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by Grivas Efstratios

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Grivas Chess International Academy

NEWSLETTER 24 NOVEMBER 2026



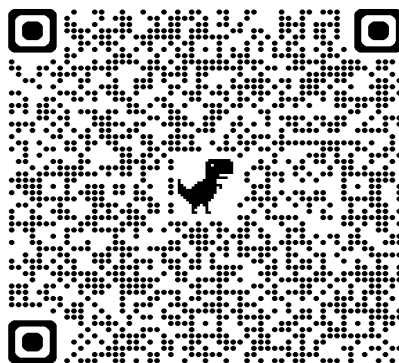
Symbols

+	check	=	equal position
++	double check	oo	unclear position
#	checkmate	oo/=	with compensation
!!	brilliant move	=+	Black is slightly better
!	good move	-/+	Black has a large advantage
!?	interesting move	-+	Black is winning
?!	dubious move	1-0	the game ends in a win for White
?	bad move	½-½	the game ends in a draw
??	blunder	0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
+ -	White is winning	(D)	see next diagram
+/-	White has a large advantage	o	White to play
+=	White is slightly better	•	Black to play

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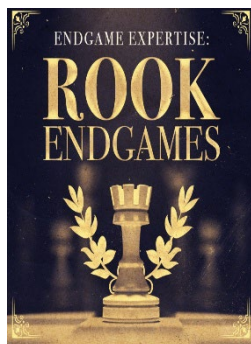
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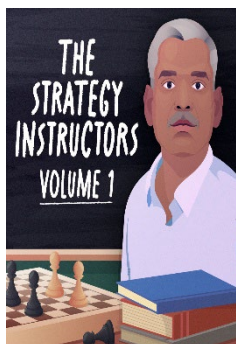
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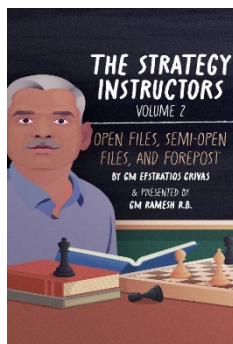
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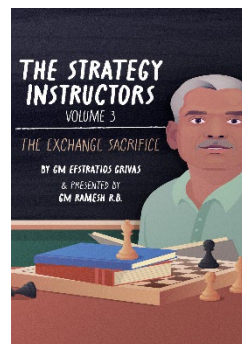
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Ivan Sokolov
Rook Endgames



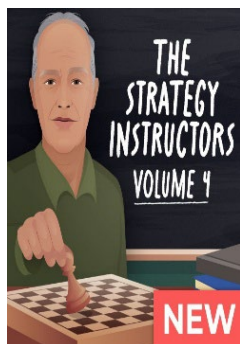
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Ramesh RB
Majority - Minority



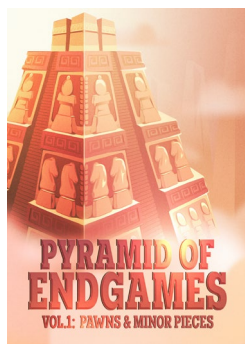
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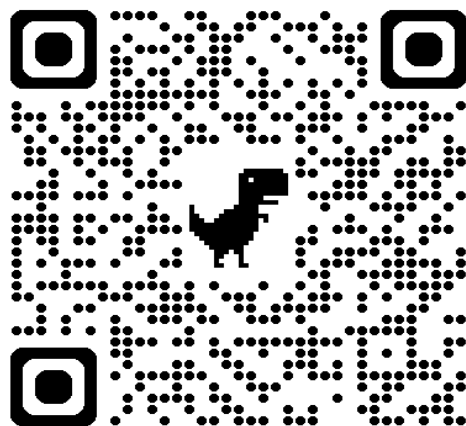
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Exchange Sacrifice



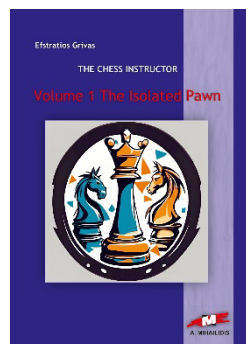
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The Isolated Pawn



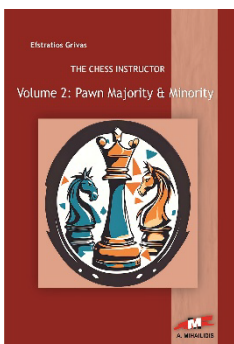
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Antoaneta Stefanova
Pyramid of Endgames
V1



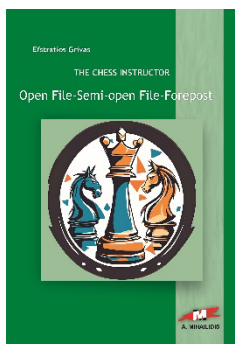
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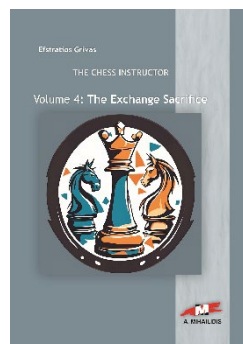
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The Isolated Pawn



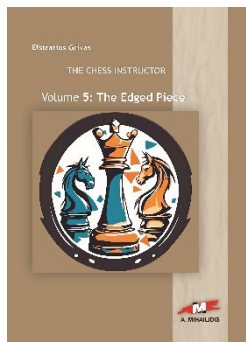
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Majority - Minority



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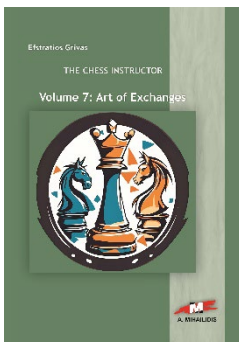
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Exchange Sacrifice



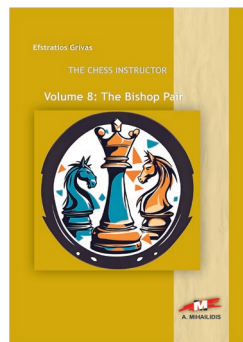
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The Edged Piece



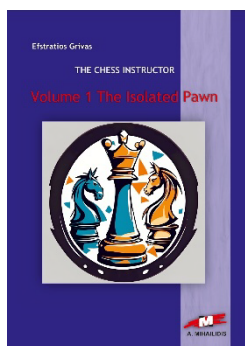
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The Weak Square



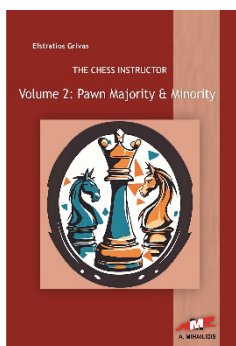
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Art of Exchanges



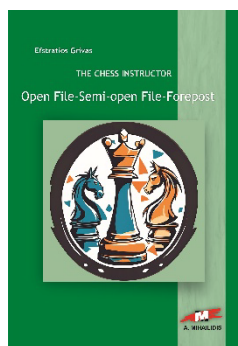
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The Bishop Pair



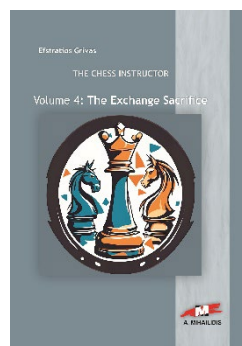
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The Isolated Pawn



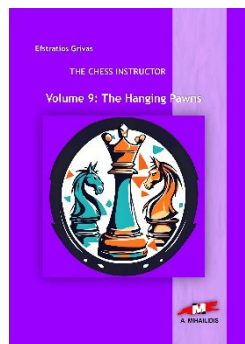
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Majority - Minority



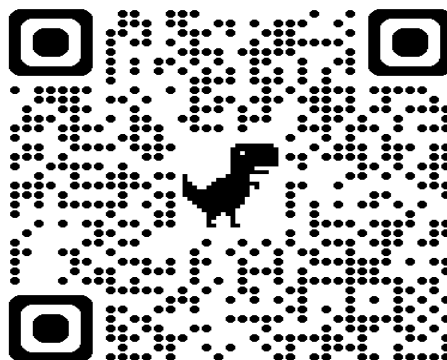
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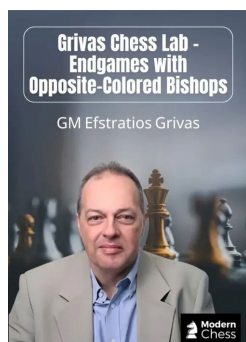
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Exchange Sacrifice



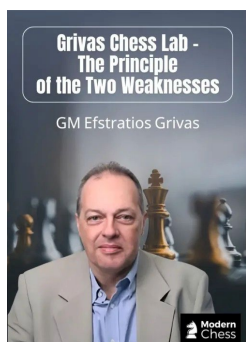
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The Hanging Pawns



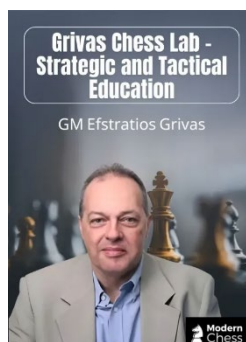
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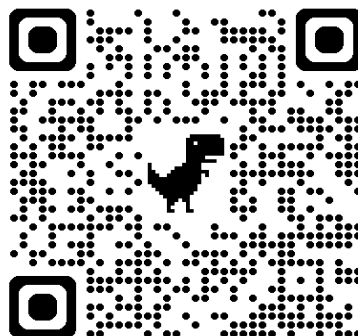
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What Will we do?

- Analyse yourself and identify your strong and weak points: This should be done as follows:

First you will have a deep look at your last 40 games (20 with white and 20 with the black pieces - no quick draws) and you will fill-up some special tables that I will send you.

This will help us to see how you understand your openings, your middlegame and your endgame.

Then you will send me these (light-analysed) 40 games in a ChessBase file and the tables that you have already filled-up.

I will look at them also and correct your tables.

Finally, as a conclusion, I will send you back your analysed games and my detailed opinion about your strong (in order to improve them) and weak points (in order to minimise them) on your play.

This will take about two months (time mostly depending on you).

- Build an Opening Repertoire: With the help of the previous work, we can build-up a full opening repertoire with both white and black pieces.

This repertoire will be your base for the next 2-3 years at least.

I will not only fill-up a decent and easy-to-learn repertoire table but I will send you files on your openings and we will discuss your questions and things that you might do not understand.

I will also give you my opinion in certain literature that can help you.

- Understand Middlegame Technique: I will provide you with lot of middlegame material.

For each subject, after we work on it together, you will read the relative material and you will analyse 3-4 of your own games (if not exist then a choice by you) with this certain subject (positional or tactical).

I will check your analyses and I will provide you my opinion and how it can work better.

- Understand Endgame Technique: I will provide you with lot of endgame material.

For each subject, after we work on it together, you will read the relative material and you will analyse 3-4 of your own games (if not exist then a choice by you) with this certain endgame subject.

I will check your analyses and I will provide you my opinion and how it can work better.

- Understand Tactics: You will work on special files that I will provide you, for sharpening your tactical skills.

- Understand Planning: You will work on special files that I will provide you, for sharpening your planning skills.

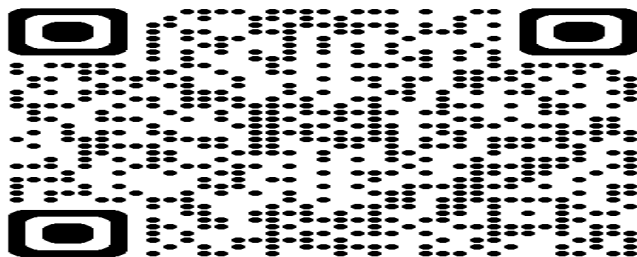
- General Tips: I will provide you with general tips on how you should prepare and play in tournaments.

As the new year is coming soon and I have still 2-3 open spots for Chess Students, I am calling you to check my CV and message me privately, if you interested to be part of my Training Program, which has produced over 20 GMs, as well, as a high number of other titled players (IMs, WGMs, FMs, and Masters).

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All the best - GM Efstratios Grivas

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November 2026 Schedule - Rating Level 1300-2100

Date	Time CET	Category	Topic
Thursday 05	18:00 - 19:00	Middlegame	The Hanging Pawns
	19:15 - 20:15	Endgame	Bishop vs. Knight
Thursday 12	18:00 - 19:00	Planning	Critical Games
	19:15 - 20:15	Tactics	Trapping a Piece
Thursday 19	18:00 - 19:00	Endgame	Knight vs. Bishop
	19:15 - 20:15	Middlegame	Strategic Prevention
Thursday 26	18:00 - 19:00	Tactics	Centralised Safe King
	19:15 - 20:15	Strategy	The Capablanca Manoeuvre

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The Endgame Corner

Queen & Pawns vs. Queen & Bishop & Pawns Same Side

Concept

As usual, the stronger side (usually the one who has the bishop!) has (more than) great winning chances, if he can create targets, or a passed pawn, or a combined attack to the enemy king.

Of course, the perpetual check is always luring and it takes a lot of moves.

The stronger side should always consider exchanging queens, if of course the ending is winning.

So, a queen & pawns vs. a queen & bishop & pawns (on the same side of the board), is a complex endgame where the extra bishop significantly changes coordination and winning or drawing chances.

Key Evaluation Factors

- **Material vs. Activity:** A queen alone, heavily dominates a single minor piece, but the addition of pawns and a defending or attacking bishop alters board geometry and long-range control.

- **Bishop Influence:** A bishop controls long diagonals, which can act as a shield, blockade passed pawns, or restrict enemy king and queen manoeuvres.

However, a bishop cannot cover opposite-colour squares by itself, creating potential weaknesses.

- **Pawn Structure & Role:** Pawns act as potential promotion threats or targets. If the weaker side can create a clear passed pawn, the bishop is often tied down to blockading the promotion square.

- **Perpetual Check:** Queen endings frequently hinge on king shelter and avoiding perpetual checks.

- **King Safety:** The presence of the extra bishop can either help construct a temporary safety net (fortress) or awkwardly get in the way of king/queen coordination.

- **Exchanges:** The stronger side would usually love to exchange the queens, as then

the perpetual check is nullified, allowing its king to advance and attack targets.

Another good exchange for the stronger side is to return his bishop for two or more pawns, clutching a winning queen ending.

- **Targets:** The stronger side should draw its targets and attack them, as the presence of the extra piece would be proven quite helpful!

In some cases, we can even meet a direct attack on the weaker side's king, using the breakthrough technique.

In general, the weaker side should refrain from creating further weaknesses.

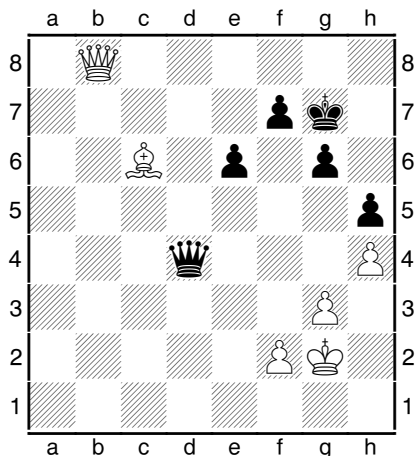
The Wrong Corner Bishop

In this case some 'care, should be taken into account, as some queenless situations might end in a disaster for the bishop.

□ Nihal Sarin

■ Korobov Anton

A06 Vrnjacka Banja 2024 ○



White's extra bishop should clear the result to White's favour, but as Black's pawn structure is healthy, this isn't that easy. The main target should be Black's base of his structure; namely the f7-square/pawn. In some cases the transposition to a won pawn ending (by

returning the extra material), can be a solution. Black's main problem is that he has to defend for a long time, without any real chance for counterplay, except a perpetual check, which White should keep in bay.

47.Qb7!

Concentrating on the f7 target.

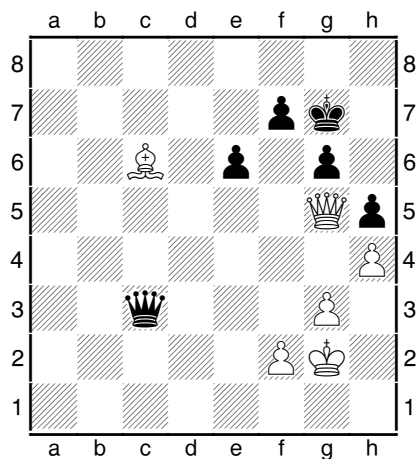
47...Qf6 48.Qb4

White would love to dominate the a1-h8 diagonal with his queen, which would be a real improvement. He could also opt for 48.Bd7 Kf8 49.Qc8+ Kg7 (49...Ke7 50.Qe8+ Kd6 51.Bb5 Qf5 52.Qd8+ Kc5 53.Be8 +-) 50.Qc7 Qe7 51.Qc3+ Kg8 52.Bb5 Qb7+ 53.Qc6 Qa7 (53...Qxc6+ 54.Bxc6 Kf8 55.Kf3 Ke7 56.Kf4 f6 57.Ke4 +-) 54.Qc8+ Kg7 55.Qc3+ Kg8 56.Be2+-, is similar to the game. Keep in mind that if White succeeds to place his queen on f8, then the f7 target will barely survive.

48...Qe5 49.Qe7 Qd4 50.Qg5

50.Be8 Qe4+ 51.Kh2 Qf3 52.Qc5 Qf6 53.Kg2 Kg8 54.Qd6 +-, is good as well, but the game is going on...

50...Qc3 (D)



Well, it seems that White hasn't really made any progress, but he is still 'building'!

51.Be4

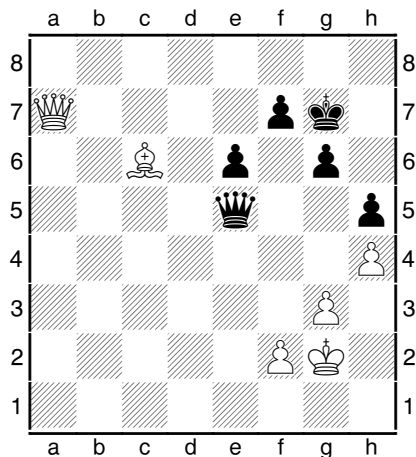
There is no point to drive the bishop back, away from the main f7 target, but White can maintain the winning position.

51...Qd4 52.Bf3 Kf8 53.Qe3 Qb2

As noted, nearly all endings without the queens are easily won by the stronger side: 53...Qxe3 54.fxe3 Kg7 55.Bc6 f5 56.Kf3 Kf6

57.Kf4 e5+ 58.Kf3 Ke6 59.e4 +-,

54.Bc6 Kg7 55.Qa7 Qe5 (D)

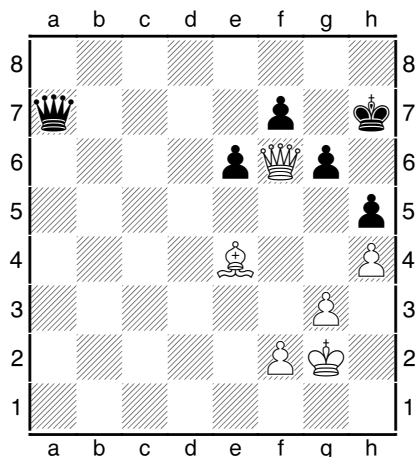


56.Be8!

Finally, the general impression is that N.Sarin didn't have a deep knowledge for this ending, but his class states that he will find/understand everything!

56...Qf6 57.Qc5

57.Qb8! Qd4 58.Qc7 Qd5+ 59.Kh2 Qf3 60.Qf4 Qb7 61.Qe5+, significantly improves White's position, as now the long diagonal has been dominated: 61...Kg8 (61...Kf8?! 62.Qh8+ Ke7 63.Bxf7! +-) 62.Qf6 Qc7 63.Qd4 Qe7 64.Bb5 Qb7 65.Bd3 Qe7 66.Be4 Qc7 67.Qf6 Kh7 (67...Qa7 68.Bxg6! +-) 68.Kg2 Qa7 (D)

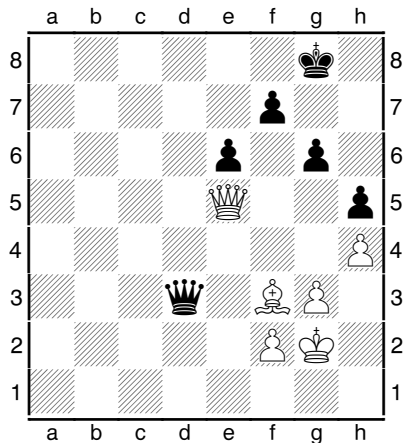


It seems that here there is nothing direct, but White can launch a decisive attack: 69.g4! hxg4 70.h5 +-,

57...Kg8 58.Qd6 Kg7 59.Qf4! Qe7

White gets the long diagonal, as again Black cannot go for 59...Qxf4 60.gxf4 Kf6 61.Kf3 Kg7 62.Ke4 Kf8 63.Bb5 Ke7 64.Ke5 f6+ 65.Ke4 +-.

60.Qe5+ Kg8 61.Bc6 Qd8 62.Bf3 Qd3 (D)



63.Be4

63.Qf6 Qc4! (stopping Be4) 64.Qb2 Qa4 65.Qb8+ Kg7 66.Qe5+ Kg8 67.Be4 Qc4! 68.Kh2 Qb4 69.Bd3 Qd2 70.Qd4 +-, can be also played.

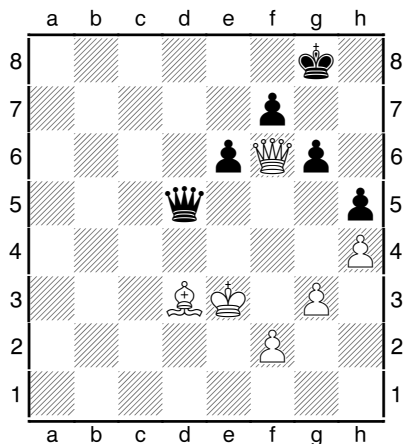
63...Qe2 64.Qd4 Qe1 65.Kf3?!

White decided to include his king in some 'attack' but this cannot bring results as long as the queens are in the board.

65...Qc1 66.Ke2 Qc7 67.Qf6 Qc4+ 68.Kf3 Qb4 69.Bd3

And of course, not the naive 69.Bxg6? Qg4+ =.

69...Qb7+ 70.Ke3 Qd5 (D)



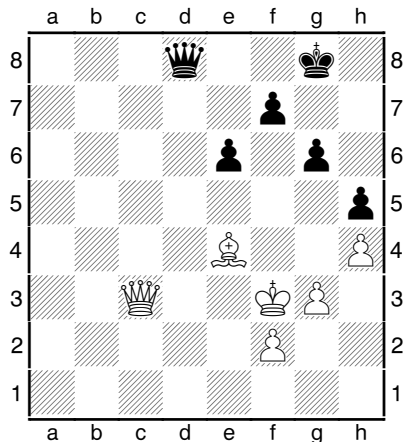
71.Qg5

71.Bxg6 fxxg6 72.Qxg6+ Kf8 73.Qf6+ Ke8 74.Qg5 +-, should win as well, but there isn't really a need for.

71...Qb3 72.Qd8+ Kg7 73.Qd4+ Kg8 74.Kf4 Qb7 75.Be4 Qc7+

75...Qb5, forces 76.Kf3, with a later win.

76.Kf3 Qe7 77.Qc3 Qd8 (D)



78.Qc5?

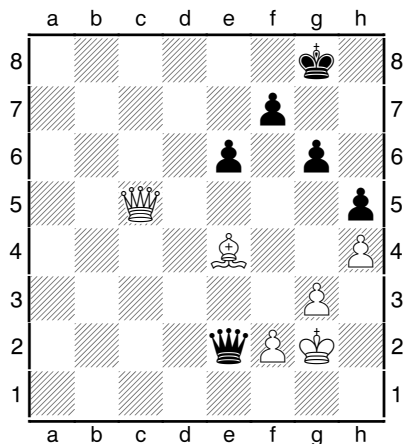
Losing the long diagonal, so, accurate was 78.Kg2 Qe7 79.Qa1! Kh7 (79...Qd8 80.Qa8 +-) 80.Qe5 Kg8 81.Qg5! Qe8 82.Qf6 Kh7 83.g4! +-.

78...Qd1+

More stubborn was 78...Qf6+, although Black will not avoid losing in the long run after 79.Ke3 +-.

79.Kg2 Qe2 (D)

Or 79...Qa1 80.Qg5 Kg7 81.g4! hxg4 82.h5 Qd4 83.Qxg4 +-.



80.Qc8+ Kh7

White wins as well after the alternative 80...Kg7 81.Qc3+ Kg8 82.Qd3! Qb2 83.Bxg6 +.

81.Bf3!

Gaining an important tempo, to place the queen on f8.

81...Qe5 82.Qf8!

Now, the f7 target will soon fall...

82...Qc7 83.Be4 Qa7?!

More stubborn was 83...Qd7, but White wins anyway after 84.Qc5 Kg7 85.Qg5 Qd4 86.Bf3 Kf8 87.Qf4 Qc3 88.Qh6+ Ke7 89.Be4 Qd4 90.Qg5+ Kf8 91.Bxg6 fxg6 92.Qxg6 +-.

84.Bc6! Qc7 85.Be8

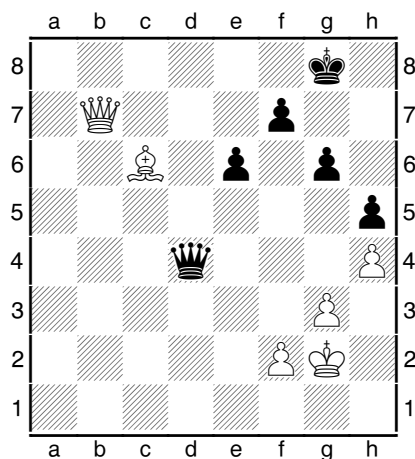
Black resigned, as finally the f7 target falls.

1-0

□ Svane Rasmus

■ Gurel Ediz

A07 London 2025 ○



As we have already noted, this is a winning position for White. But, even strong GMs cannot know everything for any ending! Nothing new under the sun!

79.Bf3 Qf6 80.Qb8+ Kg7 81.Qd6 Qc3 82.Qc6 Qd4 83.Qe4 Qc3 84.Qe2 Qc5?!

84...Qd4, should be more stubborn.

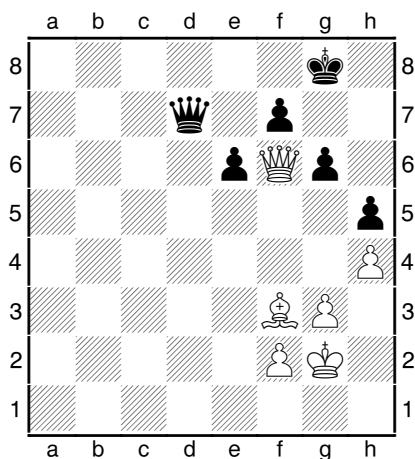
85.Qd2

Why not 85.Qb2+ +-, gaining the long diagonal.

85...Qc7?! 86.Qd4+!

White didn't miss his chances!

86...Kg8 87.Qf6 Qd7 (D)



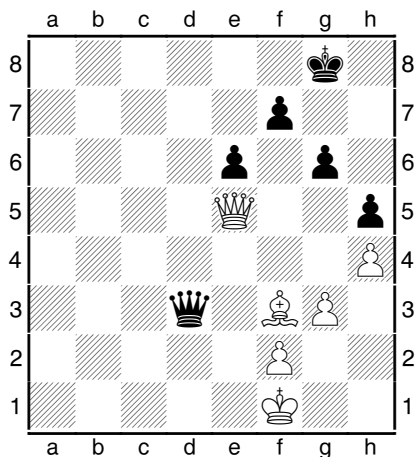
88.Qe5

88.Be4 Qb5 89.Qg5 Qe8 90.Kh2 +-, looks accurate.

88...Qa7 89.Be4 Qc7 90.Bf3 Qd7 91.Kf1

91.Qf6 Qd3 92.Bc6 Qc4 93.Be8 Qc7 94.Kh2 Qa7 95.Bc6 Qa6 96.Be4 +-, should be the right track.

91...Qd3+ (D)



White has made significant improvement, but as this was a blitz game, inaccuracies, mistakes, etc, are expected... No time - no honey!

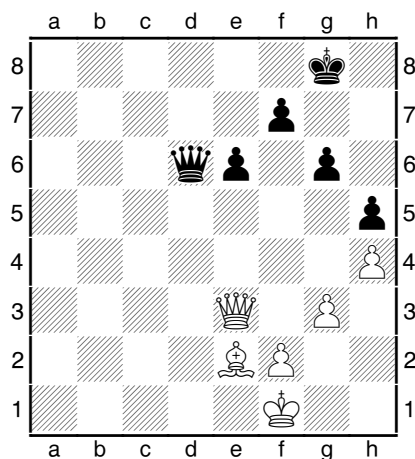
92.Qe2

White seems to know little on this type of ending, but he can still prevail.

92...Qd6

92...Qd4, gaining back the long diagonal, should be more stubborn.

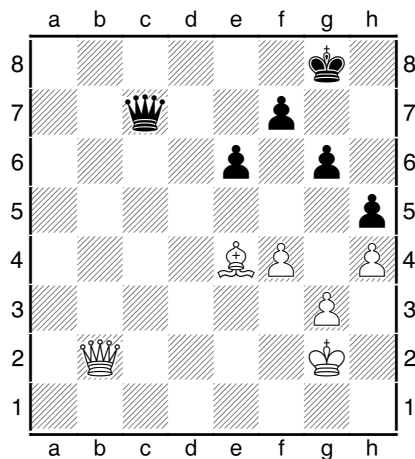
93.Qe3 Qa6+ 94.Be2 Qd6 (D)



95.f4?

Going in the wrong direction, as now the white king is rather exposed. Not difficult was 95.Qc3 Qd7 96.Qf6 Qd5 97.Kg1 Qd6 98.Bb5 Qd1+ 99.Kh2 Qd6 100.Be8 Qc7 101.Qd4 Qb7 102.Ba4 Qa6 103.Bc2 Qc8 104.Bd3 Qc1 105.Qf6 +-,

95...Qd5 96.Kf2 Qh1 97.Bf3 Qa1 98.Qd2 Qa7+ 99.Kg2 Qa3 100.Kf2 Qa7+ 101.Ke2 Qa6+ 102.Qd3 Qa2+ 103.Kf1 Qa1+ 104.Kg2 Qb2+ 105.Qe2 Qb6 106.Qf2 Qd6 107.Qb2 Qc7 108.Be4 (D)



108...Qc4?

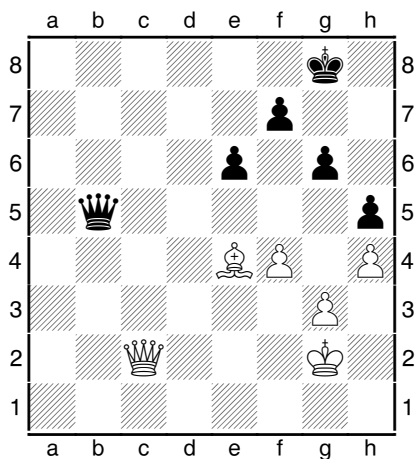
A blitz blunder! After 108...Qd6 109.Qf6 Qd2+ 110.Kh3 Qe1, White shouldn't win...

109.Qc2!

A kind of a double attack, as the queen exchange and the sacrifice on g6, cannot be both parried.

109...Qb5 (D)

109...Qxc2+ 110.Bxc2 +-, is an easy win for White.



110.Bxg6! fxg6 111.Qxg6+ Kh8 112.Qh6+ Kg8 113.Qxe6+ Kf8 114.Qf6+

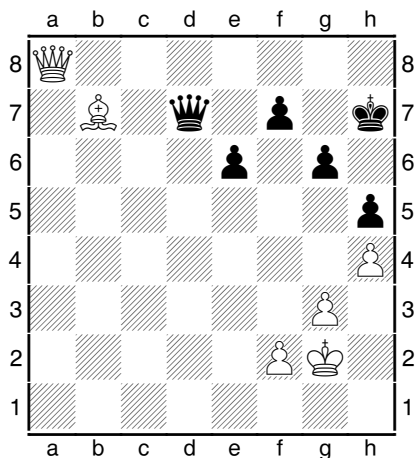
Black resigned, as White can also exchange the queens after 114...Kg8 115.Qg5+ +-, or 114...Ke8 115.Qe5 +-,

1-0

□ Gufeld Eduard

■ Damjanovic Mato

A39 Skopje 1971 ○



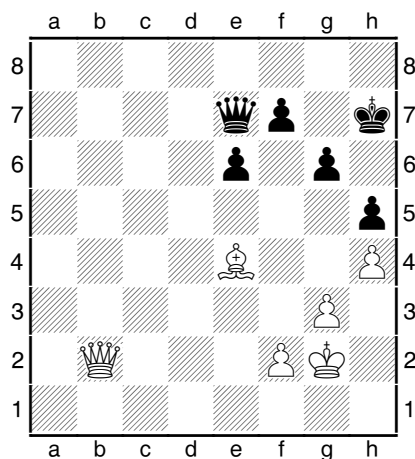
44.Bc6 Qd6

44...Qd4 45.Qf8 +-, is easy, as well.

45.Qb7! Qf8

Or 45...Kg7 46.Be8 Qf8 47.Qd7 Kg8 48.Kh2 Kg7 49.Qd4+ Kg8 50.Bc6 Qa3 51.Be4 +-,

46.Qb2 Qc5 47.Be4 Qe7 (D)



48.Qe5

Full domination!

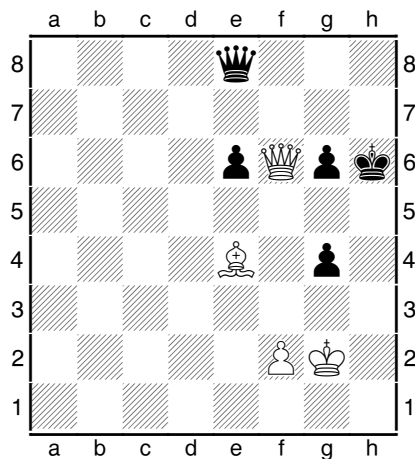
48...Kg8 49.Qg5!

The (already) well-known way.

49...Qe8 50.Qf6 Kh7 51.g4!

And the direct attack decides.

51...hgx4 52.h5 Kh6 53.hxg6 fxc6 (D)



Now that the black pawn structure has been destroyed, it is time for the white king to join the battle. Three white pieces attacking g6, will obviously capture it!

54.Kg3! Kh7 55.Kxg4 Kh6 56.f4! Kh7

57.Kg5 Qb5+ 58.f5!

An accurate and pretty way to end the game, but 58.Qe5 +-, wins as well.

58...exf5 59.Qf7+ Kh8 60.Kh6!

And Black resigned, as he is mated next move.

1-0

The Right Corner Bishop

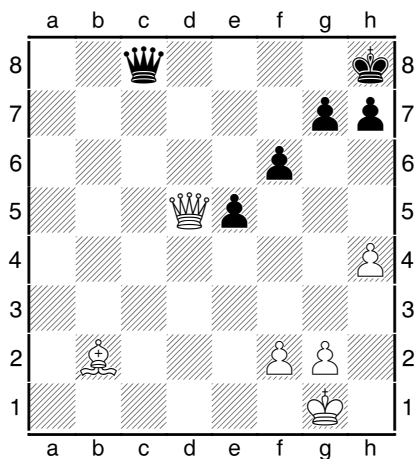
This should be a slightly better version. The bishop side wins by targeting the base of the opponent pawn structure, or with a direct attack, depending on the situation.



□ **Holt Conrad**

■ **Romanchuk Viktor**

D31 Internet 2021 ○

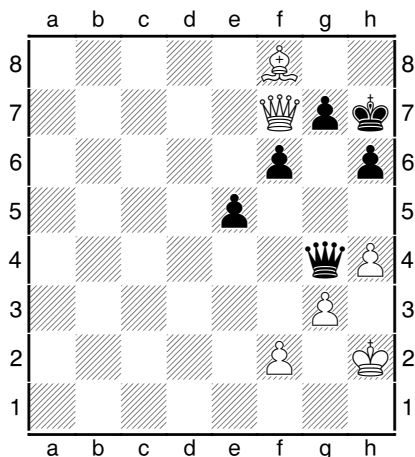


35.Ba3!

Going for the g7-pawn.

35...h6 36.Qf7 Qg4 37.Bf8 Qd1+ 38.Kh2

Qg4 39.g3 Kh7 (D)



40.h5!

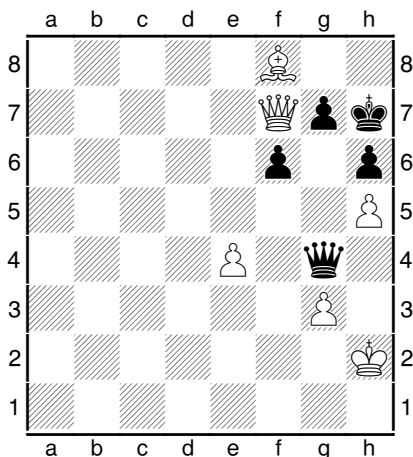
Fixing the black pawn structure.

40...Qg5

Black had to try 40...e4, but anyway he will not survive after 41.Qe8 e3 42.Qg6+ Qxg6 43.hxg6+ Kxg6 44.fxe3 +-.
41.f3!

Zugzwang!

41...e4 42.fxe4 Qg4 (D)



43.Qxg7+!

The pawn ending is the most secure and easy way.

43...Qxg7 44.Bxg7 Kxg7 45.Kh3 Kf7 46.Kg4 Ke6 47.Kf4 Ke7 48.Kf5 Kf7 49.g4!

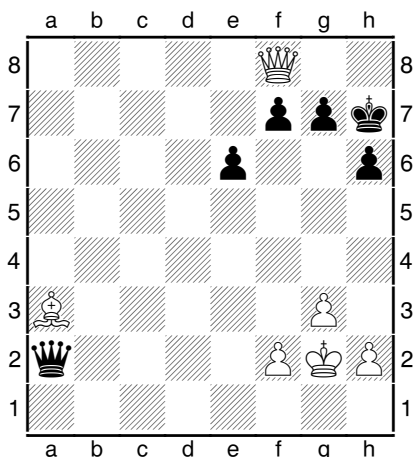
And as White wins easily, Black resigned.

1-0

□ Taleb Moussa

■ Anastasian Ashot

A30 Dubai 2002 ○



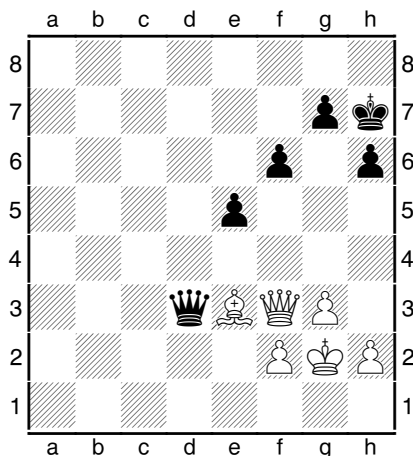
43.Qa8!

Consolidation, avoiding any chances for perpetual check.

43...Qc2 44.Qf3 f6

44...Kg8 45.h4 f6 46.h5 Qa4 47.Bd6 Qa6 48.Bf4 Qc4 49.Be3 Qb5 50.Qe4 e5 51.Bxh6! gxh6 52.Qg6+ Kh8 53.Qxh6+ Kg8 54.Qg6+ +-, is a typical winning continuation.

45.Bb4 e5 46.Ba5 Kh8 47.Bb6 Kh7 48.Be3 Qd3 (D)



The white pieces have been taken improved positions and it is now time for the typical plans.

49.h4! Kh8 50.g4

50.Bxh6, wins as well: 50...Qxf3+ 51.Kxf3 gxh6 52.Kg4 Kg7 53.h5 Kf8 54.Kf5 Kf7 55.f3 +-.
50...Kg8 51.Qa8+ Kh7 52.Qc6 Qd1 53.Qe4+ Kh8 54.g5

And Black resigned, due to 54...hxg5 55.hxg5 fxg5 (55...Qh5 56.g6 +-) 56.Qxe5 Qg4+ 57.Qg3 +-.
1-0

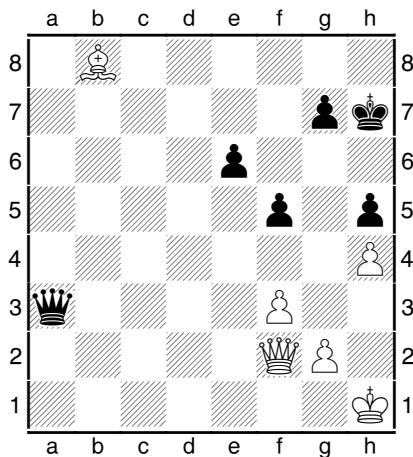


GRIVAS CHESS
 INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

□ Triapishko Alexandr

■ Patil Pratik

B41 Hyderabad 2019 ○



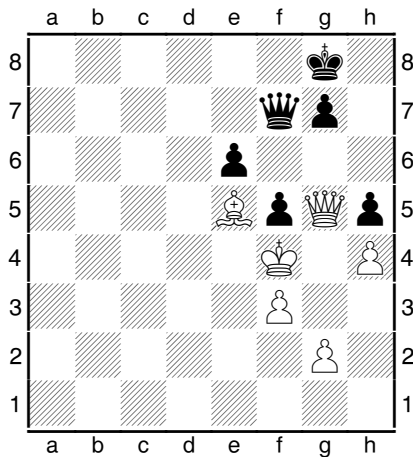
38.Qg3!

Concentrating again on the g7-pawn/target.

38...Qa4 39.Be5 Qd7 40.Qg5 Qf7 41.Kh2!

Time for the white king to join the battle.

41...Kg8 42.Kg3 Kh7 43.Kf4 Kg8 (D)



44.Qxg7+!

The 'usual' liquidation to a pawn ending.

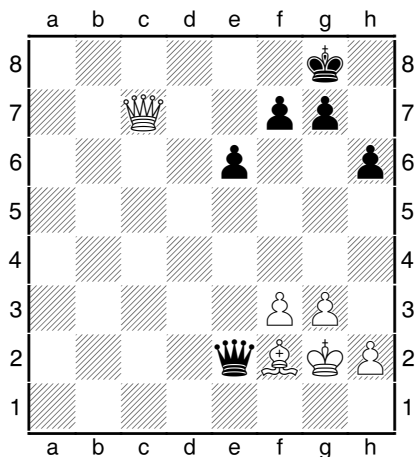
44...Qxg7 45.Bxg7 Kxg7 46.Kg5 Kf7 47.f4 Kg7 48.Kxh5 Kf6 49.Kh6 Kf7

And at the same time Black resigned, due to 50.Kg5 Kg7 51.h5 Kf7 52.h6 +-.
1-0

□ Muzychuk Anna

■ Bojkovic Natasa

A31 Zlatibor 2007 ○

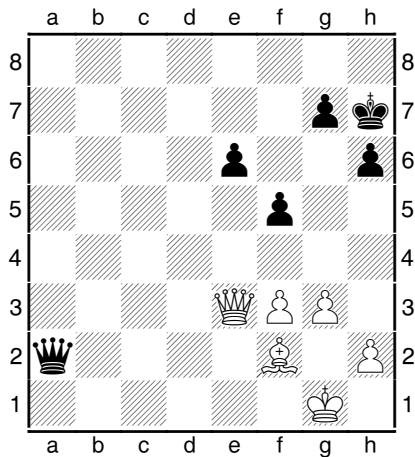


White's king is a bit exposed, but this isn't enough for Black to escape.

43.Qb8+ Kh7 44.Qb7 f5

Black cannot avoid the queen exchange after 44...Kg8, due to 45.Qa8+ Kh7 46.Qe4+ +-.
45.Qb6! Kg6

45...e5 46.Qe6 +-.
46.Qe3 Qa2 47.Kg1 Kh7 (D)



48.Be1!

Preparing the 'battery' on the a1-h8 diagonal.

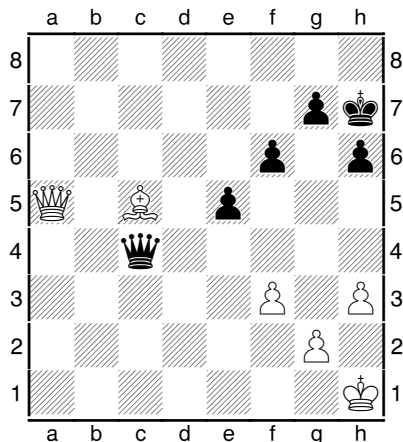
48...Qd5 49.Kf2 Qa2+ 50.Qe2 Qb3 51.Bd2 Qc2 52.Bf4 Qc5+ 53.Kg2 Qd5 54.Bc1 Qb3 55.Bb2 Qd5 56.Bc3 Kg8 57.Qe5!

Pushing Black back.

57...Qd7 58.Bd4 Kh7 59.Kf2 Kg8 60.Qb8+ Kh7 61.Qa7!

Black resigned, as he cannot avoid the queen exchange anymore...
1-0

□ Gavrilescu David
 ■ Ibrahimli Murad Sultanali
 C27 Doha 2025 ●



44...Qc1+?

Exchanging as many pawns as it is possible, its a good defending idea, so Black should have opted for 44...e4! 45.Bg1 exf3 46.Qf5+ Kh8, but after 47.gxf3! (47.Qxf3? Qc1, with excellent drawing chances) 47...Qe2 48.Qe4 Qa2 49.Be3 +-, White would prevail, but not without hard work.

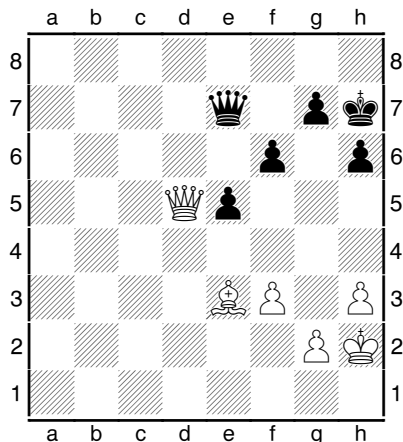
45.Bg1 Qc2 46.Qd5

Now everything is under full control.

46...Qg6 47.Kh2

Why not 47.Qe4! +-.

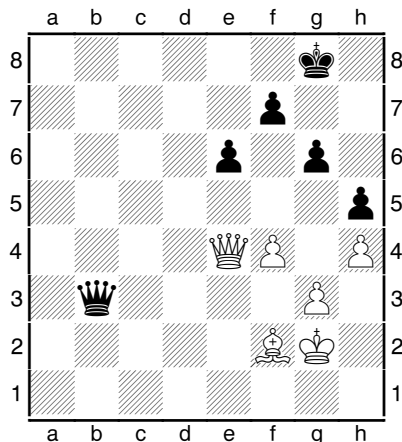
47...Qe8 48.Be3 Qe7 (D)



Probably Black lost on time, but anyway, his chances of survival are slim: 49.Qe4+ Kg8 50.f4 Kf7 51.fxe5 fxe5 52.Bf2 +-.

1-0

□ Mirzoev Azer
 ■ Hirneise Jens
 E41 Internet 2023 ○



In such pawn structures, the defender is about to get mated, under the cooperation of the white pieces on the long diagonal.

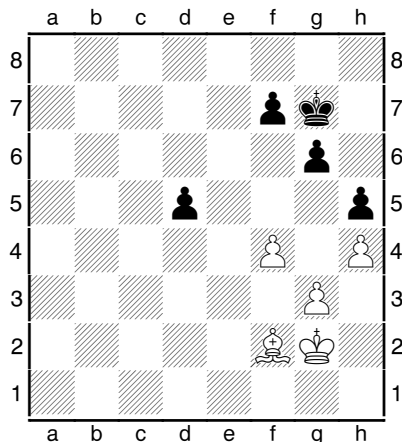
45.Qf3 Qb8 46.Qe4 Qb2 47.Qe5 Qb3 48.Kh2 Qc2 49.Qd4 Qe2 50.Kg2 Qb5 51.Qd8+ Kg7 52.Qg5

52.Bd4+ +-, should be easier.

52...Qd5+?!

Black could try 52...Qc6+, but he wouldn't last long after 53.Kh2 Qc2, will not last long after 54.Qc5 Qa2 55.Qe5+ Kg8 56.Kg1 Qb1+ 57.Qe1 Qa2 58.Bd4 Qb3 59.Qe3 Qb1+ 60.Kf2 Qa2+ 61.Qe2 +-.

53.Qxd5 exd5 (D)



The pawn ending is easily won by White.

54.Kf3 f6 55.Bd4 Kf7 56.f5! gxf5 57.Kf4 Ke6 58.Bc3

1-0

Grandmaster on Fire!

GM Nikolas Theodorou (Greece)

Concept

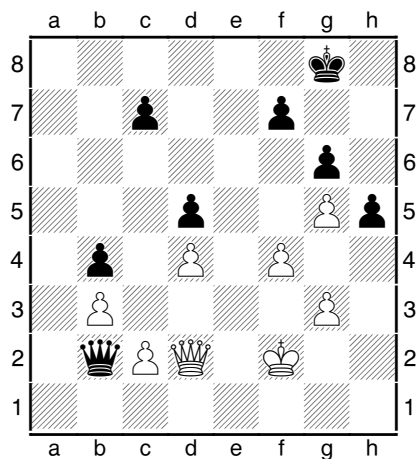
The No1 Greek GM played another great game against the top, notching a good point as well! Let's see how:

□ Firouzja Alireza

■ Theodorou Nikolas

B01 Internet 2026

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qd6 4.d4 Nf6
5.Nf3 Nc6 6.Bb5 a6 7.Ba4 b5 8.Bb3 Na5
9.Ne5 Nxb3 10.axb3 Bb7 11.0-0 e6 12.Qd3
b4 13.Na4 Qd5 14.f3 Bd6 15.Be3 0-0
16.Nc5 a5 17.Nxb7 Qxb7 18.Nc4 Qb5
19.Ra4 Nd5 20.Rfa1 h6 21.Rxa5 Rxa5
22.Rxa5 Qc6 23.Bd2 Ra8 24.g3 Rxa5
25.Nxa5 Qb6 26.Nc4 Qa7 27.Kg2 Be7
28.Be3 Qa1 29.Bf2 Qc1 30.Qd2 Qb1 31.h4
h5 32.Be3 Bf6 33.Bg5 Bxg5 34.hxg5 g6
35.f4 Qa1 36.Ne3 Qxb2 37.Nxd5 exd5
38.Kf2 (D)



The position is objectively equal, because the probability of perpetual check (for both sides!) is high, but both players are ready to fight further!

38...Qb1 39.Qe2 Qh1 40.Qe8+ Kg7
41.Qe5+ Kg8 42.f5 Qh2+ 43.Ke3?!

43.Kf3 gxf5 44.Qe8+ Kg7 45.Qe5+ =.

43...gxf5?!

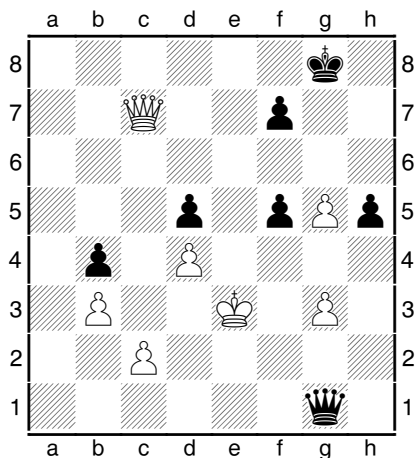
43...Qg1+! 44.Ke2 Qg2+ 45.Ke3 gxf5
46.Qe8+ Kg7 47.Qe5+ Kh7 48.Qxf5+ Kg8

49.Qc8+ Kg7 50.Qxc7 Qe4+ 51.Kd2 Qxd4+
52.Kc1 Qe3+ 53.Kb1 Qxg5 =+, would be accurate.

44.Qxc7

White is still playing for something more, but he should now 'accept' the draw by 44.Qe8+ =.

44...Qg1+ (D)



45.Kd3?

The text is losing. White should have opted for the safe 45.Ke2 Qg2+ 46.Kd1 Qe4 47.Kc1 (47.Qe5? Qxe5 48.dxe5 Kg7 -+) 47...Qxd4 48.Kb1 =.

45...Qd1+!



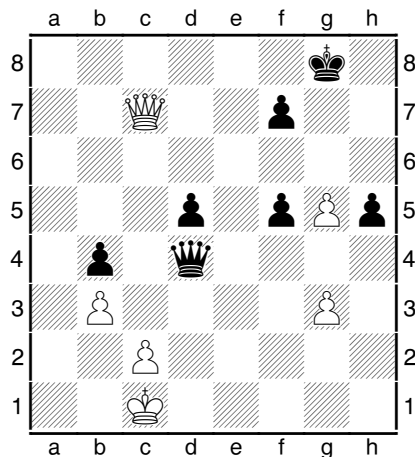
GM Nikolas Theodorou

46.Ke3 Qe1+ 47.Kd3

47.Kf3 Qe4+ 48.Kf2 Qxd4+ 49.Ke2 Qg4+
50.Kf2 h4! 51.gxh4 Qxh4+ -+.

47...Qe4+ 48.Kd2 Qxd4+ 49.Kc1 Qa1+

50.Kd2 Qd4+ 51.Kc1 (D)



Black has won a good pawn and now he must activate his king.

51...Kg7! 52.Kb1 Qd1+

Easier seems 52...h4! 53.gxh4 f4 -+.

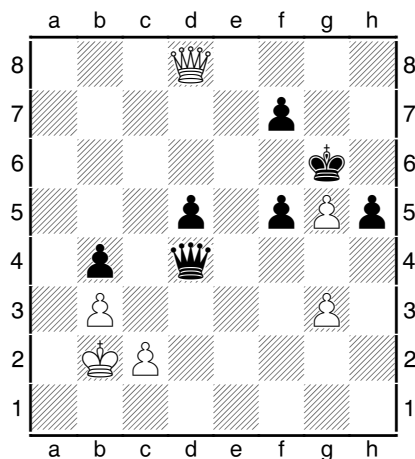
53.Kb2 Qd4+ 54.Kb1 Kg6?

54...h4! 55.gxh4 f4 -+.

55.Qd8! Qd1+?

55...Qe5!, was Black's last chance: 56.Qg8+ Qg7 57.Qb8 Kxg5 58.Qxb4 Qe5 -/+.

56.Kb2 Qd4+ (D)



57.Kb1?

After 57.Ka2!, White should hold.

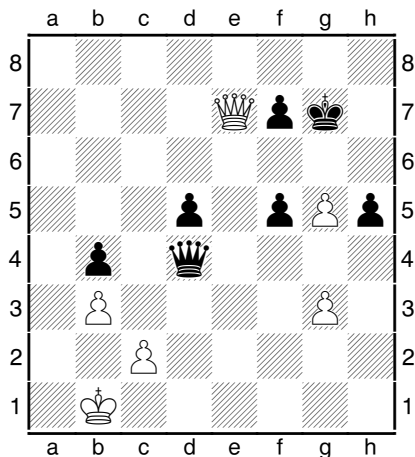
57...Kg7?

But Black missed again the strong 57...Qe5! -/+.

58.Qe7?

Out of the question is 58.Qe7? h4! -+, as well, but White should try 58.Qd6! =.

58...Qd1+ 59.Kb2 Qd4+ 60.Kb1 (D)



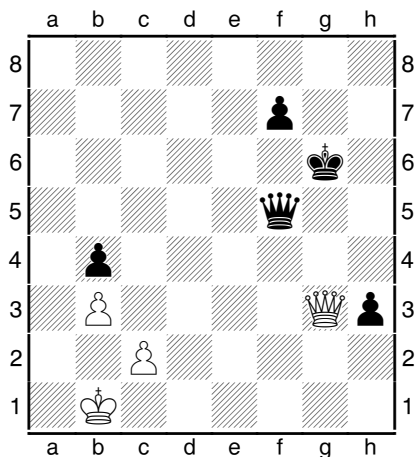
60...f4!

Creating an important passed pawn.

61.gxf4 Qxf4 62.Qc5 h4! 63.Qxd5 h3 64.g6 Kxg6

64...h2 65.Qg2 fxg6 -+.

65.Qd3+ Qf5 66.Qg3+ Kf6 67.Qb8 Kg7 68.Qg3+ Kf6 69.Qh4+ Kg6 70.Qg3+ (D)



After some checks, Black found the best continuation.

70...Kh5! 71.Qb8 f6 72.Ka1 Kg4

72...Qe5+ 73.Qxe5+ fxe5 -+.

73.Ka2 Qxc2+ 74.Ka1 Qc3+ 75.Ka2 Qe5 76.Qb5?!

A tricky, blitz move! But also 76.Qxb4+, loses to 76...Kg3 77.Qc4 h2 78.Qd3+ Kf2 79.Qh7 Qa5+ 80.Kb2 Qd2+ 81.Ka3 Qc1+-+.

76...Qxb5

0-1

The Middlegame Corner

Analysis in the Microscope

Concept

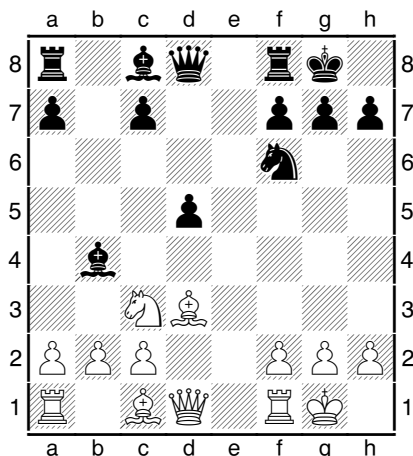
It is rather essential to know how to combine good opening preparation, with lively middlegame ideas and endgame technique. Let's see a typical example:

□ Xiong Jeffery

■ Bjerre Jonas Buhl

C47 Internet 2024

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.d4 exd4
5.Nxd4 Bb4 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.0-0 d5
9.exd5 cxd5 (D)



A well-known position of the 'Scotch Opening'. The fight will take place around the central black hanging pawns.

10.h3

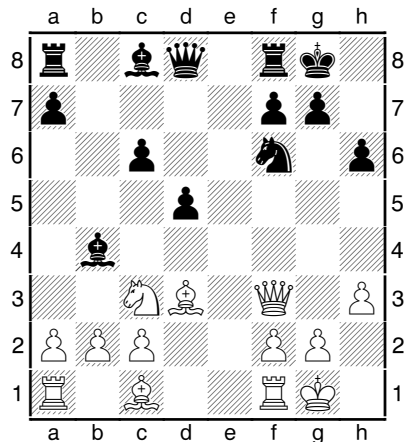
A line that has recently gained popularity, instead of the 'usual' 10.Bg5. White plans to place his queen on f3 (the reason for the text move) and continue with Bf4, or Ne2-f4, depending on the circumstances. Of course, ideas like Na4-c5 (after a darksquared bishops exchange), also comes in mind. Although White doesn't get any advantage, it is a pleasant variation to follow, with a number of strategic elements (like hanging pawns handling) to be known.

10...h6

Also playable is 10...Be6 11.Qf3 c5 12.Rd1 oo Nakamura,H-Caruana,F Douglas 2023, or

10...Re8 11.Qf3 c6 12.Bf4 Bd6 13.Ne2 oo Xiong,J-Alekseenko,K Internet 2022.

11.Qf3 c6 (D)



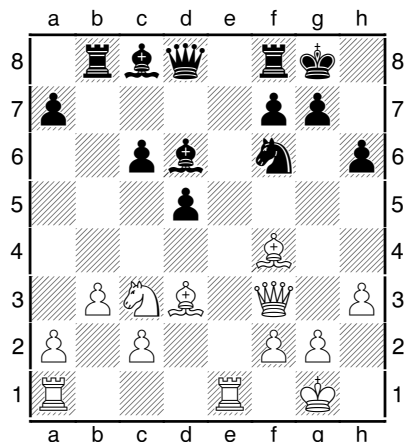
12.Bf4 Bd6

Black should refrain in general from 12...Bxc3?! 13.bxc3 +=, which gives White the bishop pair and possibilities to attack the centre with c4.

13.Rfe1 Rb8

Possible is 13...Be6 14.Ne2 c5 15.Rad1 Rb8 16.b3 Xiong,J-Kamsky,G Internet 2022, with a typical middlegame position of this variation. The harmonious white centralised pieces should be an asset here.

14.b3 (D)



14...Rb4?!

A typical manoeuvre, but it seems that 14...Bxf4 15.Qxf4 Be6 16.Na4 Qa5 17.Qd6 oo Khamrakulov,D-Batchuluun,T Jakarta 2013, is more accurate.

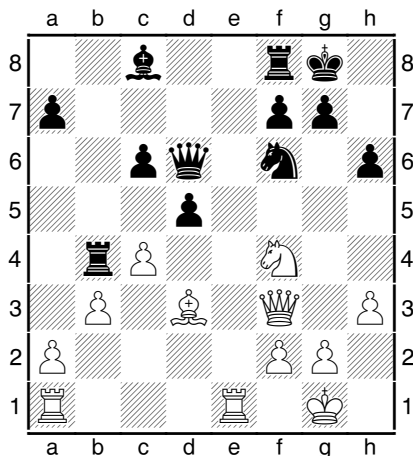
15.Ne2?!

Accurate seems to be 15.Bxd6! Qxd6 16.Qe3 Rb7 (16...d4 17.Ne4 dxe3 18.Nxd6 exf2+ 19.Kxf2 += Eljanov,P-Tomashevsky,E Internet 2023) 17.Na4 Be6 18.Nc5 Re7 19.Qd4 += Ostrovsky Berman,N-Brzezina,P Eforie Nord 2025.

15...Bxf4?!

A number of small inaccuracies from both sides! Again, better seems to be 15...c5! 16.Rad1 Bb7 17.Bxd6 Qxd6 18.Ng3 g6 19.Qe3 Kg7 20.Qe7 Qxe7 21.Rxe7 Rc8 oo Zawadzka,J-Cyfka,K Chorzow 2013.

16.Nxf4 Qd6 17.c4! (D)



White dreams of placing his knight on d3 (after an eventual...d4), 'conducting' a blockade set-up. Aron Nimzowitsch at his best!

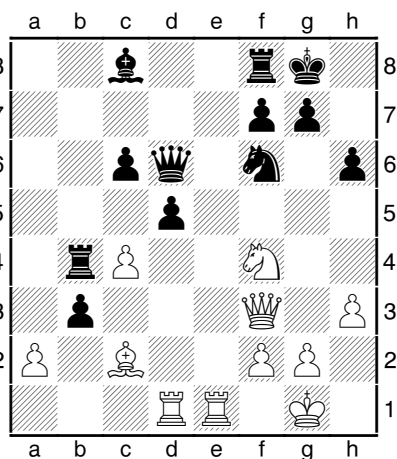
17...a5!

The usual black counterplay in the hanging pawns structure, planning...a4. White would feel rather happy after 17...d4? 18.Nh5! (18.Qg3? Rd8 19.Nh5 Qxg3 20.Nxf6+ gxf6 21.fxg3 Be6 oo Paravyan,D-Esipenko,A Moscow 2021, or 18.Bc2 c5 19.Nd3 Rb8 20.Re2 +=, is typical, but less strong) 18...a5 19.c5! Qd8 20.Nf4! +/-.

18.Rad1

Centralisation!

18...a4 19.Bc2 axb3 (D)

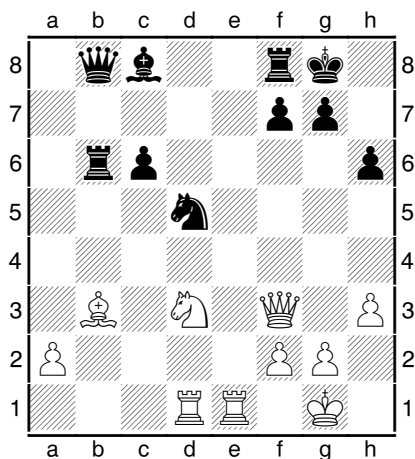


20.Bxb3

A natural novelty to 20.axb3 Qb8 (20...Qc7 21.Qc3 +=) 21.Nd3 += Grigorjev,I-Domogaev,S Voronezh 2016. White wants to add more pressure on the d5-pawn.

20...Qb8 21.Nd3! Rb6 22.cxd5 Nxd5? (D)

A bad move. Instead, Black should have opted for 22...cxd5 23.Nf4 Bb7 24.Rd4 Rd8 25.Qd1, where White would have good pressure against the black d5-pawn, but he could hold his own.



23.Ne5?!

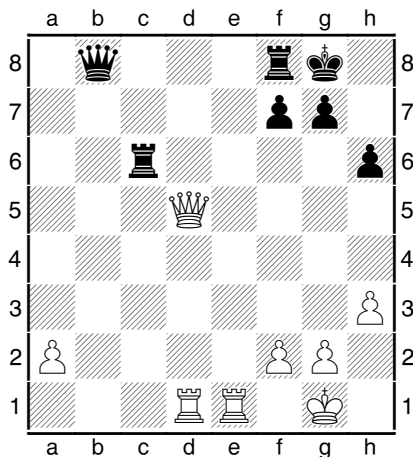
The text looks like a good option, but it is actually reducing White chances to prevail! Much better was 23.Rc1! Be6 24.Nc5 +/-.

23...Be6! 24.Nxc6?!

Although the text wins a pawn, the endgame is rather drawish. For this, a better option would be to opt for continuing the pressure

with 24.Rd4 +=.

24...Rxc6 25.Bxd5 Bxd5 26.Qxd5 (D)

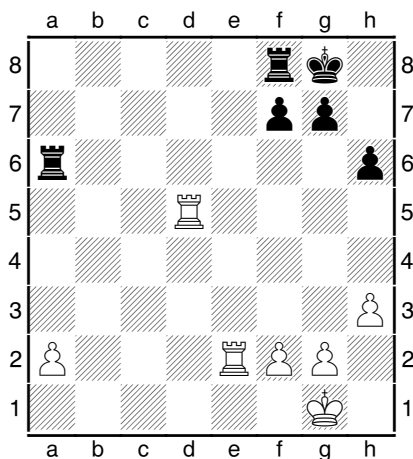


White won a good pawn, but the ending with heavy pieces and the extra a-pawn still on his original square, is rather drawish.

26...Ra6! 27.Re3?!

White should dream of exchanging the rooks, going for a queen ending, but not the queens. For this, good was 27.Re2 Qa8 28.Qd2, although Black should hold here as well.

27...Qa8! 28.Re2 Qxd5 29.Rxd5 (D)



Now things would be easier for Black (to hold), as the extra a-pawn is going nowhere. But of course, White can try for 'free'!

29...Rfa8 30.Rdd2 Ra3 31.g3

I feel that 31.h4, should be easier, although the text doesn't alternate the result, as well.

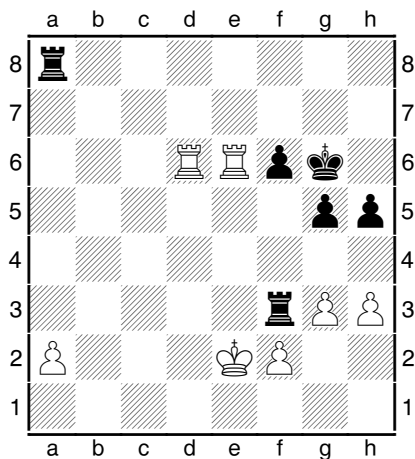
31...g5!

Turning the h3-pawn into a 'target'.

32.Kf1 Kg7 33.Ke1 Kg6 34.Kd1 h5!

Counterplay is nearly always welcomed! Black plans the annoying...h4.

35.Rd6+ f6 36.Ree6 Rf3! 37.Ke2 (D)



37...g4

37...Rf5! 38.Ra6 Rc8 39.Rec6 Rxc6 40.Rxc6 Ra5 41.Rc2 Ra3 =, should be easier.

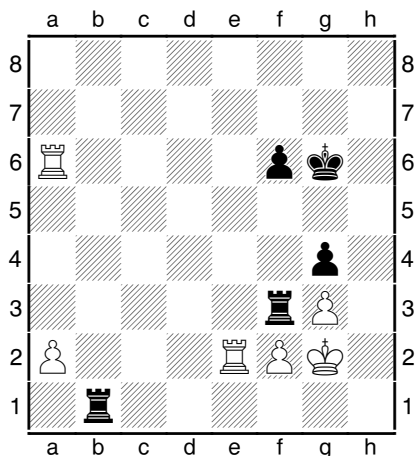
38.hxg4 hxg4 39.Ra6 Rb8 40.Kf1

40.Reb6 Rxb6 41.Rxb6 Ra3 42.Rb2 Kg5 43.Kd1 f5 44.Kc1 f4 45.gxf4+ Kxf4 46.Rc2 Kf3 47.Kb2 Ra8 =, is a draw, as well.

40...Rb1+ 41.Re1 Rb2 42.Re2 Rb1+

Also the alternative 42...Rxe2 43.Kxe2 Kg5 =, leads to draw.

43.Kg2 (D)



43...Rc3?

A fatal blunder, Black is out of danger after the accurate 43...Rb4! 44.Ra8 Kg5 45.a3 Rc4 =.

44.Re4!

Now the black pawns are falling!

44...Kg5 45.Ra5+ f5 46.Rf4

And that's the end of the game...

46...Rcc1 47.Rxf5+ Kg6 48.Rg5+

Black resigned, as after 48...Kf6 49.Rxg4 +-, everything is clear...

1-0

The Tactics Corner

The Power of the Breakthrough

The Composer

Viktor Alexandrovich Evreinov (November 11, 1908 - August 7, 1984) was a prominent Russian chess composer known for creating artistic endgame studies.



Key Details About Viktor Evreinov

- **Background:** Born in Smolensk, he lived and worked as an educator in Saratov. During World War II, he served in the Soviet tank corps and later taught plane drawing at a military school, retiring with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

- **Chess Composition Career:** He began composing endgame studies around 1940 but became actively involved starting in 1957.

- **Output:** He composed over 70 chess studies, earning 6 first prizes and 55 other awards and distinctions in composition contests.

- **Notable Works:** His compositions have been featured in international publications and study databases like ARVES

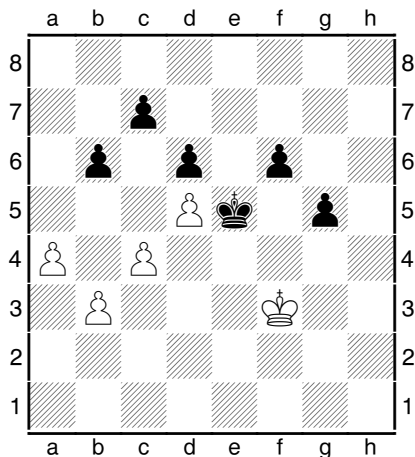
(Association of Encyclopaedia of Chess Studies) and the Chess Studies Database.

One of his well-known 1959/1960 winning studies involves intricate lines starting with moves like 1.Re4!, or 1.exd7+.

Modern engine analysis (such as Stockfish) has occasionally re-evaluated some of his complex tactical studies, showing alternative defensive nuances or draws in positions once thought decisive.

Breakthrough - Evreinov Viktor

Saratov 1980 ○



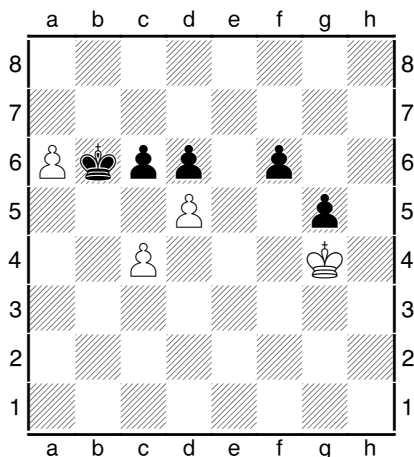
It looks like White is busted, as the black pair on the kingside will carry the day, allowing its king to penetrate on the queenside. But the reality can be different...

1.b4!

The only way. Nothing is offered by 1.Ke3? f5! 2.b4 f4+ 3.Ke2! (3.Kd3? g4 4.a5 g3 [4...bxa5 5.bxa5 g3 6.Ke2 Ke4 7.a6 f3+ 8.Kf1 Ke3! 9.a7 g2+ 10.Kg1 Ke2 11.a8Q f2+ 12.Kxg2 f1Q+ 13.Kg3 Qf3+ 14.Kh4 Kd3 -+]) 5.Ke2 Ke4 6.a6 f3+ 7.Kf1 Ke3 8.a7 g2+ 9.Kg1 Ke2 10.a8Q f2+ 11.Kxg2 f1Q+

12.Kg3 Qf3+ 13.Kh4 Qf4+ -+) 3...Kd4 4.a5 bxa5 5.bxa5 Kc5 6.Kf3 c6! 7.a6 Kb6 8.c5+! Kxa6 9.cxd6 Kb7 10.d7 Kc7 11.dxc6 Kd8 =. In this variation, the base of the black pawns is on the g-file, so the white king is short of a tempo when capturing it.

1...Kd4 2.a5 bxa5 3.bxa5 Kc5 4.Kg4 c6 5.a6 Kb6 (D)



Black should win here, as the white pawns fall...

6.c5+!

But this isn't the case!

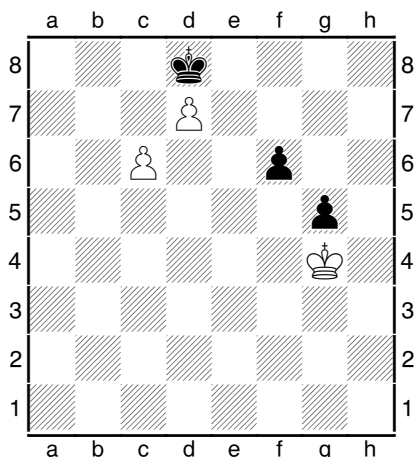
6...Kxa6

6...Kxc5 7.a7+-, or 6...dxc5 7.d6! +-, are easier.

7.cxd6 Kb6 8.d7

Winning as well, but again easier was 8.Kf5! cxd5 9.Kc6 g4 10.d7 +-.

8...Kc7 9.dxc6 Kd8 (D)



Two connected passed pawns for each side; why White is winning? Because his pawns are more advanced and by the zugzwang method he can force a mate!

10.Kf5! Ke7 11.Ke4! g4

11...Kd8, now, loses to 12.Kd5! Ke7 13.Kc5 g4 14.Kb6 g3 15.Kc7 +-.

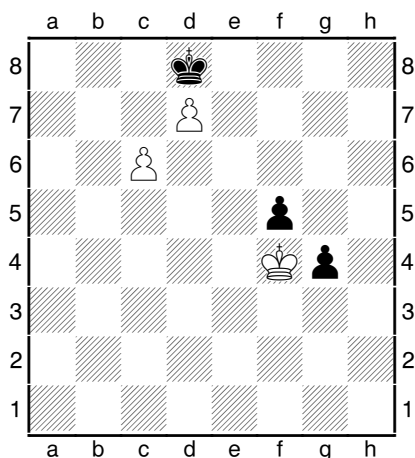
12.Ke3!

The only winning move!

12...f5 13.Kf4

Black is in zugzwang and his king has to retreat. Note that now the base of the black pawns is on the f-file, which makes the difference.

13...Kd8 (D)



14.Kxf5! g3 15.Ke6

That's the difference; now Black gets mated.

15...g2 16.Kd6 g1Q 17.c7 #

1-0



The Tactics Corner

Train Your Sub-conscious

Concept

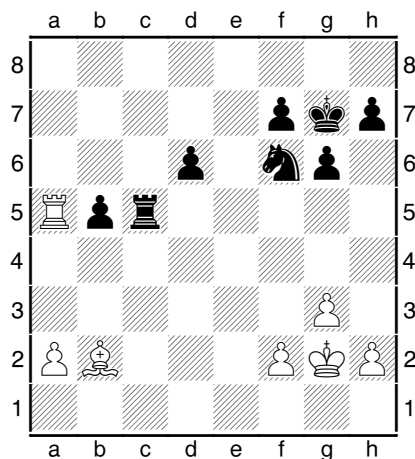
Tactics aren't falling from the sky, but they are mainly based on healthy facts and domination. Let's see some:

□ **Giri Anish**

■ **Rodshtein Maxim**

A50 Eilat 2012

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 b6 3.d4 Bb7 4.g3 g6 5.Bg2 Bg7 6.0-0 0-0 7.d5 e6 8.Nc3 exd5 9.cxd5 Re8 10.Re1 c6 11.e4 d6 12.Bf4 exd5 13.exd5 Rxe1+ 14.Qxe1 Na6 15.Nd4 Qd7 16.Rd1 Nc7 17.Nc2 Rc8 18.Qe2 Nh5 19.Bg5 Bxc3 20.bxc3 Nb5 21.Re1 Nxc3 22.Qd2 Bxd5 23.Bxd5 Nxd5 24.Qxd5 Rxc2 25.Re7 Rc1+ 26.Kg2 Qc6 27.Qxc6 Rxc6 28.Rxa7 Kg7 29.Be3 Nf6 30.Bd4 b5 31.Ra5 Rc4 32.Ba1 Rc1 33.Bb2 Rc5 (D)



White seems to be doing well despite his pawn deficit, due to the pinned f6-knight, although not something direct is on the horizon.

34.a4!

Clarifying the situation, but also quite strong was 34.h4 h6 35.Ra3 Rc2 36.Rb3 +.

34...bxa4 35.Rxc5 dxc5

And now, as the black queenside pawns are going nowhere, the f6-knight will be soon lost.

36.f4!

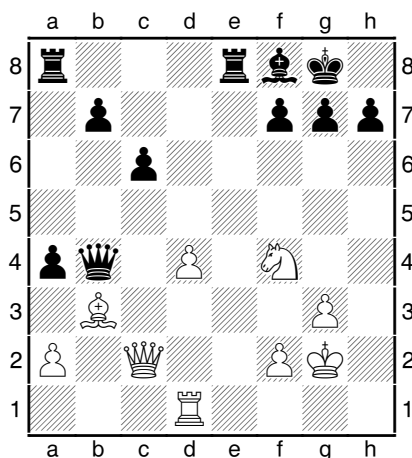
White must stop Black's saving idea by ...g5 and ...Kg6, unpinning the knight. 36.h4! +-, was OK, as well.

36...a3 37.Ba1

Black resigned, as he will soon run out of moves: 37...h6 38.h4 h5 (38...c4 39.g4 +-) 39.Kf3 +.

1-0

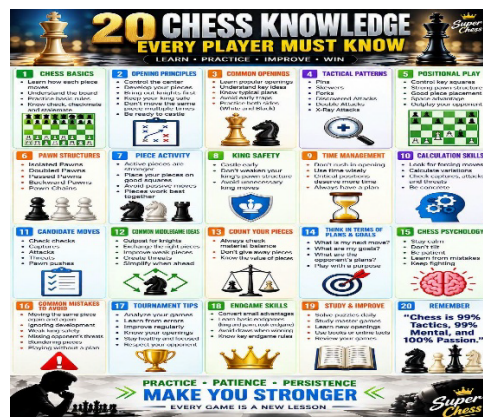
Exercise 1 - Suffocation □



Is Black winning? Well, probably yes, due to his extra material. But things can be turned over by a pretty combination!

1.Qxh7+! Kxh7 2.Rh1+ Kg8 3.Ng6 axb3 4.Rh8 #

1-0



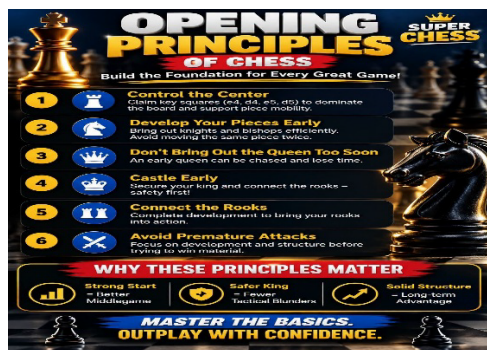
The Tactics Corner

Diagonal Beauty

Concept

Diagonals have their own beauty, but as like the Sirens, can be lethal...

The combination to be examined, is quite similar to the 'Novotny Interference', as a piece is 'sacrificed', to kill any remaining defence.



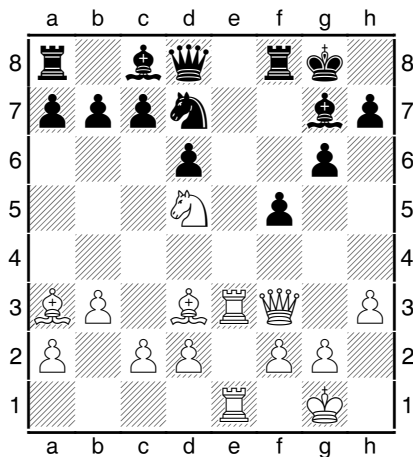
And indeed, this action is beautiful and lethal at the same time!

□ Nezhmetdinov Rashid

■ Kotkov Yuri

C67 Krasnodar 1957

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0-0 Nxe4 5.Re1 Nd6 6.Nxe5 Be7 7.Bd3 0-0 8.Nc3 Nxe5 9.Rxe5 Bf6 10.Re3 g6 11.Qf3 Bg7 12.b3 Ne8 13.Ba3 d6 14.Rae1 Nf6 15.h3 Nd7 16.Nd5 f5 (D)



White's gathered forces are ready to deliver the lethal blow, as Black's under-developing is awful...

17.Nxc7! Qxc7 18.Qd5+ Kh8 19.Re8 Nf6 20.Rxf8+ Bxf8 21.Bb2! Bg7 22.Bc4!

Ready to mate on g8, after Bxf6, or Re8+.

22...Bd7

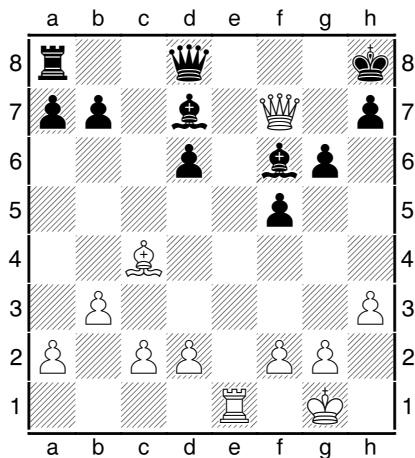
22...Nxd5, simply fails to 23.Re8 #.

23.Bxf6

Straight-forward was 23.Qf7 Qd8 24.Re7 Qf8 25.Bxf6 Qxf7 26.Rxf7 Bxf6 27.Rxf6 +-.

23...Bxf6 24.Qf7 Qd8? (D)

Although Black will not escape, he should try 24...Bg5 25.g3! f4 26.h4 +-.



25.Re8+!

A great tactic, which forced Black to give-up: 25...Bxe8 26.Qf8 #, or 25...Qxe8 26.Qxf6 #.

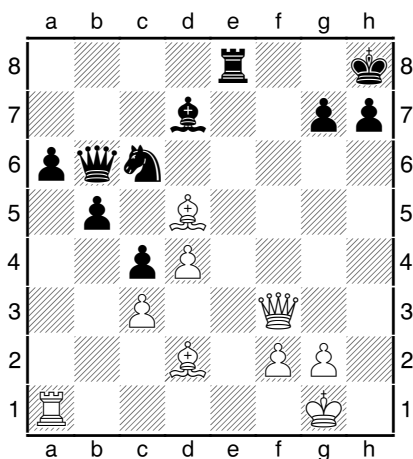
1-0

□ Kotronias Vasilios

■ Kalesis Nikolaos

C42 Karditsa 1994

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.d4 d5 6.Bd3 Bd6 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 Be6 9.Nc3 Nxc3 10.bxc3 dxc4 11.Be4 Bc8 12.Bg5 f6 13.Bd2 c6 14.Qe2 b5 15.Rfe1 a6 16.a4 Ra7 17.axb5 cxb5 18.Nh4 Bxh2+ 19.Kxh2 f5 20.Nxf5 Bxf5 21.Bf3 Nc6 22.Kg1 Re7 23.Qd1 Rxe1+ 24.Qxe1 Re8 25.Qd1 Qb6 26.Bd5+ Kh8 27.Qf3 Bd7 (D)

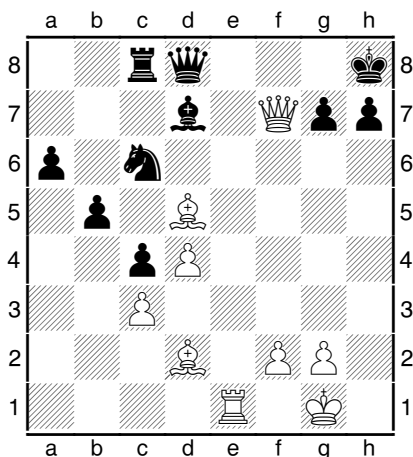


Black has an extra pawn, but his back-rank is rather weak.

28.Re1! Rc8

After 28...Rxe1+ 29.Bxe1, Black cannot protect his back-rank without losing material.

29.Qf7! Qd8 (D)



30.Bh6!

The killer no1!

30...gxh6

30...Qf8 31.Qxd7 gxh6 32.Bxc6 +-.

31.Re8+!

And the killer no2! Black resigned, due to 31...Bxe8 32.Qf8 #, or 31...Qxe8 32.Qf6 #.

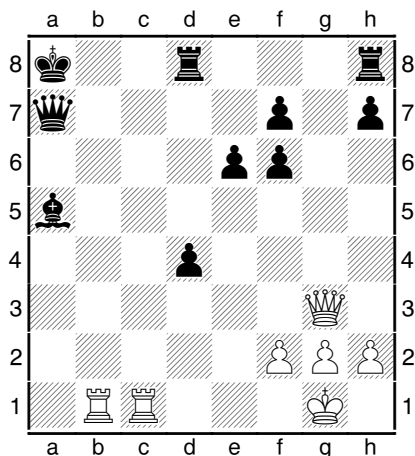
1-0

□ **Espinosa Aranda Angel**

■ **Kovalev Denis**

B12 Internet 2020

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bg4 6.Be3 e6 7.c3 Bxf3 8.Qxf3 Nxe5 9.Bb5+ Nc6 10.c4 Qf6 11.Qg3 0-0-0 12.Bg5 Qxb2 13.Bxc6 Nf6 14.Bxf6 gxf6 15.0-0 bxc6 16.Nc3 Qb8 17.Qh3 Bxc5 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.Rac1 Kb7 20.Rb1+ Bb6 21.a4 d4 22.Qf3+ Kc8 23.Nb5 Qb7 24.Rfc1+ Kb8 25.Qg3+ Ka8 26.a5 Bxa5 27.Nxa7 Qxa7 (D)



28.Rc8+!

The immediate 28.Qf3+?, fails to 28...Rd5 +-, so White firstly kills this defence.

28...Rxc8 29.Qf3+

And now, as White mates by force, Black resigned.

1-0

4 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT LESSONS FROM CHESS.

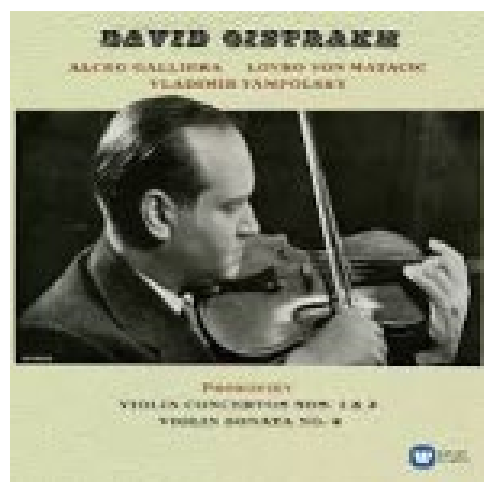
1 PROPHYLAXIS (ANTICIPATION) ASK: "WHAT IS MY OPPONENT TRYING TO DO?" BEFORE EXECUTING YOUR PLAN. ? 🛡️ ANTICIPATE FRICTION, UNDERSTAND PERSPECTIVES.	2 SMALL STRUCTURAL MOVES EVERYDAY HABITS CREATE LONG-TERM MOBILITY. Small actions build your foundation. 🌱 🔧 PAWNS SHAPE THE FUTURE BOARD.	3 BLUNDER MANAGEMENT NOT "AVOIDANCE" BUT "RESILIENCE". A MISTAKE IS A BAD MOVE, TILT IS A LOST GAME. ↺ 📈 PAUSE, REASSESS, PLAY THE BEST MOVE "NOW".	4 RESOURCEFULNESS OVER RESOURCES MAXIMIZE THE VALUE OF EVERYTHING YOU HAVE. COORDINATION BEATS SHEER POWER. 👥 💡 FOCUSED ACTIVITY AND SYNERGY.
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The Music Corner

A Famous Match

The Story

The relationship between legendary Soviet violinist David Oistrakh and composer Sergei Prokofiev was one of the most fruitful and multi-faceted in 20th-century classical music. They were not only close musical collaborators and premier champions of each other's work, but also neighbours and fierce rivals over the chess board.

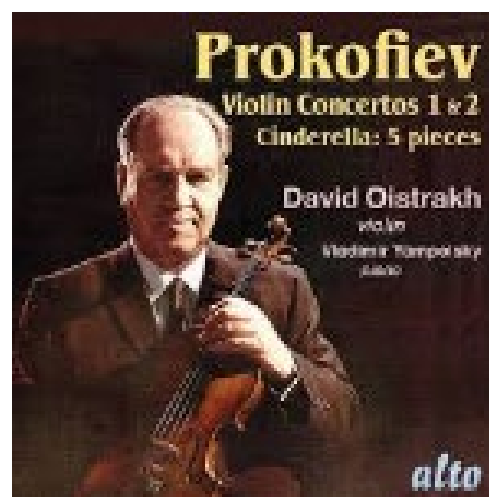


Musical Collaboration & Masterpieces

D.Oistrakh was a definitive interpreter of S.Prokofiev's violin works, creating definitive recordings of his concertos and sonatas:

- **Violin Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Op. 80:**

Written between 1938 and 1946, this dark and intense masterpiece was dedicated to D.Oistrakh. D.Oistrakh premiered the work alongside pianist Lev Oborin in 1946. Its hauntingly famous, muted rapid scales - which S.Prokofiev described as sounding like 'the wind in a graveyard' - were played by D.Oistrakh at S.Prokofiev's own funeral in 1953.



- **Violin Sonata No. 2 in D major, Op. 94a:** This work originally began its life as a flute sonata. It was D.Oistrakh who famously recognised its potential for his own instrument and persuaded a hesitant S.Prokofiev to rearrange it for the violin.

- **The Violin Concertos:** D.Oistrakh became universally renowned for his performances of both *Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major* and *Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor*, recording them with world-class conductors like Kirill Kondrashin, Kurt Sanderling, and even under S.Prokofiev's own baton in 1938.



The Famous 1937 Chess Match

Beyond the concert hall, the two shared a passion for chess. In November 1937, their legendary friendly rivalry culminated in an official, highly publicised **10-game chess match** at the Moscow Masters of Art Club.

- **The Wager:** The terms were strict - the loser of the match would have to fund and perform a free concert for the club members.

- **The Outcome:** The match was closely watched by the Soviet elite, with famous musicians like 18-year-old violinist Elizaveta Gilels looking on. Accounts vary on who definitively won, but many sources state the match was cut short after seven games due to D.Oistrakh's upcoming concert tour, ultimately resulting in a series of draws that led to a joint celebration rather than a penalty concert.

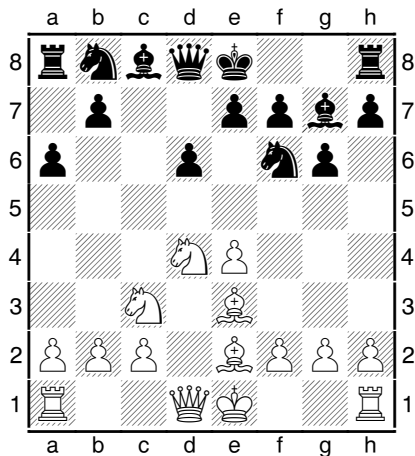


□ Prokofiev Sergei

■ Oistrakh David

B70 Moscow 1937

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.Be2 a6 (D)



8.Qd2!

Not much is 8.f4 0-0 9.0-0 Nc6 10.Nb3 Bd7 oo Thomas,G-Alekhine,A Nottingham 1936.

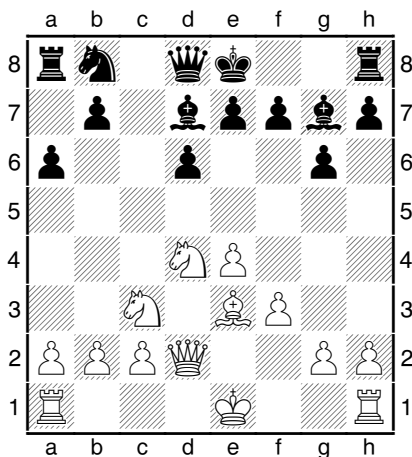
8...Ng4?! [Bad is 8...b5? 9.a4 b4 10.Nd5 Nxe4 11.Qxb4 +- Szpiro,A-Appel,I Warsaw 1935, but Black should have opted for 8...Nbd7 9.0-0-0 b5 10.Bh6 Bxh6 11.Qxh6 Bb7 12.Rhe1 Rc8 += Durarbayli,V-Andriasian,Z Abu Dhabi 2024.

9.Bxg4! Bxg4 10.f3?!

Accurate was 10.Nd5! 0-0 11.f3 Bd7 12.Ne2! +/-.

10...Bd7? (D)

Black should have taken advantage of White's previous inaccurate move by 10...Be6! 11.0-0-0 Nc6 12.Nd5 +=.



11.Bh6! Rg8?!

White will retain his plus even after 11...Bxh6 12.Qxh6 Qa5 13.Nb3 Qh5 14.Qxh5 gxh5 15.0-0-0 +/-.

12.Bxg7 Rxc7

The fianchetto rook cannot really be advisable...

13.Qh6?!

13.0-0-0! f6 14.h4 +/-.

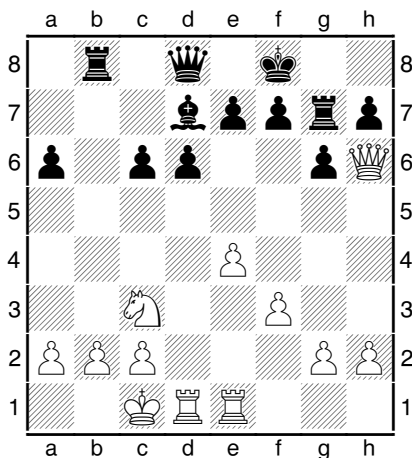
13...Kf8 14.0-0-0 Nc6 15.Nxc6 bxc6

15...Bxc6 16.e5 +/-.

16.Rhe1

16.e5 d5 17.Qe3 Qa5 18.h4 +/-.

16...Rb8 (D)



17.e5!

The usual centre assault.

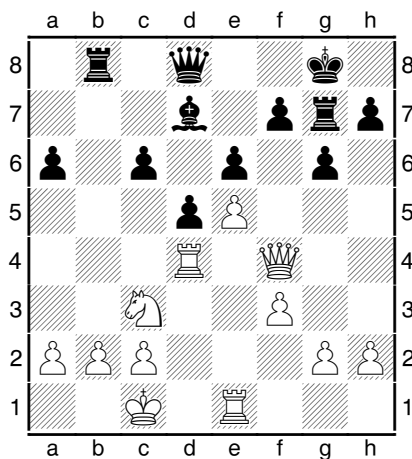
17...d5

17...dxe5? 18.Qd2 Ke8 19.Rxe5 +/-.

18.Qf4?!

18.Qe3! Qb6 (18...Qa5? 19.Qa7 Rd8 20.Rd4 +/-) 19.Qxb6 Rxb6 20.Na4 Rb8 21.Nc5 +/-.

18...Kg8 19.Rd4 e6 (D)



20.Red1?

20.Na4!, occupying the weak c5-square, would be quite pleasant for White.

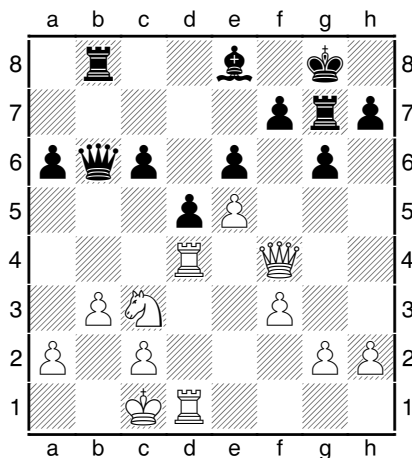
20...Qb6?

20...g5!, would have solved Black's problems: 21.Qf6 Qxf6 22.exf6 Rg6 23.Ra4 Ra8 24.Ne4 c5! 25.Ra5 c4 26.Nc5 Bc8 27.Ne4 Bd7 =.

21.b3?

21.Na4! Qa7 22.Rb4 +/-.

21...Be8! (D)



22.R4d2?

22.Na4 Qa7 23.Rb4 Rc8 24.Rb6 c5 25.Rd6 g5 26.Qe3 Bxa4 27.bxa4 Rg6 oo.

22...Qc7?!

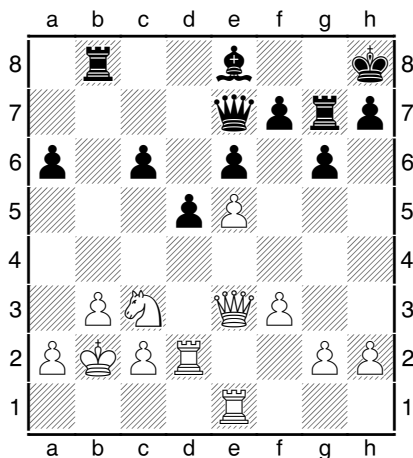
22...g5! 23.Qg3 c5 =+.

23.Qe3?

23.Qg5! c5 24.h4 oo.

23...Qe7?

23...c5! 24.Ne2 a5 +/-.

24.Re1 Kh8 25.Kb2 (D)**25...Rg8?**

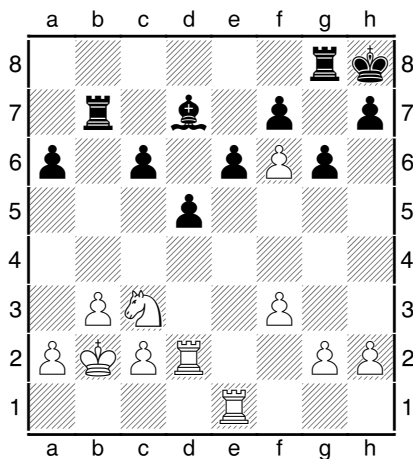
25...c5 26.Nd1 Bc6 27.Nf2 d4 =+.

26.Qf4?

26.Na4! Rb5 27.c4! dxc4 28.Nc3 Rb8 29.Ne4 +/-.

26...Bd7 27.Qf6+ Qxf6 28.exf6 Rb7? (D)

28...g5! oo.

**29.g4?**

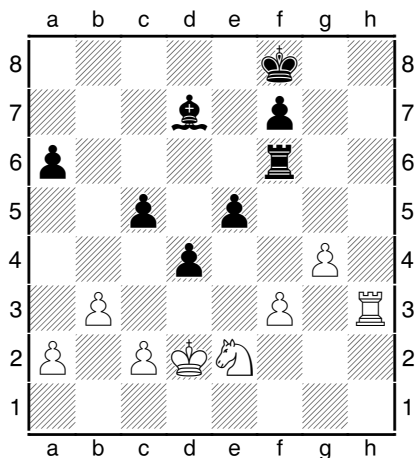
29.Na4! Be8 30.Kc3! Rb5 31.Kd4 +/-.

29...g5 30.h4 gxh4 31.Rh2 Rg6 32.Rxh4 Rxf6 33.Reh1 Kg8 34.R1h3 Kf8 35.Rxh7 Rb4?

35...c5! 36.Ne2 d4 oo.

36.Ne2?

36.a3 Rb7 (36...Rbf4? 37.Ne2! Rxf3 38.Rh8+ Ke7 39.g5 R6f5 40.Nd4 +/-) 37.Na4 +/-.

36...e5 37.Kc3 c5 38.R7h6 d4+ 39.Kd2 Rbb6 40.Rxf6 Rxf6 (D)**41.Rh5?**

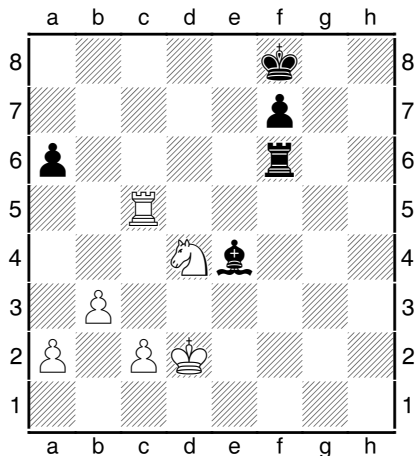
41.c3 Bb5 42.cxd4 exd4 43.a4 Bxe2 44.Kxe2 Re6+ =.

41...e4! 42.fxe4 Bxg4?

42...Rf2! 43.Rxc5 Bxg4 -+.

43.Rg5! Bf3?

43...Bh3! 44.Rh5 Bg4 =.

44.Rxc5 Bxe4 45.Nxd4 (D)

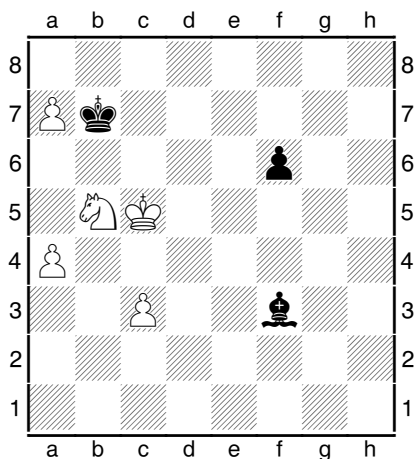
After a lot of inaccuracies/bad moves, White has got a winning position.

45...Bg2 46.a4 Ke7 47.b4 Kd7 48.Ke3 Rd6 49.b5

49.c4! Rg6 50.b5 +/-.

49...Rd5?! 50.Rxd5+ Bxd5 51.bxa6 Kc7

52.Nb5+ Kb6 53.Kd4 Bg2 54.a7 Kb7
55.Kc5 Bf3 56.c3 f6 (D)

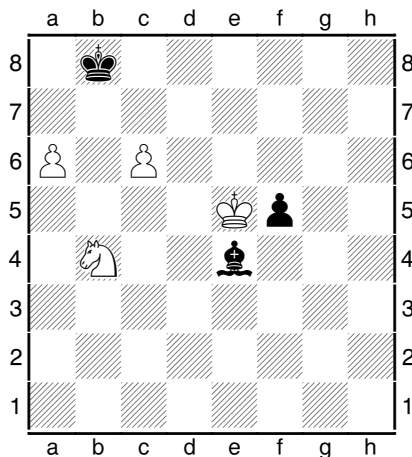


57.Kd6?

Throwing the win away. White could prevail by 57.a8Q+! Kxa8 58.Kb6 Bg2 59.a5 Bf3 60.a6 +.

57...Bd1! 58.a5 Be2 59.Nd4 Bf1 60.Nc6 f5 61.Ke5 Bd3 62.Kd4 Be4 63.a6+ Ka8 64.Nb4 Kxa7 65.c4 Kb6 66.c5+ Ka7 67.Ke5

Kb8 68.Nd5 Bd3! 69.Nb4 Be4 70.c6 (D)



70...Kc7! 71.a7 Bxc6! 72.Nxc6 Kb7

Draw agreed, as in this well-known position White cannot make progress: 73.Kxf5 Ka8 74.Ke6 Kb7 75.Kd7 Ka8 =, as the placement of the white king on the b6- or c7-squares, creates a stalemate. A useful endgame reminder!

½-½

Are You Actually Coaching?

The way you coach is not just about your style.
It is about what your client walks away with.



CHESS PLAYER VS NON CHESS PLAYER

Same world. Different mindset.



- | | |
|--|--|
| THINKS AHEAD
Looks beyond the next move. | LIVES IN THE MOMENT
Focuses on what is happening now. |
| PLANS & ADAPTS
Builds strategies and adjusts when things change. | REACTS, NOT PLANS
Often decides on the spot. |
| HANDLES PRESSURE
Stays calm when the clock is ticking. | FEELS PRESSURE
Can get stressed over small things. |
| SEES POSSIBILITIES
Spots patterns and hidden opportunities. | MISSSES THE BIGGER PICTURE
Focuses on one thing at a time. |
| LEARNS EVERY DAY
Grows from wins, losses, and experience. | SAME ROUTINE, LESS GROWTH
May miss lessons and new perspectives. |

The Psychology Corner

Twelve Chess Players Who Suffered From Severe Mental Illness

The Story

On 23rd June 2019, popular chess streamer and content creator, International Master Anna Rudolf wrote an emotional Instagram post in which she described how she had been battling with depression in the preceding months.

Her post was incredibly brave and worthy of admiration. Even though a lot of progress revolving mental illnesses and mental health, in general, has been made in the last couple of decades, talking about depression and anxiety still involves a lot of stigmas and is a sort of a taboo.

We realise that the only way of destigmatising mental issues is to talk about them openly. And to raise awareness that they happen on a much broader scale than most of us assume.

Especially in the world of chess. Despite W.Hartston's apocryphal remark, Anna Rudolf is definitely not the first chess player to experience mental problems.

Chess history is full of examples of players suffering from severe cases of depression and/or other mental issues. Sometimes these issues resulted in most tragic outcomes.

Of course, it would be premature to claim that chess *causes* these issues *per se*. The exact causes of depression and other mental illnesses are not exactly known.

But as far as we know, ¹ there is a strong genetic component involved. Chess in itself can't be responsible for the appearance of mental illness if the person is not prone to developing one.

However, we do think chess might serve as a trigger. Tournament chess puts an enormous strain on the nervous system.

This is especially apparent on the professional level when one's existence depends on the outcome of the game. We are sure you all know at least one strong player (Grandmaster even) who is rather distressed

and uncertain about his future. In his book, *Russian Silhouettes*, Grandmaster Genna Sosonko summed it up quite nicely:

'In our day top chess demands even more all-devouring preparation, complete concentration, and aloofness from everything else. In the future this tendency will only be intensified.

Players will reach the summit and pass their peak well before thirty. Too much nervous energy will have been spent on preparation and struggle in the younger years.

Giving the joy of creativity, and sometimes prizes and money, chess at the very highest level demands a trifle in return - the soul'.

So, even if chess can't cause mental illness in itself, it makes more likely to appear.

In the remainder of this post, you will find a list of chess players who suffered from severe mental illness.

We refrained from including Robert James Fischer (because he was never officially diagnosed) or Paul Morphy (whose family tried to put him into a mental institution but he refused to go).

We also refrained from including Raymond Weinstein (a young and promising American International Master who murdered an 83-year-old man) or Alexander Pichushkin (a serial killer known under the nickname 'Chess Killer'), since we wanted to focus more on the depression/anxiety and less on psychopathic/sociopathic side of mental illnesses.

With that being said, without further ado, we present you a list of 12 chess players who suffered from severe mental illness.

Chess is a high-stakes psychological battlefield where cognitive processing, emotional control, and mental stamina matter just as much as technical and tactical knowledge.

1. *Alvis Vitolins*



A.Vitolins was an extremely promising player in his youth, but he never realised his full potential. G.Sosonko thinks it had a lot to do with a serious mental illness A.Vitolins has been fighting against throughout his entire life:

‘To understand fully the phenomenon of Alvis Vitolins, one has to know that he suffered from a severe mental derangement. Effectively from the very start, he was not so much battling against his opponent as against himself’.

Even though he was treated by a psychiatrist friend for free and prescribed anti-depressants, A.Vitolins’ story had the most tragic outcome. At the age of 50, he decided to take his life by jumping from a bridge to Gauja river. In G.Sosonko’s words:

‘While his parents were alive this was their concern. They died within the space of one week, and on New Year’s Eve 1996 the psychiatrist Eglitis, also a chess player, who had been treating Vitolins for free, also died.

In addition, he had reached the age of fifty and at this stage of his life he must have felt that he was no longer needed by anyone.

He had never complained about this life, but also he did not want to remain in it any longer. Sigulda is one of the most beautiful places in Latvia.

Mysterious sandy caves, the ruins of medieval fortresses and castles, an enormous park with ancient oaks divided by the swift-flowing Gauja with its precipitous banks.

It is also good here in winter, when all is snowy and the trees are covered in hoar-frost. When the only thing sparkling in the sun is the white-blue ice of the hardened river, and

it beckons, beckons to you, and there only remains the last jump.

Like Luzhin, who ‘at the instant when icy air gushed into his mouth, ... saw exactly what kind of eternity was obligingly and inexorably spread out before him’.

On a frosty day, the 16th February 1997, Alvis Vitolins threw himself down onto this ice from the railway bridge spanning the Gauja river.

2) *Karen Grigoryan*



Karen Grigoryan was an Armenian International Master with an equally tragic story. He battled depression throughout his life and in 1989 - at the age of 42 - he committed suicide by jumping from the highest bridge in Yerevan. From Russian Silhouettes:

‘The following day, after losing a game, he could become dejected and depressed, repeating that his own play was repulsive to him, that his life was of no use to anyone.

He would begin talking about suicide, long before he became a patient at a psychiatric hospital and long before that final free-fall jump from the highest bridge in Yerevan on 30th October 1989’.

Incidentally, K.Grigoryan and A.Vitolins were close friends and could be often seen together in tournament halls, isolated from the world around them:

‘The friendship between Grigorian and Vitolins was not a friendship in the generally accepted sense of the word. Shut off from the other world, they simply understood each other, or, more correctly, trusted each other.

They intuitively felt that the other was a kindred soul, who after a conversation with you does not go off and begins retelling its content with an ironic smile’.

As they say, birds of a feather flock together...

3) *Norman Von Lennep*



Norman Von Lennep was a Dutch player from the end of the 19th century. Even though he came from an upper-class family and was expected to study, earn a title, get a good job and marry a nice young lady, he decided to become a chess professional instead.

There are also rumours nice young ladies didn't quite interest him as much as nice young men.

Due to his choices, his father decided to exile him. During the Hastings 1895

tournament where he worked as a journalist, it was announced he has decided to stay in England.

However, being abandoned by family and living in a foreign country among strangers apparently took its toll on his (fragile) mental state. In 1897, he took a ship sailing from Harwich to the Hook of Holland.

During the trip, he jumped into the North Sea and ended his life at the shockingly early age of 25.

4) *Curt von Bardeleben*



The name of Curt von Bardeleben is most often associated with a game from the Hastings tournament 1895 in which his opponent W.Steinitz executed a brilliant combination involving a series of consecutive rook sacrifices.

What we didn't know is that Vladimir Nabokov's book *The Defence* was inspired by C.von Bardeleben.

At the age of 62, he committed suicide by jumping out of a window - just like V.Nabokov's main character, Luzhin.

5) Wilhelm Steinitz



It is well known that Wilhelm Steinitz wasn't the most successful when it came to managing his finances and that he died in poverty.

What is lesser known that he also battled with mental issues. I first stumbled upon it on his Wikipedia page, which claims that he spent 40 days in mental Asylum in Moscow after his 1896 match against E.Lasker, and also that he died in a mental asylum in New York.

We were able to find sources that verify it is indeed so. First of all, the book Wilhelm Steinitz: 1st Chess Champion states that in 1896:

'The decision was made to transfer Steinitz to a psychiatric hospital'.

More importantly, an article on the reliable source - the website Chesshistory by Edward Winter, titled Steinitz versus God provides us with the following quotes from reliable sources:

'As the years went by, he veered into a much more serious state of psychosis. For a time, he was confined to a Moscow asylum. He insisted that he had played chess with God over an invisible telephone wire (God lost).

He died, impoverished, in a New York mental asylum following an unsuccessful attempt to challenge God to a chess match'.

6) Harry Nelson Pillsbury



W.Steinitz was not the only player from the end of the 19th century to suffer from a mental disorder. American hero Harry Nelson Pillsbury's is an even more tragic example.

H.N.Pillsbury's story is well-known. He shocked the chess world by winning chess tournament in Hastings in 1895, got overpowered by E.Lasker in St.Petersburg in 1895, continued playing for several years and then became seriously ill due to a syphilis infection, which cost him his life in 1906 - at 34 years of age.

His mental problems - a direct consequence of the rapidly progressing illness - are less-known. After he got hospitalised in 1905, contemporary newspapers described him as 'temporarily insane'.

According to yet another fantastic Chesshistory article, titled Pillsbury's Torment, he even attempted suicide by jumping from the fourth floor of the hospital where he was being treated for mental disorders.

7) Akiba Rubinstein



There are several accounts that the great Polish player, Akiba Rubinstein, spent his last 30 years regularly visiting mental institutions. According to his Wikipedia page:

'After 1932 he withdrew from tournament play as his noted anthropophobia showed traces of schizophrenia during a mental breakdown'.

In Russian Silhouettes, in the chapter against A.Vitolins, G.Sosonko mentions him as an example of a chess player who lost his sanity: 'Vladimir Nabokov, who by his own admission took particular pleasure in composing 'suicide studies' - where White forces Black to win - said in an interview on French television:

'Yes, Fischer is a strange person, but there is nothing abnormal about a chess player being abnormal, this is normal. Take the case of Rubinstein, a well-known player of the early part of the century, who each day was taken by ambulance from the lunatic asylum, where he stayed constantly, to a café where he played, and then was taken back to his gloomy little room.

He did not like to look at his opponent, but an empty chair at the chess board irritated him even more. Therefore in front of him, they placed a mirror, where he saw his reflection, and, perhaps, also the real Rubinstein.

Even in the years of his triumphs, the great Akiba liked to sit half turned at the chess board, as though keeping aloof from his opponent and playing only his own game.

It has to be mentioned, that Edward Winter seriously doubted all these claims in his article Akiba Rubinstein's Later Years:

'Much about the last 30 years of Rubinstein's life is unclear or unknown, but it is evident that for most of that period he lived at home, and not in a sanatorium or mental institution'.



8) Albin Planinc



Even though it didn't have the worst consequence, the story of Slovenian Grandmaster Albin Planinc is no less sad and tragic.

A.Planinc rose to prominence after winning the 1969 Ljubljana tournament, ahead of 10 Grandmasters despite the fact that he was working shifts in the local bicycle factory.

But he really shocked the chess world in 1973, when he won the strong IBM Amsterdam tournament, together with T.Petrosian - ahead of B.Spasky, U.Andersson, J.H.Donner, and Z.Ribli.

It seemed to everyone that great career was in the making.

Alas, Caissa had other plans. Starting from approximately 1975, an apparent mental disorder started taking its toll on A.Planinc. He was performing poorly and living in his own world, avoiding all social contact during tournaments.

In 1979, he played his final tournament before retiring from chess. There is no information what he did for a living from that point onward.

What is known is that he was living together with his mother in a small flat and constantly fighting his own demons.

He spent his final years in the mental institution in Ljubljana. According to the Slovenian biographical movie Total Gambit (*Totalni Gambit*), shortly after his mother died in 2008 - in the very same mental institution - A.Planinc also departed this world.

His girlfriend's words from the same movie, full of sorrow and pain, speak for themselves:

'We never stood a chance . . . Chess could not do it. How could I do it?'.

9) Lembit Oll



Estonian Grandmaster Lembit Oll is a better-known name on this list and, unfortunately, the highest rated player who decided to end his life prematurely.

He was the leading Estonian Grandmaster in the 90s. At his peak, he reached 2650 ELO and was the 25th ranked player in the world.

His mental issues started in 1996 after he divorced his wife and lost custody of his two sons. Although he was prescribed anti-depressants, the hole he found himself in was too deep.

On 17 May 1999, he jumped out of the window of his 4th-floor apartment in Tallinn. Oll was just 33 at a time.

10) Georgy Ilivitsky



No less tragic is the case of a little known Soviet International Master Georgy Ilivitsky. Even though he is virtually forgotten today,⁶ he was one of the strongest Soviet Masters after World War II.

Some of his notable results include third place in the 1955 Soviet Championship (together with M.Botvinnik, T.Petrosian and B.Spasky, just half a point behind E.Geller and V.Smyslov and ahead of P.Keres and M.Taimanov) and victories in matches over Isaac Boleslavsky (1944), Alexey Suetin (1950) and Ludek Pachman (1956).

Alas, he was unable to make further progress. And life was tough for Soviet masters who didn't make it to the very top. G.Ilivitsky didn't get many opportunities to play outside the Soviet Union and had to gradually give up chess.

This feeling of failure and abandonment haunted him during his entire life. When he was 68, he decided life has become unbearable and committed suicide by jumping from the window - apparently inspired by the afore-mentioned Nabokov's novel *The Defence*.

11) Pertti Poutiainen



Another tragic story reminiscent of Lembit Oll and Georgy Ilivitsky. Pertti Poutiainen was the Champion of Finland in 1974 and 1976. He was awarded the title of International Master in 1976. Alas, according to Boris Gulko:

'Poutiainen was a talented player from Finland. He was their chess hope. At this time in my career, I played him twice in the Soviet Union. Alas, the stress of chess tournament life became too great for him and he later committed suicide'.

P.Poutiainen took his life on June 11, 1978. Examples such as L.Oll, G.Ilivitsky, P.Poutiainen, A.Vitolins and K.Grigoryan show how merciless the system in the Soviet

Union was. It was the perfect example of 'winner-takes-it-all', where the top Grandmasters enjoyed great privileges at the expenses of everyone below their level.

Evgeny Sveshnikov, one of the most vocal fighters for the rights of chess players also pointed it out. From his Wikipedia page:

'Most fundamentally, it is very difficult for chess players to earn a living; he speaks of many chess players in Russia and the Baltic States suffering severe depression and in some cases committing suicide'.

12) Shankar Roy



The most recent, but no less tragic example of a chess player succumbing to depression is Bengali International Master, Shankar Roy.

Roy - an employee of Eastern Railway, represented India in several international competitions and won the senior state championship in four successive years from 1995.

Roy has been suffering from depression for several years and already tried to take his life in the past by setting himself on fire.

After the death of his father from blood cancer on April 25, 2012, he made the second

attempt and hanged himself from a ceiling using his wife's scarf.

He was only 38 years old at a time.

Final Words?

Even though the majority of the examples on this list (apart from Roy Shankar) happened from the past, mental illnesses are very much topical even today.

According to pretty much any study out there, depression and anxiety have been on the rise in the world in general.

And we think they might also be on the rise in the chess world, with all the pressure revolving winning prizes, chasing norms and making it as a chess professional involved.

What to Do?

Is there something we chess players can do about it?

- First of all, we can stop stigmatising mental disorders. Impairing their significance and looking down upon people who have to deal with them.

- Stating you seek help because you are depressed should not be considered as a sign of weakness, but on the contrary - a sign of enormous strength.

- Secondly and more importantly, the best advice we can offer is to start paying attention to other chess players.

- Yes, our game is full of peculiar and eccentric people. But as much as they are socially inept, many of them are alone in their misery and crave for human contact.

- So go to the hall and talk to people.

- Approach that 'weird guy' nobody wants to approach.

- Analyse with an elderly master and listen to the stories from his past - as much as you find them boring.

- Don't make fun of lower rated players - especially in youth categories.

- Don't create additional pressure or reprimand anyone for their losses.

- Show people you care about them. Especially those who need someone to care about them the most.

Because you never know.

You might save someone's life.

Chess Players' Memory is a Myth

By World Champion Viswanathan Anand

The Story

When I was younger, I could recall every chess game I played. Now, I often don't have complete memory of a game I played a week ago.

What's the last thing that slipped your mind? Was it a chore, your belongings at a hotel or on a flight, an appointment or, worse still, your wedding anniversary? If it's the last, I hope your limbs are intact.

I'm a survivor myself. I run the risk of throwing my reputation off the cerebral pedestal with this story, which I've often shared at seminars and gatherings - but I'll do it once more anyway.

It was January 1998, during my World Championship match against Karpov in Lausanne, when three-and-a-half-inch floppy disks were still in vogue. Every night, whatever preparation had been worked on would be backed up, stored in floppies and stowed away in a safe by Aruna.

One night, after putting away the disks, she turned to me with a knowing smile and told me that the code to unlock the safe was easy to recall, 2706.

Confused, I commented, 'That's a silly code... Which player has a rating like that?' Live Elo ratings weren't around then and ratings were usually updated to a difference of five. Aruna looked aghast.

From the look in her eyes I could sense her blood beginning to simmer. 'It's not anyone's rating,' she said coldly. 'It's our wedding anniversary!'

I had the stupidest look on my face as I tried to make sense of why I should be trusted to remember this detail. We were just into the second year of our marriage.

Coming from a chess player who is believed to thrive on plucking out endless moves, games and notations from memory, this might sound incredulous, even blasphemous.

Broadly, chess players tend to be the subject of envy for their eidetic memory - or

at least what's commonly perceived as eidetic memory.

This belief was debunked by the Dutch psychologist and chess player Adriaan de Groot more than half a decade ago through his experiments.

He tested four categories of players of varying strengths - Grandmaster, Master, expert and class 'A' player, the last a decent chess player who ranks below expert level.

De Groot showed each of them a chessboard configuration with 22 pieces from an unknown game. The subjects were then asked to reconstruct the board, either on another board or verbally.

The Grandmasters and Masters reproduced it almost effortlessly and got 93 per cent right, while the experts and class 'A' players struggled a bit, missing a detail in a couple of places, and got 72 per cent and 51 per cent correct respectively.

But when the positions were randomised, making no logical sense whatsoever, each group, including the Grandmasters, placed only three or four pieces correctly.

It showed that Grandmasters didn't look at or commit to memory the positions of individual pieces; rather, they remembered pieces in groups, structures or patterns.

So, essentially what chess players have isn't an inexplicably photographic memory, but contextual memory.

What most of us do is convert a picture into a story. The mental soliloquy in a seasoned player's head goes something like this: 'Oh, these three pawns haven't been moved, so White was basically moving these other pawns...

White has a bishop here, and I recall this bishop position from my game last year'.

The reason the Grandmasters and Masters were able to reconstruct what they were shown the first time was because the picture made sense to them.

Personally, I favour creating summaries, or collapsing a whole lot of positions into a

story. While doing this, I keep the essential elements in mind.

I could liken this to a situation in which you've lost your way and all you know is that you need to head north-west.

It works in the same way as a person recalling trivia through a story that makes the facts stick in their head. Who's ever going to forget Isaac Newton and the discovery of gravity, for example?

The story that goes with the discovery makes it unforgettable.

When I was younger, I could recall every game I played from the first move till the end. Now, with an avalanche of analysis and positions to remember, I often don't have complete memory of a game I played a week ago.

Playing a move on the board, however, is more than just about remembering. It's also about remembering why the move is being made.

If I know for certain that a particular move works at a specific position, I can play it with a whole other level of confidence; on the other hand, if all I have is a broad idea of where a move might work, which then calls for rechecking, I'd play it with a hint of hesitation.

On the morning of a game during the World Championship matches, after breakfast, my team of four trainers and I would spend a couple of hours debating the final choices and

lines, and they would force me to go over my notes before breaking off to get back to work while I showered and took a nap.



My memory of positions and lines is much stronger if the reason for remembering them is interesting - a game connected to a painful loss, perhaps, or if something is new and interesting.

If I haven't revised my notes, the chances of me forgetting my preparation runs high.

It's why my team's chorus cry for me during a World Championship is 'Revise, revise, revise'.

'Paint it Black' and 'Viva La Vida' can wait.



Chess Goes to War

Games From the WW II

Concept

Chess played a unique and varied role during World War II, serving as a tool for military codebreaking, a morale booster in the trenches and camps, and a platform for political propaganda.

Codebreaking & Intelligence

- Bletchley Park: British chess masters and analysts - such as Harry Golombek and Hugh Alexander - worked at Bletchley Park decrypting German Enigma traffic. Their analytical mindset translated directly from board positions to code-breaking.

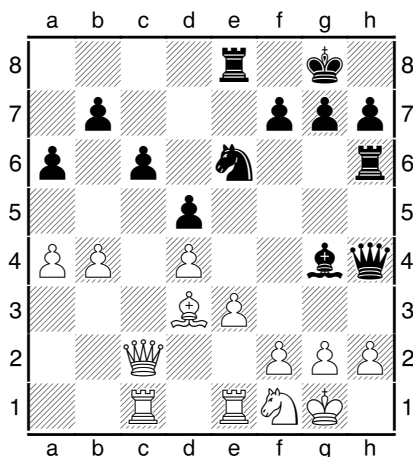
- Mathematical Modelling: American grandmaster Reuben Fine used his multilingual skills and background in mathematics to work on models predicting enemy submarine movements.

□ Luckis Markas

■ Raud Ilmar

D65 Buenos Aires 1940

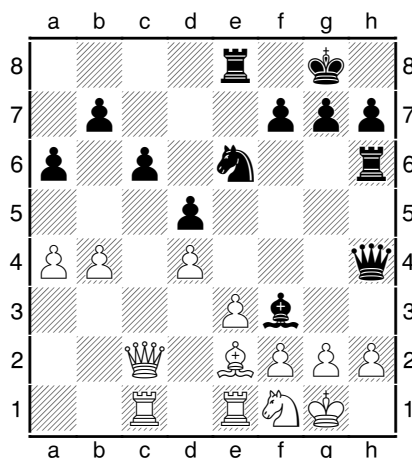
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Nf3 Be7 5.Bg5 Nbd7 6.e3 0-0 7.Rc1 c6 8.Bd3 a6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.Qc2 Re8 11.0-0 Nf8 12.Ne5 Ng4 13.Bxe7 Qxe7 14.Nxg4 Bxg4 15.Ne2 Rad8 16.Ng3 Rd6 17.Rfe1 Qh4 18.b4 Rh6 19.Nf1 Ne6 20.a4 (D)



not to weaken our pawns in front of our castled kings but Black now demonstrates that the pawns can be disrupted via a direct attack here.

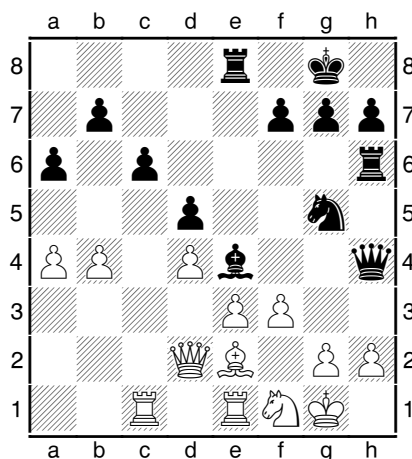
20...Bf3! 21.Be2 (D)

21.gxf3 Ng5 22.Bf5 (22.Qe2? Qh3! -+), was White's best chance: 22...g6! (22...Nxf3+? 23.Kg2 Nxh2 24.Ng3! g6 25.b5! oo) 23.Kg2 gxf5 24.Qxf5 Ne6 -+.



21...Be4! 22.Qd2 Ng5 23.f3 (D)

23.Bd1 Bxg2! 24.Kxg2 Ree6! -+, gives Black an unstoppable attack.

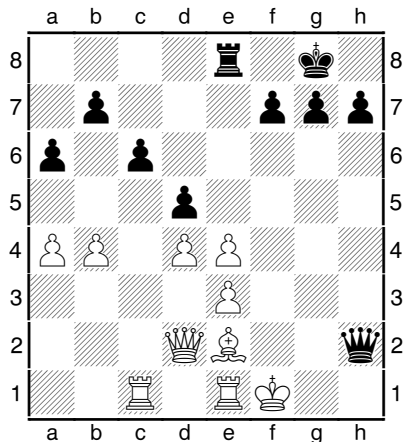


23...Nh3+! 24.gxh3

24.Kh1 Qf2 25.gxh3 Rg6 -+.

Instructional manuals sometimes advise us

24...Rg6+ 25.Ng3 Rxc3+! 26.hxc3 Qxc3+
 27.Kf1 Qxh3+ 28.Kg1 Qg3+
 28...Re6 29.Bf1 Rg6+ 30.Bg2 Bxf3 -, is
 another win.
 29.Kf1 Qh2 30.fxe4 (D)



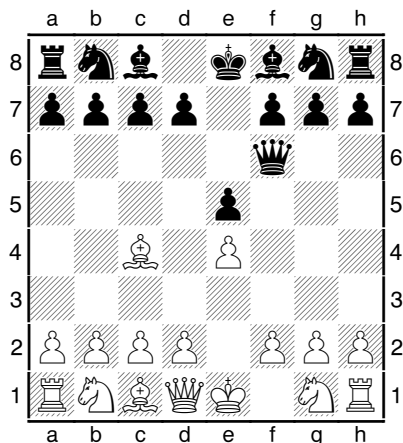
30...Re6! 31.Qd1 dxe4 32.Rc2 Qh3+
 33.Kg1 Rg6+ 34.Bg4 Rxc4+ 35.Qxc4
 Qxc4+ 36.Rg2 Qf5 37.Rb2 h6 38.b5 c5
 39.Rf2 Qg5+ 40.Rg2 Qd5
 0-1

□ Collins F G Tims

■ Prytys W.

C23 London 1941

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Qf6 (D)



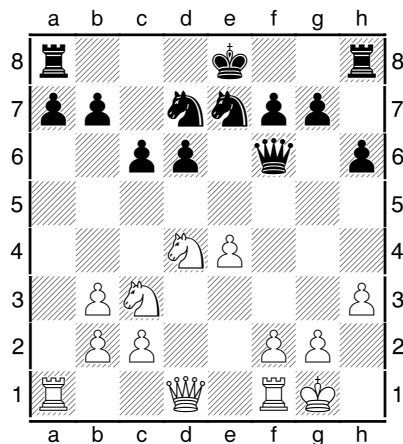
No doubt readers will turn up their noses at
 such an early queen excursion. Fair enough,
 though it has been played by a young Jonny
 Hector (unsuccessfully) and occasional by
 Andrew Smith (successfully). But please try

not to be too sniffy about opening nuances.
 There is a war on, you know...

3.Nc3 c6 4.Nf3 h6 5.0-0 Be5 6.d3?

Engines want to go for the jugular with 6.d4!
 Bxd4 7.Nxd4 exd4 8.e5 Qg6 9.Qxd4 Ne7
 10.Ne4, when Black's queenside is not going
 to get developed anytime soon.

6...d6 7.h3 Be6 8.Bb3 Bxb3 9.axb3 Ne7
 10.Be3 Nd7 11.d4 exd4 12.Bxd4 Bxd4
 13.Nxd4 (D)



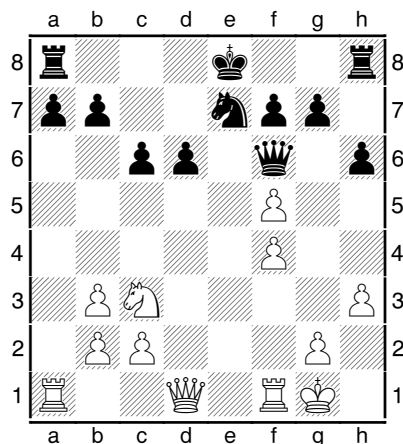
13...Ne5?

Asking for trouble. 13...0-0, is not too terrible
 for Black, though White is better.

14.f4 N5g6 15.Nf5 Nxf5

Leads to a fatal opening of the e-file, but
 15...d5 16.Ne3!, is also very strong for White.

16.exf5 Ne7 (D)

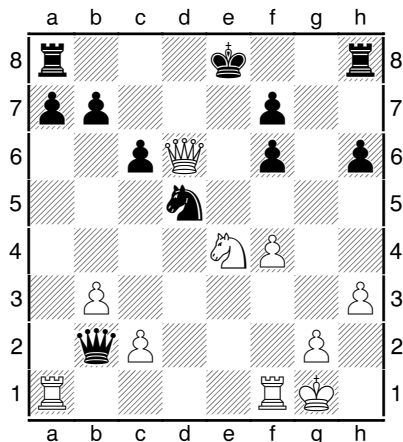


17.Ne4! Qxb2 18.f6

The engines find 18.Nxd6+ Kf8 and now the
 very pretty 19.Rxa7!, with the idea of

19...Rxa7 20.Nc4! +-, threatening the queen and mate on d8. The text is also very good.

18...gxf6 19.Qxd6 Nd5 (D)



20.Nxf6+!

Black resigned, as a rook check on e1 will be devastating: 20...Qxf6 21.Rae1 +-.

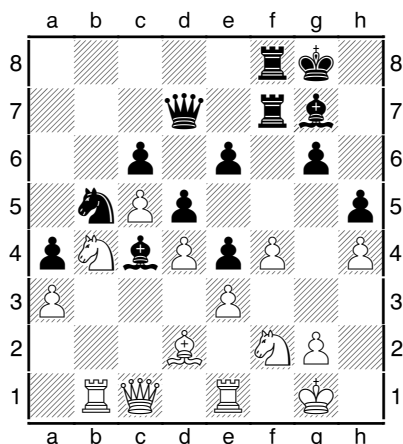
1-0

□ Menchik Vera

■ Saunders Elaine

D00 London 1943

1.d4 d5 2.e3 c6 3.Nd2 e6 4.Bd3 f5 5.Nh3 Bd6 6.0-0 Qc7 7.f4 Nf6 8.c4 Ne4 9.Bxe4 fxe4 10.Qh5+ g6 11.Qe2 Na6 12.c5 Bf8 13.a3 Bg7 14.b4 b6 15.Rb1 bxc5 16.bxc5 Qe7 17.Qd1 Nc7 18.Nb3 Ba6 19.Re1 Bd3 20.Rb2 a5 21.Bd2 a4 22.Nc1 Bb5 23.Na2 Bc4 24.Nf2 Bb3 25.Qc1 0-0 26.Nb4 Qd7 27.Rb1 Nb5 28.Ng4 Rf7 29.Rf1 Raf8 30.h4 h5 31.Nf2 Bc4 32.Re1 (D)



32...e5! 33.dxe5 Bxe5 34.Nxe4!

White must try this as otherwise the two black bishops will rule the board.

34...dxe4 35.fxe5

35.Qxc4 Nxa3 36.Qxe4 Nxb1 37.Rxb1 Qxd2 38.fxe5, doesn't give White enough compensation for the exchange.

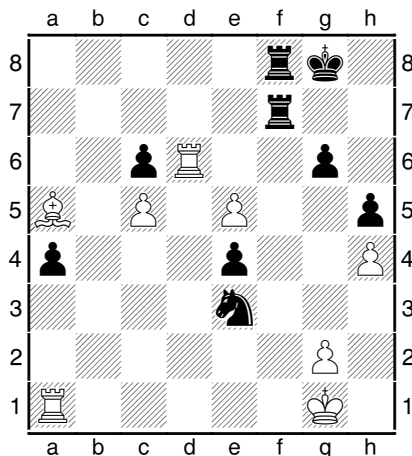
35...Bd3?

Not easy to see but Black has 35...Nxa3! 36.Qxa3 Rf2!, lining up ...Qg4, or the immediate ...Rxc4+. 35...Bf1!, is also surprising potent, since the rook cannot take on f1 and Black again threatens ...Qg4, etc.

36.Nxd3 Qxd3 37.Ba5?

37.e6!, forces the undoubling of the black rooks, when White can continue with 38.Rb4! and she is well in the game.

37...Nxa3 38.Ra1 Nc2 39.Rd1 Qxe3+ 40.Qxe3 Nxe3 41.Rd6 (D)



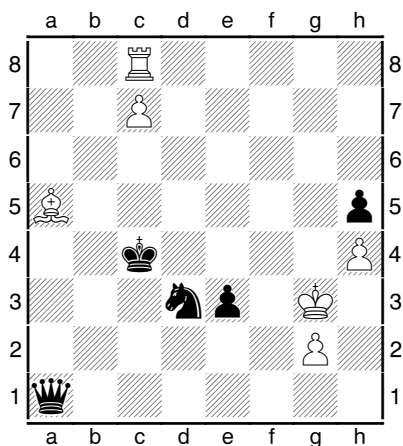
41...Rf1+ 42.Rxf1 Rxf1+ 43.Kh2 Ng4+ 44.Kg3 Nxe5 45.Bc3 Nd3 46.Rxc6 e3 47.Rxc6+

47.Re6!, slows Black's progress somewhat.

47...Kf7 48.Rg7+ Ke6 49.Rg6+ Kd5 50.Rd6+ Kc4! 51.c6 Rf8 52.Ba5 Rc8 53.c7 a3 54.Rd8 a2?

A terrible blunder which is even losing Black's winning position! Some commentators of the era, even said that the text was 'Good enough', though it is interesting to point out here the following variation which is a favourite theme of so many endgame composers: 54...Rxc7! 55.Bxc7 a2 56.Ra8 e2 -+.

55.Rxc8 a1Q (D)



56.Rd8?

56.Re8!, turns the tables: 56...Qxa5 57.c8Q+ Nc5 58.Rxe3 +.

56...Qe5+

White resigned, as it is forced mate after 57.Kf3 Qf4+ 58.Ke2 Qf2+ 59.Kd1 Qf1+, etc, but White could have turned the tables on the previous move. 54...a2 was not 'good enough' after all - it was an outright blunder. Vera Menchik could win after 56.Re8! and Black has no good moves.

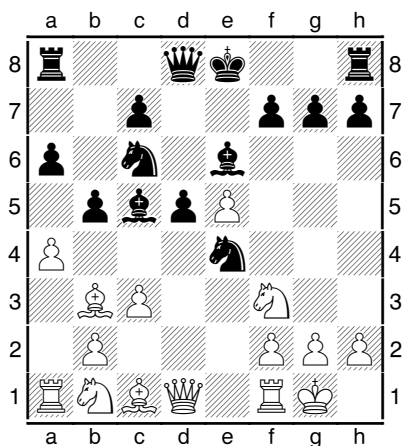
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□ **Sergeant Philip W.**

■ **Saunders Elaine**

C82 Correspondence 1943

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Nxe4 6.d4 b5 7.Bb3 d5 8.dxe5 Be6 9.c3 Bc5 10.a4 (D)

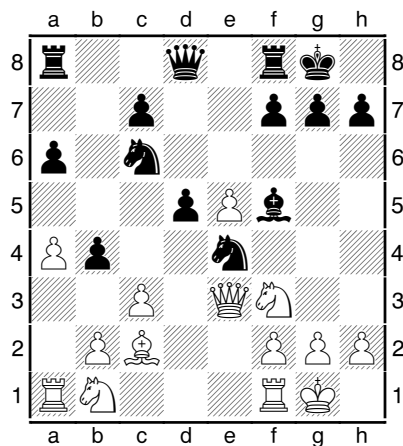


I remembered that in 1906(?) I played the move with success against Professor L.Loewy of Vienna, in the Ostend Amateur Tournament, he is replying with the inferior 10...0-0 and getting a bad game'.

10...b4 11.Qe2 0-0 12.Bc2 Bf5

Sound, if commonplace. In an exceedingly brilliant game against Shories (1905), Spielmann sacrificed a pawn by 12...f5 and the game continued 13.exf6 Qxf6 14.Bxe4 dxe4 15.Qxe4 Bb3! oo/=.

13.Be3 Bxe3 14.Qxe3 (D)



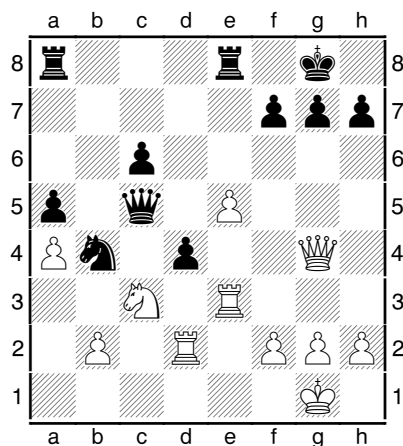
14...Ng3?

14...Qe7 15.Re1 Bg6 oo.

15.Bxf5?

15.hxg3! Bxc2 16.Qc5 +/-.

15...Nxf5 16.Qc5 Qd7 17.cxb4 Rfb8 18.Nc3 Nxb4 19.Rad1 c6 20.Rd2 a5 21.Nd4 Nxd4 22.Qxd4 Qe7! 23.Re1 Re8 24.Qg4 Qc5! 25.Re3 d4 (D)



Here Mr Sergeant says, 'I tried 10.a4, because

26.Rg3?

A blunder. White can play 26.Rxd4! Nc2

27.Rg3 Qxe5 28.Re4 =.

26...Qxe5 27.Re2 f5!

Missed by White.

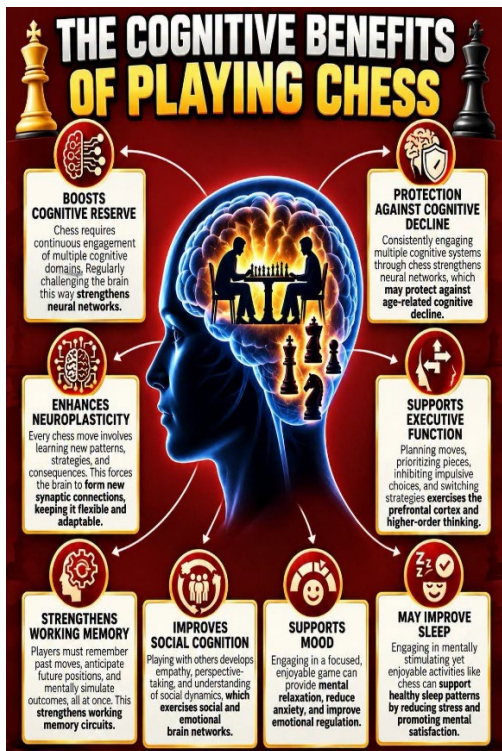
28.Qf3 Qc5 29.Qh5 Rxe2 30.Nxe2 Qc2

31.h4 Qxb2 32.Qh6 d3 33.Qe6+ Kh8

34.Re3 Rg8! 35.Nf4 d2 36.Qxf5 d1Q+

And White resigned...

0-1



10 COMMON CHESS MISTAKES BY BEGINNERS

Avoid them today. Win tomorrow!

- MOVING THE SAME PIECE TOO OFTEN IN THE OPENING**
Develop all your pieces. Don't move the same piece multiple times in the opening.
- IGNORING THE CENTER**
Control the center with pawns and pieces.
- BRINGING THE QUEEN OUT TOO EARLY**
Develop first, attack later.
- FORGETTING KING SAFETY**
Castle early when safe.
- PLAYING WITHOUT A PLAN**
Give every move a purpose.
- MISSING OPPONENT THREATS**
Check threats before every move.
- CAPTURING WITHOUT CALCULATION**
Calculate what happens next.
- NEGLECTING PIECE DEVELOPMENT**
Activate and connect your pieces.
- MOVING TOO FAST**
Take time to find good moves.
- GIVING UP AFTER A MISTAKE**
Learn, stay calm, keep fighting.

“EVERY MISTAKE IS A LESSON. EVERY GAME IS A STEP TOWARD IMPROVEMENT.”

LEARN • PRACTICE • IMPROVE • ENJOY CHESS!

WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONS COMPLETE HISTORY (1886 – 2024)

INCLUDING CLASSICAL, PCA AND FIDE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

CLASSICAL WORLD CHAMPIONS (1886 – 1990)

From Wilhelm Steinitz to Garry Kasparov (before the split)

Rank	Champion	Titles	Years
1	Wilhelm Steinitz	4 titles	1886, 1892, 1900, 1903
2	Emmanuel Lasker	6 titles	1894, 1896, 1906, 1911, 1924, 1927
3	José Raúl Capablanca	1 title	1921, 1924, 1925, 1926
4	Alexander Alekhine	4 titles	1927, 1935, 1937, 1938
5	Mikhail Botvinnik	1 title	1948, 1953, 1954, 1958
6	Mikhail Tal	1 title	1960, 1961, 1962, 1969
7	Tigran Petrosian	2 titles	1963, 1969
8	Bobby Fischer	1 title	1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970
9	Bobby Fischer	3 titles	1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970
10	Anatoly Karpov	6 titles	1975, 1976, 1978, 1981, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1990
11	Garry Kasparov	6 titles	1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1993

THE SPLIT ERA (1993 – 2006)

Two World Champions at the same time: Classical/PCA Champion and FIDE Champion

Rank	Classical/PCA World Champion	FIDE World Champion	Titles	Years
1	Garry Kasparov	Vladimir Kramnik	2 titles	1993, 1995
2	Vladimir Kramnik	Anatoly Karpov	2 titles	2000, 2004
3	Anatoly Karpov	Alexander Khalifman	3 titles	1993, 1996, 1998
4	Alexander Khalifman	Vladimir Kramnik	1 title	1999
5	Vladimir Kramnik	Ruslan Ponomarev	1 title	2000
6	Ruslan Ponomarev	Rustam Kasimdzhanov	1 title	2002
7	Rustam Kasimdzhanov	Yesselin Topalov	1 title	2004
8	Yesselin Topalov	Yesselin Topalov	1 title	2005

UNIFIED WORLD CHAMPIONS (2006 – 2024)

From Vladimir Kramnik to Gukesh D (After the reunification)

Rank	Unified World Champion	Titles	Years
1	Vladimir Kramnik	1 title	2006
2	Vladimir Kramnik	4 titles	2007, 2008, 2010, 2012
3	Magnus Carlsen	5 titles	2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2021
4	Ding Liren	1 title	2023
5	Gukesh D	1 title	2024

MOST WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES

Rank	Champion	Titles
1	Emmanuel Lasker	6
2	Garry Kasparov	6
3	Mikhail Botvinnik	6
4	Magnus Carlsen	5
5	Wilhelm Steinitz	4
6	Alexander Alekhine	4
7	Vladimir Kramnik	4
8	Vladimir Kramnik	4
9	Anatoly Karpov	3
10	Tigran Petrosian	2

KEY POINTS

- The first official World Chess Champion was Wilhelm Steinitz in 1886.
- From 1993 to 2006 there were two World Champions: the Classical/PCA champion and the FIDE champion.
- In 2006, Vladimir Kramnik defeated Vladimir Topalov to reunify the titles.
- From 2006 onward there has been a single, universally recognized World Champion.
- Gukesh D became the 18th World Champion in 2024 and the youngest undefeated World Champion at age 18.

UZBEKISTAN REWARDS ITS CHESS CHAMPIONS

FOR THEIR VICTORY AT THE CHESS OLYMPIAD

\$200,000 CASH PRIZE (EACH PLAYER)

A HOUSE (EACH PLAYER)

A VOLKSWAGEN TERAMONT PRO (EACH PLAYER)

UZBEKISTAN CHESS TEAM

- Javohir Sindarov
- Nodirbek Abdurattorov
- Nodirbek Vokhidov
- Mukhliddin Madaminov
- Shamsiddin Vokhidov

Head Coach: Rustam Kasimdzhanov

Also received a car

PRIDE • UNITY • UZBEKISTAN

The Endgame Corner

An Interesting Bishop Ending

Concept

Before we examine the next game, we should be aware that a bishop & pawn versus bishop endgame, depends heavily on whether the bishops are of the same colour or opposite colours.

With bishops running on the same colour, the outcome is decided by king and pawn geometry which was analysed historically by L.Centurini:



Luigi Centurini (1820-1900) was an Italian jurist, chess player, and endgame composer from Genoa.

In chess theory, he is highly celebrated for his deep 19th-century research into same-coloured bishop endgames, laying down the definitive foundational rules that are still used in textbooks today.

Grandmaster Reuben Fine famously codified L.Centurini's discoveries into two core governing principles for a bishop and pawn versus a same-coloured bishop:

The Frontal Defence (Easy Draw)

- Rule: The game is a draw if the defending

king can block the pawn by occupying *any* square directly in its path that is the opposite colour of the bishops.

- Why it works: Because the stronger side's bishop moves on the other colour, it can never directly attack or drive the defending king away.

The defending bishop can simply shuffle back and forth on a safe diagonal, completely freezing the pawn's progress.

The Rear Defence

Stricter Draw Conditions

- If the defending king is cut-off and forced behind or to the side of the pawn, the defensive tasks become incredibly narrow. The defender can only hold a draw if:

- The defending king actively attacks the pawn and holds the opposition against the enemy king.

- The defending bishop has access to two separate diagonals to intercept the pawn, and each diagonal must be at least two squares long.

Draw Conditions

- The defending king reaches a square directly in front of the pawn (or in its path) on a colour not controlled by the attacking bishop.

- The defending bishop can control the pawn's key-squares or switch diagonals effectively to block progress.

Win Conditions:

- The stronger side wins if the king & bishop cut-off the defending king and force the bishop to abandon critical squares.

- The stronger side can use manoeuvres (like sacrificing the bishop or cutting-off diagonals) to shepherd the pawn to promotion.

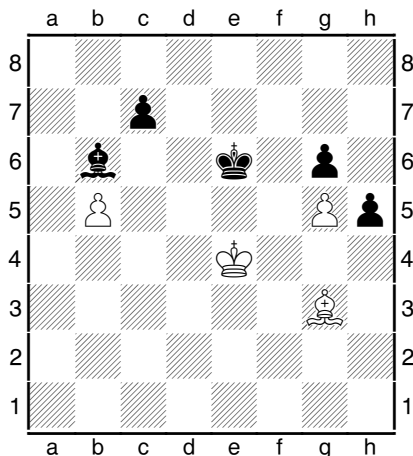
After all these, that we will need later on the game, it is time to examine the ending in question.

□ Robson Ray

■ So Wesley

C54 Saint Louis 2026

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Be5 4.d3 d6 5.c3 Bb6 6.0-0 h6 7.b4 Nf6 8.a4 a5 9.b5 Ne7 10.Nbd2 0-0 11.d4 Ng6 12.Re1 Re8 13.h3 exd4 14.cxd4 d5 15.exd5 Rxe1+ 16.Qxe1 Nxd5 17.Nb3 Be6 18.Bd2 Ndf4 19.Bxe6 fxe6 20.Qe4 Qd5 21.Qxd5 exd5 22.Kf1 Kf7 23.h4 Ne6 24.Re1 Ne7 25.g4 Nc8 26.Ne5+ Kg8 27.Nd7 Kf7 28.Ne5+ Kg8 29.Nd7 Kf7 30.f4 Nd6 31.f5 Nf8 32.Nxf8 Rxf8 33.Nc5 Nc4 34.Bc3 h5 35.g5 Nd6 36.Re5 Kg8 37.Ke2 Nxf5 38.Nxb7 Nxh4 39.Nxa5 Ng6 40.Re3 Ra8 41.Nc6 Rxa4 42.Ne7+ Nxe7 43.Rxe7 Ra2+ 44.Kf1 Kh7 45.Re5 Ra3 46.Be1 Ra4 47.Rxd5 Rxd4 48.Rxd4 Bxd4 49.Bg3 Bb6 50.Kg2 Kg6 51.Be5 Kf7 52.Kf3 g6 53.Bg3 Ke6 54.Ke4 (D)



This ending is winning for Black, who has to activate his bishop for the time being. Well, Black is facing two major problems; firstly his c7-pawn is a permanent target for the white bishop, while his h-pawn goes to the wrong colour-corner.

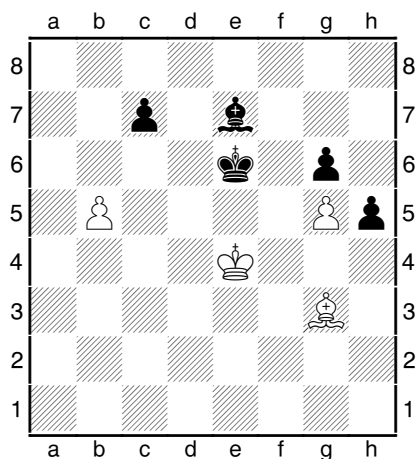
54...Ba5!

It is obvious that the black bishop belongs on the h2-b8 diagonal, from where it can protect his c7-pawn and attack the enemy g5-pawn, simultaneously.

55.Bh4

The alternative 55.Bf4 h4 +, looks even better for Black.

55...Bb4 56.Bg3 Bd6! 57.Bf2 Be7 58.Bg3 (D)



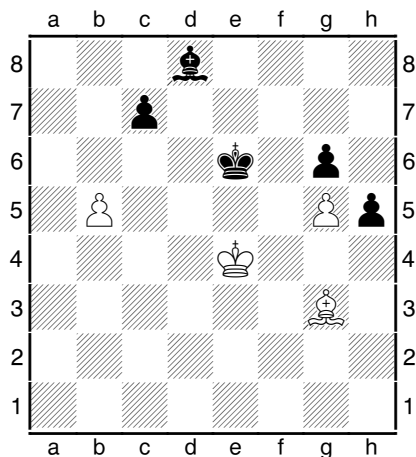
58...Bd6

The alternative 58...Kd7 59.Bh4 Kd6 60.Bg3+, seems to go nowhere.

59.Bf2 Be7?

An ugly move, which could have cost the half-point to Black. The zugzwang method would do the job here: 59...Be5 60.Be1 Bh2 61.Bh4 Kd6 +, or 59...Bh2 60.Bh4 Kd6 +.

60.Bg3 Bd8 (D)



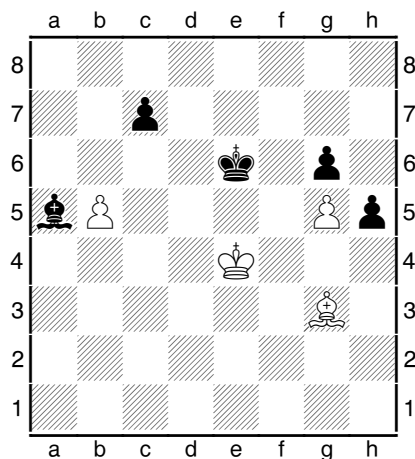
Passive but necessary to continue playing for a win. 60...Bd6?, creates a threefold repetition! And 60...Kd7, only leads to a draw after 61.Bh4 Kd6 62.Bg3+ Kc5 63.Bxc7 Bxc7 64.b6 Kc6 65.Bh2! Kxb6 66.Kd5 =.

61.Bh4 Kd6 62.Kd4 Be7 63.Bg3+?

Giving Black hopes, while White could draw with 63.Ke4 Kc5 64.Ke5! =, going for the g6-pawn.

63...Kd7 64.Bh4 Ke6 65.Ke4 Bb4! 66.Bg3

Ba5 (D)



After a good number of moves, Black didn't take the chances that his opponent gave him and he hasn't made any progress...

67.Bh4 Bd2 68.Bg3!

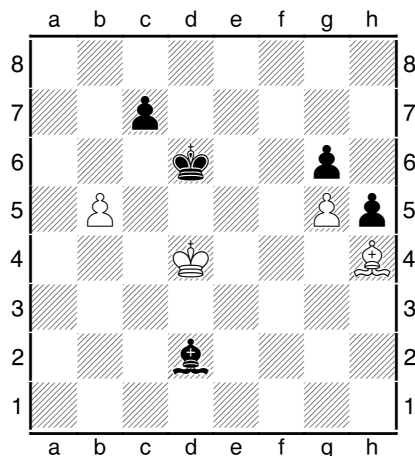
The black king shouldn't be allowed to enter White's camp via f5 or d5, so White has to play his bishop only.

68...Kd7

After 68...Bxg5 69.Bxc7 Be7 70.b6 Kd7 71.Be5 Kc6 72.Bd4 =, White holds.

69.Bh4 Kd6 70.Kd4? (D)

A critical mistake. White could hold after 70.Bg3+ Kc5 71.Bxc7 Kxb5 72.Kd5 Bxg5 73.Ke6 =.

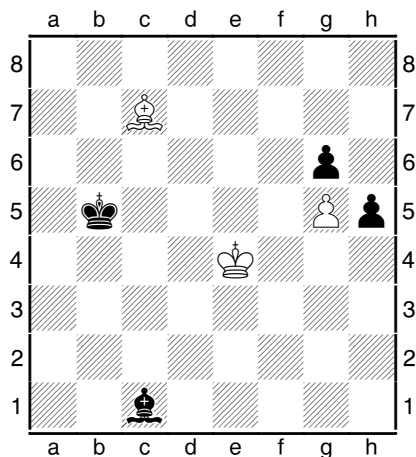


70...Bf4! 71.Ke4 Bc1?

Black again abandons the important h2-b8 diagonal. He should have opted for 71...Bh2! 72.Kd4 c6 73.bxc6 Kxc6 74.Ke4 Kd6 75.Kd4

Ke6 76.Ke4 Bc7 77.Bf2 Ba5 78.Be3 Bc3 79.Bf4 Be1 80.Be3 Bg3! (but not 80...h4? 81.Kf4 h3 82.Bg1 =) 81.Bc5 h4 82.Bd4 h3 83.Kf3 Bf4! (a great move, avoiding the naive 83...h2? 84.Kg2 Bf4 85.Bf6 Kf5 86.Bc3 =) 84.Bg7 Kf5 85.Bf6 Bxg5 86.Bxg5 Kxg5 87.Kg3 Kf5 88.Kxh3 Kf4! -+, when the last black pawn will queen.

72.Bg3+! Kc5 73.Bxc7 Kxb5 (D)

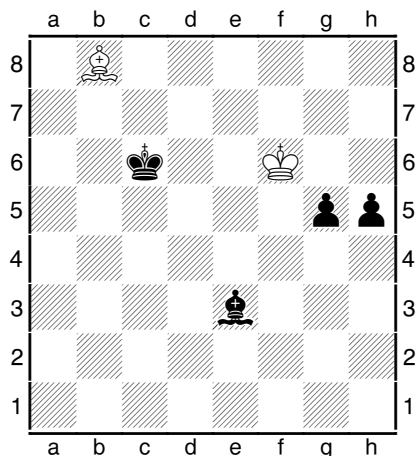


Two pawns up for Black, but White can still hold, due to his active king.

74.Ke5 Kc6 75.Bb8 Bxg5 76.Ke6!

The position is now drawn, although Black can try for free...

76...Be3 77.Kf6 g5 (D)

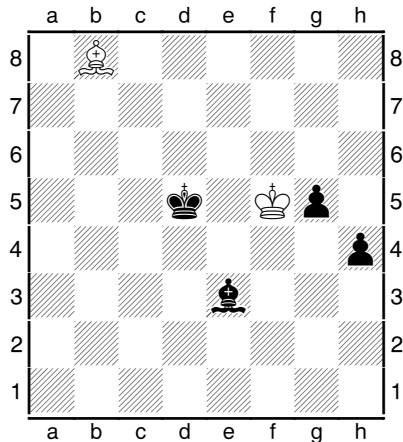


78.Kg6?

An 'easy' move, which is simply losing! White had first to go for 78.Ba7! Bc1 (78...Bxa7 79.Kxg5 =) and only now to attack

the black pawns with 79.Kf5 Kd5 80.Bb6 g4 81.Bf2 =.

78...h4 79.Kf5 Kd5! (D)



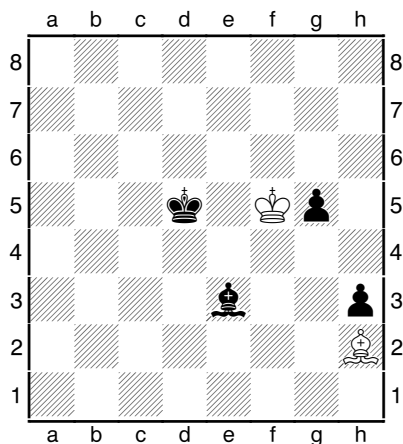
The winning method is extremely nice; something that an ambitious chess player should remember by heart. Black will sacrifice his h-pawn, in return for his king's invasion, gaining winning positions as the white king is badly placed!

80.Bc7

80.Kg4 Ke4 81.Bc7 h3! 82.Kxh3 Kf3 -+, doesn't make any difference.

80...h3! 81.Bh2 (D)

81.Kg4 Ke4, is just a transposition.

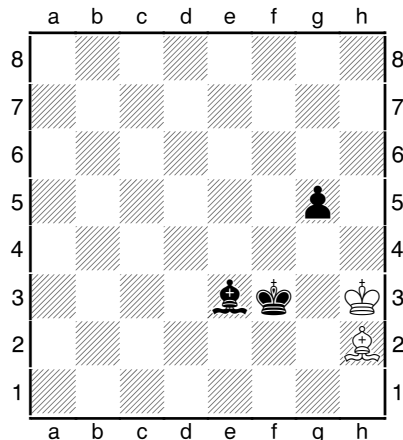


Now Black has to lose a tempo, creating a zugzwang situation.

81...Bf4! 82.Bg1 Bc1 83.Kg4

After 83.Bh2 Be3 -+, Black has lost the tempo, as it is White's turn to move - look at the position after White's 81st move.

83...Be3! 84.Bh2 Ke4 85.Kxh3 Kf3 (D)



And finally we have the position that Black was aiming for. The defending king is badly placed - he should have been placed behind the enemy pawn and opposite to the stronger side's king - something that here cannot be achieved.

86.Bc7

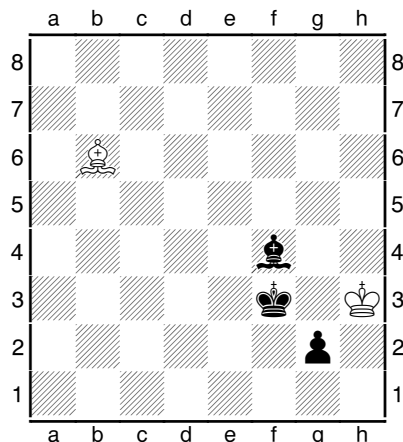
If, according to the endgame theory, the white king was on f5, it would be important who would be on the move! Black could still win 86...g3, but if White was on the move, he could draw by 87.Bf2!.

86...Bf4! 87.Bd8 g4+

The last black pawn is marching!

88.Kh4 g3 89.Bb6 g2 90.Kh3 (D)

Or 90.Bg1 Ke2 (90...Bg3+ 91.Kh3 Be1 92.Kh2 Bf2 -+) 91.Kg4 Kf1 92.Bd4 Bh2 93.Bb6 Bg1 94.Bc7 Bc5 95.Bh2 Bd6! -+.



90...Bg3 91.Bg1 Be1 92.Kh2 Bf2

0-1