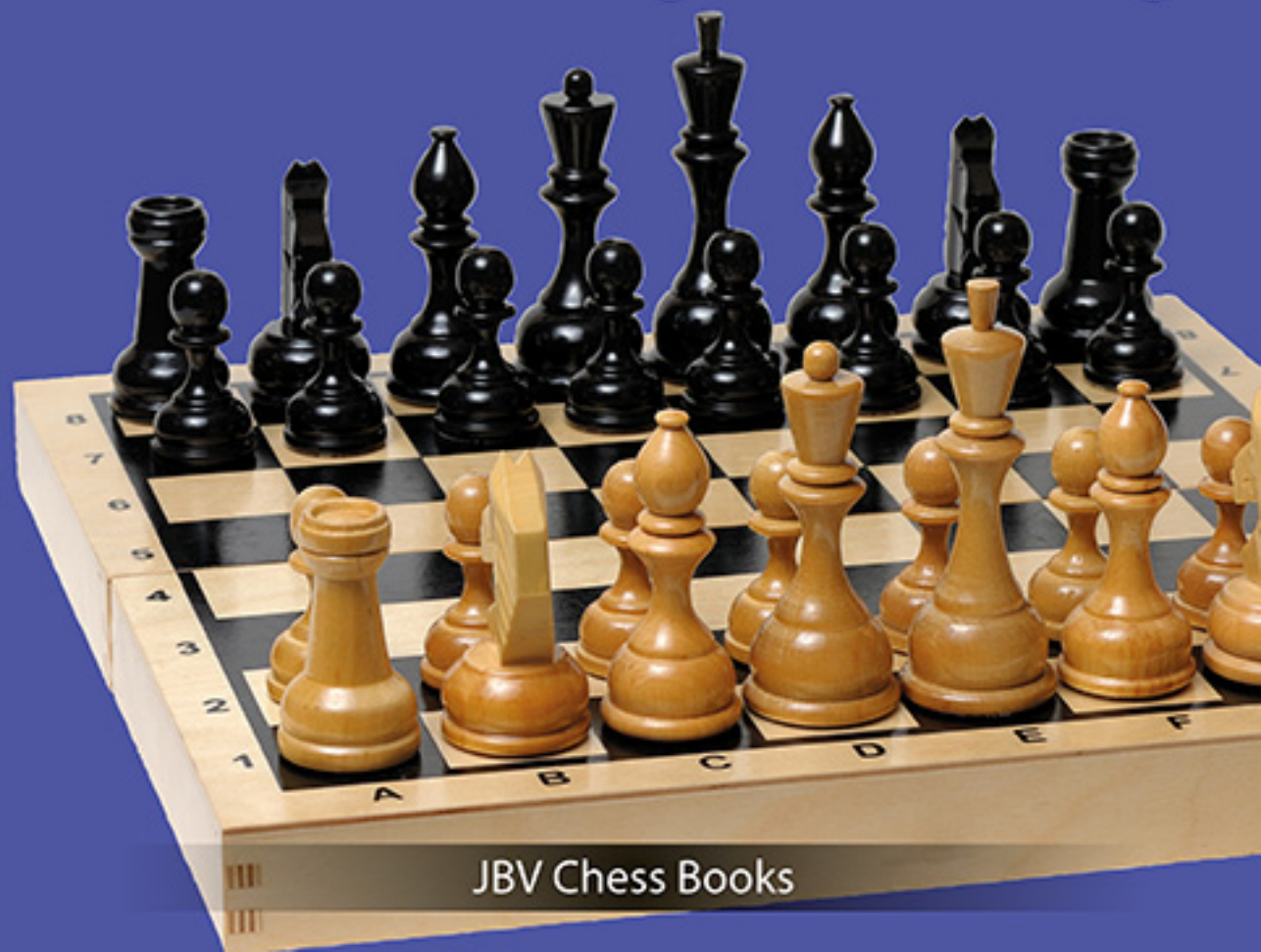


Karsten Müller

Typical *Caro-Kann*

Main line with
3. ♘c3 dxe4 4. ♘xe4

Effective Middlegame Training



JBV Chess Books

Karsten Müller

Typical Caro-Kann

Main line with 3. c3 dxe4 4. xe4

Effective Middlegame Training

JBV Chess Books

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Preface

Someone who decides to learn Spanish (the language, mind you – and not the opening!) will appropriately acquire textbooks that deal with Spanish – not those that deal with *all* Roman languages or even all *European* languages.

Let's take this comparison a little further: If a dictionary is something like an opening book, then a grammar is something like a textbook for the middle game. True, one could fill entire libraries with opening books on the subject of Spanish alone, but what about a corresponding 'grammar'?

Of course, in every middlegame textbook one or the other position is clearly recognizable as *Spanish*, but their number is negligible in the context of French, English, Russian, Italian, Dutch and so on and so forth. And thus of all these other European languages – no excuse me: of all these other *openings* whose middlegame treatment the reader doesn't want to learn at all.

For example, isn't dealing with the issues of isolani, hanging pawns and minority attack just as dispensable for an e4 player as it is essential for a d4 player? – Why should a die-hard enthusiast of Indian openings care about the strategic intricacies of positions resulting from all those complicated Queen's Gambit systems? And of course vice versa: what can a player who 'by nature' avoids fianchetto openings do with all these subtleties of Indian positions?

And it is precisely this conspicuous and astounding vacuum in the area of middlegame literature that inspired me to make an appropriate attempt at improvement: If you want to learn *French* (the *opening*, mind you, and not the language!), you will get a textbook and exercise book in which only *French* is 'spoken' or played.

However, this book deals with the 'Caro-Kann Defense' – more precisely, with the main line 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♙xe4 and with positions that can arise from this basic structure.

And I would like to make one more important point in advance. It is an enormous challenge for every chess author to do justice to a readership with the broadest possible skill level. So it would be absurd in the field of opening and endgame literature to offer, for example, 'French' or 'Rook Endgames' for players between 1400 and 1600, between 1600 and 1800 and so on. Accordingly, you only write *one* book on the respective topic and try to explain all important things as precisely and comprehensibly as possible – and then it's up to each individual reader how intensively he is willing to work with the book in order to achieve the greatest possible benefit.

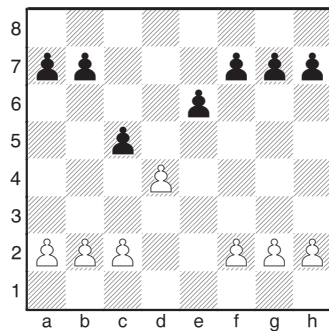
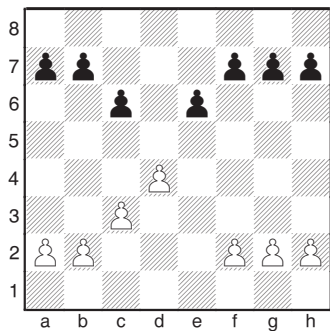
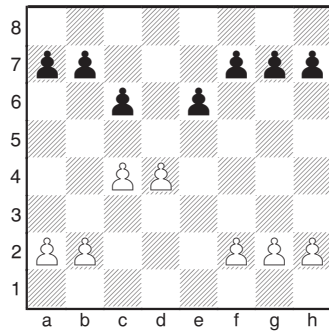
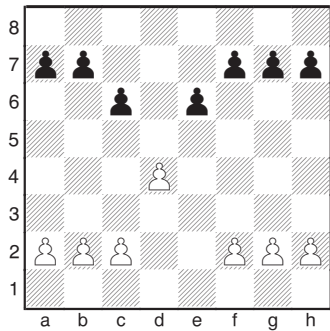
The task becomes much more difficult with a book like this, which consists exclusively of exercises. Because if the author chooses consistently very simple or

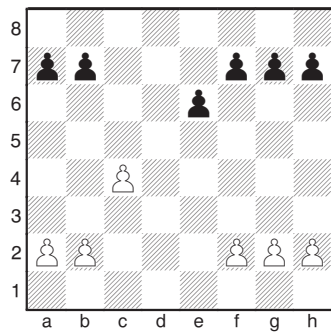
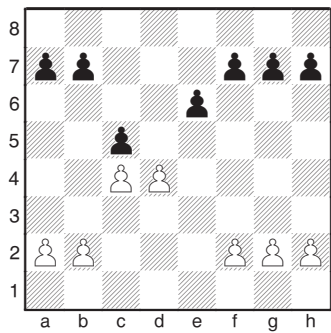
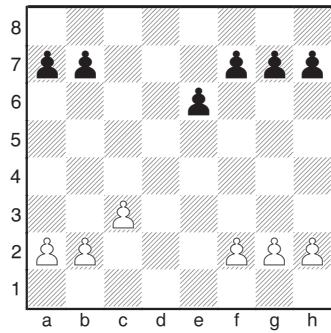
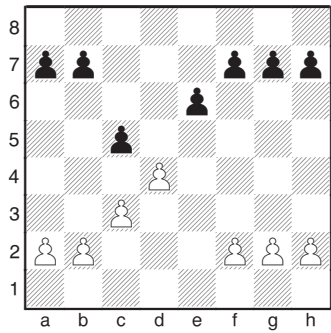
consistently somewhat more difficult examples, then in the first case more advanced players shy away because they feel *underchallenged* – in the second case less advanced players because they feel *overchallenged*.

And therefore here's a good advice – regardless of your skill level. Take each exercise seriously, but don't let it become torture! As soon as you encounter too many obstacles or too much resistance, just take the liberty to open the solution section and turn the test book into a textbook!

Karsten Müller, Hamburg, March 2026

The following pawn structures are treated



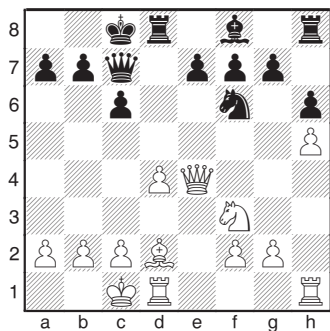


Exercises

Concrete question (solutions from page 41)



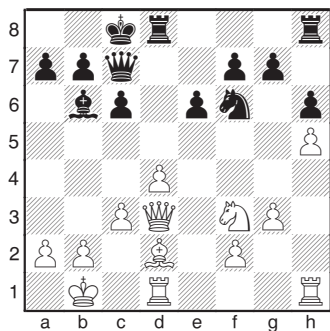
1



How can White exploit the absence of the move e7–e6?



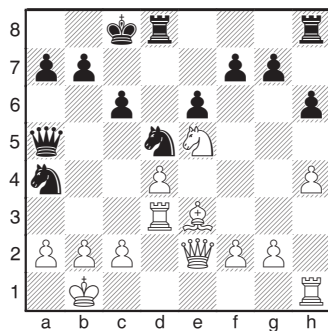
2



e6–e5 equalizes in the simplest way – right?



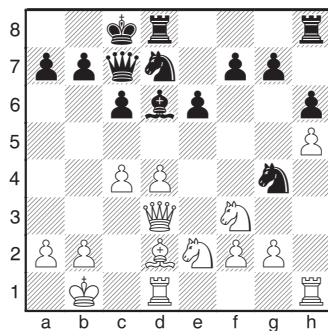
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Why does the last move ♖d3 deserve a question mark?



4

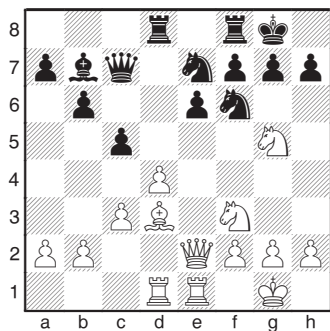


Why does the last move ♜g4 deserve a question mark?

Violent measure or pressure increase? (solutions from page 46)



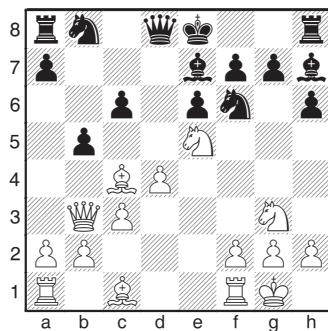
5



White to move



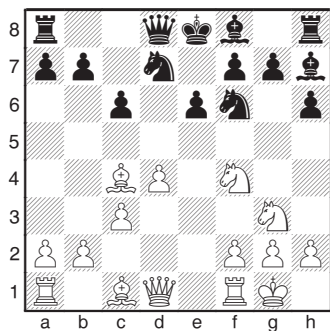
7



White to move



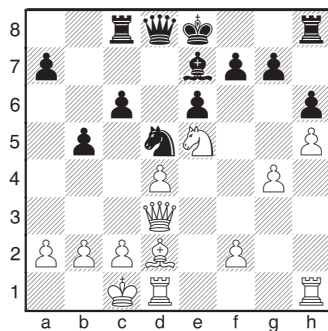
6



White to move



8

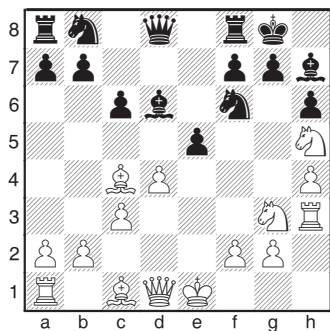


White to move

Concrete question (solutions from page 52)



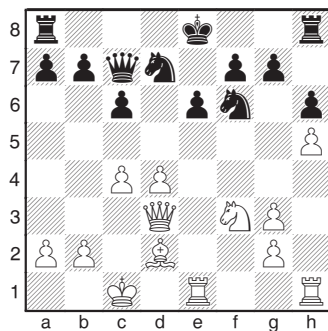
9



Why does the last move e6-e5 deserve even *two* question marks?



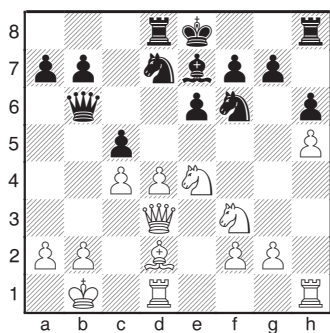
11



How can White get the most out of the advantageous position?



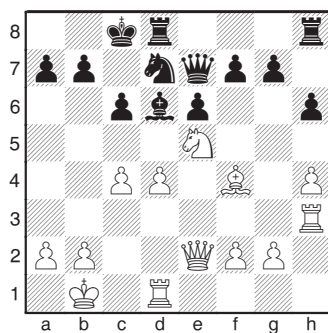
10



How can White get the most out of the advantageous position?



12



How can White get the most out of the advantageous position?

Solutions

1

Zapata Arbelaes – Da Paz

Internet 2020

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♕f5
5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.h4 h6 7.h5 ♕h7 8.♗f3 ♗d7
9.♕d3 ♕xd3 10.♖xd3 ♖c7 11.♕d2 0-0-0
12.0-0-0 ♗gf6 13.♗e4 ♗xe4 14.♖xe4
♗f6

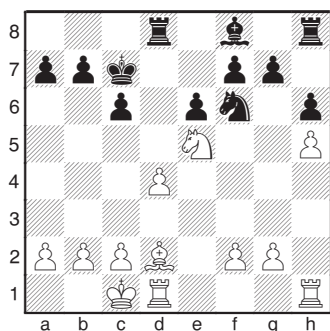
This instructive example illustrates very impressively how a seemingly ‘harmless’ different move order in the opening phase (♠14...e6) could have led to a significant disadvantage. The pivotal factor is the latently vulnerable pawn on f7.

With the unavoidable exchange offer **15.♖e5!±** White could have put his opponent in serious trouble, for the likely initial thought, “What on earth is this?”, would soon have been followed by the second: “What am I supposed to do?”

In the game, however, 15.♖e2?! e6 led to a normal theoretical position with the typical ‘slight edge’ for White.

Here is an overview of the three main lines:

I) 15...e6? is very bad as after **16.♖xc7+ ♗xc7 17.♗e5 ...**



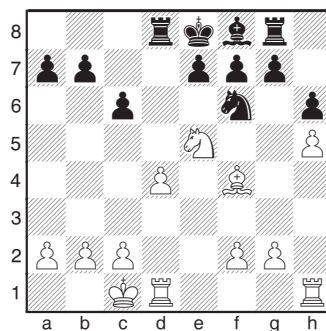
... Black could not capture on d4. With instead **17...♗g8 18.♗xf7** (18.f3!?) he had to accept the loss of a pawn in an extremely uncomfortable position, and thus the verdict ‘~+–’.

II) 15...♗g8

A) After 16.♕f4 ♖xe5 17.♗xe5 ♗d5 Δf6, Black would at least escape without losing a pawn, although after **18.♕g3 f6 19.♗d3±** (19.♗g6!?) his position would still leave much to be desired.

B) 16.♖xc7+ ♗xc7

1) After the tempting gain of tempo 17.♕f4+, Black could adjust his king’s position to the requirements with **17...♗d7!?** (17...♗c8 18.♗e5 ♗d5) 18.♗e5+ ♗e8.



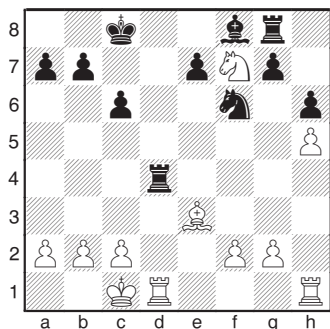
After that, White could only demonstrate a little more than a minimal advantage with **19.♗h3!** and the possible continuation **19...e6 20.♗b3 ♗d5 21.♕g3 f6 22.c4!** etc.

2) Much simpler, however, is 17.♗e5 ♗e4 18.♕f4 ♗c8 19.♗he1!± with the possible continuation **19...f5 20.f3 ♗f6 21.♗g6 ♗xh5 22.♕h2 Δ22...♗d7?! 23.c4~+–.**

III) 15...♞xe5 16.♜xe5

Also, 16.dxe5!? with the main line 16...♜g4 17.♞h4!?± (17.♞de1!?) is by no means to be dismissed.

16...♞xd4 17.♜xf7 ♞g8 18.♙e3±
18.f3!? Δg4



18...♞xd1+

18...♞d5 19.♙xa7 (19.♞xd5)

19.♞xd1 ♜d7 and now, not hastily 20.♙xa7?! b6 21.a4±, but systematically 20.♞d4! Δ♞g4 etc.

2

Abdi – Alaoui Belghiti

Internet 2020

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♜c3 dxe4 4.♜xe4 ♙f5
5.♜g3 ♙g6 6.♜f3 ♜d7 7.h4 h6 8.h5 ♙h7
9.♙d3 ♙xd3 10.♞xd3 ♞c7 11.♙d2 e6
12.0-0-0 0-0-0 13.♙b1 ♜gf6 14.♜e4 ♜c5
15.♜xc5 ♙xc5 16.c3 ♙b6 17.g3

After choosing the wrong bishop retreat (♞16...♙d6), White failed to achieve a solid minimal advantage with the prophylactic 17.♞e2 Δ♜e5. Accordingly, Black can now consider whether the unprotected position of the White queen allows him to avoid a prolonged struggle for equality.

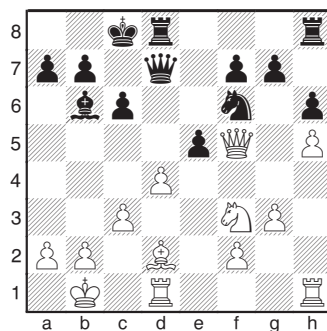
I) After the weak game move 17...♞d5?!, the gain of tempo 18.c4± would have re-

sulted in a solid minimal advantage, especially since 18...♞xh5?? (♞18...♞dd8) would be refuted with 19.♞xh5 ♜xh5 20.c5+.

II) The advance 17...e5! is indeed best, but requires precise and sometimes far-reaching calculation.

After 17...♞e7 (to be able to retreat the bishop to c7) 18.♞e2, White has at least a slight edge.

A) The intermediate check 18.♞f5+ is sufficiently met by 18...♞d7.

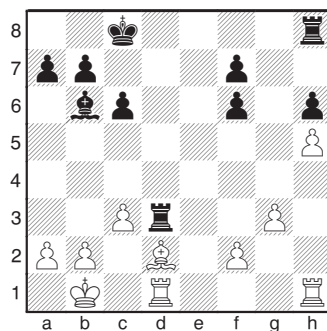


Now the following lines lead to compensation or unclear play:

1) 19.♞xe5 ♙c7 20.♞e2 ♞f5+ 21.♙a1 ♞he8= Δ22.♙e3 ♜g4

2) 19.♞xd7+ ♜xd7 20.dxe5 ♙xf2 21.♙f4 ♙b6= Δ22.♞he8, ♙c7 etc.

B) And after 18.♜xe5 ♞xe5 19.dxe5 ♞xd3 20.exf6 gxf6 ...



... the destruction of the pawn structure can be compensated with active play; e.g. **21.♙f4**

21.♙hf1 amounts to a transposition of moves after 21...♖f3 22.♙f4 ♖xf2 23.♖xf2 ♙xf2 23.♖d6 ♖g8.

21...♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 ♙xf2 23.♖d6 ♖g8 24.♙xf6 ♙xg3 Δ25.♙xh6 ♖h8 etc.

3

Efimenko – Espinosa Veloz

Internet 2020

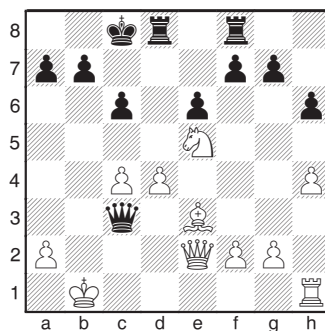
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♙f5 5.♘g3 ♙g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗h3 e6 8.♘f4 ♙h7 9.♙e3 ♗f6 10.♙d3 ♙xd3 11.♖xd3 ♗bd7 12.0-0-0 ♖a5 13.♙b1 0-0-0 14.♖e2 ♙d6 15.♗gh5 ♙xf4 16.♗xf4 ♗d5 17.♗d3 ♗7b6 18.♗e5 ♗a4 19.♖d3

By transferring both knights to the queen-side, Black has more or less committed to continue his play there. This approach has borne fruit in that White, faced with obvious tactical threats, was induced into a somewhat careless defensive move. (♖19.♖c4 ♖b6 20.♖b3 ♖hf8 21.♙c1~±) With precise play, Black can now seize the opportunity and come close to equalization again.

I) After the loss of time **19...♖hf8?**, White could have achieved a clear advantage with **20.c4**.

Perhaps 20.♖b3!? was even slightly stronger.

A) With **20...♗dc3+?**, Black completely misjudged the resulting material imbalance after **21.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 22.♖xc3 ♖xc3** ...



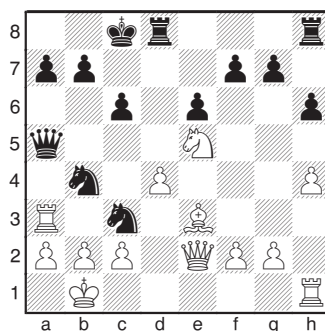
... and now, for example, **23.♖c1** with a straightforward winning position, since Black's rooks have no open files, leaving the minor pieces clearly superior.

B) Likewise, **20...♗b4?** leads to a losing position after **21.♖a3** (21.♖d2) **Δ21...♗c3+ 22.bxc3 ♖xa3 23.cxb4 ♖xb4+ 24.♖b2** etc.

C) **20...♗xe3 21.fxe3 f6 22.♗f3±**

II) And the assault attempt **19...♗b4?** also loses after precise defense, as shown in the following lines:

A) **20.♖a3?? ♗c3+!**



1) **21.♖xc3?! ♖xa2+ 22.♙c1 ♖a1+ 23.♙d2 ♖xh1 24.♗xf7 ♖xh4**

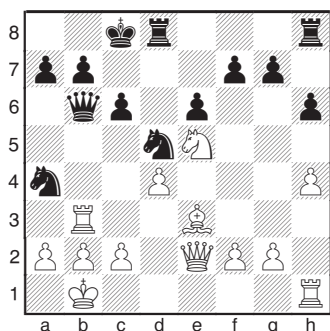
2) **21.bxc3 ♖xa3 22.cxb4 ♖xb4+ 23.♙c1 ♖a3+ 24.♙d1 ♖xa2**

B) **♖20.♖b3 ♗c3+ (20...♗xa2 21.♖c4+-+++)** **21.bxc3 ♖xa2+ 22.♙c1 ♖a1+**

1) 23. ♖b1?? ♗a2+ 24. ♔d2 ♜xc3+ 25. ♔d1 ♞xd4+∞

2) 23. ♔d2 ♜xh1 24. ♞xb4+-; 24. cxb4; 24. ♗xf7

III) 19... ♞b6? is also bad, because after 20. ♞b3, Black is left with only unsatisfactory moves.

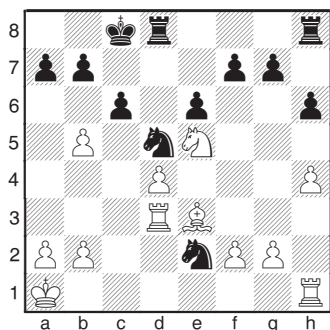


A) 20... ♞xb3?! 21. axb3 ♗ac3+ 22. bxc3 ♗xc3+ 23. ♔b2 ♗xe2 24. ♗xf7 is clearly winning again.

B) 20... ♞c7 21. ♗d2 f6 22. ♗f3 or 22. ♗f3 would be a bit better, but still clearly ±.

IV) After the well-considered and rather poisonous continuation 19... ♞b5! and the only move 20. c4, the following continuations arise:

A) 20... ♗ac3+? would be bad in view of 21. ♔a1 ♗xe2 22. cxb5 ...



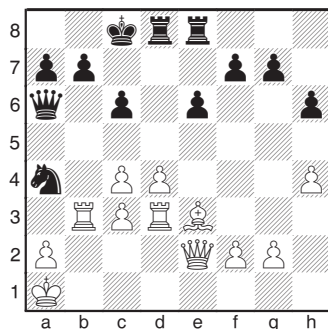
... Δ22... ♗b4?! (Δ22... ♞hf8 23. bxc6±)

23. ♞d2 ♗xd4 24. ♗xf7+-

B) By contrast, after 20... ♗dc3+ 21. ♔a1 ♞xe5 22. bxc3 ♞a5, White cannot make much headway given his compromised king and pawn structure, as the following lines show:

1) After 23. c5, Black immediately counters in the center with 23... e5!∞ Δ24. ♞g4+ ♔b8 25. ♞xg7 e4 (25... ♗xc3) 26. ♞d2 ♞c3+ 27. ♔b1 ♞b4+ 28. ♔a1 ♞c3+ along with perpetual check.

2) And after 23. ♖b1, White has at most a slight edge; e.g. 23... ♞he8 24. ♞b3 ♞a6



a) 25. ♞d1 or 25. ♞b4 is followed by 25... ♗b6.

b) And after 25. ♞c2, Black does not fall for 25... ♞xc4?? 26. ♞b4+-, but secures an approximately equal game with 26... ♗b6 27. c5 ♗c4 etc.

4

Pycha – Slampa

Czech Republic 2020

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. ♗c3 dxe4 4. ♗xe4 ♗f5 5. ♗g3 ♗g6 6. ♗f3 ♗d7 7. h4 h6 8. h5 ♗h7 9. ♗d3 ♗xd3 10. ♞xd3 e6 11. ♗f4 ♞a5+ 12. ♗d2 ♞c7 13. 0-0-0 ♗gf6 14. ♔b1 0-0-0 15. c4 ♗d6 16. ♗e2 ♗g4

By sending a lone attacker into enemy

territory ($\Delta 16...c5\infty$), Black had probably only ensured that his own king was safe and assumed that the fork threat on f2 would require a defensive move. What he overlooked, however, was not only that the a7 pawn was undefended, but more importantly that his king could be in real danger due to the potential occupation of the h2–b8 diagonal by the *White* bishop.

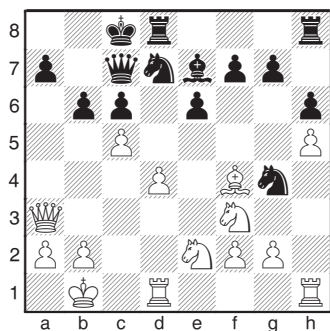
After the resolute advance **17.c5!**, Black falls into a more or less clear disadvantage.

I) After **17...e7** he still got away relatively unharmed, and with **18.♖a3!** White produced the first of a whole series of subtleties.

A) After **18...b6 ...**

1) ... followed by **19.cxb6? ♜xb6 20.♞a6+ ♞b7 21.♞xb7+ ♔xb7 ∞** , Black had nothing more to fear.

2) $\Delta 19.\text{♙f4!}$



a) After **19...e5? 20.♙g3!+- $\Delta 20...bxc5 21.\text{♞c1}$** , Black drifts into a losing position.

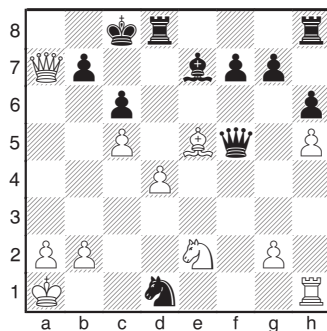
b) And after **19...♞b7 20.♙g3 bxc5 21.♞d3! $\Delta \text{♞f5}$** , White could at least obtain '±'.

B) The counterattempt **18...e5?!** also yields a significant advantage for White with precise play.

1) For instance, **19.♞xa7? ♜xf2 $\mp$ $\Delta 20.\text{♙a5} \text{♞b8}$** would be inaccurate.

2) $\Delta 19.\text{♞c1!} \pm \Delta 19...\text{♜xf2?! } 20.\text{♞hf1} \text{♙e4 } 21.\text{♙a5+-}$

C) **18...♜xf2?!** would be followed by the more or less forced continuation **19.♙f4 e5 20.♜xe5 ♜xe5 21.♙xe5 ♞d7 22.♞xa7 ♞f5+ 23.♔a1 ♜xd1**



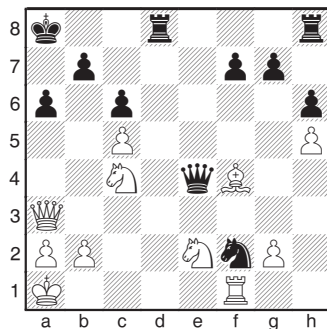
1) But now not the clumsy **24.♞a8+? ♔d7 25.♞xb7+ ♔e8**

a) **26.♞xc6+? ♔f8+- $\Delta 27.\text{♞xd1} \text{♞xe5}$**

b) $\Delta 26.\text{♞b3} \text{♙f2 $\mp$ }$

2) ... but the elegant **24.♞b6 ♔d7 (24...♞d7?! 25.♞a5!+-) 25.♞xd1 ♔e8 26.♜c3±**

II) **17...♙xc5?!** also leads to a lengthy and fairly forced line: **18.dxc5 ♜xf2 19.♞a3 ♔b8 20.♙f4 e5 21.♞xd7 ♞xd7 22.♜xe5 ♞f5+ 23.♔a1 ♔a8 24.♜c4 a6 25.♞f1 ♞e4 ...**

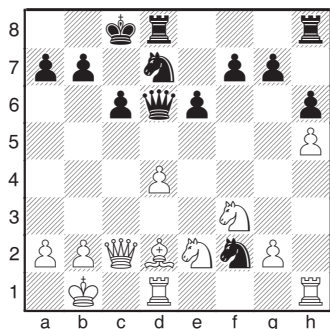


... and now **26.♖f3!** ~± – and not **26.♜b6+?** ♔a7 ∆ **27.♞xf2??** ♞d1+ –+ after **28.♙c1 ♞xe2** or **28.♜c1 ♞xf4**.

III) Finally, the immediate capture **17...♜xf2?!** can lead to the following lines:

A) 18.♞a3 ♙e7 19.♙f4 e5 see Line IC – and **18...♙xc5 19.dxc5 ♜b8** see Line II.

B) And 18.cxd6 ♞xd6 19.♞c2 ...



... is ± after **19...♜xd1 20.♞xd1** or **19...♜xh1 20.♞xh1**.

5

Alekseeva – Smirnova

Internet 2020

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♜c3 dxe4 4.♜xe4 ♜d7 5.♜f3 ♜gf6 6.♜g3 e6 7.♙d3 c5 8.0-0 ♙e7 9.♞e2 0-0 10.c3 b6 11.♙g5 ♙b7 12.♞ad1 ♞c7 13.♜e4 ♞ad8 14.♞fe1 ♜d5 15.♙xe7 ♜xe7 16.♜eg5 ♜f6

After initiating a dubious exchange operation (♜14...♞fe8∞; 14...h6; 14...c4!?), Black has come under noticeable piece pressure on the kingside. In fact, White's position already offers potential for a sacrifice – although it has to be precisely determined in which way.

I) However, with **17.♜xh7?** White unleashed the tactical potential at entirely

the wrong place, because after the modified 'classical bishop sacrifice' **17...♜xh7 18.♙xh7+ ♜xh7 19.♜g5+**, the king could evade any danger with **19...♜h6**.

Things would have looked very different after **19...♜g6?? 20.♞g4+-:**

– **20...♜h6 21.♞d3** or **21.♞xe6+ fxe6 22.♜xe6**

– **20...f5 21.♞xe6+ ♞f6 22.♞h4 ♞xe6 23.♜xe6**

20.♞g4

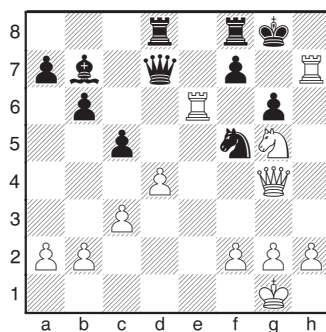
After **20.♞e3?**, the sidestep **20...♜g6** secures a significant advantage, since after **21.♜xe6 fxe6 22.♞xe6+ ♞f6 23.♞xe7 ♞xe7 24.♞xe7 ♞f7+** the three pawns do not provide sufficient compensation for the piece.

A) In the game, many mistakes followed: 20...♜f5?? 21.♞d3 g6 22.♞h3+??

Instead, the king's shelter could have been brutally torn open with **22.♞xe6!** ♜g7 **23.♞xg6+! fxg6 23.♜e6+.**

22...♜g7 23.♞h7+ ♜g8 24.♞h3

Here, **24.♞xe6** followed by the only move **24...♞d7 ...**



... would have led to unclear play or perpetual check.

– **25.♞h8+ ♜g7 26.♞h7+ ♜g8=**

– **25.♞h3 fxe6 26.♞h8+ ♜g7**

– 27. ♖h7+ ♜f6 (27... ♜g8 28. ♖h8+ =)
28. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 29. ♜h7+ ♜g7 30. ♜xf8
♜xf8=

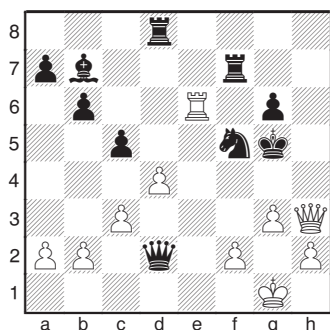
– 27. ♖h7+ ♜f6 28. ♖xf8+ ♜xg5 29. f4+
♜xf4 30. ♖h4+ ♜e3 31. ♖e1+ ♜d3
32. ♖d1+ =

And after the game move, the better continuation **24... ♖f4** would have led to similar consequences in a spectacular fashion, namely **25.g3! ♖d2**

After 25... ♖xg5 26. ♖h8+ ♜g7 27. ♖h7+, the alternative 27... ♜f6 would also be playable, since even winning the queen with 26. f4 yields no advantage after 26... ♖h5 27. ♖xh5 gxf4 28. ♖xh5 ♖g8 etc.

After **26. ♖h8+ ♜g7 27. ♖h7+** and now **27... ♜f6 28. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 29. ♖xe6+ ♜xg5**

...

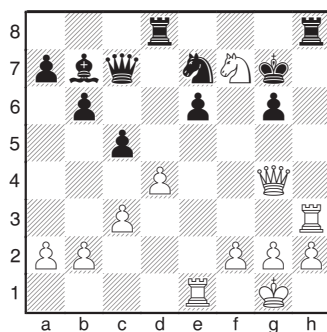


... White can win the queen in a similar way with **30.f4+ ♖xf4 31.gxf4 ♜xf4**. And after **32. ♖xg6!?** (32. ♖d3! ♜d2+) **32... cxd4**, it is above all a grand tour of the queen that deserves the greatest attention (if only for its entertainment value), forcing the opposing king not to avoid epaulettes but, on the contrary, to stock up with them from all sides: **33. ♖g4+** (33. cxd4) **33... ♜e5 34. ♖e2+ ♜e4 35. ♖b5+ ♖d5 36. ♖e8+ ♖e7** – only now not further clockwise with **37. ♖h8+??**

♜f4–+, but first **37. ♖b8+ ♖d6 38. ♖xd6 ♜xd6**, and only then **39. ♖h8+∞** etc.

B) 20...g6 is better in the sense that White must defend with far greater precision for a much longer time in order to save the game. This process is illustrated in the following overview:

1) After the mistake **21. ♖d3?** and the continuation **21... ♜g7 22. ♖h3** (22. ♖xe6?? ♜c8–+ ++++) **22... ♖h8**, the capture **23. ♜xf7!** ...

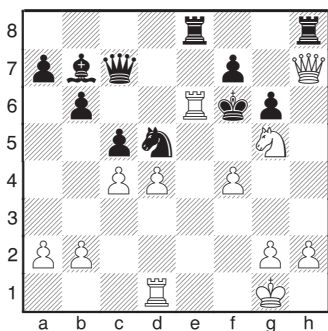


... secures a solid minimal advantage after **23... ♖xh3 24. ♖xh3 ♖d5** – and after **25. ♖xe6?** (♜25. ♜e5) **25... ♜g8! 26. ♜e5 ♖d6** – even clearly more.

2) After the correct continuation **21. ♖h4+!** ♜g7 **22. ♖h7+ ♜f6**, the following possibilities arise:

a) After **23. ♖e5?** followed by **23... cxd4** (23... ♜d5?! **24. ♖de1**!) **24. ♖h4 ♜f5 25. ♖xf5+** and the only move **25... exf5**, the capture **26. ♜xf7+** leads to a draw after **26... ♜g7 27. ♖h6+ ♜f6 28. ♖h4+**, but is clearly – after the fearless **26... ♜e6!** etc.

b) The correct continuation is **23.f4! ♖de8 24. ♖e5 ♜d5 25. c4 ♖h8 26. ♖xe6+!** ...



... with perpetual check or unclear complications in the following lines:

– 26...fxe6 27.♖e4+ ♕f5 28.♖g3+ Δ28...♕xf4?? (Δ28...♕f6 =) 29.♖xg6+–

– 26...♕f5 27.♖xe8 ♖xh7 28.♖xh7 f6 29.cxd5 ♖xh7 30.d6 c6 31.♖e7 ♖g8 32.d5! ♖b5 33.♕f2= with a study-like rescue in two lines:

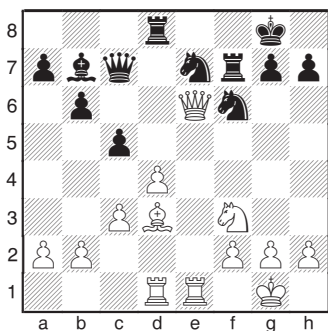
– 33...♕xf4 34.a4!

– Δ34...♕c4?? 35.d7 ♖d8 36.♖de1! ♕xd5 37.g3+ ♕g4 38.♖h7 or 37...♕g5/♕f5 38.♖d1!!

– Δ34...♕xa4 35.♖d3 followed by perpetual check on the third rank.

– 33...g5 34.fxg5 ♖xg5 35.d7! ♖f4+ 36.♕g1 ♖d6 37.d8♖! ♖xd8 38.d6 Δ38...♕d7 39.♖g7 Δh4-h5

II) After the comparably 'primitive' tactical approach 17.♖xe6! fxe6 18.♖xe6+ ♖f7 ...



... White obtains a more or less clear minimal advantage in two lines:

A) 19.♕c4 ♕d5 20.♕xd5

1) 20...♖xd5?! 21.♖e5 ♖g6 22.♖xf7 ♖xf7 23.♖xf7+ ♕xf7 24.dxc5 ♖xc5 25.♖d4+++

2) 20...♖exd5 21.♖e5/♖g5 c4 22.♖xf7 ♖xf7 23.g3

B) 19.♖g5 ♕d5 20.♖h3 h6 21.♖xf7 ♕xf7 22.dxc5 (22.♖g3) 22...bxc5 23.♖g3; 23.b3; 23.♕f1

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Obad – Cun

Internet 2020

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♖d2 dxe4 4.♖xe4 ♕f5 5.♖g3 ♕g6 6.♖h3 h6 7.♖f4 ♕h7 8.c3 ♖f6 9.♕c4 e6 10.0-0 ♖bd7

In view of White's pressure on e6 – a virtually classical sacrifice point in similar constellations – the previous move (Δ10...♕d6=) can be interpreted either as a mistake or as a provocation. And once White has come to a decision, he must choose the appropriate continuation.

The choice 11.♕xe6? indicated that White evidently assumed a mistake.

Much better was the pressure increase with 11.♖e1± and the possible continuation 11...♖b6 Δ12.♕xe6? (Δ12.a4) 12...fxe6 13.♖xe6+ (13.♖xe6?? ♕f7–+) 13...♕d8 14.c4=.

After 11...fxe6 12.♖xe6 and the correct continuation 12...♖b6, the best move 13.b4 (13.♖e1?? ♕f7–+) would above all have enabled the queen's later deployment on b3.

About the author

GM Dr. Karsten Müller was born on November 23rd, 1970 in Hamburg. He studied mathematics and received his doctorate in 2002. From 1988 to 2015 he played for the 'Hamburger SK' in the German 'Bundesliga' and in 1998 he was awarded the title of Grandmaster.

The busy and globally recognized endgame expert was named 'Trainer of the Year' by the German Chess Federation in 2007



He is the author (or co-author) of the following highly esteemed works:

- Secrets of Pawn Endings (with Frank Lamprecht, Everyman/GAMBIT 2000)
- Fundamental Chess Endings (with Frank Lamprecht, GAMBIT 2001)
- Danish Dynamite (with Martin Voigt, Russell 2003)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book: Test and Improve Your Tactical Vision (Russell 2004)
- How to Play Chess Endgames (with Wolfgang Pajeken, GAMBIT 2008)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book 2: Test and Improve Your Positional Intuition (Russell 2008)
- Bobby Fischer, The Career and Complete Games of the American World Chess Champion (Russell 2009)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book 3: Test and Improve Your Defensive Skill! (with Merijn van Delft, Russell 2010)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book 4: Mastering the positional principles (with Alexander Markgraf, Russell 2012)
- The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal: Learn from the Legend (with Raymund Stolze, Edition Olms 2012)
- Fighting chess with Hikaru Nakamura (with Raymund Stolze, Edition Olms 2013)
- The slow (but venomous) Italian (with Georgios Souleidis, New in Chess 2016)
- The Magic of Chess Tactics 2 (with C.D. Meyer, Russell 2017)

His excellent series of ChessBase–DVDs Chess endgames 1–14 also attracted attention.

Müller's popular column Endgame Corner was published at 'www.ChessCafe.com' from January 2001 until 2015, and his column Endgames is published in Chess-Base Magazine since 2006.

To date, numerous of his books have been published by JBV Chess Books (Joachim Beyer Verlag) – a total of 29 in German and the following titles also in English:

Magical Endgames (2020), (together with Claus Dieter Meyer)

The Human Factor in Chess (2020), (together with Luis Engel)

The Best Endgames of the World Champions Vol 1 – From Steinitz to Tal (2021)

The Best Endgames of the World Champions Vol 2 – From Petrosian to Carlsen (2021)

World Chess Championship 2021 (2022),
(together with Jerzy Konikowski and Uwe Bekemann)

The Best Combinations of the World Champions Vol 1 – From Steinitz to Tal (2022), (together with Jerzy Konikowski)

The Best Combinations of the World Champions Vol 2 – From Petrosian to Carlsen (2022), (together with Jerzy Konikowski)

Bobby Fischer 60 Best Games (2022)

Chess Training with Matthias Blübaum (2022)
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Typical French, Effective Middlegame Training (2024)

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Typical Queen's Gambit, Orthodox Variation, Effective Middlegame Training (2025)

Typical Caro Kann - Mainline with 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4, Effective Middlegame Training (2026)

Magnus Carlsen – The Creativity of a Genius (2026)