

Contents

Explanation of symbols.	6
Introduction to the new edition	7
Introduction to the first edition	13
Chapter 1 – Second move sidelines.	17
Chapter 2 – 2...♘c6 sidelines	26
Chapter 3 – The Lowenthal & the Kalashnikov.	35
Chapter 4 – The Accelerated Dragon 4...g6.	50
Chapter 5 – The Sveshnikov 5...e5	72
Chapter 6 – Sidelines after 2...e6.	100
Chapter 7 – The Taimanov 4...♘c6	122
Chapter 8 – The Paulsen 5.♘c3 without 5...♖c7.	143
Chapter 9 – The Paulsen 5.♘c3 ♖c7.	159
Chapter 10 – 2...d6 sidelines	187
Chapter 11 – The Scheveningen	196
Chapter 12 – The Dragon 5...g6	203
Chapter 13 – The Richter-Rauzer without 8...♙d7	223
Chapter 14 – The Richter-Rauzer 8...♙d7	249
Chapter 15 – The 6.h3 Najdorf.	268
Chapter 16 – The 6.♙e2 Najdorf	312
Chapter 17 – What others recommend... and why I disagree	334
Index of variations.	359
Index of players	364
Bibliography	367

Introduction to the new edition

The previous edition of *Dismantling the Sicilian* starts as follows:

‘This book deals with the study of the Sicilian Defence; however, the theoretical development has been so significant in recent years, that trying to cover all the variations of such a popular defence is somewhat a utopian dream. Therefore, this book is content to offer a repertoire for White based on 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 followed by 3.d4.’

Eight years on, it may seem that the ‘utopian dream’ could be extended to a one-volume repertoire book against the Sicilian. After all, last year the esteemed author GM Parimarjan Negi finished the three-volume series *Grandmaster Repertoire: 1.e4 vs. the Sicilian*, and the most recent Open Sicilian repertoire for White, *Attacking the Flexible Sicilian* by GM Vassilios Kotronias and IM Semko Semkov, covered only 2...e6 Open Sicilians in 400 pages.

As a grandmaster and theoretician, I enjoy such detailed, specific works, but as a coach, I completely understand that amateur players are reluctant to study well over a thousand pages of material for one opening, however compelling the repertoire is.

My opening philosophy is even more principled than Jesus de la Villa’s, in that I believe in playing the best moves against everything. That may seem like a lot more work, but my experience suggests the opposite. We will have less need to change our repertoire or rely on the element of surprise, while playing critically in the opening often carries over to our middlegame and endgame play. Furthermore, the ever-improving chess engines have demonstrated that not only are there often several equivalent moves in the opening phase, but that in many cases the best move is a rare or new continuation. In that sense, you could argue that a strong novelty is an unpleasant surprise. And you will find hundreds of novelties in this book.

As this is a flexible repertoire with some reserve options for White, I should mention an exception to my above philosophy – against the Paulsen (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6), I adhered to the previous edition’s recommendation of 5.♘c3, even though I believe in White’s chances for an edge after 5.♙d3 and 5.c4. These two moves were covered very thoroughly in the aforementioned Negi and Kotronias/Semkov books respectively. Recommending 5.♘c3 best matched my writing philosophy: to offer as much original material as possible, as every serious player has

access to a large database and chess engine. Furthermore, I can say from my own experience that a nuanced understanding of Hedgehog structures is required to make use of White's small edge, whereas White's play in the 5.♘c3 variation is more tactical and natural for a club player to execute.

Although this is a new edition of *Dismantling the Sicilian*, I found it necessary to change the basic framework of the repertoire. Granted, I was extremely successful with De la Villa's English Attack-based repertoire in my own games, and I can even attribute my first win against a grandmaster (also the game that secured my FM title) in a classical game to the book:

Max Illingworth 2289

Darryl Johansen 2457

Parramatta 2010 (8)

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♙e3 ♘f6 7.f3 ♙e7
8.♚d2 0-0 9.0-0-0 a6 10.g4 ♘d7 11.h4 ♘de5 12.♚g2 b5 13.g5 ♙d7 14.♖b1
♘xd4 15.♙xd4 b4 16.♘e2 ♚c7 17.f4 ♜fc8 18.♘g3 ♘c6 19.♙e3 d5 20.exd5
b3 21.g6 bxa2+ 22.♖a1 ♘b4 23.gxf7+ ♖xf7 24.dxe6+ ♙xe6 25.c3 ♜d8
26.♜e1 ♘d5 27.♙d4 ♘f6 28.♜g1 ♜g8 29.♘e4 ♘h5 30.f5 ♙xf5 31.♘g5+
♙xg5 32.♚d5+ 1-0**

As I show in the uniquely *New In Chess* chapter called 'What others recommend... and why I disagree' (no. 17), overviewing the recommendations of the previous edition as well as Negi's series, the English Attack has been neutralised by modern computers. Particularly the modern main line of the Najdorf/Scheveningen English Attack has been virtually analysed to a draw by deep engine analysis. You will still have plenty of opportunities to charge Garry the g-pawn in this repertoire – with the difference that mostly we will be supporting this aggression with h2-h3, ♙e2 or f2-f4.

Furthermore, it has recently become popular in the Open Sicilian to castle queenside with our queen more aggressively placed on e2 or f3, as you can study in the Taimanov, Scheveningen and Najdorf chapters. The theory is still developing in these systems, but I've made a strong case that White is fighting for an opening advantage, which can easily increase if Black settles for natural developing moves (as is frequently the case at the amateur level).

I've noticed on online chess forums and blogs that readers desire clear explanations of ideas, and lament getting bogged down in swathes of

variations, most of which they are unlikely to face over the board. This book doesn't skimp on detail either, but I have divided each chapter into a 'theoretical overview' section and an 'illustrative games' section, so you may play the repertoire successfully without needing to read cover-to-cover.

Inexperienced players can play through the games in the 'illustrative games' section and quickly apply the typical middlegame plans, themes and tactics. Advanced players can find all the theory they need to know (and a bit more!) explained in the theoretical overviews. Finally, professional players can subsequently work through the illustrative games for further detail, as well as reserve options to complicate the opponent's preparation. There are some inevitable wide branches for Black's most flexible systems, so you may choose to skip the sidelines in each branch on a first read for a 'quick repertoire'.

In principle, I have offered alternatives only where I was unable to clearly prove a white advantage, but there are some exceptions where I included another good option for its similarity with another repertoire line, or to improve our understanding of the Open Sicilian. All the illustrative games are referenced in the 'theoretical overview' sections, though I have not altered the move orders of the games, as the reader will benefit from acquaintance with different move orders (and may well apply some of them to his or her repertoire). You will also find a summary of each chapter, with the engine's evaluations at a high depth of each major variation (to the nearest 0.05) to indicate the main theoretical conclusions.

I lacked the space to include a separate chapter for exercises, but I have selected many of the diagrams in such a way that they (excepting those indicating important branchings, and those in the 'What others recommend...' chapter) serve as a 'White to play' puzzle. You will find the solution in the text following the diagram, which will consolidate key tactics, move orders, plans and novelties in your memory. You may find solving these diagram positions in the 'illustrative games' section useful for improving your overall skill.

Those comparing this book to the previous edition will notice that I have merged some chapters together, namely the various sidelines are grouped by 'Second move sidelines', '2...♘c6 sidelines', '2...e6 sidelines' and '2...d6 sidelines'. This made it easier to divide the particularly flexible Paulsen, Richter-Rauzer and Najdorf Sicilians into two chapters each, so they would be better digestible. It was in these three systems (together with the Sveshnikov and the Four Knights Sicilian) that I was unable

to conclusively prove an advantage for White. Therefore, I have offered several options for White, so the opponent cannot memorise one line against our entire repertoire.

To portray the spirit of the repertoire, I will elaborate on these alternatives here. In the **Paulsen** with 5.♘c3 ♖c7 6.♙d3 ♟f6, my main recommendation is now 7.0-0, but the flexible 7...♙e7 proved very resilient. I show two ways to handle it, and also analyse two games with the old recommendation 7.f4 in the ‘illustrative games’ section. It might seem surprising that the **Four Knights Sicilian** is hard to prove a serious edge against, but I cover both 9.♙d3 and 9.exd5 in the main line. In the ‘What others recommend...’ chapter, I also share a wrinkle against 6.♘xc6 that is not mentioned in *Attacking the Flexible Sicilian*.

Those who have done their own work on the opening can surely recognize the feeling of finding an edge against everything except one rare sideline! That was the case in the **Rauzer** main line with 6.♙g5 e6 7.♖d2 a6 8.0-0-0 ♙d7 9.f3 ♙e7, when Black plays an early ...♘xd4. I cover both the old recommendation 10.h4 and 10.♖b1 in the theoretical overview for that chapter for some flexibility, and in the illustrative games you will even find a way to avoid it with 10.♙e3!?, which could prove a starting point for your own investigations. Amusingly, this reminds me of the main rule of thumb I learned from writing this book – the once maligned ♘xc6 exchange is often a good early middlegame move for White in the Open Sicilian!

As for the **Sveshnikov**, my main recommendation is 9.♘d5 ♙e7 10.♙xf6 ♙xf6 11.c3, and I offer some alternative options against the more drawish lines, but I also present a repertoire with 9.♙xf6 in ‘What others recommend...’, explaining the problem line that forced me to find something better. Of course, most of the world’s elite currently avoid the Sveshnikov with 3.♙b5, but my variations have the advantage that Black finds it extremely hard to play for a win without accepting a disadvantage.

Finally, the **Najdorf** is the one major line (the Nimzowitsch, 2...♘f6, doesn’t qualify) where I offer two different options right at the start – the modern main line 6.h3 is my main recommendation, supporting g2-g4 while avoiding certain problem lines against 6.♙e3 and 6.f3 respectively, but for a lower theoretical workload (and similar ideas) I give a secondary recommendation of 6.♙e2. This is partly motivated by the fact that I consider the Najdorf the only repertoire foundation against 1.e4 that offers considerable winning chances at the professional level without accepting an objective disadvantage, though I understand that’s a very contentious view!

Owners of the previous edition may have noticed that I have taken a different approach to the Illustrative games themselves. Since the 2009 edition of *Dismantling the Sicilian*, correspondence games have become more and more theoretically significant, and about a third of the selected games are in fact from correspondence chess. This is not only because these games are of a higher quality than over-the-board play, but I also found them to contain many interesting middlegame and endgame motifs. Although I am not a correspondence player, I found from my study of these games that they are not simply 'engine battles' as many assume, but rather a valuable lesson in how to find ideas beyond the scope of the engine.

At the same time, over-the-board games are a more practical struggle, and there are many typical tactics and ideas that especially strong players know to anticipate or avoid. The sharp nature of many of my recommendations means that even the world's top players can falter in the complications, but we can also learn a lot from the improvements over and alternatives to these games, and not neglect the 'human' component of tournament play. In this book, I have covered games up to and including June 30, 2017.

A larger or multi-volume book might contain a historical overview of each variation and detailed explanations of every move, but early games can be looked up in a database, and I prefer succinct, punchy explanations. I haven't held anything back in my coverage, analysis of and views about this Open Sicilian repertoire for White. While theoreticians, analysts, players and stronger engines will be investigating my ideas more deeply, and will be finding improvements over my analysis for both sides, I'm confident that the basic repertoire, and the understanding you will acquire from my explanations, will be a strong framework for your continued success playing the Open Sicilian as White.

I'd like to express my gratitude to Jesus de la Villa for giving me the opportunity to work on this updated edition of *Dismantling the Sicilian*, a project which remains topical and influential today. I'm also grateful to Jesus for his encouragement, and for the positive influence the previous edition of his book had on my chess development and career. I am pleased that I can give some of that back in this collaborative second edition.

Max Illingworth
Sydney, Australia,
September 2017

Introduction to the first edition

This book deals with the study of the Sicilian Defence; however, the theoretical development has been so significant in recent years, that trying to cover all the variations of such a popular defence is somehow a utopian dream. Therefore, this book is content to offer a repertoire for White based on 1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 followed by 3.d4.

The Sicilian is the most widely used defence. According to different databases and different periods, percentages may vary, but will be around 20%; if we take into account only those games starting with 1.e4, the percentage of Sicilians may reach 40%. Furthermore, those figures have been increasing in recent years.

Therefore, my proposal is a repertoire based on the Open Variation, that starting with 2.♟f3 and virtually always followed by 3.d4. I think it is only logical to devote our best studying efforts to a position that will probably arise quite frequently in our games, and to choose secondary lines against defences we won't face so often. Vast practical experience also indicates that, against the Sicilian, the prospects of an advantage with other moves than 2.♟f3 are not great. Flexibility and the surprise factor is one thing, and basing our repertoire on harmless lines is a quite different one.

My general philosophy for developing an opening repertoire is based on the following approach: against main lines, play main lines; against secondary lines, play secondary lines; against unsound lines, play the refutation. Some amateur players have asked me why, and I will try to state my case now:

- Main lines are usually the best and the most frequent in practice. Being the most frequent, it is worth being well prepared against them; being the best, we are not likely to find a way to an edge in secondary lines.
- We won't face secondary lines so often, therefore it is less profitable to spend a long time on them in our preparation. A further point is that we would run the risk of reaching a good position, but one in which our opponent has far clearer ideas. A secondary defence is much more likely to offer secondary lines with good prospects for an edge.
- Finally, it is worth searching and finding a refutation against a weak system, since it will work forever. Besides, these defences will usually take us by surprise and we need a convincing preparation against them.

Of course, this is a basic approach and must be adapted to each particular case. Quite frequently, main lines may become secondary and vice versa; even some unsound lines may be rehabilitated, though this is less likely to happen. A flexible approach is always necessary.

Our playing style must have its influence as well when it comes to building our repertoire. However, if our style does not involve an open game against the Sicilian, then we should consider whether 1.e4 is right as our first move after all.

Although this book recommends main lines, from the point of view of the current state of chess theory, the repertoire we present also tries to fulfil the principles of economy and coherence, by choosing lines that can transpose into one another, whenever possible, or that share strategic ideas.

Thus, there is one set-up which constitutes the core of this repertoire. It can be used (obviously, with important adjustments) against a wide range of variations (Najdorf, Scheveningen, Classical, Taimanov, Dragon, Kupreichik and some secondary lines). This set-up is based on the moves f2-f3, ♕e3, ♖d2 and 0-0-0.

I have always considered queenside castling in the Open Sicilian to be logical: the rook immediately occupies the only open file (for White).

The position of the f-pawn allows some discussion. For many years, the general trend and almost a sacred rule was the idea that White cannot develop any active play against the Sicilian without the move f2-f4. Although well founded upon a wide experience, I have the feeling that this theory has been indiscriminately applied, thus leading White into trouble in several variations. The reason is that it fuels Black's counterplay along the a8-h1 diagonal, with pressure on e4 and, from that weak point, on White's position as a whole.

In the f2-f3 set-up, the point e4 has a solid defence. There is no need for White to worry about this square, and his plan is clear-cut and easy to carry out. This might be, if not a theoretical, at least a practical reason why White's results with this set-up have generally been so remarkable. Fischer's comment that the Sicilian Dragon was a weak defence because an amateur as White could easily defeat a grandmaster with the Rauzer Attack, can be applied to a certain extent to other lines.

About the structure of this book

I have decided to present the book as a collection of annotated games, to make the material appear not too dull. Readers may use it as a reference book or read it from beginning to end, in order to become familiar with the most frequent tactical ideas, transpositions and strategic plans.

A division has been made in four main Sections. The first contains minor second moves for Black after 2.♘f3, Section 2 deals with 4...e5, 4...g6 and 4...♘c6 systems after the exchange on d4, and in Sections 3 and 4, respectively the systems with 2...e6 and those with 2...d6 are discussed. Almost all systems have an individual chapter, though some have far less material. In my view, the current preparation and competition methods (I'm thinking especially about open and rapid chess tournaments) force us to possess an accurate knowledge of some specific refutations and favour the use of surprise variations. Many of these surprise weapons, despite their theoretical weakness, pose almost insurmountable complications in over-the-board play.

Furthermore, my aim has been to provide the reader with a complete repertoire and therefore to answer clearly to the question of what to play in all reasonable positions.

At the beginning and at the end of each chapter I have included short sections intended to make the study easier, but not strictly necessary for an experienced player.

The chapters open with the title and the diagram reflecting the starting position of our study. In my opinion, there are a lot of underrated variations in the Sicilian (and a few, overrated). I have the feeling, reinforced by writing this book, that many are playable and pose problems for White, if the first player intends to achieve an edge.

The introduction tries to guide the readers on the themes of the chosen line and its relationship with other variations.

Here I feel obliged to mention the real father of the Sicilian Defence, Louis Paulsen (1833-1891). He was born in Germany but developed as a chess player in the United States. Paulsen investigated most of the important variations and understood the spirit of counterplay inherent in this defence. If the Sicilian wasn't named after him, it was due to random circumstances.

A deeper analysis of the ideas contained in every variation would have been interesting, but the book is already rather thick, so I considered it more important to go deeply into certain lines.

This structure should altogether help black players to choose some lines for their repertoires, though in this case they must complete their study with the attacking lines for White that we don't mention here.

We have tried to present the material in a very clear way, without complex trees and with move-by-move explanations, with the exception of the more often repeated moves. We considered it very important to understand the position and to know the purpose of every move, in order

to fix our memory and prevent our opening study from becoming useless, if we forget the lines after a few days or weeks. However, in some cases it has been impossible to avoid presenting a potentially disturbing branch.

This book is a revised version of the Spanish original *Desmontando la Siciliana*. We can't talk about a second edition, as most of the material has been changed rather than merely updated. Furthermore, some chapters are completely new, and in those which keep recommending the same lines, many model games are more recent and recommended subvariations have quite often changed as well. Nevertheless, we cannot talk about a new book either, since the structure and base material are the same. In some cases, I have changed my recommendations because some new lines are clearly better or have cast doubts on the old ones; at other times, the previously recommended line is still equally interesting and the reasons for the change are less conclusive. In those cases (and some others) I refer to the original text, identified with the abbreviation 'DLS'. Of course, comparing both versions may be interesting for those who have the original book.

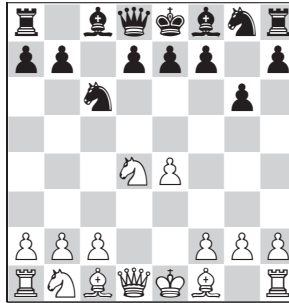
Despite all the hours devoted to this work, I'm perfectly well aware that some variations will not resist the passing of time and I hope the readers will show their sympathy. I also encourage them to continue their research and complete their repertoires, when necessary, consulting other sources and analysing on their own. However, I hope the recommendations from this book can help the readers improve their repertoire, bring them some sporting pleasure and let them have a good time with the analysis of memorable games and interesting positions.

Jesus de la Villa Garcia
Pamplona, Spain,
May 2009

CHAPTER 4

The Accelerated Dragon 4...g6

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6



The Accelerated Dragon can be a very tricky opening at the club level, as White must constantly watch out for ...d7-d5 in one go in the 5.♘c3 variation. Fortunately, it's very hard for Black to mix up the game against my recommendation.

5.c4!



The Maroczy Bind is easy to play – you place your minor pieces with ♘c3/♙e3/♙e2/0-0, and usually ♙d2/f2-f3/♖ac1/b2-b3/♗fd1 in some order from there.

Alternatives to 5...♙g7 (Gurgenidze Variation)

A) Tiviakov's 5...♙h6 is a bit slow if White develops normally: 6.♙xh6

♘xh6 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♙e2 d6 9.0-0 f6 10.♗d2 ♘xd4 11.♗xd4 and Black's set-up remains passive, while White can build up with b2-b4, f2-f4, ♘d5 and ♖ad1;

B) 5...d6 6.♘c3 will transpose to other lines;

C) 5...♘f6 6.♘c3 d6 followed by 7...♘xd4, the Gurgenidze Variation, is probably Black's best line as it leads more easily to simplifications (which favour the side with less space) (6...♘xd4 7.♗xd4 d6 8.♙e3 ♙g7 transposes after 9.♙e2 or 9.f3):

C1) 7.f3! With this move order White can somewhat restrict Black's options. 7...♘xd4 (7...♙g7 8.♙e3 0-0 9.♙e2 ♘h5!?) is permitted by the 7.f3 move order, however White has several decent options,

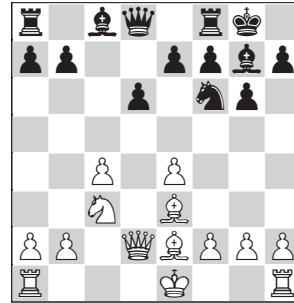
my preference being 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♖d2 ♘f6 (or 11...♗a5 12.0-0 ♜b8 13.♝fc1!± with the idea of preparing the b2-b4 break with a2-a3) 12.0-0 ♘d7 as in O'Hare-Reichenbach, email 2014, when a slight improvement is 13.♞ad1 ♗c7 14.b4 with a pleasant space advantage. White can play for c4-c5 to fix Black's queenside) 8.♗xd4 ♙g7 9.♙e3 0-0 10.♖d2 a5 (10...♙e6 11.♝c1 ♗a5 12.b3 ♝fc8 is usual, and transposes to line C2 after 13.♙e2)



With the pawn on f3, we don't have to allow Black's plan of ...a5-a4/...♗a5/...♙e6/...♝fc8. 11.b3! a4 (11...♙d7 12.♙e2 ♙c6 13.0-0 ♘d7± is the 5...♙g7 main line with an extra tempo for White; 11...♙e6 12.♞b1 ♘d7 13.♙e2 ♘c5 14.0-0↑ on the other hand makes little sense for Black, as a2-a3 and b2-b4 will force his pieces back) 12.b4 ♙e6 13.♝c1 ♘d7 14.♙e2 ♘b6 15.♘b5 a3 16.♘d4 ♙d7 In Caruana-Carlsen, St Louis 2014, White achieved a strong attack with 17.h4!?, but the more positional 17.0-0 ♘a4 18.f4 also secures a stable advantage, as Black has some trouble coordinating his pieces around White's space.

However, 18...e5 may confuse things a little. Probably White's strongest option is 17.♙f2, which is a fairly frequent idea in this line;

C2) 7.♙e2 ♘xd4 (7...♙g7 8.♙e3 transposes back to 5...♙g7) 8.♗xd4 ♙g7 9.♙e3 0-0 10.♖d2

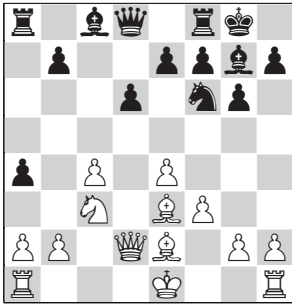


Black will tend to play ...♙e6/...♗a5/...♝fc8 to pressure our c-pawn, but White's 60% score shows there's no cookie-cutter solution for Black:

C21) 10...♘g4 tries to disrupt White's set-up, but Black ends up losing some time: 11.♙g5 h6 12.♙f4 ♙h7 13.0-0 ♗a5 (13...♙d7 14.♘d5 ♘e5 was played in two email games, but 15.♙e3!± and f2-f4 is an improvement) 14.♞ab1 ♘e5 15.b4 ♗d8 16.♙e3 and Black remains passive – a common story against the Bind;

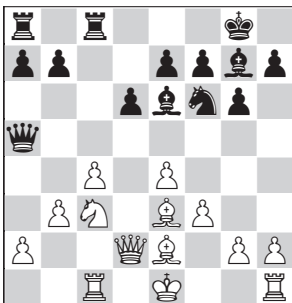
C22) 10...♗a5 11.f3 ♙e6 12.♝c1 transposes to 10...♙e6;

C23) 10...a5!?! is the main trend, but Caruana-Antipov, Gibraltar 2017, showed a nice idea for White: 11.f3 (we could also reach this position with the 7.f3 move order) 11...a4



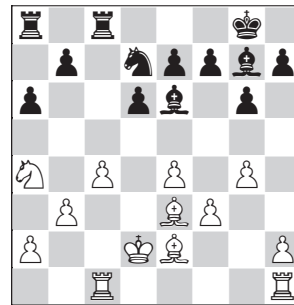
12. ♕f2! ♖a5 (other moves are met in the same way) 13. ♖ac1 ♙e6
 14. ♘d5 ♙xd5 15. ♗xa5 ♖xa5 16. cxd5
 Compared to 11.0-0, White's king is better placed on f2. Black probably has to try and change the position, but after 16...e6!N 17.dxe6 (17. ♙f4 may also favour White, but it's messy) 17...fxe6 18. ♗e1 White has a fairly stable bishop pair edge and one less pawn island. Black can bid for counterplay, but 18... d5 19.e5 ♘h5 20. ♙d4↑ followed by g2-g3 and f2-f4 keeps control;

C24) 10... ♙e6 11. ♖c1 ♖a5 12. f3 ♖fc8 (12...a6 can be met with the usual 13.b3, but even better is 13. ♘d5! ♖xd2+ 14. ♗xd2 ♙xd5 15. cxd5 as in Dvoirys-Tiviakov, Podolsk 1993. Black faces a long fight for a draw after b2-b4 and a4-a5, and if White gets his bishop to h3, Black will lose the c-file for sure) 13.b3 and now:



C241) 13... ♖ab8!? is Zvjaginsev's preference, but White has a couple of routes to an edge: 14.g4!? (the dynamic choice, whereas 14. ♘a4 ♖xd2+ 15. ♗xd2 gave a small positional advantage in Yu-Zvjaginsev, China tt 2017; 14. ♘d5 also offers a small but nice advantage after 14... ♖xd2+ 15. ♗xd2 ♘xd5 16. cxd5 ♙d7 17.g4) 14...a6 Now 15. ♘a4 ♖xd2 16. ♗xd2 gives us a good version of 13...a6, but I also like 15.g5!N ♘d7 (15... ♘h5 16.f4 f5 17. ♘d5 ♖xd2+ 18. ♗xd2 is an ugly position for Black) 16. ♘d5 ♖xd2+ 17. ♗xd2 ♙xd5 18. cxd5 followed by h4-h5, with an obvious positional advantage;

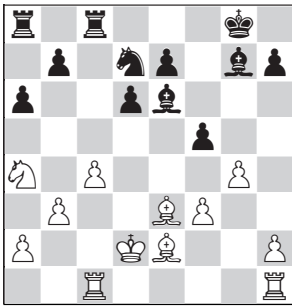
C242) 13...a6 14. ♘a4 ♖xd2+ 15. ♗xd2 ♘d7 (more cumbersome is 15... ♖c6 16. ♘b6 ♖e8 17.g4 ♘d7 18. ♘d5±) 16.g4±



This is to some extent the key position for the Gurgenzidze Variation. Black's problem is that his winning chances primarily lie in White over-pressing or wasting multiple tempi, and in general it is quite difficult for human players to play purely reactive chess in the hope of a draw.

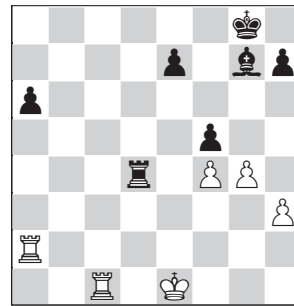
16...f5 (16... ♖c6 should be met with the incisive 17.h4!, when games

such as Brunsek-Benko, corr 2005, and Bazantova-Pino Munoz, corr 2012, demonstrate that passive play by itself will not suffice for a draw. Naturally, if 17...♘c5 White should keep the minor pieces when he has more space: 18.♘c3!± 17.exf5 gxf5



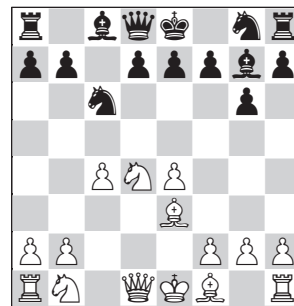
18.h3! ♖f8 19.f4 ♜ad8 (19...♗f6 20.♜hg1 ♜ad8 21.♙b6!↑ and ♙f3 is best avoided; 19...d5!? is one attempt to liquidate everything for a draw, but in the forcing line 20.cxd5 ♙xd5 21.♜hd1 ♜ac8 22.gxf5 b5 23.♗c5!N ♗xc5 24.♙xc5 ♙b2 25.♜c2 ♙e4 26.♙d3 ♙xd3 27.♙xd3 ♜cd8+ 28.♙e2 ♜xd1 29.♙xd1 ♜xf5 30.♙xe7 ♙f6 31.♙d6 ♜d5+ 32.♜d2 ♜h5 33.♜d3± Black remains a pawn down and doesn't have an easy draw by any means) 20.♗c3 (following Sevia-Banawa, St Louis 2015, with 20.g5!? ♙f7 21.♙f3 is also possible, accepting a smaller advantage but also avoiding positions where Black might memorise the drawing method at home) 20...d5! 21.cxd5 ♗f6 22.♙b6 ♗xd5 23.♙xd8 ♜xd8 24.♗xd5 ♙xd5 25.♜h2 ♙xb3+ (or 25...♙b2 26.♜c7 ♙d4 27.♙d3!? ♙b6 28.♜c3 ♙a5 29.♙c2 ♙xc3 30.♙xc3 and Black can't avoid losing a

kingside pawn, because of 30...♙e4?! 31.♙xe4 fxe4 32.♜d2!) 26.♙e1 ♙xa2 27.♙xa6 bxa6 28.♜xa2 ♜d4



Guseinov has held this position on two occasions, but neither of his opponents kept the pawns on with 29.♜f2!, which still requires some accuracy from Black to hold the draw.

Old main line 5...♙g7 5...♙g7 6.♙e3



6...♗f6

A) 6...♗h6 7.h3!±, as in two Roiz-Shukh games, leaves the knight out of play on h6;

B) 6...♙b6 7.♗b3 ♙d8 is a strange preference of Mamedov, which is well met by 8.♗c3! ♙xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♗f6 10.f3 d6 (or 10...0-0 11.c5! b6 12.♙e2!? bxc5 13.♗xc5 d6 14.♗b3

and White's bishop pair outweighs the isolated queenside pawns)

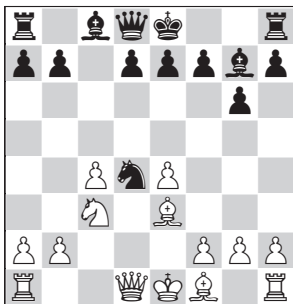
11. ♖h6 ♜g8 12. ♖d2± as in Tenev-Chitescu, email 2006;

C) 6...d6 7. ♘c3 ♖b6 is another version of an early ...♖b6, favoured by Savchenko. We have a good counter in 8. ♘db5! ♙xc3+ 9. ♘xc3 ♖xb2 10. ♘b5 ♙f8 11. ♙e2!↑ and with subsequent simple development, White obtained a durable initiative in Sevian-Chizhikov, Stockholm 2017.

7. ♘c3 0-0

A) 7...d6 8. ♙e2 will almost certainly transpose to 7...0-0;

B) 7...♘g4 8. ♖xg4 ♘xd4 (8...♙xd4?! 9. ♙xd4 ♘xd4 is known to be bad if White plays aggressively: 10.0-0-0 e5 11.f4 d6 12. ♖g3 f6 13.f5! ♙f7 14. ♙d3 ♙d7 15. ♜hf1↑ with a strong kingside initiative) is the main alternative, but this has a poor reputation as Black's concept is quite time-consuming. 9. ♖d1



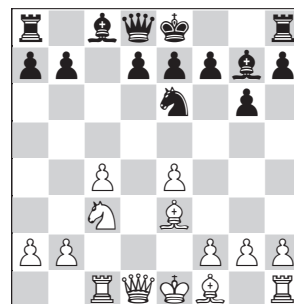
Black has many interpretations of the position, so I'll cover all the important ones.

B1) 9...♘c6 is the alternative retreat to the one to e6, but it's still quite passive and 10. ♖d2 d6

11. ♙e2 ♖a5 12. ♜c1 0-0 13.0-0 ♙e6 14.b3 gives White a nice spatial advantage. As is often the case in the Maroczy Bind, strategic understanding from playing through GM games is more useful than knowing everything move by move, but it should be noted that 14...♜ac8 15.f4 f5 16.exf5 ♙xf5 17. ♙f3 was a fantastic structure for White in Polugaevsky-Suetin, Kislovodsk 1972. White can expand with h2-h3 and g2-g4, or opt for trades of pieces other than rooks in the knowledge that Black's hanging central pawns will become weaker in the process;

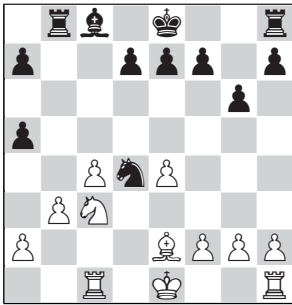
B2) 9...e5 10. ♙d3 0-0 11.0-0 d6 is a rather passive set-up for Black, but it requires a little finesse to handle the knight on d4: 12. ♖d2 ♙e6 13. ♜ac1 ♜c8 14.b3 a6 15.f3 ♖a5 16. ♜fd1± White is well placed to deal with ...f7-f5 activity, whereas if Black sits and waits with 16...♜f8, White can transition to a better endgame with 17. ♘d5, or prepare it with 17. ♖f2!↑N first;

B3) 9...♘e6 10. ♜c1 and now:



B31) 10...♖a5 11. ♙e2 b6 (11...d6 12.0-0 ♙d7 is more passive, and

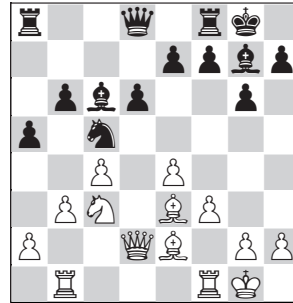
13.f4!± and f4-f5 will quickly make Black regret his decision) 12.♖d5!? (the most practical, heading for a slightly better endgame, though the main line 12.♖d2 ♘b7 13.f3 g5 14.0-0, while less clear to my mind, should also offer an advantage if White plays ♖fd1 and a quick a2-a3 and b2-b4) 12...♖b8 (angling for some counterplay if White trades queens; 12...♖xd5 13.cxd5 ♘d4 (or 13...♘c5 14.f3±) 14.♙d3± leaves the d4-knight out on a limb, and even in correspondence Black loses a good share of the games) 13.♖xa5 bxa5 14.b3 ♙d4 15.♙xd4 ♘xd4



16.♘b5! and White won an instructive game in Smeets-Finegold, Al-Ain 2012. The conventional wisdom is that Black should delay castling after ...♖a5, to play on the dark squares with ...g6-g5 and ...h7-h5 at some point:

B32) 10...d6 11.♙e2 0-0 12.0-0 ♙d7?! (12...a5 13.f4! is also unpleasant though) 13.b4 a5 14.a3 axb4 15.axb4 ♙c6 16.♖d2 ♖a3 17.♘d5±, as in Portisch-Pfleger, Manila 1974, shows a more customary approach to the position;

B33) 10...b6 11.♙e2 ♙b7 12.♖d2 0-0 13.0-0 ♘c5 14.f3 a5 15.b3 d6 16.♖b1 ♙c6 is a funny transposition to the 7...0-0 line.

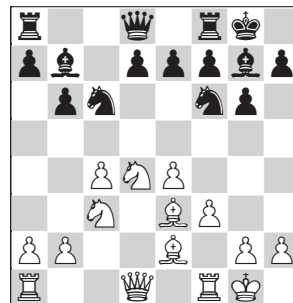


In this case the normal plan with 17.a3± and preparing the b3-b4 break (such as with ♘d5) favours White slightly – a nice example is Schuller-Henderson, corr 2011;

B34) 10...0-0 can be met in the standard way, but a more original interpretation is 11.g3!? b6 12.♙g2 ♙b7 13.0-0 when the kingside fianchetto nullifies Black's ...f7-f5 plans: 13...f5 14.♘d5! with the idea 14...♙xb2 15.♖c2 ♙e5 16.exf5 ♖xf5 17.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 18.♙xb7±.

8. ♙e2 d6

8...b6 9.0-0 ♙b7 10.f3 has a good reputation for White, as Black's attempts to break with ...d7-d5 tend to backfire.



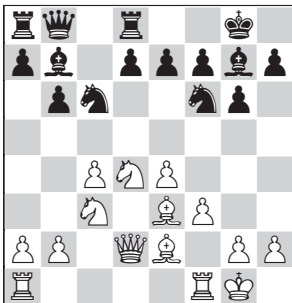
One tip I can give is that ♖db5 often proves a good move, as ...a7-a6 weakens the b6-pawn.

A) 10...d6 only leaves Black with a passive version of the 8...d6 lines: 11.♗c2!? ♜c8 12.♞d2± (Karpov-Hamdouchi, Bordeaux rapid 2005) is a neat demonstration of how to improve White's position from here;

B) 10...♞c8 11.♞d2 ♜c7 12.♗db5 ♞b8 13.♞ac1± illustrates Black's problems with delaying ...d7-d6, as ...a7-a6 severely weakens the b6-pawn, but ♗d5 will soon be quite strong in any case;

C) If 10...♗h5, 11.♗db5!? avoids ...♗f4 tricks, and 11...d6 12.♞d2 a6 13.♗a3 ♗f6 14.♗c2± saw White coordinate his pieces well for a queenside push in Nester-Savchenko, Pardubice 2006;

D) 10...♞b8 11.♞d2 ♜d8 is one way to prepare the ...e7-e6/...d7-d5 break.

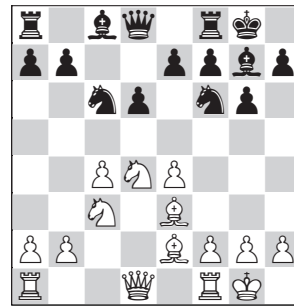


But not for the first time we see that against slow play, we can keep the pieces on the board with 12.♗c2!? d6 13.♞ad1 ♜d7 14.♗g5!± with the idea of pushing f3-f4 after tidying up the position with b2-b3 and ♖h1;

E) 10...e6?! is the most common move, but it doesn't hold up to

scrutiny: 11.♗db5! d5 12.cxd5 exd5 13.exd5 ♗b4 (13...♗e7 14.d6 ♗f5 also fails to equalise after 15.♗f2 ♗e8 16.d7 ♗f6 17.g4! ♗e7 18.♗h4 ♗c6 (or 18...a6 19.♞d6 axb5 20.♗xf6 ♗xf6 21.♞xf6 b4 22.♗e4 ♗xe4 23.fxe4±) 19.♞d6 ♞xd7 20.♞xd7 ♗xd7 21.♞ad1± and Black has problems dealing with White's far more active pieces) 14.d6 ♗fd5 15.♗f2 a6 16.♗c7 ♗xc7 17.♗xb6 ♗xc3 18.♗xc7 ♞g5 19.bxc3 ♗d5 20.♞d4 ♗xc7 21.dxc7± Black will win the c7-pawn, but White is still just a pawn up.

9.0-0



9...♗d7

A) 9...♗xd4 10.♗xd4 is sometimes played to avoid ♗c2 lines, but it will just transpose to the main line after 10...♗d7 11.♞d2. Instead, 10...♗e6?! fails to impress if White follows Fressinet-Kempinski, Germany Bundesliga 2010/11 (10...♗d7

11.♞d3!? is a good independent option, but I'm satisfied with the main line): 11.f4! ♜c8 12.b3 ♞a5 13.♞c1± and Black will not be able to avert the f4-f5 break forever;

B) 9...a6 isn't a very constructive move, but you sometimes see it from other move orders. In any case, one good counter is 10.♞c1

♙d7 11.f3 ♘xd4 12.♙xd4 ♖c8
 13.♚d2 ♙e6 14.b3 ♘d7 15.♙e3±
 when in Petrosian–Galojan, Yerevan
 2014, Black didn't find a productive
 continuation.

10. ♚d2

10.♘c2!? should also give an edge,
 but Black can avoid it with 9...♘xd4.

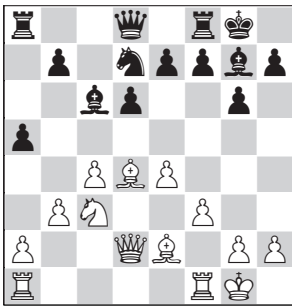
10... ♘xd4 11. ♙xd4 ♙c6

11...a5 12.b3 ♙c6 13.f3 is a
 transposition.

12.f3 a5

12...♘d7 13.♙e3 ♘c5 14.♖ab1 a5
 15.b3 is again a transposition.

13.b3 ♘d7



14. ♙e3!

It is important to preserve the
 dark-squared bishops, given White's
 pawn chain is on the light squares.

14... ♘c5 15. ♖ab1±

We've reached the old tabiya
 position of the whole Maroczy
 Bind, where Black generally relies
 on holding the position – the
 problem is that with careful play,
 White makes progress on the
 queenside with a2-a3, b3-b4 and
 ♘d5. That is why the trend has
 moved toward more aggressive
 plans with ...e7-e6, ...♙e5 and
 eventually ...f7-f5.

15... ♚b6

A) 15...f5?! is the sort of impatient
 break you're likely to see at lower
 levels: 16.exf5 ♖xf5 (16...gxf5
 17.♘d5± was also much better for
 White in Tolstikh-Kuzmin, Alushta
 2005, as Black's central structure
 is very vulnerable to ♙g5/♖fe1
 attacks) 17.♖bd1 ♚b6 18.♘b5↑ and
 Black's position remains passive
 after further improving moves by
 White;

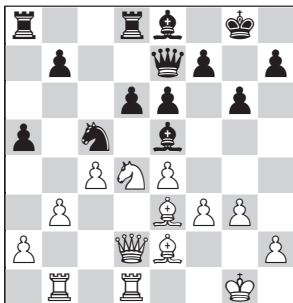
B) 15...♙e5!? tends to transpose
 into ...e7-e6 territory, such as with
 16.♖fd1 e6. An independent try is
 Oleksienko's 16.g3!? with the idea
 16...e6 17.♘b5, when Black would
 normally take on b5, but then he'll
 lose some time to a later f3-f4. But
 in the event of slower play, 17...♚e7



18.♙g5! ♚d7 19.♖fd1 ♙xb5 20.cxb5±
 forces the favourable structure in
 any case;

C) 15...e6!? Even strong GMs have
 failed to grasp this middlegame,
 so we should take this variation
 seriously. Fortunately, by playing
 ♘b5 relatively early we secure a
 small edge with the bishop pair:
 16.♖fd1 (16.♘b5 ♙xb5 17.cxb5 ♚c7
 18.♖fc1 ♖fd8 19.♖c2± is a good
 alternative, playing for a2-a3 and
 b3-b4. It's easy to feel that with

the doubled pawns, it will be hard for White to win, but the engine confirms that Black has some trouble resolving the pressure down the c-file) 16...♙e5 17.g3! (Black was threatening 17...♖h4, so it's safest to block the bishop's diagonal) 17...♖e7 18.♘b5! ♜fd8 (18...♙xb5 19.cxb5 ♜fd8 20.♖bc1 leaves Black too tied up to get in ...f7-f5 in a decent version) 19.♘d4!? (I like this reorganisation, which takes the sting out of ...f7-f5. 19.♙g5 f6 20.♙e3 g5 21.♙f1 ♖h8 22.♙g2 b6± was played in a couple of correspondence games, but despite the engine's optimistic evaluation, it's not that easy to make progress as White) 19...♙e8 (19...d5 20.cxd5 exd5 21.♘xc6N bxc6 22.♖c2 provides a pleasant bishop pair edge)

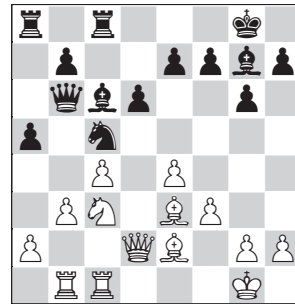


20.♙f1N ♙f6 21.♖f2 ♙g7 22.♜d2± As usual, Black's position is solid, but White has a clear plan of ♜bd1 and ♘b5 to exert long-term pressure.

16. ♜fc1 ♜fc8

16...♖b4 17.♜c2 leaves Black nothing better than 17...♜fc8 anyway, as 17...f5 18.exf5 ♜xf5 19.♖c1! ♖b6 20.a3 ♖d8 21.b4 axb4 22.axb4 ♘e6

23.♖d2± just gives an improved version of the main line with Black having weakened his structure.



17. ♜c2!

This is a crucial preparation for the a2-a3/b3-b4 plan, as 17.a3? ♘xb3! 18.♙xb6 ♘xd2 19.♜b2 ♘xc4 20.♙xc4 ♙d7, winning material, is a nasty trap that has caught out some strong players.

17... ♖d8

17...♖b4 18.♖c1 ♖b6 19.♙f1 ♖d8 20.♖d2 is just a transposition to 17...♖d8 (with two extra moves played).

17...h5 is slightly committal after 18.♘d5! ♙xd5 19.exd5± when White will use the weakening ...h7-h5 as a hook for a later g2-g4 and kingside attack. A good example of this point is Bokros-Pinter, Slovakia tt 2001/02.

18. ♙f1

The position is not very sensitive to move orders, but we don't have to rush here, as 18.a3 h5 19.b4 axb4 20.axb4 ♘a4 21.♘d5 e6 22.♘f4 ♘b6! gives Black real counterplay against the c4-pawn.

18...h5

This is usually played with ...♘h7/...♖h8 in mind. It turns out White has quite a few different

plans to make progress here, depending on Black's set-up. The passive 18...b6 19.a3 ♖a7 20.♗f2! ♙e5 21.♞d1 ♜aa8 22.b4 axb4 23.axb4 ♘d7 24.♞cc1± was Percze-Cottegnie, email 2008, a model game White won in a long grind. 18...♙e5 19.♞d1 b6 20.g3!? ♜a7 21.♙h3± shows an alternative to the queenside plan – White can improve his position with ♘e2-d4 and ♙h6 and support a steady central advance. 18...♗f8 19.♘d5 ♙xd5 20.cxd5! (20.exd5 and following Holzke-Vuckovic, Germany Bundesliga 2004/05, is the usual continuation) I think this option is a bit underrated. After 20...♘d7 21.♞bc1 ♞xc2 22.♗xc2 ♘c5 23.g3 ♞c8 24.♙h3 ♞c7 25.♗e2± Black faces a long and thankless struggle for a draw.

19.a3 ♙h7



20.♙h1!?

This small improving move emphasises Black's challenge finding a useful plan.

20...♙e5

20...♗h8 is consistent, but Black is very passive in the structure after 21.♘d5 ♙xd5 22.exd5!, and faces issues of how to deal with b3-b4/c4-c5 or f4-f5. For example, 22...b6 23.g3 ♞cb8 24.b4 ♘d7 25.♙h3 ♗e8 26.f4 is a rather miserable position for Black – if he plays ...f7-f5, White can reorganise his pieces to target the e7-pawn.

21.b4

Now the game Carlsen-Lie, Gjovik rapid 2009, is a nice model for White to follow, but let's suppose Black plays the knight to a4.

21...♘a4 22.♘e2 axb4 23.axb4 ♘b6 Black's best chance after White plays b3-b4 is probably to pressure the c4-pawn, but it's insufficient after

24.♞cc1 ♙e8 25.♘d4±

when White is ready to make inroads on the kingside with f4-f5.

Summary 4...g6 5.c4:

5...♘f6 6.♘c3 d6:	7.f3 – +0.30
	7.♙e2 – +0.35
5...♙g7 6.♙e3 ♘f6 7.♘c3:	7...♘g4 8.♗xg4 – +0.35
	7...0-0 8.♙e2 b6 9.0-0 ♙b7 10.f3 – +0.40
	7...0-0 8.♙e2 d6 9.0-0 – +0.35

4.1

Yu Yangyi 2750
Vadim Zvjaginsev 2661

China tt 2017 (6)

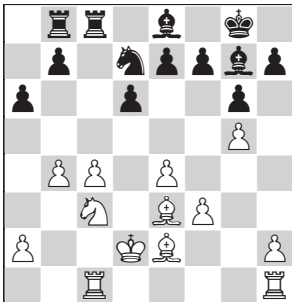
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 g6 5.c4 ♗f6 6.♗c3 d6 7.♖e2 ♗xd4 8.♞xd4 ♖g7 9.♖e3 0-0 10.♞d2 ♖e6 11.♞c1 ♞a5 12.f3 ♞fc8 13.b3 ♞ab8 14.♗a4 ♞xd2+ 15.♗xd2± ♖d7
 15...♗d7!? 16.♗c3 ♗c5 can also be met with kingside expansion: 17.g4 a5 18.h4±
16.♗c3 a6 17.g4! ♖c6

17...e6 18.a4!? holds back ...b7-b5.

18.b4

18.h4 is met with 18...h5, but 18.♞hd1!? ♗d7 19.h4↑ is one way to prosecute the kingside advance.

18...♖e8 19.g5 ♗d7



White's expansion across the board resembles Space Invaders.

20.f4

20.h4! and h5 is more precise.

20...♗f8

20...a5! at least gives Black's pieces some squares: 21.b5 ♗c5 22.♖f3±

21.h4 a5 22.b5 f5?!

One can understand Black's unwillingness to get squashed, but this weakens his structure.

23.gxf6 ♗xf6 24.♗d3

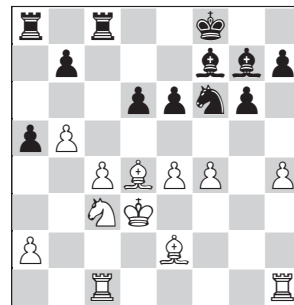
24.e5! dxe5 25.fxe5 ♗d7 26.e6 ♗c5 27.♞cf1+ ♗g8 28.♗d5± transforms White's space into unassailable threats.

24...e6 25.♖a7 ♞a8 26.♖d4

One thing I like about the Maroczy is that White doesn't always have to find the very best moves to keep an edge, this game being a case in point.

26...♖f7

26...♗d7 avoids e4-e5 breaks: 27.♗a4 ♖xd4 28.♗xd4±



27.e5! dxe5 28.fxe5

The pawn is vulnerable here, so I would prefer 28.♖xe5! ♞d8+ 29.♗c2±.

28...♗d7 29.♗e4 ♗xe5+

29...♖xe5 was better.

30.♗e3 ♗e7?

The decisive mistake, as c5-c6 is a pest. Black had to try 30...♖e8.

31.c5 ♞d8 32.♞hd1+- ♞d5 33.c6

bxc6 34.bxc6 ♖h6+ 35.♗g5 ♖e8

36.c7 ♗c6 37.♖a6

37.♖b6! could be played first.

37...♗xd4 38.♞xd4 ♞xg5?!

Better but also losing is 38...♖d7

39.♞xd5 exd5 40.c8♞ ♖xc8

41.♖xc8.

39.hxg5 ♖xg5+ 40.♔e4 ♖xc1
41.♖b7! 1-0

4.2

Iztok Brunsek 2477

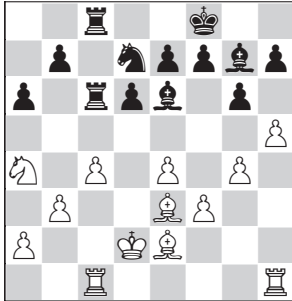
Bostjan Benko 2303

ICCF email 2005

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4
♘c6 5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 d6 7.♖e2 ♘xd4
8.♗xd4 ♖g7 9.♖e3 0-0 10.♗d2 ♖e6
11.♖c1 ♗a5 12.f3 ♖fc8 13.b3 a6
14.♘a4 ♗xd2+ 15.♔xd2 ♘d7 16.g4
♖c6 17.h4 ♖ac8

17...♘c5 18.♘c3 Black is unable
to free himself here: 18...b5?! (if
18...♖c7 19.b4 ♖xc3+ 20.♖xc3 ♘d7
21.♖hc1± and ...a6-a5 can be met
with ♖a3) 19.♘d5 ♖xd5 20.exd5
♖cc8 21.b4 ♘a4 22.cxb5±

18.h5 ♔f8



19.♘c3! b5

Black's typical break, but it also
loosens the queenside.

20.♘d5 bxc4 21.♖xc4

White should retain a set of rooks
for his initiative: 21.♖xc4! ♖xc4
22.♖xc4 a5 23.♖a6 ♖b8 24.♘c7↑
21...♘e5 22.♖e2 ♖xc1 23.♖xc1
♖xc1 24.♔xc1± a5?!

24...gxh5 25.gxh5 a5 avoids the
boxing in of the g7-bishop.

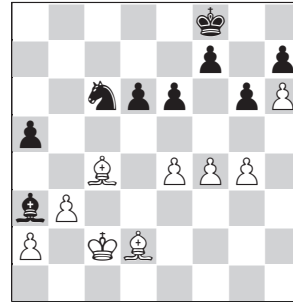
25.h6! ♖h8 26.♖d2 ♘c6 27.♔d1
♖e5 28.♘b6 ♖d4

28...♘b4 29.♖c4 ♖d4 30.♘d5 ♘xa2
31.♖xa5 ♖c5 32.♔c2 ♖xd5 33.exd5
♘b4+ 34.♔c3 ♘a2+ 35.♔d3 ♘b4+
36.♔e4± gives White scope to make
progress on the kingside.

29.♘c4 ♖xc4 30.♖xc4 ♖b2

30...♖c5 would have been more
efficient.

31.♔c2 ♖a3 32.f4 e6



33.♔b1

Better was 33.♖c3±.

33...♔e7 34.♖e3 ♖c5 35.♖d2

35.♖xc5 dxc5 36.♔b2 e5! =

35...♖a3 36.g5 ♖b4?!

36...♖c5! makes it difficult for
White to advance his queenside
majority, in light of 37.♔b2 ♖d4+
38.♔c1 ♖c5=.

37.♖e3 ♖c5? 38.♖xc5 dxc5

39.♔b2+—

The knight is too slow for this full
board ending.

39...e5

39...♘b4?! 40.♖b5!

40.f5 ♘d4 41.f6+ ♔e8 42.♔c3 ♘f3

43.♖b5+ ♔d8 44.♔c4 ♘xg5 45.♔d5
♘e6 46.♔xe5 ♘d4 47.♖d3 g5

48.♖f1 ♔d7 49.♖h3+ ♔c7 50.♖f5

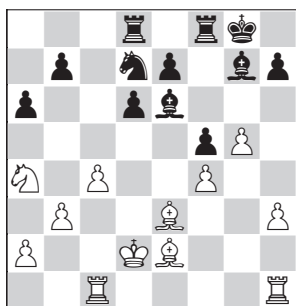
1-0

4.3

Samuel Sevian 2556
Joel Cholo Banawa 2359

St Louis 2015 (7)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 g6 5.c4 ♗f6 6.♗c3 d6 7.♕e2 ♗xd4 8.♖xd4 ♕g7 9.♕e3 0-0 10.♖d2 ♕e6 11.f3 ♖a5 12.♖c1 ♖fc8 13.b3 a6 14.♗a4 ♖xd2+ 15.♔xd2 ♗d7 16.g4 f5 17.exf5 gxf5 18.h3 ♖f8 19.f4 ♖ad8 20.g5



20...♕f7

A) 20...d5 21.cxd5 ♕xd5 22.♖hd1 ♕c6 23.♔e1 e5 liquidates the centre, but 24.♗c5 exf4 25.♗xd7 ♖fe8 26.♕xf4 ♗xd7 27.♖xd7 ♕xd7 28.♔d2± retains piece pressure;

B) 20...♗c5 21.♗c3! ♕d7 (21...♗e4+ 22.♗xe4 fxe4 weakens the structure after 23.♕g4! ♕f5 24.♕b6 ♖de8 25.♔e3±) 22.♕f3 ♕c6 23.♗d5 ♖f7 24.♖he1 (the pressure on Black's centre forces him to initiate complications) 24...♗e4+ 25.♕xe4 fxe4 26.♕b6 ♖e8 27.♖xe4! e6 28.♖ce1 ♖c8! 29.♖xe6 ♕xd5 30.♖e8+ ♖f8 31.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 32.f5 ♕f7 33.f6 (Black's g7-bishop ends up lost or trapped) 33...♕xf6 (33...♕h8 34.♖e7 ♖e8 35.♖xb7±) 34.gxf6 ♖e8 35.♖g1±

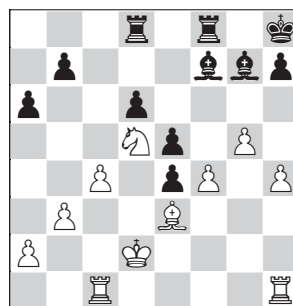
Better opposite-coloured bishop endgames offer good practical chances with rooks on the board.

21.♕f3 ♗c5 22.♗c3 e5 23.♗d5± ♔h8

Black doesn't have an easy way to release the tension, but perhaps he should increase it with 23...b5!? 24.fxe5 ♕xe5⇒.

24.h4! ♗e4+?

Better was 24...exf4 25.♗xf4 ♕e5. **25.♕xe4 fxe4**



26.f5!

This pawn sacrifice completely binds Black's pieces.

26...♕xd5 27.cxd5 ♖xf5 28.♖c7± ♔g8

28...b5

29.♖hc1

29.♖xb7 was better.

29...♖f3 30.♖xb7 ♖h3 31.♖cc7

Some of the subsequent decisions suggest severe mutual time pressure.

31...♕h8?

31...♕f8 32.♖xh7 ♖c8±

32.♖xh7+– ♖h2+ 33.♔e1 ♖f8 34.g6

34.♖h6! ♖f3 35.♖g6+ ♔f8

36.♖xd6+–

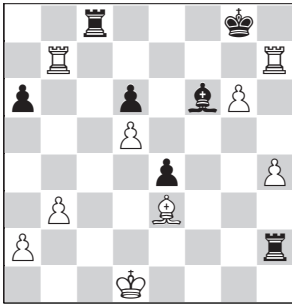
34...♖c8 35.♕g5 ♕f6 36.♔d1?

36.♖b8! ♖xb8 37.♕xf6

36...e3?

36...♙xg5 37.hxg5 ♖hc2! =

37.♙xe3 e4



38.♖bc7

38.h5! and dancing toward the checking h2-rook was the way to win.

38...♖xc7 39.♖xc7 ♖xh4 40.♖f7 ♙e5

41.a4±

White eventually converted his extra pawn, but that is not the subject for an opening manual (1-0, 60).

4.4

Samuel Sevian 2603

Vladislav Chizhikov 2262

Stockholm 2017 (8)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4

♙g7 5.c4 ♘c6 6.♙e3 d6 7.♘c3

♖b6 8.♘db5 ♙xc3+ 9.♘xc3 ♖xb2

10.♘b5 ♖f8 11.♙e2↑ ♘f6

11...♖e5?! 12.0-0! ♖xe4 13.c5!±

12.0-0 ♖g7 13.♖b1

13.f3! ♙e6 14.a3 places Black's queen in some danger of being trapped.

13...♖e5?

13...♖xa2! 14.♖a1 ♖b2 is risky, but at least gives Black a second pawn for his suffering. 15.f4!↑ is an apt reply,

with the point 15...♘xe4?! 16.♙f3 f5 17.♘d4 and the dark squares will bleed.

14.f3 h5 15.♖d2± ♖b8 16.♘c7

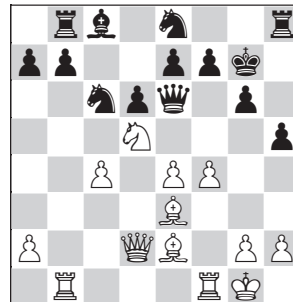
Running Black's queen out of squares. 16.♘d4!?

16...♘e8 17.f4+– ♖f6

17...♖a5 18.♖xa5 ♘xa5 19.♙d4+ f6

20.♙xa7

18.♘d5 ♖e6



19.f5! ♖d7 20.♙xa7 e6

20...♘xa7 21.♖d4+ forks king and knight.

21.♖c3+ ♖g8 22.fxg6 fxg6 23.♖f8+!

1-0

4.5

Lev Polugaevsky

Alexey Suetin

Kislovodsk 1972 (12)

1.c4 g6 2.e4 ♙g7 3.d4 c5 4.♘f3 cxd4

5.♘xd4 ♘c6 6.♙e3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 ♘g4

8.♖xg4 ♘xd4 9.♖d1 ♘c6 10.♖d2

♖a5 11.♖c1 d6 12.♙e2 0-0 13.0-0

♙e6 14.b3 ♖ac8 15.f4 f5 16.exf5

♙xf5 17.♙f3± ♖h8 18.♖fd1

Natural, but the rooks might be best on the bishop's files!

18.♖f2!? ♙d7 19.g3±

18...♖fe8 19.♘b5

Trading queens when holding the better structure has its logic.

A trickster would opt for 19.♖f2! ♕xc3?! 20.♞d5 ♖b4 21.♞b5+–.

19...♖xd2 20.♞xd2 a6 21.♘c3 h5?

Black has to break out, or his weaknesses will be hammered:

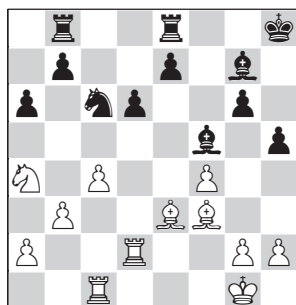
21...e5! 22.♞xd6 (22.♘d5 exf4 23.♕xf4±) 22...♕f8 23.♞d5 exf4 24.♕xf4 ♘b4☞ provides much-needed activity for a pawn.

22.♘a4

22.♘e4 was better.

22...♞b8?!

This was the last chance for 22...e5!.



23.c5!±

Splitting Black's hanging central pawns.

23...♘b4 24.♞cd1 ♕c2 25.♞c1 ♕f5 26.a3?!

Now the game loses its theoretical value.

26.h3!, intending g2-g4, was much more useful, as Black wants to play ...♘d3 anyhow. After

26...♘d3 27.♞cd1 ♘xc5 28.♘xc5 dxc5 29.♕xc5 b6 30.♕f2 ♞ec8

Black had equalised, but later he lost anyway.

4.6

Lajos Portisch

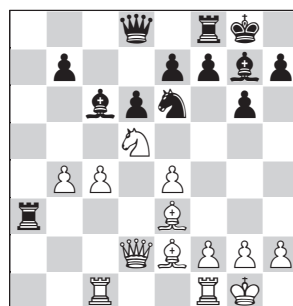
2645

Helmut Pfleger

2535

Manila 1974 (11)

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 g6 6.e4 ♕g7 7.♕e3 ♘g4 8.♖xg4 ♘xd4 9.♖d1 ♘e6 10.♞c1 d6 11.b4 0-0 12.♕e2 a5 13.a3 axb4 14.axb4 ♕d7 15.0-0 ♕c6 16.♖d2 ♞a3 17.♘d5



Black is very passive and most of White's subsequent decisions will be between several reasonable options.

17...♕h8

Black has trouble changing the position:

A) 17...♕xd5?? 18.cxd5 ♘c7 19.♕b6+–;

B) 17...f5? 18.exf5 gxf5 19.b5 ♕xd5 20.♖xd5 ♖d7 21.♕f3+–;

C) 17...♞e8 18.♕g4! h5 19.♕b6 ♖d7 20.♕h3 ♞ea8 21.f3 ♞a2 22.♖e1 g5 23.♕f5!+– showed the woes of weakening the kingside in Dammer-Warzecha, email 2012.

18.♕b6

18.♖fe1! first is more flexible.

18...♖d7

18...♖a8 19.♘xe7 ♕xe4 20.♖xd6±

19.f4 f5

This move is almost always weakening, but few would be willing to allow kingside expansion to boot, e.g. 19...♖fa8 20.f5 ♘f8 21.fxg6 fxg6 22.♖f7±.

20.exf5 gxf5 21.♙f3

Or 21.♖fe1.

21...♖fa8 22.♖ce1 ♖a1 23.b5 ♙xd5

24.♖xd5+- ♘d8 25.♖xa1 ♖xa1

26.♖xa1 ♙xa1 27.c5!

The passed c-pawn will quash Black's resistance.

27...e6 28.c6 bxc6 29.bxc6 exd5

30.cxd7 ♙f6 31.♙xd5 ♙g7 32.♙c4

♙e7 33.♙f2 ♘c6 1-0

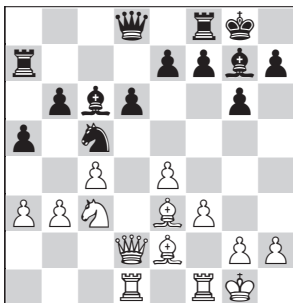
4.7

Jean Claude Schuller 2376

Gregory Henderson 2024

ICCF email 2011

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.c4 ♘f6 6.♘c3 d6 7.♙e2 ♙g7 8.♙e3 0-0 9.0-0 ♙d7 10.♖d2 ♘xd4 11.♙xd4 ♙c6 12.f3 a5 13.b3 ♘d7 14.♙e3 ♘c5 15.♖ab1 b6 16.a3± ♖a7 16...♖c7 17.♘d5!/? ♙xd5 18.exd5± is a typical transformation, when White can play f4-f5 or b3-b4 depending on Black's set-up (18.♖xd5 ♖fd8 19.♖d2 e5! and ...♘e6-d4 is harder to crack).



17.♘d5!

17.♙d1 ♖a8 18.♙c2±

17...♖a8

17...e6 meets the tactical blow

18.♘xb6! ♖b7 19.b4! axb4 20.axb4

♖xb6 21.♖xd6 ♘xe4 22.♖d3 ♖c7

23.fxe4 ♖d8 24.♖c2±.

If 17...♙xd5!/? 18.cxd5±.

18.♖fd1 ♖e8 19.♙g5 ♙e5

19...♘e6 20.♙h6 ♙xh6 21.♖xh6↑

hands White good attacking chances with h4-h5, but in the game Black's knight sinks in quicksand.

20.b4 axb4 21.axb4 ♘a4?! 22.♖bc1±

♖d7 23.♖c2 ♙xd5 24.♖xd5 ♖a7

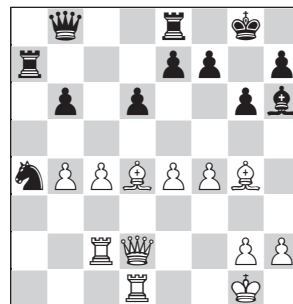
25.♖d2 ♖ec8 26.♙e3 ♖b8 27.f4

♙g7 28.♙f3 ♖a7 29.♙g4 ♖e8

30.♙d4

Now White plays on the kingside, as far away from the a4-knight as possible. 30.♖dc1±

30...♙h6?



30...♙xd4+ 31.♖xd4 ♖c7 32.f5!±

31.e5!+- ♖d8

31...dxe5 32.♙xe5 ♖xe5 33.fxe5

♙xd2 34.♖dxd2

32.e6

White's space advantage on the kingside translates to a decisive attack.

32...f5 33.♙xf5! ♖f8

33...gxf5 34.♖f2 ♖c8 35.♖g3+ ♜f8
36.♞e1
34.♙e4 d5 35.cxd5 ♙xf4 36.♖d3
♙xh2+ 37.♜h1 ♞f4 38.♙xg6 ♞h4
39.♙xh7+ 1-0

4.8

Jan Smeets 2614

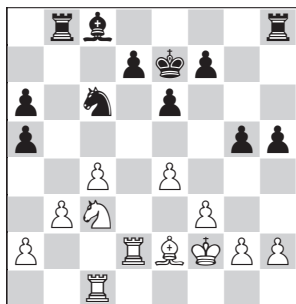
Benjamin Finegold 2498

Al-Ain 2012 (1)

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 ♟c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♟xd4
g6 5.c4 ♙g7 6.♙e3 ♟f6 7.♟c3 ♟g4
8.♖xg4 ♟xd4 9.♖d1 ♟e6 10.♞c1
♖a5 11.♙e2 b6 12.♖d5 ♞b8
13.♖xa5 bxa5 14.b3 ♙d4 15.♙xd4
♟xd4 16.♟b5!± ♟c6?!
After 16...♟xe2 17.♜xe2 a6 18.♟c3
♙b7 19.♞hd1 Black would be
robustly placed, but for the fact
he can't hold back both c4-c5 and
e4-e5: 19...♙c6 (19...f6 20.c5!±)
20.e5!N ♙xg2 21.f3↑

17.f3
17.0-0
17...a6 18.♟c3 e6
18...♟d4!?

19.♜f2 ♜e7 20.♞hd1± g5
20...d6
21.♞d2
21.c5!
21...h5



22.h4! f6 23.c5

Black's structure is growing weaker by the move.

23...♞b4

23...♙b7 24.♟a4 ♟e5 25.♟b6±

24.♞cd1 ♟e5 25.♟a4 ♙b7 26.♟b6

♙c6 27.♙xa6

27.hxg5 fxg5 28.♙xa6

27...♞g8

Possibly time pressure was the cause of the forthcoming indecisive play of our combatants.

28.♙e2

28.♞b1! a4 29.♞dd1

28...gxh4! 29.♞d4?!

29.♞d6±

29...♞xd4 30.♞xd4 ♟g6?

30...h3! 31.gxh3 h4 with ideas of ...♞g3/...♟e5-g6-f4 shifts the game's trend.

31.a3 ♟f4 32.♙f1± e5?

32...♞b8 33.b4 axb4 34.axb4

33.♞d6

33.♞d1 was better.

33...♞b8 34.♞d1 ♟e6 35.b4 axb4

36.axb4 ♟d4 37.♙c4

37.♙a6! prevents 37...d6? due to 38.b5!.

37...d6! 38.♞h1 dxc5?

38...f5! was the only way to disrupt White's hold. Now Black gets ground down.

39.bxc5 ♟e6 40.♙xe6 ♜xe6

41.♞xh4 ♞d8 42.♞xh5 ♞d2+

43.♜g3+- ♞c2 44.♞h7 ♞xc5

45.♟c8! ♙xe4 46.♞e7+ ♟d5

47.fxg4+ ♜xe4 48.♟d6+ ♟d5 49.♟f5

♜e4 50.♜g4 ♞c2 51.g3 ♞c6 52.♞d7

♞a6 53.♞d6 ♞xd6 54.♟xd6+ ♟d5

55.♟e8 ♜e6 56.♟g7+ ♟d5 57.♜f5

e4 58.♟e6 e3 59.♟f4+ 1-0

4.9

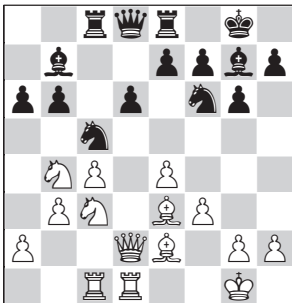
Anatoly Karpov 2674
Hicham Hamdouchi 2559

Bordeaux 2005 (3)

1. ♘f3 ♘f6 **2.** c4 c5 **3.** ♘c3 g6 **4.** d4
cxd4 **5.** ♘xd4 ♙g7 **6.** e4 d6 **7.** ♙e2
 ♘c6 **8.** ♘c2 **0-0** **9.** 0-0 **b6** **10.** ♙e3 ♙b7
11. ♗d2 ♜c8 **12.** f3± ♘e5

Black has several options, but White can meet them in a similar way:

- A) 12... ♗d7 13. ♜fd1 ♜fd8 14. ♜ac1 ♗e8 15. ♘a3!? ♗f8 16. ♘ab5↑;
 - B) 12... ♗c7 13. ♜ac1 ♗b8 14. b3 ♜fd8 15. ♜fd1 ♘e5 16. ♘d5 ♜e8 17. ♙g5 forced Black back in Radovanovic-Herman, Novi Sad 2016;
 - C) 12... ♘d7 13. ♜ad1 f5?! 14. exf5 gxf5 15. f4!±;
 - D) 12... ♜e8 13. ♜ad1 ♘e5 14. b3 ♗c7 15. ♘b4!? ♗b8 16. ♘bd5 ♘xd5 17. exd5 ♘d7 18. f4↑
- 13.** b3 **a6** **14.** ♜ac1 ♘ed7 **15.** ♘b4
 Or 15. ♜fd1 ♜e8 16. ♘b4.
15... ♜e8 **16.** ♜fd1 ♘c5



17. ♙f1

Karpov makes incremental improvements to run Black's clock down, but 17. ♘bd5! was more incisive.

17... ♘fd7 **18.** ♖h1 ♙e5
 18... ♘e5
19. ♘bd5 e6?!

Black tires of shuffling, but the pawns can't move back!

19... ♙c6 20. ♘e2 a5 21. ♘d4 ♙b7
 22. ♘b5±
20. ♘f4± ♙c6 **21.** ♘h3
 21. ♘fe2!
21... ♗c7 **22.** ♘f2 ♗b7?!
 22... f5 prevents ♘g4, albeit by further compromising his structure.
23. ♘g4+—... **1-0 (31)**

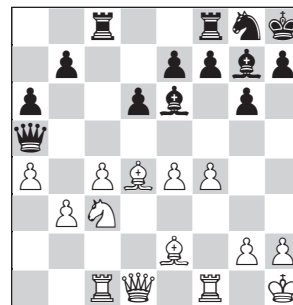
4.10

Laurent Fressinet 2718
Robert Kempinski 2615

Germany Bundesliga 2010/11 (1)

1. d4 ♘f6 **2.** c4 g6 **3.** ♘c3 ♙g7 **4.** e4 **0-0**
5. ♙e2 d6 **6.** ♘f3 c5 **7.** 0-0 **cx**d4 **8.** ♘xd4
 ♘c6 **9.** ♙e3 ♘xd4 **10.** ♙xd4 ♙e6
11. f4 ♜c8 **12.** b3 ♗a5 **13.** ♜c1± a6
 13... b5 fails to 14. f5!.
14. a4 ♖h8
 14... b5 15. axb5 axb5 16. f5!; 14... ♜fe8
 15. ♖h1 ♗c7 16. f5 ♙d7 17. ♗d3 b6
 18. ♜cd1±
15. ♖h1
 15. ♗d3!?
15... ♘g8?!

This looks bad, but who wants to play the computer's move 15... ♖g8 ?



16. f5! ♙d7 **17.** ♘d5 ♙xd4

17...♖d8

18. ♖xd4+ f6

The rest is a matter of technique – just look at Black’s pieces!

19. b4!?

19.fxg6 hxg6 20.♖c3+–

19... ♖d8 20. ♗b6 ♖c7 21. ♖cd1

21.♖e3!?

21... ♖e8

21...gxf5 22.exf5 ♗h6 23.c5! ♗xf5

24.♖f2±

22.a5 ♖c6 23. ♖e3

23.♖d3! is not the first chance

White has had for an attacking rook lift, but he opts to win on the queenside.

23... ♗g7 24. ♖c1 ♗h6 25. b5 ♖d7

26. bxa6 bxa6 27. c5 ♖b5?

27...♖xc5 28.♖xc5 dxc5 29.♖xc5

♖c6± keeps hope alive.

28. ♗d5+–... 1-0 (31)

4.11

Tigran S Petrosian

2425

Lilit Galojan

2317

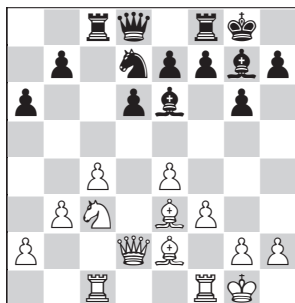
Yerevan EU-ch 2014 (6)

1. ♗f3 ♗f6 2. c4 c5 3. ♗c3 g6 4. d4 cxd4 5. ♗xd4 ♖g7 6. e4 d6 7. ♖e2 0-0

8. ♖e3 ♗c6 9. 0-0 ♖d7 10. ♖c1 a6

11. f3 ♖c8 12. ♖d2 ♗xd4 13. ♖xd4

♖e6 14. b3 ♗d7 15. ♖e3



15... ♗c5?!

This amounts to shuffling.

A) 15...♖a5?! 16.♗d5!;

B) 15...f5?! 16.exf5 ♖xf5 (16...gxf5 17.f4!) 17.f4±;

C) 15...♗h8 16.♗d5 ♖g8 17.b4 is a comical transposition to the game;

D) 15...♖e8 16.♗d5 a5 (16...♖xd5 17.cxd5 ♗f6 (17...♗c5 18.♖c2±)

18.♖b4 ♖d7 19.♖c4±) 17.f4 f5

18.exf5 ♖xf5 19.♖f3± We’ve seen

this type of dream position before.

16. b4! ♗d7 17. ♗d5± b6

17...♗f6 18. ♖b6 ♖e8 makes the best of an adverse situation.

18. ♖fd1

18.♗f4!?

18...a5 19.a3 ♖b8 20. ♗f4 axb4

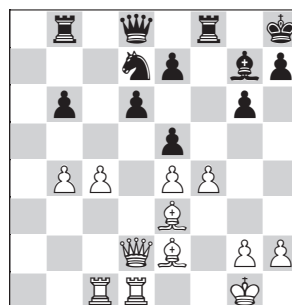
21. axb4

Black can’t avoid further structural degradation.

21... ♗h8

21...♖h6 22.h4!

22. ♗xe6 fxe6 23. f4 e5



24. f5! ♖e8

24...gxf5 25.exf5 ♖xf5 26.c5! bxc5

27.bxc5+–

25. ♖f1 ♗f6 26. ♖f3 b5 27. c5 1-0

The game score must be incomplete, though White is strategically winning by now.

4.12

Nikolay Tolstikh
Gennady Kuzmin

2375
 2510

Alushta 2005 (7)

1. ♖f3 c5 **2.** c4 ♘c6 **3.** d4 cxd4 **4.** ♘xd4
g6 5. e4 ♗g7 **6.** ♗e3 ♘f6 **7.** ♘c3 0-0
8. ♗e2 d6 **9.** 0-0 ♗d7 **10.** ♖d2 ♘xd4
11. ♗xd4 ♗c6 **12.** f3 a5 **13.** b3 ♘d7
14. ♗e3 ♘c5 **15.** ♖ab1 f5 **16.** exf5
gxf5 17. ♘d5±

**17... ♖f7**

As Black's pawns advance, they become more vulnerable to attack:

17...e6 18. ♗g5! ♖b8 **19.** ♘f4 ♖c7
20. ♖bd1±; or **17...♗xd5 18.** cxd5 ♖e8
19. ♖bc1 b6 **20.** ♖fe1±.

18. ♖bd1

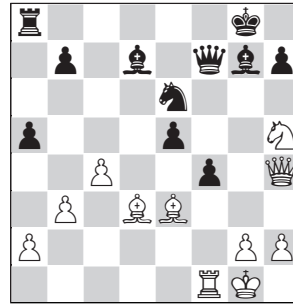
The classic 'wrong rook' question, though it doesn't matter too much. Slightly better was **18. ♖fd1!** ♖h8 **19.** a3.

18...e6 19. ♘f4 ♖d7 **20.** ♘h5 ♖f8?!**20... ♗e5 21.** ♖e1↑**21. ♖e1**

A nice manoeuvre to target Black's open king.

21... ♖f7 22. ♖h4 e5 **23.** f4**23. ♖d2!?****23... ♘e6?****23... ♘e4**

24. fxe5 dxe5 **25.** ♖xd7 ♗xd7
26. ♗d3+– f4

**27. ♗xh7+!**

Most winning middlegames are converted by tactical means.

27... ♖xh7 28. ♘xf4+ ♖g8 **29.** ♘d5 1-0

4.13

Albert Bokros
Erik Pinter

2420
 2416

Slovakia tt 2001/02 (7)

1. e4 c5 **2.** ♘f3 d6 **3.** d4 cxd4 **4.** ♘xd4
 ♘f6 **5.** f3 ♘c6 **6.** c4 g6 **7.** ♘c3 ♗g7
8. ♗e3 0-0 **9.** ♗e2 ♗d7 **10.** 0-0 ♘xd4
11. ♗xd4 ♗c6 **12.** ♖d2 a5 **13.** b3 ♘d7
14. ♗e3 ♘c5 **15.** ♖ab1 ♖b6 **16.** ♖fc1
 ♖fc8 **17.** ♖c2 h5 **18.** ♘d5 ♗xd5
19. exd5 ♖d8 **20.** f4

20. a3 and b2-b4 is the other plan, but it's arduous for Black to swing pieces to the defence of the kingside.

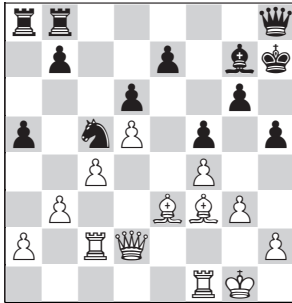
20... ♖h7?

Black can't be successful with a passive defence, and should change the position: **20... ♖d7 21.** ♗f3 e5! **22.** dxe6 ♖xe6 **23.** ♗xc5 dxc5 **24.** ♗xb7 ♖d8 **25.** ♖e2 ♖a7 **26.** ♖xe6 fxe6 **27.** ♗e4 ♗d4+ **28.** ♖h1 ♖g7 and Black has a fortress in this pawn-down ending.

21. ♖f1

21.f5!± could have been played without preparation.

21...f5 22. ♕f3± ♜h8 23.g3 ♖cb8



24.h3! b5

24...♜c8 was preferable.

25.g4 bxc4 26. ♖xc4 ♖b4 27.gxf5 gxf5 28. ♜c2! ♖f8 29. ♘h2

29.♘h1! avoids a check in the next note.

29...h4?

29...♖xc4 30.♜xc4 ♕h6 31.♕xh5 ♘e4 32.♕f3 ♜b2+ 33.♜e2 ♜xe2+ 34.♕xe2±

30. ♖g1+-

Black's pieces are too awkward to cover the g-file. White won on move 49.

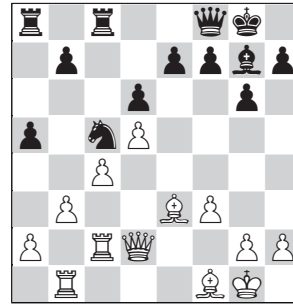
4.14

Frank Holzke 2492

Aleksandar Vuckovic 2325

Germany Bundesliga 2004/05 (6)

1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 g6 5.c4 ♕g7 6. ♕e3 ♘f6 7. ♘c3 0-0 8. ♕e2 d6 9.0-0 ♘xd4 10. ♕xd4 ♕d7 11. ♜d2 ♕c6 12.f3 a5 13.b3 ♘d7 14. ♕e3 ♘c5 15. ♖ab1 ♜b6 16. ♖fc1 ♖fc8 17. ♖c2 ♜d8 18. ♕f1 ♜f8 19. ♘d5 ♕xd5 20.exd5↑



As we have seen this structure before, most of the ideas are apparent.

20...h5

20...♜d8 21.a3 b6 22.g3↑; 20...♖c7 21.♖e1 b6 22.♖cc1±; 20...♕e5 21.g3 f5?! 22.♕h3 ♕g7 23.♖e1±

21. ♖e1

21.g3 ♖c7 22.♕h3±

21...♘h7

The f4-f5 plan of the previous game is less effective, but g2-g4 is a good substitute.

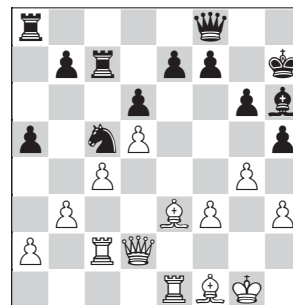
22.h3!?

22.g3

22...♖c7

22...♘g8 23.g4 hxg4 24.hxg4±

23.g4± ♕h6



24.f4! hxg4 25.hxg4+- ♘g8 26. ♕h3 26.♜h2!

26...♕g7 27.f5!

The opening of the kingside settles the issue.

27...♙e5 28.fxg6 fxg6 29.♙xc5 ♖xc5
 30.♗f1 ♚g7 31.g5 ♙d4+ 32.♖h1
 ♚h7 33.♖g2 ♚h4 34.♙e6+ ♖g7
 35.♗f4 1-0

4.15

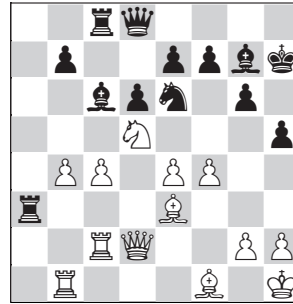
Magnus Carlsen 2776
 Kjetil Lie 2539

Gjovik rapid 2009 (1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4
 ♙g7 5.c4 ♘c6 6.♙e3 ♘f6 7.♘c3 d6
 8.♙e2 0-0 9.0-0 ♘xd4 10.♙xd4 ♙d7
 11.♚d2 ♙c6 12.f3 ♘d7 13.♙e3 a5
 14.b3 ♘c5 15.♖ab1 ♚b6 16.♗fc1
 ♗fc8 17.♖c2 ♚d8 18.♙f1 h5 19.a3
 ♖h7 20.♖h1 ♙e5 21.b4 axb4
 21...♘a4 22.♘e2 ♚h8 23.♘d4 ♙d7
 24.f4 ♙f6 25.♙e2±
 22.axb4 ♘e6?! 23.♘d5±

As we know already, Black struggles to counter full-board play with f4-f5.

23...♖a3 24.f4 ♙g7



25.f5

25.♖e1!? was more restrained, but Carlsen's play quickly gives him a winning position.

25...♘f8 26.♙g5 ♙xd5

26...♙f6 was ugly but necessary.

27.♚xd5 e6 28.fxe6 fxe6 29.♚xb7
 ♚xg5 30.♚xc8+–

One does not need to be a super-GM to convert White's material advantage. Carlsen won on move 48.