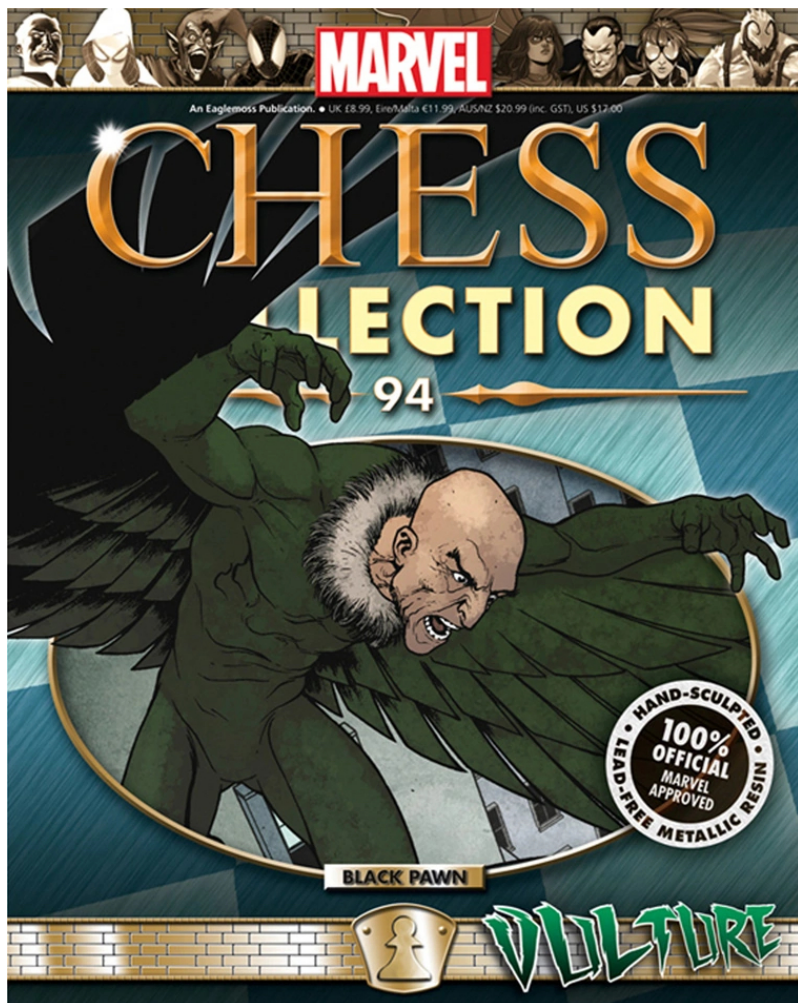


Patzer

**The magazine for the
club chess player**



Der Geier

**volume 3 number 5
July 2021**

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The dramatic cover image illustrates *Der Geier* (the Vulture), this issue's outrageous opening, which we will examine on pages 186 and 187.

Our series on the 3...♔a5 variation of the Scandinavian defence continues, starting on page 172, and we have finally reached the main line with 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 ♙g4 6. h3 ♙h5 7. g4 ♙g6 8. ♘e5 e6. There is a lot of detail here, but you shouldn't even try to memorise analysis out to move 23 – it's pointless. If you play through each variation once you will get a feel for the possibilities.

In part 4 of his series on the Jobava-Prié attack, Tim Spanton takes a completely different approach, using three high-level games to illustrate the variations that arise after 1. d4 d5 2. ♘c3 ♘f6 3. ♙f4, and now the popular 3...e6 (pages 180 to 185).

So far in our series on openings that can be played as either white or black we've looked at the Hippopotamus,¹ the King's Indian defence and attack,² and the Old Indian defence and Philidor's defence.³ In this issue we again use a book review to examine a flexible opening system, this time

Larsen's opening (1. b3) and Owen's defence (1...b6), starting on page 203. The book is Ilya Odessky's fascinating *Winning quickly with 1. b3 and 1...b6*, which was translated by Steve Giddins, who by coincidence is the author of one of the books we covered in the articles referred to earlier.

Harvey Lerman, who is the editor of *floridaCHESS*, is a real stalwart of the Florida chess community. The Board of the Florida Chess Association even voted to change the name of this year's event from the Arnold Denker to the Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship "in honor of one of the most respected and beloved chess servants in our state".⁴ On page 195 he tells us a little about his chess career, and explains why his best move was actually a blunder.

What do you think of our tactical puzzles (page 196)? Too hard? Too easy? To have your say just send an email to derek_roebuck@hotmail.com.

Derek Roebuck

¹ **Patzer** 1999; 1(1): 7-11

² **Patzer** 1999; 1(3): 85-87

³ **Patzer** 2000; 2(3): 80-83

⁴ <https://floridachess.org/Presidents-Corner>

Beating the 3...♔a5 Scandinavian defence

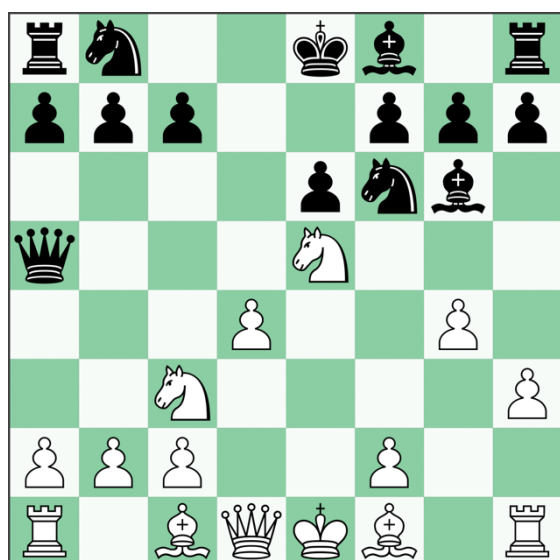
B 01

Part 5: The mainline

Derek Roebuck

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♔xd5 3. ♘c3 ♔a5
4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 ♙g4 6. h3 ♙h5 7.
g4 ♙g6 8. ♘e5 e6

As we have seen in the first four parts of this series, black has no chance of equality with any of the other options on moves 4 to 8. Can he or she do any better with this sensible-looking attempt?



▷9

9. ♙d2

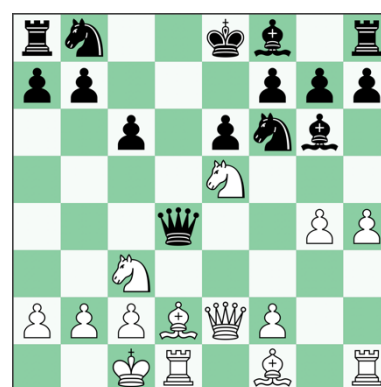
The idea, of course, is a discovered attack on the black queen. GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave once played 9. ♙f4 here, but white has a lot of other options, such as 9. h4, 9. ♘c4, 9. ♘xg6, 9. ♙c4 and 9. ♙g2. The last of these is probably the best, and gives white advantages of up to a couple of pawns on evaluation by an engine. But the positions that arise, although objectively superior, are fearsomely difficult for a patzer to get his or her brain around. Our option is more direct, and trappier for black.

9...c6?

This move is often good for black in the ♔a5 Scandinavian, and the real possibility that black will try it now is one reason we played 9. ♙d2!?

10. h4! ♙b6

(1) 10...♙d8 11. ♙e2 ♙xd4
[11... ♙xc2 12. ♖c1 is even worse]
12. 0-0-0.

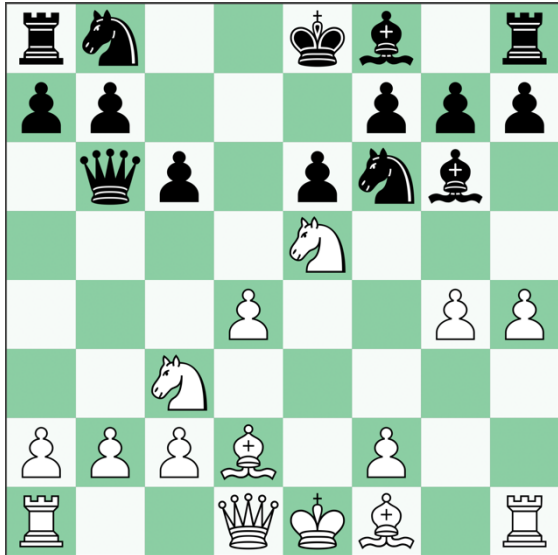


analysis

Now black can't save the bishop with 12...h6, because 13. ♘xg6 is just crushing, and white wins material after 12... ♙b4 13. ♙h6 or 12... ♙d6

13. ♘c4 ♙e7 14. h5 ♙e4 15. ♙e3
 ♚xd1+ 16. ♘xd1 ♙xh1 17. f3.

(2) 10...h6 11. ♘xg6 fxg6 12. ♚e2!
 White will play 0-0-0 and ♖h3.

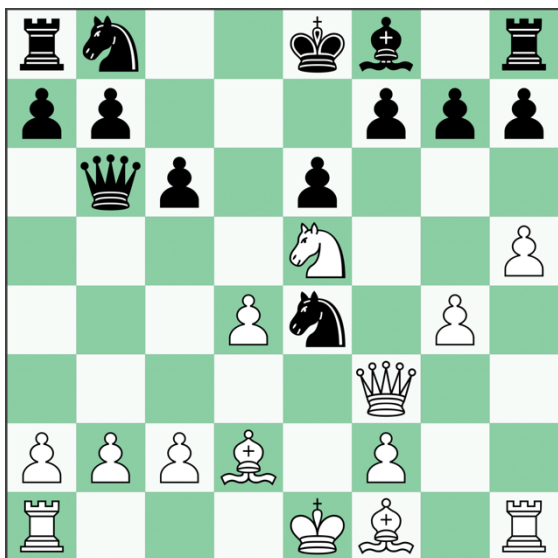


► 11

11. h5!? ♙e4 12. ♘xe4 ♘xe4

12...♚xd4 13. ♘xf6+ gxf6 14. ♘f3!,
 and black will have nothing close to
 compensation for the piece.

13. ♚f3

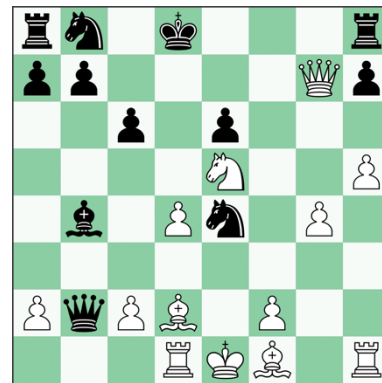


► 13

13...♘d6

This is not the best move, but it's the
 most likely at club level.

(1) Not many players will dare to play
 13...♚xb2!, but it may be no worse
 than the alternatives: 14. ♚xf7+
 ♙d8 15. ♖d1 ♙b4 [15...♘xd2 16.
 ♚xd2! ♙b4+ 17. ♙e3 ♖f8 18.
 ♚xg7 is very tough for black] 16.
 ♚xg7.

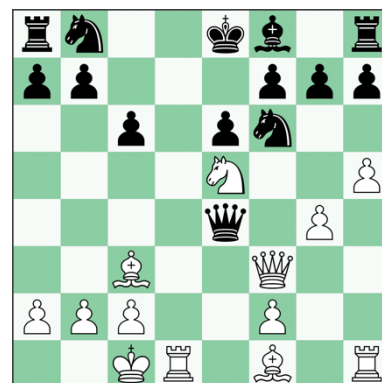


analysis

Now 16...♖e8 17. ♙d3 ♙xd2+ 18.
 ♖xd2 and 16...♙xd2+ 17. ♖xd2
 ♖e8 18. ♙d3 both lead to a position
 that is unsurvivable for black after
 18...♘xd2 19. ♙xd2.

(2) 13...f5 looks ugly, and indeed
 white has 14. 0-0-0 ♚xd4 15. ♘c4,
 for example 15...♘a6 16. ♙e3 ♚f6
 17. ♙d4 with gxf5 to follow.

(3) 13...♘f6 14. 0-0-0 ♚xd4 15.
 ♙c3 ♚e4 [15...♚b6 16. g5]



analysis

16. h6! ♔xf3 17. ♘xf3 ♚g8 18. ♕d3 ♘bd7 19. g5 ♘d5 20. ♕xh7 and white wins.

14. 0-0-0 ♔xd4

(1) 14...♘d7 15. ♘xd7 ♔xd7 16. c4 ♕d8 17. ♕f4 ♕e7 18. ♔b1. Now white's pawn pushes to d5 and/or c5 are irresistible.

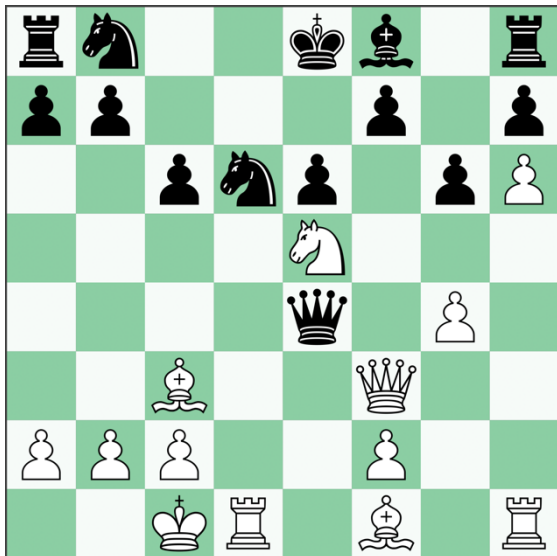
(2) 14...♕e7 15. g5 ♔xd4 16. ♕f4 ♕e4 17. ♚xd6!

(3) 14...♕d8 15. ♕b4!? ♕f6 [the engine suggests 15...f6, which would irreparably weaken e6] 16. ♕b3 and white has far too many threats.

15. ♕c3 ♕e4

If the queen goes to b6 or c5, white plays 16. h6! anyway.

16. h6 g6



▷17

17. ♚xd6! ♕xf3 18. ♘xf3 ♕xd6 19. ♕xh8

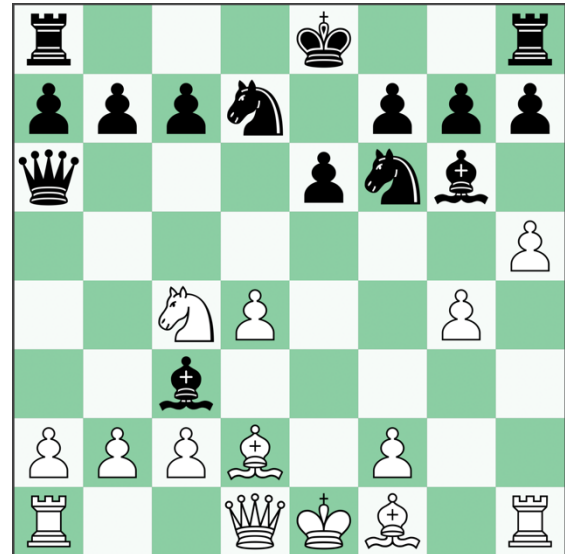
White is winning.

9... ♕b4

10. h4 ♘bd7

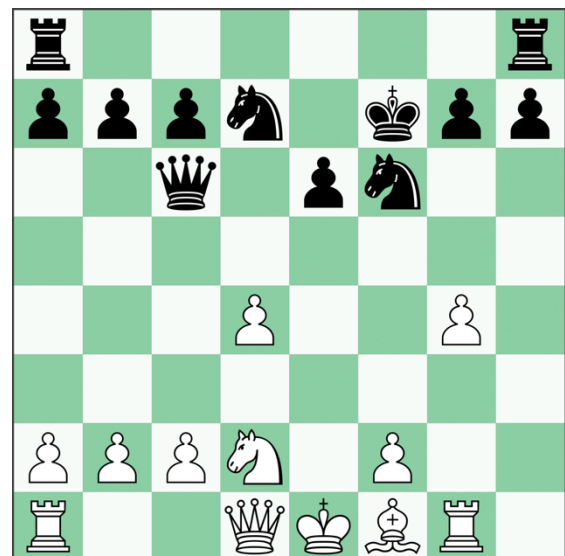
10...♕b6 11. ♕g2 ♘bd7 12. ♘xd7 ♕xd7 [12...♘xd7 13. h5] 13. ♘a4 ♕b5 14. b3. White wins the b-pawn.

11. ♘c4!? ♕a6 12. h5 ♕xc3



▷13

13. hxg6 ♕xd2+ 14. ♘xd2! ♕c6 15. gxf7+ ♔xf7 16. ♚g1

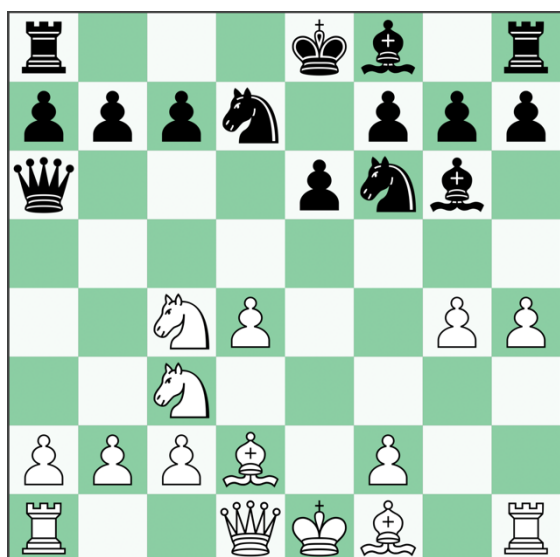


▶16

White has a clear advantage, but must be careful to get his king to safety. If black prevents g5 with 16...h6 or 16...g5, white will play c3, ♖b3 (or ♖f3) and then 0-0-0. The immediate 16...e5? loses to 17. ♗c4+ ♔e7 18. ♕e2, and black can't prepare this break with 16...♖he8 because of 17. g5 ♘d5 18. ♕h5+!

9...♘bd7

10. ♘c4 ♕a6 11. h4



► 11

11...♕c6!?

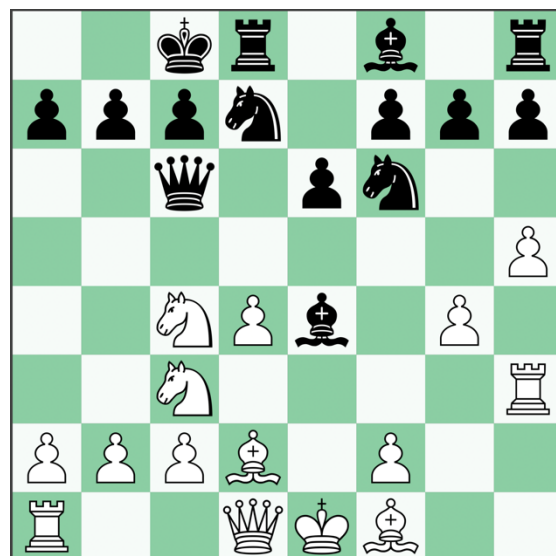
11...♕b4 is a transposition to the main line from 9...♕b4, and 11...h6 can be met with 12. ♖h3 ♕b4 13. ♘e5 ♕b6 14. ♘xg6 fxg6 15. g5! hxg5 16. hxg5 ♖xh3 17. ♕xh3, with a modest but definite advantage.

12. ♖h3 0-0-0

After 12...h5 13. ♘e5 white intends to take on g6, and if 13...♘xe5 then 14. ♕b5! wins enough material after

14...0-0-0 15. ♕xc6 ♘xc6 16. g5! that white should have a good chance of a win.

13. h5 ♕e4



► 14

14. a3!?

There is no rush. White is obviously threatening to play g5, but the real threat is better disguised.

14...h6

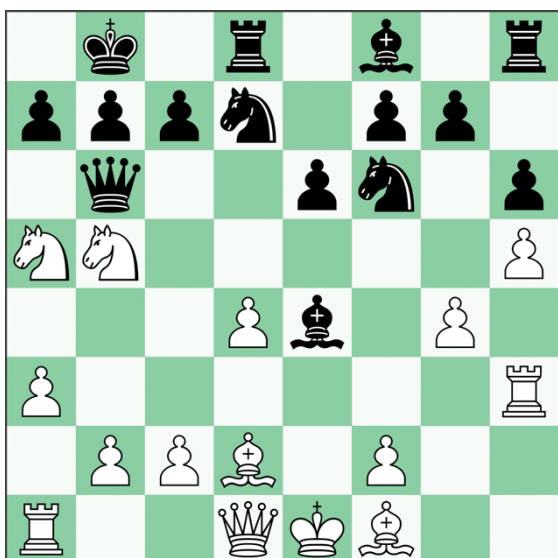
14...♕d5 15. ♘b5! ♕b8 16. ♘a5 ♕b6 temporarily thwarts white's plan of ♘b3, but allows 17. c4! a6 18. ♘c3 ♘e4 [18...♕c6 19. c5] 19. ♘a4 ♕xd4 20. ♕e3 ♕xd1+ 21. ♖xd1 ♕c6 22. ♘xc6+ bxc6 23. ♕g2, which is close to winning.

15. ♘b5! ♕b8

15...♕a6 16. ♘xc7! ♕xc7 17. ♕f4+ ♕c8 18. ♖c3 completes the rook lift in style.

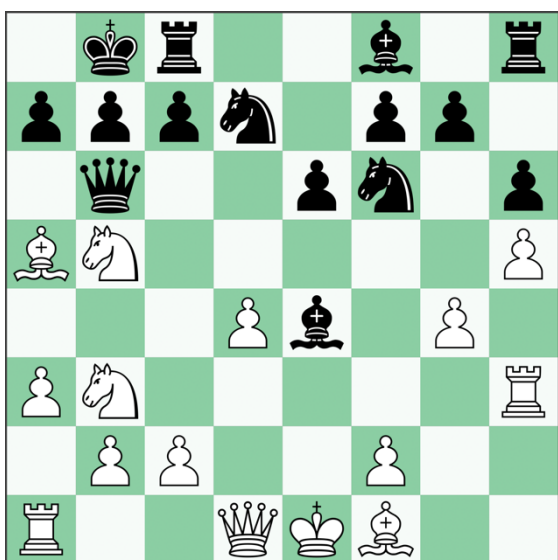
16. ♘a5 ♕b6

Now for some tactics.



► 17

17. ♖b3! ♜c8 18. ♙a5



► 18

18... ♙a6

18... ♙c6 19. ♜c3 doesn't help black.

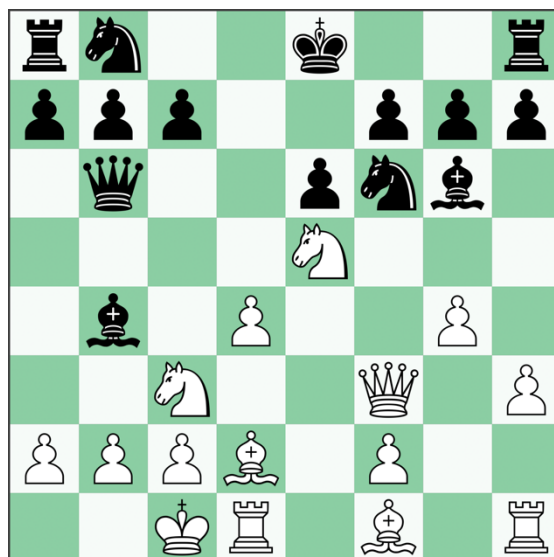
19. ♙xc7+! ♜xc7 20. ♘xc7

White's knight will escape via b5.

9... ♙b6

This sensible retreat is the move you are most likely to encounter here.

10. ♙f3!? ♙b4 11. 0-0-0

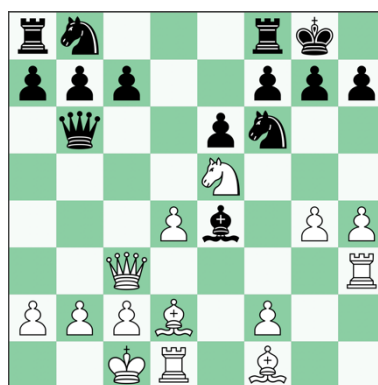


► 11

11... ♙xc3

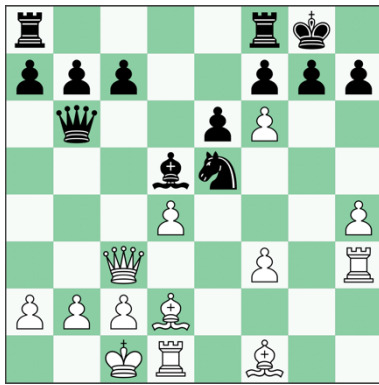
11... 0-0? 12. h4! and now:

(1) 12... ♙xc3 13. ♙xc3! [now 13. ♙xc3?? ♙e4 would be bad] ♙e4 14. ♙h3!?



analysis

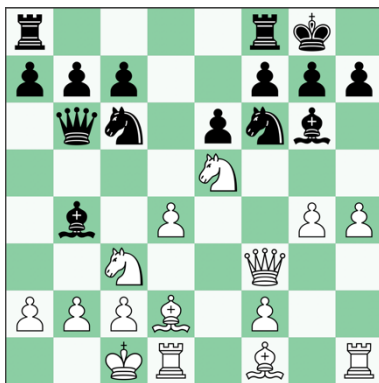
14... ♘c6 [14... ♘bd7 allows 15. g5 ♘d5 16. ♘xd7!?, winning a piece, and 14... ♜d8 is met by 15. ♙g5 ♘bd7 16. ♜e1 ♙d5 17. ♙d3] 15. f3 ♙d5 16. g5 ♘xe5 17. gxf6.



analysis

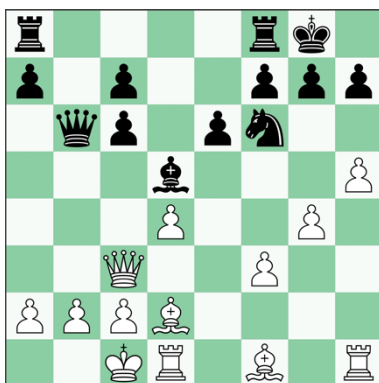
17...Nxd7 [17...Nc6 18. Qh6!?] 18. fxg7 and now white's simple plan of h5-h6 is quite hard to meet.

(2) 12...Nc6



analysis

13. Nxc6! bxc6 [13...Qxc6!? might be better, but 14. Qxc6 bxc6 15. h5 Qxc3 16. Qxc3 Qe4 17. Rh3 h6 18. Qa5 also favours white] 14. h5 Qxc3 15. Qxc3 Qe4 [15...Nd5 16. Qa3] 16. f3 Qd5



analysis

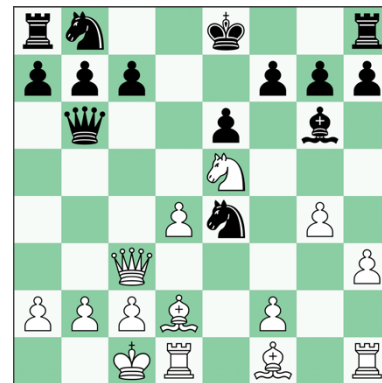
17. Qa3!? Now white has two ideas that, taken together, are close to winning: to trap the bishop with c4,

and to continue the kingside pawnstorm, possibly starting with h6.

12. Qxc3 Nc6!?

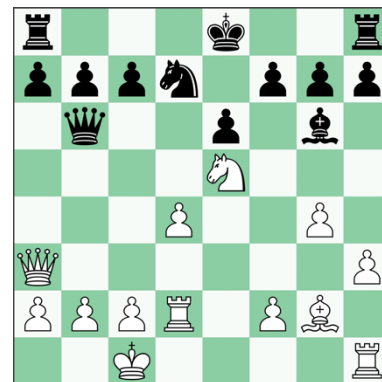
(1) If black goes 12...Nbd7, white can just take on g6 and get two good bishops against two very unfortunate knights: 13. Nxc6 hxc6 14. Qg2.

(2) 12...Ne4 is another option.



analysis

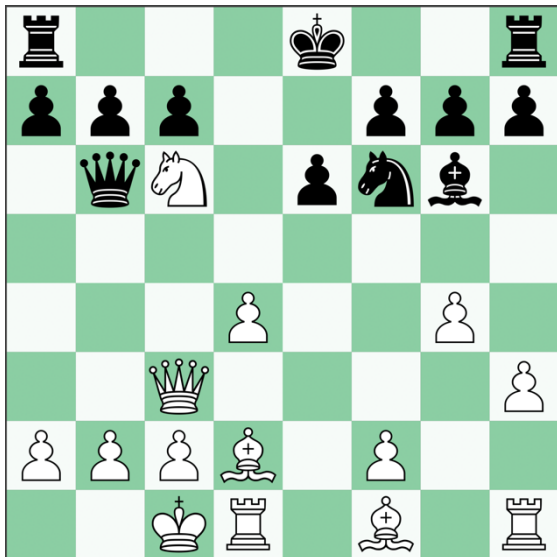
13. Qa3! Nxd2 [13...Nxf2? 14. Qa5! Qd6 15. Qb4 Qd5 16. Qc4 gives white a massive initiative] 14. Qxd2 Nc6 15. Qg2!?



analysis

Now 15...Nxe5 looks best for black, but after 16. dxe5 Qd8 17. Rhd1 Qxd2 18. Qxd2 the obvious space advantage makes things very pleasant for white.

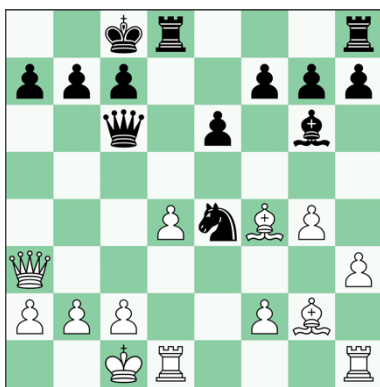
13. Nxc6



► 13

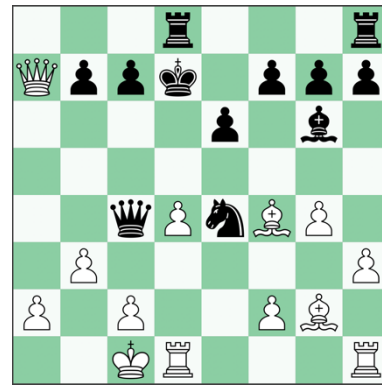
13... ♔xc6

(1) At club level, I suspect most of your opponents will fail to spot the *zwischenzug* 13... ♞e4! 14. ♔a3!? (discouraging queenside castling) ♔xc6 15. ♞g2 0-0-0 16. ♞f4!?



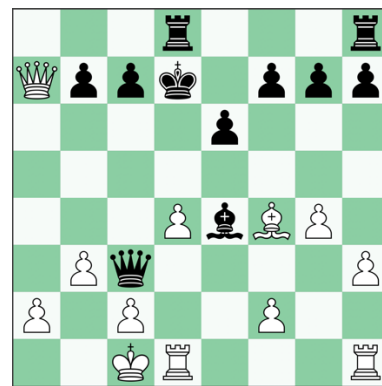
analysis

Now if black defends poorly with 16... ♔b8? or 16... a6?! white will play 17. ♞he1, followed by ♞d3-c3. The computer-approved move 16... ♔c4! is much better, but after 17. ♔xa7 ♔d7 18. b3!? black is not even close to equality.



analysis

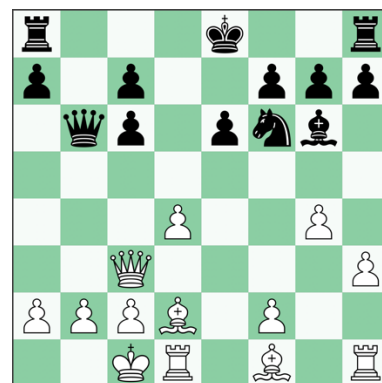
18... ♔c3! [18... ♔c6 19. d5! exd5 20. ♞xd5+! ♔xd5 21. ♞d1] 19. ♞xe4 ♞xe4.



analysis

20. ♔c5! ♔xc5! 21. dxc5+ ♔c6 22. ♞hg1 ♞xd1+ 23. ♞xd1. For the time being, at least, white is a pawn up, and will have chances to win in the endgame.

(2) The other recapture appears to be worse: 13... bxc6?!

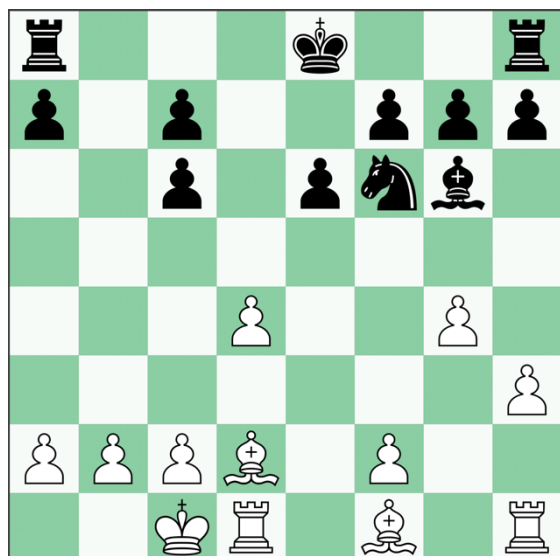


analysis

14. ♞g2!? ♞e4!? [on 14... ♞d5?! white has 15. ♔a3!, hoping for 15... ♔xd4 16. ♞xd5 ♔xd5! 17. f4!

with the idea of f5] 15. ♖xe4 ♖xe4
16. ♜he1, and white has a small but
stable advantage.

14. ♙xc6+ bxc6

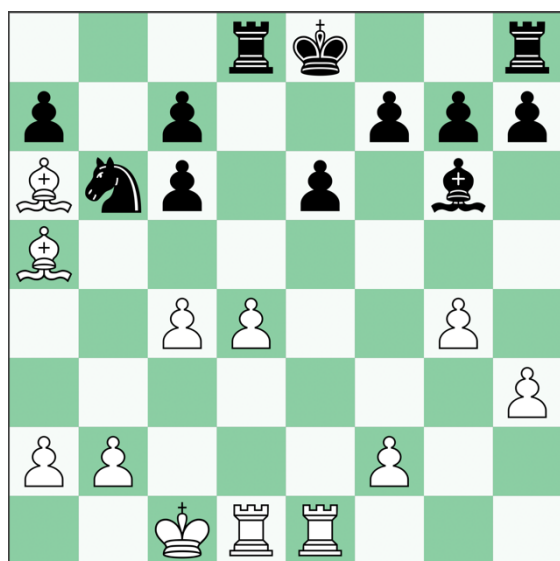


► 15

15. ♖a6!? ♜d8 16. ♖a5!? ♞d5

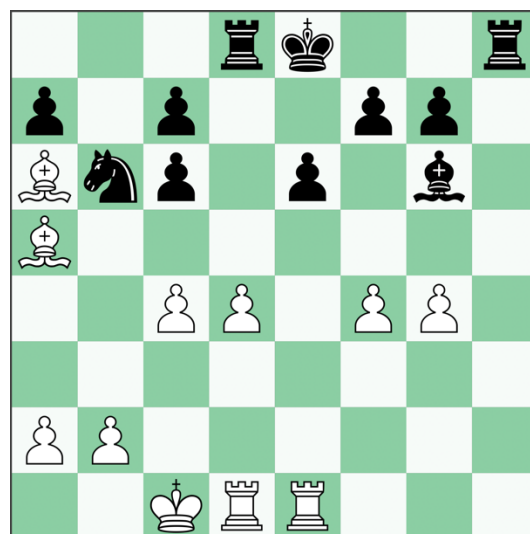
Black could also try 16...♔d7!? or
16...♞e4 17. ♜hf1 ♔d7, but the
king just looks wrong on d7.

17. c4 ♞b6 18. ♜he1!?



► 18

18...h5 19. f4 hxg4 20. hxg4



► 20

20...♔f8

Black can't play 20...0-0, because of
21. ♖b4 ♜fe8 22. ♖b7 ♜b8 23.
♖xc6 ♜ec8 24. ♖c3 ♞xc4 25. d5
exd5 26. f5.

21. b3!?

White has a clear advantage. Note
that black cannot try 21...♜h4??
because of 22. ♖b4+, when
22...♔e8 23. f5 or 22...♔g8 23.
♖e7 will be decisive.

Summary

Remember to punish 9...♖b4 and
9...c6 with 10. h4, when black can't
try to hide his bishop on h7 because
you will take it, isolating his e-pawn.
9...♞bd7 is met with 10. ♞c4 ♙a6
11. h4. The main line, 9...♙b6, is
trickier, but after 10. ♙f3 ♖b4 11.
0-0-0 ♖xc3 12. ♙xc3 you will have a
fine position.

The ideas behind the Jobava-Prié attack

D 00

Part 4: 3...e6

Tim Spanton

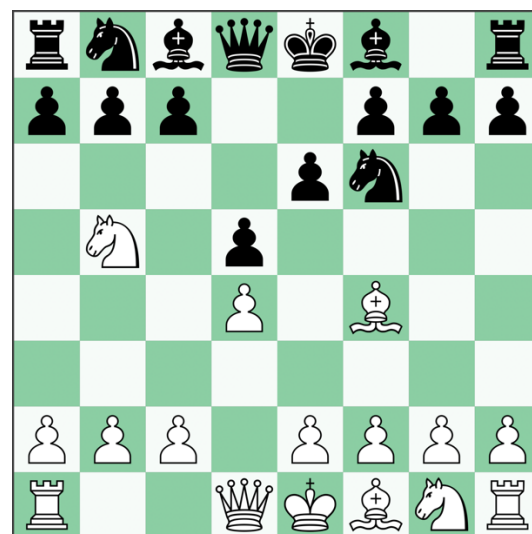
Black's most-popular response after 1. d4 d5 2. ♘c3 ♘f6 3. ♙f4 is to open a diagonal for his dark-square bishop with 3...e6.

White usually continues 4. e3, but in terms of percentage his most-successful move in ChessBase's 2020 Mega database is 4. ♘b5, trying to take immediate advantage of black's failure to cover the b5 square.

After 4. e3 the black reply 4...c5?! scores well, but it is dubious if white plays the thematic 5. ♘b5, when the forced move 5...♘a6 covers the c7 square, but leaves black in a quandary over how to get rid of the pesky knight on b5.

It is much more common for black to develop his dark-squared bishop, with 4...♙d6 being narrowly more popular than 4...♙b4 according to the ChessBase 2020 Mega database.

1. d4 d5 2. ♘c3 ♘f6 3. ♙f4 e6
4. ♘b5



► 4

4...♘a6

(1) Overwhelmingly most popular, but *Komodo 10* very marginally prefers 4...♙d6!? 5. ♘xd6 cxd6, when black argues his central pawn-majority and half-open c-file balance white's bishop-pair.

S. Tologontegin – J. Catalino Sadorra, Asian Indoor Games 2017, continued 6. e3 ♘c6 7. ♘f3 0-0 8. ♙e2 ♙e7 9. 0-0 e5 10. ♙g5!? ♙f5 11. c3, when *Komodo 10* and *Stockfish 10* suggest 11...♚fd8 [Catalino Sadorra played 11...♙e4] with a reasonable game for black.

(2) 4...♙b4+ is also possible, when B. Jobava – B. Gelfand, Eurasian Blitz Cup 2016 saw 5. c3 ♙a5 6. a4 a6 7. b4 axb5 8. axb5 b6?! [8...♙d7!? worked out well in M. Duggan – T. Spanton, England 2019, which then continued 9. bxa5?! (9. e3 seems better) ♙xb5 10. ♙b3 c6, when

white's a-pawn proved to be a major weakness and ultimately cost him the game] 9. bxa5 bxa5 10. e3. Now black's a-pawn was a major weakness.

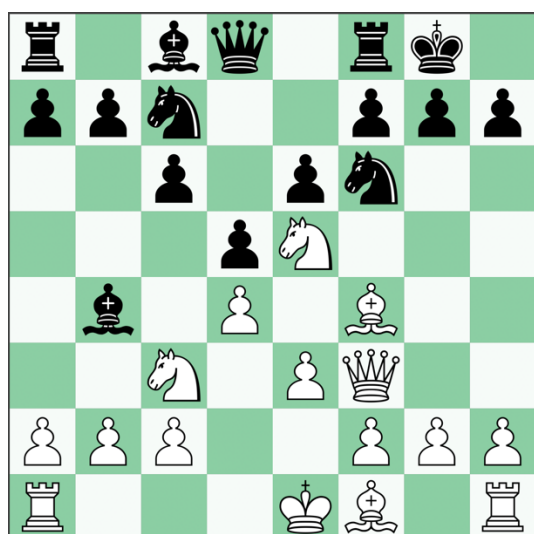
5. e3 c6 6. ♘c3 ♘c7 7. ♘f3 ♙d6 8. ♘e5 0-0 9. ♔f3!?

The Belarusian GM Vladislav Kovalev preferred the normal 9. ♙d3 in wins against strong opposition in 2015 and 2016.

9... ♙b4!?

In this section we are following the game B. Jobava –V. Anand, Riyadh (World Blitz Championship) 2017.

Previous high-level games had seen 9...c5 and 9...♘b5?! Anand's novelty seeks to take advantage of white's somewhat denuded queenside.



▷10

10. ♙d3

(1) Trying to save the b-pawn by attacking the black dark-squared bishop with 10. a3? only makes matters worse, for example 10... ♙xc3+ 11. bxc3 ♘e4.

(2) 10. ♘d3? ♙xc3+ 11. bxc3 ♘b5.

(3) 10. ♙g5!? is possible, but all of the engines prefer the text.

10... ♘b5

This move works, now that the c3 knight is pinned.

11. 0-0!?

White can only save the pawn with 11. ♙xb5 cxb5 12. ♙g5, with an unclear position after 12... ♙e7.

11... ♘xc3 12. bxc3 ♙xc3 13. ♖ab1

White's lead in development gives him full compensation for the pawn, according to the engines. That makes it a difficult position for black to play at a blitz time-control, but Anand is a speed specialist.

13... ♘d7 14. ♔g3

There is no mate (or even a perpetual check) after 14. ♙xh7+?? ♔xh7 15. ♖h5+ ♔g8, for example 16. ♖b3 ♘xe5 17. ♙xe5 f6 18. ♖xc3 fxe5 19. e4 exd4 20. ♖h3 dxe4 etc.

14... ♘xe5 15. ♙xe5 f6 16. ♙d6 ♖f7 17. ♖b3 ♙a5 18. e4?!

The engines reckon white still has decent compensation for his material deficit after 18. c4 ♙c7 19. ♙xc7 ♖xc7 20. ♖f3, although they are starting to favour black.

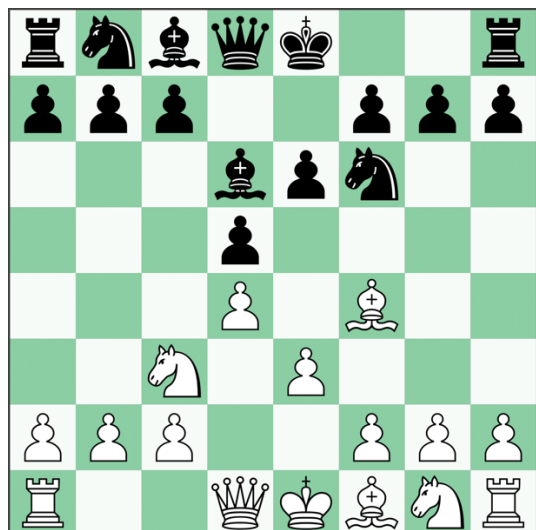
18... ♙c7 19. ♙xc7 ♖xc7 20. e5 c5 21. ♙xh7+??

Seeing his compensation ebbing away, white gets desperate (or simply miscalculates). 21. ♖h4 keeps the game going.

21... ♖xh7 22. ♔h4+ ♕g8 23. ♖h3
 ♕f8 24. ♔h8+ ♕e7

Black won in 33 moves.

1. d4 d5 2. ♘c3 ♘f6 3. ♙f4 e6
 4. e3 ♙d6



▷5

5. ♘f3

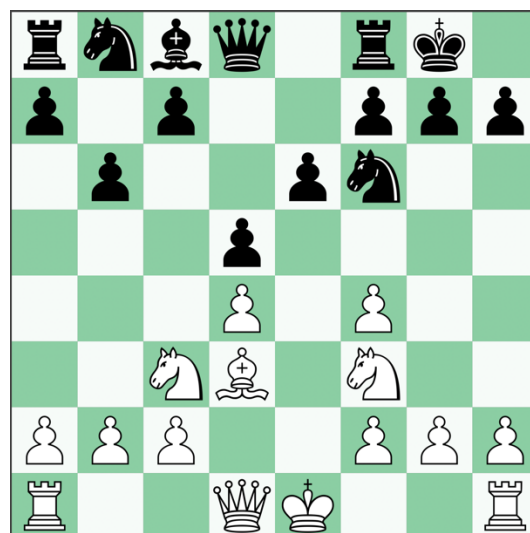
This is the main line. White saves a tempo on moving the dark-squared bishop and is unconcerned about contracting doubled f-pawns – the continuation will show why.

5... ♙xf4 6. exf4 0-0

6... ♔d6 can be met by 7. ♘e5, which is where the white king's knight likely wants to go at some point anyway.

7. ♙d3 b6!?

7...c5 is slightly more popular, but playing to swap off black's bad bishop seems logical.



▷8

8. ♘e2!?

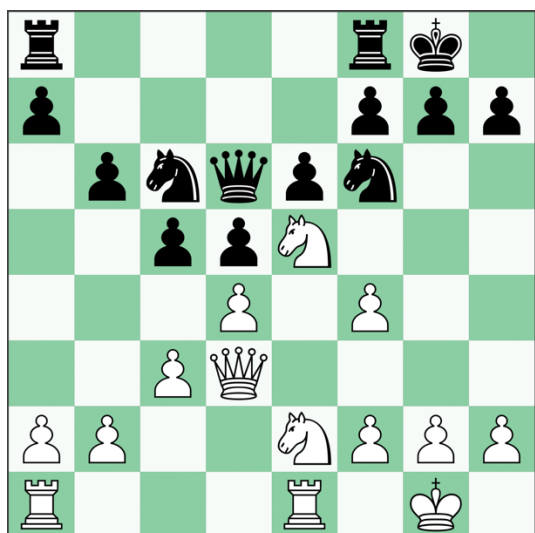
Komodo 10's choice. I presume the idea is that white hopes to attack on the kingside, and may castle long if the right conditions arise. 8. ♔e2 prevents an immediate ... ♙a6, but *Komodo 10* and *Stockfish 10* reckon black is fine after a line such as 8...c5 9. b3 ♔c7 10. ♔e5 ♔e7. It may well be that 8...a5!? is also reasonable, although the engines slightly prefer white after 9. 0-0 ♙a6 10. ♙xa6 ♘xa6 11. ♘e5.

8... ♙a6 9. ♘e5 c5

White's light-squared bishop cannot avoid a swap.

10. c3 ♙xd3 11. ♔xd3 ♔d6 12. 0-0 ♘c6 13. ♖fe1

White's game is a little freer, but black can engineer some queenside counterplay before the situation gets serious on the kingside, where the f4 pawn gives white more space.



► 13

13... ♖ac8! 14. ♖ad1 ♜fe8 15. h3 cxd4 16. ♞xd4!?

This comes to be the engines' top choice, but not by much.

16... ♞xd4 17. ♚xd4

White avoids 17. cxd4?!, which gives him an isolated d-pawn and opens the c-file, where black already has a rook.

17... ♚c5 18. g4 ♜e7 19. a4

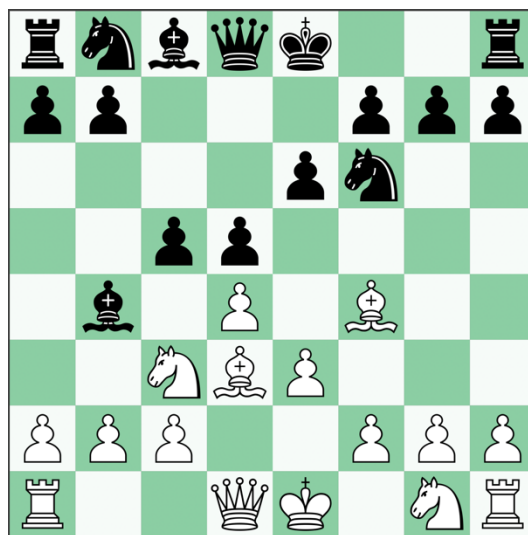
½:½ E. Córdoba – A. Kovalyov, San Salvador (American Continental) 2016.

This game suggests that if black knows what he is doing, white cannot expect much from allowing a swap on f4. Perhaps 5. ♙g3 is the way to go, as 5... ♙xg3!? 6. hxg3 gives white a half-open h-file, and promotes his h-pawn that covers one square (g3) to a g-pawn that covers two squares (h4 and f4).

1. d4 d5 2. ♞c3 ♞f6 3. ♙f4 e6 4. e3 ♙b4

The pin of the c3 knight with ... ♙b4 is common in the Veresov, but here it can be even more effective as there is no white bishop pinning the f6 knight, which might be able to drop into e4. One point of the line is that black can play a quick ...c5 without worrying about a white knight landing on b5 and attacking the c7 square.

5. ♙d3 c5



► 6

6. dxc5

White should be careful. 6. a3? lost a pawn in Zeng Chongsheng – Zhou Jianchao, Chinese Championship 2016 after 6... ♙xc3+ 7. bxc3 ♚a5, as 8. ♚d2? runs into 8...c4 and 9... ♞e4.

6... ♞bd7

Black wishes to capture on c5 with this knight and so prolong the pin on the white c3 knight. We are following B. Jobava – O. Korneev, Sochi (Tseshkovsky Memorial) 2014.

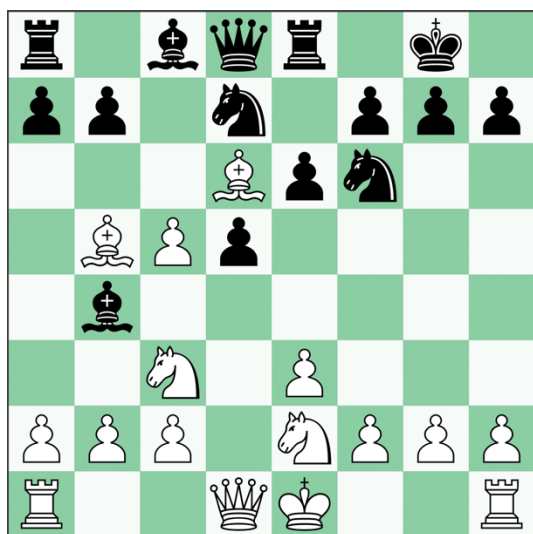
7. ♖e2

This scores much better in the ChessBase 2020 Mega database than the equally popular 7. ♘f3.

7...0-0!? 8. ♙d6!?

White makes it as difficult as possible for black to regain the pawn.

8... ♖e8 9. ♙b5



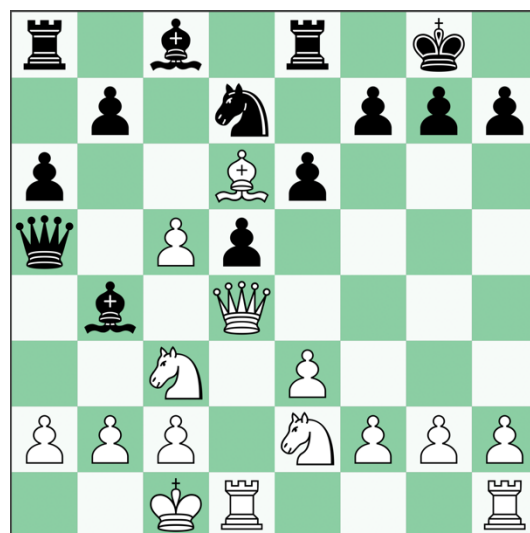
►9

9...a6

Stockfish 10 and *Komodo 10* suggest sacrificing the exchange with 9...b6!? 10. ♙c6 ♙a6 11. ♙xa8 ♙xa8. After the further moves 12. 0-0 bxc5 13. ♙g3 e5, black has more space and the bishop-pair, but I suspect most humans would rather have the white pieces.

10. ♙xd7 ♘xd7 11. ♙d4 ♙a5 12. 0-0-0!?

This gives the impression of castling into it, but may be OK. Instead, L.O. Hauge – D. Kollars, Pro League (rapid) 2019 saw 12. 0-0 ♙xc5 13. ♙xc5 ♙xc5 and a draw in 79 moves.



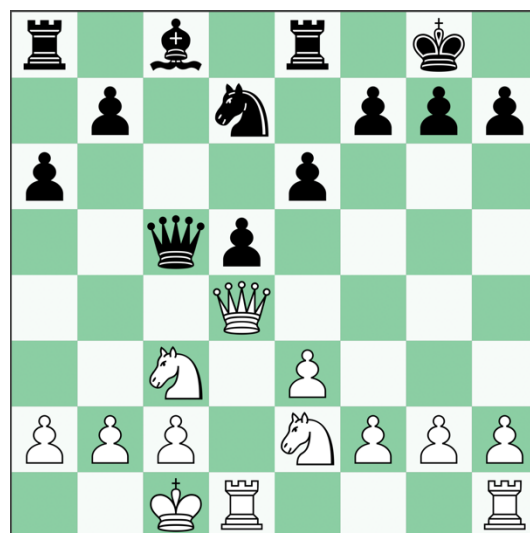
►12

12... ♙xc5!?

(1) Black is at least equal after 12...b6, e.g. 13. ♙c7 ♙xc5 14. ♙a4 ♙xa4 15. ♘xa4 ♖a7 16. ♘xc5 ♖xc7.

(2) The consistent 12... ♘xc5 also looks fine, as 13. a3? is met by 13... ♘b3+ 14. cxb3 ♙xd6.

13. ♙xc5 ♙xc5



►14

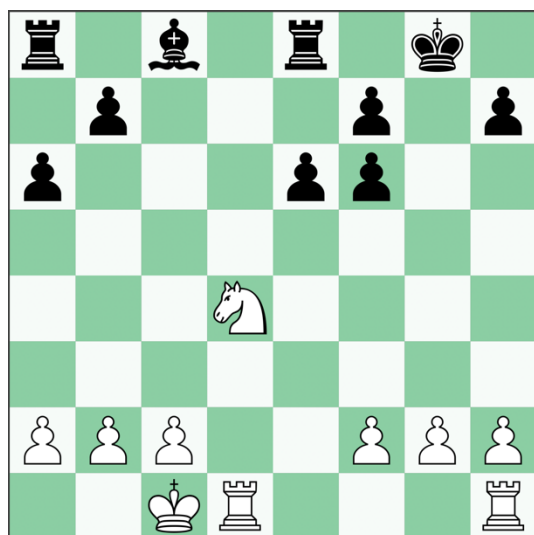
14. e4!

White gets an initiative.

14... ♖xd4 15. ♘xd4 dxe4 16. ♘xe4

The position is simplified, but white has a handy lead in development.

16... ♘f6 17. ♘xf6+ gxf6



▷ 18

18. ♘e2

Taking control of the d file.

18... e5 19. ♘c3 ♙e6 20. ♘d5 ♙xd5
21. ♖xd5 ♙g7 22. ♖hd1 ♖e6 23.
♖d7 b5 24. ♖1d6 ♖ae8 25. ♙d2 f5
26. b3 f4!?

This looks strange. Normal, but not necessarily better, is 26... ♙f6.

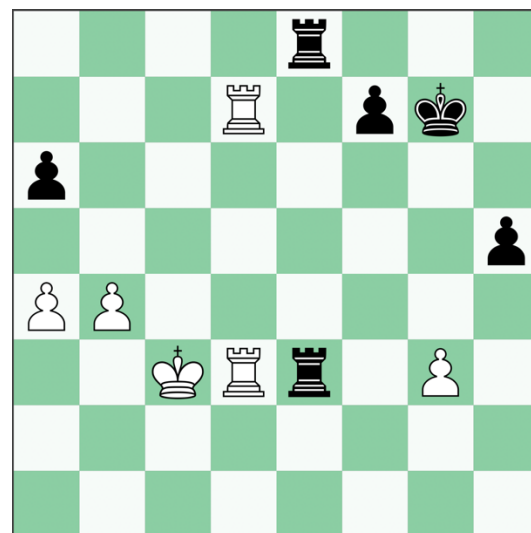
27. g3!?

Allowing black to undouble his pawns also seems odd, but the idea may be to make it more difficult for him to create a passed e pawn. White could have created a passed pawn of his own with 27. c4.

27... fxc3 28. hxc3 b4 29. c3 bxc3+
30. ♙xc3

White remains better. He has only two pawn islands and will find it much easier to create a passer.

30... h5 31. b4 e4 32. a4 e3 33. fxe3
♖xe3+ 34. ♖d3



► 34

34... ♖xd3+?!

The engines strongly prefer 34... ♖3e4, for example 35. ♙b3 ♖b8 36. ♖7d4 ♖e1 37. ♙b2 f5, when it is hard to see how white makes progress.

35. ♖xd3 ♖e6 36. b5 axb5 37. axb5
♖e4?

The engines' 37... ♙g6 is better. Now the b-pawn cannot be stopped.

38. b6 ♖e6 39. b7 ♖b6 40. ♖d7
♖b1

Or 40... ♙f6 41. ♙c4 ♙e6 42. ♙c5 ♖b1 43. ♖d6+ ♙e7 44. ♖b6 ♖c1+ 45. ♙d5 ♖d1+ 46. ♙e4 etc.

41. ♙c4 ♙g6 42. ♙c5 ♙g5 43.
♖xf7 ♙g4 44. ♖f4+ ♙xg3 45. ♖b4

1:0

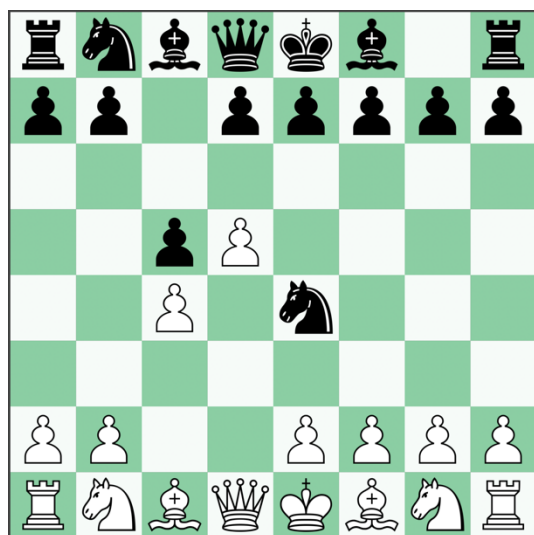
Der Geier

A 56

Derek Roebuck

I'm confident that you've never heard of this one:

1. d4 ♞f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 ♞e4!?



1

▷4

Der Geier ("the Vulture") is a creation of the very fertile brain of German FM Stefan Bücker,⁵ editor of the brilliant but sadly defunct periodical *Kaissiber*.

What benefits does 3...♞e4 offer? Black is relying on the move ...♚a5+ to create a problem for white: how best to interpose? The knight move practically dares white to play 4. f3!?,

⁵ Bücker S. *Der Geier*. Schach bei Franckh, 1986. This book also contains detailed analysis of 1. d4 c5 2. d5 ♞f6 3. ♞f3 c4 (*das*



Stefan Bücker (1959-)

but 4...♚a5+ 5. ♞d2 ♞d6, with the idea of ...g6, is playable for black. The rest of black's plan is basically to go for a Czech Benoni structure with ...e5 (see later). 3...♞e4 also facilitates a later ...f5. This is a precarious return on the investment of moving the same piece twice in the first three moves.

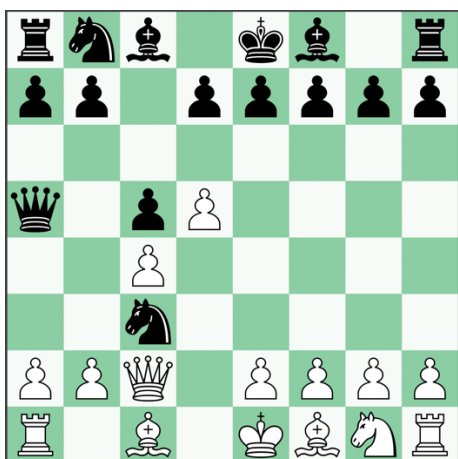
4. ♚c2

After 4. ♚d3!? Bücker's original idea was 4...♚a5+, but you could make a case for 4...♞f6!?, because on d3 the queen is arguably getting in the way of white's minor pieces.

4...♚a5+ 5. ♞c3 ♞xc3

Now we rely on a tactical trick:

Habichd) and 1. d4 c5 2. d5 ♞f6 3. ♞c3 ♚a5 (*das Wusel*). These two names don't really translate into English.



2

▷6

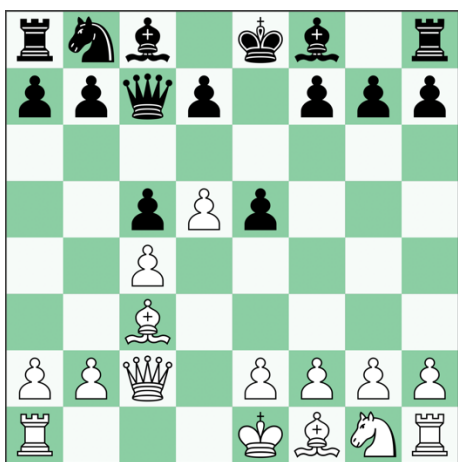
6. ♖d2!

This is necessary, because 6. bxc3 g6 is fine for black, and 6. ♙xc3 ♙xc3 7. bxc3 g6 even more so. Black will play ...d6, ...e5 and ...♙c7 in some order or other over the next few moves.

6...e5 7. ♖xc3!

7. dxe6?! leads to a symmetrical pawn structure with not much chance of a white advantage.

7...♙c7



3

▷8

Now 8. e4 would reach the expected Czech Benoni pawn structure. So let's

try something a little different. The black pawn on e5 is keeping the a1-h8 diagonal closed and covering its king on the e-file. Let's undermine it.

8. f4!? d6 9. ♘f3 ♘d7

9...exf4?! would be very brave. White will play e3, ♙d3, 0-0 and ♖ae1.

10. e3



4

▷10

10...g6

This is Bückers' move. *Stockfish 12* prefers to shore up e5 with 10...♙e7 11. ♙d3 ♙f6, but black's king is so vulnerable here that white can simply play 12. ♙xh7!?

11. 0-0-0 ♙g7 12. h4!

Now the engine suggests that black "castle into it" with 12...0-0, but not many humans will go for that. Bückers once played 12...♙d8 here, and even struggled to a draw after 13. h5!

Conclusion

By using a tactical trick (6. ♖d2!) as well as some forceful play, white can reveal the deficiencies of black's plan.

Games

Marco Gunawan

Marcus Simonds

Australia (David Ellis Cup) 2020

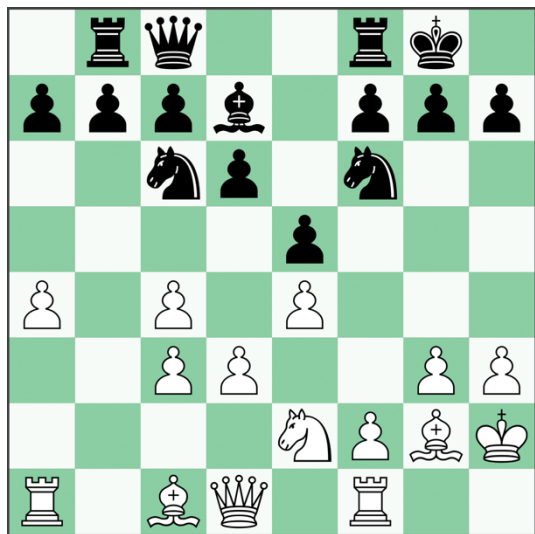
English opening (A 21)

[Kinsman, Roebuck]

1. c4 e5 2. ♘c3 ♙b4 3. g3 ♙xc3 4. bxc3 ♘c6 5. e4

5. ♙g2 is often played here. The exact move order is probably not important, unlike in most of the "open" games (after 1. e4 e5).

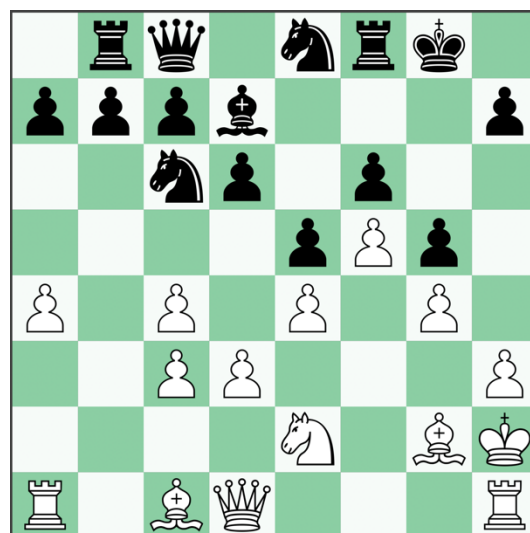
5... ♘f6 6. ♙g2 0-0 7. ♘e2 ♙e8 8. 0-0 d6 9. d3 ♙b8 10. h3 ♙d7 11. a4! ♙c8 12. ♙h2 ♙f8?!



▷13

After a relatively unexciting opening, black has let the position slip a little with his last three moves. White can take advantage of this with...

13. f4! ♘e8?! 14. f5! f6 15. g4 g5!? 16. ♙h1

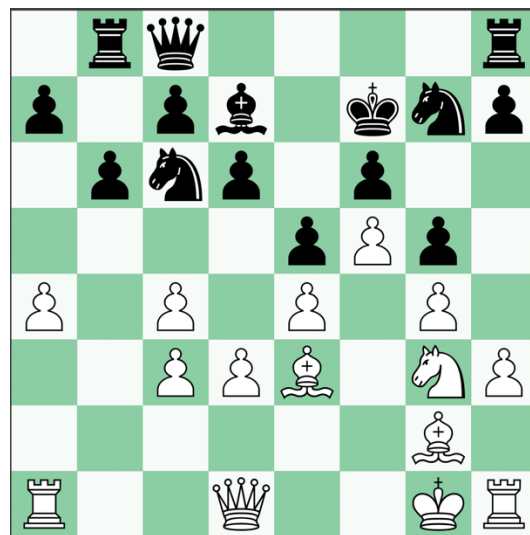


►16

16... ♘g7?!

The engine says black needs to play ...h6 and ...♘d8 here, but in any case he is clearly on the back foot.

17. ♙g1 ♙f7 18. ♙e3 ♙h8 19. ♘g3 b6



▷20

20. ♙d2?

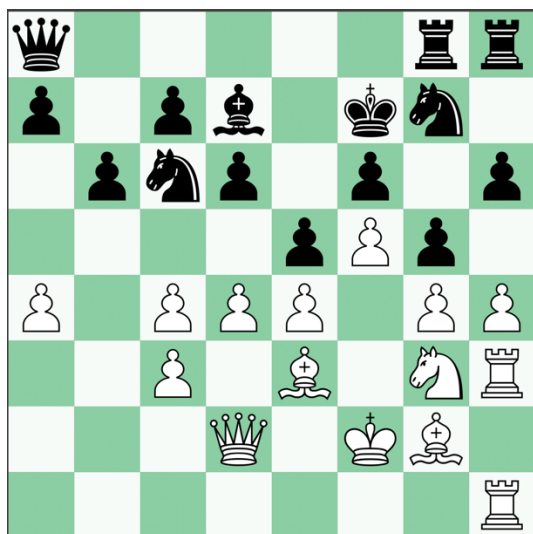
White had a chance to go for it immediately with 20. h4, or 20. d4!? followed by h4. He can get a second rook on the h-file by playing ♙f1,

♖a2 and ♖ah2, but 20. ♔d2 blocks this rook lift.

20...h6?

Perhaps counterintuitively, 20...h5!? is a better way to deal with the threat along the h-file.

21. h4 ♔d8 22. ♕f2 ♔e7 23. ♖h3 ♖bg8 24. ♖ah1 ♔d8 25. d4 ♔a8

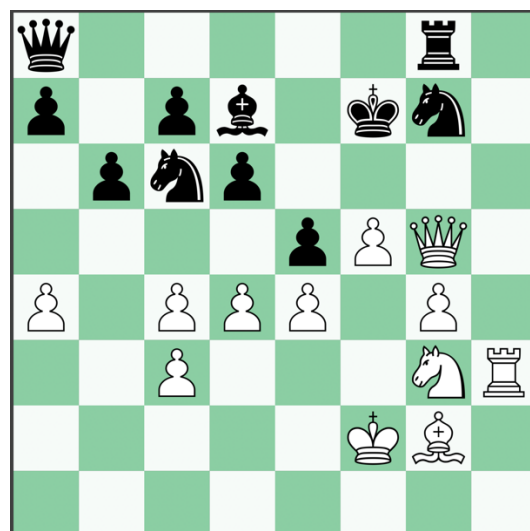


▷ 26

26. hxg5?!

White has played well, but now releases the tension unnecessarily. The engine move is 26. c5!, but the more human move 26. ♕f3!? is also winning, for example after 26...♔e7 27. hxg5 hxg5 [27...fxg5? 28. ♕xg5+ hxg5? 29. ♔xg5+ is terminal] 28. ♕xg5! ♖xh3 29. ♖xh3 ♖h8 30. ♕h4!, when black cannot prevent 31. g5 and all that will entail.

26...hxg5 27. ♕xg5 ♖xh3 28. ♖xh3 fxg5 29. ♔xg5

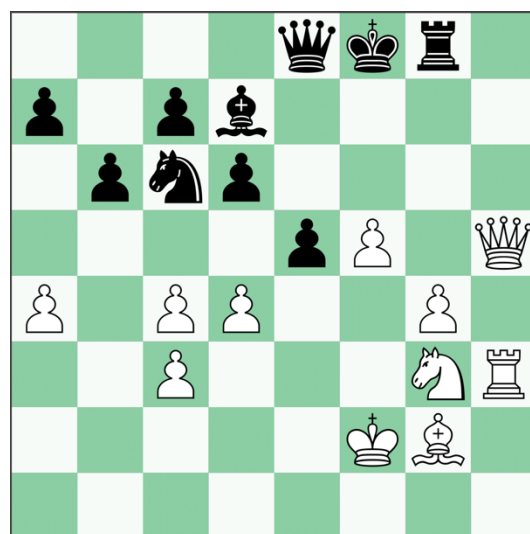


▶ 29

29...♘xf5? 30. ♔h5+

30. ♖h7+ is actually a forced mate after 30...♖g7 31. exf5 ♔f8 32. ♔g6+ ♔e7 33. ♖xg7+ or 30...♘g7 31. ♘f5! ♕xf5 32. exf5! (opening up access to d5 for his bishop) ♔e8 33. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 34. ♔xg7, when the black queen's position is extremely unfortunate.

30...♔f8 31. exf5 ♔e8



▷ 32

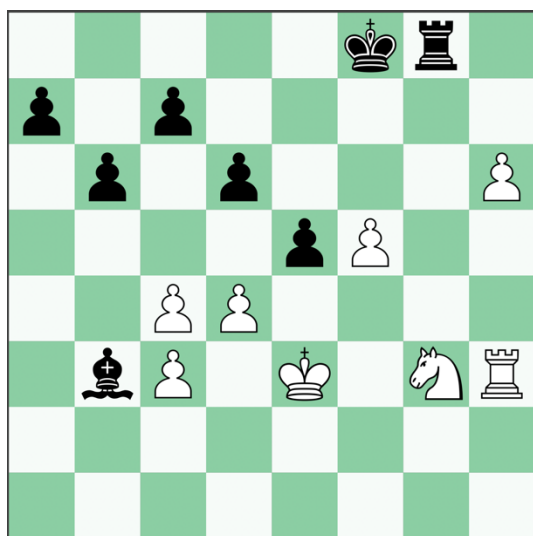
32. ♕xc6?

32. ♔h6+! is another forced mate.
One line would be 32...♔e7 33.
♔h4+! ♔f8 34. ♕d5 ♔e7 35. f6!

32...♔xh5 33. gxh5? ♕xc6 34. h6

The dust has cleared, and although white is still winning there are still plenty of ways to go wrong, as we will see very soon.

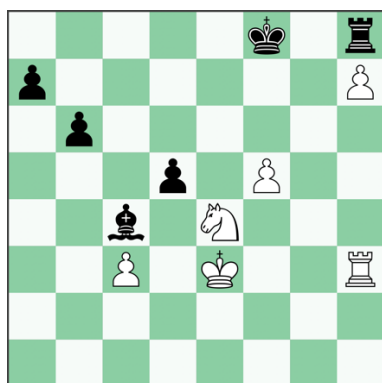
34...♕xa4?! 35. ♔e3 ♕b3



▷36

36. ♔d3?

Now black should be drawing.
Instead, white should play 36. dxe5!
♕xc4 [36...dxe5 37. ♔e4 ♕xc4 38.
♔xe5 a5 39. h7 ♔h8 40. ♕e4!?] 37.
exd6 cxd6 38. ♕e4 d5 39. h7 ♔h8.



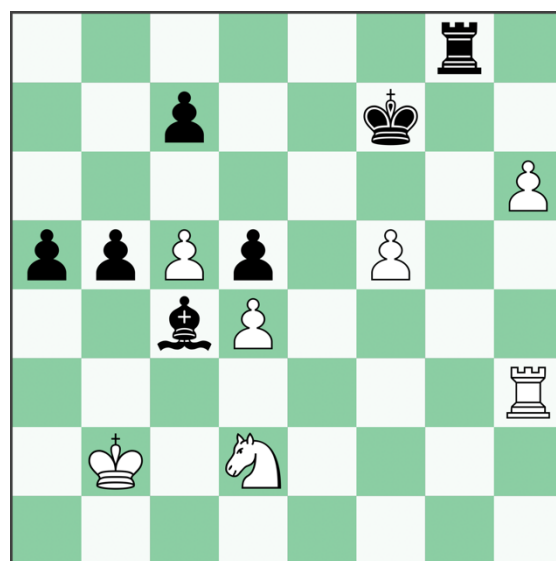
analysis

Now 40. ♕g5, followed by ♕e6+,
♔f4 and ♔h6 should be enough to
win for white, but this is still tricky,
despite the engine assessment of +9.

36...a5! 37. ♕e4 ♕a2?

37...a4! was better.

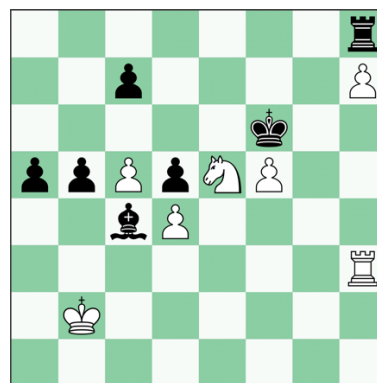
38. ♕d2 exd4 39. cxd4 d5 40. c5 b5?
41. ♔c3 ♔f7 42. ♔b2 ♕c4



▷43

43. ♕xc4?

White should be playing ♕f3-e5+
here, because after h7 and ... ♔h8
the threat of ♕f7 will be decisive, for
example 43. ♕f3 ♔h8 44. ♕e5+
♔f6 45. h7!



analysis

Now 45...♔xf5 46. ♘f7 and
45...♔g7 46. ♘d7 ♖xh7 47. f6+!
are both decisive.

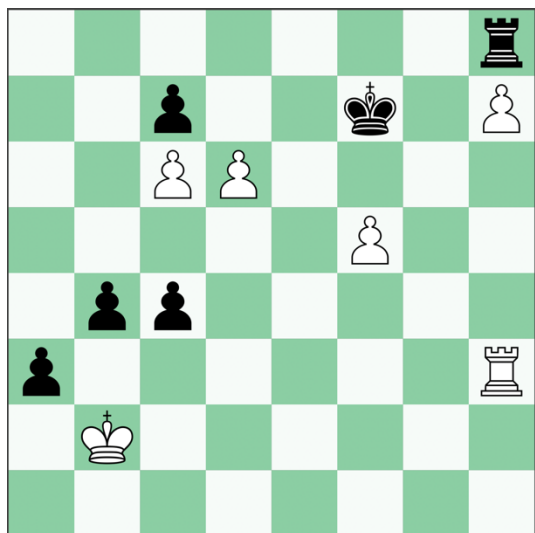
43...dxc4?

White gets lucky! There is no win
after 43...bxc4!! 44. ♔a3 ♔f6 45. h7
♖h8 46. ♔a4 [46. ♖h6+?? actually
loses] ♔xf5 47. ♔xa5 ♔e4 48. ♔b4
♔xd4, and white is rapidly running
out of pawns.

44. d5 b4 45. h7 ♖h8 46. c6!?

46. d6 also works.

46...a4 47. d6 a3+



▷48

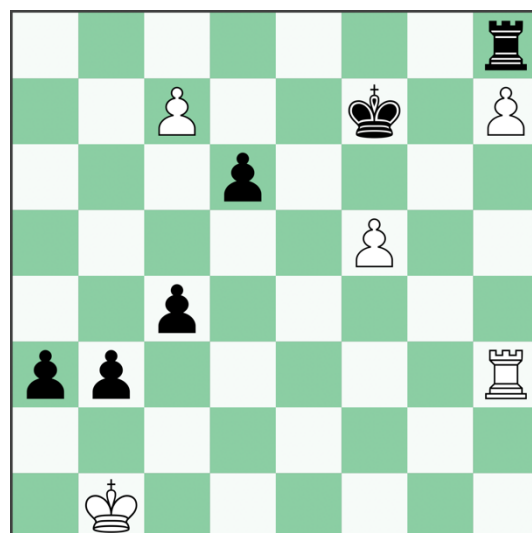
48. ♔b1?!

48. ♔a2! would prevent any further
advances. If black tries 48...c3 white
has 49. ♔b3, which gets the king
"between the pawns".

48...cxd6 49. c7??

Suddenly black is winning. White had
to acknowledge that mistake on the
previous move and play 49. ♔a2!

49...b3!

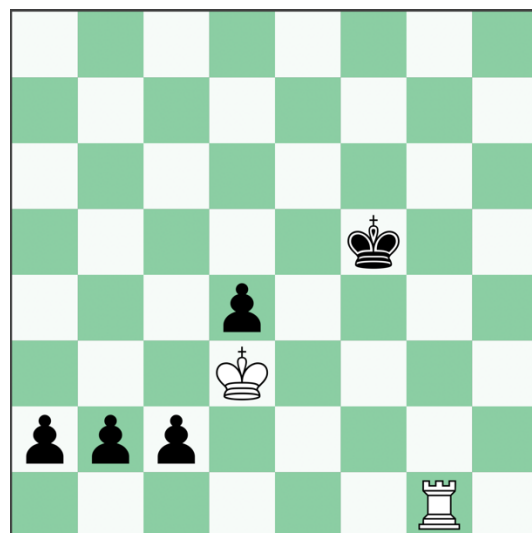


▷50

**50. c8 ♖xc8 51. h8 ♖xh8 52.
♖xh8 c3**

White can do nothing against the
connected passed pawns. If only he
had played 48. ♔a2!

**53. ♖c8 c2+ 54. ♔c1 ♔f6 55. ♖f8+
♔e5 56. ♖e8+ ♔xf5 57. ♖e1 d5
58. ♔d2 d4 59. ♔d3 a2 60. ♖g1 b2**



▷61

0:1

An amazing finish.

D. Sandler

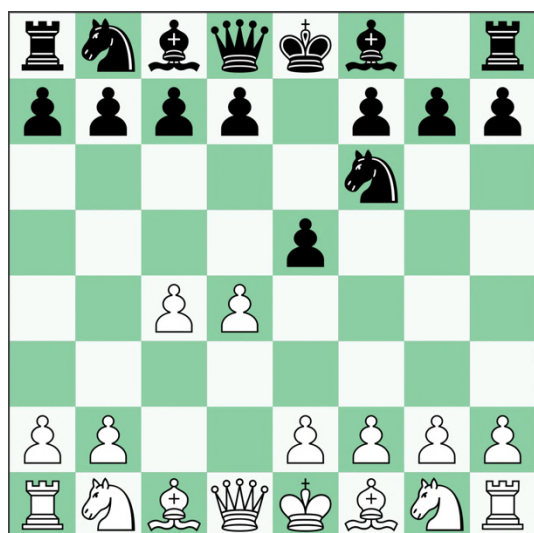
M. Scully

Australia (Doeberl Cup Minor) 2009

Budapest gambit declined (A 51)

[Roebuck]

1. d4 ♞f6 2. c4 e5



▷3

The Budapest gambit is better than it looks at first glance, but nevertheless white should accept the pawn offer.

3. d5?

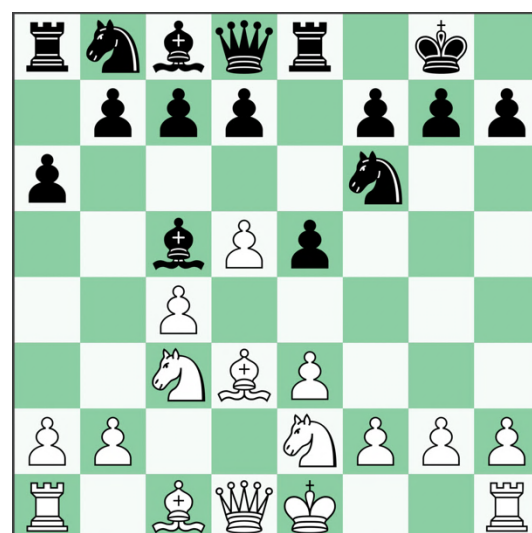
The second most common move after the obvious 3. dxe5!

3...a6?! 4. ♞c3 ♙c5 5. e3

Because black has played 4... ♙c5 and not 4... ♙b4, white has the option of 5. e4!? here.

5...0-0 6. ♙d3 ♖e8 7. ♞ge2

Obviously not 7. ♞f3?? e4.



►7

7...c6!?

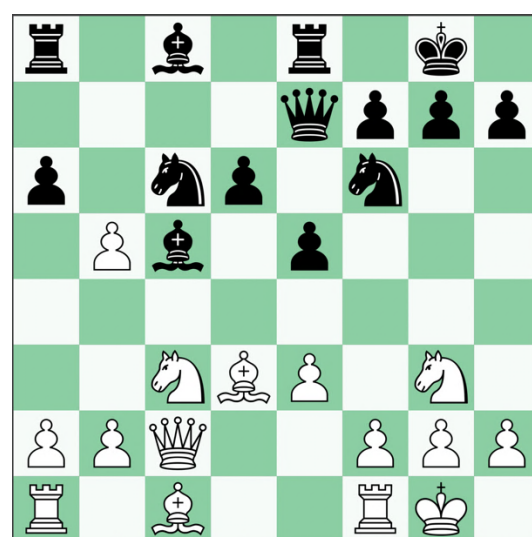
7...d6 would be the "conventional" move. Instead, black mixes things up.

8. 0-0 b5 9. ♙c2 ♙e7?!

9...bxc4, followed by ...a5 and ...d6, would have been better.

10. ♞g3 d6 11. dxc6? ♞xc6 12. cxb5

The engine thinks white can preserve a small edge with 12. a3!?

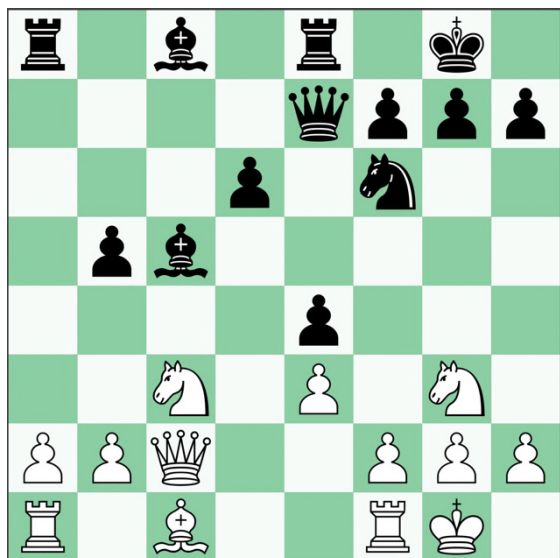


►12

12... ♖b4! 13. ♔e2 ♘xd3 14. ♔xd3 e4!? 15. ♔c2

15. ♔e2! was a reasonable option.

15...axb5

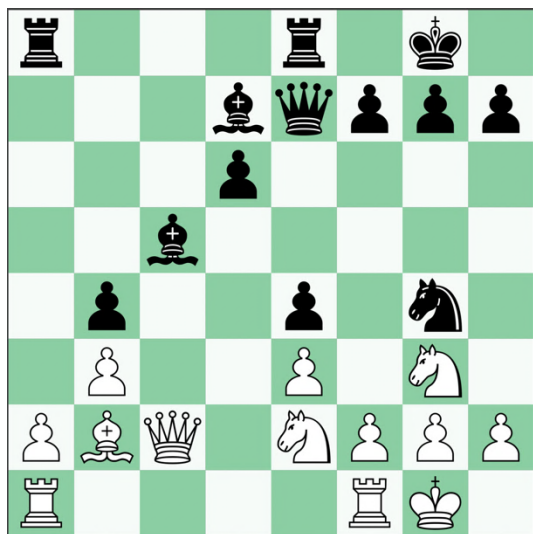


▷16

16. b3?!

16. b4 ♙xb4 17. ♙b2 is about equal, but now black could played 16...h5!

16... ♙d7?! 17. ♙b2 b4 18. ♘ce2 ♘g4?



▷19

19. ♘d4?

White could have played 19. h3! here, because 19... ♘e5 loses a pawn to 20. ♘xe4, and the other retreats allow 20. ♘f4, with a nice position.

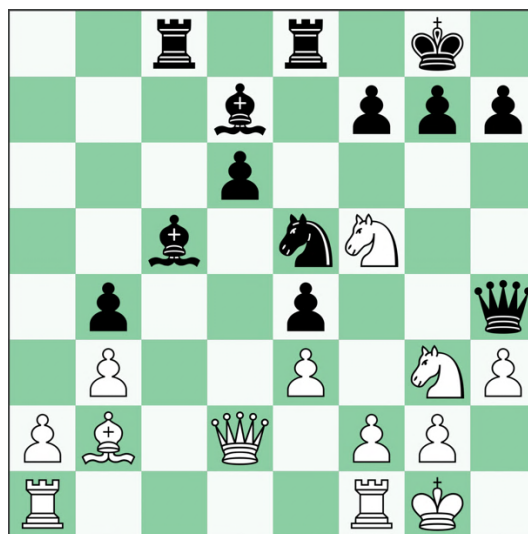
19... ♖ac8?

An unfortunate oversight. Black had a crushing attack here: 19... ♔h4! 20. h3 ♘xe3 21. fxe3 ♔xg3, and the threat of ... ♙xh3 pretty much forces 22. ♔f2, when black can exchange queens and then double rooks on the a-file to target the weak a2-pawn.

20. ♔d2 ♔h4

Better late than never.

21. h3 ♘e5! 22. ♘df5?



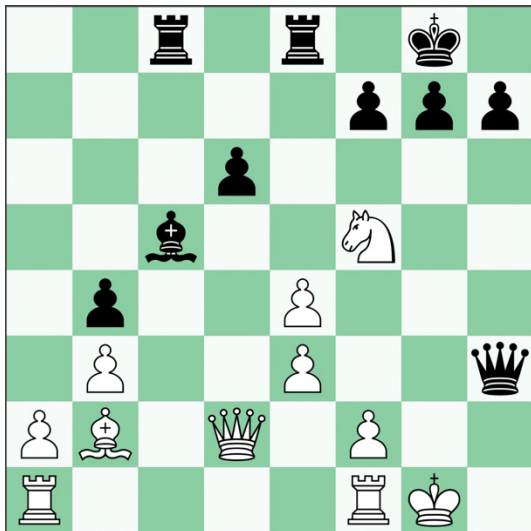
►22

22... ♘f3+!

22... ♙xf5 23. ♘xf5 ♘f3+ is also winning.

23. gxf3 ♙xf5 24. ♘xf5 ♔xh3 25. fxe4

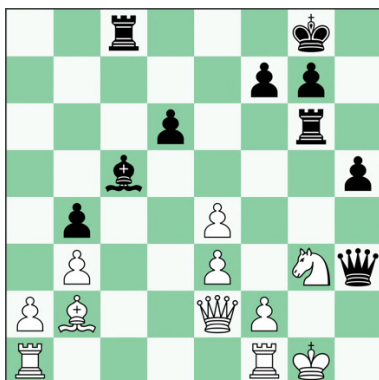
White obviously can't allow ...exf3.



► 25

25... ♖xe4?

Although it is difficult to calculate, black had a forced win with the rook lift 25... ♖e6!, for example 26. ♞g3 ♖g6 27. ♔e2 h5!

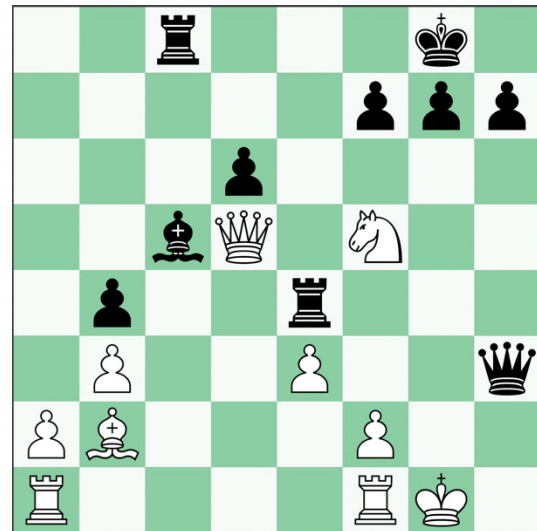


variation

Black is getting the piece back after ...h4, and will have a persistent attack on the white king.

26. ♔d5??

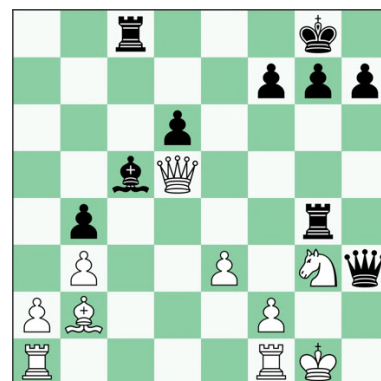
White had to play 26. f3! here, when black would probably have to settle for a draw after 26... ♖xe3 27. ♞xe3 ♘xe3+ 28. ♔xe3 ♔g3+ or possibly 26... ♔xf5 27. fxe4 ♔g5+.



► 26

26... ♖ce8?

Black actually had mate in nine moves here with 26... ♖g4+ 27. ♞g3.



variation

27... ♘xe3! [the other obvious try 27... ♖xg3+ is also an easy win] 28. ♔g2 ♖xg3 29. ♔xg3 ♔xg3+ 30. ♔h1, and black brings the other rook over to deliver checkmate.

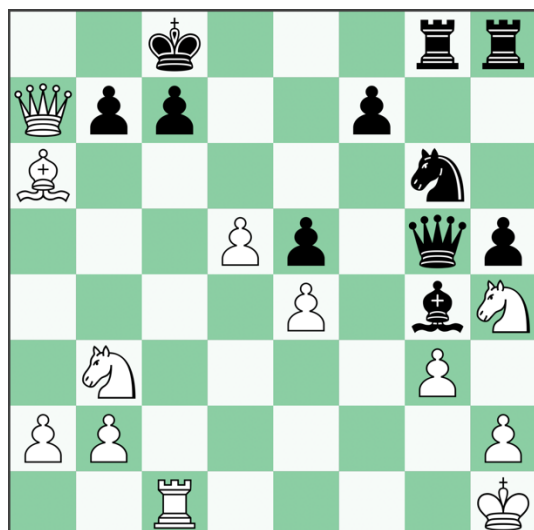
27. ♞g3?? ♖xe3! 28. ♞f5 ♖f3 29. ♖ae1 ♔g4+ 30. ♞g3 ♖xg3+

0:1

My best move

Harvey Lerman

United States of America (USCF 1957)



► 29

Denis Strenzwilk – Harvey Lerman
USA 1962

Black is hopelessly lost here, but has four minutes on the clock compared to white's one (with no increments or delays in those days). According to the engine black's best chance is to run to the kingside with 29...♔d8.

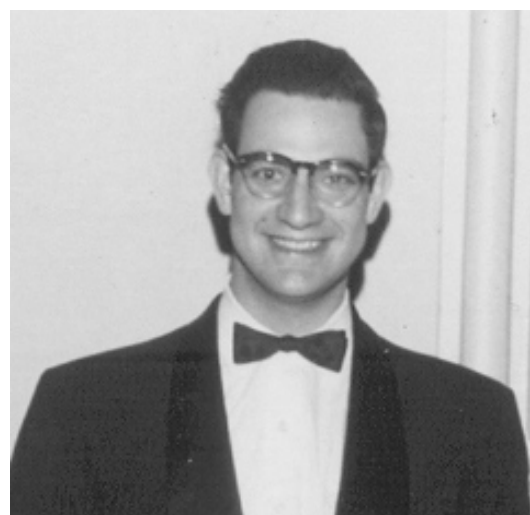
29...♘h4?

My best move was a blunder! White was scared and gave up his attack.

30. ♔xb7+?

30. ♔xb7+! ♔d8 31. ♖xc7! wins.

30...♔d8 31. ♔xc7+ ♔e8 32. ♔b8+ ♔e7 33. ♔b4+ ♔f6 34. ♔c5 ♔f3+ 35. ♔g1 ♔xe4 36. ♖f1+ ♔f3+ 37. ♔g2 ♔f4? 38. ♔e2? ♔d4+ 39. ♔g1? ♔xe2#



Harvey Lerman in 1959

When did you start playing chess?

My father taught me how to play when I was four years old.

When did you first join a club?

I started a club in high school and joined the Hartford Chess Club.

Do you have an especially memorable tournament?

I played in my first major tournament as a young man (the 1957 Connecticut State Championship). I won my game against the defending champion, and then was told that I would have to play another game in an hour and then more the following Sunday. My body rebelled against that and I gave up playing in major chess tournaments for the rest of my life.

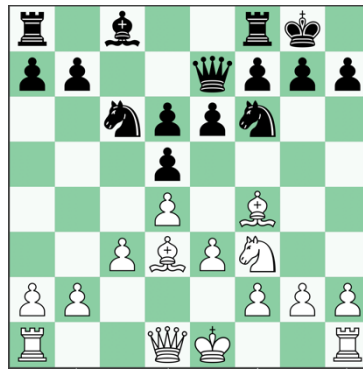
Do you study chess, and if so, what aspects?

I read the games in *Chess Life* and try to work out why the move made is so good!

Tactics

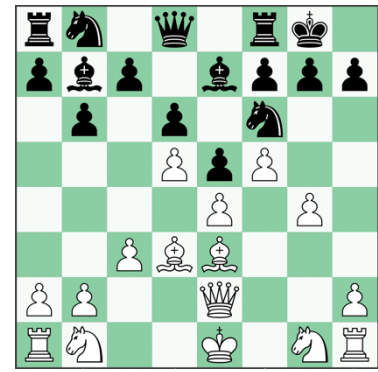
This issue's tactics are from this year's Bob Pilgrim Open at the Metropolitan CC in Perth, Australia.

Answers on page 207.



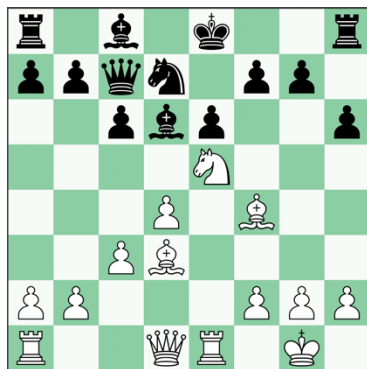
T4

►9



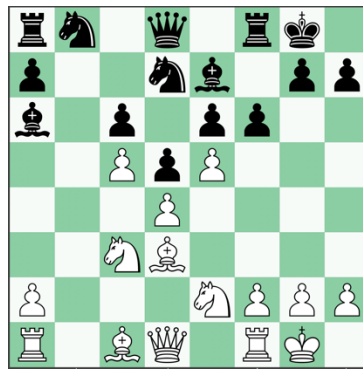
T8

►10



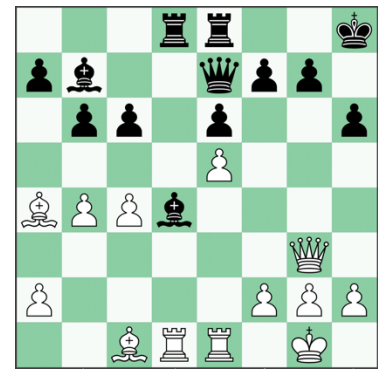
T1

►14



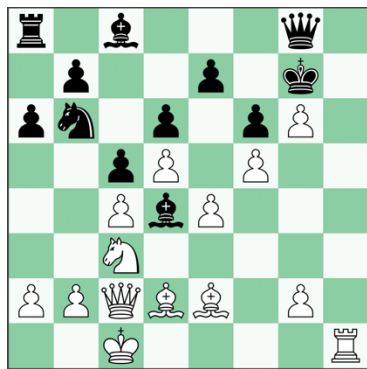
T5

►12



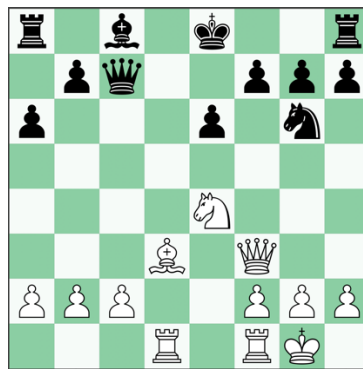
T9

►23



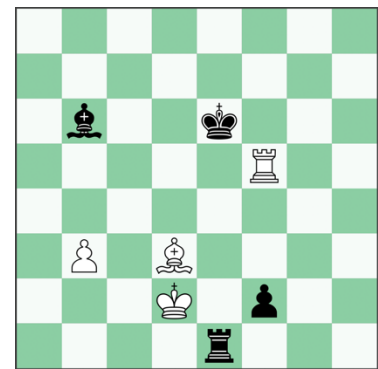
T2

►23



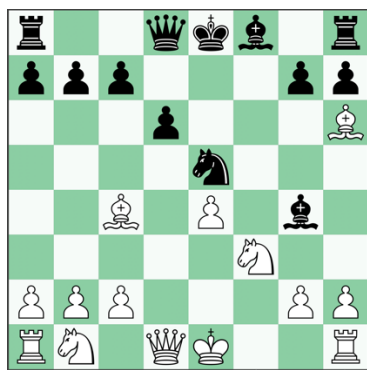
T6

►18



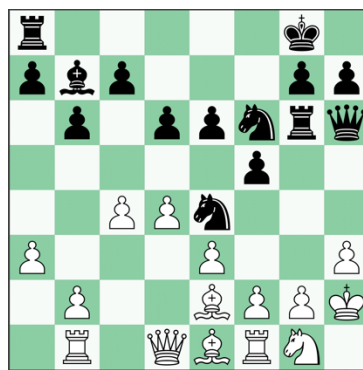
T10

►47



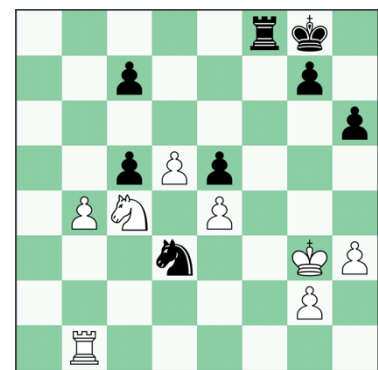
T3

►9



T7

►17



T11

►44

Rook versus two isolated or doubled pawns

♖ 0/d, ♜ 0/e

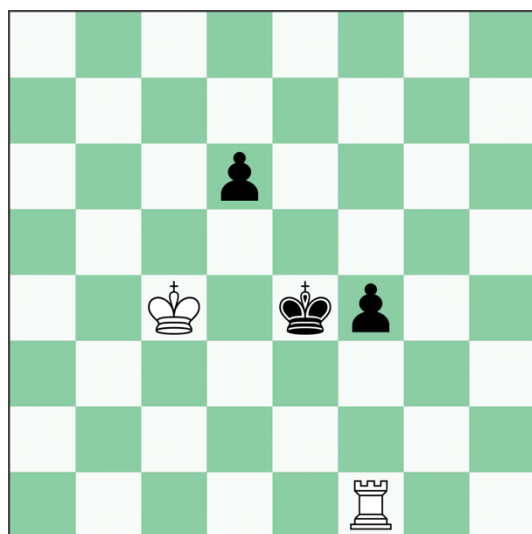
Derek Roebuck

Two isolated pawns

In general, the pawns can ultimately be captured. White will only have problems if the pawns are already far advanced, and at least one of them is supported by the black king.

Pawns separated by one file

In theory at least, the black king can support the advance of both pawns. Actually, play often resembles that seen in rook versus one pawn.



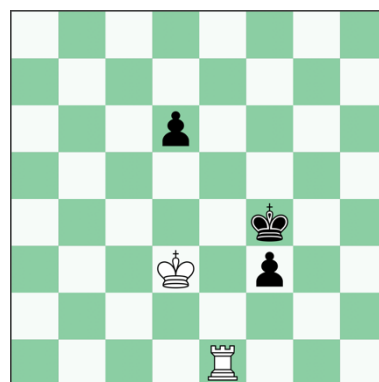
1

►57

The position in diagram 1 is from the game L. McShane – Z. Azmaiparashvili, Germany 2003.

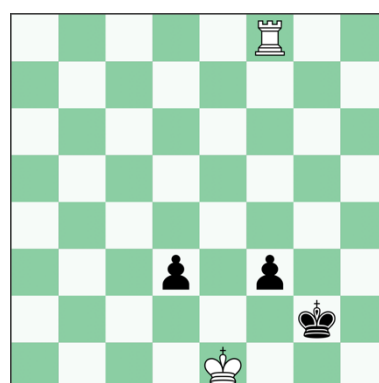
57...f3 58. ♔c3

58. ♜e1+ also draws, for example after 58...♔f4 59. ♔d3.



variation

(1) Now 59...♔g3? loses to 60. ♜g1+ ♔f2 61. ♜g8 d5 62. ♜f8 ♔g2 63. ♔d2! [not 63. ♔e3?? d4+!] d4 64. ♔e1 d3.



variation

65. ♜f7! Black is in zugzwang.

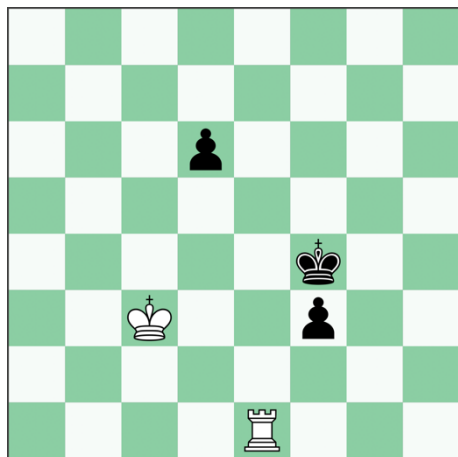
(2) 59...f2! is the right move. Now 60. ♜d1 and 60. ♜f1 can both be met by 60...♔f3, when white will have to give up the rook for black's f-pawn.

58...♔e3 59. ♜e1+ ♔f4!!

Black elegantly sidesteps 59...♔f2??, which loses to 60. ♜e6 [or 60. ♔d2] ♔g2 61. ♜g6+ ♔f1 62. ♔d2, when white has time to take the d-pawn

with the rook. Now white repeats moves:

60. ♖f1 ♔e3 61. ♖e1+ ♔f4



1a

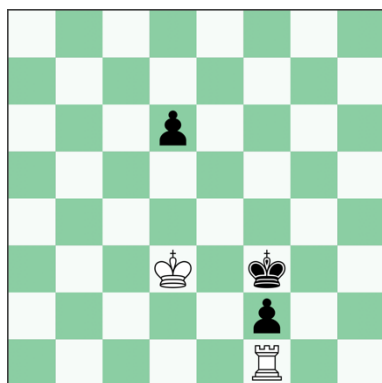
►62

62. ♔d2 f2!

62... ♔g3 loses to 63. ♖g1+, as we have already seen, or perhaps more simply to 63. ♔e3 ♔g2 64. ♖d1 f2 65. ♖d2.

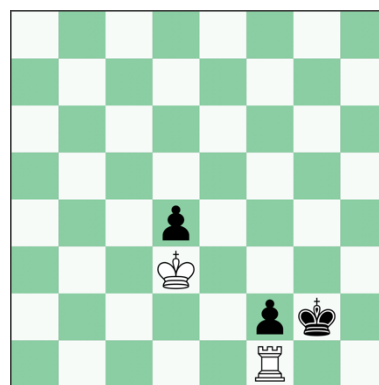
63. ♖e6

If white tries 63. ♖f1 ♔f3 64. ♔d3 we can clearly see the difference the second pawn makes.



variation

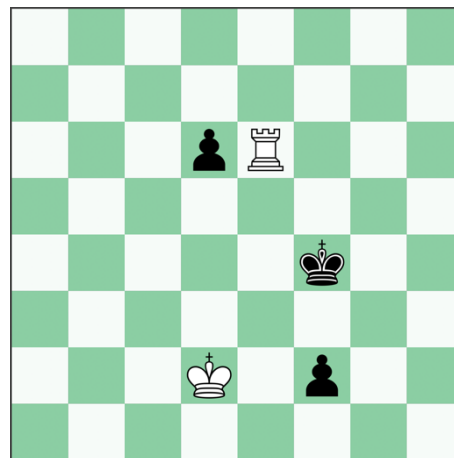
64...d5 65. ♔d2 d4 66. ♔d3 ♔g2.



variation

White has to take the draw with 67.

♖xf2+ or 67. ♖d1 f1 ♔+ 68. ♖xf1, because 67. ♔e2?? loses to 67...d3+.



1b

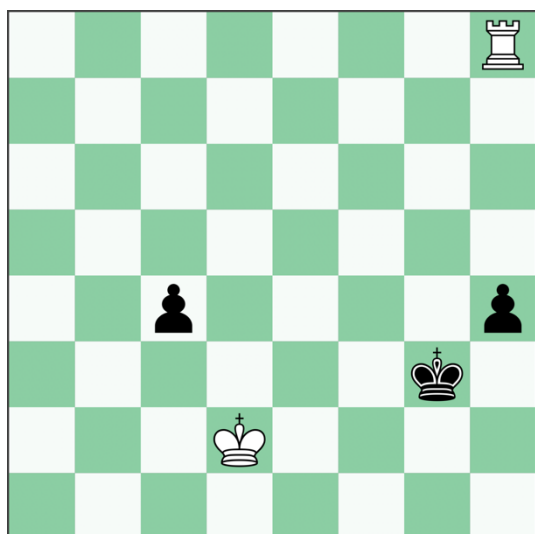
►63

Black avoids the threatened skewer on the f-file with:

63...f1 ♔+! 64. ♔d3 ♔g3 65. ♖xd6 ♔f5 66. ♖e6 ½:½

The main value to black of the second pawn is the possibility of a deflecting check if the white king approaches the more advanced pawn on the file between the pawns.

Widely-separated pawns



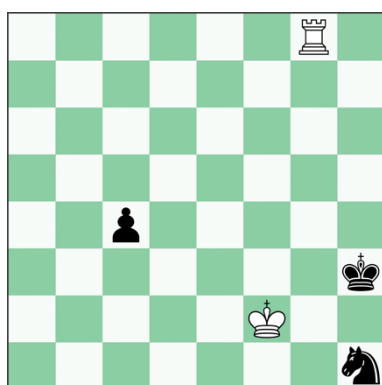
4

►54

Without the c-pawn, black would be one tempo short of drawing. The only useful function of the c-pawn is to distract the white king, and what better time than now?

54...c3+!

A. Goryachkina – K. Lagno, Kazan 2019 continued 54...h3? 55. ♔e3 h2 56. ♚g8+ ♔h3 57. ♔f2 h1♞+.



variation

Now after 58. ♔f3 ♔h2 59. ♚h8+ ♔g1 60. ♚c8 ♞f2 61. ♚xc4 ♞d3 62. ♔e3 ♞e5 63. ♚e4 white had

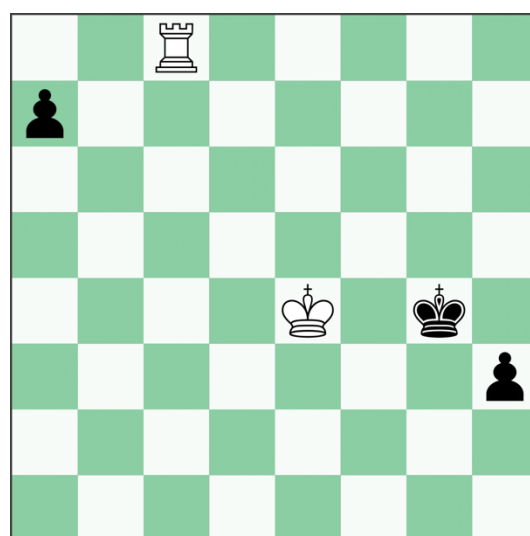
successfully separated the black king from its knight, and went on to win.

55. ♔xc3 h3 56. ♚g8+ ♔f3

Black has an easy draw.

a- and h-pawns

Black's only chance is to have a very advanced pawn, supported by the king.



5

►73

This position occurred in C. Sreeves – J.R. Adair, England (4NCL) 2018/19. Black's a-pawn is an irrelevance.

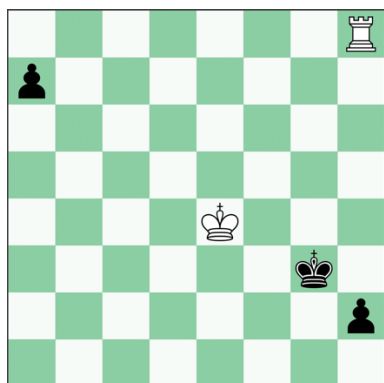
73...h2!

This is also the move if the a-pawn is removed. In the game black went wrong with 73...♔g3?, and lost after 74. ♔e3 ♔g2 75. ♚g8+ ♔f1 76. ♚h8 ♔g2 77. ♔e2 h2 78. ♚g8+ ♔h3 79. ♔f2 h1♞+. As we know from an earlier article,⁶ the knight in the corner is lost after 80. ♔f3.

⁶ **Patzer** 2021; 3(1): 34-38.

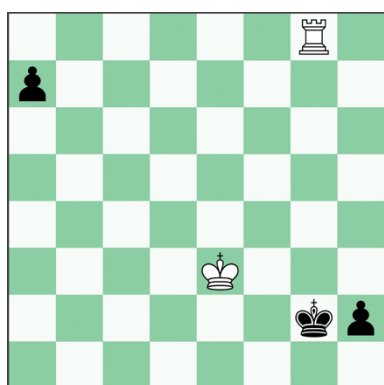
74. ♖g8+

This looks like the straightforward way to draw, but 74. ♖h8!? offers white the faint chance of a win after the forced reply 74...♔g3.



variation

75. ♔e3!? [now 75. ♖g8+ ♔h3 76. ♖h8+ is the same draw as the main line] ♔g2 76. ♖g8+.



variation

Now 76...♔f1! is the only draw.

74...♔h3 75. ♖h8+

75. ♔f4 is drawn after 75...h1 ♔ or 75...a6!?

75...♔g3

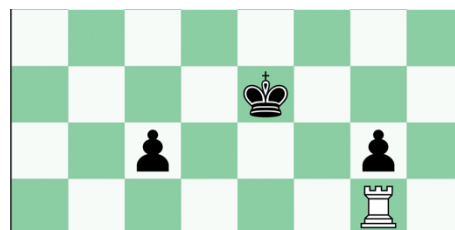
75...♔g2 is also drawn, and for the same reason.

75...♖g8+

Neither side can make progress.

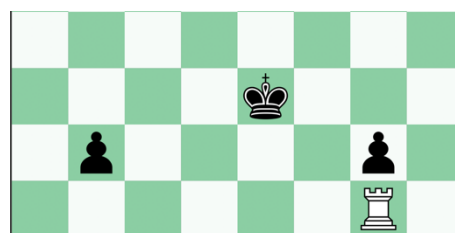
Both pawns on the seventh rank

This highly improbable configuration is only interesting if white's king is distant, and therefore unable to take any part in the proceedings.



6 ▷

In diagram 6 white has no defence to the threat of 1...♔f2 and 2...g1 ♔, because 1. ♖c1 is met with 1...♔d2.



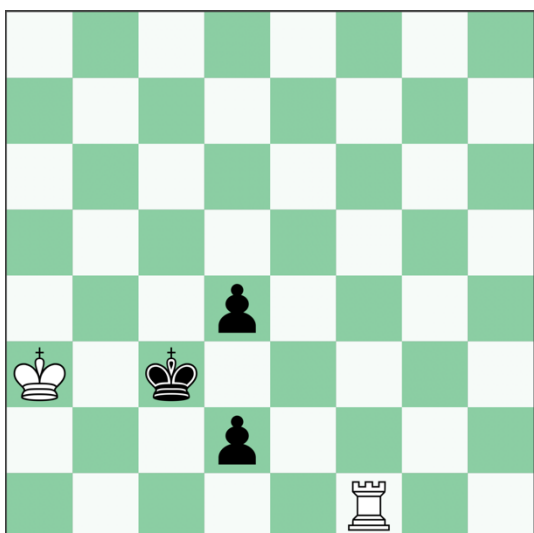
7 ▷

When the pawns are separated by four or more files (as in diagram 7), however, white can play 1. ♖b1! and draw after 1...♔d3 2. ♖g1.

Doubled pawns

According to Reuben Fine,⁷ doubled pawns have essentially no chance of winning. Unfortunately it is much more complicated than that.

⁷ Fine R. *Basic chess endings*. David Mackay, 1941: 281.



8 N. Kopaev 1958



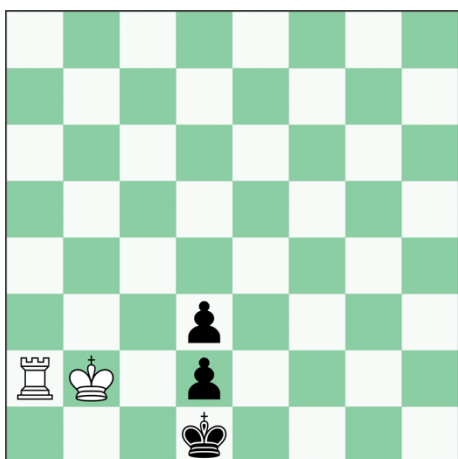
This study (with colours reversed) is a good example.

1...d3!

White's king is going nowhere. The tempting alternative 1...♔c2 will only be a draw after 2. ♔b4 d3 3. ♔c4. This is a variant of the tailhook.

2. ♖a1 ♔c2 3. ♖a2+ ♔d1! 4. ♔b2!?

4. ♖a1+ ♔e2 5. ♖a2 ♔e1 comes to more or less the same thing.



8a



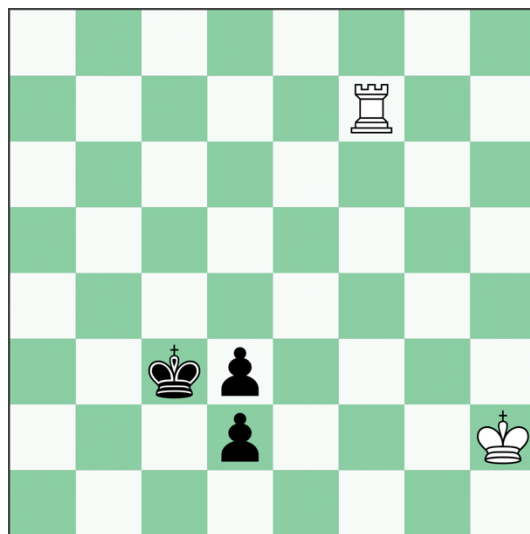
4...♔e1!

Black actually loses after the lazy 4...♔e2?? 5. ♔c3!

5. ♖a1+ d1♔ 6. ♖xd1+ ♔xd1

Black wins after promoting the second d-pawn.

The example Fine uses is also quite instructive (diagram 9).



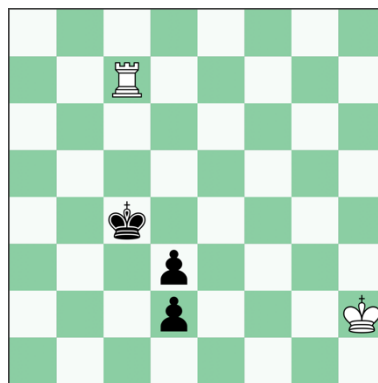
9 R. Fine 1941



White is obviously going to have to play for a draw.

1. ♖c7+ ♔b2 2. ♖b7+ ♔a2

The alternative is 2...♔c3 3. ♖c7+ ♔d4 4. ♖d7+ ♔c4 5. ♖c7+.



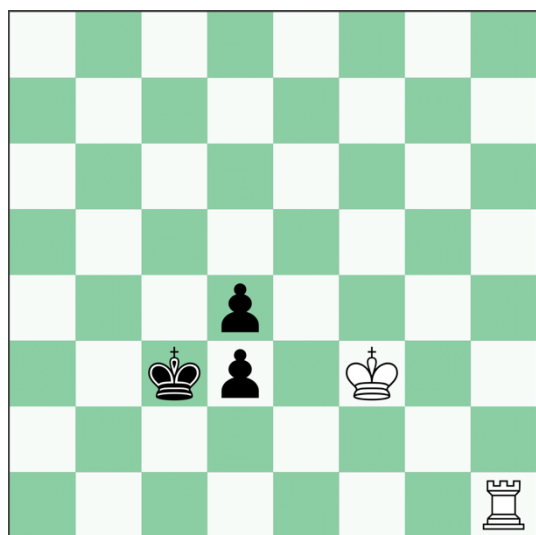
variation

The black king cannot approach the rook on the b-file, because of ♖b7+ and ♖b1, and if it goes to the d-file

then ♖d7+ will force it back to c4 to protect the pawn on d3.

3. ♖a7+ ♔b2 4. ♖b7+ ♔c2 5. ♖c7+ ♔d1 6. ♔g2 ♔e1 7. ♖e7+

The black king cannot escape the checks. Fine also points out that if the white king stood on h3 in diagram 9 then the position is a win, because the black king could run over to the kingside and shelter from checks on h1: 1. ♖c7+ ♔d4 2. ♖d7+ ♔e3 3. ♖e7+ ♔f2 4. ♖f7+ ♔g1 5. ♖g7+ ♔h1.



10



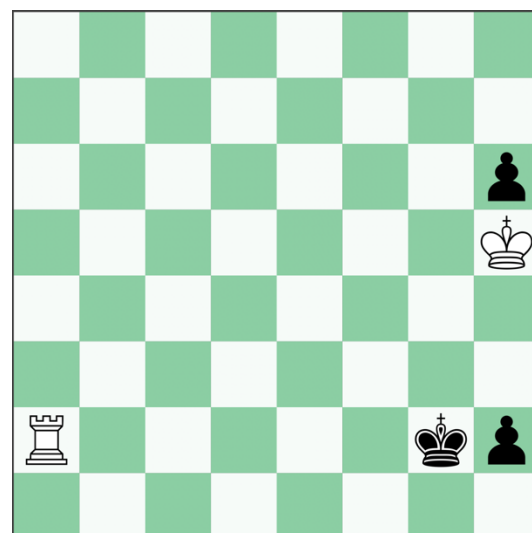
When white's king is nearby, and the pawns are not so far advanced, the win is straightforward.

1. ♖h4!

1. ♖d1 also wins, but 1. ♖h8? and all of the king moves are draws.

1...d2 2. ♔e2 d3+ 3. ♔d1

When his or her king stands in front of a single black pawn, white wins, and the presence of a second pawn on the same file does not change this.



11

► 83

This doubled-pawn position occurred in E. Schmittziel – H. Reefschräger, German Championship 1994.

83...♔g1

83...♔g3 is draw by repetition after 84. ♖a1 ♔g2.

84. ♔g4!

Worth a try.

84...h1 ♞??

Black can't promote to a queen or a rook because of 85. ♔g3!, but this is simply a blunder. The obvious idea 84...h5+ 85. ♔g3 h4+ 86. ♔f4 h1 ♞ draws here.

85. ♔f3!

We have already seen this concept at the end of a contest between a rook and a solitary h-pawn. The knight is eventually lost.

85...h5 86. ♖g2+ ♔f1 87. ♖h2

Black resigned in view of 87...♔g1 88. ♖xh5 ♞f2 89. ♖d5 ♞h3 90. ♖c5 or 89...♔f1 90. ♖d2.

Openings for the club player

Getting started

Part 4

*Larsen's opening (A 01) and
Owen's defence (B 00, A 10)*

Derek Roebuck

This review is about a big book on a small subject. If you are thinking of buying just one (more) work on the opening, you may already be thinking that a book on a more popular line might be a better investment. Let me try to persuade you otherwise.

Odessky starts by explaining that he has had good results by sticking to opening systems that he knows and his opponents don't:

On a small island of chess theory (or rather, a chess garden overgrown with weeds and thorns) onto which I lured them, I was better equipped. Much better!

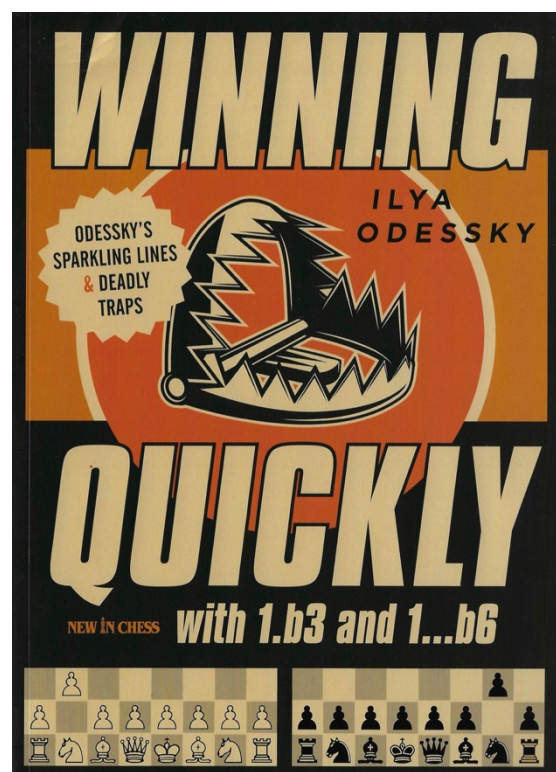
He goes on to admit that 1. b3 is not actually a very good move:

...at least four other opening moves are definitely stronger than 1. b3, and three others are roughly as good.

So what about 1...b6 then?

The move 1...b6 in reply to 1. e4 or 1. d4 is, strictly speaking, lousy ... No, it's a catastrophe.

How can we justify playing like this? Odessky tells us that we have to be prepared to set traps.



Winning quickly with 1. b3 and 1...b6.

Ilya Odessky

New in Chess, Alkmaar, 2020

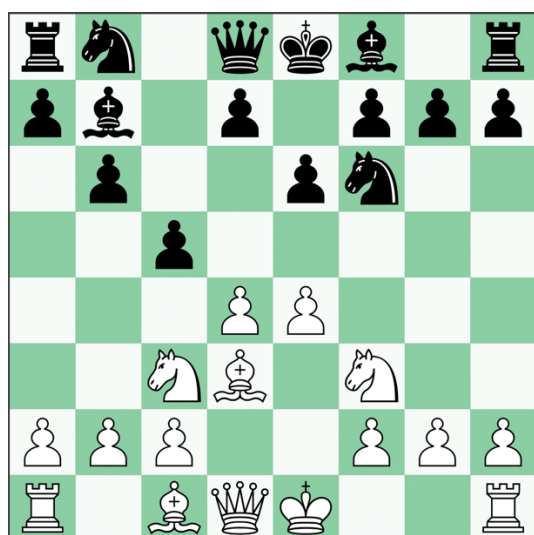
Soft cover, 463 pp.

I can almost hear the purists amongst you tutting here, and going back to your books on the Spanish and the Sicilian Najdorf. The rest of us will read on and learn some interesting ideas, not just about opening theory, but also about the concept of taking risks in chess.

The book contains four chapters and, given that the first finishes on page 16, we can call that three. The names of these chapters are "The opening 1. b3 (1...b6) and how to work with it", "Traps and their unsightly simplicity" and "More than what's left". It's hard to imagine that much was lost in the translation. Add to this the fact that the chapters are not subdivided and it

should be clear that this book has no real structure. This makes it quite difficult to learn from, and I freely admit that I haven't been able to read it all. Instead, I have dipped into it from time to time, and have definitely learned some interesting things.

Firstly, I looked to see how Odessky's thoughts might influence my own planned responses to 1...b6. (It's a bit pretentious to call my opening "preparation" a repertoire.). Take the following position, which can arise from various move orders, including 1. e4 b6 2. d4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb7 4. Nf3 Nf6 5. Bd3 c5?! (diagram 1).



1

▷6

Assuming I would remember my lines here, I had imagined that I would play 6. 0-0, as recommended by GM John Shaw.⁸ Having read Odessky's book, however, I now think I will play:

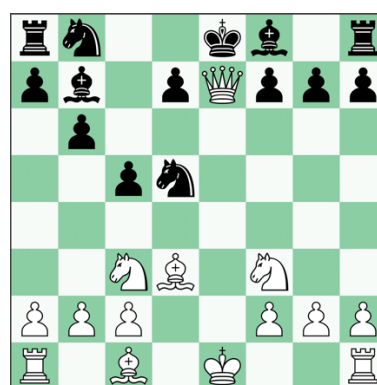
⁸ Shaw J. *Playing 1. e4. Caro-Kann, 1...e5 & minor lines – a grandmaster guide*. Quality Chess, 2016.

6. d5! exd5

The first point is that black is forced to capture on d5, because 6...Bxe7 will be met by 7. d6!, which is pretty close to winning.

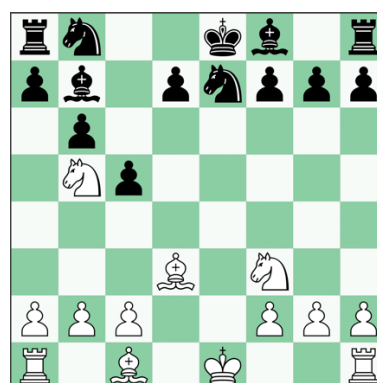
7. exd5 Bxe7

(1) 7...Nxd5 (Odessky gives this the "??" annotation, but to be fair black is in trouble whatever he or she plays) 8. Qe2+! Qe7 [8...Bxe7 is met with 9. Qe4! and 8...Nxe7 9. Bf4 Bxf3 10. Nb5! is quite amusing] 9. Qxe7+ is one of the traps Odessky was referring to earlier.



variation

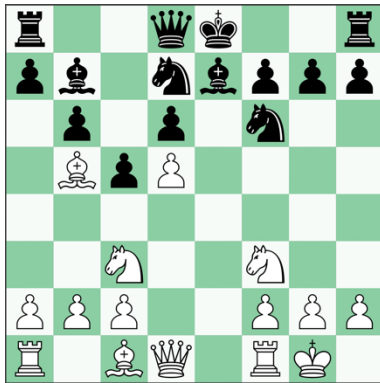
Now 9...Nxe7 is the only move [because the other recaptures are met by 10. Bxe4!] and after 10. Nb5 black's position is miserable.



variation

10...♔d8, for example, allows 11. ♖g5 ♕d5 12. ♖d6, which is just crushing.

(2) 7...d6 is arguably even worse: 8. 0-0!? [the engine likes 8. ♕b5+!?, but let's go with Odessky] ♕e7 9. ♕b5+ ♖bd7.



variation

10. ♖h4! 0-0 [10...g6 11. ♕h6] 11. ♖f5 ♕e8 12. ♕g5. What I like about this position is that a future ...a6 can be met with ♕c6!, because if black exchanges bishops white will be able to play ♖d5, exploiting the pin on the f6 knight.

8. ♖h4!?

This is *Stockfish 13*'s idea, and it works because the absence of black's light-squared bishop from the h3-c8 diagonal weakens the f5 square. Odessky concentrates on 8. 0-0 and also mentions 8. ♕c4, but 8. ♖h4!? may well be better, and it is strange that it is not covered in his book.

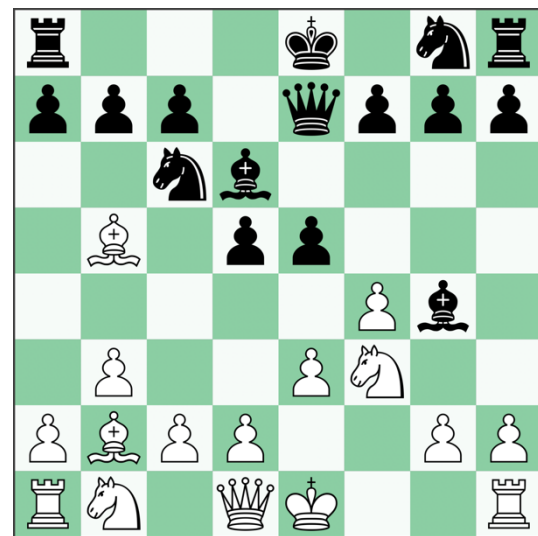
8...g6 9. ♔f3! 0-0 10. ♕h6

White's position seems convincingly superior.

From the perspective of the black player, the book contains some interesting advice, but probably not enough to make me play 1...b6.

The other half of the book is about 1. b3. Could Odessky ever persuade a skeptical player to take up Larsen's opening? Well, the problem as I see it is that the book is not organised in a way that would let someone new to this system pick it up quickly. In fact, the quirky structure of Odessky's opus makes it quite a poor resource for putting together a repertoire.

Having said that, when you take the time to work through it, there is a lot of interesting material in this book. Take for example the main line after 1. b3 e5 2. ♕b2 ♖c6 3. e3 d5 4. ♕b5 ♕d6 5. f4, and now if black avoids ...f6 and instead continues with 5...♔e7 6. ♖f3 ♕g4 we reach the position in diagram 2.



2



Here Odessky doesn't just unfurl a tactical trap, he shows the reader how to push black into an unfavourable ending, with a lot of good advice on the way.

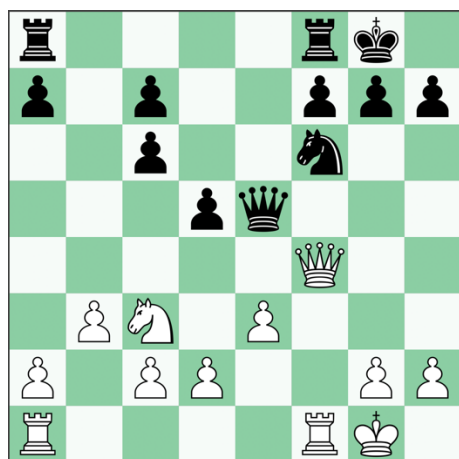
7. fxe5!? ♞xe5!

The trap is 7... ♞xf3? 8. exd6! ♚h4+ [8... ♞xd1 would lose immediately to 9. dxe7 or 9. ♞xc6+] 9. g3 ♚g4 10. ♞e2 ♞xe2 11. ♚xe2, when white is a pawn up with a great position.

8. ♞xc6+ bxc6 9. ♞xe5 ♞xf3 10. ♚xf3 ♚xe5 11. 0-0

Black's last four moves have been completely forced.

11... ♞f6 12. ♞c3 0-0 13. ♚f4!



2a

►13

This is Odessky's *tabiya*⁹ for this variation. Black has several options now, and the ending resulting from the exchange of the queens and one pair of rooks is examined in great detail.

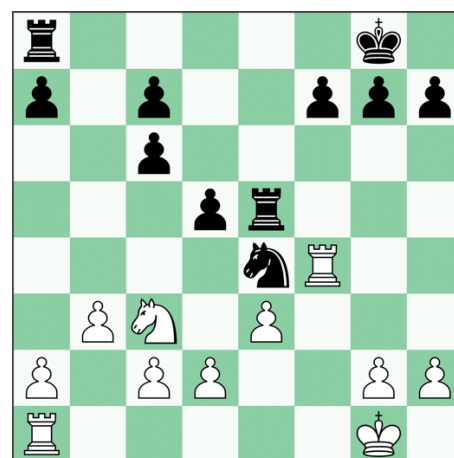
13... ♚fe8

13... ♚xf4 comes to much the same thing.

14. ♚xe5 ♚xe5 15. ♚f4 ♞e4?!

⁹ We have met this term before. A *tabiya* is a position in the opening of a game that occurs after a sequence of moves that is heavily standardized, and from which the

Black should play 15... ♞d7 and transfer the knight to b6.



2b

►16

16. d4! ♞xc3 17. dxe5 ♞e2+ 18. ♚f2 ♞xf4 19. exf4

Black can probably draw this rook ending in correspondence chess, but in an over-the-board game a well-prepared white player would be very happy with the outcome of the opening.

Odessky's idiosyncratic approach may not suit all readers, but if you want to develop a repertoire for both white and black you could do a lot worse than study his book. You will need to work on it though – Odessky does not give it to you on a platter.

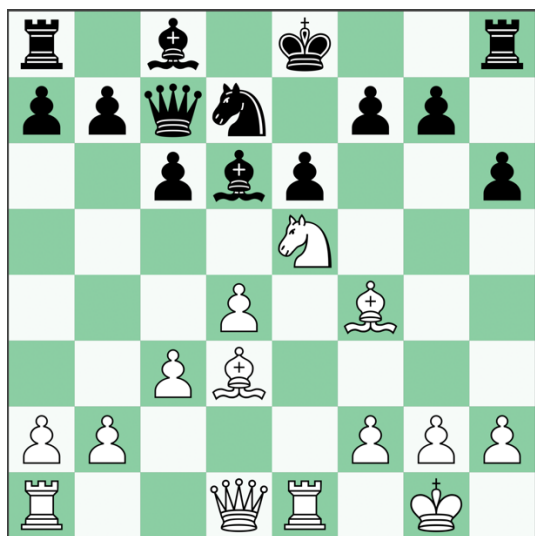
Ratings

Club player ★★★★★

Correspondence player ★★☆☆☆

players have many possible moves again. The word comes from the Arabic *طبيعة*, which means "nature", or in this context "normal manner".

Tactics solutions



T1 ▷14

Sanjay Mukhedkar

Dylan Gough

Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

14. ♖xf7!

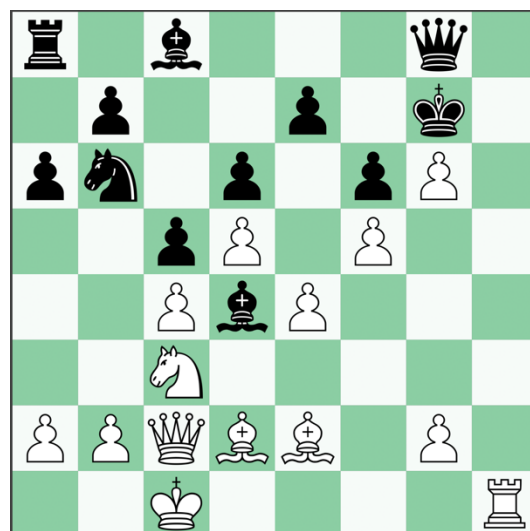
In the game white went with 14. ♔g4 and ended up drawing.

14... ♔xf7

After 14... ♖xf4 15. ♘xh8 ♖xh2+ 16. ♔h1 black really needs to play 16... ♘f6 in order to cover h5, and is losing after any sensible white reply including 17. ♖f5 or even 17. g3!?

15. ♔h5+!

And now 16. ♖xe6 will be decisive, for example 15... ♔e7 16. ♖xe6+ ♔xe6 17. ♖e1+ ♖e5 18. ♔g6+ ♔e7 19. ♔xg7+.



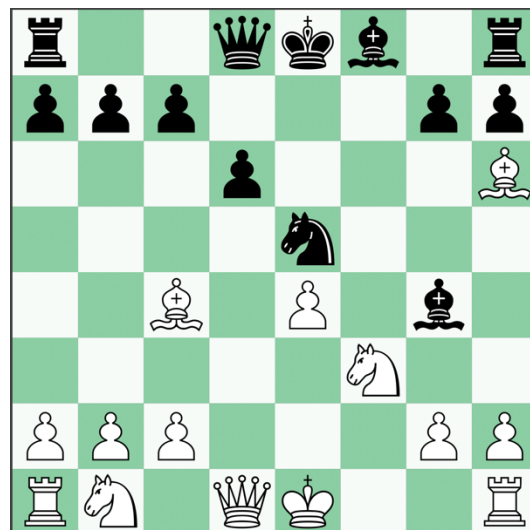
T2 ▷23

Melvyn Lintern

Lucien Koch

Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

23. ♖h6+! ♔h8 24. ♖f8+ ♔h7 25. ♖xh7+



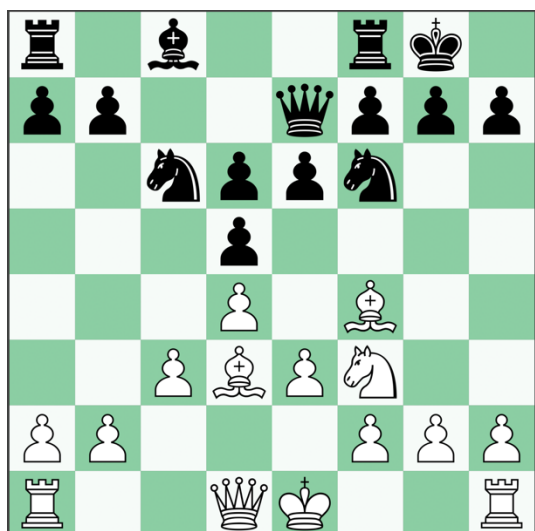
T3 ▷9

Matt Buggins

Dougal McLean

Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

White could have played 9. ♘xe5!! ♖xd1 10. ♖f7+ ♔e7 11. ♖g5#.



T4

►9

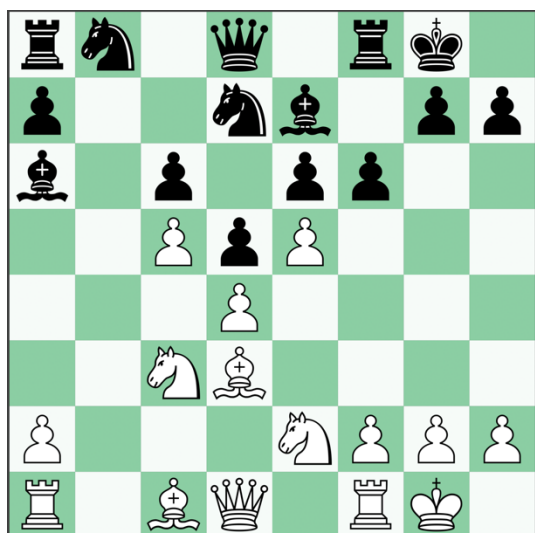
Stevica Milovanovic

Senudi De Vas

Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

Black missed the chance to win a piece here.

9...e5! 10. ♘g5 e4



T5

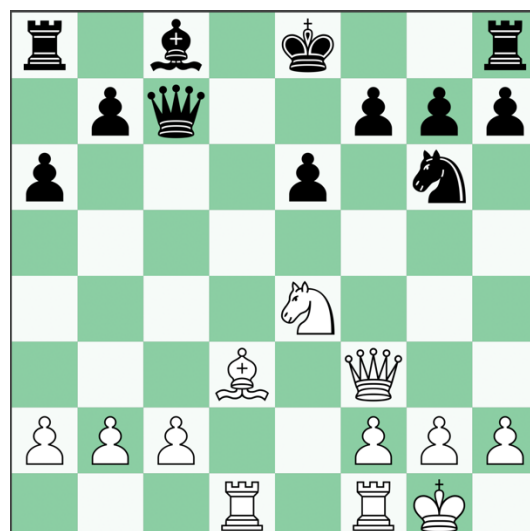
►12

Jonathan Melnick

Ben Motu

Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

12. ♘f4!



T6

►18

Keegan O'Mahoney

Stevica Milovanovic

Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

18. ♘d6+! ♔f8

18...♔e7 19. ♙xg6! is no good, and white wins the queen for two pieces after 18...♙xd6 19. ♙b5+.

19. ♙xg6?!

The engine prefers the non-forcing 19. ♖fe1, giving black a choice of several replies, including:

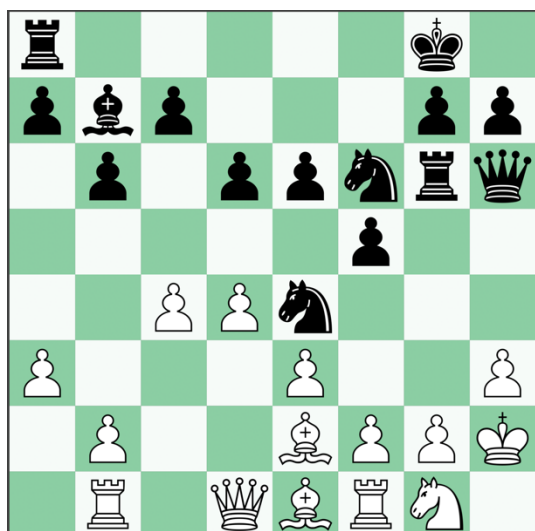
(1) 19...♘h4 20. ♙g3 ♙d7 21. ♙e4 ♘f5 [21...♘g6 22. ♘xf7!] 22. ♙xf5 exf5 23. ♙a3! ♔g8 24. ♘xf7 is winning for white.

(2) 19...♖a7 20. ♙xg6! hxg6 21. ♘xf7!? ♙xf7 [21...♙xh2+ doesn't help] 22. ♖d8+ is an easy win.

(3) After 19...f6 20. ♙c4 e5 21. ♘e4! white threatens ♘xf6 and ♙a3+, and 21...♙e7 22. ♖d6! wins.

In the game, white quickly got back on track and won after:

19...hxg6 20. g3 ♖b8 21. ♘xf7!



T7

►17

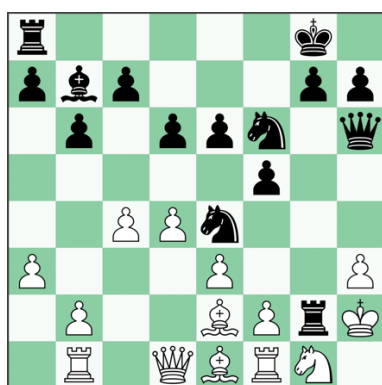
Dougal McLean

David Ellis

Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

17... ♖c3!

The only thing wrong with this move is that it isn't 17... ♜xg2+!, which is even better.



variation

After 18. ♔xg2 [18. ♔h1 ♜xf2 19. ♜xf2 ♘xf2+ is even worse for white] ♘xf2+ black can either give up his queen or allow mate with 19. ♔xf2 ♚h4#.

18. ♙f3

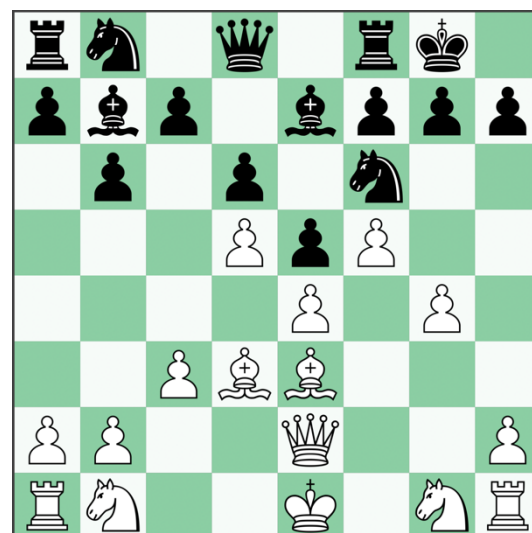
White's best defence.

18... ♘xd1 19. ♙xb7 ♘xe3

19... ♘xf2, 19... ♘g4+ and 19... ♜b8 are all winning too.

20. fxe3 ♜b8 21. ♙c6 ♚xe3

Black won in a few more moves.



T8

►10

Robert Baumgartner

Mike McGregor

Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

10... ♘xd5! 11. exd5

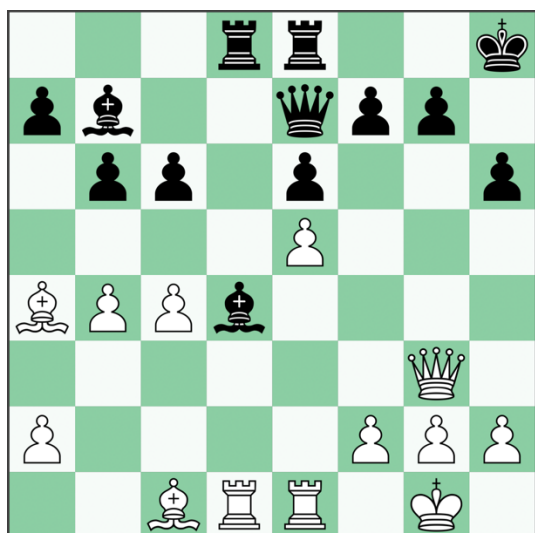
In the game white played 11. ♘f3?!, and was much worse after 11... ♘xe3 12. ♚xe3 ♙h4+!?, but did manage to draw.

11... ♙xd5 12. f6!

Black's idea, of course, was 12. ♘f3 e4!, winning back the piece with a great position a pawn up.

12... ♙xh1 13. fxe7 ♚xe7 14. ♘d2 ♙b7

Black has a definite edge here, but will have to play carefully to maintain it.



T9

►23

Tjerman Gunawan

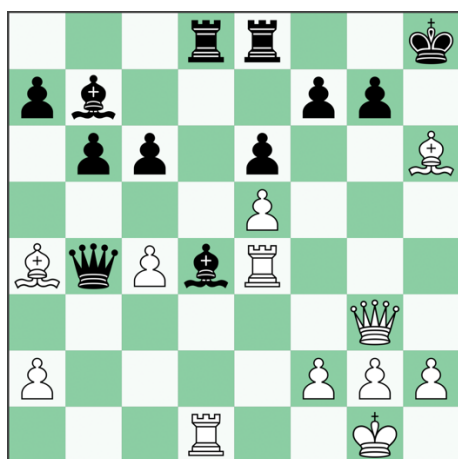
Emily Zhang

Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

23. ♖e4!

Stockfish takes a few seconds to find this, initially preferring the move that was actually played, 23. a3?! (White won after 23...a5 24. ♖e4, however.)

23... ♙xb4 24. ♗xh6!



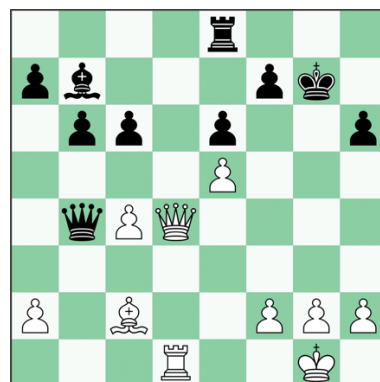
T9a

►24

It will prove impossible to deal with all of white's threats: ♔xg7#, ♔h4 and ♖exd4.

24...gxh6 25. ♔h4 ♗xf2+!?

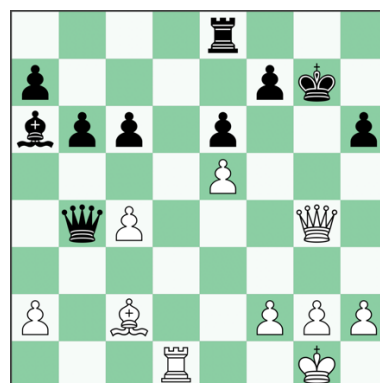
25... ♔h7 26. ♖exd4 ♖xd4 27. ♗c2+ ♔g7 28. ♔xd4 is the other option.



variation

(1) 28... ♔e7 defends the kingside, but gives up the menace to white's back rank. With 29. h4! white can restore the threat of ♔g4+, and have a great attack without having had to give up any material to get it.

(2) 28... ♗a6 maintains black's only threat, but leads to forced mate after 29. ♔g4+!

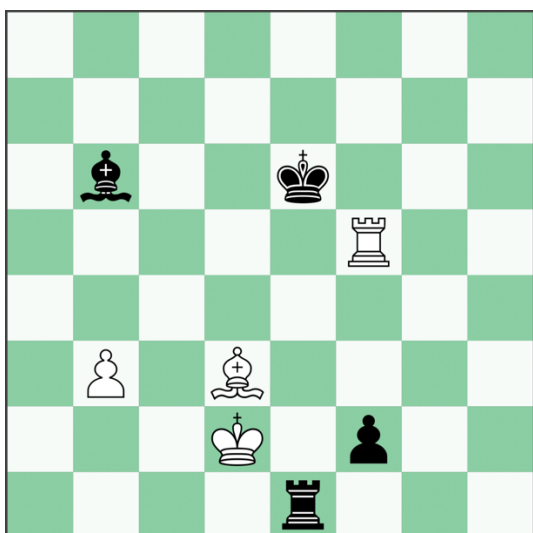


variation

After 29... ♔f8 [29... ♔h8 30. ♔e4] 30. ♔f4! white wins, because of the new plan of ♗g6.

26. ♔xf2 ♖d2+ 27. ♔f1!! ♔h7 28. ♔f4! ♖xd1+ 29. ♗xd1

The threat of ♖e3 will be decisive.



T10

►47

Wallace Sheridan

Leon Taylor

Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

You will have noticed that white's bishop is overloaded, having to protect both f5 and f1.

47... ♗e3+!

Black actually played 47... ♖a1?!, which should be a draw, blundered again into a lost position, and finally managed to win!

48. ♔c3 ♜c1+ 49. ♔b4

49. ♔b2 ♜d1 is very similar.

49... ♜d1 50. ♔c3

If white's bishop moves, it has to give up one of the diagonals:

(1) 50. ♗c2 f1 ♖ 51. ♜xf1 ♜xf1.

(2) 50. ♗e4 ♜d4+ and 51... ♜xe4.

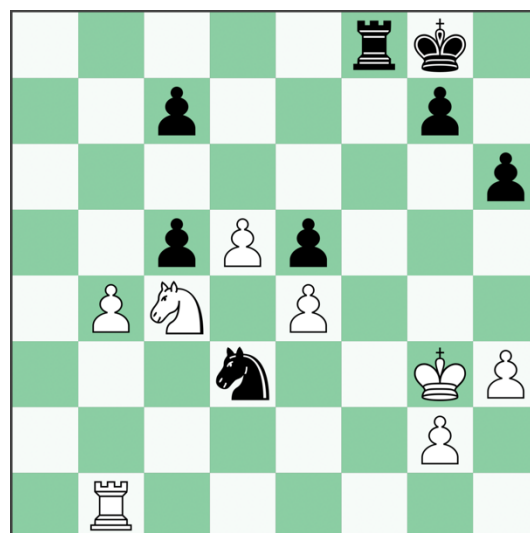
(3) 50. ♗c4+ ♔xf5.

50... ♜xd3+! 51. ♔xd3 ♔xf5 52.

♔e2 ♔f4 53. b4 ♔g3 54. ♔f1 ♗b6

55. b5 ♔h2 56. ♔e2 ♔g2

Black wins easily.



T11

►44

Reuben Jeyaraj

Melvyn Lintern

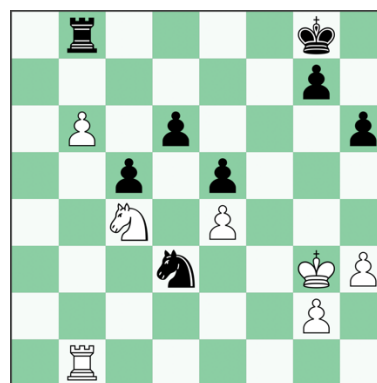
Australia (Bob Pilgrim Open) 2021

44. b5!

White played 44. bxc5?, which seems about equal, but won in the end. This is much better.

44... ♘f4

The problem with 44... ♜b8 is 45. d6! cxd6 46. b6.



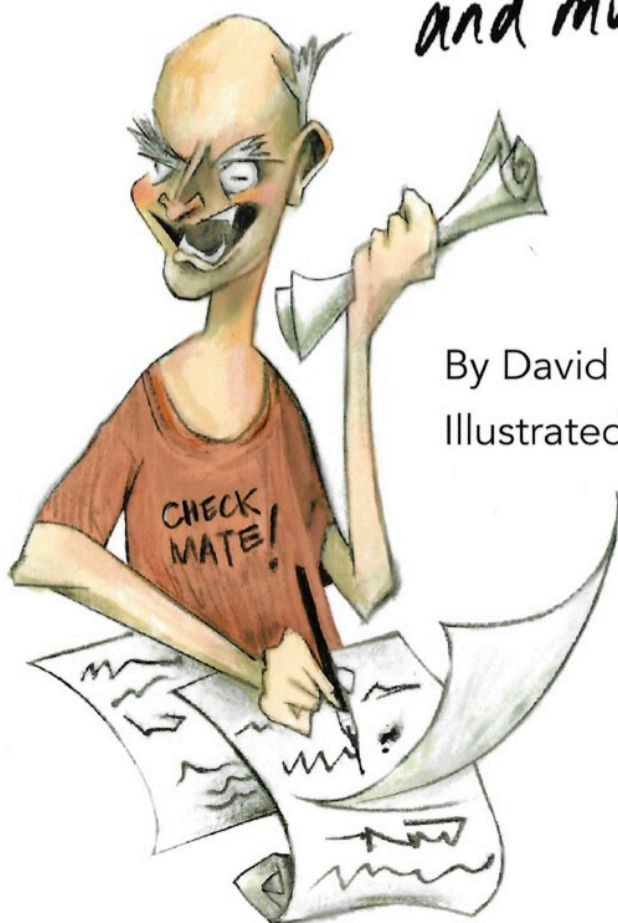
variation

Black's rook is permanently passive, and the d6 pawn cannot be saved.

45. d6!? cxd6 46. ♘xd6

White's knight will return to c4, when black's e5 pawn is the next problem.

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By David Ellis

Illustrated by Rosie Di Wu

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