Grandmaster
Insides
Key to Symbols used

! a good move
⃣ a weak move
!! an excellent move
?? a blunder
!? an interesting move
?! a dubious move
□ only move
= equality
∞ unclear position
∞∞ with compensation for the sacrificed material
± White stands slightly better
⊕ Black stands slightly better
± White has a serious advantage
⊕ Black has a serious advantage
±± White has a decisive advantage
⊕⊕ Black has a decisive advantage
→ with an attack
↑ with an initiative
↔ with counterplay
Δ with the idea of
△ better is
≤ worse is
N novelty
+ check
# mate
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Introduction

I started to play chess when I was 7 years old, which was average for Russia, or more precisely the Soviet Union, the country I was born in. I immediately fell in love with the game of chess, and still carry that love more than 40 years later. I loved chess because, thanks to the tutelage of my father and grandfather, I was able to challenge adults and felt special being able to compete with many of them on even terms.

After a successful career in finance and management, I recently came back to my big love – chess, by deciding to spend a substantial amount of time teaching the game that gave me so much joy and happiness. As I am no longer an active professional chess player, having left the circuit about 25 years ago, my current level of play is extremely volatile; one day I could be beating a 2700 player, while the next I may lose to a good club player who manages a creative attack. This gives me an excellent vantage point from which to examine what makes a Grandmaster tick, as both strong moves and horrible blunders can be produced by one and the same head – not only in the same tournament, but even in the same game.

The concept of explaining precisely what a Grandmaster sees and what he does not came to me after some of these roller-coaster events. I firmly believe that understanding the true scope of an average Grandmaster's potential will help players of all levels better their game.

How? You may ask. My answer is simple: by showing the human side of Grandmasters, players of all levels will know that their aspirations to become better are quite realistic, as even the highest title in chess does not guarantee against a healthy portion of mistakes, miscalculations and outright blunders.

Besides this hopefully inspirational chapter, which you will find towards the end of the book, you will also be able to follow my exploits as a player who once made it to the top 50 in the world. In my relatively short professional career, spanning about 6 years, I came close to qualifying for the Candidates tournament, won the World Junior Championship and all the major Open tournaments in the U.S.

Although this book will by default be quite biographical in nature, my real goal here is to make it very instructional. The focus will be on how to improve your game
whether it is for your child who is five or six years old, or for a master that has stalled in his progress. By making a note of what and how I studied at every stage of my development and what mistakes I have made, you will find many interesting examples of ideas you may want to repeat or avoid yourself from my career. I will put these in italics in the text so you, dear reader, will have an easier time spotting them in the book.

Hopefully those memories, along with games and opening analysis from the past, will guide you towards a better understanding of how to improve in chess.

Maxim Dlugy
January 2017
I have always loved games and thanks to my parents, who cultivated that interest in me, I would always play competitively with adults. One of my favorites was the game “Cities”, where players alternate naming cities starting with the last letter of the previous players choice. So if someone says Paris, you can say Strasbourg and your opponent needs to name a city starting with the letter G. This required preparation; I remember browsing through index of city names, trying to remember cities that start with tough letters, such as Y or X. That was the first step. Then I would prepare to spring traps on my opponents by remembering cities that end with tough letters like the letter X.

This laid the basis to my approach in preparation for playing games; this method became indispensable when I became a professional chess player. I was always interested in game theory and in the ability to improve my own skills so I could win. I don’t know why winning became so important, but I firmly believe that a strong desire to win is necessary to become a truly strong player in chess. Only this can push one to work at learning more and more about an ultimately infinite game.

I learned chess from my maternal grandfather, who was a very strong player of about 2400 strength. He played for the Dinamo Moscow chess club team, with
David Bronstein, on board one. I have a photo of him playing a tournament game against Vassily Panov, the collaborator on the Panov-Botvinnik attack in chess theory. That game ended in a draw. Unfortunately my grandfather died, right after he showed me how to set up the pieces and some of the rules of chess. My father and my paternal grandfather took over from there, playing chess with me to compensate for the loss of such a potentially wonderful teacher. When I was seven, kids played chess at the summer camp I was sent to, but from what I remember, we all hardly knew the rules and were making them up as we went. One of our inventions was that if only the Kings remain, and you make 50 moves with your King, you get a pawn on the starting square of your choice. I think FIDE canceled that one some time ago.

I was an avid reader, and decided to learn more about the game. I devoured chess books, playing over the moves myself after learning the chess notation. I would also ask every guest who came to our house, whether or not they played chess, to play a game with me. The best lesson came from a neighbor, Igor Abramovich, who lived in the same building, and one day came in hauling a chess clock. He explained the rules of playing blitz and we began. When I got to a lone Queen vs. King endgame, I sacrificed my Queen to claim a draw. He asked why and I said: “I didn’t want to lose on time”. After his clarification that he could no longer win as he had no material, I almost cried. “Uncle Igor, why didn’t you explain that rule to me when we started?” , I asked, as my eyes filled up with tears. The desire to win was enormous.

By next summer, when my mother and I went to Piarnu, Estonia - the birthplace of Paul Keres - for summer vacation, I was already good enough to compete with adults at the open chess club named after the legendary Estonian. It was a winner stays 5 minute game, and I remember one day I hit a record of 48 games in a row. I was very proud and remember running back to mom to tell her this wonderful news.

Of course, I was still playing with my dad and grandfather whenever I could. I had a much easier time with my father, and until I was about 8, was mostly losing to his
How I grew up to become a professional chess player

dad. It was only later, when I was an adult, that my father told me that he was a much stronger player than his dad and played down to me so I would get the confidence to continue studying the game. I am eternally grateful to him for that.

By 9, I started a chess club in my own school, with a few kids staying after hours to play. I was explaining the basics that I knew to them and, so one may say, started my chess coaching career. I also befriended a boy from a grade above me, who told me about chess training at a nearby chess club. I started going to that club with him and another boy to learn chess from someone other than myself. Many years later, Grandmaster Dmitry Gurevich told me he was friends with my first chess coach, whose name I don't quite recall. He was a candidate master.

When I got to the club, the coach played a game with me and rated me as a third category player, which is probably in the range of 1400-1600 in FIDE rating terms. When I was ten, I started my first ever tournament in that club to qualify for the second category, but an upset from one of the boys from my school meant I wasn't going to make it. I did not complete the tournament, as my family finally got permission to emigrate from the Soviet Union, and on December 14th, 1976 the first leg of my Russian chess education was completed as we boarded the plane for the West.

In Rome, where my family was waiting to get a refugee visa to the United States, there was an immigrant centre, where blitz chess tournaments were organized. I competed twice, coming in third the first time and tying for first on the second attempt. I was the only child competing and this is when I first heard about tiebreaks. The 20-something aged player that tied with me really wanted the transistor radio, offered as the first prize, and convinced the organizers that his Bucholz was better and that is how real tournaments are run. I got a silver-plated ballerina statue for my effort and a bronze ashtray, that my father could use, as prize for the first tournament.

I distinctly remember following every major chess event through newspaper clippings, and the candidates matches leading up to the Baguio City showdown between Korchnoy and Karpov in 1978. By the time I left Rome for New York, it was clear that my love for chess will continue and now was the time to find out how to improve in America.

While still living with our friends, who put us up during the first couple of weeks in New York, I was taken by their friends son – who was three years older than me
and already a first category player in Russia – to a local chess club in Queens. The tournament was on, and I couldn’t really play anyone. All I remember was free cookies, which I was happy about. This friendly teenager turned out to be Vadim Genfan, the game with whom in the near future would have an inspirational character to it.

The next year or so my chess education was one of self-study and playing Russian immigrants in the yard next to our apartment house. Finally, when I had already turned 12, I persuaded my father to take me to the Manhattan Chess Club and my chess education began for real!

I came to the club and was happy to see other young players there. I was soon playing in a kids tournament and when I scored 3 out of 4, losing a tough game to the National Elementary School Champion, Andy Lerner, the kids, most of whom took lessons with the legendary Jack Collins, suggested I look him up for lessons. I did, and soon I started commuting to the Alphabet City area of New York, where Jack lived, and became one of Collins Kids, playing matches against children from Iceland, the Westpoint Academy and the U.S. Amateur Team Championships.

My lessons cost $5.00, which was quite reasonable for my family, but many years later I found out that, in fact, the real price was $20.00 and it was subsidized by a wonderful person, the father of two Collins Kids, Svetozar Jovanovic. I am still in touch with his older son Oliver, who is a bioinformatics professor at Columbia University.

My lessons with Jack gave me the basic knowledge I so craved. I was learning basic endgames that Jack played out on the chess set, which I last saw at the St. Louis Chess Hall of Fame exhibit, dedicated to Bobby Fischer. Fischer also played chess on that set, sitting on one of the same nice armchairs as I did while I learned the Lucena position. Collins, who loved children, had become the centre of American chess life in New York throughout the 60's and 70's when most of the top Grandmasters and masters frequented his apartment as a chess club. He showed me games of Paul Morphy, Steinitz and Lasker, among other champions – including his favorite, Bobby Fischer – explaining the
ideas behind the moves of these great players. My basic chess knowledge grew as did my rating. Having started in the U.S. with a mere rating of 1406, after my first tournament I started to gain quickly and by the time I was 13, I was a 2100 player.

I want to step back for a second and recall a truly important chess game in my life which I played at the Manhattan Junior Chess Championship. This was my second tournament in New York, and I was paired as Black with Vadim Genfan, the teenager I met on the third day in New York, who took me to the club in Queens. He was rated 1947 – 541 points above me. I tried to go to sleep, but couldn't. The thought that I will be beaten the next day did not let go, and I started to think about my predicament.

I imagined him playing his first move, and suddenly realized that this move will not be sufficient to beat me. I will respond with something reasonable and the game will go on, I thought. I also realized that the second move Vadim will play will hardly be enough to break down my resistance and so I imagined the game will continue and there is no reason for me to believe I should lose. I ran out with this discovery to tell my mother, who congratulated me. Satisfied, I went off to sleep.

The next day my opponent played 1. c4 – the move I had never seen before in my life. Sticking to my system – I replied 1... c6! - clearly showing that I also know how the Knights move and won a complicated game which forever prevented me from being afraid of any opposition!

When my rating reached 2000 or so, my good friend – a very talented junior and also a Collins Kid, John Litvinchuk – defected! He went off to take lessons from Vitaly Zaltsman, an international master from Ukraine, who was winning lots of tournaments in the U.S. back then. Grandmaster Bill Lombardy, Jack Collins' best friend and supporter, cursed John for betraying Jack and leaving for another coach. With my full allegiance to Jack, I felt Bill was right. Still, Jack Collins was only a strong expert at the time, and as things stood, my progress while learning from him started to diminish. I needed another coach, and deep down I understood it. I loved Jack, and this created a serious dilemma. I solved it by simply stopping to take any lessons from Jack or anyone else. Of course, this lapse in my chess training between the ages of 13 and 14 slowed down my progress, and I regret not being more selfish back then and taking on a good coach in that period.

On Fridays, I played in the blitz tournaments at the Manhattan Chess Club, and on weekends I would always play in a tournament run by Bill Goichberg, the perennial
Chapter 1

New York chess organizer. This seemed to leave no time for formal lessons, so when I called Jack, I would just tell him how I did, and that all my time was spent playing chess. This lasted for almost a year, and finally after a 5.5/6 result in the Atlantic Open in Philadelphia in the under 2200 section, I achieved master!

With that, came some bonuses, which are unfortunately not available to young chess players now. The American Chess Foundation had a program with a formula \( +500 \). If a 14 year old had a rating of 1900 or above, he became eligible for free lessons, paid by the Federation. I was given a choice between Grandmaster Edmar Mednis and International Master Vitaly Zaltsman. As I was aware of my friend John Litvinchuk’s progress with Zaltsman, after some deliberation I told the ACF that I want to start taking lessons with Vitaly.

Suddenly the floodgates of chess heaven opened up and the chess truth came out to hug me! Well, almost. When I started with Vitaly, I had just had a few bad tournaments and my rating dropped back to expert level.

When I started showing him my games, his explanations about what was really going on and the various plans I could have been playing for were so out of my league, that I quickly realized that I knew next to nothing in chess. Amazingly, decades later, my friend Shernaz Kennedy, who also studied with Jack Collins and then switched to Vitaly Zaltsman by my advice, told me that at that time she was very friendly with Bobby Fischer. When she told him that she is planning to start with a new coach, Bobby demanded she send him Vitaly’s games. After looking them over, he told her that Zaltsman is a 2700 positional player and a 2200 tactical player. “You need to learn tactics from someone else” was Fischer’s advice.

I was quite good at tactics myself, so Vitaly’s positional school was sowed on very fertile ground. In general, when picking a coach, you should look for someone to complement your abilities, not to repeat them. I was lucky to find just such a coach.

I quickly gained in strength, surprising even Vitaly. A year later I earned my first International Master norm and, when I went to Argentina to play in the Cadet World Championships (Under 16), I was tied in rating with the number 1 seed Dibyendu Barua at 2350 FIDE. I didn't win though, finishing 7th, after a rather bad tournament where I lost as White to Barua, who shocked me with the Queen's Gambit Accepted, and to the eventual winner Stuart Conquest, where I failed to convert extra material.
How I grew up to become a professional chess player

I loved what Barua did to me in the QGA, and soon adopted it as my main defense against 1. d4. The “if you can't beat them join them” motto makes a lot of sense in chess.

The breakthrough came the following summer, when I was 16. With one IM norm, I decided to try my luck in Europe and prepared to play in four tournaments in a row, hoping to get the IM title.

The Young Masters tournament in Gausdal as well as the Gausdal Open were loved by the young Americans. I came there with a pack of U.S. talent, including Nick DeFirmian, Sergey Kudrin, John Fedorowicz, and Steve Ondedahl among others. I started the Young Masters slowly with 3/6 and needed to win three games in a row to get the norm.

Somehow, I managed, and this set the stage for yet another norm event: the main Gausdal International. With 6 GMs playing, this was clearly the strongest tournament I had ever played in, but my confidence grew and with it, the results. I got lucky in round 8, when I needed one more point to clinch the IM norm and title and got paired against an unrated player with Black, who was doing very well up to that point. I won that game and suddenly found myself tied for first going into the last round of this event. My opponent, Sergey Kudrin, was doing even better than me, and he needed a win in the last round for a GM norm. This turned out to be his undoing. Knowing he will try to win at all costs, I decided to use psychology. I played an extremely safe system in the Classical Variation of the Queen's Indian defense and used his unwarranted attempts to complicate to get the better game. The game finally moved into a Knight and pawn endgame, where I had five pawns to Sergey's four, and after 80-something moves, I managed to convert it into a win. When I called my parents to tell them that I not only earned all the IM norms, but also won the tournament clearly with 7/9, they almost didn't believe me!

I was flying high, and continued with the next tournament on my list: the Lloyds Bank Open. After drawing Raymond Keene in the last round, I secured my now superfluous fourth IM norm, outscooring Viktor Korchnoi in the process – who scored 5/9 – one of the worst performances in his career. In the fourth tournament, played in England during the summer breeze, I earned a 2400 performance, gaining rating points yet again. When I came back to New York, I remember Vitaly's amazement at my result. I was still very rough at the edges, but would always get back
into the game with some strange tactical shots. Tactics are the lifeblood of any chess game. There should never be any doubt that any spare time a chess player spends training himself at tactics is time well spent. I continued studying with Zaltsman, spending about 10 hours a week in lessons with him and studying and playing during all the other free time I got from school.

The following summer, I earned my first GM norm at a tournament in New York, and competed in my first World Junior Championship, where I was once again rated equal first, this time with Nigel Short, at 2450. Once again, luck was not on my side, and I finished 6th, trying too hard in my last round against Valery Salov from Russia to win and get the bronze. Kiril Georgiev from Bulgaria rose as a star that year, defeating me in the game that won the brilliancy prize of that event and easily running away with the tournament ahead of such future strong players as Valery Salov, Evgeny Bareev, Nigel Short and others.

As my final year of school was coming to a close, I was convinced I needed to try and become a professional chess player. I had long and difficult conversations about this decision with my parents, who were eventually very understanding; we decided that I will try this career for 6 years, or three World Championship cycles.
How I grew up to become a professional chess player

The target for those six years was to become top 5 in the world. Failing that, I would return to study and a career in something else of my choosing.

The day after High School graduation, I flew to California to play in the U.S. Junior Championship, where I was 150 points higher rated than the number two seed. I started with the worst performance imaginable, blundering pieces left and right and getting only ½ a point in the first four rounds. I called my dad and cried in the phone, telling him I made a bad choice to become a professional chess player and am now failing in the very first tournament of my career. He supported me as much as possible and I regained the much-needed confidence and finished strong with 6/7 in the remaining rounds, coming in fourth place and avoiding a complete breakdown.

A week later I was due to play in the U.S. Closed Championship and, after a nice weekend tournament which I won in Los Angeles, I started my real chess career, beginning the strongest tournament of my life with an amazing 4.5/5. At the end of the tournament I was tied for 3rd with Yasser Seirawan, James Tarjan and John Fedorowicz. The third place finisher qualified for the Interzonal tournament that year, which was the next stage in the World Championship qualification process, so there had to be a match played to determine who the United States would send to play.

Yasser qualified by virtue of his rating, while it turned out that Jim Tarjan was playing this event as a swan song and was retiring from chess. That left the mighty John Fedorowicz, and a match was set up to determine who would be competing in the 1985 Tunis Interzonal. I won that match and, with that, managed to prove that my result at the U.S. Championships was not a fluke. From this moment onwards, a new professional chess player appeared in the American deck.
Chess is a serious game. Not in the sense that playing chess isn't fun – it certainly is! Improving at chess is a serious business, as you can never ever know everything about it; that is essentially a mathematical certainty.

Recently, after years of using one of the fastest supercomputers in the world, the database of all resulting positions from placing seven random chess pieces on the board was completed. Even if that computer continues to be available for solving all eight pieces, and even supposing computing power doubles every year and this doubling effect will be somehow installed into the Moscow State University Supercomputer – the next batch of answers should not come out earlier than about 20 years. That will work for Rook and pawn endings with two pawns each, but adding another pawn will take centuries for a definitive result to be found.

Magnus Carlsen reached the number one spot in the world and said that he loves to play chess, because there is still a lot more to learn about the game. He also said that he is a quick learner and that when he looks at his chess games of a few years back when he was World number two, he is amazed at how poorly he played then. This means that you, or your child, if you're a chess parent, can continue to learn more about the game in the foreseeable future. It also means that there should be a system for learning how to study, as there is a lot to be done.
Let me then divide this system into its important elements under separate headings and go through my own experiences and practices in mastering chess as a child.

**1. Desire and Passion**

This rightfully belongs here as the number one driving factor of all chess progress. While chess is far and away the best game ever created, this feeling is shared by only those that enjoy both the combative and the creative processes that chess offers. If you like to win, because you can beat your dad but not your grandfather – and you are sure that you can find ways to finally reach that goal – you will be pushing yourself to be better in every way possible. Creating those inner goals for yourself or your child is very important in driving yourself to progress. Adults can aspire to gain rating points in over-the-board or online play and learning more about chess will surely help them achieve those goals.

If I misplay a position which seemed good to me, I am to this day driven to immediately find out where I went wrong. The search for chess truth is a passion; once you realize where you have made the mistake, you can find it and file it in your memory, where it becomes another piece of knowledge in your chess war chest, like a new word or a faster route to a familiar place.

**2. Parental Support**

For a child, having the full support of both of your parents while studying chess and gradually improving at it is a must. Success in chess is not a linear story, and while it takes time away from normal schooling, and although emotions may run high when you lose, parents need to be patient and extremely supportive.

My father was not only my first real chess teacher, but also an ongoing supporter, taking me to tournaments and staying with me until any hour of the night. I remember one game when I was 14, against Grandmaster Anatoly Lein that finished at 3 in the morning! It was a very long endgame and my father, who had to get up for work at seven the next morning, stoically waited at the Chess Center of New York for the game to end.

My mother, who never played chess, always had kind words of advice for me before every tournament and always showed an interest in coming to tournaments where
she would receive indirect information about what players thought about me from some of the best players in the world. She befriended World Champions Vassily Smyslov and Boris Spassky for that reason, and was very happy to hear that they thought I had real talent. What else would they tell her?

3. Games that Help Improve at chess

Considering that chess is a strategy game which has a very extensive scope, almost every strategic game would help study or improve at chess one way or another. Checkers, which I loved playing as a child, helps calculation and understanding when to simplify.

There is a famous Russian game called “Wolf and the Sheep” where four ‘sheep’ are placed on the a1, c1, e1 and g1 squares, while the lone black ‘wolf’ can choose any corresponding square on Black’s back rank. White’s checkers can only move forward diagonally and try to stalemate the black Wolf, who needs to break through their barrier but has the advantage of being able to move diagonally forwards and backwards.

Although the game is theoretically a win for the sheep, calculation is important and the methodology could be easily compared to trapping a weaker piece on the chess board in an endgame.

As I mentioned before, games like the game “Cities”, which I loved as a child, helps us not only remember important geographical information, but can also sow roots in understanding how preparation is important towards realizing your goals. As a child, I also loved to play that was created by some Russians who brought it back home to the Communist Soviet Union. They called it “Black Business”, but the idea of buying up properties to have a market advantage was present. I loved strategizing and developing best and worst case scenarios as I was playing that game, and later Monopoly, as it taught me the risk/reward ideas which became extremely important when deciding on a dangerous looking move in chess – one where your opponent would have to play extremely accurately to punish it.
As chess is ultimately a game between two players, game elements such as the ones found in Monopoly become extremely important, especially as time pressure looms. Understanding your opponent’s fears and ambitions could become more important than playing the best move in those kinds of situations. These games added strategical acumen to my thinking, but out of all of them, my fascination with breaking my own records was probably the most important driving force in helping me improve at chess.

It started with kids showing off how long they can juggle a soccer ball in the yard. I wanted to be the best and immediately started practicing on my own. Eventually I managed to become the best among the kids in our yard. I still remember the record – 89! Not much considering the world record is over 24 hours, but the point is that if the desire and the ability to self-improve can be measured or calibrated with others’, the driving force will be there as the benefits and results are clearly visible.

Some of the most chess-related games that helped me understand the role of alternating moves, and the limitations one has to deal with when you can't keep moving and have to give your opponent the opportunity to respond to your move, were the game of soldiers and Chapaev.

The way I played soldiers was simple but instructive: I would set up the plastic soldiers set and then try to knock them off move by move in the quickest number of moves with a hit from a plain checker, by flicking it with a finger. However, if I was playing my cousin, who had sophisticated weapons like toy cannons, I would shoot them with plastic balls, or with a plastic gun armed with plastic chips. The winner was the one with the last soldier standing. Since the armies were equal in size, any mistake could potentially cost you the game, and the understanding of the responsibility associated with making a good move gradually improved.

“Chapaev”, is a classic Russian board game of strategy and skill, named so after a revolutionary Russian military hero, Vasily Ivanovich Chapaev. In that game, played on a chess board with checkers, each side tries to knock off the opponent's checkers by flicking their checkers at them. The player who manages to do so without his own checker falling off the board continues the attack. There are many interesting rules in that game, including ways that you could attack. One of my favorites was “scissors”, where you would snap two of your own checkers together to have your opponent's checker that is stuck in-between them fly out. In that game, the initia-
tive became a crucial factor, as your attacks had to be calculated, much like in billiards or pool, so that your opponent wouldn't have a good counter when you miss and your checker position would allow you to continue your attack.

Another very popular Russian game that helps future chess players understand the importance of preparation and teaches them to structure their thought process, is the game of words where players take a random word and make smaller words out of it using only the letters found in the original word. I loved that game and when I could not convince my parents to play it, I would play it in solitude, trying to find additional words for days and sometimes weeks. This game included preparation, especially if smaller three letter words were allowed, forcing one to calculate possibilities in a very orderly way.

For example, let's take “Kasparov” as an example. I would first look for all the words beginning with a, such as “ark” or “ask”, then when I would come to a standstill, I would include another letter, let's say “p”, and list the words such as “park”, and “par”, going over every letter. When I finished my first attempt, so as not to stall and to keep the letters churning in my head, as I was fighting against a clock with other players, I would rewrite the stem word in a random fashion – for instance as “Parksova” – and with a new twist would probably start spotting new words such as “parka”. This process would go on until the timer rings or someone would offer to stop the game. Then, all the same words would be crossed out and the winner would be the one with the most original words. Additional points could be given for longer words at one extra point per letter after the minimum number, although that's not the way I played most of my life. Analyzing variations in chess uses the same approach, with the bonus being that this process is timed just like in the word game.

I once offered Garry Kasparov to play this game, and it turned out that he played it quite a lot while preparing for World Championship matches. We played one game, where he added the rule of giving extra points for longer words, and I lost by one point, as he was concentrating on longer words to go for the biggest rewards. He also taught me an amazing variation of this game which he played with some of his coaches: he takes a large stem word and each player gets three attempts trying to construct the largest three words possible. This is all done blindfolded while taking a nice stroll through Green Park in London, for example. The trick is that once you make one or all three of your attempts, you're done and if your opponent can find a longer overall set of words, you will lose. This excellent, though quite difficult
variation, trains calculation using only your mind and is very close to the thought process used by top players to calculate long variations in a chess game.

**Chess Variants**

It should come as no surprise that a number of games based on chess rules, but containing some interesting changes, can go a long way towards improving the special skills needed to become a chess player. Below is a small table with names and rules, and what skills are improved for the different variants of chess:

**Two-Move Chess:** Each player gets two moves, but only one if checked. This develops alertness to threats and helps understanding the initiative, as well as tactical calculation.

**Loser’s Chess:** Each player tries to give away all his pieces or get stalemated. Capturing is obligatory, but you can choose what to capture. The King is just another piece and can be taken. *This develops tactical calculation.*

**Bughouse (or Swedish chess)** – Usually played with two players against two. Any piece you capture is given to your partner, who can place it on his board instead of moving his natural pieces. Placing a piece with mate is usual, although variations abound. *This develops defensive and tactical skills, while also teaching you good time management skills,* as winning on time is common.

I found the three variants above to be the most useful, although I’ve played dozens of others and most of them are quite good for developing the skills mentioned above, as well as overall creativity.
I think it's extremely important for a child to be developing in all areas while studying chess. Of course, if your child has real desire, passion, and ambition to be great at chess, he may try to block other things you have to offer. This has to be resisted. I firmly believe that a well-rounded child or person will always outpace an extremely focused one, because they will be able to draw upon their much more extensive knowledge base.

In my case, I was growing up reading a healthy number of books on an ongoing basis. As I loved playing all kinds of games, I did not shun playing games outside while living in Russia. Soccer in the summer and spring, and hockey in the winter months were played almost daily, with my mother characteristically calling me up from the 10th floor balcony to stop and have dinner. We also played a post WWII game “Knives”, which had a bit of strategy to it. A large circle was drawn with a knife on barren soil. The circle would be divided into even parts based on the number of kids playing. At that point, each player in turn would throw the knife into someone else’s territory with the goal of having it stick in. If successful, then standing on his own territory, he would have to draw a line from the perimeter of the circle to the point where he stabbed the ground, adding this piece of land to his own. If your lot of land becomes too small to stand on, you are knocked out. The winner is the last one standing. Strategy, balance and a good eye were all needed to be good at this game.
Besides spending time with kids my age in the yard, my parents were fanatic about taking me to museums, explaining the characteristics of various artists, architectural styles, and famous architects. I was taken to see sculptor exhibits, beautiful cities like Suzdal, and St. Petersburg where there was a lot of historic buildings and beautiful churches to see. I was also provided books on the myths and legends of Ancient Rome and Greece, so my liberal education would be on par with the exact sciences.

As my mother had me reading and reciting the multiplication table by the time I was five, I was accepted early to school and was the youngest child in my class. It was difficult having to fight off kids who wanted to pick on me, but it certainly built character. My mother told me to never let anyone get the better of me, whatever the price, and kids quickly understood that there were easier targets to pick on. On the other hand, as I was always the youngest, I always felt the need to fit in and so, if I wasn't picked on, I would try to be cordial in all respects. My uncle was an artist, and he gave me and my cousin Grisha master classes at his home on how to draw. I loved it and although I never took it seriously until I stopped playing chess professionally, I think it helped me develop better sight of the board and what was happening around me.

Very often, looking at some top chess players, I notice that they are in a world of their own when they are involved in a chess tournament. Perhaps thanks to being offered many interesting faces of the beautiful world we live in, I avoided that type of inward-mindedness. Another very important element of being well-rounded were the birthday parties my parents organized for me. They were organized as a contest in various categories, where the invited children would compete for prizes given out based on the final points awarded for right answers.

The categories were usually mathematics, literature, history, and art; parents were told in advance what to expect from the party. It was extremely competitive and although everyone got a great prize, winning the contest was extremely glorious. Kids loved my birthdays because their gifts were usually better than what they got me, and everyone left my party a winner.

I remember my 14th birthday party in New York, which was attended by the future GM Joel Benjamin. This was my last birthday with contests, where a chess tournament was added as an additional feature.
Integration of Chess into Normal Life

To improve at these contests I created a notebook which I called “About Everything”, where I would put in all the important facts I could find. I knew the capitals of most countries in the world, the tallest mountains and waterfalls, as well as the longest rivers. This trained my memory, which later became very important in remembering opening variations in chess.

Just before turning 13, an amazing event changed my life and put me on the path to success.

Even though my father was a textile engineer with a number of patents to his name in the Soviet Union, when we immigrated to the United States, getting a job in his profession was next to impossible. He started to learn English, and while doing that had to make ends meet by taking on menial jobs. He was working as a handyman in a building on the Upper West Side in Manhattan, when he was summoned to an apartment with a leak complaint. As he was fumbling with the issue at hand, the owner, Eliane Reinhold, asked him whether he was really a handyman. “I am really a textile engineer from Russia”, my father replied. She was happy to hear that, as her husband taught Russian at an Ivy League University.

As they became friends, my father invited Eliane and her son Michael for dinner at our modest apartment in Queens. There upon meeting me, Eliane told my parents, “You did a very important thing: you took this child out of Russia. I will get him into a good school”. It turned out that her son attended Dalton, the most privileged school in Manhattan. Getting into that school was a complete lottery even for the wealthy and smart kids. Eliane somehow got me into Dalton to take their standardized exam, where I did superbly in mathematics.

My English was not considered, as after only a year and a half in New York, I was barely making myself understood. Having passed the math standardized test with no mistakes, I was accepted in November to attend the 7th grade! Amazingly, when Eliane was planning to visit her father in South Africa, my mom asked her to look up her father’s cousin who lived there. Upon return, Eliane told my shocked parents that my mother’s uncle was in fact her father’s business partner! What a truly small world we live in.

I was accepted with a full scholarship to Dalton and with it came a great feeling of responsibility. My parents were very clear that this was an amazing chance to be successful in a new country, and I had no right to not give the school 100% of my abilities. Considering how difficult the school was, the fact that my English had to
be brought up to the level of my peers there, and that the daily commute to the school was just over an hour, I had my hands full. In addition to all of that, was chess.

My chess life would start on Friday nights, when I would take the subway to the Manhattan Chess Club and do my weekend homework at the club before the weekly blitz tournament which started at 7:30 in the evening. If there were enough people willing to hang out after the blitz, we would play bughouse until about one in the morning. After that I would have a couple of slices of pizza at a local pizzeria, and endure a 45 minute commute back home, getting there around 2:30 in the morning. If I had a tournament planned on the weekend, I would miss the blitz tournament and head straight home to get my homework done, so I would be free to play.

A year later, when I started taking lessons with Vitaly Zaltsman, I would have two lessons with him mid-week, so I would free up Fridays and the weekends for chess events. Sometimes I just didn’t have enough time at home to do the homework. In those cases, I would jump on the train going the opposite way till the first stop of the N train, so I could get a seat and do the homework in the 40-something minutes it took until I had to change trains at Lexington Avenue and 59th Street. I think this routine really made me value everything that I was able to achieve, as I always felt that success comes at a price of hard work and dedication. I think that this character building as a teenager allowed me to be the nice, normal professional chess player that I eventually became.
Unlike most kids studying chess, I can responsibly say that I became good at chess thanks to blitz.

From the moment our neighbor brought the chess clock to our apartment in Moscow, until this very day, I have always been better at blitz than at regular chess. I truly believe blitz has gotten a bad reputation among coaches because of one historic fact: Mikhail Botvinnik, the father of the Soviet Chess School was a poor blitz player who disliked blitz chess. It is well known that Botvinnik was superb in strategy but pretty mediocre at tactics. His weaker tactical vision never allowed him to compete seriously in blitz, and he was often getting into time pressure. His chess school, which opened in the late 1930's, admonished blitz; students including Kar- pov were criticized for playing blitz instead of studying.

Recently, Mark Taimanov, who started to attend Botvinnik's chess school at its onset in 1939, recalled an amazing secret he kept for over four decades. Taimanov and Botvinnik were at a training camp preparing for a team event. Botvinnik asked if Taimanov was busy later in the day and invited him to come to his place at 8:30 in the evening. When he arrived, Botvinnik locked the door, pulled down the blinds and asked if his guest would agree to play 10 blitz games against him. Taimanov knew of Botvinnik's extremely critical attitude toward blitz and was therefore quite surprised. Botvinnik then swore Taimanov to secrecy about the proceedings, after which Mark Taimanov, who played blitz quite well, beat the Russian chess Patriarch
seven to three. Botvinnik was not upset. For him, it was yet another step in preparation for a chess event.

I think one of the reasons Botvinnik requested absolute secrecy was that he was afraid his pupils would see it as a sign of hypocrisy on the part of the founder of the Soviet Chess School. He was afraid that while he admonished blitz, it would not be a good idea to let others know he used it himself for important tournament preparation.

As his pupils moved around the world, teaching future stars, many of them continued to spread the bad word about blitz, eventually creating this strange belief that blitz is just for fun, to be played only after you're finished with your serious study, and even then in moderation.

I completely disagree! I think blitz is an excellent tool for chess improvement. Let's discuss the pros and cons of using blitz as a preparation tool.

Pros:
- Blitz helps you learn to make decisions faster.
- Blitz helps you learn how to make use of your time.
- Blitz helps you try out new openings and ideas without being afraid of the result.
- Blitz helps you enjoy chess which will make you want to learn it more and keep you playing longer.
- Blitz helps you gain more confidence as you have more chances of beating tougher opponents.
- Blitz helps you learn to focus, as positions change rapidly and opportunities come up every few seconds.
- Blitz allows you to test out your knowledge in a short period of time, as you can play a full blitz tournament within two to three hours.
- Blitz allows you to learn openings faster, as you can analyze the opening portion of your blitz games and quickly understand what went wrong.
- Blitz allows you to practice lots of chess without going to a serious tournament.

Cons:
- Blitz allows superficial play.
- Blitz will make you go blind (just kidding – I can't really think of a second con for blitz)
Putting aside the pros, let’s examine how dangerous it is to “allow superficial play”. In fact, superficial play comes from a lack of practice. If someone gets into time trouble and isn’t well-practiced in blitz, his play will not only be superficial – it will be full of serious blunders, which is much worse. It is true that finding the best plan or converting a theoretically winning endgame is sometimes difficult in blitz, but whatever plan you do choose will point you into the direction of where you need further study. You will learn that in specific positions, your tendency is, for example, not to attack, when the attack is warranted, or vice versa. This will help you hone in on your weakness and study those kinds of positions with the correct plans carried out, making you a better player.

Let’s see an example of a blitz game of mine against the now three-time World Blitz Champion, Alexander Grischuk, with the mindset of what can be learned from playing just one blitz game:

\[ \text{Dlugy, Maxim} \]
\[ \text{Grischuk, Alexander} \]
\[ \text{ICC (3-min game), 24.03.2003} \]

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \) \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 4. \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) e6
5. e3 \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \) 6. \( \text{\textit{c2}} \) \( \text{\textit{d6}} \) 7. \( \text{\textit{d3}} \)

In 2003, this method of playing against the Meran already became the main line. However, back in 1986, when I discovered this idea in my preparation for my game against Glenn Flear, only one other player, Sergey Smagin, came up with the same idea and played it in one of the USSR Qualification tournaments against Nikolay Monin. In fact, Sergey played 7. \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) with the same idea as myself, but I always preferred to develop as actively as possible and therefore analyzed 7. \( \text{\textit{d3}} \).

7... 0-0 8. 0-0

8... \( \text{\textit{dxc4}} \) 9. \( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) a6

Seventeen years after the advent of the waiting approach 6. \( \text{\textit{c2}} \) and 7. \( \text{\textit{d3}} \), Black has also learned to be patient. My idea, which Smagin actually got to play, was that if Black simplifies and plays logically after 8... \( \text{\textit{dxc4}} \) 9. \( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) e5, White – analogous to the Queen's Gambit Declined variation seen in the then recently concluded world championship match between Kasparov and Karpov –
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plays 10. h3! exd4 11. exd4 ²b6 12. ²b3 when Black to fight for equality needs to play 12... h6 to stop White from developing his Bishop to the powerful g5-outpost. In that case, White has a dangerous sacrifice 13. ²xh6! gxh6 14. ³g6 ³h8 15. ³xh6 with lots of compensation for the piece.

I prepared this for my game against Flear, but he diverged with an immediate 8... e5, when I got a slight edge with 9. cxd5 cxd5 10. ²b5 ²b8 11. dxe5 ²e5 12. ²xe5 ²xe5 13. ³d2.

It's interesting to see that using computers, it is actually possible to defend the position after the piece sacrifice, although Smagin as well as another dozen or so players broke through rather quickly. Still, after 15... ³h7 16. ³e4 ³e7 17. ³f6! ³f5 18. ³h5 ³f6 19. ³g5 ³xd4 20. ³xh7 ³xh7 21. ³ad1 ³g8 22. ³c2 ³g6! 23. ³xg6 fxg6 the position is far from clear and looks quite playable for Black. White can also try 19. ³h4 but after 19... ³e4 20. ³ae1 ³g8 21. ³xf7 ³xf8 22. ³xf8 ³xf8 23. ³xe4 ³xh4 24. ³b3 ³d8 25. ³fe1 ³d5 26. ³e6 ³c8! 27. g3 ³hf6 28. ³xd5 ³xd5 29. ³h6+ ³g8 30. ³ee6 ³c7 31. g4 ³f4 32. ³xf4 ³xf4 33. ³e8+ ³g7 34. ³eh8 ³e7, the game is headed for a draw. Perhaps White can salvage a small edge with the non-committal 19. ³ae1, but I am sure here too, that Black has enough resources to hold the position. Sorry for the digression, but I just couldn't resist to offer some opening chess history, especially since I was one of the founders of what became one of the most popular variations in chess.

10. ³d1

Theory went a long way, but good, natural moves are always in vogue. Without definite knowledge of modern theory, my motto is to play logical moves at every turn.

I know that my Rook needs to be on d1, and I also know that I want to fight for the centre with e4 and to stop Black's counter play with h3.

10... ³e7 11. e4 e5 12. h3 b5 13. ³f1

I wanted to be able to play g3 and ³g2 to shield my King and prepare a kingside expansion with f4 and e5, after the exchange of central pawns.

After the game, I looked it up and saw that both 13. ³e2 and 13. ³d3 have also been played in this position.

13... ³b7

As it turned out, this move is a novelty. Previously played was 13... c5, when after 14. d5 followed by a4, White tries to weaken Black's queenside, banking on the strength of his protected passed pawn on d5.

14. ³g5
The Role of Blitz

A standard developing move, trying to get Black to play 14... h6, which would be somewhat weakening after the simple retreat 15. e3, since then Black would find it hard to stop White's Knight from coming to f5, as the move g6 would no longer be available.

14... ad8 15. dxe5 xe5 16. d4 g6

This move is inaccurate and allows me to get a better position without any serious counterplay. Black should have played either 16... c5 or 16... c8, in both cases stopping the exchange of my Knight for his Bishop without any compensation.

Now I decided on a plan to simplify the position, believing that the resulting endgame should favor the two Bishops.

17. f5 e5 18. xd6 xd6 19. xd6 xd6

20. d2!

I thought this was quite simple and it turns out to be strong as well. The ending where White has a two-Bishop against a Knight and bishop advantage, with an unbalanced pawn structure: four pawns versus three pawns on the kingside and two pawns against three pawns on the queenside, could potentially be quite dangerous for Black.

20... xd2 21. xd2 d8 22. g5 c5 23. f3

My plan is simple. Without any weaknesses I can quickly exchange Rooks, bring my King to the centre and start dealing with my opponent's queenside, while bolstering up my kingside pawns.

23... h6 24. e3

No reason to double the pawns in exchange for the bishop pair. I have a serious advantage that could already be decisive in a classical time control game. In a blitz game against one of the best
players in the world, this is not so easy, but if I keep moving in the right direction while avoiding obvious drawish pitfalls, I should have reasonable winning chances.

24... c4

I need to create a weakness on the queenside, so my King will have access to it.

29... c6

29... b4 might have been more prudent, but I would have a number of ways to attack the weakened queenside, so Grischuk decides against it.

30. axb5 axb5

31. na2!

This move fixes the queenside pawns, and I can now think about the best way to attack them. In general, fixing your opponent’s pawns is a clever tactic in blitz. This helps focus your attention on your opponent's weaknesses and in this way, prioritize your moves that facilitate ways of attacking them, without those pawns being a moving target. The calculation that needs to be done when your opponent's weak pawns can move when being attacked, is much more complicated than if they are fixed.
The Role of Blitz

31... \( \texttt{f7} \) 32. \( \texttt{b4} \) \( \texttt{b7} \) 33. \( \texttt{d4} \)

This is a bit wasteful. The direct plan of bringing my King to c3 with ideas of coming into b4 was much stronger. The simple 33. \( \texttt{e1} \) was much more testing.

33... \( \texttt{c6} \) 34. \( \texttt{c3} \)

This move is based on the idea that if your opponent wants to do something - avoid it. In this case, though, the straightforward 34. \( \texttt{xc6} \) followed by 35. \( \texttt{e3} \) would have been very strong.

34... \( \texttt{xb4} \) 35. \( \texttt{xb4} \) \( \texttt{b6} \)

Black is looking for counterplay, and trying to exchange off my last queenside pawn.

36. \( \texttt{e3} \) \( \texttt{a4} \) 37. \( \texttt{a3} \) \( \texttt{c8} \)

Clearly, Black still has a long way to go to draw this game, as even the exchange of all the pawns on the queenside will create a dangerous pawn-down endgame for him, where I will have the possibility of creating a passed e-pawn with good winning chances.

38. \( \texttt{d4} \) \( \texttt{e6} \) 39. \( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{f5} \)

(see diagram previous column)

40. \( \texttt{exf5} \)

40. e5 was also good, but I wanted access to the long diagonal for my light-squared Bishop from where I would be able to attack the b5-pawn.

40... \( \texttt{xf5} \) 41. \( \texttt{g4} \) \( \texttt{d7} \) 42. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{e8} \) 43. \( \texttt{d5} \) \( \texttt{b4} \)

Black bites the bullet, as there was no easy way of passing time.

44. \( \texttt{xb4} \) \( \texttt{xb2} \) 45. \( \texttt{c3} \) \( \texttt{d3} \) 46. \( \texttt{e3}! \)

A double attack! I defend my pawn, while attacking the ones on g7 and c4. Now the time gained in the opening and middlegame comes in handy, as I have to
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stop the possible drawing options of my resourceful opponent.

46... g5 47. f5!

The f-pawn will now be extremely strong.

47... f4 48. exd4 c6

Black realizes that 48... dxe4 49. f6! is finished and so threatens 49... d5.

49. e5 d5+ 50. d4 b6 51. e6

With a dual threat of 52. c5 and 52. g7 picking up more pawns.

51... d7 52. g7

I simply know that this position is won. I don't need to calculate beforehand. After the seemingly best 57... f6 58. g5 h5 59. e5, Black will quickly find himself out of moves.

58. h5 e6+ 59. e5 c5 60. g5 d7+ 61. f5 f8 62. e5 e6 63. g6+ e7 64. f6+ d6 65. g7 xg7+ 66. xg7 d5 67. h6 c4 68. h7 d3 69. h8 g2 70. h3 d1 71. e4 c1 72. b2 73. d3 c1 74. d2+ b1 75. b2

1-0
The Role of Blitz

As it turned out, even with the rational usage of time, it came down to seconds. In fact, at the end, I was down to 1/5 of one second, when my esteemed opponent still had over 6 of them!

Now to the learning phase: after reviewing this blitz game, I learned that my understanding of the opening was at a very high level, and that the plan of exchanging Queens and major pieces on the d-file, once I get the bishop pair, is quite dangerous for Black. I also understood that getting to the queenside pawns faster, when in that endgame, is a major priority for White, if he wants to improve his winning chances. In general, this one blitz game significantly improved my understanding of this line against the Semi-Meran Defense.

Critics may say that my play was too simplistic or superficial, because it was a blitz game and I didn't have a chance to calculate complicated plans. On the other hand, Bobby Fischer played very direct, simplistic chess with straight-forward plans and very often those plans were the best in the given positions. Learning to play simply and directly is an important part of becoming a strong chess player.

After stopping to play chess professionally, I kept my form up only by playing blitz online and, if not for online chess, I doubt that I would have the presence of mind to write about my chess adventures.
Besides the passion and dedication, playing the right kinds of games, and practicing chess by playing blitz, developing the tactical and strategic eye is very important. The earlier you start, the better, and I think tactics are connected to one’s ability to count numbers quickly. As a young child, my mother had me add, subtract, and multiply numbers in my head. Practicing this ability eventually forced the improvement of the same brain muscle that is responsible for performing calculations of tactical variations. My mother did it with me because her father was a natural mathematical wizard, able to perform similar, if not more impressive feats than Dustin Hoffman’s character managed in the film “Rainman”. The difference being that my grandfather was an absolutely normal and a very successful architectural engineer who was in charge of calculating the integrity of the design of some of the most famous bridges, tunnels and roads in the Soviet Union. This included the Moscow Ring Road, which he wanted to be wider than was planned. The KGB called him in for trying to overspend the hard-earned Soviet-budgeted funds on a road outside of Moscow, and he then cited the Short Handbook of the Communist Party, with quotes by Lenin, pertaining to wide roads. Just for fun, he memorized the entire book by heart and quoted the page and the word on which the quote began. When he told the KGB cronies that he felt it was his duty to memorize the whole handbook by heart, afraid for their own careers, they simply let him go asking to forget the incident.
My grandfather truly believed that this ability to calculate quickly and memorize books after one or two reads was trainable, and tried to teach my mother the same. She, in turn, tried to teach me the same, and while this really did help me become better at counting in my head and recognizing tactics, it was clear that some things are just innate and cannot be learned. I read about my grandfather from one of his students in 2003, who was writing memoirs about his own life. It was pleasant to see that my parents’ stories about his incredible abilities were all true, and remembered by others.

The advent of calculators has destroyed the necessity of learning to calculate in your head, but how can you train your brain if you don’t practice it? I recommend to do this, or have your child train by drilling him with more and more challenging math calculations. Once he starts beating you or his older sibling, you won’t be able to stop him. At the end of the day, you or your child will have trained the ability to calculate variations quickly and that is the ultimate goal here. I tell my students to never stop solving tactical problems and to do it on a daily basis. The tactical trainers readily available on many chess sites are a great tool towards building your tactical acumen which I consider the lifeblood of any chess player’s ability. Without tactical vision, your strategic understanding or your opening and endgame knowledge will go to waste, as you will either miss a winning tactic or allow your opponent a shot which will change the logical flow of the game.

Strategy

What about strategy? This is, of course, a much more serious question, as it pertains to a certain knowledge base which has to be the foundation on which you build. In my case it started with Vitaly Zaltsman, when I was already a master, but I think there are a number of shortcuts that can be used to speed up the learning process. I would start by creating a catalog of typical strategic plans based on different pawn structures, and look at the effective and ineffective games with each of those plans under the different headings.

So for example, in the Queen’s Gambit Declined Exchange Variation, the pawn structure characterized by White’s pawns on a2, b2, d4, e3, f2, g2, h2 versus Black’s on a7, b7, c6, d5, f7, g7, h7 gives White three main plans based on piece or King placements. The most standard is the minority attack advance of b4-b5, trying to weaken Black’s c6 or d5 pawns; the second one is the play in the centre with f3 followed by e4, or in rarer cases, e5 supported by f4 followed by a kingside pawn
march. The third possible plan, given that White castles queenside, is to attack Black's King with the g- and h- pawns if he is castled on the kingside. There is also the possibility of Black castling queenside, in which case White can either opt for plan number one: the minority attack, or more commonly plan number two: the central advance.

Once you see one or two annotated games that worked and didn't work under each of the four or five scenarios described above, you will be able to work out the strategic ideas that determined the success or failure of each one of those plans. Armed with that knowledge, your strategic understanding will grow. Of course, this should be done in every major opening, starting with the ones that are already in your opening repertoire.

My education was supplan ted by reviewing the annotated games of Mikhail Botvinnik, in the Russian three-volume edition of his complete games. As he was playing mostly weaker opponents, the mistakes appeared especially instructive, and the plans Botvinnik carried out quite formidable. I believe that, in general, it is easier to learn from games where one of the players is about 200 rating points stronger than his opponent, because the game is decided by broad strokes and not by seemingly insignificant nuances, which of course makes for a more important lesson to be learned. Since Botvinnik's opening repertoire was very expansive, his games gave me quite a good understanding of most of the available plans.

My coach Vitaly Zaltsman also broadened and deepened my understanding by analyzing with me every World Chess Championship match ever played, explaining in detail the plans that the World's top players used in the most important games of their careers. This was invaluable, and opened my eyes to all the available strategic ideas used in chess at the time. Of course, as chess players get better and the understanding of chess improves, new ideas and even new plans are developed all the time; keeping up without having a good base of strategic knowledge, which can be used in the comparison of new ideas to the old, would be extremely difficult. It remains the responsibility of all aspiring chess players to arm themselves with that knowledge, especially as it is now readily available on almost any good chess website.

Besides typical plans, mastering chess strategy includes understanding issues such as: weak and strong squares, outposts for your pieces, weakened or strengthened pawn structures, improvement of your badly placed pieces or playing against your opponent’s badly placed pieces, as well as many other aspects.
Understanding the typical plans, and the factors that lead to their successful or unsuccessful implementation, will help you with every other strategic issue in chess and is therefore the correct foundation for learning chess strategy. Let's take a look at one of my games with the intent of learning some chess strategy from it:

Dlugy, Maxim (2485)  
Remlinger, Larry (2380)  
New York 1985

This game was played at the New York Open in 1985, where I tied for first. It shows how the central strategy, where one side dominates the centre, works together with pawn structure transformations.

1. d4 ♜f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♜f3 ♜b4+ 4. ♜d2 ♜e7 5. g3 0-0

5... ♜c6 is more common, forcing White to take on d2 with the Knight as after 6. ♜g2 ♜xd2+ 7. ♘xd2 ♜e4 8. ♜c2 ♘b4+ Black equalizes easily.

6. ♜g2 ♜xd2+ 7. ♘xd2 d6?!

I consider this to be a mistake, which gives me a positional advantage. Black should play ...d5 instead, trying to fight for equality in the centre.

8. ♜c3 e5 9. 0–0 a5 10. e4 c6 11. h3!

With this preventive move, stopping ...♕g4, I secure the centre without any compensation.

11... ♘e8 12. ♘ad1 ♘a6 13. ♘fe1 ♘b8 14. b3 ♘d7

Black has placed his pieces merely in anticipation of my possible actions. The problem for him is that the side with the space advantage will always have more possibilities at his disposal, as it is much easier to coordinate flexible piece movement when you have more space.

15. ♘a4!
The start of concrete operations, provoking Black to weaken his position by fixing his pawns. Once Black’s weaknesses become fixed, the extra space and control over the centre, will give me great chances of breaking through.

15... c5

The alternative 15... b5 is met simply with the flexible 16. b2! when Black is in trouble after either:

A) 16... c5 17. dxe5 dxe5 18. cxb5 axb5 (or 18... xb5 19. c4±) 19. a4 c6 20. c4 xb3 21. b5 c7 22. fxe5±;

B) 16... exd4 17. bxd4 and my threats of bxa6 and e5 will get me a pawn with a great position or;

C) 16... b4 17. c5.

16. dxe5 dxe5 17. b6 c6

Effecting a welcomed pawn structure transformation.

18. xa5 would be a grave mistake, as after 18... c7! Black will win the exchange due to the awkward position of my Queen.

You should always be on the lookout for your opponent’s counter-chances, as no matter the position, if there is someone still sitting in front of you, it means there is some thought directed at stopping whatever you’re doing. Becoming emotional when you have a great position will turn off your brain, while your opponent still conspires to get back in the game.

18... xd5 19. exd5

Now I have a protected passed pawn and many targets for an attack.

19... d6 20. e2!

I start to increase the pressure. 20. a5 would be a mistake due to 20... b4, forcing White to give back material and the initiative. The best plan for me now, is to improve the position of all my pieces before starting to open up the position, as my space advantage allows
me to mobilize my pieces better and faster than my opponent.

20... b6 21. \textit{de}1 \textit{d}7 22. \textit{c}3 f6

\textbf{23. h4!}

Positional play is about improving the position of your pieces before starting serious operations. With my Bishop piercing the h3-c8 diagonal, my imminent pawn break with f2-f4 will gain in force.

23... \textit{f}8 24. \textit{h}3 \textit{h}8 25. h5!

This prepares another improvement of my pieces: my Knight heads to f5, where, with the combined threats of h6 and f4, I'll be able to launch a strong attack.

25... \textit{c}7 26. \textit{h}4 \textit{ed}8

Had Black tried 26... g6, trying to stop my control of the f5 square, I would be able to win material with 27. \textit{d}3 \textit{g}7 28. hxg6 hxg6 29. \textit{x}g6+! \textit{x}g6 30. \textit{f}5+ with a decisive advantage. In general, the side with a dominating position will always have tactics favoring him. Knowing that is important, as it's much easier to solve a ‘White to play and win’ position than just looking for the best move.

27. \textit{f}5

I went with what I assumed to be the crushing continuation, without looking deeper. A much faster and easier win was to be had with the direct 27. f4! Black can't take the f4-pawn as after 27... exf4 28. \textit{f}5 \textit{d}7 29. h6 White breaks through to the King.

27... \textit{d}7 28. f4 g6

29. fxe5?!

Again somewhat inaccurate. My pieces are positioned so well that I could attack Black from all sides. The fastest and cleanest win was 29. hxg6 hxg6 30. \textit{h}2! \textit{h}7 31. fxe5 gxf5 32. exf6 \textit{f}7 33. \textit{xf}5. Of course, if you can calculate
Development of Necessary Skills: Tactics & Strategy

one line to the end and are sure that you're winning, it's very tempting to stop looking for anything else and play it. In this case, I was sure I was winning material and that Black would, at best, end up in a losing endgame and looked no further.

29... gxf5 30. exf6 ♘xd5 31. cxd5 ♘xd5 32. ♕f2 ♗e6 33. ♘xf5 ♘d4+

A few moves ago, I missed this retort in my calculations, thinking Black will just have to resign. Still, Black's position is quite lost and my precise play from this point on will net the point rather quickly.

34. ♘xd4 ♘xd4 35. ♕f4 ♘e8 36. ♘xe8+ ♘xe8 37. ♕f1

I am still completely winning. The extra pawn is coupled with a strong Bishop and the ability to create a winning attack on the kingside.

37... h6 38. ♕f2 b5 39. a4!

With this move I free the c4 square for my Bishop, which will help stop all black activity as my f7-pawn will prepare to queen. An important strategic element is in play here: breaking up your opponent's pawns with your own wedge in order to free up key outposts for your pieces.

39... bxa4 40. bxa4 ♗b8 41. ♕c4 ♕f8 42. f7 ♗g7 43. ♕g4+ ♕f6 44. ♕g6+ ♘e7 45. ♖xh6 ♕f5 46. ♕c6 ♖d6 47. ♕d5

The position has clarified into an obvious win for White, so Black resigned.

1–0
What is to be learned from this game? As I mentioned above, the most effective strategic lessons can be learned from games where one player is about 200 points higher rated than the other, as was mostly the case in the collection of Botvinnik's games. Here, my opponent was rated about 100 points below me, and I was about to gain 60 more points over the next 6 months. So, this is a nearly perfect scenario for an instructive game, as we do not see too much resistance which would take away from the smoothness of the lesson. In this game, Black gave up the centre by allowing White to post three central pawns on c4, d4, and e4 without any impediment. I started probing his weaknesses with a4, forcing concessions and further weaknesses. After ...c5, my Knight arrived on d5 and could not be tolerated there without loss of material. After its exchange, the resulting pawn structure was primed for a decisive opening of the e-file, after I gathered my forces in the most energetic way: the doubling of Rooks on the e-file, taking over the h3-c8 diagonal with my Bishop, and readying my Knight for a decisive kingside invasion by placing it on h4. Once the position opened up, numerous weaknesses were uncovered in my opponent's camp, which led to material gain and an easily winning endgame. In the future, if we see such a pawn structure, the themes of probing weaknesses on the queenside, coupled with trying to get our Knight exchanged off on d5 will loom large in our minds, helping us win games in such set-ups.
Chapter 6

Improvement secrets

1. Study Versus Tournament Play

This is a very interesting and controversial topic. Since there is so much information that needs to be learned in order to improve at chess, it would appear that studying should be weighted more heavily than actually playing. Nowadays, you can easily practice your newly learned openings, plans, and ideas against strong competition online, without even necessarily revealing your identity. Is it not plausible to just study up to the moment of an important tournament and then proceed to beat everybody using a recently developed opening that you've never played before, and the tactical acumen that surpasses your previous one by 300 points – at least judging by the rating system in the tactics trainer?

My thinking is that this is purely individual. Some people need to play to internalize their knowledge. It's almost as if a tournament game that focuses all of our senses and abilities to the maximum, is the needed key to really access the information learned. In my practice, two failures occurred because of a lack of play. The first occurred when my coach, Vitaly Zaltsman, told me to stop tournament play for a couple of months prior to the World Under 16 championship, resulting in a sub-par performance. The second, even more devastating, was when Vitaly prepared me for the U.S. Closed Championship in 1986 and I didn't play for three months or so. The result was a potential +8 in positions I got out of the opening and my only minus score (-1) in the eight U.S. Championships I have played. This taught me to never
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play in important competitions without tournament practice before the event. Vitaly still believes in his method and it recently worked with one of his students, Joseph, who was strictly told not to play in ANY tournaments until Zaltsman gives him the green light. When Vitaly finally gave the go-ahead, he immediately won the under 1800 section at the World Open, pocketing $8000, which paid for lots and lots of previous and future lessons with my now semi-retired coach. So, what works for some may not work for others. My suggestion is to try it both ways and really try to understand the difference. Believe me – it’s worth it!

2. The Killer Instinct — When is it Too Much?

I thought of this topic because I clearly realize that without my incredible desire to win, I would not even come close to the achievements in my chess career or in my life. The will to win drives all of our actions and thoughts, and makes us focus on what we need to get done in order to achieve our goal.

Many chess parents watching their kids may confuse this drive – if it is present – with autistic behavior or another kind of abnormal condition. However, think of someone cramming for a morning test the night before. Won’t their behavior be a little strange? They will shun their friends or normal activities, and they will be pushing themselves into the wee hours of the night, trying to make it all count the next day. That is what a passionate, dedicated chess player is like – except the tests are coming in every game of every tournament, and the amount of knowledge you can access is almost infinite, compared to, for example, a chemistry or history examination. Much like in any profession, there are truly autistic chess players, but it is within a normal statistical expectation compared to any other endeavor.

It sometimes happens that the killer instinct comes into conflict with the fright of new heights. In this case, when a player who was vicious against his own level of players suddenly moves up a couple of hundred points to play against much more experienced players, he becomes satisfied with a draw in positions where he would never even think twice about playing on against previous competition. This is normal, and will go away on its own eventually; as the chess player moves past this new level, but allowing it to happen will halt progress. Coaches and parents should fight this fear, by explaining to the chess student that losing against a stronger player will teach you much more than agreeing to a draw with him in an interesting position. As a matter of fact, Garry Kasparov was moving up so fast that he was suddenly being offered a draw by top Grandmasters, months after becoming one
himself, and could not fight the temptation to draw. He eventually fought this fear and became the world's strongest player, although one can argue that his 17-game draw streak against Karpov in his first match helped him gain this confidence for the future.

I remember very well the game I played against Gennady Sosonko in the New York International 1984, where after getting a good position in the opening I accepted my esteemed opponent's draw offer. My coach Vitaly Zaltsman was livid: “How can you accept a draw when you get such a great position out of the opening?”, he screamed. When will you have a chance to have such a great position against such a player with Black?” I remembered this lesson for a long time and, when needed, fought with myself to keep playing even when accepting a draw did not seem such a bad result. It is interesting that the engines first evaluate the position as even, but eventually agree with my coach that Black is the one holding all the trumps. Here is this short and potentially exciting game:

\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{Sosonko, Gennadi (2560)} \\
\text{Dlugy, Maxim (2460)} \\
\text{New York 1984}
\end{array}\]

\[1. d4 d5 \ 2. \text{d}f3 \text{f}f6 \ 3. c4 dxc4 \ 4. \text{c}c3 a6 \ 5. e4 b5 \ 6. e5 \text{d}d5 \ 7. a4 \text{x}c3 \ 8. \text{bxc3 b}b7 \ 9. e6 \text{f}6\]

This move was prepared and analyzed by Vitaly and myself prior to the game.

\[10. \text{e}3 \text{d}5 \ 11. \text{h}4 \text{g}6 \ 12. \text{b}1 \text{d}6 \ 13. \text{ax}b5 \text{e}6 \ 14. \text{e}2 \text{d}7 \ 15. 0-0\]

Draw agreed.

\[\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\]

One year later when I was playing in the Interzonal in Tunis, trying to qualify for the Candidates Tournament, my coach told me to play safe against Arthur Yusupov, the eventual winner of the tournament. It was an early round in a long competition
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and, having prepared the Catalan, I wasn't too fond of playing a dull line against the Queen's Gambit Declined instead. Zaltsman insisted that if I play Yusupov in a complicated position, my understanding of chess will not be sufficient to match him.

I quickly drew the game. While a draw with the eventual winner of the tournament was not a bad result, I think this low confidence in my abilities which was transferred to me was what led to me NOT to qualify from that tournament by a one point margin.

Because I believed myself not be fully ready for such level competition, I offered draws in better positions against Ermenkov and Portisch, and failed to capitalize on opportunities against Tony Miles and Nick DeFirmian. Even the loss from an equal position as a result of a blunder against Alexander Chernin could be relegated to the low confidence bucket. Confidence is crucial in performing well in a tournament.

It is interesting that I once played John Fedorowicz a blitz match, and won the first 14 games. Then, I drew one and immediately after that I lost a game. Seeing that my confidence got shattered, I quit. Confidence acts like Red Bull: while it's in your system you feel the energy and perform to the best of your abilities; as soon as it's out of your system, you feel tired and disinterested. Try to go to every game believing yourself to be the world champion. If you really believe it, your opponents will also get the vibes and will show signs of insecurity and fear at key moments in the game.

I was quite arrogant as a child. Since I excelled at blitz, I would win quite often, even against players rated higher than me. I would drive this home by making snide remarks, helping to build up my confidence. Keeping the confidence level high is very important for a young player.

I remember one older player, an expert, telling me after I drew him, that I can't play chess and will never amount to anything because I have no talent. I was 13 at the time, and couldn't stop myself crying from this insult. I never forgave him for that, although perhaps it is time for it. He was obviously relaying his own inferiority complexes on someone less than half his age, because he could. Parents should explain to their children that it's important to be civil and social with other chess players, but at the same time not be too hard on their children who are trying to fight for their confidence in a very competitive field.
3. Motivation

I once attended a lecture given by Garry Kasparov to a high-profile corporation in Switzerland. The topic Garry spoke on was “How to motivate yourself”. One of the questions after his talk was how you can establish a new goal if you have already reached the peak. Kasparov responded with “Look for a new peak”. It's interesting that a few months later, Garry announced his retirement from chess and engaged himself in the political struggle in Russia, eventually being nominated Chairman of the Human Rights Foundation International Council. It certainly looks like Garry managed to find new motivation after reaching his peak in chess.

The question remains: how does a chess player that has recently started playing or has reached a certain plateau find motivation? My answer is: try to set new records! Whether you are an online player or someone trying to make a norm to get a new FIDE title, records are what can drive you towards achievements!

When I came to the United States and played in my first tournament, I received a rating of 1406. First of all, it was a number that could definitely be improved, and secondly, when the top-50 lists in various age groups came out, I found myself among the top 5 players in the country for my age. That was a serious motivator. I immediately started working on my rating and kept at it, getting a special sense of fulfillment from breaking every 100 point barrier.

Motivation is what will drive you or your child to go over each and every one of your games – to see where you could have played better, to learn more about chess – so you can use that knowledge in your future battles to inch closer to your goals. Setting goals is absolutely essential to improvement! The key to success is visualizing it and you can only do that if you set a goal.

4. Confidence / Over-confidence

All of the parents I meet that are ready to pay for private chess lessons for their children, want their children to improve at chess. There are many approaches that they take to support their child.

Almost all of them get anxious at chess tournaments, and often wonder how to improve their child’s performance. In my opinion and experience, the best support
a parent can offer their child is to make them believe in themselves. As it is quite natural to make mistakes in chess, and the job of chess coaches is to point out those mistakes, the parents may feel an inclination to strengthen the explanation of those mistakes by repeating them to their child and asking them to explain in their own words what they did wrong.

Additionally, the nervousness connected with the child's performance could encourage them to ask things like “How could you play such a move?”, or “Didn't you know to ask yourself what he is threatening?” I don't believe that approach is constructive. I think the best question to ask your child runs something like this: “I know you were strong enough to win this game. What do you think went wrong?” This will place your child on a pedestal, while giving him the chance to assess the possible mistakes on their own. Even if they answer “I am not sure”, the parent should simply have them think it out for themselves by saying something like: “Well, whatever it was, I am sure you'll learn from it and do great in the next game or tournament.”

Why be so kind? The explanation is simple: chess is a game where the conclusions we reach, and the lessons we learn, are internalized in our mind. We may not even be able to explain what it was that we learned from an exercise, or a bad game we played, but we will be able to improve upon it in a similar position in the future. The coach should point out the mistakes, while it remains the job of the parents to convey feeling of complete confidence in their child regarding their abilities. Confidence is transmitted over the chessboard; your opponent will feel how certain you are of your moves and abilities, and will start making mistakes.

Consider the World Champion phenomena described so well by strong Grandmasters; Fischer, Tal, Kasparov, Karpov and now Magnus – with their aura of over-confidence – created a shield which enabled them to save or even win many more losing positions than one would expect.

If your child believes he can win, because they are constantly supported by their parents and coach in this, they will improve faster, and will have more fun doing so. If a child starts crying after losing a game, or after a really bad tournament, give them your support. Explain that this is temporary, and that the knowledge they've been accumulating will bring successes in the near future. DO NOT MAKE FUN OF YOUR CHILD FOR PLAYING POORLY!
My first opening knowledge came from a funny episode at the very outset of my chess education when I was still studying with Jack Collins. My rating rose to 1541 and then the break-down of the United States Chess Federation's computer system froze all ratings in the U.S.A for over 12 months. This created an interesting opportunity for winning class prizes, as I was still eligible to compete in the under 1600 section, while my actual strength was roughly 300 points higher. Along came Jeffrey Kastner, a seasoned master and, at that time, the manager of the Manhattan Chess Club who I was on very good terms with. A new organizer, Jose Cuchi, a diamond dealer who loved chess, and was later responsible for holding some of the best International tournaments in New York, organized an amazingly attractive tournament where the Under 1600 section boasted a first prize of $6000! In 1978, this was probably worth about $20,000 today, if not more. Jeff offered me a deal: he would pay the hefty entry fee and give me free chess lessons to prepare me for the tournament in return for 50% of the prize I win.

Of course, I agreed. Jeff showed me how to play the Sicilian, and how to play 1. d4 and to combat the main openings for Black. The Four Pawns Attack against the King's Indian, The Exchange variation with $\text{gf3}$ against the Grunfeld, the Miles System with $\text{gf4}$ against the Queen's Indian and the Exchange variation against the Queen's Gambit Declined were the systems Jeff taught me. Amazingly, I stayed with
all those openings till I was 15 years old, and even now employ almost all of those systems from time to time! These were great lessons, and I am grateful to Jeff, who has long ago moved to Arizona, for those few serious steps in my chess education. The funny side of the story, is that unfortunately I was not the only one whose rating froze for months. A lot of other underrated players competed in that event, and regretfully I only scored 3/6. A fellow Collins Kid, Sandeep Joshi, born on the exact same day as me, took first with 6/6.

When I qualified for the U.S. Closed Championship by virtue of winning the U.S. Junior Championship in 1983, Vitaly and I really started focusing on openings. There were 17 opponents to prepare for, and we started preparing special systems against the main openings played by the top players in the country. This was the start of my serious approach to theoretical research, which continues to this day, except now I am developing opening ideas more for my students than for my own rapid and blitz play.

Let's take a look at a system that I started to play as early as 1983, but kept working on throughout my whole career to create a very good alternative to the main variations of this opening. Following my change of careers in 1991, the chess world picked up this system and has seen some of the top players in the world play it against each other.

After the moves 1. d4 ¸f6 2. c4 e6 3. ¸f3 b6 4. g3 a6 the main line has always been considered 5. b3. Vitaly Zaltsman suggested we seriously look at 5. ♞a4.

Vitaly had an amazing approach in studying theory: he would take a book on the opening by a strong grandmaster and would try to find improvements in slightly off-beat lines instead of digging into the main line theory. This approach had the double effect of creating a surprise weapon, while at the same time avoiding a direct analytical competition in lines analyzed by teams of strong players.

Let me present how this process created a system that is still regularly played by top players over 30 years later.
How to study openings?

The Queen's Indian - 5. a4 line

Efim Geller, in his 1981 book on the Queen's Indian Defense, considered 5. a4 to be the most principled response to 4... a6. This is quite revealing, as Geller was an extremely respected theoretician with a great instinct for the truth in chess. Zaltsman noticed this comment, and we honed in on developing this system.

After 5. a4 Black's main response is 5... c5 with 5... c6 being a completely independent way of playing for Black. Both 5... e7 and 5... b7 could easily transpose to the 5... c5 lines, but do have some independent content.

I've selected some key games, with annotations, to acquaint you with the some of the work done in this line during my chess career.

This is Geller's suggestion, who prefers this Gambit continuation over the defensive 9. c3, when Black has reasonable compensation for the pawn after 9... b4.

9... b7 10. e2 c6 11. c4 b7 12. 0-0 a6

If Black accepts the sacrificed Knight immediately, 12... xf3 13. xf3 xf3 14. c8+ e7 15. b3! e4 16. d5! yields a strong attack as White's Knight heads for d4 displacing Black's Queen.

13. c3 xf3 14. xf3 xf3 15. c8+ e7 16. e4!

Dlugy, Maxim
Wilder, Michael
Estes Park 1987

1. d4 f6 2. c4 e6 3. f3 b6 4. g3 a6 5. a4 c6 6. c3 b5 7. cxb5 cxb5 8. xb5 b6 9. e3!
16... h5!


This is the real test of the sacrifice. Black wants to open up the King as soon as possible, with perpetual check in sight.

17. d5?

A mistake which leads to equality. I couldn’t find the refutation of this fine resource over the board.

A) It seems Black is in trouble after 17. ♔f4 (threatening mate in two with 18. ♔d6 followed by 19. ♔c5) but after 17... ♔xe4 18. ♔b7 ♔d2 19. d5 h4 Black’s resources seem to be just enough to hold the position. After 20. ♔xd2 (Instead 20. ♔xa8 would be a mistake as Black first evacuates his King and then leaves happily ever after ♔f6! 21. ♔e5+ ♔f5!) 20... ♔f6! 21. ♔fe1 (21. ♔c7 trying to exchange Queens is another try, when Black does best to avoid the trade for now with 21... ♔g6 with rough equality) 21... hxg3 22. ♔e4+ ♔g6 23. fxg3 with a complex position after 23... ♔c6 24. ♔xa8 ♔c5+ 25. ♔xc5 ♔xa8 26. dxc6 ♔xc6 27. ♔ac1 ♔d5 28. ♔e3 ♔xa2 29. ♔xd7 ♔xb2 which is likely closest to equality.

B) 17. ♔g5! The only way to refute Black’s retort, warding off Black’s threats while maintaining the grip on the position. After 17... h4 18. ♔fe1!

Position after: 18. ♔fe1!

White threatens mate in a few moves starting with 19. ♔d5+ forcing Black to react immediately. The toughest test seems to be 18... ♔c6 19. ♔xa8 h3 20. ♔f1! when Black’s tries all come up short. Let’s see: 20... ♔xd4 (or 20... ♔g2+ 21. ♔e2 ♔xd4+ 22. ♔d3 ♔xf2 23. ♔e3 and White defends; 20... ♔d3+ is also losing after 21. ♔e2 ♔f3 22. ♔d2 ♔h1+ 23. ♔e2 ♔xa1 24. d5 and White’s attack will triumph shortly) 21. ♔d5+ exd5 22. exd5+ ♔d6 23. ♔b8+ ♔xd5 24. ♔e5+ ♔c4 25. ♔c1+ and mate in 4.

17... h4 18. d6+

I offered a draw which was accepted. After 18... ♔xd6 19. ♔f4+ ♔e7 20. ♔ad1 ♔xe4 21. ♔xe4 ♔xe4 22. ♔c5+ ♔e8 23. ♔c8+ it’s just a draw by perpetual check. ½ - ½
How to study openings?

Dlugy, Maxim (2545)
Chandler, Murray G (2535)
London 1986

1. d4 ﹐f6 2. c4 e6 3. ﹐f3 b6 4. g3 a6
5. ﹖a4 c6 6. ﹐c3 d5 7. cxd5 exd5 8. ﹐g2?!

A slow move, instead of the stronger 8. ﹐e5! as advocated by Geller.

After 8. ﹐e5 Black can play actively with 8... b5 or passively with 8... ﹐b7, but doesn’t get full equality in either case:

A) 8... b5 9. ﹐c2 ﹐d6 10. ﹐f4 and the weakened c6 pawn is becoming a problem.

B) 8... ﹐b7 9. ﹐g2 ﹐d6 10. 0-0 0-0 11. e4! and White’s superior development leads to Black’s issues.

8... ﹐d6 9. ﹐g5 0-0 10. ﹐e5?

...whereupon I squandered my last chance for a level position with 13. ﹐c5. Instead, I played a weak move and allowed a strong answer by Black.

13. ﹐d3? h6! 14. ﹐d2 ﹐b5
Now I was forced to leave myself with a weak c5-pawn, which I lost together with the game after...

15. \( \text{ac5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 16. \( \text{dxc5} \) \( \text{a6} \)

0-1 (46)

\( \text{Dlugy, Maxim} \) (2570)
\( \text{Ivanov, Alexander} \) (2470)
\( \text{Chicago 1989} \)

1. \( d4 \) \( \text{f6} \) 2. \( c4 \) \( e6 \) 3. \( \text{lf3} \) \( b6 \) 4. \( g3 \) \( \text{a6} \)
5. \( \text{wa4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 6. \( \text{g2} \) 0-0 7. \( \text{c3} \) \( c6 \) 8. \( \text{f4} \) \( b7 \)

with a significant advantage in the endgame which, the great defender Igor, managed to draw. Besides Igor's choice:

B) 10... b5 is interesting, as Black can probably hold the endgame after 11. \( \text{dxc5} \) \( \text{dxc5} \) 12. \( \text{b3} \) \( b4 \) 13. \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{bxc3} \) 14. \( \text{dxe7} \) \( \text{e8} \) 15. \( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 16. \( \text{xc3} \) \( d5 \) 17. \( \text{b3} \) \( c6 \) 18. 0-0 \( \text{xe7} \) 19. \( \text{d1} \) \( h6 \) 20. \( \text{d6} \) \( e8 \) 21. \( \text{e5} \)

C) 10... \( \text{exd5} \) would be a mistake as after 11. \( \text{cxd5} \) \( b5 \) 12. \( \text{b3} \) \( b4 \) 13. \( d6 \) \( d8 \) 14. \( \text{a4} \) White's space advantage looks almost decisive.

9. 0-0 \( a6 \)

Alex wants to take back some space using only pawns. Practitioners of the Queen's Indian will recognize that Black has not fully equalized.

A) My game with the other Ivanov – Igor, from the 1989 US Championship, continued 10... \( \text{cxd5} \) 11. \( \text{cxd5} \) \( b5 \) 12. \( \text{b3} \) \( b4 \) 13. \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{bxc3} \) 14. \( \text{dxe7} \) \( \text{e8} \) 15. \( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 16. \( \text{xc3} \) \( d5 \) 17. \( \text{b3} \) \( c6 \) 18. 0-0 \( \text{xe7} \) 19. \( \text{d1} \) \( h6 \) 20. \( \text{d6} \) \( e8 \) 21. \( \text{e5} \)

Geller, in his book, explains that Black needs to play actively and analyzes 8... \( \text{c8} \) 9. \( \text{c1}! \) \( \text{b7} \) persistently trying to achieve ...b5. Here White should play actively with 10. \( d5 \); now Black has a tough choice.

10. \( \text{b3} \) \( d5 \) 11. \( \text{e5} \)
11. c5 \( \square \)bd7 12. \( \square \)a4 b5 13. \( \square \)c3 a5 14. a3 is another approach, one which is very similar to how White plays in this type of position these days.

11... b5 12. \( \square \)ad1

Once again, after 12. c5 a5 13. \( \square \)d3 \( \square \)bd7 14. \( \square \)f3 h6 15. \( \square \)fe1 \( \square \)e8 16. \( \square \)ad1 White looks quite a bit better thanks to a huge space advantage and the lack of significant pawn breaks available to Black.

12... \( \square \)bd7 13. e4 dxc4 14. \( \square \)xc4 \( \square \)a7 15. \( \square \)e5 \( \square \)xe5 16. \( \square \)xe5 \( \square \)a8 17. a4 \( \square \)b6 18. axb5 axb5 19. \( \square \)f4 \( \square \)d7

20. h3

Missing a strong positional solution with 20. \( \square \)e3!, after which I should not be afraid of 20... \( \square \)g4 because of 21. \( \square \)a4! \( \square \)b8 22. \( \square \)c5 and Black's marooned light-squared Bishops ensures my advantage. After the text move, the lost tempo will finally give Black equality here.

20... b4 21. \( \square \)e3 \( \square \)a5 22. \( \square \)a1 \( \square \)c7 23. \( \square \)a4 c5 24. dxc5?!

I should have gone for 24. \( \square \)xc5 \( \square \)xc5 25. dxc5 \( \square \)xe4 26. \( \square \)xb4 \( \square \)xg2 27. \( \square \)xg2 \( \square \)d5 28. \( \square \)e4 \( \square \)xe3+ 29. \( \square \)xe3 when Black is the one still looking for equality.

My desire to keep more pieces on the board due to my opponent's time pressure works against me.

24... \( \square \)xe4 25. \( \square \)xb4 \( \square \)xg2 26. \( \square \)xg2 \( \square \)d5 27. \( \square \)e4 \( \square \)b8

Inaccurate.

Black should simply take on e3. After 27... \( \square \)xe3+ 28. \( \square \)xe3 \( \square \)fd8 Black's control over the d-file is full compensation for my extra pawn.

28. \( \square \)g1

Now I return the favor. After 28. \( \square \)d4 \( \square \)b4 29. \( \square \)e5 \( \square \)xe5 30. \( \square \)xe5 f6 31. c6 \( \square \)d8 32. \( \square \)c3 \( \square \)c4 33. \( \square \)a5 \( \square \)d6 34. c7 \( \square \)xc7 35. b3 the position would be equal, but more preferable for me.

28... \( \square \)b4 29. \( \square \)f3 \( \square \)xe3 30. \( \square \)xe3 \( \square \)c6 31. b3 \( \square \)f6 32. \( \square \)b6 \( \square \)d8

Black already stands a little bit better and I have to be careful not to wind up in a precarious endgame.

33. \( \square \)fd1
Chapter 7

33... \( \texttt{d4?} \)

Black finally commits a decisive mistake in time-pressure. After the correct 33... \( \texttt{bd4!} \) 34. \( \texttt{e2} \) \( \texttt{xc5} \) 35. \( \texttt{c4} \) \( \texttt{d5} \) 36. \( \texttt{xd4 xd4} \) 37. \( \texttt{a2} \) \( \texttt{g6} \) 38. \( \texttt{h2} \) \( \texttt{b8} \) 39. \( \texttt{d3} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 40. \( \texttt{a5} \) \( \texttt{e6} \) 41. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{g7} \) 42. \( \texttt{a2} \) I would still need to demonstrate good technique to draw.

34. \( \texttt{xd4??} \)

An amazing oversight, simply missing that Black has the \( a8 \)-square under control. Instead 34. \( \texttt{c4!} \) interrupting the defence of the \( d4 \)-Bishop was decisive. All roads lead to a win for White here. For example:

A) 34... \( \texttt{f6} \) 35. \( \texttt{e5} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 36. \( \texttt{xd1} \) \( \texttt{f8} \) 37. \( \texttt{d7} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) 38. \( \texttt{c3} \) \( \texttt{b5} \) 39. \( \texttt{c6} \) and Black is simply lost as he has no counterplay;

B) on 34... \( \texttt{e5} \) I have 35. \( \texttt{xe5!} \);

C) and after 34... \( \texttt{xc5} \) 35. \( \texttt{xd4} \) \( \texttt{xd4} \) 36. \( \texttt{xd4} \) Black's \( 8 \)-th rank IS NOT protected.

34... \( \texttt{bxd4} \)

Now I am simply lost.

35. \( \texttt{c1} \) \( \texttt{h6} \) 36. \( \texttt{c4} \) \( \texttt{d1+} \) 37. \( \texttt{xd1} \) \( \texttt{xd1} \) 38. \( \texttt{xd1} \) \( \texttt{xc5} \) 39. \( \texttt{h4} \) \( \texttt{b4} \) 40. \( \texttt{d3} \)

I managed to "survive" until move 97, when I finally capitulated.

The endgame is somewhat instructive, so I will let you enjoy it, though I can't say that I did.

40... \( \texttt{f6} \) 41. \( \texttt{e3} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 42. \( \texttt{xe5} \) \( \texttt{fxe5} \) 43. \( \texttt{xe5} \) \( \texttt{xb3} \) 44. \( \texttt{e7} \) \( \texttt{d1+} \) 45. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{d5+} \) 46. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{h7} \) 47. \( \texttt{e8} \) \( \texttt{g6} \) 48. \( \texttt{f8} \) \( \texttt{e4} \) 49. \( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{e1+} \) 50. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{h7} \) 51. \( \texttt{f7} \) \( \texttt{e4+} \) 52. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{e6} \) 53. \( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{g6} \) 54. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{g7} \) 55. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{e1+} \) 56. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{e2} \) 57. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{d1+} \) 58. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{e1} \) 59. \( \texttt{c4} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 60. \( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{d5+} \) 61. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{d1+} \) 62. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{c1} \) 63. \( \texttt{b4} \) \( \texttt{f6} \) 64. \( \texttt{d4} \) \( \texttt{c2} \) 65. \( \texttt{f4+} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 66. \( \texttt{b4} \) \( \texttt{d5} \) 67. \( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{c5} \) 68. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{c1+} \) 69. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{d1} \) 70. \( \texttt{f6} \) \( \texttt{d5+} \) 71. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{g5} \) 72. \( \texttt{hxg5} \) \( \texttt{d4} \) 73. \( \texttt{g6} \) \( \texttt{g5} \) 74. \( \texttt{f3} \) \( \texttt{xe6} \) 75. \( \texttt{h2} \) \( \texttt{b1+} \) 76. \( \texttt{f8} \) \( \texttt{b5} \) 77. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{d3} \) 78. \( \texttt{f3+} \) \( \texttt{d2} \) 79. \( \texttt{e3} \) \( \texttt{b1+} \) 80. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{b7+} \) 81. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{g7} \) 82. \( \texttt{h2} \) \( \texttt{g4} \) 83. \( \texttt{h1} \) \( \texttt{h3+} \) 84. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{c8} \) 85. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{c4} \) 86. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{e1+} \) 87. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{b1} \) 88. \( \texttt{e8} \) \( \texttt{b7+} \) 89. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{g7} \) 90. \( \texttt{e4} \) \( \texttt{g6} \)
How to study openings?

This game is the stem game for the system employed by Black, and is a result of my work on two of my previous games in this line, against Axel Ornstein and Harry Schussler.

1. d4 ♙f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♙f3 b6 4. g3 ♙a6 5. ♙a4 ♙b7 6. ♙g2 c5 7. dxc5 ♙xc5 8. 0-0 0-0 9. ♙c3 ♙e4 10. ♙xe4 ♙xe4

11. ♙f4 ♙c8?!

Black should have used my reluctance to play b4 to try and prevent it with either ...a5, ...♗c6, or ...♕e7 with good chances for equality. For example: 11... ♙c6 12. a3 a5! 13. ♙ad1 ♙e7 14. ♙e5 ♙xg2 15. ♙xg2 ♙xe5 16. ♙xe5 d6 17. ♙c3 ♙b7+ 18. f3 ♙fc8 19. ♙d2 h6 20. ♙fd1 ♙a6 with rough equality.

91. ♙b4

After 91. ♙e3, 91... h4 92. ♙g2 ♙g4 93. ♙e7 hxg3 wins.

91... ♙e2 92. ♙b2+ ♙e1 93. ♙b4 ♙c2 94. ♙f4 h4 95. ♙f3 h3 96. ♙h2 ♙c6

0-1
This move was played in my game with Harry Schussler.

14. a3?!

The more direct 14. b5! axb5 15. axb5 c5! d5 16. xd5 xd5 17. e3! f6 18. d1 f6 19. e3! would secure me a significant advantage.

14... b7 15. d1d8?!

This was another inaccuracy, allowing a blow-out tactical attack with 16. b5! a5 17. c5! d5 18. xd5 xd5 19. d2 a2 20. xa8 xa8 21. cxb6 axb6 22. c4 c5 23. xa5 and the back rank problems force Black into a bad endgame after either 23... xe2 24. xc5 bxc5 25. b6 or 23... d5 24. e4 h5 25. d2 bxa5 26. b3. Instead, I played a tame move, after which Schussler equalized.

16. d6 ac8 17. b3 xd6 18. xd6 e7 19. h4 xg2 20. xg2 d5 21. e4 c7 22. e5 f6 23. f4 fxe5 24. fxe5 f8

The game ended in a draw on move 44 after a few inaccuracies from both sides.

A couple of rounds later, Axel’s buddy Harry played 13... b7 instead of 13... c6 in the game we just investigated.

14. d1 d8?

Amazingly, this turns out to be almost a decisive mistake.

Black had to play 14... a6! when I would be only slightly better after 15. b3 c6 16. d6 xd6 17. xd6 b5 18. e3 f5! (18... xb4? is dangerous due to 19. d2!) 19. cd1 ad8 20. cxb5 axb5 21. c5.

15. d4! f5
16. d6?

Spoiling a brilliant opening!

After the swashbuckling 16. xe4!! Black’s weakened kingside provides more than enough compensation for the exchange after 16... fxe4 17. d2 a6 (17... c6 also doesn’t do it. After 18. xe4 c8 19. f3 xb4 20. xa8 xa8 21. c7 e8 22. d1 d5 23. cxd5 xd5 24. e5 White is much better.) 18. c2 xb4 19. xe4 c6 20. xh7+ h8 21. f3 a5 22. d1 and the engines give White a two pawn advantage here. Not to be recommended.

16... f6?

Axel continues to be oblivious to his fate which hinges on my ability to see the obvious exchange sacrifice. Instead 16... c6! would essentially equalize the position.

17. d2?

Shamefully, my ability to sacrifice exchanges was never as well developed as in my American peers Nick De Firmian, Joel Benjamin and John Fedorowicz. Otherwise, there’s no doubt I would have won this game with the very tempting 17. xe4! fxe4 18. d2 c6 19. b5! xd6 20. xe4 c7 21. xf6+ gxf6 22. xa8 and the variation stops as everything becomes pretty obvious.

17... a6

Even though I am still a bit better here, the fatigue I was feeling from an ongoing adjournment with Ralph Akesson – where I was trying to win an exchange-up endgame and finally prevailed on move 102 – had me play a terrible game here, which I eventually lost.

Back to the main game!

11... e7 12. f4 c6 13. a3 a5

Joel could have played more patiently with ...c8, heading towards comparable variations with the above games, where White would have a slight advantage. Instead, he wants to see what I have in mind against this direct approach.

14. b5 xf3 15. xf3

In an earlier game, I played 15. exf3 and eventually prevailed in a very even end-
game. This idea came to me during the game, and I really loved the way it felt!

15... \( \texttt{d}d4 \)

As mentioned previously, exchange sacs were the bread and butter of the All-American team of Joel, Nick, and John and here too, after the acceptance of the sacrifice, Black would have a great position. For example: 16. \( \texttt{xa}8? \texttt{xe}2+ 17. \texttt{h}1 \texttt{xa}8+ 18. \texttt{f}3 \texttt{xf}4 19. gxf4 \texttt{b}8 20. f5 exf5 21. d1 c7 22. d3 g6 23. fe1 c5 24. ad1 f4 and only I could be in trouble.

![Position after: 15... \( \texttt{d}d4 \)](image)

16. \( \texttt{g}4! \)

The point of this position. I will either retain the two Bishops or will wreck Black’s pawn structure. In either case, Black is hard-pressed to equalize.

16... f5 17. e3

An inaccuracy. My idea needed to be exploited to the fullest. After 17. \( \texttt{h}5! \) I am offering to lose my Bishop on an even more disadvantageous square for Black. After 17... g6 18. ad1 f6 19. e3 gxh5 20. exd4 I would be clearly better. Other options also don’t equalize. For instance 17... \( \texttt{f}6 \) trying to go after the other Bishop with e5 in case of 18. e3. I first play 18. d6! g6 19. e3! \( \texttt{xb}5 \) 20. \( \texttt{xb}5 \) gxd5 21. xf8 xa1 22. x\( \texttt{xa}1 \) xf8 23. d1 d6 24. e4 fxe4 25. \( \texttt{d}5 \) d7 26. d4 and the wrecked position of Black’s King will soon begin to tell.

17... \( \texttt{xb}5! \)

Joel correctly avoids capturing on g4 and the position is now close to equality.

18. \( \texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}3 \) 19. \( \texttt{c}2 \)

![Position after: 19. \( \texttt{c}2 \)](image)

19... \( \texttt{e}4?! \)

Somehow even the members of the Exchange Sac Brat Pack sometimes miss a beat. The most dynamic approach for Black here was to offer an exchange sacrifice with 19... \( \texttt{f}6! \) After 20. \( \texttt{xa}8 \)
How to study openings?

\[ \text{\textit{xa8 21. ac1xf3 22. ce1c6 23. g5 xc4 24. xf6 gxf6 I would have to play extremely energetically to stop Joel from clamping down on my position. It looks like after 25. e4 c8 26. exf5 e5 27. d2 d5 28. h6 c6 29. f3 d4 30. g2 d5 31. f2 c5 32. fe2 e3+ 33. xe3 dxe3 34. xe3 axe3 35. xe3 c2+ 36. h3 I could probably survive the ordeal, but it isn't pretty.}} \]

20. ex4 fxe4 21. xe4

Now I felt I had to be better as Black's weaknesses are closer to his King than to mine. The engines take a while to confirm this assessment, considering the position roughly level. Still, I think it is very difficult to defend in a practical game.

21... c8 22. fd1 f7 23. d3 f6 24. b1

24... c5?

The engines really dislike this move, offering c6 instead. After 24... c6 25. d6 e7 26. xe7 xe7 27. d4 c5 28. d3 h6 29. b5 e7 30. f4 White has some nagging pressure.

25. d6 c8 26. b5

The plan is to play c5 at the right moment. Actually, the direct 26. db3 winning the b-pawn was much stronger, as 26... c6 would be met with 27. c5! breaking through to b8.

26... a1?

A mistake in mutual time-pressure. Joel had to look to defend the b-pawn instead of searching for counterplay with f6. After 26... e7 27. xe7 xe7 28. xb6 f6 29. d2 c3 30. d3 xd3 31. xd3 xc4 32. b8+ f8 33. xf8+ xf8 34. xd7 c3 35. a4 a3 36. d4 e7 Black has reasonable drawing chances in this rook and pawn endgame.

27. d2?

I continue my procrastination. Once again the direct 27. db3 was much stronger. After 27. db3 f6 28. f4! Black has no counterplay.

27... a4

First, I simply acknowledge Black's weaknesses by hitting them with my Rooks.
Joel offers a bait, the a4-pawn to get my pieces off the centre squares. I bite.

28. \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{c6} \)

The game enters a new technical phase, where Joel displays incredible technical agility.

33. \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{d8} \) 34. \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{c7} \) 35. \( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 36. \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{h6} \) 37. \( \text{b8+} \) \( \text{h7} \) 38. \( \text{d3+} \) \( \text{g6} \) 39. \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{c1+} \) 40. \( \text{xc1} \) \( \text{xc}1+ \) 41. \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{c6+} \) 42. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 43. exd5 exd5 44. \( \text{d4} \)

I thought my position to be completely won, having an outside passed pawn with a much safer King in the King and pawn endgame, but Benjamin keeps looking for chances until I commit a serious error.

44... \( \text{b7} \) 45. \( \text{xb7+} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 46. \( \text{a5?} \)
How to study openings?

And here it is. Amazingly enough, after this move it's not even clear if I am winning.

The correct technique was to weaken Black's King first. Still, even after 46. g4! a8 47. h4 d8! the exact procedure for a clear win is difficult to work out. Black will always have chances as long as he has a passed pawn of his own. Here's my take on it: 48. g3 c7+ 49. f3 The King nears the d-pawn so he can block it again after removing his Queen to push his own. 49... b7 50. a5 a8 51. c5 d4+ 52. f4! Not allowing Black to get his Queen active with e5, while still preparing to block with the King in case of ...d3. 52... d8 53. a7+! g8 54. b6! With the g pawn hanging, Black is forced to open up his King some more. 54... g5+ 55. e4 e7+ 56. xd4 gxh4 57. a6

In Queen and pawn endings the faster passed pawn usually decides; such is the case here, once White finds shelter for the King. 57... f8 58. e6+ g7 59. d7+ g8 60. a7 xf2+ 61. d5 d2+ 62. c6 c3+ 63. b7 f3+ 64. b8 The eighth rank will allow the opportunity to shield the King with check, so the tactical solution is close at hand. 64... f4+ 65. c8 c4+ 66. d8 a2 67. b7 d2+ 68. c8 c2+ 69. b8 h2+ 70. c7 b2+ 71. c8 g2 72. b8! and White is ready to promote a Queen and check on the next move. Time to give up.

46... a8!

Position after: 46... a8

This intricate move forces me to unblock the d-pawn before I am fully ready.

47. a4 d4+ 48. f1 h1+ 49. e2 e4+ 50. d2 f5

Position after: 46... a8

Here with Black's King under some protection, it's hard to organize a cross check and the position becomes very difficult to win.

51. f4

Position after: 51. f4

51... c5?
Chapter 7

Joel correctly avoids 51... \(\text{e}6\), when I win due to his bad King after 52. \(\text{e}xd4\) \(\text{a}2+\) 53. \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{xa}5\) 54. \(\text{d}7+\) \(\text{h}8\) 55. \(\text{e}8+\) \(\text{g}7\) 56. \(\text{e}5+\) or after 55... \(\text{h}7\) 56. \(\text{f}7+\) \(\text{h}8\) 57. \(\text{x}g6\), but misses the best defence 51... \(\text{h}5\)! giving his King the important \(\text{h}6\) square. This basically forces the trade of the a- and d-pawns, as after the direct line 52. a6 \(\text{e}4\) 53. a7 \(\text{x}a5+\) 54. c2 \(\text{c}3+\) 55. b1 \(\text{d}3+\) 56. b2 \(\text{c}3+\) 57. a2 \(\text{d}2+\) 58. b3 \(\text{c}3+\) Black has a perpetual check.

Now even 53... \(\text{h}5\) is not be enough to save the game. After 54. a6 \(\text{c}6\) 55. a5 \(\text{f}3\) 56. a7 \(\text{e}3+\) 57. d1 d3 58. c7+ \(\text{h}6\) the safe square is no longer safe, and White wins with a nice transition to a winning King and pawn ending after 59. \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{xa}7\) 60. \(\text{h}8+\) 61. \(\text{x}h7+\) 62. d2.

52. \(\text{a}1?!\)

Objectively not the best, but forcing Black to make some tough decisions. The strongest line may have been 52. \(\text{d}7+\) \(\text{h}8\) 53. \(\text{e}8+\) \(\text{h}7\) 54. \(\text{f}7+\) \(\text{h}8\) 55. \(\text{x}g6\) \(\text{xa}5+\) 56. e2 \(\text{a}2+\) 57. f3 \(\text{x}h2\) 58. f6+ \(\text{h}7\) 59. xd4 when the position is a draw even with White to move, according to the Lomonosov tablebases, but Black still has to be quite precise to earn that result.

52... \(\text{c}4?\)

The losing mistake. Black has an unlikely draw by perpetual starting with the simple 52... \(\text{b}4+\) Surprisingly, I have nowhere to run to as my Queen is misplaced on a1. After 53. \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{b}3+\) 54. xd4 \(\text{b}4+\) 55. e3 \(\text{b}3+\) 56. f2 \(\text{c}2+\) 57. g1 \(\text{c}5+\) 58. g2 \(\text{d}5+\) 59. h3 \(\text{h}5+\) we would have gone full circle.

53. \(\text{a}3\) \(\text{d}5\)

The Queen is significantly better placed here, and Black no longer has perpetuals like he did a few moves earlier.

55... \(\text{h}7\)

This makes it easy. Joel had to go for counterplay with 55... \(\text{g}2+\) 56. d3 \(\text{x}h2\), although if I continue on my mission to queen the a-pawn, I will eventually prevail after 57. \(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xg}3\) 58. \(\text{b}8+\) \(\text{g}7\) 59. \(\text{e}5+\) \(\text{f}7\) 60. \(\text{c}7+\) \(\text{f}6\) 61. a6 \(\text{f}2+\) 62. d5 \(\text{f}3+\) 63. f5 c3+ 64. b6 \(\text{b}4+\) 65. a7! as Black’s King can’t really hide from my Queen and after 65... \(\text{f}5\) 66. \(\text{c}8+\) \(\text{f}6\) 67. b8 \(\text{e}7+\) 68. b7 \(\text{f}8\) 69.
How to study openings?

56. $\texttt{d}3$

This was played in the ancient times when adjournments were still around and an analysis done with the help of my friend Boris Gulko showed that I will be able to win the d-pawn for the h-pawn, whereupon I can move my King towards Black's and various trading and mating patterns will win the game for me.

56... $\texttt{h}5$

It's too late. The Queen on e5 will help escort my King up the board.

57. $\texttt{e}7+$ $\texttt{g}8$ 58. $\texttt{e}5$ $\texttt{g}2$ 59. $\texttt{x}d4$ $\texttt{x}h2$ 60. $\texttt{a}6$ $\texttt{f}2+$

60... $\texttt{x}g3$ doesn't help either. After 61. $\texttt{c}7$ $\texttt{f}2+$ 62. $\texttt{c}3$ $\texttt{e}1+$ 63. $\texttt{b}3$ $\texttt{b}1+$ 64. $\texttt{a}4$ $\texttt{e}4+$ 65. $\texttt{b}5$ $\texttt{d}5+$ 66. $\texttt{b}6$ $\texttt{b}3+$ 67. $\texttt{a}7$ it's similar to the line above, but even easier as Black's King is stuck on the eighth rank.

61. $\texttt{e}3$ $\texttt{a}2$ 62. $\texttt{d}3$ $\texttt{g}7$ 63. $\texttt{c}5$ $\texttt{a}5+$ 64. $\texttt{c}6$ $\texttt{h}6$ 65. $\texttt{b}5$ $\texttt{c}3+$ 66. $\texttt{c}5$ $\texttt{f}6+$ 67. $\texttt{d}6$ $\texttt{f}5$ 68. $\texttt{e}7$ $\texttt{e}4+$ 69. $\texttt{c}7$ $\texttt{c}4+$

70. $\texttt{d}8$

Proceeding with the key winning plan analyzed at adjournment together with Boris Gulko.

70... $\texttt{g}8+$ 71. $\texttt{e}7!$ $\texttt{a}8$

The winning idea found at adjournment was that the a-pawn is immune as after 71... $\texttt{g}7+$ 72. $\texttt{e}8$ $\texttt{x}a7$ 73. $\texttt{f}8+$ $\texttt{g}7$ 74. $\texttt{x}g7+$ $\texttt{x}g7$ 75. $\texttt{e}7$ the resulting King and pawn ending is absolutely winning for me due to zugzwang.

72. $\texttt{d}4$ $\texttt{b}7+$ 73. $\texttt{d}7$ $\texttt{b}4+$ 74. $\texttt{f}7$ $\texttt{c}4+$ 75. $\texttt{f}8$ $\texttt{c}5+$ 76. $\texttt{g}8$

Black resigned, as after 76... $\texttt{c}4$ 77. $\texttt{f}7$ $\texttt{c}8$ 78. $\texttt{f}8$ comes with check.

1-0
1. d4 $\text{d}f6$ 2. c4 e6 3. $\text{d}f3$ b6 4. g3 $\text{a}6$ 5. $\text{a}4$ c5 6. $\text{g}2$ b7 7. dxc5 $\text{x}c5$ 8. 0-0 0-0 9. $\text{c}3$ $\text{e}7$

This move begins one of the main defensive ideas against the 5. $\text{a}4$ line, and is one where both Walter Browne and Alexander Ivanov have tried to hold their own against me in numerous games.

10. $\text{f}4$ $\text{a}6$

The other principled defence for Black is to erect a Hedgehog with 10... d6 and ...a6 and hope it holds. Let's investigate:

10... d6 11. $\text{f}d1$

11... a6

Andrei Sokolov, while rated third in the World, played the somewhat dubious 11... $\text{a}6$ against me at the World Student Team Championship in 1985. After 12. $\text{b}5$ $\text{c}5$ 13. $\text{c}2$ d5 14. cxd5 exd5
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15. \( \text{d}1 \text{c}8 \) 16. \( \text{e}4 \text{c}8 \) 17. \( \text{f}3 \text{c}8 \) 18. \( \text{b}1 \text{c}4 \) 19. \( \text{h}3 \text{c}1 \) 20. \( \text{x}c1 \text{c}8 \) 21. \( \text{x}c8 \) we agreed to a draw, as I needed to clinch silver for our team behind the Soviets.

There were a number of improvements that could be offered for White, as I essentially received a typically nice Tar- rasch with the weak isolated d-pawn for Black.

I think the strongest reply would simply be 12. \( \text{b}4 \) stopping Black from making it to c5 with the Knight. My joint analysis with my coach Vitaly Zaltsman, following my win against Ahmed Saeed at the 1983 World Junior Championship, showed that there might be a better move than the natural 12. \( \text{d}2 \) which I played or 12. \( \text{ac}1 \). Vitaly conceived the paradoxical...

12. \( \text{b}4 \)!

Position after: 12. \( \text{b}4 \)!

Allowing Black to develop his Knight with tempo In the 80's I managed to play this move in blitz games against Michael Rohde and John Fedorowicz. Some twenty years later it was played by Peter Leko, first against Vladimir Kram- nik and later against Levon Aronian!

12... \( \text{c}6 \) 13. \( \text{a}3 \)

Black's pawn on d6 is being attacked di- rectly and the passive 13... \( \text{e}8 \) would give White a strong initiative after 14. \( \text{b}4 \) Black has to play actively with...

13... \( \text{d}5 \) 14. \( \text{a}4 \)

...and here having provoked Black's d pawn to d5, Vitaly and I thought White could claim an advantage as White will either saddle Black with an isolated pawn on d5, or he will fight off the somewhat insufficient gambit after 14... \( \text{b}5 \) 15. \( \text{cxb}5 \) \( \text{axb}5 \) 16. \( \text{xb}5 \).

Twenty years after the novelty was conceived, the World Champion finds a key tactic that enables Black to fight for equality.

14... \( \text{c}8 \) 15. \( \text{cxd}5 \) \( \text{b}5 \)!

Position after: 15... \( \text{b}5 \)!

Now it turns out that White's Queen is getting forked by the Knight, where- upon Black manages to stave off the
weakening of his d-pawn. Peter Leko's attempts to gain an advantage from this position against both Kramnik, and later Aronian, were not successful and after...

16. \( \texttt{c2} \texttt{b4} \) 17. \( \texttt{d2} \texttt{bxd5} \) 18. \( \texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd5} \) 19. \( \texttt{ac1} \texttt{e8} \) 20. \( \texttt{d4} \)

...both games ended in draws. It looks like White needs to look for an advantage after either 12. \( \texttt{ac1} \) or 12. \( \texttt{d2} \).

11. \( \texttt{ad1} \)

As in most variations of the Queen's Indian, Black needs to fight for control of the e4-square. The plan is to play \( ...\texttt{c5}, \ldots\texttt{c8}, \ldots\texttt{ce4} \) and, following the exchange of Knights on e4, capture with the Bishop on b7, bolstering it up with \( \texttt{b7} \). Such control over e4 would give Black a great position. White needs to find a way to interfere with this plan.

Black could also start by playing 11... \( \texttt{c8} \), somewhat forcing White to play \( \texttt{b5} \), as there are few other useful moves available in this case. Still, I think after 12. \( \texttt{b5} \) White retains the advantage.

The decision of which Rook to move to d1 took years! In fact, when I started to play this line, I played 11. \( \texttt{ac1} \) in this position, until I realized that White must act fast to create pressure with every move. 11. \( \texttt{ad1} \) became a prophylactic move to stop Black's typical play, and to prepare an amazing piece sacrifice. Only towards the end of my career, I decided that the safer and more logical 11. \( \texttt{fd1} \), allowing White to mobilize the

Rook to c1 is a valid alternative to play for an advantage, but as you will see from the subsequent analysis, it may well be that 11. \( \texttt{ad1} \) still packs a punch!

11... \( \texttt{c5} \)
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to pin the Knight with 13. a3! giving an edge to White. Two other moves played against me in tournament games also do not equalize. Let’s see:

12... e4

This move began a game where my preparation went until a Rook and four pawns versus Rook and three pawns endgame, which was probably losing for Black. This was my game against Petar Popovic from the Clichy International 1986. That game continued...

12... c6 13. b3 e8 was played in my game against the Cuban IM Vilela back in 1985. Now instead of 14. d3 as I played, when he could have fought for the e4-square with 14... c5 and 15... f5 with approximate equality, I should have played prophylactically with: 14. a3! Vacating the a2-square for the Queen before fighting for the centre. After, for example: 14... f6 15. a2 ac7 16. xc7 xc7 17. fe1 e4 18. e5 xg2 19. xg2 d8 20. e4 e7 21. f3, White can claim a slight advantage, as he took over the control of the centre.

13. d2!

If Black wants to maintain equality, he will have to deal with White’s attempts to control the e4- and d6-squares tactically. My preparation showed that Black comes out just a little short in this attempt.

13... ac5 14. c2 a6

The key move, as otherwise Black is simply worse.

15. xe4 axb5 16. d6! xe4 17. xe4 xe4 18. xe7 e8

The engines offer a valid alternative in 18... d5 19. xf8 xf8 but White is still the only one playing for a win after the exact 20. b3 xc4 21. c1 xb3 22. axb3 a2 23. c2.

19. xe4 xe7 20. cxb5 xa2

This position was the starting position for my pre-game preparation against Petar. I had a feeling that the Black’s back rank weakness combined with the weak b6 pawn and the possibility of blocking Black’s pawn with d6 should amount to something. I kept looking and found:

21. b4! e8

Forced as 21... c5 simply loses to 22. xc5 bxc5 23. a1 xa1 24. xa1 e8 25. b6 and White queens or mates.
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22. \( \text{d}6 \text{c}5 \)

I also thought this was necessary. Our silicon friend suggests 22... \( \text{c}2 \) 23. \( \text{d}7 \text{g}6! \) 24. \( \text{d}2 \text{a}4! \) as a better defense.

23. \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{bxc}5 \) 24. \( \text{c}1 \)

Alternatives are not that great either; for example: 25... \( \text{xb}4 \) 26. \( \text{xd}7 \text{aa}8 \) 27. \( \text{xd}8+ \) \( \text{xd}8 \) 28. \( \text{b}6 \text{b}3 \) 29. \( \text{b}7 \text{b}2 \) 30. \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 31. \( \text{xb}2 \text{f}8 \) 32. \( \text{g}2 \text{e}7 \) 33. \( \text{f}3 \text{d}6 \) 34. \( \text{e}4 \text{c}6 \) 35. \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 36. \( \text{f}4 \text{f}6+ \) 37. \( \text{e}4 \text{c}6 \) 38. \( \text{f}5 \text{e}5 \) 39. \( \text{g}4 \text{h}6 \) 40. \( \text{h}4 \) and zugzwang rules!

26. \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 27. \( \text{a}6! \)

This rearrangement of the Rooks is decisive as my b-pawn now queens.

27... \( \text{d}2 \) 28. \( \text{b}6 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 29. \( \text{a}8! \)

...and Popovic resigned congratulating me on a good preparation. Considering I spent about 15 minutes on the game, I wasn't hiding it at all!

Back to the main game!

25. \( \text{b}4! \)

This was the first move I had to think about in this game, and it is quite strong.

25... \( \text{c}4 \)

12. \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{c}8 \)
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12... d6 played against me by Jim Plaskett, should give White a better game after the direct 13. b4 \( \text{ce}_4 \) 14. \( \text{cd}_4 \) \( \text{xc}_3 \) 15. \( \text{xb}_7 \) \( \text{xd}_1 \) 16. \( \text{xd}_1 \) \( \text{b}_8 \) 17. \( \text{f}_3 \) \( \text{c}_8 \) 18. \( \text{c}_6 \) \( \text{xc}_6 \) 19. \( \text{xc}_6 \) \( \text{c}_7 \) 20. \( \text{a}_4 \) \( \text{c}_8 \) 21. \( \text{b}_5 \) when Black has no real compensation for White's Bishop pair.

13. \( \text{d}_4 \)

The move that also took many years to decide upon!

Our opening laboratory showed that instead of \( \text{d}_4 \), with the obvious idea of stopping Black's planned entry into the e4 square, White can also play his own aggressive plan starting with 13. \( \text{b}_5 \).

I have played many games with this move, and only with computer analysis coming into the forefront, was this move finally relegated to the dubious category. Let's embark on a cool adventure together with the Knight!

13... \( \text{ce}_4 \) 14. \( \text{fd}_4 \)

This was Zaltsman's idea. Seeing that Black's e4-Knight does not have many retreat squares, White plans to push it back with 15. f3 and 16. b4.

14... a6 15. \( \text{c}_7 \) \( \text{a}_7 \! \) !

15... \( \text{b}_8 \) allows 16. \( \text{xa}_6 \) \( \text{a}_8 \) 17. \( \text{c}_7 \) \( \text{xa}_2 \) 18. \( \text{b}_1 \) \( \text{a}_4 \) 19. b3 \( \text{a}_5 \) 20. \( \text{db}_5 \) with an edge for White.

16. \( \text{f}_3 \)

This position is still dear to me as I probably spent more time on it than on any other chess position. Black has no less than five plausible moves, only three of which have been played against me in tournament games. Let's take a look in the order with which they became known to me:

A) 16... \( \text{g}_5 \)

This move, first played against me by Walter Browne at the 1986 US Championship, was a complete shocker! I saw Walter's point that the "normal" 17.
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...\textit{e5} loses to 17... d6 18. \textit{xf6} \textit{xf6}, when Black saves his Knight but I don't save mine and simply retreated to c1 with the Bishop, giving Black a nice position. After 17. \textit{c1}?! he played 17... \textit{xg3} 18. \textit{cxe6} dxe6 19. \textit{hxg3} \textit{h5} when I would be fine after 20. \textit{h2}! but instead I opted for 20. \textit{g4} \textit{f4} 21. \textit{h1} whereupon Browne seized the initiative with 21... b5 and won a rather convincing game. When I returned home from Colorado, Zaltsman and I started looking for something to do against 16... g5. We noticed a very interesting piece sacrifice starting with 17. \textit{fxe4} \textit{gxf4} 18. \textit{d5}!? As you will see, it is in this variation that the Rook is needed on the f-file, and therefore the ultimate reason for playing 11. \textit{ad1}. The amazing variations available here convinced us that this was going to be extremely difficult to defend against in a practical game. So, in the next outing, my victim was none other than the future World Champion Viswanathan Anand!

\textbf{17. fxe4 gxf4 18. d5 exd5 19. exd5}

\textit{A1} 19... \textit{g4}

Even in 1986, when this game was played at the World Open 30/30 Tournament, Vishy demonstrated amazing intuition. The move he plays gives Black good equalizing chances, but he has to play very precisely in such a complicated position. He had beaten me the previous year at the World Junior Championship, a tournament which I went on to win, after I blundered a piece while still in the opening, and I was very happy to spring this huge novelty on him. I played:

\textbf{20. xf4}
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The engines give 20. \( \text{\#}e4 \) instead citing equality as their evaluation.

20... \( \text{\#}e3? \)

This just loses. Anand had to find 20... \( \text{\#}e5 \) planning to use his Knight for defence. Silicons favor Black a little, although who really knows what's going on.

21. \( \text{\#}e4 \text{\#}g5 22. \text{\#}xe3 \text{\#}xf4 23. \text{\#}xf4 \)

There's no defence against my Queen and Knight. After...

23... \( \text{\#}f6 24. \text{\#}f5 \text{\#}h8 25. \text{\#}d4 \text{\#}a8 26. \text{\#}h6 \) Black resigned. 1-0

A2) The next time I played this sacrifice, I was up against a notable theoretician and a former Candidate for the World Championship, Andras Adorjan.

He came well prepared to defend this position and played 19... \( \text{\#}h5 \) instead. After...

20. \( \text{\#}f5 \text{\#}h8 21. \text{\#}h1 \text{\#}e8 \)

...I probably made a mistake by closing the f-file with...

22. \( gxf4? \)

Engines recommend 22. \( g4 \text{\#}g7 23. \text{\#}c3 \text{\#}f6 24. \text{\#}xe7 \text{\#}xe7 25. \text{\#}xf4 \text{\#}d6 26. \text{\#}df1 \) with, as usual, an equal position! Andras defended well, and after...

22... \( \text{\#}d6 23. e4 \text{\#}f6 24. \text{\#}c3 \text{\#}c8 25. \text{\#}d4 \text{\#}d8 26. \text{\#}de1 \text{\#}g7 \)

...the initiative transferred to Black and I lost shortly thereafter. After the tournament, I analyzed the position after 19... \( \text{\#}h5 \) to be a win for White, but, of course, modern engines created doubt in my mind as to whether the position was really so good.

I remember giving a lecture on this entire variation at a Sports University in Moscow a few years ago, and even those kids, comprised of masters and IMs, were able to find reasonable defences for Black in this crazy position.

B) 16... \( \text{\#}d6 \)
Guyla Sax played this move against me at the 1987 NY Open, a few rounds prior to the above game with Andras Adorjan. I replied with the planned 17. $\text{\textsection}x d 6$ $\text{\textsection}x d 6$ 18. c5 leading to a very complicated ending which I won following his mistake after...

18... $\text{\textsection}x c 7$ 19. cxd6 $\text{\textsection}x c 2$ 20. $\text{\textsection}x c 2$ $\text{\textsection}c 8$ 21. $\text{\textsection}d 2$ $\text{\textsection}a a 8$ 22. e4 $\text{\textsection}c 5$ 23. $\text{\textsection}e 3$ $\text{\textsection}a c 8$ 24. $\text{\textsection}f d 1$ g6 25. $\text{\textsection}d 4$ $\text{\textsection}e 8$ 26. $\text{\textsection}f 2$ e5 27. $\text{\textsection}4 d 3$ a5 28. $\text{\textsection}h 3$

The analysis after the game found on the scoresheet gives 28. $\text{\textsection}f 1$ b5 29. $\text{\textsection}d 5$ $\text{\textsection}f 8$ 30. $\text{\textsection}b 3$ b4 31. a3 with an advantage for White.

After 28. $\text{\textsection}f 1$, Black should probably exchange Bishops with 28... $\text{\textsection}a 6$ instead, maintaining equality.

28... $\text{\textsection}f 6$ 29. $\text{\textsection}1 d 2$ $\text{\textsection}f 8$ 30. $\text{\textsection}d 1$

Luring Black into sacrificing on e4, which he does.

30... $\text{\textsection}x e 4$ 31. $\text{f} x e 4$ $\text{\textsection}x e 4+$ 32. $\text{\textsection}e 3$ $\text{\textsection}x d 2$ 33. $\text{\textsection}x d 2$ $\text{\textsection}c 2$?

A serious mistake. Black underestimated the d-pawn. After 33... f5, the position would have been quite unclear.

34. $\text{\textsection}x c 2$ $\text{\textsection}x c 2$ 35. $\text{\textsection}x d 7$ $\text{\textsection}x h 2$ 36. $\text{\textsection}c 3$ f5 37. $\text{\textsection}d 5$ $\text{\textsection}c 2$

Position after: 37... $\text{\textsection}c 2$

38. $\text{\textsection}x f 5$! $\text{\textsection}c 6$ 39. d7 $\text{\textsection}d 6$ 40. $\text{\textsection}e 6$ e4 41. $\text{\textsection}x b 6$ h5 42. $\text{\textsection}c 4$ $\text{\textsection}d 1$ 43. $\text{\textsection}x a 5$

And Black resigned.

1-0
After the game, my analysis showed that I could have also played 17. \( \text{\textit{ce6!}} \) dxe6 18. fxe4 e5 19. f5 c5 20. e3 with some advantage. Modern engines agree, and offer the temporary pawn sacrifice 18... \( \text{\textit{x}} \text{xf4} \) 19. gxf4 \( \text{\textit{a}} \text{xa8} \) as an equalizing improvement.

\( \text{\textit{g5}} \)

Position after: 16... \( \text{\textit{g5}} \)

A novel idea at the time that Walter Browne played it against me, in what was our sixth encounter in the 5. \( \text{\textit{a4}} \) variation!

17. \( \text{\textit{xe6}} \)

White should look for an advantage in some complicated lines beginning with 17. \( \text{\textit{a4}} \) or 17. \( \text{\textit{b3}} \), delaying the capture on g5 by a move or two. I was not prepared for this in my game against Walter, and decided to play it simply.

17... \( \text{\textit{d7}} \)

Now Black gets a good version of a Hedgehog and I really have no advantage to speak of. Walter’s desire to win after a novelty was unveiled was ultimately his detriment, as his aggressiveness turned against him.

18. \( \text{\textit{d3}} \) b5?!

Not really necessary.

The simple 18... h6 19. e3 a8 20. c1 ac8 21. fd1 fe8 22. d2 b8 23. f2 f8 24. a3 d6 25. b3 a8 26. b4 g4! 27. b3 led to a nice position for Alexander Ivanov, who by now got into time pressure and agreed to a draw against me here at the 1989 American Open.

19. cxb5 axb5 20. a3 a6?

Walter should have started with 20... b4 21. b5 a6 22. xe7 d3 23. xe6 xe2 24. xf8 c5+ 25. h1 xd1 26. xd1 bxa3 27. bxa3 xf8 28. xf6 gxf6 with a drawn position.

21. b4

Here I am already slightly better, and I eventually won this game played in the 1987 US Championship.
D) 16... ♖xg3!! Theoretical novelty!

Position after: 16... ♖xg3!!

Amazingly, this move advocated by the silicon monsters was probably never even considered by the humans analyzing this position. Let's take a look at what's happening:

D1) 17. hxg3 ♖h5 18. ♖e5 d6 19. ♖xe6 fxe6 20. ♖h3 ♕c5 21. ♖xe6+ ♖h8 22. ♖f4 ♖xf4 23. gxf4 ♖xf4 24. e3 ♖f6 25. ♖d5 ♖xd5 26. cxd5 ♖g6+ 27. ♖h2 ♖xd5 28. ♖c8+ ♗g8

And somehow Black is a pawn up and better.

D2) 17. ♖xg3 ♖h5 18. ♖e5 f6! 19. ♖xe6 dxe6 20. ♖h3 ♖h8 21. ♖xe6 ♖e8 22. ♖g3 ♖c5 23. ♖f5 ♖c8 24. ♖xc8 ♖xd4+ 25. ♖h1

The only move, otherwise Black wins with ...♖xg3 and ...♗e3.

25... ♖c5 26. ♖e6 ♖e7 27. ♖d7 ♖f7 28. ♖f2 g6 29. ♖d5 ♖f4 30. ♖xf7 ♖xf7 31. e3 ♖xe3 32. ♖c8 ♖xf2 33. ♖xf2 a5 34. ♖fd2 ♖e5

And White is still struggling to prove full equality.

E) 16... ♕c5! Theoretical novelty!

Position after: 16... ♕c5

It turns out that even though the whole point of White's tactical intrusion was to stop this move, it is still quite playable and also gives Black an easy game:

17. b4 ♖h5! 18. ♕d5

Without this move, White is in real trouble.

18... ♖xd5

Now Black should probably settle for the saner 18... ♖xd5, leading to a drawish position, as after 18... exd5 19. ♖f5 ♖d8 20. ♖d6 ♖c6 21. cxd5 ♖a4 22. ♖d2 ♖xf4 23. gxf4 ♖a8 24. bxc5 ♖c7 25. ♖e4 bxc5 26. f5 f6 the position, though assessed slightly in Black's favor by the engines, is extremely unclear.

How to study openings?

Even though I still sometimes play the crazy 13. \( \text{Q} \text{b5} \) in blitz games, it seems that objectively it doesn't give White an advantage, though Black has to be well prepared to meet it.

Besides this, which I have played a number of times in tournament games, I have tried 14. \( \text{Q} \text{c1} \) in blitz; the resulting positions resemble mutual zugzwang, and therefore I am not completely sure how to prove White's advantage there. Let's see:

14. \( \text{Q} \text{c1} \) \( \text{Q} \text{ce4}! \)

I think Black has to play this move to fight for equality. In any case, the fight for the e4-square should be a dream come true, so why deny yourself?

15. \( \text{Q} \text{x e4} \) \( \text{dxe4} \)

The complications after the other captures seem to favor White. For example: 15... \( \text{Q} \text{x e4} \) 16. \( \text{Q} \text{d1} \) \( \text{Q} \text{c5} \) 17. \( \text{cxd5} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 18. \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{Q} \text{xd4} \) 19. \( \text{Q} \text{xc8} \) \( \text{Q} \text{x f2}+ \) 20. \( \text{Q} \text{f1} \) \( \text{Q} \text{axc8} \) 21. \( \text{Q} \text{g5}! \) \( \text{Q} \text{xg5} \) 22. \( \text{Q} \text{xg5} \) and though it's a long way to Tipperary, only White is trying to get there, if you get my drift.

16. \( \text{Q} \text{e5} \) \( \text{h6}! \)

If Black doesn't play 13... \( \text{d5} \) now, White will strengthen the position and it will be too late to ever play this break. For example, after 13... \( \text{Q} \text{d8} \) 14. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 15. \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 16. \( \text{Q} \text{d8}+ \) \( \text{Q} \text{x d8} \) 17. \( \text{Q} \text{x e5} \) and White is better thanks to the three against two pawn majority on the queenside.

14. \( \text{cxd5} \)

Position after: 13... \( \text{d5} \)
A very strange position is upon us; it's not clear how White should go about breaking through the e-pawn, which is holding Black's position together. I think that an equilibrium has been reached and the better player will likely prevail. I think White could also look for some advantage with 14. \( \text{c}e5 \), played in only a few games. It makes sense to open up the diagonal for the Bishop while influencing the centre, although Black may be able to exchange off a lot of pieces and equalize through attrition.

The debate as to whether White has a significant advantage after 14... \( \text{c}x\text{d}5 \) is still ongoing. It's clear that White is playing without risk, but can this advantage be converted into anything tangible? Of course, as I mentioned previously, if your plan is not to go into the somewhat murky complications with 13. \( \text{c}b5?! \), you need a reason to put the a Rook on d1; most of the games with this plan are played with White’s Rook on a1, not f1 moving to this square. I will try to extrapolate the key ideas from those 40-plus games that have been played with the Rook on a1.

A) 15. \( \text{c}g5 \)

If White plays to get a Bishop versus Knight advantage in this way, Black may refuse with 15... \( \text{c}f6 \), which is quite playable, though has never been played before.

15... \( \text{d}x\text{g}5 \) 16. \( \text{d}x\text{g}5 \) \( \text{c}x\text{c}3 \) 17. \( \text{w}x\text{c}3 \) \( \text{d}x\text{g}2 \) 18. \( \text{d}x\text{g}2 \) e5!

Back to the main game!

Position after: 14. cxd5

14... exd5

A very important, but possibly incorrect decision.
How to study openings?

This is a key move in order for Black to fight for equality here, as he is up against a number of dangerous factors: Black's Knight on c5 will lose its outpost to the Bishop on e3, whereupon his queenside pawns on dark squares will become targets. If White also gets the c-file, it could end quite quickly and painfully.

19. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{b}7+ \) 20. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{e}4! \) 21. \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 22. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{exf}3+ \) 23. \( \text{exf}3 \) \( \text{b}5! \) 24. \( \text{c}6 \) \( \text{a}5! \)

Once again Black has to play very actively not to get into trouble. This means your opponent has to be well-prepared for this particular line and it is your decision to guess whether that will be the case.

25. \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{axb}4 \) 26. \( \text{axb}4 \) \( \text{h}6= \)

The stable Knight on e6 secures Black's equality.

B) 15. \( \text{xd}5! \)

The other approach to this position. The key trick here, and one which will probably work on an unprepared opponent, is that now the move that has been played in about 40 games in my database 15... \( \text{xd}5 \) is not very good. A very important nuance here is that with the Rook NOT being on a1, taking with the Bishop on d5 is quite dangerous. Let's see why:

15... \( \text{xd}5? \) 16. \( \text{b}4! \)

Now with the Rook on a1, Black would have the resource 16... \( \text{f}6! \) Threatening \( \text{xf}3 \) and even gaining a nicer position after 17. \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{d}7! \)

This explains why, in most of the games played in this variation, when the Rook is on a1 Black captures here with the Bishop, instead of the pawn.

16... \( \text{e}4 \) 17. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 18. \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 19. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 20. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{f}xe4 \) 21. \( \text{f}xe4 \) \( \text{b}7 \)

21... \( \text{xa}2 \) loses the Bishop to 22. \( \text{c}2 \), but now White's initiative grows naturally.

22. \( \text{h}3! \) \( \text{c}8 \) 23. \( \text{c}4= \)

And Black is worse.

Therefore, Black should recapture with the pawn, a somewhat counter-intuitive move hardly seen in tournament practice.

After 15... \( \text{exd}5 \) 16. \( \text{g}5 \) tries to force some weaknesses while moving the Bishop out of Black's Knights way. 16... \( \text{f}6 \) 17. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 18. \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 19. \( \text{d}1 \)
and though the engines don't mind Tarrasch-style positions and consider this to be equal, to the human eye White stands a little better.

Back to the main game!

15. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}\text{d}1} \) \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{e}4} \) 16. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}\text{5} \textcolor{blue}{\text{e}}\text{6}} \)

In my game with IM Bruce Rind played in 1991, my Rook on a1 instead of f1 went instead. The game continued: 16...

Here the Rook placement difference finally disappears. 21... \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\text{x}2} \) 22. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\text{x}2} \) \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{x}8} \) 23. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\text{e}1} \) \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\text{f}}\text{8}} \) 24. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\text{x}8}+ \) \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{x}8} \) 25. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\text{c}2} \) \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\text{g}}\text{6}} \) 26. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}\text{3} \textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{c}5} \) 27. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}\text{2} \textcolor{blue}{\text{e}}\text{6}} \) 28. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\text{c}3} \) \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{c}5+} \) 29. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}\text{3}} \) \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\text{a}}\text{5}} \) 30. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}\text{1} \textcolor{blue}{\text{e}}\text{7}} \) 31. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{g}}\text{4} \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{7}} \) 32. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}\text{3} \textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{c}7 \) 33. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}\text{3} \textcolor{blue}{\text{b}}\text{5}} \) 34. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}\text{2} \textcolor{blue}{\text{a}}\text{7}} \) 35. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{g}}\text{5} \textcolor{blue}{\text{b}}\text{5}} \) 36. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}\text{1} \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{7}} \) 37. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}\text{4} \textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{6}} \) 38. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}\text{3} \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{8}} \) 39. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}\text{3} \textcolor{blue}{\text{e}}\text{6}} \) 40. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}\text{2} \textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{7}} \) 41. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}\text{5} \textcolor{blue}{\text{h}}\text{3}} \) 42. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}\text{3} \textcolor{blue}{\text{e}}\text{8}} \) 43. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}\text{4} \textcolor{blue}{\text{a}}\text{b}4 \) 44. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}\text{b}4 \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{6}} \) 45. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}\text{4} \textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{7}} \) 46. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{g}}\text{4} \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{6}} \) 47. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}\text{5} \textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{7}} \) 48. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\text{3} \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{6}} \) 49. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\text{6+} \textcolor{blue}{\text{e}}\text{8}} \) 50. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}\text{5} \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{7}} \) 51. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}\text{4} \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{8}} \) 52. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}\text{2} \textcolor{blue}{\text{g}}\text{4+}} \) 53. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}\text{2} \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{7}} \) 54. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{c}}\text{3} \textcolor{blue}{\text{e}}\text{8}} \) 55. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}\text{8} \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{6}} \) 56. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}\text{3} \textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{7}} \) 57. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}\text{4} \textcolor{blue}{\text{a}}\text{8}} \) 58. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{h}}\text{4} \textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{7}} \) 59. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}\text{5} \textcolor{blue}{\text{e}}\text{6}} \) 60. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}\text{5} \textcolor{blue}{\text{e}}\text{5}} \) 61. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{x}}\text{e}5+ \textcolor{blue}{\text{b}}\text{7}} \) 62. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}\text{4} \textcolor{blue}{\text{c}}\text{7}} \) 63. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{x}}\text{c}7 \textcolor{blue}{\text{x}}\text{c}7} \) 64. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{e}}\text{5} \textcolor{blue}{\text{d}}\text{8}} \) 65. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{d}}\text{6}} \) and Black resigned.

I cannot say I didn't feel a little bit like Magnus after this game. Just kidding - he was only two years old at the time.

17. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{b}}\text{5} \textcolor{blue}{\text{a}}\text{c}8 \) 18. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{a}}\text{b}1 \textcolor{blue}{\text{g}}\text{4}} \) 19. \( \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\text{f}}\text{4} \textcolor{blue}{\text{g}}\text{5?}} \)
How to study openings?

After this, my advantage could have become quite permanent.

23... gxh4 24. hxh6?!

It was better to hold off this exchange and simply recapture on h4 with an advantage. Now Black has some chances for equality again.

24... gxh6 25. f5 f6 26. 3xh4 c7

Getting the other Rook into play with 26... fe8 was preferable.

27. xe7+ xe7 28. d3

The f5-square is important and I am rushing to control it.

28... c7 29. f3 e5 30. d1 c8 31. e3

Trying to force ..f5, as that will weaken Alex’s King. 31. f4 with the same idea was even stronger.

31... f5 32. d3

The position has a lot of tactical nuances which I kept overlooking, focused mainly on my opponent's time-pressure. It was important to first improve the Knight with 32. f3 as now Black has a surprising resource in 32... e6! 33. xa6 f4 34. f3 xb2 35. xf4 xf4 with an unclear position evaluated as equal by the engines.
32... b7? 33. b3!

This starts a simple combination, which Ivanov essentially misses due to the lack of time.

33... b5 34. f4 e6

Black tries to stop the obvious double capture on e4, but misses that I can prepare it with...

35. xf5! xf5 36. xe4 f7 37. xd5 xd5 38. xd5

In the resulting ending Black is clearly lost.

1-0

This move starts a completely different branch of the 5. a4 variation, one where Black is trying to prove that his centre pawns, though a bit constrained by White’s pieces and the c4-pawn, can break out to achieve a balanced game. Back in 1983, after my misplayed game with Sergey Kudrin which I was lucky to draw in this variation, Vitaly and I conceived a plan that to this day makes this variation a challenge for Black to equalize in. In this very important game played at the Dubai Olympiad, I was able to demonstrate the strategic idea quite well.

8. 0-0 e7 9. c3 0-0 10. f4

Delaying 10. f4 can be played with an interesting idea which I tried against the
How to study openings?

Great Dane, Bent Larsen, at the GLC London International 1986. I played 10. \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{b6} \) 11. \( \text{b3} \) moving the game straight into the endgame.

Larsen obliged, and found himself in trouble after 11... \( \text{xb3} \) 12. axb3 a6 13. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{d8} \) 14. \( \text{d6} \) Of course beating such a legend was not an easy task and in fact after 14... \( \text{xd6} \) 15. \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{c6} \) 16. \( \text{a5} \) \( \text{a7} \) 17. \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{b7} \) 18. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xg2} \) 19. \( \text{xg2} \)

With this move, preparing to create a hedgehog with the pawn on c5 instead of b6, Black is showing his cards a little early.

Current practice tries to delay this move for a bit, sometimes hinting that preparing d5 in one move is a possibility.

In fact, out of 9 games in the database played in 2015, only one game featured this move, while the rest opted for the more flexible 10... \( \text{b6} \). Let’s see:

11. \( \text{fd1} \)!

Black cannot take the poisoned b2 pawn, as on 11... \( \text{xb2} \) 12. \( \text{ab1} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 13. \( \text{xb7} \) the Queen is threatened both by 14. \( \text{e5} \) and \( \text{d2} \) and 13... \( \text{g4} \) would be answered by the cold-blooded 14. h3!

Now 11... d6 would transpose to the game, but the next move is more flexible and leaves White with a lot to think about.

11... \( \text{d8} \)

11... \( \text{c6} \), played against me by a notable Queen’s Indian specialist, Lev Psakhis, in the 1997 World Open is also interesting. After 12. \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{a5} \) 13. b3 d5 14. cxd5 (see analysis diagram)
I offered a draw which was accepted, but had I played the superior 14. \( \text{a}4! \) \( \text{xb}5 \) 15. \( \text{xb}5 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 16. \( \text{d}2! \) \( \text{d}8 \) 17. \( \text{e}5 \) I doubt that this would be an easy position to save for Black.

After 11... \( \text{d}8 \) the most interesting continuation, in my view, is 12. \( \text{ab}1 \), hinting at an eventual \( \text{b}4 \). This was first played by Alex Czerwonski against Bartek Macieja. White won that game after Bartek opted for immediate counterplay with 12... \( \text{d}5 \). Still, even more tenacious play may not be enough for full equality as evidenced by a very instructive game between Kramnik and Carlsen played in 2010 and a recent encounter between Mamedyarov and Navara, both won by White.

As for myself, I played the standard 12. \( \text{d}2 \) against Roland Berzinsh in a Latvian Rapid tournament in 2006, and the game showed some of the difficulties Black can experience in the typical endgame after the trade on \( \text{b}3 \). I submit it in full:

\[
12... \text{c}6 \ 13. \text{c}2 \text{b}7 \ 14. \text{b}3! \\
\]

It's important that this move threatens to take the Queen without improving Black's a-pawn!

\[
14... \text{xb}3 \ 15. \text{xb}3 \text{d}6 \ 16. \text{ad}1 \text{e}8 \ 17. \text{e}4! \text{d}7 \\
\]

And now came the thematic break:

\[
18. \text{e}5! \text{dxe}5 \ 19. \text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 \ 20. \text{xe}5 \text{xd}2 \ 21. \text{xd}2 \text{xg}2 \ 22. \text{xg}2 \text{f}6 \ 23. \text{h}4 \text{g}5 \ 24. \text{d}7 \text{f}8 \ 25. \text{e}3 \text{b}8 \ 26. \text{e}4 \text{xb}3 \ 27. \text{xc}5 \text{xc}5 \ 28. \text{xc}5 \text{xb}2 \ 29. \text{xe}6+ \text{g}8 \ 30. \text{c}5 \text{c}2 \ 31. \text{xa}7 \text{g}4 \ 32. \text{e}7 \text{f}5 \ 33. \text{xe}8+ \text{f}7 \ 34. \text{d}4 \ 1-0 \\
\]

Back to the game!

\[
11. \text{fd}1 \text{b}6 \ 12. \text{d}2 \\
\]
How to study openings?

In the database I see that I scored 3.5/4 with this move, only drawing Lajos Portisch from a good position. Still, there is some intrigue in trying to immediately exchange Queens, after which Black may be unable to defend his weak d-pawn since his pieces are still not developed. This perhaps explains my experiment with 12. \( \text{b3} \) here. I played this against Amador Rodriguez, who opted for a patient defence with 12... \( \text{d8} \) 13. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 14. \( \text{ad1} \) \( \text{e8} \). Now I think I would be a little better in the endgame after 15. \( \text{xb6} \), but I opted for a full-blown middlegame with 15. \( \text{c2} \) only to offer a draw in a complicated position five moves later.

What I like about this opening system is that you are playing without risk, and if you feel like playing on, you can certainly find great reasons to do so. On the other hand if you want a peaceful resolution, your opponent, who is patiently waiting for your plans to present themselves, will likely accept.

\[ 12... \text{d8} \]

Let’s have a look at some other options.

A) Both Portisch and Walter Browne preferred \( 12... \text{c6} \) here against me, planning to block the d-file with \( \text{d4} \). I responded with \( 13. \text{d1} \)

![Position after: 13. \text{d1}](image)

Unfortunately, taking the d-pawn just falls short of an advantage, though I tried hard to make it work.

After 13. \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xd6} \) 14. \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 15. \( \text{b1} \) (the nutty 15. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{xa1+} \) 16. \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{a5} \) 17. \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{xd1+} \) 18. \( \text{c6} \) 19. \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{ab8} \) 20. \( \text{a3} \) \( \text{fd8} \) 21. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d7} \) with some weird sort of equality could only be conceived by the engines, as humans prefer Rooks) 15... \( \text{xc3} \) 16. \( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{d4} \) 17. \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{ad8} \) 18. \( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xd8} \) 19. \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) 20. \( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 21. \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{g6} \) Black is fine.

\[ 13... \text{fd8} \]

This is my game with Lajos Portisch from GLC London 1986. 13... \( \text{d4} \) was Walter Browne’s choice. After 14. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{xf3+} \) 15. \( \text{xf3} \) Walter Browne blundered a pawn with 15... \( \text{fd8} \? \) (see analysis diagram)
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16. \texttt{xb7} \texttt{xb7} 17. \texttt{xd6} \texttt{xd6} 18. \texttt{xd6} \texttt{xd6} 19. \texttt{xd6} as taking on b2 gets mated on the back rank due to \texttt{b1}.

14. \texttt{b3} \texttt{d4} 15. \texttt{e3} \texttt{xf3} 16. \texttt{xf3} \texttt{xf3+} 17. \texttt{xf3} \texttt{h6} 18. \texttt{g4} \texttt{a5} 19. \texttt{d3} \texttt{ac8} 20. \texttt{ad1} \texttt{d7}

Here I should have played 21. \texttt{h4}! or an even stronger 21. \texttt{e4}! with gusto and a real advantage. I chickened out and opted for the lame:

21. \texttt{g3} \texttt{cd8} 22. \texttt{h3} \texttt{b6} 23. \texttt{1d2} \texttt{a6} 24. \texttt{g2}

...offering a draw which was accepted.

\texttt{½-½}

B) There was also a funny miniature I played in 1992 against Vulicevic. Instead of 12... \texttt{d8} it went 12... \texttt{h6} 13. \texttt{b3} \texttt{xb3} 14. \texttt{axb3} \texttt{e5?} 15. \texttt{e3} \texttt{e4?} 16. \texttt{h4!} and Black resigned as he loses material. 1-0

C) Another recent attempt to equalize by Black was seen in my game against Joshua Ruiz, who played 12... \texttt{a6}.

After 13. \texttt{ad1} \texttt{d6} 14. \texttt{b5} \texttt{e8} I decided upon 15. \texttt{g5} \texttt{xg2} 16. \texttt{xg2} \texttt{ac7} and then played 17. \texttt{a4} not getting much out of the opening.

Instead 17. \texttt{xb6} \texttt{axb6} 18. \texttt{ge4} \texttt{d5} 19. \texttt{cx5} \texttt{xd5} 20. \texttt{xd5} \texttt{exd5} 21. \texttt{xd5} \texttt{xd5} 22. \texttt{xd5} \texttt{xa2} 23. \texttt{d2} leads to a slight advantage in the endgame, similar to Karpov-J.Polgar, Najdorf Memorial 2001.

\texttt{13. ad1} \texttt{a6}

In the US Action 1990 Tournament, Yury Dokhoian played 13... \texttt{a6} against me. I replied with 14. \texttt{b3} \texttt{xb3} 15. \texttt{axb3} \texttt{d5} 16. \texttt{e1} (see analysis diagram)
How to study openings?

Position after: 16. \( \textit{e}1 \)

...and somehow thought the position was equal and offered a rather early draw which was accepted. I think after 16...

16. ... \( \textit{b}4 \) 17. \( \textit{d}3 \) \( \textit{d}7 \) 18. \( \textit{cxd}5 \) \( \textit{bxd}5 \) 19. \( \textit{e}5 \) \( \textit{dd}8 \) 20. \( \textit{g}5 \) \( \textit{ab}8 \) 21. \( \textit{xd}5 \textit{exd}5 \) 22. \( \textit{d}3 \) Black still needs to play accurately to fully equalize.

14. \( \textit{g}5 \)

The start of my plan.

Instead, 14. \( \textit{b}3 \) looks strong, but Black can defend with 14...

14. ... \( \textit{xb}3 \) 15. \( \textit{axb}3 \) \( \textit{e}8 \) 16. \( \textit{e}4 \) \( \textit{f}6! \) 17. \( \textit{e}5 \) \( \textit{fxe}5 \) 18. \( \textit{xe}5 \) \( \textit{xg}2 \) 19. \( \textit{xg}2 \) \( \textit{c}8 \) 20. \( \textit{f}3 \) \( \textit{c}6 \).

14... \( \textit{xg}2 \) 15. \( \textit{g}xg2 \) \( \textit{h}6? \)

A mistake according to the engines. They offer 15... \( \textit{e}5 \) 16. \( \textit{e}3 \) \( \textit{b}7+ \) 17. \( \textit{f}3 \) \( \textit{c}6 \) 18. \( \textit{ge}4 \) \( \textit{xe}4 \) 19. \( \textit{xe}4 \) \( \textit{d}4 \) but after 20.\( \textit{c}3 \) White's control over \( \textit{d}5 \) here should clearly outweigh all the other factors. "Oh yeah," agrees Houdini by the time we get to this position.

16. \( \textit{ge}4 \) \( \textit{e}8 \)

17. \( \textit{g}4?! \)

Part of my plan, but silicon friends are such party poopers that they even ruined THIS game for me! The direct 17. \( \textit{xd}6!! \) wins outright. The tactic goes as follows: 17... \( \textit{xd}6 \) (or 17... \( \textit{e}4 \) \( \textit{b}7 \) 19. \( \textit{f}3+\) ) 18. \( \textit{ xd}6 \) \( \textit{xd}6 \) 19. \( \textit{e}4 \) \( \textit{e}7 \) 20. \( \textit{xd}8+ \) \( \textit{xd}8 \) 21. \( \textit{e}8+ \) and it's all over. Not too difficult, if you ask me. "Elementary," echo the engines.

17... \( \textit{a}7 \) 18. \( \textit{d}3 \)

With this move, I am preparing to triple on the \( \textit{d} \)-file.

18... \( \textit{ad}7 \) 19. \( \textit{f}3 \) \( \textit{b}7 \) 20. \( \textit{1d}2 \) \( \textit{c}6? \)

The resourceful 20... \( \textit{g}5 \) 21. \( \textit{g}3 \) \( \textit{f}5 \) was necessary. Now after 22. \( \textit{gxf}5 \) \( \textit{exf}5 \) 23. \( \textit{f}2 \) \( \textit{f}4 \) 24. \( \textit{g}4 \) \( \textit{fxg}3 \) 25. \( \textit{h}6+ \) \( \textit{h}7 \) 26. \( \textit{f}7 \) \( \textit{c}8 \) 27. \( \textit{c}2 \) \( \textit{g}7 \) 28. \( \textit{d}5 \) \( \textit{xf}7 \) 29. \( \textit{h}7+ \) \( \textit{f}8 \) 30. \( \textit{h}8+ \) it's only a draw. Thank you, sand people!

21. \( \textit{d}1 \) \( \textit{b}4 \)
Gudmundur accepts my invitation for a tactical escapade and winds up in a much worse endgame.

Still, even after the best 21... c7 22. a4 e5 23. g3 b8 24. b3 a7 25. b6 I would be quite a bit better.

22. xc5! xd3 23. xb7 xf4+ 24. g3 xb7 25. xf4 g5+ 26. g3 xd2 27. xd2

Allowing this trade of my two Rooks for a Queen and a pawn, I thought the resulting position would be much better for me. The principle of two weaknesses will be at work here: Black’s weak a-pawn combined with my ability to start opening up his King should overload Gudmundur’s defensive abilities. The engines agree.

27... c8 28. b3 f8 29. a4 c6 30. a5

**Step 1**: Confine Black’s pieces to the defence of a6-pawn.

30... e7 31. b2 cb6 32. d3 f6 33. b4 d7 34. g5

**Step 2**: Weaken the King.

34... h5 35. g6 f5 36. e4 f6 37. exf5 e5 38. d5 xf5 39. c5 f6 40. c4 c6 41. a4
How to study openings?

Step 3: Combine aggression on the queenside with threats against the King.

41... dxc5 42. âxc5 âe7 43. âd3+ âg5 44. h4+ âh6 45. âf5

The King found his own end.

1-0

As you could see from the previous pages, developing an opening system takes years of work and practice. While playing professionally, I have never left an opening problem encountered in any of my games, be it blitz or tournament chess, without subsequent analysis. During the tournament I would write down the issue and then, upon arriving back home, would start solving each problem until I found a solution.

Besides the 5. âa4 Queen's Indian, in my work with Vitaly we have developed a number of variations in many different openings. Recently, I found out that the 5. f3 System against the Benko Gambit, for example, which I used to defeat the top American practitioner of this opening, Lev Alburt, is called the Dlugy Variation. I was probably the highest rated player at the time playing it, but of course Vitaly and I took ideas seen in the games of some of the leading British players and tried to improve on them to create a real weapon. I believe we were successful in doing so, as the 5. f3 System is still quite a viable weapon against the Benko. We did a lot of work on the Black side of the Richter Rauzer and the ...âd7 Caro-Kann as well as the Queen's Gambit Accepted, while managing to create serious problems for Black not only in the Queen's Indian, but also in the King's Indian, the Grunfeld and the Benoni Defenses among others.
Chapter 8

Learning a new opening system

When I arrived to Berkeley for my first U.S Closed Championship in 1984, I felt the intensity of the moment. As the winner of the 1983 U.S Junior, I was the wild card and almost automatically the lowest rated player in the 18-player field, comprised of all the top players in the country. Though I felt reasonably well prepared for the event, after some intense sessions with Vitaly I still had no idea what to expect. After drawing the first round game with the White pieces against the highest rated player in the country, Yasser Seirawan, I was slated to play Jack Peters, a very aggressive International master from California in the second round. At 8 AM, the phone in my hotel room rang to wake me up.

“Hello?”,

I said, not believing that someone would call me at such an ungodly hour, when the game wasn't until 1pm.

“Hi, It's Roman”,

answered the deep, easily recognizable voice of Grandmaster Roman Dzindzichashvili.

“Are you awake?”

“Well, I am now."

I responded, waiting to understand the reason for this call.

“OK, then, let's go play Ms.Pacman”

continued the deep voice of a 40 year old Grandmaster. I was somewhat surprised by the offer.
“I have to prepare for my game,” I responded.
“Who are you paired with?” asked Dzin, as he was referred to by almost everyone who knew him.
“Peters”, I said.
“And what are planning to play?” he asked.
“The Sicilian”
“What?”, said Dzin,
“You shouldn’t play the Sicilian against Peters, He is too aggressive. You have to play the ... ♗d7 Caro-Kann, like I played against Ljubo at the NY Open. That's how I won $18,000.”
“But I don't play the ... ♗d7 Caro-Kann. I used to play the ... ♗f6 Caro-Kann with gxf6,” I said.
“Don’t worry. We will go play Ms.Pacman, have breakfast and then I will teach you.”

I couldn’t refuse a free consultation from one of the best theoreticians in the world, and I started forcing myself out of the bed to give Dzin some real competition in Ms. Pacman, a game he was almost as good as me at. We went to the local Walmart, ordered breakfast, and ate while each one of us took 40 minutes or so to lose the first life in the popular video game. Then, 90 minutes later, when the game of two elite Ms. Pacman professionals went in favor of the younger competitor, we went back to the hotel where Dzin showed me his magic in the ... ♗d7 Caro-Kann. Here it is:

After the moves 1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. ♗c3 dxe4 4. ♗xe4 ♗d7 White has a number of reasonable tries as Black wants to challenge the Knight on e4 without breaking up his pawn structure as would be the case with another playable move 4... ♗f6.

Roman showed me two cool novelties, armed with which I felt confident to go out and play a completely new variation in the strongest tournament of my life!  

**NEW IDEA 1:**

Dzin explained that the main line starts with 5. ♗c4 ♗gf6 6. ♗g5 e6 7. ♗e2 when Black has to start unwinding his position with 7... ♗b6 8. ♗d3 h6 9. ♗f3 c5

Now when White captures on c5 with 10. dxc5
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instead of recapturing the pawn immediately, Black can opt to take it with the Knight, by playing 10... \( \text{bd}7\)!

If White allows this, Black is immediately doing quite well, as the Knight would win a tempo by hitting the Bishop on d3. It's logical, therefore, that White will try to keep the pawn, but after the forced sequence 11. b4 a5 12. c3 \( \text{d}5\) 13. \( \text{d}2\)

Black has the amazing 13... \( \text{g}5\)! (Roman's sign) with a stupendous initiative for the pawn. Such was my belief in Dzin's magnetic personality, that I in fact played this idea later in a rapid game against Michael Rohde, and even though I cannot say I achieved a great position out of the opening, I did eventually manage to win the game, as Michael got into a serious time pressure. If we look critically at Roman's novelty, though, we will notice that it's not too hot.

After 13... \( \text{g}5\), in the game Alexander Ivanov – Roman Dzindzichashvili from the 1989 American Open, the game continued:

14. \( \text{c}4\) \( \text{f}4\) 15. \( \text{xf}4\) \( \text{xf}4\) 16. \( \text{h}3\) \( \text{f}6\) 17. \( \text{c}1\) \( \text{g}7\) and now instead of 18. \( \text{g}3\)!, which allowed Dzin to equalize with 18... \( \text{fxg}3\) 19. \( \text{hxg}3\) \( \text{xb}4\) 20. \( \text{xb}4\) \( \text{b}2\)!, Alex should have simply castled with a great position.

Still, Dzin's idea has serious merit – it just needs the right form.

I think that after including the capture on b4, Black has formidable compensation. Let's see:

13... axb4! 14. axb4 \( \text{g}5\)!
...and now I could not find a path to a simple edge for White.

A) After 15. \( \text{c4} \text{g7} \) 16. \( \text{c1} \) 0-0, White's threat of capturing on d5 is diffused and White is lacking in development.

B) On 15. \( \text{e4} \text{f6} \) 16. \( \text{e2} \text{d5} \) White may want to choose repetition as for example after 17. \( \text{b5} \text{g7} \) 18. \( \text{d1} \) 0-0 19. \( \text{c4} \text{c7} \) 20. h4 g4 21. \( \text{xd7} \text{xd7} \) 22. \( \text{xg4} e5 \) 23. \( \text{g3} \text{a4} \) 24. \( \text{c1} \text{a6} \) 25. \( \text{e2} \text{g6} \) 26. \( \text{h3} e4 \) 27. \( \text{fg1} \text{d5} \) Black has more than sufficient compensation for the two pawns invested into White's inability to bring out his pieces.

Now 7. c3 was played by Alonso Zapata against me in the last round of the Tunis Interzonal 1985. I won that game after equalizing easily in the opening.

A) But what happens if White takes the pawn?

7. dxc5 \( \text{a5+!} \)

Black organizes his pieces in a very nice manner...

8. c3 \( \text{xc5} \) 9. \( \text{e3} \text{c7} \) 10. \( \text{d3} \text{g6} \)
11. 0-0 \( \text{g7} \) 12. \( \text{e1} 0-0 \) 13. \( \text{d4} \text{e6} \)

NEW IDEA 2:

If White plays 5. \( \text{f3} \) (instead of 5. \( \text{c4} \)), Black plays 5... \( \text{gf6} \) 6. \( \text{g3} \) to keep the position complicated and now the super cool 6... c5!
...and the somewhat clumsy position of White’s Knight on g3 gives Black a good position. Pushing the pawn forward, as was played against me in a tournament blitz game by Nigel Short, is also insufficient for any advantage.

**B) After 7. d5 b6! 8. c4** (the alternative 8. b5+ d7 9. xd7+ xxd7 actually loses a pawn) 8... e6! 9. dxe6 xd1+ 10. xd1 xe6 gives Black a better endgame.

Armed with these two marvelous ideas, one of which would give me quite a suspect position in the form it was offered, I went to the round. Let’s see what happened:

I remembered that Black is supposed to play this pawn break against any Bishop retreat, but forgot that in both cases, Black should first force the Knight back to f3 with 8... h6. As my opponent immersed himself into thought from this rare move, Dzin, upon seeing my "lemon“, motioned me to get up from the board. When I did, he came over and whispered: "Are you crazy? You’re supposed to play h6 first!". I was stupefied. My second game in the most important tournament of my life – and I got talked into playing a completely new variation, which I immediately forgot. How much worse could it get?

9. dxc5

Amazingly enough, my blunder has been played before by quite a reputable player. Jan Donner, a famous Dutch Grandmaster and a notable chess writer, played it against GM Darga at the Capablanca Memorial in Havana 20 years earlier in 1964 and drew. Even that is not the earliest game where this
move has been played. But how bad is it? Let's see:

9... \( \text{Bxc5} \)

Of course, with the Bishop on b3, nuances such as ...\( \text{Bd7} \) become impossible as White crushes through on f7 and e6.

10. \( \text{Bf3} \)

The big difference. White develops swiftly now, and both Knights easily find good squares.

Here, realizing what I had done, I started to think on my own and it seemed that I was doing reasonably well. I played:

10... \( \text{h6} \) 11. \( \text{Be4} \) \( \text{Bxe4} \) 12. \( \text{Bxe4} \) \( \text{Bd5!} \)

It seemed very important to transfer the Knight to f6, to force White's Queen from the dominating e4-square. That will allow me to develop my Bishop to b7.

13. \( \text{Be5} \)

Peters is relentless in his pursuit to punish me for my indiscretion. After the normal 13. 0-0 0-0 14. c3 \( \text{Bf6} \) 15. \( \text{Bc2} \) \( \text{Bc7!} \) to stop White from developing the Bishop to f4 16. \( \text{Bf4} \) \( \text{Bb7!} \) Black is perfectly fine, as any knight discoveries are met with ...\( \text{Bc6} \) "discovering" the mate on g2. This turns out to be a common theme in this variation.

13... 0-0 14. 0-0

14... \( \text{Bf6} \)

Slightly inaccurate. I didn't have such a good feel for the position to find 14... \( \text{b5!} \) taking control over White's queenside by expanding quickly. Now if White tries to weaken my kingside with 15. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{Bc7} \) 16. \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{f5} \) 17. \( \text{Bc2} \) \( \text{Bb7} \) 18. \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{d6} \) 19. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{Bf8} \) White's advantage is nebulous at best, as Black's pieces are extremely active.

15. \( \text{Bf3} \) \( \text{Bd6} \) 16. \( \text{Be1} \) \( \text{Bc7} \) 17. \( \text{Bf4} \)
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Position after: 17. $\text{f4}$

And now we came to the moment of truth. I noticed that I have serious difficulties in developing. Jack wants to play $\text{ad1}$ after which my pieces will be tied up in knots.

After looking at all my options, including trying to save a bad endgame after 17... $\text{d7}$ 18. $\text{xd7}$ $\text{xd7}$ 19. $\text{xd6}$ $\text{xd6}$ 20. $\text{xb7}$ $\text{c5}$ 21. $\text{f3}$ $\text{ab8}$, I spotted the unlikely rook sacrifice...

17... $\text{b6}!!$

The sheer courage of this move shocked Peters. I saw it in his eyes. He sunk into thought for 45 minutes and emerged with:

18. $\text{ad1}$

It seemed to me like I may just get enough compensation if White accepts my gift with 18. $\text{xa8}$ $\text{b7}$ 19. $\text{xa7}$ $\text{a8}$ 20. $\text{xa8+}$ $\text{xa8}$ as I am threatening $\text{e4}$. In fact, the engines agree with my assessment and offer 21. $\text{g3}$ $\text{e4}$ 22. $\text{f3}$ $\text{xg3}$ 23. $\text{hxg3}$ $\text{xf3}$ 24. $\text{gxf3}$ $\text{xg3}$ 25. $\text{fxg3}$ $\text{xg3+}$ as the top line with a draw, while Black can actually get sufficient play with some other moves. Evidently, Peters realized that White would not be pressing at all, and decided in favor of simple development. I felt as though I finally equalized!

18... $\text{b7}$ 19. $\text{h3}$?

This move played after a subsequent 15-20 minute consideration leads to Black's immediate advantage.

The best move for White was 19. $\text{d3}$

which was found by Mark Dvoretsky when I showed him this game, whereupon we concluded that White would be much better. The engines are completely unimpressed, though, and offer a beautiful reply – 19... $\text{c5}!!$

The ability to threaten mate in one with the Queen beats anything White's Knight can do. This idea showed up in my commentaries to White's 13th move, and seems to be a theme that a serious student of the game should note and remember. Now, even after the super-
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complicated and appealing 20. \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{h5} \) 21. \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{xf4} \) 22. \( \text{d7!} \)

Not the best try. Under the circumstances, White should have tried 20. \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xd6} \) 21. \( \text{c3} \) where he would have reasonable if not quite sufficient compensation for the exchange. Now the position quickly rolls downhill, as there’s simply nothing serious that White can get going.

20... \( \text{xe4} \) 21. \( \text{xf7} \)

It doesn’t really matter in what order White gives away his pieces. I have sufficient defences and the material rift is too wide.

21... \( \text{xf4} \) 22. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{ae8} \) 23. \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 24. \( \text{d7} \) \( \text{d5!} \)

The final touch. I threaten mate in one while repelling all threats. White resigned.

0-1
Incredibly, my first experiment with the 4... d7 Caro-Kann was a success, and in fact was likely the key factor for my great result at the US Championship. I won a further game against Joel Benjamin, drew Robert Byrne and Sergey Kudrin, and even had Ron Henley, a 1. d4 player, play 1. e4 against me, evidently having prepared something special. I smoothly played 1... c5! against him and equalized easily against the Closed Sicilian, as Ron was not prepared to discuss the main lines of an opening he did not expect. The confidence which Dzindzi instilled in me to play his eighteen thousand dollar opening was sufficient to get me to find the right moves when push came to shove. I believed the opening was sound and it was just a matter of finding the correct continuations. Such a belief does wonders for your results, as the confidence you exude dampens your opponent's spirits and they begin to believe you. So, experiment with new things as much as you can. Force yourself to learn a new variation on the day of the game and try it out in battle. The benefits will definitely outweigh the drawbacks. Incidentally, the ... d7 Caro-Kann became an integral part of my opening repertoire, and I am still thankful to Roman for convincing me to play it.
Chapter 9

Preparing for a match

After tying for third place in the U.S. Closed Championship in 1984 with Yasser Seirawan, James Tarjan and John Fedorowicz, I qualified to play a match for the last open Interzonal spot. The Interzonal was the next step on the way to the World Championship Match, and the top finishers from the Interzonal would qualify to play in the Candidates Tournament, from where the top finishers would play matches to determine who would challenge the World Champion.

I was a bit lucky that Yasser Seirawan was already pre-qualified to play in the Interzonal thanks to his high rating, while James Tarjan retired from chess right at that moment. In fact, James did not play serious chess for over 30 years, I believe, reappearing in April 2014 to start playing again.

This left only John Fedorowicz and myself vying for the final spot for the United States, the other two going to Lev Alburt, the 1984 U.S. Champion, and the runner up Nick DeFirmian.

The American Chess Foundation was gracious enough to organize and sponsor our match, and it was decided that it would take place at the Manhattan Chess Club.
The format was 4 games with a classical, at that time, 40 moves in 2½ hours time control, with adjournments after move 40.

My official coach was Vitaly Zaltsman, while John got International Master Victor Frias to help him.

After Vitaly and I analyzed many games that John had played, including all his games from the 1984 U.S. Championship, we concluded that I am the favorite in the match, though the popular opinion was that this will be a lay-up for Fedorowicz. The major weakness we spotted was that when Fedorowicz did not get a good position out of the opening, instead of patiently defending and trying to slightly improve his position, he searched for immediate tactical play and went for it, even if that was not the best objective decision in the position. Armed with that knowledge, I could prepare for these lunges and meet them with my own tactics, which would be devastating for my opponent.

I recently found a diary I kept just prior to, and during the match which shows exactly what was going on in my head during this very important moment of my chess career.

Investigated further the Keres-Parma Variation. Learned the IQP (Isolated Queen’s Pawn) position and noted that after 1. c4 c5 2. Qf3 Qf6 3. Qc3 e6 4. g3 d5 5. cxd5 Qxd5 6. g2 Qc6 7. 0-0 Qe7 8. d4 0-0 9. e4 then 9... Qb6 will probably be the variation I play instead of 9... Qxc3.

In fact, though John refrained from playing 1. c4 in this match, I used the Keres-Parma in tournaments, developing a number of novelties for Black.
As the reader may have guessed, my match took place during the 1984 World Chess Championship match between Kasparov and Karpov, which of course was a highlight of the chess world at the time.

**September 21st:**

Gave Herbie a lesson and investigated further Karpov-Kasparov Game 2 (perhaps g5 is not so strong).

Game 2 of the 1984 match between the two great K’s saw Kasparov play a pawn sacrifice against Karpov’s Queen’s Indian, where he supported his f5-Knight with the pawn on g4 (see diagram next page). I imagine I analyzed this varia-
In fact, my game with Predrag Nikolic from the 1985 Interzonal to which I qualified by virtue of winning this match went: 11. h3 \(d8\) 12. d5 exd5 13. \(\text{x}d5 \text{b}4!\) 14. \(c4 \text{x}d1\) 15. \(\text{x}d1 \text{f}5\) 16. \(c3 \text{d}6\) 17. b3 \(d8\) 18. \(b2 \text{d}3!\) 19. \(\text{x}d3 \text{x}d3\) 20. \(d1 \text{xb}2\) 21. \(\text{xb}2 \text{e}7\) 22. \(\text{xd}8 \text{xd}8\) with an equal endgame which was later drawn.

Checked out another line from my game with Albertson (blitz), from above: 7. \(\text{e}2\) b5 8. \(b3\) \(b7\) 9. a4 \(b7\) 10. axb5 axb5 11. \(a8\) \(a8\) 12. \(b5\) \(xf3\) 13. \(gxf3\) \(xf3\) 14. \(d1\) \(h1\) 15. \(c6\) \(e7\) 16. \(c3\) \(cxd4\) 17. \(exd4\) 0-0 with an advantage for Black, 18. \(f4\) \(f5\) 19. \(g3\) h5 20. h4 \(d8\) etc.

12. \(b5\) is a mistake and the position is quite complicated but fully playable for Black after the stronger 12. \(c3\) b4 13. \(b5\) \(b8!\)

Won the blitz tournament easily losing \(\frac{1}{2}\) point to Asa Hoffman to clinch first. Albertson, Bonin, Arkady there.

The Manhattan Chess Club was still my best place to practice new ideas while playing blitz, as online chess did not exist back then.

Zaltsman said that 1. c4 c5 2. \(f3\) \(f6\) 3. \(c3\) e6 4. e4 \(c6\) 5. d4 \(cxd4\) 6. \(\text{xd}4\) \(b4\) 7. \(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{dxc}6!\) is good for Black. Bishop goes to c5 and life becomes fantasy after e5.
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It's quite ironic that a year later I will be playing Fedorowicz in the last round of a tournament needing a draw to secure my final grandmaster norm. John will play exactly this line. More on that later in the book!

September 22nd:

While checking openings for Fed, found that the Kingside attack plan in case of Black's early castling is not well enough investigated by me. Went to Zaltsman (father's lift) to check the problem.

1. d4 ²f6 2. c4 g6 3. ²c3 ²g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 c6 6. ²e3 0-0 7. ²d2 a6 8. 0-0-0 b5 (For 8... ²bd7 see Polugaevsky-Geller Game#11 in Polugaevsky's book — 9. e5 ²e8 10. f4 ²a5 11. ²b1 b5 12. c5! with a serious advantage for White.) 9. ²h6 and now 4 options:

A) 9... ²a5 10. h4 ²bd7 11. h5 b4 12. ²b1 e5 13. hxg6 fxg6 14. ²xg7 ²xg7 15. ²h6 ²g8 16. ²h3 ²f7 17. ²g5 ²g7 18. d5 with a large advantage. On 12... ²h5 13. ²xg7 ²xg7 14. g4 ²f6 15. ²h6 ²g8 16. f4 e5 17. g5 ²h5 18. ²e2 with a large advantage.

B) 9... bxc4 10. h4 d5 11. h5 ²h6 12. ²h6 g5 13. ²h3 ²xh3 14. gxh3 ²h8 15. ²g1 ²g8 16. e5! continuing the attack after 16... ²e8 with 17. h5! while after 16... ²d7 17. ²g5 ²f8 18. ²g8 ²g8 19. ²e2 ²g7 20. ²e2 with a large advantage.

C) 9... ²xh6 10. ²h6 ²a5 11. e5! dxe5 12. dxe5 ²fd7 13. h4 ²d8 14. e6! with a crushing attack.

Checking these variations now with the Komodo engine, I saw a lot of interesting new possibilities. For example, it turns out White's attack is not that dangerous after 9... ²a5 10. h4 b4 11. ²b1 ²xh6 12. ²xh6 ²xa2 13. h5 ²bd7 14. hxg6 fxg6 15. ²h3 ²f7 16. ²g5 ²b6! 17. ²xf7 ²xc4! 18. ²xc4 ²xc4 19. ²d2 ²xf7! with an unclear position, playable for both sides. Finding such subtleties would, of course, be extremely difficult before the silicon age.

September 23rd:

D) After checking last nights pretty variations, which go like this: 9... ²bd7 10. h4 e5 11. ²ge2 ²a5 12. h5 ²b6? 13. ²g3 ²xc4 14. ²xc4 ²xc4 15. dxe5 dxe5 16. hxg6 fxg6 17. ²h6 ²f7 18. ²d6 ²c5 19. ²hd1 with a winning position, we found that after 12... b4 13. ²b1 ²xh6 14. ²xh6 ²xa2 Black is doing fine. We decided to play like Sher-
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win: 12. \( \text{\texttt{g7 xg7}} \) 13. a3 \( \text{\texttt{b6}} \) 14. \( \text{\texttt{g3}} \) h5 15. dxe5 dxe5 16. c5! with the idea of \( \text{\texttt{f5}} \). On 16... \( \text{\texttt{a4}} \) 17. b4! And if Black doesn't block the attack and plays 14... bxc4 after 15. h5 \( \text{\texttt{e8 (only move)}} \) 16. hxg6 fxg6 17. dxe5 dxe5 18. \( \text{\texttt{h6 f7}} \) 19. \( \text{\texttt{d6 c5}} \) 20. \( \text{\texttt{xf6 xf6}} \) 21. \( \text{\texttt{f5! a7}} \) 22. g4! \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \) 23. \( \text{\texttt{e3! b7}} \) 24. \( \text{\texttt{h6 e6}} \) 25. g5! wins. We checked this once again and found that instead of 13... \( \text{\texttt{b6}} \) Black should play 13... \( \text{\texttt{b8}} \) and the position is unclear.

We found 10. e5! dxe5 11. dxe5 \( \text{\texttt{e8}} \) 12. h4 \( \text{\texttt{c7}} \) 13. e6 fxe6 14. h5 \( \text{\texttt{h6}} \) 15. \( \text{\texttt{h6 f4}} \) 16. \( \text{\texttt{xf4 xf4}} \) 17. hxg6 hxg6 18. \( \text{\texttt{h3}} \) with a lasting edge in the endgame. I am satisfied.

In the first game tomorrow I have White. Game starts at 1:45pm.

It's almost comic to check old analyses in tactical positions with an engine. I would only say that while most of the conclusions are correct, the path from point A to point B is filled with an enormous amount of wrong moves. After checking the above, I will say that after 9... \( \text{\texttt{bd7}} \) 10. e5 Black should not capture on e5, but retreat to e8 with a fully playable position.

The rest just shows how much I wanted to find an advantage for White and that psychologically I was ready for the match. The Byrne System was never played though, and in fact only one grandmaster – Roman Dzindzichashvili – allowed me to try the King's side attack plan, beating me in an important blitz game when he sacrificed the exchange with 9... \( \text{\texttt{h8}} \) after my 9. \( \text{\texttt{h6}} \).

September 24th:

I won the first game in a surprise variation of the Queen's Indian.

Below I submit the first game of the match with my current annotations, before reverting back to the diary.

\( \text{\texttt{Dlugy, Maxim}} \)  
\( \text{\texttt{Fedorowicz, John}} \)  
\( \text{\texttt{New York 1984 – Game 1}} \)

1. d4 \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \) 2. c4 e6 3. \( \text{\texttt{f3}} \) b6 4. g3 \( \text{\texttt{b4+}} \) 5. \( \text{\texttt{d2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xd2+}} \) 6. \( \text{\texttt{xd2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{a6}} \) 7. b3 c6 8. \( \text{\texttt{g2}} \) d5 9. 0-0 \( \text{\texttt{bd7}} \)

Position after: 9... \( \text{\texttt{bd7}} \)

This was all new to me and I had to constantly calculate the possibility for Black to capture on c4. Here after 9... dxc4 10. \( \text{\texttt{e5}} \) 0-0 11. \( \text{\texttt{xc4}} \) White is clearly better.
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10. \( \text{h}c2 \) 0-0 11. \( \twoheadrightarrow \text{d}1 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 12. \( \text{c}3 \) \( \twoheadrightarrow \text{e}7 \)

Black has many reasonable moves at his disposal. A recent game went 12... c5 13. dxc5 \( \text{b}xc5 \) when White could have fought for an edge with 14. \( \text{d}d4 \) as 14... dxc4? would be really bad after 15. b4 \( \text{c}7 \) 16. \( \text{b}b5 \)!

13. e4

This took a lot of calculation, as it is not clear why Black should not take on c4.

13... \( \text{f}d8 \)?

John decides not to react. The engines disagree and propose 13... dxc4 14. e5 \( \text{d}5 \) 15. bxc4 \( \text{xc}4 \) 16. \( \text{e}e4 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 17. \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{c}7 \) where I would clearly have good compensation for the pawn. One logical idea is to play 18. \( \text{h}4 \) planning to take on d5 and invade on f5 with the Knight. Black has resources though, and after 18... f6 19. \( \text{x}d5 \) exd5 20. f4 g6 21. \( \text{e}1 \) fxe5 22. fxe5 c5 I could force a draw with 23. \( \text{x}g6 \) or play on with 23. \( \text{a}c1 \) with mutual chances.

14. e5 \( \text{e}8 \) 15. \( \text{f}1 \)

Now I have a typical edge stemming from my space advantage guaranteed by the e5-pawn.

15... \( \text{b}7 \) 16. \( \text{x}d5 \) \( \text{xd}5 \) 17. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 18. \( \text{a}c1 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 19. \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{dc}8 \) 20. b4 a6 21. a4
Intuitively, I chose the strongest plan. Still, taking this game from a positional advantage to a win is a very tricky process.

21... \( \text{d7} \) 22. \( \text{d2} \) f6 23. f4 g5!

As expected, when worse, John begins active play. Here is turns out to be the best plan. I will now get a weak f4-pawn, which will provide Black with reasonable counter chances.

24. \( \text{f3} \) gxf4 25. gxf4 f5

26. \( \text{e2} \)

It was better to fix the queenside pawns on light squares with 26. a5!

Now after, for example, 26... \( \text{g7} \) 27. \( \text{e2} \) b5 28. \( \text{d2} \) h8 29. \( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{xc7} \) 30. \( \text{c1} \) h5 31. \( \text{e2} \) g7+ 32. \( \text{f2} \) f8 33. \( \text{g1} \) h6 34. \( \text{d3} \) g6 35. \( \text{g5} \), Black is beginning to feel the lack of space.

26... \( \text{xc1} \) 27. \( \text{xc1} \) \( \text{xc1}+ \) 28. \( \text{xc1} \) f8 29. \( \text{d2} \)

37... h5?

Somehow I missed the point. Even here fixing the pawns on the light squares on the queenside maintained an advantage for me. After 29. a5 bxa5 30. bxa5 \( \text{g6} \) 31. \( \text{e2} \) g7 32. \( \text{f2} \) h5 33. \( \text{e3} \) it is becoming clear that Black is headed for a difficult defence.

29... \( \text{g6} \) 30. \( \text{e2} \) g7 31. \( \text{g3} \) h6 32. \( \text{e1} \) c6 33. \( \text{c2} \)

Even here leaving the Bishop on an active post and playing a5 was stronger.

33... \( \text{d7} \) 34. a5 bxa5 35. bxa5 \( \text{b5} \) 36. \( \text{d3} \) e7 37. \( \text{c5} \)

37... \( \text{d3} \)

Equalizing!
Preparing for a match

38... \(\text{\textcopyright e8}\)

In time pressure it was hard to figure out the priorities. Turns out that Black should strive for immediate counter play with 38... \(\text{\textcopyright xd3}\) 39. \(\text{\textcopyright xd3 h4}\), with equality.

39. \(\text{\textcopyright xa6}\)

A very important decision just before the first time control. I could have held on to some advantage with 39. \(\text{\textcopyright e2 h4}\) 40. \(\text{\textcopyright e3 g6+}\) 41. \(\text{\textcopyright g3 xg3+}\) 42. \(\text{\textcopyright xg3 xd3}\) 43. \(\text{\textcopyright xd3 f3+}\) 44. \(\text{\textcopyright f2 d2}\) 45. \(\text{\textcopyright c5 c4}\) 46. \(\text{\textcopyright b3}\) although the position looks quite drawish to me.

According to the engines, White’s open King gives Black a draw after this, 43... \(\text{\textcopyright h5}\) and even 43... f4!

44. \(\text{\textcopyright c3 d1+}\) 45. \(\text{\textcopyright f2 h1}\) 46. \(\text{\textcopyright c5 xh2+}\) 47. \(\text{\textcopyright e1 f4}\) 48. \(\text{\textcopyright a6}\)

Well, this is obviously a race of the a- and f-pawns.

But what move should Black play? John chooses an obvious, but weak continuation.

48... \(\text{\textcopyright g1+}\)?

Now Black is in trouble and the road to a draw is a narrow mountain path.

It was important to either play prophylactically with 48... \(\text{\textcopyright f7!}\), as if I push the a-pawn, Black will quickly win it with ...\(\text{\textcopyright a2}\), or push his own pawn with 48... \(\text{\textcopyright f3}\) 49. \(\text{\textcopyright xf3 g1+}\) 50. \(\text{\textcopyright e2 xd4}\) though after 51. \(\text{\textcopyright a3 xe5+}\) 52. \(\text{\textcopyright d1 e8}\) 53. \(\text{\textcopyright c7}\) 54. \(\text{\textcopyright a8+}\) after which I can still toy around for a while in this drawn endgame.

41... h4 42. \(\text{\textcopyright xf4 hgx3}\) 43. \(\text{\textcopyright xg3 a4}\)
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49. \( \text{d}d2 \text{f}f2+ 50. \text{c}c1 \text{a}a2 51. \text{b}b2 \text{a}a5 52. \text{b}b8+ \text{h}h7 53. \text{a}a7 \)

Position after: 53. \text{a}a7

53... \text{a}a1+??

Of course, this is an outright blunder, but after 53... \text{c}c3+ 54. \text{b}b1 Black would have to find the incredibly amazing 54... f3! (after 54... \text{e}e1+ 55. \text{a}a2 \text{d}d2+ 56. \text{a}a3 \text{a}a5+ 57. \text{b}b3 the checks end abruptly) 55. \text{a}a8 \text{f}2!! when White's two Queens are no match for the g7-Knight and I would have to try my luck in the endgame after 56. \text{h}h8+ \text{g}6 57. \text{x}xg7+ \text{x}xg7 58. \text{xe}6+ \text{f}7 59. \text{f}8+ \text{xe}6 60. \text{f}6+ \text{d}7 61. \text{f}7+ \text{c}6 62. \text{x}xf2 which is clearly very difficult to win even if it is objectively winning.

54. \text{b}1+

1-0

The Queens get traded immediately.

The opening was played well by me – I seemed to have improved theoretical continuations.

I expect 1. \text{c}4 or 1. \text{d}4 tomorrow, but I am still prepared to play the \( \text{d}d7 \) Caro-Kann in case of 1. \text{e}4.

\textbf{September 25th:}

A little surprised, I wrote down 1. \text{e}4 and equalized easily, but only after careful over-the-board consideration. For example, on move 11 I consumed 40 minutes, but found the correct continuation. I seem to be playing well.

\( \text{D} \) Fedorowicz, John
\( \text{A} \) Dlugy, Maxim
\( \text{I} \) New York 1984 – Game 2

1. \text{e}4 \text{c}6 2. \text{d}4 \text{d}5 3. \text{c}3 \text{dxe}4 4. \text{x}e4 \text{d}7 5. \text{c}4

Efim Geller's 5. \text{g}5 has not been unveiled yet, and this was considered the main line against the 4... \text{d}d7 Caro-Kann, which became my main equalizing weapon for Black since my success at the 1984 US Championship.

5... \text{g}6 6. \text{g}5 \text{e}6 7. \text{e}2 \text{b}6 8. \text{d}3 \text{h}6

Unlike my game with Jack Peters, here I remembered to force the Knight back to f3 first before playing ...\text{c}5.

9. \text{f}3 \text{c}5 10. \text{dxc}5 \text{xc}5 11. \text{d}2
Preparing for a match

This was the novelty Fedorowicz prepared for the match. Instead of straightening out the Knights with the normal 11. e5, which allows Black to immediately get rid of his clumsy Knight on b6, White prepares queenside castling. I started looking for issues with this move, and after 40 minutes of thought I played the reasonable

11... c7

The engines prefer to castle, finding a great use for the b6 Knight on a4 rather than d7. After 11... 0-0 12. 0-0-0 a4! 13. e5 d4 14. c3 is impossible as the Bishop on d3 hangs. This detail forces White to switch gears into a defensive stance, where he will be somewhat worse.

12. 0-0-0

My tactical point was that White can't play 12. e5 as after 12... xf2+ 13. xf2 xe5 14. xe5 g4+ I simply win a pawn.

12... d6!

I liked this concept of holding off White's horses. As the e5-square is taboo, White's Knights will have to settle for the d4-square, which is not very promising for the development of a kingside attack.

13. d4 d7

This completed the series of moves I was thinking about for 40 minutes.

14. b5

The other major alternative was 14. f5 when I analyzed 14... f8 15. c3 bd5?! 16. e5 a5 thinking that I might even be better. The engines don't agree, and offer to continue analysis after 17. a3! b5 18. c3 xa3 19. bxa3 xa3+ 20. d2 exf5 21. xf6+ f8 22. d4 e8 23. f3 a2+ 24. c2 b4 with enormous complications, which will probably end up in some perpetual check. It looks like 15... 0-0-0 would be simpler and stronger.

14... xb5 15. xb5+ e7
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Even though my King is currently in the centre, my superior development easily gives me at least an equal game.

16. \( \text{Qf3} \) 17. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{hd8} \)

And here I offered a draw which was readily accepted by John.

\( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \)

Expecting the Benko or the King’s Indian in the next game, we prepared the following:

1. \( d4 \) \( \text{f6} \) 2. \( c4 \) \( g6 \) 3. \( \text{c3} \) \( g7 \) 4. \( e4 \) \( d6 \) 5. \( f3 \) \( c6 \) 6. \( \text{e3} 0-0 \) 7. \( \text{d2} \) \( a6 \) 8. \( 0-0-0 \) \( b5 \) 9. \( \text{h6} \) \( a5 \) 10. \( \text{xg7!} \) \( \text{xg7} \) 11. \( \text{e5} \) \( dxe5 \) 12. \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{g8} \) 13. \( \text{ge2!} \) instead of Portisch’s 13. \( a3 \) with a slight advantage.

It’s interesting that the Engines don’t share our optimism about this position and think Black is very close to equality after a number of moves here. Still, the position is quite complicated to play for a human and moving the pieces around in it in advance would have given me better chances. Also, the engines agree that 13. \( \text{ge2} \) is superior to 13. \( a3 \) and no games have, as of yet, been played with that move!

We also analyzed: 10. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 11. \( \text{h5} \) \( b4 \) 12. \( \text{b1} \) \( e5 \) 13. \( \text{hxg6} \) \( \text{fxg6} \) 14. \( \text{hxg7} \) \( \text{xg7} \) 15. \( \text{h6} \) \( g8 \) 16. \( \text{h3} \) \( e8 \) 17. \( \text{g5} \) \( e7 \) (17... \( \text{f8!} \) and Black is fine) 18. \( c5 \) \( d5! \) with counter-chances for Black.

The engines agree on the assessment of both 17... \( \text{f8} \) and 18... \( d5! \) But also consider Black’s chances higher in the mutual attacking frenzy after 10... \( \text{xh6!} \) followed by 11... \( b4 \).

Against the Benko we prepared: 1. \( d4 \) \( \text{f6} \) 2. \( c4 \) \( c5 \) 3. \( d5 \) \( b5 \) 4. \( \text{cxb5} \) \( a6 \) 5. \( \text{e3} \) \( b7 \) 6. \( \text{c3} \) \( a5 \) 7. \( \text{d2} \) \( axb5 \) 8. \( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{b6} \) 9. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{a6} \)

10. \( \text{ge2!} \) (Black is fine after 10. \( \text{c4?!} \) \( \text{b4} \) 11. \( \text{c1} \) \( e6 \) 12. \( e4 \) \( a6 \) 13. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 14. \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 15. \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{a6!} \) 10... \( \text{b4} \) 11. \( 0-0 \) \( \text{fd5} \) 12. \( e4! \) with an advantage.

The engines agree! 9. \( \text{f3} \) was played in this position for the first time in 1987 by Marc Lacrosse. Later grandmaster Alexander Graf took up this variation as his main weapon against the Benko with good results.
Preparing for a match

September 26th:
Free Day. I spent today resting and vegetating. Lots of walking around the green neighborhood in Leonia, New Jersey with my parents to free my mind.

September 27th:
The expected Gamble – the King’s Indian arrived, but in a somewhat different shape – the 6...c6, 7...a6 variation. I thought that it’s psychologically better to play the c1, b3 line, because the a3, b4 line is played by Fed and I know this one better.

I got a completely winning position, but blundered horribly and lost. Somehow the feeling that I was physically incapable during that game permeated. I could not or would not calculate some very easy tactical variations.

Dlugy, Maxim
Fedorowicz, John
New York 1984 – Game 3

1. d4 c5 2. c4 g6 3. d3 g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 0-0 6. e3 c6 7. de2 a6 8. de2 b5 9. c1

Position after: 9. c1

This was criticized later by Zaltsman.

He felt that if I know a3 is a stronger move, why play this?

9... d7 10. b3 b5 11. cx b5 ax b5 12. d5 e5 13. d4 e8! 14. a3!

Position after: 14. a3!
Found after a long think. I should try to fix the b-pawn.

14... e6 15.  ثن e2 exd5 16. exd5 h6?

A strange move, showing that Fed just believes me.

A) In reality after the natural 16... b4 17. axb4 仿真 xb4 18. 0-0 Black is a little worse;

B) But after 16... c5! 17. dxc6 仿真 xc6 18. 仿真 xc6 仿真 xc6 19. 0-0 仿真 d5! 20. 仿真 xd5 仿真 xd5 21. 仿真 d1 仿真 e6 the weak a-pawn gives Black full equality.

17. 0-0 g5

This self-inflicted weakening of the kingside is just wrong. I can now get a big advantage in many ways.

18. 仿真 e1

One of my weaknesses is that I tend to over-prepare my attacks.
Preparation for a match

Here too, the direct and immediate 18. f4! is much stronger, as Black’s intended retort 18... \( \text{\textit{eg}}4 \) doesn’t cut it after the obvious 19. \( \text{fxg5} \) \( \text{\textit{xe}}3+ \) 20. \( \text{\textit{xe}}3 \) \( \text{\textit{xe}}3 \) 21. \( \text{gxf6} \) \( \text{h8} \) 22. \( \text{f3} \).

18... b4 19. axb4 \( \text{\textit{xb}}4 \) 20. f4 \( \text{\textit{eg}}4 \)

\[
\text{Position after: 20... \textit{eg}4}
\]

21. \( \text{\textit{c}}4 \)

In my post game analysis, I gave this move, assessed as best by the engines, a question mark, asserting that I would be much better after 21. \( \text{\textit{xg}}4 \) \( \text{\textit{g}}4 \) 22. \( \text{\textit{c}}2 \) \( \text{\textit{xe}}3 \) 23. \( \text{\textit{xe}}3 \) \( \text{\textit{xc}}3 \) 24. \( \text{\textit{xc}}3 \) \( \text{\textit{e}}4 \).

In fact, I would be barely better here and should instead capture on c3 with the Rook with a big advantage.

On the other hand, Black should sacrifice the exchange for reasonable compensation with 22... \( \text{\textit{b}}8 \) 23. \( \text{\textit{xb}}4 \) \( \text{\textit{xb}}4 \) 24. \( \text{\textit{d}}1 \) \( \text{\textit{xb}}3 \) 25. \( \text{fxg5} \) \( \text{\textit{a}}8 \). 21... \( \text{\textit{xe}}3 \) 22. \( \text{\textit{xe}}3 \) \( \text{\textit{b}}8 \) 23. \( \text{fxg5} \) \( \text{\textit{g}}4 \)

\[
\text{Position after: 23... \textit{g}4}
\]

24. \( \text{\textit{e}}4 \)

The engines are relentless in proving that I am already winning here. After the more forcing 24. \( \text{\textit{e}}7 \) \( \text{\textit{d}}8 \) 25. \( \text{\textit{xd}}7 \) \( \text{\textit{xd}}7 \) 26. \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{\textit{e}}5 \) 27. \( \text{gxh6} \) \( \text{\textit{h}}8 \) and now the crushing 28. \( \text{\textit{e}}6 \) clocks Black.

28... \( \text{\textit{e}}8 \) 29. \( \text{\textit{g}}5+ \) \( \text{\textit{h}}7 \) 30. \( \text{\textit{f}}5+ \) \( \text{\textit{h}}6 \) 31. \( \text{\textit{g}}5+ \) \( \text{\textit{h}}7 \) 32. \( \text{\textit{f}}4 \) \( \text{\textit{g}}6 \) 33. \( \text{\textit{h}}4+ \) \( \text{\textit{h}}4 \) 34. \( \text{\textit{hxh4+ g}}6 \) 35. \( \text{\textit{g}}5+ \) \( \text{\textit{h}}7 \) 36. \( \text{\textit{d}}3+ \) \( \text{f}5 \) 37. \( \text{\textit{xf5#}} \) is one sample line.

24... h5 25. \( \text{\textit{c}}6 \)?

I gave this move a double question mark in my post-game notes, when it actually deserves only one, as it allows Black to equalize with precise play.

It was better to play prophylactically with 25. \( \text{\textit{h}}1 \) when Black’s problems start mounting from all directions.

For example, on 25... \( \text{\textit{e}}5 \) I can start a direct attack by depriving Black of his strongest piece with 26. \( \text{\textit{xe}}5 \) \( \text{\textit{xe}}5 \)
27. \( \text{c}4 \text{e}4 \text{g}7 \) 28. \( \text{d}5 \text{f}6 \) and Black is simply helpless against an array of White's attacking possibilities.

25... \( \text{d}6 \text{c}6 \) 26. \( \text{d}x \text{c}6 \text{e}3 \text{c}3 \) 27. \( \text{h} \text{xc}3 \text{d}5! \)

Position after: 27... d5!

It is amazing that in my post-game notes, the sickening feeling of losing this game made me evaluate this position already losing for White, when in fact, the position is now completely equal.

28. \( \text{h} \text{xg}4 \)

A) Of course, I cannot take on d5 because of the familiar tactic 28. \( \text{h} \text{xd}5? \text{e}4 \text{e}4 \text{b}6+ \) 30. \( \text{h} \text{h}1 \text{f}2+ \) 31. \( \text{xf}2 \text{xf}2. \)

B) I also had a crazy-looking engine move 28. \( \text{h}3! \) with a slight pull for White, but in my state of mind at the time even contemplating a move like that would be out of the question.

28... \( \text{hx} \text{g}4 \)

Position after: 28... hxg4

29. \( \text{g}6? \)

Only this, given by me as “interesting”, is a real mistake. After the natural 29. \( \text{h} \text{xd}5 \text{e}6+ \) 30. \( \text{h}1 \text{d}4 \) I simply missed that I could keep the Queens on with 31. \( \text{e}1! \) when Black is not better, and after 31... \( \text{b}5 \text{c}4 \text{e}5 \text{g}5 \text{c}3. \text{e}7 \text{d}8 \) 34. \( \text{xd}8 \text{xd}8 \) 35. \( \text{f}7 \text{h}8 \) 36. \( \text{d}7 \text{f}8 \) 37. \( \text{xc}7 \text{a}5 \) 38. \( \text{g}3 \text{a}1+ \) 39. \( \text{g}2 \) a perpetual is the most Black has here.

29... \( \text{fx} \text{g}6! \)

John notices my trap.

On 29... \( \text{d}5 \text{c}4 \text{g}7! \) the tables would turn once again and I would have some advantage.

30. \( \text{h} \text{xd}5+ \text{h}7 \) 31. \( \text{f}7 \text{b}6+ \) 32. \( \text{h}1 \text{d}4 \)

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Preparing for a match

33. \textit{g3}\textsuperscript{?}

The final mistake.

After 33. \textit{c2} \textit{e4} 34. \textit{c5} \textit{g7} 35. \textit{xf8}+! \textit{xf8} 36. \textit{xg6+} \textit{f4} 37. \textit{xf4+} \textit{xf4} 38. \textit{g3} \textit{b4} 39. \textit{f5} for example, the position looks holdable for me.

33... \textit{d8}! 34. \textit{e5} \textit{d4} 35. \textit{e6} \textit{d6} 36. \textit{xg6+} \textit{h6} 37. \textit{e3+} \textit{xg6} 38. \textit{xf8} \textit{xf8}

And I resigned.

0-1

\textbf{September 28\textsuperscript{th}:}

Today is an off day and I am composing myself for the continuing struggle. Zaltsman is right when he says that a player should so totally involve himself in a match that only when it's over can he realize the facts and accept either condolences or congratulations.

I'm studying a bit of 4... \textit{d7} Caro-Kann, preparing to have Black. Could be that the ...\textit{d7} system will solidly settle in my repertoire. Today I won't have time to write out and understand all the Informator games, so I'm just looking at book lines and watching some TV.

\textit{Karpov-Kasparov 1-0}

Kaufman (the Executive Director of the American Chess Foundation) called Zaltsman to ask (how the match is going) – some additional stimulus added.

The ACF was extremely helpful in supporting young American players to greater heights. Clearly, Allen Kaufman's call showed that ACF was following the match intently, and in fact when I won it, I received a 10,000\$ budget to prepare for the Interzonal.

But the struggle – not the result – is what's important.

This, of course, is an extremely philosophical statement coming from an 18-year-old. I guess what I meant by it, was
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that if I am fully prepared for battle, be what may, I will do my best. Hopefully this will be good enough, but the learning process itself will certainly be a major achievement. Many parents and players put too much focus on the result, which leads to lack of tamed creativity and a fearful playing style. This is a mistake. You or your child will achieve their best only if you are ready for the fight, no matter how well you are already doing!

Somehow, it’s hard to imagine that I can win such an important event, but at the same time it’s hard to understand a) why I shouldn’t and b) why should I lose.

Still, I will not throw caution to the winds, but instead I will try to achieve a solid position and hopefully get to out-play him in the end (in overtime).

### September 29th:

The long awaited fourth game arrived; Fedorowicz, impatient to finish the match, opened 1. e4. An IQP position (isolated Queen’s pawn) arose...

Fedorowicz, John

Dlugy, Maxim

New York 1984 – Game 4

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. c4 \( \text{c6} \)

5. \( \text{c3} \) e6 6. \( \text{c3} \) f6 7. \( \text{c3} \) d5

I have always felt comfortable playing against the IQP, losing less than a handful of games in tournaments throughout my career.

The key is to find defensive tactics, which I am usually quite good at. In this game too, after failing to equalize, it was my defensive ability that saved the day.

8. \( \text{c4} \) f6
Preparing for a match

There is no reason, for such an immediate retreat.

Both 8... 0-0 and 8... c6 look more exact to me now.

9. 0-0 c6 10. a3 0-0 11. d3 a6 12. g5 b5 13. a2 a7

Even though Zaltsman and I criticized this maneuver, which I saw in Vlastimil Hort’s game, and blamed it on getting the worst position in the opening, the engines actually approve it, and consider it quite smart, to get the Rook to d7 before developing the Bishop to b7.

14. ad1 d7 15. b1 g6 16. fe1 b4

This isn’t bad, but there was no rush.

After the simple 16... b7 17. b4 c7 18. h3 fd8 19. e3 b6 Black is just doing fine.

17. axb4 xb4 18. d2

18... c6

Now, I felt like holding White to the defense of the d-pawn, although after the organic 18... b7 19. e5 c7 20. a4 a5 21. h4 a8 I would be doing quite well.

19. h6 e8 20. c2!

An excellent plan! John’s Bishop returns to skewer my pieces on the a4-e8 diagonal. Suddenly, I have to take immediate measures.

20... b7 21. a4

Position after: 21. a4
21... $\textit{b6}$

A tough position to play correctly. The engines recommend 21... $\textit{c7}$ 22. $\textit{f4}$ $\textit{b6}$ 23. $\textit{g5}$ $\textit{c8}$ although White has the initiative after 24. $\textit{f4}$ $\textit{d8}$. One aggressive line could go: 25. $\textit{b3}$ $\textit{g7}$ 26. $\textit{h6+}$ $\textit{g8}$ 27. $\textit{xe6!}$ $\textit{a5}$ 28. $\textit{xf6}$ $\textit{xf6}$ 29. $\textit{e5}$ $\textit{xb3!}$ 30. $\textit{xd7}$ $\textit{h8}$ 31. $\textit{c5}$ $\textit{xd4}$ 32. $\textit{xb7}$ $\textit{e2+}$ 33. $\textit{f1}$ $\textit{xd1+}$ 34. $\textit{xd1}$ $\textit{xf4}$ 35. $\textit{xf4}$ $\textit{c2}$ 36. $\textit{b3}$ $\textit{a2}$ 37. $\textit{g3}$ and it's White who is playing for a win in this endgame.

22. $\textit{d5!}$

This game, until almost the very end, was John's best game in the match; he is playing the best moves, putting me under tremendous pressure.

22... $\textit{exd5}$?

This was not the best defence. Although even after the strongest 22... $\textit{ed8}$ 23. $\textit{xc6}$ $\textit{xc6}$ 24. $\textit{e5}$ $\textit{xd5}$ 25. $\textit{xd7}$ $\textit{xd7}$ the exchange sacrifice leaves White some chances for a successful conversion, but a draw is quite likely. After 26. $\textit{d4}$ $\textit{xd4}$ 27. $\textit{xa6}$ $\textit{g5}$ 28. $\textit{h4}$ $\textit{f7}$ 29. $\textit{hxg5}$ $\textit{fxg5}$ 31. $\textit{h4}$ $\textit{a1}$ 32. $\textit{xe7}$ $\textit{xf4}$ the game is probably drawn, though a significant defensive task is ahead of me.

23. $\textit{g5}$ $\textit{d8}$ 24. $\textit{xf6}$ $\textit{xf6}$ 25. $\textit{xe8+}$ $\textit{xe8}$ 26. $\textit{xd5}$

According to the engines, White has played the best moves beginning with $\textit{d5!}$. Now I find what seemed to be the only defence...

26... $\textit{f8}$

My idea was that after 27. $\textit{h6+}$ $\textit{g7}$ 28. $\textit{xd7}$ $\textit{e4}$ White's bad Queen outweighs his extra pawn. In fact, after 29. $\textit{e3}$ $\textit{xd1+}$ 30. $\textit{xd1}$ $\textit{e5}$ 31. $\textit{b3}$ $\textit{b4}$ 32. $\textit{h3}$ $\textit{a5}$ it is clear that White is not playing for a win.

The position that arose happens to be an amazing problem, that no Grandmaster I have shown up to now has been able to solve. The position is winning for White, but the winning maneuver is so counter-intuitive that I imagine only a handful of grandmasters would be able to find the solution during a tournament game, and even that is probably an overstatement. If you want to try, I suggest giving yourself an hour or so to see if you can outdo the GM teams that I gave this problem to. Good luck!
Preparing for a match

Now for the solution: the truth is that after 27. \[ \text{h6} + \text{g7} \] 28. \[ \text{c1!!} \] (instead of 28. \[ \text{xh7} \]) I would simply be tactically lost. There is no defence against the threat of 29. \[ \text{xh6} \] combined with the preparation of the Knight move to b6 after 29. \[ \text{d2} \].

It’s really quite an amazing position, one which is so typically impossible to play against engines. After the best 28... \[ \text{c8} \] 29. \[ \text{d2!} \] there’s simply no defence against 30. \[ \text{b6} \] as the Rook is guarding against the Knight check on e7.

It’s quite sad actually, how lost this position is, and if Fedorowicz had found this continuation, the match would be over. Once again in this match, John believes me and, shocked by such a turn of events, simply plays 27. \[ \text{c1} \].

27. \[ \text{c1 e6} \]

Both of us are missing the problem in Black’s position although I had no choice.

28. \[ \text{xf6} \]

After that move John offered a draw, which I accepted.

Amazingly enough, prior to White’s last move, he still has a winning position. This position is a complete tactical problem of the very highest level of difficulty. Once again, you may enjoy trying to find the solution, as armed with the solution to the first problem, you would have better chances to find it now. Still, the GM team I gave it to, was not able to solve it after about 30 minutes of moving the pieces on the board, so don’t get too discouraged if you match their result.

The solution once again involves luring the Bishop from the f6-square with 28. \[ \text{h6+} \] \[ \text{g7} \] 29. \[ \text{d2!!} \] threatening \[ \text{f4} \] and \[ \text{g5} \]. I would be defenseless as after 29... \[ \text{d6} \] 30. \[ \text{b6} \] wins and there is simply no good defence against White’s simple threats.

I have to applaud John for almost creating a masterpiece in this game, as White’s play was very imaginative and led to a winning position which was extremely difficult to solve. I am also very happy that the analysis of this game presented chess lovers with a gift of these twin problems, the likes of which I have not seen before.

½-½
Chapter 9

September 30th:

I went to Zaltsman to analyze the Caro-Kann and tomorrow’s possible King’s Indian. Found that instead of 13... a7? Yesterday, Black should play 13... b7 14. a4 b6 15. a4 bxa3 17. bxa3 a5 18. c5 d5! with equality. Kuligowsky’s idea in a slightly different situation.

After checking this line with the engines, 32 years later, I have to agree – it’s a solid piece of analysis and another reasonable way for Black to play, though as we have seen in the commentaries to the corresponding match game, 13... a7 is fully playable as well.

Also in the KID (King’s Indian Defence) as in game #3, after (1. d4 f6 2. c4 g6 3. c3 g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 0-0 6. e3 c6 7. ge2 a6 8. d2 b6) 9. a3 d7 10. b4 b5 11. cxb5 axb5 12. d5 e5 13. d4 e6 14. e2 is fine, but after 9... d7 10. d1 e5! 11. d5 e7 12. g3 b5 13. cxb5 axb5 14. c1 f5 15. xbx5 f4 is unclear. Still, I expect the QID, while Zaltsman is betting on the KID (10 cents).

As we will see from the next game, the first part of the analysis is quite correct, while the resulting position after 15... f4 is likely better for White after 16. a7 b7 17. f2 fxg3 18. hxg3 xf3 19. c6! b8 20. a7 picking up the exchange for somewhat insufficient compensation.

Also in the QID after 1. d4 f6 2. c4 e6 3. f3 b6 4. g3 a6 5. a4 c5 6. g2 b7 7. dx5 xc5 8. 0-0 0-0 9. c3 e7 10. f4 a6 11. ad1 c5 12. c2 c8 13. b5 e8 14. b4! a6 15. a3 d5 16. g5 g6

Position after: 16... g6

17. ac1(?) with a large advantage.

As you can imagine the a4 Queen’s Indian was heavily analyzed by our team prior to the match, so at the last moment we were trying to cover ideas we have not considered. Defending the d6 square by retreating the Knight was a plausible option, and we decided to analyze it, in case John will react to our b5 idea in this manner. The analysis is largely correct, except for one important detail – the last move in the variation is not strictly possible, as my Rook is on d1. I guess we somehow confused which Rook to place on d1, as it was still a subject of our debate at the time. Still, instead of 16. g5, White is much better after the simple 16. c1! vying for the control of the c-file.
Preparing for a match

**October 1st:**

Zaltsman wins the bet – KID, but I win the game!

- Dlugy, Maxim  
  - Fedorowicz, John P  
  - New York 1984 – Game 5  
  
1. d4 d6 2. c4 g6 3. c3 g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 0-0 6. e3 c6 7. g2 a6 8. d2 b8 9. a3 d7 10. b4 b5

I was happy to see this, as we didn’t find equality for Black after this advance. A number of games I later played as White from this position confirmed this assessment.

11. cxb5 axb5 12. d5 e5 13. d4 e6 14. e2!

15. 0-0 c4 16. xxc4 bxc4 17. fe1!

A strong move, anticipating Black’s opening of the e-file.

17... e5

John makes a difficult decision to close down the e-file and concentrate on his kingside attack, in an attempt to get compensation for the abandoned c-pawn.

Now the weak b5-pawn will force Black to defend, while I gradually put my pieces on excellent squares.

14... e8

Six years later at Wijk aan Zee 1990, Friso Nijboer tried 14... c5 in this position, but after 15. dxc6 xxc6 16. dxb5 d5 17. 0-0 dxe4 instead of 18. c5, I should have played 18. fxe4, as after 18... e5 19. d6 fg4, I can simply respond with 20. xg4 xg4 21. d4 with a great position.
Opening up the e-file wouldn't have helped. After 17... exd5 18. exd5  vídeo c8 19.b5!  vídeo b7 20. vídeo c6! White's key strategic idea is revealed. After the exchange on c6, White will block all counter play with  vídeo d4 and then simply advance his queenside pawns. After 20...  vídeo xc6 21. dxc6  vídeo a8 22. a4  vídeo fe8 23. a5  vídeo e6 24.  vídeo d4 and it's getting pretty clear that Black is in dire straits.

18.  vídeo de2  vídeo d8 19.  vídeo a2  vídeo e8 20.  vídeo xc4 f5 21. exf5!

I decided that it would be easier to repulse Black's counter play in a somewhat open position. The other option 21. a4 f4 22.  vídeo f2 g5 23. a5 g4 24. a6 gxf3 25. gxf3  vídeo h3 26.  vídeo h1  vídeo g5 27. ólogo g1  vídeo h5 28. ólogo d3  vídeo f6 29. a7 ólogo a8 30. ólogo b1 ólogo h6 31. ólogo d2 ólogo h8 32. ólogo c3 ólogo f6 is more complicated as I would still need to figure out how to extricate my King from the claws of Black's pieces.

21... gxf5 22. f4

Fixing the f-pawn, to stop Black from activating his d7-Bishop, seemed logical to me, but the engines prefer 22. a4 as a more direct approach. After 22... f4 23. ólogo f2 ólogo g5 24. ólogo h1 ólogo h5 25. a5 ólogo f6 26. ólogo e4 ólogo h6 27. ólogo g1 Black has no real counter play.

22... ólogo h8 23. ólogo f2

A prophylactic move, trying to prepare for ... ólogo f6, when I can play ólogo h4.

23... ólogo f6

Not the best. For better or worse Black has to act fast to get counter play, and to do that he has to start bringing pieces towards my King.

Notwithstanding my preparation he should have opted for 23... ólogo f6 when after 24. ólogo h4 ólogo c8! 25. ólogo h1 ólogo b7 26. fxe5 dxe5 27. ólogo c5 ólogo a8 Black would have reasonable compensation for the pawn, although I would still have the advantage.

24. a4 ólogo g8 25. ólogo a3
I am still trying to overprotect everything, as I wanted to avoid the repetition of game 3 when I lost a similarly advantageous position. The Rook will serve a major defensive function across the third rank.

25... \texttt{g6} 26. \texttt{d1}

In trying to completely get rid of any counter play I am overplaying my hand and giving Black sufficient compensation for the pawn. As any Bishop move would be answered by g3, I should have simply pushed the a-pawn with a nearly winning position.

26... \texttt{f6} 27. \texttt{b5} \texttt{f7} 28. \texttt{e3} \texttt{e4} 29. \texttt{g3} \texttt{bc8}

In effect the game has to be won again, as it's not easy to make progress, considering how active Black's pieces have become.

30. \texttt{d3} \texttt{f6} 31. \texttt{f1}

I am slowly creeping up on Black's weakness: the f-pawn. Black needs to take measures.

31... \texttt{xg3}?

Black couldn't bear the pressure! After the calm 31... \texttt{g6} 32. \texttt{e1} \texttt{e8} 33. \texttt{c4} \texttt{e7} 34. \texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 35. \texttt{g3} \texttt{b2} 36. \texttt{a2} \texttt{g7} 37. \texttt{g2} \texttt{c5} 38. \texttt{gf4} I would also be making progress towards the full point, but Black would retain serious counter chances.

With the trade of pieces, the chances are seriously reduced.

32. \texttt{hxg3} \texttt{exf4} 33. \texttt{xf4}

It was hard to decide between this and 33. \texttt{xf5} which is probably objectively stronger, but I decided to err in favor of safety.

33... \texttt{ce8} 34. \texttt{xf5} \texttt{g6}
Chapter 9

John has opened up the position for his two Bishops in the hopes that they will come within striking distance of my King. Objectively, it’s not sound, but practically it could work.

35. \( \text{f2?} \)

Missing the much superior 35. \( \text{fd4! g5} \) 36. \( \text{e5} \) 37. \( \text{f7} \) and Black simply cannot create reasonable counterplay in time.

35... \( \text{b2} \) 36. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{e5} \) 37. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h5} \)

Black is down two pawns but the pressure of the fight makes the result unpredictable.

38. \( \text{b4} \)

Trying to shift the Rook to the h-file.

38... \( \text{gf8} \) 39. \( \text{g4!} \)

I am running Black’s Queen down.

39... \( \text{h1} \)

After 39... \( \text{xf5} \) 40. \( \text{gxf5} \) Black’s only hope, the two Bishops, is gone.

40. \( \text{b1! xb1} \) 41. \( \text{xb1} \) \( \text{f6} \) 42. \( \text{c1} \)

The position was adjourned around here, and I remember how Zaltsman and I were trying to find some chances for Black. Finally, after not finding anything concrete, Vitaly said: "Let’s look for something he would play to give his pieces some hope".
Preparing for a match

After some time, we found exactly the line that happened in the game, which made it extremely easy to finish it off.

42... d8 43. c4 e5 44. c3 h5 45. h6!

An important nuance, forcing exchanges because of the f7 threat.

45... xf3+ 46. gxf3 g7 47. f5+ f6

Black is trying to preserve his Bishops, but in the final analysis there is noone to take care of my passed a-pawn.

48. a5 xb5 49. xb5 xd5 50. fd4 c6 51. a6

There are many ways for me to win here, and so Fedorowicz resigned. The score of the match became 3.5-2.5 my favor.

1-0

I am taking the day off to prepare fully against 1. e4.

I was close to winning the match the second time around and didn't want to take any chances. Getting a sound position out of the opening was extremely important and so Zaltsman and I decided to take a time out, which was allowed under the match regulations.
Chapter 9

October 2nd:

I went to Zaltsman to study the Caro-Kann.

We also looked over game 5 from the match. In yesterday’s game 22. f4 was unnecessary, simply 22. a4 was good. Also 30. a2 was better than 30. d3.

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. c4 f6 5. c3 e6 6. f3 e7 7. cxd5 xd5 8. c4 f6 9. 0-0 c6 10. a3 0-0 11. a3 a6 12. g5 b5

A tremendous combination. Black is much better.

Let’s go back some moves.

If 13. b3 b7 14. fe1 c8 15. ad1 a5 16. c2 g6 17. e5 c4 18. xc4 xc4 19. b3 c7 20. g3 d7 (planning ... b8 with equality) 21. e5=

Let’s go back some more moves.

On 8. d3 I should be prepared to play the ... f6 variation, since conventional play like ...a6, ...b5, ...b6, ...b7 does not equalize.

Interesting preparation. After 15. a4 Black could play 15... a5! without capturing on a3 and after 16... xf6 gxf6! 17. b1 f5! 18. c5 xc5 19. dxc5 xc5 20. c1 e7 21. fe1 f6 Black is the only one vying for an advantage.

The line prepared for the game (end of the previous page) is also fine, but it’s
Preparing for a match

important to note that if White doesn't fall into the tactic with 17. \( \text{bxc5?} \) but plays 17. \( \text{bxf6} \), Black has to be exact. After 17... \( \text{gxh6!} \) (keeping the control over the a3-f8 diagonal) Black reaches equality on 18. \( \text{b3 b5!} \) 19. \( \text{d5xb3} \) 20. \( \text{b3 a5} \) 21. \( \text{a2 exd5} \) 22. \( \text{b6 a8} \) 23. \( \text{xd5 xd5} \) 24. \( \text{xd5 a3} \).

The situation is not as simple if White first plays 15. \( \text{b1} \) threatening to take on f6. Then after 15... g6 16. \( \text{a4} \) Black will need to watch out for the Knight coming to c5. It looks like the simplest defence is to stop it directly with 16... \( \text{d7!} \), when White's initiative dwindles after, for example, 17. \( \text{h6 e8} \) 18. \( \text{a2 f6} \) 19. \( \text{fe1 a5} \) 20. \( \text{b3 b5!} \) and with Black's Queen eyeing e2, White's d5 break is not as dangerous. After 21. \( \text{d5 exd5} \) 22. \( \text{xe8 xe8} \) 23. \( \text{xd5 e2} \) 24. h3 \( \text{de5!} \) Black is playing for the advantage.

The comments to game 5 are not very instructive. 22. a4 would give Black counter-chances, while the difference between 30. \( \text{d3} \) and 30. \( \text{a2} \) is negligible and if Black plays correctly by trying to activate his h-pawn, he will get sufficient compensation in either case.

The discussion of the ...\( \text{f6} \) variation is quite important, as it shows that I was completely prepared to play that line for Black. We will see how to play against \( \text{d3} \) later when we analyze my game with Igor Ivanov from the National Open.

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October 3rd:
I WON THE MATCH!!!!!!

We guessed the opening correctly. Fedorowicz repeated the fourth game.

\( \text{Fedorowicz, John} \)
\( \text{Dlugy, Maxim} \)
\( \text{New York 1984 – Game 6} \)

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. c4 \( \text{f6} \)
5. \( \text{c3} \) e6 6. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 7. \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 8. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 9. 0-0 \( \text{c6} \) 10. a3 0-0 11. \( \text{d3} \) a6 12. \( \text{g5} \) b5 13. \( \text{b3} \)

John deviates from game 4, trying to prove that the Bishop is going to be more useful on b3.

13... \( \text{b7} \) 14. \( \text{c2} \) g6 15. \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{e8} \) 16. \( \text{ad1} \) \( \text{c8} \)

This more or less standard position doesn't quite work for White.

The Queen on d3 and the Bishop on c2 step on each others toes and he has to spend time to regroup which gives me time to blockade White's breakthroughs while stopping tactics.

17. \( \text{e2} \)
17... a5

17... c7! with the ideas to block the a2 diagonal with ... a5... c4, and also threatening with ... g4 to counter attack, intending ... xd4, ... xf3 and ... xh2 mate was quite strong.

In fact it looks like White would need to think about equalizing then, as 18. e5 allows nice simplification with 18... xa3 19. bxa3 xe5 20. dxe5 xc3 21. exf6 xc2 with Black playing for a win without risking a loss.

19. b3 d6!

As I was primarily thinking about safety in this game, I shunned ideas such as 18... xa3 19. bxa3 xc3 20. g5 d5 21. f3 h5 22. e4 with compensation for the pawn, and wanted to block White's pawn advances.

20. xf7

Quite a good move defending the key f7-square while eyeing the f5-square, from which my Knight will oust the dangerous h6 Bishop.

20... d6!

John jumps at the chance to complicate, but I have it all covered. It was more practical to keep the pressure up with 20. fe1 but perhaps John was afraid that I would equalize with the simple 20... d5 when:

A) 21. xd5 xd5 22. xd5 exd5 23. f3 f5 24. xf7 xf7 25. g4 g5! 26. xe8 xe8 27. e1+ f7 28. xg5 xg5 leads to an equal end-game, while;

B) 21. xf7 still doesn't give White anything after 21... xf7 22. xe6 h4! 23. xe8+ xe8 24. x8+ xe8 25. xd5 xh6 26. g3 d8 27. f6+ f8 28. xe8 xe8.

20... xf7 21. xe6 c4!
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This is a little stronger than giving up the exchange with 21... $\text{xf8}$. Although here too White's initiative is not enough for an advantage.

22. $\text{xc4} \text{bxc4}$ 23. $\text{g5} \text{c8}$

A bit inaccurate. Perhaps the simplest way was 23... $\text{d5}$ 24. $\text{xd5} \text{xd5}$ 25. $\text{xd5} \text{xd5}$ 26. $\text{xe7} \text{xe7}$ 27. $\text{fe1} \text{b7}$ 28. $\text{c1} \text{d6}$ and it's hard to imagine that Black could have problems holding this endgame.

24. $\text{xc8} \text{xc8}$ 25. $\text{fe1} \text{d8}$ 26. $\text{xf6}$

A strange decision by Fedorowicz who should be trying to complicate instead of simplifying.

After 26. $\text{h4} \text{g5}$ 27. $\text{g3} \text{d5}$ 28. $\text{e6} \text{xc3}$ 29. $\text{bxc3} \text{a5}$ 30. $\text{c1}$ the position would still have some tension.

26... $\text{xf6}$ 27. $\text{e6} \text{d8}$

I was uncomfortable with 27... $\text{g7}$ 28. $\text{b6} \text{c7}$ 29. $\text{a4}$ though after 29... $\text{c8}$ I should be fine.

28. $\text{d5} \text{f8}$

Position after: 28... $\text{f8}$

29. $\text{d6}$?

Another important inaccuracy. After this, John loses all chances to save the match.

He could have played on with 29. $\text{a4} \text{c7}$ 30. $\text{f4} \text{d7}$ 31. $\text{c5} \text{xd5}$ 32. $\text{xd5} \text{xd5}$ 33. $\text{d7+} \text{g7}$ 34. $\text{xa6} \text{g5}$ 35. $\text{fxg5} \text{yg5}$ 36. $\text{f2}$ for example, and I would still have to solve some tactical problems.

29... $\text{c6}$!

With this pin, White's pieces become bogged down and I can start to look for counterplay.

30. $\text{e4} \text{b6}$ 31. $\text{c5} \text{xb2}$
Having calculated that I have no risk in the fight with the d-pawn, I create a dangerous passed pawn of my own.

32. \( d7 \) \( \text{ae}7 \) 33. \( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{xb}7 \) 34. \( \text{xa}6 \)

White could have tried 34. \( \text{c}6 \) but after 34... \( \text{b}3 \) 35. \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{xa}3 \) it is clear that he cannot win.

34... \( \text{d}8 \) 35. \( \text{a}8 \) c3 36. \( \text{c}8 \) \( \text{f}6 \)

Oops! Now White needs to think about survival. The c3-pawn is a serious weapon.

37. \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \)

White's position is rolling downhill with each move. Obviously John stopped thinking objectively and was just trying to play some active moves at this point.

38. \( \text{a}5 \) \( \text{a}7 \) 39. \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{xd}7 \) 40. \( \text{xd}7+ \) \( \text{xd}7 \) 41. \( \text{d}5+ \) \( \text{c}6 \)

And in this hopelessly lost position, Fedorowicz offered a draw to surrender the match. I thought about it and made a decision to grant him an extra 5 FIDE points as compensation for the loss of the event. This was a mistake I will come to regret later.

\( \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \)

Now it's time to rest up and make budget preparations as well as to get ready for Colorado accommodation-wise. Tomorrow – Spassky Simul at Game Room.
Chess Life wrote up the match as an extremely close 3.5-2.5 affair in which Fedorowicz was a clear favorite, but somehow stumbled and lost a nearly winning match. I, of course, was of the opinion that I managed to win two matches after losing in comprehensively in game 3, when logically the match could have been closed out. I was leaving for Colorado to play in the US Masters in 4 days and the American Chess Foundation, which generously supported top chess players in the country, was asking me for a budget to prepare for the Interzonal. I had proven to be one of the top players in the country and was about to go into the big league!

In conclusion, it seems that although John got reasonable positions as White out of the opening, the margin of error to prove any advantage was too small for him to make use of it, while the opening advantages I got against the King's Indian and the Queen's Indian enabled me to have many chances at getting back into the game even after mistakes on my part. His temperament which got him to play tactically when he disliked his position explains his Qxf7 in the last game, as well as 31... Qxg3? in game 4. Both of those moves made it much easier for me to play the rest of the game.
Of course, you don't always have the luxury of preparing against your opponents in advance, or being able to dissect every game he has ever played to draw his psychological profile and holes in opening preparation. Sometimes you may have only a couple of games to go off, and like a doctor in the forest, you have to be able to tell something about your patient. In fact, the word 'patient' is quite often used in that same meaning by Russian chess players to talk about their opponent, especially if they have a plus score against him.

Anyway, let's scroll ahead a few months to the World Junior Championship in Sharjah, where I had my last chance to become the World Under 21 Champion. Since this was quite an important tournament in my life, let me tell you a quick story of how I even got to play in this tournament. Even before the U.S. Junior Championship, when FIDE announced that both the World Junior and the next chess Olympiad will be held in United Arab Emirates, a significant number of countries including the United States objected on the grounds that Israel would not be allowed to participate as part of the organizing country's state policy. The boycott was announced, and when I won the U.S. Junior in 1985, I knew that I was not going to play in the World Championship and would get an all expense paid trip to the U.S. Open instead. 1985 was a great year for me, and as I came back home to New York from leading the U.S. Student Team to a second place finish at the World Under-26 Team Championships in Argentina, I decided to play in the New York State Championships, in part by accident. It was a Swiss tournament with a couple of strong
Grandmasters where I expected to do rather well. When I got there I saw the technical director of the US Chess Federation, Randall Hough, and asked him a general question – how are things? All of a sudden, he told me that because of a letter from the President of the Israeli Chess Federation, which asked all countries not to boycott the upcoming chess Olympiad in the spirit of “We are all one family” (Gens Una Sumus), the US Chess Federation’s board has decided to go to the Chess Olympiad in Dubai in 1986 after all. Being a logical person, I immediately asked Randall whether the same applies to the World Junior in 1985 in Sharjah, as the reason for the boycott, and therefore the reason to lift it should be matching with the Olympiad. Randall looked at me quizzically, and then realizing the logic of the question, said: “Well, that’s up to the Board”. My next step was to call Carol Jarecki, the mother of a talented youngster John, who was a friend and a reputable arbiter, but importantly a friend of the USCF President at the time, Steven Doyle. She contacted Steven and he called an extraordinary telephone Board Meeting to discuss my request. In a narrow 4-3 vote, with Steven obviously supporting my side, the Board decided to lift the boycott for the World Junior. Two days before the event (!), I was called by the USCF President and was informed that I am playing. The USCF got the funds together to buy tickets for myself and my coach, and off we went off to see if I could become the World Junior Champion. Once again, I was seeded first coming into the event, so the tournament was mine to lose. I started off with a draw against an outsider when I blundered a pawn on the Black side of a c3 Sicilian and decided to save myself by offering a draw which was readily accepted. Funnily, a couple of rounds later one of the players, after reading the tournament bulletin, was happy to repeat all my moves, but his opponent was not so kind and did not accept the draw. My troubles continued as I drew against Horvath from Hungary on the White side of the Budapest and then playing against the young Vishy Anand, blundered a piece right out of the opening and lost. I had 3/5, while the leader Pavel Blatny had a perfect score. I needed to win every game with both colors to have a chance. After winning an easy game against a player from Pakistan, I was paired with the young Russian (now Ukrainian) upstart Vassily Ivanchuk, who had just won the Russian under-20 championship. I was Black and I needed to win no matter what.

Vitaly and I had only 6 games to go off of – the games from the tournament itself, published after every round and distributed to all the players. Vitaly looked at the games and concluded that Vassily was an ingenious attacker and tactician, but simply lacked the knowledge needed to play endings. The decision was to try to exchange Queens and go into an endgame, no matter how drawish it may be. The game itself will be a great demonstration of how important it is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your opponents. Let's take a look:
Preparing for the next round in a Swiss

Ivanchuk, Vassily
Dlugy, Maxim
Sharjah 1985

1. e4 c6 2. d4 dxe4 3. dxe4 c5 4. d4 cxd4 5. cxd4 g6 6. g5 e6 7. e2
b6 8. d3

It was considered important to challenge the strong Knight on e5 immediately, as otherwise, White would have more options as to how to build up his attack.

12. gxf3 exf5 13. exf5 0-0 14. d2

Instead of castling, Ivanchuk is preparing queenside castling after which the attack on my kingside could become devastating. I need to stop it immediately.

14... d5 15. 0-0

The principled continuation 15. 0-0-0 gives Black sufficient counterplay after 15... a5 16. d3 b5! when White’s initiative is probably just sufficient to hold the balance. A sample line could go 17. xh6 b4 18. g4 d5 19. xg7 dxg7 20. e5+ f6 21. h5 h8 22. g6+ f8 23. b1 a6 24. xf6 bxc3 25. e8+ g7 26. g6+ with a perpetual check.

15... d4

8... h6

Having analyzed the lines with the immediate 8... c5 stemming from my game with Peters, I submit to you that 8... c5 is quite playable even here. But that’s another story. For now I was a good boy, and was following main line theory.

9. f3 c5 10. dxc5 xc5

Our analysis with Zaltsman could not resurrect Dzindzi’s 10... bd7 idea at that time, and we decided I would play the safer capture.

11. e5 bd7
Chapter 10

An important move, forcing White to either sacrifice a pawn or retreat giving me a sound position.

16. \( \square c4 \)

I was surprised to see this from Ivanchuk, as it would be more in his style to sacrifice material for long-term compensation.

A) A few months before this game Dmitry London, a strong IM from New York, played 16. \( f4 \) against me, and got a great position which he conducted to a win after 16... \( \text{xf4} \). \( \text{ad1} \text{xe5} ? \). \( \text{xe5} \text{a5} 19. f4. \) The mistake was to give up the Bishop: after 17... \( \text{c5} \) Black has a reasonable position with an extra pawn and good chances to ward off the attack. In fact, two years later, Vladimir Tukmakov did just that against Alexander Khalifman and won with Black.

B) 16. \( \text{f3} \) was another attempt by Nick DeFirmian to prove an advantage for White in this position.

This game was played at the 1985 US Championship, a couple of months after the stem game. After 16... \( \text{xb2} \). 17. \( \text{ab1} \text{a3} 18. \text{c3 e7} 19. \text{fd1} \text{c6} 20. \text{a1 d8} 21. \text{e5 c7} 22. \text{g4} \) I should have played 22... \( \text{d5!} \) threatening to block off White's strong Bishop with ...\( \text{c3} \) with a good position. Instead, I captured on \( \text{g4} \) and the game became very complicated. I only managed to win it because of my opponent's incredible time-pressure.

16... \( b6 \) 17. \( \text{e3} \)

17... \( \text{h5}!! \)

While objectively this is not the strongest move, and I can claim equality with 17... \( \text{c6} \) or 17... \( \text{e5} \) instead, Ivanchuk's profile called for the exchange of Queens. And then I saw it in his face. It's as if the light went out. He lost all interest in the game and since he didn't want to show his interest in keeping the Queens on, instead of trading Queens himself and posting his Bishop on the long diagonal with \( \text{e4} \), which would have been the best course of action, he played...

18. \( \text{c3}?! \)

...and accompanied this move with a draw offer. How happy I was to have Vitaly as my coach! I quickly played...

18... \( \text{xe2} \)
...and told Vassily I wanted to play on. What follows is an incredible display of misplacement of pieces and pawns in the endgame.

19. \( \text{\textit{xe}}2 \text{\textit{c}}5 \quad 20. \text{\textit{f}}3 \text{\textit{b}}8 \quad 21. \text{\textit{b}}4? \)

Suddenly, after White has parted with his only reasonably placed minor piece, he needs to think seriously about defending his b- and c-pawns.

Vassily tried to defend against \( \text{\textit{g}}5 \) but there are other threats in the position. Still, even after 26. \( \text{\textit{ac}}1 \text{\textit{g}}5 \) 27. \( \text{\textit{d}}4 \text{\textit{f}}5 \) White's position is difficult to hold.

21... \( \text{\textit{e}}7 \quad 22. \text{\textit{c}}4 \text{\textit{b}}7 \quad 23. \text{\textit{xb}}7 \text{\textit{xb}}7 \)

With simple moves the overextended c-pawn is going down. I protect the Knight and now there is no defence to ...\( \text{\textit{f}}6 \).

24. \( \text{\textit{fd}}1 \text{\textit{e}}4 \quad 25. \text{\textit{e}}1 \text{\textit{c}}8 \quad 26. \text{\textit{f}}4 \)

Position after: 21. \( \text{\textit{b}}4 \)

This activity is not warranted.

White needs to improve his pieces before weakening his pawns. 21. \( \text{\textit{c}}2 \) planning 22. \( \text{\textit{e}}3 \) was more or less necessary.

21... \( \text{\textit{e}}7 \quad 22. \text{\textit{c}}4 \text{\textit{b}}7 \quad 23. \text{\textit{xb}}7 \text{\textit{xb}}7 \)

Position after: 23... \( \text{\textit{xb}}7 \)

Position after: 21. \( \text{\textit{b}}4 \)

Position after: 28... \( \text{\textit{c}}6! \)

Position after: 29... \( \text{\textit{f}}6 \)

Position after: 30. \( \text{\textit{d}}2 \text{\textit{xc}}4 \)

Position after: 31. \( \text{\textit{dc}}2 \text{\textit{b}}2! \)

With simple moves the overextended c-pawn is going down. I protect the Knight and now there is no defence to ...\( \text{\textit{f}}6 \).

29. \( \text{\textit{f}}2 \text{\textit{f}}6 \quad 30. \text{\textit{d}}2 \text{\textit{xc}}4 \)

Off with the pawn!

31. \( \text{\textit{dc}}2 \text{\textit{b}}2! \)

This little tactical shot, displacing White's Rooks, rids Ivanchuk of counterplay.
32. \text{d1} \text{xe3} 33. \text{xc6} \text{xc6} 34. \text{xe3} \text{f8} 35. \text{d8+} \text{e7} 36. \text{a8c7} 37. \text{a4} \text{d6}

With the dominating position of the King in the centre, White’s counterplay loses its teeth.

38. \text{d8+}

Trying to exchange off some pawns on the queenside with 38. a5 was perhaps a better practical chance as now I would have to choose between the Rook endgame after 38... \text{c1} 39. \text{xc1} \text{xc1+} 40. \text{f2} \text{c7}; or a gradual improvement of the position with 38... \text{b7} 39. \text{xb6 axb6} 40. \text{b5 d5} 41. \text{a2 c3} when there would still be a lot of work to prove a win.

38... \text{d7} 39. \text{c8 d5} 40. \text{f1 d4} 41. \text{d2 e4} 42. \text{e2 f6} 43. \text{c6 e5} 44. \text{fxe5 xe5} 45. \text{h3 c7}

And now, disgusted with his play, Vasily resigned and went off to dive into the Persian Bay, fully clothed, I may add. Although the position is technically lost, I was surprised at such an early resignation, but it again confirmed the profile of this future champion – he loathed endgames, and did not want to play them.

0-1
Preparing for the next round in a Swiss

In conclusion, as you are preparing against your opponent in a tournament, try to understand the nature of his play. What positions does he like and play for? What are his results like when he is attacking or defending? How does he do in endings and does he play for them or to avoid them?

Of course opening choices are important as well, and if you see that he plays a certain opening worse than others – think about what it says about his style. For example, if your opponent keeps winning closed positions by utilizing extra space he gets on the White side of a King’s Indian, but keeps getting mated when he plays the Black side of an open Sicilian, it probably means he prefers closed positions. Therefore, you should try to pry the game open as much as possible, even if it means playing the Grunfeld and you are not fully ready with all your variations. You have to be a good psychologist when you prepare against your opponent, and even a couple of games can show a lot if you care to examine them with a magnifying glass.
I remember once over-analyzing one of my games with Adorjan, which I lost, trying to get to the truth of the position. At one point, when it was time for him to go, he said “Analysis-Paralysis”, hinting that sometimes you should stop analyzing and just assess what you have learned. We stopped, but I remembered the phrase forever and used it on several occasions myself.

These days, analysis of your own games is unthinkable without a good engine. But then, how can you practice what you require most during the game: the ability to critically sift through the many possibilities available to you and make a choice, sometimes an extremely difficult one, that will hopefully be the best move under the circumstances? The answer is simple – you cannot! That means that no matter what seems to be the easiest course of action – when you analyze your own games, you should first do it without an engine – completely on your own!

Then, after you're done – and you are satisfied that this is the most you could have done in a real tournament game if you had either enough time, were in good form, or had sufficient sleep – then you can switch on your engine and test your own conclusions. Make sure to notice the differences between what you decided upon
during your analysis and the superpowers that be. These differences are your weaknesses (!) and by working on them you will become a better player!

I worked for about 10 hours a week with Vitaly Zaltsman, analyzing my own and other players’ games for significant chess publications such as New In Chess, the Chess Informant, Inside Chess, and Chess Life. Besides that, I was also analyzing my own games and openings before meeting Vitaly, and I also got an amazing chance to test my analytical skills in the most important chess contest in the world – the World 1986 Chess Championship! Grandmaster Raymond Keene, the organizer of the aforementioned Karpov – Kasparov match, hired me to produce the official bulletin of the match for the journalists and the fans.

I was to produce express commentaries to the game right after the game finished, as well as the following morning, which was the actual printed version which would then be sold to the public. The job came with a lot of responsibility, as my comments would be critiqued not only by the fans all over the world, but by the two best players in the world playing for the highest title. The responsibility focused my work and helped me become objective in the search for the truth in chess. At some point, I even heard complaints from the Karpov team: “Why does Dlugy have to analyze these games so deeply?” I received it as a great compliment, as I imagined that some novelty the coaches came up with for one of the games was probably suggested in the analysis I did in one of the issues and they had to rethink their ideas.

Of course, I did not work in vacuum. I organized the Grandmaster Analysis room, where all dignitaries attending the match would be given special VIP passes to attend. The round table at the Park Lane Hotel in London would have Nigel Short, John Nunn, Jonathan Speelman, Gennady Sosonko, Leonid Shamkovich, Yasha Murey, Harry Schussler, Jonathan Tisdall, John Arnason, Norman Weinstein, and of course, Viktor Korchnoi besides many other titled visitors analyzing the variations during the game. My job was to critically direct their analysis so that a high quality express bulletin would be produced immediately following each game. At night I would work on my own, with help from International Masters Jonathan Tisdall and David Goodman, who happened to be the brother of Raymond Keene’s wife and whose house we were staying in gratis for the duration of the event. I think this experience forced me to become objective in my analysis, as with millions of eyes watching, I became aware of the need to find truth in any given position. While practical considerations are also very important, as we are after all playing a competitive game, understanding chess can only be accomplished through the search
for the truth. In 1991, when I had already quit professional chess and started my career in finance, I got a postcard from Viktor Korchnoi, praising my objectivity in analysis my own and other players' games and asking me to become his coach for the upcoming World Championship Cycle. Although my circumstances did not allow me to accept this amazing offer, it was the highest praise I could get from the most monumental truth-seeker in chess.

Below I will present one of the most interesting games from the Karpov-Kasparov 1986 match with my commentaries taken directly out of the bulletin I produced.

As always, the original will be in normal text with my new comments in italic.

8. ³f b3

8. cxd5 has gradually been given up in top flight chess as after 8. cxd5 ³xd5 9. ³d2 ³xc3 10. bxc3 ³a5 Black equalizes with an eventual ...e5.

While this was true at the time of this match, 8. cxd5 ³xd5 9. ³b3 has seen a significant revival and currently represents the main line in this variation with players like Carlsen, Kramnik, and of course Kasparov having played it in major competitions.

8... ³xc3+

8... ³a6, as played by Nigel Short against Ghitescu in Lucerne 1985, is an alternative. That game continued 9. 0-0
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\[ \text{\textit{a5} 10. \textit{cxd5 } \textit{\textbf{x}c3} 11. \textit{\textbf{w}xc3} \textit{\textbf{w}xc3} 12. \textit{bxc3 exd5} (after 12... \textit{\textbf{d}xd5} White gets a slight edge with 13. \textit{c4 } \textit{\textbf{b}6} 14. \textit{c5 } \textit{\textbf{d}5} 15. \textit{\textbf{a}3}, as Ghitescu pointed out) 16. \textit{\textbf{d}d5} 17. \textit{\textbf{b}3} f5 18. e3 with a slight edge for White.} \]

9. \textit{bxc3}

9. \textit{\textbf{w}xc3} would allow ... \textit{\textbf{e}e4} followed by ... \textit{\textbf{a}5+} with equality.

Actually 9... \textit{\textbf{e}e4} is not a very good move, as White can simply play 10. \textit{\textbf{a}a3} stopping 10... \textit{\textbf{a}5}. Still Black does get good play with 9... \textit{e5!} 10. \textit{\textbf{b}3} \textit{d}4 11. \textit{\textbf{a}5} \textit{\textbf{e}e8}! Kamsky-Christiansen USA ch 1993.

9... \textit{\textbf{c}c6}

9... \textit{dxc4} equalized in Karpov-Portisch Lucerne 1985 with Karpov opting for the peculiar 10. \textit{\textbf{a}3}? \textit{\textbf{b}d7} 11. \textit{\textbf{b}5} \textit{\textbf{a}b6} 12. 0-0 \textit{\textbf{d}7} 13. \textit{\textbf{d}d1} with a double-edged position. Was Karpov afraid of a novelty?

Kasparov, in his book on the match (Garry Kasparov on Modern Chess Part 3), explains that Ubilava, one of Karpov’s seconds, was the expert on the 8. \textit{\textbf{b}3} line and so the moves were carefully chosen by Black to avoid variations with potential problems.

10. \textit{cxd5}

10... \textit{\textbf{a}5}?

A very inflexible move. Black shows all his cards by this in-between move. 10... \textit{exd5} would be a more flexible decision. Kasparov likes 10... \textit{\textbf{a}5} and gives 10... \textit{exd5} 11. 0-0 \textit{h}6 12. \textit{\textbf{f}4} with pressure. Black may well be better off here than in the game though as after 12... \textit{\textbf{e}e8} the threat to the e-pawn may force White to seek an edge with the tactical line 13. \textit{\textbf{ad}1} \textit{\textbf{xd}4} 14. \textit{\textbf{x}d}4 \textit{\textbf{xe}2} 15. \textit{c}4 \textit{\textbf{b}6} 16. \textit{\textbf{xb}6} \textit{axb6} 17. \textit{\textbf{c}xd5} \textit{\textbf{axa}2} 18. \textit{d}6 \textit{\textbf{d}7} when this slightly inferior endgame may well be a draw.

11. \textit{\textbf{c}2} \textit{\textbf{xd}5}
11... exd5 was again possible.

12. ♕d3!

An excellent move, preparing to fight for the control of the vital c4 square.

If instead 12. 0-0 then 12... ♕d7! and after 13. ♕d1 ♘c8 Black stands well.

12... ♘d7?!

This move might be too slow for the demands of the position. Besides 12... ♗e8 Black can play 12... ♕c7 or 12... b6!? creating positions rich in possibilities.

According to Garry, Black indeed had to play 12... ♕c7, with excellent chances for equality as the key line 13. ♕b5 ♕c6! is way stronger than 13... ♕c4? Which loses a pawn after 14. ♕xc4 followed by 15. ♕xd5 and 16. ♕c7.

13. c4!

Complex openings often create situations where the obvious developing moves are not the best. In this position, the control of the c4-square takes precedence over the immediate safety of the King. White prevents the possibility of ...♗c8 by shielding the c4 square with the pawn. This position is critical; the correct square for the Knight has to be picked.

13... ♕e7?

Wrong, as the course of the game brilliantly shows.

A) The tempting 13... ♕b4 is also misleading, with White retaining the advantage after 14. ♕c3 ♕ac6 15. ♕a3 a5 16. ♕b5.

B) The correct retreat for the Knight was 13... ♕b6! when White has a few choices, none of which are entirely convincing.

B1) After 14. ♕a3 ♕e8 15. c5 ♕bc4 16. ♕b4 Black responds with 16... e5 17. ♕b3 (on 17. ♕f5 Black plays 17... e4 18. ♕xe4 ♕xe4 19. ♕xe4 ♕f6 20. ♕d4 ♕c6 and wins) 17... ♕c6! (Tisdall) and equalizes.

Actually, the given line is wrong, after 15... ♕bc4? 16. ♕b4 e5 17. ♕f5 e4 18. ♕xe4 ♕xe4 19. ♕xe4 ♕f6 White wins with 20. ♕e7+. Instead, Black equalizes with the cool 15... e5! instead. After 16. ♕b3 ♕bc4 17. 0-0
White has no advantage.

B2) On 14. c5 ｂa4?! 15. ｂa3 ｃc6 16. ｃxc6 ｃxc6 17. ｂb5 White is better, but the more precise 14... ｂbc4 gives White more problems, for example 15. ｂb1 ｃc8! 16. ｃxb7 ｃxb7 17. ｃxb7 ｃxc5 18. ｃb3? ｃd5 19. ｃxc4 ｃc6 20. ｃe4 ｄd1+ and Black has a fierce attack.

On Kasparov's recommended 15. 0-0 (instead of 15. ｂb1), mobilizing the Queen immediately (instead of 15... ｃc8 as he analyzes) with 15... ｆf6! gives Black sufficient play after 16. ｃxb7 ｆad8 17. ｆa6 ｃc8! 18. ｆxc4 ｆxd4 19. ｆb2 ｆxd3 20. ｆxf6 ａa3 21. ｆb2 ｃxc4 22. ｆxa3 ｃxa3 23. ｃ6 ｂb5 and Black is fine. Actually, 14... ｂa4 may also be completely playable as well; after 17. ｂb5 as given above, Black equalizes with 17... ｃc3 18. ｂb2 ａa5 19. ｃxc6 ｃd5+ 20. ｄd2 ｆxd2 21. ｆxd2 bxc6.

14. 0-0!?

In the Analysis Room 14. ｂa3 was expected, with White holding on nicely to his position after 14... ｃe8 15. ｃc1. The two active Bishops give Black problems.

Garry is right to have veered off his home preparation here, as he admits himself, since after 14. ｂa3 ｃe8 15. ｃc1 e5 17. ｂb3 ｃc6 Karpov would have no cause for worry.

14... ｃc8

Black puts White's plan to the test. The c-pawn is attacked.

A) The option 14... e5 would lead to White's superiority in the ending after 15. ｂb5 ｃc6 16. ａa3 ｃxd3 17. exd3;

B) The continuation 14... ｄec6 is also dubious after 15. ａa3 ｃe8 16. ｆf3 e5 17. ｆd1 ｃe6 18. ｃc3 ｃc8 19. ｇg5 and after 19... ａxc4 20. ｃc2! White has more than enough for the pawn.

Well, 20. ｃc2 is just unnecessary as 20. ａxc6 simply wins a piece, but it is important to address Kasparov's discussion of Eduard Gufeld's recommended 14... ｃc6.

Garry provides lines which give Black a good game if White captures on c6, as Black's Knights cooperate very well against White's weakened pawn structure. However, it looks like the standard maneuver seen in the Queen's Indian Defense 15. ｂh3! would create serious problems for Black. White avoids the immediate decision on c6 and gives Black
a complicated task, as the Knights are dreaming of the c6-square which is no longer available. The attempt to make it useful with 15... a4 doesn't equalize. White continues with 16. c3! hinting at attacking g7, and after, for example, 16... c8? 17. xe6! or 17. xe6 winning. After 16... ac6 17. b3! The c8-square suddenly becomes controlled by White's Bishop, stopping the a8-Rook from developing, as Black would need to play e5 to defend against the b2, c3 battery.

15. b3!

Kasparov's calculations are clear-headed and precise: after 15. c5 xc5 16. a3 c7 17. fd1 a4! White gets nowhere. Garry forces the play and clearly shows an advantage for White.

Actually, 15. c5 would be a reasonable attempt for White to fight for an advantage, as White can improve in the above line with 17. b4! when Black cannot shake off White's initiative after 17... d4 18. fc1 e5 19. a3 xc1+ 20. xc1 e8 21. xe7 xe7 22. xb7. The attempt to force White's hand with 15... e5 also gives White plenty to play for after 16. b5 xb5 17. xb5 a6 18. b6! xb6 19. cb6 fd8 20. b1.

15... xc4 16. xb7 c7

Brilliant unstereotyped play.

Instead of staying on the long diagonal with 17. e4, which incidentally gives nothing after 17... h6, he insists on fighting for control of the c4-square. White now begins a game of cat and mouse with Black's pieces, eventually getting them to tread on each other's toes.

17... e5

The ingenious 17... g6 with the point of 18. xc4 e5 is answered by 18. f4! (Murey) with a big advantage for White.

18... e3!

An interesting position. White could have played 18. d6 when Black has to be very accurate.

A) 18... c4 is bad after 19. xc4 xc4 20. a3;
B) 18... f6 leads to an advantage for White after 19. a3 c8 20. xc8 wxc8 21. ac1;

C) After 18... c6 19. xe5 xa6 20. b2 f5 21. e4 is much better for White;

D) Black's only move is 18... 7g6 and White suddenly gets nowhere after 19. g5 f6.

Perhaps 18. e4 would have been interesting.

Garry agrees, but I now think after 18... 7g6 19. e3! c8 20. xd8 xd8 21. b5 e7, which he gives as a tenable position, White can press on via 22. c5 d5 23. f4 d7 24. d4 c3 25. xc3 xc3 26. fc1 xc1 27. xc1 b6 28. a4, with a nagging edge.

18. e4 is indeed quite strong. After 18... f6 19. a3 c6 20. b4 e8 21. c5 d5 22. f3 Black's troubles would be far from over.

18... c4

Black understands that he must keep on attacking White's pieces, as losing the initiative in such a position would mean defeat. But White's subtle maneuvers prevent Black from regaining the balance. There was an alternative in 18... f6, but after 19. a3 White has a strong initiative.

No argument there, because after 19... c8 20. xc8 xc8 21. fc1 d5 22. x7 7c7 23. c1 b7 24. c5 a8 25. e4 White is holding all the trumps.

19. e4!

White correctly declines the offer of the a pawn. After 19. xc4 xc4 20. xa7 d5! Black's pieces are on their feet and White's chances of realizing his extra pawns are slim.

Kasparov keeps the initiative and maintains a big advantage.

19... d6?!

This was a moment for a practical decision. Karpov is low on time and is in a critical position. It was essential to play 19... a8! and then try defending an inferior endgame after 20. xa8 xa8 21. g5 d5 22. fc1 cb6 23. d2! Now Kasparov forces a better version of a similar endgame.
Kasparov initially agrees with this, but then finds the stronger 21. \( \text{Nf4} \), after which he says that it’s hard to say whether this would be a better continuation than the game. I beg to differ. After 21... \( e5 \) 22. \( \text{Ng5} \) Black need not play 22... \( f6 \) as is analyzed by Garry, but should opt for 22... \( \text{Nd5}! \) when White is hard-pressed to show a significant edge after 23. \( \text{Bfc1} \) \( \text{d6} \) 24. \( \text{Nc5} \) \( \text{e6} \) 25. \( \text{Kd2} \) \( \text{Bxc5} \) 26. \( \text{Bxc5} \) \( \text{c7} \) 27. \( \text{Kd3} \) \( \text{Nd5} \).

20. \( \text{Kd3}! \)

After 20. \( \text{Bb4} \) \( \text{c8}! \) Black would have some chances to equalize. Garry's move wins an important tempo as after 20. \( \text{Kd3} \) \( \text{c8} \), the move 21. \( \text{Kd1} \) would keep Black tied up.

GK gives 21. \( \text{Na3} \) as another way to keep the advantage in this case.

20... \( \text{Cc6} \) 21. \( \text{Ka3}! \)

The Bishop finally moves with devastating effect.

21... \( \text{Clc8} \)

21... \( \text{Nd5} \) would be met by 22. \( \text{Kac1}! \) (Shamkovich) and White trades off an important defensive piece. On 21... \( \text{Bb6} \) he can play the complicated 22. \( \text{Bc5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 23. \( \text{Bxc5} \) \( \text{Bxc5} \) 24. \( \text{Bd1} \) with the unavoidable threat of 25. \( e4 \), or try the simple 22. \( \text{Kd4} \) forcing Black to retreat.

22. \( \text{Kxc8} \) \( \text{dxc8} \) 23. \( \text{Bd1} \)

White had a pleasant choice. After 23. \( \text{Bxd8} \) \( \text{xd8} \) 24. \( \text{Bd1} \) Black would have to cede the d-file and allow decisive penetration. 23. \( \text{Bf3} \) was also an appealing continuation when the lead in development and the active Bishop give him a big advantage.

23... \( \text{Bxd3} \) 24. \( \text{Bxd3} \) \( \text{e8} \) 25. \( \text{Bd1} \) \( f6 \)

Both players are playing normal moves with White doubling the Rooks to control the d-file and Black attempting to escape from the box with his King. White begins the attack.
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GK considered 25... f6 a mistake and gave 25... g6 as a sterner defence, albeit in a lost position.

White plans to exchange off a pair of Rooks.

35... \( \text{h}7 \) 36. \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{bc}8 \) 37. \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 38. \( \text{c}7 \)

Aiming for the g7-square.

38... \( \text{e}6 \)

Position after: 38... \( \text{e}6 \)

39. \( \text{d}5 \)

It is interesting that Kasparov avoids 39. \( \text{xe}6 \) which would lead to a theoretically winning Rook and pawn endgame. Obviously he is hoping to win more easily.

39... \( \text{h}6 \) 40. \( \text{a}5 \) \( \text{e}4 \)

Kasparov now spent 16 minutes on sealing his next move. The popular opinion was that White is winning easily, but some experts felt that Kasparov's last few moves had not been the best. On Thames TV, Grandmaster Viktor Korchnoi echoed Nigel Short's view that 41.
a6 would win easily. John Nunn advocated 41. e7; other possibilities are 41. b4 and 41. h4. At 3:44pm the following day Karpov's resignation was announced in the pressroom and his official resignation was received shortly afterwards. Kasparov's sealed move was 41. a6, probably the best.

41. a6 1-0

As you can see, at some of the crucial moments of the game, most of my annotations withstood the test of time and engines. This was important for me then, and remains important now.

It is also very important for any serious student of chess to critically analyze their own or other players games in such a way, searching for the ultimate truth in chess. With sufficient practice, this exercise will be transformed into a better chess understanding and better moves played in an actual game.
Chapter 12

Touching the Stars

Besides the golden opportunity I got to subject my analytical work to worldwide critique, I was given another unforgettable chance: On the first free day or time-out taken by one of the champions, Raymond Keene asked me to play a 4-game 15-minute match against a solid grandmaster on stage. If I recall correctly, he suggested my friend Harry Schussler. I immediately took matters into my own hands and proposed that he offer Viktor Korchnoi an opportunity to teach the reigning World Junior Champion a lesson. When Ray said he didn't have a budget for Korchnoi, I told him that I'm sure he would agree for a modest 200 pound fee, as he barely survived a tournament game against me a year earlier. My intuition was right – Viktor agreed, as he wanted to give me a lesson, and the stage was set to measure myself against my first chess idol. At 55, Viktor was still rated 4th in the world with only Arthur Yusupov between him and the two K's playing the match. Now the problem was, notwithstanding the great opportunity at hand, that it came completely unexpected. Being a 20-year-old in London, I slept only a couple of hours, not really thinking I would be playing for my life during day time. The solution came quickly, and since then I have suggested it to numerous players in need of a quick pick-me-up. I went to the restroom and for 15 full minutes immersed my face in ice-cold water, trying to really wake up. Then, I dried myself and went to the stage to shake hands with the great maestro and our arbiter, Lothar Schmidt.
This was the first time ever that DGT boards were used to play rapid chess, and it was clear that some glitches would occur. In fact, when the time-pressure got really serious, some pieces would magically disappear and then reappear again, causing wild commotion and laughter from the audience. After a bad start, where I failed to even draw a Rook up position, I came back to win the mini-match 2.5-1.5.

This was a very uplifting experience. When we were walking off stage, to be diplomatic, I said in my native Russian language: “Viktor Lvovich”, “15 minutes per game is not serious chess”. Korchnoi looked at me sternly and replied: “Young man, 15 minutes per game is very serious!”.

I am not sure if he meant it as a compliment, but perhaps this match together with another draw he managed to save from a lost endgame 4 years later, prompted him to invite me as his coach in 1991.

Let's take a look at the games, or rather what the DGT was able to record:
Dlugy, Maxim
Korchnoi, Viktor
London 1986 – Game 1

1. d4 \(\heartsuit\)f6 2. c4 g6 3. \(\heartsuit\)c3 d5 4. \(\heartsuit\)f3 \(\heartsuit\)g7 5. \(\heartsuit\)b3

In those days, this was my pet variation, and I knew it quite well.

5... dxc4 6. \(\heartsuit\)xc4 0-0 7. e4 \(\heartsuit\)c6 8. \(\heartsuit\)e2 \(\heartsuit\)g4 9. d5 \(\heartsuit\)xf3 10. gxf3 \(\heartsuit\)e5 11. \(\heartsuit\)b3 c6 12. f4 \(\heartsuit\)ed7 13. dxc6 bxc6

Position after: 13... bxc6

14. \(\heartsuit\)e3

14. e5 is more popular, while 14. 0-0 is quite rare but interesting.

14... \(\heartsuit\)b8

A less forcing continuation is 14... \(\heartsuit\)a5 which can easily transpose into similar ideas after 15. 0-0 \(\heartsuit\)ab8 16. \(\heartsuit\)c2 \(\heartsuit\)xb2 17. \(\heartsuit\)xb2 \(\heartsuit\)xe4, although here White has a cute and possibly strong continuation: 18. \(\heartsuit\)ad1 \(\heartsuit\)b6 19. \(\heartsuit\)xb6! axb6

20. \(\heartsuit\)xe4 \(\heartsuit\)xa2 21. \(\heartsuit\)d2 with an unclear position, which could be somewhat better for White.

15. \(\heartsuit\)c2 \(\heartsuit\)xe4?

In this move order, the sacrifice seems suspicious at the very least.

16. \(\heartsuit\)xe4

It was also possible to take with the Knight. After 16. \(\heartsuit\)xe4 \(\heartsuit\)xb2 17. \(\heartsuit\)xc6 \(\heartsuit\)a5+ 18. \(\heartsuit\)f1 \(\heartsuit\)b6 19. a4! White's pieces are somehow well-coordinated to stave off Black's dangerous initiative.

For example: 19... \(\heartsuit\)d5 20. \(\heartsuit\)d1 \(\heartsuit\)xe3+ 21. fxe3 \(\heartsuit\)f5 22. h3 \(\heartsuit\)fb8 23. \(\heartsuit\)h2 and White is on his way to a winning game.

16... \(\heartsuit\)xb2 17. \(\heartsuit\)c1

This looked most natural.

17... \(\heartsuit\)a5
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It looks like taking on c3 immediately was a better chance. After 17... \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{c3+}}\) 18. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{c3}}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}}\texttt{5}}\) 19. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}\texttt{4}}\) \(\texttt{e5}\) 20. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}}\texttt{1}}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}}\texttt{6}}\) 21. \(\texttt{\texttt{d}3}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{d}5}\) 22. \(\texttt{\texttt{a}3}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{e3+}}\) 23. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{e3}}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}4}}\) 24. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}}\texttt{5}}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{f}4}}\) 25. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}3}}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{d}8}\) 26. \(\texttt{\texttt{c}2}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{d}2}\) 27. \(\texttt{\texttt{e}1}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}2}}\) 28. \(\texttt{\texttt{x}a2}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}2}}\) 29. \(\texttt{\texttt{c}1}\) White should eventually win, but it would be quite a significant procedure.

18. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{c6}}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}6}}\) 19. \(\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{b6}\)

In an attempt to simplify, I make my job more difficult. Much stronger was 19. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}1}}\)!, as Black doesn’t threaten \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}8}}\) on account of \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{b6}}\!\)

20. \(\texttt{\texttt{f}1}\)

(see diagram previous column)

20... \(\texttt{\texttt{d}8}\)

Korchnoi tries to double on the 7th rank, but 20... \(\texttt{e5}\) may be stronger. Now, after 21. \(\texttt{f5}\)!? \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}6}}\) 22. \(\texttt{\texttt{b}1}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{c}2}\) 23. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}3}}\) \(\texttt{e4}\) 24. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}5}}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{c}8}\) 25. \(\texttt{\texttt{x}a5}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{b}a5}\) 26. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{e4}}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}2}}\) 27. \(\texttt{\texttt{a}6}\) White still has all the winning chances, but finding this with a few minutes on the clock would be nearly impossible.

21. \(\texttt{\texttt{d}1}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}1+}}\) 22. \(\texttt{\texttt{d}1}\) \(\texttt{d}2\) 23. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}3}}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}2}}\)

24. \(\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}8}}\)!

This was a mistake. The correct move order 24. \(\texttt{\texttt{c}4}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{a}1+}\) 25. \(\texttt{\texttt{g}2}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{f}6}\) 26. \(\texttt{\texttt{x}f6}\) \(\texttt{\texttt{xf}6}\) 27. \(\texttt{\texttt{f}3}\) would get me closer to a technically promising position.

24... \(\texttt{\texttt{f}8}\) 25. \(\texttt{\texttt{c}4}\)?
This looks like it wins, but I had to take my move back with 25. \( \textit{b5} \) in order to equalize.

**25... \( \textit{xf2+?} \)**

Both of us missed the tricky 25... \( \textit{b1+} \) 26. \( \textit{g2 e4+} \) 27. \( \textit{g3 e6} \) when Black suddenly takes over. After the best 28. \( \textit{a1 g5!} \) 29. \( \textit{d5! exd5} \) 30. \( \textit{xe4 dxe4} \) 31. \( \textit{fxg5 d6+} \) 32. \( \textit{f4 exf3+} \) 33. \( \textit{xf3 d4} \) I would be fighting hard for a draw.

26. \( \textit{g1 g2+} \) 27. \( \textit{xg2 xc4} \)

And now, with little time on the clock, I failed to find either 28. \( \textit{h3} \) or 28. \( \textit{h4!} \) with a Rook to the good and a simple win. Instead, I blundered everything with...

28. \( \textit{b8?? c1+} \) 29. \( \textit{e1 xe1+} \) 30. \( \textit{g2} \)

...and resigned a couple of moves later, as Black activated his Bishop.

0-1
Typical uncompromising Korchnoi! He immediately picks up on the possible problem with my last move. Still, Black’s position is quite sound, as White also took two moves to get his Knight to c4, while playing a rather passive d3 over d4.

6... c5 7. h5 dxc6 8. hxh6

This is quite drastic. Korchnoi, obviously relieved by game one, is expecting to win with some cool tactics.

8... hxh6 9. hxg6 hxg6 10. c1?

My 6 last moves are all Komodo’s first picks and that has added to my slight advantage. But now I begin to waver.

18. g5 a6

I am trying to threaten xxb2, but the natural 18... e7 was stronger. After 19. xe6 fxe6 20. b1 d5 Black’s ad-
vantage in space could become quite significant.

19. \( \text{bxc6} \) \( \text{fxe6} \) 20. \( \text{bxa5} \) \( \text{dxc4} \) 21. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{c6} \)

24... a4

Strange, but this natural advance helps White to defend.

It was better not to move the a-pawn and proceed in the centre and the kingside with 24... g5 25. \( \text{e1} \) c4 26. d4 c6 27. d5.

25. \( \text{e3} \) f5 26. \( \text{f4} \) e5 27. \( \text{e2} \) b4

28. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 29. \( \text{c1} \)

It's amazing how easily Korchnoi outplayed me from a worse position. Now I have to be very careful just to survive.

29... \( \text{c8} \) 30. b3 \( \text{e7} \) 31. e4 \( \text{g7} \)

32. d5

This tempting advance is actually inaccurate. After 32. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 33. d5 \( \text{g5} \)!

34. \( \text{dxe6+} \) \( \text{e8} \) 35. \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{xf4} \) 36. \( \text{gxh6} \) \( \text{e7} \) 37. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 38. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 39. \( \text{g5} \) the position is balanced. But finding these moves would be much more difficult for Black.

32... \( \text{a8} \) 33. \( \text{f4} \) e5 34. \( \text{d3} \) axb3 35. \( \text{axb3} \) \( \text{a3} \) 36. \( \text{d1} \)

36... g5?

This is clearly just time-pressured panic. After the natural 36... \( \text{g5} \) 37. \( \text{b1} \)
37... $\textit{d}2$ the position would be roughly equal. If White tries for more with 37. $f4$ Black gets the edge after 37... $h6$ 38. $f2$ $h5$ 39. $f3$ $a2$ 40. $c4$ exf4 41. gxf4 $h2$ 42. $e5$ $h3$+ 43. $e2$ $g3$+ 44. $d2$ $f1$+ 45. $e2$ $e3$

37. $b2$ $e8$ 38. $c4$ $a2$ 39. $h5+$ $f8$ 40. $xe8$ $xe8$ 41. $g2$

Position after: 41. $g2$

42. $f3$ $g4+$ 43. $xg4$ $xf2$ 44. $h1$

41... $f7$?!

In a tournament game, the consequences of 41... $g4$ can be easily calculated. After 42. $b1$ $f7$ 43. $e3$ $g6$ 44. $xg4$ $g5$ Black’s potential passed pawn on the queenside, equalizes the chances. Of course, sacrificing the pawn under the gun was a difficult decision to make.

42. $f3$ $g4+$ 43. $xg4$ $xf2$ 44. $h1$

Amazingly this loses a crucial tempo versus the correct 44... $g6$ which just holds. White could now win with 45. $a1$ $f8$ 46. $a8+$ $g7$ 47. $a7$ $f6$

48. $d7$ $e2$ 49. $xd6$ $xd6$ 50. $xd6+$ $e7$ 51. $e6+$ $d7$ 52. $f5$

$e3$ 53. $xe5$ $xb3$ 54. $g6$, while after the correct 44... $g6$, Black holds in all variations.

For example: 45. $a1$ $e2$ 46. $a7$ $f6$ 47. $f3$ $c2$ 48. $g4$ $c3+$ 49. $e2$ $f8$ 50. $a8$ $e7$ 51. $e3$ $g6$

52. $f5$ $g5$ 53. $xd6$ $c2+$ with a cute draw by perpetual check on c1,c2, and c3.

The DGT Board passed out here, but somehow I did manage to draw anyway.

$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Dlugy, Maxim
Korchnoi, Viktor
London 1986 – Game 3
Korchnoi plays another reasonable move for Black here, testing my knowledge of this variation.

9. dxe5?!

Most of the theoretical discussion these days centres on the position starting with 9. d5 cxd4 10. cxd4 exd4 11. xd4 c6 when White chooses between 12. d6 and 12. c4.

In either case the position is extremely double-edged. For example, after 12. c4 b5! after (12... cxd5 13. exd5 f5 14. 0-0 c8 15. b3 e4 16. xe4 xe4 17. f3 xf3 18. xf3 f6 in Jakovenko-Navara from the European Cup 2015, White could have fought for an edge in the endgame with the precise 19. xf6 xf6 20. d1 c2 21. b1 d8 22. a4 b6 23. b3 e5 24. e3) 13. xc6 d7 14. d6 e8 15. f3 h5 16. e3 f5 17. a3 b4 18. xb4 b8 19. a3 fxe4 20. f4 h4+ 21. g3 xg3 22. f2 h3 23. xg3 ec8.

In Ding Liren - Wei Yi from Tata Steel 2016, White took a draw with 26. f1 g4 27. e2, afraid to enter possibly favorable complications after 24. g1 g4 25. xg4 xg4 26. f2 xf4 27. e2.

9... g4 10. 0-0 gxe5 11. xe5 xe5 12. b3 c6

Seems like Black fully equalized here, but Korchnoi is relentless in looking for active play.

13. e3

There was no reason for this. After the prosaic 13... e7 14. c2 e6 15. ad1 c4 16. d4 ad8 Black is comfortably equal.

14. xb7 b8

This is a further inaccuracy. Black had full compensation for the pawn after 14... a5 15. ab1 fb8 16. e7 c4, although following 17. a3! xa3 18. bxa3 d3 19. xb8+ xb8 20. a4 White could still try to claim a slight pull in the endgame.

15. xa7 xb2 16. a3
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Korchnoi thinks everything equalizes, but it’s not so easy. 16... b8 or 16... b8 was more prudent.

16... xe2

This opening variation, recently seen in one of the key World Cup Final games between Sergey Karjakin and Peter Svidler, was my specialty.

1. f3 d5 2. d4 c5

I was happy to see this, as 4. e4 was considered the most testing move. Still after 4. e4 f6! 5. c3 xc5 6. exd5 exd5 7. b5+ c6 8. 0-0 0-0 as in my game with Yasser Seirawan from the 1988 US Championship, Black has a good version of the Tarrasch French.

3. dxc5 e6 4. e3

At this point the DGT board stopped functioning once again, but I am quite proud that I somehow managed to win this hardly-winning endgame against the great endgame wizard Viktor Korchnoi.

With the score leveled, the fourth game became the decisive encounter in this tough match.

- Korchnoi, Viktor
- Dlugy, Maxim
- London 1986 – Game 4

1. f3 d5 2. d4 c5

At this point the DGT board stopped functioning once again, but I am quite proud that I somehow managed to win this hardly-winning endgame against the great endgame wizard Viktor Korchnoi.

1-0
To "simplify with the youth". This is an old Russian chess slogan, which assumes that young players have not had the experience necessary to play endgames on par with their older colleagues. Of course, there is a lot of basis for this notion, as youngsters, especially now, focus mainly on learning openings and tactics, forgetting how important it is to study endgames. Thankfully, Vitaly Zaltsman brought this problem to my attention, forcing me to learn endings. I was able to survive a really tough exam in endings from one of the world's toughest examiners.

5. c4 dxc5 6. dxc5 dxc5 7. cxd5

Trying to "nuance" Black with 7. d4 a5+ 8. c3 gives Black a fine endgame after 8... cxd4 9. cxd4 a6 10. c4 b5

7... e5 8. d4 f6 9. e5+ f6 10. d5 e6 11. f6 12. c3 b5

12... ce4 13. c1 ac8 14. b3

It was more exact to keep both pairs of Knights with 14. e2, but Viktor prefers to "simplify with the youth". This is an old Russian chess slogan, which assumes that young players have not had the experience necessary to play endgames on par with their older colleagues. Of course, there is a lot of basis for this notion, as youngsters, especially now, focus mainly on learning openings and tactics, forgetting how important it is to study endgames. Thankfully, Vitaly Zaltsman brought this problem to my attention, forcing me to learn endings. I was able to survive a really tough exam in endings from one of the world's toughest examiners.

14... c3 15. xc3 xc3 16. xc3 c8 17. d4 b6

Of course, it is very difficult to choose between this, ...a6, and ...b5, but somehow I thought the possibility of being able to place my Rook on c5 should be added to my defensive arsenal here.

18. d1 c6!
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The c-file is my counter-asset to the weak d-pawn. This is why White's advantage, for the moment, is kept at bay.

19. \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{c4} \) 20. \( \text{xc4} \) dxc4

Korchnoi understands that his exam is not over yet, and by creating a strong centre he will yet create more problems for me. Still, the weak d-pawn has been traded off and I have a potential outside passed pawn in the making on the queenside.

21. f3 \( \text{f8} \) 22. e4 \( \text{e7} \) 23. \( \text{f2} \) \( \text{c5?} \)

Inaccurate. It was time to target interesting squares with my Knight by placing it on d7.

24. \( \text{c2} \) g6 25. \( \text{e3} \) b5 26. \( \text{e2} \) c8

I am trying to avoid 26... \( \text{e6} \) 27. \( \text{d8} \), when White's Rook could become active.

27. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{e6} \) 28. f4 c3 29. bxc3 \( \text{xc3} \) 30. e5 \( \text{e8} \) 31. a4 a6 32. \( \text{d8} \) \( \text{e7} \) 33. \( \text{a8} \) \( \text{c7} \) 34. \( \text{a7} \) \( \text{e6} \) 35. axb5 axb5 36. \( \text{b7} \) \( \text{c6} \) 37. \( \text{d3} \) h5 38. \( \text{c2} \)

And even though Korchnoi has once again outplayed me to get a slight advantage in this even endgame, I was able to outblitz him in the last minute of the game. At one point it got so exciting, that after Korchnoi banged the clock, it actually fell down and Lothar Schmidt had to pick it up to have the game continue. From what I remember in the final position, I was winning on the board, not just on the clock. How I did it – I don't know!

0-1
I was ecstatic! I beat the number 4 player in the world while sitting at the board and chairs specially made for the World Champion and his challenger! How much better could life get? It got better.

A few days later, the musical “Chess” had a world premiere in London and the top two players were of course invited to attend. Since both of them had other things on their mind, Raymond Keene, explaining that I am also a world champion (though in the Junior category), gave me Garry’s ticket, which clearly said: World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov. After the show, the after-party at the trendy Hippodrome disco had the whole cast attend, and the lead actor who played the world champion kept asking me for tips for his role, as he wanted to get into my shoes. Loved it!
Chapter 13

Enhancements

Dvoretsky

Besides working with my coach Vitaly, I have had an opportunity to improve my chess by working with a number of other top players and coaches. In 1985, after a great year and successfully earning my Grandmaster title, I flew to Montpellier to the site of the 1985 Candidates Tournament to watch the best players in the world in action. I also decided to play in the open tournament there, and to take lessons from Mark Dvoretsky, who already had a brilliant reputation.

Our sessions, usually conducted together with Jeroen Piket, who was to become a strong grandmaster some years later, concentrated on prophylactics – the prevention of opponents’ ideas. Although Zaltsman was always insisting on asking the question: “What does my opponent want?”, I never thought of focusing on this idea as much as after I saw some hand-picked positions from Mark, who was an absolute genius in finding positions that will stick in your memory forever. These positions help you create the correct connections in your brain, which goes a long way towards finding similar ideas in your own games. My work with Mark paid off! Not only did I win the open tournament, picking up a nice prize, but I also managed to play a few games with this newly discovered concept. I was proud to show Mark how quickly his ideas can find their way onto the chess board. Let’s take a look at
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some of these examples from my game with Johnny Hector, an extremely aggressive player who became a grandmaster a few years later. As I am finishing the book, I was struck by the sad news that Mark passed away shortly before the start of the Tal Memorial in Moscow. Mark passed away September 26th, 2016, and the tournament became a Dvoretsky Memorial as well.

I heard the news at night the following day, when I checked the Russian news site chess-news.ru. I immediately remembered all the interesting conversations and analysis sessions I've had with Mark during major chess events, and when he was briefly staying at my house as a guest.

He was a brilliant coach; generations of top chess players owe him a debt of gratitude.

1. ²c³ c5

Today, I would play 1... d5 without a moment’s hesitation, but back then I loved the Sicilian, and tried to transpose into it every chance I got.

2. e4 ²c6 3. ²f³ d6 4. d4

Johnny is true to himself!

His strange move order transposed into the most popular opening.

4... cxd4 5. ²xd4 ²f6 6. ²e³ e5 7. ²f³ ²e7 8. ²c4

White is fighting for the control of the d5 square, but maintaining it will not be easy.

8... 0-0 9. ²e² a6

A reasonable move, but I would play 9... ²a5 today, controlling White’s c4 Bishop.

10. a4 ²c7 11. ²d1 ²b4

The fight for d5 continues, and it looks like I am not losing it.

12. ²b³

Position after: 12. ²b³

White reacts to the threat of 12... ²xc2.
12... h6!?

Here, the Dvoretsky method is at work. Before our session, I would have played 12... e6 13. 0-0 cad8 14. g5 and it's not clear how to play for an edge for Black. Now, I picked out White's plan of playing for h4 followed by f5, and have found a way of stopping both g5 and this plan while not exchanging too many pieces against a lower rated opponent.

13. h4 h7!

The threat of g6 is parried, and I am planning to play g6 to stop f5 altogether.

14. h3

White is likely trying to play g4, followed by f5, but White’s delay in castling gives me ample possibilities to get in d5.

14... e6 15. f5

White decides to jump in now, before I play g6 or prepare the typical d5 advance with fd8. For example, after 15. 0-0 fd8 16. f5 xf5 17. exf5 d5 Black would be slightly better.

15... xf5 16. exf5
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16... \( \text{c6} \)

Not strictly necessary, as after 16... \( \text{ad8} \) 17. f4 d5 18. fxe5 \( \text{xe5} \) I would be doing fine as well.

17. f4

This proves too rash. After the natural 17. 0-0 d5 the position is roughly balanced, whether White tries the modest 18. c1 e4 19. f4 fe8 20. e5 \( \text{ad8} \), or the tactical 18. f4 leading to a fine position for Black after 18... \( \text{c5}! \) 19. \( \text{xe5} \) d4 20. a2 bd5 21. \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 22. c4 xf4 23. \( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{xa4} \) 24. \( \text{f6} \) \( \text{g6} \) 25. \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 26. d3 \( \text{ad8} \).

17... exf4

18. \( \text{xf4} \)?

A grave mistake. Hector had to hold the a7-g1 diagonal with a temporary pawn sacrifice 18. \( \text{d4}! \) after which Black would only be slightly more comfortable following 18... d5 19. 0-0 \( \text{ae8} \) 20. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c5} \) 21. \( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{b6} \) 22. \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 23. \( \text{xd4} \) a5

18... d5 19. 0-0 \( \text{c5} \) 20. \( \text{h1} \) d4

My position springs to life with a number of active attacking moves, whereupon White finds himself in serious trouble.

21. b1 bd5

The e3-square is under serious siege and White tries to solve this issue by undermining the d-pawn. The tactics simply don't work for this idea.

22. c3 \( \text{ae8} \) 23. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{e3} \) 24. \( \text{xc6} \) bxc6 25. cxd4

White sacrifices an exchange, as it was futile to fight the e-pawn combined with my access to all the dark squares.

After 25. \( \text{xe3} \) dxe3 26. fe1 b8 27. c4 xb2 it's quite clear that I will win material with the upcoming \( \text{e4} \).
Enhancements

25...  \check{Q}xd1  26.  \check{Q}xd1  \check{Q}b4  27.  \check{Q}c3  
\check{Q}e4  28.  \check{Q}f1  g5!

This opens up additional files for my Rooks and signals the end of the game.

29.  f\times g6+  f\times g6  30.  \check{Q}f3  \check{Q}d6  31.  \check{Q}xd6  
\check{Q}xf3  32.  gxf3  \check{Q}xd6  33.  d5  \check{Q}b8  34.  
\check{Q}d1  cxd5  35.  b3  d4  36.  \check{Q}e4  \check{Q}xe4  37.  
fxe4  \check{Q}e8

And White resigned.

0-1

Efim Geller

In 1988, while captaining the U.S. Women's Olympic Team, I used my free time, usually available during the round, to take lessons with the great Efim Geller. Even though Geller was one of the best theoreticians in the world, our openings didn't really match. After seeing some cool ideas for Black and White in the Scheveningen Sicilian, which were unusable to me since I was too entrenched with my 4 Knights Sicilian, I could not put a finger on what I learned, except that I had good practice analyzing various positions with a legend!
Boris Gulko

In 1987, following the release of Boris Gulko from the Soviet Union, we became close friends. When the American Chess Foundation announced their decision to award the Samford Fellowship to Joel Benjamin over me, citing as the main reason the fact that in the following year Joel would not be eligible to receive the benefit of the full two-year fellowship because of his age, they generously offered me a consolation prize of some thousands of dollars for preparation.

They explained that I will likely get the Samford the following year, which indeed did happen. I decided to use some of the funds to work with Boris, and we spent about a week at my home working on various openings systems.

We looked at various Grunfeld lines, which both of us played, but the only recollection I have of that week is his explanation that the move order 1. d4 c6 2. c4 \( \text{\#} \) f6 is inaccurate for Black as after 3. \( \text{\#} \) f4! d5 4. e3!

White manages to both develop his Bishop and get in e3 to protect the pawn and therefore will stand better. The London System, which I have been playing lately, plays on this move order and in fact, after 1. d4 d5 2. \( \text{\#} \) f4 c6 3. e3 \( \text{\#} \) f6 4. c4! we get the position Boris mentioned.
Deep Blue

Besides humans, there are of course engines, but in 1990 there was pretty much only one that mattered, and it was called Deep Thought. This computer resembled the super-computer Earth in one of the most hilarious books in the world: The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams. By that time, I was already married with a child and a mortgage on a house, and looking to supplement my chess income with interesting projects. I decided to reach out to the Deep Thought team, suggesting that if they ever need a Grandmaster for sparring, or help in improving the program, I would be available. A few months later, when the team got financing from IBM, they got back to me and asked me to come for an interview with the head of the program. After some discussions, two contracts were approved and signed. The first stated I was to help tweak the engines computations processes, after assessing it’s strengths and weaknesses by analyzing it’s response to different kinds of chess problems specially picked by me for the task. The second stated I was to produce the definitive book for Deep Thought on all modern chess theory!

While the first assignment was a walk in the park, and the most difficult thing about it was to actually find the office I worked from in the gigantic IBM’s T.J Watson Research Center in Tarrytown, 20 minutes from my home in New Jersey, the second one proved daunting. When I finally completed it, close to the end of December 1990, a number of discrepancies between my evaluation and the computer’s had to be reckoned with and there was an enormous amount of work to be done. This was work which at some point I had to abandon, as from January 2nd, 1991 I started my career in finance at Bankers Trust.

This experience, though, had me revamp my own opening theory as some of the conclusions I took for granted were being seriously challenged by Deep Thought.
Incidentally, during my tenure at IBM, the head of the program overseeing the original Carnegie Mellon Team that was behind Deep Thought, decided that the name was inappropriate for the general public, who may not have been aware of Douglas Adams’ masterpiece. They ran a contest to rename the program, and the winner “Deep Blue”, hinting at the IBM's blue chip status, stuck. When, a few years later, the computer managed to defeat Kasparov in a controversial and close match, it was of course with the new name that became widely known to the world at large. I remember having the toughest time refuting the Albin-Counter Gambit, as the lines given in the Encyclopedia of Chess Openings at the time were simply not giving White any advantage. I was trying hard to prove the computer wrong, but was not successful at the time. Only recently I decided to take on the challenge, seeing how well my friend, and in some ways my idol, Alexander Morozevich, beautifully handled this opening for Black against the likes of Ivanchuk and Gelfand. I believe I can now claim that I have proven a significant advantage for White against the Albin-Counter Gambit, some 25 years later! Without giving too much away, I think after 1. d4 d5 2. c4 e5 3. dxe5 d4 4. Cf3 Cc6, White has to play 5. Bd2!, so as to be able to play 6. h3 on 5... g4.

The most amazing episode in my work with Deep Blue (yes, let's use the widely known name now), came one day when I brought a position from my game with
John Nunn from the Wijk Aan Zee 1990 super-tournament. Deep Blue suggested a move, which clearly was not playable and I asked Murray Campbell, one of the key team members to check the position. After he inputted the position again, Deep Blue repeated it's initial “blunder”, and as I looked deeper into the position, I suddenly realized that this move, crazy from a human point of view, might in fact be playable. This was in a position where John Nunn consumed 40 minutes and played a sequence after which he offered me a draw. I declined and got a better position soon afterwards.

Let's take a look at this bizarre position:

After the moves:

\[
\begin{align*}
1. & \text{e}4 \text{c}5 \quad 2. & \text{d}f3 \text{d}6 \quad 3. & \text{d}4 \text{cxd}4 \quad 4. & \text{d}xd4 \\
& \text{\textit{\&}}f6 \quad 5. & \text{c}c3 \text{\&}c6 \quad 6. & \text{\&}c4 \text{e}6 \quad 7. & \text{\&}e3 \\
& \text{\&}e7 \quad 8. & \text{\&}e2 \quad 9. & 0-0-0
\end{align*}
\]

9... \&d7

One of the novelties Deep Blue produced in this opening after this game was played was 9... \textit{\&a5}!, the move I was staying away from because of 10. \textit{\&h1}.

It found that Black can play 10... \textit{\&xe4}! 11. \textit{\&xe4 d5}, and surprisingly none of White’s tactical or positional approaches give him an advantage.

**A)** For example: 12. \textit{\&xc6 bxc6} 13. \textit{\&d2 \textit{\&b6} 14. \&d3 \textit{\&b8}!}

Position after: 14... \textit{\&b8}

15. \textit{\&c3? d4!} \textit{\&}. Komodo improves with 15. \textit{b3!} but even then the position that arises after 15... dxe4 16. \textit{\&xe4 f5} 17. \textit{\&e1 \&f6} 18. \textit{\&c3 \textit{\&xc3} 19. \textit{\&xc3 \&xf2} 20. \textit{\&e5 \&b7} 21. \textit{\&c4 \&h8 is double-edged and roughly balanced.}

**B)** White can try 12. \textit{\&b3}

Position after: 12. \textit{\&b3}
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12... \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{c7} \) 13. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{d3} \) dx\( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{e4} \) 14. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xe4} \) but after exact defensive play starting with 14... b6 Black equalizes as well. I analyzed 15. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{c4} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{b7} \) 16. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{d4} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{fc8} \) 17. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xc6} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xc6} \) 18. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xc6} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xc6} \) 19. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xc6} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xc6} \) 20. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{d7} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{f8} \) 21. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{gd1} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{ac8}! \) 22. c3 \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{g8} \) 23. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{c2} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{e8} \) and White's activity has been neutralized.

If, after 12. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{b3} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{c7} \) White tries to go after the weakened the d-pawn with 13. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xd5} \) exd5 14. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{c3} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{e6} \) 15. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xd5} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xd5} \) 16. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{d5} \), Black should avoid the a pawn for fear of losing control of the d-file, and instead of 16... \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{b4} \) as given in my notes, take the h-pawn instead with a good position.

C) Another try by Komodo 12. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{b1} \) also doesn't give White anything to bite on after 12... dxc4 13. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xc4} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{b4} \) 14. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xb4} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{ xb4} \) 15. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{b5} \) b6 16. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{ec3} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{c6}! \)

It seems like Deep Blue's analysis is holding 25 years hence.

10. f4 \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{c8} \) 11. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{b3} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{a5} \) 12. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{db5} \) d5

Here, John Nunn thought for 40 minutes, played 13. f5, and offered a draw. Try to spot an incredible tactical shot for White before reading the answer below! Well, here it goes: 13. exd5 exd5 14. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xa7}!! \)

In fact, even now Komodo 10 considers this the only move in the position, but finds equality for Black in all the key lines. If you haven't spotted White's idea yet, take a couple of minutes to try to see it now. I certainly did! Well, let me put an end to the intrigue. Why would anyone take the useless a pawn and give up a Knight for it? Most of us wouldn't even take it for free! Let's try to understand what's happening:

A) 14... \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xa7} \) 15. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xd5} \) \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xd5} \) 16. \( \textit{\text{\#}} \text{xd5} \)
Now it's getting more clear that White's threats to win back the piece are quite serious, but Black has many reasonable defences. Let's take a look at the best one: 16... b5 17. xa7 c5!!

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**A1)** to sacrifice the Queen with 18. xc5 xe2 19. xf8 b6 20. d6 e3+ 21. b1 h6 when the engine thinks it's completely equal;

**A2)** or keep the Queen after 18. c4 fe8 19. g4 c6!

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20. xc5 (after 20. g5 it's a draw by perpetual following: 20... e1+ 21. d1 d8 22. xe1 xe1 23. xg7+ h8 24. xh7+ xh7 25. f5+ g7 26. g5+) 20... xa7 21. e5 xe5 22. fxe5 e3+ 23. b1 e8 24. d1 xe5 25. g3 and although Black has excellent compensation for the pawn, there's still work to be done to fully equalize.

**B)** But Black has another very reasonable continuation. Instead of accepting the Knight he can strike with 14... g4!

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Twenty five years ago, Deep Blue gave White a slight advantage in all lines, and when I played into this position, I was always fearful that someone may be able to spot this amazing tactic. Of course, realistically, there were no engines except my student :-) that were able to find this at the time, and so I was relatively safe.
When my family immigrated from the Soviet Union in 1976, any chess player showing anti-Soviet tendencies would *a priori* become our friend, even if we didn't know them personally. Such was the case with Viktor Korchnoi, Boris Gulko, and Garry Kasparov. Viktor defected from Soviet Union and then played for the World Championship against Karpov, Boris was not allowed to leave for fear he would help Korchnoi take the title away from Karpov, and Kasparov – uncharacteristically for a Soviet player – made a brave move and spoke out openly against the joint decision of the Russian Sports Federation and Campomanes to cancel his first match with Karpov. That decision split the chess world, and I was among those who were categorically against the cancellation of a match where the challenger, after a heroic effort to stay in a match he was losing badly, just won two games in a row and finally had a reasonable shot at the crown. I met Kasparov during my stint at the 1986 World Championship match described above. It was a strange meeting, as I was going somewhere within the Park Lane Hotel and he was on the way somewhere during a free day with his entourage. We were heading towards each other and he just stopped, looked at me and without saying a word extended his hand, which I shook. After that, he went off on his way and I, happy to have met a legend who was only three years my senior, went off on mine.
Later in the year, I was playing on the U.S. Team at the Dubai Olympiad and during our match with the Soviet team, when I was facing Rafael Vaganian with the Black pieces on board 4, Kasparov would stop to look at our game intently and then walk off with Rafael discussing something. That was basically our second interaction, and it was not that pleasant to imagine what Garry might have been saying. Nevertheless, I drew that game, and after Yasser Seirawan won a slightly inferior endgame against Garry we even won the match!

A bit more than a year later, we were paired to play in the second elimination round of the World Blitz Championship. This was a tough match, with me winning game one, losing the next two, and then forcing myself to play a King’s Indian Defence to win on demand with Black against the reigning World Champion. When I won that game the theater, packed with about 800 spectators, exploded. It was rare to see the reigning World Champion not to be able to draw with White to clinch the match. Armageddon games were not invented then, so we were playing until the first win with alternating colors in case of a draw. Garry picked White, and I stoically defended a really difficult Rook and pawn ending to eke out a draw in game five. As Garry was prancing nervously on stage, I forgot my preparation! Before the match, I told myself not to play the $f4$ variation against Garry’s Grunfeld, and somehow my hand played that move. I kept hoping Garry wouldn’t know the novelty played against me by Maya Chiburdanidze a couple of months back, and like a hypnotized rabbit kept playing the same moves, finally being hit by the same idea once again. I lost a pawn and never recovered. Garry won the game and the match $3\frac{1}{2} - 2\frac{1}{2}$.

Let’s take a look at two of my wins:
Rubbing shoulders with the Greats

Dlugy, Maxim (2550)
Kasparov, Garry (2750)
Saint John 1988 (2)

1. d4 d6 2. e4 ♖f6 3. f3!

Position after: 3. f3!

This was my first ever game against Kasparov and, of course, the tension was quite high. Still, my blitz results were quite impressive; to get into the World Blitz Championship I played in an GM qualifier, where I started with 14(!) wins against 7 different grandmasters. I remember Bernard Zuckerman, a strong IM and a blitz specialist, who was one of the only non-GMs in the qualifier, asking me how many games I played and how many points I had. He kept repeating his question, as he simply couldn’t believe the answer. I offered him to play, but he ran away. Of course I caught him later and finished him off with a characteristic 2-0. Garry had never seen 3. f3! and consumed over a minute trying to understand how to deal with this reasonably smart move order discovered by my coach Vitaly. He liked it so much that soon afterwards he played it himself in a match against Curt Hansen, winning a nice game. While writing this comment I noticed that Anand also took up this move in his match against Mikhail Gurevich after failing to equalize against me in Wijk Aan Zee 1990.

3... ♖bd7 4. c4 e5 5. d5 ♖e7 6. ♖e3

Position after: 6. ♖e3

The position is similar to the Saemisch King’s Indian, except Black’s Bishop is not fianchettoed. Considering that Black needs some positional compensation for surrendering space on the queenside, it seems Black would be better off with the Bishop on g7 where it could become active if the game opened up.

6... c6 7. ♖c3 a6

Position after: 7. ♖c3 a6

Garry is a bit reluctant to show his hand as the position is quite new for him. Probably castling immediately would be a sounder decision.
8. \( \text{d3} \)

Garry is reluctant to spend time to transfer his Bishop to g7, and prepares his only remaining counterplay f5 with the Knight on g7. I prepare for the opening up of the position.

12. \( \text{h1!} \)

A strong prophylactic move, aiming to open up the position with g4 when the possibility arises.

12... f5 13. exf5

13... gxf5?

This turns out to be an inaccuracy. Capturing correctly on f5 is an art in the King’s Indian and similar structures. Here, surrendering the e4-square is not as important, as Black stands to grab my e3 Bishop after capturing with the Knight. After 13... \( \text{xf5} \) I would have to choose between the passive 14. \( \text{f2?} \) when Black would be close to equality after 14... \( \text{g5!} \) 15. \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{f6} \), or the real test of the position: 14. \( \text{xf5}! \) gxf5
15. \( \textbf{h6} \) \( \textbf{f6} \) 16. \( \textbf{g4} \) \( \textbf{b6} \) 17. \( \textbf{b3} \) with some advantage for White.

14. \( \textbf{f4} \)

Considering Black's misplaced Bishop on e7, it was even stronger to play 14. \( \textbf{h6} \) \( \textbf{e8} \) 15. \( \textbf{g4} \) e4 16. \( \textbf{fxe4} \) fxg4 17. \( \textbf{g3} \) e5 18. \( \textbf{e2} \) c5 19. \( \textbf{xf8+} \) \( \textbf{xf8} \) 20. \( \textbf{f1} \) with the initiative.

14... e4 15. \( \textbf{c2} \) c5

It may have been objectively better to play 15... \( \textbf{f6} \) keeping the pawn structure fluid, but Garry was clearly worried that after 16. b4 he would be eventually saddled with a weak d6 pawn.

16. \( \textbf{g4!} \)

I am carrying out the typical plan for White in these positions - blowing up the kingside for my pieces to come in.

16... \( \textbf{fxg4} \) 17. \( \textbf{xe4} \) \( \textbf{f6} \)

Black's options here would not make much difference. On 17... b5 I could simply play 18. b3, and if Black ever contested the b-file with his Rook, I could fight for it with \( \textbf{b1} \). On 17... \( \textbf{f5} \) I would continue by attack with 18. \( \textbf{2g3} \) \( \textbf{xe3} \) 19. \( \textbf{xe3} \) \( \textbf{f6} \) 20. \( \textbf{g5} \) and it's quite clear that the Knights are going to crush through to the King.

18. \( \textbf{2g3} \) \( \textbf{xe4} \) 19. \( \textbf{xe4} \)

19... \( \textbf{f6?} \)

This was inaccurate. It was important to create a diversion with 19... b5! here. After 19... b5 I could play in many different ways, but Black would get some counterplay in all cases. One example is:

20. \( \textbf{c2} \) h5 21. \( \textbf{xc5!} \) dxc5 22. d6 \( \textbf{a7} \) 23. dxe7 \( \textbf{xe7} \) 24. d1 \( \textbf{b6} \) 25. \( \textbf{d5+} \) \( \textbf{h8} \) 26. f5 \( \textbf{ee8} \) 27. b4 h4 28. f6 \( \textbf{xf6} \) 29. bxc5 \( \textbf{xf1+} \) 30. \( \textbf{xf1} \) \( \textbf{h6} \) 31. \( \textbf{e2} \) bxc4 32. c6 \( \textbf{f5} \) 33. \( \textbf{c3+} \) \( \textbf{g7} \) 34. \( \textbf{xc4} \) \( \textbf{xc3} \) 35. \( \textbf{xc3} \) g3 and Black somehow survives.

20. \( \textbf{c2!} \)
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After this Black is forced to weaken his kingside and my advantage becomes obvious.

20... h5?

Objectively this move already loses, but finding the killing shot in a blitz game was a challenge I was not up to. Still, even after the relatively better 20... h8 21. a7h7 a7xb2 22. a7ab1 a7e7 23. a7fe1 a7f6 24. a7xc5 Black is in dire straits.

21. a7g6?

Missing the deadly attacking idea 21. a7h7+ a7h8 22. a7g6! when there is simply no defence to a7h6.

21... h4

Black’s best chance lay in taking out the g3-Knight with 21... a7h4! 22. a7xh5 a7xh5 23. a7xh5 a7f5 24. a7e2 a7e4+ 25. a7g1 a7f6 26. a7xg4+ a7g7 27. a7ad1 when Black’s activity partially compensates for the absence of two pawns! Meanwhile after 22. f5!? a7xg3 I could still launch a dangerous attack with 23. f6! a7e5 24. f7xg7 a7xg7! (24... a7xg7 25. a7xh5 is game over.) 25. a7e2! a7f3 26. a7xh5 a7f6 27. a7xf3 a7xf3 28. a7xf3 gxf3 29. a7xf3 a7xb2 30. a7g1+, but after all the fun White is only slightly better in this endgame.

22. a7h5

Not a bad move under the circumstances, though the killer idea 22. a7h7+ a7h8 23. a7g6! would still win. After 23... hxg3 24. a7h6 a7f7 25. a7g6+ a7g8 26. a7h7+ a7f8 27. a7d4!

27... cxd4 28. a7ae1 Black’s King cannot escape the mating net.
22... b5

Understandably, Garry wants to create counterplay, but concentrating on defence with 22... \( \mathbb{Q} \)xh5 23. \( \mathbb{Q} \)xh5 \( \mathbb{Q} \)g7 24. f5 g3 25. \( \mathbb{Q} \)g6 and only now 25... b5 may have been better, though I would still have the edge after 26. \( \mathbb{Q} \)ae1! \( \mathbb{Q} \)f6 27. b3 bxc4 28. bxc4

23. f5 bxc4 24. \( \mathbb{Q} \)xc4

\( \mathbb{Q} \)b7

This looks like an option that complicates White's life, but in fact it's now easier to play. The best choice would have been 24... \( \mathbb{Q} \)xh5 25. \( \mathbb{Q} \)xh5 \( \mathbb{Q} \)a7 (instead after 25... g3, 26. \( \mathbb{Q} \)g4+ \( \mathbb{Q} \)g7 27. \( \mathbb{Q} \)g5 \( \mathbb{Q} \)b6 28. \( \mathbb{Q} \)ab1 and White's threats are stronger) 26. \( \mathbb{Q} \)xg4+ \( \mathbb{Q} \)g7 27. \( \mathbb{Q} \)g6 \( \mathbb{Q} \)xb2 and although White is better, there are still problems to be resolved.

25. \( \mathbb{Q} \)ad1!

Over-protection of a weak point is your road to success, to paraphrase Nimzowitsch.

25... \( \mathbb{Q} \)e7

Garry is in trouble and he is panicking. After 25... \( \mathbb{Q} \)xh5 26. \( \mathbb{Q} \)xh5 g3 27. \( \mathbb{Q} \)g4+ \( \mathbb{Q} \)g7 28. \( \mathbb{Q} \)g5 \( \mathbb{Q} \)d7 29. \( \mathbb{Q} \)xh4 gxf2 30. \( \mathbb{Q} \)xe1 \( \mathbb{Q} \)xf2+ 31. \( \mathbb{Q} \)xf2 \( \mathbb{Q} \)ab8 32. \( \mathbb{Q} \)e7 \( \mathbb{Q} \)xb2+ 33. \( \mathbb{Q} \)h3 my threats would be decisive.

26. \( \mathbb{Q} \)h6

A strange decision. The simplifying 26. \( \mathbb{Q} \)xf6+ \( \mathbb{Q} \)xf6 27. \( \mathbb{Q} \)xg4 would be completely decisive, as I am threatening \( \mathbb{Q} \)g5 followed by f6 or \( \mathbb{Q} \)xh4 and \( \mathbb{Q} \)h7 mate.

26... \( \mathbb{Q} \)e5 27. \( \mathbb{Q} \)fe1

In mutual time-trouble, I spotted the Bishop on b7.
27... \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}wxb2} 28. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}b1} \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}a3} 29. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xf6+} \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xf6}

Position after: 29... \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xf6}

30. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xb7}?

Not the best.

After \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}zwischenzug} 30. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}e3}! Black would just resign, as there's no counterplay starting with \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}f3} next move.

30... \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}f3+} 31. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}g1} \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xf5} 32. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}h7+} \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}h8} 33. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xf5}?

With my flag rising considerably, my instincts took over, and all thinking seized.

After 33. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}f1}! Black would be lucky to play on after 33... \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xh6} 34. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xf3} \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xf3} 35. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}c2} when the end would be near around the h7-square.

33... \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xf5} 34. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}e2} c4

Position after: 34... c4

35. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xf3}

This is not bad, although the engines announce mate in 12 after 35. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}g7}, while the sounder looking 35. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}e8} is "only" mate in 18.

35... \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}xf3} 36. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}f2}

Going for mate with 36. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}ee7} would get there in 21 moves after the best series according to Komodo.

36... \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}g8}

Position after: 36... \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}g8}

37. \textit{\textbf{\textvisiblespace}g1}??

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This is just hand motion! Black has no mating threats, so why not just double on the 7th rank and see what gives? Now I am just much better.

37... \textit{gxg1} 38. \textit{hxg1} \textit{xd5} 39. \textit{f2} \textit{d3} 40. \textit{b6} d5 41. \textit{xa6} c3

Position after: 41... c3

42. \textit{c6}?

This should have led to an objectively drawn position. The best, although not the only move, was 42. \textit{f4} to defend the h2 pawn, then after 42... d4 43. a4 \textit{d2+} 44. \textit{xf3} \textit{a2} 45. \textit{e4} c2 46. \textit{c6} I will pick up all the pawns, winning as in the game.

42... d4?

Very short on time, Garry misses his chance to draw! After 42... \textit{d2+} 43. \textit{xf3} \textit{hxh2} 44. a4 d4 45. \textit{g5} h3 46. \textit{f6+} \textit{h7} 47. \textit{xd4} \textit{a2} 48. \textit{xc3} h2 49. \textit{c1} \textit{xa4} 50. \textit{e5} Black would still have a challenge of making a draw in this ending with hanging flags, but at least theoretically the position would be drawn.

43. a4?

And once again I miss the mark. Defending the h2-pawn was of paramount importance. After 43. \textit{f4} I would still be winning.

43... \textit{h7}?

Here it is – the final mistake! After 43... \textit{d2+} it was still a draw. We both simply missed this tactic.

44. \textit{f4}!
Finally winning.

44... $\text{d}1 45. \text{xf}3 \text{a}1 46. \text{c}4 \text{d}1 \\
47. \text{e}4 \text{d}3 48. \text{xc}3 \text{d}2 49. \text{d}3 \text{a}1 \\
50. \text{xd}2 \text{xa}4 51. \text{c}4 \\
51... \text{a}3+ 52. \text{c}3 \text{g}6 53. \text{h}4 \text{f}5 \\

And with lightning speed I finished off the game, so that even the DGT boards couldn't get all the notation. It felt good to beat my idol in the first ever game against him.

1-0
Kasparov, Garry (2750)
Dlugy, Maxim (2550)
Saint John 1988

1. c4 ¤f6 2. ¤c3 g6

I was in a must win situation against a player who hardly lost any games with the White pieces.

The only chance I had was to play an opening where most pieces remain on the board for as long as possible.

With no chance for my favorite Queen's Gambit Accepted, I had to make up theory as I went.

I did the same thing during my 4 game exhibition match with Jonathan Speelman played during the 1986 K-K match.

I won that game to even the match, and now was trying to do the same against one of the main protagonists!

3. e4 d6 4. d4 ¤g7 5. ¤e2 0-0 6. ¤f3 ¤g4

I did not know the theory of this variation, and just relied on my common sense to find reasonable moves.

I realized that I will not be equalizing in the opening, so I tried to move the main fight to the middlegame.

7. ¤e3 ¤bd7

A rare though not completely ridiculous move. I am ready to part with my light-squared Bishop, but will keep flexibility in determining the pawn structure in the centre and on the queenside.

8. h3

It's interesting that some years later I won a nice game against Fred Lindsay, a solid U.S. master, playing the same way. That game went 8. ¤d2 ¤xe2 9. ¤xe2 e5 10. d5 ¤h5 11. g3 a6 12. 0-0 ¤e8 13. f3 f5 14. ¤f2 ¤hf6 15. b4 ¤h6 16. ¤b3 ¤h5 17. ¤d3 fx4 18. fx4 ¤df6 19. ¤g2 ¤e7 20. c5 ¤g4 21. ¤g1 ¤g5 22. ¤h1 ¤e3 23. ¤xe3 ¤xe3 24. ¤xe3 ¤xe3 25. ¤ae1 ¤f2 26. ¤d1 b6 27. c6 ¤e3 28. ¤g2 b5 29. ¤f3 ¤xf3 30. ¤xf3 ¤b6 31. ¤g2 ¤f8 32. ¤f1 ¤f6 33. ¤d2 ¤e3 34. ¤db1 ¤g7 35. h3 ¤d4 36. ¤f3 ¤b8 37. ¤f1 h5 38. ¤e2 h4 39. g4 ¤h7 40. ¤d2 ¤g5 41. ¤d3 ¤f8 42. ¤d1 ¤f4 43. ¤a3 ¤f6 44. ¤xa6 ¤xh3 45. ¤a5 ¤g1+ 46. ¤d3 h3 47. ¤a8 ¤g7 48. ¤c8 ¤b6
Fred Lindsay - Maxim Dlugy National Open, Las Vegas 1993 0-1.
8... \( \text{xf3} \) 9. \( \text{xf3} \) c6!

Position after: 9... c6!

When playing for a win, keeping the pawn structure as fluid as possible is an important component of forcing your opponent to think.

10. 0-0 a6 11. \( \text{c1 e5} \) 12. d5

Keeping the tension in the centre is not so easy for White. After 12. \( \text{d2 exd4} \) 13. \( \text{xd4 e8} \) 14. \( \text{fd1 e7} \) the Bishop on f3 is slightly misplaced, giving Black a reasonable position.

12... c5 13. a3 \( \text{e8} \) 14. b4 \( \text{c7} \) 15. \( \text{b3 b6} \)

typical blitz trick. I am hinting that I want to recapture with the b-pawn on c5, when I am actually planning something completely different.

16. bxc5?

A positional concession. Garry would be better off continuing to improve his position with let's say 16. \( \text{e2} \) before deciding when to capture on c5.

16... dxc5!

Clearly the sharpest continuation and therefore the best under the circumstances. My Knight on d6, will be targeting c4 and e4 and supporting the f5-advance. Hopefully there won't be any endgame to play!
17. h4

A well-known way of opening up the game.

Garry realizes that with the open h-file, only the side with the space advantage and the Bishops would be likely to use it. I must find tactics to prove him wrong.

17... \( \texttt{d6} \) 18. h5 f5

Another strange move under the circumstances. Instead of avoiding confrontation by playing 20. \( \texttt{d2} \), Kasparov invites it, judging that with the Bishop on g2 he can't get mated. But if the Bishop is on g2, who will defend the c4-pawn?

20... b5!

Objectively a little dubious, but I had no nerve to prepare this with 20... \( \texttt{ab8} \) when after 21. a4 f4 22. \( \texttt{d2} \) f6 the position become quite unclear. Black gets excellent dark square play after 23. gxf4 \( \texttt{e7} \) 24. \( \texttt{ce1} \) h5 25. \( \texttt{xh5} \) gxf5 26. f5 \( \texttt{h4} \).

21. cxb5 f4 22. \( \texttt{d2} \) c4

Garry himself once explained that there is a chess truth that if you attack your opponent 10 times in a row, he is bound to make a mistake in defending. I assume in blitz that number should be lower.

23. \( \texttt{b4} \)?
Chapter 14

There it is – a mistake!

After the strong zwischenzug 23. b6! ∆xb6 24. ♕c2 ♕d7 25. ∆a4 fxg3 26. fxg3 ♕f6 27. ♕g2, White would be better.

23... a5?

I keep attacking, though after the objectively strongest 23... ♕ab8 24. a4 ∆c5 25. ∆b1 ♕b3 White should already sacrifice the exchange with 26. ♕xb3 cxb3 27. ♕xb3 resulting in an unclear position after 27... fxg3.

24. ♕b1 ∆c5

...opening up the path for the Queen to h7 and h2. White keeps the balance with 29. ♕g2! ♕xe1 30. ♕xe1 ∆c5 31. b6 ♕b7 32. ♕h1 ♕g7 33. ♕b5 ♕xb6 34. ♕xd6 ♕xd6 35. ♕b5 with still an unclear position.

25. b6

Even now, it’s hard to say what the best move is in this crazy position.

The line initially liked by Komodo loses it’s steam after 25. ♕g4 ♕b3 and now 26. ♕cd1 ♕h6 27. ♕e1 fxg3 28. f3 ♕d2!!

25... ♕f7?

My bad! It was essential to stay out of the way of White’s light-squared Bishop and play 25... ♕d8 or some other Queen move (...♕b7, ...♕b8). Then after 26. ♕g4 ♕b8 27. ♕c2 ♕xb6 28. ♕a4 ♕xa4 29. ♕xa4 ♕xe4 30. ♕xa5 fxg3 31. fxg3 ♕g5 32. ♕xb6 ♕xg4 33. ♕xf8+ ♕xf8 34. ♕xc4 ♕xg3+ 35. ♕h1 ♕h3+ perpetual check could result. Not the result I wanted!
26. \( \text{b5! } \text{xb5} \) 27. \( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{b3} \) 28. \( \text{g4!} \)

The reason for the problem with my 25th move is now clear. I need to lose a crucial tempo.

28... \( \text{e7?} \)

This should have lost the game. It was critical to play 28... \( \text{f6} \) when White does not have a big edge after the simple 29. \( \text{cd1 } \text{xd2} \) 30. \( \text{xd2 } \text{fg3} \) 31. \( \text{f3? } \text{h6!} \) 32. \( \text{e2 } \text{h4} \) 33. \( \text{c5} \)

...because of the extremely sneaky 33... \( \text{f7!!} \) 34. \( \text{e6 } \text{g7} \) 35. \( \text{xf7 } \text{e3+} \) 36. \( \text{xe3 } \text{h8} \) with mate to follow shortly. Therefore, White would have to find 31. \( \text{xc4! } \text{gxf2+} \) 32. \( \text{dx} \text{f2 } \text{xb6} \) 33. \( \text{c6! } \text{e3} \) 34. \( \text{xg6 } \text{f6} \) 35. \( \text{e6+ } \text{h8} \) 36. \( \text{h5+ } \text{h6} \) 37. \( \text{f3} \) with an advantage.

29. \( \text{cd1?!} \)

Not the best. The aggressive 29. \( \text{d6! } \text{f7} \) 30. \( \text{xc4 } \text{xd2} \) 31. \( \text{c7} \) would do the trick, as White picks up the Knight with \( \text{d5} \) check next.

29... \( \text{fxg3} \) 30. \( \text{e6+ } \text{h8} \) 31. \( \text{g2??} \)

A seemingly winning move, with an 'almost' unstoppable threat of \( \text{h1}. \) When I saw this move, I remember
thinking – "it's all over". Then I saw the refutation.

31... \( \text{h4} \) 32. \( \text{fxg3} \)

Garry missed that on the planned 32. \( \text{h1} \) I have 32... \( \text{xf2+} \) 33. \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{h2} \) mating White instead.

32... \( \text{xe4+} \) 33. \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{d4} \)

Suddenly the game is finished. My pieces dominate.

34. \( \text{d7} \) \( \text{f3+} \) 35. \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xf3} \)

0-1

I was shocked as much as the next guy. I just beat one of the best players in the history of chess in a must-win situation with Black! Wow! Unfortunately the end was not as sweet, as you already know.

After that, Garry himself got eliminated by Kiril Georgiev when he couldn't get over his nerves after stalemating Kiril with a Queen and Bishop against a lone King. Some time after that match, Dmitry Gurevich offered to take me up to Garry's room to introduce me properly.

Garry was still fuming after losing 50,000$ in one move, as he put it. I offered to play him some two minute chess – which he has never played. I won the first two games, and he came back by winning three. “I am not a bad student, right?,” he asked and I had to admit he wasn’t! This probably began our friendship, and on the way back from St. John, Canada, he was on the same plane with me going to New York. At one point, while filling out the costumes declaration, he asked how to spell New Hampshire. I spelled it, but was curious why he would ask for that spelling.


I said that I am ready to bet 20$, because I don't think I should penalize him too hard for this strange lapse. I walked over to Andrew Page, his agent at the time, and asked him to inform his client that he just lost 20$. When the bet was officially won by me, Garry wondered
which currency we actually bet in. “Technically, we could still be over Canada’s border.” The stewardess confirmed it was still Canada, and I pocketed $20 Canadian for future use.

In October 1989, an event called the Kasparov Challenge was organized to give top U.S. players the opportunity to cross swords with the World Champion. I was eliminated from the qualifier by Gata Kamsky, who went on to play a two game televised match with Garry. As Garry and I were already good friends, with him supporting my election to the GMA Board, I gave him the characteristics of Gata as a chess player and walked into the playing hall together with him. This immediately placed me into the enemy list of Gata’s father, Rustam, as a Kasparov collaborator. Garry won that match by winning one and drawing one game, and the following year invited me and my family to his preparation camp on Martha’s Vineyard a couple of weeks before his 1990 match with Anatoly Karpov.

Garry was in amazing form, and besides analyzing some opening lines, we would play blitz matches for a small $5 or $10 wage, where I would need to score 2 points to a win a 6 game match. The final score in those matches was clearly in his favor!

At one point I showed Garry some of my ideas on the Black side of the English in the Keres-Parma Variation. I was amazed at the speed with which he suggested a completely new idea with a pawn sacrifice!

After the opening moves:

1. c4 c5 2. g3 3. d4 4. g5 d5 5. cxd5 cxd5 6. g2 e7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. d4 c6 9. e4 b6

White has two major ways to go. Besides 10. d5 with quite complicated variations, there is the simplifying but venomous 10. dxc5 played against me by Lajos Portisch, Lev Albur and Jan Smejkal. Let’s see.

10. dxc5 bxc5 11. cxd1 a5 12. e5

Instead of this, Portisch played 12. f4 and offered a draw, which I accepted after 12... f6! 13. a1 e5 14. b5 exf4 15. xc5 because he found himself actually disliking his position. Here, Zaltsman and I came up with a novelty.

12... b4

Position after: 12... b4
Chapter 14

We couldn't quite equalize for Black after the normal 12... c4 13. e1 when the Rook is ready to lift to e4 and came up with this strong-looking waiting move.

This key idea was demonstrated in my game with Jan Smejkal.

After 13. f1 xc3 14. bxc3 d7 15. b1 b8! I threatened to reorganize my pieces with the Bishop coming to c6, and White preferred to take the repetition with 16. d4 c6 17. f3 b8 18. d4.

When I showed this to Garry, he looked for a minute or two and offered a pawn sacrifice:

13. e4 c4 14. b3! dxe5 15. xe5 xe5 16. e3!

I was stunned. It was hard to believe Black couldn't equalize here, as he has a full pawn extra without any pawn weaknesses. However, Garry's intuitive understanding of the initiative and development advantage was right! Even with the mighty engine on my side, I am still struggling to prove full equality here even after the best 16... c6 when White has a number of promising continuations to choose from.

In some weeks, when the 1990 World Championship match moved to Lyon from New York for the second half, I was charged as the newly elected President of the United States Chess Federation to visit the match and improve our relations with FIDE, and everyone in general. When I got to Lyon, I was jetlagged and tired from the trip, but naturally accepted Garry's invitation to come to his bunker in a beautiful house in Lyon. Lev Alburt, who was a close friend, was also invited. After dinner, Garry, who had just drawn a tough game with the white pieces to clinch the title at 12-10 in the 24 game match, asked me to play blitz. Frankly, I was shocked. Even though, as the reader may have gathered from an earlier chapter, I do not adhere to Botvinnik's ideas about the bad effects of blitz, it seemed like that was slightly inappropriate preparation for the potentially final game of the match. Incredulously, I agreed, as of course being challenged to a match by the reigning World Champion who was 2 points ahead against another chess legend was quite an honor for me. I would be surprised if there were many people in the world who would find themselves in such a position!
The match started with me losing the first game. I came back with a 3 game winning streak – my personal record against Garry in all our matches! Only recently, upon decoding my 30 year old computer, did I actually realize that all the games played in that training match were recorded by me from memory upon getting back to my hotel. At the end, the match ended when Garry was ahead 5-4, so he could feel himself a winner. I was certainly not interested in having him lose sleep over this training session. The idea, after all, was for him to do well in his next game. Let's take a look at a couple of those games and how they related to the actual match.

Dlugy, Maxim
Kasparov, Garry (2800)
Lyon 1990 (2)

1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6
5. f3 0-0 6. ♘e3 e5 7. d5 ♗h5 8. ♘d2 f5 9. 0-0-0 a6 10. ♘d3 b5

Position after: 10... b5

In his notes to the 21st game of the 1990 match, in his book 'Kasparov vs. Karpov 1988-2009' Garry comments that besides 10... c5 as he actually played in that game, his team also studied 10... b5, but "that in fact, alas, it's not so simple". I was trying to prove this as well.

11. cxb5 ♗f4 12. ♘c4 axb5 13. ♘xb5 ♘d7 14. g3

I didn't want to help Black develop by capturing on d7, or lose a tempo by retreated, though perhaps leaving the Bishops on with 14. ♘c4 was even stronger.

14... ♗h5 15. ♘b1 ♘xb5 16. ♘xb5
16... \textit{\textbf{\texttt{d7}}}

An inaccuracy. Black has to act quickly and resolutely here to get good compensation for the pawn.

Now was the time to find a target in my Bishop on e3. After 16... fxe4 17. fxe4 \textit{\texttt{f6}} 18. \textit{\texttt{c3}} \textit{\texttt{g4}} 19. \textit{\texttt{h3}} \textit{\texttt{c8}} 20. \textit{\texttt{f2}} \textit{\texttt{xe3}} 21. \textit{\texttt{xe3}} \textit{\texttt{d7}} Black may have some compensation on the dark squares, though I am doubtful that he can reach full equality. Perhaps Garry wanted to keep it complicated for now.

17. \textit{\texttt{e2}} \textit{\texttt{b8}}

Some additional complications could be had with 17... f4 18. gxf4 \textit{\texttt{b8}} 19. \textit{\texttt{ec3}} \textit{\texttt{xf4}} 20. \textit{\texttt{c2}} but the sad state of Black's g7-Bishop gives White a long-term strategic advantage.

18. \textit{\texttt{d3}} \textit{\texttt{hf6}} 19. \textit{\texttt{ec3}} fxe4 20. fxe4 \textit{\texttt{g4}}

21. \textit{\texttt{hf1}}!

A good practical decision. I know how dangerous it is to surrender the initiative to Kasparov. I decided to give back the pawn but keep the initiative for myself.

The engines recommend 21. \textit{\texttt{g1}} \textit{\texttt{f2}} 22. \textit{\texttt{xf2}} \textit{\texttt{xf2}} 23. \textit{\texttt{df1}} \textit{\texttt{c5}} 24. \textit{\texttt{e3}} \textit{\texttt{xf1+}} 25. \textit{\texttt{xf1}} \textit{\texttt{a4}} 26. \textit{\texttt{f2}}! instead, when Black doesn't have enough for the pawn.

21... \textit{\texttt{xf1}} 22. \textit{\texttt{xf1}} \textit{\texttt{xh2}} 23. \textit{\texttt{c1}}

I spot a new target - the pawn on c7.
The drawings of Maxim Dlugy

When I was about seven years old, my uncle, who was an accomplished artist, decided to teach my cousin and me how to paint. I remember not only enjoying his lessons in watercolor painting, but also the funny faces he drew. I started drawing these faces and trying on different forms until I became addicted to doodling something even during business meetings.

When I was about 30 years old I decided to try my hand at some drawings with colored pencils.

I liked the various spontaneous images that were created by my hand, and eventually decided to dedicate an entire album to such pieces of work. As the images came to be more and more complex, I felt the need to take up more space and to spice them up with more vibrant colors. That got me into drawing with markers. The space I was taking up with my drawings kept expanding and I was becoming less and less fearful of spoiling them with some flawed strokes, as I started to realize that it is always possible to create an interesting combination of form and color.

As my imagination and creative juices started to flow, I realized that I can try my hand at deciding the subject matter instead of the images randomly coming from my thoughts. This created a somewhat less chaotic assemblage of images that started to conform to certain symbols and storylines.

Finally, during the Gelfand-Anand World Chess Championship match in Moscow, I showed the photos of my works to Andrey Filatov, the chief organizer and sponsor of the match, and he gave me the green light to exhibit my works at the site of the match at the prestigious Tretyakov Gallery. I am extremely grateful to him for that gesture.

My mother, who also found herself as an artist after she retired from medicine, named the way that I paint “maximatism” (for obvious reasons). I wrote an interesting article about this in the New In Chess magazine in 2014, explaining the way that it works.

I do hope the reader enjoys my creations as much as I do myself!

Maxim
Balance
Barcelona
Big Snail
Drain Your Brain
Noah's Arc
Global Chess
Year of the Snake
Gypsy Mama
Lady Macbeth
Lickety good
MAXIMATÍSMO 16.V.13

Maximatismo
Maze of Love
Pawns
Rubbing shoulders with the Greats

23... \(\texttt{\text{T}g4}\) 24. \(\texttt{\text{T}g1}\) \(\texttt{\text{h}6}\) 25. \(\texttt{\text{c}2}\) \(\texttt{\text{b}7}\) 26. \(\texttt{\text{c}4}\)

Tying Black to the defence of the \textit{c}­­pawn immediately with 26. \(\texttt{\text{d}d1!}\) was stronger. After 26... \(\texttt{\text{c}8}\) 27. \(\texttt{\text{c}4}\) \(\texttt{\text{a}6}\) 28. \(\texttt{\text{e}2}\) \(\texttt{\text{gf}6}\) 29. \(\texttt{\text{c}6}\) \(\texttt{\text{b}7}\) 30. a4! my advantage would be more or less obvi­ous.

26... \(\texttt{\text{e}3}\)

The position is actually quite interesting for understanding principles of attack and counterattack in chess. Black has the weakness on \textit{c}7 and a potentially weak King, but can try to muster up some threats against my King. If I can keep Black's Knight in the arrears, I will gradually be able to either create dangerous threats or push my queenside pawns after tying Black up to defence.

27. \(\texttt{\text{e}2!}\)?

Again trying to reduce any kind of seri­ous counterplay. Of course after 27. \(\texttt{\text{c}7!}\) \(\texttt{\text{c}7}\) 28. \(\texttt{\text{x}c7}\) \(\texttt{\text{c}8}\) 29. \(\texttt{\text{x}e3}\) \(\texttt{\text{x}e3}\) 30. \(\texttt{\text{e}2}\) \(\texttt{\text{f}1}\) 31. \(\texttt{\text{b}5}\) \(\texttt{\text{x}g3}\) 32. \(\texttt{\text{g}2}\) \(\texttt{\text{h}5}\) 33. \(\texttt{x}d6\) I would be clearly better in this upcoming race thanks to the extra \textit{d}-pawn, but the connected nature of Black's passers would force me at some point to calculate complex tactics, which I was trying to avoid against Garry.

27... \(\texttt{\text{x}g1}\) 28. \(\texttt{\text{x}g4}\) \(\texttt{\text{f}8}\) 29. \(\texttt{\text{g}5}\)

As it turns out, this is a decisive mistake. Garry had to resort to passive defence with 29... \(\texttt{\text{e}8}\) when I could try to slowly increase my advantage by rep­­ositioning my Rook with 30. \(\texttt{\text{g}4}\) \(\texttt{\text{e}7}\) 31. \(\texttt{\text{c}1}\) \(\texttt{\text{c}5}\) 32. \(\texttt{\text{f}1}\).

30. a4!

Suddenly my Queen enters \textit{e}7 with crushing effect.

30... \(\texttt{\text{d}4}\)
The characteristic sac on a4 would not work here, even in Garry's hands. After 30... \( \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{e}}}a4 31. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}d6! cxd6 32. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}xa4} \) it's just not that interesting.

\[
31. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}e7 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{b}b6 32. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}xc7 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{a}a7 33. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{d}b5}}} \)\right)}\right)}\right)}\right)}\right)}
\]

\[
\text{Position after: 33. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{d}b5}}} \right)
\]

Garry resigned here, but in a blitz game it was probably worth trying 33... \( \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}xb2 34. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}xd6 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}xd6 35. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{b}}}xd6}} \)\right)

1-0

My next win with the White pieces against Garry's King's Indian was a fluke, as I misplayed the opening and found myself in trouble.

\[
13. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{b}b6}} \right)
\]

This move had been played exclusively in this position, including the previously quoted game 21 of the 1990 World Championship Match. I would like to point out that the engines suggestion of 13. exf5 gxf5 14. \( \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}h3!}} \) could be quite annoying as by threatening \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}g5} White is forcing Black to waste time by vacating the g8-square for his Bishop with \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}h8}. After 14... \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}h8} 15. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{b}b6! e4}} \) doesn't quite work after 16. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}xa8 exd3 17. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{b}b6 f4}} 18. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}f2 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}e5} 19. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}d4} \) and so Black will need to back down into a worse position.

\[
13... \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}d7}} 14. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}e2}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}}}ac8 15. \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsuperscript{c}b1}}} \right)
\]
A novelty compared to the game Garry just finished playing a couple of days earlier. He played 15... $f7 against Kar­pov and 20 years later suggested 15... $f6 as a slight improvement here.

16. $h1

This seemed natural to me during a blitz game, as it may have seemed to Karpov who played the same move against Gar­ry’s 15... $f7. Still, perhaps it was time to start a typical Saemisch plan with 16. $g3 $f6 17. h4 trying to prove that the h-file is good for something. After 17... $xd5 18. cxd5 $e7 19. h5 $f4 20. h6 $xh6 21. $xh6 fxg3 22. f4 $eg8 23. $h3 $g4 24. fxe5 $xe5 25. $d4 $f6 26. $xe5 $xe5 27. $xg3 White has a slight advantage.

16... $f7 17. $ec3

This natural move seemed best to me, and is certainly better than Karpov’s 17. $c2, but as we have actually trans­posed to the match game now, Garry analyzes Spassky’s suggestion 17. $g3 and concludes that White has a marked advantage. I agree.

17... $f6

18. $xf6?

This is simply wrong. I got to thinking about superfluous Knights - defined as two Knights vying for the same square by Mark Dvoretzky, and decided to get rid of one of them. The problem is that Black’s cramped status is immediately lifted now, and he has more space for maneuvering his pieces, restoring equality in the position. It was im­portant to keep up the pressure with moves such as 18. $f2, 18. $f1, or 18. b3, forcing Black to play a waiting game as well.

18... $xf6 19. $d5?!

Another inaccuracy. My reluctance to play b3 is evident here. But weakening my King in this way, would be the least
of the evils. Now Black gets rid of his remaining bad piece.

19... \( \text{	exttt{d8!}} \)

I didn't find the best defence. After 22. \( \text{	exttt{f1! \texttt{xc4}} \text{ 23. \texttt{xd4 \texttt{xa2+}} \text{ 24. \texttt{a1 \texttt{b3}}} \text{ 25. \texttt{e3! \texttt{xd1}} \text{ 26. \texttt{xd1}}}} \) Black is not even necessarily better.

22... \( \text{	exttt{xc4}} \text{ 23. \texttt{xc4 \texttt{xc4}}} \text{ 24. \texttt{d3}} \)

Certainly when it rains – it pours! My brain switched off! This is madness.

I simply forgot that a5 is a protected square. The position was still level and after 20. \( \text{	exttt{f4! \texttt{fxe4}} \text{ 21. \texttt{xe4 \texttt{xb6}}} \text{ 22. \texttt{xb6 \texttt{cd8}}} \text{ 23. \texttt{xc6 bxc6}} \text{ 24. \texttt{f5 dxe5}} \text{ 25. \texttt{c3}} \) for example, chances would be even.

20... \( \text{	exttt{a5}} \text{ 21. \texttt{c3 d4}} \)

Garry rushed to get his reward. It was stronger to play 21... \( \text{f4} \text{ 22. \texttt{f2 b5}} \) with a closed centre and a gradual demolition of my queenside.

22. \( \text{	exttt{c1}} \)

24... \( \text{	exttt{xc3}} \)

The position is actually a bit tricky. As Black wins a pawn, but opens up the game, his minuses – the weak d-pawn and the somewhat open position of the King – come to light and the advantage dissipates.

It was important to keep the centre closed with 24... \( \text{f4} \text{ 25. \texttt{xd4 \texttt{xd4}}} \text{ 26. \texttt{e2 d5}} \text{ 27. \texttt{exd5 \texttt{e8}}} \text{ 28. \texttt{g3 \texttt{xc3}}} \text{ 29. \texttt{xc3 \texttt{xd5}} and this endgame may well be winnable.} \)

25. \( \text{	exttt{xc3}} \text{ 26. \texttt{xc3 \texttt{c6}}} \text{ 27. \texttt{d1}} \text{ 28. \texttt{fxe4 \texttt{f6}}} \text{ 29. \texttt{d2 \texttt{g4}}} \text{ 30. \texttt{xd6 \texttt{xe4+}}} \text{ 31. \texttt{a1 \texttt{f5}} \)
Rubbing shoulders with the Greats

I now have enough for the pawn and could come close to forcing the draw with 32. h6 g8 33. h4 f7 34. d7 xd7 35. xd7 d8 36. g7+ g8 37. xd8+ xd8 38. xe5 when Black's attempts to win the h-pawn with the King would likely fail as White's King will make way to the b-pawn.

32. g4 f6 33. c5 f7 34. a3 g7 35. c1

Black is better now and after 35... h4 36. d2 h3! 37. b1 a5 38. c1 h6 39. c4 g5 40. a2 f1 a classic time control tournament game could be eventually won with perfect play, but in a blitz game different things can happen. For example:

35... e6?? 36. h6+ g8 37. xc6!

It was a joy to save the game with such a shot.

1-0

Two months later I was to start my career in finance and in 1996, I invited Garry to become the Senior Adviser of an investment fund I started together with a partner. Russia Growth Fund invested in Russian companies and until Garry started his political career, he remained the Adviser for the Fund.
Anand

In 1984, at the Thessaloniki Chess Olympiad, Grandmaster Raymond Keene – whom I've already played a few times in tournaments in England – stopped me in the playing hall, where I was spectating and introduced me to a 15-year-old kid. “This is Viswanathan Anand – he will be a very strong chess player”, said Ray. I looked at the kid and said: “Alright, then let’s go to the skittles room and try you out”. As there were hardly any clocks available, I taught Vishy how to play instant chess, where you count 1-2-3, or just yell “go!” and your opponent must make a move, or lose the game. We played hundred of games and of course became friends. The following year at the World Junior Championship, I played Vishy in round 4 of the event, and missed a tactical shot early in the game to lose a piece for two pawns. I came close to drawing that game, but somehow in the end, Vishy had sufficient technique to finish me off. During the blitz tournament on the off day, Vishy offered me a draw on the Black side of a Four Pawns Benoni. I scoffed at the offer and took revenge for the loss.
A year later, Vishy came to the World Open in Philadelphia and we played a rapid game, discussed in the 5. ♙a4 Queen’s Indian section above. After the game, which took me three minutes to play, I had a talk with him, where I tried to warn him that if your opponent plays fast, it means he has really studied the opening. Against a well prepared opponent, you should either guess where the novelty is coming from or simply try to avoid playing into the main line, as the chance of an unpleasant surprise is much higher than the possibility that you know the opening better.

I really meant well, but in the game we played a few days earlier as leaders in the main World Open Tournament, it seems Vishy still didn't get my advice. Let's take a look:
Rubbing shoulders with the Greats

Anand, Viswanathan  (2405)
Dlugy, Maxim  (2545)

Philadelphia 1986

1. e4 c5 2. d3 f3 c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. xd4 f6 5. c3 d6 6. g5 e6 7. d2 a6 8. 0-0-0 h6

9. e3

9... b4

In the 20 years that I was studying chess by simply playing on popular online websites, I tried to refute White's positionally suspect play by preparing queenside castling.

I would instead play 11... a5 12. e2 b7 13. g3 0-0-0 no doubt surprising my opponents. While this may still be somewhat playable, after this continuation lost its surprise value, it became a little difficult to hold Black's position and I think Alexandra's choice is correct here.

11. e2 0-0 12. e5 h7 13. h4 a5 14. h3 c5 16. d2 a7!

The engines have made the previously unthinkable 9. xc6 the main line in this position. I was fortunate to be the joint commentator with Garry Kasparov during the game Wesley So against Alexandra Kosteniuk, which may have shaken White's trust in the attack. That game went:

9. xc6 bxc6 10. f4 d5 11. e3

Black prepares to defend the g7-square
by moving the f-pawn.

17. ♖d3

Here Garry and I both liked ...♕b7 and ...f6 but it was such a close choice, that he had to ask me which I preferred.

I chose 17... ♖b7, whereupon he agreed to take 17... f6 as his next moves guess. We were both surprised when Alexandra quickly played a third viable move...

17... f5

...sort of hinting that if Wesley doesn't take en passant, he may not get any attack on Black's King.

That turned out to be a nice psychological ploy, as White should keep the attack for later and try to run for the corner with his King.

18. exf6

White is still worse after 18. ♕b1 ♕b7 19. ♕e2 ♕b6 20. b3 ♖xf2 21. ♖c3 ♕a7 22. ♗a4 ♕d7 23. c3 c5 24. ♕xf2 ♖xa4 25. ♖c2, but not as much as after the move played.

18... ♖xf6 19. ♕f3

And Black could already have been much better by playing the natural 19... ♕b7

For example: 20. ♕b1 ♕b4 21. ♕e5 ♕d4! 22. ♖xd4 ♕e5 23. ♕c4+ ♕h8 with a winning position.

Instead, Black played 19... ♕g4, nevertheless getting a good position. The game ended in a draw.

9... ♕xd4 10. ♖xd4 b5 11. f3 ♘a5
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This move was created by an epiphany. For the longest time, I could not work out what to do if White plays 12. \( \text{\textit{f2}} \) here. I tried both 12... \( \text{\textit{b8}} \) and 12... \( \text{\textit{d7}} \) and simply didn’t like the positions I was getting.

That led me to delay playing 11... \( \text{\textit{a5}} \) in favor of 11... \( \text{\textit{e7}} \). There were problems with that delay as well, but there was nothing I could do.

Then one day while taking a shower a variation flashed in front of my eyes. I couldn’t believe it, and taken by it, I ran out without drying myself off to see it with my own two eyes on a real board. Amazingly, it checked out. Here it is:

11... \( \text{\textit{a5}} \) 12. \( \text{\textit{f2}} \) \( \text{\textit{b4}} \) 13. \( \text{\textit{b6}} \) \( \text{\textit{g5+}} \)

Now White can draw by repetition with 14. \( \text{\textit{e3}} \), but that’s a success story for the opening! What if White continues to attack with 14. \( \text{\textit{f4}} \)? Let’s see:

14. \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) \( \text{\textit{g6}} \)

A) 15. \( \text{\textit{f5}} \) \( \text{\textit{g5+}} \) 16. \( \text{\textit{e3}} \) and here I noticed the hidden shot 16... \( \text{\textit{g4!!}} \) which instantly wins the game.

Of course 15. \( \text{\textit{f5}} \) is a huge mistake, but Black should be OK if White sacrifices a piece with 15. \( \text{\textit{e5}} \) or 15. \( \text{\textit{d3}} \) in any case.

But is that so? Checking it with the engines now I noticed an amazing continuation for White...

B) White should play a temporary piece sacrifice: 15. \( \text{\textit{e5}}! \) \( \text{\textit{bxc3}} \) 16. \( \text{\textit{d3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xcb2+}} \) 17. \( \text{\textit{b1}} \) \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) 18. \( \text{\textit{d4}} \) \( \text{\textit{d5}} \) 19. \( \text{\textit{he1!}} \) when it’s not so easy to prove equality for Black.

Position after: 19. \( \text{\textit{he1!}} \)

B1) I tried 19... \( \text{\textit{h5}} \) 20. \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) \( \text{\textit{e7}} \), but now White breaks through with 21. \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{exd5}} \) 22. \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) 0-0 23. \( \text{\textit{xa8}} \) \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 24. \( \text{\textit{d5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf2}} \) 25. \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd1}} \) 26. \( \text{\textit{xd1}} \) \( \text{\textit{h5}} \) 27. \( \text{\textit{d3}} \) \( \text{\textit{c8}} \) 28. \( \text{\textit{d4}} \) and Black is clearly still fighting for equality.

B2) Another try 19... \( \text{\textit{b8}} \) also gives White the advantage after 20. \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 21. \( \text{\textit{f5}} \) \( \text{\textit{h5}} \) 22. \( \text{\textit{c4}} \) \( \text{\textit{b4}} \) 23. \( \text{\textit{h3}} \) \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) 24. \( \text{\textit{f1}} \) \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) 25. \( \text{\textit{xf4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) 26. \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xb6}} \) 27. \( \text{\textit{cxd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{exd5}} \) 28. \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \)
0-0 29. \textit{b}3. So I might be back to the drawing boards here, though with engines help, there is no reason to fear; novelties are lurking around every corner. I would look into 12... \textit{b}8 after all.

\textbf{12. \textit{b}1}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image1.png}
\end{center}

This simple move looks natural, but now Black starts uncoiling his spring. Much more testing is to play 12. a3 as Anand played against Ivanchuk in 2002, or 12. \textit{xf}6 now or on the next move, with a very complicated positional struggle.

\textbf{12... b4 13. \textit{e}2}

Once again 13. \textit{xf}6 is a more testing continuation.

A recent online game of mine went 13... gxf6 14. \textit{e}2 \textit{b}7 15. \textit{f}4 0-0 0 16. \textit{c}4 \textit{c}5 (after 16... h5! Black should maintain the balance) 17. \textit{b}3 a5 18. \textit{c}1 \textit{b}8 19. c3 bxc3 20. \textit{xc}3 \textit{b}6 21. \textit{a}4? (White has a pull after 21. \textit{d}1!) 21... d5! 22. exd5 \textit{b}4 and Black was better. Kastor-Dlugy ICC online blitz 2016.

\textbf{13... e5 14. \textit{e}3}

After this move White already stands worse, although there are many complicated tactics to avoid.

White’s last chance for equality lies in 14. \textit{f}2 to try and attack Black’s Knight on f6 from h4. Still, even in that case Black is OK.

\textbf{14... \textit{e}6 15. \textit{c}1 d5}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image2.png}
\end{center}

Incredibly, I have a played a series of 5 moves in the opening where I attacked at least a pawn with every move.

I was also moving my pieces into more aggressive positions with every move. When I saw this plan played once in a similar position, in the game Orest Popovych against Igor Ivanov, I wanted to do it myself and simply had to learn this system!
Rubbing shoulders with the Greats

16. \( \texttt{b3} \) \( \texttt{c7} \) 17. \( \texttt{exd5} \) \( \texttt{xd5} \) 18. \( \texttt{d3} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) 19. \( \texttt{he1} \)

![Position after: 19. \( \texttt{he1} \)](image)

Vishy, as usual, was blitzing out his moves. I was also playing my moves within seconds.

Now I stopped to think about what White wanted. Clearly his idea was to play a waiting move, so that if I castled, he would sacrifice on h6, demolishing my kingside.

But as my coach asked – what would be his threat? The more I looked the rosier the position appeared. 20. \( \texttt{xh6} \) would not threaten anything. What if I continue with my plan? Oh my – White would simply be lost! So without further delay I played...

19... \( \texttt{0-0} \)!

![Position after: 19. \( \texttt{he1} \)](image)

For the first time in the game Vishy thought for a while.

He was shocked when he noticed that after 20. \( \texttt{xh6} \) a5!! 21. \( \texttt{g5} \) a4 22.

White has no compensation for Black’s advantage of two Bishops and a free attack on the queenside.

20. \( \texttt{e4} \)

20 \( \texttt{f2} \) preserving the Bishop for now was a better defence. Six years later, Anand who liked what I did as Black, repeated all these moves against Mickey Adams.

Adams played 20. \( \texttt{xf2} \) here, and after 20... a5 21. \( \texttt{e4} \) Vishy played 21... a4 and eventually even lost the game. Instead, the crushing 21... \( \texttt{xe3} \) 22. \( \texttt{xe3} \) \( \texttt{ad8} \) with the position similar to our game would keep a decisive advantage.

20... \( \texttt{fd8} \) 21. \( \texttt{xd5} \) \( \texttt{xd5} \) 22. \( \texttt{f2} \) \( \texttt{ad8} \) 23. \( \texttt{xd5} \) \( \texttt{xd5} \)

![Position after: 23... \( \texttt{xd5} \)](image)
27. cxb3 axb3 28. a3 ♘h4!

Position after: 28... ♘h4!

A nice shot, forcing Vishy's pieces back.

29. ♘g3 f5

The threat of f4 will eventually force White to take on f5, when my Bishop will reach c2, paralyzing Vishy's position.

30. ♘c1

Position after: 30. ♘c1

30... ♘d7?

It was more accurate to eye the b3-square, while also pressuring the f3-pawn here. After 30... ♘f7 31. gxf5 ♘xf5+ 32. ♔a1 ♔c2 33. ♘e2 ♘a5 34. ♘e4 would fail to the striking 34... ♘xa3+ 35. bxa3 b2+ 36. ♘xb2 ♘b3+ 37. ♔a1 ♘xa3#

31. gxf5 ♘xf5+ 32. ♔a1 ♔c2 33. ♘e2

33... ♘a4?

Too early. I should have started with 33... ♘e7 34. ♘e4 ♘h8 35. ♘g1 ♘d8 36. ♔c1 ♘f8, and with the Queen on f8 eyeing the a3 and f3 targets White's defence would be impossible.

34. ♘g1?

This turns out to be a grave mistake. After the best 34. ♘e4 ♘xe4 35. fxe4 ♘xe4 36. ♘c3, White's chances of saving this bad ending would be quite reasonable.

34... ♘e7

I was prepared to be tied for first in the World Open going in to the last round.
In fact, the engines confirm that the best White can do from here is get mated in 16 moves! But fate had other plans!

35. \( \text{Qh5} \)

I looked at this, and just didn't understand where White's chances lay. I saw that after 35... \( \text{xa3} \) I was simply threatening five mates in one, and contemplated what White would do.

I imagined he would give away his Rook on g8, then check me a few times with his pieces, and then calmly resign.

Of course, the most human move here would be to play 35... \( \text{g6} \), simply avoiding all complications and forcing gigantic wins of material, but I wanted Vishy to have his checks.

The engines give both 35... \( \text{g5} \) and 35... \( \text{xa3} \), the move I played, as mate in 12.

35... \( \text{xa3} \) 36. \( \text{g7}+ \text{f8} \)?

First sign of trouble. I was expecting 37. \( \text{g8} \), so why not 36... \( \text{h8} \)?

37. \( \text{a7}!! \)

A complete shocker.

After the expected 37. \( \text{g8}+ \text{g8} \) 38. \( \text{g2}+ \text{f7} \) 39. \( \text{g7}+ \text{e6} \) 40. \( \text{g8}+ \text{e7} \) 41. \( \text{g7}+ \text{d6} \) 42. \( \text{f8}+ \text{c7} \) and it was clear checks were running out and \( \text{d1} \) mate or a Bishop move mate are unstoppable.

37... \( \text{xa7}?? \)

I was so shocked that this move even existed, I shut off my brain.

Otherwise, I would have spotted 37... \( \text{c6} \)! threatening \( \text{d1} \) and forcing quick resignation after a couple of moves.

38. \( \text{xa7 e4} \) 39. \( \text{b6}! \)
Chapter 14

Again the only defence to ...a5 check that doesn't also allow ...d1 mate.

39... d1+ 40. xd1 xd1 41. e3

Only now did I start realizing that White has a possible stalemate defence if he takes my e- and h- pawns and trades off my dark-squared Bishop for all his pieces. I got sick to my stomach and continued as if in a stupor. In fact it's much worse! The position is a draw even with the dark-squared bishops on the board! There's simply no way to attack the b2-pawn more times than White can defend it!

41... f7

The engines best 41... e4? allows White to get an immediate draw with 42. xh6+ f7 43. fxe4 as 43... xh5 is simply a draw.

42. g3 xf3 43. xh6 e6 44. b1 c5 45. c1

White is not obliged to keep his King locked up until the right moment comes. Now the Knight on g3 is well positioned to take the e-pawn, when the time comes.

45... g1 46. f1 g2 47. e3!

And now my Bishop is trapped. In disgust I played...

47... d7 48. xg1 xf1

...and agreed to a draw.

½-½
I was so shaken by these events that as I walked to my hotel, I was barely mis­sed by a car while crossing a very busy street! Ughh.

My next meeting came 4 years later in Wijk aan Zee 1990, when Vishy was al­ready a seasoned grandmaster and the defending champion of the tournament I got invited to for the first, and as it tur­ned out, last time. I went to the event in spite of an enormous scandal involving my ex-wife – who wanted me to stay home – so I didn’t even take my notes with me, as I basically just jumped into a taxi and asked to be taken straight to the airport. For a while, that is until I be­gan to feel I could win the event, I didn’t take it too seriously. Before this game, Mikhail Gurevich and Yury Dokhoian, both seconds for Garry Kasparov, de­cided to make a quick draw and take a bus to Amsterdam to check out the ca­sino.

I also wanted to go, but somehow nee­ded to also draw quickly. The result was that I got a slight advantage against Vishy as White, offered a draw, and when he offered to take a look at the game excused myself and ran to the bus stop, making it just in time to join the fellow GMs. Not a very good example for youth, but that’s what is sometimes needed to change the angle of how you are perceiving the tournament. Some­how, after that night, I came back and won a couple of games, finding myself in the battle for first place.

A further three years later, when Anand was already rated 3rd in the world after Kasparov and Karpov, he came to New York and accepted the invitation to play in an elimination blitz tournament or­ga­nized by the future Professional Chess Association President, Bob Rice.

We met in round 2 and played a two game match, which was tied.

Thereupon an Armageddon game was played, in which Vishy chose black and draw odds. I, of course, had five minutes to his four, but when I got an advantage in a Slav Defence type of position, Vishy defended with his characteristic tenac-
ity and once I saw I couldn't break through I started throwing pawns at him, which he gladly took to win the game and the match. The first game, though, was reasonably well played by both players and I present it below for your perusal.

Dlugy, Maxim (2550)  
Anand, Viswanathan (2710)  
New York 1993

1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 d5 4. ♗f3 ♗g7 5. ♖b3 dxc4 6. ♖xc4 0-0 7. e4 a6 8. ♖e2 b5 9. ♖b3 c5 10. dxc5 ♖b7 11. 0-0 ♗fd7 12. e5

Later in his career, Vishy chose the temporary piece sacrifice 12... ♗d5 here, and was successful in defending a slightly inferior ending against Peter Leko which resulted after more or less forced play following 13. ♖xd5 ♖xc5 14. ♖xe7+ ♔xe7 15. ♖a3 ♖f8 16. ♖g5 ♖f8 17. ♖d2 ♖xe5 18. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 19. ♖fe1 ♖ae8 20. ♖f1 ♖xe1 21. ♖xe1 ♖xe1 22. ♖xe1.

13. ♖b4 ♖fd7

Not the best move, according to the databases, with White winning one game and losing two. Luckily the win is the game we are looking at.

Seriously though, 14. ♖d1! is much more testing. The tactical justification lies in the tricky position White gets after 14... ♖c7 15. ♖e3 ♖xe5 16. ♖c1! ♖d6 17. ♖h4! ♖b8 18. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 19. ♖g5 h5 20. ♖h5 ♖xh2+ 21. ♖f1

12... ♖xc5
Now the tempting 21... \( \text{g4} \) is refuted by 22. \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g7} \) 23. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{e5} \) 24. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h8} \) 25. \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{g5} \) (25... \( \text{ad8} \) 26. \( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xd8} \) 27. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{h8} \) 28. \( \text{hx8} \)) 26. \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{f6} \) 27. \( \text{xb7} \) and White has an advantage in the unbalanced position after 27... \( \text{a7} \) 28. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 29. \( \text{c3} \).

Black has to play 21... \( \text{g7} \), when it is much harder to prove an advantage for White, but after 22. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{d6} \) – and not 22... \( \text{e5} \) which is refuted by the simple 23. \( \text{f4} \) winning a piece – 23. \( \text{d4}+ \) \( \text{g8} \) 24. \( \text{g4} \) it now looks like White will maintain the advantage. After either 24... \( \text{e8} \) 25. \( \text{f4} \) threatening to destroy Black King's shelter with \( \text{xg6} \) and \( \text{xc5} \), or 24... \( \text{a7} \) 25. \( \text{h3} \) renewing the threat of \( \text{h4} \), White stands better.

14... \( \text{h6} \) 15. \( \text{e3} \) a5 16. \( \text{h4} \) b4 17. \( \text{b5} \)

17... e6

It's also possible to play 17... \( \text{b8} \) here, when White doesn't get anywhere after 18. \( \text{bd4} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 19. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xf3}+ \) 20. \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 21. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 22. \( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 23. \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{e6} \) 24. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{xg5} \)

Viswanathan Anand (photo Jos Sutmuller)
21... \( \text{xf3} \)

Vishy goes for one of his famous exchange sacrifices, but he could have equalized with the engines brilliant display of pyrotechnics starting with 21...

\( \text{xe5} \) 22. \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 23. \( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{xe2} \) + 24. \( \text{h2} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 25. \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{c8} \) 26. \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{xc2} \) 27. \( \text{g6+} \) \( \text{g7} \) 28. \( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 29. \( \text{xb2} \) \( \text{g2}+ \) 30. \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{g5}+ \) with a perpetual check.

22. \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 23. \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 24. \( \text{c4} \)

It's important to improve my pieces somewhat before accepting the exchange.

24... \( \text{f4} \) 25. \( \text{cd1} \) \( \text{c7} \) 26. \( \text{xa8} \) \( \text{xa8} \) 27. \( \text{b3} \)

My Queen felt uncomfortable glued to the h-pawn, and so I decided to give it up in return for free piece play.

27... \( \text{h2}+ \) 28. \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{f4} \) 29. \( \text{xa4} \)
The game has been played quite accurately by both players up to this point, and it has taken it's toll.

My time situation was not optimal and I decide to simplify to make it easier to play the following moves.

29... $\text{hx}c4$ 30. $\text{b}3$ $\text{c}7$ 31. $\text{f}3$ $\text{c}8$ 32. $\text{b}3$

My first order of business was to get the pawns off dark squares, lest I blunder them in time pressure.

32... $\text{e}5$ 33. $\text{d}2$ $\text{c}3$ 34. $\text{d}3$ $\text{g}7$

It was better to put up the blockade of the d-file with e5 and ...$\text{d}4$, when Black would be having some fun in my zeitnot.

35. $\text{fd}1$ $\text{f}8$ 36. $\text{g}3$ $\text{f}6$ 37. $\text{g}2$

I am not rushing to play $\text{d}7$, reserving it for a better time. First, I consolidate my position on the kingside.

37... $\text{c}2$

This is already a step in the wrong direction. After 37... h4 38. $\text{d}7$ $\text{e}5$ The weakening of my kingside would substantially cut down on my active operations.

38. $\text{d}2$

With more time, the possibility of going for an attack with 38. $\text{d}7$ $\text{xa}2$ 39. $\text{d}6$, when I am going to take on e6 shortly with substantial winning chances, could have been considered.

38... $\text{b}1$

It was not too late to keep the Queen closer to the centre of the action with 38... $\text{c}5$ so that 39. $\text{d}7$ could be met with 39... h4 Now after 40. $\text{d}6$ hxg3 41. $\text{xe}6$ $\text{xf}2+$ 42. $\text{xf}2$ $\text{xf}2$ 43. $\text{xf}2$ a4 Black would be safe.
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39.  
40.  
40. 2d6 would have been significantly stronger leaving Black in trouble after 40...  xa2 41.  xe6  xb3 42.  e4! with a deadly threats of  xg6,  xg6 or  xf7, one of which will win the game or after 40...  f5 41.  xf5 exf5 42.  a6  e8 43.  f3 with good winning chances in the endgame.

40...  e5 41.  d5  f5?

This was Vishy's last chance for counterplay with 41...  h4 42.  gxh4  f5, when the open position of my King, gives Black enough chances to maintain the balance.

42.  e3  g5 43.  f3  g6 44.  d6

44...  b1?

This mistake is decisive. After 44...  f6 45.  e6 the position is probably objective lost for Black, but breaking through with the flag hanging would still be a significant task for me. Now it's just over.

45.  df6  e4 46.  xf7+

Missing a quick mate with 46.  xg5, as I honed in on f7 as a target. It really doesn't matter now.

46...  xf7 47.  xf7+  h6 48.  e6+  h7 49.  f7+  g7 50.  f6 1-0

After the game Vishy said: "I told Freddie (having in mind our mutual friend and founder of Chessbase Frederick Friedel) that the Grunfeld is a bad opening. He still insisted I play it!".

Vishy and I see each other every so often at interesting events, and we sometimes reminisce about the old times. It is truly wonderful to know someone like him for over 32 years!
When remembering Mikhail Tal, most players of my generation would find it hard to call him by his official name, as he was a personification of such a nice, soft and humorous person with a twinkle in his eyes and a smile on his face. To me he personified what a great chess player should be like — extremely sharp, but never condescending. He made a verb out of the noun ‘hooligan’ and when analyzing would always inquire “what if I hooligan in this way”, and then would reel off an amazing variation that would only be spotted by modern chess engines.

I first met Misha in an original way. I was playing in the Montpellier Open tournament in 1985, in the same playing hall as the Candidates Tournament was being held. It was a medium strength Open and I had a tough game on one of the top boards against an Argentine master Ariel Sorin, who ten years later would become a Grandmaster. I sacrificed a pawn for very tentative compensation and was not very happy with my position, when I suddenly noticed Tal peering intently over it as a spectator. I was a little embarrassed that Tal happened to witness me at my moment of weakness, but still quite proud that he was actually spending a few minutes calculating variations in his head, while still playing his game at the Candidates Tournament!
The following morning at breakfast, Tal approached me and asked how I did. I told him that I managed to get a slight advantage in the endgame after regaining the pawn, but upon resumption of the game following adjournment my opponent managed to draw. “Yes, I thought it was just about enough for equality”, was Misha's conclusion. I was flattered that he kept this piece of information in his head, but also touched by his interest in games with unbalanced material situations. Somehow, after that we became quite friendly and always managed to find topics of conversation whenever we would meet at major events.

Misha's blitz strength was legendary, as without banging the clock, the pieces, or seeming to move his hands quickly, he was finding energetic and extremely strong moves consuming almost no time. At the first official World Blitz Championship in St. John in 1989, he made it to the final round and was slated to play Rafael Vaganian. With the enormous prize fund offered, the players decided to take off the pressure and split the two top cash prizes, but play the match for the title itself. Misha was so happy that he celebrated prior to the start of the match, with a full bottle of cognac. He then went off to beat one of the best blitz players in the world with a 3.5-2.5 score in a 6 game match, surrendering a draw in a winning position to clinch it. I was just outside the playing hall when Misha came out and was one of
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the first to congratulate him on his new title. I was amazed at how inebriated he was!

Of course, Misha gave an enormous handicap to anyone he played virtually his whole life, as the pain he was in for most of his life due to his poor health must have been incredibly difficult to deal with while concentrating over the chess board. This explains his uncharacteristically peaceful mood towards the end of his chess career.

In 1990 I was having a mixed result at the New York Open, and having beaten Larry Christiansen with the Black pieces in round 8, I was prepared to come and fight for some prize money with the White pieces in the last round.

To my partial dismay, when I arrived at the tournament site to see the pairing, I was paired with the Black pieces because my opponent Mikhail Tal just had to Blacks in a row. The possibility of playing with the great champion, although with Black, improved my mood a bit and when I walked into the playing hall, I was prepared to give Misha a fight.

Suddenly, Misha approached me and asked if I was in an aggressive mood today? This was a typical way for him to offer a draw when he wasn’t feeling to well. Unlike Vladimir Akopian, who somehow managed to misunderstand the question, as relayed in Ivan Sokolov’s excellent book (Ivan’s Chess Journey - Thinkers Publishing), my response was very clear.

I said: “Misha, of course not! I would much rather play blitz with you!” “That can be arranged”, was Tal's reply and a few minutes later, as we set up to play blitz, almost all the spectators left the main hall to watch this match. People gathered around the table in such a way that they would take chairs and stand on them to see what was going on. Truthfully, I have never seen so many fans gather around one table. I'm pretty sure that if the Guinness World Records representative would have been there – this event would have gotten into the book.

In any case, when I got back home, I recorded the results and at least the opening stages of all the 13 games played. I was extremely fortunate to tie the match with the reigning World Blitz Champion, but of course, this was a genius who was not in his best form, and my only real chance was to rely on the clock as my assistant, as the moves on the board were clearly not going in my favor.

Let me present some interesting moments from this match:
1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 b5

I was reluctant to play my normal defensive openings such as the Queen's Gambit Accepted against Misha, and tried to complicate as much as possible so as not to have to defend as Black.

4. ♘f3 g6 5. ♗g5

A rare continuation with a novel idea. White usually plays 4. ♘f3 to continue 5. ♕c2 and quickly develop the minor pieces. Misha has something completely different in mind.

5... ♘g7

5... ♗e4 was a viable alternative. After 6. ♘f4 ♘g7 7. ♘bd2 f5! Black gets good play.

6. d6

This was clearly Tal's new idea. I have to be careful now, as tactics are everywhere.

6... ♗e4?

The engines suggest 6... ♙a5+ instead, citing 7. ♘d2 ♙b4 8. dxe7 ♘c6 followed by ♘xe7 as the road to equality. I wanted to play sharper.

7. dxe7

Of course Misha considered 7. ♙d5 when the position remains unclear after 7... ♗xd6! 8. ♙xa8 ♗b7 9. ♙xa7 ♘xb2 10. cxb5 ♙xa1 11. a4 ♙c8

7... ♙a5+ 8. ♘d2 ♗xd2 9. ♘xd2

Perhaps it was better to rid myself of the e-pawn as soon as possible with 9... ♘c6 10. cxb5 ♘xe7, when the position looks balanced after 11. e4 0-0 12. ♘c4 a6 13. bxa6 ♘xa6 14. 0-0 ♘xb2 15. ♘b1 ♘g7 16. e5.
10. e3?

A strange decision, as e4 seems much more natural. It looks like Misha wanted to lure my pawn to d5, but it turns out not to be such a good idea.

After 10. e4 ćc6 11. ćxc4 ćxe7 12. 0-0 0-0 13. e5 the position is full of life for both sides, with Black having the two bishops as compensation for the problematic pawn on d7.

10... d5 11. e4

Misha goes all in – and it shouldn’t work!

11... dxe4?

And I bite. Instead, after the greedy 11... ćxb2! my real target is to play c3, and not to take the a1-Rook. White is in serious trouble and sacking the Knight with 12. će2 c3 13. 0-0 cxd2 14. ćb1 ćf6 15. exd5 ćxe7 simply doesn’t deliver enough for the piece.
14... \texttt{\textit{d8}?}

Not the best, though it managed to confuse Misha. After 14... \texttt{exf3} it looks like White should simply go for the fattest piece with 15. \texttt{\textit{d5} when I should be OK after 15... \texttt{d8} 16. \texttt{\textit{c4} a6} 17. \texttt{\textit{e1}+ \textit{f8} 18. \texttt{\textit{e3} c6} 19. \texttt{xg4 d4}. Now 20. \texttt{\textit{xa8} e2+} 21. \texttt{h1 \textit{xd1} 22. \texttt{\textit{ad1} fxg2+} 23. \texttt{xg2 d4} leads to an unclear but balanced position.

15. \texttt{\textit{b3}?}

A real lemon. The attack would have been sound after 15. \texttt{\textit{e2!} \textit{xf3}} 16. \texttt{\textit{xf3} \textit{xf7}} 17. \texttt{\textit{g5+} \textit{f8}} 18. \texttt{\textit{c4} and my King has nowhere to hide.

15... \texttt{exf3} 16. \texttt{\textit{fe1+}

The best move! Instead, after 16. \texttt{\textit{xf3 \textit{b6}}! 17. \texttt{\textit{ae1+ \textit{f8} my defences hold.

16... \texttt{f8}

In good form, Misha would have found the best continuation 17. \texttt{\textit{e8}+!! when the natural 17... \texttt{\textit{xe8}} 18. \texttt{\textit{xe8 \textit{xe8}? loses to 19. \textit{g8+} \textit{f8} 20. \textit{c4! with a decisive attack. I would have to find 18... \textit{c7!! when I would have slightly better chances after 19. \texttt{\textit{d5 \textit{xe8}} 20. \texttt{\textit{xa8} \textit{f8} 21. \texttt{\textit{xf3 \textit{f6}}.

17... \texttt{\textit{c7} 18. \texttt{\textit{xe8} \textit{f7}}

Position after: 18... \texttt{f7}

19. \texttt{\textit{e3}?

The last chance was 19. \texttt{\textit{c2}, although after 19... \texttt{\textit{c6} 20. \texttt{\textit{xc5+ \textit{e7}} 21. \texttt{\textit{xg6 \textit{xe6} 22. \texttt{\textit{xe7+ \textit{g8} 23. \texttt{\textit{e4 \textit{xe4} 24. \texttt{\textit{xe4 \textit{f5} 25. \texttt{\textit{f4 \textit{xd2} 26. \texttt{\textit{xf5 \textit{xb2} 27. \texttt{\textit{e1 \textit{f8} I should be winning.

19... \texttt{d7}

And suddenly there is no real compensation for the piece.

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Tal, Mikhail
Dlugy, Maxim

New York 1990

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4

Let's see what happens when I do play the Queen's Gambit Accepted against Misha.

3. ¤f3 a6 4. e3 e6 5. ¤xc4 c5 6. a4 ¤f6
7. 0-0 ¤c6 8. ¤c3 ¤c7 9. ¤e2 ¤e7
10. ¤d2

This interesting developing move is still being played these days. It felt like the Bishop is a little out of place on d2, and I decided to clarify the isolani for White by exchanging on d4.

10... cxd4 11. exd4 ¤b4?!

My desire to block the d4-pawn is understandable, but White will get an initiative that will be tough to defend against. After the more reasonable 11... 0-0 12. d5 exd5 13. ¤xd5 ¤xd5 14.

15. ¤xd5 ¤f6 15. ¤c3 ¤xc3 16. bxc3 ¤f5
I should be very close to equality.

12. ¤ac1 ¤d6 13. ¤fd1

It's possible that 13. ¤e4 is even stronger. After 13... ¤xe4 14. ¤xe4 ¤d5 15. ¤fe1 ¤f6 16. ¤h4 White maintains the initiative.

13... 0-0 14. ¤g5 ¤fd5

I am playing to trade as many pieces as possible, since I am fighting against the d-pawn and the reduction of pieces favors Black. The problem is my lack of development, which very soon begins to tell.

15. ¤xd5 ¤xd5 16. ¤xd5 ¤xg5 17. ¤xg5

(see diagram next page)

17... ¤xd5?

A serious mistake. Capturing with the pawn was much safer. After 17... exd5

Position after: 14... ¤fd5

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Misha couldn't make use of his control over the c-file as after 18. \( \texttt{c2 g6} \) 19. \( \texttt{xg6 hgx6} \) 20. \( \texttt{e1 f6} \) 21. \( \texttt{e6 xe6} \) 22. \( \texttt{xe6 fc8} \) 23. \( \texttt{c5 xc5} \) 24. \( \texttt{xc5} \) 25. \( \texttt{b4} \) a5! I get enough counterplay.

18. \( \texttt{c5 d6} \)

The more active 18... \( \texttt{b3} \) gives more chances to survive. After 19. \( \texttt{c7 d5} \) 20. \( \texttt{e4 b6} \) 21. \( \texttt{g4 h8} \) 22. \( \texttt{f4 b7} \) 23. \( \texttt{f3 b3} \) 24. \( \texttt{c3 d5} \) 25. \( \texttt{xf7 xf7} \) 26. \( \texttt{xf7} \) \( \texttt{c2} \) there are still many technical problems to solve in order for White to bring down the point.

19. \( \texttt{c2} \) g6?

No feeling of danger here! After 19... f5 I would be worse, but still hanging on. Now, the position of my King begins to worsen radically.

20. \( \texttt{e4 f4} \) 21. \( \texttt{g3 f3} \) 22. \( \texttt{e1 g7} \) 23. \( \texttt{e3 g4} \) 24. \( \texttt{f6} \) e5 25. \( \texttt{c3} \)

It was a little more accurate to start with 25. f3 here, but this is sufficient.

25... f6?

This loses in short order. I could prolong the agony by shedding my e-pawn here with 25... \( \texttt{d1} \) 26. \( \texttt{e1 d4} \), although the position is hardly playable after 27. \( \texttt{xd4 exd4} \) 28. \( \texttt{d1 f5} \) 29. \( \texttt{d6} \).

26. f3 \( \texttt{h3} \) 27. \( \texttt{c7+ h8} \) 28. \( \texttt{xf6} \) \( \texttt{xf6} \) 29. \( \texttt{xe5 f5} \)

30. \( \texttt{xf6+} \)

Oops. And resigns. 1-0
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With the Greats

Vassily Smyslov

The great master of harmony, the 7th World Chess Champion Vassily Smyslov, absolutely loved chess. Though he started to play rather late, by age 20 he was already one of the world's strongest players, and at 62, he qualified for the Candidates and went through to the Quarter-Finals losing only to Kasparov – the unstoppable rising star at the time. In 1987, with Gorbachev's perestroika, the United States finally became easily accessible to Soviet chess players, and Vassily Vasilievich decided to combine good old-fashioned tourism with chess and came to play in America's strongest Swiss at the time, the New York Open. I was playing reasonably well and in round seven, got paired with the former World Champion on board three. Let's take a look at this short, but exciting game.
Dlugy, Maxim (2520)  
Smyslov, Vassily (2550)  
New York 1987

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1. c4

I usually played this move when I expected an imminent Slav Defence, and wanted to steer the game off to some other lines. Still, against the former World Champion, playing into lines I was not very familiar with was probably unjustified.

1... e5 2. c3 f6 3. f3 c6 4. d4

I really had no idea what I was getting myself into, but remembering a funny episode retold to me by some of my older colleagues about Smyslov, decided to play into a complicated tactical line. The episode I am referring to is from the Russian Team Championship when Smyslov was paired with White against the then very young and extremely talented Alexander Beliavsky. The game started 1. d4 f6 2. c4 e6 3. f3 c5 and here after some thought, Smyslov accepted the invitation to play against the Benoni and played 4. d5. He lost a tough game and afterwards commented: "I over-estimated my position here when I played my fourth move." I think this episode shows the kind of person Vassily Vasilievich was: He always wanted to be in harmony with himself, and always tried to play positions where he could slowly improve his position without the noise coming from the tactical complications. My psychological ploy worked and Smyslov played:

4... exd4 5. cxd4 c5

A much more serene move, compared to the theoretically and practically strongest 5... b4 when the position becomes extremely tactical following 6. g5 h6 7. h4 xxc3+ 8. bxc3 e5 9. f4 g6 10. xg6 xf6 11. g3 for example.

6. c2

Position after: 6. c2

Since I wasn't well-versed in any of this, I decided to play it safe, without the disturbance of the pawn structure, and retreated the Knight, hoping to complete my development before trying to take the grip in the centre. Modern theory scorns this move and prefers 6. xc6 bxc6 7. g3 0-0 8. g2 b8 9. 0-0 e8 10. c2 f8 11. b3 g6 12. b2 g7 13. ad1 e7 14. e4 d6 15. fe1 where White got an advantage in Bu-Jakovenko 2007.
6... 0-0 7. e3 b4

Smyslov prefers clarity and goes for the most direct path to equality.

8. a3 bx1c2+ 9. cxb2 d5

Black continues to play direct chess, trying to equalize on the spot.

10. b4

After 10. cxd5 cxd5 11. d2 xc3 12. xc3 d6 13. d1 e7 14. d3 g6 15. 0-0 e8 16. d2 White may be a tad better, but such intricacies were beyond me.

10... e7

The ex-world champion passes by the positional equality based on a temporary pawn sacrifice.

After 10... d4 11. bxc5 dxc5 Black is fine in all lines. For example: 12. xc3 or 12. a4 d7 13. d3 c6 14. 0-0 e7 15. xc3 xc5 16. a3 g5 with good play, 12... e4 13. d4 e7 14. b2 f6 and Black is already better here.

11. b2

Taking on d5 was quite drawish.

After 11. cxd5 cxd5 12. b2 xc3 13. xc3 f6 14. d3 xc+ 15. xc3 c6 16. d1 e7 17. 0-0 e6 Black has full equality.

11... c6 12. cxd5 cxd5 13. e2
At this point, I was quite full of myself, being pretty sure I have achieved a small edge in an opening I had rarely played, against such a great player.

This is why it came as a great surprise to me how quickly my supposedly good position deteriorated from here on, without me playing any noticeably bad moves.

13... a5! 14. b5

It was hard to realize that I could just ignore the threat to the b-pawn with 14. 0-0, as after 14... axb4 15. axb4 ∆xa1 16. ∆xa1 ∆xb4 17. ∆b5 ∆e7 18. ∆b1! the threat of ∆xf6 doubling the f-pawns is very hard to meet.

Still, after 18... c5 19. ∆xf6 gxf6 20. f3 e6 21. d3 d8 22. d4 it's hard to talk about any advantage for White.

14... e6 15. 0-0 c8

16. ♞a4?!

This misplaces the Queen. The Queen belonged on d3, although after 16. ♞d3 ♞d6 17. ♞ac1 ♞e7 18. a4 e4 19. g3 ♞g5 20. b6 ♞xc1 21. ♞xc1 ♞xg3 22. fxg3 ♞xg3 23. hxg3 ♞xg3+ 24. h1 the game could end in a draw by perpetual check.

16... ♞d7!

Smyslov's Knight immediately goes for my weakened c4-square.

17. ♞d1 ♞f6 18. ♞ac1 ♞c5 19. ♞f4 ♞b3 20. ♞c2 ♞c7
And suddenly I am close to being lost! The pin on the c-file looks devastating; all this in a span of 4 moves after I thought I had an edge! How did he do it? How did I miss it? Those were the questions flashing in my brain. Then, I found an interesting resource:

21. \textit{\&f3} d4 22. \textit{\&e4!} \textit{\&xc2} 23. \textit{\&d3}
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Now Smyslov sunk deep in thought and when he reemerged he said "OK, draw" and took on b2 with the Queen. Since I had nothing more than a perpetual check in mind, I of course accepted this slightly unorthodox draw offer.

23... ♕xb2

½-½

Actually the position is quite complicated here, and as you shall see, far from drawn. Black has many promising possibilities, but none of them suited Smyslov's harmonious style.

Let's take a look:

A) 23... ♕d2! An amazingly difficult move to find, as so many things have to work tactically for Black that it's simply hard to believe even if you spot the actual move. After 24. ♕xd2 (24. ♕xf6+ loses to 24... ♕h8 25. ♕h5 ♕xd3 26. ♕xd2 ♕b1+ 27. ♖d1 ♕g6) 24... ♕xd2 25. ♕xd2 dxe3! the e-pawn is a real monster and after the best 26. ♕e4 g6 27. ♕c4 ♕xc4 28. ♕xf6 ♕fe8 29. ♕d4 ♕xd3 30. fxe3 ♕c1+ 31. ♕f2 ♕xb5 32. ♕h6 f6 33. ♕d5+ ♕xh8 34. ♕xb5 ♕e7 35. ♕xa5 ♕c7 Black's chances to win are roughly the same as White's to draw;

B) 23... ♕c7 looks too loose but is actually quite strong, as after 24. ♕xf6+ gxf6 25. ♕xf6 (25. exd4 is a better chance, when Black still has the edge after 25... ♖fd8 26. ♕xf6 ♕d5 27. ♕e4 ♕d8 28. ♕h6 ♕g5 29. ♕xh7+ ♕f8 30. ♖xd5 ♕xd5 31. ♕f3 ♕e3+ 32. ♕h1 ♕e8) 25... ♖fe8 26. ♕g5+ ♕f8 27. ♕h6+ ♕e7 28. exd4 the threat of d5 seems to give me some chances.

But after 28... ♕d6 29. d5 ♕xd5 30. ♕g5+ ♕d7 31. ♕f5+ ♕c7 32. ♕xc8 Black doesn't take on c8 but plays the killer...

C) And finally, the move Smyslov actually played: 23... ♕xb2 and now after 24. ♕xf6+ Black has to play 24... ♕h8 if he wants to play for a win. (as 24... gxf6 does lead to a draw by perpetual after 25. ♕g3+ ♕h8 26. ♕h4 f5 27. ♕f6+.)

25. ♕e4 (see analysis diagram)
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25... \textit{f5}! (Black has to continue to give away pieces if he wants to play for a win, as the "normal" 25... g6 allows me to once again force a draw this time with 26. \textit{h4 \textit{g7} 27. \textit{h5+ gxh5} 28. \textit{g5+} or 26... h5 27. \textit{g5 \textit{g7} 28. \textit{xh5+ \textit{h7} 29. \textit{f6+) 26. \textit{xf5 g6}}

Now I would have to make a tough choice between 27. \textit{e5} or 27. \textit{h3}. Let's see what happens:

\textbf{C1)} After 27. \textit{h3} Black plays 27... h5! (27... \textit{g7} allows an immediate draw with 28. \textit{h5+ gxh5} 29. \textit{g3+ \textit{h8} 30. \textit{e5+ f6} 31. \textit{e7 f5} 32. \textit{e5+ g8} 33. \textit{e6+ g7} 34. \textit{d7+ \textit{h6} 35. \textit{e6+}) 28. \textit{xh5 \textit{c5}! 29. \textit{f4+ g7} 30. \textit{exd4 xd4} 31. \textit{g4 \textit{f6}} and I am quite a bit worse even after the destabilizing sacrifice 32. \textit{xg6 fxg6} 33. \textit{e6+ g8} 34. \textit{xf8 xf8}, though there is still a lot of work here for Black to win this position.

\textbf{C2)} The other attempt 27. \textit{e5}

...is much more challenging, when Black has only one move leading to an advantage.

- After 27... \textit{c1?} 28. \textit{f1 \textit{xf1+} 29. \textit{xf1 \textit{xa3} 30. \textit{f4!} (White draws with the threat of \textit{h6} and the already familiar resource \textit{h5} if Black plays ...\textit{g7.}) 27... \textit{xa3} gives White many drawing options, with the simplest probably being 28. \textit{e8+ f6} 29. \textit{xf6 \textit{c5} 30. \textit{d5+ g8} 31. \textit{e6+ g7} 32. \textit{e5+}. Venturing to h6 with the King is not recommended on account of g4!;

- The strongest move for Black is 27... \textit{c3!} preparing to take on e3, when I would be in serious trouble. Now after 28. \textit{d5+ f6} 29. \textit{e7 c5} 30. \textit{xb7 dxe3} 31. \textit{xe3 cd8} Black is clearly better and I would need a miracle to save the game.
Boris Spassky

I met Boris Spassky in 1984, when he came to New York and gave a simultaneous exhibition at the Game Room, one of Manhattan's establishments where chess, backgammon and cards were mixed up in one happy bunch. It was also the home away from home for the legendary chess master Yakov Yukhtman.

Yasha never cared for titles, though was probably good enough to be a grandmaster at his prime, having beaten Mikhail Tal and drawn the likes of Paul Keres, Viktor Korchnoi and Boris Spassky himself.

Yasha was a mouthful in more ways than one, and got so emotional over one of his losses in a tournament in the Soviet Union that he bit his opponent. A committee was set up to investigate the incident and the proposal was voiced to strip him of his master's title. For Yukhtman this would mean unemployment, because back then all masters in the Soviet Union were paid a monthly stipend for which they had to belong to a club and teach some classes in the Pioneer Clubs. This was very serious for Yasha, when suddenly, Boris Spassky, as part of the committee thanks to his World Champion title, made a proposal: Let's not strip Yasha of his master's
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title, but any time he plays in tournaments, have him play in a muzzle”. After the general laughter, the committee decided to hand Yasha a warning: “Don’t bite!”. I am sure on that momentous occasion at the Game Room, Yasha and Boris recalled more than this incident, but as I watched the simul, I carried away the impression that Boris was a real actor, entertaining the public with every grimace and remark.

When in October of same year I came to spectate to the Thessaloniki Chess Olympiad, I spent some time in the bar area, where Boris would always be joking around. I still remember his Russian style “Knock Knock” joke, which happens to rhyme in Russian – “Knock knock – Who’s there? 100 grams! Come in!” With this, Boris would down some amount of prescribed alcohol and show everyone his big grin. Of course, I was puzzled by his playing kit he would take to every one of his games at the Olympiad – his tennis bag, filled with his tennis equipment. It was very soon after the start of many a round that I would see him, together with Ulf Andersson, his main partner, go off to play tennis, leaving chess to the more seriously inclined. Whenever I saw him look at a chess board, however, his comments were always quite deep and thoughtful. Finally, at the GLC Challenge in London in 1986, I got to play him. Let's take a look:
1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. c3 dxe4 4. xxe4 d7 5. f3 g6 6. xf6+ xf6 7. h3

This modest variation has some teeth, and I immediately started looking for tricks in White's set-up. After some consideration, I decided not to play the most natural developing move 7... f5, afraid that after 8. e5, White will be able to create some serious threats with 8. g4. Of course, after the game, I realized that after 7... f5 8. e5 e6 9. g4 g6 10. g2 d7 11. xg6 hxg6 Black should be fine, and played it in the same tournament against Jim Plaskett, even managing to win that game.

7... e6?! 8. g5 e7 9. d3 0-0 10. e2 b6

My set-up looks a bit slow, as White can use the time I am spending on developing my light-squared Bishop to launch an attack. Still, my position is quite sturdy and a clear advantage is not yet in sight.

11. 0-0-0 b7 12. h4

It was more natural to start by slamming the Knight on e5, though even after 12. e5 d5 13. d2 c7 the possibility of b4 would give me a reasonable game.

12... c7 13. e5 c5

This move was based on a calculation of a pretty fascinating line, which actually happened in the game.

14. dxc5 xc5 15. xf6

This leads to a draw.

After the game Boris showed that White retains good attacking chances with 15. f3 ad8 16. b1 d5 17. a3 as 17... f6 loses to 18. d7. I was very impressed how easily Boris Vasilievich created attacks out of thin air in our post game.
Chapter 14
Rubbing Shoulders With the Great

analysis. Then, when I ran out of steam and was already thinking I was dead lost in the position, he said "But this was playing for heads or tails, and I don't like that". I then realized that the great Boris already didn't have the nerves to play these positions, and he just wanted to feel comfortable when he played his games.

15... \textit{xf6} 16. \textit{d7}

...and White has to be careful to maintain the balance with the surprising 22. \textit{c1} \textit{xc3+} 23. \textit{b1} \textit{d4} 24. \textit{xh7+} \textit{xc4} 25. \textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 26. \textit{h5+} when it is White who delivers the perpetual.

16... \textit{xb2+}

This is the retort I had to calculate when playing 13... \textit{c5}.

17. \textit{xb2} \textit{b4+} 18. \textit{c1} \textit{a3+} 19. \textit{b1}

It turns out that my calculation was correct. If White tries to play for a win with 19. \textit{d2} I get full compensation with 19... \textit{fd8} (19... \textit{a5+} is also possible, as Black can get equal chances in the ending after 20. \textit{e3} \textit{fd8} 21. \textit{f3!} \textit{c6} 22. \textit{e4} \textit{d5} 23. \textit{d2} \textit{a3+} 24. \textit{d3} \textit{x}3+ 25. \textit{xd3} \textit{xd7} 26. \textit{c4} \textit{f5} 27. \textit{xd5} \textit{exd5} 28. \textit{cxd5} \textit{e8+} 29. \textit{f4} \textit{e2} 30. \textit{g3} \textit{xa2} 31. \textit{xf5} \textit{f7} 20. \textit{e5} (20. \textit{e1} \textit{c6} 21. \textit{e5} \textit{g2} 22. \textit{g1} \textit{c3+} leads to a perpetual check) 20... \textit{a5+} 21. \textit{c3} \textit{ac8}

19... \textit{b4+} 20. \textit{c1} \textit{a3+} 21. \textit{b1} \textit{b4+} \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}

So my only game with this great player was a short but exciting draw and I was quite happy to leave it at that!

Decades later in Moscow, after partial recovery from his heart attack, Boris visited the Central Chess Club to spectate a tournament where I was playing. As he was wheeled in on his wheelchair, general silence fell, waiting for him to say something. “The load has arrived” said Boris Vasilievich, hinting at his somewhat imperfect health but in such a way that the whole room burst into laughter.
Chapter 14f

Rubbing Shoulders
With the Greats

Vladimir Kramnik

I first met Vladimir Kramnik at the Palma de Mallorca 1989 Grandmaster’s Association tournament, which was eventually won by Boris Gelfand. During the free day, Mark Dvoretsky asked me if I would play some blitz with the talented kids he brought with him to the tournament. Of course, I accepted!

The kids turned out to be future superstars Peter Svidler, Sergey Rublevsky, and among others, Vladimir Kramnik. While I had no trouble giving the master class to the other kids, Vlad was clearly more difficult, and I remember being amazed at how well this 15 year old teenager navigated the most complicated positional games. I am pretty sure the score between us was about even, and as I was giving the master class, the traditional ‘winner stays’ rule applied only to the kids. If someone beat me, I would continue to play instead of stepping down to let other kids in. Therefore, I was clearly playing Vladimir more than the other kids.

Some years later, when I was working in Moscow and convinced Victor Bologan to work for my company, Garry Kasparov called me while I was still in New York and told me he wanted to play some practice blitz games to prepare for his upcoming
blitz tournament in Argentina. As I was flying in to Moscow the day before he wanted to play, I called Victor and asked him if he could bring a chess board and a clock to the office so we could practice prior to me playing Kasparov, as at that time I hardly played any over the board blitz, limiting myself to practice on the Internet Chess Club.

Victor offered to invite Kramnik, whom he was working with at the time. Of course I agreed! This was 1997 and Vlad was already the number three player in the world. How can you refuse the chance to prepare to play the number one by playing the number three? (if you're not number two, that is).

I arrived on the red eye flight to Moscow at 8 am, slept for a couple of hours, and went to the office. By the time 6 pm rolled around I was a bit jet lagged, but having played Victor for a couple of hours, I was excited to see how good Vlad really was. He arrived shortly after six in the evening and asked whether I want to play 5 or 3-minute blitz. I was very confident that the shorter time control would favor me, and picked 3 minutes. This turned out to be a huge mistake! Vladimir was crushing me in games where he would get the advantage out of the opening, and in the positions where I would get a better game, the speed with which he played completely
shocked me into blundering away those advantages. The final score was so dismal that I erased it from my memory; I was absolutely certain that I just played the best blitz player I have ever played. Some 20 years later, I still stand by that assessment.

A few years later, when Kramnik just defeated Kasparov in the World Championship match, my old friend Joel Lautier challenged me to a blitz match on ICC (Internet Chess Club). We started to play, and pretty soon it became obvious that Joel, who I usually had a reasonable score against, somehow became an incredibly strong player in blitz. The final score in that session was 21-7, and I was just amazed at how much better Joel became from working with Kramnik during his match with Garry. As I finished playing, I wrote: “Joel, my congratulations! Your work with Vladimir certainly rubbed off on you! By the way, please express my congratulations to Vlad on his victory over Garry.”

The response was completely unexpected: “Thank you, I am just staying at Joel's house in Paris after the match”. Oh wow! Somehow, Chessbase published the games directly as a Kramnik-Dlugy match, completely destroying my win/loss percentages in the database. Oh well, that’s what I get for playing online!

I wanted to show you one of those 28 games, and one of my four victories just to illustrate what it would take to beat Vladimir Kramnik in one blitz game in 1999. Here it is:

```
8... d5 9. cxd5 b4 10. a4 bxd5
```

In a blitz game, it's hard to find the most testing continuation, which I think would look something like this: 8. e4 d5 9. cxd5 exd5 10. e5 e4 11. 0-0 c5 12. d1 c8 13. e3 d7 14. ac1 fd8 15. b1 with a slight edge for White.

Vladimir’s Knight made a successful journey to d5, especially in view of the fight for the control of the e4-square.
Black is close to equality.

11. \( \textsf{d}2 \)!

Quite a passive move, simply trying to develop without disturbing the pawn structure.

It was better to use my Queen's control of the c6-square and play 11. \( \textsf{e}5 \) when after 11... \( \textsf{c}5 \) 12. \( \textsf{g}5 \text{ cxd}4 \) 13. \( \textsf{x}d5 \text{ xd}5 \) 14. \( \textsf{xd}4 \text{ xg}2 \) 15. \( \textsf{xd}8 \text{ fxd}8 \) 16. \( \textsf{xg}2 \text{ d}5 \) the position would be completely equal.

11... \( \textsf{c}5 \)

Vlad could have played for the total control of the e4-square with 11... \( \textsf{x}c3 \) 12. \( \textsf{xc}3 \text{ d}5 \), though after 13. \( \textsf{fc}1 \text{ e}4 \) 14. \( \textsf{d}2 \) \( \textsf{f}5 \) 15. \( \textsf{b}4 \) the position would be balanced.

12. \( \textsf{fd}1 \text{ e}8 \)

Vlad goes for the endgame, which will be roughly equal as his pieces are in firm control of the central squares.

13. \( \textsf{xe}8 \text{ fxe}8 \) 14. \( \textsf{ac}1 \text{ ed}8 \) 15. \( \textsf{dx}c5 \text{ xc}5 \) 16. \( \textsf{xd}5 \text{ xd}5 \) 17. \( \textsf{b}4 \text{ f}8 \) 18. \( \textsf{e}5 \text{ xg}2 \)

Perhaps it was better to keep the bishops for now and play 18... \( \textsf{e}4 \) 19. \( \textsf{e}1 \text{ f}6 \) 20. \( \textsf{d}3 \text{ f}5 \), maintaining control over the e4-square.

19. \( \textsf{xg}2 \text{ e}4 \) 20. \( \textsf{e}1 \text{ xd}1 \) 21. \( \textsf{xd}1 \)
Rubbing shoulders with the Greats

21... \( \texttt{Nc8} \)

This is inaccurate.

Black should have stopped my Rook invasion with 21... \( \texttt{Nd6} \), when my slight initiative could have been neutralized after 22. \( \texttt{Nc1} f6 23. \texttt{Nc6 Nc8} 24. b5 Na8 25. a4 a6 \)

22. \( \texttt{Bd7} f6 23. \texttt{Nd3 a5} 24. bxa5 bxa5 \)

25. \( \texttt{Nxh5}?! \)

Not the best use of my advantage. A much stronger alternative was 25. \( \texttt{Na7}! Nc2 26. \texttt{Bxa5} \) as my e-pawn is indirectly protected thanks to \( f3! \) Now after 26... \( \texttt{Nc5} 27. \texttt{Nxc5 Nxc5} 28. \texttt{Na8+ Nf7} 29. \texttt{f3} \) I would have better chances to convert my extra pawn than in the game.

25... \( \texttt{Na8} \)

The alternative 25... \( \texttt{Nc2} \) was stronger. Now if I try 26. a4, Black should play

26... \( \texttt{Nc4}! \) (and not 26... \( \texttt{Nxe2} 27. \texttt{Nb6}! 27. \texttt{f3} \) now backfires due to 27... \( \texttt{Nxa2}! 27... \texttt{Nc4} 28. a5 e5 29. \texttt{Na7} \) with some chances to get the a-pawn going) 27. \( \texttt{Ne1 Nxa4} 28. \texttt{Nd8 f6} 29. \texttt{f3} \texttt{g7} 30. \texttt{Nd7 g8} 31. \texttt{Nc7 Bd8} 32. \texttt{Nc1 Ng5} 33. h4 \texttt{f7} \) with equality.

26. \( \texttt{Bb4}! \)

This move enables me to save the a-pawn, giving me some winning chances.

26... \( \texttt{Nxb4} 27. \texttt{Nxb4 Nc3} 28. \texttt{Nd2 Na4} 29. \texttt{Nc2} \)
Vlad decides not to go into a theoretical endgame with 29... \( \text{cxe2} \) 30. \( \text{xe2 xeb4} \) 31. \( \text{xe6 a4} \) 32. \( \text{e2 a3} \), as after 33. \( \text{f1} \) it could simply be lost for him.

However, the best choice must have been to go 29... \( \text{xb4} \) 30. \( \text{xc3 b2} \) and after 31. \( \text{e3} \) we would get into a 4 vs 3 rook ending that Black should definitely hold.

30. \( \text{f1 f7} \) 31. \( \text{e1 f5} \) 32. \( \text{f3} \)

The fight for the e4-square still continues! It seemed right to take out that retreat option for the Knight.

32... \( \text{f6} \) 33. \( \text{d2 b5} \) 34. \( \text{b2 a8} \) 35. \( \text{c2 d6} \) 36. \( \text{d3} \)

I am slowly making progress. Now I am ready to start edging the a-pawn forward.

36... \( \text{g5} \) 37. \( \text{a3 h5} \) 38. \( \text{b4} \)

The next step is prepared!

38... \( \text{g4} \) 39. \( \text{a4 d8} \)

Perhaps it was better to continue advancing the pawns on the kingside. After 39... \( \text{e5} \) 40. \( \text{c3 e6} \) 41. \( \text{e3 c8+} \) 42. \( \text{b3 c1} \) 43. \( \text{c2 gxf3} \) 44. \( \text{exf3 f1} \) Black gets enough counterplay against the a-pawn. For example: 45. \( \text{a5 xf3+} \) 46. \( \text{b2 f4} \) 47. \( \text{xf4 xf4} \) 48. \( \text{xf4 exf4} \) 49. \( \text{a6 c8} \) 50. \( \text{c3 d5} \) 51. \( \text{d3 c6} \) 52. \( \text{e4 b6} \) 53. \( \text{xf4 xa6} \) 54. \( \text{g5 b6} \) 55. \( \text{hxh5 c5} \) 56. \( \text{g6 d6} \) 57. \( \text{h4 e7} \) 58. \( \text{g7 d6} \) 59. \( \text{d4 e8+} \) and Black survives.

40. \( \text{c3 c8+} \) 41. \( \text{b3 gxf3} \) 42. \( \text{exf3 e5} \)

The problem with this solution is that Black took the eye of my a-pawn with his Rook, and allowed my King to cross the c-file to defend the pawn.

Now my Rook is free to create disharmony in Black's position.

43. \( \text{b6 e7} \) 44. \( \text{e3 c1} \) 45. \( \text{a5} \)
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Position after: 45. a5

45...  a1

This is a mistake. After the strongest 45...  d7 The endgame is difficult to call, but looks closer to a draw. For example: 46.  d5  b1+ 47.  c2  h1 48.  h4  a1 49.  f6+  c7 50.  a6  h3 51.  f4  exf4 52.  d5+  d7 53.  xf4  xg3 54.  xh5  h3 55.  f6+  c7 56.  d5+  d7 57.  h5  c4 58.  h6  xg6 59.  xg6  wh6 with a theoretically drawn endgame.

46. a6  d7 47. b2  a4 48. b3  a1 49. d5

Position after: 49. d5

49...  e4 50.  xe4  xe4

Position after: 50...  xe4

51. c3?!

This is simply a mistake under the time pressure gun. After the correct 51.  b2  a5 52.  e3  a4 53.  b3  a1 54.  c4  xc4 55.  xc4  a4+ 56.  b3  a1 57.  c3  a3+ 58.  d2  c7 59.  h6  a2+ 60.  e3  xh2 61.  xe4  b8 62.  h7  h1 63.  f4  f1+ 64.  e4  h1 65.  e3  a8 (65...  h2? 66.  f3  a8 67.  a7 Black is forced into zugzwang and I win the h pawn and the game.) 66.  f3  f1+ 67.  g2  f5 68.  h3  g5 69.  e7  b8 70.  e4 and White wins anyway.

After testing the World Champion for the 47...  a5? 48.  xd6! trap, I continue by activating my Knight.

It seems, I should have traded into the Rook and pawn ending with 49.  c4! instead. Now after 49...  xc4 50.  xc4  a3 51.  b4  a2 52.  b3  a5 53.  h6 e4 54.  xe4  xe4 55. a7! the typical threat of  h8! wins the game.
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The future World Champion (photo Jos Sutmuller)

51... e3

51... c7 would force repetition with 52. d5, as otherwise Black trades the knights and the passed pawns and earns a draw.

52. c2

53. xe4?

Vlad makes the final mistake. There was still lots of play after 52... a5 53. d3 c7 54. b3 xa6 55. d5+ d7 56. xe3 with me still pressing for a draw in a probably objectively drawn position.

53... e2 54. c5+ c7

I had just enough time to figure out this move loses!
55. \( \text{b7} \)+!

The point. I protect my Rook with tempo.

55... \( \text{c6} \) 56. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xa6} \)

Vlad recognizes the Rook and pawn ending as hopeless and tries his chances in getting all my pawns. After 56... \( \text{e1}\) 57. \( \text{xe1} \) \( \text{xe1} \) 58. \( \text{h7} \) \( \text{e2+} \) 59. \( \text{b3} \) Black can’t have my h-pawn.

57. \( \text{e7} \) \( \text{a2+} \) 58. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 59. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{e1}\)+ 60. \( \text{xe1} \) \( \text{hx2} \) 61. \( \text{d4} \)!

The resource \( \text{f3} \) holds the last pawn.

61... \( \text{h4} \) 62. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{a2} \) 63. \( \text{hx4} \) \( \text{a4+} \) 64. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 65. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{c6} \) 66. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 67. \( g4 \) \( \text{a7} \) 68. \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{f7} \) 69. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{f8} \) 70. \( \text{e5+} \) \( \text{c6} \) 71. \( g5 \) \( \text{c7} \) 72. \( \text{e7+} \) \( \text{c6} \) 73. \( g6 \) \( \text{g8} \) 74. \( g7 \) \( \text{c5} \) 75. \( \text{e5} \) 1-0

As you can see, beating Kramnik is no easy task!
Chapter 14g

Rubbing Shoulders
With the Greats

Anatoly Karpov

After 2 years of waiting for the permission to leave the Soviet Union, my family finally received the green light in the winter of 1976. As we collected all of our belongings, organized a farewell party to say goodbye to all our friends, and bought our air tickets, there was one event I could not miss – the 1976 USSR Chess Championship.

Together with my father I would go to the Russian Railroad Club, located on the famous Three Terminals Square in Russia, and with my small magnetic chess set would follow the games on stage, trying to understand the reasons for the moves.

When I was in Rome, my grandfather sent us a photo from the Soviet Sports newspaper, where I was photographed with this little set. The author of the article, Vladimir Dvorkovich and I met years later when Vladimir, who was the Chief Arbiter at the 1974 Karpov-Korchnoi Candidates Final match, became head of staff for Garry Kasparov's team at the 1990 World Chess Championships in New York and Lyon. Later, I became a frequent guest at his son's Arkady's chess club, which he organized in memory of his father Vladimir. What a small world!
The winner of that USSR Championship with a fantastic score of 8 wins, 8 draws and 1 loss, was the then-current World Chess Champion, Anatoly Karpov. Two years later, when I was a Collins Kid, Anatoly visited New York, and was received in a special ceremony by New York’s favorite mayor, Ed Koch. The Collins Kids were invited to the affair, and I still have a photo where, together with Joel Benjamin, we are shining from bring in the proximity of such a great player.

Of course, we would meet at the Chess Olympiads in 1984, where I was a spectator, and in 1986 where I would see him play for the winning Soviet team and finally in 1988, where as the captain and coach for the U.S. Women's Olympic team, I was able to participate in some post game analysis sessions with some of the best players in the world. I remember being completely amazed by such a session after Karpov's game against Predrag Nikolic.

Although the game ended in a draw, Karpov was pressing on the White side of the Queen's Indian all along. Then at some point in the analysis, Karpov suggested a very modest move: pawn to a3, and suddenly it became clear that Black is completely paralyzed and has nothing to play for! Such prophylactic moves became Karpov's trademark. A few months after the Olympiad, I played against Anatoly in
round 5 of the 1988 World Rapid Championships, and at one point I laid a really sly trap, which many players could have fallen into. I saw Karpov about to play the losing move, as he slowly started moving his hand towards the wrong piece. At the last moment, as he was doing his last check for blunders, he noticed my trap and I could see how he almost gasped, having realized how close he came to losing. Then I noticed that the correct move, fully prophylactic in nature, would give him a huge advantage, and a minute later this move was indeed played. I went on to lose that game, and in fact, to this day this is the only official contest that Anatoly and I have played. Unfortunately, I don't have the record of that game. After losing to Karpov, I picked up steam and managed to tie for first with him, Rafael Vaganian, and Victor Gavrikov. The top-8 players in that championship played matches against each other, and I was eliminated by my good friend Jaan Ehlvest, who went on to lose to Karpov, who also won the final match to win the title.

Years passed, and although I was good friends with Ron Henley, one of Karpov's main coaches, I never really crossed paths with Anatoly until one day he came to watch the Moscow Blitz Championship.

He was there as an honorary guest and I came over and told him that although Ron has tried for years to get us to play blitz together, it has never happened. “I am here for another couple of weeks”, I told him. “Great”, said Karpov – “why don't you come over at 8pm tomorrow to my house and we'll play blitz”. So, suddenly I became a frequent guest at his house and over the next few years, we played hundreds of games including his attempts to teach me some weird Yugoslav version of chess, with a river running over the board.

As I played him, I realized how radically different his chess thinking is from the rest of the world. One example that stands out starts with the moves: 1. d4 ♝f6 2. ♝f3 g6 3. c4 c5 4. e3 ♗g7 5.d5 0-0 6. ♗c3 e6 7. ♘e2 exd5 8. exd5.

After playing a dozen or so games with Black from this position, I asked Anatoly: “Why are you playing this tempo down position against the Benoni?” He looked at me quizzically - “What do you mean?”, he inquired. “Well, instead of e4 you have the pawn on e3, and later you move it to e4 anyway.” He looked at me like he's talking to a beginner and said: “But I choose when to move the pawn to e4!” That was quite deep, actually, and later I saw how Mamedyarov beat Boris Gelfand twice in a row, by losing a tempo in just such a way.
Then came Anatoly’s campaign to become FIDE President. Garry Kasp­arov was a big driving force to make it happen and I thought this was a great opportunity to revamp the way chess is perceived in the corporate world and take it from the fringes of Kalmykia to serious sponsors.

I started helping in the campaign wherever I could, and Anatoly and I flew together to Ethiopia, Angola and Arab Emirates to try and wrest the control over the chess world from Kirsan Ilyumzhinov. In those few months I got to know Anatoly quite well, and while there are many critics who have not forgiven him for playing the Soviet trooper game, when he would hail Brezh­nev for making him a better chess player, I did not once see an instance when Karpov would promise something and not deliver on it.

In 2013, as I was staying with my mother in Sicily, I got an invitation to come to Cap d’Agde – a beautiful French city close to the Spanish border, where each year a chess festival carrying Karpov’s name takes place. As I arrived into the lobby, Anatoly immediately spotted me and invited me to dinner.

At dinner, I told him why he should have called me to play some training games prior to going to Kiev, where he lost two games in the Scandinavian Defence to Kariakin and Areschenko in lines we had analyzed together at his home. I told him of the idea I discovered in the Scandinavian where White sacrifices a pawn on d4, if White moves his Queen to g3. He liked it a lot, looked at his watch and said he's running to play his game.

Twenty minutes later, my idea appeared on the screen:
Muzychuk, Mariya (2491)  
Karpov, Anatoly (2619)  
Cap d'Agde 2013

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♕xd5 3. ♕c3 ♕d6 4. d4 c6

I started playing this variation to avoid theoretical discussions with my higher rated opponents in blitz games and it has proven quite a great opening!

5. ♕f3 ♕g4 6. h3 ♕xf3 7. ♕xf3 ♕xd4 8. ♕e3 ♕d8!

Now even 10... ♕a6 is no help as White simply continues with his attack by playing 11. ♕xa7 and it becomes quite clear that Black is simply lost.

I wondered, why when I played Sergey Kariakin this way, he never once sacrificed the pawn with 6. h3, always preferred 6. ♕e2 instead.

So, this kind of deductive thinking got me to look for an alternative, and I started analyzing 8... ♕d8!

After an hour or so, my attempts to crush Black immediately were rebuffed by solid defences and I was ready to play 8... ♕d8 against strong opposition.

9. ♕d1 ♕d7 10. ♕c4 e6 11. 0-0 ♕gf6 12. ♕d2

On the immediate 12. ♕g3, Black plays ...♕h5 as well with equality.

12... ♕a5 13. ♕g3

I was in Cairo, Egypt by the pool at the Four Seasons Hotel, waiting for an important call to go to a business meeting, when I noticed a chess board by the bar.

I asked if I could use it, and was suddenly immersed in analysis. When I got to the position after 8. ♕e3, I realized that 8... ♕b4 was losing for Black, since after 9. 0-0-0, Black's attempts to develop with 9... e6 or 9... ♕f6 are immediately squashed by 10. ♕b5!

Position after: 8... ♕d8!

Position after: 13. ♕g3

13... ♕h5!
Chapter 14

There goes my idea.

14. \( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 15. \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 16. \( \text{f}3 \)

The feisty future World Women's Champion didn't fancy an early draw and decided to risk playing on.

16... \( \text{e}5 \) 17. \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 18. \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 19. \( \text{fd}1 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 20. \( \text{e}4 \) 0-0

White gets enough compensation after 21. \( \text{xf}6^+ \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 22. \( \text{d}7 \) \( \text{fd}8 \) 23. \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 24. \( \text{a}4 \) when it would be hard for Black to squeeze out a full point.

21... \( \text{xc}5 \)

21... \( \text{b}5 \)! securing the d5 square for the Knight was stronger, when White is in trouble after 22. \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{fe}8 \) 23. \( \text{d}7 \) \( \text{d}5 \)

22. \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{fe}8 \) 23. \( \text{d}3 \)

Maria is trying to organize an attack on Karpov's King, but it's not going to work, as Black has enough resources.

It was better to fight for the control of the d5-square via 23. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 24. \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}5 \) 25. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 26. \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 27. \( \text{fxe}3 \) with excellent drawing chances.

23... \( \text{b}5 \) 24. \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 25. \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 26. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 27. \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 28. \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{ae}8 \)
Quick concentration of forces in the centre is a mark of a great player. Now e4-e3 is a looming threat that White has to take notice of.

29. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{b3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{c7}} \)

An interesting maneuver, which gives White some wiggling potential. It was easier to simplify a bit with 29... b6 30. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{e3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xe3}} \) 31. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xe3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{e4}} \) 32. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xe4}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xh5}} \) 33. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{d7}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{h6}} \) when White has to retreat and try to hold a bleak endgame a pawn down.

30. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xa7}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{b5}} \)

31. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{c5}} \)?

Maria misses her chance. She had to sacrifice with 31. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xb5}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xa7}} \) 32. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xc6}} \)

when Black has to be careful to play

32... \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{f4}} \), as after 32... \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{e7}} \) 33. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{c6}} \) 34. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{d7}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a8}} \) 35. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{f3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{e7}} \) 36. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{fd3}} \)

White breaks through to the eighth rank. After 33. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{g3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{h3}}+ \) 34. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{g2}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xf2}} \) 35. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{d2}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{g4}} \) 36. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xg4}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{a8}} \) 37. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{e4}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xc6}} \) 38. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{a3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{c8}} \) 39. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{a7}} \) the game would be even.

31... \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{bxa4}} \)

Now Karpov takes over.

32. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{a3}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{b7}} \) 33. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xa4}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{xb2}} \) 34. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{a6}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{c3}} \) 35. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{e1}} \)

35... \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{xc2}} ! \)

Protecting the c6-pawn indirectly with the \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{e2}}+ \) check discovery.

36. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{c4}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{d2}} \) 37. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{f1}} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{d5}} \)
Another one of Karpov's little combinations, eyeing the Rook on a6 in case White takes the Knight and forcing a queen trade.

38. \( \text{Rx}d5 \) cxd5 39. \( \text{xa5} \) h6 40. \( \text{c5} \) \( \text{a8} \)

0-1

Karpov, Anatoly (2619)  
Muzychuk, Mariya (2491)  
Cap d'Agde 2013

Anatoly was so impressed with how quickly one of my ideas materialized on the board that he asked me to prepare him for all the games, and I became de facto his second for the tournament. Later in the tournament when he was slated to play with White against Maria, I convinced him to play 1. \( \text{gf3} \) followed by 2. c4 to meet Maria's Grunfeld Defence with an early h4. This idea worked marvelously, as after 1. \( \text{gf3} \) \( \text{gf6} \) 2. c4 g6 3. \( \text{c3} \) d5 4. cxd5 \( \text{xd5} \) 5. h4! h6 6. e4 \( \text{xc3} \) 7. bxc3 \( \text{g7} \) 8. d4 c5 9. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{a5} \) 10. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{c6} \) 11. \( \text{c1} \) cxd4 12. cxd4 \( \text{xd2+} \) 13. \( \text{xd2} \) f5

14. e5

An interesting positional decision.

The tactical continuation 14. d5 fxe4 15. dxc6 exf3 leads to rough equality after 16. c7 \( \text{e5} \) 17. \( \text{d3} \) fxg2 18. \( \text{xe6}+ \) \( \text{f8} \) 19. \( \text{hg1} \) \( \text{h3} \) 20. f4 \( \text{d6} \) 21. \( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 24. f5 \( \text{f7} \) (and not 24... \( \text{xa2} \) ? as 25. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{g8} \) 26. \( \text{a3} \) wins a piece) 25. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{g8} \) 26. \( \text{a3} \) \( \text{b4} \) 27. \( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{d8} \) 28. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 29. \( \text{xe6+} \) \( \text{f7} \) 30. \( \text{fxe6}+ \) \( \text{xe6} \) and the position peters out to a draw.

14... \( \text{e6} \) 15. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{xc4} \)
An important decision, as now Black's King remains a bit passive, and Karpov masterfully makes that felt. Black should have tried to activate it with 15... \( \text{f7} \) 16. \( \text{xe6+ xe6} \) 17. \( \text{c5 hd8} \) 18. \( \text{b1 d7} \) 19. \( \text{e2 ad8} \) and although it's not quite clear how Black will get active, Maria's position would be quite solid.

16. \( \text{xc4 e6} \) 17. \( \text{b1} \)

17... 0-0-0?

This nice looking move is in fact a mistake. The King finds it difficult to coordinate with the other pieces to the left of the centre. It was better to play simply with 17... 0-0 18. \( g3 \) \( f7 \), eventually positioning the pieces for a flavorful middlegame. After 19. \( \text{e1 d8} \) 20. \( \text{e2 fd7} \) 21. \( \text{d3} \) when Black seems to be doing fine after 21... \( \text{xd4+} \) 22. \( \text{xd4 xd4} \) 23. \( \text{xd4 xd4} \) 24. \( \text{xb7 a4} \) with a likely draw.

18. \( \text{e2 d5} \) 19. \( g3 \) \( \text{hd8} \) 20. \( \text{e1} \)

The king position pins the Knight on c6, and it's hard to organize another important attack on d4. Black is worse.
20... \( \text{f}8 \)

The attempt to get compensation for the exchange backfires as White is better after 20... \( \text{xd}4 \) 21. \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 22. \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4+ \) 23. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 24. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 25. \( \text{c}1+ \) \( \text{c}6 \) (25... \( \text{d}8 \) 26. \( \text{f}4 \) g5 27. \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{h}8 \) 28. \( \text{d}1 \) e5 29. hxg5 hxg5 30. g4 fxg4 31. \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 32. \( \text{e}4 \) is also quite bad, as Black's Bishop looks like a big pawn on h8.) 26. \( \text{f}4 \) and White picks up another pawn.

21. \( \text{d}3 \) g5 22. hxg5 hxg5 23. \( \text{x}g5 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 24. \( \text{xc}6+ \) bxc6 25. \( \text{xd}8 \) \( \text{xd}8 \)

Karpov transferred his positional advantage into the endgame, where Black's weaknesses are quite serious, as he has a classic bad Bishop staring at a dark-squared pawn on e5, versus a good Knight which can hop around attacking Black's weakened pawns.

26. \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{a}3 \) 27. \( \text{h}7 \) \( \text{d}7 \)

Position after: 27... \( \text{d}7 \)

28. \( \text{xd}7! \)

A surprising decision, showing how certain Anatoly is of his advantage.

28... 

Keeping the Rooks seemed a more reasonable route, trying to pick the right moment for a rook trade later on. But upon closer look, it turns out that after 28. \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 29. \( \text{xe}6 \) c5!

Black's passed pawn could provide adequate compensation for the pawn. Let's check it out: 30. \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{e}7! \) 31. \( \text{d}5 \) c4 32. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 33. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{b}2 \) 34. \( \text{d}6+ \) \( \text{b}7 \) 35. \( \text{g}6 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 36. \( \text{d}2 \) c3 37. \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 38. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 39. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{b}5 \) and Black holds comfortably.

28... \( \text{xd}7 \) 29. \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 30. \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 31. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 32. \( \text{c}5+ \) \( \text{e}7 \) 33. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 34. \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 35. \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 36. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 37. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 38. g4 fxg4 39. fxg4 \( \text{f}7 \) 40. \( \text{e}1 \)
Rubbing shoulders with the Greats

40... $\text{f}2$?

This move played in mutual time-pressure in this rapid game is already a decisive mistake. Black had to keep the Bishop on b6 to avoid an immediate loss. After 40... $\text{g}6$ 41. $\text{f}3$ $\text{h}6$ 42. $\text{d}3$ $\text{c}7$ 43. $\text{e}4$ the position would transpose to the game.

41. $\text{f}3$ $\text{g}6$

42. $\text{d}3$?

A serious mistake. White wins with 42. $\text{d}4$! as 42... $\text{g}5$ loses to 43. $\text{xc}6$ $\text{e}1$ 44. $\text{d}4$ $\text{xg}4$ 45. $\text{xe}6$ $\text{f}5$ 46.

45. $\text{d}8$ (Amazingly after 45. $\text{e}4$ $\text{b}6$! it is White’s turn to be in zugzwang and the position which is won for White with Black to move is a just a draw with White on move.) 45... $\text{f}5$

46. $\text{xc}6$ $\text{b}6$ 47. $\text{c}4$ $\text{e}6$ 48. $\text{b}5$ $\text{c}7$ and Black is saved.
43. \( \texttt{e4?} \)

43. \( \texttt{\textbf{d4!}} \) was still winning as after 43... \( \texttt{\textbf{xd4}} \) (43... \( \texttt{\textbf{g5}} \) loses here as Black is in zugzwang after 44. \( \texttt{\textbf{xe6+}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xe4}} \); for example: 45... \( \texttt{\textbf{f2}} \) 46. \( \texttt{\textbf{d8}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{h4}} \) 47. \( \texttt{\textbf{x6}} \) and White wins the piece with the simple \( \texttt{e6, e7} \)). 44. \( \texttt{\textbf{xd4}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{g5}} \) 45. \( \texttt{\textbf{c5}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{f4}} \) White wins beautifully with 46. \( \texttt{\textbf{g5}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xe5}} \) 47. \( \texttt{\textbf{b6!!}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{f5}} \) 48. \( \texttt{\textbf{xa5}} \) and White queens the a-pawn while stopping Black's passers.

43... \( \texttt{\textbf{f2?}} \)

Losing again. Black hold the draw with 43... \( \texttt{\textbf{h6}}! \)

44. \( \texttt{\textbf{d4!}} \)

Finally Anatoly finds the right way.

44... \( \texttt{\textbf{xd4}} \) 45. \( \texttt{\textbf{xd4}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{g5}} \) 46. \( \texttt{\textbf{c5}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{f4}} \)

Gasp! White misses the trivial win with 47. \( \texttt{\textbf{g5}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xe5}} \) 48. \( \texttt{\textbf{b6!}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{f4}} \) 49. \( \texttt{\textbf{xa5}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xe5}} \) 50. \( \texttt{\textbf{b6}} \)

47... \( \texttt{\textbf{c5!}} \)

Now Maria gets a second chance to survive the endgame.

48. \( \texttt{\textbf{xa5}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{xe5}} \) 49. \( \texttt{\textbf{g5}} \)

Now it was better to try 49. \( \texttt{\textbf{b5}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{d4}} \) 50. \( \texttt{\textbf{g5}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{c4}} \) 51. \( \texttt{\textbf{g6}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{c3}} \) 52. \( \texttt{\textbf{g7}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{c2}} \) 53. \( \texttt{\textbf{g8\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet}}}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{c1\textbf{\textbullet}}} \) 54. \( \texttt{\textbf{\textbullet}xe6} \) with a theoretically drawn endgame, yet still difficult to defend in time-pressure.

49... \( \texttt{\textbf{c4}} \) 50. \( \texttt{\textbf{b4}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{d4}} \) 51. \( \texttt{\textbf{g6}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{c3}} \) 52. \( \texttt{\textbf{g7}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{c2}} \) 53. \( \texttt{\textbf{g8\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet}}}} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{c1\textbf{\textbullet}}} \) 54. \( \texttt{\textbf{\textbullet}d8+} \) \( \texttt{\textbf{e4}} \) 55. \( \texttt{\textbf{a5}} \)

Decades of experience made Karpov leave the e6-pawn be, to complicate Maria’s defensive task under the gun. Eventually she falter under pressure in this drawn ending.

55... \( \texttt{\textbf{b2+}} \)
Rubbing shoulders with the Greats

After 55... ♕c6! the position becomes dead drawn as Black has a simple resource 56. ♕b6 ♕d5! and Black’s King approaches the a-pawn with a draw in sight.

56. ♕c5 ♕c3+ 57. ♕b5 ♕b3+ 58. ♕c6 ♕c4+ 59. ♕b7 ♕b5+ 60. ♕b6 ♕d7+ 61. ♕c7 ♕b5+ 62. ♕a7 ♕f5 63. ♕a6 ♕e5 64. ♕b6 ♕d7+ 65. ♕b8 ♕e8+ 66. ♕c7 ♕e7+ 67. ♕c6

67... ♕e6+

It was important to find the nuance check 67... ♕e8+ planning to start moving the e-pawn in case of ♕c5 or ♕d5.

68. ♕c5 ♕e7+ 69. ♕c4 ♕f7+ 70. ♕b4 ♕f8+ 71. ♕a4 ♕e8+ 72. ♕a5 e4 73. a7

Now White is too fast. Black is losing.

73... ♕c8

74. ♕b5+?

It’s Karpov’s time to make a mistake in this dramatic endgame.

The correct procedure was 74. ♕c4! threatening ♕b8 and ♕a5 check followed by promotion on a8. Black can’t check on f8 as White responds ♕c5 check, ending all debate.

74... ♕g4 75. ♕d5 ♕c3+ 76. ♕b5 ♕b2+ 77. ♕c6 ♕f6+

77... ♕c2 was a better check, but now with both flags hanging it simply became impossible for either side to seriously consider their moves.

78. ♕c7 ♕c3+ 79. ♕c6
This check loses while the check from the other side 79... e5+ was sufficient for a draw. Queen and pawn endings are simply not made for humans!

80. b7 b4+ 81. c8 f8+ 82. c7 f4+ 83. d6 c1+ 84. c6 f4+

85. b6?

Another mistake, with the "obvious" 85. b7 leading to a forced mate in 28 according to the engines. The point is that after 85... f7+ 86. b8 b3+ 87. c7 g3+ 88. c8 the checks end and any self-respecting human can now take over.

85... f2+ 86. c5 b2+ 87. c6 f6+ 88. b7 f7+ 89. c8 e8+ 90. c7

90... f7+?

Again Maria closed in on a draw but forgot about her counterplay!

With 90... e3! the e-pawn is close enough to become a major drawback for White, taking the position back to a draw (play on words).

91. b6 b3+?

One of the last mistakes.

After 91... f6+ 92. a5 a1+ 93. b5 f1+ 94. c4 f5+ 95. b4 f8+ 96. c5 e8 the battle would still rage.

92. b5 a3
Maria realized that the checks will stop after 92... ♕e6+ 93. ♕c6 ♕b3+ 94. ♕c7 ♕g3+ 95. ♕d7 as in the line above and looks for a saving grace. It’s too late now, as Karpov starts to check out the best squares for his Queen.

93. ♕d7+ ♕f4 94. ♕d5 ♕b4+ 95. ♕c7 ♕e7+ 96. ♕b6 ♕b4+ 97. ♕c6 ♕a4+ 98. ♕b7 ♕b4+ 99. ♕c7 ♕e7+ 100. ♕d7 ♕c5+

Position after: 100... ♕c5+

101. ♕b8?
And once again Karpov releases his firm grip on the position.

After 101. \(b7 \ b4+ 102. \ a6 \ a3+ 103. \ b6 \ e3+ 104. \ b7 \ b3+ 105. \ c7 \ c4+ 106. \ c6 \ f7+ 107. \ b8 \ b3+ 108. \ c8 \ g8+ 109. \ b7 \ b3+ 110. \ b6 \ d5+ 111. \ c7 \ f7+ 112. \ c6 \ e6+ 113. \ c5 \ f5+ 114. \ b4 \ f8+ 115. \ a4 \ e8+ 116. \ b5 White wins after \(b8\) next move!

101... \(b6+ 102. \ c8\)

102... \(c5+??\)

Just when she repulsed another wave of attack, Maria crumbles under pressure. After 102... \(a6+ 103. \ d8 \ e3!\) The game could go another 100 moves!

103. \(c7+\)

An amazing perseverance by Karpov, who won the double round robin portion of that event with a 2790 performance and a score of 11/14. In the Final, Anatoly drew both rapid games against Etienne Bacrot after demonstrating one of the most amazing defences in the first game – where he was just an exchange down and completely lost – and then lost both blitz playoff games, forgetting about his clock in a winning position in the second game.

1-0

It was a great run, and I truly enjoyed analyzing with chess with Anatoly. Out of every great chess player I ever met, he strikes me as one of the biggest true lovers of the game.
Magnus Carlsen

Even if I never met Magnus as someone writing about the inside story of a grandmaster, I would have to mention that he is one of the greatest talents the game has ever known. I am completely fascinated by the thinking process of this unbelievably strong player. Of course, to learn something about it, I would have to play him myself. I met Magnus at the closing ceremony of the 2011 Tal Memorial tournament in Moscow. I was seated at his table next to him and his father, when I asked him if we ever played. “We did”, he answered. “How did I do?”, I asked. “You scored about 30-35%”, he replied. I was curious, and decided to pursue the issue. “What handle were playing under”, I asked, determined to examine our games in detail. “I can’t tell you that”, was the correct reply of a true professional.
Years later, when Magnus played incognito to qualify for the ICC Championship Final and some players, thinking this unknown player is clearly using an engine, complained – he revealed himself for who he was, and all the questions were immediately put to rest.

When I was invited to field the post-game conferences for players not speaking Russian at the 2012 Tal Memorial, I was fascinated by the way Magnus played the endgame against Evgeny Tomashevsky in the penultimate round. He really needed to win to have a good chance for first place, and it seemed that at one point he was about to overreach as he took his King away from Black's passed c-pawn, all the way to the h-file. Levon Aronian, who finished his round early and I were analyzing the position as it was being played and we feared Magnus is close to losing this endgame. Then Tomashevsky played defensively and managed to make a draw by finding moves in a passive position, when it seemed active play was warranted. At the conference, I asked Magnus whether he was afraid of the active defence by Black, when his King ventured all the way to the h-file. "I spent a long time figuring
out this position, and I was never in danger”, was his reply. I continued to press the point, and Magnus decided to explain himself: “The Bishop is always stronger than the Knight in such endings, and so unless you show some specific variations, there is nothing to discuss”, he said.

I thought to leave it at that, but then as we left the tournament hall, I couldn’t take it any longer, and addressed him again. “Magnus, you know, “Levon Aronian thought you were close to being lost at some point in that endgame”, I said. “If that’s what he thought, he is an idiot”, replied Magnus. I was flabbergasted. Magnus was clearly not having a doubt that he was the only one pressing. As I went to dinner, I was somewhat happy as a journalist, that I was able to ignite some serious emotion in the ever-cool Norwegian star, and then I noticed the outdoor restaurant I chose for dinner was the one Aronian chose as well. I came up to him, and relayed the events above. Aronian was smiling. “Let's analyze the position to a win, and hand him the envelope before the last round, was Levon’s suggestion.”

It was a good idea, but there was one big problem: Magnus was right! He was always a little better, and had Tomashevsky played actively, it’s quite likely that he would have simply lost, since he would have to come up with many more exact moves just to hold the position. Even moving pieces around with the second highest rated player was not enough to refute Magnus's understanding of the position.

Then came the 2015 Sinquefeld Cup. Contracted by Bleeker Street Cinema to help promote the film “Pawn Sacrifice” in the chess circles, I was bound for Saint Louis, Missouri for some interviews and participation in the screening and the party preceding it. The tournament did not have any tiebreaks and so players were completely free one full day prior to the fun events that are usually scheduled at the very end of the tournament, when Rex Sinquefeld and his son Randy compete on teams with the top players in the world.
The previous day, when the tournament was already finished, Magnus already won an amazing bet against the strong international master Lawrence Trent. He waged that he will score 4/10 points against him giving him rook odds in 3 minute blitz. Lawrence couldn’t believe these odds, accepted the wager and Magnus promptly scored 4/9 to win the bet! Maxime Vachier Lagrange tried to repeat this feat against Lawrence and lost all 10 games! I came to the restaurant where the players were finishing up their closing dinner to inquire if there were any blitz wagers planned for tonight. It turned out that Hikaru Nakamura was offering Maxime a 1 minute per game match, where he was betting he would win 6 games before Maxime won 3. I liked those odds, but decided to improve them a bit. So I asked Hikaru if he would try to score 7 points against me before I scored 3. Hikaru probably remembered the match we played back in 2006 at the closing ceremony of the U.S.Championship, where I was so happy to socialize with old friends and colleagues that I downed 7 glasses of red wine before Hikaru challenged me to a match. I was not in good form that evening and lost miserably. This recollection had him quickly agree to the conditions, and I went back to the room to put on a comfortable T-shirt to withstand the St. Louis heat wave.

As I got to the chess club, I saw Levon Aronian already there. I asked him to play a few bullet games to help me remember how to move the pieces quickly. After I managed to win our mini-match with a 2-1 score, Anish Giri, who was spectating, wanted some action as well. He sat down, but only managed one draw in 3 games against me, as I started to pick up some speed. I was still waiting for Hikaru and expected him to come any moment now. I got up and looked around. Magnus Carlsen just finished playing some blitz with Rustam Kasimdzhanov, and a bit more confident from my previous 6 games, I decided to ask him if he would play me some 1 minute chess. To my great joy, Magnus agreed!

I started off with two losses, but then came back to win four in a row. Magnus was amazingly fast and extremely strong, but his preference for simplification would sometimes get him in trouble. As the match progressed, I noticed Sunil Weeramantry, Hikaru's step father, watching every game intently, and after about an hour, the match score was amazingly roughly even! That was probably enough for Sunil to tell Hikaru that the planned odds were probably a bit too steep.

I managed a five game winning streak at one point, and that got Magnus into the match in a serious way. After an hour and a half, the age factor started showing, and I began dropping pieces like winter flies. With a score of roughly minus 2, I
called it quits on the World Champion and we went off to play bughouse. As Magnus got up he looked at me and couldn’t contain a compliment: “You are very strong”, he said, surprised to find someone who can actually survive his speed and amazing technique. This was clearly one of the best days of my life!

As I headed back to the hotel with my student Joris, who watched our whole match, he said something I found hard to believe. “You know, you won every game against Magnus where you played the London System”. “What, really?”, I asked. “That can’t be!” But my student who has an exceptional memory, convinced me otherwise. “You really did”, he said.

Therefore, when at the World Rapid and Blitz Championships in Berlin a couple of months after, Magnus started playing the London System, I assumed this was not an accident.

Of course the match with Hikaru didn’t happen, as by that time everyone was engaged in playing bughouse, with even Garry Kasparov suggesting moves in a variant of chess he hardly ever played.
That night we played till about 3 in the morning, but the following night, my old chess buddy Yasser Seirawan and I took on Maxime and Magnus in a bughouse match that lasted until 4:30 in the morning.

Many times Magnus and Maxime would say a phrase which would hint that maybe we were all overdoing it: “The level of degradation has reached it’s peak”, but we kept going.

Besides us, there was only the club manager who kept getting us drinks, so we wouldn't drop of dehydration. Yasser and I lost that match with a rough score of 20-10, but I got to checkmate the World Champion a few more times in the process.

In those two days I saw and felt how much Magnus loves chess and everything associated with it.

The chess world is truly lucky to have such an amazing World Chess Champion!
Chapter 15

Crucial games

There is a special magic to playing the last round of a chess tournament when you have a chance of winning it. The adrenaline, the nerves and the “if I could only pull it off” ideas flying in your head can sometimes take you to the top of your game, while at other times pull you down into the peak of degradation – to paraphrase the World Champion. I would like to show some of my most memorable decisive games, so that perhaps together we could understand what are the elements that help a chess player succeed under pressure.

▲ Dlugy, Maxim
▲ Odendahl, Steven M
▲ Gausdal Young Masters 1982

This game was played in the last round of the Gausdal Young Masters Tournament and while I had no chance to win the event, a win would give me my second International Master norm, while a draw would miss it by ½ a point. Considering I started badly and won the previous two games, I was on a good run and came to the game believing I could do it. I think this was felt by my opponent, who after holding an inferior position,
slipped and lost his footing towards the end of the game. Let’s see:

1. d4  d5 2. c4  e6 3.  c3  c5 4. d5 exd5 5. cxd5  d6 6.  c3  g6

The Benoni was a popular opening choice for many aspiring young Americans, popularized Nick DeFirmian, who was one of the most promising young players in the United States at the time.

7. e4

A few years later, to avoid the  variation, I started to play 7.  d2 before playing e4.

7...  g7 8.  d2 0-0 9.  e2  e8 10. 0-0  a6

One of the main variations against the Classical Benoni. Black’s other main choice is to develop the Knight to d7.

11. f3  c7 12. a4  b6 13.  c4  a6 14.  g5  h6 15.  e3  h5

It is more common for Black to capture the Knight on c4 immediately, before White props up the Knight with his b-pawn, because bxc4 becomes a strategically advantageous pawn transformation.

16. g4

It was more accurate to play 16.  d2 first and follow up with g4 after 16... g5. I was not aware of such nuances.

16...  f6 17.  d2  g5 18. b3

I always considered this move to be a huge achievement for White against
this variation of the Benoni. It seems to me that if White opens up the b-file with bxc4, it will be possible to press the b6-pawn with a5 and \( a\)b1, creating a serious problem in his position.

It's interesting that this opinion is hardly shared by others. In three games in the database in this position, none of the players chose b3, while the great Lajos Portisch played \( f2\) and even went on to lose his game to Rajna in 1980.

Nevertheless, I like my move!

18... \( \text{e7} \) 19. \( \text{ae1} \) \( \text{d7} \) 20. \( \text{h4} \)

I thought it was time to create weaknesses in Black’s position. The g5-pawn will have to be defended, while the open h-file will also have to be tended to.

20... \( \text{e5} \)

The alternative 20... gxh4 gives me a better game after the natural 21. \( \text{xh6} \) \( \text{d4+} \) 22. \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 23. \( \text{xc4} \) a6 24. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{e5} \) 25. \( \text{h1} \) b5 26. \( \text{d3} \) bxa4 27. bxa4 \( \text{ab8} \) 28. \( \text{b1} \).

21. \( \text{hxg5} \) \( \text{hxg5} \) 22. \( \text{d1} \)

Avoiding the trap 22. \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 23. \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{c3} \) 24. \( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 25. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xe1} \)

22... \( \text{f6} \)

23. \( \text{f2} \)?

Too boring! The immediate 23. \( \text{xe5} \) ! \( \text{xe5} \) 24. \( \text{xa6} \) \( \text{xa6} \) 25. \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{b4} \) 26. \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{g7} \) 27. \( \text{f2} \) \( \text{h8} \) 28. \( \text{e3} \) gave me a large advantage, as Black will find it difficult to defend the d6-pawn from the Knight on f5 and Bishop on g3.

23... \( \text{h7} \)?

Steve Odendahl is not taking advantage of my mistake.

After 23... \( \text{xc4} \) ! 24. \( \text{bxc4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 25. \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{e5} \) ! the threat of \( \text{g3} \), keeps the balance, as after 26. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{g3+} \) 27.
Black should re-position the Queen on the h-file. After 27... \( \text{h}4 \)!, the attempt to rip the position open with 28. f4 leads to equality after 28... gxf4 29. \( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{xf}4 \) 30. \( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{d}4+ \) 31. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 32. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{g}5 \) 33. \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{xe}3+ \) 34. \( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{e}8 \).

24. \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{g}8 \)

![Position after: 24... \( \text{g}8 \)](image)

25. \( \text{g}2 \)

The engine points out a messy but promising line with 25. \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 26. \( \text{xe}5+ ! \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 27. f4 \( \text{xe}4 \) 28. fxg5 \( \text{xe}2 \) 29. \( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{xd}5 \) 30. \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{xd}4+ \) 31. \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 32. \( \text{h}2+ \) \( \text{g}7 \) 33. \( \text{g}6! \) \( \text{h}8 \) 34. \( \text{d}4+ \) \( \text{xd}4+ \) 35. \( \text{xd}4+ \) \( \text{f}6 \) 36. \( \text{h}8 \) 37. \( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{h}3 \) 38. \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 39. \( \text{b}5 \) and White should eventually win the endgame.

25... \( \text{g}7 \) 26. \( \text{f}2? \)

This attempt to "improve" the Bishop to g3 and stop \( \text{g}6-\text{h}4 \) allows Black to regroup and defend. The Knight to h4 idea could have been easily repulsed by the Rook to h5 idea. For example: 26. \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 27. \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 28. \( \text{h}5! \) \( \text{h}4+ \) 29. \( \text{f}1 \) and there is no defence against \( \text{h}3\text{xg}5 \).

26... \( \text{h}8 \)

Strange, but somehow neither player thinks the Knight on f5 is strong. Black should have played \( \text{xc}4 \) first.

27. \( \text{g}3? \)

After the correct 27. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 28. \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 29. \( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 30. \( \text{exf}5 \) \( \text{gh}7 \) 31. \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 32. \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{h}1 \) 33. \( \text{xh}1 \) Black can only wait for White to find a way in, which should not be too difficult considering the numerous possibilities.

27... \( \text{xc}4 \) 28. \( \text{bxc}4 \) \( \text{g}8 \)

![Position after: 28... \( \text{g}8 \)](image)

29. \( \text{h}1 \)

Considering this was a must-win game, it is quite strange I didn't go for the most aggressive and promising continuation.
beginning with e5. After 29. e5 $\mathcal{R}$xe5 30. $\mathcal{Q}$d3! the threat of $\mathcal{Q}$xe5 followed by d6 and $\mathcal{Q}$h7 forces Black to weaken the light squares further with 30... f6, when I would get excellent long-term compensation after 31. $\mathcal{Q}$h1 $\mathcal{Q}$c8 32. $\mathcal{Q}$xe5 fxe5 33. $\mathcal{Q}$f2. Now after 33... $\mathcal{H}$h4 34. $\mathcal{H}$xh4 gxh4 35. $\mathcal{H}$h6 $\mathcal{Q}$e8 36. $\mathcal{H}$h1 $\mathcal{Q}$g5 37. $\mathcal{H}$xh4 $\mathcal{Q}$xh6 38. $\mathcal{Q}$xh6, I win back the pawn and get an absolutely commanding position thanks to my control over the e4-square.

This programmed move creates a weakness on b6 and a potential route for invasion for my pieces via the a4-e8 diagonal.

36... $\mathcal{Q}$c8 37. axb6 axb6 38. $\mathcal{H}$a2 $\mathcal{Q}$e7 39. $\mathcal{Q}$d3 $\mathcal{Q}$b8 40. $\mathcal{Q}$d1 $\mathcal{Q}$g7 41. $\mathcal{Q}$f2

41... $\mathcal{Q}$g6?

Black's sense of danger has been numbed and he makes a decisive mistake. After 41... $\mathcal{Q}$c7 I could try a number of plans from playing f4 at the right moment to loading up the battery on the b1-h7 diagonal and then sacrificing with e5. In any case, Black would have reasonable chances to hold this position. Now it's too late. 42. $\mathcal{Q}$c2 $\mathcal{Q}$b7 43. $\mathcal{Q}$b1 $\mathcal{Q}$d7 44. $\mathcal{Q}$c2 $\mathcal{Q}$f8 45. e5 dxe5.

42. $\mathcal{Q}$b1!

Black missed the double threat of $\mathcal{Q}$xb6 and e5 opening up the Queen for the kill.

42... $\mathcal{Q}$f7 43. $\mathcal{Q}$xb6 $\mathcal{Q}$a6 44. $\mathcal{Q}$a4 $\mathcal{Q}$c7
45. \( \texttt{b5} \)

It’s easier to win by keeping the Queens on the board, as Black’s King is in serious trouble.

45... \( \texttt{g7} \)

Position after: 45... \( \texttt{g7} \)

46. \( \texttt{g3} \)

46. \( \texttt{e8} \) was decisive, as Black would be unable to activate his Queen after 46... \( \texttt{b7} \) 47. \( \texttt{c6} \) \( \texttt{c7} \) 48. \( \texttt{c1} \) \( \texttt{b4} \) 49. \( \texttt{a4} \) \( \texttt{b7} \) 50. \( \texttt{e3} \) \( \texttt{a6} \) 51. \( \texttt{e2} \) \( \texttt{h7} \) 52. \( \texttt{g3} \) and the Knight goes to h5, resulting in a quick mate.

46... \( \texttt{b8} \)

Black could prolong the agony with a pawn sacrifice. After 46... \( \texttt{b4} \) 47. \( \texttt{xb4} \) \texttt{cxb4} 48. \( \texttt{xb4} \) \( \texttt{a7} \) 49. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{e3} \) 50. \( \texttt{b2} \) Black gets some drawing chances with an additional sacrifice of the Bishop. After 50... \( \texttt{xg4} \) 51. \texttt{fxg4} \( \texttt{xe4+} \) 52. \( \texttt{f2} \) \( \texttt{xc4} \) 53. \( \texttt{d7} \) \( \texttt{xd5} \) 54. \( \texttt{f5} \) \( \texttt{c5+} \) 55. \( \texttt{e2} \) \( \texttt{c6} \) 56. \( \texttt{d4} \)

White eventually wins by attacking the d-pawn with his King, but it’s a haul.

47. \( \texttt{e8} \) \( \texttt{a6} \)

Position after: 47... \( \texttt{a6} \)

48. \( \texttt{e1} \)

The c4-pawn doesn’t matter as my Knight heads for the sweet f5-square.

48... \( \texttt{b7} \) 49. \( \texttt{g2} \) \( \texttt{b2} \) 50. \( \texttt{e7+} \) \( \texttt{g8} \) 51. \( \texttt{e8+} \) \( \texttt{g7} \) 52. \( \texttt{h3} \) \( \texttt{a3} \) 53. \( \texttt{e7+} \) \( \texttt{g8} \) 54. \( \texttt{e8} \) \( \texttt{xf3+} \) 55. \( \texttt{h2} \) \( \texttt{c6} \) 56. \( \texttt{f7+} \) \( \texttt{h7} \) 57. \( \texttt{dxc6} \)

Black resigned and I earned my second IM norm.

1-0
Immediately following this tournament, a much stronger Open tournament was held. Considering I was still in good form, this set the stage for yet another crucial game in my career.

Diagram 1

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘f3 b6 4. g3 ♗b7

In later games, with the Black pieces, Sergey would either play the ...♖a6 variation or the Benoni against me.

5. ♗g2 ♗e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♗c3 ♗e4 8. ♘xe4 ♘xe4 9. ♘e1!

This variation is usually played to make a short Grandmaster draw, and I could see how Sergey was getting visibly upset that I was using his tournament standing to force his play. In chess, like in war, all is fair as long it’s done by the rules.

9... d5 10. ♔a4

I am trying to avoid all complications and position my Queen, where Black would do best to exchange it off.

10... ♘f6

This move is already a bit clumsy. Black is well prepared to play ...c5 and could easily equalize with either 10... ♘xg2...
11. \( \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\text{\textit{e5}}} xg2 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textit{e8}}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textit{e8}}} \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textit{xe8}}} \texttt{\textit{exd5}}} \texttt{exd5} \texttt{\textit{e3}} \texttt{d7} \texttt{\textit{a1}} \texttt{\textit{ac8}} \texttt{\textit{ac6}} \texttt{\textit{b8}} \texttt{\textit{c2}} \texttt{a6} \texttt{\textit{c6}} \texttt{fc1} \texttt{c5} \texttt{\textit{xg2}} \texttt{\textit{xg2}} \texttt{\textit{c5}} \texttt{x} \texttt{xd5} \texttt{\textit{dxc5}} \texttt{\textit{xc5}} \texttt{\textit{f4}} \texttt{c6}, \texttt{\textit{exd5}} \texttt{\textit{c6}}\) 12. \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} xg2 \texttt{\textit{e8}} \texttt{\textit{e8}} \texttt{\textit{exd5}} \texttt{\textit{exd5}} \texttt{\textit{e3}} \texttt{d7} \texttt{\textit{ac1}} \texttt{\textit{ac6}} \texttt{\textit{b8}} \texttt{\textit{c2}} \texttt{a6} \texttt{\textit{c6}} \texttt{fc1} \texttt{c5} \texttt{\textit{xg2}} \texttt{\textit{xg2}} \texttt{\textit{c5}} \texttt{x} \texttt{xd5} \texttt{\textit{dxc5}} \texttt{\textit{xc5}} \texttt{\textit{f4}} \texttt{c6}, \texttt{\textit{exd5}} \texttt{\textit{c6}}\), \texttt{\textit{exd5}} \texttt{\textit{c6}}\, \text{but \texttt{Sergey} needs to complicate.}

11. \( \texttt{\textit{e3}} \texttt{\textit{xg2}} \texttt{\textit{e8}} \)

To get the my strong Queen off a4, 12... \( \texttt{\textit{e8}} \) was necessary. To avoid simplification, \texttt{Sergey} accepts a slightly worse position.

13. \( \texttt{\textit{ac1}} \texttt{a6} \)

A more resolute solution would be 14... \( \texttt{c5}! \texttt{dxc5} \texttt{d4} \texttt{\textit{d2}} \texttt{bxc5} \texttt{b4} \texttt{\textit{d7}} \texttt{\textit{d3}} \texttt{e7} \) when I should play 19. \( \texttt{\textit{e3}} \) with a complicated position after 19... \( \texttt{g5} \texttt{f4} \texttt{e7} \texttt{fd1} \texttt{dxe3} \texttt{xe3} \texttt{\textit{c7}}\).

14. \( \texttt{\textit{a7}} \)

15. \( \texttt{\textit{exd5}} \texttt{\textit{cxd5}}? \)

A strange decision given the situation. 15... \( \texttt{exd5} \) was both stronger and more complicated.

Then, after 16. \( \texttt{\textit{d2}} \texttt{b5} \texttt{\textit{b4}} \texttt{a5} \texttt{\textit{c3}} \texttt{b4} \texttt{d3} \texttt{g6} \texttt{\textit{e3}} \texttt{\textit{d6}} \texttt{a3} \texttt{\textit{f4}} \texttt{c6}, \texttt{\textit{exd5}} \texttt{\textit{c6}}\), \texttt{\textit{exd5}} \texttt{\textit{c6}}\, \text{but \texttt{Sergey} needs to complicate.}

16. \( \texttt{\textit{d3}} \)

\( \texttt{\textit{c7}?} \)

\texttt{Sergey} realizes that the opening didn’t go as planned and tries to solve his problems quickly by trading down on the c-file. The problem is that I will control the file and get an undisputed advantage. Still, even a more circumspect approach doesn’t seem to be successful in fighting for the control of the c-file. For example: 16... \( \texttt{\textit{b5}} \texttt{\textit{c2}} \texttt{\textit{b6}} \texttt{\textit{c5}} \texttt{\textit{b7}} \texttt{\textit{c2}} \texttt{\textit{d7}} \texttt{\textit{c6}} \texttt{\textit{xc6}} \texttt{\textit{fa8}} \texttt{\textit{fc1}} \) and I have a serious endgame advantage.

17. \( \texttt{\textit{xc7}} \texttt{\textit{xc7}} \)

18. \( \texttt{\textit{c1}} \texttt{\textit{b7}} \)

19. \( \texttt{\textit{c2}}! \)
The file is under control and it's time to create new weaknesses to attack.

19... \texttt{\#d7 20. \#a4}

It was maybe stronger to play 20. \texttt{\#c7}, but I didn't like the Queen getting active with 20... \texttt{\#b5}. As it turns out, I missed the nice prophylactic idea 21. \texttt{\#g2}! planning 22. \texttt{\#c3} while stopping 22... \texttt{\#a4} with the threat 23... \texttt{\#d1+} in response.

20... \texttt{\#a5 21. \#c7!}

I judged correctly that the a-pawn will be quite weak after we trade off pawns on the queenside.

21... \texttt{\#xa4 22. \#xb6 \#h6}

22... \texttt{\#d7} would be met strongly by 23. \texttt{\#b7!} threatening b3. Now on the forced 23... \texttt{\#d8 24. \#b3 \#a2 25. \#c7 \#f8 26. \#c1 \#a1 27. \#xf7 \#xd4 28. \#xd4 \#xd4 29. \#d3} Black would be in an extremely precarious position.

23. \texttt{\#c5!}

This forces an advantageous endgame, which my opponent still tries to avoid.

23... \texttt{\#a2?}

It was best to start going into a full defensive mode with 23... \texttt{\#b4 24. \#xb4 axb4 25. \#d3 \#a6 when I would have to start working to convert my undisputed advantage into a win.}

24. \texttt{\#b3?}

This rash move loses most of my advantage. Black's Queen is basically trapped, and by playing 24. \texttt{\#b5} I would be trapping Black's Knight as well. After 24. \texttt{\#b5! \#e7 25. \#b7 \#f6 26. \#f4 \#g5 27. \#xg5 hgx5 28. \#d3} Black has to give away the a-pawn to fend off the threat of \texttt{\#c8}. After 28... \texttt{\#a4 29. \#c3! a3 30. \#xa3 \#c4 31. \#c3 \#a6 32. \#xa6 \#xa6 33. \#c6} I would be in a technically winning endgame.

24... \texttt{\#xb3 25. \#xb3}
25... a4?

Not the best defence.

Sergey misses a good chance to save the game with 25... axb3 26. axa5 bxa5 27. c6 bxc6 28. c7 b5 when Black seems to hold after 29. c5 xc5 30. dxc5 bxc2 31. c6 e5 32. b6 a6.

26. a5 c8 27. c3

Now Black loses the a-pawn and I get an ending with good winning chances.

27... e5?

Another knee jerk reaction from Black.

It was necessary to keep the pawn structure as is, and play something like 27... c6 28. axa4 g5, forcing me to solve many technical problems.

28. axa4 xc3 29. bxc3 exd4 30. xd4 xd4 31. cxd4 c6 32. e3

A classic endgame has occurred where White has excellent winning chances. Eight years later I reached a similar endgame against Viktor Korchnoi, who had a pawn on e6 instead of d5. He managed to draw it after I displayed really poor technique.

32... f8 33. f1 e7 34. e2 d6 35. g4

I thought it was important to stop Black from expanding on the kingside.

35... e7 36. c5 c6 37. d3 e7 38. f4 c6 39. h5
A typical idea – if your opponent doesn’t want to push pawns so as not to weaken them, spend some time to make that happen.

39... g6 40. \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 41. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 42. \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 43. \( \text{f}4+ \) \( \text{d}6 \) 44. \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 45. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 46. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 47. \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 48. \( \text{d}3 \) g5 49. e4

Position after: 49. e4

It’s time to create a passed pawn, which will deflect Black’s pieces. The next step is to capture on d5 and force the King back before attempting to advance the passed d-pawn.

49... h5 50. h3 hxg4 51. hxg4

Black correctly trades a set of pawns, but there is still enough material to force a win.

51... \( \text{e}7 \) 52. exd5 \( \text{xd}5 \) 53. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 54. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{c}3+ \) 55. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{b}5 \) 56. \( \text{e}3 \)

Not only protecting d5, but also preventing the trading of pawns with ...f5.

56... \( \text{d}6 \) 57. \( \text{c}3 \)

Now that everything is protected, it’s time to take a walk with the King. The f-pawn can’t be properly attacked by Black’s Knight and, by the time it gets to h4, I will be pushing my d-pawn too far.

57... \( \text{b}7 \) 58. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 59. \( \text{b}5 \)

The correct path will be found by trial and error. The shortest method was 59. \( \text{f}5+ \) \( \text{e}6 \) 60. \( \text{g}3 \) planning to force f6. After 60... \( \text{a}5+ \) 61. \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{c}6+ \) 62. \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 63. \( \text{e}4 \) f6 64. \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{a}6+ \) 65. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 66. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 67. d5 \( \text{d}7 \) 68. \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 69. \( \text{d}6+ \) \( \text{e}7 \) 70. \( \text{f}5+ \) \( \text{f}7 \) 71. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}5+ \) 72. \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 73. \( \text{b}6 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 74. \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 75. \( \text{c}7 \) the d-pawn is a success story!

59... \( \text{d}8 \) 60. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 61. \( \text{f}5+ \) \( \text{e}6 \) 62. \( \text{g}3 \)

It’s a good thing that knight and pawn endings are very similar to king and pawns endings and it’s possible to try
different setups in advantageous positions before finding the best one.

62... f6 63. e4 d8 64. c5+ d6 65. d5

Finding the moment when Black cannot bring the King out to e5, I push the d-pawn one square further.

65... f7

65... e5 would lose as after 66. d7+ f4 67. xf6 xf3 68. d6 f4 69. d5 I simply win the Knight for the d-pawn in a few more moves.

66. d4 e7

66... e5 allows the simple combination 67. e4+ e7 68. xg5 winning another pawn.

67. e4 h6 68. c5 f7 69. c6 d8 70. xf6 e5+ 71. d6 xf3 72. e6

The end is near. I will pick up the g5-pawn in short order and move one of the pawns to victory.

72... d4+ 73. e5 c2 74. f5 e7 75. xg5 d6 76. f5 e3+ 77. e4 g2 78. d4 h4 79. e4+ e7 80. e5 f3+ 81. f4 h4 82. g5 g6+ 83. g4 f7 84. d6 f8 85. c5 g6 86. d7 e7 87. h5 f4+ 88. h6 d5 89. g6 1-0

After receiving a nice paycheck and a beautiful Norwegian wooden troll, which has recently been re-glued by my mother's friend, I felt euphoric! Here I was, a 16-year-old far away from home, winning a tournament ahead of all these strong players! When I called home, my dad kept asking me repeat myself to make sure he heard me right – he was just too amazed to believe this news himself.
My first US Invitational Chess Championship in 1984 started amazingly well. When I had 4.5 out of 5, Grandmaster Dmitry Gurevich commented that I will play in many more of these events, but will never have such a good score.

As it turns out, he was quite right. The best I managed was 3.5/5 the following year. Still, towards the end of this 17-round event, I was getting tired.

This was the first and in fact the only tournament of such length in my entire career, and playing against the best players in the U.S. as the lowest rated and youngest player in the tournament was getting exhausting.

Ahead was my final test. In my last round, to have a chance to qualify for the Interzonal, I had to win against the worst performing player in the tournament, Kamran Shirazi, who somehow lost all form and nerve and scored only one draw in the 16 rounds leading up to this game, including a scandalous loss as white to Jack Peters which went: 1. e4 c5 2. b4 cxb4 3. a3 ds 4. exds exds 5. axb4? es! 0-1.

As you can imagine, I didn't expect much of a fight, and came in to the game full of hope. What happened was a real roller-coaster, where my seat belt snapped quite early!

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Shirazi, Kamran G} & (2465) \\
\text{Dlugy, Maxim} & (2470) \\
\text{Berkeley 1984} & \\
\end{array}
\]

1. e4 c5 2. \text{c3} \text{c6}

I faced the Closed Sicilian earlier in the tournament against Ron Henley and quickly drew, but expected Kamran to come out swinging as always.

3. g3 g6 4. \text{g2} \text{g7} 5. f4 d6 6. \text{f3} e5 7. 0-0 \text{ge7} 8. f5

Quite expected from the most enterprising, although not very sound player I have met. White sacrifices a pawn for activity and I will have to play accurately...
to defend. It’s interesting that this enterprising move is quite reasonable here, giving White good chances, while the stale 8. d3 even led to a loss as White for one of the most famous practitioners of the Closed Sicilian, Boris Spassky, in his 1965 game against Minic.

8... gxf5 9. ♗g5

Shirazi again plays with the maximum possible gusto.

The slower approach 9. d3 0-0 10. ♗h4 f4 11. gxf4 exf4 12. ♗h5 leads to a roughly equal and complicated position after 12... ♗g6 13. ♗f5 ♗e5 14. ♗d5 ♗h8 15. ♗h1 ♗d4 16. c3 ♗e6.

9... h6?

I was really hoping Shirazi would have a veil come down over his eyes as it had during the previous 16 rounds; I wanted him to engage me to the fullest.

The problem is that what I am really asking for is not bad for White at all. It was probably wiser to refrain from this dangerous path and play 9... 0-0 when White’s activity eventually subsides after something like 10. ♗h5 (or 10. d3 f6 11. ♗f3 fxe4 12. dxe4 ♗d4 13. ♗h4 ♗d7 14. ♗d5 ♗xd5 15. exd5 ♗c8) 10... h6 11. ♗h3 f6 12. d3 fxe4 13. ♗xe6 ♗e8.

10. ♗xf7!

Absolutely correct. White gets full compensation for the piece now.

10... ♗xf7 11. ♗h5+ ♗f8 12. exf5

12... ♗f6?

The choice between this and 12... ♗g8 was a difficult one, and I chose incorrectly. After the correct 12... ♗g8 13. f6! ♗xf6

A) 14. ♗d5! White wins back the piece, but I can hold on by exchanging Queens with 14... ♗e8 15. ♗xe8+ ♗xe8 16. ♗xg8 ♗xg8 17. ♗xf6 ♗d4 18. d3 ♗xc2 19. ♗b1 h5 20. ♗xd6 ♗f5.
B) If White tries for more with 14. \( \text{d}5 \)
Black seems to have sufficient resources after 14... \( \text{g}7 \) 15. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{c}e7 \) 16. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 17. \( \text{c}7 \) \( \text{d}7 ! \) 18. \( \text{xa}8 \) \( \text{d}5 ! \) 19. \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{xa}8 \) repulsing White's main wave of attack with some material advantage.

13. \( \text{d}4 ! \)

With such a sudden opening of the game my position becomes extremely dangerous.

13... \( \text{g}8 \)

Once again there was a tough choice between this move and \( \text{g}7 \), but I thought this gave me more chances by threatening the trade of Queens.

After 13... \( \text{g}7 \) 14. dxc5 dxc5 15. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 16. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 17. \( \text{g}4 + \) \( \text{h}7 \) 18. \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 19. \( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 20. \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 21. c3 White gets a decisive advantage.

14. dxc5 \( \text{e}8 \) 15. \( \text{d}1 \)

Even the simple approach 15. \( \text{xe}8 + \) \( \text{xe}8 \) 16. \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 17. \( \text{xd}6 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 18. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 19. \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 20. \( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 21. b4 a6 22. h3 h5 23. \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{ag}8 \) 24. h4 gives White more than enough for the piece, but Kamran never trades Queens when he can avoid it.

15... dxc5 16. \( \text{e}3 ! \)

A strong move. White's other alternatives 16. \( \text{d}5 \) and 16. \( \text{e}4 \) were also dangerous, but this forces me to make a tough decision once again.

16... \( \text{d}7 ? \)

I fail the test. It was imperative to play 16... \( \text{d}8 ! \) to move the Knight to f6 (while not allowing the trade of my dark-squared Bishop which would happen after 16... \( \text{e}7 \) 17. \( \text{d}5 \) when I would be helpless against the threats of f6 and \( \text{c}7 \)). Now, after 17. \( \text{xc}5 + \) \( \text{g}7 \) 18. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 19. \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{h}7 \) 20. \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 21. \( \text{xf}6 + \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 22. \( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 23. b4 a5 24. b5 \( \text{c}4 \) 25. \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) or after 17. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 18. c3 \( \text{g}7 \) 19.
Chapter 15

Black’s position is surprisingly quite resilient, and can be objectively called unclear.

17. \textit{$\text{ex}c5$} \textit{$\text{e}5$} 18. \textit{$\text{ex}e7$} \textit{$\text{xe}7$}

Other captures are equally bad.

For example: 18... \textit{$\text{gx}e7$} 19. \textit{$\text{e}1$} stopping Black’s defence \textit{$\text{d}4$}. 19... \textit{$\text{c}7$} 20. \textit{$\text{f}6$} \textit{$\text{g}6$} 21. \textit{$\text{d}5$} \textit{$\text{d}8$} 22. \textit{$\text{d}1$} \textit{$\text{e}6$} 23. \textit{$\text{e}4$} \textit{$\text{f}7$} 24. \textit{$\text{c}3$} \textit{$\text{d}4$} 25. \textit{$\text{c}5+$} \textit{$\text{g}8$} 26. \textit{$\text{c}3$} \textit{$\text{e}6$} 27. \textit{$\text{e}7+$} \textit{$\text{xe}7$} 28. \textit{$\text{f}xe7$} \textit{$\text{xc}5$} 29. \textit{$\text{xg}6$} \textit{$\text{g}6$} 30. \textit{$\text{d}8+$} \textit{$\text{g}7$} 31. \textit{$\text{ff}8$} is one of many ways White can break through my helpless position.

19. \textit{$\text{d}5$}?

Not the best. It was time to arrest my Knight on g8. After 19. \textit{$\text{f}6$} \textit{$\text{b}4$} 20. \textit{$\text{xc}6$} \textit{$\text{d}4+$} 21. \textit{$\text{f}2$} \textit{$\text{bxc}6$} (the exchange of Queens doesn’t help after 21... \textit{$\text{xd}1+$} 22. \textit{$\text{xd}1$} \textit{$\text{bxc}6$} 23. \textit{$\text{d}8+$} \textit{$\text{f}7$} 24. \textit{$\text{e}4$} when Black is lost) 22. \textit{$\text{h}5$} \textit{$\text{g}4$} 23. \textit{$\text{g}6$} \textit{$\text{d}7$} 24. \textit{$\text{e}4$} \textit{$\text{h}3$} 25. \textit{$\text{h}5$} would be helpless against White’s mobilization and an eventual f7, breaking through to my King.

19... \textit{$\text{c}5+$} 20. \textit{$\text{h}1$}

20... \textit{$\text{h}7$}?!?

Again I had a tough choice between this move and 20... \textit{$\text{ce}7$}.

I probably should have preferred the latter as after 20... \textit{$\text{ce}7$} 21. \textit{$\text{c}3$} \textit{$\text{f}6$} 22. \textit{$\text{e}4$} \textit{$\text{b}6$}! I manage to hold the f6-square and White probably doesn’t have more than a draw after 23. \textit{$\text{e}2$} (on 23. \textit{$\text{d}3$} \textit{$\text{xf}5$} seems quite playable) 23... \textit{$\text{g}7$} 24. \textit{$\text{ad}1$} \textit{$\text{xe}4$} 25. \textit{$\text{xe}4$} \textit{$\text{f}6$} 26. \textit{$\text{g}4$} a5! preparing - oh yes! to develop a Rook on a6.

21. \textit{$\text{b}4$}

The position is rich with possibilities for White, and many of them look quite appetizing. Besides this move, Kamran could have tried 21. \textit{$\text{h}5$} when I would have to defend with 21... \textit{$\text{ce}7$} 22.
Critical games

$\textit{No}, now after 23. â€œad1 â€œd7 although my position looks quite disgusting, breaking through is not easy.

For example: 24. f6 â€œxd1 25. â€œxd1 â€œe6 26. â€œd3 â€œf7 and all the key squares around my King are protected.

During the game I felt that I was quite lost, but surprisingly, it's not so simple.

21... â€œd6 22. â€œe1

Considering the complexity of the position, Kamran is playing extremely well.

Now his Rook is coming to d1 and I will have another big problem to worry about.

22... â€œd7

While there's time, I am trying to develop my pieces.

Another possibility was 22... â€œf6 when White maintains the advantage after 23. â€œd1 â€œxd5 24. â€œxd5 â€œxb4 25. â€œd8+! â€œe7 26. â€œe8+! â€œd6 27. c3 â€œc5 28. f6 â€œd7 29. â€œe4 â€œf7 30. â€œh8 â€œc7 as he surprisingly forces a better ending with 31. â€œd5 â€œxd5 32. â€œxd5 â€œe6 33. â€œxe6 â€œxh8 34. â€œf7.

23. â€œd1 â€œe8 24. f6

24... â€œe6??

And finally I fall apart. Defending such position is not easy.

My only chance was 24... â€œd4! with the idea to meet 25. c3 with 25... â€œc6. Then, after 26. â€œe3 â€œe6! 27. cxd4 exd4 White is even a bit lucky to have the useful in-between-move 28. b5! which forces the ending after 28... â€œxg2+ 29. â€œxg2 â€œxe1 30. â€œxe1 â€œd7 31. f7 â€œxf7 32. â€œf3 â€œe4 33. â€œxd4 â€œxf1+ 34. â€œxf1+ â€œe7 35. â€œf5+ â€œd7 where Black has significant drawing chances.

25. â€œf4! â€œc7 26. â€œg6+ â€œf7 27. â€œe4 â€œxf6
And here my lucky star shone on Kamran and showed him the beautiful mate starting with his next move 28. $\text{dxe5}. \text{If he just stopped to make the obvious move 28. } \text{h4}, \text{I would pretty much have to resign, as after I lose the Knight White continues to have a decisive attack.}$

28. $\text{dxe5}+?? \text{g8}$

The artist in Kamran was dreaming of 28... $\text{e7}??$

29. $\text{xh7}+!! \xh7 30. $\text{g6}$ but it was not to be. Now quite suddenly, I am better in a very messy position and Kamran, like so many times in this tournament loses heart.

30. $\text{xa2}$

Realizing that with every grabbed pawn my chances to convert some yet unknown ending will grow, I start munching.

31. $\text{f4}$

Better resistance was offered with 31. $\text{g6+ g7 32. xh6 e7 33. f5}$ although after 33... $\text{d7}$! my advantage is quite serious.

31... $\text{f7} 32. \text{xh6 xf6} 33. \text{xf6 f7} 34. \text{h3 b6 35. e4 g6 36. xe8+ xe8 37. d5+ h7 38. e4 f7 39.}$

Position after: 40. $\text{a1}$
In the search for this strange looking move, Kamran finally outdoes himself. It was better to keep the Queen close to the Bishop with 40. $d4$ when converting my material advantage would still be quite a task.

40... $e6$ 41. $g2$ $c6$

Without the Bishops, Kamran's King becomes to weak to sustain the position.

42. $c1+$ $h7$ 43. $xc6$ $xc6+$ 44. $h2$ $e5$ 45. $g4$ $d6$ 46. $g2$

And White resigned without waiting for me to mop up. That was one of the most nerve-wracking games in my life!

0-1

Sometimes to win a tournament it is sufficient to make a draw in the last round, but if your opponent has White and is a half point behind, making that draw may be more difficult than winning a tough game. In my last round game at the NY Open in 1985, I was paired with the Black pieces against Andras Adorjan, a former Candidate for the World Championship. While all the leaders were clearly planning to draw each other to take their share of first, I was paired down and therefore my opponent needed to win to get a significantly higher prize than a draw would yield. Realizing that Andras is a very serious theoretician, I researched his games and together with my coach Vitaly Zaltsman, analyzed a very sharp and surprising continuation from a position well-known to Adorjan. The surprise value did it's job! Let's take a look:

1. $c4$ $c5$ 2. $f3$ $f6$ 3. $c3$ $e6$ 4. $g3$ $c6$ 5. $g2$ $d5$ 6. $xd5$ $xd5$ 7. 0-0 $e7$ 8. $d4$ 0-0 9. $xd5$ $exd5$ 10. $xc5$ $xc5$ 11. $c2$

Adorjan has advocated and played this move before, in this position.

11... $b6$ 12. $g5
Even though he had played 12. \( \text{d}1 \) against Pia Cramling, I fully expected him to play 12. \( \text{g}5 \) as he had done in his games against Jim Plaskett and Yehuda Grunfeld. After 12. \( \text{d}1 \) Black should play 12... \( \text{f}6 \) making use of the fork on b4 to organize his pieces. After 13. \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 14. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{h}6 \) Black stands well.

12... \( \text{g}6 \) 13. \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{e}6 \)?

I played this novelty quickly and confidently, hinting that if White plays natural moves, I would have analyzed them far deeper than my opponent could hope in a tournament game. The psychological drapery is an important aspect of any novelty. The silent dialogue I had with Andras forced him to doubt his intuition, and after a long think, he decided not to engage by playing the most natural move 14. \( \text{xe}6 \). His move showed that he wanted to find something unexpected for me that still made sense.

14. \( \text{h}3 \)?!

After this, I have easy equality. Three other games have been played since 1985 after 13... \( \text{e}6 \). In all of them White captured on e6, and played complicated games scoring 50%. My analysis showed that Black has enough compensation for the two Bishops and the somewhat weakened pawn structure in the form of the pressure down the f-file, quick development and good central presence. A typical line might run: 14. \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{fxe}6 \) 15. \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 16. \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 17. \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 18. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{dxe}4 \) 19. \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 20. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 21. \( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{xd}1 \) 22. \( \text{xd}1 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 23. \( \text{e}3 \) (or 23. \( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 24. \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{xf}2+ \) 25. \( \text{xf}2 \) \( \text{e}2+ \) 26. \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{xf}2 \) 27. \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{f}7 \) with equality) 23... \( \text{xe}3 \) 24. \( \text{fxe}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) with a drawish endgame.

14... \( \text{xh}3 \)!

I thought this was the most direct way to punish White for the strange knight maneuver.

15. \( \text{hxh}3 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 16. \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \)

Position after: 16... \( \text{e}7 \)
Here I optimistically thought I may already be better if White tries to avoid the obvious simplification, when suddenly Adorjan offered a draw without making a move. I assumed he would take on d5 with the Bishop and considering that after 17. \( \text{\textit{Qxd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qad8}} \) 18. \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qb4}} \) 19. \( \text{\textit{Qh6}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxd5}} \) 20. \( \text{\textit{exd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qf6}} \) followed by 21... \( \text{\textit{Qee5}} \), the position would be quite equal, I agreed. A quick and painless way to win the tournament!

\( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \)

\( \text{\textit{Dlugy, Maxim}} \) (2485) 
\( \text{\textit{Rohde, Michael A}} \) (2400) 
\( \text{\textit{Philadelphia 1985}} \)

The World Open has always been a test of form for me, and playing for a win in the last round has become synonymous with American Swisses.

After a shaky start, I managed to win three games in a row to move into the last round with a chance for first. Michael Rohde and I are still friends, but when we play each other, it's always a fight. This game was no exception.

1. \( \text{\textit{d4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qf6}} \) 2. \( \text{\textit{c4}} \) \( \text{\textit{g6}} \) 3. \( \text{\textit{Qc3}} \) \( \text{\textit{g7}} \) 4. \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) \( \text{\textit{d6}} \) 5. \( \text{\textit{f3}} \)

My favorite Saemisch Variation against the King's Indian. It's only after Kasparov popularized the 6... \( \text{\textit{c5}} \) pawn sacrifice with his win against Beliavsky that I started looking for other ways to meet it.

5... \( \text{\textit{0-0}} \) 6. \( \text{\textit{Qe3}} \) \( \text{\textit{bd7}} \)

This move was favored by John Nunn, who was one of the main King's Indian theoreticians of the time, preferring the Black pieces.

7. \( \text{\textit{Qd2}} \) \( \text{\textit{c5}} \) 8. \( \text{\textit{d5}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qe5}} \) 9. \( \text{\textit{Qg5}} \)
This sortie was the rave at the time, moving the Bishop out to a strong position before proceeding to kick the Knight on e5 with f4.

9... b5

Nunn preferred not to tempt White into the kingside pawn advance and instead directed his play on the queenside with 9... a6 but lost a tough game to Anatoly Karpov in 1993 after 10. f4 ed7 11. f3 b5 12. cxb5 a5 13. e5 dxe5 14. fxe5 g4 15. xe7 e8 16. d6.

A) In this very complicated position he went astray with 16... h6, when Karpov got a large advantage with the surprising 17. g5!

B) He should have played 16... gxe5 instead.

B1) Black equalizes after the tactical 17. e2 axb5 18. xe5 xe5 19. xb5 c6! as 20. xa5 xa5 21. c7 xb2 22. d1 xe7 23. dxe7 c3+ 24. f2 xe7 25. d8+ g7 26. c4 a4 27. b3 f4+, which gives Black sufficient compensation for the exchange.

B2) 17. xe5 xe5 18. e2 may be a better try for an advantage, when after 18... d4 White can try different ideas - Larsen style 19. a4 or 19. h4 or central play with 19. d5.

10. g4 f6 11. h3

11... a6

It would be interesting to try the immediate Benko Gambit style play with 11... b5!? here.

Now after 12. cxb5 (On 12. xb5 Black gets good compensation with 12... b8 13. c3 e8 continuing to play to open up the position. It would be difficult for White to coordinate the best defence in a practical game.) 12... c4 I looked at this wild line: 13. e3 a6 14. f4 d3+ 15. xd3 cxd3 16. b6 a5 17. xd3 a6 18. d2 d7 19. f3 xb6 20. d4 c4 21. f2 e5 22. dxe6 fxe6 23. xg7
12. f4 \( \text{d7} \) 13. \( \text{f3} \) b5

14. cxb5

I felt that the only way to refute a gambit here would be to accept it. In general, the expansion of the kingside should favor me, if I am able to organize an attack on Black's King. After all, in the Benko Gambit Black's play is supposed to be on the queenside. Fourteen years after this game, John Levitt refused to accept the pawn and lost to Ilya Smirin after 14. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{b6} \) 15. 0-0-0 \( \text{b4} \) 16. \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 17. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{g7} \) 18. \( \text{dg1 e6} \)

19. h4 exd5 20. exd5 \( \text{e8} \) 21. h5 \( \text{a4} \) 22. b3 \( \text{c3} \) when Black proved that the dark-squared Bishop is both a great defender and attacker.

14... \( \text{b6} \) 15. a4

This move is typical for White's handling of the Benko. The b5-square has to be held to avoid Black's activity on the a- and b-files.

15... axb5 16. \( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{a6} \) 17. 0-0 \( \text{e8} \)

18. e5

An important decision. While Black is taking his time for his typical counterplay – assaulting the b5-square – I now had a choice of how to organize my central pawns. I decided that I will be able to maintain my centre, but it may be that the positional treatment starting with 18. f5 was stronger. After 18. f5 \( \text{c7} \) 19. \( \text{h6} \) Black would have to exchange his dark-squared Bishop, and my extra pawn would be felt without the ensuing complications. I am pretty sure
Anatoly Karpov would choose the f5 approach.

18... \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}\texttt{b}5 19. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}}\texttt{xb}5 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}a}1 20. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}a}1 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}c}7

On the immediate 20... f6 I would retain an edge with 21. exf6 exf6 22. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}h}4 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d}7 23. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d}3.

I keep a bind in the endgame with 26. \textit{\texttt{e}e}5! \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}cd}5 27. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}xd}5 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}xd}5 28. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}c4. I was usually pretty good at finding advantageous transpositions into endgames, but the pressure of the situation led me astray.

21... f6!

Now the position becomes extremely well contested.

22. exf6 exf6 23. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}h}4 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}}}a}8

Natural, but Black has another important option.

23... \textit{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}h}6! Trying to stop the thematic f5 advance. Now, after 24. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{g}g}3} \textit{\texttt{\texttt{d}d}7} 25. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{d}d}3} f5 26. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{g}g}5} \textit{\texttt{\texttt{x}xg}5} 27. fxg5 fxg4 28. \textit{\texttt{e}e}4 \textit{\texttt{e}e}8! (28... \textit{\texttt{\texttt{c}c}xd}5 29. \textit{\texttt{\texttt{x}xd}6} favors White.) 29. hxg4 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{g}g}4} 30. \textit{\texttt{g}g}2 \textit{\texttt{\texttt{f}f}5} I would have to play perfectly to hold on to a slight advantage.

24. f5!
Crucial games

Position after: 24. f5!

Without this move I have no chance to fight for an edge.

24... cxd5

Black had a very difficult decision to make.

A) 24... bxd5 gives me a better game after 25. cxd5 cxd5 26. fxg6 hxg6 27. g3 c7 28. h4! xb5 29. d3! d4 30. xd6 d8 31. xg6 which Black may hope to save after 31... f3+ 32. xf3 xf3 33. e8+ xe8 34. xe8+ h7 35. h5+ g8 36. xc5 h6. It makes sense to try exchanging on f5 first.

B) After 24... gxf5 25. gxf5 bxd5 26. xdx5 xd5 27. b6! Black can't take on f3, as the c7 pawn will decide the game quickly, but after 27... xd2 28. xd2 d5 29. e6 xb6 30. xd6 a4 31. b3 c3 32. f2 e8 33. xc5 f8 34. c6 xc5+ 35. xc5 e4 36. xe4 xe4 the position looks salvageable.

25. e4

Afraid that I won't have enough to win in the various possible endings, I decide to play into the wild complications here.

It was probably objectively stronger to play 25. xdx5 xd5 (after 25... xdx5 26. fxg6 hxg6 I play 27. g3 planning h4 with a serious attack) 26. xd5+ xdx5 27. fxg6 hxg6 28. d1 c7 29. b6 b5 30. g3 f7 31. xd6 d7 32. b7 xb7 33. xc5 c7 34. b4 when my winning chances would be a little lower than Black's chances to draw.

But I wanted more action!

Position after: 25. e4

25... c4

Black has a difficult position, but many interesting ways to play it.

Michael goes for the most principled continuation, trying to see if his Knights combined with the Queen on the long diagonal can inflict some damage.

Let's take a look at alternatives:
Chapter 15

A) 25... gxf5 26. gxf5 \(d8\) 27. \(h2\)! initiating a strong knight transfer to g4.
27... \(h8\) 28. \(g3\) \(c4\) 29. \(e2\) \(a2\)
30. \(d1\) \(ce3\) 31. \(xd6\)! with an ongoing tactical melee favoring White.

B) After 25... \(a2\) 26. \(g3\) \(b3\) 27. \(h4\) g5 28. \(g2\) \(xb5\) 29. \(xd6\) \(e8\)
30. \(c3\) \(xe1+\) 31. \(xe1\) \(d7\) 32. \(xc5\) and White emerges up a pawn.

26. \(d3\)

26. \(e2\) was also possible, but I wanted to keep an eye on the d5-Knight.

26... \(ce3\)?

Michael walks into my trap. He should have played 26... \(e5\), after which I could maintain a slight advantage with
27. \(xe5\) dxe5 28. \(c4\) \(h8\) 29. fxg6 hxg6 30. \(g3\).

27. \(xd6\)!

Black should have played the most aggressive move 27... \(g2\) forcing me to find 28. \(e4\)! when the complications after 28... \(gf4\) 29. \(b3\)! (stopping \(a1+\) followed by \(xb2\)) 29... \(b8\) 30. \(xf4\) \(xd6\) 31. \(e4\) result in a comparatively quiet position with an extra pawn for me.

28. \(g3!\)

Another strong alternative was 28. \(e4!\) \(xd6\) 29. \(xe3\) with a winning position.

28... \(f8\)

29. \(c4?\)

Here, missing 29. \(e4!\) was a serious mistake. After 29. \(e4\) \(xd6\) 30. \(e6+\) \(g7\) 31. \(xd6\) \(c2\) 32. \(e2\) \(d4\) 33.
\(xd4\) cxd4 34. g5 fxg5 35. f6+ \(h6\) 36. f7 I break through first.

29... \(xc4?\)

Suddenly all of Black's attempts to launch an attack are repulsed.
Missing the best chance. After the ultra aggressive 29... \( \text{Q}g2! \)

I would have the following options:

A) 30. \( \text{B}d1 \text{Q}de3! \) 31. \( \text{B}xd8 \text{Q}xf3 \) 32. \( \text{B}h2 \text{Q}f4 \) 33. \( \text{B}d2! \text{Q}xd1 \) 34. \( \text{B}xf4 \text{Q}e2+ \) 35. \( \text{B}g1 \text{Q}xb2 \) 36. \( \text{Q}xb2 \text{Q}xb2 \) 37. \( \text{Q}c4+ \text{Q}g7 \) 38. \( \text{fxg6 hgx6} \) 39. \( h4 \) with a small edge for me in the endgame;

B) 30. \( \text{fxg6 Qxe1} \) 31. \( \text{gxh7+ Qg7} \) 32. \( \text{Qxe1} \) would be an interesting attempt to change the nature of the position with an exchange sacrifice, but after 32... \( \text{Q}b6 \) 33. \( \text{Q}c2 \text{Q}xc4 \) 34. \( \text{Q}xc4 \text{Q}d6 \) 35. \( \text{Q}xd6 \text{Q}xd6 \) 36. \( \text{Q}xc5 \text{Q}e4 \) the position trades down to a draw.

C) 30. \( \text{Qf1!} \) may be the best practical possibility.

Black would need to find 30... \( \text{Q}de3 \) (I would maintain an advantage after 30... \( \text{Q}g4 \) 31. \( \text{Q}c2 \text{g}5 \) 32. \( \text{Q}h2 \text{b}4 \) 33. \( \text{Q}c3 \text{Q}fd5 \) 34. \( \text{Q}b3 \text{Q}b7 \) 35. \( b6 \text{Q}h8 \) 36. \( \text{Q}e1 \text{Q}xb6 \) 37. \( \text{Q}xb6 \text{Q}xb6 \) 38. \( \text{Q}f7 \text{Q}d3 \) 39. \( \text{Q}e2 \text{Q}f4 \) 40. \( \text{Q}xf4 \text{Q}xf4 \) 41. \( \text{Q}g2) \) 31. \( \text{Q}e2! \) when I am planning to win both Knights.

Black has to play 31... \( \text{Q}e8! \) (31... \( \text{Q}xf1 \) 32. \( \text{Q}xf1 \text{Q}e4 \) 33. \( \text{Q}d2! \)) 32. \( \text{Q}xe3 \text{Q}xe3 \) 33. \( \text{Q}e1 \text{c}4 \) 34. \( \text{Q}f2 \text{Q}c5 \) 35. \( \text{Q}h4! \text{g}5 \) 36. \( \text{Q}f3 \text{gxh4} \) 37. \( \text{Q}xa8 \text{Q}xa8 \) 38. \( \text{Q}xe3 \text{Q}xe3+ \) 39. \( \text{Q}xe3 \text{Q}b8 \) 40. \( \text{b}3! \text{Q}xb5 \) 41. \( \text{bxc4 Qb1+} \) 42. \( \text{Q}f2 \text{Q}c1 \) with an objectively drawn endgame.

30. \( \text{Qxc4} \)

30... \( \text{Q}g7? \)

This just loses. The last chance for survival was 30... \( \text{Q}xf5 \), when I would have to find the strongest move 31. \( \text{g}5! \) to end any resistance. Now my Knight enters the zone next to Black's King which spells the end. After 31... \( \text{Q}g7 \) 32. \( \text{gxf6 Qxf6} \) 33. \( \text{Q}e5! \text{Q}xe5 \) 34. \( \text{Q}xe5 \text{Q}d6 \)
35. \( \texttt{h2} \) White launches the decisive attack. For example: 35... \( \texttt{e6} \) 36. \( \texttt{h4} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) 37. \( \texttt{g5+ g6} \) 38. \( \texttt{d1 e4} \) 39. \( \texttt{d8+ f8} \) 40. \( \texttt{g1+ g6} \) 41. \( \texttt{xg6} \) winning.

31. \( \texttt{fxg6 hxg6} \) 32. \( \texttt{g5!} \)

I can play this move anyway! With the King opened, I will have many different opportunities to find a winning continuation.

32... \( \texttt{d6} \) 33. \( \texttt{gxf6+ xf6} \) 34. \( \texttt{xd6 xf3} \) 35. \( \texttt{e7+} \)

Trying to keep it simple. The more aggressive 35. \( \texttt{e5 d2} \) 36. \( \texttt{f1 f5} \) 37. \( \texttt{xf5 gxf5} \) 38. \( \texttt{b6 f7} \) 39. \( \texttt{b7} \) won a little faster.

35... \( \texttt{h8} \) 36. \( \texttt{f4!} \)

(see diagram previous column)

The ending is completely winning for White, and easier to control.

36... \( \texttt{d1+} \) 37. \( \texttt{f2 e4+} \) 38. \( \texttt{xe4 xd6} \) 39. \( \texttt{xd6 xd6} \) 40. \( \texttt{b4!} \)

A typical move to quickly get my Rook behind the passed pawn.

40... \( \texttt{c4} \) 41. \( \texttt{xc4 b6} \) 42. \( \texttt{c5 g7} \) 43. \( \texttt{e3 f7} \) 44. \( \texttt{d4 f6} \)

On 44... \( \texttt{e7} \) 45. \( \texttt{d5!} \) keeping the King out decides.

45. \( \texttt{e5} \)

Cutting the King. Black resigned.

1-0
Thanks to this win, I tied for first with Yehuda Grunfeld and Dmitry Gurevich and then went on to win the blitz tiebreaker to win the 1985 World Open Champion title.

**The World Junior Championship ‘85**

The World Junior Championship in 1985 was hotly contested with me falling behind significantly after blundering a piece in the opening in round 4 to the young Indian upstart Viswanathan Anand.

After good wins against Vassily Ivanchuk, Robert Kuczynski and Pavel Blatny among others, I entered the last round half a point ahead of my closest rivals. Paired with the White pieces against the Englishman James Howell, I had only one result in mind – one that would clinch me the World Junior Title and a Grandmaster norm, awarded for such a result. Let’s see what happened:

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{Dlugy, Maxim} & (2495) \\
\text{Howell, James C} & (2370) \\
\text{Sharjah 1985} & \\
\end{array}
\]

1. d4  \text{f6} 2. c4 g6 3. \text{c3}  g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3  0-0 6. \text{e3}  c6 7. \text{ge2}  a6 8. \text{d2}  b8 9. a3

I was happy to see Black play the same system against the Saemisch as was chosen by John Fedorowicz in the key game I won to help me qualify for the Interzonal, and was eagerly awaiting whether my opponent will just walk right into my preparation.

9... b5 10. cxb5 axb5 11. d5 \text{a5}

A novelty. Black is threatening 12... \text{b3} as well as 12... c5 with a good position, forcing me to play.

12. \text{d4}
Now it looks like I am doing well, threatening to take on b5 as well as force the Knight off with b4, but Black has an important resource.

12... e5! 13. c6 xc6 14. dxc6 e6

After James played this, I thought White should be better in a number of ways, but the longer I considered this position, the more complicated it became. Finally, after some serious consideration, I played.

15. xb5

The attempt to play a dual purpose move to develop and capture with 15. xb5 fails to 15... d5 16. exd5 xd5 when White's clumsy position would force me to look for equality.

15... d5

A very difficult choice indeed. The database has 6 games besides this one which reached this position.

In one of them Boris Alterman agreed to a draw with Ye Jiangchuan, while in one other master Iljushina opted for the immediate 16. c5.

I thought the Rook stands well on b8 and wanted to kick it off prior to attacking the other Rook. Four other players concurred, and considering that two of them managed to win with the others drawing, they were probably happy with the average.

16... c8 17. c5

The exchange begs to be played, but I had quite an idea planned for that.

Instead, after 17... e8! 18. e2 dxe4 19. xd8 xd8 20. e7 d5 21. c4 exf3 22. gxf3 I was hoping for an advantage, but after 22... e4! 23. xd5
18. \( \text{hxg5} \)

My idea was not to lose control of the position which would be easily accomplished after 18. \( \text{hxg5} \) \( \text{h6} \) 19. \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 20. \( \text{fxe4} \) \( \text{f8} \) 21. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 22. \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{f6} \) and it’s clear that all three results are quite possible.

18... \( \text{fxd8} \) 19. \( \text{e7} \)!

A strange idea, actively trying to get rid of Black’s Knight on f6, which is proving to be Black’s best minor piece.

I think this move came as quite a surprise and my opponent missed his best chance for initiative here.

19... \( \text{d8} \)!

After 19... \( \text{d5} \) Black gets a great game as both:

A) 20. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{exf3} \) 21. \( \text{gxf3} \) \( \text{e4} \) 22. \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 23. \( \text{c5} \) \( \text{f4} \);

B) ...and 20. \( \text{fxe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 21. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{d2} \) 22. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{fxe6} \) 23. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d4} \) 24. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4}+ \) 25. \( \text{f2} \) \( \text{f8}! \) do not give me any advantage.

20. \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 21. \( \text{fxe4} \)

A very tricky position has occurred. Black has two Bishops and a better pawn structure, but choosing the right move can be treacherous.

21... \( \text{b3} \)!

Black wants to stop both \( \text{d1} \) and \( \text{b4} \), but allows mobilization of my other pieces. It was probably stronger to play on the other wing with 21... \( \text{g5} \) 22. \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{f5} \) although it’s by no means clear that Black is fine here. After 23. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{f4} \) 24. \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{fxe4} \) 25. \( \text{c3} \) it looks like White has organized his pieces for a technical blowout. Now the complications after 25... \( \text{ed8} \) 26. \( \text{xd8+} \) \( \text{xd8} \) 27. \( \text{xc7} \)!
...seem to favor White.

For example: 27 d2+ 28 f2 g4 29 c4+ h8 and White can now sacrifice the exchange to empower the queenside pawns with 30 e3 f8+ 31 g3 xe3 32 xg4 b6 33 d5 c8 34 b5 d8 35 g3 when Black is faced with a difficult defence.

22 d3!?

This move prepares to shed a pawn for quick development, leading to an advantage for White.

It seems like developing with 22 g3 was stronger, as Black will have to solve many problems on his way to equality.

It may be that Black's best defence would be 22 d8 to free up the Rook on c8 for counterplay on the b-file.

Now, after 23 d2 a4 24 b3 xb3 25 a4 I would get a position similar to the game, with the difference that Black's Bishop is a bit more passive.

22 ed8 23 e2 a4

Black's threat to capture on d3 forces my play, but that's what I had planned.

24 b3 xb3 25 a4

Position after: 25 a4

I evaluated this position as better for White, assuming that my passed a-pawn will be the strongest card in the deck.

Still, things may not be so simple, as Black could try to open up the position for the two Bishops, creating serious threats of his own.

25... e7?

This is too passive and lets me carry out my plan undeterred. Black has to play for the ...f5 break with 25 e6 26 h3 g5 Now after 27 g4 g7 28 hg1 h6 29 a5 f5 30 xf5 xf5 31 exf5 d5 and the position heats up and Black's Bishops look prepared to even out the chances.

26 hc1?!
It may have been even stronger to push the a-pawn forward, but I wanted to trade the light-squared Bishops in order to achieve a strategically winning position.

26... d6?

The losing move. Black simply allows me to do everything I want, waiting patiently for my a-pawn to finish off the game. The bad dark-squared Bishop remaining will be no match for all the advantages of my position. It was necessary to return back to the plan with the ...f5 break and play 26... e6. Now, after 27. h3 f5 28. c4! the position would be much worse for Black than in the note above, but he would still have drawing chances due to active placement of his King after 28... xc4+ 29. xc4 fxe4 30. xe4 d5 31. c4 f7 32. b1 e6.

By delaying this advance, I risked not making it happen at all. After 27. a5! e6 28. a6 f8 29. a7 a8 30. c4 xc4+ 31. xc4 Black's position would be completely lost.

27... xc4+ 28. xc4 a8?

Black's only hope was the idea of marching his King to support the Bishop on d6, so he could free his Rook on d8 as soon as possible.

27. c4?

A mistake based on the incorrect understanding of the position. While it's true that the exchange of light-squared Bishops favors me, the ability to run the pawn down to a7 is a much more serious weapon and should have been effected immediately.

I have a few possibilities, but it's hard to prove a decisive advantage.

A) If I try to run the pawn down the a-file with 29. a5 Black gets counterplay on the b-file with 29... b8 30. b1 a8 31. xd6 xd6 32. c5 a6 33. xe5 axc6 and Black should hold this ending with relative ease.
B) 29. g4 going for the full board bind is a better try, but after 29... \(\texttt{e7} 30. \texttt{h4 a8} 31. \texttt{g5 h6} 32. \texttt{a5 hgx5} 33. \texttt{hxg5 db8} 34. \texttt{c3 b2+} 35. \texttt{f3 h2} 36. \texttt{a6 h3+} 37. \texttt{e2 b8} Black's active Rooks equalize the position.

C) 29. \(\texttt{xd6 xd6} 30. \texttt{a5} \) seems like the most direct approach, but here too, after 30... \(\texttt{a8} 31. \texttt{a6 a7} 32. \texttt{c5 f6} 33. \texttt{g4 f7} 34. \texttt{h4 e6} 35. \texttt{g5 d8} \) proving a significant advantage is daunting. After 36. \(\texttt{f1 f5} 37. \texttt{exf5+ gxf5} 38. \texttt{a1 d6} 39. \texttt{ca5 e8} 40. \texttt{d1+ xc6} 41. \texttt{a2} it may look like Black is on the verge of being mated. Indeed, after 41... \(\texttt{b5} 42. \texttt{b2+ c4} 43. \texttt{c2+ b3} 44. \texttt{c6 ea8} 45. \texttt{a1 b4} 46. \texttt{b1+ a3} 47. \texttt{h5 a2} 48. \texttt{b7 xa6} 49. \texttt{xa6+ xa6} 50. \texttt{xc7 h6} 51. \texttt{g6 a4} \)

The correct method, temporarily cutting out Black King while trying to make a hole in Black's connected pawns so White's King can squeeze through.

After 52... \(\texttt{a7} 53. \texttt{c8 b3} 54. \texttt{e8 e4} 55. \texttt{e3 c4} 56. \texttt{f4 d3} 57. \texttt{xf5 e3} 58. \texttt{f6} \) that's exactly what happens and White finally wins.

It's hard to say whether my position would indeed be winning after Black's best defence, but it would certainly be a very difficult problem to prove this beyond any doubt.

29. \(\texttt{d1!} \)

(The position resembles a study, as the direct approach 52. \(\texttt{h7} \) doesn't seem to win. Black plays 52... \(\texttt{b3} 53. \texttt{xh6 e4+} 54. \texttt{f1 f4+} 55. \texttt{g2 g4+} 56. \texttt{h3 g5} 57. \texttt{h7 e4} \) and White doesn't have time for the staircase method \(g7, h6, \texttt{h8} \) as Black simply pushes the e-pawn.) 52. \(\texttt{c3!} \)

The problem is that Black will now be settled with a weak pawn on d6 and that should decide the game in my favor.

29... \(\texttt{a6} 30. \texttt{xd6 cxd6} 31. \texttt{c7 c8} 32. \texttt{b1 a8} 33. \texttt{b6 f8} 34. \texttt{xd6 e7} 35. \texttt{d5 f6} 36. \texttt{g4} \)
Black will never be able to capture the pawn on c7 as I trade all Rooks and win the king and pawn endgame because Black's King has to take care of my a-pawn while I take care of Black's kingside. Therefore, I need to simply advance my pawns and King towards the other side of the board and the game will win itself.

36... a7 37. d5 d7

My advice is: if you are winning, don’t put your auto-pilot on; keep checking for blunders as if you’re still playing a complicated position. This will prevent such mishaps in the future. If you’re losing, either just resign and prepare for the next game, or look at every occurring position ready to pounce with a tactic. Check for every possible check, capture and attack and do so on every move.

Only then will you be able to take of opportunities presented to you and not fret when analyzing the game with your engine post factum.

38... e7?? 39. d3

No more Mr. Nice Guy!

39... b7 40. a5 b3+ 41. c2 b5
42. c5 b7 43. a6 a7 44. c6
45. c3 e7 46. b4 f7 47.
48. b6 a8 49. b7
50. d6 e7 51. c6 1-0
And Black resigned, making me the 1985 World Junior Champion. In fact, my closest rivals drew and it turned out that I won the event by a whole point!

Immediately after the game my I went up to my coaches room with Vassily Ivanchuk and our two coaches.

Vitaly Zaltsman offered me a shot of cognac which I drank, using banana as an appetizer.

After that, Ivanchuk and I engaged in a blitz match. It was a tough match, although I vaguely remember winning by a slight margin. As the match continued we heard a loud knock on the door.

It turns out that the closing ceremony was in full bloom when the officials noticed that the champ was missing. We ran down and I got my gold medal and trophy from FIDE President Florencio Campomanes. It was a very good day indeed!
As I flew back to New York, I was already preparing for a GM norm round robin tournament due to begin in New York the very next day. When I arrived, though jet lagged, I was still in good form from my performance in Sharjah, and so I won the first two rounds, drew rounds 3-7 and won round 8 against Susan Polgar, setting myself up for the 6/9 score in the last round, which would give me my last GM norm. That’s when the following game was on the table.

Fedorowicz, John P (2520)
Dlugy, Maxim (2485)
New York 1985

Chess is a very serious game, and sometimes relaxing your focus during the game, for just a single move, may cost you a full point. But that’s not all.

One of the key ideas I teach my students is not to assume anything in chess.

This is especially important when considering your move against a surprise reply from your opponent.

In fact, it’s better to assume your opponent’s move is wrong and look to punish it rather than to take him at his word.

My mistake in the following game was made before I made my first move. Having agreed to a draw against John Fedorowicz in a winning position in the last game of our match for the Interzonal spot, I assumed (there’s that word with that donkey inside it) that my opponent, as compensation for that free gift, will be nice enough to accept my draw offer in the last round. Considering the tournament situation where John had nothing to win or lose from any specific result, it may have appeared to be a reasonable expectation, especially as I assumed John was a friend, but in reality Fedorowicz wanted to be the hero that would stop me from becoming a Grandmaster ahead of him and some other aspiring Americans. He was on a mission to stop me, and a draw was the furthest thing from his mind.

1. c4 c5 2. e3 f6 3. d3 e6 4. e4 c6 5. d4 cxd4 6. xd4 b4 7. xc6 dxc6

Position after: 7... dxc6
I could not even imagine that John, whom until that game I considered my friend, had this vindictive mindset and so when deciding how to capture on c6, took with the d-pawn and offered a draw, absolutely certain that he would accept. John looked at me with a fierce look, signaling the start of a battle, and without replying played his next move.

8. ♕xd8+ ♕xd8 9. e5

I was still shaking from his refusal and at this point my brain shut off completely. I stopped even going through variations in my mind and simply played the first moves that came to my head.

9... ♕d7

The following year, when Dmitry Gurevich repeated this opening idea against me I played the safer 9... ♕e4 and managed to prove that Black is OK after 10. a3 ♕xc3+ 11. bxc3 b6 12. ♕e3 ♕c7 13. ♕d3 ♕c5 14. ♕xc5 bxc5 15. ♕d2 ♕a6 16. ♕c2 ♕b6 17. h4 h5 18. ♕hd1 ♕ad8 19. ♕e2 ♕c7 20. ♕xd8 ♕xd8 21. ♕d1 ♕g8 22. g3 g6 23. ♕d6 ♕c8 24. ♕d3 ½-½ Gurevich,D – Dlugy,M Estes Park, US Ch 1986.

10. ♕f4 ♕xc3+ 11. bxc3

A complicated middlegame for which I was completely unprepared has arisen. White has the two Bishops and a chance to pressure me on the kingside, while his queenside pawns are in shambles. Clearly, this position was analyzed intensively by Fedorowicz in preparation for this game. I felt mindless and helpless.

11... c5!? 

It’s hard to say if Black can manage without this move, so I decided to play it right away. Now I think it makes sense for Black to exchange one pair of Rooks first to make the defence easier. After 11... ♕c7 12. 0-0-0 b6 13. h4 ♕a6 14. ♕c2 ♕c5 15. ♕h3 ♕ad8 16. ♕d4 ♕d7 17. h5 h6 18. ♕d6 ♕b7 19. ♕g3 ♕dg8 Black has quite an impregnable but extremely passive position.
12. h4

My psychological state was calling for a quick resolution of the game, and I simply couldn't bring myself to play a long defensive game after 14... b7 15. g3 ag8 16. gd3 c6 17. e2 h6 18. h5 d8 19. g4 b8 although it was preferrable to my bold move. This opens the position quite dangerously for my opponent's two Bishops.

15. g3 f7 16. exf6 xfx6 17. e5

12... e7?

But this is a mistake. The King will get into crossfire on e7 and therefore should have been stationed on c7.

After 12... b6 13. h5 b7 14. h6 g6 15. 0-0-0 c7 16. f3 hg8 17. d3 ad8 18. c2 b8 19. g5 xd1+ 20. xd1 a6 Black should be OK.

13. 0-0-0 b6 14. h3

This is simply wrong. I am attempting to develop my Rook through a7, but seriously weaken the queenside pawns.

With White's full control over the centre, he should be able to pick off my pawns quite easily now.

I had to defend patiently with 17... g8 when my position could still possibly be survivable.

18. e2 a7
19. h5?

White wants to have the kingside as well.

Instead 19. \( \text{d6} \) simply won material as after 19... b5 20. \( \text{c6} \) bxc4 21. \( \text{xc5} \) the c-pawn falls.

19... h6

A strange decision brought about by my state of mind.

I remember being so disgusted with the whole situation that I was playing in a very reactive way, not thinking about ways to save the game at all.

Otherwise, I may have chosen 19... \( \text{d7} \) when I can actually still grit my teeth and hold on after 20. h6 \( \text{xd1+} \) 21. \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{g8} \) 22. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 23. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 24. g3 \( \text{c6} \) 25. \( \text{c2} \) h5 26. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 27. hxg7 \( \text{xd1+} \) 28. \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{xg7} \) 29. \( \text{g6} \) \( \text{d7} \) 30. \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{xg7} \) 31. \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{f6} \) 32. \( \text{h7} \) \( \text{f7} \) 33. \( \text{h2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 34. \( \text{d2}+ \) \( \text{e7} \) 35. \( \text{c7} \) \( \text{e5} \) 36. \( \text{d6+} \) \( \text{e8} \) 37. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{g7} \) 38. \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{g7} \) 39. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e7} \)

Although objectively White does have a decisive advantage.

20. \( \text{d6} \) b5 21. \( \text{c6} \) \( \text{d8} \) 22. \( \text{xc5} \) bxc4 23. \( \text{xc4} \)

And so I am completely lost and my opponent is about to stop me from becoming a Grandmaster.

I was crying inside and kept thinking thoughts completely unconnected with chess.

Fedorowicz decides to simplify into a winning endgame, but 25... \( \text{xh6} \) \( \text{g6} \) 26. \( \text{fg4} \) threatening to win the Rook on d8 was more precise. Now, after 26... f5 27. \( \text{g7+} \) \( \text{f8} \) 28. \( \text{g8+} \) \( \text{f7} \) 29. \( \text{g7+} \) \( \text{f6} \) 30. \( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xd8} \) 31. \( \text{g6+} \) \( \text{e5} \) 32. \( \text{xh6} \) White's two pawns should easily decide the game.

25... \( \text{xg7} \) 26. \( \text{xf6+} \) \( \text{g8} \) 27. \( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xe2} \)
A glimmer of hope has appeared. Some opposite color Bishops endgames are drawn. Of course with the Rooks on, the position is surely lost.

28. a4

The was no reason to move the pawn up so fast. The patient 28. a3 would have given me less to bite at.

28... d7 29. b6 e5

I actually have two targets now, the a4 and h5 pawn and am trying to force White to decide how to protect them best.

30. f6?!

John gets tempted by the creation of three connected passed pawns, but it was more precise to keep what he has in play.

After 30. c4 f5 31. e3 c2+ 32. d1 a2 33. e1 d3 34. c6 e2+ 35. d1 a2 36. xh6 White's kingside passers should prevail.

30... xa4 31. xh6

This strange decision by White has him parting with the c-pawn as well compared to the line above and therefore gives me more survival chances.

31... c2+ 32. b1 xc3

33. e3??

And here comes the final lemon. White had to keep the Rooks to maintain his winning chances. After 33. d6 c6 34. d8+ f7 35. e3 e6 36. g4 e8 37. d2 e7 38. g5 White should
eventually prevail, but now the GM title is again within my reach.

33...  🜄 c6!

Oops! White's Rook is trapped and with it's disappearance, I can quickly set up a drawing fortress.

34.  🜄xc6  🜁xc6 35. g3 🜄e8!

It's extremely important to force White's pawns on the dark squares so I can block them.

36. g4 🜄d7 37. g5 🜄g4 38. h6 🜄f5+ 39.  b2 e4 40.  c3 🜄f7 41.  d4 🜄h7

Having just earned my final GM norm by drawing the game with Fedorowicz, I barely made it to the airport to fly to Montpellier, where the Candidates Tournament was being held. Alongside the main event, a reasonably strong Open with a good prize fund was organized. In the last round I was paired against a strong Croatian grandmaster, Krunoslav Hulak. Winning meant taking clear first in an international competition. I played a sound positional game without feeling any nervous jitters characteristic of last round battles, mainly due to my overall good form and newly discovered chess ideas courtesy of my work with Mark Dvoretsky, conducted in parallel with the tournament.

1. d4  f6 2. c4 e6 3.  f3 c5 4. d5 exd5 5. cxd5 d6 6.  c3 g6 7.  d2  g7 8. e4 0-0 9.  e2  a6 10. 0-0  c7 11. a4 b6 12.  c4  a6

With the g6-advance firmly blocked I can now wait with  h7-g6 as White cannot make any headway.

½-½

I have never seen Fedorowicz more upset than after this draw, which taught me an important lesson for the future.
Unlike my game with Steve Odendahl, Black delays $\text{e}8$, but it’s not clear how that can be made useful for him if he doesn’t actually play for the f5-break by moving his Knight away from f6.

This, in turn, would let me pressure Black’s d6-pawn by developing my Bishop to f4 and keeping it on that diagonal, giving White the edge.

13. $\text{g}5$ $\text{d}7$ 14. b3

As I mentioned in my notes to the game with Odendahl, I consider getting to play the move b3 in this variation an accomplishment for White.

14... $\text{fe}8$ 15. $\text{c}2$ $\text{g}4$ 16. $\text{ae}1$

I am concentrating my forces on the kingside, preparing to start moving my pawns supported by my Rooks.

16... $\text{d}4$

Black had a couple of options:
A) 16... \(\text{Bxc3}\) 17. \(\text{Bxc3 Bxe4}\) would actually result in an exchange sacrifice by Black after 18. \(f3\) \(\text{Bxe2}\) 19. \(\text{Bxe2}\) \(\text{Bxe5}\) 20. \(\text{Bd1}\) \(\text{Bxc4}\) 21. \(\text{Bxc4}\) \(\text{Bxa4}\) 22. \(\text{Bc1}\) White should be quite a bit better.;

B) 16... \(\text{Bxc4}\) looks better, but after 17. \(\text{Bxc4}\) \(\text{Bxe5}\) 18. \(g3\) \(\text{Bd4}\) 19. \(\text{Bg2}\) \(h5\) 20. \(\text{h3}\) \(\text{Bf6}\) 21. \(f3\) I prefer White's chances, as it's quite likely that White will eventually organize the f4-e5 break, creating the protected passed d-pawn.

17. \(\text{Bf4}\)!

An important move, forcing Black to make a decision.

17... \(\text{Bd5}?\)!

Not best. Black should have played 17... \(\text{Bxc4}\) 18. \(\text{Bxc4}\) \(\text{Bd5}\), though I prefer White after 19. \(\text{Bg3}\) \(h5\) 20. \(\text{Bh1}\) \(\text{Bg4}\) 21. \(\text{Bd2}\) \(\text{Bxe7}\) 22. \(\text{Bxg4}\) \(\text{hxg4}\) 23. \(f3\) \(\text{gxf3}\) 24. \(\text{Bxf3}\).

18. \(\text{h3}\)?

Procrastination was still an issue in my games. Direct play was called for. After 18. \(\text{Bxe5}\) \(\text{Bxe5}\) 19. \(\text{Bxe5}\) \(\text{Bxe5}\) 20. \(f4\) \(\text{Bc7}\) 21. \(f5!\)

Position after: 21. \(f5!\)

my attack on the kingside is quite dangerous. If Black tries to block it with 21...

\(\text{Bxe2}\) (21... \(\text{Bxe5}\) also doesn't help much as after 22. \(\text{Bd2}\) \(\text{Bae8}\) 23. \(\text{Bxa6}\) \(\text{Bxa6}\) 24. \(\text{Bf3}\) \(\text{Bxe7}\) 25. \(\text{Bf1}\) \(\text{Bc7}\) 26. \(\text{fxg6}\) \(\text{fxg6}\) 27. \(\text{Bf6}\) the invasion down the f-file will prove decisive.) 22. \(\text{Bxe2}\) \(g5\) I begin destroying his King's shield with 23. \(h4\) \(h6\) 24. \(hxg5\) \(hxg5\) 25. \(f6\) \(\text{Be5}\) 26. \(\text{Be3}\) \(g4\) 27. \(\text{Bf2}\) \(\text{h5}\)

Position after: 27... \(\text{h5}\)

28. \(\text{Bh3}!!\) and Black gets mated on the dark squares in short order.

18... \(\text{f5}\)?
Black incorrectly decides to open up the game. His chances lay in maneuvering his pieces to their best positions first. With 18... $\text{cxc4}$ 19. $\text{dxc4}$ $\text{cxc4}$ 20. $\text{bxc4}$ $\text{e7}$ 21. $\text{d3}$ $\text{f6}$ 22. $\text{e2}$ $\text{a6}$! Black could maintain a balanced position.

19. $\text{xe5}$ $\text{xe5}$

Keeping the beautiful Bishop on d4 is not an option. After 19... $\text{dxe5}$ 20. $\text{d6}$ $\text{e6}$ 21. $\text{e5}$ $\text{f8}$ 22. $\text{exf5}$ $\text{gx5}$ 23. $\text{e7+}$ Black loses an important pawn.

20. $\text{xe5}$ $\text{dxe5}$

Here too, Black should have taken back with the Rook.

After 20... $\text{xe5}$ 21. $\text{f4}$ $\text{e7}$ 22. $\text{xa6}$ $\text{xa6}$ 23. $\text{e5}$ $\text{b4}$ 24. $\text{e2}$! I would have a long-term positional advantage, but now the position opens up and leads to Black's quick downfall.

21. $\text{exf5}$ $\text{gx5}$

22. $\text{d6}$!

This forces the trade of the d pawn for the f-pawn, whereupon Black's King and the e5-pawn will become serious problems.

22... $\text{xd6}$ 23. $\text{xa6}$ $\text{xa6}$ 24. $\text{xf5}$ $\text{e6}$

25. $\text{xe6+}$

I judged the endgame winning, and so did not consider 25. $\text{g5}$ keeping the Queens on the board to be a serious option.
Chapter 15

When playing for a win, you should play the way you are more comfortable with, as otherwise nerves will enter into the picture and you will be scolding yourself for not playing the natural move you're used to instead of looking to find the best move.

25...\(\mathcal{N}\)xe6 26. f4!

Black's problem is not the defence of the e-pawn, but my creation of a passed f-pawn, which becomes quite strong very quickly.

26... c4

Krunoslav is an active player and he simply couldn't take passive defence here. He looks for counterplay, but actually makes my task even easier, as he will have to divert his pieces away from my threats to try and make this counterplay a reality.

After the less active 26...\(\mathcal{Q}\)b4 I should play positionally with 27. f5! (After the materialistic 27. \(\mathcal{Q}\)b5 \(\mathcal{F}\)f8 28. \(\mathcal{N}\)xe5 \(\mathcal{N}\)xe5 29. fxe5 \(\mathcal{N}\)xf1+ 30. \(\mathcal{N}\)xf1 \(\mathcal{F}\)f7 31. \(\mathcal{Q}\)xa7 \(\mathcal{N}\)e6 32. \(\mathcal{Q}\)e2 \(\mathcal{N}\)xe5 33. \(\mathcal{Q}\)e3 the knight and pawn ending should be winning for me eventually, but there's still a lot of work ahead.) Now after 27...\(\mathcal{N}\)e8 28. \(\mathcal{Q}\)e4 \(\mathcal{N}\)ed8 29. \(\mathcal{Q}\)f6+ \(\mathcal{Q}\)g7 30. \(\mathcal{Q}\)g4 \(\mathcal{Q}\)d3 31. \(\mathcal{N}\)e3 holding on to the e-pawn with 31...\(\mathcal{N}\)d5 loses to the straight-forward 32. f6+ \(\mathcal{N}\)f8 33. f7 threatening \(\mathcal{Q}\)f6.

27. bxc4 \(\mathcal{N}\)c8 28. f5!

This is the simplest plan. The f-pawn will win material.

28...\(\mathcal{N}\)d6 29. f6 \(\mathcal{N}\)xc4 30. f7+ \(\mathcal{N}\)f8 31. \(\mathcal{Q}\)e4 \(\mathcal{N}\)g6 32. \(\mathcal{Q}\)f6!

Though there were other winning continuations in the last 3-4 moves, I was going for this tactic, which I saw was winning with a nice idea.

32... \(\mathcal{Q}\)xf7 33. \(\mathcal{Q}\)d7+ \(\mathcal{Q}\)g7 34. \(\mathcal{N}\)xe5
My point. I win an exchange and the technical phase is quite easy.

34... \( \text{exa4} \) 35. \( \text{exg6 hxg6} \) 36. \( \text{exe7+} \) \( \text{h6} \) 37. \( \text{exa7 b5} \) 38. \( \text{f6 c5} \) 39. \( \text{exa4 exa4} \) 40. \( \text{f4 g5} \) 41. \( \text{b4 c3} \) 42. \( \text{b3 e2+} \) 43. \( \text{h2 d4} \) 44. \( \text{b4} \)

Black resigned and I received all these French Francs...

1-0

Nick DeFirmian remained a difficult opponent for me up to this game, where I had to beat him to win clear first place in the 1988 World Open, which boasted a $25,000 first prize.

Following my loss to him on the White side of a Benoni in the 1984 U.S. Championship, where he came in second, I lost to him in the last round of the 1987 World Open from a winning position in the opening.

Going into this game, I was fully committed to winning and taking revenge for the tough losses suffered.

1. \( \text{d4 f6} \) 2. \( \text{c4 c5} \) 3. \( \text{d5 g6} \) 4. \( \text{c3 d6} \) 5. \( \text{e4 g7} \) 6. \( \text{f3 0-0} \)

Even though I was a bit surprised to see Nick stay away from his favorite Benoni in favor of this interesting King's Indian move order, I was fully prepared with a rare but dangerous plan of my own.

7. \( \text{f4}! ? \)
This move, favored by Mikhail Tal, Victor Korchnoi, and Lajos Portisch forces Black to think twice before transposing to Benoni positions with 7... e6 and is therefore an excellent option against lovers of that opening.

7... b6

Some months later Alex Wojtkiewicz accepted my challenge and played 7... e6. That game went 8. dxe6 xxe6 9. xdx6 xe8 10. xxc5 xa5 11. b4 xa6 12. c1 xe4 13. xe4 f5 14. d3 xe4 15. 0-0 xe4 16. xf3 xd7 17. e4 xc5 18. bxc5 xe7 19. b1 xc4 20. xb7 d8 21. a3 and Black managed to draw this difficult endgame after a further 20 moves.

8. c2 e5

This move completely changes the positional landscape taking us into positions Nick, with his predisposition to Benoni pawn structures, was not fully familiar with.

9. d2! h5 10. g3!

With Black's dark-squared Bishop out of commission, my positional challenge is to take the steam out of the f5-break. By preparing to put pressure on f5, I solidify my advantage.

10... f5 11. h3!

A somewhat original method of applying pressure where it counts. With the f5-pawn under siege, Black cannot develop his Knight to d7 to help out the kingside.

11... fxe4?!

Black faced a difficult choice, but perhaps it was practically better to play 11... d8 letting me choose between:

A) 12. g5 h6 13. e6 xxd2+ 14. xd2 xe6 15. dxe6 g7 16. exf5 gxf5 17. 0-0-0 xe6 18. xdx6 xd6 19. xdx6 d4 20. g2 bc6 21. d5+ h8 22. a4 winning a pawn or;
B) 12. exf5 gxf5 (12... \( \text{xf5} \) 13. \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 14. \( \text{d3} \) with a similar advantage as in the game) 13. \( \text{h4} \) and somehow Black is helpless against the threats to the f-pawn, as 13... \( \text{f6} \) simply loses material to 14. \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 15. \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 16. \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 17. g4 \( \text{f7} \) 18. \( \text{gxf5} \).

12. \( \text{g5} \)

I thought for a while on this, as 12. \( \text{xc8} \) dominating on light squares in case of 12... exf3 13. \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 14. \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 15. 0-0 was a very tempting option. I decided to stay away from any complications which helped Nick survive our previous encounter.

12... \( \text{hxh3} \) 13. \( \text{hxh3} \) h6

Stopping my Knight's intrusion to g5 is necessary.

14. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{d7} \) 15. 0-0 \( \text{c7} \) 16. \( f3 \)

The key to winning such positions is not to rush. To paraphrase Magnus Carlsen, who missed a tactical sequence to go into a positionally better endgame against Fabiano Caruana: "The joy from anticipation of how I will torture him in this position stopped me from even considering other alternatives".
16... h6 17. c3

Komodo gives a really cool line showing that I can win a pawn by force with 17. xf6+ xf6 18. f2 f5 19. g4 f6 20. g5 hxg5 21. e4 f5 22. g3 but there is no reason to even look that way, as the gradual positional squeeze will give more of an advantage.

17... h7 18. f2 ae8 19. g2 a6 20. a4

I decided to bank on the ability to win the position on the kingside, based on the full blockade of all of Black's active ideas.

20... b6 21. b3 c8 22. g4

Stopping the possibility of Black's Knight going to f5.

22... e7 23. ae1 d7 24. h3 f7 25. h1!

This starts another improvement of the position, that of my Knight going to a more active square on g3. Nick's face was showing that he was not enjoying the lack of tactical possibilities at his disposal.

25... ef8 26. g3 b6 27. d3 a5

Black decides to completely close off the queenside, hinting that he will attempt to hold off any action on the kingside as his pieces are fully concentrated here. This is simply a mirage, though.

I have too many ways to attack for Black to be able to defend with such limited space available. The space advantage, in fact, is a deciding factor.

Understanding the "winnability" factor is very important in order to become a great player.

It is clear to me that Magnus is far better than anyone in the world in this very aspect.
28. \( \text{h1} \)

Komodo is restless and suggests instead 28. \( \text{f4} \) opening up the position in my favor.

After 28... \( \text{exf4} \) 29. \( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 30. \( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 31. \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{e5} \) 32. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 33. \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{g8} \) 34. \( \text{g5} \) Black's troubles continue, but I saw no reason to rush this.

28... \( \text{h8} \) 29. \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{g8} \) 30. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{h8} \)

Finally! Black has a difficult defensive task ahead of him, and if my Knight gets to e6 the game will soon be over.

34... \( \text{h5?} \)

Typical Nick, always looking for a counter-punch. In this case, though, it's not enough.

Black could have tried to resist as follows:

A) 34... \( \text{xd4} \) 35. \( \text{hxg4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 36. \( \text{fxe5} \) \( \text{f5} \) 37. \( \text{exd6} \) \( \text{h4}+ \) 38. \( \text{h2} \) \( \text{xf2}+ \) 39. \( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{f3}+ \) 40. \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 41. \( \text{d7} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 42. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 43. \( \text{f4} \) with a winning position for me or;

B) 34... \( \text{exf4} \) 35. \( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 36. \( \text{hxg4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 37. \( \text{e6} \) \( \text{e5} \) 38. \( \text{c1!} \) (38. \( \text{hxh6?} \) would be a mistake as Black wins back material with 38... \( \text{xf2}+ \) 39. \( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{xf2}+ \) 40. \( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{h4}! \) 38... \( \text{dxg3} \) 39. \( \text{xdg3} \) \( \text{e4}+ \) 40. \( \text{h2} \) \( \text{xf2}+ \) 41. \( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{xf2}+ \) 42. \( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{f5} \) 43. \( \text{f4} \) and White should eventually win,
though there is still lot of work left to be done.

35. fxe5 dxe5 36. gxf5 \( \text{\textbf{xf5}} \) 37. \text{\textbf{x}}f7 \text{xf7} 38. \text{xf7} \text{xf7} 39. \text{\textbf{xh5}} gxh5 40. \text{\textbf{g3}}

I thought the endgame is completely winning for me due to the following factors:

1. protected passed pawn on d5;
2. Black's bad Bishop;
3. loads of vulnerable pawns on dark-squares for my Bishop to take.

40... h4 41. \text{\textbf{e4}} \text{\textbf{g8}}

Nick decided to pull his King away to try and create some counterplay. After 41... \text{\textbf{f5}} 42. \text{\textbf{g5}} \text{\textbf{g6}} 43. \text{\textbf{d1}} \text{\textbf{d6}} 44. \text{\textbf{xd6}} \text{\textbf{gxg5}} 45. \text{\textbf{e4+}} \text{\textbf{g6}} 46. \text{\textbf{g4+}} \text{\textbf{gg4+}} 47. \text{\textbf{hxg4}} Black would be hopelessly lost.

42. \text{\textbf{g5}} \text{\textbf{f5}}

43. \text{\textbf{f6+}}

I thought winning this good Bishop against bad Knight endgame would be trivial. I could have played 43. d6 \text{\textbf{d4}} 44. \text{\textbf{d1}} planning \text{\textbf{g4}} instead with a more tactically winning position.

43... \text{\textbf{xf6}} 44. \text{\textbf{xf6}} \text{\textbf{f8}} 45. \text{\textbf{xe5}} \text{\textbf{f7}} 46. d6

Here, I decided to force the transposition to a winning bishop versus knight endgame.

46... \text{\textbf{d7}} 47. \text{\textbf{f3}} \text{\textbf{e6}} 48. \text{\textbf{f4}} \text{\textbf{e8}} 49. \text{\textbf{f2}} \text{\textbf{d4}}
Just when it seems completely winning for White, the engines are not happy with my play, awarding White only a one pawn advantage in the first minute of thinking.

To me it seemed already resignable for Black.

50. \( \mathbb{h}5 + \mathbb{d}7 \) 51. \( \mathbb{h}7 + \mathbb{e}8 \) 52. d7+!

Forcing the winning endgame.

52... \( \mathbb{x}d7 \) 53. \( \mathbb{g}8+ \mathbb{e}7 \) 54. \( \mathbb{g}5+ \mathbb{d}6 \) 55. \( \mathbb{d}5+ \mathbb{c}7 \) 56. \( \mathbb{x}d7+ \mathbb{x}d7 \) 57. \( \mathbb{x}h4 \mathbb{x}b3 \) 58. \( \mathbb{e}3 \)

Black's problem is that his Knight can never attack my pawns, while I have three targets on the queenside with the h-pawn as a decoy.

58... \( \mathbb{d}4 \) 59. \( \mathbb{e}4 \mathbb{e}6 \)

After 58... \( \mathbb{e}2 \) 60. \( \mathbb{f}6 \mathbb{g}3+ \) 61. \( \mathbb{f}3 \mathbb{f}5 \) 62. \( \mathbb{e}5 \mathbb{e}6 \) 63. \( \mathbb{e}4 \mathbb{e}7 \) 64. \( \mathbb{h}4 \mathbb{g}6 \) 65. \( \mathbb{g}3 \mathbb{f}8 \) 66. \( \mathbb{c}7 \mathbb{d}7 \) 67. \( \mathbb{f}4 \mathbb{f}6 \) 68. \( \mathbb{h}5 \) Black's is quickly pushed back through a typical zugzwang.

60. \( \mathbb{g}3 \mathbb{e}2? \) 61. \( \mathbb{e}5 \)

Now Black's Knight is also trapped.

61... \( \mathbb{g}1 \) 62. \( \mathbb{h}4 \mathbb{h}3 \) 63. \( \mathbb{g}3! \)

Completing the trap.

63... \( \mathbb{g}1 \) 64. \( \mathbb{e}3 \mathbb{f}5 \) 65. \( \mathbb{h}2 \mathbb{h}3 \) 66. \( \mathbb{f}3 \)
Chapter 15

Black is in zugzwang and has to lose the Knight.

66... g6 67. g3 g5 68. hxg5 xg5 69. f3 f5 70. c7 b5 71. cxb5 e6 72. xa5

This win not only helped me win the largest prize in World Open history, but the next two games I played against Nick as well.

1-0

Ivanov, Igor
Dlugy, Maxim
National Open 1989

Sometimes the pairing you thought very difficult in your last round works out surprisingly well and you find yourself comfortably riding out a nice position to a rather simple win. This could happen as a result of a well played opening, or some overzealous attempt by your opponent to get the better game with a risky move that backfires and leaves him in ruins.

Such was the case in my last round encounter at the 1989 National Open with a really difficult opponent for me – Igor Ivanov.

Igor and I have played many games, but sometimes the ease with which he would beat me surprised me until I realized that, given a slightly different turn of events, Igor might have become one of the world's strongest players. Winning this game meant tying for first, but I didn't really expect that this would be doable against such a strong opponent. Fate had other plans:

1. c4 f6 2. f3 c5 3. c3 e6

The invitation to the Keres-Parma Variation of the English Defense has been extended, but Igor decides to take the position down the more classical route.
4. e3 c6 5. d4 d5 6. cxd5 cxd5 7. d3 cxd4 8. exd4 e7

And so we have reached one of the main tabias of the Panov Botvinnik Caro-Kann, the opening with which I was very familiar, as the Caro-Kann was a mainstay in my repertoire.

9. 0-0 0-0 10. a3

This move creates slightly different possibilities from the more well-trodden 10. e1, to which I would also have replied 10... f6.

10... f6 11. e4

I prefer this move over the standard 11... ce7, which leads to slightly passive play for Black after 11... ce7 12. d3 g6 13. h6 g7 14. xg7 xg7 15. fe1 when Black has to play quite accurately to claim full equality.

12. d3 h6!?

This move, first played by theoretician extraordinaire Semen Furman, and soon taken up by strong Hungarian GMs Farago, Pinter, and Sax, makes a lot of sense.

Instead of allowing White's Bishop to develop with tempo to h6, Black blocks that Bishop's development path, forcing White to decide how to solve that issue.

13. e1

White's alternative rook development 13. d1 is also quite reasonable. In this case, I would look to develop my pieces as follows: 13... b6 14. e2 b7 15. c2 xc3 16. bxc3 e7 17. d3 g6!
Chapter 15

The point of the move ...h6 is now revealed. After Black moves his Rook from f8, ...\textit{\textbf{c}}f8 will always be a comfortable way to defend the kingside.

13... \textit{\textbf{d}}8

14. \textit{\textbf{xd}}5

The best move according to the engines!

Meanwhile in 2007, in a correspondence game between Ohtake and Carlsen – mind you, it was a different Carlsen than you’re thinking of – the insidious 14. \textit{\textbf{d}}2!? was played. The game continued 14... \textit{\textbf{xd}}4?! 15. \textit{\textbf{xd}}4 \textit{\textbf{c}}7 (15... \textit{\textbf{xc}}3 also doesn’t give Black an easy way out after 16. bxc3 e5 17. \textit{\textbf{e}}3 exd4 18. cxd4 \textit{\textbf{e}}6 19. \textit{\textbf{xb}}7 \textit{\textbf{ab}}8 20. \textit{\textbf{e}}4 with some chances for White to make use of his extra pawn) 16. \textit{\textbf{ce}}2! \textit{\textbf{xd}}4 17. \textit{\textbf{xd}}4 \textit{\textbf{xd}}4 18. \textit{\textbf{c}}2! \textit{\textbf{xd}}2 19. \textit{\textbf{ad}}1 \textit{\textbf{g}}5 20. \textit{\textbf{xc}}7 \textit{\textbf{f}}8 21. b4 White got a static long-term advantage which he managed to convert into a win.

15... \textit{\textbf{d}}7!

This move came to me during the game, as the more common idea 15... \textit{\textbf{b}}8 not blocking the light-squared Bishop seemed more natural at first.

Then I saw the interesting possibility of developing both the Queen and the Bishop on the c8-h3 diagonal and decided on the text move.

15... \textit{\textbf{b}}8 turns out to be a weaker alternative as after 16. g3 \textit{\textbf{g}}4 17. \textit{\textbf{f}}4 \textit{\textbf{c}}8 18. \textit{\textbf{d}}6 \textit{\textbf{d}}7 19. \textit{\textbf{e}}5 \textit{\textbf{xe}}5 20. dxe5 White gets a stronghold in the centre, and the possibility of winning a pawn while getting rid of the Knight on d6 with 20... \textit{\textbf{g}}5 21. \textit{\textbf{d}}2 \textit{\textbf{xe}}5 22. \textit{\textbf{xe}}5 \textit{\textbf{xd}}6.
This leads to a position with excellent attacking chances for White after, for example, 23. \( \text{Be}1 \) \( \text{g6} \) 24. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f3} \) 25. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{h7} \) 26. \( \text{f5}! \) \( \text{e4} \) 27. \( \text{f6} \) \( \text{g7} \) 28. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 29. \( \text{e7} \).

16. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{g4}! \)

17. \( \text{e3} \)

White's alternatives also give me a good game. For example:

A) 17. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{f5}! \) 18. \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{xd6}! \) 19. \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{e4} \) and White has to play carefully to equalize after 20. \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 21. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{dxe4} \) 22. \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 23. \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{e8} \) 24. \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 25. \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 26. \( \text{d4} \);

B) or 17. \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{f5} \) 18. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{e4} \) 19. \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 20. \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 21. \( \text{gxf3} \) \text{gxf6} with equality.

17... \( \text{f5} \)

18. \( \text{h3} \)

The alternative 18. \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 19. \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 20. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 21. \( \text{ac1} \) \( \text{a6} \) 22. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e8} \) gave Black a good game in Shimanov-Amanov 2008, a game which Black eventually won.

18. \( \text{d6} \) was probably White's best choice, but after 18... \( \text{e4} \) 19. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{dxe4} \) 20. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) Black has full equality.

18... \( \text{g6} \)

19. \( \text{e5} \)?
After this move, White will have to be extremely accurate to hold the game. It was still possible to play for a complicated, balanced middlegame with 19. g4 e4 20. e5 although Black gets a good position after 20... xe5 21. dxe5 c2! with ideas similar to the game.

19... xe5 20. dxe5 d4

Surprisingly, my d-pawn becomes extremely strong very fast.

21. g3?

Igor tries to find refuge in the endgame, as the middlegame after 21. f3 d3 22. d2 a6 23. d6 d4 24. f4 xh3 25. e4 f5 looks quite dangerous for White. Still, after the best 26. ac1 d7 27. h2 g4 28. f3 h5+ 29. g1 xd6 30. exd6 f5 31. b4, White would have retained good chances to hold the game.

21... xg3

The ending is not as easy to hold as White thinks, as besides the strong d-pawn, I also have a nifty Knight that can reach some pretty unpleasant squares.

22. fxg3

A difficult decision without a right or wrong answer.

Taking with the Bishop on g3 would retain the pawn structure but would lose an important tempo in defending against the d-pawn. After 22. xg3 c2 23. e6 (On 23. f4 a5! forces the win of material. After 24. b4 b3 25. a2 d3 26. d6 d7 27. e3 a5! White’s position starts crumbling like a sand castle in a storm.) 23... fxe6 24. c7 d3! 25. xa8 xa8 26. f4 d4 I will win back the exchange, retaining the extra pawn with excellent winning chances.

22... c2!

I think I already has a winning endgame here, as I can improve this position in
many different ways, while White will be tied down to blocking the advance of my d-pawn.

23. e6

White hopes to solve his problems with a simple tactical solution, but one does not exist. Alternatives don't help much:

A) 23. c7 ac8 24. e6 g5!

B) 23. d6 d7 24. d2 d3 25. ac1 d4 26. e3 ad8 27. g4 f6 and White's position falls apart.

23... fxe6 24. c7 e5!

The key! I am happy to part with an exchange, as I will be getting it back with interest.

25. xa8 exf4 26. c7 d3 27. e6?

The slightly better 27. gxf4 d4 28. f2 d2 29. g1 d7 30. a8 e6 31. ad1 xd1 32. xd1 xf4 also loses for White.

27... d6 28. c5 d2 29. ed1 b6!

Position after: 29... b6

Besides the goodies on d1, the Knight is also trapped. White resigned and I brought the Edmonson Cup (the trophy for winning the National Open) home.

0-1

Dlugy, M
Dzindzichashvili, R
St Martin 1990

This game was played in the last round of the beautiful St.Martin International, when I drew too many games in the early rounds and now had to win to tie for first, as I was playing Dzindzi, who was leading the tournament. Roman Dzindzichashvili, a top ten player in the world in the early 80's, always had my fullest respect and I decided that in a must-win situation I had to throw caution to the winds. Let's take a look.

1. d4 d6
Like many players coming from the Georgian school of chess, Dzindzi felt equally comfortable in the Pirc, Modern, or King's Indian Defenses, even creating the Dzindzi-Indian Defense, which goes 1. d4 g6 2. c4 \textit{g7} 3. \textit{c3} c5 4. d5 \textit{xc3}!? 5. bxc3 \textit{f5!}

2. c4 \textit{f6} 3. \textit{c3} g6 4. e4 \textit{g7} 5. f4

I resorted to my old favorite, the Four Pawns Attack, for two reasons: the first, was that Dzindzi was a real expert in the Saemisch, playing both the pawn sacrifice 6... c5 line as well as the Byrne System with a6 and c6, and I wasn’t prepared to handle them effectively.

The second, and probably more important reason, was that in some blitz games we played, Dzindzi played a rather dubious b5 system against the Four Pawns Attack, and I was hoping he would repeat it in a tournament game.

5... c5 6. d5 0-0 7. \textit{f3} b5?! 

Besides Dzindzi, Shirov, Svidler and Mikhail Tal have adopted this gambit continuation, but somehow I feel the advanced nature of White’s kingside pawns should only help White in gaining an advantage.

8. \textit{xb5} a6 9. a4 \textit{a5}

Besides this move, the immediate 9... axb5 and 9... e6 have been played, with middlegames generally favoring White.

10. \textit{d2} \textit{b4}

Black “enters the dragon”, to coin a phrase, but it’s not that safe.

On the other hand, why go \textit{a5} in the first place then?

11. \textit{c2}

I am playing the most obvious moves and Black’s situation is getting dangerous.

11... \textit{g4}
After 11... c4, the simplifications following 12. e5!

favor White, as the useful move 12...  \( \text{\textit{f5}} \) which Black would like to play, is refuted by 13. \( \text{\textit{a2!}} \) forcing favorable trades.

Otherwise, after 12... dxe5 13. fxe5  \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 14. \( \text{\textit{d1!}} \) \( \text{\textit{b3}} \) 15. \( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) 16. \( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe5}} \) 17. \( \text{\textit{xe5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe5}} \) 18. \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) White is simply much better.

12. b3

This seemed strong, but it looks like 12. \( \text{\textit{g5}} \)!

was even stronger. After the forced attempt to evacuate the Queen with 12... c4, White creates a winning endgame as follows: 13. e5  \( \text{\textit{f5}} \) 14. \( \text{\textit{ce4!}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) 15. \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) c3 16. \( \text{\textit{xf6+}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) 17. \( \text{\textit{xc3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc3}} \) (17... \( \text{\textit{e4+}} \) is no better as after 18. \( \text{\textit{e3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) 19. \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) \( \text{\textit{e6}} \) 20. \( \text{\textit{exd6}} \) \( \text{\textit{e8}} \) 21. \( \text{\textit{xe6}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe6}} \) 22. \( \text{\textit{f2}} \) White has a winning endgame as well.) 18. \( \text{\textit{xc3}} \) fxe5 19. fxe5 axb5 20. \( \text{\textit{xb5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe5}} \) 21. \( \text{\textit{xe5}} \) dxe5 22. \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) with a decisive advantage.

12... e6

Black's Queen is now in the way of his counterplay.

After 12... axb5 13. \( \text{\textit{xb5}} \) \( \text{\textit{a6}} \) 14. \( \text{\textit{c1!}} \) – stopping Black's attempt to escape via d4 – 14... \( \text{\textit{xf3}} \) 15. \( \text{\textit{xf3}} \) \( \text{\textit{a5}} \) 16. 0-0 gives White a decisive advantage.

13. \( \text{\textit{c4}} \) \( \text{\textit{a5}} \) 14. 0-0 exd5 15. \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{d8}} \) 16. \( \text{\textit{xf6+}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) 17. \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) axb5 18. \( \text{\textit{xb5}} \) \( \text{\textit{a6}} \) 19. \( \text{\textit{ad1}} \) \( \text{\textit{b4}} \) 20. \( \text{\textit{b2}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc3}} \) 21. \( \text{\textit{xc3}} \)
Chapter 15

I have a decisive advantage with an extra pawn and better pawn structure, but have to be mindful of Black's tricks.

21... $\text{e7}$ 22. $\text{d1} \text{ad8}$ 23. h3 $\text{c8}$
24. $\text{e2} \text{b7}$ 25. $\text{fe1} \text{c7}$
26. $\text{c1}$

Another reasonably direct way to move forward towards a win was 26. f5 planning $\text{h2-g4}$. For example: 26... $\text{c6}$ 27. $\text{h2} \text{xb5}$ 28. $\text{g4 f6}$ 29. axb5 and besides everything else, Black also has to worry about his King now.

26... $\text{b8}$ 27. $\text{f6}!$

I spotted a nice piece transfer to clarify my advantage.

27... d5 28. $\text{h4}! \text{dxe4}$ 29. $\text{g5 h5}$ 30. $\text{xe4 xe4}$ 31. $\text{xe4}$

Now, with the light-squared Bishop gone, many endgames with Bishop against Knight will be easily won.

31... $\text{d4}$ 32. f5!

Opening up Black's King.

32... $\text{d6}$ 33. $\text{fxg6 fxg6}$ 34. $\text{c4+ h8}$

On 34... $\text{g7}$, trading into the endgame with 35. $\text{e7+ xe7}$ 36. $\text{xe7+ h6}$ 37. $\text{f1}$ would be the simplest route.

35. $\text{g5}!$

This launches a mating attack.
35... d1+ 36. e1 d4+ 37. h1

37. h2! was immediately decisive.

37... xe1+

The only move to prolong the inevitable was 37... f4 38. xf4 xe1+ 39. xe1 xf4 with a lost endgame.

38. xe1 g7

And Black’s flag fell as I was contemplating 39. e7 f5 40. e3 with mate to follow.

1-0

Dlugy, Maxim
Benjamin, Joel
National Open 1993

My games with Joel Benjamin were always very hard-fought. When we were kids, Joel’s nearly 2 year advantage over me helped him win the 1982 U.S. Junior Championship, in which I came second. In 1983 I managed to tie with him in the same event, and soon after that caught up with him both in results and rating. Then came an amazing run of luck. From 1984 to 1986 I played Joel 12 times, and got the Black pieces all 12 times. I managed 2 losses, 1 win and 9 draws in those games, and when I finally got the White pieces in 1987, won a nice game at the U.S Championship, analyzed earlier in this book. In this game played after my retirement in 1993, I decided to play in my favorite U.S tournament, the National Open, as a way to relax from my day job – that of a foreign exchange trader at Bankers Trust in New York – and got to the final round of the event with a chance for first. I only had to beat my old nemesis, Joel.

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. f3 f6 4. c2

I used this system quite often to steer out of common main line theory when I changed my careers. It proved quite handy, as I managed to win some nice games over the years with it.

4... g6
This continuation is probably the most testing, trying to take advantage of the bad placement of my Queen on c2 by organizing an attack on it with the Bishop.

5. \( \text{\&f4} \) \( \text{\&a6}! ? \)

Joel is playing extremely aggressively. A more common way to play this position is 5... \( \text{\&g7} \) 6. e3 0-0 7. \( \text{\&c3} \) c5. Trying to transpose into the \( \text{\&f4} \) Grunfeld, with the difference that White's Queen is on c2 instead of d1. This nuance may actually help Black equalize, although I think White retains somewhat better chances after both 8. \( \text{\&c1} \) and 8. \( \text{\&d1} \).

6. cxd5?

I was not prepared for 5... \( \text{\&a6} \), and played this move as a way to clarify the position. The move is simply wrong, as Black will grab the initiative, thanks to my reluctance to start developing immediately. After the routine 6. e3, the position could get quite unclear, but the complications after 6. e3 \( \text{\&f5} \) 7. \( \text{\&b3} \)

8. \( \text{\&xb7}! ? \)
Crucial games

Joel certainly has a great feel for the initiative and this pawn sacrifice is completely sound, but I felt like if I was going to suffer, I better suffer for something.

After the defensive 8. d2 b6 9. xb6 axb6 10. c3 xc3 11. xc3 c7, Black is slightly better in the endgame thanks to the open a-file.

8... ab4 9. a3 g7 10. e3

After 10. d2 0-0 11. xb4 b8 12. xa7 xb4 13. c1 c5!

10... 0-0

Position after: 10... 0-0

I was very unhappy with my position and was choosing among many bad-looking moves.

Keeping my pawn structure together with 11. g3 seemed to lose immediately to 11... a5. Indeed, after the forced sequence 12. c4 (on 12. d2 Black blows up my position with 12... e5! when 13. dc4 loses to 13... c2+ 14. e2 c3+ 15. bxc3 xc3 16. b3 d3+ 17. f3 e4+ 18. g4 xa1 19. xd3 xh1 20. xe4 xd4 21. exd4 f5+ 22. h3 fxe4 23. b6+ h8 24. xa8 xc8) 12... c2+ 13. d1 a4 14. b3 b5 15. xb5 cxb5 16. c1 c3+ 17. d2 e4+ 18. d1 b4 19. cd2 xa2 20. xe4 xc1 21. c5 a2 Black is simply winning.
Chapter 15

11... $\text{d}3+$

Joel has to choose between many appetizing options. It was stronger to play 11... $\text{xf}4$ when both 12. $\text{exf}4$ $\text{d}6!$ 13. $\text{e}5$ $\text{fb}8!$ 14. $\text{xf}7$ $\text{xf}4$ 15. $\text{e}5+$ $\text{f}8$ 16. $\text{c}7$ $\text{xd}4$ and 12. $\text{xb}4$ $\text{xg}2+!$ 13. $\text{e}2$ $\text{b}8$ 14. $\text{d}2$ e5 15. $\text{hg}1$ exd4 16. $\text{xg}2$ $\text{xb}2$ win for Black.

12. $\text{xd}3$ $\text{xd}3$ 13. 0-0-0

I have no choice, as my King has to have a semblance of cover.

13... $\text{xf}4$ 14. $\text{exf}4$

14... $\text{f}5$

It was probably more mundane and stronger to choose 14... $\text{e}2$ 15. $\text{d}2$ $\text{b}8$ 16. $\text{xa}7$ $\text{xf}3$ 17. $\text{xf}3$ $\text{d}5$ 18. $\text{b}1$ $\text{xf}3$ 19. $\text{e}1$ $\text{xf}4$ with a very easy-to-play winning position.

15. $\text{he}1$

In Joel's time pressure, I understood that my chances lay in making him think he has to defend.

15... $\text{e}6$?

The first serious inaccuracy by Black.

After 15... c5! Black breaks through. For example: 16. $\text{dxc}5$ $\text{a}5$ 17. $\text{b}5$ $\text{xb}2+!$ 18. $\text{xb}2$ $\text{xc}5+$ 19. $\text{c}2$ $\text{ab}8$ with a winning attack.

16. $\text{a}6$!

The alternative 16. $\text{c}4$ $\text{b}8$ 17. $\text{a}6$ $\text{c}7$ 18. $\text{fe}5!$ may have been an even sterner defence, as after 18... f6 I can try
to equalize with 19. g4! fxe5 20. gxf5 exd4 21. fxe6 ♕xf4+ 22. ♕b1 ♕f5+ 23. ♕a1 with a complicated, though still worse position.

16... ♕b8

The numerous promising alternatives are eating into Black's remaining time. 16... ♕c8, 16... ♕d5, and 16... ♕g4 were all strong as well.

17. ♖c4 c5 18. dxc5 ♕c7

19. ♖d6?

Believing that the worst is over, I make a serious slip.

The best defence was offered by 19. b3!! ♕xf4+ 20. ♕e3, when surprisingly my c-pawn creates reasonable counterplay after 20... ♕g4 21. c6 ♕xg2 22. c7 ♕xf2? 23. ♖d2 with a draw. Black should instead play the surprising 22... ♕a8! with complications favoring him.

19... ♕b7?

Joel misses a nice combination in time pressure. After the flashy 19... ♕xb2+! 20. ♖xb2 ♕a5 the c3- and a2-squares cannot be protected at the same time, and Black gets a decisive advantage after 21. ♖d2 ♖xa2 22. ♖d1 ♖xb2 23. ♖xb2 ♖xb2 24. ♖e3 ♖xf2 25. ♖e2 ♖f1+ 26. ♖d2 ♖c8 27. c6 ♕b1 28. ♖e3 ♕e4+ 29. ♖f2 ♖xc6.

20. ♖f5 ♕b4

Now I finally have a narrow road to equality.

21. ♖e2?

This is not it! The best continuation was to start the counterplay with 21. c6!

Now, after 21... ♕a4 22. ♖e2! there is a surprising defence following:

A) 22... ♕xa2 23. ♕a3 ♕b1+ 24. ♖d2 ♖fd8+ 25. ♖d6 ♖xe5 26. fxe5 ♖xb2+ 27. ♖e1 ♖xe2+ 28. ♖xe2 ♕c2+ 29. ♕d2 ♕xc6 30. ♕xa7 with equality...;

Position after: 18... ♕c7

Position after: 20... ♕b4
Chapter 15

B) ...while after 22... \( \mathcal{xe}5 \) 23. \( \mathcal{xe}5 \) \( \mathcal{xa}2 \) 24. \( \mathcal{a}3 \) \( \mathcal{b}1+ \) 25. \( \mathcal{d}2 \) \( \mathcal{xb}2+ \) 26. \( \mathcal{e}1 \) White even gets the advantage.

For example: 26... \( \mathcal{xe}2+ \) (or 26... \( \mathcal{d}8 \) 27. \( \mathcal{d}7 \) \( \mathcal{xe}2+ \) 28. \( \mathcal{xe}2 \) \( \mathcal{b}5+ \) 29. \( \mathcal{e}3 \) \( \mathcal{c}8 \) 30. \( \mathcal{c}3 \) \( \mathcal{xc}6 \) 31. \( \mathcal{f}6+ \) \( \mathcal{g}7 \) 32. \( \mathcal{h}5+ \) \( \mathcal{f}8 \) 33. \( \mathcal{d}8+ \) \( \mathcal{xd}8 \) 34. \( \mathcal{xc}6 \) \( \mathcal{gxh}5 \) 35. \( \mathcal{c}5+ \) \( \mathcal{g}7 \) 36. \( \mathcal{xa}7 \) with some winning chances for White) 27. \( \mathcal{xe}2 \) \( \mathcal{c}2+ \) 28. \( \mathcal{e}1 \) a5 29. \( \mathcal{xa}5 \) \( \mathcal{e}4 \) 30. \( \mathcal{d}7 \) \( \mathcal{xc}6 \) 31. \( \mathcal{f}6+ \) \( \mathcal{h}8 \) 32. \( \mathcal{a}1 \) \( \mathcal{a}4 \) 33. \( \mathcal{c}3 \) \( \mathcal{b}5 \) 34. \( \mathcal{d}5+ \) e5 35. fxe5 \( \mathcal{xe}4+ \) 36. \( \mathcal{e}3 \).

\[ \mathcal{d}1 \mathcal{xb}2 26. \mathcal{xb}2 \mathcal{xb}2 27. \mathcal{e}1 \] when White retains drawing chances even after the engines best 27... \( \mathcal{g}7 \) 28. \( \mathcal{d}2 \) \( \mathcal{b}1+ \) 29. \( \mathcal{d}1 \) \( \mathcal{b}4+ \) 30. \( \mathcal{d}2 \) \( \mathcal{a}4 \) 31. c6;

B) 21... f6 22. a3! \( \mathcal{a}4 \) 23. \( \mathcal{d}7! \) \( \mathcal{b}3 \) (after 23... \( \mathcal{b}5 \) 24. g4 \( \mathcal{xe}5 \) 25. \( \mathcal{xf}5 \) \( \mathcal{xc}4+ \) 26. \( \mathcal{c}2 \) \( \mathcal{xf}4+ \) 27. \( \mathcal{b}1 \) \( \mathcal{bb}8 \) 28. \( \mathcal{xe}6+ \) \( \mathcal{h}8 \) 29. \( \mathcal{fxg}6 \) \( \mathcal{e}4 \) 30. \( \mathcal{d}6 \) White retains good compensation for the piece thanks to the strong c-pawn) 24. \( \mathcal{a}5 \) \( \mathcal{a}2 \) 25. \( \mathcal{ec}6 \) \( \mathcal{b}1+ \) 26. \( \mathcal{d}2 \) \( \mathcal{xb}2+ \) 27. \( \mathcal{e}1 \) \( \mathcal{xe}2+ \) 28. \( \mathcal{xe}2 \) \( \mathcal{b}5+ \) 29. \( \mathcal{e}1 \) \( \mathcal{xc}5 \) 30. \( \mathcal{xa}7 \) \( \mathcal{xa}3 \) 31. \( \mathcal{e}7+ \) \( \mathcal{h}8 \) 32. \( \mathcal{fxf}5 \) \( \mathcal{exf}5 \) 33. \( \mathcal{c}7 \) with a likely draw.

22. c6!

\[ \mathcal{e}1 \mathcal{xe}5 \] 23. \( \mathcal{xb}4 \) \( \mathcal{xf}4+ \) 24. \( \mathcal{d}2 \) \( \mathcal{xd}2+ \) 25. \( \mathcal{xd}2 \) \( \mathcal{xc}6 \) 26. \( \mathcal{c}3 \) \( \mathcal{bc}8 \) 27. b3

22... \( \mathcal{xe}5 \) 23. \( \mathcal{xb}4 \) \( \mathcal{xf}4+ \) 24. \( \mathcal{d}2 \) \( \mathcal{xd}2+ \) 25. \( \mathcal{xd}2 \) \( \mathcal{xc}6 \) 26. \( \mathcal{c}3 \) \( \mathcal{bc}8 \) 27. b3

21... \( \mathcal{fc}8?! \)

In this complicated position choosing the best move is almost a matter of luck.

Let's check out the other possibilities:

A) 21... \( \mathcal{xe}5 \)!? 22. \( \mathcal{xe}5 \) \( \mathcal{xf}4+ \) 23. \( \mathcal{e}3 \) (after 23. \( \mathcal{dd}2 \)? \( \mathcal{xb}2 \)! 24. \( \mathcal{xb}2 \) \( \mathcal{b}4+ \) 25. \( \mathcal{a}1 \) \( \mathcal{b}1# \) the variation ends) 23... \( \mathcal{a}4 \) 24. \( \mathcal{d}2 \) \( \mathcal{xa}2 \) 25.
27... \( \text{	exttt{\texttt{g7}}} \)?

An inaccuracy which will force Black to find only moves to equalize. Joel should have played an immediate 27... \( \text{f6!} \) preparing to dislodge my strong Knight off c4 with e5 and \( \text{e6} \). Then after 28. \( \text{d7} \) \( \text{c7} \) 29. \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{f7} \) 30. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{e7} \) 31. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d8} \) 32. \( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xd8} \) 33. \( \text{d2+} \) \( \text{e7} \) Black would keep the balance in the ending.

28. \( \text{d7} \) \( \text{c7} \) 29. \( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{x} \text{c7} \)

There was a beautiful tactical sequence that Joel would have been able to find had he more time on his clock. It starts with the sharp move 31... \( \text{g5!} \) 32. \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{f8}! \) Now, on 33. \( \text{fxg5} \), Black wins the piece with 33... \( \text{e5!} \) and I would have no defence against \( \text{e6} \), meanwhile trying to find drawing chances after 34. \( \text{gxf6} \) \( \text{e6} \) 35. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 36. \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xc4+} \) 37. \( \text{d3} \).

30. \( \text{b4?} \)

30... \( \text{f6} \) 31. \( \text{f4?} \)

Walking into a potential deadly trap that my opponent misses.
35... d5?

Black cracks in time pressure. After 35... f6 36. xe5 xa2 37. e2 d5 the position would be completely equal.

36. xe5+ f6 37. e2 g8?

Now, it's lost.

37... xa2 could be answered either by 38. xg6 with an extra pawn, or 38. c6 e6 39. f2+ g5 40. d2 h5 41. c5 trying to go after the a7 pawn with a serious advantage in the endgame. Still, Black had to play that to try and hold the game.

38. c6 d5 39. c5 e6 40. f2+

And with d6 looming, Black resigned, allowing me to tie for first in the 1993 National Open.

1-0
I seriously believe that any chess player who wants to improve their analytical skills has to subject themselves to public criticism by publishing their work. The more responsibility there is – the better. Learning to cope with responsibility will force a player to be objective in his evaluations of games, a skill which will automatically be transferred to the board when the clock is ticking and making an objective evaluation of the position becomes crucial. Many young players now rely solely on engines’ evaluations of their games, instead of thinking about the positions on their own, and think they will improve simply by finding out what the machine believes is the best move. They forget than when the time comes, they will have to use the skills they learned about finding the best move in the position to make their decisions on the board.

Unless they do independent analysis without an engines help, they will not be able to find good moves during the games, as the skills necessary to do that will be missing.
Another important aspect of writing about chess is that it actually helps you better remember and understand the ideas you're writing about. Once you formulate a concept or a theory and defend it in print, you become seriously involved in defending that idea and that will drive you to learn more about it, so that when the time comes you can prove it over the board as well. In 1989, I asked my friend Eric Schiller how he manages to write and publish so many books. He explained that he just compiles the information and then inserts simple to understand commentaries with basic tactics to explain the ideas.

He claimed it took him three days of work to put out a book.

That made me want to try writing a book, and he put me in touch with his publisher. I decided to tackle the 4. \( \text{c2} \) Variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defense and agreed on the payment with the publisher, thinking that the conditions were more than fair for a three day effort. What happened next was a complete surprise. As I got all the material together, I decided to make a concentrated effort to really understand what were the key ideas in that opening. As I got deeper and deeper into my own analysis, I started discovering my own new ideas, which needed more time be checked for mistakes. This continuously extended the writing time. Finally, three (!) months after the start of the book, working an average of 8 hours per day on it, I was finished. Although I learned a whole new opening system, I realized that with my passion for finding the truth, writing books is a dangerous proposition for me. From that point on, and until I finished writing this book you're holding in your hands, I stuck to articles.

I wanted to present an article I wrote in the early 90's for Chess Life, in my bi-monthly column “Beyond The Basics”, and see how it fits into the modern understanding of chess over 15 years after being published.
HOW A NOVELTY IS BORN...

BY MAXIM DLUGY

The new *Chess Informant* arrives in the mail. I am excited! Now I can look at some of my favorite opening variations and see what novelties the world came up with in the last few months. Now I’ll be both armed with new exciting ideas and forewarned against unpleasant surprises in my next tournament. I look in the Queen’s Gambit Accepted section and see that the line I started playing with Black in 1985 is all the rage now, but that I am still safe there. Glancing over the Richter Rauzer Sicilian B66 variation I’ve been playing since 1983, I find that Serper’s novelty in the previous informant has been virtually refuted by Lau’s excellent 14. b1! Good thing I did some work on that line before, and that it’s not going to be a problem either. If I only knew how to handle that Grunfeld Defence!

Novelty, innovation, new idea, improvement-- what are we talking about here? How is a novelty born?

This is a story about the evolution of one seemingly unimportant improvement in a ...d7 variation of the Caro-Kann. It’s only been played once on a GM level, but it was enough to put White’s set-up out of commission. It starts with a game I played in New York Open ’85 against Zoran Gajic, a player I

felt I had to beat to have a shot at the top prizes in that first-class Swiss.

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{Gajic, Zoran} \\
\text{Dlugy, Maxim} \\
\text{New York Open 1985}
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
1. e4 c6 & 2. d4 d5 3. \text{d}2 \text{dxe4} 4. \text{x}e4 \\
& d7 5. f3 \text{g}6 6. \text{xf6+} \text{xf6} 7. \text{e}2 \text{g}7 8. 0-0 \text{g}7 9. c3
\end{align*} \]

9. c4 is the topical line assessed as += in ECO. But more on that later.

9... 0-0 10. \text{e}5

A well known and popular set-up back in 1985. After the usual 10... \text{e}6 11. \text{e}1 White maintains the centre and although Black doesn’t have particular difficulties it’s extremely hard to complicate the game. After some thought I came upon an interesting, if somewhat artificial knight maneuver in an attempt to complicate things.

10... \text{e}8! 11. \text{f}4 \text{d}6 12. \text{e}1 \text{e}6
Chapter 16

13. \( \texttt{g4?!} \)

My opponent is already confused by the new set-up and begins an artificial knight maneuver of his own, with the hope of attacking my King.

13... \( \texttt{b6} \) 14. \( \texttt{b4} \) a5 15. \( \texttt{h6+} \) \( \texttt{h8} \) 16. \( \texttt{d8} \) 17. \( \texttt{d3} \) \( \texttt{b5} \) 18. \( \texttt{d2} \) \( \texttt{axb4} \) 19. \( \texttt{xb4} \) \( \texttt{xal} \) 20. \( \texttt{xal} \) \( \texttt{xal} \) 21. \( \texttt{e1} \) \( \texttt{d6} \) 22. \( \texttt{h3} \) \( \texttt{a8} \) 23. \( \texttt{g4} \) \( \texttt{a2} \) 24. \( \texttt{c1} \) \( \texttt{b3} \) 25. \( \texttt{g5} \) \( \texttt{f5} \) 26. \( \texttt{xf5} \) \( \texttt{xf5} \) 27. \( \texttt{h6} \)

The start of an unlikely King maneuver which is especially hard to stop amidst White’s mounting time pressure.

27... \( \texttt{f6} \) 28. \( \texttt{h4}? \)

After 28. \( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{f8} \) 29. \( \texttt{e3} \) \( \texttt{d7} \) 30. \( \texttt{g3}! \) White could put Black’s "win at all costs strategy" to the test.

28... \( \texttt{f8} \) 29. \( \texttt{e3} \) \( \texttt{g7}! \)

And Black, armed with an extra piece, won easily. (0-1)

So the risky play paid off (I even managed to tie for first in the tournament), and I remembered the ...\( \texttt{e8-d6} \) maneuver as a distinct possibility in this variation.

Along comes the following:
This, of course, is the main line favored by ECO. I stopped to think. Once again I need to complicate the game and make an effort to solve my opening problems at the same time. ECO gives 11... \( \text{d7} \), 11... \( \text{c7} \) and 11... \( \text{c8} \) as the possible moves evaluating the position as somewhat better for White in all lines. Remembering my experiment from earlier in the year I started contemplating 11... \( \text{e8} \). And the more I looked – the more I liked it! The Knight on d6 will be threatening the c4-pawn, the d4-pawn and the Bishop on e3 via f5, while the opening of the long diagonal will make the break c5 all the more plausible. In fact, I didn’t really see what White could do to get any kind of play going.

In October of the same year I played in a GM tournament and once again encountered the same variation, this time against a tougher opponent.

\[ 1. \text{e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. d2 dxe4 4. xe4 d7 5. f3 g6 6. xf6+ xf6 7. e5 e6 8. e2 g6 9. 0-0 g7 10. c4 0-0 11. e3 e8! 12. f4} \]

White prepares to strike in the centre, but the attempt backfires as Black is extremely solid.
Chapter 16

12... 
13. d5 cxd5 14. cxd5 f5 15. g4 c8

Position after: 15... c8

White gained some time at the cost of seriously compromising his pawn structure.

16. d4 b6!

In the ending, only Black will have winning chances.

17. e3 xd4 18. xd4 e6!

Position after: 18... e6!

The simplest way – Black completes his development.

19. dxe6 xe6 20. fd1 fd8 21. b3 f5! 22. gxf5 xf5 23. b2

Position after: 23. b2

23... ac8?!

23... h4 was stronger.

24. f3 b6 25. b7 b8 26. e4 d6 27. d5 xd5 28. xd5 f7 29. xd8+ xd8 30. xf7

Position after: 30. xf7

30... xf7?

Black's last chance to play for a win was 30... b2 31. xd8 x1.

31. xg7 xg7 32. c1 d7 33. a4
Chess Writing

\[ \begin{align*}
&\textsf{f6 34. a5! bxa5 35. c5 b7 36. xa5 xb3} \\
&\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}
\end{align*} \]

Is the story over? Is the novelty born? Not quite. In the same tournament Yehuda Grunfeld put my novelty to a real test with an innovation of his own.

Grunfeld, Yehuda (2475) 
Lein, Anatoly (2465) 
New York 1985

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. dxe4 dx e4 4. dxe4 dxe4 5. f3 g6 6. xf6+ xf6 7. e5 e6 8. e2 g6 9. 0-0 g7 10. c4 0-0 11. e3 e8! 12. b3!

And White eventually converted his extra pawn into a full point.

Immediately after this game I started looking for improvements for Black after 12. b3, but the longer I looked the more convinced I became that White had the upper hand. The tournament was over and I was off to Montpellier to watch the Candidates Tournament, to play in an Open event there, and to take lessons from Mark Dvoretsky. Mark’s approach to teaching chess is different from all other trainers; he teaches methods of thinking over anything else. We concentrated on Prophylactics—or the prevention of your opponent’s ideas, and when I came back to New York, I found the answer I was looking for. Instead of reacting to 12. b3 Black has to prevent it!

13... c8 14. c3 d8 15. h3 f6?! 16. f3 d7 17. e1 e8 18. f1 f7 19. c1 a5 20. a4 b6 21. b3 c5 22. f4 c6 23. g3 ad8 24. g2 c8 25. dxc5 xc5 26. e3 c7 27. d4 f5 28. c1 f4 29. xf4

White targets the b7-pawn, tying Black’s Knight to its defense.

12... d6 13. ad1!

White successfully defends his centre and keeps a comfortable edge.
So, I need the Knight to go to d6, while preventing 12. \( \text{b3} \). The answer...

11... \( \text{e}4!! \)

The universal move. Now if 12. \( \text{b3} \) Black plays 12... \( \text{e}5! \) 13. dxe5 \( \text{d}2! \) 14. \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{d}2 \) with full equality, and all other moves transpose to 11... \( \text{e}8 \) lines as Black safely reaches the d6-square with his Knight. The novelty is born!

Over a year later someone else caught up with me. It seems the great practitioner of prophylactics did his homework. Behold!
Chess Writing

Sokolov, Andrei (2645)  
Karpov, Anatoly (2710)  
Linares 1987

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. c4 dxe4 4. c5 x.e4  
7. f.d5 e6 8. f3 g6 9. b.b.c4 d5 10. c3  
0-0 11. e3 e4!! 12. c.c2 d.d6 13. b3 c5!  
(see diagram on the right) 14. a.a1 f.f5 15. d.b5 x.e5 16. d.xe6  
17. e.f7+ x.f7 18. g.g3 f.f8 19. b.b4 x.e3 20. f.xe3 f.f1+ ½ - ½

Position after: 13... c5!

You hardly see this once-fashionable set-up for White against the c.d7 Caro-Kann nowadays. It’s been replaced by 5. g.g5 and 5. c.c4. Yet, when the new revised edition of ECO comes out I am sure the assessment of the line will revert from =+ to =. It takes quite a bit to erase a little plus sign, doesn’t it?

A few words about the content of the above: Yury Razuvaev, a strong grandmaster who worked with Karpov – preparing him for some major events – told Boris Gulko when he was his second for his Candidates match against Nigel Short, that 11... c.c4! was suggested by him a long time ago.

Karpov, it seems, remembered the old analysis and played it when Andrey Sokolov played into that position. When I asked Karpov directly, he gave me another version. He said when he saw White's set-up he immediately saw how ineffective it is if he'll play 11... c.c4. He played it and the variation fell into disuse. I imagine that the truth is somewhere in-between. I think by the time Andrey played this variation, Anatoly already forgot the actual analysis, but then something clicked and he “saw” the right idea – one that was in his sub-consciousness from the time of his work with Razuvaev.

To complete the story on the actual variation, I can tell you that White did try to play for an advantage against 11... c.c4 with 12. f.f4, but those attempts led to Black outscoring White in the chess database.

Generally speaking, the variation has been closed 30 years ago thanks to prophylactic thinking.
Amazing Games

Of course, after years of playing, any strong player has a collection of really cool games, combinations, and endings to show. I am no exception. In this chapter let's take a look at some things that somehow worked out really well:

△ Dlugy, Maxim (2455)
▽ Zapata, Alonso (2455)
صديق New York 1983

This game was played in my first Grandmaster Round Robin tournament where I did quite poorly.

This game, though, made up for the whole event, as it was definitely the best and most exciting game I played in my youth.

1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 c5 4. d5 ♗g7 5. e4 d6 6. h3 0-0 7. ♗f3 e6 8. ♗d3

Position after: 8. ♗d3

8... ♗a6

I was fully prepared to play positions
after 8... exd5 9. exd5 $\text{e}8+$ 10. $\text{e}3$ $\text{h}6$ 11. 0-0 $\text{xe}3$ 12. fxe3 where if Black takes the pawn, White develops a dangerous initiative down the f-file.

9. 0-0 $\text{c}7$ 10. $\text{g}5$ e5

Black decides to close off the centre and prepares to play for the f5-break. The justification is White’s pawn on h3, which will make f5 stronger.

11. $\text{d}2$

As Black decided to play without the common move h6, I have the possibility of keeping my Bishop on both the c1-h6 and h4-d8 diagonal with this simple queen move.

11... $\text{e}8$ 12. a3

This came as a bit of a surprise. By blowing up the kingside Alonso is forcing me to start calculating long complicated variations, many of which lead to trouble.

13... f6 14. $\text{e}3$ f5!

The brashness of youth! There was no real reason to react as aggressively. After the simple 13. b4 f6 14. $\text{e}3$ b6 15. $\text{ab}1$ f5 16. $\text{c}2$ f4 17. $\text{d}2$ I would be well positioned for the oncoming queenside storm, while Black’s counter play on the kingside is lacking focus.

15. gxh5

A tough choice. The alternative 15. exf5 was probably safer. After 15... gxf5 16. gxh5 $\text{h}5$ 17. $\text{h}2!$ (after 17. $\text{g}5$ f4 18. $\text{xh}7$ $\text{xh}3$ Black is winning) 17... f4 18. $\text{g}1$ $\text{f}6$ 19. $\text{d}1$ $\text{xd}1$ 20. $\text{axd}1$ fxe3 21. fxe3 $\text{d}7$ 22. $\text{xf}6$ $\text{xf}6$ 23. $\text{e}4$ $\text{e}7$ 24. $\text{f}3$, White stands a little better thanks to the control of the e4-square.
15... f4

This was one tough move to decide on! The alternatives are quite complicated:

A) 16. h2 g5! 17. xg5 hxg5 18. xg1 fxe3 19. fxe3 h6 20. e6 xe6 21. dxe6 xe6 22. g3 f3 with an equal position.;

B) 16. xc5 Objectively the strongest!

16... dxc5 17. g2 g5 18. e2 hxg5 19. xg1 g6 20. ag1 e8! 21. f1 h6 22. h4 g4 23. h5 a6 24. h4 f6 with an unclear position, where I now prefer White.

16... g5 17. h1 xh5

On 17... fxe3 I thought I would be a little better following 18. xe3 xh5 19. xg5 f4 20. g3 h6 21. f3 d7 22. e2 f6 23. h4 h7 24. h1 g8 25. h2 ff8 26. f5.

18. xc5
Chapter 17

I played this move setting up a serious tactical trap that my opponent falls into.

18... g4!

After 18... dxc5 19. e2 g6 20. ag1 e8 21. f1 h6 22. h4 g4 23. h5 a6 24. h4 d6 25. c2 a complicated position with slightly better chances for White could occur.

Now, take a moment to understand how White should play to avoid losing. If you spot a nice tactical idea, you are likely on the right track.

19. hxg4 xg4+ 20. f1 xf3

It looks like I just blundered a piece, but it's all a part of a fantastic tactic.

21. h2!!

Suddenly, I threaten to win Black's Queen with e2. Black plays a move which looks completely decisive, but actually comes close to losing.

21... dxc5?

A big mistake. Black had to play 21... h3+ 22. e1 g4! escaping from the Queen trap. Now, after 23. xh3 xh3 24. xd6 f7 25. f1 h5 26. xc7 xc7 27. d6 f7 28. c5

I would have excellent compensation for
the exchange, but Black can certainly fight back. A sample line could go 28...  #h8 29. #d5 #af8 30. #d1 #f6 31. #d7 #e7 32. b4? (32. #d3! is stronger, maintaining an advantage) #h4 33. #d3 f3 34. #xb7 #xf2+ 35. #d2 #h1 36. #c8 #xf1 37. d8 #e1+ 38. #c2 #g2+ 39. #d1 #g8! 40. #xf8 #xf8 41. #xf8 #xf8 42. #xe1 #f7 and suddenly Black has better chances.

22. #e2 #e3

When Alonso played this move, he looked triumphant.

After all, he is up a piece and his Queen found a way out of the trap.

23. #c2!!

Not so simple! It turns out that Black's Queen is headed for another trap, as mine simply sidesteps the trade.

23... #d4

Other queen sacrifices are also bad:

A) after 23... #g3 24. fxg3 fxg3+ 25. #g2 gxh2 26. #xh2 #f6 27. #g1;

B) or after 23... #h3+ 24. #xh3 #xh3+ 25. #e1 f3 26. #f1 #g4 27. b4 h5 28. #d1 h4 29. #e3 #d7 30. #f5 Black's compensation is inefficient.

24. f3!

The real point of my play.

Going after the Queen directly with 24. #d1 would give Black more than enough material and compensation after 24... f3 25. #e1 fxe2 26. #xe2 #xd1+ 27. #xd1 #g4.

24... b5

Zapata is an extremely versatile tactician. Here too he is looking for ways to make his Queen count before it's gone.

25. #d1 bxc4
Chapter 17

It looks like Black is getting some counter play. If I capture on d4 now, Black's pawns appear quite strong.

26. d6!

The killer shot. I am playing as if the Queen is already taken, making all my pieces work. Still, even the direct 26. \textit{x}d4 \textit{exd}4 27. \textit{xc}4 \textit{dxc}3 28. \textit{bxc}3 would give me a winning advantage.

26... \textit{c}e6 27. \textit{b}5?

A significant inaccuracy. After the strongest 27. \textit{d}5! Black is helpless, as my pieces come to the c4-square. For instance 27... h6 28. \textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 29. \textit{xc}4 \textit{h}7 30. \textit{xc}5 \textit{d}8 31. b4 and it's just a matter of time before Black is routed. Now the tactics flare up anew.

27... \textit{e}3 28. \textit{xc}4

The threats of \textit{c}7 and \textit{d}7 force Black to ignore the safety of his Queen on e3.

28... \textit{h}8

29. \textit{d}3

The engines prefer White going for other pieces with 29. d7! Now, after 29... \textit{a}6 30. a4 \textit{xb}5 31. \textit{xb}5 \textit{d}4 32. \textit{d}3 \textit{ad}8 33. \textit{xe}3 \textit{fxe}3 34. \textit{d}5 I would be winning comfortably.

29... \textit{g}5

A better attempt at getting counter play for Black was based on the immediate activation of his Rook with 29... \textit{b}8.

I would then have a choice between delaying the capture of the Queen with 30. d7, or 30. \textit{xe}3.

A) After 30. d7 \textit{xd}7 31. \textit{xd}7 \textit{fd}8 32. \textit{xe}6 \textit{xd}7 33. \textit{xd}7 \textit{c}1+ 34. \textit{g}2 Black is a piece down, but after 34... \textit{e}1 35. \textit{f}1 a6 it would be hard to prove White's serious advantage either after 36. \textit{c}3 36... \textit{xb}2+ 37. \textit{g}1 \textit{g}3+ 38. \textit{g}2 \textit{g}2+ 39. \textit{xe}2 \textit{e}1+ 40. \textit{f}1 \textit{g}3+ 41. \textit{h}1 \textit{xf}3+ 42. \textit{g}2 \textit{h}5+ 43. \textit{g}1 \textit{f}8 or after 36. \textit{h}3 \textit{g}3+ 37. \textit{xe}3 \textit{fxe}3 38. \textit{xe}3 \textit{axb}5 39.
Amazing Games and Combinations

b3  a8f8  40.  a4  bxa4  41.  bxa4  b1b1,  although  I  would  be  better  in  both  cases.

**B2)** The  narrow  road  to  White's  advantage  is  paved  with  prophylactic  moves.  After  31.  b1d1  b1d4  32.  b1xd4  cxd4  33.  b1e1!

Position after: 30... fxe3

B1)  Now,  following  31.  c1b1c1,  Black  seems  to  get  enough  compensation  for  the  Queen  after  31...  d4.  For  example:

B1a)  32.  bxc5  bxc5  33.  xf3  xf3  xf3+  34.  e1b1c1  g4  35.  c3  b1f8  36.  c4  f2  37.  b1h4  h5  38.  b7  d6  39.  xg4  hxg4  40.  e6  d2  41.  b8  xd8  42.  b1h6+  leads  to  a  draw;

B1b)  32.  a4  xf3  33.  xf3  xf3+  34.  e2  g4  35.  h1  g3+  36.  e1  f3  37.  f1  f8  with  Black  forcing  repetition  by  attacking  White's  Queen;

B1c)  32.  xd4  cxd4  33.  b4  e6  34.  c7  bc8  35.  e7  f6  36.  e1  c1+  37.  d1  b3  38.  d7  xd1+  39.  e2  d2+  with  a  perpetual  check.

White  needs  to  find  an  amazing  combination;  a  breakthrough  to  the  kingside  allowing  the  Queen  to  swing  to  the  kingside  to  attack  Black's  King.  After  36.  f4!!

B2a)  36...  exf4  37.  e5!  xe5  38.  c5!  Black  is  helpless  against  the  attack  on  the  h7  pawn.  After  38...  g7  (on  38...  e8  39.  c2  wins  immediately)  39.  h5  h6  40.  g6  d3  41.  xh6+  xh6
Chapter 17

42. \( \text{hxh6+ g8 } \)
43. \( \text{b4 d2+ 44. f1 b5+ 45. g2 c4 46. g5+ h8 } \)
47. \( \text{f6+ g8 48. xf4 bc8 49. xe3 } \) White picks up all the pawns for a winning position.

**B2b)** Black would be better off not accepting the Trojan gift on e5 with 36... \( \text{a8} \) though after 37. \( \text{c5 g8 38. h1 af8! (preparing to meet 39. fxe5 with 39... h4+ 40. xh4 g1+ 41. e2 f2+ 42. d3 xd1+ winning for Black) 39. f5! b8 40. b3 g7 41. a4 bg8 42. e2 g1+ 43. xg1 xg1+ 44. f1 d3 45. xe3 h4+ 46. d1 xf1+ 47. d2 f2+ 48. xd3 g2 49. c5 and White's pawns and Queen are stronger than Black's pieces.}

The alternative 31... \( \text{e6} \) also leads to White's advantage after 32. \( \text{c7 f4+ 33. h1 b8 34. c2, although Black is not without his chances.}

For example: 34... \( \text{e6} \) 35. \( \text{f1 bd8 36. xc5 g8 and if Black somehow manages to exchange the e-pawn for White's d-pawn, he will have reasonable survival chances.}

![Position after: 29... g5](image)

30. \( \text{xe3} \)

This certainly looks like a notable accomplishment.

I managed to mow down two pawns while not allowing Black any serious counterplay.

After 30. \( \text{c7 b8 31. d5! Black would be in trouble both after 31... x3 32. xd3 h3+ 33. x3 xh3}

32. \( \text{xc5 a6 33. xe3 e6 34. a7!} \)

34... \( \text{f4+} \)
The point was that on 34... $\textit{b}7$, I would keep all my pieces by munching on yet another pawn with 35. $\textit{xa6}$!

35. $\textit{f}2$

35. $\textit{h}1$! was a strong alternative, allowing my Rook to enter the game through the second rank after 35... $\textit{e}6$ 36. $\textit{c}3$ $\textit{xb}2$ 37. $\textit{d}1$!

35... $\textit{e}6$ 36. $\textit{c}7$ $\textit{xb}2$ 37. $\textit{xe}6$

36. $\textit{xe}6$

38. $\textit{e}7$?

A serious mistake, almost letting the win slip away.

Instead, after 38. $\textit{xa6}$! $\textit{f}4$ 39. $\textit{g}1$ $\textit{d}2$ 40. $\textit{f}1$ $\textit{d}1$ 41. $\textit{c}2$ $\textit{g}8$ 42. $\textit{f}2$ $\textit{f}6$ 43. $\textit{c}8$ $\textit{d}8$ 44. $\textit{xd}8$ $\textit{xd}8$ 45. $\textit{a}5$ $\textit{e}6$ 46. $\textit{c}4$ $\textit{8xd6}$ 47. $\textit{xe}5+$ $\textit{g}7$ 48. $a4$ I would win easily.

38... $\textit{d}4$ 39. $\textit{e}3$

39... $\textit{fb}8$?

This is Black’s final mistake, after which I finish the game without a blemish. He had to try 39... $\textit{b}3+$ 40. $\textit{d}2$ $\textit{b}2+$ 41. $\textit{d}3$ $\textit{xe}2$ (the best chance, as 41... $\textit{b}3+$ loses to the King march 42. $\textit{c}4$ $\textit{c}8+$ 43. $\textit{d}5$ $\textit{xa}3$

44. $\textit{c}7$ $\textit{xc}7$ 45. $\textit{xc}7$ $\textit{a}5+$
46. \( \text{b5}!! \text{xb5}+ \) 47. \( \text{c4} \) although Black is still wiggling in a lost ending after 47... \( \text{e8} \) 48. \( \text{c8e5} \text{c5}+ \) 49. \( \text{xe5} \text{xe5} \) 50. \( \text{xe5} \text{xf3} \) 51. \( \text{f2} \text{h4} \)

Now I would have to find and play 42. \( \text{e3}! \) and after 42... \( \text{b3}+ \) 43. \( \text{xe2} \text{b2}+ \) 44. \( \text{d1} \text{h2} \) 45. \( \text{d7} \text{h1}+ \) 46. \( \text{c2} \text{h2}+ \) 47. \( \text{c3} \text{xf3} \) 48. \( \text{b4} \text{d2} \) 49. \( \text{d8e8}+ \text{xe8} \) 50. \( \text{xe8}+ \text{e8} \) 51. \( \text{e7} \text{h6} \) 52. \( \text{a5} \text{f6} \) 53. \( \text{xe5} \) the result would still be in some doubt, as Black has chances to organize a fortress of some sort. Let's see: 53... \( \text{g6} \) 54. \( \text{c7} \text{g8} \) 55. \( \text{c8e8}+ \text{f7} \) 56. \( \text{d7+} \text{g8} \) 57. \( \text{d5}+ \) \( \text{h8} \) 58. e5 \( \text{g5} \) 59. \( \text{xa6} \text{xe5} \)

This position is given as mate in 48 moves in the Lomonosov Tablebase, but the human continuation 60. \( \text{d7} \text{f6} \) 61. \( \text{f7} \text{g5} \) 62. a4 \( \text{e7} \) 63. \( \text{g6} \text{g7} \) 64. \( \text{e8+} \text{h7} \) 65. \( \text{e4+} \text{g6+} \) 66. \( \text{b5} \text{d8} \) 67. \( \text{d3} \text{c7} \) 68. \( \text{d7+} \text{g7} \) 69. \( \text{f5+} \text{g6} \) 70. a5 \( \text{xa5} \) 71. \( \text{xa5} \text{g7} \) turns out to be a theoretical draw. White can win by stopping Black's Bishop from sacrificing itself for the a-pawn. It's doable but quite difficult.

40. \( \text{h4}! \)
The next game was played quite recently, when I was working in Moscow and got invited to participate in the Moscow Team Championship by a friend. I always did well when playing for a team and since my schedule was quite open, I agreed and suddenly found myself trying to win a really close game against the International Master Sergey Appolonov. At one point, I started to analyze a forced variation and was amazed to find the longest combination I’ve ever played. I was sitting at the board mesmerized by the beauty of the game, shaking my head in disbelief for about 20 minutes after already having calculated the whole line, as I simply wanted to make sure I am not missing anything. For the rest of the story, let’s check out the game:

Dlugy, Maxim (2519)  
Appolonov, Sergei (2392)  
Moscow 2012

1. d4 ♕f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♕f3 ♖b4+ 4. ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 5. ♖xd2

As this was a team event, I decided to play a less topical line, hoping to somehow surprise my opponent by potentially castling on the queenside.

The memories of my short draw versus Ulf Andersson from the 1990 Wijk aan Zee tournament after 5. ♖xd2 convinced me that I have to take with the Knight to complicate.

5... d5 6. ♖c2

6. g3 would be a more conventional method of playing this for White, but I had other plans.

6... 0-0

Position after: 6... 0-0
Chapter 17

7. e4

It was possible to maintain some pressure by trying to get a lead in development with 7. e3, when Black still has some opening issues to solve.

The problem is that this pressure could well be short-lived, and once Black gets his pieces out, equality will be close by.

One sample line could go: 7. e3 \( \text{bd7} \) 8. \( \text{c1} \) dxc4 9. \( \text{xc4} \) c6 10. \( \text{d3} \) e8 to break with e5.

11. \( \text{c3} \) e7 12. \( \text{c4} \) c5! switching the break. 13. 0-0 b6 14. \( \text{fd1} \) b7 15. \( \text{ce5} \) cxd4 16. \( \text{xd4} \) c5 with full equality.

This line shows why I wanted to get a very concrete game in a team event.

7... dxe4 8. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{bd7} \)

It was possible to go for immediate simplification with 8... \( \text{xe4} \) 9. \( \text{xe4} \) c5 and after 10. 0-0-0 cxd4 11. \( \text{xd4} \) d7 12. \( \text{d3} \) f6 13. \( \text{e5} \) b6 14. f3 d7 15. \( \text{b1} \) ac8 Black would be close to equality.

However, the potentially better endgame for White, if simplification could be arranged, gives me some dose of optimism.

9. 0-0-0!? 

My big plan. While I control the centre, I thought it would be possible to create chances either for a kingside attack or to simplify into a better endgame.

9... b6

Black probably shouldn't have allowed me to develop my light-squared Bishop to e4 with tempo.

After 9... \( \text{xe4} \) 10. \( \text{xe4} \) f6 11. \( \text{e5} \) b6 12. \( \text{d3} \) b7 13. \( \text{he1} \) d6 it begins to look like my plan is full of hot air.

It seems like I have to leave the e5-square for my Knight, but that will allow Black to simplify with \( \text{d7} \) at the right moment.

10. \( \text{d3} \) b7 11. \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 12. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 13. \( \text{xe4} \) f6 14. \( \text{e2} \) d6
Black is playing quite pragmatically, showing that my set-up is no big deal.

It took me a while to find something useful to do.

15. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}3 \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{c}6}}}

Black could have tried to be feisty with 15... \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{b}5} 16. \textcolor{red}{\textbf{cxb}5} \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{a}6}} but the compensation would not be entirely sufficient after 17. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}3} \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{axb}5} 18. \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{xb}5 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}4}} 19. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}2 \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d}5} 20. \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e}1}}.}}}

16. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}3}}

My Rook is playing cat and mouse with Black's Knight.

On 16... \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{g}4}, I would play 17. \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}3}, with Black misplacing the Knight and losing control of the e4-square.}

16... \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{fd}8} 17. \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}1 \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{d}6} 18. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}3}}}

Now that I have protected c4, d4 and e4 I can start preparing a kingside attack.

18... \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ad}8} 19. \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{g}4 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}6}}}

Black decides to react, although my threat was somewhat unclear. I think it was better to wait with something like 19... \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}7} 20. \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e}1 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}6}}, stopping my potential d5-break.}

20. \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{g}1}!}

I thought a while about this move, as I was completely sure that my opponent will sacrifice the exchange on d4 in reply and wanted to understand if I had some chances for an advantage in that case. After finding some nuances, I went for it.

20... \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xd}4}}

A very understandable reaction, as otherwise my attack on the g-file could prove dangerous.

21. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{cxd}4 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xd}4} 22. \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}1 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}6}}}

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23. \( \texttt{f3} \)

By removing my Queen from the second rank with tempo, I thought I could fight for an edge.

The engine gives 23. \( \texttt{cc3} \) instead, claiming that White may be a bit better after 23... \( \texttt{d1}+ \) 24. \( \texttt{c2} \) \( \texttt{d4} \) 25. \( \texttt{ed3} \) c5 26. b3 e5 27. \( \texttt{b1} \) \( \texttt{d7} \) 28. \( \texttt{f3} \), although it seems to me that after Black establishes the pawn on e5, he should have no trouble holding the endgame.

23... \( \texttt{h7} \)

A bit inaccurate. Black is reluctant to play a5, afraid that after 23... a5 24. c5 bxc5 25. \( \texttt{a8+} \) \( \texttt{h7} \) 26. \( \texttt{xa5} \) his c-pawn would be weakened, but after 26... \( \texttt{e4} \) Black's initiative would be enough to hold the balance e.g. 27. \( \texttt{e1} \) \( \texttt{d5} \) 28. \( \texttt{a1} \) \( \texttt{a4} \) 29. a3 \( \texttt{d4} \).

24. a3 a5 25. \( \texttt{cc3} \)

Now that Black has helped me stop his own...e5 thanks to \( \texttt{f5+} \), I can try to exchange Rooks.

26. \( \texttt{e2} \)

Another interesting attempt for an advantage was 26. \( \texttt{ed3} \) ! Now after 26... \( \texttt{xc4} \) 27. \( \texttt{e2} \) \( \texttt{e4} \) 28. \( \texttt{c2} \) b5 29. \( \texttt{xc4} \) bxc4 30. \( \texttt{d7} \) f5 31. f3 \( \texttt{c6} \) 32. \( \texttt{d1} \) \( \texttt{d6} \) 33. gxf5 exf5 34. \( \texttt{c3} \) a4 35. \( \texttt{g1} \) \( \texttt{d7} \) 36. h4 White is definitely better, but the winning plan is not quite apparent.
Now Black is two moves away from establishing a dark squared blockade with ...\(\text{d}d7\) and ...e5. I have to find an antidote.

28. h4!

By threatening to open up the game, I am forcing Black to play into my combination.

28... \(\text{d}d7\)

Other options are quite dangerous as well. Taking on g4 would be a blunder after 28... \(\text{x}g4\) 29. \(\text{x}g4\) \(\text{xd}3\) 30. \(\text{e}4+\), while after 28... e5 29. g5 \(\text{d}7\) 30. \(\text{g}3\) \text{hxg5} 31. \(\text{xd}4\) \text{cxd4} 32. \(\text{h}5+\) White gets a winning attack.

Here I thought for a long time, as I thought it was absolutely essential to stop e5.

While this may not be objectively so, I focused all my attention on the move 29. f4 desperately trying to make it work. As the initial idea of a pawn down King and pawn endgame hit me, I started checking and rechecking it to make sure it all fits.

What happened next became an utterly beautiful study in a King and pawn ending, which to this day no one has been able to solve!

29. f4?!

As you will see by the following analysis, this was NOT the best move. I could continue analogous to the note above with 29. g5! e5 30. \(\text{g}3\) and now after 30... g6 (30... \text{hxg5} 31. \(\text{xd}4\) \text{cxd4} 32. \(\text{h}5+\) \(\text{h}6\) 33. \(\text{xf}7\) \text{gxh4} 34. \(\text{g}1\) \(\text{f}6\) 35. \(\text{c}7\) e4 36. \(\text{xb}6\) d3 37. \(\text{xa}5\) \(\text{f}4\) 38. \(\text{a}7\) is also decisive) 31. \(\text{xd}4\) \text{cxd4} 32. \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 33. \(\text{c}6\) e4 34. h5 it begins to become clear that Black's position is not holdable.

After 34... e3 35. \text{hxg6+ fxg6} 36. \text{fxe3 dxe3} 37. \text{gxh6 g5} 38. \(\text{g}1\) I will catch all the passed pawns and win.

29... \(\text{xf}4\) 30. \(\text{xd}4\) \text{cxd4}

The only move as 30... \(\text{xd}4\) loses a piece after 31. \(\text{c}2+\) \(\text{g}8\) 32. \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{g}1+\) 33. \(\text{d}1\).

31. \(\text{d}3+\) f5
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This is forced, as after 31... \( \text{g}8 \) 32. \( \text{e}4 \) followed by capturing on \( d4 \), White is winning.

32. \( \text{x}e6 \) \( \text{c}5 \)

This seemed to be a big problem at first, but then I saw an incredible possibility to play for a win.

33. \( \text{x}f5+ \) \( \text{x}f5+ \) 34. \( \text{g}x\text{f5} \) \( \text{e}6 \) 35. \( \text{f}xe6 \)

Oops. This loses. Sergey was temporarily lucky that at this point I thought there were two ways to win and after checking that White wins with 37. \( \text{c}5!! \) \( \text{bxc}5 \) 38. \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 39. \( \text{a}5 \) \( \text{b}3 \) 40. \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 41. \( \text{e}7 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 42. \( \text{a}6 \) \( \text{c}3 \) 43. \( \text{e}8++ \) \( \text{x}e8 \) 44. \( \text{a}7 \) \( \text{d}2+ \) 45. \( \text{d}1 \) afraid of miscalculation, I went for my simple winning line beginning with...

37. \( \text{axb}4?! \) \( \text{f}6 \) 38. \( \text{h}5! \)

This was the point.

My h-pawn is holding down two kingside pawns, and by creating an outside passed pawn on the queenside, I'll be able to distract Black’s King to take out his pawns with my King and eventually Queen the h-pawn.

38... \( \text{x}e6 \) 39. \( \text{c}2 \)

Sergey finds the first correct move. After 35... \( \text{g}8? \) 36. \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{axb}4 \) 37. \( \text{axb}4 \) \( \text{f}8 \)
39... g5?

This was the move I assumed Black would play, and so he did.

A) If Black decides not to get rid of the blockade with 39... d6 he gets routed with the obvious 40. d3 e5 41. b5! e6 42. xd4 d6 43. c5+ bxc5+ 44. c4 c7 45. xc5 b7 46. b6 b8 47. c6 c8 48. b7+ b8 49. b6 g6 50. hxg6 and there’s no reason to even go and eat the pawns on the kingside with the King. What both of us missed was the paradoxical.

B) 39... f6!! Amazingly this move is not a tempo-losing move like it looks, as Black will pick up a tempo later by not having to move his King to f7. Here are the variations:

B1) 40. b5 As Black moves away from the queenside, it seems like White can win simply by advancing there.

B2) 40. d3 g5! 41. hxg6 h5

42. xd4 (On 42. c5 Black draws simply with 42... bxc5 43. bxc5 h4 and here – with Black’s King on e6 – White would win easily by queening his g-pawn and then his c-pawn with check. In the current position White cannot win back that tempo. So, after 44. c6 h3 45. c7 h2 46. c8# h1# it’s a draw.) 42... xg6!! (Another huge surprise, as the obvious looking 42... h4 loses after 43. e4 xg6 44. b5! f6 45. c5 e6 46. c6.)

Now the truth comes out! White loses a tempo after 43. c5 (On 43. e4 f6 44. f4 h4 45. g4 e5 46. xh4 d4 47. c5 bxc5 and draws.) 43... bxc5+ as the capture comes with a check, so White has no time to play b5 now! And after 44. bxc5 f6 Black is in time to catch the c-pawn.
40. hxg6 h5 41. g7 f7 42. c5 bxc5 43. bxc5

And here, realizing that I queen with check after promoting both pawns before Black gets a Queen of his own, Black resigned.

1-0

**Combinations**

I consider myself an intuitive player, finding moves that seem right versus calculating long complicated variations, especially as they branch out into full grown trees and become difficult to control. Still, sometimes the work simply has to be done or you risk playing a second rate move, or missing a straightforward win if you put in the time. In the next two games, I will go over how to force yourself to continue calculating even if it seems that there is nothing more to look for.

Andrew Soltis is a born chess writer, amazing fans every month with his humorous and inventive monthly chess column ‘Chess to Enjoy’ in the Chess Life magazine. I, for one, read it every month above all others as it always shows a new perception on the game I love. I imagine most of Andy’s creativity goes towards making that column, as he is extremely orthodox when playing this rather old version of the King’s Indian with a slightly dubious Knight on d7. Still, in the games we have played he showed incredible ingenuity in saving and even winning some of these games.

9. d5 c5

Andy doesn’t fall into a well concealed
trap. After 9... \( \text{g}2 \text{g}4 \) 10. \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{f}6 \)? White wins a pawn with 11. \( \text{d}x\text{c}6 \) \( \text{b}x\text{c}6 \) 12. \( \text{xd}\text{d}6 \) \( \text{fxg}5 \) 13. \( \text{e}6+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 14. \( \text{xg}4 \).

10. \( \text{g}3! \)

I developed this prophylactic treatment against this system together with Vitaly Zaltsman in preparation for the 1986 US Championship. My game against John Fedorowicz from the same tournament saw it played for the first time. Later on Dmitry Gurevich took note of the idea and played it four times in his games, scoring three points out of four against strong competition. The idea of this move is to make \( \text{f}5 \) undesirable for Black. If Black is stopped from advancing on the kingside, White will have ample time to secure an advantage by expanding his operations on the queenside – where the \( \text{d}5 \)-pawn gives him an undisputed space advantage.

The other conventional treatment of this position gives Black a reasonable position after 10. \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 11. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 12. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \)! (12... \( \text{e}7 \) 13. \( \text{exf}5 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 14.

\( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{gxf}5 \) gives White a slight edge) 13. \( \text{b}3 \text{exf}4 \) 14. \( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 15. \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 16. \( \text{a}5 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 17. \( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 18. \( \text{dxe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 19. \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 20. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 21. \( \text{fe}1 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 22. \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 23. \( \text{c}7 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 24. \( \text{d}5+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 25. \( \text{e}6 \)

and now in Vassia-Vayser 2004, Black should have sacrificed the exchange with 25... \( \text{e}5 \) 26. \( \text{xf}8 \) \( \text{xf}8 \) with full compensation for the exchange.

10... \( \text{h}8 \)

Black's problem is that playing for \( \ldots \text{f}5 \) now loses its bite.

A) For example after 10... \( \text{e}8 \) 11. \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 12. \( \text{exf}5 \) \( \text{gxf}5 \) 13. \( \text{c}2 \) Black will be forced to move one of the central pawns, after which they will be blockaded and attacked.
Let's see: 13... e4 (13... f4 14. d2 d6 15. d3 h8 16. f3 fxg3 17. hxg3 h5 18. g2 and White starts the attack on the h-file even after 18... xg3 19. h1! xh1 20. xh1 f6 21. g6+ g8 22. xf8 xf8 23. xg7 with a nearly winning advantage.)

14. f4 (My game against John went 14. d2 e5 15. f3 exf3 16. xf3 g6 17. d3 f6 18. g5 and I also got a large advantage which I failed to convert late in the endgame.)

14... e5 15. f3 exf3 16. xf3 and the f-pawn is quite weak, giving me a big advantage.

B) Black is also worse after 10... g4 11. d2 f5 12. exf5 gxf5 13. g5 b6 14. e6 xe6 15. dxe6 e7 16. d5 xd5 xd5 17. cxd5 f6 18. g5.

11. h4

I understood that Black decided to at least exchange the dark-squared Bishop and was preparing this with his move, creating the g8-square for the Knight. I didn't want to stop him; after the exchange of Bishops, ...f5 would always be positionally dangerous for Black, as the weakened King would lose his major shield – the Bishop on g7. This would untie my hands in launching the expansion on the queenside, with a serious chance for a large advantage.

11... g8 12. c2

All my moves are directed towards the prophylaxis of stopping ...f5.

I am not interested in stopping the trade of Bishops, rather I want to nudge Black towards that decision since I have nothing else to do.

12... df6 13. h1?

I am not really sure why I felt I needed the King on h1. I think 13. f3 would be a good waiting move.

13... d7

Black decides to see if he can create counter play by sending his Queen to h3. I seriously doubted that this would be a factor.

14. f3 h5 15. d3

(see diagram next page)

Still directing my play against the ...f5 advance. Very consistent to say the least.

15... h6
Finally, I convinced Black that his ...f5 advance is not going to happen and he goes for the exchange of Bishops.

15... f5 would lose material to 16. exf5 gxf5 17. ♜xf5 ♞xf5 18. ♞xf5 ♜xf5 19. ♜xf5 ♞xf5 20. g4 ♞d3 21. ♞fd1.

16. ♜xh6 ♞xh6 17. ♞d2

A provocative move. After 17... ♞g8 18. a3 b6 19. b4 ♟e7 20. ♞g2 ♞d7 21. ♞ab1 ♞fc8 22. ♞b2 ♞hf6 23. ♞e3 I would have a long-term advantage, but winning would be a long way away.

18. ♞g2

It was probably objectively stronger to try and punish Black for his brash move with 18. ♞f5+.

Now, after 18... ♞xf5 19. exf5 I take control over the e4 square and with it, my advantage becomes quite clear.

After 19... ♟d8 20. f4! Black has to try to defend the position with 20... e4 (after 20... exf4 21. g4 ♞f6 22. ♞xf4 White's threats are too strong) 21. ♞xe4 ♞xf5 22. ♞xf5 gxf5 23. ♞ae1 which would be quite a daunting task.

18... ♟h3

Soltis is tempted into trying to create some play.

It turns out to be a complete mirage. There is simply nothing Black can do.

19. ♞g1

19... ♞f6?
The losing move. It turns out Black was much better off to play 19... f5 regardless, because now I win by force with a surprising combination. After 20. exf5 \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{x}f5 \) 21. \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{x}f5 \) 22. \( \text{g}4 \text{\textit{Q}} \text{d}4 \) the position is quite sharp and Black would have reasonable chances after 23. gxh5 \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{x}f3+ \) 24. \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{x}f3 \) 25. \( \text{e}4 \text{\textit{W}} \text{x}h5 \) 26. \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{x}d6 \text{\textit{W}} \text{g}4 \) It looks like White is better after 27. \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{e}1 \text{\textit{Q}} \text{a}f8 \) but to prove a real advantage I would have to find the prophylactic move 28. \( h4 \) enabling me to capture on e5 in some important variations, while also planning to trade Queens with 29. \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{g}5 \). The position is quite complicated but I would have the better chances.

When I saw 19... \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{f}6 \) my first reaction was that Black has lost the opening battle and is now retreating preparing to defend his queenside when I start my attack with 20. a3. As a serious chess player, though, I had to see what happens if I focus my attention to what is happening on the queenside. I noticed that the move g4 not only threatens to fork the Knights, but is also temporarily locking in Black’s Queen. I decided to concentrate my attention on calculating whether the Queen hunt could be successful. After forcing myself to keep looking even after seeming to find successful defenses for Black, I began breaking them down one after the other, until finally the whole combination, as it was played, was in front of my eyes.

20. \( \text{g}4! \text{\textit{Q}} \text{h}8 \)

Of course I considered what would happen if Black sacrificed a piece on g4. I realized that he would simply not have enough for the piece. For example: 20... \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{f}xg4 \) 21. \( \text{f}xg4 \text{\textit{Q}} \text{g}4 \) 22. \( \text{e}1 \text{\textit{Q}} \text{d}7 \) 23. \( \text{f}3 \text{\textit{W}} \text{h}6 \) 24. \( \text{W} \text{x}h6+ \text{\textit{Q}} \text{x}h6 \) 25. \( \text{g}2 \text{f}5 \) 26. \( \text{e}x\text{f}5 \) \( \text{g}xf5 \) 27. \( \text{f}1 \text{\textit{Q}} \text{f}6 \) 28. \( \text{h}4 \text{\textit{Q}} \text{a}f8 \) 29. \( \text{c}2 \text{b}6 \) 30. \( \text{h}1 \) and I should eventually find a way to break out on the queenside, as Black is tied up in moving his pawns on the kingside. Once I realized the sacrifice on g4 would be unsound I started analyzing what would happen if Black simply moved back his Knights. I focused on playing the most aggressive move and noticed that threatening to attack the Queen with \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{d}1-\text{f}2 \) would be the most dangerous for Black as it would narrow the possibilities of defense.

21. \( \text{\textit{Q}} \text{d}1 \text{\textit{Q}} \text{e}8 \)

The logical defense. Black is trying to create an escape square for his Queen.
Now after 22. \( \texttt{Qf2} \texttt{xf3} \) the f6-square has been created.

Black could have tried to complicate with a Queen sacrifice as follows: 21... h5 22. \( \texttt{Qf2} \texttt{xf3} \) when White has a choice:

\[ \textbf{A)} \text{ After } 23. \texttt{e2}?! \texttt{xe4} 24. \texttt{c2! xf2+} 25. \texttt{xf2 xf2} 26. \texttt{xf2 h}x\texttt{g4} \]

Black’s massive pawn formation could present practical difficulties for White, although I should win by quickly opening up another front on the queenside with 27. b4 cxb4 28. c5;

\[ \textbf{B)} \text{ It’s much stronger to play } 23. \texttt{g5} \texttt{h7} 24. \texttt{ae1!}, \text{ avoiding the trick } 24. \texttt{e2 xg5!} \text{ when Black is better after the forced sequence } 25. \texttt{h4} \texttt{h3+} 26. \texttt{h2 xf2} 27. \texttt{xf2 xf2}. \]

Now Black is helpless against 25. \( \texttt{e2} \) followed by \( \texttt{xf6} \) winning a full piece.

\textbf{22. \texttt{Qf2}}

It turns out that the f6-escape square can be closed down, and the Queen hunt will bear fruit.

\textbf{22... \texttt{xf3}}

The alternative 22... \( \texttt{h6} \) loses quickly to 23. g5 \( \texttt{h5} \) 24. \( \texttt{e2} \) when the threat of 25. f4 cannot be stopped without heavy loss of material.

\textbf{23. g5!}

When hunting a bear, you have only one shot when he is coming at you.

So you must look at this possibility with the focus of a sniper. I could not afford for Black to escape with \( \texttt{xf6} \) and the only move to consider to deal with that threat was g5.

I kept asking myself – “what I am threatening after each move?”, and tried to find all the possible defenses to my threats and the ways to eliminate them one by one.
Chapter 17

23... \( \text{h3} \)

The most obvious defense.

I also considered 23... \( \text{g4} \) but noticed that now the Queen cannot escape to h5, therefore attacking it with the Knight would simply win the Bishop on g4 after either 24. \( \text{h4} \) or 24. \( \text{e1} \) followed by the trade of Queens.

For example: 24. \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{f4} \) 25. \( \text{xf4} \) exf4 26. \( \text{xg4} \).

After the game move, since 24. \( \text{h4} \) would be met with 24... \( \text{h5} \), my only other attacking move would be...

24. \( \text{e1}! \) \( \text{h5} \)

I got to this position in my calculations as I was considering 20. \( \text{g4} \) and noticed that now I have a drawing mechanism beginning with 25. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{h4} \) 26. \( \text{f3} \). I realized that I can take off the e5 pawn and return to the original position with even material.

Now, did something change in the position after I removed Black's e5-pawn?

Yes! The long diagonal has opened up for me to check on c3. Why would that help? Oh yes - the Bishop on h3 would be attacked twice then. The combination is complete.

25. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{h4} \) 26. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h5} \) 27. \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{h4} \) 28. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h5} \) 29. \( \text{e1} \)

and Black resigned seeing that 30. \( \text{c3} \) is next, winning the Bishop on h3.

As you can see in this combination, continuing to look for solutions even when stumbling blocks were popping up was the key component to success.

Eliminating unworkable possibilities significantly helped me in the calculation process.

1-0
Amazing Games and Combinations

In the following game I played in a relatively recent tournament in Bulgaria against an untitled player from Greece, I was faced with an interesting challenge when my opponent took 45 minutes to play what seemed like an outright blunder. It took some discipline and patience to overcome my initial desire to reply immediately and created a nice tactical exercise for chess lovers to solve.

1. e4 d5

I have developed the Scandinavian Defense for my rapid and blitz play so I won't have to study too much theory to compete with the top players in the world in faster time controls. The Scandinavian has proven to be quite a good choice, as it is comparatively easy to learn and simple to play. After some work with Anatoly Karpov, I managed to convince him to take it up as well, and he has shown amazing results, losing only two games while winning many more against serious competition in rapid tournaments.

2. exd5 ♕xd5 3. ♘c3 ♕d6

Magnus Carlsen preferred 3... ♕d8 against Fabiano Caruana, but that move leads to Black giving up his light-squared Bishop for the Knight after 3... ♕d8 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 ♕g4 6. h3 ♘xf3 7. ♕xf3 which I am trying to avoid with this variation.

4. d4

Position after: 4. d4

4... c6!

I prefer this move order to 4... ♘f6, in terms of prophylaxis. Now 5. ♘f3 ♕g4 6. h3 to try and win the Bishop for the Knight is connected with a pawn sacrifice, which is not to everyone's liking:

5... ♘xf3 7. ♕xf3 ♕xd4.

5. ♘ge2 ♘f5

The simple-minded approach to this variation of the Scandinavian is to develop the light-squared Bishop to the best available square.
As g4 is now bluntly answered by 5... g4 6. f3!, f5 is the natural choice. Of course, I could have played the position differently with 5... g6 instead, trying to make use of White's artificially placed Knight on e2.

6. \textit{g}f4 \textit{b}4

My move was partially based on the need to win the game, 6... \textit{d}8 was probably safer.

7. d5

An aggressive decision. While it's clear that the pawn on b2 is taboo, as White breaks through to b7 with the Rook, the d5-pawn is a target that will help me mobilize my pieces and catch up in development.

7... \textit{f}6

I need to catch up in development, and begin to bring out my pieces while threatening the d5-pawn.

8. \textit{d}4

My opponent thought for about 45 minutes on this move. I could not believe it. My first reaction was to snap off the d5-pawn with my Knight and write off his move to our difference in ratings. Then, I decided to show some respect. After all, 45 minutes is a long time to miss a simple pawn capture.

8... \textit{x}d5

I thought for about 15 minutes after managing to understand everything about this position. My immediate feeling of surprise was replaced by intrigue as I started going through my steps, trying to find my opponent's idea.

After looking at all the captures, I noticed that upon taking on d5, White is planning to capture on b8 with the Bishop, followed by a double-attack with \textit{e}5, hitting both my Bishop and Rook and planning to win a piece.
Amazing Games and Combinations

At first, I tried to understand what my worst case scenario would be if $\text{cxd5}$ was refuted in such a simple manner and realized that Black's position after $8... \text{xd4} \ 9.\ \text{xd4 d7}$ would not be that bad.

This gave me confidence to continue looking to try and refute White's somewhat artificial tactical idea. As in the previous game, try to find the tactics that make $8... \text{cxd5}$ work before looking at the text. I am sure you will enjoy them.

9. $\text{xb8} \text{xb8} \ 10. \text{e5}$

As I considered this position, I realized that after White takes my Bishop, he will have to reckon with $\text{xb2}$ when I create a double attack of my own. After the obvious $\text{b1}$ though, I need something more serious than moving my Queen to continue playing this position. I quickly spotted the beautiful idea leading to mate:

10... $\text{d8!} \ 11. \text{xf5} \text{xb2}$

Now on 12. $\text{b1}$, I win with the simple and beautiful $12... \text{xc3!} \ 13. \text{xb2 d1}$ mate. When I saw this line, it became difficult to stop myself from just playing $8... \text{d5}$, but I managed to stop and force myself to check the tactics again, as the correct calculation here would effectively mean that the game will be over, so it's worth investing some more time in this kind of thinking process.

What else can White play if not 12. $\text{b1}$, I asked myself? Then I noticed 12. $\text{d1}$. The idea is simple: on $12... \text{c3}$ 13. $\text{d8} \text{d8}$, my King becomes exposed, and after seeing 14. $\text{d3} \text{d5}$ with Black's advantage, I quickly noticed the better check 14. $\text{a5!}$ after which the position is unclear at best. So that's what my opponent thought about for the last 45 minutes! Now, I had to step back again and try to evaluate the position objectively, tactics aside. When I did, the correct solution immediately appeared:

12. $\text{d1 e6!}$

Position after: 11... $\text{xb2}$

Position after: 12... $\text{e6!}$
If I simply develop my Bishop to b4, I will guarantee the return of the lost piece plus at least an extra pawn, even if White captures the pawn on g7, there is nothing to worry about! It all works!

13. \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{b4} \) 14. \( \text{g}7 \)

When I considered my options here, I realized that simply capturing on c3, although winning, would not be the simplest way to win this position. White’s forces are in complete disarray, and so I should maintain the pin for a couple more moves to be decisive.

14... \( \text{f8} \) 15. \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{xc3} \)

Thankfully my b4-Bishop is also protecting my Rook on f8, so White is lost.

16. \( \text{xd8}+ \) \( \text{xd8} \) 17. \( \text{g5}+ \) \( \text{f6} \) 18. \( \text{d2}+ \) \( \text{c8} \)

And White resigned a few moves later. 0-1
As I explained at the beginning of the book, my chess strength came as a result of my early affection for blitz. From my early successes in Piarnu, Estonia when I was seven, to my first prizes at blitz tournaments in Rome on the way to the United States when I just turned 11, to the Manhattan Chess Club's Friday night blitz tournaments where I improved my blitz to the point that my regular rating was always 100-200 points lower than my blitz strength, I have always considered playing blitz a very important part of my chess life. By 1981, when I was 15 years old and had only one IM norm, I flew to England to play in the Lloyds Bank International and Manchester International Swiss tournaments.

There was a couple of days in between those events, and I was invited to play in a game-in-15-minutes tournament in Bolton. A bunch of young American players including Jonathan Tisdall, John Fedorowicz and Eric Schiller came along, competing against some of the top British players – Raymond Keene, Nigel Short and David Norwood – as well as against some top European GMs such as Adam Kuligowsky. The Americans, always strapped for cash, agreed to split the collective winnings from the event between ourselves, so we could all make it back to the next tournament. In the last qualification round I had to beat John Fedorowicz with a score of 1.5-0.5 to qualify for the finals. When I did, John, very unhappy with the proceedings, said: “You will cost us all money for beating me”. He turned out to be wrong.
I easily won the finals, ahead of Raymond Keene, David Norwood, and one other player who was not Nigel Short, as Nigel failed to qualify.

In 1983 when I played in the World Junior Championship, the French Championship was taking place at the same venue at the same time. This prompted the organizers to hold the French Open Blitz Championships as well. During the World Junior in the evenings, I was playing blitz for money against Joseph Klinger, the Austrian participant in the Junior event. I was giving him 5 minutes to 2 minutes time odds and generally doing quite well. Six rounds into the final when I gave up a draw to the French Champion Nikolai Legky after blundering a Queen, I inquired as to how Joseph was doing. He had a perfect score! I won the rest of my games, including a win over him (at 5 to 5), and took home a very heavy marble trophy along with the prize money.

I was so fascinated with blitz that when I was 12 or 13, that in order help myself play at shorter time controls I taught myself to move with my left hand, even though I am a righty. The effect was to be able to play equally fast with one minute on the clock whatever the color. I overdid it though, and for decades I have not been able to move pieces comfortably with my right hand, using only my left hand to make moves on the board.

In 1987 another interesting event connected with blitz happened that I would like to share.

A little-known organizer advertised a huge open tournament in London with an enormous prize fund. It was called the London Peace International. Many Grandmasters bought their tickets only to find out at the last moment that the prize fund for the event was reduced 10 times (!) from the 50,000 pounds announced to a mere 5000. I was already in London, and though many players withdrew, I decided to play. The organizer announced that as compensation, every few days there will be a blitz tournament organized with reasonable prizes. “Well,” at least I will make some of the expenses back”, I thought. The blitz events were split into a qualifying and the final stage. I easily won the first one when the organizer, upon paying me the prize, informed me that the winner of the tournament has to give all other players one minute odds in the next event. I came again and won the second tournament giving all the players including a number of Grandmasters 5 minutes to 4. The organizer explained, that as I have won two in a row, the odds are now going to have to be 5 to 3. It was getting uncomfortable, as there were a number of strong...
Blitz and Rapid Successes and the reasons for them

GMs and in the Finals, I had to play each of them twice. Still, I managed to tie for first with Grandmaster Eric Lobron, ahead of a few GMs and a number of IMs.

Then the real punchline came – the organizer insisted I give 5 to 2 odds in the next tournament, though I “only” tied for first. I tried to convince him otherwise, but he was not bending. So I came again and qualified for the Final Section giving everyone 5 to 2 minutes odds. Then I got paired against GM Julian Hodgson, who was always a pretty good blitz player. “I was waiting for this moment”, Julian said. “There was no point coming when you have 3 minutes on your clock. Now, I am sure you’ll be sweating”. He was right. After he beat me with a 2-0 score, I only managed a total of 50% in the Grandmaster Final.

In 1988 Walter Browne organized the World Blitz Chess Association and started unofficially rating all public blitz tournaments. Organizers in the United States were happy to send in the results of their sideline blitz events, as it gave them more exposure for their regular classical time control tournaments. Walter would write or call organizers of large European blitzes and get those cross tables as well. As a result of this hard work Walter Browne managed to combine the results of many of the world's top blitz tournaments, in an attempt to rate all the top players to see how they stack up against one another.

My results in the 1988-1992 years saw me become the number one player on those lists ahead of Kasparov, Karpov, and even Tal every so often – at least once per year. This was a result of winning nearly all blitz tournaments I participated in and usually with quite a crushing score. For example, I remember qualifying for the final four in one U.S. Open Blitz Championship with a score of 27/27. I then proceeded to win the Final with a 3.5/4 score.
Chapter 18

In 1989 I tied for first in the Qualification Swiss in Mazatlan with Karpov, Vaganian, and Gavrikov, ahead of some of the best players in the World. In the match playoffs, I got eliminated by Jaan Ehlvest in a close 4 game match, where I started with a draw and a win only to lose both remaining games, the last of which from a very good position. Jaan was one of the top 10 players in the world at the time.

I was so used to winning that once when there was a very strong blitz tournament organized at the Manhattan Chess Club, where all grandmasters participated, I lost 5 games. I was so disgusted with my performance that I wasn't even psychologically prepared to finish the event. I was going to the director's office to see if I could withdraw when I ran into Boris Gulko, who was clearly beaming from his performance. “How are you doing”, I asked. “I am in the lead”, he said. I asked him how many games he has lost, and he told me: “5”. What? I am withdrawing with 5 losses, I said. Boris explained that in such a strong event +4, which was the score I had, should be good enough to win or tie for first. I was surprised by this explanation, but stayed in the tournament and split the first two prizes with my good friend.

On another occasion, already in 1997, when I was playing chess mostly online, I remember accepting an invitation from Susan Polgar to come to her chess club in Queens for a blitz tournament. “Judith is in town”, she told me, and I was very happy to test my blitz skills against hers. I came with a friend from the world of finance, who wanted to see how a blitz tournament looks. In a field of 12 players, with a number of GMs including former U.S. Champions Joel Benjamin and Stuart Rachels, I won all the games, including a victory over Judith. As my last round opponent Rachels didn’t want to play until the very last round, I had time to play Judith two more games, where she tried to take revenge for the tournament loss. I managed to win both of those as well. When the tournament ended my friend sincerely asked me if I had ever failed to win a blitz game? It was funny, but there was a period in my life when not winning a blitz tournament was a tragedy.

Now it’s just fun, although as I am writing this, I won two blitz tournaments a couple of days back, one online and one offline, and it made me think back to the days when the moves came quickly and naturally.

The reader already saw some of my blitz exploits against Grischuk and Kasparov, so perhaps I will limit myself with those and try to comment on some of my rapid games to show what a Grandmaster really thinks during a shortened version of a classical game.
When I conceived this book I wanted to analyze the real thoughts that a Grandmaster goes through as he plays a game, as most commentaries we see in print tend to embellish the truth. This includes “improvements” from friendly engines, and assumptions that a player actually saw a specific variation which he may have just guessed based off intuition, and then added for more of an educational benefit for the reader.

I think showing EXACTLY what a Grandmaster goes through as he is contemplating his moves is extremely important. Students of the game will be able to realize that actually very few of us (GMs) analyze a stupendous amount of variations, often relying on intuition and elimination processes to get to the best moves.

I thought of this idea back in 1995 when I already retired from playing chess professionally but was still writing articles for the Chess Life magazine. Below I present an article on the topic.
THINKING OUT LOUD...

In this month’s article I want to explore the thinking processes that go into playing a game. Let’s take a look at one such game, which I recorded notes to immediately after it was finished.

The annotations in *italics* are, so to say, my new comments on my previous comments!

This game was played in the last round of the tournament with me trying to catch a plane at 7:10pm.

As this was the last flight that would get me to work on Monday, I planned ahead.

The round started at 3pm, the time control was 40 moves in two hours followed by a game in 1 hour, and the drive to the airport was estimated at one and a half hours.

My calculations had me winning the game in the first time control, spending no more than 40 minutes for the game. The battle line were drawn.

1. d4 ♞f6 2. ♜f3 g6 3. ♞g5 ♞g7 4. ♙bd2 0-0 5. c3 d6 6. e4

Position after: 6. e4
I am happy with my set-up as I know that I can make many moves quickly in this line, while posing a number of strategical traps along the way.

Only time will tell if the extra time my opponent consumes in solving some of these problems will help me in winning this game on time.

Perhaps I should have played some theoretical line of the King’s Indian or a Grunfeld to speed things up.

6... c6 7. e2 c7 8. 0-0 bd7 9. c2

Let's see what I should do about the natural 9... e5:

**A)** If I play 10. dxe5 dxe5 11. ad1 to target d6, he can play 11... c5 followed by e6. So I should prepare capturing on e5 with 10. ad1. Wait, what if he tries to dissolve the centre with 10... d5. Then I play 11. xf6 xf6 12. exd5 cxd5 13. dxe5 xe5 14. xe5 xe5 15. f3 and he gets saddled with an isolated pawn.

**B)** In this case after 10. ad1 he'll play 10... e8, when I can choose between 11. fe1 and 11. dxe5. Let's check the tactics again: If he plays 10... d5 11. xf6 dxe4 planning 12. xg7 exf3 13. xf8 fxe2, what do I do? I just play 12. xe5! and win a pawn. Go for it!

9... e5 10. ad1

**10... d5?**

He took so long to play this lemon? Maybe I miscalculated. Let’s see: 11. xf6 xf6 12. exd5 exd4 13. cxd4 and his c-pawn is pinned. I guess it’s his loss.

11. xf6 xf6 12. exd5 cxd5 13. dxe5 xe5

If I play 14. xe5 and he captures with the Queen, I can play 15. f3. After 15... e7 16. xd5 e6 17. d2 h6 18. 2d1 xa2 he wins back the pawn. So I’ll just play 16. fe1 or go for complications with 16. xd5 e6 17. a5. Perhaps I should just keep the
pieces on with 14. \( \text{d}4 \)? No, he then plays 14... \( \text{c}6 \) and I'm getting nowhere fast.

As you can see, Grandmasters make mistakes not only in judgment but also in "seeing" variations.

I was still used to seeing the Bishop on g7 and in the above variation it mysteriously migrates there from f6, allowing the illegal \( \text{h}6 \) to kick my Rook from d2.

14. \( \text{e}5 \) 15. \( \text{f}3 \)

After 15... \( \text{f}5 \)! 16. \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 17. \( \text{xd}5 \) a6 18. \( \text{dd}1 \) b5 19. \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{fe}8 \) 20. \( \text{fe}1 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 21. \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 22. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 23. \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xf}2+ \) 24. \( \text{xf}2 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 25. \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{ae}8 \) 26. \( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 27. \( \text{d}8+ \) \( \text{g}7 \) 28. \( \text{f}8+ \) \( \text{f}6 \) Black maintains the balance.

16. \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \)

I should stop all his sacrificial ideas of ...d4 and prepare to line up my Rooks, while making his \( \text{f}5\)-e4 maneuver dubious.

15... \( \text{e}6 \)?

It's good to see that he decided not to sacrifice anything, as I can now quickly get him in a bind and then get him into suffering mode.

My commentaries were on the button. According to engines Black should free himself from defending the pawn and rely on the strength of his Bishops and initiative.

Position after: 15. \( \text{f}3 \)

17. \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{fd}8 \) 18. \( \text{d}2 \)

This will stop ...\( \text{f}5 \) as after 18... \( \text{f}5 \) 19. \( \text{fd}1 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 20. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 21. \( \text{c}4 \) I win a pawn.

18... \( \text{d}7 \) 19. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{ad}8 \) 20. \( \text{e}1 \)
I guess I should force him to choose a place for his Queen, especially since if he goes to c7, I can swing the attack to the kingside with $\text{h6}$. Considering I've only spent five minutes on the game up to this point, this would be a welcome development.

20... $\text{c7}$

Great! He misses the point.

21. $\text{h6}$

Now he must somehow prepare 22... f6. If he plays 21... $\text{b6}$ 22. $\text{h4} f6$, I simply play 23. $\text{d4}$ and I weakened his pawn structure for free. What if he plays 22... $\text{xb2}$? After 23. $\text{xh7}$ $\text{f8}$ it looks good, but a bit messy. Perhaps I can improve. Yes, after 21... $\text{b6}$ I'll throw in 22. $\text{b4}$ and then continue with 23. $\text{h4}$, as planned.

The engines prefer the direct 21. $\text{h4}$, but give White a big edge in either case.

21... $\text{c6}$

This looks significantly weaker. He pinned himself up to the pawn, and maybe I can throw in c4 at some point. Perhaps I should continue the attack with 22. h4 now, as it will take his Queen a while to get back. Let's see 22. h4 $\text{c5}$ 23. h5 $\text{f8} 24. \text{g5}$.

Looks good, but maybe 22. $\text{h4}$ is stronger. Hard to say, but I have to make a move to make my flight. Wait, after 22. $\text{h4} f6$ 23. $\text{e3}$ I attack the a7 pawn as well as the Bishop. But can I take it? Let's see: 23. $\text{e3} \text{f7} 24. \text{xa7} b6 25. $\text{a3} \text{a8} 26. \text{b3}$ followed by 27. $\text{d4}$ and I am home safe.

22. $\text{h4} f6$ 23. $\text{e3} \text{f5}$
This one. Hmm, Now if 24. \( \text{a7} \text{e4} \) and he gets compensation because of my useless Rook on h4. Clever. OK, I'll play as if nothing happened simply by relying on the weakness of his kingside. I simply don't have the time to figure this one out.

(Objective note: The compensation is non-existent. After 24. \( \text{a7} \text{e4} \) 25. \( \text{h3} \) I could quickly consolidate my extra pawn.)

24. \( \text{d4} \)

Actually, modern engines prefer this move to capturing the pawn, as after 24. \( \text{a7} \text{e4} \) 25. \( \text{h3} \text{xf3} \) followed by d4! Black's control of the d file affords him reasonable drawing chances.

24... a6

Now I can start attacking him on the kingside with 25. h4. If he plays to trade Rooks with 25... \( \text{d6} \), I'll sidestep with 26. \( \text{d2} \) and 26... \( \text{e4} \) will be useless as I'll trap his Bishop with 27. \( \text{g4} \) followed by f3.

25. h4 \( \text{d6} \) 26. \( \text{d2} \text{b5} \)

This defends against c4, but maybe I can infiltrate now. Let's see 27. \( \text{e7} \text{e6} \) and now what? Oh yes, I play 28. \( \text{d5} \) and it's all over.

27. \( \text{e7} \text{d7} \)

I guess I should just trade into the Bishop ending now, as I can fix his pawns on light squares with b4. If I try to mate him with 28. \( \text{e8} \text{f7} \), I don't really see a constructive continuation.

28. \( \text{xd7} \text{xd7} \) 29. \( \text{xd5} \text{xd5} \) 30. \( \text{xd5+} \text{e6} \)

Position after: 30... \( \text{e6} \)
A surprise, but it shouldn't change anything. The game should win by itself now.

31. b4 ♗f8 32. ♗xe6 ♗xe6 33. a3 ♗c8

Now to get the King into the centre.

34. ♗f1 ♗e7 35. ♗e2 ♗d6

Now to force f4, I'll play 36. ♗e3 ♗e5 37. ♗e4 and he can't play g5 as his h7 pawn hangs.

36. ♗e3 g5

What a nuisance. OK, I'll just exchange and gain the commanding position with my King.

37. hxg5

Objective note: A serious inaccuracy. This will force me to take measures against Black's possible outside passer created from the transformation of the pawn structure.

After the correct 37. g3!, Black would have no counter chances whatsoever.

37... fxg5 38. ♗d4 h6

Now I have to prepare my King's possible departure from the centre by consolidating the kingside. I don't want Black's King to get active after 39. c4 bxc4 40. ♗xc4 ♗e5, so I'll block Black's pawns on light squares.

39. ♗h5 ♗b7 40. f3 ♗d5 41. ♗g4 ♗b7 42. ♗f5 h5 43. ♗e4 ♗c8

I clearly screwed up. I have an hour and 40 minutes to get to my flight, my opponent has 50 minutes left on his clock, and I still don't see a winning plan. I better do something quick that gets my pawns on the queenside going.

44. ♗d5 h4 45. c4 bxc4 46. ♗xc4 ♗b7

Now to stop ... g4.

47. ♗f1 ♗c8 48. a4
Chapter 19

54... \( \text{a} \text{xa} \text{a} 6! \) 55. \( \text{a} \text{xa} \text{a} 6 \text{h} 3! \) getting rid of my "winning pawns".

The correct procedure after 50... \( \text{e} \text{e} 6 \) is

51. \( \text{c} \text{c} 4+ \) \( \text{d} \text{d} 6 \) 52. \( \text{d} \text{d} 4 \text{b} 7 \) 53. \( \text{e} \text{e} 3 \text{e} \text{e} 5 \) 54. \( \text{b} \text{b} 5 \text{a} \text{xb} 5 \) 55. \( \text{a} \text{xb} 5 \text{g} 4 \) 56. \( \text{fx} \text{g} 4 \text{a} \text{xa} 2 \) 57. \( \text{a} 6 \text{h} 3 \) 58. \( \text{f} 2 \text{f} 4 \) 59. \( \text{f} 1 \) with a trivial win.

49. \( \text{fx} \text{g} 4 \text{a} 5 \)

Oh boy, I have to make a quick decision. I can play 50. \( \text{b} \text{a} \text{a} 5 \) or 50. \( \text{g} 5 \) and both look good.

Let’s see the simpler route. 50. \( \text{b} \text{x} \text{a} 5 \) \( \text{c} \text{c} 4 \) 51. \( \text{e} \text{e} 4 \) and I get to the h-pawn while saving one of the a-pawns.

50. \( \text{b} \text{x} \text{a} 5 \) \( \text{a} \text{x} \text{g} 4 \) 51. \( \text{e} \text{e} 4 \) \( \text{d} \text{d} 7 \) 52. \( \text{f} 4 \) \( \text{c} 5 \) 53. \( \text{g} 5 \) \( \text{b} 4 \) 54. \( \text{a} 6 \) \( \text{a} \text{x} \text{a} 4 \) 55. \( \text{a} \text{x} \text{h} 4 \) \( \text{a} 5 \) 56. \( \text{g} 4 \) 1-0

With one hour and 2 minutes to go to my flight, the Kansas State Chess Association President, Rick Hodges, played a dangerous but sound combination and got me to the airport 7 minutes before
takeoff. No points for the Kansas/Missouri police. Happy end after all!

This next game where I share my thoughts was played as I was thinking about material for this chapter.

I was a bit nervous about 4. e5, but thought I would figure something out.

In fact after 4... c5, White scores less than 40% in the database.

4... ♗xd5 5. ♗f3 c5

This made sense to me, trying to take a chunk out of White’s centre before he solidifies the position.

6. ♗e3 cxd4

Other moves such as 6... ♗c6 or 6... ♗f6 seemed to lead to an unclear pawn sac.

7. ♗xd4

I thought White had to play 7. cxd4 to vie for an advantage, though didn’t see anything wrong for me after 7... ♗f6 8. ♗c3 ♘d8 or 8... ♔a5 with a very playable Grunfeld.

7... ♗f6
Chapter 19

It didn’t make sense to trade on d4, as I can hit the Bishop on d4 with a tempo after ...\(\text{c6}\).

Time will be quite important in this type of an open position.

8. \(\text{a3}\)

A strange developing move, as White will no longer make it back to d4, even if he makes it to b5.

8... 0-0

I calculated that after 9. \(\text{b5} \text{c6} 10. \text{c7} \text{e4}\) I would be doing well. After 9. \(\text{c4} \text{e4+}\) I didn’t see a reason to retreat with the Queen, as I will gain extra time attacking White’s Bishops.

In fact, this move is officially a novelty, though Black did fine in the 3 games here with ...\(\text{a5}\) and ...\(\text{f5}\).

10. \(\text{e2} \text{xe2+} 11. \text{xe2} \text{c6} 12. \text{e3} \text{d5} 13. \text{d2} \text{e5}\)

It seemed natural to me to take space so easily afforded here, and I only calculated one line, namely 14. 0-0-0 h6, stopping White from bothering my pieces as 15. \(\text{h6}\) loses to ...\(\text{h6}\) check!

14. \(\text{c4} \text{b6}\)

I didn’t like either 14... \(\text{d8} 15. 0-0-0 \text{h6} 16. \text{g5}\) with an unclear valuation and noticed that after the move played I can continue hunting Bishops after 15. \(\text{b3} \text{a5}\). If I get to trade a Knight for his Bishop, my advantage will grow.

15. \(\text{b5}\)

Position after: 8... 0-0

Position after: 13... e5

Position after: 15. \(\text{b5}\)
15... e4

It seemed natural to push for more space, especially after calculating all the simple but effective moves.

If 16. \( \text{g5} \), then 16... h6! 17. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{e8} \) followed by \( \text{f5} \) winning the Knight. This means White will have to take on c6 to put the Knight on d4, which will grant me the ever-important Bishop pair, or play 16. \( \text{g1} \), when I started contemplating 16... \( \text{b4} \) as a tactical possibility.

16. \( \text{xc6} \) bxc6 17. \( \text{d4} \)

I knew this was an important moment – one where my advantage could dissipate if I took the wrong path – and wrote: "time to think" on my pad.

I concentrated on the Knight maneuver \( \text{a4-c5} \) clearly recognizing it as a most incisive way to make my initiative felt.

17... \( \text{a4} \)

I analyzed: 18. b3 c5! and it seems I am penetrating; 18. 0-0-0 \( \text{c5} \) 19. \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{d3} \) and looks like I should have something with \( \text{xb8} \) and \( \text{a6} \).

18. 0-0-0

18... \( \text{c5} \)

I analyzed the alternatives 18... \( \text{g4} \) 19. f3 exf3 20. \( \text{xf3} \), or 18... \( \text{b8} \) 19. b3 \( \text{c5} \) 20. \( \text{xc6} \) to both be unclear.

I am correct in this position, but the position after 20. \( \text{xf3} \) is quite bad for White after the simple 20... \( \text{xb8} \).

Still, White has a better defense after 18... \( \text{g4} \) 19. \( \text{xc6} \), when indeed White’s compensation could prove to be sufficient, though of course it’s only Black who is trying.

19. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d3+} \)
"This has to be right as ...f5 is in the air", is what I wrote. That’s basically correct. Evaluating the position based on general positional ideas works here, because White is restricted in the kind of counter play he can manage.

20. $\text{c2} \text{c5}$

I analyzed 20... $\text{b8} 21. \text{b3}!$ I thought (21. $\text{b3}$ would be weaker because of 21... c5! 22. f3 f5!) 21... $\text{b6} 22. \text{c4} \text{a6} 23. \text{a4}$ was not at all clear. Indeed, this would give away some of my advantage as the move I played is much more decisive.

21. $\text{e2} \text{e6}$

It seemed White was vulnerable on the a2-g8 diagonal and I didn’t even consider the other obviously strong possibility 21... $\text{a6} 22. \text{f4}$. I considered the alternative 22. b3 a5 23. $\text{f4} \text{a4}$ to be good for Black (which it is).

22... $\text{xf4} 23. \text{xf4} \text{xa2}!$

This came to me as I saw that I can sacrifice the exchange for two pawns after 24. $\text{b3} \text{ab8}! 25. \text{xb8} \text{xb8}$ and White appears to be in grave danger after the b-pawn falls.

24. $\text{a1}$

The engines agree with my assessment and think that after 24. b3 $\text{ab8} 25. \text{xb8} \text{xb8}$ White’s best defensive attempt is to immediately surrender the exchange with $\text{b1}$, leaving him a pawn down.

24... $\text{e6}$
25. \( \text{h}d6 \)

I considered both 25. \( \text{b}b5 \text{c}c4 \) followed by \( \ldots \text{d}3 \) with a large advantage, and the move Robert played, where I thought 25. \( \text{d}6 \text{c}8 \) 26. \( \text{b}b5 \text{c}4 \) 27. \( \text{c}7 \text{d}3 \) and 28... \( \text{b}8 \) should be good. After White played the text move, I had another think.

25... \( \text{f}c8 \)

I looked at 25... \( \text{f}d8 \) 26. \( \text{x}c5 \) and saw there were no special breakthroughs with 26... e3. I also noticed that after my move if White plays 26. \( \text{b}5 \) then \( \text{c}6 \) may be strong, as well as 26... \( \text{c}4 \) 27. \( \text{c}7 \text{ab}8 \) – delaying \( \text{d}3 \) so as to control the d5 square. The position now looks winning to me, I wrote.

26. \( \text{c}4 \)

"Weakening". Now 26... \( \text{f}5 \) looks most unnerving. After 27. \( \text{b}3 \text{c}6 \), planning \( \ldots \text{b}6 \) and \( \ldots \text{a}6 \) White should lose material.

26... \( \text{f}5 ! \) 27. \( \text{b}3 \text{c}6 \) 28. \( \text{b}5 \text{a}6 \)

"It doesn't look like White can survive the tactics now."

In fact, the engines give me a decisive advantage.

29. \( \text{g}3 \text{b}6 \) 30. \( \text{c}2 \)

Having played this, White resigned, not waiting for the kill with, for instance 30... e3 31. \( \text{b}3 \text{d}8 \) winning a piece.

0-1
As you can see, I analyzed a surprisingly limited number of variations, narrowing the scope of my calculations to a few lines which pointed out the weaknesses in my opponent's position.

The only real tough part for an amateur player would be to continue calculating the position after my capture of the a pawn with the Bishop on move 23, which seemed to trap my own piece.

Forcing yourself to keep calculating in order to make moves that would win, if only they could work, is a sign of chess maturity which comes with experience. As I mentioned earlier: assume your opponent is wrong when he plays a surprising move, but also try to surprise yourself by proving your immediate assumptions wrong as well. That's how most games will be won.

The surprisingly little amount of calculation I did in this game to beat a seasoned FIDE Master with the Black pieces, shows that using process of elimination and a general plan together can create a formidable weapon against any level of opposition. You don't need to be Vassily Ivanchuk or Boris Gelfand and analyze an astronomical number of variations to win games. Tigran Petrosian once replied to a question of how many moves ahead he looks to decide on what to play. He answered: "two, but they are usually the correct ones".
Epilogue and plans

Although I have much more to say and show, at some point there comes the time when you have to finish the book no matter how much enjoyment you get during the process of writing it. Not to mention that I am close to passing my second deadline for its completion. I recently opened a Chess Academy in New York City, which I called Chess Max Academy. The focus of this school will be to help kids improve at chess through group lessons. I believe working in a group with peers of similar chess levels is one of the best ways to engage the youngsters, forcing them to test the limit of their capabilities as they try to become the best in their group. You can check out the news and information on my academy at www.dlugy.com. My plan is also to get kids to play more blitz chess. As I wrote in the first chapters of the book, I believe blitz is extremely beneficial for overall chess improvement, but it can also be used as a major reason for children not to leave chess when they reach 13-14 years old – the age when numerous other interests get in the way. Blitz would enable them to practice playing chess in a much quicker environment, giving them time to combine chess with other activities. It is my vision to reinvent blitz chess in the United States, and eventually the world, by creating a structure that will put tremendous blitz ability on a pedestal. As I find more time for another one of my favorite hobbies – painting – I hope to create a series of chess related works and designs that add another dimension to how children could perceive chess. The publishers have agreed to show off some of my artwork in the book to help complete the view of my inner world (my insides). I hope you enjoy reading this book as I much as I had writing it. More are on the way....

Maxim Dlugy
In this book IM Raja Panjwani presents the Hyper Accelerated Dragon. He demonstrates from the second move on an entertaining and dynamic way to handle 1.e4. He covers all of White's main variations and sidelines, where even the most famous Maroczy Bind gets a ferocious new treatment. This book is recommended to all players that are eager to explore Raja's new and critical lines in this exiting Sicilian.
The Modernized BENKO GAMBIT

Milos Perunovic
'Grandmaster Insides' takes you into the inner world of Maxim Dlugy, as he recounts and analyzes what a young player went through to become a champion and what areas of development are important for self-improvement as a chess player. As the highest rated player in the world in the age group of 15 and until he became World Junior Champion at 20, Maxim has an ideal vantage point from which to recount the exploits of a talented young player. He became the highest rated blitz player in the world, won numerous International tournaments and even tied for 1-4th place in the first World Rapid Championship in Mazatlan, while missing becoming a World Championship Candidate when he was 19 by half a point. Dlugy covers important topics: preparation for your opponent, match play and the search for the objective truth in chess, taking the examples from his own career. His games and interaction with World Chess Champions will give the reader a deeper look at some of the best players in history such as Tal, Smyslov, Spassky, Karpov, Kasparov, Kramnik and even Magnus Carlsen.

Maxim Dlugy is a former US Junior Champion, World Junior Champion, 2 times National Open Champion, 2 times World Open Champion, and a Former President of the US Chess Federation. He has helped prepare both Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov for major international events (including world chess championship matches), has an opening variation named after him and many young students in the top 50 lists in the US. His shows on ICC and chess.com has attracted a large audience as he explains his thoughts during the games.