

Chess Canada





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 use your imagination.

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

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notes:

IM Shiyam Thavandiran
WGM Maili-Jade Ouellet
IM Mike Ivanov
IM Mark Plotkin

TL;DR ... see p.14

next:

- **WGM Maili-Jade Ouellet**
“Beast Games”
- **IM Mike Ivanov**
“How I won... final IM Norm”



Canada has a long but spotty history of hosting events in the World Chess Championship:

- 1894: **Montreal** was one of three cities to cohost of the Steinitz-Lasker World Championship match;
- 1971: **Vancouver** held the Fischer-Taimanov Candidates match;
- 1988-9: the Candidates matches were part of the World Chess Festival in **St. John NB**. When Spraggett advanced, his next Candidates match was held in **Quebec City**.
- 2024: **Toronto** hosted the Candidates Tournaments: two round-robin to choose the challengers for the Open and Women's World Chess Championships.

Along side the Candidates were chess events with world-class attendees, including former World Champions **Vishy Anand** and **Alexandra Kosteniuk**. In short: the **2024 Toronto Candidates** was both a rare and important event in Canadian chess history.

editor's intro

The week before the Candidates, Toronto hosted the **2024 Canadian Zonal**, which determined National Champions, positions on the Olympiad teams, as well as qualification for the next stage of the 2026 World Championship cycles.

It was tempting to call this issue “Toronto”, but there are parts of Canada which might chafe.

The **2024 Zonal** gets plenty of coverage here: **IM Shiyam Thavandiran** annotates all 10 of his games *en route* to his crushing 9/10 win; women's winner **WGM Maili-Jade Ouellet** annotates one of her games; and there are notes from **IMs Mark Plotkin** and **Mike Ivanov**, and the usual selection from your editor.

100 years: Younger, Faster, Global

I took these major events and the coincidence that they were exactly 100 years after the great New York 1924 tournament, and did both chess analysis and some statistical comparisons as a way to see how tournament chess at the highest level has changed.

Some changes are exactly what you'd expect: modern chess is younger, faster, and more global...

New York '24	Nat	Age
Alekhine	FRA*	31
Bogoljubow	GER*	34
Réti	CZE	34
Capablanca	CUB	35
Tartakower	POL	37
Lasker, Ed.	USA	38
Yates	ENG	40
Marshall	USA	46
Maróczy	HUN	54
Lasker, Em.	GER	55
Janowsky	FRA*	55

Toronto '24	Nat	Age
Gukesh	IND	17
Praggnanandhaa	IND	18
Firouzja	FRA*	20
Abasov	AZE	28
Vidit	IND	29
Caruana	USA	31
Nepomniachtchi	RUS	33
Nakamura	USA	36

Toronto '24w	Nat	Age
Salimova	BUL	21
Vaishali	IND	23
Goryachkina	RUS	26
Lei	CHN	27
Tan	CHN	33
Muzychuk	UKR	34
Lagno	RUS	35
Koneru	IND	37

*indicates recent emigres; very common in post WW1 Europe.

Average ages:

New York 1924: 40
Toronto 2024: 25
Toronto 2024w: 27

The *youngest* player in NY24 was 31-year-old Alekhine; in Toronto there were only two men older than that... but also *two* teenagers!

The game is also more global: NY24 had *no* players from Asia or the far East, Toronto had 5 Indians and 2 Chinese.

The game is also *much much* faster.

Rate of Play: 1924 v 2024

	NY 24	TO 24
Time Control	30/2 + 2hr adj + (15/60) x 2 + overnight adj... etc.	Open: 40/2 + g/30 + 30s @ move 40. Women: 40/90 + g/30 + 30s from move 1
games	20	14
# days	33	18
rest days	13	4

Players in 1924 had 4 min per move, indefinitely, *plus* time off for adjournments. If both players used all their time, a 60 move game would take 10 hours from first move to last; a 90 move game would take 14 hours *plus* at least 20 hours for the overnight adjournment.



At the 2024 Candidates, players in the Open section had 3 min per move up to move 40, then 30 minutes for all their remaining moves, plus 30s/move. So a 60-move game where both players used all their time would take 5hrs 20 minutes, while a 90-move game would take 5hrs 50min: 2 min 40s, and 1min 57s per move, respectively.

Much faster, and much less time to rest: NY24 scheduled 11 rest days, *plus* two byes per player. This produced some strange schedules, like a stretch where Capablanca had no games for 5 days in a row! In Toronto there were only 4 rest days in total, and 0 byes. To put this another way: for the players, **40% of NY24 was days off**; only 22% of TO24 were off-days.

When we go past the big picture, and down to the moves, this comparison got a bit out of hand.

?????????????????

Before reviewing a tournament I put all the games through the Chessbase “blundercheck” tool: the latest version of Stockfish at 21+ ply and set it to show all mistakes greater than some significant small

number (it varies, but in this case it was 0.8). A few hours later and all the turning points of the games are identified and quantified. Those positions can be good tactical puzzles or Critical Positions.

When I did this with NY24 I got an overwhelming number of mistakes. Big mistakes. Sometimes back-to-back-to-back mistakes. Too many mistakes.

BLUNDERCHECK: 1924 v 2024

??	NY24	TO24	TO24w
>-1	228	65	82
>-2	114	35	49
>-4	37	9	20
B2B	40	11	18
games	110	56	56

B2B = back to back/both players

I didn’t want this to become a computer-checked reanalysis of NY24 — there is *already* one of those: in 2016, Taylor Kingston used the Rybka 3 engine, the best in the world at the time, and a *lot* of editorial effort, to create a freely downloadable collection of “Analytical Corrections, Additions

and Enhancements” for the Russell Enterprises 21st century edition of Alekhine’s *New York 1924*. I prefer non-fiction to romance, so I appreciate his work. YMMV.

In the end I did what I always do: I picked the most high-profile games, the ones with most startling or challenging tactics, the ones with something I hadn’t seen before, and the ones with a series of mistakes by both players. Many of those double-oversight sequences happened in endgames, **rook endings** in particular. I found several rook endings from NY24 which could serve as master-classes, but which no one seems to have noticed. Of course, there’s the rightly famous “umbrella maneuver” from Capablanca – Tartakower; but in a later round there was the opportunity for a more elaborate umbrella maneuver which would have saved Edward Lasker against... Capablanca!

The rook ending in Bogoljubov-Tartakakower has a preposterous finesse with what I *think* is zugzwang on an almost wide-open board! AFAIK, nobody has seen this before...

Don’t get me started.

Silicon Chisels

Computer analysis of NY24 finds a *lot* of mistakes, and results in a lot of corrections to earlier analyses. These corrections bring us closer to the truth of those games, but I’m sure some readers will recoil, fearing it might taint the enjoyment they had from a favourite game or player.

I suspect this is true only for chess fans who grew up reading old chess books: people who got hooked on the online version of chess probably have no interest in these heroes of the past... but they’re unlikely to be reading this anyway.

A reaction from the older fans might be: “Alekhine was a genius and an obsessively hard-worker who produced some of the most amazing games and best chess books ever! Why are you dumping on him?”

Yes he was; and no, I’m not. The fact that I’d spend so much time reviewing these old games and analyses shows I hold them in some respect. But I want to temper that respect so it doesn’t become hero-worship: seeing the weaknesses along with the strengths to



help calibrate a more accurate appreciation.

Detailed review of these games and analyses hammers home something everyone knows: ***chess is hard***. It is too hard for the best players to avoid blunders OTB. And it is ***too hard even for an obsessive genius like Alekhine***: he wrote the best chess books of his era, but even with plenty of time and in the peace of his study he still got some things completely wrong. Seeing these errors shouldn't upset us; refusing to see them is a self-imposed immaturity.

Stockfish beats Chessmaster*

Do people get upset when Stockfish refutes Rybka?

It would be strange if SF *didn't* sometimes refute older programs: why aren't the newer engines better? – did their successes make them lazy and unmotivated?

Ditto chess players and analysts.

Chess is, in part, a knowledge game; and knowledge increases with data and testing and analysis. To mention just two clear examples from this issue:

MJO's two games here have: an opening which didn't exist in 1924, and a line of the Slav Alekhine rejected as illogical but modern players know is sound;

Capablanca – Janowski is a reversed Benoni where Capablanca and Alekhine both underestimated the piece activity of pushing the c-pawn without additional pawn support, something even club players understand today.

Does this mean today's players are better than giants of the past? In some ways, yes: those who have learned from the giants of the past (and the demi-giants in between) come to the board better informed. And today's top players come to the board *much much* better informed than any in the distant past. In addition to the great games and books by the great players of the past, including Alekhine's, today's players have databases that speed preparation and god-tier analysis engines to test their ideas.

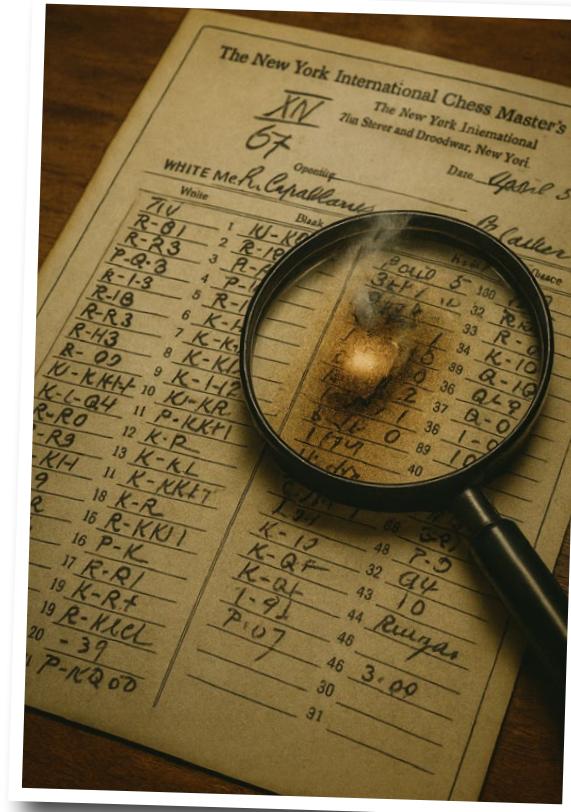
[see: Appendix 2 for more]

Rather than press the point, I end with a quote from **Ken Dryden's *The Game***, which I think addresses the underlying issue better than I can.

*The Chessmaster 2000™
with Joystick and Mouse control!

Stealing Fire or getting burned?

One theme that appears repeatedly in this issue is how players cope with the overwhelming complexity of chess; in particular, ***how contemporary players cope with computer engines***. They clearly trust the computer's evaluations, but they don't always understand them. This presents a dilemma they are all keenly aware of: the computer moves are objectively best, but the memory and workload required to reproduce them is mind-boggling. What do they do?



Naturally, their responses vary, some of them being the same as those of the old masters:

- dodge prep and go for an equal middlegame where class wins [see: **Shiyam v Yan**; Capablanca v Janowski].
- an opportunity to drag an opponent into dangerous territory where the practical difficulties of refuting a risky novelty make it worth the risk [see: **Lin vs Atanasov**, **Vidit v Naka**, **Pragg v Gukesh & Nepo**, **Reti v Marshall!**?].
- create a publishing project where old games are subjected to deep computer scrutiny and try to orient yourself and your readers in the myriad of unsuspected possibilities [see: **Sadler & Giddens**, **Chess Canada**].
- figure the cost of learning is too high for the return and put their effort somewhere else [see: **Caruana & Nepo** on the Qpp v Q ending].
- simply acknowledge it as a source of joy and wonder — ***who knew the game could still hold such surprises!?*** [see: notes by **Shiyam**, **Vidit**, **Pragg**, **Edward Lasker**, **Sadler**, **me**].



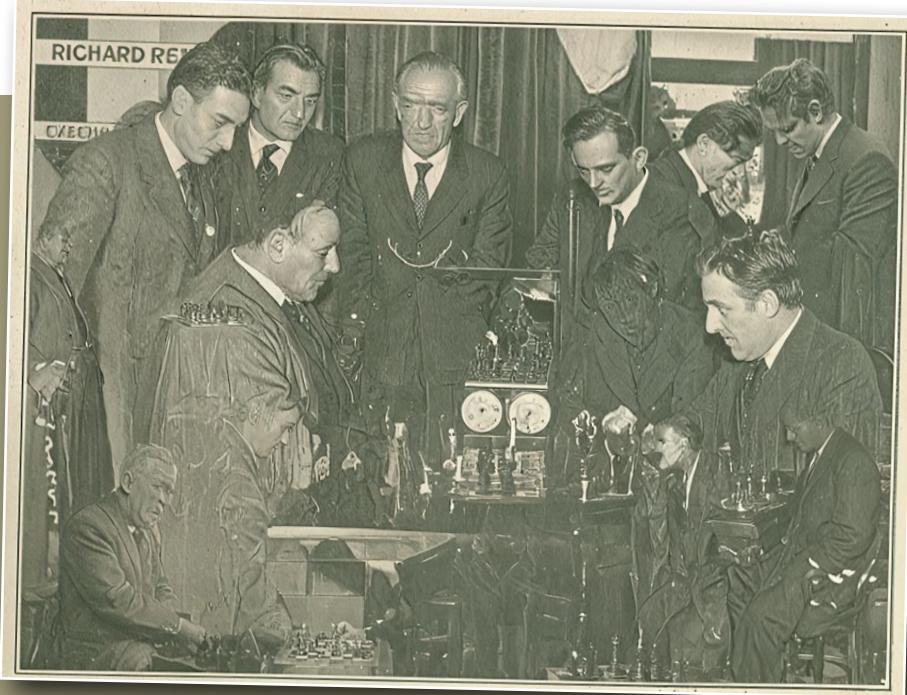
photo: Michel Walusza/FIDE

Restoration or Degradation?

In addition to other changes, modern chess also has greater and more diverse media distribution.

Each DGT board at the 2024 Candidates had *five* fixed cameras on it, sending moves and video around the world with only a 15 minute anti-cheating delay. After most games the players sat for interviews and analysis.

In 1924 there was *not a single photograph* of the players during their games! There were *no* published post-mortems and *no* post-game interviews. Worse, apart from Alekhine's fantastic tournament book, we have only a handful of comments from the players about their games in NY24. One of those is from Edward



reimaging 1924

Stable Diffusion output ranges from a pleasant upgrade to a photo of Alekhine visiting Montreal just before NY24, to the Lovecraftian horror above.

Lasker's *Chess for fun and chess for blood*; pairing his words with the computer-heavy analysis from Matthew Sadler is, IMO, one of the highlights of this issue.

2024 Toronto Candidates media controlroom

I've used the best software and techniques I can on both the images and the games. With images it's clear when you've gone overboard; with games, not so much. The rook endings are heavy going: more suited for deep study than any causal play-through – use the PGN! But rook endings *are* the most common *and* subtly complicated part of chess, and I thought I'd leave it all in... a Christmas treat for the masochists.



ALEKHINE AMONG MONTREAL CHESS FRIENDS.
Sitting (from left to right)—J. L. Blanchard, J. Sawyer, A. Lambert, Dr. W. Winfrey, A. Alekhine, F. A. Beque, A. Lamotte.
Standing—O. Trempe, A. Cartier, J. C. Paquin, C. Manseau, G. Marechal.
(Souvenir photograph, taken by Duprage, Dec. 4, 1923).



For the non-masochists, especially those unhappy to see 100-year-old giants cut down by computer engines, I've appended five **100-year-old endgame studies by Reti**: each one beautiful, memorable, imaginative, and (*despite all that*) completely computer-approved.

- John Upper
editor, *Chess Canada*



from: **Ken Dryden The Game**

Hall, Sawchuk, Jacques Plante, and Bower — they were the heroes of my childhood. Performing before my adolescent eyes, they did unimaginable things in magical places. Everything they did was braver and better than I had ever seen before. Then later, when I got old enough to get close to them, they had gone. And so it was that as a boy, my impression of them was fixed and forever frozen. They were the best. It meant that later, when I would get better, they would get better too.

For any goalie who came before — Georges Vézina, George Hainsworth, Frank Brimsek, Bill Durnan, Turk Broda — I have only record books and someone else's opinion, invariably exaggerated by time. For those who have come later... I have seen each of them up close, too close. I have seen their flaws and remember more than their highlights. And I have fixed on them a thirty-year-old's cold, jealous judgment. I know that pucks are now shot faster by more fast shooters. I

know that players train harder and longer, and receive better coaching. I know that in any way an athlete can be measured — in strength, in speed, in height

or distance jumped — he is immensely superior to one who performed twenty years ago. But measured against a memory, he has no chance. I know what I feel.

Nothing is as good as it used to be, and it never was. The “golden age of sports,” the golden age of anything, is the age of everyone’s childhood.





Critical Positions



selected by **the editor**

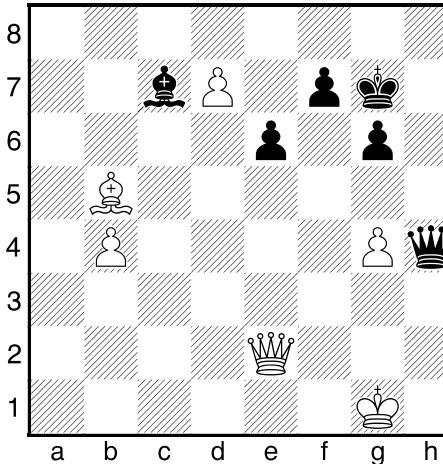
The following diagrams are critical positions from this issue of *Chess Canada*. You can treat them as exercises or as a teaser introduction to what you'll find in this issue.

These “critical positions” can be:

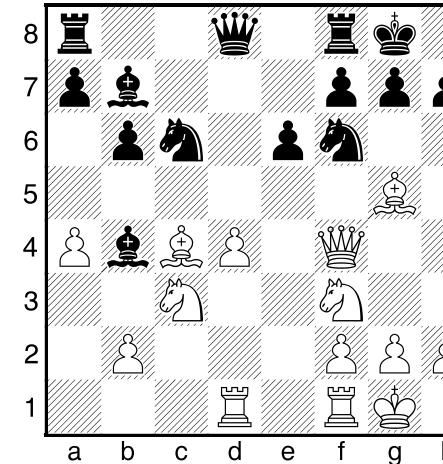
- winning combinations
- surprising tactics
- endgames requiring precise play
- simple calculation exercises
- variation-rich middlegames
- moments when one player went badly wrong.

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

Solutions appear 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.

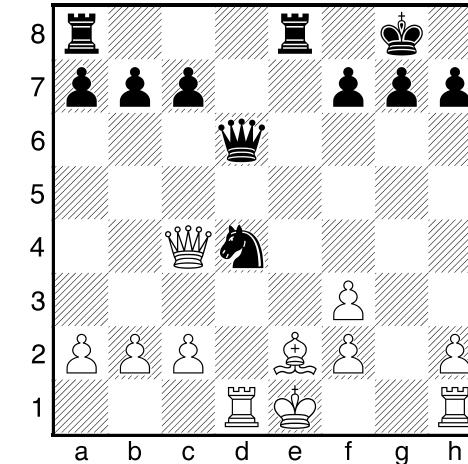


How I won...

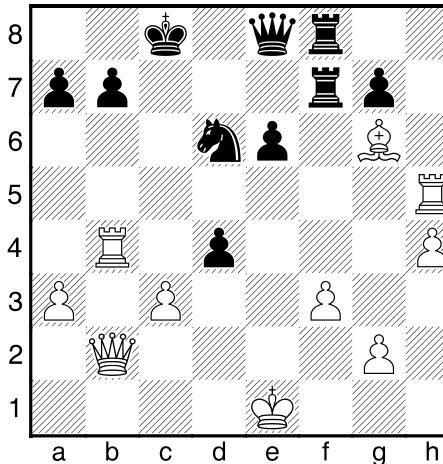


... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, ... $h6$, or something else?

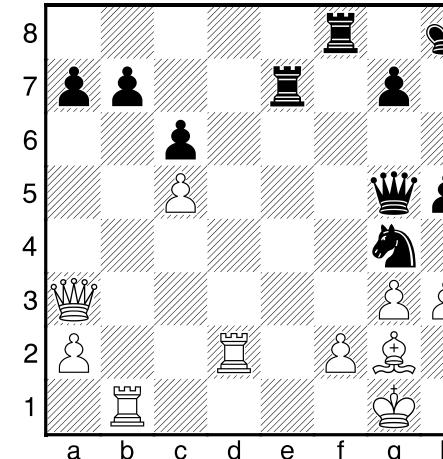
Zonal Games



Zonal Games

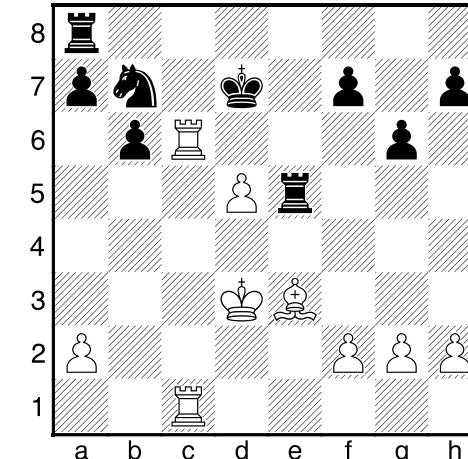


How I won...



What should White play: $\mathbb{B}d1$, $\mathbb{B}d2$, or something else?

Zonal Games

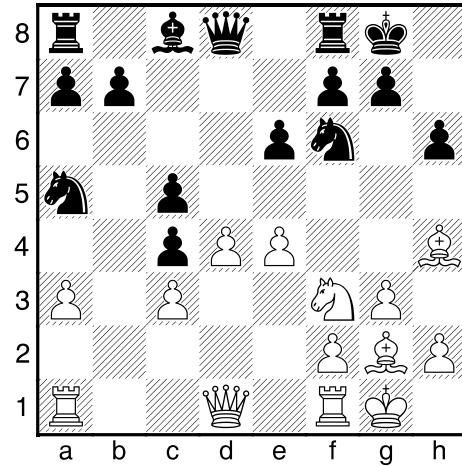


Can Black take on d5?

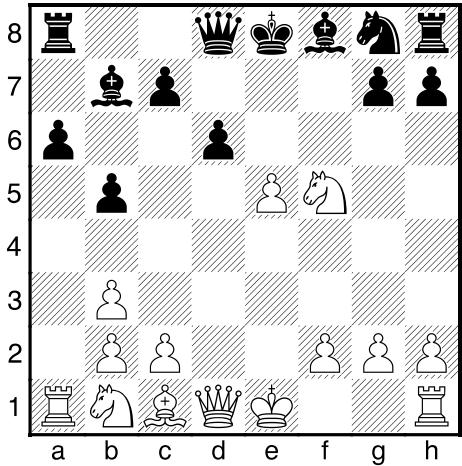
Zonal Games

Chess Canada

critical positions

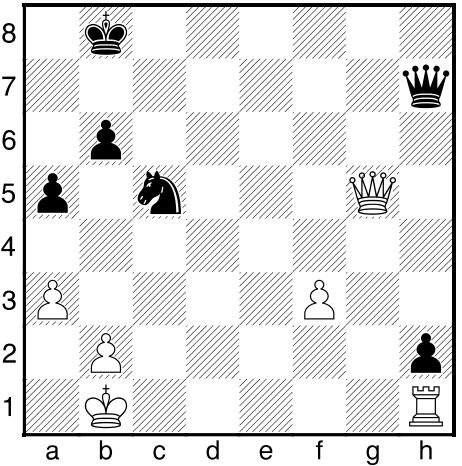


Candidates



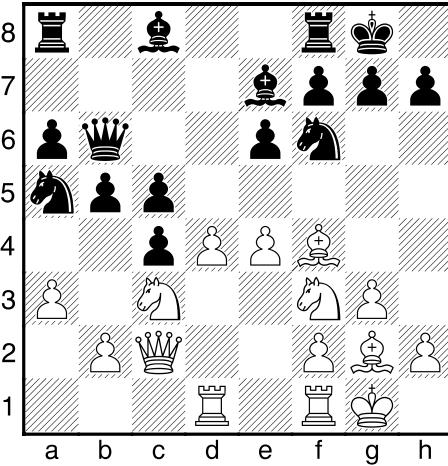
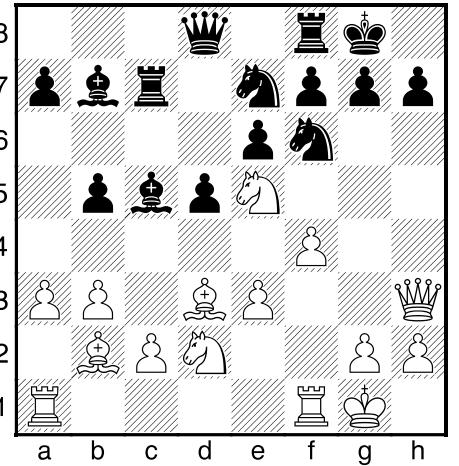
What happens if $\mathcal{N}xg7$?

Candidates

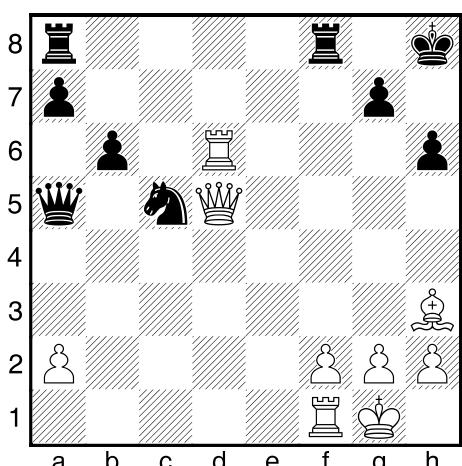


One of three squares takes you to the World Championship...

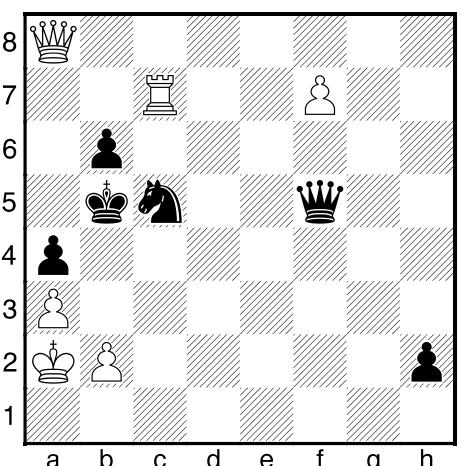
Candidates



Candidates

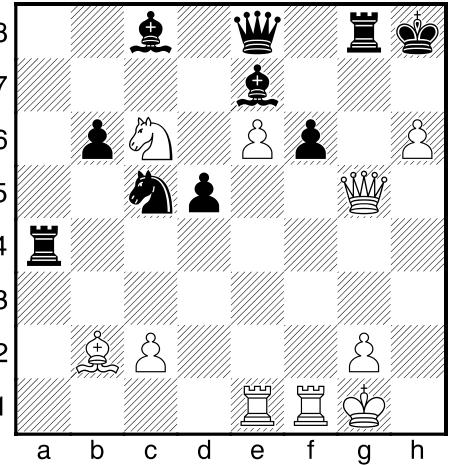


Candidates



Find it to qualify for the World Championship.

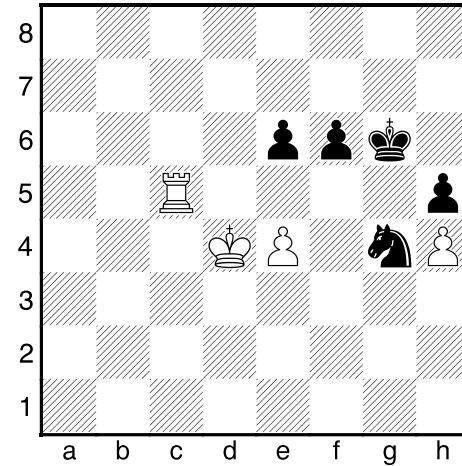
Candidates



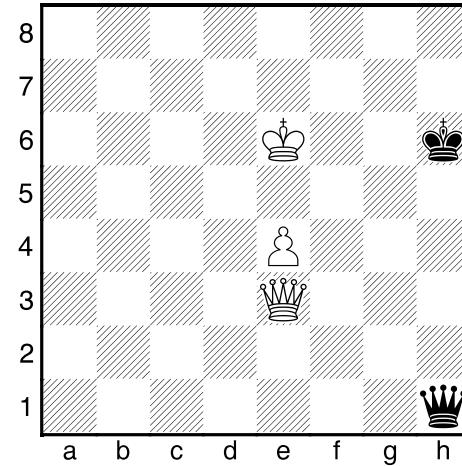
White has played several sub-optimal moves, and now her path to victory is only one move wide...

Chess Canada

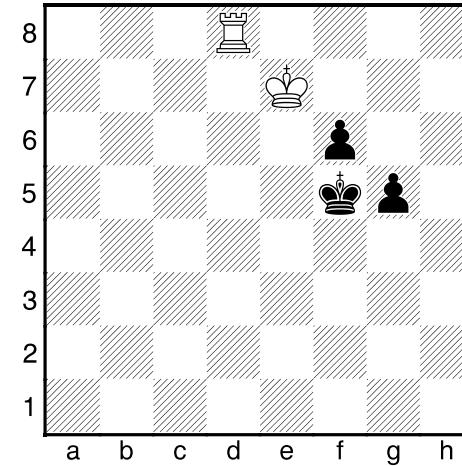
critical positions



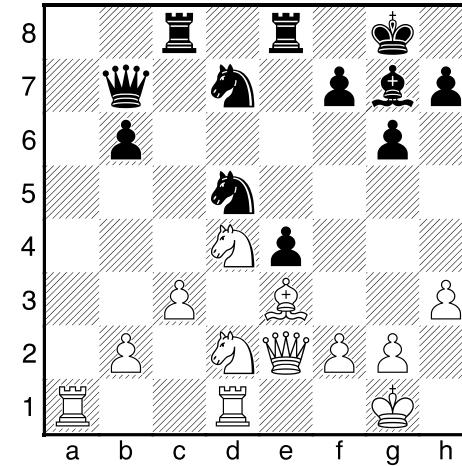
Find the only move.
Extra credit: show why all other moves lose.
Candidates



Book draw...
but you can't look at the book!

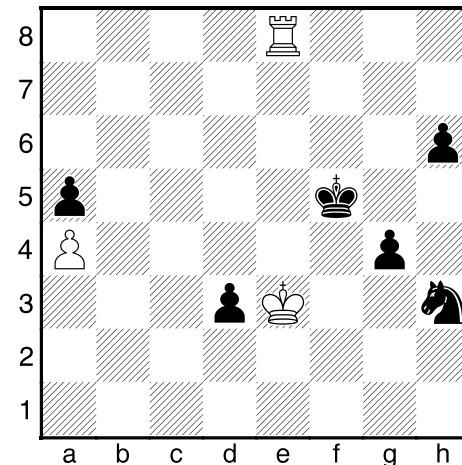


White has played a long sequence of "only moves" to reach this position. Now what?



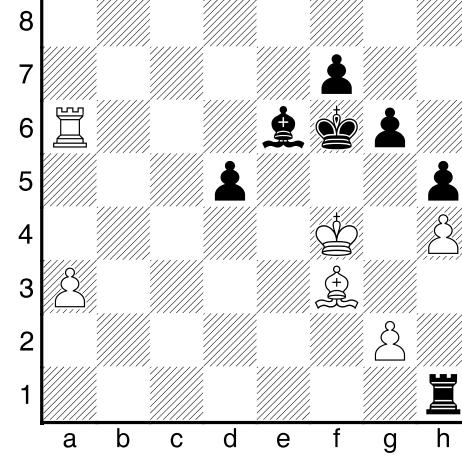
Can Black steamroll White with ...f5–f4?

New York 1924



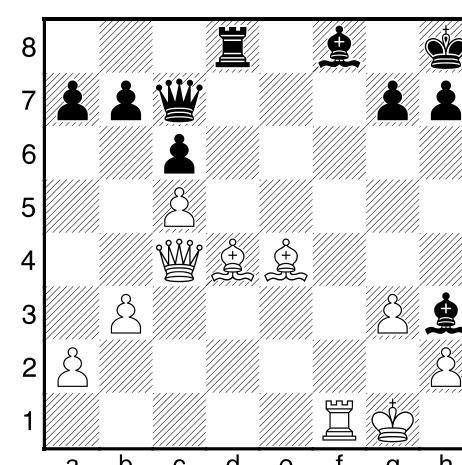
♔xd3 or ♕a8?

Candidates

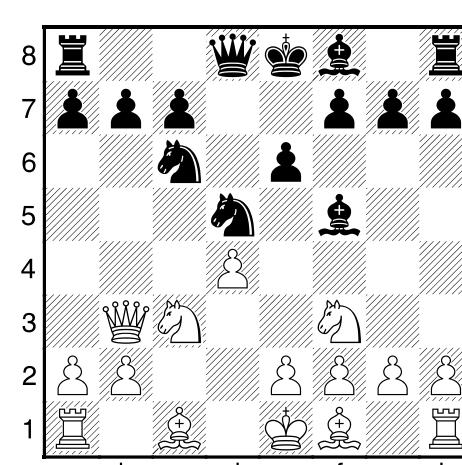


Take on d5 or defend h4?

Candidates



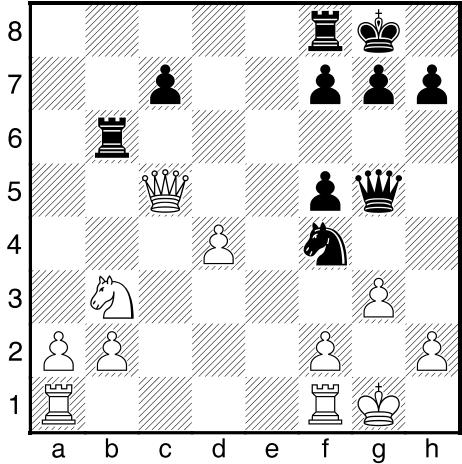
New York 1924



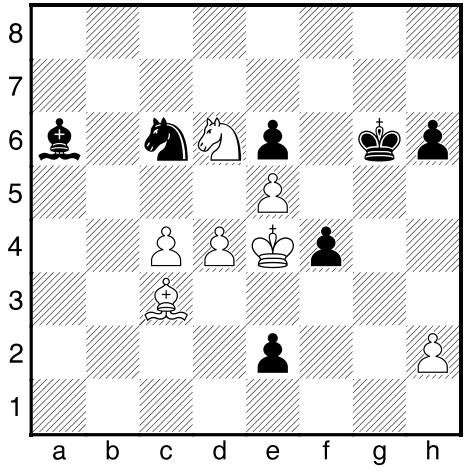
New York 1924

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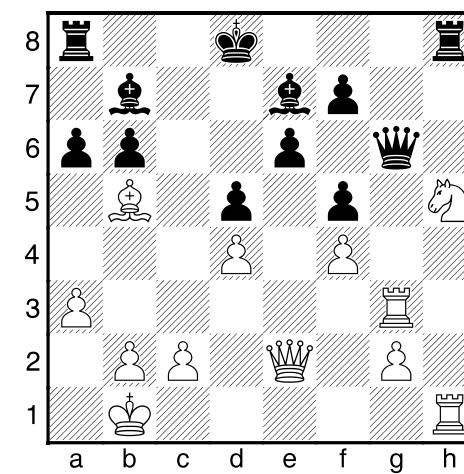
critical positions



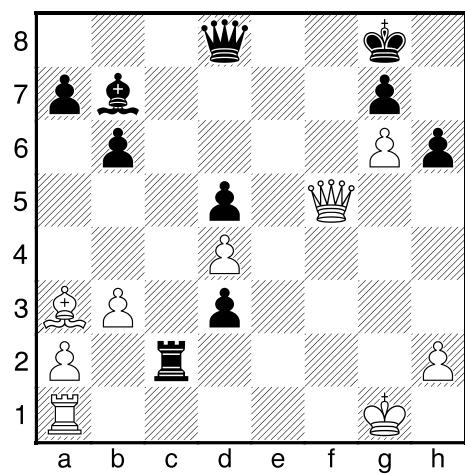
... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}e2+$,
or does it make any difference?
New York 1924



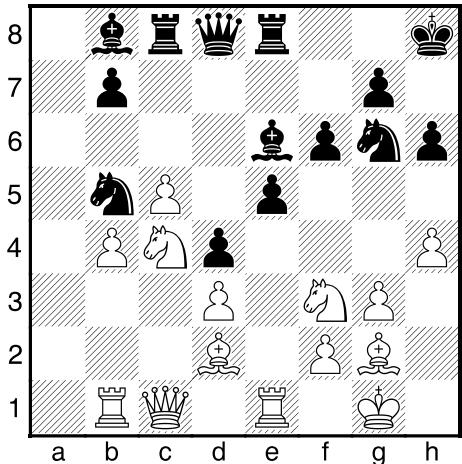
How hard?
Alekhine-fooling hard.
New York 1924



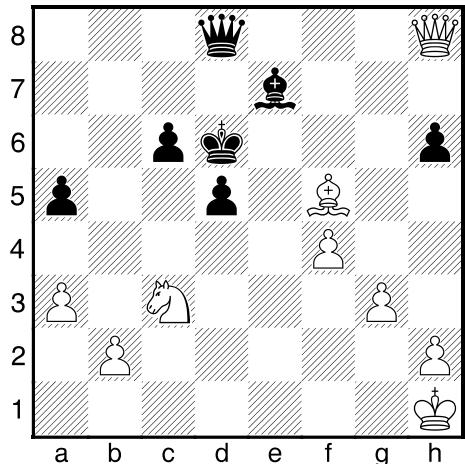
What happens if ... $\mathbb{Q}xh5$?
New York 1924



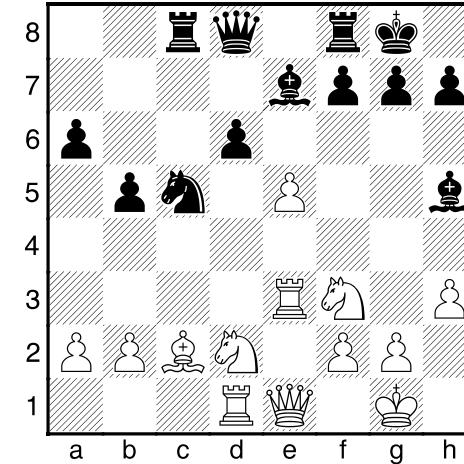
... $\mathbb{W}c8$? ... $\mathbb{W}f6$?
New York 1924



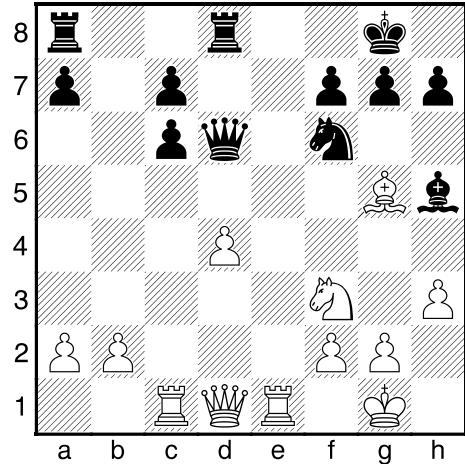
What happens if $\mathbb{Q}xh6$?
New York 1924



Mate in 5.
New York 1924

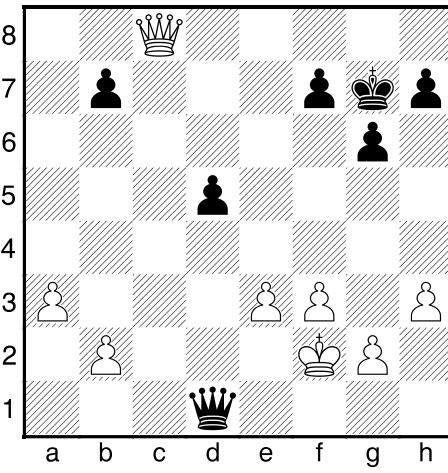


... $d5$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}g5$?
New York 1924



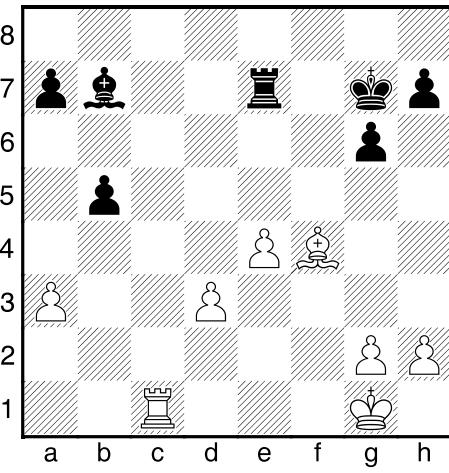
Which \mathbb{B} should Black activate:
... $\mathbb{B}ab8$ or ... $\mathbb{B}e8$?
New York 1924

Chess Canada critical positions



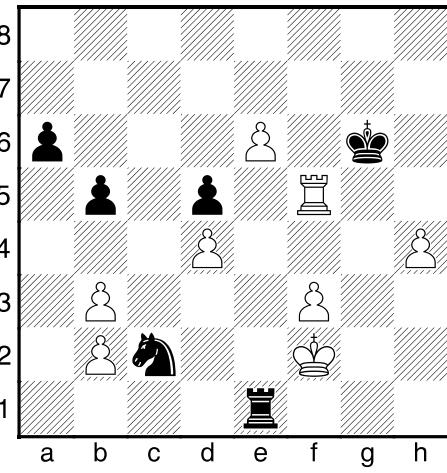
Keep your eye on *your* game.

New York 1924

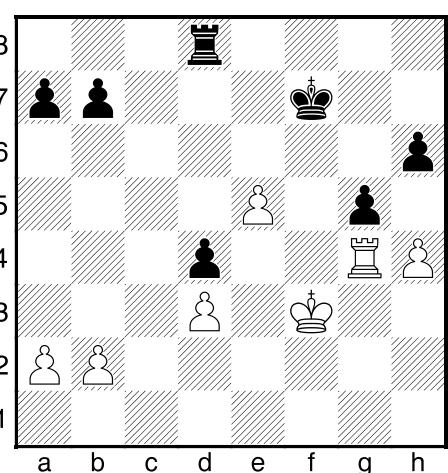


Up a pawn with connected passers.... trade down with $\mathbb{B}c7$ or play something else?

New York 1924

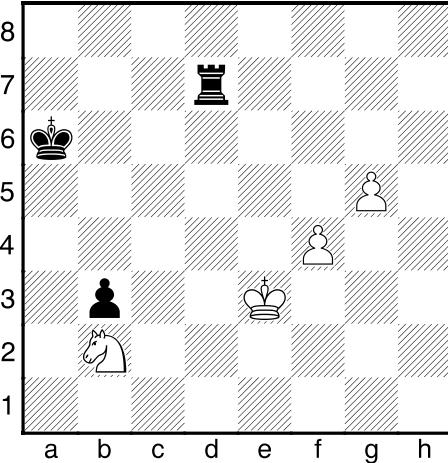


New York 1924

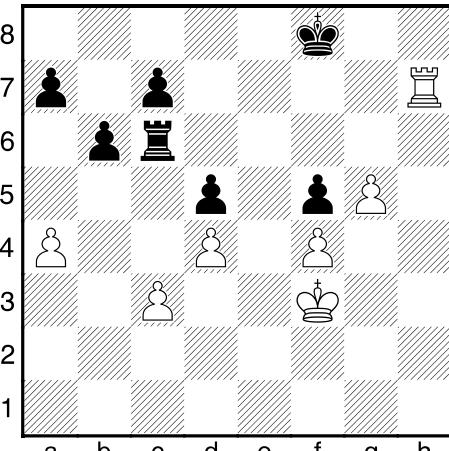


... $\text{g}6$, ... $\text{g}8$, or ...?

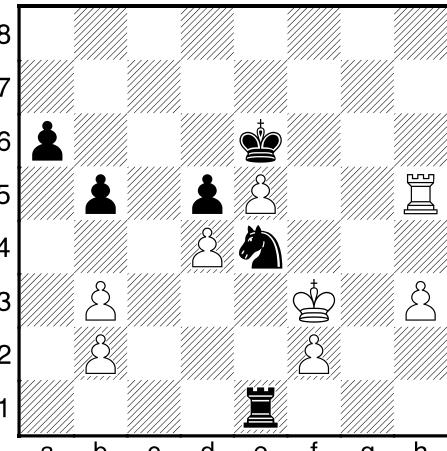
New York 1924



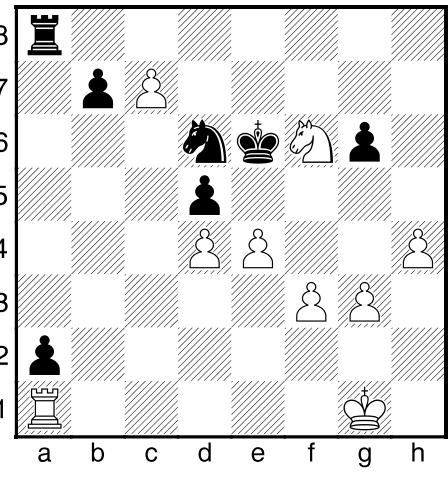
New York 1924



Of course you know this one?
New York 1924



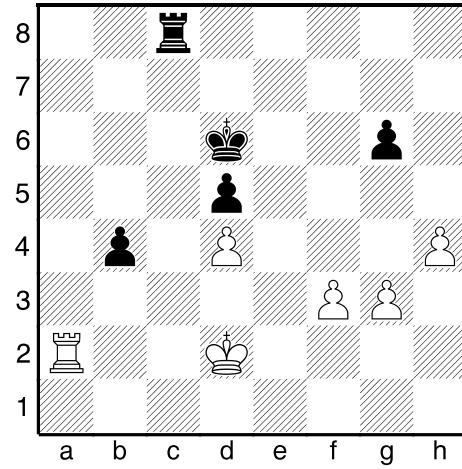
New York 1924



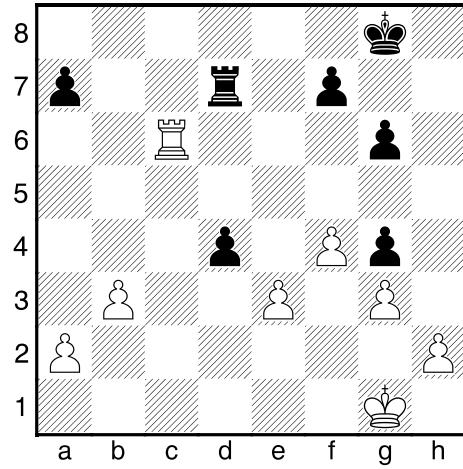
Take on f6 or take on e4?
New York 1924

Chess Canada

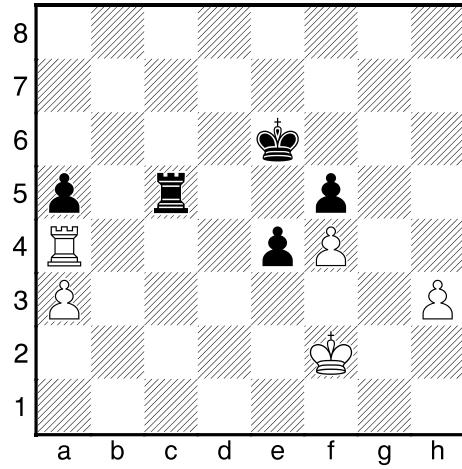
critical positions



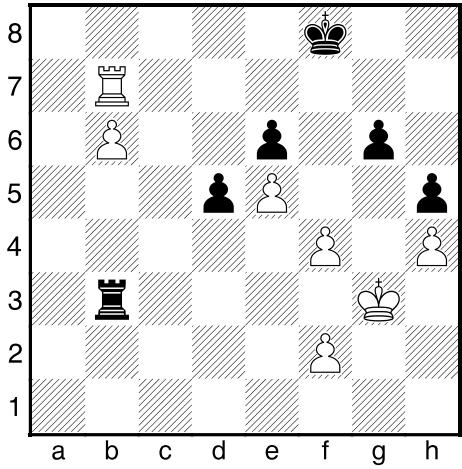
New York 1924



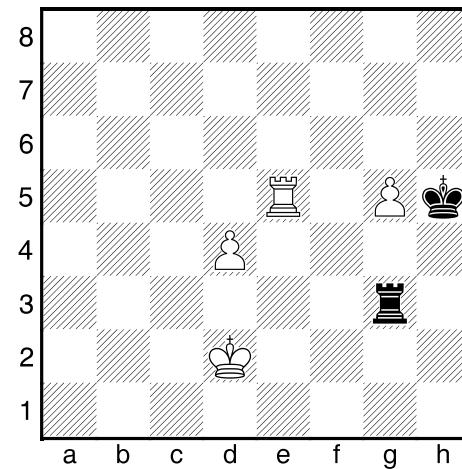
New York 1924



New York 1924

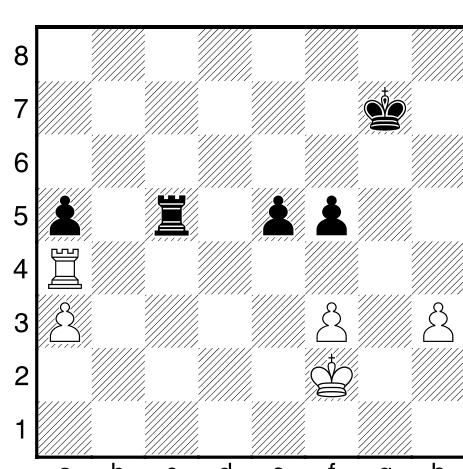


Side-effects include dizziness
Consult your doctor before
ingesting.



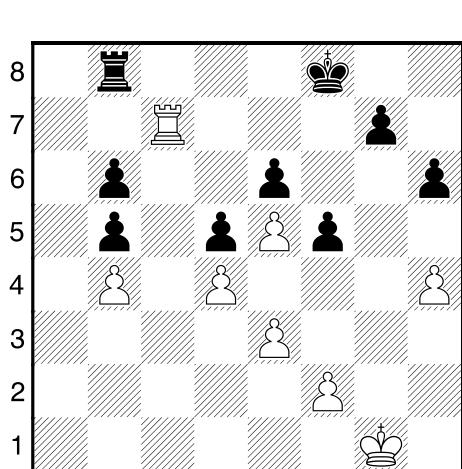
Passed pawns must be pushed,
or
Do not Hurry?

New York 1924

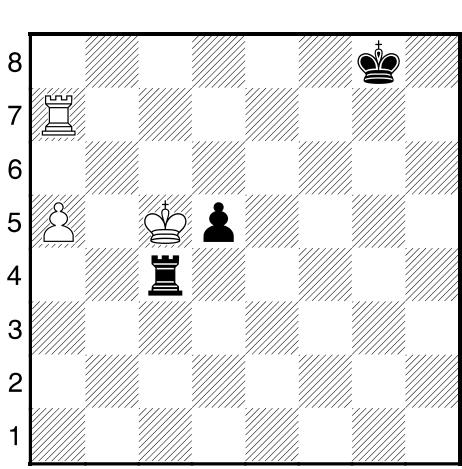


to the e-file or g-file?

New York 1924



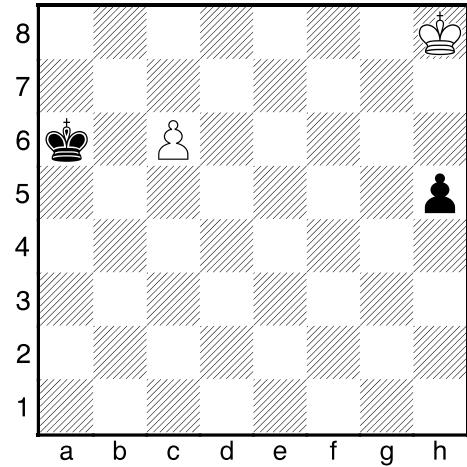
New York 1924



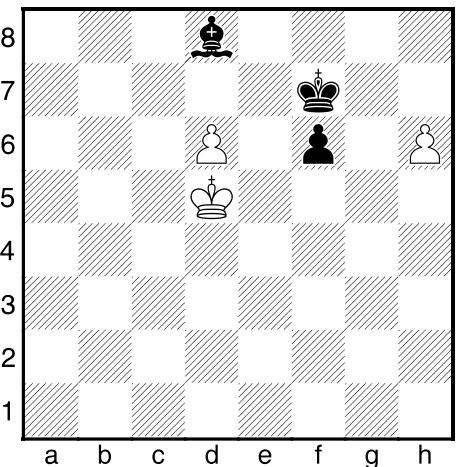
Appendix 1

Chess Canada

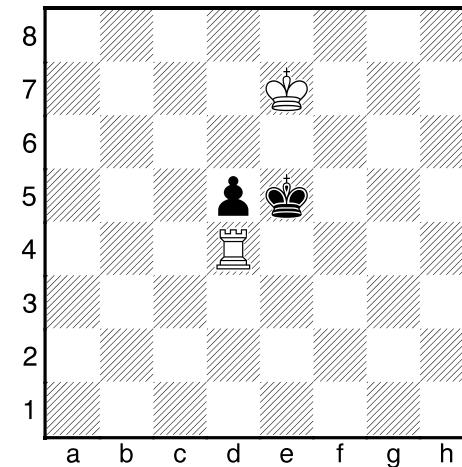
critical positions



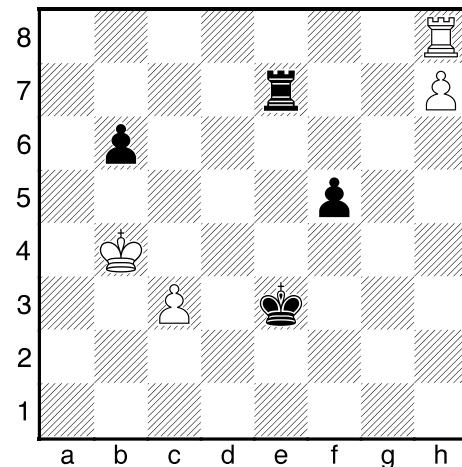
Reti



Reti



Reti



Reti

TL; DR

I know it's long. boo hoo. The PGN makes it way easier to follow, & it won't be on the test anyway.

Here's a short list to help you choose what to look at:

Shiyam's report on the Zonal shows what it takes to win a modern Canadian Zonal: good chess, good nerves, and some good luck — at *least* enough luck to ensure you arrive before forfeiting!

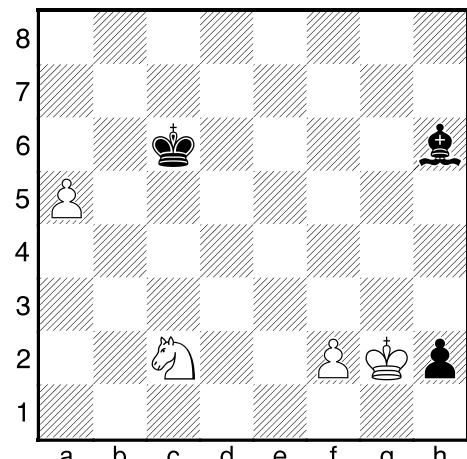
Epics for the History Books:

Caruana v Nepomniachtchi (115)

Reti – Bogoljubow (138)

Lasker v Lasker (165)

It's fun to "listen in" on Fabi and Nepo talk about their epic final round at the Candidates. Even though the latter two



Reti

are well-known, the notes here include things I have not seen elsewhere.

Short attacking games:

- Plotkin v Doknjas & Dukic (62, 64)
- Lin - Atanasov (71)
- Derraugh v Ivanov (80)
- Vidit – Nakamura (96)
- Marshall – Bogoljubow (155)

Crazy-Instructive Rook endings:

- Capa – Tartakower (176 & A1)
- Bogo – Tartakower (189)

Fun:*

Reti Studies (203)

Lin v Atanasov *a la* Chernev (71)

Mike Ivanov & GMs 4 kids (86)

TL;DR TL;DR...?

Top 5:

1. Shiyam v Raja p.21
2. Shiyam v Bator p.29
3. Lin v Atanasov p.71
4. Fabi v Nepo p.115
5. Lasker v Lasker p.165
6. Reti Study #2 p.205
7. *The Game* excerpt p.7

Some of the pictures aren't bad: the old ones may never have looked better & you don't even have to read *them*.

Uncredited pixels are by the editor.

*how did "fun" end up last?

How I won... 2024 Canadian Zonal



by IM Shiyam Thavandiran

The 2024 Canadian Zonals took place March 27 - April 2, 2024 at Hart House, University of Toronto.

The Open was a 10-round Swiss, dominated from start to finish by **IM Shiyam Thavandiran**, whose undefeated **9/10** (!) had the title wrapped up with a round to go and finished a full 2 points (!! ahead of 2nd.

Chess Canada is proud to present all 10 games played and annotated by the winner of the 2024 Zonal: IM Shiyam Thavandiran.

Rd	vs	FIDE	Result
1	J.R.Yang	2121	+
2	*FM S.Noritsyn	2191	+
3	IM Panjwani	2468	+
4	*IM Atanasov	2407	=
5	GM Sambuev	2462	+
6	GM S.R-Lemieux	2506	+
7	IM Vettese	2206	=
8	IM N.Noritsyn	2451	+
9	IM K.Sai	2404	+
10	*FM A.Dorrance	2276	+
	TPR	2715	+8=2-0

* title conveyed 2024



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Thavandiran

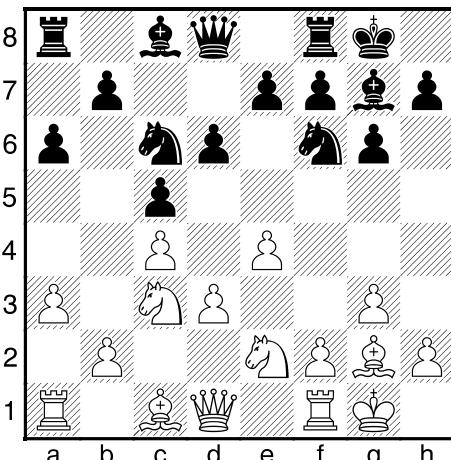
Thavandiran, Shiyam (2475)
Yang, Jingyun (Ryan) (2275)
2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto
(1), 28.03.2024

Notes:

IM Shiyam Thavandiran

The first round is always tense. After taking a quick look at my opponent's repertoire, I decided it was best to skip theory and simply play chess against a lower-rated opponent. I haven't played 1.c4 for many years but felt it would be a safer alternative to my usual 1.e4.

**1.c4 g6 2.g3 ♜g7 3.♗g2 ♜f6
4.♘c3 c5 5.e4 ♜c6 6.♘ge2
d6 7.d3 0-0 8.0-0 a6 9.a3**

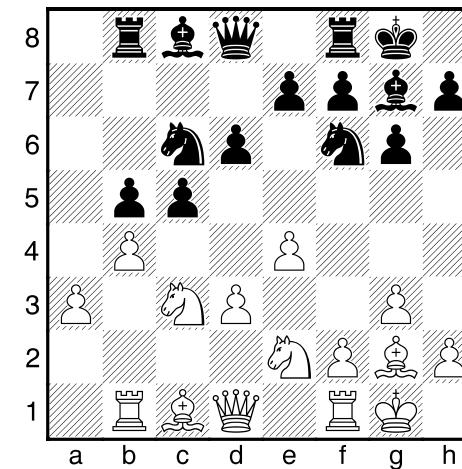


Apparently 9.h3 is the most played here. To me it was logical to fight for space on the queenside in a symmetrical manner.

**9...♜b8 10.♝b1 b5 11.cxb5
axb5**

So far my opponent had been playing quickly and confidently, making me second-guess my opening decision.

12.b4



12...cxb4

The most popular move, but perhaps not the best. Black captures away from the centre, clearing the way for White to push forward with d4. Modern

engines show that Black has different options here:

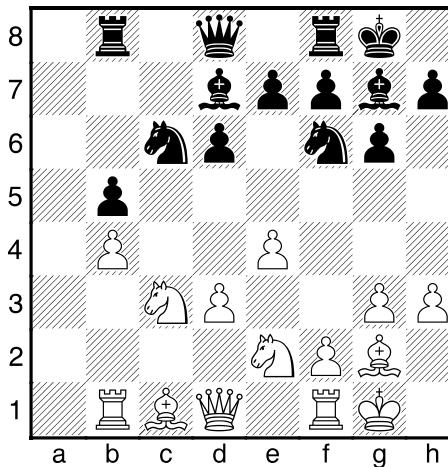
12...♝d7 getting out of the way of the dark-squared bishop while preparing ideas such as ...♝d4 and ...♝b6,

12...♝g4 developing the last minor piece and asking White some tough questions.

13.axb4 ♜d7

13...e5 is a simple and good way to equalize: 14.♝e3 ♜e6 15.d4 ♜c4!= **Granda Zuniga,J** (2646)-Lopez Martinez,J (2552) Lorca, 2016.

14.h3±



14...♛c7?!

So far, the opening has been normal and it's not clear how I

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Thavandiran



can get some advantage. But this is quite a poor move that wastes time reshuffling the pieces with no clear aim.

14...e5 again, this move is logical, getting space in the center.

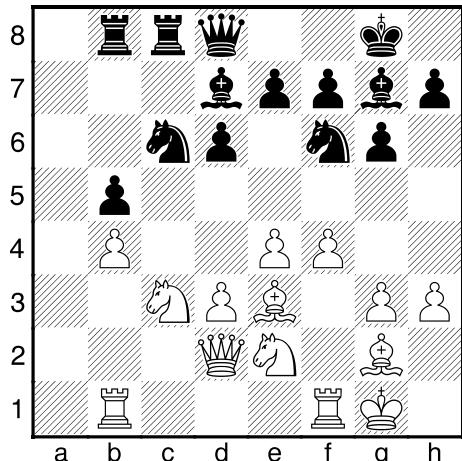
15.♘e3 ♖fc8 16.♗d2

White can try to grab space in the center with 16.d4!? but has to calculate 16...e5? correctly.

16...♗d8

16...e5 17.♖fc1 ♔e6±.

17.f4



17...♘e8?!

Black is playing extremely passively. More active tries are:

17...e6!? 18.g4?! h5! would allow Black to significantly slow down White's pawn storm; and

17...h5!? 18.f5 ♔e5 19.♖f2±.

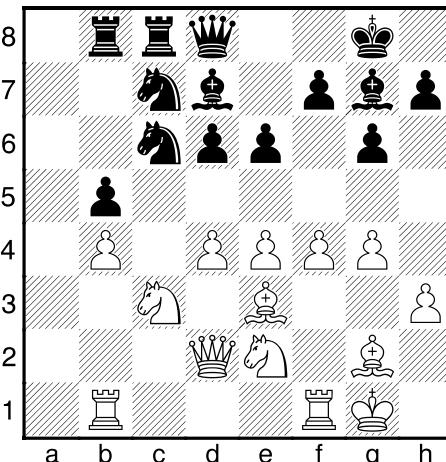
18.g4!± e6 19.d4

Perhaps not the most precise. After the immediate 19.f5!? White can double rooks on the f-file with ♖f2 and ♖bf1. I believe I didn't want to allow ...♘e5, which makes sense too.

19...♘c7?

The kingside is under fire and the knight moves away from the battle.

19...♘e7! stopping the dangerous f4–f5 was Black's best defense in a difficult position.



IM Shiyam Thavandiran

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20.d5

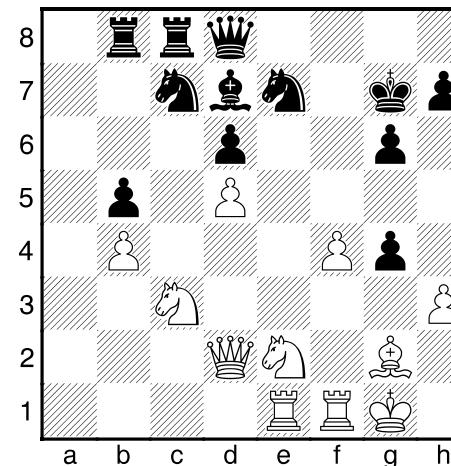
20.♘f2! This patient move to first improve my position would have been classy, and the best option.

20...exd5 21.exd5 ♘e7

22.♗d4! f5?!

22...♔f8! the kingside desperately needs reinforcements.

23.♗xg7 ♔xg7 24.♗be1 fxe4



25.hxg4

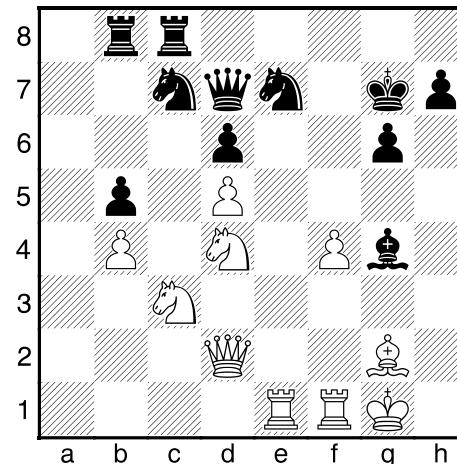
Good enough, but White had much better: 25.f5!!+–, a computer move that I completely missed. As we will see, I eventually played f5 and considered it on many moves, but here was where it was the

strongest. The f-pawn is actually getting in the way. After 25.f5 ♘xf5 26.hxg4 is the key point, as Black's strong knight gets dislodged.

25...♘xg4 26.♗d4

26.f5 ♘xf5 Black is fine here since the knight on f5 is stable.

26...♔d7



27.♘c6

27.f5!! suddenly it works again! With the queen on d7, White's queen can swoop into g5. 27...♘xf5 28.♔g5+–.

27...♘xc6?

Now it really is over. Black could have resisted longer with an exchange sacrifice. A knight

on f5 would clearly be more valuable than the dormant rook on b8.

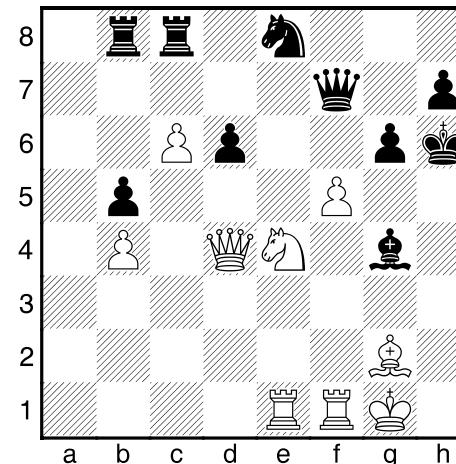
After 27...♘f5 28.♔xb8 ♔xb8 29.♗e4 White will surely win this anyway, but Black need not resign.

28.dxc6 ♔f7 29.♗e4

29.♔d4+! ♔g8 (29...♔f6 30.♗e7+) 30.f5! ♘xf5 31.♗d5! would have been a powerful and elegant way to finish the game.

29...♗e8 30.♔d4+ ♔h6

31.f5!



It should be said that I was down to a minute here when I played this move. I didn't calculate much, but it felt intuitively that

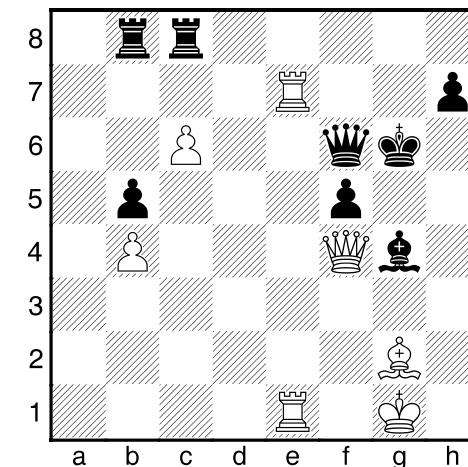
this was the way to go.

31...gxf5

31...♘xf5 32.♗g3+–.

32.♗xd6 ♘xd6 33.♔xd6+

♔g5 34.♗e7 ♔f6 35.♔f4+ ♔g6 36.♗fe1



Black is busted.

36...♗e8

A shocking move to see.

37.♗xe8 ♔xe8 38.♗xe8 ♔f7

39.♗e1 ♔c3 40.♗d5+ ♔g6

I have to say that it was strange for my opponent to continue playing here. He could (should) have resigned instead of playing 36...♗e8 but now that we've reached the time control, there

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isn't even a pretense of playing for time.

**41. $\mathbb{E}e6+$ $\mathbb{G}g7$ 42. $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{F}f7$
43. $\mathbb{E}e3\#$**

A crushing first round win that put me in a great mood. My only gripe was that this game was not broadcast live and it wasn't until the second half of the tournament when the pgn became available for replay on lichess. I had hoped that my future opponents would see this and prepare for the English Opening!

1-0



FM Sergey Noritsyn

2025 Hart House CC Champ

**Noritsyn, Sergey (2377)
Thavandiran, Shiyam (2475)
2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto
(2.9), 28.03.2024**

**Notes:
IM Shiyam Thavandiran**

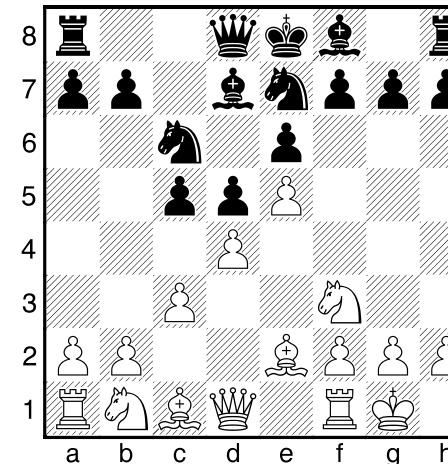
1.e4 e6

In some sense, this was the scariest moment of the tournament for me. For this 10am game I had slept through my alarm and somehow made it to the tournament hall at 10:26am, only four minutes before being forfeited.

2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

An unusual move order to get to the Advance Variation of the French Defense.

**2...d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$
5.d4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 6. $\mathbb{E}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 7.0-0**



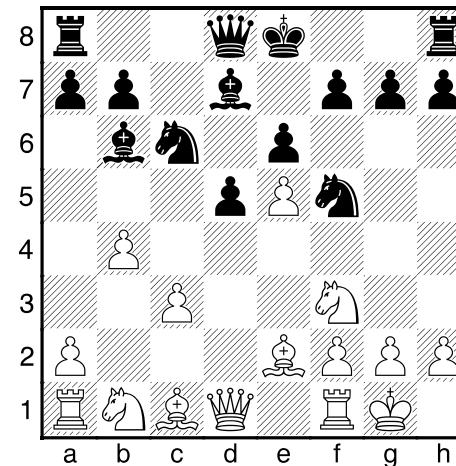
Interestingly, Sergey and I reached this same position in the same building a few months before in the Hart House Masters training tournament. I did not handle the variation well, but I was very fortunate that none other than **Kevin Spraggett**, widely considered the greatest Canadian chess player ever, suggested 7... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$? to me as an improvement some time after I had shown him that game.

7... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$?

7... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ f6 9. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ fxe5
10. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe5\#$
Noritsyn, S-Thavandiran, S Hart House Masters, 2023. (½-½ after 100+ moves).

8. $\mathbb{d}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 9. $b4$
9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ is the most popular move here.

9... $\mathbb{Q}b6$



10. $b5$
I don't like this move at all as it weakens a lot of squares: b5, c4, and c5. Also, Black can now create pressure along the c-file with the knight moving to a5.

10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ was how I played against Cheparinov in the Candidates Blitz soon after this game.

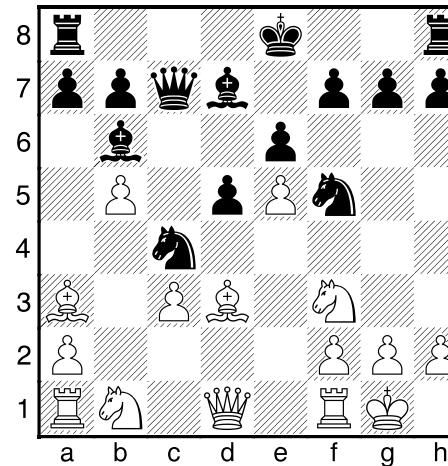
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Thavandiran



editor - that game saw White prudently decline to "win" Black's d5-pawn: 11. $\mathbb{E}e1$ 0-0 12. a4! a6 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ exf5 14. a5 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Cheparinov, I (2638)- Thavandiran, S (2347) Toronto Candidates Blitz, 2024.

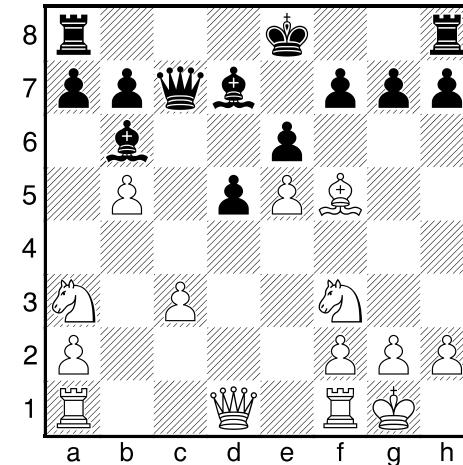
10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$
12. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4!$



One of the main ideas of Black's ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is sacrificing the d5 pawn. Black gets full compensation, so it is advisable for White to refrain from capturing on f5.

13. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$

I had slept through my alarm and somehow made it to the tournament hall at 10:26am, only four minutes before being forfeited.



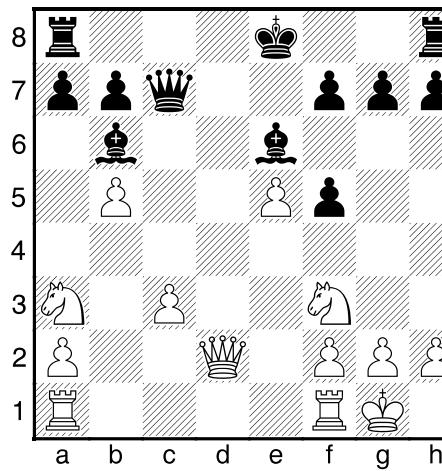
14... $\mathbb{exf5}$

14... $\mathbb{Wxc3}?$ is also interesting. During the game I thought 15. $\mathbb{Wd3}$ was strong, but Black has a nice trick: 15. $\mathbb{Wd3}$? (\square 15. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{exf5}$ 16. a4 $\mathbb{E}c8\#$) 15... $\mathbb{E}c8!$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Wxd3}$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{E}c3-+$.

[editor - In this line 16. $\mathbb{Wxc3}$ is trickier: 16... $\mathbb{E}xc3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{E}xf3\#$ 18. $\mathbb{gxf3}$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

$\mathbb{E}xc3$ 20. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3-$ + material is nominally equal, but White has no way to open files for his rooks, while Black's \mathbb{Q} s and pawns have an excellent future, and Black can activate his \mathbb{E} with ... $h5$, ... $\mathbb{E}h6-f6$.]

15. $\mathbb{Wxd5}$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{Wd2}$



16... $\mathbb{Wc5}?$

16... $\mathbb{E}c8!$ I had the idea to castle long, but it was better to prevent White regrouping with $\mathbb{Q}c2$.

17. $\mathbb{Wb2}?$

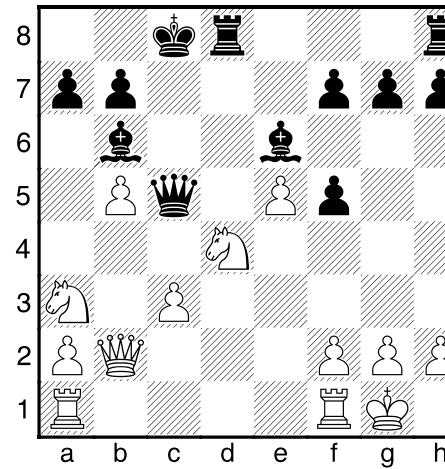
I believe this was the decisive mistake. White did not sense the danger and tries to hold on the pawn, instead of improving the misplaced knight on a3.

\square 17. $\mathbb{Q}c2!$ White should return the extra pawn to achieve more harmony. The position is about equal after, for example, 17... $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}cd4$.

17... $0-0-0$

Not the only move. Both ... $\mathbb{E}c8$ and ... $0-0$ were strong as well.

18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$



18... $\mathbb{Q}b8!$

18... $\mathbb{W}xe5?!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{fxe6}$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c4\pm$.

One of the themes I'm quite proud of in this game is forgoing the recapture of material in favour of piece activity.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6?$

White may be objectively lost

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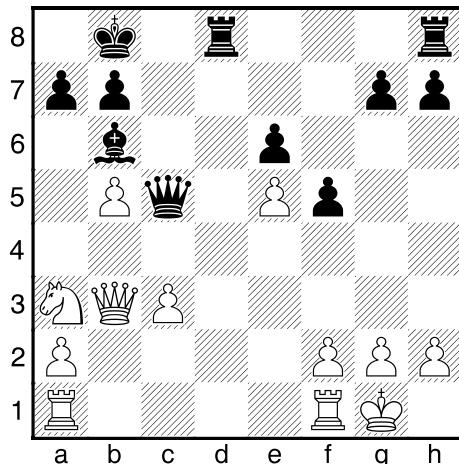


after this.

19. $\mathbb{Q}ac2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ again, we see the drawback of 10.b5.

19. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ White's position is passive but the knight on d4 is key to limiting the damage.

19...fxe6 20. $\mathbb{Q}b3$



20... $\mathbb{Q}c8!$

The point of 18... $\mathbb{Q}b8$. Again, Black delays the capture of e5 in order to restrict White's knight. 20... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ and White should equalize here.

21. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}hd8!$

21... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c4=.$

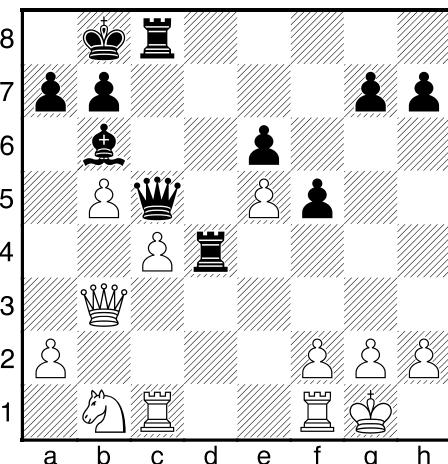
22. $\mathbb{Q}b1$

Reminiscent of [Karpov-Kasparov, Linares 1993](#) where all of White's pieces were pushed back to the first rank.

22... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$

22... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?!$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}ce1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ Black is still better but White's queen is now active. In the game, White had zero active pieces!

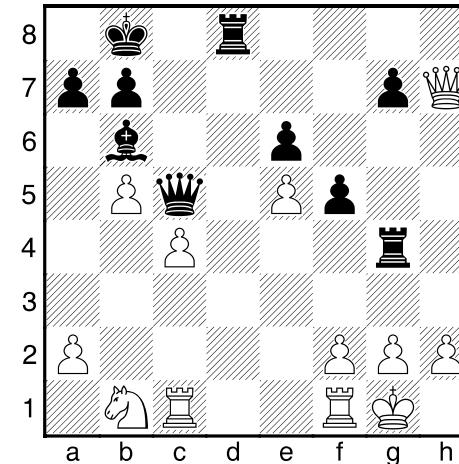
23. $c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4!-+$



From move 18 to now, each move I played was the computer's top choice. Even during the game I could definitely feel the difference in class of my own chess, especially compared to my last game with Sergey from November.

24. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

26. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$



26... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?!$

26... $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$ I'm not sure why I didn't play this. 27. $\mathbb{Q}ce1$ (27. $\mathbb{Q}xc4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2!-+)$ 27... $\mathbb{Q}f4-+$.

27. $\mathbb{Q}c3??$

This loses a piece but White's position was quite tough anyway. After 27. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ Black should still win, but White survives for the time being.

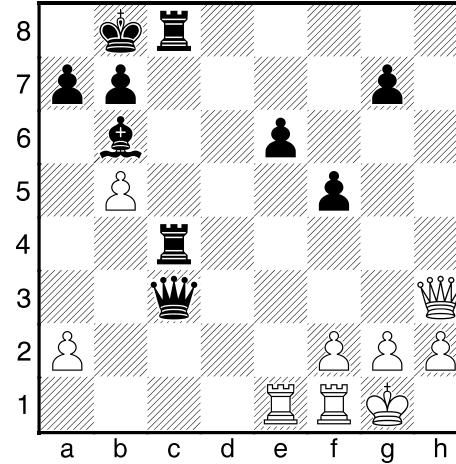
27... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}dc8$

29. $\mathbb{Q}ce1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

IM Shiyam Thavandiran



2025 Hart House CC Simul



Somewhere around here, Sergey made a hand gesture which I interpreted as confusion about what unfolded in this game. If so, I don't blame him: the opening was tricky and then I played the middlegame very precisely.

30.g3 $\mathbb{W}f6$

Moreover, despite starting the game with an accidental 26 minute handicap, I was up on time here.

31. $\mathbb{H}d1$ $\mathbb{H}d4$ 32. $\mathbb{H}c1$ $\mathbb{H}cd8$

Black's rook guards the 8th rank and helps control the d-file.

33. $\mathbb{W}g2$ e5

A game I'm extremely proud of and put me in a very good mood. I understood I was no longer the

same player and had gone up in level. Good results are one thing, but the manner in which I won this game is a different story entirely.

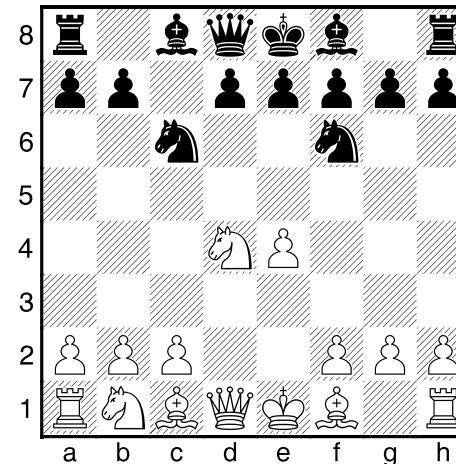
0-1

Thavandiran, Shiyam (2475)
Panjwani, Raja (2525)
2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto (3), 28.03.2024

Notes:
IM Shiyam Thavandiran

My first mistake in this game was made before it started. Coming into the tournament, I placed a high emphasis on prioritizing rest and minimizing opening preparation, trusting that the games would be decided in the middlegame and endgame. However, I wanted to win this game very badly — I felt that Raja would be one of the main contenders and it would a chance for me to establish myself. So in fact, there were two mistakes that I made here: preparing too much, and not managing my emotions.

1.e4 c5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3.d4
cxd4 4. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

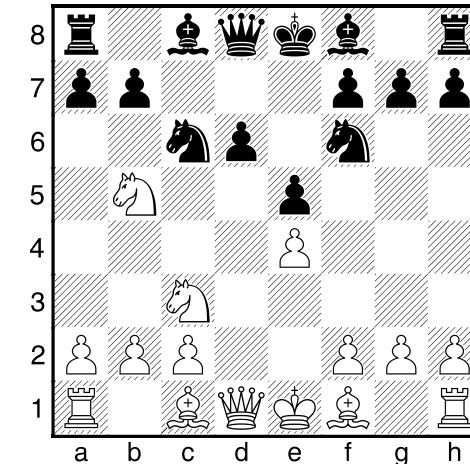


A surprise. I had expected the Kalashnikov (4...e5) which is what I spent my time cramming before the game. I also arrived 12 minutes late to this game. Not a good start.

5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e5

The Sveshnikov. Of course, Black could also have played 5...d6 or 5...e6 but the Sveshnikov is a closer relative to the Kalashnikov.

6. $\mathbb{Q}db5$ d6



It didn't take a long time for me to recall the last game I played in this line. It was the 2017 Spice Cup when I played 8. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ against GM Vasif Durarbayli. At some point in that game I achieved a winning position, but a draw is all I wanted as it finally put my live rating over 2400 and secured the IM title for me, five years after I scored my third IM norm at the 2012 World Junior Chess Championship.

I suspected Raja would be ready for this and I decided to deviate. I played 7. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ in my childhood and so it wasn't entirely unfamiliar — in any case, White can take more liberties in the opening.

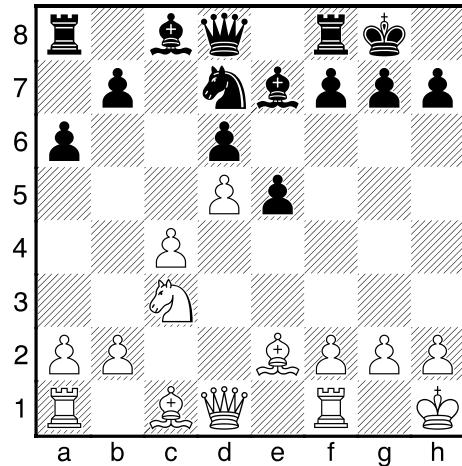
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7. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 8. $\mathbb{exd}5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$
 8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is the other alternative.
 Both moves were famously
 featured in the 2018 World
 Championship match between
 Caruana and Carlsen.

9. $c4$ $a6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$
 0-0 12. 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{h}1$



Around here, Raja shook his head as if he was not expecting me to make this move. As it turns out, I'm following one of the mainlines despite playing without any concrete knowledge here. However, as we will see, this feeling of playing well led me to believe my position was advantageous.

13... $f5$ 14. $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15. $\mathbb{W}c2$
 I was proud of this move. It's

nothing spectacular but in fact it's the simple, classical moves that are often surprisingly difficult to make.

15... $\mathbb{exf}4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

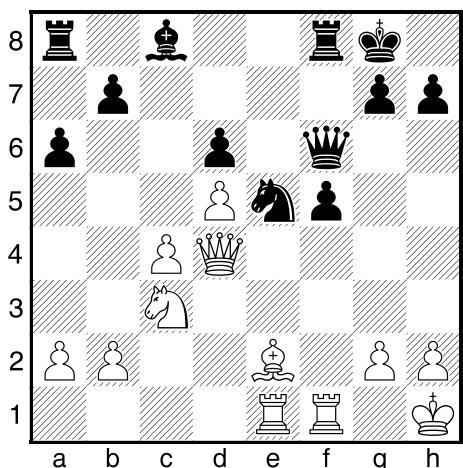
17. $\mathbb{W}d2$

Another move I was proud of.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$

18... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 19. $c5$ would be what White wants.

19. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d4$



Around here I felt that my position was very good. However, this is entirely mistaken. It's dead equal and understanding this structure is something I need to work on.

20... $\mathbb{Q}d7$



IM Raja Panjwani



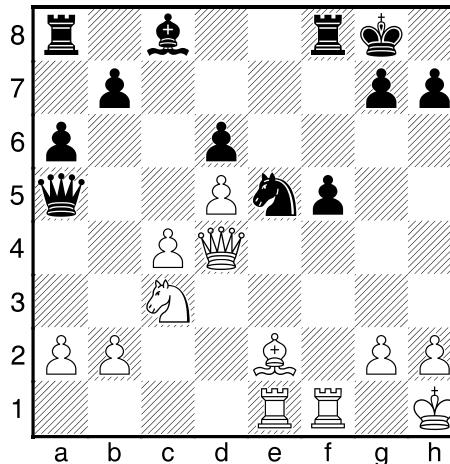
20... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b6$ this was my main idea but the computer shows Black can simply ignore the threat to the pawn with 21... $\mathbb{W}g6$.

21. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}b6$ $\mathbb{W}d8$

23. $\mathbb{W}d4$

To me this seemed like a clever maneuver as my queen became more centralized.

23... $\mathbb{W}a5!$?



An interesting practical attempt that I didn't expect. I was low on time and perhaps Raja thought it was good to play provocatively.

24.a3

24. $\mathbb{R}b1!$? is a Karpovian move that **Kevin Spraggett** suggested to me when we looked at this

game after the tournament. I wish I had thought of it! Again, it seems so simple, but like I said earlier, it's deceptive. White moves the rook way from the open file in the center to support the more relevant queenside expansion with b4 and c5.

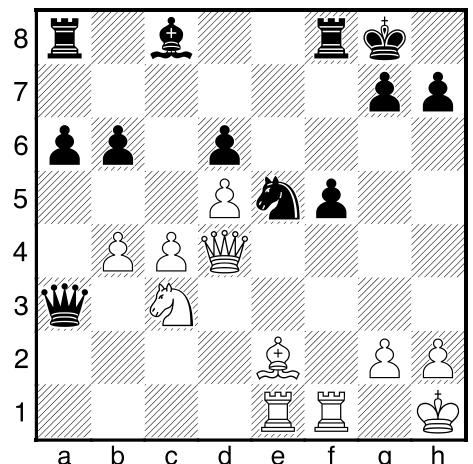
24... $\mathbb{b}6$

Objectively dubious, but only against computer-like precision.

25.b4

This was my main idea with 24.a3, and I thought I was trapping the queen. I so badly wanted to win this game that I started hallucinating!

25... $\mathbb{W}xa3$

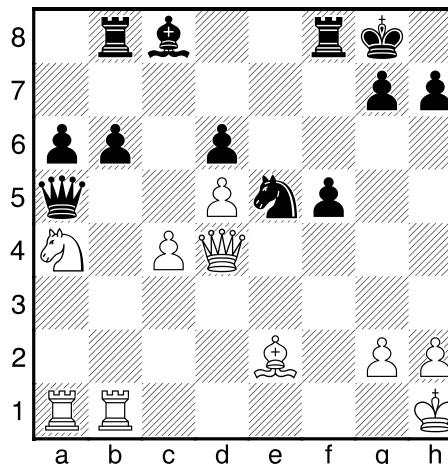


26. $\mathbb{R}a1$

26. $\mathbb{Q}e4!!$ is computer chess. White is close to winning after this. It didn't occur to me at all and I've spent quite a lot of time afterwards wondering if it's possible to train this kind of vision. 26... $\mathbb{f}xe4$ 27. $\mathbb{R}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ is the idea where Black's queen is out of play, the king is weak, and queenside is not developed. Now, the only move that the computer shows as not losing is 28... $\mathbb{Q}g4!!$ Remarkable stuff.

26... $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{R}b8$

28. $\mathbb{R}fb1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$

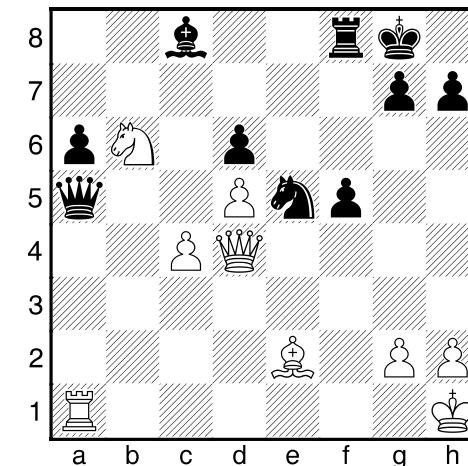


29. $\mathbb{R}xb6?$

More hallucination. I knew that my best was to go for 29. $\mathbb{R}xb6$ and play that position a pawn down, but at the last second, I

outsmailed myself and thought the text was an improvement. After 29. $\mathbb{R}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $dxc5$ I felt the position about unclear but balanced: both sides had their trumps, but the most likely result was a draw.

29... $\mathbb{R}xb6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$



30... $\mathbb{W}b4$

Of course. Now Black has the extra option of ... $\mathbb{W}b4$ instead of ... $\mathbb{W}c5$.

30... $\mathbb{W}c5$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $dxc5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{R}xc8$ 33. $\mathbb{R}xa6=$.

31.h3 f4? 32. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{R}xc8$

33. $\mathbb{W}xf4$

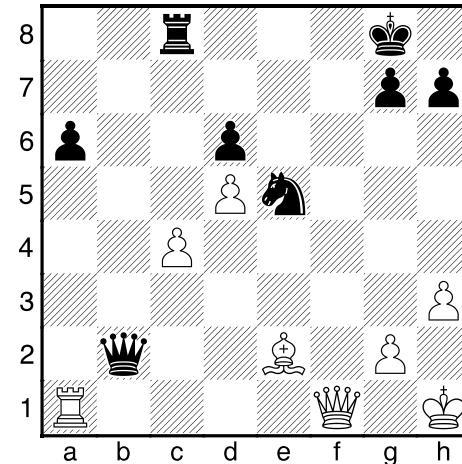
Regaining the pawn but Black still has the more active pieces. Not 33. $\mathbb{R}xa6??$ $\mathbb{W}e1+-$.

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33... $\mathbb{W}b2$ 34. $\mathbb{W}f1$



An ugly retreating move like $\mathbb{W}f1$ should be avoided if possible; $\mathbb{E}e1$ would probably make White's life easier.

34... $\mathbb{E}f8$ 35. $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

A strong move, rerouting the knight to c5 and also opening the e-file for the rook.

36. $\mathbb{Q}g4?!$

This was definitely a time scramble and the most precise moves aren't being played. I was just trying to make the time control and not lose on the spot.

The computer shows 36.c5 was a way for White to liquidate: 36... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ and if

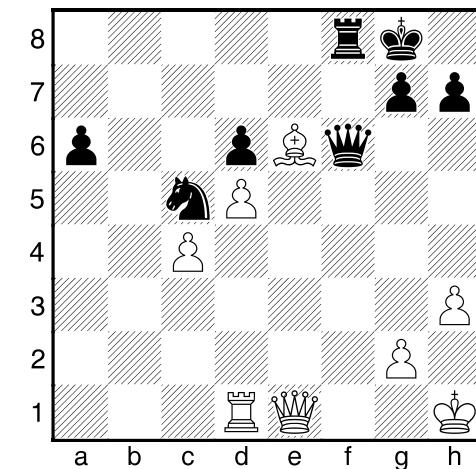


37... $\mathbb{E}a8$ simply 38. $\mathbb{E}b1=$ or $\mathbb{E}c1?!$.

36... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 37. $\mathbb{E}d1?!$

The rook does nothing here other than prevent the queen coming to d4. Again, we see that the simple classical logic of $\mathbb{E}b1$ and taking the open file isn't always obvious: 37. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 38. $\mathbb{E}b6$ and White is still worse, but at least there is counterplay.

37... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$



With this, I complete the rerouting of all my pieces to useless squares.

38... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}f4!$

40. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 41. $\mathbb{W}e7$

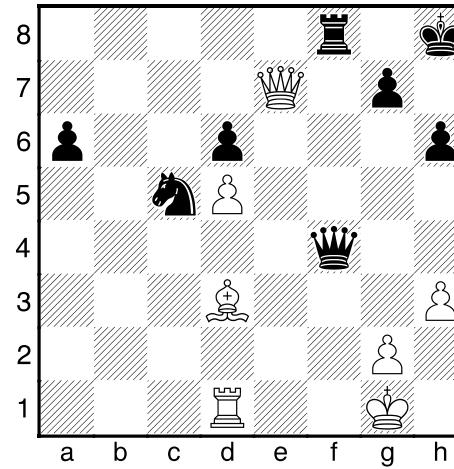
41. $\mathbb{W}g3?!$ $\mathbb{W}f4$ 42. $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{E}xf4$

43. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 44. $\mathbb{E}b6$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}e2$



a5 46. $\mathbb{B}b5$ a4 47. $\mathbb{B}a5$ and $\mathbb{B}b5$ is equal.

**41... $\mathbb{W}f4$ 42. $\mathbb{B}e2$ h6
43. $\mathbb{B}d3$!?**



Not an obvious move – it seems like White's pieces are loose, but this is compensated by the loose rook on f8.

43... $\mathbb{Q}g8$

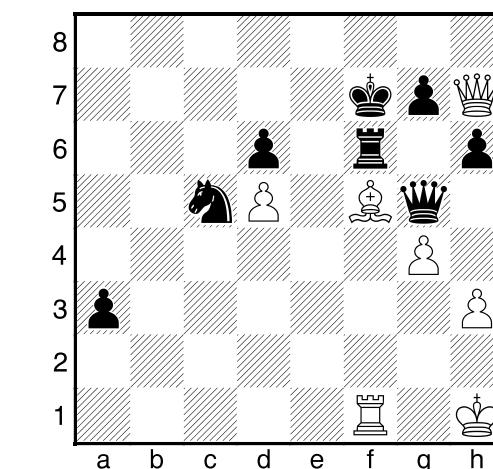
A good defensive move to neutralize the $\mathbb{B}f1$ threat.

43...a5 44. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$ 45. $\mathbb{B}h2!$
 $\mathbb{B}xf1??$ 46. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 47. $\mathbb{W}xf8\#$.

43... $\mathbb{B}xd3$ 44. $\mathbb{B}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}f1+$ [editor - SF17 insists Black wins here with 44... $\mathbb{B}c8!!$ 45. $\mathbb{B}d1$ a5! and while Black's passed a-pawn is a clear advantage; but what

human would be confident enough to rate this position -3?] 45. $\mathbb{B}h2$ $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 46. $\mathbb{W}xf8+=$.

44. $\mathbb{B}b1$!? a5! 45. $\mathbb{W}e2!$ a4
46. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ 47. $\mathbb{B}h1$ $\mathbb{B}f6$
48. $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 49. $\mathbb{B}f5$ a3
50. $\mathbb{B}f1$!?

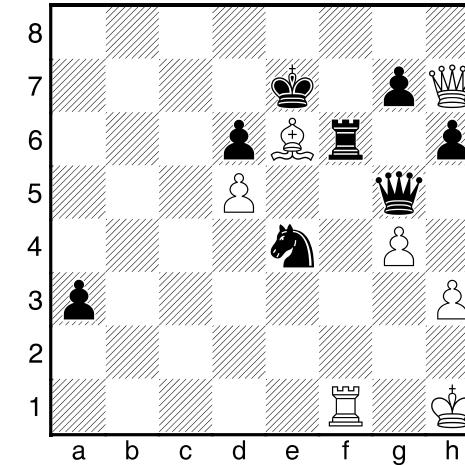


Around here I noticed a bead of sweat on my opponent's forehead. I took solace in the fight I was putting up, despite it still being likely that I would lose the game.

51... $\mathbb{B}e4$

51...a2! the most natural – passed pawns must be pushed. It's hard for White to keep the game going here.

52. $\mathbb{B}e6+$ $\mathbb{B}e7$



53. $\mathbb{B}e1$!

I made this important defensive move with 1 second on the clock. With e3 now under control it wasn't clear how Black should continue.

53. $\mathbb{B}b1??$ $\mathbb{B}g3+$ 54. $\mathbb{B}g2$
(54. $\mathbb{B}g1$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ – stopping this is the idea of $\mathbb{B}e1$.) 54... $\mathbb{W}d2+$
55. $\mathbb{B}xg3$ $\mathbb{W}f2\#$.

53... $\mathbb{B}f2+??$

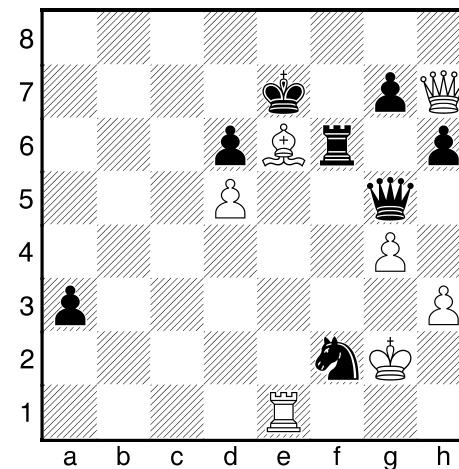
Raja still had 7 minutes on the clock. My only guess is he planned to play 54. $\mathbb{B}g2$ $\mathbb{B}d3$ but forgot about the queen on h7.

53... $\mathbb{B}g3+$ 54. $\mathbb{B}g1$ $\mathbb{B}e2+!$
However, even here I can resist: with ... $\mathbb{B}h1$ and White will not resign anytime soon; or 55. $\mathbb{B}xe2$

$\mathbb{W}c1+$ 56. $\mathbb{B}h2$ $\mathbb{W}f4+!$

Both ... $\mathbb{B}e2+$ and ... $\mathbb{W}f4+$ are very tricky moves to find, especially in the context of the psychological situation happening on the board — what seemed like a certain win has now become a mess. A winning evaluation by the engine doesn't mean much if one can't calculate the lines that it's based on.

54. $\mathbb{B}g2$



54... $\mathbb{W}d2??$

This was even more shocking than the last move – my opponent still had 4 minutes to try and find a way, instead of essentially resigning with this move.



The engine says 54... $\mathbb{E}xe6!$ is equal. I didn't see this at the board, but intuitively I felt that the position was still a mess and that some resources should exist.

editor – for example: 55. $\mathbb{E}xe6+$ $\mathbb{F}f7\Box$ (55... $\mathbb{Q}d7?$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}xf2+-$) 56. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $a2\Box\infty$.

55. $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$

56. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{F}f8$ 57. $\mathbb{W}d8+$ $\mathbb{G}g7$

58. $\mathbb{W}g8\#$ was a mate in 3 that I didn't see, but it's enough to find just one win.

56... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 57. $\mathbb{W}xf6+$

Wow! An incredible escape.

I still remember the shock and relief I felt as we signed the scoresheets.

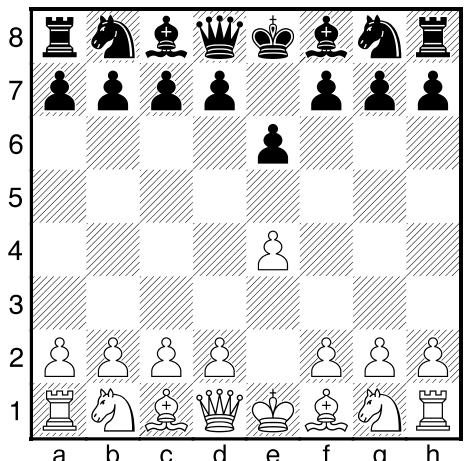
1-0

Atanasov, Anthony (2443)
Thavandiran, Shiyam (2475)
2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto (4), 29.03.2024
Notes:
IM Shiyam Thavandiran

1.e4

A surprise on move one. Today there was just a single round to be played, and so I had spent a big chunk of time preparing something for the London System, which my opponent was exclusively playing up to this point.

1...e6



In the past, I would have seriously considered deviating

from my (narrow) repertoire altogether when faced with such a big surprise on the first move. Perhaps I would have felt that Anthony didn't study all of Black's replies to 1.e4 and I could have played a different opening that I've dabbled in, like the Sicilian Kalashnikov or the Scandinavian. However, that's illogical for a few reasons, and so I decided to stick with my trusted weapon, the French Defence.

2.d4 d5 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

The most aggressive line, and in line with the aggressive look on my young opponent's face.

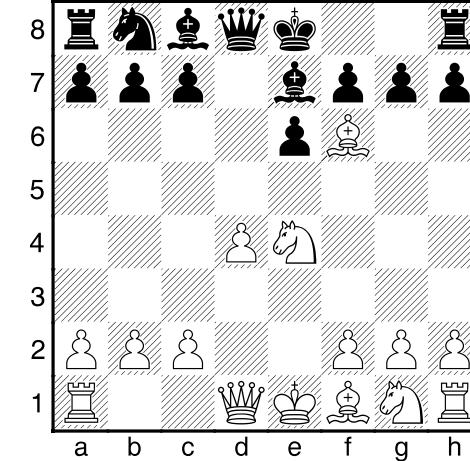
3... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

4.e5 is seen much more often at the top levels and in my own practice too.

4... $dxe4$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

I've played 5... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ most recently, and it's quite solid, but I figured that my opponent had mainly prepared for this.

6. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$



6... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

The first time I've ever played this popular move, but it wasn't a complete gamble. Before the tournament and in between rounds, I was reading [Nigel Short](#)'s instant classic book [Winning](#). I was inspired by it in general, but specifically he made very insightful comments on playing the French. I had read his notes on 7...a6 but that was more or less the extent of my knowledge.

I've also played 6... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ in the past, but with Anthony still looking quite confident, I decided to deviate and play the more dynamic capture for the first time instead.



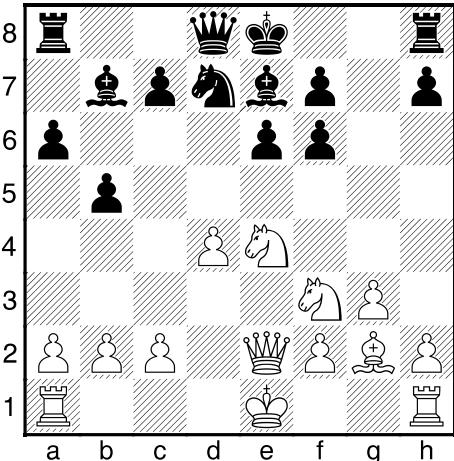
7. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ a6 8. g3

Anthony definitely stopped looking confident at this point, but his moves are natural enough and so only time would tell who would win the opening battle.

8...b5

8...f5 might be more accurate.

9. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$



All part of the plan I had read about in *Winning*.

11. 0-0

I was quite happy to see this as now I get the freeing ...c5 in. I thought 0-0-0 would be much more testing: 11.0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ with a double-edged position. I'm not sure who's better. (11...c5 looks

risky with the rook glaring down the d-file.) 12. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ It looks like White's position is easier to play, but Black should be okay with enough precision.

11...c5

Black desperately seeks space. 11...f5 is definitely advised, to kick the knight away from the centre before starting active counterplay.

12. a4

A principled approach.

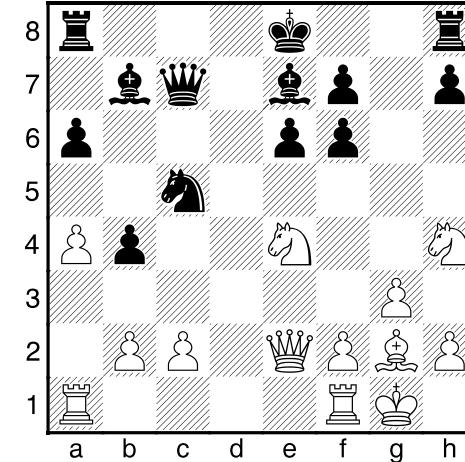
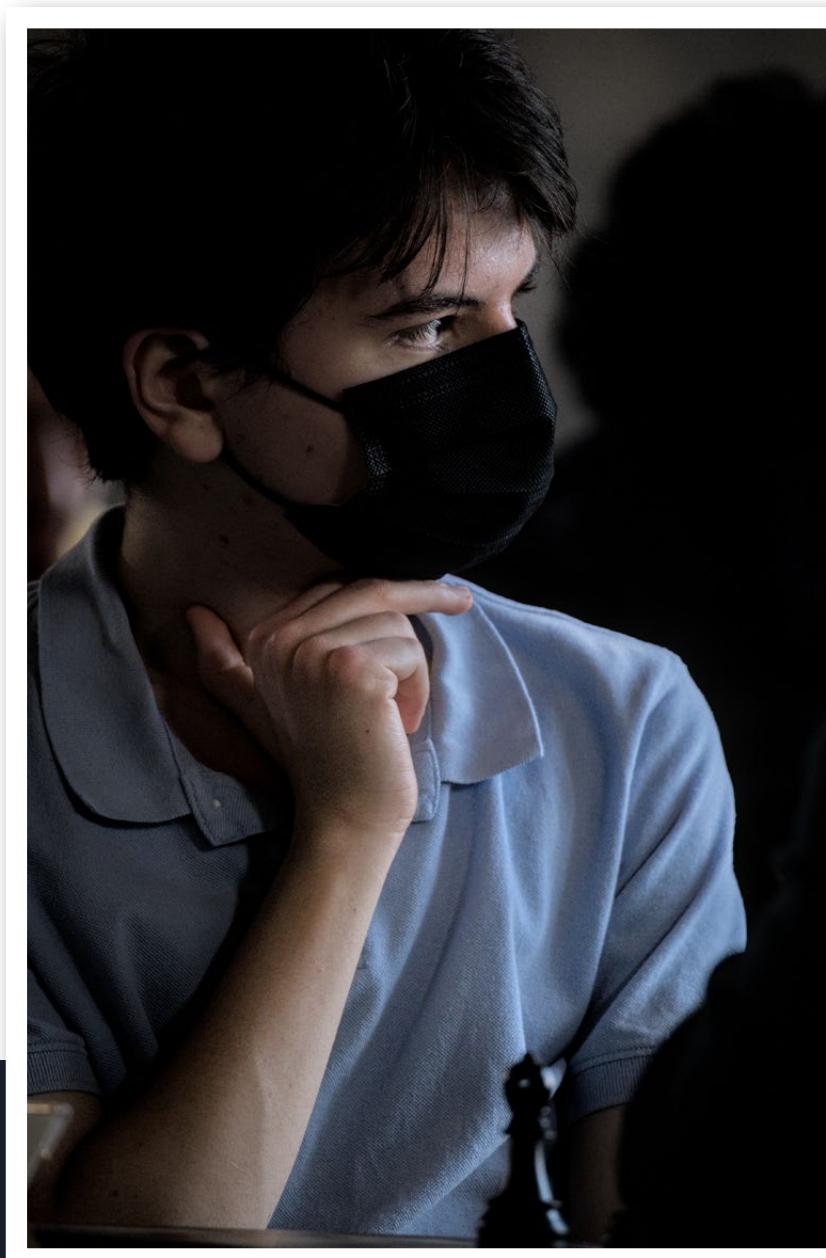
12...b4

13. $\mathbb{Q}h4!?$

Creative, and something I had not expected. White's knight threatens to hop forward to f5 in some lines, and now $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ is a threat as well.

13. $\mathbb{Q}fd1!?$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}ac1!$ and White has some initiative.

13... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$



15. c3?

A serious mistake, after which White may have ended in a strategically lost position. Even with the second-rate move that I played, only Black could be better. There's no clear point to c3.

15. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+ -$) 16. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$

White is better due to the better pawn structure, more potential for attack, and lead in development.

FM Anthony Atanasov

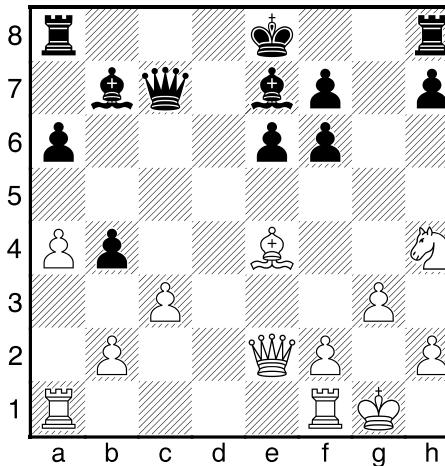
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15... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
 15...f5?? 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$
 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+/-$.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$



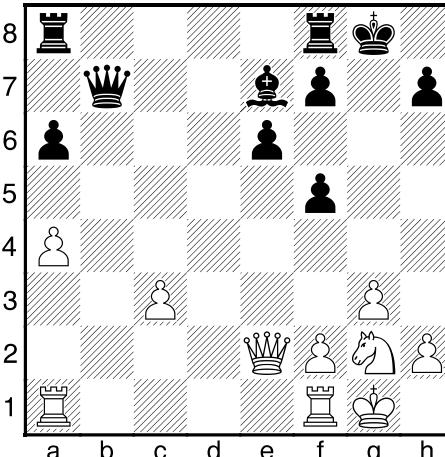
16...f5

I played this move smugly, thinking I was quite smart to turn the tables. Unfortunately, I missed the subtle 16... $\mathbb{W}e5!$ when Black forces the queen exchange and enters a better ending where I would have been very optimistic on scoring the full-point.

16... $\mathbb{W}e5!$ is somehow obvious... once the computer points it out... but with my king still uncastled it was counterintuitive to leave my bishop hanging and move my

queen to the center of the board. Above all, after being on the defensive, it's psychologically difficult to have the gumption to even look for a killer blow. 17. $\mathbb{B}fe1!$ an important move, to exchange one pair of bishops. (17. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ would give Black more chances due to the bishop pair - White can still exchange it with $\mathbb{Q}f3$ but this would just be losing time compared with 17. $\mathbb{B}fe1$.) 17... $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
 19. $\mathbb{B}xe4$ bxc3 20.bxc3 $\mathbb{B}c8!?$ or 20...f5!?.

17. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g2$
 bxc3 19.bxc3 0-0

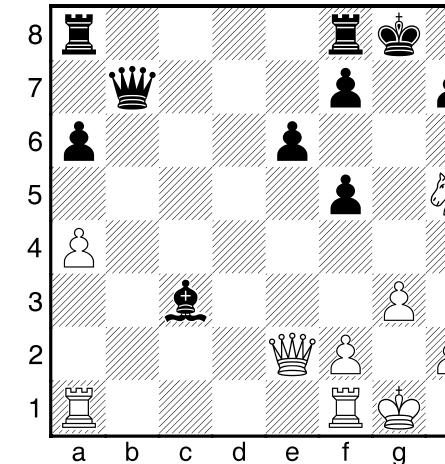


The move is somehow obvious... once the computer points it out...

I felt only I could be better, but a clear way forward wasn't

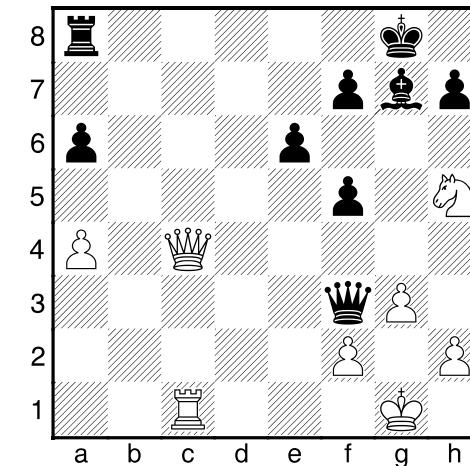
apparent. I missed my big chance, and so a draw is a fair and satisfactory result.

20. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$



Things were now getting scary with both of us low on time. I was just looking to bail out with a draw at this point.

23... $\mathbb{B}fc8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$
 25. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}f3$



26. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$
 28. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xa4$ 29. $\mathbb{W}g5+$

I'm up two pawns and one is a passed a-pawn, but I felt any winning attempt by Black would be insanely risky due to the necessity of exposing my king. I accepted the draw offer.

A short but sharp game, which in the end proved to be between the top two finishers of the tournament.

1/2 - 1/2

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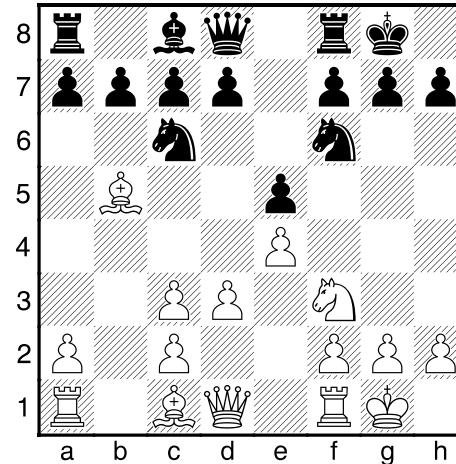


Thavandiran, Shiyam (2475)
Sambuev, Bator (2562)
2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto
(5), 30.03.2024

Notes:

IM Shiyam Thavandiran

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3
4.♗f6 4.♗b5 ♗b4 5.0-0 0-0
6.d3 ♗xc3 7.bxc3

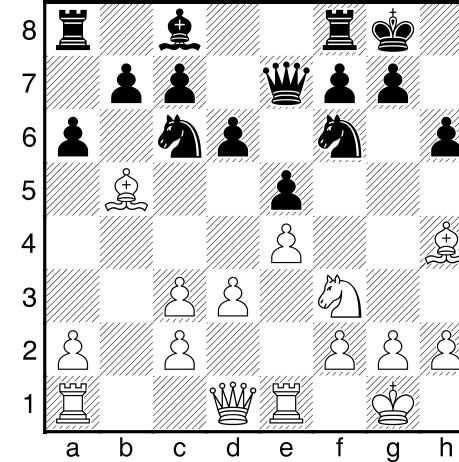


A structure that I quite enjoy playing and have significant experience in. White has the bishop pair and a strong center, while Black has the better pawn structure and potential to grab more space with ...a6, ...b5 along with ...h6, ...g5.

7...d6 8.♗g5 h6

I hadn't prepared much for this game and wasn't so familiar with the intricacies of this move order. The main move is 8...♗e7, followed by ...♘d8-e6, a plan I first saw in the games of [Akiba Rubinstein](#) played over 100 years ago. One of the greatest chess thinkers of all time.

9.♗h4 ♗e7 10.♗e1 a6



Thus far, Bator had been blitzing out his moves. I recalled that I had lost to Joshua Sheng in a Pro Chess League game that had a similar structure after 11.♗a4 b5 and I remember I did not like my position. I decided to deviate and part with my bishop instead. It turned out to be a good practical decision as Bator was surprised and started spending time to think. Objectively, I think both moves are of similar value.

11.♗xc6
11.♗a4 b5
12.♗b3 ♘a5 and White must play precisely to avoid the light-squared bishop getting shut out of play after Black's ...c5-c4.

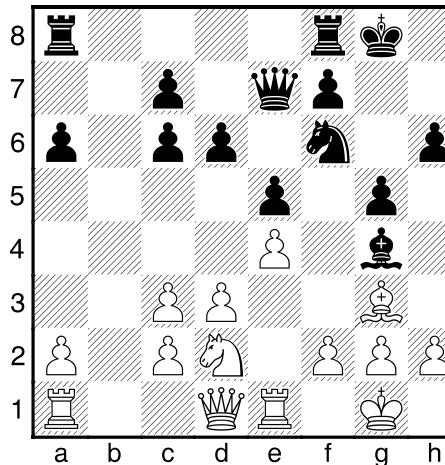
11...bxc6
12.♘d2
A thematic plan to reroute the knight to e3 - this was a plan I first read



about in an inspiring article by **GM Grigory Serper** many years ago:
<https://www.chess.com/article/view/are-you-a-giant-of-positional-chess>

His weekly column is a wonderful source of chess knowledge, culture, and history that I've gained a lot from over the years.

12...g5 13.♔g3 ♔g4!

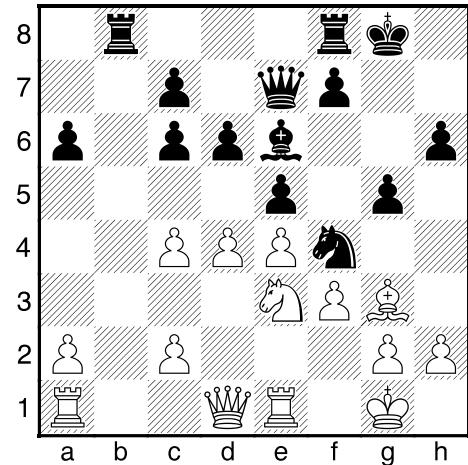


A strong move, gaining the h5 square for the knight.

**14.f3 ♔e6 15.♘f1 ♘h5
16.♘e3**

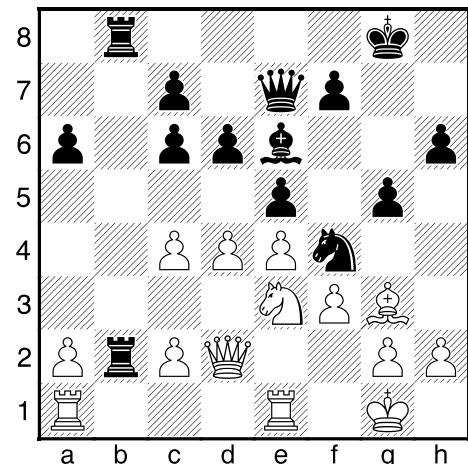
White completes the plan and soon there will be tension in the center as pawns get pushed forward.

16...♝ab8 17.d4 ♘f4 18.c4



A typical idea for White in this structure is to play c4–c5 at some point to undouble the pawns and create weaknesses in Black's position.

18...♝b2 19.♔d2 ♞fb8



20.d5

The game is very tense and a lot can be said about each move. I'll skip over most of it in order to

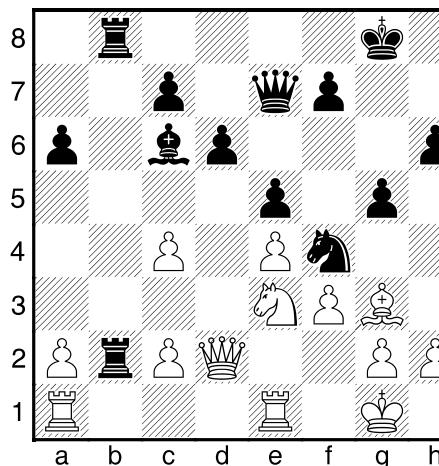
focus on the exciting time trouble phase, but here I'll say I took this decision in order to stop any c6–c5 ideas by Black.

20.dxe5!? **dxe5 21.♔a5** is a suggestion by the computer that didn't cross my mind at all. White is better here due to the active queen and Black's pawn weaknesses. However, I was fixated on the thematic c4–c5 to soften d6 – a drawback of playing a pet line is that it's easy to fall into a routine and have biased evaluations.

20...♝d7 21.dxc6

21.♔h1 c5 and Black is better since White no longer has any active possibilities in the center.

21...♝xc6

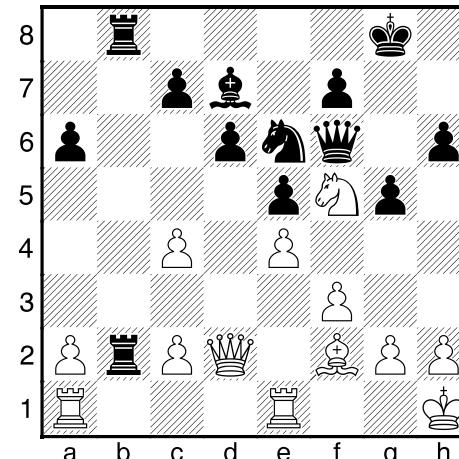


22.♔h1

Here I channeled **Fischer's** 19.♔h1 from the famous Telex game against **Smyslov** in Havana 1965. The idea was the same: to sidestep any tactical tricks involving Black's knight, however, c5 may have been objectively strongest.

It turns out that 22.♔c3 ♜b1?! doesn't do anything besides the one-move threat of ...♞e2+, but during the game it spooked me and the idea of playing like Fischer was too tempting. Similar to my rejection of dxe5 earlier, we see that superficial knowledge of a position can lead to suboptimal moves.

22...♞e6 23.♘f5 ♜f6 24.♘f2 ♜d7

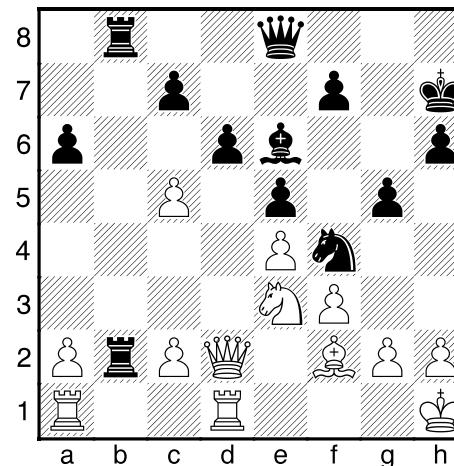




25.♘e3

I definitely considered 25.c5 here, but I thought the position wasn't favourable after 25...♝a4 26.cxd6 ♜xc2. In fact, almost anything here by White is enough to hold the balance, but I believe I most likely rejected this due to a lack of winning chances. I still liked my position despite going a bit astray with the ♘e3–f5–e3–f5–e5 pendulum motion.

**25...♝d8 26.♘f5 ♔h7
27.♗ec1 ♘f4 28.♘e3 ♛e6
29.♗d1 ♛e8?! 30.c5!**



This comes at the perfect time, with Black's misplaced queen (♘f6+ forks are looming). This sense of patience and timing comes from my experience in this structure, which in a practical

game matters more than what the lichess Stockfish engine says. The main challenge now was that I had 4 minutes to make move 40, versus Bator's 27 minutes.

30...♝b5

Played after 10 minutes.

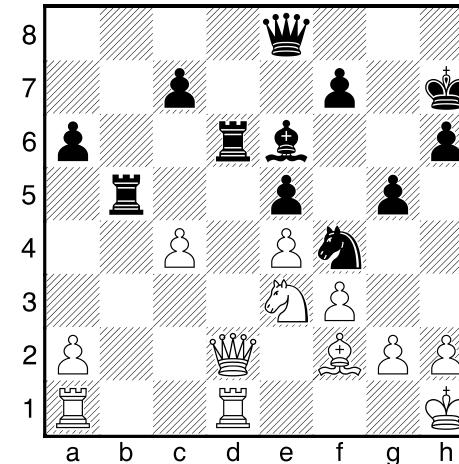
30...dxc5 31.♝c3 with excellent pressure on Black's shattered pawn structure with an eye towards the weak dark squares around the enemy king. But 30...♝c6 and Black is still OK.

31.cxd6 ♜d8 32.c4!

A powerful move. All of the momentum was now on my side and I felt very much on the way to a win.

32...♜xd6

each before the additional 30 minutes after move 40. If 34...♝b8 35.♛xe5±.



33.♝c3

As mentioned, I had 4 minutes left and so I didn't spend time to look for better than the natural but second-rate ♜c3, but 33.♘d5! ♛xd5 34.exd5 ♜b8 would be Black's only way to avoid losing material, though but the position remains miserable anyway.

33...♝c6?

33...♝c6! I saw this move and wasn't sure how to continue, but instead Black blundered.

34.a4

More pawn power.

34...♝bc5

This was played after 8 minutes. We now both had 4 minutes

35.♘d5!

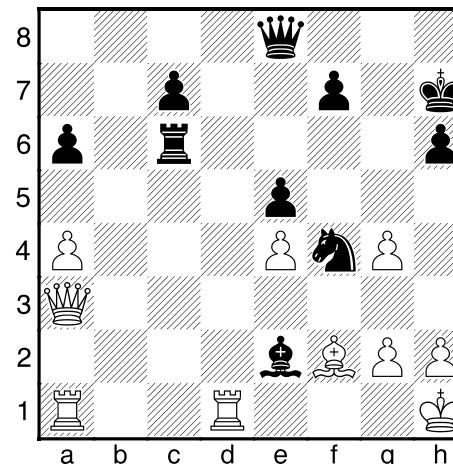
White is winning material due to the aforementioned ♘f6+.

**35...♜xc4 36.♛xc4! ♛xd5
36...♜xc4? 37.♘f6++–.**

37.♝b4 ♛c4 38.♛a3 g4

Bator is resourceful and immediately seeks counterplay in a worse position.

39.fxg4 ♛e2



Another resourceful move, forcing me to make an important decision on move 40.

40.♝dc1

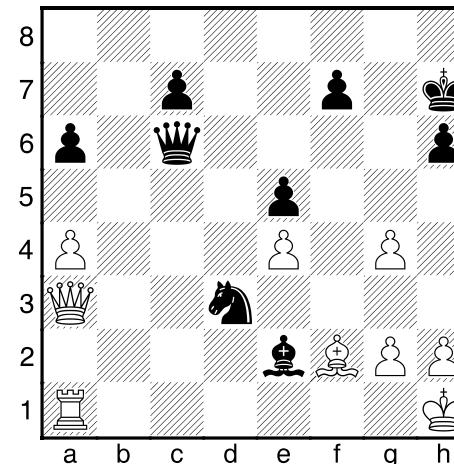


It was natural to trade pieces and simplify the position, but this is a poor square for the rook. It was critical to guard the key d3 square. Now, Black not only gets control of d3, but also reactivates the misplaced queen. Better were 40.♖d2 or 40.♗e1.

40...♝d3

Very natural and what I had expected. However, Stockfish shows that ...♝d3! essentially equalizes for Black.

41.♖xc6 ♜xc6



42.♝h4?

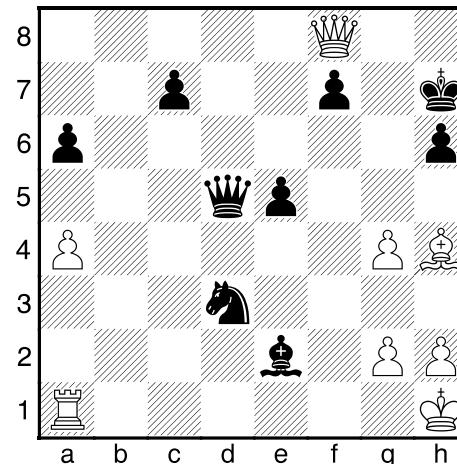
A terrible case of unnecessary overthinking.

I spent 12 of my replenished 30 minutes and went to play

for mate on h8, instead of the initially intended and automatic ♜g3. This was psychological — I wanted to end the game as soon as possible against a resourceful player like Bator, but this precisely allowed him to get counterplay and display his defensive skills.

I saw that after 42.♝g3 ♜xe4 43.♛e7 White is better, but I didn't see a clear win here, which made ♜h4 more tempting to me.

42...♜xe4 43.♛f8 ♜d5!!



A brilliant find, played after 6 minutes of thought, that completely shocked me. Black ignores the ♜f6 threat due to a double minor piece sacrifice that secures perpetual check. I was

very impressed, and couldn't believe my eyes.

44.♛d8!

Played after 8 minutes. Bator has incorrectly rejected draws against me and others in the past, and I had this in mind. In any case, ♛d8 is objectively best.

44.♝f6 ♜f2+ 45.♚g1 ♜h3+!!=

The point! White's king has no shelter from the enemy queen. 46.gxh3 ♜d4+ 47.♚g2 ♜e4+ 48.♚f2 ♜f4+! 49.♚xe2 ♜e4+= I desperately checked to see if I can escape, but it's not there.

44...♜d4

The only move.

45.♝b1!

Instead of playing 44.♝f6 and forcing Black to force the draw, this maintains the tension and invites Black to accept or reject the draw — which I knew has historically been a challenging decision for my opponent.

After 45.♝xd4 exd4 the computer gives White a ± advantage here, but I would

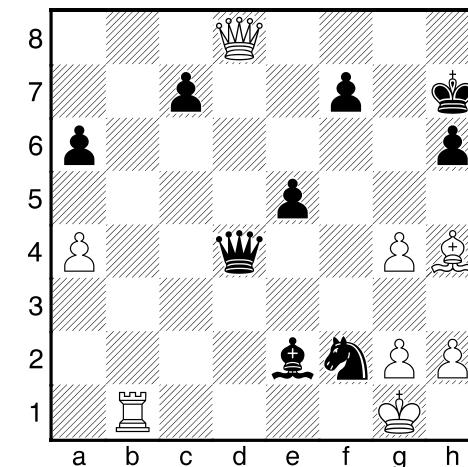
think that Black wins this position more often in a practical game.

45...♝f2+ 46.♚g1 ♜e4+

47.♚h1

Again, 47.♝xd4 exd4 is possible, but I still can't calculate like Stockfish. Some positions I can, but not this one.

47...♝f2+ 48.♚g1



48...♜xg4+??

Very surprising, but also not entirely unexpected: in a similar situation, Bator rejected a repetition against me in the 2008 Thanksgiving Open... and promptly lost.

49.♝xd4 exd4 50.♝c1

The point. Black's c-pawn falls and White comfortably stops the

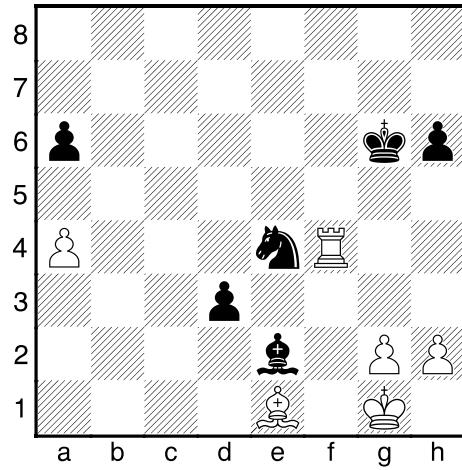
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d-pawn due to the misplaced knight.

50...d3 51.♘e1 ♘f6 52.♗xc7
♘e4 53.♗xf7+ ♔g6 54.♗f4



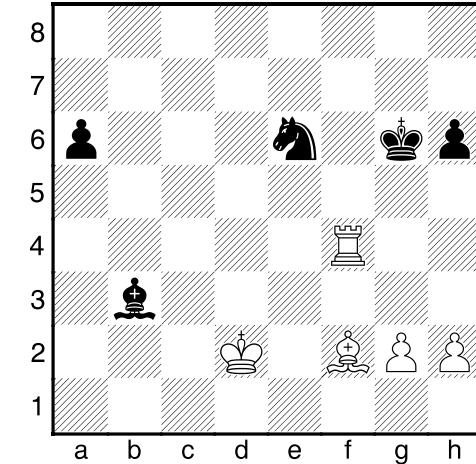
54...♘c5

54...d2 55.♗xd2 ♘xd2 56.♗f2+– is a nice trick.

55.♔f2 ♔d1 56.♔e3 ♘xa4
57.♔xd3 ♘c5+ 58.♔d2 ♔b3
59.♔f2 ♘e6



IM Shiyam
GM Bator

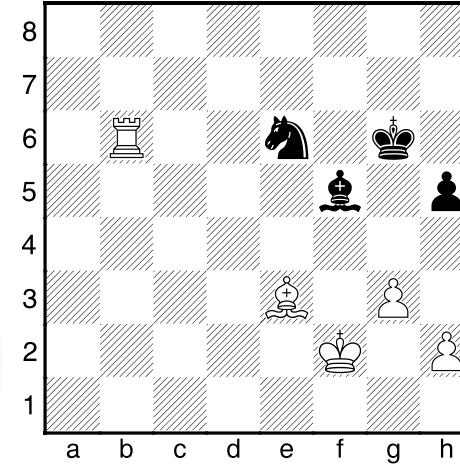


Despite the material advantage, winning this isn't trivial. The key is that White should avoid h2–h3, which becomes a weakness, and certainly not g2–g4 which would allow an exchange of pawns and move Black closer to a draw.

60.♗b4 ♔d5 61.♗b6 ♔f5
62.g3 ♔g4 63.♗d6 ♔c4
64.♔c3 ♔a2 65.♔b2 ♔c4
66.♔c3 ♔a2 67.♗xa6 ♔d5
68.♗d6 ♔a2 69.♗a6 ♔d5
70.♗a4+ ♔f3 71.♗b6 ♔e4
72.♗a2 ♔g4 73.♗e2 ♔f5
74.♗e5 ♔g5 75.♗e3+ ♔f6
76.♗a5 h5 77.♔d2 ♔g6
78.♔e1 ♘f8 79.♔f2 ♘e6
80.♗a4 ♘c7 81.♗a7 ♘e6
82.♗a6 ♘h3 83.♗b6 ♘f5

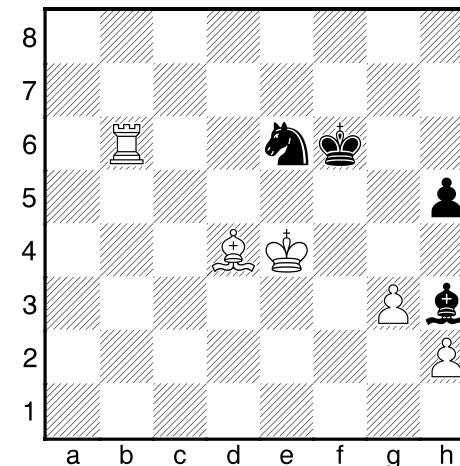
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It never gets old to mention Shereshevsky's timeless endgame principle of "do not hurry". White has no need to rush with h3 and g3, tempting as it was. I realized that the way to breakthrough was bringing my king to the center.

84. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 85. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
 86. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 87. $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
 88. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$



Do not hurry!

88... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 89. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

90. $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 91. $\mathbb{Q}b4+$

Black resigned since after $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ and $\mathbb{Q}xf8$, it's all over.

After he resigned, Bator quipped: "I don't know who is luckier, you or Shawn", presumably referring to my game against Raja, along with Shawn's wins against Dukic and Vettese. I replied "they say good players get lucky".

Normally, I would have liked to analyze this fascinating game with Bator but I knew the next round would be starting shortly and I had to go grab lunch after this long game.

I will say that this win was quite meaningful, since Bator had dominated the local Canadian scene for over a decade, including wins against me in the 2011 and 2017 Canadian Zonals. Moreover, I was happy with the quality of my play against a strong opponent.

1-0

**Rodrigue-Lemieux,
Shawn (2636)**

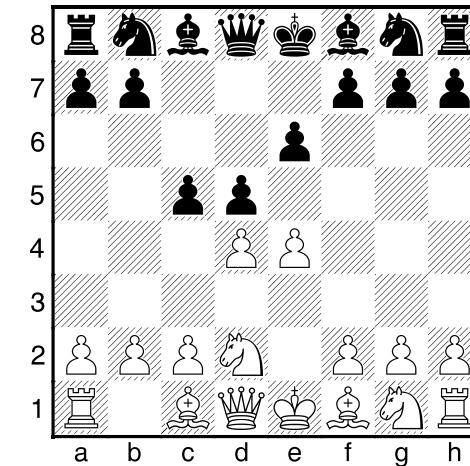
Thavandiran, Shiyam (2475)
 2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto
 (6), 30.03.2024

Notes:

IM Shiyam Thavandiran

but I knew "getting two" would be huge for my championship aspirations. So, in the end, I was going to play a normal game but always ready to fight for the win if the opportunity arose.

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ c5



Shawn and I shared first with 4½/5 going into this game. I didn't have high expectations to score a win in this game, and knew that a draw with Black against the top seed would be a great result. This was the only double round day that I didn't have time to go home and rest, and this actually helped me keep a healthy mindset of not expecting too much and instead focus on enjoying the game. At the same time though, I couldn't help but recall a quote from [Kawhi Leonard](#) in the 2019 NBA Championship run with the Toronto Raptors, where he famously said "let's get two" in reference to winning not just one, but two critical road games in the hostile arena of the Golden State Warriors. Even beating one of Bator and Shawn was great,

We reached this same position in Round 5 of the 2022 Canadian Zonal in Kingston. Shawn won the game and would go on to have a monster year. I went on to have such a disappointing year that it made me seriously consider retirement. So, while that seemed like an inflection point, to be back here competing again was already a very special moment for me, and to win this game felt like a blessing from Caissa herself.

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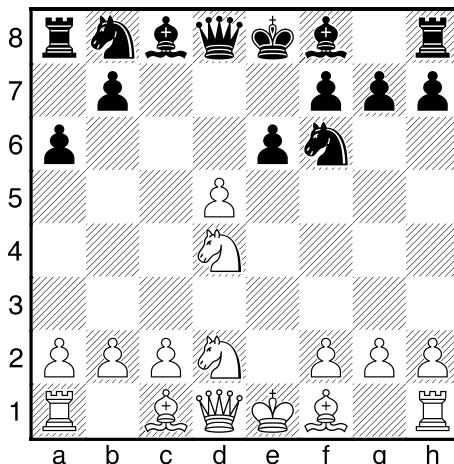
4. $\mathbb{Q}gf3$

I didn't expect 4. $\mathbb{Q}gf3$. The only thing I had checked in the little time I had between rounds was: 4. $exd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ $cx d4$ 6. $g3$, as Shawn had used this to win a miniature against GM Moradiabadi.

4... $cxd4$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6. $exd5$ $a6$

6... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ Ding's choice in his game against Nepo in 2023; he lost, but it was not due to the opening.

6... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ is annoying, and what I wanted to avoid with 6... $a6$.



A rare third option played by [Richard Rapport](#). The fact that I paid special attention to

this move was likely indirectly influenced by [GM Eric Hansen](#). During my sabbatical in 2022, the Chessbrahs hosted me for several nights in Toronto to help me prepare for my GM title pursuit. In particular, Eric offered a lot of invaluable feedback on my games and opening approach, including stressing the idea that opening choices by top players have the "mark of quality." Since Rapport was Ding's second for the World Chess Championship match where Ding got a great position in one game with the French Defence, I knew that 6... $a6$ was a move I could trust despite it being played very few times.

7. $\mathbb{Q}2f3$

7. $\mathbb{Q}e2!?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5 =$ (7... $\mathbb{W}xd5!?$
8. $\mathbb{Q}c4!?$);

7. $c3!?$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ is a way that White can try to make Black uncomfortable.

7... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

To be honest, I didn't have any preparation beyond seeing that one Rapport game. Fortunately, Shawn was clearly surprised, as

GM Shawn Rodriguez-Lemieux





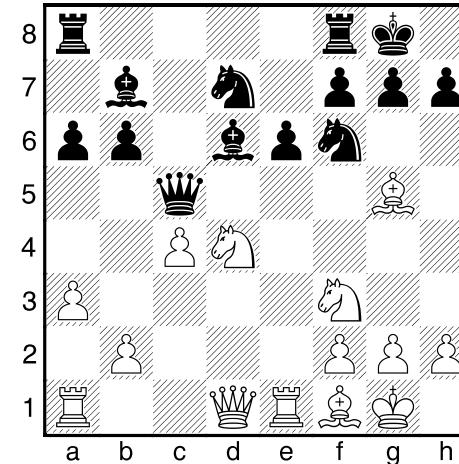
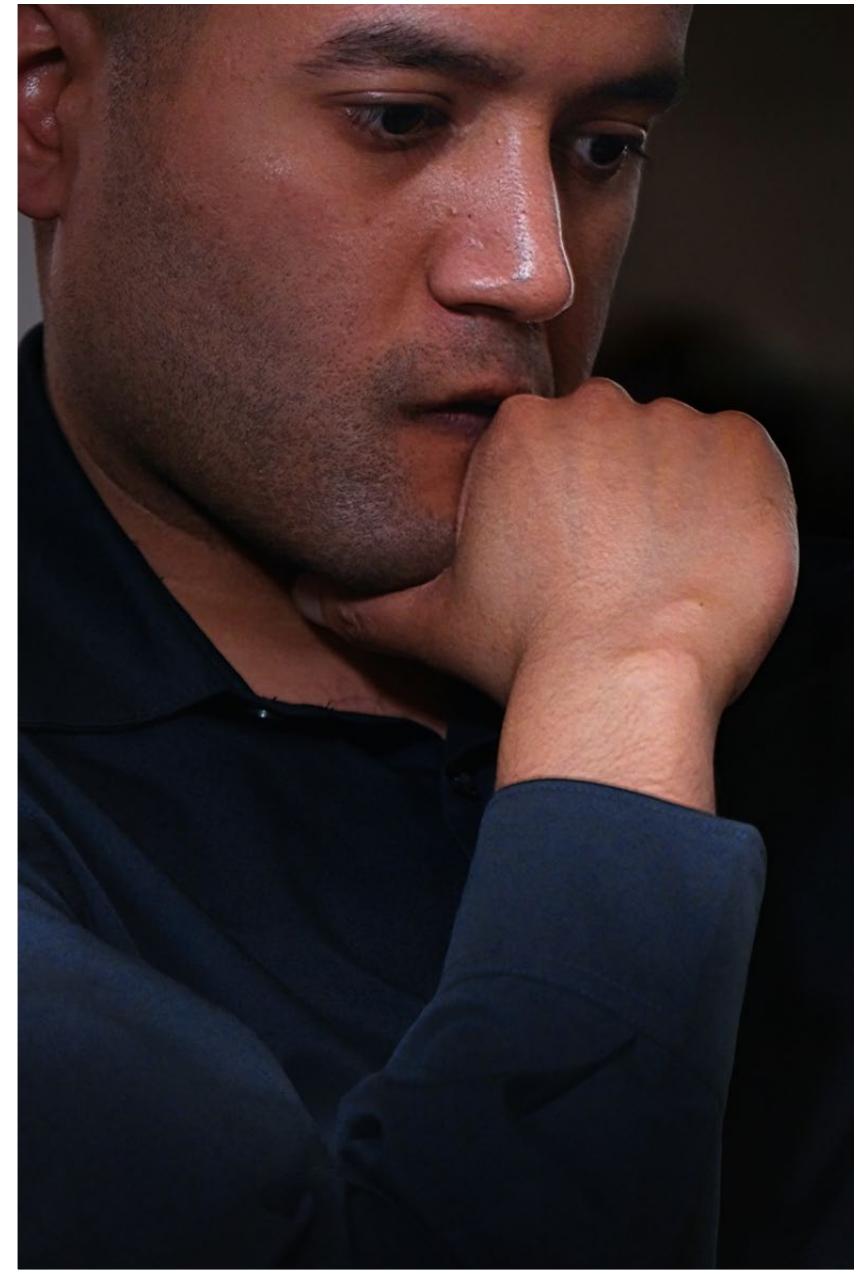
he spent 24 minutes on this move and 6 minutes on the previous one. I was content that we were both playing on our own in this position.

8.c4 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$
 9. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}a5$
 10.a3 $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$
 11. $\mathbb{W}xd2$
 $\mathbb{W}c7$ was
 Giri-Rapport,
 Bucharest,
 2023.

8... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

We both were spending oceans of time choosing the right squares for our pieces in this unfamiliar position. Certainly, we didn't want to make any slips due to the high stakes of the game.

9.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 10.c4 $\mathbb{W}c5$ 11.a3
 b6 12. $\mathbb{H}e1$ 0–0 13. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$
 14. $\mathbb{Q}g5$



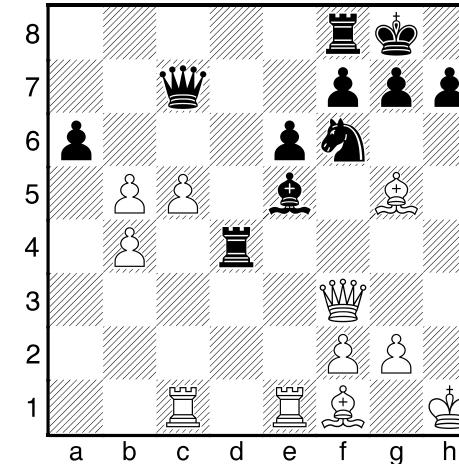
14... $\mathbb{Q}e5!$

I was very happy with this move. Black does not fear doubled pawns after $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ and instead plays actively in the center, fighting for the initiative.

15.b4
 $\mathbb{W}c7$
 16. $\mathbb{H}c1$
 $\mathbb{H}ad8$

16... $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$
 18. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ wins a pawn, but playing ... $\mathbb{H}ad8$ first is an improved version, winning an important tempo.

17. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$
 19. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$
 21.c5 b5 22.a4 $\mathbb{H}d4$ 23.axb5



Draw offer from Shawn.

23...axb5

Played after not too much thought. I was up a pawn with some initiative, but Shawn defends well here.

I didn't see this at all and already felt much less optimistic about my winning chances.

24. $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 25. $\mathbb{H}e4!$

I didn't see this at all and already felt much less optimistic about my winning chances.

25... $\mathbb{H}xe4$

25... $\mathbb{H}fd8$ 26. $\mathbb{H}xd4$ $\mathbb{H}xd4$.

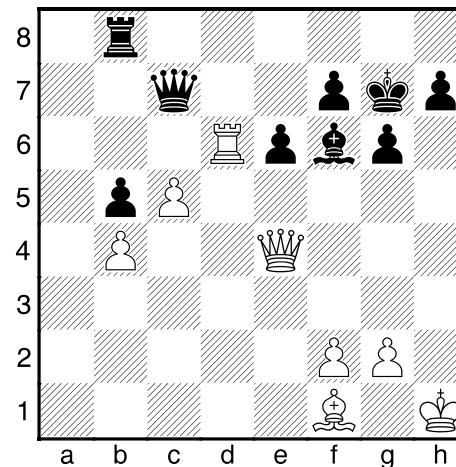
26. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{H}b8$

I wasn't thrilled to play this



passive move, but the principled ... $\mathbb{R}d8$ sacrificing b5 was too risky for me: 26... $\mathbb{R}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{R}d4\#$.

27. $\mathbb{R}d1$ g6 28. $\mathbb{R}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$



The first of two draw offers in the entire tournament from me - the second was in the next game against Nicholas. After the draw offer, Shawn gave me a death stare as if to show me he sensed weakness, but I was calm. If anything, it was encouraging for me because any winning attempt by him in this position would be very risky.

I offered a draw for the same reasons I took one against Anthony and why I wouldn't have been upset if I had drawn Bator in that position with the material advantage: my main goal in the tournament was to show the improvement in my chess level, and wanting to win at all costs is usually accompanied by a loss of objectivity and poor moves. With White's active rook, passed c-pawn, and time pressure for both of us, I didn't want to gamble. A draw would still keep me in =1st. Fortunately, my opponent decided to continue the game.

29.g3

Suddenly, I have a clear plan to attack the g3 "hook" (a la Aagaard) and break open the kingside.

29...h5!

Thematic.

30. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ h4 31.g4

After the draw offer, Shawn gave me a death stare as if to show me he sensed weakness, but I was calm.

31. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{h}xg3$ is crushing.

31. $\mathbb{g}xh4$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ is not what White wants.

31. $\mathbb{Q}g2$!? an interesting alternative suggested by Stockfish 17.

31... $\mathbb{W}a7$!

A strong maneuver to bring the queen into the game.

32. $\mathbb{Q}b1$

32. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$! followed by capturing e6 wins, since Black now defends the bishop after $\mathbb{W}xg6+$.

32... $\mathbb{W}a1$ 33. $\mathbb{R}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

33... $\mathbb{R}d8$?? 34. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ wins.

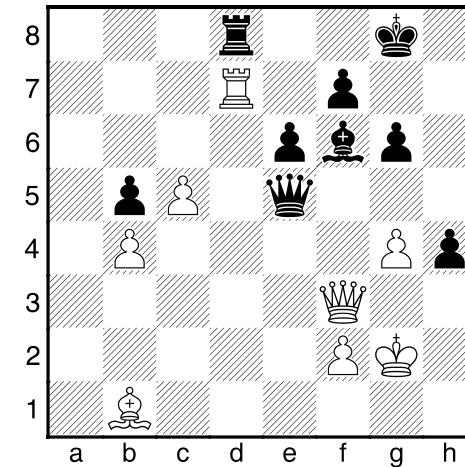
34. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e5$?

Panic. We were both low on time and I wanted to ensure safety. However, the right pieces to trade were the rooks. 34... $\mathbb{R}d8$! and Black is much better.

35. $\mathbb{W}f3$?

White's king is in more danger and so a queen trade is in his favour. A draw would have likely followed 35. $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$.

35... $\mathbb{R}d8$!



Black trades White's most active piece.

36.c6

Accompanied by Shawn's second draw offer of the game, which is acceptable chess etiquette given that I had offered a draw after his first one. However, with his active rook coming off the board, I risk nothing by playing on. The draw offers during the time scramble certainly added to what was already an intense game, given that we were both fighting for sole position atop the standings.

36. $\mathbb{R}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ deserved attention.



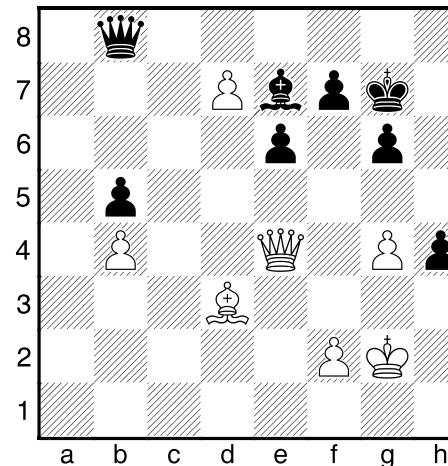
36...♝xd7 37.cxd7

The pawn is so close yet so far. The nature of the opposite-coloured bishops means that Black will always securely control the d8 queening square.

37...♚g7

As mentioned in the Sambuev game, do not hurry! White's threat was ♜a8+.

38.♝d3 ♜e7 39.♛e4 ♜b8



40.♛c6?

Shawn made this move with one second on his clock. It's a serious mistake to move the queen away from the center and weak king.

A waiting move like 40.♝e2 seems the most practical.

The computer gives this as equal: 40.♛d4+ ♜f6 41.d8♛ ♜xd8 42.♛xd8 ♜xd8 43.♝h3 g5 44.♝xb5 ♜e7 45.♝e8 ♜xb4, but there was no time to consider this when we were both playing on increment.

40...♛f4! 41.♛e4 h3+!

Showing great understanding by going after the important f2-pawn protecting White's already weak king.

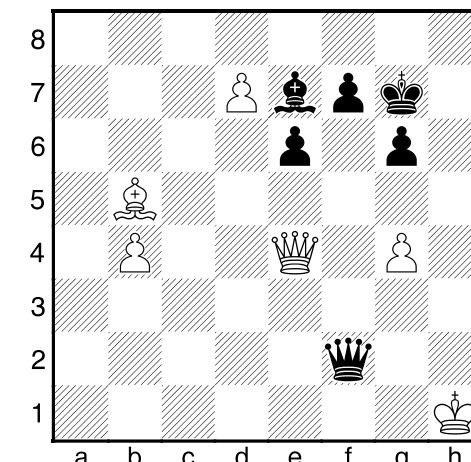
42.♚g1 h2+!

Insisting.

43.♚g2 h1♛+

Third time's the charm!

44.♝xh1 ♜xf2 45.♝xb5



We can take stock of this

position. Speaking of, Stockfish 17 evaluates this position as -2.5. Material is equal but White has a bare king, isolated pawns, and the nature of the Queen + opposite bishops endgame ensures that Black will always have mating threats on the dark squares.

45...♝d6?

A serious inaccuracy and lack of subtlety.

45...♝d8! would have been a wonderful move, once again demonstrating the importance of not hurrying in the endgame. There was no need to rush with the primitive threat of ♜h2#. It was important to keep constant control of d8. Moreover, Black can go to the equally dangerous square of b6.

After 45...♝d8 the game might go:

a) 46.♝e2 ♜b6 and wins;

b) 46.♝c6 ♜f1+ 47.♝h2 ♜c7+ shows how fast White can get mated in this position;

c) 46.♛e2 ♜g3 with very

unpleasant pressure, most likely winning;

d) 46.♛e5+ is probably what I didn't like:

46...♝h7?? 47.♛h2+=; 46...♝g8! 47.♛b8 ♜h4+ and Black picks up g4 with very good winning chances.

46.♛e2! ♜h4+

It would have been much nicer to play 46...♜g3, to keep the king boxed in, but d8=♛ is available with the bishop on d6.

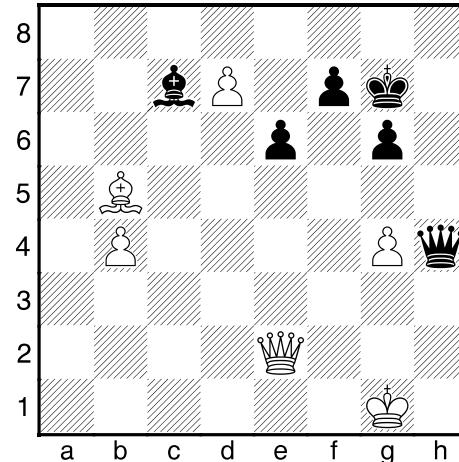
47.♚g1

The computer rates 47.♚g2 as better, but it's hard to decide on this over the board. 47...♜h2+ 48.♚f1 (48.♚f3 ♜g3+ 49.♚e4 looks too dangerous for a human to play.) 48...♜h1+ 49.♚f2 ♜c7 looks very scary, but somehow the computer says it's equal. Practically, this type of position is very difficult to defend.

47...♝c7

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Thavandiran



48. $\mathbb{W}e4??$

Not an unnatural move as it centralizes the queen and protects b4. However, guarding the f2 square was mandatory. Suddenly it is forced mate.

48. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is a nice move to protect some light squares around the king, but Black should be able to pick up the b4 pawn and press via the $\mathbb{W}f4+/\mathbb{W}e1+$ fork after some clever moves starting with 48... $\mathbb{W}g3+$.

48... $\mathbb{Q}b6+!$ 49. $\mathbb{K}g2$

49. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}f2\#.$

49... $\mathbb{W}f2+$ 50. $\mathbb{K}h3$

50. $\mathbb{K}h1$ $\mathbb{W}g1\#.$

50... $\mathbb{Q}c7$

The finish would be 51. $\mathbb{W}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ 52. $\mathbb{K}h4$ $\mathbb{W}h6\#.$

White resigned, after writhing in his chair for a bit. It became clear to me how badly Shawn wanted to win the Zonal.

This statement win against the top seed with Black put me in clear first, with four rounds to go. It was very nice to get several messages from friends congratulating me on my fantastic 5½/6 start.

0-1

Globe & Mail

Data scientist takes sabbatical...

Thavandiran, Shiyam (2475)
Vetese, Nicholas (2459)
2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto (7), 31.03.2024

Notes:
IM Shiyam Thavandiran

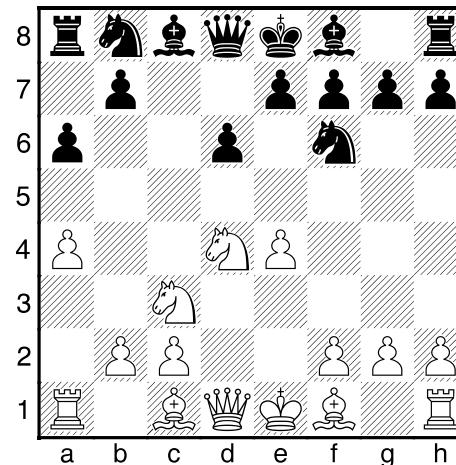
After scoring two monster wins yesterday and taking sole lead of the tournament, I was so excited that I didn't sleep until early in the morning. This lapse in routine was less fatal given that there was only game to played in the evening but this was still far from ideal. I had White and while this seemed like it would be a good chance to further distance myself, I felt a lot of nerves. I was only half a point ahead of my next round opponent who I sincerely considered as one of the pre-tournament contenders. Similar to the Round 2 game with Sergey, I had played Nicholas with the same colour at the Hart House Masters training tournament in November 2023. We drew in a Sicilian Taimanov where I never had chances, and Nicholas went on to win the tournament half a point

ahead of me. We also drew in Varennes 2017, where I had a worse position as White (more on this later). My pre-tournament feelings were confirmed given that Nicholas was in clear second and clearly playing high quality chess.

1.e4 c5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3. $d4$ $cx d4$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6

I had expected Nicholas to deviate from the Taimanov that he played in our previous game. He probably expected me to play my usual 6.h3 here.

6.a4



An unpleasant surprise for Nicholas, just as I had also expected and confirmed by the visible disappointment of my

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opponent. This was the move I had played against him in 2017 and Nicholas now had to decide between repeating the same line or playing something new. He chose the latter.

6...g6

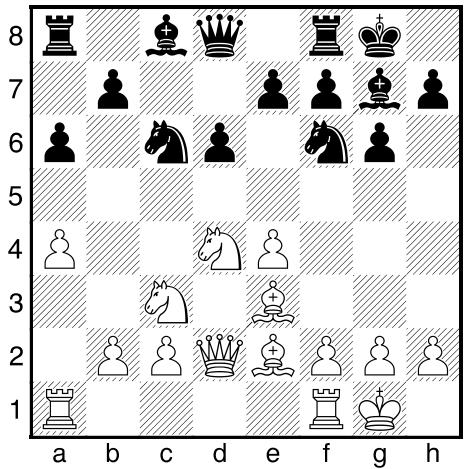
A move that's as good as any in this position. Our previous game continued: 6...e5 7.♘f3 h6 8.♗d2 d5 9.exd5 ♗xd5 10.♗c4 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♗e7 12.♗h5 0–0 13.♗e4 ♗c7 14.♗d5 (½–½, 26) **Thavandiran,S (2385)-Vettese,N (2155)** Montreal, 2017.

I'll leave it to the reader to guess where I would have deviated.

But if even **Magnus Carlsen** is unable to put the slightest of pressure as White (albeit against **Wei Yi**), it's probably not a good sign for 6.a4:

<https://lichess.org/broadcast/german-bundesliga-202425/round-6/NffwRqNc/uAxnCkVp>

7.♗e2 ♗g7 8.0–0 ♗c6 9.♗e3 0–0 10.♗d2



10...♗e8!?

This move really confused me. I had seen (and played) several games in this position, but none with ...♗e8. It had to be second-rate, but I couldn't figure it out and incorrectly treated it like a transposition.

10...♗xd4 11.♗xd4 ♗e6 12.a5 with a pleasant space advantage for White. **Thavandiran,S (2420)-Xiong,J (2709)** Titled Tuesday, 2021.

10...♗g4 11.♗xg4 ♗xg4 12.♗d5 ♗c8 13.a5 (1–0, 30) **Kamsky,G (2700)-Granda Zuniga,J (2601)** Buenos Aires, 2005. Kamsky is the big hero in this line, as Kevin had shown me when he introduced me to 6.a4 back in 2017.

IM Nicholas Vettese





10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ an improvement suggested by Kamsky in his notes to his win over Dominguez, where he chose 12.f3. 11... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13.f3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14.a5 (0-1, 47) Thavandiran,S (2399)-Zherebukh,Y (2636) chess.com, 2018, with a complicated middlegame ahead.

11. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$?

A serious inaccuracy. I tried to play like I did against Zherebukh but it doesn't work.

11. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$! is a thematic move in many positions of the 6.a4 line, and not just against the Dragon setup: 11... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 12.a5 this almost always follows $\mathbb{Q}xc6$. 12...c5 13. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ ±.

11.a5!? $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ also a thematic pawn sacrifice, see Kamsky's win against Salem Saleh.

11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

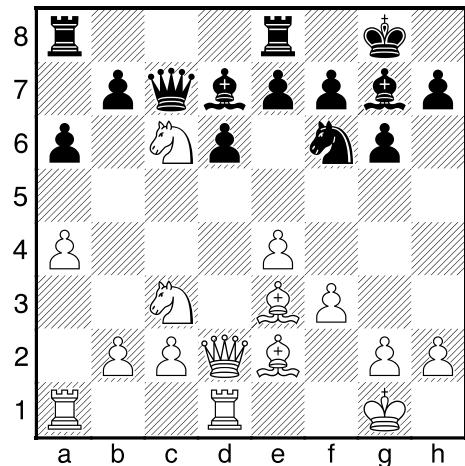
11... $\mathbb{Q}g4$! 12. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 13.f3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ = the difference here with the Kamsky - Granda Zuniga game is that White doesn't have time to get $\mathbb{Q}d5$ in.

Here my nerves failed me: a passive move accompanied by a draw offer.

12.f3

12. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$!?

12... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$!



It took me a while to come to this move. While it's easy in analysis to make everything look simple, I hadn't expected ...g6 from Nicholas and so I had to spend time recalling/creating plans.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

13... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 14.a5±.

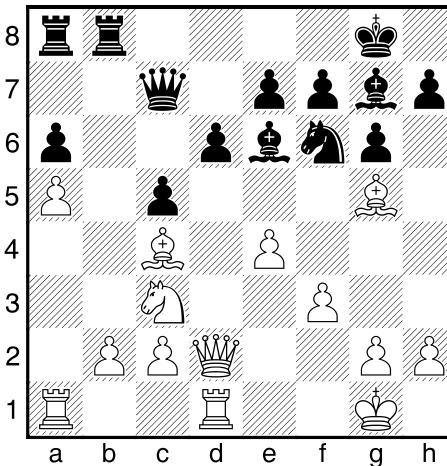
14.a5 c5 15. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}eb8$

16. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

A move I was quite proud of during the game but it appears that the simple b3 may have been just as good if not better. However, these computer lines are very complex and I won't get into them in detail: 16.b3! $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (16... $\mathbb{Q}e6$!?) 17.e5! $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18.exd6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d5$!?) 17. $\mathbb{Q}d5$!

16... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

16... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$?? 17.e5+–; but 16... $\mathbb{Q}c6$!?



17.b3?

Here my nerves failed me: a passive move accompanied by a draw offer.

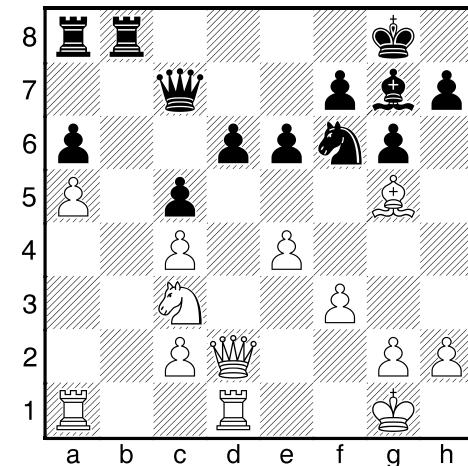
17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$! $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 18.e5!? is what I intended when I played

$\mathbb{Q}c4$ and $\mathbb{Q}g5$. It's rarely a good idea to change plans suddenly. (For some reason, I did not consider 18. $\mathbb{Q}a4$! at all. I was fixated on tripling the pawns and I may have also forgotten that ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is not possible. 18... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$?? 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ +–) 19. $\mathbb{Q}b6$

$\mathbb{Q}e8$ White can play e5 now in what should be a better version.)

18... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ e4 I saw my king in danger here and didn't trust myself to navigate the complications. I avoided the principled decision because I was afraid to lose and I nearly paid the price.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 18.bxc4 e6!



I completely missed this move. The d6 pawn is poisoned (or so I thought!) and now I don't have



any counterplay associated with $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ and $\mathbb{Q}d5$.

19. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$!? $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}a3$, with the knight on e8, this looks more manageable for White.

19. $\mathbb{W}xd6$!! Wow! Stockfish 17 shows that this equalizes, but I thought this was losing after 19... $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$. This is where I ended my calculation. But if we go a little further: 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 22. $c3$! and amazingly, this position is equal! I can believe it, as White's pieces are very active and there are no immediate weaknesses for Black to attack. Still, it takes a lot of imagination to consider the line past $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and to find $c3$.

19... $\mathbb{Q}d7$! 20. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$

21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

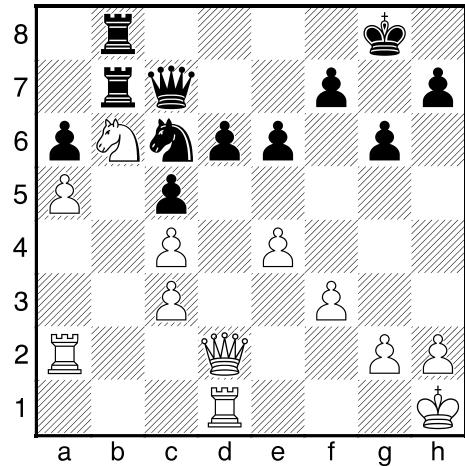
21. $\mathbb{Q}f1$!?

21... $\mathbb{Q}d4+$! 22. $\mathbb{Q}h1$

The computer prefers 22. $\mathbb{Q}f1$.

22... $\mathbb{E}ab7$ 23. $c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

**24. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b6$
 $\mathbb{Q}c6\#$**



At first, I thought I was losing a pawn by force but noticed that as soon as ... $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ happens, I would have $\mathbb{W}xd6$ since ... $\mathbb{E}d8$ is no longer possible! So I simply had to wait.

26. $h4$!

An important move and the best one both practically and objectively. It seems like Black has to respond quickly to this active move, but in fact, patience was required from Black.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xa5?$

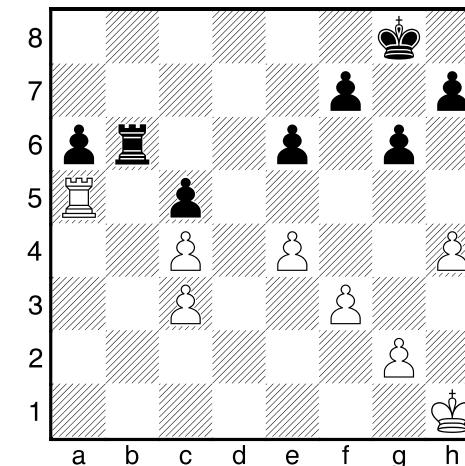
26... $\mathbb{E}d8$! Black has to secure d6 first, but White can still resist with 27. $\mathbb{W}g5$ or 27. $h5$!? or 27. $\mathbb{E}da1$!?

27. $\mathbb{W}xd6=$

Nicholas was visibly

disappointed here as he had missed that I can now take d6.

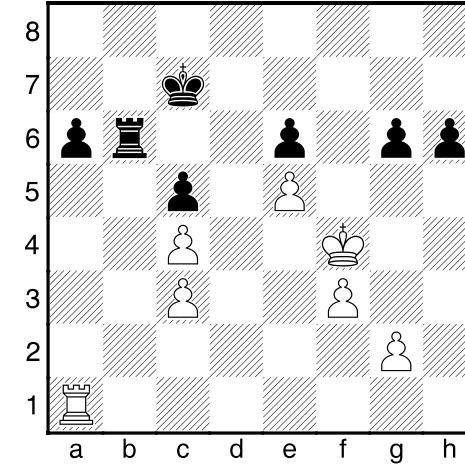
**27... $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 28. $\mathbb{E}xd6$ $\mathbb{E}xb6$
29. $\mathbb{E}xb6$ $\mathbb{E}xb6$ 30. $\mathbb{E}xa5$**



30... $\mathbb{E}c6$ 31. $e5$

Here I started to get slight glimmers of hope to win this, but most of all, I was relieved to have escaped a very dangerous position.

**31... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
33. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $h6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
35. $h5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 36. $h\times g6$ $f\times g6$
37. $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{E}b6$**



38. $\mathbb{E}h1$

Too hasty. Black's rook can't move yet, so I could have taken the opportunity to play g3 and improve my position first. Black can draw, but to me it is not trivial.

38. $g3$!:

38... $\mathbb{Q}b7$? this natural move loses. I will give some sample lines: 39. $\mathbb{E}h1$ $a5$ 40. $\mathbb{E}xh6$ $a4$ 41. $\mathbb{E}h1$ $a3$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}g5$! (*The natural move seems to be $\mathbb{E}a1$ to stop the a-pawn, but that is actually a serious mistake: 42. $\mathbb{E}a1$? $\mathbb{E}b3$! 43. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{E}xc3$ =) 42... $\mathbb{E}b3$ 43. $\mathbb{E}c1$. The pawn on c3 is key and White does not mind the passed pawn coming to a2: 43... $a2$ 44. $\mathbb{E}a1$ + -;*

38... $\mathbb{E}b3$! is Black's best

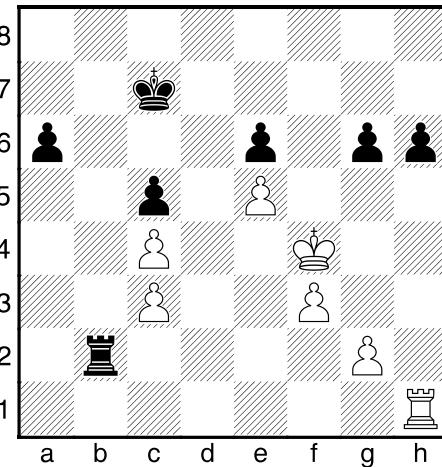
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defense, to sacrifice the a6 pawn; e.g. 39. $\mathbb{B}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7=$.

38... $\mathbb{B}b2$



39. $\mathbb{B}xh6$

39. $\mathbb{B}xh6$ I considered this here but it seemed too risky and unnecessary given the tournament situation.

a) 39... $\mathbb{g}5+!=$ 40. $\mathbb{g}g4$ (40. $\mathbb{e}e3$ $\mathbb{c}c2=$) 40... $\mathbb{e}e2$;

b) 39... $\mathbb{c}c2$ 40. $\mathbb{B}xh6$ $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 41. $\mathbb{B}xg6$ $\mathbb{B}xc4+=$;

c) 39... $h5?$ 40. $\mathbb{g}g5$ $\mathbb{g}g2$ 41. $\mathbb{B}h3!+-$ White calmly allows Black to run with the a-pawn. Hard to play as a human.

d) 39... $a5$ 40. $\mathbb{B}xh6\pm$ It turns out

this is actually good for White but computer-level precision is required.

39... $\mathbb{B}xg2$
 40. $\mathbb{B}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$
 41. $\mathbb{B}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$
 42. $\mathbb{B}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$
 43. $\mathbb{B}h8+$

Not what I wanted before the game, but certainly a good result considering the position I had after I exchanged light-squared bishops.

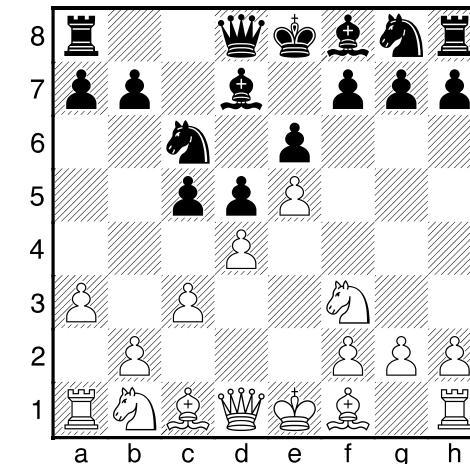
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Noritsyn, Nikolay (2590)
Thavandiran, Shiyam (2475)
 2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto (8), 01.04.2024

Notes:
IM Shiyam Thavandiran

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5
 4. c3 $\mathbb{N}c6$ 5. $\mathbb{N}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 6. a3



6. $\mathbb{N}e2$ is by far the more popular move and what Nikolay's younger brother chose in Rd 2.

GM Sambuev
 IM Noritsyn
 GM Rodrigue-Lemieux

Monsters in the dark...

Chess Canada

Thayandran



6...c4

6...f6 the main alternative.

7.♘bd2 ♘a5 8.h4

Not the most popular move, but the computer approves.

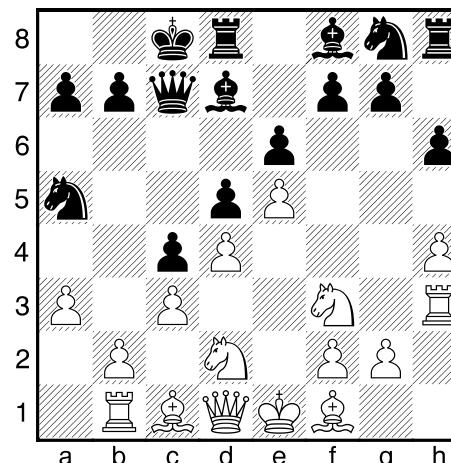
8...h6?!

A move that's not necessary and simply a waste of a tempo as we will see later. However, since it's a closed position, this inaccuracy is not critical.

9.♗h3

Nikolay was playing quickly here but I was happy to see this as now it's not clear where White's king will go.

9...♝c7 10.♝b1 0-0-0



When we see long castling,

excitement usually follows.

11.b3 cxb3 12.♘xb3 ♘a4

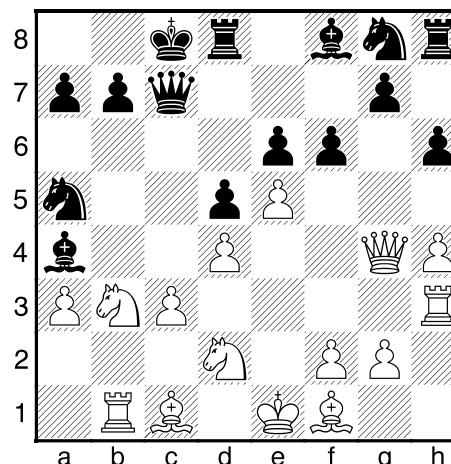
13.♘fd2

I didn't believe in this for White.

13...f6

The quintessential French Defense move, trying to break down White's center.

14.♗g4

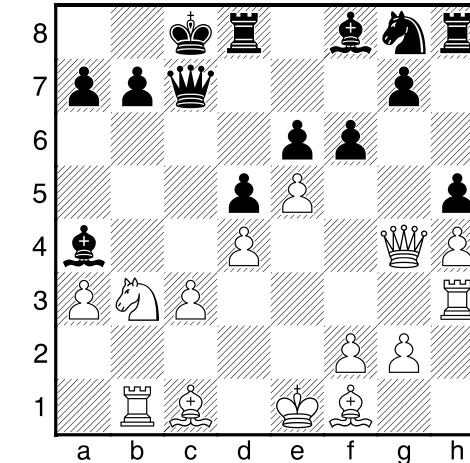


A critical moment where I thought for 16 minutes before finding the right sequence of moves.

14...♘xb3!

It's important to play this first. Not 14...h5 15.♗xe6+ ♔d7 16.♗xd5 ♔xh3 17.♗xa5±.

15.♗xb3 h5!



We see now that Black could have saved a tempo by not playing 8...h6 earlier.

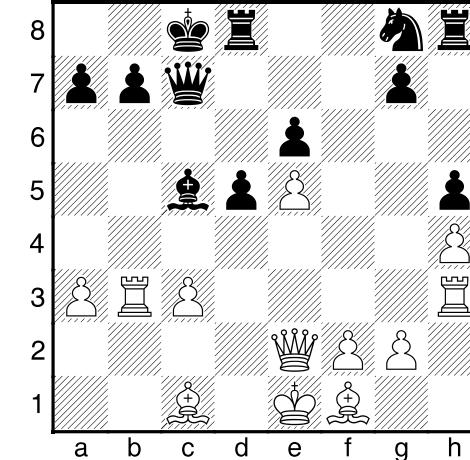
16.♔e2

During the game I assumed 16.♔xe6+!? ♔d7 was winning, but Stockfish 17 actually evaluates the position as balanced after 17.♔f7! ♔xh3 18.♔xc7+ ♔xc7 19.♔xh3.

16...fxe5 17.dxe5

17.♔g5!? Stockfish 17's suggestion: a precise move to take away any ...♗e7/♗f8 options as we will see later.

17...♘xb3 18.♗xb3 ♘c5



19.♗g3?

□ 19.♗e3 White had to exchange these bishops at this moment, since after the next move it becomes difficult to achieve this. 19.♗g5 ♘e7± is why 17.♔g5 would have been a nice finesse.

19...♘h6!

I really liked my position here and felt quite optimistic about my winning chances.

20.♗g5

20.♗e3 ♘f5±.

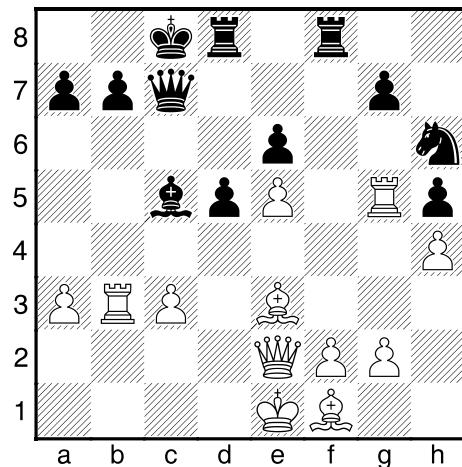
20.♔xh6 gxh6 was my idea 21.♔xh5? (21.f4!? with the idea to play ♘f3–g3–♔h3 to solidify White's loose position.) 21...♗h8± and White will get crushed here.



20...♜hf8

Now Black is objectively better, but the position remains very complex.

21.♝e3



21...♜f7

This move cost me a lot of time. Objectively, it's not nearly one of the best options but I was happy to find it during the game, and in such a complex position, it's hard to play perfectly.

21...♝xe3!? 22.♜xe3 ♜b8 also gives Black a pleasant initiative. 21...♞g4! would have been strongest. 22.♝xc5 ♜xc5 23.f3 but here Black must find 23...♝f7! the key move that I missed in this line. The point being 24.fxg4? ♜df8+.

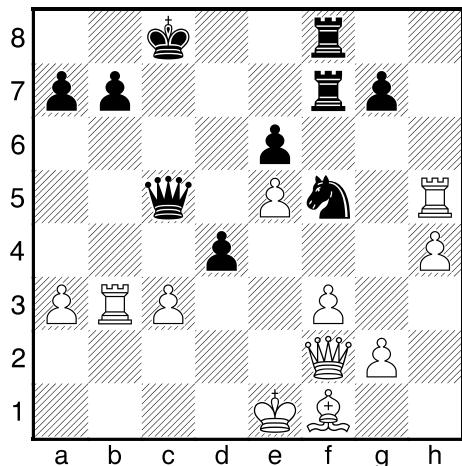
22.♝xh5

22.♝xc5 ♜xc5 23.♝e3! White could equalize by forcing a queen trade, but the computer lines here are long and complex after both 23...♛a5 and 23...♜xe3+.

22...♜df8

I definitely recalled [Kasparov's](#) famous ...♜e7 and ...♜e8 doubling of rooks in the final game of the 1985 World Chess Championship match that crowned him as the World Champion.

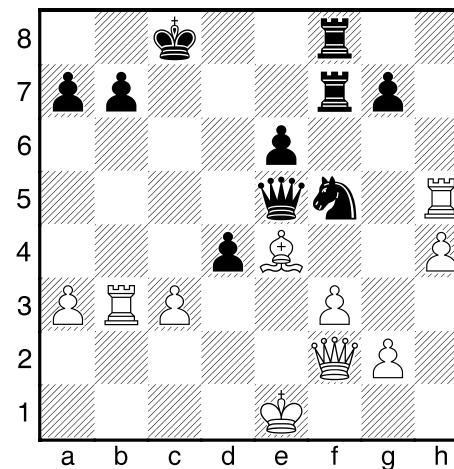
**23.f3 ♜f5 24.♝xc5 ♜xc5
25.♛f2 d4**



I played inventively to get to this much better position, but it cost me too much time on the clock.

Now I had less than 3 minutes to reach move 40, while my opponent had 27 minutes.

26.♝d3 ♜xe5+ 27.♝e4!?



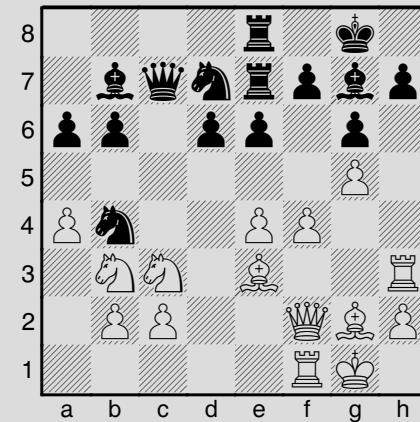
An unpleasant move to face and therefore a great practical attempt. With so much tension in the center and my own king being aimed at, I didn't have the time or nerves to react well.

27...♛a5??

Panic, and the position suddenly is equal again after the Queen moves from the center. My idea was to stop cxd4 but this was the wrong way to do it.

The right way was 27...♝c7! redeploying the rook and winning the game. It's hard to suggest a

In the K-K game Shiyam refers to in his notes, Karpov trailed by 1 point in the final game of the World Championship match. Knowing White had to play for a win, and seeing that the only way to do that was to push f4-f5, Kasparov piled up behind his e6-pawn, guaranteeing that f5 would explode in Karpov's face:



25.♝d1 f5 26.gxf6 ♜xf6 27.♝g3
♝f7 28.♝xb6 ♜b8 29.♝e3 ♜h5
30.♝g4 ♜f6 31.♝h4 g5 32.fxg5
♝g4 33.♝d2 ♜xe3 34.♝xe3
♝xc2 35.♝b6 ♜a8 36.♝xd6
♝b7 37.♝xa6 ♜xb3 38.♝xe6
♝xb2 39.♝c4 ♜h8 40.e5 ♜a7+
41.♚h1 ♜xg2+ 42.♝xg2 ♜d4+
0-1

Karpov - Kasparov
World Ch., Moscow (g.24),
09.11.1985

Chess Canada

Thayandiran

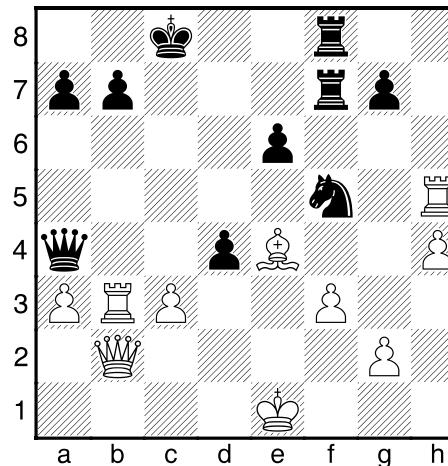


move for White: 28.cxd4 (28.g4 dxcc3+) 28... $\mathbb{R}c1+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 30. $\mathbb{R}e3$ (30. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{R}d1+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}c7+!$) 30... $\mathbb{R}a1-$ (30... $\mathbb{Q}xe3?$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xc1!$).

28. $\mathbb{W}d2$

Renewing the threat.

28... $\mathbb{W}a4$ 29. $\mathbb{W}b2$



Now my own king's safety is in question and I reacted with another blunder.

29... $\mathbb{Q}d6??$ 30. $\mathbb{R}b4$

I simply missed this.

30... $\mathbb{W}e8$

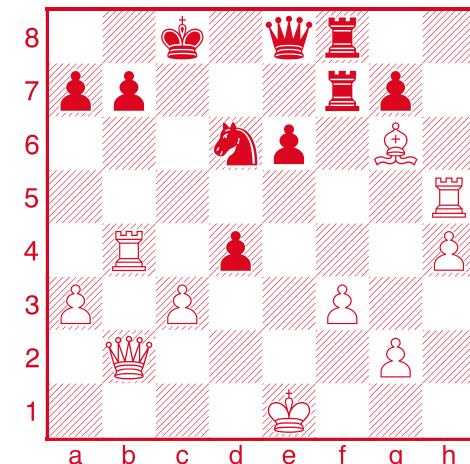
30... $\mathbb{W}a6$ 31. $\mathbb{R}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$
(31... $\mathbb{R}c7?$ was *invisible to me* during the game.) 32. $\mathbb{R}c6!+$ is why I went for ... $\mathbb{W}e8$.

31. $\mathbb{Q}g6?$

31. $\mathbb{R}xd4!$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 32. $\mathbb{R}b4$ b6 is the best White can get, and while there's no doubt that White's on top, the conversion is far from guaranteed due to the dark-squared weaknesses around White's king and the misplaced rook on h5.

31. $\mathbb{R}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 32. $\mathbb{R}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

Amazingly, Stockfish 17 evaluates this position as equal, which coincides with my feelings during the game. While I completely lost the thread the last few moves, I still believed in the dynamic potential of my pieces.



At this point I had 58 seconds left before even writing the move down, and I can't recall

everything I felt. While it was unpleasant to have not foreseen this at all, I quickly realized that after 31...e5, the position remains highly complex. Indeed, White has to play with computer-like precision to maintain a big advantage. But I somehow spotted ... $\mathbb{R}xf3$ and of course spent some time rechecking because it's hard to believe it works, but it does.

31... $\mathbb{R}xf3!!$

Played with 18 seconds left on my clock.

31...e5!? 32. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ (32. $\mathbb{W}c2$ e4 33. $\mathbb{R}e5!+/-$) 32... $\mathbb{R}xf7$ 33.cxd4 exd4+ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f1\Box$ White's only winning move but even here Black can still create counterplay. 34... $\mathbb{Q}e4!?$ (34... $\mathbb{R}c7!?$ 35. $\mathbb{R}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 36. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 38. $\mathbb{W}xd5+/-$) 35. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ (35. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{R}c7$ 36. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xh5$ 37. $\mathbb{W}xe4+/-$) 35... $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 37. $\mathbb{W}xa7+/-$.

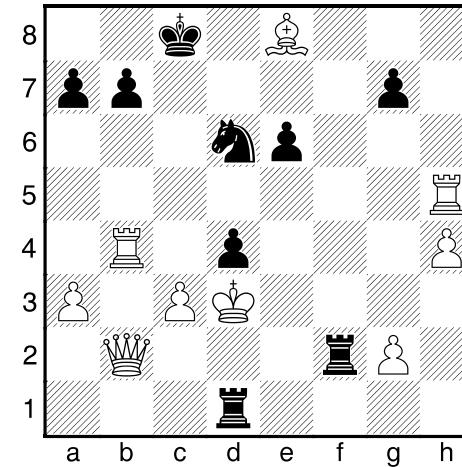
32. $\mathbb{Q}xe8??$

Nikolay spent 4 of his 16 minutes on this. I believe he considered ... $\mathbb{R}e3+$ but not what I played in the game. 32.gxf3 $\mathbb{W}xg6\infty$.

32... $\mathbb{R}f1+\Box$

It was impossible for me to stay seated and I stood up out of pure adrenaline. Nikolay paused for a few minutes now and I could see he realized it was forced checkmate. He was a gentleman to play out the next couple of moves and resign in the most picturesque position.

33. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{R}8f2+$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{R}d1+$



As I exited the playing hall I ran into **FM Goran Milecevic**, one of my trainers during my formative chess years. I couldn't help but pump my fist while telling him I won the game.

0-1

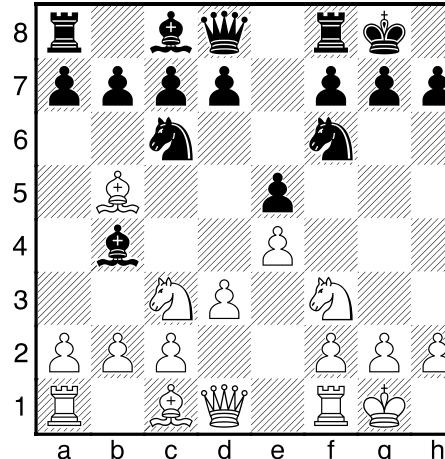


Thavandiran, Shiyam (2475)
Sai, Krishna GV (2447)
 2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto
 (9), 01.04.2024

Notes:
IM Shiyam Thavandiran

Before the game, I grabbed a coffee, even though it meant arriving late for the game. This proved to be a good choice, as I would need it for this 117 move 6-hour marathon game!

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♘b4 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3



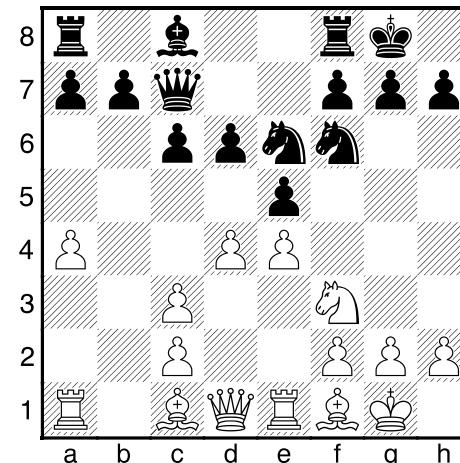
Since this was the second game of the day and not much time for my opponent to prepare, I

didn't have any concerns about repeating the line I played against Sambuev.

6...♗xc3 7.bxc3 d6 8.♗g5 ♘e7 9.♗e1 ♖d8 10.d4 ♖e6 11.♗c1 c6

Not the most typical, as Black usually plays ...c5.

12.♗f1 ♘c7 13.a4



This move cost me 18 minutes on the clock, as I was trying to come up with a good concept of playing. I wanted to go for some ♖h4-f5 ideas but ...d5 seemed to be a good response. I vaguely remembered playing a couple of rapid training games against Sai several years ago and not liking my position after allowing

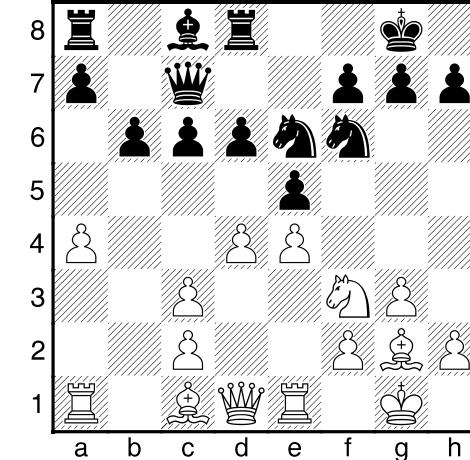
a timely ...d5. I believe that memory influenced me in this game to keep the center under constant watch.

13...♖d8 14.g3

Objectively, White actually can go for ♖h4, but the position becomes very complex. I decided to continue playing slowly, but the computer prefers more direct play here.

14.a5!? is a pretty natural follow-up to a4! I may have just missed that ...b6 was an idea for Black.

14...b6 15.♗g2



15...♗a6

15...h6!? 16.♗h4?! ♖g5!= 17.f4? ♖h3+! is one nice computer line that shows how Black can respond energetically in this position.





16.♗b2

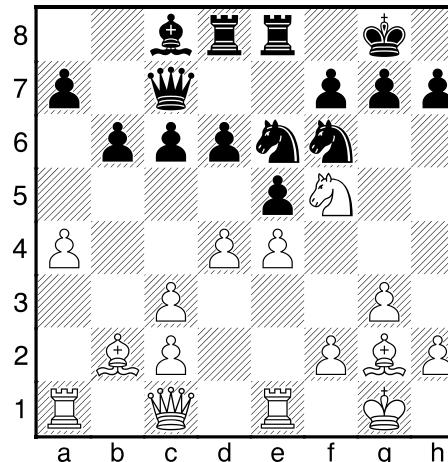
So far just normal developing moves, but I was eating a lot of time on the clock.

16...♝e8 17.♗h4

I still liked my position a lot and indeed I am slightly better.

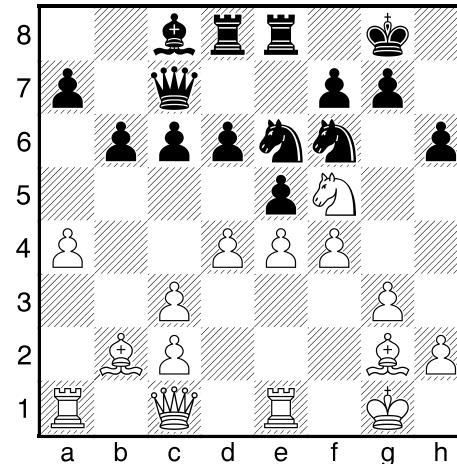
17...♜ad8 18.♘f5 ♜c8

19.♚c1



I was really proud of this move as it was going with one of my tournament goals of playing non-routine chess. I noticed that the queen was better placed on c1 instead of d2 in a lot of lines for tactical reasons due to the d8-rook and f6-knight. The computer does not like this move but in a practical game, this position seems passive and unpleasant for Black.

19...h6 20.f4



Played with just over 16 minutes left to make move 40 while my opponent had 41 minutes here.

20...♞f8??

A big blunder played after 15 minutes of thought! This was the 9th round of a tough, long tournament and perhaps that can explain it.

Somehow Black is supposed to be better now (?), but I think the computer line here is a very unnatural way of playing: 20...exf4 already an unusual move to voluntarily give up the center, 21.gxf4 ♞h5 22.♗f1 d5 23.e5 it seems like White has improved his pawn structure, but the issue is the dark-squared bishop and

a1-rook are not playing at all, so 23...f6; the computer line continues with 24.♗g3 ♞hxf4, but I wanted to show just the first few moves.

20...♞h7!? seems like a more human defense.

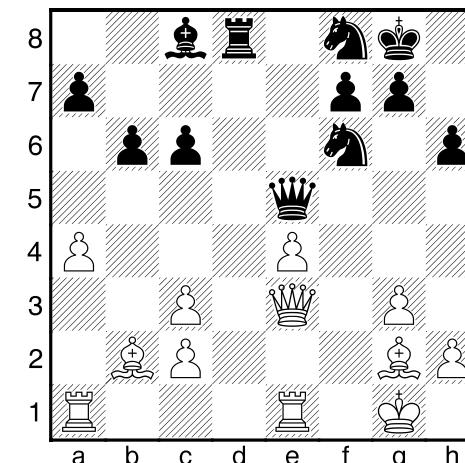
21.♗xd6!

A typical but very nice tactical trick here to collapse Black's center and win material.

**21...♛xd6 22.fxe5 ♜xe5
23.dxe5 ♜c5+ 24.♛e3**

Precision is very much required as Black has dangerous threats with ...♞g4.

24...♛xe5



25.h3!

25.♜ad1 ♞g4!

25...♝g6 26.♜ad1 ♜e8

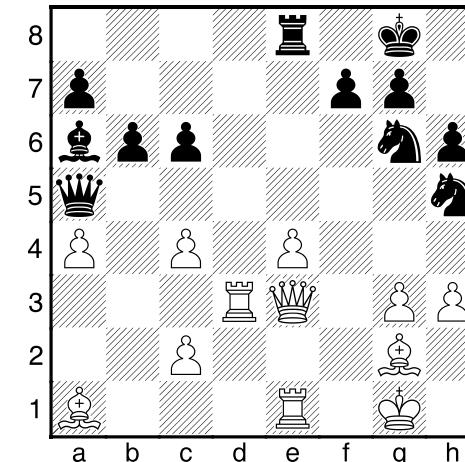
27.♝a1!

Finally preparing to activate the dormant bishop.

27...♝h5 28.♝d3!

28.♚h2 ♜f6 29.c4 ♜h5 seemed annoying, and I correctly avoided this.

28...♝a6 29.c4! ♜a5



30.♝c3

Sacrificing a pawn in order to trade queens — following the classical strategy of simplifying the position when converting a material advantage.

30...♛xa4 31.♝a1 ♛xc4

32.♝d4

Forcing the queen trade.

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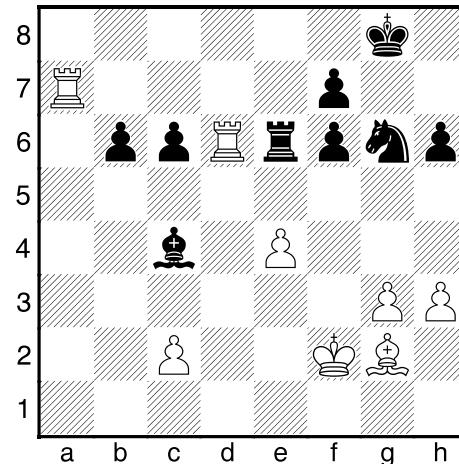
Thayandiran



32... $\mathbb{W}e2$

32... $\mathbb{W}b5?$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ and the bishop is lost.

33. $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 34. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$
 35. $\mathbb{B}dd7$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
 37. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $gxf6$ 38. $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{B}e6$



Thus far I had been displaying great technique, but here I made a serious inaccuracy by not simply trading rooks. I believe I wanted to leave Black with the doubled pawns, but it was far more important to deprive Black of any counterplay.

39. $\mathbb{B}d8+?!$

\square 39. $\mathbb{B}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ (39... $fxe6$
 40. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ and this additional trade would just be an added bonus.)
 40. $\mathbb{B}a6+...$

39... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}e5$

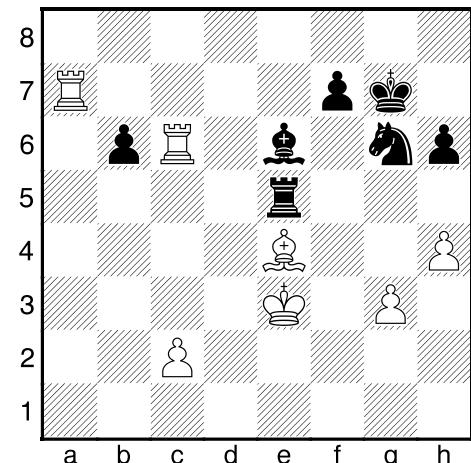
I recall that I partly kept the rooks on because I imagined I could make some mating threats with the two rooks. Now that we reached the time control, I realized that this was not possible and I had a lot more work to do.

41.h4

41. $\mathbb{B}aa8?!$ $f5\leftarrow$;
 41.g4!? as prophylaxis against ...f5.

41... $f5$ 42. $\mathbb{exf5}$ $\mathbb{B}xf5$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}e3$
 $\mathbb{B}c5$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 45. $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{B}e5$
 45... $\mathbb{B}c4$ 46. $\mathbb{B}xe6+...$

46. $\mathbb{B}xc6$



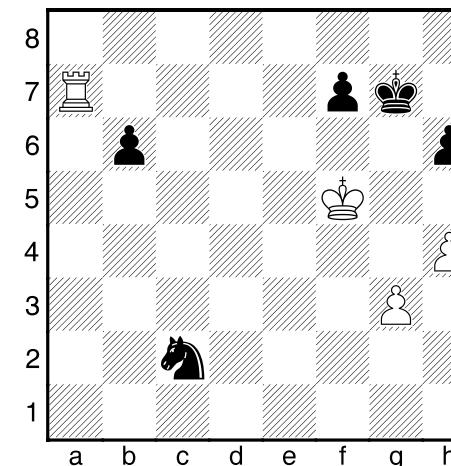
A risky looking move that required a lot of calculation and rechecking.

46... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 47. $\mathbb{B}c4$ $\mathbb{B}e6$ 48. $\mathbb{B}b4$

$\mathbb{Q}e7$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

With this important move ($\mathbb{Q}f3$ also worked), White avoids all tactical tricks.

49... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 50. $\mathbb{B}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5+$
 51. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}f6+$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{B}f2$
 53. $\mathbb{B}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 54. $\mathbb{B}f5$ $\mathbb{B}xf5$
 55. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$



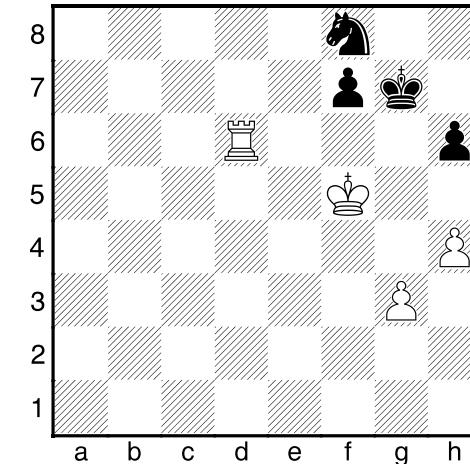
56. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

A little finesse to gain some time.

56... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 57. $\mathbb{B}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$
 58. $\mathbb{B}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 60. $\mathbb{B}d6$

We each had ~3 minutes here but I somehow could not figure out the winning plan. Analyzing later at home, the simplest idea is a timely $\mathbb{B}g4+$ and eventually invading with $\mathbb{Q}f6$.

60... $\mathbb{Q}f8$



61. $\mathbb{B}a6$

61. $\mathbb{B}d4!$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 62. $\mathbb{B}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
 63. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ I believe this is a very subtle idea that is not easy to spot over the board. White puts Black in zugzwang after which the decisive breakthrough follows:

64... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 65. $\mathbb{B}b4$ and Black will have to concede something (e.g. pushing f6) after which White easily wins;

64... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 65. $\mathbb{B}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (65... $\mathbb{Q}g7$
 66. $\mathbb{B}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 67. $\mathbb{B}b8$; 65... $\mathbb{Q}e7$
 66. $\mathbb{B}b6$ $h5$ 67. $\mathbb{B}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 68. $\mathbb{B}b8$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 69. $\mathbb{B}xe8+$) 66. $\mathbb{B}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$:

And now there are two ways:
 67. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ the human way 67... $\mathbb{Q}e6$
 68. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 69. $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$
 70. $\mathbb{B}f6+...$

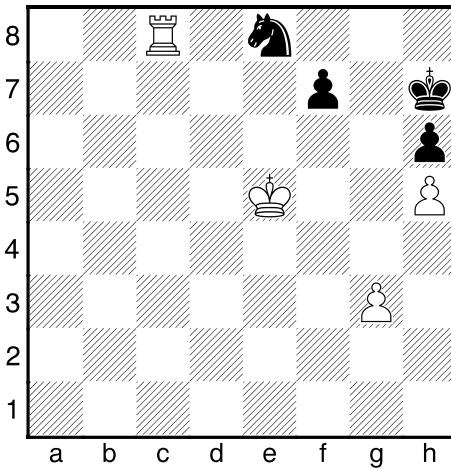
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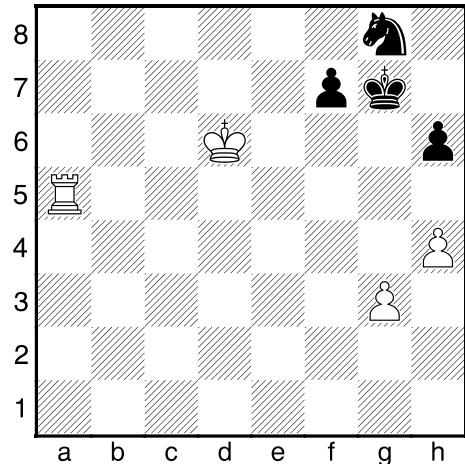
67.h5 the computer way ♖e8
68.♖c6 ♔h7 69.♖c8 this runs into a bolt from the blue:

Analysis Diagram



69...♘f6!! 70.♖c3 ♘xh5 71.g4 miraculously, this only move still wins for White, 71...♗g7 72.♔f6+-.

61...♗g6 62.♖a7 ♘f8
63.♔e5 ♘g6+ 64.♔d6 ♔f6
65.♖a1 ♘e7 66.♖f1+ ♘f5+
67.♔d5 ♔g6 68.♔e5 ♘e7
69.♖f6+ ♔g7 70.♖a6 ♘c8
71.♖a3 ♔g6 72.♖c3 ♘e7
73.♖c7 ♘g8 74.♖a7 ♔g7
75.♔d6 ♔g6 76.♖a5 ♔g7
77.♖f5 ♔g6 78.♖a5 ♔g7



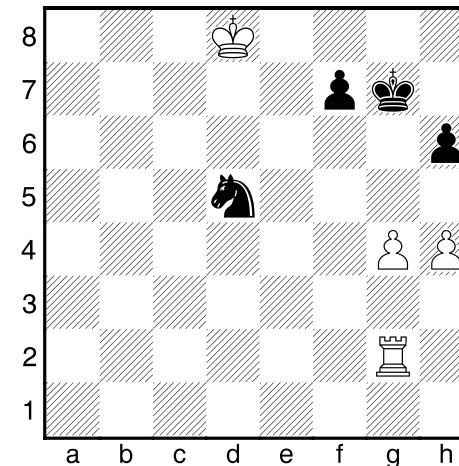
It should also be said that at some point during this game it became clear due to results on the other boards, that a win would clinch the Canadian Champion title with a round to spare. Now, I was certainly getting frustrated that I may actually draw this ending despite having a winning position since move 20.

79.♖a8 ♘f6 80.♖a4 ♘e8+
81.♔e7 ♘f6 82.♖d4 ♘g8+
83.♔d6 ♘f6 84.g4

Played mainly out of fear that I would accidentally fall into a threefold repetition.

84...♔g6 85.♖f4 ♔g7
86.♖a4 ♘e8+ 87.♔e7 ♘f6
88.♖d4 ♘g8+ 89.♔d6 ♘f6

90.♖b4 ♘e8+ 91.♔e7 ♘f6
92.♖d4 ♘g8+ 93.♔d8 ♘f6
94.♖f4 ♘d5 95.♖f2 ♘f6
96.♖g2 ♘d5



97.♖g1? ♘f4

97...h5! would draw. I was aware that ...h5 would be Black's best try and was very relieved when my opponent wanted to continue trying to keep a fortress.

98.♔e8 ♘g6

98...h5 was the last chance.

99.h5!

Finally I play h5 when I could see the forced win.

99...♔e5 100.♖f1 f6 101.♖f4
♘d3 102.♖d4 ♘e5 103.♖e4
♔g8 104.♔e7 ♔g7 105.♖f4
♘c6+ 106.♔d7 ♘e5+

107.♔e6 ♘f7 108.♖xf6
♘g5+ 109.♔f5 ♘f3
110.♖g6+ ♔h7 111.♖a6
♘h4+ 112.♔f6 ♔g8
113.♖a8+ ♔h7 114.♖a3 ♔g8
115.♖g3 ♔h7 116.g5 hxg5
117.♔xg5

... and with that, I became Canadian Champion!

One of the happiest moments of my life.

1-0

Dorrance, Adam (2429)
Thavandiran, Shiyam (2475)
2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto (10), 02.04.2024

Notes:
IM Shiyam Thavandiran

Unsurprisingly, I didn't get much sleep before this game, simply from pure excitement and receiving a flood of congratulatory messages that made it nearly impossible to unwind. Still, during dinner at home I made sure to watch an interview that Ian

Chess Canada

Thayandiran



Nepomniachtchi gave after his tournament-clinching penultimate round in the 2022 Candidates. He talked about how it was very important to him to remain professional even after securing the tournament win with a round to go. He recalled that in a similar situation in the 2020/2021 Candidates, he lost the last round to Ding and that made him depressed. So I took this lesson seriously and wanted to finish with a good game. As part of my morning routine, I had been listening to a playlist I created and "It Ain't Hard to Tell" by Nas started playing. This was incredibly inspirational to me, as it was the tenth and final song on his debut album, *Illmatic*, a

Adam Dorrance



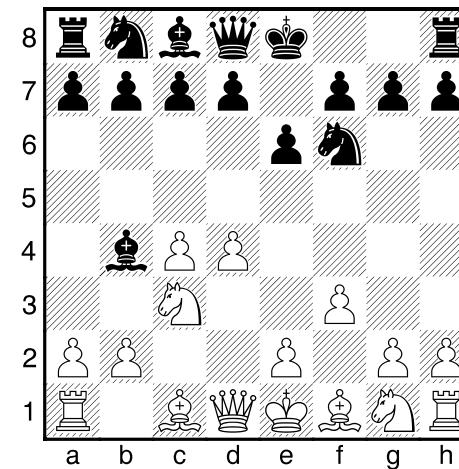
masterpiece in my favourite music genre of hip-hop. I realized that in some sense this tournament was my personal *Illmatic*, and in fact, that this

tenth game would be still a chance to show my best chess just as "It Ain't Hard to Tell" was my favourite song on *Illmatic*. Amazingly, I believe this final game of the Zonal fit the jazzy, smooth aura of "It Ain't Hard to Tell" that I tried to channel. Now that I think about it, I also wore a suit for the last round to look nice for the photos, and this surely further cultivated the showmanship mindset that I had.

1.d4 $\mathbb{N}f6$ 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{N}c3$

I didn't prepare for this game and I'm glad I didn't - Adam usually plays the Catalan.

3... $\mathbb{N}b4$ 4.f3



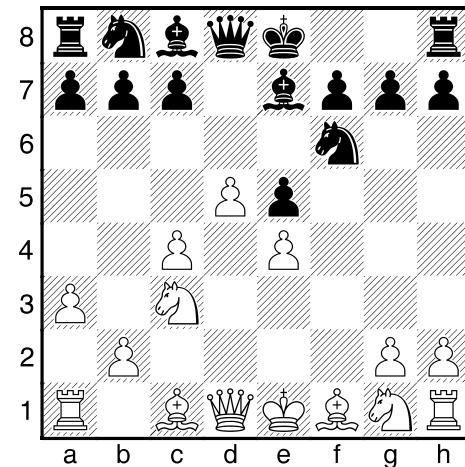
I certainly would not have predicted the 4.f3 Nimzo. Adam

told me after the game that he had clinched the FM title and so he decided to try something new.

4...d5

After some time, I decided to go for a setup I had seen in a game between the now retired Canadian GM's **Mark Bluvshtein** and **Anton Kovalyov**. I liked the setup for Black because it gave me some strategic trumps that I could work with and maneuver around. However, as we will see, it is risky if White knows what to do.

5.a3 $\mathbb{N}e7$ 6.e4 dx \mathbb{N} 7.fxe4 e5 8.d5



8... $\mathbb{N}c5$

8...0-0-0! is possibly more precise, to discourage $\mathbb{N}g5$.

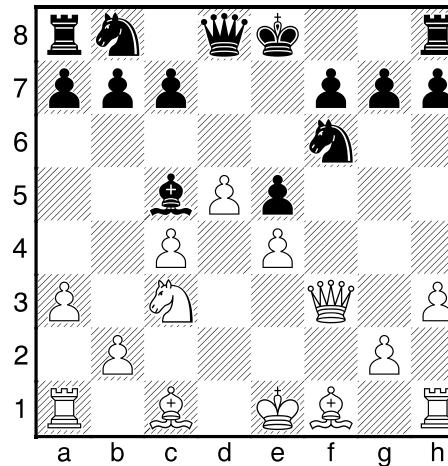
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Thayandran



9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5!$?
 (10... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $a5$ 12. 0-0-0+
 Wei,Y (2733)-Yuffa,D (2578)
 Moscow, 2019.) 11. $b4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$
 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $exd4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4\pm$.

9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 10. $h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$
 11. $\mathbb{W}xf3$



11... $a5!$?

11... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g5$:

12... $a5$ 13. 0-0-0 0-0 14. $g4$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16. $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$
 17. $g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ Bluvshtein,M
 (2548)-Kovalyov,A (2548)
 Montreal, 2008 (½-½,49). I
 didn't consciously recall that
 Anton used this same maneuver
 of ... $\mathbb{Q}e8-d6$, but likely it was
 subconsciously in my mind when
 playing this game.

12... $\mathbb{Q}d4$! 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$! and
 White retains an edge. (13.0-
 0-0? $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4\#$)
 13... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$? (13... $c5$?) 14. $\mathbb{Q}a2$
 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $exd4$ 16. $e5$!

Ganguly,S (2654)-Filippov,A
 (2607) Khanty-Mansiysk,
 2009. The story behind this
 game is worth reading in the
 fantastic book *The Anand Files*.
 Apparently, every move from
 this game this was leftover prep
 from the 2008 World Chess
 Championship match between
 Anand and Kramnik, where
 Ganguly was one of Anand's
 seconds.

12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Like many variations of the
 Sicilian where White castles
 queenside, it is best to keep the
 bishop on f1 to save a tempo
 and also sometimes develop to
 h3.

12. $\mathbb{Q}g5$! is more in the spirit of
 the position but this only became
 clear to me after the game.

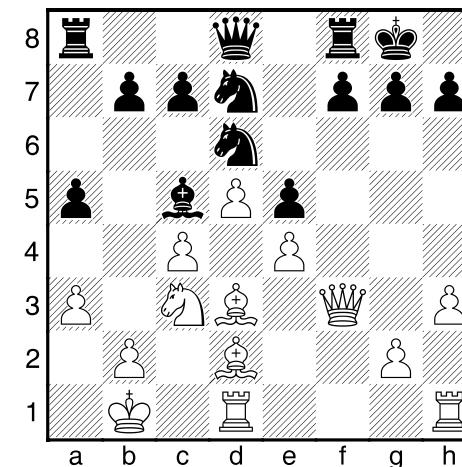
12... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$?

13... 0-0 14. 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e8$!

Beginning a nice regrouping of
 the pieces. White had to have
 played $\mathbb{Q}g5$ in the opening to
 stop this.

15. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$



16. $\mathbb{Q}df1$?

The computer does not like this
 and there is a big change in its
 evaluation. Indeed, Black's play
 becomes quite easy after this
 because in many lines the rook
 would be better placed on d1
 rather than f1, due to a potential
 opening of the d-file after ... $c6$.

16. $\mathbb{Q}b5$! was better, as was
 16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$! $c6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$! and White
 is still dominating the center with
 a kingside attack looming: 17...
 $a4$ 18. $h4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 19. $dxc6$ $bxcc6$
 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ + is a sample line

to show why $\mathbb{Q}df1$ was a big
 mistake.

16... $c6$! = 17. $g4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$!
 18. $\mathbb{W}d1$!

The best defense under the
 circumstances.

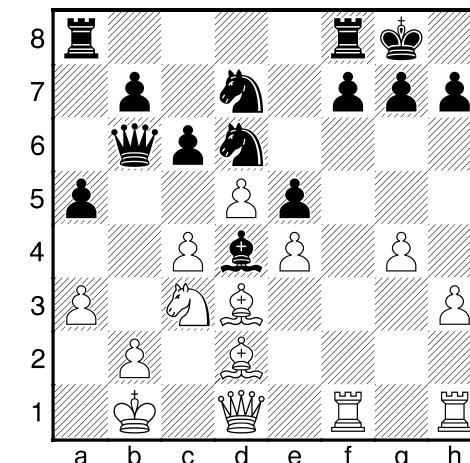
18. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b3$! and White is in
 trouble.

18. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $a4$! (18... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a4$)
 19. $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$! and the a4 pawn is
 immune because of mate on b2.
 Black will play ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ next with a
 dominating grip on the position.

18... $\mathbb{Q}d4$!

The only move to keep
 the advantage. 18... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$?

19. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ +-.



19. $\mathbb{W}c2$?

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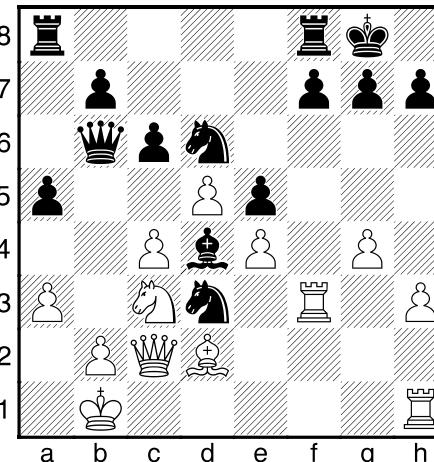
Thayandran



Incredibly, all of this had been played before — which I had no idea about. Understandably, I received a couple of messages after the game to ask if this was still part of my opening preparation, but as I had mentioned earlier, the Kovalyov game was my only reference point.

The predecessor continued: 19. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ and White is still much worse but can fight: 20. $\mathbb{W}e2?$ $\mathbb{B}ab8\#$ Sammour Hasbun,J (2463)-Gareyev,T (2570) Pawtucket, 2008. (20... $b5!-+$)

19... $\mathbb{Q}c5!-+$ 20. $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3!$



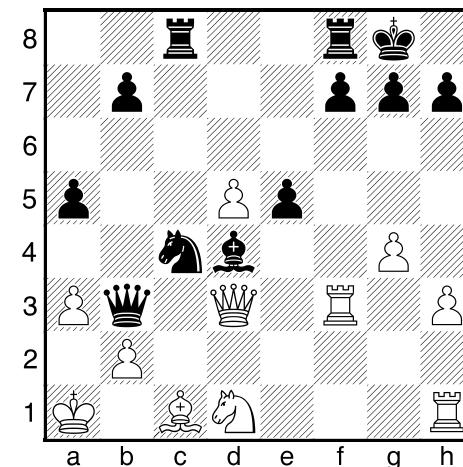
Here I couldn't help but recall the famous $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ from the 1971

Fischer-Petrosian Candidates Match, where Fischer unexpectedly traded his good knight for a bad bishop.

21. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}b3$

The point. Just as Fischer did, I traded in the good minor piece for a different advantage, which in this case is the critical b3 square.

22. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $cx d5$
24. $exd5$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d1$

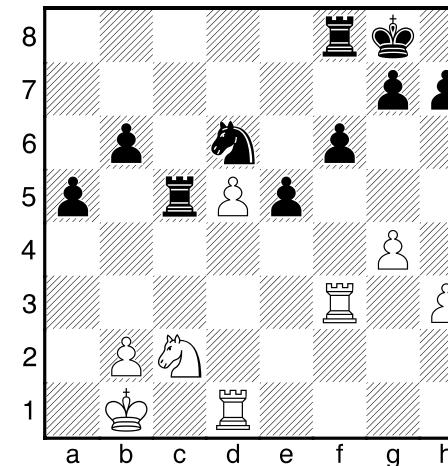


25... $\mathbb{W}xa3!-+$

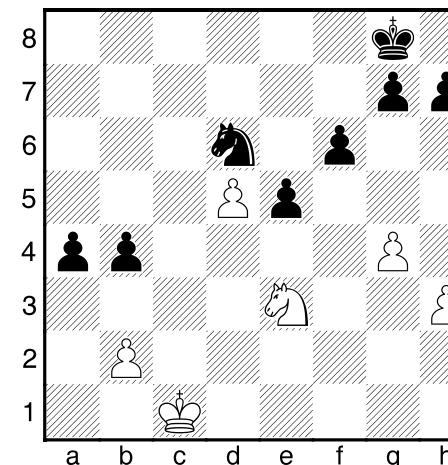
I suppose that this fancy move was due to the aforementioned showmanship mindset. Both ... $\mathbb{W}xd3$ and ... $\mathbb{W}b5$ are also completely winning.

26. $\mathbb{W}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

$\mathbb{Q}b5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $b6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e3$
 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}g5$
 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $f6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$
34. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$



35. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $a4$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $b5$
37. $\mathbb{Q}ff1$ $b4$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$
39. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}c1$
 $\mathbb{Q}xc1+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$



41... $g6!$

The f-pawn will start rolling.

42. $\mathbb{B}3!?$

A good practical try. I took some time here to think because it seemed like ... $\mathbb{A}xb3$ was the natural move, but I eventually realized that sacrificing the b-pawn to keep the passed a-pawn was much stronger.

42... $a3!$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $f5$

White can't deal with passed pawns on both sides.

44. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $f4$
46. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $f3$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $f2$

A smooth game I was very happy about and one worthy of my newly crowned Canadian Champion title.

With this win, I finished the tournament with an undefeated 9/10, two points ahead of second place.

0-1



The **2024 Canadian Zonals** took place March 27 - April 2, 2024 at Hart House, University of Toronto.

It was a pair of Swisses in two sections — a 10-round Open and 9-round Women's — to determine the National Champions, titles that entail an automatic place on the Olympiad team and a place in the next FIDE World Cup.

The previous article showed how IM Shiyam Thavandiran won the Open section.

The Women's title was won by **WGM Maili-Jade Ouellet**, on tie-break ahead of WIMs Yuanshan Li and Svitlana Demchenko. MJ annotates a complex penultimate-round draw for *Chess Canada*.

Following that are interesting games from other contenders, including four from three of the players who tied for =2nd-5th, plus two attacking games annotated by **IM Mark Plotkin**, and one more in the following article by **IM Mike Ivanov**.

Ouellet, Maili-Jade (2318) Pham, Bich Ngoc (2294)

2024 Canadian Women Zonal
Toronto (8), 01.04.2024

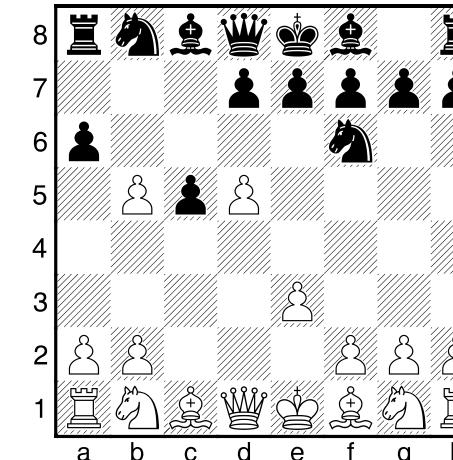
notes:
WGM Maili-Jade Ouellet

This was Round 8 of the Canadian Zonal. I was leading the tournament with a score of 6/7, while two players trailed closely with 5½, and Penny with 5. The stakes were high, as this game was crucial for retaining my title, qualifying for the Olympiad, and securing a spot in the Women's World Cup.

1.d4 $\mathbb{N}f6$ 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5

Penny chose a dynamic opening, as expected. Given the tournament standings, my preparation before the round had heavily focused on reviewing these types of lines (such as the Benko, Dutch, and possibly the King's Indian Defense), anticipating her need to play for a win.

4.cxb5 a6 5.e3

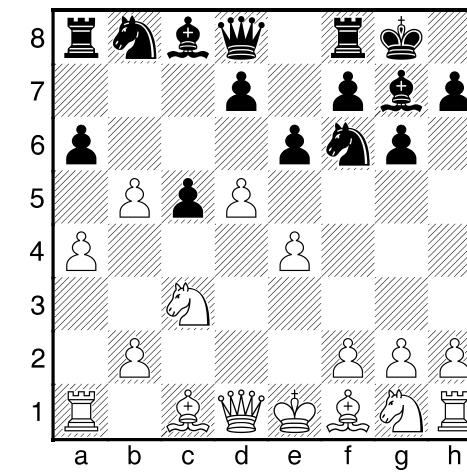


This was a line I had in my files for quite some time but had never had the opportunity to play over the board, and it caught my opponent by surprise.

The idea behind 5.e3 is to delay resolving the queenside structure. The plan usually involves playing $\mathbb{N}c3$, a4, and eventually e4. The kingside knight can go to f3 or e2, depending on Black's development. In the current position, Black's queenside remains undeveloped, which highlights the advantage of delaying the exchange of a/b pawns, even at the cost of a

tempo (e2–e3 followed by e3–e4, rather than e2–e4 at once).

5...g6 6. $\mathbb{N}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7.a4 0–0
8.e4 e6



9.dxe6!?

A decent move, but an inaccuracy, as 9.e5 is much stronger. Unfortunately, due to a lack of experience in the line, I forgot what the best continuation was and did not play it.

After 9.e5:

9... $\mathbb{N}e8$ 10. $\mathbb{N}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11. $\mathbb{N}c4$
White is up a pawn, while Black's pieces are undeveloped and lack space;

Chess Canada

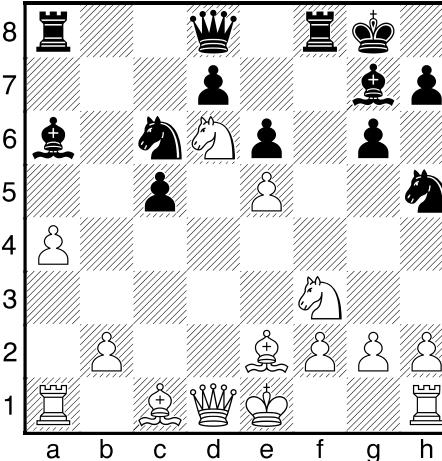
Zonal Games



9... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $exd5$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}a7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f3\pm$ threatening to take on c5 with a good game for White.

9...fxe6 10.e5 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $axb5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}a6?$!

14... $\mathbb{W}b6$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ was best.



15. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

After considerable thought, I chose this move, as it appeared to be a natural continuation, developing with tempo. However, I failed to foresee that it would lead to a relatively forced sequence resulting in the loss of my extra pawn and a slightly inferior position. From that point onward, I felt uncomfortable,

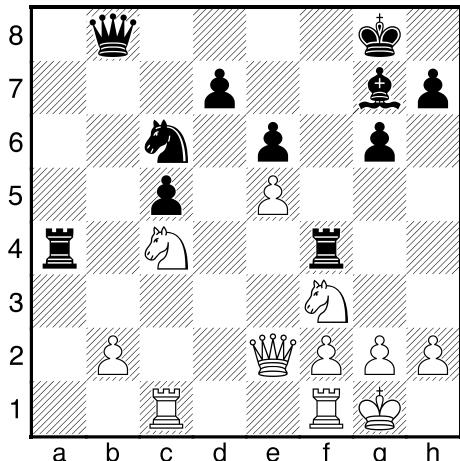
as I struggled to find optimal placement for my pieces while maintaining any realistic winning chances.

15. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{E}xa6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ would have allowed me to solidify the center and achieve a better position, with an extra pawn, well-placed pieces, and straightforward development.

15... $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$
17. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{E}xa6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}a7$
19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$
19.b3?? $\mathbb{Q}xe5-$ +.

19... $\mathbb{E}xa4$ 20. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$
21. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{E}xf4$ 22.0-0 $\mathbb{W}b8$

Putting pressure on the b2-pawn and threatening ... $\mathbb{W}b5$ resulting in a very uncomfortable pin.



23.g3
 Removing the rook from the 4th-rank.

23... $\mathbb{E}f8$
 23... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{E}xd4$ was possible, but not dangerous for White.

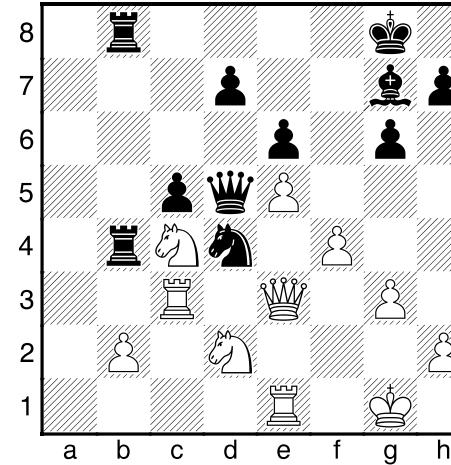
26... $\mathbb{W}a8$ 27.f4 $\mathbb{E}fb8$ 28. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{W}d5$

Women's Zonal

Top 4: WIM Yunshan Li, WIM Svitlana Demchenko, WIM Bich Ngoc Pham, WGM Maili-Jade Ouellet



Chess Canada Zonal Games



29. $\mathbb{W}e4$

Forcing a queen exchange as my king is weak. Also, removing the queens simplifies the position and makes it easier to play under time pressure.

29... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$

$\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$

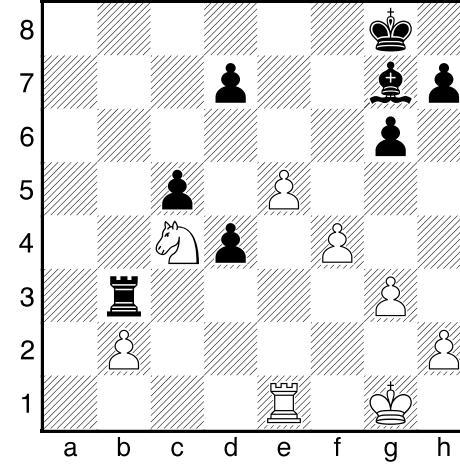
31. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xc3$

$\mathbb{Q}b4$ 33. $b3$ was the easiest way to equalize for White.

31... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xd5$

$exd5$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $d4$

34. $\mathbb{Q}c4$



34... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

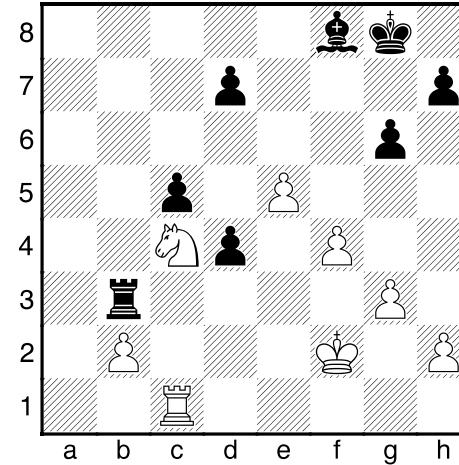
34... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

$\mathbb{Q}d3$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

39. $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$

41. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ was something I calculated and feared as my pieces are uncoordinated and inactive, while Black's king and rook are very active.

35. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$



Throughout the game, I felt uncomfortable with my position and under pressure, particularly as I believed my opponent was tactically sharper during this game. However, after Black's recent inaccuracies, I felt I had regained control and was confident I would not lose after successfully centralizing my king.

37. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

39. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

41. $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$

Penny does not repeat.

43. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ $\mathbb{Q}f2+$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$

$\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $c4$ 46. $b3$ $c3$

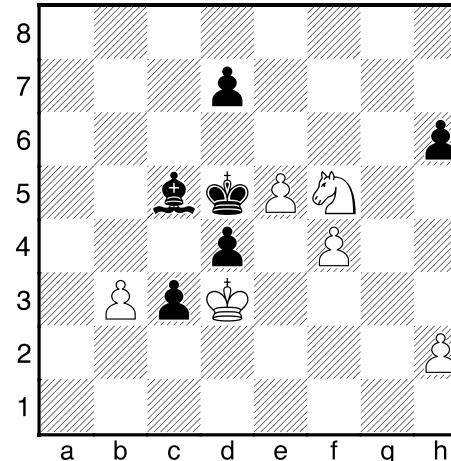
47. $\mathbb{Q}f3$



Hart House: Great Hall

Chess Canada

Zonal Games



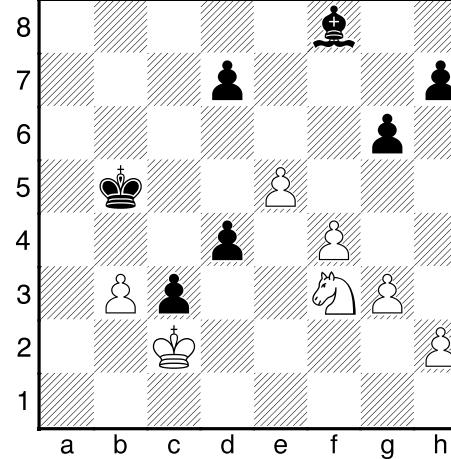
47... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

47... $\mathbb{Q}c5??$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}d3+-$.

48. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 49. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

50. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5

52. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ gxf4 53.gxf4

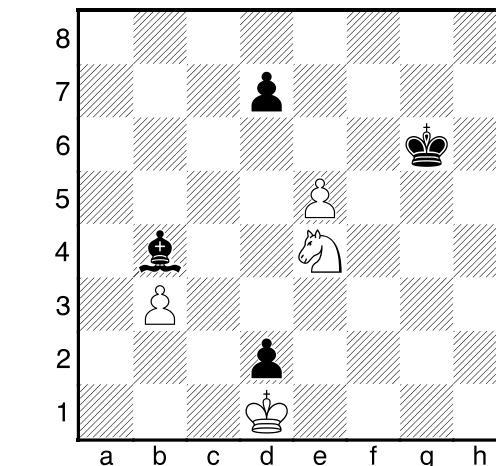


From this point on, I was the only one with winning chances as Penny has to be very careful.

53...c2!

Not the only move possible, but definitely the simplest and most effective.

54. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$
 d3+ 56. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}f7$
 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 58.h3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 59.h4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$
 60. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$
 62. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ d2 63. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$



64. $\mathbb{Q}f6$

64. $\mathbb{Q}xd2=$ but since I was not risking anything, I tried to keep some chances alive.

64... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 65. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$
 66. $\mathbb{Q}b8$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 67. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$
 68. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 69. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$
 70. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$

The game could have continued

a bit longer, but the position was clearly drawn, and I did not believe either of us would make a losing mistake. We agreed to a draw despite my desire to win to maintain my lead and her attempts to create chances of her own. As a result, there was a three-way tie going into the final round between Yunshan Li, Svitlana Demchenko, and myself. We all won our last round, but I emerged as the national champion due to better tiebreaks.

1/2



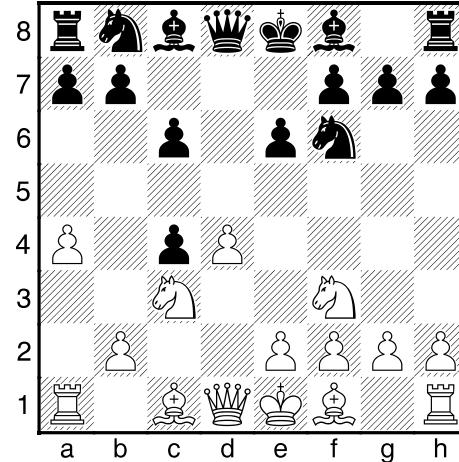
Ouellet, Maili-Jade (2318)
 Golubeva, Oksana (2158)

2024 Canadian Women Zonal
 Toronto (4.2), 30.03.2024

Notes: John Upper

1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5
 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ dxc4 5.a4 e6

Round 4
 Women's Zonal



Chess wisdom has changed dramatically.

Annotating a game from his 1929 World Championship match against Bogoljubow, [Alekhine](#) wrote:

It has been my peculiar luck that this illogical move (instead of the natural 5... $\mathbb{Q}f5$) has been adopted against me, with a disastrous effect, no less than four times, namely (besides the present game) by Bogoljubow again (Nottingham, 1936), by Dr Euwe (19th matchgame, 1935) and by the late German master, Helling, in Dresden, 1936.

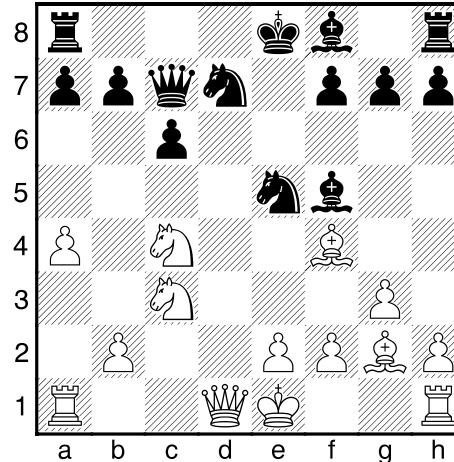
- Alekhine, *My Best Games of Chess*, (Russell, 2012).

A stickler might note that this move had been played not only "no less than four times", but *five* times, if we include Alekhine's 1933 loss to P.Brandes. But let's not be so pedantic. :)

To be fair to Alekhine, in those games he continued with 6.e4!?, leading to unbalanced positions where his skill dwarfed his opponents', making 5...e6 seem worse than it actually is. Enough games have been played since Alekhine's day that a moderately well-prepared mortal would have a good idea of how to play as Black, but that was not until decades later.

5...e6 jumped in popularity after Kramnik used it to score an easy draw in his 2004 match with Leko, and has since been played successfully by Carlsen, Caruana, Anand, Svidler and other top players.

For years, the mainline was:
 5... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ or e3 and $\mathbb{Q}xc4$
 6... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 8.g3
 e5 9.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$
 11. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ *Analysis Diagram*



This position appeared three times in the 1935 [Alekhine-Euwe World Championship match](#), where Black suffered a bit after ...f6 or ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$, but it came back to life with a move Morozevich sprang on Kasparov in 2000:

11...g5!? 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ gxf4 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$
 0-0-0 14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$:

14... $\mathbb{Q}g4$?! 15.a5! fxe4 16.hxg3
 a6 17. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}df6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$
 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ h5 20. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ ±
 and Black lost the h-pawn and the game in [Kasparov,G \(2851\)-Morozevich,A \(2748\) Corus Wijk aan Zee, 2000](#).

14... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$
 $\mathbb{Q}g8N$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (*threatening*
 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ +–) 17... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$
 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ □= and neither side can

avoid the repetition 19. $\mathbb{Q}e3$
 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ [Haessel,D \(2184\)-Upper,J \(1987\) CAN-ch, Guelph, 2011](#) ... a game which shows how a computer-prepped mortal can improve over giants of even the recent past. ☮

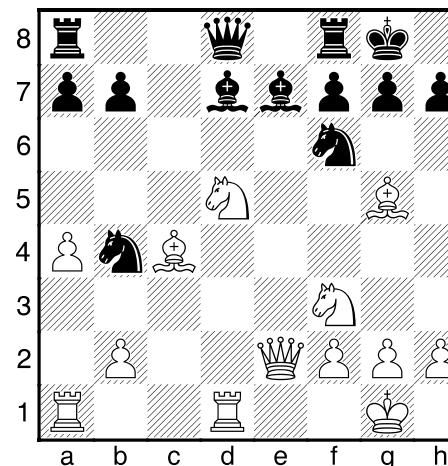
6.e3

This ensures White gets the c4-pawn back smoothly, and after the positionally obligatory ...c5 it transposes into a QGA position where Black hasn't played ...a6 and White has the move a2-a4 "for free". Current chess wisdom is that access to b4 gives Black near-equality.

6.e4 is an interesting gambit line, where Black gives up the DSB to keep the extra c-pawn: 6... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 7.e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ b5 9.axb5 (9.h4!?) 9... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10.bxc3 cxb5 11. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ where White usually goes $\mathbb{Q}h5$, hoping to soften up Black's kingside, before aiming the \mathbb{Q} to d6 via e4. Black is at least equal, but the non-standard positions are tricky.

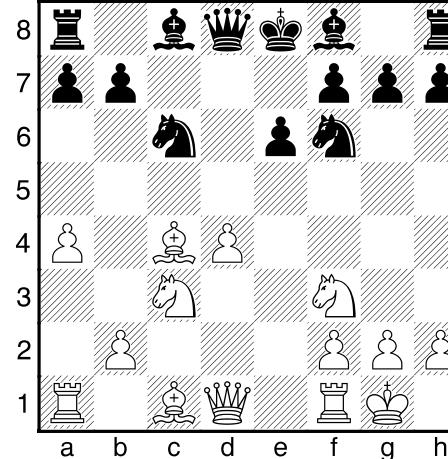
**6...c5 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8.0-0
 cxd4 9.exd4**

Chess Canada Zonal Games

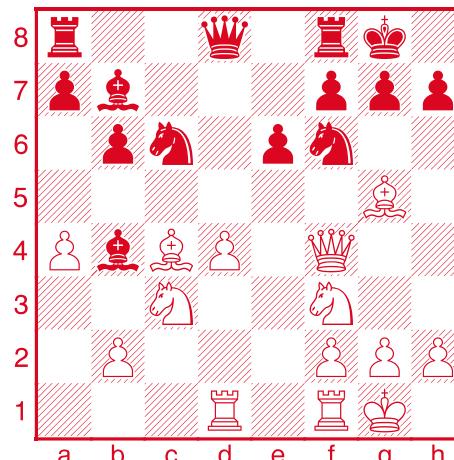


9... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

When White has played a2-a4, Black usually uses the b4 square for the \mathbb{Q} , where it helps control d5; for example: 9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10. $\mathbb{W}e2$ 0-0 11. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (12. $a5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{B}c8\infty$ Oparin,G (2671)-Caruana,F (2804) American Cup, Saint Louis, 2024) 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13.d5! $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ *Analysis Diagram*



10. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 0-0 11. $\mathbb{W}d2$ b6
12. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}f4!$



... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, ...h6, or something else?

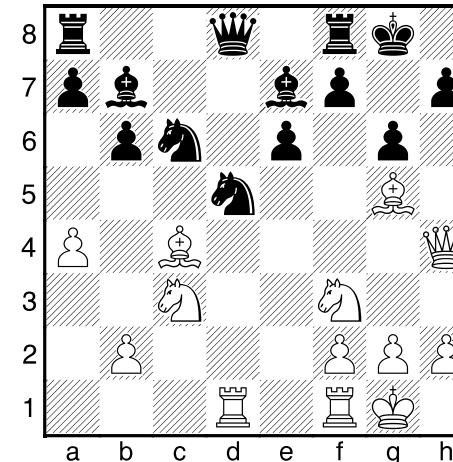
14... $\mathbb{Q}fxd5?$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe7\Box+-$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$
(15... $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$
17. $\mathbb{Q}xd7\Box+-$) 16. $\mathbb{Q}e5\Box$ $\mathbb{W}e8$
17. $\mathbb{Q}xd7\Box+-$ Chiku Ratte,O (2206)
-Corriveau,P (2031) Elite-ch
POM Montreal, 2013;

14... $\mathbb{Q}bxd5\Box$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5\Box$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ h6 \Box
18. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}hxg5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd7\pm$ White
scores about +130 Elo from
here! 19... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20.a5 $\mathbb{W}b3?$
(\Box 20... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8\infty$)
21. $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 22.h3 \pm Sambuev,B
(2555)-Kraiouchkine,N (2253)
Montreal, Pere Noel op, 2010.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e7??$

I'm always surprised how
intricate and counter-intuitive
the maneuvers in these IQP
positions can be.

13... $\mathbb{Q}d6!?$ 14. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7?$
(14... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15.d5 \uparrow ; 14... $\mathbb{Q}e7\pm$ is
the SF17 suggestion.) 15. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$
g6 (15...h6? 16. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!+-$) 16.d5!
 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (16... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}fe1+-$)
17. $\mathbb{Q}c4!+-$ *Analysis Diagram*



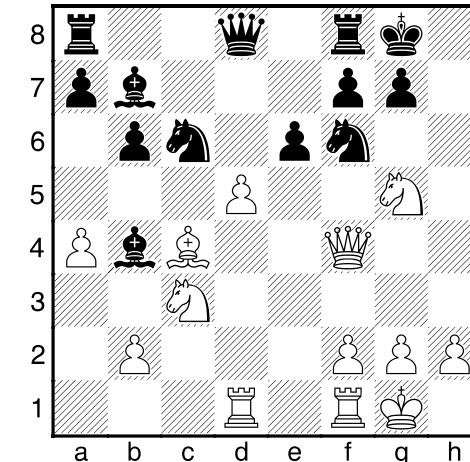
This is ridiculous... but winning!!
White's last moves were $\mathbb{Q}c4$ –
 $d3$ – $c4$, and $d4$ – $d5$, moving a
piece twice and giving away a
center pawn.... but now White is
winning!!! Essentially, White's
last moves created a "remove-
the-guard" tactic against the
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and Black can't bail with
... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ since $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ comes with

a threat: 17... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ h5
19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\Box+-$.

13...h6!? looks wrong on the
general principle about not
making pawn moves in front of
an attacked King, but it's not bad
here:

14. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!?$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (14... $\mathbb{Q}xh6??$
15.d5 $\Box+-$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (17. $\mathbb{Q}xh6??$ $\mathbb{W}d6\Box$)
17... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xh6+-$) 15. $\mathbb{Q}h4\infty$
(15. $\mathbb{Q}g5!?$; 15. $\mathbb{W}g5??$ $\mathbb{Q}f5+-$);

14.d5! $\mathbb{Q}hxg5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$
Analysis Diagram



a) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ 16. $\mathbb{W}h4+-$;

b) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+-$ or
16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6+-$;

Chess Canada National Games



c) 15...exd5 \square 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ \square $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
 17. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ (17. $\mathbb{W}h4??$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ \square
 18. $\mathbb{B}xd8$ $\mathbb{B}axd8$ — White's attack
 is over and Black has \mathbb{B} \mathbb{Q} for the \mathbb{W} .) 17... $\mathbb{W}f6$ \square 18. $\mathbb{B}f5$!
 (18. $\mathbb{W}h4??$ $\mathbb{W}h6$ \square —+) 18... $\mathbb{Q}d6$!
 (18... $\mathbb{W}h6$? 19. $\mathbb{B}xf7$ —+) 19. $\mathbb{B}xf6$
 $\mathbb{B}xf4$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ \square ±. White's up
 a pawn, but will have to spend a
 few moves reorganizing, which
 gives time for Black to activate
 the \mathbb{B} s.

14.d5!+—

Black is busted.

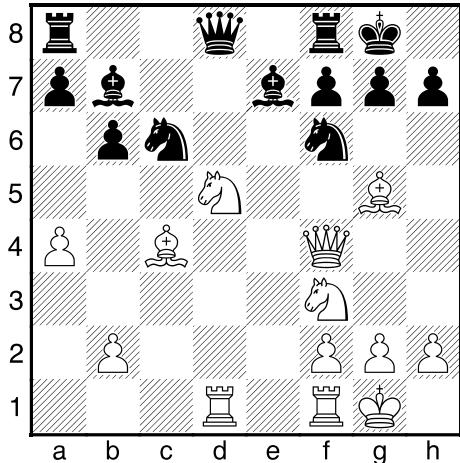
14. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ is also strong: 14... $\mathbb{B}xf6$
 15. d5 \square exd5 (15... e5 16. dxc6—)
 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 17. $\mathbb{B}fe1$!—, every
 one of White's pieces is better
 than every one of Black's, so it
 should be no surprise that even
 the computer can't find a decent
 move for Black.

14...exd5

14... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 15. d6!— trapping the \mathbb{Q} ,
 or 15. dxe6!— winning a couple of
 pawns.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5
 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ \square $\mathbb{B}xg5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ h6
 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$!— with too many tactics.

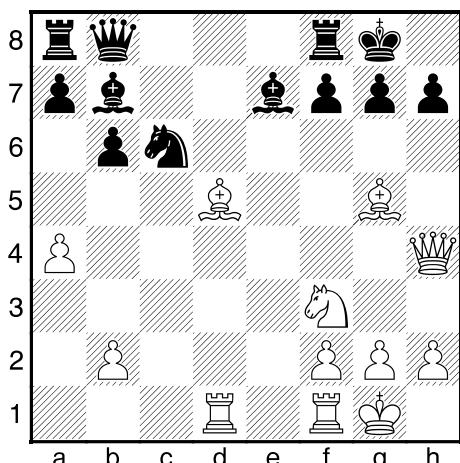
15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$



15... $\mathbb{W}b8$

15... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}xg5$
 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $gxf6$
 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$! $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$
 21. $\mathbb{B}d7$!—.

16. $\mathbb{W}h4$! $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$!

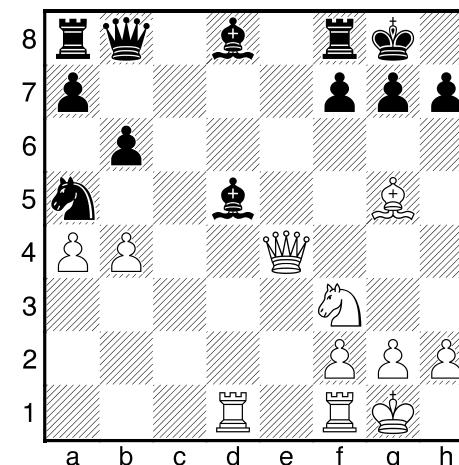


17... $\mathbb{Q}d8$!?

Resourceful, but White is up to
 the challenge.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ h6 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$!
 $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 21. $\mathbb{B}d7$!
 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ (21... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}g4$ —)
 22. $\mathbb{B}xg7$ — White has a winning
 attack and a material advantage.

18. $\mathbb{W}e4$! $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 19. b4 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$



So the \mathbb{W} keeps an eye on h7.

20... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

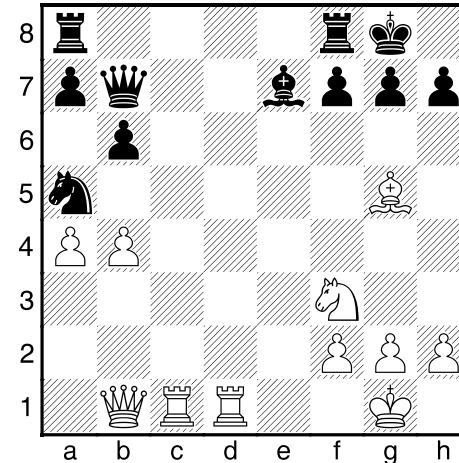
20... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 21. $\mathbb{W}c2$ — wins the \mathbb{Q} .

21. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 22. $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$

23. $\mathbb{W}b1$

23. $\mathbb{W}xb7$?? $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$
 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ ±.

23... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}dd1$!



Compared to the diagram at
 move 13, White's pieces have
 been driven away from their
 menacing posts around Black's
 kingside, but Black's one bad
 piece will cost the game: if the
 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ were on almost any other
 square the position would be
 equal.

White's last two moves — both
 retreats to the back rank — are
 very impressive. Retreats like
 this tend to feel like concessions
 — deactivating pieces from
 previously dominating squares
 — but, in fact, Black is still totally
 busted: materially Black is fine,
 but White's better development
 is worth a lot. How much?
 Stockfish rates this position +4.5.

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24... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e4!$

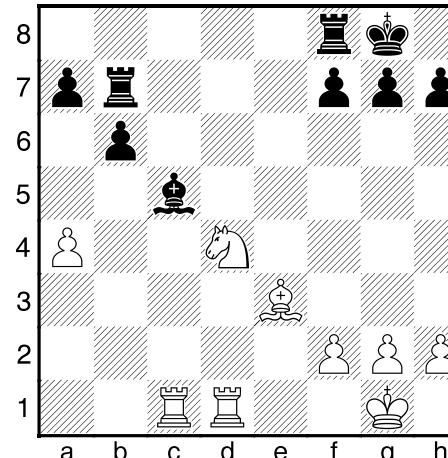
Double attack on the pinned and overworked \mathbb{Q} , and even stronger than 25. $\mathbb{B}xc6+-$, which also wins.

25... $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 26.b5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$

26... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$
28. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+-$.

27.bxc6 $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}c7$

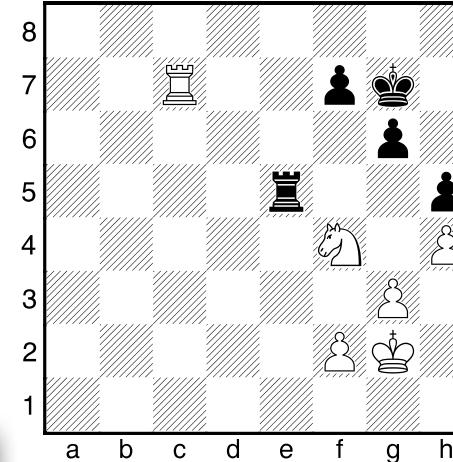
29. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}xb7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e3$



I can't suggest a good reason why Black is playing on. I suppose it's possible she enjoys playing chess... but enjoying this??

30...g6 31.g3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32.a5
 $\mathbb{B}e8$ 33.a6 $\mathbb{B}be7$ 34. $\mathbb{B}c2$
 $\mathbb{B}e4$ 35. $\mathbb{B}cd2$ h6 36. $\mathbb{Q}g2$
h5 37.h4 $\mathbb{B}b4$ 38. $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

39. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 40. $\mathbb{B}a1$ $\mathbb{B}4e7$
41. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 42. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
43. $\mathbb{B}d7$ $\mathbb{B}e5$ 44. $\mathbb{B}1d5$ $\mathbb{B}e6$
45. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}f6+$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ bxc5
47. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}ee6$
49. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xa6$ 50. $\mathbb{B}xa6$ $\mathbb{B}xa6$
51. $\mathbb{B}c7$ $\mathbb{B}e6$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{B}e5$
53. $\mathbb{Q}f4$



SF rates this move as a -70 point blunder — from +82 to +12 — even though the pawn ending is an even more straightforward win for a human than the \mathbb{Q} v \mathbb{B} ending.

Stockfish is NOT always "something to go by".

59... $\mathbb{B}a5$

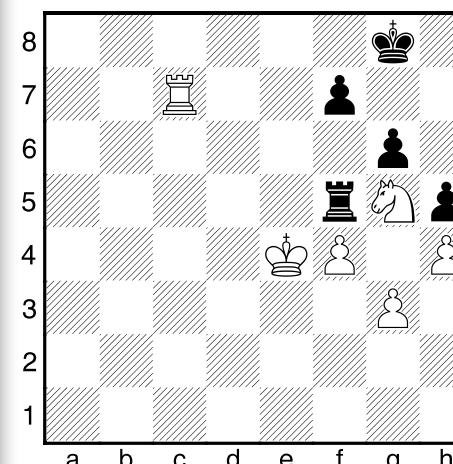
59... $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 60. $\mathbb{B}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}e5$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 62.f5 $\square+-$ and White wins the h5 pawn or promotes her f-pawn.

60. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{B}b5$ 61. $\mathbb{B}c8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
62. $\mathbb{B}c5$ $\mathbb{B}b3$ 63. $\mathbb{B}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
64. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ 65. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{B}b3$
66. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{B}b6$

66... $\mathbb{B}xg3$ 67. $\mathbb{B}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 68. $\mathbb{Q}d8$
#1.

67. $\mathbb{B}e7$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 68. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$
69.f5 $\mathbb{B}g8+$ 70. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{B}xg3$
71. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 72. $\mathbb{B}e8\#$

1-0



59. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$

Yes, I gave that an ex!

WIM Oksana
Golubeva



Plotkin, Mark (2501)
Doknjas, John (2307)

2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto (4), 29.03.2024

notes: **IM Mark Plotkin+**

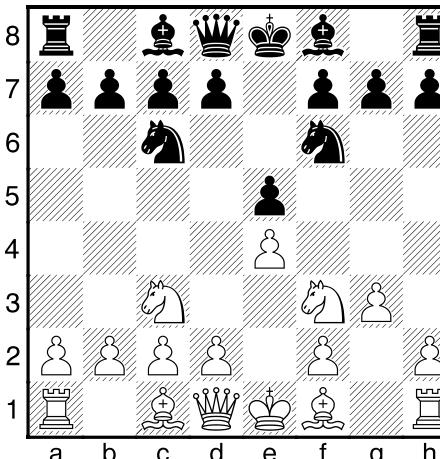
Notes based on a Hart House Chess Club post-game interview with IM Mark Plotkin.

"When I saw that online he sometimes plays 1...e5 and 1...c5, so I decided not to prepare and just play a sideline." - MP

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6

"I know that he knows all the alternatives — ♘b5, ♘c4, d4 — better than me, so..." - MP

3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g3



4...♗b4

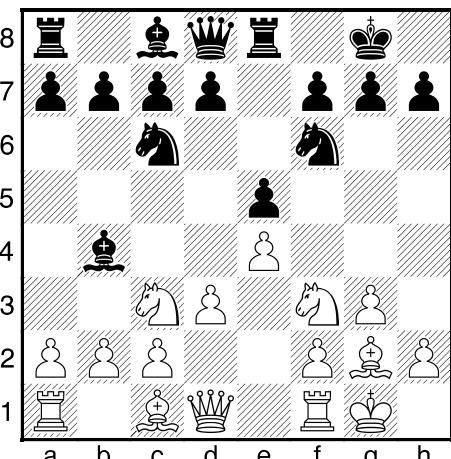
"In chess, especially when your opponent plays unprincipled — like I always do — you want to punish it by playing as principled as possible. The best way to beat me is to play as basic as possible: develop your pieces and hit the center." - MP

editor - 4...♗c5= and 4...d5= are less unprincipled.

5.♕g2 0-0

5...♗xc3 6.dxc3 ♘xe4 7.♘xe5 ♘xe5 (7...♘xc3?? 8.♘xc6 ♘xd1 9.♘xd8+— *I'm up a piece, and my ♘ has a way out (b7) and his ♘ does not.* - MP) 8.♘xe4 White has the Bishops, which should be worth something.

6.0-0 ♜e8 7.d3±



"All the pieces are on the board and White has a lot of ideas: ♘g5, ♘h4–f5 with f2–f4, ♘d5. But it's not a position you would expect an FM to lose in 11 moves." - MP

7...d5?! 8.♘xd5

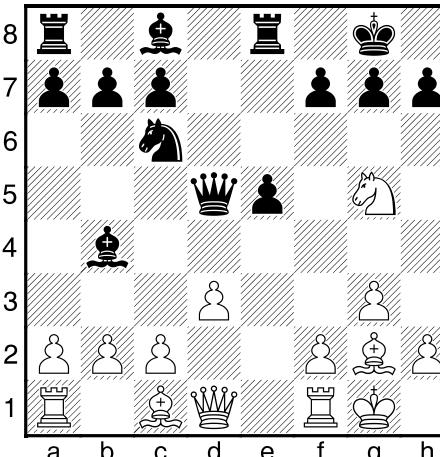
Trading the ♘c3 for a kingside defender.

8...♘xd5 9.exd5 ♜xd5

editor - Chessbase MegaBase 2025 continues with this nonsense: 9...♗d7N 10.d6 ♜xd6 11.♘g5 ♜a5 12.c3 ♜b6 and ends here. These are obviously DGT board transmission errors, but now they're in the Bible.

Don't trust Chessbase.

10.♘g5



10...♗d6

Blocks his ♘b4.

10...♗d8? stays out of the way of the ♘s, but loses the kingside to 11.♗h5+—;

10...♗d7 holds, but blocks the LSB. 11.h3 h6 12.♗e4 f5 13.♗c3 ♜f7 14.♗d5 ♜d6 15.f4 ♜e6± Kiik,K (2410)-Hartman,C (2320) Rilton Cup 27th Stockholm, 1997.

11.c3

Gains a tempo on the ♘, and makes ♜b3 possible.

11...♗a5

11...♗c5 12.♗e4 gets the ♘ pair in an open position with a lead in development.

12.f4

Attacking the center and developing the ♜f1.

If 12.♗h5 ♜g6 13.♗xg6 hxg6 14.♗d5 ♘d8 15.f4 - MP.

12...♗b6+

12...♗d7 13.♗xf7!? ♜c5+ (13...♗xf7 14.fxe5+??+—)

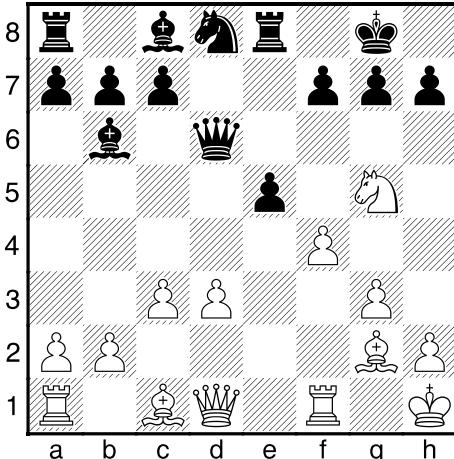
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14. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ (14. $d4!$ SF17) 14... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$
15. $fxe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ with a mess after
16. $b4$ or 16. $d4$.

SF shows White doesn't have to go ballistic after 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, but has a crushing position after the calm 13. $f5!$ with threats on both sides of the board: $\mathbb{W}h5$, or $a4+b4$.

13. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$



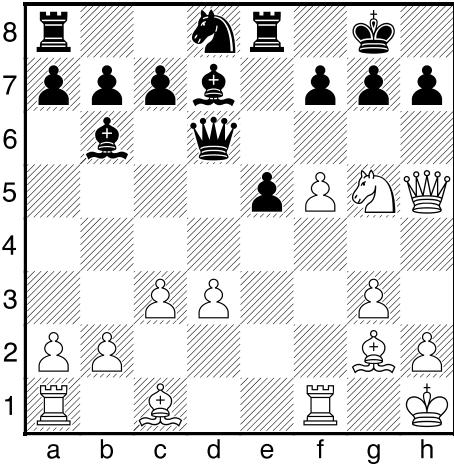
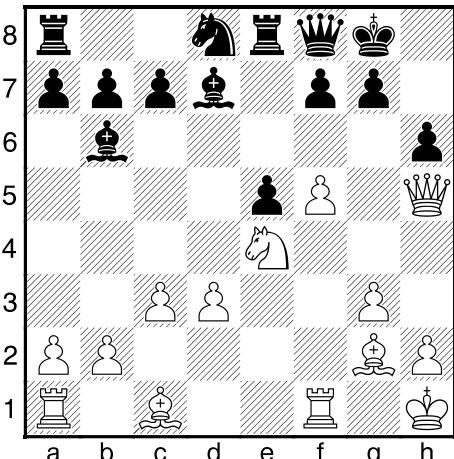
14. $f5!$

Blocks the $\mathbb{Q}c8$ and prevents the defence ... $\mathbb{W}g6$ after $\mathbb{W}h5$.

14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{W}h5$

17. $\mathbb{Q}f6+!$

Not the only winning move, but pretty, thematic, and utterly crushing.



17... $\mathbb{gxf6}$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

IM Mark Plotkin:

"An 18 move game against a FIDE Master today... you just don't expect it... I'm expecting a slugfest.

I want to make it clear that even though I won quickly, but by no means do I believe that this player is very much weaker than me. Everyone has bad days, and he comes from a family that — he has two brothers that are both incredibly strong — they're both around 2200 - 2270 level, everyone in his family is very strong — so I definitely got lucky with the fact that he probably was prepping for the wrong thing, and he was unable to figure out the position over the board."

1-0

IM Plotkin &
FM Plotkin



music room

Chess Canada

Zonal Games



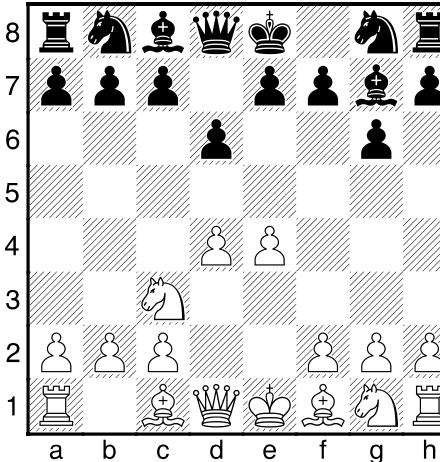
Dukic, Zachary (2365)
Plotkin, Mark (2501)

2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto
 (5), 30.03.2024

notes: **IM Mark Plotkin** +

“Traditionally, whenever we play, Black wins. If you'd told me before the game I would beat a theoretical monster in 24 moves I wouldn't have believed you. It was surprising, because my opponent knows theory about 80x better than I do.” - MP

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♜g7 3.♗c3 d6



4.♕e3

4.f4 ♜f6 5.♗f3 0-0 6.♗e3:
 6...a6!? 7.a4 c5 8.dxc5 ♜a5
 9.♗d3 dxc5 10.♗e5± **Dukic,Z-**

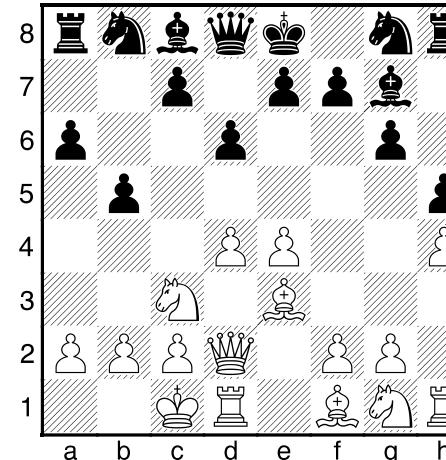
Plotkin,M, CAN-ch University
 Ottawa, 2018;

5... c5 7.dxc5 ♜a5 8.♗d3±
Dukic,Z - Plotkin,M, Canada zt
 Kingston, 2019.

4...a6!?

4...♗f6 5.♗d2.

5.h4 h5 6.♗d2 b5 7.0-0-0



“Obviously, aesthetically, my position is atrocious. I know I can “get away” with this, but this is not how you develop your pieces. I would never teach anyone to play like this.” - MP

7...♗b7 8.f3 ♜d7 9.♗h3

Now I have my first think of the game. - MP

9...e6

9...♗gf6 10.♗g5 c5? 11.dxc5
 ♜xc5 12.♗xc5 dxc5 13.♗xd8+
 ♜xd8 14.♗xd8+ ♜xd8
 15.♗xf7++-

10.♗g5 ♜e7

And this is where chess is going



IM Raja Panjwani **FM Zac Dukic**

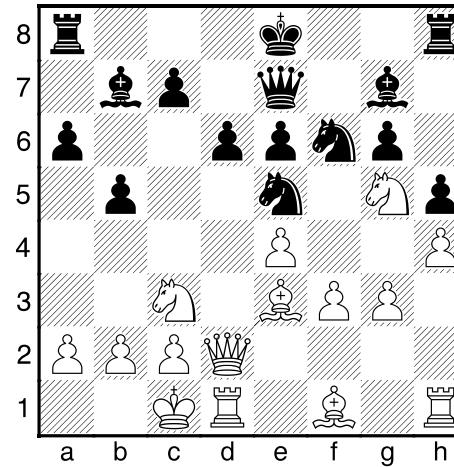
GM SRL **CM Neil Doknjas**

to start being played. Up to now we have been playing rapidly. Here he thought for 20 minutes and played...

11.d5 ♜gf6 12.dxe6 fxe6
13.g3
13.♗e2!?



13... $\mathbb{Q}e5$



Now White has to start calculating, since the natural move $\mathbb{Q}h3$ seems to give Black a lot of counterplay.

14. $\mathbb{W}f2$

14. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 15. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$!?; 14. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ b4 15. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$;

14. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ I even considered this... 14...0-0!? 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ d5 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$...trying to bring everything in to attack the king.

[editor: White is +3 in all those lines]

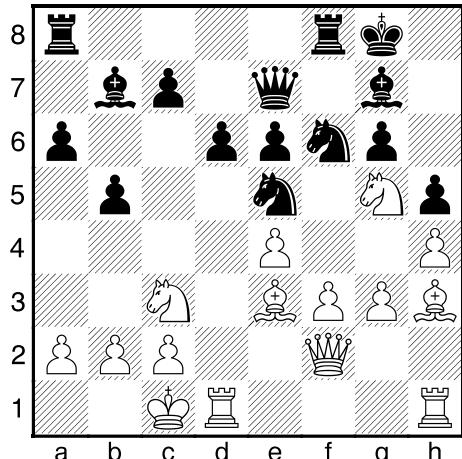
Now this is utter nonsense, but in my head it was "...maybe!?", and when you have so many options, in my head... *something* must work. – MP

Whenever I play chess I am typically pessimistic about my position ...and for good reason!

- IM Mark Plotkin

editor – and it is so *close to working*: in that last line, after 17... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ White has only one move to keep an advantage: 18. d6!!.

14...0-0 15. $\mathbb{Q}h3$



15... $\mathbb{Q}h8$

15... $\mathbb{Q}fg4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ and the e6 pawn hangs with check.

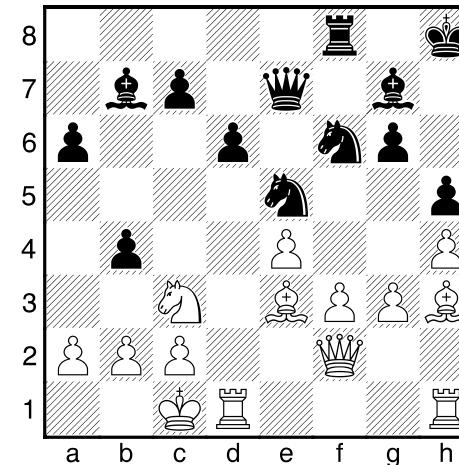
16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ b4

16... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ +-

17. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$?

17. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ so White will have the option of $\mathbb{Q}xg7$.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xf8$



It turns out he doesn't have any good moves: Black is completely dominating here. - MP

17... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ + and any discovery on b2 White could take the $\mathbb{Q}g7$.

18. $\mathbb{Q}d5$

18. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$! -+.

18... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$! 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ \square
20. $\mathbb{W}g2$

20. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$

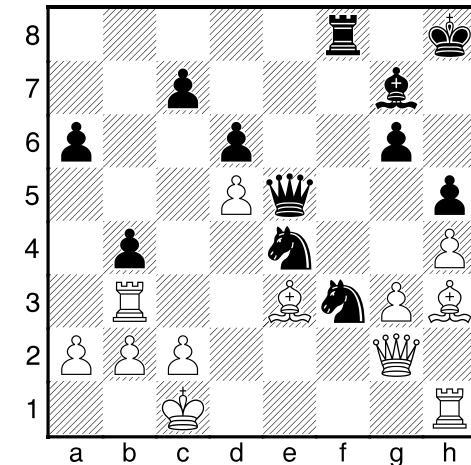
preventing $\mathbb{Q}d4$ and attacking e4. I have a lot of ideas for an attack, but I had NO idea what was going on in this position... I knew I wasn't losing, but I definitely didn't think I was winning.

Whenever I play chess I am typically pessimistic about my position... and... for good reason. :) - MP

20... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

21. $\mathbb{Q}df1$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 22. c3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ →.

21... $\mathbb{W}e5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b3$



"...and this is where the game becomes beautiful." - MP

22... $\mathbb{Q}c3$!!

Threat: ... $\mathbb{W}xe3$ + mating.

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GMs Preetu & Sambuev

FM Plotkin & IM Vettese

23. $\mathbb{W}f2$

23. bxc3 $\mathbb{W}xe3+-$;
 23. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}h6+ \#2$;
 23. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5+-$.

23... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}d2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}xe3+!$ 24... $\mathbb{Q}de2+$

0-1

Thinking: Fast and Slow

Panjwani, Raja (2525)
Atanasov, Anthony (2443)

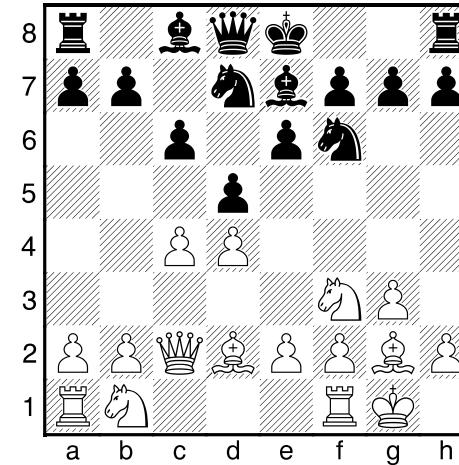
2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto
 (5), 30.03.2024

Notes: John Upper

1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 2. d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3. c4 e6
 4. g3 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$

This check slightly uncoordinates White's queenside minors.

5. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ c6 7. $\mathbb{W}c2$
 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8. 0-0



A typical position in the Closed Catalan. White has more space and can try to increase it with an eventual e2–e4. The vast majority of games continue with either ...00 or ...b6 with

Black slowly unwinding after capturing on c4. In this game, rather than patiently suffer a cramped position, Black takes the opportunity to either exchange a minor piece or expand on the kingside with...

8... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$?

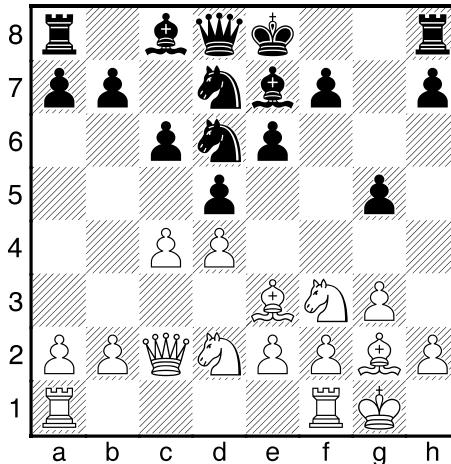
2700+ GMs Erigaisi and Sarana have both played this regularly in rapid events.

9. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

9. a3 a5 10. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 0-0 12. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 13. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $dxcc4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ b5 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}ce4$ c5= [Dubov,D \(2716\)-Erigaisi,A \(2702\)](#) Global Chess League Dubai rapid, 2023.

9... $\mathbb{Q}g5!?$

9...f5 transposing to a Stonewall is also possible... OTOH, Black would then be playing a Stonewall.

10. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ 11... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

11...h5 is interesting here. If White's B was back on c1, then e2–e4 would be both obvious and strong; but with the $\mathbb{Q}e3$ preventing a second central pawn break, White's only way

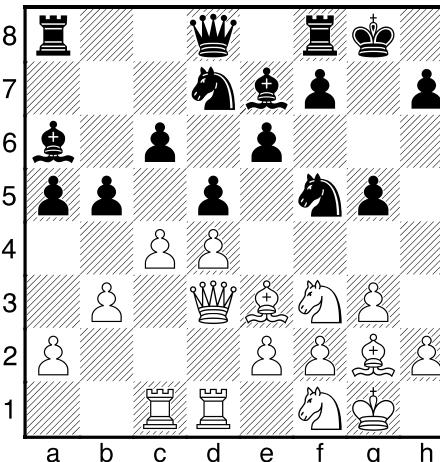
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through the center is with a piece sac. Luring the \mathbb{Q} to a bad square is actually the point of Black playing 4... $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ then avoiding the \mathbb{Q} exchange.

11...h5 12. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ g4
 14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$
 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd7?!$ (16. $\mathbb{Q}ac1?!$ threatens to smash open the center with a piece sac: $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ then $cx d5$ and $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ 17. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 18. $cxd5$ $exd5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?!$)
 16... $\mathbb{Q}xd7=$ [Mishra,A \(2550\)-Van Foreest,J \(2680\)](#) Sigeman & Co 28th Malmo, 2023.

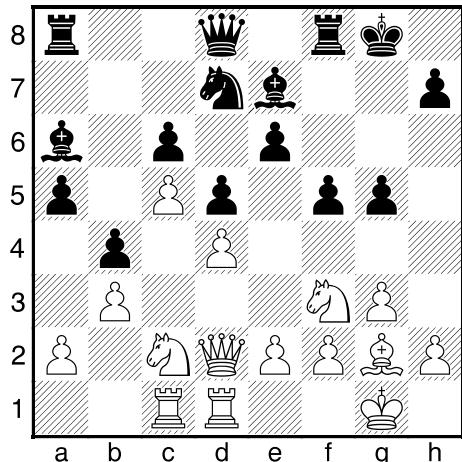
12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0-0 13. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ b6
 14. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ a5 15. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$
 16.b3 b5



17.c5

17. $cxd5$ $cxd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4=$

17...b4 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$
 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ f5 20. $\mathbb{Q}c2$



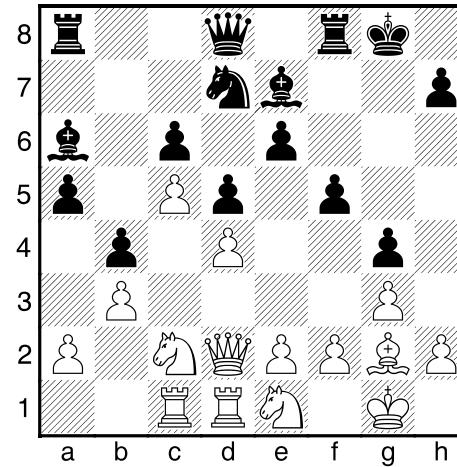
Black has more space and a choice of pawn breaks on the kingside.

20...g4

SF slightly prefers 20...f4. If White replies as in the game with queenside play, 21.a3(?) then Black gets a strong kingside initiative with 21...g4 22. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 23. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5\uparrow$.

A difficulty in playing ...f4 is judging that after 21. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ Black has good compensation after ... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ or 22... $\mathbb{Q}f6?!$ among other things, threatening $\mathbb{Q}e8$ skewering e2, or the even worse... 23. $\mathbb{Q}h3?$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5!!$ 24. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ trapping the \mathbb{Q} .

21. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$



21... $\mathbb{Q}g5?!$

This forces e2-e3, which Black might have hoped he could exploit with ...e5. But after $dxe5$ White has $\mathbb{Q}d4$, with an immediate threat to sac on c6, and White can go back to nibbling at the queenside with a3 as in the game but with Black having a shakier pawn structure.

SF suggests regrouping with: 21... $\mathbb{Q}e8?!$ 22.a3 f4 23. $gxf4$ $bxa3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ when White has lots of interesting options — $\mathbb{Q}c3-g3$, or e3 then f3, and even the crazy-looking $\mathbb{Q}c4$ — but SF17 rates them all as a bit better for Black!?

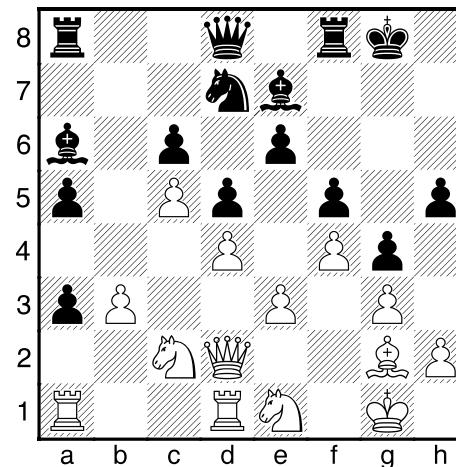
22.e3 h5

Again, 22... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ is worth considering, and if 23.f4 $\mathbb{Q}d8!$ and Black can get busy on the kingside.

23.f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$

23 moves and no pawn exchanges!? 23... $gxf3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf3=$.

24.a3 $bxa3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}a1$



25... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$

After this it is all one-way traffic for White on the queenside.

25... $\mathbb{Q}e8!$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8! \infty$ White can win the a5 pawn with an eventual b3-b4xa5, but Black should be able to stir up enough kingside play with ...h4 and putting majors on the h-file.

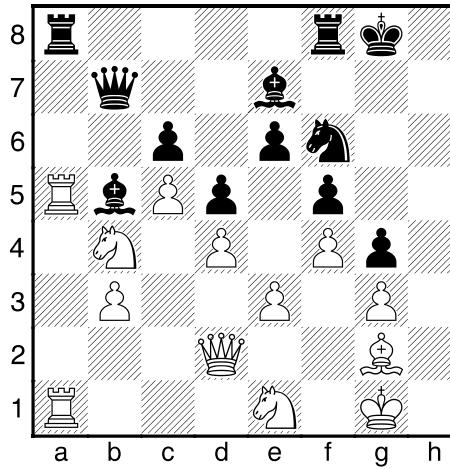
26. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ h4 27. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $hxg3$

Chess Canada Zonal Games



27...h3? 28.♗da1□+– (28.♗f1?
♗e4?).

28.hxg3 ♛c8 29.♗da1 ♛b7
30.♘b4 ♛b5



31.♔a2□+–

White's up a pawn, and I don't see a way for Black to prevent White from trading the ♛b5, leaving Black with weak pawns on e6 and either b5 or c6.

31...♗xa5 32.♗xa5 ♜b8

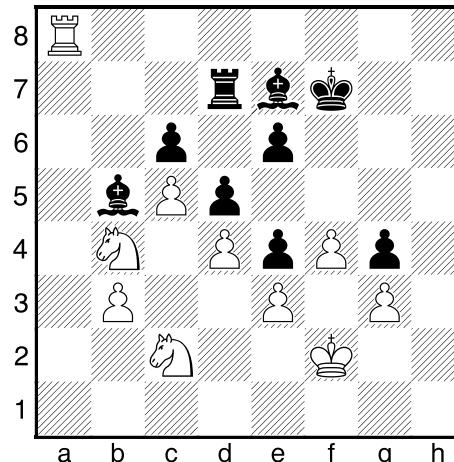
33.♗a7 ♘e4 34.♗xe4

White even has the bizarre computer move: 34.♗f1! ♜xf1
35.♘xc6□+–.

34...fxe4 35.♗f2 ♔f7

36.♗xb7 ♜xb7 37.♗a8 ♜d7

38.♘ec2



There's no good defence to
♘a3xb5, so Black randomizes.

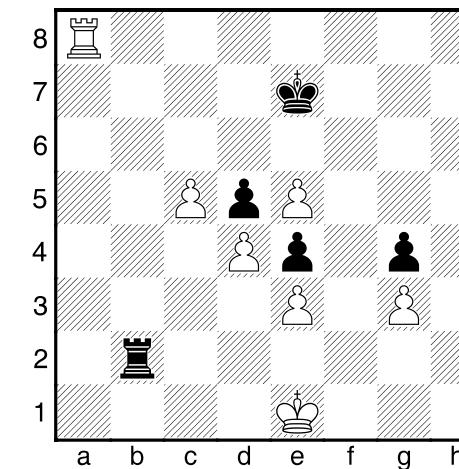
38...e5 39.fxe5 ♔e6

40.♘a3 ♜b7 41.♘xb5 ♜xb5

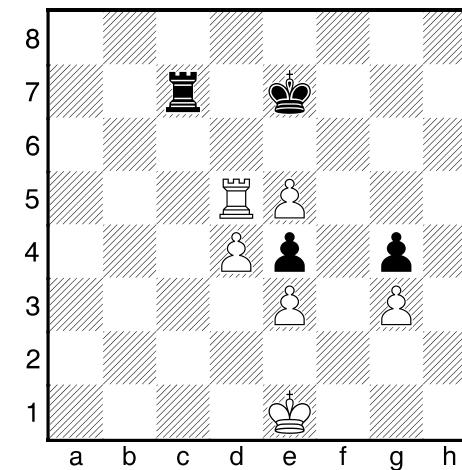
42.♘xc6 ♜xb3 43.♘xe7

43.♗e8 also wins 43...♔d7
44.♗xe7+ ♔xc6 45.♗e6+– and
♗d6 or ♗g6.

43...♗b2+ 44.♔e1 ♔xe7



45.c6 ♜c2 46.♗a7+ ♔e8
47.c7 ♔d7 48.♗a5 ♜xc7
49.♗xd5+ ♔e7



50.♗c5! ♜b7

50...♗xc5 51.dxc5 ♔e6 52.c6+–
the ♔ can stop them, but
can't take either.

51.d5 ♜b3 52.♔d2 ♔d7

53.♗a5 ♔c7 54.d6+ ♔c6

55.♗a4 ♜d3+ 56.♔e2

1–0

*mens sana vel
corpo occupatus*



10 seconds in Hart House

Chess Canada

Zonal Games

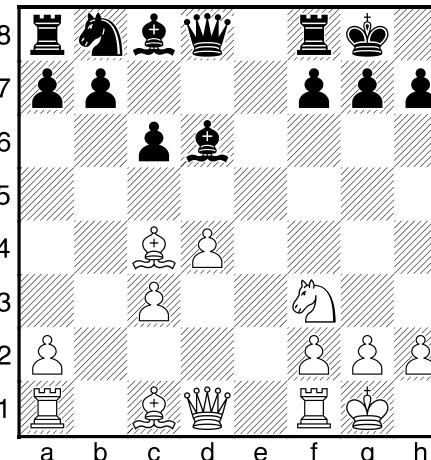


**Rodrigue-Lemieux, Shawn
(2636)**
Atanasov, Anthony (2443)

2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto
(9), 01.04.2024

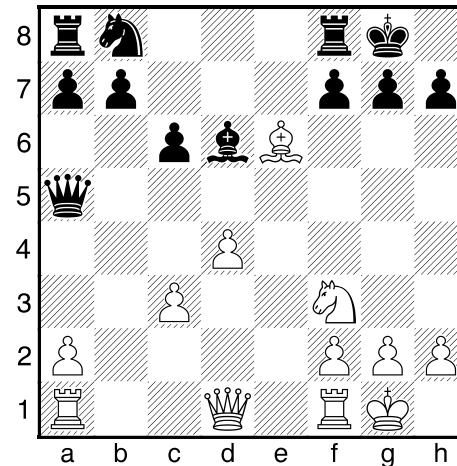
Notes: John Upper

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5
d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.d4 d5
6.♗d3 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4
c6 9.♘c3 ♗xc3 10.bxc3
dxc4 11.♗xc4



There are over 1000 games in the Db from here.

11...♗f5 12.♗g5 ♗a5
13.♘h4 ♗e6 14.♗xe6 ♗xg5
15.♘f3 ♗a5



Cutting-edge Petroff theory:
¾ of the games in my database are from the past 3 years.

16.♗h3!?

16.♗b3 and 16.♗b3 are reasonable and well-tested alternatives.

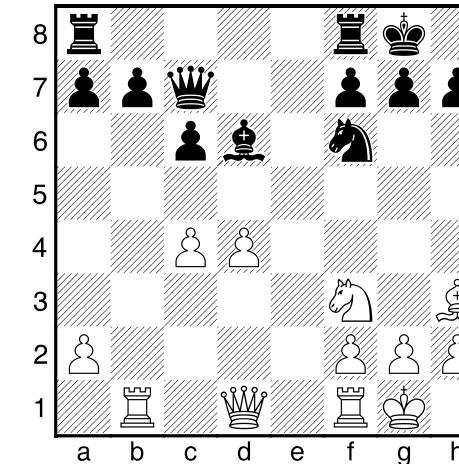
16...♗c7

A week later, at the Candidates tournament a few blocks away, the world's top Petroff expert continued: 16...♗xc3 17.♗b1 b6 18.♗b3 ♗a5 19.d5 cxd5 20.♗g5 see: [Pragg - Nepo](#), later in this issue.

17.c4 ♘d7 18.♗b1!?

18.♗e1 was played the previous year in Mamedov-Nepo, Airthings Rapid.

18...♗f6

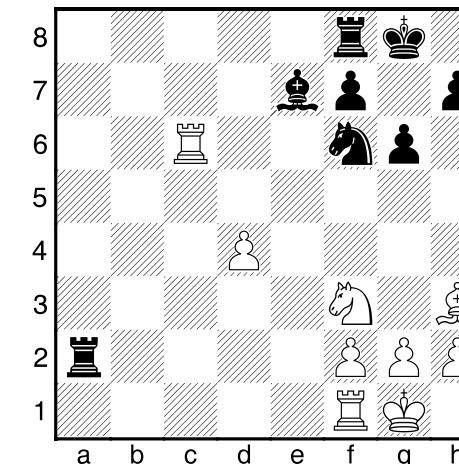


19.c5! ♗e7 20.♗b3 ♗ab8

Black has a more direct route to equality, but it doesn't look like it at first:

20...b6 21.cxb6 axb6 22.♗xb6 ♗xb6 23.♗xb6 ♗xa2 24.♗xc6 g6

Analysis Diagram

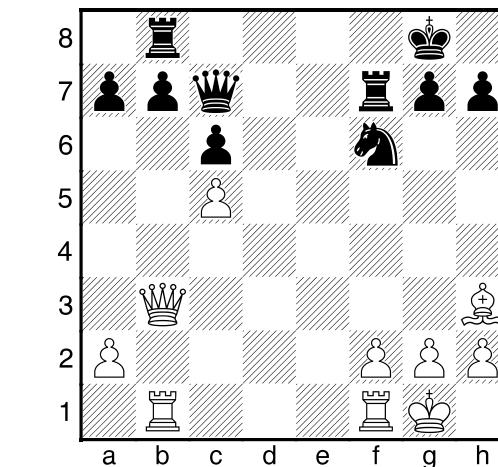


White is up a clear passed pawn, but at 40 ply the computer's top

three lines are 0.00!? Seriously: not even a token 1 centipawn plus.

Readers might be interested in fooling around with this and seeing if they can create any chances for White. I couldn't, which is at least a lesson in how to hold as Black.

21.♗e5 ♗xc5 22.♗xf7 ♗xf7
23.dxc5

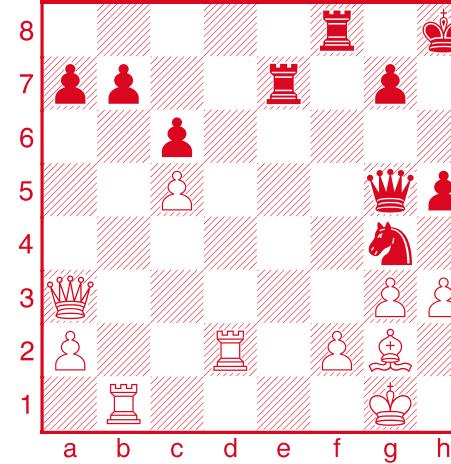


23...♗h8

23...♗e4!? 24.♗e6 ♘d2=.

24.g3 ♗e7 25.♗fd1 ♗e5
26.♗a3 ♗f8 27.♗g2 ♘g4
28.♗d2 h5 29.h3 ♗g5!

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What should White play: $\mathbb{B}d1$, $\mathbb{B}b2$, or something else?

30. $\mathbb{B}d1??$

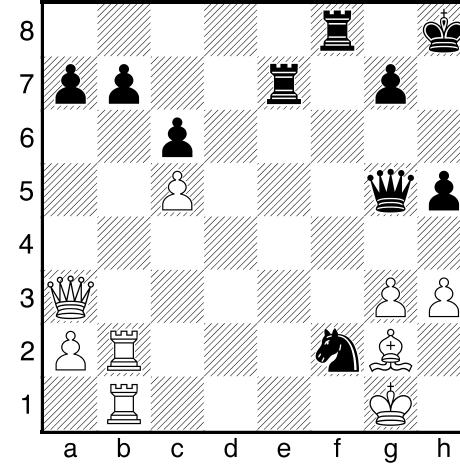
This loses to the game continuation. It is not quite the only losing move, but almost every other move is better.

30. $\mathbb{W}b2$ is safe and boring and about equal after ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$.

30. $f4?!$ $\mathbb{W}f5\infty$ saves the \mathbb{Q} by hitting the $\mathbb{B}b1$ and White has voluntarily softened his kingside.

30. $\mathbb{B}b2!?$ leads to the most interesting play 30... $\mathbb{Q}xf2\Box$ Anything else loses b7, the initiative, and the game.

Analysis Diagram



a) 31. $\mathbb{B}xf2??$ $\mathbb{B}xf2$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}f5+\Box$ 33. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c2+\Box$ a crucial intermediate check, ensuring Black captures the rook with check so White has no chance for the fork on f8: 34. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}xb1+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{E}e5!+$ and Black has an exchange and the initiative.

b) 31. $h4!$ saves the h-pawn from ... $\mathbb{Q}xh3+$ tactics, but gives Black other options: 31... $\mathbb{W}g4$ 32. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{E}e2!\infty$ with a very complicated position: Black threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ then ... $\mathbb{W}d4+$, and if White tries to kick out the \mathbb{W} 33. $\mathbb{B}b4?$ Black has the shocking 33... $\mathbb{W}h3!!$ threatening ... $\mathbb{W}h1+$... $\mathbb{Q}h3\#$ and there's no saving White since 34. $\mathbb{B}xf2$ $\mathbb{E}e1+$ also wins.

c) 31. $\mathbb{B}f1!:$

c1) 31... $\mathbb{Q}xh3+$ leads to perpetuals: 32. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{B}xf1+$ 33. $\mathbb{B}xf1\Box$ $\mathbb{E}e3\Box$ 34. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ (34. $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xg3+\Box=$) 34... $\mathbb{B}xg3+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}c1+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}h2$: 36... $\mathbb{B}xg2+$ 37. $\mathbb{B}xg2$ $\mathbb{W}f4+\Box=$ draws, since the \mathbb{B} can block but not stop the diagonal checks;

36.. $\mathbb{W}f4!?=$ is a draw, since 37. $\mathbb{W}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}e4+??$ $\mathbb{B}g6+\Box$ and mate!

c2) 31... $\mathbb{B}e3!?$ 32. $\mathbb{W}b4\Box$ guards e1 and $\mathbb{B}b2$ (32. $\mathbb{W}xa7??$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3+-$ + there's going to be a mate with $\mathbb{W}g3$ and $\mathbb{B}e1$; 32. $\mathbb{B}b3??$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3+-$ #4) 32... $\mathbb{Q}xh3+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xg3+$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{B}xf1+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{B}c3$ Black has the initiative and is basically playing with draw odds, since trading majors followed by eliminating White's c-pawn leaves White with no way to win.

30... $\mathbb{B}e1+\Box-+$
Wins pawns and keeps the initiative.

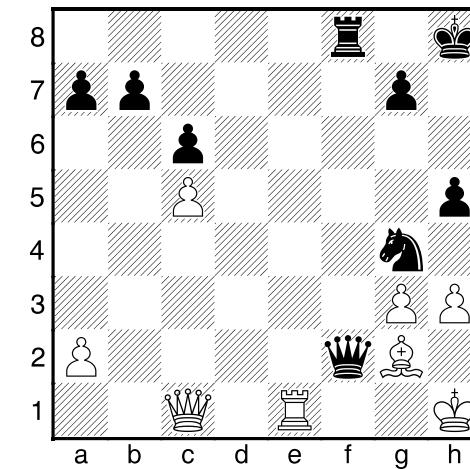
31. $\mathbb{B}xe1$

31. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}xd1$ 32. $\mathbb{B}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2-+$.

31... $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 32. $\mathbb{W}c1$

32. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{B}xf2\Box-+$.

32... $\mathbb{W}xf2+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}h1$



33... $\mathbb{Q}f6\Box-+$

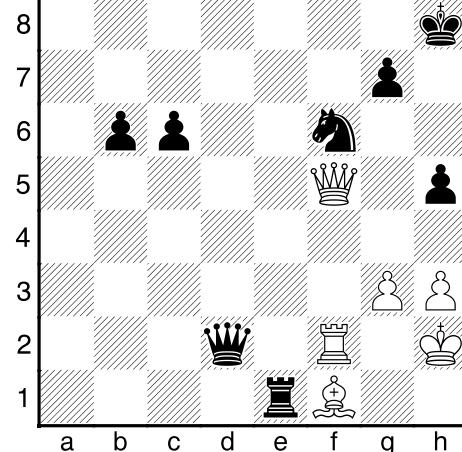
Black is up a pawn and White is hanging two more on g3 and a2. White tries to create threats against Black's slightly loose King, but Black doesn't relax.

33... $\mathbb{Q}h6??$ 34. $\mathbb{B}f1+-$ would be an awful way to throw away the win.

34. $\mathbb{B}e3$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 35. $\mathbb{B}a3$ $\mathbb{W}f2$
36. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 37. $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d4$
38. $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{B}e1$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}b2+$
40. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ b6
42. $\mathbb{C}xb6$ $\mathbb{A}xb6$ 43. $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{W}d2+$
44. $\mathbb{B}f2$

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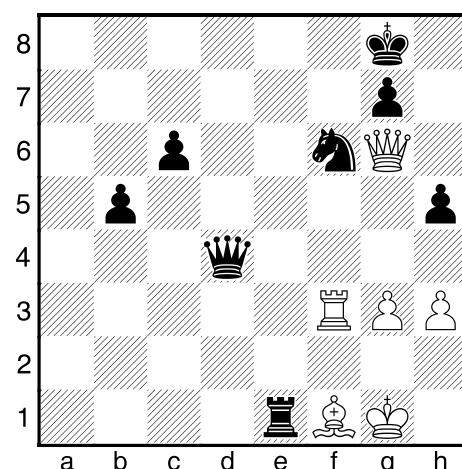
Zonal Games



44... $\mathbb{W}d6$

The crosspin 44... $\mathbb{B}xf1??$ fails to the tempo 45. $\mathbb{W}c8++-$.

45. $\mathbb{B}a2$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 46. $\mathbb{B}a4$ $b5$
 47. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{E}e5$ 48. $\mathbb{W}c8+$ $\mathbb{K}h7$
 49. $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 50. $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{K}g8$
 51. $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 52. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{W}b2+$
 53. $\mathbb{K}g1$ $\mathbb{E}e1+$ 54. $\mathbb{K}f1$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$



Black repeats a couple of times here, a sensible policy when

playing with increment.

55. $\mathbb{K}h2$ $\mathbb{W}b2+$ 56. $\mathbb{K}g1$ $\mathbb{W}e5$
 57. $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 58. $\mathbb{K}g2$ $\mathbb{W}c2+$
 59. $\mathbb{K}g1$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 60. $\mathbb{K}g2$ $\mathbb{B}d5$
 61. $h4$ $\mathbb{W}c2+$ 62. $\mathbb{K}g1$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$
 63. $\mathbb{K}g2$ $\mathbb{W}f8!$
 63... $\mathbb{W}f8$ 64. $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e3+!-+$.

0-1

I liked the next game so much I annotated it *twice*: once as a modern opening survey, and here in the *style of Irving Chernev...*

Lin, Leo
Atanasov, Anthony

2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto (1), 27.03.2024

Notes: *pseudo Chernev*
 (perhaps an alias?)

1. $e4$

This is an excellent opening move. White anchors a Pawn in the center of the board and opens lines for his Queen and a Bishop.

1... $e5$

"Probably the best reply," says Capablanca. Black equalizes the pressure in the center and frees his Queen and a Bishop.

2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

It is good strategy to make developing moves which embody threats, as it cuts down the choice of reply.

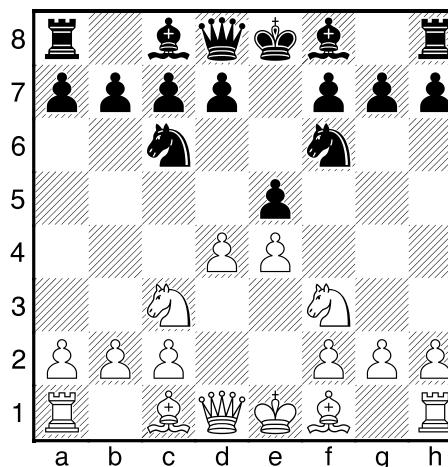
2... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

A move popularized by the Russian Master Petroff.

3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Both sides have developed their Knights according to the classical principles, and White must decide how to bring out his Bishops.

4. $d4$



The Scotch Four Knights

While one hesitates to deem a move "bad" when it has been so frequent a choice of Masters such as Tarrasch, Maroczy, and Spielmann — and it is undoubtedly better than 3. $d3$, which frees the Queen Bishop at the cost of hemming in the King's Bishop — I will merely note that Capablanca invariably played 4. $Bb5$, and not without success!

4... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

In our day, masters from Lasker to Rubinstein and Alekhine all prefer to clarify the center with 4... $exd4$. The fact that the incomparable American Paul Morphy played this Bishop sortie is enough reason to recommend it.

5. $dxe5$

Pawn-hunting in the opening is rarely a good policy, and Black's play in this game gives us an object lesson in how to punish such greed.

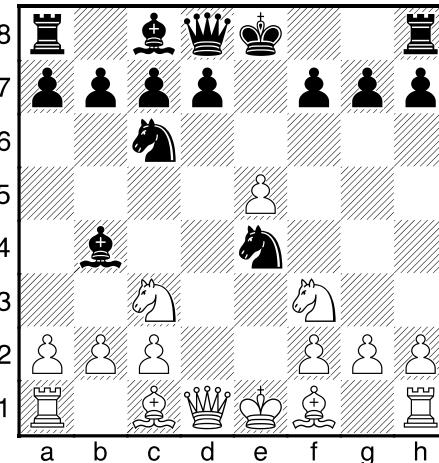
5. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ *a la Lopez* did not turn out well when played against Morphy, who continued:
 5... $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ 6. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $d5!$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$



0–0! 8.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ 9. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3!$ 10. $bxcc3$ $c6!$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}a5!$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xc3!$ and Morphy was a pawn ahead and went on to win this game, and the first American Championship with it. [Paulsen, L-Morphy, P, New York, 1857.](#)

5. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ has been the choice of more modern masters, when play might continue 5... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 6. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 7. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ with a fighting middle-game in prospect in [Spielmann, R-Bogoljubow, E Stockholm, 1919.](#)

5... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$



Captures a valuable center pawn and creates a double-attack on the pinned $\mathbb{Q}c3$.

6. $\mathbb{W}d3$

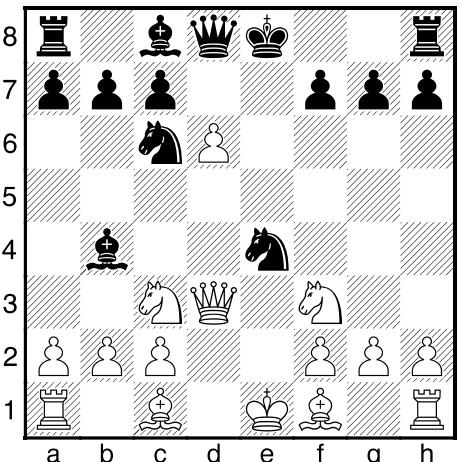
Bringing the Queen out in the opening is rarely a good policy, but this natural move is hard to resist when it both attacks the \mathbb{Q} and defends $\mathbb{Q}c3$.

6. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ also defends the \mathbb{Q} , but after 6... $\mathbb{Q}xc3!$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 8. $bxcc3\#$ White has no compensation for his shattered queenside pawns.

6... $d5!$

Black defends his $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and clears the way for the $\mathbb{Q}c8$. Notice how Black continues to strive for rapid development!

7. $exd6$



Captures a pawn *en passant* and removes the guard of the $\mathbb{Q}e4$. White may have thought he was

winning here... if so, Black's next move was a cold shower.

7... $0-0!$ ♔

The hand of a Master! Black indirectly defends the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ by creating the possibility of a pin on the e-file. He also makes his \mathbb{Q} safe and develops the $\mathbb{B}h8$.

8. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

White unpins the $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and so renews his threat to the $\mathbb{Q}e4$.

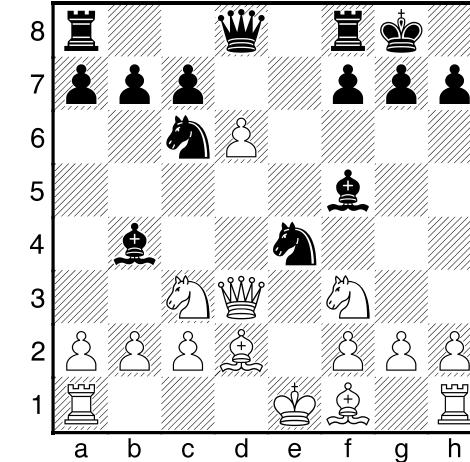
8. $dxc7?$ is too greedy! 8... $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 9. $cxdd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10. $a3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5+$ and White loses a piece as his hard-working b-pawn can't both break the pin and capture the $\mathbb{Q}c3$.

8... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

Again, development above all!

Black's energetic move defends the \mathbb{Q} , develops the \mathbb{Q} , and creates worrisome threats of a discovered attack on the white Queen.

White could be more than satisfied with the outcome of the opening after 8... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ and 9.000!



9. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

White tries to simplify his position with exchanges, but it is out of the frying pan and into the fire! Instead, he should return the sacrificed pawn with 9. $d7$, after which he may get out of the opening with his skin. Remember: an extra pawn is of no use when you are being checkmated!

9... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

Recaptures the piece and attacks the \mathbb{W} . Perhaps White overlooked that the \mathbb{Q} is indirectly protected, since 10. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ would be met by the terrible pin ... $\mathbb{B}e8!$

10. $\mathbb{W}c4$

Makes the Queen safe and keeps an eye on both black

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Zonal Games



Bishops. White threatens to win a piece with $\mathbb{Q}xb4$.

10...fx3

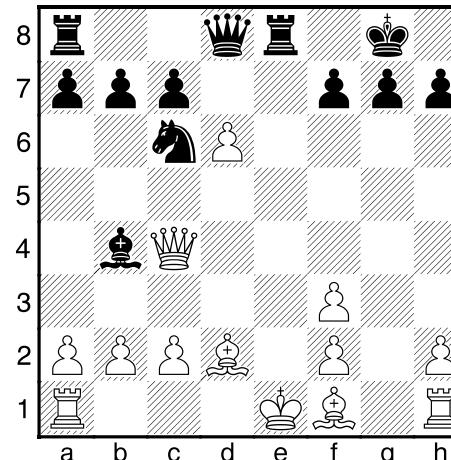
Black captures a piece, opens the e-file, removes a guard of the $\mathbb{Q}d2$, and ruins White's kingside pawns! What more could anyone ask from a single move!

11.gxf3

11. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ is no better 11... $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ and the white King is not long for this world.

11...e8+

Develops the \mathbb{Q} with check.



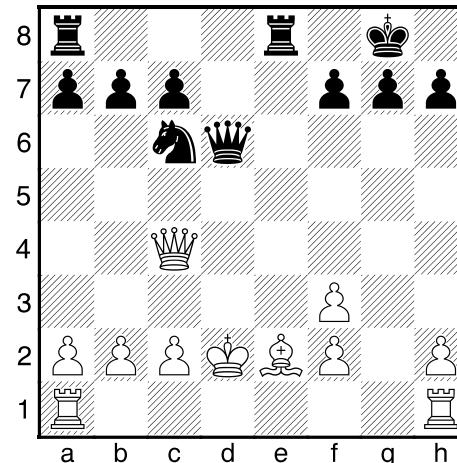
12.Qe2

Blocks the check and develops a piece, and renews the threat to win a piece with $\mathbb{Q}xb4$. Not 12. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 13.dxc7 $\mathbb{Q}e1\#$.

12...Qxd2+

Boldly forward! Rather than retreat, Black trades his hanging piece and forces the white king into the open. The insipid 12... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ allows White to fight on with 13.0–0–0!

13.Qxd2 Wxd6+



Restores material equality, but that is not nearly as important as the fact that White's \mathbb{Q} is exposed and he's playing without his \mathbb{Q} s.

14.Qe1

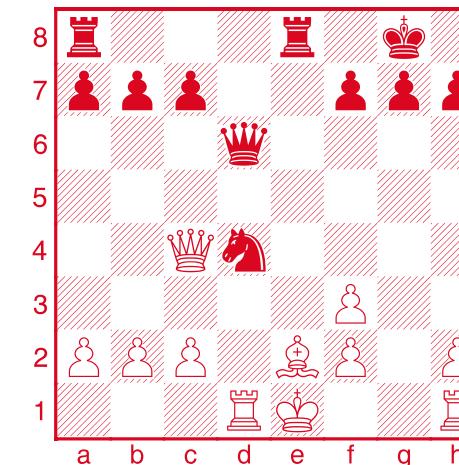
White could have struggled on with 14. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ but after 14... $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ the result would never be in doubt. Disheartened, White allows Black to finish the game with a sparkling combination.

14...Qd4

Forward! The \mathbb{Q} and \mathbb{Q} converge on the pinned $\mathbb{Q}e2$.

15.Qd1

The move White must have counted on. He indirectly defends the $\mathbb{Q}e2$ by pinning an attacker to the $\mathbb{W}d6$, but Black has another arrow in his quiver. Can you find it?



15...Qxf3+!

The Pawn was free for the taking, but Black is after bigger game.

16.Qf1 Wxd1+!!

A bolt from the blue! One can imagine Capablanca's smile on playing this *petite combinacion*.

17.Qxd1 Qd2+

The *denouement*. Black recovers the queen, and White had seen enough.

Lessons from this Game:

- develop your pieces
- control the center
- castle your king to safety
- when in doubt, play like Capablanca.

0–1

Here is a second analysis of the same game, this time with a detailed focus on the tactics arising from Black's tricky sideline. Some variations are long, but that's life when you choose to play either side of the Scotch 4K. Of course, they have all been deeply computer-checked.

Lin, Leo (2229)
Atanasov, Anthony (2443)

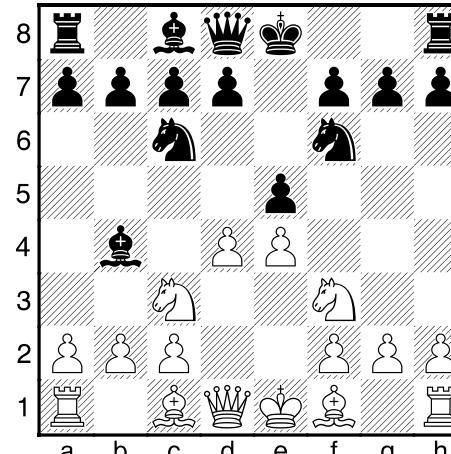
2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto
 (1), 27.03.2024

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 e5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$
 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 4. d4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$?

Chess Canada

National Games



Anti-Scotch Four Knights

A good choice! The most common move here is 4... exd4, and it is invariably played by Carlsen and Nakamura, so you have to assume White is well prepared for it. The Bishop pin scores just as well but is played only 10% as frequently, and among top players only Mamedyarov plays it regularly.

A common middlegame theme is White's $\mathbb{Q}+bad$ queenside vs Black's sound structure. White has lots of reasonable-looking options, but only one testing move.

5.dxe5?!

Black's play in this game shows why this is not good.

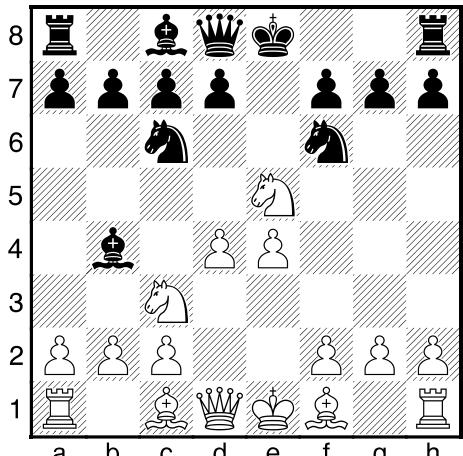
a) 5. $\mathbb{Q}b5?!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 6. $\mathbb{W}d3$ d5
 7. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 0-0 8. 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 9. dx5
 $\mathbb{Q}xc3!$ 10. bxc3 c6! 11. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}a5$
 12. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 0-1 **Paulsen,L-Morphy,P USA-01 Congress, New York, 1857.**

b) 5. a3? $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 6. bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
 7. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}e3\infty$.

c) 5. d5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$
 (6. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ d6 7. 0-0 0-0 8. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ c6!= **Andreikin,D (2713)-Mamedyarov,S (2753) Wch Blitz Khanty-Mansiysk, 2013.**) 6...d6!?
 (6... $\mathbb{Q}xe4\infty$) 7. $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (7... c6 8. dx5 0-0 9. $\mathbb{Q}d7!t$) 8. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4\infty$.

d) 5. $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ The only real test.

Analysis Diagram



Black again has options, which

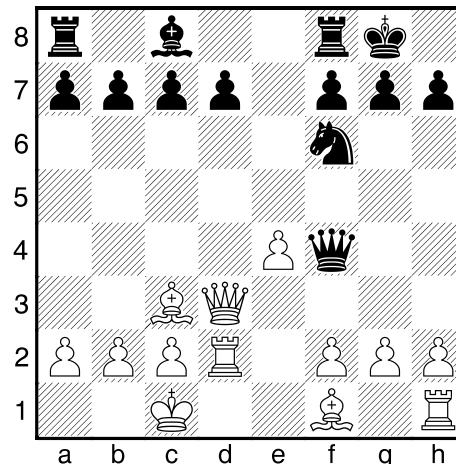
can make it intimidating for a less well-prepared White player:

d1) 5... 0-0!? 6. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ dxc6 7. e5± gambits a pawn for development, which might be uncomfortable for a White player who opted for the Scotch.

d2) 5... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+!?$ 6. bxc3 $\mathbb{W}e7$ forcefully unbalances the position and recovers the pawn, but it's hard to believe White's B-pair won't come good.

d3) 5... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 6. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 7. dx5 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0 9. 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}f4+!$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Analysis Diagram



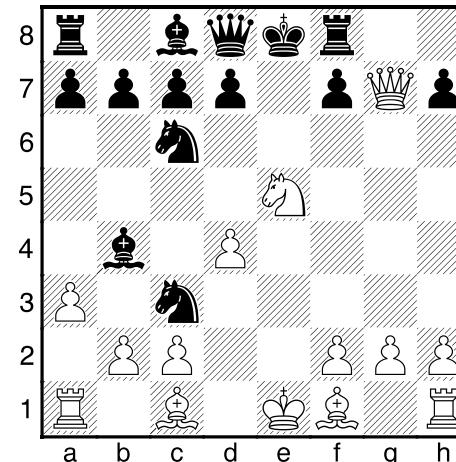
This is the recommended line in **Sielecki's Keep it Simple: 1.e4** repertoire book/Chessable

course. White has the B-pair and a lead in development. Black has one last chance to complicate here with 11...d5!?:

12. $\mathbb{W}f3?!$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 14. gxf3 gxf6 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\pm$ **Kravtsiv,M (2598)-Mamedyarov,S (2738) ChessKid Cup rapid, 2023;**

12. exd5! $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13. b3! $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14. $\mathbb{W}f3\pm$ and Black's activity evaporates after 14... $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 16. gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 18. $\mathbb{Q}g2+-$ and f3-f4, with an extra pawn and better pieces.

d4) 5... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ fails if White goes for the following maelstrom: 6. $\mathbb{W}g4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3\Box$ 7. $\mathbb{W}xg7\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 8. a3 \Box *Analysis Diagram*

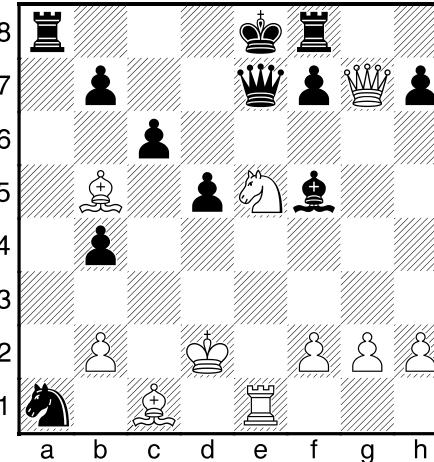




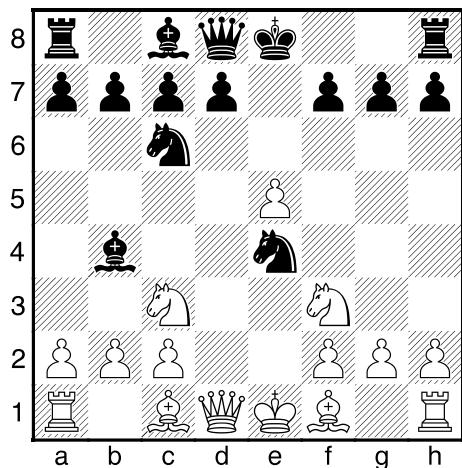
8... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xc6\Box$ $dxc6$ 10. $\mathbb{W}e5+$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ material is equal, but Black's $\mathbb{Q}a5$ is misplaced and White can develop with $h4$ and $\mathbb{Q}h3$. White scores about +100 Elo from here.

8... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ is obviously the critical move, but it's bad if White finds the way through the complications: 9. $axb4\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2+$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc3\Box$ $a5$ (11... $f6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g6!!+-$) 12. $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ (12. $b5?$ $\mathbb{W}e7\infty$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}h6?!$ $\mathbb{W}b4!+\bar{f}$ [Xiong,J \(2659\)-Christiansen,J \(2629\)](#) Titled Tuesday blitz, 2024) 12... $axb4+$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ (13. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e1\Box+-$) 13... $d5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $c6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e1!$ (15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6!$ $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e2\Box+-$) 15... $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

Analysis Diagram



5... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$



6. $\mathbb{W}d3$

A completely crazy-looking position, with several strong players having gone wrong in the lines along the way. You can see why a prudent player wouldn't want to risk this — as either colour — against a well-prepped opponent...

Is it even obvious what happens now?

White wins after:

17. $\mathbb{Q}xc6\Box+-$ $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{W}xe1$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}d41-0$ [Malakhov,V \(2515\)-Varga,Z \(2450\)](#) Budapest, 1996.

Attacking the \mathbb{Q} and defending $c3$.

6. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3!$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 8. $bxc3\bar{f}$ White has no comp for the bad structure.

6. $a3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3+!$ (6... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 7. $\mathbb{W}d3\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}a2+$ 8. $AXB4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 9. $\mathbb{W}c3!=$) 7. $bxc3$ $d5$ 8. $c4$ $d4!?\infty$ (8... $\mathbb{Q}e6\bar{f}$) 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ [Hou,Y \(2649\)-Azarov,S \(2577\)](#) Corsica Masters rapid, 2016.

6... $d5$

Defending the $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and developing the $\mathbb{Q}c8$.

7. $exd6?!$

7.a3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ similar to the Yifan game above, but with the White \mathbb{W} on the not-so-useful d3-square.

7... $0-0!+\bar{f}$

Makes the \mathbb{Q} safe, develops the $\mathbb{Q}h8$, and indirectly defends the $\mathbb{Q}e8$ with a skewer on the e-file.

8. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

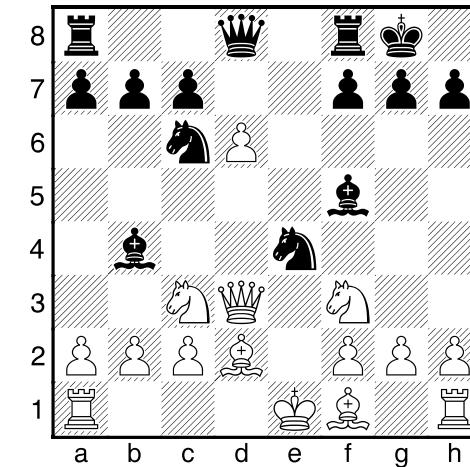
Unpins the $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and so renews the threat to the $\mathbb{Q}e4$.

8. $dxc7?$ loses a piece to

8... $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 9. $cxd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10. $a3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5-+$ and White's b-pawn can't both break the pin and capture the $\mathbb{Q}c3$.

8... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

Defends the \mathbb{Q} , develops the \mathbb{Q} , and creates discovered threats to the $\mathbb{W}d3$.



9. $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$

9.d7 doesn't save White, but it is definitely better than the game.

9... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ (9... $\mathbb{Q}d6?!$ 10. $\mathbb{W}d5!$ $\mathbb{W}e7+\bar{f}$) 10. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ (11. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}e7+$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4+-$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}xf2$, with a big lead in development and a weak White king.) 11... $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8+$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f1\bar{f}$ also with a big lead in development and a weak White king... but not as weak as in the



game.

9...♝xe4

Recaptures the piece, attacks the \mathbb{W} , and is indirectly protected by the ...♝e8 pin.

10.♔c4

Makes the \mathbb{W} safe and keeps an eye on both black \mathbb{Q} s. It's bad news when the computer prefers the obviously losing 10.♔xe4 ♜e8.

10...♝xf3 11.gxf3

11.♗xb4 ♜e8+ 12.♔d2 ♜g5+–+ or ...♝e4+–.

11...♝e8+ 12.♝e2 ♜xd2+

13.♔xd2 ♜xd6+

White's \mathbb{Q} is exposed and he's playing without his \mathbb{B} s.

14.♔e1

14.♗d3 ♜e5 15.♔e4 ♜xd3 16.♔xd3 ♜f4+–+.

14...♞d4 15.♔d1 ♜xf3+

16.♔f1 ♜xd1+! 17.♔xd1 ♜d2+

0–1

game.

9...♝xe4

Recaptures the piece, attacks the \mathbb{W} , and is indirectly protected by the ...♝e8 pin.

10.♔c4

Makes the \mathbb{W} safe and keeps an eye on both black \mathbb{Q} s. It's bad news when the computer prefers the obviously losing 10.♔xe4 ♜e8.

10...♝xf3 11.gxf3

11.♗xb4 ♜e8+ 12.♔d2 ♜g5+–+ or ...♝e4+–.

11...♝e8+ 12.♝e2 ♜xd2+

13.♔xd2 ♜xd6+

White's \mathbb{Q} is exposed and he's playing without his \mathbb{B} s.

14.♔e1

14.♗d3 ♜e5 15.♔e4 ♜xd3 16.♔xd3 ♜f4+–+.

14...♞d4 15.♔d1 ♜xf3+

16.♔f1 ♜xd1+! 17.♔xd1 ♜d2+

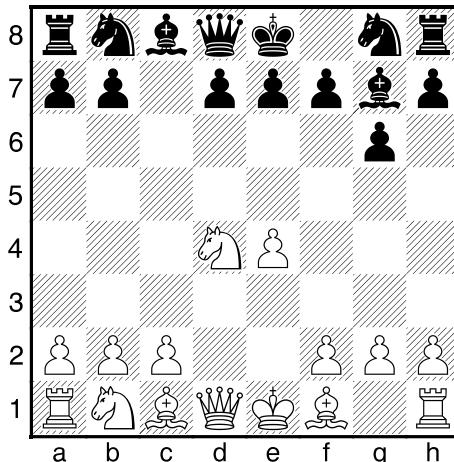
0–1

Panjwani, Raja (2525) Sambuev, Bator (2562)

2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto (9), 01.04.2024

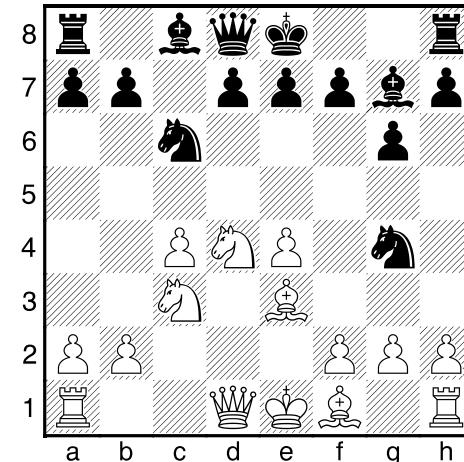
Notes: John Upper

**1.♞f3 g6 2.e4 c5 3.d4 cxd4
4.♞xd4 ♜g7**



An accelerated Dragon!? An interesting choice, since Raja wrote the most recent Black repertoire book on it: *The Hyper-Accelerated Dragon*, (Thinkers Publishing, 2017, 2022. 2nd ed.).

**5.c4 ♜c6 6.♔e3 ♜f6
7.♞c3 ♜g4**



The Breyer Variation, Chapter 4 in Raja's book. Black trades a pair of \mathbb{N} s, which makes the cramped position a bit more bearable.

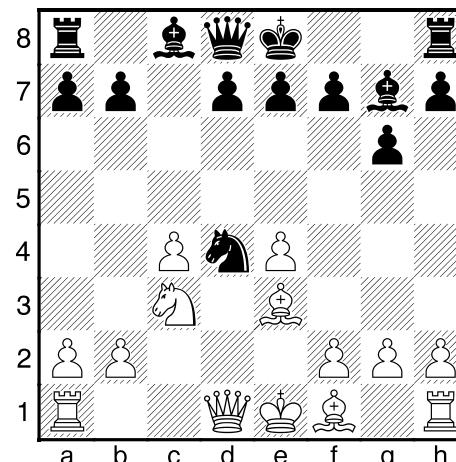
8.♔xg4 ♜xd4

8...♜xd4? 9.♔xd4 ♜xd4 10.0–0–0! ♜c6 11.♔g3! 0–0 12.h4±

"White's attack is overwhelming."
- Panjwani.

9.♔d1

An accelerated Dragon!?
An interesting choice...
...since White wrote a recent Black repertoire book on it!



9...♝e6!?

Departs from Raja's repertoire choice:

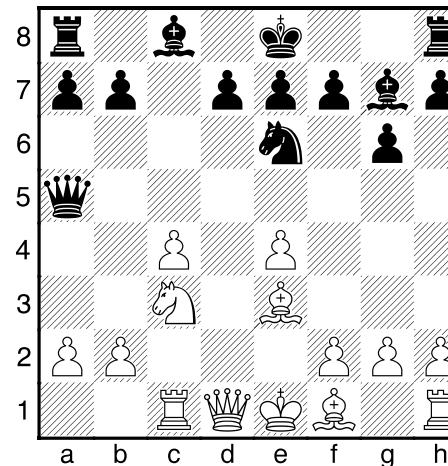
"Bent Larsen used to prefer 9...♝e6, but I think 9...e5 offers more chances for counterplay based on Black's occupation of the center. Computers generally tend to prefer White in the Breyer, but from my experience even 2600+ GMs find it very uncomfortable to 'play round' Black's d4 knight, which (invariably) leads them to mishandle White's position." - Panjwani

Against 10.♞b5 Raja's book recommended the Novelty pawn sac 10...d6! which — seven years later — we find is the first choice of SF17! See his book for details.



10. $\mathbb{E}c1$
10. $\mathbb{E}e2$ $\mathbb{E}xc3+! \infty$.

10... $\mathbb{W}a5$

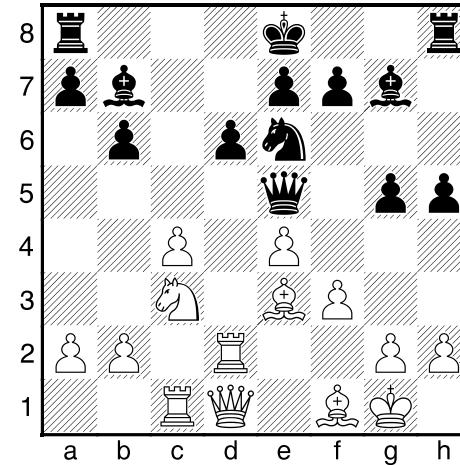
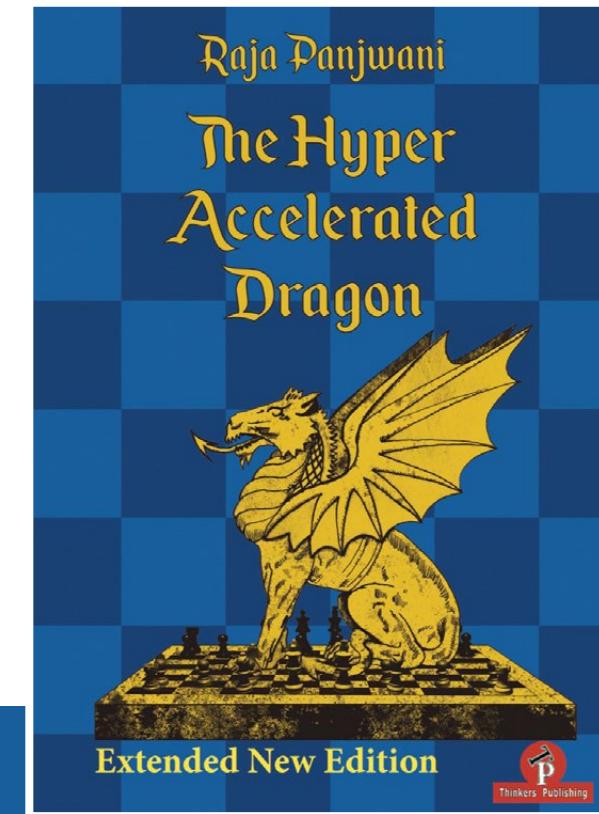


Black's usual development scheme is to control the dark squares with pawns: ...b6, ...d6, and even ...g5, as in the Short-Larsen game in the next note. White's next move cuts across this.

11. $\mathbb{W}d5$

Here's a Larsen game that shows how Black gets in trouble if White keeps the pieces on: 11. $\mathbb{E}e2$ b6 12. 0-0 $\mathbb{E}b7$ 13. f3 g5 14. $\mathbb{E}f2$ h5 15. $\mathbb{E}f1$ $\mathbb{E}e5$ 16. $\mathbb{E}d2$ d6

Analysis Diagram



Short played:
17. $\mathbb{E}d5 \pm$ $\mathbb{F}f8$ 18. b4 $\mathbb{E}h6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}b3$ g4 20. $\mathbb{E}xh6+$ $\mathbb{E}xh6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ 22. f4± **Short,N (2620)-Larsen,B (2570) Hastings, 1987.**

But White has much better:
17. $\mathbb{E}d5!!+-$ is a terrific exchange sac, creating tactics on the \mathbb{W} and the \mathbb{E} and the c-file. Here's the most direct line: 17... $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 18. cxd5 $\mathbb{E}c5$ 19. $\mathbb{E}b5+!$ $\mathbb{F}f8$ 20. b4 $\mathbb{E}b7$ 21. $\mathbb{E}c6$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xb7$ $\mathbb{E}xb7$ 23. $\mathbb{E}e2!+-$ threatens both $\mathbb{E}c8\#$ and $\mathbb{E}d4$, trapping the \mathbb{W} .

11... $\mathbb{E}xc3+!$

Unbalances the game and forces White to choose between pawn sacs.

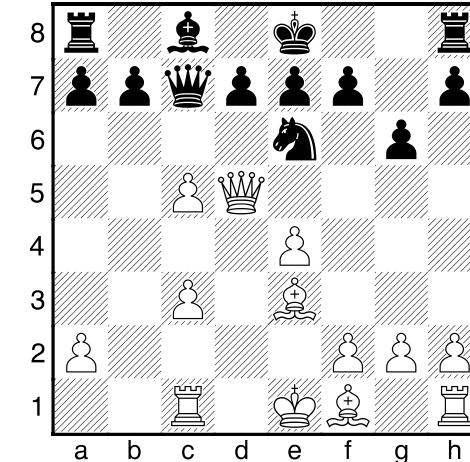
12. $\mathbb{B}xc3$

12. $\mathbb{E}xc3!?$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 13. $\mathbb{E}c1 \pm$ for the pawn, White has the B-pair, a lead in development, space, and a choice of plans.

12... $\mathbb{W}c7!?$

12... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 13. c5 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 14. exd5±, for the pawn, White has the B-pair and a central pawn blob that will probably require Black to accept some pawn weakening to break down. Not fun for Black.

13. c5!



13... $\mathbb{E}f8?!$

Clearly hoping to lever open the position with ...f5, but it commits the \mathbb{F} to the center, and ...f5 doesn't solve Black's queenside woes.

13... 0-0-0? invites an attack with 14. h4→

13... $\mathbb{E}b8$ preparing to unwind the queenside with ...b6 or even ...b5.

14. $\mathbb{E}b5!$

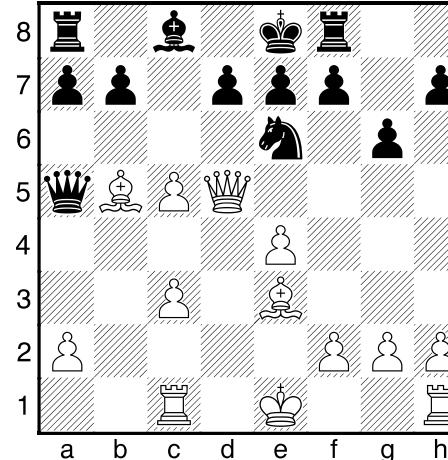
Develops and stops ...f5, which would hang the \mathbb{E} .

14... $\mathbb{W}a5$

RU booked?

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Zonal Games



15.c6?

Trading the iso and breaking open the position for the B-pair is perfectly reasonable, but it fails to Black's next.

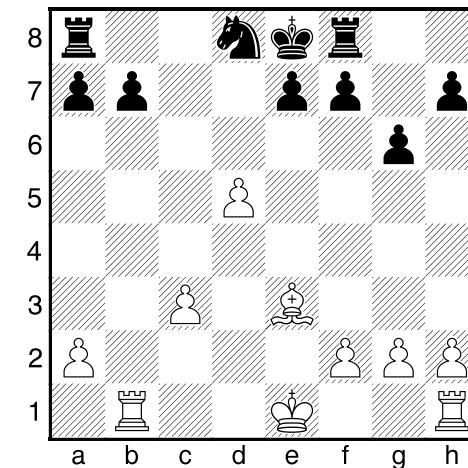
Instead, 15.♕c4! keeps the pieces on and leaves Black horribly contorted; for example: 15...f5 16.f3! (16.♕h6±) 16...fxe4 17.0–0!+– with a winning development advantage against a sitting duck ♔.

15...♔c7!

This paradoxical retreat — Black's fourth Queen move of the game and all on the same short diagonal! — simply threatens to take on c6 and so forces exchanges which minimize White's space and development advantage.

15...bxc6? 16.♕xc6 ♔xd5 17.♕xd5 ♕b8 18.♕xa7± gives Black some activity, but it's not enough for White's B-pair and extra pawn.

16.cxd7+ ♕xd7 17.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 18.♕b1 ♔xd5 19.exd5 ♕d8



The exchanges have drained White's potential, and even though he can get his ♕s into the game faster, there are no useful open lines.

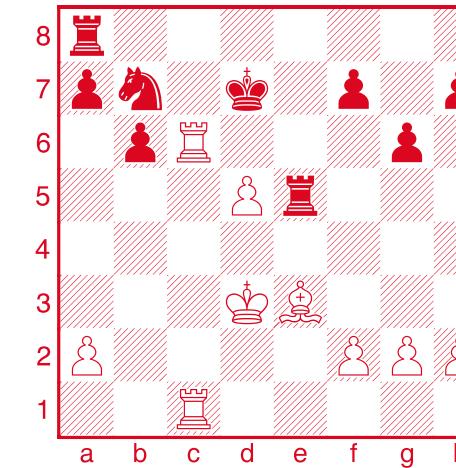
20.♔d2

20.a4!? discourages Black's ideal regrouping with ...b6 and ...♗b7, since 20...b6?! 21.a5! gives White a passed c-pawn and long-lasting queenside pressure.

20...b6! 21.♕he1 ♔d7 22.c4 e6!

Leaving White with an isolated pawn on d5 or c4.

23.♔d3 ♕e8 24.♕ec1 exd5 25.cxd5 ♗b7 26.♕c6 ♕e5 27.♕bc1



27...♕xd5+! 28.♔e4 ♕c5=
Saves the ♕ and prevents the ♕c7+ fork by interfering with the defence of the ♕c6.

29.♕6xc5

29.♕xc5 ♔xc6=.

29...bxc5 30.♕xc5 ♕e8+ 31.♔d3 ♗xc5+ 32.♕xc5 ♔d6 33.♕a5 ♕e7 34.♕a6+ ♔e5

1/2

links

Hart House Chess Club

Their [event page](#) includes links to interviews, photos, videos and tournament details.

YouTube Interviews:

[Playlist](#)

[Plotkin v Doknjas](#)

[Dukic v Plotkin](#)

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Chess Canada

Zonal Games



#	Player	Score	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	Old	Perf
1	Thavandiran, Shiyam	9	+41	+6	+2	=4	+11	+3	=17	+13	+7	+9	2475	2794
2	Panjwani, Raja	7	+61	+31	-1	+27	+4	=14	=3	+17	=11	=7	2525	2611
3	Rodrigue-Lemieux, S.	7	+24	+15	=25	+17	+13	-1	=2	+6	-4	+11	2636	2606
4	Atanasov, Anthony	7	+49	+33	+9	=1	-2	=7	=27	+19	+3	=5	2443	2591
5	Preotu, Razvan	7	+32	-25	=12	+22	+34	-17	+33	+21	+13	=4	2555	2515
6	Noritsyn, Sergey	6.5	+42	-1	+59	+9	-7	+31	+15	-3	=14	+17	2377	2556
7	Sai, Krishna G V	6.5	+63	=18	+29	-11	+6	=4	+39	+14	-1	=2	2447	2552
8	Ivanov, Mike	6.5	-0	-0	-51	+52	+63	+46	+31	+41	+27	2385	2549	
9	Dorrance, Adam	6.5	+48	+60	-4	-6	+24	=23	+44	+18	+17	-1	2429	2472
10	Zhang, Samuel	6	-38	+53	+19	+7	-1	+29	-13	+27	=2	=3	2562	2506
11	Sambuev, Bator	6	+50	=39	=5	-14	+59	-15	+40	=20	+37	=23	2307	2473
12	Doknjas, John	6	=22	+35	+54	+25	-3	+18	+11	-1	=5	2590	2469	
13	Noritsyn, Nikolay	6	+40	-17	+61	+12	+15	=2	=21	-7	=6	=16	2501	2440
14	Plotkin, Mark	6	+16	-3	+45	+26	-14	+12	-6	+0	=8	=13	2365	2429
15	Dukic, Zachary	6	-15	=37	-23	+39	+61	+34	-20	+44	+33	=14	2211	2421
16	Saha, Ananda	5.5	+55	+14	+20	-3	+39	+5	=1	-2	-9	-6	2459	2496
17	Vetteze, Nicholas	5.5	+43	=7	=21	+20	+25	-13	+29	-9	+26	-8	2382	2428
18	Rusonik, Max	5.5	-52	+23	-11	+60	=20	+39	+37	-4	=21	=34	2341	2398
19	Lawson, Eric	5.5	+56	+44	-17	=18	-19	-27	+16	=12	=23	=22	2446	2366
20	Le, Quang Long	5.5	=35	+22	=18	=54	=23	+26	=14	-5	=19	=24	2358	2363
21	Stevens, Christian	5.5	=13	-21	+42	-5	=60	=30	+36	+35	=27	=20	2280	2356
22	Kaufman, Raymond	5.5	=53	-19	+16	+36	-21	=9	=8	=26	=20	-12	2335	2355
23	Song, Ethan	5.5	-3	=36	=35	+43	-9	+42	+47	-8	+40	=21	2313	2343
24	Latorre, Vincent	5.5	+36	+5	=3	-13	-18	=40	-38	+47	=28	=32	2354	2378
25	Jaferian, Koosha	5	+37	-29	=39	-15	+32	-21	+31	-23	-18	=33	2250	2358
26	Kalinin, Dzmitry	5	-60	+52	+63	-2	+41	+20	=4	-11	=22	-10	2334	2340
27	Keleberda, Tymur	5	-59	-45	+57	=61	-36	+49	+56	+29	=25	-0	2310	2335
28	Kang, Dorian	5	+57	-26	-7	+46	+54	-11	-18	-28	=30	+41	2397	2317
29	Plotkin, Victor	5	-31	=49	-37	+52	=38	=22	+54	-33	=29	+46	2205	2313
30	Kot, Emanuel	5	+30	-2	=32	=41	+46	-6	-26	-10	+51	+42	2387	2275
31	Doknjas, Neil	5	-4	-25	=24	+38	-23	+28	-44	-22	=48	=46	2243	2254
32	Abrahams, Daniel	5	+51	-4	-46	+47	-40	+35	-5	+30	-16	=26	2342	2269
33	Xu, Daniel	5	-14	-55	+30	=40	+35	-5	+17	-19	-12	-10	2334	2340
34	Terry, Joshua	5	-62	+48	=60	+32	-5	-16	-41	+55	+35	=19	2201	2237
35	England, Max	4.5	-21	-13	=24	+63	-37	-33	+32	-22	-34	+50	2007	2275
36	Huang, Youhe	4.5	-25	-24	+38	-23	+28	-44	-22	=48	=46	+45	2243	2254
37	Tanaka, Tyler	4.5	-26	-16	+30	=40	+35	+56	-19	+45	-12	-0	2392	2233
38	Piasetski, Leon	4	-11	-0	-36	+45	-30	+60	+25	-0	-0	-0	2323	2431
39	Cummings, David	4	+47	=12	=26	+44	-17	=19	-7	=41	-0	-0	2408	2331
40	Li, William	4	-14	-55	+52	=37	=33	-25	-12	+51	-24	-20	2285	2274
41	Yang, Jingyun (Ryan)	4	-1	-42	+53	=31	-27	+45	+34	=39	-10	-29	2275	2222
42	Yuen, Noah Nathaniel	4	-6	-41	-22	=58	-63	-24	-51	+60	+47	-31	2237	2168
43	Marchand, Calix	4	-18	-63	+48	-24	-50	-32	=55	=52	+49	=47	2237	2168
44	Jodar, Marlon	3.5	-46	-20	+50	-39	=8	+36	-9	-16	-0	-0	2331	2275
45	Taylor, Ashton	3.5	-54	+28	-15	-38	+51	=41	+60	-37	-32	-36	2218	2161
46	Singh, Mahip	3.5	-44	+56	+33	-29	-31	-47	-10	+57	=36	-30	2276	2160
47	Clyde, Jordan	3.5	-39	-50	+51	-33	+48	+46	-24	-25	-42	-43	2240	2159
48	Campbell, Ryan	3.5	-9	-34	-43	=57	-47	+53	=50	=36	+52	-0	2204	2153
49	Lin, Leo	3.5	-4	-30	-55	-16	+53	-28	=52	=50	-43	-36	2229	2132
50	Liu, Zachary	3.5	-12	+47	-44	-59	-43	-51	=48	=49	+56	-35	2210	2129
51	Wiebe, Isaac	3	-33	-32	-47	+10	-45	+50	+42	-40	-31	-0	2218	2123
52	Yang, Lefan	3	=19	-27	-40	-30	-10	+57	=49	=43	-48	=53	2233	2081
53	Malakar, Saarthak	3	=23	-11	-41	-56	-49	-48	-57	+0	+64	=52	2192	2062
54	Derraugh, Geordie	2.5	+45	+59	-13	=21	-29	-8	-30	-0	-0	-0	2270	2254
55	Ajith, Aayush	2.5	-17	-40	+49	-8	-56	=58	=43	-34	-0	-0	2327	2341
56	Barron, Michael	2.5	-20	-46	=64	+53	+55	-37	-28	-32	-50	-49	2277	2072
57	Marin, Sam	2.5	-29	-8	-28	-48	-58	-52	+53	-46	-0	+0	2196	2039
58	Mao, Fengxi	2	-0	-0	-42	+57	=55	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	2266	2199
59	Chiku-Ratte, Olivier Kenta	2	+28	-54	-6	+50	-12	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	2159	2601
60	Liu, Henry	2	+27	-9	-34	-19	-22	-38	-45	-42	-0	-0	2246	1972
61	Nicula, Marius	1.5	-2	+64	-14	=28	-16	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	0	2249
62	Ma, Derek	1	+34	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	0	2249
63	Joseph, Jonath	1	-7	+43	-27	-35	-42	-10	-0	-0	-0	-0	0	1972
64	Yu, Jonathan	0.5	-0	-61	=56	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	-0	0	1972



photos: Deepanshi Matai

#	Player	Score	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	Old	Perf
1	Ouellet, Maili-Jade	7.5	+31	+16	=3	+7	=2	+8	+6	=4	+5	+2318	2341	
2	Li, Yunshan	7.5	+28	+17	+5	=4	=1	=16	+3	+15	+14	2377	2303	
3	Demchenko, S.	7.5	+32	+18	=1	+6	+4	+15	-2	+8	+10	2321	2268	
4	Pham, Bich Ngoc	6.5	+22	+27	+11	=2	-3	=14	+9	=1	+17	2294	2199	
5	Li, Yilin	6	+12	+21	-2	=8	=33	+18	+26	+7	-1	1887	2193	
6	Mills, Morgan	6	=24	+45	+9	-3	+29	+23	-1	=17	+15	2084	2099	
7	Golubeva, O.	5.5	+10	+25	+15	-1	=23	=9	+16	-5	+24	2278	2016	
8	Jiang, Kate	5.5	+41	=23	+29	=5	+17	-1	+25	-3	=11	2109	1998	
9	DSouza, Carina	5.5	=19	-6	+12	+10	=7	-4	+18	=16	=16	1973	1988	
10	Sreekumar, G.	5.5	-7	=30	+45	+21	-9	+35	+22	+16	-3	1568	1898	
11	Zhong, April Y.	5.5	+35	+33	-4	-23	+28	+20	-15	+25	=8	=2023	1876	
12	Mok, Gillian	5.5	-5	+44	+25	-9</								



Mike Ivanov earned his FM title in 2016 and the IM title in October 2024, following a determined, 21-month-long, 236-FIDE-rated-games in North America and Europe took him from 2290 to 2403. Mike will annotate the final tournament of that run in our next issue.

The exciting game below at the 2024 Zonal was part of that run.

In 2025, along with his business partner Lan Huang he published the book *Best Stories in Chess*, a collection of amusing and absurd events from the (mostly) recent history of the game.

He currently teaches chess in Toronto for the Canada Chess Youth Club. The second game here shows how he explains games to young students.

Links

[Best Stories in Chess](#)

[Canada Chess Youth Club](#)

**Derraugh, Geordie (2189)
Ivanov, Mike (2374)**

A52

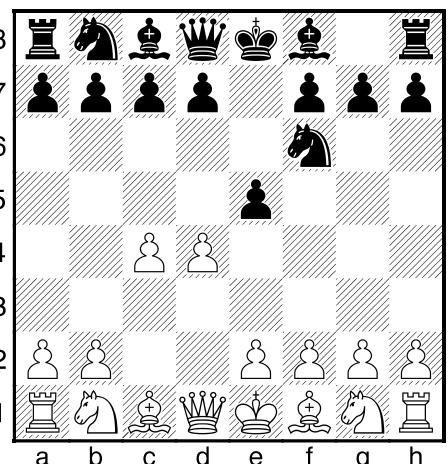
2024 Canadian Zonal Toronto
(6), 30.03.2024

notes: **IM Mike Ivanov**

1.d4

Going into this game, I was playing my friend Geordie Derraugh, who decided to completely switch to a d4 repertoire after playing e4 for the last 12 years I've known him.

1... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 e5!?



My reasoning was that he probably looked over all the main lines in detail including

what I usually played, plus there could be targeted preparation. I thought even if he remembered the Budapest Gambit, it wouldn't be in such detail and we'd get a fresh position that both of us won't know very well. That turned out to be true, although the line he chose is quite dangerous.

**3.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$
4.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$
5.f4 $\mathbb{Q}ec6$
6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$**

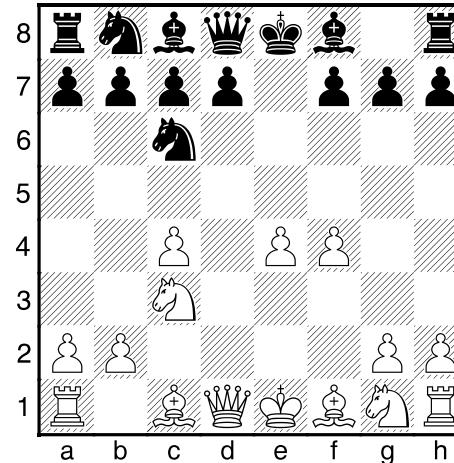


IM Mike Ivanov

Toronto Chess-in-the-Park meetup

Chess Canada

Misha's tales



When trying to remember the line here, something came to mind from 2017 when I last looked at this. A very weak phone engine was suggesting ... $\mathbb{b}4$ to trade the knight, then ... $d6$ and after $\mathbb{f}3$... $\mathbb{g}4$ to trade off the other knight, bring the $b8$ knight to $d7$ and $c5$, followed by... $a5$ and a potential ... $0-0-0$. At the board though, this looked very suspect, and I knew the older engines underestimated the bishop pair.

6... $\mathbb{c}5$

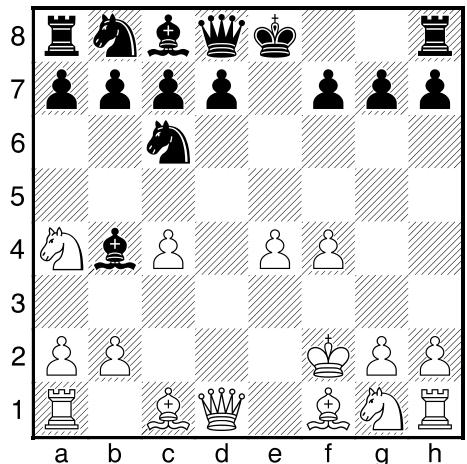
6... $\mathbb{b}4$:

7. $\mathbb{f}3$ $\mathbb{x}c3+$ 8. $bxc3$ $d6$ 9. $\mathbb{d}3$ $\mathbb{g}4$ 10. $0-0$ $\mathbb{d}7$ 11. $\mathbb{e}3$ $\mathbb{e}7$ 12. $\mathbb{b}1$ 0-0-0? 13. $\mathbb{b}3$!
Indeed, this wouldn't be too promising either;

After 7. $\mathbb{g}e2$! or $\mathbb{d}2$, White gets a significant edge according to Leela, so engines have gotten better over time!

7. $\mathbb{d}3$ $d6$ 8. $\mathbb{f}3$ $\mathbb{g}4$ 9. $0-0$ $\mathbb{x}c3$ 10. $bx $$$ 11. $\mathbb{xf}3$ 12. $\mathbb{d}7\pm$.

7. $\mathbb{a}4$ $\mathbb{b}4+$ 8. $\mathbb{f}2$



Here he offered a draw, which was tempting, since I was half an hour down on the clock and had no idea how to treat this position, which is somewhat worse and dangerous. As the higher-rated player with ambitions, my reply to the draw offer was: "I wish I could". I don't want to beat good friends, but sometimes we have to.

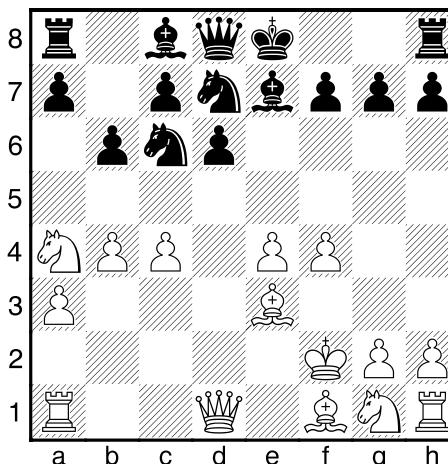
8... $\mathbb{b}6$!?

One idea with ... $b6$ was to trade the bishop with ... $\mathbb{c}5$ at some point, although this felt slightly dubious. What I decided on was a hedgehog type of plan with ... $\mathbb{e}7$, $\mathbb{b}7$, $d6$, and $\mathbb{d}7$, followed by ... $a5$ and $\mathbb{c}5$, and the bishop hopefully coming to $f6$.

9. $a3$ $\mathbb{e}7$ 10. $b4$ $d6$ 11. $\mathbb{e}3$

$\mathbb{d}7$

The move orders matter here. White has to reckon with ... $\mathbb{f}6$ – $\mathbb{g}4$ threats, so the $c8$ bishop isn't in a big hurry to commit himself. Instead, 11... $g5$ 12. $\mathbb{f}3$ $gxf4$ 13. $\mathbb{xf}4\infty$.



Should White go, $\mathbb{f}3$, $\mathbb{d}3$, or something else?

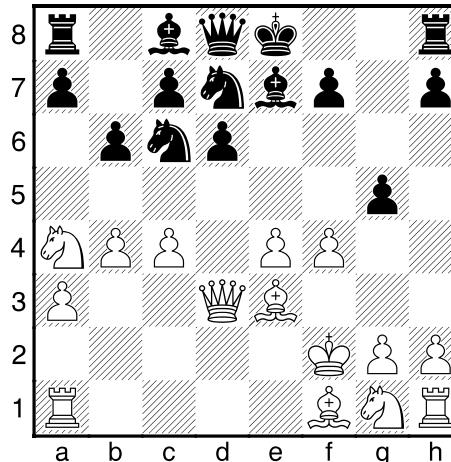
12. $\mathbb{d}3$?

Natural, but bad. $\mathbb{d}3$ was meant to prepare 12... $\mathbb{f}6$ $h3$, but it only helps with 12... $g5$ because now ... $\mathbb{e}5$ will come with tempo.

12. $\mathbb{f}3$?! $\mathbb{f}6$ $Xe4$ and ... $\mathbb{g}4$.

Better were: 12. $\mathbb{e}2$ $g5$?, and 12. $\mathbb{c}3$ $g5$?

12... $g5$!



I was already considering this a move earlier, and planned it against most White candidates:

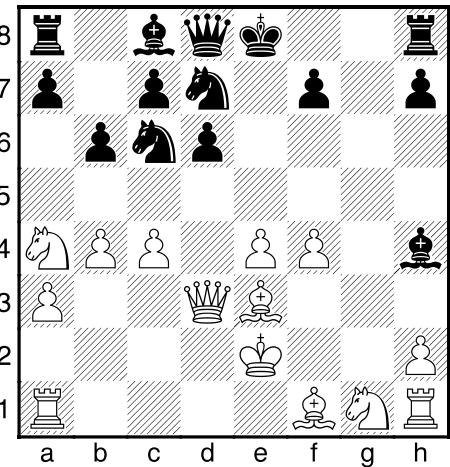
- all my pieces need the space, and the $e5$ square would be nice too
- isolating the $e4$ pawn doesn't hurt
- any ... $f5$ break hurts my light squares too much...

Chess Canada Mishka's tales



...so I'm left with this weird-looking break.

13.g3 gxf4 14.gxf4 ♜h4+
15.♔e2



15...♞de5!?

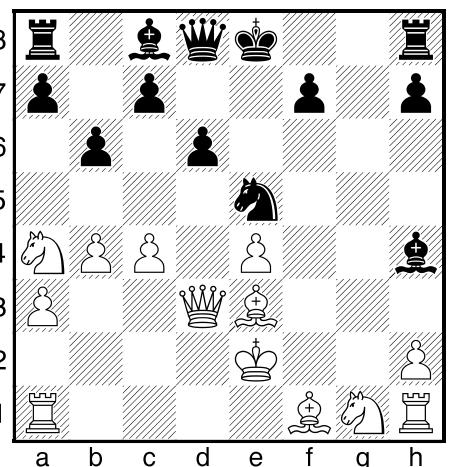
Right idea, but 15...♝f6 followed by ...♞de5 would be even stronger. In such positions, if White can consolidate, then the king will be fine and the space advantage will start to tell. This is reminiscent of the French Closed Tarrasch triangle system where Black also plays ...g5 and has to follow it up energetically not to get squeezed completely.

I seriously considered going back with 15...♝f6 but it didn't feel right for this position, even

if it's also equal: 15...♝f6 16.♝d1 ♜e7 17.♞f3 a5 (17...♝b7 18.♝h3 0-0-0 19.c5↑) 18.b5 ♞d8 19.♝h3±.

I should have tried 15...♝f6 16.♞c3 ♞de5 (16...♞ce5 is not as accurate because of... 17.♝d4!= sometimes sacrifices are better left ignored.) 17.fxe5 ♞xe5 18.♝c2 c6! 19.♝d2 ♜g8 20.♝e2 ♜g2 21.♝c1 ♜e6 Black has more than enough positional compensation for the piece.

16.fxe5 ♞xe5



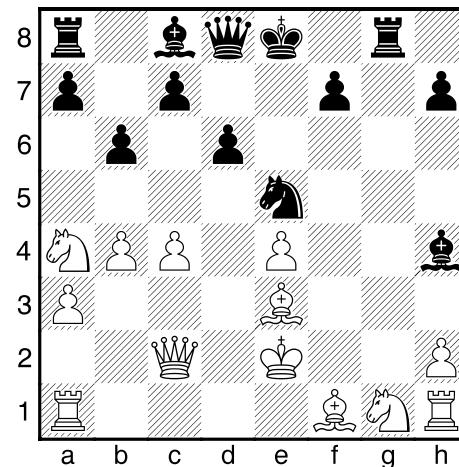
At this point a crowd assembled around the board because we were both laughing. The joke is that I've always said Geordie's alter ego was Fritz 7: grab

material, run, and hope for the best. This proved to be the case here.

17.♝c2

As a result of this sacrifice, my pieces all get good squares (especially the godly knight on e5) and White loses all play. White will have a hard time simply developing because of all the threats in the air.

17...♜g8



18.h3?

It's hard to find good defensive moves here, but I felt that h3 had to be wrong as it gives me a tempo for the attack when White shouldn't have that luxury.



Geordie Derraugh

18.♞f3? ♞xf3 19.♝xf3 ♜g4+
20.♔g2 ♜h5+ 21.♔h3 ♜d7+
22.♔xh4 ♜g4#.

18.♞c3 c6! keeps the ♞ off d5 and prepares ...♝f6 and ...♝e6

Chess Canada Misha's tales



with more than enough comp
- editor.

Perhaps a GM would figure out the best defense which was: 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ [editor - with the \mathbb{Q} stuck in the center, it is hard to believe that one critical variation depends on allowing a queen exchange and then attacking on the a-file, but it's true: 20. $\mathbb{W}c3?$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ 22. $b5$ $a6!+$ the $\mathbb{Q}a4$ has nowhere to go and White's sleeping kingside would make Morphy weep.] 20... $\mathbb{Q}f2$

(20... $\mathbb{Q}g5$

21. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$

$\mathbb{W}xg5+$

22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ I

was looking forward to these positions, which are at least

more pleasant, even if silicon isn't too impressed.) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$

$\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}h6+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

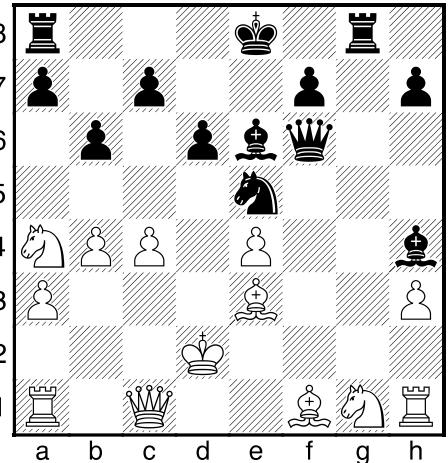
$\mathbb{Q}xh1$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$

$\mathbb{Q}xg1$ and here Black is only

symbolically better, if at all, providing White plays 26. $c5!$

At this point a crowd assembled around the board because we were both laughing.

18... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}f6$
20. $\mathbb{W}c1$



20... $\mathbb{Q}g3$

If I can get the dark square bishop, White should fall apart.

20... $\mathbb{Q}g5$

21. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$

22. $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

I thought

this was good for me but after 23. $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}xa1$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ white is starting to unravel.

20... $\mathbb{Q}f2$ was my first instinct, but I couldn't figure out all the tactical details, which are of

I don't want to beat good friends, but sometimes we have to.



FM Mike Ivanov

It's not personal. It's just business.

- Michael Corleone

Chess Canada

Misha's tales



course good for Black: 21. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (21. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}xf2+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}f3-$ +) 21... $\mathbb{B}g3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}xf2+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{B}xc3+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}f3+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}xe4+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}f3+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}xh1-$.

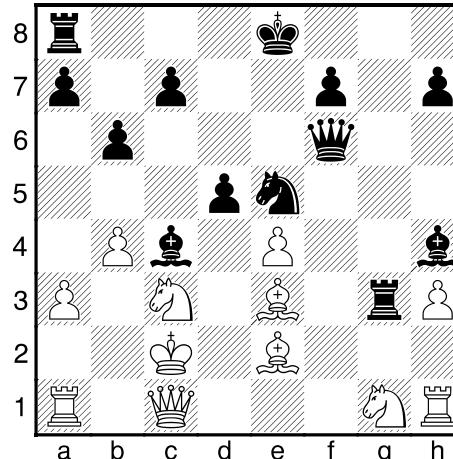
21. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

21... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{B}b3!$? I saw this far but thought it was unclear at best.

22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{B}g2+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}d4-$.

22... $d5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3$



23... $d4$

23... $d4$! To be honest, I didn't even consider this. Time

was ticking down and I was a bit obsessed about bringing the last rook into the attack. 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}g6-$ or 23... $0-0-0!?$ -.

24. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $0-0-0?$

24... $\mathbb{B}d8!$ Only way. The difference is that White's light-square bishop doesn't get to run away in the variations. 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ (26. $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $c6-$) 26... $\mathbb{B}xc3+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 28. $\mathbb{B}f1$

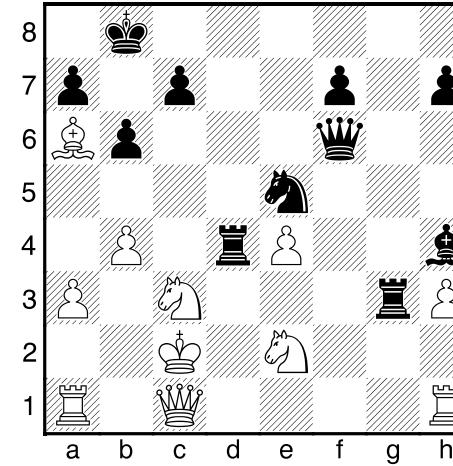
(28. $\mathbb{B}g1$ $c6$ 29. $\mathbb{B}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and Black is much better but has to be precise in the ensuing attack.) 28... $\mathbb{W}xf1$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 31. $\mathbb{B}xf1$ $c6-$.

25. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$

26. $\mathbb{Q}a6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$

27. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$

Friends again...



Here I was hit with the realization that I wasn't better anymore, and had to be precise not to end up losing. Thankfully, some initiative remains.

27... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e1$

28. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 30. $\mathbb{W}f1$ $\mathbb{B}d2+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}xh3$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{B}xf3$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ (33. $\mathbb{B}g1$ $h6-$) 33... $\mathbb{B}f6-$ White can finally breathe, but



Mike & Geordie @ Pubchess

Chess Canada Misha's tales



Black is still better coordinated.

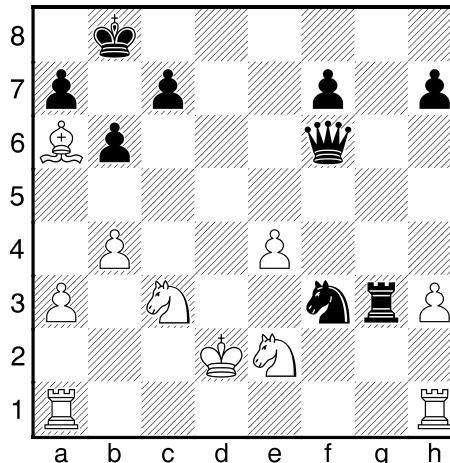
28. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 29. $\mathbb{R}axc1$ reaches a weird imbalance that White should probably have gone for. Queen and pawn against Bishop, Knight, and Rook, but the white King is a bit open and the white pieces aren't fully connected yet. *editor* – Does it spoil the fun to learn that SF17 rates this 0.00?

28... $\mathbb{R}d2+$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$

30. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$

Compared to the 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ line, Black has a bit more initiative here and can pose some coordination problems for White.

30... $\mathbb{Q}f3+$



31. $\mathbb{Q}c2?$

Understandable, especially in time trouble, but wrong.

White had to come up with the incredible 31. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ to hold the balance. After 31. $\mathbb{Q}d3$:

31... $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$

33. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and Black can't find a constructive knight check!;

31... $\mathbb{Q}e5+?$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

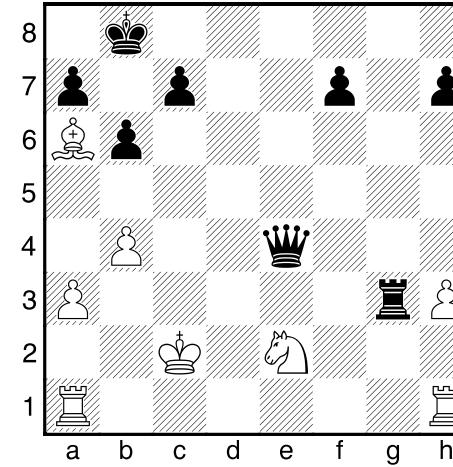
33. $\mathbb{R}af1\pm$;

31... $\mathbb{W}d8+$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e3!?$ ($\mathbb{Q}c2$ is also possible, but this is great if you want to irritate your opponent :) 32... $\mathbb{W}d2+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6+=.$

31... $\mathbb{Q}d4+$

Now I'm back in control because the white pieces can't protect each other, the rooks don't get the time they need, and the king needed two knights for his defense. Chess can be cruel that way!

**32. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e2$
 $\mathbb{W}xe4+$**



34. $\mathbb{Q}b2$

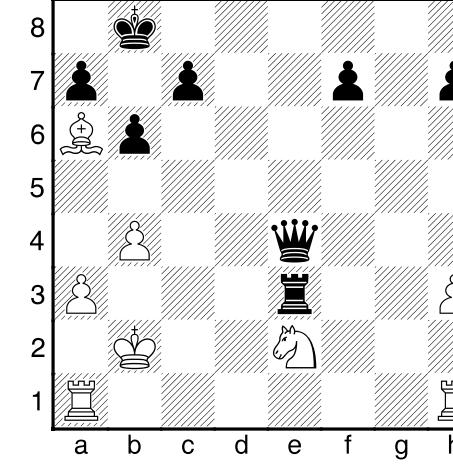
34. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}d5+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}b3+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (36... $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $c6$ the problem is White has nothing constructive to do here. 38. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b2+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $b5-+$) 37. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $c6$.

34... $\mathbb{Q}e3?$

I give Geordie one last chance to recover. Not sure why I rejected ... $\mathbb{Q}g2$, which is stronger and also feels more natural.

34... $\mathbb{Q}g2!$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ (35. $\mathbb{Q}hc1$ $b5!$) 35... $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}xe2+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}f3+$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{W}xh3-+$.

This ending should be winning as the white king is too exposed, allowing the black pawns to be pushed faster than usual due to forks.



35. $\mathbb{R}he1$

35. $\mathbb{R}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}xe2+$ 37. $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 38. $\mathbb{R}c3$ $f5$ 39. $\mathbb{R}hc1$ $f4$ 40. $\mathbb{R}1c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 41. $\mathbb{R}f2$ $c6$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b1+ -+$.

35. $\mathbb{R}hc1!$ is the best defense, but even then Black should be able to make progress with the pawns. 35... $\mathbb{R}xe2+$ (35... $b5$ doesn't work anymore because the knight isn't pinned and can hop to $c3$ with equality.) 36. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}xe2+$ 37. $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 38. $\mathbb{R}c3$ $f5$ 39. $\mathbb{R}d1$ $a5$ 40. $\mathbb{R}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 41. $\mathbb{R}d7$ $h5$ 42. $\mathbb{R}h7$ $axb4$ 43. $axb4$ $f4$ 44. $h4$ $b5$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $f3$ 46. $\mathbb{R}c5$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ 47. $\mathbb{R}c3$ $\mathbb{W}f4$ and Black converts.

35... $b5!$

What I was hoping for. With the bishop shut out, the rest is easy.

Chess Canada

Misha's tales



36.♘c3

36.♗xb5 ♕e5+ 37.♔c2 ♕xb5+-.

36.♗ac1 ♕xe2+ 37.♗xe2 ♕xe2+
38.♗c2 ♕e6 39.♗xb5 ♕e5+-.

36...♕g2+ 37.♔b3 ♕d5+

With a mate in 4, as ...♕d2 is coming next.

Overall, a wild game where my instincts were generally right but faulty calculation allowed White to get a second wind.

Working with Leela in the last five years made me more comfortable with positional sacrifices like ...♗de5, which really helped overcome "Fritz 7" this time around!

0-1

When I started teaching kids chess 15 years ago, I was surprised when my explanations of the Fried Liver Attack fell on deaf ears. Couldn't they tell how exciting the sacrifices were, and how Black could steal the initiative with the Traxler counterattack?

It took me quite a while to realize the importance of entering their world and imagining the game as kids see it. Instead of explaining how to put pressure on the enemy's position, or how to create two weaknesses, I started talking about "eating the Swiss cheese", "poking the bear", and using "permanent glue" to tie two pieces together. I learned that any game can be explained in children's terms, including grandmaster games. That way, they would be better understood and remembered.

In this game, GM Anton Kovalyov defeats FM Pechenkin using positional maneuvering followed by a pretty breakthrough. Would I put it that way when teaching? Of course not! Below is what a child-friendly explanation might look like...

Kovalyov, Anton (2619)

Pechenkin, Vladimir (2312)

Edmonton International 28.06.2012

as told by:

Rachel Huang & Mike Ivanov

1.♘f3

The horsie decides to head for the center of the universe, where it can see and touch everything. Knights are very touchy creatures.

1...f5

Black decides he wants a piece of the center pie, before white's front teeth start munching everything.

2.b3

White's c1 bishop wants to come out the back door, where his eyes will be magnificent.

2...d6 3.d4

White wants a piece of the pie too.

3...g6

Black's f8 bishop didn't like looking at walls, so it prepares a nice house for itself on g7.

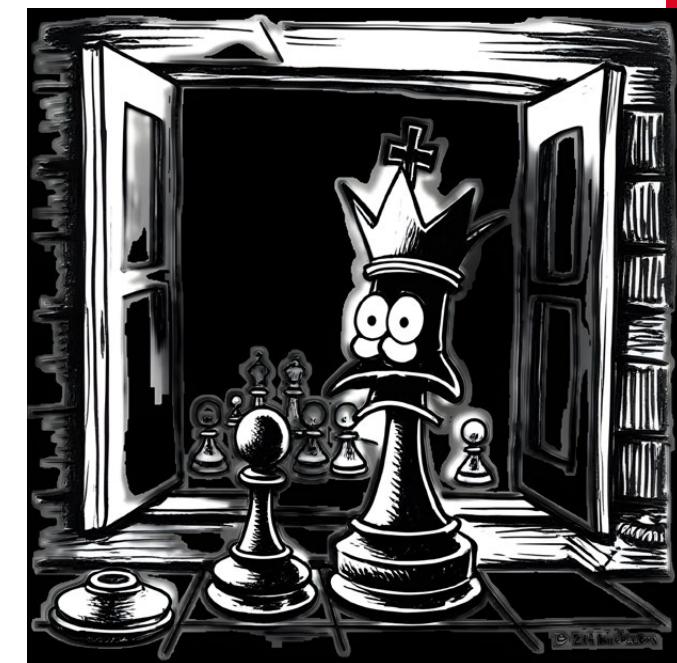
4.g3

We need to wake up the f1 bishop if the white king ever wants to find his castle.

4...♗g7 5.♗b2 ♗f6 6.♗g2

0-0

The black king buys his own house, but the window is a bit too big, and he's scared of catching a cold.



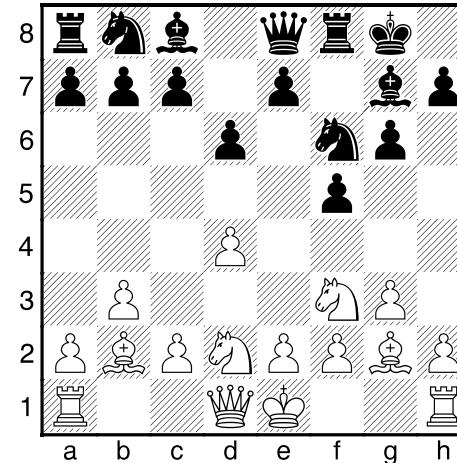
7.♘bd2

The second knight didn't want to block his relatives on c3, so decides to wake up this way instead.

Chess Canada Misha's tales



7... $\mathbb{Q}e8$



The queen has dreams of eating more pie by pushing the pawn to e5 one day, but also hopes to visit the white king one day, while covering her own husband.

8.a4

White's rook on a1 was feeling left out, so we make sure she's happy too. One day the a-pawn may create trouble for black on the queenside, especially with the help of that sneaky g2 bishop.

8...h6

The black pawns want to expand their spaceship, and like alien invaders, make their way into white's camp.

9. $\mathbb{N}c4$

The knight keeps an eye on the center pie, while opening the queen's eyes behind him.

9...c6

9...d5? Isn't the knight asking to get kicked by that d-pawn? 10. $\mathbb{N}ce5$! Sure, he'd love to get kicked onto a pile of gold!

10.0-0

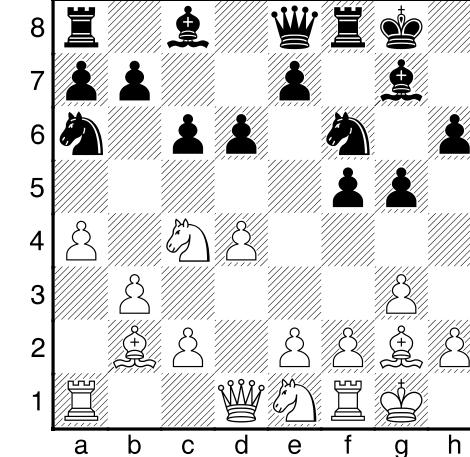


The white king finds a roof before his old shelter is blown apart.

10...g5 11. $\mathbb{N}e1$

The white knight didn't like the look of those menacing foot soldiers, so he looks for greener fields, and safer squares.

11... $\mathbb{N}a6$



Knights on the side are never bright! On the side, they see no light! But he didn't have many better options, and the rooks are longing to meet each other, they're long-lost brothers!

12. $\mathbb{N}d3$

Knights like having this sort of umbrella hat, with the d-pawn shielding it from harm.

12... $\mathbb{N}c7$ 13.f3

White prepares the rolling stones that will roll through the center and kick away all defenders.

13... $\mathbb{Q}g6$

Black puts more eyes on e4, trying to stop white from stealing the whole pie.

14.e3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$



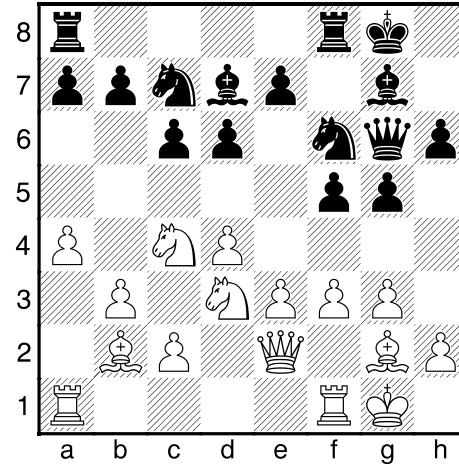
Chess Canada

Misha's tales



The black rooks must be so happy to see each other!

15. $\mathbb{W}e2$



The white rooks must be jumping for joy too. More importantly, White really wants to push that e-pawn, with the queen pushing it slowly but surely!

15... $\mathbb{W}h5$

The black queen takes a rope to tie the f3 pawn to the white queen.

16. $\mathbb{R}ae1$

The white pieces like to keep an eye on each other, and the white rooks are now best friends!

16... $\mathbb{R}ae8$

Black brings the last sleeping

beauty to the party.

17. $h3 \mathbb{N}e6$

While this knight has great eyes, he doesn't have the umbrella to cover him, like the one his d3 counterpart knight has. Rolling stones don't like being blocked by pieces!

18. $a5 \mathbb{N}d5$

The Black knight longs to touch everything from the top of the center mountain. That being said, he can be kicked away soon, and won't stay the king of the hill forever.

19. $g4$

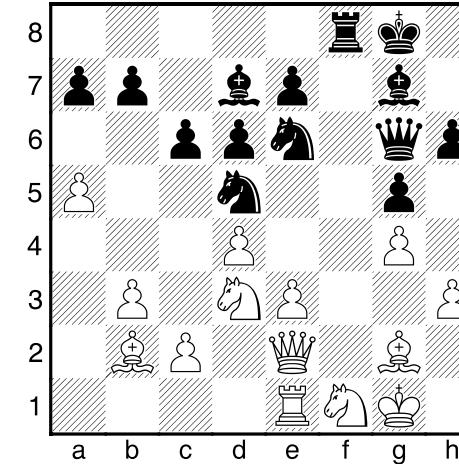
We didn't like that evil queen looking into our house, and we also get to trade the only black pawn fighting for the pie in the center.

19... $fxg4$ 20. $fxg4 \mathbb{W}g6$

21. $\mathbb{N}d2$

The knight didn't have a real job on c4, so he looks for new work on the kingside. The cheese holes on f5 and h5 are calling him!

21... $\mathbb{R}xf1+$ 22. $\mathbb{N}xf1 \mathbb{R}f8$



The black rook gets to the open highway, but it turns out she's only staring at thin air!

23. $\mathbb{N}g3$

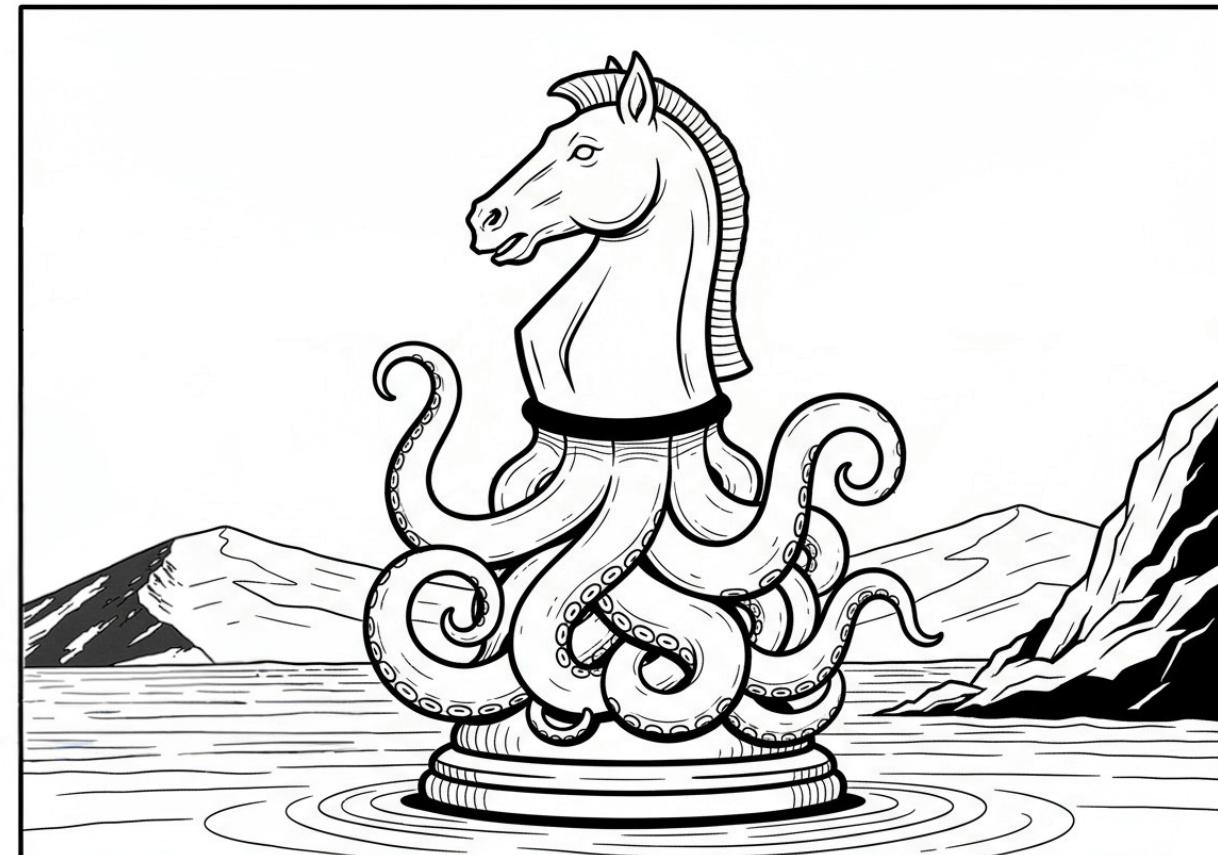
The white knight takes the train to his final destination, the swiss cheese on f5!

23... $\mathbb{W}e8$

With a heavy sigh, the black queen goes back home to watch over her weak relatives.

24. $\mathbb{N}f5$

The Loch Ness Monster has arrived! His tentacles are crawling towards the black king,



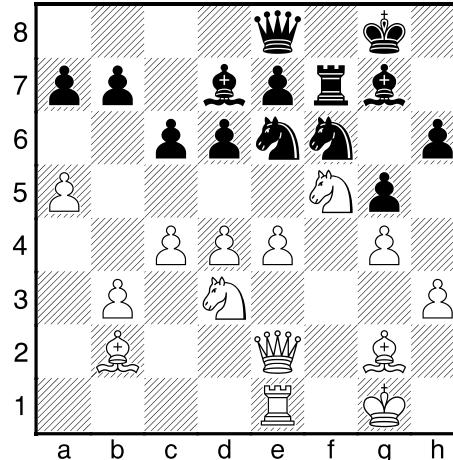
Chess Canada Misha's tales



and the pawn on g4 is a great anchor, holding him in place.

24...♝f7 25.c4
Shoo horsie, shoo!

25...♞f6 26.e4



The rolling stones are finally rolling, and the blocked black pawns can't put up much of a fight.

26...♝f8

The bishop is shy, but that won't help his king whose roof is being torn apart.

27.♛e3 ♞c7 28.e5!

The rolling stones clear the way for the sniper bishops, while kicking away the chimney knight on f6.

Nothing can stop White now!

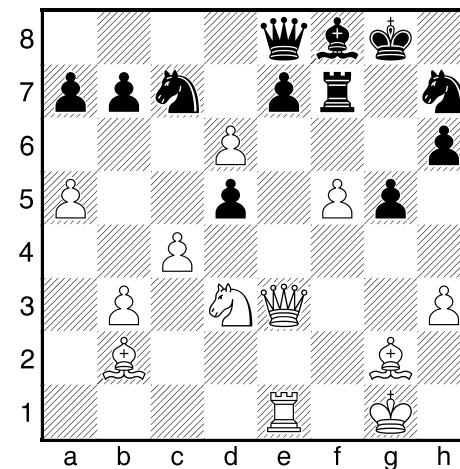
28...♝h7

He's not happy about being stuck in the closet, but what choice did he have?

29.d5

The white bishop on b2 is paving the road right into the enemy castle.

29...cxd5 30.exd6 ♛xf5
31.gxf5



The Loch Ness Monster might be gone, but the bishop on c8 was the only one guarding the light squares, now the white bishops cut the position like a pair of scissors through paper.

31...dxc4 32.dxc7 cxd3

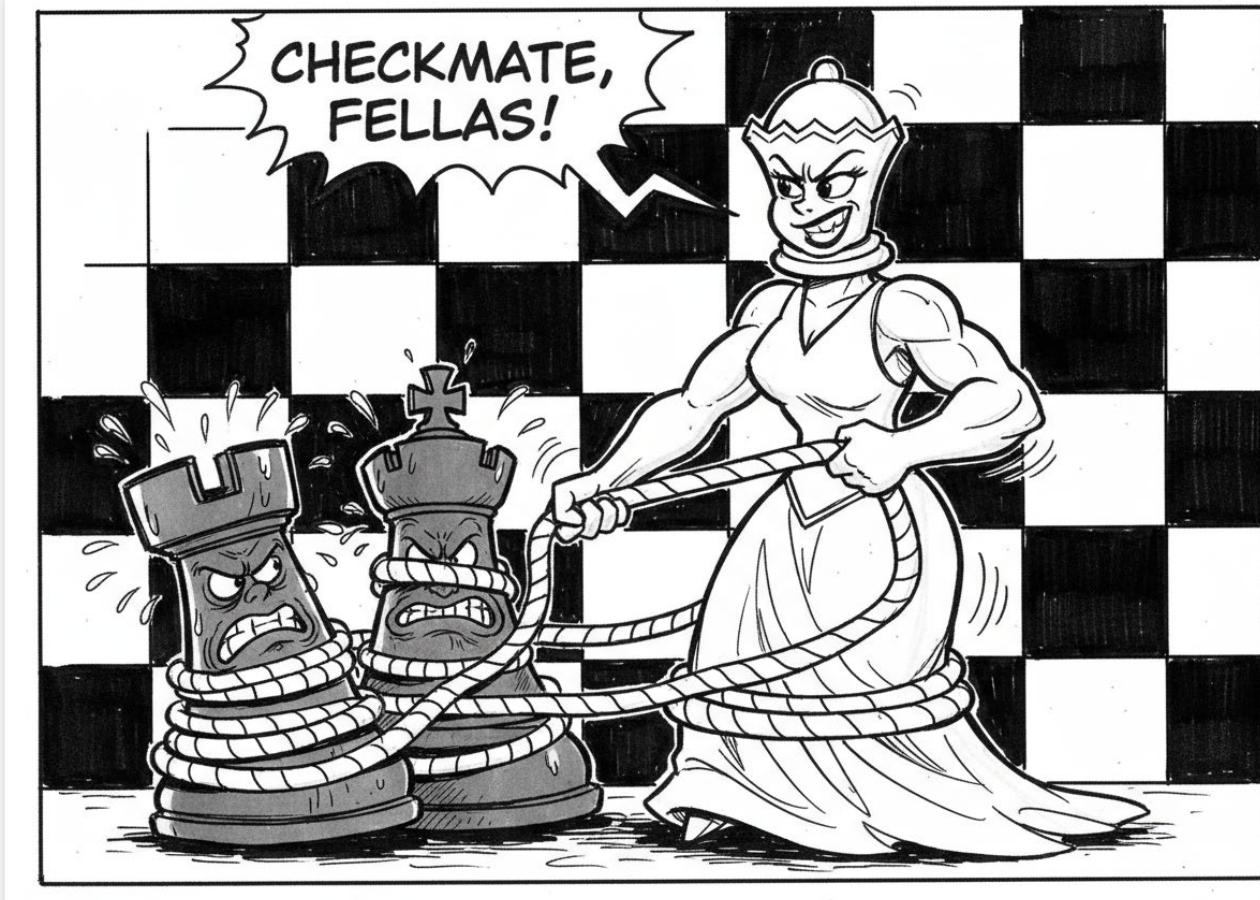
33.♛e6

The white queen ties the black rook and king with a rope, while preparing the princess on c7 for promotion. Black's pieces are in no shape to fight a fly at this point, never mind a menacing army!

33...d2 34.♝d1

Black's last hope is gone, and they give up, ashamed at their pieces. Notice the white scissor bishops who finally got the eyes they wanted!

1-0





Scheinberg
Family

chessable

1
Schei
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chessable

FIDE CANDIDATES

TORONTO — 2024



Pregame @ The Madison



The Madison Pub hosted two Candidates events: the drawing of lots and a special evening of PubChess following the opening ceremonies.

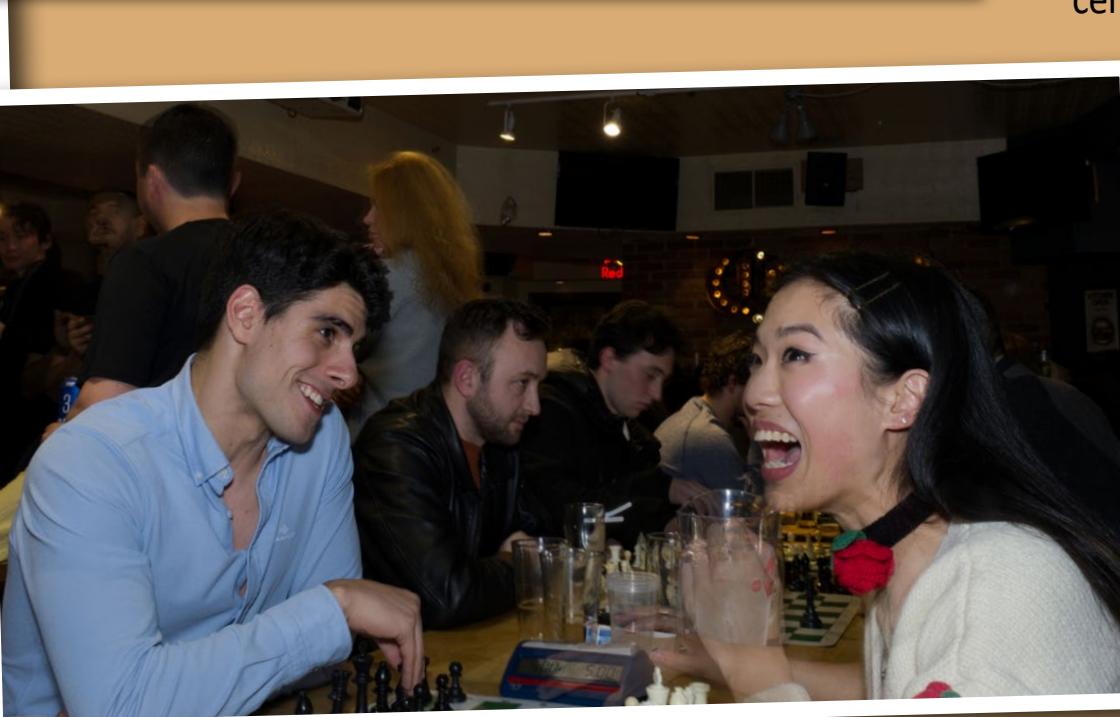
clockwise from top left:
event-branded hockey pucks
with numbers on reverse
were used to select the
playing-order.

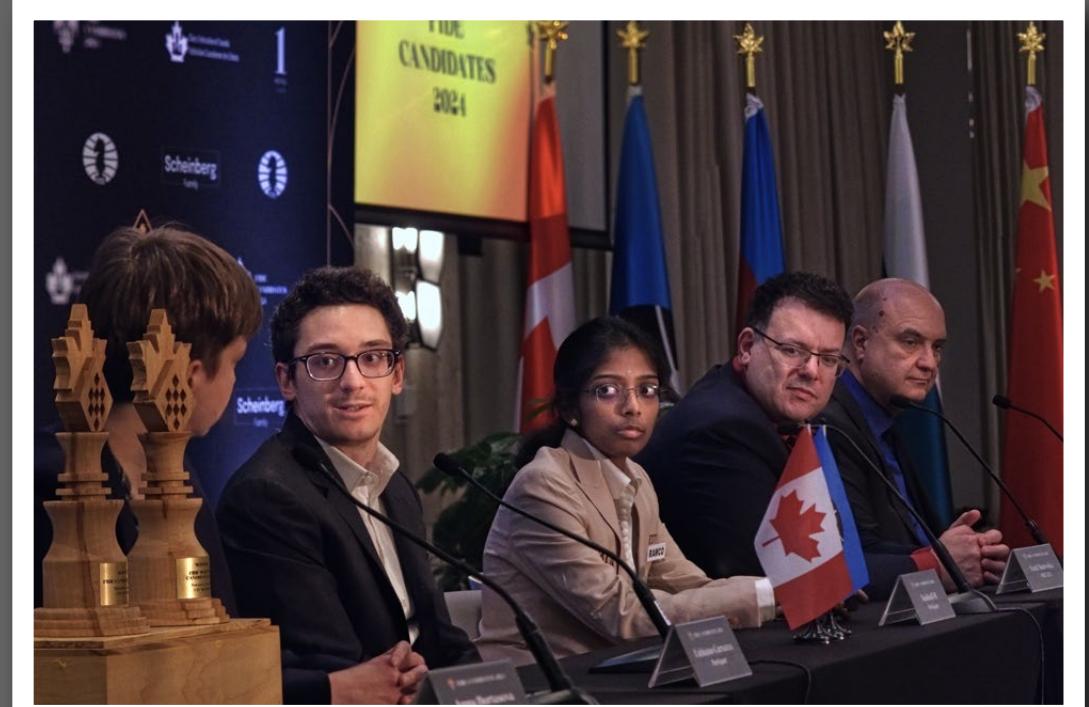
FIDE Press Secretary WGM
Anna Burtasova enjoys GM
Evgeny Bareev's Candidate's
story before the draw.

Former Canadian Junior
Champ, FM **Vinny Puri**
played in the warmup.

GM **Aryan Tari** and WGM
Nemo Zhou reunited and
streamed on twitch.

Gotham Chess – IM Levy
Rozman – played fans, streamed
live, and recorded YT content.





Checking in @ Hotel 1



clockwise from above:

Opening press conference, with FIDE Press Secretary WGM Anna Burtasova, GM Fabiano Caruana, IM Vaishali Rameshbabu, FIDE VP GM Emil Sutovsky, CFC President Vlad Drkulec.

Former World Champions Vishy Anand and Alexandra Kosteniuk at a public forum with WGM Qiyu Nemo Zhou.

Candidate's Arbiter IA Aris Marghettis with GM Shawn Rodrigue-Lemieux.

Somehow, *Chess Canada* mascot Mr. Knightly snuck an unauthorized selfie before security threw him out.

photo: FIDE/Maria Emelianova

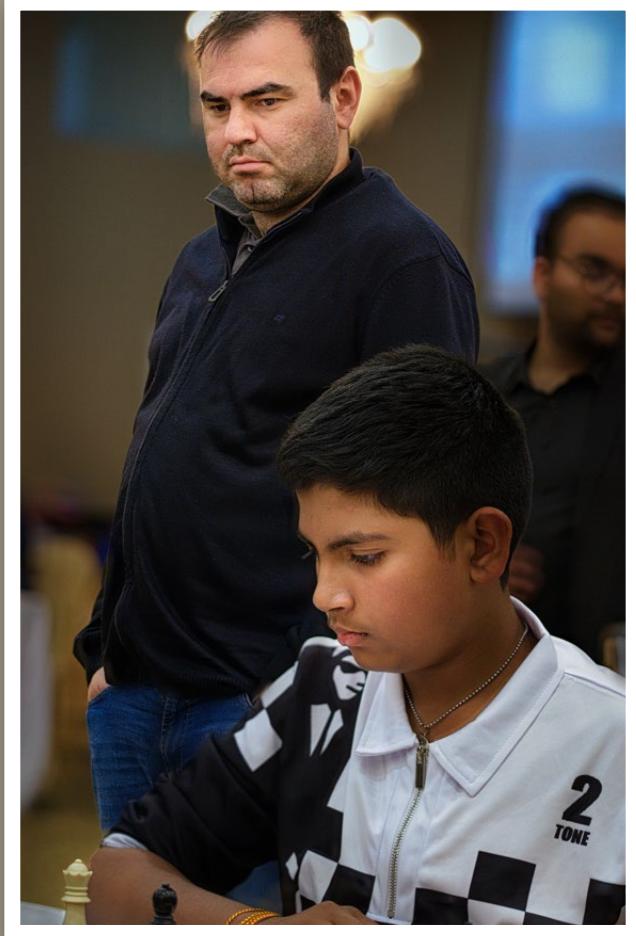
Irene Xie rd.1 vs Shak ?!?



IM Lawrence Day rare playing appearance



GM Shakhriyar Mamedyarov & Aaron Reeve-Mendes

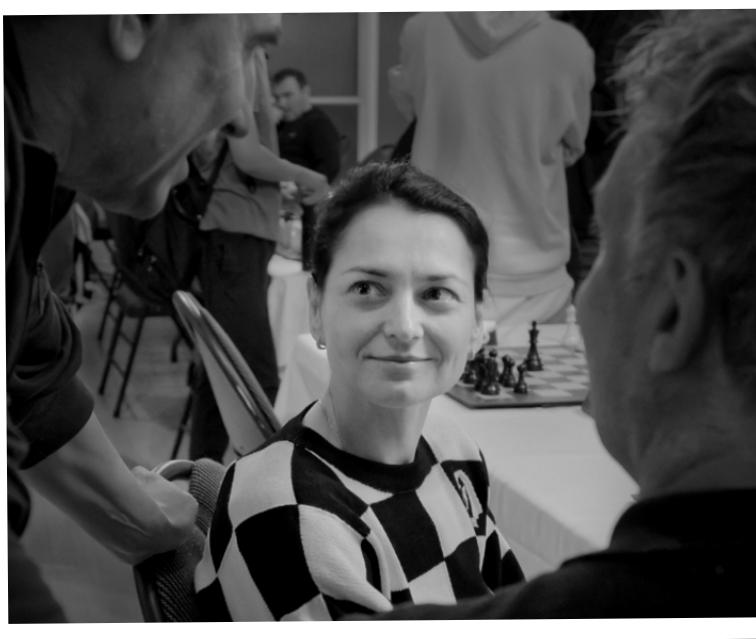


Candidates Rapid

Org. Salim Belcadi & Shak; also shown: GM Aryan Tari, GM Razvan Preotu, IM Nikolay Noritsyn, IM Michael Barron, IM Artiom Samsonkin, IM Nicholas Vettese



Blitz @ Annex CC



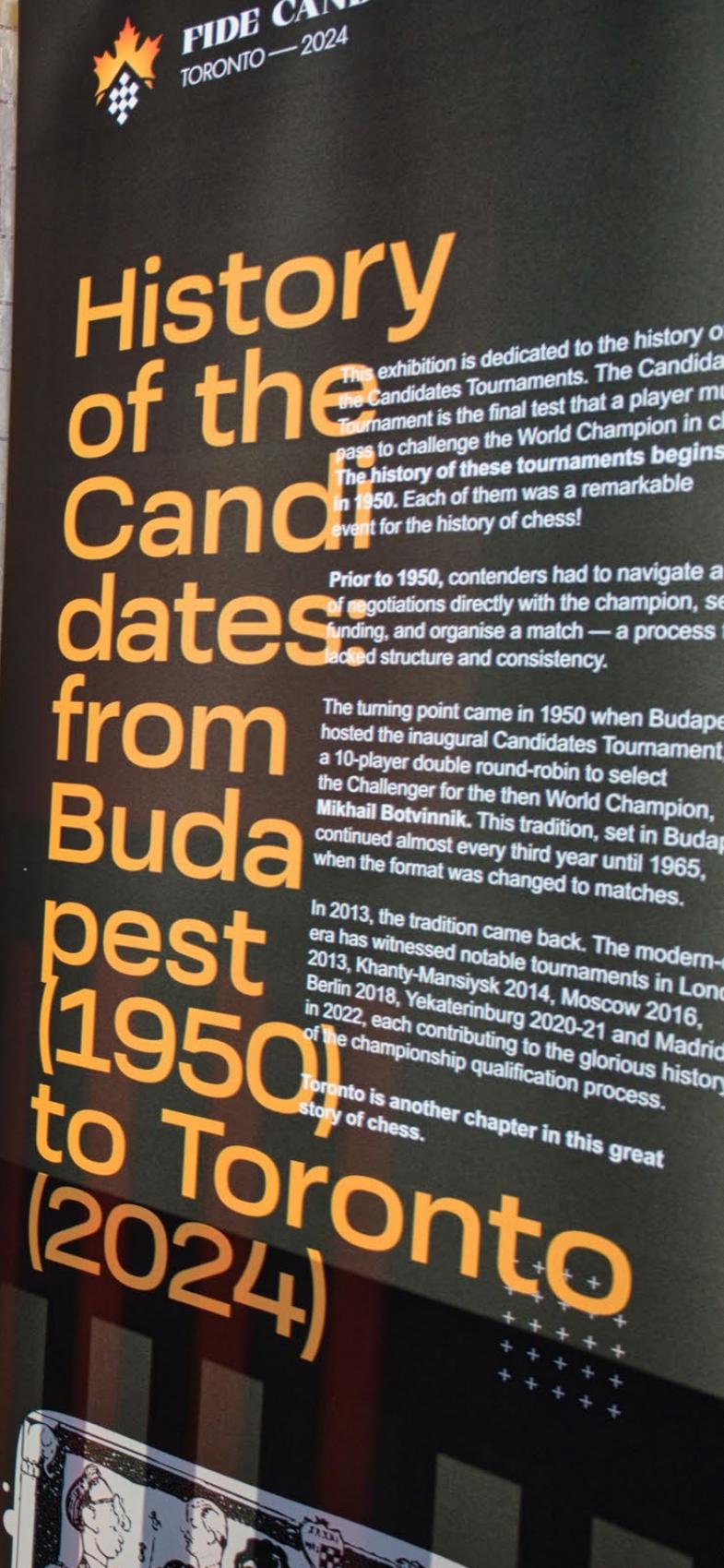
clockwise from above:

- after his lecture GM **Mark Bluvshtein** met with WIM **Nava** & **Sasha Starr**;
- GM Alexandra Kosteniuk & husband GM Pavel Eljanov chat with GM **Bareev**;
- blitz co-champs GMs **Cheparinov** & **Mamedyarov** hoist the trophy;
- TDs **Heidi Gay** & **Omar Shah** at work;
- IM-elect **Mike Ivanov** plays blitz;
- **Nemo** streamed on twitch.



next page: *FanZone*

- pictorial history of the Candidates;
- GM **Eric Hansen** & **Salim Belcadi**;
- GMs **Aryan Tari** & **Aman Hambleton** analyze during the final round.



Chess Canada Toronto 2024



2024 Toronto Candidates



by John Upper +

FIDE 2024 Candidates Tournament
Toronto, April 3-22, 2024.

Open and Women's sections, both **8-player double RR**s, to choose the challengers for the World Chess Championship and Women's World Chess Championship Matches.

Time Controls:
Open: 40/2 + g/30 + 30s/ move 41.
Women: 40/90 + g/30 + 30s/move 1.

Pretournament favourites:

Ian Nepomniachtchi (RUS) went undefeated in winning both the 2021 and 2022 Candidates;

Fabiano Caruana (USA) won the 2018 Candidates and perennial World #2 behind Carlsen;

Hikaru Nakamura (USA) had been having an excellent year since he split his chess time between major events and online streaming, reaching #3 on the FIDE rating list.

Three Indians qualified for the Candidates, but most thought their age and inexperience would count against them.

In a Hollywood-worthy improbable finish, the final round saw the young-est Indian, 17-year-old **Gukesh Dommaraju**, $\frac{1}{2}$ a point ahead of the three favourites, and all four were paired against each other.

The Women's event was much less dramatic, as **Tan Zhongyi** (CHN) led from start to finish to win by $1\frac{1}{2}$.

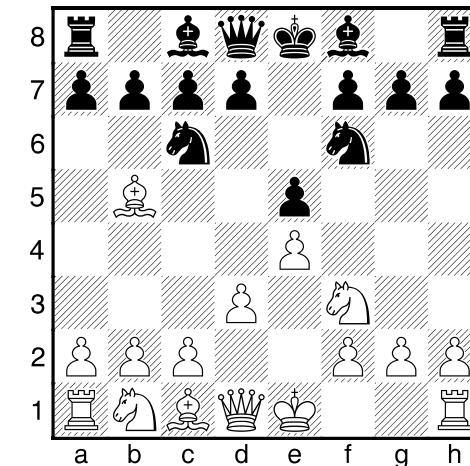
After four draws in round 1 the Candidates exploded to life with 3 decisive games in round 2. First, Vidit played an early novelty on the Black side of a Berlin Lopez and followed it with a startling piece sac on move 11.

Notes here include post-mortem comments from the players, and Vidit's analysis for Chessbase Magazine.

Nakamura, Hikaru
Vidit, Santosh Gujrathi

*FIDE Candidates 2024 Toronto (2), 05.04.2024
notes: John Upper +*

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5
♗f6 4.d3**



White avoids the Berlin

The Great Hall



2024 Candidates Round 3

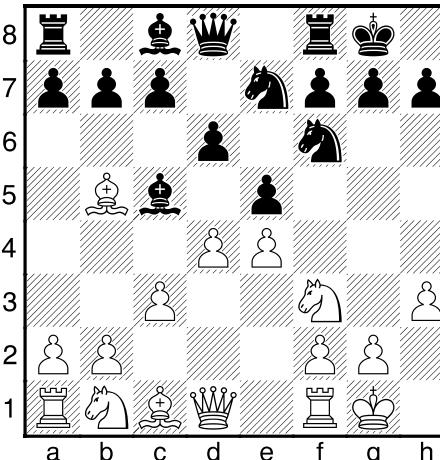
What is Fabi looking at?

Chess Canada Toronto 2024



endgame. Among modern super-GMs there is nothing remarkable about this — it shows White hopes for a complicated game in slightly less explored territory. But this early choice may help explain some of Nakamura's poor decisions later in the game: trying to avoid opening prep he worried would end in a draw, he stumbles his way into a bad loss.

**4...♝c5 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0 d6
7.h3 ♝e7 8.d4**



8...c6!?

Vidit:

"The big novelty! 8...♝b6 is by far the main move. Engines don't approve it at first sight which makes it even more special :)"

A notable point about modern opening prep at the highest level: look for a move the computer initially rejects but rates higher at much longer depths. That means it is playable *and* more likely to surprise an opponent.

9.♝d3

White declines the pawn sac.

White can grab the pawn, but doing so doesn't promise an advantage but does promise to walk into Black's prep: 9.dxc5 cxb5 10.cxd6 (An even safer way to side-step Black's prep would be 10.♝xd6 ♛xd6 11.cxd6 ♝c6= but playing like this would effectively concede a draw as White — and if you're going to do that, why avoid the Berlin at move 4? OTOH, had everything else turned out as it did, the extra half-point would have put Nakamura in a playoff for the qualification spot!) 10...♝g6

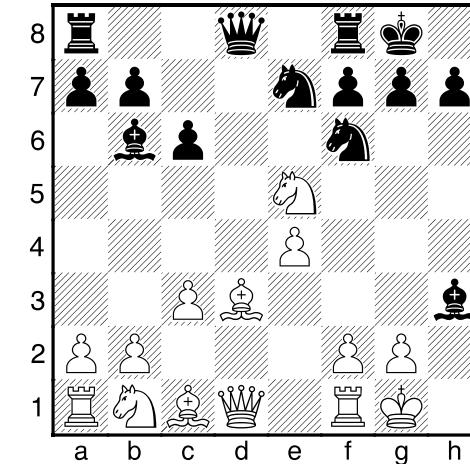
11...Bxh3!!

Naka said he was sure Vidit had prepared this, and the result would be a playable position for Black with much more time on the clock. After 11.♝d3 ♜d7 Black could continue with ...♝b6, ...♝ac8-c6.

9...♝b6

White spent 20 minutes here, and didn't see a refutation, so...

**10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♝xe5
♝xh3!!**



"A completely out of the blue sacrifice! It's always very pleasing to play such flashy moves." — **Vidit**



five video cameras per board

2 minicams between the e- and d-files, 2 webcams at the corners, and one wide angle at the side of the board captured all the drama, including Vidit's confident wait after ...Bxh3.



Hikaru did post-mortem streaming on his Twitch channel after every round. He said he had "expected" this sac, and he replied to it in only 4 minutes, which suggests rechecking his calculations rather than starting from scratch; but his next few moves — and his online explanations — suggest that he had already been knocked for a loop, and didn't play close to his best after this.

12.  c4?

12.gxh3 ♕b8!:

13. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}g3+$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}xh3+$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{E}ad8+-$ there's no saving the $\mathbb{Q}d3$, leaving Black up a pawn with a huge lead in development;

13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (13... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ "Here White has various moves like $\mathbb{Q}h2/\mathbb{Q}g3/\mathbb{Q}g5$ and the game goes on." - **Vidit** 14. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15. $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}f3$. **Naka** said he'd seen this — "and the game goes on" — and couldn't explain why at the last moment he opted for the game line.

“He did not see that at all!”
- GM Robert Hess

Four months later we saw this whole line in a GM "game" which — given the players are sisters and almost always play quick draws — was not much of a game: 16... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 20. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$

Muzychuk,A (2525)-Muzychuk,M (2508) Tbilisi FIDE GP (Women 2024).

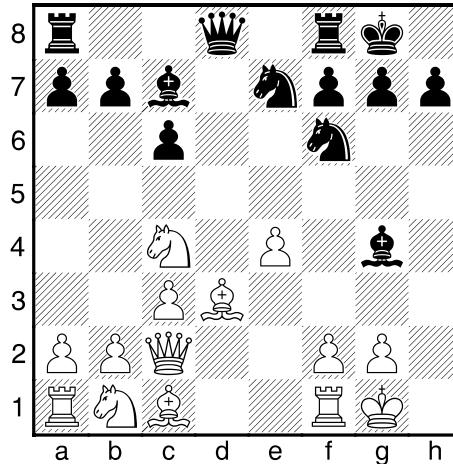
12...g4

12... $\mathbb{W}c7$? hoping for ... $\mathbb{W}g3-$ +, but 13.e5! wins, since 13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ only temporarily saves the piece, since 14. $\mathbb{W}a4\Box+$ - threatens the $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and if the $\mathbb{Q}f6$ moves there is $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ then $\mathbb{W}xg4$.

13.  c2

13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$
 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (double attack on
 f2 stops $\mathbb{Q}e1$ for now) 16. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$
 $axb6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ does not win
 a piece, because Black has
 17... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}b3\#.$

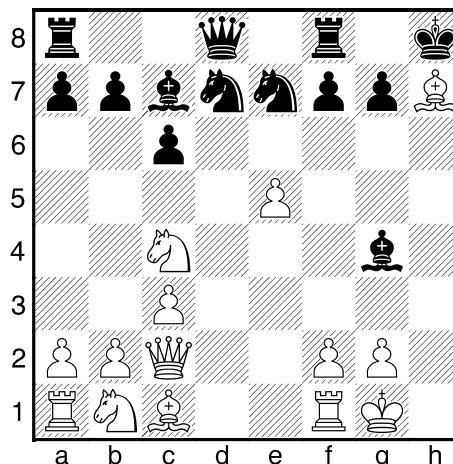
13...c7



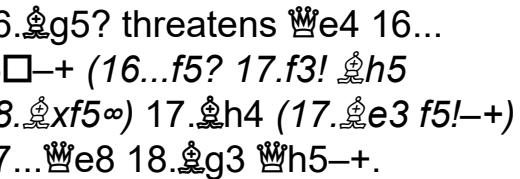
Nakamura was down to 1hr to make it to move 40, and this was Vidit's first "think" of the game: 32 min on this move!

14.e5 ♟d7 15.♗xh7+!?
The computer's top choice.

15... ♕h8

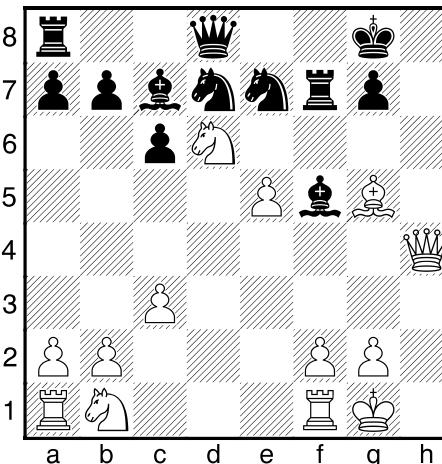


16. d3?



6. ♕e4? f5!! 17. exf6 ♗xf6
3. ♕g5 ♗e8□—+

Both players saw 16. $\mathbb{W}e4!$ f5 and thought it was easily winning for Black, but in fact it is wildly unclear after: 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf5!!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{K}f7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ *Analysis Diagram*



What a mess!

If Naka had managed to find his way here there is no telling how this game and the whole tournament might have gone.

Chess Canada Toronto 2024

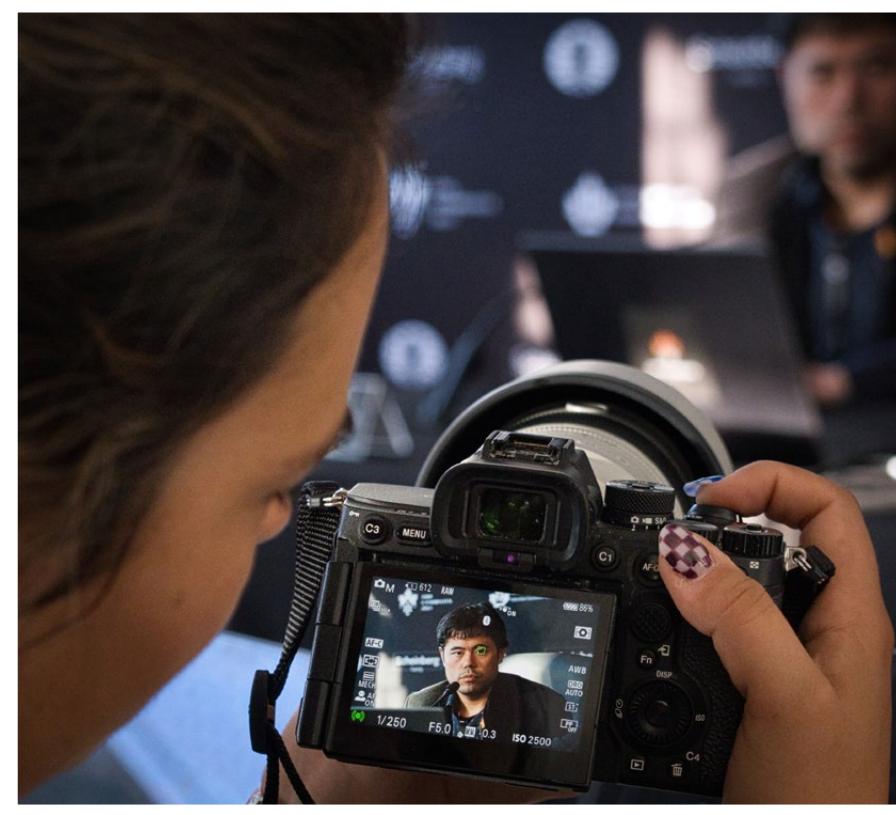


"If I had played this crazy sequence, I would have definitely been taken away for anti-cheating check! :)"

- Vudit

17. $\mathbb{Q}e3$
 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

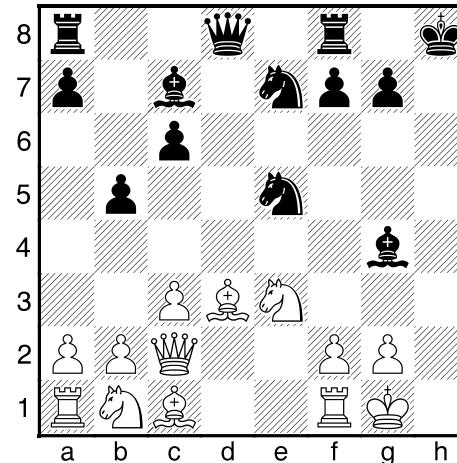
Players answered questions after most games.



move!" - Vudit 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}g6!!$
"Black will collect all his pieces back with interest :) The crazy line goes on, and I am just giving it for fun." - Vudit 23. $\mathbb{Q}e5$!
(23. $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ -+) 23... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$
24. $\mathbb{W}c4$ + \square $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e4$ \square $\mathbb{Q}f7$!
26. $f4$ \square $\mathbb{Q}c7$ \square 27. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ -.
Vudit.

16... $b5!$

Engines recommend this crazy line: 16... $f5!!$ 17. $exf6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ \square
18. $fxg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ -+ and despite having no pawns protecting his \mathbb{Q} , Black has a winning attack.

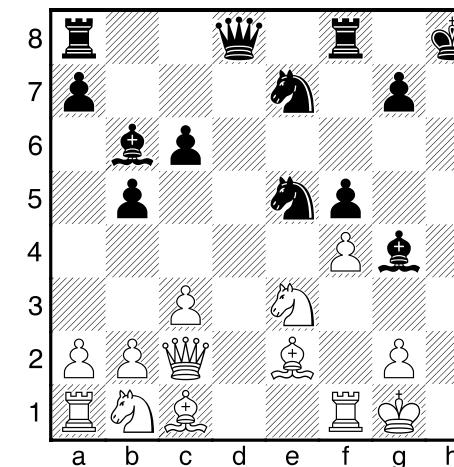


18. $\mathbb{Q}e2?$

Played after 4 seconds.
"My brain stopped working."
- Nakamura

18. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ \square $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 19. $g3!$ $f5 \rightarrow$
material is equal, but Black is way ahead in development, and almost all his pieces are pointed at the white king.

18... $f5!!$ -+ 19. $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6!!$



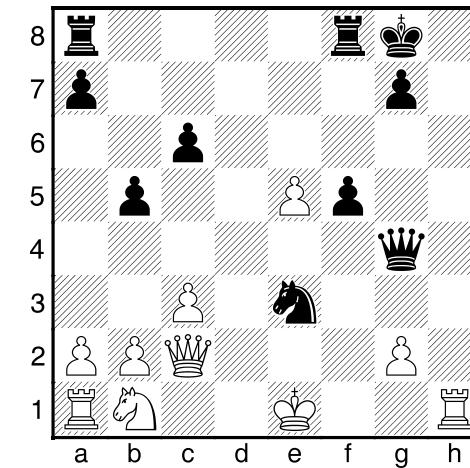
20. $\mathbb{Q}f2$

"I decided to have some fun. Effectively the same as a resignation." - Naka

20. $fxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$
22. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ -+ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $fxg4$
24. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ -+ with a huge lead in development, a weak white \mathbb{Q} , and equal material. with a huge lead in development and

a weak white \mathbb{Q} .

20... $\mathbb{Q}d5!!$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
22. $fxe5$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$
24. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}xg4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$
 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$



Amusingly, White's only developed piece is the $\mathbb{W}c2$.

26. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}g3$ -+ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d2$
 $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ -+ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 29. $b3$
 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ -+!

followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}g3$ fork. White resigned.

0-1

Nakamura postmortem

FIDE photographer Maria Emelianova, at work in the Press Room.

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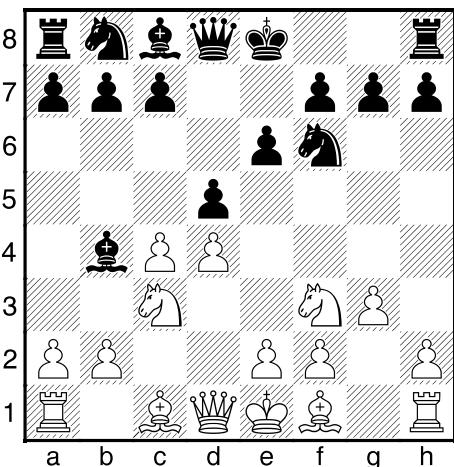


Praggnanandhaa, R. Gukesh, Dommaraju

FIDE Candidates 2024 Toronto
(2), 05.04.2024
Notes: John Uppen

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 ♗f6
4.g3 ♕b4+ 5.♘c3!?

Very rare.

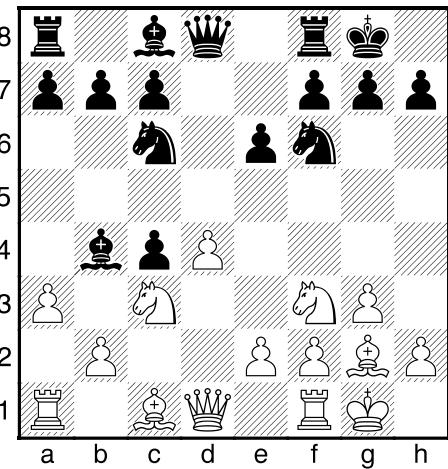


The point of the bishop check is to uncoordinate White's development with ♘d2 — which is 30x more common than Pragg's move — as other ways to block the check allow Black to either take and keep the c4 pawn or get easy equality while White spends moves recapturing.

The game line leads to some

fascinatingly unbalanced positions, where White has excellent attacking chances, which is why the next 10 moves have so many embedded games and Analysis Diagrams.

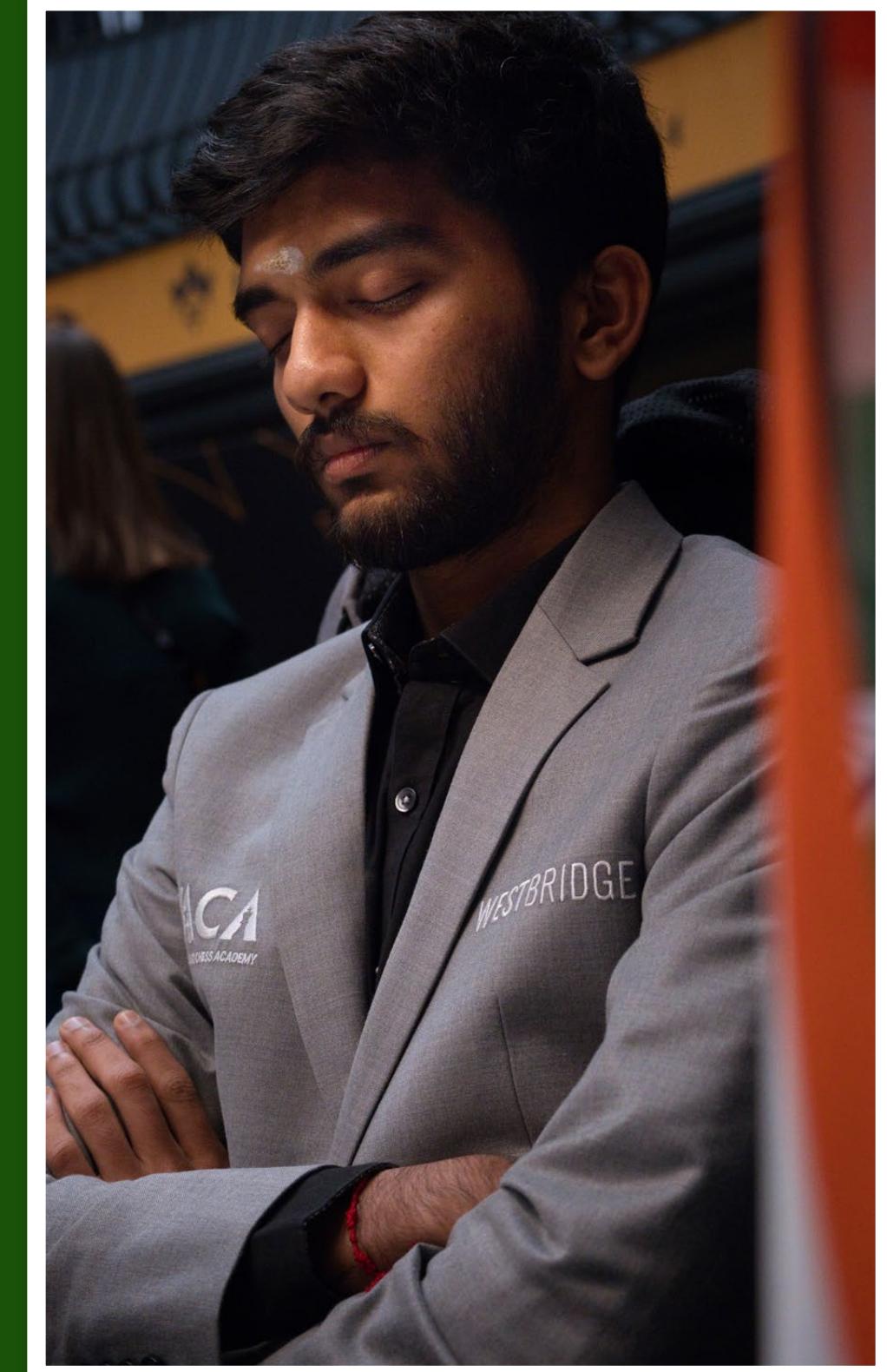
5...dxc4 6.♔g2 0-0 7.0-0
♘c6 8.a3



White's attacking chances in this game attracted top GMs to repeat it, including two games in Prague 2025.

8...♗e7

Conceding the bishop-pair and trading a potential kingside dark-square defender looks like asking for trouble, but Black *can* take the ♘:
8...♘xc3!? 9.bxc3 ♘a5 10.♗g5

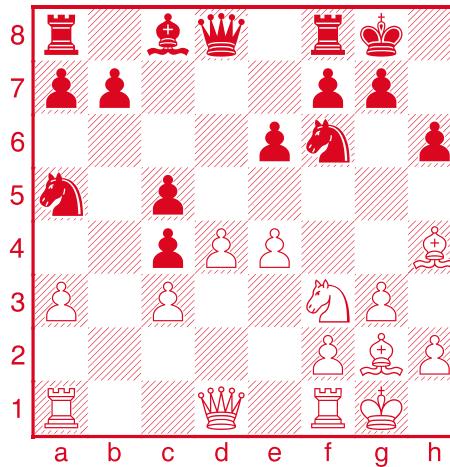


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trying to exploit the dark squares,
10...c5 11.e4 h6 12.♗h4!

Analysis Diagram



12...g5?? 13.♗xg5 hxg5
14.♗xg5+– the ♘f6 is a goner.

12...♗c7?! 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.d5!
the ♘a5 is offside and the black
king is weak.

12...e5!:

a) 13.dxe5?? ♗xd1 14.♗fxd1
♗xe4+– threatens ...g5
and prepares to gobble the
queenside pawns.

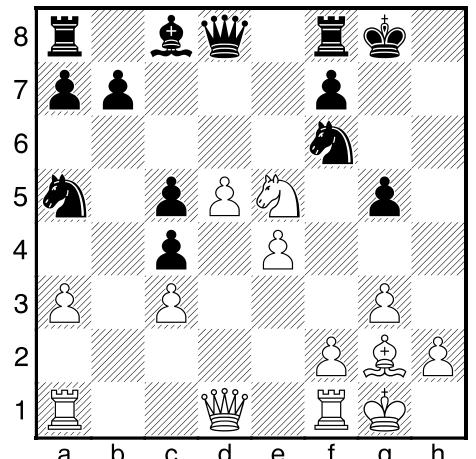
b) 13.d5?! ♗g4!– threatens ...g5
and so forces exchanges.

c) 13.♗xf6! ♗xf6 14.♗a4??
(14.dxe5=) 14...♗b3+–

15.♗xe5 (When he played
14.♗a4, did Shankland miss that
15.dxe5 loses since 15...♗e6□
traps the ♗a4 by either♗d7
or by ...a6 and ...b5?) 15...♗e6
16.♗ad1 cxd4 17.♗xc4 b5!
Saves the ♘. 18.♗xb5 ♗ab8
19.♗a4 dxc3+ The c-pawn is a
winning asset, and Black pushes
it home in model fashion. 20.e5
♗e7 21.♗d6 c2 22.♗de1 ♗fc8!
Strong and stylish. 23.♗xc8
♗xc8 24.♗c1 ♗xc1 25.♗xc1
♗d8 26.♗b5 ♗d1+! 27.♗f1 ♗d8!
0–1 Shankland,S (2670)-Wei,Y
(2755) Prague Masters, 2025.

d) 13.♗xe5!? leads to a
fascinatingly unbalanced game:
g5 14.♗xg5□ hxg5 15.d5□∞

Analysis Diagram

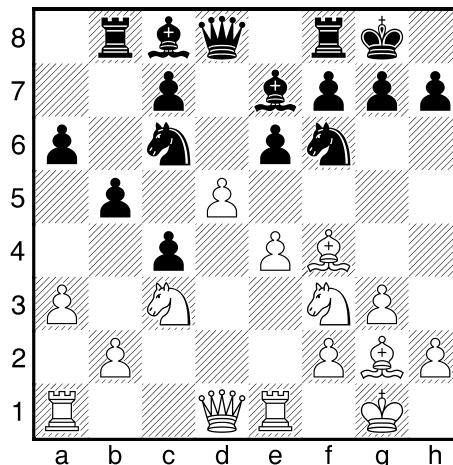


White has only a pawn for the

piece, but SF and leela say
White has full compensation!?
A position worth studying for
anyone who goes near these
lines.

9.e4 a6!

9...♗b8 Black goes ...a6 anyway,
so this turns out to be a wasted
tempo. 10.♗f4 b5 11.♗e1 a6
12.d5 *Analysis Diagram*



12...exd5?! 13.exd5 ♘a5
14.♗xe7! ♗xe7 15.d6!± leaves
White with a strong pawn on c7
and squares for the minor pieces
behind it.

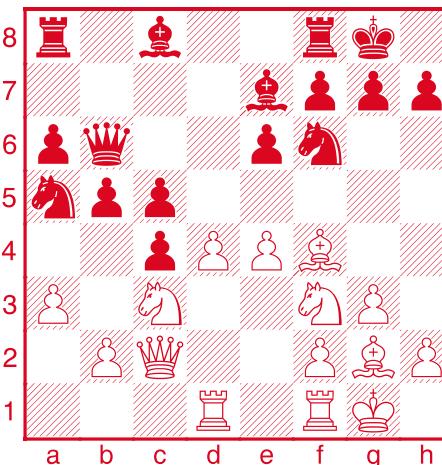
12...♗a5 13.♗c2 ♘h5?!
(13...♗b3 14.♗ad1 ♘d7∞
SF17) 14.♗e3 f5? 15.dxe6+–
f4 16.♗ad1 ♗e8 17.gxf4 ♘xf4
18.♗xf4 ♗xf4 19.♗d5 ♗g4

Best here is 20.♗d4!+–, but
Pragg played 20.♗xe7+– ♗xe7
21.♗d2 forking a5 and d8.
(21...♗b7! parries both White
threats, now 22.♗e5 ♗xg2+!
23.♗xg2 ♗xe6 24.♗c6 ♗h4□
saves the ♗b8 by threatening a
perpetual, but 25.♗e3!± White
should win.) 21...♗b7? 22.♗e5
♗g5 23.f4 ♗xe5 24.fxe5 ♘c6
25.♗d7+– Praggnanandhaa,R
(2741)-Nguyen,T (2668) Prague
Masters, 2025.

10.♗e3

10.♗f4 b5 11.♗d2 ♘a5 12.♗ad1
c5 13.♗c2 ♗b6? (13...♗b7?)

Analysis Diagram



14.dxc5!+– sets up winning
tactics with ♘g5: threatening h7
and activating the ♗g2.

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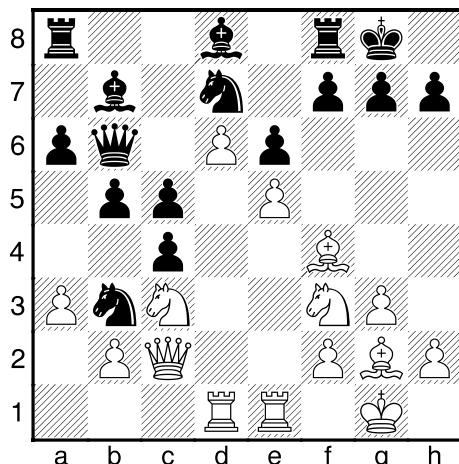


This was "only a blitz game", but this is a very common tactic in the Catalan, so world-class players wouldn't miss this:
 14... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 15.e5! $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ g6
 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!+ -$ and $\mathbb{Q}xd5-f6+$.

I'd guess the players underestimated White's chances in the following line: 14... $\mathbb{W}xc5!?$ 15.e5! $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ (16...g6 17. $\mathbb{Q}ge4!+ -$ with a winning attack, possibly starting with $\mathbb{Q}xd5$.) 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19.b4!+ - is an unusual tactical punchline.

The actual game continued:
 14.d5? $\mathbb{Q}b7=$ 15.d6 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16.e5
 $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$

Analysis Diagram



A weird position: White's center



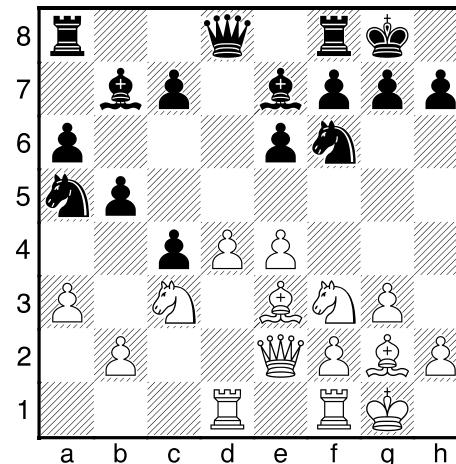
Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu

pawns look like a suffocating advantage, but SF rates the position as about equal (!), and Aronian shows how to get counterplay, starting with the threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$:

18. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ h6 Stopping $\mathbb{Q}g5$ and preparing ...f5. 20.g4! f5! 21.exf6 (21.gxf5? $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ $\mathbb{W}c6!!\#$) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e5?$ Loses tactically. (22. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3!\#$; the g4 pawn is poisoned: 22... $\mathbb{Q}xg4??$ 23. $\mathbb{W}g6+ -$) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 26.f4 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 27. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 29.g5 $\mathbb{Q}e2+0-1$

Radjabov,T (2765)-Aronian,L (2781) Paris GCT Blitz, 2021.

10... $\mathbb{b}5$ 11. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$
 $\mathbb{Q}a5!$



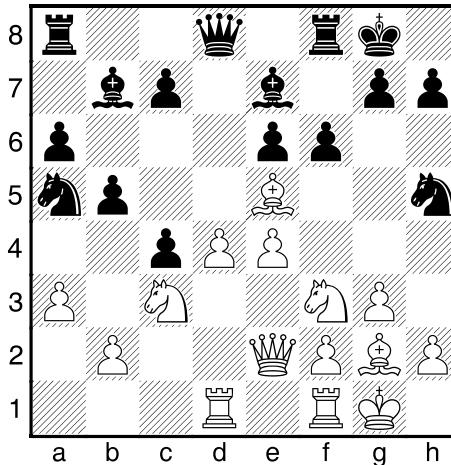


13.d5!?

This and the next pawn push are a maneuver **Hans Kmoch**, in his classic book **Pawn Power in Chess**, called the "sealer-sweeper". Attracting the opponent's pawn to d5 and then not taking but pushing past it "seals" the d5 square and opens the d4 square for White's pieces.

13.♘f4 ♗h5 14.♗e5 f6!

Analysis Diagram



Another game illustrating White's attacking chances:

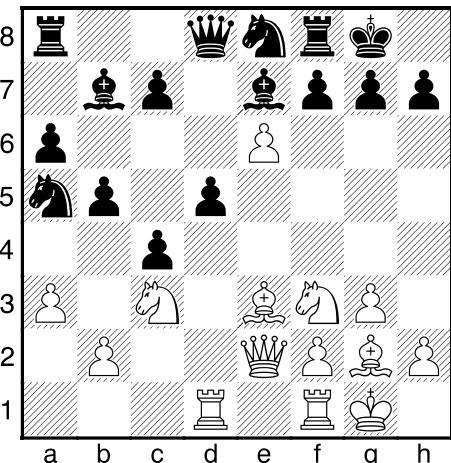
15.♗g5! fxg5 16.♗xh5 ♗c6 (16...♗d6 17.♗h3∞) 17.♗g4 ♗d7 18.h4 ♗ad8 19.hxg5 ♗xe5 20.dxe5 ♗c6∞ 21.♗d5? (♗21.g6∞; ♗21.♗h3∞) 21... exd5 22.exd5 ♗d7! 23.e6 ♗d6∞ 24.♗h2 ♗c5 25.d6 ♗xf2!

26.dxe7 ♗xg2+□ 27.♗h3 ♗xe7□—+ 28.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 29.♗f5 ♗e8□ (29...♗e7?? 30.♗e5=) 30.g6 hxg6 31.♗e5 ♗c6 32.♗g4 ♗d5 33.♗xd5 ♗xd5 34.e7 ♗f7 35.♗e1 ♗e8 36.♗f1 ♗d7+ 0–1 Li,C (2710)-Tkachiev,V (2631) Jakarta, 2011.

13...exd5 14.e5!?

Technically, the first OTB Novelty of the game.

14...♗e8! 15.e6!



Pragg had played at blitz speed up to here, and Gukesh was way behind on the clock.

15...f5

Is this an example of the computer "killing chess by making it all about opening prep", or the reverse: showing the range of playable openings/middlegames is much wider than we imagined?

Human Stuff:

In the postmortem press conference **Gukesh** said: "After this move he started thinking, which means ...f7–f5 is not a great move."

This remark tells us a lot about opening prep at the top levels:

- 1) he believed Pragg was not bluffing with his fast moves, but was in his opening prep;
- 2) he is sure his opponent's prep is thoroughly computer-checked, and that in any sharp position the computer prep will include more than just the opponent's best line(s);
- 3) the fact that his opponent

started to think OTB for himself means that Gukesh had finally made a seriously sub-optimal move.

All of this turns out to be very close to the truth:

- Pragg was now out of his prep; and
- the computer rates both 15...fxe6 and 15...c6 as better than the move he played; but
- the computer rates *all* these continuations as slightly better for Black!?

So, we could say Pragg was semi-bluffing: his moves don't lose, and they put his opponent under tremendous pressure to find the best and often "only" moves to survive, while even if his opponent works it out then Pragg is only a little worse: still within the drawing margin. High reward, low risk.

Is this an example of the computer "killing chess by making it all about opening prep", or the reverse: showing



the range of playable openings/ middlegames is much wider than we imagined?

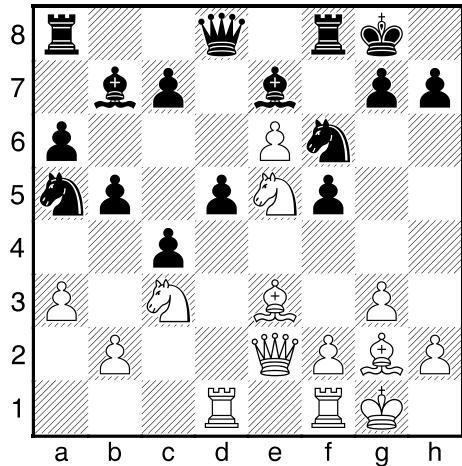
Computer Stuff:

15...c6! 16.exf7+ $\mathbb{W}xf7!$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ (18...c5? 19. $\mathbb{W}g4!$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}e6+$ mates.) 19. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}h6!$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ the $\mathbb{Q}h3$ is defended tactically. 21... $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7\Box+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ Black won in the correspondence game: Hunger,H (2402) - Laurenc,P (2415) ICCF, 2014.

15...fxe6 would *still* be an OTB Novelty, even a year later, although this whole line is in a 2021 HiARCS Opening Book/ Database, which continues: 16. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c6!? 17. $\mathbb{W}xe6+$! $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5?$ $\mathbb{Q}d6?$! 19. $\mathbb{Q}fe1?$! $\mathbb{Q}f6?$! 20. $\mathbb{W}h3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ $\mathbb{Q}f7!$ 23. $\mathbb{W}h5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$!. The "!" notations in the HiARCS book indicate places where the computer is not certain of the best move, and so where the variation might be improved. I'll leave it up to dedicated students to find them :D

16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Not the only way to defend d5: ...c6 and then ... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ is attractive too.



White is down two pawns but has the initiative and a wide range of continuations... which makes the position difficult for *both* players. Not surprisingly, neither fully copes with the complications; but it turns out that Gukesh's oversights — as shown in his post-mortem comments — underestimated his resources, while the moves he played always kept his position at least within the drawing margin.

17. $\mathbb{W}c2?$

"This move I completely missed,

and it is quite interesting if not best of all." - **Gukesh**

17. $\mathbb{Q}g5?$ and 17. $\mathbb{Q}fe1?$ are better.

17...c6!?

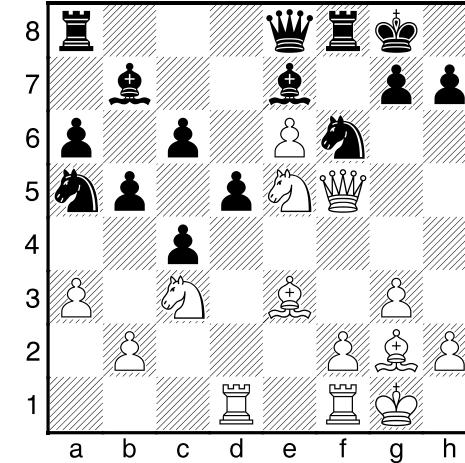
Gives up f5 to secure the center and gain a tempo for the kingside defense. Now the only way for White to attack with his pieces — the $\mathbb{Q}c3$, $\mathbb{Q}g2$, and his \mathbb{R} s — is with a sac on d5.

17...g6 weakens the dark-squares around the king, though it's not clear how to exploit this: with the extra pawns in hand, Black would happily trade a \mathbb{R} for White's DSB or $\mathbb{Q}e5$.

The computer prefers 17...c5! creating tactics with ...d4 that work for Black.

18. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}e8!$

Gukesh: "during the game I could not go clearly through all the mess." 18... $\mathbb{Q}c8?$ 19. $\mathbb{W}h3?$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}fe1\infty$) 19... $\mathbb{W}d6\Box$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6\Box$ (20... $\mathbb{Q}xe6?$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\pm$) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6\Box+$.



19. $\mathbb{Q}f7?$

After this, Black's path gets much wider, no longer requiring a string of "only moves", though that's not something either player knew at the time.

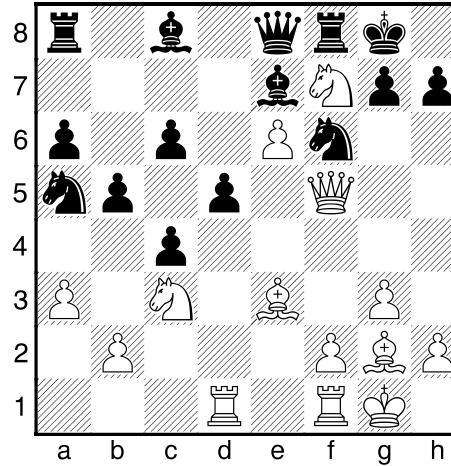
Gukesh was more worried about 19. $\mathbb{W}h3$ preparing a pawn storm with f4 and g4, and intended to bail with 19... $\mathbb{W}h5!$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}c8?$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ h6 ∞) 20. $\mathbb{W}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 21.f4.

"This is very hard to evaluate, but I was at least happy that I am not getting checkmated directly." - Gukesh

19... $\mathbb{Q}c8!$

19... $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ or 19... $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ planning ... $\mathbb{Q}c5xe6$ are good too.

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20. $\mathbb{B}f1$

Gukesh saw 20. $\mathbb{B}d4$!?

$\mathbb{B}b3$!–+ which wins, but only if he finds... 21. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xd5$!? $cx d5$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xd5$... the following only move: 23... $\mathbb{W}e7$ □ defends the $\mathbb{B}f6$ to allow ...g6. (23... $\mathbb{B}a7$? 24. $\mathbb{B}g5$ ±)

24. $\mathbb{B}xa8$ (24. $\mathbb{B}e4$ $g6$ □–+ (24... $\mathbb{W}xe6$? 25. $\mathbb{B}h6$ +□+–))

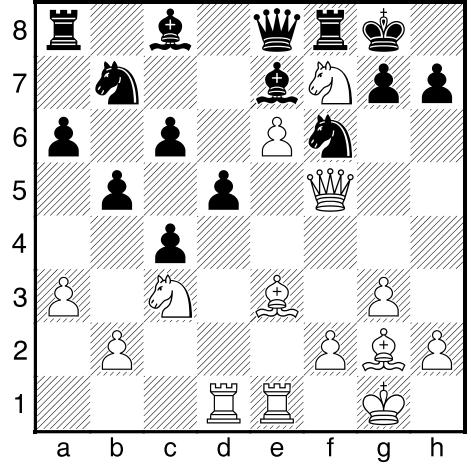
24... $\mathbb{B}xe6$ –+ when White hangs pieces on f5, a8 and f7.

20... $\mathbb{B}b7$!?

Heading for d6 to dislodge the $\mathbb{B}f7$.



**Gukesh &
WGM Anna Burtasova**
FIDE Press Officer



21. $\mathbb{B}g5$

As before, both players needed to calculate the sacs on d5:

21. $\mathbb{B}xd5$!? leads to a complete mess 21... $cx d5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xd5$! Black has three ways to keep the balance:

a) the prosaic 22... $\mathbb{B}xf7$ = ;

b) the tricky 22... $\mathbb{B}xe6$ 23. $\mathbb{B}h6$ +□ $\mathbb{B}h8$ □ (23... $gxh6$?? 24. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ + $\mathbb{B}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}d4$ +–) 24. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}xd5$ =;

c) the flashy 22... $\mathbb{B}b4$!? 23. $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 24. $axb4$ ∞.

21... $\mathbb{B}a7$!

Gets off the long diagonal and prepares to defend the 7th. "I thought this is a brilliant idea, practically."

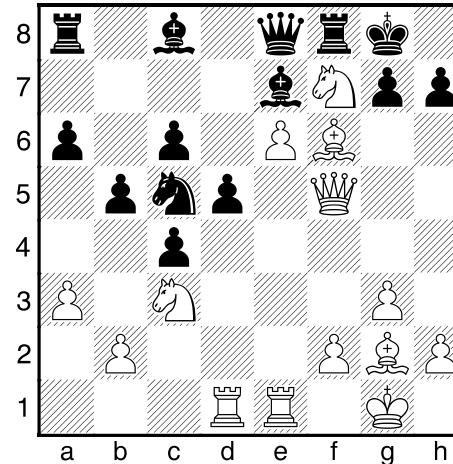
- Gukesh.

The computer agrees, ranking only one move higher.

21... $\mathbb{B}d6$!?

22. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{B}xf7$ □ 23. $exf7$ + $\mathbb{B}xf7$! 24. $\mathbb{B}xd5$! $cx d5$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $gxf6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c7$ □∞ $\mathbb{B}g4$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ □ (27... $\mathbb{B}xd1$? 28. $\mathbb{B}xe7$ +–) 28. $\mathbb{B}xa8$ $\mathbb{B}xd1$ 29. $\mathbb{B}c6$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ □ 30. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ +□=.

21... $\mathbb{B}c5$! is the computer's top choice 22. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ *Analysis Diagram*



22... $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ □ $cx d5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ (24. $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{W}c6$! (24... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ "White is winning." - **Gukesh**) 25. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 26. $e7$ +□ (26. $\mathbb{B}xa8$? $\mathbb{B}d3$ +?) 26... $\mathbb{B}h8$ 27. $exf8$ $\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}h5$ □ $\mathbb{B}b7$ □ 29. $\mathbb{B}xb7$ □=) 24... $\mathbb{B}xe6$ □ 25. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ □ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xe6$! $\mathbb{B}ac8$ ∞;

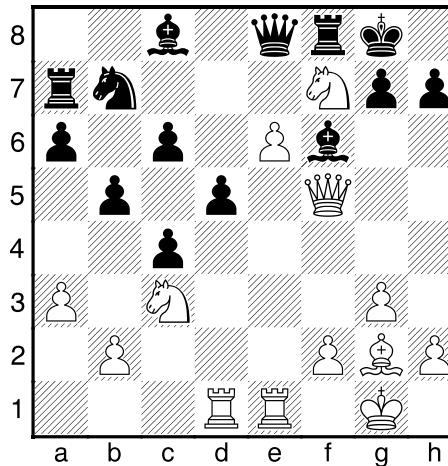
22... $\mathbb{B}xe6$! 23. $\mathbb{B}h6$ + $\mathbb{B}h8$ □ 24. $\mathbb{B}xg7$ + $\mathbb{B}xg7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xe6$!! $\mathbb{B}xe6$! (25... $\mathbb{B}xf5$? 26. $\mathbb{B}xf5$ + $\mathbb{B}h8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xe7$ ±) 26. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}h8$!! gets



out of the checks and threatens to trade down with ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$.
 26... $\mathbb{B}f6??$ loses to 27. $\mathbb{Q}f5+\square$
 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e5+-$ with a small material advantage and a much safer \mathbb{Q} .

22. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

Threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ then ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$.



23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\square$

The only way to get his pieces into the attack.

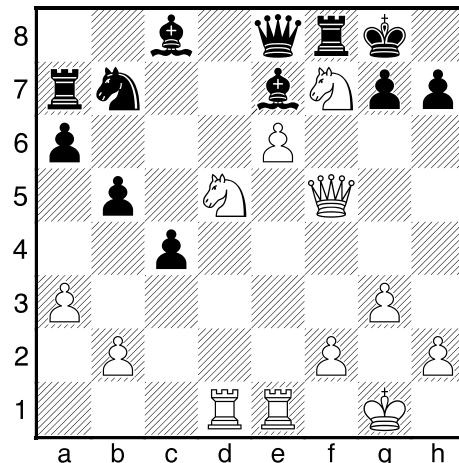
23. $\mathbb{Q}e4?$ $\mathbb{W}xe6!$ (Black said he intended 23... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+\pm$)
 24. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+\mathbb{Q}xf7$
 26. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{B}e8!$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g5+\mathbb{Q}f6$
 28. $\mathbb{Q}h7+\mathbb{Q}g6+-$ there's no perpetual and Black's pawn blob wins every endgame.

23... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

After 23... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$, not 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4?$
 $\mathbb{W}xe6\square-+$, but 24. $\mathbb{Q}h6+!$ leads to a crazy-looking but balanced endgame: 24... $\mathbb{Q}xh6\square$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e7+$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xd5+$
 $\mathbb{W}f7\square$ (27... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc3-+$)
 28. $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$
 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
 32. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e5=$.

24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

24... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ is the only other move, and SF rates it 0.00 after:
 25. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c7\square$ $\mathbb{W}e7\square$
 27. $\mathbb{Q}d5\square$ $\mathbb{W}e8!$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c7\square=$.



The culmination of the game. Both players were already severely low on time.

25. $\mathbb{W}g4?$

25. $\mathbb{Q}d4?$ $\mathbb{Q}c5-+$ **Gukesh**.

25. $\mathbb{Q}h6+\square=$ would have forced/allowed a draw after 25... $\mathbb{Q}h8$
 26. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$, or Black could keep on playing with 25... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}g4+$
 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 27. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8!$ (Not 27... $\mathbb{Q}a8$
 28. $\mathbb{Q}e7!!$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ which wins for White.) 28. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}h4$
 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ with a mess.

25... $\mathbb{Q}d8\square-+$

Keeping everything coordinated and developing his worst piece ($\mathbb{Q}a7$).

25... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ doesn't lose, although **Gukesh** thought it did lose after:
 26. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8(?)$
 28. $\mathbb{Q}e7\square-+$.

Gukesh can be forgiven for missing two computer improvements in this line:

27... $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}f7!$
 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}dxe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$
 31. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4=$, and

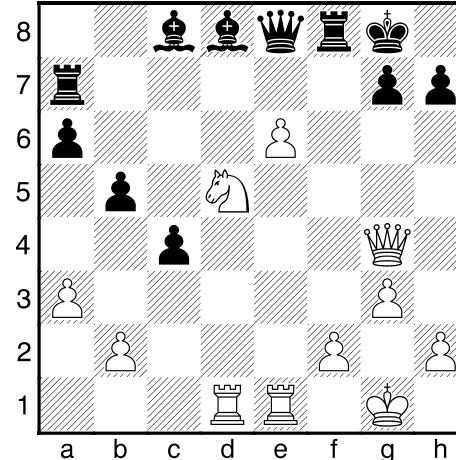
27... $\mathbb{Q}g8!$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d4\square$ threatening the \mathbb{Q} and skewering the $\mathbb{Q}a7$.
 28... $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xa7\square$ $\mathbb{Q}c5\square\infty$.

26. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$

After the game, **Gukesh** said

he thought White was equal after 26. $\mathbb{W}d4!?$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (26... $\mathbb{Q}b7?$)
 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd8-+$
Gukesh) 27. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d4$. But in this position (or on move 26) Black comes out on top with a pseudo-sac: 28... $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$
 29. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ (29. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7-+$) 29... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (30... $\mathbb{Q}d8-+$)
 31. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}f8!-+$.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xd8-+$



White's remaining pieces are beautifully placed, but he doesn't have enough of them.

27. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
 29. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$
 31. $\mathbb{Q}h5!?$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 32. $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$
 33. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$

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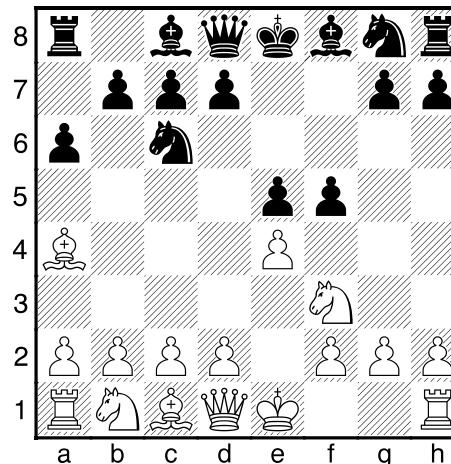


Vidit, Santosh Gujrathi Praggnanandhaa, R.

FIDE Candidates 2024 Toronto
(3), 06.04.2024
Notes: John Uppen +

Pragg: "After my tough loss in the 2nd round, I wanted to have a fight in this game."

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6
4.♕a4 f5!?

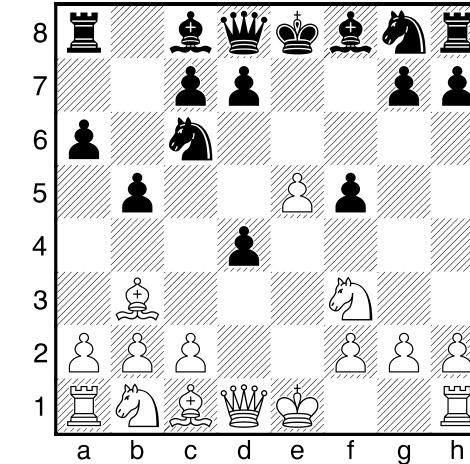


Vidit v Pragg

Just because we're shaking hands, doesn't mean I don't have something up my sleeve...

A Deferred Schliemann?
A type of reversed King's Gambit (Falkbeer) — is rare enough when White can play it a tempo up — but *extremely* rare at the top level. Apart from chess.com's Titled Tuesday blitz events there are no recent games by top players.

5.d4! exd4 6.e5 b5 7.♗b3



7...♘a5!?



I am absolutely flabbergasted by this opening...

...it is sooo risky to play this.

- GM Daniel King

Above:
I knew something weird was happening when I noticed Fabi fixated on the demo screens.

Next:
Nepo didn't disappoint either...



A game of seconds

Pragg said one of his Candidates seconds (unnamed) advised playing the Deferred Schlieman, and this particular continuation seems to have been chosen because of one of *Vidit's* coaches:

"7... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ is the mainline and has been tried many times by Surya Ganguly, the trainer of Vidit."

- Pragg

Not only would this mean it was more likely Vidit knew the main line, but also knew that

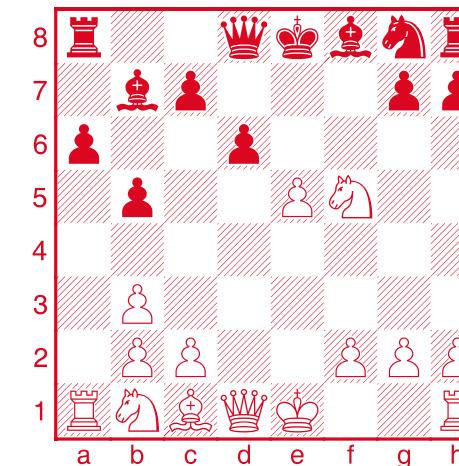
preserving the LSB with 8.a4! is better for White, after which Black's best would be the illegal ...f5–f7.

This rare sideline of a sideline clearly caught Vidit unprepared, and he spent 17 minutes here before he played...

8. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$

10. $a xb3$ $d6!$

10... $\mathbb{Q}xg2??$ is what one of Morphy's amateur opponents would have tried: 11. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $g6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+-$.



What happens if $\mathbb{Q}xg7?$

11. $\mathbb{W}e2$

11. $exd6$ $\mathbb{W}d7!!$ is the deeper idea here: the $\mathbb{Q}f5$ will have to retreat

and if the black \mathbb{Q} goes to f7 Black will be ready to play $\mathbb{Q}a8-e8$. 12. $\mathbb{W}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 14. 0–0 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ Black has excellent development and the \mathbb{Q} pair in return for the f-pawn.

With $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ White initiates a line where Black can allow a forced draw with: 11. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 12. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 13. $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ (13... $\mathbb{Q}e7??$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g5++-$) 14. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 15. $\mathbb{W}f5+$ etc.; but if Black wants to play for more, SF rates: 15... $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ 16. $exf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ as slightly better for Black!?



I can't be seeing this!



One simply does not play 4...f5 in the Candidates.



He did play 4...f5!?



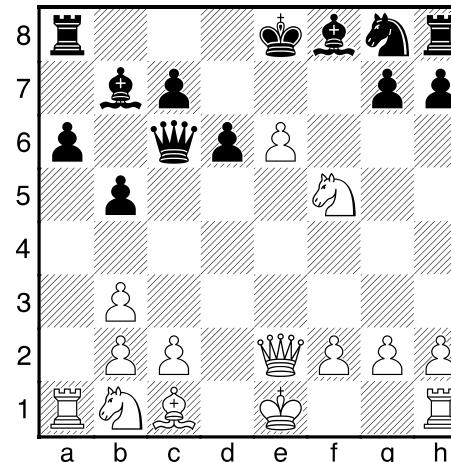
Maybe he'll play like that against me!

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11... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 12.e6!?
12.exd6+ $\mathbb{K}f7C$.

12... $\mathbb{W}c6$



13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$
13. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+?$ doesn't work anymore: 13... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 15. $\mathbb{W}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}f6+ -$.

Pragg said he expected: 13.f3 $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ d5 15.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 16.c3 $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ 0-0-0 ∞ , but "It is easier to play with Black here." - Pragg

13...g6

Not yet threatening to take the \mathbb{Q} , but saving the g7 pawn solidifies the kingside and threatens to take on g2. 13... $\mathbb{W}xg2??$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+ \square$ and

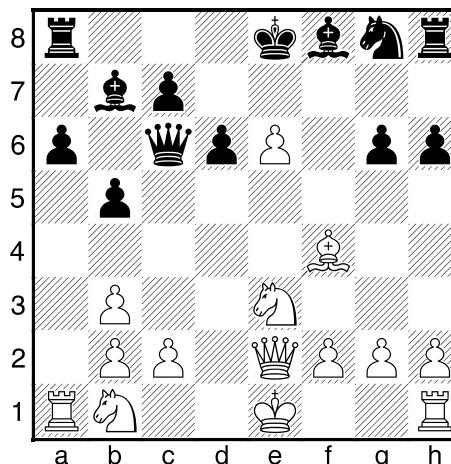
$\mathbb{W}h5+ - f7\#.$

14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

Defends g2.

14...h6 15. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

15. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}e4!$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 0-0-0
17.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18.c4 b4! 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xe6\infty$.



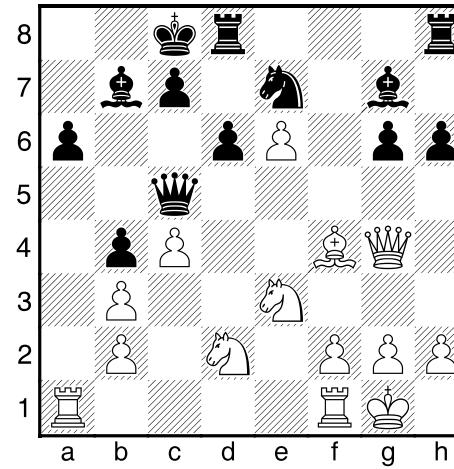
15... $\mathbb{Q}e7!$

15... $\mathbb{W}e4!?$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$
(16... $\mathbb{W}xf4?$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}cd5+ -$)
17. $\mathbb{Q}cd5$ (17. $\mathbb{Q}xb5?$ $axb5$
18. $\mathbb{W}xb5+$ $\mathbb{W}d7! \mp$ White can't take both a8 and b7.) 17...0-0-0
18.c4 I felt White should be okay here. - Pragg

16.c4 b4 17. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}c5$

Unblocks the $\mathbb{Q}b7$ to stop $\mathbb{Q}d5$.

18.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0-0?



"A really risky move." - King

□ 19...0-0! 20. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}h5! \mp$ "was my initial plan, then got very excited about long castling! Black's pieces are well placed compared to White's pieces." - Pragg

20.h4?

Here is Pragg's analysis:

"This stops ...g5 and ...h5 ideas, but it was more important to be direct here."

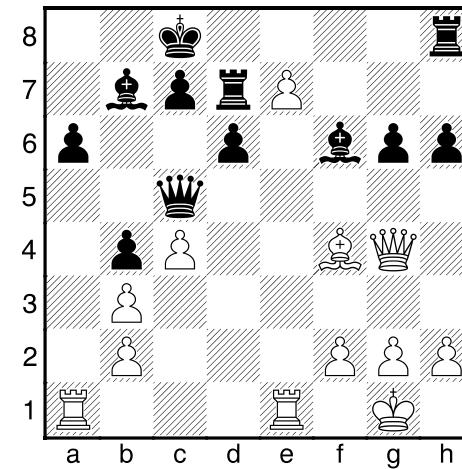
□ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d5! \leftarrow$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21.e7+ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
22. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ According to comp this is stronger, but the lines are difficult in practical play.

(22.cxd5 less strong, but may be possible to spot in a game.)

22... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ I stopped my analysis with 24. $\mathbb{W}g3! \pm$ this seems strong with $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ coming. 24... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd6+ -$) 22... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ I thought this was winning for Black during the game...

[editor - but tactics which neither of the Indian super-GMs saw OTB leave White better...]

23. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}fe1 \square$
Analysis Diagram



24... $\mathbb{Q}xe7!$ Black has to do this. 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $gxf5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e3 \pm$ means suffering for Black.

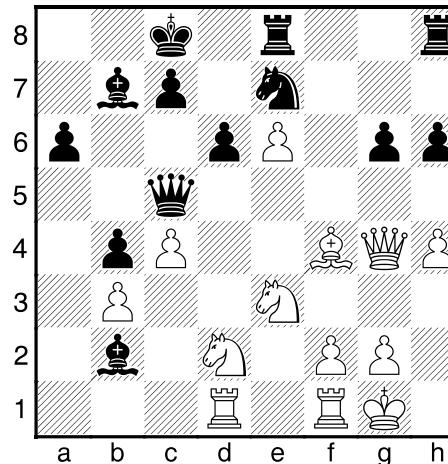
24... $\mathbb{Q}e5?$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}ad1 \square$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

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(25... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $dxe5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d5\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}exe5\Box+$ – Black is totally stuck and lost here.) 26. $\mathbb{Q}e3\Box$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a1+$ – Amazing line to trap the \mathbb{W} on a5. Because of this, the whole line with 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ works!" - **Pragg**

20... $\mathbb{Q}de8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2!$



Wins a pawn, but also allows Black to block the c-file with $\mathbb{Q}c3$, which takes some of the sting out of $\mathbb{Q}d5$.

22. $\mathbb{Q}d5?$

Anyway!

22... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

24.e7+?

Makes the e-pawn easier for Black to round up.

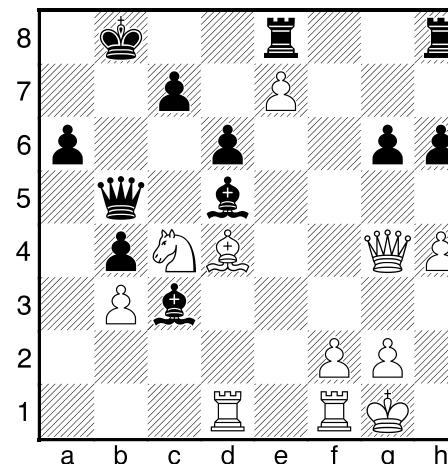
24... $\mathbb{Q}fe1!$ White gets more counterplay with the pawn on e6. 24... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}h5\Box$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xh5$ $gxh5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ Black is slightly better, but rook endgames always provide chances. - **Pragg**

24... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

25. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}h7!$ Black gets the e7 pawn: 26. $\mathbb{W}d7$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ –.

25... $\mathbb{W}b5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$

27. $\mathbb{Q}d4$



27... $\mathbb{Q}hg8?$!

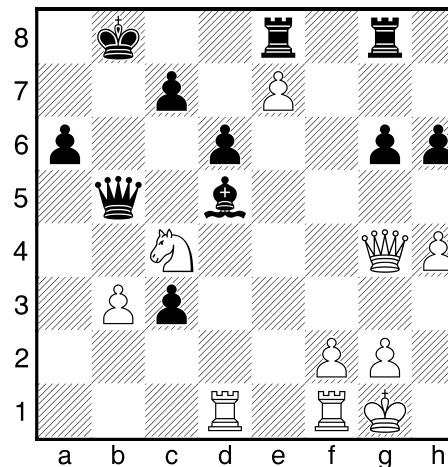
I was planning to go for this...

27... $\mathbb{Q}xc4?$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$...until I saw: 29. $\mathbb{Q}a7+!+$ –.

Here is the main line of Pragg's analysis, which has multiple

branches: 27... $\mathbb{Q}h7!$ The only move which wins, but the lines are not easy: 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}hxe7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ Black has to make only moves from here to win: 30... $\mathbb{W}c6\Box$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $c2\Box$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6\Box$ 33. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$ –+ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7\Box$ 36. $\mathbb{W}xf1$ $c1\mathbb{W}$ –+.

28. $\mathbb{Q}xc3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$



29. $\mathbb{W}d4?$!

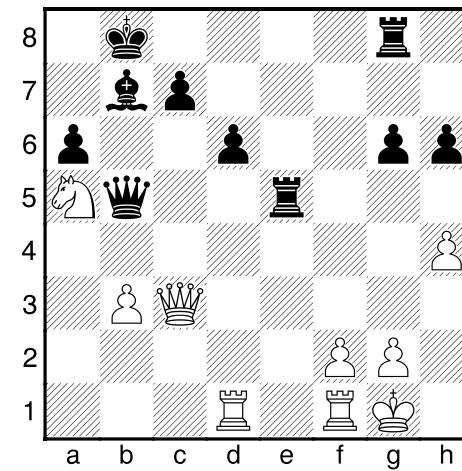
Again, the computer finds a maneuver Pragg couldn't imagine OTB: 29... $\mathbb{Q}a3!^\infty$ "A difficult move to spot and understand the idea... 29... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ Provoking ... $c5$ is much more important than the $c3$ pawn. 30... $c5$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 32. $\mathbb{W}g3$ White gets so much

counterplay." - **Pragg**

29... $\mathbb{Q}b7$

29... $\mathbb{Q}a8!$ "According to the comp this is better to avoid $\mathbb{Q}a5xb7$. Hard to understand during the game." - **Pragg**
30. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}c6\Box$.

30. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$



32.b4?

Stabilizes the \mathbb{Q} , but unless the \mathbb{Q} is going to take on $b7$ it is not doing much on $a5$. 32. $\mathbb{Q}xb7!$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ Black is up a pawn, but positions with 6 major pieces give tremendous scope for resistance... and blunders.

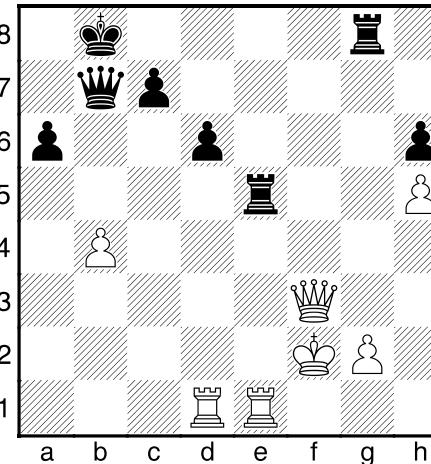
32... $g5!^\infty$ 33.h5?! g4

34. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ g3!–+



Black's minority attack strikes home.

35.♘xb7 gxf2+ 36.♔xf2
♘xb7 37.♗f3



37...♝eg5 38.♗xb7+ ♔xb7
39.g4 ♞xg4 40.♗e6 ♞h4
41.♗xh6 ♞g5 42.♗h7 ♞hxh5
43.♗d7 ♔c8 44.♗e7 ♞e5
45.♗g7 ♞hf5+

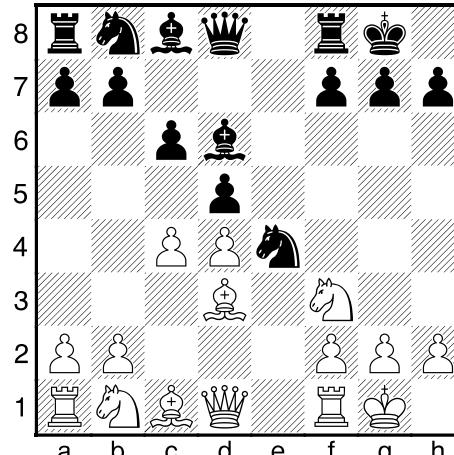
Black will force off a ♞ with ...♝g5+ and keep the white ♔ cut off with ...♞e5, making the win trivial.

0-1

Praggnanandhaa, R. Nepomniachtchi, Ian

FIDE Candidates 2024 Toronto
(5.1), 09.04.2024
Notes: John Upper

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5
d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.d4 d5
6.♗d3 ♘d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4
c6



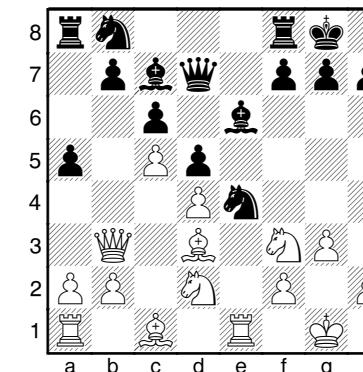
Nepo playing the Petroff was one of the sure bets of the Candidates. He has had this position as Black 23 times, scoring +3 =17 -3 against world-class opponents, and he's had it 7 times as White (mostly rapid and blitz) scoring +5 =1 -1.

This makes Nepo a tempting target for some deep and high-risk opening prep, but it also means he has a strong feel for what is important in these middlegames. So, even if he can be lured into deep waters, Nepo is no sitting duck.

9.♘c3

In round 7, Nakamura continued with: 9.♗e1 ♘f5 10.♗b3 ♘d7
11.c5 (11.♗h4 ♘e6 12.♗c2 ♘a6
13.a3 f5= Caruana,F (2783)
-Nepomniachtchi,I (2766)
Candidates, 2022) 11...♘c7
12.g3 a5 13.♗bd2 ♘e6

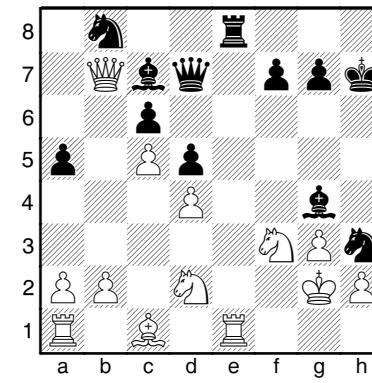
Analysis Diagram



It is odd that the Petroff had/ has a reputation for being a dull opening when tactics abound.

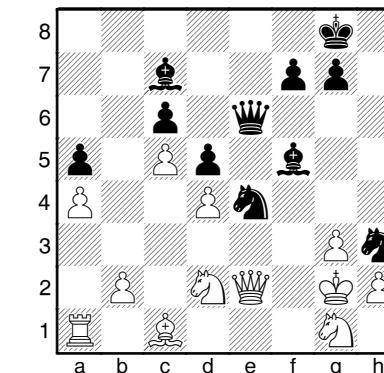
Start the Fireworks!

14.♗xb7 ♘xf2 15.♗xh7+ ♘xh7
16.♗xa8 ♘h3+ 17.♗g2 ♘g4
18.♗b7 ♘e8=



White's up an exchange, but has four pieces on the queenside which are not playing yet.

19.♗b3 ♘xe1 20.♗xe1 ♘e6
21.♗d3+ ♘f5 22.♗f1 ♘d7
23.♗ef3 ♘f6 24.♗g1 ♘g8
25.♗e2 (25.♗df3) 25...♗e4
26.a4



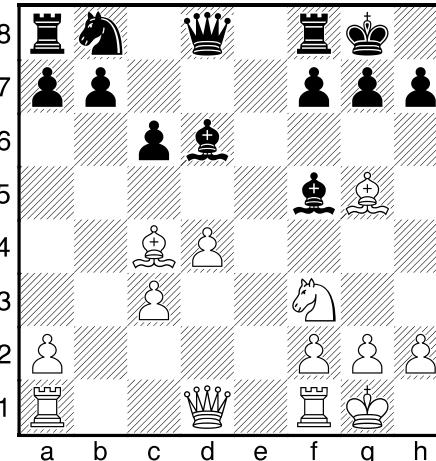
More fireworks incoming! The next sequence is forced, leading



to a position where White has a huge material advantage but cannot develop the $\mathbb{K}c1$ and $\mathbb{Q}d2$ in time to avoid a repetition:

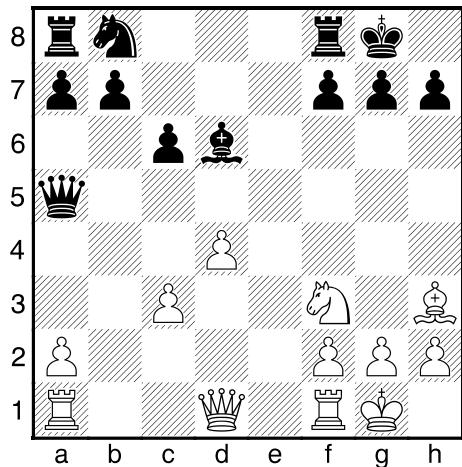
26... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$!? 27.hxg3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ + \square
 28.gxf4 $\mathbb{W}g6$ + \square 29. $\mathbb{Q}f1$
 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ + \square 30. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$
 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}a3$!= $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$
 $\mathbb{W}g1$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}g2$ + 35. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}f3$ +
 36. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ + 37. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}f3$ +
 38. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ + 39. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}f3$ +
 40. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ +1/2 **Nakamura,H**
(2789)-Nepomniachtchi,I (2758)
Candidates Toronto, 2024.

9... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10.bxc3 dxc4
 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g5$



Nepo introduced this in 2017 in a game where he beat Li Chao, and it is now the main line.

12... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$
 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$
 16. $\mathbb{Q}h3$!?



Before this game, $\mathbb{Q}b3$ was the main move by far. Pragg's $\mathbb{Q}g3$ leaves the b-file unblocked and stops the black \mathbb{Q} from developing smoothly. Obviously, it also reduces pressure on Black's kingside, but as we will see, it can return there faster than Black would like.

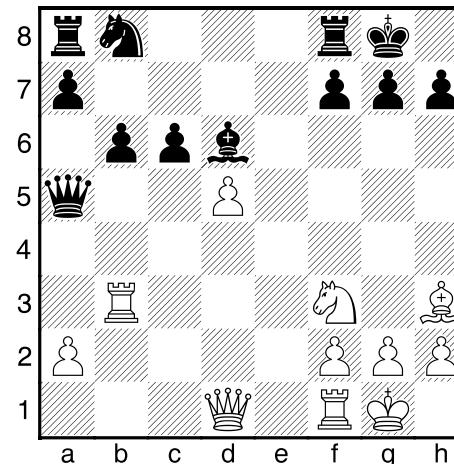
16... $\mathbb{W}xc3$!?

Improves over a previous Nepo game and a game from the Canadian Zonal played a week earlier: 16... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17.c4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ (18. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}b3$ (19.c5 \pm) 19... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20.c5 \pm **Mamedov,R (2646)-**

Nepomniachtchi,I (2793)
Airthings rapid, 2023 18... $\mathbb{Q}f6$
 19.c5! was **Rodrigue-Lemieux - Atanasov, Toronto, 2024**, earlier in this issue.

17. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ b6 18. $\mathbb{Q}b3$
 Another plus from not playing $\mathbb{Q}b3$.

18... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 19.d5!



Pragg played this instantly, and it's another piece of his dangerous prep: the second pawn sac cuts the black \mathbb{W} from the kingside when White has four pieces ready to pounce with sacs-a-plenty on f7 and h7. Black has several reasonable-looking replies, and they all cross minefields of tactics.

Nepo thought for 40 minutes and played the computer's top choice:

19... $\mathbb{W}xd5$?
 19... $\mathbb{W}xd5$? obviously gives up the $\mathbb{Q}d6$, but that's not the real problem: 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ + 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ leaves Black with a nominal material advantage — 4 \mathbb{Q} v \mathbb{Q} — but so far behind in development that White can force through a winning attack; e.g. 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5$!? (or 22. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ threatening $\mathbb{Q}f6$ +) 22...g6 23. $\mathbb{W}c1$!—.

19... $\mathbb{Q}d8$!?
 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ cxd5
 (20... $\mathbb{Q}e7$? 21.d6+—; 20...c5?? 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ +— with takes on f7 or h7 or even $\mathbb{Q}e6$.) 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 22. $\mathbb{W}h5$ — or 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$!?.

19... $\mathbb{W}xa2$!?
 is objectively OK, but it may be imprudent to give White his widest range of challenging continuations:

20. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$!; 20. $\mathbb{Q}f5$! SF 20...g6 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ \square 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$!
 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ \square 23. $\mathbb{Q}b1$! $\mathbb{W}a1$ \square \pm ; 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ cxd5 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$! $\mathbb{Q}fe8$! (22... $\mathbb{Q}e5$?)

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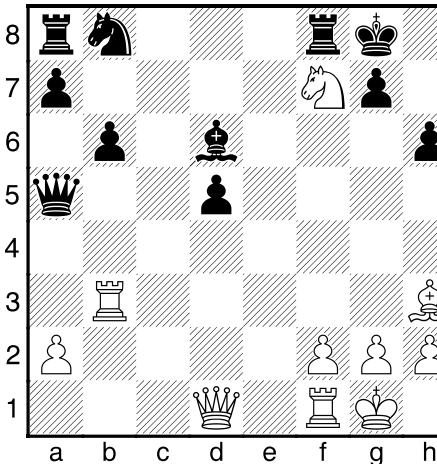
23. $\mathbb{H}d2! \pm$; 22... $\mathbb{Q}xh7??$
 23. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f5+-$
 23. $\mathbb{W}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4 \square \infty$.

20. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $h6$

20... $g6!?$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e6!?$ or 21. $\mathbb{H}d3!?$.
 20... $d4?$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7 \square$ $\mathbb{H}xf7$
 22. $\mathbb{Q}e6 \square +-$.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!!$

21. $\mathbb{Q}e6!?$ $fxe6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$
 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6!$ (23... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$
 $\mathbb{H}ad8 \infty$) 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa8 \square$ $\mathbb{W}e5 \square \mp$
 25. $g3 \square$ $\mathbb{H}xa8 \mp$.



21... $\mathbb{Q}xf7 \square =$

SF rates all of White's top 5 responses as 0.00. Equal, but far from boring.

21... $\mathbb{H}xf7??$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e6 \square$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$
 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5 \square$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ (23... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

24. $\mathbb{H}f3+-$; 23... $\mathbb{H}d8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$
 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}f3++-$) 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+\square$
 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}f3+\square$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 26. $\mathbb{H}c3 \square$
 $\mathbb{W}e5$ 27. $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xc6+-$
 White's up an exchange.

22. $\mathbb{H}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

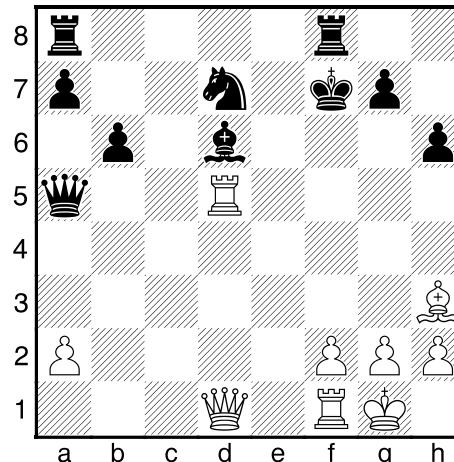
Nepo gives back the \mathbb{Q} for a tempo to connect the \mathbb{H} s.

22... $g6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}a1!?$ ∞ keeps the \mathbb{Q} from running away.

22... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6+\square$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$
 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+-$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ keeping the \mathbb{Q} stuck in the corner paid off.

23. $\mathbb{H}xd5$

23. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8 \square \infty$.



23... $\mathbb{Q}c5??$

After only two minutes a losing blunder! Nepo is often criticized for rushing critical decisions, but here the reason his move loses mightn't be found by any super GM in under an hour... and it wasn't by *either* of the super GMs playing this game.

23... $\mathbb{Q}c5?$ 24. $\mathbb{W}b3 \square +-$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$
 25. $\mathbb{W}d3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c4!$
 (26. $\mathbb{H}xd7+?$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}g6$
 $\mathbb{Q}xf2+!!=$) 26... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}e4+\mathbb{Q}f7$
 28. $\mathbb{W}e6\#.$

23... $\mathbb{Q}xh2+\square$ wins a pawn, but the reason it is the difference between a draw and a loss is an impossible-to-see tactical resource shown in the note to White's 26th move. 24. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5 \square \infty$ 25. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ (25. $\mathbb{H}d6!?$)
 25... $\mathbb{Q}g8 \square$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8 \square$
 27. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ (27. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{H}f6$) 27... $\mathbb{H}f6 \infty$.

24. $\mathbb{H}xd6+-$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

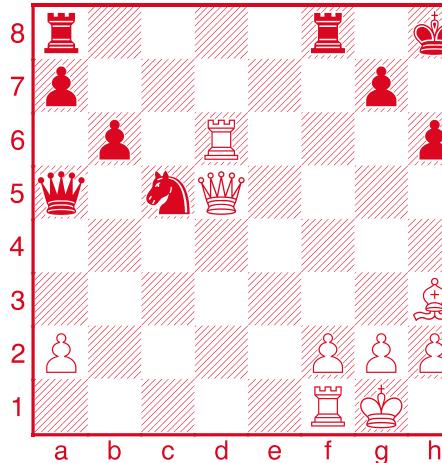
24... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 25. $g3!$ and $\mathbb{Q}g2$, threatening $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ royal fork and hitting the $\mathbb{H}a8$.



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25. $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{K}h8$



26. $\mathbb{K}f5?$

Wrong move order!

26. $\mathbb{W}e5!+$ — or $\mathbb{W}d4$, both threatening $\mathbb{K}xh6!+$:

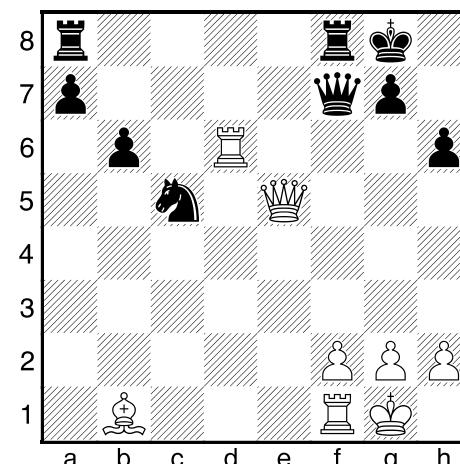
a) 26... $\mathbb{K}h7$ 27. $\mathbb{K}f5++$ — $\mathbb{K}g8$ and White has a choice of attacking finishes:

28. $\mathbb{K}g6$ $\mathbb{K}f7$ 29. $\mathbb{K}xg7+$ $\mathbb{K}xg7$
30. $\mathbb{W}d5++$ —; or
28. $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{K}h8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}c6+--$.

b) 26... $\mathbb{K}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{K}g6$ $\mathbb{K}f7$
28. $\mathbb{K}xg7!+$ $\mathbb{K}xg7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{K}f7$
30. $\mathbb{W}xa8+$ $\mathbb{K}g7$ 31. $\mathbb{W}d5+--$.

c) 26... $\mathbb{W}xa2!$ is the trickiest defence, requiring some beautiful moves to defeat:

27. $\mathbb{K}f5!+--$ and the game might end like this: (27. $\mathbb{K}xh6+$ $\mathbb{K}g8\pm$)
27... $\mathbb{K}g8$ (or this: 27... $\mathbb{K}ae8??$)
28. $\mathbb{K}xh6+$ $\mathbb{K}g8$ 29. $\mathbb{K}h7+$ $\mathbb{K}f7$
30. $\mathbb{K}g6+$ $\mathbb{K}g8$ 31. $\mathbb{K}h8+$ mating)
28. $\mathbb{K}b1\Box$ Retreating the \mathbb{K} to attack is difficult to see, but Tal at his best found moves like this.
28... $\mathbb{W}f7$ *Analysis Diagram*



29. $\mathbb{W}b2!!+--$ is a fantastically hard-to-see retreating-attacking move that threatens both $\mathbb{K}a2$ and $\mathbb{W}c2$. [Compare with Reti-Bogoljubow note 20 later in this issue.]

29. $\mathbb{W}b2$ would not have been possible after 23... $\mathbb{K}xh2+$ and $\mathbb{K}xh2$ because here Black would win with ... $\mathbb{W}f4$ check!

After 29. $\mathbb{W}b2$ Black is doomed:

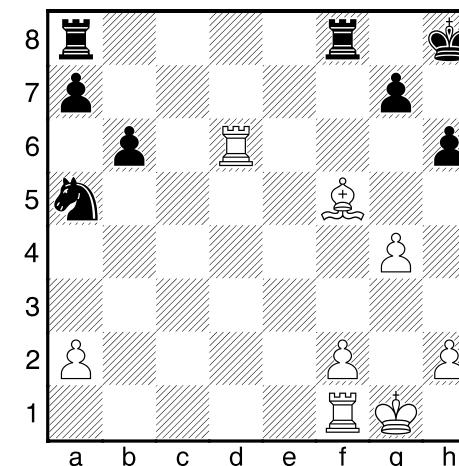
29... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 30. $\mathbb{K}a2+$ $\mathbb{K}h7$

31. $\mathbb{W}c2+$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ (31... $\mathbb{K}h8$
32. $\mathbb{K}b1+$ —) 32. $\mathbb{W}xe4+$ $\mathbb{K}xe4$
33. $\mathbb{K}b1\Box+$ —;
29... $\mathbb{W}f4$ 30. $\mathbb{W}a2!+$ $\mathbb{K}h8$
(30... $\mathbb{K}f7+$ — 31. $\mathbb{W}d5$ or
31. $\mathbb{K}fd1+$ —) 31. $\mathbb{W}c2\Box$ $\mathbb{K}g8$
32. $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{K}f7$ 33. $\mathbb{K}g6$ $\mathbb{W}e5$
34. $\mathbb{K}a2++$ — returning to the a2–g8 diagonal after all.

26... $\mathbb{K}b7!$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xa5$

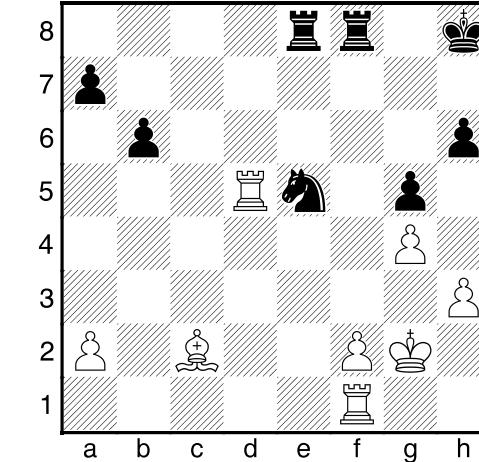
27. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xf5\pm$

27... $\mathbb{K}xa5$ 28. $g4\pm$



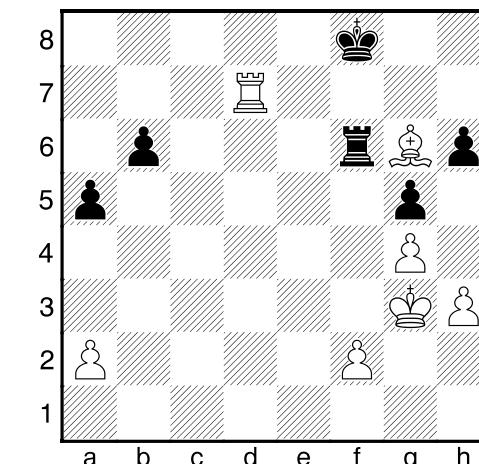
And Neko escaped another losing position in another Candidates tournament...!

28... $\mathbb{K}c4$ 29. $\mathbb{K}d5$ $\mathbb{K}ae8$ 30. $h3$
 $\mathbb{K}e5$ 31. $\mathbb{K}g2$ $g6$ 32. $\mathbb{K}c2$ $g5$



Black has secured a choice of outposts for his \mathbb{K} and White has no realistic chances.

33. $\mathbb{K}f5$ $\mathbb{K}e7$ 34. $\mathbb{K}d6$ $\mathbb{K}g7$
35. $\mathbb{K}e1$ $\mathbb{K}f6$ 36. $\mathbb{K}d5$ $\mathbb{K}g6$
37. $\mathbb{K}xe7+$ $\mathbb{K}xe7$ 38. $\mathbb{K}d7$ $\mathbb{K}f8$
39. $\mathbb{K}e4$ $a5$ 40. $\mathbb{K}g3$ $\mathbb{K}g6$
41. $\mathbb{K}xg6$



41... $\mathbb{K}xg6$ 42. $h4$ $\mathbb{K}c6$

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43.hxg5 hxg5 44.♗b7 a4

1/2

**Caruana, Fabiano
Nepomniachtchi, Ian**

*FIDE Candidates 2024 Toronto
(14.2), 21.04.2024*

Notes: John Upper++

Going into the final round Gukesh led Caruana, Nepo, and Nakamura by $\frac{1}{2}$ a point, and all four were paired against each other! This meant that a draw in this game would guarantee neither player could qualify for a playoff. Clearly, a "must win" for both.

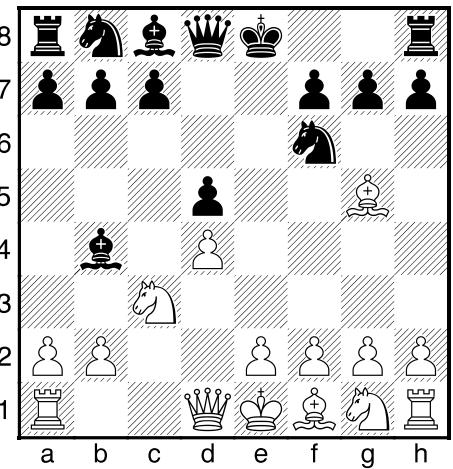
Quotations from **Fabi** and **Nepo** are from a 90 minute conversation on the **C-Squared podcast**, posted 2024.05.07, about three weeks after the Candidates (link at end).

1.d4!

No Petroff for you!

This was the only time in this Candidates that Fabi played anything other than 1.e4.

1...♞f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5
4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 ♜b4!?



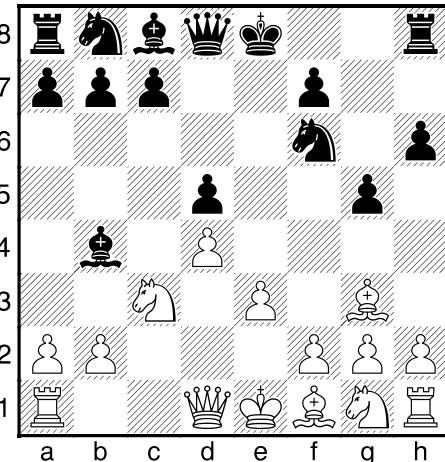
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Nepo was even *less* prepared! His seconds — [Jan Gustafsson](#), [Nikita Vitugov](#), and [MVL](#) — told him to prep for 1.e4!? So Nepo was going into a line he hadn't played for two years without reviewing his notes!?

Now 6.♘f3 would transpose to a complex but well-known line of the Ragozin, but Fabi goes for the more complex central play with ♘ge2 and f2–f3.

6.e3 h6 7.♕h4 g5 8.♕g3



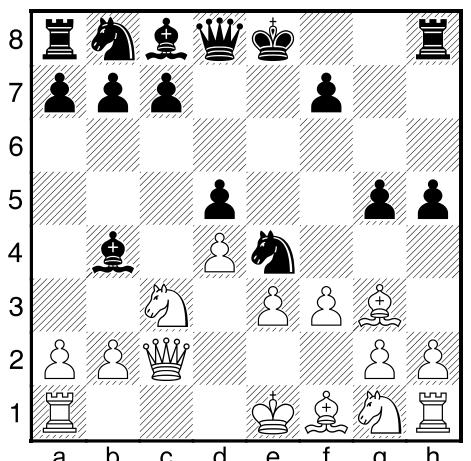
This is relatively unexplored, with about half the games in the database having been played after this one; an excellent start for a must-win game.

8...♘e4
 8...h5 9.♗b3 ♖xc3+ 10.bxc3
 h4 11.♗e5 ♖bd7 12.♘f3 ♖xe5
 13.♘xe5 h3! 14.♗g1! White's ♔ is staying in the center anyway.
 14...c6 15.g4!± [Caruana,F \(2784\)](#)-[Aronian,L \(2737\)](#) Saint Louis Rapid, 2025.

9.♗c2
 Transposing to a line in the ♗c2 Nimzo.

9.♘ge2 h5 10.h3 ♖xg3
 11.♖xg3 h4 12.♗h5! c6 13.♗e2
 ♖d7± [Carlsen,M \(2847\)](#)-[Nepomniachtchi,I \(2789\)](#) Carlsen Inv rapid, 2021.

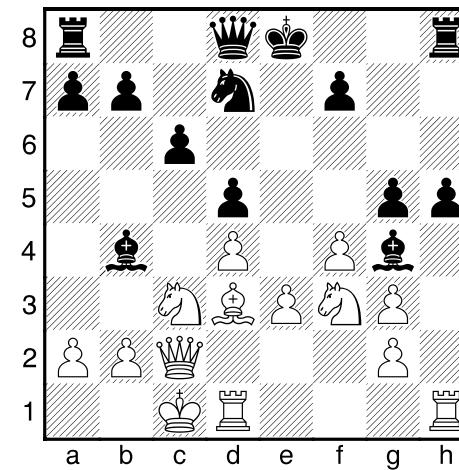
9...h5 10.f3



10...♗xg3 11.hxg3 ♖e6

12.♗d3
 12.0–0–0 ♖d7 13.a3 ♖d6
 (13...♖xc3! 14.♗xc3 ♖f6∞)
 14.e4± [Giri,A \(2764\)](#)-[Gukesh,D \(2732\)](#) Aimchess Rapid, 2022.

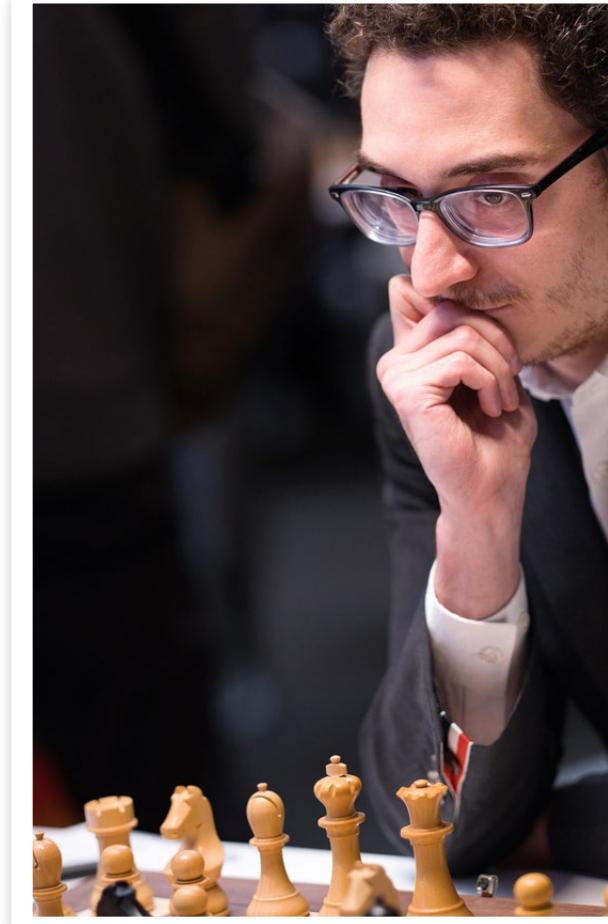
12...c6 13.0–0–0 ♖d7=
14.f4 ♖g4 15.♘f3



15...♖e7
 15...gxh4 is prudent, but takes a lot of dynamism out of the position, which mightn't be desirable for either player in a must-win game.

16.e4!
 This strong move surprised Nepo.

16...♗xc3 17.♗xc3 ♖xf3
 White is not hanging the e-pawn:



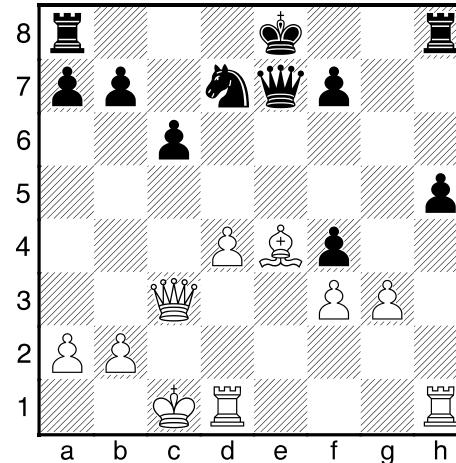
17...dxe4 18.♗xe4! since
 18...♖xe4?? 19.♗he1+–.

18.gxf3 dxe4 19.♗xe4!
 Keeps the e-file open, so the black ♔ will almost certainly have to go queenside, and the ♗ will be a terror if White gets in d4–d5.

19.fxe4 is good too, but may give Black some hopes for pressure against the white center.



19...gxf4



20.g4!

Caruana:

"Here I thought about 20.d5 but 20... $\mathbb{W}c5$!.. And 20. $\mathbb{W}a5$ stops you from castling, but doesn't really work 20...fxg3!?. And then I realized that after 20.g4 h4 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$! setting up d4-d5, and at least it is totally safe for White and dangerous for Black, so it felt like an ideal solution."

20...0-0-0?!

Nepo:

"I'm not sure exactly why I castled here rather than going for ...h4. I kept calculating different variations which all ended up in similar bad positions, and I thought if nothing else works I

had ...000; and on d5 ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and hope for the best... but, as it turned out, there was not much to hope for."

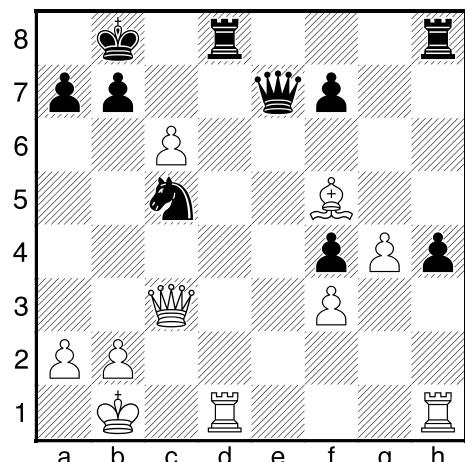
21.d5 h4

21... $\mathbb{W}c5$ kills the attack on the \mathbb{K} , but concedes a terrible endgame after

22.dxc6 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ + 23.bxc3 bxc6
24. $\mathbb{B}xh5$!± Black's pawns are trash, and conceding a passed h-pawn after ... $\mathbb{B}xh5$ is hopeless.

22.dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ + $\mathbb{K}b8$

24. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ +–



24...b6?!

Nepo:

To be honest, here my only "hope" was that Fabi would win the tiebreak...

If it wasn't for the time-control I would probably give up.

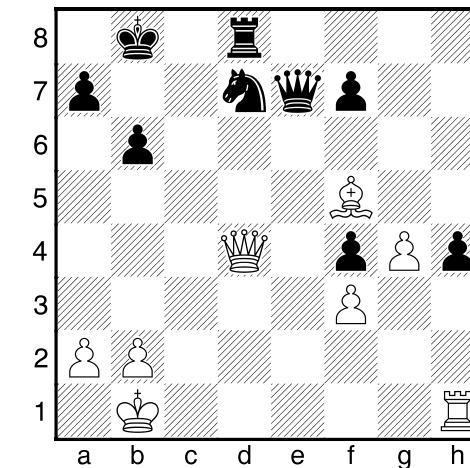
- Nepomniachtchi

here. Even better is: 25. $\mathbb{Q}d7$! keeps the pawn on c6 — maybe going to c7 — and prepares $\mathbb{B}he1$ with a huge attack. Importantly, 25... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ fails to 26.c7+–.

25... $\mathbb{B}xd7$

25... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 26.c7+–+ $\mathbb{K}b7$
27.cxd8 \mathbb{W} $\mathbb{B}xd8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ +– $\mathbb{K}b8$
29. $\mathbb{W}c6$ –+–

26.cxd7 $\mathbb{B}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$



"I had hoped for 24... $\mathbb{B}xd1$ + 25. $\mathbb{B}xd1$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xd8$ + $\mathbb{W}xd8$
27. $\mathbb{W}xc5$... but the problem, of course, is that you play 27. $\mathbb{W}e5$ + first..."

Fabi: ...or 27.c7+...

Nepo: Oh yes! This is more than enough. Normally in such positions there is more than one way to lose. [laughs]

After 27. $\mathbb{W}e5$ + $\mathbb{Q}a8$

28. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}d1$ + 29. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{W}xc1$ +
30. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ h3 31.c7+–; 27... $\mathbb{W}xc7$
28. $\mathbb{W}h8$ ++–) 27... $\mathbb{W}d1$ + 28. $\mathbb{W}c1$
 $\mathbb{W}xc1$ + 29. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ h3–+ and I promote."

25. $\mathbb{B}d7$ +–

White has so many good choices

28. $\mathbb{B}d1$!

28. $\mathbb{W}xf4$ + also wins, but the f4 pawn isn't worth giving up the bind; e.g. 28... $\mathbb{Q}e5$! 29. $\mathbb{B}e1$? (29. $\mathbb{B}xh4$?; 29.a3!±) 29... $\mathbb{W}c7$!∞ 30. $\mathbb{W}xe5$?? $\mathbb{B}d1$ +–+ oops.

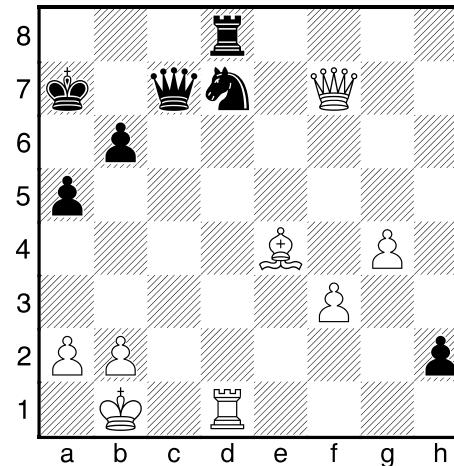
28... $\mathbb{W}c5$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xf4$ + $\mathbb{W}c7$



30.♔d2

Of course you keep the ♔s on with the opponent's king so exposed and his pawns loose.

**30...h3 31.♗e4 a5 32.♔d5
♚a7 33.♔xf7 h2**



34.♔h7

"I really like this move, making sure there are no miracles." - **Giri**

34.f4! pushing the pawns and adding the ♔ to the defence of h1 is one of several moves that win — and it's the computer's top choice — but for any human under the pressure of this must-win game, any move that undefends a piece and a pawn will feel "loose".

Nepo:

"To be honest, here my only "hope" was that Fabi would win the tiebreak... If it wasn't for the time-control I would probably give up. I had only some hopes of ...♝c8, ...♚c2 and some random tactics."

34...♚b8 35.a3

Weakens the king's shelter, but still well within the drawing margin.

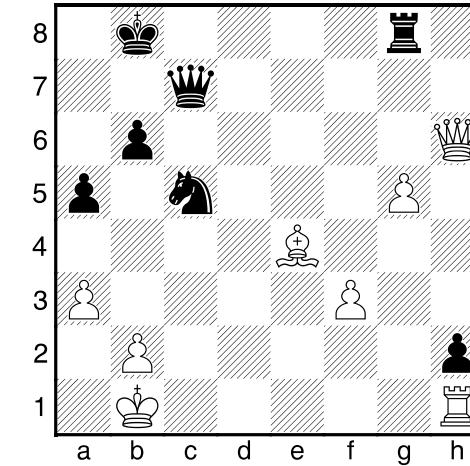
35.♔d2! looks risky to give up the back rank, but ♔xh2 comes with check or pins the black ♔: 35...♝c8 (35...♝g3 36.♔xh2□+–) 36.♔xh2+–.

35...♝e5 36.♔h6 ♚c7

37.g5?!

Again 37.♔d2! and Black really could resign.

37...♝g8 38.♔h1 ♜c5



39.♔h7?

Giri gives this a ??, and says: "This is quite insane, giving Black some hopes is absolutely uncalled for."

That's totally fair. White is still winning, but Black's response dramatically narrows the route to victory.

Most of White's forcing moves are bad:

39.♔c6? ♜xe4=;

39.g6? ♜xe4 40.fxe4 ♚g3=;

39.♔xh2? ♚xh2 40.♔xh2 ♜xe4 41.fxe4 ♜xg5 gives no winning chances.

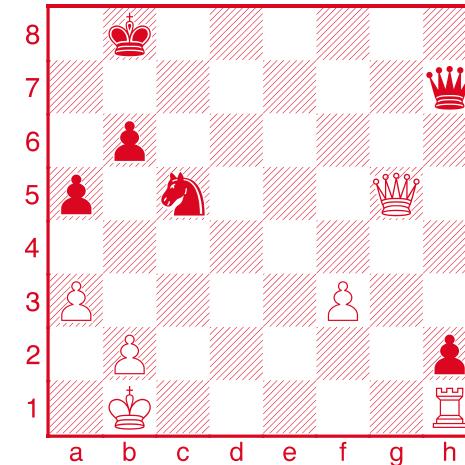
But 39.♔c2! keeps the ♔,

contains the ♔, and followed by taking on h2 wins more simply.

39...♜xg5!!

Strong, but essentially forced — on anything else White takes on h2 with a trivial win.

40.♔xg5 ♚xh7+



Three squares to escape the check.

41.♔a1??

This is the first move after the time control, but Fabi blunders away the win, dropping from +3.5 to near equal.

But Nepo has a few blunders left in him, and Fabi gets (several) more chances... This shows that

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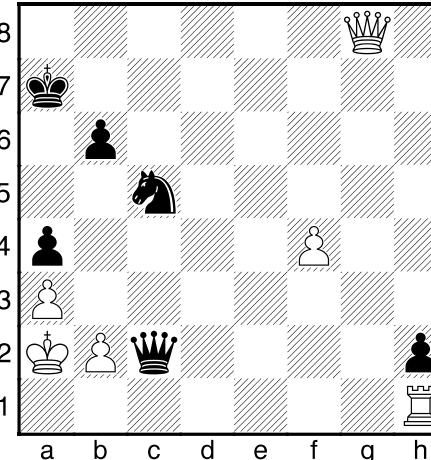


the drawing/ winning mechanisms of this $\mathbb{W}\mathbb{Q}$ combo against the semi-exposed \mathbb{K} are not part of either GMs basic "chess vocabulary".

41. $\mathbb{K}c1?$ $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ 42. $\mathbb{K}d1$ and Black has several routes to a draw.

41. $\mathbb{K}a2\Box+-$ $\mathbb{W}f7+$ 42. $\mathbb{K}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ 43. $\mathbb{K}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ (43... $\mathbb{W}h7+$ 44. $\mathbb{K}a2+-$ and the $\mathbb{Q}b3$ is the umbrella White needs.) 44. $\mathbb{W}e5+\Box+-$ and finally takes h2.

41... $\mathbb{W}c2$ 42. $\mathbb{W}g8+$ $\mathbb{K}a7$
43. $\mathbb{K}a2$ a4 44. f4



44... $\mathbb{Q}b3?$

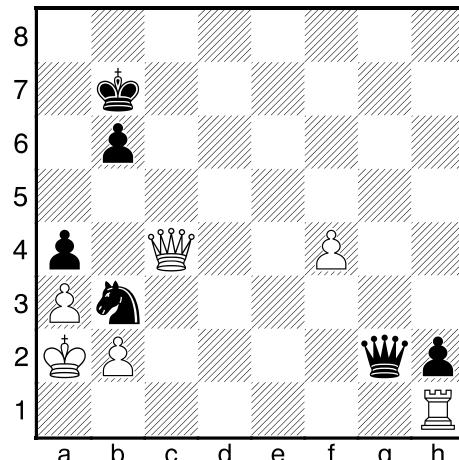
Threatens to draw with ... $\mathbb{Q}c1+$,

but blocking the checking diagonal lets the draw slip, and Fabi plays the next sequence perfectly.

Black draws with the absurdly calm 44... $\mathbb{K}a6\Box=$ for example: 45. $\mathbb{W}a8+$ (45. $\mathbb{W}h8??$ heading for h2 or c4 hangs the \mathbb{Q} to 45... $\mathbb{W}c4+-$) 45... $\mathbb{K}b5$ 46. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ 47. $\mathbb{K}b1$ (47. $\mathbb{K}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ 48. $\mathbb{K}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ 49. $\mathbb{K}a2$ $\mathbb{W}xh2$ 50. $\mathbb{W}d3+\Box=$ and White gives a perp.) 47... $\mathbb{W}c4+$ 48. $\mathbb{K}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}c1\Box=$.

45. $\mathbb{W}g7+\Box+-$ $\mathbb{K}a6$ 46. $\mathbb{W}c3\Box$
Covering c1.

46... $\mathbb{W}g2$ 47. $\mathbb{W}c4+!$ $\mathbb{K}b7$



48. $\mathbb{K}e1!$

Saves the \mathbb{Q} by threatening a mating attack.

Not 48. $\mathbb{W}f1?$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 49. $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d2\Box=$.

48... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

48... $\mathbb{h}1\mathbb{W}??$ 49. $\mathbb{K}e7+$ mates.

49. $\mathbb{W}f1\Box$

Stops the h-pawn.

49... $\mathbb{W}d5+$ 50. $\mathbb{K}b1\Box$

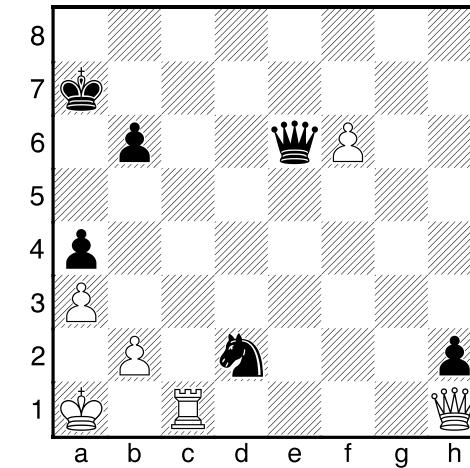
50. $\mathbb{K}a1??$ drops the \mathbb{W} to 50... $\mathbb{Q}b3+-$.

50... $\mathbb{W}f5+$ 51. $\mathbb{K}a1$ $\mathbb{W}c2$

52. f5! $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 53. $\mathbb{K}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

winning position.

54. f6! $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ 55. $\mathbb{K}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$
56. $\mathbb{W}h1+$ $\mathbb{K}a7$ 57. $\mathbb{K}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b3+$
58. $\mathbb{K}a1$ $\mathbb{W}e6$



White has only two moves to win.

59. $\mathbb{K}c7+?$

This draws, but only because it allows an amazing perpetual that neither player saw OTB.

$\mathbb{K}e1$ and $\mathbb{K}d1$ were the only wins; e.g. 59. $\mathbb{K}d1!+-$ $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ 60. $\mathbb{K}b1\Box$ $\mathbb{W}f5+$ 61. $\mathbb{K}a2\Box$ and White escapes the checks for one move, and will play f7 to force off the passers.

59... $\mathbb{K}a6$

Fabi has played the last 10 moves perfectly, and with his next move he again has a

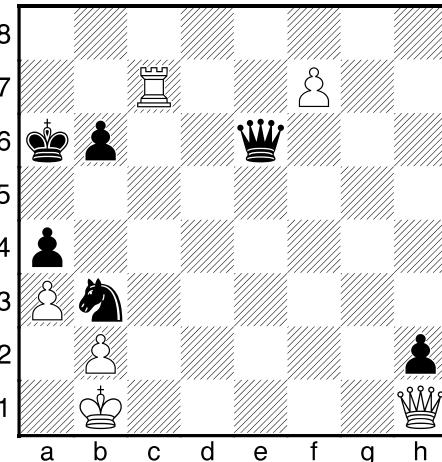
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Fabi:

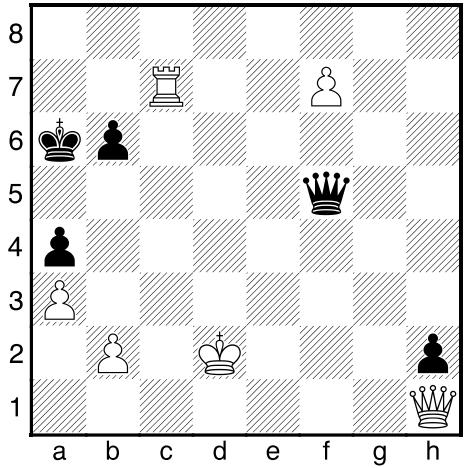
"Here I felt I had lost control many times during this game; but then I thought 'it's a miracle, f7 and ... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b1$ and I'm winning' — which wasn't even true, because I missed ... $\mathbb{Q}d2+$, but I thought ... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ king runs or whatever, and on ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ I have checks I have a pawn on the 7th rank, I have a \mathbb{Q} ... somehow I should win... but I didn't see the way, and there is only one way."

60.f7 $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}b1$



61... $\mathbb{W}f5+?$

Amazingly, 61... $\mathbb{Q}d2+\square$ saves the game: 62. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}f5+!$ 63. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ *Analysis Diagram*



There is no way for the \mathbb{Q} to escape the checks without hanging the \mathbb{Q} or the \mathbb{W} and the \mathbb{Q} ... which is still a draw after $f8=\mathbb{W}$.

Here are some of the more amusing lines:

Giri likes this: 63... $\mathbb{W}f2+$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}g3+$ 65. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}xc7\Box=$ is equal, since 66. $f8\mathbb{W}??$ loses to the skewer 66... $\mathbb{W}b7+-+$;

63... $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (64. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}xc7+=$) 64... $\mathbb{W}g4+$ 65. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ (65. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3+\Box$ 66. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $h1\mathbb{W}+=$) 65... $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 66. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}g5+$ 67. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{W}h5+$ 68. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ (68. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}d1+\Box$ 69. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}d5+=$ the white \mathbb{Q} and \mathbb{W} are perfectly useless.) 68... $\mathbb{W}d5+\Box$ 69. $\mathbb{Q}g1$

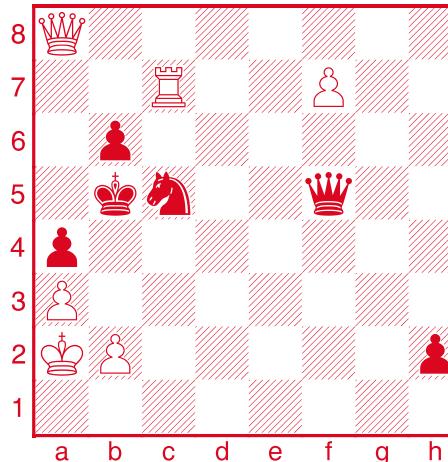
$\mathbb{W}d1+$ 70. $\mathbb{Q}f2!?$ $\mathbb{W}xh1$ 71. $f8\mathbb{W}$
 $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 72. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}xc7=.$

62. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 63. $\mathbb{W}a8+!$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$

64. $\mathbb{W}c6+$

Gaining time with the 30s increment.

64... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 65. $\mathbb{W}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$

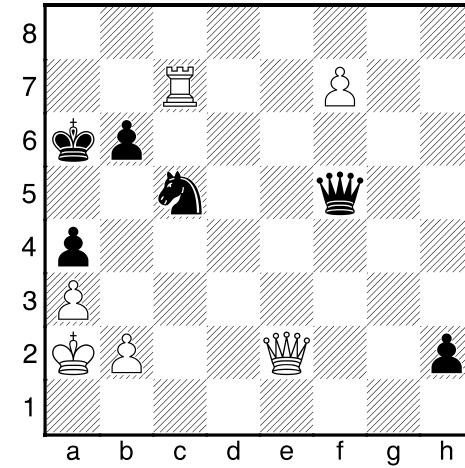


Not so trivial.

66. $\mathbb{W}c6+??$

66. $\mathbb{W}e8+\Box+-$ "Fabi must have missed the $\mathbb{W}e2$ back check. Not really hard, but I guess his brain was melting at this point." - **Giri**. 66... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ (66... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 67. $\mathbb{W}e2+!$ and $\mathbb{Q}a7\#$.) 67. $\mathbb{W}e2+\Box$

Analysis Diagram



"Black is losing trivially." — **Giri**

I don't think Giri did due diligence here. It seems to me the win is far from trivial, requiring a sequence of "only moves" from White. In fact, more than a month after the game, **Nepo** admitted to Caruana that even then he didn't know what the win was after $\mathbb{W}e2+$.

Here it is: 67... $b5$ (67... $\mathbb{Q}a5?$ 68. $\mathbb{Q}a7+\#1$) 68. $\mathbb{Q}c6+\Box$ forcing the \mathbb{Q} back 68... $\mathbb{Q}a7!$ (68... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 69. $\mathbb{W}xb5++-$ is trivial.) 69. $\mathbb{W}e7+\Box$ forcing the \mathbb{Q} back 69... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 70. $\mathbb{W}e3+\Box$ forcing the \mathbb{Q} to the back rank so the f-pawn promotes with check. 70... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 71. $\mathbb{W}e6!!+-$ controls the checking diagonal and forces

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the exchange of passers, leaving White with $\mathbb{W}pp$ v $\mathbb{W}pp$.

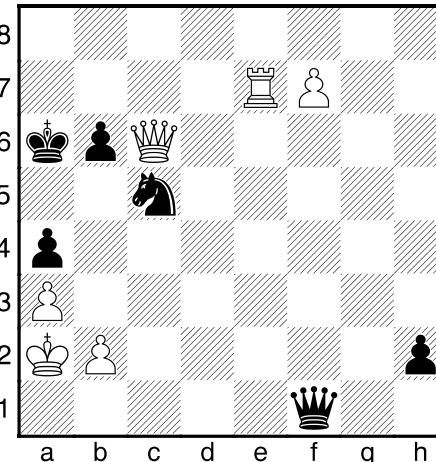
If Giri finds *that* sequence "trivial", the we should expect his rating to go way up very soon.

OTOH, Nepo knows what he doesn't know.

66...†a6□ = **67.**‡e7

In PuzzleRush 67.‡a8+ would still win; but in this OTB game Black can claim a threefold repetition draw by telling the Arbiter he intends to play the only legal move.

67...†f1!



Fabi:

"I played some random move

with my \mathbb{W} , and after you played ...†f1 I was thinking "I can't repeat for a draw, but if I don't repeat probably I could lose — which, in this situation, I guess, doesn't make a difference for me [editor - qualifying for the World Championship match], but maybe if I lose this game maybe I get murdered on my way out of the playing hall by someone. [laughs]

And then I got excited by ‡e4... but this h-pawn which I hadn't captured for like 50 moves was still there... so this one moment of joy was like... [sigh]... but I had nothing else to do with a few seconds left on my clock....Of course, it's impossible to win this endgame."

Nepo:

"Didn't you win the same or almost-the-same queen endgame against Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in the Sinquefield Cup?"

Fabi: [thinks]

"Um, well... without the b6 pawn..."

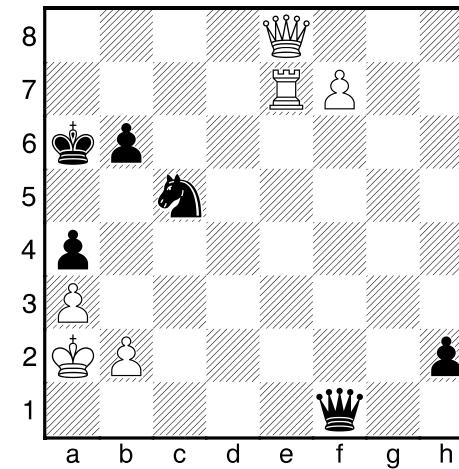
Nepo: [laughs]

"Ah! I know it's also a draw, but without the b6-pawn it would be a bit more challenging for Black."

Fabi:

"Yes, [laughs] although it is somehow a theoretical draw."

68.†a8+ $\mathbb{W}b5$ **69.**‡e8+
†a6□ **70.**†a8+ $\mathbb{W}b5$
71.‡e8+ $\mathbb{W}a6$ =



72.‡e4!?

Nepo:

"I was completely shocked by ‡e4. Of course, I was completely sure you won't repeat; but I didn't see the ‡e4 resource."

72...‡xe4□

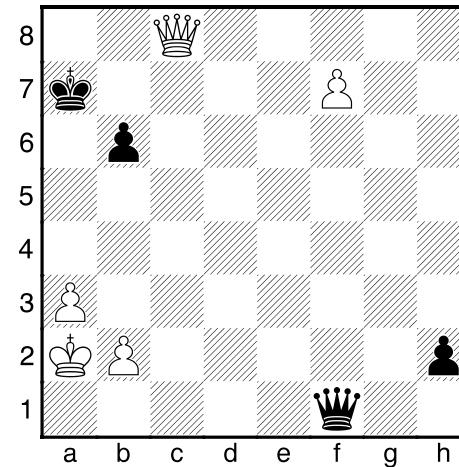
72...h1†?? 73.†a8+ $\mathbb{W}b5$

74.‡b4#.

Nepo:

"I even tried to look for another way to fight... 72...†a1+ 73.†xa1 h1†+ 74.†a2+– but no."

73.†xa4+ $\mathbb{W}b7$ **74.**†xe4+
†a7 **75.**†a4+ $\mathbb{W}b7$ **76.**†d7+
†a6 **77.**†c8+ $\mathbb{W}a7$



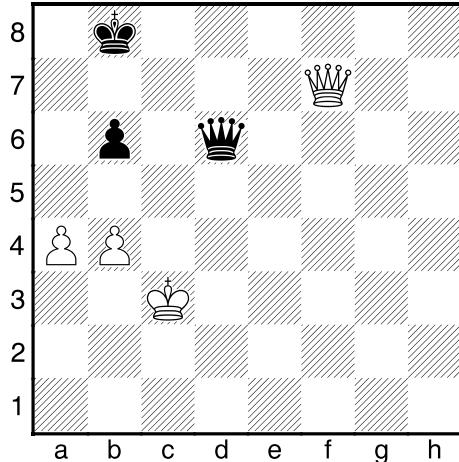
Fabi has run out of tricks, and simplifies into a $\mathbb{W}pp$ v $\mathbb{W}p$ which is easily held by Nepo.

78.f8† $\mathbb{W}xf8$ **79.**†xf8 h1†
80.a4 $\mathbb{W}d5+$ **81.**†a3 $\mathbb{W}d3+$
82.b3 $\mathbb{W}d4$ **83.**†f7+ $\mathbb{W}b8$
84.†e8+ $\mathbb{W}a7$ **85.**†e7+ $\mathbb{W}b8$
86.†e1 $\mathbb{W}d6+$ **87.**†b4 $\mathbb{W}f6$



88. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e7+$ 89. $\mathbb{b}4$ $\mathbb{W}e6$
 90. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{a}7$ 91. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{b}8$
 92. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 93. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$
 94. $\mathbb{b}3$ $\mathbb{W}d5+$ 95. $\mathbb{b}2$ $\mathbb{W}d6$
 96. $\mathbb{W}e8+$ $\mathbb{a}7$ 97. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{b}8$
 98. $\mathbb{c}3$

Still going....



98... $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 99. $\mathbb{d}3$ $\mathbb{W}d6+$
 100. $\mathbb{c}4$ $\mathbb{W}c6+$ 101. $\mathbb{b}3$
 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 102. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 103. $\mathbb{W}e2$
 $\mathbb{W}d5+$ 104. $\mathbb{a}3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$
 105. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 106. $\mathbb{b}3$ $\mathbb{a}7$
 107. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}d5+$ 108. $\mathbb{a}3$
 $\mathbb{W}d4$ 109. $\mathbb{b}3$

Caught on boardside mic:

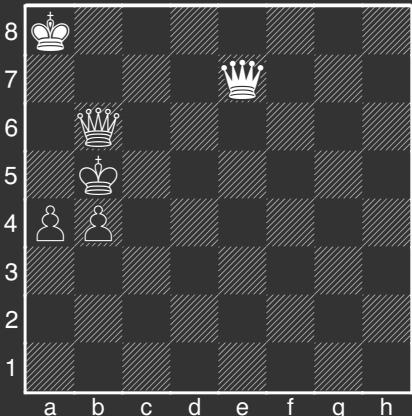
Nepo: "Sorry."
Fabi: "My fault"

1/2

the horror....

This extract is from the $\mathbb{W}pp$ v \mathbb{W} endgame Nepo and Fabi referred to in their podcast analysis.

Caruana - MVL, Sinquefield Cup 9th Saint Louis (4), 05.09.2022

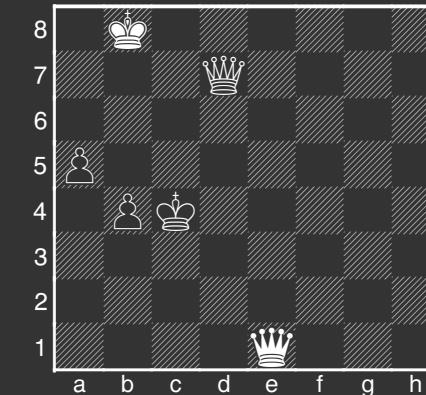


The current position is winning, but there are many positions — including some that happen in this game — where $\mathbb{W}+$ connect-ed-pp v \mathbb{W} are drawn.

I'm not going to analyze this in any depth — neither Fabi nor Nepo think it is worth learning to table-base perfection — I'll just show some of the (many) ways this can go wrong.

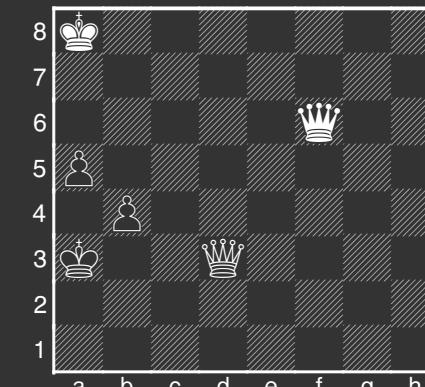
...up is down ...black is white ...and Qpp v Q is a draw!

81. $\mathbb{c}4$ $\mathbb{b}8$ 82. $\mathbb{W}d6+$ $\mathbb{a}7$
 83. $\mathbb{W}d4+$ $\mathbb{b}7$ 84. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{b}8$
 85. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{b}7$ 86. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{b}8$



Only \mathbb{W} moves to d8, d6, d5, b5 or f5 win.

87. $\mathbb{a}6?$ $\mathbb{W}e2+!=$ (or 87... $\mathbb{W}f1+=$)
 88. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}e6+?$
 The last mistake. 88... $\mathbb{W}e7\Box=$.



Only \mathbb{Q} moves and ... $\mathbb{W}c6$ or ... $\mathbb{W}e6$ draw, but not...

79... $\mathbb{W}a1+?$ 80. $\mathbb{b}3+-$ $\mathbb{W}e1$

1-0

89. $\mathbb{c}5\Box+-$ $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 90. $\mathbb{W}d5\Box$
 $\mathbb{W}e3+ 91. \mathbb{b}5 \mathbb{W}e7 92. \mathbb{a}7+!$
 forces a winning $\mathbb{Q}p$ ending:
 92. $\mathbb{a}7+$ $\mathbb{W}xa7$ (92... $\mathbb{Q}xa7$
 93. $\mathbb{W}c5+$ $\mathbb{W}xc5+$ 94. $\mathbb{Q}xc5\Box+-$)
 93. $\mathbb{W}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 94. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$
 95. $\mathbb{W}xa7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 96. $\mathbb{Q}c6+-$.

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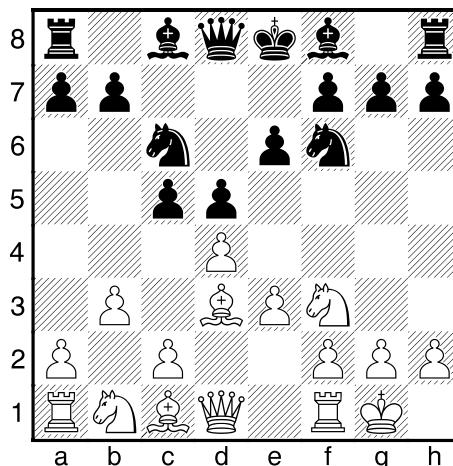
Tan, Zhongyi Muzychuk, Anna

Candidates (Women) Toronto (6), 10.04.2024
Notes: John Uppercut

Tan Zhongyi won the Women's Candidates with +5 =8 –1, a full 1½ points ahead of Humpy, Lei, and Vaishali.

Tan became the Women's World Champion in 2017 after beating Muzychuk in the final of the 2017 Women's World Cup. Here is a wonderful and complex attacking game where she does it again.

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e3 e6
4.♗d3 c5 5.b3 ♘c6 6.0–0



The **Colle-Zukertort** is a deceptive opening: it looks passive, but we might call it "strategically aggressive". White creates no short-term threats, which gives Black more freedom, but after finishing development with ♘b2 and ♘bd2 and if Black doesn't make concessions by trading in the center, White has middlegame choices of playing for a kingside attack with ♘e5 and f4, or c2–c4 with central pawn conflict that can be resolved into very different pawn structures.

6...b6

This recently-popular choice is 10x less frequently played than the main move 6...♗d6.

Here's a recent miniature where Caruana gives Norway's #2 a lesson in the Zukertort's attacking chances: 6...♗d6 7.♘b2 0–0 8.♘bd2 b6 9.♘e5 ♘b7 10.f4 ♘c8 11.a3 ♘e7 12.♗f3 ♘c7 13.♗h3 b5? 14.dxc5 ♘xc5

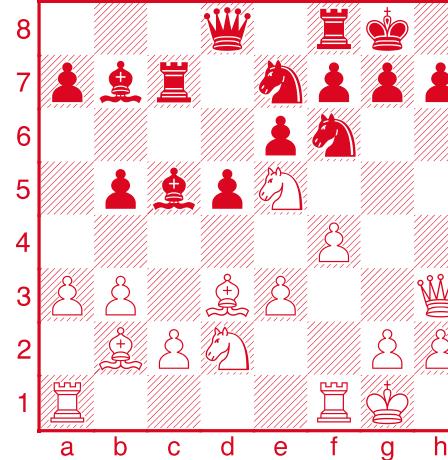
Analysis Diagram



Tan Zhongyi

Led from start to finish, despite one loss.

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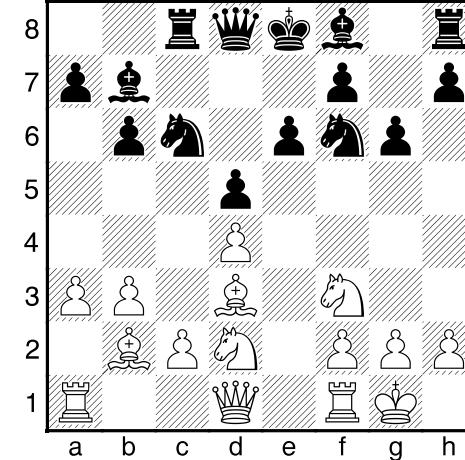


15. $\mathbb{Q}c6!!+ -$ Attacking the \mathbb{W} and the only defender of the mate threat on h7. (15. b4 first and then $\mathbb{Q}c6$ also wins.) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ h6 17. $\mathbb{W}g4$ Lures the pawns into a rigid structure before creeping through the cracks. 17... g6 18. $\mathbb{W}h3$ h5 (18... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ threat: $\mathbb{W}xh6+$.) 19. b4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}h8\#$ 1-0
 Caruana,F (2792)-Tari,A (2660)
 Chess.com Rapid, 2022.

7. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 9. a3
 Stops ... cxd4 then ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$.

9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$
 9... cxd4 10. exd4 g6?!

Analysis Diagram



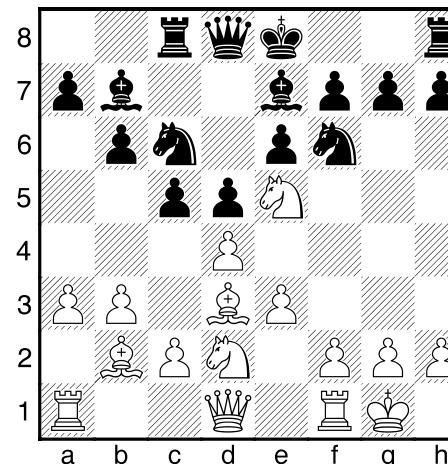
Allowing e3xd4 gives White better control over e4 and e5, so this trade on d4 has long been regarded as good for White; but this line can take White out of his comfort zone, which may be why Magnus has tried it:

11. c4 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 12. c5 a5 13. b4 axb4 14. axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16. cxb6 $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3?!$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xa3\pm$
 Sambuev,B (2497)-Narayanan,S (2348) Ottawa Eastern Ontario, 2022.

11. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 0-0
 13. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. a4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15. c3 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c2?!$ $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ cutting White's connection to e5 works tactically 18. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ (the tactics work for Black. 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

$dx\mathbb{e}4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4\#$) 18... f6 (18... $\mathbb{Q}c5!)$
 19. $\mathbb{Q}ef3$ e5! $\mathbb{Q} Bluebaum,M$
 (2670)-Carlsen,M (2862) Opera Euro Rapid, 2021.

10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$



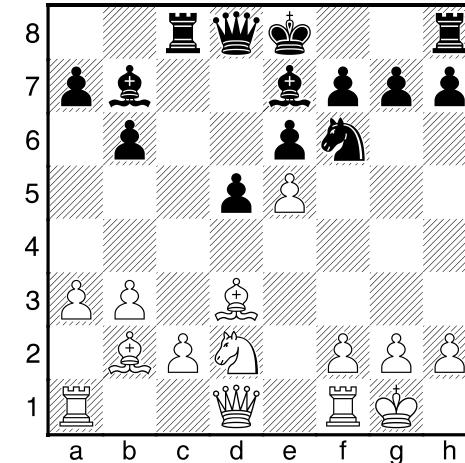
White opts for the kingside attack with f2-f4 we saw in the Caruana miniature.

10... cxd4?!

Simply ... 00 looks better.

10... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?!$ 11. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7\pm$ and White still has a happy choice of playing on the kingside with $\mathbb{W}g4$ and f4, or in the center with c2-c4. (11... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}b5+\pm$).

11. $exd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5?!$ 12. $dxe5$



12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

12... $\mathbb{Q}e4?!$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}g4$ 0-0 17. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7\pm$
 White's up a pawn, but SF rates this position only +.3; presumably because Black's c-file pressure (or d-file play) and White's e5 pawn blocking the \mathbb{Q} count as compensation.

13. $\mathbb{W}g4$ g6 14. b4! \pm

Now all of Black's minors are bad. Compare with Bluebaum - Carlsen above: the black DSB would be better on g7.

14... a5 15. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0

16. $\mathbb{Q}ae1?!$

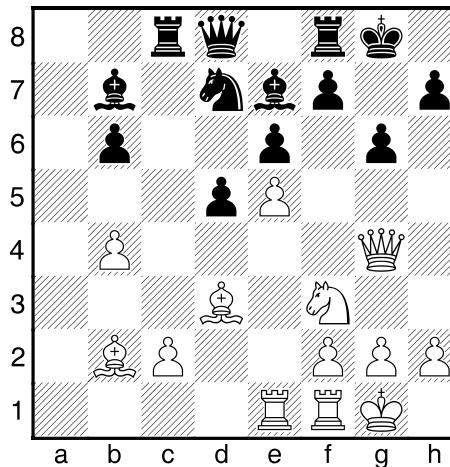
Not bad, but the subtle 16. $\mathbb{Q}ab1!$

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supports b4 before continuing on the kingside and so avoids the decent pawn sac in the next note.

16...axb4 17.axb4



17...♝a8?

Misses her chance.

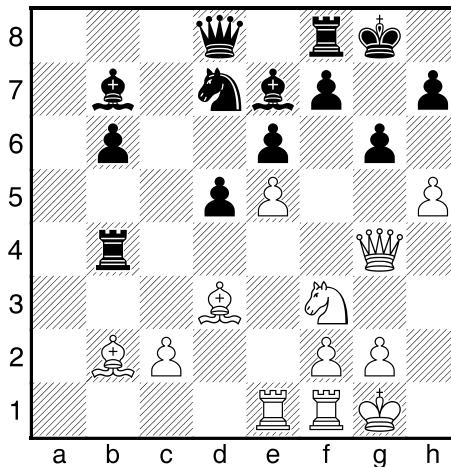
17...d4!! is a very practical pawn sac. It doesn't equalize, but it forces White to change gears from the familiar kingside attack underway: 18.♞xd4!? (18.♝xd4 ♜b8±) 18...♝xb4 19.♞xe6! ♜xe6+ 20.♝xe6+!? (20.♝xb4 ♜g5! 21.♝e4 ♜a6!∞) 20...♝h8 21.♝h3 ♜e7!∞.

18.h4!± ♜a4

Attacks and pins b4, maybe hoping for ...♞c5xd3.

18...h5 19.♝f4 ♜a2 (19...f5 20.♝h6+–; 19...♝g7 20.♝a1 White is winning on both sides of the board.) 20.♞c1+– and g4.

19.h5! ♜xb4



20.♝d4!

White has three pieces ready to take on g6 followed by a ♜ lift, which explains Black's next.

20...g5!?

Is it a "sacrifice" when both players are easily good enough to see that taking the ♜ loses? 20...♝xb2? 21.hxg6+– ♜xg6 22.♝xg6+ hxg6 (22...♝h8 23.♝h5+–) 23.♝xg6+ ♜h8 24.♝xe6+–.

20...♝e8 supports g6, but the

black pieces are so passive that after 21.♞c3 White has a choice of ways to build a crushing attack: ♜e3, or g3 & ♜g2; e.g. 21...♜a4 22.hxg6 hxg6 23.♜e3.

21.♞c3

Saves the ♜ with a tempo on the ♜.

21...♜a4 22.f4! ♜c8

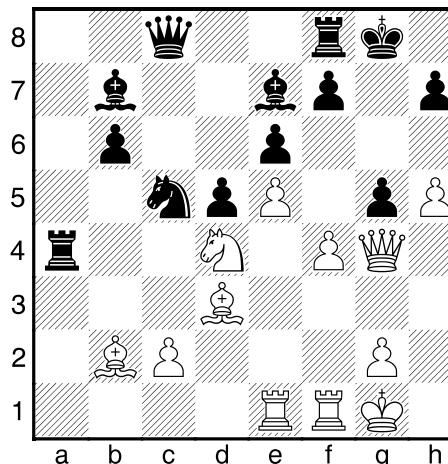
Hits the ♜ and reinforces e6.

23.♝b2□

23.♞a1? ♜xa1!∞.

23...♞c5

If 23...♝b4 simply 24.♞a3 (or violently 24.fxg5+–) 24...♜xd4 25.♞xe7+–.



Is it possible to have too many

good options? It certainly defeats the "method of elimination"!

Here White has several continuations which look good — f4–f5, f4xg5, ♜xh7+, ♜e3/f3, and even h6 — how to choose?

Calculate first, then choose.

24.f5?!±

Threatens f6 then ♜xg5. It's thematic and strong, but not the best.

24.fxg5 ♜xd3 25.cxd3 ♜c2 looks like a refutation, but White wins with the counter-attacking deflection 26.♜a1!!+–, and if 26...♝b4 27.♞a3+–.

24.♞xh7+! Use it and/or lose it? 24...♝xh7 25.fxg5□ threatening g6+ and the ♜s join in: 25...♝e8 (25...♝g7 26.g6 fxg6 27.♝xg6+ ♜h8 28.♝f6+–) 26.♝f6! (26.♝e3+–) 26...♝xf6 27.♝exf6□ ♜g8 28.♝e5! A wonderful way of getting a major piece to the h-file: White threatens g6+ and if takes takes White gets ♜h5 or ♜h5.



24... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ redirecting the LSB from the kingside is weird, but it wins too: 24... $\mathbb{B}b4$ 25. $\mathbb{fxg}5$ $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 26. $g6\Box+$ $\mathbb{fxg}6$ 27. $\mathbb{hxg}6$ $\mathbb{B}xf1+$ 28. $\mathbb{B}xf1$ White threatens to tear open the light squares with $\mathbb{Wh}5$ and the $\mathbb{Q}b5$ prevents ... $\mathbb{We}8!?$

24... $\mathbb{exf}5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf5!$

25. $\mathbb{Q}xf5?$ is so tempting, but there's a Black stinger at the end of this line: 25... $\mathbb{B}xg4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Wh}8!$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $d4\Box\infty$ opens one long diagonal for Black and closes the other for White and Black stays afloat in the tactics after 28. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{B}xg2+\infty$.

25... $\mathbb{W}d8?$

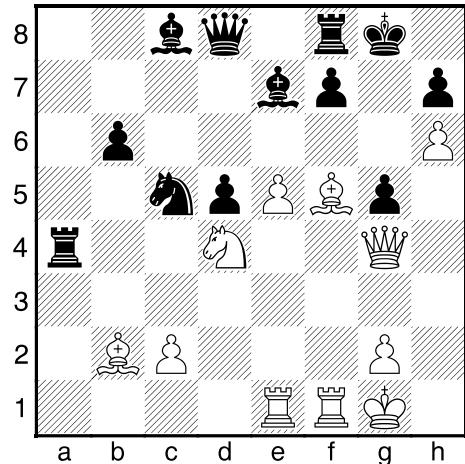
25... $\mathbb{We}8$ looks like it asks for trouble on the e-file, but it is better than ... $\mathbb{W}d8$ for the easy-to-miss fact that in lines with e6 f6, White cannot continue with $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$, $\mathbb{W}f7+$ then $\mathbb{W}g6$.

26.h6

26.e6! f6 27. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+!$ (other moves win too) 27... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{Wh}8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}g6+-.$

26. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{Wh}6$ 28.e6+-.

26... $\mathbb{Q}c8$



27.e6 $\Box+$ – f6

27... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 28. $\mathbb{B}xe6!+-.$

27... $\mathbb{fxe}6$ 28. $\mathbb{B}xe6!+-$ Black can't bail out with ... $\mathbb{B}xd4$ since $\mathbb{W}xd4$ reloads.

28. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+!!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}f5+$

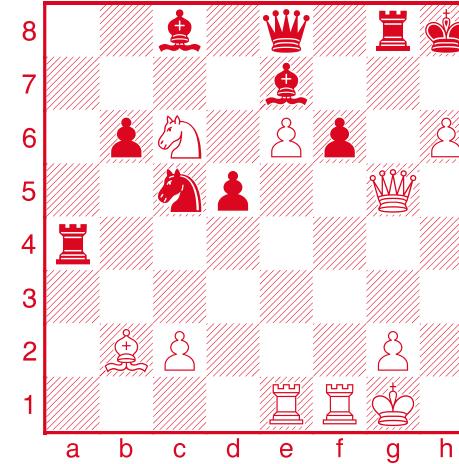
$\mathbb{Q}h8$

29... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 30. $\mathbb{B}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 31. $\mathbb{B}h3$ $\mathbb{B}h8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c6\Box+–$ hits the \mathbb{W} and threatens $\mathbb{W}xg5+.$

30. $\mathbb{Q}c6!$

The \mathbb{Q} landing on c6 hits the \mathbb{W} and opens the diagonal for the deadly $\mathbb{Q}b2...$ just like the Caruana-Tari game!

30... $\mathbb{W}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xg5!$ $\mathbb{B}g8$



White has played some sub-optimal moves, and now her path to victory is only one move wide...

32. $\mathbb{Q}xf6??$

And that's not it.

32. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+\Box+–:$

32... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 33. $\mathbb{W}f5+\Box$ the $\mathbb{Q}e7$ drops, White will be up a pawn, and the \mathbb{Q} is no safer;

32... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 33. $\mathbb{W}xf6+\mathbb{Q}h7$ 34. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ (34... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e7+–)$

35. $\mathbb{exf}7\Box$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 36. $\mathbb{B}e8\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

saves the \mathbb{B} and threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (36... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}e5+–)$

37. $\mathbb{Q}d8\Box+–$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$

(38... $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+ it's\ check.$)

39. $f8\mathbb{W}!$ $\mathbb{B}xf8$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+\mathbb{Q}xh6=.$

41. $\mathbb{Q}xd7+–.$ A long sequence, but not too many branches.

32... $\mathbb{Q}xf6!=$

32... $\mathbb{B}xg5??$ 33. $\mathbb{B}f8+\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$

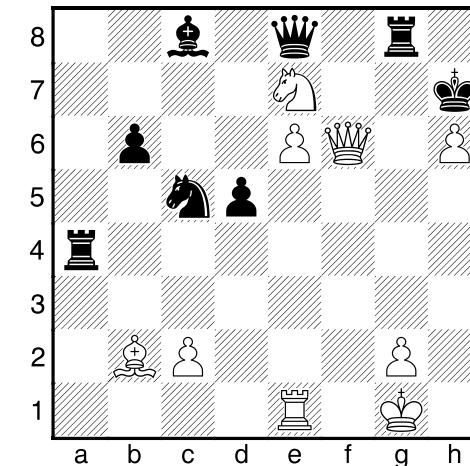
34. $\mathbb{B}xe8+–$ down a piece, but threatening $\mathbb{B}h8\#$ and both $\mathbb{Q}s.$

32... $d4!$ 33. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6\Box$ 34. $\mathbb{W}xf6+\mathbb{Q}h7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e7\infty.$

33. $\mathbb{W}xf6+\Box$

33. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+?$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6+–.$

33... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}e7$



34... $\mathbb{B}e4??$

34... $\mathbb{Q}xe6\Box=$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{W}xg8$

36. $\mathbb{W}e7+$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ (36... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 37. $\mathbb{B}f1+–)$

37. $\mathbb{B}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 38. $\mathbb{B}xe7+\mathbb{Q}xh6=.$

34... $\mathbb{B}ag4?$ 35. $\mathbb{W}f5+\mathbb{Q}xh6$

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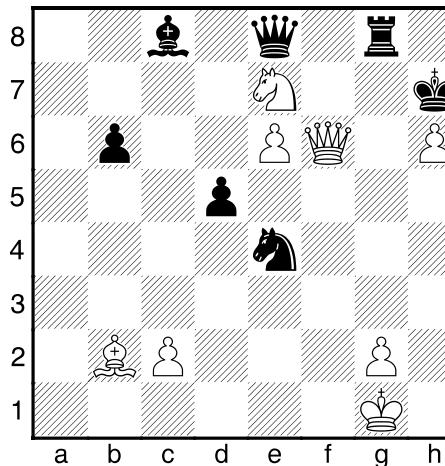


(35... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$
 37. $h7+$! $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 38. $\mathbb{W}h5++$)
 36. $\mathbb{Q}xg8+$ $\mathbb{W}xg8$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}c1+\square+-$.

35. $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$

35. $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ also wins.

35... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$



36. $\mathbb{Q}xg8!$

Creates a study-like finish.

36... $\mathbb{W}xg8$

36... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$
 38. $\mathbb{Q}xe8+-$ with an extra piece.

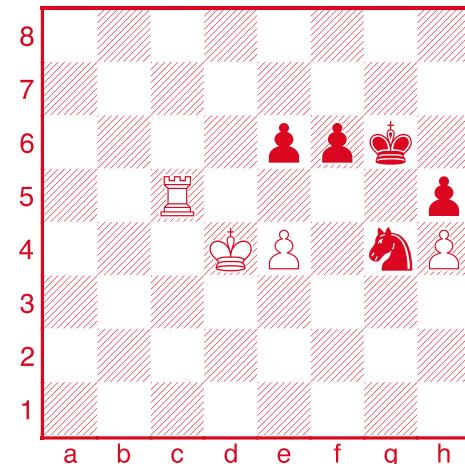
37. $\mathbb{W}f7+\square$

37. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 38. $exf7$ when none of Black's three pieces can do anything to stop $f8=\mathbb{W}$.

1-0

Salimova, Nuryul Muzychuk, Anna

Candidates (Women) Toronto
(8), 13.04.2024
Notes: John Upper



Find the only move.

Extra credit: show why all other moves lose.

White is pressing, but Black's pawns and \mathbb{Q} control a lot of squares. If all the pawns were gone it's a draw. Black can force off the e4 pawn with ...e5 and ...f5, so any White winning attempt must preserve the h4 pawn, and the most direct way Black can play for a draw is to tie one white piece to defending the h4 pawn. On its own, that should

guide you to finding Black's saving line, even though it does little to show how White wins against everything else.

53... $\mathbb{Q}e5??$

53... $\mathbb{Q}h2\square=$ draws by immediately tying White to the defence of the h4 pawn. 54. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (54. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 55. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4+=$) 54... $\mathbb{Q}g4\square$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7=$.

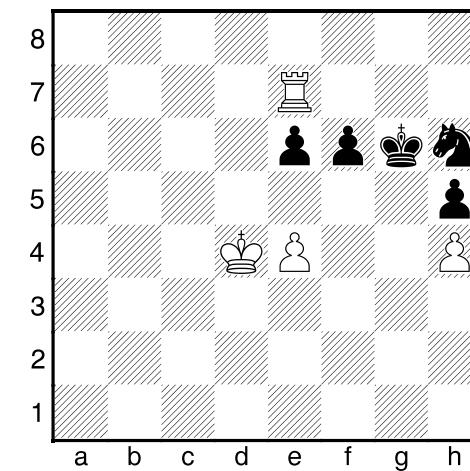
53... $\mathbb{Q}h6?$ 54. $\mathbb{Q}c6\square$ e5+ 55. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ aiming for f5, even at the cost of a pawn. 55... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ (57. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 62. $\mathbb{Q}f5+=$) 57... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}g2+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}f5+-$.

53... $\mathbb{Q}h6?$ commits the \mathbb{Q} to defence, and challenges White to prove the win. 54. $\mathbb{Q}c6\square+-$ playing to force the e6-pawn forward, 54... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ (54...f5?
 55. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$ simplest 56... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 57. $exf5\square+-$)
 55. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ (55. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ also wins
 55...f5? 56.e5\square f4!?
 57. $\mathbb{Q}d6\square$ $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ f3 60. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}d6!+-$

(61. $\mathbb{Q}f4?$ $\mathbb{Q}g6=))$ 55... $\mathbb{Q}g6$

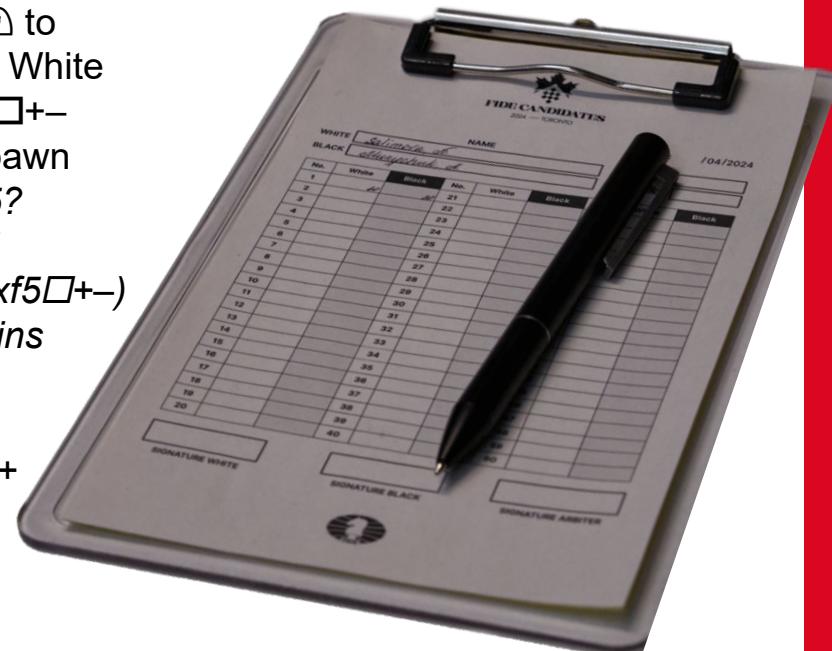
56. $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Analysis Diagram



56...f5 57. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$ as above.

56...e5+ 57. $\mathbb{Q}d5+-$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ f5? (59... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}xf6++$)

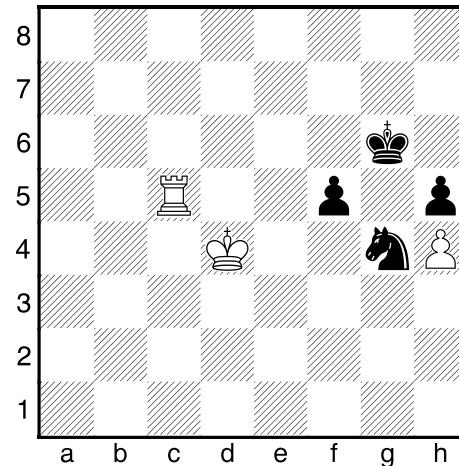


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60. $\text{exf5+ } \mathbb{Q}xf5$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}a4\Box+$ — saves h4. White wins by taking the e-pawn and then squeezing Black away from the h5-pawn.

53...f5? also loses, but leads to the most instructive/challenging line for White. After 54. exf5+ **Analysis Diagram**

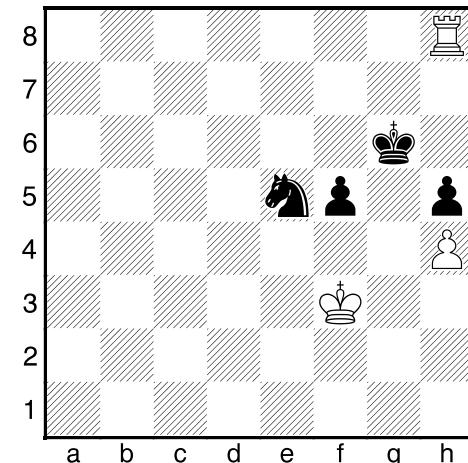


White must preserve the h4-pawn to have any chance to win. Ideally, White would get the \mathbb{Q} to g5 where it defends h4 and attacks the black pawns; but there's no direct way to do that, since Black can cover the approach squares with ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$, ... $\mathbb{Q}e5-g6/f7$.

One winning maneuver is to get the \mathbb{Q} to g5, where it restricts Black's pieces and then try to

approach with the king.

55. $\mathbb{Q}c8 \mathbb{Q}g7$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}a8$ pass.
 56... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ (56... $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ —)
 57. $\mathbb{Q}f8 \mathbb{Q}g6$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}e3\Box$ (60. $\mathbb{Q}xh5?$ $\mathbb{Q}f7=$ traps the \mathbb{Q}) 60... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}g8!$ (61. $\mathbb{Q}xh5?$ $\mathbb{Q}g6=$ also trapping the \mathbb{Q}) 61... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 62. $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ pulling the \mathbb{Q} to g6 takes away a support for the \mathbb{Q} and prevents ... $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ 62... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 63. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ **Analysis Diagram**



65. $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ plays for zugzwang
 65... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 66. $\mathbb{Q}d8$ nudges the unstable \mathbb{Q} 66... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (66... $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 67. $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ —) 67. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 68. $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ —

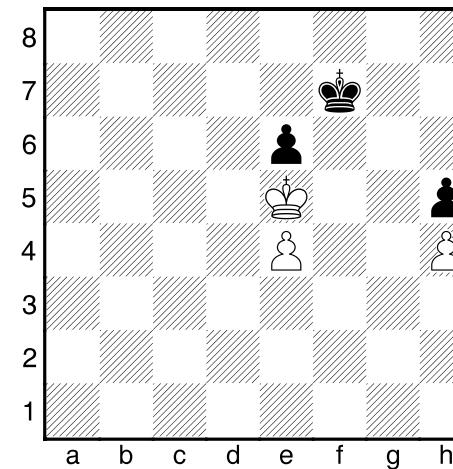
Getting the white \mathbb{Q} from d4 to f4 has taken 15 moves (!) — \mathbb{Q} s are tricky pieces — but obviously White has made a lot

of progress.

54. $\mathbb{Q}c3??$

White misses her only chance, and from here on the game is objectively drawn.

54. $\mathbb{Q}xe5\Box+$ — the pawn ending wins. 54... fxe5+ 55. $\mathbb{Q}xe5\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ **Analysis Diagram**



White wins by attacking the e6 pawn from the d-file. This fails if White allows Black to play ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ after White goes $\mathbb{Q}d4$, but White can lose a tempo by triangulating to prevent this one Black hope.

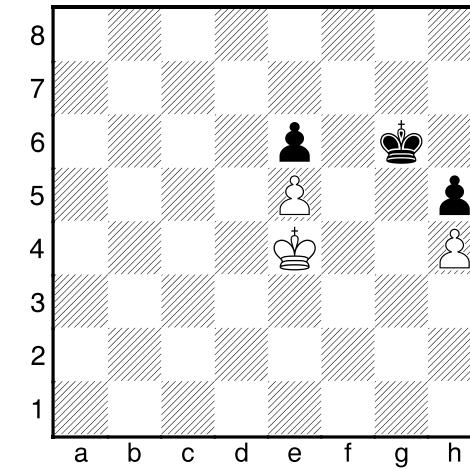
This line shows some of the basic pitfalls for White:

56. $\mathbb{Q}d6?$ $\mathbb{Q}f6\Box=$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (57. $\mathbb{Q}e5+??$ $\mathbb{Q}f5-+$) 57... $\mathbb{Q}e5\Box$
 58. $\mathbb{Q}e7\Box=$ Black wins both white

pawns, but the white \mathbb{Q} gets to f1 in time.

This is how White wins:

56. $\mathbb{Q}f4\Box+$ — $\mathbb{Q}g6!$ (56... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}e5+!$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}e4\Box+$ — is similar, but simpler.) 57. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ simplest. 57... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ (58. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}d4??$ $\mathbb{Q}f5-+$) 58... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ **Analysis Diagram**



Shows the point of taking two moves to go from f4 to e4: the black \mathbb{Q} has to step back from f5, eliminating counterplay.

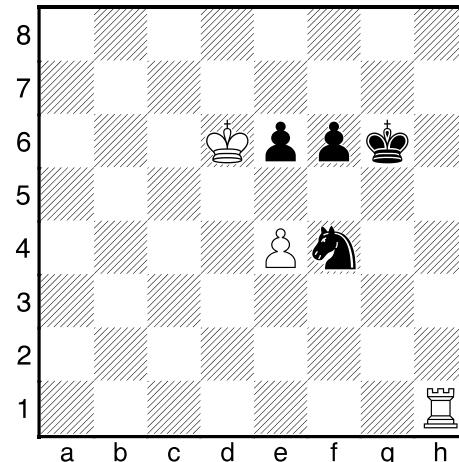
59... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ (61... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 62. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ — mutual zugzwang.) 62. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 63. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ —

54... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$
56. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

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58. $\mathbb{E}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 59. $\mathbb{E}h7+$ $\mathbb{K}g6$
60. $\mathbb{E}h1$



60... $\mathbb{K}f7$

60... f5= 61. $\mathbb{E}g1+$ $\mathbb{K}f7!$ 62. exf5 exf5 63. $\mathbb{E}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 64. $\mathbb{E}xf5+$ $\mathbb{K}g6=.$

61. $\mathbb{E}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 62. $\mathbb{E}f1$ e5
63. $\mathbb{K}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 64. $\mathbb{K}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$
65. $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 66. $\mathbb{K}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$
67. $\mathbb{E}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 68. $\mathbb{E}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$
69. $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 70. $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{K}g6$
71. $\mathbb{K}d6$

71... f5!
72. exf5+ $\mathbb{K}xf5$
73. $\mathbb{E}xe5+$ $\mathbb{K}f4$

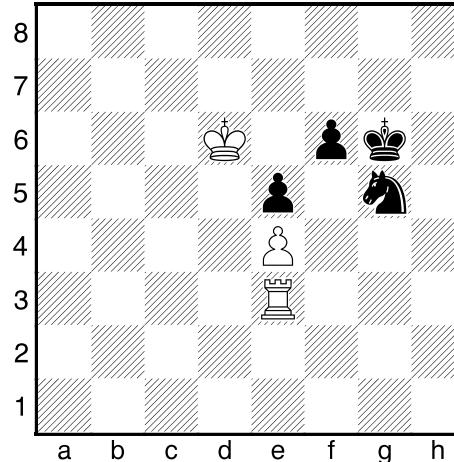
A known draw.

White pushed for nearly 50 moves, but didn't manage to push the Black \mathbb{K} even one rank or file closer to the edge of the board.

1/2

Nurguryl Salimova

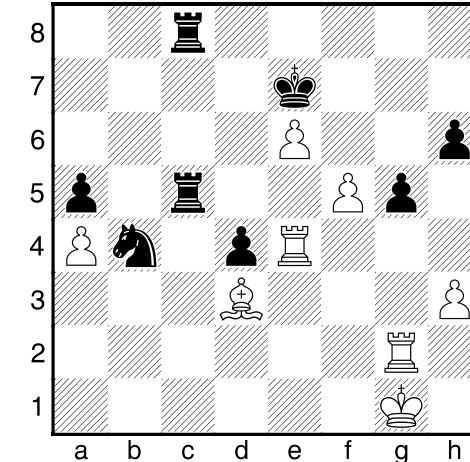
Finished second to Goryachkina at the 2023 World Cup to qualify for Candidates.



**Firouzja, Alireza
Nakamura, Hikaru**

FIDE Candidates 2024 Toronto
(5), 09.04.2024

Notes: John Upper



An exceptionally accurate middlegame has resulted in this tricky endgame. Alireza is a very combative player, and chooses to force a very unbalanced endgame, giving up his e- and f-pawns for an exchange.

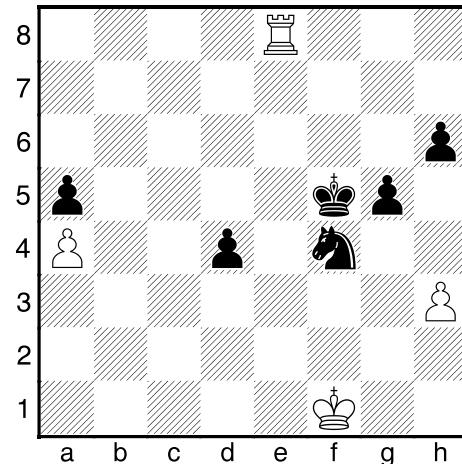
53. f6+!
53. $\mathbb{E}xd4$ leads to a relatively simple draw. 53... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$
54. $\mathbb{E}d7+$ $\mathbb{K}e8$ 55. $\mathbb{E}xd3$ $\mathbb{E}xf5=.$

53... $\mathbb{Q}xf6\Box$ 54. $\mathbb{E}f2+$ $\mathbb{E}f5\Box$
55. $\mathbb{E}xf5+$ $\mathbb{K}xf5$ 56. e7
56. $\mathbb{E}xd4+?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3\bar{=}$.

56... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$
56... $\mathbb{E}e8?$ 57. $\mathbb{E}b5\Box$ $\mathbb{K}xe4$
58. $\mathbb{E}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 59. $\mathbb{E}c6+ -.$



57.e8 \mathbb{W} $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 58. $\mathbb{W}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$
59. $\mathbb{Q}f1$



If Black's a-pawn was off the board then White would be winning, but with it on the board — or with the tempi it would take for White to capture it — the computer rates this position as 0.00.

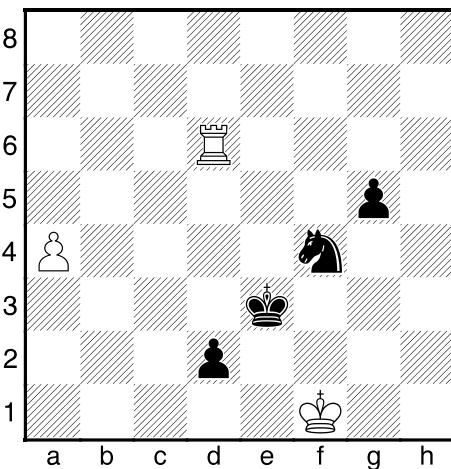
59...d3
59... $\mathbb{Q}xh3$
60. $\mathbb{Q}a8!$ d3
61. $\mathbb{Q}xa5+$
 $\mathbb{Q}e4\Box$ 62. $\mathbb{Q}a6$
White would be winning if he didn't have to spend this tempo to get checking



tilt

distance behind the Black \mathbb{Q} ; here that tempo is worth a 1/2 point. (62. $\mathbb{Q}e1?$ g4 \Box +) 62... $\mathbb{Q}f4$
63. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ d2 64. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$

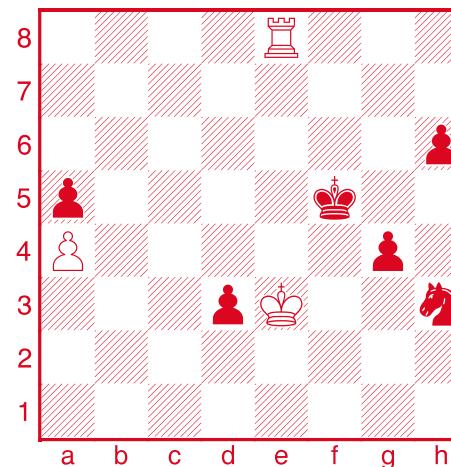
Analysis Diagram



Black shoulders the White \mathbb{Q} away and prepares to cut off the \mathbb{Q} with ... $\mathbb{Q}d3$. 65.a5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ This

is as close as Black can get, but White draws by checking the \mathbb{Q} away from defending e2. 66. $\mathbb{Q}e6+\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 67. $\mathbb{Q}f6+\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$
68. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 69. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ (69. $\mathbb{Q}e2?$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+ - +$) 69... $\mathbb{Q}e3=$

60. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3+$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ g4



$\mathbb{Q}xd3$ or $\mathbb{Q}a8?$

62. $\mathbb{Q}xd3??$

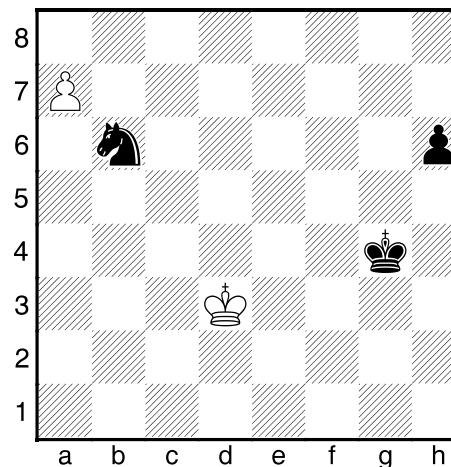
After the time control.... but no adjournment.

Any move keeping the \mathbb{Q} on the 8th rank draws, though it is as close as can be; e.g. 62. $\mathbb{Q}a8$ g3 63. $\mathbb{Q}xa5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ g2 65. $\mathbb{Q}b1\Box$ g1 $\mathbb{W}+$

66. $\mathbb{Q}xg1+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg1$ 67.a5 \Box $\mathbb{Q}f3$
68.a6 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 69.a7 $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ 70. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$
 $\mathbb{Q}b6=$

Analysis Diagram

Notice how White didn't take the d3 pawn until all the other issues were sorted.



White has two ways to draw this specific ending:

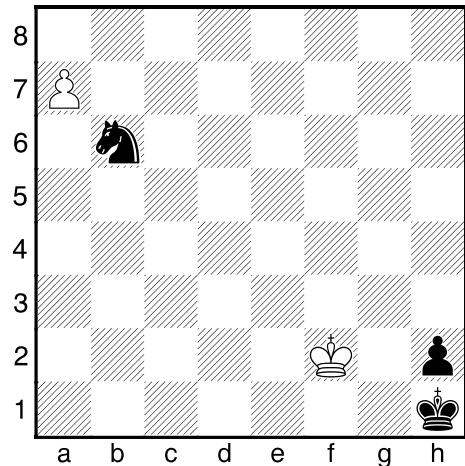
- with the black h-pawn so far back, White has time to cross the board to force a double-promotion,
- more generally, and if Black's h-pawn was a little further advanced, White could draw by putting the king on h1, or (if Black prevents $\mathbb{Q}h1$) by trapping the black king against the edge of the board.

Chess Canada Toronto 2024



Here's the double-promotion line:
71.♔d4 h5 72.♔c5 ♔a8 73.♔c6
h4 74.♔b7 h3 75.♔xa8 h2=.

Here's the more instructive/amusing line: 71.♔e2 ♔g3
72.♔f1 ♔h2 73.♔f2 h5 74.♔f1
h4 75.♔f2 h3 76.♔f1 ♔h1
77.♔f2 h2 *Analysis Diagram*



78.♔f1 is an obvious draw if the ♔f1 and ♔a8 oscillate; but there are still some silly tricks: 78...♔d5!? (78...♔a8!=) 79.a8♔ (79.a8♔= stalemate.) 79...♔e3+□ 80.♔f2 (80.♔e2 ♔g2=) 80...♔d1+□= and it's still a draw. :)) 78...♔xa8 79.♔f1= ♔b6 80.♔f2 ♔c4 81.♔f1 ♔d2+ 82.♔f2 ♔f3 83.♔f1□=.

Here's a trick that's worth knowing, and hard to figure out

in time trouble: 78.a8♔+. Is this so stupid? The position is still a draw! The key is that if the ♔ and ♔ are on the same colour square, then ♔-to-move is a draw, while ♔-to-move is a loss. It's a draw because the ♔ must alternate between light and dark squares, and with ♔ and ♔ on the same colour square a ♔-to-move can give check but can never move to prevent the ♔ from moving to the second defensive square.

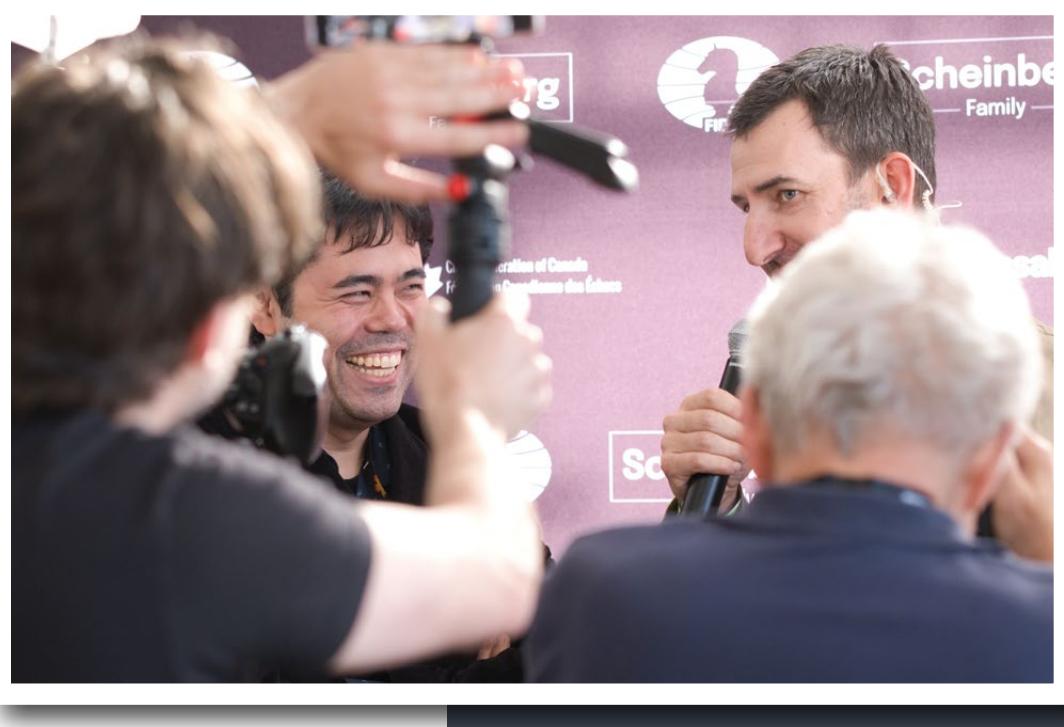
62...g3□+ 63.♔f8+

63.♔e1 g2+. White has to give up the ♔, but unlike the variation above, does not have a passed a-pawn.

63...♔e6

63...♔e6 64.♔g8 g2 the fork on f4 defends the pawn, which promotes next.

0-1



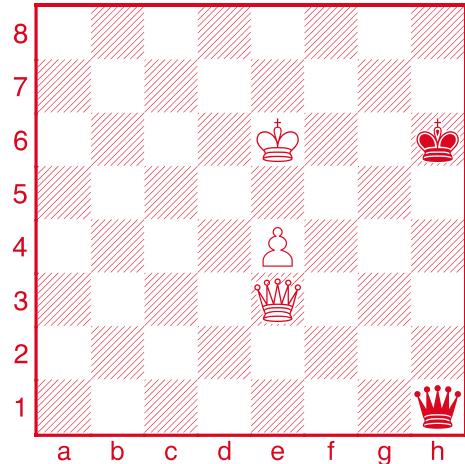
*Nakamura and Mike Klein for chess.com
Alireza and Anastasiya Karlovich for St.Louis CC*

Chess Canada Toronto 2024



Gukesh, Dommaraju Abasov, Nijat Azad

FIDE Candidates 2024 Toronto
(5), 09.04.2024
Notes: John Upper



82... $\mathbb{Q}h5??$

The e4 pawn prevents the black \mathbb{W} from crossing the diagonal for checks, and it supports $\mathbb{W}f5$ blocking checks.

82... $\mathbb{Q}g7?$ 83. $\mathbb{W}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 84. $\mathbb{Q}f7$
 $\mathbb{W}f3+$ 85. $\mathbb{W}f5+\square+-;$

82... $\mathbb{Q}g6?$ 83. $\mathbb{W}g3+\square$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$
84. $\mathbb{W}f4+!$ (84. $\mathbb{Q}f6?$ $\mathbb{W}f1+\square=$)
84... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 85. $\mathbb{W}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 86. $\mathbb{Q}f7$
 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ 87. $\mathbb{Q}f8\square$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$ (87... $\mathbb{W}g4$
 $\mathbb{W}f5+\square+-)$ 88. $\mathbb{W}e7+\square+-.$

82... $\mathbb{Q}h7\square$ 83. $\mathbb{W}a7+$ (83. e5
 $\mathbb{W}c6+=)$ 83... $\mathbb{Q}h6\square=.$

83. $\mathbb{Q}f5?$

83. $\mathbb{W}c5+\square+-$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 84. $\mathbb{W}f8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$
(84... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 85. $\mathbb{W}g7+$ and skewers
h1.) 85. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 86. $\mathbb{W}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$
87. $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{W}h5+$ 88. $\mathbb{Q}f8\square+-.$

83... $\mathbb{W}f1+??$

83... $\mathbb{W}g2\square=$ 84. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}g6\square=;$
84.e5?? $\mathbb{W}g6+$ and mates!

84. $\mathbb{W}f4\square+-$
 $\mathbb{W}b5+$
84... $\mathbb{W}h3+$
85. $\mathbb{Q}f6\square+-.$

85. $\mathbb{W}e5\square$
 $\mathbb{W}d7+$ 86. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$
 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 87. $\mathbb{W}g5+!$
and $\mathbb{W}f5+$ forces
off the \mathbb{W} s.

1-0



Nijat Abasov

Beat Giri and Vidit to qualify from the 2023 World Cup after 3rd place Carlsen declined.

Gukesh Dommaraju

Qualified from the 2023 FIDE circuit tournaments, 2nd behind Caruana.

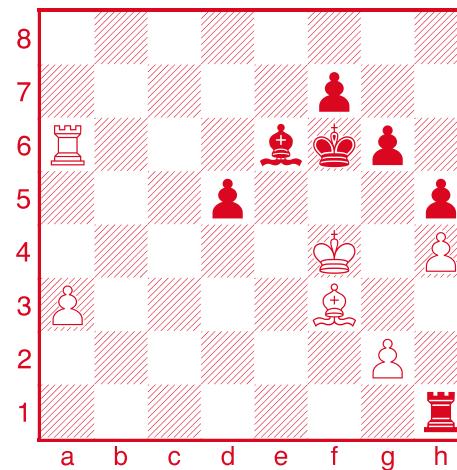
Lei, Tingjie Tan, Zhongyi

Candidates (Women) Toronto
(1), 04.04.2024

Notes: John Upper

Lei Tingjie

Chess Canada
Toronto 2024

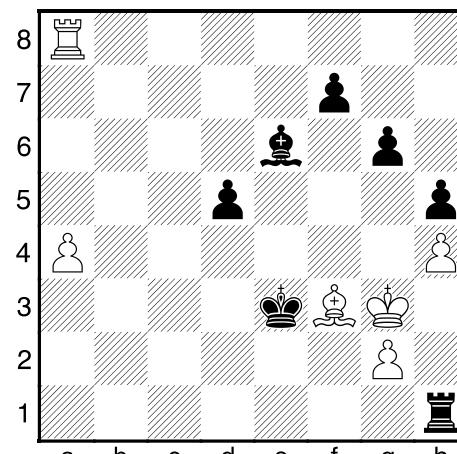


Take on d5 or defend h4?

40. $\mathbb{Q}g3?$

40. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\blacksquare = \mathbb{Q}xh4+ 41. \mathbb{Q}g3\blacksquare$
(41. $\mathbb{Q}f3?? g5-+$) 41... $\mathbb{Q}d4=$ or
41... $\mathbb{Q}g4+=$.

40... $\mathbb{Q}e5 41. a4 \mathbb{Q}d4! 42. \mathbb{Q}a8$
 $\mathbb{Q}e3!$



It's a mating trap!!

A pawn check from f4 or h4 is mate, so White must give up the exchange to merely prolong the game.

43. $\mathbb{Q}e8$

43. $\mathbb{Q}g8 f5 44. \mathbb{Q}f8 g5! \#1.$

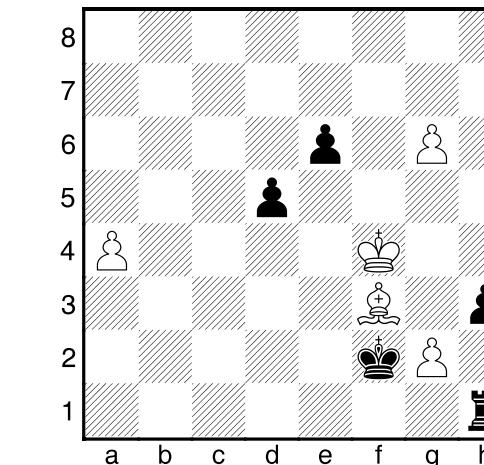
43... $g5! 44. \mathbb{Q}xe6\blacksquare$

44. $h\mathbb{x}g5 h4\#.$

44... $f\mathbb{x}e6 45. h\mathbb{x}g5 h4+$

46. $\mathbb{Q}g4 h3 47. g6 \mathbb{Q}f2!$

48. $\mathbb{Q}f4$



48... $\mathbb{Q}a1+$

48... $h\mathbb{x}g2! 49. \mathbb{Q}xg2 \mathbb{Q}g1!+$
as spotted during live online commentary by **GM Naroditsky**

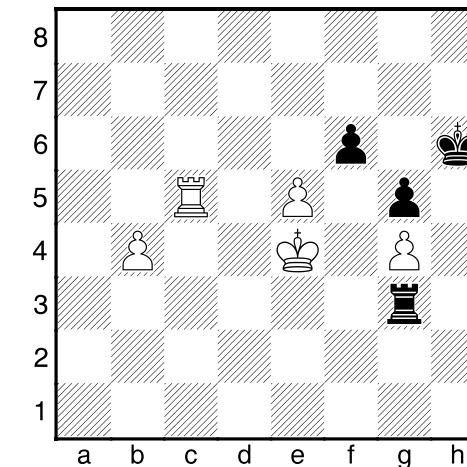
49. $g7 \mathbb{Q}xa4+ 50. \mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{Q}a8$

51. $g\mathbb{x}h3 \mathbb{Q}xf3 52. h4 \mathbb{Q}g8$

0-1

Muzychuk, Anna Lei, Tingjie

Candidates (Women) Toronto
(4), 07.04.2024
Notes: John Upper



46. $e6!+$

46. $\mathbb{Q}f5! \mathbb{Q}f3+ 47. \mathbb{Q}e6 \mathbb{x}e5$
48. $\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{Q}f4 49. \mathbb{Q}d5\blacksquare+-.$

46... $\mathbb{Q}xg4+ 47. \mathbb{Q}d5\blacksquare+-$

47. $\mathbb{Q}f5?? \mathbb{Q}f4\#.$

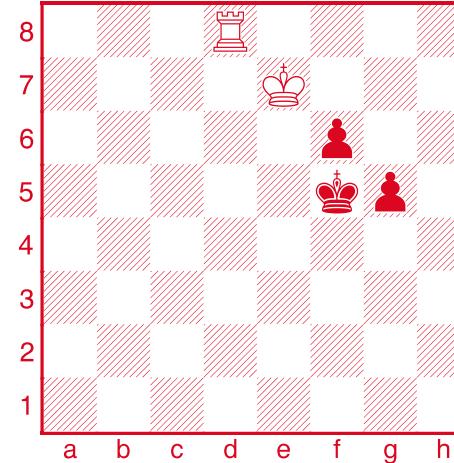
47... $\mathbb{Q}xb4 48. e7\blacksquare \mathbb{Q}b8$

49. $\mathbb{Q}e6\blacksquare \mathbb{Q}g6 50. \mathbb{Q}d5\blacksquare \mathbb{Q}e8$

51. $\mathbb{Q}d8\blacksquare \mathbb{Q}xe7+ 52. \mathbb{Q}xe7$

$\mathbb{Q}f5$

Chess Canada Toronto 2024



White has played a long sequence of "only moves" to reach this position. Now what?

53. $\mathbb{E}d5+$?

After this, White can prevent Black from queening, but not from drawing.

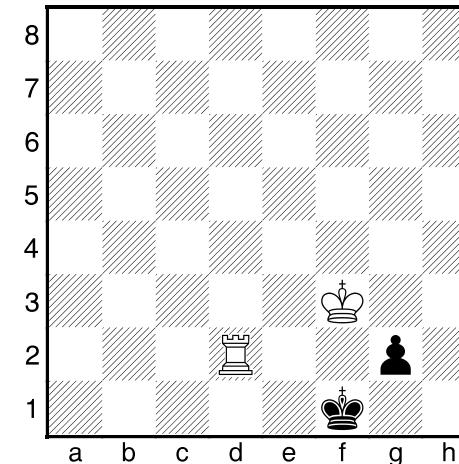
53. $\mathbb{E}f7+-$ and 53. $\mathbb{E}g8+-$ are the only moves that win.

53... $\mathbb{E}f4\Box$

53... $\mathbb{E}e4?$ 54. $\mathbb{E}d1\Box$ $f5$ 55. $\mathbb{E}f6$ $g4$ 56. $\mathbb{E}g5$ $\mathbb{E}f3$ 57. $\mathbb{E}h4!+-$ ($57. \mathbb{E}xf5?$ $g3=$) 57... $\mathbb{E}g2$ 58. $\mathbb{E}d5$ ($58. \mathbb{E}g5$ $g3$ 59. $\mathbb{E}f4\Box+-$) 58... $f4$ 59. $\mathbb{E}d2+\Box$ ($59. \mathbb{E}xg4?$ $f3=$) 59... $\mathbb{E}f3$ 60. $\mathbb{E}a2$ $g3$ 61. $\mathbb{E}h3+-$.

**54. $\mathbb{E}xf6$ $g4$ 55. $\mathbb{E}d4+$ $\mathbb{E}f3$
56. $\mathbb{E}f5$ $g3$ 57. $\mathbb{E}d3+$ $\mathbb{E}f2$**

**58. $\mathbb{E}g4$ $g2$ 59. $\mathbb{E}d2+$ $\mathbb{E}f1$
60. $\mathbb{E}f3$**



Black can't safely queen, but draws...

60... $\mathbb{E}g1\mathbb{Q}+\Box=$

60... $\mathbb{E}g1\mathbb{W}??$ 61. $\mathbb{E}d1\#.$

61. $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{E}h3$ 62. $\mathbb{E}h2$

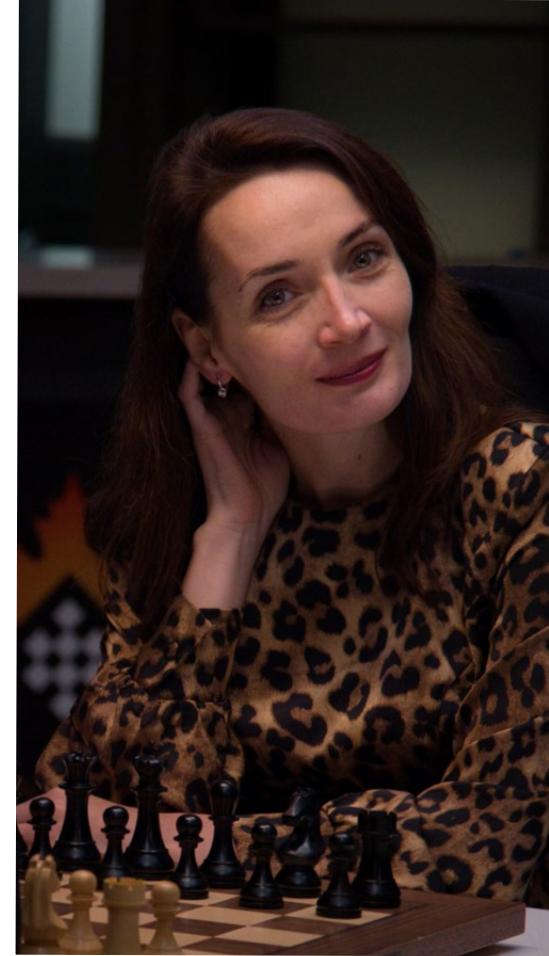
So long as the \mathbb{E} isn't in the corner or a long way from the \mathbb{E} it's a relatively simple book draw... but it's not always drawn:

- **Steinitz** won a mirror-image of this when his opponent played $\mathbb{E}g5??$ (Baden-Baden, 1870);
- **Kramnik** lost this in a rapid game.
- Shockingly, **Topalov** lost this to Ding in a *classical* OTB game (Shamkir, 2019).

**62... $\mathbb{E}g1$ 63. $\mathbb{E}f2+$ $\mathbb{E}e1$
64. $\mathbb{E}f6$ $\mathbb{E}h3$ 65. $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{E}g1$
66. $\mathbb{E}g3$ $\mathbb{E}f1$ 67. $\mathbb{E}g6$ $\mathbb{E}h3$
68. $\mathbb{E}g7$ $\mathbb{E}g1$ 69. $\mathbb{E}g3$ $\mathbb{E}e2$
70. $\mathbb{E}f3+$ $\mathbb{E}e1$ 71. $\mathbb{E}f7$ $\mathbb{E}g1$
72. $\mathbb{E}d3$ $\mathbb{E}h3$ 73. $\mathbb{E}h7$ $\mathbb{E}f2+$
74. $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{E}d1+$ 75. $\mathbb{E}d3$ $\mathbb{E}f2+$**

1/2

"Gens unna sumus"



Goryachkina



Lagno

Chess Canada Toronto 2024



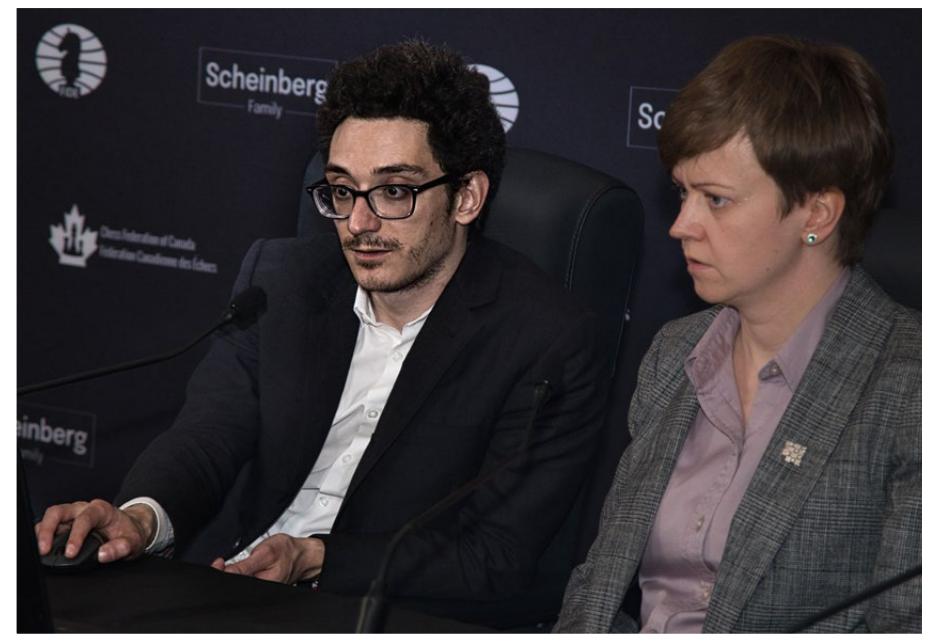
Rank	Player	Score	GD	HN	IN	FC	RP	VG	AF	NA
1	Gukesh Dommaraju	IND	9	X X	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	½ 1	1 0	0 1
=2	Hikaru Nakamura	USA	8.5	½ ½	X X	½ ½	1 ½	½ 1	0 1	½ ½
=2	Ian Nepomniachtchi	FIDE	8.5	½ ½	½ ½	X X	½ ½	½ ½	1 1	½ ½
=2	Fabiano Caruana	USA	8.5	½ ½	½ 0	½ ½	X X	½ 1	½ 1	½ ½
5	R Praggnanandhaa	IND	7	0	½ 0	½ ½	0 ½	X ½	½ 1	½ 1
6	Vidit Gujrathi	IND	6	0	½ 1	0 1	½ 0	½ 0	1 ½	½ ½
7	Alireza Firouzja	Fra	5	1 0	0 0	½ 0	½ ½	½ 0	X 1	½ ½
8	Nijat Abasov	AZE	3.5	0	0 ½	½ 0	½ 0	½ 0	½ 0	X X

Rank	Player	Score	TZ	KH	LT	VR	AG	KL	NS	AM
1	Tan Zhongyi	CHN	9	X X	½ ½	0 1	1 1	½ ½	½ ½	1 ½
=2	Konneru Humpy	IND	7.5	½ ½	X X	0 1	1 1	½ ½	½ ½	0 ½
=2	Lei Tingjie	CHN	7.5	0 1	0 0	1 X	0 1	½ 1	½ ½	½ ½
=2	Vaishali Rameshbabu	IND	7.5	0 0	½ 0	1 0	X X	½ 0	1 1	½ 1
5	A. Goryachkina	FIDE	7	½ ½	½ ½	½ 0	½ 0	X X	½ ½	1 1
6	Kateryna Lagno	FIDE	6.5	½ 0	½ ½	½ ½	0 1	½ ½	X X	½ ½
=7	Nurygul Salimova	BUL	5.5	½ ½	1 0	½ ½	0 0	0 ½	½ ½	X ½
=7	Anna Muzychuk	UKR	5.5	½ 0	½ ½	½ ½	0 ½	½ 0	½ ½	X X

shock...

and...

...awe!



Caruana tries to process what just happened.



photo: Michal Walusza/FIDE

links

Hikaru Nakamura

not only finished 2nd, he recorded and posted [daily reviews of his games](#).

Quotations from **Fabi** and **Nepo** are from a 90 minute conversation on the [C-Squared podcast](#), posted 2024.05.07, about three weeks after the Candidates.

Canadian WIM Svitlana Demchenko

analyzed Women's Candidates games on Daniel King's [PowerPlay](#) Chess channel.

chess24

had live GM commentary, and [video like Vidit's ...Bxh3!!](#)

FIDE had pro photographers with unlimited access on site, and post their photos on the [FIDE flickr page](#).

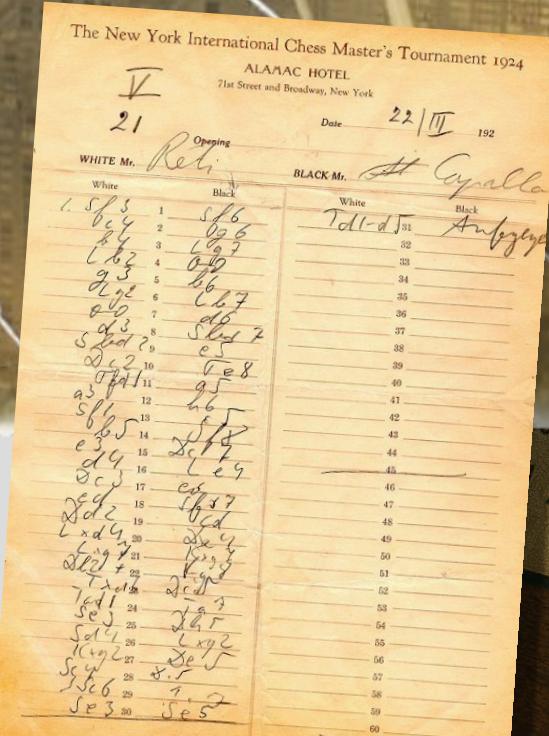
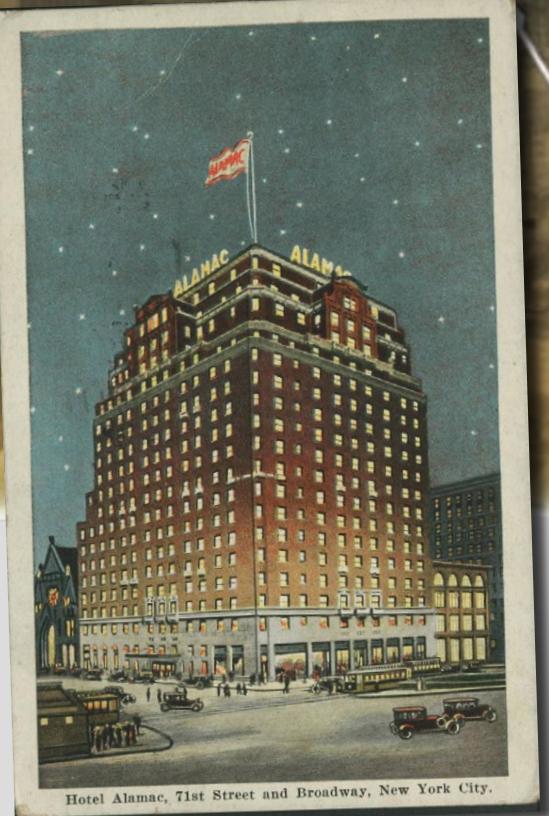
Chess Canada

Had daily site access & time-limited access to the playing hall. e.g. [Rd 3 photos here](#).

outside the Great Hall fans mob Gukesh with Round 14 still underway inside

Chess Canada

New York 1924



New York 1924



by John Upper ++

Looking Back Sideways

The **1924 New York International Chess Masters Tournament** was held March 16 - April 17, at the year-old Alamac Hotel, 71st & Broadway, in Manhattan.

It was an 11-player double-RR which included the current World Champion Jose Raul Capablanca, *former* World Champion Emanuel Lasker, and Alexander Alekhine, the *next* World Champion.

It used the classical time control of 30/2hr, with adjournments adding 1hr every 15 moves.

Games ran from 2-6pm, followed (if necessary) by a 2 hour adjournment and continued from 8pm-midnight, followed by a second adjournment until the next rest day.

It used an **unusual pairing system**, tried at Hastings 1895, but inconceivable today:

“players will draw their own numbers before beginning of the tournament. The number

of the round to be played each day will be decided by draw and announced 15 minutes before beginning of playing hours. The first half of the tournament must be completed before any of the rounds of the second half are drawn.”

As a result, neither the players nor spectators knew who would play who until just before the games started... or even *if* a player would play that day, as one player received a bye each round.

One unusual effect of this pairing system is that players got multiple whites and blacks in a row; at the extreme end, between rounds 11-21 Reti got **5 whites in a row** followed by 5 blacks, while Yates had the reverse!

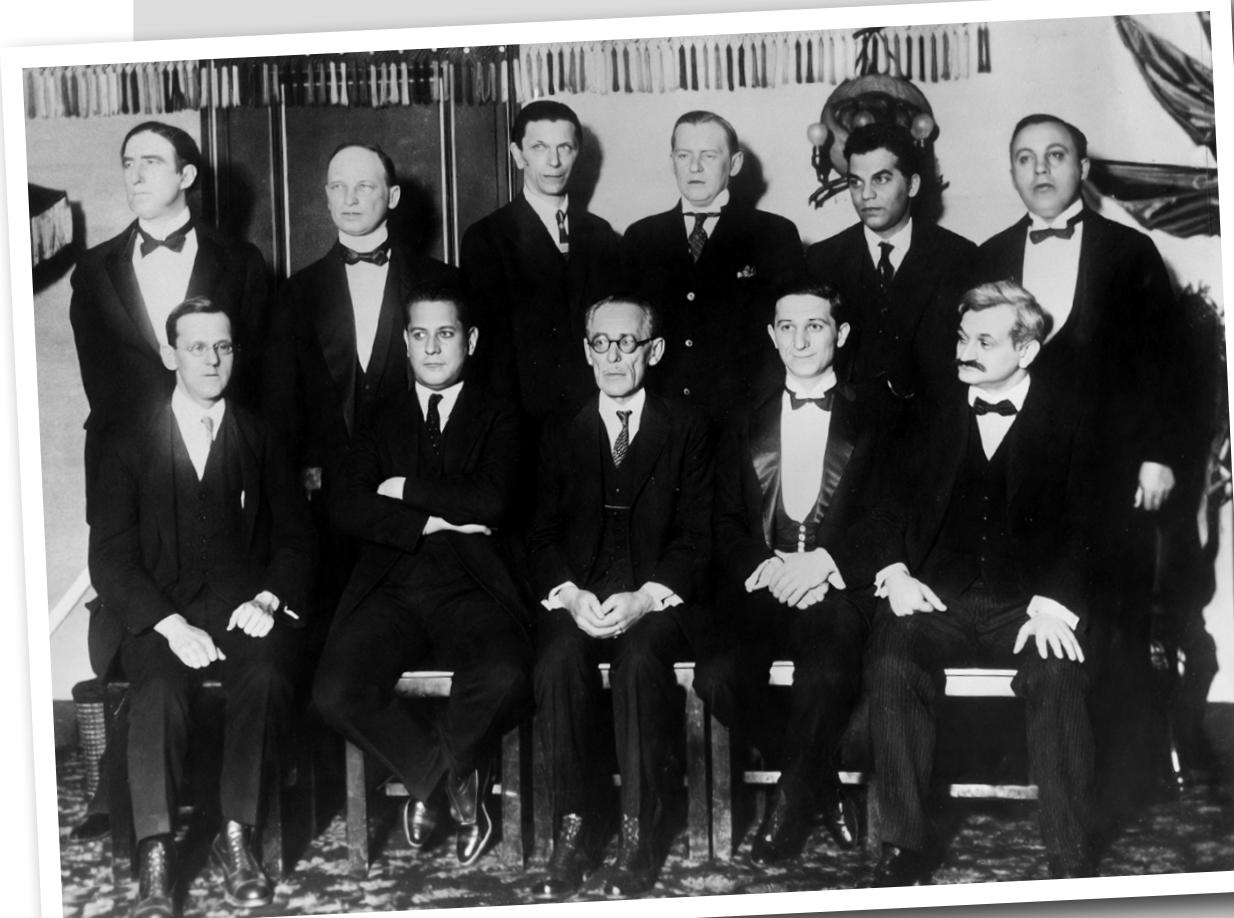
Today, NY 24 is notable for:

- Reti's extremely successful “new” White system ($\mathbb{Q}f3$, $g3$, $c4$);
- one of the most anthologized games ever: Reti-Bogoljubow;
- two endings now in most textbooks;
- Capa's first loss in 8 years;

- a surprise tournament win by the 55-year old ex-champion Lasker;
- one of the greatest tournament chess books of all time.

Here are some highlights and lowlights showing how the best tournament chess was played 100 years ago...

not exactly how you remember it



alternate angle group photo

rear: Marshall, Tartakower, Maroczy, Alekhine, Reti, Bogoljubow
front: Yates, Capablanca, Janowski, Ed Lasker, Emanuel Lasker

Reti, Richard Bogoljubow, Efim

New York 1924 (12), 02.04.1924
Notes: John Uppercrust

This is the most famous game from New York 1924. It won the Brilliance Prize, and has all the features annotators look for when compiling games:

- it's short,
- it has a memorable final combination,
- it's free of obvious blunders,
- its positional story-line can be told simply.

That "story-line" is that Reti invented a new Hypermodern way of playing, where pieces are developed to the flanks ($\mathbb{g}2$, $\mathbb{b}2$) and only later is the center attacked and occupied with pawns.

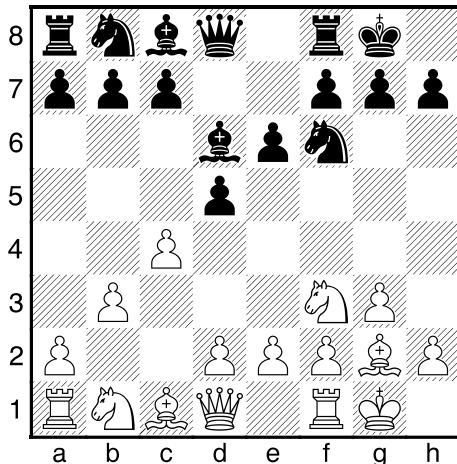
This game is the perfect illustration of the Hypermodern style; though, as Alekhine noted in his tournament book, Bogoljubow's milquetoast opening play helps Reti considerably in implementing this Grand Plan, and Black is never

in danger of equalizing. Even so, Reti's road to victory could have been much twistier had Bogo played more dynamically at moves 12 and 16, or posed some seriously difficult tactical problems at move 20.

1. $\mathbb{f}3$

Reti opened all his White games in NY24 with this, so by this game in round 12 Bogoljubov must have expected it.

**1... $d5$ 2. $c4$ $e6$ 3. $g3$ $\mathbb{f}6$
4. $\mathbb{g}2$ $\mathbb{d}6$ 5. $0-0$ 0-0 6. $b3$**



Reti played this set-up with $\mathbb{f}3$, $c4$, $\mathbb{g}2$ and $b3$ against ... $d5$ four times in NY1924, scoring +2 =2 –1, his only loss coming to tournament winner Lasker in round 16.

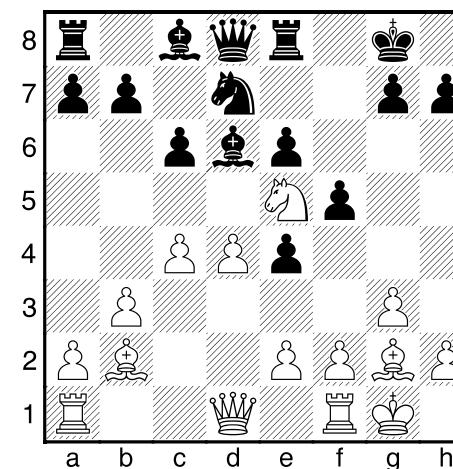
6... $\mathbb{e}8$ 7. $\mathbb{b}2$ $\mathbb{bd}7$

Black is making things too easy for White; he should think about developing the $\mathbb{c}8$ by defining the center with: $\mathbb{d}7$... $e5$ or ... $c5$, or 7... $dxc4$ 8. $bxcc4$ $e5$!.

8. $d4$ $c6$?

$\mathbb{d}8$... $b6$.

**9. $\mathbb{bd}2$ $\mathbb{e}4$ 10. $\mathbb{xe}4$ $dxe4$
11. $\mathbb{e}5$ $f5$**



Having developed all his minors, and with Black playing without the $\mathbb{a}8$ and $\mathbb{c}8$, White chips open some files for his majors.

12. $f3!$ $exf3$

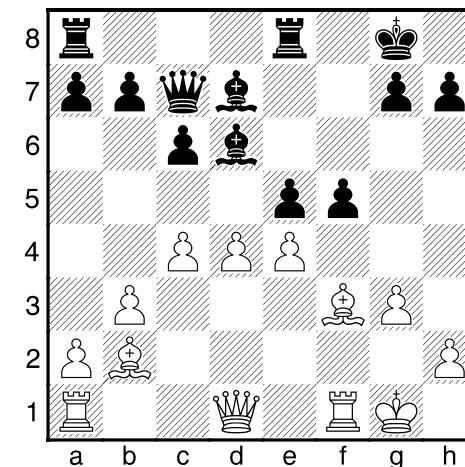
12... $\mathbb{d}xe5$! 13. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{c}5$!
14. $\mathbb{h}1$ $exf3$ (14... $e3$ 15. $f4$
the $\mathbb{c}8$ is no closer to useful

employment, and the $e3$ pawn is a target.) 15. $\mathbb{xf}3$ ±.

13. $\mathbb{xf}3$ $\mathbb{c}7$ 14. $\mathbb{xd}7$!

A tough decision, since it voluntarily unscrambles Black's congested queenside, but a little better than $\mathbb{d}3$ ±.

14. ... $\mathbb{xd}7$ 15. $e4$ $e5$



Black is on the verge of breaking out, and if it was Black's move then ... $fxe4$ would leave him better, but it's White's move...

16. $c5$!

Booting Black's \mathbb{d} and leaving White in charge in the center.

Not 16. $d5$? $\mathbb{ad}8$ and suddenly all Black's pieces make sense and No Anthologies for You!



Chess Canada

New York 1924

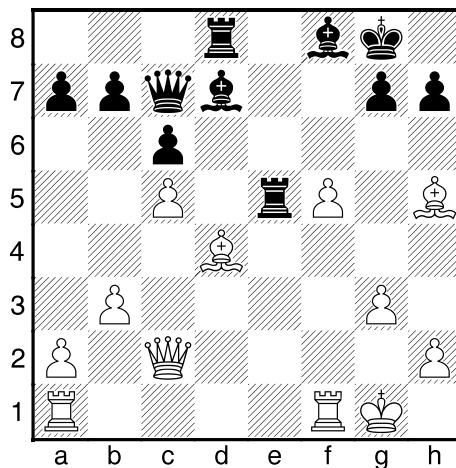


16... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c2\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$

\square 17... $\mathbb{g}6$ 18. $\mathbb{d}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ or
18... $\mathbb{W}a5!?$.

18. $\mathbb{e}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}ad8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{W}e5!$

20. $\mathbb{Q}xd4\Box$

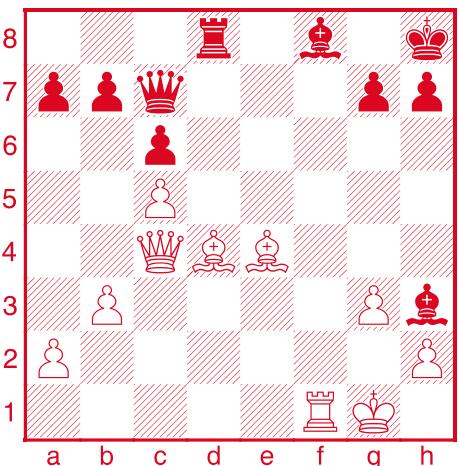


20... $\mathbb{Q}xf5?!$

This invites Reti's memorable winning combo.

20... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ forces White to find even harder "only moves" for *much* longer than the game line, and so was a better practical try:
20... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}c4\Box+-$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$
22. $\mathbb{Q}f3\Box$ (22. $\mathbb{Q}f7??$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
23. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8+-$) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$
23. $\mathbb{Q}e4\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1+$ (23... $\mathbb{Q}g5$
24. $\mathbb{Q}f7+-$) 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}h3!?$

Analysis Diagram



25. $\mathbb{Q}b1\Box+-$ (25. $\mathbb{Q}f4?$ $\mathbb{W}d7\pm$)

25... $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ (25... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}d3\Box$

$\mathbb{Q}f5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf5\Box+-$) 26. $\mathbb{W}c2\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

27. $\mathbb{W}xh7+\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

29. $\mathbb{W}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}g4+!$ and it's mate-in-3.

It is interesting to speculate whether this game would be as well-known if Bogo had played this tougher defense: would Reti have found the win, and if he *did*, would the extra complexity of the finish after move 20, rather than the pretty and simple interference mating combo that won in the actual game, have made it just a bit too difficult to understand/enjoy along with its traditionally-presented plot line?

21. $\mathbb{Q}xf5\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xf5$

$\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f1\Box$

23... $\mathbb{Q}d8$

23... $\mathbb{W}d8?$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$

25. $\mathbb{W}xf8+$ is PuzzleRush 900.

23... $\mathbb{W}e7$ is similar to the game, but a little trickier: 24. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ attacking f8 and interfering with the \mathbb{Q} 's defence of the back rank. (25. $\mathbb{Q}c4?$ $\mathbb{Q}d8=$) 25... $g5$ or ... $h6$ or ... $g6$ (25... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c8$ or $\mathbb{W}e6+-$ wins an exchange.) 26. $\mathbb{W}xf8+$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g8++-$ and the \mathbb{Q} saves itself, leaving White up a piece.

24. $\mathbb{Q}f7+\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e8\Box$

A memorable interference combo. Black can take on c5 with check, but there's still mate on f8.

1-0

Alexander Alekhine

4th World Champion
(1927-35, 1937-46)

Alekhine was an excellent annotator: profound *and* productive.

His accurate insight into opening ideas, lucid explanations of middlegame complications, and keen eye for tactics distinguish his writing ahead of all pre-WW2 chess books.

New York 1924 was the first of his four chess masterpieces, the others being the tournament books *New York 1927* and *Nottingham 1936*, and *My Best Games of Chess*. The three tournament books were commissioned and published in English and remain in print. It is a bad sign to find a list of Best Chess Books that does not include at least one of them.

New York 1924

by Alexander Alekhine

All notes credited to **Alekhine** are from this book:

Reti, Richard Alekhine, Alexander

New York 1924 (13), 03.04.1924
Notes: John Uppen

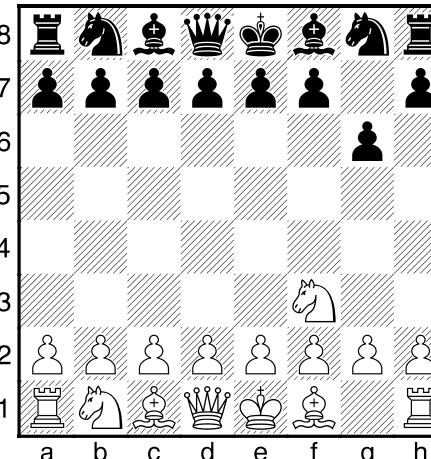


1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

Before this round, Reti had played 1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ followed by c4/g3/b3(b4) in five of his previous games, scoring a fantastic 4½ points. The only game that differed was two rounds earlier, where Tartakower played...

1... $g6!?$

... and this was the only time Alekhine ever played this.

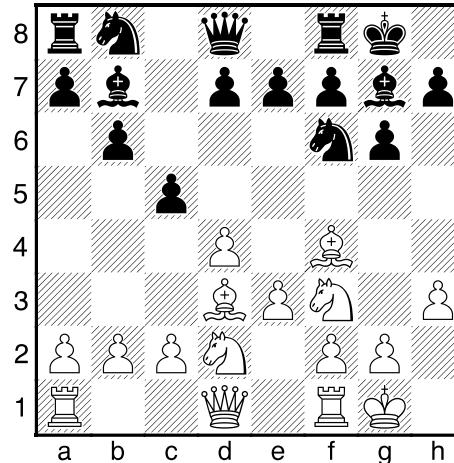


2. $d4!?$

Reti varies too!

Against Tartakower, Reti continued: 2. e4 c5 3. d4 cxd4 4. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ transposing to a Classical Dragon, where Black was OK. Reti, R-Tartakower, S New York, 1924.

2... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4. h3 c5
5. e3 b6 6. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$
0-0 8. 0-0



What's in a Name?

Alekhine plays the Reti System (reversed) against Reti, who counters with the London System in New York.

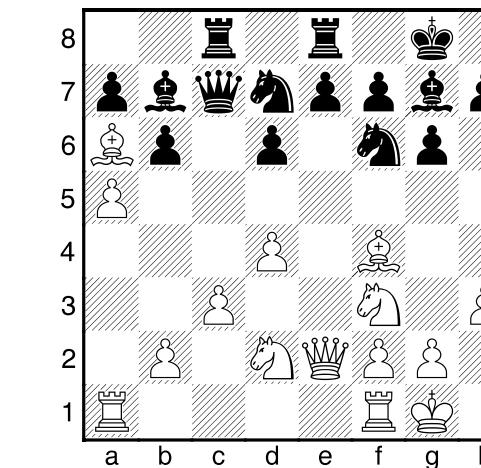
If we flipped the board and reversed the colours — putting the white \mathbb{Q} s on g2 and b2, and

the black \mathbb{Q} s on f5 and d6 — Black's setup would be called "The New York System" against the Reti... no matter where the game was played.

8... $d6$ 9. $c3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10. $\mathbb{W}e2$
 $\mathbb{H}c8$ 11. $a4$ $\mathbb{H}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{W}c7$

13. a5 cxd4 14. exd4

SF17 would opt for cxd4, keeping the e-file closed, with equality.



Having fianchettoed both \mathbb{Q} s, Alekhine continues in Reti-style: trying to push through the center with his pawns.

14... $e5$

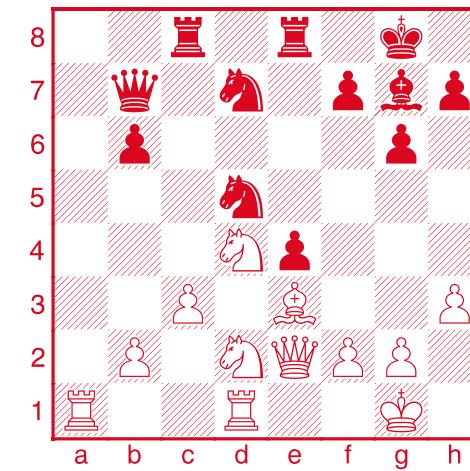
14... $\mathbb{Q}xa6!$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16. $axb6$ $axb6\infty$.

15. $dxe5$ $dxe5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$
17. $axb6$ $axb6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$
 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 19. $\mathbb{H}fd1$ e4

Alekhine: "Hallucination!"

Stockfish: Best move, and equal.

20. $\mathbb{Q}d4$



Can Black steamroll White with ...f5-f4?

20... $f5?!$

Alekhine: "Suicide!"

SF17: You said it.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 21. $fxe3$ (21. $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c4=$) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
(21... $\mathbb{Q}e5! \mathbb{F}$ SF) 22. $cxd4$ f5=.

21. $\mathbb{Q}b5! \pm$

Threatening both $\mathbb{Q}a7$ and a \mathbb{Q} fork on d6.

Chess Canada

New York 1924



21...f4?

A "once you've said 'A' you must say 'B'" moment?

21... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 22.fxe3!±

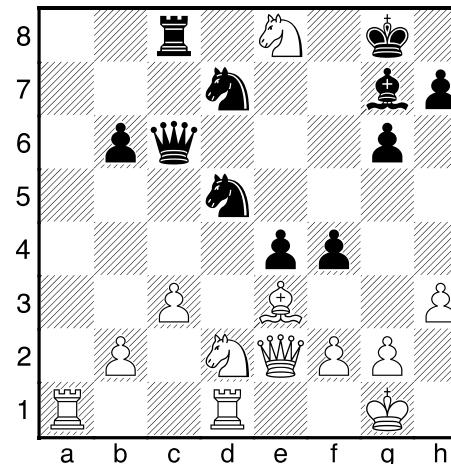
21... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ +–;

21... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ +–.

22. $\mathbb{Q}d6$!+–

22. $\mathbb{Q}d4$? f3! 23.gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}f4$!∞ was probably what Alekhine was hoping for.

22... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$



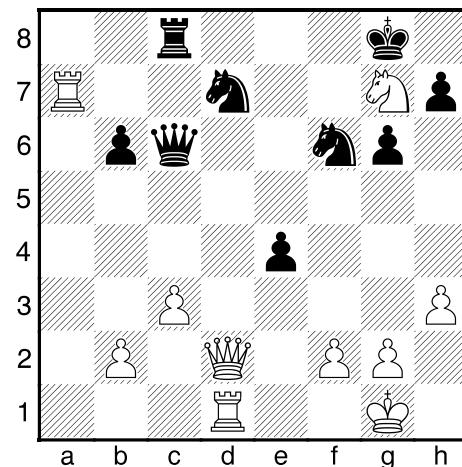
23... $\mathbb{Q}xe8$

23...fxe3 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$:

24...exf2+ 25. $\mathbb{W}xf2$ "Simplest" -
AA 25...e3 26. $\mathbb{W}f3$ exd2 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$
 $\mathbb{Q}7f6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ +–;

24... exd2 White's \mathbb{Q} is trapped, but Black's \mathbb{Q} s and \mathbb{K} are vulnerable, so White comes out ahead: 25. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}5f6$ (25... $\mathbb{Q}7f6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}a7$) 26. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ +–

Analysis Diagram



a) 26... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}f4$ (27. $\mathbb{W}h6$ +–
AA) 27... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ +–;

b) 26... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$
28. $\mathbb{Q}e8$!+–;

c) 26... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ + $\mathbb{Q}xd7$
28. $\mathbb{W}xd7$ + $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ ++–
White is up only one pawn, but there is no way to save e4 and b6 and h7.

24. $\mathbb{W}c4$ □+–

Forks c6 and d5, exploiting the instability of the two \mathbb{Q} s on the

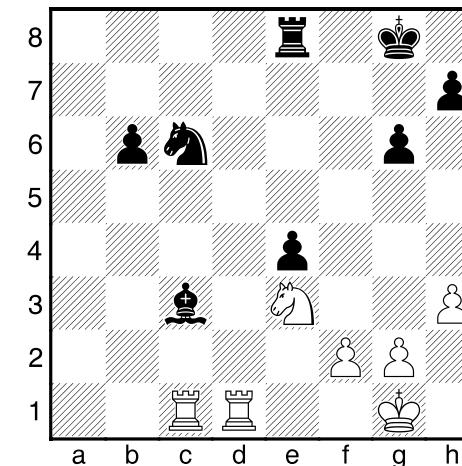
d-file.

24... $\mathbb{Q}e5$

24... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ fxe3
26. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ +–.

25. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ +– $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c4$!

$\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 27.bxc3 fxe3
28. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$



Black's minors have no way to save themselves.

29... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$

30... $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ +–.

31. $\mathbb{Q}d5$

The tactics initiated by 21...f4 might end like this: 31. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ +–.

1–0

Reti, Richard
Marshall, Frank James

New York 1924, (15), 06.04.1924
Notes: John Upper

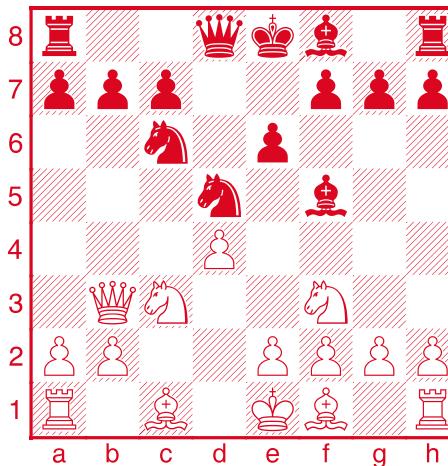
1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 d5?!

This is certainly one way to cut across Reti's system, but not an objectively good one. OTOH, it leads to the kind of cut-and-thrust positions that Marshall played better than Reti.

3.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 4.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$

5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 6. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$?

Better was ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$.



A position that looks like it might come from a modern blitz game between players who are out of

book. It's complicated enough that both Reti in 1924 and 2900+ lichess players today have gone wrong very quickly as White.

7.e4!

7. $\mathbb{W}xb7?$ is bad, but it takes some impressive gymnastics to refute:

a) 7... $\mathbb{Q}a5?$ 8. $\mathbb{W}a6!+-;$

b) 7... $\mathbb{Q}cb4$ 8. e4! a6! (8... $\mathbb{Q}c2+?$ gives White two minors and an attack for the $\mathbb{Q}a1.$) 9. exd5 (9. $\mathbb{Q}xa6\infty$) 9... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10. $\mathbb{W}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}a8=;$

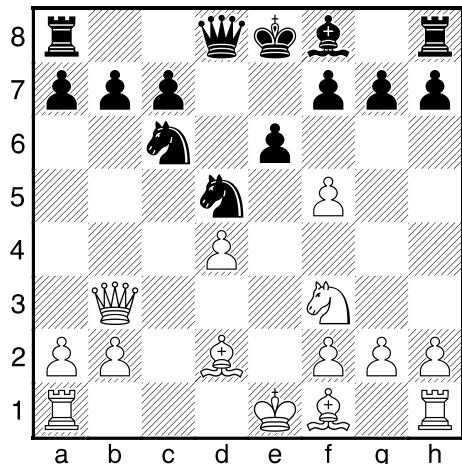
c) 7... $\mathbb{Q}db4!$ threatens to trap the \mathbb{W} and maybe win with ... $\mathbb{Q}c2+$, 8. $\mathbb{W}b5!$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 9. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c2+ 10. \mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}d7!$ (10... $\mathbb{Q}2xd4?!$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4+$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13. e3!= and the game might end with a repetition 13... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}c2=)$ 11. e4 \square $\mathbb{Q}2xd4!$ (11... $\mathbb{Q}xa1? 12. exf5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ is complicated, but better for White.) 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\infty$ and takes on d4 with check.

Who would find *all that* OTB? Reti very reasonably did not take that chance against Marshall.

7... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 8. exf5! $\mathbb{Q}d5$

9. $\mathbb{Q}b5?!$
 9. $\mathbb{W}xb7?!$ $\mathbb{Q}b4+\infty$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2?!$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}db4?!$
 (11... $\mathbb{Q}de7\infty$) 12. a3??
 (12. $\mathbb{W}b5\infty$; 12. $\mathbb{Q}b5?$ 0-0!!-+)
 12... $\mathbb{Q}b8+$ 0-1 ominous _
 octopus (2959)-QuarterPawn
 (2788) lichess blitz, 2023.

□ 9. $\mathbb{Q}d2! \pm$ Analysis Diagram



This prophylactic move is the real solution to the previous Critical Position. It's not mentioned by Alekhine, but it is close to winning: it eliminates Black's counterplay and leaves White with much better development and structure, and an attack on b7. For example:

a) 9... $\mathbb{W}xf5?$ 10. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}cb4$

11. $\mathbb{Q}b5+--;$

b) 9... b6? 10. $\mathbb{Q}b5+--$ and
 $\mathbb{Q}e5/\mathbb{W}a4;$

c) 9... $\mathbb{Q}b4!?$ develops and eliminates the \mathbb{Q} -pair, but White gets a huge positional advantage after 10. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}cxb4$ (10... $\mathbb{Q}dxb4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\pm$) 11. a3! (11. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}e7?!$ 12. a3! is also good, but unnecessarily complex.) 11... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and White should win after 12. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ or $\mathbb{Q}xe6$;

d) 9... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}b5$

(11. $\mathbb{Q}c4!)$ 11... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g5!+--$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}g8$ 14. 0-0
 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}f8$

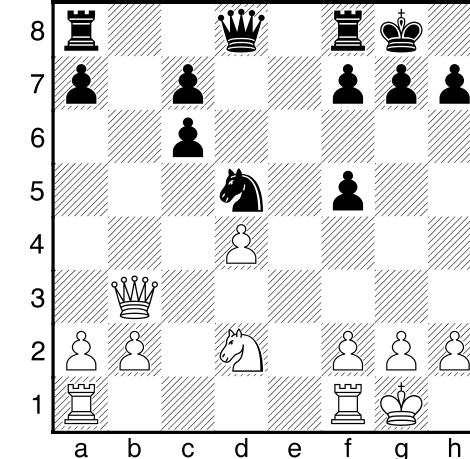
17. $\mathbb{W}h31-0$ Bareev,E (2633)-Cibulka,V (2259) EU-Cup Ohrid, 2009.

9... $\mathbb{Q}b4+! \leftarrow$

Suddenly it's a knife fight!

10. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$

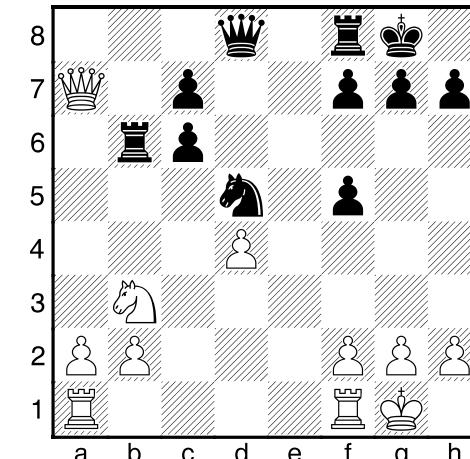
$\mathbb{W}xf5\infty$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13. 0-0-0 0-0



Marshall's boldness has paid off: he's at least equal and Reti has no chance for a positional squeeze in this mess.

14. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

16. $\mathbb{W}xa7?!$



White's pieces are all on the wrong side of the board, and Marshall never needed an invitation to attack.

Chess Canada

New York 1924



16... $\mathbb{W}g5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}a5$ c5!

Clearing the 6th rank for the \mathbb{K} .

18. $\mathbb{W}xc5$?

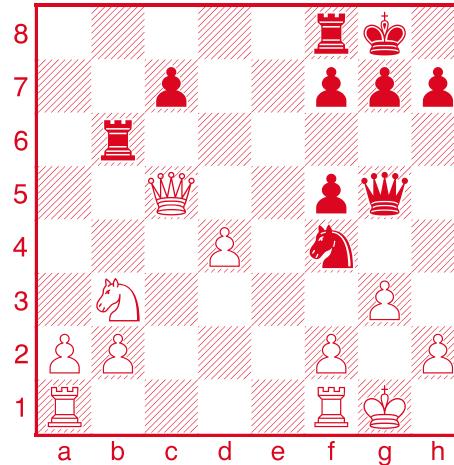
Alekhine praised this capture, but overlooked a winning improvement for Black on move 19...

... or did he?

Some early reproductions of this game continue with a transcription error here: 18.dxc5. Later defensive resources with $\mathbb{W}c2$ would not have been possible after dxc5, which would explain what now appear to be errors by Reti in the game and Alekhine in his notes. OTOH, based on the handwritten game scores, $\mathbb{W}xc5$ was the move actually played. [see: Edward Winter]

The computer prefers to grovel with 18. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ and Black takes one of the pawns with a clearly better endgame.

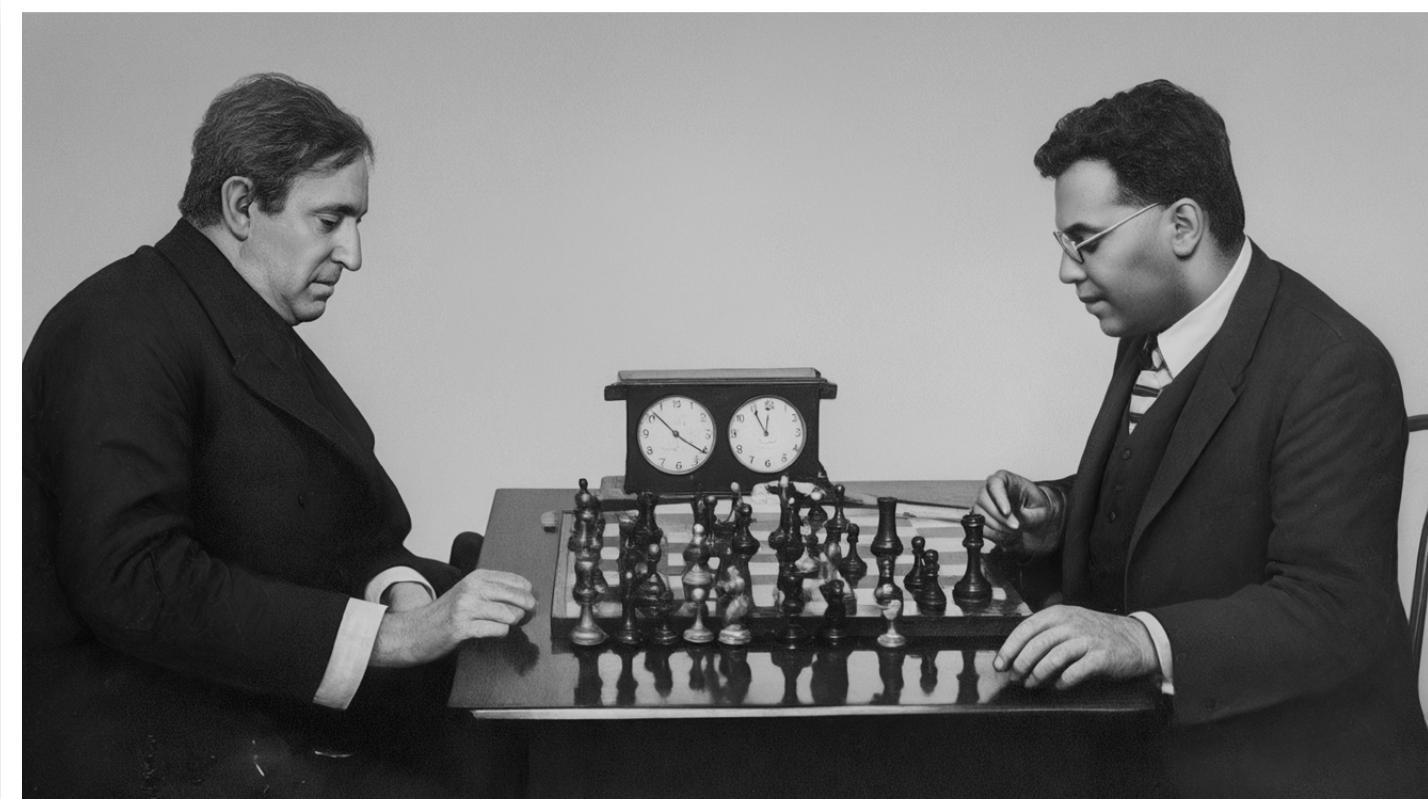
18... $\mathbb{Q}f4!-+$ 19.g3



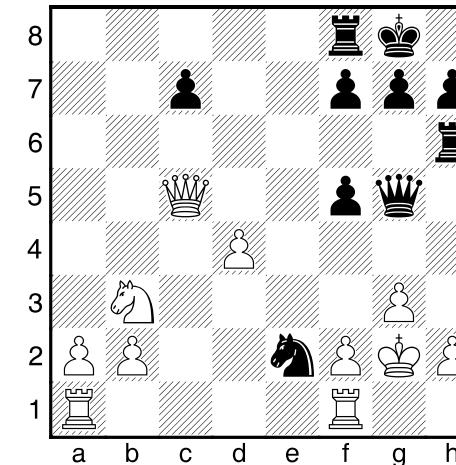
... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}e2+$, or does it make any difference?

19... $\mathbb{Q}h6$?

This gives White his only chance



to defend. Alekhine doesn't mention it, but there is no defence after: 19... $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}--$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ *Analysis Diagram*



So many ways to lose:

21.f4? $\mathbb{Q}xh2! \#2$;

21.h3? $\mathbb{Q}f4+-$;

21. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{W}g4-+$;

21. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{W}h3+$
23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}h5+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}e6-+$;

21. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}h1$ (22. $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+!$ with a variety of standard mating patterns, including:
23. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}f3$ 24. $\mathbb{B}g1$ $\mathbb{B}xh4+$
25. $gxh4$ $\mathbb{W}h3\#$) 22... $\mathbb{W}h3+$

23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $g5!-+$ is an odd but effective way to get all the pieces into the attack. Amusingly, Black has no pieces on the queenside, and White's king has no future on the kingside.

20. $\mathbb{W}xc7??$

Reti knew Marshall was one of the best attackers of the era, so he wasn't

Moscow 1925

Marshall v Reti

Chess Canada

New York 1924

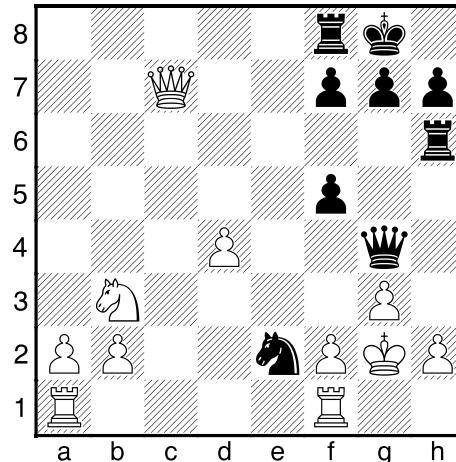


simply grabbing another pawn rather than defending: the $\mathbb{W}c7$ guards f4 and g3, so Black's attacking options are more limited... but not limited enough.

20. $\mathbb{W}c4?$ guards against ... $\mathbb{Q}e2$ but Black wins with 20... $\mathbb{W}h5$ 21. $h4$ $\mathbb{W}f3-$ +

20. $\mathbb{W}c2\Box\infty$ guards across the second rank, prevents ... $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (*which is why Black had to play it on the previous move*), and now 20... $\mathbb{B}xh2$ only draws (20... $\mathbb{W}h5$ 21. $f3\Box=$ shows the point of $\mathbb{W}c2$: White guards h2 and f3.) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{W}h5+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ (22... $\mathbb{W}h3?$ 23. $f3!-+$) 23. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+=$.

20... $\mathbb{Q}e2! 21. \mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{W}g4$



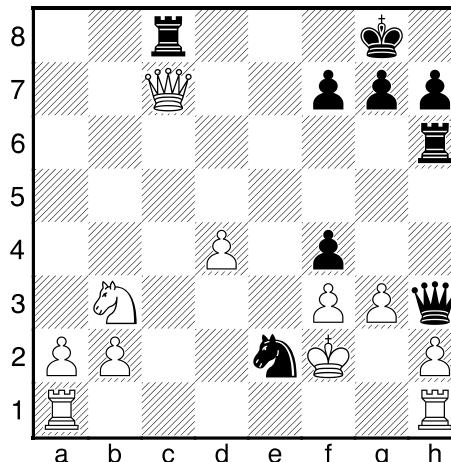
22. $\mathbb{B}h1$

22. $h4$ $f4!-+$ (22... $g5??$ 23. $f3\infty$ thanks to the $\mathbb{W}c7!$).

22... $f4$

Not the only win. 22... $\mathbb{W}h3!+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ and ... $g5-g4$ as in the note at move 19.

23. $f3$ $\mathbb{W}h3+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}c8!$

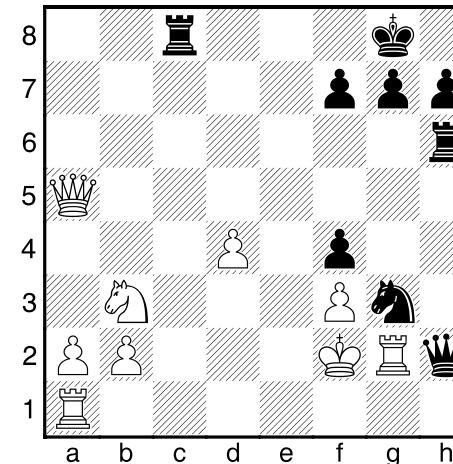


Very nice. Black brings his last piece into the attack on the file White's pawn grabbing just opened for him!

25. $\mathbb{W}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 26. $\mathbb{B}hg1$
 $\mathbb{W}xh2+$

26... $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ was more efficient, but not more winning.

27. $\mathbb{B}g2$



27... $\mathbb{W}h4$

Weakening the back rank with 27... $\mathbb{B}c2+!?$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ still wins, but only if Black finds the absurd: 28... $g6!-+$.

28. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$

Closing the exits. To plagiarize a previous note: Black has no pieces on the queenside, and White's king has no future on the kingside.

29. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}h1+$

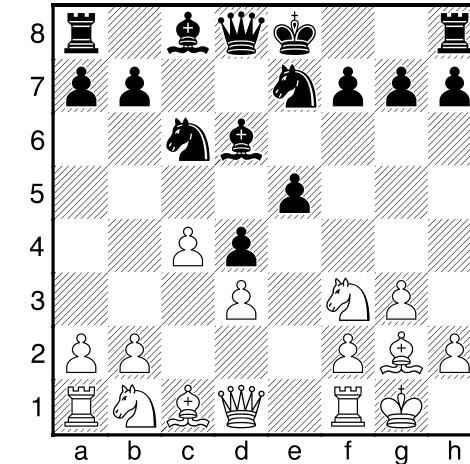
0-1

Capablanca, Jose Raul Janowski, Dawid

New York 1924 (15), 06.04.1924
Notes: John Uper

Before the end of the tournament, even Capablanca gave Reti's opening a try.

1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $d5$ 2. $g3$ $c5$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}g2$
 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 4. $0-0$ $e5$ 5. $c4$ $d4$ 6. $d3$
 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 7. $e3$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 8. $exd4$
 $cxd4$



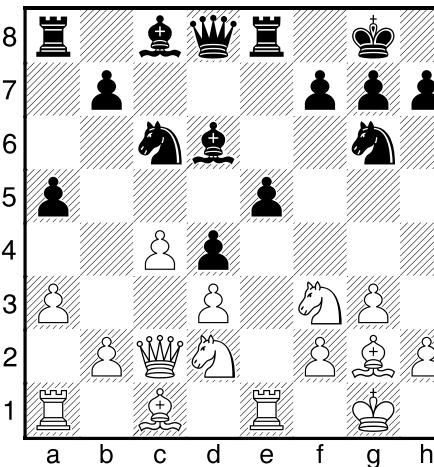
A reversed Benoni !?

Well-known for decades to us, but — apart from a few Blackburn games at the turn of the century — it was virtually unplayed and unknown in 1924.



The usual strategy for both sides is to advance their pawn majorities: in the reversed case it is White's on the queenside and Black's in the center. Capa — of course — does exactly this; but Janowski seems content to stabilize his center and sit, beginning central play only after Capa has made serious progress on the queenside.

**9.a3 a5 10.♗bd2 ♗g6
11.♘e1 0-0 12.♗c2 ♘e8**



13.b3!?

After 13.b3 **Alekhine** writes: "It is very difficult for White to establish himself promisingly on the queenside, for, until he is ready for c5, his pawn superiority there is quite illusory. That move, moreover, could quite easily be

prevented by Black."

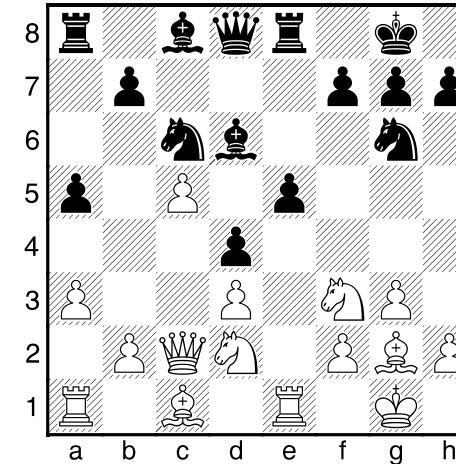
Alekhine has hit on the critical idea for White (c4–c5, and b4) but oddly he does not seem to notice that White can play it immediately. Like Capablanca in the game, he seems to have thought White's queenside play required a pawn duo on c4 and b4, which would also explain why Capa played to prevent ...a5–a4.

Decades of testing the Benoni has shown that even without the b- & c-pawn duo there will be sufficient play on the queenside.

Even White's *least* positionally sophisticated route: 13.♗b1 a4 14.b4 axb3 15.♗xb3+ gives adequate play on the b-file.

FWIW, Stockfish rates 13.b3 as a slight *mistake*, giving the advantage to Black, and says the immediate **13.c5!** is White's best.

Analysis Diagram



Note that if the ♗g6 were on f6, as in a normal Benoni, then c4–c5 would have the drawback of allowing (even inviting) that ♗ to d5.

The only way to try to prove that White is not "ready to play c5" is to keep the DSB attacking it with ♗f8 or ♗e7, but neither succeed:

13...♗f8 14.♗b1 (14.h4 Black can't simply round up the c5 pawn with 14...♗d5? 15.h5! ♗h8 16.♗xe5+–) 14...a4 15.h4 ♗a5 16.♗e4 ♗f5 (16...f5? 17.♗fg5!!+–) 17.♗fd2±;

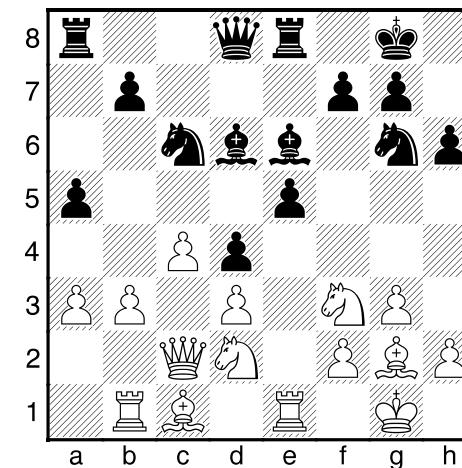
13...♗e7!? hoping to double up on the c5 pawn with ...♗f8–e6!? 14.h4 f6 15.h5 ♗f8 16.♗c4 (16.♗b1 a4 17.b4

axb3 18.♗xb3+ ♔h8 19.♗e4±)
16...♗xc5 17.♗cxe5±.

13...h6

13...♗e7 14.♗e4 ♗c7±.

14.♗b1 ♗e6



15.h4

If this was a 21st century game (and if I was a hack), I suppose I'd feel obliged to say something like "as Alpha Zero has shown..."

If I was (still) a Capablanca fan-boy I'd be sure to point out that the great Cuban understood all this on his own and that there is no explaining Genius...

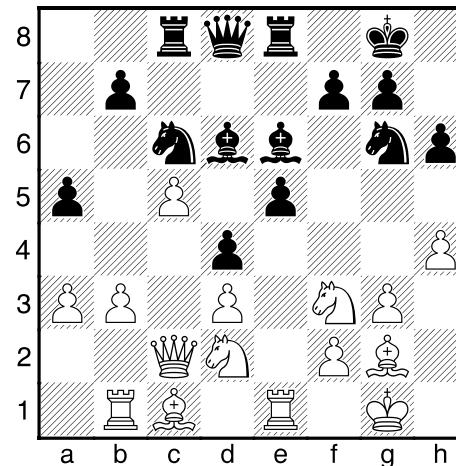
Instead, I'll just say that here, as on previous moves, White's best was c4–c5!



15...♝c8?!

15...♝e7 stopping White's next.

16.c5!



16...♝b8

16...♝ce7!? not mentioned by Alekhine, leads to some characteristically Benoni tactical and positional craziness:

17.♝e4∞ ♜b8 (17...♝d5?)

18.♝xd6 ♜xd6 19.cxd6 ♜xc2

20.♝xd4!!+–) 18.b4 axb4

19.axb4 b5=;

17.b4 axb4 18.axb4 b6 19.h5

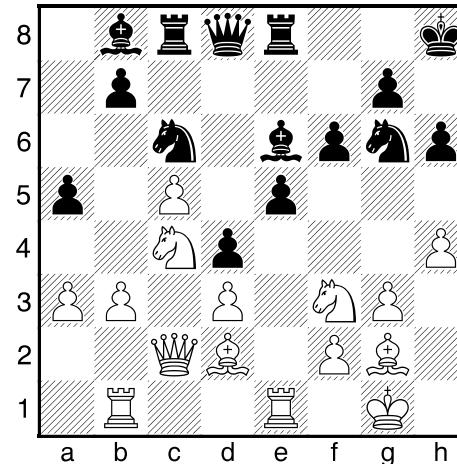
♝f8 20.♝c4! (20.♝xe5 bxc5∞)

20...bxc5 (20...♝xc4? 21.cxd6

♝e6 22.dxe7+–) 21.b5! and ♜d2

is a promising pawn sacrifice.

17.♝c4 f6 18.♝d2 ♜h8



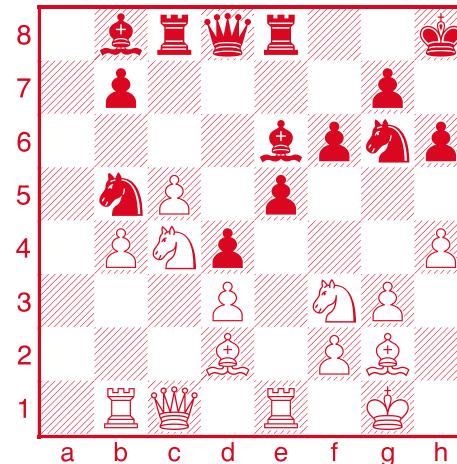
19.b4

White has methodically managed to get his queenside rolling, while Black has made his kingside slightly more porous.

Also good is 19.♝b6! ♜c7 20.b4 axb4 21.axb4 ♜a7 22.b5! ♜e7 23.♝a4!±.

19...axb4 20.axb4 ♜a7

21.♝c1 ♜b5



22.♝h2!?

Rather than sac on h6, Capa opts for continuing his positional masterclass. Exposing the ♜ hits b7 and increases his control over the light squares.

Alekhine praised Janowski's defensive play, saying his previous move was "Parrying the threat 22.♝xh6? ♜c3 23.♝a1 e4."

In fact, 22.♝xh6!? is far trickier than Alekhine's notes indicate: 22...♜c3 23.♝a1 (SF17 prefers White after the exchange sac 23.♝d2!±) 23...e4 Alekhine's note ends here, but now White has 24.♝xd4∞ not mentioned by Alekhine, but a move he certainly would have found had he been *playing* this game. Then 24...♜xd4∞ 25.♝e3∞ ♜xd3∞ 26.♝f1∞ ♜d5 27.♜xc3 ♜e5! and SF17 rates the game as balanced after 28.♝d2∞ or even another exchange sac with ♜xe5.

22...♝e7

It is interesting to note how frequently modern engines

suggest exchange sacs which do not seem to have occurred to the classical World Champions. Here we have one that might not occur to a *modern* GM: SF17 prefers 22...♝e7!? and after 23.♝xb7 offering an exchange with 23...♝d5± in return for lots of good squares for the material.

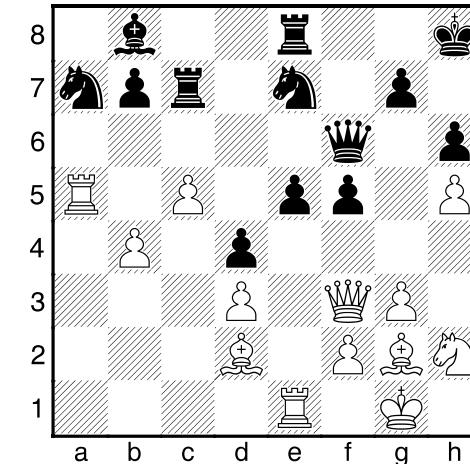
23.♝a1 ♜c7 24.♝a5 ♜d7

25.♝b6 ♜c6 26.♝c4 ♜a7

Heading for c8?! **27.♝d5 ♜xd5**

28.♝xd5 f5 29.♝f3 ♜f6

30.h5 ♜e7



31.g4!

Not the computer's top choice — 31.b5! — but strong and thematic: no matter how Black responds, White's pieces will flood through on the light squares.

Chess Canada

New York 1924



31...f4

Other moves are no better:

31...e4!? tries to randomize
32.dxe4 $\mathbb{Q}ac6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}aa1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

34. $\mathbb{W}g3\Box+-$.

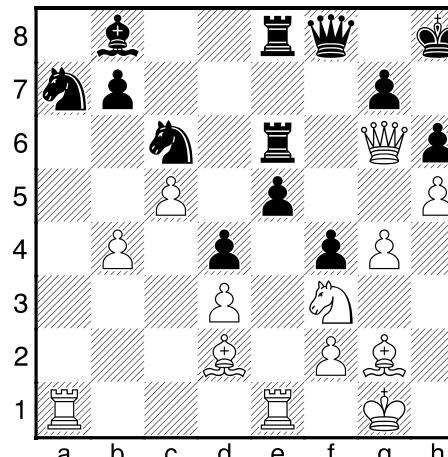
31...fxg4 32. $\mathbb{Q}xg4!$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$
 $\mathbb{Q}ec6$ (33... $\mathbb{Q}ac6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}a8+-$)

34. $\mathbb{Q}xa7!$ not the only winning move, but a nice way to show the power of White's minors:
34... $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ (34... $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 35.b5+-)

35. $\mathbb{Q}xe5+-$.

32. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}ec6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}aa1$ $\mathbb{Q}ce7$

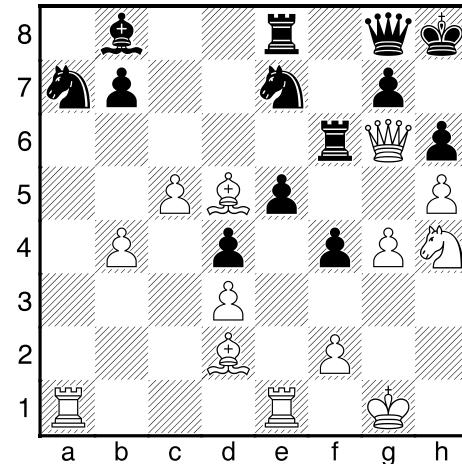
34. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$



White finishes with a stylish display of light square domination.

36. $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ $\mathbb{W}g8$

38. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$



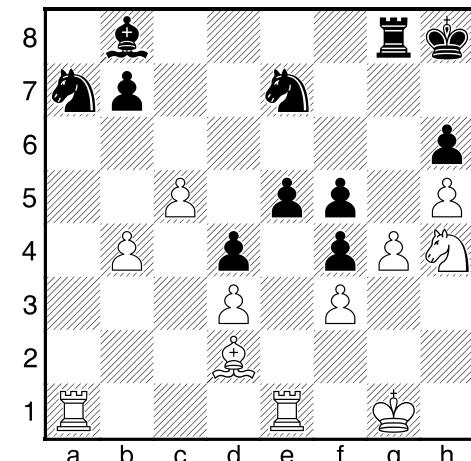
39. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

39... $\mathbb{W}xd5$:

40. $\mathbb{W}xe7??$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}f3\Box+-$ gives mate or wins pawns and traps the \mathbb{Q} ;

40. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 41. $\mathbb{W}xg6+-$.

40. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 41.f3 f5



42. $\mathbb{Q}xf4!$

Deflecting the $\mathbb{Q}b8$ with the nominal exchange sac 42. $\mathbb{Q}xa7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ also wins.

42... $\mathbb{Q}ec6$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$

44. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

$\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$

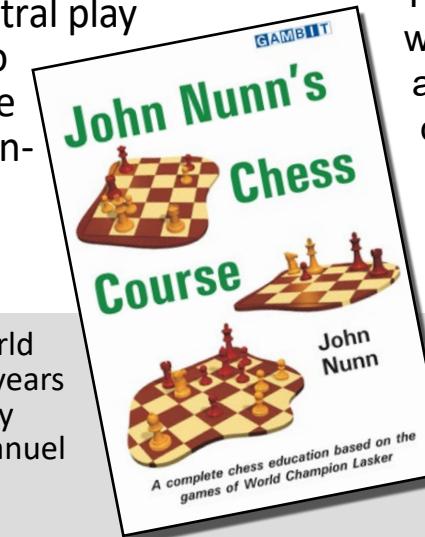
Fittingly, the queenside pawns White so carefully advanced in the early middlegame are unstoppable in the endgame.

1-0

Going into round 16, Emanuel Lasker and Capablanca were tied for the lead with 9½ and Lasker was due to face the opening that had defeated Capablanca and Alekhine. Lasker's common-sense response — a London System reversed, followed by central play

— did a lot to take the shine off Reti's opening.

Despite being World Champion for 27 years there are relatively few books on Emanuel Lasker.

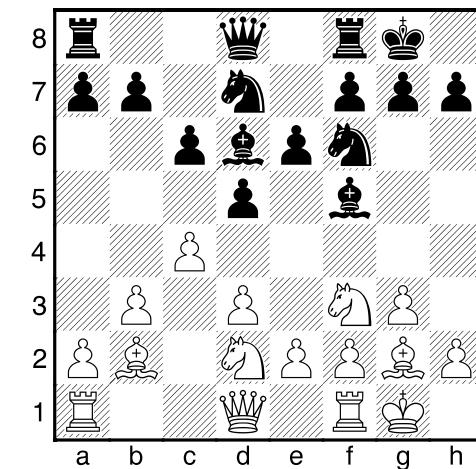


Reti, Richard Lasker, Emanuel

New York (16), 09.04.1924

Notes: John Upper

1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d5 2.c4 c6 3.b3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$
4.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$
6. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ e6 7.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 8.d3
0-0 9. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$



"Reti tended to play this system with the idea of delaying any action in the centre for a considerable time, but these days players are aware that central activity by e4 is often an effective strategy. Over

Nunn's 2014 is one of the few, but even it is not a game collection, but a disassembly and reconstruction of Lasker's games into teachable moments.



the next few moves White has several chances to play e4, but both players appear to underestimate the significance of this advance."

- John Nunn,

John Nunn's Chess Course, (Gambit, 2014).

9...e5?!

9... $\mathbb{W}e7$ "is the best move. This flexible option connects Black's rooks and prepares a possible ... $\mathbb{Q}a3$, while keeping his solid pawn-structure intact. In this case the position would be very close to equality." - Nunn.

10.cxd5 cxd5 11. $\mathbb{Q}c1$

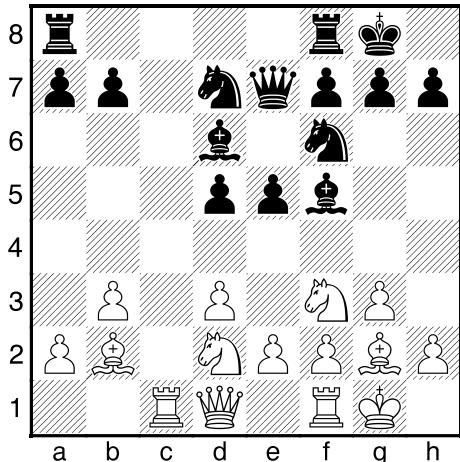
11.e4!:

11... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12.exd5! $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
13. $\mathbb{Q}c4\uparrow$;

11... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 12.d4!?:

11... dxe4 12.dxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4??$
(12... $\mathbb{Q}e6\pm$) 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
14. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}df6$ 15. $\mathbb{W}e2+-$ White
plays $\mathbb{Q}f5$ and brings his \mathbb{Q} s to
the middle: Black gets cut to
ribbons.

11... $\mathbb{W}e7$



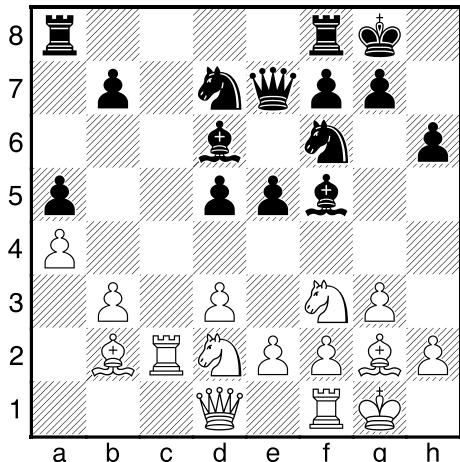
12. $\mathbb{Q}c2?!$

Again, 12.e4 dxe4 13.dxe4
 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (13... $\mathbb{Q}xe4??$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h4\Box+-$; 13... $\mathbb{Q}xe4??$
14. $\mathbb{Q}h4+-$) 14. $\mathbb{Q}c4\pm$ - Nunn.

12...a5?!

12...h6! enables ... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ in
preparation for e2-e4.

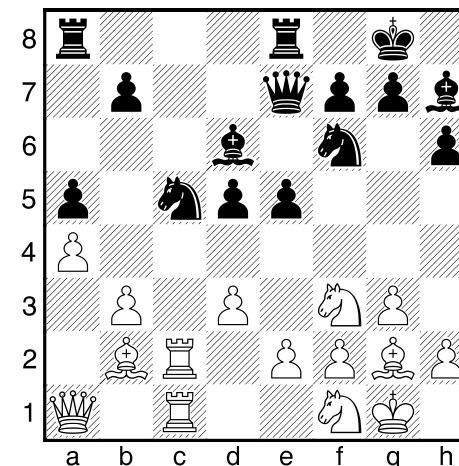
13.a4 h6!



Nunn:

"This is generally a key move in the New York System since it secures the important light-squared bishop from exchange. After the bishop has dropped back to h7, Black will be threatening ...e4-e3 (...e4 is bad if the reply $\mathbb{Q}d4$ attacks the bishop, which is why the bishop must retreat first)."

**14. $\mathbb{W}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$
16. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5!$**



17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

The annotator of this game in the Chessbase Megabase 2025, Andre Schulz, gives this both and exclamation and a \Box — "only move".

Do you trust Chessbase?

Nunn is less impressed:

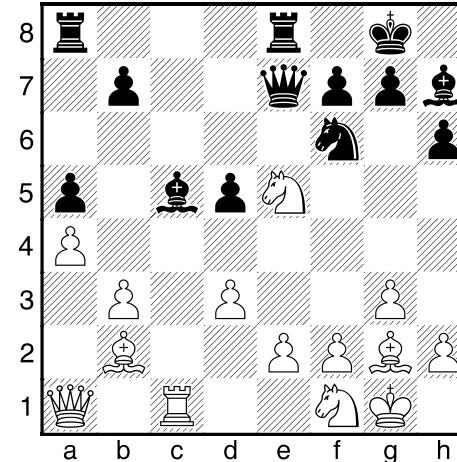
"A rather desperate measure as White does not obtain sufficient compensation for the exchange. However, there is no really tempting move since both variations, are clearly favourable for Black: 17. $\mathbb{W}a2$ d4 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}d5-b4$, and 17. $\mathbb{Q}3d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ with ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ to come."

SF17 agrees that Black is clearly better on all lines, but at 30 ply it does not rate $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ among White's top 6 moves!? Instead, it offers the following as White's best:

17. $\mathbb{Q}xe5!:$
17... $\mathbb{Q}xb3?!$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}e6$
19. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$
21. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $gxf6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e3\bar{F}$;

17... $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xe5\Box$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$
19. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3\Box$ 20.f4 \Box
 $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e3$
 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b1\bar{F}$ Black's up a
full exchange, but White has
some pressure on d5 — (f4-f5
currently ties down the $\mathbb{Q}e8$) —
and two good squares for the
 \mathbb{Q} s if he can manage $\mathbb{Q}c2-d4$.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$



Nunn:

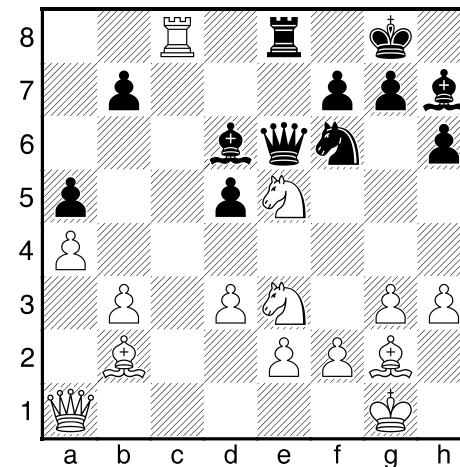
"At first sight it appears that White might have decent compensation for the exchange. He has an extra central pawn and Black's bishop on h7 is now somewhat out of play as he no longer has the move ...e4 which would liberate it. However, there are a number of factors which work against White. The e2-pawn is undefended, so his e5-knight is in a way pinned. Moreover, this knight is by no means secure since the only move that would support it is d4, and this would have the twin defects of activating Black's light-squared bishop and blocking in White's own b2-bishop. In fact, Black has a large advantage in this position."

18...Rac8 19.Qe3 Re6

20.h3 Qd6?

As **Alekhine** noted, better was 20...b6! \mp keeping the \mathbb{Q} attacking e3 keeps the \mathbb{Q} e5 where it is and denies White his chance for an advantage at move 22.

21.Rxc8!



21...Rxc8?!

Natural, but tactically wrong. 21...Rxc8!= so that after $\mathbb{Q}5g4$ trades the main defender of d5, $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ will not come with a tempo on the \mathbb{W} .

22.Qf3?

\square 22.Q5g4! **Alekhine** 22...Qxg4 23.hxg4! and White wins the d5-pawn next with a clear plus. This would not have been possible if Black's \mathbb{Q} was still on c5.

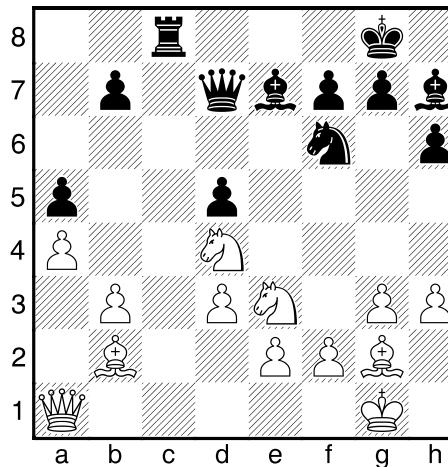
22...Qe7

Very human, but perhaps not best.

Both Nunn and SF prefer the "apparently suicidal" 22...Qxg3!?

23.Qxf6 gxf6 \square 24.Qg4 Qd6
 $(24...\mathbb{Q}b8!$ SF; 24...Qe5?!
25.Qfxe5 fxe5 26.Qxd5! ∞)
25.Qxf6+ Qg7 with comp for the exchange.

23.Qd4 Wd7



Nunn:

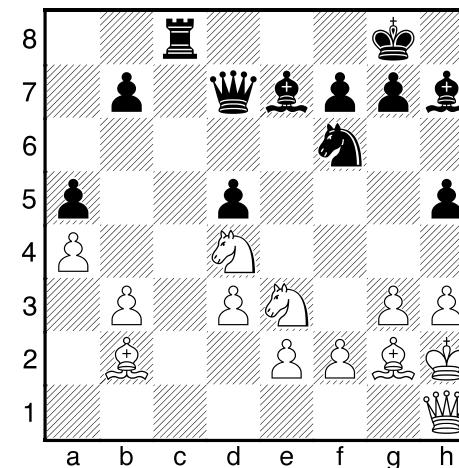
"With one pawn for the exchange and well-placed minor pieces, White has sufficient play for the exchange but in order to maintain the balance he must continue accurately. The game continuation is particularly instructive because Reti aims

to gain material at the cost of allowing Black an initiative. At the moment, Black's rook has little scope since White has no trouble covering the squares along the c-file, but if the position opens up and tactics start to fly around then the rook could become a far more effective piece. Lasker plays consistently for activity and in particular to expose the white king, even if this costs him a pawn or two."

24.Qh2

\square 24.g4 and Qf3 keeps the kingside tight.

24...h5 25.Qh1?!



"Even for Reti himself this is almost too "original"..." – **Alekhine**

Chess Canada

New York 1924



White's second $\mathbb{Q} \mathbb{W}$ battery of the game wins the d5 pawn, but the \mathbb{W} is not well placed here, and — to anticipate another theme from NY1924 — Black's d5 pawn is a useful umbrella for the $\mathbb{Q}d4$, and White will regret removing it.

25. $\mathbb{Q}b5! \infty$ "the threat of $\mathbb{Q}d4$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}c3$ etc., would have forced Black, after ... $\mathbb{Q}f5-e6$, to permit the exchange of that bishop, thereby strengthening the power of the hostile pair of bishops." - **Alekhine**

25...h4 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $h \times g3+! \mp$ now, so White has to take with the f-pawn, which takes away a central support for a white \mathbb{Q} and opens the center a bit more for the black \mathbb{Q} s.

26... $h \times g3+ 27. f \times g3$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd5 28. \mathbb{Q}xd5 \mathbb{Q}f6!$

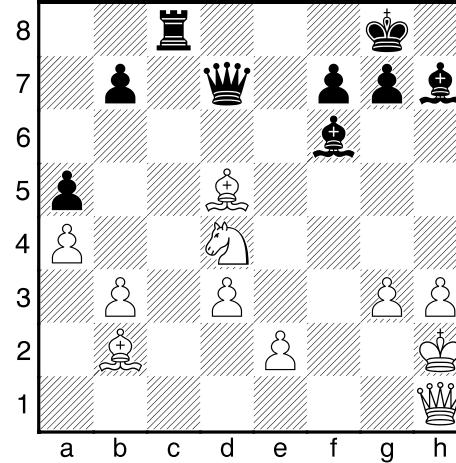
FINAL BOSS

...same as the old boss



Dr. Emanuel Lasker

*World Champion 1894-1921
NY24 winner at 55*



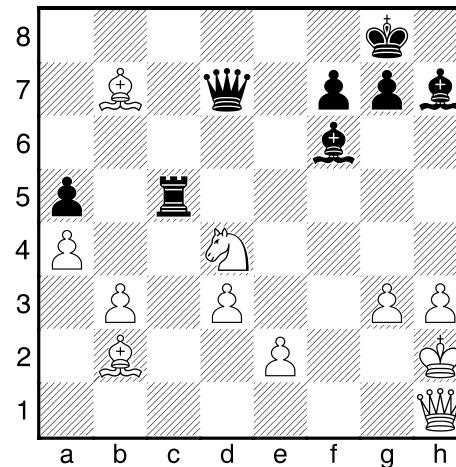
29. $\mathbb{Q}xb7?$

29. $e4?? \mathbb{Q}xd4 30. \mathbb{Q}xd4 \mathbb{Q}c2+-+$.

29. $\mathbb{W}f3 \square \infty$ gets the \mathbb{W} to a safe square and prepares $e4$, when White's $\mathbb{Q} \mathbb{B} \mathbb{B}$ is a match for Black's \mathbb{Q} .

29... $\mathbb{Q}c5 \mp$

$\square 29... \mathbb{Q}d8$ forces 30. $e3$ and 30... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ wins a pawn and brings the $\mathbb{Q}h7$ back to life.





30.♕a6+

The possibility of ♜a8+ tactically defends the ♔d4, but Black can deal with that and White's minors are left uncoordinated.

Nunn and **Kasparov** both

suggest 30.♕e4 ♜xd4 31.♕xh7+ ♜xh7 32.♕e4+ f5 33.♕h4+! ♜g8 34.♕xd4 ♜xd4 35.♕xd4 ♜c2 with drawing chances.

But **SF** says that after 30.♕e4 Black improves with 30...♕xe4! 31.♕xe4 ♜e5!—+ when Black keeps a strong attack rather than allowing White to escape to an ending.

30...♕g6 31.♕b7 ♜d8

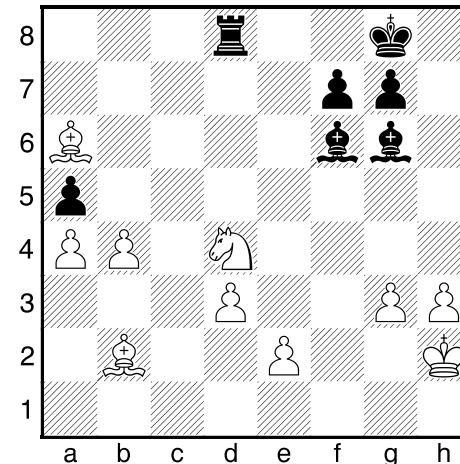
31...♕d6 32.♕a3!? ♜xd4 33.♕xc5 ♜xc5 34.♕c4—+

- **Kasparov**, *My Great Predecessors* v.1.

32.b4 ♜c7 33.♕b6 ♜d7!—+

This wins, though I wonder if Lasker had worked out all the tactics at move 35.

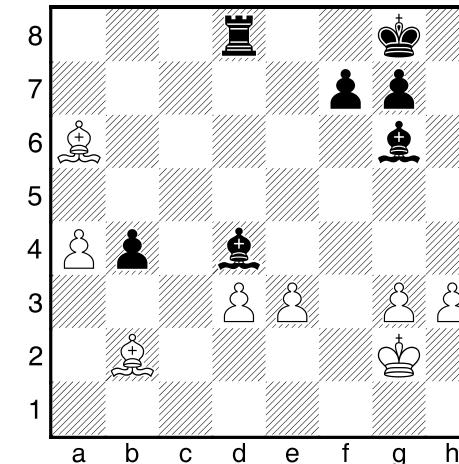
34.♕xd8+ ♜xd8



35.e3

35.♘c6!? forces Black to find a series of only moves: 35...♘d6 36.♕b5! (36.♕xf6 ♜xc6—+) 36...♜xb2 37.bxa5 ♜e6 38.a6 ♜xe2+ 39.♔h1 ♜e8 40.a7 threatens both ♘b8 and ♘e7+ 40...♜a8 41.♕a6 ♜d4 42.♘xd4 ♜xa7 43.♕b5 ♜xd3! 44.♕xd3 ♜d7—+ **Nunn** continues this line for another 11 moves, concluding that after the ♜ gets behind the a-pawn Black's ♔ can advance and will win the white kingside pawns.

35...axb4 36.♔g2 ♜xd4

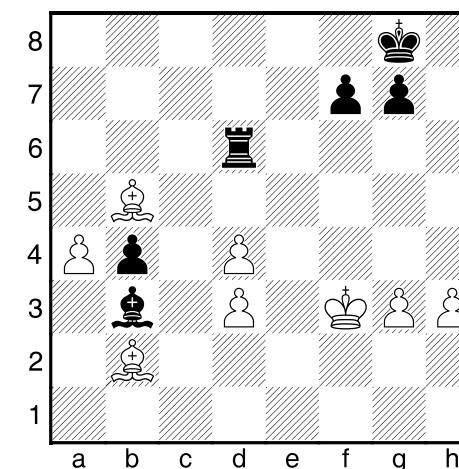


37.exd4

37.♘xd4 ♜xd4? is so tempting, but it only draws: 38.exd4 b3 39.♘c4 b2 40.♕a2 ♜xd3 41.a5=.

37.♘xd4 ♜f5! 38.♘c4 ♜e6—+
- **Nunn**

37... ♜f5! 38.♘b7 ♜e6
39.♔f3 ♜b3 40.♘c6 ♜d6
41.♘b5



Nunn:

"Throughout his career, Lasker's play was marred by imprecise play in technically winning positions and there are many cases in which he overlooked simple wins and allowed his opponents unnecessary chances."

41...♜f6+?!

41...♜e6, cutting the king off, followed by ...♔d1+ and ...♜e2, again with a straightforward win.

- **Nunn**

42.♔e3 ♜e6+ 43.♔f4?!

Lets the fox into the henhouse. But not much better was 43.♔d2!? ♜g6 44.d5 ♜xd5 45.♕e5 ♜c6!—+.

43...♜e2 44.♘c1 ♜c2 45.♕e3 ♜d5

There's no stopping the b-pawn.

This win kick-started Lasker's fantastic tournament finish: 6½/7 to finish a full 1½ points ahead of World Champion Capablanca.

0-1

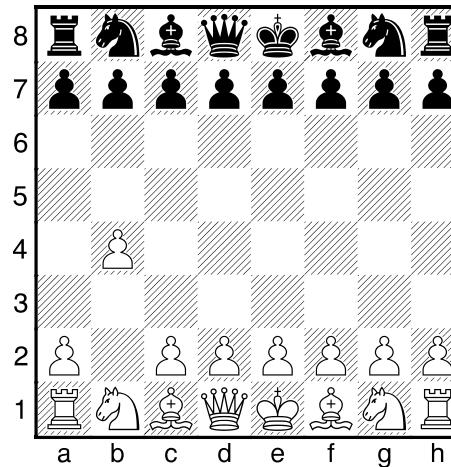


Tartakower, Saviely Maroczy, Geza

New York 1924 (4), 20.03.1924
Notes: John Uppen

Apart from Reti's very successful system, the only other opening that raised eyebrows at NY24 was this one...

1.b4



Alekhine:

"An old move, the chief drawback of which is the fact that White discloses his intentions before knowing those of his opponent. He need not necessarily be at a disadvantage thereby, but is not that altogether too small a satisfaction for the

first player?"

What a wonderfully modern assessment! Nothing about how this move is "unprincipled" or "an ugly attempt to provoke the opponent" or "concedes the center (or initiative) to Black". Rather, Alekhine points out that White is not objectively worse after this move, but that it prematurely commits White and gives Black early information about how to set up.

True, though I believe Breyer or Reti said the same things about 1.e4.

1... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Contrary to the stories I was told when learning chess — that 1.b4 was inspired by a between-round sighting of an Orangutang at a NY zoo — this opening had previously been played by and against World Champions (in simul, to be fair), but also five years earlier by Tartakower himself:

1.b4 e5 2. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ f6!? 3.e4? (3.b5 d5 4.e3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 5.c4 c6 Bugaev,N-Steinitz,W. Moscow simul,

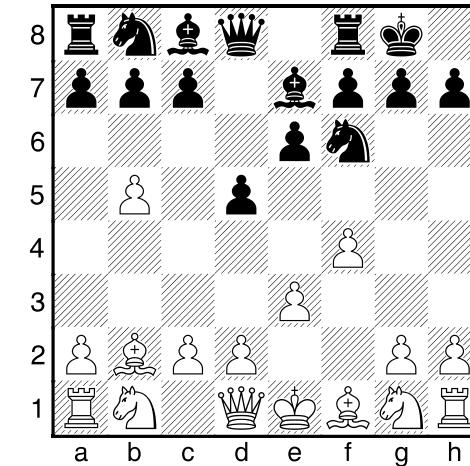
1896.) 3... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5.f4 d5! 6.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 7.fxe5 fxe5 8. $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10.0-0 0-0 11. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ 12.d3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ -+ 13. $\mathbb{W}g5$ h6 14. $\mathbb{W}g3$ e4? (14... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ defends the $\mathbb{Q}g6$ and threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ then ...e4, getting \mathbb{Q} and \mathbb{Q} for \mathbb{Q} .) 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}t$, **Tartakower,S-Reti,R** Match Vienna, 1919.

Of course, my ability to fact-check these stories is due to easily searched computer databases, which weren't in wide use for 60+ years after the first words were written about this tournament.

2. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ e6 3.b5

Even Capablanca had previously tried 1.b4, unsuccessfully: 3.a3 d5 4.e3 c5 5.bxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 6.d4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ = 7.c4 dxc4 8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 0-0 9. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a6 10. $\mathbb{Q}gf3$ b5 11. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ with a QGA/Meran type position. **Capablanca,J**-Van Hoorn,P Netherlands Tour, 1911.

3...d5 4.e3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 5.f4 0-0



6. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Alekhine:

"Why post the bishop on a bad spot when first of all the knight may be developed to a good one (6. $\mathbb{Q}f3$)?"

6. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ a6 7.a4 axb5 8.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ c5 10.bxc6 bxc6 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c5 \mathbb{Q} Khalikian,O (2325)-**Andersson,U** (2518) Yerevan Blitz, 2024.

6...a6

Alekhine:

"More energetic utilization of the adversary's eccentricities here would have been 6... c5 ..."

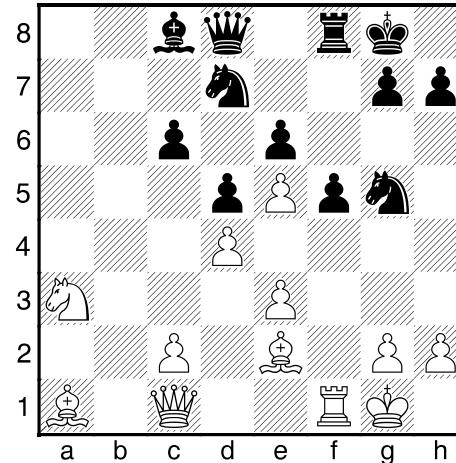
7.a4 axb5 8.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 11.0-0 f5 12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ c6

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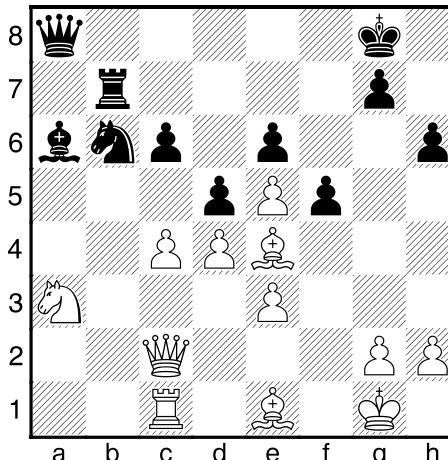
New York 1924



15. $bxc6$ $bx $c6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$
17. $fxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 18. $d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$$



19. $c4$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 20. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{W}a8$
21. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$
23. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}b7$ 24. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$
25. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $h6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$



26... $dxe4$?

Alekhine:

"Correct would have been 26... $fxe4$ 27. $cxd5$ (if 27. $c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and

the black pieces would force an entrance.) 27... $\mathbb{W}f8$! [editor - hits the $\mathbb{Q}a3$ and threatens mate on f1] 28. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}xa3$ whereupon neither: 29. $dxc6$ (29. $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$; 29. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $exd5$) 29... $\mathbb{E}c7$ need have been feared by Black. The

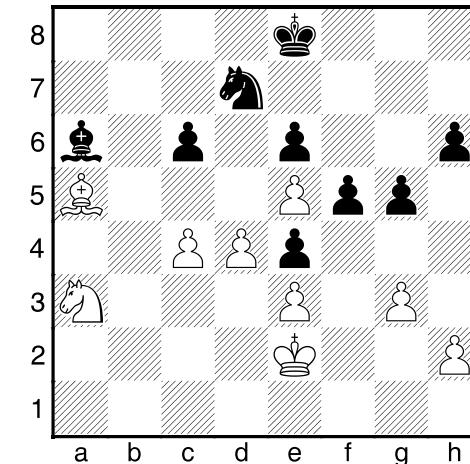
text move not alone (sic) permits the victory to slip out of hand, but even affords the opponent a chance in the center, which, with a little care, however, attains no decisive significance."



Geza Maroczy

Once again, Alekhine's analysis is correct in both detail and overall evaluation, if only understating Black's advantage: virtually winning in all lines after 26 ... $fxe4$.

27. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{E}xb1$
29. $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$
31. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 32. $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
33. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
35. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $g5$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
37. $\mathbb{Q}e2$



37... $c5$!?

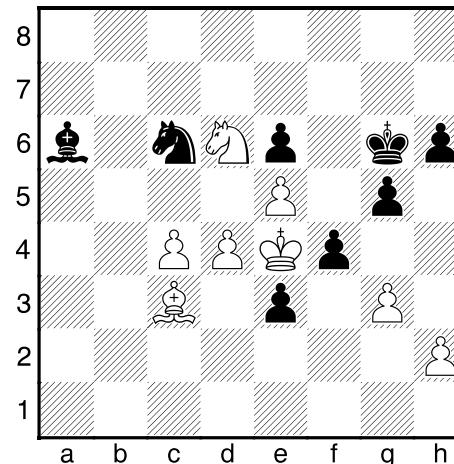
The position is equal and Black could just try to sit, but Black takes risks to play for a win.

Exchanging on d4 gives Black a chance to create a passer with $f5-f4$, but it also allows White to improve the \mathbb{Q} to d6 where it



will combine with the c4–pawn to dominate the $\mathbb{Q}a6$.

38. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $cxd4$
 40. $exd4$ $f4$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$
 42. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $e3$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$
 44. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

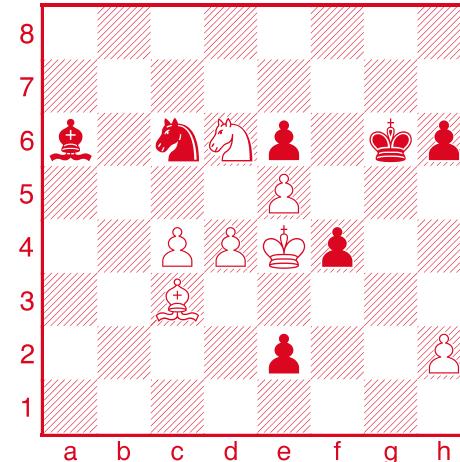


45... $e2?$

Black over-presses, but the refutation eluded both the players and the future World Champion annotator.

45... $fxg3!$ 46. $hxg3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
 47. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5\Box=$.

46. $gxf4\Box$ $gxf4$



47. $\mathbb{Q}d2?$

Alekhine:

"White, who until now has conducted the interesting ending faultlessly, permits victory to slip from him here. Correct would have been 47. $\mathbb{Q}e1!$, whereupon the advance of the center pawns would have been decisive: 47... $f3$ 48. $d5$ $exd5+$ 49. $cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 50. $e6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 53. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 54. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ –. With the text move the opponent is presented with the tempo he needed for a draw."

This is one of Alekhine's relatively rare analytical mistakes and (as usual) it's due to unusual tactics in a complex ending.

Alekhine's recommended move 47. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ actually allows Black

to draw by activating the \mathbb{Q} to create play against $h2$, which keeps the white \mathbb{Q} tied down: 47... $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ (47... $f3??$ 48. $d5\Box+$ – loses, as per AA's analysis.) 48. $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7\Box$ 49. $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}g4\Box$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}d3!?$ $\mathbb{Q}f3!?$ shows the idea behind the \mathbb{Q} advance (*Simpler is 50... $f3$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6=$ and Black can hold by oscillating the \mathbb{Q} across $e7$.) 51. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ $\mathbb{Q}c8\Box$ (52... $\mathbb{Q}xc4??$ 53. $e7\Box+$ –) 53. $e7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7\Box$ 54. $e6$ $\mathbb{Q}a4\Box$ controlling $e8$ while staying out of reach of any \mathbb{Q} hops. If White does nothing Black will attack the $\mathbb{Q}f5$ and take on $e7$. 55. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g2\Box=$.*

47. $\mathbb{Q}xf4?$ keeps the black \mathbb{Q} out, but leaves the \mathbb{Q} overloaded:
 47... $\mathbb{Q}xd4=$.

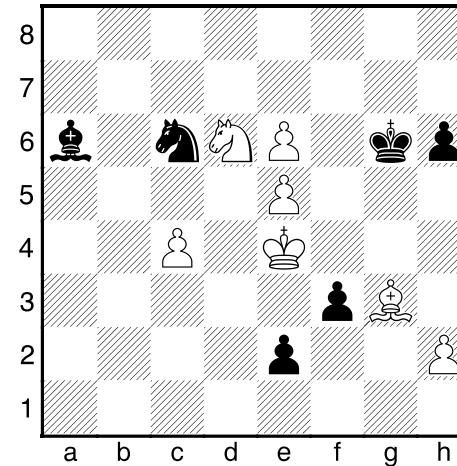
White has only one move that wins: 47. $d5\Box+$ – kicks the \mathbb{Q} away from its attack on $d4$ and $e5$ and so frees White's \mathbb{Q} and \mathbb{Q} .

After 47. $d5$:

47... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ does not transpose to Alekhine's analysis, since 48. $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}f3!+$ – stops

the pawns and prevents Black's \mathbb{Q} from getting to $h2$ before losing $e2$ and $f4$;

47... $f3$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}e1\Box$ (48. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5+=$) 48... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (48... $exd5+$ 49. $cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 50. $e6+$ – transposes to AA's note.) 49. $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}g3$
Analysis Diagram



Black's pieces are all on their best squares: the \mathbb{Q} can't move safely, if the \mathbb{Q} moves then $e5$ is safe and $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ wins, and any Black \mathbb{Q} move gives White tempo to either capture $f3$ and $e2$ or to promote the e-pawn by moving the \mathbb{Q} to $f2$ to stop Black's pawns and using his minors to support the e-pawn.

For example: 50... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ (50... $h5$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ Domination!) 51. $e7!$

Chess Canada

New York 1924



$\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ — Black's passers disappear and his \mathbb{K} is cut off and unable to help attack e5.

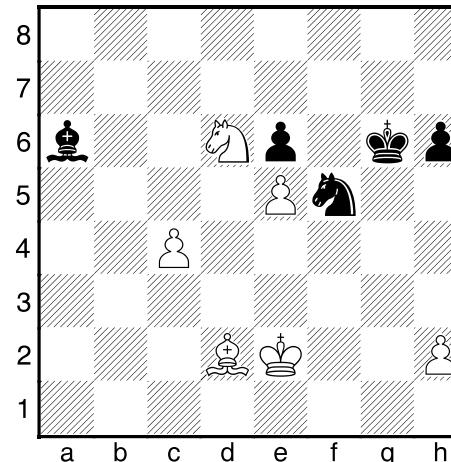
47...f3

... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ also draws.

48. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$

48. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 49. d5 exd5+ 50. cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}b4\Box=$.

48... $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$



50... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 51. exd6 $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$

Trading down to an opposite-coloured \mathbb{Q} ending with a check!

52. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 53. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ h5

54. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$

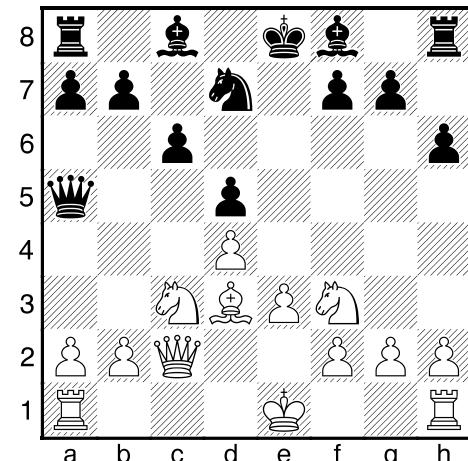
1/2

Marshall, Frank James Bogoljubow, Efim

New York 1924 (18), 11.04.1924
Notes: John Uper

The following earned the **Second Brilliance Prize** with a spectacular attack featuring a double \mathbb{Q} sac, a \mathbb{W} sac, and a \mathbb{K} hunt.

**1. d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ d5
4. e3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 5. c4 c6 6. cxd5
exd5 7. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$
9. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ h6
11. $\mathbb{Q}f3$**



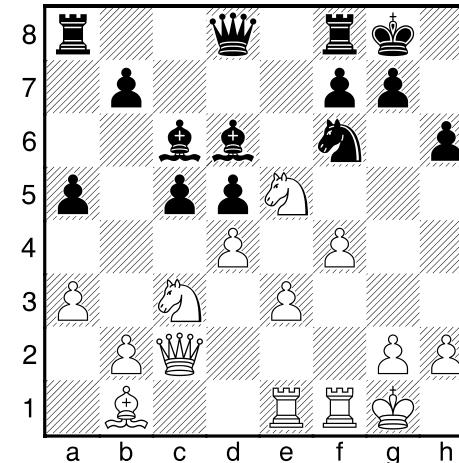
The Carlsbad structure, common then and now.

11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Unnecessarily passive.

11... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ was Alekhine's — and every modern master's — automatic first choice. 12. 0-0 0-0 13. a3 $\mathbb{W}d8$ 14. b4 Playing for the minority attack to leave Black with a weak queenside pawn... but Marshall was not Reshevsky. 14... a6 15. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16. h3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17. a4 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 18. b5 axb5 19. axb5 c5 ∞ Sarana,A (2654)-Moranda,W (2605) Titled Tuesday blitz, 2020.

**12. 0-0 0-0 13. a3 $\mathbb{W}d8$
14. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ a5 15. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 17. f4 c5
18. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$**



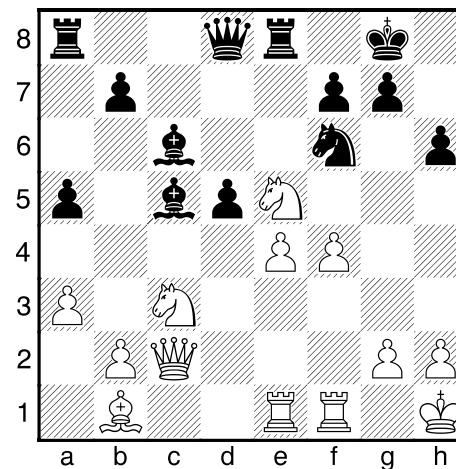
20. dxc5

At 32 ply, SF17 rates this, $\mathbb{Q}h1$, and g4 as its equal first choices at +0.24.

20. $\mathbb{Q}g4!$? g6! (20... $\mathbb{Q}e8\Box$)

20... $\mathbb{Q}e4?$ 21. dxc5! $\mathbb{Q}xc5$
22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ looks strong, but computers don't sweat: 21... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7\Box$ (22... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$? 23. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. e4 \Box +—) 23. $\mathbb{W}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8\Box$.

**20... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
22. e4!**



22... $\mathbb{Q}d4?$

Black should have accepted the inferior structure with 22... dxe4 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ White wins a pawn (c6 or g7) but, maybe because of the opposite \mathbb{Q} s, the computer says White is only slightly better, despite the extra pawn, after something like: 27. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ (27. $\mathbb{W}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}d4\Box$) 27... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}d4=$.



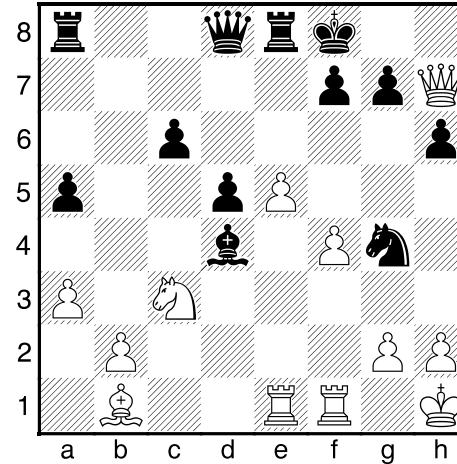
23.♘xc6!

Marshall plays the rest of the game with energy and computer-level precision.

23...bxc6 24.e5 ♜g4

24...♘xc3 25.exf6!—+ with the king's escape square on e7 now attacked (twice!), Black has no time to take on e1, and goes down a piece.

25.♔h7+! ♔f8



26.g3!

26.♘f5 is also good, but White

must be aware of Black's threats:

26.— ♜h4 27.h3 ♜g3 28.hxg4

♜h4# a basic mating pattern.

26...♜b6 27.♘f5 ♜f2+

28.♝xf2

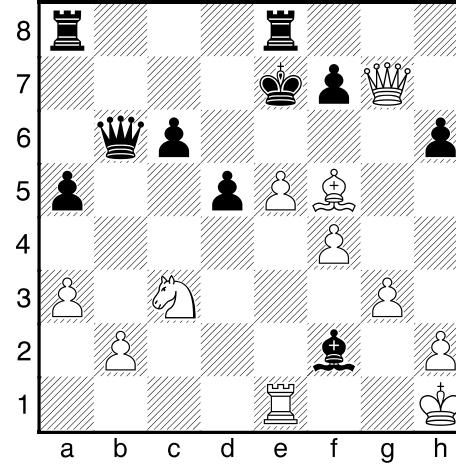
28.♔g2 wins too, since

28...♜xb2 29.♝b1! ♜xc3

30.♝b7+— mates.

28...♝xf2 29.♛h8+ ♔e7

30.♛xg7



An unusual double rook sacrifice.

pix or it didn't happen?

There are no in-game photos from New York 1924.

As the remains of the negative from "Lunch atop a Skyscraper" show, even in 1932 photographers preferred glass plate negative cameras when they had enough light.

1924 cameras could not create sharp images indoors without disturbing flashes or floodlights, so what photos *do* exist were posed and lit between games, as in this photo, which appears to be at the resumption of **Bogoljubow - Marshall**.

L2R: Norbert Lederer (org.), Reti, Janowsky, Yates, Maroczy

photo: American Chess Bulletin 1925.12



Chess Canada

New York 1924

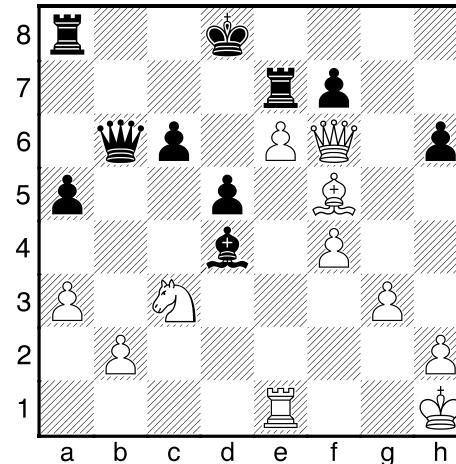


30... $\mathbb{Q}d8$

30... $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ loses to one of two basic checkmate patterns:

31. $\mathbb{W}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
 (32... $\mathbb{Q}e7?$ 33. $\mathbb{W}d6\#$) 33. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$
 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 35. $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
 36. $\mathbb{W}xf7\#$.

31. $\mathbb{W}f6+!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32. $e6!$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$



33. $exf7\Box$

A temporary queen sac that also brings the \mathbb{Q} into the attack.

33... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 34. $f8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$

35. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 36. $\mathbb{W}xa8$

Did the ever-optimistic Bogoljubov think he could magic his way out of this, down a piece and a pawn... or was he willing to let Marshall finish in style?

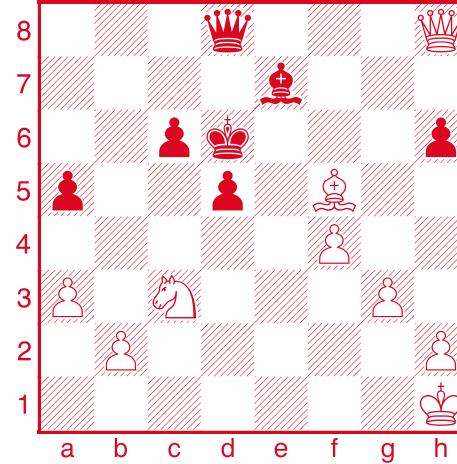
36... $\mathbb{Q}d6$

36... $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 37. $\mathbb{W}c8+$ and White can simply win a loose piece or calculate to mate.

37. $\mathbb{W}h8!!$

There's the move of a guy who had solved a lot of Sam Lloyd's!

37... $\mathbb{W}d8$



Mate in 5.

38. $\mathbb{W}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$

39... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 40. $\mathbb{W}e2+!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$

41. $\mathbb{Q}c2\#$.

40. $\mathbb{W}c3+$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}d3+$

$\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 42. $\mathbb{W}c2\#$

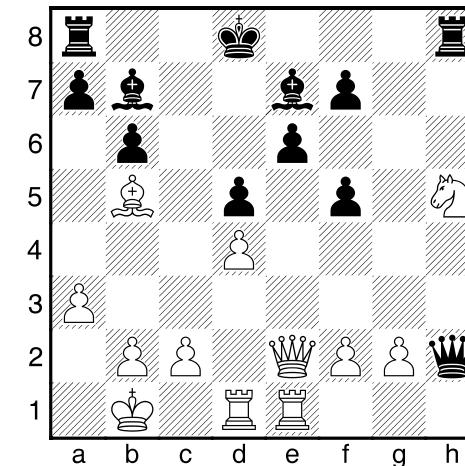
Opposite Bs = drawn endings... if you survive the attack.

1-0

Bogoljubow, Efim Alekhine, Alexander

New York (17), 10.04.1924

Notes: John Uppen



20. $\mathbb{Q}g3?!$

20. $\mathbb{Q}h1!$ $\mathbb{W}xg2$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e5+-$.

20... $\mathbb{W}h4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$

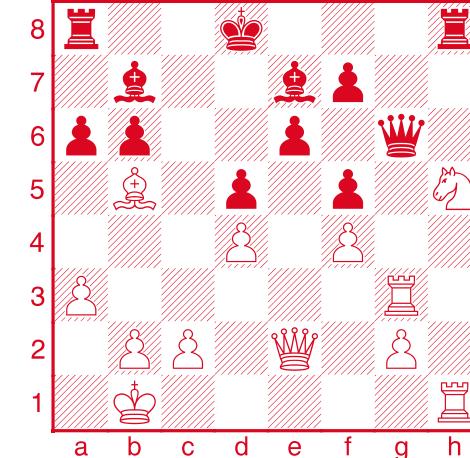
22. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 23. $f4!$ $\mathbb{W}g6$

24. $\mathbb{Q}d3?$

24. $\mathbb{W}e5!!+-$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 25. $g4\Box+-$.

24. $g4!+-$.

24... $a6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g3?$



What happens if ... $\mathbb{Q}xh5$?

25... $\mathbb{Q}xh5!$

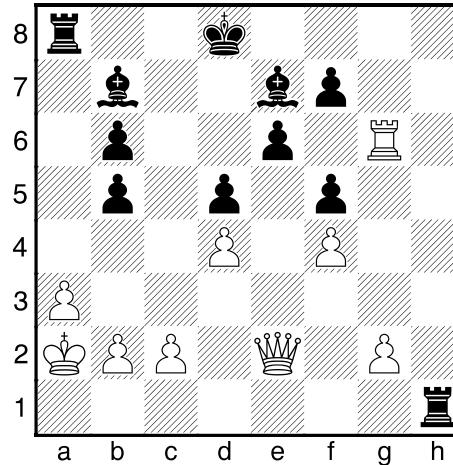
25... $\mathbb{W}h6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d3\#$ Black's LSB is a long-term liability.

26. $\mathbb{W}xh5??$

This loses, but only if Black finds the resource Alekhine missed in the game, but found when annotating this game for his tournament book.

26. $\mathbb{Q}hh3$ is the only other good move, and transposes to the main line after 26... $\mathbb{Q}xh3$
 27. $\mathbb{Q}xg6\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+\#$;

26. $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh1+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $axb5$:
 Analysis Diagram



Alekhine ends his note here with
“28. $\mathbb{Q}g8+$ $\mathbb{K}c7-$ with an easy
win.”

There are two problems with this

First, this final position in this variation is not at all an easy win. Black is way up in material, but his LSB is junk and the white \mathbb{W} has targets; e.g. 29. $\mathbb{W}e5+$! $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (29... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 30. $\mathbb{W}g7!$) 30. $\mathbb{B}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}b8$, with counterplay in both cases.

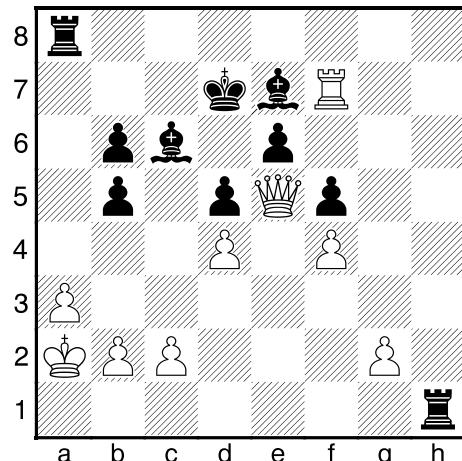
Second, Alekhine missed a significant improvement for White on the second-last move in this line: **28.¤g7!** *not trading the active ♕ for the passive one on a8 gives White strong attacking chances:*

a) 28...b4? 29.♗b5+–;

b) 28... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ holds the center, but loses the queenside pawns to 29. $\mathbb{E}g8+$! $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 30. $\mathbb{E}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xb5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (31... $\mathbb{Q}c7??$ 32. $\mathbb{W}e8+-$) 32. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{E}h8!=$ It's hard to imagine how Black might coordinate to cause White any difficulties, and almost as hard to see how White might safely advance his queenside pawns.

c) 28... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 $(29...\mathbb{Q}d7? 30.\mathbb{W}e5+-)$ 30. $\mathbb{W}e5$
 threatening $q2-q4$.

Analysis Diagram



30... $\mathbb{R}g8??$ wrong rook: that one is needed to defend the $\mathbb{Q}e7$
31.g4!! $\mathbb{R}xg4$ (31... $fxg4$ 32. $f5+-$)
32. $\mathbb{W}f6+-.$

30...g1 31.g7 e8∞.

26...  xh5??

26... $\mathbb{W}xg3\blacksquare-$

Alekhine

"Black overlooked in the variation 26... $\mathbb{W}xg3$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $axb5$ 28. $\mathbb{B}h7$ the recourse of 28... $\mathbb{W}e1+\square$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{W}b4\square$ 30. $\mathbb{B}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 31. $\mathbb{B}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}c4+\square$ whereupon White would naturally have to give up. The exchange of queens, on the other hand, leads to a certain draw."

It's worth noting that Alekhine gave no punctuation to any of these moves, though several deserve "!!" since they are "only moves" that are hard to see in advance.

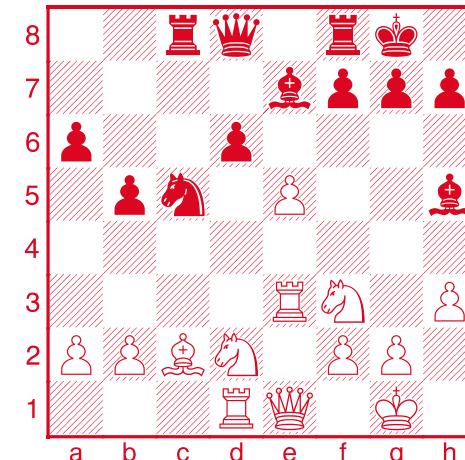
After this double blunder the two sides play the remainder perfectly, and the game ended in a draw on move 85.

1/2

Yates, F.D. Capablanca, J.R.

New York 1924 (20), 14.04.1924
Notes: John Upper

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♞c6 3.♗b5 a6
 4.♗a4 ♞f6 5.0–0 ♗e7 6.♗e1
 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0–0 9.d4
 ♗g4 10.♗e3 exd4 11.cxd4
 ♗a5 12.♗c2 ♞c4 13.♗bd2
 ♗xe3 14.♗xe3 c5 15.♗e1
 ♗d7 16.h3 ♗h5 17.dxc5
 ♗xc5 18.♗d1 ♗c8 19.e5



...d5 or ...q5?

19...g5??

Θ19..d5=

"The opening maneuver of the winning line of play." - **Alekhine**

Chess Canada

New York 1924



20. $\mathbb{H}c3??$

Alekhine says best was: 20. $\mathbb{H}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 22. $gxf3$ $dxe5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{H}cx d8$ 24. $\mathbb{H}xd8$ $\mathbb{H}xd8$ 25. $\mathbb{H}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ with a "winning endgame."

This was definitely one of Alekhine's *worst* analyses: he misses White's winning tactic here, and what he calls a "winning endgame" offers no real winning chances — SF rates it equal after a4, or $\mathbb{Q}f5$ or $\mathbb{Q}e4$ — and there are even more mistakes to come.

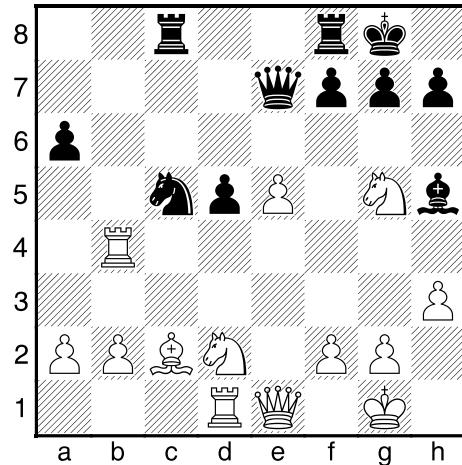
In fact, White gets a huge advantage after: 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg5!!$:

20... $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 21. $g4\Box$ threatening to win the \mathbb{Q} by breaking the pin with $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (or others) 21... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3\Box$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $hxg6$ 24. $exd6+-$ with a material and positional advantage;

20... $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ gives White a winning attack after 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+\Box+-$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22. $f4!$ (22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g6+-$) 22... $f6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $fxg5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xd1+-$

20... $b4$ 21. $\mathbb{H}c4$ $d5$ 22. $\mathbb{H}xb4$

23. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xg5!!?$



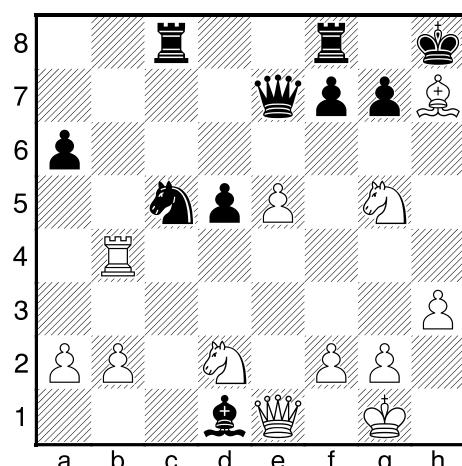
23... $\mathbb{Q}xd1??$

A second game-losing blunder from The Chess Machine

(23... $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 24. $f3\pm$)

This time Yates pounces...

24. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+\Box+-$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$



... only to immediately go wrong.

25. $\mathbb{H}h4??$

"The point of the sacrifice of the exchange", says Alekhine. But here Alekhine and Yates missed a second win for White with

25. $\mathbb{W}xd1!+-$:

a) 25... $g6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ (26... $fxg6$ 27. $\mathbb{H}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}df3$ with 3p and an attack for the exchange) 27. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xg6$ 28. $\mathbb{H}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 29. $\mathbb{H}g4+-$;

b) 25... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ White has the material and the attacking compensation;

c) 25... $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 27. $\mathbb{H}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ White could toss in some discovered checks to reach the time control, but the direct route is: 28. $\mathbb{W}d3!$ $\mathbb{H}c4$ 29. $\mathbb{H}h5!$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g8+-$.

25... $\mathbb{W}xg5\Box=$ 26. $f4!$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

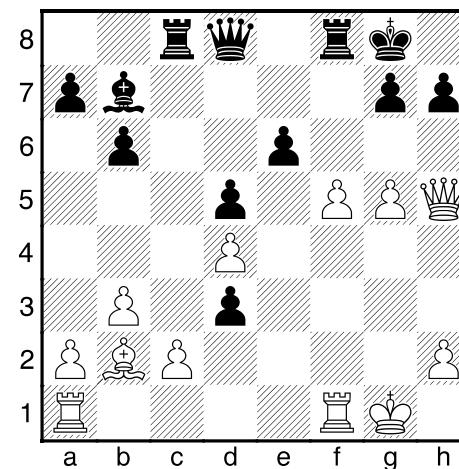
Black's \mathbb{W} guards h4, so White doesn't have a combo with $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{H}h8+\mathbb{W}h4$; so, down a \mathbb{H} , he forces the draw.

27. $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$
29. $\mathbb{Q}c2+$

1/2

Maroczy, Geza
Bogoljubow, Efim

New York 1924 (5), 22.03.1924
Notes: John Upper



20... $\mathbb{Q}xc2??$

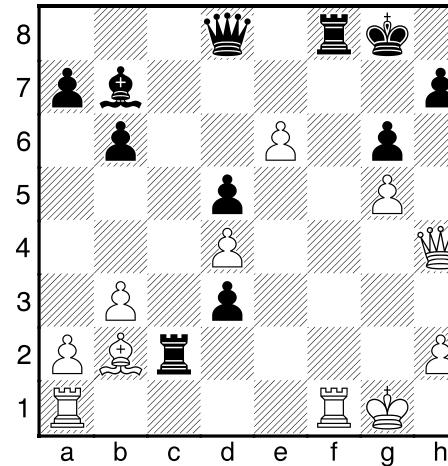
As Alekhine noted, 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf5+-$ was winning. The game move gives White an amazing game-saving resource.

21. $g6??$

AA thought White's g6-pawn gave sufficient counterplay for a draw, but it doesn't. White's miracle resource is: 21. $fxe6\Box$ $g6\Box$ (Taking the \mathbb{Q} loses 21... $\mathbb{Q}xb2??$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f7\Box+-$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (22... $d2$ 23. $e7+-$) 23. $\mathbb{Q}af1\Box+-$) 22. $\mathbb{W}h4\Box$ Keeping an eye on h7, so $\mathbb{Q}f7$ comes with a threat. Analysis Diagram

Chess Canada

New York 1924



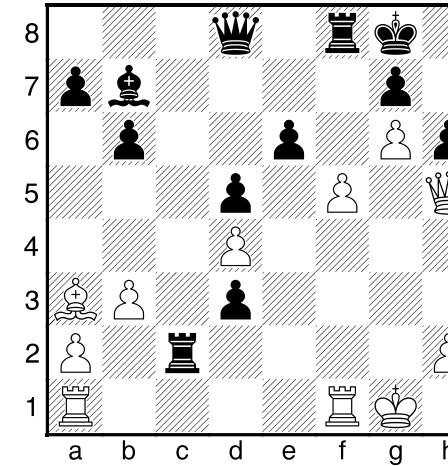
22... $\mathbb{B}xf1+$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xf1$ $\mathbb{B}e2\Box$
 (23... $\mathbb{B}xb2??$ 24. $\mathbb{B}f7+-$ h5
 25.e7 \Box (25. $\mathbb{W}f4??$ d2 \Box -+)
 25... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}f8+$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 27.e8 \mathbb{W}
 $\mathbb{B}b1+$ 28. $\mathbb{B}g2)$ 24. $\mathbb{B}f7$ (24. $\mathbb{W}h6!?$
 or 24. $\mathbb{B}a3!?)$ 24...h5 \Box 25. $\mathbb{B}f6\infty$.

22... $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 23. $\mathbb{B}f6\Box$ = $\mathbb{B}c8$
 24. $\mathbb{B}af1\Box$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ (24... $\mathbb{B}xf6??$
 25.gxf6 $\mathbb{B}xe6$ 26.f7+ wins the
 $\mathbb{W}.)$ 25. $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{B}xe6$
 26. $\mathbb{B}xg6+\Box$ =. A wild
 line, which (incidentally)
 shows how unimportant
 the fianchettoed \mathbb{B} s are
 when blocked by their
 own pawns.

21...h6-+ 22. $\mathbb{B}a3$

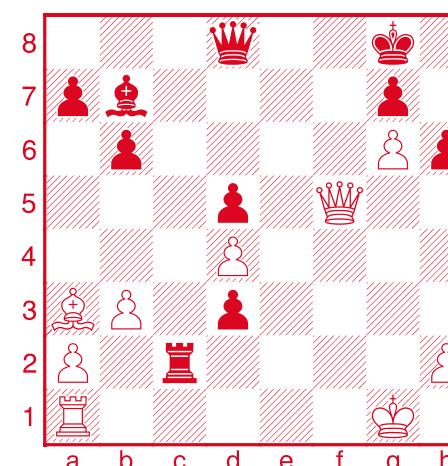
puttering

Alekhine & Ed Lasker
 in publicity photo with
 golfer "Chick" Evans.



22... $\mathbb{B}xf5??$
 22... $\mathbb{W}f6\Box$ -+ 23. $\mathbb{W}g4$ (23.fxe6
 $\mathbb{W}xd4+-$; 23. $\mathbb{B}xf8$ $\mathbb{W}xd4+$
 24. $\mathbb{B}h1$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$ 25. $\mathbb{W}f3$ d4-+)
 23...exf5-+ simplest, White can't
 defend d4 and g6.

23. $\mathbb{B}xf5\Box\mathbb{B} exf5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xf5$

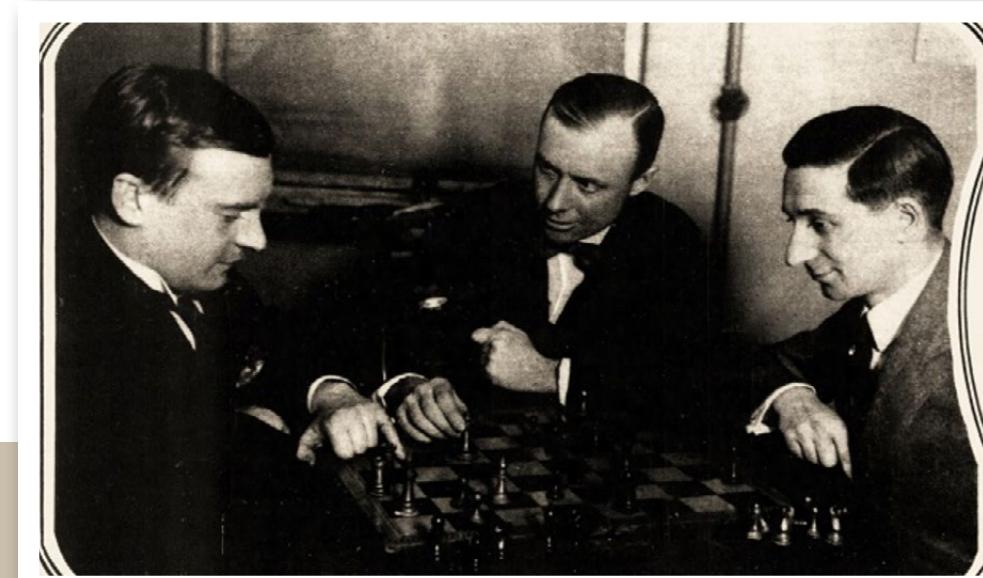


What happens if ... $\mathbb{W}c8$?
 What happens if ... $\mathbb{W}f6$?

24... $\mathbb{W}f6!$
 Just for fun, here's a crazy line
 of cat-and-mouse: 24... $\mathbb{W}c8!?$
 25. $\mathbb{W}f7+$ $\mathbb{B}h8$ 26.h3 \Box = $\mathbb{W}d8\Box$
 27. $\mathbb{B}h1!$ (27. $\mathbb{B}e7$ $\mathbb{W}g8=)$
 27... $\mathbb{W}b8$ 28. $\mathbb{B}d6\Box$ $\mathbb{W}c8$
 29. $\mathbb{B}g1\Box$ $\mathbb{B}c1+\Box$
 30. $\mathbb{B}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}xc1+$
 31. $\mathbb{B}g2$ $\mathbb{W}d2+=.$

25. $\mathbb{B}e1??$
 □25. $\mathbb{B}f1\Box$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$
 26. $\mathbb{B}xf5$ $\mathbb{B}c8\mathbb{B}$.

This attempt to
 exploit Black's
 back rank loses
 immediately.



Courier-Journal, 24 February 1924 (chessnotes 11301)

25... $\mathbb{B}e2?$

But not to this move, which
Alekhine said was "Clearly
 forced."

Black wins with the Puzzle Rush-
 style: 25... $\mathbb{B}c1!!$, when either
 capture of the \mathbb{B} ends the mate
 threat on f8 and so hangs the \mathbb{W} ,
 leaving White a choice of losing
 endings:

26. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}xe1+$ 27. $\mathbb{W}f1$ d2-+;

26. $\mathbb{B}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}xf5-$ +;

26. $\mathbb{B}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 27. $\mathbb{B}e8+$ $\mathbb{W}f8$
 28. $\mathbb{B}xf8+$ $\mathbb{B}xf8$ 29. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{B}c8-$ +
 saves the d3-pawn and wins the
 one on g6. Black probably wins
 this, but it is opposite \mathbb{B} s, so it's
 not trivial.

26. $\mathbb{B}f1??$

The final blunder.

26. $\mathbb{B}xe2\Box$ dxe2 27. $\mathbb{W}xf6\Box$ gxf6
 28. $\mathbb{B}f2!$ $\mathbb{B}a6$ 29. $\mathbb{B}d6!=.$

26... $\mathbb{W}xd4+!$ 27. $\mathbb{B}h1$ $\mathbb{W}f6\Box$

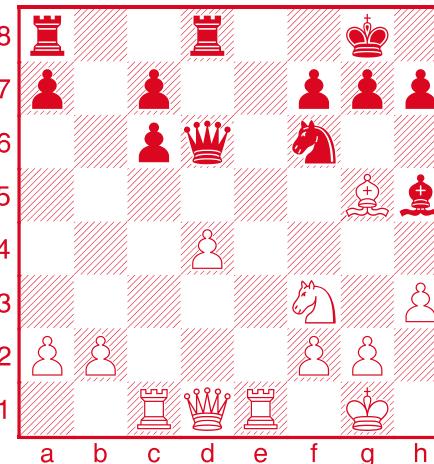
0-1

Marshall, Frank Janowski, Dawid

New York 1924 (13), 03.04.1924

Notes: John Uppercrust

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘c3 e5 4.e3 exd4 5.exd4 ♘c6 6.♗f3 ♘f6 7.♗xc4 ♘d6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗g5 ♘g4 10.♗d5 ♘e7 11.♗xe7+ ♘xe7 12.♗d5 ♘fd8 13.♗e1 ♘d6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.h3 ♘h5 16.♗c1



Which ♘ should Black activate:
...♘ab8 or ...♘e8?

16...♘ab8?

Sets up a ♘ fork on c6, which White immediately exploits.

16...♘e8! 17.g4 ♘xe1+

18.♗xe1 ♘g6 19.♗xf6 (19.♗c3 ♘e4=) 19...♗xf6 20.♗e5±.

17.g4 ♘g6 18.♗e5! c5

18...♗xd4 19.♗xd4 ♘xd4

20.♗xc6+–;

18...♗b6 19.♗c4+–;

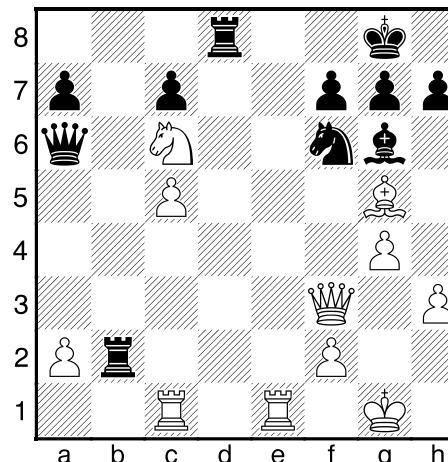
18...♘e4 19.♗xf6 gxf6 20.♗xf7+–

19.♗xc5+–

Black has no comp for the pawn and bad queenside.

19...♗a6 20.♗f3 ♘xb2

21.♗c6



There are no safe squares for the ♘d8!

21...♘e4

21...♗a8 22.♗e7+ ♘f8

23.♗xa8+–.

21...♗f8? 22.♗xf6 gxf6

23.♗xf6+– threatens mate and a winning discovery on the ♘.

21...♗e8 22.♗xf6 ♘xe1+ 23.♗xe1 gxf6 24.♗xf6+– threatens a back rank mate, ♘e7+ ♘h8#, the ♘b2, and a winning discovery on the ♘.

22.♗e7+ ♘h8 23.♗xe4

♗xe4 24.♗xe4 ♘e2 25.♗e3

♗xa2 26.♗c6 ♘g8 27.♗d5

♗a4 28.♗e5 h6 29.♗xf7

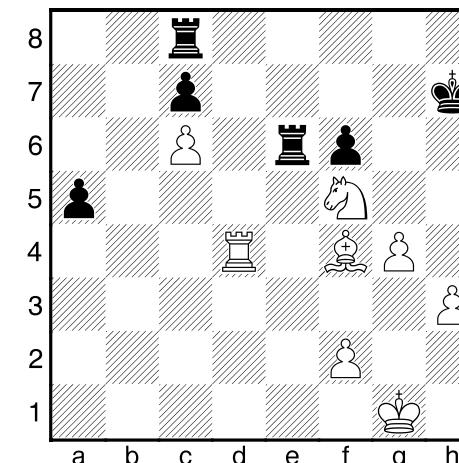
♗f6 30.♗xf6 gxf6 31.♗f7+

♘h7 32.♗xh6 ♘d8 33.♗f5

a5 34.c6 ♘e4 35.♗c5 ♘e5

36.♗c4 ♘e6 37.♗f4 ♘c8

38.♗d4!



38...♘h8

38...♗xc6 39.♗e7 and there's no check on c1!

39.♗d7 a4 40.♗e7 ♘xe7

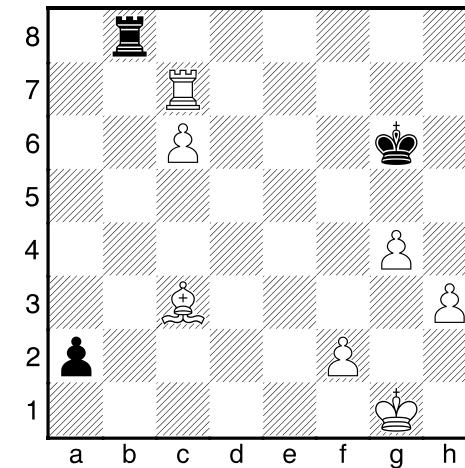
41.♗xe7 a3 42.♗h6!

Ruthless.

42...a2 43.♗g7+ ♘h7

44.♗xf6+ ♘g6 45.♗c3 ♘b8

46.♗xc7



I can't imagine any 21st century GM playing this out in anything other than a bullet game.

46...♗b3 47.♗g7+ ♘h6

48.g5+! ♘h5 49.♗f6 ♘a3

50.c7 a1 ♘+ 51.♗xa1 ♘xa1+

52.♔g2 ♘c1 53.f4 ♘c3

54.♔f2

1-0



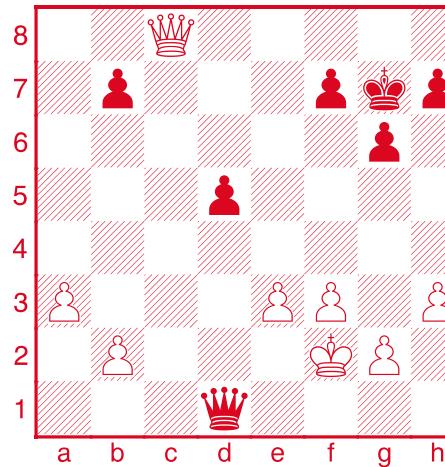
Chess Canada

New York 1924



Alekhine, Alexander Maroczy, Geza

New York 1924, (14), 05.04.1924
Notes: John Upper



31. $\mathbb{W}xb7??$

Made during the 1st session. In his book Alekhine says he was distracted by the Capablanca - Lasker game.

31. $\mathbb{W}c3+\square+- \mathbb{W}g8$

32. $\mathbb{W}d4!+-$ White has both an extra pawn, and targets on d5 and b7 — if the d5 pawn was on c6 it would be nearly equal.

31... $\mathbb{W}d2+!$

Or 31...d4=.

32. $\mathbb{K}g3$

32. $\mathbb{K}g1 \mathbb{W}xe3+=.$

32... $d4\Box=$

"This simple move was overlooked by White." - **Alekhine**

33. $exd4 \mathbb{W}g5+$

Black has a perpetual.

1/2

"This was the day of days and most fortunate did they rate themselves who, unaware of the pairings, repaired to the scene of action only to find that the number of the round in which Dr. Lasker was to play Capablanca for the second time, had come out of the hat."

- tournament book

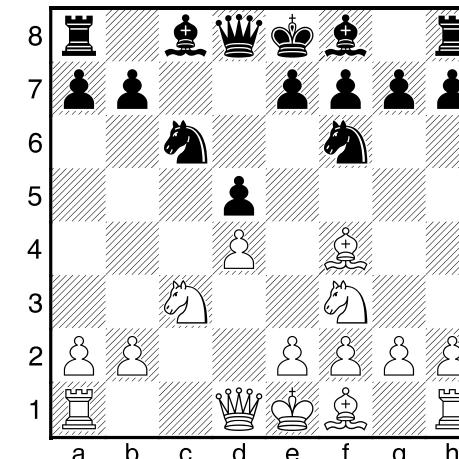
Capablanca, Jose Raul Lasker, Emanuel

New York 1924 (14), 05.04.1924
Notes: John Upper

Capablanca defeated Lasker for the World Championship in 1921. NY1924 was the first time they'd played since then. Their round 2 game, played while Capa was recovering from a cold, was an uneventful 30 move draw.

This game won Capa the 3rd Brilliancy Prize.

1. $d4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 2. $c4 c6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3 d5$
4. $cx d5 c x d5$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}c6$
6. $\mathbb{Q}f4$



An exchange Slav? How could

this win a so-called Brilliancy Prize?

6... $e6$

6... $a6$ and 6... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ are the modern remedies.

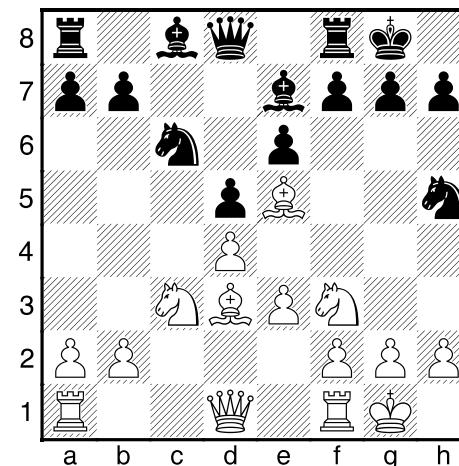
7. $e3 \mathbb{Q}e7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d3 0-0 9. 0-0-0$

$\mathbb{Q}h5$

Alekhine:

"The logical consequence of the chosen system of development which leads to a middle game very difficult to be handled by both sides. Although White will retain the initiative a long while, nevertheless the entire line of play is neither disadvantageous nor devoid of chances for Black and cannot be deemed in any way the cause of his defeat."

10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

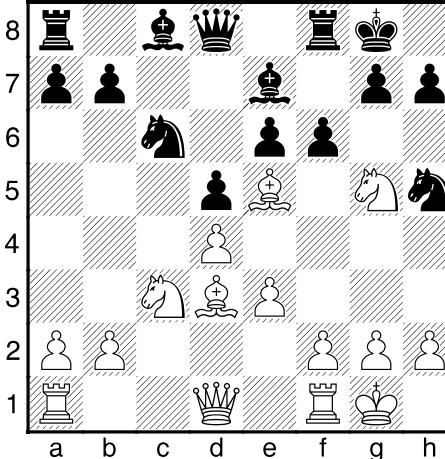


10...f5

Alekhine says this throws away a whole tempo over ...f7–f6–f5, though he misses a crucial tactical detail.

10...f6 gives White an extra option 11.♘g5!? which AA says is bad because of 11...♝e8, but AA overlooked or underestimated 12.♗b5□ winning for White, as in **Euwe, M-Landau, S** NED-ch11 Netherlandsm, 1939.

Let's take a closer look at 10...f6 11.♘g5!? *Analysis Diagram*



This is not bad at all, but it is more Marshall (or Alekhine!?) than Capablanca, since the attacks on h5 and h7 force the following:

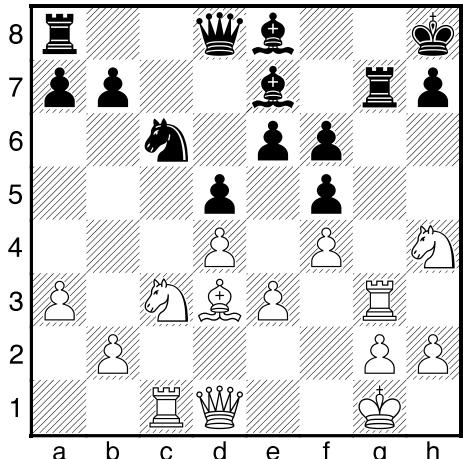
11...fxe5? 12.♕xh7+ ♔h8

13.♘f7+!! ♜xf7 14.♗xh5+– Vigus, *Play the Slav*, (Everyman, 2008).

11...g6□ 12.♘xh7□ fxe5□ (12...♔xh7?? 13.♗xh5+ #2) 13.♗g4!N with several variations leading to the familiar 0.00, the simplest being: 13...exd4 (13...♗g7!?) 14.♗xg6+ ♔g7 15.♗g5 ♜xg5□ with a forced repetition. 16.♗h7+ ♔f7 17.♗g6+=.

There is certainly more to be found in here with the help of the newer NNUE engines. (hint hint)

11.♗c1 ♘f6 12.♕xf6 gxf6
13.♘h4 ♔h8 14.f4 ♜g8
15.♗f3 ♜d7 16.♗h3 ♜e8
17.a3 ♜g7 18.♗g3



Alekhine:

"White decides upon an exchange of rooks which probably increases his offensive possibilities but, at the same time, cedes a counter-initiative to his opponent, who thereby will be able to effect a correctly timed regrouping operation for defensive purposes."

18...♜xg3 19.hxg3 ♜c8

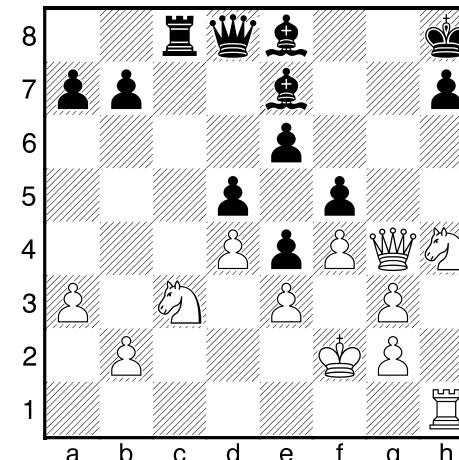
20.♔f2 ♘a5 21.♗f3

□21.g4±.

21...♘c4 22.♗e2 ♘d6

23.♗h1 ♘e4+ 24.♗xe4 fxe4

25.♗g4 f5



26.♘xf5!

Alekhine:

"White obtains three pawns in return for the knight, and a

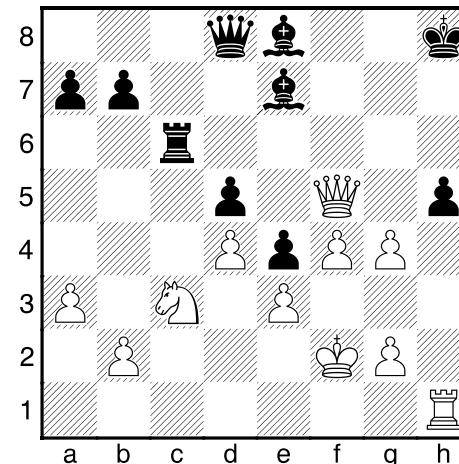
permanent offensive against the exposed hostile king. The correctness of the sacrifice for that reason is unquestionable."

26...exf5 27.♗xf5 h5 28.g4!

28.♗xh5+!? is not as crazy as it looks: 28...♔xh5 29.♗xh5+ ♔g7 30.♗g4+ Black can obviously take the repetition, but it's not clear he has better: 30...♗f8 31.♗f5+ ♔f6!? 32.g4!↑.

28...♜c6

Now all the black pieces help defend the ♔.



29.g5

□29.♘xd5 ♔h4+ 30.g3 ♜c2+ 31.♔g1 ♜c1+ 32.♔g2 ♜c2+ 33.♔h3 hxg4+ 34.♔xg4 ♔d7 35.♗xh4+ ♜xh4+ (35...♗g8 36.♗f6++– and ♜xd7.) 36.gxh4



Chess Canada

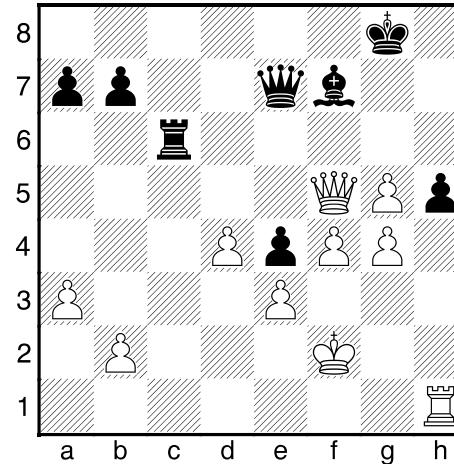
New York 1924



$\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ – with a winning endgame. - **Alekhine**

29... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?!$
 □ 30.g4.

30... $\mathbb{Q}f7! \infty$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$
 32.g4 ∞



32... $hxg4??$

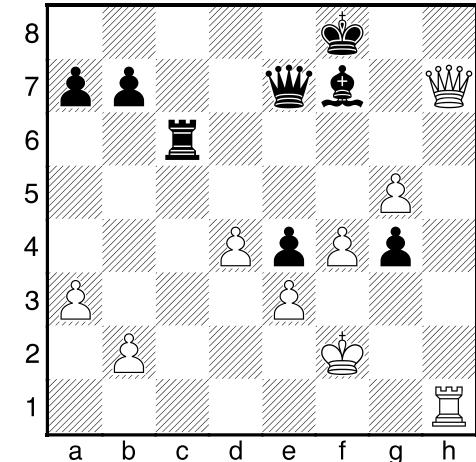
Alekhine devoted a lot of attention to this high-profile game between his two great predecessors, and his analysis of this complicated position is tactically perfect:

"Again Dr. Lasker selects a somewhat difficult continuation. It is indeed doubtful if after the plausible 32... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 33. $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 34. $\mathbb{W}e5!?$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 35. $dxe5$ $hxg4$ 36. $f5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5 \square \infty$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$

38. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ although White would have obtained thereby only two pawns for his piece, he would have commanded quite such easy drawing chances as in the actual game, for in that case the weakness of his e-pawn, as well as the entrance of the rook to the seventh row, would have caused him fresh troubles.

A simpler drawing variation would have been 32... $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g3 \square$ (33. $\mathbb{Q}f1?$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ *Black would actually obtain a mating attack*) 33... $\mathbb{Q}e2 \square$ 34. $g6$ $h4+\square$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xh4 \square$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3+\square$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \square$ $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ and White could not have escaped perpetual check."

33. $\mathbb{W}h7+\square+-$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$



34. $\mathbb{Q}h6??$

Alekhine doesn't comment, but SF says this gives away the win.

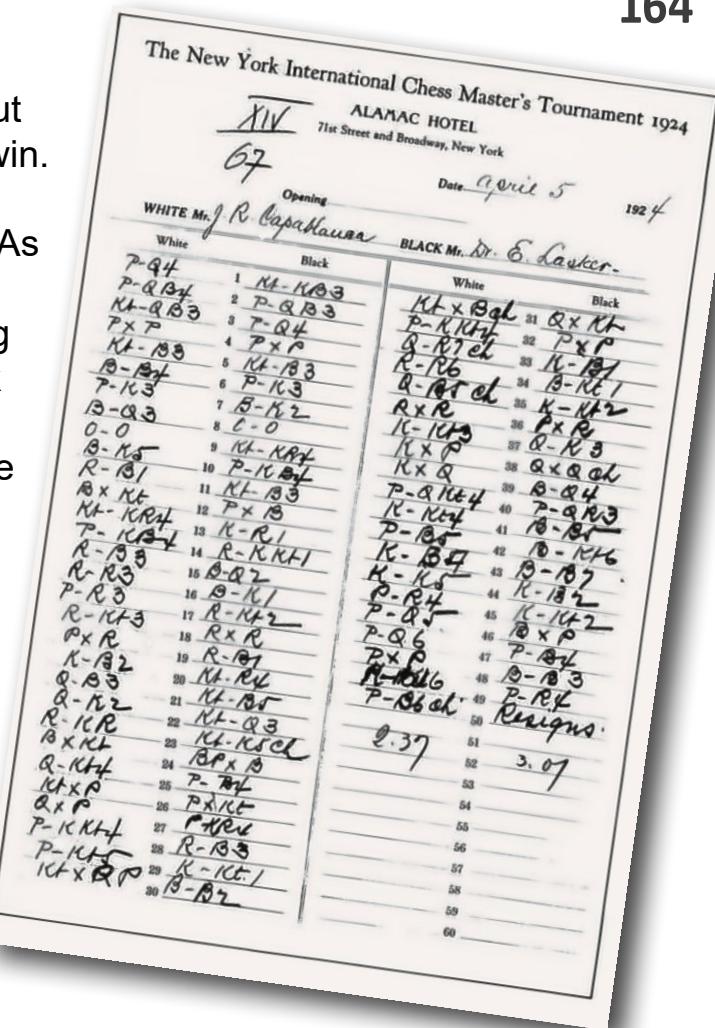
□ 34. $\mathbb{W}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g3 \square+-$. As I understand it, this improves on the game line by improving the \mathbb{Q} (getting out of 2nd rank checks and ready to march across the light squares) while Black has no corresponding way to improve.

34... $\mathbb{Q}g8!$

Alekhine:

"Black might have safely taken this rook for instance: 34... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 35. $\mathbb{W}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 36. $g6$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ (36... $\mathbb{Q}e6?$ 37. $g7!+-$) 37. $f5$ $\mathbb{W}c7!$ and, after 38. $f6$ he would again have had perpetual check: 38... $\mathbb{W}c2+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}c7+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ (40. $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$ $\mathbb{Q}e6++-$) 40... $\mathbb{W}c2+=.$ "

SF agrees with most of that, but finds a winning improvement: instead of 38. $f6$, White wins with 38. $\mathbb{W}h4 \square+-$ which does three things: the white \mathbb{Q} can take on $g4$ without allowing the \mathbb{Q} check from $e6$, if the black \mathbb{W} chases

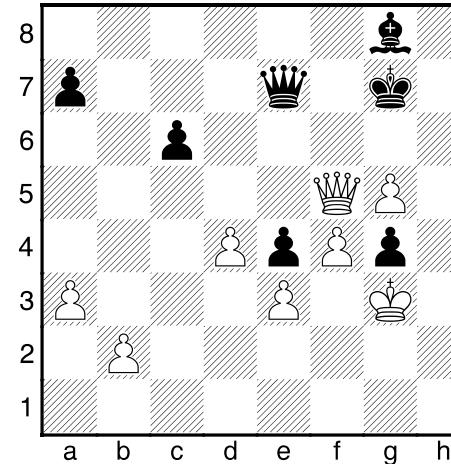


the white \mathbb{Q} it creates a bridge for the \mathbb{Q} to hide on the h-file, and (if Black passes) White goes $f6+-$, threatening $f7+$, and $\mathbb{W}h7+$ if $\mathbb{Q}xf7$.

35. $\mathbb{W}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxcc6$
 37. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

Chess Canada

New York 1924



37... $\mathbb{W}e6??$

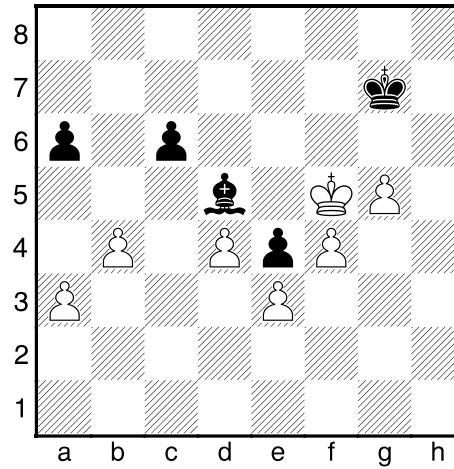
Lasker's worst move of the tournament. With 37... $\mathbb{Q}d5=$ Lasker would have finished 2½ points ahead of Capablanca, instead of "only" 1½.

38. $\mathbb{Q}xg4\blacksquare+$

Alekhine:

"It may almost be assumed that Dr. Lasker for the moment had forgotten the possibility of this capture. Now the exchange of queens, under circumstances very unfavorable to him, can no longer be avoided, inasmuch as his queen dared not abandon the protection of the f6-square on account of a mate in two moves."

38... $\mathbb{W}xf5+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xf5\mathbb{Q}d5$
40.b4 a6



It's a sign of how bad the \mathbb{Q} is that White has more than one way to win this.

41. $\mathbb{Q}g4$

41. $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ — also wins, either with a4 and b5 to exploit the unstable \mathbb{Q} , or strolling over and taking the a-pawn.

41... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 42.f5 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}f4$
 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 45.a4
 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 46.d5 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 47.d6 c5
48.bxc5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ a5
50.f6+

Rather a lot of game-changing mistakes, which may explain why this game is so rarely anthologized, despite featuring the two World Champions who topped the table at this great tournament.

1-0

Lasker, Emanuel Lasker, Edward

New York 1924 (6), 23.03.1924

Notes: Ed Lasker, Sadler, Upper

This game climaxes with a fortress — where a \mathbb{Q} holds vs \mathbb{Q} — that makes its ending almost as famous as the much-anthologized Capablanca - Tartakower, played in the same round.

Even though he didn't win it, the whole game, not just the ending, illustrates the qualities that made **Emanuel Lasker** the longest-reigning World Champion:

- 1) the fine judgement and strong nerves to create positions that put his opponents under maximal pressure (e.g. 30. $\mathbb{Q}e3!?$, 51. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$);
- 2) the sharp tactical eye to find his way through those minefields (21. $\mathbb{Q}c2!$, 35. $\mathbb{Q}h2!$); and
- 3) the endgame skill that allowed him to find a draw in a position all his competitors thought was lost.

Notes here borrow mainly from two books:

- Edward Lasker, *Chess for Fun & Chess for Blood*, (Dover, 1942)
- Sadler & Giddens, *Re-Engineering the Chess Classics: A Silicon Reappraisal of Thirty-Five Classic Games* (NiC, 2022).

Their titles perfectly convey their different styles and strengths:

Fun & Blood is fully human — all the excitement and confusion of OTB chess told by a man who loved the game and played very well.

Silicon Reappraisal tries to steal fire from the computer gods by subjecting critical positions of classic games to computer v computer test matches, and reassembling the results into digestible text and fantastic variations.

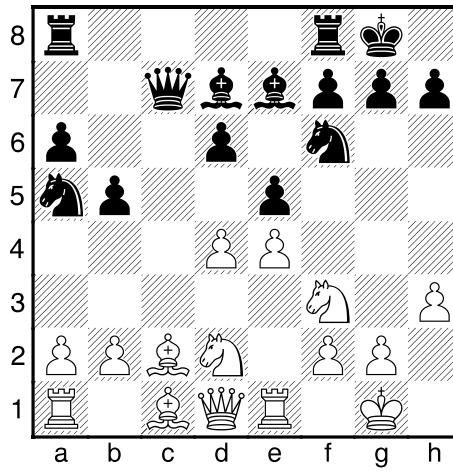
In their completely different ways, both books are excellent.

Chess Canada

New York 1924



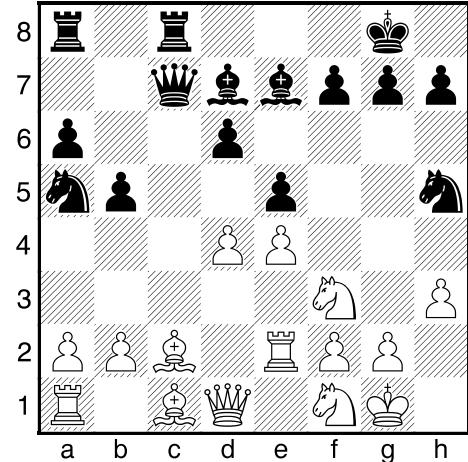
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6
 4.♕a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♔e7 6.♗e1
 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.h3
 ♘a5 10.♗c2 c5 11.d4 ♔c7
 12.♗bd2 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♘d7



A standard **Chigorin Lopez** with the rare ...♗d7 — this game being only the second one in the Megabase after Schlechter - Chigorin, 1907 — though it has been tried a few times by Nigel Short.

The idea is simply to connect the ♘s while realizing that any other square for the ♔ leaves it misplaced after d4-d5.

14.♗f1 ♕fc8 15.♗e2!?
 ♘h5!?



Discouraging ♘g3 and challenging the former World Champion to an early tactical skirmish!? Not *prudent*, but bold enough to create something memorable!

Ed.Lasker:

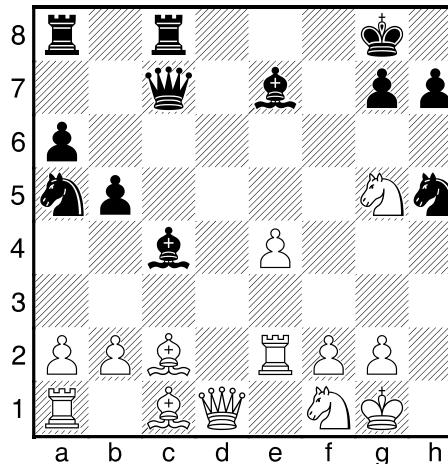
"when I met Emanuel Lasker in the sixth round, I was certainly anything but hopeful of my chances. But I was thrilled by the thought of a serious game with the greatest Chess master of all times whose name was accidentally also my own and I was determined to do that name honor no matter what the outcome of the battle might be."

16.dxe5 dxe5 17.♗xe5
 Challenge accepted!

17...♗xh3
 Desperado 1.

18.♗xf7
 Desperado 2.

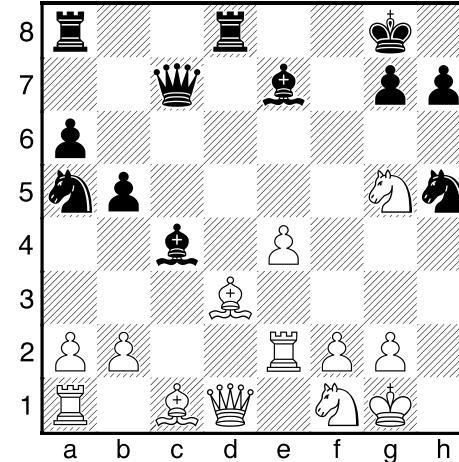
18...♔e6 19.♗g5 ♔c4



20.♔d3

20.♗e1! ♘f4□ (20...♗xf1??
 21.♗d5+ with a smothered mate.) 21.♗xf4 ♕xf4□ 22.♗f3
 White's up a passed e-pawn, but it looks like Black can perpetual the ♔e1 with 22...♗b4 23.♗e3
 ♔c5. Here, SF prefers White after either giving the ♘ back with b2-b4 or giving the exchange with e4-e5, neither of which is at all obvious here, let alone at move 20.

20...♗d8



21.♗c2

Ed.Lasker:

"This almost humorous counter-pin I had not taken into consideration...but I still have quite an advantage in mobility and I control the Queen's file, so that my positional superiority should be worth the Pawn I lost in the mix-up. Encouraging myself with these considerations I continued..."

Sadler:

"It's funny — and quite typical of analyzing with engines — that such a sharp-looking position is actually balanced, with multiple equivalent ways of playing
 21.♗e1 ♘f4 22.♗xc4+ bxc4
 23.♗xf4 ♕xf4 24.♗h3 ♕xd1
 25.♗xf4 ♕xa1 26.♗xa1 ♘f6 once

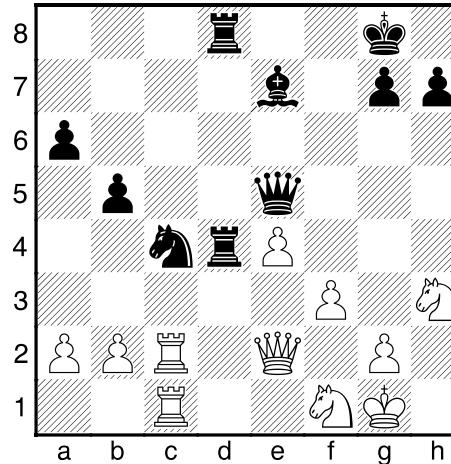


again gives Black plenty for the pawn, (1/2–1/2, 37) Dragon 3.1–Stockfish."

**21... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$
23. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$
 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4!$**

Stops f4 and prepares to double \mathbb{Q} s.

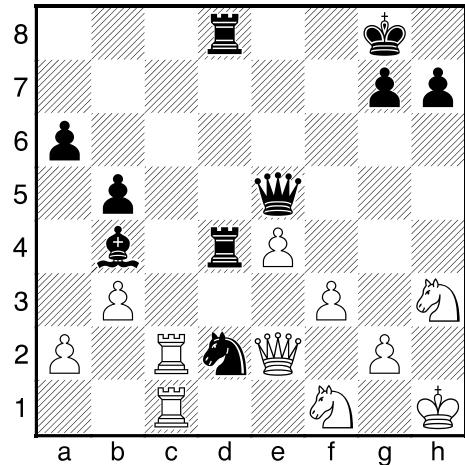
26.f3 $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$



Ed. Lasker:

"I had only about five minutes left within which to complete my thirtieth move, and realizing that breaking in at d2 was the only forceful plan at my disposal I decided to go into it."

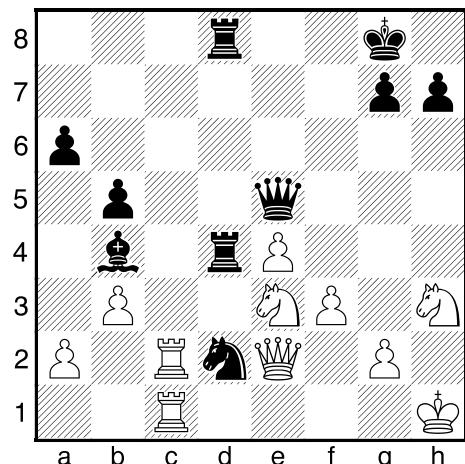
**27... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 29.b3
 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$**



Sadler:

"This looks a bit crazy at first and even at second sight! What on earth is the knight achieving on d2?... The logic isn't bad, but tactics and lunatic activity is enough to keep Black afloat!"

30. $\mathbb{Q}e3!?$



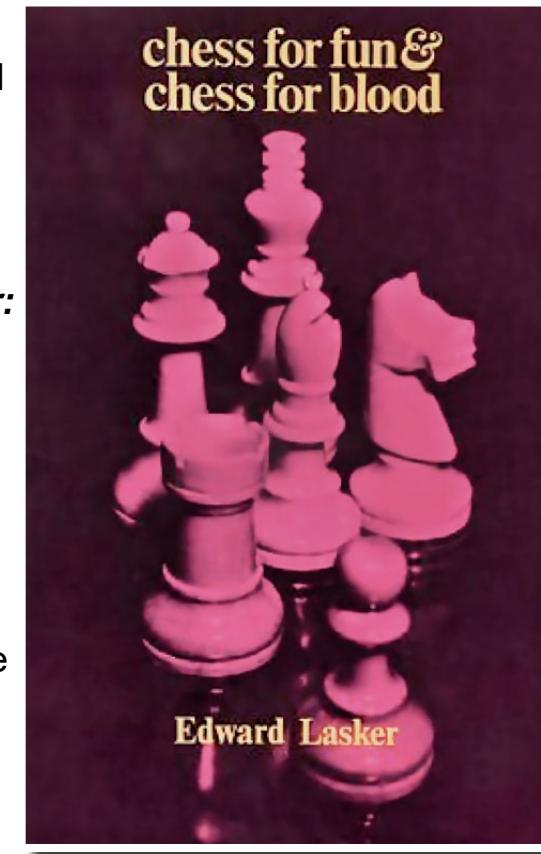
Sadler:

"Objectively inferior, but typical Lasker. With Black's flag hanging (the time control for this event was at move 30), he dangles before him the tempting knight sacrifice on e4."

editor - Here is a long selection from [Edward Lasker's Chess for fun & Chess for Blood](#). It gives as accurate a description as I have ever read of time-trouble panic and the he-goes-there-I-go-there calculation that every chess-player knows. Here and elsewhere I have changed Lasker's original descriptive notation to algebraic.

Edward Lasker:

Only one more move to make before time control. I went over the only two moves which White could make if he wanted to avoid the exchange of the Knight,



either $\mathbb{N}h2$ or $\mathbb{N}e3$. In the latter case, why could I not sacrifice my Knight on e4 and regain the piece after $\mathbb{f}xe4$, ... $\mathbb{R}xe4$, since his Knight was pinned? Well, I did not suppose White would make that move. But I awoke from my musings with a start...He did make that move! Had he made it to complicate things so that I would not have enough time left to calculate the consequences of the sacrifice $\mathbb{N}xe4$? Or had I made a mistake in my calculation? In feverish haste I went over the combination again. What could he do after 31. $\mathbb{f}xe4$ $\mathbb{R}xe4$? Perhaps 32. $\mathbb{R}c8$? Then I could not exchange Rooks because after 33. $\mathbb{R}xc8+$ and 34. $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ I had no defence. But what about 32... $\mathbb{R}e8$? Would that not defend the first rank and still win back the Knight? After exchanging Rooks

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White could not protect the Knight with the other Rook because my Bishop held both White's e1-square and Qc3. Or could he perhaps play for a mating attack with 34.Qd3? Tick, tick went the clock... fifteen seconds left... after ...RxN he would continue with 35.Qd5+. Why not interpose the Queen on d6 or even go in the corner with the King? Or could he play 34.Ng1 and answer ...RxN with Qg4, attacking my Bishop and threatening Rc8? ...Bf8 should do in that case... Three seconds left! I had to move. I was so excited by that time that the pieces began to dance in front of my eyes! Was there perhaps a move which maintained my threat... which did not spoil anything, so that I could squeeze in my thirtieth move before the flag fell and then analyze the consequences of the Knight's sacrifice in peace? . . . Ah! ...Ba3! His Rook must move and... quick!

Edward Lasker & Emanuel Lasker

undated

Ed.Lasker:

"A careful analysis of the combination with Emanuel Lasker himself last year [1940 – *editor*] brought out that if he had played... 30... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ instead of $\mathbb{N}e3$, the game would have ended in a draw, and so I feel somewhat consoled today. After 30... $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 33.f4 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ would have been the likely continuation."



30... $\mathbb{Q}a3?$

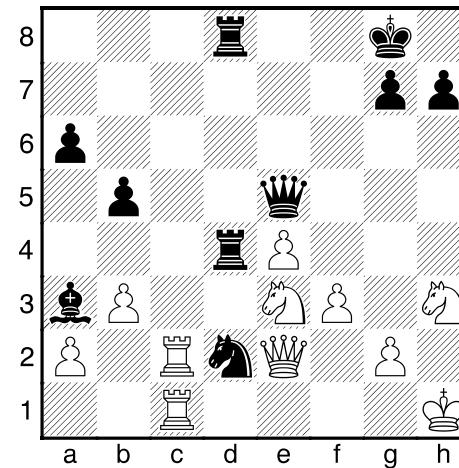
30... $\mathbb{Q}xe4\Box=$:

31.fxe4? $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ "a very difficult resource to spot" - **Sadler**. Indeed: 18 years later, both Laskers thought the (weaker) ... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ was winning. (32... $\mathbb{Q}xc8??$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xc8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 34. $\mathbb{W}f3+-$) 33. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 34. $\mathbb{W}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6=.

31. $\mathbb{Q}f1\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xg3\Box$ $\mathbb{W}xg3\Box$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8=$.

Ed.Lasker:

"I made the move just in time to avoid forfeiting the game, but immediately realized I had thrown away my opportunity to win, for after..."



31. $\mathbb{Q}d1\Box+-$

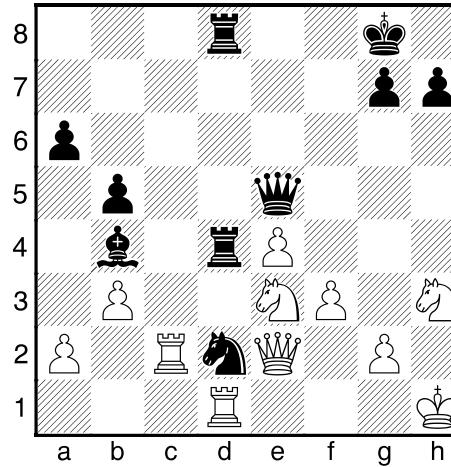
Ed.Lasker:

"...my Rook on d8 would be *en prise* if, after sacrificing my Knight on e4, I played $\mathbb{R}xe4$... I was worn out by the harassing time pressure and disconsolate when finding out, upon figuring through the combination again slowly, that in answer to 32.Rc8 I would really have won through ... $\mathbb{R}e8$."



I had to seal my next move, the game being adjourned until the evening session. Having completed the first thirty moves within the two hours allotted for them I had plenty of time to survey the situation."

31... $\mathbb{Q}b4$



Ed. Lasker:

"When the game was resumed two hours later Emanuel Lasker made the next three moves which I had expected:"

32.a3

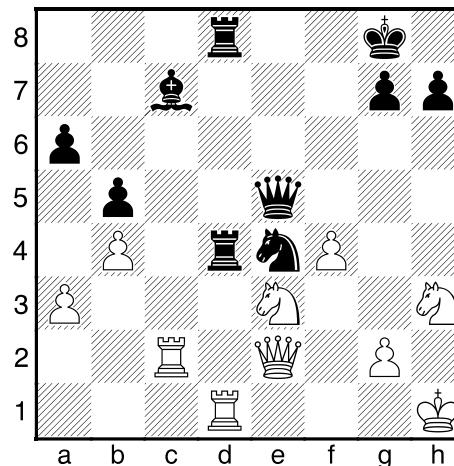
32. $\mathbb{Q}f2!$ $\mathbb{Q}4d7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}fg4$ $\mathbb{W}e6$
34.a3+-.

32... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 33.b4 $\mathbb{Q}c7?$!

33... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 34.fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}c7$
35. $\mathbb{Q}xc7!$ ± gets the same

materially unbalanced endgame as the actual game, without allowing White better options along the way.

34.f4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$



Ed. Lasker:

"My opponent again did not think very long... most disconcerting... before he made a reply I had not considered at all and which proved to refute my beautiful combination."

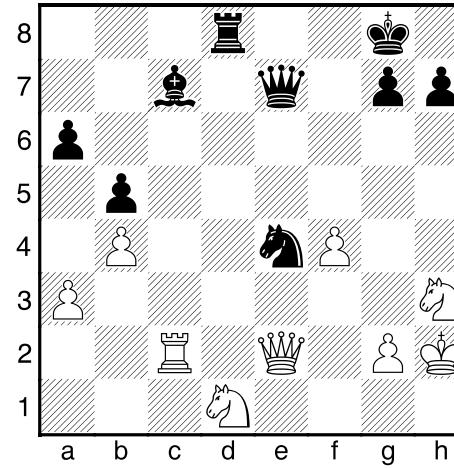
35. $\mathbb{Q}h2!!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$

35... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ also loses: 36. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ (37... $\mathbb{Q}xd8+?$ $\mathbb{Q}f8+\square-+$) 37... $\mathbb{W}xf4+$ 38.g3 \square $\mathbb{W}xg3+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}h1+-.$

36. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$

36.fxe5?? $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ 37.g3 $\mathbb{Q}1d2-+.$

36... $\mathbb{W}e7$



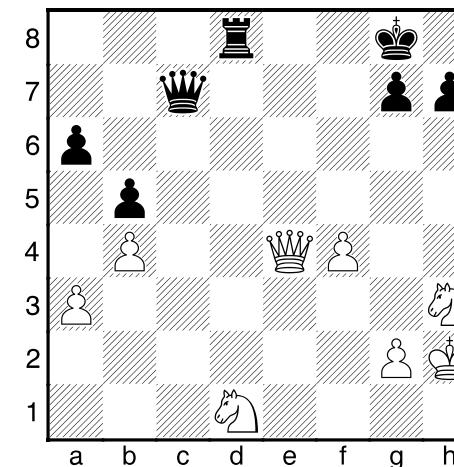
37. $\mathbb{Q}xc7?$

Ed. Lasker:

"An error of a type the old Russian Champion Ossip Bernstein used to describe as the "equalizing injustice of Chess". Emanuel Lasker made the move without a moment's hesitation. Evidently he had planned it far ahead, at the time he played Kh2, and as he saw he won the exchange, he did not bother looking around for other possibilities. With 37. $\mathbb{Q}df2$ he would have won a whole piece and the game. 37... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ would not have helped me because of 38. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}c8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 41. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}g5+.$ "

37. $\mathbb{Q}df2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4+$ doesn't help either: 38. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}4h3$ $\mathbb{W}g3+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}c8!$ simplest.

37... $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 38. $\mathbb{W}xe4$

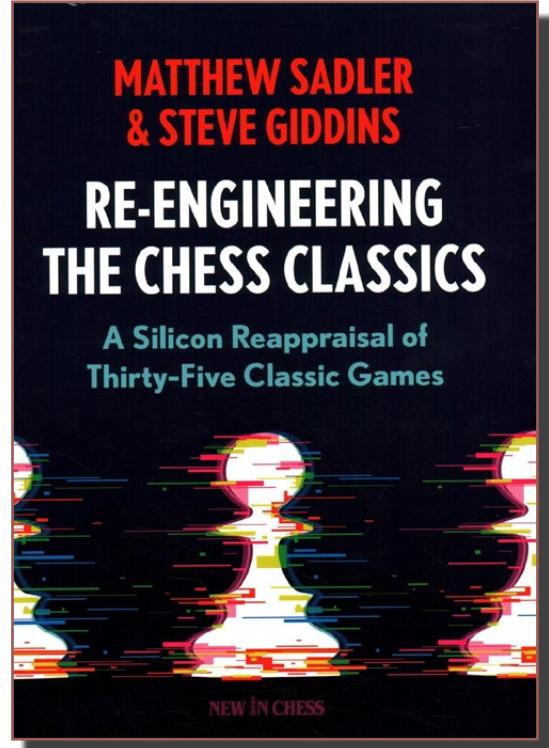


The next phase of the game is extraordinarily complicated, and I won't even try to give a detailed analysis of it — there is much more in *RTCC* if you are interested. Instead, I will give one long extract from Sadler which illustrates his ability to expertly combine verbal explanation with computer-backed analysis, but also shows a world-class GM and annotator running up against the limits of chess complexity, even with 3600+ silicon guides helping 24/7.



Matthew Sadler:

"Two minor pieces for the rook should be a winning advantage for White in principle. The engines certainly think so, and every game from this position ends in a white win. However, the specific material balance — two knights for the rook with pawns on both wings — does add some complexity to White's task. In particular, since there are pawns on both wings, the exchange of queens is something that White should avoid: the short-range knights will be unable to cover the queenside pawns. This means that Black has some scope to disrupt a white set-up offering the exchange of queens. White's primary task, of course, is to establish a knight on the e5-outpost — most likely the knight on d1 since the knight on



h3 performs the important task of defending f4 — which creates threats against the black king and helps restrain the activity of the black major pieces.

We now enter a phase of the game in which we ran hundreds of engine games. We do not

propose to include them in the notes — even we can have too many engine games! We propose rather to focus on the basic struggle in the position: White's desire to activate the knights and Black's attempts to prevent this, mostly by offering a queen exchange."

38... $\mathbb{W}c4$

[editor - 38... $\mathbb{E}xd1??$ 39. $\mathbb{W}e8\#$ would have been anti-climactic.]

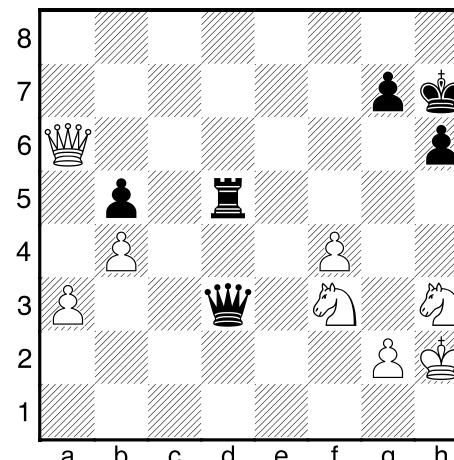
"38...h6 produced an engine game that illustrated the struggle

described above beautifully:

39. $\mathbb{Q}df2$
(preparing
 $\mathbb{Q}f2-g4-e5$)
39... $\mathbb{W}d7$

40. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ (offering the queen exchange) 41. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{E}d4$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (White aims for the e5-square with the knight) 42... $\mathbb{W}e4$ (and again!) 43. $\mathbb{W}b3+$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ (and again!) 44. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{K}h7$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 46. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ White has achieved a lot by establishing a knight on e5, but the win is far from automatic. 47. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 48. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{E}d5$ 50. $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ [editor - 51. $\mathbb{Q}hg5+$ $hxg5$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$ $\mathbb{E}xg5\#$]
51... $\mathbb{W}e4$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d3$ 53. $\mathbb{W}xa6$

Analysis Diagram



"Not quite sure how that happened, or why it had to happen..."

- Sadler & Giddens

Not quite sure how that happened, or why it had to happen, but White has won a pawn. The win still requires a lot of patience however, since Black's position remains completely intact even without the a6-pawn."

editor - Sadler concludes with a sample computer game from this position:

53... $\mathbb{E}h5$ 54. $\mathbb{W}e6$ $\mathbb{E}d5$ 55. $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 56. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 57. $\mathbb{W}a8$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{E}d4$ 59. $\mathbb{W}b8$ $\mathbb{E}d5$ 60. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 61. $\mathbb{W}f7$ $\mathbb{E}d2$ 62. $\mathbb{W}e8$ $\mathbb{E}d5$ 63. $\mathbb{W}h5$ (the threat of $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ forces a weakening of Black's kingside which helps White a lot) 63... $g6$ 64. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 65. $\mathbb{W}c8$ $\mathbb{E}d2$ 66. $\mathbb{W}b7+$ $\mathbb{K}g8$ 67. $\mathbb{W}xb5$ Another pawn drops and it's curtains, (1-0, 85) Stockfish-Dragon 3.1, 2022"

- Sadler, Re-Engineering the Chess Classics.

Chess Canada

New York 1924



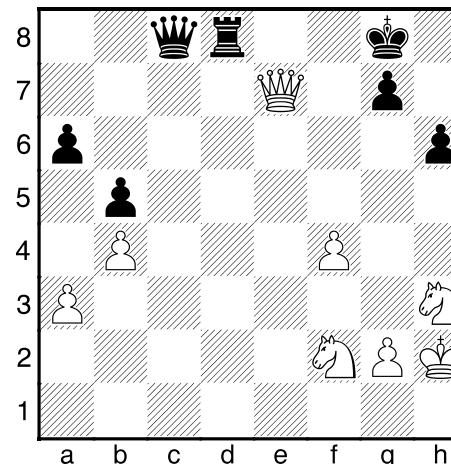
editor: Did that help?

Yes... when top-class engines can't hold a position I am sure that position is objectively lost...

But... Sadler's not the only one who doesn't understand all that maneuvering between moves 47 to 63, which makes as much sense to me as the tablebase-proved maneuvering in a 70+ move \mathbb{W} v \mathbb{K} ending.

Believe but not understand?

39. $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}df2$ h6



41. $\mathbb{W}a7?$!

$\square 41. \mathbb{Q}g4+$ — heading to e5.

41... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 42. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{W}d5?$!

43. $\mathbb{W}b6$

$\square 43. \mathbb{W}xa6.$

43... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 44. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

45. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}c4?$!

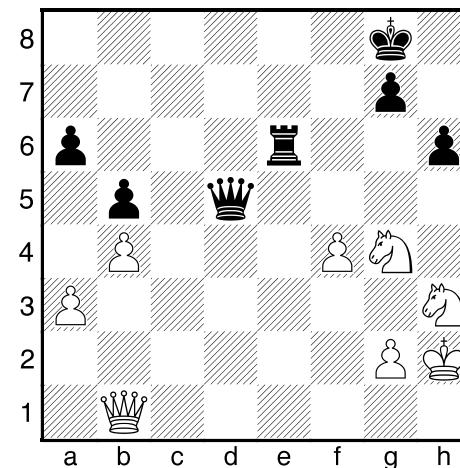
$\square 45... \mathbb{Q}g6 \Leftarrow$

46. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 47. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$

48. $\mathbb{W}b3+$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 49. $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

50. $\mathbb{Q}g4?$

$\square 50. \mathbb{Q}g1 \pm$ guarding e2 before switching the \mathbb{Q} s with $\mathbb{Q}fh3$ then $\mathbb{Q}f3$ heading to e5.



50... $\mathbb{Q}e2!$

Ed.Lasker:

"In permitting the sacrifice I practically offered a draw, because White's Queen will hardly have any difficulties in enforcing a perpetual check. However, from a psychological standpoint, I felt I had winning

chances because White would try for a win with the Knight and two passed Pawns against my Rook. I did not think I had much to fear from such an attempt, as the White King was bound to become exposed to attack as soon as the Pawns advanced. I might otherwise have tried ...Re4 and played ...Re2 only after White's Ne5."

This is psychologically astute, but the chess isn't right: computers rate $\mathbb{Q}e2$ as Black's only move to draw. Had he instead played 50... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ as he suggests, then White has 52. $\mathbb{W}g6 \square +$ — defending g2 and threatening to win the \mathbb{Q} with: $\mathbb{W}e8+$, $\mathbb{Q}g5+$, $\mathbb{W}h5+$. If Black defends the \mathbb{Q} and the light squares with 52... $\mathbb{W}e4$ then 53. $\mathbb{W}g4$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}g1-f3$ and White gets both \mathbb{Q} s to their best squares with very good winning chances.

51. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$

Sadler says this is, "Desperation from White to force something from the position, sacrificing a knight for two pawns and the chance for evil checks against

the open black king."

I'd quibble with the word "desperation", which suggests White felt he was in trouble and had to lash out. Rather, IMO, the former World Champion has been maneuvering for a dozen moves, testing his weaker opponent's vigilance. Finding him up to *that* challenge, White changes the material balance and dynamics and tries posing some different questions. With the exposed black king White still has a draw in hand, but maybe Black will go wrong *here*...?

This isn't "desperation", it is good practical fighting chess: White fights for the win by testing his opponent in a tricky but still objectively drawn position.

BTW: SF rates three other moves as equally good: 51. $\mathbb{W}f1$, 51. $\mathbb{Q}gf2$, and 51. $\mathbb{W}g1$.

51... $\mathbb{g}xh6$ 52. $\mathbb{W}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

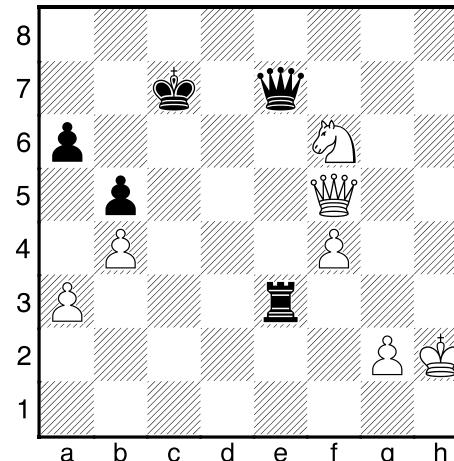
53. $\mathbb{W}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 54. $\mathbb{W}g6+$

$\mathbb{Q}d8$ 55. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 56. $\mathbb{W}f2$

$\mathbb{Q}g8$ 57. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 58. $\mathbb{W}c3$

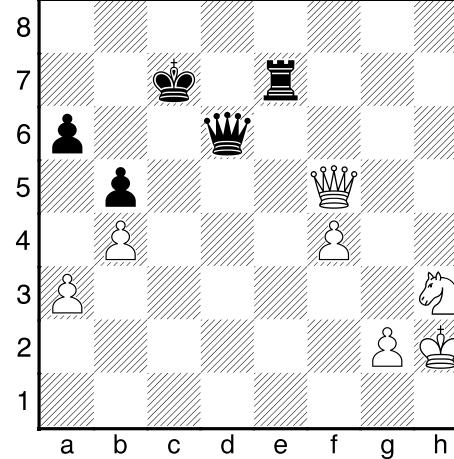
$\mathbb{Q}d7$ 59. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 60. $\mathbb{W}e4$

$\mathbb{Q}g7$ 61. $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$



62.♘g5 ♜e3 63.♘e4 ♜e7
Threat: ... ♜h4+–+.

64.♘f6



Ed.Lasker:

"White here sealed his move. A third four-hour session was in prospect as the ending was evidently going to be extremely difficult for both sides."

Blocks the mating threat and threatens a family fork on d5.

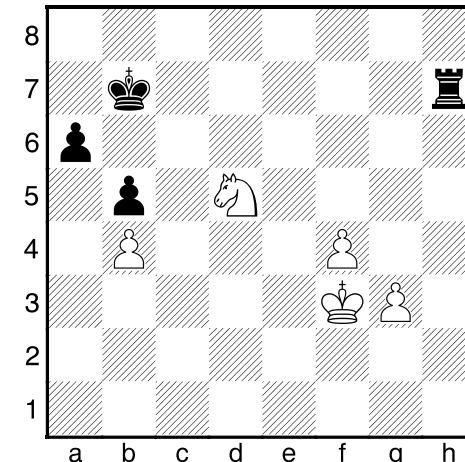
64... ♜b8!

A nice echo of White's 35.♔h2, which also pre-empted a ♜ fork and left his opponent in a precarious position.

65.g3

Guards h4 and so unpins the ♜.

**65... ♜xa3 66.♔h3 ♜a1
67.♘d5 ♜h1+ 68.♔g2 ♜h7
69.♗xh7 ♜xh7 70.♔f3 ♜b7**

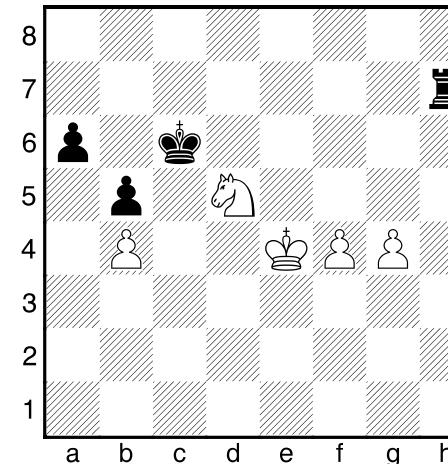


71.g4??

71.f5!= The key idea is that the ♜ is best placed on d3, and pushing the f-pawn enables ♜f4–d3. If you want to see the variations which prove this, read [Nunn's John Nunn's](#)

Chess Course or Sadler's Re-Engineering...

71... ♜c6□–+ 72.♔e4



72... ♜h8??

Right idea — force the ♜ away (by threatening ... ♜e8+) — but wrong execution.

72... ♜d7□–+:

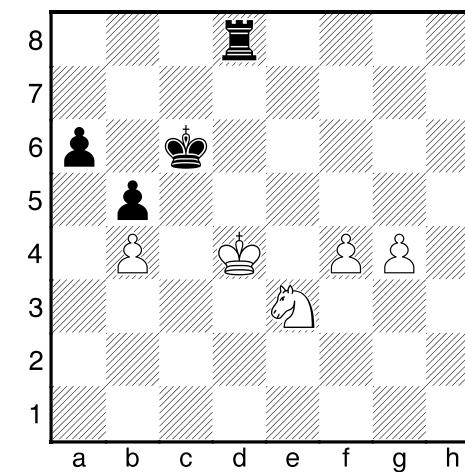
a) 73.♘c3 a5□ 74.bxa5 b4–+;

b) 73.♘f6 ♜d8 and the ♜ and ♔ are cut off from Black's soon-to-be passed b-pawn: 74.g5 a5□–+ 75.g6 (75.bxa5 b4–+) 75...a4–+;

c) 73.f5 ♜xd5 74.f6 ♜d1!–+ simplest. (74... ♜d8 also wins, but is way trickier: 75.g5 ♔d6 (75... ♜f8?? 76.♔f5□+–) 76.♔f5

77.g6 ♔e8□–+) 75.g5
76.♔f5 ♜f1+ 77.♔g6 ♔e6
78.♔g7 ♜f4–+.

**73.♘e3= ♜e8+ 74.♔d4
♜d8+**



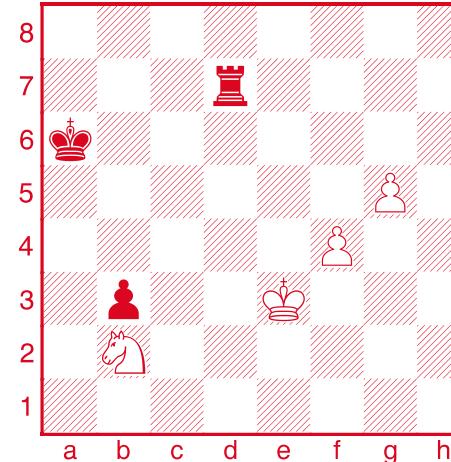
75.♔e4??

As we'll see in several variations below, allowing the white king to get cut off leaves the ♜ alone and unable to cope with Black's passed b-pawn. Instead, 75.♔c3!=.

**75... a5□–+ 76.bxa5 b4
77.a6 ♔c5!**

Here's a beautiful line that leads to a study-like finish discovered by **Dvoretsky**: 77...b3? 78.♘c4 ♔b5 79.♘b2 ♔xa6 80.♔e3? (80. f5!=) 80... ♜d7! (Dvoretsky) 81.g5

Analysis Diagram



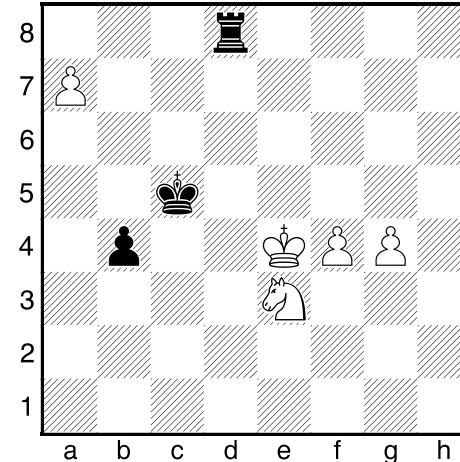
Nunn:

81... $\mathbb{Q}b7\Box-$

"it seems incredible, but this retreating move is the only winning continuation. Black's king must cross to the other side of the board to hold up White's pawns, but at the same time the king must never block the c7-square, as Black may need to play ... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ in order to cut off the white king from the b-pawn.

81... $\mathbb{Q}b7\Box-$ 82.f5 $\mathbb{Q}c8\Box$ 83.g6 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 84.f6 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ Black's king arrives just in time. - **Nunn**
 85. $\mathbb{Q}d3\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 86.g7 (86. $\mathbb{Q}d2\Box-$ 86... $\mathbb{Q}f7\Box$ 87. $\mathbb{Q}e5\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}g8\Box$ 88. $\mathbb{Q}g4\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 89. $\mathbb{Q}h6\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 90.g8 $\mathbb{Q}+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 91. $\mathbb{Q}xg8\Box-$.

78.a7



Ed. Lasker:

"Here is the surprise, which demonstrates how important a difference the position of my Rook on the eighth row constitutes. If the Rook had gone to d7 on the 72nd move, he could now simply capture the Pawn. As it is, he must lose a move for this purpose, and that is enough to secure a draw!"

Again, half-right: Black actually has enough time to play ... $\mathbb{Q}a8$ and win, as Sadler shows below.

78...b3??

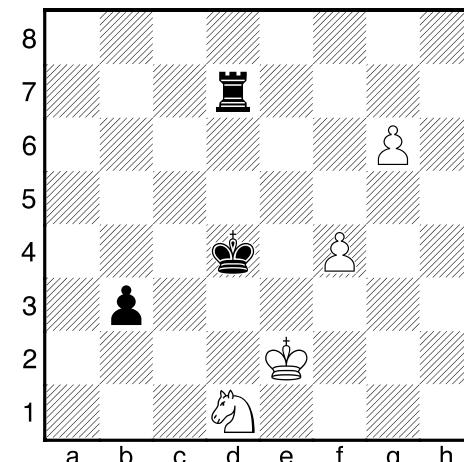
Sadler:

"Back to a draw — passed pawns shouldn't be pushed after all! How can move like this be wrong? The problem is that

the pawn is harder for Black to defend against attack from the white king, so White gets a choice of destinations for his king according to Black's play: help the kingside pawns push through or run back to attack the b-pawn."

78... $\mathbb{Q}a8\Box-$ 79. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ (Sadler gives a long, multi-branching analysis of this defence, concluding that Black wins after 79. $\mathbb{Q}f1\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 80. $\mathbb{Q}d2\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 81. $\mathbb{Q}d3\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ see RECC for more.) 79... $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 80.g5 $\mathbb{Q}e7\Box$ 81. $\mathbb{Q}d3\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}d7\Box$ 82. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (82. $\mathbb{Q}c2\Box$ b3+ 83. $\mathbb{Q}c1\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\Box-$) 82...b3 (82... $\mathbb{Q}d4\Box-$) 83.g6 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

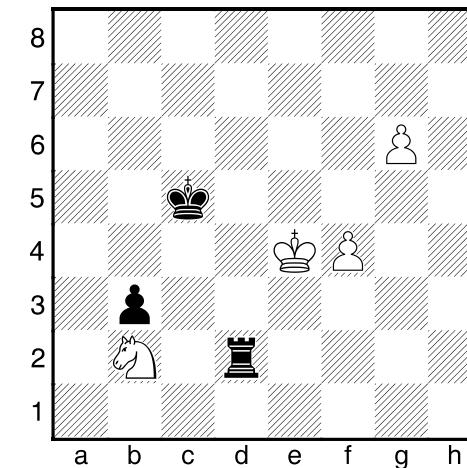
Analysis Diagram



"This is the difference from the game continuation [editor - after

move 81]: the white king has been forced back and the black monarch can come over and deal with the passed kingside pawns more easily: 84. $\mathbb{Q}f3\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 85.f5 $\mathbb{Q}e5\Box-$ - **Sadler.**

79. $\mathbb{Q}d1\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 80.g5 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$
 81.g6 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 82. $\mathbb{Q}b2\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$



83. $\mathbb{Q}f3\Box!$

Preventing $\mathbb{Q}g2$ saves the \mathbb{Q} .

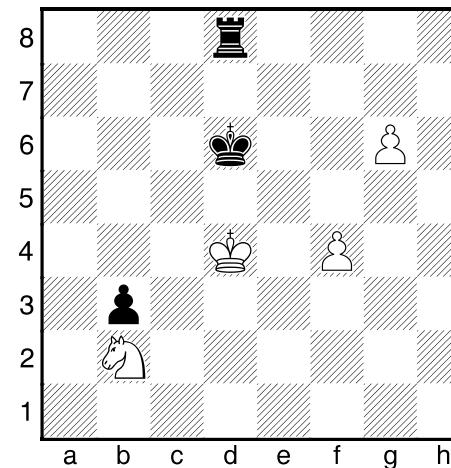
There is one other drawing move: 83.g7 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 84.f5 \Box $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 85.f6 \Box $\mathbb{Q}g1$ (85... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 86. $\mathbb{Q}e5\Box-$) 86. $\mathbb{Q}d3\Box$ (86. $\mathbb{Q}e5\Box$? $\mathbb{Q}e1\Box-$) 87. $\mathbb{Q}f5\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}d6\Box-$ 86... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 87. $\mathbb{Q}d4\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (87... $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 88. $\mathbb{Q}c4\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 89. $\mathbb{Q}e5\Box-$) 88. $\mathbb{Q}e5\Box-$ the \mathbb{Q} and \mathbb{Q} both die stopping their opponent's passers.

Chess Canada

New York 1924



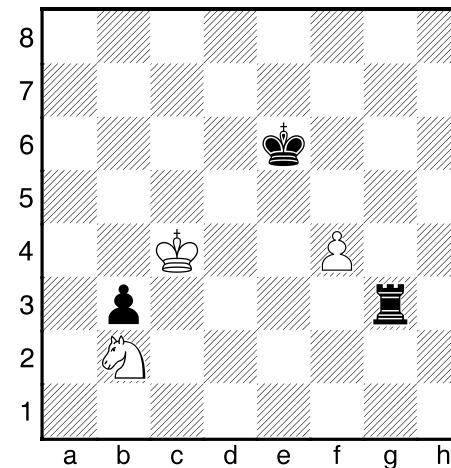
83... $\mathbb{H}d8$ 84. $\mathbb{K}e4$ $\mathbb{H}d2$
 85. $\mathbb{K}f3$ $\mathbb{H}d8$ 86. $\mathbb{K}e4$ $\mathbb{K}d6$
 87. $\mathbb{K}d4$



Sadler:

"Compared with the note to move 78, here the black b-pawn is vulnerable and the white king immediately moves to attack it."

87... $\mathbb{H}c8$ 88. $g7$ $\mathbb{K}e6$
 89. $g8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{H}xg8$ 90. $\mathbb{K}c4$ $\mathbb{H}g3$

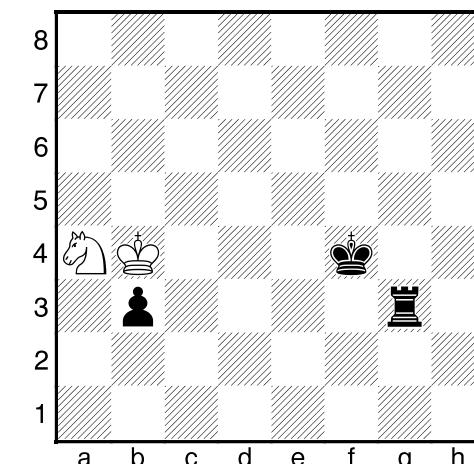


83... $\mathbb{H}d8$ 84. $\mathbb{K}e4$ $\mathbb{H}d2$
 85. $\mathbb{K}f3$ $\mathbb{H}d8$ 86. $\mathbb{K}e4$ $\mathbb{K}d6$
 87. $\mathbb{K}d4$

Ed.Lasker:

"This is the move I had calculated would win my game after all. The other contestants also believed I had now a fairly easy win as White could not capture my Pawn. I remember I left the room at this stage to stretch a little and was congratulated upon my victory by Bogoljuboff and others who were in the Press room and told me the story of the game was ready to be released. However, when I returned to the table, a rude shock awaited me."

91. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{K}f5$ 92. $\mathbb{K}b4$ $\mathbb{K}xf4$



Ed.Lasker:

"It would take White three more moves, I had calculated, to capture the Pawn: Ka3, Nc5

and Nxb3. But at that moment my King would reach the square c4 and the Knight would be lost because the Rook pins it! It never occurred to me that White need not capture the Pawn at all and could still draw the game. Emanuel Lasker actually discovered a new end-game position in which a Rook and a Pawn cannot win against the Knight, and this position has since become a classic."

93. $\mathbb{Q}b2!$

Ed.Lasker:

"I was certainly surprised when I saw this move. Examining the position carefully, I soon realized that I had no way of driving White's King away. And I could not cross the sixth rank without exposing the Pawn to capture! The first thing I did was to rush back to the Press room and tell the reporters

that they should kill their story. I was afraid they might have already released it, for everyone had been telling them I had an easy win. Then I returned for another analysis of the position. If I could reach d2 with the King by playing him in back of my Rook, I could still win. And I made a last attempt..."

93... $\mathbb{K}e4$ 94. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{K}d4$
 95. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{H}f3$ 96. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{H}e3$
 97. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{K}e4$ 98. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{K}f3$

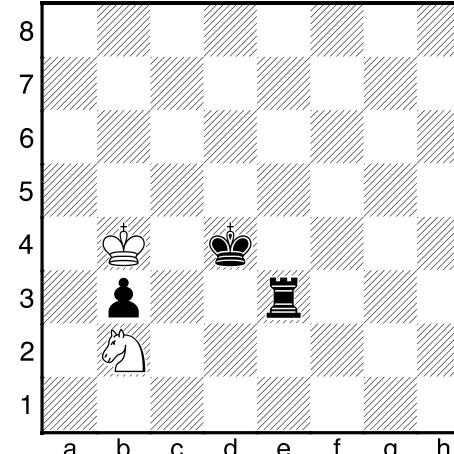
Edward Lasker

1923 US Ch. match v Marshall



Chess Canada

New York 1924



99.♔a3

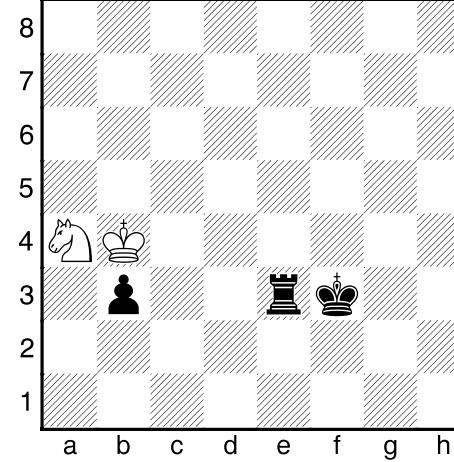
Ed. Lasker:

"This foils my plan. After ...♔e2 White would play Kb2 and I could never approach."

99...♔e4

99...♔e2 100.♗c5 ♔d2
101.♔b2□=.

100.♔b4 ♔d4 101.♗b2□



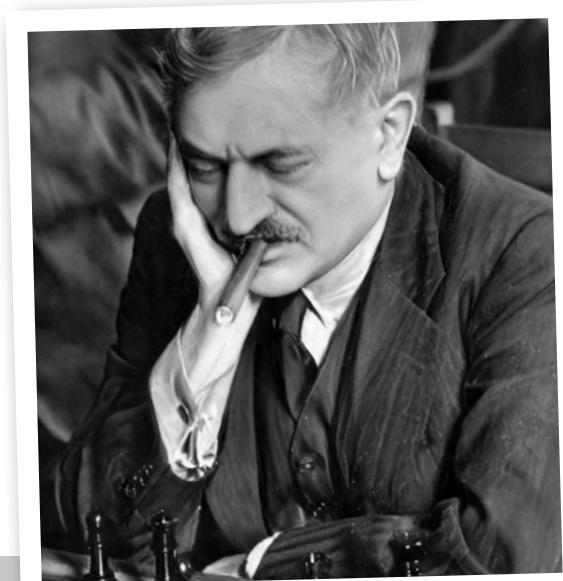
101...♝h3 102.♗a4□ ♔d3
103.♔xb3 ♔d4+

"...and we called the game a draw. It was generally considered the most exciting game of the tournament.

I felt quite discouraged, naturally, at seeing the win slip through my hands after more than thirteen hours of hard struggle. But when the excitement had subsided I came to regard this game as one of my best efforts; and whenever I think of it I smile, remembering the "equalizing injustice of Chess."

- **Edward Lasker**, *Chess for fun & chess for blood.*

1/2

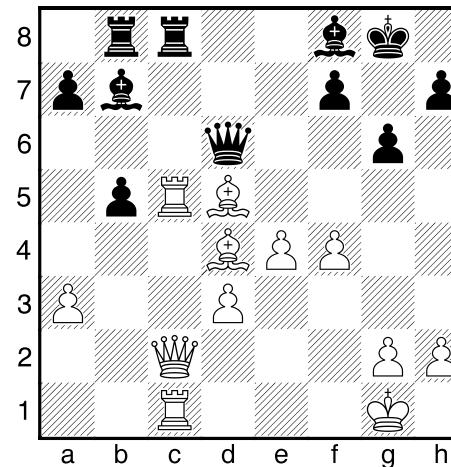


smoking encouraged

Bogoljubow, Efim Lasker, Edward

New York 1924 (14), 05.04.1924

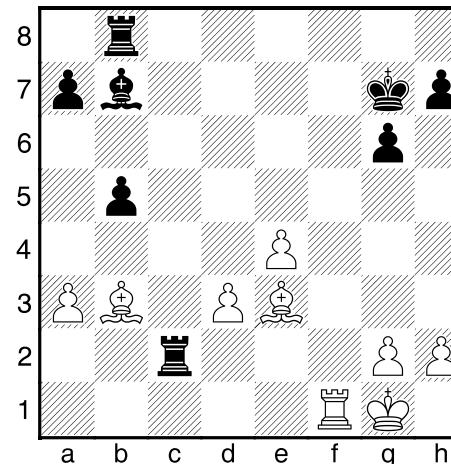
Notes: John Uppen



26...♝xf4??

26...♝b6=.

27.♝f1!+– ♔xc5 28.♔xc5
♝e3+ 29.♔xe3 ♔xc2
30.♔xf7+ ♔g7 31.♔b3



31...♝c7

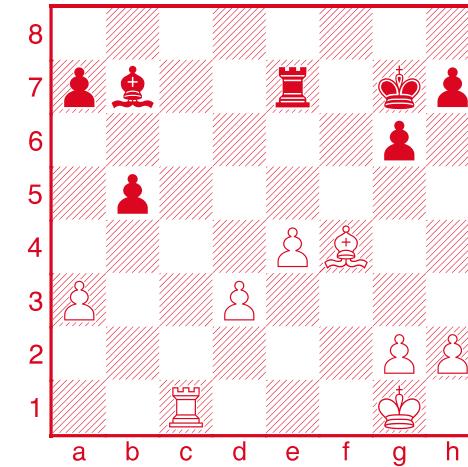
...♝b2 or c3 get forked, and
31...♝e2 32.♝f7+ ♔h8 33.♔d4+
is mating.

32.♔f4 ♔bc8 33.♔e6!?

This wins, but 33.♔xc7 leaves same-colour ♔'s and makes and ♘ trade an easy win for White.

33...♝e7 34.♔xc8 ♔xc8

35.♝c1 ♔b7



White is up a pawn and has connected passers in the center. Should he trade down with ♘c7 or play something else?

36.♝c7??

Almost anything is better than trading ♘s, which allows Black to set up a blockade — such a common theme in opposite-

Chess Canada

New York 1924



colour ♜ endings that it is ludicrous that Bogo not only allowed it, but walked directly into it!

Simply 36.♔f2+–.

36...♚f7??

36...♝xc7□= 37.♝xc7 b4!! (or 37...♝a6 then ...b4.) 38.axb4 ♜a6□ 39.d4 ♜d3 40.e5 ♜f7= or ...♝c4 and Black has a fortress, as noted by **Alekhine**.

37.♝xe7+ ♜xe7

38.♝d2!

Now pushing the b-pawn drops it with check and gives the white king time to support the center pawns.

38...♚e6 39.♝f2 ♜d6

40.♝e3 ♜c5 41.♝a5

♝c8 42.♝d8 ♜d7

43.♝a5 g5 44.♝c3 h5

44...a6 45.♝b4+ ♜b6

46.d4 a5 47.♝e7 b4

48.axb4 a4 and b5 or d5 keeps White's ♜ in touch with the a-pawn. Now 49.b5!+– is simplest.

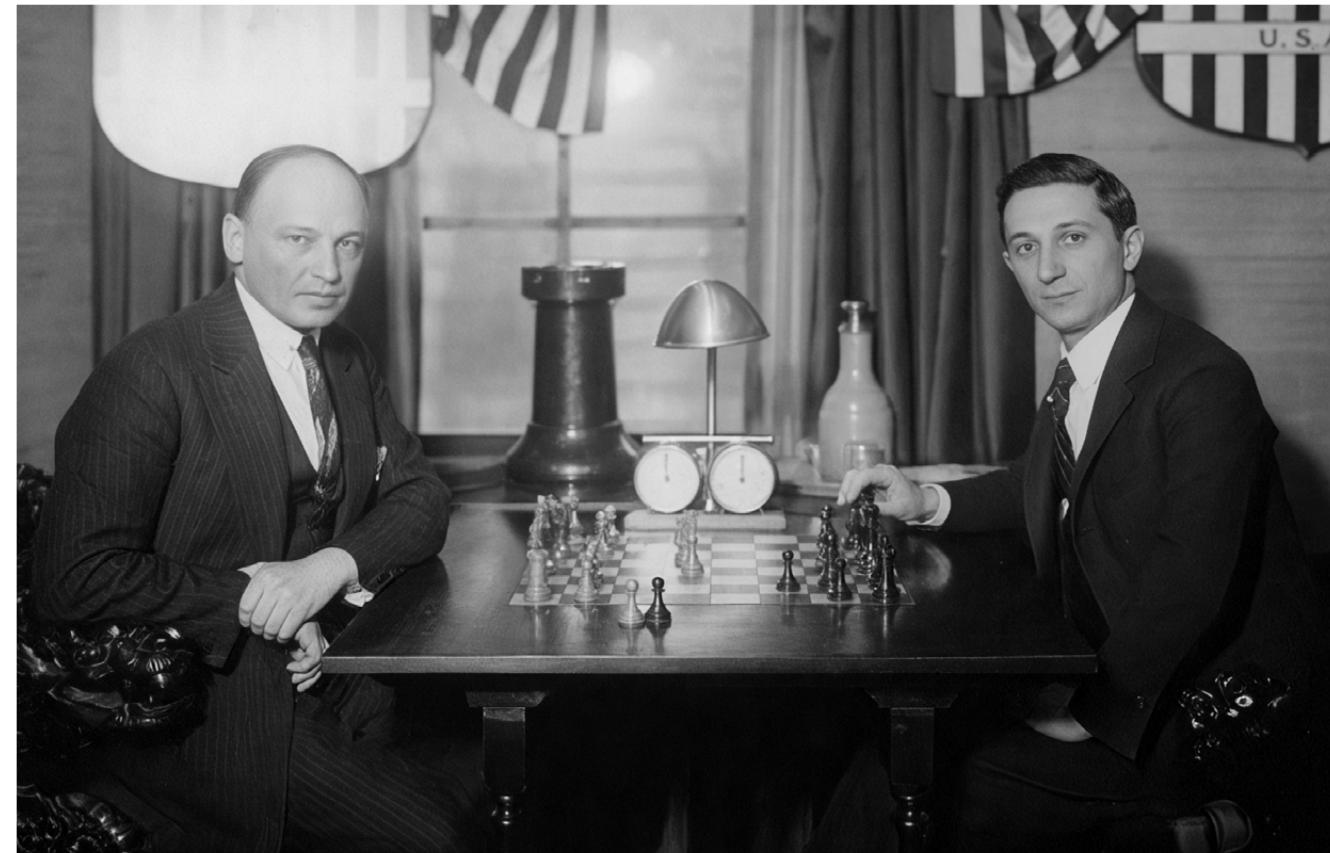
45.♝d4+ ♜d6 46.♝xa7 h4 47.♝d4 ♜e6 48.♝c3 ♜f7 49.d4 ♜g6 50.d5 ♜c8 51.♝a5 ♜d7 52.♝d8 h3 53.gxh3 ♜xh3 54.♚d4 ♜d7 55.e5 ♜f5 56.e6 ♜e8 57.♝xg5

If ♜xg5, d6–d7 wins, so...

1–0

rooked

Tartakower & Ed. Lasker ended on the short sides of the most famous endings of NY24.

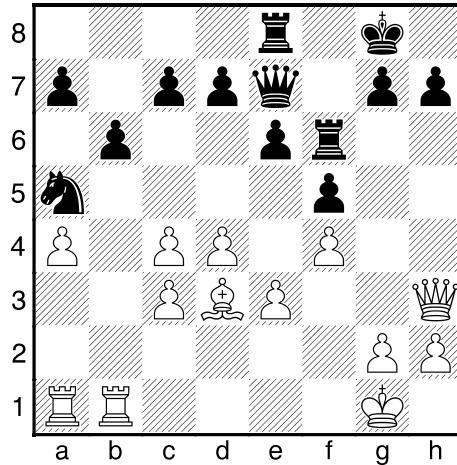


**Capablanca, Jose Raul
Tartakower, Saviely**
New York 1924 (6), 23.03.1924

Notes: John Upper

This game may be the most anthologized from NY24, almost exclusively for the memorable maneuver Capablanca plays in its ♜ ending; the first 30 moves are usually truncated — skipped over as an unnecessary delay before the good stuff.

1.d4 e6 2.♝f3 f5 3.c4 ♜f6 4.♝g5 ♜e7 5.♝c3 0–0 6.e3 b6 7.♝d3 ♜b7 8.0–0 ♜e8 9.♛e2 ♜e4 10.♝xe7 ♜xc3 11.bxc3 ♜xe7 12.a4 ♜xf3!?
13.♝xf3 ♜c6 14.♝fb1 ♜ae8 15.♝h3 ♜f6 16.f4 ♜a5=



A Classical Dutch has produced a Nimzo-Indian type structure. White has a bit more space, but there are no open files and with all 16 pawns still on the board the ♜ is no worse than the ♜. Neither side currently has any exploitable weaknesses, but Black creates some of his own.

17.♛f3

17.g4? ♜h6! 18.♛g3 fxg4=

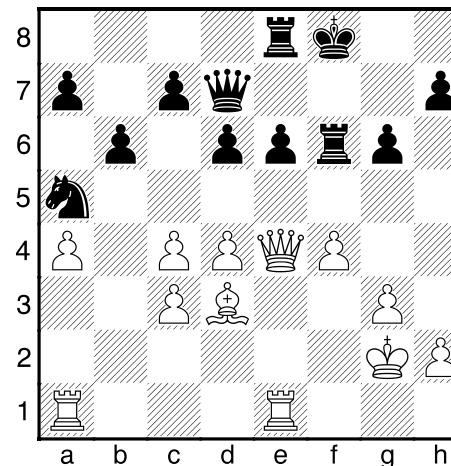
17...d6?!

▷ 17...c5= and ...♝c8 would be



the standard Nimzo way to go after the doubled c-pawns.

18. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 19. $e4! \pm$ $\mathbb{f}xe4$
 20. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $g6$ 21. $g3$ $\mathbb{f}f8$
 22. $\mathbb{f}g2$



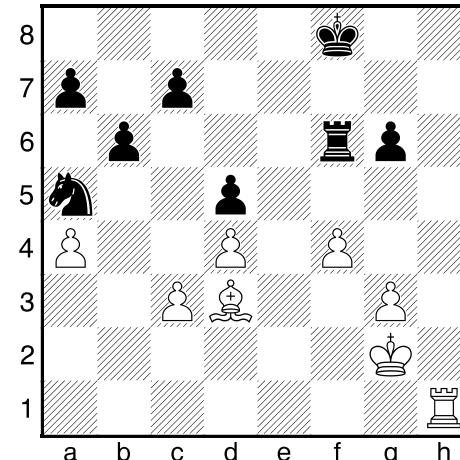
22... $\mathbb{E}f7$

\square 22... $e5! =$.

23. $h4! \pm$ $d5?!$ 24. $cxd5$ $exd5$
 25. $\mathbb{W}xe8+$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}xe8+$
 $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 27. $h5! \pm$

Now there's play on both sides, and the \mathbb{W} is better than the \mathbb{E} .

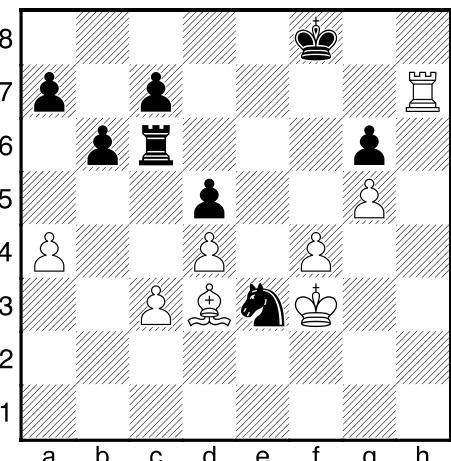
27... $\mathbb{E}f6$ 28. $hxg6$ $hxg6$
 29. $\mathbb{E}h1$ $\mathbb{f}f8$



30. $\mathbb{E}h7?!$

If the analysis below is correct, then this move gives away White's advantage. \square 30. $\mathbb{E}h8+!$ $\mathbb{f}g7$ 31. $\mathbb{E}d8 \pm$.

30... $\mathbb{E}c6!$ 31. $g4$ $\mathbb{E}c4$ 32. $g5$
 $\mathbb{E}e3+ 33. \mathbb{f}f3$



33... $\mathbb{E}f5??$

A losing blunder, which does not seem to be recognized as such.

Both Tartakower and Alekhine analyzed Black's saving move — 33... $\mathbb{E}d1$ — but overlooked defensive improvements.

Alekhine:

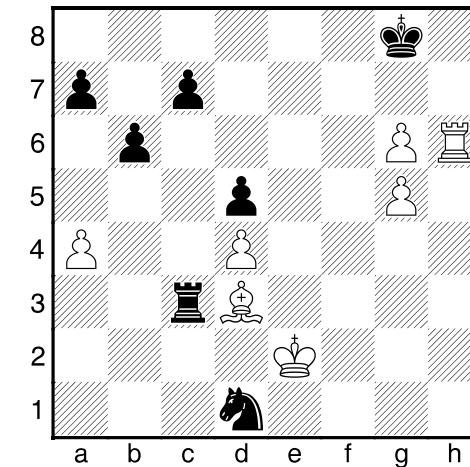
33... $\mathbb{E}d1$ 34. $\mathbb{E}h6$ $\mathbb{f}f7$ 35. $f5$ $\mathbb{E}xc3$
 36. $fxg6+$ $\mathbb{f}g8$ 37. $\mathbb{E}e2$ $\mathbb{E}b2$ (?)
 38. $\mathbb{E}f5$ "with an easy win." - AA.
 For those, like me, who don't find it as easy as Alekhine, it might end like this: 38... $\mathbb{E}g3$ 39. $\mathbb{E}h7$
 $\mathbb{E}xg5$ 40. $\mathbb{E}e6+ \square$ $\mathbb{f}f8$ 41. $\mathbb{E}f7+ \square$
 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 42. $g7+ -$.

Tartakower:

33... $\mathbb{E}d1$ 34. $\mathbb{E}h6$ $\mathbb{f}g7$ 35. $f5$
 $\mathbb{E}xc3$ (?) 36. $\mathbb{E}f4!$ $\mathbb{E}e4$ 37. $\mathbb{E}xe4$
 $dx e4$ 38. $f6+$ $\mathbb{E}xf6+$ 39. $gxf6+$
 $\mathbb{E}xh6$ 40. $\mathbb{E}xe4$ $\mathbb{f}h7$ 41. $\mathbb{E}d5!$
 $\mathbb{E}g8$ 42. $\mathbb{E}c6$ $g5$ 43. $\mathbb{E}xc7$ $g4$
 44. $d5+ -$ Black wins the race, but White promotes with check and can force off the \mathbb{W} s with a check on g7, leaving a winning \mathbb{P} ending.

a) 34... $\mathbb{E}xc3?$ 35. $\mathbb{E}e2!+ -$ White gets the g6 pawn and the connected passers win easily.

b) 34... $\mathbb{f}f7$ 35. $f5$ $\mathbb{E}xc3 \square$
 36. $fxg6+$ $\mathbb{f}g8 \square$ 37. $\mathbb{E}e2 \square$
Analysis Diagram

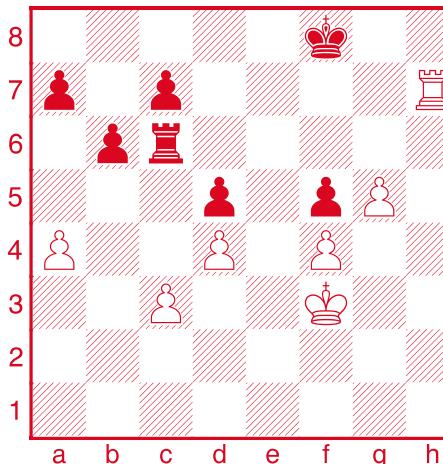


Here, instead of Alekhine's ... $\mathbb{E}b2$ $\mathbb{E}f5 \square + -$ which wins as shown above, Stockfish shows that Black draws with any of three moves: ... $\mathbb{E}b3$, ... $\mathbb{E}a3$, and ... $\mathbb{E}f2$, each of which takes advantage of White's cut off \mathbb{P} and isolated pawns. For instance: 37... $\mathbb{E}f2!$ 38. $\mathbb{E}f5$ (38. $\mathbb{E}xf2$ $\mathbb{E}xd3 =$ is trivial.) 38... $\mathbb{E}e4 \square$ hits g5 and forks on g3. 39. $\mathbb{E}e6+ (39. \mathbb{E}h7 \mathbb{E}xg5 =)$ 39... $\mathbb{E}g7$ 40. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ (40. $\mathbb{E}f7??$ $\mathbb{E}xg5-+$) 40... $\mathbb{E}xg5 =$.



c) After 34... $\mathbb{g}7$ 35.f5
 Tartakower showed one way
 ... $\mathbb{d}xc3$ loses. But Black saves
 the game with: 35... $\mathbb{d}b2\Box=$
 hitting the \mathbb{g} before it has any
 good squares and unpinning
 $g6$ by enabling ... $\mathbb{d}xc3$ with
 check. 36. $\mathbb{d}e2$ (36.f6+ $\mathbb{d}xf6+\Box=$;
 36. $\mathbb{d}b5$ $\mathbb{d}xc3+$ 37. $\mathbb{d}f4$ $gxf5=$)
 36... $\mathbb{d}xd3!$ 37. $\mathbb{d}xd3$ $\mathbb{d}d6!=$
 threatening ... $gxf5$ with an easy
 draw.

34. $\mathbb{d}xf5\Box+- gxf5$



This is **one of the most analyzed endgames of all time**, with new ideas proposed and refuted for over 80 years after it was played by players from Alekhine to Kasparov and endgame experts from Pervakov to Dvoretsky.

I will present this endgame twice: once as played, to illustrate its most famous lesson — the umbrella pawn — and a second time in Appendix 1 with only the main lines of alternate defensive tries.

Fuller analysis can be found in Steve Giddins's *Greatest Ever Chess Endgames*, (Everyman, 2012) and Daniel Naroditsky's *Mastering Complex Endings*, (NiC, 2014).

35. $\mathbb{d}g3\Box$

"Decisive! White sacrifices material in order to obtain the classical position with king on f6, pawn on g6 and rook on h7, whereupon the black pawns tumble like ripe apples."

- **Alekhine**

"It is extremely instructive to see how Capablanca is no longer in the least concerned about material equality but thinks only of supporting his passed pawn."

- **Reti, Masters of the Chessboard.**

"In a simplified ending, where Pawns are worth their weight in

gold, Capablanca gives away two of them! Furthermore, he lets Black capture them with check!"

- **Chernev, Capablanca's Best Chess Endings.**

35... $\mathbb{d}xc3+$

35... $\mathbb{d}g8!?$ improving the position of the \mathbb{d} before taking on c3 is analyzed in the longer version.

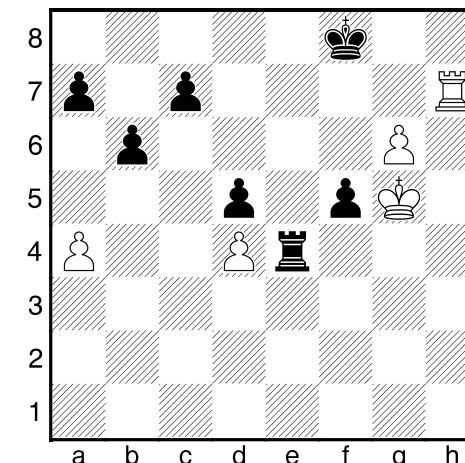
36. $\mathbb{d}h4\mathbb{d}f3?!$

Black has more challenging defences — ...a6, ...c5, ... $\mathbb{d}c1$ — all in the Appendix.

37.g6! $\mathbb{d}xf4+$ 38. $\mathbb{d}g5\mathbb{d}e4$

38... $\mathbb{d}xd4$ 39. $\mathbb{d}f6\Box\mathbb{d}e8$
 (39... $\mathbb{d}g8$ 40. $\mathbb{d}d7!$ mates.)

40. $\mathbb{d}xc7!$ mopping up some pawns before winning the \mathbb{d} for the g-pawn.



39. $\mathbb{d}f6!$

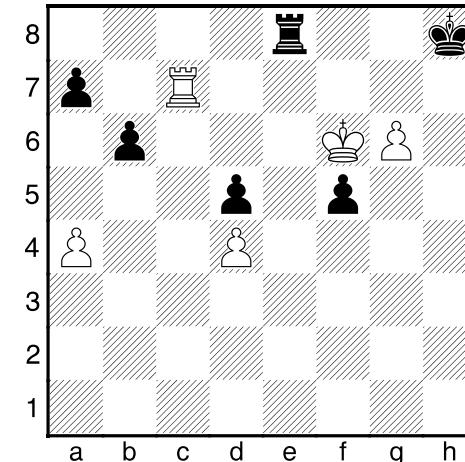
The star idea of this ending: White has sac'ed two pawns to get his \mathbb{d} to dominant positions and uses the opponent's pawn as an "umbrella" to shield the \mathbb{d} from checks.

39. $\mathbb{d}xf5?$ $\mathbb{d}xd4=$ and Black has checks that prevent the white \mathbb{d} supporting the passed g-pawn.

39... $\mathbb{d}g8$ 40. $\mathbb{d}g7+$

Not necessary, but good technique: pushing the \mathbb{d} gives White a tempo for both back-rank mate threats and makes g6–g7+ a possibly useful tempo gainer.

40... $\mathbb{d}h8$ 41. $\mathbb{d}xc7\mathbb{d}e8$



Chess Canada

New York 1924



... had a great fall?
1925.12.07

1-0

cover boy

46. $\mathbb{E}xa7$ $\mathbb{E}g1$ 47. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}c1$
 48. $\mathbb{E}d6$ $\mathbb{E}c2$ 49. $d5$ $\mathbb{E}c1$
 50. $\mathbb{E}c7$ $\mathbb{E}a1$ 51. $\mathbb{E}c6$ $\mathbb{E}xa4$
 52. $d6$

42. $\mathbb{E}xf5$

42. $\mathbb{E}f7$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 43. $\mathbb{E}c1$! changing the direction of the mating threats also wins, but is less direct.

42... $\mathbb{E}e4$ 43. $\mathbb{E}f6$ $\mathbb{E}f4+$
 44. $\mathbb{E}e5$ $\mathbb{E}g4$ 45. $g7+$ $\mathbb{E}g8$

45... $\mathbb{E}xg7$ 46. $\mathbb{E}xg7$ $\mathbb{E}xg7$
 47. $\mathbb{E}xd5+-$ Black can't stop the d-pawn.

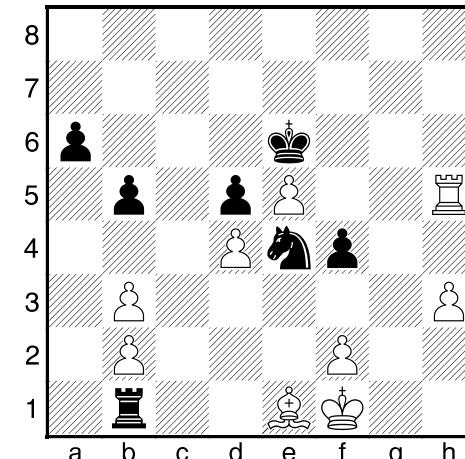
46. $\mathbb{E}xa7$ $\mathbb{E}g1$ 47. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}c1$
 48. $\mathbb{E}d6$ $\mathbb{E}c2$ 49. $d5$ $\mathbb{E}c1$
 50. $\mathbb{E}c7$ $\mathbb{E}a1$ 51. $\mathbb{E}c6$ $\mathbb{E}xa4$
 52. $d6$

Lasker, Edward
Capablanca, Jose Raul

New York 1924 (18), 11.04.1924
 Notes: John Uper

1. $e4$ $g6$ 2. $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{E}g7$...

Did you expect a Modern from Capablanca?



44. $\mathbb{E}e2$

Alekhine:

"A deplorable mistake, because of which the instructive ending comes to an untimely end."

Stockfish disagrees, and actually counts 44. $\mathbb{E}e2$ as one of only two moves that save the game, the other being the one shown in Alekhine's analysis. White's losing move is still to come, and

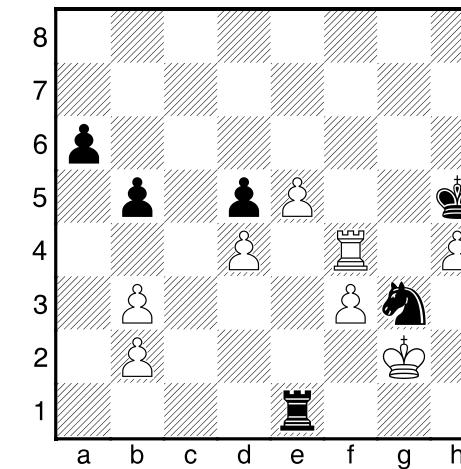
careful computer analysis shows that this instructive ending is actually only beginning.

Alekhine:

"Necessary was... 44. $\mathbb{E}h6+$ $\mathbb{E}f5!$ 45. $f3$ $\mathbb{E}g3+$ 46. $\mathbb{E}g2$ $\mathbb{E}xb2+$ 47. $\mathbb{E}f2$ $\mathbb{E}g5!$ 48. $\mathbb{E}xa6$ $\mathbb{E}f5$ "with a superior position."

But in that final position, SF17 gives 10 moves for White that are all 0.00.

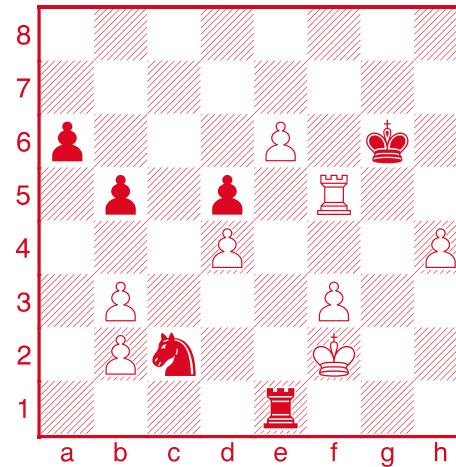
Alekhine said 46... $\mathbb{E}xe1$ would lose to 47. $\mathbb{E}f6+$ $\mathbb{E}g5$ 48. $h4+$ $\mathbb{E}h5$ 49. $\mathbb{E}xf4$ *Analysis Diagram*



SF improves here by showing that Black has a highly tactical draw: 49... $\mathbb{E}e2\Box$ 50. $\mathbb{E}f5+$ $\mathbb{E}xh4\Box$ 51. $\mathbb{E}f2$ $\mathbb{E}xd4\Box$ 52. $\mathbb{E}f4+$ $\mathbb{E}g5\Box$ 53. $\mathbb{E}xd4$ (53. $\mathbb{E}g4+$ $\mathbb{E}f5$

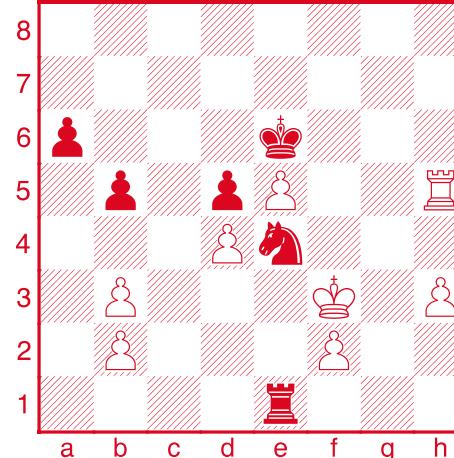
54. $\mathbb{E}xe1$ $\mathbb{E}xf3+$ 55. $\mathbb{E}d1\Box=$ taking the \mathbb{E} loses (!! so White will drop the e-pawn and is left with the better side of what should be a draw.) 53... $\mathbb{E}b1!$ (53... $\mathbb{E}xe5??$ 54. $f4++-$) 54. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xb2+=.$

49... $\mathbb{E}f1?$ 50. $\mathbb{E}f2+-$. Alekhine ends here, though there are still a few more tactical adventures, since Black can save the piece (but not the game) with 50... $\mathbb{E}e3!?$ 51. $e6!+-$ (51. $\mathbb{E}xe1??$ $\mathbb{E}g2+-+)$ 51... $\mathbb{E}c2$ 52. $\mathbb{E}f5+\Box$ $\mathbb{E}g6!$ *Analysis Diagram*



53. $\mathbb{E}e5\Box$ (53. $\mathbb{E}xd5?$ $\mathbb{E}xe6=$)
 53... $\mathbb{E}xe5$ 54. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{E}d4$ (or ... $\mathbb{E}b4$) 55. $h5+\Box+-$ Black can't catch 'em all! Another pretty line.

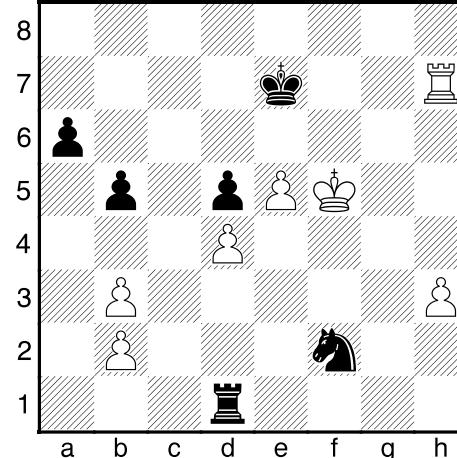
44... $f3+$ 45. $\mathbb{E}xf3$ $\mathbb{E}xe1$



In fact, had White not blundered *here*, this ending would have continued to be not only instructive, but a wonderful sequel to Capablanca's "umbrella" maneuver in his endgame against Tartakower from round 6.

46. $\mathbb{h}6+??$

46. $\mathbb{f}4!=$. The umbrella on f2 shields the white \mathbb{f} just long enough to get in front of his e6 pawn. After this, Black needs to reconcile himself to the draw. 46... $\mathbb{xf}2$ 47. $\mathbb{h}6+\square$ $\mathbb{e}7$ 48. $\mathbb{f}5=$ Black's pieces are almost comically unprepared to cope with $\mathbb{h}7+$ and $\mathbb{e}6$: now the $\mathbb{f}2$ is the umbrella! 48... $\mathbb{d}1$ 49. $\mathbb{h}7+$ *Analysis Diagram*



Black can accept the repetition, or tempt fate by allowing the White \mathbb{f} in:

49... $\mathbb{e}8??$ 50. $\mathbb{e}6+-;$

49... $\mathbb{d}8$ 50. $\mathbb{e}6$ $\mathbb{xd}4$ 51. $\mathbb{h}4$ $\mathbb{e}4$ 52. $\mathbb{a}7$ $\mathbb{c}5+$ 53. $\mathbb{d}6$ $\mathbb{e}4+$ 54. $\mathbb{e}6$ $\mathbb{d}2?$ might not lose, but it would be insane 55. $\mathbb{d}7+$ $\mathbb{c}8$ 56. $\mathbb{xd}5=;$

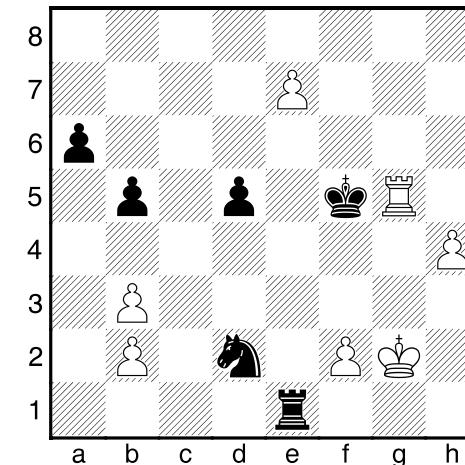
49... $\mathbb{f}8$ 50. $\mathbb{e}6$ $\mathbb{e}4$ (50... $\mathbb{xd}4??$ 51. $\mathbb{f}7++-$) 51. $\mathbb{xd}5$ only White can be playing for a win.

46... $\mathbb{f}5\square-+$ 47. $\mathbb{xa}6$

The Analytical Supplement to the Russell edition of Alekhine's book says White still had good drawing chances here

with 47. $\mathbb{h}4!$ This is true: the game move leaves Black with a relatively trivial win, while $\mathbb{h}4$ poses much more serious problems.

However, with a clever maneuver and precise play, Black can still win: 47. $\mathbb{h}4!$ $\mathbb{d}2+$ 48. $\mathbb{g}2$ $\mathbb{e}4$ 49. $\mathbb{g}6$ $\mathbb{xd}4$ 50. $\mathbb{e}6$ $\mathbb{e}5$ 51. $\mathbb{e}7$ $\mathbb{f}5$ 52. $\mathbb{g}5+$ *Analysis Diagram*



The 2016 Analytical Supplement was done with **Rybka3**, and continued: 52... $\mathbb{f}6$ 53. $\mathbb{xd}5$ $\mathbb{xb}3$ 54. $\mathbb{d}6+$ $\mathbb{xe}7$ 55. $\mathbb{xa}6=$ when White does draw.

But computers have improved tremendously since then, and even in positions with relatively few pieces the new engines find much more.

Stockfish 17 shows a Black win with 52... $\mathbb{f}4\square$, since supporting ... $\mathbb{f}3$ gives tactics which win if White takes the d-pawn now, and time enough to advance the d-pawn if White saves his e-pawn.

After 52... $\mathbb{f}4$:

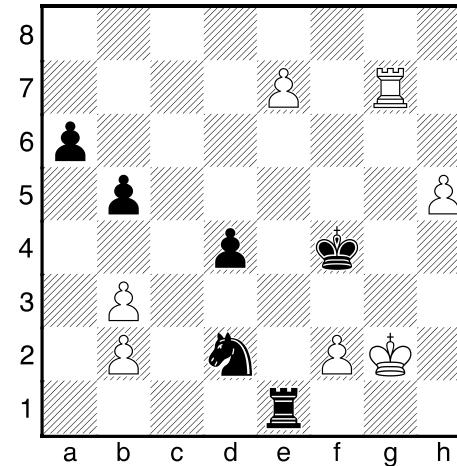
53. $\mathbb{xd}5$ $\mathbb{f}3\square-+$ 54. $\mathbb{d}3$ (54. $\mathbb{h}5?$ $\mathbb{g}4-+$ White has to give the exchange to avoid mate.) 54... $\mathbb{xf}4+\square$ 55. $\mathbb{h}2$ $\mathbb{xe}7$ 56. $\mathbb{d}6$ $\mathbb{f}3+$ 57. $\mathbb{g}2$ (57. $\mathbb{h}3$ $\mathbb{e}6!-+$ simplest.) 57... $\mathbb{g}7+!$ 58. $\mathbb{h}3$ (58. $\mathbb{f}1?$ $\mathbb{g}1+-$ wins the \mathbb{h} with a skewer). Black has several ways to win, including simply saving the b-pawn with the \mathbb{d} and mopping up the white pawns with the \mathbb{f} and \mathbb{h} ; but the computer shows a shorter tactical win with: 58... $\mathbb{g}5+$ 59. $\mathbb{h}2$ $\mathbb{f}3$ 60. $\mathbb{f}6+$ $\mathbb{e}2$ 61. $\mathbb{f}4$ $\mathbb{f}3+$ 62. $\mathbb{h}3$ $\mathbb{f}2$ and ... $\mathbb{g}3$ mate.

53. $\mathbb{g}7$ $\mathbb{d}4$ is more-or-less zugzwang, 54. $\mathbb{h}5$

Analysis Diagram

Chess Canada

New York 1924

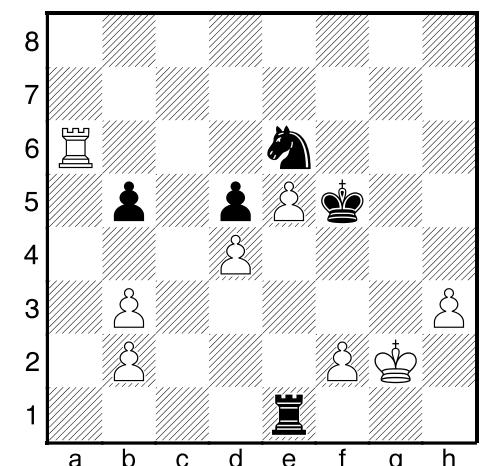


White's best chance, but Black is just in time: 54... $\mathbb{Q}f5\Box$ 55.h6 (55. $\mathbb{Q}g6 \mathbb{Q}xe7$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}xa6 \mathbb{Q}g7+-+$ and push the d-pawn.) 55... $\mathbb{Q}f6\Box$ stops the pawns and prepares to activate the \mathbb{Q} . 56. $\mathbb{Q}g4 \mathbb{Q}xe7\Box$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}xd4 \mathbb{Q}e4\Box$ (57... $\mathbb{Q}xb3?$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}d6+=$) 58.f3 $\mathbb{Q}g5+-$.

Whew. Chess is hard.

So, with perfect play Capablanca could have won after 47.h4!. But this is obviously not even remotely easy, so 47.h4 would have been a *much* better defensive try than the game move.

47... $\mathbb{Q}g5+!$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}e6!$



After this tidy \mathbb{Q} maneuver the rest is mopping up.

49.h4

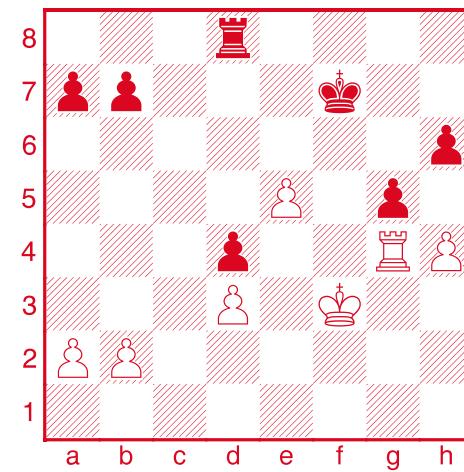
49. $\mathbb{Q}d6 \mathbb{Q}e4!$ since the \mathbb{Q} fork protects d5.

49... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}b6 \mathbb{Q}g4+$
 51. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}xd4$ 52.e6 $\mathbb{Q}e4$
 53.h5 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 54. $\mathbb{Q}b8 \mathbb{Q}h6$
 55. $\mathbb{Q}e1 \mathbb{Q}xh5$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}h3$
 57. $\mathbb{Q}f8+ \mathbb{Q}e5$ 58.b4 $\mathbb{Q}b3$
 59. $\mathbb{Q}e8+ \mathbb{Q}e6$ 60.f4+ $\mathbb{Q}f5$

0-1

Capablanca, Jose Raul Reti, Richard

New York 1924 (21), 15.04.1924
Notes: John Upper



... $\mathbb{Q}g6$, ... $\mathbb{Q}g8$, or... ?

31... $\mathbb{Q}g6??$

Black has two moves which draw: ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g8$.

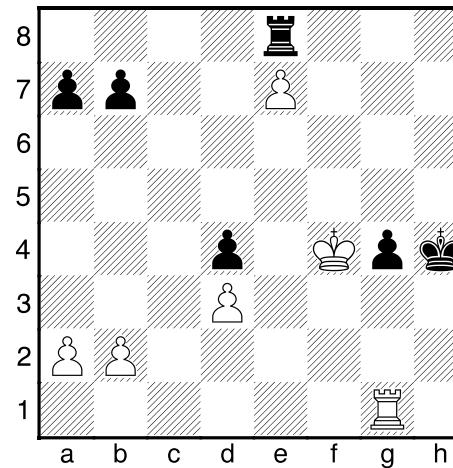
a) 31...gxh4? 32. $\mathbb{Q}xh4 \mathbb{Q}g6$
 33. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ h5 34. $\mathbb{Q}h1+-$ Black can't indefinitely keep defending d4, the h-pawn, and preventing $\mathbb{Q}f5$.

b) 31... $\mathbb{Q}e6!$ 32.hxg5 h5 \Box =
 33. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$? $\mathbb{Q}g8\Box$ (33... $\mathbb{Q}f5??$
 34.g6 \Box $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}h4\Box+-$ as above.) 34. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8+\Box$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f1\Box$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{Q}g1+\Box=$ since

$\mathbb{Q}g2??$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$ would be a winning pawn ending.

c) 31... $\mathbb{Q}g8!$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (32. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6\Box=$) 32... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (33.hxg5 $\mathbb{Q}xg5!=$ simplest.) 33... $\mathbb{Q}f5\Box$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ g4!= or 34... $\mathbb{Q}d8+=$.

32.hxg5 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e4\Box$
 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 35.e6 g4
 36.e7 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}f4$



37... $\mathbb{Q}h5$

37... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}f5+-$ White is playing with an extra \mathbb{Q} . 40... $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}a4+-$.

38. $\mathbb{Q}f5$

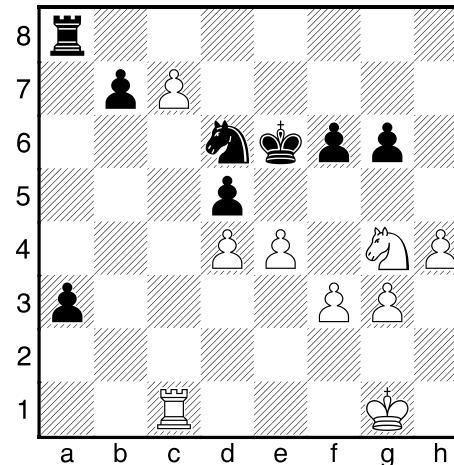
And $\mathbb{Q}f6$ will support the e-pawn and win the \mathbb{Q} .



Bogoljubow, Efim Yates, FD

New York 1924 (16), 09.04.1924

Notes: John Uppercrust



If this game had been played in the past 50 years it would be reasonable to think that the next moves were both time pressure blunders while making their last moves before the time control. But in NY24 the time control was at move 30, with an extra 1hr for each additional 15 moves.

40... $\mathbb{Q}xf6??$

or 40... $\mathbb{Q}e3$ or 40.exd5+.

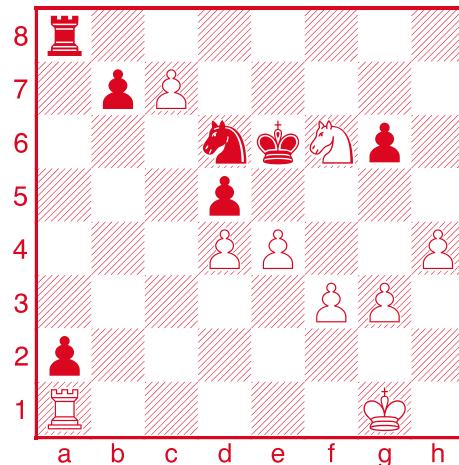
40...a2?

Did Yates just believe him, or could he not resist throwing

in this "surprise" intermediate move? Either way, it turns the game from a win to a draw.

40... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 41.e5+ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 42.exd6+ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ b5# with a long line, as shown by AA. Black wins here because the b-pawn will gain a tempo on the $\mathbb{Q}c1$, while in the game line White's \mathbb{Q} is on a1 and his \mathbb{Q} can defend b2.

41. $\mathbb{Q}a1\Box$



Take on f6 or take on e4?

41... $\mathbb{Q}xf6??$

Not remarked on by AA, but this is a decisive blunder.

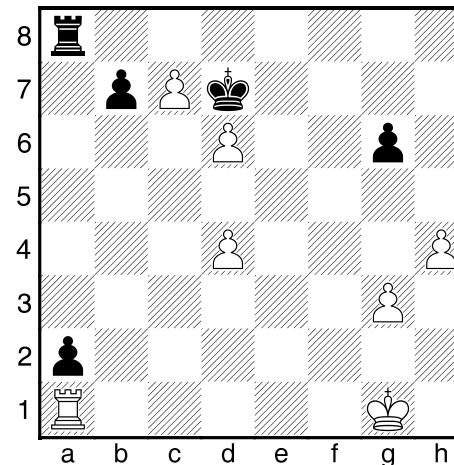
41... $\mathbb{Q}xe4\Box=$

42. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8\Box=$ (42... $\mathbb{Q}xe4??$

43. $\mathbb{Q}xa2\Box+ -$) 43.g4 (43. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}a3=$) 43... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 44.h5 gxh5 45.g5=;

42.fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 43.e5+ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 44.exd6 $\mathbb{Q}d7\Box$ guarding c8 prevents tactics with $\mathbb{Q}xa2$, and threatens to win with ...b7-b5-b4 etc. (44... $\mathbb{Q}xd6??$ allows White to win by trading the queenside pawns to reach a 2v1 ending where Black's king is too far to defend. 45. $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ b5 48. $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}b6+ -$ White's \mathbb{Q} can attack the g-pawn and Black's \mathbb{Q} can't help.)

Analysis Diagram

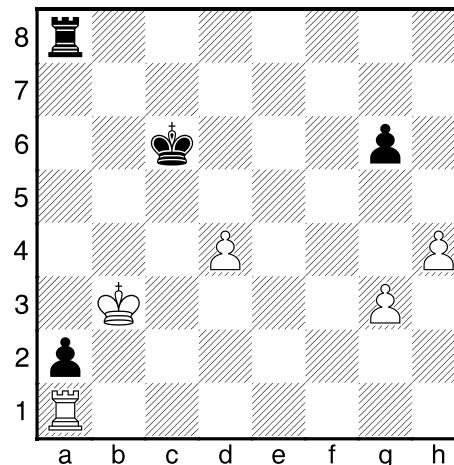


Not 45.g4?? b5+.

45. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ White's \mathbb{Q} has to get close enough to stop Black's

b-pawn, and staying off the second rank allows $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ tricks; but the king walk pulls it far enough from the kingside for Black to draw. 45...b5 46. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ (46. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6=$ With White's \mathbb{Q} on the second rank there are no $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ tricks: 47. $\mathbb{Q}xa2??$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2+ -$) 46...b4 47. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ b3 48. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6=$

Analysis Diagram



Saved by one tempo!

If White trades \mathbb{Q} s on a2 the black king can win d4 and still be in the square of the h-pawn; otherwise, the best White can do is a drawn $\mathbb{Q}Q$ v \mathbb{Q} ending.

If Black's d5 pawn was still on the board this would be a win for



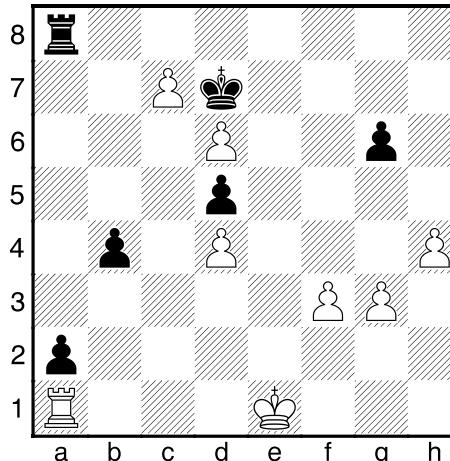
White, since the d5–pawn would block a king attack on White's d4 pawn, and $\mathbb{B}xa2$ would win. This is why 41... dxe4 was necessary: the empty square d5 would leave the d4–pawn exposed to attack.

So simple it's almost obvious?

42.e5+ $\mathbb{K}e6$ 43.exd6 $\mathbb{K}d7$

43... $\mathbb{K}xd6$ 44. $\mathbb{B}xa2!$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 45. $\mathbb{B}c2$, any \mathbb{B} exchange leaves a +– pawn ending.

44. $\mathbb{K}f2$ b5 45. $\mathbb{K}e1$ b4



46. $\mathbb{K}d2??$

I doubt Bogoljubow missed that this hangs d6, since now $\mathbb{B}xa2$ fails to the recapture check. Rather, I suspect he miscalculated the position at move 48, thinking Black's three

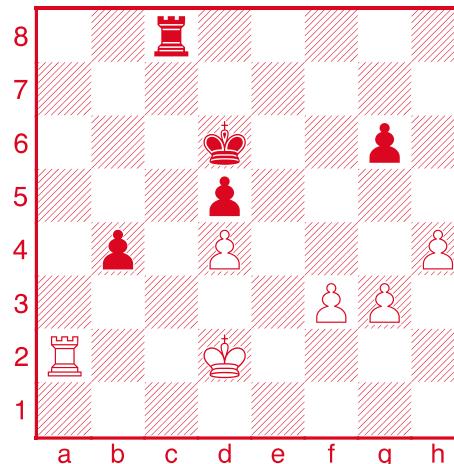
isos were losing.

After 46. $\mathbb{K}d1!$ b3 both sides have a protected passer on the 7th, but all four pawns are doomed, and White's kingside wins whether or not the \mathbb{B} s get traded. 47. $\mathbb{K}c1$ (*the white \mathbb{K} can approach this way only because Black earlier inserted ...a2 $\mathbb{B}a1$*) 47... $\mathbb{K}xd6$ 48. $\mathbb{K}b2$ $\mathbb{K}xc7$ 49. $\mathbb{K}xb3+-$.

46... $\mathbb{K}xd6!$ 47. c8 \mathbb{W}

47. $\mathbb{B}xa2??$ $\mathbb{B}xa2+$ is now check.

47... $\mathbb{B}xc8$ 48. $\mathbb{B}xa2$



Here both sides trade blunders by overestimating the importance of the g6 pawn.

48... $\mathbb{B}c6??$

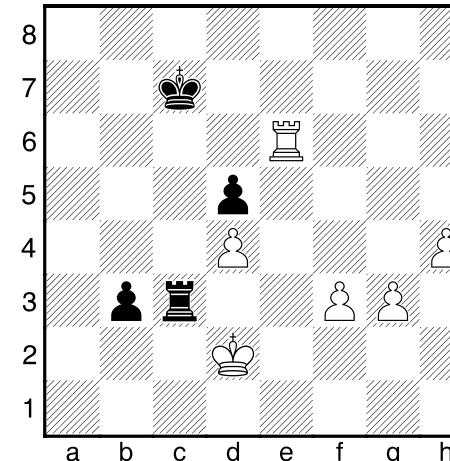
Again, no comment from

Alekhine, but this is another game-losing blunder.

Black's move defends g6 and keeps the white king cut off from the b-pawn, but it loses.

48... $\mathbb{B}c4\blacksquare=$ 49. $\mathbb{B}a6+$ $\mathbb{K}c7\blacksquare$ preventing $\mathbb{B}b6$ (49... $\mathbb{B}c6??$ steps into a losing pawn ending.) 50. $\mathbb{B}xg6$ b3 51. $\mathbb{B}e6$ hurrying back to stop the b-pawn from e1 51... $\mathbb{B}c2+\blacksquare$ 52. $\mathbb{K}d1$ $\mathbb{B}c3$ (... $\mathbb{B}g2$ also draws) 53. $\mathbb{K}d2$

Analysis Diagram



53... $\mathbb{B}xf3!?$ 54. $\mathbb{B}g6$ $\mathbb{B}f2+$ 55. $\mathbb{K}c1$ (55. $\mathbb{K}c3?!=$ draws, but White is the one who could go wrong.) 55... $b2\blacksquare$ 56. $\mathbb{B}g7+\blacksquare=$ White stops the b2 pawn by either getting to the b-file or threatening to skewer b1 with $\mathbb{B}a8+-\mathbb{B}b8+$,

and underpromotions with check leave the \mathbb{B} too far to help with the kingside.) 55... $\mathbb{B}c2+$ 56. $\mathbb{K}b1$ $\mathbb{B}h2\blacksquare=$.

53... $\mathbb{B}c2+=$ 54. $\mathbb{K}d3$ (54. $\mathbb{K}d1$ $\mathbb{B}c3=$) 54... $\mathbb{B}f2\blacksquare$ 55. f4 $\mathbb{B}f3+=$ wins the g-pawn to cripple White's passers.

49. $\mathbb{B}a7?=?$

Gives up the win.

49.g4+– improves on the variations above since now $\mathbb{B}f3+$ will not fork the g-pawn, leaving White with connected passers. 49... $\mathbb{B}c4$ 50. $\mathbb{B}a6+!$ $\mathbb{K}c7$ 51. $\mathbb{B}xg6$ b3 52. $\mathbb{B}e6!$ $\mathbb{B}c2+$ 53. $\mathbb{K}d3$ $\mathbb{B}f2$ 54. $\mathbb{K}c3$ (54. $\mathbb{B}e1?$ $\mathbb{B}xf3+=$) 54... $b2$ (54... $\mathbb{B}xf3+$ 55. $\mathbb{K}b2+-$ White can set up $\mathbb{B}g6-\mathbb{B}g4-\mathbb{B}h5$ and this triangle defends itself and moves up the board to promotion.) 55. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{B}xf3+$ 56. $\mathbb{K}xb2$ $\mathbb{B}h3$ (56... $\mathbb{B}f4$ 57. $\mathbb{B}e7+$ $\mathbb{K}d6$ 58. $\mathbb{B}g7\blacksquare+-$) 57. h5 $\mathbb{B}g3$ 58. $\mathbb{B}e7+$ $\mathbb{K}d6$ 59. $\mathbb{B}g7+-$.

49... $\mathbb{K}e6??$

The final blunder.

49... $\mathbb{B}c4\blacksquare=$ 50. $\mathbb{K}e3$ $\mathbb{B}c3+$

Chess Canada

New York 1924

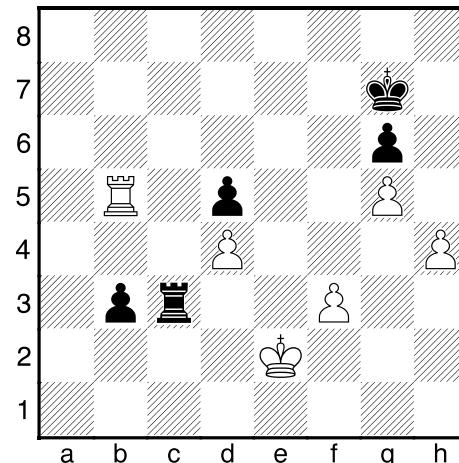


(50... $\mathbb{Q}c6\Box$) 51. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6\Box$ = and the black \mathbb{Q} supporting the b-pawn draws.

50. $\mathbb{Q}b7\Box$

Black's b-pawn is no longer a threat and White wins with no difficulties.

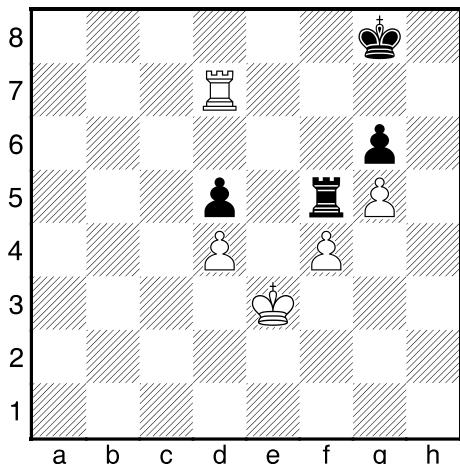
50... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b3 52. g4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 53. $\mathbb{Q}b6\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 54. g5 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}b5$



55... $\mathbb{Q}c2\Box$

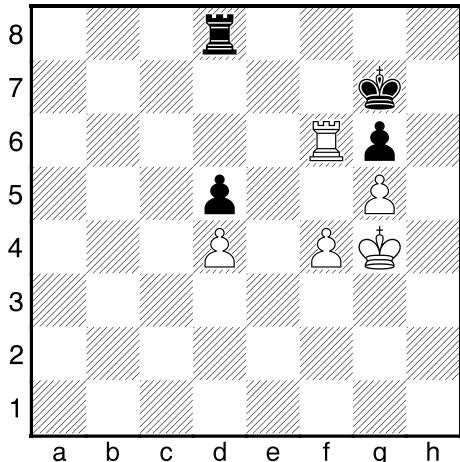
55... $\mathbb{Q}f7\Box$? 56. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ (56. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\Box$) 56... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}b6\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}xb3\Box$.

56. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}b7\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 61. f4



Now White maneuvers to put the \mathbb{Q} on e5.

61... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 62. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 63. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 65. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 66. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 67. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 68. $\mathbb{Q}f6\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

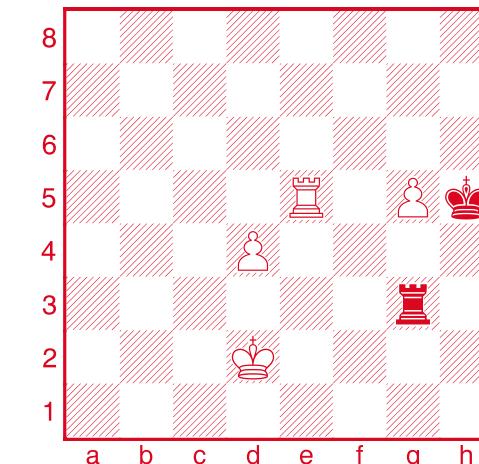


69. f5 gxf5+ 70. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 71. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 72. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 73. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}e1\Box$ 74. $\mathbb{Q}f5$
74. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ would have been much

quicker:

74... $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 75. $\mathbb{Q}g6\Box$; 74... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 75. $\mathbb{Q}g6\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 76. $\mathbb{Q}a6\Box$.

74... $\mathbb{Q}f1\Box$ 75. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 76. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 77. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 78. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}c1\Box$ 79. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}b1\Box$ 80. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c1\Box$ 81. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 82. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$



Passed pawns must be pushed?

83. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$

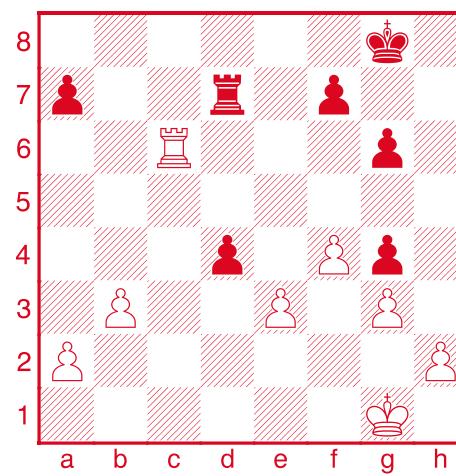
83. d5?? this passed pawn must not be pushed! 83... $\mathbb{Q}xg5\Box$ = 84. $\mathbb{Q}xg5\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 85. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6\Box$ =.

83... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 84. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 85. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 86. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 87. d5 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 88. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7\Box$ 89. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 90. $\mathbb{Q}e6$

1-0

Tartakower, Saviely Marshall, Frank

New York 1924 (14), 05.04.1924
Notes: John Upper



30. $\mathbb{Q}f2?$

Alekhine:

"Winning an important tempo."

In fact, this is the first of pair of unnoticed blunders that could have changed the game to a draw.

30. $\mathbb{Q}c2?$ d3 (30... $\mathbb{Q}xe3?$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f1\Box$ +) 31. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c1\Box$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c1\Box$ =.

30. $\mathbb{Q}xd4\Box$ ($\mathbb{Q}c8\Box$ and then $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ also draws, but there's no good reason to bring the black \mathbb{Q}

Chess Canada

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forward) 30... $\mathbb{E}xd4$ 31. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ (31... $\mathbb{E}e4$ 32. $\mathbb{A}f2+$) 32. $\mathbb{A}f2$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 33. $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{E}d1$ 34. $\mathbb{E}d2!$ +– makes a bridge for the white \mathbb{A} to cross to attack a7 while the $\mathbb{E}d2$ protects the base of both pawn chains and cuts off Black's \mathbb{A} .

30...dxe3+??

30...d3□ 31. $\mathbb{A}e1$ (31. $\mathbb{E}c1$ f5 32. $\mathbb{E}d1$ (32. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{E}h7=$) 32... $\mathbb{E}c7!=$) 31... $\mathbb{E}d5$ □ 32. $\mathbb{A}d2$ (32. $\mathbb{E}c3$ $\mathbb{E}h5$ 33. $\mathbb{E}xd3$ $\mathbb{E}xh2$ 34. $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{E}h1+$ 35. $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{E}h3$ 36. $\mathbb{A}f2$ $\mathbb{E}h2+=$) 32... $\mathbb{E}h5$ □ 33. $\mathbb{A}xd3$ $\mathbb{E}xh2$ 34. $\mathbb{E}c2$ (34. $\mathbb{E}a6$ $\mathbb{E}g2=$) 34... $\mathbb{E}h1\pm$.

31. $\mathbb{A}xe3$

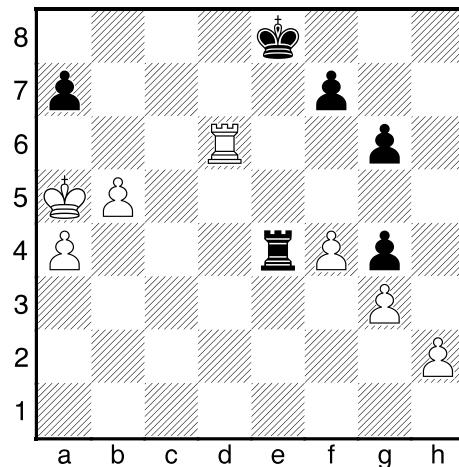
Alekhine:

"A pawn plus on the queenside easily turned to account, the better position of his rook, the preferable king's position — more than this surely no one could expect!"

True, and Tartakower doesn't give Marshall a second chance.

31... $\mathbb{E}e7+$ 32. $\mathbb{A}d3$ $\mathbb{E}d7+$ 33. $\mathbb{A}c2$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 34. $\mathbb{B}b4$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ 35. $\mathbb{A}b3$ $\mathbb{E}e2$ 36. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{E}e3+$ 37. $\mathbb{A}c4$ $\mathbb{E}a3$ 38. $\mathbb{B}b5$ $\mathbb{E}a4+$

39. $\mathbb{A}b3$ $\mathbb{E}e4$ 40. $\mathbb{E}c7$ $\mathbb{E}e3+$ 41. $\mathbb{A}b4$ $\mathbb{E}e4+$ 42. $\mathbb{A}b3$ $\mathbb{E}e3+$ 43. $\mathbb{E}c3$ $\mathbb{E}e1$ 44. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 45. $\mathbb{A}b4$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 46. $\mathbb{A}a5$ $\mathbb{E}e4$ 47. $\mathbb{A}a4$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 48. $\mathbb{E}c6$ $\mathbb{A}d8$ 49. $\mathbb{E}f6$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ 50. $\mathbb{E}d6$



50... $\mathbb{E}e2$ 51. $\mathbb{A}a6$ $\mathbb{E}xh2$ 52. $\mathbb{A}xa7$ $\mathbb{E}a2$ 53. $\mathbb{E}d4$ $\mathbb{E}a3$ 54. $\mathbb{B}b6$ $\mathbb{E}xg3$ 55. $\mathbb{B}b7$ $\mathbb{E}b3$ 56. $\mathbb{B}b8\mathbb{W}+$ $\mathbb{E}xb8$ 57. $\mathbb{A}xb8$ f5 58. $\mathbb{A}a5$ g5 59. $\mathbb{A}a6$ g3 60. $\mathbb{A}a7$ $\mathbb{E}xf4$ 61. $\mathbb{A}a8\mathbb{W}$

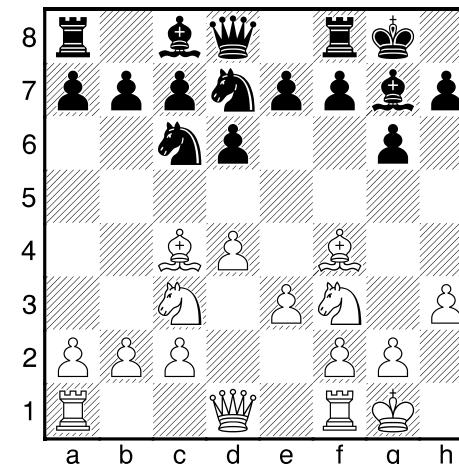
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Janowski, Dawid Yates, F.D.

New York 1924 (14), 05.04.1924
Notes: John Uppercrust

Apart from Alekhine's relatively short notes I can't find this game analyzed anywhere. That's not surprising — the game is full of mistakes and neither player was a contender — but it means the instructive rook endgame has also passed under the radar.

1.d4 $\mathbb{A}f6$ 2. $\mathbb{A}f3$ g6 3. $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 4.h3 0–0 5.e3 d6 6. $\mathbb{A}c4$ $\mathbb{A}c6$ 7.0–0 $\mathbb{A}d7$ 8. $\mathbb{A}c3$

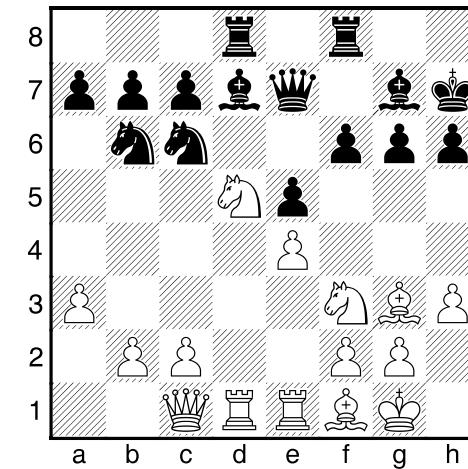


8...h6 9. $\mathbb{W}d2$ e5 10. $\mathbb{A}g3$ $\mathbb{A}h7$ 11. $\mathbb{A}ad1$ $\mathbb{A}b6$ 12. $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{E}fe1$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{A}d3?$

14.dxe5±.

14... $\mathbb{E}ae8$
14...f5±.

15.dxe5 dxe5 16.e4± $\mathbb{A}b4$
17. $\mathbb{A}f1$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}c1$ f6 19.a3
 $\mathbb{A}c6$ 20. $\mathbb{A}d5$



20... $\mathbb{A}xd5?$

After this White has a huge advantage, with every minor piece better than its black counterpart.

20... $\mathbb{W}f7$ 21. $\mathbb{A}xc7$ $\mathbb{A}xh3\pm$.

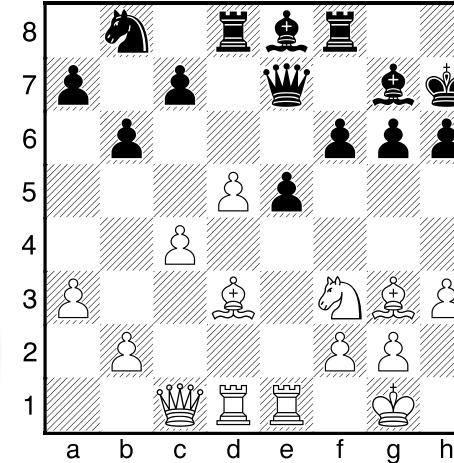
21.exd5 $\mathbb{A}b8$ 22.c4 b6?

22... $\mathbb{W}f7\pm$.

23. $\mathbb{A}d3!$ $\mathbb{A}e8$

Chess Canada

New York 1924



Black's passive play has allowed White to build a winning advantage; but for the remainder of the game Janowski invariably avoids the most dynamic ways to play for the win, and when (at last) confronted with a Black threat he retreats into what he hopes will be a fortress.

24. $\mathbb{W}c2$

□24. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 25. $f4+/-$.

24... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

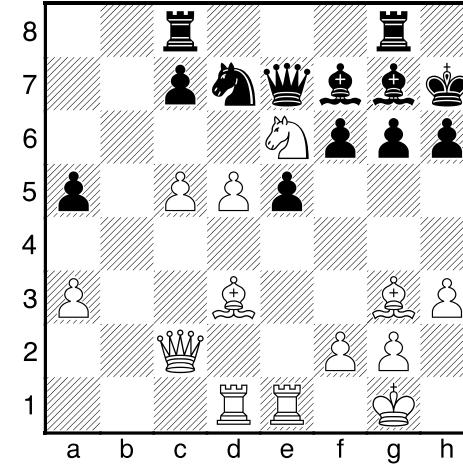
□24... $c6\leftarrow$.

25. $b4$ $a5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d4!$

$\mathbb{E}c8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{E}g8$

28. $c5$ $bxc5$ 29. $bxc5$

$\mathbb{Q}f7$



30. $c6$

□30. $f4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ (30... $c6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{E}xg7$ 32. $d6+/-$) 31. $dxe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+/-$.

30... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31. $f4?!$

□31. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (31... $f5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}b7+/-$) 32. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+/-$.

31... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 32. $dxe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$

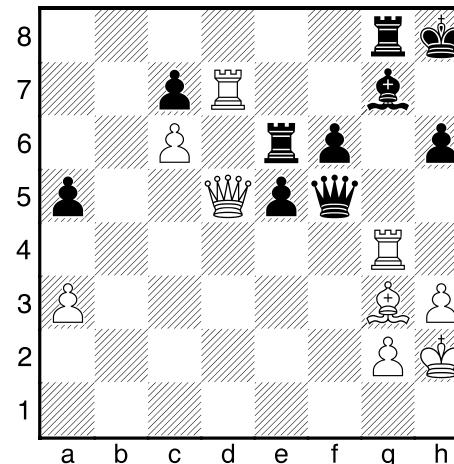
33. $f5$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $gxf5$

35. $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$

37. $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 38. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$

39. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}ce8$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ $\mathbb{W}b1+$

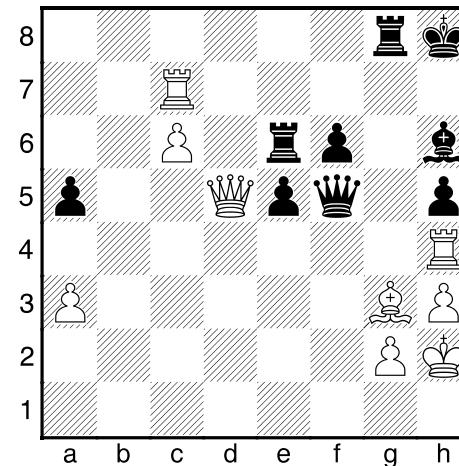
41. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ $\mathbb{W}f5$



43. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$

□43. $\mathbb{Q}dxg7!$ wins the $c7$ -pawn and will leave Black hopelessly tangled after $\mathbb{Q}d7$, and dramatically simplifies the position.

43... $h5$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$



White has had a big advantage for 20 moves — ranging from +1.5 to +5.5 here — but at the first sight of black counterplay (... $\mathbb{Q}xg3!?$) — and the last move of the second time control — he plays a panicky defensive move which gives it all away.

45. $\mathbb{W}f3??$

White has several wins here — even 45... $\mathbb{Q}e1$ — but the two best are: 45. $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ and Alekhine's 45. $\mathbb{Q}xh5!$.

F.D.Yates

no cigar

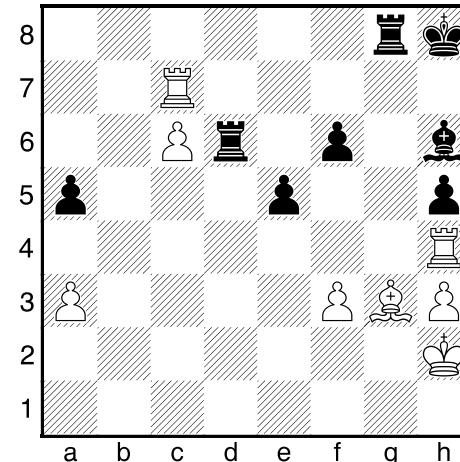


45. $\mathbb{B}d7!$ $\mathbb{B}xg3$ 46. $\mathbb{B}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$
 47. $\mathbb{Q}f2\Box$ $\mathbb{W}c2+$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}c1+$
 49. $\mathbb{W}d1+$ — blocks the check and attacks h5, ending any Black hopes.

As **Alekhine** noted, White wins with 45. $\mathbb{B}xh5!$; but requires some calculation to be sure:

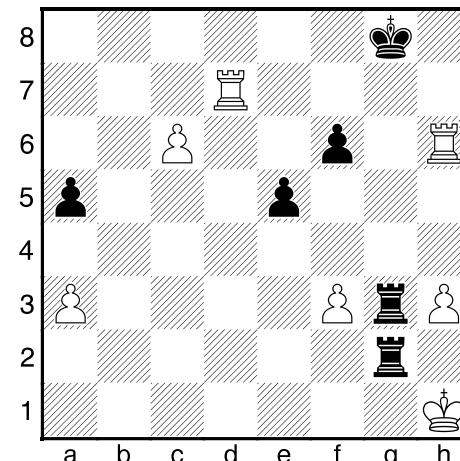
45... $\mathbb{W}xh5$ 46. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}xg3!$? looks frightening, but top class players should be able to identify the defensive saves with little effort: (46... $\mathbb{W}g5$ 47. $\mathbb{W}g4+$ AA) 47. $\mathbb{Q}xg3!$ (47. $\mathbb{W}xf6+!$ wins, but is more of a tightrope: 47... $\mathbb{B}g7$ 48. $\mathbb{B}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 49. $\mathbb{W}d8+\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 50. $c7\Box+$ —) 47... $\mathbb{W}g6+$ (47... $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ no checks and Black gets mated.) 48. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}c2+$ 50. $\mathbb{W}e2+$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}c1+$ 52. $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{W}c4+$ 53. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 54. $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ — a long line, but the attacking geometry for Black clearly doesn't work: the \mathbb{Q} attacks only dark squares and White blocks checks with the \mathbb{W} until the \mathbb{Q} hides behind the light-square-guarding pawns.

45... $\mathbb{W}xf3!$ 46. $gxf3$ $\mathbb{B}d6\Box=$



Black creates counterplay against the \mathbb{Q} and \mathbb{B} just in time.

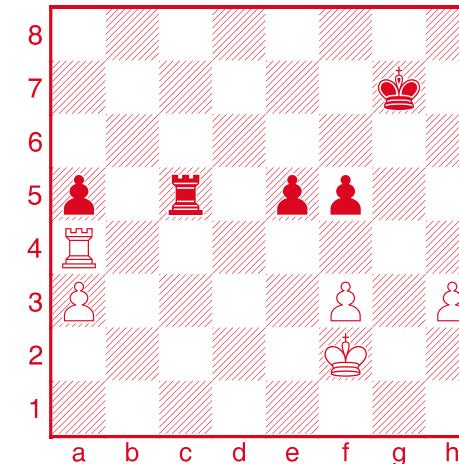
47. $\mathbb{B}xh5$ $\mathbb{B}d2+$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{B}xg3$
 49. $\mathbb{B}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 50. $\mathbb{B}d7$
 $\mathbb{B}dg2!$



51. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 52. $\mathbb{B}h4$ $\mathbb{B}c2$
 53. $\mathbb{B}g1!$?

A weird choice. 53. $\mathbb{B}g4+$ and recapturing with either pawn fixes White's structure.

53... $\mathbb{B}xg1+$ 54. $\mathbb{Q}xg1$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$
 55. $\mathbb{B}a4$ $\mathbb{B}c5$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $f5$



\mathbb{Q} to the e-file or g-file?

57. $\mathbb{Q}g3??$

57. $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}d3\Box=$:

a) 58... $f4$ 59. $\mathbb{B}c4$ $\mathbb{B}b5$ 60. $a4$ $\mathbb{B}b3+$ 61. $\mathbb{B}c3=$;

b) 58... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 59. $\mathbb{B}c4$ $\mathbb{B}d5+$
 60. $\mathbb{Q}e2\Box$ (60. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}b5\Box+$)
 60... $\mathbb{B}b5$ 61. $a4\Box=$;

c) 58... $\mathbb{B}d5+$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}e2\Box$
 (59. $\mathbb{Q}c4??$ $\mathbb{B}d4+$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{B}xa4$
 61. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $e4$ 62. $fxe4$ $f4\Box+$;
 59. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $f4+$ —) 59... $f4$ 60. $\mathbb{B}c4\Box$
 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 61. $\mathbb{B}c8!$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 62. $\mathbb{B}h8+$
 $\mathbb{Q}g3=$

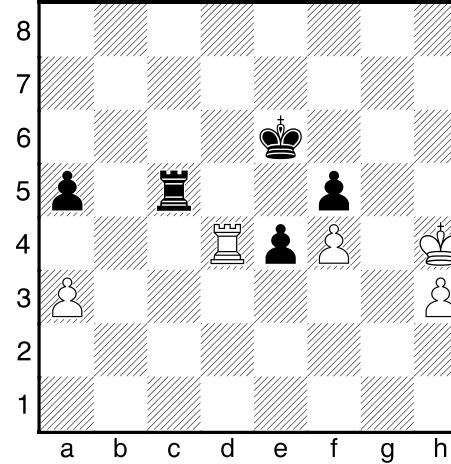
57... $\mathbb{Q}f6!+—$ 58. $f4$

Alekhine:

"A dreadful move, which allows the adversary a supported passed pawn and at the same time endangers his own f-pawn. A draw was still to be had by: 58. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 59. $f4+$ $exf4$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}c3+$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{B}g3+$ 62. $\mathbb{Q}h2=$ etc."

SF rates 58. $f4$ as losing, but still White's best!! That's because although the final position in Alekhine's variation is equal, Black has a winning improvement on the very first move: after 58. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $f4!—$ Black wins by going after the h-pawn with his \mathbb{Q} , and then the $f3$ pawn with \mathbb{Q} and \mathbb{B} . White's \mathbb{B} can go to the second rank to prevent his \mathbb{Q} from being checked back, but also has to defend the a-pawn, and it can only sit on a2 for one move before zugzwang.

58... $e4\Box+—$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$
 60. $\mathbb{B}d4$



The next sequence includes a string of blunders from both players, who repeat the position without noticing White's drawing counterplay.

60... $\mathbb{R}b5??$

60... $\mathbb{R}c3!$ 61. $\mathbb{R}a4 \mathbb{R}f3-$ (Alekhine), since 62. $\mathbb{R}g5 \mathbb{R}xh3$ 63. $\mathbb{R}xa5 \mathbb{R}g3+\square$ 64. $\mathbb{R}h5 \mathbb{R}g4-$ transposes to the game.

61. $\mathbb{R}a4??$

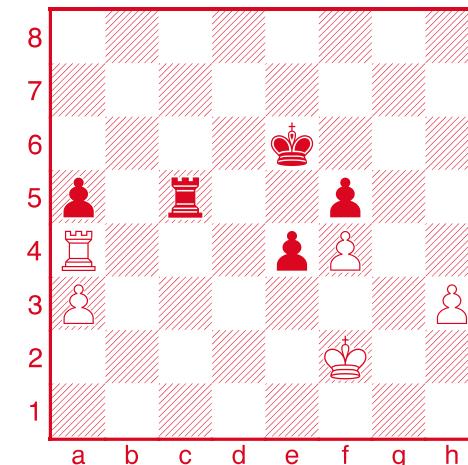
Either Janowski believed it's a fortress or that Yates wouldn't be able to figure out how to break it.

Black gets drawing counterplay by going after the f5-pawn with: 61. $\mathbb{R}d8!$ or 61.a4! e.g. 61... $\mathbb{R}b4$ 62. $\mathbb{R}d8 \mathbb{R}xa4$ 63. $\mathbb{R}g5\mathbb{=}$.

61... $\mathbb{R}d5??=$

61... $\mathbb{R}c5-$ transposing to a previous line, when 62. $\mathbb{R}g5?$ loses to 62...e3 $\square-$ exploiting the terrible immobility of the $\mathbb{R}a4$, and showing why the black \mathbb{R} is best placed on the c-file.

62. $\mathbb{R}g3!= \mathbb{R}c5$ 63. $\mathbb{R}f2 \mathbb{R}e6$



64. $\mathbb{R}g3??$

64. $\mathbb{R}e2?$ $\mathbb{R}f6$ 65. $\mathbb{R}f2 \mathbb{R}g6$ 66. $\mathbb{R}g2 \mathbb{R}h5$ 67. $\mathbb{R}g3 \mathbb{R}c3+$ 68. $\mathbb{R}g2 \mathbb{R}h4+-;$

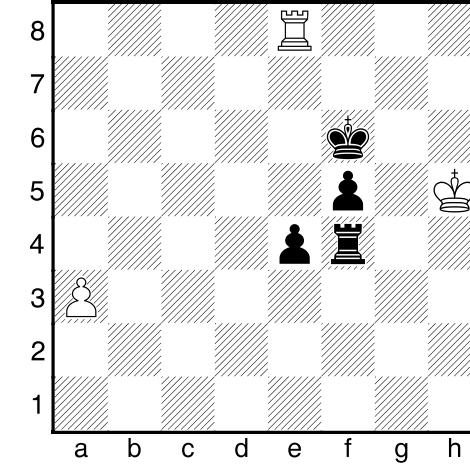
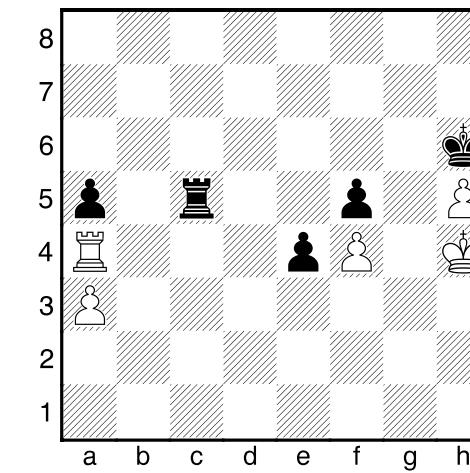
64. $\mathbb{R}h4\mathbb{=}$ looks like a pointless distraction — surely the black \mathbb{R} can walk over and take the h-pawn and then either invade on g4 or cross back to the queenside?

No! White's point is to make

a pocket for the king on h4.

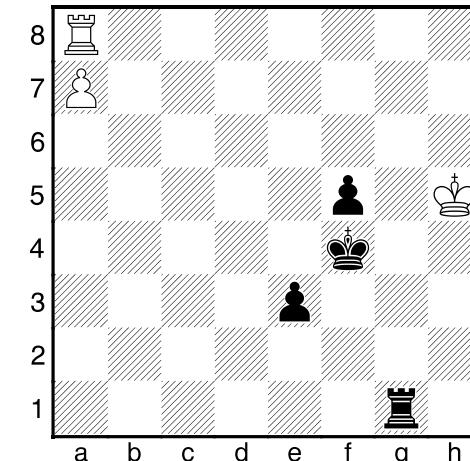
64... $\mathbb{R}f6$ 65. $\mathbb{R}h5\mathbb{=}$ (65. $\mathbb{R}e3??$ $\mathbb{R}d5\mathbb{=}$) 65... $\mathbb{R}g7$ 66. $\mathbb{R}g3\mathbb{=}$ $\mathbb{R}h6$ 67. $\mathbb{R}h4\mathbb{=}$

Analysis Diagram



The rest needs no comment.

**71.a4 $\mathbb{R}f3$ 72. $\mathbb{R}h4 \mathbb{R}a3$
73. $\mathbb{R}a8 \mathbb{R}e5$ 74. $\mathbb{R}g5 \mathbb{R}g3+\mathbb{!}$
75. $\mathbb{R}h5 \mathbb{R}e3$ 76.a5 $\mathbb{R}f4$ 77.a6
 $\mathbb{R}g1$ 78.a7**



White can oscillate the \mathbb{R} to draw and it's a fortress. To make progress Black must give up the a-pawn. 67... $\mathbb{R}d5$ (67...e3 68. $\mathbb{R}g3\mathbb{=}$ (68. $\mathbb{R}d4?$ $\mathbb{R}c6\mathbb{=}$) 68. $\mathbb{R}c4\mathbb{=}$ $\mathbb{R}d6$ 69. $\mathbb{R}c3$ (69. $\mathbb{R}c5??$ $\mathbb{R}e6-$) 69... $\mathbb{R}e6$ 70.a4 \square (70. $\mathbb{R}e3??$ $\mathbb{R}e7\mathbb{=}$ 71.a4 $\mathbb{R}g7\mathbb{=}$) 70...e3 71. $\mathbb{R}xe3\mathbb{=}$ $\mathbb{R}xe3\mathbb{=}$ stalemate: another bonus of having the \mathbb{R} pocketed on h4!

**64... $\mathbb{R}c3+$ 65. $\mathbb{R}h4 \mathbb{R}f3$
66. $\mathbb{R}g5 \mathbb{R}xh3$ 67. $\mathbb{R}xa5$
 $\mathbb{R}g3+\mathbb{=}$ 68. $\mathbb{R}h5 \mathbb{R}g4$
69. $\mathbb{R}e5+$ $\mathbb{R}f6$ 70. $\mathbb{R}e8 \mathbb{R}xf4$**

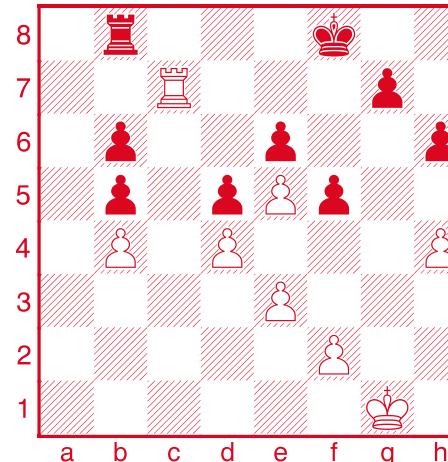
**78... $\mathbb{R}a1$ 79. $\mathbb{R}g6 \mathbb{R}a6+$
80. $\mathbb{R}h5 \mathbb{R}e2$ 81. $\mathbb{R}e8 \mathbb{R}f3!$**

0-1



Bogoljubow, Efim Tartakower, Saviely

New York 1924 (15), 06.04.1924
Notes: John Uppen



Another fascinating rook ending. White is a pawn down, but has a \mathbb{R} on the 7th and targets on b6, e6 and g7 as compensation. If Black does nothing, White can go $\mathbb{f}4$, $f3$, $e4$, and after exchanges $d4-d5$ will create a central passer supported by the \mathbb{Q} , which wins. This means Black must do *something* to create counterplay, but what?

Rook activity, of course!

38... $\mathbb{R}a8?$

Loser! You thought Rook activity would save you? ***Ha ha ha!***

Actually, the idea is right, but the move-order is wrong.

38... $g5?$ is terrible — making the white \mathbb{R} even more active — and loses to several moves, including 39. $h5!+-$.

38... $f4\Box=$ is the only move to draw. The idea is that Black's \mathbb{R} will get pawn targets no matter what White does about the f4-pawn: either on d4 or e3 and h4, depending on what White does about the f4 pawn.

The difficult-to-understand point is that Black must do this *now* — before ... $\mathbb{R}a8$ — because how White responds to ... $f4$ makes a difference to whether Black must spend a tempo defending e6:

- if White takes on f4 then Black can drop the e6-pawn and draw with counterplay across the 4th rank, and
- if White ignores f4 and allows ... $fxe3$ then Black must defend e6 or White's central clump wins, but Black draws with counterplay against the

e- and h-pawns.

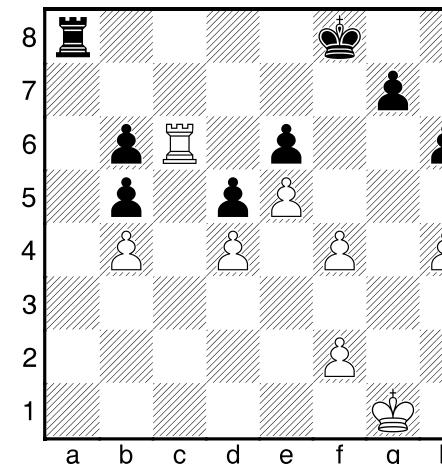
In the game line, Black is forced to spend a tempo defending e6 before White has to make a choice about ... $f4$.

In the game, both players miss this critical difference, and Alekhine didn't mention it in his book.

After 38... $f4$:

39. $\mathbb{R}c6$ $fxe3$ 40. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{f}7!=$ defending e6 keeps d5 safe. Black next goes ... $\mathbb{R}a8$ and attacks the e3 and h4-pawns (the b4-pawn can wait).

39. $exf4$ 39... $\mathbb{R}a8\Box$ 40. $\mathbb{R}c6$
Analysis Diagram



Black doesn't have to defend e6 now that the fourth rank is littered with targets: 40... $\mathbb{R}a4!$ (40... $\mathbb{f}7?$ 41. $\mathbb{R}xb6+-$ transposes to the game.) 41. $\mathbb{R}xe6$ (41. $\mathbb{R}xb6$ $\mathbb{R}xb4\Box=$) 41... $\mathbb{R}xb4\Box=$.

39. $\mathbb{R}c6\Box+-$

Alekhine:

"After 39. $\mathbb{R}b7$ $f4$ 40. $\mathbb{R}xb6$ $\mathbb{f}7$, the play, except for transposition of moves, would be identical."

It *would* be identical, but in this line, instead of Alekhine's ... $\mathbb{f}7$, Black has the drawing ... $fxe4$, as explained in the previous note.

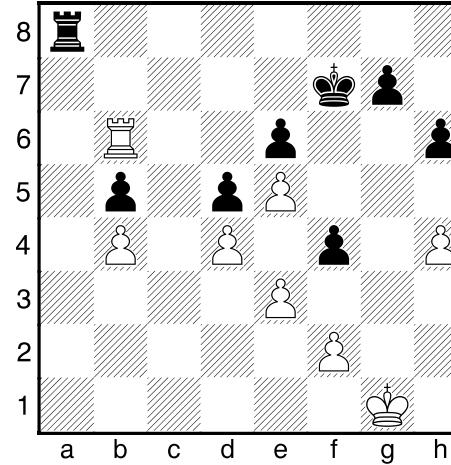
39... $\mathbb{f}7$

Dropping e6 leaves d5 hopelessly weak and makes the win relatively easy: 39... $\mathbb{R}a4$ 40. $\mathbb{R}xe6\Box$ $\mathbb{R}xb4$ 41. $\mathbb{R}xb6$ $f4$ 42. $\mathbb{g}2!+-$ the d5 pawn will fall and the central white pawn clump is too strong.

40. $\mathbb{R}xb6\Box$

40. $h5?$ $\mathbb{R}a4=$.

40... $f4!?$



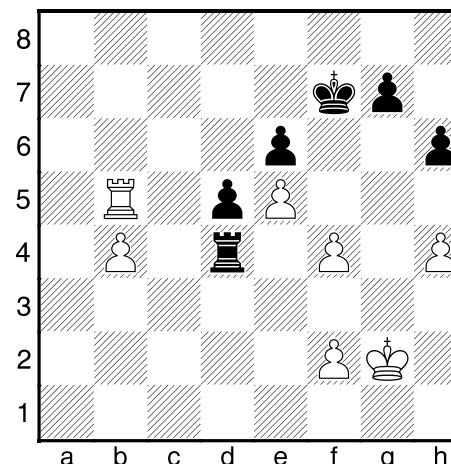
The same idea analyzed at move 38, but now Black is one move too slow to tear open the 4th rank.

41. $\mathbb{B}b7+$??

Gives away the win.

41. $\mathbb{B}xf4$ $\mathbb{B}a1+$ 42. $\mathbb{B}g2$ $\mathbb{B}d1$
43. $\mathbb{B}xb5$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$

Analysis Diagram



44. $\mathbb{B}f3?$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ \mathbb{B} = threatening $\mathbb{B}f5$ and taking on f4 with check, leaving White without the tactical defense with a \mathbb{B} skewer from f7. 45. $\mathbb{B}g4$ $h5+$ 46. $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{B}f5$ 47. $\mathbb{B}b7$ $\mathbb{B}e4$ \mathbb{B} =.

44. $\mathbb{B}g3$ \mathbb{B} + is similar to the game, and is correctly given by Alekhine as superior to 41. $\mathbb{B}b7$ +. But his note continues with 44... $\mathbb{B}g6$ 45. $\mathbb{B}b7$ "after which the pawn would decide in the long run." - **Alekhine**, 45... $\mathbb{B}f5$? 46. $\mathbb{f}3$! \mathbb{B} +. SF disagrees, and rates 45. $\mathbb{B}b7$ as giving away the win to 45... $\mathbb{B}d1$. Instead, it says White wins with either 45... $\mathbb{B}b6$ or 45... $\mathbb{B}b8$. I'll leave it to any interested readers to explain (or refute?) its assessment. :)

41... $\mathbb{B}f8$??

Gives away the draw.

Alekhine:

"As a matter of course, 41... $\mathbb{B}g6$ was essential. Black evidently was afraid of 42. $h5$ +, yet this very line of play, after 42... $\mathbb{B}f5$ 43. $\mathbb{B}f7$ + $\mathbb{B}e4$ 44. $\mathbb{B}xf4$ + $\mathbb{B}d3$ would have given him splendid chances, for instance: 45. $\mathbb{B}f7$

44. $\mathbb{B}c4$ 46. $\mathbb{B}xg7$

[editor - ? SF says this pawn capture is a tempo-loss giving away the win, and claims a win in lines where White brings the \mathbb{B} to the queenside and goes after the e-pawn with a stutter step $\mathbb{B}e7$ (forcing ... $\mathbb{B}a6$) and then $\mathbb{B}d7-d6$.]

46... $\mathbb{B}xb4$ 47. $\mathbb{B}g6$ (or 47. $\mathbb{B}e7$ $\mathbb{B}a6$) 47... $\mathbb{B}e8$! and the black b-pawn becomes very powerful.

White, therefore, after 41... $\mathbb{B}g6$ would have done best by selecting the variation, 42. $\mathbb{B}xf4$ $\mathbb{B}a1+$ 43. $\mathbb{B}g2$ $\mathbb{B}d1$ 44. $\mathbb{B}xb5$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 45. $\mathbb{B}g3$ after which, however, he would have had a full tempo less than with the move mentioned in the other variation. This circumstance would have tended to make the attainment of victory much more difficult. After the ultra-careful retreat of the king, the not too difficult endgame is wound up by Bogoljubow in irreproachable fashion."

Alekhine is right that after 41... $\mathbb{B}g6$! the \mathbb{B} uses the light squares and has enough counterplay to draw:

a) 42. $\mathbb{B}xf4$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ \mathbb{B} = or 42... $\mathbb{B}f5$ \mathbb{B} =;

b) 42. $\mathbb{B}e7$ $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 43. $\mathbb{B}xe3$ $\mathbb{B}f5$ \mathbb{B} = ... $\mathbb{B}a2$ draws too: the well centralized \mathbb{B} and active \mathbb{B} hold the draw similar to a defence we'll see in the game at move 49.

c) But after Alekhine's 42. $h5$ SF opts for a move he didn't mention, presumably because the black \mathbb{B} seems hopelessly out of the game after 42... $\mathbb{B}xh5$ 43. $\mathbb{B}xg7$.

It's true that White can keep the black \mathbb{B} sidelined by leaving the \mathbb{B} on the g-file, but White can't make any progress without taking the e-pawn, and only the \mathbb{B} can do that, which would allow the black \mathbb{B} back into the game.

That may help us understand why SF says Black has more than 10 moves which leave the position after 42... $\mathbb{B}xh5$ \mathbb{B} = as 0.00! For example:

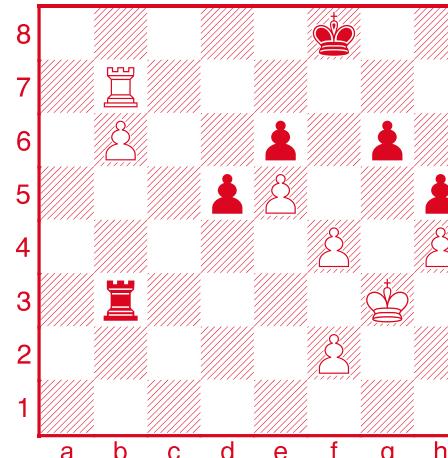
43. $\mathbb{B}xg7$ $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 44. $\mathbb{B}xe3$ $\mathbb{B}a4$
45. $\mathbb{B}e7$ $\mathbb{B}xb4$ (or 45... $\mathbb{B}a6$
46. $\mathbb{B}b7$ $\mathbb{B}g4$ \mathbb{B} =) 46. $\mathbb{B}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}b2$
47. $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{B}g5$ 48. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}4$
49. $\mathbb{B}e6$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 50. $\mathbb{B}e5$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 51. $d5$

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**42. exf4+– ♕a1+ 43. ♔g2
♕d1 44. ♕xb5 ♕xd4 45. ♔g3
h5 46. ♕b7 g6 47. b5 ♕b4
48. b6 ♕b3+–**



This is crazy-hard.

49. f3?

Gives away the win. Pushing the

♕d2=.

And White can't do better than 43. ♕xg7:

43. exf4?! ♔g4 and Black is playing for the advantage;

43. ♕e7?? actually loses to 43... fxe3 44. fxe3 ♔g4□+ going after the base of the pawn chain: 45. e4?! ♔f3! a passer on e5 might look strong now, but not after d4 and b4 fall

f-pawn cuts off one path for the white ♔ to the center (through f3!), it also opens the 2nd rank which makes ... ♕b2 a drawing resource.

49. ♔g2? allows d4□= the main drawing resource: trading the d-pawn for the b-pawn. 50. ♔f1 ♕b2 51. ♔e1 d3= 52. ♕b8+ ♔e7□ 53. b7 ♔d7□=.

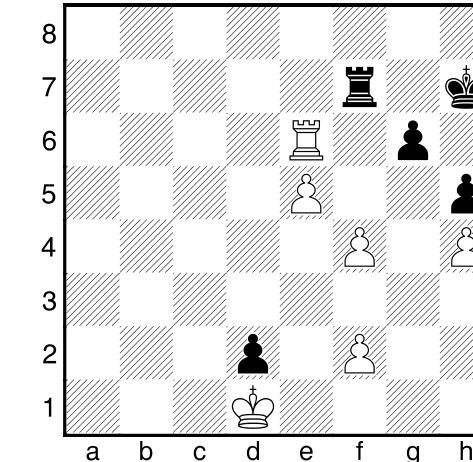
49. ♔h2□+– Despite both players having ♕s on a mostly-open board, the solution requires zugzwang!

White passes the move to Black:

- ... ♔-moves allow White to trade the b-pawn for the g- or e-pawns, winning:

a) 49... ♔e8? is the easiest to refute: 50. ♕g7 ♕xb6 51. ♕xg6 ♔f7 52. f5!+–;

b) 49... ♔g8 50. ♕b8+ ♔g7 51. b7 d4 52. ♔g2□ d3 53. ♔f3□ d2+ 54. ♔e2 ♕b2 55. ♔d1! ♔h7 (55... ♔f7? 56. ♕h8+– is the skewer trick.) 56. ♕e8 ♕xb7 57. ♕xe6 ♕f7 *Analysis Diagram*

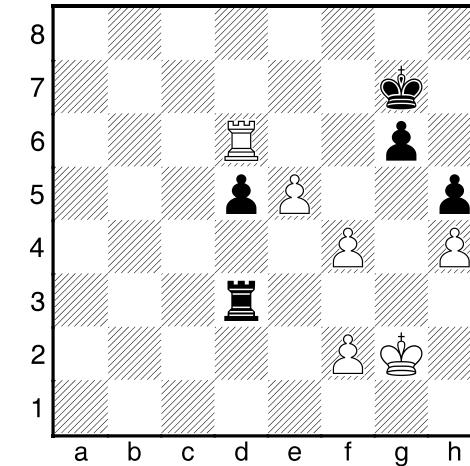


58. ♕f6□+– a key resource in several lines. White wins the pawn ending... instructively (of course): 58... ♕xf6 (58... ♕d7 59. ♕d6 ♕f7 60. ♕d4+–) 59. exf6 ♔g8 60. ♕xd2 ♔f7 61. ♔e3 ♔xf6 62. ♔e4 ♔e6 63. f5+! gxf5+ 64. ♔f4 ♔f6 65. f3! another reason to keep f2–f3 in reserve. 65... ♔g6 66. ♔e5+–;

c) Black has no time to win either white f-pawn: 49... ♕b4 50. ♕b8++– is similar to the game.

d) 49... ♕b2!? 50. ♕b8+ ♔f7 51. b7 ♔g7 (51... ♕xf2+? 52. ♔g3 ♕b2 53. ♕h8+– the skewer trick.) 52. ♔g2 ♕b3 53. ♕e8 ♕xb7 54. ♕xe6 ♕b3 55. ♕d6 ♕d3

Analysis Diagram



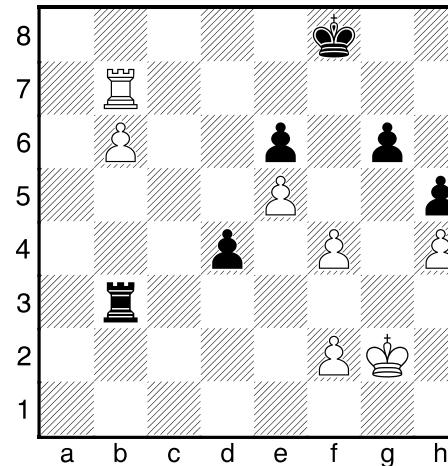
Is this obviously winning?

White *does* win, but has to find the idea of f4–f5 — a temporary pawn sac that undoubles the f-pawns *and* leaves Black with two weak pawns, *and* clears a path for the white ♔ to advance: 56. f3 ♕d1 57. f5! gxf5 58. ♔g3 ♕d4 59. ♕f6□+–.

This process of elimination leads us to Black's only other choice: counterplay with the d-pawn.

e) 49... d4 50. ♔g2□

Analysis Diagram



Is this Zugzwang?

- pushing the d-pawn or \mathbb{h} moves on the b-file allow $\mathbb{f}3$ to round up the d-pawn, which was not the case with a white pawn on f3, when ... $\mathbb{b}2$ would control the white \mathbb{f} and b-pawn.

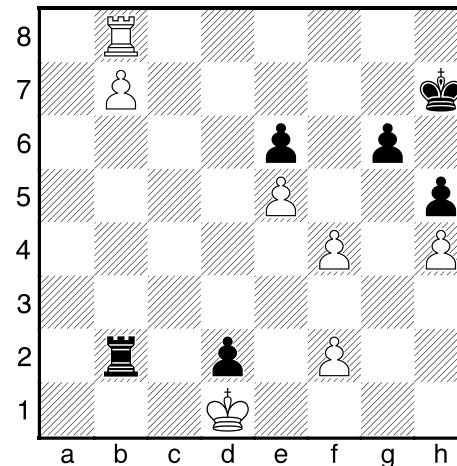
— ... \mathbb{f} moves leave the black e- or g-pawn exposed to the white \mathbb{h} , as in variations (a) and (b) above:

50... $\mathbb{e}8$ 51. $\mathbb{g}7\Box+$ — with the pawn on f3 this is a draw: Black goes ... $\mathbb{b}2+$ then ...d3. With the pawn on f2 there is no 2nd-rank check and on ...d3 White has $\mathbb{f}3+-$.

50... $\mathbb{g}8$ 51. $\mathbb{f}1$ $\mathbb{b}2$ 52. $\mathbb{b}8+!$ $\mathbb{g}7$ (or ... $\mathbb{h}7$, both avoiding

$\mathbb{h}8-h7+$) 53.b7 tying the \mathbb{h} to the b-file, 53...d3 54. $\mathbb{e}1$ heading for c1. 54... $\mathbb{h}7$ 55. $\mathbb{d}1$ $\mathbb{g}7$ 56. $\mathbb{c}1$ d2+ 57. $\mathbb{d}1\Box$ $\mathbb{h}7$

Analysis Diagram



If Black's \mathbb{f} was now on g7 White would only draw with $\mathbb{e}8$, but White could lose a tempo with either f2–f3 or $\mathbb{e}2$, when a black \mathbb{f} move would allow White the essential defensive resource of $\mathbb{e}6-f6$ shown on the previous page. With the \mathbb{f} away from f6 there is no need for subtlety, and with 58. $\mathbb{e}8+—$ White gets the e- and d-pawns for the b-pawn, and 58... $\mathbb{x}b7$ 59. $\mathbb{x}e6$ $\mathbb{f}7$ 60. $\mathbb{f}6+—$ was shown above to be a win.

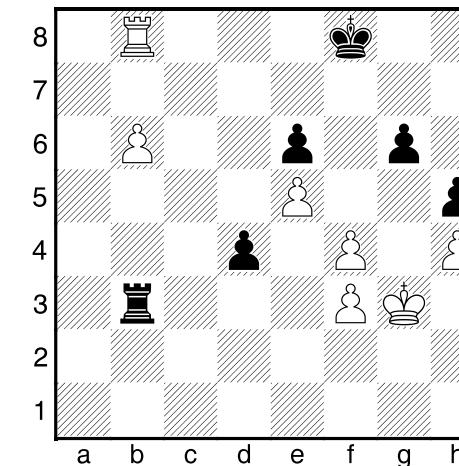
49... $\mathbb{b}4??$

The final blunder.

49...d4 \Box = the only move to

draw. If White continues with the line that wins in the game...

50. $\mathbb{b}8+$ Analysis Diagram



a) Staying on g7 and h7 to avoid the "skewer trick" — $\mathbb{h}8-h7+$ to control c7 — doesn't draw: 50... $\mathbb{f}7?$ 51.b7 \Box $\mathbb{g}7$ 52. $\mathbb{f}2$ (52. $f5!$ also wins.) 52... $\mathbb{b}2+$ 53. $\mathbb{e}1$ d3

slow transit chess

L2R:
Bogo, Maroczy, Reti,
Lasker & Tartkower.

Shipbound to NYC.

Detroit Free Press
1924.03.23

54. $\mathbb{d}1\Box$ d2 55. $\mathbb{e}2\Box$ $\mathbb{h}7$

56. $\mathbb{e}8$ $\mathbb{x}b7$ 57. $\mathbb{x}e6$ $\mathbb{f}7$

58. $\mathbb{f}6\Box+—$ transposes to an earlier note.

b) 50... $\mathbb{g}7?$ 51.b7 $\mathbb{b}2$ 52.f5 \Box
could this ending be any more instructive? 52... $\mathbb{g}5$ 53. $\mathbb{f}4\Box$
d3 54. $\mathbb{g}5$ d2 55. $\mathbb{d}8$ $\mathbb{x}b7$
56. $\mathbb{x}d2+—$.

c) 50... $\mathbb{e}7\Box$ 51.b7 $\mathbb{d}7\Box$
52. $\mathbb{g}8$ $\mathbb{x}b7$ 53. $\mathbb{x}g6$ $\mathbb{b}4!=$
avoids the \mathbb{g} exchange and prepares ...d3 with an advanced passer and play against the doubled f-pawns. (53...d3??
54. $\mathbb{g}7+—$ trades \mathbb{g} s and wins the d-pawn.)

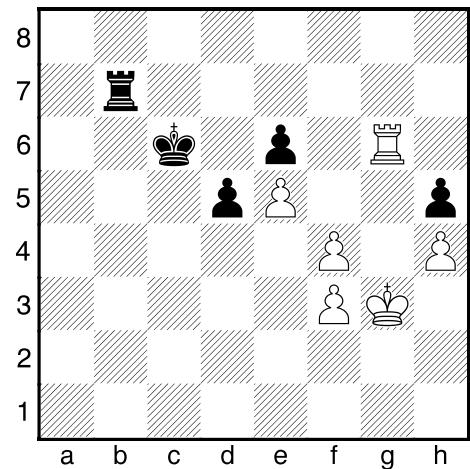


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50. $\mathbb{B}b8+!+- \mathbb{E}e7$ 51. $b7 \mathbb{Q}d7$
 52. $\mathbb{B}g8 \mathbb{B}xb7$ 53. $\mathbb{B}g7+ \square$
 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 54. $\mathbb{B}xg6 \square+-$



Compared to the note at move 49, Black does not have the d5 square for the \mathbb{Q}

54... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

54... $\mathbb{E}e7$ loses in several ways:
 55. $f5$ or 55. $\mathbb{B}h6$ or 55. $\mathbb{Q}f2$.

I'll give the last word to **Alekhine**, who gives the following line with a very pretty finish:

"The e-pawn cannot be saved, for instance: 54... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 55. $f5$!
 (After 55. $\mathbb{B}g7+$ followed by exchange of rooks, the pawn-ending would end in a draw)
 55... $exf5$ 56. $e6+$ [editor -

56. $\mathbb{B}d6+$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ 57. $\mathbb{B}f4 \square$ is the workmanlike win.] 56... $\mathbb{Q}d6$
 57. $e7+ \square$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 58. $\mathbb{B}g8 \square$
 $f4+$ 59. $\mathbb{B}h3 \square$ and wins. An instructive variation, which enhances considerably the total merit of this game (it was honored with a special prize)."

55. $\mathbb{B}xe6$ $d4$ 56. $f5$ $\mathbb{B}d7$
 57. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 58. $\mathbb{B}e8$ $\mathbb{B}a7$
 59. $f6$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 60. $\mathbb{B}e7$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 61. $f7$

1-0

Alexander Alekhine



Posing with the same position as the Tartakower - Lasker photo.



room and bored

The six players at the pretournament dinner here faced each other a total of 30 times at the Alamac Hotel in NY24, but there are no in-game photos, only posed PR photos.

clockwise from front center:
 Mr. & Mrs. Norbert Lederer (Manhattan CC director & Alekhine's US rep.),
 Mr. & Mrs. Bogoljubow, Alekhine, Yates (obscured), Mr. & Mrs. Frank Marshall,
 Dr. Emanuel Lasker, Richard Reti.

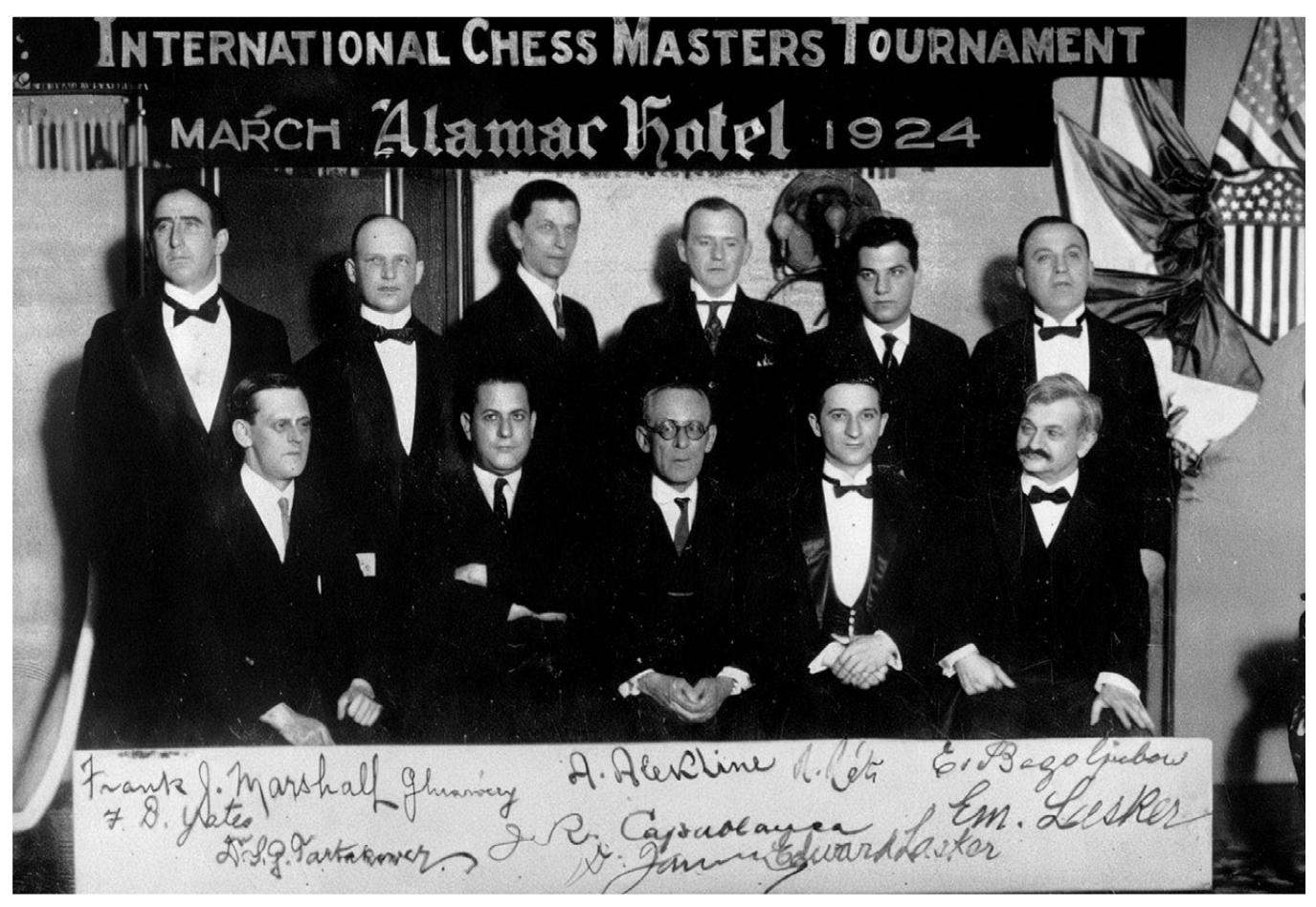
photo: A. Van der Wiel

Chess Canada

New York 1924



1/60th of a second in New York



the famous group photo

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total
1 Lasker, Emanuel	**	½0	1½	½1	11	11	11	½1	½1	½1	11	16
2 Capablanca, Jose Raul	½1	**	½½	½½	01	½1	11	11	½	½1	½1	14½
3 Alekhine, Alexander	0½	½½	**	½½	01	1½	½½	½½	11	½½	11	12
4 Marshall, Frank James	½0	½½	½½	**	½1	0½	01	½0	½1	½	11	11
5 Reti, Richard	00	10	10	½0	**	½½	01	11	10	10	11	10½
6 Maroczy, Geza	00	½0	0½	1½	½½	**	01	½½	11	½1	10	10
7 Bogoljubow, Efim	00	00	½½	10	10	10	**	01	11	½1	1	9½
8 Tartakower, Saviely	½0	00	½½	½1	00	½½	10	**	10	½0	½1	8
9 Yates, Frederick Dewhurst	½0	0½	00	½0	01	00	00	01	**	11	½1	7
10 Lasker, Edward	½0	½0	½½	0½	01	½0	½0	½1	00	**	0½	6½
11 Janowski, Dawid	00	½0	00	00	00	01	10	½0	½0	1½	**	5

links

Edward Winter

[Chess Notes on NY1924](#)

2020 Chessbase series

Posts by [Johannes Fischer](#) and [Klaus Besenthal](#) on Chessbase, treating the 1924 tournament as a live event. [Full links](#) at end.

Edward Lasker

[Chess for fun and chess for blood](#) is in the public domain, and free on google reads.

Russell Enterprises

PDF [Computer Supplement](#) to their 21st Century Edition! of Alekhine's New York 1924.

Capablanca's score-sheet from his win over Emanuel Lasker is from Fred Wilson's *A Picture History of Chess*, (New York, 1981)

Photo Restoration

We're not yet at "one click solutions", so most people would be better off paying someone to do it for them.

The stubborn and the bored might start with [ComfyUI](#) & [SUPIR](#) (both free); then assemble its output using a good image stacker/editor like Affinity Photo or Luminar Neo.



Appendix 1: Umbrella Redux



by John Upper ++

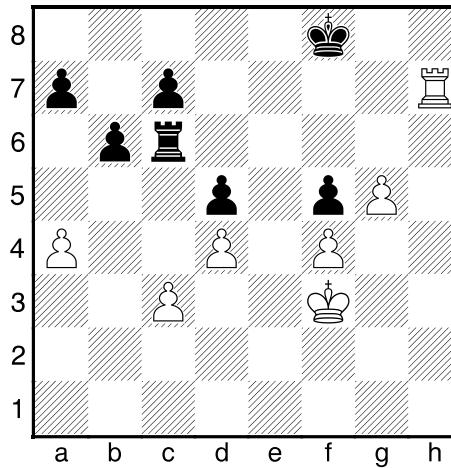
Capablanca - Tartakower

(NY, 1924) is one of the most analyzed endgames of all time. For over 80 years after it was played, new ideas have been proposed and refuted by players from Alekhine to Kasparov and endgame experts like Pervakov and Dvoretsky.

White's now-famous winning maneuver was analyzed in with the full game earlier in this issue.

Here, to give a taste of some of the richness of this endgame, are the main lines of alternate defensive tries. It is also a reminder of a kind of long-term multi-party analysis that hasn't survived into the computer age.

Fullest analysis can be found in [Steve Giddins's](#) *Greatest Ever Chess Endgames*, (Everyman, 2012).

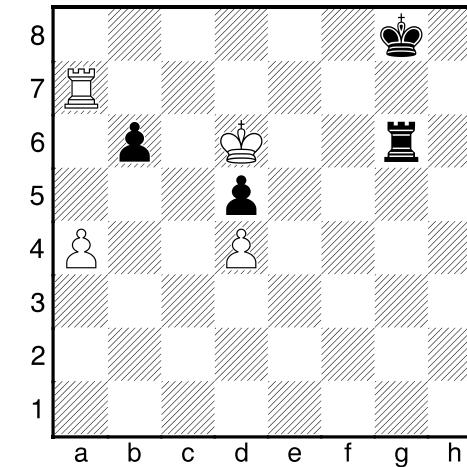


35. $\hat{g}3\Box \hat{R}xc3+$

Goldin:

35... $\hat{g}8!?$ improving the position of the \hat{g} before taking on c3. 36. $\hat{R}d7 \hat{R}xc3+ 37. \hat{h}4 \hat{R}f3 38. \hat{h}5!$ (now the game continuation only draws: 38. $g6? \hat{R}xf4+ 39. \hat{g}5 \hat{R}e4 40. \hat{f}6 \hat{R}e8=$ Goldin 41. $\hat{g}7+ \hat{f}8\Box 42. \hat{R}xc7 f4\Box=$) 38... $\hat{R}xf4 39. \hat{g}6 \hat{f}8 40. \hat{f}6 \hat{R}e4 41. \hat{f}7+ \hat{g}8 42. \hat{R}xc7 \hat{R}e8 43. \hat{f}xf5 \hat{R}e4 44. \hat{f}6 \hat{R}f4+ 45. \hat{e}5 \hat{g}4 46. \hat{R}xa7 \hat{R}xg5+ 47. \hat{d}6 \hat{R}g6+$

Analysis Diagram



48. $\hat{f}xd5 \hat{f}8$ Goldin claimed this was a draw, but here 49. $\hat{R}c7\Box+-$ threatening $\hat{R}c6$ wins; e.g. 49... $\hat{R}g5+ 50. \hat{R}c6 \hat{R}a5 51. d5! \hat{R}xa4 52. d6 \hat{R}c4+ 53. \hat{R}b7 \hat{R}d4 54. d7 \hat{R}e7 55. \hat{R}c8+-$ promoting with a discovered check!

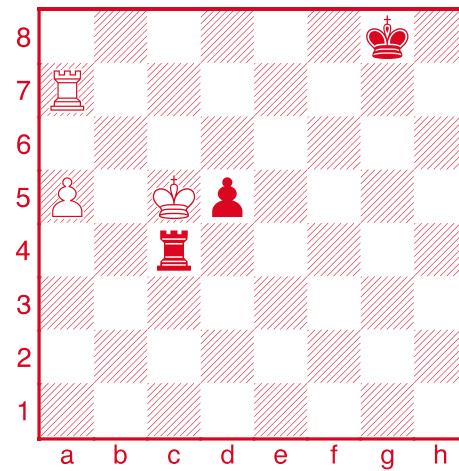
only 20 more years
I've almost got it....

Chess Canada

Umbrella Redux



Zaitsev, improving (sort of?) on Goldin's 2003 analysis showed another way to win: 48.♔c7! ♜g4 (48...♚f8 49.♗b7!+) 49.♗xb6 ♜xd4 50.a5□ ♜b4+ 51.♔c5 ♜c4+ *Analysis Diagram*



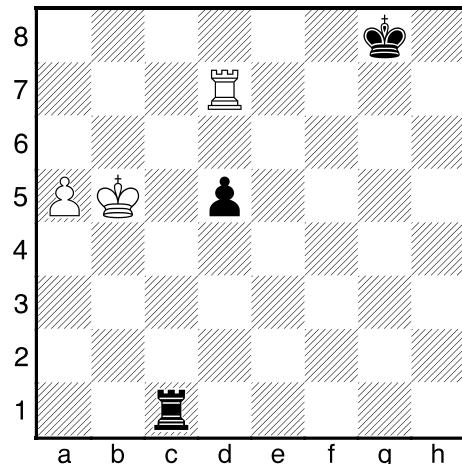
52.♔xd5? ♜g4! The 5th rank skewer leaves White no time to get the ♜ off the a-file. Without the umbrella there is no escape from the lateral checks, and Black is saved by the **Vancura** draw: Black draws by continually attacking the pawn from the side (tying down the ♜) and when the ♔ approaches the pawn the side checks force it away: no umbrella, no win: 53.♗e7 (53.a6 ♜g6!+) 53...♜a4□ 54.♗a7 ♜g4□ 55.♔c5 ♜g5+□=.

Curiously, the **Vancura draw** **was also discovered in 1924!**?

52.♗b5!! ♜c1 and here White has two ways to win:

53.♗b7 ♜b1+ 54.♔a6□ ♜a1
55.♗b4□+— building a bridge, or

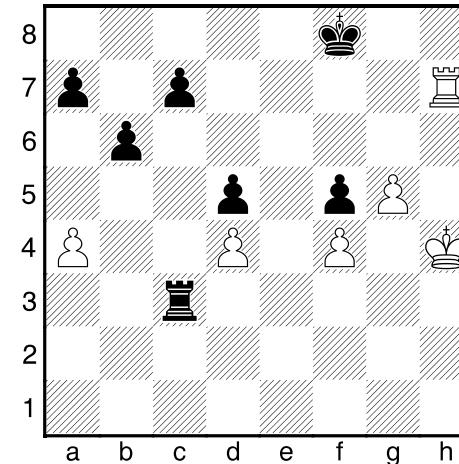
53.♗d7!: *Analysis Diagram*



The black ♔ is cut off, and — importantly — if Black were to check the white ♔ away (to d8, not a6) then put the ♜ behind the a5-pawn, ♜xd5 protects it. 53...♜b1+ 54.♔c6+— (54.♔a6? ♜f8□=).

If we take the diagram position and move the white pawn one square back to a4 this would be a draw!

36.♔h4



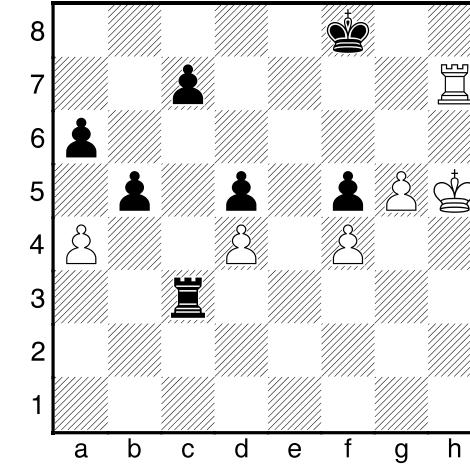
36...♜f3?!

This makes the win much simpler. Three alternatives have been seriously analyzed: ...a6, ...c5, and ...♜c1. They all recognize the usefulness of the black ♜ on the c-file and particularly on the 6th rank, and try to create counterplay without sidetracking the ♜ as much as Tartakower did.

Goldin:

36...a6! 37.♔h5! (37.g6? b5
38.axb5 axb5 39.♔g5 b4
40.♗f7+ (**Kasparov**) 40...♚g8= Black's ♜ is perfectly placed; with much more analysis published.)
37...b5

Analysis Diagram



38.axb5? axb5 39.♔g6 ♚g8
40.♗g7+ ♚f8 41.♗f7+ ♚g8
42.♗f6 b4 43.♔a6 ♜a3□ What a resource! 44.♗c6 ♜c3! 45.♗e6 ♜f8□= the b-pawn will force the white ♜ to defend.

38.♔g6! (**Zaitsev**, but 38.a5 also wins)

38...bx a4 39.♗xf5 a3 40.♗h6□ c6 41.♗h8+ ♚e7 42.♗a8+— stops the a-pawn from behind, and White's g-pawn is better supported and more advanced than Black's d5-pawn;

38...♚g8 39.♗g7+! ♚f8 40.♗f7+ ♚g8 41.♗f6!+— where the ♜ stops lateral checks, and if Black tries to save the a-pawn with 41...c6 his ♜ can't defend 42.♗d6+—.

Chess Canada

Umbrella Redux



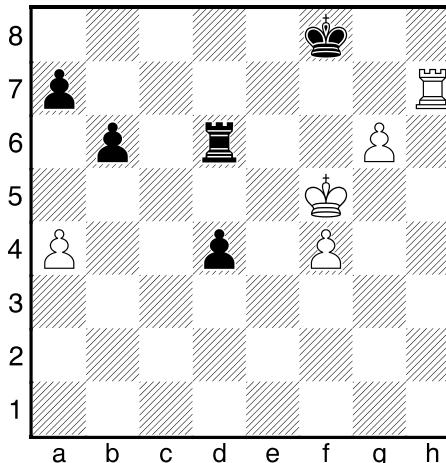
Naroditsky:

36...c5! 37.g6 cxd4 38.♔g5 a6 39.♕d7 b5 40.axb5 axb5 41.♕xd5 d3 now 42.♕xf5+ looks way simpler to me, but Naroditsky continues with 42.♔h6 leading to a winning ♜ v ♜ ending. Naroditsky, *Mastering Complex Endings*, (NiC, 2014).

Van der Steren:

36...c5! 37.dxc5 ♜xc5 38.g6 ♜c6 39.♔g5 ♜d6 40.♕xf5 d4

Analysis Diagram



It's a race! 41.♔g5□ d3 42.f5□ (42.♕h1? d2 43.♕d1 ♔g7 44.f5 ♜d5= or 44...a6=) 42...d2 43.f6□ ♜d5+ 44.♔h4! (44.♔h6?? ♜h5+□= and after promoting with check the ♜ will give a perpetual. 44.♔f4 also wins, but the White King will have to run

to the h-file as in the main line, and gains nothing from delay.)

44...♜d4+ 45.♔h3! (45.♔g3? ♜g4+=) 45...♜d3+ 46.♔g2 ♜e8 47.♕e7+ ♜d8 48.g7+= is Van der Steren, *Kings of the Chessboard* (Thinkers, 2019). Wins, since 48...♚c8 49.g8♛+ ♜d8 50.♛c4+!+= mates.

Dvoretsky & Mueller:

36...♜c1 37.♔h5□ (37.g6? ♜h1+ 38.♔g5 ♜xh7 39.gxh7 ♜g7 40.♕xf5 c5□=) 37...c5 (37...♜h1+ 38.♔g6+=) 38.♕d7! cxd4 (38...c4 39.♔g6+=) 39.♕xd5□ ♜d1 40.♔g6

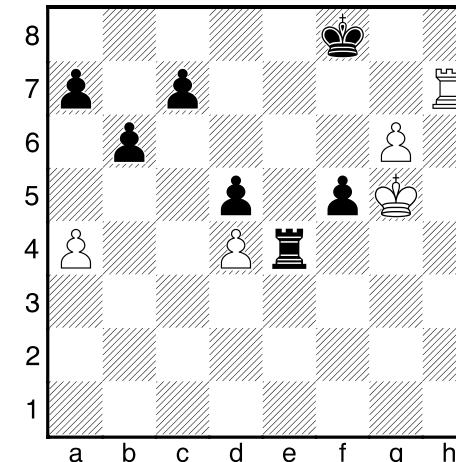


Freddy knew he'd never hear the end of this when his team were all back in the box.

(40.♕xf5++ wins too.) 40...d3 41.♔f6 ♜e8 42.g6+=.

37.g6! ♜xf4+ 38.♔g5 ♜e4

38...♜xd4 39.♔f6□ ♜e8 (39...♚g8 40.♕d7!) 40.g7 ♜g4 41.♕h8+=.



39.♔f6!

The famous idea of this ending: using the opponent's pawn as an "umbrella" to shield the ♔ from checks. 39.♔xf5? ♜xd4= and Black has checks that prevent the white ♔ supporting the passed g-pawn.

After this there isn't much Black can try, the analysis-fest peters out...

39...♚g8 40.♕g7+ ♜h8

41.♕xc7 ♜e8 42.♕xf5 ♜e4

43.♔f6 ♜f4+ 44.♔e5 ♜g4

45.g7+ ♜g8

45...♜xg7 46.♕xg7 ♜xg7

47.♔xd5+= Black can't stop the d-pawn.

46.♕xa7 ♜g1 47.♔xd5 ♜c1

48.♔d6 ♜c2 49.d5 ♜c1

50.♕c7 ♜a1 51.♔c6 ♜xa4

52.d6

1-0



A paper crown and an umbrella don't make you "Capablanca the King of Chess".



Appendix 2: The Thief of Joy



by John Upper

Ratings & Rankings

Today we take it as given that national and international rating lists exist, and that their calculations are good predictors of outcomes between rated opponents. But this was not always so.

The first attempt to use ratings for chess was for US correspondence chess in 1939. Germany and the US introduced their own OTB rating systems around 1949. In 1950, FIDE introduced official titles – GM, IM, and Woman Master – to distinguish some of those who had reputations for having played exceptionally well. Those titles did not always reflect playing strength: they were subjectively awarded, often after political arm twisting and deal-making, and – since titles were kept for life – they might wildly flatter a titlist's current playing strength. FIDE did not introduce its own ratings until 1971, including a minimum rating as one requirement for its titles, though there are also titles awarded directly for winning events FIDE deems worthy. From 1971 to 1980 FIDE updated its rating list once per year, and has doubled this rate each decade so that now they are updated every month. For some, even that is too slow; these ratings junkies can follow

live updates for players over 2700 at <https://2700chess.com/>

It's natural to wonder what the ratings of the Chess Greats would have been if ratings had been around in their eras. There are several ways to answer this.

Sonas Chessmetrics

The best-known attempt to do this was by Jeff Sonas, and is searchable on his Chessmetrics website. A key part of his methodology is to iterate rating calculations of each tournament until they converge on stable values. This always produces rating differences between the players which fit their tournament performance. Using those players and ratings and repeating the process for tournaments with new players eventually produces a set of ratings which are internally coherent: highly if not perfectly predictive of results between players.

Like FIDE's Elo system, Sonas requires an "average rating" input for the tournament. The number chosen is irrelevant to the stability of the final rating list: just pick a number and iterate and you'll eventually get a coherent rating list.

Sonas chose to make the average ratings of his historical calculations of classical tournaments close to the average rating of contemporary super tournaments. IMO that leads to absurdly high Chessmetrics ratings of the best players from the distant past. For instance, the top 3 on the Chessmetrics list for January 1900 list are:

1. Emanuel Lasker 2858
2. Siegbert Tarrasch 2805
3. Harry N. Pillsbury 2798

Great players, but were they *better* players than the top 3 on the Chessmetrics list for December 2004 (his final list):

1. Vishy Anand 2795
2. Garry Kasparov 2790
3. Vladimir Kramnik 2753

Something's fishy here; and it doesn't get better if we compare it to the FIDE list during the 2024 Candidates:

1. Magnus Carlsen 2830
2. Fabiano Caruana 2804
3. Hikaru Nakamura 2789

TL;DR

the Sonas lists are excellent for ranking players, but it is absurd to compare his ratings with any modern rating list, even his own.

If those ratings are intended to indicate the objective strength of the players, then we need an explanation of why the best modern players are worse than the best players from 100+ years ago – *despite* having the (apparent?) advantage of the expertise and analysis of generations of players, *and* much easier access to that history and wisdom. *Has television, microplastics, and the war on traditional values made even the top chess players worse???*

I don't believe they are worse, and take this as evidence that the Sonas ratings do not tell us about the relative strength of chess players across eras. They retrodict the results of games between players of the same eras, but "2800" in 1924 is not the same as "2800" decades later. His ratings flatter the big fish who dominate small ponds, and do not account for the increase in player numbers and any advances in chess knowledge.

WWSD?

A second way to compare players of different eras is to run their games through modern chess engines and compare how much their moves diverge from the computer's top choices. Computers play like gods: What Would Stockfish Do? There is



more than one way to try to answer this.

ACPL

The simplest is “average centipawn loss” (ACPL): sum the differences between each move made by the player and the top move by the engine and divide by the number of moves. The smaller the ACPL, the better the player.

A 2006 study did this and famously rated Capablanca as the most accurate World Champion, just edging out Kramnik and leaving Botvinnik way back in 12th, one place behind Tal.

There are two reasons to distrust the conclusion of this 2006 study:

1. The engine analysis was second-rate;
2. Simple ACPL is crude.

An assumption in this method is that the computer is much closer to perfect play than the human, so any divergence from the computer is sub-optimal play. This is a reasonable assumption today. But 20 years later we can look down from our AI-assisted computing cloud to see this assumption of computer superiority was clearly *not* true in the 2006 study, which used only a 12-ply analysis with the much-weaker Crafty engine.

Current engines are *vastly* better than

those of 10, let alone 20, years ago; so an ACPL calculated against a top modern engine like Stockfish or leela or Komodo would be sounder.

But a simple ACPL can also be misleading:

- a) early opening deviations → higher ACPL
- b) sharp openings → higher ACPL
- c) simplified positions → lower ACPL
- d) endgame adjournment precision → lower ACPL

Factors **a** and **b** would count against a player like Marshall, while factors **c** and **d** would count (strongly) in favour of Capablanca.

Refining ACPL

Since 2006, researchers have improved on simple ACPL. One way is to divide the game into phases and weight the ACPL according to when the moves were played: typically, raising the weight for middlegames and lowering it for endgames, on the assumption that middlegames are both more complex and more determinative of the outcome of the game. This is

Ken Regan
Shows some of his findings to IAs Omar Shah and Aris Marghettis and others at the 2022 Canadian Open in Hamilton.

an improvement over simple ACPL, but can overlook something we smashed our heads against in Bogoljubov-Tartakower: “a rook endgame with zugzwang can be *much harder* than a middlegame with stable structure”, to quote Chat-GPT5.

Intrinsic Performance Rating

Today, SUNY mathematician, and IM, Ken Regan runs Stockfish and Komodo engines on modern computers to analyze chess games, compares the moves actually played with the computers’ evaluations, and combines the scores of all the moves analyzed to come up with a number he calls the Intrinsic Performance Rating (IPR).



IPR is based on a weighted CPL which attempts to factor in the complexity of each position by using metrics including: how many good moves exist, the number of near-equal good moves, the size of the differences between the engine’s top-rated moves.

Regan’s formula is beyond my mathematical competence to describe — and he is no longer at liberty to discuss all their details, since he now works with FIDE as part of their anti-computer cheating detection program — but the stats-literate can find much more about it on his website and published papers.



We can argue about the details – should we discount for time-trouble errors? How to compare play after adjournments to modern 30s increment play with no time outs? Should opening book play count, and if so for how much? etc. Regan's cutoffs may not please everyone [FYI, he analyzes moves 9-60], but they are a clear improvement over earlier computer-based quality calculations.

For example: imagine your opponent plays like a maniac, sac's pieces to forced recaptures and then resigns. You've just played exactly like Stockfish, but your moves were all forced: computer-level accuracy, but along a path with no choices. ACPL will give you a perfect score, and idiots on the internet will accuse you of cheating, but IPR recognizes that your choices were all easy and gives you a lower rating.

One outstanding problem is properly scoring moves which are sub-optimal against super-humanly accurate play, but which create significant challenges

for the actual meat-bag opponent.

As Regan notes, IPR "may overdo accuracy, [but] undercut challenge created", which is a concise way of acknowledging the difference between simplifying positions then playing like a tablebase (e.g. Capablanca) vs creating a complex mess and finding your way through the thick forest of variations – "where $2+2=5$ " – when the path through is wide enough for only one (e.g. Tal). Computers find those two styles equally easy, but humans find the second much more difficult to master. IPR credits you for finding your way through the complications, but docks you for playing the "second-rate" moves that got you – and your opponent – into that mess.

If you think creating challenges for your opponent is a component of chess skill, then IPR is a good but incomplete proxy for chess skill: it measures accuracy (which is very highly correlated with winning) but leaves out... *something*. It leaves out what we saw the top players saying

GPT5: one-sentence summary

Phase-adjusted ACPL is a crude early attempt to normalize mistake sizes by game phase, while Ken Regan's IPR is a mathematically rigorous, complexity-adjusted, phase-independent generalization of the same idea — producing a rating-scale measure of intrinsic playing strength.

about their computer-assisted opening prep: how to choose "second-rate" continuations that are both "difficult" for the opponent and not "too risky" for the player.

In the future there may be a way to measure this too: comparing IPR with game results may give an indication of which players create the most difficulties for their opponents *despite* not playing the computer-approved moves. We might call this metric "savvy" or "guts"... or "luck" — which can't be ruled out over the short term. Comparing the IPRs and final scores of Lasker and Capablanca suggests that this is more than possible, though a more sophisticated application of IPR — perhaps short in-game sequences of low-IPR followed by high-IPR in won games — would be necessary to distinguish "savvy" from simply bad play.

The tables on the next pages combine the data discussed above for the players in the Candidates, New York 1924, along with the chess.com analysis results for the "Accuracy" and "Rating" for the winners of each.

Ignore it at your leisure.

Pandora's Box?

Edward Lasker consults with Claude Shannon on his 6x6 chess computer at IBM Labs.

Links

[Chessmetrics](#)

[2700chess.com](#)

[Guid & Bratko, 2006](#)

[Regan](#)



IPR: New York 1924

IPR: Toronto 2024

Rank	Name	S-Rating	S-TPR	IPR*
4	Marshall	2551	2677	2550
2	Capablanca	2765	2792	2480
8	Tartakower	2677	2579	2415
5	Reti	2673	2648	2335
3	Alekhine	2776	2689	2315
1	Lasker, Em.	2738	2828	2300
7	Bogoljubow	2689	2646	2250
10	Lasker, Ed.	2547	2575	2230
6	Maroczy	2675	2664	2170
9	Yates	2571	2556	2150
11	Janowski	2501	2511	2075
	Avg	2651	2651	2297

Rank	Name	FIDE	TPR	IPRa
=2	Nepomniachtchi	2758	2823	2915
=2	Caruana	2803	2817	2804
1	Gukesh	2743	2847	2785
5	Praggnanandhaa	2747	2745	2710
=2	Nakamura	2789	2819	2703
7	Firouzja	2760	2641	2691
8	Abasov	2632	2568	2535
6	Vidit	2727	2697	2435
	Avg	2745	2745	2697

Rank	Name	FIDE	TPR	IPRa
5	Goryachkina	2553	2512	2756
=2	Koneru	2546	2542	2741
1	Tan	2521	2619	2680
=2	Lei	2550	2542	2655
=7	Salimova	2432	2450	2643
=7	Muzychuk, A	2520	2437	2592
6	Lagno	2542	2485	2446
=2	Vaishali	2475	2552	2372
	Avg	2517	2517	2611

Abbreviations

S = Sonas, from Chessmetrics

FIDE = FIDE rating at start of tournament

TPR = Tournament Performance Rating

IPR* = Regan's "preliminary" IPR calculation. [based on SF11... still hoping for updates.]

IPRa = Regan IPR caculation, averaged from four engines: Stockfish 7 & 11, Komodo 10 & 13.

Table Talk

Obviously, IPR does not map directly onto tournament standings:

- all three winners had a lower IPRs than opponents who finished 4th or lower;
- the highest IPR at NY24 and TO24w was scored by someone who finished well-behind the winner.

The reasons we should not expect IPR to match results are explained in the previous pages.

Notes

For me, the three most remarkable things about these scores are:

1. the low IPR for NY24;
2. Lasker's remarkably low IPR – barely above the tournament average, despite finishing +12;
3. The high IPR in the women's Candidates.

The only thing I'll say about 3 is that the final IPR *understates* how close they were to the Open Candidates; Regan told me that "after 10 rounds

the women were within error bars of the men's IPR"!?

I've suggested a reason for Lasker's low IPR vs his high + score; and there's more about that in the tables that follow.

The IPR for NY24 is shockingly low no matter how you look at it: avg below current FM level, the three World Champions averaged 2365, and only one player over 2500. If those were your early chess heroes it might be tempting to shoot the

messenger.* OTOH, if you believe chess is progressive then this is just what you should expect, even if the size of the difference is larger than you might have guessed.

Rather than say more, I'll end this section by referring back to the Ken Dryden quote I used in the introduction:

"Nothing is as good as it used to be, and it never was. The golden age of sports, the golden age of anything, is the age of everyone's childhood."

*Regan, not me.

New York 1924: chess.com game review

Lasker	Rd	Acc %	GR	vs	Acc %	GR	W/D/L	Marshall	Rd	Acc %	GR	vs	Acc %	GR	W/D/L	Capa	Rd	Acc %	GR	vs	Acc %	GR	W/D/L
B	3	96.4	2500	AA	88.3	2350	1	W	18	98.6	2500	EB	84.4	2450	1	W	7	96.4	2500	ST	91.3	2450	1
B	8	94.9	2500	EB	92.5	2450	1	B	21	96.1	2500	FY	88.8	2400	1	B	10	96.1	2500	EB	87.8	2350	1
B	17	94.4	2500	FY	89.8	2400	1	B	11	91.5	2450	EdL	87.7	2350	1	W	21	96.1	2500	RR	91.1	2450	1
W	10	93.1	2500	RR	83.7	2150	1	W	13	90.7	2450	DJ	85.8	2250	1	B	19	95.6	2500	ST	85.6	2250	1
W	13	93	2500	EB	88.1	2350	1	B	8	86.8	2300	DJ	82.4	2100	1	W	8	95	2500	FY	88.9	2400	1
B	21	92.6	2450	ST	83.6	2200	1	B	15	78.9	1950	RR	72.9	1700	1	B	18	93.3	2500	EdL	88.6	2400	1
B	19	92.5	2450	EdL	86.5	2300	1	W	20	99.3	2500	AA	99.3	2500	0.5	W	14	92.7	2450	Eml	86	2300	1
B	7	90.8	2450	GM	72.8	1800	1	B	16	98.8	2500	JC	98.5	2500	0.5	W	22	92	2450	EB	88.8	2400	1
W	12	88.1	2400	DJ	83.7	2300	1	W	17	95.3	2500	EdL	95.1	2500	0.5	W	16	90.2	2450	DJ	82.8	2200	1
B	4	87.9	2350	DJ	82.9	2200	1	W	10	93.7	2500	JC	93.7	2500	0.5	B	13	88.1	2400	GM	84.8	2250	1
W	22	85.9	2300	FM	79.9	2000	1	W	5	93.4	2500	FY	94.2	2500	0.5	W	17	98.5	2500	FM	98.8	2500	0.5
B	16	85.4	2300	RR	81.3	2100	1	W	1	93.2	2500	RR	93.4	2500	0.5	B	12	98.3	2500	AA	98.8	2500	0.5
W	20	84.5	2250	GM	80.6	2000	1	W	2	90.7	2450	ST	90.9	2450	0.5	B	2	97.9	2500	Eml	96.9	2500	0.5
W	5	97.6	2500	ST	97.9	2500	0.5	B	7	90	2450	AA	89.6	2400	0.5	W	4	97.3	2500	EdL	97.5	2500	0.5
W	2	96.9	2500	JC	97.9	2500	0.5	W	19	89.6	2400	GM	89.9	2400	0.5	W	9	95.7	2500	GM	96.5	2500	0.5
W	11	95.8	2500	FY	95.9	2500	0.5	W	9	86.8	2300	EmL	86	2300	0.5	B	1	94.4	2500	DJ	93.9	2500	0.5
W	18	94.3	2500	AA	94.4	2500	0.5	B	3	90	2400	EB	95.1	2500	0	B	11	93.7	2500	FM	93.7	2500	0.5
W	6	91.4	2450	EdL	92	2450	0.5	B	6	86.8	2300	GM	90.8	2450	0	W	5	93.5	2500	AA	93.1	2500	0.5
B	9	86	2300	FM	86.8	2300	0.5	B	14	86	2400	ST	96.7	2500	0	B	20	86.1	2300	FY	86.6	2300	0.5
B	14	86	2300	JC	92.7	2450	0	B	22	79.9	2000	EdL	85.9	2300	0	B	6	83.1	2200	RR	90.3	2450	0
Avg		91.4	2425		87.6	2290	13/6/1	Avg		90.8	2393		90.1	2378	6/10/4	Avg		93.7	2463		91.1	2410	10/9/1
Sdev		4.27			6.65			Sdev		5.62			6.24			Sdev		4.11			4.89		

Table Talk

Chess.com's Game Review feature allows users to upload PGNs and get computer analysis which, among other things, offers an "Accuracy %" and a "Game Rating" (GR) for both players in each game.

The tables above and on the next page show the results of putting each game from six players through the chess.com analysis feature: Lasker, Marshall, & Capablanca from NY24 (above); Gukesh & Tan from TO24, and Shiyam from the 24Zonal (next page).

Games in NY24 table are sorted by: result (W/D/L), then Accuracy.

Notes

Lots to see here: Scores with Black: Lasker 8.5/10; Capa: 6.5/10; 4 of Marshall's 5 wins were Black. When playing <90% Capa scored +1 =1 -1, Lasker scored +5 =1 -1.

The bottom two lines are the most interesting: **Capablanca beats Lasker and Marshall in Accuracy and Rating, but so do his opponents**: a full 3% more accurate than Lasker's. Second, the Standard Deviations show **Capablanca was the steadier player, but so were his opponents**. Lasker's play was a bit less steady than Capa's, but his opponents were all over the place: Capa's opponents played under 2300 only twice, Lasker's did 8 times!

Readers are invited to speculate about why none of the GRs are higher than 2500.



Toronto 2024: chess.com game review

Rd	Gukesh	Acc %	GR	vs	Acc %	GR	+/-
1	W	96	2950	VG	96.9	2900	.5
2	B	89.7	2650	RP	82.2	2400	1
3	W	96.2	2950	IN	96.2	2950	.5
4	B	98.8	2950	FC	98.7	3000	.5
5	W	90	2700	NA	86.9	2450	1
6	W	97.6	2950	HN	98	3000	.5
7	B	85.5	2450	AF	97	2950	0
8	B	96.8	2950	VG	83.8	2400	1
9	W	97.2	2950	RP	97.3	2950	.5
10	B	98.7	2950	IN	98	3000	.5
11	W	96.1	2900	FC	96.7	2950	.5
12	B	94.9	2900	NA	90.5	2600	1
13	W	96	2950	AF	91.2	2750	1
14	B	97.9	3000	HN	97.9	2950	.5
Avg		95.1	2871		93.7	2804	9
Sdev		3.91			5.7		

Rd	Tan	Acc %	GR	vs	Acc %	GR	+/-
1	B	95.8	2800	LT	90.1	2600	1
2	W	98.3	2850	VRB	89.5	2500	1
3	B	99.9	2850	HK	99.4	2900	.5
4	B	89.7	2500	KL	90.2	2600	.5
5	W	96.8	2850	NS	96.9	2750	.5
6	W	87.6	2450	AM	78.3	2200	1
7	B	98.7	2850	AG	98.5	2900	.5
8	W	85.7	2450	LT	93.7	2750	0
9	B	96.8	2850	VRB	85.7	2300	1
10	W	98	2850	HK	98.2	2900	.5
11	W	91	2600	KL	82.4	2250	1
12	B	91.1	2650	NS	90.8	2500	.5
13	W	98.2	2850	AG	98.7	2900	.5
14	B	97.2	2850	AM	96.5	2800	.5
Avg		94.6	2732		92.1	2632	9
Sdev		4.62			6.57		

Rd	Shiyam	Acc %	GR	vs	Acc %	GR	+/-
1	W	94	2650	Yang	81.5	2300	1
2	B	90.1	2550	Sergey	81	2150	1
3	W	85.8	2300	Raja	86.8	2400	1
4	B	97.1	2850	AA	96.5	2800	.5
5	W	91.4	2600	Bator	88.6	2500	1
6	B	94	2700	SRL	88.1	2600	1
7	W	97.4	2850	NV	97.3	2800	.5
8	B	89.8	2450	NN	83.4	2350	1
9	W	87.2	2400	SK	83.5	2300	1
10	B	94.2	2750	AD	86.3	2350	1
Avg		92.1	2610		87.3	2455	9
Sdev		3.91			5.69		

Notes

All three drew their two most accurate games; same as NY24.

Gukesh and Tan each lost only one game, then won the next; same as Lasker.

The obvious thing to note when comparing this with the tables on the previous page is the much higher Game Rating scores: all 54 NY24 GRs were 2500 or lower, here only 7, but 31 higher. This can partly be explained by higher accuracy and smaller standard deviations in 2024. But that can't explain it all.

Why does Gukesh's 90% in rd.5 get rated 2700, or Shiyam's 90.1% in rd.2 get rated 2550, while *all* of the 37 “more accurate” games from NY24 are rated lower?

This *might* be due to chess.com slightly discounting opening accuracy when calculating GR: moves that in 1924 were thought of as middlegame play are now discounted as book openings. Another possibility is how chess.com accounts for game complexity: the more early exchanges the simpler the game gets, and the less simple accuracy is a sign of a high rating. More cogitation and data needed.

*The Most Incredible Tremendous Chess Ranking of Fame**

chess.com	Acc %	SdevR	GR
Trump	95.1	3.91	2871
Tan	94.6	4.62	2732
Thavandiran	92.1	3.91	2610
Capablanca	93.7	4.11	2463
Lasker	91.4	4.27	2425
Marshall	90.8	5.62	2393

* Literally incredible. Side-effects may include cockiness. Consult “doctor” if confidence lasts more than 4 years.





Appendix 3:

Five Réti Studies



notes by John Upper

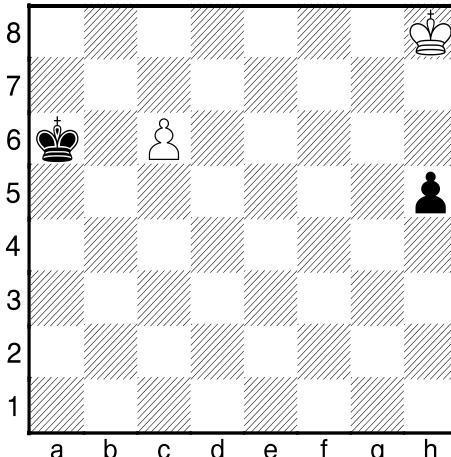
Over his short life, **Richard Réti** made a remarkably diverse set of chess contributions:

- the flank opening with Nf3, g3, Bg2, usually followed by c4 and b3, bears his name.
- played two of the most famous games of all time:
1924 win over Bogoljubow,
1925 loss to Alekhine (...Re3!!)
- set a world record 29 simultaneous blindfold games in 1925.
- wrote two very good books:
Modern Ideas in Chess, and
Masters of the Chess Board, the latter still being an excellent introductory game collection.
- created a fantastic set of endgame compositions, including the most famous endgame study of all time.

He died of Scarlet Fever in Prague, one week after his 40th birthday.

The following is a very short selection of some of his endgame studies, which age cannot wither nor computers stale.

Richard Reti
Deutsch Österreichische Tageszeitung, 11.09.1921



This is probably the best-known endgame study of all time. It's in every endgame textbook and, most recently, is the first position in Jan Timman's *100 Endgame Studies You Must Know*, (New in Chess, 2025).

If we mentally divide the board in halves then Black seems to win easily: Black stops the white pawn on the queenside, and Black wins on the kingside because the black passer has a big head start on the white king.

Reti knits the sides together to create a miracle.

1. $\hat{g}7\Box$

By chasing on the diagonal White creates the threat of supporting the c-pawn, and the tempi it takes Black to prevent this gives White just enough to catch the h-pawn.

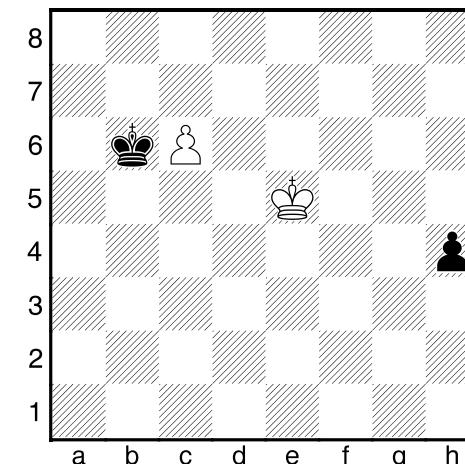
1...h4

1... $\hat{b}6$ 2. $\hat{f}6!$ is similar to the main solution.

2. $\hat{f}6!$ $\hat{b}6$

2...h3 3. $\hat{e}6$ h2 4.c7=.

3. $\hat{e}5!$



The white \hat{e} is one step outside "the square" of the h-pawn: if Black doesn't push ...h3 it will be caught.

3...h3

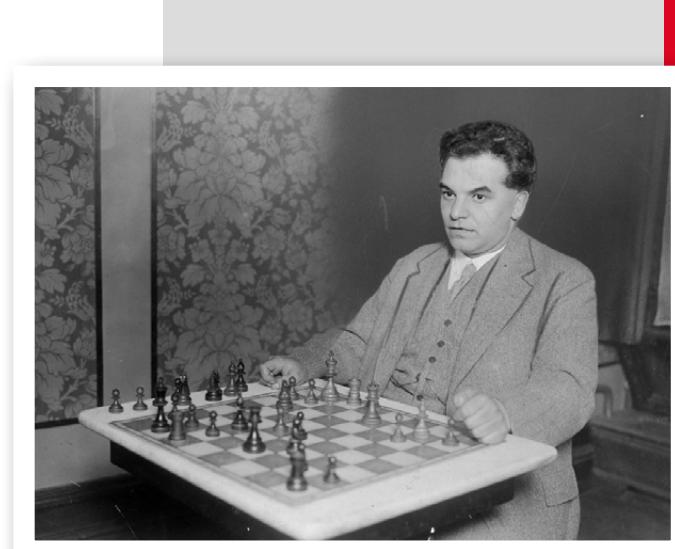
3... $\hat{c}6$ 4. $\hat{f}4=$ catches the h-pawn.

4. $\hat{d}6\Box$ h2 5.c7 \Box $\hat{b}7$

6. $\hat{d}7\Box=$

A stunning study:

- a preposterous-seeming result,
- a demonstration of the uneasy fact that — on a chess board if not in the physical world — a straight line is somehow not shorter than a zigzagging diagonal;
- all with the minimum material.

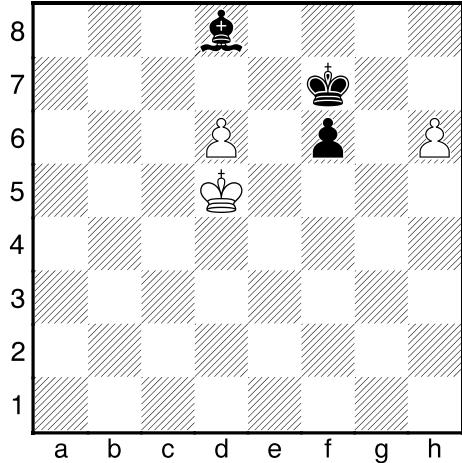


Reti studies



Richard Réti

Nerodny Listy#15, 10.06.1928.



Things look hopeless for White. As in his famous pawn study, Black seems to have White's promotion threats on (double) lockdown while White has no way to take Black's passer.

Of course, it wouldn't be any kind of a study if those appearances weren't totally wrong...

1. $\mathbb{Q}c6\Box = \mathbb{Q}a5$

1... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}e6\Box$ f5
4. $h7\Box = \mathbb{Q}c3??$ 5. d7+-.

1... f5 2. $\mathbb{Q}d5\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (2... $\mathbb{Q}f6$
3. d7 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (3... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}e6\Box$ =)
4. $d8\mathbb{W}+!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ =) 3. $\mathbb{Q}e5\Box$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}e6\Box$ (4. $\mathbb{Q}f4?$ $\mathbb{Q}g5+\Box$ +

and ... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ -g5 wins one pawn and stops the other.) 4... f4 5. $h7\Box$ (5. d7? $\mathbb{Q}d8\Box$ -+) 5... f3 (5... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$
6. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ f3= White promotes second, but it's with check.)
6. d7 \Box =

2. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$

2. $\mathbb{Q}b5?$ $\mathbb{Q}c3\Box$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}a1!$ (or
3... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ -+) 4. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (4. $h7$ f5 \Box -+)
4... f5 \Box -.

2... $\mathbb{Q}c3$

The most useful diagonal, where it can guard h8 or swing back to cover d8.

2... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 3. $h7\Box$ $\mathbb{Q}g7\Box$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}e6\Box$ =
and h8= $\mathbb{W}+$ deflects to win the black \mathbb{Q} .

2... f5 3. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (3. h7=) 3... $\mathbb{Q}g6$
4. $h7\Box = \mathbb{Q}c3+$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}e6$! $\mathbb{Q}xh7$
(5... $\mathbb{Q}f6$? 6. d7+-) 6. d7 $\mathbb{Q}a5\Box$ =.

2... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}e6\Box$ =.

3. $h7\Box$

3. d7? $\mathbb{Q}a5\Box$ 4. $h7$ $\mathbb{Q}g7\Box$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}e6$
 $\mathbb{Q}d8\Box$ -+.

3... f5

3... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}e6\Box$ =.



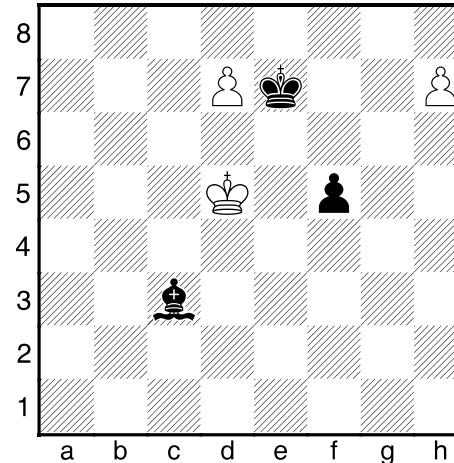
Richard Réti
(1889-1929)

Chess Canada

Réti Studies



4. $\mathbb{d}7\blacksquare$ $\mathbb{e}7$



5. $\mathbb{d}8\mathbb{w}+$!

A fantastic deflection & decoy! Deflecting the black \mathbb{w} allows White's next move, and decoying it to the back rank preempts a skewer after double promotions...

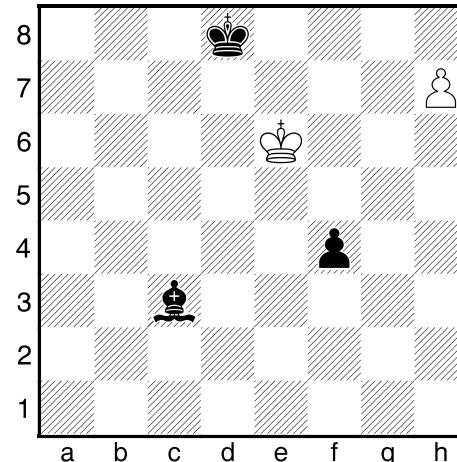
5... $\mathbb{w}xd8$

Black to move would win with any \mathbb{w} move off the back rank, or any \mathbb{w} move on the long diagonal out of the reach of the white \mathbb{w} . But White to move draws with...

6. $\mathbb{e}6\blacksquare$

Forcing Black to push the pawn beyond the support of its \mathbb{w} .

6... $f4$



7. $\mathbb{d}5\blacksquare$

As in the famous pawn study, the defending \mathbb{w} catches the pawn that has a head start by taking a bent line to create one threat to gain a tempo.

7... $f3$ 8. $\mathbb{c}4\blacksquare$

Threatens to draw by taking the \mathbb{w} and promoting. This would lose to the $\mathbb{w}f1-a1+$ skewer, but White promotes with check! If Black's \mathbb{w} had not been decoyed to the 8th rank, then ...f2-f1= $\mathbb{w}a1+$ would win.

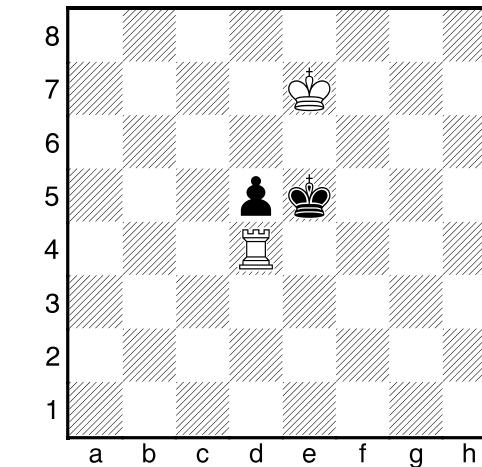
8... $\mathbb{f}6$ 9. $\mathbb{d}3\blacksquare=$

Wow.

Richard Reti

Hastings and St. Leonards Post, 1922.

Another Reti study that made its way into the endgame manuals.



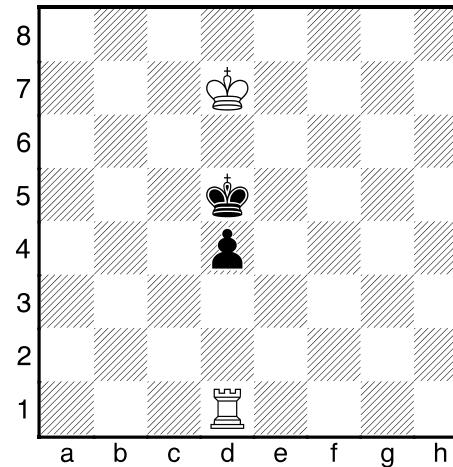
1. $\mathbb{d}2!$

Or $\mathbb{d}3$ then $\mathbb{d}1$. The key is that White must lose a tempo to force the black \mathbb{w} to choose the d- or e-file to approach d1, at which point the white \mathbb{w} takes the other file and arrives in the nick of time.

1. $\mathbb{d}1?$ $d4!$ 2. $\mathbb{d}7$ (2. $\mathbb{d}2$ $\mathbb{e}4$ 3. $\mathbb{d}6$ $\mathbb{e}3=$) 2... $\mathbb{d}5\blacksquare=$ Black shoulders away the white \mathbb{w} , 3. $\mathbb{d}2$ moving closer to the pawn gives Black one extra tempo when the \mathbb{w} attacks the \mathbb{d} : (3. $\mathbb{e}7$

$\mathbb{e}5\blacksquare=$; or 3. $\mathbb{c}7$ $\mathbb{c}5\blacksquare$ 4. $\mathbb{b}7$ $\mathbb{c}4$ 5. $\mathbb{c}6$ $d3\blacksquare=$) 3... $\mathbb{c}4$ 4. $\mathbb{e}6$ $\mathbb{c}3$ 5. $\mathbb{d}1$ $d3$ 6. $\mathbb{e}5$ $d2$ 7. $\mathbb{e}4$ $\mathbb{c}2=$.

1... $d4$ 2. $\mathbb{d}1\blacksquare$ $\mathbb{d}5$ 3. $\mathbb{d}7\blacksquare$
3. $\mathbb{f}6?$ $\mathbb{e}4\blacksquare=$.



A mutual zugzwang. The pawn can't move safely, so Black's \mathbb{w} has to give way.

3... $\mathbb{c}4$

3... $\mathbb{e}4$ 4. $\mathbb{c}6\blacksquare+$ is a mirror.

4. $\mathbb{e}6$

The "opposition" approach feels right, but $\mathbb{d}6$ also wins.

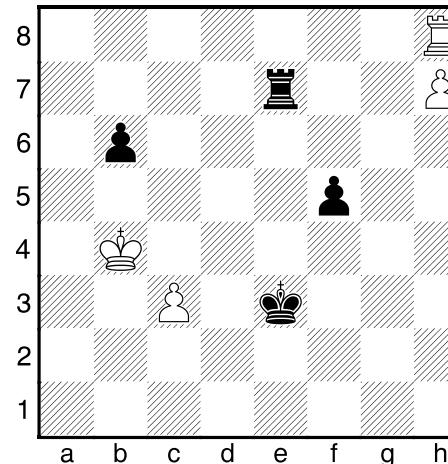
4... $d3$ 5. $\mathbb{e}5$ $\mathbb{c}3$ 6. $\mathbb{e}4$ $d2$
7. $\mathbb{e}3$

1-0



Richard Reti

28 Rijen #206, 01.08.1925



Reti published this study a year after NY1924, and it can be thought of as variations on the umbrella theme from Capablanca - Tartakower.

If the white \mathbb{K} can check then the h-pawn promotes and White wins. The umbrella $\mathbb{R}e7$ currently prevents that check and keeps the white \mathbb{K} tied to defending the $\mathbb{R}h7$. The solution is to nudge the umbrella on e7...

1. $\mathbb{K}b5\Box$ $f4$ 2. $\mathbb{K}c6\Box$

2. $\mathbb{K}xb6?$ $f3\Box=$ 3. $c4$ (3. $\mathbb{R}a8=$ is another of many ways to draw.) 3... $f2$ 4. $\mathbb{R}f8$ $\mathbb{R}xh7$ 5. $c5$ $\mathbb{R}h4$ 6. $c6=$ or 6. $\mathbb{R}xf2=$.

2... $\mathbb{K}f2!$

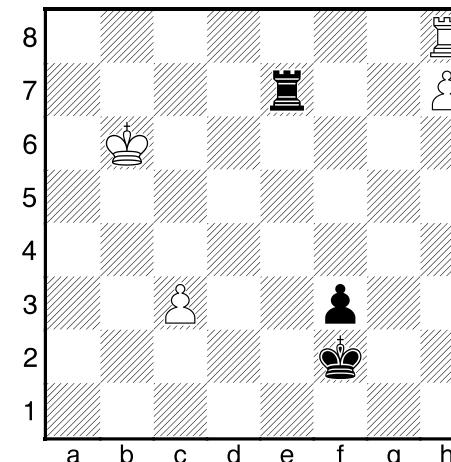
Best defence: using the pawn as an umbrella frees the $\mathbb{R}e7$ from double-duty, but blocking the $\mathbb{K}f$ gives White one extra tempo...

2... $f3?!$ 3. $\mathbb{K}d6\Box+-$ and the black \mathbb{R} cannot both keep attacking $h7$ and prevent $\mathbb{R}e8+$.

3. $\mathbb{K}xb6\Box$

...to create a second passed pawn. Not 3. $\mathbb{K}d6?$ $\mathbb{R}g7=$.

3... $f3$



The defending \mathbb{K} tries to save the day by combining threats to support his passed pawn with threats to catch the opponent's passer: if it were Black to play, then ... $\mathbb{K}e2$ or ... $\mathbb{K}e3$ — both possible because of the umbrella

on $e7$ — would allow the black \mathbb{K} to get close enough to stop White's c-pawn and draw.

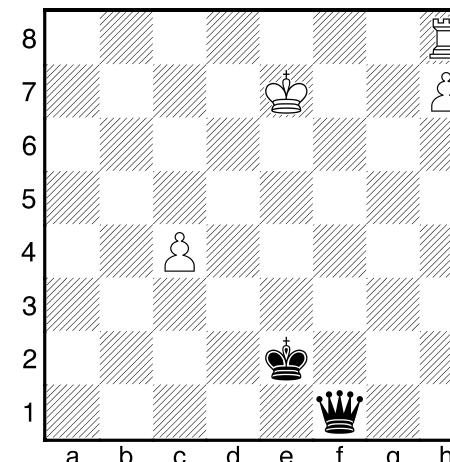
But it's not Black's move...

4. $\mathbb{K}c6!$

Black's pawn cannot promote unless the \mathbb{K} steps out of its way, and that would allow a winning check from the White rook, so the white \mathbb{K} heads back to nudge the umbrella.

4. $c4?$ $\mathbb{K}e2=$ the umbrella on $e7$ is safe for just long enough to shelter the \mathbb{K} and draw. 5. $\mathbb{K}c6$ $f2$ 6. $\mathbb{K}d6??$ tempting, but loses. (6. $\mathbb{R}f8!=$) 6... $f1\mathbb{W}\Box$ (6... $\mathbb{R}xh7?$ 7. $\mathbb{R}e8+=$; 6... $\mathbb{R}f7?$ 7. $\mathbb{R}e8+$ $\mathbb{K}d3\Box=$) 7. $\mathbb{K}xe7$

Analysis Diagram



Black has no checks and it looks like White is the only one with winning chances, but 7... $\mathbb{W}f5!+-$ zugzwang! The white \mathbb{K} is now the umbrella and every White move loses a pawn with check or loses the \mathbb{R} .

For completeness, if the white \mathbb{K} defends the pawn and rook Black wins by creating one more zugzwang: 8. $c5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5+$ 9. $\mathbb{K}f7$ $\mathbb{W}d5+$ 10. $\mathbb{K}f8$ $\mathbb{W}f5+$ 11. $\mathbb{K}g7$ $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 12. $\mathbb{K}g8$ $\mathbb{K}e3\Box+-$.

4... $\mathbb{R}f7$

4... $\mathbb{K}e2$ 5. $\mathbb{K}d6+-$ and the $\mathbb{R}e7$ is overworked.

4... $\mathbb{R}g7$ this umbrella doesn't shield the g-file because of the $\mathbb{R}g8$ pin.

4... $\mathbb{K}f1$ 5. $\mathbb{R}f8$ is similar to the mainline.

5. $\mathbb{K}d6!$ $\mathbb{R}f6+$

5... $\mathbb{K}f1$ 6. $\mathbb{K}e6\Box$ $\mathbb{R}c7$ 7. $\mathbb{R}f8$ $\mathbb{R}xh7$ 8. $\mathbb{R}xf3+$ $\mathbb{K}e2$ 9. $\mathbb{R}g3+-$ as in the mainline solution.

6. $\mathbb{K}d5$ $\mathbb{R}f5+$

6... $\mathbb{R}f7$ 7. $c4!+-$.

7. $\mathbb{K}e6!$ $\mathbb{R}h5$

Chess Canada Röti Studies



8. $\hat{d}6\Box$

Preventing the white \hat{d} from being an unwitting umbrella.

8.c4? $\hat{e}2=$ Black uses the white \hat{d} as an umbrella and draws.

8. $\hat{d}7?$ enables ... $\hat{x}h7+$ tricks, so 8... $\hat{x}h6!=$ or 8... $\hat{f}1!=$.

8... $\hat{x}h6+$ 9. $\hat{c}5$ $\hat{x}h5+$

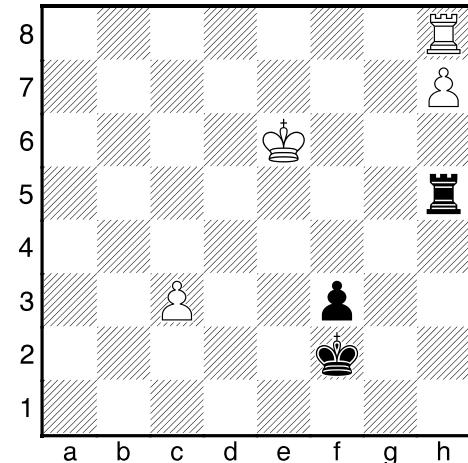
10. $\hat{b}4$

And White's c-pawn is the final umbrella, strolling up the board with the \hat{c} to promotion.

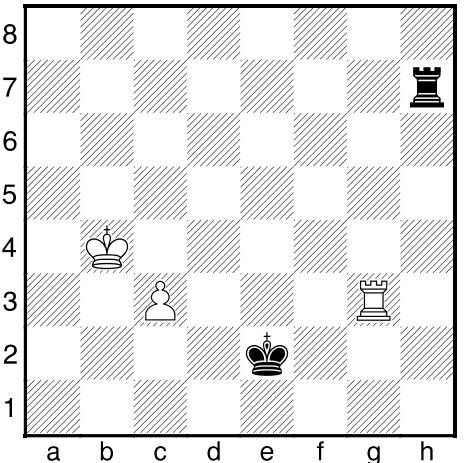
10... $\hat{f}1$ 11. $\hat{f}8!$ $\hat{x}h7$

12. $\hat{x}f3+$ $\hat{e}2$ 13. $\hat{g}3!$

Creating a bridge with $\hat{f}4$ or



$\hat{f}5$ are the only other winning moves.



8. $\hat{d}6\Box$

The black \hat{d} is too far to help stop the pawn... AND — in one last bit of supernatural perfection in this study — the black \hat{x} is too close to the white \hat{c} to give a perpetual: if there were one more rank of checking distance between the black \hat{x} and white \hat{c} (e.g. if the \hat{x} was somehow on h8) then Black draws with checks from the front, and any attempt to block those checks with the \hat{x} would allow the Black \hat{d} to approach the white pawn!

13... $\hat{d}2$ 14.c4 $\hat{b}7+$

15. $\hat{c}5$

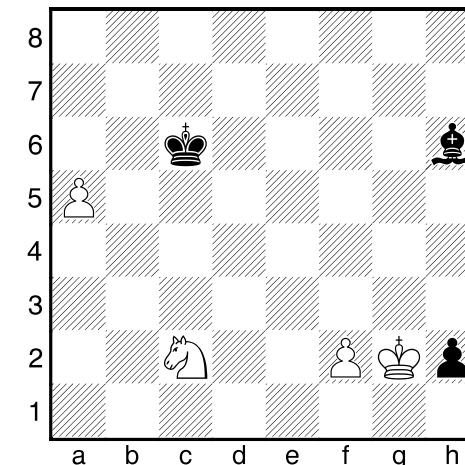
If $\hat{c}8+$ was possible it would draw.

1-0

Finally, a fun study that doesn't even *pretend* to be "instructive"... though it probably *is*, so be careful.

Richard Reti

Hastings and St. Leonards Post
(v), 1922.



1. $\hat{d}4+\Box \hat{c}5$

1... $\hat{b}7$ 2. $\hat{x}h2$ $\hat{a}6$ 3. $\hat{b}3\Box$ $\hat{b}5$ 4. $\hat{h}3$ $\hat{b}4$ 5. $a6+$ even 5. $\hat{g}4!?+ -$ and the \hat{g} still has no way to guard a7.

2. $\hat{h}1\Box$

Zugzwang!

On a nearly empty board the $\hat{d}\hat{d}\hat{d}$ dominate the \hat{g} and \hat{c} .

1-0

links

Edward Winter's
[Chess Notes on Reti](#)

Free Reti book
[Modern Ideas in Chess](#) is now in the public domain, and can be found online and legally downloaded, though in "descriptive notation".

