

Chess Canada

Spring



Chess Canada

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Chess Canada is distributed by email to CFC members who have submitted their email address to the CFC:

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submissions

Chess Canada is looking for contributions: tournament reports, photos, annotated games. For examples, see this issue or read the 2013.06 Appendix for other ideas.

suggestions

If you have an idea for a story you would like to write, email me:

cfc_newsletter_editor@chess.ca

- John Upper
editor *Chess Canada*

Chess Canada Spring

22 Critical Positions	3
Sambuev: Beast Games	6
Preotu: How I won...	27
Senior Moments	49
2024 Hart House Reading Week	72
Bonus Preview	83

Annotations by:

GM Bator Sambuev
GM Razvan Preotu

Next Issue:

- **GM Shawn Rodrigue-Lemieux**
"Beast Games"
- **IM Shiyam Thavandiran**
"How I won...
2024 Canadian Closed"

Chess Canada Spring

Cover: Mr.Knightly and Tulips

Canada 150 Tulips, with distinctive red-white-red bands like the Canadian flag, were a gift to Canada from the Netherlands, and were the "Official Tulip of Canada's 150th Anniversary".

photo: Sussex Avenue, across from the National Gallery, 2017.





Critical Positions



selected by the editor

The following diagrams are critical positions from this issue of *Chess Canada*. You can treat them as exercises or as a teaser introduction to what you'll find this month.

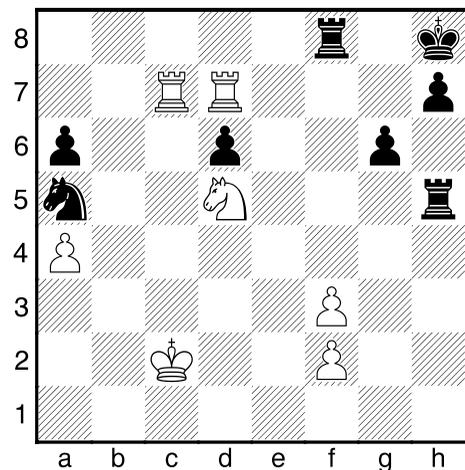
These "critical positions" can be:

- winning combinations
- surprising tactics
- endgames requiring precise play
- simple calculation exercises
- variation-rich middlegames
- moments when one player went badly wrong.

The  and  squares next to each diagram indicate the player to move.

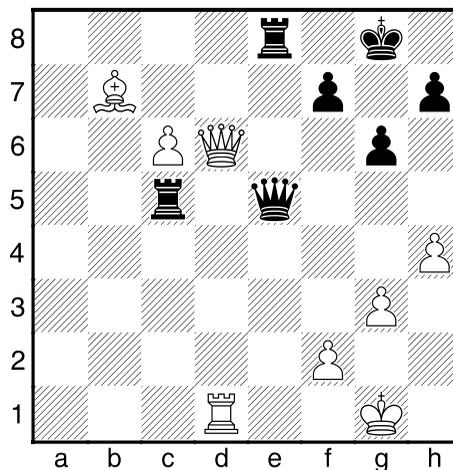
Solutions are in the game analysis *below the red diagrams* in the articles named under the diagram.

Critical positions usually feature significantly more analytical commentary than the rest of the game.



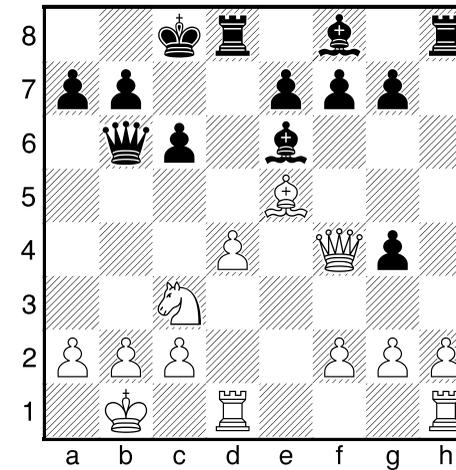
Black's pieces hug the edges of the board and Shirov is White!

see: Sambuev



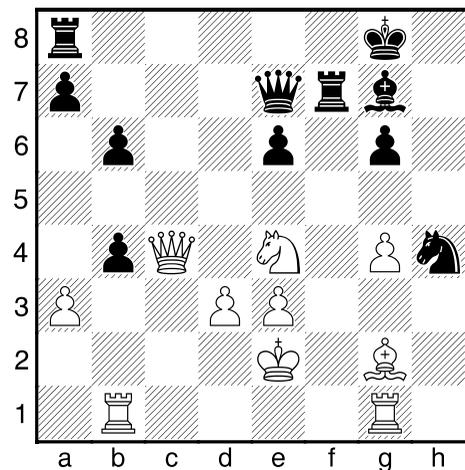
Should Black exchange ♔s with ...♙xd6, or ♖s with ...♗c1?

see: Sambuev



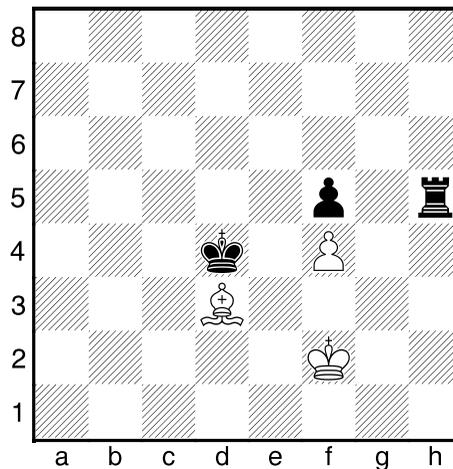
Should White do anything about ...f6?

see: Sambuev



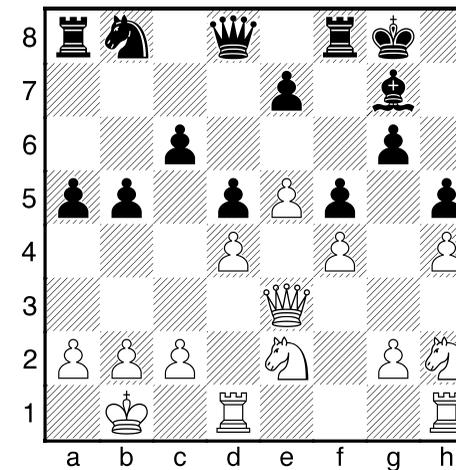
How to recapture on b4?

see: Sambuev



You're on increment at move 83.

see: Sambuev

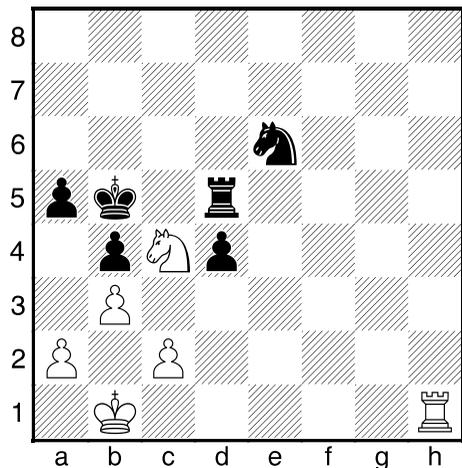


Find White's best pawn move.

see: Preotu

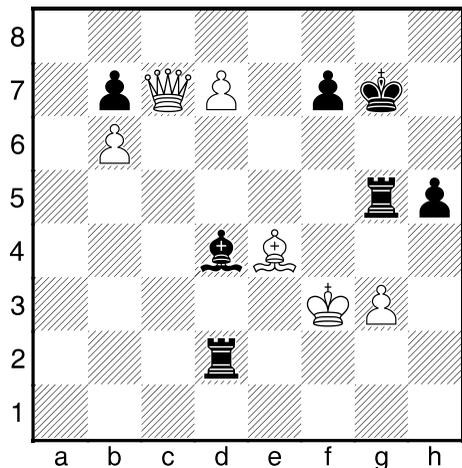


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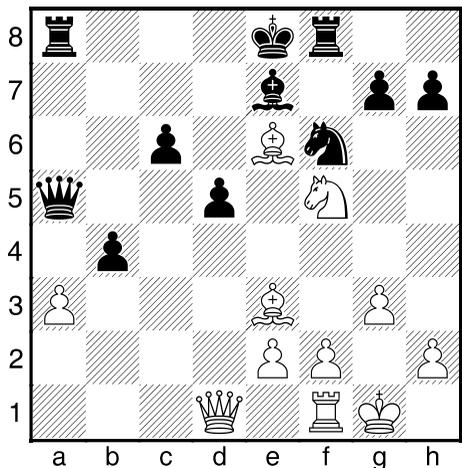
Is ...d3 and ...♖xd3 the simplest draw?

see: Preotu



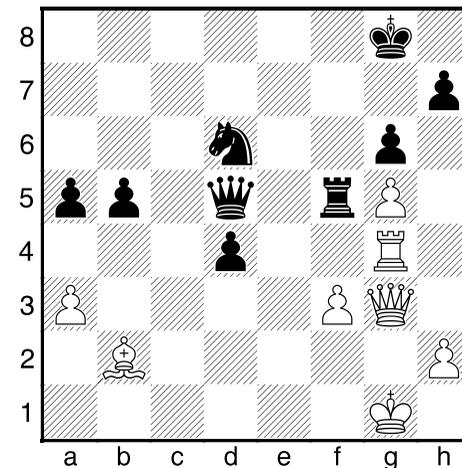
Be brilliant, or lose.

see: Preotu



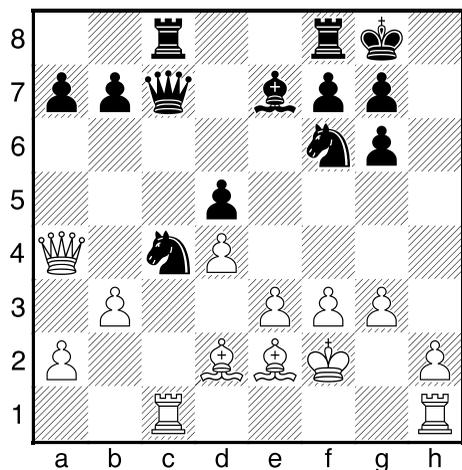
Play for the crowd!

see: Preotu



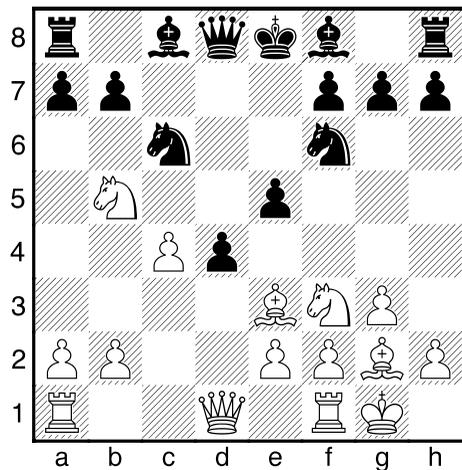
Can Black save his d-pawn, or is there something better?

see: Senior Moments



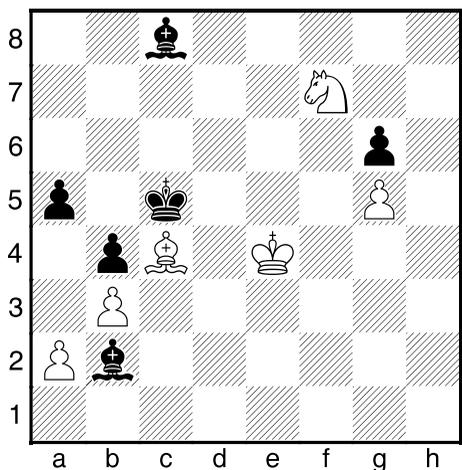
Black trails the top-seed by 1/2 a point and needs winning chances.

see: Preotu



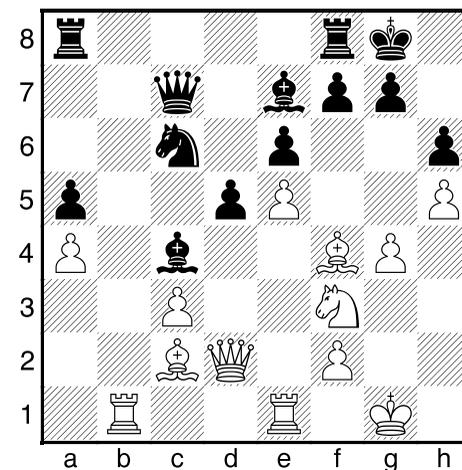
How badly has White mangled this opening?

see: Preotu



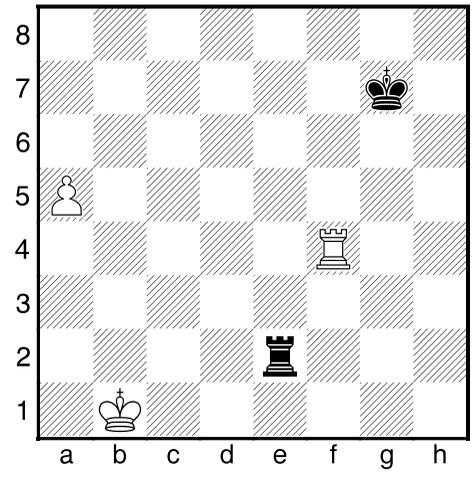
♘e5 or something else?

see: Senior Moments

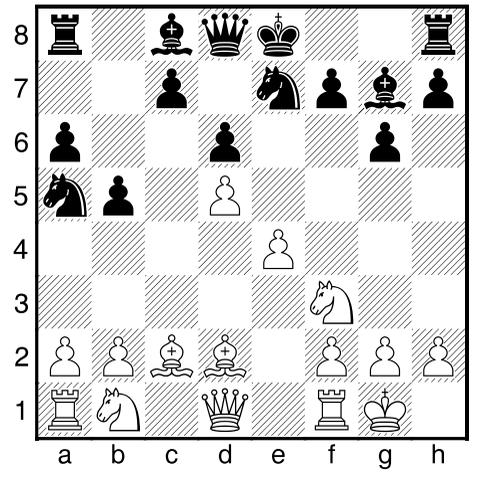


What happens if ♕xh6?

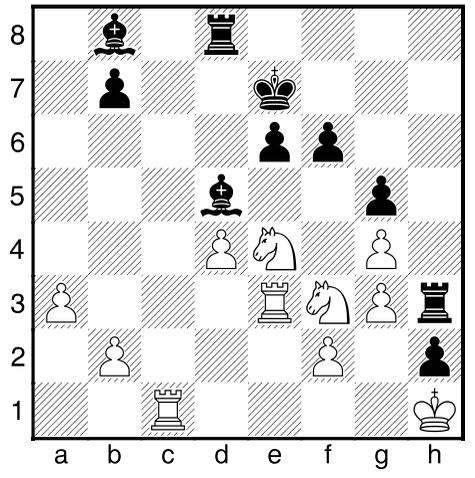
see: Senior Moments



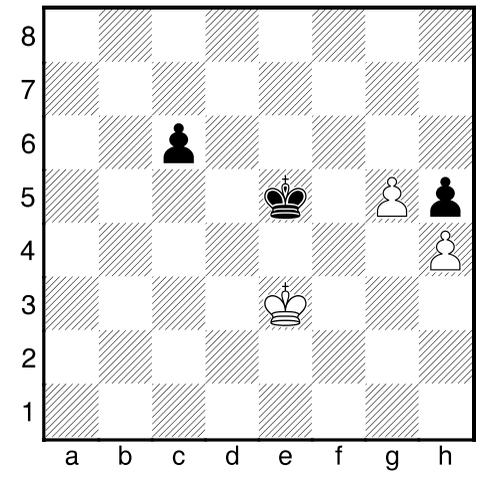
Did you study your Dvoretsky?
see: Senior Moments



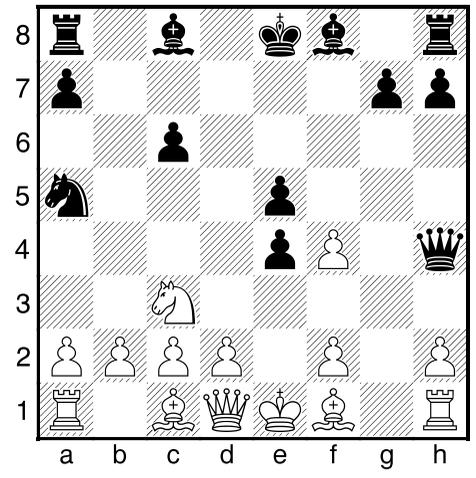
A Lopez sideline that appears
more than once in this issue.
see: Hart House



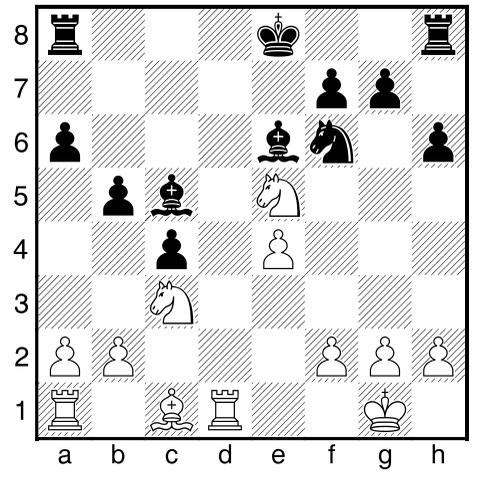
Hooliganism or safety?
see: Hart House



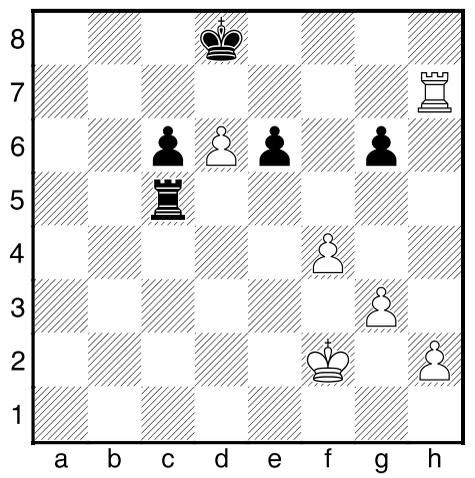
Did you study your Dvoretsky?
see: Hart House



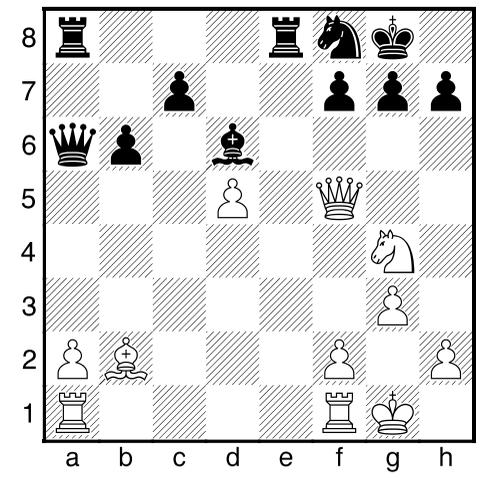
The Two Knights Lives?
see: Senior Moments



What happens if Nd5 ?
see: Hart House



Not *another* endgame!??
see: Hart House



Should Black improve his K with
 $\dots\text{Kb5}$ or $\dots\text{Ke2}$, or try to trade
 K s with $\dots\text{Kc8}$, or go $\dots\text{Ng6}$, or
something else?



Bator Sambuev continues to be Canada's most active Grandmaster. While many adults play fewer and fewer tournament games – to protect their ratings or egos from much younger opponents?! – Bator competes almost non-stop (see table). I asked Bator to choose some of his favourite games from the past year to annotate for *Chess Canada*; below are 7 games that made the cut.

— editor

Event	Date	Games	Points	Place	TPR
Excelsior March Open	2024-03-17	5	3	=7th	2444
2024 Ottawa March Open	2024-03-03	5	5	1st	2622
2024 Excelsior February Open	2024-02-25	5	3	=7th	2300
Excelsior 1st Anniversary Open	2024-01-28	5	4	2nd	2451
2024 Ottawa Winter Open	2024-01-21	5	4.5	1st	2576
2023 Tournoi du Pere Noel A	2023-12-30	5	4.5	=1st	2562
2023 Ottawa December Open	2023-12-10	5	4	=2nd	2461
Excelsior November Open Top	2023-11-19	4	4.5	1st	2531
2023 National Capital Open	2023-11-05	5	3.5	=5th	2437
2023 Excelsior October Open	2023-10-29	5	4	=1st	2516
2023 Ottawa Fall Open	2023-10-01	5	4.5	1st	2624
2023 Excelsior September Open	2023-09-10	9	6.5	4th	2521
2023 Toronto Open Crown	2023-09-04	6	5	=1st	2582
4th Roi Mohammed VI	2023-08-13	9	4	=37	
2023 Quebec Open Section A	2023-08-04	9	7.5	=1st	2665
9th RIDEF (Francophonie)	2023-07-02	9	7.5	=1st	
2023 Excelsior June Open Ch Top	2023-06-25	5	4	=2nd	2508
2023 Excelsior June GM Norm	2023-06-23	9	5.5	=2nd	2588
2023 Eastern Ontario Open	2023-06-18	5	4.5	1st	2523
Cdn Transnational Classic Crown	2023-06-11	9	5	=15th	2593
Cdn Transnational Rapid Crown	2023-06-04	11	4.5	=25th	2468
Cdn Transnational Blitz Crown	2023-06-03	14	7	=20th	2386
2023 Ontario Open	2023-05-22	6	4	=4th	2450
56th Capablanca Memorial	2023-05-03	10	8	=1st	
2023 Excelsior April Open Top	2023-04-23	5	4.5	=1st	2538
2023 Canadian Closed	2023-04-11	9	7.5	=1st	2588
TOTALS: 26 events	11 months	179	129.5		2519

notes: GM Bator Sambuev

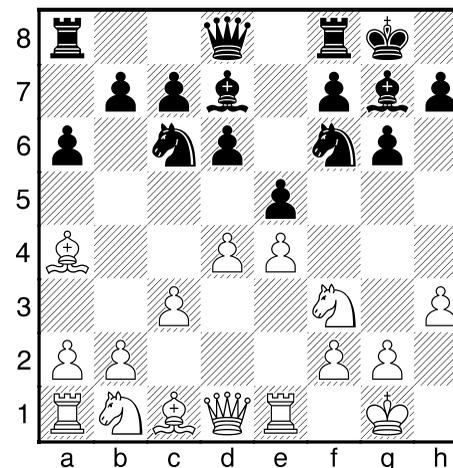
In 2022 I had some issues with health, and as result I lost about 100 points of FIDE rating. It made me start working on chess a lot and completely change my opening repertoire. Many years ago I got an idea that it would be logical to fianchetto the dark-squared bishop in the Ruy Lopez, instead of the traditional ...♘e7-♖e8-♘f8 etc. This is how I started analyzing the Steinitz variation; but I couldn't even begin to imagine how complicated this opening was! I can say that the main line is one of the most complicated for playing and analyzing. This past year this opening has brought me a huge number of points, and the following game is one of the best games I ever played.

Noritsyn, Nikolay (2546) Sambuev, Bator (2514)

C79

Canadian Championship Toronto
(6.1), 09.04.2023

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6
4.♙a4 d6 5.0-0 ♙d7 6.c3 ♘f6
7.♖e1 g6 8.d4 ♙g7 9.h3 0-0



10.♙c2

So we got some mix between a Ruy Lopez and a King's Indian, and also it can transpose to something like Benoni, e.g. 10.♘bd2 exd4 11.cxd4 ♘b4 12.♙xd7 ♖xd7 13.♘f1 c5 14.a3 ♘c6 15.d5.

10...♘h5 11.♙e3

Computers say the best move here is 11.a4, which is what Shirov played against me (see below).

11...♔h8!

The point is to have ...♖g8 in the

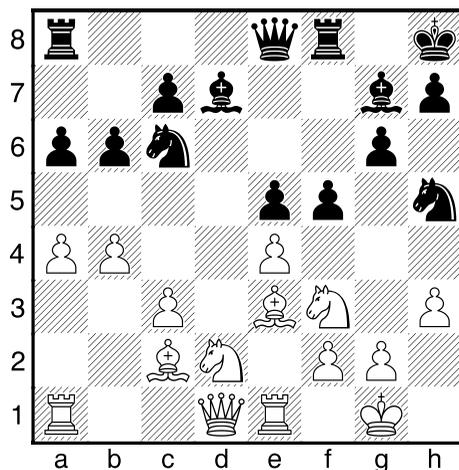


case of de de, ♖c5.

12. ♖bd2 ♔e8 13.dxe5

Probably 13. ♖c4 is a bit more accurate.

13...dxe5 14.b4 f5 15.a4 b6



16. ♖b3?!

It's not a mistake yet, but it becomes clear that White underestimates Black's attack on the kingside. It would be better to keep more pieces around the king with 16. ♖f1.

16...f4 17. ♖c1 g5!

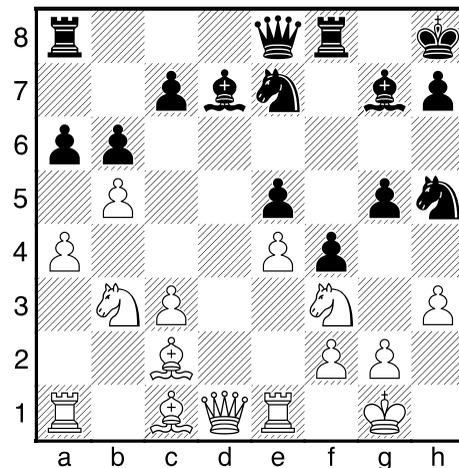
This move obviously came as unpleasant surprise for White.

18.b5

If 18. ♖xg5 then 18... ♖d8!

followed by ... ♖g6 with a huge attack.

18... ♖e7!



I wanted to keep my a8-rook on the board.

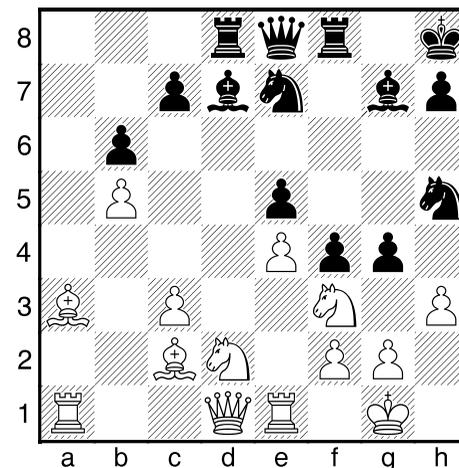
19. ♖a3?!

Too slow. It was necessary to launch counterplay on the Queenside: 19.a5! g4! 20.hxg4 ♖xg4 21.axb6 cxb6 22.bxa6 ♖g6 with very sharp play.

19...axb5 20.axb5 ♖d8

21. ♖bd2 g4

GM Bator Sambuev



22. ♖h2?

Now Black is winning. White had to take 22.hxg4 ♖xg4 and now 23. ♖e2 ♖f6 24. ♖b3! taking the g-file under control. Black's attack looks scary, but the computer says it's still equal, e.g. 24... ♖g6 25. ♖ed1! ♖g8!? 26. ♖xg8 ♖xg8 27. ♖xe7 (27. ♖f1 ♖f5!∞) 27... ♖xe7 28. ♖f1□ (28. ♖a7? ♖h3+) 28... ♖e6

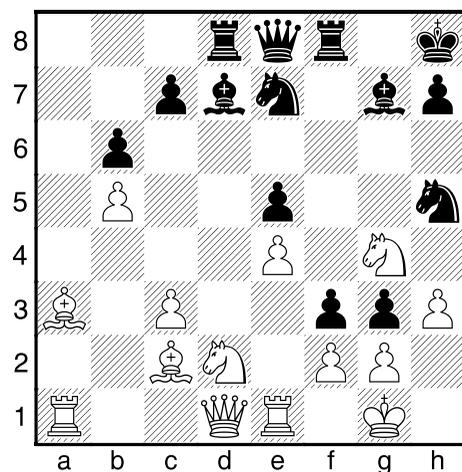


29. ♔e1! (29. ♘e1? f3! 30. ♘dxf3 ♘f4-+) 29... ♖xg2 30. ♖f1 The computer says 0.00, but from a practical point of view it's definitely easier to play for Black.

22...g3 ♖-+ 23. ♘g4

23. ♘hf3 gxf2+ 24. ♔xf2 ♕f6 with an irresistible attack; or, 23.fxg3 fxg3 24. ♘hf1 ♘f4 25. ♘xg3 ♕xh3 winning.

23...f3!



editor – the black pawn on g3 is not a typo.

24.gxf3 ♘f4 25.fxg3 ♘xh3+
26. ♔g2 ♕xg4

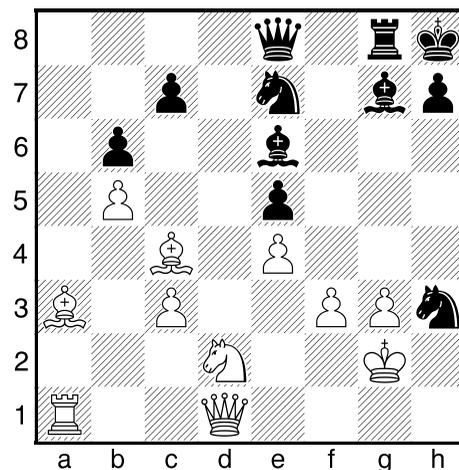
White could resign here but preferred to play for another 20 moves. The rest is just matter of simple technique.

27. ♖e3

editor: 27.fxg4 ♖f2+ ♖ 28. ♔xh3 ♖dxd2-+ and White has to give up the ♖ to stop mate.

27...♕e6 28. ♖d3 ♖xd3

29. ♕xd3 ♖g8 30. ♕c4



30...♕f6!? 31. ♕xe6 ♘f4+
32. ♔f2 ♘xe6 33. ♖b3 ♖f7
34. ♖h1 ♖d8 35. ♘f1 ♖d3
36. ♖c2 ♖d7 37. ♘e3 ♕g5
38. ♕c1 ♘c5 39. ♔g2 ♖d3
40. ♖e1 ♖b3 41. ♖e2 ♕xe3
42. ♕xe3 ♖xc3 43. ♔h3 ♖c2
44. ♖d1 ♖d3 45. ♖a1 ♖d7+
46.g4 ♘g6 47. ♖d1 ♖e7
48.g5 ♘e6

Maybe there were no spectacular moves and combinations, but I played very accurately in an

extremely complicated position that I had never played before.

0-1

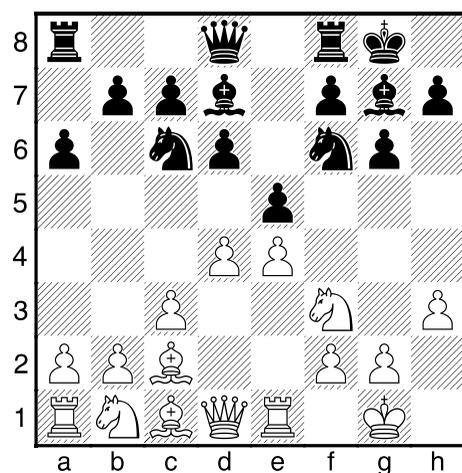


notes:**GM Bator Sambuev****Shirov, Alexei (2668)
Sambuev, Bator (2462)**

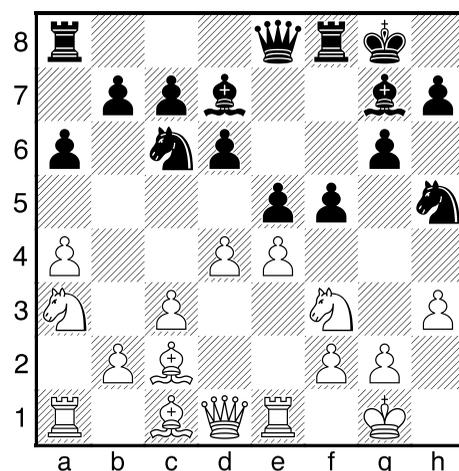
C79

Morocco King's Cup (3),
15.08.2023**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6
4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 d6**

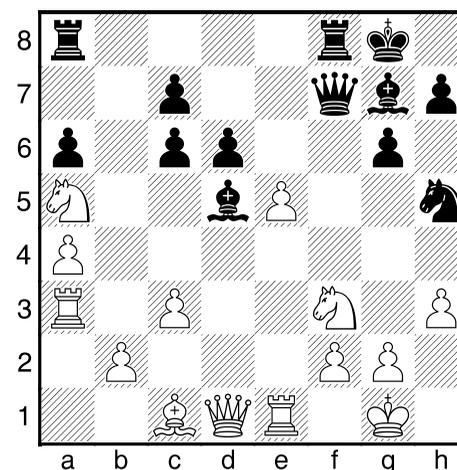
This move order allows me to avoid some lines. It doesn't mean I was scared of something, I just wanted to get a particular position.

**6.♖e1 ♙d7 7.c3 g6 8.d4 ♙g7
9.h3 0-0 10.♙c2****10...♘h5!?**

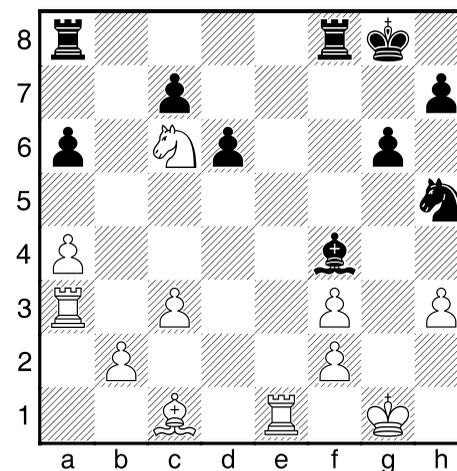
This is not the only possible plan, and not even the best one. I've been analyzing this Steinitz Lopez for more than one year, played already about 20 tournament games in it... and still don't have the feeling that I understand it well enough.

11.a4 ♙e8 12.♘a3 f5

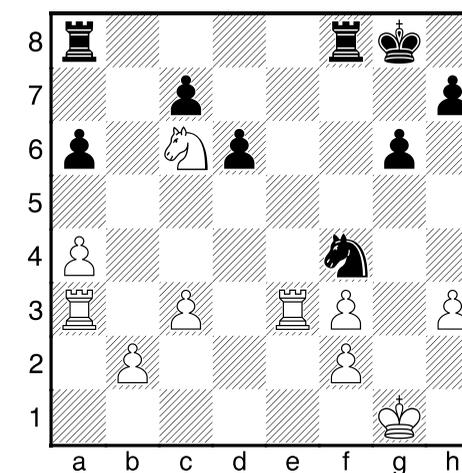
I had analyzed this line until the endgame and couldn't imagine that my opponent had done the same. But during the game I was literally shocked: it turned out that there was some correspondence game that I did not have in my database, but he did!

13.♘c4 fxe4 14.♙xe4 ♙f7**15.dxe5! ♙e6 16.♙xc6 bxc6
17.♘a5 ♙d5 18.♖a3!**

Here I realized that somehow my opponent was ready for this line. On the other hand, this ending is not dangerous for Black, the only problem is that I didn't analyze that far.

**18...♙xf3 19.♙xf3 ♙xf3
20.gxf3 ♙xe5 21.♘xc6 ♙f4!****22.♙e3**

editor – Four months later, White *unimproved* with: 22.♙xf4 ♘xf4 23.♖b3 ♘xh3+ 24.♙h2 ♘g5 (24...♖xf3∞) 25.♙g2 ♖xf3 26.♖b8+ ♖xb8 27.♘xb8 a5= ½-½. Miranda Mesa,E (2495)– Figueredo Losada,L (2379) 33rd Carlos Torre Memorial op, 2023.

22...♙xe3 23.♖xe3 ♘f4**24.♖b3**

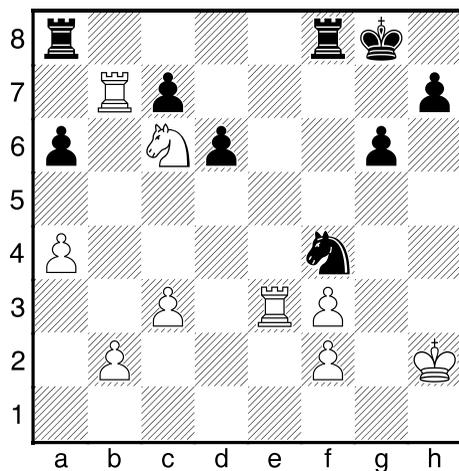
I was sure that this position cannot be dangerous for Black and considered only couple of natural moves like 24.♙h2 ♘d5!; or 24.h4 ♘d5! The text move I didn't analyze.

24...♘xh3+

Here is a forcing way to get a

draw: 24...♘d5 25.♘e7+ ♘xe7
26.♞xe7 ♞ab8 (ed. - 26...♞f7??
27.♞xf7 ♔xf7 28.♞b7 ♞c8
29.♞a7+-) 27.♞xb8 ♞xb8 28.♞xc7
♞xb2 29.♞c6 d5=. The text move
is also OK.

25.♔h2 ♘f4 26.♞b7

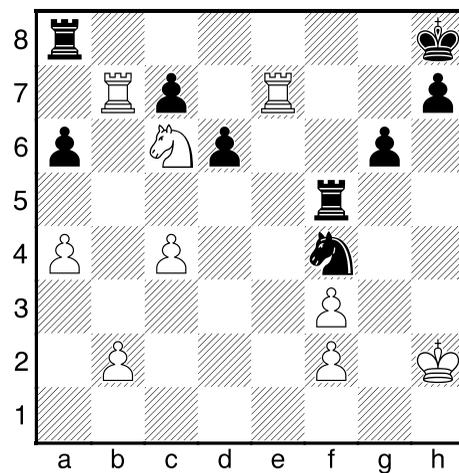


26...♔h8?!

For some reason I didn't like position after the more natural 26...♞f7, but it's totally safe for Black; for example:

27.♞b8+ ♞xb8 28.♘xb8 c5
29.b4 cxb4 30.cxb4 ♘d5
31.♞e8+ ♔g7 32.♘xa6 ♞xf3=;
or
27.a5 ♔g7 28.c4 d5! 29.c5 g5
30.b4 h5= and there's no way
for White to make progress.

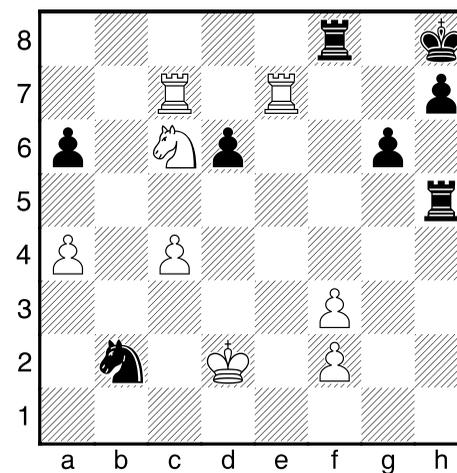
27.c4 ♞f5 28.♞e7



28...♞af8??

After this move White could win. I just didn't realize that in this position move order really matters. Correct was: 28...♞h5+! 29.♔g1 (or 29.♔g3 ♞f8 30.♞bxc7 ♞h3+ 31.♔g4 ♞h1 32.♞f7 ♞xf7 33.♞xf7 ♘e6 34.♔g3 ♞g1+ 35.♔h2 ♞c1 36.b3 ♘c5 37.♘a5 ♞b1=) 29...♞g8!! (on any other move White wins) 30.♞exc7 (30.♞bxc7 g5 31.♞cd7 (by the way, the only move) 31...g4 32.♞d8 gxf3+=) 30...♞e8 31.♘e7 ♞g5+ 32.♔f1 ♞h5 33.♔e1 d5! 34.♔d2 (34.c5 ♘e6 35.♞c6 ♘xc5 36.♞xc5 ♞e5+=) 34...dxc4 35.♞xc4 g5 White still has some chances, but with accurate play it should be a draw.

29.♞bxc7 ♞h5+ 30.♔g1!
♞g5+ 31.♔f1 ♞h5 32.♔e1
♘d3+ 33.♔d2 ♘xb2



34.♘b4?

This move looks logical because when the knight appears on f6 it's over. The only problem is that now the knight will never reach this square! White had to choose a longer route: 34.♘d4! ♘xa4 35.♘e6 ♞b8 36.♘f4 ♞h6 37.♘d5 g5 38.♞f7+- and ♘f6 wins.

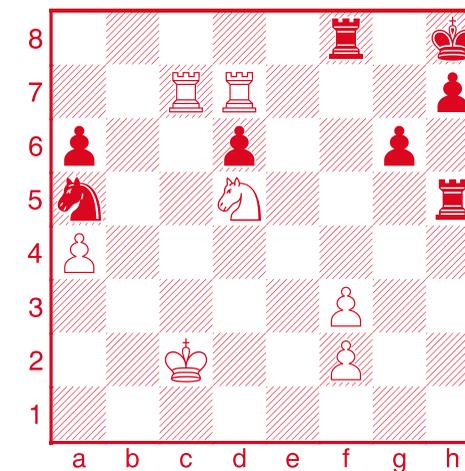
There was another way to win, much less obvious: 34.c5!? e.g. 34...♔g8 35.♔c2 ♘c4 36.♔c3 ♞h4 37.f4!! ♞xf4 38.♞e8+ ♞f8 39.♘e7+ ♔f7 40.♞xf8+ ♔xf8 41.c6+-.

34...♔g8□

After this "only move" Black is safe, probably White missed that.

35.♞g7+

35.♘d5 ♘xc4+ 36.♔c2 (36.♔c3 ♞xf3+ 37.♔b4□= (37.♔xc4?? ♞h4+-+)) 36...♘a5 37.♞g7+ ♔h8 38.♞gd7: *Analysis Diagram*



White's pieces could hardly be better coordinated while all Black's pieces are scattered around the edge of the board. Clearly there's no way to survive this when Shirov is White?

Clearly not: 38...♞xd5?? 39.♞xh7+ ♔g8 40.♞cg7#, or 38...♞h2?? 39.♘f6!+-.

38...♘c6□ 39.♘f6 (39.♞xc6 deflects the ♞ from the 7th, allowing 39...♞xd5 40.♞xa6=



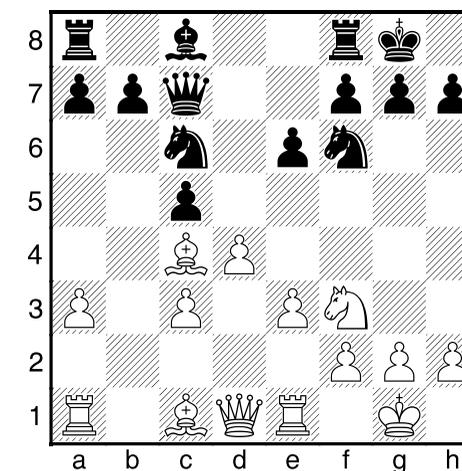
notes: GM Bator Sambuev

Sambuev, Bator (2462)
Bosiocic, Marin (2541)

E59

Morocco King's Cup Casablanca
(2), 15.08.2023

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4
4.e3 0-0 5.♙d3 d5 6.♘f3 c5
7.0-0 ♘c6 8.a3 ♙xc3 9.bxc3
dxc4 10.♙xc4 ♚c7 11.♖e1!?



A surprisingly rare move. Looks like nobody understands what's the point.

11...e5 12.h3!

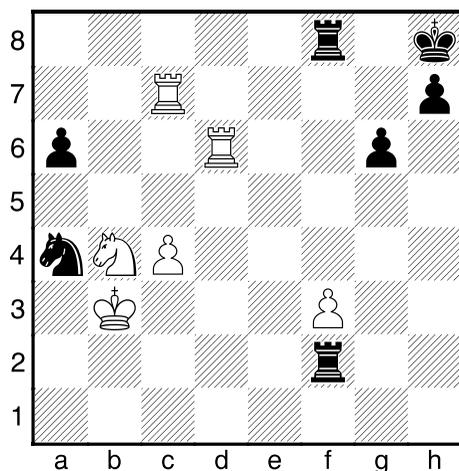
Not 12.d5?! ♘a5 (12...
e4? 13.dxc6 exf3 14.♙xf3±
[Reshevsky–Euwe](#), Candidates



(40.♖cc7?? ♖c5+-+) 39...♖c5+□
40.♔d2 ♘e7□= blocking the
mate on h7 and trading either a
♖ or the ♘; e.g. 41.♖a7 ♖xf6□
42.♖xe7 ♖c8=.

35...♔h8 36.♖ge7 ♔g8
37.♔c2 ♘xa4= 38.♖g7+
38.♘d5 ♘c5=.

38...♔h8 39.♖gd7 ♖h2!
40.♖xd6 ♖xf2+ 41.♔b3



41...a5!?

My opponent already was in time trouble, so I decide to complicate things a bit. After the simple:

41...♘b2 42.♘xa6 ♖8xf3+
43.♔b4 ♘d3+ 44.♔b5 ♘e5
45.c5 Black has no chances to
convert the extra pawn.

42.♘d5??

I'd been hoping for this move. After the game Shirov said that he simply forgot that he could take my knight:
42.♔xa4 axb4
43.♔xb4
♖8xf3=.

42...♖b8+!

43.♔a3

♖f1□-+

44.♘b4

♖a1+

editor –

44...axb4+

45.♔xa4

♖xf3-+ also wins.

45.♘a2 ♘c3

0-1

unidentified player

*having the time
of his life*



Chess Canada Spring

Tournament, 1953. (1-0, 20)

13.d6! ♖d8 14.♘xe5 ♘xc4
15.♘xc4 ♕e6 16.♚d3 ♘g4
17.♚e2 ♚h4 18.h3 ♚xf2+=.

12...e4

Probably it's better to play 12...h6.

One of the key ideas: 12...♕f5?!
13.e4!:

13...♕g6? 14.d5 ♖ad8?
15.♕g5+- ½-½ Injac,T
(2391)–Aditya,M (2505)
Fagernes op–A, 2023;

13...♘xe4?! 14.♘h4 ♚d7
15.♚f3 ♘d6 16.♘xf5 ♚xf5
17.♚xf5 ♘xf5 18.dxe5±;

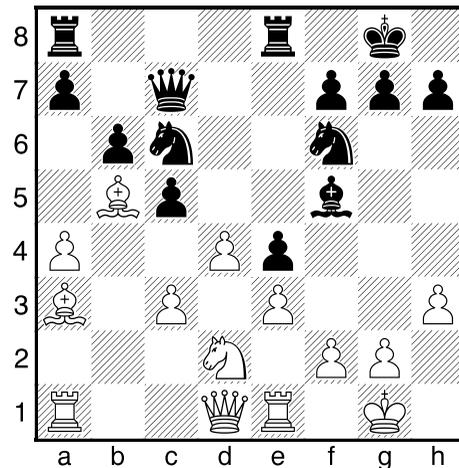
13... ♕xe4 14.♘g5 ♕g6 15.dxe5
♘xe5 16.♕f4 ♖fe8 17.♘e6! fxe6
18.♕xe5±.

editor – 12...cxd4?! 13.cxd4
♘xd4?! 14.♕xf7+±.

13.♘d2 ♕f5 14.a4 ♖fe8

It was better to delay this move:
14...b6 15.♕a3 ♖ad8 and after
16.♕b5 the knight is not pinned.

15.♕a3 b6 16.♕b5



Now the position is quite unpleasant for Black because it's not easy to find moves.

16...♖ad8

It was better to unpin the knight immediately: 16...♖e6 e.g. 17.f4 (probably it's better to play 17.♘f1) 17...♘d5 (17...exf3? 18.♚xf3 ♕g6 19.e4! cxd4 20.e5 dxc3 21.♚xc3 ♘d5 22.♚c4 a6! 23.♚xd5 axb5 24.♕d6 ♚d7 25.♖ac1 ♖c8 26.♚xb5 and the position is close to winning.) 18.dxc5 bxc5 19.♕xc5 ♖g6 20.♚h1 ♖d8 21.♖c1 ♚h6 22.♕f1 (one of the ideas of the move ♖e1: the f1 square is available for minor pieces) 22...♘f6 (22...g5 23.g4 ♕c8 24.fxg5 ♖h4 25.♚e2 ♘e5 26.♚h2 ♘xg4 27.♚xc7 ♘xc7 28.♕d4 and

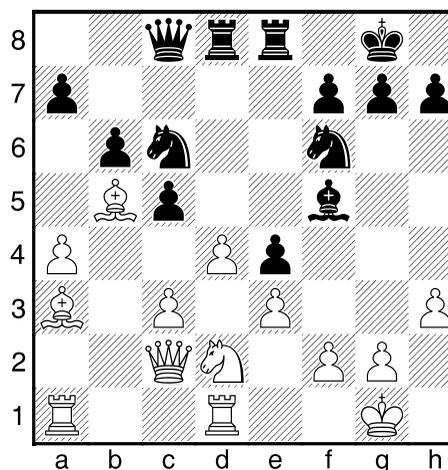
White is slightly better.) 23.♕d4 g5! 24.fxg5 ♘g4 25.♚xg4! ♕xg4 26.gxh6. The position is roughly equal, but it's easier to play for White.

17.♚c2

White's only inaccuracy in the game.

The immediate 17.♘f1 is better, e.g. 17...♖e6?! 18.♘g3 ♕g6 19.♚c2 ♘a5 20.♘e2! cxd4 21.♘xd4 ♖e5 22.♕b4 ♖g5 23.♕xa5 bxa5 24.♖ed1±.

17...♚c8 18.♖ed1



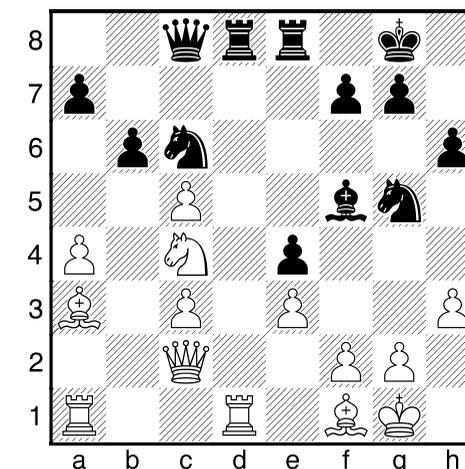
18...♖e6?

It's not easy to find the way to equalize: 18...♖d5! 19.c4 (19.♘f1 ♕xh3!∞) 19...♘xd4! 20.exd4 e3

21.♚b2 ♕xh3! 22.cxd5□ (22.gxh3?? ♖g5+-) 22...♕xg2!
23.♘f1 (23.♚xg2?? ♚g4+-) 23...♚g4! (23...♚h3? 24.fxe3□ ♚h1+ 25.♚f2±) 24.♘xe3 ♖xe3□ 25.fxe3 ♕xd5+= 26.♚f1 ♘e4 27.♚h2 ♚f3+=.

There is another way, but it's definitely not for human chess: 18...h6!! 19.♕f1 ♘h7 (this is the point, but the complications are only beginning) 20.♘c4 ♘g5 21.dxc5:

Analysis Diagram



21...♕xh3! and somehow it's a draw:

22.gxh3 ♘xh3+ 23.♕xh3 ♚xh3=
editor – White can't defend the checks on the light squares without allowing a perp; e.g.



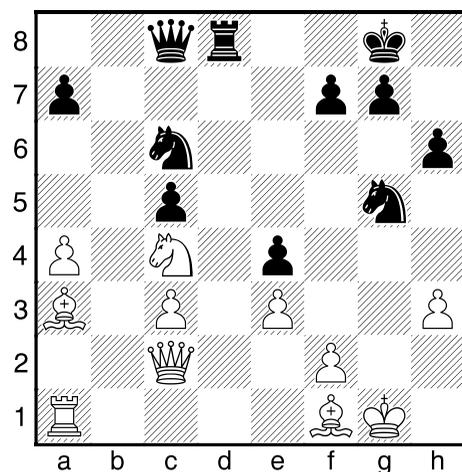


Chess Canada Spring

24. ♖e2?? ♘e5! (24... ♖e6-+)
25. ♘xe5 ♖xd1+ 26. ♖xd1 ♖xe5-+
that thing on a3 may look like a
piece, but it doesn't move like
one.

22. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 (after 22... ♘xd8
23. ♖e2 White can keep playing.)
23.gxh3 bxc5!!:

Analysis Diagram



24. ♗g2 ♘f3+ 25. ♗xf3 exf3
26. ♖h2 ♖e6 27. ♘b2 ♖e5+
28. ♖h1 ♖e6=;

24. ♖d1 ♘f3+ 25. ♖g2 ♖d5!!
26. ♖xe4 (26. ♖xd5 ♘e1+-+)
26... ♘g5! 27. ♖xd5 ♖xh3+
28. ♖g1 ♘f3+ 29. ♖xf3 ♖xf3 and
according to the computer it's
just 0.00.

It is interesting to see why ...h6

is better than ...h5: 18...h5?!
19. ♗f1 ♘h7 20. ♘c4 ♘g5 21. dxc5
♗xh3 22. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 (22... ♘xd8
23. ♖d1! ♗g4? 24. ♖d5!+- X ♘g5
and ♘d6 fork.) 23.gxh3 bxc5
24. ♖d1 ♘f3+ 25. ♖g2 ♖d5
26. ♖xe4 ♘g5 27. ♖h4!±. It
proves to be that the pawn on
h6 makes the whole difference:
knight must be protected.

19. ♗f1!

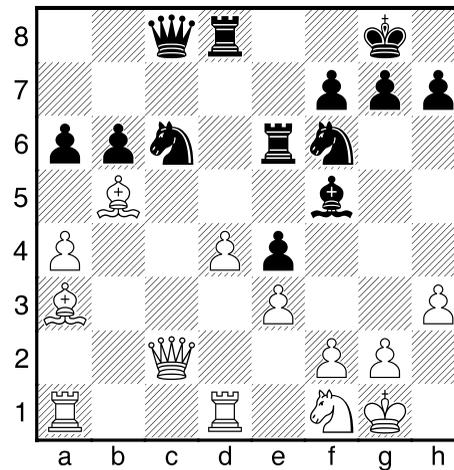
This natural move required very
precise calculating.

19...cxd4

If White gets to
play ♘g3 then
Black loses
all attacking
chances and
White's bishop
pair and strong
centre will tell
very shortly. That
was Black's idea,
but he missed
one intermediate
move.

editor – the
intermediate
move... on move
28!

20.cxd4 a6



21.d5!

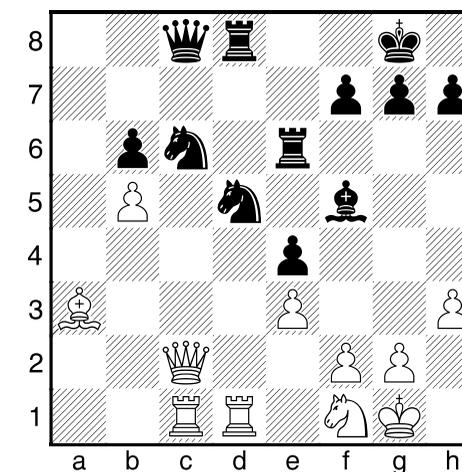
21. ♗e2?? ♘xd4∞.

21... ♘xd5?

Now White
wins. Black
had to play
21... ♖xd5
22. ♖xd5
♘xd5 23. ♗e2
that was my
idea. Now
all Black's
pieces are
placed very
unfortunately
and the
only White
task is to

gain the pawn back in better
circumstances. 23... ♖e8! (the
only move) 24. ♖b3!? (24. ♗xa6
♖xa6 25. ♖xc6±) 24... ♗e6
25. ♖b2 ♘a5 26. ♖c1 ♖b7
27. ♘g3 ♘f6?! 28. ♖b4!? ♘c6
29. ♖d6 ♖c8 30. ♗xa6 ♖xa6
31. ♖xc6±.

22. ♖ac1! axb5 23.axb5



23... ♗xh3

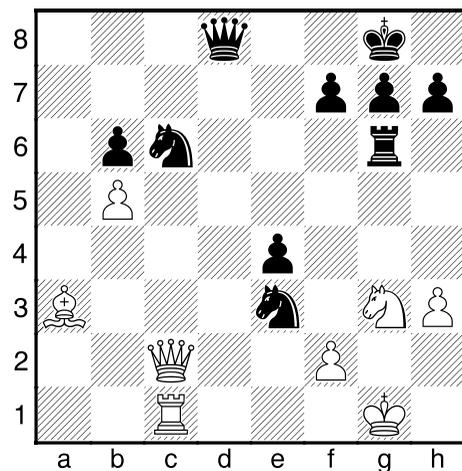
If Black had traded rooks on
move 21 he could play here
23... ♖a8, but now there will be
24.bxc6 ♖xa3 25.c7∞+-.

23... ♘a7? 24. ♖xc8 ♘xc8
25. ♖xd5+-.

24.gxh3 ♖g6+ 25. ♘g3 ♘xe3
26. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8



**GM Martin
Bosioc**



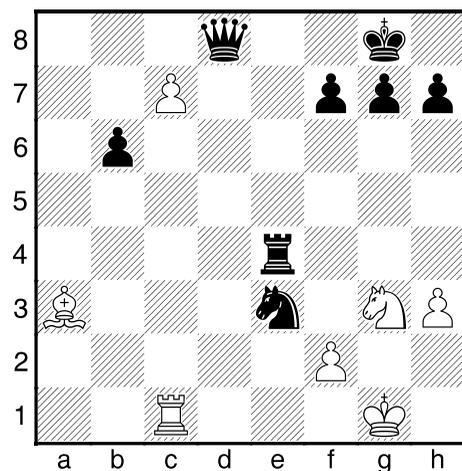
27. ♖xe4!

27. ♖b3 also wins: 27... ♘d4
28. ♖xe3 ♘f5 29. ♖d2!, but the
text move is stronger.

27... ♜e6 28. bxc6!

This is the point.

28... ♜xe4 29. c7 ♠

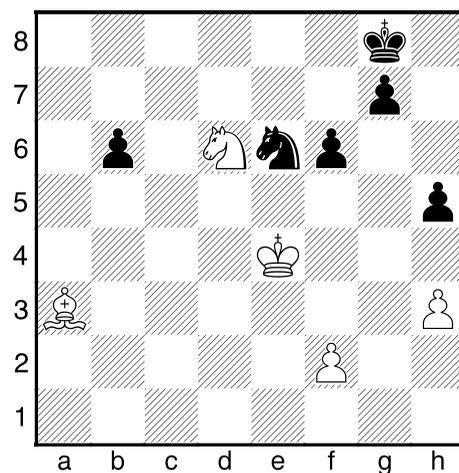


editor – Worth a diagram:
Materially, White has only a ♙

for a ♔, but all of Black's pieces
are hanging and White's pieces
perfectly support the passed
pawn.

29... ♖c8 30. ♘xe4 ♘d5
31. ♘d6 ♖xc7 32. ♜xc7 ♘xc7
The rest is simple.

33. ♖g2 f6 34. ♖f3 h5 35. ♖e4
♘e6



36. f4 ♖h7 37. ♙c1 ♘c5+
38. ♖d5 ♖g6 39. ♙e3 h4
40. f5+ ♖h7 41. ♘c8 ♘d3
42. ♘xb6 g6 43. ♖e6 ♖g7
44. ♘d5

I'm proud of this game: only one
inaccuracy and very precise
calculation in a very complex
middlegame.

1-0

IM Alex Reprintsev
watched by familiar faces

notes:
GM Bator Sambuev

Reprintsev, Alexander
(2361)
Sambuev, Bator (2510)
B24

Excelsior April Open Toronto
CAN (4.1), 23.04.2023

1. e4 c5 2. g3 ♘c6

The most principled move, from

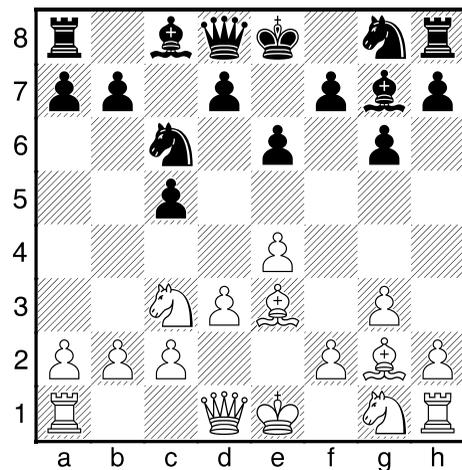
my point of view, is 2...d5; but I
know practically nothing about
the following weird line: 3. exd5
♖xd5 4. ♘f3 ♙g4 5. ♙g2 ♖e6+
6. ♖f1∞.

3. ♙g2 g6 4. ♘c3

So we get a Closed Sicilian. It's
difficult to gain any profit from
the absence of the knight on c3:
4. ♘e2 ♙g7 5. c3 e5!

4... ♙g7 5. d3 e6 6. ♙e3





6...d4

A small inaccuracy. More accurate is 6...d6, and only after 7. dge2 d4. My idea was to do without ...d6 so I could play ...d5 in one move if possible.

7. dge2

Here White could play 7. dce2! followed by c3 with some edge.

7...de7 8.a3?!

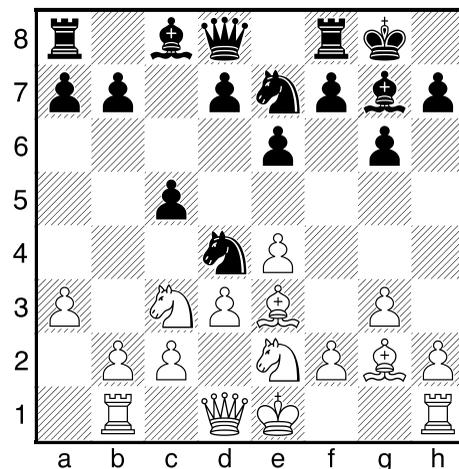
Very strange plan. It would be better to launch play on the other side: 8.h4 The idea is to secure g5 square for the dark-squared bishop: 8...h5 9.0-0 0-0 10. g5

8...0-0

After the previous White move it was very unlikely that my opponent would play h4, so I

castled. From a computer point of view, more accurate is 8...d6 in order to meet 9.h4 with 9...e5!

9. b1?!



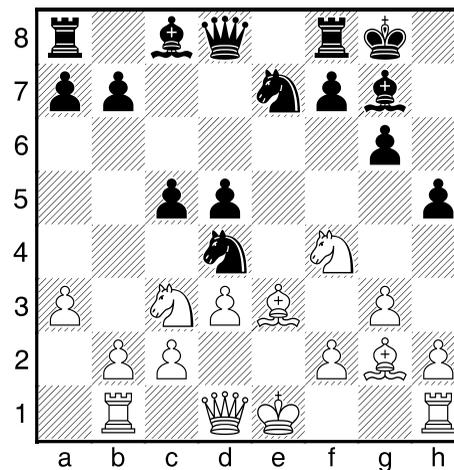
Yes, yes: we all know from Alpha Zero that in any position we should play 9.h4!

9...d5

At least consistent. Apparently, in a Closed Sicilian it's better to keep the pawn on d6: 9...d6 10.b4 b6. On the other hand, the text move is obviously not a mistake.

10. exd5 exd5

11. f4 h5!

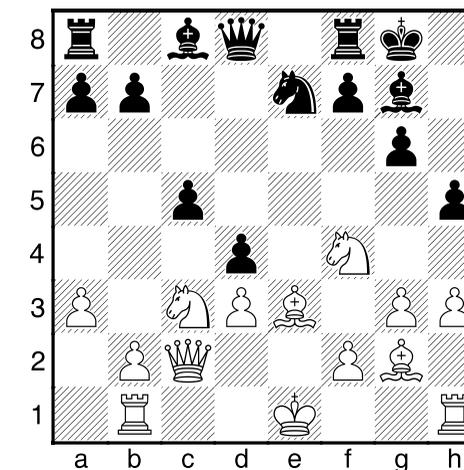


It's useful to provoke weakening.

12.h3

12. fxd5?? dxd5 13. gxd5 (13. dxd5 g4-+) 13... g4 14. f3 f5!-+.

12...xc2+! 13. xc2 d4

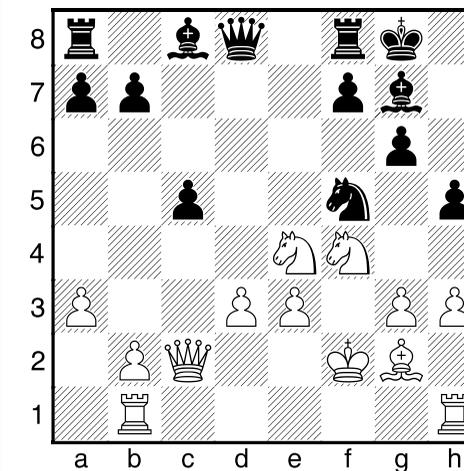


14. de4?

This move came as a pleasant surprise to me. I considered only 14. d2 dxc3 15. gxc3 f5 16.0-0 d4 17. gxd4 gxd4 18.b4 White's activity compensates for the opponent's bishop pair and better pawn structure.

14...dxe3 15. fxe3 f5

16. f2?



That's too optimistic. After the more cautious 16. ♖f2 Black is clearly better but White is still in business.

16...b6!

16... ♘d7 is probably a bit more accurate, but I wanted to protect c5, just in case.

I understood that this position is practically winning for me. Of course it was tempting to sacrifice something immediately: White is literally asking for this. I spent some time calculating different versions of a sacrifice on e3 but didn't find anything convincing. Black gets adequate compensation but not more, e.g. 16...h4 17.g4 ♘xe3 18. ♔xe3 f5 19. ♘xg6 ♖e8 20.gxf5 ♘xf5 21. ♖c4+ ♘e6 22. ♖xc5 ♘f7 23. ♘f4 ♖c8 24. ♖xa7 b6 25. ♖bc1 ♖d4+ 26. ♔f3 ♘h5+!? 27. ♘xh5 ♖xd3+ 28. ♔g4 ♖e2+ 29. ♔xh4 ♖xe4+ 30. ♘xe4 ♖xe4+ 31. ♔g5 ♖e5+ 32. ♔g4 ♖e2+=.

Eventually I realized that my main enemy is the knight on e4; so it should be eliminated.

17. ♖c4

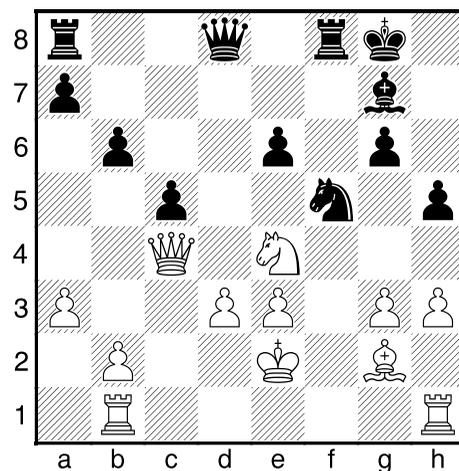
Frankly speaking, I didn't see this move, and somehow it confused me. I was ready to sacrifice a piece on the previous move, but now for some reason I chose to protect the pawn.

After 17. ♘xc5 it's time to sacrifice: 17...h4! 18. ♘xa8 (18.g4 ♘xe3+) 18...hxg3+ 19. ♔e2 bxc5 20. ♘e4 ♘h6 21. ♖hf1 ♘xe3! 22. ♔xe3 ♘xh3 23. ♖xc5 ♖h4 24. ♖f3 ♘g4+.

17...♘e6?

After 17... ♘b7 18. ♘xg6 b5! 19. ♖a2 ♖xd3 Black wins.

18. ♘xe6 fxe6 19. ♔e2



Somehow I missed this simple move, and after a long think I realized that now White's king is

totally safe.

19...♖e7

My very first thought was 19... ♔h8! but I wasn't sure what to do after the simple 20. ♖hf1 (20. ♖xe6?? ♘xe3! 21. ♔xe3 ♖d4+ 22. ♔e2 ♖ae8+ and ... ♖f2+ is next.) I missed 20... ♖d5! and Black is clearly better.

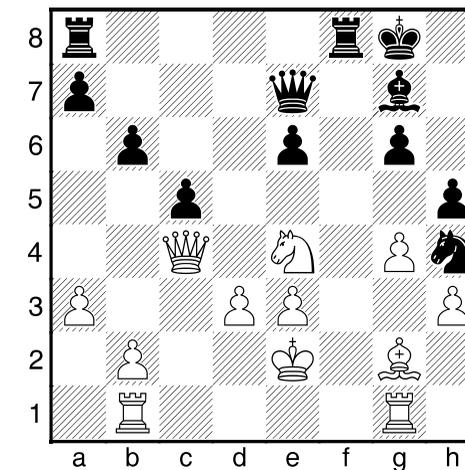
20.g4!

20. ♖hf1? b5! 21. ♖xb5 ♘d4! 22. ♖f3 ♘xe3.

20...♘h4

Here I missed an interesting possibility: 20...b5!? 21. ♖xb5 ♘h4 and White should give up the bishop: 22. ♖xc5 (22. ♖hg1? ♖c7!-) 22... ♖xc5 23. ♘xc5 ♘xg2 but after the accurate 24. b4! according to the computer it's equal. But not 24. ♖hg1?! which gives Black some chances: 24... ♘xe3! 25. ♔xe3 ♖ad8 26. b4! (26. ♘b3 ♖d5) 26... ♘d4+ 27. ♔e4 ♘g1 28. ♖xg1.

21. ♖hg1



21...hxg4?!

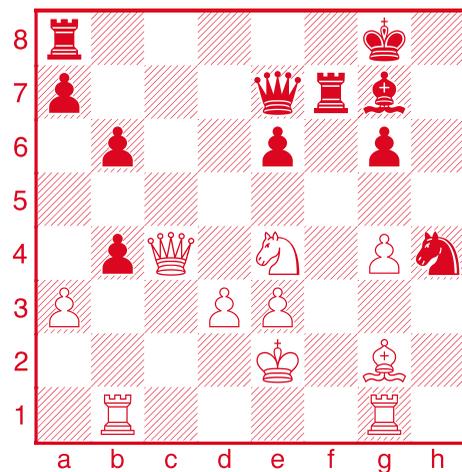
I had to accept that fact that I lost all advantage and just to continue playing normal chess: 21... ♖ae8 22.gxh5 ♖c7 with dangerous threats. White still should be accurate: 23.h6! ♘xh6 24. ♘f6+! ♖xf6 25. ♖xh4= Instead I followed a weird idea that could lead me to defeat.

22.hxg4 ♖f7?? 23.b4

White could win after 23. ♘g5! ♘xg2 24. ♘xf7 ♘h4 (24... ♘xe3 25. ♖e4!+) 25. ♖bf1 ♖f8 26.g5!+-.

23...cxb4





24. ♖xb4??

Any other capture keeps the position equal, now Black suddenly wins.

editor – 24. ♖f6+? invites Black's ♖ in: 24... ♖xf6 ♘ 25. ♖gf1 (25. ♙xa8 ♖f2+–+; 25. ♖bf1 ♖b2+–+) 25... ♖e5 26. ♙xa8 (26. ♖xf7 ♘xg2–+) 26... ♖h2+–+.

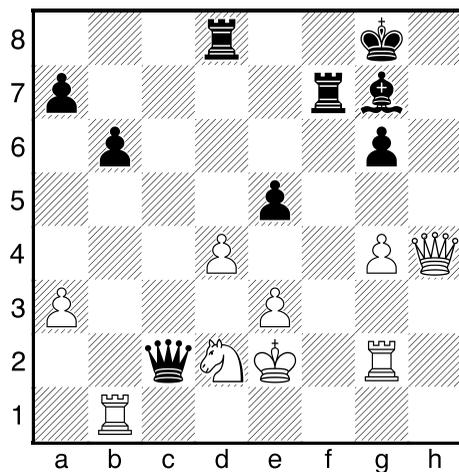
24... ♖c7!

Eyeing h2 and c2.

25. ♖e1 ♘xg2

25... ♖af8! 26. ♖xh4 ♖c2+ 27. ♘d2 ♙c3 28. ♖bd1 ♙xd2 29. ♖xd2 ♖f2+ is more convincing, but my way also works.

26. ♖xg2 ♖c2+ 27. ♘d2 ♖d8
28. d4 e5! 29. ♖h4



29... ♙f6

29... ♖dd7 is even better.

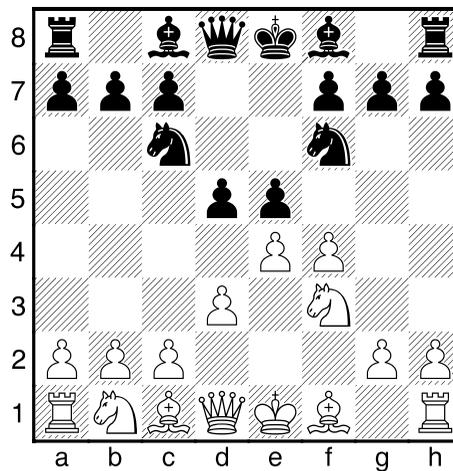
30. g5 exd4! 31. ♖e4 d3+
32. ♙e1 ♙c3 33. ♖xg6+ ♙f8
34. ♖h6+ ♙e7

0-1

When I was a kid I liked to play different tricky lines in the opening. For example, I used to play the Alekhine Defence, and there was one interesting line:

1. e4 ♘f6 2. d3

e5 3. f4 ♘c6 4. ♘f3 d5



5. exd5

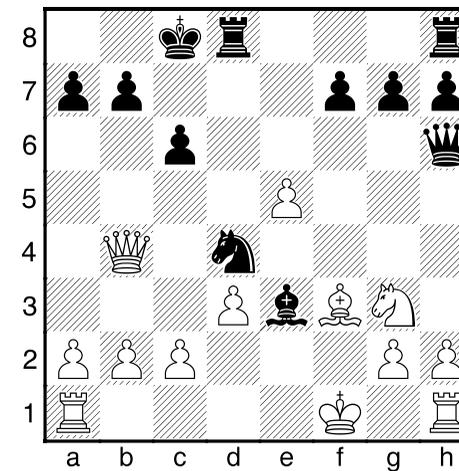
I was especially impressed by following line: 5. fxe5? dxe4! 6. exf6 exf3 7. ♖xf3 ♘d4! 8. ♖e4+ ♙e6 and it's practically winning for Black. – Sambuev

5... ♘xd5 6. fxe5
♙g4 7. ♙e2 ♙xf3
8. ♙xf3 ♖h4+
9. ♙f1

editor – ♘9. g3 ♖d4
10. c3 ♖xe5+ 11. ♖e2
♖xe2+ 12. ♙xe2± is
Alekhine's Stockfish-
approved analysis.

9... 0-0-0 10. ♘c3
♙c5 11. ♘e4 ♘e3+
12. ♙xe3 ♙xe3
13. ♖e1 ♖h6! ♣

14. ♘g3 ♘d4 15. ♖b4 c6



16. ♖a4

editor – ♘16. c3 ♘c2 17. ♘f5
♘xb4 18. ♘xh6 ♙xh6 19. cxb4
♖xd3 ♣, Alekhine, once again,
confirmed by Stockfish 16.

16... ♙b8 17. ♖d1 ♖he8 18. h4
♖f4 19. ♖h3 b5! 20. ♘h5 bxa4
21. ♘xf4 ♙xf4 22. c3 ♘xf3
23. ♖xf3 ♙xe5 24. ♖xf7 ♖f8

0-1

[Maroczy – Alekhine, New York, 1924.](#)

It is because of unusual lines like this that I like this line I played against the Dutch:



notes:

GM Bator Sambuev

Sambuev, Bator (2407)
Vlachos, Anatole (2454)

A04

Cannes 36e (8), 25.02.2023

1. Nf3 f5 2. d3

That's why I like this line against the Dutch: it can transpose to the game mentioned above.

Obviously it's not the best line, normal moves like 2.g3 or 2.c4 are definitely better. But this move is very tricky and leads to completely different positions.

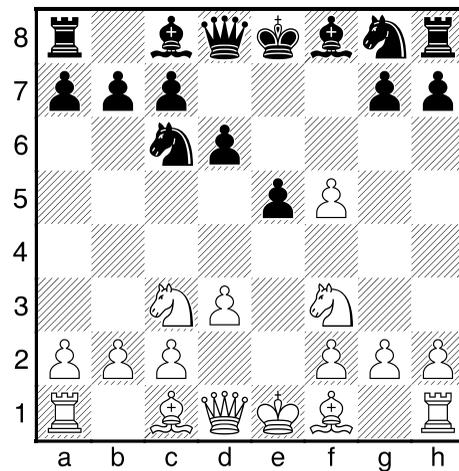
2... d6

It's difficult to stop 3.e4, e.g. 2... Nf6 3.e4 fxe4 4.dxe4 Nxe4 5. Nc3 Nf6 ? 6. Ng5 +.

3.e4 e5 4. Nc3 Nc6

Now in the case of 4... Nf6 5.d4 we transpose to Maroczy – Alekhine reversed, but it leads to an equal position. For many years I was sure that 5.d4 is the best move, but stronger is 5.exf5! Nxf5 6.d4 e4?! 7. Nh4 ! Ng4 8. Ne2 ±.

5.exf5



5... Nge7 !

That's why 4... Nc6 is more accurate. In the case of 5... Nxf5 6.d4 exd4 (6... e4 7.d5! exf3 8.dxc6 bxc6 9. Qxf3 ±) 7. Nxd4 Nxd4 8. Qxd4 c6 9.g4! Nxc2 10. Ng2 Qf6 (10... Qb6 11. Qc4 0-0-0 12.0-0+) 11. Qc4 this position is very dangerous for Black.

6.g4

I thought that this natural move is a novelty, but it proved to be that there were few correspondence games.

6... h5 7.gxh5 Nxf5

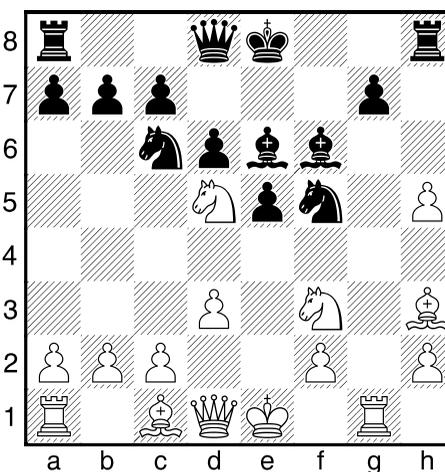
It's better than 7... Nxf5 8. Nh4 .

8. Rg1

A good alternative is 8.h4, and it was also played in some correspondence game.

8... Ne7 9. Nd5 Ne6 10. Nh3 Nf6

The best move according to the computer is 10... Rf8 and then 11. Nxe7 Qxe7 12. Rg6 ! with initiative.



11.h6

Better was 11. Ng5 Nxe5 12. Nxe5 Qd7 13. Nxf5 Nxf5 14.h6 Ne6 ! (the only move) 15.hxg7 Qxg7 16. Nf6 + Qf7 17. Ne4 (17. Qd2 !? Nd4 18.0-0-0 Nf3 19. Qc3 Rac8 ! 20. Ne4 Nxe4 21. Rxe4 Rxe4 22.f4 with a very sharp position, which the computer says is 0.00.) 17... Raf8 18.h4 Qe8 19. Rg3 ±.

Or 11. Nxf5 Nxf5 12.h6 Qd7 ! 13. Nxf6 + gxf6 14. Rg7 Qe6 15. Nh4 0-0-0 16. Qh5 Nh7 17. Ne3 f5 18. Ng5 Rd7 19.b3

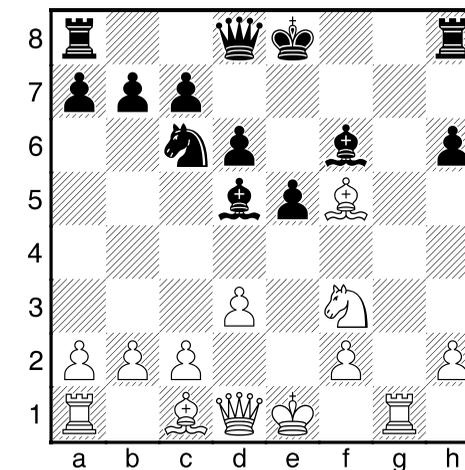
White is still better. It is important that Black should find some moves not to get into trouble while White's moves are quite natural.

11... Nxd5

11... Qd7 may lead to the variation from the previous note: 12. Nxf5 Nxf5 13. Nxf6 + (13. Nh4 !? Nxe4 ?? 14. Rxe4 +) 13... gxf6 14. Rg7 .

It is interesting that in the case of 11... gxe4 the winning move is 12.c4!! Black is completely paralyzed.

12. Nxf5 gxe4





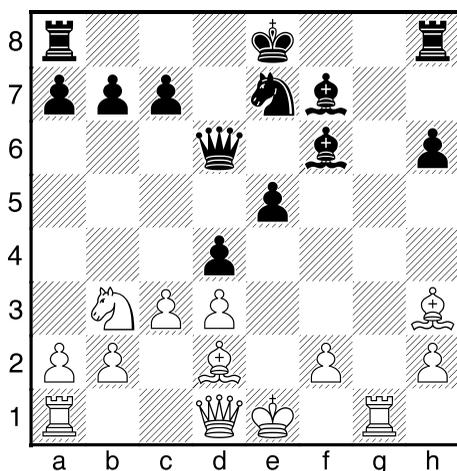
13. ♖d2?!

White had to play 13.c4! ♙xf3! (13...♙f7?! 14. ♖b3 and White is clearly better.) 14. ♖xf3 ♘d4 15. ♙g6+ ♚e7 16. ♖d5 the position looks dangerous, but apparently Black should be fine.

13...♙f7 14.c3 d5 15. ♖b3 ♖d6 16. ♙e3

The idea was to provoke ...d5-d4. More cautious is 16. ♖f3.

16...♘e7 17. ♙h3 d4 18. ♙d2



18...e4?

I'd been counting on this move. Black had to play 18...dxc3 19. ♙xc3 ♖d8 with equal chances in this sharp position.

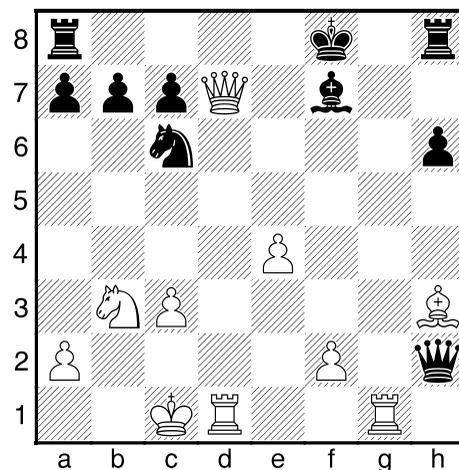
19.dxe4 dxc3

Here my opponent realized that

he missed 19...♖xh2 20. ♖g4! (any other move and Black wins) 20...♙e6 21. ♖xe6 ♖xg1+ 22. ♚e2 ♖g6 23. ♘d4+.

editor: Black can stop the attack with 23...♙xd4 24. ♖xg6+ ♘xg6 25.cxd4+- but White's central passers and ♙-pair are a winning combo.

20. ♙xc3 ♙xc3+ 21.bxc3 ♖xh2 22. ♖d7+ ♚f8 23.0-0-0± ♘c6?



Now all I need is some accuracy.

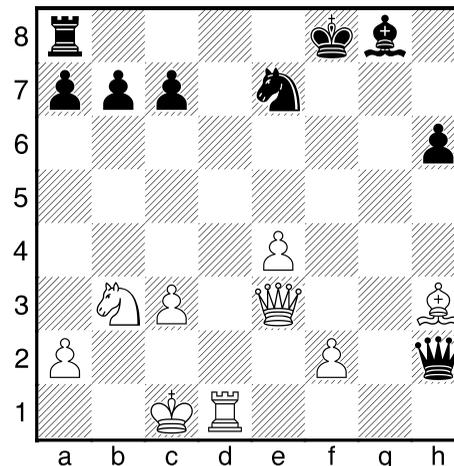
24. ♖f5

24. ♘c5 was stronger, but the text move doesn't spoil anything.

24...♖g8

24...♖e5 25. ♖xe5 ♘xe5 26.f4 looks totally hopeless.

25. ♖c5+ ♘e7 26. ♖xg8+ ♙xg8 27. ♖e3!



Now everything is protected.

27...♙f7 28. ♖xh6+ ♚g8 29. ♖g5+ ♚f8

29...♘g6 30. ♙e6 ♖f4+ 31. ♖xf4 ♘xf4 32. ♙xf7+ ♚xf7 33. ♖d7+-.

30. ♘c5! ♖xh3 31. ♘d7+ ♚e8 32. ♖g7 ♘d5 33. ♖xd5 ♙xd5 34. ♘f6+

1-0



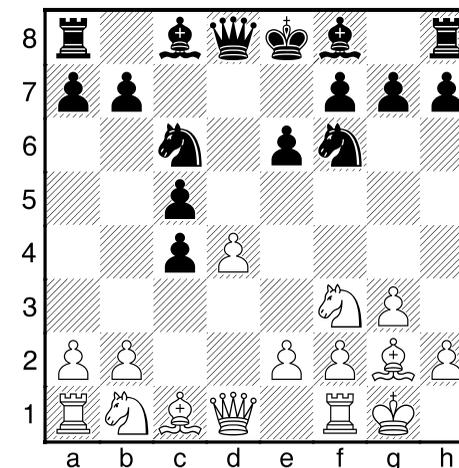
notes: GM Bator Sambuev

Meshkovs, Nikita (2573)
Sambuev, Bator (2448)

E04

Transnational Crown Montreal
CAN (4.6), 09.06.2023

1.d4 e6 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3.g3 d5
4. ♙g2 c5 5.c4 dxc4 6.0-0
♘c6



7. ♖a4

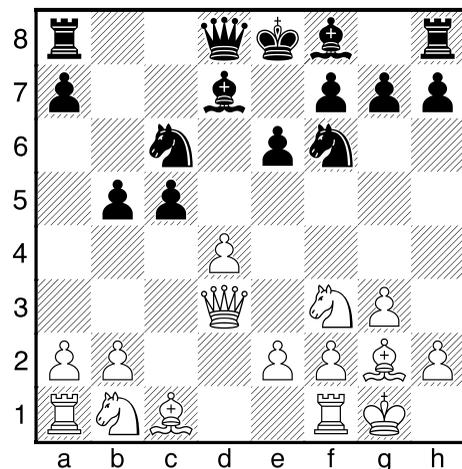
The most popular and logical move, but 7.dxc5 or 7. ♘e5 ♙d7 8. ♘a3 cxd4 9. ♘axc4 probably promise White more chances.

7...♙d7

editor – 7...cxd4 8. ♘xd4 ♖xd4

9. ♖xc6+ ♗d7 10. ♖d1 scores well for White after both 10... ♖xc6 (or 10... ♔xd1+) 11. ♔xc6±.

8. ♔xc4 b5 9. ♔d3



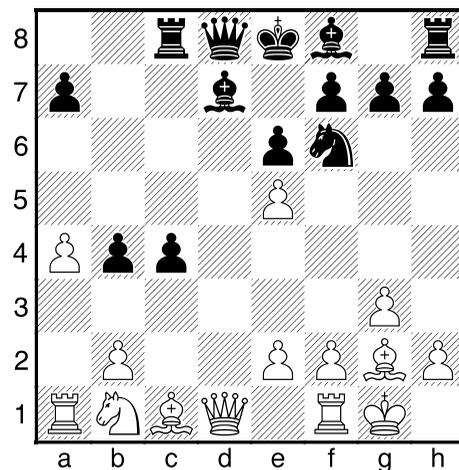
9...c4

It is interesting that I analyzed this line a bit just a day before the game. The main alternative is 9... ♖c8 but I never understood what's the point. From my point of view, after the text move White cannot claim any advantage.

10. ♔d1 ♖c8 11. a4?!

After this move Black is simply better. If White wanted to play ♗e5 he had to do this immediately: 11. ♗e5 ♗xe5 12. dxe5 ♗g4 13. ♔d4 f5 with a roughly equal position.

11...b4 12. ♗e5 ♗xe5
13. dxe5

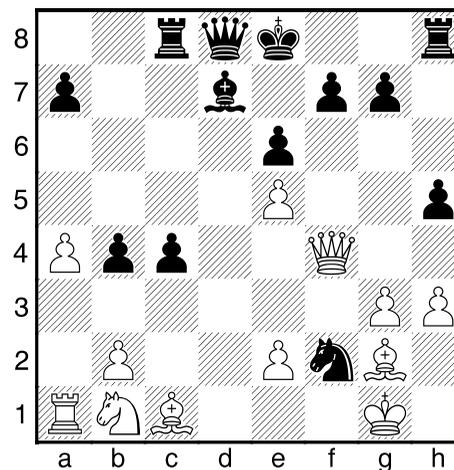


13...♗g4?!

I was feeling that my position is already better and thought that it's time to sacrifice something because White is going to have to play another couple of moves with his Queen. Unfortunately, my following sacrifice gives Black adequate compensation but not more.

Comparing this to the position without moves 11. a4 b4, here White has some problem with development of the knight, so better was: 13... ♗d5 14. ♖xd5 exd5 15. ♔xd5 ♖c5 16. ♗d2 ♖e6 17. ♔xd8+ ♖xd8 18. ♗e4 ♖d4 with a clear advantage.

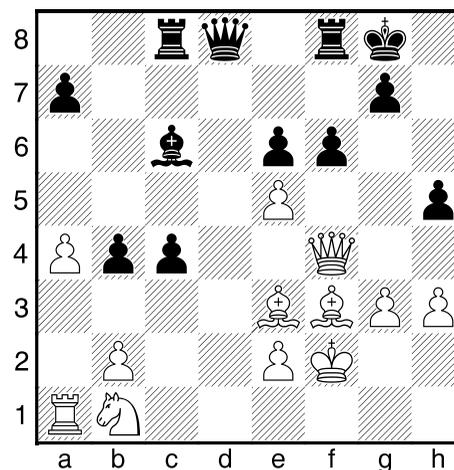
14. ♔d4 h5 15. h3 ♖c5 16. ♔f4
♖xf2+ 17. ♖xf2 ♗xf2



18. ♔xf2

The other capture also leads to equal position: 18. ♔xf2 ♖c6 19. ♖xc6+ ♖xc6 20. ♗d2 c3 21. bxc3 bxc3 22. ♗f3 ♔d1+ 23. ♔e1! ♔xe1+ 24. ♗xe1 0-0=.

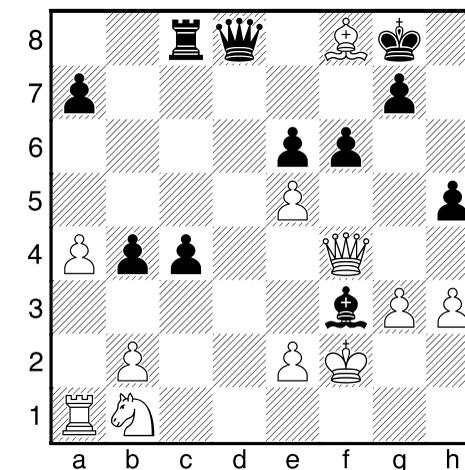
18...0-0 19. ♖e3 f6 20. ♖f3
♖c6



21. ♖c5?!

It's not a mistake yet, but the first step into an abyss. After the simple 21. ♗d2! c3 22. bxc3 bxc3 23. ♗e4 fxe5 24. ♔xe5 ♔d5 25. ♔xd5 ♖xd5 the most probable result is a draw.

21...♖xf3 22. ♖xf8



22...♖b7

There was an interesting possibility: 22... ♔d1!?:

a) 23. exf3?? ♖xf8 24. ♔xc4 fxe5 25. ♔e2 ♔h1-+;

b) 23. ♔d2 might be dangerous: 23... ♔h1 24. ♖xb4! ♔g2+ 25. ♔e3 ♖d5 26. ♔e1! ♔e4+ 27. ♔f2 h4 28. ♔g1 c3! with accurate play White still should be fine, but it looks like there's no risk for



Black;

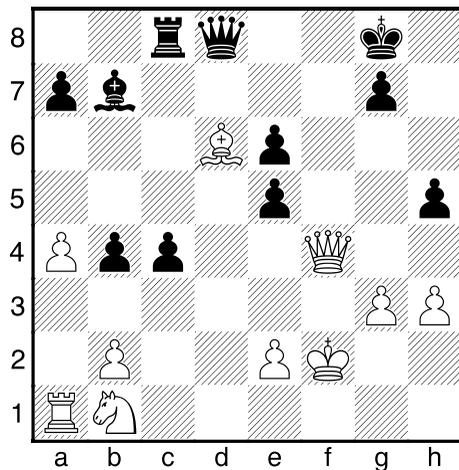
c) 23.♘c3! ♔xa1 24.♙xg7! ♔h1
25.exf3 bxc3 26.♙xf6 ♔h2+
27.♔e1! ♔d2+ 28.♔xd2 cxd2+
29.♔xd2 ♔b8 30.♔c3 and most
likely it's a draw.

I decided that this was too complicated, and played a more natural move because I saw one idea...

23.♙d6

23.♙xb4 ♔b6+ 24.♔e3 ♔xb4
25.♘c3 fxe5 26.♖d1 allowed
White to finally complete
development with a pretty safe
position.

23...fxe5



24.♙xe5??

I'd been hoping for this move.

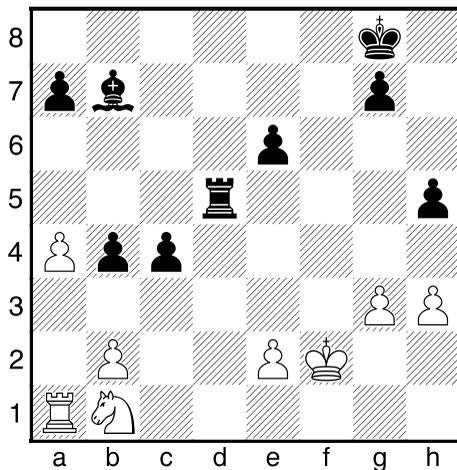
After 24.♔xe5 ♔b6+ 25.♔f1 ♖d8
26.♘d2! ♔xd6 27.♔xd6 ♖xd6
28.♘xc4 ♖d5 29.♔e1! it looks
like this ending is slightly better
for Black, but it's just a draw.

On the other hand, if I see that
in one line I win and in the other
I get a draw if the opponent
finds some precise moves, then
I think it's a better choice than
going into some crazy unclear
attacking position.

24...♔d5

Now it's just over.

**25.♙d6 ♖d8 26.♔e5 ♖xd6
27.♔xd5 ♖xd5**



White's problem is that he cannot

even complete development.

**28.♔e1 ♖g5 29.♔f2 ♖f5+
30.♔e1 ♙g2**
editor – Move 30 and White
didn't move his ♖a1 or ♘b1.

0-1

notes:

GM Bator Sambuev

**Mikhalevski, Victor (2519)
Sambuev, Bator (2434)**

A14

*Excelsior March GM Norm To-
ronto CAN, 15.03.2023.*

In this game both players
committed a number of mistakes;
but it was played in the 6th round
of the event with a very tough
schedule of two games a day
and very decent opposition, so
please don't be too harsh on us.

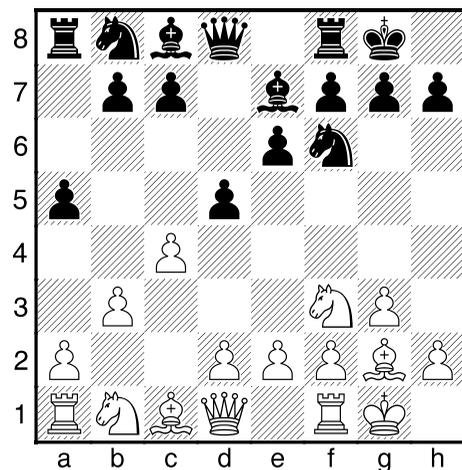


GM Nikita Meshkovs



**Chess Canada
Spring**

1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 e6
4.0-0 ♙e7 5.c4 0-0 6.b3 a5



The computer gives a very simple recipe: always meet c4 with ...d4 and Black has no problems. I prepared the text move for one of my students some years ago.

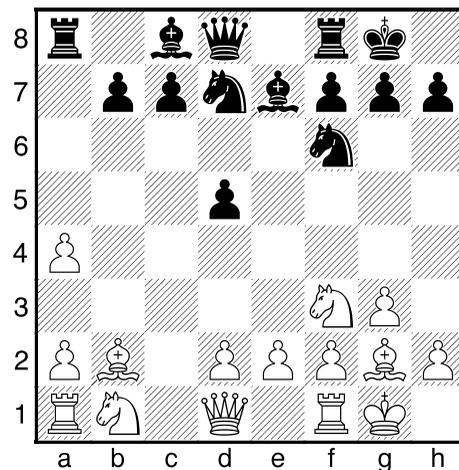
7.♙b2

The most logical move of course is 7.♘c3 d4 8.♘b5 but it's not exactly what White wanted to get playing this opening.

7...a4 8.bxa4 ♘bd7

Black already has no problems, and it is rather White who should be accurate not to get an inferior position.

9.cxd5 exd5



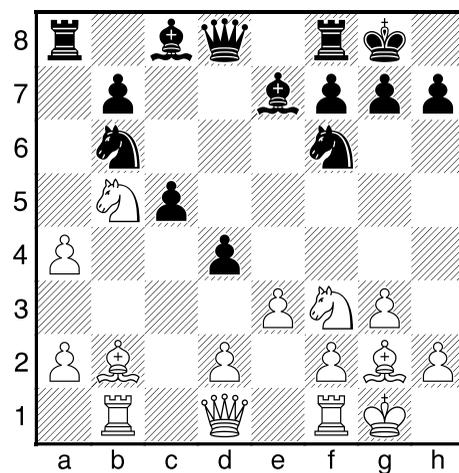
10.♘c3

10.a5! ♖xa5 11.a4 and it's still equal. Now Black is slightly better.

10...♘b6 11.♖b1 d4

11...♙f5 was probably was a bit more accurate: 12.d3 d4 13.♘b5 c5♞.

12.♘b5 c5 13.e3



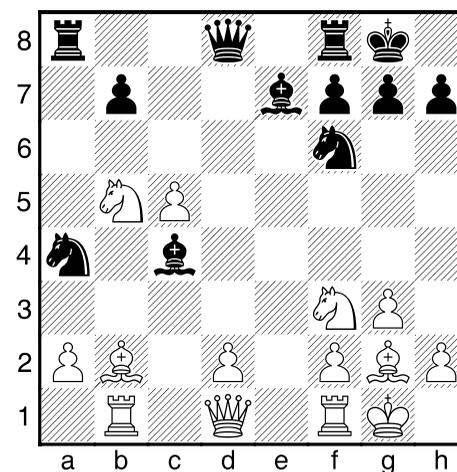
This move allows ...♙f5 so it was better to first play 13.♙c2 ♘xa4 14.♙a1 ♙e6 15.a3 ♘b6 16.e3 with an equal position.

13...♘xa4?!

After the game I found I'd overlooked the following exchange sacrifice: 13...♙f5 14.exd4! ♙xb1 15.♙xb1 ♖xa4 16.dxc5♞ and with pawn and bishop pair White is quite safe.

On the other hand, the only question is "can Black win this or not?". I had to accept that, but during the game I overestimated my position and wasn't satisfied by such an outcome. So after a long think, I played the text move.

14.exd4 ♙e6 15.dxc5 ♙c4



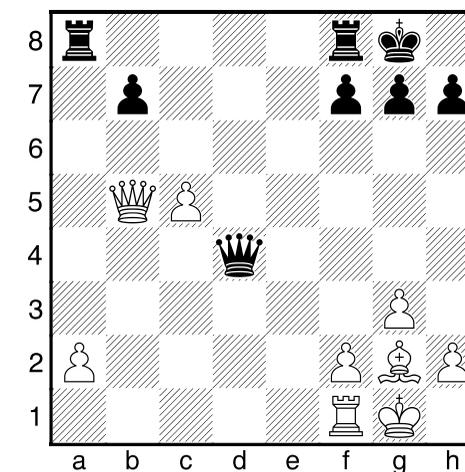
16.♙xf6?!

What I expected, but White could simply play: 16.♖e1! ♘xc5 17.♙xf6 ♙xf6 18.d4 ♘e6 19.a4 ♙xb5 20.♖xb5 ♘xd4 21.♖xb7 ♘xf3+ 22.♙xf3 ♙xd1 23.♙xd1 and now it is *Black* who has to fight for a draw, even if most likely he will succeed.

16...♙xf6 17.d4

Now, in the case of 17.♖e1 Black has 17...♙d3! 18.♙f1 ♙xb1 19.♙xb1 ♘xc5 20.d4 we get a similar game as after 13...♙f5, with the same chances for both sides. Don't complicate things without necessity!

17...♙xb5 18.♖xb5 ♘c3
19.♙d3 ♘xb5 20.♙xb5 ♙xd4
21.♘xd4 ♙xd4





Strangely enough, I managed to reach the position I was aiming for. After the best move it still should be a draw, but White suddenly played...

22. ♗xb7?

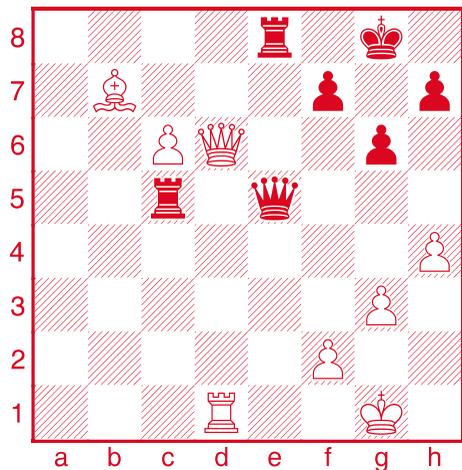
The bishop is obviously misplaced there.

After the simpler 22. ♖xb7 ♗xa2 23.c6 it's very unlikely that Black will manage to convert this.

22... ♗xa2 23.c6 ♗c2

Maybe White can hold this position somehow, but the way it goes he plays without his bishop.

**24. ♖f5 ♗c5 25. ♖d7 ♖e5
26. ♗d1 g6 27. ♖d6 ♗e8 28.h4**



Should Black exchange ♖s with

... ♖xd6, or ♗s with ... ♗c1?

28... ♗c1?

This attractive move should lead to an immediate draw.

Black retains good winning chances after: 28... ♖xd6 29. ♗xd6 ♗e2. It is difficult to estimate chances in this ending.

I think with absolutely perfect play White can survive, so it's something like 75% for a win vs 25% for a draw.

editor – After 30. ♗d7 ♗ec2 How can Black can make progress? White's pawn is stopped and his ♗ looks like it will be permanently guarding the c-pawn. If both

Black ♗s are stuck on the c-file to prevent c6-c7 then it's a kind of dynamic stalemate. But Black can free one of his ♗s by bringing his ♖ to e8 (so the ♗ will hang if c6-c7). Although White's only weak point is f2, Black can target that with his ♗c2 and other ♗ on the f-file. Trading ♗s would let Black's ♖ attack f1 from e1,

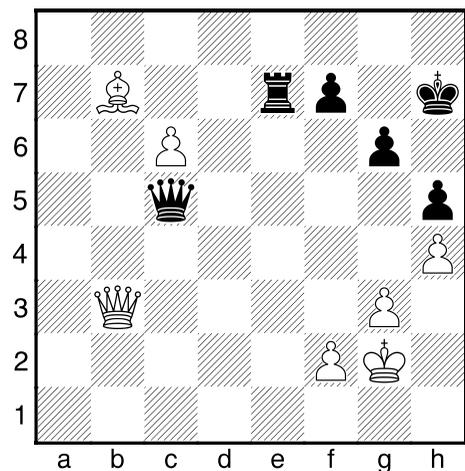


and if White defends f2 with ♖f1 it will surely soon be a real zugzwang.

29. ♖d2?

I was sure that after trading rooks it should be winning for me because White has no counterplay. What we both missed is that after the simple: 29. ♖xc1! ♔xd6 30. c7 it's time to agree to the draw.

**29... ♖xd1+-+ 30. ♔xd1 ♔c5
31. ♖d2 h5 32. ♔g2 ♖e7
33. ♖d1 ♔h7 34. ♖b3**



34... ♖d4??

Suddenly a big mistake! Black had to play 34... ♖e6!

35. ♖f3??

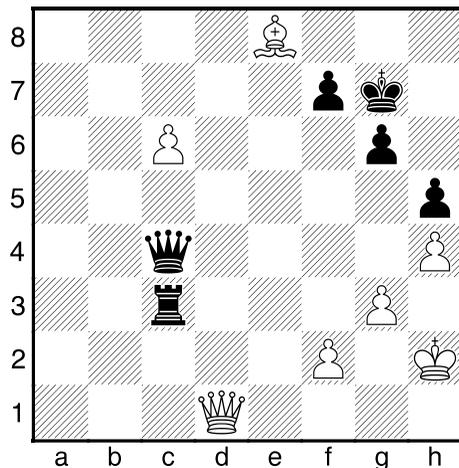
White misses his chance to

activate the bishop: 35. ♖a6 ♖c5 36. ♖c4! ♖xc4 37. ♖xc4 and Black can keep trying, but now it's a draw.

35... ♔g7 36. ♖c8

Now in the case of 36. ♖a6 ♖c5 the only way to protect the pawn is to go back to b7.

**36... ♖c4 37. ♖d7 ♖e1 38. ♔h2
♖c1 39. ♖e8 ♖c3 40. ♖d1**



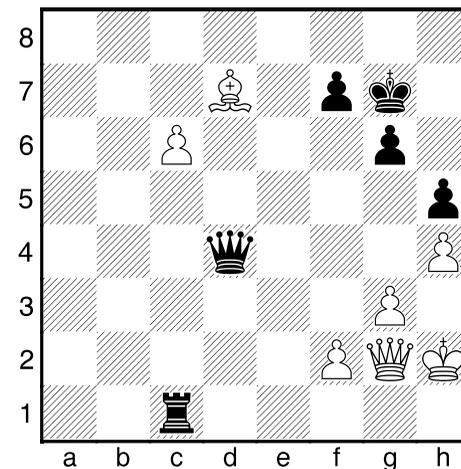
40... ♖c5

It's the very last stand and Black only needs to find a final regrouping: 40... ♖c2 41. ♖f3 ♖e6! 42. ♖d7 ♖e1 43. ♔g2 ♖c1+-

**41. ♔g2 ♖e5 42. ♖d7 ♖e4+
43. ♔g1 ♔h7 44. ♖f1 ♖d4
45. ♔h2 ♖c2 46. ♔g1 ♔g7
46... ♖c3! 47. ♖g2 ♖a1+ 48. ♔h2**

♖d1 49. ♖h3 ♖e1+- etc.

47. ♖g2 ♖c1+ 48. ♔h2



48... ♖d3

Here I missed that after 48... ♖f6! White is in zugzwang.

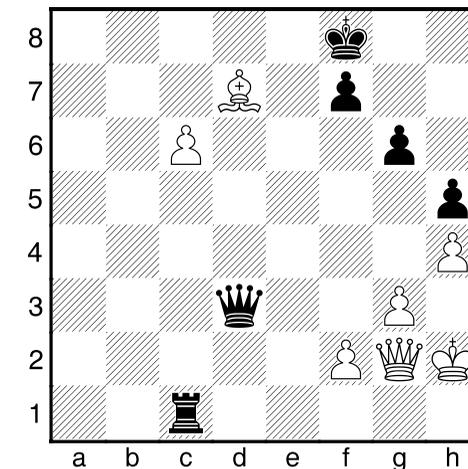
editor – e.g. 49. ♖e8 ♖c2 50. ♔g1 ♖a1+ 51. ♔h2 ♖e1+- forking f2

and e8.

49. ♔h3 ♔f8?

49... ♖e2 and White can resign.

50. ♔h2



50... ♔e7?

This whole idea – blocking the c-pawn with the ♔ – is wrong, and even gives White some chances.

51. ♔h3 ♔d6

♔51... ♖c2 52. ♔h2 ♖e2 53. ♔g1 ♖c1+ 54. ♔h2 ♖f1+-.

52. ♔h2 ♔c7

53. g4 ♖d6+



GM Victor Mikhalevski

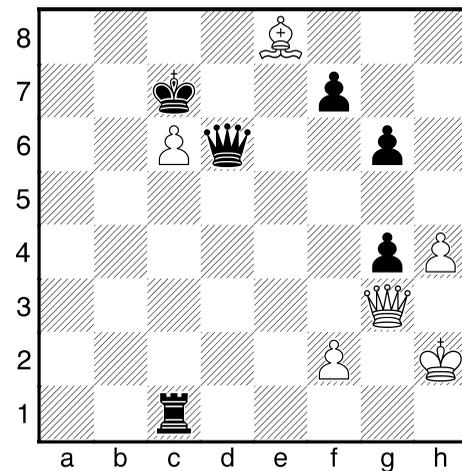


Anyway. The position is still winning, but now I should calculate something instead of just making moves. Of course, I failed...

54. ♖g3

editor – 54. ♖h3 ♜c3+ 55. f3 ♞f4+.

54...hxg4 55. ♙e8



55...f6??

I got that feeling that I'm losing control over the game, and after this mistake I have to win it all over again.

I was still winning after 55... f5! 56. ♙xg6 (56. ♞xd6+ ♔xd6 57. ♙xg6 ♔e5 58. ♙e8 ♔f4 59. ♔g2 ♜c2□ and ...g3 or ...♔g3 wins.) 56...f4□ 57. ♞xg4

f3+□ 58. ♞g3 ♞xg3+□ 59. ♔xg3 ♜g1+□-+. Somehow, I missed that I win the bishop in the end.

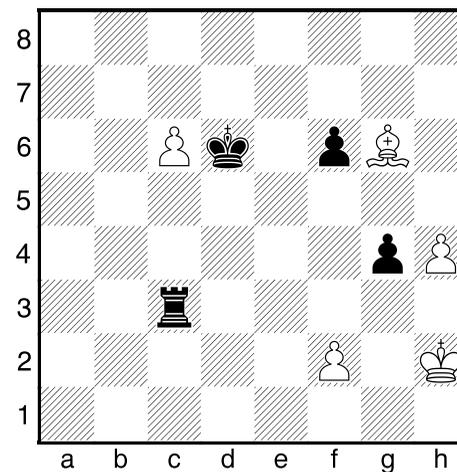
56. ♙xg6

56. ♞xd6+ ♔xd6 57. ♔g3 f5
58. ♙xg6 is the same.

56...♜c3?

Now it's a draw. Black retains winning chances after 56...♔xc6 57. ♙f5 ♜c3 58. ♞xd6+ ♔xd6 59. ♙xg4 ♔e5.

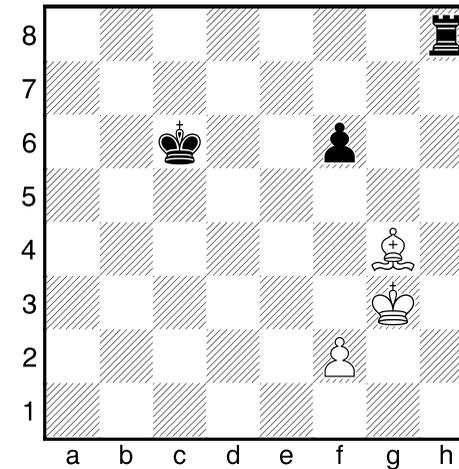
57. ♞xd6+□ ♔xd6



58. ♙f5

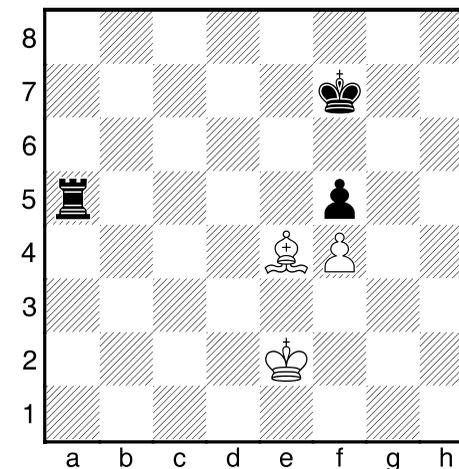
It's draw after 58. ♙e8! ♔e5 59. h5! =.

**58...♜h3+ ♔ 59. ♔g2 ♔xc6
60. ♙xg4 ♜xh4 61. ♔g3 ♜h8**



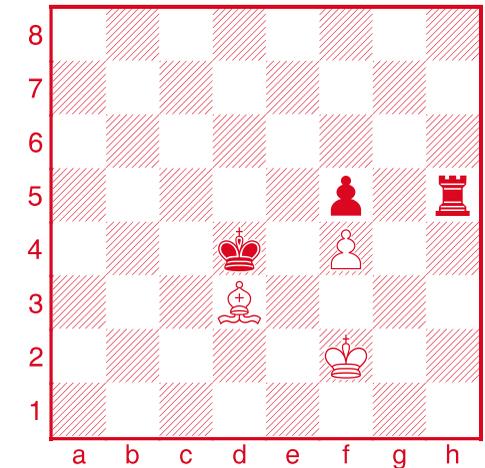
According to the tablebase it's a draw, and it was a draw until the very end.

**62. ♔f4 ♜g8 63. ♙f3+ ♔d6
64. ♙e4 ♔e6 65. ♙f5+ ♔f7
66. ♔e3 ♜b8 67. f4 ♜b3+
68. ♔f2 ♔e7 69. ♔e2 ♜a3
70. ♔f2 ♔f7 71. ♔e2 ♜a5
72. ♙e4 f5**



Trying to restrict some how the bishop.

**73. ♙c6 ♜c5 74. ♙b7 ♔e6
75. ♔e3 ♜c4 76. ♙h1 ♔d6
77. ♙b7 ♜c7 78. ♙g2 ♜g7
79. ♔f2 ♜h7 80. ♙f1 ♔d5
81. ♙d3 ♜h5 82. ♔e3 ♔c5
83. ♔f2 ♔d4**



I have made a lot of progress and finally get a chance. In this position only one move saves White, and my opponent doesn't find it.

84. ♙a6?

The only saving move is quite logical: 84. ♙b1! keeping f5 under attack and preventing ...♔e4 leaves the ♜ tied down. But after 84. ♙a6 ♔e4 85. ♔g3 ♜h7-+ there are no checks to dislodge the



black king, so Black will win the pawn and the game.

0-1

editor – the game score ends here — which seemed odd since White made the last move and Black has not demonstrated the final winning maneuver — so I asked Bator about it:

"I don't remember exactly... according the live stream he forfeited on time but I'm not sure. I think right after ♙a6 he realized that he's losing the pawn and resigned."

– **Bator Sambuev**



GM Bator Sambuev
preparing for his next game



Chess Canada
Spring



editor:

In 2021, Quality Chess published *Winning*, by Nigel Short. Far from a “Best Games” collection, *Winning* includes all 79 games Short played in eight round-robin tournaments he won. As one would expect, those games include many excellent and instructive attacks, and almost as many choice words – “coryphaeus”, “gurning”, and “funambulist” are three I noted. But *Winning* also includes: one loss, 7 draws in under 20 moves, and too many “winning ugly” games to count. Showing the good, the bad, and the ugly gives a fuller picture of what it takes to win a competitive tournament than any collection of Best Games... and may even serve as a mithridate for those poisoned by perfectionism.

That was *one* reason I asked GM Razvan Preotu to annotate all five of his games from a recent weekend Swiss he won. The other was that it saved me from having to make a hard choice...

When preparing an issue, I usually review all the available games from an event’s PGN or live feed, and choose one or two from the winner and a couple of interesting ones from the rest of the field. But in the Excelsior 1st Anniversary Swiss – January 26-28, 2024 – *all five* of Razvan’s games were interesting, and all five interesting in different ways: from a feeble draw with White against an opponent he out-rated (by 500 points!) but did not out-play in round 1, to a game he had to resort to a time-trouble endgame trick after wasting a huge opening advantage, to a very complex GM vs GM showdown in round 4, to a final round win over an FM capped by an irresistible queen sacrifice.

None of these games might make a short list of Razvan’s Best Games, but this is what it takes to win a weekend Swiss in 2024...

notes: GM Razvan Preotu

Preotu, Razvan (2534)
Loadman, Ian (2054)

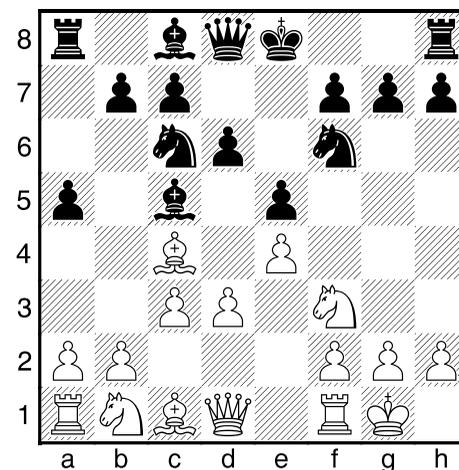
C54
2023 Excelsior Anniversary (1),
26.01.2024

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4
♘f6 4.d3

I decided to play a slow positional game, which in retrospect was not a great choice. 4.♘g5 is how to get a complicated game.

editor – see: Berengolts –
Loadman, in "Senior Moments".

4...♙c5 5.c3 d6 6.0-0 a5



A useful move to allow for ...♙a7, which gets out of the move d4 and prevents White from expanding on the queenside with b4.

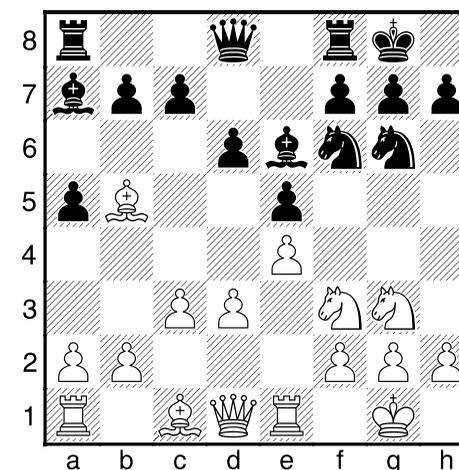
7.♖e1 ♙a7 8.♞bd2 0-0 9.♞f1
♙e6

Trading light-square bishops is one of Black's main ideas.

10.♙b5 ♞e7

Maneuvering the knight to g6 and allowing for ...c6. My opponent knew the opening ideas very well.

11.♞g3 ♞g6



12.h3?!

This is a useful move to control g4 and prepare d4, but it gives



Black time to play ...d5 first.
12.d4 is what White should play.
I didn't like that Black has the
idea of ...♘g4 with pressure
against d4, but with the knight
on g6 instead of c6 this is not
so strong, and White can play
♙e2 or ♙e3 in response. 12...
c6 13.♙f1 ♘g4 14.♙e3 White
intends h3.

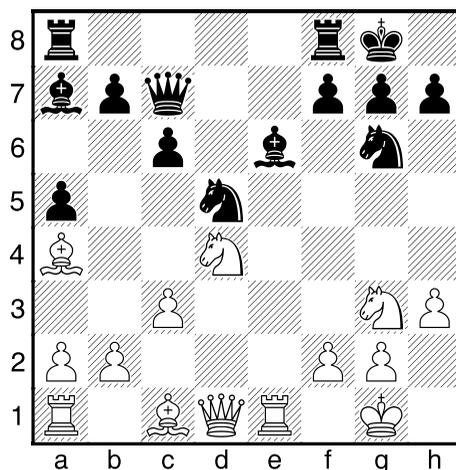
12...c6 13.♙a4 d5!

Black strikes in the center before
White can push d4 and now has
a good position.

14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.d4

15.♘xe5?? runs into a common
tactic in the Italian: 15...♘xe5
16.♖xe5 ♙xf2+! 17.♔xf2 ♚f6+
18.♚f3 ♚xe5-+.

15...exd4 16.♘xd4 ♚c7!



Black does not need to worry
about ♘xe6 and can finish
development. I was not happy
with how the opening went, as
already Black is slightly better.

17.♘f1?!

My idea was to prepare ♘xe6
as there are no tactics with the
knight on g3, but this is passive
and allows the very strong
...♘df4.

17.♘xe6?? ♙xf2+! wins material
18.♔xf2 fxe6+ 19.♔g1 ♚xg3-+.

17.♘h5! was stronger as it
controls f4, playing against
...♘df4. I didn't like that ...♙b8
essentially forces me to repeat
with ♘g3, but objectively White
is the one trying to equalize.
17...♖ae8 18.♙b3 ♙b8 19.♘g3=.

editor – a week after this game
was played, White failed to
equalize in an all-GM game
after: 17.♘e4 ♖ae8 18.♘xe6?
♖xe6 19.♙c2 ♖fe8 20.♚g4
♘e5 (Δ20...♖e5-+ and ...f5
cashes in the e-file battery.)
21.♚h5 g6 22.♚d1 ♘c4 23.♖e2
f5-+ 24.♙d3 b5 (Δ24...♘e5-+)



25. ♖g5 ♕xf2+?!, not best, but sufficient for the draw Black needed to wrap up this two game match; (1/2-1/2, 35) [Vokhidov,S](#) (2596)–[Anton Guijarro,D](#) (2672) Chessable Masters Div 2 rapid, 2024.

17... ♖ae8?!

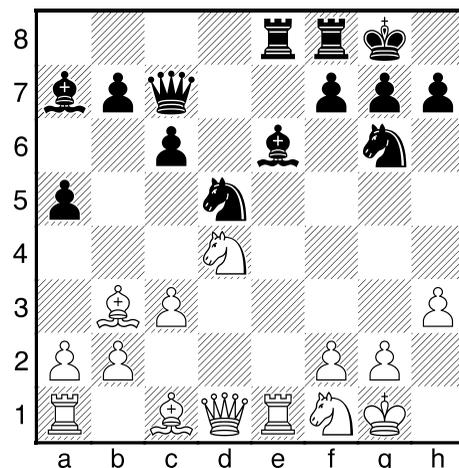
The rook belongs on d8 to put pressure against the queen, so I was happy to see this move. I was mainly worried about 17... ♖ad8.

17... ♘df4! would have been very strong. Black threatens ... ♖ad8 and has ideas of ... ♕d5 and ... ♘h4 attacking g2. White's position is critical.

Not 18. ♘xe6? fxe6 19. ♕e3 ♘h4 gives Black a decisive attack 20. ♕xa7 ♖xa7 21. ♘e3 ♘hxg2-+.

Instead, 18. ♕c2! when White intends ♕xg6 to force the knight away from f4. 18... ♖ad8 19. ♕xg6 ♘xg6 20. ♕e3♭.

18. ♕b3



Improving the bishop, as on a4 it was doing nothing.

18... ♕xd4?!

Black trades to no longer have to worry about ♘xe6, but this was not a threat because opening the f-file is still extremely dangerous for White.

18... b5♭ gaining space and intending ... a4-a3 is what I was mainly worried about.

On 18... ♘df4 I was planning 19. ♘xe6 fxe6 20. ♕e3 but Black still has the initiative after 20... ♕xe3 21. fxe3 ♖d8↑ with ... ♘d3 ideas.

19. ♖xd4

I was happy with the position

now as I no longer felt I was worse and in danger.

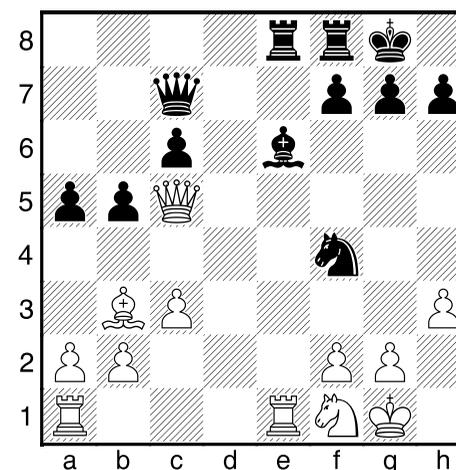
19... b5 20. ♖c5

Preventing ... c5-c4.

20... ♘df4

A good move to eliminate White's bishop pair

21. ♕xf4 ♘xf4



22. ♖ad1

I would like to play 22. ♕xe6?? to not allow ... ♕xb3, but this fails to 22... ♘d3-+.

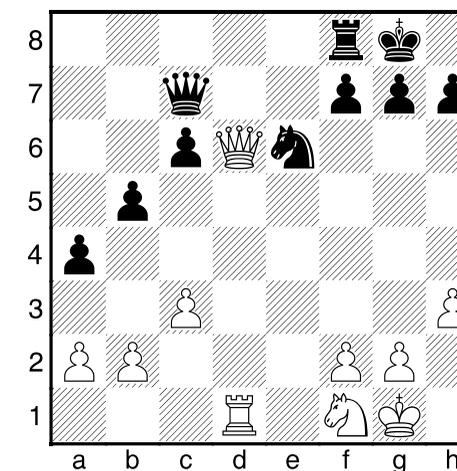
22... a4

22... ♕xb3! Weakening White's pawn structure is best. 23. ♖xe8 (23. axb3?? ♘d3!-+) 23... ♖xe8 24. axb3=.

23. ♕xe6 ♖xe6 24. ♖xe6

I considered 24. ♘e3 to try and keep more pieces on, but I was worried by ... ♖g6 ideas with pressure against g2. Turns out this is not dangerous: 24... ♖g6 (24... ♖fe8 25. c4=) 25. ♖f1=.

24... ♘xe6 25. ♖d6=

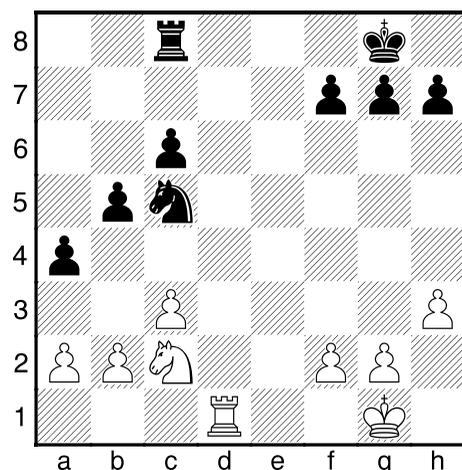


The position is completely equal. I was hoping that I could somehow outplay my opponent in the endgame if I can get an active rook on d6.

25... ♖b6 26. ♖e7 ♖c5

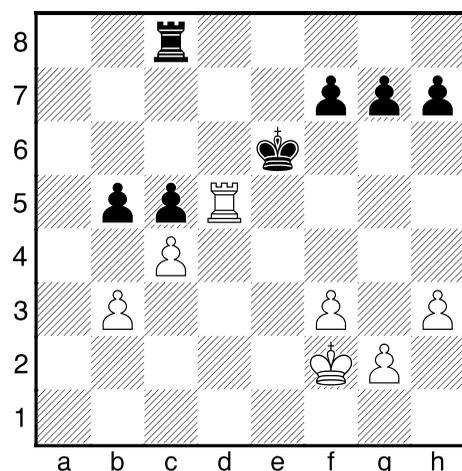
27. ♖xc5 ♘xc5 28. ♘e3 ♖c8 29. ♘c2





I didn't see any other idea but to go for ♖b4 and ♜d6 attacking c6.

29...♔f8 30.f3 ♕e7 31.♘b4
♘d7 32.♔f2 ♘b6 33.b3 c5
34.♘d5+ ♘xd5 35.♞xd5
axb3 36.axb3 ♕e6 37.c4



37...b4

A good move to allow for ...♞a8-a3 counterplay. In rook

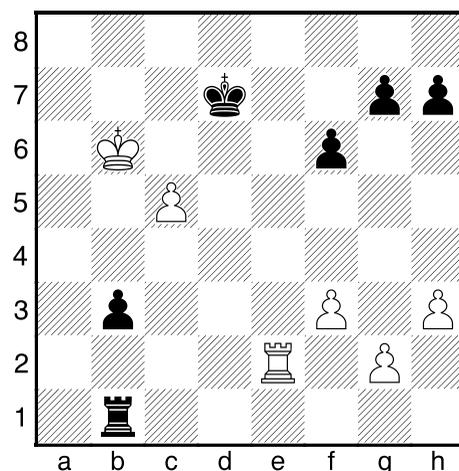
endgames it is important to have an active rook.

37...bxc4 38.bxc4 is of course drawn, but Black will have to defend a bit because of the passive rook.

38.♕e3 ♞a8 39.♞xc5 ♞a3
40.♕d4 ♞xb3 41.♞e5+ ♔d7
42.♕c5

I was hoping to go ♕b6 and advance the c-pawn.

42...f6 43.♞e2 ♞b1 44.♕b6
b3 45.c5



45...♞c1!

Not a hard move to find, but an important one, preventing c6+ and intending ...♞c2 and ...b3-b2.

46.♞b2

Preventing ...♞c2.

46.♞d2+ ♔e6 47.c6 ♞c2 48.♞d1
b2 Black threatens ...♞c1 so
White has no time to promote the
c-pawn. 49.♞b1 (49.c7?? ♞c1-+)
49...♕d6=

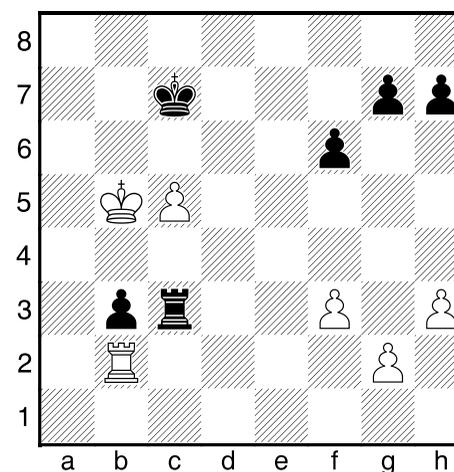
46...♞c3

Here I didn't see what I could do and decided to go after the b3-pawn, although this is clearly not a winning attempt

47.♕b5

White can advance the kingside pawns with 47.h4 before deciding on a plan, but during the game I didn't see what this accomplishes.

47...♕c7



Black's king is in front of the pawn so the game is a dead draw now.

48.♕b4 ♞c2 49.♞xb3 ♕c6
50.♞a3 ♞b2+ 51.♕c4 ♞c2+
52.♕d4 ♞d2+ 53.♕c4 ♞c2+
54.♕d4

Not a good game by me and a bad start to the tournament. I never had an advantage and was in a bit of danger in the early middlegame had my opponent played more aggressively.
1/2-1/2

notes:

GM Razvan Preotu

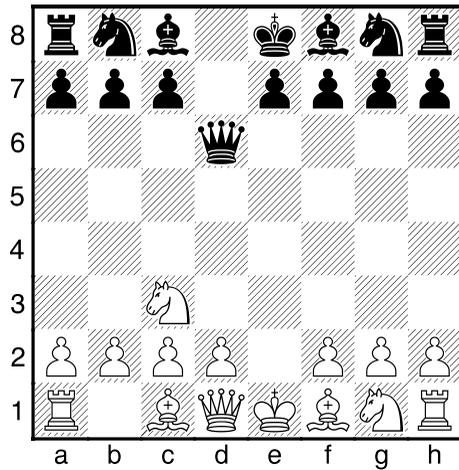
**Singh Dhaliwal,
Jaipreet (2104)
Preotu, Razvan (2534)**
B01

2023 Excelsior Anniversary (2),
27.01.2024

1.e4 d5!?

I felt after the first round game that I needed a new strategy, and that I should surprise my opponents in the opening.

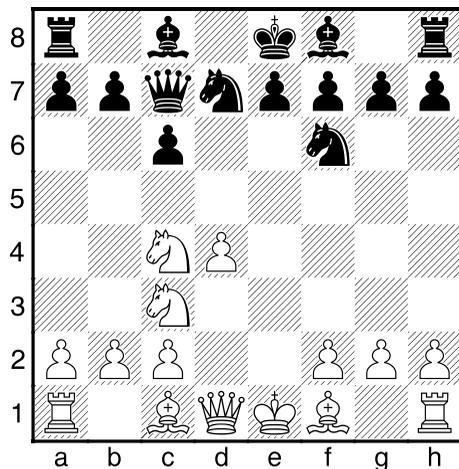
2.exd5 ♞xd5 3.♘c3 ♞d6



This is a favourite of Sergei Tiviakov. Magnus Carlsen has played this a number of times in blitz as well, if that means anything.

4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 c6 6.♘e5
White centralizes the knight to play against ...♗g4.

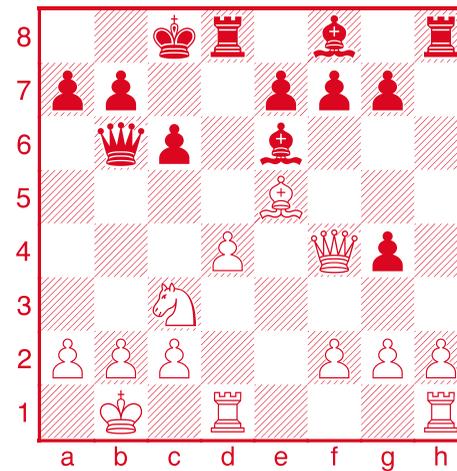
6...♘bd7 7.♘c4 ♔c7



8.g3

8.♔f3 is a better way to prepare ♗f4, as White develops the queen and allows for 0-0-0. I played this as White against Tiviakov in the 2014 Canadian Open: 8...♘b6 9.♗f4± ♔d8 10.♗e5 ♗g4 11.♔f4 ♗e6 12.♘xb6 ♔xb6 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♗e2 h5 15.♔b1 ♘g4? 16.♗xg4 hxg4:

Analysis Diagram



Should White do anything about ...f6?

17.♔e4 ♖h5 18.♗g3?! ♖a5 19.b3 ♗f5 20.♔e3 e6 21.♘e4 ♖ad5! ♣ 22.♔f4 ♗xe4 23.♔xe4 ♖xd4 24.♖xd4 ♔xd4 25.♔xd4 ♖xd4-+ Black has an extra pawn and the active ♖ and converted methodically. (0-1, 47) **Preotu,R** (2341)–**Tiviakov,S** (2656)

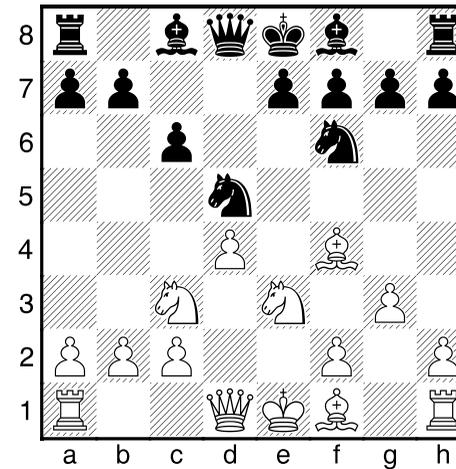
Montreal, 2014. [game in PGN]

♞17.d5+-:

17...cxd5 18.♖d3! threatening ♘a4 and ♖c3+;

17... ♗xd5 hoping to use the ♖h8 across the 6th rank, but 18.♘xd5 cxd5 19.♖d3 ♖h6 20.♔xg4+ ♖e6 (20...e6 21.♖c3+-; 20...♔e6 21.♖c3+ ♔d7 22.♔a4+-) 21.♖hd1+- Black gets sliced to ribbons.

8...♘b6 9.♗f4 ♔d8 10.♘e3 ♘bd5!



Black has less space and benefits from trading pieces. I also wanted to develop the bishop to f5.

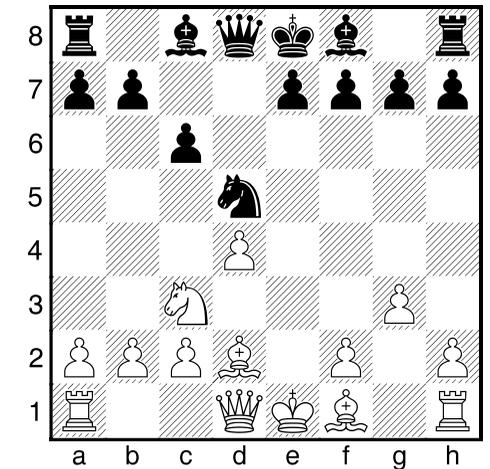
11.♘exd5

11.♔f3 keeping more pieces on and preventing ...♗f5 would make it more uncomfortable for Black. 11...♘xf4 12.♔xf4 e6 13.♗g2 ♗e7 14.0-0 0-0= Black has the bishop pair but is not better because of the passive light-square bishop.

11...♘xd5

I was very happy with my position and thought I was gaining the initiative. White was not in time to play ♗g2 and can't trade on d5 due to ...♔xd5.

12.♗d2



12...♗f5

Threatening ...♘b4, with a double attack on c2, and one on d4.



Chess Canada Spring

12...♖xc3 13.♙xc3 ♔d5 is a strong idea and was what I was originally intending, but I wasn't very excited about the line 14.♖g1 ♕f5 15.♙g2 ♔e6+ 16.♔e2 ♔xe2+ 17.♔e2 e6 as although Black is very comfortable in the endgame, I didn't think my winning chances were so good. If instead 17...♙xc2 18.d5 allows White to activate the bishops, giving great compensation for the pawn.

13.♖c1?

My opponent defends against ...♗b4, but loses valuable time.

I thought 13.♙g2! was the critical line, accepting the challenge after ...♗b4 13...♖b4 Black doesn't have to go for this and could just play ...e6, but then the position is equal 14.♖c1 ♔xd4 Black is a pawn up and threatens ...000 to force a queen exchange against 0-0, but White has 15.a3! ♖a6 16.♔e2!♙ preparing ♙e3 against ...000. Both sides have chances: Black is a pawn up, but White has better development. (16.0-0? 0-0-0!♗ forces a queen exchange.)

Jaipreet Singh Dhaliwal
Hart House Reading Week Open



13...♗xc3

Black has a greatly improved version of 12...♗xc3 (above).

14.♙xc3 ♔d5 15.♖g1 ♔xa2

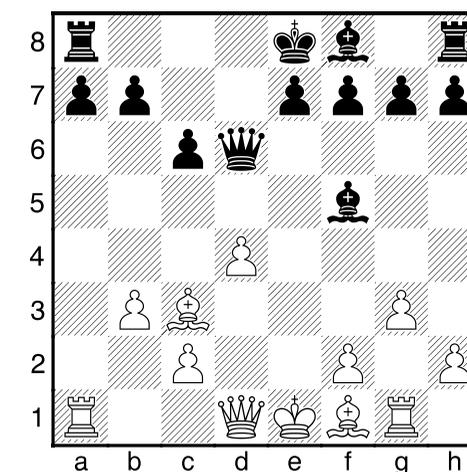
A greedy move, but there is nothing wrong with taking the pawn.

I also considered 15...0-0-0, playing for development with moves like ...e5 or ...g6 and ...♙g7.

16.b3 ♔a3

Returning the queen to d6 where it is centralized is a good idea.

17.♖a1 ♔d6



18.♖a5?!

This allows Black to consolidate

with ...e6, preventing d4-d5 once and for all.

18.g4! With the idea to meet ...g6 with d5 was the only idea for White to complicate the position: 18...e6+ (18...g6 19.d5 Black can't capture on d5 because b5+ would be very strong 19...e6 20.dxc6 cxc6 21.g3 White intends Bg2 and has some compensation) 19.d2 (19.e2 e4 White can't play f3 because of ...xf3 so it is not clear how to proceed.) 19...h6+ 20.e1 d7 Black threatens ...xh2 and ...e6 completing development. The computer thinks White has some compensation, but practically I don't think it's enough.

18...g6
18...e6.

19.d2!

Walking the king to c1 makes a lot of sense as White couldn't castle.

19...e6

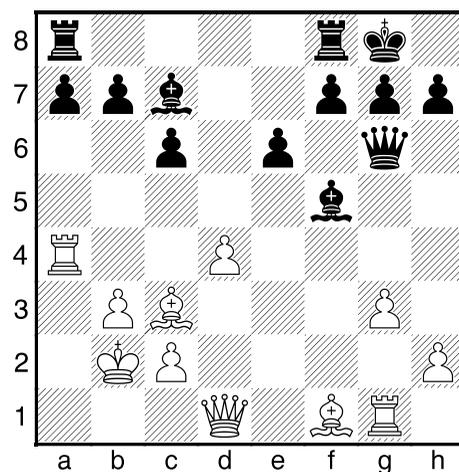
White no longer has d5 and Black is just a clean pawn up.

20.f4 e6 21.c1?

Sacrificing another pawn is too much.

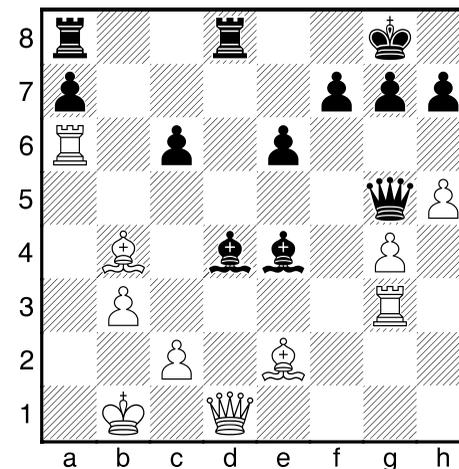
21.g2 0-0 22.c1 is a better defense, but Black is still likely to win with the extra pawn and better piece coordination.

21...xf4+ 22.b2 c7
23.a4 0-0-



Black is two pawns up and the rest is a matter of technique.

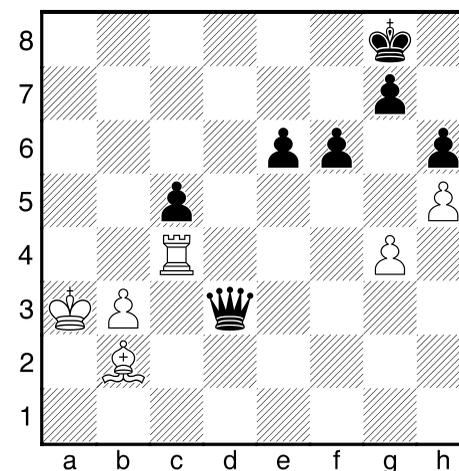
24.e2 fd8 25.h4 b5
26.a6 b6 27.g4 e4 28.h5
g5 29.g3 b4 30.xb4
xd4+ 31.b1



31...c3

Winning the Queen or the Bishop.

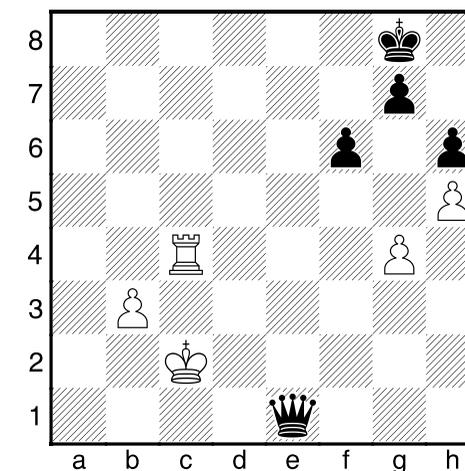
32.xd8+ xd8 33.xc3
d2 34.xa7 h6 35.f3 xf3
36.xf3 d1+ 37.a2 c1
38.c3 xc2+ 39.a3 d3
40.xd3 xd3 41.b2 c5
42.a4 f6 43.c4



editor – Black doesn't even need the c1 to win:

- 1) force White to give up a piece for the e-pawn;
- 2) break up White's kingside pawns and win them.

43...e5 44.xc5 e4 45.c3
e3 46.b2 e2+ 47.a3
c2 48.b4 e2 49.c4
xc3+! 50.xc3 e1+
51.c2



51...f5!

editor – leaving White with doomed isos.

52.gxf5 f2+ 53.c3 xf5
54.b4 xh5 55.c5 f3+
56.c4 e4+ 57.c3 g5
58.b5 g4 59.b6 g3 60.c8+



♔f7 61.♖c7+ ♔g6 62.♖c8 g2
63.♖g8+ ♔f7 64.b7 ♕e5+!
65.♔d2 ♔xg8

0-1

notes:
GM Razvan Preotu

Preotu, Razvan (2534)
Filipovich, David (2124)
B15
2023 Excelsior Anniversary (3),
27.01.2024

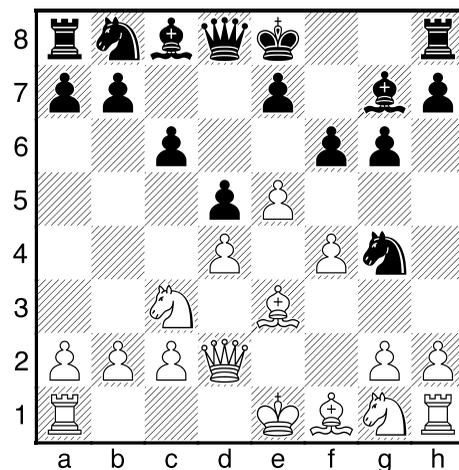
1.e4 g6

I was happy to see the Modern,
as it is not a solid opening.

2.d4 ♖g7 3.♘c3 c6 4.♙e3 d5
5.e5

This is one logical setup by
White, gaining space and
blocking the bishop on g7.

5...f6 6.f4 ♘h6 7.♕d2 ♘g4



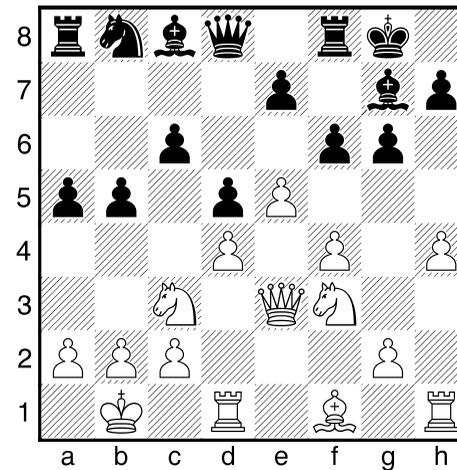
Black guarantees the knight for
bishop exchange which is
normally quite favourable, but
here the position is relatively
closed and Black is moving
the knight many times in the
opening.

8.0-0-0 0-0 9.♔b1

It's nearly always useful to
defend a2 and get off the c1-h6
diagonal.

9...b5 10.♘f3 ♘xe3 11.♕xe3
a5

Black is advancing the
queenside pawns to start an
attack but this is quite slow.

12.h4!

Threatening h5 is dangerous for
Black. I was very happy with my
position.

editor – Canadians who learned
chess from Suttles and Day
games might be shocked to
find that Stockfish 16 rates this
position as +2, even after Black's
best move, which he played...

12...♙g4 13.♙e2

Sacrificing a pawn to open
lines is more direct: 13.h5! gxh5
(13...♙xh5 14.g4! ♙xg4 15.♙h3+
) 14.♘e2! followed by ♘g3 and
it is very likely White's attack will
lead to victory.

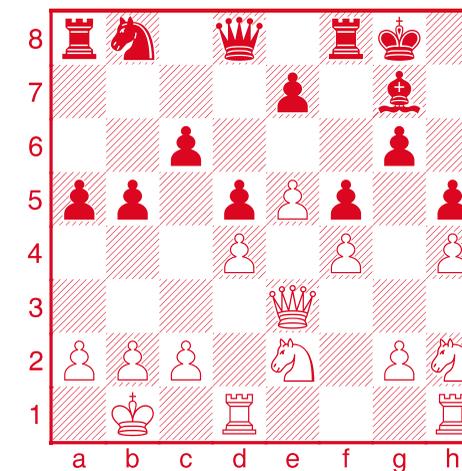
13...h5 14.♘h2!

White, of course, wants to
prepare g4.

14...♙xe2

14...f5 15.♘xg4 fxg4 16.♙xg4!
hxg4 17.h5+- sacrificing a piece
to open lines is strong, and very
similar to the improvement in the
next note.

15.♘xe2 f5



What is White's best pawn
move?

A very critical moment in the
game, as if Black has enough
time to consolidate with ...e6
...♘d7 it is not clear how White
will put on any pressure.

16.e6??

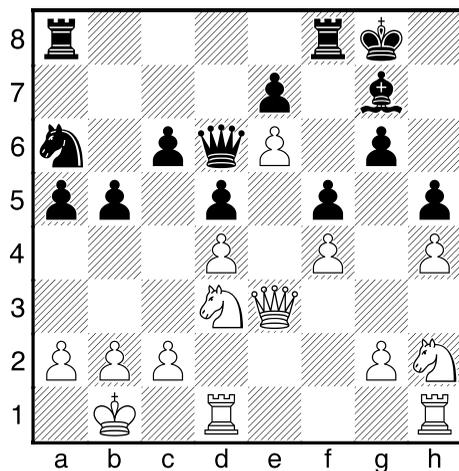
This is completely wrong and
changes the evaluation from
winning for White to equal. I



saw the right idea of g4 and sacrificing the knight to open lines, but was not confident with myself and didn't want to risk being a piece down. My idea with e6 was to prevent Black from playing ...e6 ♞d7, but the clear downside is that Black's bishop gets opened

16.g4! or ♜dg1 and then g4 is completely devastating: 16...fxg4 17.♞xg4! hxg4 18.♜dg1+- or 18.h5+- Black is simply unable to get enough pieces to the defense.

16...♞d6= 17.♞c1 ♞a6
18.♞d3



18...♞ac8!

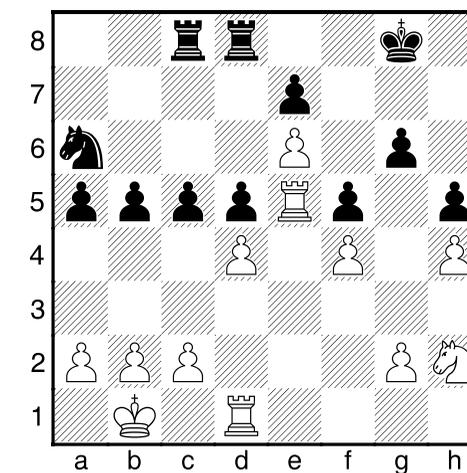
A strong move, preparing ...c5.



I completely missed the idea of ...♞c8 and ...c5 when playing e6. Worse are 18...♞c7 19.♞c5±, and 18...♞f6 19.♞he1±.

19.♞he1 c5⇒ 20.♞e5 ♞xe5
20...cxd4 21.♞xd4 ♞fd8 Was a better option, keeping the queens on the board. White has to be a bit careful with ...♞c5xe6 being a threat.

21.♞xe5 ♞xe5 22.♞xe5
♞fd8=



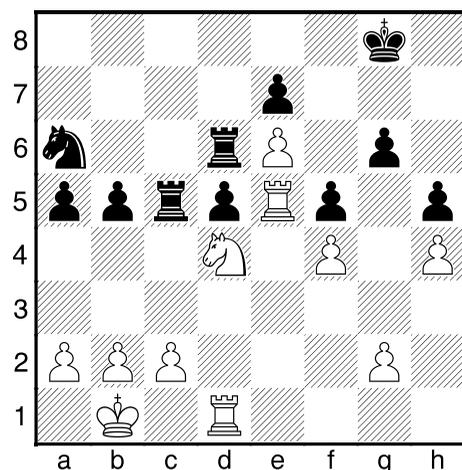
The endgame is dynamically balanced. It is not clear if the pawn on e6 is a strength or a weakness.

David Filipovich
Finding a solution to 16.e6?



Chess Canada
Spring

23.dxc5 ♖xc5 24.♘f3 ♜d6
25.♘d4



25...b4

A good positional move to advance the pawn, but during the game I thought this was a mistake because I considered my next move to be very strong.

I was expecting 25...♘c7 to prevent the move I played in the game 26.a3= White prevents ...b4 and can slowly improve with b3, ♖b2, but there is no dangerous plan afterwards.

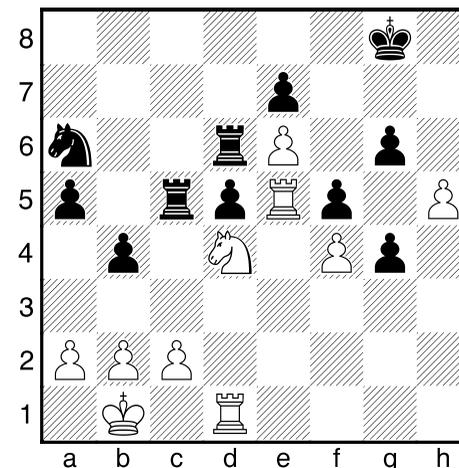
26.g4

I was happy with this move and thought Black's position is all of a sudden dangerous.

26...hxg4

26...fxg4 is also possible 27.♖g5 ♘c7 28.f5 was my idea, but after 28...♘e8! Black is in time to get the knight to f6 and defend h5.

27.h5



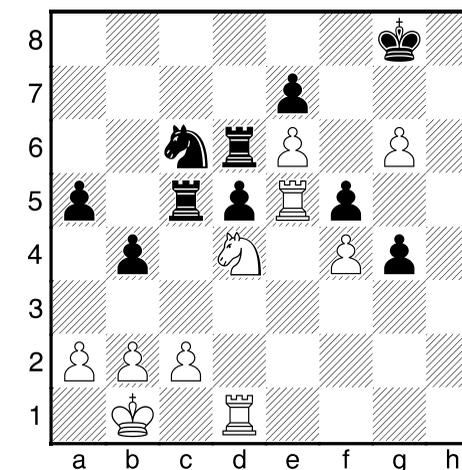
Black's position is critical as the defense of the f5-pawn has been undermined

27...♘b8!

Intending ...♘c6 to exchange knights. I overlooked this important resource for my opponent when playing 26.g4.

27...♘c7? intending ...♘b5 is not the same, as the rook on e5 won't be attacked 28.hxg6 ♘b5? 29.♘xf5+-.

28.hxg6 ♘c6



The position becomes very forcing, and Black continues to play well.

29.♘xf5 ♘xe5 30.♘xd6
♘xg6 31.♘f5 ♘xf4
32.♘xe7+ ♖f8 33.♘f5 ♘xe6
34.♘e3



GM Razvan Preotu
Finding something after 16.e6?

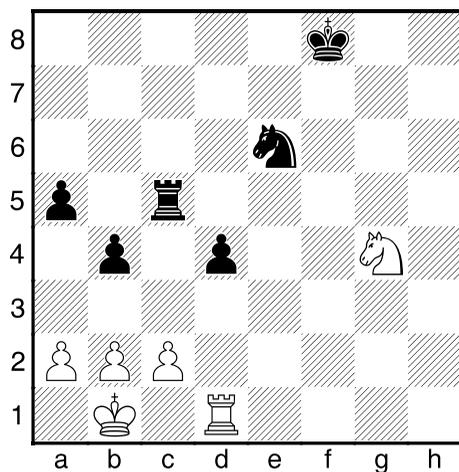


White wins the g4-pawn.

34...d4

34...g3 35.♘f1 g2 36.♘e3=.

35.♘xg4=



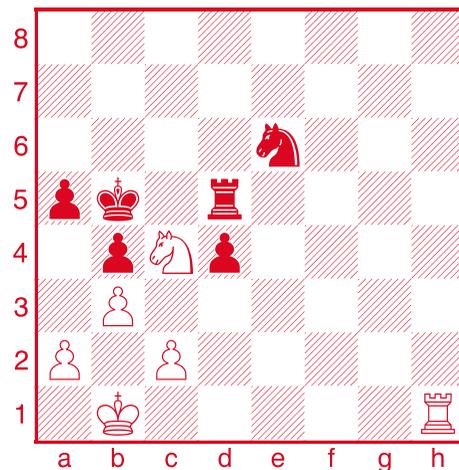
Despite not having an objective advantage I felt I have chances to outplay my opponent, as Black's pawns are more vulnerable than mine and, most importantly, I had a serious time advantage: my opponent only had around 5 minutes (+30s) for as many moves as I could force him to make.

35...♙e7 36.♘f2 ♔d7

37.♘d3 ♜f5 38.b3 ♙c6

39.♘b2 ♜d5 40.♘c4 ♙b5

41.♜h1



Doesn't ...d3 and ...♜xd3 simply draw?

Trying to annoy my opponent with ♜h6. I was also setting a trap by allowing ...d3, as I knew my opponent would be tempted by this move to trade pawns.

41...d3

41...a4 42.♜h6 axb3 43.axb3 ♘f4=.

42.cxd3 ♜xd3??

A decisive mistake as the pin after ♜h5+ ♘c5 proves to be fatal!

42...♘c5 or ...♘f4 was better.

White can win the a5-pawn, but that's not enough to win the game: 43.♜h6 ♘xd3 44.♜b6+

♙c5 45.♜a6 ♔d4=.

43.♜h5+ ♔c5

editor – 43...♙c6 44.♘e5+-.

editor – 43...♙a6 44.♜h6!

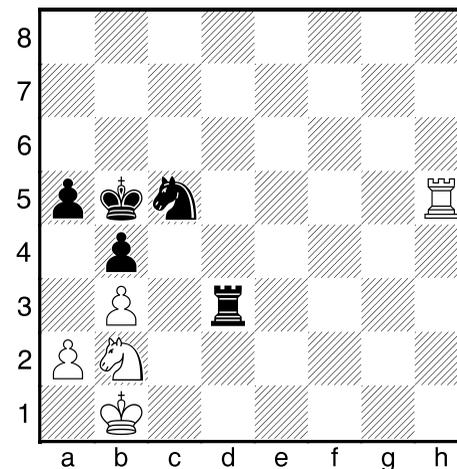
(44.♜xa5+ and ♜b5xb4 also wins.)

44...♜d1+ 45.♙c2 ♜e1

46.♙d2 ♜e4 47.♙d3 ♜e1

48.♘e3+- wins the ♘e6.

44.♘b2 ♔



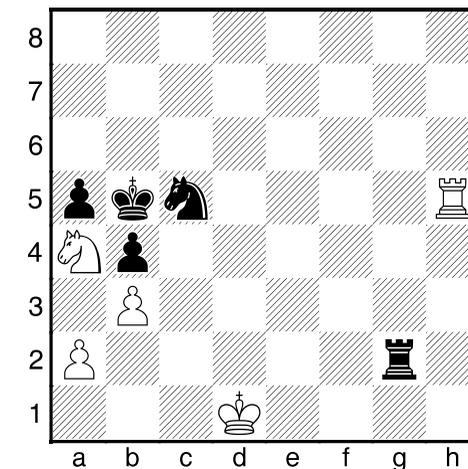
White gets ♘a4 and — amazingly — Black is losing!

44...♜g3

44...♜d8 45.♘a4 ♜c8 defends the knight, but Black is an eternal pin: only the rook can move along the c-file or the ♘ is lost. White's winning plan involves

advancing the king to the back rank where it will take away the c7/c8 squares from the rook: 46.♙c2 ♜c7 47.♜d5 ♜c8 48.♙d2 ♜c7 49.♙e3 ♜e7+ 50.♙f4 ♜f7+ 51.♙e5 ♜e7+ 52.♙f6 ♜e6+ 53.♙f7 ♜c6 54.♙e7 ♜c7+ 55.♙d8 ♜c6 56.♜h5 ♜d6+ 57.♙c7 ♜c6+ 58.♙b8 +-.

45.♘a4 ♜g1+ 46.♙c2 ♜g2+ 47.♙d1



The checks run out and Black is not able to save the knight.

47...♜xa2

47...♜g1+ 48.♙e2 ♜g2+ 49.♙f1 ♜c2 50.♙e1 ♙c6 Escaping the pin, but 51.♙d1+- White is just in time to play ♙d1.



48.♖xc5+

The pawn on b3 can't be traded, so White is technically winning.

48...♔a6+- 49.♖c6+ ♔b7**50.♖b6+ ♔a7 51.♖h6 ♖g2****52.♘c5 ♖g5 53.♖a6+ ♔b8****54.♖xa5 ♖g1+ 55.♔d2 ♔c7****56.♘d3 ♖g2+ 57.♔e3 ♖g3+****58.♔e4 ♖g4+ 59.♔f3 ♖d4****60.♔e3 ♖h4 61.♖b5 ♖h3+****62.♔d4****1-0****notes:****GM Razvan Preotu**

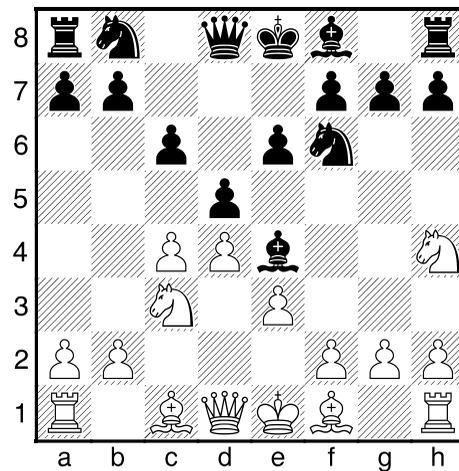
This is the critical round of the tournament. I had 2.5/3 points while my opponent was 3/3.

Sambuev, Bator (2584)
Preotu, Razvan (2534)

D12

*2023 Excelsior Anniversary (4),
28.01.2024*

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6
4.♘c3 ♘f5 5.e3 e6 6.♘h4

♙e4

I decided to repeat the line I played against Bator in the 2023 Canadian Transnational Chess Championship in Montreal, as the opening was quite successful. This line usually leads to very fighting positions, which was perfect for my tournament situation

7.f3

White guarantees the bishop pair advantage, but the move f3 is weakening. Because of this White's main idea in many lines is to go for 0-0-0, leading to sharp play.

7...♙g6 8.♖b3 ♖c7 9.g3

A useful move to defend the

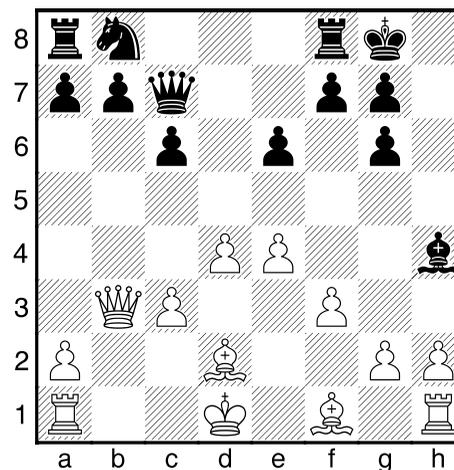
knight on h4.

Our game in Montreal went:

9.♙d2 ♙e7 10.cxd5 ♘xd5

11.♘xg6 hxg6 12.e4 ♘xc3

13.bxc3 ♙h4+! 14.♔d1 0-0=:

Analysis Diagram

With the king on d1 Black has good play by trying to open the center with moves like ...c5.

15.♖b1 b5 16.g3 ♙e7 17.h4?!

♖xg3 18.♔e2 ♖c7! 19.h5 g5! ♖

20.♔f2 a6 21.c4 e5 22.♙h3?!

(22.d5 ♖) 22...exd4 23.♖bg1

♘d7 24.♙xg5 ♙xg5 25.♖xg5

♖f4!-+ 26.♖hg1 bxc4! 27.♖xg7+

♔h8 28.♖xc4 ♖e3+ 29.♔g2

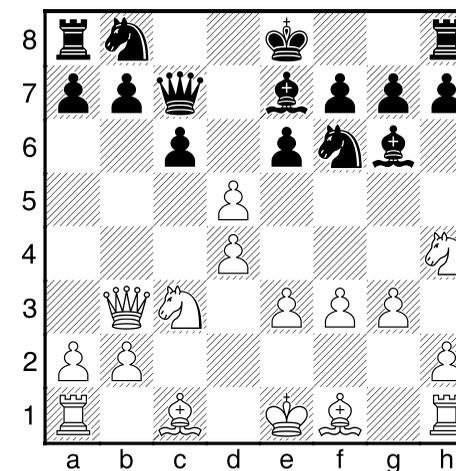
(29.♔f1 ♖ab8-+ or 29...♖xf3+-+)

29...♔xg7 30.♙xd7 ♔h8 31.♖xc6

♖g8+ 32.♙g4 ♖f4 33.♔h3

♖ad8 34.♖d1 ♖c8! 35.♖d7 ♖c2

36.♖xd4+ f6 37.♖g1 ♖xg4! if
38.fxg4 ♖c3+. 0-1 **Sambuev,B**
(2448)-**Preotu,R** (2475)
Montreal, 2023.

9...♙e7 10.cxd5**10...cxd5!**

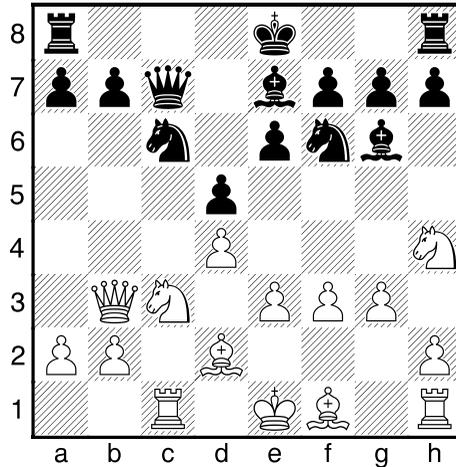
The best way to recapture as it opens the c6-square for the knight.

10...♘xd5 11.e4 White gets the center 11...♘xc3 12.♙f4! A strong Zwischenzug to develop with tempo 12...♖b6 13.♘xg6 hxg6 14.bxc3± 10...exd5 leads to a pawn structure that favours White. Black will have a hard time challenging the center with ...c5 because it weakens the d5-pawn, while White can more



easily prepare e4. 11. ♖xg6 hxg6
12. ♕d2±.

11. ♕d2 ♖c6 12. ♖c1



12...0-0

I was out of my opening preparation and after some thought decided to play normally by allowing ♖xg6.

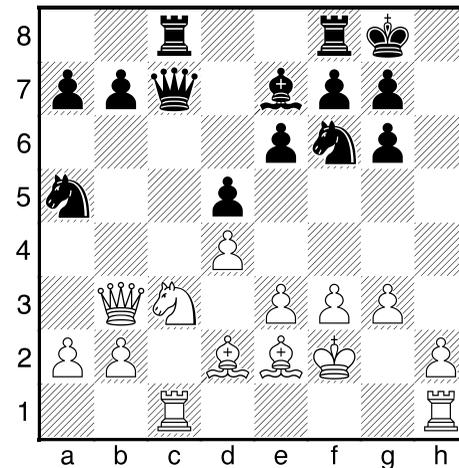
12... ♕h5!? preventing ♖xg6 is an interesting option 13. ♕e2 g5 14. ♖g2 Black keeps the bishop but has weakened the kingside, so I was unsure about this 14...0-0 15.0-0 ♕g6=.

13. ♖xg6 hxg6 14. ♖f2 ♖ac8
Preparing ... ♖a5-c4. I decided to move the a8 rook to keep the option of ... ♖fe8 and ...e5.

15. ♕e2

15. ♕d3 seemed more natural to me, but my opponent must have not liked that he will likely have to move the bishop again if I play ...e5. 15... ♖d7 Followed by ...e5 is a strong idea other than ... ♖a5-c4, as after dxe5 ... ♖xe5 White has to move the bishop again.

15... ♖a5



16. ♖a4

16. ♖xd5 was possible, and something I had to calculate when playing ... ♖a5, but it is not dangerous: 16... ♖xb3 17. ♖xc7 ♖xd5 (17... ♖xc7 18. ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 19. ♕b4! White gets the exchange back and will be a pawn up, but Black will have

enough compensation with the active rook: 19... ♖c7 20. ♕xf8 ♖xf8 21. axb3 ♖c2 22. ♖b1 ♖d5 23. e4 ♖b4=) 18. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 19. axb3 ♖c2 20. ♖d1 ♖xb2 21. e4 ♖b4 White has to bail out with ♕xb4 and d4-d5 as otherwise the b3-pawn is lost. 22. ♕xb4 ♕xb4 23. d5 exd5 24. ♖xd5=.

16... ♖c4

Having activated the knight to c4 I felt good about my position.

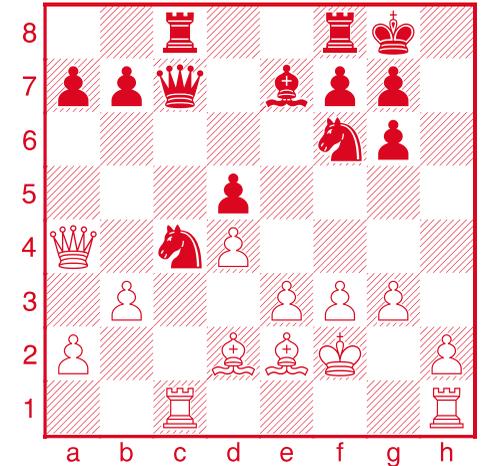
17. ♖xd5!?

Opening the c-file to follow up with b3. The nature of the position changes completely.

I was expecting 17. ♕xc4 ♖xc4= with an equal position. 17... dxc4!? intending ...a6 and ...b5 is an ambitious try for Black.

17. ♖b5 ♖b6 18. ♕xc4 dxc4 Black has ...a6 against ♖xc4 winning b2, so the position is completely fine. 19. ♖xc4?? (19. ♖a5!)= 19... a6 20. ♖xc8 (20. ♖c3 ♖xb2+) 20... ♖xc8 21. ♖c3 ♖xb2+.

17...exd5 □ 18. b3



Black trails the top-seed by 1/2 a point and needs winning chances.

18... ♖xd2!?

The simplest move and I thought the most ambitious for me. Black gets rook and two pieces for the queen, which is more than enough material. The problem is the knight on d2 is trapped deep in White's side of the board, but I felt I'd have enough activity with the rooks on the open c-file.

18...b5 19. ♖xb5 □= doesn't achieve anything for Black.

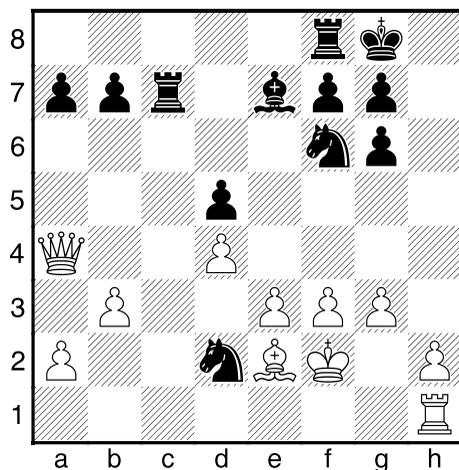
18... ♕a3 is a strong move that wins the exchange, but the position remains complicated after 19. bxc4 (19. ♖c2? b5! allows





Black to save the knight, and is an idea I missed during the game. After 20. ♖xb5 ♗b6 bxc4 fails to ... ♗xb5 and the rook on c2 is not defended, but after 21. ♗xb6 ♘xb6-+ Black is up a piece for two pawns.) 19... ♗xc1 20. ♖xc1 ♗ White has a pawn and the bishop pair for the exchange, giving good positional compensation.

19. ♖xc7 ♖xc7



20. ♖d1!

A very important move. White wins the knight immediately as ... ♖c2 is met with ♔e1.

20. ♗xa7? wins pawns, but Black gets to keep the knight 20... ♖c2 21. ♗xb7 ♖e8 ♗.

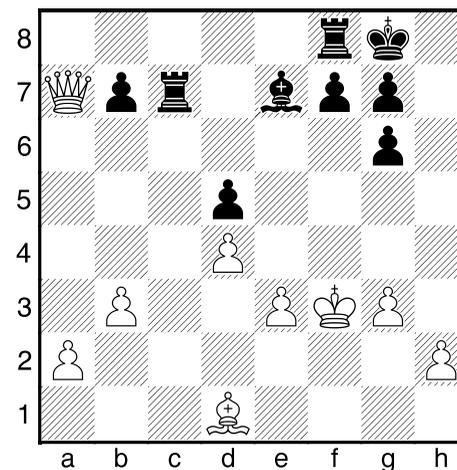
20. ♗a5?? attacks the rook and knight, but fails 20... ♖c2 21. ♖d1 ♖e8! preparing to attack e3 and Black has a winning advantage, as ♖xd2 fails to ... b6! 22. ♔e1? (22. ♖xd2? b6-+) 22... ♗xf3+! wins on the spot (22... ♗b4 transposes) 23. ♗xf3 ♗b4+ 24. ♗xb4 ♖xe3+ 25. ♔f1 ♖xf3+ 26. ♔g1 ♖ff2-+ editor – there's no way to keep the ♗ out, and it goes to e4 or g4 with mate threats.

20... ♗de4+

Wins the exchange with ... ♗e4-c3.

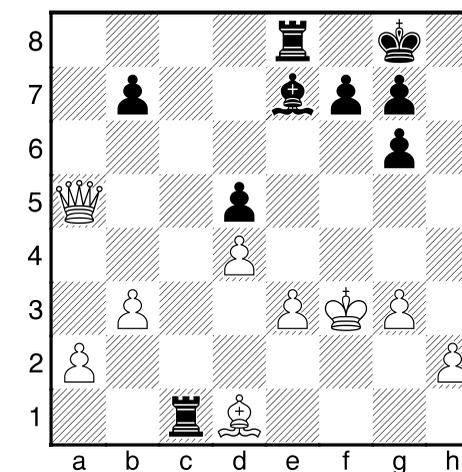
20... ♖c2 21. ♔e1 ♗de4 22. fxe4 ♗xe4= Black has enough compensation for the queen, but is clearly fighting for a draw.

21. fxe4 ♗xe4+ 22. ♔f3 ♗c3 23. ♗xa7 ♗xd1 24. ♗xd1



The start of a very interesting endgame with the material imbalance of queen and pawn vs two rooks. Generally, queen and pawn is worth a bit more than two rooks, but here my king is very safe and the rooks have a lot of potential to get active with the open c-file and weak e3-pawn. I felt I was fine and that both sides have chances to outplay the other, which was perfect for my tournament situation.

24... ♖e8 25. ♗a5 ♖c1



26. ♗d2?!



GM Razvan Preotu

Neck and neck with GM Bator Sambuev.



Retreating the queen was unnecessary. 26. ♖b5! improves the queen by attacking e8 and b7:

26... ♔f8?! is natural since it keeps the rook on e8, but after 27. ♕e2 ♕g5 28. ♔g4! prevents ... ♖xe3 and White gets the advantage 28... ♕xe3 ♖ (28... ♕h6?? 29. ♖xd5 ♖xe3 30. ♕c4+-) 29. ♖xd5± White has the initiative with threats of ♕c4 and ♖xb7;

26... ♖d8 27. ♖xb7 ♕g5 28. ♔g4 (28. ♕e2 ♖c3↑) 28... ♖xd1 (28... ♕xe3 29. ♖e7 ♖f8∞) 29. ♔xg5=. The position is equal as Black's rooks are very active and White's king can be in some danger.

26... ♖c6

I wanted to focus my play against the e3-pawn. The threat is ... ♕g5.

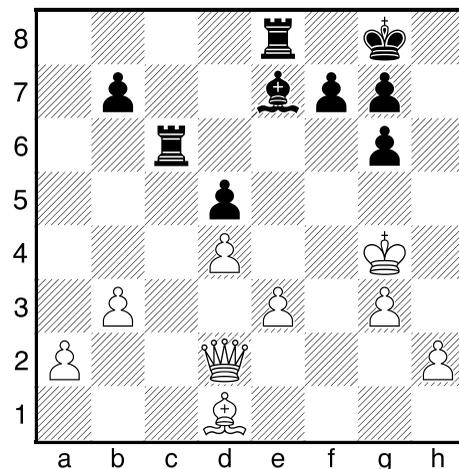
26... ♖ec8 is also strong, keeping control of the c-file. White is tied down here.

27. ♔g4!

Prevents ... ♕g5 and now if Black

gets ... ♖xe3 it won't be with check.

editor – 27. h4 also stops ... ♕g5, but Black has the billiards ricochet 27... ♕a3! threatening ... ♕c1-+, and if 28. ♕c2 ♖ec8-+ followed by ... ♕c1 and ♖ to the e-file wins!



27... ♖f6?

Not a good move. I thought ... ♖f5 and ... ♕g5 could be strong, and I'm also playing against ♕f3, ♔h3-g2, which I thought my opponent wanted to get; but in reality the rook is awkwardly placed on f6.

I considered 27... f5+ 28. ♔h3 ♕g5 but didn't like that I'm potentially weakening my king, and White has 29. ♕f3 attacking

d5. But I missed that 29... ♔h7! 30. ♕xd5 ♖d6 is good for Black because of ... ♖xe3 next; e.g. 31. ♕f7 ♖xe3 32. ♖b4 ♖d7 33. ♖f8 ♖d8 34. ♖c5 ♖e2♣.

27... ♖e6 is simple and strong, targeting e3 28. ♕f3 ♕f6 29. ♕xd5 ♖xe3♣ and we get the same pawn structure eventually reached in the game where Black is the one playing for the win.

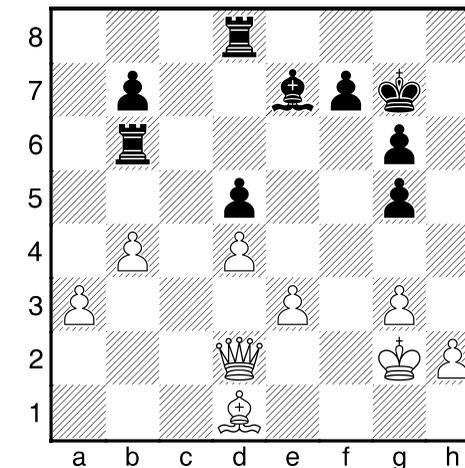
28. ♔h3 g5!

I really like this idea of improving the king with ...g6 and ... ♔g7, where it will be on a dark-square.

29. ♔g2 g6 30. ♕f3 ♖d8 31. b4 ♖a6 32. ♕d1 Intending ♕b3.

32. b5 ♖a4! followed by ... ♖b4 gives Black counterplay; but 32... ♖a3 33. ♕d1! followed by ♕b3 and the rook on a3 is misplaced.

32... ♖b6 33. a3 ♔g7



I felt good about my position as I secured the my king and prevented my opponent from advancing his queenside pawns.

34. ♕b3

This surprised me as it allows ...g4, a move I wanted to achieve.

34. h3? prevents ...g4 but is too slow, and Black strikes on the queenside with 34... ♖c8!♣ threatening ... ♖bc6-c3 giving Black the advantage: 35. ♕b3?! ♖bc6 36. ♔f3 ♖c3 37. ♕xd5 ♖xa3 38. ♕xb7 ♖cc3-+.

34. ♖b2!♣ preparing to advance the pawns with b5 and a4 is the best move and keeps the position relatively balanced, although I still prefer Black.

34...g4!

Threatening ...g5. I thought I'm nearly winning here, but I underestimated my opponent's next move.

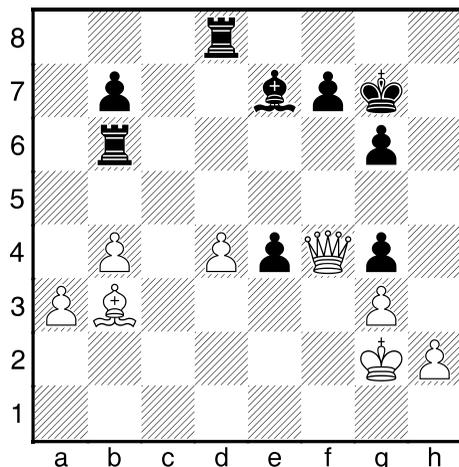
35.e4!

An important move, allowing White to trade the weak e3-pawn.

35.gd1 f5 is really bad for White due to ...g5 and ...e6.

35...dxe4 36.f4

Threatening c7 and xe4.

**36...f6!**

36...f5?? 37.c7+- is terrible. 36...f6? 37.c7 is very unpleasant, and what I originally missed when playing ...g4.

editor – here, the computer shows Black has a preposterous save with 37...e3 and if 38.cxb6 e2 39.cxb7 (or 39.cxd8=; 39.f2?? xd4+-+) 39...e1c 40.cxf7+ h6 41.cxf6= with a perpetual coming soon.

37.cxe4

White got a favorable exchange but I still felt my position is easier to play as my king is safer.

37...f8?!

37...gd6! with the idea of ...c7-b6 is stronger, when 38.cxc4 e8! followed by ...e3 and Black is taking over the initiative.

38.f3c4?

Allowing ...a8 is a serious mistake.

38.cxc4 e8! followed by ...e3 and White is on the defensive.

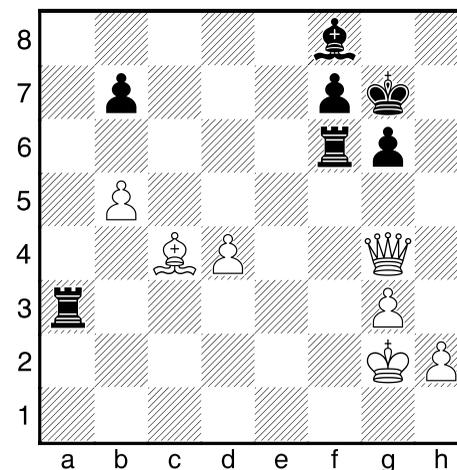
38.d5! is best, moving the pawn to a more secure square and playing against ...a8 as White can save the queenside pawns with a4.

38...a8!

Targeting the a3-pawn. White no longer has a3-a4, so this is very strong because the rook will get active.

39.cxc4

39.cxe3 defends a3, but White no longer gets the g4 pawn. 39...c8 40.cxe2 f3+- with a huge advantage for Black.

39...xa3 40.b5**40...c3?**

Missing a big opportunity to dominate White's queen. At this point we both had around 5 minutes left and I made the decision to speed up, but of course that means not playing precisely.

40...e3! controlling e4 and e2. White's queen has a hard time centralizing itself: 41.d1 b4!+- preventing d2. White can't chase the rook from e3 and is dominated. Black has ideas of ...e1 and ...f2+, and if White ever plays d5 there is ...c5 with excellent coordination.

41.e2 d6

My plan was ...c7-b6.

42.f5 c7?!

Defending b7 and possibly intending ...e7.

42...b6! preventing White from playing b6 and stopping all counterplay is stronger. I didn't want to take away the b6 square for the bishop, but Black can attack the d4-pawn in other ways, like ...b4-c3.

43.f3

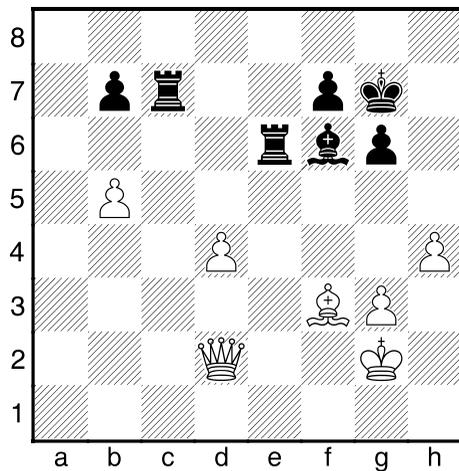
43.b6! at any moment is a good inclusion for White, fixing the b7-pawn as a target; e.g. 43...e7 44.b2.

43...e6 44.d2 e7?!

Intending ...f6 and ...d7. 44...b6!.



45.h4 ♖f6



46.h5

A logical move to try and open my king, but it's not actually easy to win the pawn back. It also creates a target on g3 that I can attack.

46.d5! is a better version of the game for White: 46...♖e5 47.b6 ♖d7= White can simply wait and it's hard to imagine how Black improves.

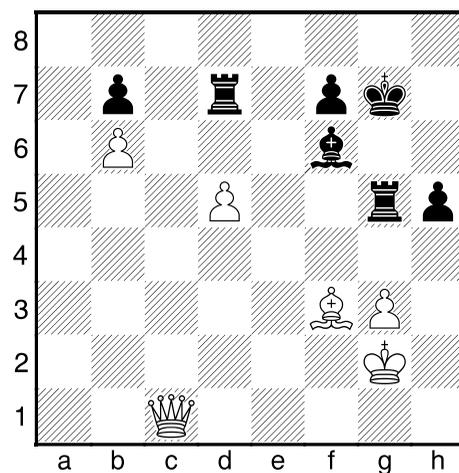
46...gxh5 47.d5!

47.♙xh5 ♖e4! is strong, and what Bator told me he missed after the game. Black surrounds and wins the d-pawn, so this is clearly not a good exchange for White.

47...♖e5

My plan was to attack the g3-pawn with ...♖g5. The position remains complicated as White has counterplay with the d and b pawns, but I felt confident after finding this idea because I will be the one attacking during the time scramble.

48.b6 ♖d7 49.♙c1 ♖g5



50.♙c7!

A nice move that I completely missed! Luckily for me, Black can simply move the rook.

50...♖e7 51.d6 ♖e3 52.d7 ♖d3

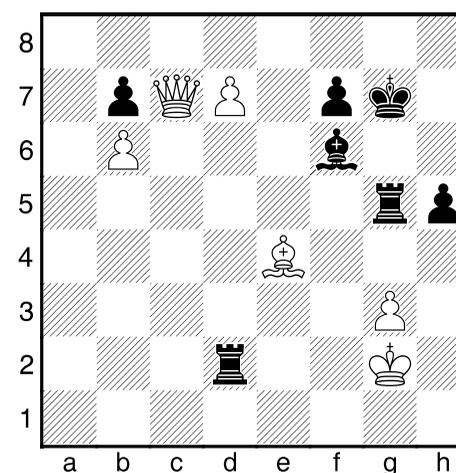
Stopping the pawn. I have threats of ...h4 and ...♖d2,+ so I thought the position is dangerous

for White.

53.♙e4

53.♙xb7 h4 I felt was very dangerous during the game because... 54.♙e4 ♖d2+ ...and the white King is forced to the back rank, but after... 55.♙f1 ♖a5 56.♙e1 ♠= seems to defend.

53...♖d2+



54.♙f3

This is objectively the best move, but White needs to find a brilliant resource against ...♙d4.

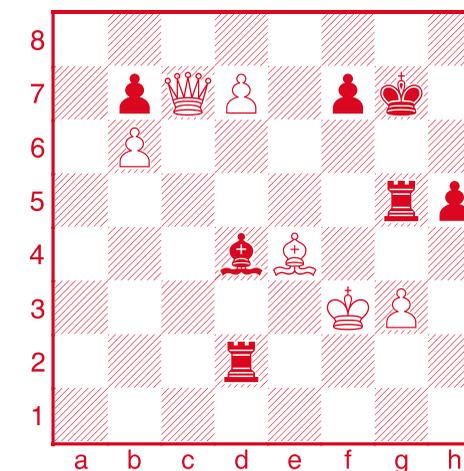
Not 54.♙h3?? ♙e5♠-+ when White can promote but gets mated.

I was expecting 54.♙f1? and

thought I would have good chances with White's king stuck on the back rank. A sample computer line is: 54...♖b5 55.♙e1 ♖bb2 56.♙f3 ♖a2 57.d8♙ ♖xd8 58.♙xh5 ♖a1+ 59.♙e2 ♖e8+ 60.♙f2 ♖e7-+ and Black should be winning as the b6-pawn will fall. The king on g7 remains incredibly safe while White's king is not.

54...♙d4

The best practical move. White's king is in a mating net and I thought I was winning, but White has a brilliant defensive resource which we both missed.



Be brilliant, or lose.

55.g4??

Having no time, my opponent



was unable to find the correct move and loses right away.

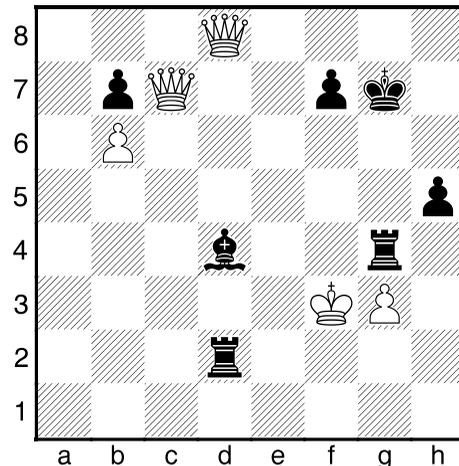
55.♙xb7?? ♖g4!-+ is the important idea, preventing White's king from escaping.

55.♙d3? is what I expected, when Black wins with 55...♖xd3+ 56.♙e4 (editor – 56.♙e2 ♙xb6□ the ♖s cover all the checks, 57.d8♙ (57.♙xb6 ♖xd7-+) 57...♖xd8 58.♙xb6 ♖d7-+) 56...♙xb6! White has no checks 57.♙xb6 ♖xd7-+. Black has a decisive material advantage and the king is safe enough so that White doesn't have realistic chances of perpetual, but it will still require good technique to win.

55.♙g6!! is the only drawing move! It opens an escape square on e4, and it is important that the bishop attacks the h5 pawn to prevent ...♖g4. An amazing concept!

55...♖f2+ 56.♙e4 ♖g4+ 57.♙d3 White's king escapes 57...♖f3+ 58.♙e2 ♖g3 59.♙xg3! ♖xg3 60.d8♙ ♙f6 with a dead draw 61.♙d5 ♖xg6 62.♙xb7 ♙d4=;

55...♖xg6 56.d8♙ ♖g4:
Analysis Diagram



White can give up a queen or both queens to prevent mate:

57.♙f4 ♖f2+ 58.♙e4 ♖xf4+ 59.gxf4 ♙g1=;

57.♙f8+ ♙xf8 58.♙xf7+ ♙xf7=, stalemate.

55...♖xg4

A very important win for me to overtake Bator in the standings.

0-1

notes:

GM Razvan Preotu

**Preotu, Razvan (2534)
Findlay, Ian (2249)**

D02

*2023 Excelsior Anniversary (5),
28.01.2024*

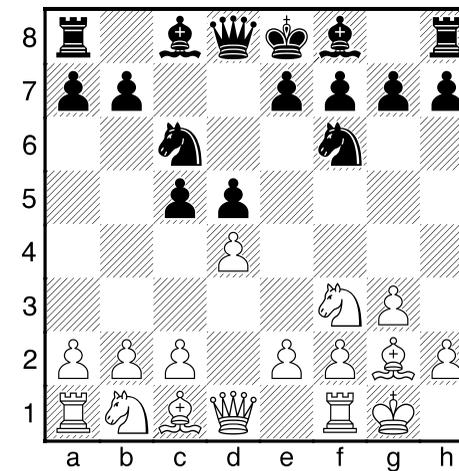
Going into the final round I was tied with FM Ian Findlay for 1st

place on 3.5/4. Our previous game was in the 2023 Labour Day Open where it was a Dragon Sicilian. I won the game, but expected my opponent to have an improvement ready if I played the same line again, so I decided to surprise him by playing the Reti.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.g3 d5

FM Ian Findlay
Leans into a reverse Grunfeld

3.♙g2 c5 4.0-0 ♘c6 5.d4



White is playing a reversed Grunfeld, one of the best openings to have an extra move in.

5...♙b6

I saw that Ian played this in his round 2 game against David Filipovich and so I was able to prepare against it before the game. I find this idea to be very risky, as Black will be moving the queen many times in the opening.



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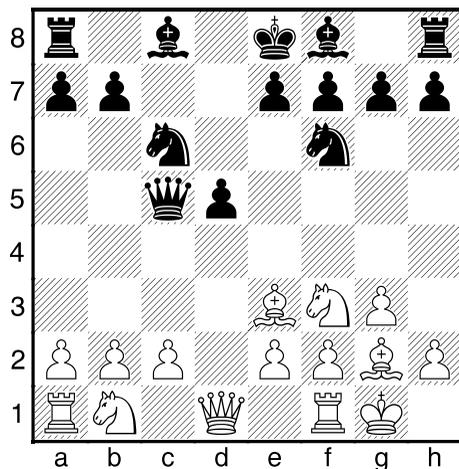
5...e6 is most solid, when 6.c4 transposes to the Catalan.

5...cxd4 6.♞xd4 followed by c4 and White has an amazing Grunfeld, being an extra move up.

6.dxc5 ♞xc5

Black's idea is to play ...e5.

7.♞e3



White develops with tempo and intends c4 to challenge the center. Black's position is dangerous because of White's superior development

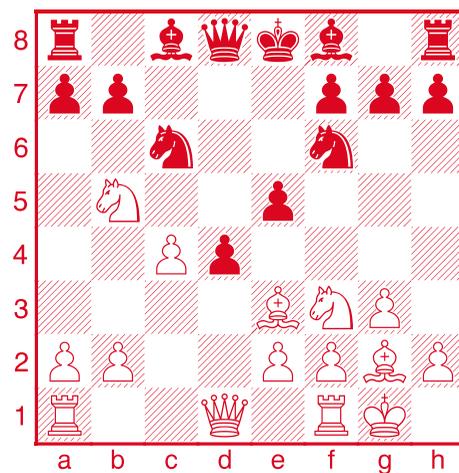
7.♞c3 is how the round 2 game against David Filipovich went, where the result was a draw.

7...♞a5

7...♞b4 playing against c4 8.♞c3 e6 9.a3 ♞a5 10.b4 ♞d8 11.♞b5↑ Followed by c4 and White has the initiative.

7...♞d6 was my main preparation, keeping the queen in the center to prepare ...e5. 8.♞c3 White intends the very strong ♞b5 and c4. (8.c4 e5 is reasonable for Black.) 8...e5 9.♞b5! ♞d8 (9...♞b8 10.♞g5± threatening ♞xf6 and the d5-pawn is weak.) 10.c4! d4:

Analysis Diagram



11.♞xe5 ♠ White sacrifices a piece for Black's strong center pawns and gets a very large advantage, nearly winning according to the computer:

11...dxe3 12.♞xd8+- and a white ♞s will fork a black ♞;

11...♞xe5 12.♞xd4 Black can't trade queens because ♞e5 hangs and there is the ♞c7+ fork. 12...♞fd7 13.♞ad1 a6 14.♞c3+- White has an overwhelming position as all the pieces are developed and Black can't get the king out of the center with ...♞e7 0-0 because of f4.

8.c4!↑

Opening the center. White has the initiative because of better development.

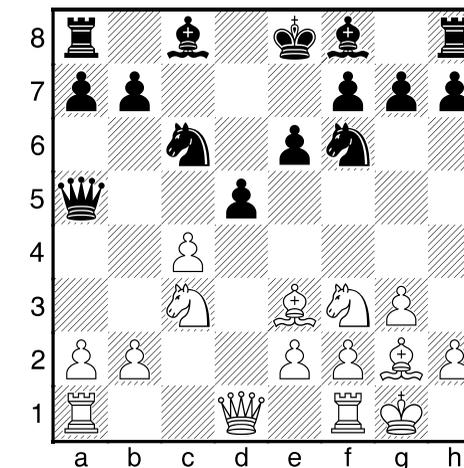
8...e6

8...dxc4 is risky after ♞a3 or ♞bd2.

9.♞c3

Putting pressure against d5 and trying to provoke ...dxc4.

9.cxd5 ♞xd5 10.♞d2 was also tempting for me as White can play e4 if Black retreats 10...♞b4 11.a3 ♞xd2 12.♞bxd2 0-0 13.b4±. Black has issues activating the light-square bishop.



9...♞b4!

The best way to develop, putting pressure against the knight.

9...dxc4 10.♞d2 is very bad for Black 10...♞e5 11.♞ce4 ♞xe4 12.♞xe4± threatening ♞d6+. White has more than enough compensation for the pawn.

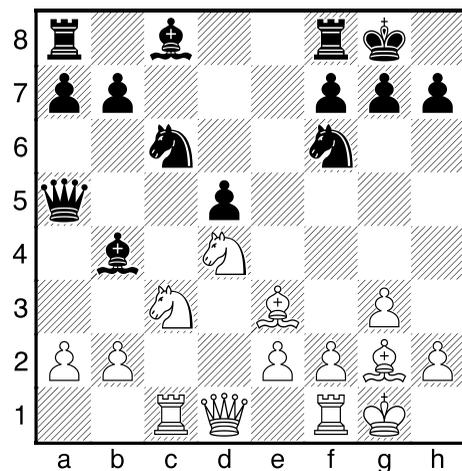
10.cxd5 exd5 11.♞c1

11.♞a4 followed by a3 and ♞d4 is also good, and something I considered.

11...0-0 12.♞d4

12.a3 playing against ...♞xc3 followed by ...♞xa2 is a bit more precise. If 12...♞xc3 13.♞xc3±.





Opening the bishop and blocking the pawn. White has a nice position as the isolated pawn is a weakness. Threats are a3 and ♘b3.

12...♙e6

12...♙xc3! simplifying the position is best and what I thought to be critical. 13.♖xc3 ♗xa2 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♖xc6 ♙e6± followed by ...♞fc8. White has a very stable long-term advantage with the bishop pair, but at least Black has activated his pieces. I would have been very happy with this position because the bishop on d4 will be a monster.

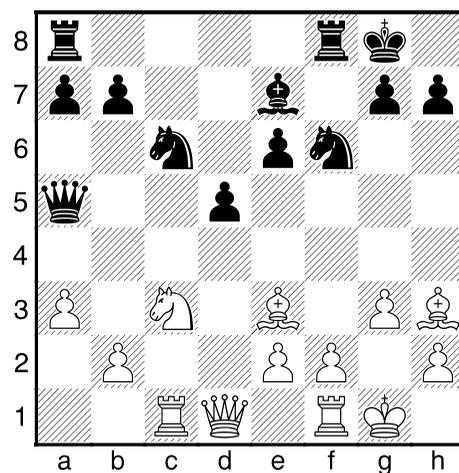
13.a3 ♙e7?!

This is inconsistent with 9...♙b4

and blocks the e-file, so there is no more ...♞e8 defense against ♘xe6 fxe6 then ♙h3.

13...♙xc3! is still best, when White has the pleasant choice between ♘xe6 or ♖xc3±, which is what I intended, with a clear advantage for White.

14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.♙h3



Black has no good way to defend e6 while keeping the pieces coordinated. I knew the position was very good for me.

15...♔f7?

Not a good sign to move the king towards the center in the middlegame.

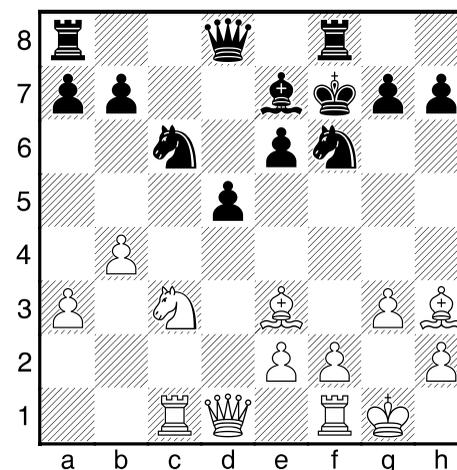
15...d4? intending ...♞ad8

doesn't work: 16.♙xe6+ ♔h8 17.♙xd4 ♞ad8 18.e3+-.

15...♘d8? is too passive 16.♗b3+- with threats of ♘b5-c7 and White is dominating.

15...♞ad8! simply giving up the pawn is what the computer recommends as the only good option 16.♙xe6+ ♔h8 17.♙d2±. White is a clear pawn up with great chances to convert, but Black does have good piece coordination.

16.b4 ♗d8



17.♘b5

Opening up the rook. I had a strong idea prepared, but missed how Black can play against it.

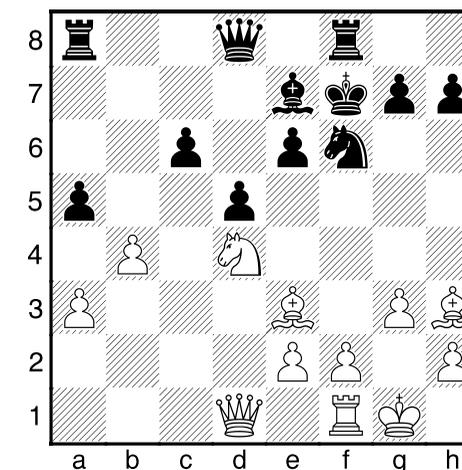
17.♗b3! developing the queen and intending ♞fd1 is best. Black is tied down and White can prepare the pawn break e4 by moving the bishop from e3.

17...a5?!

A logical move to target the queenside pawns and activate the rook, but it allows me to execute my idea.

17...♞e8! preparing ...♙f8 to defend e6 is the only good move. ♞xc6 is no longer effective, and Black can follow up with ...a5. 18.♗d3 a5 19.bxa5 ♗xa5 20.♞fd1±.

18.♞xc6! bxc6 19.♘d4+-



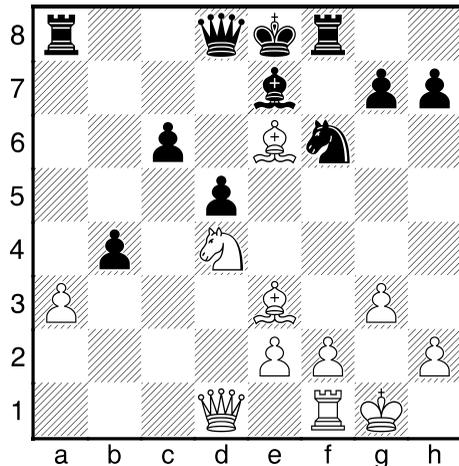
Black has no good way to defend e6. I was very happy to get

this as the only way for Black not lose material is to keep the king in the center which is very dangerous. White is objectively winning.

19...axb4

19...♔g8 secures the king but allows White to win material with 20.♘xc6 ♖d6 21.♘e7+ ♖xe7 22.♙c5 ♖d7 23.♙xf8 ♔xf8 24.♖d4+-. With the passed b-pawn and ♖b1 the position is technically winning for White.

20.♙xe6+ ♔e8



21.♘f5

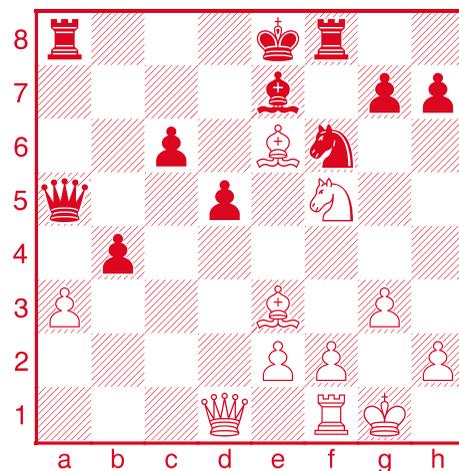
I was attracted to the idea of ♘xg7#.

21.♖c2 is also strong, with axb4 and ♘f5 ideas.

21.axb4! is best. White threatens ♖c2 attacking c6 and keeps the option of ♘xc6. 21...♙xb4 22.♘xc6 ♖d6 I saw this and rejected the line, not realizing that 23.♘d4+- is winning for White as Black's king is too weak. ♘f5 and ♖b3 are decisive threats; e.g. 23...♙c5 24.♘f5♠+.

21...♖a5

21...♖f7! giving up the exchange is best. White shouldn't accept the sacrifice, as the bishop on e6 is a monster and worth more than Black's rook. 22.axb4 ♙xb4 23.♖d4! (23.♙xf7+? ♔xf7±) 23...♖b7 24.♖c1 White has developed all the pieces and Black's weak king is decisive in the long run; e.g. 24...♖a6 25.♘xg7+ ♖xg7 26.♖xb4+-.



Play for the crowd!

22.♖a4

A beautiful queen sacrifice that I couldn't resist playing. ♖xc6+ is a threat and Black's queen needs to control b6 to prevent mate in 2.

22.♖c2 followed by axb4 and ♖b1 is also completely winning, but not as pretty.

22...♖a6

The only move. 22...♖xa4 23.♘xg7+ ♔d8 24.♙b6#.

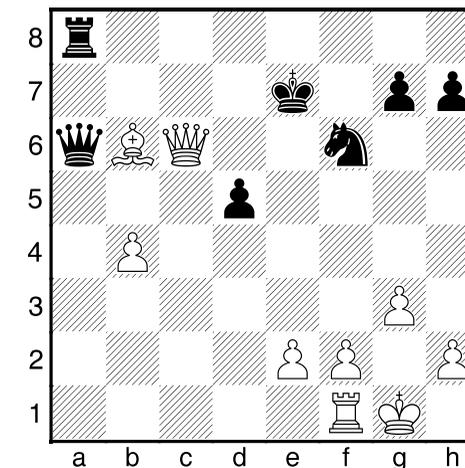
23.♙b6!

Another appealing move. This ends the game as Black can't defend against both ♘xg7# and ♖xc6+.

23...♖f7

23...♖xb6 24.♖xa8+ ♙d8 25.♘d6+ ♔e7 26.♘c8+ ♔xe6 27.♘xb6+-.

24.♖xc6+ ♔f8 25.♙xf7 ♔xf7 26.♘xe7 ♔xe7 27.axb4+-



White is two pawns up and easily winning.

27...♔f7 28.b5 ♖a2 29.♙d4 ♖e8 30.♖a1 ♖xe2 31.♙xf6

With this win I clinched 1st place with 4.5/5 points.

1-0

I felt very good about winning the tournament and was happy about my quality of play in the final two games.

– GM Razvan Preotu





Steampunk Chess Clock 110% Authentic



		Player	Rtg	Rd.1	Rd.2	Rd.3	Rd.4	Rd.5	Pts.
1	GM	Preetu, Razvan	2534	19w½	18b1	16w1	2b1	3w1	4.5
2	GM	Sambuev, Bator	2584	13b1	21w1	6b1	1w0	7b1	4
3	FM	Findlay, Ian	2249	8w1	16b½	17w1	6w1	1b0	3.5
4		Zhao, Jifan	2039	6w0	15b1	12w½	17b1	10w1	3.5
5		Huh, Isaak	2226	-½	9w1	7b½	-½	12w1	3.5
6		Singh, Mahip	2289	4b1	10w1	2w0	3b0	14w1	3
7		Kim, Noah	2174	12w½	19b1	5w½	14b1	2w0	3
8		Zhong, Ryan Yunhui	1999	3b0	-1	9w0	15b1	16w1	3
9		Wang, Andy	1927	15w1	5b0	8b1	-½	0	2.5
10		Hoekman, Samuel	1938	14w1	6b0	18w1	12b½	4b0	2.5
11		Chunchu, Ashwin	1961	16w0	14b0	13b½	21w1	17w1	2.5
12		Deepak, Laksshana	1967	7b½	20w1	4b½	10w½	5b0	2.5
13		Douglas, Richard	2074	2w0	17b0	11w½	-1	18w1	2.5
14		Maulucci, Anthony	2075	10b0	11w1	21b1	7w0	6b0	2
15		Campbell, Ryan	2244	9b0	4w0	20b1	8w0	21b1	2
16		Filipovich, David	2124	11b1	3w½	1b0	19w½	8b0	2
17		Harms, Reece	1962	20b½	13w1	3b0	4w0	11b0	1.5
18		Singh Dhaliwal, Jaipreet	2104	-½	1w0	10b0	20w1	13b0	1.5
19		Loadman, Ian	2054	1b½	7w0	-½	16b½	0	1.5
20		Ghnatios, Ralph	2119	17w½	12b0	15w0	18b0	-1	1.5
21		Oancea, Nicolae	1986	-1	2b0	14w0	11b0	15w0	1

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2023 Canadian Senior 50+



The 2023 Canadian Senior was a pair of 7-round Swisses held at the Excelsior Chess Club in Etobicoke (next to the Toronto International Airport), October 5-8, 2023.

FM Victor Plotkin won the 50+ section with 6/7 (+5 =2 -0). Tied for 2nd–4th with 4.5/7 were FMs **Jura Ochkoos** and **Ian Findlay**, both of whom Victor defeated, and **Sergey Malakhovets**.

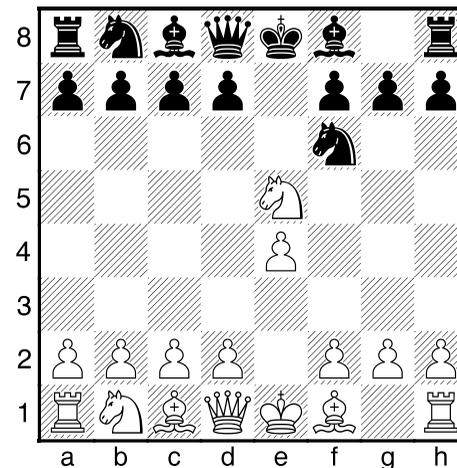
Victor's games didn't make it into the databases because he preferred to play in the larger playing room, which makes it easier to stretch your legs but does not have DGT boards. Victor kindly sent me the scores of two of his games for the Newsletter. I picked this one because it seems to me like a characteristic Victor Plotkin win with Black: safe but slightly worse out of the opening, exchanges down to an endgame

where his opponent is slowly outplayed, winning when his opponent eventually fails to find the only moves to save the game.

Findlay, Ian (2257) Plotkin, Victor (2351)

C42
Canadian Senior 50+ (3),
05.08.2023
Notes: John Upper

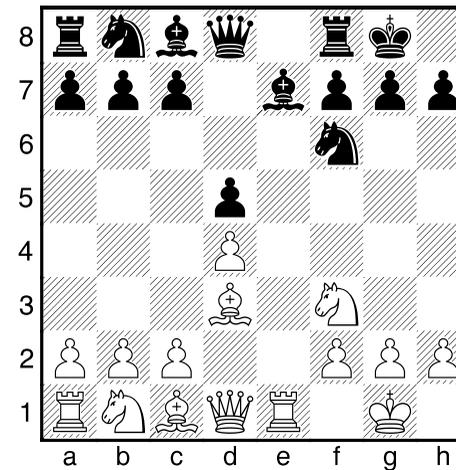
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♗xe5



3...d6
Victor also plays 3...♗xe4!?, which Nakamura recently demonstrated is not nearly the forced loss we were warned to

avoid as beginners. With best play it is slightly worse for Black, just like this game.

4.♗f3 ♗xe4 5.d4 d5 6.♕d3
♕e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♖e1 ♗f6±



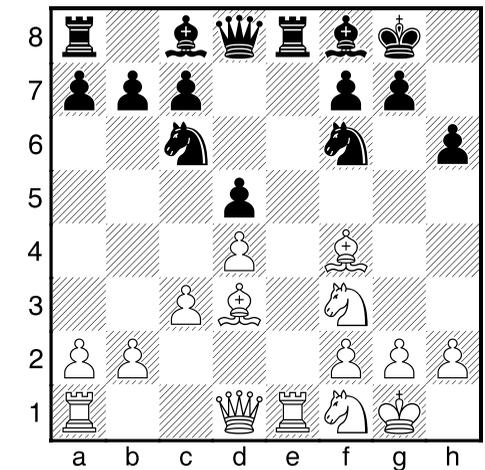
Transposing to a position from the exchange French where Black would have the move.

9.♗bd2
9.♕g5! ♕g4 10.♗bd2 ♗c6 (10...c5!?) 11.c3 ♕h5 12.♖b3 ♖b8 13.♗e5 ♗xe5 14.♖xe5! threat ♕xf6 and ♖xh5. 14...♕g6 15.♕xf6! ♕xf6 16.♖xd5 ♖e7 17.♕xg6 hxg6±. ½-½ **Smirin,I** (2663)–**Nabaty,T** (2564) *Isreal-ch*, 2013.

9...♗c6 10.c3 ♖e8

10...♕g4 11.♖b3 ♖b8 12.♗e5 ♕h5 13.f4 ♗xe5 14.fxe5 (14.dxe5?? ♕c5+ 15.♖h1 ♗g4+) 14...♗e8 15.♗f1 ♕g6 16.♕xg6= ½-½ **Nielsen,P** (2663)–**Rozentalis,E** (2595) *Olympiad-36 Mallorca*, 2004.

11.♗f1 h6 12.♕f4 ♕f8±

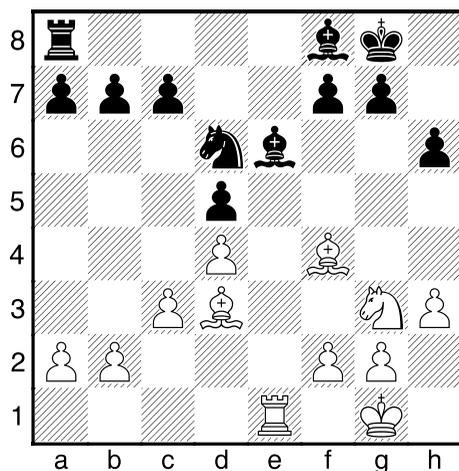


White's a little better, with more active minors and the chance to create some kingside pressure, maybe with a ♖♕ battery on c3-h7.

13.♗g3
13.♖xe8!? ♗xe8 14.♕c2±.

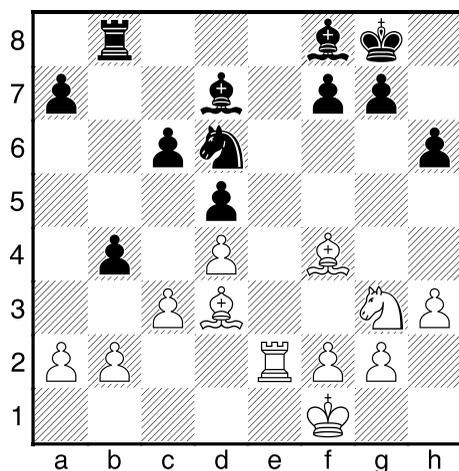
13...♖xe1+ 14.♖xe1 ♕e6
15.♖d2 ♕g4 16.♗e5 ♗xe5

17. ♖xe5 ♕e6 18. ♔f4 ♞e8
19. ♖e1 ♔g5! 20. h3 ♔xf4
21. ♕xf4 ♞d6



With ♔s off and the e-file secured, Black has no weaknesses and no problems.

22. ♕c1 ♕d7 23. ♖e5 c6=
24. ♔f1 b5 25. ♖e2 ♖b8
26. ♕f4 b4

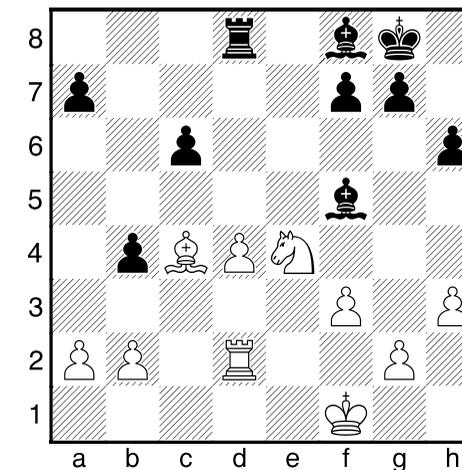


Forcing White to choose his structure:

27. c4!?

27. ♞f5 ♕xf5 28. ♕xf5∞.
27. cxb4 ♖xb4 28. ♕xd6 ♕xd6
29. ♕f5∞.

27...dxc4 28. ♕xc4 ♖d8
29. ♕xd6 ♕xd6= 30. ♞e4 ♕f8
31. ♖d2 ♕f5 32. f3



The structure has changed, and Black has the ♕-pair; but White's strong ♞e4 keeps the balance, and trading it would fix the white pawns and head to an opposite colour ♕ ending.

32...♕e7

32...♕xe4 33. fxe4 c5 34. d5
♕d6! =.

33. ♔e2 ♔f8 34. g4 ♕c8 35. d5
35. ♔e3! shows why computers are so hard to beat: it finds the tricky resource on move 39: 35... f5 36. ♞c5 f4+ 37. ♔e2 ♕f6
38. b3 ♖xd4 39. ♕e6! ♖xd2+
40. ♔xd2= and White gets the pawn back or an easily drawn opposite ♕ ending.



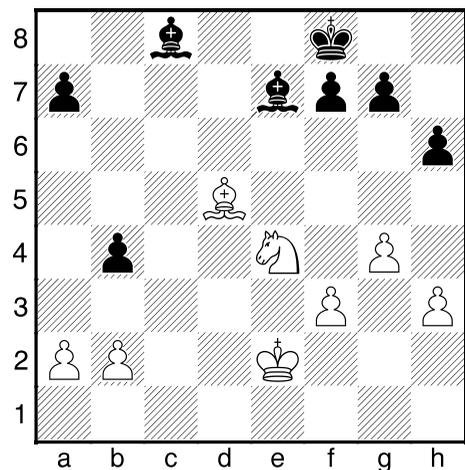
2023 Canadian Senior 50+

Merlin Nazareno v FM Victor Plotkin, who played his games in the large room.



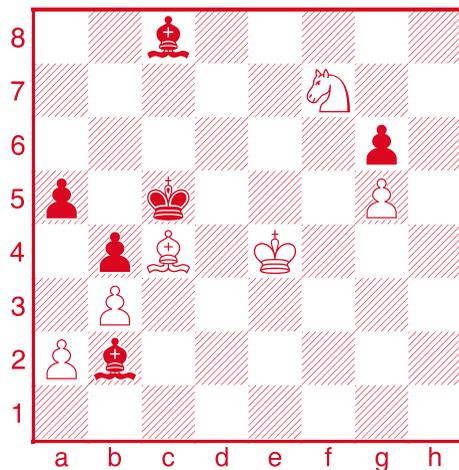
Chess Canada
Spring

35...cxd5 36.♖xd5 ♖xd5
37.♗xd5



With the B-pair and pawns on both sides, Black can realistically play for the win. This would be a draw with best play, but White's drawing margin continues to get narrower.

37...f5 38.♘f2 ♗f6 39.♘d3 a5 40.b3 ♖e7 41.♖e3 ♖d6 42.♗c4 fxc4 43.hxc4 ♗g5+ 44.f4 ♗d8 45.♘e5! ♗f6 46.♘f7+! ♖c5 47.g5♖= hxc5 48.fxc5 ♗b2 49.♖e4!= g6



♘e5 or something else?

50.♘e5??

♖50.♗d3!= looks weird — which makes it hard to find — but targets the g6 pawn and prevents ...♗f5-b1: 50...♗d4 threatens ...♗f5+ winning, but (50...♗e6 51.♘d8=; 50...♗f5+ 51.♖e3 ♗c1+ 52.♖e2 ♗g4+ 53.♖e1 ♗h5 54.♗e2=) 51.♘d6!! ♗f5+♖ 52.♘xf5 gxf5+ 53.♖xf5 ♖d6=.

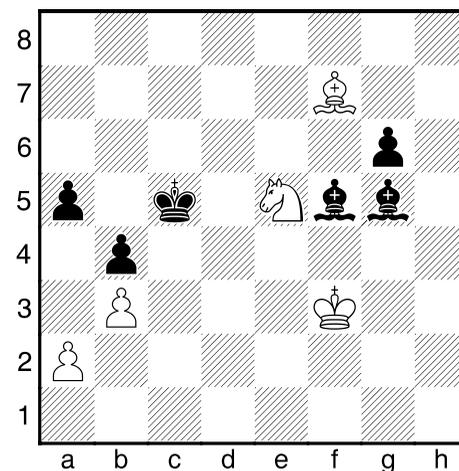
50...♗f5+
51.♖f4 ♗c1+?
Black's only mistake in the game, allowing White a chance at a draw.



So good. So far.

♖51...♗e5+-+ 52.♖xe5 ♗b1 53.♖f6 ♗xa2 54.♖xg6 a4 55.♖f6 ♗xb3+- Black wins the ♖♗ v ♖ ending.

52.♖f3 ♗xg5 53.♗f7♖



53...♗b1

Another line showing the computer finding a study-like idea: 53...♖d4! 54.♘c6+ (54.♘xg6 ♗b1+- White's pieces are all misplaced for a fight on the queenside.) 54...♖d3 threat ...♗e4+ 55.♘xa5 ♗c1 56.♘c4 ♖d4 the ♘c4 is dominated and Black can push the g-pawn.

54.♗xg6♖

White can still draw, but the only moves in the following variations show the funambulistic skill he will need:

54...♗xg6

54...♗xa2 55.♗f7♖ (55.♗c2? ♖d4♖ 56.♘c6+ ♖c3 57.♗d1 ♗xb3+-.)

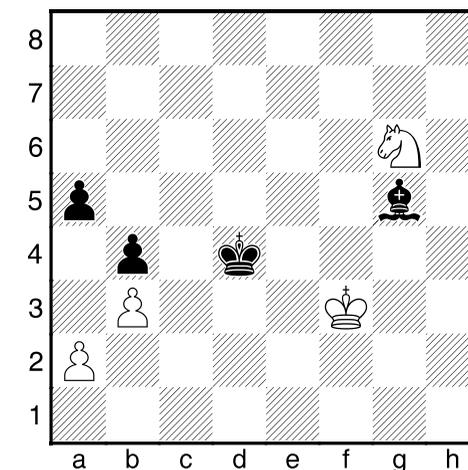
a) 55...♗f6 56.♘d7+♖ ♖d6 57.♘xf6 ♖e7=;

b) 55...♗d8 56.♖e4 a4 57.bxa4 (57.♘d3+=) 57...♗xf7 58.♘xf7 b3 59.♘e5=;

c) 55...a4 56.bxa4♖ ♗xf7 57.♘xf7♖ b3 (57...♗f6 58.♖e2=) 58.♘xg5♖ b2 59.♘e4+♖ ♖b4 60.♘d2♖=;

d) 55...♖d4 56.♘c6+♖= ♖c3 57.♘xa5 ♗d8 58.♘c6= and ♘xb4.

55.♘xg6 ♖d4





I put the game up to here into chess.com's Analysis service, which reported:

"That game was pretty competitive. White played a bit better than Black in the opening. It was an incredible middlegame by both players. Both players had a nice endgame."

It also offered the following evaluations of the players moves:

White: 93% accuracy, 2550.

Black: 92.4% accuracy, 2500.

But chess is brutal, and matching or outplaying your opponent for 55 moves is not enough if the game lasts longer, which this game did...

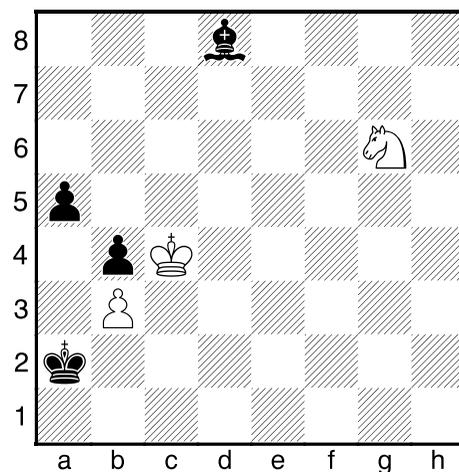
56. ♖g4??

56. ♖e2= ♖c3 57. ♗e5 ♘d8
58. ♗c4 ♖c2 59. ♖e3 (59. a3? bxa3□-+) 59... ♖b1 60. ♖d3 ♖xa2 61. ♖c2 a4 (61... ♘c7 62. ♗b2= blockades the light squares.) 62. bxa4 b3+ 63. ♖c1 ♘a5 64. ♖d1= there's no way to dislodge the ♗c4.

Absurdly, White *also* draws with 56. ♗h8!? ♖c3 57. ♗f7

♖b2 58. ♗xg5 ♖xa2 59. ♖e3 ♖xb3 60. ♗e4 a4 61. ♗c5+ ♖a3 62. ♖d2 b3 63. ♖c1= and ♗ takes one of the pawns.

56... ♘d8□-+ 57. ♖f5 ♖c3
58. ♖e4 ♖b2 59. ♖d3 ♖xa2
60. ♖c4



60... a4! 61. ♗e5 a3
61... axb3 62. ♗d3 ♖a3□-+.

62. ♗c6 ♘e7

0-1

2023 Canadian Senior 50+

David Filipovich, FM Dale Haessel,
FM Ian Findlay.

next page (L2R)

Findlay, Haessel, Filipovich,
IM Michael Barron, Sergey Malakhovets,
Nicolae Oancea, Dmitry Chernik.

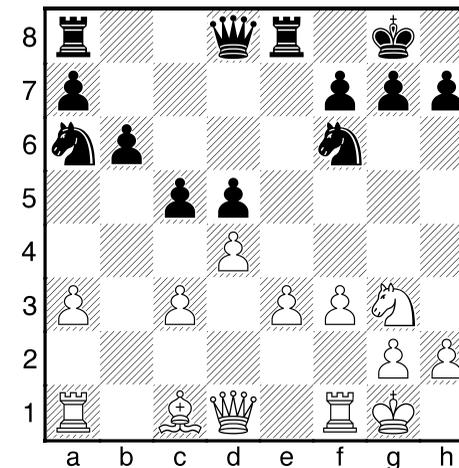
Haessel, Dale (2203) Findlay, Ian (2257)

E49

Canadian Senior 50+ Etobicoke
CAN (7.8), 07.08.2023

Notes: John Upper

1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♘b4
4. f3 d5 5. a3 ♘xc3+ 6. bxc3
c5 7. cxd5 exd5 8. e3 0-0
9. ♘d3 b6 10. ♗e2 ♘a6
11. ♘xa6 ♗xa6 12. 0-0 ♖e8
13. ♗g3



A classic Nimzo-Indian middle-game: White plays to expand in the center, Black hopes his ♗s will be able to use the resulting holes.



13...♘b8?

This unprotects the ♖a8, and gives White the tactics necessary to break in the center immediately.

♞13...♘c7:

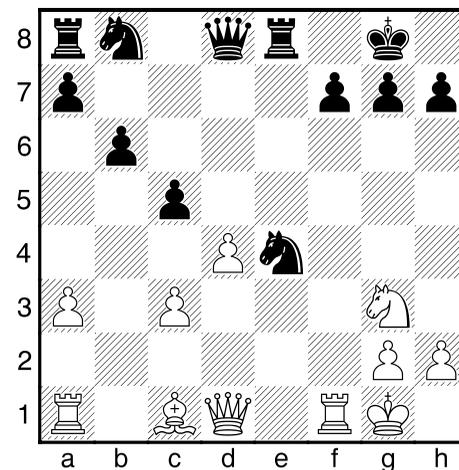
14.♙d3 ♙d7 15.a4 ♘e6 16.♙d2 ♖ac8 17.♖fb1 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♖c4 19.♙b3 h5!∞ [Radjabov, T \(2723\) – Inarkiev, E \(2658\) Moscow Chess Stars 3.0 Rapid, 2023.](#)

14.♖a2 ♘b5 15.♙d3 ♘d6 16.♖e2 ♙d7 17.e4 ♙b5□= 18.♙xb5 ♘xb5 19.♙b2 ♘d6 20.e5 ♘c4□ 21.exf6 ♖xe2 22.♘xe2 ♘xb2= [Jones, G \(2625\) – Wojtaszek, R \(2727\) Gibraltar Masters 14th, 2016.](#)

14.♖a2

Three IMs and one GM have had this position as White, but none found the crushing attack after: 14.e4!!N dxe4 15.fxe4± ♘xe4:

Analysis Diagram



The following isn't a complete

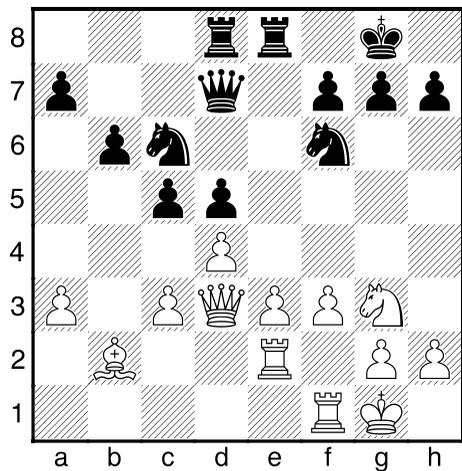
analysis, but shows White's hardest-to-see tactics: 16.♘f5! threat: ♙g4+- (16.♘xe4? ♖xe4 17.♙f3 ♙d5!♞) 16...♘f6 (16...♙f6? 17.♘h6+-) 17.♙f3 tempo on a8. 17...♘bd7 18.♙h6! g6 (18...gxf6? 19.♙g3+ ♘g4 20.♙xg4+ ♙g5 21.♘h6+-) 19.♘e3 threat: ♘d5 or ♘g4, 19...♙e7 (19...cxd4 20.♘g4+-; 19...♙h8 20.♙g5+-) 20.♘d5□ ♘xd5 21.♖ae1□+-.

14...♘c6 15.♖e2 ♙d7 16.♙b2





♖ad8 17.♔d3



White has his d- and his e-pawn well protected and is ready for the advance e4.

17...b5

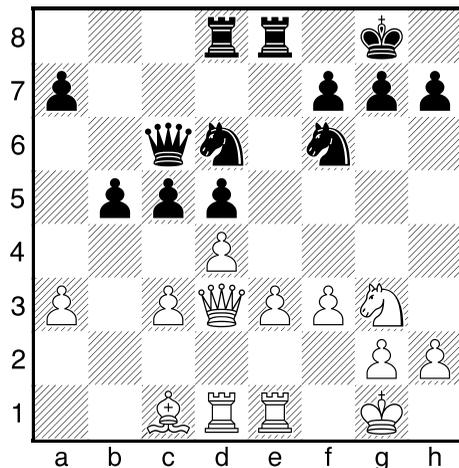
17...h5! "A typical idea in this kind of position and in general against the knight on g3. It is not so clear how to react to the black kicker." - Bologan, 18.♖ee1 h4 19.♗h1 h3 20.g4 ♗h7! "While preparing this line I was very delighted to see this idea, which not only allows Black to stop the march of White's pawns, but also to establish firm control on the kingside." – Bologan, MegaBase.

21.♗g3 ♗g5 22.♔h1 ♗a5 ♞Eljanov,P (2732)–Bologan,V (2655) Poikovsky Karpov 15th, 2014.

18.♖ee1

18.♔xb5?? ♗xd4+ Black wins the exchange with the intermediate ...♗xe2 check.

18...♗a5 19.♖d1 ♗c4 20.♙c1 ♗c6 21.♖fe1 ♗d6

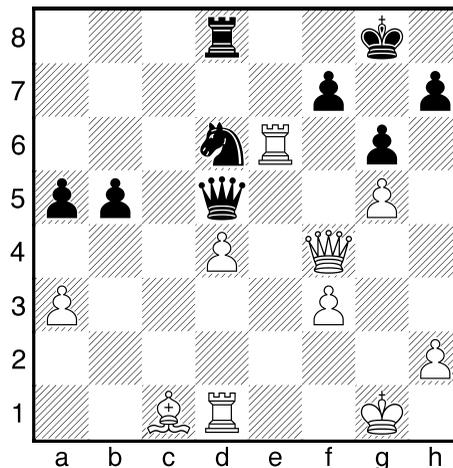


Black could hardly be better set against e3-e4.

22.♗f5 ♗xf5 23.♔xf5 a5 24.g4

Playing to dislodge the ♗ and push e4. This is consistent but risky, since it exposes his ♔.

24...♖e6 25.g5 ♗e8 26.e4 cxd4 27.cxd4 g6! 28.♔f4 ♗d6 29.exd5 ♔xd5 30.♖xe6



30...fxe6 ♖-+

30...♔xe6? 31.d5∞ or 31.♔f6∞.

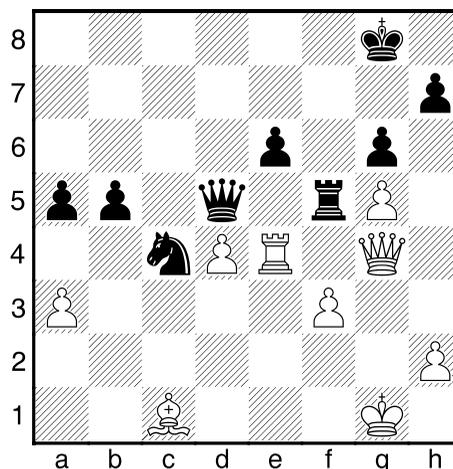
31.♖e1 ♗c4

Keeping White off e5.

32.♖e4 ♖f8!

32...e5!! 33.dxe5 ♔d1+ 34.♔f2 ♖f8 ♖-+.

33.♔g4 ♖f5



Black's pieces nimbly restrict White's majors while creating new threats. Notice how 8 of Black's 9 pieces are on light squares, where they can't be touched by White's ♙, which is also blocked by its own pawns.

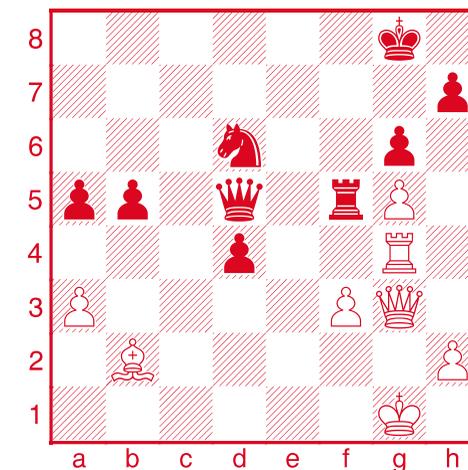
34.♔g3 ♗d6 35.♖f4 e5!

35...♖xg5 also wins: 36.♖f8+ ♔xf8 37.♙xg5 ♔xd4+-+.

36.♖g4

36.♖xf5 ♔xd4+ ♖-+.

36...exd4 37.♙b2



Can Black save his d-pawn?

37...d3!

37...♖xf3 also wins, but the game line is much prettier.

38.♖d4 ♔xd4+!! 39.♙xd4 d2
The ♙d4 prevents ♔xd6 from guarding the promotion square!

A really excellent game by Black, who won despite White making no serious mistakes.

0-1

Ochkoos, Jura (2316)
Filipovich, David (2139)

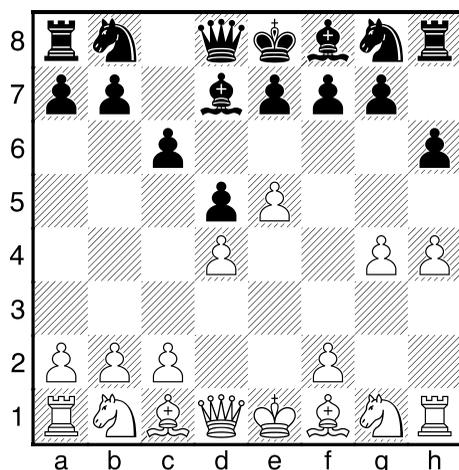
B12

Canadian Senior 50+ (7),
07.08.2023

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♙f5
4.h4 h6 5.g4 ♙d7

5...♙e4 6.f3 ♙h7 7.e6 is an interesting but well-explored gambit.



After this White gets an ideal anti-French setup, and Black's ...h6, ...♙f5-d7 just look like a waste of time. Botvinnik got away with this in his 1961 rematch against an ill Mikhail Tal, but top players today only risk this in blitz.

6.♘c3!

Black's only play will be via ...c5, and the ♘c3 keeps two eyes on d5, so Black must go ...e6 before ...c5, which frees White from defending g4. White doesn't need to support d4 with c3, since a minor piece on d4 will be very well placed.

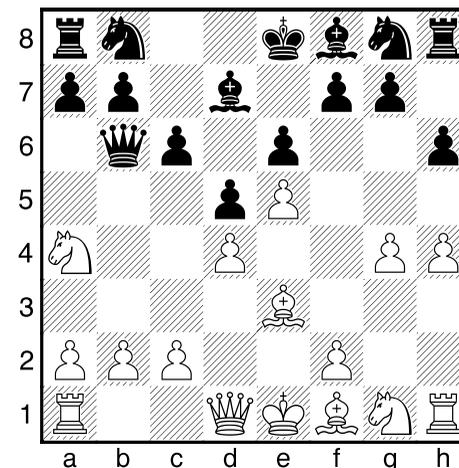
6...e6 7.♙e3 ♔b6

7...♘e7 8.h5! ♔b6 9.♙d2 (9.♘a4!)

9...♘c8 10.0-0-0! ♘a6 11.f4± c5 12.dxc5 (12.f5!±) 12...♙xc5 13.♙xc5 ♘xc5

14.♘f3 ♘e7 15.♘d4± ♖c8? Now it looks like a bad Sicilian for Black. (♠15...0-0-0) 16.♙b1 0-0 17.g5!+- hxg5 18.fxg5 ♘c6 19.h6! g6 20.h7+ ♔h8 21.♙f4+-
Caruana,F (2791)–Vachier Lagrave,M (2766) Speed Chess Chess.com blitz, 2021.

8.♘a4!



8...♙c7

8...♙a5+ 9.c3 b6 (9...b5? 10.♘c5± where are any of Black's pieces going to go?)

10.b4! White offers four pawns for the ♙ and a lead in development that the computer rates as winning: 10...♙xb4♠ 11.cxb4 ♔xb4+ 12.♙d2 ♔xd4 13.♘f3 ♔xg4 14.h5!±.

9.♘f3

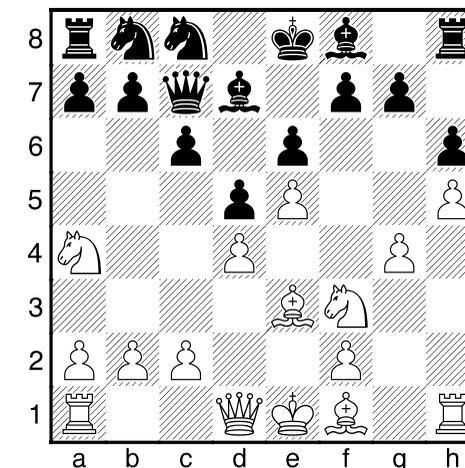
"...clearly better for White as Black's pieces are stuck, unable to come into the game."
– Sethuraman (Chessable 1.e4 Repertoire)

9...♘e7

9...b6 10.♘c3 ♘e7 11.h5 a6 12.♘e2! c5 13.c3 ♘bc6 14.♙g2 f6! 15.0-0 (15.♙f4 g5♠∞) 15...

fxe5 16.dxe5∞ **Mchedlishvili,M (2571)– Paichadze,L (2479) Tbilisi Gaprindashvili Cup, 2021.**

10.h5 ♘c8



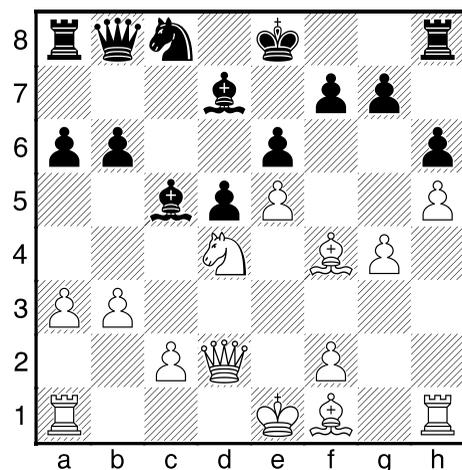
The same ...♘g8-e7-c8 maneuver MVL played against Caruana in the game quoted above. I didn't understand it there either.

11.b3

♠11.♘c5 b6 12.♘xd7 looks like an utterly anti-positional trade for a bad ♙, but SF16 rates it as winning after 12...♘xd7 13.g5↑.

11...b6 12.a3 c5 13.♘c3 ♘c6 14.♙f4 cxd4 15.♘b5 ♔b8 16.♙d2 a6 17.♘bxd4 ♘xd4 18.♘xd4 ♙c5





19. ♘f3!?

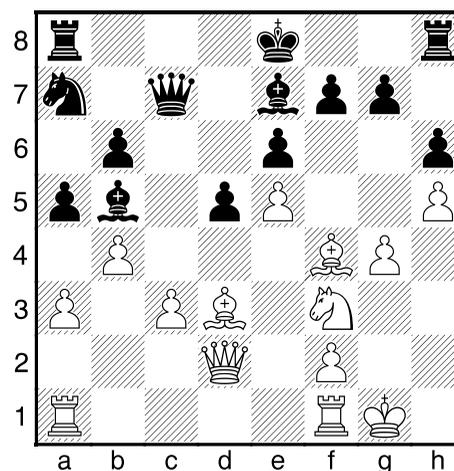
A good human move: keeping pieces on before denying Black's minors any central squares with b3-b4.

It's well known that today's top computers — Stockfish and Leela — rate space and development much more highly than even the best human players. But it's still a shock that in this position SF16 opts for the utterly inhuman 19.0-0-0! the point being that after Black takes a free pawn with check 19...♙xa3+ 20.♚b1± White's extra space and connected rooks give multiple crushing threats, including 21.g5 or 21.♘f5!

19...a5 20.c3

The computer wants to smash the kingside immediately: 20.g5! hxg5 21.♙xg5 ♘e7 22.h6 threat ♙xe7 and hxg7 or ♚g5+. 22...gxf6 23.♙f6!± and White owns the kingside, and a line which shows a reason to keep the ♚ on h1.

20...♘a7 21.b4 ♙e7 22.♙d3 ♙b5! 23.0-0 ♚c7=



Black has done a good job to trade two pairs of minors...

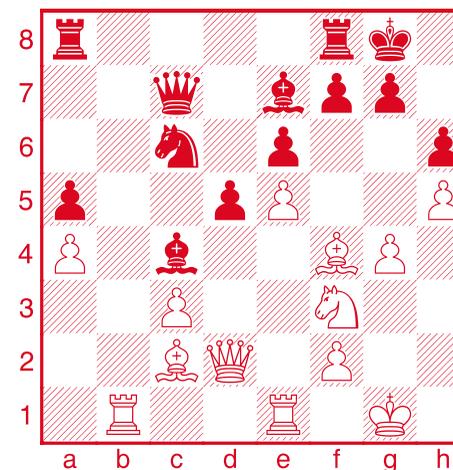
24.bxa5 bxa5 25.a4 ♙c4 ... but doesn't trade!?

25...♙xd3 26.♚xd3 ♖c8 looks fine for Black.

26.♖fb1 0-0 27.♙c2 ♘c6

28.♖e1 ♚b6 29.♖ab1 29.♙xh6!±.

29...♚c7



What happens if ♙xh6?

30.♙xh6!?

30.♚e3! defending the ♘f3 sets up ♙xh6.

30...gxf6?

After this Black is dead lost.

30...f5? 31.gxf5+- for completeness, here's one of the longer lines: 31...gxf6 32.♚xh6 ♙c5 (32...♙d8 33.♚h1+-) 33.♚h1 ♚h7 34.♖g1+ ♚h8 35.♚xh7+ ♚xh7 36.f6+ ♚h8 37.♖g6+-.

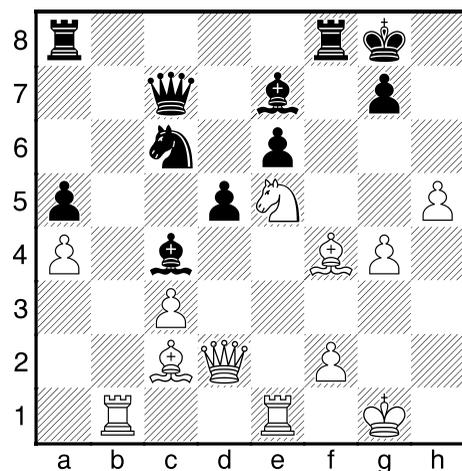
30...f6□ 31.exf6? ♖xf6 forking h6 and f3. 32.♙xg7! (32.♙g5 ♖xf3-+) 32...♙c5!! 33.♙h7+? (33.♙xf6 ♚g3+-+) 33...♚xh7□ 34.♘g5+ ♚xg7 35.♘xe6+ ♖xe6 36.♖xe6 ♚g3+-+;

After the only move 30...f6, taking on f6 loses, so White's best is: 31.♙f4! fxe5 32.♘xe5: *Analysis Diagram*



Headspinning?

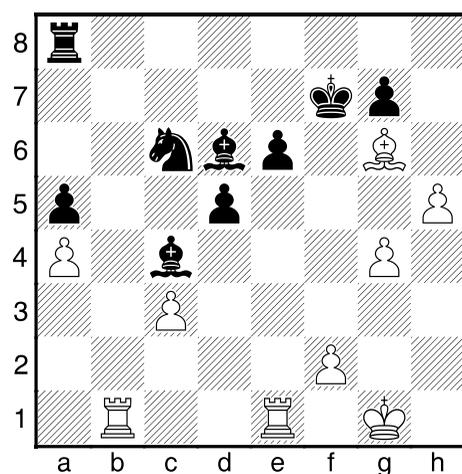
Jura Ochoos takes a break.



32...♗g5! 33.♗xg5 ♖xe5
34.♖xe5!∞.

32...♖xf4!? leads to a very long forcing line where Black might end up OK if he plays perfectly:
33.♖xf4 ♗d6 34.♖f7+!! ♖xf7
35.♘xf7 ♗xf7 36.♗g6+:

Analysis Diagram



36...♔f6 (36...♔f8 37.♖xe6
♖d8 38.♖b7+-) 37.g5+! ♔xg5

38.♖xe6 ♖d8 39.♖b6 d4
creating a passer and attacking
♖e6, 40.♖e8 ♖xe8 41.♗xe8
♗e5! 42.♖xd6 dxc3 43.♗g6
(43.♖d1? ♗d3-+) 43...♗b3
and it's still a game.

Of course, no one could expect Black or White to see more than a fraction of that, but if you see ...gxh6 is losing, you might start down this road just by process of elimination, and then anything could happen in these head-spinning complications.

31.♖xh6+- f5 32.♖xe6+

Something is going to roll: either White's kingside pawns or the Black King's head.

1-0

2023 Canadian Senior 65+

Ilia Bluvshstein and **IM Brian Hartman** tied for first in the 65+ section of the Canadian Senior. They drew with each other, and with **Ian Loadman**, who finished clear third, and won their other games to finish with 6/7.

Here are two games with all the tactics and attacking chess you'd expect from a Dragon and a Two Knights defence with 4.♘g5.

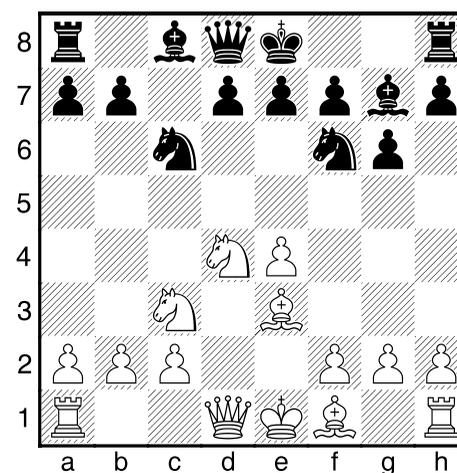
Hartman, Brian (2340) Berengolts, Isai (2018)

B76

Canadian Senior 65+ Etobicoke CAN (6.1), 07.08.2023

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♗xd4 ♗c6 5.♗c3 ♗g7
6.♗e3 ♗f6



7.♗b3!?

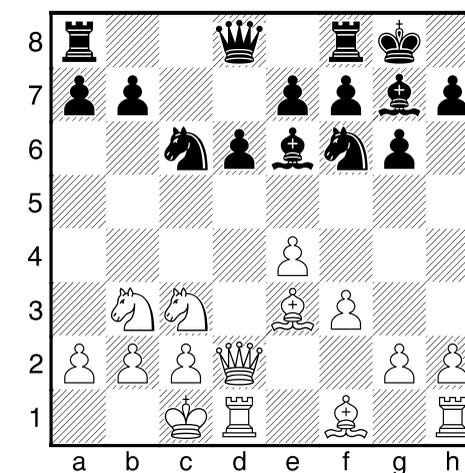
This voluntary retreat helps control d5, and so prevents one of Black's equalizing ideas in the Accelerated Dragon: ...d7-d5 in one tempo.

7...0-0 8.♖d2 d6

Black heads to a more typical Dragon, which might not have been his preference, given that he started with an Accelerated Dragon move-order.

Instead, 8...a5!? is a way to try to exploit the ♗b3 while also preparing to support ...d5 with ...♗b4.

9.f3 ♗e6 10.0-0-0



10...♗e5

"We have a strange version of a 9.♗c4 Yugoslav Attack. Black should not rush to play ...♗c4, as then he would be two tempos behind (due to ♗xc4 coming directly as opposed to ♗c4-b3xc4). However, White is also

at risk of losing two tempos if he gets tempted to return his knight to d4."

– Gawain Jones,
GM Repertoire: Dragon
(Quality Chess, 2015)

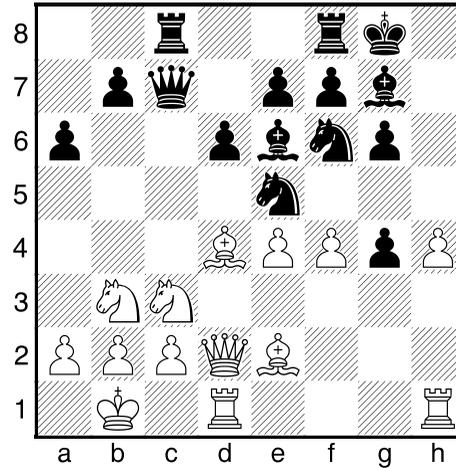
Here are two recent Carlsen games, which both continued:
10...♖c8 11.♔b1 ♘e5:

12.♙e2 ♘c4 13.♙d4± ♙xe2
14.♚xe2 ♘c6 15.♙xf6 ♙xf6
16.♘d5 ♙g7 17.h4 e6! 18.♘e3
♚e7 (♞18...♚b6 19.♖xd6
a5↑) 19.h5 d5 20.exd5 exd5
21.♚d2 d4= [Carlsen,M](#) (2847)–
[Martinovic,S](#) (2548) [FIDE World Cup, 2021](#);

12.h4 h5! 13.♙e2 a6 14.♙d4 ♚c7
15.g4 hxg4 16.f4:

Analysis Diagram

**2023 Canadian Senior
65+**
IM Brian Hartman



a) ♞16...♖fd8 17.fxe5?
(17.♚e3!?!; 17.h5!?) 17...dxe5-+;

b) ♞16...b5!? 17.fxe5 dxe5
18.♙e3 b4 19.♘d5 (19.♘a4?
♘xe4 20.♚c1 ♘g3♣) 19...♙xd5
20.exd5 ♖fd8∞ SF16;

c) 16...♘c6?? looks sensible,
but with the c-file closed Black
has no threats and his king
is in a shooting gallery and
Carlsen shows perfect attacking
technique: 17.♙xf6♣+- ♙xf6
18.♘d5♣ ♙xd5 19.exd5♣ ♘d4
20.♙xg4! clearing the second

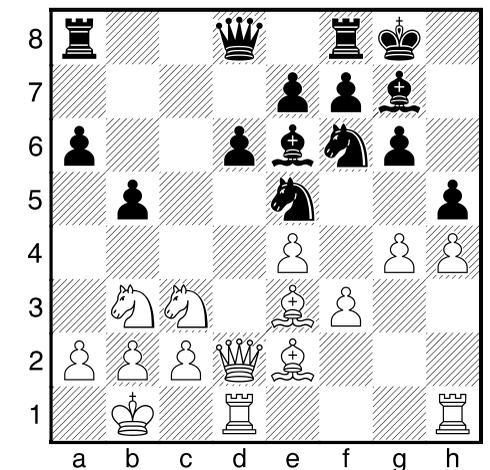
rank and hitting the ♖c8.
20...♘xb3 21.axb3 a5 22.h5!
Ignoring the ♖c8 and playing
for mate. 22...a4 23.hxg6! axb3
24.cxb3 ♖a8 25.♚h2 1–0.

[Carlsen,M](#) (2853)–[Shevchenko,K](#)
(2684) [Warsaw Superbet Blitz, 2023](#).

11.♔b1± a6N

Playing for ...b5-b4, which might
help attack b2, but it seems
slow. 11...♖c8 transposes to the
Carlsen games in the previous
note.

12.h4 h5 13.♙e2 b5 14.g4



The game has turned into a
more typical Yugoslav attack vs
the Dragon, but Black misses
the possibility of ...♖xc3, which

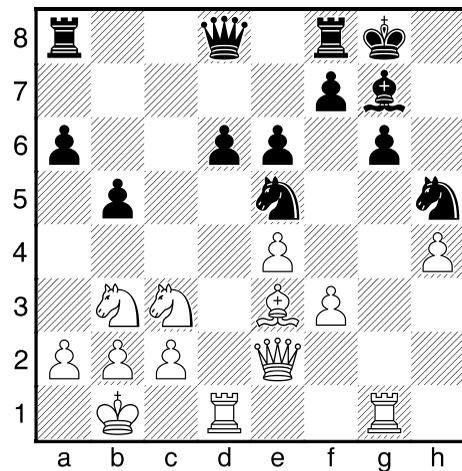


would be very useful if White moved his f-pawn from the defence of e4.

14...♙c4?!

♠14...hxc4 15.f4 (This is possible because the ♘c3 secures the white center: a ♖c8 would allow Black to strongly counter this with ...♖xc3 and ...♗xe4.) 15...♗f3?! (♠15...b4! 16.fxe5 bxc3 17.♖e1! ♗xe4 (17...♗h5?) 18.h5!) 16.♙xf3 gxf3 17.h5!↑ (Again, imagine being able to play ...♖xc3 now!) 17...b4 ♠ (17...♗xh5? 18.f5 ♗g3 19.♖h2+-) 18.♗d5 ♗xe4 19.♖h2 ♖c8! 20.hxc6 fxc6 21.♙d4!↑ ♗f6 22.♙xf6 ♖xf6 ♠±.

15.gxh5 ♗xh5 16.♖hg1± ♙xe2 17.♖xe2 e6



18.♖f2?!

18.f4! ♗c4 19.f5!± ♗xb2? (19...♖xh4? 20.♙g5! ♖h3 21.♖d3+- traps the ♖.) 20.♙xb2 b4 21.fxc6!+-.

18...♖c8 19.♙d4 ♖c7 20.f4 ♗c4 21.♙xg7 ♗xg7 Threatening ...♗xb2.

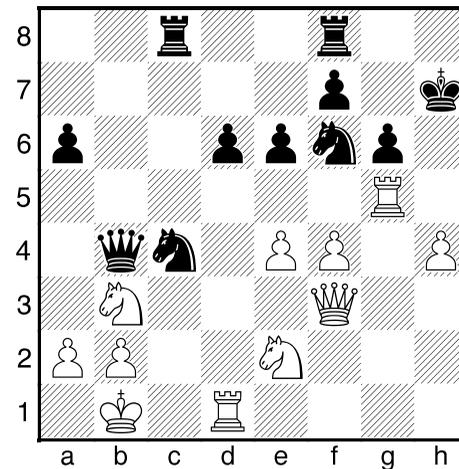
22.♗e2± ♗h7

22...♗xb2? 23.♖d4+ ♠+-.

23.c3 b4?! 24.cxb4! ♖b7

25.♖f3 25.♗g3!±.

25...♖xb4 26.♖g5 ♗f6



27.h5?

The right idea, but tactically mistimed. ♠27.♙a1 then h4-h5.

27...♗xe4 ♠=

Exploiting the discovered attack to win the e-pawn.

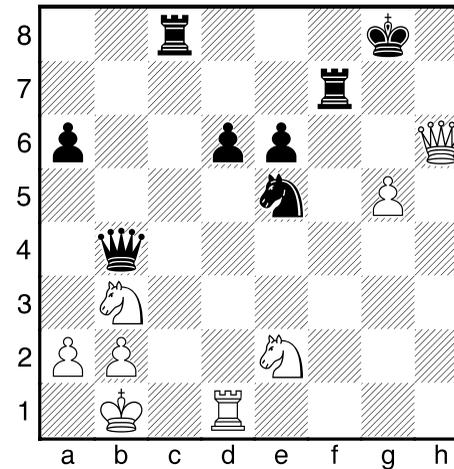
28.hxc6+

28.♖xe4?? ♗a3+-+ shows why it was better to play ♙h1 first, getting the ♙ out of ♗ checks.

28...♙g7 ♠

28...fxg6? 29.♖h3+ ♙g7 30.♖xg6+ ♠ ♙xg6 31.♖xe6+ ♠+-.

29.gxf7+ ♗xg5 ♠ 30.fxc6 ♖xf7 ♠ 31.♖h3 ♗e5 32.♖h6+ ♙g8



33.♗ed4?

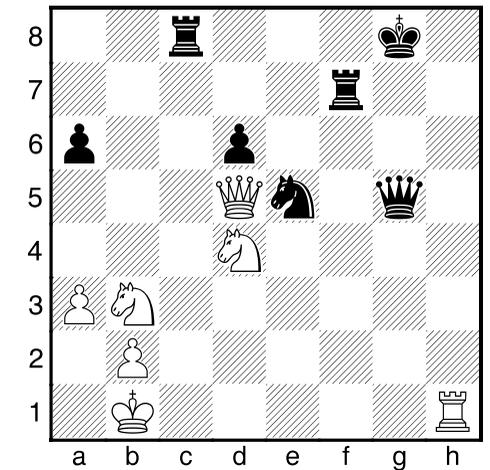
33.♗g3∞;

33.♖h1?? ♖e4+ ♠ 34.♙a1 ♖h7 ♠+-.

33...♖b7! ♠ 34.♖xe6 ♖d7? =

♠34...♖e4+ 35.♙a1 ♖g4 ♠ ♠ defending the ♖c8 while attacking the ♖d6 and ♖d1. Black should win this endgame.

35.♖d5 ♖g4 36.♖h1 ♖xg5 37.a3



37...♗f3??

♠37...♖g6+ 38.♙a1 ♖e8∞.

38.♖xd6?

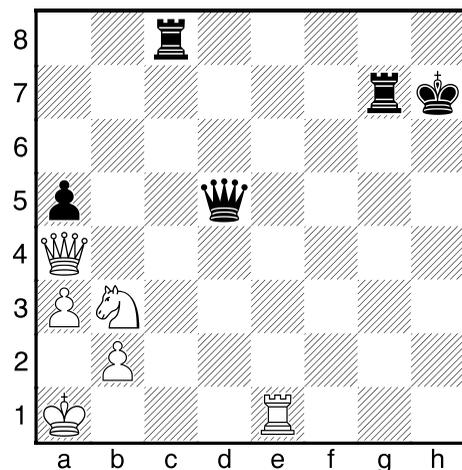
♠38.♖e6+- and White has a double attack on the unprotected pieces on c8 and f3.

38...♗xd4 39.♖xd4 ♖g7

40.♙a1± a5 41.♖a4 ♖d5

42.♖e1 ♙h7





43. ♖xa5

43. ♖xa5= ♖xb3?? 44. ♖f5+□+;-;

44. ♖h5+?= only forces a repetition.

43... ♖a8? 44. ♖c2+!+- ♔g8

45. ♖c4?

▷45. ♖c6+- and ♖e7 comes with a material-winning attack.

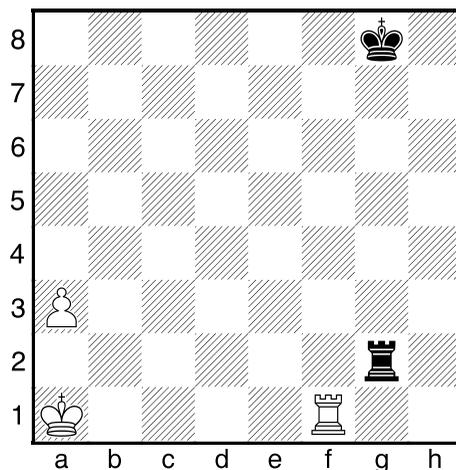
45... ♖c8= 46. ♖b6 ♖xc2

47. ♖xd5 ♖gg2 48. ♖e3

48. ♖e8+!? ♔f7 49. ♖b8=.

48... ♖xb2□ 49. ♖xg2 ♖xg2=

50. ♖f1

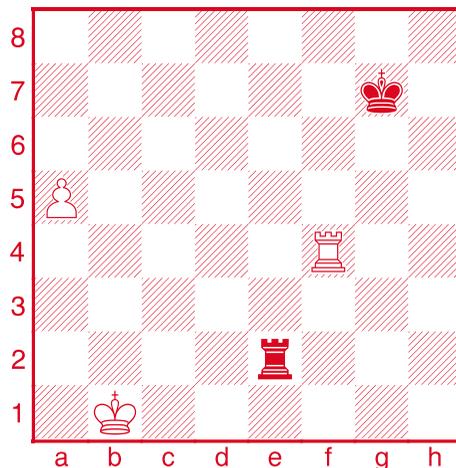


50... ♔g7

Or 50... ♖g7 51. ♔b2 ♖f7= builds a bridge for the defending ♔, which draws if it gets to c8.

51. ♔b1 ♔g8 52. a4 ♔g7

53. ♖f4 ♖e2 54. a5

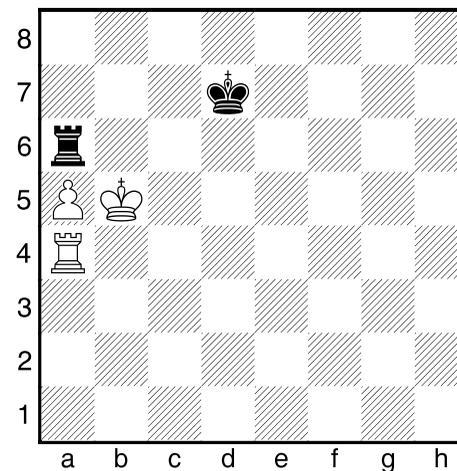


54... ♖e5??

▷54... ♖e6 or ... ♖e8 or ... ♖e7

55. ♔b2 ♖a6□ 56. ♖a4 (56. ♖f5

♔g6= 57. ♖b5 ♔f7 so there's no check on the 6th rank, 58. ♔b3 ♔e6 59. ♔b4 ♔d6=) 56... ♔f7 57. ♔b3 ♔e7 58. ♔b4 ♔d7 59. ♔b5: Analysis Diagram



59... ♖a8? 60. a6 ♔c7 61. ♖c4+ ♔b8 62. ♖h4! (62. ♔b6? ♖a7□= 63. ♖h4 ♖b7+□=) 62... ♖a7 63. ♖h8+ ♔c7 64. ♖g8○+;-;

59... ♖h6! 60. a6 ♔c7□ 61. a7 ♖h5+□= to force off ♖s.

55. ♖a4+- ♔f6 56. ♔b2 ♔e7

57. a6 ♖b5+ 58. ♔c3 ♖b8

59. a7 ♖a8 60. ♔c4 ♔d6

If it were Black's turn, then ... ♔c6 or ... ♔c7 would draw, but...

61. ♔b5

1-0

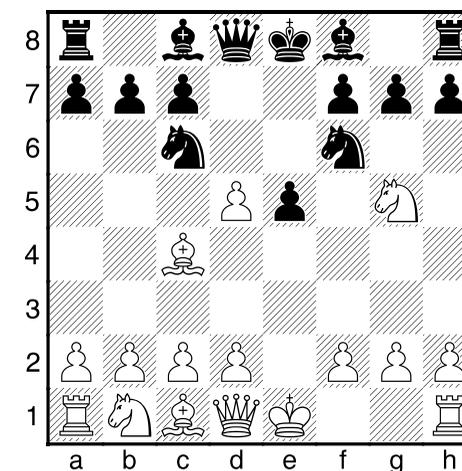
**Berengolts, Isai (2018)
Loadman, Ian (2132)**

C58

Canadian Senior 65+ Etobicoke
CAN (3.1), 05.08.2023

Notes: John Upper

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♔c4
♖f6 4. ♖g5 d5 5. exd5



5... ♖a5!

Allowing the Fried Liver Attack with 5... ♖xd5? 6. ♖xf7 ♔xf7 7. ♖f3+ ♔e6 8. ♖c3 ♖cb4 may not be objectively lost, but strong players only risk this in blitz.

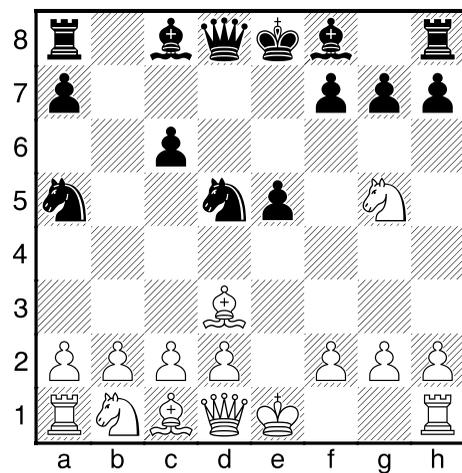
6. ♔b5+ c6 7. dxc6 bxc6

8. ♔d3

The Modern Main line in the Two Knights. 8. ♔e2 h6 9. ♖f3 e4∞ is the old main line.



8...♖d5



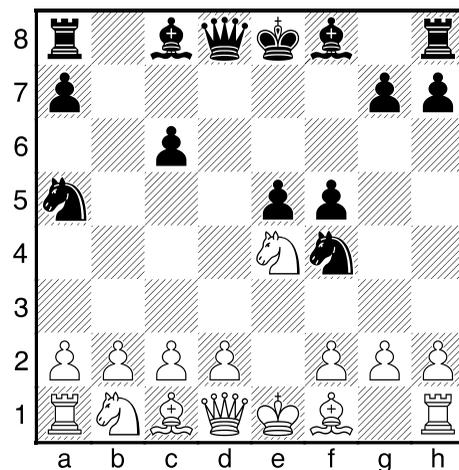
An important position in the Two Knights, with approximately equal chances for both sides, as seen in the recent super-GM games below.

9.♘e4

9.h4 h6 10.♕h5 ♖f6 11.♘e4 ♗e6∞ [Nepomniachtchi,I \(2771\)–Firouzja,A \(2777\) Al Cup Div 1 L rapid, 2023.](#)

9.♘f3 ♘d6 10.0-0 ♗f4 11.♘c3 ♗xd3 12.cxd3 0-0∞ [Nakamura,H \(2775\)–Caruana,F \(2764\) Norway Chess 11th, 2023.](#)

9...♗f4 10.♙f1 f5



11.g3?

♠11.♘ec3! ♙c5 (11...c5 12.♘a3∞) 12.a3:

"This is another incredibly rich position, of which we might see more practical examples in the future. I think Black's best is: 12...♙b6!N leading to complex play, where Black has full compensation for the pawn."

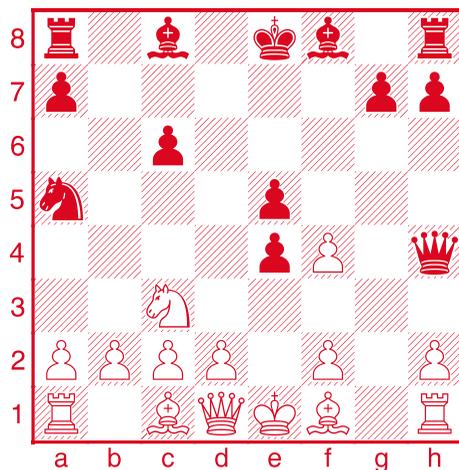
– Ntirlis, *Playing 1.e4 e5*, (Quality Chess, 2017).

♠11.♘g3!? ♙c5 12.c3 ♙b6 13.d4 ♗e7 14.d5? (♠14.♙xf4 exf4+ 15.♘e2 looks terrible, but White has some hope of getting his ♗ out of the center.) 14...0-0 15.b4 ♗b7 16.dxc6 ♗d6 17.♙e3 ♙e6 18.♘d2 ♙xe3 19.fxe3 ♗d5-+ [Askarov,B \(2416\)–Wen,Y \(2592\) Albena op-A, 2015.](#)

Issac Berengolts



11...fxe4□-+ 12.gxf4 ♖h4□
13.♘c3



13...♙f5?

13...exf4? 14.♘xe4∞ ♙g4 15.♙e2 h5? (15...♙f5∞) 16.d3+- 0-0-0
17.♙xg4+ hxg4 18.♙xf4+- Cop,T (2268)–Matijevic,H (2222) CRO–chT2 Center, 2011.

♠13...♙g4□. The ♙ will go to f5, but this in-between move keeps the white ♖ and ♗ boxed in. After 14.♙e2 ♙f5□-+ Black continues piling up with ...♙c5 and ...000.

14.♖e2□♣

Guards f2, attacks e4, and makes space for the ♗ on d1.

14...♙c5

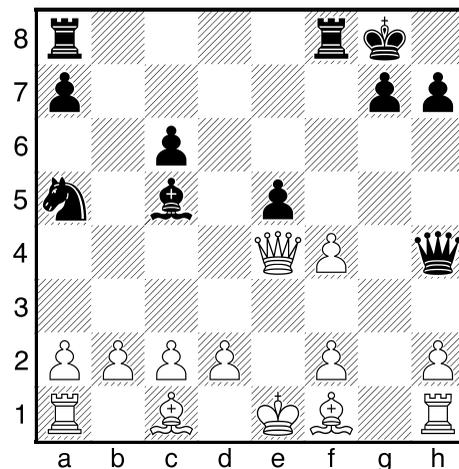
Threatening ...♙g4, trapping the ♖ or mating on f2.

15.♘xe4□ ♙xe4

15...♙g4? 16.♖d3 ♖d8

17.♖g3□+-.

16.♖xe4 0-0!



Threatens ...♖xf4, and of course ♖xe5 loses to the e-file pin.

There are a lot of "?" in the next few moves, which is an indication of how non-standard and tactically volatile this position is, and not the general level of skill of the players. Something to consider before playing either side of this opening.

17.♗d1?

17.d4!! is best, but tough to take seriously without good nerves and A+ calculation. I'd expect Shirov would find it, and the idea of giving back the pawn to finish development mirrors Black's 4...d5, so it's not totally out of reach for lesser mortals. Here are three continuations after 17.d4!!:

a) 17...♖ae8!? 18.dxe5

♖xe5!? leads to a forced draw:

19.♖xe5□ ♖xf2+□ 20.♗d1 ♖d8+□ 21.♙d3 ♖f3+ 22.♖e2 (22.♗d2 ♘c4+-+) 22...♖xh1+ 23.♖e1 ♖f3+=;

b) 17...♙xd4 18.♙d3 ♙xf2+

19.♗e2□ ♖ae8!? (19...exf4 20.♖xh7+□=) 20.f5 ♘b7∞;

c) 17...exd4 18.♖e6+ (18.♙e2?

d3♣) 18...♗h8 19.♖h3 ♙b4+ 20.♗d1∞ ♖xf2?? 21.♙d3 h6 22.♖f1+- traps the ♖.

17...♖ae8?

17...♖xf4□-+ 18.♖xe5 ♖e4□

19.♖g3 (19.♖xc5 ♖g4+ #2)

19...♙xf2-+.

18.d3?

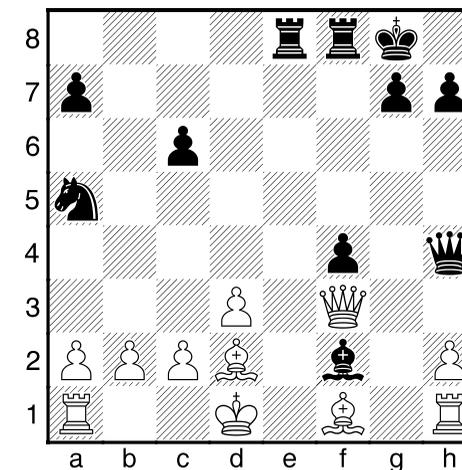
Weakening e3 turns out to be

fatal.

♠18.♖g2 exf4 19.♖f3□ ♙xf2 20.♙e2♣ is similar to the game, but does not weaken e3.

♠18.♙e2 ♖xf4 19.♖g2 ♖xf2 20.♖g4♣.

18...exf4□-+ 19.♖f3 ♙xf2
20.♙d2



Material is equal but Black obviously has an overwhelming lead in development.

20...♙e1!

Trading the defender of e3 to invade on the e-file.

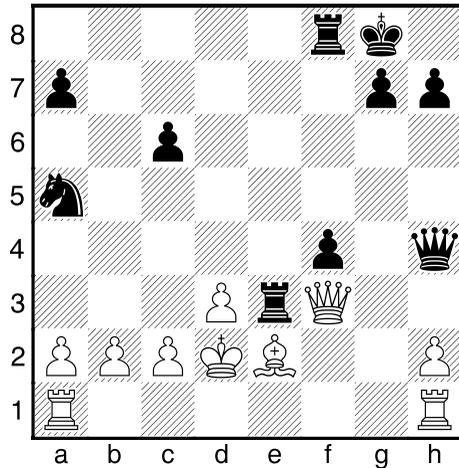
21.♙e2

21.♙c1!? ♙c3! threatening mate on e1. 22.♙e2 ♙d4 23.♖f1



♙e3-+ would be an amusingly roundabout way to get to e3.

21...♙xd2 22.♔xd2 ♖e3



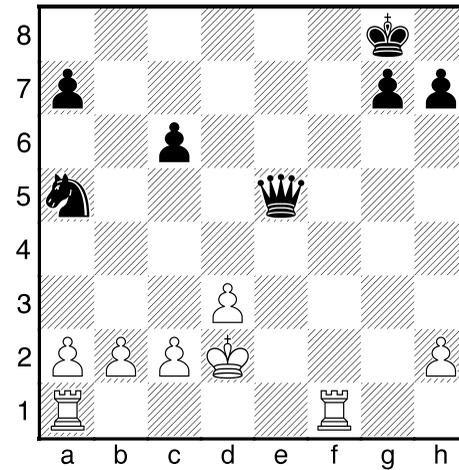
23.♙f1

23.♙g4 ♘c4+! 24.dxc4 ♙f2□-+ (24...♖d8+ 25.♔c1=) 25.♖hf1 (25.♖hg1 ♖xe2+ 26.♙xe2 ♖d8+-) 25...♖d8+ 26.♔c1 ♖xe2!-+.

23...f3!

Not the only winning move, but nice.

24.♔xe3 ♙f4+ 25.♔f2 fxe2+ 26.♔xe2 ♙e5+ 27.♔d2 ♖xf1 28.♖hxf1



The end of the combo on move 23. White's ♖s are terrible defenders and Black attacked with the ♙ and ♘ to win.



Ian Loadman
Playing in Hart House

28...♙xh2+ 29.♔c3 ♙e5+ 30.♔d2 ♙g5+ 31.♔c3 ♙c5+ 32.♔d2 ♙b4+ 33.♔c1 ♘b7 34.c3 ♙d6 35.♔c2 ♙h2+ 36.♔b3 ♘c5+ 37.♔c4 ♙d6 38.d4 ♙d5+ 39.♔b4 a5+ 40.♔a3 ♘e4 41.♖ad1 h6 42.♖fe1 ♘d6

0-1

Toronto Senior

The 2023 Toronto Senior was also held at the Excelsior Chess Club, but at a more senior-friendly rate of one game per week over 9 weeks, November-December, 2023. The top section was a Round Robin, handily won by second seed **Sergey Malakovets**, who won his first six games and had the tournament wrapped up with two rounds to go. Top seed **IM Michael Barron** also scored 6–0 against the bottom of the table, but suffered two losses and ended second.

Here are three games from the top three finishers.

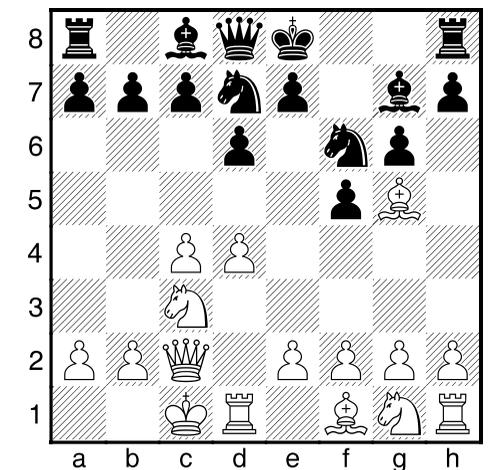
Upper, John (2163)
Barron, Michael (2286)

A85

Toronto Senior (3), 19.11.2023

Notes: John Upper

1.c4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.d4 d6 4.♙g5 ♘bd7 5.♙c2 g6 6.0-0-0 ♙g7



Michael always plays the Leningrad Dutch, which ought to make it easy to prepare against him, but it's not at all a bad opening. When prepping I found that 7...h4 scores well for White, but all the lines I looked at had Black more-or-less equalizing to positions he'd have enough experience to play comfortably. OTOH, looking at his games suggested that





his most exploitable weakness would be tactics in non-standard positions; so I played for a direct but different attack...

7.f3!?

This was an over-the-board decision. I'd stuck it in the computer for 10 seconds and knew only that SF didn't like it, but decided to try it because (as I said above) I didn't have any better ideas, and this is so unusual it would require Black to step off traditional paths.

7...e5!

Opening the d-file looks risky, but SF16 rates it best.

8.dxe5

8.e3 is less ambitious, but maybe better.

8...dxe5?!

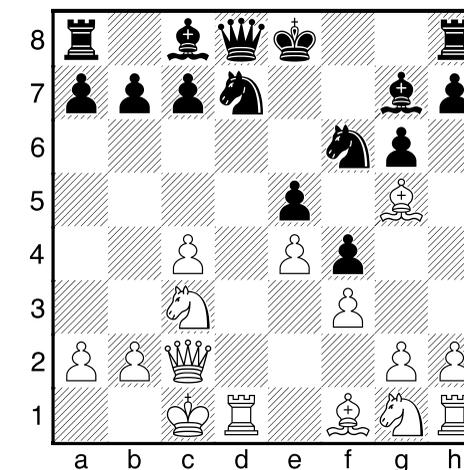
After 8...♞xe5! I'd thought 9.c5!/? would be good, leaving Black with a ragged center and exposed ♔, but it turns out that White's ♔ is more vulnerable if the c-file opens; for example: 9...0-0! 10.cxd6 ♕e6!♞ (10...cxd6♞) 11.dxc7? ♚xc7 12.♔b1



♞ac8+-. For only one pawn Black has a winning lead in development.

9.e4! f4

Saving f5 and keeping the center closed; again, the top choice of SF16. Weaker is 9...fxe4 10.♞xe4 0-0 11.c5±.



10.g3!/? h6 11.gxf4?!

The right idea, but there's a better execution: ♖11.♕h4 g5 12.gxf4 gxh4 13.fxe5 with the h-file blocked and the g6 pawn gone, this is a better version of the game line for White.

11...hxg5 12.fxe5 c6!

More cool defence, and again the top choice of SF16.

IM Michael Barron

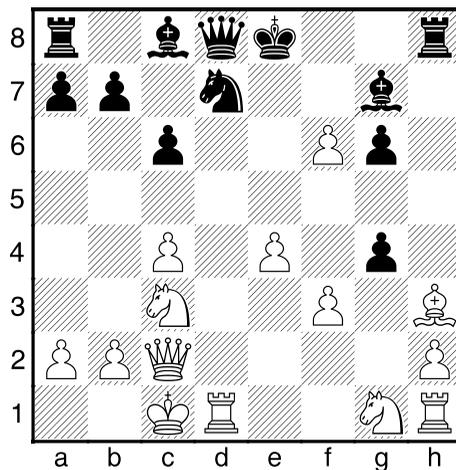
Couldn't be more relaxed *even if* he knew how fruitless my prep was.

12...0-0!? 13.exf6 (13.♙h3?? g4□-+; 13.♘h3? g4! 14.♘g5 ♘d5!-+) 13...♙xf6∞.

13.♙h3!

A good move that also looks like a tactical mistake, so bonus cheapo points. Going e6 helps Black castle long after ...♙xd7.

13...g4!? 14.exf6□



14...♙h6+

This in-between move is very tempting — it makes the ♙ safe and allows Black time to take on h3 — and I had expected it. But Black has a much better defence, which I'd seen but underestimated: take on f6 and play a pawn down.

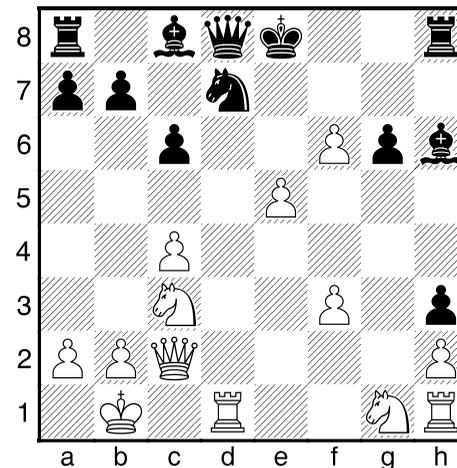
♠14...♙xf6 15.♙xg4 ♘e5
16.♙xc8 ♖xc8=.

15.♙b1 gxh3?

The losing move.

♠15...♙xf6 16.♙xg4 ♘e5□
17.♙xc8 (17.h3±) 17...♖xc8±
Black is down two pawns, but gets at least one back, and his ♙ is safer than in the game. I hadn't seen this at move 10, and underestimated it here.

16.e5□+-



Everything else is losing, but now White threatens ♙xg6+ and e6 regaining the piece. I'd seen this position when I played 13.♙h3 and thought White was winning, which turns out to be true.

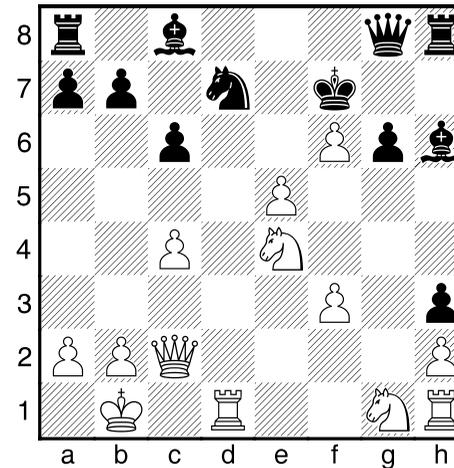
16...♙f7 17.♘e4!

Not the only winning move. In fact, White has several good options over the next few moves, which made choosing harder.

17.♘xh3! ♙e8 (17...♙a5
18.e6+□ ♙xe6 19.♖he1+ ♙xf6
20.♖d6+ mates.) 18.♘e4 ♙xe5
19.♘d6+ ♙xf6 20.♖he1+-.

17...♙g8

Unpins the ♘ and defends g6.
17...♙a5 18.♘d6+ ♙e6 19.♙xg6
with mate on ♙f5 or ♙f7.



18.♘d6+

18.e6+! opening the e-file also wins: ♘xh3-g5+ and White attacks with all pieces.

18...♙e6 19.f7?!

19.♘xc8 is the brute force way: 19...♙xc8 20.♖d6+ ♙xe5 21.c5+- the Black ♙ leads his army into oblivion.

19...♙h7!

Hoping to trade ♙s with ...g5.

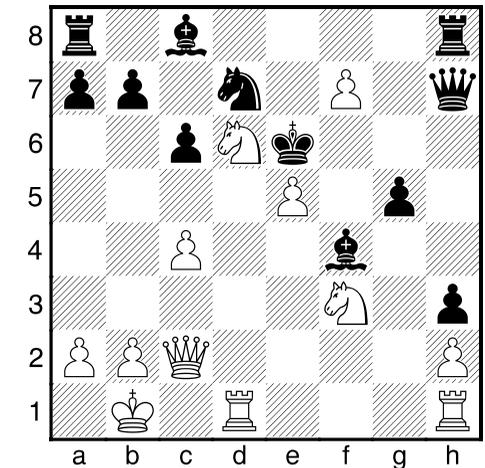
20.f4!

Giving a pawn to get the ♘ and ♖ out, and now ...g5 fails to f4-f5+.

20...♙xf4 21.♘f3

Even 21.♘xh3 wins; e.g. 21...♙xh3 22.♙xg6+-.

21...g5



Black plays to trade ♙s, but I'd seen White's forced win.





22. ♖d4+! ♔xe5
 22... ♕e7 23. ♘4f5+ ♕e6
 (23... ♕d8 24. e6+-) 24. ♘xc8+-.

23. ♖he1+ ♔f6
 23... ♕xd6 24. ♘e6+ ♕e7
 25. ♘xg5+-.

24. ♖e6+
 24. ♖xh7! actually forces
 mate: 24... ♖xh7 25. ♖e6+ ♔g7
 26. ♘4f5+ ♔h8 27. ♖e8+ ♘f8
 28. ♖xf8#.

24... ♔g7 25. ♘4f5+
 Black has to give the ♔ to
 delay mate, and preferred
 to resign.

1-0

The top seeds met in the
 final round. Sergey had
 the tournament wrapped
 up, but Michael needed
 a win to clinch second
 place; and who plays a
 one-game-a-week event
 hoping for a quick draw?

2023 Toronto Senior

IM Michael Barron
 vs Sergey Malakhovets

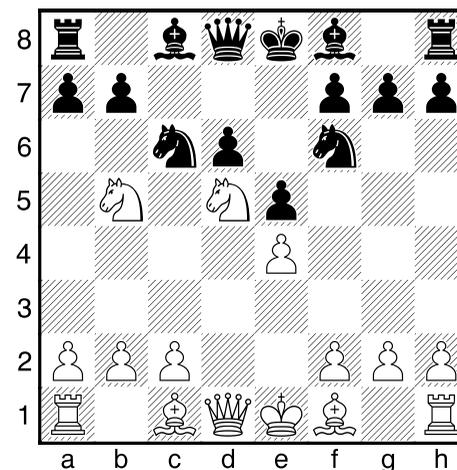
Barron, Michael (2286) Malakhovets, Sergey (2181)

B33

Toronto Senior (9), 14.12.2023

Notes: John Upper

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. d4
 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 e5
 6. ♘db5 d6 7. ♘d5



Caruana tried this four times
 against Carlsen in their World
 Championship match. He got
 a winning position in one,
 but ended up drawing 3 and
 losing one in the tie-break. The
 mainline starts: 7. ♘g5 a6 8. ♘a3
 b5 9. ♘d5 ♘e7 10. ♘xf6 ♘xf6 with
 24,000 games in the MegaBase.

7... ♘xd5 8. exd5 ♘e7

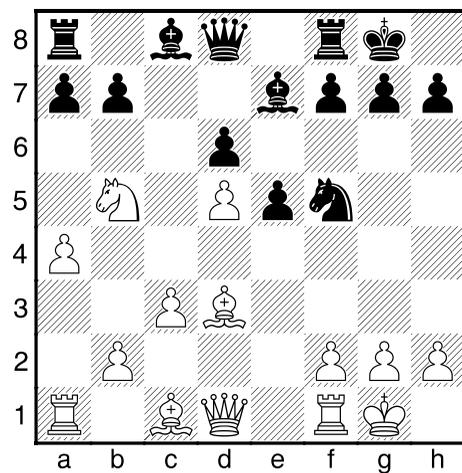
Carlsen played both this and
 8... ♘b8 twice in the Caruana
 match. In either case, White
 typically plays on the queenside,
 either with a pawn storm or
 dropping minor pieces on the
 weak squares, while Black tries
 to do something on the kingside
 with ...f5. The difference is that
 8... ♘b8 helps Black hold the
 queenside, while 8... ♘e7 is
supposed to help Black on the
 kingside.

9. c3 ♘f5

9... ♘g6 looks more natural,
 but with less defence of the d6
 pawn White forces concessions
 with 10. ♖a4! ♘d7 11. ♖c4 ♖c8
 12. ♖b4± if the ♘ was on f5 here,
 d6 would be defended and Black
 could go ...a6 with a good game.



10.a4 ♖e7 11.♔d3 0-0 12.0-0



12...♔d7

If Black isn't going to play ...b5 then this doesn't help, since it can make it harder to defend d6.

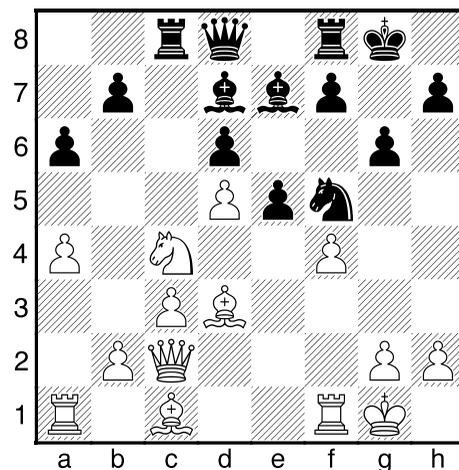
A few days later, a top GM game continued: 12...♘h4 13.f4 a6 14.♘a3 exf4 15.♙xf4 ♘g6 16.♙xg6?! hxg6 17.♘c4 ♖c7 18.b3 b6 19.♙e3 ♖b8 20.♔d4 ♙g5 21.♘d2 ♖e8 22.c4 ♙e3+! 23.♙xe3 ♖xe3 24.♖e1 ♖c5 ♖ Erigaisi,A (2727)–Predke,A (2689) Chennai, 2023.

13.♖h1

Black might need to find an improvement in this line: 13.♖e1 a6 14.♘a3 b5 15.axb5 axb5 16.♔d2 ♖b6 17.♖b3 ♖fb8 18.♘xb5 ♖xa1 19.♖xa1 ♙xb5

20.♙xf5 ♖c7 21.♖d1 ♙c4 22.♙c1 g6 23.♔d3!± Huschenbeth,N (2608)–Abasov,N (2638) POL–chT Ekstraliga, 2021. If Sveshnikov players wanted to defend a difficult endgame like this, they'd play 1...e5.

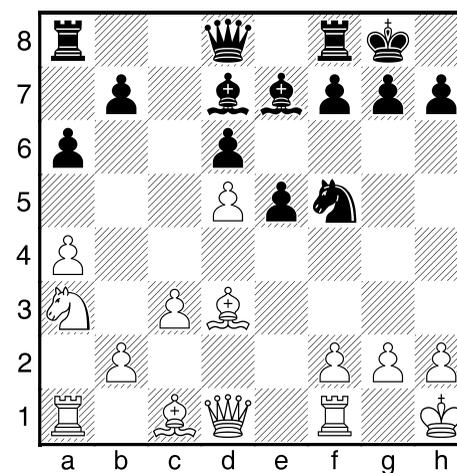
Here's a game Black might have seen when preparing: 13.♖c2 g6 14.f4 a6 15.♘a3 ♖c8 (15...b5!) 16.♘c4: Analysis Diagram



16...♖e8 17.♖f2 e4! 18.♙e2 b5 19.axb5 axb5 20.♘e3 b4 21.cxb4 ♘d4! 22.♙a6 ♖a8 23.♘c4 ♘b3 24.♖a3 ♖xa6! 25.♖xb3! (25.♖xa6? ♖c8!-) 25...♙b5 26.♘a3? (26.♖c3 ♙f6 27.♖c2 ♖a4!?) 28.♙d2? e3!-) 26...♙xf1 27.♖xf1 ♖a8!-+ Barron,M (2127)–Sokolin,L (2464) WchT Seniors, 2022. 0-1.

♠16...e4! 17.♙e2 h5! ♖ here's the kind of action that keeps attracting fans to the Sveshnikov: ♠18.♖xe4 ♖e8 19.♖d3 ♙h4! 20.g3 ♖xc4!!-+ 21.♖xc4 ♙xg3!! 22.hxg3 ♘xg3 23.♖f2 ♖h4-+.

13...a6 14.♘a3



14...♘h4N

In the game, Black closes the kingside and the ♘ turns out to be a liability here, but it could have been redeployed via g6.

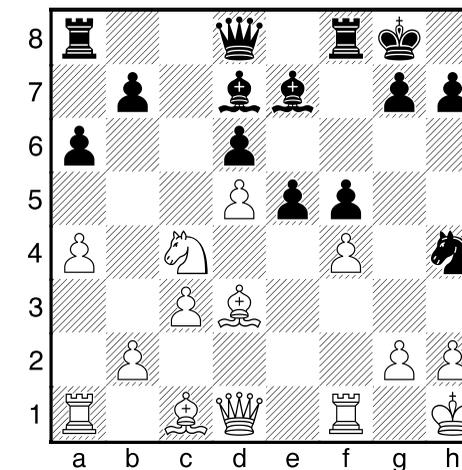
14...b5 looks like the consistent way to play, preventing ♘c4. Maybe even 14...♙g5! is worth a look.

15.f4 f5

15...exf4± planning ...♘g6-e5 is

a reasonable alternative, as in Erigaisi–Predke (above).

16.♘c4



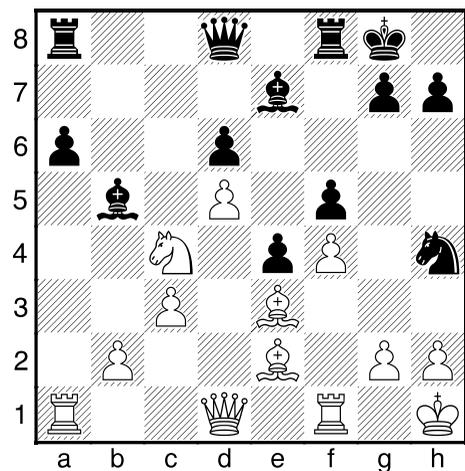
16...e4?

After the game both players focused on this as being a critical error, after which Black can't get any kingside play since his f5 and e4 pawns are taking squares his pieces need. ♠16...♘g6±.

17.♙e2 b5 18.axb5 ♙xb5

18...axb5 19.♖xa8 ♖xa8 20.♘b6 ♖b7 21.♘d7 ♖xd7 22.♖b3 ♖b8 23.c4+- wins a pawn that's supported by the B–pair.

19.♙e3



19...♖f6?

♞19...♙xc4 20.♙xc4 a5 is unpleasant for Black, but the game line loses the queenside immediately.

20.♘b6+- ♖b8

20...♙xe2 21.♚xe2 and White wins the a-pawn for free anyway.

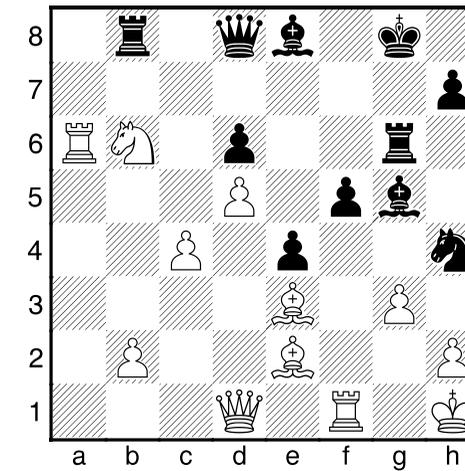
21.c4♠+- ♙e8 22.♖xa6 g5

Desperation. If Black does nothing White will simply go b4 and c5.

23.fxg5 ♖g6 24.g3! ♙xg5



Sergey Malakhovets
2023 Toronto Senior Champion



25.♙d4!

The simplest: secure the ♘b6 and leave the ♘h4 for later.

25.♙xg5 wins, but who wants an easy win to turn into a race?
25...♚xg5 26.c5! dxc5 27.d6♠+- ♙c6!?

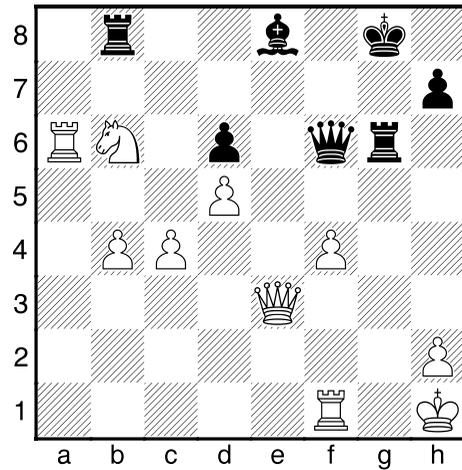
25...♘f3 26.♙xf3 exf3

27.♚xf3 f4

The f4 pawn is pinned to mate on f8, so White ignores it.

28.b4 ♚e7 29.gxf4 ♙f6

30.♚e3 ♚f7 31.♙xf6 ♚xf6



32.f5! ♔f8

32...♖g5 33.♔e6++-

33.♖a7 ♖f6 34.c5 dxc5

35.♔g3+

Forking b8.

35...♗g6

Defending with the pin.

36.♘d7!

Black's ♔ and ♖h7 are the only pieces that aren't (currently) hanging.

A very smooth win by Michael, and Sergey's only loss of the tournament.

1-0

Sergey played the London in all his White games in the Toronto Senior, scoring 4.5/5. Here is a smooth win over an IM from the 2023 Canadian Seniors 50+, where he finished =2nd-4th with FMs Jura Ochkoos and Ian Findlay.

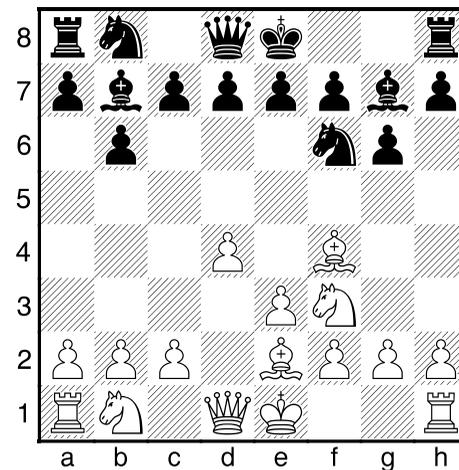
Malakhovets, Sergey (2119)
Duong, Thanh Nha (2252)

A47

Canadian Senior 50+ Etobicoke CAN (5.10), 06.08.2023

Notes: John Upper

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f4 b6 3.e3 ♗b7
4.♘f3 g6 5.♗e2 ♗g7



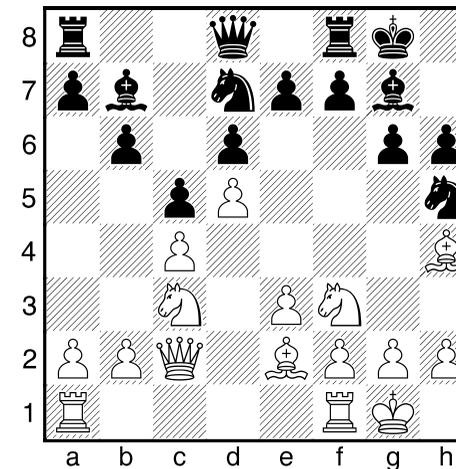
6.h3

A standard idea in London lines vs ...d5: White wants to keep

the DSB if Black should chase it. Another way of dealing with attacks on the ♗f4 is shown in the Eric Prie game below:

6.0-0 0-0 7.c4! Not dogmatically insisting on a London with c3. 7...d6 8.♘c3 ♘bd7 9.♔c2 ♘h5 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 c5?! 12.d5:

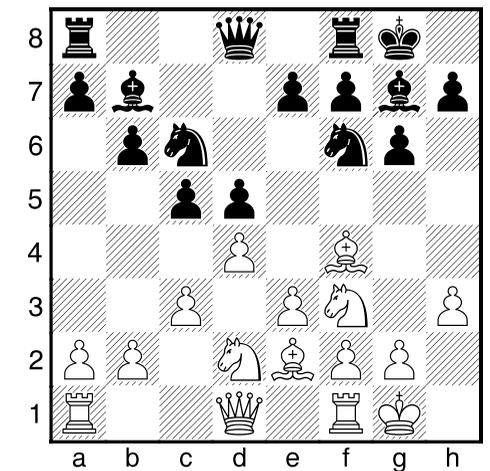
Analysis Diagram



The IM playing Black has a very bad Benoni, and tries to break out by forcing off White's DSB, but gets cut to ribbons by his GM opponent's accurate attack: 12...♘df6 13.♘d2 g5 14.♔d1±; 12...g5? 13.♗xg5!+- ♗xc3 (13...hxg5 14.♘xg5 ♘hf6 15.f4!+- Romero, *The Agile London* (NiC, 2016)) 14.bxc3 hxg5 15.♘xg5 ♘hf6 16.f4! ♔g7 17.♖f3! ♖g8 18.♖g3! ♔f8 19.♔h7! ♖xg5

20.♔h6+ ♔e8 21.fxg5! ♘e4 22.♖g4 Black goes even further down on material since the ♘ has no safe squares and ...f5 ♔h5+ leads to mate; so 1-0 in [Prie, E \(2502\)–Dumitrache, D \(2467\) FRA–chT Top 16 GpA, 2010](#).

6...0-0 7.0-0 c5 8.c3 d5
9.♘bd2 ♘c6



10.♗h2!?

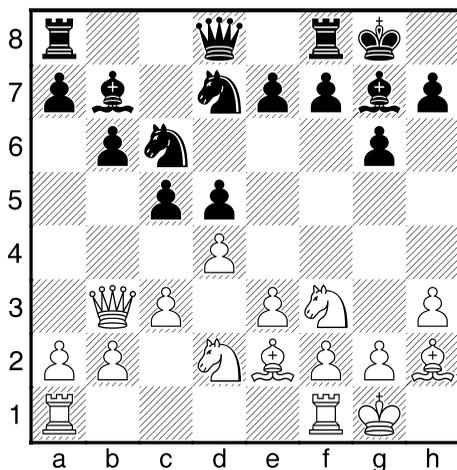
I don't see the point of this.

10.♘e5 ♘xe5 11.♗xe5 ♘d7 12.♗xg7 ♔xg7 13.f4 ½-½ [Nikolic, Z \(2445\)–Damjanovic, B \(2420\) YUG–ch sf Bela Crkva, 1986](#);

10.♔b3 ♔c8 (10...♘d7!?) 11.♖fd1 ♗a6 12.♗xa6 ♔xa6 13.a4 c4

14. ♖c2 ♖c8 15. ♘e5 ♘a5 16. ♕h2
 ♖f5 17. ♖xf5 gxf5 18. f3 ♖fd8
 19. g4!± Demchenko,A (2641)–
 Preotu,R (2487) Leon blitz op
 33rd, 2020.

10... ♘d7 11. ♖b3

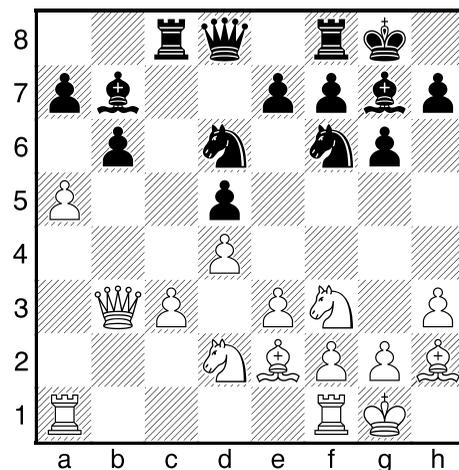


11...c4?!

△11...e5! leaves d5-hanging, but White is in trouble if he takes it:
 12. ♖xd5?! (12. dxe5=) 12...cxd4
 13. exd4 ♘xd4! 14. ♖xb7 ♘c5!±
 traps the ♖, or 14... ♘xe2+±.

12. ♖c2 ♘f6 13. a4 ♘a5
 14. b3! cxb3 15. ♘xb3 ♘c4
 16. ♘bd2 ♘d6
 16... ♘a5!? and White has
 to work harder to open the
 queenside.

17. ♖b3 ♖c8?! 18. a5±



White creates a queenside pawn
 weakness and piles up on it.

18... ♘fe4

18...bxa5? 19. ♕xd6
 hangs the ♕. 19... ♖xd6
 20. ♖xb7 ♖b8 21. ♖a6+–
 the ♖ is safe.

19. ♘xe4 ♘xe4

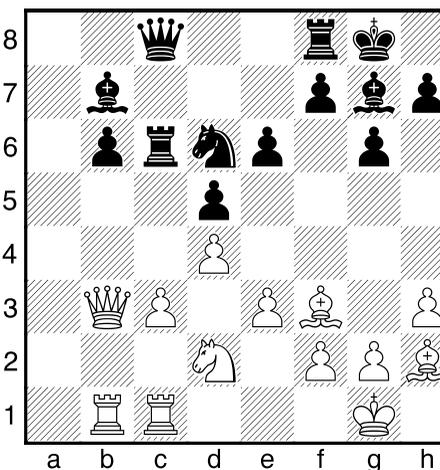
20. ♖fc1 ♘d6 21. axb6
 axb6

21... ♖xb6? 22. ♖xb6 axb6
 23. ♕xd6 exd6 24. ♖a7+–
 both Black ♕s are trash.

22. ♖ab1

22. ♖a7! ♖a8 23. ♖xa8
 ♕xa8 24. ♖a1±.

22... ♖c6 23. ♘d2 ♖c8
 24. ♕f3 e6



25. ♖a3

25. ♕xd6!? ♖xd6 26. c4 ♖c6
 27. ♖b2± White has strong



queenside pressure, though
 maybe the 5v4 on the kingside
 would be hard to win.

25... ♘c4?

Loses the b–pawn and leaves
 White in total control over the
 queenside.

25... ♖d8± and ... ♕f8 saves the
 b–pawn and makes White work
 for a way to break through; which
 isn't so easy: 26. ♖a7 wins the
 pawn, but leaves White tangled
 26... ♕f8 (26... ♕a6!?!; 26... b5!?)
 27. ♖xb6 ♕a6!?!± threatening
 ... ♘b5.

26. ♘xc4 ♖xc4

26... dxc4 27. ♕xc6 ♖xc6 28. f3+–
 Black has no comp for the
 exchange.

27. ♖xb6

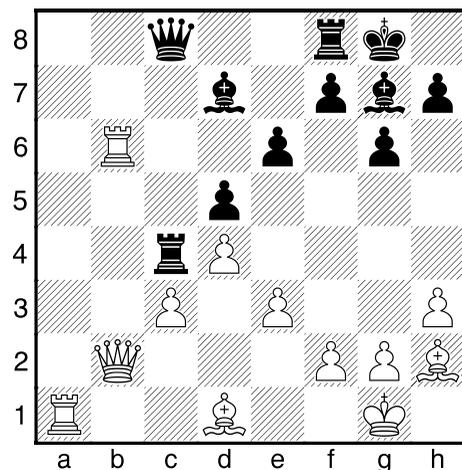
27. ♕e2 also works, trapping the
 ♖: 27... ♖c6 28. ♕b5+–.

27... ♖a8 28. ♖b2! ♕c6
 29. ♕d1 ♕d7 30. ♖a1 ♖c8

IM Thanh Nha Duong

2022 North York
 IM Norm Round Robin





31.♙d6!

Trades down and opens h2 for the ♔, just in case.

31...♖e8

31...♖xc3? 32.♖b8+-.

32.♖b8 ♕c6 33.♖xe8+ ♙xe8

34.♕b8 ♙f8 35.♙xf8 ♔xf8

36.♖a7

36.♖a8 is close to zugzwang and threatens ♙e2-b5.

36...♔g7

36...♖xc3 37.♙a4+-.

37.♕e5+ ♔h6

37...♔h6 38.g4 is #2.

1-0

Canadian Senior 50+	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Score	Perf	New
1 Plotkin, Victor	+8	=6	+4	=5	+3	+2	+9	6	2456	2366
2 Malakhovets, Sergey	=0	-7	+10	+8	+11	-1	+12	4.5	2292	2181
3 Ochkoos, Jura	+9	=11	-5	+15	-1	+13	+6	4.5	2167	2305
4 Findlay, Ian	+10	+14	-1	=11	=7	=6	+5	4.5	2160	2258
5 Haessel, Dale	=0	+12	+3	=1	=6	=7	-4	4	2292	2214
6 Filipovich, David	+15	=1	+7	=0	=5	=4	-3	4	2247	2170
7 Barron, Michael	=12	+2	-6	+9	=4	=5	-8	3.5	2127	2255
8 Oancea, Nicolae	-1	-10	+12	-2	=0	+15	+7	3.5	2067	2095
9 Nazareno, Merlin	-3	+13	=11	-7	+14	+12	-1	3.5	2005	2059
10 Bordas, Gyula	-4	+8	-2	=13	-12	+14	+15	3.5	1858	1945
11 Duong, Thanh Nha	+13	=3	=9	=4	-2	-0	-0	2.5	2087	2245
12 Chernik, Dmitry	=7	-5	-8	+14	+10	-9	-2	2.5	1865	1990
13 Momic, Jovan	-11	-9	+0	=10	+15	-3	-14	2.5	1700	1675
14 Uyanik, Mehmet	+0	-4	-15	-12	-9	-10	+13	2	1673	1172
15 Supsup, Ferdinand	-6	+0	+14	-3	-13	-8	-10	2	1623	1656

Canadian Senior 65+	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Score	Perf	New
1 Bluvshstein, Iliia	+0	=2	+10	+5	=3	+4	+6	6	2159	2136
2 Hartman, Brian	+6	=1	+8	=3	+4	+5	+9	6	2109	2334
3 Loadman, Ian	+12	+4	+5	=2	=1	=6	-0	4.5	2168	2146
4 Fradkin, Benjamin	+7	-3	+6	+11	-2	-1	+8	4	1903	1912
5 Berengolts, Isai	+8	+11	-3	-1	+7	-2	+10	4	1801	1996
6 Finlay, Ian	-2	+9	-4	+12	+8	=3	-1	3.5	1841	1836
7 Brown, John R.	-4	+12	=9	+10	-5	-8	+11	3.5	1600	1423
8 Verde, Pino	-5	+0	-2	+9	-6	+7	-4	3	1661	1487
9 Benggawan, Undriadi	=0	-6	=7	-8	+12	+11	-2	3	1657	1401
10 Wood, Monika	+0	=0	-1	-7	=11	+12	-5	3	1598	1181
11 Glew, Richard	=0	-5	+12	-4	=10	-9	-7	2	1359	1646
12 Szucs, Nadia	-3	-7	-11	-6	-9	-10	+0	1	1180	1527

	Toronto Senior	Rtg	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Score
1	MALAKHOVETS, Sergey	2181	*	0	½	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7.5
2	BARRON, Michael	2286	1	*	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
3	UPPER, John	2163	½	1	*	½	½	0	½	1	1	1	6
4	OANCEA, Nicolae	2035	0	1	½	*	½	1	½	½	1	1	6
5	CAMPBELL, Brett	2053	0	0	½	½	*	½	1	1	½	1	5
6	BERENGOLTS, Isaac	1996	0	0	1	0	½	*	½	½	1	1	4.5
7	FRADKIN, Benjamin	1914	0	0	½	½	0	½	*	½	1	1	4
8	CORRIE, Michael	1578	0	0	0	½	0	½	½	*	1	0	2.5
9	MOMIC, Jovan	1683	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	0	*	1	1.5
10	VERDE, Pino	1479	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	*	1



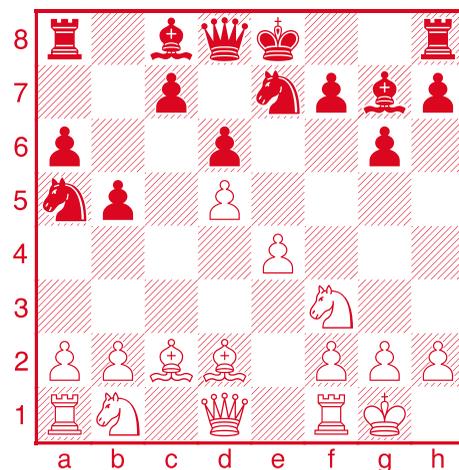
The Hart House Reading Week Open was held February 17–19, 2024, in the Great Hall in Hart House, University of Toronto. It attracted 251 players in six sections.

IM Nikolay Noritsyn won the Crown section with an undefeated 5/6, ½ a point ahead of **IM Mark Plotkin**, who was held to draws by his father Victor and Nikolay in the final two rounds.– 3rd–5th were Jonathan Yu and FMs Eilia Zomorrodian and Victor Plotkin.

Noritsyn, Nikolay (2572)
Chiku–Ratte, Olivier
Kenta (2454)

C60
 Hart House Reading Week
 (6), 19.02.2024
 Notes: John Upper

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5
 g6 4.0-0 ♙g7 5.c3 a6
 6.♙a4 ♘ge7 7.d4 exd4
 8.cxd4 b5 9.♙c2 d6 10.d5
 ♘a5 11.♙d2



11...c5?!
 The game line shows why this is bad.



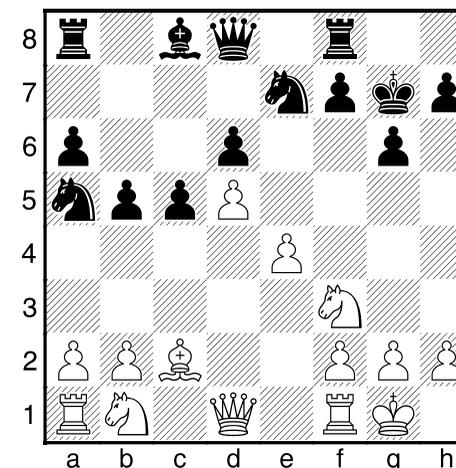
11...c6!? 12.♙c3 (12.♙xa5?! ♙xa5 13.dxc6? ♙xb2+)
 12...♙xc3 13.♘xc3 0-0± is similar to the game, but Black has a better chance of getting counterplay against the White center.

11...♘c4!? 12.♙c3 ♙xc3 (12...♘xb2?? 13.♙xg7!?) (13.♙e1!) 13...♘xd1 14.♙xh8+- White already has a ♖♙ for the ♙, and the black ♘d1 is trapped.) 13.♘xc3 ♘xb2 14.♙c1 ♘c4 15.♙b3± (15.♙h6?! looks annoying, but 15...♘g8! 16.♙g7 ♙f6);

11...♙xb2!? 12.♙xa5 ♙xa1 13.♘c3 is a good exchange sac for White. 13...♙b2□ (13...♙xc3? 14.♙xc3+- the dark squares belong to White.) 14.♙d2± or 14.♙b1!?

12.♙c3 0-0 13.♙xg7 ♙xg7

IM Olivier Kenta
Chiku-Ratte



14.h3!
 Shuts down the ♙c8.

The game has transposed to a Modern Benoni where Black has activated his queenside majority with ...b5. The problem for Black is his minor pieces:

- 1) the ♙g7, normally his most important minor, is missing;
- 2) the ♙c8 has no future, h2-h3 prevented ...♙g4;
- 3) the Lopez ♘ on a5 is misplaced.

14.b3! is also good, putting the ♘a5 on an even worse circuit, where its best fate would probably be to defend from f7.

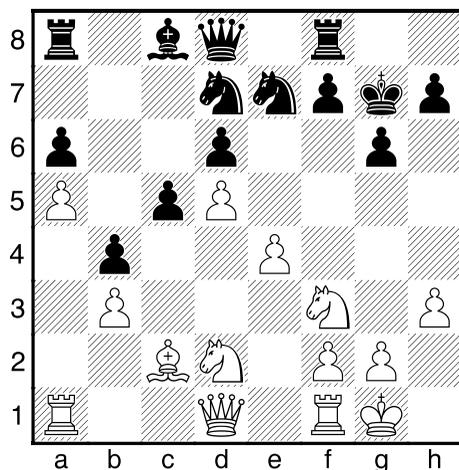
14...♘c4 15.b3 ♘b6 16.a4!

b4?!

♞16...♖b8; ♞16...f5.

17.a5!

Prevents ...a5 and kicks a defender of c4. With the queenside stabilized, White is free to push in the center and kingside. This is positionally winning for White, and the game shows how.

17...♘d7 18.♘bd2**18...♗b7**

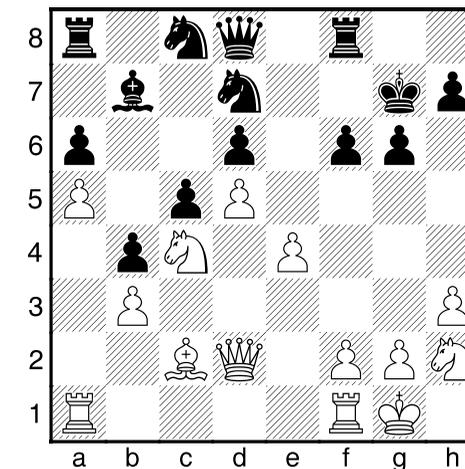
Black has to pick his poison. In the game he allows White to methodically build up in the center, and he gets squashed. Here he could try to break out of the bind with exchanges, but the holes behind are permanent,



and the IM playing White will not be as easily confused as a club-level player.

18...f5!? 19.exf5 ♘xf5 20.♘c4 ♖f6 21.♗xf5 gxf5 22.♖e1+- if Black had time for ...♗b7 and ...♖ae8 he'd be OK, but here ♖e6 comes too soon.

18...♘e5!? 19.♘xe5! dxe5 20.♘c4 f6 21.♖d2 g5 22.♗d1+-.

19.♘c4 ♘c8 20.♖d2 f6 21.♘h2**21...♖e7**

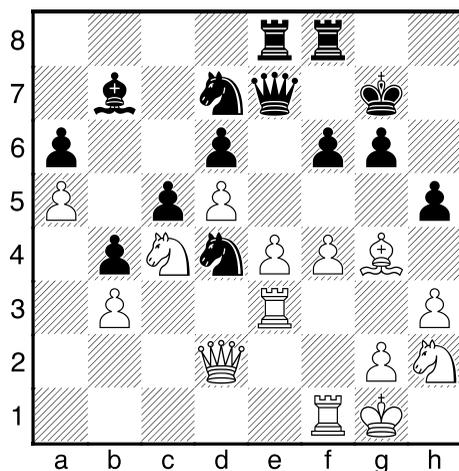
21...♘e5 22.f4 ♘xc4 23.bxc4 ♘e7 24.♘f3+- and e4-e5 will create a passer and weaken Black's king.

IM Nikolay Noritsyn

Hart House Reading Week Open, rd.5.



22.f4 ♖a7 23.♞ae1 ♘b5
24.♙d1 ♞ae8 25.♙g4 ♘d4
26.♞e3 h5



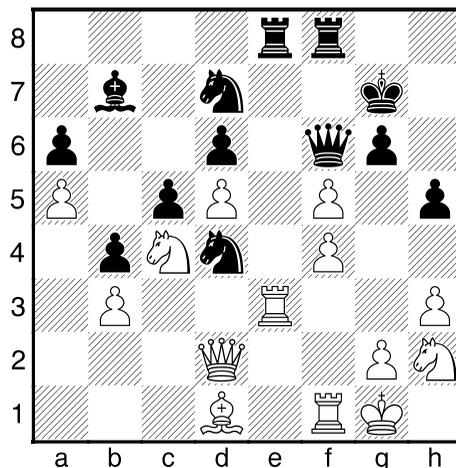
27.♙d1

Patience. 27.♙e6 ♘xe6 28.dxe6 ♞xe6 29.♘xd6+-.

27...f5

Desperation, but Black is losing anyway, and it can't have been fun sitting there watching White's methodical build up, which could continue with ♘f3, removing the ♘d4, Black's only good piece.

28.exf5 ♞f6



29.♞e6!

Clearly best, and a no-brainer at IM level.

29...♘xe6 30.fxe6 ♘b8

That's a one-way retreat.

31.♘xd6 ♞e7 32.f5 gxf5

33.♘xf5+ ♞xf5

Everything else gets mated.

34.♞xf5 ♞xf5 35.♙f3 ♞e8

36.♙e4 ♞ff8 37.e7

37.♞g5+! was mate-in-2, but the game line is easily winning.

1-0

Yu, Johnathan (2210) Findlay, Ian (2259)

B51

Hart House Reading Week (5),
19.02.2024

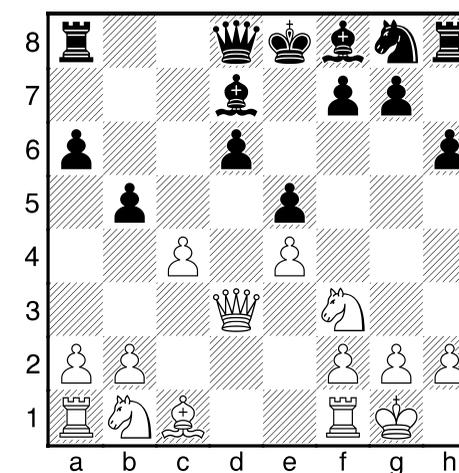
Notes: John Upper

Johnathan Yu plays in a lot of Toronto events, and FM Ian Findlay, who moved back to Toronto after the pandemic, plays when the golf courses are snowed under. Both were in contention for prizes on the last day. I've included this game because of the surprising number of unusual tactics that could have decided the game early on, and for its Tragicomic finish.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙b5+
♘d7 4.0-0 a6 5.♙xd7+ ♙xd7
6.d4 cxd4 7.♞xd4 e5 8.♞d3
h6

The main line: avoiding ♘f6 ♙g5.

9.c4 b5



10.c5?!

Trading the d6 pawn for the e5 pawn while opening the center for Black's B-pair does not seem like a good idea, especially if White allows the ♞ trade. OTOH, White has struggled to prove anything from this position, and top players have begun to resort to supporting the c-pawn with 10.♘fd2.

10...dxc5 11.♘xe5 ♙e6
12.♞d1

12.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 13.a4 ♙d6 (♞13...b4?) 14.♘c6 ♞c8 15.axb5 axb5 16.♘a7 ♞a8 17.♘c3 (♞17.♞d1± ♙b8? 18.♘c6!+- winning the ♞ or mating on d8.) 17...♙c4?? 18.♙e3? (18.♘axb5!!+- more weird tactics!) 18...♙xf1 19.♙xf1 ♘f6=

Overleaf: Great Hall at Hart House

Everyone should enjoy a tournament hall like this at least once.





Chess Canada Spring



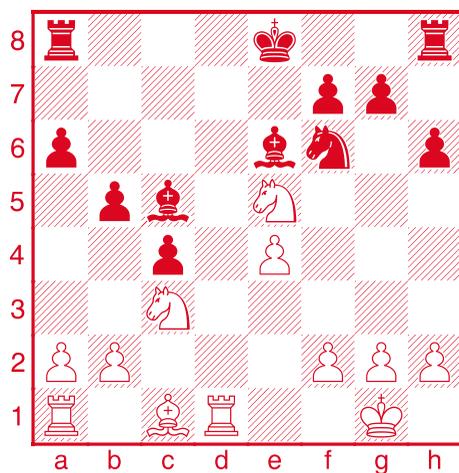
Benmesbah,N (2223)–Brunner,N
(2418) Cappelle Online Blitz op
1st, 2021. 1-0

12...♔xd3 13.♖xd3 ♘f6

14.♘c3 c4!

14...b4 15.♘d5 ♖c8∞.

15.♖d1 ♘c5♯



What happens if ♘d5?

16.♘d5??

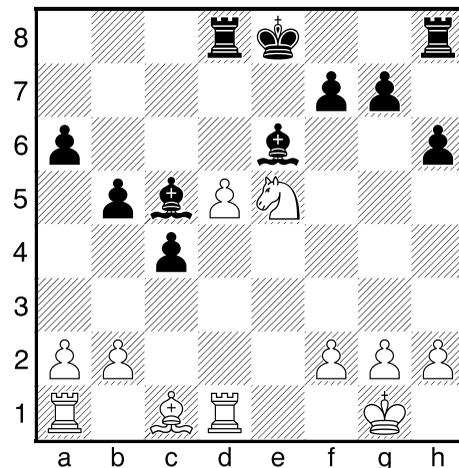
Hoping to hop into c7?

16...♘xd5?

♠16...0-0-0+ and there's no good defence to ...♘xe4. 17.♘c6 looks annoying, but goes nowhere after 17...♖d7 (17...♖d6 works too.) 18.♘e5 ♖d6 and ...♘xd4.

17.exd5= ♖d8?

♠17...♘f5 18.d6 ♖d8 19.♘f4
♖xd6 (19...♘xd6 20.♘c6± ♘d3
21.♘xd8 ♘xf4±) 20.♘xc4! ♖xd1+
21.♖xd1 bxc4 22.♖d5=.



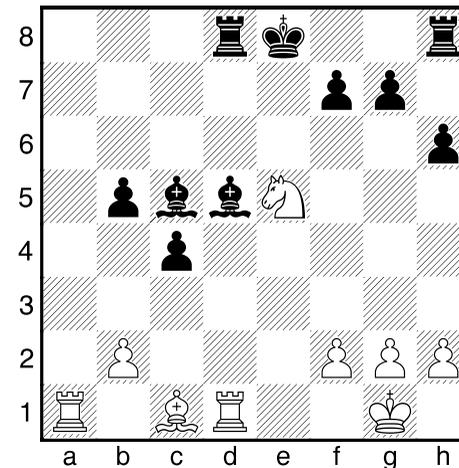
18.a4

♠18.♘e3!+- defends the ♖d1 and leaves two Black pieces hanging:

18...♘d6 19.♘c6! ♖c8 20.♘a7+- the ♖ and ♘e6 are hanging and all White's pieces are protected;

18...♘xe3 19.dxe6+- and the pawn or ♘ on f7 wins; e.g. 19...♖xd1+ 20.♖xd1 ♘f4 21.exf7+ ♔e7 22.♘g6+-.

18...♘xd5 19.axb5 axb5



20.♘e3?

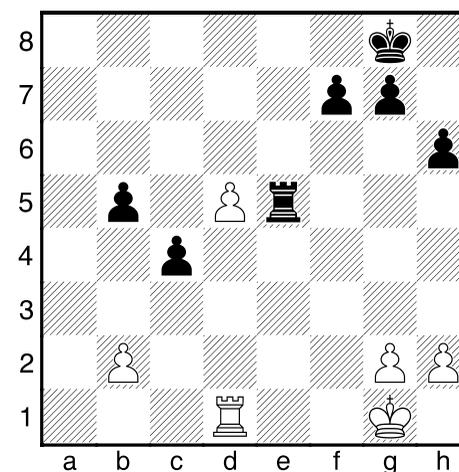
20.♘xc4!!= ♘xc4? (20...bxc4
21.♖a5=) 21.♖xd8+ ♔xd8
22.♖a8±.

20...♘xe3♯ 21.fxe3 0-0

22.♖d4 ♖fe8 23.♖ad1 ♖xe5♠

24.e4 ♖d7 25.♖xd5 ♖dxd5

26.exd5



The strange tactics are over, and

we have an endgame.

Black is up a pawn, but if it was White's turn then d5-d6 would force the Black ♖ to defend and enable counterplay against Black's queenside pawns. But it's Black's move, and after...

26...♔f8♠-+

... the protected passed pawn is stopped by the ♔, and Black's ♖ can support the queenside.

27.d6 ♔e8 28.d7+ ♔d8

29.♔f2 b4! 30.♖a1 ♖c5

31.♔e3 ♖c7 32.♖c1 c3

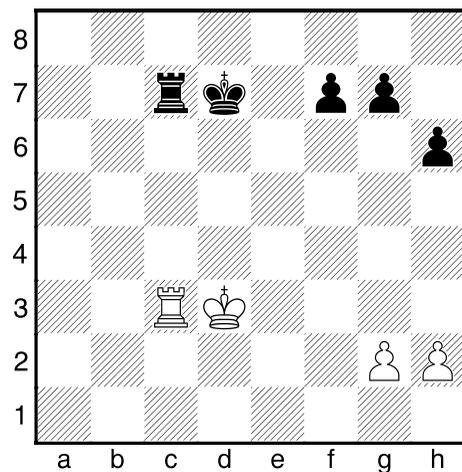
33.bxc3 bxc3

33...♖xc3+ 34.♖xc3 bxc3 35.♔d3
♔xd7+- transposes.

33...b3? 34.c4! =.

34.♔d3 ♔xd7 35.♖xc3





35...Rxc3+□

Of course, you'll never win this with R's on.

36.Ke3xc3 Ke6

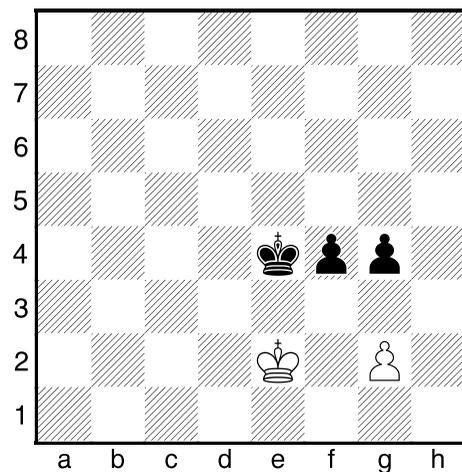
#27 is what my computer says.

37.Ke4 Kf5 38.Ke3 Kg4

39.Kf2 f5 40.Ke3 g5 41.Kf2

Ke4 42.Ke2 h5 43.Kf2 Ke4

44.Ke2 f4 45.h3 g4 46.hxg4 hxg4



47.Kf2

47.g3 fxg3

48.Ke1

Ke3 49.Kf1

Ke3 50.Kg1

g2 51.Kh2

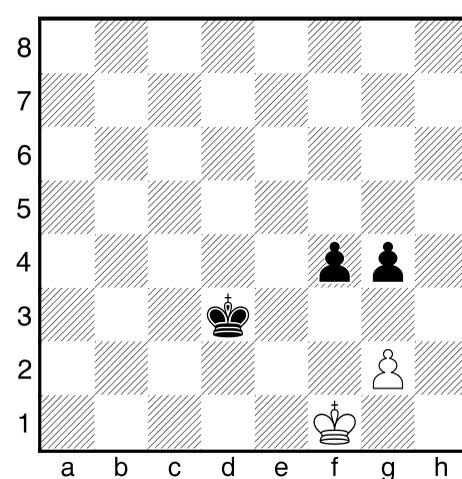
g1 ♖+!

52.Kxg1

Ke3+.

47...Kd3

48.Kf1



48...Ke3

48...Kd2 also wins 49.Kf2 (49. g3 f3 □-+) 49...g3+ 50.Kf3 Ke1 51.Kxf4 Ke2+.

49.Ke1 f3

or 49...g3 50.Kf1 Ke2 51.Kg1 Ke2 52.Kh1 f3 53.gxf3 Ke2+.

50.g3 Ke3 51.Kf1 Ke2

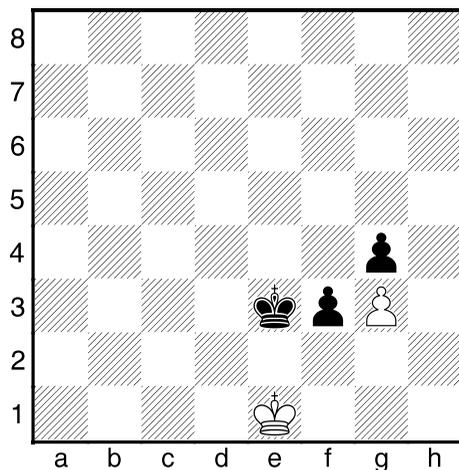
52.Kg1 Ke1 53.Kf1 Ke2



Jonathan Yu vs FM Ian Findlay

It's not just a matter of technique when you're hungry.

54. ♔f2 ♔d3 55. ♔f1 ♔e3
56. ♔e1



56...f2+ 57. ♔f1 ♔f3?

57...♔d3! 58. ♔xf2 ♔d2! 59. ♔f1
♔e3 60. ♔g2 ♔e2 61. ♔g1 ♔f3
62. ♔h2 ♔f2 63. ♔h1 ♔xg3
64. ♔g1 ♔h3 65. ♔h1 g3-+.

but...

1/2-1/2

So, what happened?

"It was indeed a draw.
Embarrassing how simple the
win is after Kd3 Kxf2 Kd2. I had
lots of time. I can only say a
senior moment. I wanted to go
for lunch :)"

– FM Ian Findlay,
ChessTalk

Vadim Razin (UKR) began with
three wins, including a win over
IM OKCR, but then lost to both
Plotkins and this game. I've
included it because of the crazy
tactics at move 34, and as a
second Tragicomic ending that
ended in Johnathan Yu's favour.

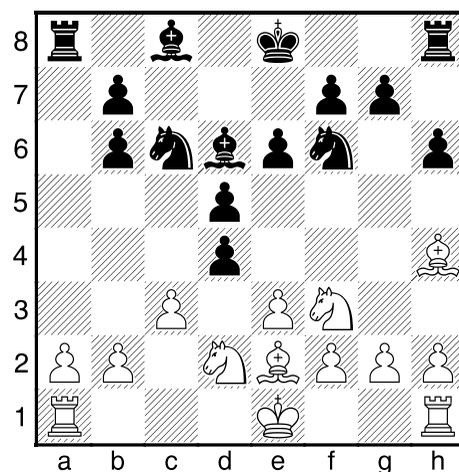
Razin, Vadim (2490)
Yu, Johnathan (2210)

D03

*Hart House Reading Week (6),
19.02.2024*

Notes: John Upper

1. d4 ♘f6 2. ♘f3 e6 3. ♙g5 d5
4. e3 h6 5. ♙h4 c5 6. c3 ♖b6
7. ♗b3 ♘c6 8. ♘bd2 ♙d6
9. ♙e2 cxd4 10. ♗xb6 axb6



I used to play the Slav, and was

surprised to discover that Black
actually outperforms White
in positions with the doubled
isolated b-pawns and the
symmetrical pawn center we'd
get here after cxd4.

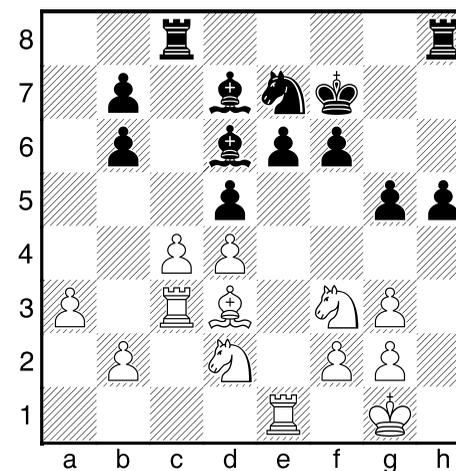
11. exd4 ♙d7 12. 0-0 ♘e7
13. ♙d3 ♘h5!

Eliminates White's DSB.

14. ♖fe1 g5 15. ♙g3 ♘xg3
16. hxg3 f6 ♔f7 17. a3 ♔f7

17...b5! stops White on the
queenside, and leaves Black free
on the kingside.

18. c4 h5 19. ♖ac1 ♖ac8
20. ♖c3



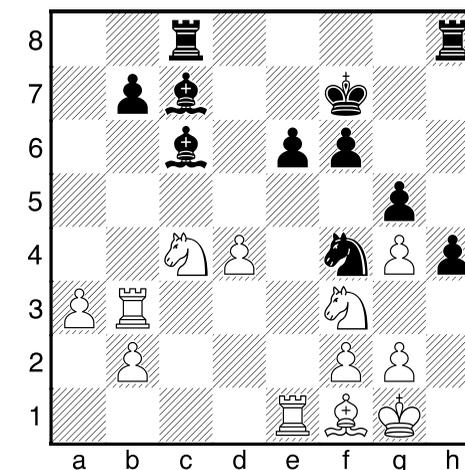
20...h4?!

20...g4 looks anti-positional,

but SF16 seems to love the fact
that White's ♘h4 is so badly
sidelined. 21. ♘h4 f5 ♔.

21. g4 ♘g6 22. ♖b3 ♘f4
23. ♙f1 ♙c6 24. ♖xb6
24. g3!? hxg3 25. fxg3 ♘g6
26. ♔g2∞.

24...dxc4 25. ♘xc4 ♙c7
26. ♖b3



26...♙d5

With both ♙s pointed at the ♔g1
it feels like there ought to be a
way to break through, and there
is, but it would be crazy hard to
see long lines like these:

26...h3!:

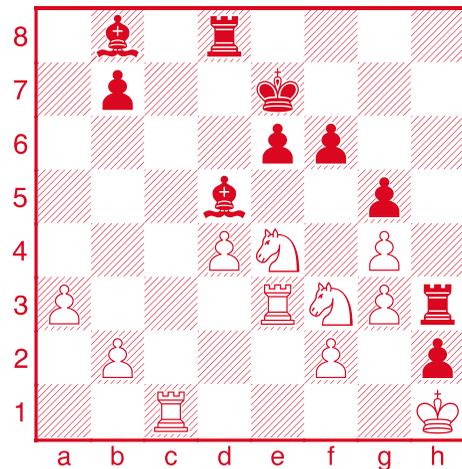
27. gxh3 ♔g7 (27...♘h3+?
28. ♙xh3 ♖xh3 29. ♘xg5+!+-)
28. ♘cd2 ♘h3+ 29. ♙xh3
♖xh3 ♔;





27.g3 h2+□-+ 28.♔h1 (28.♖xh2 ♜xh2!-+) 28...♞h3 29.♙xh3 ♜xh3 30.♔g2 h1♚+! 31.♞xh1 ♜xh1 32.♔xh1 b5 33.♞cd2 ♙a5-+ 34.♔g1 ♙d5 White is going to lose at least a ♖,
35.♞xb5 (35.♞e3 ♙xd2 36.♞xd2 ♞c1+ 37.♞f1 ♙c4-+) 35...♙xd2 36.♞xd2 ♞c1+ 37.♞f1 ♞xf1+-+.

27.♞c3 ♙b8 28.♞ec1 ♞cd8
29.♞cd2 ♔e7 30.♞e3 h3
31.g3 h2+ 32.♔h1 ♞h3
33.♙xh3 ♞xh3 34.♞e4



Hooliganism, or safety?

34...♙f4!?

According to Shirov, during post-mortems Tal would call moves like these "Hooliganism" — with obvious glee!

It's an excellent try in the opponent's time trouble: with best play White draws, anything less loses.

34...♔f7 35.♔g2 ♞dh8 36.♞h1□ (36.♔h1 ♙f4!-+);

34...♙c6 35.♞xc6! not the only move, but greatly simplifies White's game. 35...bxc6 36.♞b3∞.

35.gxf4□ ♞xf3

35...gxf4! 36.♞c7+ (36.♔g2?? h1♚+-+) 36...♔f8 37.♞e1 ♞xf3 38.♞xf6 ♞e3+ 39.♔xh2 ♞xe1 40.♞h7+= down a ♞, White saves the game with this well-known repetition.

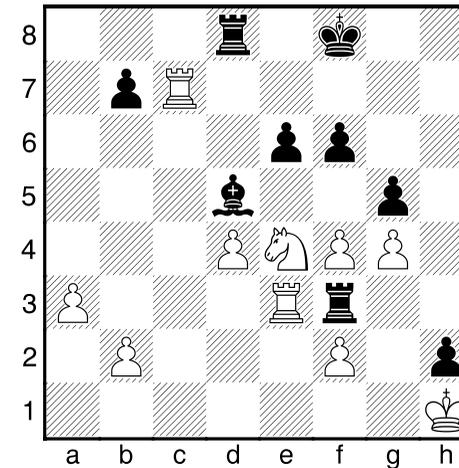
36.♞c7+

36.♞xf3? ♙xe4 37.♞cc3 ♞h8□-+ and ...♞h3.

36.♞c3 ♞xe3+ (36...♞xf4+ 37.♞xd5+ ♞xd5=; 36...♙c6 37.d5□ ♞xe3□=) 37.♞xd5+ ♞xd5 38.fxe3 gxf4=.

36...♔f8□=

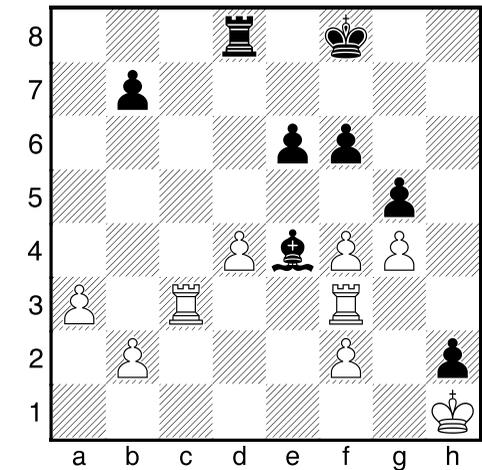
Not allowing ♞xf6+xd5.



37.♞xf3

37.♔xh2 ♞xe3 38.♞xf6□ ♞e2 39.♞h7+= is the same mechanism as above.

37...♙xe4□ 38.♞cc3□



38...♞xd4??

38...gxf4= 39.♔xh2 ♙xf3□ 40.♞xf3 e5?? (40...♞xd4□=) 41.dxe5 fxe5 42.♞b3+- e.g. 42...♞d7 43.♔g2 e4 44.♞b4 ♞e7 45.f3!+- breaks the pawns due to the threat of ♞xf4+.

39.fxg5+- ♔e7

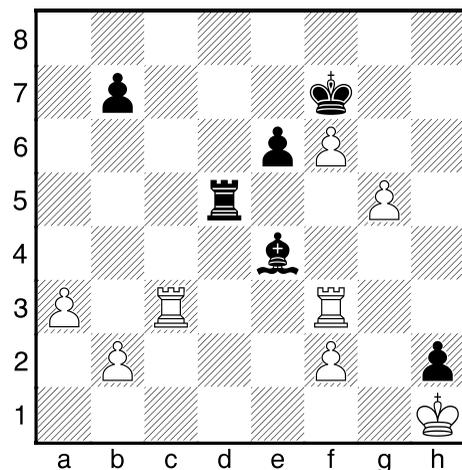
39...♔f7 leaves the f-pawn pinned after 40.♔xh2 ♙xf3 41.♞xf3 ♞xg4 42.♞xf6+ ♔e7 43.f4+-.

40.gxf6+ ♔f7
41.g5 ♞d5



Vadim Razin

Perfect in the first half...



42.g6+??

This and White's next are probably due to the same oversight. Each move drops ½ a point.

42. ♖xh2 (or 42. ♖c7+ first)
 42... ♟xf3 43. ♖c7+ ♚ (43. ♖xf3? ♖xg5±) 43... ♖f8 (43... ♖g6
 44. ♖g7+ ♚h5 45. f7 ♖g4!?)
 (45... ♖d8 46. ♖g8+-) 46. f8 ♖
 ♖d1 47. ♖xf3+-) 44. g6 ♖d8
 (44... ♖h5+ 45. ♖g3 ♖g5+
 46. ♖xf3 ♖xg6 47. ♖xb7+-)
 45. ♖h7+- or 45. ♖g3, which is
 slower but also winning.

42... ♖xg6± 43.f7??

Better was 43. ♖xh2 ♟xf3
 44. ♖xf3 ♖f7 White has the better
 side of a draw. After the game
 move, the ♖ and ♟ can't stop the
 pawn, but...

43... ♖f5 ♚-+

Stops promotion and wins the ♖.

43... ♖d8?? 44. ♖xh2+- Black
 can win the f7-pawn, but only by
 trading down to a losing pawn
 ending.

44. ♖xh2 ♟xf3 45. ♖g3 ♟d5

0-1

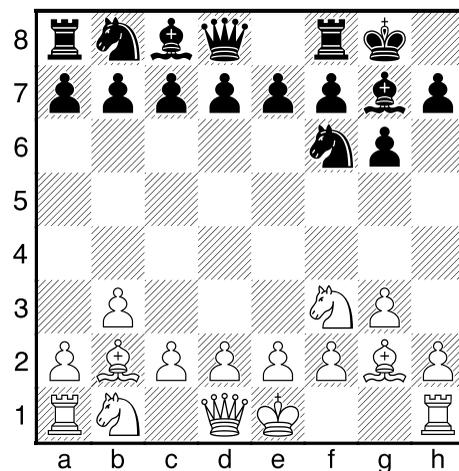
Mao, Fengxi (2315) Shih, Matthew (2231)

A11

Hart House Reading Week (6),
 19.02.2024

Notes: John Upper

1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. b3 g6 3. ♟b2
 ♟g7 4. g3 0-0 5. ♟g2



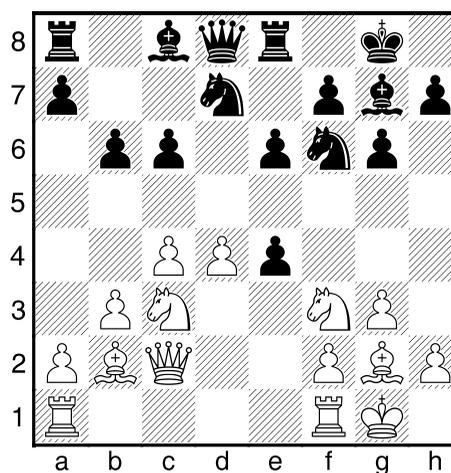
White scores 60% from here

(excellent) but only +14 Elo (not).
 This suggests it's an opening
 higher-rated White players try
 when they hope to outclass their
 opponents, and that they may be
 mistaken in doing so!?

5...d5

5...a5!? 6.0-0 a4 (6...d5 7.c4)
 7.c4 d6 8.d4 ♖bd7 9. ♖c3 ♖b6
 10. ♖c2 d5 11.c5 a3 12. ♟xa3
 ♖xa3 13.cxb6 cxb6 14. ♖fc1 ♟f5=
[Carlsen,M](#) (2838)–[Jobava,B](#)
 (2701) [PRO League KO Stage](#)
[rapid, 2017.](#)

6.c4 c6 7.0-0 ♖e8 8.d4 e6
 9. ♖c3 ♖bd7 10. ♖c2 b6
 11.e4 dxe4



12. ♖xe4

12. ♖g5! and 12. ♖e5! are both
 Novelties. No extra charge ☺

12... ♖xe4

12... ♟b7?? 13. ♖d6+- ♖c7
 14. ♖xe8+- 1-0, [Jones,G](#) (2670)–
[Dourerassou,J](#) (2477) [EU-ch](#)
[qual Online, 2020.](#)

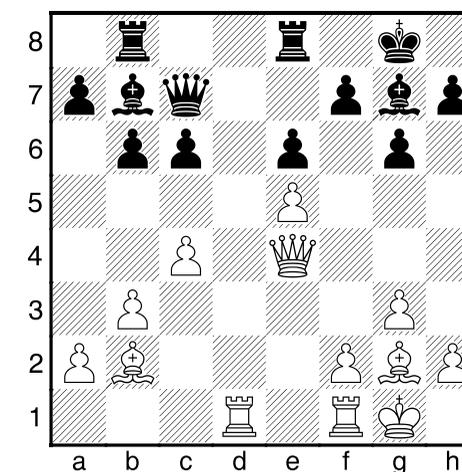
13. ♖xe4 ♟b7 14. ♖ad1

14. ♖fd1!? keeping the ♖a1 might
 get a better version of the c5 sac
 White tries in the game.

14... ♖c7

14... ♖c8 15. ♖e5 ♖e7 16. ♖d2
 ♖f6?! 17. ♖f3 ♖ed8 18. ♖fd1 ♖c7
 19. ♖e3 ♖dc8 20.h3± White has a
 solid space advantage. 20... ♖b8
 21. ♟c3 ♖bc8 22. ♟b2 ♖b8 23. ♟c3
 ♖bc8. ½-½, [Shoppen,C](#) (2507)–
[Santiago,Y](#) (2490) [Vlissingen HZ](#)
[op 24th, 2022.](#)

15. ♖e5 ♖xe5 16.dxe5 ♖ab8



17.c5!?N

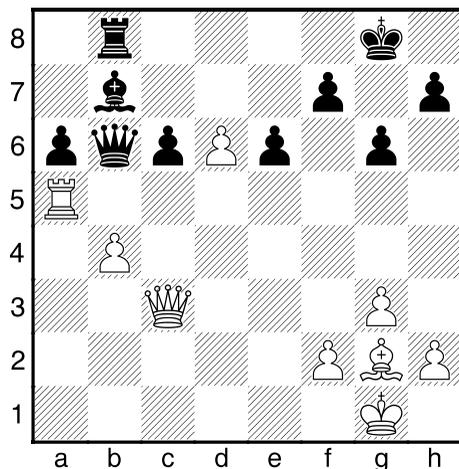
Stops Black from equalizing simply with ...c5.

17...bxc5 18.♖d6 ♔a5**19.♔c2**

19.♖a1 is not as stupid as it looks, and doesn't allow Black to liquidate the weak c5-pawn, since after 19...c4 20.♔xc4 e5 is not hanging: 20...♙xe5?? 21.b4+-.

19...c4!

19...♔xa2?? 20.♖a1+-.

20.♙c3 cxb3 21.axb3 ♔c5**22.b4 ♔c4 23.♖d4 ♔b5****24.♖a1 a6 25.♖a5 ♔b6****26.♖d6 ♖ed8 27.♔d2 ♖xd6****28.exd6 ♙xc3 29.♔xc3**

White is down a pawn but

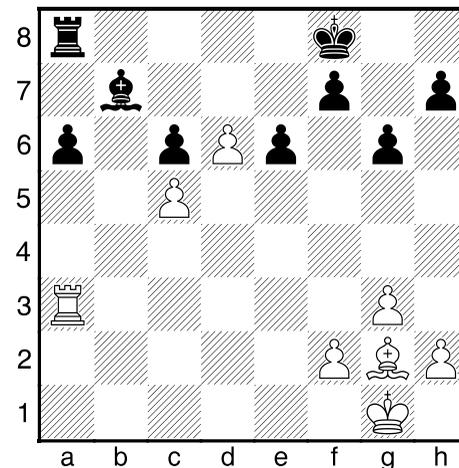
has more than enough compensation.

29...♖d8?

29...♙a8□=.

30.♔c5!+-

The ♔b6 is trapped and the exchange on c5 will support White's ♙d6.

30...♔xc5□ 31.bxc5 ♔f8**32.♖a3?! ♖a8****33.♖a5**

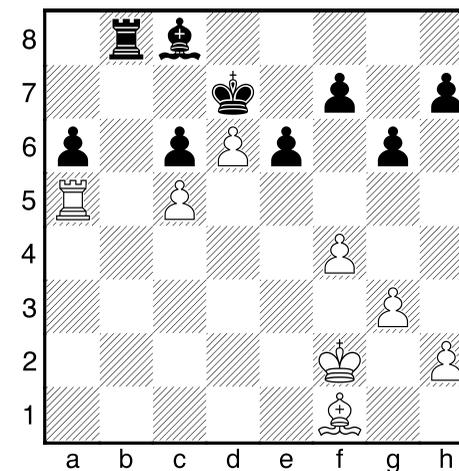
Keeping Black's pawns blocking Black's pieces. White is still winning, despite the wasted tempi.

33.♖b3!? ♖a7□ 34.♙f3

(34.♖xb7?? does not work

34...♖xb7 35.♙xc6 ♖b1+□

36.♔g2 ♖c1□-+) 34...a5 35.♙d1! a4 36.♖a3□ ♖a5 37.♙xa4□ ♖xc5 (37...♙a6 38.♖b3□+-) 38.♖b3 ♙a6 39.♖b8+ ♔g7 40.d7+- Black has no miracle escape, though it is close: 40...♖c1+ 41.♔g2 ♙f1+ 42.♔f3 ♖c3+ 43.♔e4 ♖c4+ 44.♔e5 (44.♔e3 ♖c3+ 45.♔d2 ♖d3+ 46.♔e1 ♖xd7 47.♔xf1+- would be a headache.) 44...f6+ 45.♔d6! ♖xa4 46.d8♙ ♖d4+ 47.♔xe6 ♙h3+ 48.♔e7 ♖e4+ 49.♔d6 ♖d4+ 50.♔xc6+-.

33...♔e8 34.f4 ♔d7 35.♔f2**♖e8 36.♙h3 ♖b8 37.♙f1 ♙c8****38.♙xa6?**

△38.♔e3 so the ♔ can defend c5, or cross over via e5 and f6. If Black tries to sit tight with 38...♖a8 39.g4 f6 40.g5! so the White ♔ can attack e6 from e5.

40...♔e8! to defend e5 with the ♔. I think White should win with something like ♙c4, ♖a2-b2-b6, but even with the computer saying +5 haven't found a fully convincing line.

38...♙xa6=

38...♖a8?? 39.♙xc8+ ♖xc8

40.♖a7++-.

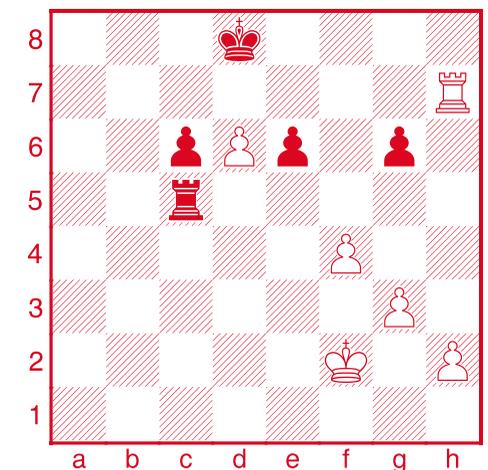
39.♖xa6 ♖b5□=

Now that the ♙s are gone Black can immediately target the pawn that supports White's pride and joy on d6.

40.♖a7+ ♔d8

40...♔e8 41.♖e7+ ♔d8□

(41...♔f8?? 42.♖c7+-).

41.♖xf7 ♖xc5 42.♖xh7=

42...♖h5??

42...♖d5? 43.♖h6□ (43.♖g7? ♖d2+□ 44.♔e3 ♖xh2 45.♖xg6 ♔d7=) 43...♔d7 44.h4□+/-;

42...e5□= 43.♖g7 exf4 44.gxf4 ♖f5 45.♔e3 ♖f6= even if all the pawns on the 6th rank disappear, the f and h pawns only draw if Black's ♔ isn't stuck on the back rank.

43.♖xh5□+- gxh5 44.h4

This wins, and may or may not be more straightforward than:

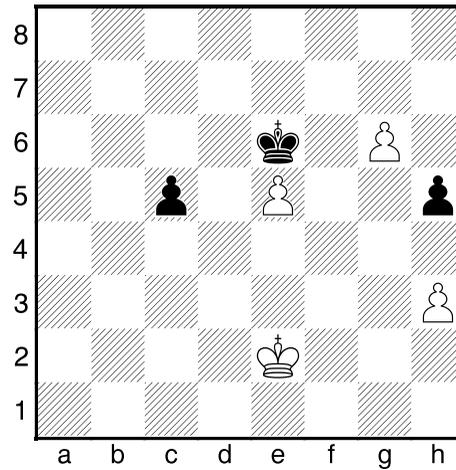
44.h3! ♔d7 45.g4 ♔xd6 46.g5□ c5 47.♔e2:

a) 47...♔e7 48.♔d3 ♔f7 49.♔c4 h4 (49...♔g6 50.h4+-) 50.♔xc5 ♔g6 51.♔d6+-;

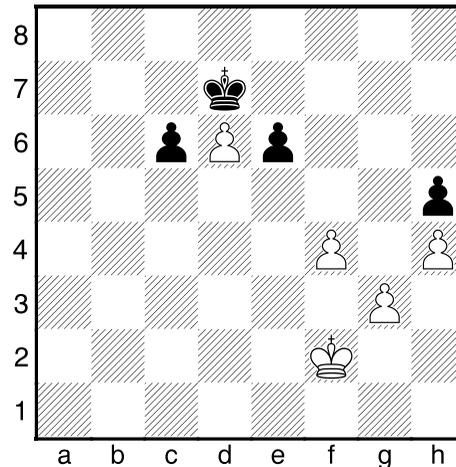
b) 47...h4 48.♔d3 e5 49.g6□ ♔e6 50.fxe5+-;

c) 47...e5 48.g6□ ♔e6 49.fxe5□+-;

Analysis Diagram



A winning position for White that reappears several times in this analysis.

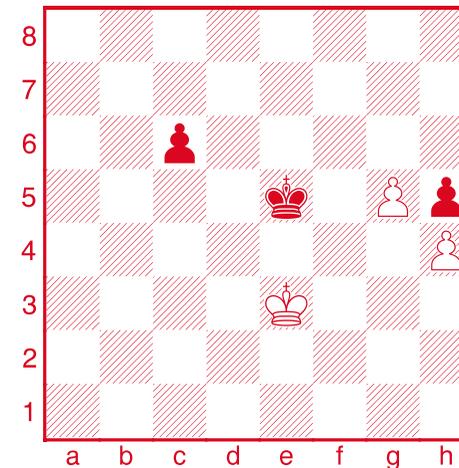
44...♔d7**45.g4□ ♔xd6 46.g5□+- e5 47.fxe5+?**

47.f5?= c5 48.♔e3 ♔d7 49.♔d3 ♔e7 50.f6+ (50.♔c4 e4□=) 50...♔e6 51.♔e3 ♔f7 52.♔e4

c4□= Both ♔s can stop the pawns but never capture them.

47.g6!+- ♔e6 48.fxe5□+- as in the variations at move 44. But not 48.f5+? ♔f6 49.♔e3 ♔g7= or 49...c5=.

47.♔f3!+- is simplest 47...c5 48.♔e4 (48.g6 ♔e6 49.fxe5□+-) 48...exf4 49.♔xf4□+-.

47...♔xe5= 48.♔e3**48...♔f5??**

48...♔d5?? 49.♔f4□+- ♔e6 50.♔e4 ♔d6 51.♔f5 c5 52.♔f6+- White's new ♖ will check from d8 and c8, skewering the new piece on c1 before it has a chance to move.

48...c5□= Black can defend

the c5-pawn from d5 or d6 and stay within the square of the g5-pawn. 49.♔d3 ♔d5□ 50.♔c3 ♔e6 (50...♔d6?? 51.♔c4+-; 50...♔e5=) 51.♔c4 ♔d6 52.♔b5 ♔d5□= 53.♔a5 ♔e5= (53...c4?? 54.♔b4+-).

49.♔d4 ♔g4

49...♔e6 50.♔e4□ c5 51.♔f4□ ♔d5:

52.♔f5 ♔d6 53.♔f6+- with the same position as at the end of the previous note;

52.g6 also works, since White promotes with check; 52...♔e6 53.♔g5 c4 54.♔h6 c3 55.g7+-.

50.g6 ♔xh4 51.g7 ♔h3 52.g8♖ h4 53.♔e3 ♔h2 54.♔f2

1-0

Hart House Reading Week**homepage:**

<https://harthousechess.com/2023/12/14/hart-house-reading-week-open-2024/>

more photos:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.993723028812224&type=3>



Bonus Preview

This is a simple way for Black to equalize against many early b3 lines, including this double-fianchetto.

10.bxa4

SF16's top choice, but still just equal.

10.♔c2 ♘bd7 (10...a3 11.♙c3=) 11.♞e5 c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♞dc4? This attempt to trade minors fails to Black's accurate play: 14...axb3! 15.axb3 ♖xa1 So the ♖a8 won't hang on ♙xb7. 16.♙xa1 dxc4 17.♙xb7 ♞xe5 18.♙xe5 ♚b6 This double attack on b7 and b3 wins. 19.♙xf6 (19.♙f3 cxb3+) 19...cxb3 20.♚c4 ♙xf6+ with connected passed pawns, White didn't last long in Yu,Z (2394)-Rodrigue Lemieux,S (2242) Montreal op, 2019.

10...♚d7 11.cxd5 exd5
12.♚c2 ♙d6 13.e4 ♞xe4
14.♞xe4 dxe4

The following game was the last position in the previous all-tactics issue. Here's the full game, and it's a teaser for an upcoming issue where **Canada's newest GM Shawn Rodrigue-Lemieux** annotates his favourite games from the past few years!

Spoiler: this wasn't one of them.

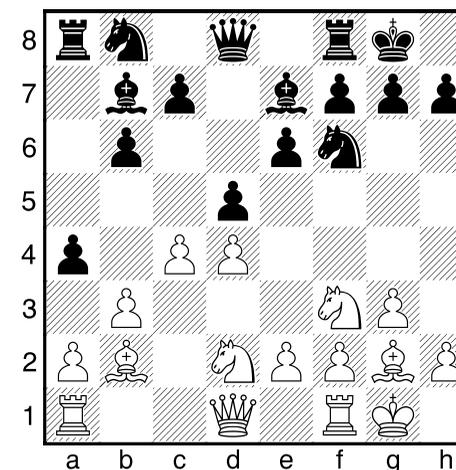
Gordon, David (2221) Rodrigue-Lemieux, Shawn (2528)

E17

Ottawa Winter Open Ottawa
(2.2), 21.01.2023

Notes: John Upper

1.c4 e6 2.g3 d5 3.♙g2 ♞f6
4.♞f3 ♙e7 5.0-0 0-0 6.b3 b6
7.d4 ♙b7 8.♞bd2 a5 9.♙b2
a4=



2024 Hart House RW Open	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	Score	TPR	New
1 Noritsyn, Nikolay	=12	+16	+3	+7	=2	+6	5	2611	2578
2 Plotkin, Mark	=0	+9	+12	+8	=1	=3	4.5	2621	2501
3 Plotkin, Victor	+17	+14	-1	=6	+8	=2	4	2549	2397
4 Yu, Jonathan	-7	+5	=17	+16	=9	+8	4	2431	2247
5 Zomorrodian, Eilia	-6	-4	+19	+17	+12	+9	4	2404	2266
6 Chiku-Ratte, Olivier Kenta	+5	+7	-8	=3	+10	-1	3.5	2413	2450
7 Mao, Fengxi	+4	-6	+15	-1	-11	+14	3	2335	2327
8 Razin, Vadim	+19	+13	+6	-2	-3	-4	3	2334	2471
9 Findlay, Ian	=18	-2	+11	+14	=4	-5	3	2290	2263
10 Joseph Benher, Savio	-13	+19	=14	+15	-6	=11	3	2285	2164
11 Kang, Dorian	-16	=17	-9	+19	+7	=10	3	2230	2273
12 Wu, Ruining (Ray)	=1	+18	-2	+13	-5	-0	2.5	2368	2240
13 Zhu, Matthew	+10	-8	=16	-12	=17	=15	2.5	2190	2243
14 Shih, Matthew	+0	-3	=10	-9	+16	-7	2.5	2092	2217
15 Huang, Youhe	=0	=0	-7	-10	+0	=13	2.5	1952	2243
16 Wiebe, Isaac	+11	-1	=13	-4	-14	=17	2	2167	2218
17 Kapra, Jerjis	-3	=11	=4	-5	=13	=16	2	2130	2241
18 Singh, Mahip	=9	-12	-0	-0	-0	-0	0.5	2037	2276
19 Kot, Emanuel	-8	-10	-5	-11	-0	-0	0	1876	2203

editor's notes

All photos, except the one of the Cannes Open on p.19, were taken by me. You can find additional photos of these tournaments, and more, on the *Chess Canada* facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ChessCanada/> Canadian chess clubs and CFC organized events may use those photos free of charge, so long as they are accompanied by this attribution: "photo: John Upper"

Chessbase 17 crashed *many* times when compiling this issue, but only twice was it so bad I wanted to sledgehammer their programmers thumbs:

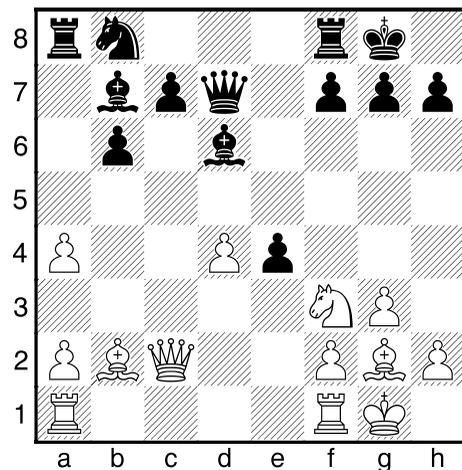
- it ballooned one database to 21Gb to completely fill my laptop HD.
- it no longer correctly exports PGNs without altering the text notes.

Luckily, I still have my copy of CB15 (downgraded to ver. 0.2), which will export to RTF without adding font links which break my Adobe layout program. Fingers crossed, it can still export PGNs with unmangled notes.

Not 1: trust Chessbase software.

Not 2: delete old Chessbase programs or old photos.

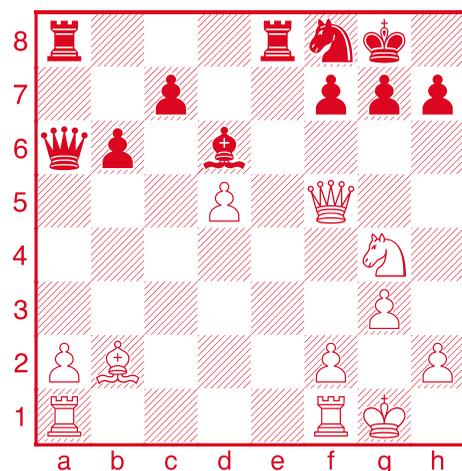




15. ♘e5

15. ♘g5!? f5 16. ♖b3+ ♔h8
17. ♘e6∞.

15... ♖xa4 16. ♙xe4 ♙xe4
17. ♖xe4 ♘d7 18. ♘g4 ♖fe8
19. ♖d3 ♖a6 20. ♖f5 ♘f8
21. d5



Material is equal, Black's pawn structure is better, but White has

pieces menacing Black's king. Should Black improve his ♖ with ... ♖b5 or ... ♖e2, or try to trade ♖s with ... ♖c8, or go ... ♘g6, or something else?

21... ♖e2??

21... ♖b5?? 22. ♘h6+ (or 22. ♘f6+ or ♙xg7, they all win.) 22... gxf6
23. ♖f6+-;

21... ♖c8?? 22. ♘h6+ ♖+- gxf6
23. ♖f6 ♙e5 24. ♙xe5+-;

21... ♘g6? 22. ♙xg7!!± ♔xg7
23. ♖f6+ ♔f8 24. ♘h6 ♖e7
25. ♖ae1□ (25. ♘f5? ♙e5+-;
25. ♖fe1? ♖ae8=) 25... ♖ae8
26. ♘f5□±;

21... ♙e7!! undeveloping the B and undefending the c7-pawn *and* blocking the ♖e8: this move looks stupid in every way. But it does the one essential thing: defends the kingside dark squares.

If you don't see that White was threatening piece sacs on the dark squares g7, h6, and f6 then you'd never consider ... ♙e7. The computer sees all that, and rates this as the only move to keep the

balance.

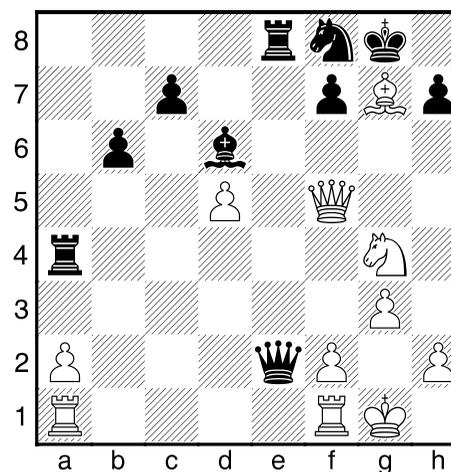
The game might continue:
21... ♙e7 22. ♖e5 f6 23. ♖xc7 ♖b5! forks ♙b2 and d5. Black has enough activity for the pawn; e.g. after something like: 24. ♖fb1 ♖xd5 25. ♖xb6 ♖eb8= White can't unwind without giving back the a-pawn.

22. ♙xg7□+-

Black's ♖e4 attacks the ♙b2 and adds support to e5, so ♘ sacs now both fail to taking the ♘ then blocking the long diagonal on e5; e.g. 22. ♘h6+?? (or ♘f6+) 22... gxf6 23. ♖f6 ♙e5+-.

22... ♖a4

Threatening the ♘g4. Not 22... ♔xg7?? 23. ♖f6+ ♔g8 24. ♘h6#.



23.f4?

White spent 9:39 on this move, and it's a lemon. It defends the ♘g4 and keeps Black pieces off e5, but neither of those were necessary: White can give the knight for time to reload the diagonal by moving the B:

□23. ♙c3 threatens immediate mate with ♘h6. 23... ♖xg4 (23... ♖xg4 24. ♖ae1!+- skewers ♖e8.) 24. ♖f6□ ♙e5 25. ♙xe5 ♖xe5 26. ♖xe5+-;

□23. ♙d4 ♖xd4 24. ♘h6+ ♔g7 25. ♖g5+ ♘g6 26. ♘f5+ ♔g8 27. ♘xd4+-;

□23. ♙b2 ♖xb2 24. ♘f6+ ♖xf6 (24... ♔h8 25. ♘xe8+-) 25. ♖xf6 ♙e5 26. ♖g5+- or 26. ♖c6+-.

23... ♙c5+

23...h5!? allows White to force a repetition:

a) Not with 24. ♖xh5?? ♙c5+ 25. ♔h1 ♖e4+-+. Compare this with the game line: the Black ♙c5 prevents the maneuver ... ♖b5xd5 check.

Major 2024 Summer Events

May 31-June 2:
Maplewood Professional Cup
Montreal
<https://maplewood2024.square.site/>

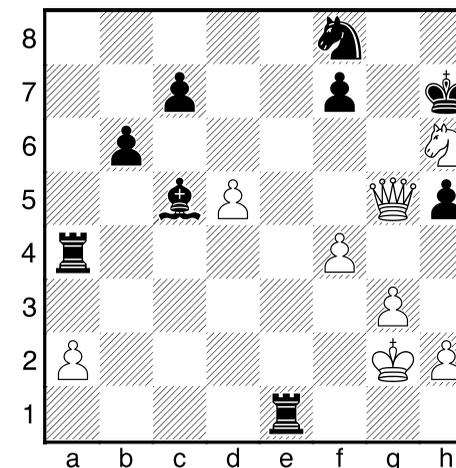
July 9-12:
CYCC
Laval, QC.
<https://cycc2024.my.canva.site/>

July 13-18:
Canadian Open
Laval, QC.
<https://cycc2024.my.canva.site/canadianopen2024>

Aug. 12-20:
RIDEF, Francophonie
Quebec City
<https://cycc2024.my.canva.site/site-ridef>

Aug. 14-18:
NA U20 Championship
Calgary
<https://najcc.com/NAJCC/Home/Home>

27. ♖ae1 ♔xe1 28. ♖xe1
♖xe1+ 29. ♔g2



White is attacking with queen and knight, and would be better if he had time for ♘f5, but Black is faster.

29... ♖xa2+ 30. ♔h3 ♖ee2
Threatening mate on h2.

31. ♔g8+ ♔xh6 32. ♔g5+
♔h7 33. ♔xh5+ ♔g7 34. ♔g4
♘h7! 35. ♔f5 ♖xh2 36. ♔g4+
♔h6

0-1

can't get to the long diagonal.

25. ♔c3□+- threatens ♘h6# and prepares to reload the dark-square attack. Black has tries, but no escape:

a) 25... ♔xg4 26. ♖f6□ ♔d4
(26... ♘g6? guards h8 at the cost of g7, 27. ♔g7#) 27. ♔xd4 ♖xd4
28. ♔xd4+-;

b) 25... ♖e4+ saves the K, but 26. ♔xe4 ♖exe4 27. ♘f6+- wins a whole rook with the discovered check;

c) 25... hxg4 26. ♖ae1□ ♖b5 defends e8, but 27. ♖f6□+- forces Black into a hopeless endgame: 27... ♔d4 28. ♔xd4
♔xd5+ 29. ♔g1 ♔xd4+ 30. ♔xd4
♖xd4 31. ♖xe8+-;

d) 25... ♔d4 26. ♘h6+ ♔g7
27. ♔xd4+ ♖xd4 and White has a couple of ways to win the ♖d4, the simplest being 28. ♔xf7+ (28. ♔g5+! is greedier and wins more) 28... ♔xh6 29. ♖f6+-.

25... ♔xg7 26. ♔g5+ ♔h7
Threatening ... ♖e4+.

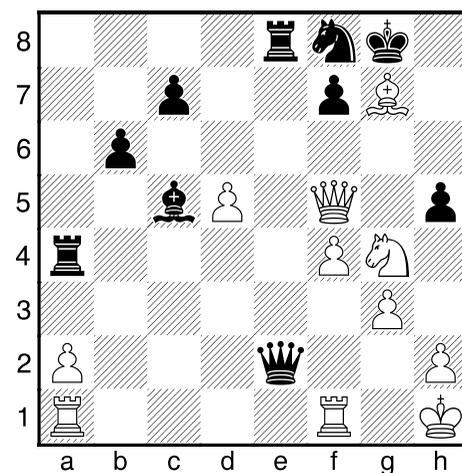
b) 24. ♔c3? hxg4 25. ♖ae1
♖b5□ 26. ♖f6 ♖c5+□-+ 27. ♔h1
♖xd5+□-+;

c) 24. ♘f6+ ♔xg7 25. ♔g5+
(25. ♘h5+ transposes) 25... ♘g6
26. ♘h5+ Black can't run since 26... ♔f8?? (26... ♔g8 27. ♘f6+= is the repetition) 27. ♖ae1+- closes the exit with a tempo on the ♖, and 27... ♔xe1 28. ♖h6+□
♔e7 29. ♖xe1+ is hopeless.

24. ♔h1□ h5?

Gives White a second chance!

□24... ♖e4+ 25. ♔xe4 ♖exe4□
(25... ♖axe4?? 26. ♔xf8+- and a fork on f6.) 26. ♔e5 ♘d7 stops the fork on f6. 27. ♔xc7±.



25. ♘h6+??

25. ♔f6? ♔xg4+- and White's ♖



Chess Canada Spring