

Boroљub Zlatanović

GET TO KNOW YOUR CHESS TROOPS! - 1
Everything About the King



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FOREWORD

The countless possibilities of combinations, with six different chess pieces (units), each one with its own strengths and weaknesses, have captivated chess lovers around the world for centuries. Many chess authors have studied the openings, but only few have studied middlegames and endgames. To make a serious effort in every phase of the game, to get from each piece what it can offer, and to incorporate it into a chess symphony, is probably the highest level of chess mastery, to which every player aspires. Not many chess authors studied the individual strength of each piece. Of course, some conclusions were made about their value, with the indication that everything depends on the current position. To find the right examples for each piece and to make them understandable to the chess audience is a colossal work of chess literature.

In myriad of chess games, huge databases, and with the modern chess engines one needs to have the correct feeling about the game and knowledge to single out what is most memorable and beautiful. To guide the reader through the labyrinth of chess beauty, where each piece plays a significant role, and at the same time leave him amazed, is this book in your hands, which will remain a guide for other authors when they try to write something similar. Many have at least once encountered the power of the bishop pair, or the case of an "eternal" knight, or the possibilities the connected pawns provide. But, the author points out that even the king himself can attack!

When you look at all these examples, you should be able to understand more easily what is a "bad bishop", "restricted knight", or the triangulation of the queen and the king.

This book should grace the chess library of every chess player and chess lover!

And, what is your favorite piece?

Skopje, October 2024

GM Dragoljub Jaćimović

A WORD FROM AUTHOR

There are many various concepts and approaches to creating chess books. Chess strategy books have, more or less, well-known structure and contents. Writers work on „elements“ (following classification they prefer), principles, concepts... The chapter titles are more or less known in advance.

In this book I suggest an alternative concept. I will try to explain how to use your pieces and how to handle situations with the same pieces in your opponent's camp! Not once I heard statements like: „He doesn't know how to play with minor pieces“, or „He always stays with a bad bishop“ or „He is bad in rook endgames“, etc... Moreover, I sometimes come to a similar conclusion watching games of certain players. That conclusion motivated me to focus on such peculiar problems and to explain everything related to a concrete chess piece.

The first volume is dedicated to the most important piece – the king. Some principles are well known: in the opening we should castle as soon as possible to secure the king and give freedom to other pieces, in the middlegame we should attack the opponent's king if he is not safe to mate and win, in the endgame we are well-advised to activate our own king in order to have one more piece in action... But, there are many exceptions or modifications of these principles and there are many other „less common“ principles.

I am sure that you will learn a lot while reading this book that and you will enjoy some interesting games. The material is divided in six chapters. In the first chapter our story will be about the importance of having an active king in the endgame. The next three chapters are about launching and organizing attacks on our opponent's unsafe king (king in the center, attacks with castling on the same side and on the opposite sides). The fifth chapter is about king evacuation, a concept of great value both in defense and attack! The final chapter focuses on art and beauty in chess and you will see brave kings in action and some risky walks performed across the whole board!

I have no doubt that the mix of well known, unknown and fresh examples will be interesting to you, dear reader. You will learn a lot from illustrative and instructive examples and explanations. Please, feel free to send your reviews, suggestions and ideas to my address borzlat@gmail.com.

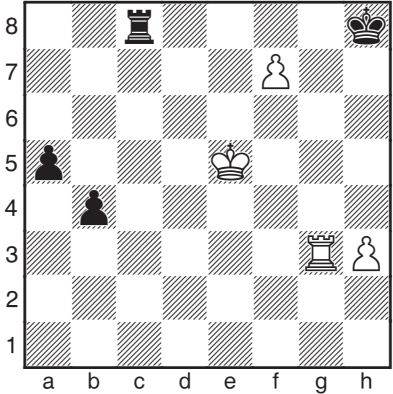
October 2024

To my beloved wife and son!

Boroljub Zlatanović

49...♖c3 is also good, but 50.f6 is extremely unpleasant.

50.♖xg3 b4 51.f6 a5 52.f7 ♖c8
53.♔e5



Previous moves were normal. Black should just go on...

53...♖b8??

53...a4 54.♔f6 a3 and White must force a draw after 55.♖g4 ♖c6+ 56.♔e5 ♖c5+ 57.♔d6 ♖c8 58.♖xb4 ♔g7

54.♔f6 Surprisingly White uses his active king to play for checkmate! On the other hand, Black's pawns are too slow!

54...♖b6+

54...a4 55.♖e3+-

55.♔f5 ♖b5+ 56.♔g6 ♖b6+ 57.♔h5 ♖b8 58.♔h6 a4 59.♖g6

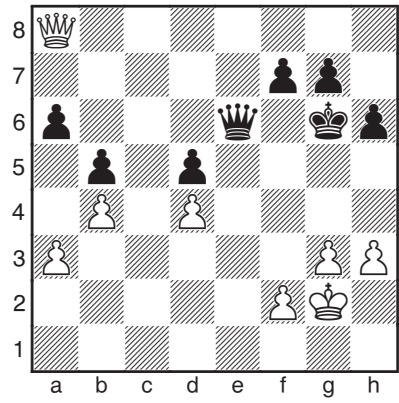
There is no defense against the ♖e6-e8 maneuver. Black resigned.

1 : 0



Vladimir Hamitevici 2512 - Richard Rapport 2715

Reykjavik 2018



Although the machine gives equality here, Black is clearly better. He can simply stay put without any risk. On the other hand, White must play very carefully. That makes a diagnosis crystal clear. Black can disturb the enemy king and work with checks to collect some material.

32...♔f5! Black's queen holds everything protected while the king goes to attack the enemy pawns. It would be wrong to try the same with the queen and leave own pawns unprotected.

33.♕a7?

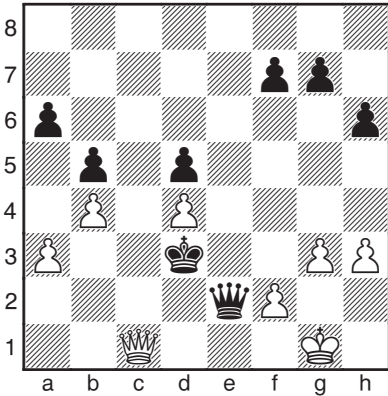
33.♕f8 is evident move to stop opponent's advance.

33...♔e4! Black is already lost. The black king's target is actually the a-pawn.

34.♕c5 ♔d3 35.♕c1 ♕e4+

35...♔xd4?? 36.♕d2+ is drawish.

36.♖g1 ♕e2?!



Objectively, this move complicates Black's task, but it is very difficult to predict a shocking resource White has available.

36...♕xd4 is an evident move.

37.♕b1+ Now Black wins smoothly.

37.a4! and Black must be accurate. 37...♕c2! would bring a full point.

37...♕c2 38.♕e1 ♔c4 39.♕e8 ♕b1+ 40.♖h2 ♕f5! I quite like this approach of keeping everything under control with your queen while the king finishes the job.

41.♕e3 ♕e4 42.♕c1+ ♔b3 43.♕a1 ♕c2 44.♖g1 ♕c3 White resigned. He did not prevent the black king's activation and result is fair.

0 : 1

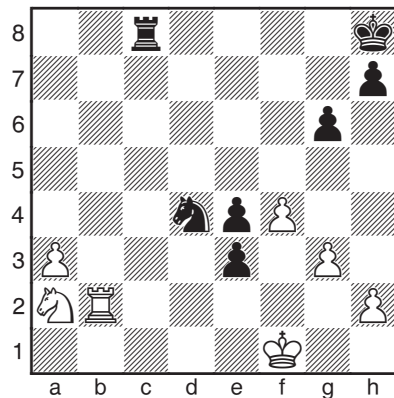


Carlo D'Amore 2425 - Sofia Polgar 2295

Rome 1989



Richard Rapport

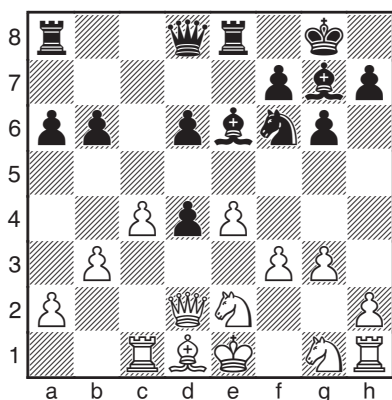


Black pieces are ultimately active and that is a key factor here. Still, White has three pieces in defense, including



Erich Gottlieb Eliskases - Leonid Stein

Mar del Plata 1966



White is lagging in development without chance to castle anytime soon. He planned to take the pawn for free, but Black prepared a huge surprise.

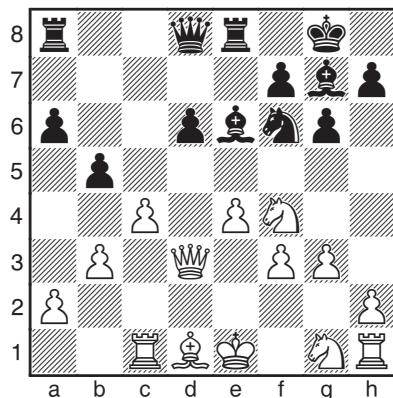
17...d3! 18.♖xd3

18.♘f4 ♕h6! 19.♗xd3 ♕xf4 20. gx f4 ♕f5! with sacrifice on e4 would lead to disaster.

18...b5!? Well prepared continuation, but not the most aggressive.

18...♕h6! was even stronger. For instance 19.♖c3 d5 20.cxd5 ♘xd5 21.exd5 ♕f5 22.♗c4 b5 23.♗b4 ♗xd5 and White is hopeless under fire of all the black pieces.

19.♘f4?



19.♗d2 was a must move. Now 19... ♗b6 20.♖f1 is much better for Black, but White can still resist;

19.cxb5? evidently would allow destruction after 19...d5

19...♕f5! Now there is no escape, as the sacrifice would work.

20.♗f1 ♕xe4 21.♘ge2 ♕b7 22. ♘d5

22.♖f2 g5 23.♘d5 ♕xd5 24.cxd5 ♘xd5 is hopeless for White.

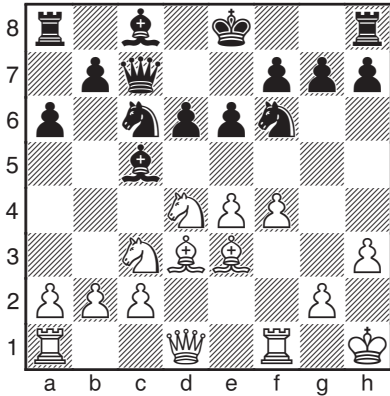
22...♕xd5 23.cxd5 ♘xd5 Black attacks with a material and huge positional advantage. The game is practically over.

24.b4 ♘xb4 25.♕b3 ♘d3+ 26. ♖d2 ♘xc1 27.♘xc1 ♖c8 28. ♗d3 ♗f6 White resigned. **0 : 1**



Garry Kasparov 2770 - Viswanathan Anand 2650

Tilburg 1991



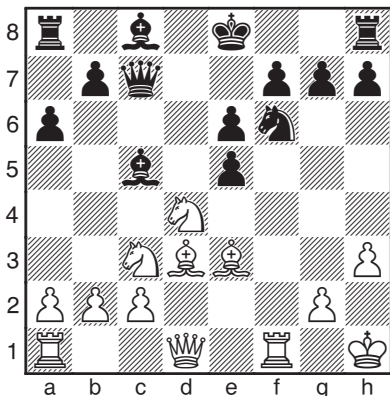
In this position again Black did not manage to castle and, moreover, the situation allows White to go for a wonderful combination utilising many tactical motifs.

12.e5! is needed to deflect the d6-pawn and leave the black bishop unprotected.

12...♞xe5

12...dxe5 13.♞db5! axb5 14.♙xc5 is simply lost for Black.

13.fxe5 dxe5



That was Anand's plan, but Kasparov calculated much deeper...

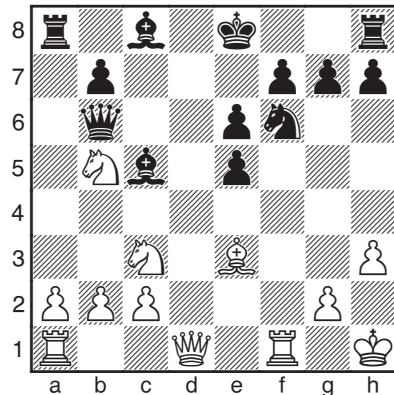
14.♙b5+! An absolutely shocking shot!

14...axb5

14...♙d7 falls to 15.♞xe6! fxe6 16.♙xd7+ ♞xd7 17.♙g5 and Black's position is in ruins.

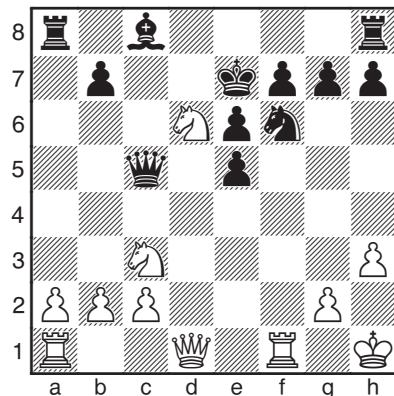
15.♞dxb5 White recovered the piece in the best possible way and is now ready to continue attacking.

15...♞b6



White must prevent castling now.

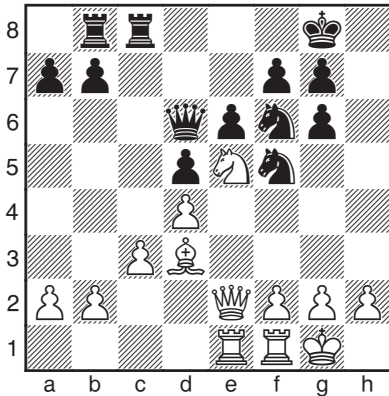
16.♙xc5 ♞xc5 17.♞d6+ ♙e7





Magnus Carlsen 2872 - Vladimir Belov 2598

World Championship Blitz
Moscow 2019



Even though it is a blitz game, White has many reasons to engage a direct pawn attack. Black's rooks do nothing and there will be some additional gained tempi after kicking back the black cavalry. As usual, Carlsen's approach is confirmed as correct.

20.g4! ♞e7 **21.f4** Black's kingside situation may only look compact at the first glance.

21...a6? A terrible move.

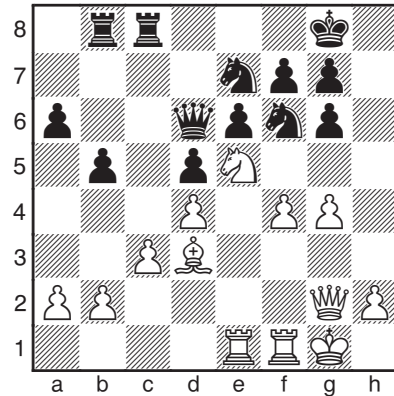
21...♞c6 would make sense, to exchange the annoying knight if possible. Anyway, after 22.h4 with the idea of h5 White's attack would be unbearable.

22.♞g2!?

22.♞f2! is more precise, to use the

h-file to attack.

22...b5 is too slow.

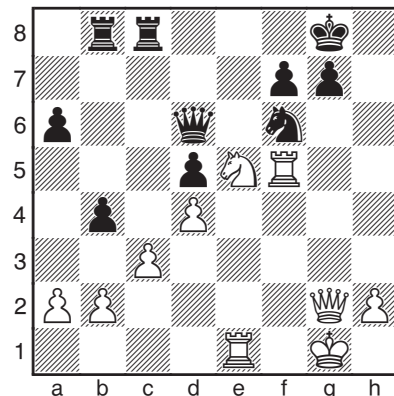


22...♞e4! 23.♙xe4 dxe4 24.♞xe4 b5 will prolong resistance in a totally lost position.

23.f5! The scene is set and White strikes.

23...exf5 24.gxf5 ♞xf5 Trading pieces would not help Black.

25.♙xf5 gxf5 26.♞xf5 b4



27.♞ef1 Direct attack on the knight and f7-pawn.

27...♙f8 28.♞g5! bxc3

28...g6 29.♖xg6! fxg6 30.♔xg6 leads to Black's collapse.

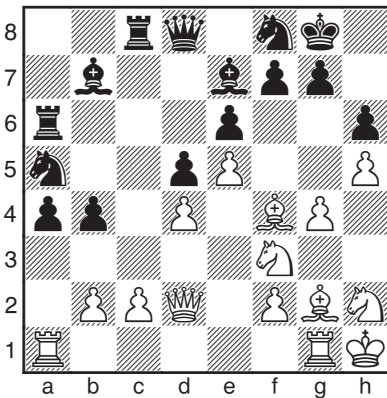
29.♖xg7 cxb2 30.♖xf7+ ♔e8
31.♔g6 Stopping the passer and threatening with checkmates. Black resigned.

1 : 0



Sergey Karjakin 2757 - Samuel Shankland 2709

FIDE World Cup
Krasnaya Polyana 2021



The King's Indian Attack often leads to White's attack on the black king directly by using the pawns. The following position is a perfect example and illustration. White is ready to launch the attack, while Black's play on the queenside looks too slow.

22.g5! ♖c4

22...hxg5 would only accelerate White's attack. After 23.♔xg5 White

would normally launch the attack on the g-file with an inevitable collapse for Black.

23.♔c1! hxg5

23...a3 24.bxa3! b3 (24...bxa3 is too slow. White wins after 25.gxh6) 25.cxb3! ♖xe5 would slow down White's attack, but after 26.♔e3 ♖xf3 27.♔xf3! Black is lost. A possible continuation could be 27...hxg5 28.♔xg5 ♔xg5 29.♖xg5 with doubling of the rooks.

24.♔xg5 Traditionally White exchanges the bishops. The white bishop is not so important while the black



Sergey Karjakin

bishop is the main defender of dark squares.

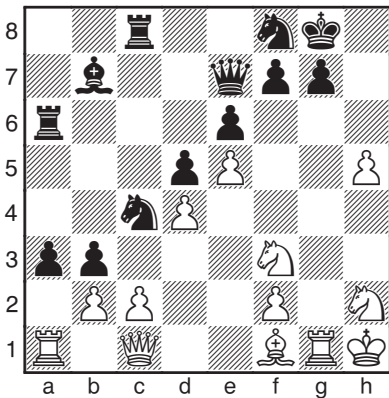
24...b3

24...♗xg5 is more resistant, but 25.♘xg5 f6 26.exf6 ♖xf6 27.♗h3! preparing ♘g4 is hopeless for Black.

25.♗xe7

25.♗f1 is even better. Now 25... bxc2 26.♗xe7 ♖xe7 27.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 28.♘g4 would bring a quick win.

25...♖xe7 26.♗f1 a3



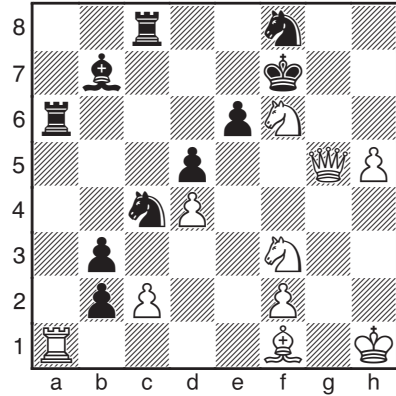
This allows a beautiful finale.

26...f6 is the way to try to organize something. Anyway, White has 27. exf6 ♖xf6 28.h6 g6 29.cxb3 axb3 30.♖xa6 ♗xa6 31.♖g5! ♖xg5 32.♘g5 with the idea of ♘g4-f6 and win.

27.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 28.♘g4 f5 Act of desperation.

28...♘h7 29.♖h6+ ♔g8 30.♘f6+ ♘xf6 31.♗d3! mates in a few moves.

29.exf6+ ♖xf6 30.♘xg5 axb2 31. ♖g5+ ♔f7



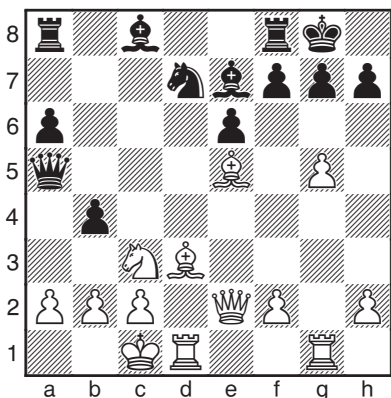
32.h6! Threatening mate in one.

32...♘g6 33.♘h4! bxa1 ♖ 34. ♖xg6+ ♔e7 35.♖g7+ ♔d6 36. ♖d7#

1 : 0



Samuel Shankland

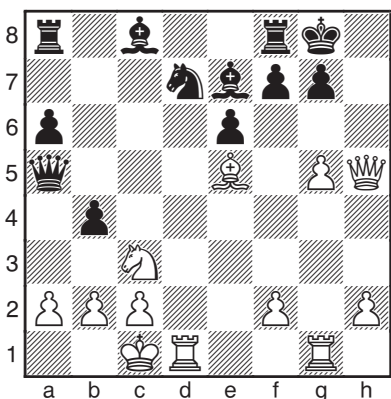


16...bxc3 17.gxf6 cxb2+ 18.♔b1
wins by force;

16...♘d5 loses after 17.♕h5 g6 18.
♖h6 f6 19.♙xg6

17.♙xh7+! Wins by force!

17...♔xh7 18.♕h5+ ♔g8



19.♙xg7! A well known mechanism
in action.

19...♔xg7 20.♕h6+ ♔g8 21.♘d5
To eliminate the covering of the g-file
possibility. A matter of style.

21.g6 wins as well;

21.♘e4 with ♘f6 idea is the quick-

est win, by the way.

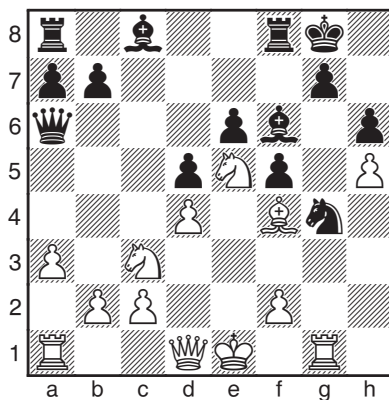
21...exd5 22.g6 ♘f6 23.g7 ♘h7
24.gxf8♖#

1 : 0



Shakhriyar Mamedyarov 2747
- Anish Giri 2764

chess24.com rapid 2022



White sacrificed a pawn to open the
g-file. In similar situations the num-
ber of pawns barely matters. Actually,
even the number pieces often doesn't
matter all that much.

16.♙xg4! The knight must stay on
e5 to paralyze the black troops. White
has enough of attacking potential on
the kingside even without the rook.

16.♘xg4? is bad 16...fxg4 gives
Black advantage because of ...e5 re-
source.

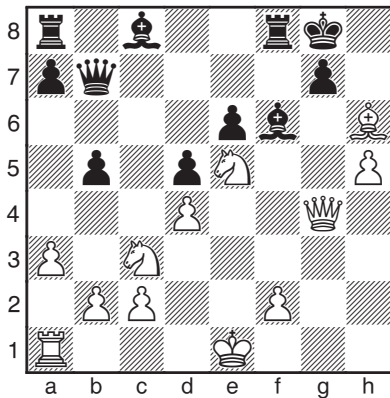
16...fxg4 17.♕xg4 The threat is to

take on h6. Plan is, of course, to castle and place the rook on the g-file.

17...b5! Black must not wait with any action.

17...♔h7? would prevent nothing. White has 18.♙xh6 winning anyway.

18.♙xh6 ♖b7?



Anish Giri

18...♙xe5! 19.dxe5 ♖b7 is correct. 20.0-0-0 keeps a clear advantage on White's side due to the control over the dark squares. (20.♘xb5 is wrong. After 20...♖f7! Black has play on the b-file with counterattack.)

19.0-0-0? A counter-favor.

19.♙f4 is an obvious and trivial move. White is not intending to recapture with the bishop, at the same time preparing devastating h6.

19...a5?

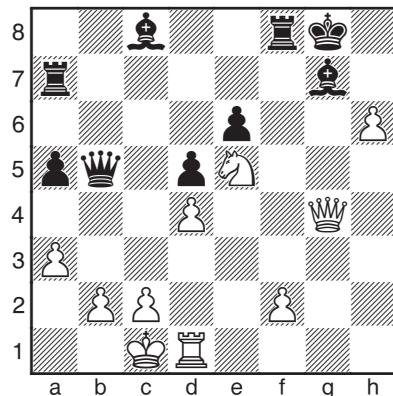
19...♙xe5! 20.dxe5 ♖b8 would be the best defense.

20.♘xb5 Now White just takes the pawn with deflection.

20...♖xb5

20...♙xe5 doesn't work now. The rook comes to g1, and the knight comes to d6 - Black is hopeless. 21.dxe5

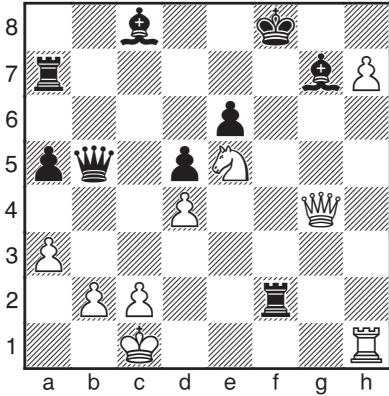
21.♙xg7 ♙xg7 22.h6 ♖a7



23. ♖h1! The only winning move! After taking the bishop White's attack on the h-file decides.

23. h×g7 ♖×g7 24. ♕h4 ♖f5! 25. ♖h1 ♖xe5! and Black escapes!

23... ♖xf2 24. h7+! ♔f8



25. ♕×g7+!

25. h8 ♕+ ♔xh8 26. ♖xh8+ ♔e7 27. ♕h4+ wins as well.

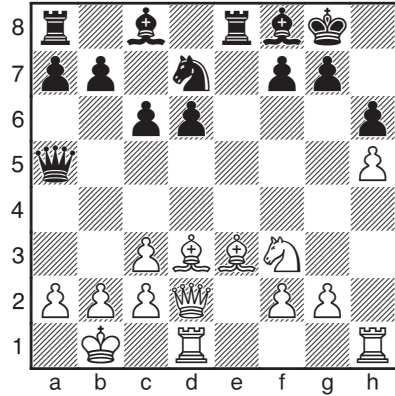
25... ♖×g7 26. h8 ♕+ ♖g8 27. ♖g6+ ♔e8 28. ♕×g8+ ♔d7 29. ♖e5+ ♔d6 30. ♖d3 Black resigned.

1 : 0



Vassily Ivanchuk 2748 - Boris Gelfand 2750

Nice rapid 2010



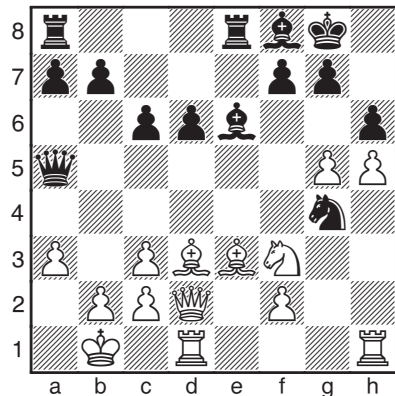
White's attack looks faster after the next obvious move.

14.g4 ♖f6? is a terrible mistake that gives White's attack a new impulse.

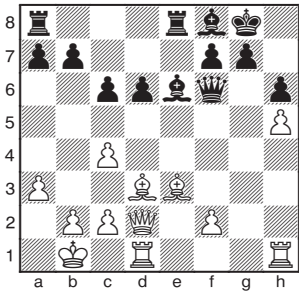
14... ♖e5 is correct. Now 15. ♖xe5 dxe5 16.g5 ♔e6 17.b3 e4! 18. ♔xe4 ♔g4 19.f3 ♖ad8 is completely unclear.

15.g5 ♔e6 16.a3 More precise than 16.b3 ♖d5.

16... ♖g4



16...♖d5 looks like a good try, but
 17.c4 ♖xf3 18.gxf6 ♖xf6



19.♔d4! leaves Black in a hopeless situation after, for instance 19...♖f3 20.♖dg1 ♔g4 21.♖c1! with idea ♖g3.

17.gxh6! White is not confused at all.

17...♖d5 18.♖e2! A brilliant possibility! The king gets space to escape and the attack continues after having the f3-knight defended.

18...♖a2+ What else?

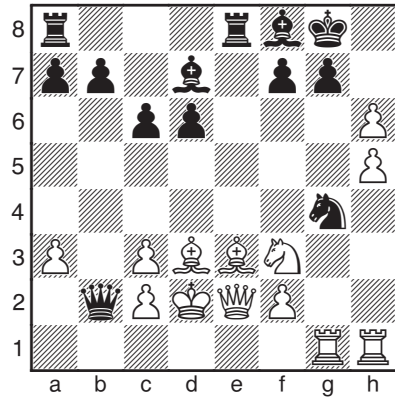
19.♔c1 ♖a1+

19...gxh6 20.♖dg1 is hopeless for Black;

19...♗xh6 20.♔xh6 gxh6 21.♖hg1+ ♔h8 22.♖e4 and White wins.

20.♔d2 ♖xb2 21.♖dg1 Now everything goes smoothly. Black's army is in total chaos and there is nothing to do against White's attack. The white king only optically may look exposed but he is perfectly safe.

21...♔d7

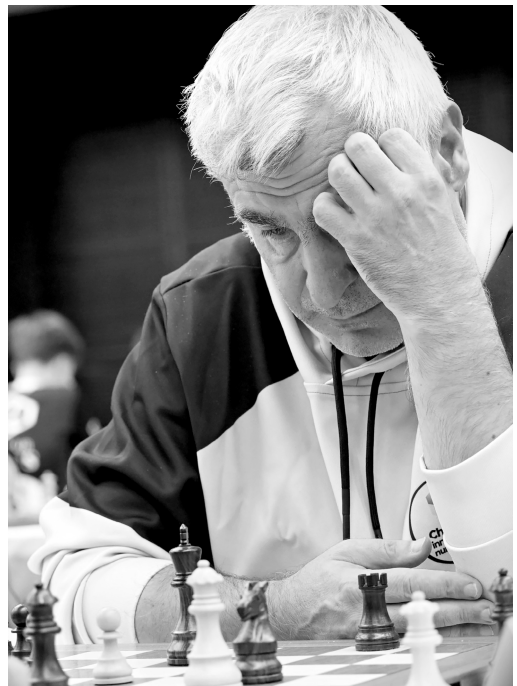


To stop White's attack by opening the e-file.

22.♖xg4! Wins in style!

22...♔xg4 23.♗g5

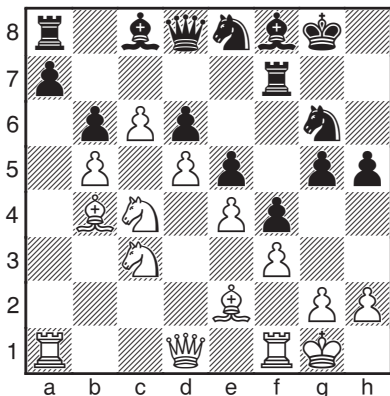
23.h7+ ♔h8 24.♗g5! ♔e6 is the other way, but methodically a less precise move order.



Vassily Ivanchuk

Yaroslav Zhrebukh 2558 - Salem A.R. Saleh 2473

Moscow 2009

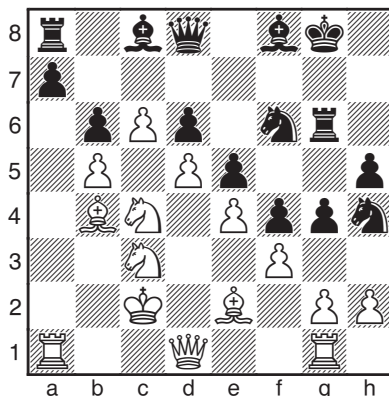


Now we will examine evacuations that are executed voluntarily. In the diagram position White has a great presence on the queenside: a passed pawn, enormous space advantage, pressure on the a-file... The position is absolutely winning. But, before playing for a full point White must take measures regarding Black's attack on the kingside. The simplest, the best and the most elegant solution is the evacuation of the king.

21. ♖f2! Now or never! With the black pawn advanced to g4 Black would have check on h4 to stop the evacuation.

21...g4 22. ♖e1 ♖g7 23. ♖d2 ♗h4 24. ♖g1 White waits on the kingside and uses a moment without Black's threats to continue with active queenside operations.

24...♖g6 25. ♖c2 ♗f6



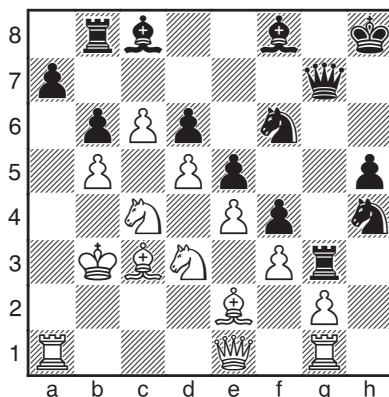
White's king is safe and it is time to play actively.

26. ♗a4! Not only preparing the capture on b6, but also preparing the knight regrouping to sacrifice on e5!

26...♖b8 27. ♗ab2 White switches to the second option.

27...♙c7 28. ♗d3 ♗e8 29. ♙c1 ♙g7 30. ♕c3 The previous and next moves are pretty natural.

30...♗f6 31. ♖b3 ♖h8 32. ♙e1 g3 33. hxg3 ♖xg3



34. ♗dxе5! White prepared the blow and Black's position will collapse.

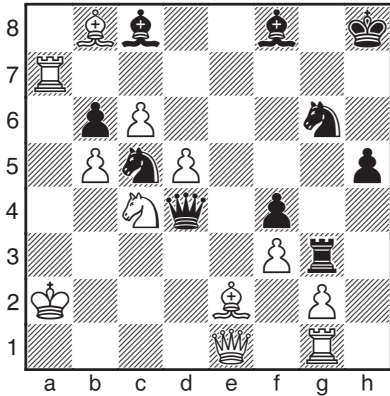
34...dxe5 35.♙xe5 Black's rook can't escape.

35...♘g6

35...♖a8 36.♘xb6+-

36.♙xb8 ♘xe4 37.♖xa7 ♘c5+

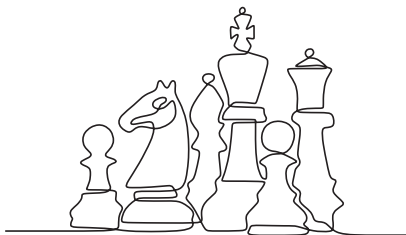
38.♙a2 ♚d4



39.♚a1 Forcing the win without risk.

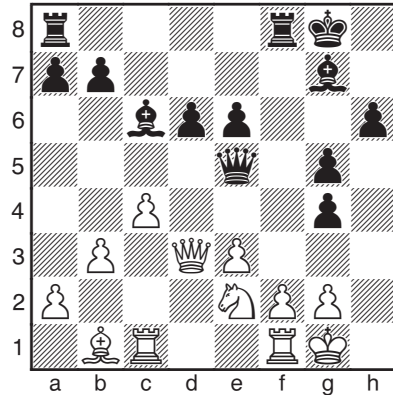
39...♙g7 40.♚xd4 ♙xd4 41.♖d1
Black resigned.

1 : 0



Grigory Ravinsky - Alexander Kotov

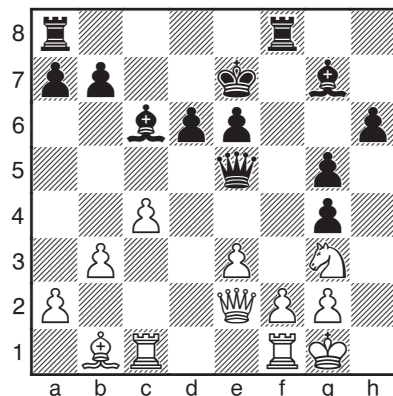
USSR 1949



Black is definitely better, White has nothing for two sacrificed pawns. The battery is not so dangerous, but the bishop pair is. But, what to do as Black? Well, why keeping the king in a dangerous zone?

23...♚f7! The black king would be safer on the e7-square.

24.♘g3 ♙e7 25.♚e2?

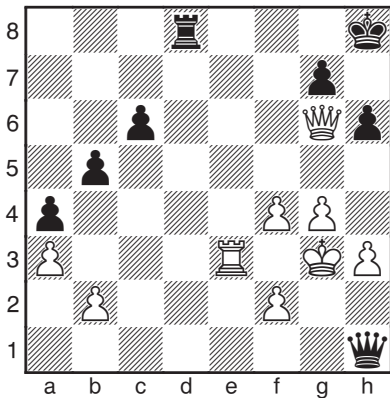


53. ♖b8 Black resigned.

1 : 0



Ratmir Kholmov – Vladas
Mikenas
USSR 1953



White is winning here. His pieces are ultimately active and there is an extra pawn. Moreover, it can be used after f5–f6 to directly attack the black king. But, White's king is exposed and White first takes measures to secure him.

40. ♖h4! Making the king safe before action. You can predict that something similar to the previous example may happen...

40... ♗g2! 41. ♖h5!

41... ♗c2 is OK, but too passive and 41... c5 may complicate the converting process.

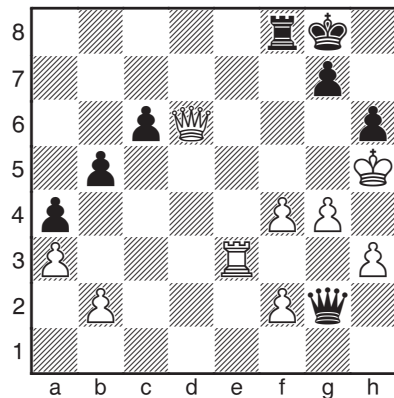
41... ♖f8

41... ♗xf2 loses after 42. ♖e8+ ♖xe8 43. ♗xe8+ ♔h7 44. ♗e4+ ♔g8 45. ♔g6 ♔f8 46. ♗e5 with taking on g7 with check.

42. ♗d6

42.f5 is also good and even more direct.

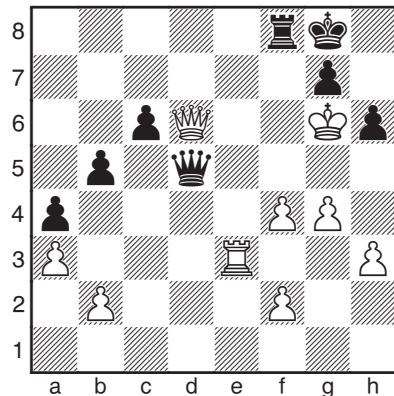
42... ♔g8



43. ♔g6!

There is the threat after 43... ♖f6+ 44. ♗xf6 gxf6 45. ♖e8#!

43... ♗d5



Practically the only move. Now, White switches to a trivially won rook end-game.

44. ♖xd5+ cxd5 45.g5 To get rid of doubled pawns and to prevent check on f6.

45...hxcg5 46.fxg5 d4 47. ♖e7 ♖d8 48. ♖xg7+ ♔f8 49. ♖f7+ ♔g8

49...♔e8 50. ♖c7 d3 51. ♖c1 d2 52. ♖d1 is winning.

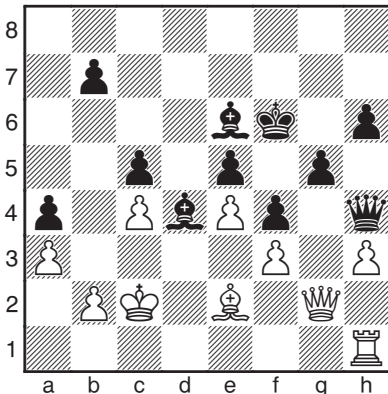
50. ♖e7 d3 51. ♖e1 ♖d6+ 52. ♔f5 d2 53. ♖d1 ♖d5+ 54. ♔g4 ♖d3 55.h4 ♔f7 56.h5 ♔g7 57.f4 ♔g8 58. ♔f5 Black resigned.

1 : 0



Magnus Solmundarson - Vassily Smyslov

Reykjavik 1974

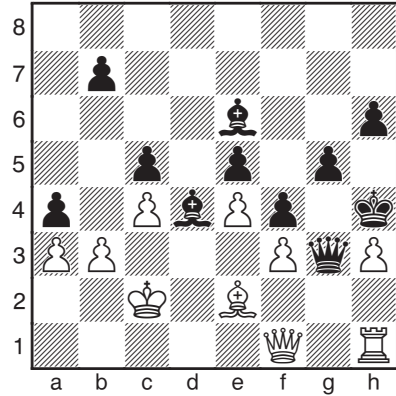


Black is behind in material, but his

dominance is evident. White must protect the h3-pawn and his pieces are paralyzed. Black can't improve his own pieces - they are on the best spots. So, he should try to use his king actively!

42...♔g6! The black king goes to h4. One more attack on the h3-pawn and White's position would collapse.

43. ♔b1 ♖g3 44. ♖f1 ♔h5 45. ♔c2 ♔h4 46.b3



The act of desperation where every reaction is good. Black chose to act in style.

46...b5 This advance would define the queenside situation and White would stay with no play.

47.bxa4

47.cxb5 axb3+ 48. ♔b1 c4 loses even faster. Here **49. ♕xc4 ♕xc4 50. ♖xc4 ♖g2** is crystal clear.

47...bxa4 48. ♕d3 h5 No rush, Black fully improves before action.

49. ♔b1