

BATSFORD CHESS OPENING GUIDES

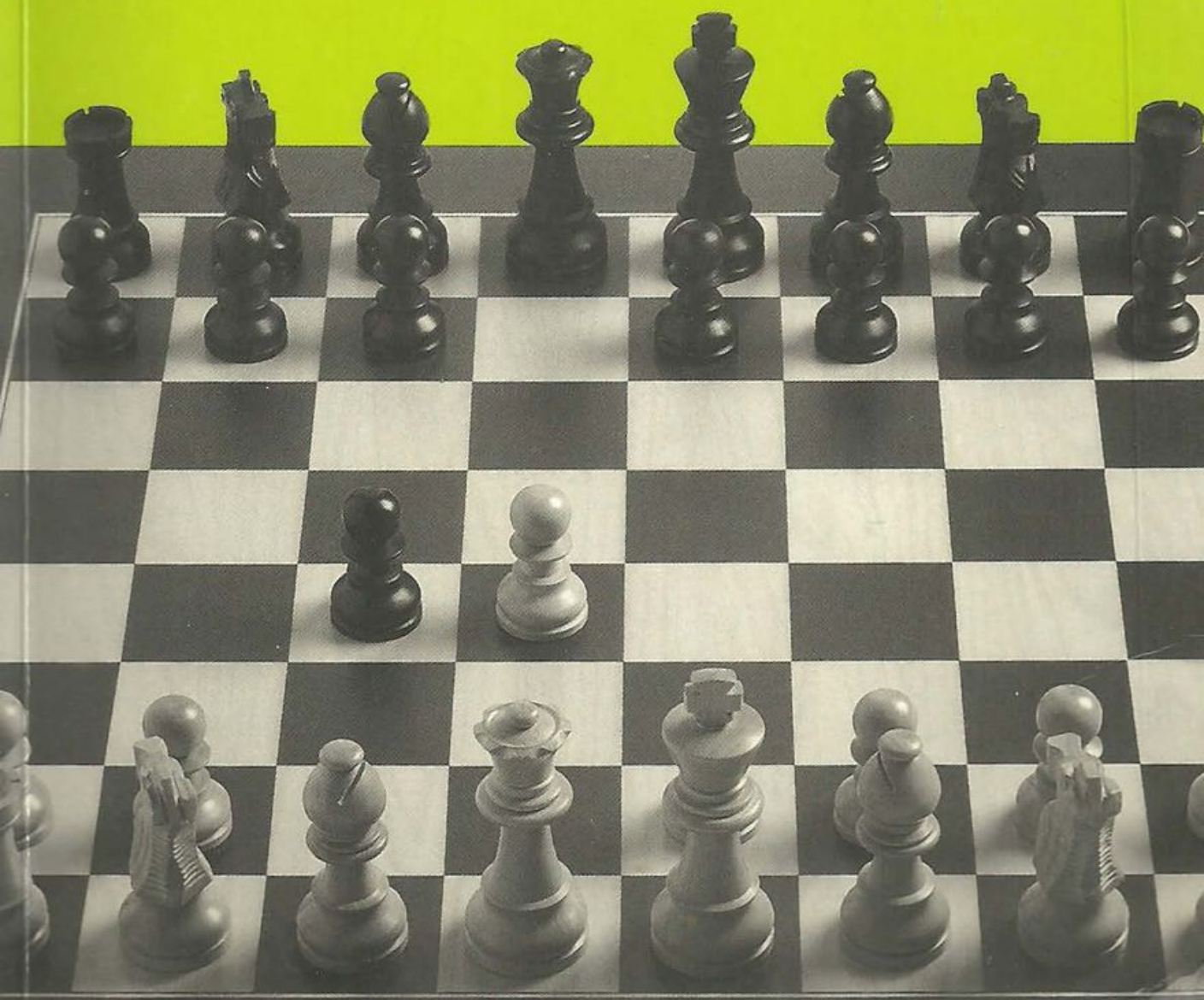
The

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED

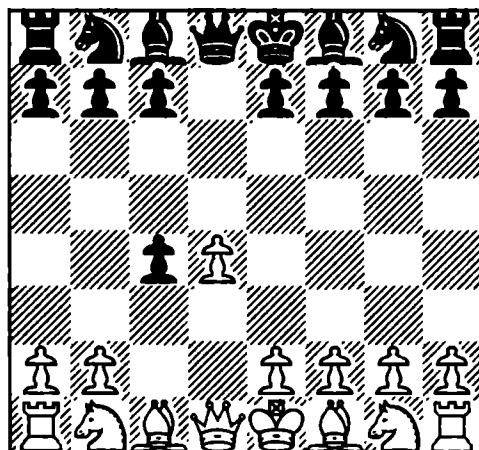
A sharp and sound response to 1 d4



CHRIS WARD

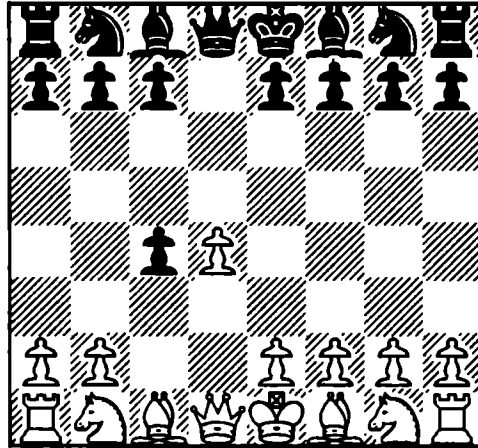


1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4



To my brother Jeremy, for his continued support

The Queen's Gambit Accepted



BATSFORD CHESS OPENING GUIDES

Other titles in this series include:

0 7134 8462 4	Benko Gambit	Andrew Kinsman and Byron Jacobs
0 7134 8456 X	Budapest Gambit	Bogdan Lalic
0 7134 8461 6	French Tarrasch	John Emms
0 7134 8451 9	King's Gambit	Neil McDonald
0 7134 8472 1	Modern Defence	Jon Speelman and Neil McDonald
0 7134 8466 7	Scotch Game	Peter Wells
0 7134 8471 3	Spanish Exchange	Andrew Kinsman

For further details for Batsford chess titles, please write to Batsford Chess Books, 583 Fulham Road, London SW6 5BY.

Batsford Chess Opening Guides

The Queen's Gambit Accepted

Chris Ward

B.T.Batsford Ltd, London

First published 1999
Copyright © 1999 Chris Ward

ISBN 0 7134 8467 5

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.
A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be
reproduced, by any means, without prior permission
of the publisher.

The Batsford Chess Opening Guides were designed
and developed by First Rank Publishing
Typeset and edited by First Rank Publishing, Brighton
Printed in Great Britain by
Creative Print and Design, Ebbw Vale, Wales
for the publishers,
B. T. Batsford Ltd,
583 Fulham Road,
London SW6 5BY

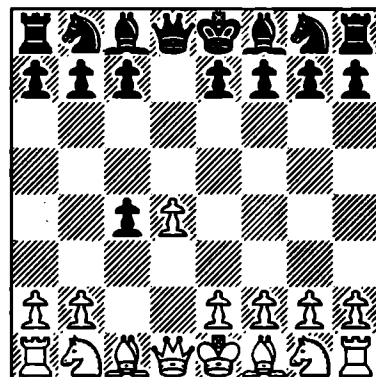
Chess set used in cover photograph courtesy of the
London Chess Centre

A BATSFORD CHESS BOOK

General Manager: Nigel Davies

Advisors: Mark Dvoretsky, Raymond Keene OBE,
Daniel King, Jon Speelman, Chris Ward

CONTENTS



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4

Bibliography	8
Introduction	9

Part One: 3 e4

1	Central Variation with 3...♘c6	12
2	Central Variation with 3...♘f6	29
3	Central Variation with 3...c5	40
4	Central Variation with 3...e5	50

Part Two: 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3

5	Classical Variation without an early ♕e2	65
6	Classical Variation with an early ♕e2	87
7	Fourth Move Alternatives for Black	100

Part Three: Other Variations

8	3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3	110
9	3 ♕a4+ and 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 ♕a4+	125
10	Third Move Alternatives for Black after 3 ♘f3	132
11	3 ♘c3 and 3 e3	146

Index of Complete Games	158
-------------------------	-----

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Queen's Gambit Accepted, Eduard Gufeld (Batsford 1986)

Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings vol.D, (Sahovski Informator 1987)

New Ideas in the Queen's Gambit Accepted, Glenn Flear (Batsford 1994)

The Queen's Gambit Accepted, Iakov Neishtadt (Cadogan 1997)

Periodicals

Informator

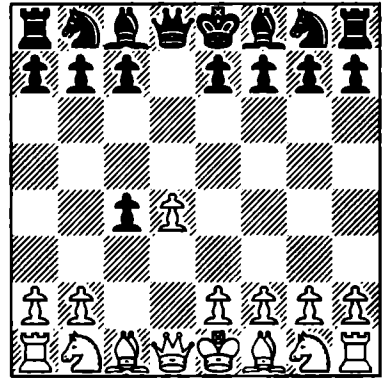
New in Chess Yearbook

ChessBase Megabase CD-ROM

Chess Monthly

British Chess Magazine

INTRODUCTION



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4

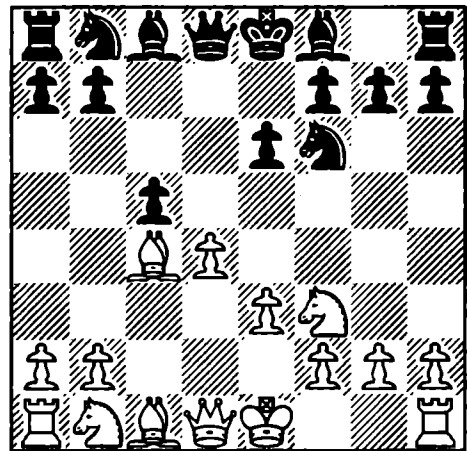
In my role as a coach of junior players, the Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA) has in the past caused me to reconsider some basic teaching principles. I recall demonstrating the Queen's Gambit and then on 2...dxc4, have members of the audience chuckle. 'As if Black would do that' was the audience view, with the children obviously preferring 2...c6 or 2...e6, keeping the centre intact. Yes, the general opinion was definitely that 3 e4 would be 'winning', which brings to mind my own story. As a nine-year-old just starting out, I was happy playing the natural 3 e4 until I was told by an experienced player that it was a mistake. Hence I switched to the more solid 3 ♘f3 and 4 e3, only to discover some seven or eight years later that I had actually been misinformed! Of course at the end of the day it all boils down to taste and I had no hesitation in returning to my first love of 3 e4 (rather bitterly though in view of those wasted years!).

In the 1990s the QGA (whose advocates include Anand and Short) is considered a perfectly acceptable defence. Black does indeed concede the centre, but the intention is to strike back when the time is right. For his part, White may eschew

the immediate 3 e4 in favour of the slower plan of retaining this move as a long-term aim (i.e. after he is satisfactorily developed or feels that he is ready).

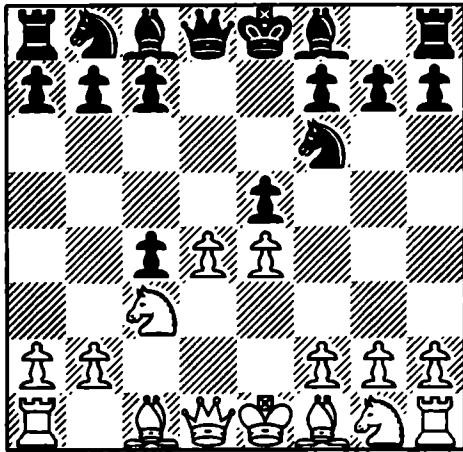
Black has two main breaks in the QGA, which we deal with in turn:

...c7-c5



After this move Black's pieces are granted more freedom to manoeuvre. His queen can leave its home square and the c-file could later become useful for a rook or two. White no longer has a free hand in the centre as e3-e4 is dissuaded by the pressure on his d4-pawn. Note that the above diagram is characteristic of the 'Classical variation' (Chapters 5 and 6).

...e7-e5

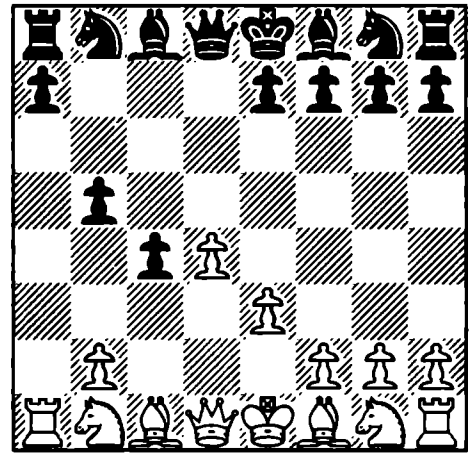


Black generally wants to play either ...c7-c5 or ...e7-e5 in the QGA to buy some space of his own. In the above diagram, Black has just played 4...e5! and what better way could there be of preventing White from playing e4-e5 himself? In situations such as this, White gains nothing from the queen trade 5 dxe5 ♖xd1+. Usually Black is fine whether both sides retain their doubled pawns or a c4 for e5 (or e4) swap is initiated. If White advances with 5 d5, then he is reducing the scope of his light-squared bishop, whilst allowing Black access to the c5-g1 diagonal. Also 5...b5!? becomes an option because the c3-knight plays an integral part in holding White's centre together.

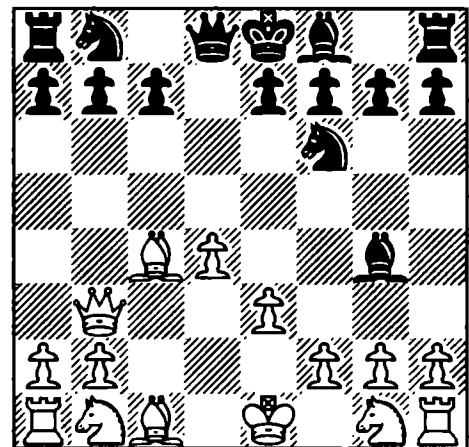
I pride myself on having taken an objective approach throughout this book. I can safely say that I would be prepared to play the QGA with either colour, but first I should take to task the 'gambit' part. At grandmaster level, opening gambits are very rarely seen as they tend to have a bad reputation (especially in these days when analysis is aided by materialistic computer programs). Acceptance of the Queen's 'Gambit' would imply that you have snatched a lukewarm to hot pawn and could suggest that you have a little suffering to do before your extra material hopefully sees you through. In reality that's

just not the way things are. The Queen's Gambit isn't really a gambit at all, as there is no satisfactory way for Black to keep his pawn. The only way this would be possible would be try something with ...b7-b5, but in practice White could undermine this with a2-a4 and b2-b3.

While we're on the topic, there is an idea that Black must steer clear of. After 3 e3 b5? 4 a4 c6 5 axb5 cxb5

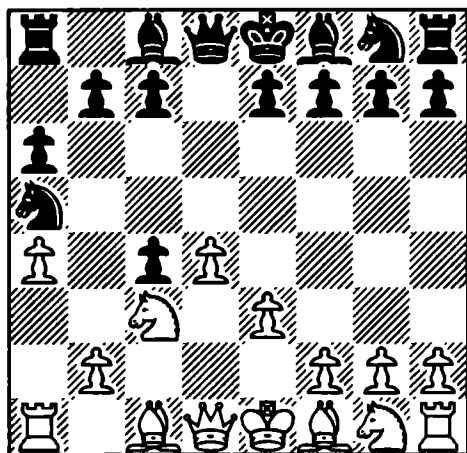


Instead of following up with the usual undermining 6 b3, White has the devastating 6 ♕f3! Black must always be wary of this diagonal and for that matter the damage that the sneaky white queen can cause elsewhere, e.g. 3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♙xc4 ♙g4? 5 ♕b3



Simultaneously attacking f7 and b7. If White demonstrates that he is not in a hurry to recapture on c4, preferring to

produce and then defend a big centre, then there is a playable manoeuvre that can be successful in cementing the 'gambit' pawn. After 3 Qc3 a6!? 4 a4?! (as we shall see in Chapter 8, 4 e4 is the correct response), Black can use the advance of the a-pawns to his advantage with 4... Qc6 ! 5 e3 Qa5 .

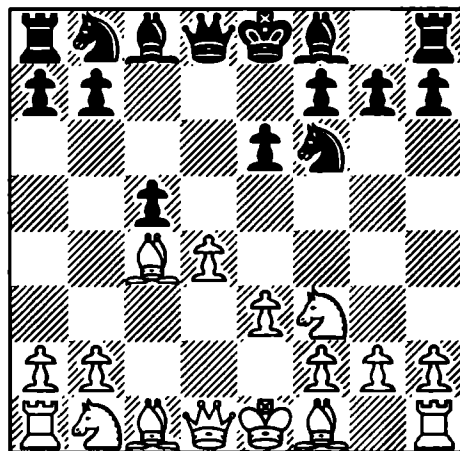


The c4-pawn will remain a thorn for a while as it is surprisingly difficult to regain it (e.g. 6 Qf3 , intending 7 Qe5xc4 , is foiled by 6... Qg4). In such instances, at worst Black will temporarily have the use of the b3-square to cause some damage.

I have mainly used modern games throughout this book to explain both new and old ideas. Obviously theory changes

all the time, but whereas individual moves and sequences come and go, the basic plans always remain the same. Basically then don't blame me if some of the analytical assessments are eventually modified(!) by future games, although I will reiterate that I'm not unhappy with them as they stand.

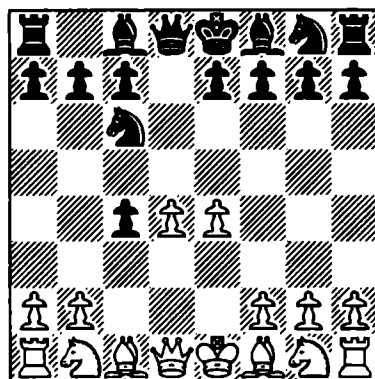
The arrangement of material in this book is designed to reflect current trends. Although the 'Classical variation' (3 Qf3 Qf6 4 e3 e6 5 Qxc4 c5)




is usually regarded as the main line, I have included more games in the 'Central variation' (3 e4) because frankly I consider it to be a more critical test of the QGA.




CHAPTER ONE

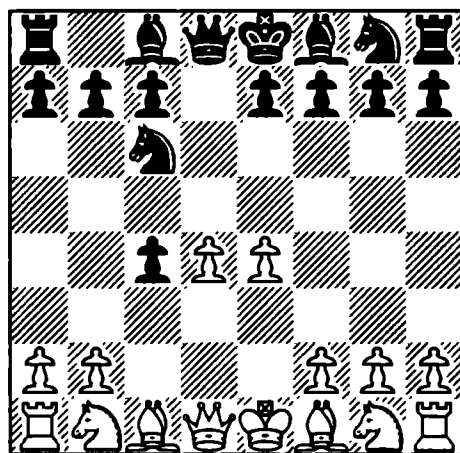
3 e4 c6




1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c6

As you will soon discover, the 'Central variation' (3 e4) takes up a hefty percentage of this book. My justification for this is twofold. First, 3 e4 is White's most natural move, staking a firm claim in the centre; and second it leads to some pretty sharp lines, and is therefore the most testing response to the QGA. If the QGA is to be refuted, then 3 e4 is probably the place for White players to look.

Black has four main responses: 3... c6, 3... f6, 3...c5 and 3...e5. Since Black is currently struggling with 3...c5 and 3...e5 (see Chapters 3 and 4 respectively) it makes sense to start with the fashionable 3... c6. Surprisingly, White is having real trouble eliminating this slightly odd-looking move from the equation. Over the years I have reached the conclusion that this move must be respected. A variety of different attempts to bash it off the board have been tried but, amongst others, Baburin and Sadler remain its loyal servants.



Having been brought up in a school of thought which holds that it is wrong to obstruct the c-pawn in Queen's Pawn Openings, I have previously been critical of this move. Nevertheless I have been forced to reconsider my views in recent years as numerous strong players have continued to implement it to good effect. The point behind 3... c6 is that, although the counter thrust ...c7-c5 is temporarily put on ice, the alternative strike ...e7-e5 remains a dynamic option, enabling Black to put pressure on White's centre before he has had a chance to regain his gambit pawn.

4 f3

In accordance with the general rule of

Game 1 Ward-Fugslang Copenhagen open 1992

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c6

developing knight before bishop and, for the time being at least, keeping the centre pawns flexible. 4 ♖e3 is equally popular (see Games 5-9), whereas 4 d5 is the subject of Game 10.

4...♗g4 5 ♖xc4

For 5 d5, see Game 4.

5...e6

Both 5 ♖b3 and the good old 5 ♖xf7+ ♗xf7 6 ♖g5+ were threatened and the text seems the most natural way to parry both. Less ambitious is 5...♖xf3 6 ♖xf3 (hitting f7) 6...e6 7 d5 ♖e5 8 ♖b5+ c6 9 ♖c3! Amazingly, in our 1994 British Championship encounter, Keith Arkell just accepted a pawn loss here with 9...♖d6 10 dxc6 bxc6 11 ♖xc6+ ♖xc6 12 ♖xc6+ ♗e7 13 ♖b7+ ♖c7 14 ♖xc7+ ♖xc7. Not a strategy I could recommend! Black should have played 9...cxb5 10 ♖xe5 ♖d6 11 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 12 dxe6 fxe6. Having studied this endgame a little, I can tell you that this position isn't as easy for White as one might think. Nevertheless, being sort of half a pawn up, he definitely has the upper hand.

6 ♖b5

The old continuation. White intends to meet a doubling of his f-pawns with an even weaker doubling of Black's c-pawns. 6 d5 is considered in Game 2 and 6 ♖e3 in Game 3.

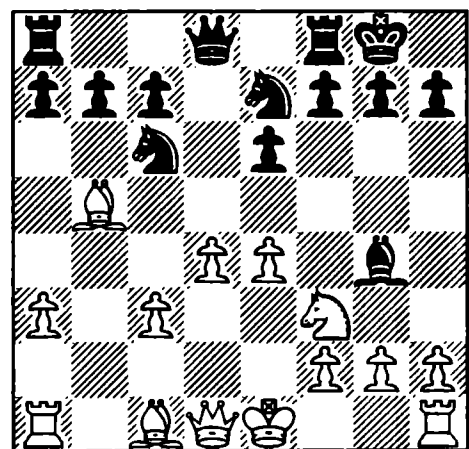
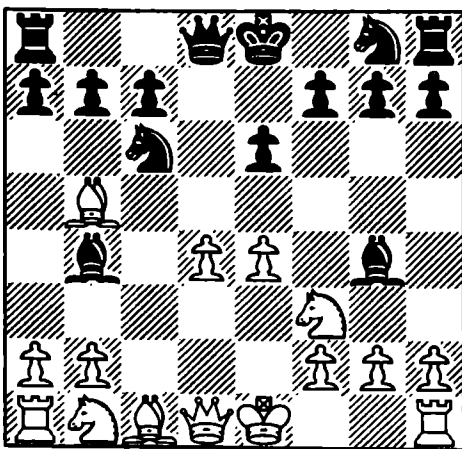
6...♖b4+?!

It almost seems incredible that I am picking on such a natural-looking move. After all doesn't it make sense to extract this bishop before playing ...♖ge7 to support the knight on c6? As this instructive game shows though, Black cannot allow White to consolidate his centre and I must recommend the immediate 6...♖ge7! Black's aim should be to pressurise White's d4-pawn and after 7 ♖bd2 (preparing to replace the other knight when captured) 7...a6 8 ♖e2 (a useful retreat, bearing in mind the trick 8...♖xd4?? 9 ♖xd4 ♖xe2 10 ♖xe2) 8...♖g6 (in my opinion better than the older 8...♖d6, which prepares queenside castling, but is vulnerable to a later ♖c4) 9 h3 ♖xf3 10 ♖xf3, he should continue with 10...♖h4!, as Matthew Sadler demonstrated against me at the 1994 Isle of Man open. I tried 11 d5 exd5 12 exd5 ♖xf3+ 13 ♖xf3 ♖e5 14 0-0 ♖d6 15 ♖e2, but despite having the two bishops found that my isolated pawn clogged me up a bit. In short I was planless and so I must conclude that Black has a very comfortable position.

7 ♖c3 ♖ge7 8 a3!

As 8...♖a5? falls foul of 9 b4 ♖b6 10 d5! winning a piece, this effectively forces Black to trade his bishop for a knight, whilst solidifying White's centre at the same time.

8...♖xc3+ 9 bxc3 0-0



10 h3 ♖h5

Naturally Black is loathe to concede his second bishop which would leave White with both the bishop pair and a useful space advantage, courtesy of his nifty pawn centre.

11 g4 ♖g6 12 ♛e2 a6 13 ♖d3 ♘a5

In view of the game continuation, this looks a little slow, especially as Black seems to be caught in two minds as to whether or not he should break out with ...c7-c5 or ...f7-f5. The problem is that there isn't much else to recommend and at least this threatens 14...♘b3.

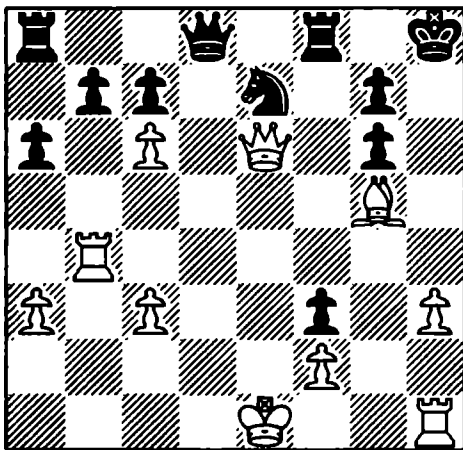
14 ♜b1 f5 15 exf5 exf5 16 ♖g5 ♘ac6

16...♛d7, hoping to utilise the pin on the e-file, is no better, e.g. 17 ♖xe7 ♜fe8 18 gxf5 ♜xe7 19 ♘e5 and White is winning.

17 d5!

The point is that 18 ♖c4 prohibits the queen from capturing this pawn.

17...fxg4 18 ♖xg6 gxf3 19 ♛e6+ ♖h8 20 dxc6 hxg6 21 ♜b4 1-0



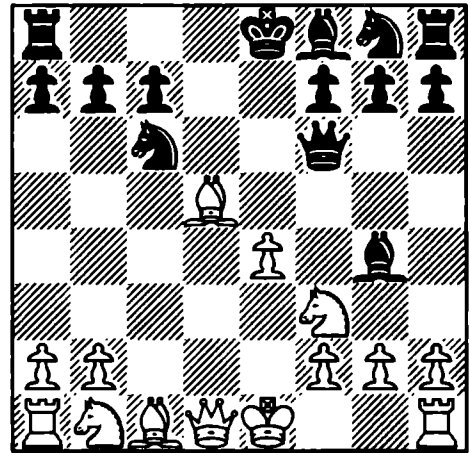
Black must concede his queen to avoid 22 ♜h4 mate.

Game 2
Ward-Baburin
Isle of Man open 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘c6 4 ♘f3 ♖g4
5 ♖xc4 e6 6 d5

For a while, this move also looked quite good to me. By trading centre pawns, White removes a target and opens up a diagonal for his bishop.

6...exd5 7 ♖xd5 ♛f6!



I guess that this move had previously been rejected for two reasons. First, it takes away an obvious square from the g8-knight, while castling queenside on the face of it may run into a ♖g5. It was perhaps not unsurprisingly then, that my opponent admitted that 'Fritz' was largely responsible for the development of this big opening novelty.

Both 8 ♛b3 and the simple 8 ♖xc6+ were threatened and that explains why 7...♛d7 had previously been considered best (note that 7...♖b4+ 8 ♖d2 ♖xf3 9 ♖xc6+ bxc6 10 ♛xf3 ♖xd2+ 11 ♘xd2 ♛d4 12 ♛c3 ♛xc3 13 bxc3 left White effectively half a pawn up and able to convert the endgame in Ward-Ahlander, Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 1995). After 7...♛d7 I had been successful against Matthew Sadler (British Championship, Swansea 1995) with 8 ♛b3 0-0-0 9 0-0 ♖xf3 10 ♛xf3 ♘f6 11 ♖xc6 and then more convincingly with 11 ♖g5!? ♘d4 (11...♖e7 12 ♖xc6 ♛xc6 13 ♘c3 h6 14 ♖f4 ♜d7 15 ♜ac1 ♖c5 16 b4!? is also quite difficult for Black) 12 ♛d1 ♖c5 13 ♘c3 ♘e6 (if 13...c6 then 14 ♘a4!) 14 ♖xf6 gxf6 15 ♛h5 against the Swedish IM Christer Hartman

(Wrexham 1996). Of course this all seems a little irrelevant now, as this game changes the assessment of the whole variation.

8 ♖a4?!

Taking into consideration my previously impressive record with this line, perhaps I could be forgiven for a little over-enthusiasm. Okay, so clearly this move doesn't work out and the onus is on White to find an improvement. In some analysis published in *Informator 71*, Baburin has suggested the sedate variation 8 ♖b3 ♙b4+ 9 ♙d2 ♙xf3 10 ♖xf3 ♘d4 (note that a queen trade allows a ♙xc6+ intermezzo, i.e. doubled isolated pawns are off the agenda!) 11 ♖d3 ♙xd2+ 12 ♘xd2 and the more crazy line (which is definitely worth investing some time on) 8 ♘c3 ♙b4 9 h3 ♙xf3 10 ♖xf3 ♘d4 11 ♖d3 c6 12 0-0! ♙d8 13 e5 ♖xe5 14 ♙xf7+ ♕xf7 15 ♖c4+ ♖e6 16 ♖xb4 ♘c2 17 ♖f4+ ♘f6 18 ♙b1, both apparently with equal chances.

8...♙xf3 9 ♙xc6+ bxc6

In terms of pawn structure alone, Black gets the worse deal from this bishop and knight trade. His queen is the more active of the two, so 9...♖xc6? makes no sense.

10 gxf3 ♙c5 11 ♘c3 ♘e7

Outwardly White's position doesn't seem too bad. However, upon closer inspection it becomes clear that he has problems with his f-pawns as well as the safety of his king.

12 f4 0-0 13 ♖c4 ♙b6 14 ♙d2 ♙ad8 15 0-0-0 ♙xf2 16 ♘e2 ♙xd2 17 ♙xd2 ♙e3 18 ♖d3 ♙xd2+ 19 ♖xd2 ♘g6 20 ♙d1 ♖h4!

The extra queenside pawn is hardly significant. Hence Black ignores that feature and instead sets about exposing the weaknesses in White's kingside structure. Specifically, Black attacks the isolated h-pawn whilst keeping tabs on the f-pawn.

21 f5 ♘e5 22 ♖f4 ♖e7

Having provoked the concession of the e5-square, Black's menacing queen demonstrates its flexibility by preparing to switch to the queenside. However, 22...♖f6! (potentially eyeing up the b2-pawn) would have been more accurate as it would have prevented the counterplay that follows.

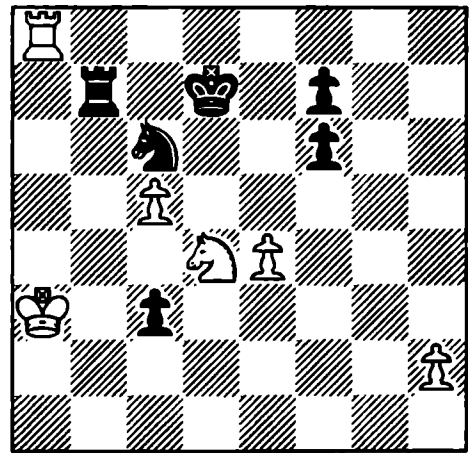
23 f6! ♖xf6 24 ♖xf6 gxf6

Previously White was just having to defend. Now, however, he has no less than six isolated pawns to target. Nevertheless Black is still favourite for the whole point.

25 ♙d4 ♙b8 26 ♙a4 ♙b7 27 ♕c2 c5 28 ♙a3 c6 29 ♙g3+ ♕f8 30 ♙h3 ♙b4 31 ♘g3 ♙c4+ 32 ♕b3 a5?!

The more cautious 32...♕g7 33 ♘f5+ ♕h8 would have been more accurate.

33 ♙xh7 a4+ 34 ♕a3 ♙b4 35 b3 ♕e7 36 ♙h8 ♙b7 37 ♘f5+ ♕d7 38 ♙a8 axb3 39 axb3 c4 40 b4 c5 41 bxc5 c3 42 ♘d4 ♘c6



43 ♘xc6??

A reckless move, played only because I was trying to be clever and, 'knowing' that the game was destined to be a draw, wanted to grasp the opportunity for a snazzy finish. As it transpires, both 43 ♙a4 (which I had seen) and 43 ♙a6 (which I hadn't) were simple draws.

43...c2

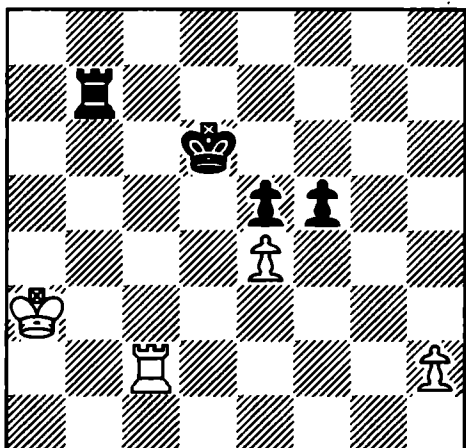
This was the move I was expecting, but I'd also seen the failure of 43...♙b1 44

♖b8+! ♔e6? (44...♔e7 45 ♘c6+ will be a draw by repetition) 45 ♙a6+ ♔e5 46 ♘c6+ ♔xe4 47 ♘b4.

44 ♘e5+ fxe5 45 c6+ ♔xc6!

A ridiculously simple but strong move from Alex, using good endgame judgement rather than needlessly entering complex fantasy variations. I had needlessly spent time on 45...♔d6 46 cxb7 c1♚+ 47 ♔a2, when despite plenty of available checks Black can't win without the access to the d5-square that is required to mop up the b7-pawn, and 45...♔c7 46 ♙c8+ ♔xc8 47 cxb7+ ♔xb7 48 ♔b2 when only White could be better in the king and pawn ending (but actually it's a draw).

46 ♙c8+ ♔d6 47 ♙xc2 f5!!



Excellent. With White's king cut off, Black's one passed pawn is far stronger than both of White's put together.

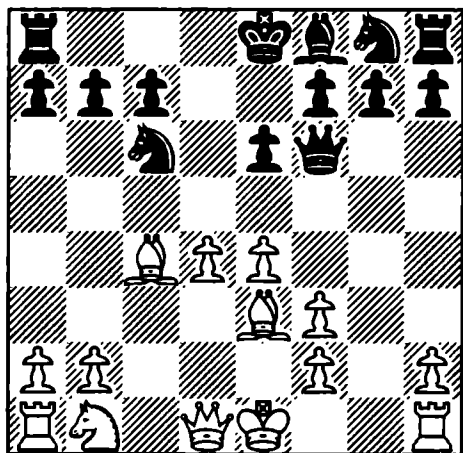
48 exf5 e4 49 ♙b2 ♙c7 50 ♔b3 ♔e5 51 ♙c2 ♙d7 52 ♔c3 e3 53 f6 ♔e4 54 ♙g2 ♙c7+ 55 ♔b2 ♙f7 56 ♔c2 ♙xf6 57 ♙g3 ♙c6+ 58 ♔d1 ♔d3 59 h4 ♙a6 60 ♔c1 ♙c6+ 61 ♔d1 ♙a6 62 ♔c1 ♙a1+ 63 ♔b2 ♙h1 64 h5 ♙xh5 65 ♔c1 ♙h1+ 66 ♔b2 ♔d2 0-1

Game 3
Inkiöv-Lautier
French Team Championship 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘c6 4 ♘f3 ♙g4

5 ♙xc4 e6 6 ♙e3 ♙xf3 7 gxf3 ♚f6

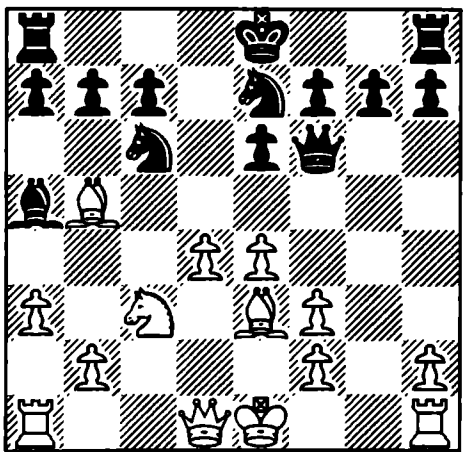
Essentially this differs from the previous two games in that Black has doubled White's f-pawns without risking the doubling of his own c-pawns. Of course matters aren't so simple because, after all, White gained a bishop for a knight out of the sixth move trade.



8 ♙b5 ♙b4+ 9 ♘c3 ♘ge7 10 a3?!

This only forces the bishop back to where it wants to go (namely b6 to continue pressurising the d4-pawn). Compared to Game 1, White is unable to follow up with 11 b4 and 12 d5 because his knight would be hanging.

10...♙a5



11 f4 0-0-0 12 e5

Giving away squares left, right and centre. Nevertheless, something had to be done to avoid the immediate loss of the d-

pawn.

12... ♖h4 13 ♖a4 a6 14 ♙xc6

Naturally this is unattractive as White concedes his good bishop, knowing that Black has another knight where that came from! Unfortunately, the retreat 14 ♙e2 b5! 15 ♖d1 ♘xd4! 16 ♙xd4 ♘f5 is clearly no better.

14... ♘xc6 15 0-0-0 ♙xc3 16 bxc3 g5!?

White has all seven pawns on the same colour as his bishop and now Black uses the fact that the queens are on the same rank to open things up a bit.

17 fxg5 ♘xe5 18 ♖hg1

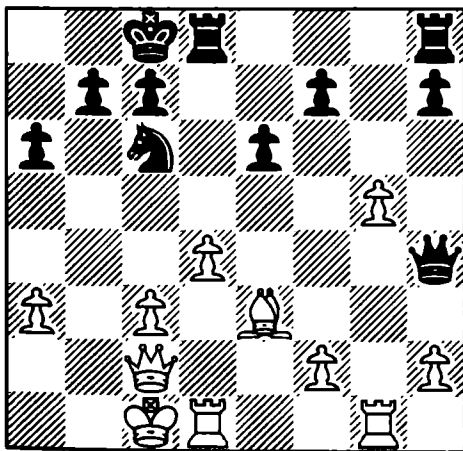
18... ♘g4 was threatened, but now that would run into 19 d5!, when it would be White's turn to use the pin.

18... ♘c6!

The knight returns, having provided the black queen with more options.

19 ♖c2

White chooses to let his h-pawn go in the hope of some counterplay. The more passive 19 ♖g2 could have been met with either 19... ♖e4 or 19... e5.



19... ♖xh2 20 ♖h1 ♖d6 21 ♖b3 ♘a5 22 ♖b4 ♖d5!

Because his h-pawn is a little weak, Black is not interested in an endgame just yet. Instead he retains the light-squared blockade and enables a ... ♖d6-b6 manoeuvre.

23 ♙f4 ♘c4 24 a4 ♖d7 25 ♖h4 e5 26

♙g3 ♖hd8 27 ♖e1 a5 28 ♖b3 ♖d6! 29 ♙xe5 ♖b6 30 ♖c2 ♘a3 31 ♖f5+ ♖b8 32 ♙xc7+

Desperate times call for desperate measures. It's too late to try and defend, e.g. 32 ♖h3 ♖a2! or 32 ♖e2 ♖c4!

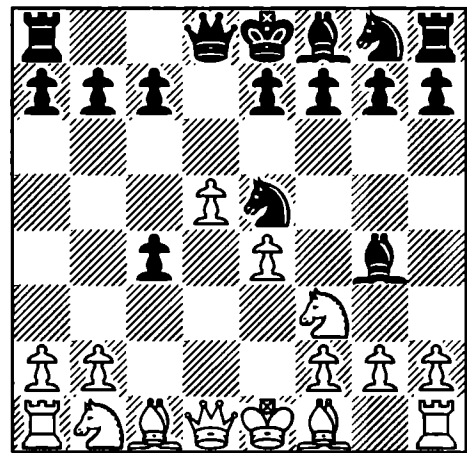
32... ♖xc7 33 ♖e7+ ♖b8 34 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 35 ♖xh7 ♖xg5 36 ♖hx7 ♘c4 37 ♖c2 ♖g1 38 ♖f8+ ♖a7 39 ♖ee8 ♖b2+ 40 ♖d3 ♘b6 41 ♖e5 ♖d1+ 42 ♖e4 ♖e2+ 43 ♖f3 ♖xe5 44 dxe5 ♖e1 0-1

Game 4 Karpov-Milov Biel 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘c6 4 ♘f3 ♙g4 5 d5

An aggressive alternative which aims to unsettle Black before he gets his kingside developed.

5... ♘e5



6 ♙f4

In recent years this has risen in popularity, while the speculative 6 ♖d4 (!? or ?!) has gone out of fashion. The justification for the latter is 6... ♘xf3+ 7 gxf3 ♙xf3 8 ♙xc4 ♙xh1? 9 ♙b5+ c6 10 dxc6 a6 11 c7+ with a winning advantage, but 8... e5 9 ♙b5+ c6 10 ♖xe5+ ♖e7! 11 dxc6 ♖xe5 12 cxb7+ ♖xb5 13 bxa8 ♖+ ♖d7 14 ♖xa7+ ♖e6 leaves White without checks and struggling after 15 ♘c3 ♙b4 (i.e. again

threatening 16...♖e2 mate and the h1-rook). To further dampen White's enthusiasm for this line, there are also other promising eighth move alternatives for Black to consider (e.g. 8...f5!?).

6...♟g6

At this stage, Black wisely rejects capturing on f3 with either piece. White's pawns would become doubled, but Black is in real danger of seriously falling behind in development and/or becoming rather vulnerable on the light squares. It's not difficult to imagine him being overrun in the centre.

7 ♙e3

Better than 7 ♙g3 after which the bishop is left with less scope after 7...e5.

7...♟f6 8 ♟c3 e5

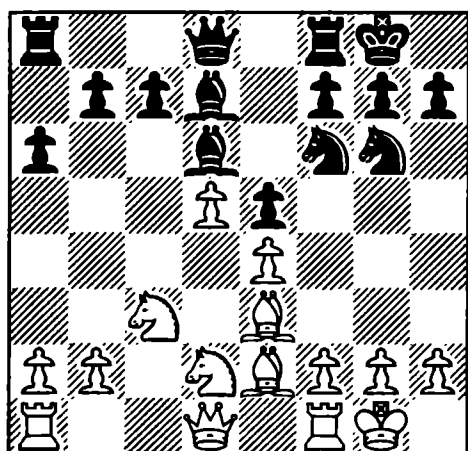
This is almost universally played now. The old move 8...e6 9 ♖a4+!? ♖d7 10 ♖xd7+ ♔xd7 11 ♙xc4 leaves Black's king a little awkwardly placed, but 10...♟d7 takes the pressure off d5 and is well met by 11 ♟d2!

9 ♙xc4 a6 10 0-0 ♙d6 11 ♙e2

Vacating the c4-square and unpinning the knight so that it can begin a journey there (or to c5) via d2.

11...0-0 12 ♟d2 ♙d7

Black wants to keep his good bishop and is already considering hassling White's bishop with ...♟f4.



13 ♜c1

Probably the best continuation. Karpov considers 13 g3 to be overly cautious, particularly as Black should (failing anything drastically brilliant on the kingside) grasp any opportunity to get in ...c7-c6, e.g. 13...b5 (threatening 14...b4 winning the e-pawn) 14 a3 c6! Similarly 13 ♟c4 might be premature because of 13...♙b4 (again indirectly hitting e4) 14 ♖c2 b5 15 ♟d2 c6!

13...♖e7 14 a3

Implementing typical Karpovian suffocation techniques. The possibility of responding to ♟c4 with ...♙b4 is removed from the agenda.

14...b5?!

Controlling c4, but irrevocably weakening both the c6- and c5-squares. I'm not sure that this is a fair trade and suggest that the immediate 14...♟f4 would have been preferable.

15 ♟b3 ♟f4

Another problem with the ...b7-b5 concession is that potential ...c7-c6 break is pretty much gone for good, thus leaving all of Black's eggs in the kingside basket. For example, after 15...c6?! 16 dxc6 ♙xc6 17 ♟a5 ♙xe4 18 ♟xe4 ♟xe4 19 ♙f3 f5 20 ♖d5+ ♔h8 21 ♙xe4 fxe4 22 ♜fd1 Black has holes and weaknesses everywhere, whereas White's position could hardly be more solid.

16 ♙f3 ♔h8

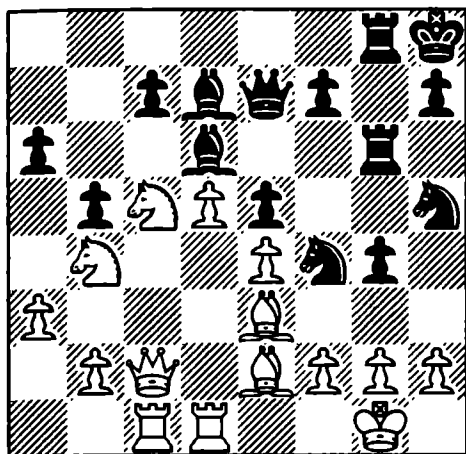
Black figures that the g-file is going to be a good way to enter a rook or two into the proceedings and so vacates the g8-square in favour of the immediate 16...g5!? 17 ♟a2 g5 18 ♟c5 ♜g8 19 ♟b4 ♜g6 20 ♖c2

Karpov may be one of the coolest characters around (most players would be worried by the build-up of enemy troops around the white king), but here he shows that he is in no hurry to capture the pawn on a6 (or for that matter the bishop on d7).

20...g4 21 ♙e2 ♜ag8

The problem throughout for Black is that his g-pawn continually seems to get in the way.

22 ♖fd1 ♘6h5



23 g3!

Played not so much just to attack the knight, but rather to prevent Black from playing 23...g3 himself. In that case, Black would be more than happy to sacrifice a piece (or even two!).

23...♗c8 24 ♘c6

Taking the knight would be tantamount to suicide, i.e. 24 gxf4? g3 25 hxg3 ♘xg3 26 fxg3 ♖xg3+ 27 ♔f1 ♜h4!

24...♜g5 25 ♗f1 ♖h6 26 ♜c3

Offering future lateral defence as well as setting his sights on the e5-pawn.

26...♘f6 27 ♘d3!

Again 27 gxf4?! is unnecessary. It is better to frustrate Black who has a massive strike force but a g-pawn that is annoyingly surplus to requirements!

27...♜h5 28 h4 gxh3

Now of course this pawn is getting in the way on the h-file and, in the absence of checkmate, Black's position is rapidly coming apart at the seams.

29 ♘dx5 ♖g7 30 ♗xf4 ♘xe4 31 ♜e3 ♜f5 32 ♗xh6 h2+ 33 ♔xh2 ♘xf2 34 ♗xg7+

Karpov has played a superb game. He never appeared fazed by his opponent's offensive movements and with his king

shaken, but not stirred, he finishes the game embarrassingly ahead on material.

34...♔xg7 35 ♖d4 1-0

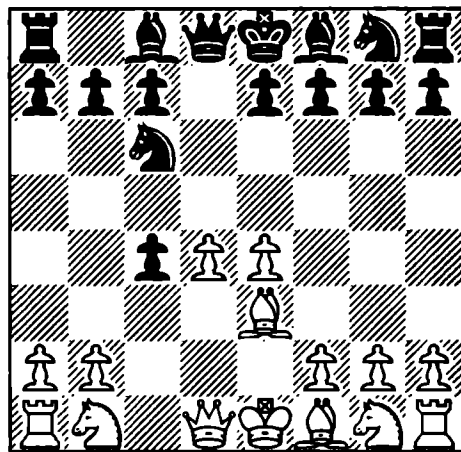
Game 5

Savchenko-Zaja

Nova Gorica 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘c6 4 ♗e3

In breaking the rule 'knights before bishops', White at least prevents the 4 ♘f3 ♗g4 pin.



4...e5

4...♘f6 is seen in Games 6-9.

5 d5 ♘ce7 6 ♗xc4 ♘g6

A typical manoeuvre for the black knight, protecting the e5-pawn and eyeing up the f4-square for a future invasion.

7 ♗b5+

Considering that his fixed pawns are on light squares, this check, essentially seeking a trade of good for bad bishop, is very logical. Having said that, the immediate 7 ♜b3! (with possible ideas of d5-d6) is also worthy of attention.

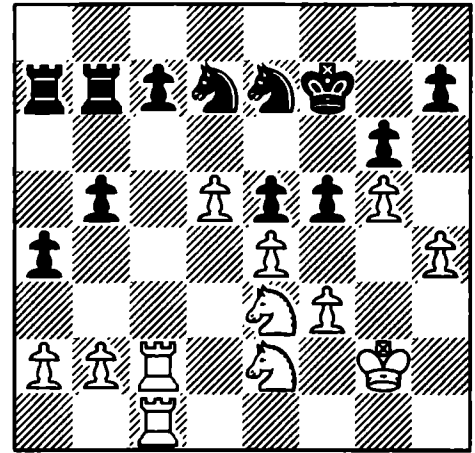
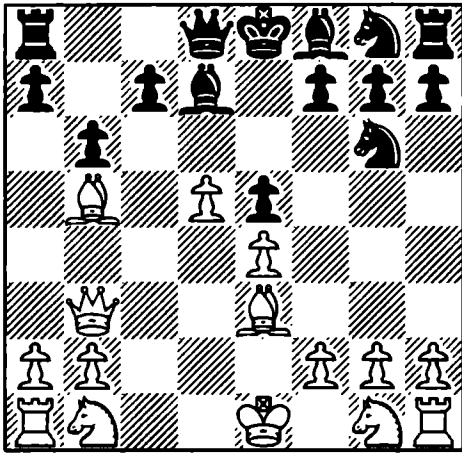
7...♗d7 8 ♜b3 b6?!

This game is a good demonstration of how White has the superior pawn structure and can expect an easy ride in these type of positions if Black is unable to generate the right kind of piece play. The text is too slow and Black must be prepared to offload the b-pawn, e.g. 8...♘f6! 9 ♗xd7+

♖xd7 10 ♜xb7 ♜b8 with 11...♗h4 to follow. True, it's fairly unclear, but in contrast to the game, where he is slowly suffocated, at least Black gets his share of the action.

can always get b2-b4 in anyway and besides a d5-d6 'mixer' sometime would also weaken the b6-pawn.

22 ♜c2 b5 23 ♗e3 ♜b8 24 ♜dc1 ♜bb7 25 g4 g6 26 ♔g2 ♔f7 27 h4 a4 28 g5 f5



9 ♗e2 ♗f6 10 f3

Defending the e-pawn and stopping 10...♗g4. Later we see another reason for delaying moving a knight to c3 (the knight opts to aim for c4 instead).

10...a6 11 ♗xd7+ ♗xd7

Black maintains a grip on the c5-square, but the damage has already been done in the weakening of c6.

12 ♗d2 ♗c5

Black returns the compliment, offering to exchange his bad bishop. Unfortunately, these exchanges only make things less congested for when White's rooks come into play along the c-file.

13 0-0 ♜g5 14 ♗c4 0-0 15 ♔h1 ♗xe3 16 ♜xe3 ♜xe3 17 ♗xe3

Very simple chess. For Black now it's going to be a matter of all hands to the pump to defend the c7-pawn.

17...♗e7 18 ♜fd1

Slightly surprising as you would think that bringing a rook (and then two!) to the c-file immediately would be more logical.

18...♜a7 19 ♜ac1 ♜c8 20 ♗c4 f6 21 ♜c3 a5

Creating the illusion of guaranteeing the c5-square for a knight. In reality White

29 ♜c6!

Having also weakened Black's kingside pawn structure, the white rooks now seek new life along the sixth rank.

29...fxe4 30 fxe4 ♗xc6

Effectively throwing in the towel, but who could blame him. All of Black's pieces are defending.

31 dxc6 ♜b6 32 ♗d5 ♜ba6 33 cxd7 ♜d6 34 ♗f6 ♜d2 35 ♜c2 1-0

Game 6
Savchenko-Ibragimov
Alushta 1993

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♗c6 4 ♗e3 ♗f6 5 ♗c3

More natural than 5 f3 (Games 8 and 9), but nonetheless allowing Black's reply.

5...♗g4!?

The less direct but certainly interesting 5...e5 6 d5 ♗a5!?

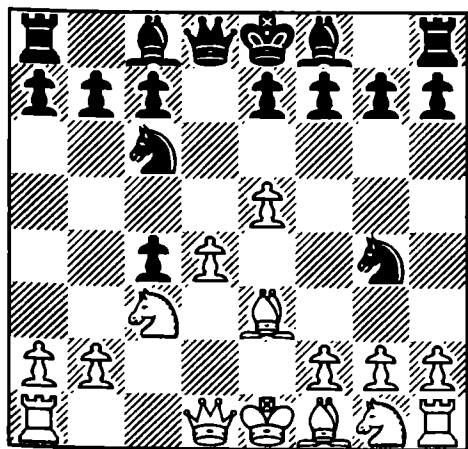
6 e5!?

If this really works out, then it is a very nice concept. Black is intending to capture the bishop and strike out with ...e7-e5. If White then relents with d4-d5, he could

easily end up with a restricted light-squared bishop and embarrassing problems on the dark squares. 6 e5!? intercepts this plan and highlights the fact that at present Black is unable to undermine this e-pawn with ...c7-c5. With that said and done, the obvious recapture is also not without punch, i.e. 6 ♙xc4 when:

a) 6...e5 7 ♖b3!? (7 ♖f3 could also be tried, but I would avoid 7 d5 for the reasons already stated) 7...♗d7 8 0-0-0!? (instead the less promising 8 ♙b5 exd4 9 0-0-0 a6 10 ♙xc6 ♗xc6 11 ♙xd4 leaves White with a development advantage, but Black with the two bishops) 8...exd4 9 ♘f3 ♙c5 (alternatively 9...♘a5 10 ♗b5 ♗xb5 11 ♙xb5+ c6 12 ♙xd4 cxb5 13 ♘xb5 is too risky) 10 ♗b5 ♙d6 11 ♙xd4 0-0 12 h3 ♘xd4 13 ♗xd7 ♙xd7 14 ♖xd4 ♘xf2 15 ♖f1 ♙e6 16 ♙xe6 fxe6 17 ♖xf2 ♙c5 18 ♖fd2 ♙xd4 19 ♘xd4 with a clearly better endgame for White in Vyzmanavin-Baburin, Gorky 1989.

b) 6...♘xe3! 7 fxe3 e5 8 ♗h5 (if 8 ♗b3 now, then Black could choose between the ambitious 8...♗h4+ 9 g3 ♗h5 and 8...♙d7) 8...g6 9 ♗f3 f6 results in a very murky position. With both 10 0-0-0 and 10 ♘d5 at his disposal, White certainly isn't lacking in activity. However, he may live to regret the absence of a dark-squared bishop.



6...♘xe3

Natural, but this time probably not best, as it seems to give White more options. I don't really believe in plans for a kingside fianchetto here and would prefer 6...♙f5!? 7 ♙xc4 e6 8 ♘f3 ♘xe3 9 fxe3 ♙e7. White's pawn on e5 spearheads a nice centre, but Black can console himself with the advantage of the two bishops. As an ...f7-f6 break isn't a very attractive proposition, Black should soon consider moving his knight in order to challenge with ...c7-c5.

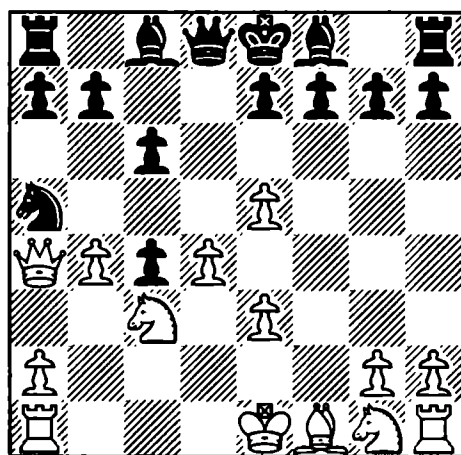
7 fxe3 ♘a5?!

7...e6?! looks too passive, so Black should probably try 7...♙f5. However, White would then have additional options to those discussed above.

8 ♗a4+!

Initiating a fairly forced sequence which, in view of the fact that ...♘a5 is a common theme, Black players should familiarise themselves with.

8...c6 9 b4



9...cxb3 10 axb3 e6

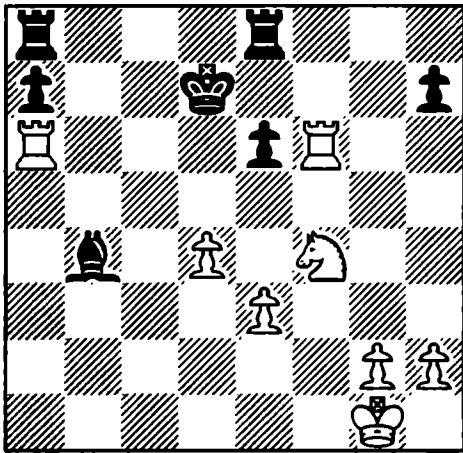
The only real alternative, 10...b6 11 b4 ♘b7 12 ♗xc6+ ♗d7 13 ♗e4, leaves Black horribly uncoordinated and probably having to turn to 13...♙d8 as a solution to 14 ♙b5.

11 b4

11 ♗xa5 ♗xa5 12 ♖xa5 ♙b4 13 ♖c5! would also leave Black with a grim position with just a rook and pawn for two

pieces, a poor bishop and ♖e4-d6 staring him in the face.

11...♖c4 12 ♙xc4 b5 13 ♖xb5 cxb5 14 ♙xb5 ♙d7 15 ♖e2 ♙xb5 16 ♚xb5+ ♚d7 17 ♚xd7+ ♚xd7 18 0-0 f6 19 exf6 gxf6 20 ♙xf6 ♙xb4 21 ♙a6 ♙he8 22 ♖f4



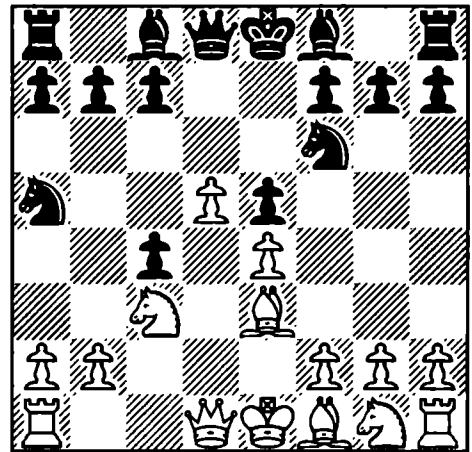
White has already handled this endgame nicely. As well as the dominating rooks, Black must also keep tabs on the knight which as well as 23 ♖xe6, harbours other menacing prospects via 23 ♖d3.

22...♙d6 23 d5 ♙c5

23...♙xf4 would have been dealt with by 24 dxe6+ (and if necessary 25 ♙f7+) before recapturing.

24 dxe6+ ♚c7 25 ♙f7+ ♙e7 26 ♖d5+ ♚b7 27 ♙xa7+ ♙xa7 28 ♖xe7 ♙xe3+ 29 ♚f1 ♙c5 30 ♖f5+ 1-0

because of 8...cxb3 9 axb3 b5 10 ♚xa5 ♚xa5 11 ♙xa5 ♙b4.



7...♙d6

It looks more sensible to defend the e-pawn like this than to play 7...♖g4 8 ♙g5!, although that possibility shouldn't be completely ruled out.

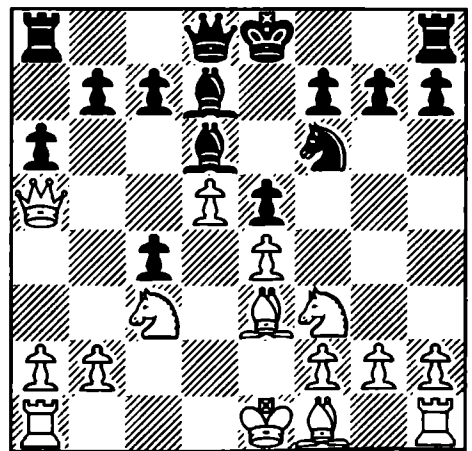
8 ♚a4+

Absolutely critical as the calmer 8 ♖d2 runs into 8...♖g4!?

8...♙d7!

A very tricky move which heralds an idea essential to the survival of this variation. Note that 8...c6 9 dxc6 ♖xc6 10 ♙xc4 0-0 11 ♙d1 is just better for White, as Black has trouble finding a place for his queen.

9 ♚xa5 a6!!



A fantastic idea. The queen is trapped, although that's certainly not the end of

Game 7
Illescas-Sadler
Linares Zonal 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♖c6 4 ♙e3 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 e5 6 d5 ♖a5!?

see following diagram

7 ♖f3

Here 7 ♚a4+?! c6 8 b4? (8 dxc6 ♖xc6 9 ♙xc4 ♙b4 10 ♖f3 0-0 11 0-0 ♙xc3 12 bxc3 ♖xe4 13 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 14 ♚xe4 ♙f5 was equal in Vyzmanavin-Sadler, Paris rapidplay 1994) would be unsuccessful

the story.

10 ♖b1??

The obvious threat was 10...b6, but there were two better attempts at queen retrieval than this:

a) At first 10 ♖a4! (preparing 12 ♖xb6 if necessary) looks quite good because after 10...♗xe4 11 ♕xc4 b5 12 ♕d3 ♖f6 (12...♜e7 is met by 13 0-0, as the c7-pawn provides another escape route for the queen), White can save his knight and prevent 13...e4 with 13 ♖c3. However, Black should insert 10...♜e7! Then 11 a3 ♖xe4 12 ♕xc4 b5 13 ♕d3 ♖f6 14 ♖c3 e4 15 ♖xb5 (perhaps 15 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 15 0-0 0-0 16 ♜fe1 would be more shrewd, but Black is fine) 15...exf3 16 ♖xc7+ ♕xc7 17 ♜xc7 fxg2 18 ♜g1 0-0 would be very double edged, whilst 11 0-0 ♕b4 12 ♜xc7 ♕xa4 13 ♜xc7+ ♖xe7 is simply better for Black.

b) 10 b4! has been recommended as the refutation of Black's play. As you will see though, I'm not so sure. 10...cxb3? 11 axb3 b6 12 ♜a2 ♕b4 13 ♕d2 ♕xc3 14 ♕xc3 ♖xe4 15 ♕xe5 is winning for White, and so Black should investigate 10...b6! Then after 11 ♜a3, he should continue his queen hunt with 11...a5. In my opinion both 12 ♜b2 axb4 13 ♖d1 b5 and 12 ♜c1 axb4 13 ♖e2 ♖xe4 14 ♜xc4 f5 15 ♖g3 ♖f6 16 ♕g5 h6 17 ♕xf6 ♜xf6 leave Black in the more comfortable position despite only having two pawns for the piece.

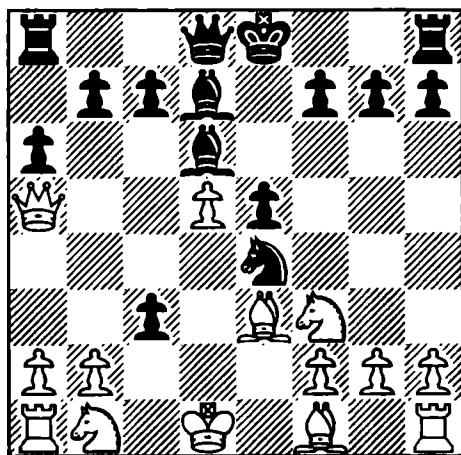
10...♖xe4 11 ♖d1

11 b4 would have been a better practical decision, but it compares unfavourably to the notes to 10 b4.

11...c3 0-1

An amazing position to resign in especially as computer programs still suggest that White is a little better! Of course, that's rubbish though no doubt Illescas was still pretty shell-shocked and besides 12 b4 b6 13 ♜a3 a5 14 ♕d3 axb4 15 ♜c1

♖c5 (or 15...♕a4+) is pretty grim.



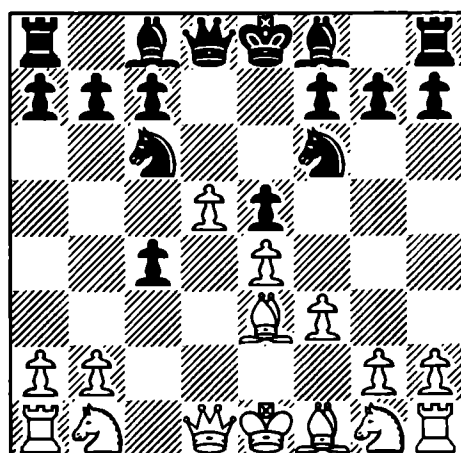
Game 8

Christiansen-Benjamin

USA Ch., Chandler 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♖c6 4 ♕e3 ♖f6
5 f3 e5 6 d5

Other than preventing ...♖g4 ideas, the advantage of 5 f3 over 5 ♖c3 is that 6...♖a5? is now unplayable because of 7 ♜a4+ c6 8 ♕d2.



6...♖e7

6...♖d4 is seen in the next game.

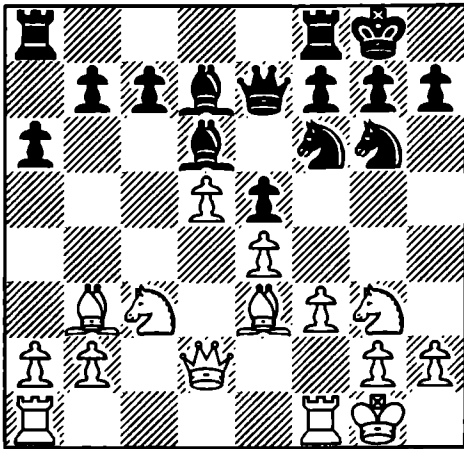
7 ♕xc4 a6

Played instead of 7...♖g6 and thus sidestepping 8 ♕b5+ ♖d7 (it's quite common for the knight to blockade such a check because Black naturally wants to preserve his good bishop) 9 ♖e2 a6 10 ♕d3 ♕d6 11

♖d2 ♗h4+ 12 g3 ♗e7 13 ♘bc3 ♘f6 14 h4!
h6 15 0-0-0 ♙d7 16 ♖b1 ♙c5 17 ♜c1 ♙xe3
18 ♗xe3, which is better for White be-
cause of his space advantage and pressure
along the c-file. It is somewhat ironic how
often Black misses his 'bad' dark-squared
bishop, which solves a lot of problems by
sitting on d6.

8 ♘e2 ♘g6 9 0-0 ♙d6 10 ♗d2 ♗e7 11
♙b3 ♙d7 12 ♘bc3 0-0 13 ♘g3

This assessment of this type of position
is critical to the whole 3...♘c6 variation.
The prevailing view is that White has the
slightly better chances, although Black
could hardly be more solid. I suppose that
Black has the only real weakness (the c7-
pawn), with Black's bad bishop guarding
it and White's bad bishop trying to ensure
that it doesn't advance and get swapped
off.



13...♗fd8

I must confess, though, to being rather
baffled by Black's play in this game and
particularly with his unnatural reluctance
to hop his knight into the tempting f4-
square. If the knight were then captured
by White's bishop, Black would have the
e5-square at his disposal and could perhaps
initiate some action against the enemy
king. White has an obvious plan of attack-
ing the c7-pawn and it certainly seems to
me that any kingside play by Black here
comes too little too late.

14 ♖h1 ♙c5

In the middlegame, a plan of trading
'bad' for 'good' bishops is often to be rec-
ommended. Having seen several games of
this kind, though, I would have to ques-
tion the validity of such a policy here, at
least while all the rooks remain.

15 ♜fe1 ♙xe3 16 ♗xe3 ♘e8

The d6-square certainly looks ripe for
occupation by a black knight and indeed it
would perform some useful functions. As
always the problem for Black would be
how to avoid losing his c-pawn.

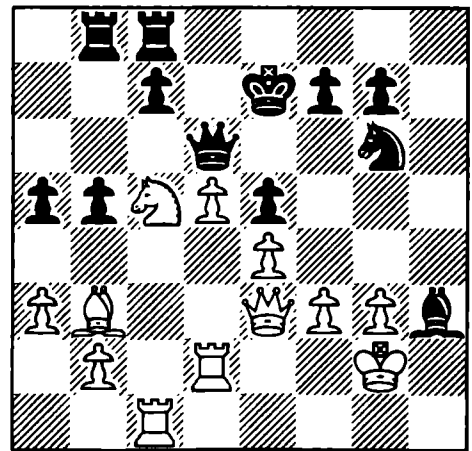
17 ♘f5 ♗f8

17...♙xf5? loses the e-pawn as well as
donating the e4-square to the other white
knight, but 17...♗f6 18 ♜ac1 ♘f4 looks
more to the point.

18 ♜ac1 ♘d6 19 ♘xd6 ♗xd6 20 ♜ed1
♜dc8 21 ♜d2 b5?!

This prevents 22 ♘a4, but White easily
finds another way to get his knight to the
promising c5-square.

22 ♘d1 a5 23 ♘f2 h5 24 ♘d3 ♜ab8 25
a3 h4 26 g3 hxg3 27 hxg3 ♖f8 28 ♖g2
♖e7 29 ♘c5 ♙h3+



Presumably now after 30 ♖xh3?, Black
would have to go 30...♘f4+! and indeed
that looks very strong. However, that all
seems irrelevant as White can satisfactorily
ignore this sacrifice and continue with his
queenside play.

30 ♖f2 ♗f6 31 ♘d3

Safe and simple. White vacates his knight from the c-file in anticipation of wreaking havoc with his rooks. The immediate 31 ♖dc2 also looked good, while the dinky 31 ♘b7 (with 31...♙xc7 32 ♙c6 in mind) would also have been a nice move to play.

31...♜b6 32 ♙dc2 ♙d7 33 ♙xc7!

No doubt not the bolt out of the blue that a casual observer might imagine. The pressure on the c7-pawn was always likely to become unbearable.

33...♜xe3+ 34 ♘xe3 ♘d6 35 ♙xc8 ♙xc8 36 ♙h1

The presence of fixed pawns on the same colour as his bishop render this end-game not exactly straightforward for White. Nevertheless, Larry Christiansen now shows that he is more than up to the task.

36...♙h8 37 ♙xh8 ♘xh8 38 f4 f6 39 ♙d1 ♘g6 40 b4 axb4 41 axb4 ♘f8 42 ♙e2 ♙e8 43 ♘f2 ♘e7 44 fxe5 fxe5 45 ♘d1 1-0

Game 9

Thorsteins-Greenfeld

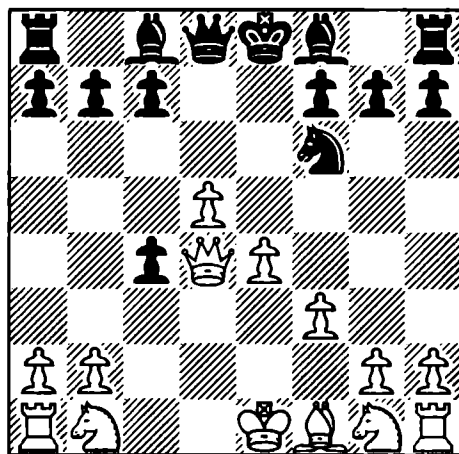
Reykjavik 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘c6 4 ♙e3 ♘f6 5 f3 e5 6 d5 ♘d4!?

Certainly bold and in many respects a very logical response. Black is in effect chastising White for having eschewed a natural developing move (5 ♘c3), whilst simultaneously creating the odd dark-squared hole. Black challenges his opponent to part with his good bishop, albeit at the cost of a pawn.

7 ♙xd4 exd4 8 ♜xd4

The problem for Black here is that White might just be able to paper over the cracks in the long run by switching the 'troublemaker' pawns (particularly the f- and e-pawns) to dark squares and thus achieve world domination with his centre.



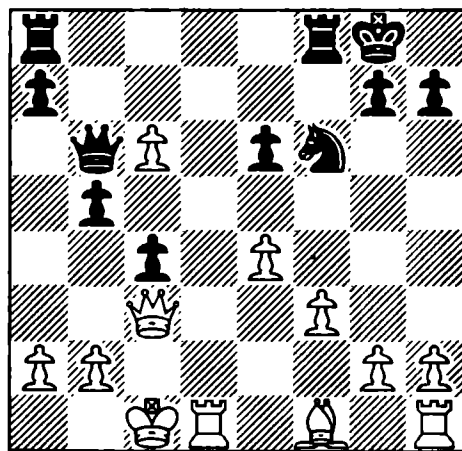
8...♙b4+ 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 0-0-0

Making the safety of his king a priority (a strange statement when you see the outcome of this encounter!). Alternatively 10 ♙xc4 was playable, but obviously 10 f4?? would be far too premature (10...♘xe4!).

10...♙xc3 11 ♜xc3 b5

This move explains why Black was so eager to part with his bishop. One feels that White's superior pawn structure should definitely give him the upper hand here. However, Black's attacking chances, spearheaded by a tricky queenside pawn majority, are clearly not to be underestimated.

12 ♘e2 c6 13 dxc6 ♜b6 14 ♘d4 ♙e6 15 ♘xe6 fxe6



16 ♜d4?

Both 16 ♜e5 and 16 ♙d6 look more

natural, but with the bishop still on f1 (i.e. with the rooks unconnected), 16...♖ad8 looks like an interesting response in both cases.

16...♗a5!?

Remaining on the offensive. Nevertheless 16...♗xc6 17 ♗d6 ♗b6! didn't look too bad either.

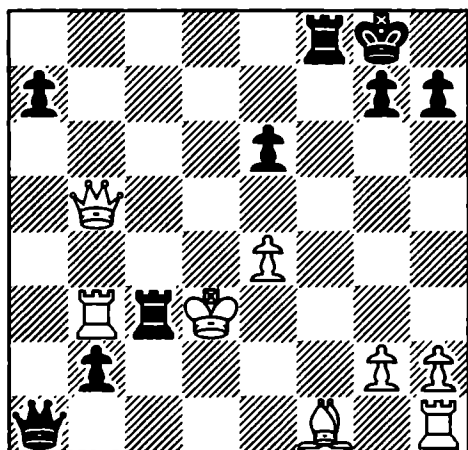
17 ♗c5

It looks particularly perilous to drop the a-pawn, but 17 ♖b1?? would fail to 17...♖ad8.

17...♗xa2 18 ♗xb5 c3!

All of a sudden Black has an overwhelming attack. Now 19 bxc3 loses to 19...♖ab8, while 19 ♗b4 runs into 19...♗xe4! 20 fxe4 ♖f2.

19 c7 ♖ac8 20 ♖d3 ♗xe4! 21 fxe4 ♗a1+ 22 ♖c2 cxb2 23 ♖b3 ♖xc7+ 24 ♖d3 ♖c3+ 0-1

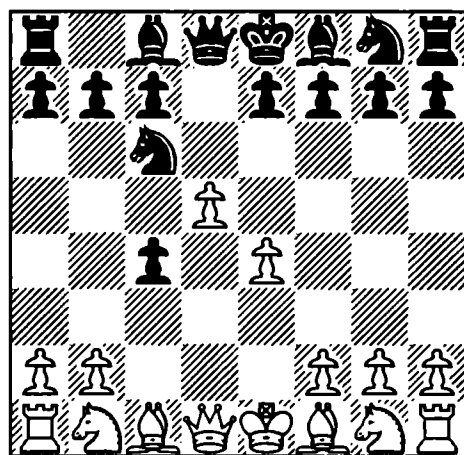


24...♗c1, 24...♗d1 and 24...♗e1 were all pretty good, so this was certainly not the only finish. Nevertheless, it is quite neat!

Game 10
Romanishin-Sadler
Altensteig 1992

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♗c6 4 d5

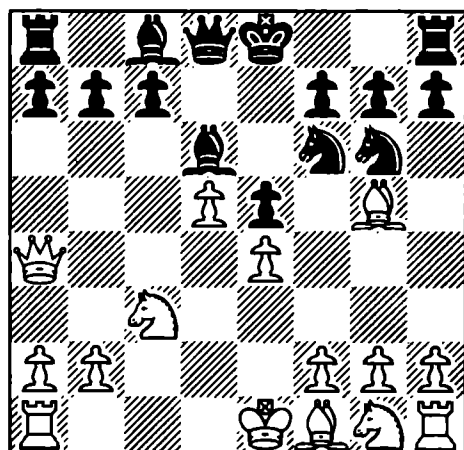
The most tempting of White's fourth move alternatives, but nevertheless probably the worst.



4...♗e5 5 ♗c3

Fairly non-committal. 5 f4 is best met by 5...♗d3+ 6 ♖xd3 cxd3 7 ♗xd3. Then either ...e7-e6 or ...c7-c6 would be on the agenda, with the ultimate aim of opening things up for the bishop pair.

5...♗f6 6 ♗d4 ♗g6 7 ♗xc4 e5 8 ♖g5 ♖d6 9 ♗a4+



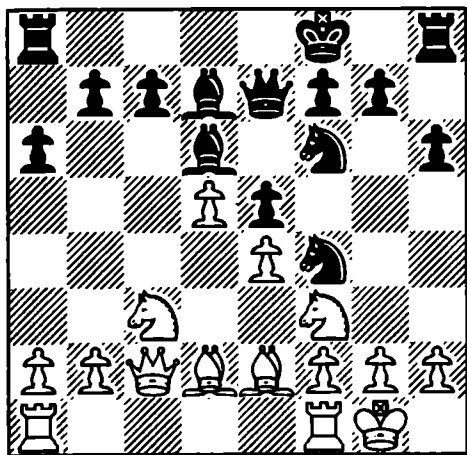
9...♖f8!

Guaranteeing that the light-squared bishops will remain on the board, as would not be the case after 9...♖d7 10 ♖b5. The black king isn't in danger and it's not impossible to envisage situations whereby the rook could be useful along the h-file.

10 ♗f3 h6 11 ♖d2 a6

Facilitating 12...♖d7 and terminating any ♗b5 ideas that White may have harboured.

12 ♖e2 ♖d7 13 ♜c2 ♜e7 14 0-0 ♘f4



15 ♖xf4

Not a concession that White would have relished unless he was confident of getting in e4-e5.

15...exf4 16 ♝ac1 ♘g4

This move, angling for the e5-square, is very logical, and I'm sure that at this stage Black would have been satisfied with the way that things were panning out.

17 ♘b1 c5 18 ♘bd2 b5

It's all about controlling squares and at the moment White doesn't seem to have any. Nonetheless, there could easily be trouble in paradise if White was to get in e4-e5 and/or win the c5-pawn.

19 a4 g6

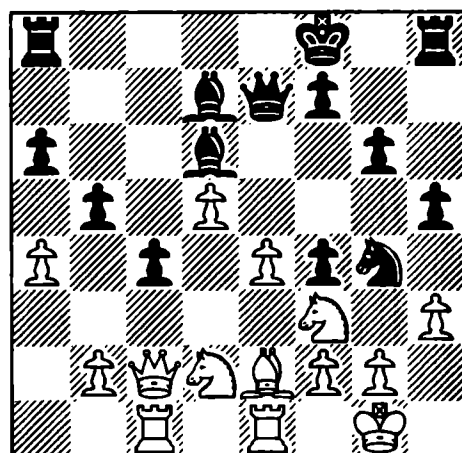
19...b4?, conceding the c4-square to an enemy knight, is definitely something

Black wants to avoid.

20 h3 h5!?

The king's rook would spring to life after 21 hxg4?! hxg4 22 ♘e1? ♜h4 23 f3 g3. White had probably been hoping for 20...♘e5 21 ♘xe5 ♜xe5 22 ♘f3 ♜g7 23 axb5 axb5 24 e5!

21 ♝fe1 c4



A fascinating position. The b3- and d3-squares are now under Black's control with his queenside pawns looking menacing. Although Black has vacated the c5-square for his bishop, he has also given White the additional possibility of playing ♘d4.

22 e5

This thematic push leads to a disappointing (for the spectators) early bath.

22...♘xe5 23 ♘xe5 ♜xe5 24 ♖xc4 ½-½

Summary

Alas from a White point of view the splendid 7...♞f6! novelty of Game 2 keeps the 3...♘c6 variation firmly on the map.

Despite all materialistic computer help, Sadler's fantastic piece sacrifice in Game 7 remains sound and so after 4 ♙e3 ♘f6, perhaps White should turn to 5 f3. Although it was a Black win, I believe that Game 9 is critical and should definitely be put under the microscope.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘c6

4 ♘f3

4 ♙e3

4...e5 - Game 5

4...♘f6

5 ♘c3 (D)

5...♘g4 - Game 6

5...e5 - Game 7

5 f3 e5 6 d5 (D)

6...♘e7 - Game 8

6...♘d4 - Game 9

4 d5 - Game 10

4...♙g4 5 ♙xc4

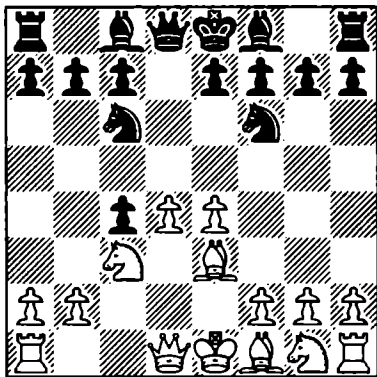
5 d5 - Game 4

5...e6 (D) 6 ♙b5

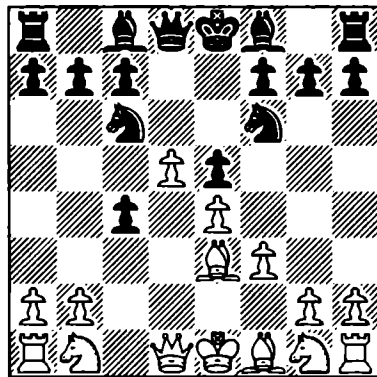
6 d5 - Game 2

6 ♙e3 - Game 3

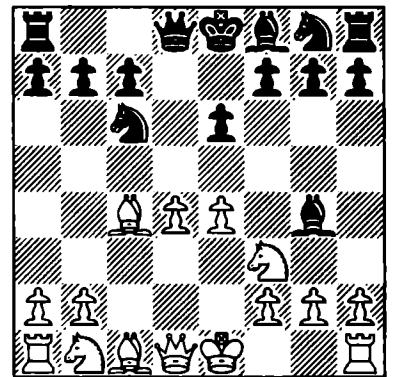
6...♙b4+ - Game 1



5 ♘c3



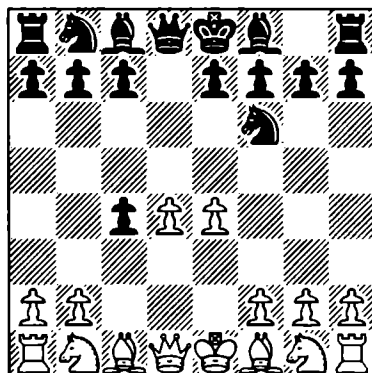
6 d5



5...e6

CHAPTER TWO

3 e4 ♘f6



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘f6

In this chapter the other knight comes out in response to the Central variation. In a similar manner to the Alekhine Defence (1 e4 ♘f6 2 e5 ♘d5) or in particular the 2 c3 Sicilian (1 e4 c5 2 c3 ♘f6 3 e5 ♘d5), Black entices the white e-pawn to e5 in return for a handy square for his king's knight. White does retain a space advantage, but generally Black doesn't have a problem developing his pieces. Clearly many top players consider this a satisfactory option for Black and notable scalps include Anatoly Karpov at the hands of Nigel Short.

Game 11 Ward-Grinfeld Hastings Challengers 1994

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘f6

With this move Black attacks White's e-pawn rather than the d-pawn. The reply is virtually forced as 4 ♘c3(!) is met well by 4...e5! As a trade of queens (via 5 dxe5) wouldn't benefit White, he would be stuck with having to play 5 d5. However, this concedes the c5-square too soon (compared to previous games, Black could therefore get his bishop on the a7-g1 di-

agonal first) and besides 5...b5!? immediately gives White something to think about.

4 e5

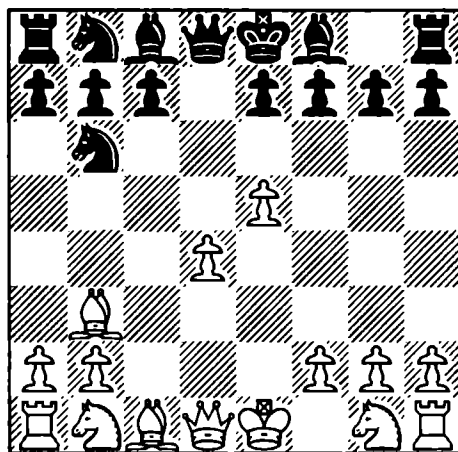
This pawn can prove to be quite restricting, but on the other hand, Black is granted a very useful square for his knight.

4...♘d5 5 ♙xc4 ♘b6

The usual move. 5...♘c6 is seen in Game 16.

6 ♙b3

6 ♙d3 is also popular – see Games 14 and 15.



6...♘c6

Instead 6...c5 7 dxc5 ♛xd1+ 8 ♚xd1 ♘b6 7 9 e6 fxe6 10 ♙xe6 ♘a6 proved to be a surprisingly successful weapon for Nigel

Short in his 1992 World Championship match with Karpov. However, it has since been established that White can improve on the certainly not stupid looking 11 c6 with 11 ♙e3 ♜dxc5 12 ♙xc8 ♞xc8 13 ♜c3 ♜d3 14 ♚c2 . Similarly, 10... ♜c6 11 ♙e3 ♜de5 12 ♙xc8 ♞xc8 13 ♜d2 , as in Ward-B.Lalic, Maidstone 1994, also leaves Black struggling for equality.

7 ♜f3

Because of the forthcoming pin, this obvious-looking move is surprisingly rare. Personally I don't think that it has been given a fair crack of the whip. The standard 7 ♜e2 is the subject of the next two main games.

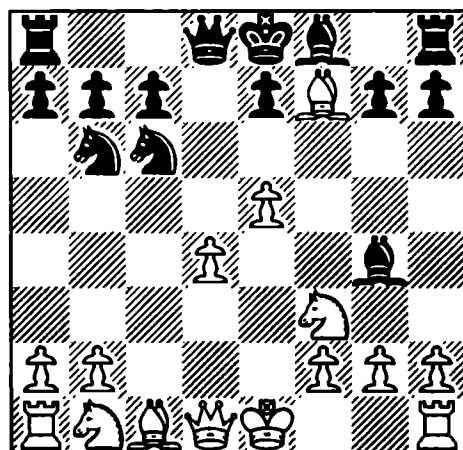
7... ♙g4

The clear drawback of this move, and hence I suppose you could say the whole 3... ♜f6 variation from Black's point of view, is that now White can basically force a draw with 8 ♜g5 ♙xd1 (I guess 8... $\text{♞xd4}?$? 9 ♙xf7+ ♚d8 is just about playable, though not much fun!) 9 ♙xf7+ ♚d7 10 ♙e6+ ♚e8 11 ♙f7+ etc. That might be okay in cushy little all-play-all grandmaster tournaments, but in real life we know that sometimes even Black has to be able to play for the win! Needless to say there are bucket loads of such (presumably pre-arranged) quick draws on various databases. So what of 7... ♙f5 I hear you ask? Well, Black can reach positions not dissimilar to the next few games after 8 ♜c3 e6 8 a3 ♞d7 etc., but of more concern to me would be the sharp 8 d5!? ♜a5 9 ♜c3 ♜xb3 10 ♞xb3 ♙d3 11 e6 f6 12 ♙e3 ♙c4 13 ♞b4 a5 14 ♞c5 ♞d6 15 ♞xd6 exd6 16 ♙xb6 cxb6, as played in Kouatly-Semkov, France-Bulgaria 1985. Clearly Black's two bishops don't provide adequate compensation for his poor pawn structure.

8 $\text{♙xf7+}!$?

Certainly attractive at a glance, but far from as devastating as one might think

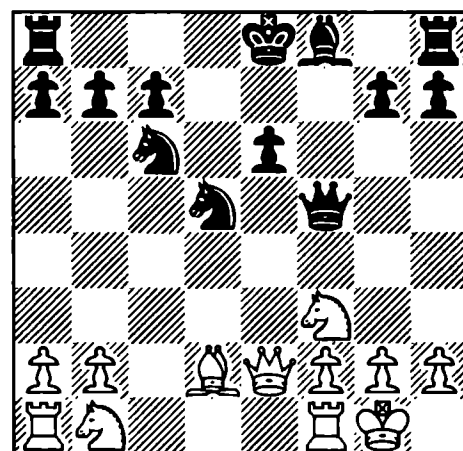
because White must sacrifice a couple of pawns and retract into a bit of a huddle in order to avoid a swap of queens.



8... ♚xf7 9 ♜g5+ ♚e8 10 ♞xg4 ♞xd4 11 ♞e2

11 $\text{♞xd4}?$, putting White on the defensive, obviously wouldn't be in the spirit of things.

11... ♞xe5 12 ♙e3 ♜d5 13 ♜f3 ♞f5 14 0-0 e6 15 ♙d2



Other than simply preserving the bishop, this move seems to be a worthwhile preparation for a future ♜c3 (i.e. to keep the pawn structure intact).

15... ♙d6

White can hope for the fantasy variation: 15... ♙e7 (obviously not a bad move in itself) 16 ♜c3 ♞d8 17 ♞fe1 ♜xc3 18 ♙xc3 ♚f7 19 ♞c4 ♙f6 20 ♞e3 $\text{♙xc3}?$ 21 $\text{♜g5+}!!$ For example, 21... ♚g6 (21... $\text{♞xg5}!$

22 ♖xe6+ ♔f8 23 bxc3 ♘e7 24 ♖ae1 ♘f5
25 ♖e5 g6 26 f4 ♖h4 27 g3 ♘xg3 28 ♖g5!
22 ♖xc3 when the knight still can't be
taken and the black king is all over the
shop.

16 ♖e1

Whenever I've reached this position, passers-by have wondered what I'm playing at. White's main compensation for the pawn of course is the fact that Black can't castle. Amazingly in this encounter, my opponent attempted just that! When I pointed out her error, she corrected her move to the one that I had been expecting.

16...♔d7

16...♖f8 isn't silly. In fact in the Salona 1997 all-play-all tournament, I (generously?) agreed a draw here with the Croatian IM Zaja, as he was on for a GM norm. The onus is still on White to prove that he has enough, but 17 ♘c3 ♘xc3 18 ♙xc3 ♖f7 19 b4!? would at least have kept Black on his toes.

17 ♘c3 ♖ae8 18 ♘e4 ♖hf8 19 ♖ac1

This makes it difficult for the black king to just slink back into a queenside castled position, i.e. 19...♔c8? fails to 20 ♘xd6 cxd6 21 ♘d4 as well as the obvious exchange sacrifice 20 ♖xc6 bxc6 21 ♘d4.

19...h6 20 b4!?

Other than trying to tease Black into capturing this pawn (a dubious response given the lines that could be opened up against his king), White's idea is to boot the c6-knight away with b4-b5.

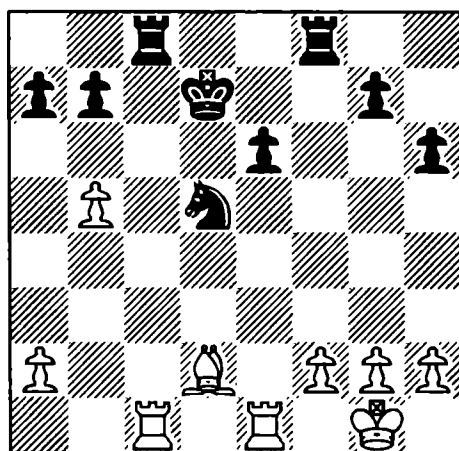
20...♖h5 21 ♘xd6 cxd6 22 b5 ♘e5

A little wimpy, but in returning the pawn at least Black insures against being checkmated. 22...♘d8!? was the 'man's' move - and it would have been the woman's too had she played it!

23 ♘xe5+ ♖xe5 24 ♖xe5 dxe5 25 ♖xe5 ♖c8 26 ♖ee1

Black's king is more centralised, but he has the worse pawn structure and in end-games with pawns on both sides such as

this, the bishop will always be better than the knight. I'm certainly not saying that White should definitely win this position, but I don't think I would be putting my head on the block by saying that he has the better chances.



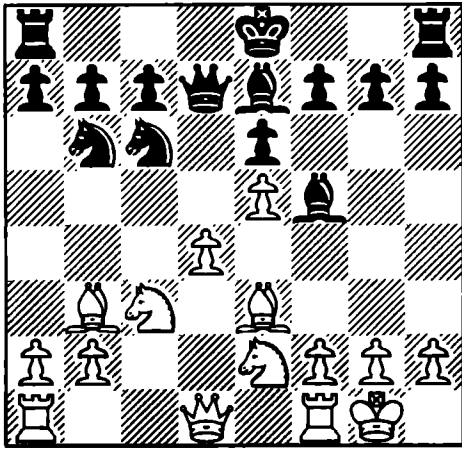
26...a6 27 bxa6 bxa6 28 ♔f1 ♖b8 29 ♖b1 ♖b5 30 a4 ♖bb8 31 ♔e2 ♖fc8 32 ♔d3 ♔d6 33 f4 ♖f8 34 g3 g6 35 ♖ec1 h5 36 ♙e1 ♔d7 37 ♔e4 ♘f6+ 38 ♔d4 ♘d5 39 ♙d2 ♖fe8 40 ♔e5 ♖f8 41 ♔e4 ♘f6+ 42 ♔d3 ♘d5 43 ♙e3 ♘b4+ 44 ♔e4 ♘d5 45 ♙d4?! a5 46 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 47 ♖c5 ♘e7 48 ♙c3 ♘c6 49 ♖g5 ♖b3 50 ♔d3 ♖a3 51 ♖xg6 ♘e7 52 ♖g7 ♔e8 53 ♔c2 ♖xa4 54 ♖h7 ♘d5 55 ♔b3 ♖e4 56 ♙xa5 ♘f6 57 ♖h6 ♔f7 58 ♙c3 ♘d5 59 ♙e5 ♖e3+ 60 ♔c4 ♖e4+ 61 ♔c5 ♖a4 62 ♔b5 ♖a2 63 ♖xh5 ♘e3 64 h3 ♘d5 65 ♖g5 ♖h2 66 h4 ♖h1 67 h5 ♘e7 68 ♔c5 ♘f5 69 g4 ♘e3 70 ♔d4 ♖h3 71 ♖g6 ♘c2+ 72 ♔c5 ♘e3 73 ♙d4 ♘c2 74 ♖f6+ ♔e7 75 ♖h6 ♖a3 76 ♖h7+ ♔f8 77 g5 ♖a5+ 78 ♔b6 ♖f5 79 ♖h8+ ♔e7 80 ♙f6+ ♔f7 81 ♙e5 1-0

Game 12

Gormally-Law

Four Nations League 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘d5 5 ♙xc4 ♘b6 6 ♙b3 ♘c6 7 ♘e2 ♙f5 8 ♙e3 e6 9 ♘bc3 ♙e7 10 0-0 ♖d7

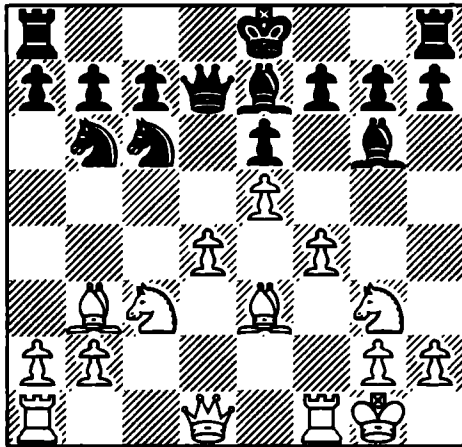


A standard sort of position for this variation has been reached.

11 Ng3! ?

This, combined with White's next move, demonstrates an alternative use for the knight.

11... Bg6 12 f4



12... Ba5 13 d5 Nxb3 14 Wxb3!

Contrary to the inference of previous theory, this looks better than 14 axb3 0-0 15 dxe6 Wxd1! 16 exf7+ Kxf7 17 Kaxd1 Kxb3 18 Kde1 Nd5 19 Nxd5 Kxd5 , when Black's two bishops give him the endgame edge.

14... Kd3

14... exd5? is a blunder because of 15 f5 , so it's difficult to criticise the text which extracts the bishop before a white rook makes it to d1.

15 Kfd1 Kc4 16 dxe6 Wxe6 17 Wc2 0-0

18 We4

Suddenly life doesn't look so rosy for Black, who is in danger of being rolled over by f4-f5 .

18... Wc6

Not a great move to play, but there was little else on offer. 18... Ka6 19 f5 Wc4 fails to 20 Kd4 , and so one (as is often the case when they're not one's own pawns!) might be tempted to suggest the more active 18... f6 . However, that's not a tremendous solution either as after 19 Wxb7 fxe5 , 20 f5 must be good for a comfortable plus even if the greedy 20 Wxc7 isn't.

19 b3

This turns out well, but anything involving wrecking Black's structure with Wxc6 would also have been good.

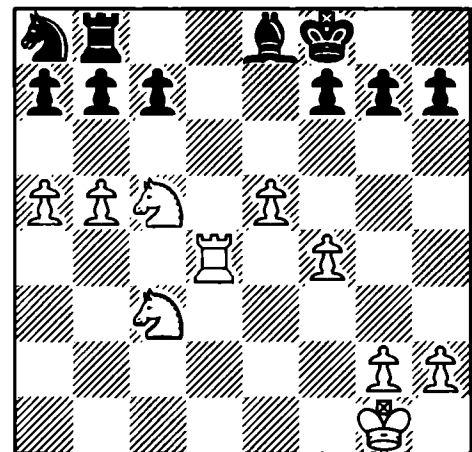
19... Kc5 20 Kxc5 Wxc5+ 21 Wd4 Wxd4+ 22 Kxd4 Ke6 23 Nge4

Black would have experienced the same problem of a white knight coming to c5 if he'd retreated his bishop to a6 instead.

23... Kfd8 24 Kad1 Kxd4 25 Kxd4 Kd7 26 Nc5 Kc6 27 b4

White dominates the d-file and is intent on making life a misery for Black's queen-side.

27... Kb8 28 a4 Kf8 29 b5 Ke8 30 a5 Na8



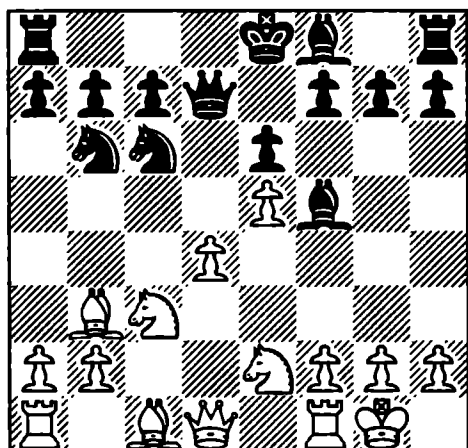
I've seen better squares for a knight(!), but here 30... Nc8 31 Nd7+ Kxd7 32 Kxd7 would have been even worse.

31 ♖d7+ ♗xd7 32 ♜xd7 a6 33 bxa6
bxa6 34 ♖e4 ♜e8 35 ♖c5 ♜e7 36 ♜d3
♗e8 1-0

And a resignation (or loss on time) was obviously forthcoming before 37 ♜b3 could be played. An excellent, theoretically important game by Mr Gormally, but spare a thought for his opponent who, theory aside, hardly set a foot wrong.

Game 13
Van Wely-Anand
Wijk aan Zee 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘f6 4 e5 ♖d5 5
♗xc4 ♖c6 6 ♖e2 ♖b6 7 ♗b3 ♗f5 8
♖bc3 e6 9 0-0 ♗d7!?



In view of the previous game, I would suggest that Black should delay ...♗e7 in favour of developing his queenside. The plan of pressurising White's d4-pawn with an early ...♜d8, or long castles as in this game, should at least give White something to think about.

10 a3

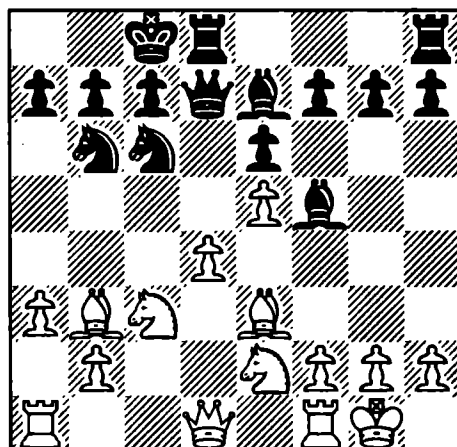
A typical idea in this variation which allows a non-swapping (the player with the space advantage should try to preserve the bits on the board) retreat in the event of ...♖a5, whilst preventing a ...♖b4-d5 manoeuvre.

10...♗e7

Black has time for this now, since

White won't be able to play ♖g3 without losing his d-pawn.

11 ♗e3 0-0-0!?



12 ♗c1

This move, vacating the queen from the d-file, is an interesting idea. More usual though is 12 ♜ac1, when Black should choose between a plan of 12...♖a5 (intending ...♖ac4), 12...f6! or even a combination of the two as in the main game.

12...♗b8 13 ♜d1 f6 14 ♖g3 ♗g6 15
♖ge4

Black is chipping away at White's centre, but as we saw in the last game, one shouldn't underestimate the damage that can be done by a knight on c5 (and that's just where this one is headed).

15...♖a5 16 ♗a2 ♖ac4 17 exf6 gxf6 18
♖c5 ♗c6 19 b4 ♜hg8

The pot is beginning to boil with both sides having potentially very strong attacks.

20 b5 ♗d6 21 a4 ♗h5 22 ♜e1

see following diagram

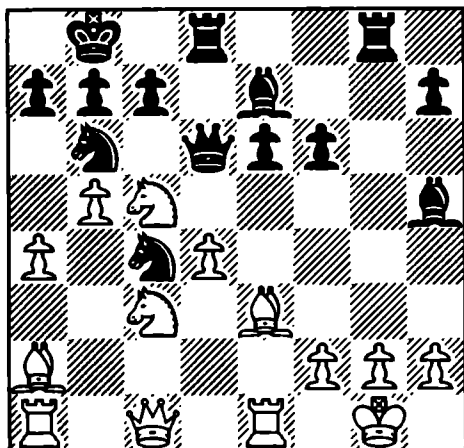
22...♜xg2+

Evidently Anand could find nothing conclusive after 22...♗f3 23 g3, so he decides to bail out before things turn sour.

23 ♗xg2 ♜g8+ 24 ♗h3 ½-½

Forced. 24 ♗h1?? ♗f3 is mate and 24 ♗f1?? ♗xh2 is very close to it. The players

shook hands here because we would have seen a repetition after 24...♙g4+ 25 ♔g2 ♙h5+ 26 ♖h3 etc.

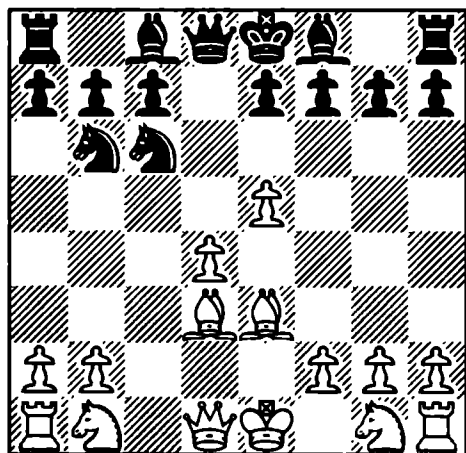


Game 14
Hübner-Sulskis
Euro. Team Ch., Pula 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘d5 5 ♙xc4 ♘b6 6 ♙d3!?

Preferring an alternative aggressive diagonal. Note that the white queen still effectively protects the d-pawn, i.e. 6...♚xd4?? 7 ♙b5+.

6...♘c6 7 ♙e3!



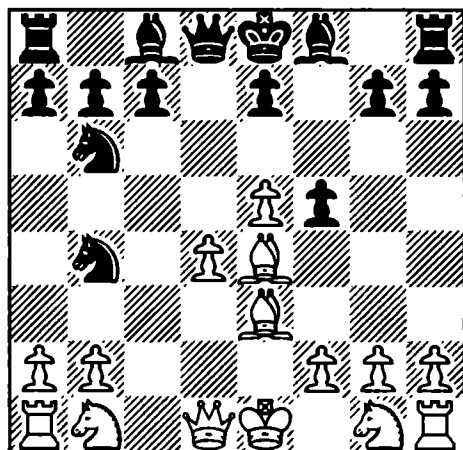
This policy of 'bishops before knights' has been causing Black real headaches in this variation. However, White isn't just doing it to be awkward. There is method in his madness and it all revolves around

depriving the black light-squared bishop of a suitable home. The bishop on d3 prevents it from going to f5, while White has delayed developing his g1-knight to prevent 7...♙g4. Meanwhile, the text move fulfils the necessary task of adding defence to the d4-pawn. 7 ♘e2 is less effective, as we see in the next game.

7...♘b4

The most common response. Black puts off the problem of his own bishop in favour of hassling the enemy ones. If this game (and plenty of other recent encounters) is anything to go by, the conclusion must be that this move is currently not hitting the mark. Another reply is 7...♙e6 and I wonder then after 8 ♘c3, whether Black should investigate 8...♘b4 9 ♙e4 ♘d4d5 10 ♘f3 ♘xc3!? 11 bxc3 ♙d5. White would have a potentially strong centre, but for the time being at least, Black would have a reasonable grip on the light squares.

8 ♙e4 f5



Initially this move was successful, but nowadays it is struggling to stay on the map.

9 exf6 exf6 10 ♘c3

Although 10 a3 f5 11 axb4 ♙xb4+ 12 ♘c3 fxe4 13 ♚h5+ ♖f8 14 ♘ge2 has also been favouring White, it is not quite as convincing. Note that White can't enter into the immediate 10 ♚h5+? g6 11 ♙xg6+

hxg6 12 ♖xh8 because of 12...♗c2+. This though explains Black's next move (moving the f8-bishop would allow the h8-rook to be captured with check).

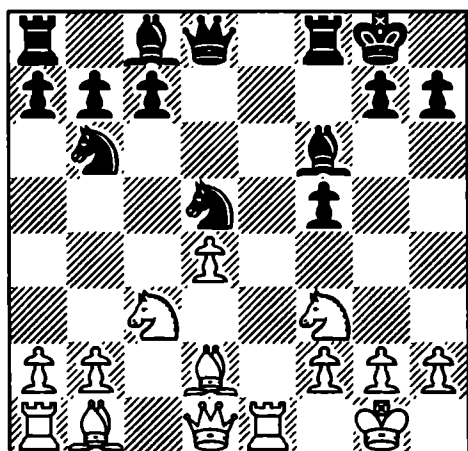
10...f5

As we have previously stated, other than forcing this bishop to make a decision, Black also had to do something about the problems surrounding g6 and h7. In fact he would far prefer this pawn to be back on f7, where it wouldn't be obstructing his bishop nor be the guilty party which allows White an outpost on e5.

11 ♖b1 ♘d5 12 ♗f3 ♖b4 13 ♗d2 ♗e7

The immediate 13...0-0 14 ♗xd5 ♗xd2+ 15 ♖xd2 ♗xd5 16 0-0 is also quite nice for White. Black has blockaded White's isolated d-pawn, but the white knight will soon find its way to e5. Meanwhile freeing his bishop with ...f5-f4 could easily mean trouble around h7.

14 0-0 0-0 15 ♖e1 ♗f6



16 a3

Stopping any ...♗b4 ideas, but more importantly preparing a transfer of the bishop to another diagonal.

16...♗h8 17 ♗a2 f4 18 ♗e5 f3 19 ♗xd5

With his bishop unable to provide any support to his own kingside, White wisely avoids the complications of 19 ♗xf3?! ♗g4.

19...♗xd5 20 ♗f7+!?

Utilising a back-rank mate trick to ultimately simplify to a very promising endgame.

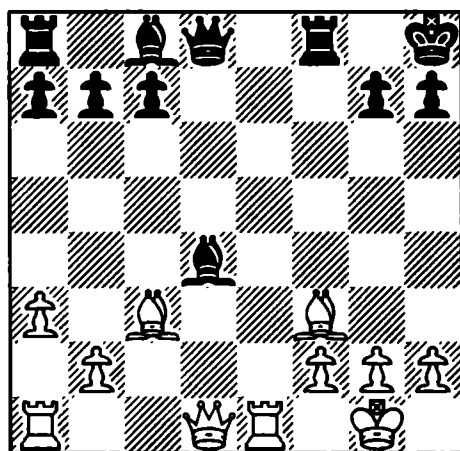
20...♖xf7 21 ♗xd5 ♖f8

Or 21...♗d7 22 ♗xf3 ♖xd4 23 ♖e2 carrying threats of ♖e8+ and ♗c3.

22 ♗xf3 ♗xd4

Despite the level material situation and vague pressure on f2, Black is a long way from equalising. White's light-squared bishop hinders Black's queenside and both his seventh and eighth ranks are vulnerable.

23 ♗c3!



23...♗xc3 24 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 25 bxc3 ♖b8 26 ♖e7 ♗d7 27 h4!?

To avoid being back-rank mated himself, whilst buying space on the kingside. Obviously both 27 ♖ad1 and 27 ♖ae1 were okay too.

27...h6 28 h5 c5 29 g4 a5 30 ♖d1 ♗c6

An ugly move, but forced if Black doesn't want to lose a pawn.

31 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 32 ♗xc6 bxc6 33 ♖e4!

It's not entirely clear that this endgame is winning (rook and pawn situations are notoriously drawish). However, with his king tied to the vulnerable kingside pawns, it is extremely unpleasant for Black who is unable to come up with a satisfactory defence (if indeed one exists).

33...♖d2 34 ♗g2 ♖a2 35 ♖a4 ♖c2 36 ♖c4 ♖a2 37 ♖a4 ♖c2 38 ♖c4 ♖a2 39 a4!

♔g8 40 ♕f3 ♕f7 41 ♖e3 ♖e6 42 ♜xc5
 ♜xa4 43 ♜xc6+ ♕f7 44 f3 ♜a1 45 ♜a6
 a4 46 ♕d4 a3 47 ♕c4 ♜f1 48 ♜xa3 ♜xf3
 49 ♜a7+ ♕f8 50 ♜d7 ♜g3 51 ♜d4 ♕e7
 52 ♕b4 ♕e6 53 c4 ♕e5 54 ♕c5 ♜g1 55
 ♜d5+ ♕f4 56 ♕d6! ♕xg4 57 c5 g5 58 c6
 ♜a1 59 c7 ♜a6+ 60 ♕c5 1-0

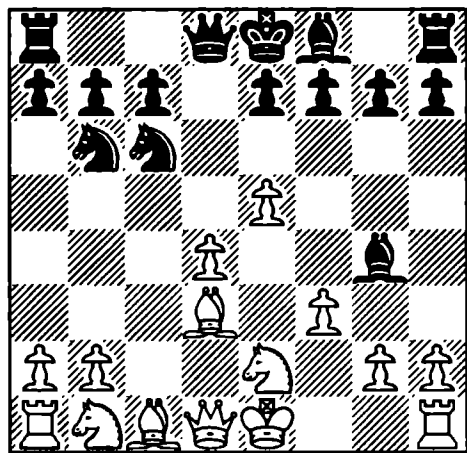
If 60...♜a8 then 61 ♜d8. Even if Black does get to give his rook up for the c-pawn and obtain two connected passed pawns of his own, he is still lost as the white king isn't too far away.

Game 15
Dreev-Salov
President's Cup, Elista 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘d5 5
 ♙xc4 ♘b6 6 ♙d3 ♘c6 7 ♘e2 ♙g4!

Black takes advantage of the fact that he can go this square and so opts to provoke a weakness before returning to the e6-square.

8 f3



8...♙e6

And not 8...♙h5? because of the powerful pawn sacrifice 9 e6!

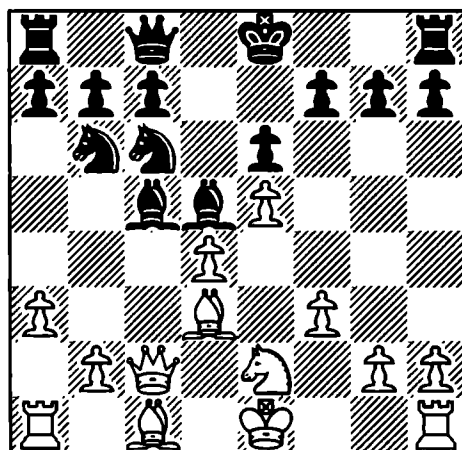
9 ♘bc3 ♜d7 10 ♘e4 ♙d5 11 ♘c5 ♜c8
 12 a3

As the early queenside expansion doesn't prove to be too successful, perhaps 12 ♙e3 e6 13 ♜c1 is a more prudent course of action.

12...e6 13 ♜c2

Protecting the knight other than by 13 b4? a5! 14 b5 ♘xd4! or 14...♘xe5!

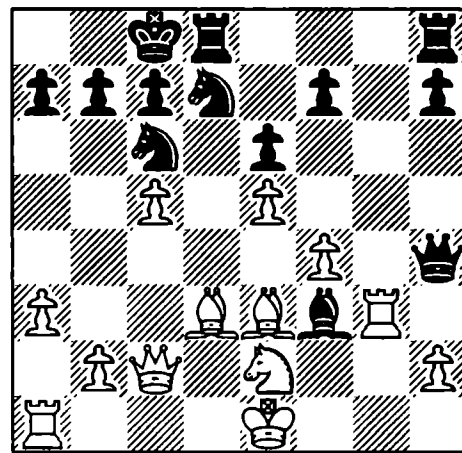
13...♙xc5



14 dxc5

More ambitious than 14 ♜xc5, as Black's knight is forced to find a new home. Still White's pawns now come under direct attack and the upcoming loss of the g-pawn is a real blow.

14...♘d7 15 f4 ♙xc2 16 ♜g1 ♙f3 17
 ♜xg7 ♜d8 18 ♙e3 ♜h4+ 19 ♜g3 0-0-0

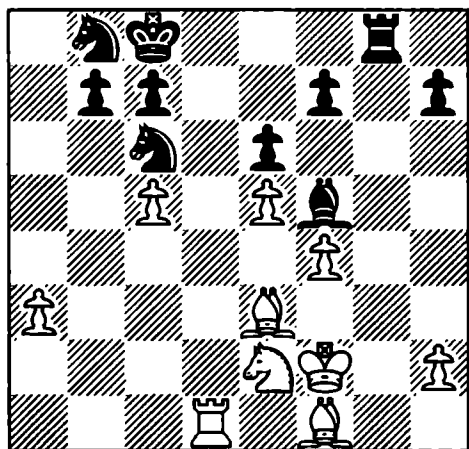


20 ♘c3

Although White has the two bishops, presently it's Black's bishop that is performing the most useful function (namely preventing White from castling long). It's clear why Black would want to unclog the d-file, but instead of Black's next move, 20...♜hg8!? looks quite promising as 21

♙xh7?! ♜xg3 22 hxg3 drops the rook to 22...♙h1+.

20...♘db8 21 ♙f1 ♙g4 22 ♗f2 ♙f5 23 b4 a6 24 b5 axb5 25 ♘xb5 ♜hg8 26 ♜xg8 ♗xf2+ 27 ♚xf2 ♜xg8 28 ♞d1 ♙e4 29 ♘c3 ♙f5 30 ♘b5 ♙e4 31 ♘c3 ♙f5 32 ♘e2



The position has been fairly equal for a while, but it looks as though White feels obliged to play on for the win, rather than repeat moves.

32...♘e7 33 ♘g3 ♙g6 34 ♙g2 ♘bc6 35 ♙f3 ♘f5 36 ♙c1 ♘fd4 37 ♙g2 ♙c2 38 ♞d2 ♙g6 39 ♞d1 ♙c2 40 ♜g1 ♘b3 41 ♙e3 ♘cd4 42 ♘e4 ♞d8 43 ♙h1 ♘f5 44 ♘f6 h6 45 c6 bxc6 46 ♙xc6 ♘a5 47 ♙b5 c6 48 ♙a6+ ♚c7 49 ♞c1 ♘xe3 50 ♚xe3 ♙f5 51 ♙e2 ♘b3 52 ♞c4 c5 53 ♞c3 ♘d4 54 ♞xc5+ ♚b6 55 ♞c1 ♘xe2

Eschewing the automatic pawn reclaim with 55...♘c2+. However, now it is Black with the bishop for the knight and his rook activity together with the presence of White's wobbling rook's pawns suggests that Black is always going to have enough for the draw. The remaining moves bear this out.

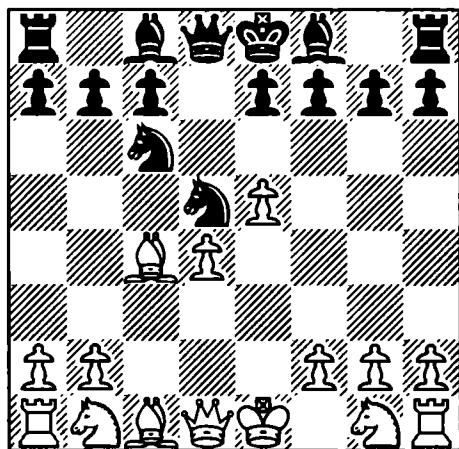
56 ♚xe2 ♞d3 57 ♘e8 ♞h3 58 ♘d6 ♞xh2+ 59 ♚f3 ♙g6 60 ♚g3 ♞a2 61 ♞c3 ♞a1 62 ♚g4 ♞g1+ 63 ♞g3 ♞f1 64 ♞h3 h5+ 65 ♚g5 ♚c5 66 a4 ♚b4 67 f5 ♙xf5 68 ♞xh5 ♙g6 69 ♞h4+ ♚c5 70 a5 ♞a1 71 ♚f6 ½-½

Game 16

Topalov-Sadler

Monaco (blindfold) 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘d5 5 ♙xc4 ♘c6!?

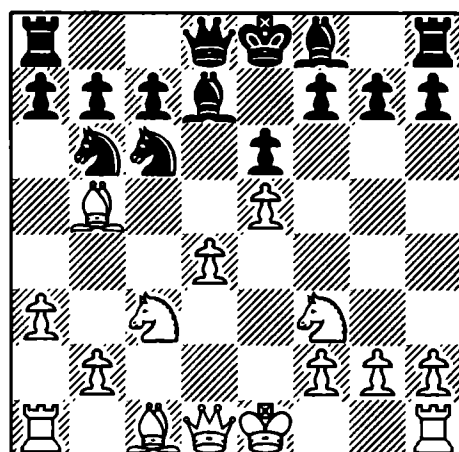


A sneaky continuation which is designed to cut out the shenanigans of Game 14. As 6 ♙e3 looks a bit odd now, Black is hoping that the g1-knight will show its hand.

6 ♘c3!?

White doesn't allow the transposition to other lines that 6 ♘f3 or 6 ♘e2 would have allowed (i.e. after 6...♘b6).

6...♘b6 7 ♙b5 ♙d7 8 ♘f3 e6 9 a3!?



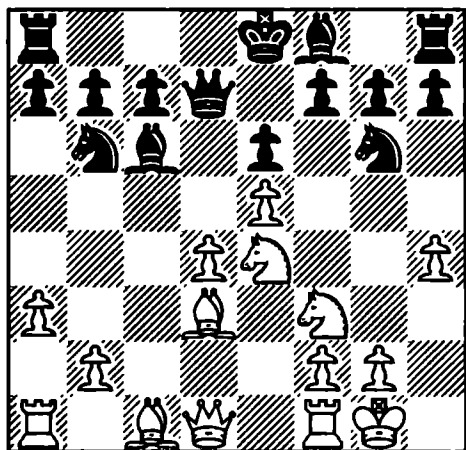
Equally crafty. After 9 0-0, best is 9...♘b4 with similar ideas to the game, but slightly more flexibility. With the inser-

tion of 9 a3!?, White prevents his opponent from stopping him retreating his bishop to d3!

9...♘e7 10 ♖d3 ♙c6 11 0-0 ♚d7

11...♙xf3?! 12 ♚xf3 ♚xd4? loses to 13 ♘b5, but the immediate 11...♘g6 should be taken into consideration.

12 ♘e4 ♘g6 13 h4!?



Attempting to embarrass the knight, which is otherwise well placed on g6.

13...0-0-0 14 g3 ♚d5

Now all that Black needs to do is to clear a couple of white knights out of the way!

15 h5 f5!? 16 exf6 gxf6?!

Whenever Matthew loses a game with his favourite opening, we should all sit up and take note. I was going to say that with hindsight, probably he would have preferred the safer, but equally dangerous (for White) 16...♚xh5! However, that seems like the wrong choice of words seeing as

he wasn't even sighted for the game!

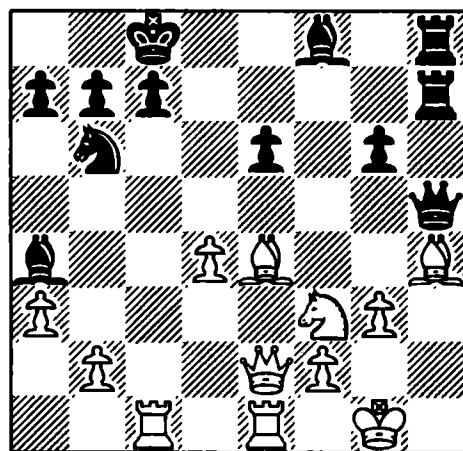
17 hxg6 hxg6 18 ♚e1 f5

No doubt White had it in mind to consolidate with ♙f1-g2, so Black decides to act quickly. There is nothing clearly better, but it would have hurt to have conceded the g5-square like this. White takes full advantage.

19 ♙g5 ♚d7 20 ♚c1 ♚dh7 21 ♙h4 ♙a4 22 ♚e2 fxe4

Black regains his piece, but as it stands the h-file is firmly blocked and it looks as though his e- and g-pawns should drop like flies.

23 ♙xe4 ♚h5



24 ♘g5! ♙e7

24...♚xe2 25 ♚xe2 ♙h6 26 ♘xh7 ♙xc1 27 ♙xg6 is a hopeless endgame, so Black desperately goes for broke.

25 ♘xh7 ♚xh7 26 ♙xe7 ♚h2+ 27 ♚f1 ♙b5 28 ♚xb5 1-0

Well, White might not have seen it!

Summary

There are plenty of subtle move orders involved in the 3...♘f6 variation, but once they are negotiated, it seems to me that White generally gets the upper hand. Although it's not clear quite how much compensation White gets for the pawn in Game 11, there would appear to be other good continuations for the first player.

I would have said that Anand's handling of Game 13 is vital to the survival of this line, but in fact Black still needs to find a solution to the promising 6 ♙d3 and 7 ♙e3 approach of Game 14. Possibly acknowledging this problem, Sadler turned to 5...♘c6 in Game 16, but he still had trouble equalising.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘d5 5 ♙xc4

5...♘b6 (D)

5...♘c6 – Game 16

6 ♙b3

6 ♙d3 ♘c6 (D)

7 ♙e3 – Game 14

7 ♘e2 – Game 15

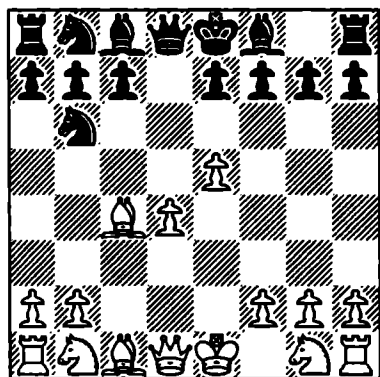
6...♘c6 7 ♘e2

7 ♘f3 – Game 11

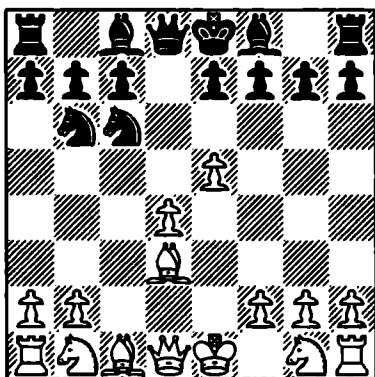
7...♙f5 (D) 8 ♙e3

8 ♘bc3 – Game 13

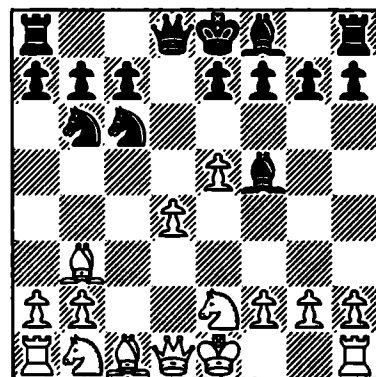
8...e6 – Game 12



5...♘b6



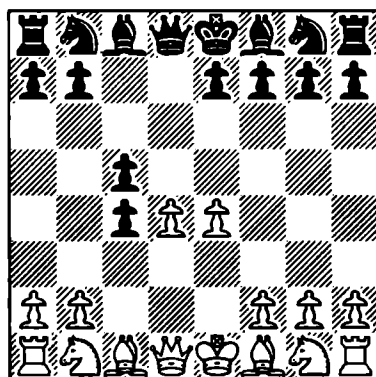
6...♘c6



7...♙f5

CHAPTER THREE

3 e4 c5



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5

Although there is no doubt that 3...c5 is a thematic break, having studied the games in this chapter (and from prior experience), I can't help getting the feeling that this is the most suspicious of Black's third move alternatives. Although Black invariably surfaces with a queenside pawn majority, from White's point of view, there is something rather comforting about having a piece on d5, supported by an e4-pawn (a frequent occurrence). Indeed if the reader wants to persevere with 3...c5, I would have to suggest the lines where Black mixes things up by protecting the 'gambit' pawn with an early ...b7-b5 (Games 17-19). Theoretically though, White is still just about on top.

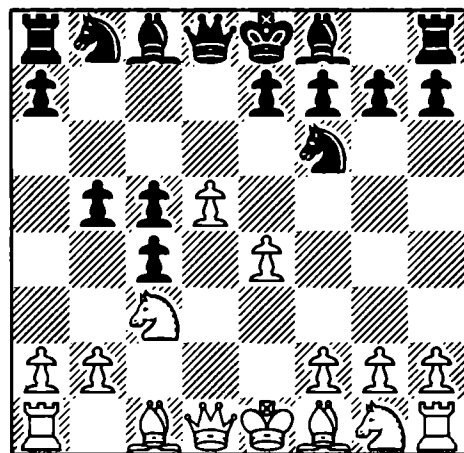
It should be observed that there is a potential overlap here with Chapter 8 (e.g. 3...c5 4 d5 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e6 6 ♘f3 exd5 7 e5).

doubt there are those (e.g. GM Keith Arkell) who would consider 4 ♘f3 cxd4 5 ♙xd4 (5 ♘xd4?! e5!) 5...♙xd4 6 ♘xd4 ♙d7 7 f3 with arguably a minuscule advantage to White. Not exactly chess though is it?!

4 d5 ♘f6

4...e6 is the subject of Games 20-22.

5 ♘c3 b5!?



Game 17

Bacrot-Peric

Corsica (rapidplay) 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5

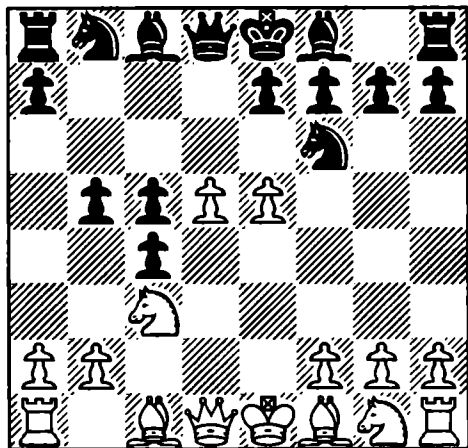
Attacking White's centre with the (temporary at least) extra pawn and thus provoking the d-pawn to push on. No

A logical move which can be daunting to meet without pre-game preparation. Black tries to consolidate his c-pawn and threatens to hassle White's centre. The first observation I should make is that capturing on b5 proves too time consuming for White, i.e. 6 ♘xb5?! ♙a5+ 7 ♘c3 ♘xe4 with no problems for Black.

The old 5...e6 is seen (by transposition) in Games 20-22.

6 e5

The most direct move. For 6 ♖f4, see Games 18 and 19.



6...b4 7 exf6 bxc3 8 bxc3 ♖a5?!

This game is a good example of how things can go horribly wrong for Black as well as White. The correct move is not 8...exf6?! 9 ♖xc4 ♖d6 10 ♗e2+! with a likely endgame advantage, but 8...♖d7, aiming to capture on f6 with the knight and so prompting 9 ♗a4 (9 fxe7 ♖xe7 10 ♖xc4 ♖b6 11 ♖b5+ ♖d7 leaves Black with a lead in development and likely to regain the d-pawn) 9...exf6 10 ♖f4 ♗b6 11 ♖xc4 ♖d6. Black no longer has to face an inferior endgame and has active piece play to compensate for his worse pawn structure.

9 ♗d2 gxf6 10 ♖xc4 ♖d7

Both ...♗g8 and the deflecting ...♖h6 are moves that don't figure (and possibly should have done) in this game, but other than that, Black just seems to get blown away.

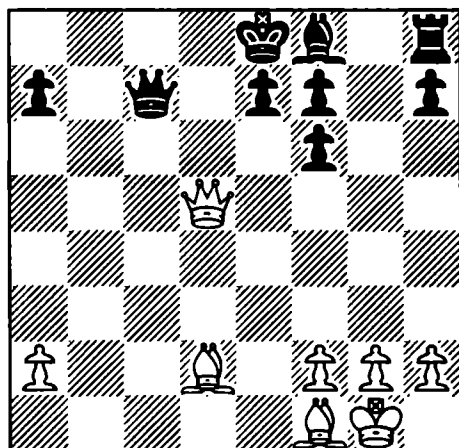
11 ♖f3 ♖b6 12 ♖e2 c4 13 0-0 ♖b7 14 ♖d1 ♖d8 15 ♗f4 ♖xd5?!

Black soon lives to regret letting White's light-squared bishop into the game and probably 15...♖xd5 or even the ultra-greedy 15...♗xc3 would have been preferable.

16 ♗xc4 ♖xc3 17 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 18 ♖f1 ♖xf3 19 ♖d2 ♗c7 20 ♗d3+ ♖d5 21 ♖c1 ♗b6 22 ♖b1

22 ♗xf3 was also good, but the talented young Frenchman is playing for mate.

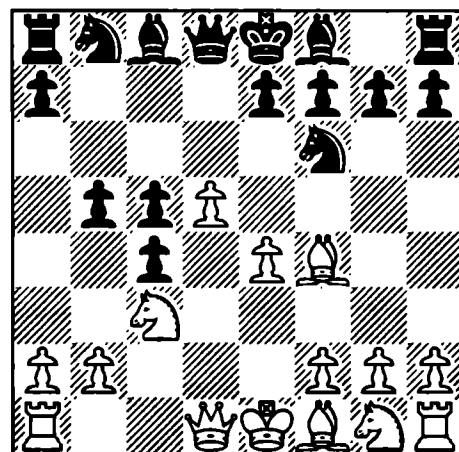
22...♗c7 23 ♖b5 ♖e8 24 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 25 ♗xd5 1-0



There is no defence to 26 ♖a5. Okay, this was a rapidplay game, so one can't be too harsh on Black, but it certainly looked like a very impressive display by White.

Game 18 Gelfand-Anand Linares 1993

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5 4 d5 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 b5 6 ♖f4

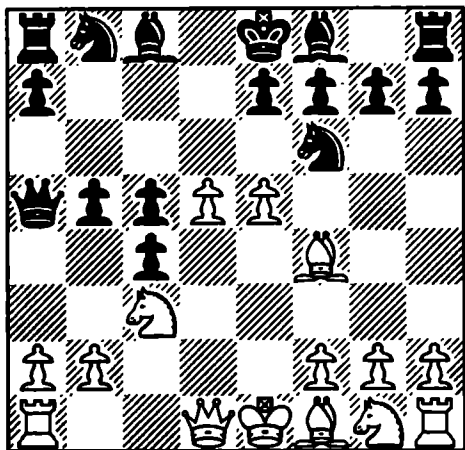


Of course it is easy to be wise after the event, but there is something slightly il-

logical about playing 6 ♖f4 only to then go 7 e5.

6... ♗a5 7 e5?!

7 f3 is more prudent – see the next main game.



7... ♖e4 8 ♗ge2 ♖a6 9 f3 ♖b4!!

When it first appeared, this was a stunning novelty.

10 fxe4

10... ♖d3+ was coming anyway and it would have been particularly strong after 10 ♖xe4??

10... ♖d3+ 11 ♖d2 g6!

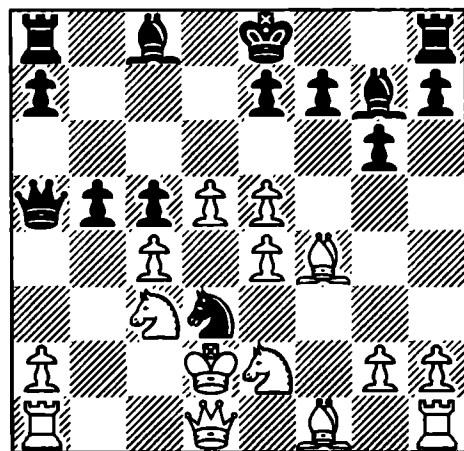
With White a little tied up, Black isn't interested in winning the rook (cum exchange) in the corner with 11... ♖f2 and instead coolly continues with his development.

12 b3?!

It's natural for White to want to undermine the foundations of the d3-knight, but it soon proves fatal to open up the diagonal to his rook. White would have been better off playing 12 g3 or 12 ♖e3, but Anand's idea was just to continue quietly with 12... ♗g7 and 13... ♖xe5. With his queenside pawns looking menacing and White's king far from where he'd like it to be, clearly there is reasonable compensation.

12... ♗g7 13 bxc4

Probably the losing move, but at least it's consistent with his last move.



13... ♖xf4 14 ♖xf4 ♗xe5 15 ♖fe2 b4 16 ♗a4+

This now leaves White material down, but 16 ♖a4 lost to 16... ♗d7! The e5-bishop is a monster.

16... ♗xa4

The brilliant Indian grandmaster now proceeded to mop up efficiently, probably at breakneck speed. It later looks as though White generates a chance or two, but the reality is that Black always had things under control.

17 ♖xa4 ♗xa1! 18 ♖xc5 0-0! 19 ♖d3 a5 20 g3 ♗g7 21 ♗g2 ♗a6! 22 c5 ♖ac8 23 c6 ♖fd8 24 ♖c1 ♗h6+ 25 ♖ef4 ♗xd3 26 ♖xd3 e5 27 ♖c4 exf4 28 ♖e1 fxc3 29 e5 ♗f4 30 hxg3 ♗xg3 31 ♖e3 ♗f4 32 ♖e4 ♗h2 33 ♗h3 ♖c7 34 ♖e2 ♗g3 35 ♖e3 ♗f4 36 ♖e4 g5 37 ♖c5 ♖e7 38 ♖d4 f6 39 d6 ♗xe5+ 40 ♖xe5 ♖xd6+ 0-1

Game 19

Vyzmanavin-Azmaiparashvili

Burgas 1994

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5 4 d5 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 b5 6 ♗f4 ♗a5 7 f3!?

7 ♗d2 also looks quite solid, but it's debatable whether after 7... ♗d8!?, White has anything better than 8 ♗f4 repeating the position. Of course that's not so good if Black needs a win, in which case he would have to try 7...e5!?

tion of plonking his bishop on d6, retreating his queen and ultimately inflicting grief with his queenside pawns. In my view 7 a4 ♖xe4! is a little premature, but the text move 7 f3!? does threaten 8 a4 b4 9 ♖b5 when the c4-pawn will easily drop.

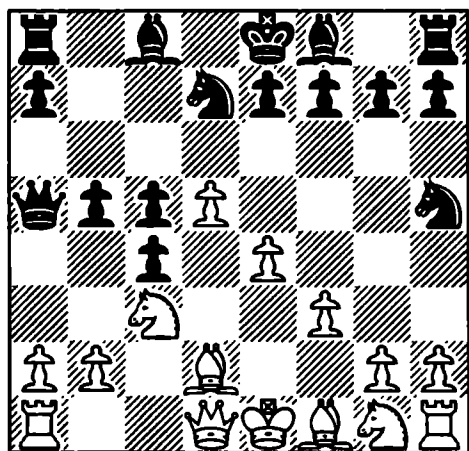
7...♗h5

A funny-looking move, but one designed to avoid the aforementioned threat of 8 a4. Note that after 7...b4, White's best response is 8 ♖a4+ ♖xa4 9 ♖xa4. With the imminent recapture a c-pawn, one would expect White to be much better. However, it's not clear how far this is true after 9...e6. Then 10 d6?! fails to 10...♗h5 and I would imagine that the real problem is developing the f8-bishop after 10 ♖xc4 exd5 11 exd5.

8 ♖d2

More threatening than 8 ♖e3 ♗d7 (or 8...e5!?).

8...♗d7



9 f4 g6

A useful way to protect the knight. 9...♗hf6? would have walked into 10 e5.

10 ♖e2

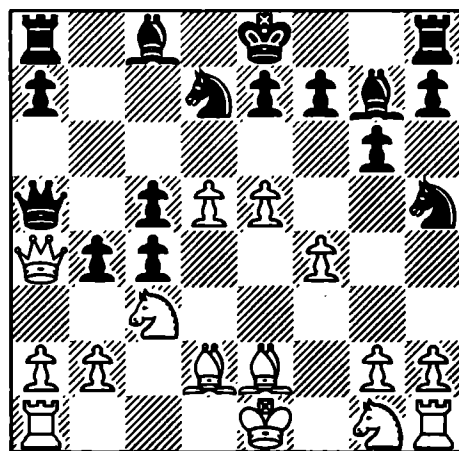
An obvious move, although Vyzmanavin has suggested that 10 e5(!?) ♖h6 11 ♗ge2 (threatening 12 g4-g5) may be even better. Indeed White would retain his big pawn centre, but after 11...b4!, he would have to come up with something other than 12 ♖e4?! ♖b7. Perhaps he had

12 ♖a4 in mind (and that would be consistent with the game continuation), but matters are far from clear.

10...♖g7

If Black is looking for an improvement over the game and is unhappy with later recommendations, then perhaps the immediate 10...b4!? fits the bill.

11 e5 b4 12 ♖a4!?



12...♖xa4

By no means forced and indeed perhaps this is where Black should be trying to improve. Black can try to void the queen swap with:

a) 12...♖b6?! 13 ♖e4 ♖b7 (alas, Black can't protect his c-pawn with 13...♖a6 because of 14 e6 fxe6 15 dxe6 ♖xe6 16 ♖xc5) 14 ♖xc4 when White seems to be in charge of the situation.

b) 12...♖d8!? 13 ♖e4 0-0 14 g4 ♖xf4!? 15 ♖xf4 ♖xe5 when Black would appear to be notching up the pawns for the piece.

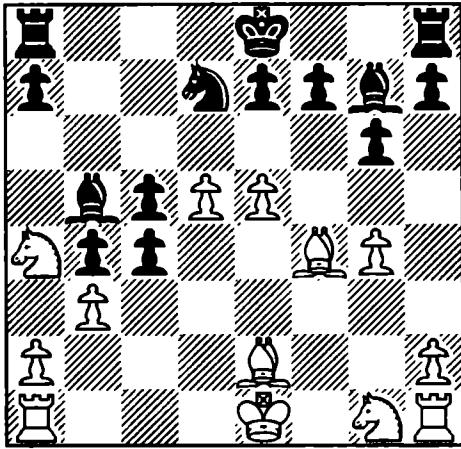
c) Nobody has previously considered the subtle 12...♖a6!?, leaving the c3-knight unable to run away until White has helped Black's light-squared bishop to develop with 13 ♖xa6 (essentially leaving Black a tempo up on the game).

13 ♖xa4 ♖a6 14 g4 ♖xf4 15 ♖xf4 ♖b5 16 b3

see following diagram

16...♖xa4

This ending is a great cause of debate. A piece is a piece, but pawns are pawns! Although this move messes up White's pawn structure further, it could be argued that Black should keep his bishop and delete this in favour of the immediate 16...♗xe5.



17 bxa4 ♗xe5 18 0-0-0 c3 19 ♖b5+ ♕f8
20 h3 ♜d8 21 ♞h2!

Intending ♞e2 and deliberately leaving the knight at home in order to prevent the passage of the black knight to d4 via f3.

21...g5

Intended to deflect away the bishop. If 21...c4 straightaway, then White would soon mop it up after 22 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 23 ♞e2. However, Black could have tried 21...h5!? 22 g5 c4 when compared to the former variation, the g5-pawn would be a target.

22 ♖g3 c4 23 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 24 ♞e2 ♖f4+
25 ♕c2 h5 26 ♖xc4 hxg4 27 hxg4 ♞h4
28 ♞g2 ♜d6 29 ♗e2 ♖e3 30 ♗d4 ♞f6
31 ♖e2!

Obviously not 31 ♗f5? ♞xf5 when the bishop hangs on c4.

31...♞f2 32 ♞xf2 ♖xf2 33 ♕b3 ♖xd4 34
♞xd4 ♞h2 35 ♞e4

It's been a pretty close run thing, but alas this is the worst piece configuration that Black could have hoped for (the rook and bishop work very well together), added to which his pawns are well blocked. Perhaps Black could have made

things slightly more difficult for White now with 35...a5, but after 36 a3! surely it's just a matter of time.

35...f5?! 36 gxf5 ♕f7 37 a3 a5 38 axb4
axb4 39 a5 g4 40 a6 ♞h1 41 ♞xb4 1-0

Game 20

Zontakh-Mirkovic

Belgrade 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5 4 d5 e6 5 ♗c3
5 ♖c4 is considered in Game 22

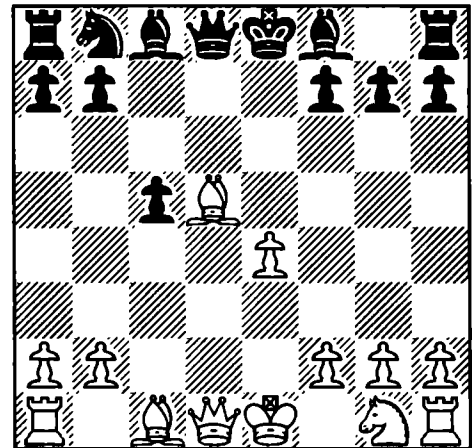
5...♗f6

The immediate 5...exd5 is the subject of the next main game.

6 ♖xc4 exd5 7 ♗xd5

This seems preferable to 7 exd5 – see Game 22 (by transposition).

7...♗xd5 8 ♖xd5



To me, this type of position just feels good for White. The c5-pawn, which would probably like to return to c6 at some stage, seems to get in the way and Black's only real comfort is that some day he might be able to do something with his queenside majority.

8...♖e7

The best move. The threat was 9 ♖xf7+. After 8...♗c6? it is worth playing 9 ♖xc6+ to cripple Black's queenside, while after 8...♖d6 the bishop would be awkwardly placed.

9 ♗e2!?

Setting the knight on the track that will control the key d5-outpost.

9 ♖f3 is seen (by transposition) in the next game, while unfortunately (from White's point of view) the energetic 9 ♜h5 (i.e. extracting the queen to an active post before playing ♖f3) has been neutralised by 9...0-0 10 ♖f3 ♘d7 11 ♘g5 ♙xg5 12 ♙xg5 ♖f6 13 ♙xf6 (if 13 ♜h4 then 13...♜a5+! 14 ♙d2 ♜a4) 13...♜xf6 14 0-0 ♜b8! 15 ♜ac1 b6 16 b4!? cxb4 17 ♜c7 ♙e6! 18 ♜xa7 g6 19 ♜e2 ♙xd5 20 exd5 ♜bd8 21 ♜d1 ♜fe8 22 ♜f3 ♜xf3 23 gxf3 ♜a8 24 ♜xa8 as I found to my cost (i.e. drawn without much of a fight) in Ward-Howell, Four Nations League 1996.

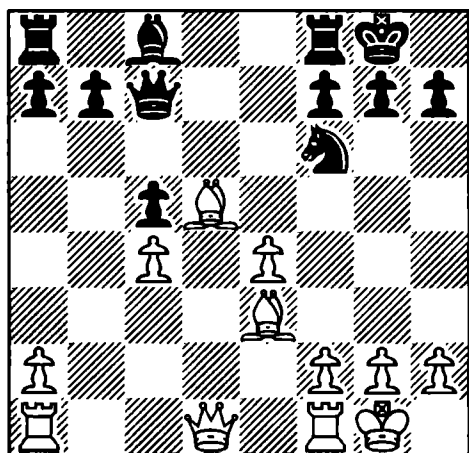
9...0-0 10 0-0 ♖d7 11 ♖c3 ♙f6

In the light of this game, perhaps Black should reserve the f6-square for his knight. Alternatively, Black could transpose into the game Rausis-Lev, European Club Cup 1997, with 11...♖b6!? 12 ♙f4 ♖xd5 13 ♖xd5 ♙d6 14 e5 ♙c7 15 ♜c1 b6 16 ♜f3 ♙e6 17 ♜fd1 ♙xd5. Evidently both players decided that Black's position was defensible, as here they shook hands on the draw.

12 ♙e3 ♙xc3

Black's idea is to eliminate two sets of minor pieces, but because of the strong white pawns that result, this proves to be an unsuccessful strategy.

13 bxc3 ♜c7 14 c4 ♖f6



15 ♜d2 ♖xd5 16 cxd5 ♙d7 17 ♙f4 ♜d8 18 ♜fe1 ♜e8 19 ♜ac1 ♜c8 20 ♜c3!?

Black's pawn majority just doesn't manage to get going. Meanwhile not only do White's d- and e-pawns look dangerous, but his space advantage allows him to make inroads for a kingside attack.

20...♜h4 21 ♙g5 ♜h5 22 ♜g3 ♙f8?!

It's easy to see why Black was eager to vacate the g-file with his king, but it looks equally vulnerable on f8.

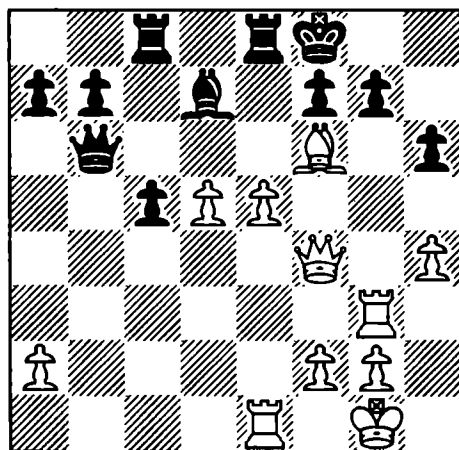
23 ♜f4! ♜g6

24 ♜d6+ was threatened, so rather than face the indignity of 23...♙g8 24 ♙f6 g6 25 ♙c3! (intending 26 ♜f6), Black offers his queen (for a rook and bishop).

24 h4

24 ♙e7+ would have been good too, but White sadistically prefers to toy with his opponent.

24...♜b6 25 e5 h6 26 ♙f6!



26...gxf6

The attempt to spoil the party with 26...♜xf6 27 exf6 ♜xe1+ 28 ♖h2 would have proved futile as Black would still have had insurmountable problems with his king.

27 ♜xh6+ ♙e7 28 d6+ ♙e6 29 ♜d3 1-0

In case you were wondering, the continuation 29...♙b5 30 ♜xf6+ ♖d7 31 ♜xf7+ ♙c6 32 ♜d5+ ♖d7 33 e6+ ♜xe6 34 ♜xe6+ ♙c6 35 d7+ ♙c7 36 dxc8♜ was mate in seven!

Game 21
Ibragimov-Estrada Nieto
Ubeda open 1997

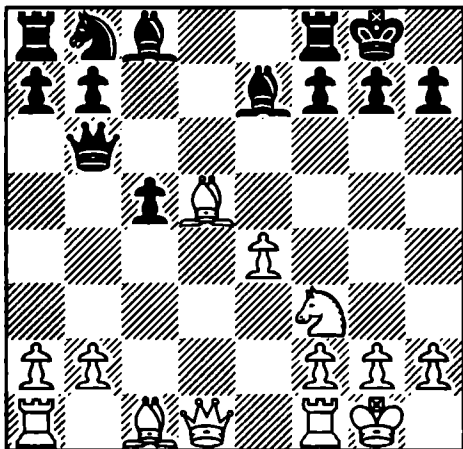
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5 4 d5 e6 5
 ♖c3 exd5 6 ♖xd5 ♖e7 7 ♗xc4

The pin 7 ♗g5 has a bad reputation, but after 7...h6 8 ♗f6 ♖d7 (perhaps 8...b5!? but definitely not 8...gxf6?? 9 ♖xf6 mate!), 9 ♗xc4!? is fascinating, e.g. 9...gxf6 10 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 11 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 12 ♚xd8. Three pieces are a lot to give up for the queen (and probably one pawn), but White can hope to exploit his opponent's poor piece co-ordination and the exposed nature of the black king.

7...♖xd5 8 ♗xd5 ♗e7

Reaching the same position as the last game, but from a different move order (i.e. the one that allows 7 ♗g5).

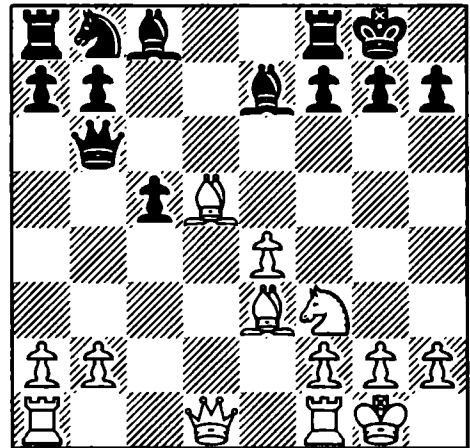
9 ♖f3 0-0 10 0-0 ♚b6



Facilitating 11...♖c6 (i.e. preventing the doubled isolated pawns that would otherwise arise after 12 ♗xc6), but considering all of the evidence, it is likely (particularly as the white knight will have trouble getting to d5) that Black should instead stick with the policy of hassling the bishop. The 10...♖d7-b6 (or f6) manoeuvre again looks playable, as does 10...♖a6!? 11 ♗c4 ♗e6 12 ♗xe6 fxe6 13 ♚e2 ♖b4 14 ♖d1 ♚b6 15 ♗e3 ♖ad8 16 a3 ♚a6! 17 ♚xa6

♖xa6 18 ♗g5 ♗xg5 19 ♖xg5 ♖c7 20 ♔f1 h6 21 ♖f3 ♖b5 when Black's (this time more mobile) queenside majority and his grip on the d4-square provided compensation for his weak e-pawn in Vyzmanavin-Vaulin, Russian Cup 1997.

11 ♗e3



11...♖c6

A trade of b-pawns after 11...♚xb2? 12 ♖b1 only favours White, while if played next turn, then it would be the c5-pawn that would drop.

12 ♖c1 ♗g4

Probably Black does better to interpolate 12...♖b4!? first, e.g. 13 ♗c4 ♗g4 14 h3 ♖ad8 15 ♚e2 ♗e6.

13 h3 ♗e6

Finally the reasoning behind 9 ♖f3 is uncovered: 13...♗h5 14 g4 ♗g6 15 ♖d2! The c4-square is a fantastic location for the white knight.

14 ♗xe6 fxe6 15 ♚c2 ♚a6?

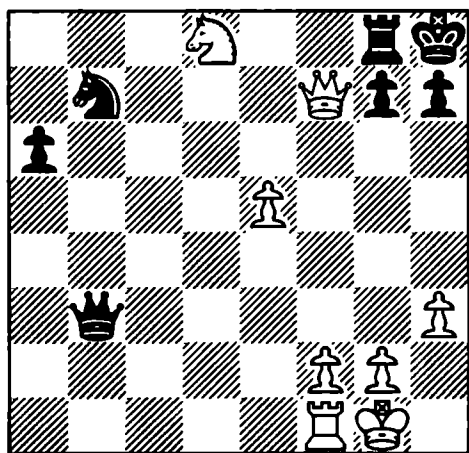
Encouraging an unfavourable exchange of pawns. 15...♖b4 again looked best.

16 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 17 ♚xc5 ♚xa2 18 ♚b5!

Defending a pawn, attacking a pawn and threatening 19 ♖a1.

18...a6 19 ♚xb7 ♖a5 20 ♚c7 ♖f7 21 ♚e5 ♖b7 22 ♖g5 ♖e7 23 ♖c7 ♖xc7 24 ♚xc7 ♚xb2 25 e5 ♚b3 26 ♚f7+ ♔h8 27 ♖xe6 ♖g8 28 ♖d8! 1-0

A nice win of a piece with which to finish.

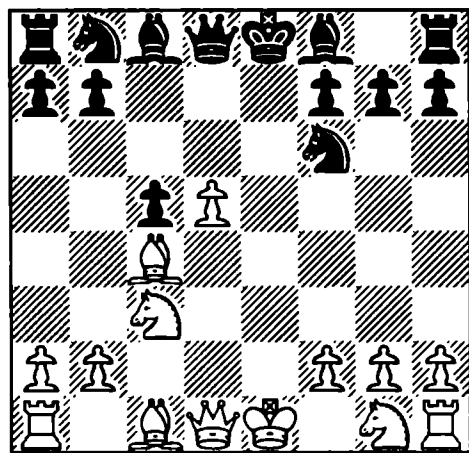


Game 22
Borges-Cifuentes
Matanzas 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5 4 d5 e6 5
 ♖xc4 ♜f6

It should be noted that the immediate
 5...exd5? 6 ♖xd5 proves to be very un-
 comfortable for Black, as 6...♜f6? would
 fall foul of 7 ♖xf7+! and 6...♖d6 of 7 e5!
 (same idea).

6 ♜c3 exd5 7 exd5



White opts to accept an isolated pawn
 on d5 and though this idea is not without
 venom, Black shouldn't be too worried by
 it.

7...a6

Obviously useful. Black prevents a
 white knight or bishop using the b5-

square whilst preparing an expansion of
 his queenside pawns.

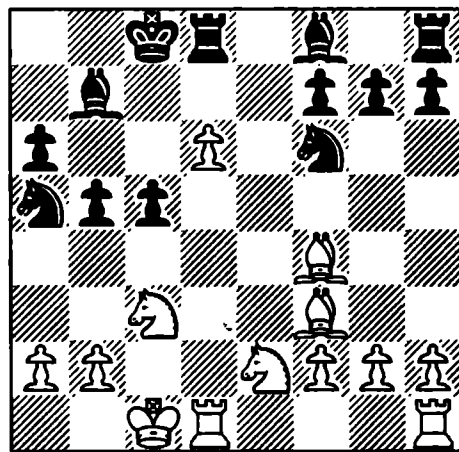
8 ♖f4

A tough decision which leads to some
 interesting complications. The problem
 with the usual hindering 8 a4 is that it
 gives Black a chance to firmly blockade
 the d-pawn with 8...♖d6. Note that after 8
 ♖f4, 9 ♜e2+ must not be met by
 9...♜e7?? 10 ♖xd6, but by 9...♜f8!?

8...b5 9 ♜e2+ ♜e7 10 d6

Safer than the crazy piece sacrifice 10
 0-0-0!? bxc4 11 ♜xc4 (or 11 ♜d2) which
 would also no doubt appeal to some.

10...♜xe2+ 11 ♖xe2 ♖b7 12 ♖f3 ♜c6
 13 0-0-0 0-0-0 14 ♜ge2 ♖a5!



15 ♜g3 ♖xf3 16 gxf3 ♜b7 17 ♜f5 ♜h5
 18 ♖g5 f6 19 ♖e3 ♜xd6

At last Black has mopped up the trou-
 blesome intruder. However, his king's
 knight is a little offside and things don't go
 as smoothly as Black would like. In fact
 by over-pressing, Black very nearly
 throws the game away and as you will see,
 only just about manages to draw a techni-
 cal queen ending.

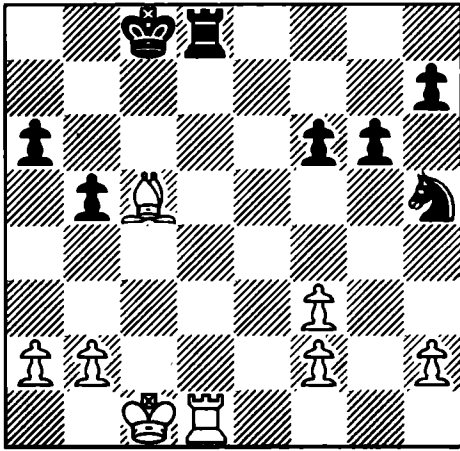
20 ♜xd6+ ♜xd6 21 ♜e4 ♜c6 22 ♜d5 g6
 23 ♜hd1 ♖e7 24 ♜xc5

White regains his pawn at the cost of
 letting Black complete his development.

24...♖xc5 25 ♜xc5 ♜xc5+ 26 ♖xc5 ♜d8

White retains a bishop for a knight, but
 his inflexibly weak kingside pawns should

leave him with zero winning chances.



27 ♖d4 ♜d6 28 ♜c2 ♘f4 29 ♜d2 ♜b7
 30 ♖c3 ♜xd2+ 31 ♜xd2 f5 32 ♜e3 ♘e6
 33 f4 ♜c6 34 b3 ♜d5 35 h3 ♘c5 36 f3
 ♘e6 37 ♖d2 ♘d4 38 ♖c3 ♘c6 39 ♜d3
 ♜c5 40 ♜d2 ♘b4 41 a3 ♘c6 42 ♜d3
 ♜d5 43 ♖f6 ♜e6 44 ♖c3 ♜f7

Unable to make any progress through the centre (neither side has any entry points), Black now embarks on a ridiculous winning attempt that so nearly goes horribly wrong.

45 ♖e1 ♜g7 46 ♖c3+ ♜h6?! 47 ♖f6
 ♜h5 48 b4 h6 49 h4 g5

Forced as Black was in zugzwang. It would have proved fatal to give way with the knight and let the enemy king in.

50 fxg5 hxg5 51 hxg5 ♜g6 52 ♜e3 ♜f7
 53 ♜f4 ♜e6 54 ♜e3 ♜f7 55 ♖c3 ♜g6
 56 ♜f4 ♘e7 57 ♖d2 ♘c6 58 ♖e3 a5 59
 ♖c5 axb4 60 axb4 ♘d8 61 ♖d4 ♘e6+
 62 ♜e5 ♘xg5 63 f4 ♘f3+ 64 ♜d5 ♘e1
 65 ♖e5 ♘d3 66 ♖d6 ♜h5 67 ♜d4 ♘f2
 68 ♜c5 ♘e4+ 69 ♜c6 ♜g4 70 ♖e5 ♘f2
 71 ♜xb5 ♘d3 72 ♜c4 ♘xe5+ 73 fxg5 f4
 74 e6 f3 75 ♜d3 ♜g3 76 e7 f2 77 e8♚
 f1♚+ 78 ♚e2 ♚f5+ 79 ♚e4 ♚b5+ 80
 ♜c3 ♜h2 81 ♚c2+ ♜h1 82 ♚d1+ ♜g2
 83 ♚d2+ ♜h1 84 ♚d6 ♜g2 85 ♚c5 ♚a4
 86 ♚g5+ ♜h3 87 ♚f5+ ♜g3 88 ♚e5+
 ♜h3 89 ♚e6+ ♜g3 90 ♚d6+ ♜h3 91
 ♚d3+ ♜h4 92 b5 ♚a3+ 93 ♜c4 ♚a4+ 94
 ♜c5 ♚a5 95 ♚d4+ ♜h3 96 ♜c6 ♚a3 97
 b6 ♚f3+ 98 ♜c7 ♚g3+ 99 ♜d7 ♚f3 100
 ♜e7 ♜g2 101 ♚b2+ ♜h1 102 b7 ♚e4+
 103 ♜d6 ♚g6+ 104 ♜c5 ♚f5+ 105 ♜b6
 ♚f2+! ½-½

Summary

After 3...c5 4 d5 e6, Games 20 and 21 demonstrate why in my view White has an edge in the lines where he gets a piece to d5. Certainly the 7 exd5 of Game 22 is nothing for Black to worry about.

As a White player, I was always more worried by the prospect of 5...b5. However, although Anand produced a wonderful game against Gelfand, I'm not sure that Black can rely on Game 18 to hold the variation together as 6 ♖f4 combined with 7 e5?! isn't the best. Leaving aside the specifics, the concept of the piece for pawns sacrifice in Game 19 is critical.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5

4 d5 ♘f6

4...e6 (D)

5 ♙xc4 ♘f6 6 ♘c3 exd5

7 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 8 ♙xd5 ♙e7 (D)

9 ♘e2 – Game 20

9 ♘f3 – Game 21

7 exd5 – Game 22 (by transposition)

5 ♘c3 – Game 22

5 ♘c3 b5

5...e6 6 ♙xc4 – see Games 20-22 (by transposition)

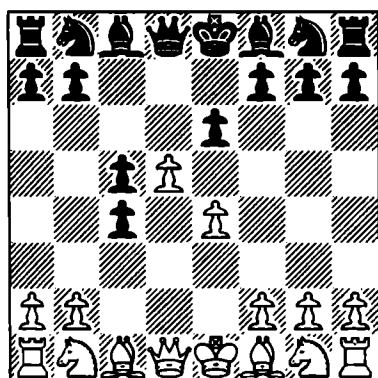
6 e5

6 ♙f4 ♚a5 (D)

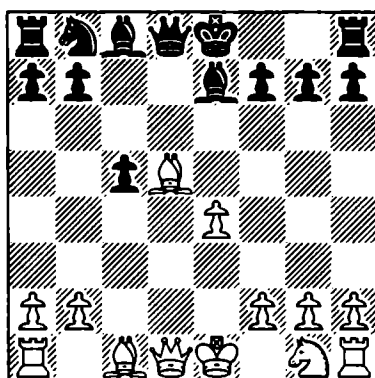
7 e5 – Game 18

7 f3 – Game 19

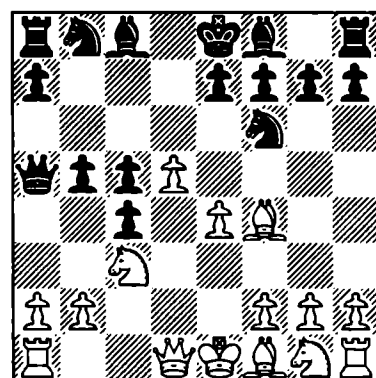
6...b4 – Game 17



4...e6



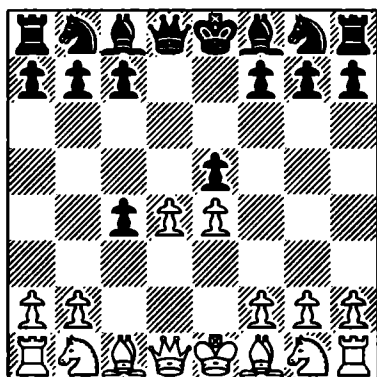
8...♙e7



6...♚a5

CHAPTER FOUR

3 e4 e5



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5

This 'straight bat' continuation has been also struggling in recent times. Here we discover that most early queen trade variations are satisfactory for Black (which also explains why there would certainly be no fear of 4 dxe5?), but alternative lines whereby White gets rapid development can prove to be a problem. Indeed many of the old lines for Black are being used less and less, and currently the whole assessment of 3...e5 seems to revolve around the subject of 4 dxf3 exd4 5 dxc4 dxc6 6 O-O e6 (Games 30 and 31). This 'newish' line seeks to reduce the impact of White's light-squared bishop along the a2-g8 diagonal and currently seems to be holding its own.

Game 23

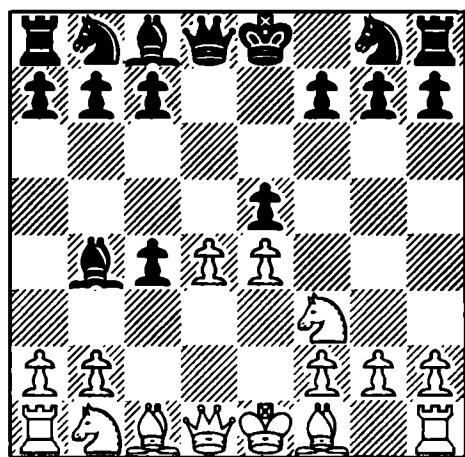
Ricardi-Gomez

Presidencia Roque Saenz Pena 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 dxf3 e6

This move and 4...exd4 (see Games 25-31) used to be played on a fairly equal basis. I would have to say now though that this is the inferior move, but it is still better than the third possibility 4...dxf6 5 dxc4 dxe4 6 dxe5 d6 (or 6...e6 7

dxc3! as 7...dxc3 8 dxf7+ kf8 9 bxc3 dxc3+ 10 kf1 leaves White with the devastating threat of 11 e3+). 7 e6 e7 8 O-O O-O 9 dxc3 dxc6 10 dxc6 bxc6 11 Wf3 eb7 12 e3 ef6 13 ffd1 Wd7 14 ffac1 ffd8 15 ea4 Wf5 16 dxc6 Wxf3 17 dxf3 e6xf3 18 gxf3 when Black was essentially a pawn down in Ward-Adamski, KS Summer, Copenhagen 1998.



5 dxc3

The disadvantage of 4...e6 over 4...exd4 is that White may possibly be able to secure a very slight endgame advantage by trading queens. Black has already committed his bishop but, since this piece is not really interested in swapping itself

for the knight, it would rather go to c5 in one move. The one plus point of this move order is that 5 Qbd2? isn't playable here (as it is after 4...exd4 5 Qxc4 Qb4+) because of 5...c3! Results in practical play suggest that White also has the more comfortable game after the obvious 5 $\text{Qd2 Qxd2+ 6 Qxd2 exd4}$ and now either 7 Qxd4 and 7 Qxd4 .

5...exd4 6 Qxd4

6 Qxd4 is the subject of the next main game.

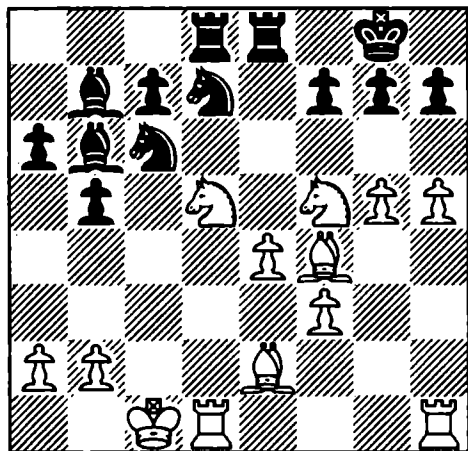
6... $\text{Qxd4 7 Qxd4 Qf6 8 f3 a6 9 Qxc4 0-0 10 Qf4 b5 11 Qe2 Qc5?!}$

Black never got his queenside going after this move. 11...c5!? looks like a better try with the idea of 12 Qc2 Qa5! ?, as 13 $\text{Qd6 b4! 14 Qxf8 Qxf8}$ (intending...b3+ after the c3-knight budges) nets Black two pieces for the rook.

12 0-0-0 $\text{Qb6 13 g4! Qe8 14 h4 Qb7 15 h5}$

The problem for Black is that unlike White, who can aggressively advance his pawn majority willy-nilly, he in contrast must be wary about making concessions. An advance of the c-pawn, for example, would leave a gaping hole on d6.

15... $\text{Qc6 16 Qf5 Qad8 17 g5 Qd7 18 Qd5}$



Already Black's position has gone to pot.

18... $\text{Qc8 19 Qb1 Qc5 20 Qxc7 Qed8 21}$

Qd5 Qf8 22 b4!

The final nail in the coffin, forcing the win of the exchange.

22... $\text{Qxb4 23 Qde7+ Qh8 1-0}$

Game 24

Van Wely-Hübner

Ter Apel 1997

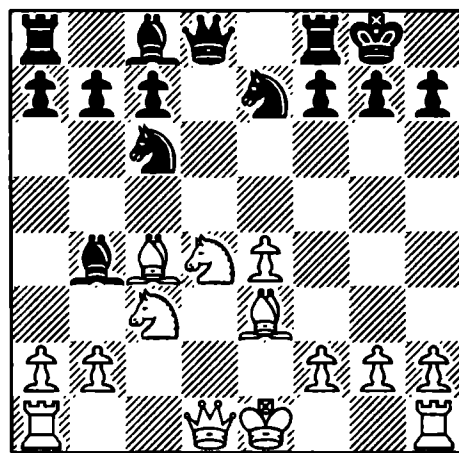
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 $\text{Qf3 Qb4+ 5 Qc3 exd4 6 Qxd4}$

Despite White's victory in the last game, it must be said that this move, not seeking an early queen trade, is the more ambitious approach.

6... Qe7

Avoiding the complications of 6... $\text{Qe7 7 Qxc4! Qxe4+?!}$ (7... Qf6 would be more restrained, but after 8 f3 0-0 9 Qb3! you kind of wonder what Black has gained by playing 6... Qe7) 8 Qf1 Qxc3 9 bxc3 when Black has bagged a pawn, but has only developed his queen!

7 $\text{Qxc4 Qbc6 8 Qe3 0-0}$



9 $\text{Qdb5!?$

Preventing the simplification that 9 0-0 $\text{Qxd4 10 Qxd4 Qc6 11 Qe3 Qa5 12 Qe2 Qxc3 13 bxc3 b6}$ would have allowed.

9... Qd7

Black's problem is the c7-pawn, but he might have been better off anticipating the following sequence with the immediate 9... Qa5! ?

10 a3 ♖a5

It generally isn't a good idea to take on c3, even when this involves isolating White's pawns. Now the knight would just be replaced, leaving White sitting pretty with his advantage of the two bishops.

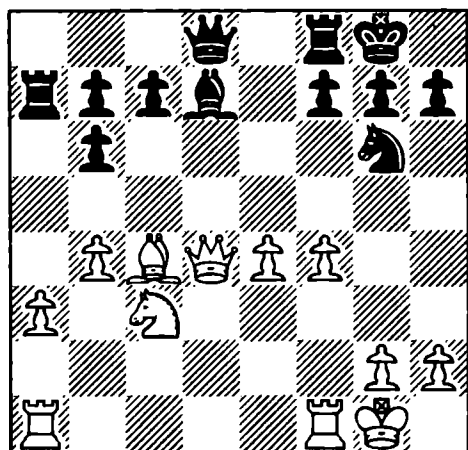
11 b4 ♖b6 12 ♖xb6 axb6 13 f4!

Black's queenside majority is stationary and vulnerable, while White's, in contrast, is free to advance, eating up space in its wake. In particular the text move prevents 13...♗e5.

13...♗a7 14 ♗xa7 ♖xa7 15 0-0 ♗g6

Temporarily at least halting the progress of f5-f6, since White won't want to see an enemy knight nestling in on e5.

16 ♜d4!



Controlling e5 (and thus returning f4-f5 to the menu) whilst also threatening 17 ♖ad1. Black now cracks under the pressure, but there can be no disputing White's superiority.

16...♖a4? 17 ♜xd8 ♖xd8 18 ♖b5! ♖b3

If 18...♖c2 then 19 ♖f2 ♖d3 20 ♖d2 ♗xf4 21 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 22 ♖xd3 ♗xd3 23 ♖d1 wins the knight because of the back-rank mate threat.

19 ♖fb1! c6

19...♖c2 20 ♖b2 ♖d3 21 ♖d2 would lose as before. The text simply acknowledges the loss of a pawn.

20 ♖xb3 cxb5 21 ♗xb5 ♖aa8 22 g3 h5

23 ♖c3 h4 24 ♖a2 ♗e7 25 ♖c7 ♗c6 26 ♖c2 h3 27 ♗f2 ♗d4 28 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 29 ♖c8+ ♖xc8 30 ♖xc8+ ♗h7 31 ♗f3 ♖d2 32 ♗g4 ♖xh2 33 ♖c7 f6

Or 33...♖h1 34 ♖xf7 h2 35 ♗h3! when the king takes care of Black's h-pawn, whilst the white rook continues munching pawns. This was not a feature that White needed to rely on when he entered the endgame, but it does the job just the same!

34 ♖xb7 ♖a2 35 ♗xh3 ♖xa3 36 ♗g4 ♖e3 37 ♗f5 ♖xg3 38 e5 fxe5 39 fxe5 ♖f3+ 40 ♗e4 ♖f1 41 b5 ♖e1+ 42 ♗f5 ♖f1+ 43 ♗e6 ♖f2 44 ♖d7 ♗h6 45 ♖d6 g5 46 ♗d7+ ♗g7 47 e6 ♖e2 48 ♖d1 ♗f6 49 ♖f1+ ♗g7 50 ♖f7+ ♗g6 51 ♖f8 ♖d2+ 52 ♗e8 ♖d5 53 e7 ♗g7 54 ♖f7+ ♗g8 55 ♖f6 ♗g7 56 ♖c6 ♖d2 57 ♖c8 1-0

Game 25
Lorscheid-Ibragimov
Berlin open 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 ♗f3 exd4 5 ♜xd4

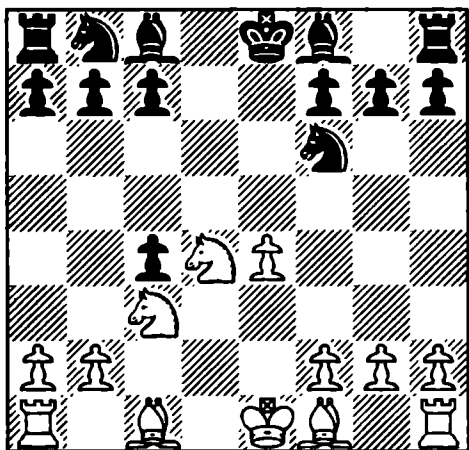
Prior to the 1998 British Championship, there had been amusing speculation as to generally how quickly Grandmaster Keith Arkell would be able to exchange queens in his games. Sitting next to me during his fifth-round encounter with the promising junior Nicholas Pert, he bashed out this move proudly, turned to me and declared 'that should bring my average down a bit!' Frankly 5 ♜xd4 doesn't deserve to work and fortunately it doesn't seem to. The critical 5 ♖xc4 is the subject of Games 26-31.

5...♜xd4 6 ♗xd4 ♗f6 7 ♗c3

see following diagram

7...♖c5!

Recalling earlier notes, not having already committed himself, Black is far from obliged to play 7...♖b4.



8 ♖db5

On 8 ♗e3, Black should consider 8...a6 or 8...♖g4!?

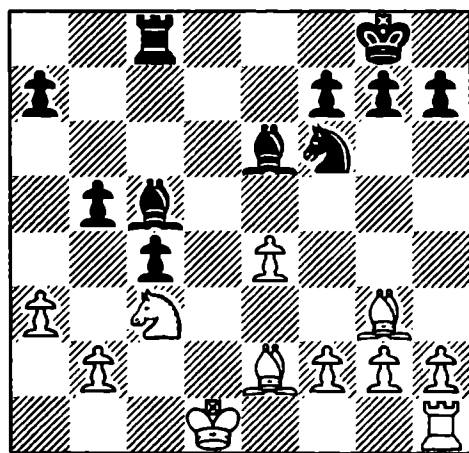
8...♖a6 9 ♗f4 ♗e6! 10 ♖xc7+ ♖xc7 11 ♗xc7 ♗c8 12 ♗g3 0-0 13 ♗e2 b5!?

Wasting no time in getting his majority rolling. The obvious threat is 14...b4 and if 14 ♖xb5 ♖xe4, White has a check on b4 and the loss of a key bishop to deal with.

14 a3 ♗fd8 15 ♗d1

Not a great move to have to play, but White couldn't allow the seventh rank invasion that would have befallen 15 0-0.

15...♗xd1+ 16 ♖xd1



16...a5

In contrast to some of the previous encounters that we've witnessed, it's nice to see Black being able to make something of his queenside pawn majority.

17 e5 b4 18 ♖a4

If 18 axb4 axb4 19 exf6 bxc3 20 bxc3 ♗d8+ 21 ♖c1, then 21...♗f5 threatening 22...♗a3 mate is devastating. Hence White would have had to try 21 ♖e1, when it's not easy to see how he'll get his rook out.
18...♖e4 19 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 20 f4 c3 21 bxc3 bxa3!

Now there's no defence to ...a3-a2 and ...♖b3.

22 c4 ♗f5 0-1

Game 26

Ftacnik-C.Hansen

Yerevan Olympiad 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 ♖f3 exd4 5 ♗xc4 ♗b4+

The fashionable 5...♖c6 is seen in Games 30 and 31.

6 ♖bd2

More aggressive than 6 ♗d2 (Games 28 and 29) because unless Black wants to give his bishop up for a knight, more pieces will be preserved on the board. White is in no great rush to regain his pawn, counting on the fact that it won't go away.

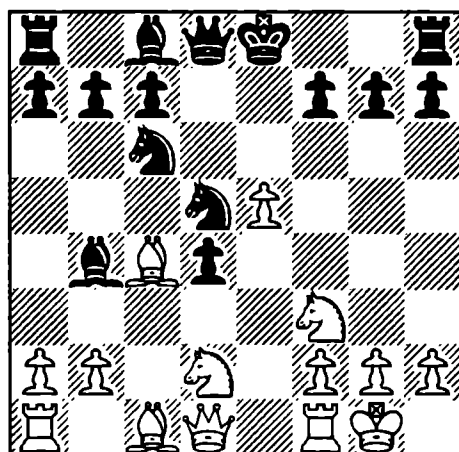
6...♖c6

For the record, White was threatening 7 ♗xf7+ with 8 ♗b3+ to follow.

7 0-0 ♖f6

7...♗e6 is seen in the next game.

8 e5 ♖d5



9 ♖b3

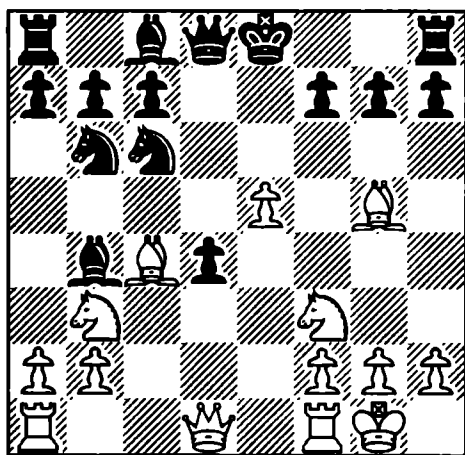
9 a3!? has also been a cause of concern for Black, e.g. 9...♙e7 10 ♖b3 ♘a5 11 ♗a4+ ♘c6 (one problem with this for the ambitious Black player is that White can take a draw by repetition if he wants; however 11...c6 12 ♙a2 would leave the a5-knight stranded) 12 ♘xd4 ♘b6 13 ♘xc6 ♘xa4 14 ♘xd8 ♙xd8 15 f4 ♘b6 16 ♙d3 g6 17 ♙e4 ♖b8 (passive, but 17...c6 would tempt a knight into d6) 18 ♘f3 ♙e6 19 ♙e3 ♙d5 20 ♙xb6 ♙xe4 21 ♙xa7 ♖a8 22 ♙e3, as in Milov-Howell, Isle of Man 1994, where White found himself a pawn up in an endgame. One possible solution is the greedy 9...♙xd2 10 ♙xd2 0-0 11 ♙g5 ♘de7 12 b4, which is suggested by theory as being clearly better for White. Certainly he has two raking bishops and menacing pawns, but I suppose that Black has his material advantage to cling to, and what of 12...♙g4!?, trying to switch the attention from d4 to e5.

9...♘b6

Not allowing the simple 9...0-0 10 ♘bxd4 when White has the freer game.

10 ♙g5

After 10 ♙b5, best is 10...♗d5! when 11 ♘bxd4 0-0 12 ♘xc6 (12 ♙xc6 messes up Black's pawns, but leaves White weak on the light squares) 12...♗xb5 13 ♘xb4 ♗xb4 is equal.



10...♙e7 11 ♙xe7 ♘xe7

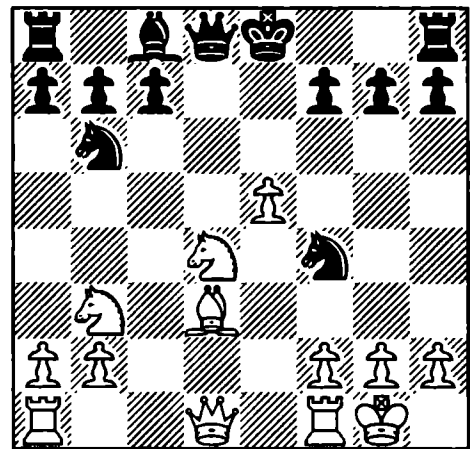
11...♗xe7 12 ♙b5 ♙d7 13 ♙xc6 ♙xc6

14 ♘fxd4 ♙d5 15 ♗g4! feels a little better for White, although Black would have the upper hand in the endgame resulting from 15...0-0 16 ♗xg7+? (16 f4!?) 16...♙xg7 17 ♘f5+ ♙h8 18 ♘xe7 ♙xb3 19 axb3 ♖fe8 20 ♘f5 ♖xe5.

12 ♙d3 ♘g6

Of the available alternatives, 12...♙g4!? strikes me as being the most testing. The problem with the liquidating 12...♙f5 on the other hand, is that after 13 ♘fxd4 ♙xd3 14 ♗xd3 White has no problems of his own and can start causing Black some trouble using the space advantage granted him by the e5-pawn.

13 ♘fxd4 ♘f4



A good square for the knight, though this move was played primarily to prevent White from sticking a pawn there himself. Not having castled yet, Black cannot play 13...♘xe5? because of the pin on the e-file.

14 ♙b5+!?

The dynamic option, though from White's point of view the game continuation (and its offshoots) are far from convincing. The big question I suppose is whether after the more solid 14 ♙e4(!) Black's play around the edges (e.g. 14...♗g5 14 ♗f3!) can compensate him for White's central domination. My heart says 'possibly'(!!!), but I'm afraid that my head says 'No'.

14...c6

A shock may have been awaiting Black in the event of 14...♙d7 15 ♖g4!

15 ♖f3

White is rightly not interested in gaining the rook and two pawns after 15 ♖xc6?! bxc6 16 ♙xc6+ ♙d7 17 ♙xa8 ♖xa8. In a middlegame, the two minor pieces can cause real damage, particularly with the g2-pawn as a target.

15...♘h3+?

Obviously 15...cxb5 16 ♖xf4 would have been grim for Black, whose last chance was 15...♖g5! Then after 16 ♖g3, 16...h6 (actually 16...♖xg3 17 hxg3 ♘g6 isn't too bad and 16...♖h6!? is a different approach altogether) would have left the b5-bishop short on retreat squares. Note that a key idea now is that 17 ♖xc6 can be met by 17...a6!

16 gxh3 cxb5 17 ♖g3

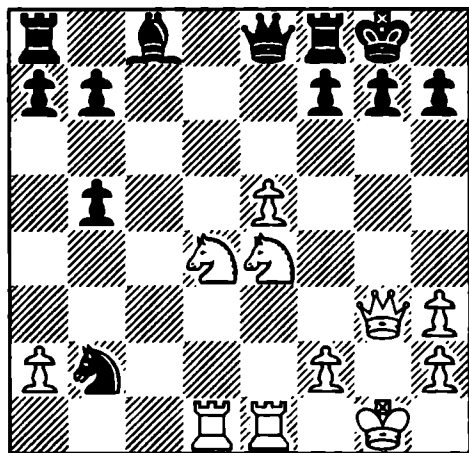
Preferring to ignore the b5-pawn in favour of a kingside offensive.

17...0-0 18 ♖ad1 ♖e8 19 ♖fe1 ♘c4 20 ♘c5!? ♘xb2

The idea after 20...b6 was to force checkmate or win the queen with 21 e6! bxc5 22 ♘f5 g6 23 exf7+ ♖xf7 24 ♘h6+.

21 ♘e4

White's pieces are certainly loitering with intent, the immediate threat being 22 ♘f6+.



21...♖e7 22 ♘d6 g6?!

After 22...♘xd1, a white knight would

have landed on f5, but 22...♙d8!, vacating the f8-square for the queen, would have left White with some work to do.

23 ♖b1 ♘c4 24 ♘4xb5 ♙e6 25 ♘e4 ♖g7 26 ♘bd6 ♖ab8 27 a4 a6 28 ♘xc4 ♙xc4 29 a5 ♙d5 30 ♘f6 ♖e6?

Not the best defence, but with his queenside fixed, all he can really do is sit back and take his punishment.

31 ♘h5+! ♖h8 32 ♘f4 ♖c6 33 ♖ec1 1-0

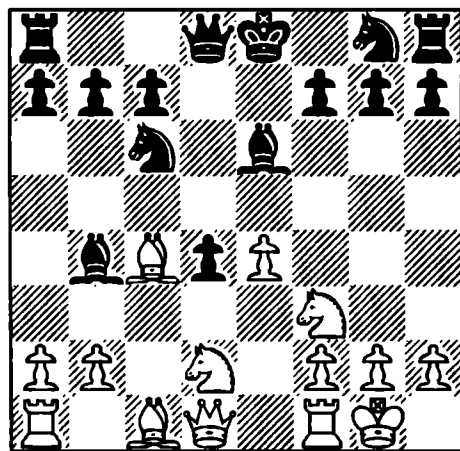
The bishop is lost after either 33...♙c4 34 ♖b4 or 33...♖d7 34 ♙d1.

Game 27

Touzane-Pinkus

Geneva 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 ♘f3 exd4 5 ♙xc4 ♙b4+ 6 ♘bd2 ♘c6 7 0-0 ♙e6

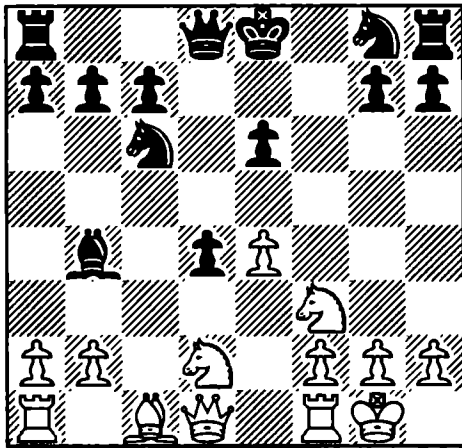


7...♖f6 compares unfavourably to lines where the dark-squared bishops have already been traded off (see Game 29 for example). In theory it's nice to bring the queen to such an aggressive post before developing the g8-knight to e7, while of course queenside castling is facilitated. However, with so many minor pieces floating around the queen may become vulnerable after 8 e5!?, and besides, there can be little dispute about the small end-game edge that White achieves after the simple 8 ♘b3 ♙g4 9 ♘bxd4 ♘xd4 10 ♖xd4 ♙xf3 11 ♖xf6 ♘xf6 12 gxh3.

8 ♖xe6

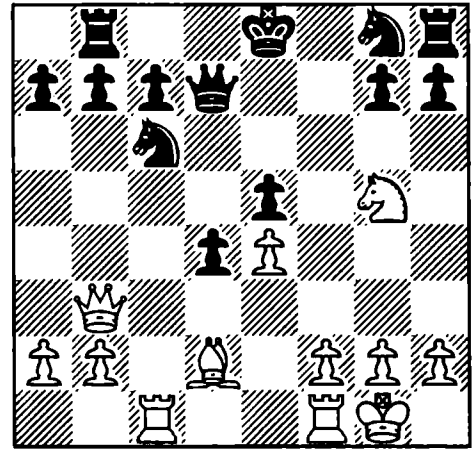
An alternative approach has also been seen in the form of 8 ♖b3 ♖d7 9 ♗g5!? ♗xc4 10 ♗xc4 f6 (not 10...0-0-0?? because of 11 ♗xf7, when the knight is indirectly protected by the queen because of a knight check) 11 ♗h3 0-0-0 12 ♗f4 ♗d6 13 ♖d1 ♗b8 14 ♗d5 ♗ge7 15 ♗xd6 cxd6 16 ♗f4 ♖he8 17 ♗g3 ♖c8 18 ♖ac1 ♗xd5 19 ♖xd5 ♗a8, when White could have maintained a slight plus with 20 a3!?, but instead played 20 f3 which soon fizzled out to a draw in Ward-Westerinen, Benidorm 1995.

8...fxe6



10...♖d7 is necessary (and better than 10...♖c8?!, as White isn't really interested in the b7-pawn anyhow) although 11 ♖ac1!? does leave White with reasonable compensation.

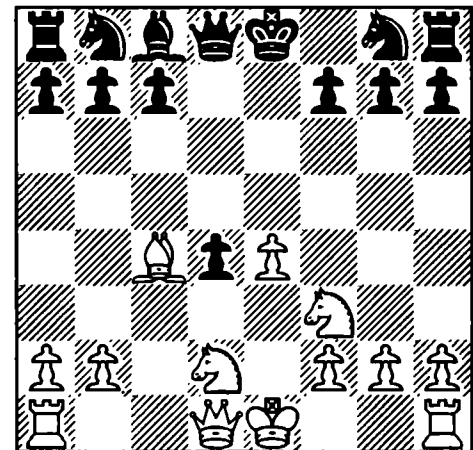
11 ♖ac1 ♖b8 12 ♗g5 ♖d7



13 ♖xc6! ♖xc6 14 ♖f7+ ♗d8 15 ♗e6+ ♗c8 16 ♖c1 1-0

Game 28
Epishin-Westerinen
Parnu 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 ♗f3 exd4 5 ♗xc4 ♗b4+ 6 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 7 ♗bxd2



9 ♖b3

The more routine 9 ♗b3 also looks quite good for White:

a) 9...e5? falls foul of 10 ♗xe5! ♗xe5 11 ♖h5+ ♗g6 12 ♖b5+.

b) 9...d3 10 ♗e3 ♗f6 11 ♗bd4 looks like regaining a pawn with a serious edge.

c) 9...♗f6 10 ♗fxd4 ♗xd4 11 ♗xd4 makes the e6-pawn stick out like a sore thumb.

9...♗xd2 10 ♗xd2 e5?

Clearly this move is of no theoretical importance, but I thought I'd include this short game because it is quite instructive. It's all very well saying 'I'll support my passed pawn and later do things down the f-file with the rooks,' but in reality the pawn must stay on e6 to block the a2-g8 diagonal and protect some squares.

7...♗h6

7...♗c6 is seen in the next main game, while the defenders amongst you out there (and it certainly wouldn't be everyone's cup of tea!) might wish to consider 7...c5 8

♘e5 ♘h6 9 ♖h5 0-0 10 h3 ♜e7 11 g4 ♘d7
12 ♘d3 b6 (or 12...♞b8 13 a4 b6). How-
ever, 7...♘f6 8 e5 ♘d5?! 9 ♖b3 c6 10
♙xd5 cxd5 11 ♘xd4 is just bad.

8 0-0 0-0

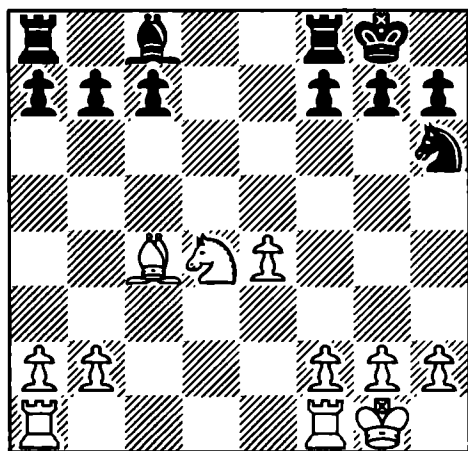
Having guarded f7 last turn, Black might instead prefer to venture into the greedy 8...c5 now. However, after seeing the old theoretical variation 9 ♘b3 ♜e7 10 ♞c1 b6 11 ♙d5 ♙b7 12 ♘xc5! bxc5 13 ♖a4+ ♔f8 14 ♞xc5! perhaps he'd rather not!

With 8...♘c6, Black would achieve a better version of the game after 9 ♘b3 ♙g4 10 ♘bxd4 ♘xd4 11 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 12 ♘xd4, as Black can solve the problem of the c7-pawn by castling queenside. However, 10 ♙b5! is then an improvement.

9 ♘b3 ♘c6 10 ♘bxd4 ♘xd4 11 ♖xd4

Black earlier took advantage of the fact that there was no bishop on c1 and developed his steed to a square where it defended f7. Now, however, it seems to be a case of 'knights on the rim are dim' as the knight takes time to re-enter the action.

11...♖xd4 12 ♘xd4



12...♘g4 13 ♘b5

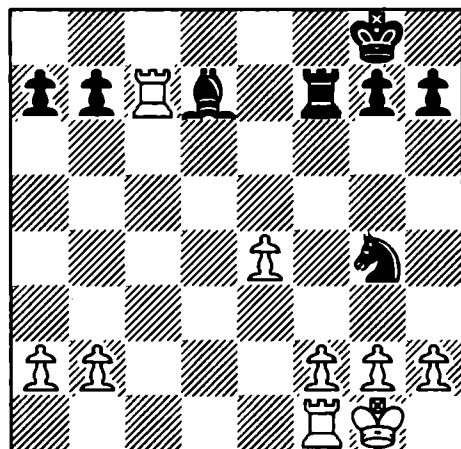
The c-pawn is at White's mercy because to advance it would enable the knight to hop into d6.

13...♙d7 14 ♘xc7! ♞ac8 15 ♞ac1

The reason why White was able to grab the pawn. White now secures a rook and

two pawns for two minor pieces in an endgame that is ideal for rooks.

15...♞xc7 16 ♙xf7+ ♞xf7 17 ♞xc7



17...♙c6

Alas Black was forced to part with his own rook to avoid losing a third pawn. Had he been able to preserve it, he would have had chances, but now it's curtains.

18 ♞c8+ ♞f8 19 ♞xf8+ ♔xf8 20 ♞d1 ♔e7 21 f3 ♘e5 22 ♔f2 ♘c4 23 b3 ♘a3 24 ♞c1 ♔d6 25 ♔e3 ♙d7 26 f4 ♙c6 27 g4 a5 28 h4 a4 29 bxa4 ♙xa4 30 e5+ ♔d7 31 ♞c3 ♘b1 32 ♞d3+ ♔e7 33 f5 ♙c2 34 ♞d4 ♘a3 35 ♔f4 b5 36 e6 ♙b1 37 ♞d7+ ♔e8 38 ♞xg7 ♙xa2 39 ♞xh7 1-0

Game 29

M. Gurevich-Meins

Groningen open 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 ♘f3 exd4 5 ♙xc4 ♙b4+ 6 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 7 ♘bxd2 ♘c6 8 0-0 ♖f6

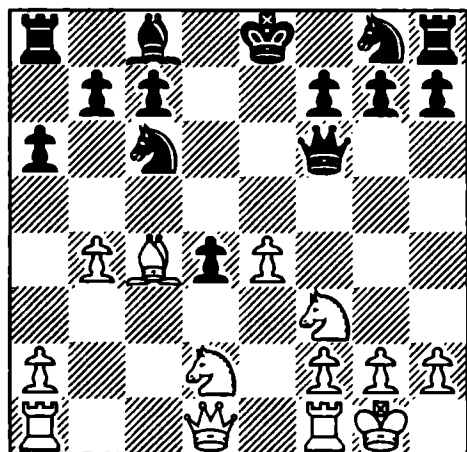
In the absence of the dark-squared bishops, this is objectively the best move. If Black could get in ...♘ge7, ...♙g4 and ...0-0-0, he would be laughing. However, that takes time and it's slightly puzzling as to why 8...♘f6 has gone out of fashion. Okay, so 9 e5! ♘d5 10 ♖b3 ♘a5 (10...♘ce7 11 ♘xd4 or even 11 ♘e4!? just seems to acquiesce) 11 ♖b5+ c6 12 ♖c5 b6

13 ♖xd4 was proven to be good by Karpov (the offside knight can trade itself for the bishop, but the d6-square is ripe for infiltration), but 9...♗g4!? 10 h3 ♗h6 11 ♖b3 ♗f5!? is yet to be refuted. Although 12 ♗b5 ♖d5 13 ♖bxd4 ♗fxd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗d7 15 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 16 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 17 ♖c1 ♖b6 18 e6!? comes close, 18...fxe6 19 ♖h5+ g6 20 ♖e5 0-0-0! then saves the day. **9 b4!?**

It's obvious why White might like to play this move before playing ♖b3 (along with the extra pressure on the d4-pawn, there would be support for a later ♗c5 invasion). White prefers not to commit the knight just yet. Not only might it be fruitfully placed on e4 (after the usual e4-e5 push), but the immediate 9 ♖b3 runs into 9...♗g4! as after 10 ♖bxd4 0-0-0, he finds himself pinned left, right and centre. Ideas with ♖e1 and/or e4-e5 straightaway are interchangeable with the text move.

9...a6

Black really needs to take steps to intercept White's expansion plan as 9...♗ge7, for example, would allow 10 b5 ♗d8 11 e5, when White will regain the d-pawn with a big space advantage. In order to get away with 9...♖xb4, Black needs to discover a better place for his queen because 10 e5 ♖g6 (somewhere else perhaps?) 11 ♖a4+ ♗c6 12 ♗xd4 ♗d7 (on 12...♗h3 there is 13 ♗d5) 13 e6! looks horrible.



10 a4

In forcing White to play this (i.e. if he's insistent on his b4-b5 plan), Black has at least taken away the ♖a4+ option from White.

Upon 10 ♖e1, the best continuation is 10...♗ge7 11 e5 ♖g6 12 ♖b3 0-0 13 ♗e4 ♗g4, as 13...♗e6?! (on the face of it removing pressure from f7) runs into the simple 14 ♗c5! It's better to give White something to think about.

10...♖xb4

The acid test.

11 e5 ♖g6 12 ♗xd4 ♗e7 13 ♖a3!

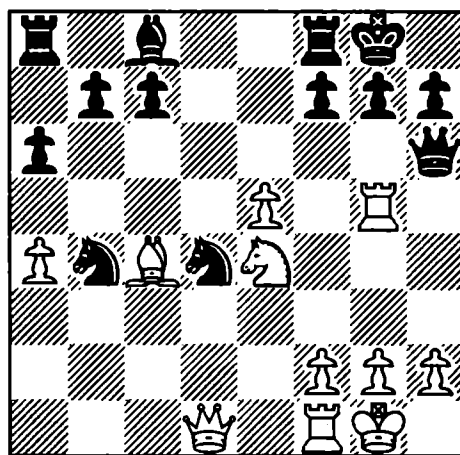
The point. White has written off the pawn deficit and is ready to swing his rook along the third rank to the kingside.

13...0-0 14 ♖g3 ♖h6 15 ♗e4 ♗f5

Played before White can get in the restricting ♖g5, preventing the text move and leaving the black queen feeling rather claustrophobic. That said and done, Black could instead try flying by his coattails with 15...♖bc6 16 ♖g5 ♖h8!?

16 ♖g5 ♗xd4

Black's king safety is also called into question after 16...g6 17 e6!



17 ♗f6+! ♖h8 18 ♖h5 ♖xh5 19 ♖xh5!?

Going for the kill. 19 ♗xh5 was safer and looks good, but White evidently felt that there was no need to be fiddling around.

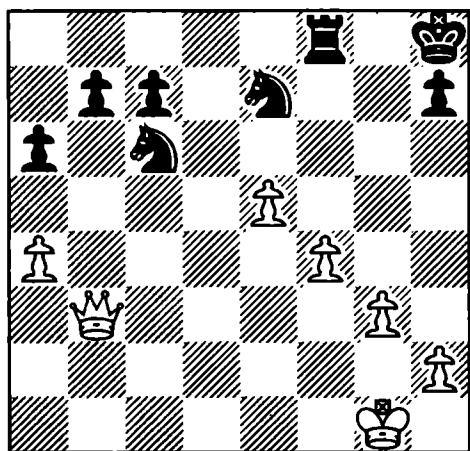
19...gxf6 20 ♖h4 ♗f5

On 20...fxe5, the d4-knight would have dropped anyway after 21 ♖f6+ ♔g8 22 ♗g5+ ♕h8 23 ♗xe5+ f6 24 ♗xd4.

21 ♗xf6+ ♕g8

Black has two knights and a rook for a queen, but his army is badly co-ordinated and the exposed nature of his king means that the practical chances are with White.

22 ♖d1 ♗e6 23 ♗xe6 fxe6 24 ♗xe6+ ♕h8 25 ♖d7 ♖ae8 26 ♗b3 ♖c6 27 f4 ♖e7 28 ♖xe7 ♖fxe7 29 g3



In terms of pieces, White has only a queen left. However, it is naturally the best 'man' for the job of advancing his massive pawn majority whilst hindering Black's.

29...♖b8 30 ♗f7 b5 31 f5! ♖g8 32 f6 ♖g6 33 e6 ♖d8 34 ♗xg8+ ♕xg8 35 e7 1-0

Game 30
Van Wely-Anand
Monaco (blindfold) 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 ♖f3 exd4 5 ♗xc4 ♖c6 6 0-0 ♗e6!?

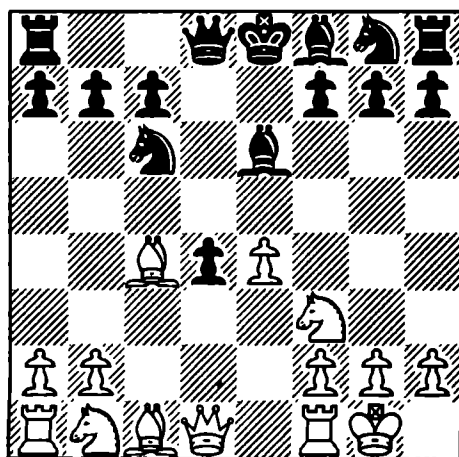
Recently this variation (i.e. avoiding ...♗b4+) has become very popular as Black has been struggling in the old main lines. For the sake of completeness, it is probably worth mentioning that whereas previously 6 ♗b3?! (i.e. before 6 0-0) could be met easily by 6...♗b4+ (with the black

queen soon defending the f7-pawn on f6 or e7), now 6...♗g4?! 7 ♗b3 would be strong as Black has the b-pawn to worry about too. Compared to the game, this time on 7...♗d7, White would have 8 ♗xf7+! ♗xf7 9 ♗xb7.

One other continuation that I would like to bring to your attention though is Grandmaster Nenashev's 6...♖f6. After 7 e5 ♖e4 8 ♖e1 ♖c5, there are similarities with the Open Spanish. The black knight wishes to park itself on e6 and 9 ♗g5 ♗d7 leads to a very interesting position. Certainly White is prompted into playing actively and although the following two encounters both ended in White wins, clearly there is a great deal of room for improvement:

a) 10 ♖a3 ♖e6 11 ♖b5 ♗c5 12 ♖c1 ♗b6 13 ♖e4 0-0 14 ♖h4 ♖xg5 15 ♖xg5 ♖xe5 16 ♖xh7 ♗f5 17 ♖xf8 d3 18 ♖d4 ♗g5 19 ♖h5 ♗f4 20 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 21 ♖g6! ♗g5 (not 21...♗xd4 22 ♗h5!) 22 ♗xf7! ♕xf7 23 ♖f3, Ward-Nenashev, Metz 1995.

b) 10 b4 ♖e6 (not 10...♖xb4?! 11 e6! ♖xe6 12 ♖e5 ♗d6 13 ♗h5! g6 14 ♗f3) 11 b5 ♖cd8 (perhaps Black could try 11...♖a5!? as both 12 ♗xe6 fxe6 13 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 14 ♖xd4 ♗c5 15 ♗e3 b6 and 12 ♗d3 b6 13 ♖bd2 ♗b4 14 ♖e4 ♗b7 15 ♖h4 h6 look eminently playable) 12 ♖bd2, Notkin-Nenashev, Cappelle la Grande open 1995.

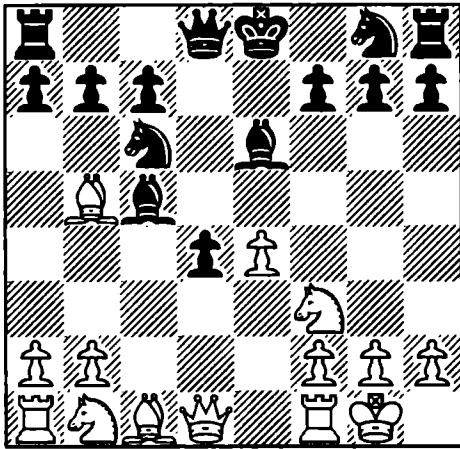


7 ♖b5

7 ♖xe6 is the subject of the next main game.

7...♗c5

Bringing the bishop out to defend the d-pawn before developing the king's knight on the natural e7-square.



8 ♜c2

Although this looks very sensible, in fact results would indicate that the plan of regaining the pawn so soon in this manner isn't too promising. There are three other alternatives that need to be considered:

a) 8 ♘bd2 ♘ge7 9 ♘g5!? (White has no advantage after 9 ♘b3 ♖b6 10 ♘bxd4 ♗d7, but this move secures the bishop as now amongst others 9...♗d7? would fall into 10 ♘xf7! ♜xf7 11 ♜h5+) 9...♜d7 10 ♘xe6 ♜xe6 11 ♘b3 ♜d6 (this time 11...♖b6 12 ♘xd4 would offer White a plus) 12 ♗f4 ♜xf4 13 ♘xc5 0-0 (13...0-0-0?! 14 ♜b3 looks a bit risky) 14 ♜c1, when White has queenside pressure and the potential of a kingside pawn steamroller to show for his pawn.

b) 8 ♘g5!?, ignoring his queenside development in the hope of catching Black on the hop. Now the casual 8...♘ge7?? would lose a piece to 9 ♘xe6 fxe6 10 ♜h5+, while 9...♜d6 would offer the additional option of 10 e5!? Black should choose between 8...♜e7, 8...♜d7 and 8...♘f6, after which White must decide

whether to expend energy ganging up on the d4-pawn or go for broke with an f2-f4 expansion.

c) 8 b4 ♖b6 (8...♖xb4? 9 ♘xd4 ♗d7 10 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 11 ♘xc6 ♜xd1 12 ♜xd1 bxc6 is a nice endgame for White and 10...bxc6 11 ♜c2 is no better) 9 ♖b2 ♘ge7 10 ♘xd4 0-0 11 ♘xc6 ♘xc6 12 ♖xc6 bxc6 isn't so great for White. The fact that his b-pawn is so advanced makes it easier for Black to exchange a weak pawn or two (and yes, this time it's Black with the two bishops!).

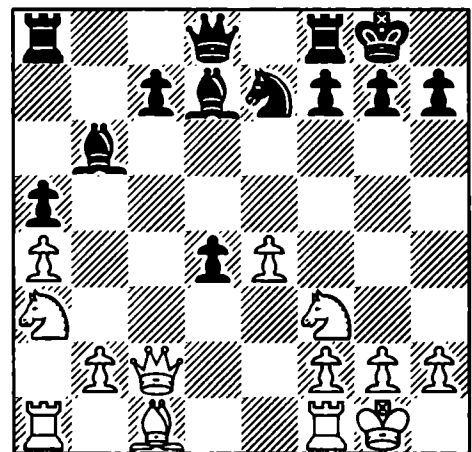
8...♖b6 9 a4

On the face of it, the insertion of 9 a4 and 9...a5 appears to help White because the scope of Black's dark-squared bishop is reduced. However, later we see that as a result, White has problems with his b-pawn as well as a lack of control over the b4-square.

9...a5 10 ♖xc6+ bxc6 11 ♜xc6+ ♗d7 12 ♜c2

Not for the first time an old problem for Black rears its ugly head. White can, and frequently has, repeated moves with 12 ♜c4 ♗e6 13 ♜c6+ ♗d7 14 ♜c4 etc., forcing a draw by repetition because Black has no satisfactory way to avoid it.

12...♘e7 13 ♘a3 0-0



14 ♘c4

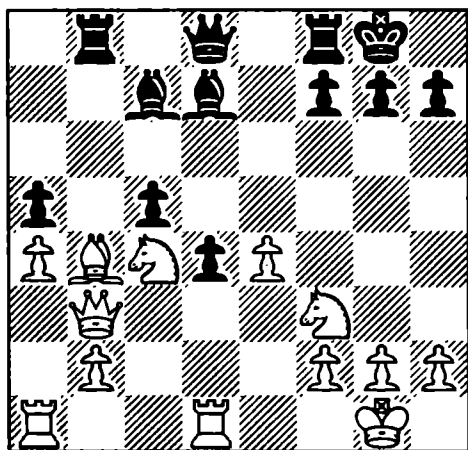
I used to think that White should have some advantage in these type of positions, but I'm no longer so sure. Effectively here

(in reality I had already repeated once with 12 ♖c4 ♙e6 13 ♜c6+ ♙d7 14 ♜c2) I continued with 14 ♘e5 ♘g6 15 ♘xg6 hxg6 16 ♘c4 ♙e6 17 ♚d1 against Bogdan Lalic (Four Nations League 1998), but after 17...♙xc4! 18 ♜xc4 ♜h4 19 f3 ♚ad8 it transpired that with ...f7-f5 possibly in mind for the future, Black had enough play for his bad bishop and awkward queenside pawn structure.

14...♘c6 15 ♚d1 ♘b4

As previously advertised, this demonstrates a frailty of 9 a4.

16 ♜b3 c5 17 ♙d2 ♙c7 18 ♙xb4 ♚b8!?



By aiming to recapture with his rook, Black makes it more difficult for his opponent to 'dig in' with his knights.

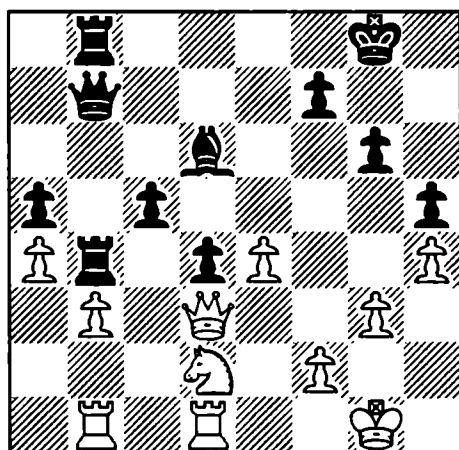
19 ♜c2 ♚xb4 20 ♘ce5 ♙d6 21 ♘d7 ♜xd7 22 b3

Although it looks as though White is constructing a nice light-squared blockade, the truth is that he is going to have problems with some of his pawns (particularly the one on b3).

22...♜e6 23 ♘d2 ♚fb8 24 ♚ab1 h5!?

This move shows incredible foresight for someone physically unsighted (both players were blindfolded, but as is often the case when strong players meet under such conditions, the game can still be of a high quality). With his dealings on the kingside, Anand proceeds to create another useful diagonal for his bishop.

25 ♘c4 ♙c7 26 ♜d3 g6 27 h4 ♜c6 28 g3 ♜b7 29 ♘d2 ♙d6



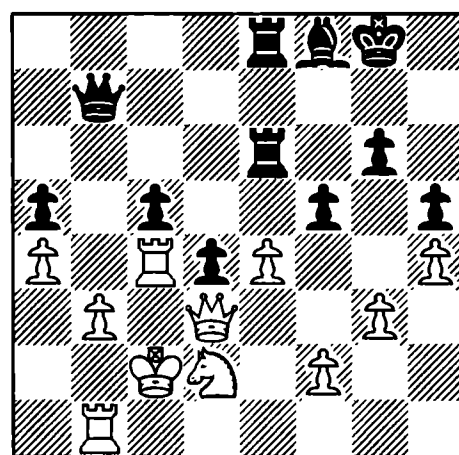
30 ♚dc1 ♙e7 31 ♚c4 ♚b6

Black is certainly not interested in a trade of rooks. He has manoeuvred himself superbly so that his three major pieces are tying White down to the defence of the b-pawn. The next stage is to remove the knight, which is holding White's position together.

32 ♙f1 ♙f8

Vacating the e-file to enable the rooks to attack the e-pawn, while making ...♙h6 an option.

33 ♙e2 ♚e8 34 ♙d1 ♚be6 35 ♙c2 f5!



White's idea of using his king to defend the b-pawn was nice in theory. However, in practice, we soon see what happens.

36 exf5 ♚e2 37 fxg6 ♙h6 38 ♚d1 ♜d5!

A quiet move, but with the exception

of his king and the ridiculous 39 ♖c3, White can't move a piece.

39 ♖b1 ♖xf2

Grabbing a pawn and paving the way to seventh heaven for his rooks. It's almost painful to watch.

40 ♜c2 d3 41 ♜c3 ♖xd2! 42 ♖xd2 ♗e1+ 43 ♖a2 ♗xd2 44 ♜f6

Or 44 ♜xd2 ♗e2.

44...♗e2 0-1

Game 31

Van Wely-Sutovsky

Wijk aan Zee 1997

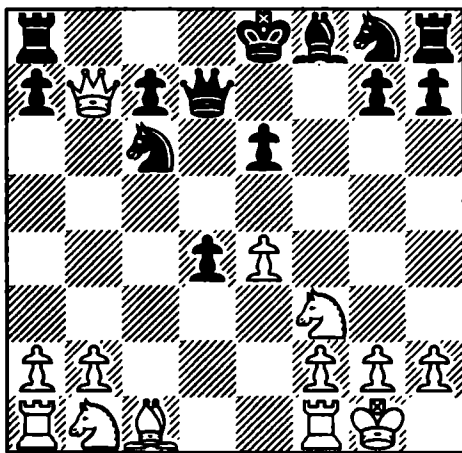
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 ♘f3 exd4 5 ♗xc4 ♘c6 6 0-0 ♗e6 7 ♗xe6

Posing the usual question: Just how weak will the e6-pawn and the squares around it be?

7...fxe6 8 ♜b3

Straight to the point. In the event of simple development, Black could easily consolidate his extra pawn. Now Black definitely won't want to play the passive 8...♜c8?! and so the fun begins.

8...♜d7 9 ♜xb7



Instead White could try for a different pawn with 9 ♘g5, when Black is best off returning it via 9...0-0-0! rather than grovelling with 9...♘d8. With the text, White redresses the material situation and now the question is whether or not Black's

piece play is sufficient compensation for his inferior pawn structure.

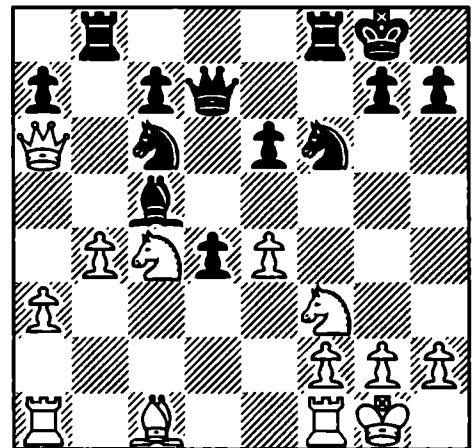
9...♗b8 10 ♜a6 ♘f6 11 ♘bd2 ♗b4

Black obviously wants to get castled as quickly as possible, and this looks like the best place for the bishop. Clearly not happy to just let Black trade minor pieces on d2, White is now provoked into incarcerating his queen. Nevertheless, after what happens, I wouldn't be surprised if in future we see the more cautious 12 ♜d3.

12 ♘c4 0-0

The e4-pawn was out of bounds, e.g. 12...♘xe4 13 ♘ce5 ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 when a white queen or knight would land on c6.

13 a3 ♗c5 14 b4



14...♘xe4!!

Karpov and Anand had two fascinating encounters with 14...♗b6 15 b5 ♘e7 16 ♘fe5 ♜e8. In the first game (Dos Hermanas 1997) Karpov seemed to gain a comfortable edge with 17 ♗e1 ♘g6 (it strikes me that a black knight might be of more use on the queenside and as White was evidently avoiding swaps, perhaps 17...♘d7!?, threatening 18...♘c5, might have been better) 18 ♘d3!, but next time (Dortmund 1997) he gambled with the incredible 17 a4!? (aiming for a4-a5, but leaving the queen extremely short of squares). Both tussles eventually ended in draws and, though entertaining, they may

be rendered theoretically redundant by the text move.

15 ♖e1

On 15 bxc5, Black doesn't play 15...♗xc5? immediately because of 16 ♖fe5!, but rather inserts 15...♞xf3! 16 gxf3 first. The white queen would be trapped (the whole basis of 14...♗xe4!!) and after 16...♗xc5, he would have to play 17 ♖e5 anyway. However, Black would have some pawns and generally excellent compensation (especially in terms of attacking chances) for the exchange.

15...♗d5 16 ♞xe4

I suppose that White could have just written off his pawn again with 16 ♖b2, claiming positional compensation. But this would have meant proving enough after 16...♗d6 or alternatively facing the promising complications of 16...d3!? Note that 16 bxc5? ♗xc5 would have just lost the queen, but the text manages to secure two minor pieces for a rook. Sounds good until you take a look at the pawn count.

16...♗xe4 17 ♖cd2

And not 17 bxc5?? yet because of the disaster that would befall White's back rank after 17...♞b1.

17...♗d5 18 bxc5 ♗xc5 19 ♗c4

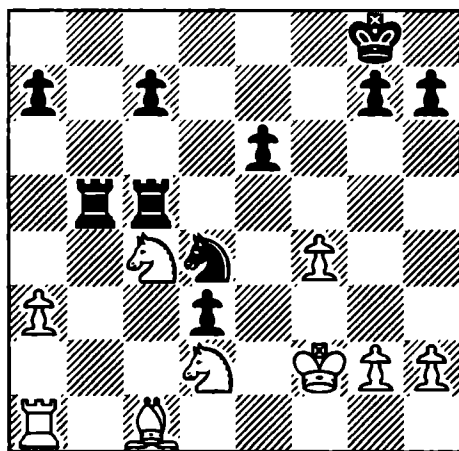
Ordinarily it would seem illogical for White to seek a queen trade, but with ...♗c3 on the cards, it was unavoidable.

19...♗xc4 20 ♖xc4

In an endgame situation such as this (where there is plenty of action for the rooks), the two extra pawns should be enough for Black to take the full point.

However, some clever defending, combined with some inaccurate play in time-trouble enabled White to scrape a draw.

20...♞f5 21 ♖f1 ♞c5 22 ♖fd2 d3 23 f3 ♖d4 24 ♖f2 ♞bb5 25 f4



25...a5?

It would have been more to the point to attempt to force access to the seventh rank with 25...♞c6! (intending 26...♞bc5) or even 25...♖b3.

26 a4 ♞b4 27 ♖e5 ♞c3 28 ♗a3 ♞xa4 29 ♗b2 ♞xa1 30 ♗xc3 ♞a2 31 ♖ec4 ♖b3 32 ♖e3 ♖xd2 33 ♖xd2 h5 34 ♖xd3 ♖h7 35 g3 a4 36 h3 ♖h6 37 ♗e5 ♞a3+ 38 ♗c3 ♞a2 39 ♗e5 c6 40 ♗c3 g6 41 h4 ♖h7 42 ♖c4 ♖g8 43 ♖b4 ♞c2 44 ♖e4 ♞e2 45 ♖d6 ♞e3 46 ♗f6 ♞xg3 47 ♖c4 a3 48 ♖xa3 c5+ 49 ♖a4 ♖f7 50 ♗d8 ♖e8 51 ♗f6 ♞g4 52 ♖b5 ♞xf4 53 ♗g5 ♞f5 54 ♖c4 ♖d7 55 ♗e3 e5 56 ♖xc5 ♖e6 57 ♖d2 ♞f8 58 ♖c4 ♞d8 59 ♖e4 ♖f5 60 ♖f2 e4 61 ♖c3 ♖e5 62 ♖c2 ♞a8 63 ♖d1 ♞a1+ 64 ♖e2 ♖d5 65 ♖d2 ♞a2+ 66 ♖e1 ♞a8 67 ♖e2 ♞f8 68 ♗h6 ½-½

Summary

Reflecting upon this chapter, I must admit that the results look quite depressing for Black. Usually it seems as though White's greater control of the centre is of more relevance than Black's static queenside pawn majority (particularly as that rarely has a positive influence on the early stages of the game).

Much of the theory of this variation has been around for donkey's years and could quite possibly return to the limelight. However, the current state of play is that Black's best chance in the 3 e4 e5 variation lies with the neutralising 5...♘c6 6 0-0 ♙e6 of Games 30 and 31.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5

4 ♘f3 exd4

4...♙b4+ 5 ♘c3 exd4 (D)

6 ♗xd4 - Game 23

6 ♘xd4 - Game 24

5 ♙xc4

5 ♗xd4 - Game 25

5...♙b4+

5...♘c6 6 0-0 ♙e6 (D)

7 ♙b5 - Game 30

7 ♙xe6 - Game 31

6 ♘bd2

6 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 7 ♘bxd2 (D)

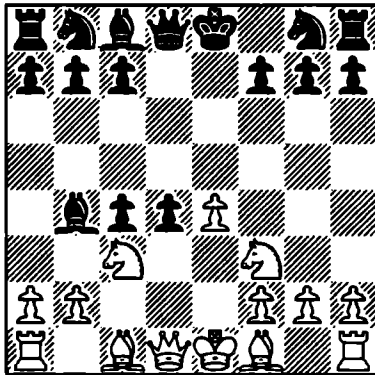
7...♘h6 - Game 28

7...♘c6 - Game 29

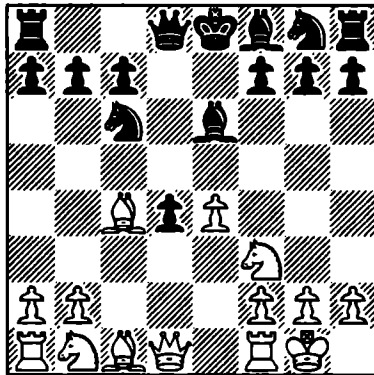
6...♘c6 7 0-0 ♘f6

7...♙e6 - Game 27

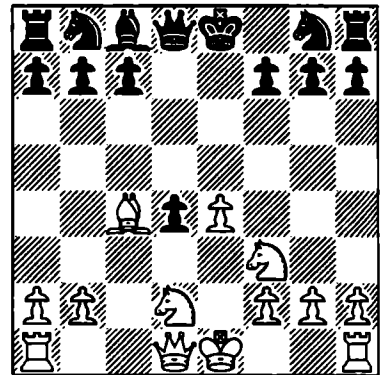
8 e5 - Game 26



5...exd4



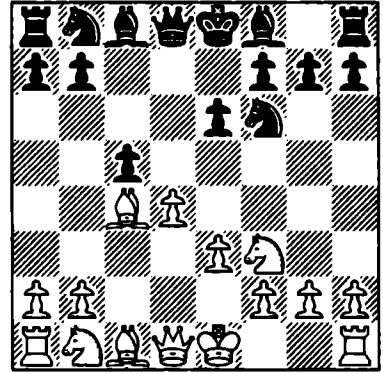
6...♙e6



7 ♘bd2

CHAPTER FIVE

Classical Variation without an early ♖e2



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5

Most players would consider this position to be the main line of the QGA and, based on bare statistics, they're probably right. In this chapter and the following one we shall take this position as the starting point. While every variation has its own individual nuances, there are of course several common features in the next two chapters. One very frequent feature is the hotly disputed Isolated Queen's Pawn (IQP) situation. As soon as Black trades his c-pawn for White's d-pawn (with White recapturing with his e-pawn), the battle commences. Will the inevitable white kingside attack be successful or will Black rebuff the enemy advances and later win the day due to more positional considerations?

As you will see, Black is not forced to give White an IQP and there are plenty of interesting alternatives. Particularly worth noting are the concept of ...b7-b6 for Black (not allowing White to attack a b5-pawn with a2-a4) and the e3-e4 gambit lines for White.

This chapter focuses on lines without an early ♖e2; specifically, not on move six or seven. In fact this manoeuvre, designed

to enable the f1-rook to switch to d1, does crop up in this chapter in a delayed form, but other preparatory moves receive full coverage.

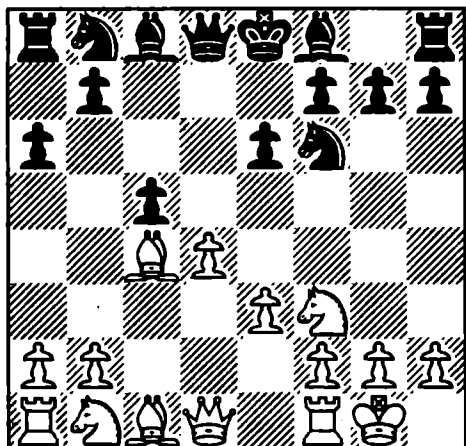
Game 32 Leitao-Baburin Bermuda 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e6 4 ♗xc4 c5 5 ♘f3 a6 6 0-0

Even this first game of the chapter arrives at our starting position via a different move order, but that is fairly indicative of what is to follow. With the exception of 6 ♖e2, covered in the next chapter, usually White castles on his sixth move, reaching the position below. Practically every game that I've seen with the wet 6 dxc5 has ended in a draw, but in the recent encounter Hodgson-Leseige, Europe-Americas 1998, 6 ♘c3 (i.e. instead of 6 0-0) turned out to be of independent significance after 6...♘f6 7 a4 ♘c6 8 d5 exd5 9 ♘xd5 (compared to lines in Chapter 3, the white pawn on e3 keeps control of the d4-square, while the c1-bishop would be well placed along the c3-g7 diagonal) 9...♘xd5?! (this makes Black's seventh move look dubious; he could have played 7...cxd4 or

7...b5, but the fact that White will now be threatening to completely mess up Black's pawn structure makes life a little awkward) 10 ♖xd5 ♗e7 11 ♖xc6+ bxc6 12 ♜xd8+ ♖xd8 13 ♗d2. Here the presence of the bishop pair doesn't adequately compensate Black for his crippled queen-side pawn structure.

6...♗f6



This then is the position from which all (bar 6 ♜e2) of the main divergences take place. Indeed White has a wide choice here. Aside from the game move and 7 ♜e2 (see the next chapter) we shall also be considering no less than six(!) other moves: 7 a4 (Games 33 and 34), 7 a3 (Game 35), 7 b3 (Game 36), 7 ♗d3 (Game 37), 7 ♗b3 (Games 38-41) and 7 e4 (Games 42 and 43).

7 ♗c3 b5 8 ♗b3 ♗b7 9 ♜e2

As a prelude to the next chapter, this flexible move vacates d1 for a rook, eyes up the b5-pawn and gives support to an e3-e4 push.

9 ♗e1 ♗bd7 10 e4 cxd4 11 ♗xd4 ♗c5 12 f3 doesn't look like anything special for White, but after some generally inaccurate play, 12...♗xb3 13 ♗xb3 ♗e7 14 ♗e3 0-0 15 ♗c5 ♗xc5+ 16 ♗xc5 ♜b6 17 ♜d4 ♗fd8 18 ♜f2 ♗ac8 19 ♗ad1 ♗c6 (not 19...♗xd1 20 ♗xd1 ♗xc5 because of 21 b4!) 20 a3 h6 21 b4 a5 22 ♗b3 ♜xf2+ 23 ♗xf2 axb4 24 axb4 ♗xd1 25 ♗xd1 ♗e8 26 ♗c5 ♗f8 27

♗e3 ♗a8 28 ♗d6 ♗a3 29 ♗d2 ♗a1 30 e5 ♗d5 31 ♗xd5 exd5 32 ♗e3, things had definitely gone a bit pear-shaped for Black in Nenashev-Nguyen, Jakarta 1997.

9...♗bd7 10 e4

Instead 10 ♗d1 ♜b6 11 a4 c4 12 ♗c2 b4 13 a5 ♜c7 14 ♗a4 ♗c8 15 e4 b3 16 ♗b1 leads to a fascinatingly unbalanced position in which Matthew Sadler once got away with grabbing the a5-pawn with 16...♜xa5. After 17 e5 ♗d5 18 ♗g5, White generated some genuine attacking chances, but nothing conclusive was ever discovered and possibly 11 d5!? is a better try for White.

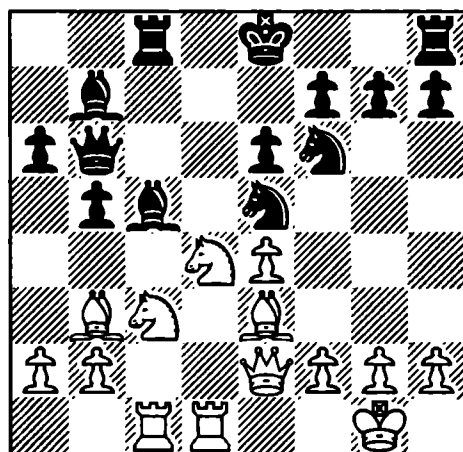
10...cxd4

An attempt to win the e4-pawn with 10...b4?! fails because of 11 e5! bxc3 12 exf6 when 12...♗xf6 runs into the bishop check on a4 and both 12...♜xf6 and 12...exf6 are strongly met by 13 d5! Clearly 12...cxb2 13 ♗xb2 wouldn't help the situation either.

11 ♗xd4 ♗c5 12 ♗e3 ♜b6

This square is visited frequently by the black queen in the Classical variation, but this game demonstrates why it isn't always as safe there as it might seem.

13 ♗fd1 ♗e5 14 ♗ac1 ♗c8?!



It's true that one or two potential tactics revolving around the c5-bishop appear to be approaching, but the delay in castling just makes things worse.

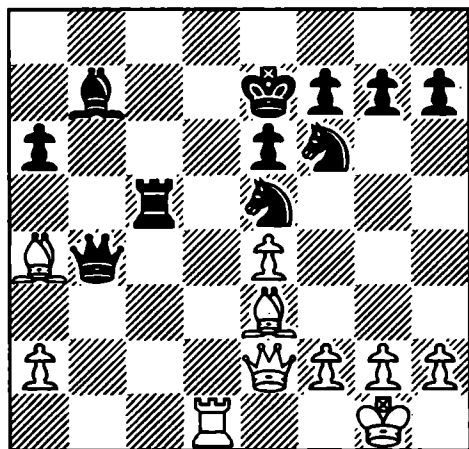
15 ♖a4!! bxa4 16 ♗xa4+ ♕e7?

16...♗ed7 17 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 18 ♖b3 ♗c6
19 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 20 ♜d6 regains all of the
material, leaving White with a tremendous
position, and 16...♗fd7 17 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 18
♖b3 ♗c6 19 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 20 ♗xc6+ ♜xc6
21 ♜c1 ♜xe4 22 ♜xc5 is also better for
White.

17 ♜xc5! ♜xc5 18 ♖b3 ♜hc8

18...♖xe4 19 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 20 ♜d2 a5
(stopping 21 b4) 21 ♗xc5+ ♜xc5 22 ♜g5+
leads to checkmate.

19 ♖xc5 ♜xc5 20 b4 ♜xb4



21 ♜d2 1-0

Black's rook (or queen) will have to
drop to avoid the mates on d8 and d6.

Game 33

Dzandzhava-Sadler

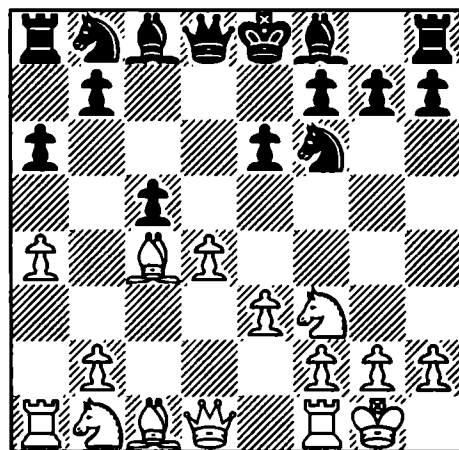
Yerevan Olympiad 1996

1 d4 d5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 e3 e6 5
♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6

If anyone searching through this book
is becoming annoyed because they can't
find the old 'Steinitz variation' (6...cxd4),
you can stop now because you won't find
it! Several of the games in this chapter end
up in a typical Steinitz-style IQP situation,
but nowadays Black players rarely com-
mit themselves with 6...cxd4. I guess that
the reasoning behind that is that 7 dxc5 is
hardly a threat, so there is no need to

show one's hand at this point and give
White more options.

7 a4



Hardly a bad move, although it may
not have been White's first choice had
...c5xd4 e3xd4 already been interjected.
The versatility of 6...a6 is that Black can
follow up ...b7-b5 with ...c5-c4 as well as
...c5xd4.

7...♖c6 8 ♜e2

On 8 ♖c3, it's usual for Black to take
advantage of the fact that ♜d1 isn't avail-
able by playing 8...cxd4 9 exd4 ♗e7. The
inclusion of 6...a6 7 a4 has given Black a
grip on the b4-square. However, an obvi-
ous downside is that he can't play ...b7-b5
and a fairly common IQP is the result.
Now 10 ♗g5 0-0 11 ♜d2 (not an im-
provement on having the queen on e2 and
I must say that 11 ♜e1 looked more natu-
ral) 11...b6 12 ♜ad1 ♗b7 13 ♖e5 ♖b4
(utilising the b4-square to erect a blockade
on d5) 14 f4 (an aggressive move which
nonetheless invokes extra weaknesses)
14...♖e4 15 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 16 ♜de1 ♗d5 17
♗xd5 ♖xd5 18 ♖c6 ♜d6 19 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7
20 ♗xe7 ♜xe7 21 f5 ♜d6 22 f6 (going for
broke when 22 fxe6 would have shared
the wares) 22...♜fd8 23 ♜e4 g6 24 ♜f3 ♜f8
25 ♜h3 ♜d5 26 ♜eh4 h5 27 g4 ♜d8 28
gxh5 g5 29 ♜g3 was seen in Zviaginsev-
Benjamin, FIDE World Championship,
Groningen 1997, when Black had the bet-

ter of the draw.

8...♖c7

Initiating an alternative plan to the standard idea of saddling White with an IQP (for which, see the next game).

9 ♖c3 ♙d6

The idea. Black takes full advantage of the fact that White can't play 10 ♖b5.

10 ♙d1 0-0 11 h3

11 ♙d2!? is an alternative approach, ready to meet 11...b6 12 d5 exd5 13 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 14 ♙xd5 ♙b7 by parking his bishop on the useful c3-square.

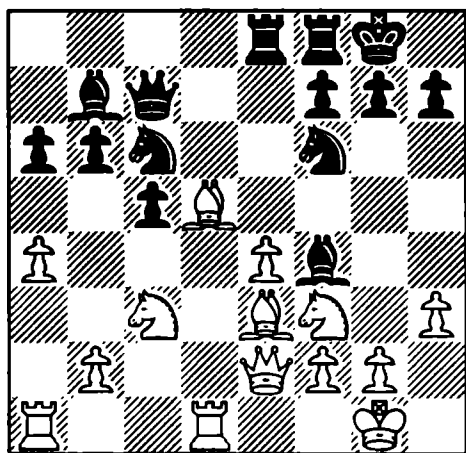
11...b6

It should be noted that with the gaping white holes on b4 and b3, it's far from inconceivable that Black might choose to recapture with the b-pawn after 12 dxc5. Now it seems that White loses patience with waiting moves and eschews the quieter 12 b3 in favour of an attempt to gain space.

12 d5 exd5 13 ♙xd5 ♙b7 14 e4 ♖ae8

Pressurising the e4-pawn and the general situation around d5.

15 ♙e3 ♙f4



16 ♖ac1

After 16 a5!?, Black should be content with active play despite his isolated pawns via 16...♙xe3 17 axb6 ♖xb6 18 ♖xe3 ♖d4!?, rather than allow his knight to be misplaced by 16...♖xa5?! 17 ♙xf4 ♖xf4 18 ♙xb7 ♖xb7 19 ♖xa6.

16...h6 17 ♙xf4?!

White sees a pawn, but soon pays the price for drawing the enemy pieces to his king.

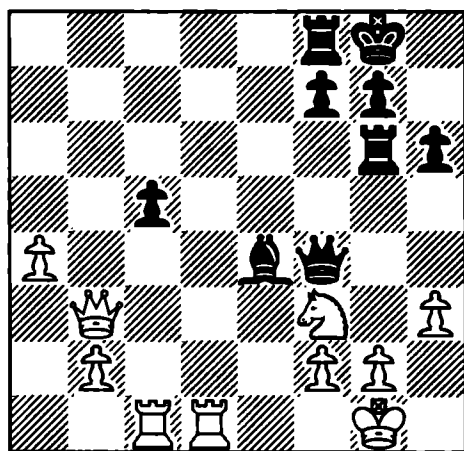
17...♖xf4 18 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 19 ♖xa6 ♖xe4 20 ♖xb6 ♙e6!

Defending the bishop, preparing to swing into action on the kingside and incidentally threatening the odd discovered attack on the white queen.

21 ♖xe4 ♙xe4 22 ♖b3

22 ♖xc5? ♙xf3 23 gxf3 ♖g6+ 24 ♖f1 ♖xf3 didn't bear thinking about as White must offer some cover to his king.

22...♖g6!?



23 ♖e1 ♖b8 24 ♖c4

24 ♖c3 would have run into the neat combination 24...♙xg2! 25 ♖xg2 ♖e4 26 f3 ♖e2.

24...♖xb2 25 ♖f1 ♖b3

Threatening 26...♖xh3 and thus forcing White to part with a key defensive pawn.

26 f3 ♙xf3 27 ♖f2 ♙e3 28 ♖a1 ♖h7

A calm move entering time trouble. 28...♖e2 also looked impressive.

29 a5 ♖e4!? 30 ♙d2 ♖e5!

The intention being to withdraw the bishop to a8 and continue the pounding with the major pieces.

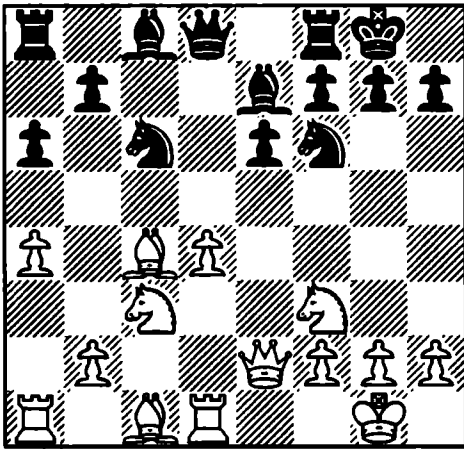
31 ♖xf3 ♖xa1+ 32 ♖h2 ♖a3 33 ♖xc5 ♖xa5 34 ♖c8 ♖f6 35 ♙d8 ♖f4+ 36 ♖h1 ♖a1+ 37 ♖g1 ♙e6 38 ♖c2+ ♖e4 39 ♖c3 ♖e1 40 ♙d3+ ♖g6 41 ♖d4 ♖f1 0-1

Game 34
Korotylev-Vaulin
Zepter open, Minsk 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e6 4 ♖xc4 c5 5 ♜f3 ♜f6 6 0-0 a6 7 a4 ♜c6 8 ♚e2 cxd4 9 ♜d1 ♙e7 10 exd4

With all things considered, it still seems more profitable for White to accept the isolani (and the active piece play that goes with it) rather than getting all solid with the unadventurous 10 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 11 ♜xd4 ♚c7. Actually Black could have forced such a scenario with 9...d3, but at least then with 10 ♙xd3, White would have gained an extra tempo.

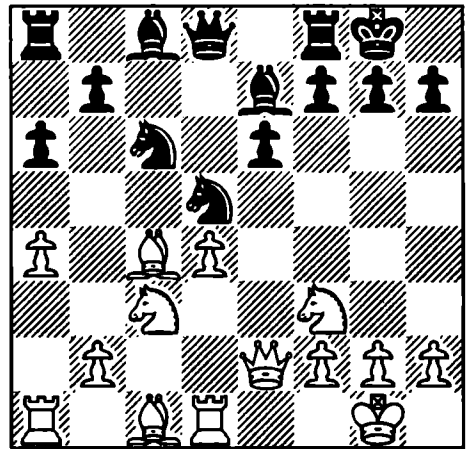
10...0-0 11 ♜c3



11...♜d5

The logical 11...♜b4 12 ♙g5 ♙d7 13 ♜e5 ♙c6 14 ♜xc6 bxc6 doesn't look too bad for Black. His control of the d5-square and the isolated white d-pawn provide compensation for his own split queenside. Nevertheless, as you will see, things started going wrong in Naumkin-Zaja, Bozen 1998, when holes began to appear in his kingside as well: 15 a5! (fixing the a6-pawn) 15...♜e8 (15...♜b8!? looks more energetic) 16 ♙f4 ♜fd5 17 ♙e5 f6?! 18 ♙g3 ♙f8 19 ♜d2 ♜a7 20 ♚f3 ♙d6 21 ♜e4 ♙xg3 22 hxg3 e5 23 dxex5 ♜xe5 24 ♜c3 ♜d7 25 g4 ♜h8 26 g3 ♜de7 27 ♜e2 ♜xe2

28 ♜xe2 ♚d7 29 ♜d1 ♜e5 30 ♜d4 ♚e7 31 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 32 ♜xd5 g6 33 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 34 ♚a8+ ♜g7 35 ♙xa6 1-0. As you will no doubt soon witness, more often than not, if White gets in the thematic d4-d5, then matters turn out nicely for him. This would explain Black's eagerness to stop this pawn in its tracks.

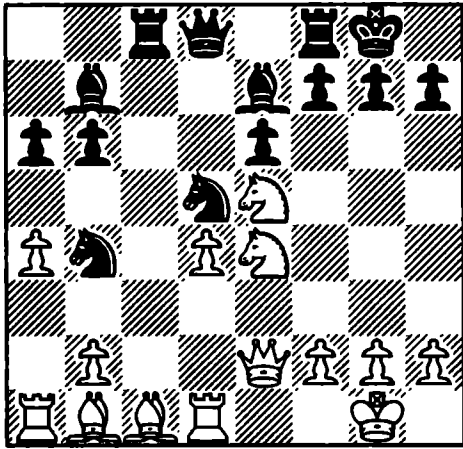


12 ♜e4

Certainly not the only move and indeed White has several playable alternative plans. A very popular one involves the immediate alignment of the white queen and bishop toward the h7-pawn via 12 ♚e4 or 12 ♙b3, but there have also been takers for the odd-looking 12 ♙d2!?, e.g. 12...b6 13 ♙b3 (12...b6 looks like nothing but a feint after 13 ♜xd5 exd5 14 ♙b3 ♙g4!, but 13 ♙a2!? is probably better, as from there the bishop can drop back to b1) 13...♜db4! (13...♙b7 is an error now because of 14 ♜xd5, whereas the text prevents the bishop from going to c2) 14 ♜e4 ♜a5!? (an interesting alternative to the perfectly sensible 14...♙b7) 15 ♙xb4 ♜xb3 16 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 17 ♜a3 ♜a5 18 ♜e3! ♙b7 19 ♜c3 ♚d6 20 ♜g5 h6 21 ♜ge4 ♙xe4? (exchanges usually make an isolated pawn look weaker, but this is a mistake because White's isolated pawn will soon be a thing of the past; the black knight is miles away from blockading on d5 and White's centralised pieces prove to be far

too dominant) 22 ♖xe4! ♜fd8 (or 22...♜fe8 23 d5 e5 24 f4!) 23 d5 exd5 24 ♘xd5 ♕f8 25 g3 ♜c6 26 ♜ed4 ♜e8 27 ♜d3 ♕g8 28 ♜g4!? ♜e6 29 b4 ♘b7 30 ♜d4 g5 31 h4! f5 32 hxg5 fxg4 33 gxh6 1-0 Speelman-Borge, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

12...b6 13 ♖d3 ♘cb4 14 ♖b1 ♖b7 15 ♘e5 ♜c8



16 ♜a3!?

A bonus of 7 a4. Now the bishops don't look so silly on the back rank as the rook sets its sights on swinging along the third rank to the kingside.

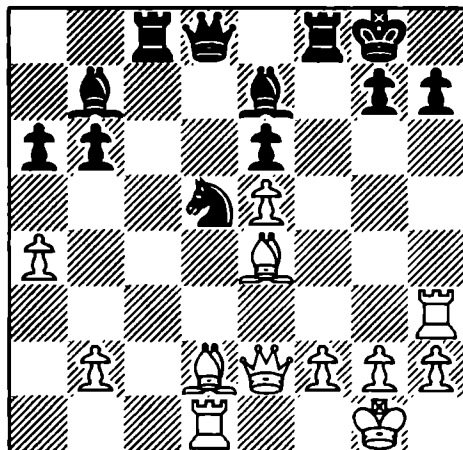
16...f5 17 ♖d2!? ♘c6

The e4-knight was of course a 'Trojan horse' as 17...fxe4 18 ♜xe4 g6 19 ♘xg6! ♜f7 20 ♜g3 would have been crushing.

18 ♜h3 ♘xe5 19 dxe5 fxe4

19...g6!? might have been more resilient.

20 ♖xe4



20...♜f5

On 20...h6, 21 ♜g4 with various threats is very difficult to meet, while 20...g6 21 ♜xh7! doesn't look very attractive either.

21 ♖xf5 exf5 22 ♜h5

Normally two minor pieces are preferable to a rook and a pawn, but with d5, f5 and h7 all vulnerable targets, Black has a tough time holding his position together.

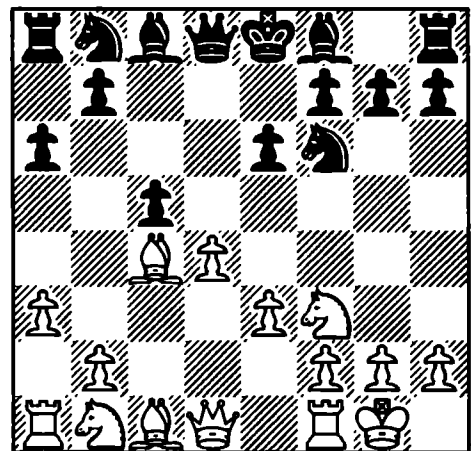
22...♜d7 23 ♜xh7+ ♕f7 24 ♜g3 ♖f8 25 ♜g6+ ♕g8 26 e6 ♜e8 27 ♜xf5 ♘e7 28 ♜g4 ♜d8 29 ♖c3 ♘f5 30 ♜e1 ♘xg3 31 e7 ♘e2+ 32 ♜xe2 ♜xe7 33 ♜xe7 ♖xe7 34 ♜xe7 ♜d1+ 35 ♜e1 ♜xe1+ 36 ♖xe1 ♖c6 37 a5 bxa5 38 ♖xa5 ♕f7 39 f3 ♕e6 40 ♕f2 ♖b5 41 g4 ♖a4 42 ♕g3 ♖d1 43 f4 g6 44 ♕h4 1-0

Game 35

Gabriel-Xu Jun

Bad Homburg 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♖xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 a3



Not fearing an expansion of Black's queenside pawns, White prepares a possible retreat for his bishop, whilst making sure that the b4-square will be out of bounds to a black knight (remember the useful ...♘b4-d5 manoeuvre). Although it may sound a little tedious, the text move also provides White with the idea of d4xc5 ♖xc5, b2-b4, when he can fianchetto his

own queen's bishop.

7...♖bd7 8 ♗e2 b5 9 ♖a2 ♖b7 10 ♖c3 ♖e7

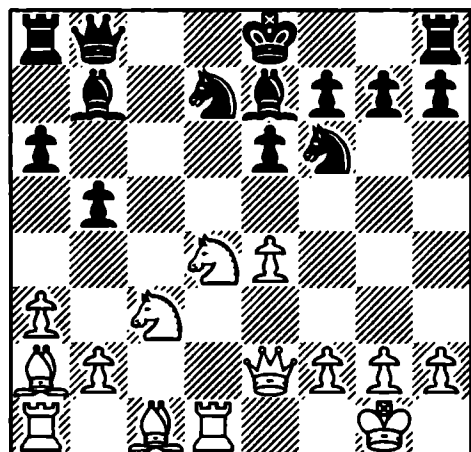
10...♗c7 11 dxc5 ♖xc5 12 e4 0-0 13 ♖d2 ♖ac8 14 ♖ac1 ♗b8 15 ♖b1 ♖b6 is perfectly okay for Black, who could also try 10...♗b8 immediately, e.g. 11 e4 cxd4 12 ♖xd4 ♖c5 13 ♖b3 ♖b6 14 ♖e3 ♖xe3 15 ♗xe3 ♗a7 16 ♗xa7 ♖xa7 17 f3 ♖e7 18 ♖ac1 ½-½ Atalik-B.Lalic, Szeged 1997.

Perhaps more ambitious still though is 10...♗b6!?, when after 11 dxc5 ♖xc5 12 e4 0-0 13 e5, Black managed to mix things up a bit with 13...♖xf3 14 gxf3 ♖h5 15 f4 g6 in Atalik-Sadler, Hastings Premier 1996. The f5-square is ripe for infiltration and the f4-pawn a valid target, but the holes around Black's king balance things up.

11 ♖d1 ♗b8

It's definitely a wise idea to remove her majesty from the same file as the white rook and it isn't a problem to temporarily incarcerate the rook on a8 here. Eventually something may be going down on the queenside and Black can complete the set with a later ...♖fc8. Again the alternative queen placements 11...♗c7 and 11...♗b6 are worthy of consideration.

12 e4 cxd4 13 ♖xd4



13...♖d6 14 g3

Stopping 14...♖xh2+, preventing the liquidating 14...♖f4 and laying the groundwork for a future f2-f4 himself.

14...0-0 15 f3

Black has a standard set-up, but has lost a tempo in obtaining it (...♖e7-d6). Nevertheless, the tactic 15 ♖xe6? fxe6 16 ♖xe6+ ♖h8 17 ♗d3 doesn't work because of 17...♖c7 18 ♖xd7 ♖d8.

15...♖e5 16 ♖e3 ♖h8 17 ♖ac1 ♖c8 18 f4 ♖xd4

Forced, but Black should live to regret losing this bishop.

19 ♖xd4 e5

Black must hurry to gain counterplay against White's e-pawn, but this concedes the d5-square and leaves the f7-pawn vulnerable.

20 ♖dd1 ♖c5 21 ♖d5 ♖xd5

Else the knight was headed for b6.

22 exd5 ♖d7 23 ♖xc8+ ♗xc8 24 ♖c1 ♗b8 25 ♗c2?!

25 ♗h5 looked more menacing for White, who seems to lose the plot from here on in.

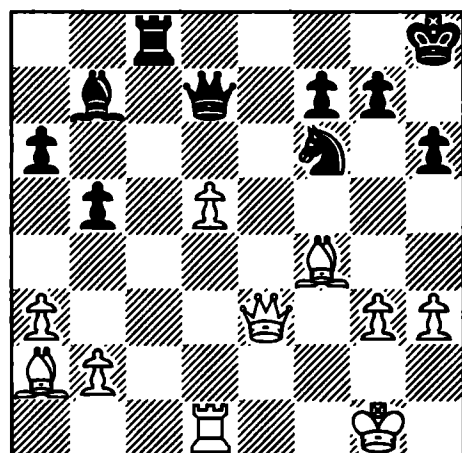
25...♖f6 26 ♖d1 exf4 27 ♖xf4 ♗e8 28 h3

The problem with the passed d-pawn is that it cannot advance without highlighting the exposed nature of White's own king. As it is 28 h3 is played to prevent a black knight infiltration via g4.

28...♖c8 29 ♗d3 h6 30 ♗e3?!

30 ♖f1 or 30 ♖h2 should still be okay for White.

30...♗d7



Preferring to pound the d5 (and h3)-pawn rather than enter the slightly unclear endgame 30...♖xe3+ 31 ♙xe3 ♜c2 32 d6.

31 ♙xh6 ♜xh3!

There is certainly no need for 31...gxh6?! 32 ♜xh6+ ♘h7 33 ♙b1.

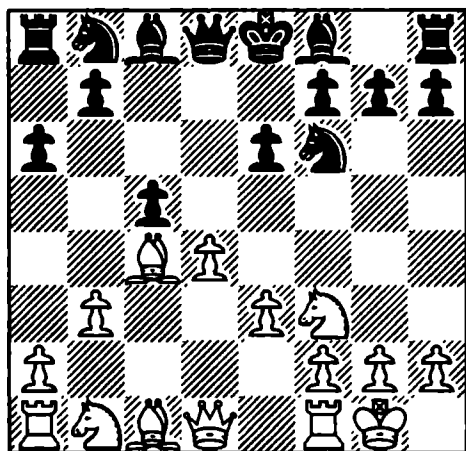
32 ♙xg7+ ♔xg7 33 ♜g5+ ♔f8 34 ♜xf6 ♜xg3+ 35 ♔f1 ♜h3+ 36 ♔e1

Or 36 ♔g1 ♜g4+.

36...♞e8+ 37 ♔d2 ♜e3+ 38 ♔c2 ♜e2+ 39 ♔c3 b4+ 40 ♔xb4 ♞e4+ 41 ♔c3 ♞e3+ 0-1

Game 36
Wojtkiewicz-Hauchard
Linares open 1997

1 ♘f3 e6 2 c4 d5 3 d4 dxc4 4 e3 c5 5 ♙xc4 a6 6 0-0 ♘f6 7 b3



This is hardly an earth-shattering move, but nonetheless it must be treated with some respect. A similar idea 7 ♘bd2!? also has its supporters, notably the Turkish GM Atalik who has frequently demonstrated the subtlety of capturing on c5 without allowing a trade of queens, e.g. 7...♘c6 (7...♘bd7!?) 8 dxc5 ♙xc5 9 b3! 0-0 10 ♙b2 ♜e7 11 ♜b1 ♙a3 (I'm not convinced that this is really necessary) 12 ♙xa3 ♜xa3 13 ♘e4 ♜e7 14 ♞d1 and arguably White held a small edge in Atalik-Ibragimov, Ano Liosia 1995.

7...cxd4

Probably not the best continuation as now Black finds it difficult to develop his pieces comfortably. The perils of this system are demonstrated after 7...b5 8 ♙e2 ♘bd7 9 ♙b2 ♙b7 10 ♘bd2 ♙e7 11 a4! Now 11...b4 would concede the c4-square and 11...bxa4 12 ♞xa4 also leaves White with annoying pressure against the a6-pawn.

Another natural response is 7...♘c6 8 ♙b2 (8 dxc5 ♙xc5 9 ♜xd8+ ♔xd8 10 ♙b2 ♔e7 11 ♘bd2 ♞d8 12 ♞ac1 b6 13 a3 ♙b7 14 ♞c2 ♞ac8 15 ♞fc1 ♘b8 16 ♙e2 ♘bd7 was equal in Aleksandrov-Volzhin, Gistrup 1996) 8...cxd4 9 ♘xd4 ♙d7 10 ♘d2 ♘xd4 11 ♙xd4 ♙c6 12 ♙e2!? ♙e7 13 ♘c4 0-0 14 ♞c1 ♘d5 15 ♜d2 ♞c8 16 ♘e5!?, as in Hellsten-Borge, Copenhagen 1996, which is also a bit worse for Black. He could instead deviated with 10...♙e7 or even earlier by 9...♘xd4 10 ♙xd4 b5 11 ♙e2 ♙b7.

It's clear from the main game as well that Black has to be exercise some care because of a certain amount of discomfort with his queenside. One possible solution is the more cautious 7...b6!? Interesting, but not interesting if you know what I mean! The not especially memorable quick draw Miles-Sadler, British Championship, Hove 1997, finished 8 ♙b2 ♙b7 9 dxc5 ♜xd1 10 ♞xd1 ♙xc5.

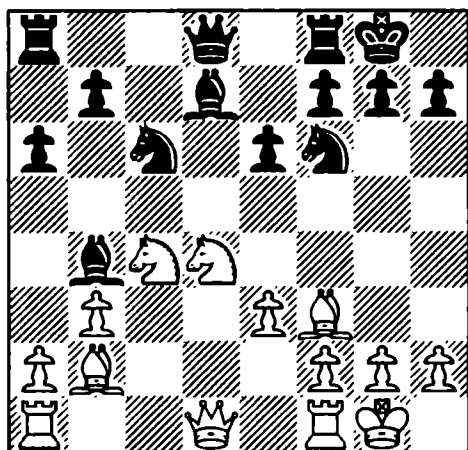
8 ♘xd4 ♙d6?!

This looks wrong. Black is unlikely to be able to get his other bishop and queen well enough co-ordinated to be able to cause the white king any trouble; it's too difficult to arrange ...b7-b5, ...♙b7 and ...♜c7. Black's dark-squared bishop is simply vulnerable on d6, so Black should settle for just nudging it to e7.

9 ♙b2 0-0 10 ♘d2 ♙d7 11 ♙e2

Vacating the c4-square for the knight and preparing to relocate the bishop on the most troublesome diagonal.

11...♘c6 12 ♘c4 ♙b4 13 ♙f3



13...♞c8

If Black trades knights on d4 then he has big problems defending his exposed b7-pawn.

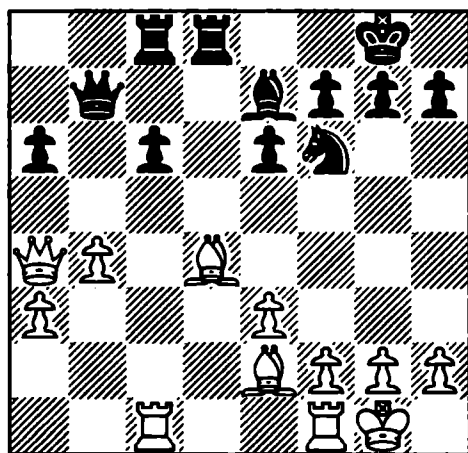
14 ♞c1 ♜c7 15 a3 ♙e7 16 b4 ♞fd8 17 ♘a5

Essentially guaranteeing the weakening of Black's queenside pawns.

17...♜b6 18 ♘dxc6 ♙xc6 19 ♙d4 ♜b5 20 ♘xc6 bxc6

The a6- and c6-pawns are juicy targets and White has the bishop pair to boot.

21 ♙e2 ♜b7 22 ♜a4



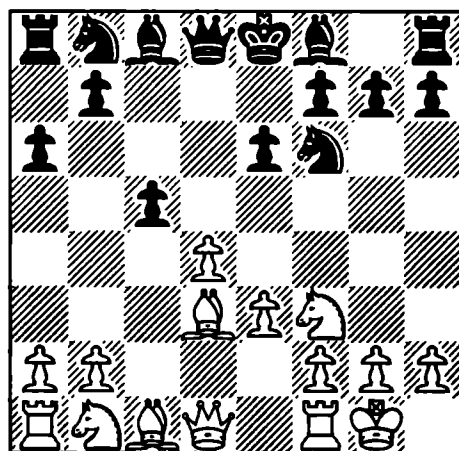
22...a5 23 ♜xa5 ♞a8 24 ♜b6 ♜xb6 25 ♙xb6 ♞d2 26 ♙f3 ♞xa3 27 ♞xc6

Black's problems on the back rank give White a useful tempo.

27...g5 28 ♙d4 g4 29 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 30 ♙xg4 ♞a4 31 ♞c7 ♞xb4 32 ♙h5 ♙e5 1-0

Game 37
San Segundo-Sadler
Euro. Team Ch., Pula 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♙xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♙d3



White retreats the bishop in anticipation of ...b7-b5. In the event of a typical IQP position, White knows that his bishop will be well placed on d3 and if Black refuses to trade on d4, the text move supports a potential e3-e4 push.

7...b6!?

This favourite move of Matthew's removes White's queenside options and so challenges him to do something in the centre.

In the IQP position after 7...cxd4 8 exd4 ♙e7, White should really go for the opponent's king, as positional play does not get him anywhere, e.g. 9 ♘e5 ♘c6 10 ♘xc6 bxc6 (Black has two isolated pawns, but he is compensated by having total control of the d5-square) 11 ♙e3 0-0 12 ♜c2 ♜c7 13 ♘d2 h6 14 ♙e2 ♘d5 15 ♞ac1 a5!? 16 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 17 ♞xc6 ♘b4 18 ♞c7 ♙d8 19 ♞c5 ♙e7 20 ♞c7 ♙d8 21 ♞c5 ♙e7 22 ♞cc1 ♘xa2 23 ♞a1 ♘b4 24 ♞fc1 ♘d5 25 ♙f3 ♙b7 26 ♘b3 ♙b4 27 ♙d2 ♙xd2 28 ♘d2 ♞fb8 ½-½ Gelfand-Anand, Linares 1997.

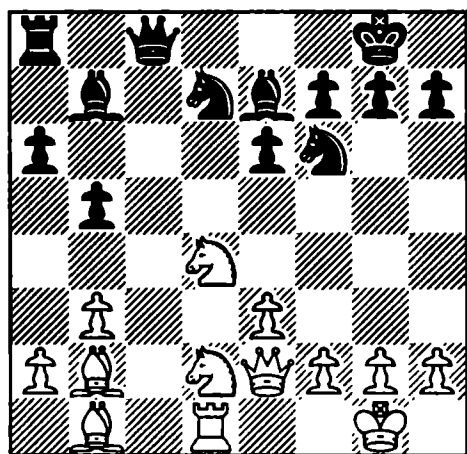
Another idea, 7...♘bd7, was recently

harshly dealt with by the immediate 8 e4 cxd4 9 e5!? ♖d5 10 ♙c4 ♗b4 11 a3 ♖c6 12 ♙e1 b5 13 ♙f1 ♙b7 14 ♗bd2 (White knows that Black's temporary extra pawn won't run away and he hopes to exploit some of the weak dark squares in the black camp) 14...h6 15 ♗b3 ♙c8 16 ♙f4 ♗b6 17 ♙c1 ♙e7 18 ♗fxd4 ♗xd4 19 ♙xc8+ ♙xc8 20 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 21 ♗xd4 ♙g5 22 ♙c1 0-0 23 ♙xg5 hxg5 24 ♗c6 ♙e8 25 ♗a7 1-0 Lautier-C.Hansen, Malmo 1998. The c8-bishop was the cause of Black's problems and it's fitting that Black should resign just as he no longer has to worry about how to get it out!

8 ♗e2 ♙b7 9 ♙d1 ♗bd7 10 ♗bd2

Alternatively 10 ♗c3 ♗b8 (already the reader should be used to this move by now) 11 h3 ♙e7 12 dxc5 (hardly in the same bracket of ambition as 12 e4!?) 12...♗xc5 13 ♙c2 ♗fe4 14 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 15 ♙d4 ♗f6 (safer than the hole-invoking 15...f5) 16 e4 e5 was pretty equal until White tried 17 ♙a4+?! b5 18 ♙xb5+ ♗f8! 19 ♙d7 axb5 20 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 21 ♙xb7 b4 and eventually went down in flames in Akesson-Degerman, Ronneby 1998.

10...♙e7 11 b3 0-0 12 ♙b2 ♗b8 13 ♙ac1 ♙c8 14 ♙b1 cxd4 15 ♙xc8+ ♗xc8 16 ♗xd4 b5!



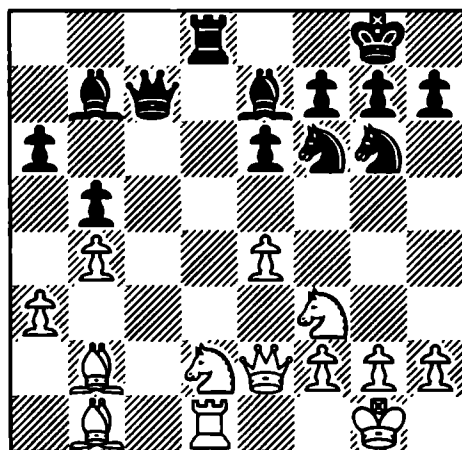
No longer fearing 17 a4, Black decides it's time to buy himself some space on the queenside.

17 e4

After this game, Matthew joked with me that in general it's a mistake for White to play e3-e4; whereas in the event of e4-e5, he's losing for sure!

17...♗f8 18 ♗4f3 ♗c7 19 a3 ♙d8 20 b4 ♗g6

White has been shaping up for a king-side attack, but Black's cunning manoeuvre of a knight to g6 has left him with aspirations of his own over there.



21 g3

Stopping 21...♗f4, but already the danger signs are there should White consider opening up the a8-h1 diagonal (with e4-e5).

21...♙a8

A crafty waiting move, with Black possibly entertaining the idea of a queen checkmate on g2!

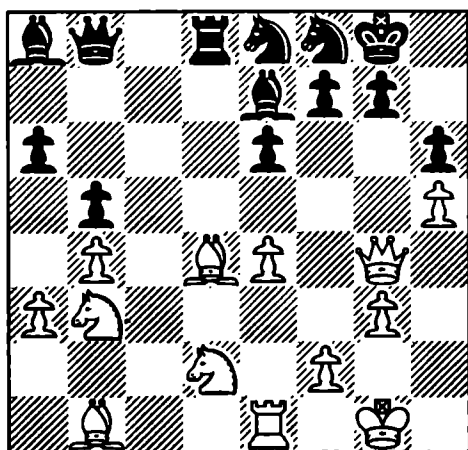
22 ♙c1 ♗b7 23 ♙e1 ♗e8 24 ♗b3 ♗d6

This was another clever re-deployment. The knight attacks the e4-pawn (as it did on f6), while also contemplating an excursion to the tasty c4-square.

25 ♗fd2 ♗b6 26 h4

It seems to me that White felt obliged to try and make progress in this game due to his slight space advantage. Ironically it is this active policy that ultimately lets him down.

26...h6 27 ♙d4 ♗b8 28 h5 ♗f8 29 ♗g4 ♗e8



What a sight. Black has nearly all of his pieces on the back rank and yet I would say that his position is preferable. White is on the verge of over-pressing and Black is ready to spring out.

30 e5?!

Ironically adding some weight to Matty's ditty about the pawn push e3-e4-e5. Though outwardly aggressive, the reality now is that there are too many holes in the white camp. Now Sadler's dormant army comes to life and he mops up with ruthless efficiency.

30...♘h7 31 ♘e4 ♚b7!

This key diagonal is White's main problem and although he tries to patch it up, the damage has already been done.

32 f3 ♚d5

Now White's pieces are looking rather loose.

33 ♘ed2 ♘g5 34 ♚g2 a5!

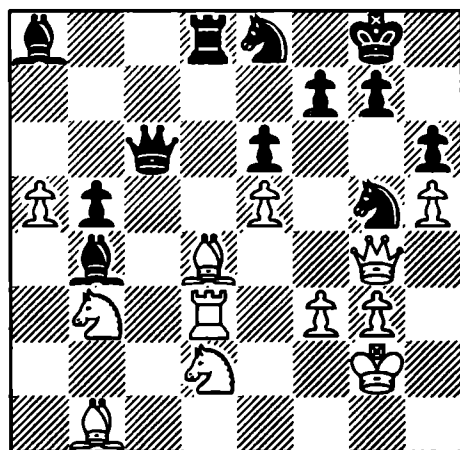
Effectively opening the door for the dark-squared bishop.

35 bxa5 ♙xa3 36 ♚e3 ♙b4 37 ♚d3 ♚c6

see following diagram

38 ♙b6??

Under severe pressure, White collapses like a pack of cards. Still it's very difficult for him and after say 38 ♙e3, he is hanging on by a thread. His pieces are uncoordinated and he remains tied down to the defence of his f3-pawn.

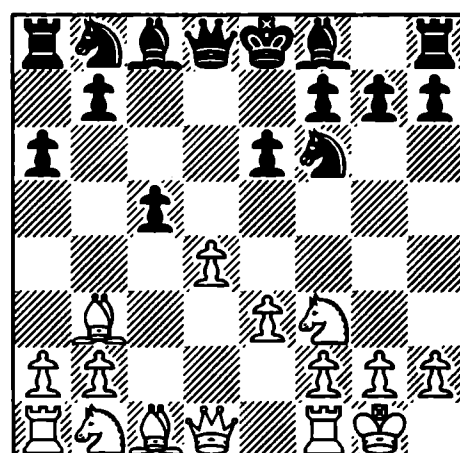


38...♚xd3 39 ♙xd3 ♙xd2 0-1

Next on the agenda is 40...♚c3, winning a piece.

Game 38
Kasparov-Piket
Tilburg 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♙xc4 e6
5 ♘f3 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♙b3



Aside from 7 ♚e2 (seen in the next chapter), this pre-emptive retreat is currently the most popular seventh move. Now Black must select his desired set-up.

7...b5

Throwing down the gauntlet, but this isn't the most sensible decision. The more prudent 7...♘c6, 7...cxd4 and 7...♘bd7 are considered in Games 39-41 respectively.

8 a4! b4

Having opened things up prematurely (from his point of view), Black experiences problems after 8...♙b7 9 axb5 axb5 10 ♖xa8 ♙xa8 11 ♚e2 or 11 ♘a3.

9 ♘bd2

The gambit style 9 e4!? is also not out of the question, e.g. 9...cxd4 (9...♗xe4?! is far too risky bearing in mind Black's state of undevelopment) 10 e5 ♗fd7 11 ♙g5 ♙e7 12 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 13 ♚xd4 ♘c6 14 ♚g4 ♙b7 15 ♘bd2 0-0 16 ♖fe1 with reasonable attacking chances.

9...♙b7 10 e4!?

More dynamic than the positional 10 a5!?, although that is certainly not without sting either, e.g. 10...♘bd7 (10...♙e7 11 ♘c4 ♘bd7 12 ♗fe5 0-0 13 ♚e2 ♚c7 14 ♙d2 ♙d5! should at least equalise for Black) 11 e4!? ♗xe4?! 12 ♗xe4 ♙xe4 13 ♗g5 ♙d5 14 ♙xd5 exd5 15 ♖e1+ ♙e7 16 ♚h5 g6 17 ♚h6 ♗f6 18 ♚g7 ♘d7 (of course 18...♖f8 allows 19 ♚xf6) 19 ♚xf7 1-0 Cvitan-Giertz, Biel 1997.

10...cxd4

Again 10...♗xe4?! demonstrates suicidal tendencies, e.g. 11 ♗xe4 ♙xe4 12 ♙g5 ♚d7 13 ♖e1 ♙d5 14 dxc5 ♙xb3 15 ♚xb3 ♙xc5? 16 ♖ad1 with a winning check on d8 to follow.

11 e5 ♗d5

It's clear that the knight must move, but current theory suggests that 11...♗fd7! is the best bet. One possible continuation 12 ♘c4 ♘c5 13 ♙g5?! f6! 14 exf6 gxf6 15 ♗fe5 h5! (a fantastic way to spoil White's fun!) 16 ♗g6 ♚d5 17 ♘d6+ ♚xd6 18 ♗xh8 ♗xb3 19 ♚xh5+ ♘d7 20 ♙xf6 ♗xa1 was certainly good for Black in Slipak-Spangenberg, Buenos Aires 1996. However, 13 ♗xd4 is one likely improvement and as this encounter was played before our text game, I wouldn't be surprised if the World Champion had something else up his sleeve too.

12 ♘c4

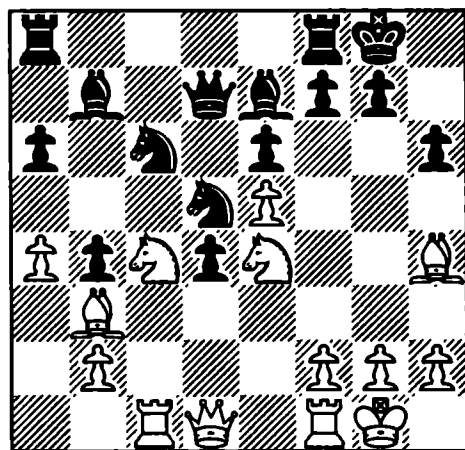
White has also been successful with 12

♗e4, but the text provides more options.

12...♘c6 13 ♙g5 ♚d7 14 ♖c1 h6 15 ♙h4 ♙c5 16 ♗fd2!

Heading to e4 with the other knight and allowing the queen to make an appearance on the kingside.

16...0-0 17 ♗e4 ♙e7



18 ♙g3

White is playing around Black's d-pawn, making it look as though it is almost detrimental to Black's cause.

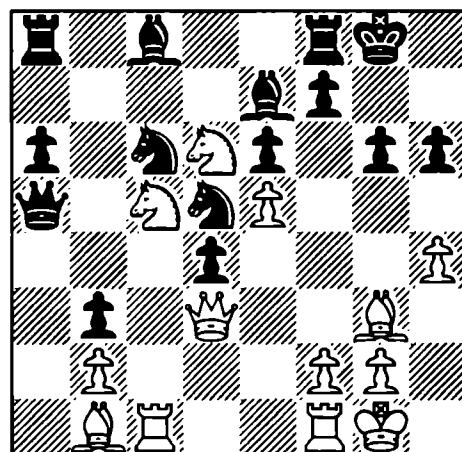
18...♚d8 19 ♗cd6 ♗a5 20 ♙c2 b3 21 ♙b1 ♚b6 22 ♚d3

With dangerous discovered threats on h7.

22...g6 23 ♗c5 ♙c8 24 h4!?

Preventing any annoying ...♙g5 ideas and preparing to open up the black king with 25 h5.

24...♘c6 25 a5 ♚xa5



26 ♖xf7! ♜xf7 27 ♜xg6+ ♕f8

27...♜g7 28 ♜e8+ ♕f8 29 ♜xc6 reveals the reason behind the 25 a5 queen deflection.

28 ♖xe6+ ♕xe6 29 ♜xc6 ♕d7 30 ♜xh6+ 1-0

If 30...♜g7 then 31 ♜g6 and if 30...♕e8 then 31 e6.

Game 39
Vaulin-Zakharov
St Petersburg 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖f3 ♖f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♜xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♜b3 ♖c6 8 ♖c3

8 ♜e2 crosses into hazy boundaries with the next chapter: 8...cxd4 9 ♜d1 can be met by a simple acceptance of an IQP position through say 9...♕e7 10 exd4 or by 9...d3 (a killjoy's move that can nevertheless get exciting) 10 ♜xd3 ♜c7 11 ♖c3 ♕c5 (Black suffered only mild discomfort with 11...♕e7 12 e4 ♖d7 13 ♕e3 ♖c5 14 ♜dd1 0-0 15 ♜ac1 ♖xb3 16 axb3 ♜d8 17 ♖a4 ♜xd1+ 18 ♜xd1 ♕d7 19 ♜b6 ♜c8 20 ♖e5 ♕e8 21 ♖d3 e5 22 ♖c3 ♜e6 23 ♖d5 ♜c8 24 h3 f6 25 ♜g4 ♜xg4 26 hxg4 ♕f7 27 ♖xe7 and a draw was agreed in Topalov-Karpov, Linares 1996) 12 h3 (Black's last move dissuaded the immediate 12 e4 because of 12...♖g4 13 ♖d1 ♖d4!? 14 ♜xd4 ♕xd4 15 h3 h5!?, but this well-known theoretical variation doesn't actually strike me as being so clear after 16 e5!? ♕a7 17 hxg4 hxg4 18 ♖d2 g3 19 ♖c4) 12...0-0 13 e4 ♖d7 14 ♕e3 ♕xe3 15 ♜xe3 b6 16 ♖a4 b5 17 ♖c5 ♖ce5 18 ♖xd7 ♖xf3+ 19 gxf3 ♕xd7 20 ♜c1 ♜b7 21 ♕h1 ♜fc8 22 ♜g1, also eventually drawn in B.Lalic-Hartman, Isle of Man 1995.

8...♕e7

If Black is going to saddle his opponent with an IQP, then now might be a better time to do it as White hasn't time to get his rook to d1. The position reached after 8...cxd4 9 exd4 ♕e7 is scrutinised in the

next game (by transposition).

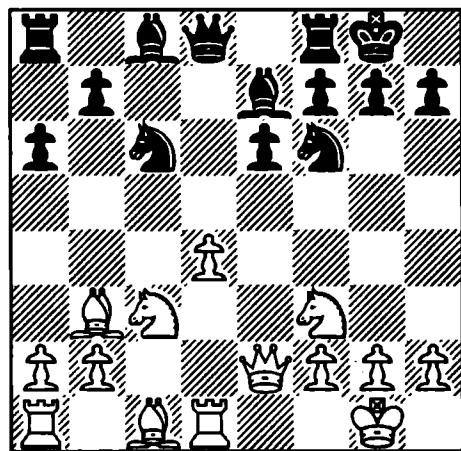
9 ♜e2

9 d5 exd5 10 ♖xd5 is an alternative way to play the position and, though it pains me to admit it, so is 9 dxc5 ♜xd1 10 ♜xd1 ♕xc5 11 ♕d2 ♕d7 12 ♜ac1 ♕a7 13 ♕e1 ♕e7. It looks as though Black should be okay, but in fact the FIDE World Champion soon engaged in a wonderful (if not entirely necessary) combination: 14 ♖a4 b6 15 ♜xd7+! ♕xd7 16 ♖xb6+! ♕xb6 17 ♕a4 ♕c8 18 ♖e5 ♕b8 19 ♖xc6+ ♕b7 20 ♖e5 ♜ac8 21 ♕c6+ ♕a7 22 ♖xf7 ♜hf8 23 ♖e5 and White went on to win in Karpov-Gulko, Oropesa del Mar 1996.

9...cxd4 10 ♜d1 0-0

Again 10...d3 is an option, if not a very ambitious one from Black's point of view.

11 exd4



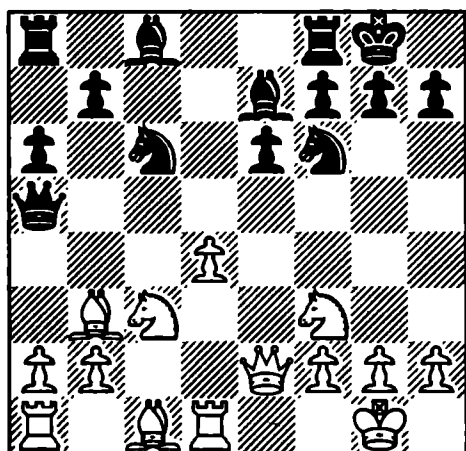
Most grandmasters prefer to play with an IQP than against one. As I have mentioned before, invariably if White gets in d4-d5, Black could be in trouble. I believe that this particular one (with the knight on c6 and White's rook on d1) is quite difficult for Black to handle. Sure if he could exchange lots of minor pieces and obtain a blockade on d5, he would be fine, but neither of those objectives seem easy to achieve.

11...♜a5

11...♖a5 (obviously this attacks the bishop and I'm sure that a knight on c4

could be a tasty proposition, but I still don't like it out there on a5) 12 ♖c2 b5 13 ♗g5 ♗b7 14 ♘e5 g6 15 ♗h6 ♜e8 16 a3 ♘h5 17 b4 ♘c6 18 ♗e4 ♝c7 19 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 20 ♞ac1 ♞b7 21 ♘xc6 ♞xc6 22 d5!, as in Lerner-Dokhoian, USSR 1985, is one example of how White should play the position and 11...♘b4 12 ♘e5 ♘bd5 13 ♞d3! ♗d7 14 ♞g3, as in Filip-Conrady, Varna 1962, is another.

It seems that even if Black does establish a knight on d5, he often still has to fend off a kingside attack. I'm not too impressed with the text selection, so perhaps Black is best off with the more routine 11...♘d5 (intending ...♗f6 and perhaps ...♘ce7).



12 d5! exd5 13 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 14 ♗xd5

14 ♞xd5 also doesn't look bad.

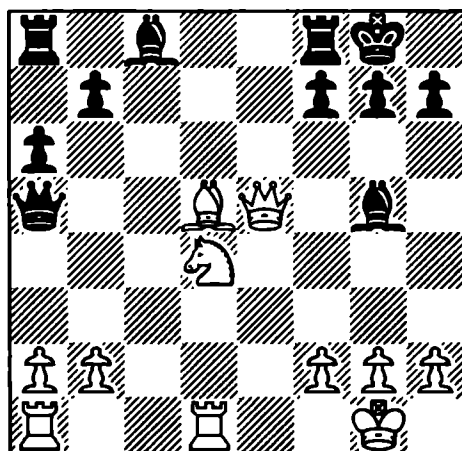
14...♗f6

Vaguely hoping for some play against White's queenside. Probably the best try was 14...♞d8 15 ♗xc6 ♞xd1+ 16 ♞xd1 bxc6, when I guess Black could claim that his bishop pair gives him some compensation for his duff pawn duo on the queenside. Let's face it though, it's not much fun!

15 ♗g5

Other than the fact that White's major pieces may dominate the central files, the problem with allowing the d4-d5 break is the pressure that builds up on f7.

15...♘d4 16 ♘xd4 ♗xg5 17 ♞e5



17...♞d8?

White was threatening 18 ♗xf7+, so Black had to play the grim-looking 18...♗d8.

18 ♘f3! ♗f6 19 ♗xf7+! ♜xf7 20 ♞h5+ ♜g8 21 ♞xd8 ♞xd8 22 ♞e1 g6 23 ♞c5 a5 24 ♘g5 ♗xg5 25 ♞xg5 ♗e6 26 h4 1-0

Game 40

Gurieli-Giertz

Biel open 1998

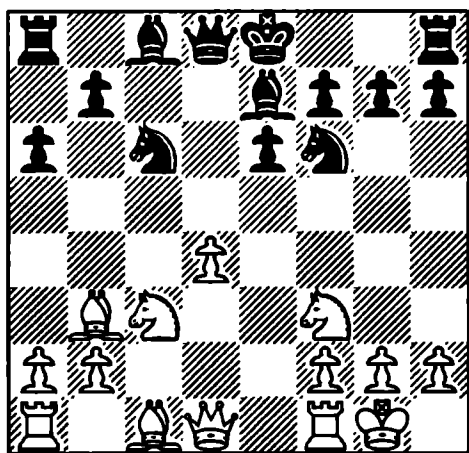
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♗b3 cxd4

Certainly the most accurate move order if Black wants to force an IQP situation where White can't get in ♞e2 and ♞d1. Of course that doesn't mean that he should pop open the champagne just yet, as White has other options.

8 exd4 ♘c6 9 ♘c3 ♗e7

This position could have arisen from the 'Steinitz variation'. My main reservation for Black in these Queen's Gambit IQP situations is that White was never in danger of losing a tempo through first moving his f1-bishop before recapturing on c4. For example, 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 c5 4 e3 cxd4 5 exd4 d5 6 ♘c3 (essentially a Panov-Botvinnik Attack, but also a common outcome from the Caro-

Kann Defence) 6...♙e7 7 ♙d3 dxc4 8 ♙xc4 is just one instance where White loses a move on the text. It is no surprise then that in the following razor-sharp variations, Black must have his wits firmly about him.



10 a3

Let's take a look at some other not dissimilar approaches by White:

a) 10 d5 (Black has done nothing wrong, so there is no reason why this should achieve anything) 10...exd5 11 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 12 ♗xd5 ♙e6 13 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 with total equality.

b) 10 ♖e1 0-0 11 a3 (this position could also have been reached in our main game had we seen the straightforward 10...0-0; note that on this occasion Black has nothing to fear from 11 d5 exd5 12 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 13 ♗xd5 ♙g4 14 ♗e4 ♗d7) 11...♖a5 12 ♙a2 b5 13 ♖e5 (13 d5!? isn't so silly now and Black must respond actively, e.g. 13...exd5 14 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 15 ♗xd5 ♙e6!? 16 ♗xd8 ♖axd8 17 ♙xe6 fxe6 18 ♖xe6 ♖d1+ 19 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 20 ♖xe1 ♖d8 when he should have enough pressure for the pawn) 13...♙b7 14 ♙g5 ♖e8 15 ♗e2 ♗d6 (Black defends the most vulnerable squares, f7 and e6, as 15...♗xd4? runs into the visual 16 ♖xf7! ♖xf7 17 ♗xe6+ ♖g6 18 ♗f7+ ♖xg5 19 ♗xg7+ ♖h4 20 g3+ ♖h3 21 ♙e6+ ♖g4 22 ♗xh7+) 16 ♖ad1 ♙d5 17 ♙b1 g6 (there was a genuine threat here,

i.e. 17...♙b3? 18 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 19 ♙xh7+! ♖xh7 20 ♗h5+ ♖g8 21 ♗xf7+ ♖h7 22 ♖d3 with 23 ♖h3 next up) 18 ♗e3 ♖h5 (White is a little better after 18...♖c4 19 ♗f4 ♖g7 20 ♖xd5 exd5 21 ♖e2) 19 ♙xe7 (it's common for Black to seek piece trades and 19 ♙h6!? is likely to be met by 19...♙f8, when despite having to acquiesce in the exchange, White nonetheless retains a slight edge with 20 ♙xf8 ♖xf8 21 ♖xd5 exd5 [21...♗xd5 is impossible due to 22 ♙e4] 22 ♖d3, as is often the case when Black also gets an isolated d-pawn) 19...♖xe7 20 ♖xg6?! (White should have settled for 20 ♖xd5 exd5 21 b4 ♖b7 22 ♗f3 when his knight is better placed than either of Black's and he retains his good bishop) 20...hxg6 21 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 22 ♙e4 ♗d8 23 ♙xa8 ♗xa8 24 d5 ♖g7 25 ♗c3 ♖b7. Unfortunately White was unable to make anything of his d-pawn and despite their temporary poor co-ordination, the minor pieces eventually saw Black through in Volzhin-Kharlov, Russian Championship, Elista 1996.

c) 10 ♙f4 (in my view a somewhat strange move as the h2-b8 diagonal is not that critical and it is usually a knight, rather than a bishop that White wants to park on e5; on f4 the bishop neither defends the d4-pawn, nor pressurises the f6-knight) 10...0-0 11 ♖c1 ♖a5 12 ♙c2 b5 13 ♖e4 ♖d5 14 ♙g5 (14 ♙g3 walks into 14...f5! 15 ♖c5 f4 and after 14 ♙d2 ♖c4, with all things considered, Black has the upper hand) 14...♙xg5 15 ♖exg5 ♖f6 16 ♗d3 g6 17 ♖e5 ♙b7 18 ♖cd1 ♙d5 19 ♗h3 ♖g7 20 ♖d3?! (unfortunately this doesn't seem to work in this position and White should settle for 20 ♖fe1 or go for broke with 20 f4!?, the intention being to somehow arrange f4-f5) 20...♖c8 21 ♙b1 ♙c4 22 ♖g3 ♗xd4! (the bishop is a vital defender and so with a reasonable white army focusing on his king, Black is rightly not tempted by 22...♙xf1? 23 ♖xe6+ fxe6

24 ♖xg6 ♕h8 25 ♖xh7) 23 ♜exf7 (there is no time for further preparatory moves – it's now or never, but as it turns out, now is not a good time either!) 23...♞xf7 24 ♜xh7 ♜xh7 25 ♖xg6 ♜f6 26 ♖d3+ ♕f8 27 ♜h8+ ♕e7 28 ♜xc8 ♖xd3 29 ♞e1 ♜d7 30 ♞ge3 ♖c4 31 b3 ♖d5 32 ♜xa6 ♜c6 33 ♜xb5 ♜ce5 34 h3 ♞g7 0-1 Vera-Sadler, World Team Championship, Lucerne 1997.

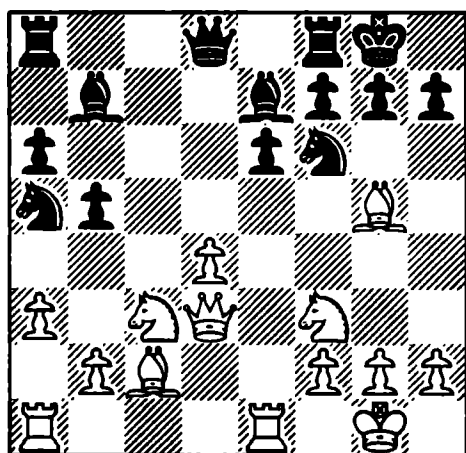
10...♜a5 11 ♖c2

Instead 11 ♖a2 b5 12 d5 exd5 13 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 14 ♖xd5 ♖b7 15 ♖xb7 ♜xb7 16 ♜d4 0-0 17 ♜c6 ♜c7 18 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 19 a4 ♞fd8 20 ♜g4 bxa4 21 ♞xa4 ♜c5 22 ♞a3 ♜e6 was agreed drawn in B.Lalic-Korchnoi, World Team Championship, Lucerne 1997.

11...b5

Putting aside mixed feelings about the a5-knight (knights on the rim are dim!), it's obviously nice for Black to get his light-squared bishop along the b7-g2 diagonal where at the very least it aids with a blockade of the d5-square.

12 ♞e1 ♖b7 13 ♜d3 0-0 14 ♖g5



The direct 'caveman' approach which, though not high on subtlety, has certainly caused Black the odd headache. The fact that Black must now play 14...g6 is a good advert for the argument that he should in general avoid playing ...h7-h6. There are enough potential sacrifices on e6, f7 and g6

without Black having to worry about further weaknesses.

14...g6 15 ♜e5 ♞c8 16 ♞ad1 ♜d5 17 ♖h6 ♜xc3 18 bxc3 ♜d5 19 f3 ♞fe8 20 a4 b4 21 cxb4 ♖xb4 22 ♜g4 ♜d8?!

Since Black should no longer want to part company with his dark-squared bishop (I mean take a look at those holes!), I would prefer 22...♖e7, particularly as the black queen was sitting pretty on d5.

23 ♖d2 ♖xd2 24 ♜xd2 ♜c4 25 ♜f4 f5

Black must be 100% sure before playing such a move. The white knight is forced back, but the black pawn can never go back.

26 ♜f2 ♜b2 27 ♞d2 ♖d5 28 h4!

Lasting damage has been done to Black's kingside and White certainly hasn't given up on the idea of finding a way through to the black king. He must be wary though as Black has one or two tricks up his sleeve.

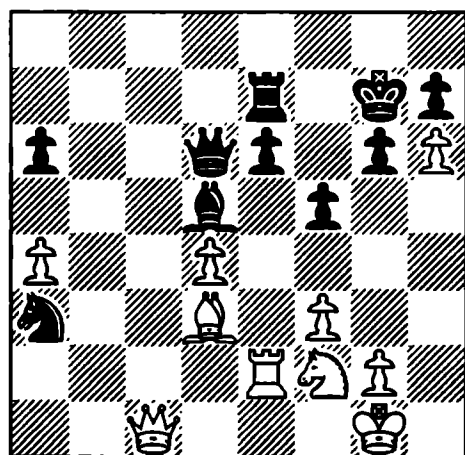
28...♜a5

Threatening 28...♞xc2.

29 ♞b1 ♜c4 30 ♞e2 ♜a3 31 ♞c1 ♜c7

31...♜xc2 32 ♞exc2 ♞xc2 33 ♞xc2 ♜xa4 34 ♞c7 looks too risky, but the question is whether Black can hang on in there with 34...e5 35 ♜h6 ♖f7.

32 ♜e3 ♜d6 33 h5 ♕g7 34 ♖d3 ♞xc1+ 35 ♜xc1 ♞e7 36 h6+



36...♕f7 37 ♜h3

Now the white knight finds its way into the action and Black finds it too difficult to cover all the weak squares surrounding his king.

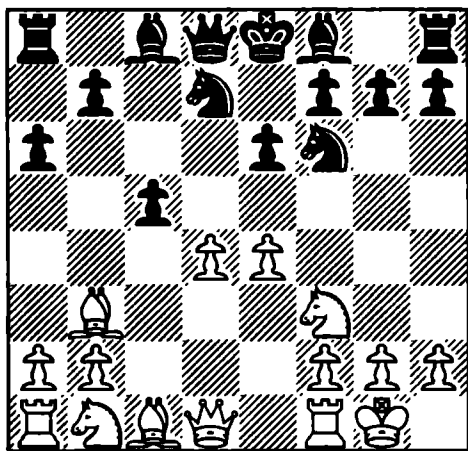
37...♖c7 38 ♖g5+ ♜g8 39 ♖e3 ♖c4 40 ♜xc4 ♜xc4

Not surprisingly this light-squared bishop isn't much use when it comes to controlling dark squares!

41 ♜b2 ♖f8 42 ♖e5 ♖c8 43 ♜b7 ♖xh6 44 ♖f7 1-0

Game 41
Sherbakov-Vaulin
Russian Ch., Elista 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖f3 a6 4 e3 e6 5 ♜xc4 c5 6 0-0 ♖f6 7 ♜b3 ♖bd7 8 e4!?



The most aggressive response to Black's provocative move.

8 ♖e2 is obviously playable, but I'm not sure about White's play in Krasenkov-Anand, Moscow (rapidplay) 1996: 8 a4 b6! (that move again) 9 ♖c3 ♜b7 10 ♖e2 ♜e7 11 ♖d1 0-0 12 dxc5 ♜xc5 13 e4 ♖g4 14 ♜f1 ♖c7 15 h3 ♖gf6 16 ♜h1 h6 17 ♜d2 ♜fd8 18 ♜ac1 ♖f8 19 ♜a2 a5 20 ♜fd1 ♖g6 21 ♜b1 ♖f4 22 ♖f1 ♜ac8 23 ♜e1 ♖b8 24 g3 ♖g6 25 ♖e2 ♖a8 26 ♜h2 ♜b4 27 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 28 ♖d2 ♖e5 29 ♖c4 ♖xc4 30 ♖xc4 ♖c8 31 ♖d4 ♖xe4 32 ♜xe4 ♜xe4. Black went on to convert this position, though I'm not trying to claim that all of

the moves were forced!

8...♖xe4

The only way to prevent 9 e5, although Black is in for a torrid time.

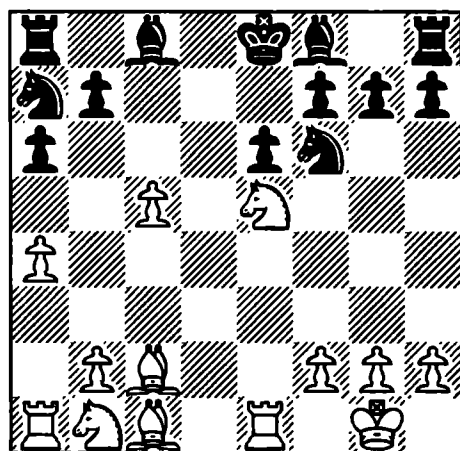
9 ♖e1 ♖df6

9...♖d6 10 d5 e5 11 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 12 ♜xe5+ ♜e7 and 9...c4 10 ♜xc4 ♖d6 11 ♜b3 ♜e7 are two attempts to defuse the situation, but it's certainly not clear that Black fares any better here than in the usual IQP position.

10 ♜c2 ♖d6

The black queen would also be in for a rough ride after 10...♖d5 11 ♖e2 ♖d6 12 ♖c3 ♖c6 13 ♜f4 cxd4 14 ♖xd4 ♖c5 15 ♜ad1, as in Romanishin-Baburin, Linares 1996.

11 dxc5 ♖b5 12 ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 13 a4 ♖a7 14 ♖e5 ♜e8



The only thing going for Black is the awkwardness that White suffers in defending his c-pawn. White would rather have his a-pawn further back as now 15 b4 a5! throws a spanner in the works.

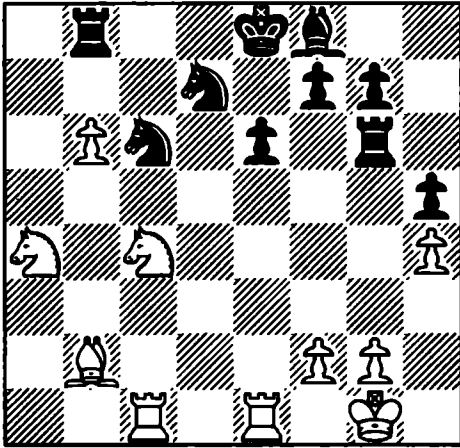
15 ♖d3 ♖c6 16 ♖c3

16 b4!? ♖d5 17 ♜d2 would have offered White some advantage.

16...♖d4 17 ♜d1 ♜d7 18 b4 ♜c6 19 ♜b2 ♜d8 20 ♖e5 ♖d7 21 ♖c4 b6 22 b5 axb5 23 axb5 ♖xb5 24 ♜a4

24 cxb6!? ♖xc3 25 ♜xc3 ♜d5 26 ♖e3 is also pretty good as 26...♖xb6? runs into 27 ♜a5 ♜c5 28 ♜b1.

24...♖d4 25 ♗xc6 ♜xc6 26 cxb6 ♜b8
27 ♖a4 h5 28 h4 ♜h6 29 ♜ac1 ♜g6



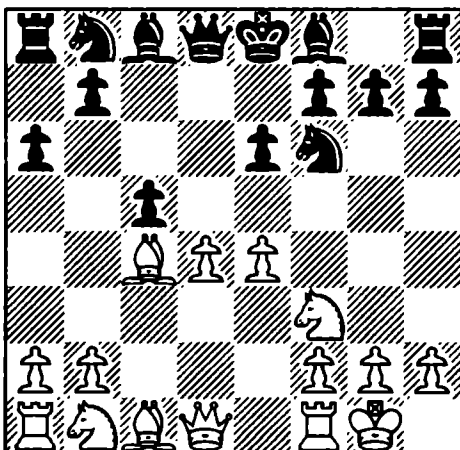
30 ♜d6+?!

The last chance to keep the rook out of the game was 30 f3!?, when after 30...♜c5 31 ♜e5 ♜xa4 32 ♜xc6 ♜xb2 White has 33 ♜ec1! ♜d8 34 ♜c7. The black king is in all sorts of trouble and the b-pawn can't be captured (34...♜xb6 35 ♜d7+ ♜e8 36 ♜c8 mate) and is destined for glory.

30...♗xd6 31 ♜xc6 ♜g4! 32 ♜xd6 ♜xa4
33 ♗xg7 ♜xb6 34 ♜xb6 ½-½

Game 42
Gelfand-Lautier
Belgrade 1997

1 d4 d5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 c4 dxc4 4 e3 ♖f6 5
♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 e4



Perhaps the real Queen's Gambit(!).

White adopts a 'Why hang around?' attitude.

7...♜xe4

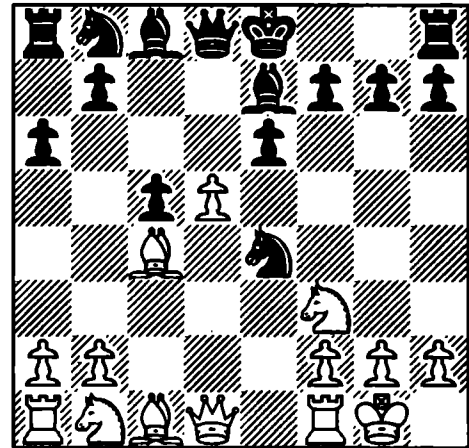
The consequences of declining this pawn are investigated in the final game of this chapter.

8 d5!?

After the slightly less flexible 8 ♖e2 ♜f6 9 d5 ♜xd5 10 ♜d1 (once considered very strong for White), Black has the cunning resource 10...♖e7!

8...♗e7

8...exd5 9 ♗xd5 ♜d6 10 ♜e1+ ♗e7 11 ♗g5 f6 12 ♗f4 ♜f5 13 ♜c3 leaves White with excellent compensation for the pawn.



9 ♜e1!?

This looks most to the point, because I doubt that 9 dxe6 ♗xe6 10 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 11 ♗xe6 fxe6 12 ♜e1 offers White much of a niggler.

9...exd5 10 ♖xd5

If 10 ♗xd5 then this time Black could play 10...♜f6 without fear of 11 ♗xf7+.

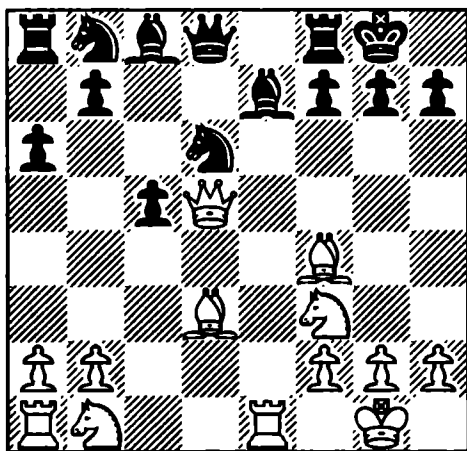
10...♜d6

Trading queens wouldn't solve the pin on the e-file.

11 ♗d3 0-0

After 11...c4, pins were also the order of the day in Rausis-Ivanov, Cappelle la Grande 1998: 12 ♗c2 ♜c6 13 ♗f4 ♗e6 14 ♖h5 ♖a5 15 ♖xa5 ♜xa5 16 ♜d4 ♜d7 17 ♜c3 ♜c6 18 ♜xe6 fxe6 19 ♜ad1 ♜b4 20

♙e4 ♖ad8 21 a3 ♘d3 22 ♙xd3 cxd3 23 ♖xd3 ♖hf8 24 g3 ♗c8 25 ♖xe6 ♘f5 26 ♖d5 ♖xd5 27 ♘xd5 ♙c5 28 b4 ♙d4 29 ♘e7+ ♗d7 30 ♘xf5 1-0.
12 ♙f4



12...♘f5

12...♘c6 (!?) 13 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 14 ♙xd6 ♖d8 has been suggested as Black's best try, but I'm not sure how he should continue after 15 ♗xc6!?

13 ♘c3

Again, thanks to the difficulties on b6, c7 and e7, a trade of queens doesn't alleviate many problems.

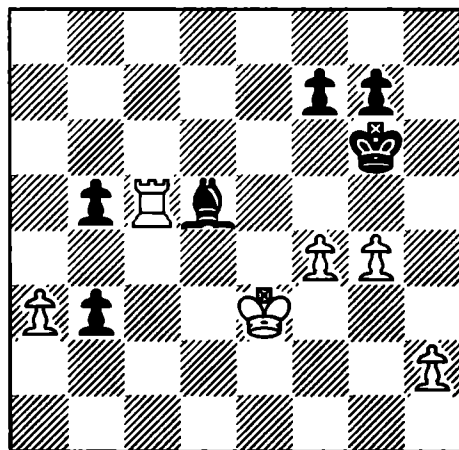
13...♙f6 14 ♙xf5 ♗xd5 15 ♙xh7+ ♗xh7 16 ♘d5 ♘d7

White has regained his pawn and is on the verge of winning another. As 16...♙xb2 17 ♖ab1 ♙f6 18 ♘b6 is unplayable, the game should effectively be over. Amazingly, as you will see, there are a couple of twists yet to come.

17 ♙d6 ♖d8 18 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 19 ♙xc5 ♙g4 20 ♙e7 ♖d7 21 ♘g5+ ♗g6 22 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 23 ♘e4+ ♗g6 24 f3 ♙f5 25 ♖ad1 ♖ad8 26 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 27 ♗f2 b6 28 ♖e2 ♖d3 29 ♖e3 ♖d4 30 ♖b3 b5 31 ♗e3 ♖c4 32 ♖c3 ♖b4 33 b3 ♙e6 34 g4 a5 35 f4 ♙d5 36 ♘d2 a4 37 a3 ♖xb3 38 ♘xb3 axb3 39 ♖c5??

39 ♗d2 would be game, set and match, but, presumably in time trouble, White allows a tactic that his opponent fortu-

nately fails to spot!



39...♙c4

I suppose Black deserved a '??' for ing 39...b4!, when either the solitary pawn or the soon to be connected pawns would romp home.

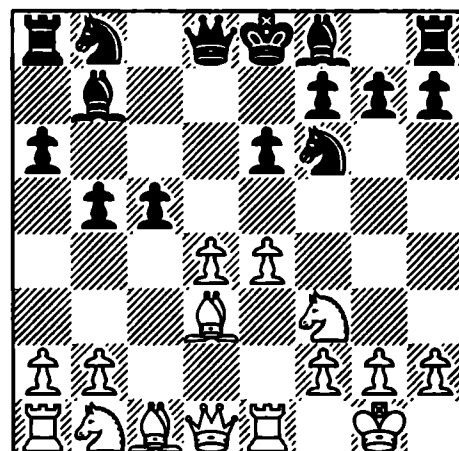
40 ♗d2 1-0

Game 43
Hebden-Sadler
British Ch., Torquay 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 ♙xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 e4 b5 8 ♙d3 ♙l

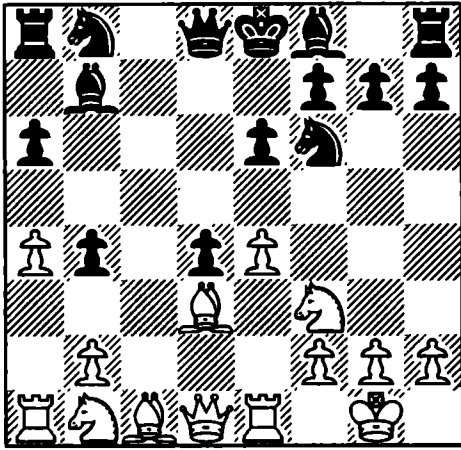
The immediate 8...cxd4 would re the 9 a4! treatment.

9 ♖e1



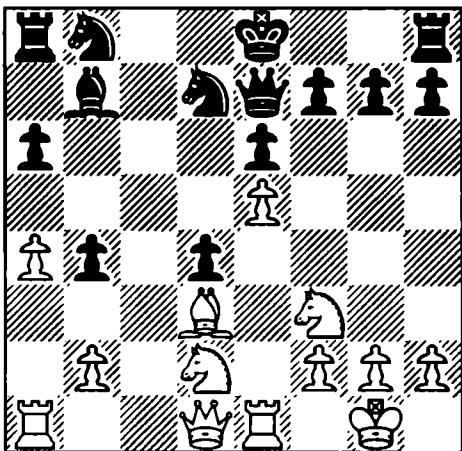
White prefers this waiting move t immediate, tried and tested (and pro equal) 9 e5 ♘d5 10 ♙g5 ♗b6.

9...cxd4 10 a4!? b4



If it had been anyone other than Matthew making this concession, I might have criticised it. Clearly though Mark was happy to follow one of his previous encounters (although up to which point, only he knows): 10...bxa4!? (at least keeping the b4-square free for a piece occupation) 11 ♖g5 ♗e7 12 ♜xa4 ♘c6 13 ♘xd4 ♘e5 14 ♗f1 h6 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♜b3 ♜b8 17 ♜a3 ♜d7 18 ♘d2 ♗e7 19 ♜a1 0-0 20 ♘2f3 ♘xf3+ 21 ♘xf3 a5 22 ♘e5 ♜c7 23 ♘c4 ♗b4 24 ♜c1 ♜fc8 25 ♜b1 ♜f4 26 f3 ♗d6 27 ♜xa5 ♜xh2+ 28 ♔f2 ♗g3+ 29 ♔e2 ♜g1 0-1 Hebden-Tkachiev, Hastings Premier 1998.

11 e5 ♘fd7 12 ♗g5 ♗e7 13 ♗xe7 ♜xe7 14 ♘bd2



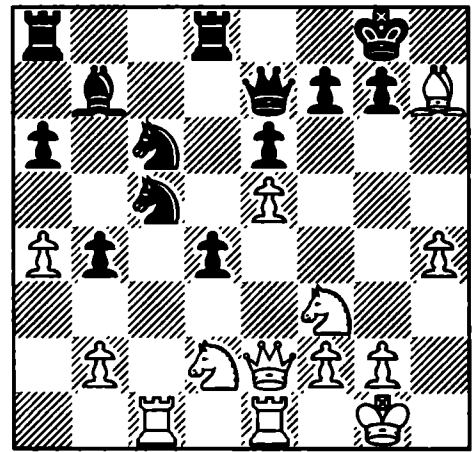
This isn't the first time that we've seen this type of position. White isn't in a

hurry to regain the d4-pawn, which may get in Black's way (specifically White's d-file pieces won't be hassled by a black rook). Besides, White's own strong e5-pawn offers some good leverage for the white knights and in general there are promising piece play prospects.

14...♘c6 15 ♜c1 0-0 16 h4!?

A standard continuation, facilitating ♘g5 in the absence of a white dark-squared bishop.

16...♜fd8 17 ♜e2 ♘c5 18 ♗xh7+!?



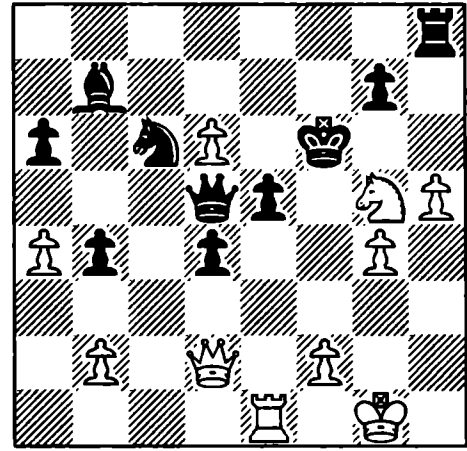
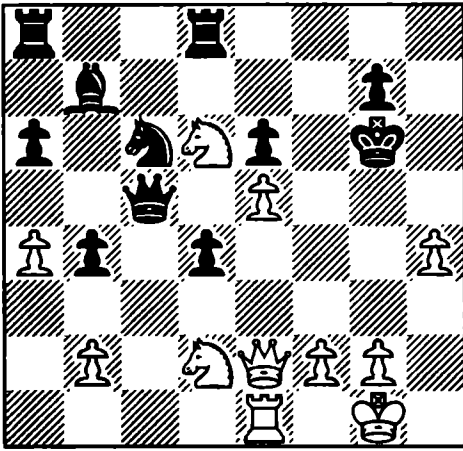
Hebden later explained that he felt he just had to play this move because he was on the demonstration boards. Still if he was going to move this bishop, h7 is the square to move it to in view of ...d4-d3!

18...♔xh7 19 ♘g5+

Although the sacrifice is hardly as crushing as in a traditional 'Greek gift', there is the point that now 19...♔g8 drops the knight on c5 because after 20 ♜h5, the black queen has to budge to give the king a flight square.

19...♔h6 20 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 21 ♘xf7+ ♔g6 22 ♘d6!?

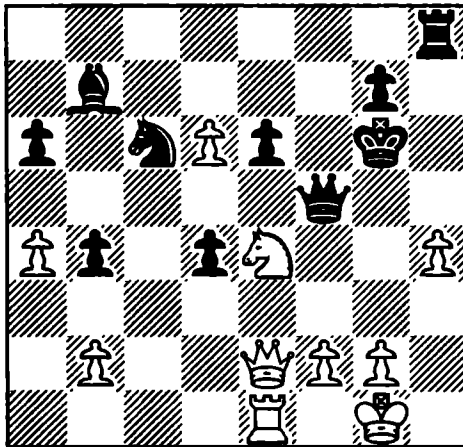
22 ♘e4 ♜e7 23 ♘eg5, threatening 24 h5+ ♔f5 25 ♜f3 mate, looks very dangerous but is thwarted by 23...♜xf7! 24 ♘xf7 ♔xf7, when White has run out of pieces to attack with. There seems little point in cashing in the chips with 22 ♘xd8 and so the game goes on!



22...Rxd6

Black offloads the exchange anyhow, but at least White has more options on the e-file and a d6-pawn which Black would be brave to take (his king would then be thrown to the wolves).

23 exd6 ♖f5 24 ♗e4 ♜h8



Black may have been considering ...♗d8 as a future defensive move and naturally wanted his rook doing something useful on the kingside. Nevertheless 24...♗d8 looks a bit safer.

25 g4 ♖d5 26 h5+ ♜f7 27 ♗g5+ ♜f6

The knight is out of bounds due to 28 ♖xe6+ ♜f8 29 ♖e8 mate. Now with 28 ♗e4+, White could have forced a draw by perpetual check, but Hebden valiantly battles on for the spectators!

28 ♖d2 e5

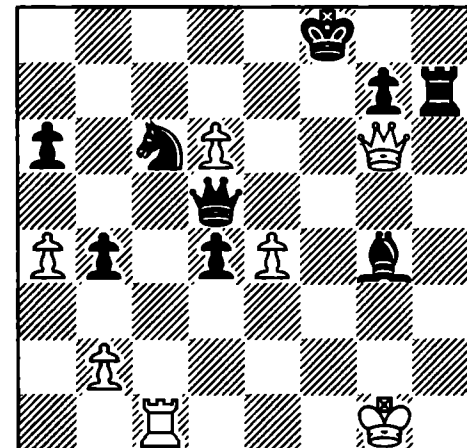
29 ♗e4+?!

Instead 29 f4!? (threatening 30 fxe5+ and 31 ♜f1+ mating) and 29 ♜e3!? (intending to bring the rook to the f-file on f3) were two serious winning attempts.

29...♜f7 30 ♖g5 ♗c8! 31 ♖g6+?!

As soon as White once again overlooks the chance to bring his rook into the game with 31 f4, the tide begins to turn.

31...♜f8 32 ♗g5 ♗xg4 33 ♜c1 ♜xh5 34 f3 e4 35 ♗h7+ ♜xh7 36 fxe4



Black is now firmly in control until in time trouble he finds:

36...♖e5??

36...♖h5 was wiser!

37 ♜f1+ 1-0

After 37...♜g8 it's 38 ♖f7+ ♜h8 39 ♖f8 mate. A fantastic game, with much theoretical interest.

Summary

If you didn't already know it, the conclusion from this chapter is that IQP positions can be extremely perilous for Black. Games 34 and 40 demonstrate two different successful attacks. White's pieces certainly get reasonable access to the enemy king, but if an offensive is thwarted, then the positional factors nearly always tend to favour Black.

The QGA expert Matthew Sadler has demonstrated that there are alternative ways for Black to play the position. It is certainly possible to retain the tension between the black c5-pawn and the white d4-pawn, and his ...b7-b6 move is particularly sensible. It is not as threatening as ...b7-b5, but it is also less weakening. Practical experience has seen White struggling to find decent targets.

All in all I see the 7 e4! pawn sacrifice as the most critical line. It is definitely worth both sides studying the contents of Games 42 and 43.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♙xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6

7 ♙b3 (D)

7 ♘c3 – Game 32

7 a4 ♘c6 8 ♚e2 (D)

8...♚c7 – Game 33

8...cxd4 – Game 34

7 a3 – Game 35

7 b3 – Game 36

7 ♙d3 – Game 37

7 e4 (D)

7...♘xe4 – Game 42

7...b5 – Game 43

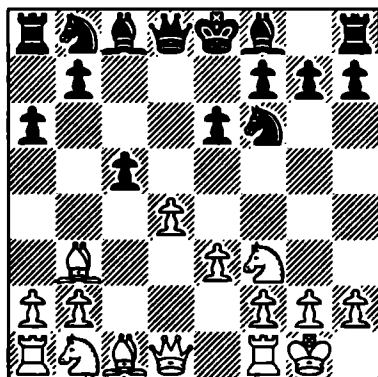
7...b5

7...♘c6 – Game 39

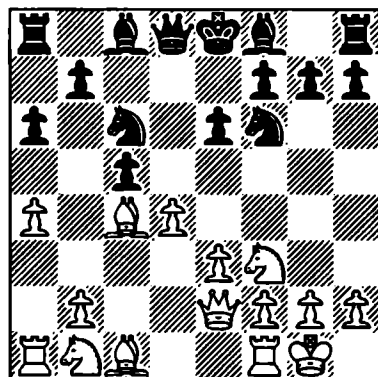
7...cxd4 – Game 40

7...♘bd7 – Game 41

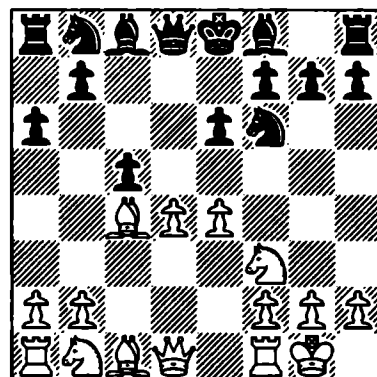
8 a4 – Game 38



7 ♙b3



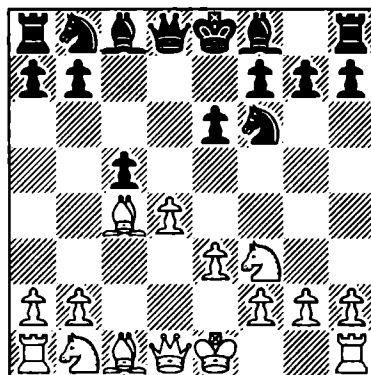
8 ♚e2



7 e4

CHAPTER SIX

Classical Variation with an early ♖e2



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 f3 f6 4 e3 e6 5 xc4 c5

In the previous chapter we saw that the move ♖e2 is a common feature of the Classical variation. Whereas this move is often played to vacate the d1-square for a rook in order to hopefully obtain a promising IQP position (Games 44-47), here we also cover Furman's 6 ♖e2 (Games 48-52), which introduces a new idea of a swift advance of the e-pawn.

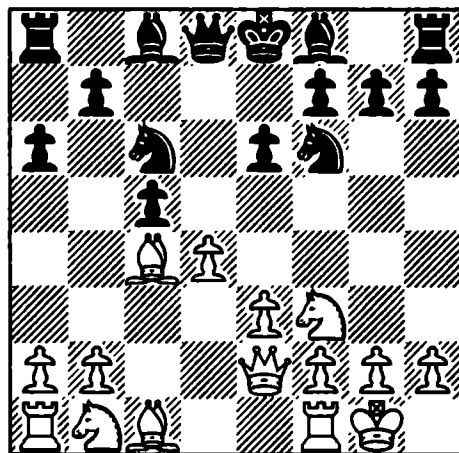
The early games of this chapter reiterate some of the positional elements, with a big emphasis on controlling key queenside squares. The later games though delve more into the tactical implications of White getting a pawn to e5, and demonstrate that 6 ♖e2 is the sharpest line in the Classical variation.

Game 44 I. Sokolov-Cifuentes Rotterdam 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 f3 f6 4 e3 e6 5 xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♖e2 c6

7...b5 is also popular (see Games 45-47), but as a reminder of how things can quickly go wrong, take a look at this: 7...cxd4 8 exd4 (we essentially have a pure

Steinitz variation with ...a7-a6 and ♖e2 added on; this game is a pretty good advertisement for delaying the exchange on d4!) 8...e7 9 c3 b5 10 b3 0-0 11 g5 b7 12 ad1 c6 13 fe1 b4 (and just when things may have felt comfortable there came...) 14 d5!! fxd5 15 xd5 xg5 16 xb4 e7 17 d5 xd5 18 xd5 1-0 Andersson-Karpov, Enkoping (rapidplay) 1995. Okay, it was only a speed chess event, but just the same I'm surprised that Karpov wasn't more wary of the thematic d4-d5 break.



8 c3

8 dxc5 xc5 transposes to Game 48.

8...b5

To balance things up, I should point

out that 8...cxd4 is now playable: 9 ♖d1 b5 10 ♗b3 ♘a5 (the key point here is that Black threatens ...♗xb3 before White manages d4-d5) 11 ♖c2 ♗b7 12 exd4 ♖e7 13 ♘e5 ♜c8 14 ♖g5 0-0 15 ♖d3 ♘c4! 16 ♜g3 ♝xd4 17 ♗h6 ♘xe5 18 ♜xg7+ ♚h8 19 ♖d1 ♝c5 20 ♖d5 ♖xd5 21 ♝xe5 ♖e4! 0-1 Illescas-Anand, Leon 1997.

9 ♖d3 cxd4 10 exd4 ♖e7

After 10...♗xd4?! 11 ♗xd4 ♝xd4 12 ♝f3 ♝a7 13 ♖e3 ♝b7 14 ♘e4, as in most instances where Black tries to snatch the d-pawn, White has definite compensation.

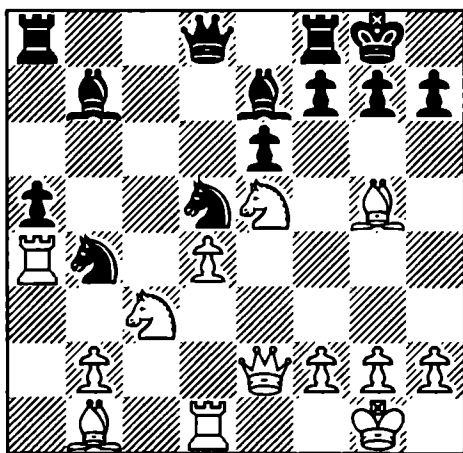
11 a4

11 ♖d1 and 11 ♖g5 are reasonable alternatives, and we are not a million miles from the IQP situations of the previous chapter. As usual the text move seeks to weaken Black's queenside or (in the event of 11...b4?!) deprive the black pieces of the b4-square.

11...bxa4 12 ♜xa4 ♗b4

As this game shows, it is quite important for Black to keep this square vacant for a knight.

13 ♖b1 ♖b7 14 ♖g5 a5 15 ♖d1 0-0 16 ♘e5 ♘fd5



17 ♖d2

17 ♝h5!? was probably only good enough for a draw after 17...g6 (not 17...h6? 18 ♖xh6! gxh6 19 ♝xh6 ♘f6 20 ♘g4 with an overwhelming attack) 18 ♘xg6 hxg6 19 ♖xg6 fxg6 20 ♝xg6+ ♚h8.

17...f5!?

I must say that although at first I really didn't like the look of this move, it certainly has its points. Whilst the e6-pawn looks weak and the e5-square is now an outpost, any potential threats against h7 have been minimised and White no longer has the e4-square at his disposal. As we shall soon see, this pawn also comes into play in its own right.

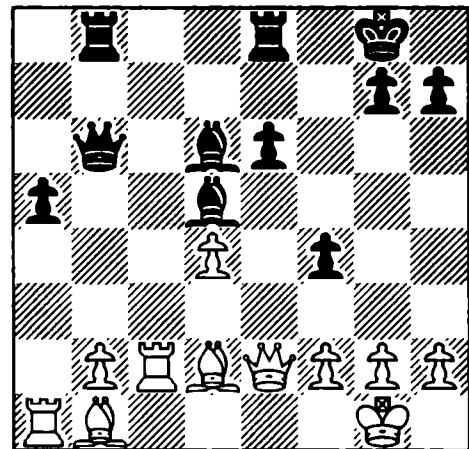
18 ♖a1 ♖e8 19 ♗d3 ♖d6 20 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 21 ♘f4 ♖b3 22 ♜c1 ♝b6 23 ♜c3 ♗d5 24 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 25 ♖e3 ♜ab8 26 ♜c2

Without kingside attacking possibilities, White has difficulty finding a plan.

26...f4!?

This pawn has done good job at reducing the scope of White's light-squared bishop. Now Black decides to go on the offensive himself.

27 ♖d2



27...♝xd4?!

27...f3! first would have left Black with a big initiative, but the white pieces are allowed to activate themselves.

28 ♖c3 ♝e4 29 ♝xe4 ♖xe4 30 ♖d2 ♖d5 31 ♜xa5 ♜ec8

Pressurising White's queenside and threatening the immediate 32...♜xc3. A back-rank trick would also occur now after 32 ♖a2?? ♖xa2 33 ♜xa2 ♜xc3.

32 ♖d1?!

32 ♖f5 was better.

32...♙b4 33 ♙xb4 ♞xb4 34 ♙a2 ♙xa2

Instead 34...♞d4!? 35 ♞b1 ♞c2 36 ♙xd5 exd5 37 g3 fxg3 38 hxg3 ♞dd2 would have left White defending a slightly tricky double-rook ending.

35 ♞xa2 ♞c7?

Rather negative. After either 35...♙f7 or 35...♞c2, Black could have continued to claim an edge.

36 h4 ♙f7 37 ♞d2 ♙f6 38 f3 ♞c1+ 39 ♙h2 ♞c7 40 ♞a6 ♞cb7 41 ♞e2 ♞7b6 42 ♞xb6 ½-½

Game 45
Franco-Rivera
Havana 1998

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 c4 dxc4 4 e3 e6 5 ♙xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♞e2 b5 8 ♙d3

The alternative retreat 8 ♙b3 is the subject of the next two main games.

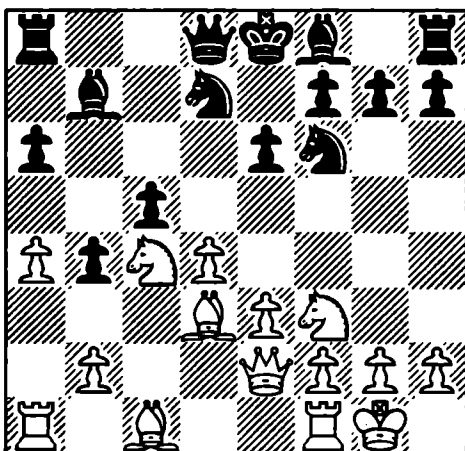
8...♘bd7

Black decides that he doesn't want to enter an IQP position, and he is certainly not afraid of d4xc5.

9 a4 b4

Now that the knight has gone to d7, Black no longer really needs access to the b4-square. However, the c4-square now looks ripe for an invasion. 9...c4 10 ♙c2 ♙b7 was an alternative, but after 11 e4 White has a free hand in the centre.

10 ♘bd2 ♙b7 11 ♘c4



The knight is more effective here than on b3.

11...♙e7 12 a5!?

The standard continuation. White grasps the b6-square and hopes to prove that the b4-pawn is out on a limb.

12...0-0 13 ♞d1 ♞c7 14 ♙d2

With his dark-squared bishop apparently incarcerated, it's almost impossible to believe that White has any advantage. Nevertheless, the c4-knight and the a5-pawn combine to present Black with a few tricky problems.

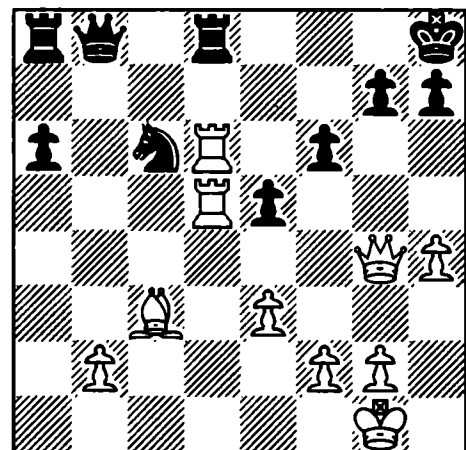
14...♙e4 15 ♙xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♞ac1 ♞b7 17 ♘fe5 ♘ef6 18 dxc5 ♙xc5?!

White's position was preferable, but this enables a forcing sequence that is clearly preferable to White.

19 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 20 ♘e5! ♘xe5 21 ♞xc5 ♘d7 22 ♞c4 ♞b5 23 ♙f1 ♘e5 24 ♞xb4 ♞xa5

Alas now Black simply reaches a position where the bishop is better than the knight.

25 ♙c3 ♞c7 26 ♞bd4 ♘c6 27 ♞c4 ♞fc8 28 ♞d6 ♞b6 29 ♞g4 ♞b5+ 30 ♙g1 e5 31 h4 ♙h8 32 ♞1d5 ♞b8 33 ♞f5 f6 34 ♞g4 ♞d8



35 ♞d7?

35 ♞xd8+! ♘xd8 36 ♞d7 would have put a somewhat more abrupt end to the proceedings, though Black certainly never manages to equalise in the game.

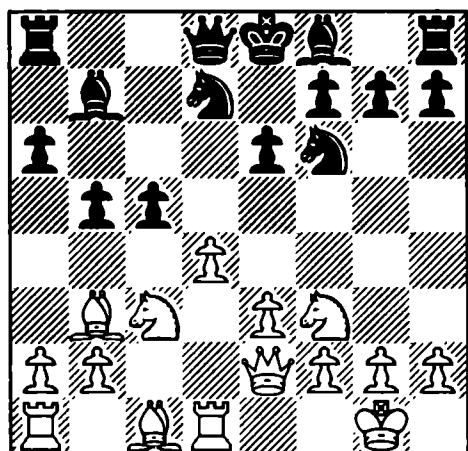
35...♖xd7 36 ♖xd7 ♗g8 37 h5 h6 38 ♖c7 ♘a7 39 ♙a5 ♘b5 40 ♖d7 ♗h7 41 ♕h2 ♖g8 42 ♗g6 ♖a8 43 ♔g3 ♘a7 44 ♖c7 ♘b5 45 ♗xh7+ ♕xh7 46 ♖c6 ♔g8 47 ♔g4 ♕f7 48 ♕f5 ♖a7 49 ♕e4 ♕e7 50 ♕f5 ♕f7 51 g4 ♖d7 52 ♕e4 ♘d6+ 53 ♕f3 e4+ 54 ♕f4 ♘b7 55 ♙c3 ♘d8 56 ♖xa6 ♘e6+ 57 ♔g3 ♖d1 58 ♖a7+ ♔g8 59 ♖e7 ♘g5 60 ♔g2 ♖b1 61 ♙d4 ♕h8 62 ♔g3 ♖g1+ 63 ♕f4 ♖f1 64 ♕f5 ♕h7 65 f4 exf3 66 ♙xf6 ♔g8 67 ♙xg5 1-0

Game 46
Giacomini-G.Flear
French Team Championship 1998

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 e3 e6 5 ♙xc4 a6 6 0-0 c5 7 ♗e2 b5 8 ♙b3 ♙b7 9 ♖d1

It is again possible to undermine the black queenside with 9 a4 b4 10 ♘bd2 (see the next game).

9...♘bd7 10 ♘c3



10...♗b6

10...♗c7 has also been tried, with a similar idea in mind, e.g. 11 d5 c4 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 ♙c2 ♙c5 14 ♘d4 0-0-0 (a divergence from the main game, with Black presumably intending 15 ♘xe6 ♗c6) 15 e4 ♗b6 16 ♙e3 ♘e5 17 ♘f3 ♙xe3 (17...♘xf3+ 18 ♗xf3 ♙xe3 might be better still, but although Black has several positional advantages after 19 fxe3, his king is

remains a little draughty) 18 ♘xe5 ♙c5 19 a4 ♗c7 and Black went on to win a murky game in Sasikiran-Gofshtein, Canadian open 1997.

11 d5 c4!?

11...♘xd5 12 ♘xd5 ♙xd5 13 ♙xd5 exd5 14 ♖xd5 ♙e7 15 e4 slightly favours White because of his central control, but 11...e5!? 12 e4 c4 13 ♙c2 ♙c5 is certainly worth investigating. The acid test would be an attempt to break up Black's impressive queenside pawns with a quick b2-b3.

12 dxe6 fxe6 13 ♙c2

The position is double-edged and reminds me of one or two variations in the 'Semi-Slav'. Black's e-pawn is a potential target and there are one or two holes in his kingside. However, his queenside holds great potential and, as we see here, things can easily go very right for him.

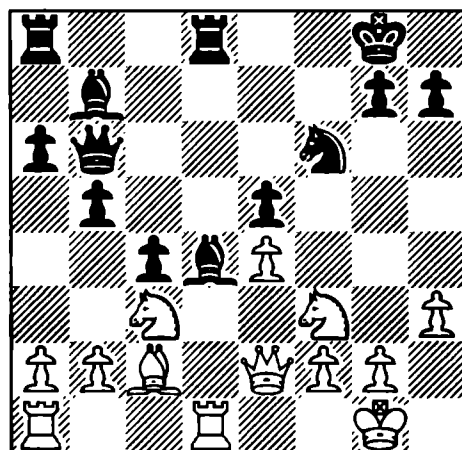
13...♙d6 14 h3?!

White seems oblivious of the need to avoid wasting time. He should have got on with things with either 14 e4 or 14 b3.

14...0-0 15 e4 ♘e5 16 ♘d4 ♙c5 17 ♙e3 ♖fd8 18 ♘f3

All in all then, White's ♘f3-d4-f3 hasn't been a categorical success!

18...♙xe3 19 ♘xe5 ♙d4 20 ♘f3 e5!



Now Black is in total control. He can build up at almost at his leisure.

21 ♖d2 ♖d6 22 ♖ad1 ♖ad8 23 ♙b1 g6 24 g3 ♔g7 25 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 26 ♗e3 b4

These pawns were just biding their time. Now White is pushed into a lost endgame.

27 ♖d5 ♗xd5 28 ♖xd4 exd4 29 ♗xd4 ♗xe4

A nice touch as now 30 ♗xb6 ♖xd1+ 31 ♖h2 ♖h1 is mate.

30 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 31 ♖xd8 ♗xb1 32 ♖a8 ♗e4 33 ♖xa6 c3 34 bxc3 bxc3 35 ♖a7+ ♖h6 36 ♖c7 ♖d5 37 ♖c5 c2 38 a3 ♗d3 39 a4 ♖b4 40 a5 ♖a2 41 a6 c1♗+ 42 ♖xc1 ♖xc1 0-1

Game 47
Hebden-G.Flear
Hastings Premier 1997

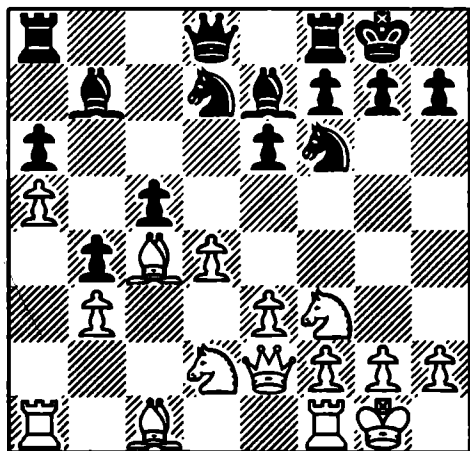
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖f3 ♖f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♗e2 b5 8 ♗b3 ♗b7 9 a4 b4 10 ♖bd2 ♖bd7

After 10...♗e7 11 ♖c4 0-0 12 ♖d1 ♗c7 13 ♗d2 ♖bd7, we would have reached a similar position to that in Game 45 (the main difference being that the bishop is on b3 rather than d3). In my view White should definitely try to get a4-a5 in himself, as after 14 ♖fe5 ♖fd8 15 ♖ac1 a5! 16 ♗e1, both 16...♖xe5 and 16...♗d5!? are fine for Black.

11 a5 ♗e7 12 ♗c4

An interesting deviation from the usual 12 ♖c4 policy.

12...0-0 13 b3



The plan of fianchettoing the queen's bishop is not especially new to us.

13...♖b8?!

One can see what Black was thinking. This knight defends the a6-pawn in case ...♗d5 was desired and after a future ...♖c6, the a5-pawn may be in trouble. However, I'm not sure that Black really had time for this and 13...cxd4 seems preferable. Surely White wouldn't want an IQP position with his dark-squared bishop blocked out and on 14 ♖xd4, Black at least has 14...♖e5.

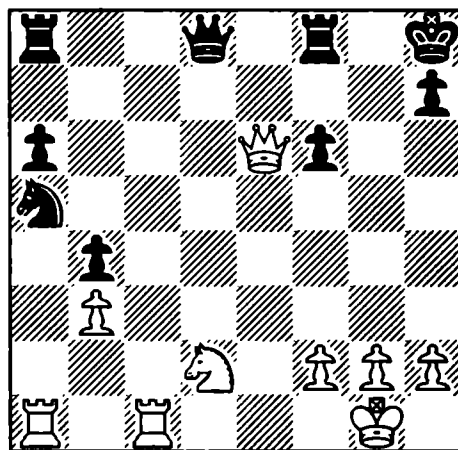
14 dxc5 ♖c6 15 ♗b2 ♖xa5 16 ♖fc1 ♗xc5?!

Now White forces a lasting positional advantage.

17 ♗xf6 gxf6

The queen had look after the knight.

18 ♗xe6 ♗xe3 19 ♗xe3 fxe6 20 ♖d4 ♗d5 21 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 22 ♗xe6+ ♖h8



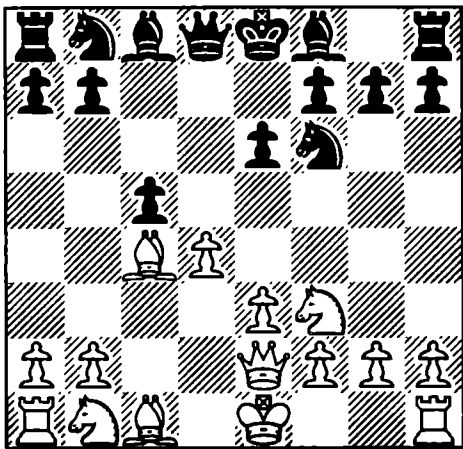
All of Black's pieces are on the edges and most of his pawns are targets. It's a long process, but Hebden's technique is easily good enough to squeeze out the full point.

23 ♗e3 ♖b7 24 ♖c4 a5 25 g3 ♖a6 26 ♖e1 ♗c7 27 ♖ac1 ♗f7 28 ♖b6 ♖d6 29 ♗c5 ♖b7 30 ♗b5 ♖a7 31 ♖ed1 ♖d8 32 ♖d7 ♖g8 33 ♗f5 ♖a6 34 ♖b8 ♖e6 35 ♗xa5 ♗e7 36 ♗c7 ♖f7 37 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 38 ♖c6 ♖e4 39 h4 ♖c8 40 ♖g2 ♖c7 41 ♖e5 ♖xc1 42 ♖xf7+ ♖g7 43 ♖xc1 ♖xf7

44 ♖c5 ♗d4 45 ♖b5 ♔g6 46 h5+ ♔h6 47 ♔h3 ♗e4 48 g4 ♗d4 49 ♔h4 ♗d2 50 ♖xb4 ♖xf2 51 ♖b6 ♔g7 52 ♖b7+ ♔g8 53 ♔g3 ♗f1 54 b4 f5 55 gxf5 ♖xf5 56 ♔g4 ♗f1 57 b5 ♖c1 58 ♔g5 ♗d1 59 ♖b8+ ♔g7 60 h6+ ♔f7 61 b6 ♖g1+ 62 ♔f4 ♗f1+ 63 ♔g3 1-0

Game 48
I.Sokolov-Lautier
Wijk aan Zee 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♗xc4 e6
 5 ♘f3 c5 6 ♚e2



Introducing a new plan. If Black is not interested in defending an IQP position, then White is going to get his e-pawn rolling.

6...a6 7 dxc5

Thanks to White's last move, this trade is far from dull here as there will be no exchange of queens.

7...♗xc5 8 0-0

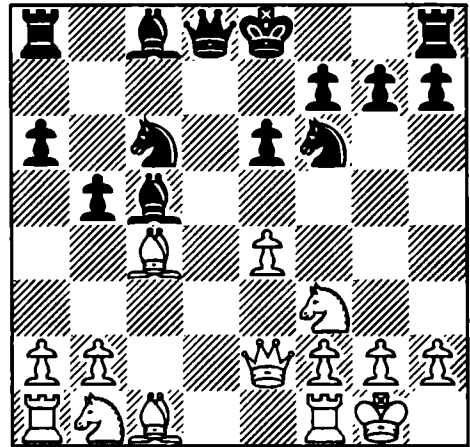
The sharp 8 e4!? is the subject of Game 52.

8...♘c6

Black has a wide choice here: 8...b5, 8...♘bd7 and 8...♚c7 are dealt with in Games 49-51 respectively. However, it is first important to know that 8...0-0?! is premature, as there is no way to prevent the cramping e-pawn rolling on, e.g. 9 e4 ♘c6 10 e5! ♘d7 11 ♗f4 b5 12 ♗d3 g6 (a

'Greek gift' was threatened, but although this stops 13 ♗xh7+, it also creates unwanted holes) 13 ♘bd2 ♗b7 14 ♗fd1 ♘d4 15 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 16 ♗e4 ♗a7 17 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 18 ♘e4 ♚b6 19 ♗ac1 f6 20 exf6 ♘xf6 21 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 22 ♗xd4 ♚xd4 23 ♗e5 ♚d8 24 ♗xf6 ♚xf6 25 ♗c6 with a winning ending in Ehlvest-Lin Weiguo, Beijing 1998.

9 e4 b5



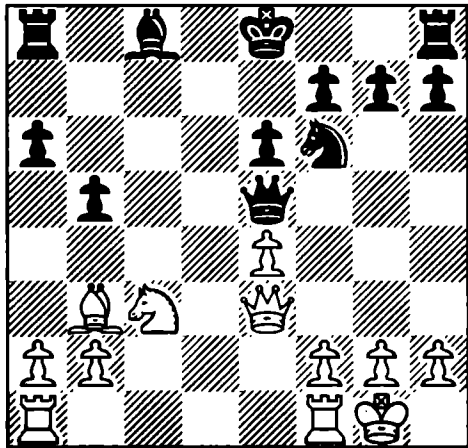
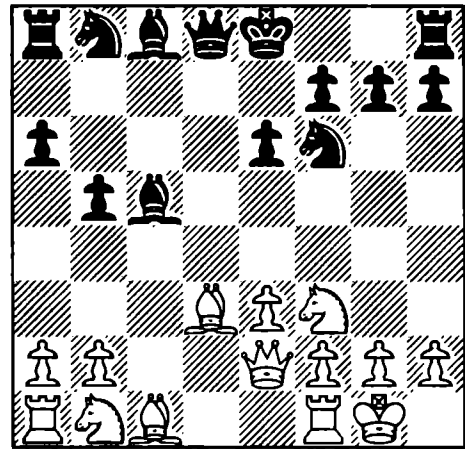
9...0-0 would have transposed to the previous note, whereas the passive 9...♚c7 was dealt some harsh treatment in Ehlvest-Zilberman, European Club Cup 1997: 10 e5 ♘d7 11 ♗f4 b5 12 ♗b3 ♗b7 13 ♘c3 ♘e7 14 ♘e4 ♘g6 15 ♗g3 ♗xe4 16 ♚xe4 0-0 17 ♗ac1 ♗ac8 18 h4 ♖fe8 19 h5 ♘e7 20 ♗f4 ♘f8 21 h6 g6 22 ♗e3 ♚a7 23 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 24 ♚f4 ♘d7 25 ♗fd1 ♗ec8 26 ♖xc5 ♘xc5 27 ♚f6 1-0.

However, 9...♘g4 is a fascinating alternative. White doesn't want his opponent to park a knight on e5, so 10 e5!? is critical, when the fun really begins, e.g. 10...♘d4 11 ♘xd4 ♚xd4 12 ♘d2 ♘xe5 13 ♘b3 (13 ♗b3?! ♗d7 14 ♘f3 ♘xf3+ 15 ♚xf3 ♗c6 was clearly better for Black in Todorov-Volzhein, Cappelle la Grande open 1996) 13...♚xc4 14 ♚xe5 ♗f8 (this necessary retreat justifies the assessment that White definitely has adequate compensation for the pawn) 15 ♗e3 f6 16 ♚g3 e5 17 f4 ♗d6 18 ♗ad1 ♗e7 19 ♗c1 ♚e6 20

fxe5 0-0 21 ♔d4 ♔d7 22 ♚fe1 f5 23 ♚c7 f4
24 ♚h3 ♚xh3 25 gxh3 ♔h4 26 ♚xd7 ♔xe1
27 e6 ♚f6 28 ♔xf6 gxf6 29 ♚f1 ♔h4 30
♔d4 1-0 Dao Thien Hai-Krizsany, Buda-
pest 1997.

10 ♔b3 ♔d4! 11 ♔xd4 ♚xd4

The point of Black's play is that after
12 e5, he can now liquidate with 12...♚e4!
12 ♔c3 ♚e5 13 ♔e3 ♔xe3 14 ♚xe3



14...♔g4

The best continuation. Although this
threatens mate, in reality Black is really
seeking a trade of queens.

15 ♚g3

There is no justification for preserving
the queens with 15 ♚h3, as after the reply
15...h5 White's queen is simply out of
play.

15...♚xg3 16 hxg3 ♚e7

If anything now Black is slightly better
due to his more centralised king.

17 ♚ac1 ♔d7 18 ♔e2 ♚ac8 19 ♚fd1
♚hd8 20 a3 ♔e8 21 ♚xc8 ♚xc8 22 f3
♔e5 23 ♚f2 b4 24 axb4 ♚b8 25 ♔c2
♚xb4 26 b3 ♚b7 27 ♔d4 ♔c6 ½-½

Game 49

Fominyh-Ibragimov

Euro. Club Cup, Budapest 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♔f3 ♔f6 4 e3 e6 5
♔xc4 c5 6 ♚e2 a6 7 dxc5 ♔xc5 8 0-0
b5 9 ♔d3

9...♔c6

For reasons that you will soon see, this
is more flexible than 9...0-0, e.g. 10 e4 e5
11 a4! b4 12 ♔e3 (White offers to swap off
his good bishop, as he is counting on a
later infiltration of Black's queenside)
12...♔xe3 13 ♚xe3 ♔c6 14 ♔bd2 ♔h5 15
g3 ♚f6 16 ♚fc1 ♔d8 17 ♔c4 ♔e6 18 ♔xe6
♚xe6 19 ♚c5 ♚ac8 20 ♚ac1 ♔f6 21 ♔g5
♚d7 22 ♔c4 ♚b8 23 ♔xf7 ♚xf7 24 ♚xc6
♔g4 25 ♚e2 ♚h5 26 h4 ♚f8 27 ♔e3 ♔f6
28 ♚xh5 ♔xh5 29 ♚xa6 ♚bd8 30 ♔d5 ♚f3
31 ♚b6 ♚df8 32 ♚c2 b3 33 ♚d2 ♚a8 34
♔c3 1-0 Izeta-Yilmaz, European Team
Championship, Pula 1997.

10 ♔d1

10 ♔bd2!? looks fairly innocuous, but
Black must be careful not to allow White
to walk all over his queenside, e.g.
10...♔b7 11 ♔d1 ♚c7 12 ♔b3 ♔d6 13
♔d2 ♔g4 14 h3 ♔ge5 15 ♔xe5 ♔xe5 16
♚ac1 ♚e7 17 ♔a5 ♔xd3 18 ♚xd3 ♔d8 19
♚e2 ♔a8 20 ♔c6 ♔xc6 21 ♚xc6 ♚b7 22
♚dc1 0-0 23 ♔a5 ♔d7 24 ♚f3 with a rather
uncomfortable position for Black in the
game Schandorff-Hillarp Persson, Politik-
en Cup, Copenhagen 1998.

10...♚c7 11 a4 bxa4

As we have already established, with
the knight on c6 it is better for Black to
capture on a4 than deprive himself use of
the b4-square.

12 ♔c3

12 ♖xa4 ♘b4 13 ♙b5+ ♙d7 14 ♙xd7+ ♘xd7 15 ♙d2 a5 16 ♖c1 ♜b7 17 ♙c3 0-0 is pretty equal.

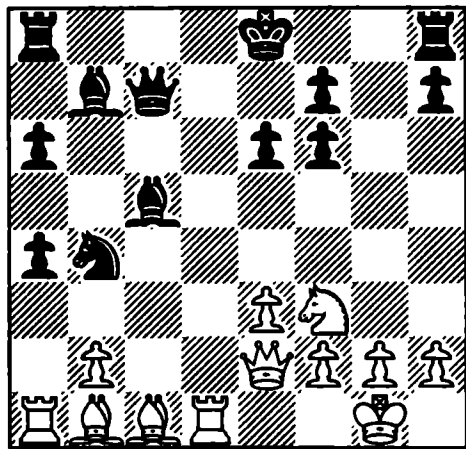
12...♙b7 13 ♘e4?!

Probably White should just have settled for regaining the a-pawn.

13...♘b4!? 14 ♘xf6+

14 ♘xc5 ♜xc5 15 ♖xa4 was the safer option, but Black has no problems here.

14...gxf6 15 ♙b1



15...♖g8

Justifying Black's decision to delay castling.

16 e4

Now 16 ♖xa4? would lose to 16...♜c6, so White decides to block off the b7-g2 diagonal. However, Black's dark-squared bishop now has a clear view of f2.

16...♞d8 17 ♞xd8+ ♜xd8 18 ♙d2 ♜b6 19 ♖xa4 ♙e7 20 ♖a1 a5

At this particular point, it is still the black king that the greater cause for concern, although that is not true after White's next move.

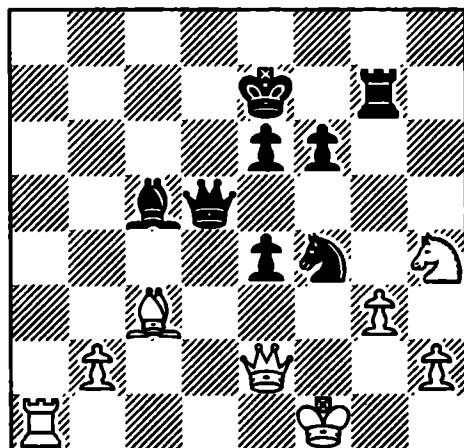
21 e5?! fxe5 22 ♙xh7 ♞g7 23 ♙e4 ♙a6 24 ♜e1 ♙d3!

Paving the way for the knight to come to d3 or c2.

25 ♙xd3 ♘xd3 26 ♜e2 ♘xf2 27 ♙xa5 ♜b3 28 ♙c3

28 ♘xe5?? would run into the very attractive 28...♞xg2+! 29 ♙xg2 ♜h3+ 30 ♙g1 ♘e4+ 31 ♙h1 ♘g3 mate.

28...f6 29 g3 ♜d5 30 ♙g2 ♘d3 31 ♙f1 e4 32 ♘h4 ♘f4!?



Taking advantage of the rook mate on g1.

33 ♜b5

The only move as 33 ♜c2 would have lost to 33...e3 34 gxf4 ♞g1+ 35 ♙e2 ♜h5+ 36 ♙d3 ♖xa1.

33...e3 34 gxf4

The rest of the game contains time-trouble errors by both players. Here 34...e2+! was correct, as White could have got away with taking the rook.

34...♞g1+ 35 ♙e2? ♖xa1 36 ♜d3 ♜xd3+ 37 ♙xd3 ♞d1+ 38 ♙e2 ♞h1 39 ♘f3 ♙f7 40 b4 ♙b6 41 ♙e1 ♙g6 42 b5 ♙f5 43 ♙c3 ♖b1 0-1

Game 50

I. Sokolov-Van Wely

Wijk aan Zee 1996

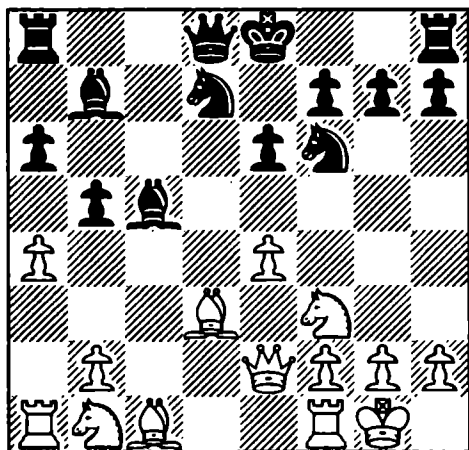
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♙xc4 e6 5 ♘f3 c5 6 ♜e2 a6 7 dxc5 ♙xc5 8 0-0 ♘bd7

Elsewhere this has usually been a flexible choice, but here it seems to reduce Black's options. Not only is the knight unable to venture to b4 and beyond, but in several key lines it blocks the retreat square of the other knight.

9 e4 b5 10 ♙d3 ♙b7 11 a4!

On 11 ♙g5, probably Black's best bet is

to go on the offensive with 11...h6 12 ♖h4 g5!? 13 ♖g3 ♘h5 14 ♘bd2 ♘xg3 15 hxg3 g4 16 ♘h4 ♗g5.



11...bxa4

11...0-0?!, hoping to trade b- for e-pawn, fails on account of 12 e5 ♖xf3 13 gxf3 ♘d5 14 axb5.

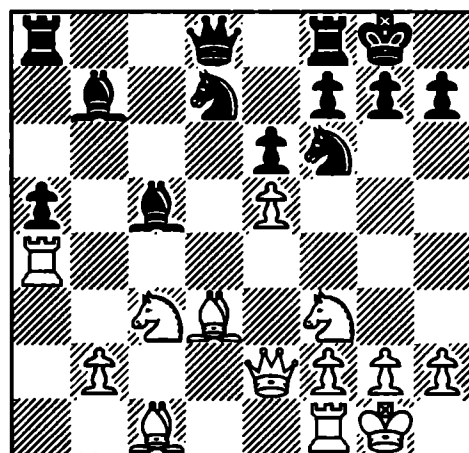
12 ♘c3 0-0

In view of this game, a logical improvement is 12...a3!? 13 bxa3 and only then 13...0-0. It is probably worth the lost tempo to reduce the pressure on the a6-pawn and prevent the a1-rook from swinging over to the kingside.

13 ♖xa4 a5

Black must be very careful and doesn't seem to have time for 13...♘b6 14 ♖a2 a5 because of 15 e5, when 15...♘fd5 would not surprisingly run into 16 ♖xh7+!

14 e5!



14...♖xf3

Forced, or else a 'Greek gift' was on the cards.

15 gxf3 ♘d5 16 ♘xd5 exd5 17 ♖g4!

White not only has extremely promising attacking prospects, but also holds the positional trumps.

17...♖e8 18 f4 g6 19 ♗f3 ♖b8 20 ♖b1

A worthwhile retreat. Whilst the bishop was on d3, it was vulnerable. 20...♖b3 was on the cards and 20 ♗xd5? would have run into 20...♘xe5! From b1 the bishop can always go to a2.

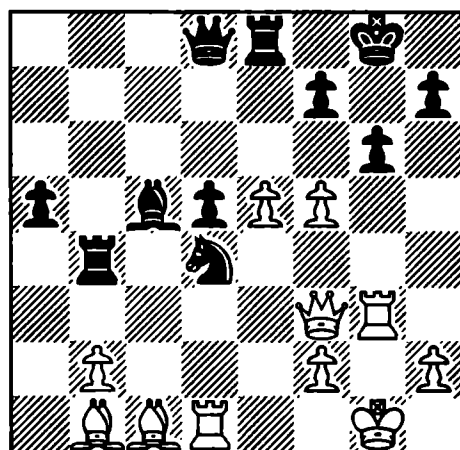
20...♖b4 21 ♖g3

Taking a 'time out' to prevent 21...♖xe5.

21...♘f8 22 ♖d1 ♘e6?

Asking for trouble, although 23 ♖a2 was on its way anyhow.

23 f5! ♘d4



24 ♖xd4! ♖xd4 25 fxg6 f6

25...fxg6 would have met the predictable 26 ♖xg6 ♖f8 27 ♖f7+ ♗h8 28 ♖g5.

26 ♗h5 ♖b7 27 g7 1-0

Game 51

I.Sokolov-Brenninkmeijer Dutch Championship 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e6 4 ♖xc4 ♘f6
5 ♘f3 c5 6 ♗e2 a6 7 dxc5 ♖xc5 8 0-0
♗c7 9 e4 ♘g4

Black's play is geared to preventing 10

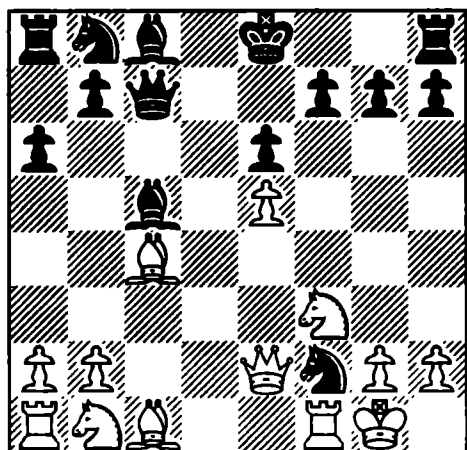
e5, but guess what?

10 e5!

Played anyway. White certainly doesn't want a black knight arriving on d4 (when ♖xd4 ♜xh2 mate would be a consideration!) and he is prepared to allow Black a combination that he hopes will fail due to a lack of development. For the record, the alternatives 10 ♖g5 and 10 ♖bd2 aren't particularly promising anyhow.

10...♖xf2

Black players have occasionally tried to defend 10...♖d7 11 ♖f4 ♖f8 12 ♖bd2 ♖g6 13 ♖g3 0-0 14 ♖ac1 ♜e7 15 ♖e4, but White's position appears to be very strong and I can't believe that Black would opt for this through choice.



11 ♖c3!

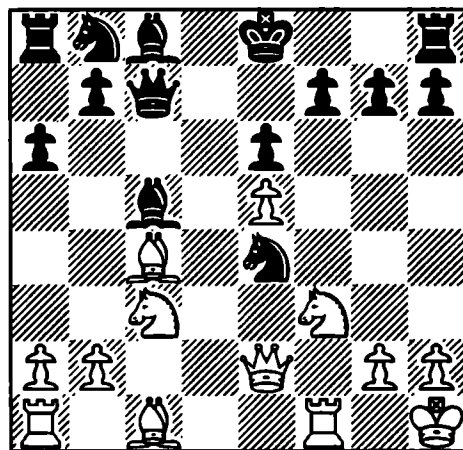
Black was hoping for 11 ♖xf2? ♖xf2+ 12 ♖xf2 b5, but 11 b4!? ♖h3+ 12 ♖h1 ♖f2+ 13 ♖xf2 ♖xf2 14 ♖bd2 ♖a7 15 ♖e4 0-0 16 ♖f6+ gxf6 17 exf6 ♖d7 18 ♜d2 ♖d8 19 ♜g5+ ♖f8 20 ♖f4 ♜c6 21 ♖d1 ♖xf6 22 ♖xd8+ ♖e8 23 ♖e5 1-0 was also quite(!) effective in the fantastic exhibition Lputian-Dlugy, New York open 1998.

11...♖e4+

Previously Black had tried 11...b5, but after 12 ♖b3 ♖e4+ 13 ♖h1 ♖xc3 14 bxc3 h6 15 ♖d4 ♜e7 16 ♜g4 g6 17 ♖e3 h5 18 ♜h3 ♖a7 19 ♖f6 0-0 20 ♖af1 ♖xd4 21 ♖xd4 ♖c7 22 ♜e3 ♖g7 23 ♖c2 ♖d7 24 ♜g5 Black could already have been for-

given for throwing in the towel in I.Sokolov-Georgiev, Tilburg 1994.

12 ♖h1

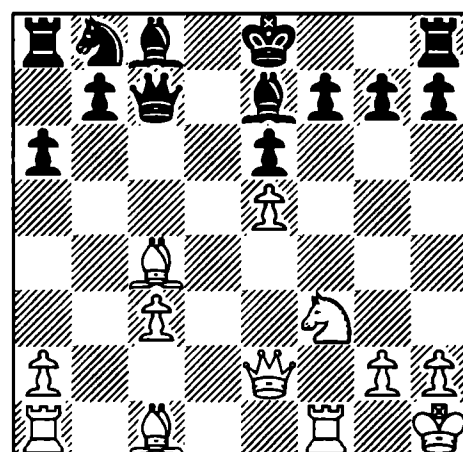


12...♖xc3

There is no repetition, i.e. 12...♖f2+ 13 ♖xf2 ♖xf2 14 ♖e4! (aiming for d6) 14...♖c5 15 ♖e3! ♖e7 16 ♖g5! 0-0 17 ♖f6+! gxf6 18 exf6 ♖d6 19 ♖d3 with a devastating attack.

13 bxc3 ♖e7

In Van Egmond-Kashtanov, Internet 1997, Black completely turned the position around with 13...h6!? 14 ♜e4 ♖c6 15 ♜g4 ♖f8 16 ♖d3 ♖d7 17 ♖e3 ♖e7 18 ♖d4 ♖f5 19 ♖xf5 exf5 20 ♜g3 ♖e6 21 ♖ab1 b5 22 ♖f2 g5 23 ♖d2 ♖e7 24 ♜f2 ♖b8 25 ♖e1 0-0 26 ♖d3 ♖fd8. However, White didn't exactly play with much dynamism in this game.



14 ♖g5! ♖xg5 15 ♖xg5 ♖c6 16 ♜h5 h6

16...♟xe5? 17 ♙f4 ♜xc4 18 ♙xe5 0-0 19 ♜g5 f6 20 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 21 ♙xf6 ♜c7 22 ♜d1 is the end of the line for Black, as he is unable to develop his queenside.

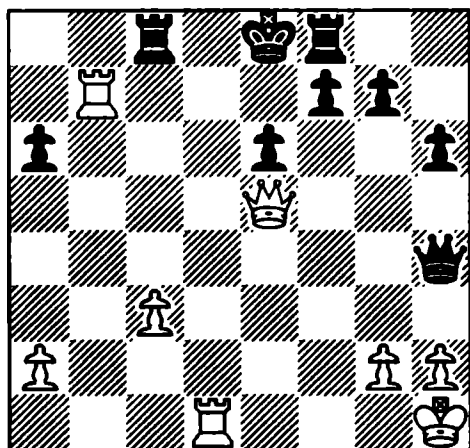
17 ♜ad1 ♜f8

Not that it was really a consideration, but a knight move (say to a5) would have allowed 18 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 19 ♜d8 mate or the other way around!

18 ♙h4 ♙d7 19 ♜d6

Threatening 20 ♙xe6 and offering the possibility of doubling rooks on the d-file.

19...♟xe5 20 ♜xe5 ♜xc4 21 ♜fd1 ♜xh4 22 ♜xd7 ♜c8 23 ♜xb7 1-0



There is no satisfactory defence to 24 ♜d6.

Game 52
Sadler-Brunner
Bern 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 ♟f6 4 ♙xc4 e6 5 ♟f3 c5 6 ♜e2 a6 7 dxc5 ♙xc5 8 e4!?

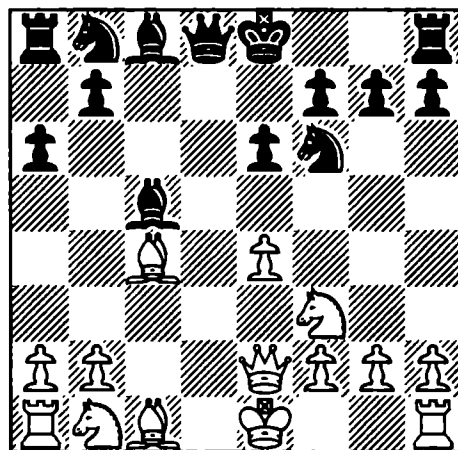
see following diagram

White does not take time out to castle but elects to advance his e-pawn immediately. This certainly adds to the confusion and is quite tricky. For example Black must want to avoid a transposition to the last game with 8...♜c7 9 e5! ♟g4 10 0-0.

8...b5 9 ♙b3

Bearing in mind the game continuation,

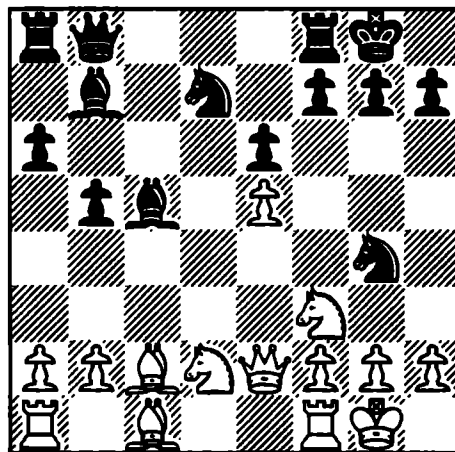
9 ♙d3 should also be met by 9...♟c6, when ...♟g4 should be in Black's future plans.



9...♙b7 10 ♙c2 ♟bd7?!

I believe that the lesson to be learnt from this chapter is that when White has conceded the d4-square, 10...♟c6 is more relevant. Here, for example, more promising for Black is 10...♟c6 11 ♟bd2 ♜c7 12 0-0 ♜c8 13 e5 ♟d4! 14 ♟xd4 ♙xd4 15 exf6 ♜xc2 16 fxg7 ♜g8 17 ♜h5 ♜xg7 18 ♟f3 ♜e2 19 ♙g5 ♙xf3 20 gxf3 ♙f6 21 h4 ♙xg5 22 hxg5 ♜c5 0-1, as in Wells-Maksimenko, Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 1996.

11 0-0 ♜b8 12 ♟bd2 0-0 13 e5 ♟g4

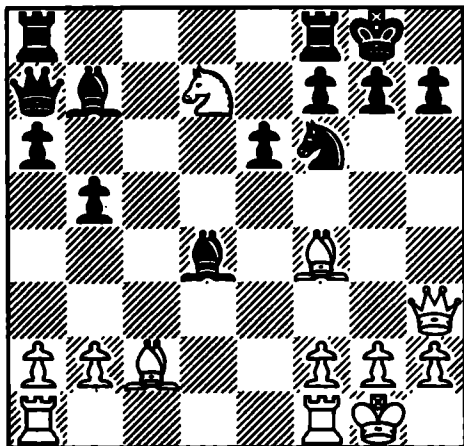


14 ♟e4!?

Sadler always had it in mind to sacrifice the pawn and besides 14 ♙xh7+?! ♜xh7 15 ♟g5+ ♜g8 16 ♜xg4 ♜xe5 is very unim-

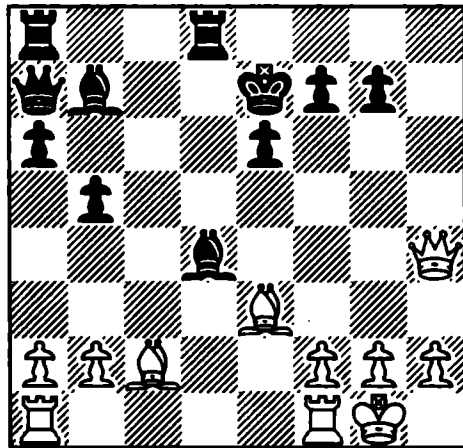
pressive for White, who would have to face the backlash of the two black bishops. 14...♖gxe5 15 ♗f4 ♖xf3+ 16 ♜xf3 ♜a7 17 ♜h3 ♗d4

17...h6 18 ♗xh6! gxe6 19 ♜xh6 is another very sound sacrifice. 18 ♖c5! ♖f6 19 ♖d7!



It's a case of 'follow my leader' as White attempts to deflect the knight in order to get at h7. 19...♞fd8 20 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 21 ♗e3 ♗d4

22 ♜xh7+ ♖f8 23 ♜h8+ ♖e7 24 ♜h4+



Sadler repeats once before characteristically finishing the game in a very efficient manner.

24...♖e8 25 ♜h8+ ♖e7 26 ♗g5+ ♗f6 27 ♜xg7 ♜d4 28 ♗g6 ♗xg5 29 ♜xf7+ ♖d6 30 ♞ad1 ♗d2 31 ♜xb7 ♞h8 32 ♜f3 ♖c5 33 ♞c1+ ♗xc1 34 ♞xc1+ ♖b6 35 ♜c6+ ♖a5 36 ♜c7+ ♖b4 37 a3+ ♖b3 38 ♜c2+ ♖a2 39 ♜b1+ ♖b3 40 ♗c2+ ♖c4 41 ♗e4+ ♖b3 42 ♞c3+ ♖a4 43 ♜c2+ 1-0

Summary

It is not necessary for Black to give his opponent an isolated queen's pawn, but if he does, he must always beware the d4-d5 break, even when it almost looks out of the question. In the 6 0-0 a6 7 ♖e2 lines (Games 44-47), it appears most satisfactory for Black to develop his queen's knight on d7 (in conjunction with ...b7-b5 and ...♗b7). White will then typically attempt to weaken the black queenside with a2-a4, when after ...b5-b4, Black must be careful to cover his holes. If he can get in ...a7-a5 before White plays a4-a5, then so much the better.

In the 6 ♖e2 a6 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 lines (Games 48-52), ...♘c6 has been the most profitable deployment for Black, who should then meet a2-a4 with ...b5xa4. It is usually important for Black to keep the b4-square for his knight, even when considering the pressure that may build up on his a6-pawn. The danger with the 'Furman variation' comes when White gets his pawn to e5. Games 51 and 52 demonstrate how dangerous this can get for Black. The best treatment is probably 8...♘c6 (Game 48) although in the final encounter of this chapter, Sadler's idea (this time with White!) of temporarily delaying 0-0 clearly deserves attention.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5

6 ♖e2

6 0-0 a6 7 ♖e2 (D)

7...♘c6 - Game 44

7...b5

8 ♗d3 - Game 45

8 ♗b3 ♗b7 (D)

9 ♜d1 - Game 46

9 a4 - Game 47

6...a6 7 dxc5 ♗xc5 8 0-0 (D)

8 e4 - Game 52

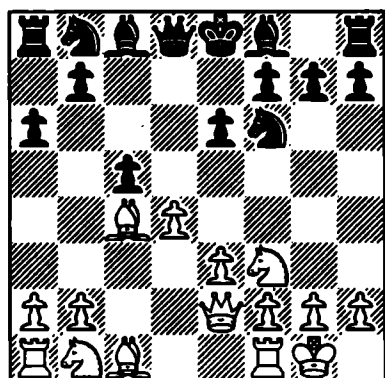
8...♘c6

8...b5 - Game 49

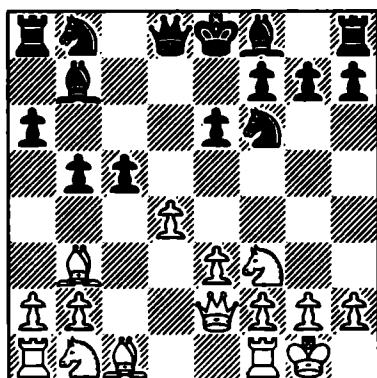
8...♘bd7 - Game 50

8...♖c7 - Game 51

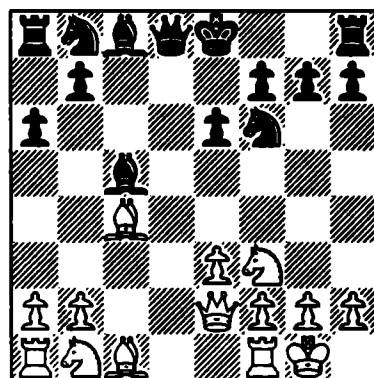
9 e4 - Game 48



7 ♖e2



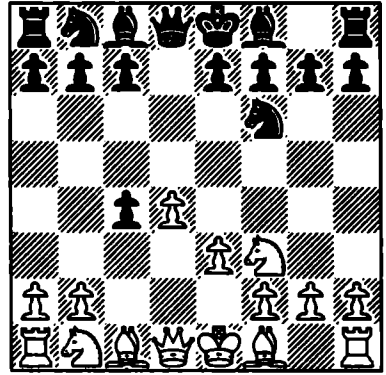
8...♗b7



8 0-0

CHAPTER SEVEN

Fourth Move Alternatives for Black after 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3

Essentially this chapter covers everything else apart from the main line $\dots\text{e6}$, which we have already covered in the previous two chapters. First we shall deal with the old favourites $\dots\text{Ng4}$ (Games 53-55) and $\dots\text{g6}$ (Games 56-57), and then follow up with the more obscure $\dots\text{Ne6}$ (Game 58). White has generally enjoyed very favourable results in all of these lines, and this helps to explain the popularity of the 'Classical variation'. In general, top players like Tony Miles turn to these comparative sidelines more for surprise value than anything else.

Let's start with a classic encounter. Well, the theory hasn't changed much and the old favourites are still the best?!

Game 53

Foguelman-Bronstein

Amsterdam Interzonal 1964

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 Ng4

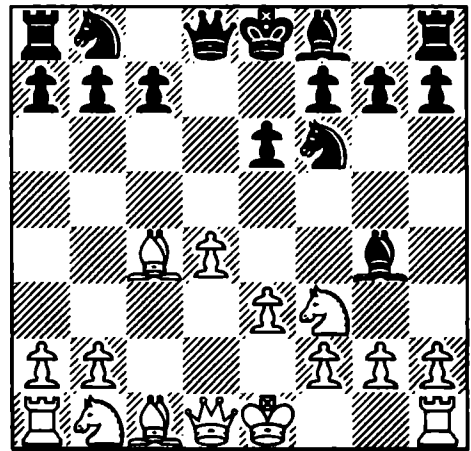
A very logical continuation. Black decides to develop his bishop before playing the natural $\dots\text{e7-e6}$. Essentially this was the old main line, but it has declined in popularity, possibly because of the tempi that White can win in harassing this bishop. As

we have seen, the trend nowadays is for Black to play it safe and seek to get the bishop developed on b7, via $\dots\text{a7-a6}$ and $\dots\text{b7-b5}$.

5 Bxc4

White is under no great pressure to capture this pawn straightaway and can play h3 h5 6 Nc3 , reserving his options (see Game 55).

5... e6



6 Wb3

White escapes the pin on the knight, exploiting the fact that the bishop is no longer defending the b7-pawn. For his part Black has no desire to incur light-squared holes in his queenside (e.g. with $6\dots\text{b6}$?) particularly as he must now part

company with his bishop to stop 7 ♖e5. Hence he decides to give up a pawn. The more restrained 6 ♖c3 is the subject of the next main game.

6...♙xf3 7 gxf3 c5!?

The immediate 7...♖bd7! is equally good as 8 ♗xb7 c5 transposes and if White passes up the b-pawn, then the black knight can satisfactorily plonk itself on b6.

8 ♗xb7 ♖bd7 9 dxc5

White would prefer not to encourage his opponent's development like this, but there is no satisfactory way to avoid his pawns being crippled (i.e. as would result from ...c5xd4).

9...♙xc5 10 f4

White's queen will soon have to move and the text at least provides it with the option of returning to an otherwise barren-looking kingside.

10...0-0 11 0-0

It's not clear where the white king should go, but in retrospect White probably came to regret his decision to place it where it has little cover. Alternatively 11 ♗g2 (taking the sting out of the next move played in the main game) 11...♖c8 12 0-0 ♙xe3 13 fxe3 ♗xc4 has also been played, when White's king is relatively safe but he has had to return the pawn, retaining an inferior kingside pawn structure.

11...♖d5!?

Interfering with the white queen's path back to his king, whilst creating an entrance for his own queen.

12 ♖d1!?

Probably White must accept the challenge of 12 ♙xd5 ♗b8 13 ♗c6 ♗b6. Then, instead of 14 ♗a4 exd5 when the black rook would also be able to swing along the third rank to join the attack, he could try 14 ♖d1! (intending to accrue some pieces for the queen after 14...♗xc6 15 ♙xc6) 14...exd5 15 ♗xd5. The position is fairly double-edged and Black can consider 15...♖d6 (or 15...♗g6+ first). For his two pawns, Black has a very big lead in development and reasonable attacking chances against the enemy king.

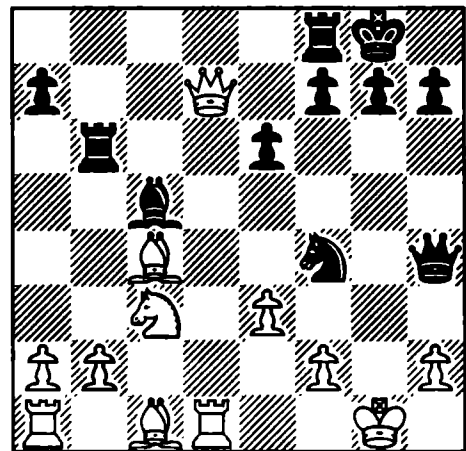
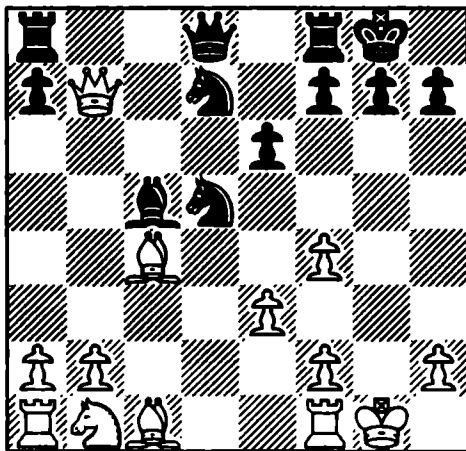
12...♗b8 13 ♗c6 ♗h4!

Springing out to a dangerous position and amongst other things threatening to win the rook with 14...♗g4+.

14 ♖c3

White intends to meet 14...♖xc3 with 15 ♖xd7!, but in fact 14...♖e5! first would have foiled his plans, e.g. 15 fxe5 ♖xc3, when as well as the queen check on g4 again becoming available, there is a bishop hanging on c4. As it happens, Black has checkmate on his mind and, even if they're not all sound, the following sacrifices are definitely entertaining and definitely do the job here.

14...♗b6 15 ♗xd7 ♖xf4



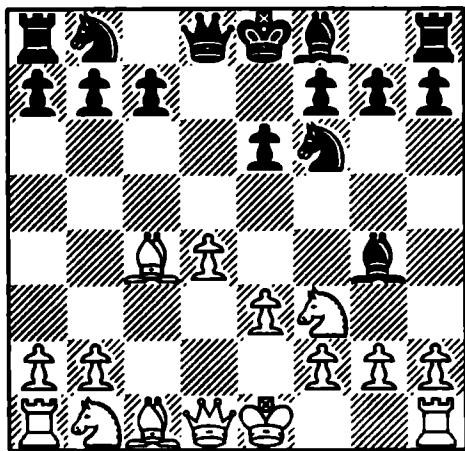
16 ♖e2?

16 exf4?? ♜xf2+ 17 ♔h1 ♜f3 mate would have been terminal, but the win isn't so clear after 16 ♜c7!

16...♗h3+ 17 ♔g2 ♗xf2 18 ♜d4 ♗g4 19 ♜f4 ♜xh2+ 20 ♔f1 ♗xe3 21 ♗d5 ♗xf4 0-1

Game 54
Antunes-Miles
Wijk aan Zee 1996

1 ♗f3 d5 2 d4 ♗f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 e3 ♗g4 5 ♗xc4 e6

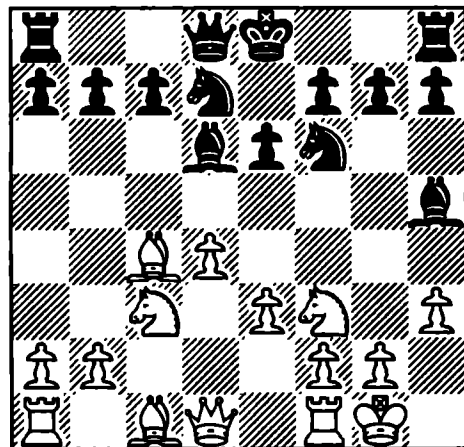


6 ♗c3

If White intends to play h2-h3, 0-0 and ♗c3, then there is no particular move order that he must follow. In general, White's long-term aim is to play e3-e4 to gain more space in the centre and free the c1-bishop. Occasionally White has been known to adopt the less ambitious queenside fianchetto instead. In that case the game Paneque-Teske, Capablanca Premier 1997, demonstrates a neat idea for Black: 6 h3 ♗h5 7 ♗c3 a6 8 0-0 ♗c6 (Black is aiming for ...e6-e5 instead of ...c7-c5) 9 ♗e2 ♗d6 10 b3 ♜e7 11 ♗b2 ♜d8 12 ♗d2 ♗g6 13 a3 0-0 14 b4 ♜d7 15 ♜b3?! (natural enough, but there is a surprising drawback to this move, as it leaves the e2-bishop unprotected) 15...e5 16 d5 ♗d4! 17 exd4 exd4 18 ♗c4 dxc3 19 ♜xc3 ♜e8, when the

white d-pawn gets in the way, leaving Black with the upper hand.

6...♗bd7 7 0-0 ♗d6 8 h3 ♗h5



9 e4

The more cautious 9 ♗e2 holds no fears for Black, e.g. 9...0-0 10 b3 (the second time we've seen this unadventurous fianchetto) 10...a6 11 ♗b2 ♜e8 12 ♜c1 c6 13 ♗a4 ♜e7 14 ♗e5 ♗g6 15 ♗xg6 (gaining a bishop for a knight, but improving Black's structure as the pawn covers more squares on g6 than it did at h7) 15...hxg6 16 ♜c2 e5 (the thematic break, Black being only too happy to offer a trade of bishops) 17 dxe5 ♗xe5 18 ♗xe5 ♜xe5 19 ♜fd1 ♜e7 20 ♗c5 ♗xc5 21 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 22 ♜xc5, when despite the compensation for Black's queenside pawn majority in the form of bishop for knight, White surprisingly went on to lose in Gausel-Agdestein, Reykjavik 1996.

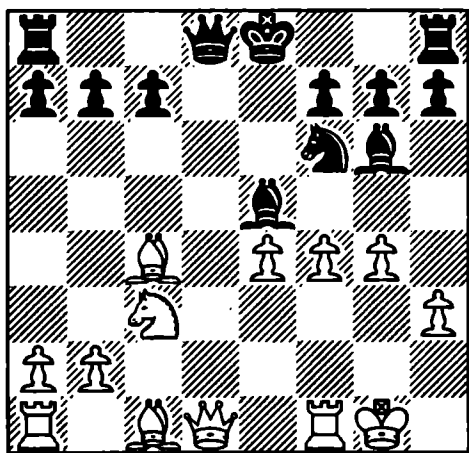
9...e5

Aside from the fact that a fork is threatened, it's essential for Black to get this move in before White can play e4-e5.

10 ♗e2

A solid, if not particularly inspirational option. Likewise 10 dxe5 ♗xe5 11 ♗e2 ♗xf3+ 12 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 13 ♜xf3 isn't anything special for White, so the critical continuation is:

10 g4!? ♗g6 11 dxe5 ♗xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 13 f4

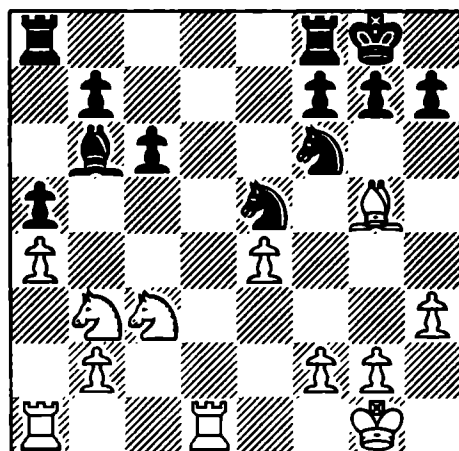


(White goes for broke, advancing his dangerous pawns whilst the black king is still in the middle) 13...Wd4+ 14 Wxd4 dxd4+ 15 c2 dxc3 16 bxc3 dxe4 (necessary to prevent 17 f5, but with a couple of open centre files and one or two available diagonals for White's raking bishops, it's clear that Black is walking a tightrope) 17 g5 d5 18 Re1+ c8 19 a3+ (there is also an argument for 19 d3!?) e8 20 f5 when Black retains his extra pawn, but remains firmly under the cosh) 19...c8 20 gxf6 dxc4 21 Re7 h5 22 Rxc7 b5. Here Black was able to hold this opposite-coloured bishop ending after 23 Rg1 Rh6 24 Rxc7+ c8 25 d5 Rxf6 26 Rg2 c7 27 d4 Rg6 28 Rf2 Ra6 29 Rc5 Rxa2 30 Rxa2 dxa2 31 Rxc5+ c6 32 Rxb5 a5 33 Rg5+ c6 34 b6 a4 35 Ra5 Rxa5 36 dxa5 c6 37 b4 c5 38 c3 d3 39 c3 d5+ 40 c3 d2 41 h4 c4 42 e7 a3! in Ftacnik-Matulovic, Vrsac 1982, but somewhat more problematic is 23 d5!?) gxf6 24 a4 c7 25 axb5 kg6 26 d4 dxb5 27 Rg1+ c6 28 Rxf7 Rh8 29 Rf7 d3 30 f5 1-0 Hummel-Stevens, Hawaii 1998. Okay, so Black might be able to grovel with 25...Rhc8, but clearly it's no fun and there is a lot of work to be done just to obtain a draw. The sharp 10 g4!?) is the reason that the 4...g4 variation is rarely seen at top level.

10...0-0 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 d4

White has a space advantage due to his e4-pawn, so it's logical for him to want to keep pieces on. Unfortunately, this objective isn't really achieved.

12...c5 13 b3 Wxd1 14 dxd1 b6 15 a4 dxd1 16 Rxd1 a5 17 g5 c6



18 dxf6 is no real problem for Black, with his control of the d5-square. As we shall see elsewhere, the split pawns after 18...gxf6 are quite effective at halting White's majority.

18 d4 d7 19 d5 c5 20 Rab1 dcd3 21 e3 dxe3 22 dxe3 Ra6 23 g3 g5 24 d4 dxc4 25 Rxd3 d5 26 d6 Rb6 27 b3 Rb4 28 c2 f5 29 exf5 Rxf5 30 a2 e4 31 d3 Rb4 32 a2 e4 33 d3 1/2-1/2

Game 55

Conquest-Brynell

Torshavn 1997

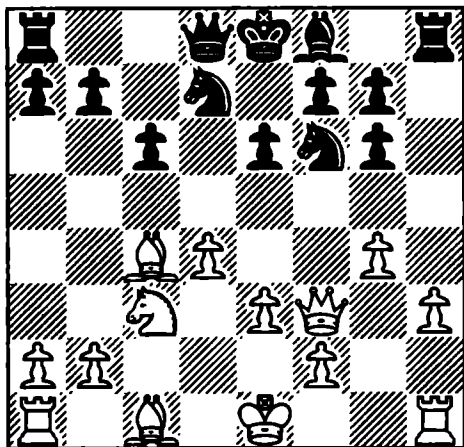
1 d3 d6 2 d4 d5 3 c4 dxc4 4 e3 g4 5 h3 h5 6 d3

Slightly unusual. More common is 6 g4 g6 7 d5 d7 8 dxc6 hxc6 9 g2 c6, when White has the option of picking off the c-pawn with his remaining knight.

6...e6 7 g4 g6 8 d5 d7 9 dxc6 hxc6 10 Wf3 c6 11 dxc4

A typical situation has arisen. White has the bishop pair, but his opponent's pawn structure is very solid. Only time

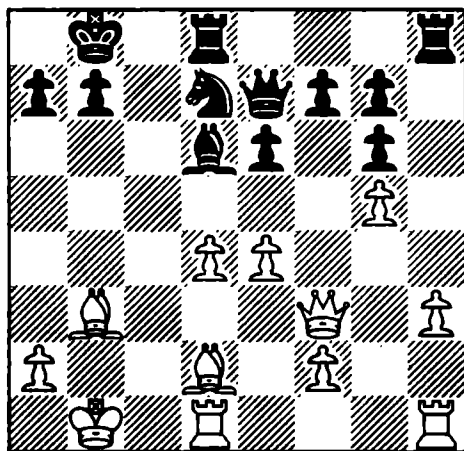
will tell whether White's expansion on the kingside will prove to be a strength or a weakness.



11...d6 12 e2

12 e4 looks tempting but it can be met with the usual reply of 12...e5, as 13 g5?! (hoping to take advantage of the pressure on f7) 13...exd4! 14 gxf6 e5 is very good for Black.

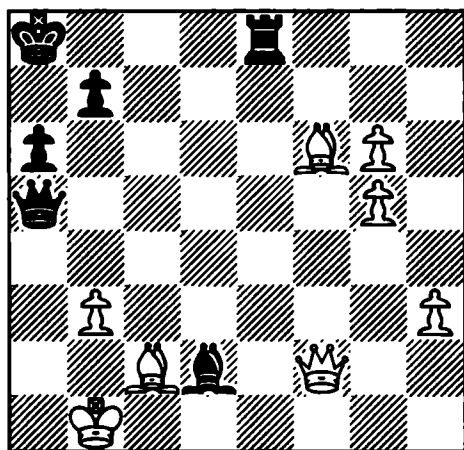
12...e7 13 0-0-0 0-0-0 14 b1 b8 15 b3 d5 16 e4 dxc3+ 17 bxc3 c5 18 g5 cxd4 19 cxd4



White has two attractive centre pawns to go with his bishop pair. However, Black seems to be able to play around them and manages to generate play against the draughty white king.

19...c8 20 e1 a8 21 e2 b6 22 d3 d7 23 f4 a3 24 e3 hd8 25 c3 a4 26 a1 c6 27 c2 d7 28

e2 e7 29 d5 b6+ 30 b3 a5 31 dxe6 xd1+ 32 xd1 fe6 33 xg7 d8 34 c1 c5 35 b2 a6 36 e3 a4 37 b3 c5 38 c1 b4 39 f6 c8 40 e3 d2 41 f2 c5 42 f5 dxb3 43 axb3 exf5 44 exf5 e8 45 fxg6



45...c3

A typical Stuart Conquest game with pieces flying all over the place. Things looked good for White with his material plus, but then it seemed that Black had an excellent position. In fact now 45...e1+ 46 xe1 xe1 47 g7 d5 48 h7 xb3+ 49 b2 d1+ 50 a2 a4+ 51 b1 d1+ etc. would be a draw!

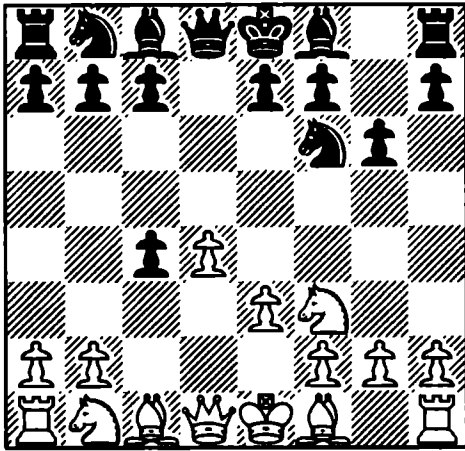
46 xc3 xc3 47 a2 e5 48 f8+ a7 49 f2+ b8 50 f8+ c7 51 f7+ b6 52 f2+ c7 53 f7+ b8 54 f8+ a7 55 f2+ b8 56 f8+ 1/2-1/2

Game 56
Popov-Begun
Zepter open, Minsk 1998

1 d3 d5 2 d4 f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 e3 g6

The 'Smyslov system', following a kind of Grünfeld Defence (1 d4 f6 2 c4 g6 3 c3 d5) approach. Black has conceded the centre but intends to strike back at it later. Black hopes that his quiet fianchetto will provoke his opponent into overextending in the middle, but I believe that provided

White is careful, he should retain a comfortable edge.

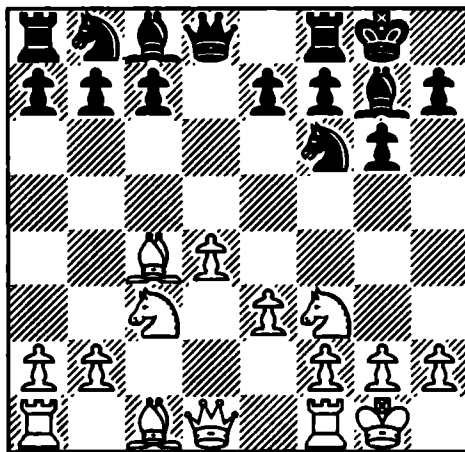


5 $\text{d}xc4$ $\text{d}g7$ 6 0-0

The more ambitious 6 b4!? is seen in the next main game.

6...0-0 7 $\text{d}c3$

If White has an early e2-e4 in mind, then h2-h3 may be a useful precaution (i.e. to prevent extra pressure on the d4-pawn from a ... $\text{d}g4$ pin). However, the immediate 7 h3 can be made to look comparatively irrelevant by 7... $\text{d}e4$! From there the knight could retreat to the flexible d6-square, possibly providing a springboard for a future ...b7-b5.



7... $\text{d}f7$

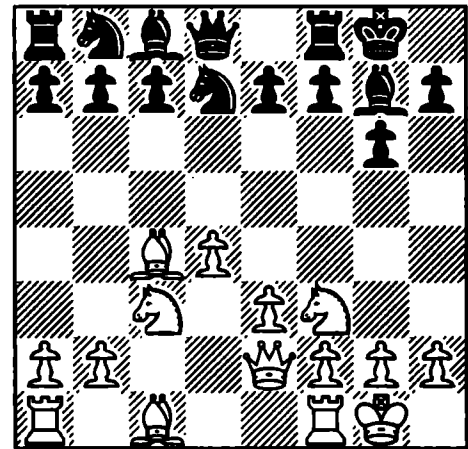
This standard manoeuvre unleashes the dark-squared bishop and, with ... $\text{d}b6$ to follow, prepares to hit out at White's centre. I can't help thinking though that this

variation must be inferior to a main line Grünfeld (1 d4 $\text{d}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\text{d}c3$ d5 4 cxd5 $\text{d}xd5$) because Black is denied the possibility of ... $\text{d}xc3$.

Note that the premature 7...c5?! allows White just to grab a pawn and consolidate it with 8 dxc5 $\text{d}c7$ 9 b4 $\text{d}c6$ 10 $\text{d}b1$ a5 11 a3 axb4 12 axb4 $\text{d}g4$ 13 h3 $\text{d}ad8$ 14 $\text{d}e2$ $\text{d}h5$ 15 $\text{d}b5$ $\text{d}c8$ 16 $\text{d}b2$, as in Khari-tonov-Najer, Russian Cup, Moscow 1996.

8 $\text{d}e2$

The immediate 8 e4(!) $\text{d}b6$ 9 $\text{d}e2$ $\text{d}g4$ 10 $\text{d}e3$ $\text{d}c6$ justifies Black's play, although 8 h3, preparing e3-e4, certainly has something to be said for it now. In the light of this game and others, a simple strategy of frustrating Black, not giving him anything to bite on, can also be recommended.



8... $\text{d}b6$ 9 $\text{d}b3$ $\text{d}c6$ 10 $\text{d}d1$ $\text{d}f5$ 11 a3!

Previously White would have had to answered ... $\text{d}a5$ with $\text{d}c2$, but the text vacates the a2-square for any necessary bishop withdrawals. Furthermore, the option of ... $\text{d}b4$ is removed and White may have a b2-b4 queenside expansion in mind for the future.

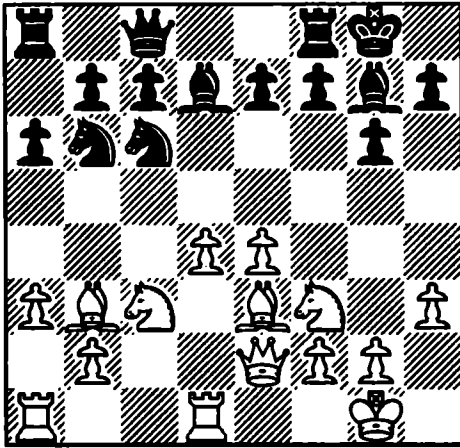
11... $\text{d}c8$ 12 h3

Another good move, denying the g4-square to the black bishop.

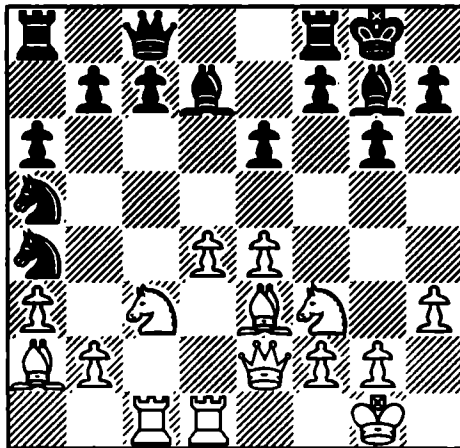
12...a6 13 e4 $\text{d}d7$ 14 $\text{d}e3$

White's position smells distinctly of roses. He has two superb centre pawns

which cramp the enemy pieces and the half-open c-file is bound to come into play soon.



14...e6 15 Nac1 Qa5 16 Ra2 Qa4



17 Qb1!

The correct strategic response. With a comfortable space advantage, White steers clear of exchanges, knowing full well that he can push Black back at his leisure. Black now has to resort to contortions to unravel his position.

17...b5

Black wants to feel that he has achieved something when his knight is forced back to b6, but this weakens both the c6- and c5-squares.

18 Qe5 Re8 19 Wc2

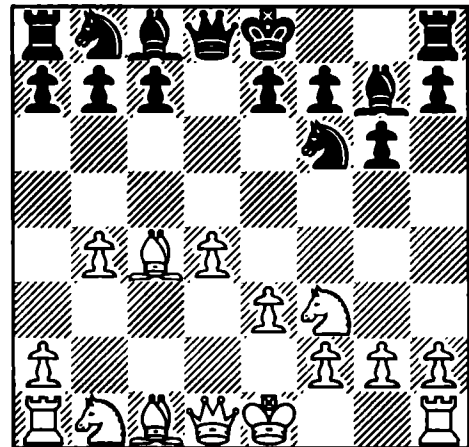
Fully justifiably, White is not hanging around. Black's c-pawn will soon be history, along with any chances for his sur-

vival.

19...c5 20 b3 Qb6 21 Wxc5 Wxc5 22 dxc5 Qc8 23 Qd4 Qc6 24 Qxc6 Qxc6 25 Qxg7 Qxg7 26 Qc3 a5 27 Qd4 Qe7 28 f4 Qfb8 29 Qe2 b4 30 a4 f5 31 Qb1 fxe4 32 Qxe4 Qd5 33 Qxd5 exd5 34 Qd2 Qa6 35 Qd4 Qc8 36 g3 Qf6 37 Qh2 Qf7 38 Qf3 Qg7 39 Qg2 h6 40 Qe2 Qc6 41 Qd2 Qe6 42 Qf2 Qce8 43 Qcc2 Qd8 44 Qe2 Qf6 45 Qxe6+ Qxe6 46 Qe2+ Qf5 47 Qe3 Qe8+ 48 Qd3 Qxe2 49 Qxe2 Qe4 50 Qe5 Qxe5 51 fxe5 Qxe5 52 Qd3 d4 53 c6 1-0

Game 57
Neverov-Karpeshov
St Petersburg open 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Qf3 Qf6 4 e3 g6 5 Qxc4 Qg7 6 b4!?



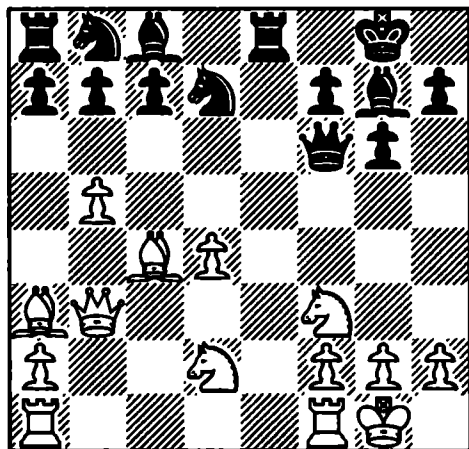
Here we see another move that seeks to reduce Black's activity. White rules out ...c7-c5 and buys some space on the queen-side. In addition, a white queen, knight or bishop could now safely slink to b3, while Qb2 and Qa3 are also available. Another entertaining spectacle with very similar ideas to the main game went 6 0-0 0-0 7 b4!? Qfd7 8 Qb2 a5 9 b5 c5 10 Qbd2 cxd4 11 Qxd4 Qb6 12 Qe2 e5 13 Q4f3 e4 14 Qd4 Qe8 15 a4 Q8d7 16 Qc1 Qf6 17 Qe1 W7e7 18 Qc4 Qxc4 19 Qxc4 Qd7 20 Wb3 Qb6 21 Qa3 (the use of this diagonal is

one of the main attractions of White's set-up) 21...♞d8 22 ♜cc1 ♙e5 23 ♞ed1 ♞h4 24 f4 ♙b8 25 ♙b2 ♞e7 26 ♙a3 ♞h4 27 ♞d2 h6 28 ♙b2 ♞e7 29 ♘c6! bxc6 30 ♞xc6 ♙e6 31 ♞c3 f6 32 ♞xb6 ♙a7 33 ♞c6 ♞ac8 34 ♙a3 ♞b7 35 ♞dd6 ♙f7 36 ♙f2 ♞xc6 37 ♞xc6 ♙b6 38 ♙c4 ♙d8 39 ♞b3 ♞d7 40 ♙xf7+ ♞xf7 41 ♞xf7+ ♙xf7 42 b6 ♞e6 43 b7 1-0 Nogueiras-Zaderman, North Bay 1998.

6...0-0 7 ♘bd2 ♘fd7 8 0-0 e5 9 ♙a3 exd4 10 b5 ♞e8

Clearly both sides felt that Black couldn't get away with 10...dxe3 11 fxe3 ♙xa1 12 ♞xa1. He would be the exchange and a pawn up but with hardly any development, and all of the white pieces would be loitering with intent to commit grievous bodily harm on the black king.

11 ♞b3 ♞f6 12 exd4!



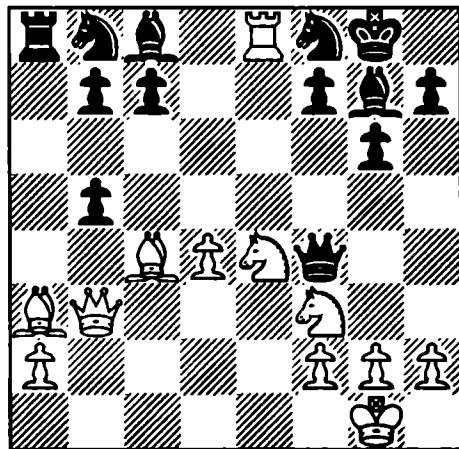
Although this is a self-inflicted isolated pawn, it controls a couple of useful squares, and more importantly the e-file is now opened to expose the weakness of Black's back rank (a product of his undeveloped queenside).

12...a6?!

In other circumstances, the correct positional move, but as we see in the game Black simply doesn't have time for this. 12...♘b6 would have offered more hope, but even that would have handed over the e5-square to a white knight and after 13

♞ae1 Black would still have been struggling.

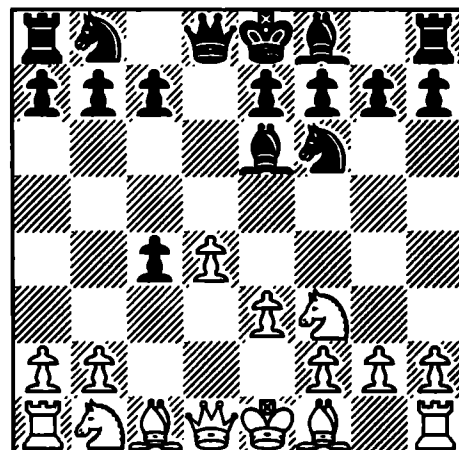
13 ♞fe1 ♞xe1+ 14 ♞xe1 axb5 15 ♞e8+ ♘f8 16 ♘e4 ♞f4



17 ♙xf7+! ♞xf7 18 ♘f6+! 1-0

Game 58
D.Gurevich-Soltis
San Francisco 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 ♙e6



There is a place for this move in the QGA, but in my view it's not here! It not only looks ridiculous; it probably is ridiculous! Black does manage to hold on to his pawn for a while and may ultimately be able to achieve a light-squared bishop trade, but the voluntary obstruction of the e7-pawn still feels wrong, even if it is only temporary.

In the event of 3...c5 4 e3 cxd4 5 exd4, I suspect that 5...♙e6 isn't actually so bad. Indeed Black was able to complete a successful kingside fianchetto after 6 ♖c3 ♜f6 7 ♙e2 ♜c6 8 0-0 g6 9 ♙e3 ♙g7 in Hebden-Shaw, Largs 1997. Now 10 ♖g5 was finally played, but Black seemed to obtain a satisfactory position with 10...♙d5 11 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 12 ♙xc4 0-0.

5 ♜bd2

By no means the only move. Personally I feel that 5 ♖c3 c6 6 ♜g5!? is tempting, but I guess that the outwardly quiet text move is also rather dangerous.

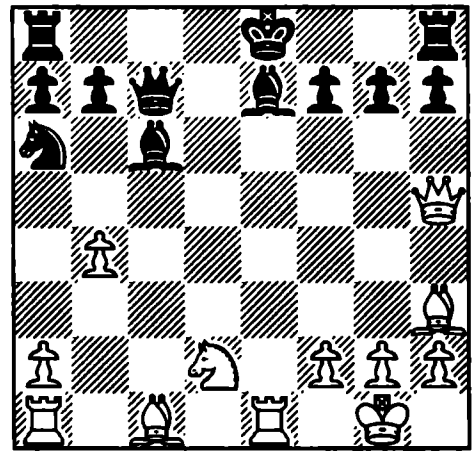
5...c5 6 dxc5 ♜a5 7 ♜g5 ♙d5 8 e4 ♜xe4 9 ♜gxe4 ♙xe4 10 ♙xc4 ♙c6 11 ♜h5 e6

Alternatively 11...g6 12 ♜e5 ♜g8 13 0-0 leaves White well placed in the centre and Black uncertain about matters such as king safety.

12 ♙xe6 ♜c7 13 ♙h3 ♜a6 14 0-0 ♙xc5

When Black gave up his e-pawn, he knew that he would get the c-pawn back. Unfortunately, however, this time-consuming sequence has prevented him from evacuating his king from the open e-file.

15 ♜e1+ ♙e7 16 b4!



16...0-0

The pawn sacrifice is perfectly sound, e.g. 16...♜xb4 17 ♙b2 0-0 18 ♙f5 h6 19 ♜g4 with an overwhelming attack.

17 b5 ♙f6

This seems to lose by force, but to say that White would have had compensation for the pawn after 17...g6 18 ♜h6 ♙xb5 19 ♙b2 f6 20 ♜e4 (threatening amongst others 21 ♜g5) would be somewhat of an understatement!

18 ♜b1 ♜a5 19 ♜f5 ♙c3 20 bxc6 ♙xd2 21 ♙xd2 ♜xd2 22 cxb7 ♜ad8 23 ♜b5 ♜d6 24 ♜e2 f5 25 g3 ♜b8 26 ♜bc1 ♜xe2 27 ♜xe2 ♜b6 28 ♙g2 ♜d7 29 ♙d5+ ♜h8 30 ♜c8 1-0

Summary

Unfortunately, in this modern day and age, the old QGA defences just don't seem to cut it any more. When I was younger, 3...♘f6 4 e3 ♗g4 was all the rage, but nowadays it seems to have slipped into semi-obscurity. It appears that the acid test involves a kingside expansion of h2-h3 and g2-g4 to escape the pin and enable ♘e5. Specifically I believe the notes to Game 54 (10 g4!?) are critical to the survival of 4...♗g4.

The once respected 'Smyslov system' can be handled well in a number of different ways, and was blown out of the water in Game 57. Finally, there may be a place for the ugly ...♗e6, but I sincerely doubt that it's on move four!

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3

4...♗g4

4...g6 5 ♗xc4 ♗g7 (D)
 6 0-0 – Game 56
 6 b4 – Game 57

4...♗e6 – Game 58

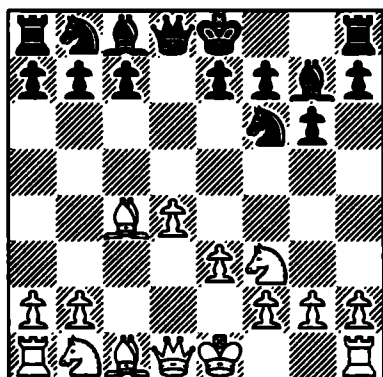
5 ♗xc4 (D)

5 h3 – Game 55

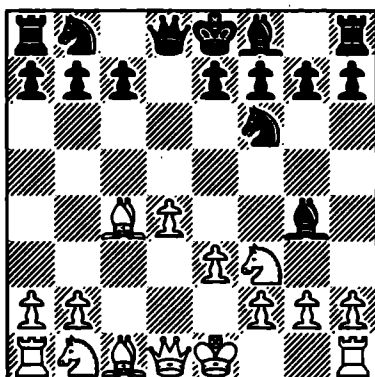
5...e6 6 ♘c3 (D)

6 ♗b3 – Game 53

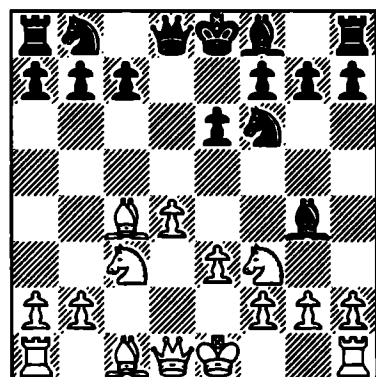
6...♘bd7 – Game 54



5...♗g7



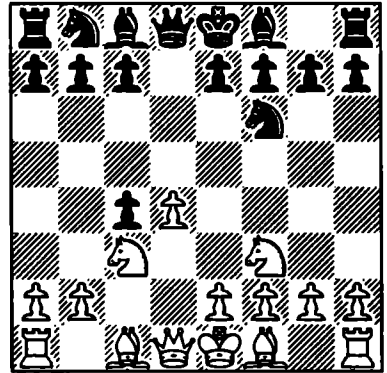
5 ♗xc4



6 ♘c3

CHAPTER EIGHT

3 ♖f3 ♗f6 4 ♘c3



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖f3 ♗f6 4 ♘c3

This chapter covers the second most aggressive line against the QGA. White doesn't play 3 e4 at once, but retains the option to do so without first playing e2-e3.

It should be noted that the 'Central variation' is often ruled out in any case if White plays the move order 1 d4 d5 2 ♖f3 ♗f6 3 c4, avoiding the Albin Counter-Gambit, or 1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♖f3 d5 3 c4, sidestepping the Budapest Gambit. It is also not uncommon to see a QGA arise after 1 ♖f3, and in any event 3 ♖f3 prevents the counter-strike 3...e5.

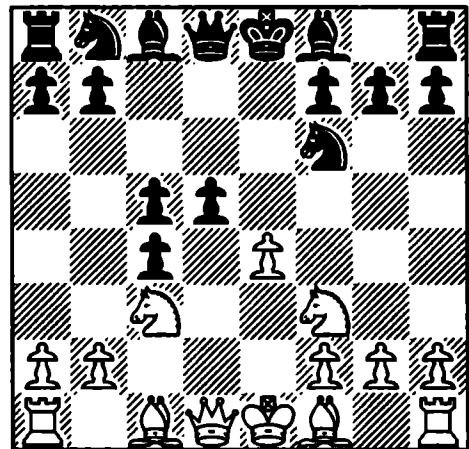
In the sharp 3 ♖f3 ♗f6 4 ♘c3 variation Black tends to turn to the break ...c7-c5 (Games 59-61) or else venture into the crazy tactics that are seen when he tries to cling on to the c-pawn with ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5 (Games 62-68). To round things off, 4...e6 is the subject of Game 69, while one should also note that 4...c6 transposes to the main line of the Slav Defence, which is outside the scope of this book.

Game 59

Ljubojevic-Van Wely
Monaco (blindfold) 1997

1 d4 d5 2 ♖f3 ♗f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 ♘c3 c5

5 d5 e6 6 e4 exd5



7 e5

A common theme in the QGA. White would prefer to end up with a piece on d5 rather than an isolated pawn and the text is the only way to achieve such an aim.

7...♗fd7

7...d4 just looks ropy. White can continue with 8 exf6 dxc3 9 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 (when both 10 ♖g5 and 10 ♗g5 look good) or even 8 ♖xc4 as 8...bxc3 falls for 9 ♖xf7+.

8 ♖g5 f6?!

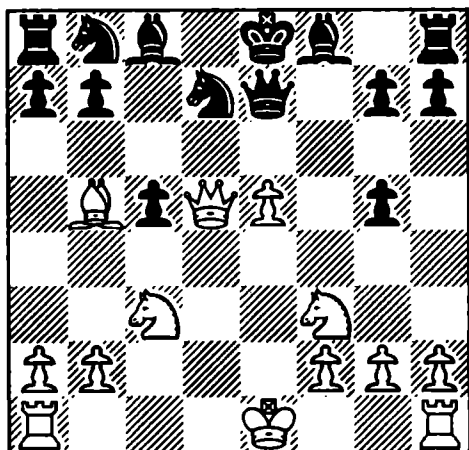
8...♖e7 is probably necessary – see Games 60 and 61.

9 ♖xd5!?

A fabulous idea which I believe was a

novelty at the time. Admittedly 9 exf6 ♘xf6 (or 9...gxf6 10 ♙h4) 10 ♙xf6 has been assessed by theory as being a little better for White for a long time, but this really goes for broke.

9...fxg5 10 ♙xc4 ♚e7 11 ♙b5

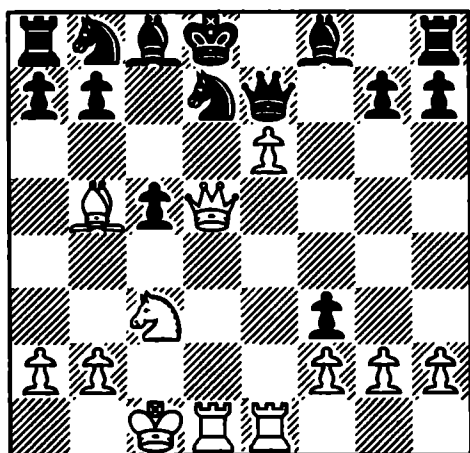


The piece has gone, but White has set up a useful pin (which can't be broken by ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5 because the a8-rook would be hanging) and is ready to flood Black's position with his remaining pieces.

11...g4 12 e6!

In for a penny; in for a pound!

12...gxf3 13 0-0-0 ♚d8 14 ♚he1



14...♚d6 15 ♚g5+ ♙e7

Probably Black should have returned the queen to e7 instead, but White is by no means forced to repeat with 16 ♚d5.

16 ♚g4 h5 17 ♚e4 ♘f6?

17...♚c7 looked like the only move to

keep Black on the map, but after 18 ♘d5, it's still not much fun for him.

18 ♚xd6+ ♙xd6 19 e7+ ♚c7 20 ♘d5+ ♘xd5 21 ♚xd5

Black has plenty of pieces for the queen, but they're all at home.

21...♙d7 22 ♚d1 ♙f4+ 23 ♚b1 fxg2

Or 23...♙xb5 24 ♚d8+.

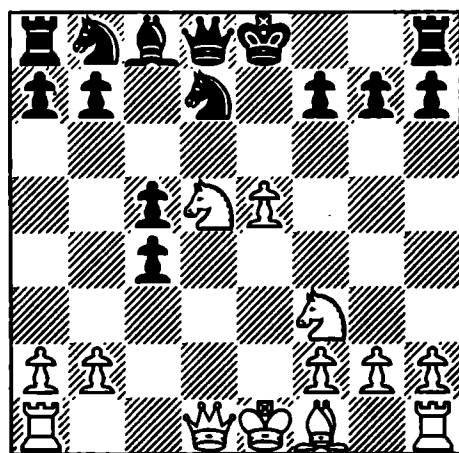
24 ♙xd7 g1 ♚ 25 ♚xc5+ ♘c6 26 ♚xg1 ♚xd7 27 ♚f5+ 1-0

Game 60

P.Cramling-Brunner

Horgen 1995

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 ♘c3 c5
5 d5 e6 6 e4 exd5 7 e5 ♘fd7 8 ♙g5
♙e7 9 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 10 ♘xd5 ♚d8



White is well placed in the centre but he (or she!) mustn't get carried away - Black will always have that extra queen-side pawn to fall back on if he can weather the storm.

11 ♚c2

11 ♙xc4 is seen in the next main game.

11...♘b6

11...♘c6 is well met by 12 0-0-0 and 11...♚a5+ by 12 ♚c3, while my own experiences have also taught me that Black should avoid 11...♘xe5?! The best that he can hope for is a worse ending (with weaker pawns and White having a bishop for a knight), but in Ward-Duncan, Gaus-

dal (Troll) 1996, he didn't even make it that far: 12 ♖e4 ♙e6 13 ♜xe5 ♜xd5 14 ♜xg7 ♜f8 15 ♜d1 ♖e4+ 16 ♙e2 ♘c6 17 ♘g5 ♜g6 18 ♘xe6 ♜xe6 19 0-0 ♜g6 20 ♜c3 ♘d4 21 ♖e3+ ♙d7 22 ♙xc4 ♙c7 23 ♖e7+ ♙c6 24 b4 1-0.

12 0-0-0 ♘xd5 13 ♙xc4 0-0

Both 13...♙e6?! 14 ♙xd5 ♜e7 15 ♙xe6 ♜xe6 (or 15...fxe6 16 ♜d6) 16 ♜xc5 and 14...♙xd5 15 ♜xc5 leave Black a pawn down for nothing.

14 ♙xd5!?

14 ♜xd5 ♜e7 15 h4 (the greedy 15 ♜xc5?!, to meet 15...♜xc5?? with 16 ♙xf7+, is a wolf in sheep's clothing because of 15...♙f5!, when the white king will begin to feel the draught) 15...♘c6 16 ♖e4 ♙e6 17 ♘g5 g6 18 ♘xe6 fxe6 19 ♜d6 ♘d4 20 ♜d1 is not as impressive as it might look for White, providing that Black continues with 20...♙h8! (rather than 20...b5? 21 ♜xd4!) when he has an excellent knight on d4 and an obvious plan of queenside expansion.

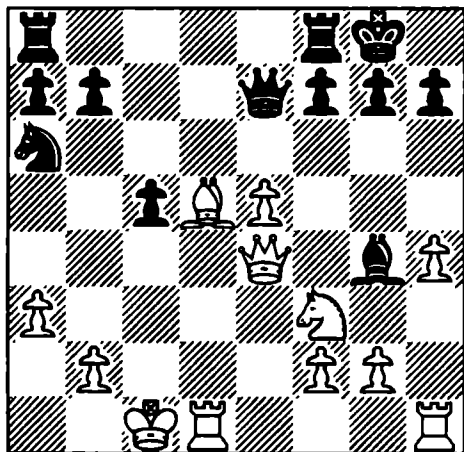
14...♜e7 15 h4 ♘a6!

Threatening 15...♘b4, but not allowing the simplification of 15...♘c6?! 16 ♙xc6.

16 a3

Although this is a logical move, keeping the knight on the edge, when castling has occurred on opposite sides, it's always risky to push pawns around your king.

16...♙g4 17 ♖e4



17...♙xf3 18 gxf3

Very ambitious, but in light of the game, perhaps White should have settled for 18 ♜xf3. Then with still half an eye on the b7-pawn, White could consider trying to get in e5-e6.

18...♜ab8 19 f4 c4!

With White gearing up for action along the g-file, Black had to react quickly. By offloading this pawn, Black opens up the c-file and vacates a useful square for his knight.

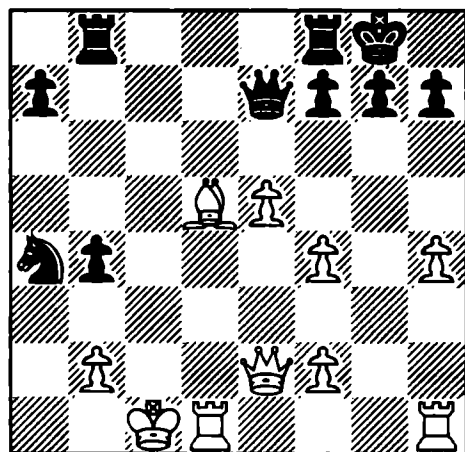
20 ♙xc4 ♘c5 21 ♖e2 b5

Naturally continuing the assault without giving White time to settle. Now capturing this pawn looks dodgy for White, but on the other hand, the advance of this pawn will be dangerous.

22 ♙d5 b4 23 a4!

The best defence. White must limit her opponent's access to her king and thus rightly opts to keep the b-file closed.

23...♘xa4



24 ♖a6?

I don't understand this decentralising queen move (unless White was possibly hoping for 24...♘c5?! 25 ♜d6 with the endgame chances in her favour). 24 ♙b1! was absolutely critical. I don't think that 24...♘c3+ works and if Black can't come up with anything good, then White can look forward to getting into bat soon on the kingside.

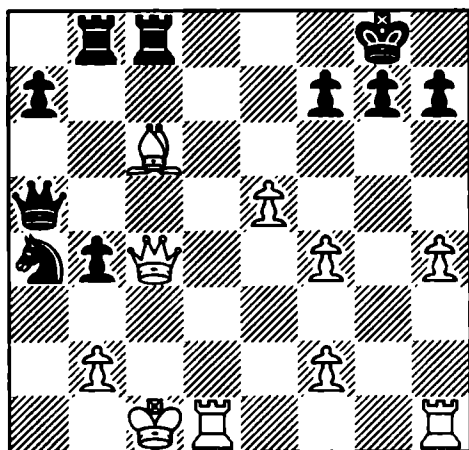
24...♖c5+ 25 ♖c4

The problem with 25 ♖b1 now was 25...♗c3+! 26 bxc3 bxc3+ 27 ♖a1 (or 27 ♖c1 ♖xf2) 27...c2 with ...♖c3+ to follow.

25...♖a5

There was also no good reason why Black couldn't capture the f2-pawn.

26 ♗c6 ♖fc8



27 ♖d7?

A blunder (losing a piece), but things were pretty uncomfortable anyway.

27...♖c5! 0-1

Game 61

Schandorff-Christensen

Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♗f3 c5 4 d5 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 e6 6 e4 exd5 7 e5 ♗fd7 8 ♗g5 ♗e7 9 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 10 ♗xd5 ♖d8 11 ♗xc4 ♗c6

I would suggest that the immediate 11...0-0 might be more shrewd, as White must then show his hand regarding the placement of his major pieces.

12 ♖e2!

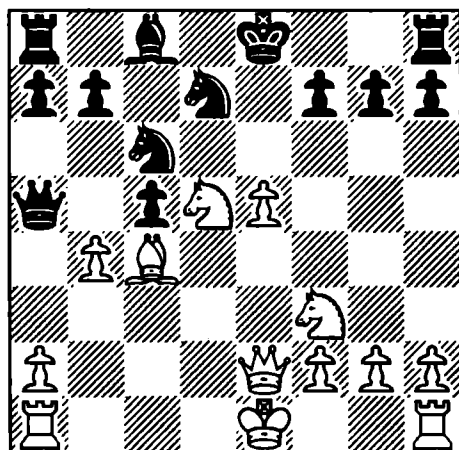
Far more testing than 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♖e1 ♗b6 14 ♗xb6 axb6 15 ♖xd8 ♗xd8, when Black has no problems.

12...♖a5+?!

White was threatening the annoying 13 e6, so Black tries to cut across this by provoking an awkward 13 ♗d2 or 13 ♖f1. As

his plan fails miserably, he should probably accept the consequences of 12...0-0 or perhaps interject 12...♗b6.

13 b4!

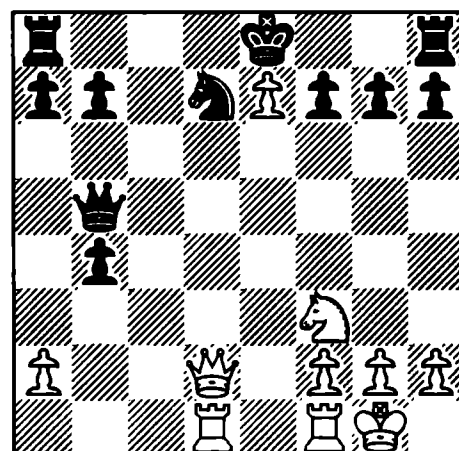


Buying White a very useful tempo. Now 13...cxb4 does not appear promising as 14 e6 in reply looks particularly unattractive for Black, who is horribly behind in development.

13...♗xb4 14 0-0 ♗f8

Side-stepping the unfavourable complications of 14...♗xd5 15 e6!? (the simple 15 ♗xd5 also looks good) 15...♗7f6 16 exf7+ ♖xf7 17 ♖ad1. Nevertheless, it's a definite case of out of the frying pan and into the fire!

15 ♗xb4 cxb4 16 ♗b5+ ♗d7 17 ♗xd7+ ♗xd7 18 e6 ♗f6 19 e7 ♖a6 20 ♖d2 ♖b5 21 ♖ad1 ♗d7



22 ♗e5! 1-0

Game 62
Berezovics-Vaulin
Decin open 1996

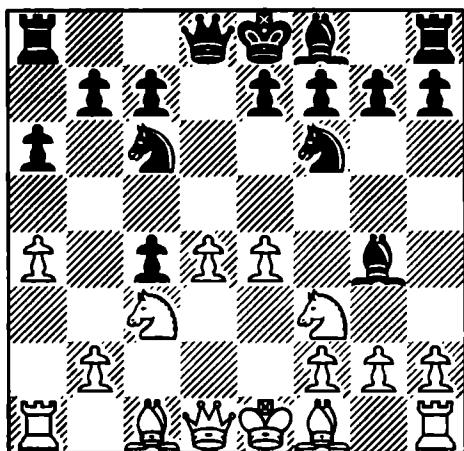
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 f3 f6 4 c3 a6
5 a4

Not really in the spirit of things. Although White prevents ...b7-b5, this move weakens the b4- and b3-squares. Black selects the best response to take advantage of this. The correct 5 e4 is the subject of Games 63-68.

5...c6

It is not such a big problem here for Black to block the c-pawn. For starters his light-squared bishop is not yet obstructed, so he can use the bishop and knight to pressurise White's d-pawn. White may also have to think about the ...e7-e5 break, as well as the possibility of ...a5, simply protecting the extra pawn.

6 e4 g4



7 e5?!

For the time being at least, taking Black's mind off the d4-pawn. However, the d5-square becomes an outpost and with the f-pawns soon doubled as well, White's two bishops aren't exactly complimented by the desired flexible pawn structure. A good demonstration of how to treat 7 e5 was given in Gilbert-Law, Four Nations League 1996: 7...xf3!? 8

gxf3 e5 9 d5 a5 10 c2 d6 11 g1 h5 12 g4 0-0 13 e2 f4 14 f1 d7 15 xf4 exf4 16 a2 b3 17 d1 b5, when Black has consolidated his extra pawn and has the better bishop.

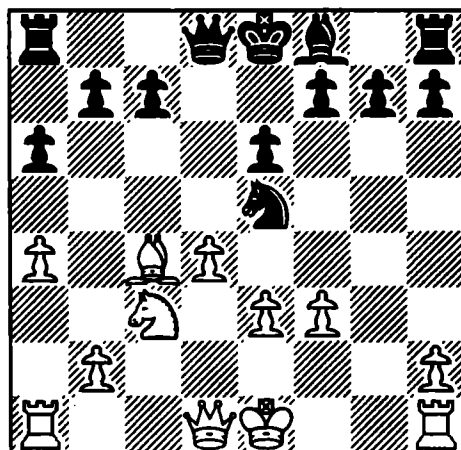
7...xf3 8 gxf3 d5 9 e3 e6

Although 5 a4 clearly has its downside, at least ...b6 is dissuaded because of a4-a5. Here 9...a5 is playable, but 9...e6 must be the best move.

10 xc4 xe3

This knight for bad bishop trade is made with a tactic in mind, based on the exposed white king.

11 fx e3 xe5



12 xe6

Of course this bishop would have been lost anyway after 12 dxe5 Wh4+.

12...Wh4+ 13 e2 dg6

Perhaps Black was being unnecessarily clever. Simplest was 13...fxe6! 14 dxe5 Wg5, when the e5-pawn would be bagged and Black could soon castle, whereas the white king is stuck in the centre.

14 d5 d6 15 xb7 b8 16 c6+ cf8 17 c2 de7 18 e4 g6 19 ag1 cg7 20 g4 Wh3 21 d1 he8 22 f2 Wh5 23 h4 h6 24 hg1 f5 25 xg6+ dxg6 26 xf5 xb2 27 xg6+ Wxg6 28 xg6 xc2+ 29 xc2 g3 30 h5 xf2 31 xf2 b8 32 d3 a5 33 b5?? xb5! 34 axb5 a4 35 d5 cf7 36 d6 ce6 37 dxc7 cd7 38 cg3 a3 39 cf4 a2 40 cf5

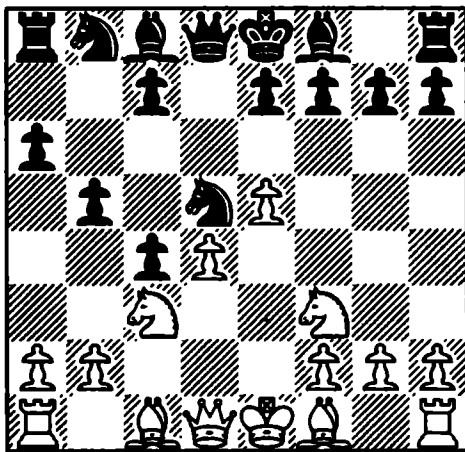
a1♖ 41 ♔g6 ♜g1+ 42 ♔xh6 ♔xc7 43 e4
 ♔d7 44 f4 ♔e7 0-1

Game 63
P. Cramling-Karpatchev
Osterskars open 1995

1 d4 d5 2 ♖f3 ♗f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 ♘c3 a6
 5 e4

The man's move (played here by a woman!). White accepts that it may be a while (if at all) before he regains the c-pawn and turns to central pawn domination for compensation. Note that 5 e3?! falls between two stools (i.e. 5 a4 and 5 e4) and has the failings of each, but not the advantages! The fact that White already has a knight on c3 makes it more difficult for him to chisel away at Black's queenside pawns after 5...b5 (i.e. after a2-a4, ...b5-b4 will be played with tempo).

5...b5 6 e5 ♘d5



7 a4

One aggressive continuation that seems to have lapsed into obscurity is 7 ♗g5. This is a common idea in the Slav Defence, where basically White gives up hope of trying to break down Black's queenside pawn mass and instead concentrates on using his space advantage on the kingside (courtesy of his e5-pawn) to gain play against the enemy king. One might think that Black would be better off here than in

those lines because the absence of a pawn on c6 means that he has more chance of activating his light-squared bishop. However, the lack of black pawns along the h1-a8 diagonal can also work in White's favour, since the a8-rook could easily become exposed if White plays ♜f3 (or ♙e2-f3). (Note that Black is usually unenthusiastic about committing his bishop to b7 too early because of problems revolving around the e6-square.) Taking a look at four possibilities from here:

a) 7...f6?! 8 ♘xd5 ♜xd5 9 ♙e2 c6 10 ♙f3 ♜d8 11 exf6 exf6 12 ♜e2+ ♙e7 13 ♘e6 ♙xe6 14 ♜xe6 as seen in Rogers-Garcia Palermo, Dortmund 1985. Black may even be able to win the d4-pawn, but the white bishops will relish the open board and Black's poor development promises White adequate compensation.

b) 7...♙f5? (it's natural to want to get this bishop out before playing ...e7-e6, as after all it may be able to simply drop back to g6 and solve all of the f7-worries; unfortunately though there isn't enough time for this here) 8 ♘xf7! ♔xf7 9 ♜f3 ♔e6 (or 9...e6 10 g4) 10 g4 ♙g6 11 ♙h3 and with 12 g5+ threatened, the black king is in dire straits, with no brothers in arms to help him!

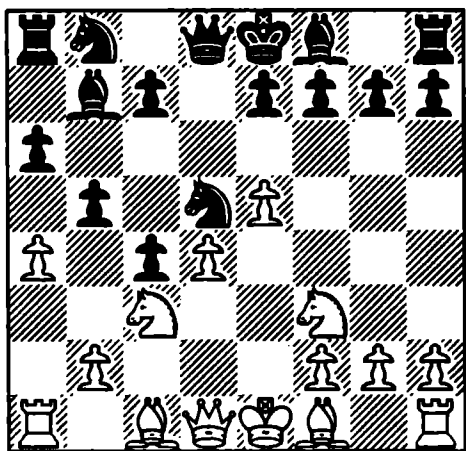
c) 7...♘xc3 8 ♜f3!? ♜d5 9 ♜xc3, when Black is lined up for a ♙e2-f3 and will therefore have to move his queen again soon. With b2-b3 also on the cards, making his pawn sacrifice permanent, I would suggest that White has very good compensation.

d) 7...e6! 8 ♜h5!? ♜d7 (Black should avoid being provoked into weakening the f6-square with 8...g6?!) 9 ♙e2 (9 ♘xd5 exd5 10 e6 ♜e7 11 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 12 exf7+ ♔e7 may look attractive at first, but clearly doesn't turn out all that well) 9...♘b4!? 10 ♙f3 (instead 10 0-0 ♙b7 11 ♘xh7 ♘8c6 12 ♘f6+ gxf6 13 ♜xh8 0-0-0 might see the material and compensation

situation being completely reversed, but of course this fantasy variation is far from forced) 10...♘c2+ 11 ♔d1 ♚xd4+ 12 ♙d2 (not 12 ♔xc2?? ♚d3 mate) 12...g6 13 ♚h3 ♘xa1 14 ♙xa8 when White's centre has been dismantled. Although White has all of his minor pieces out (and there are better places for a black knight than a1!) his king is stuck in the centre and his e5-pawn is next for the chop.

7...♙b7?!

This turns out badly for Black, who should prefer 7...♘xc3 (Games 64 and 65), 7...e6 (Games 66 and 67) or 7...♘b4 (Game 68).



8 e6!

Now that Black's light-squared bishop has switched diagonals, this is a very thematic sacrifice. First of all Black's doubled isolated e-pawns can easily become targets later. He also has more difficulty getting out his other bishop as the straightforward ...e7-e6 is no longer on offer. And finally the black king has been exposed along the h5-e8 diagonal and White has vacated the e5-square for his knight. All in all, well worth a pawn!

Note that if Black declines the pawn with 8...f6, then the e6-pawn (which can easily be secured by 9 ♘e4-c5) will be a real thorn in Black's side.

8...fxe6 9 ♘e4!

Not even giving Black the chance to

trade knights. Although Black has a well posted steed on d5, there is not much to be said about the placement of his other pieces, whereas the enemy knights are about to become monsters.

9...♘b6 10 ♘c5 ♙d5

Black was understandably reluctant to part with the only other piece of any potential and besides 10...♙xf3 11 ♚xf3 ♚xd4 12 ♘xe6 was hardly attractive.

11 ♘e5

Threatening 12 ♚h5+.

11...g6 12 ♚g4 ♘d7 13 ♚f4 ♘f6 14 h4!? ♙g7 15 h5 gxh5

Black would no doubt have liked to have avoided another set of doubled isolated pawns. Unfortunately though White was preparing to devastate Black's kingside with 16 hxg6 and of course 15...♘xh5?? would have allowed 16 ♚f7 mate.

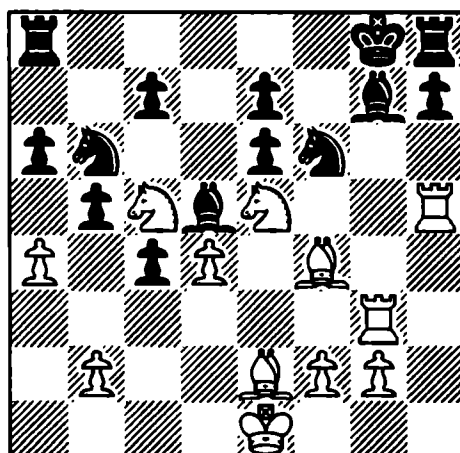
16 ♚g5

It's certainly not about pawn count now as White's bits flood into the black position.

16...♔f8 17 ♚f4

No, White is not stuck for a plan. If Black responds with 17...♔e8, we would have the same position, but the big difference is that Black would no longer be able to castle.

17...♚e8 18 ♙a3! ♔g8 19 ♙g3 ♘g4 20 ♙e2 ♚f8 21 ♙xh5 ♚xf4 22 ♙xf4 ♘f6



23 ♙xg7+! ♔f8

Or 23...♖xg7 24 ♔h6+ ♖g8 24 ♜g5 is mate.

24 ♜hg5 bxa4 25 ♜f7+ ♖e8 26 ♜gg7 c3
27 ♜xe7+ ♖d8 28 ♗xe6+ 1-0

Game 64 Haba-Blatny Zlin 1998

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f3 ♗f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 ♗c3 a6
5 e4 b5 6 e5 ♗d5 7 a4 ♗xc3 8 bxc3
♔b7

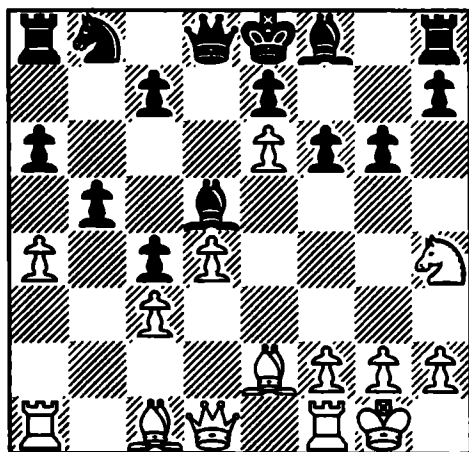
8...♜d5 is seen in the next main game.
9 e6!

Still good, although not quite as overwhelming as before, because at least Black was able to liquidate White's troublesome queen's knight.

9...f6

9...fxe6 is still a little grim. Although he has the e5-outpost at his disposal, White can also consider implementing a plan involving ♗g5!?

10 ♔e2 g6 11 0-0 ♔d5 12 ♗h4!?



12...♗c6

If Black captures the troublesome pawn on e6 (12...♔xe6?!), then his rook is no longer protected and White can exploit this to inflict critical damage on Black's queenside pawn structure with 13 axb5.

13 ♔f3 b4

White was threatening the material-winning 14 axb5.

14 ♗f5

A nice square for the knight, which can't be taken in view of 15 ♔h5 mate.

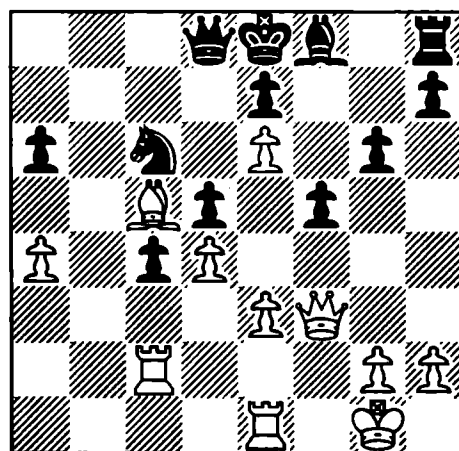
14...bxc3 15 ♔a3 ♗a5

15...c2!? 16 ♜e2 ♜b8 might have been more of a distraction, but it's still not easy to find a solution to Black's kingside problems.

16 ♜e1 c6 17 ♔xd5 cxd5 18 ♜f3 ♗c6
19 ♔c5 c2 20 ♜ac1 ♜b8 21 ♜xc2 ♜b3
22 ♗e3 ♜xe3

Otherwise Black's position collapses with the loss of his d-pawn. Nevertheless, he is now subjected to a barrage of tactics.

23 fxe3 f5



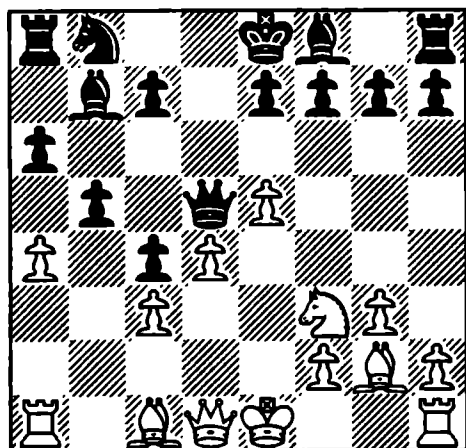
24 ♜xc4 ♔g7 25 ♔a3 ♜a5 26 ♔b4
♜xb4 27 ♜xb4 ♗xb4 28 ♜b1 a5 29
♜xd5 0-0 30 ♜xa5 1-0

Game 65 Bacrot-G.Flear French Team Championship 1998

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f3 ♗f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 ♗c3 a6
5 e4 b5 6 e5 ♗d5 7 a4 ♗xc3 8 bxc3
♜d5

In view of the previous two games, perhaps Black is wise not to allow 9 e6. However, although the queen is well placed in the centre, there are always drawbacks to bringing it out so early in the game.

9 g3 ♔b7 10 ♔g2



10...Wd7 11 a3!

Not allowing Black the time to play 11...e6 and develop normally. He could of course elect to play 11...e6, but then he would forfeit the right to castle after 12 axf8 and White would obviously have good compensation for the pawn.

11...g6 12 0-0

A different approach would be heralded by 12 h4!?, but there certainly doesn't seem to be anything wrong with Bacrot's simple approach.

12...e6 13 e1

Already the possibility of an e5-e6 sacrifice is starting to rear its ugly head. Black of course can't prevent it with 13...e6 himself as his king would be left stranded in the centre.

13...e6 14 g5! c6 15 e6

The usual plan although 15 e6, 15 e4 and 15 xf7!? all looked promising!

15...fxe6 16 e5

see following diagram

16...xd5

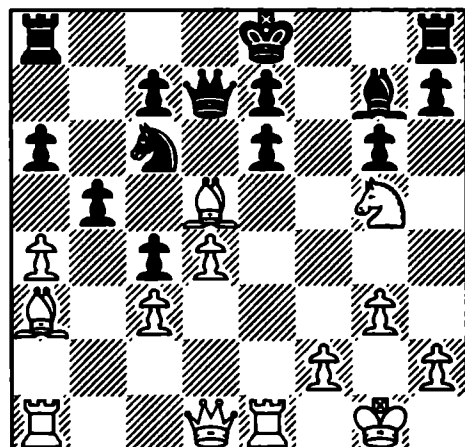
On 16...xd5, as well as the restricting 17 e6, White would also have had 17 axb5 axb5 18 e7!

17 e6

Winning the exchange and the game.

17...f7 18 xc7 f5 19 xa8 xa8 20 axb5 axb5 21 c5 d8 22 b1 xb1 23 exb1 e5 24 a6 xd4 25

cx d4 ex d4 26 xb5 d3 27 d6 xd6 28 xd6 e6 29 f4 c3 30 f1 d4 31 f3 e8 32 e3 e5 33 f4 h8 34 g4 d6 35 b8 1-0



Game 66
Sakaev-Kharlov
European Cup, Budapest 1996

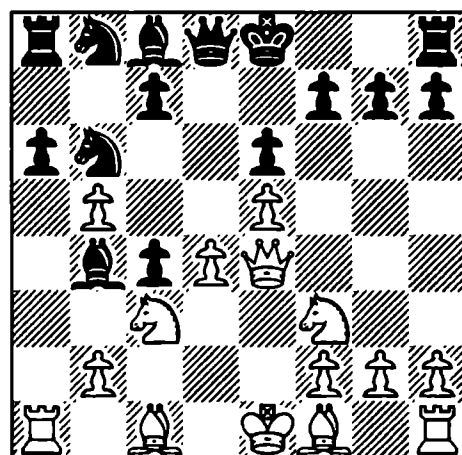
1 d4 d5 2 f3 f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 c3 a6 5 e4 b5 6 e5 d5 7 a4 e6

With this Black chooses to put a stop to White's e5-e6 tactics. However, in consolidating the d5-square, Black is also offering to return his pawn.

8 axb5 b4

Once very common, the popularity of 8...b6!? (see the next main game) has reduced this move to a sideline.

9 c2 b6 10 e4!?

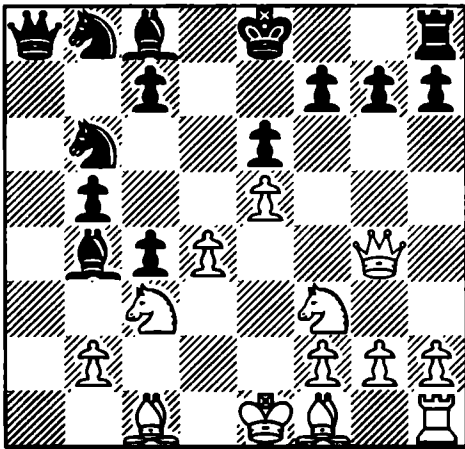


More ambitious than 10 bxa6, which restores material parity, but helps Black to develop his queenside. White eyes up the a8-rook (thus retaining the pin on the a-pawn) and will then transfer the queen to the kingside.

10... ♖d5 11 ♖g4 axb5

11...g6 is another try, although Black is immediately put on the defensive.

12 ♖xa8 ♖xa8



13 ♖e2!

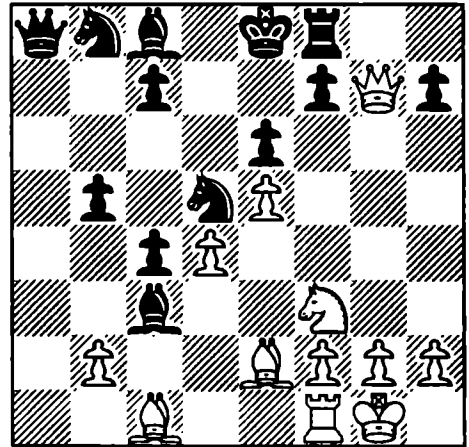
Avoiding the apparently unnecessary complications of 13 ♖xg7 ♖a1!? 14 ♖xh8+ ♖d7. Nonetheless, White players may like to explore this crazy line if they dislike 13 ♖e2 for some reason.

13... ♖d5

Instead 13...0-0 14 0-0 (14 ♖h6?! ♖a1+ 15 ♖d1 ♖xc3+ 16 bxc3 ♖xc3+ 17 ♖d2 g6 18 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 leaves Black with the better practical chances) 14... ♖h8 15 ♖g5 h6 16 ♖h5 ♖g8 17 ♖ge4 ♖xc3 18 ♖f6+ gxf6 19 ♖f3 ♖a4 20 ♖e4 ♖b7 21 exf6 1-0 was played in Khenkin-G.Gurevich, Israeli Championship 1994. 14... ♖xc3 has been suggested as an improvement, but to me, 15 ♖h6 g6 16 bxc3 ♖e8 17 ♖g5 looks a bit ropy. Sure Black retains his extra pawn, but his king is full of dark-squared holes (and unlike White he has no dark-squared bishop). Finally, hot off the press is 13... ♖g8(!?), a passive-looking move which Kasparov was unable to refute in his 1998

match with Timman. After 14 0-0 ♖xc3 15 bxc3 ♖c6 the final outcome was a draw.

14 ♖xg7 ♖f8 15 0-0 ♖xc3



16 ♖g5!?

The less entertaining 16 bxc3 ♖xc3 17 ♖d1 ♖xd1 18 ♖xd1 ♖b7 19 ♖g5 also looked pretty good for White.

16... ♖b4

White would also have followed up with his dangerous 17 ♖h5 plan in the event of 16... ♖xd4.

17 ♖h5

Now as well as capturing on f7, White has 18 ♖xh7 up his sleeve.

17... ♖d7 18 ♖xh7 ♖e8 19 ♖xf7 ♖e7 20 ♖xe6+! ♖c6

The bishop couldn't be taken, i.e. 20... ♖xe6 21 ♖f8+ ♖f5 22 ♖g6 mate.

21 ♖xd5+ ♖xd5 22 ♖g3

The intention is 23 ♖f3+, when the black king is running short of squares.

22... ♖f7

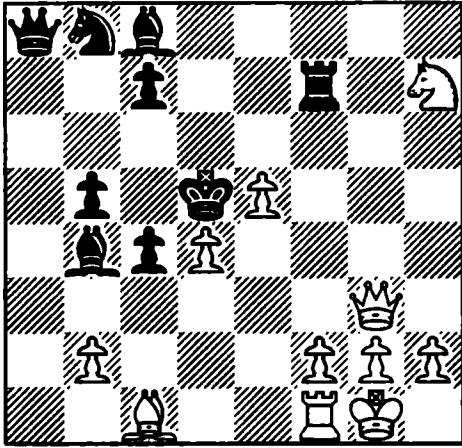
see following diagram

23 ♖f6+ ♖xf6 24 exf6 ♖a6 25 ♖f3+ ♖e6 26 ♖g5

26 f7 ♖d7 27 ♖g5 would have been a quicker route to victory, but who can blame White for basking in the glory!

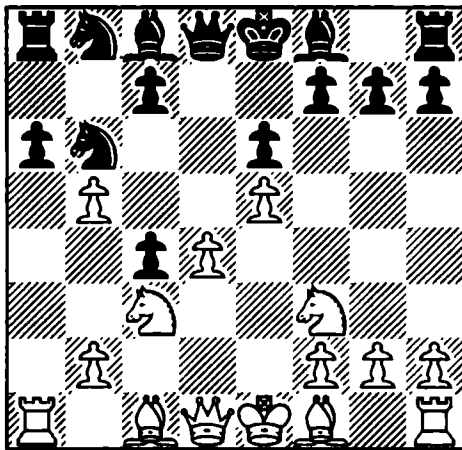
26... ♖b7 27 ♖g4+ ♖d5 28 ♖f4 ♖d7 29 f7 c3 30 bxc3 ♖d6 31 ♖f3+ ♖c4 32 ♖e2+ ♖d5 33 ♖e7! ♖b6 34 f8 ♖xf8

35 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 36 ♜f3+ ♔c4 37 ♜xf8
♗b7 38 ♜b4+ ♔d5 39 ♚e1 1-0



Game 67
Nikolic-Van Wely
Wijk aan Zee 1997

1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♖f3 d5 3 c4 dxc4 4 ♖c3 a6
5 e4 b5 6 e5 ♖d5 7 a4 e6 8 axb5 ♖b6!?



9 bxa6

There are a couple of fascinating alternatives here:

a) 9 ♖g5?! h6 10 ♜h5?! (10 ♖ge4 ♗b7 11 ♜g4 axb5 12 ♚xa8 ♗xa8 13 ♖xb5 ♜d7 14 ♖bc3 ♖c6 15 ♗e3 ♖b4! 16 ♗e2 ♖c2+ 17 ♔f1 ♖d5 18 ♗c1 ♖xd4, as seen in Krasenkov-Grabarczyk, Polish Championship 1996, is a good example of what can happen when White doesn't take care of his centre) 10...g6 (in the rapidplay game

Kramnik-Miles, London 1995, Black also seemed to gain a lot of play with 10...hxg5 11 ♜xh8 ♜xd4 12 ♗e2 ♜xe5 but alas eventually lost a titanic tussle) 11 ♜h3 ♜xd4, when it's doubtful that White's wing play will succeed in view of his flailing centre.

b) 9 ♗e3 with three further possibilities:

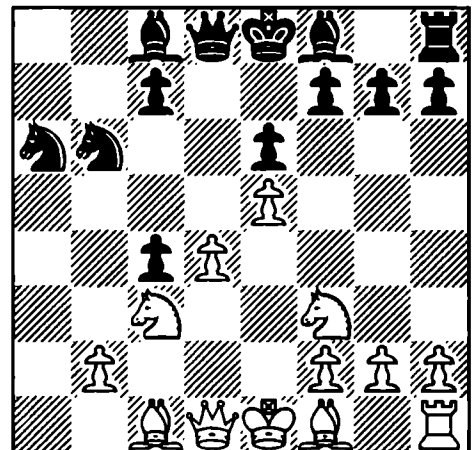
b1) 9...♗b4?! 10 ♖d2 axb5 (10...♗xc3 11 bxc3 axb5 12 ♚xa8 ♖xa8 13 ♖xc4! bxc4 14 ♜a4+ ♗d7 15 ♜xa8 is a noteworthy trick) 11 ♚xa8 ♖xa8 12 ♜g4 ♔f8 13 ♖xb5 ♖b6 14 ♖c3 ♖c6 15 ♗e2 h5 16 ♜e4 ♗b7 17 0-0 and White went on to win in Kramnik- Korchnoi, Budapest 1996.

b2) 9...♗e7 10 ♖d2 ♗b7 (10...axb5 11 ♚xa8 ♖xa8 12 ♖xb5 was comfortably better for White in Chernin-Miles, Biel rapidplay 1995) 11 bxa6 ♖xa6 12 ♖xc4 0-0 13 ♖xb6 cxb6 14 ♗xa6 ♗xa6 15 f3 ♗b4 16 h4 ♗xc3+ 17 bxc3 ♜c7 18 ♜d2 ♚fc8, which was arguably a little better for White in Piket-Nikolic, Monaco (blindfold) 1998, although the game was eventually drawn.

b3) 9...♗b7!?, protecting the rook immediately, could be the solution.

The text move leads to a dullish draw so 9 ♗e3 is certainly worth further exploration.

9...♚xa6 10 ♚xa6 ♖xa6



11 ♖g5

Note that 11 ♖xc4?! ♗xc4 12 ♖a4+ ♗d7 13 ♖xc4 ♗b4 wins a pawn, but leaves White very much wanting on the light squares.

11...♗d7 12 ♖e2 ♖b7 13 0-0 h6 14 ♖e3 ♖e7 15 ♗d2 0-0 16 ♖f3

Now 16 ♗xc4?! ♗xc4 17 ♖xc4 fails to 17...♗c6. Admittedly White can play 18 ♖g4, but after 18...♗xc4 19 ♖xh6 g6 Black will have two excellent bishops for the rook and two pawns.

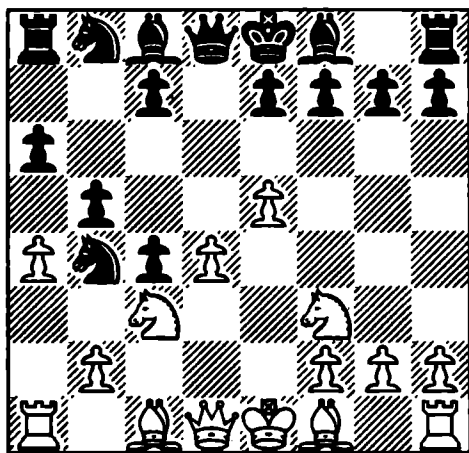
16...♖xf3 17 ♖xf3 c5 18 dxc5 ♗xc5 19 ♖g4 ♖c7 20 ♗ce4 ♗xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♖c8 22 ♖c1 ♖c5 23 h4 ♖xe3 ½-½

Game 68

Ehlvest-Sadler

FIDE World Ch., Groningen 1997

1 ♖f3 d5 2 d4 ♗f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 ♗c3 a6
5 e4 b5 6 e5 ♗d5 7 a4 ♗b4!?



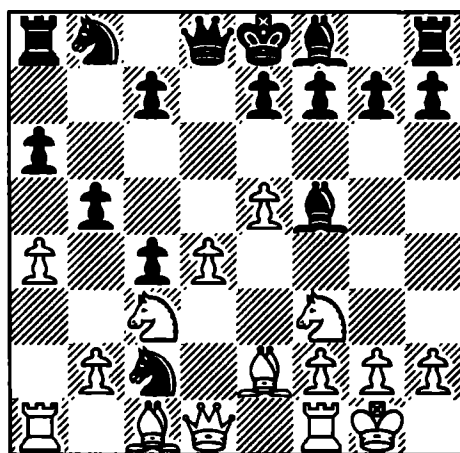
Okay, so as it turns out, this game won't exactly win any 'thriller of the year' awards! However, one must always sit up and take note when Matthew plays something different in his favourite opening. I have mentioned previously how a2-a4 weakens the b4- and b3-squares and this move aims to take advantage of that. With the c4-pawn still on the board, an infiltration on d3 may be a possibility, but more relevant is Black's blatant intention to

play ...♖f5 and ...♗c2.

8 ♖e2

Probably White was afraid of Matthew's preparation. 8 d5, vacating the d4-square, looks like a reasonable way to parry 8...♖f5(?!), e.g. 9 ♗d4 ♖d3 10 e6! However, White would then have both 8...e6 and 8...♖b7 to contend with, when there is a real danger that White may simply have over-extended himself in the centre. A far more entertaining alternative is 8 axb5 ♖f5 9 ♖xc4 ♗c2+ 10 ♖e2 ♗xa1 11 ♖a4 e6 12 bxa6+ c6 13 ♖xa1 ♗xa6 14 ♖a4 ♗b4 15 ♖g5 ♖xa4 16 ♖xd8 ♖a7 17 ♖b6 ♖a8, which left Black the exchange for a pawn up in Nilssen-Schmitz, Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 1998. Instead 10 ♖f1 ♗xa1 11 g4!?

8...♖f5 9 0-0 ♗c2



10 ♖a2

White can also consider 10 ♖b1. Then 10...b4?! wouldn't be a problem because of 11 ♖xc4 bxc3 12 bxc3, aiming to trap the knight, and if 12...♗xd4 then 13 ♗xd4 ♖xb1 14 ♖f3. In the lines 10 ♖b1 e6 11 axb5 axb5 12 ♗xb5 ♗b4 13 ♖g5 ♖d7 14 ♖xc4 c6 15 ♗c3 ♖xb1 16 ♖xb1 and 10...♗b4 11 ♖g5 ♖xb1 12 ♖xb1, White has sacrificed the exchange for a lead in

development. In both cases there is some compensation, but I certainly wouldn't say it is more than enough.

10...♖b4 11 ♖a1

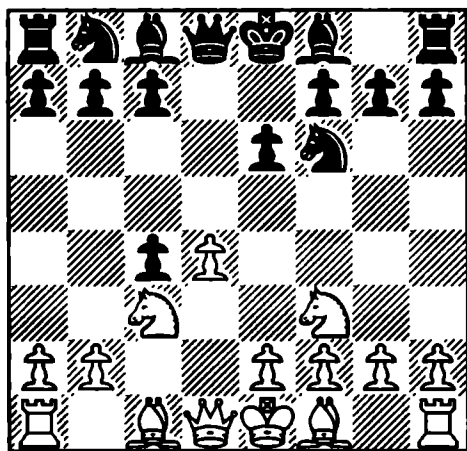
If White wishes to play for a win he could try 11 ♖a3, intending to meet 11...♗c2 with 12 ♗h4!? ♗d3 13 ♗xd3 cxd3 14 e6!? with wild complications.

11...♗c2 12 ♖a2 ♗b4 ½-½

13 axb5 remains the threat and realistically Black is too far behind in development to try anything else.

Game 69
Karpov-Van Wely
Monaco (blindfold) 1997

1 ♗f3 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 d5 4 d4 dxc4



After 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 ♗c3 e6, we would have reached this position via a 'genuine' Queen's Gambit Accepted. The fact that in this game it arose by way of a Queen's Gambit Declined (as indeed it seems to be the case in the great majority of occasions) is a reasonable indication that perhaps it doesn't really belong in this book. Nevertheless for the sake of completeness, I thought it deserved a mention and therefore a game.

5 ♖a4+

A safety-first move. Compared to the 3 e4 variation, one might be tempted by 5 e4, exploiting the fact that Black has

played the relatively passive ...e7-e6 (instead of any of the more dynamic options such as ...e5). However, the difference is that because White has been bringing knights out, he hasn't yet found the time to regain his pawn. After 5...♗b4 Black is already threatening to capture the e-pawn. After 6 e5 (6 ♗g5 is a direct transposition to the 'Vienna variation' of the QGD, while 6 ♖a4+ ♗c6 is probably an inferior version of the text) 6...♗d5 7 ♗d2 ♗b6!, Black doesn't give back the gambit pawn without a fight. Clearly White has some compensation, but it is not an easy position to play and this line is usually avoided.

5...♗bd7

In my view Black should switch to Slav Defence territory here with 5...c6(!). Then after 6 ♖xc4, he should gain a tempo on the white queen with ...b7-b5 and then attack the centre quickly with moves like ...♗b7, ...a7-a6 and ...c7-c5.

6 e4

Now of course White is free to do this as ...♗b4 has been pretty much eliminated from the equation.

6...a6

The immediate 6...c5 7 d5 exd5 8 e5 d4?! 9 exf6 dxc3 10 ♗xc4 gxf6 11 0-0 ♗g7 12 ♖e1+ ♗f8 13 ♗f4 turned out to be pretty horrendous for Black in Kinsman-Lane, Wrexham 1997. However, this idea shouldn't be ruled out altogether, as Black can consider 8...b5!? 9 ♖xb5 (9 ♗xb5?! ♗e4) 9...♖b8 10 ♖a4 and only now 10...d4.

Also possible is the straightforward 6...♗e7 7 ♗xc4 0-0 8 ♖d1 c5 9 e5 ♗e8 10 dxc5 ♗c7 11 0-0 ♗xc5 12 ♖e2 ♗d7 13 b4 ♗a4 14 ♗e4 ♗d5 15 a3 ♖c8 16 ♗d3 h6 17 ♗d2 ♖b6 18 ♖ab1 ♖fd8 19 ♖b3 (the fight is on; thanks to his pawn on e5, White has a nice space advantage, but can he hold his queenside together long enough to succeed with an imminent kingside attack?) 19...a6

20 ♘e1 ♖c7 21 ♘g3 ♘ac3 22 ♖h5 ♙a4 23 ♙xh6! f5 24 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 25 ♘xf5+ (25 ♙xf5! first looks more convincing) 25...exf5 26 ♖xf5 ♖h8 27 ♘f3 ♖h6 28 ♖b2 ♗h8 29 ♖e1 ♖f8 30 ♖g4 when White, rather fortuitously, went on to win on time in Crouch-McMahon, Sheffield 1996.
7 ♙xc4 c6?!

This just feels a bit funny. Black is now into the realms of a Slav where White has managed to play e2-e4 in one go (usually he has to play e2-e3 and then e4-e4 later). True, the white queen will have to move, but ...a7-a6 and ...c7-c6 here looks like overkill. The problem is that Black wants to play 8...b5, but his a-pawn is pinned. Perhaps 7...♖b8 is a better try.

8 ♖c2 b5 9 ♙e2 ♙b7 10 e5!

Black was hoping to get in ...c6-c5, when he could use the d5-outpost as a home for a knight or bishop. What he didn't really want there was a pawn.

10...♘d5 11 ♘xd5 cxd5 12 0-0

Now White has a very comfortable game. The position is somewhat reminiscent of one of the main lines of the Semi-Slav, where he is also left with a poor light-squared bishop. However, the essential difference here is that White has safely negotiated his pawn through to e5, thus leaving a lovely space advantage on the kingside.

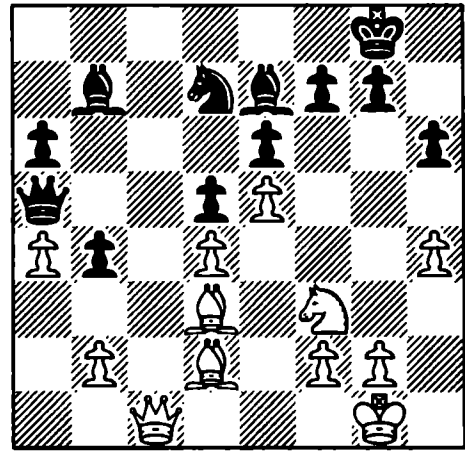
12...♙e7 13 ♙d2 0-0 14 ♙d3 h6 15 a4!

As a temporary distraction from matters on the kingside, White sets about obtaining more control on the queenside.

15...b4 16 ♖fc1 ♖c8 17 ♖d1 ♖a5 18 h4!? ♖xc1

Probably a mistake, but what else is there for Black to do?

19 ♖xc1 ♖c8 20 ♖xc8+ ♙xc8 21 ♖c1 ♙b7



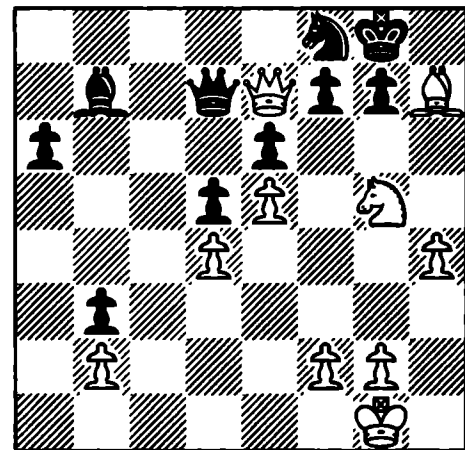
22 ♙xh6! ♖xa4

22...gxh6 23 ♖xh6 ♘f8 24 ♘g5 ♙xg5 25 ♖xg5+ ♗h8 26 h5, threatening 27 h6 (and hence 28 ♖g7 mate) would have been terminal.

23 ♙g5 ♙xg5

23...♙f8, preserving his good bishop and retaining a defender, would no doubt have been preferable if it weren't for the infiltration with 24 ♖c7.

24 ♘xg5 ♘f8 25 ♖c7 ♖d7 26 ♖c5 b3 27 ♖b6 ♖c6 28 ♖d8 ♖c8 29 ♖e7 ♖d7 30 ♙h7+! 1-0



Summary

Remaining consistent with my assessment of Chapter 3, I still feel that White has the upper hand in lines where he gets a piece on d5 (Games 59-61). With so many tactical variations, I suppose that at least Black has plenty of scope for improvement, but he certainly needs it!

Probably a better practical try is 4...a6 (Games 62-68), particularly if Black likes the idea of keeping the c4-pawn. After 5 e4 b5 6 e5 ♖d5 7 a4 White gets some reasonable counterplay, but if Black finds things uncomfortable, he can always bail out with the 7...e6 8 axb5 ♖b6!? of Game 67 or even Sadler's favoured 7...♖b4!? (see Game 68).

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3

4...a6

4...c5 5 d5 e6 6 e4 exd5 7 e5 ♘fd7 8 ♙g5

8...f6 – Game 59

8...♙e7 9 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 10 ♘xd5 ♚d8 (D)

11 ♚c2 – Game 60

11 ♙xc4 – Game 61

4...e6 – Game 69

5 e4

5 a4 – Game 62

5...b5 6 e5 ♘d5 7 a4 e6

7...♙b7 – Game 63

7...♘xc3 8 bxc3 (D)

8...♙b7 – Game 64

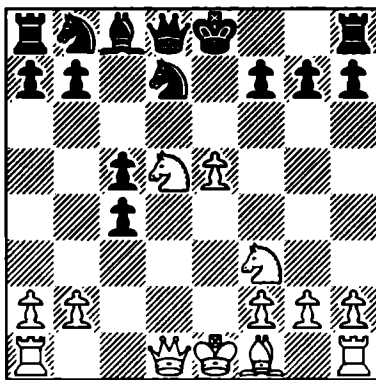
8...♚d5 – Game 65

7...♖b4 – Game 68

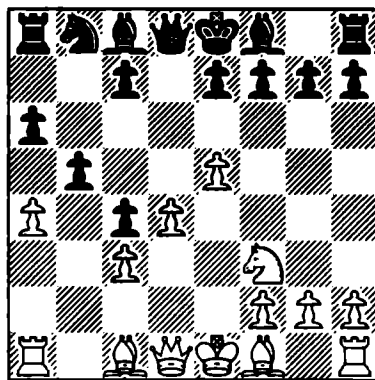
8 axb5 (D) ♖b6

8...♙b4 – Game 66

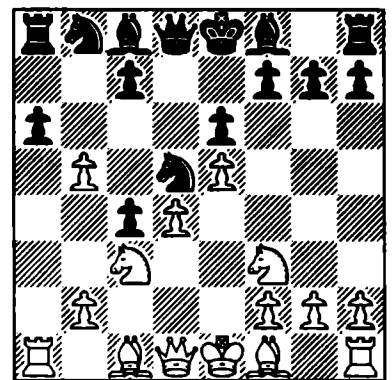
9 bxa6 – Game 67



10...♚d8



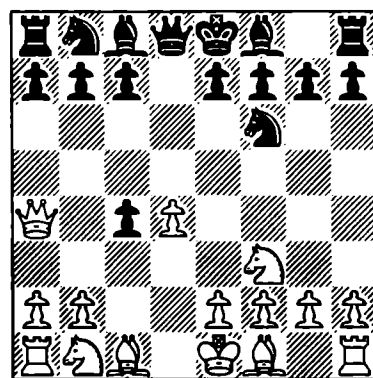
8 bxc3



8 axb5

CHAPTER NINE

3 ♖a4+ and
3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♖a4+



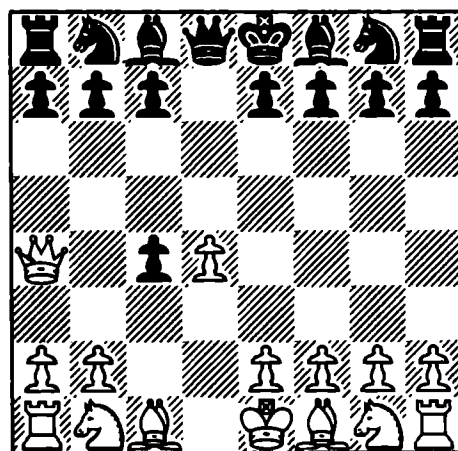
In this chapter we shall consider two similar lines for White:

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖a4+
and

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♖a4+

As we shall see in Game 70, 3 ♖a4+ is just dubious, but if White usually plays the Catalan against the Queen's Gambit Declined (i.e. 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 g3), then I guess the 'Mannheim variation' (1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♖a4+) would fit in quite well with his general Queen's Gambit repertoire (see Games 71-73). If it weren't for the fact that Black is able to satisfactorily develop his light-squared bishop, then I could buy the argument that a kingside fianchetto would exert pressure on Black's queenside. As it stands though, there is no logical reason for bringing the queen out so early, given that White can simply play e2-e3 and ♙xc4. Overall, I would strongly advise White players to avoid this chapter!

bit' doesn't instil the same kind of fear into people as the 'King's Gambit', but this move makes a bit of a mockery of the whole opening. To be on the safe side(!), White rushes to ensure that he can regain his gambit pawn. Since we already know that Black can't keep the pawn under normal circumstances anyway, this very early queen sortie is definitely unnecessary and in fact deservedly backfires on White in this game.



Game 70
Rey-Baburin
San Francisco 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖a4+?!

I know that the name 'Queen's Gam-

3...♘c6!

Of course there are eminently playable alternatives, but this move points out to White that he can't regain the c-pawn just yet without losing his own d-pawn.

4 ♘f3 ♙g4!?

4...♟f6 would transpose to the next game, but with this move Black is really seeking to punish his cheeky opponent.

5 ♘c3

I suppose that 5 ♘e5 would be consistent, but at worst Black could accept a development advantage with 5...♙d7 6 ♘xc6 (or 6 ♘xd7 ♜xd7 7 e3 e5) 6...♙xc6 7 ♜xc4 ♘f6.

5...♙xf3 6 exf3 e6

White's isolated d-pawn will remain a weakness for a long time. By continuing his development, rather than greedily snatching the d-pawn, Black doesn't allow any complications.

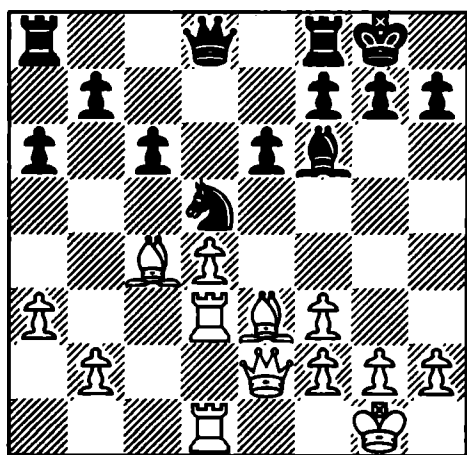
7 ♙e3 ♘f6 8 ♙xc4 a6 9 ♜d1 ♘b4!

Preventing White from trading off his big weakness and preparing a blockade on d5.

10 0-0 ♙e7 11 ♜c1 0-0 12 ♜e2 c6 13 ♜fd1 ♘bd5 14 a3 ♘xc3

Note that White can't recapture with his b-pawn, as that would leave his a-pawn en prise.

15 ♜xc3 ♘d5 16 ♜cd3 ♙f6



Initiating the early stages of a process of 'ganging up on the d4-pawn'. The superb knight on d5 makes it very difficult for White to generate any activity.

17 g3 ♜d7 18 ♙a2 ♜ad8 19 ♜c2 ♜c7 20 ♙g2 ♜d7 21 h4 h5 22 ♙b1 g6 23 ♜d2 ♜fd8 24 ♙g5 ♙xg5 25 ♜xg5 ♘e7 26 ♜3d2 ♜d5 27 ♜e3 ♘f5!

Black doesn't mind exchanging the minor pieces as he knows that his major pieces will do the business.

28 ♙xf5 ♜xf5 29 b4 ♜fd5 30 ♜c3 ♜d6

One simple idea is to treble up and then play ...e6-e5.

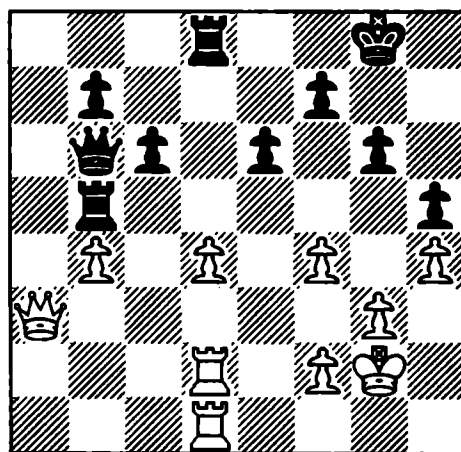
31 f4 a5!

Essentially giving White a second critical weakness.

32 ♜b1 ♜b6 33 ♜bd1 axb4 34 axb4 ♜d8 35 ♜a3

Preventing the threatened infiltration of the a-file, but waving goodbye to a pawn.

35...♜b5



Not throwing away all of the hard work with 35...♜xd4? 36 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 37 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 38 ♜a8+ ♙g7 39 ♜xb7.

36 ♜b1 ♜xd4 37 ♜a8+ ♙g7 38 ♜bd1 ♜bxb4 39 ♜b8 c5 40 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 41 ♜a1 ♜d8 42 ♜e5+ ♙g8 43 ♜f6 c4 44 f5 ♜d4 0-1

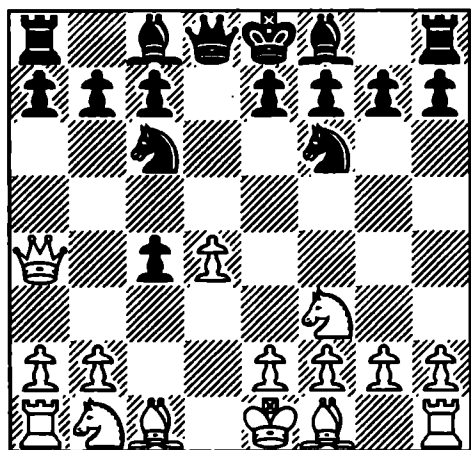
Game 71
Crouch-Duncan
Hampstead 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♜a4+

Though definitely more acceptable than 3 ♜a4+?!, the 'Mannheim variation' introduced by this move would appear to have passed its 'sell-by' date. The idea behind the check is either to confuse/discoordinate Black sufficiently in order to play

e2-e4 under favourable circumstances, or to simply regain the c-pawn with the queen (rather than the bishop) so as to enable a kingside fianchetto.

4...♘c6!?



Although the alternatives 4...c6 and 4...♗d7 (see Games 72 and 73) appear fine to me, this move seems particularly attractive. As in the last game, Black counterattacks against the d4-pawn. Note that Black should avoid the passive 4...♘bd7 5 ♘c3 e6 6 e4, transposing to Game 69.

5 ♘c3

I guess that White could try 5 g3 here, but Black is not obliged to return to the realms of a QGD Catalan with 5...e6. For example, he can consider 5...♘d7!?, intending to kick around the white queen with 6...♘b6.

5...♘d5!?

5...e6 and 5...♗g4 are playable, but the text, intending to menace the white queen, is the most dynamic way to handle the position.

6 e4!?

6 ♗xc4 is pretty wet, and Black can have some fun with 6...♘b6 7 ♗d3 e5! 8 dxe5 ♗xd3 (or 8...♗g4! straightaway) 9 exd3 ♗g4 or even 6...♘db4!?

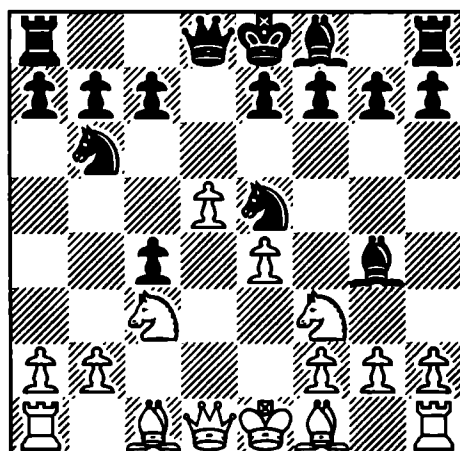
6...♘b6 7 ♗d1 ♗g4 8 d5 ♘e5

see following diagram

9 ♗d4

This isn't the first time that we have seen this type of sacrifice in the QGA. Although White retains his big pawn centre, it strikes me that the idea is doomed to failure here because White's king must stay in the centre and his light-squared bishop is never able to give what would be a big check on b5. I could be wrong, but the c4-pawn looks like a big stumbling block to White.

Another idea is 9 ♗f4!? ♘g6 10 ♗g3 e6 11 dxe6 ♗xe6 12 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 13 ♗xc7 ♗d7 14 ♗b8 ♗b4 15 a4, when White went on to win in Zagorskis-Hjelm, Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 1998. Although it is worth both sides investigating this rather unclear position, Black can also consider inserting 9...♗xf3!? 10 gxf3 and only then 10...♘g6, intending ...e7-e5, with a similar approach to the notes to Black's next move.



9...♘xf3+

Despite the fact that it doesn't attack the bishop (compared to the previous note) 9...♘g6 is also fine for Black, e.g. 10 ♗e3 ♗xf3 11 gxf3 e5 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 14 f4 ♗b4 15 ♗h3 ♖f8 16 f5 exf5 17 exf5 ♘h4 18 0-0 ♘xf5 19 ♖fe1 ♘xe3 20 ♖xe3+ ♗f7 21 ♘e4 h6 22 a3 ♗e7 23 ♖ae1 ♗d3 24 ♗e6+ ♗g6 25 ♖3e2 ♗d6 and Black went on to win comfortably in Hellsten-Volzhin, Gistrup 1996.

10 gxf3 ♗xf3 11 ♖g1 ♗d6 12 ♗e3

12 e5 is tempting, but only succeeds in dropping the d-pawn after 12...♖d7 13 ♗xc4 e6 (...0-0-0 was also on the agenda).

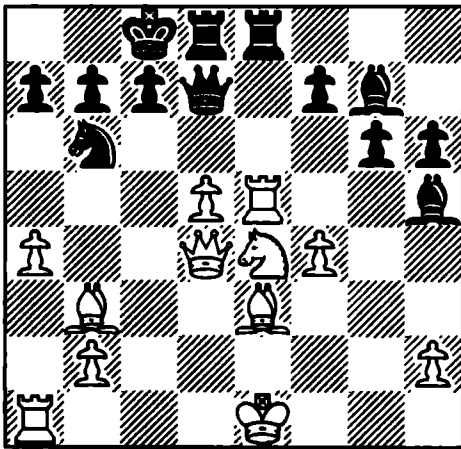
12...♗h5

Although it has been budged from its happy home on f3, the bishop continues to prevent a rook coming to d1 (and of course also stops 0-0-0).

13 f4 e6 14 ♖g5 g6 15 ♗d4 ♖g8 16 ♗xc4 h6 17 ♖e5

Incarcerating the rook, but in any event the whole concept of 14 ♖g5 hasn't exactly been a raging success. After the retreat 17 ♖g2 0-0-0 18 ♗e3 ♗g7 (making the most of 14...g6) 19 e5 ♗b4 White has clearly overextended himself.

17...0-0-0 18 ♗e3 ♗g7 19 ♗b3 exd5 20 exd5 ♖ge8 21 ♗e4 ♗d7 22 a4



22...♗f5 0-1

Not the only winning move, but the prettiest one!

Game 72
Ljubojevic-Anand
Belgrade 1997

1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♗f3 d5 3 c4 dxc4 4 ♗a4+ c6

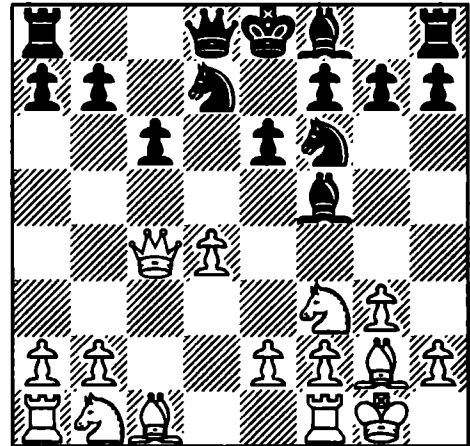
This 'Slav' treatment is also quite satisfactory for Black. In my experience queen recaptures on c4 in the Semi-Slav complex are unsatisfactory for White. For example, after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 c6 4 ♗c2 dxc4 5 ♗xc4 White has to waste time with his

queen: 5...♗f6 6 g3 b5 7 ♗c2 ♗b7 8 ♗g2 ♗bd7 9 0-0 c5. The fact that the light-squared bishop has even more options here can only be a bonus.

5 ♗xc4 ♗f5 6 g3 e6 7 ♗g2 ♗bd7

Of course I can't say that Black is winning, but his position is certainly solid!

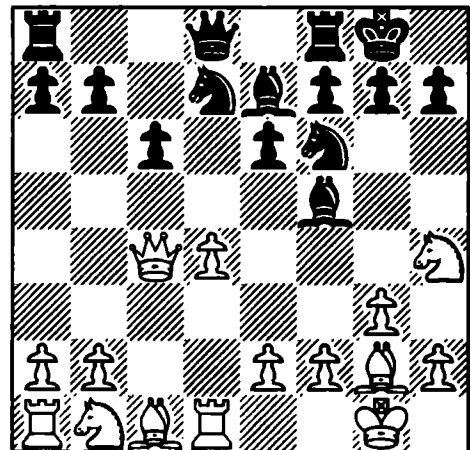
8 0-0



8...♗e7

It is amazing how Anand wins this game with such consummate ease. A sensible alternative is 8...♗b6 9 ♗b3 ♗d5, when there is absolutely nothing wrong with Black's position, but Vishy prefers not to force the issue.

9 ♖d1 0-0 10 ♗h4



White seems to lose this game because of his own ambition. In order to eventually make progress he must be able to advance through the centre. That said, he

must actually be careful. 10 e3 would be a safe move, but 10 ♗c3? falls into a trap. After 10...♙c2!, not only is Black hitting the rook, but he is also threatening to win the white queen with 11...♗b6.

10...♙e4 11 ♙xe4 ♗xe4 12 ♖c2 ♗ef6 13 ♗c3 c5!?

Many players would choose the also not unreasonable 13...♗d5 here, but Anand is not fazed by the potential pin on the d-file. After 14 dxc5, White could soon experience a similar situation on the c-file and, with the white knight out of play on h4, there could also be a trick or two on f2.

14 d5?!

Probably White should have played 14 ♗f3, but without his 'Catalan bishop' (which is usually very effective at pressurising Black's queenside) he has no chance for an advantage.

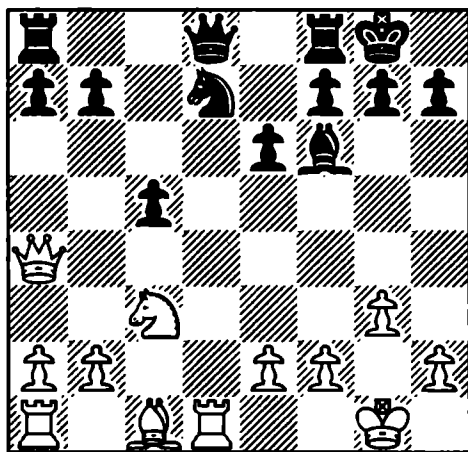
14...♗xd5!

Anand has all the tactics worked out.

15 ♗xd5 ♙xh4 16 ♗c3

If 16 gxf4 then 16...exd5 17 ♙xd5 ♖xh4 because the knight is protected by the check on g4.

16...♙f6 17 ♖a4



17...♙d4!

Cleverly provoking the weakening of White's kingside before embarking upon the complications of ...♙xc3.

18 e3 ♙xc3 19 ♙xd7

19 bxc3 ♗b6 leaves Black a clear pawn up.

19...♖e8

The point is that if now 20 bxc3, then 20...♗d8 wins the rook (or at least queen for rook and piece).

20 ♖d1

If 20 bxc3 then 20...♗d8.

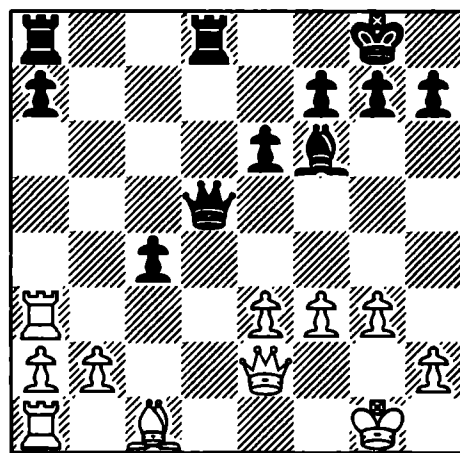
20...♙f6 21 ♙xb7 ♖c6

Black has two isolated pawns, but has pressure on both sides of the board. One white rook is stuck out on a limb, whereas the other has difficulty getting developed.

22 ♙b3 c4 23 ♙a3 ♙fd8 24 ♖e2 ♖e4

In moving the queen to such a dominating square, Black seeks yet another concession.

25 f3 ♖d5



26 ♗f2

There was nothing else to do. Anand's technique is exquisite.

26...♖b5 27 ♙b1 ♙d3 28 ♖c2 ♙ad8 29 ♙a4 ♖f5 30 ♙xc4 ♖h3 0-1

Fantastic! Black kept White tied up on the queenside only to switch flanks to devastating effect.

Game 73
Piket-Nikolic
Linares 1997

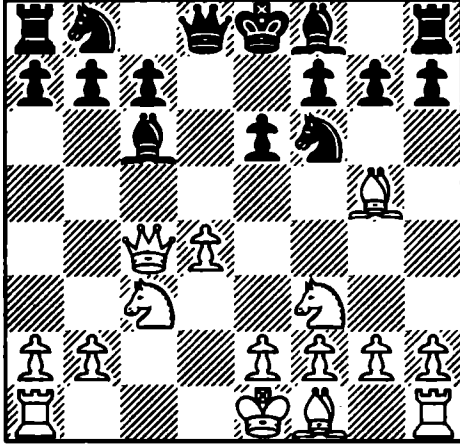
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 ♖a4+ ♗d7

In case you weren't happy with the previous suggestions, this is definitely the way to put up a straight bat!

5 ♖xc4 e6 6 ♗g5

Again White could have transposed to a 'Catalan' with a kingside fianchetto, but here Black's bishop is ready to contest the h1-a8 diagonal.

6...♗c6 7 ♘c3



7...♗c6

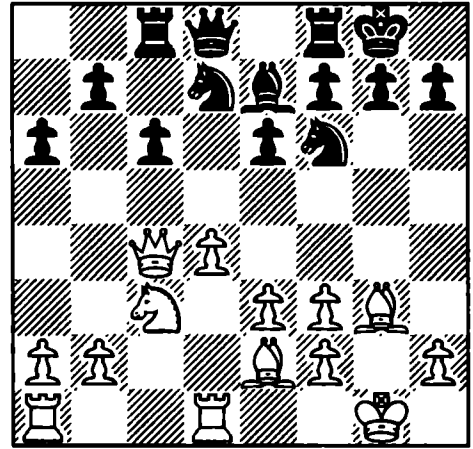
The best move. With no centre attacking breaks on offer (i.e. ...c7-c5 or ...e6-e5),

Black doesn't want to allow the cramping e2-e4 yet.

8 gxf3 c6

Rock solid! White has the two bishops, but at the cost of doubled pawns and 9 e4 would now leave the d4-pawn exposed.

9 e3 ♖bd7 10 ♗e2 ♗e7 11 ♗h4 0-0 12 ♗g3 a6 13 0-0 ♝c8 14 ♝fd1



14...c5 15 dxc5 b5 16 ♗d3 ♘xc5 17 ♗xd8 ♝fxd8 18 ♝ac1 h6 19 ♚f1 ♚f8 20 ♝xd8+ ♝xd8 21 ♘d1 b4 22 ♗c7 ♝a8 23 ♗a5 ½-½

Summary

Although I appreciate that a kingside fianchetto may compliment the style of many White players, it is exceedingly difficult to prove any sort of an edge with the 'Mannheim variation'. In days gone by it may have been a reasonable attempt to avoid the reams of theory associated with other lines of the QGA, but that argument now simply falls flat.

Game 70 puts paid to 3 ♖a4+!, and while Black has several satisfactory replies to 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♖a4+, in Game 72 Anand shows how it is possible to move on from a solid set-up to strive for the full point.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4

3 ♘f3 (D)

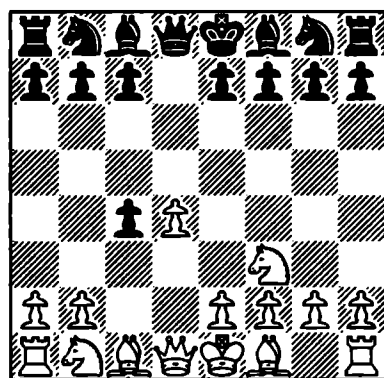
3 ♖a4+ - Game 70

3...♘f6 4 ♖a4+ (D) ♘c6

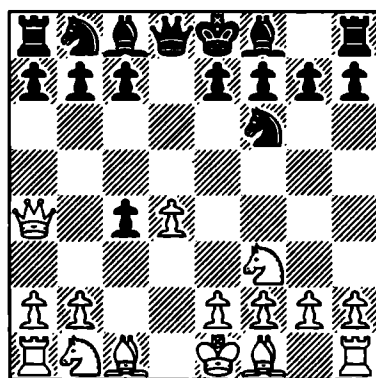
4...c6 - Game 72

4...♗d7 - Game 73

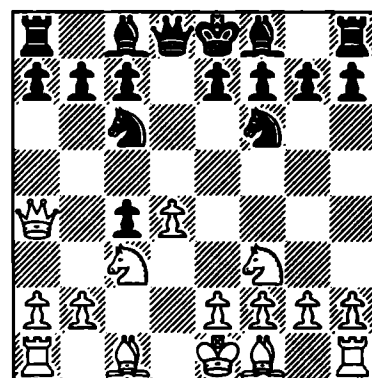
5 ♘c3 (D) - Game 71



3 ♘f3



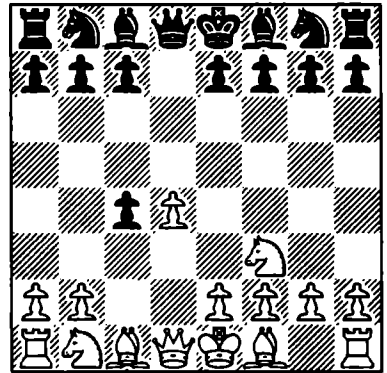
4 ♖a4+



5 ♘c3

CHAPTER TEN

Third Move Alternatives for Black after 3 Nf3



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Nf3

Essentially this chapter investigates some of the subtleties behind delaying 3... Nf6 . Some of these sidelines can pretty much be dismissed out of hand, as Black is not yet ready either to hit back in the centre (Game 74) or to try and hold on to the c4-pawn (Games 75 and 76), and the dangers of ignoring development should be very apparent.

A fair chunk of this chapter is dedicated to the 'Borisenko-Furman variation' (3...a6!), as seen in Games 77-79. It transpires that there is a lot to be said for 3...a6, which certainly gives White some transpositional headaches. However, there still doesn't seem to be any getting away from the 'Classical variation' if White wants to follow that course.

Black's final third move alternative 3...e6 (Games 80-82) has also been known to confuse White players, particularly when they discover that there is no knight on f6 to hassle after a central expansion.

Game 74

Dautov-Sermek
Dresden Zonal 1998

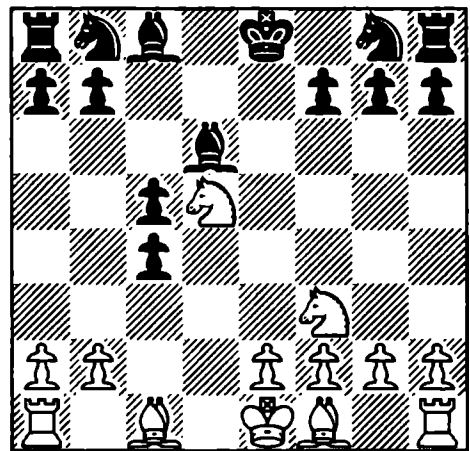
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Nf3 c5 4 d5

The most logical move, although White could of course settle for 4 e3, with a possible transposition to the notes to Game 89 after 4...cxd4 5 Qxc4 .

4...e6 5 Nc3 exd5

5... Nf6 6 e4 exd5 7 e5 was the subject of Games 59-61.

6 Wxd5 Wxd5 7 Qxd5 Qd6



8 Qd2 !

Obviously d5 is a good place for a knight, but with a black pawn on c5, the c4-square is also an excellent resting place.

8... Nc6

The old line 8... Qe7 9 Qxc4 Qxd5 10 Qxd6+ Qe7 11 Qxc8+ Kxc8 12 g3 Qb4 13 Qh3 ! Qd8 14 0-0 is considered by theory to be good for White. Provided that he

can prevent the tricky knights from causing any serious damage, his two bishops will dominate the endgame.

9 ♖xc4 ♙b8

Admittedly this looks a little odd, but Black wants to preserve his bishop and needs to prevent ♖c7+.

10 e4 ♖f6 11 ♙e3!?

11 ♖xf6+ isn't as good as one might think because Black's split pawns are quite adept at handling White's pawn majority, while Black has his own extra queenside pawn to console him.

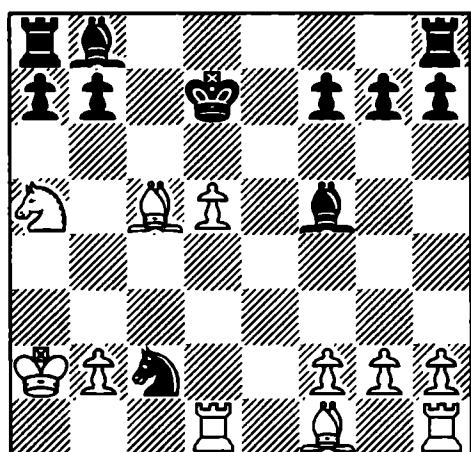
11...♖xd5

11...♖xe4? 12 f3 ♖d6 13 ♙xc5 ♙e6 14 0-0-0 ♖c8 15 g3!, intending 16 f4 and 17 ♙g2, leaves Black passively placed and White well in control of the proceedings.

12 exd5 ♖b4 13 0-0-0 ♖xa2+ 14 ♖b1 ♖b4 15 ♙xc5 ♙f5+ 16 ♖a1 ♖c2+ 17 ♖a2

White has negotiated Black's only active two pieces and now the knight looks to be out on a limb.

17...♖d7 18 ♖a5!



18...♙c7

Not 18...b6 because of 19 ♙b5+ ♖c8 20 ♙c6, while after 18...a6 simplest is 19 ♙d3 ♙xd3 20 ♖xd3 b6 21 ♖c1.

19 ♖xb7

In grabbing this pawn, White can be confident of riding the storm.

19...♖ab8 20 ♙a6 ♙b6 21 ♙a3 ♖xa3 22

♖xa3

Now Black has the advantage of the two bishops, but his king remains a liability.

22...♖hc8 23 ♖he1

The cautious 23 ♖d2! was more precise. Black now gets some counterplay, although it doesn't prove to be quite enough.

23...♙c5+ 24 b4 ♙d6 25 ♖xd6 ♖c3+ 26 ♖b2 ♖c2+ 27 ♖b3 ♖xd6 28 g4! ♙g6 29 f4

The bishop is now lost and Black must take as many pawns as he can. Unfortunately, as shall we soon see, one white pawn is enough to suffice for the win.

29...♖g2 30 f5 ♖xg4 31 fxg6 ♖gxb4+ 32 ♖c3 ♖b3+ 33 ♖d4 ♖3b4+ 34 ♙c4 ♖c8 35 ♖c1 hxg6 36 h3 a5 37 ♖d3 a4 38 ♙a2 ♖xc1 39 ♖xc1 ♖h4 40 ♖c6+ ♖e5 41 d6! ♖d4+

Alternatively 41...♖xh3+ 42 ♖c4 ♖h2 43 ♖c3 ♖h3+ 44 ♖b4 ♖d3 45 ♖c5 f5 46 ♖c7, utilising the check on e7, is also an easy win as the d-pawn is destined for promotion.

42 ♖c3 ♖xd6 43 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 44 ♙xf7

Black might have been forgiven for thinking that he had good drawing chances here. After all, White's bishop doesn't control the queening square of the h-pawn. Unfortunately, though, Black's g-pawns are going to prove seriously detrimental to his defence.

44...♖c5 45 ♙e8 a3 46 ♖b3 ♖d4 47 ♖xa3 ♖e5 48 ♖b3 ♖f6 49 ♖c4 ♖g5 50 ♖d5 ♖h6 51 ♖e6 ♖h7 52 ♖f7 ♖h8 53 ♖f8

see following diagram

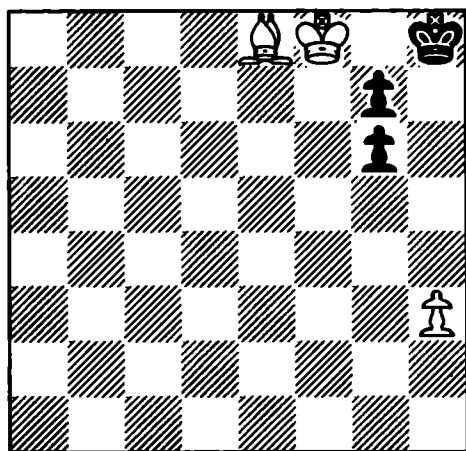
53...♖h7 54 ♙f7 ♖h8

The black king needs to stay around the queening square in order for him to have any chance to share the wares.

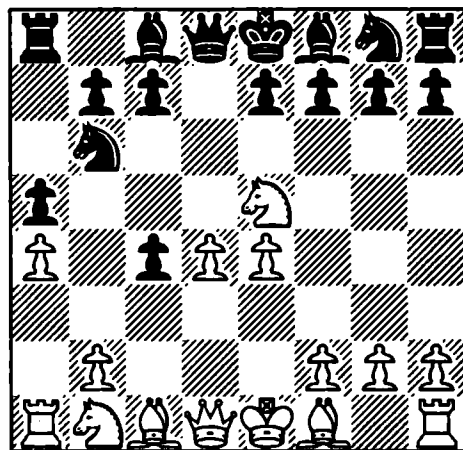
55 ♙g8! 1-0

This 'stalemating' idea forces Black

against his will to change White's h-pawn to a g-pawn, e.g. 55...g5 56 ♖e6 (note not 56 ♜f7? g4 57 hxg4 g5 58 ♜g6 ♜xg8 59 ♜xg5 ♜g7 when Black has the opposition) 56...♜h7 57 ♖f7 ♜h8 58 ♖g8 g6 59 ♖f7 ♜h7 60 ♖e6 ♜h8 61 ♖g8 g4 62 hxg4 g5 63 ♖e6.



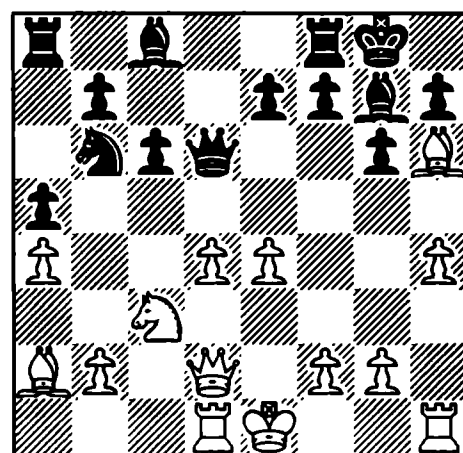
6 ♖e5!



6...♖f6 7 ♖c3 ♖fd7 8 ♖xc4 g6 9 ♖f4

At present it certainly looks as though the b5-square is of more use to White than the b4-square is to Black. The ...c7-c5 thrust has certainly been discouraged.

9...c6 10 ♜d2 ♖g7 11 ♖h6!? 0-0 12 ♜d1 ♖xc4 13 ♖xc4 ♖b6 14 ♖a2 ♜d6 15 h4!?



The natural follow-up to 15 ♖h6!? White has detected a lack of defenders around the enemy king and goes straight for the throat.

15...♖e6 16 ♖xe6 fxe6

Not a nice move to have to make, but Black obviously felt that he needed the introduction of a rook to avoid being bashed down the h-file.

17 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 18 h5 ♜f4 19 ♜xf4 ♜xf4 20 hxg6 hxg6 21 ♜e2

Game 75

Gavrikov-Gulko

USSR Ch., Frunze 1981

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖f3 ♖d7

In theory this is a nice idea. Without weakening his queenside, Black intends to try and hang on to his pawn. If White were forced to concede a bishop for a knight in order to regain the pawn, then Black can consider the whole episode to be a moral victory. Alas in practice this ...♖d7-b6 manoeuvre proves too time-consuming and White is able to round up the 'gambit' pawn with a knight.

4 e4!

Taking advantage of the fact that he has a free hand in the centre.

4...♖b6 5 a4!?

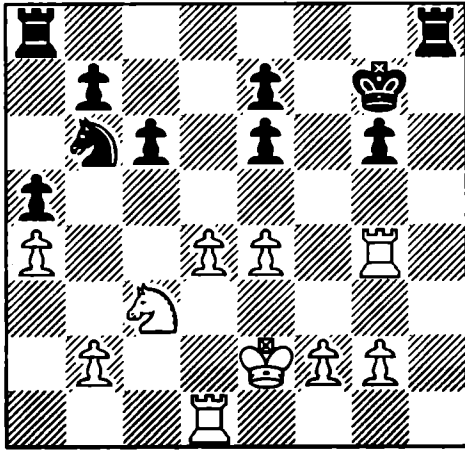
5 ♖e5 immediately should also be good, but White believes that the insertion of 5 a4 a5 will favour him.

5...a5

Forced or else after 6 a5, ...♖d7-b6 will have been to no avail.

Well, it won't be checkmate anymore, but now White's superior pawn structure is enough to see him through.

21...♞ff8 22 ♞h4 ♞h8 23 ♞g4



23...♞ad8 24 e5

Conceding the d5-square, but preparing a ♖e4-c5(or g5) manoeuvre that would highlight the weaknesses in Black's formation.

24...c5 25 ♖b5 ♞h5 26 ♖c7 ♔f7 27 ♖xe6 ♔xe6 28 ♞xg6+ ♔f7 29 ♞xb6 ♞xd4 30 ♞xd4 ♞xe5+ 31 ♔d3 cxd4 32 ♞b5 ♞e1

32...♞xb5 33 axb5 e5 34 f4 ♔e6 35 fxe5 ♔xe5 36 g4 is easily winning because the g-pawn deflects the black king away from the real action.

33 ♞xa5 e5 34 ♞b5 ♔e6 35 ♞xb7 ♞d1+ 36 ♔e2 ♞a1 37 ♞b4 ♔d5 38 f3 ♞g1 39 ♔f2 ♞c1 40 g4 ♞c2+ 41 ♔e1 e4 42 fxe4+ ♔xe4 43 ♞b8 ♔e3 44 ♞e8+ ♔d3 45 a5 ♞xb2 46 g5 ♞b1+ 47 ♔f2 ♞b7 48 g6 ♞g7 49 a6 ♔c2 50 ♔e1 ♔d3 51 ♞h8 ♞a7 52 ♞d8 ♞g7 53 ♔f2 ♔c2 54 a7 1-0

Game 76

Banikas-Rabinovich

Euro. Junior Ch., Tallinn 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 b5

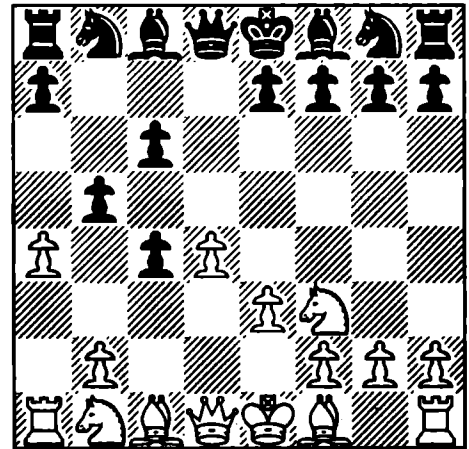
A few years ago, this move would usually have been given a '?'. However, if handled in the right way I believe that it is

just about playable. Black should not expect to keep his pawn, but rather should aim to create two connected passed pawns on the a- and b-files.

4 e3 c6

Strictly speaking this position should now be categorised as a Slav Defence.

5 a4



White should not waste any time in chiselling away at the black structure. Personally I don't believe that Black's strategy (played for greed or otherwise) should be successful unless White has already developed his queen's knight on c3.

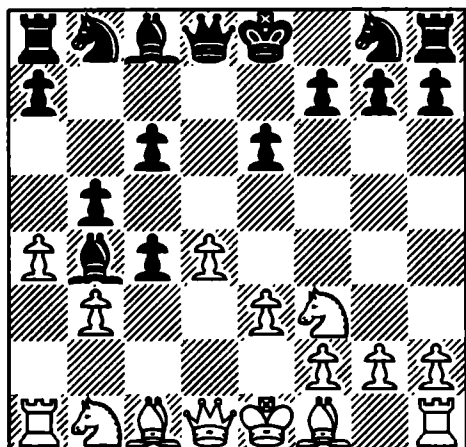
5...e6

Black cannot hope to hang on to the 'gambit' pawn, e.g. 5...a6 6 b3! cxb3 7 axb5 cxb5 8 ♙xb5+.

6 b3

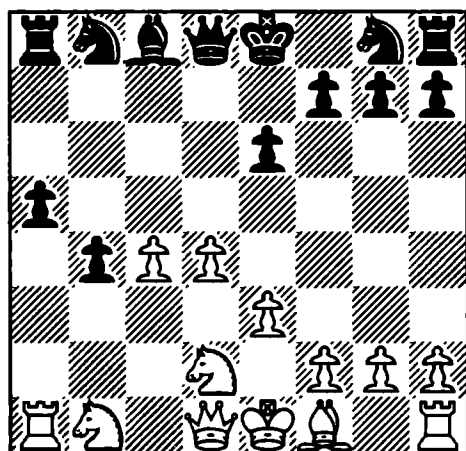
In my view Black gets a worse variation of the 'Noteboom variation' (1 d4 d5 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 e6 4 ♘f3 dxc4 5 e3 b5 6 a4 ♙b4 7 ♙d2 a5 8 axb5 ♙xc3 9 ♙xc3 cxb5 10 b3 ♙b7 11 bxc4 b4) after this move. Another textbook continuation for White is 6 axb5 cxb5 7 b3 ♙b4+ 8 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 9 ♘bxd2 a5 (of course not 9...c3? because of 10 ♙xb5+) 10 bxc4 b4 11 ♖e5! (an excellent move, eyeing up the c6-square, but incidentally threatening 12 ♘xf7! due to the queen check on f3) 11...♘f6 12 ♗a4+! (and an unrelenting follow-up, placing Black in a tangle) 12...♘fd7 13 c5 0-0 14 ♖ec4 and

White was in complete control in Miles-Hodgson, Hastings Premier 1995/96.
6...♖b4?!
♙xc4.



Put simply, Black's plan now seems to fail in an embarrassing manner. A better try would have been 6...b4, although White must still have a slight edge after 7 ♙xc4.

7 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 8 ♖fxd2 a5 9 axb5 cxb5 10 bxc4 b4



11 ♖f3!

Presumably the move that Black had missed. White now wins by a pawn by force, with a superior position to go with it.

11...♖a7 12 ♖g3

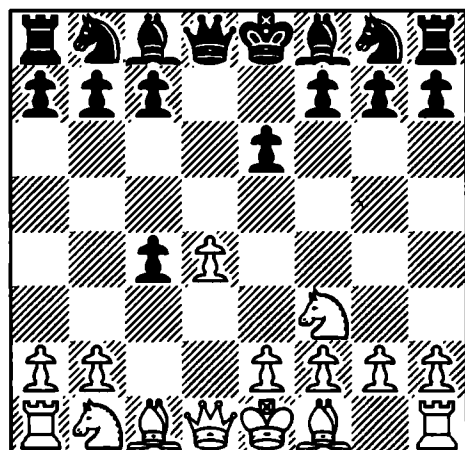
Forking the knight and pawn.
12...♖d7 13 ♖xg7 ♖f6 14 ♖g3 ♙b7 15 c5 ♙c6 16 ♖c4 a4 17 ♖d6 ♖e7 18 ♖e5 ♖f5 19 ♙d3 ♙xg2 20 c6 ♖xe5 21 ♖b8+

♖c8 22 ♙xf5 1-0

Game 77
Sosonko-Van der Sterren
Amsterdam 1996

1 d4 d5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 c4 dxc4

This position can be reached in several different ways, the most common probably being 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 dxc4. Assuming the pure QGA move order, 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖f3, it is here that the subtlety behind the outwardly passive 3...e6 can be observed. A player of the 3 ♖f3 ♖f6 4 ♖c3 system is now left in something of a quandary. It is illogical for him to transpose to a Classical variation (if he is not used to playing that) with 4 e3 ♖f6 and 4 ♖a4+ as usual offers nothing.



4 ♖c3

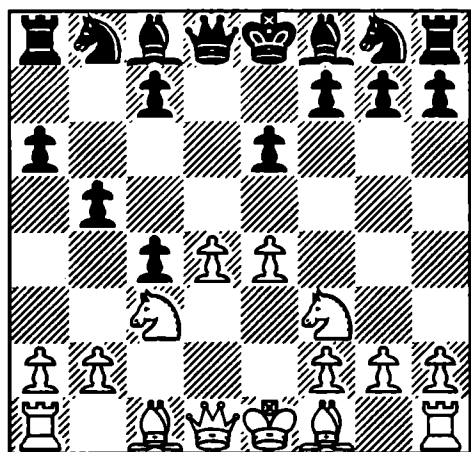
I would have to recommend 4 e4 (Games 78 and 79), as carrying on as usual like this doesn't seem to be the answer. Not for the first time we see the knight placed on a square where it is likely to be hassled by enemy pawns.

4...a6!? 5 e4

White could be more restrained with 5 a4, but then we'd see the usual treatment of 5...♖c6 6 e4 ♖a5! Now 7 ♖e5? wouldn't work because of 7...♖b3 and of course 7 ♖d2? would leave the d4-pawn en prise to the black queen. As a sort of in

between move, 5 ♗g5!? might be worth giving some thought to.

5...b5



Compared to Chapter 8, White doesn't have the tempo-gaining e4-e5 push, attacking a knight on f6 and paving the way for aggressive ideas such as ♗g5.

6 a4

If Black is allowed to consolidate with moves like ...♗b7 and ...♗f6, then White will never get his pawn back and will be left with little or no compensation.

6...b4 7 ♗e2 c5!

Pressurising the white centre before he has time to settle.

8 d5 exd5 9 ♗f4

A good practical attempt to try and take advantage of Black's lack of development. However, Black is not obliged to take up the challenge with 9...d4?!

9...♗e7 10 exd5 ♗g6 11 ♗xc4 ♗d6

The d-pawn is well blockaded and White would rather have a knight on c4 than a bishop.

12 ♗xg6 hxg6 13 0-0 ♗d7 14 ♗e2+ ♗f8

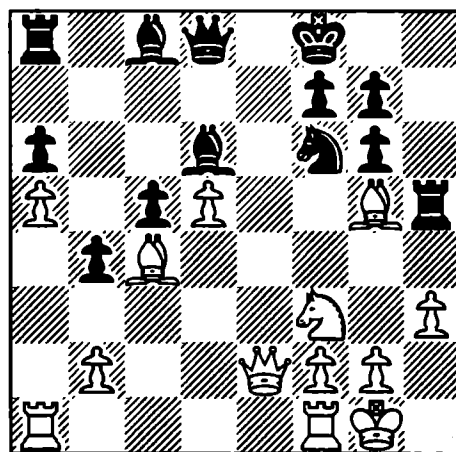
With a perfectly good file for his rook on h8, there was no need for Black to castle anyway.

15 h3 ♗h5 16 a5

Generally a useful move, here this prevents ...♗b6 and fixes the a6-pawn. However, while Black can and indeed does use another perfectly valid way to attack the

d5-pawn, in all fairness he's probably not in a desperate hurry to capture it anyhow.

16...♗f6 17 ♗g5



17...♗xh3! 18 ♗h4

Black's last move must have come as a bolt out of the blue. In fact it was a perfectly sound sacrifice as 18 gxf3 ♗d7 19 h4 ♗g4+ 20 ♗h1 ♗h3+ 21 ♗g1 ♗g4 would have led to an overwhelming attack, e.g. 22 ♗ae1 ♗h2+ 23 ♗h1 ♗f4+ 24 ♗g1 ♗e5.

18...♗d7 19 ♗g3

Unfortunately not helping matters.

19...♗xg2! 20 ♗xd6+

Effectively this is nothing more than a spite check, as the devastating ...♗h3 is inevitable.

20...♗g8 0-1

Game 78

S.Ivanov-Rublevsky

Russian Ch. (rapidplay) 1997

1 d4 d5 2 ♗f3 e6 3 c4 dxc4 4 e4 b5 5 a4 c6

This is more justified here than in Game 77. With the pawn on e3, White had no worries about his centre and could concentrate his efforts on cracking Black's queenside. Although 4 e4 was energetic, there are obviously going to be times when this pawn is vulnerable. Note, however, that 5...♗b7 6 axb5 ♗xe4 7 ♗xc4

compares unfavourably with the main game as Black has a weak c-pawn too. The temporary inconvenience caused to the white king after 7...♙xb1 8 ♖xb1 ♙b4+ would be scant reward for the concession of the bishop pair.

6 axb5

The immediate 6 b3 is the subject of the next main game.

6...cxb5 7 b3 ♙b7

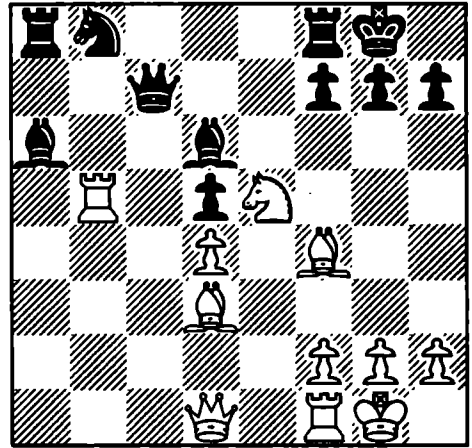
7...♙b4+ 8 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ is the most recent try. Now 9 ♖xd2?! is not as good as in the next game because Black has 9...♙b7 (i.e. this time attacking e4 as there is no pawn on c6). By the same logic White can play 9 ♖bxd2, because after 9...c3? the b5-pawn would drop with check. However, 9...♖c6!? then pressurises the d4-pawn, when White is in need of some inspiration because 10 bxc4 ♖xd4 11 cxb5 ♖e7 looks fairly equal.

8 bxc4 ♙xe4

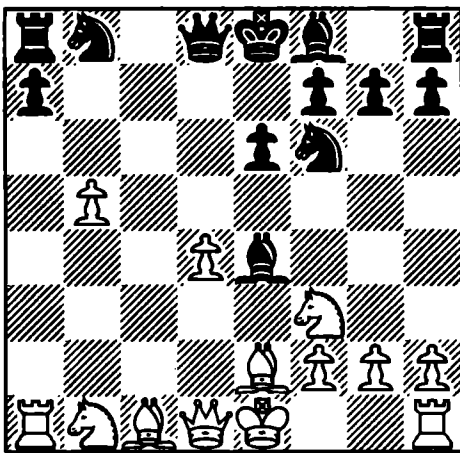
If 8...bxc4 9 ♙xc4 ♙xe4 then 10 ♖e5!? with a dangerous initiative.

9 cxb5 ♖f6 10 ♙e2

16 ♖b1! ♖b6 17 ♙e2! (preparing a change of diagonal for the bishop in the direction of the black king) 17...axb5 18 ♖xb5 ♖c7 19 ♙f4 ♙d6 20 ♙d3 ♙a6

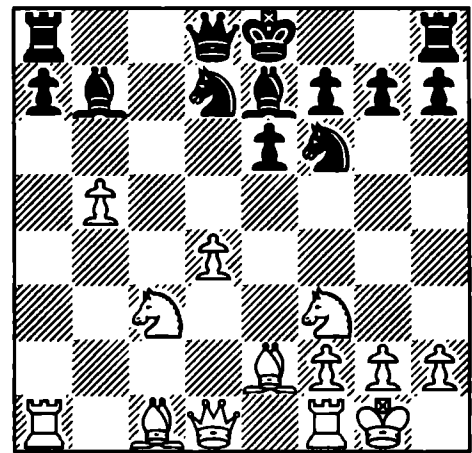


21 ♙xh7+! ♖xh7 22 ♖h5+ ♖g8 23 ♖b3 ♙xe5? (23...f6 would at least have put up a better fight) 24 ♖h3 f6 25 dxe5 ♖e7 26 ♖h7+ ♖f7 27 ♖g3 ♖e8 28 ♖xg7 ♖e6 29 exf6 ♖c6 30 ♖a1 ♖d8 31 h4 ♙b7 32 ♖c1 ♙a6 33 ♖a1 ♙b7 34 ♖d1 ♙a6 35 ♖b1 ♖xf6 36 ♙g5 1-0.
11 0-0 ♙e7 12 ♖c3 ♙b7



10...♖bd7!?

It's easy to see why Black didn't want to follow the now legendary game Anand-Karpov, Las Palmas 1996: 10...♙e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖c3 ♙b7 13 ♖e5 a6 14 ♙f3 (14...♖b6!? would at least have avoided the isolated d-pawn situation that Black soon finds himself in) 14...♖d5 15 ♖xd5 exd5



White's b5-pawn seriously restricts the a7-pawn, but there is always the chance that the isolated d-pawn (which is often so good as an attacking springboard) could be a problem for White.

13 ♖e5 ♖xe5 14 dxe5 ♖d7

The e5-pawn offers White a space advantage on the kingside, but it is also a

target.

15 ♖f4 0-0 16 ♖f3 ♜c7 17 ♜c1 ♖a3!?

This encourages a response that is pleasing to the eye, but in reality achieves little.

18 ♘d5 ♜d8 19 ♜a1 ♖b2 20 ♘f6+ ♘xf6
21 ♖xb7 ♖xa1 22 ♖xa8 ♜xa8 23 ♜xa1
♘d5

The liquidation is over and the dust has settled. Black has a great knight on d5, but the bishop always has potential in an end-game with pawns on both wings. The a7-pawn remains weak, but to gain any advantage White needs to keep his b-pawn.

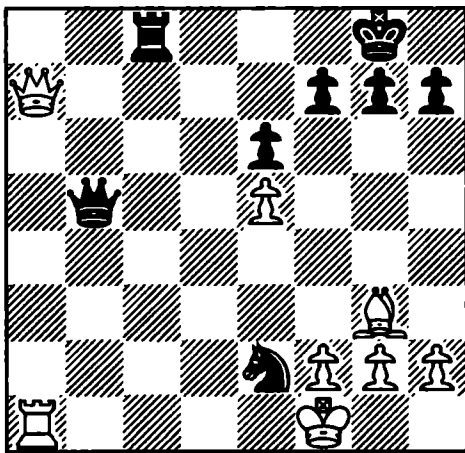
24 ♜d4 ♜b7 25 ♖g3

Effectively writing off the b-pawn, though in fact there was no real way to retain winning chances. Perhaps White still shouldn't really lose, but his position is now quite uncomfortable.

25...♜c8 26 ♜a1 ♘c3 27 ♜xa7 ♘e2+ 28 ♜f1

Prompting the reminder that queen and knight are the most deadly attacking force. White must venture into the open as 28 ♜h1?? ♜xa7 29 ♜xa7 ♜c1 is mate.

28...♜xb5



29 ♜e1 ♘c1

Black doesn't hang around with 29...♘g3 30 hxg3 ♜xe5+. In that case White should probably be able to cling on for the draw, as he is so compact.

30 ♜e3?

Surprisingly there is no clear win after

30 ♜a6 ♘d3+ 31 ♖d2 ♜b2+ 32 ♜e3.

30...♜b2 31 ♜a3 ♘b3! 0-1

32...♜c1+ is threatened and after 32 ♜xb3, the rook would drop with check too.

Game 79

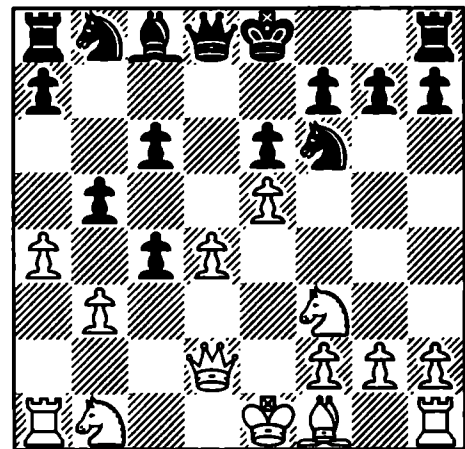
Davies-Hartman

Osterskars open 1995

1 c4 e6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 d4 dxc4 4 e4 b5 5 a4 c6 6 b3 ♖b4+

I guess that the immediate 6...♘f6 is playable, but White should be a little better after both 6 bxc4 and 6 e5 ♘e4 7 bxc4.

7 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 8 ♜xd2 ♘f6 9 e5



9...♘d5?

The d5-outpost is invariably a reasonable square for a knight. However, in the absence of the dark-squared bishops, there are numerous holes in the black camp which White is ready to exploit. Black had to enter the complications of 9...♘e4!? 10 ♜c2 ♜a5+, when he at least would have given his opponent something to think about.

10 bxc4 bxc4 11 ♖xc4 a5 12 0-0 ♖a6

This exchange of his bad bishop helps Black, but it is far from being the end of his problems.

13 ♜c1 ♖xc4 14 ♜xc4 0-0 15 ♜c1 ♜a7
16 ♘a3 ♜b7 17 ♘c4 ♘b4 18 ♘d6

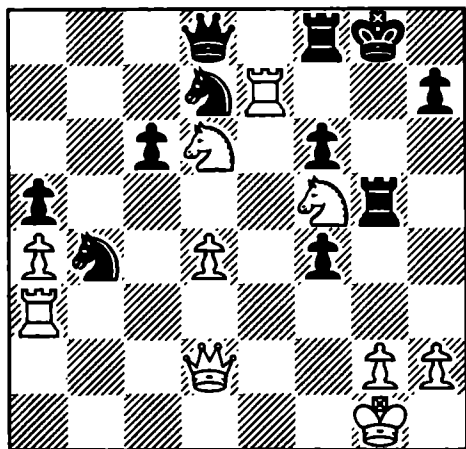
That was one of the holes I was talking

about!

18...♖c7 19 ♖a3 f6 20 ♘c4 ♗d7 21 exf6
gxf6 22 ♖e1 e5 23 ♘h4 ♖g7

In view of the game continuation, Black would have been better off chancing his arm with 23...♗xd4 24 ♖g3+ ♕f7, but not 24...♕h8? 25 ♘g6+!

24 ♘f5 ♖g5 25 ♘cd6 ♘d7 26 f4 exf4 27 ♖e7



27...♖g6 28 ♖h3 1-0

Game 80

Richardson-Hartman

Isle of Man 1996

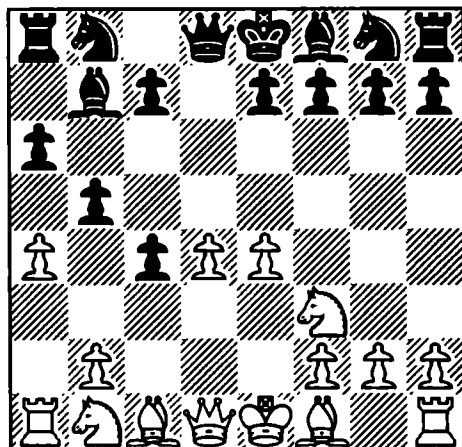
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 a6 4 e4

And here we go again. White's centre versus Black's queenside majority. Yes, Black will try to cling on to his pawn like a man possessed, but at least here White's queen's knight isn't in the firing line, as it was in Game 77.

4 e3 is seen in Games 81 and 82, while in what transpires to be a totally independent line, the game Nill-Regan, England-Germany women's match, Dresden 1998, saw 4 a4 ♘f6 5 e3 ♖g4 6 ♖xc4 e6 7 ♘bd2 (the knight looks misplaced here) 7...♘bd7 8 h3 ♖h5 9 0-0 c5 10 ♗b3 ♗c7 11 ♘e5 ♗d8 12 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 13 ♖e1 cxd4 14 exd4 ♗xd4 15 ♖xe6 fxe6 16 ♗xe6+ ♖e7 with clearly inadequate compensation for the piece. Black fared well here, but as

usual I would have been tempted by 4...♘c6!? (intending ...♘a5).

4...b5 5 a4 ♖b7



6 axb5

The main alternative (which leads to equally complex positions) is 6 ♘c3. I'll use a game of our favourite QGA expert to illustrate this: 6...b4 (hunkering down with 6...c6 might not be everyone's cup of tea, but it's still up to White to prove that he can make something of his initiative; it certainly doesn't look as if he'll ever regain his pawn!) 7 ♖xc4 e6 (not 7...bxc3? because of 8 ♗b3, threatening the b7-bishop and mate in two) 8 ♗b3 ♘c6 (8...♘d7 9 ♘g5!? with tricks on f7 and e6 also looks good for a laugh!) 9 a5 ♘xd4! 10 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 11 ♖e3 ♗d7 12 f3! ♖d6 13 ♘a4!? (it is more convincing to head for c5 than to play 13 ♘e2 ♘f6 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♗fd1 ♗e7 when White doesn't have very much for the pawn) 13...♗e7 14 e5! ♖xe5 15 ♘c5 with an unclear position, which was eventually converted into the full point by Black in Pedersen-Sadler, Cannes open 1995.

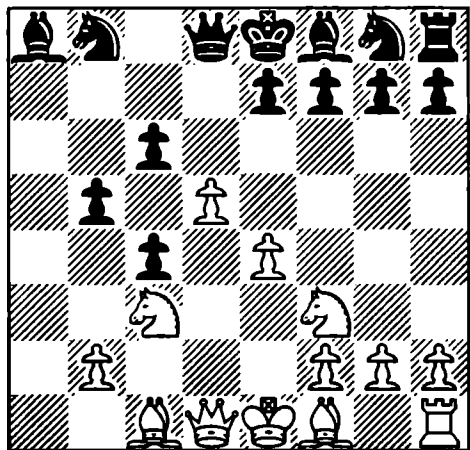
6...axb5 7 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 8 ♘c3 c6

8...b4? would be a mistake in view of 9 ♗a4+, but 8...e6!? 9 ♘xb5 (9 ♖g5!? might be worth a go) 9...♖xe4 10 ♖xc4 ♖b4+ certainly looks playable.

9 d5!?

An enterprising alternative to the pre-

viously tried 9 ♖e2 and 9 ♖g5.



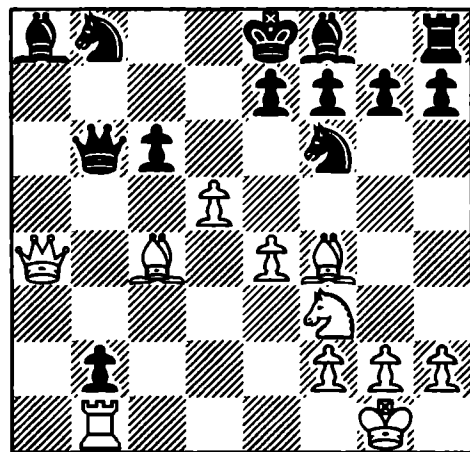
9...♘f6 10 ♖f4 b4 11 ♗a4!

Forgetting for the moment the fact that White has just left a knight en prise, this is an excellent square for the queen. Sure it attacks the bishop on a8, but it also pins the c6-pawn and prevents the black queen from venturing out to a5.

11...bxc3 12 ♖xc4!?

White must be prepared to crack a few eggs to make an omelette. Castling is a priority and then White can set about the enemy king with what is left (still a reasonably impressive amount) of his army.

12...cxb2 13 0-0 ♗b6 14 ♖b1



Despite his extra piece and the pawn on the seventh rank, I believe that Black is already in deep trouble here. White won't ignore the a8-bishop forever and Black is seriously lagging behind in kingside devel-

opment.

14...♗xe4

After the grovelly 14...♗b7, just one horrible fate awaiting Black is 15 ♖xb8 ♗xb8 16 dxc6 ♗c8 17 c7+ ♘d7 18 ♖b5 ♖b7 19 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 20 ♖d1 ♗xa4 21 ♖d8 mate.

15 ♗xa8 ♗xf2+

Unfortunately this isn't checkmate and a backlash is imminent.

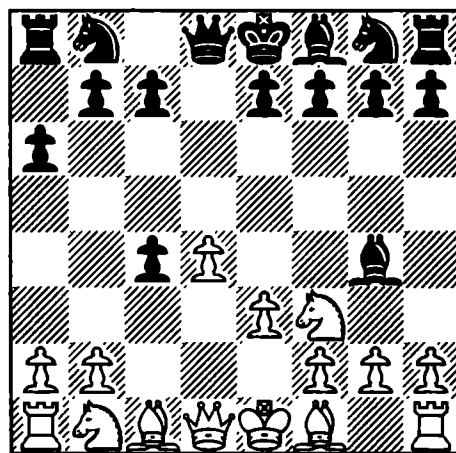
16 ♖h1 ♗b6 17 ♗xb8+ ♗xb8 18 ♖xb8 cxd5 19 ♖xd5 ♘d6 20 ♖xd6

The excitement is over and now it's time to move on to more mundane matters...

20...exd6 21 ♖xb2 f5 22 ♘g5 h6 23 ♘f7 ♖h7 24 ♖b7 ♖e7 25 ♖e6 g6 26 ♘xd6+ ♖f8 27 ♖b8+ ♖g7 28 ♘e8+ 1-0

Game 81
Karpov-Pyhala
Helsinki (simultaneous) 1996

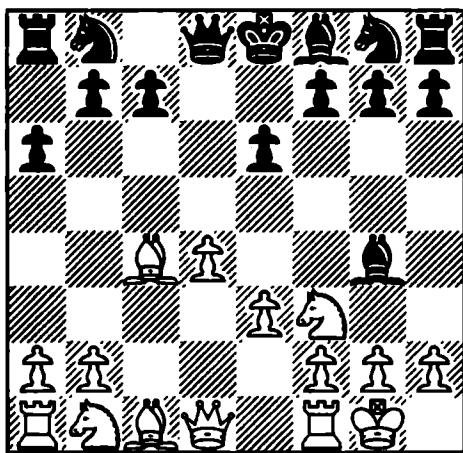
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 a6 4 e3 ♖g4



In the 'Alekhine variation' Black is effectively trading ...♘f6 for ...a7-a6, compared to the more common 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 e3 ♖g4. With the way that theory changes over time, I can see how this idea might once have held a certain appeal. However, having studied the available evidence, I must conclude that as things stand at present, the concept is mis-

guided. The first obvious point is that this move order side-steps the 'Mannheim variation' 4 ♖a4+, covered in Chapter 9, although that really isn't anything for Black to be afraid of. Secondly, one could argue that after the forthcoming 5 ♙xc4 e6, Black can always meet ♜b3 (now or later) with ...b7-b5 (i.e. protecting the b-pawn by expanding) or even ...♞a7 (very odd looking, but currently a popular idea in some variations of the Slav Defence). However, this is all based on the premise that in the main 4...♙g4 line (i.e. with ...♟f6 rather than ...a7-a6), 5 ♙xc4 e6 6 ♜b3 is dangerous, but we saw in Chapter 7 that this is not the case. In my view, Black should be more concerned about how irrelevant his ...a7-a6 may be made to look. It fits in okay in this encounter, but the next game (5 ♙xc4 e6 6 ♟c3) proves to be more of a test.

5 ♙xc4 e6 6 0-0

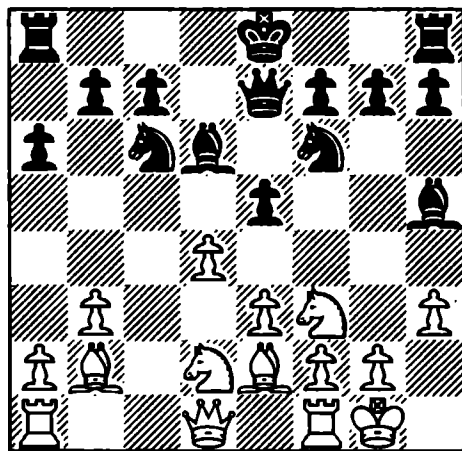


With reference to my previous comments, it should be noted that 6 ♜b3 must be met by 6...♙xf3 7 gxf3 b5 (or the non-weakening 7...♞a7, as pioneered by Alekhine) because the immediate 6...b5?! is punished by 7 ♟e5! A logical attempt is to try and open things up with 6 d5, but this can be neutralised by 6...♟f6 7 dxe6!? ♜xd1+ 8 ♟xd1 ♙xe6 9 ♙xe6 fxe6, when the isolated e-pawn isn't the end of the world for Black.

6...♟c6

Black is angling for an ...e6-e5 break, highlighting the usefulness of ...a7-a6 in stopping an annoying pin with ♙b5. For the time being at least ...c7-c5 is eschewed, but the text move does have the advantage of preventing any ideas of 7 h3 ♙h5 8 g4 ♙g6 9 ♟e5 (see the next game).

7 h3 ♙h5 8 ♙e2 ♙d6 9 b3 ♜e7 10 ♙b2 ♟f6 11 ♟bd2 e5



12 ♟c4

The combinational 12 ♟xe5 ♙xe2 13 ♟xc6?! (13 ♜xe2 ♟xe5 14 dxe5 ♙xe5 15 ♙xe5 ♜xe5 is pretty equal) 13...♙xd1 14 ♟xe7 ♙e2 15 ♞fe1 fails because after 15...♙d3, the knight is stranded behind enemy lines.

12...e4 13 ♟fe5 ♙xe2 14 ♜xe2 ♟b4 15 ♙a3 ♟bd5 16 ♟xd6+ cxd6 17 ♟c4 ♞d8 18 ♞ac1 0-0

Provided that he can avoid losing his d6-pawn, Black should be all right as he has an excellent knight on d5.

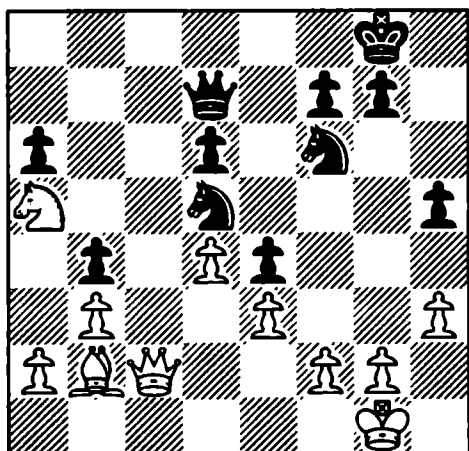
19 ♟a5 ♞c8 20 ♜d2 ♞fd8 21 ♞xc8

21 ♙xd6 ♜xd6 22 ♟xb7 ♜b6 23 ♟xd8 ♞xd8, obtaining a rook and two pawns for the two knights, is risky as any attack on the king could prove difficult to negotiate.

21...♞xc8 22 ♞c1 ♞d8 23 ♜d1

I know it was just a simultaneous, but with Karpov's fantastic judgement and understanding, if he couldn't make anything of this position, who could?

23...h5 24 ♖c2 ♜d7 25 ♘c4 b5 26 ♘a5
b4 27 ♙b2 ♖c8 28 ♜c1 ♖xc2 29 ♜xc2



29...♜c7 30 ♜xc7 ♘xc7 31 ♘c6 ♘fd5
32 a3 bxa3 33 ♙xa3 ♘b5 34 ♙c1 f5 35
♙d2 ♜f7 36 ♜f1 ♜e6 37 ♜e2 g5 38 f3
g4 39 fxe4 fxe4 40 hgx4 hgx4 41 ♜f2
♜f5 42 ♘b8 ♘bc7 43 ♙a5 ♜g5 44 ♜e2
g3 ½-½

Game 82
Delchev-Ninov
Bulgarian Championship 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 a6 4 e3 ♙g4 5
♙xc4

Before I start discussing possible subtle improvements, first take a look at the main game. Indeed I would advise you to play through it before returning to the following line: 5 h3 ♙h5 (after 5...♙xf3 6 ♜xf3, Black's b-pawn is pinned and White will regain the c4-pawn and have the two bishops advantage free of charge) 6 g4!? ♙g6 7 ♘e5!

The deviousness behind this whole idea can now be disclosed. White has secured his knight on e5, but more importantly, he is yet to commit his light-squared bishop. Sure it was fine on c4, but after 7...e6 (and not 7...b5? 8 ♙g2 ♖a7 9 ♘c6) 8 ♙g2 c6 9 ♘d2 we see how good it is at pressurising Black's queenside. The recapture of the 'gambit' pawn has been left to

a knight, which will no doubt be more than comfortable on c4. What's more, the hole on b6 caused by Black's early ...a7-a6 may prove to be a factor.

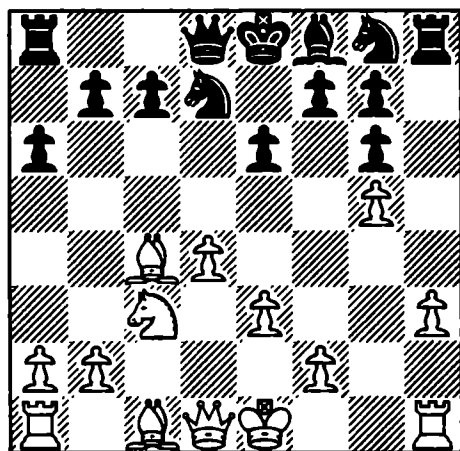
5...e6 6 ♘c3 ♘f6 7 h3 ♙h5 8 g4 ♙g6 9 ♘e5!

The reasoning behind the aggressive 8 g4 was to unpin this knight, but the g-pawn will also have another use. Such kingside expansion could prove weakening, but in this particular variation it usually tends to hit the mark.

9...♘bd7 10 ♘xg6 hgx6 11 g5

Though hardly forced, this sends the knight home as it wouldn't have had any future on h5.

11...♘g8



12 e4

White could also happily settle for the more modest 12 ♜f3, intending ♙d2 and 0-0-0.

12...♘b6 13 ♙b3

White has the two bishops and both a space and development advantage. Black will eventually need to challenge White's centre (since putting up the shutters with 13...c6 leaves the king's knight with nowhere to go), but as we shall see, he sorely misses his light-squared bishop.

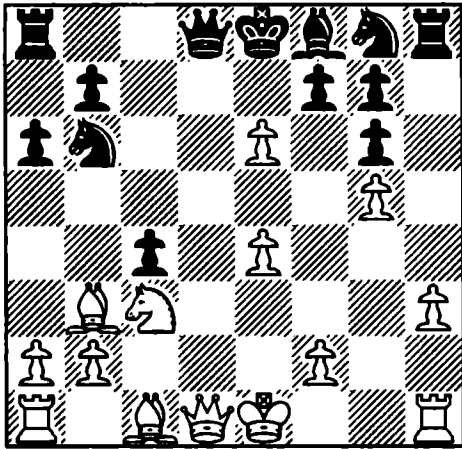
13...c5 14 d5

Naturally 14 ♙e3 would have left White with a simple plus.

14...c4

It looks natural to lock out the bishop, but in fact the best chance was (the undeserved) 14...exd5 15 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 16 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 17 ♕xd5 ♜e7! If there is one thing that is consistently in Black's favour in these type of positions, it is the vulnerability of the white h-pawn.

15 dxe6!



15...♗xd1+

Or 15...cxb3 16 exf7+ ♜xf7 (not 16...♜e7? because of 17 fxc8♜+!) 17 ♗xb3+ ♜e8 18 ♕e3 ♜d7 19 ♗d1 when White has excellent compensation (and some pawns) for the piece.

16 ♕xd1 fxe6

Now the black kingside is a mess and White's technique is more than up to exploiting this.

17 ♕g4

White is basically winning now.

17...♜f7 18 ♕e3 ♜d7 19 0-0-0 ♜e5 20

♕e2 ♜c8 21 ♕f4 ♜d3+ 22 ♕xd3 cxd3 23 ♗xd3 ♗h4 24 ♗f3 ♜e8 25 ♜b1 ♕b4 26 ♜e2 e5 27 ♕xe5 ♗xe4 28 ♗e3 ♗xe3 29 fxe3 ♜e7 30 ♕xg7 ♜f5 31 ♕c3 ♕e7 32 h4 ♜xe3 33 ♜f4 ♜c6 34 ♗e1 ♜f5 35 h5 gxh5 36 ♗e5 ♜g7 37 ♕b4 ♜e6 38 ♜xe6 ♕xb4 39 ♜d4+ ♜f7 40 ♜xc6 bxc6 41 ♜c2 ♜g6 42 ♜d3 ♕f8 43 ♗e6+ ♜xg5 44 ♗xc6 a5 45 ♗a6 h4 46 ♗xa5+ ♜g4 47 ♗a8 ♕e7 48 ♜e2 h3 49 ♜f1 ♕c5 50 ♗c8 ♕a7 51 ♗c3 1-0

And so on to some suggestions for earlier: If he is unhappy with the ...♜c6 plan of the last game, then Black should at least give priority to 6...♜d7!? This cuts out White's plan of getting a knight quickly to e5 and after 7 e4 c5 8 d5, Black can satisfactorily 'shut up shop' with 8...e5. With or without h2-h3 ♕h5 thrown in, Black can blockade on d6 and eventually angle for a ...b7-b5 or ...f7-f5 break. Instead of the text, White could try to intercept the above with 6 h3 ♕h5 7 g4 ♕g6 8 ♜e5, but at least Black doesn't waste time with his g8-knight (i.e. only to be forced back) and in this particular instance the e4-square is available to Black's bishop.

With all things considered, I would suggest that the most dangerous sequence for Black to face is the variation on move five that I told you to skip earlier. I fear that it comes close to being a refutation, but by all means return to the notes to 5 ♕xc4 to make your own judgement.

Summary

Of these third move alternatives, 3...e6 is probably the most testing, although Black still has to reckon with 4 e4 (Games 78 and 79).

Although 3...a6 has been played by several strong players, it's not really satisfactory. As far as the 'Borisenko-Furman variation' goes, John Richardson's visual Game 80 is of much theoretical importance. Game 82 also demonstrates that the 'Alekhine variation' compares unfavourably to 3... $\text{d}f6$ 4 $\text{g}4$ 5 $\text{xc}4$ $\text{g}4$. It's just not worth expending a tempo on ...a7-a6.

3... $\text{d}d7$ and 3...c5 have generally not been successful, while the brashest attempt to refute the QGA with 3...b5 looks distinctly ropy!

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 $\text{d}f3$

3...e6

3...c5 – Game 74

3... $\text{d}d7$ – Game 75

3...b5 – Game 76

3...a6 (D)

4 e4 – Game 80

4 e3 $\text{g}4$ 5 $\text{xc}4$ e6 (D)

6 0-0 – Game 81

6 $\text{c}c3$ – Game 82

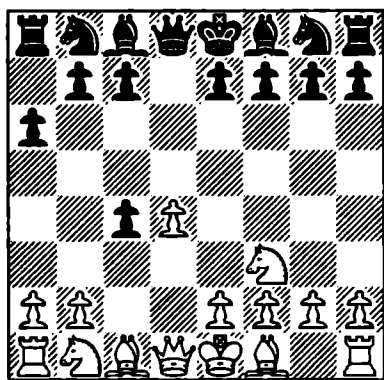
4 e4

4 $\text{c}c3$ – Game 77

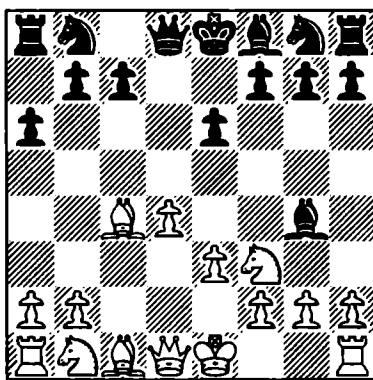
4...b5 5 a4 c6 (D) 6 axb5

6 b3 – Game 79

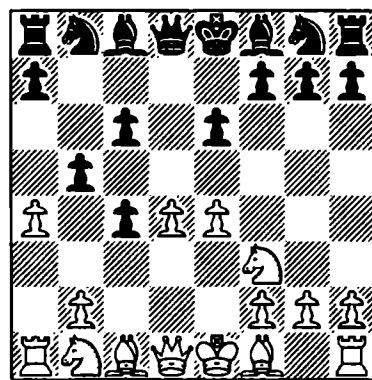
6...cxb5 – Game 78



3...a6

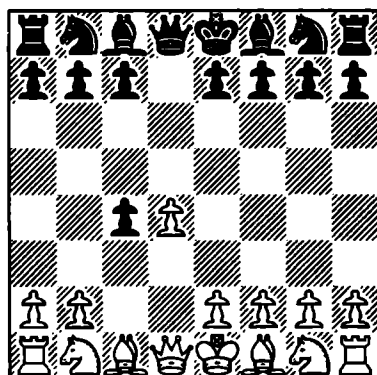


5...e6



5...c6

CHAPTER ELEVEN



3 ♘c3 and 3 e3

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4

This chapter encompasses two sort of 'in-between' sidelines. You will soon read why I'm not too impressed with 3 ♘c3 (Games 83 and 84) and the fact that it is played so rarely by strong players, seems to reinforce my views. On the other hand 3 e3 (Games 85-90) is an entirely different kettle of fish. I used to wonder why White would play such a move when it only seemed to provide Black with more options. Now I'm of the opinion that none of those options are particularly appetising and that Black is actually being railroaded into a Classical variation. In contrast then in reality it's as if White is reducing his opponent's options. The line 3 e3 e5 (Games 86-88) leads to less traditional IQP situations (i.e. with an open e-file), but it seems to me that these would be very attractive to the aggressive White player.

Game 83

T. Olafsson-Westerinen

Reykjavik open 1998

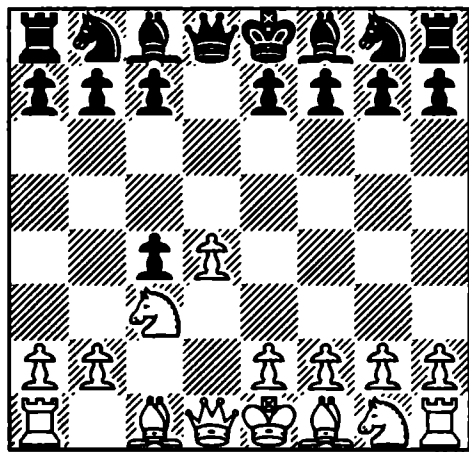
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘c3

After the mirror-image 1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 (the King's Gambit), White doesn't of course hesitate to play 3 ♘f3. However,

there it is required to prevent 3... ♖h4+ and White isn't afraid of an advance of the black kingside pawns to try and protect the one on f4, because that would weaken the enemy king position (in favour of White's developing pieces). In the QGA with 3 ♘c3 it's true that the knight on c3 temporarily stops ...b7-b5, but on the other hand, should Black succeed in supporting his c4-pawn, then this queen's knight could easily get in the way.

It seems to me that probably the best White can hope for after 3 ♘c3 is a transposition into other variations. For starters after 3...c6, switching to a Slav Defence, White has effectively been committed to 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 dxc4. At the time of writing, 3 ♘f3 is the most popular way to meet the Slav as 3 ♘c3 dxc4 is proving to be a little awkward for White. The point is that after 4 e4 b5, Black can gain a tempo on the c3-knight with ...b5-b4 whenever White strikes out with the undermining attempt a2-a4. Okay, so that's not the end of the world, but Black has other options too. For example, after 3...♘c6, White has been forced into 1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 dxc4 variation of the Chigorin Defence, whereas most top players prefer either 3 cxd5 or 3 ♘f3. Finally

it's difficult to see what White has achieved after 3...♘f6. Well, I suppose he could give 4 ♖g5! a whirl, but otherwise 4 e3 is likely to become a Classical variation, 4 ♘f3 returns to the realms of the Chapter 8 and 4 e4 e5 would only lead to one of the more dull lines of Chapter 4 after say 5 ♘f3 (if you recall, not 5 d5?! b5) 5...exd4 6 ♗xd4. Furthermore, if Black isn't happy with 4 e4 e5 he can always play 4...e6 (see the next main game).



3...a6!

For a long time in the history of this opening, 3...e5 was considered to be the perfect antidote to 3 ♘c3, but nowadays this cannot be recommended. True, the trade of queens with 4 dxe5 ♗xd1+ is fine for Black, as is 4 d5 c6 (or again 4...♘f6 5 e4 b5!?). The problem is the straightforward 4 e3, which in all likelihood would transpose to the undesirable (for Black) 3 e3 e5 variation. On the other hand, I am quite fond of the logical text move.

4 a4

I would say that this is a bit of a wimp's move, but the aggressive 4 e4?! just doesn't seem to be good after 4...b5 5 a4 b4 6 ♘a2 ♖b7 7 f3 ♘c6! 8 d5 (or 8 ♖e3 e5, intending 9 d5 ♘a5) 8...♘a5 9 ♖d2 (9 ♘xb4 e6 sees the b4-knight struggling, the b3-square ripe for invasion and White's centre under fire) 9...e6! 10 dxe6 fxe6 11 ♖xb4 ♖xb4+ 12 ♘xb4 ♗h4+!? 13 g3 ♗e7. De-

spite his funny pawns, the advantage was still with Black in Alterman-Bykhovskiy, Israel 1994.

If White really wants to play the position after 3 ♘c3 a6, attempting to dissuade ...b7-b5 with a 'Catalan' style 4 g3! is about all I could suggest, but then it's debatable whether the queen's knight is misplaced on c3.

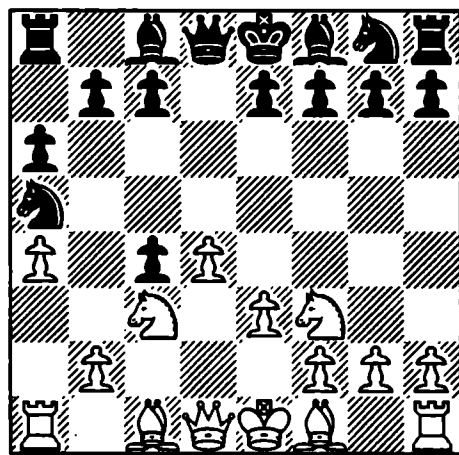
4...♘c6!

We have already seen how effective this move can be when White has weakened the b4- and b3-squares. I like this move order, but equally successful was 4...♘f6 5 e4 ♘c6 6 ♖e3 e5 7 d5 ♘a5 8 ♗c2 ♖d6 9 ♖e2 0-0 10 ♘f3 ♖d7 11 ♘d2 b5 12 axb5 axb5 13 0-0 ♗b8 14 b3 b4 15 ♘a4 c3 16 ♘c4 ♘xc4 17 ♖xc4 ♘g4 18 ♖c1 f5 19 h3 ♘h6 20 ♖xh6 gxh6 21 ♗fe1 ♗d8 22 f4 ♖xa4 23 bxa4 ♗f6 24 exf5 exf4 25 ♖d3 ♗d4+ 26 ♔h1 b3, as played in Maite-Lovlu, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

5 e3 ♘a5

The point. Black won't let his opponent regain his pawn without a fight.

6 ♘f3



6...♖g4!

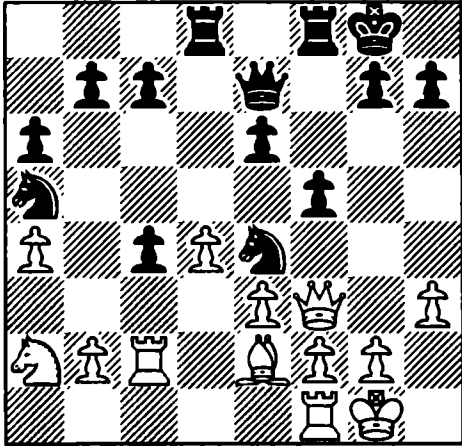
Again the right move. By pinning the knight, Black prevents a ♘e5(or d2)xc4 manoeuvre.

7 ♖d2

Also much better for Black was 7 ♖e2 ♖xf3 8 ♖xf3 e6 9 0-0 ♘f6 10 ♖d2 ♖b4 11

♘e4 ♙xd2 12 ♘xf6+ gxf6 13 ♚xd2 ♘b3
14 ♚b4 ♚d6 15 ♚xd6 cxd6 16 ♙xb7 ♖a7
17 ♙c6+ ♚e7 18 ♖a3 d5, as in Bilam-
Reefat, Calcutta 1998.

7...e6 8 h3 ♙xf3 9 ♚xf3 ♙b4 10 ♘e4
♚e7 11 ♙e2 f5 12 ♘c3 ♘f6 13 0-0 0-0
14 ♖ad1 ♖ad8 15 ♘a2 ♙xd2 16 ♖xd2
♘e4 17 ♖c2



17...b5

This move, consolidating the extra pawn, seems more practical than going for another one with 17...♚e8. The further course of the game proves this to be good judgement.

18 axb5 axb5 19 ♚f4 c5 20 f3 cxd4 21
fxe4 d3 22 ♙xd3 cxd3 23 ♖c7 ♚d6 24
♚xd6 ♖xd6 25 exf5 ♘c4 26 ♘c3 ♘xe3
27 ♖a1 exf5 28 ♚f2 f4 29 ♘xb5 ♖b6 30
♖aa7 ♖g6 31 g4 d2 32 ♘c3 d1♚ 33
♘xd1 ♘xd1+ 34 ♚f3 ♘xb2 35 ♖c3 ♘d1
36 ♖d3 ♘e3 37 ♖dd7 ♘c4 38 ♖d4 ♘e5+
39 ♚f2 f3 40 ♖d5 ♖e6 0-1

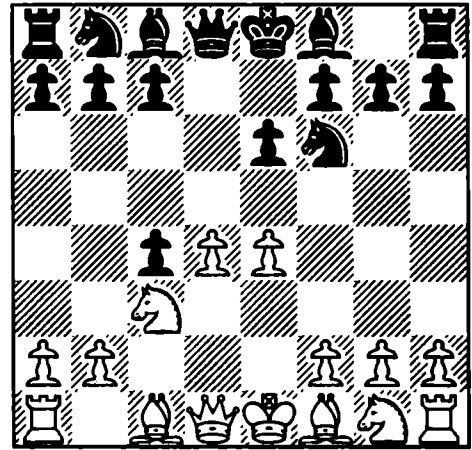
Game 84

Hawes-Barua

Yerevan Olympiad 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e4 e6

Having given you all that spiel before, I thought that I'd include this game. Black, a very strong player, eschews the equalising 4...e5 in favour of this rather passive-looking move.

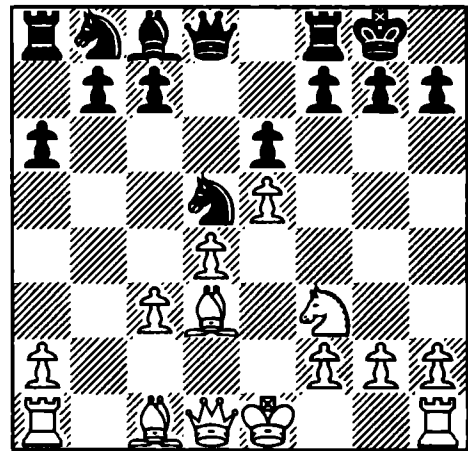


5 ♙xc4 a6

Instead 5...c5 6 d5 exd5 7 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 8
♙xd5 is covered in Chapter 3.

6 a4?!

Hardly forced. As well as 6 e5, White could also consider 6 ♘f3, intending to meet 6...b5 with 7 ♙d3. Black would need to play ...c7-c5 eventually or else it would be all one-way traffic. For example, a beginner's game might see 6...♙b4?! 7 ♙d3 ♙xc3+? 8 bxc3 0-0 9 e5 ♘d5



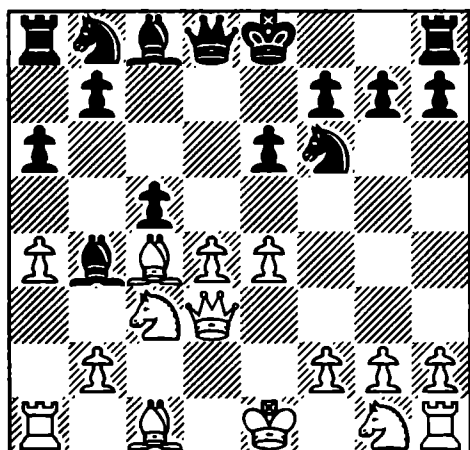
10 ♙xh7+! ♚xh7 11 ♘g5+ ♚g8 12 ♚h5
♖e8 13 ♚xf7+ ♚h8 14 ♚h5+ ♚g8 15
♚h7+ ♚f8 16 ♚h8+ ♚e7 17 ♚xg7 mate.
Presumably this wasn't on the Indian
Grandmaster's agenda, but I couldn't resist
putting it in!

6...♙b4 7 ♚d3?!

This looks slightly odd, but it could easily prove devastating if Black were to

castle kingside and end up having to deal with an alignment of the queen and bishop along the b1-h7 diagonal.

7...c5!



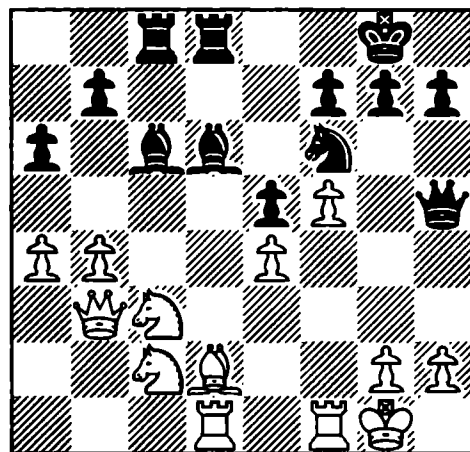
8 ♖f3 cxd4 9 ♖xd4 ♖bd7

Now the possibilities of ...♖c5 and ...♖e5 demonstrate that the queen and light-squared bishop are awkwardly placed.

10 ♖c2 ♖e7 11 ♖f4 ♗a5 12 0-0 ♖e5
13 ♗e2 0-0 14 ♖d2 ♖xc4

And now of course Black has the advantage of the two bishops to work with.

15 ♗xc4 ♖d7 16 b4 ♗h5 17 f3 ♖ac8 18 ♗b3 ♖fd8 19 ♖ad1 ♖d6 20 f4 e5 21 f5 ♖c6!

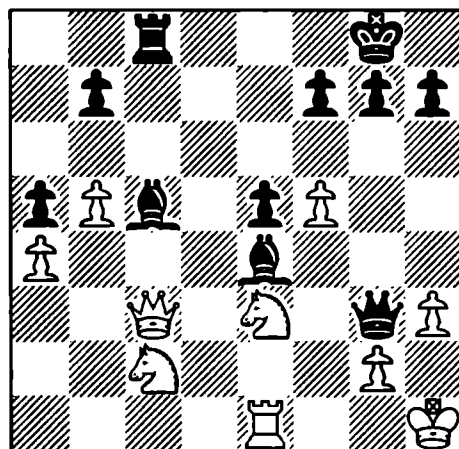


Black's justification for shutting out his dark-squared bishop is the irresistible pressure that now builds up on the e4-pawn.

22 ♖fe1 a5

Actually Black could have captured on e4 immediately, as the rook on d1 was hanging. However, his chosen route to victory is no less convincing.

23 b5 ♖g4 24 h3 ♖c5+ 25 ♖e3 ♖xd1 26 ♖xd1 ♖xe3 27 ♖dx3 ♖xe4 28 ♖h2 ♗g5 29 ♗c3 ♗f4+ 30 ♖h1 ♗g3 0-1

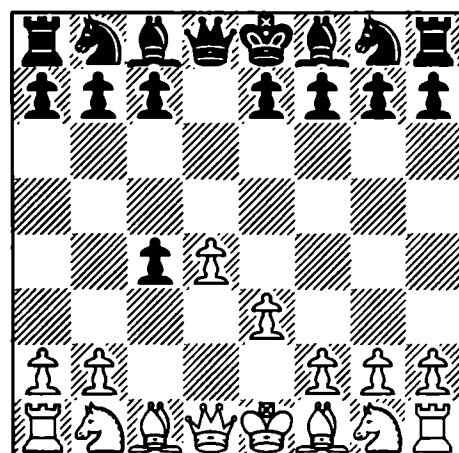


Game 85

Miladinovic-Vlassis

Korinthos open 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3



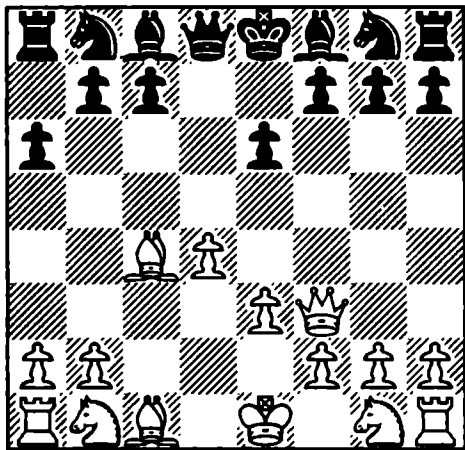
Although you will soon be aware that my conclusion on 3 e3 is that both sides are probably best off transposing to the Classical variation with 3...♖f6 4 ♖xc4 e6 5 ♖f3, the advantage of this move order is that it cuts out all of the lines that involve an early ...♖g4. While 3...♖g4?? obviously

loses a piece, 3...♘f6 4 ♙xc4 ♙g4? is also not possible because of 5 ♚b3 with dual threats against f7 and b7.

3...a6

Black may have still been hoping for a transposition into his favourite variation with 4 ♘f3 ♙g4, but there is no need for White to oblige. Aside from a transposition to the Classical variation, Black can also consider 3...e5 (Games 86-88), 3...c5 (Game 89) and 3...g6 (Game 90).

4 ♙xc4 e6 5 ♚f3!?



5 ♘f3 would have transposed to the Classical variation, but here we see another reason for delaying the development of the king's knight. It might not necessarily be that good, but evidently it is a useful option to be able to place the queen on the kingside before developing the knight. Of course White could also have tried the direct 5 ♘e2 too, but the game move has the added attraction of preventing 5...b5.

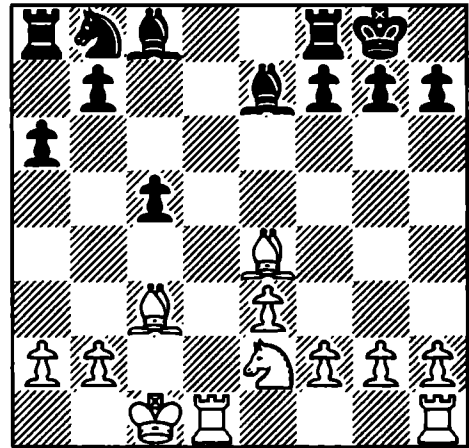
5...♘f6 6 ♘c3 c5 7 d5 exd5 8 ♘xd5 9 ♙xd5 ♚c7 10 ♙d2!

By rapidly bringing the bishop to the a1-h8 diagonal, White intercepts a ...♘c6-e5 defence.

10...♙d6 11 ♚e4+! ♚e7 12 ♙c3 ♚xe4 13 ♙xe4

The material situation is level, but White's bishops are wicked. In particular Black now has grave problems developing his queenside.

13...0-0 14 0-0-0 ♙e7 15 ♘e2



15...♘d7

Losing a pawn, but Black couldn't delay forever.

16 ♙xb7 ♙xb7

15...♙a7 would have prolonged the misery!

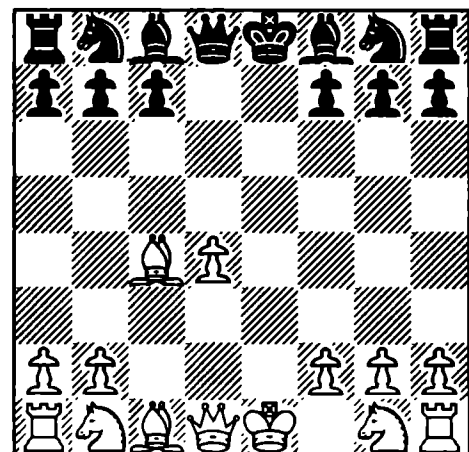
17 ♙xd7 ♙xg2 18 ♙g1 1-0

Game 86
M.Gurevich-Ye Rongguang
Tilburg open 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5

In light of recent results, I would have to say that as theory stands at present, this is no longer the best move for Black.

4 ♙xc4 exd4 5 exd4



Against the French Defence, 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5, White can try 3 exd5 exd5 4 c4,

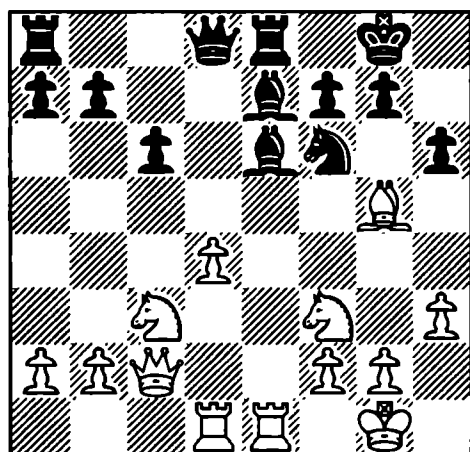
when after 4...dxc4?! 5 ♙xc4 we would reach the position in the game. However, it is unwise for Black to accelerate the development of White's light-squared bishop; 4...♘f6 is much more sensible. Indeed it seems that it is very difficult for Black to equalise from the diagram position. One would think that this position might compare favourably for Black with the Panov-Botvinnik Attack, i.e. where the c7-pawn would instead be on e6. However, the fact that Black has more scope for his light-squared bishop is not sufficient compensation for the pressure that White can build up on f7.

5...♘f6

5...♙b4+ is the subject of Game 88.

6 ♘f3

6 ♘c3 is obviously playable, while interesting complications can arise after 6 ♗b3, e.g. 6...♗e7+ 7 ♙e3 ♘bd7 8 ♘f3 ♘b6 9 0-0 ♘xc4 (one would think that with the light-squared bishop out of the way, Black would have no worries, but this game shows how it is still possible for White to drum up play) 10 ♗xc4 ♙e6 11 ♗c2 ♗d8 12 ♘c3 ♙e7 13 ♖ad1 0-0 14 ♙g5 ♖e8 15 ♖fe1 c6 16 h3 h6?!



17 ♙xh6!? g4 18 ♖xe6 fxe6 19 ♗g6+ ♘h8 20 ♘e5 ♖f8 21 ♗xh6+ ♘h7 22 ♗xe6 ♖f6 23 ♘f7+ ♖xf7 24 ♗xf7 ♗f8 25 ♗xf8+ ♙xf8 26 d5 ♖d8 27 dxc6 ♖xd1+ 28 ♘xd1 bxc6 29 f4 ♙d6 30 g3 ♘g7 and White

went on to win the endgame in Sorokin-Scarella, Villa Balester open 1996.

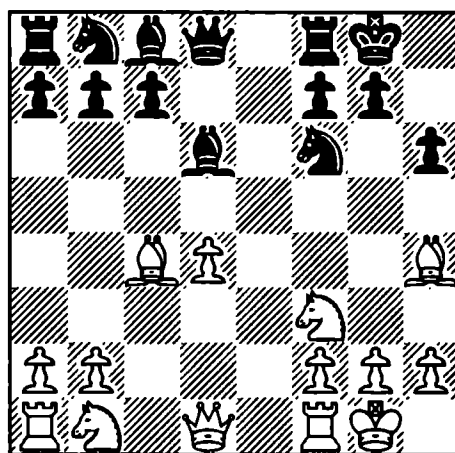
6...♙d6

It is somewhat risky to allow a pin on the f6-knight. The more prudent 6...♙e7 is the subject of the next main game.

7 0-0 0-0 8 ♙g5

After 8 ♘c3, the dangers of 8...♙g4 were also highlighted in Ulybin-Erykalov, USSR 1986: 9 h3 ♙h5 10 g4! ♙g6 11 ♘e5 c5 12 ♘xg6! hxg6 13 dxc5 ♙xc5 14 ♙xf7+!! ♘xf7 15 ♗b3+ ♙e8 16 ♖e1+ ♙e7 17 ♗xb7.

8...h6 9 ♙h4



9...♙g4

In fact perhaps Black would be better off replacing this move with the more modest 9...♙f5 (intending 10...♘bd7) or perhaps even 9...♘c6 10 h3 g5 11 ♙g3 ♘e4 12 ♙xd6 ♗xd6 13 ♘c3 ♙f5 14 ♖e1 ♖ae8.

10 h3 ♙xf3

Black is pretty much committed to this trade now, as 10...♙h5 11 g4! ♙g6 12 ♘e5 sees his bishop being hunted down anyhow and inevitable problems occurring on f7.

11 ♗xf3 ♘c6 12 ♖d1

The immediate 12 ♙xf6 is nothing to write home about.

12...♙e7

12...g5 13 ♙g3 ♙xg3 14 ♗xg3 ♘xd4 looks too risky and anyway fizzles out to

a worse endgame after 15 dxc3! ? c5 16 b5! wb6 17 dxd4 cxd4 18 wd3 (threatening 19 wg6+) 18... cg7 19 wxd4 .
13 dc3 ib8

Alternatively a trade of d- for b-pawn would favour White.

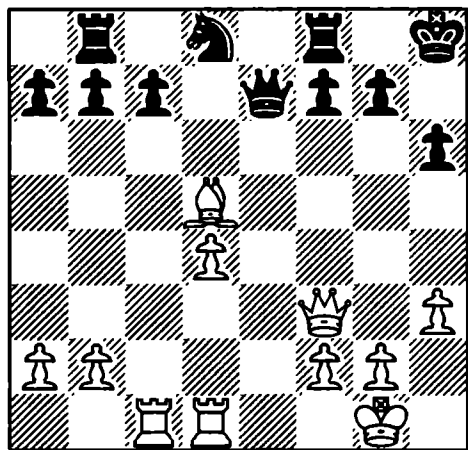
14 de2

14 dg3! ? dd6 15 db5 also looks quite promising.

14... ch8 15 fac1 de4 16 xe7 we7 17 dc3 df6

17... dxc3 18 wxc3 ffd8 19 d5 de5 20 e1 f6 21 db3 is very difficult for Black.

18 d5 dxd5 19 xd5 d8



White still has his isolated pawn, but Black has never even come close to blockading it. White's bishop is better than the knight and his major pieces are more active.

20 wg3

A simple plan such as trying to eliminate his one weakness with 20 db3 c6 21 d5 would also have been effective.

20... fc8 21 db3

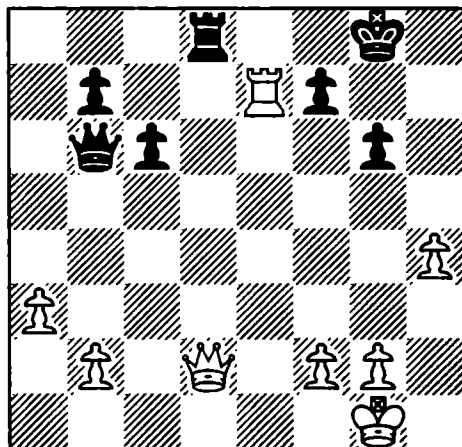
Now it's not quite so good and White should instead have chosen to dominate the e-file with 21 e1! ? wd7 22 we5 c6 23 we7! Nevertheless, he eventually brings home the bacon.

21... de6 22 d5 dc5 23 ic2 a5 24 a3 a4 25 wf4 wd6 26 wf5! g6 27 wg4 fce8 28 xa4 dxa4

28... e4 fails to 29 wf3 fxa4 30 wc3+

cg8 31 wxc5 .

29 xa4 e2 30 e1! xe1+ 31 xe1 xd5 32 wf4 wc6 33 e7 wb6 34 wxh6+ cg8 35 wd2 c6 36 h4 id8



37 wf4

Okay, so (probably in time trouble) White misses 37 xb7 , but overall he has played well.

37... wb3 38 ch2 wd5 39 xb7 cg7 40 ib4 we6 41 e4 wb3 42 e7 wd5 43 f3 ih8 44 we5+ we5+ 45 xe5 hx4+ 46 cg3 ic4 47 e2 f5 48 cf2 f4 49 ce1 ch6 50 cd2 cg5 51 e5+ ch4 52 e4! xe4 53 fxe4 cg3 54 e5 cwg2 55 e6 f3 56 e7 f2 57 e8 wf1 w 58 wxc6+ 1-0

Game 87

I. Sokolov-Hübner

Wijk aan Zee 1996

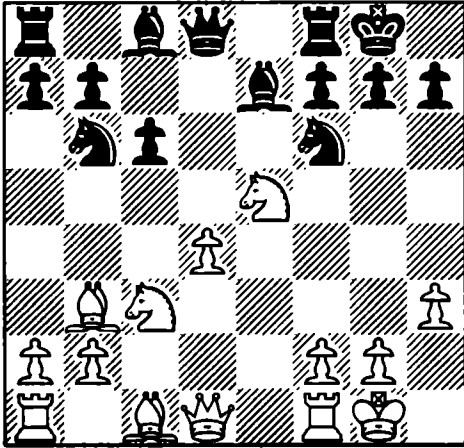
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5 4 dxc4 exd4 5 exd4 df6 6 df3 de7

This time Black settles for the immediate ... de7 . This takes the sting out of any dg5 ideas and allows the queen to attack White's d4-pawn directly. However, in this game we see how Black's problems are far from over just because he can plonk a knight on d5.

7 0-0 0-0 8 h3! ?

Preventing his d4-pawn being further pressurised by 8... dg4 . In case you hadn't spotted it, 7... dg4 ? last turn would have

fallen for 8 ♙xf7+! ♚xf7 9 ♜e5+.
8...♜bd7 9 ♜c3 ♜b6 10 ♙b3 c6 11 ♜e5



Perhaps the attraction for White of this system is that the c5- and e5-squares are excellent resting places for his knights. If all of the minor pieces were traded off, then White would be struggling because of his 'weak' d-pawn. However, in the midgame, this isolani is obviously quite a useful asset.

11...♜bd5 12 ♝e1 ♙e6 13 ♙g5 ♝e8 14 ♝c1 ♜d7 15 ♙xe7 ♝xe7 16 ♜e4!?

16 ♜xd5, giving Black an isolated pawn, might also leave White with a niggling edge, but this move is more ambitious.

16...f6 17 ♜d3 ♜f8 18 ♚f3 ♚c7 19 ♜g3

Black has removed the e5-square from the white knights, but 16...f6 has created other weaknesses. White's knights continue to probe, avoiding swaps along the way.

19...♝d8 20 ♜c5 ♙f7 21 ♝xe7 ♚xe7 22 ♜f5 ♚c7

see following diagram

23 ♚g3!

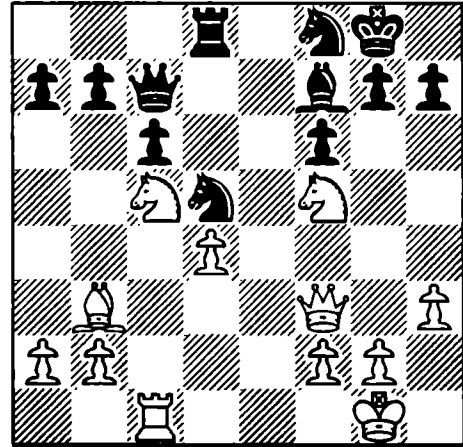
Now a trade of queens is acceptable as it means that White can bag a pawn.

23...♚xg3 24 fxg3 b6

If 24...♝b8, then 25 ♜d6. The game is gone now and it's difficult to see where

Black went wrong, other than blaming the whole strategy.

25 ♜b7 ♝d7 26 ♜fd6 ♙e6 27 ♝xc6 ♜e7
28 ♝c3 h5? 29 ♙a4 1-0



Game 88

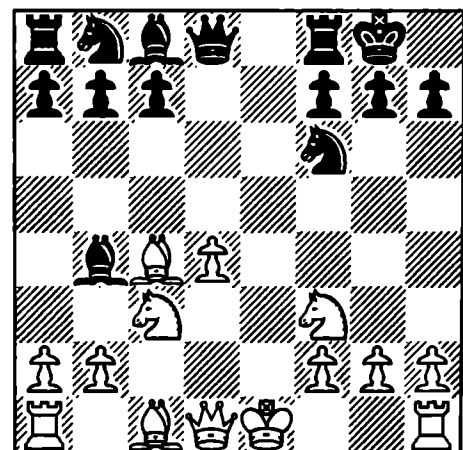
Tisdall-Westerinen

Gausdal 1995

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5 4 ♙xc4 exd4
5 exd4 ♙b4+

Possibly Black's best try. On b4, the bishop doesn't obstruct the black queen's view of the d4-pawn and White is unable to get in 8 h3 because of 8...♝e8+.

6 ♜c3 ♜f6 7 ♜f3 0-0



8 0-0 ♙g4

Okay, so the early check enabled Black to achieve this useful pin. However, the drawback of Black's plan is that ♜c3 is of

more value to White than ...♗b4 is to Black.

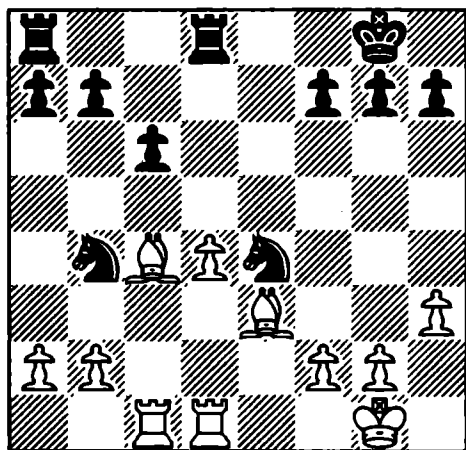
9 ♖g5

After 9 a3 ♗e7, compared to the last game, White will have got in a2-a3 for free, but perhaps it is of more relevance is that Black has managed to arrange ...♗g4.

9...♘c6 10 ♘d5 ♗e7 11 ♘xe7+ ♜xe7 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♜xf3 ♜e4!

Just about the saving move. Black must grovel a bit, but it looks as though he can just about hold his own.

14 ♜xe4 ♘xe4 15 ♗e3 ♞fd8 16 ♞fd1 ♘b4 17 ♞ac1 c6



White has two bishops and yet Black is probably quite grateful that there are no knights to contend with (see the last game!). Now the isolated d-pawn is a problem for White. If he could budge it a file to the left or the right he would be winning, but where it stands it obscures his dark-squared bishop and provides Black with an excellent outpost on d5 for a knight. It's inconceivable that there is a way for White to play for a win in this position. However, it would almost certainly be very long-winded and if such a way exists, clearly the Norwegian Grandmaster doesn't find it over the board.

18 a3 ♘d5 19 ♞d3 ♞d7 20 ♞b3 ♘xe3 21 ♞xe3 ♘d2 22 ♞d3 ♘xc4 23 ♞xc4 ♞e8 24 ♞c5 f6 25 b4 ♞e5 26 ♞dc3 ♞xc5 27 ♞xc5 ½-½

Game 89

Legky-Kallai

French Team Championship 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 c5 4 ♗xc4 cxd4 5 exd4

Actually if he prefers, White can delay this recapture with 5 ♘f3, as 5...dxe3?? would lose to 6 ♗xf7+. In Piket-Leko, Wijk aan Zee 1996, Black played 5...♜c7 anyway and after 6 ♜b3 e6 7 exd4 ♘f6 they were back to a more traditional IQP position (such as might arise from the Steinitz variation as well as the Caro-Kann, Scandinavian, Nimzo-Indian etc!), but with both queens slightly misplaced. The game continued 8 0-0 ♘c6 9 ♗g5 ♗e7 10 ♘c3 0-0 11 ♗d3 ♗d7 12 ♞fe1 ♘g4 13 ♗xe7 when the players shook hands on a quick draw. It's worth noting that were the king's rook on f1 rather than e1, then here Black would have the winning trick 13...♘xd4!! (with mate on h2).

5...♜c7 6 ♗b3 ♗g4

This early advance of the black bishop is made possible because of the hanging bishop on c1.

7 f3 ♗d7 8 ♘c3

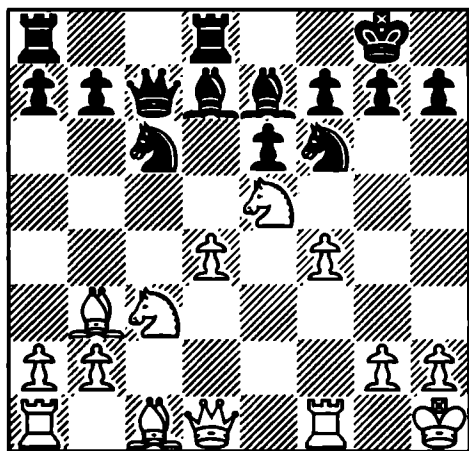
An alternative way for Black to handle the position is demonstrated after 8 ♘e2, when he can fianchetto his king's bishop with the continuation 8...♘f6 9 ♘bc3 g6 10 ♗g5 ♗g7. This is very nice in theory. Black retains options for his light-squared bishop whilst aiming his dark-squared one at White's weak point (the d4-pawn). However, the specifics aren't so easy. After say 11 ♞c1, his queen will soon be forced to find a new home and along with the usual attack on f7, there will be pressure on his f6-knight through to his e7-pawn.

8...e6 9 f4?!

White vacates the f3-square for his knight, whilst adding further support to

the e5-square. If he can get in f4-f5, then there will be further opportunities to expose the weak point on f7. Nevertheless, I'm not convinced by this move. If this pawn is stopped in its tracks and the d5-square can also be blockaded, then the c1-bishop doesn't have much of a future. White certainly has a lot of fun in this game, but I think that 9 ♘ge2 is more the order of the day. The game Adams-Leko, Etoiles 1994, then continued 9... ♗d6 10 d5 e5 11 ♘e4 f5 12 ♘g5 ♘f6 13 0-0, when Black has the better pawn structure, but is stuck with a hole on e6 and has difficulty developing the rest of his queenside. White went on to win a fairly murky encounter.

9... ♘f6 10 ♘f3 ♗e7 11 0-0 ♘c6 12 ♖h1 0-0 13 ♘e5 ♗fd8



Very provocative, but more flexible than 13... ♗ad8 because Black possibly has it in mind sometime to drop the bishop back to e8.

14 ♘xf7

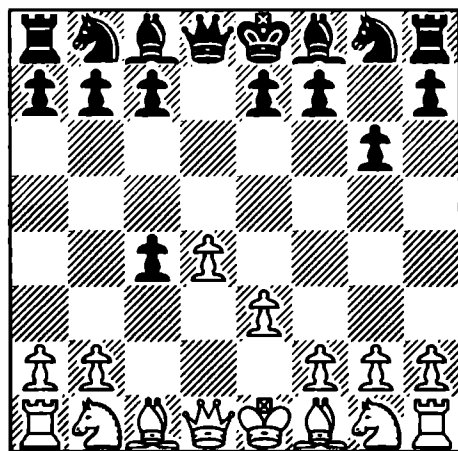
A nice idea, but one that doesn't quite hit the mark. White needed something tactical, because positionally he was busted.

14... ♖xf7 15 f5 ♖g8 16 fxe6 ♗e8 17 ♗f4 ♗b6 18 d5 ♘a5 19 ♗c2 ♗xb2 20 ♗c1 ♗ac8 21 ♗e2 ♖h8 22 d6 ♗xd6 23 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 24 ♗e5 ♗d2 25 ♗xa5 ♗xc3 0-1

Game 90

Hillarp Persson-Ward
Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 g6



A fairly offbeat try. Of course a direct transposition into the Smyslov variation (Chapter 7) is not unlikely, but somehow I knew that my opponent would try for more.

4 ♗xc4 ♗g7 5 ♗b3

Taking the game into uncharted waters.

5... ♘h6

The knight might look silly here, but in fact it is not badly placed. It doesn't obscure the bishops view of the d4-pawn and ... ♘f5 is a possibility for later. It isn't an easy task for White to achieve the desired e3-e4 and keep his centre intact at the same time.

6 ♘f3 0-0 7 0-0 ♘c6

With the queen and bishop vulnerable to ... ♘a5, the ... e7-e5 break seemed preferable to the alternative ... c7-c5 lunge.

8 ♗e2 e5 9 d5 ♘a5 10 ♗a3 b6 11 e4 f6

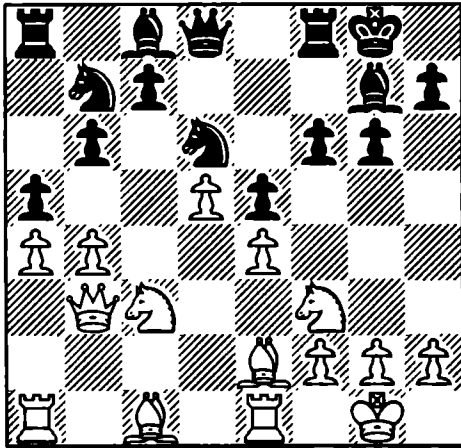
The immediate 11... f5 would have been rash. It's preferable to relocate the h6-knight first, as the d6-square is begging to be occupied by a black knight.

12 ♘c3 ♘f7 13 ♗e1 a6 14 b4 ♘b7 15 ♗b3 ♘fd6 16 a4?!

It's natural for White to want to ex-

pand on the queenside, but he now proceeds to lose control of the c5-square. Sure his dark-squared bishop can keep an eye out for that, but as we see, its enemy number isn't far away either.

16...a5!



17 h3 axb4 18 ♖xb4 ♜f7

With new targets on the queenside, there is no need for Black to go all in for ...f6-f5.

19 ♙f1 ♙f8 20 ♗b1 ♘c5 21 ♙e3 ♜a5

Maintaining the blockade and preparing to launch an assault on the isolated a-pawn.

22 ♘d2 ♙d7 23 ♗c2 ♗e8 24 ♘c4 ♘xc4 25 ♙xc4 ♙d6

Stopping 26 d6. Forget winning the exchange, White would happily sacrifice this pawn to gain d5 for his knight.

26 ♙b5 ♗a8 27 ♙xd7 ♜xd7 28 ♜f1

Struggling to find a plan, White briefly considers the idea of breaking with f2-f4.

28...♗a6

Now the black queen looks to infiltrate White's position. The relative duties of the two knights tell the whole story. The white knight (which is a target itself) has nothing but defensive responsibilities, whereas the black knight occupies an ideal square.

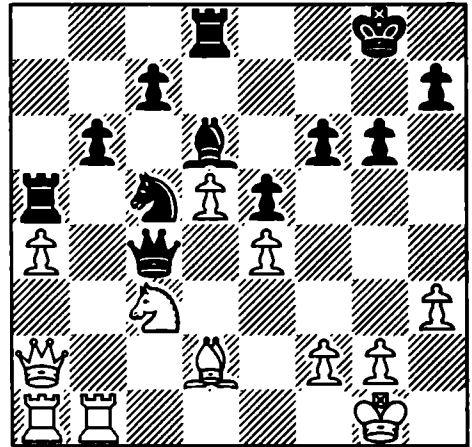
29 ♙d2 ♗c4 30 ♜fb1

After 30 f4 exf4 31 ♙xf4 ♙xf4 32 ♜xf4 ♜xd5 the black queen is a monster.

30...♜d8

No prizes for guessing where this rook is headed!

31 ♗a2



31...♗xa2

Black can see the impending gain of the a4-pawn and so goes for a simple swap. Nevertheless 31...♗d3! would have been even stronger, as the black queen would rule the roost.

32 ♜xa2 ♜da8 33 f3 ♘xa4 34 ♘b5 ♜5a6 35 ♙e3 ♙f7

In mild time-trouble Black plays it too cool. The simplest route to victory was 35...♘c5! The game move allows White time to extract his king from the g1-c5 diagonal (so that ♙xc5 ♙xc5 won't be check) and makes matters far more difficult.

36 ♙h2 ♙e7 37 ♘xd6 ♙xd6 38 ♜ba1 ♙d7 39 ♜c1 b5 40 ♜ac2 1-0

And in a travesty of justice, White pointed out that I had lost on time. My neat scoresheet implied that 40 moves had already been completed (hence I was casually pondering what appeared to be move 40), but my opponent correctly observed that I had in fact left a line blank around move 20. A tremendously depressing (and incompetent!) experience, although Black has bungled things over the last few moves and the active white rooks should give him enough for the draw.

Summary

Game 83 is pretty much a model demonstration of the frailties of a premature ♘c3. 3 ♘c3 a6! is spot on. A quick follow-up with ...b7-b5 is usually justified if White has a knight on c3, where it is in the way of his a2-a4 and b2-b3 undermining operation.

I no longer have a problem in extolling the virtues of 3 e3. Game 87 places a big question mark over 3...e5, with White winning effortlessly without having to resort to a kingside attack.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4

3 e3

3 ♘c3 (D)

3...a6 – Game 83

3...♘f6 – Game 84

3...e5

3...a6 – Game 85

3...c5 – Game 89

3...g6 – Game 90

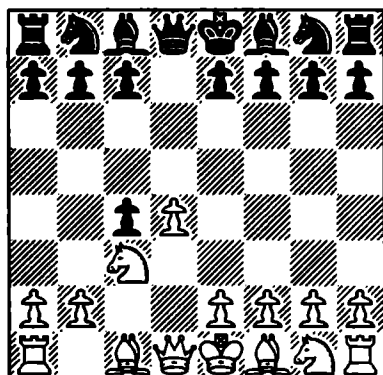
4 ♗xc4 exd4 5 exd4 (D) ♘f6

5...♗b4+ – Game 88

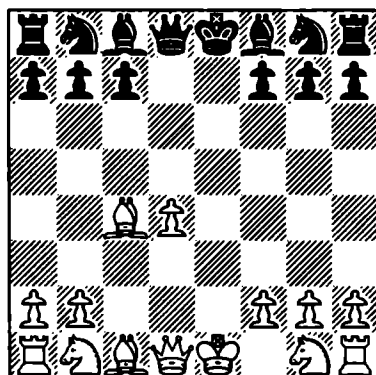
6 ♘f3 (D) ♗d6

6...♗e7 – Game 87

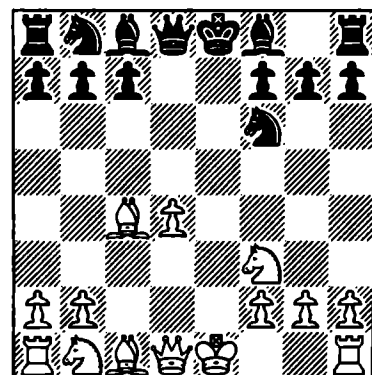
7 0-0 – Game 86



3 ♘c3



5 exd4



6 ♘f3

INDEX OF COMPLETE GAMES

Antunes-Miles, <i>Wijk aan Zee</i> 1996	102
Bacrot-Flear.G, <i>French Team Championship</i> 1998.....	117
Bacrot-Peric, <i>Corsica (rapidplay)</i> 1997.....	40
Banikas-Rabinovich, <i>Euro. Junior Ch., Tallinn</i> 1997.....	135
Berezovics-Vaulin, <i>Decin open</i> 1996.....	114
Borges-Cifuentes, <i>Matanzas</i> 1995.....	47
Christiansen-Benjamin, <i>USA Ch., Chandler</i> 1997	23
Conquest-Brynell, <i>Torshavn</i> 1997	103
Cramling.P-Brunner, <i>Horgen</i> 1995.....	111
Cramling.P-Karpatchev, <i>Osterskars open</i> 1995.....	115
Crouch-Duncan, <i>Hampstead</i> 1998.....	126
Dautov-Sermek, <i>Dresden Zonal</i> 1998.....	132
Davies-Hartman, <i>Osterskars open</i> 1995.....	139
Delchev-Ninov, <i>Bulgarian Championship</i> 1995.....	143
Dreev-Salov, <i>President's Cup, Elista</i> 1998	36
Dzandzhava-Sadler, <i>Yerevan Olympiad</i> 1996.....	67
Ehlvest-Sadler, <i>FIDE World Ch., Groningen</i> 1997.....	121
Epishin-Westerinen, <i>Parnu</i> 1996.....	56
Foguelman-Bronstein, <i>Amsterdam Interzonal</i> 1964	100
Fominyh-Ibragimov, <i>Euro. Club Cup, Budapest</i> 1996	93
Franco-Rivera, <i>Havana</i> 1998.....	89
Ftacnik-Hansen.C, <i>Yerevan Olympiad</i> 1996.....	53
Gabriel-Xu Jun, <i>Bad Homburg</i> 1997	70
Gavrikov-Gulko, <i>USSR Ch., Frunze</i> 1981.....	134
Gelfand-Anand, <i>Linares</i> 1993.....	41

Gelfand-Lautier, <i>Belgrade 1997</i>	82
Giacomini-Flear.G, <i>French Team Championship 1998</i>	90
Gormally-Law, <i>Four Nations League 1997</i>	31
Gurevich.D-Soltis, <i>San Francisco 1998</i>	107
Gurevich.M-Meins, <i>Groningen open 1997</i>	57
Gurevich.M-Ye Rongguang, <i>Tilburg open 1997</i>	150
Gurieli-Giertz, <i>Biel open 1998</i>	78
Haba-Blatny, <i>Zlin 1998</i>	117
Hawes-Barua, <i>Yerevan Olympiad 1996</i>	148
Hebden-Flear.G, <i>Hastings Premier 1997</i>	91
Hebden-Sadler, <i>British Ch., Torquay 1998</i>	83
Hillarp Persson-Ward, <i>Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 1996</i>	155
Hübner-Sulskis, <i>Euro. Team Ch., Pula 1997</i>	34
Ibragimov-Estrada Nieto, <i>Ubeda open 1997</i>	46
Illescas-Sadler, <i>Linares Zonal 1995</i>	22
Inkirov-Lautier, <i>French Team Championship 1996</i>	16
Ivanov.S-Rublevsky, <i>Russian Ch. (rapidplay) 1997</i>	137
Karpov-Milov, <i>Biel 1997</i>	17
Karpov-Pyhala, <i>Helsinki (simultaneous) 1996</i>	141
Karpov-Van Wely, <i>Monaco (blindfold) 1997</i>	122
Kasparov-Piket, <i>Tilburg 1997</i>	75
Korotylev-Vaulin, <i>Zepter open, Minsk 1998</i>	69
Legky-Kallai, <i>French Team Championship 1998</i>	154
Leitao-Baburin, <i>Bermuda 1998</i>	65
Ljubojevic-Anand, <i>Belgrade 1997</i>	128
Ljubojevic-Van Wely, <i>Monaco (blindfold) 1997</i>	110
Lorscheid-Ibragimov, <i>Berlin open 1995</i>	52
Miladinovic-Vlassis, <i>Korinthos open 1998</i>	149
Neverov-Karpeshov, <i>St Petersburg open 1997</i>	106
Nikolic-Van Wely, <i>Wijk aan Zee 1997</i>	120
Olafsson.T-Westerinen, <i>Reykjavik open 1998</i>	146
Piket-Nikolic, <i>Linares 1997</i>	129
Popov-Begun, <i>Zepter open, Minsk 1998</i>	104
Rey-Baburin, <i>San Francisco 1997</i>	125
Ricardi-Gomez, <i>Presidencia Roque Saenz Pena 1995</i>	50
Richardson-Hartman, <i>Isle of Man 1996</i>	140
Romanishin-Sadler, <i>Altensteig 1992</i>	26
Sadler-Brunner, <i>Bern 1996</i>	97
Sakaev-Kharlov, <i>European Cup, Budapest 1996</i>	118

San Segundo-Sadler, <i>Euro. Team Ch., Pula 1997</i>	73
Savchenko-Ibragimov, <i>Alushta 1993</i>	20
Savchenko-Zaja, <i>Nova Gorica 1997</i>	19
Schandorff-Christensen, <i>Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 1997</i>	113
Sherbakov-Vaulin, <i>Russian Ch., Elista 1997</i>	81
Sokolov.I-Brenninkmeijer, <i>Dutch Championship 1995</i>	95
Sokolov.I-Cifuentes, <i>Rotterdam 1997</i>	87
Sokolov.I-Hübner, <i>Wijk aan Zee 1996</i>	152
Sokolov.I-Lautier, <i>Wijk aan Zee 1997</i>	92
Sokolov.I-Van Wely, <i>Wijk aan Zee 1996</i>	94
Sosonko-Van der Sterren, <i>Amsterdam 1996</i>	136
Thorsteins-Greenfeld, <i>Reykjavik 1996</i>	25
Tisdall-Westerinen, <i>Gausdal 1995</i>	153
Topalov-Sadler, <i>Monaco (blindfold) 1998</i>	37
Touzane-Pinkus, <i>Geneva 1996</i>	55
Van Wely-Anand, <i>Monaco (blindfold) 1997</i>	59
Van Wely-Anand, <i>Wijk aan Zee 1996</i>	33
Van Wely-Hübner, <i>Ter Apel 1997</i>	51
Van Wely-Sutovsky, <i>Wijk aan Zee 1997</i>	62
Vaulin-Zakharov, <i>St Petersburg 1996</i>	77
Vyzmanavin-Azmaiparashvili, <i>Burgas 1994</i>	42
Ward-Baburin, <i>Isle of Man open 1997</i>	14
Ward-Fugslang, <i>Copenhagen open 1992</i>	12
Ward-Grinfeld, <i>Hastings Challengers 1994</i>	29
Wojtkiewicz-Hauchard, <i>Linares open 1997</i>	72
Zontakh-Mirkovic, <i>Belgrade 1998</i>	44

A lively explanation of an important opening

The Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA) is Black's most straightforward answer to the popular Queen's Gambit. By accepting the gambit pawn, Black refuses to submit to the strategic bear-hug which is so common in the Queen's Gambit Declined. The QGA is fundamentally sound, but soon leads to sharp play where both sides have plenty of chances to play for a win.

- An opening played with success on the Black side by super-grandmasters Anand, Sadler, Short, Ivanchuk, Svidler and Korchnoi
- Everything you need to know to play this opening as Black or White
- Part of the Batsford Chess Opening Guides series, providing a rapid understanding of fashionable openings through the use of model games and clear explanations



Chris Ward is a leading member of the younger generation of English grandmasters. His many successes include winning the 1996 British Championship, and he is also a well-respected chess trainer. He has written several best-selling books for Batsford, including *Winning with the Dragon*, *Opening Play* and (with John Emms) *Chess Choice Challenge*.

OTHER BATSFORD CHESS OPENING GUIDES:

THE MODERN DEFENCE

Jon Speelman and Neil McDonald

A dynamic opening for Black.

0 7134 8472 1

THE BENKO GAMBIT

Byron Jacobs and Andrew Kinsman

A revealing guide to a counter-attacking gambit.

0 7134 8462 4

THE BUDAPEST GAMBIT

Bogdan Lalić

Up-to-date coverage of a dangerous gambit.

0 7134 8456 X

THE SCOTCH GAME

Peter Wells

Learn more about one of Kasparov's favourite weapons.

0 7134 8466 7

For further information about Batsford chess books, please write to:

Batsford Chess Books,
583 Fulham Road,
London SW6 5BY

Batsford Chess Online: www.batsford.com

£14.99

ISBN 0-7134-8467-5



9 780713 484670 >