



Bobby Fischer

60 Best Games

Karsten Müller

JBV Chess Books

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Bobby Fischer 1972

Preface

The greatest chess giant of all time

There is probably no other player who has changed the chess world in so many areas and so radically – like Robert James Fischer, for whom the name *Bobby* Fischer has become common among chess players worldwide. Of his spectacular successes, his downright declassifying victories against *three* Soviet grandmasters in the early 1970s are particularly noteworthy – a kind of changing of the guard in the fight for the world title, to which the Soviets had subscribed, so to speak, for more than two decades. This triggered a worldwide chess boom, or more precisely: it triggered a chess boom especially in the *western* world, because in the Soviet Union with millions of club players such a boom was apparently hardly necessary.

Many players of all levels were drawn to the royal game specifically because of the events of that time. His games are legendary, and since they have of course already been extensively analyzed and commented on in a number of works, the question arises: What is another book supposed to achieve anyway?

I have selected what I consider to be Fischer's 60 most instructive games and checked them with various newer engines. Although I noticed numerous errors in the old analyses, Bobby's games still shine in their former glory or even brighter. Since even top programs rarely find errors, every reader can learn more than ever from these games in order to improve their own playing strength in a success-oriented manner.

In addition to the numerous photos, it's above all the quotations contained in many games that take the reader back to the 'old days of chess'. Therefore, even younger players can get a good impression of what the chess world was like when, for example, there were still 'adjourned games' and 'sealed moves' – and when no player could dodge the hard analysis work by simply delegating this tedious task to his computer.

I am grateful to Hanon W. Russell for allowing me to use the analyses from my 2008 Fischer book, as well as to Rainer Woisin and Frederic Friedel from ChessBase for the idea of adding QR Codes and for the endgame puzzles on the ChessBase website. Furthermore, I would like to thank Robert Hübner for his excellent foreword, Thomas Beyer for the very well done layout and the choice of photos and – last but not least – the publisher Robert Ullrich for his brilliant idea that led to this project in the first place.

Karsten Müller, Hamburg, May 2022

Foreword

Books about Robert James Fischer abound. Many only deal with the personality of this man; some of them tend to create myths, be it in a positive or a negative sense, and they tell more about the writer than about the person described.

It is pleasantly touching to find a pure chess book about the unforgotten master. It is surprisingly rare that authors have attempted to present and comment on a selection of Fischer's work; the most important comes from G. Kasparov (*My Great Predecessors IV*, London 2004, pp. 210–466). Probably Fischer's own well-known work (*My Sixty Memorable Games*, London 1969) discouraged most people from attempting such an undertaking. Dr. Karsten Müller fearlessly took on this task.

The book contains sixteen of the games that Fischer also included in his selection. It is exciting to pursue the question in which light the findings of the electronic chess programs make Fischer's judgments appear.

The remaining forty-four games begin with the famous game R. Fischer won at the age of thirteen against Donald Byrne. In this way, the reader is suitably attuned to the enjoyment of the following brilliant games.

Fischer's work ends with the game against Leonid Stein, played in 1967 at the Interzonal in Sousse. This collection features thirty games from Fischer's later career, when he won the Interzonal in 1970, literally destroyed his opponents Mark Taimanov, Bent Larsen and Tigran Petrosian in the Candidates matches and eventually defeated Boris Spassky in the 1972 world championship fight. In addition, there are six games from the second match against Spassky, which took place in 1992.

The comments on the games are generally kept short. The most important findings of the engines are pointed out; moreover, the reader is not confused and distracted from the course of the game by a large number of lines. In some places, however, the analysis is thoroughly deepened so that one can guess what is behind the moves in terms of content and thought work.

The book seems to me excellently suited to provide a first access to Fischer's mastery of chess. Thanks are due to the author for his efforts. I wish the work a good reception and the reader an inspiring study.

Robert Hübner, Cologne, June 2022



Bobby Fischer on his arrival in Reykjavik 1972



Donald Byrne

Bobby Fischer had dedicated himself to the royal game from an early age and worked very hard on his success. In his book *Fischer vs Spassky, Chessmatch of the Century*, Svetozar Gligoric wrote:

Then, in November 1956, Fischer's name appeared for the first time in the world's major chess magazines when he beat Donald Byrne ... in a game of great clarity and brilliance. In 'Chess Review' Hans Kmoch called it "the game of the century" and wrote: "...an astounding masterpiece in combination play, performed by a thirteen-year-old boy against a powerful opponent, which equals the finest exploits in chess history known to us..."



1

Donald Byrne

Robert James Fischer

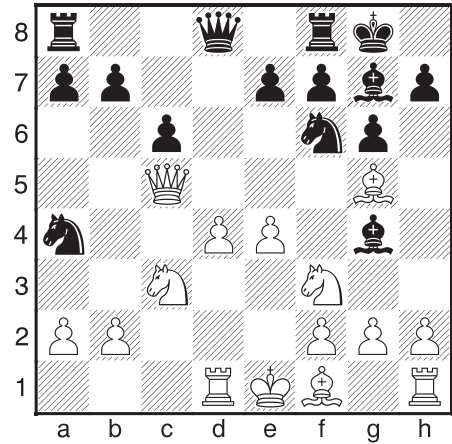
New York 1956 (D97)

1. ♖f3 ♜f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♜c3 ♙g7 4. d4 0-0 5. ♙f4
d5 6. ♗b3 dxc4 7. ♗xc4 c6 8. e4 ♜bd7 9. ♖d1
♜b6 10. ♗c5 ♙g4 11. ♙g5?

White chooses a positional sortie, but overlooks a brilliant tactical shot.

Better is 11. ♙e2 ♜fd7 12. ♗a3 ♙xf3 13. ♙xf3
e5 14. dxe5 ♗e8 15. ♙e2 ♜xe5 16. 0-0, Flear –
Morris, Dublin 1991. (GM Shipov)

11... ♜a4!!



Right from the start of his career, Bobby almost never missed dynamic options of this kind.

12. ♗a3

Black had calculated everything correctly, as the following lines show:

1) 12. ♜xa4 ♜xe4

a) 13. ♗c1 ♗a5+ 14. ♜c3 ♙xf3 15. gxf3 ♜xg5--+

b) 13. ♗xe7 ♗a5+ (13... ♗xe7 14. ♙xe7 ♜fe8 --+) 14. b4 ♗xa4 15. ♗xe4 ♜fe8 16. ♙e7 ♙xf3 17. gxf3 ♙f8--+

c) 13. ♙xe7 ♜xc5 14. ♙xd8 ♜e8+ 15. ♙e2 ♜xa4--+

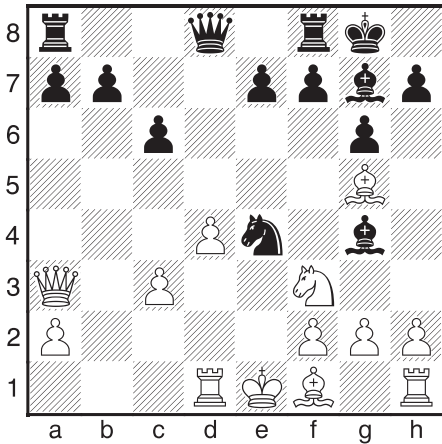
d) 13. ♗b4 ♜xg5

(Even 13... ♙xf3 14. ♙xe7 ♙xd1 15. ♙xd8 ♜axd8 is promising for Black.)

14. ♜xg5 ♙xd1 15. ♙xd1 ♙xd4--+

2) 12. ♗b4 ♜xc3 13. bxc3 ♜xe4 14. ♙xe7 ♗e8 15. ♖d3 c5! 16. ♗xb7 ♜d6 17. ♗c7 ♜f5--+

12... ♜xc3 13. bxc3 ♜xe4!



Again, it's an unexpected knight move that causes problems for White, who is lagging behind in development.

14.♞xe7 ♞b6!

After 14...♞e8? 15.♞d3! White is still in the game.

15.♞c4

White wants to complete his development as quickly as possible.

1) Accepting the exchange with 15.♞xf8!? ♞xf8 leads to the following lines:

16.♞b3

(16.♞c1 ♞e8 17.♞e2?! ♞xc3-+)

16...♞xc3 17.♞xb6 axb6 18.♞a1

(18.♞d2 ♞b4 19.♞b2 ♞a5-+)

18...♞e8+ 19.♞d2

(19.♞e5 f6 20.f3 fxe5 21.fxg4 exd4+ 22.♞d2 b5+)

19...♞e4+ 20.♞c2 ♞xf2 21.♞g1 ♞e3 with a bad endgame, although, from a practical point of view, this continuation was certainly worth considering.

2) 15.♞e2 ♞fe8 16.0-0?! ♞c7 17.♞h4 g5-+

3) 15.♞d3 ♞xc3! 16.♞xf8 ♞xf8-+ or 16.♞xc3 ♞fe8-+

15...♞xc3!

15...♞fe8? allows the evacuation of the white king with 16.0-0.

16.♞c5

White is obviously unaware of what other terrible blow awaits him, otherwise he would probably have played 16.♞xc3!?

(16.♞xf8 ♞xf8 17.♞xc3? ♞b4-+)

16...♞fe8 17.♞e3!?

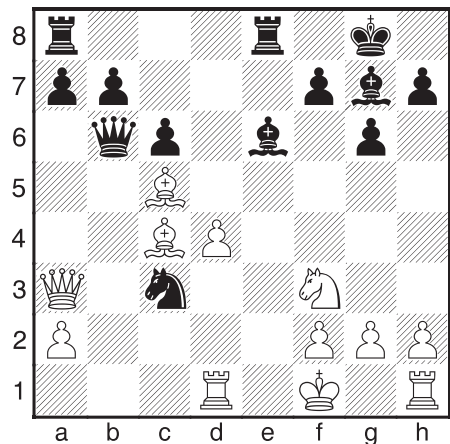
(17.♞xf7+? ♞xf7 18.♞g5+ ♞xe7 19.0-0 ♞xd1 20.♞xd1 ♞b5-+)

17...♞xf3 18.gxf3 ♞c7 and the opposite-colored bishops still give White some hope, although Black is likely to win here too.

16...♞fe8+ 17.♞f1

17.♞d2 ♞e4+ -+; 17.♞e5 ♞xe5 18.♞xb6 ♞d6+ -+

17...♞e6!!



This retreat is the real point of the whole combination.

After 17...♞b5? White could have turned the tide in his favor with 18.♞xf7+!.

1) 18...♞xf7? 19.♞b3+ ♞e6 20.♞g5+

a) 20...♞f6? 21.♞f3+ ♞f5 22.♞xh7+ ♞f7

23. ♖xb6+-

b) 20... ♖g8 21. ♗xe6 ♗xd4 22. ♗xd4+ ♖xb3
23. ♗xb3+- (Fischer)

2) 18... ♖h8 19. ♖xb6 ♗xa3 20. ♖xe8± (Shipov)

18. ♖xb6?!

After this inaccuracy, the black position plays itself.

Here is a look at the alternatives – especially at different moves of the hanging bishop.

– 18. ♖xe6? leads to a nice smothered mate:
18... ♖b5+ 19. ♖g1 ♗e2+ 20. ♖f1 ♗g3+ 21. ♖g1
♖f1+ 22. ♖xf1 ♗e2#.

– 18. ♖d3!? ♗b5 19. ♖b4 ♖d8+-

– 18. ♖e2!? ♗b5 19. ♖b4 ♖d8 20. a4 a5 21. ♖b2
♗d6+-

– 18. d5? ♖xd5 19. ♖xd5? ♖b1+ 20. ♗e1 ♖xe1#

– 18. ♖xc3 ♖xc5 19. dxc5 ♖xc3 20. ♖xe6 ♖xe6
+-

18... ♖xc4+ 19. ♖g1 ♗e2+ 20. ♖f1 ♗xd4+
21. ♖g1

21. ♖d3? axb6 22. ♖c3 ♗xf3+- 23. ♖xc4? ♖e1#

21... ♗e2+ 22. ♖f1 ♗c3+ 23. ♖g1 axb6

24. ♖d6 ♖ad8 (24... ♗xd1 25. ♖xd1 ♖xa2+-)
25. ♖xd8 ♗e2+ 26. ♖f1 ♗d4+ 27. ♖g1 ♖xd8+-

24... ♖a4 25. ♖xb6

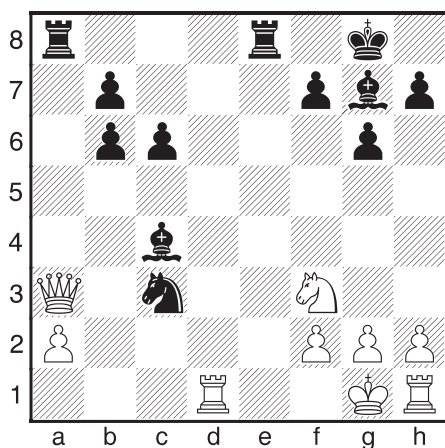
25. ♖d6 ♗xd1 26. ♖xd1 ♖xa2 27. h3 ♖a1+-

25... ♗xd1 26. h3 ♖xa2 27. ♖h2 ♗xf2 28. ♖e1
♖xe1 29. ♖d8+ ♖f8 30. ♗xe1 ♖d5 31. ♗f3 ♗e4
32. ♖b8 b5 33. h4 h5 34. ♗e5 ♖g7 35. ♖g1
♖c5+ 36. ♖f1

36. ♖h1 ♗g3+ 37. ♖h2 ♗f1+ 38. ♖h3 ♖xg2#;
36. ♖h2 ♖d6+-

36... ♗g3+ 37. ♖e1 ♖b4+ 38. ♖d1 ♖b3+
39. ♖c1 ♗e2+ 40. ♖b1 ♗c3+ 41. ♖c1 ♖c2#

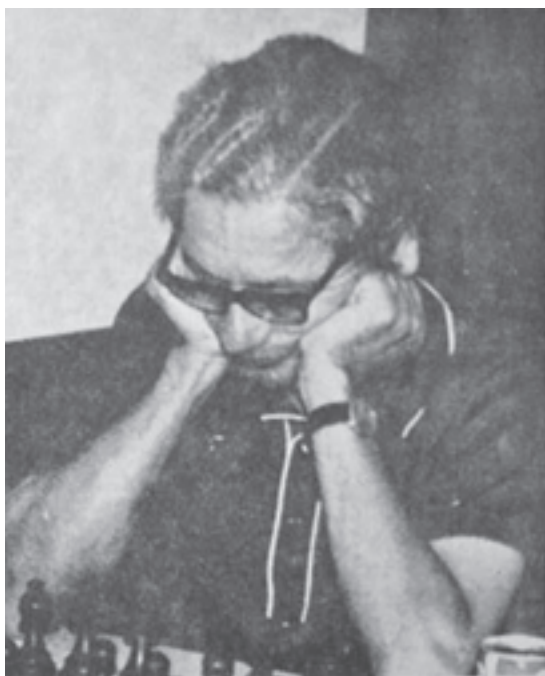
Thanks to this victory, Bobby scored 4.5 out of 11 and shared eighth place in the traditional and strong 'Rosenwald Tournament', which for a thirteen-year-old could undoubtedly be regarded as a huge success.



24. ♖b4



Ruben Shocron 1953



Ruben Shocron 1975



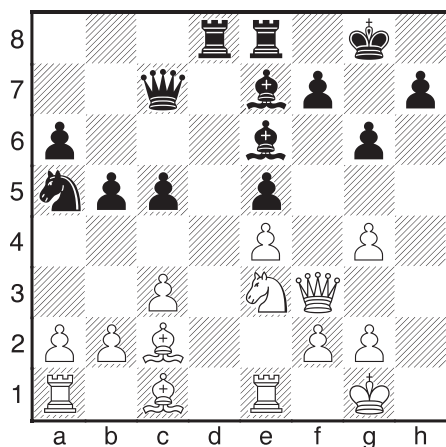
2

Robert James Fischer

Ruben Shocron

Mar del Plata 1959 (C97)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6
 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♙b3 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.h3
 ♘a5 10.♙c2 c5 11.d4 ♖c7 12.♘bd2 ♙d7
 13.♘f1 ♖fe8 14.♘e3 g6 15.dxe5 dxe5
 16.♘h2 ♖ad8 17.♗f3 ♙e6 18.♘hg4 ♘xg4
 19.hxg4



19...♗c6

19...♘c4 20.♘d5 ♙xd5 21.exd5 ♘b6 is the more popular alternative. White keeps a microscopic advantage due to his bishop pair.

20.g5

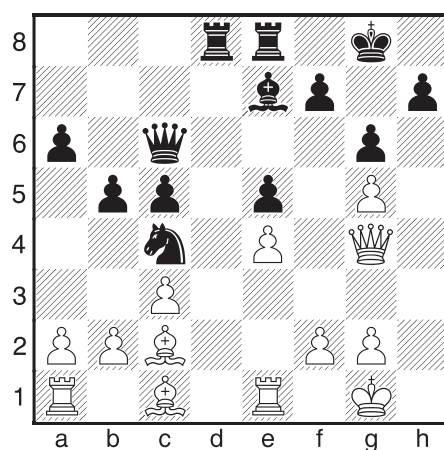
Fischer's attempt to improve the main line is objectively no better, but it confronts the opponent with problems over the board.

20.♗g3 as played in Boleslavsky – Tal, USSR 1957 may promise White a small edge.

20...♘c4

After 20...♙xg5!? Fischer gives 21.♘d5 ♙xc1 22.♘f6+ ♖h8 23.♖axc1 ♖f8 24.♗g3 ♗c7 25.♗g5 ♖g7 and now White seems to have nothing better than accepting the draw by perpetual check.

21.♘g4 ♙xg4 22.♗xg4



22...♘b6

In Zurich 1959 Unzicker played the weaker 22...f6? 23.gxf6 ♙xf6 24.a4! ♘b6 25.axb5 axb5 26.♙e3 ♖a8 27.♖ed1 ♖h8 28.b3 ♙g7 29.♗h4 (29.♗f3!?) 29...♙f6



Ed Edmonson, Bobby Fischer and Max Euwe during the preration of the match Spassky vs. Fischer 1972.



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Boris Spassky (2660)

Robert James Fischer (2785)

World Championship

Reykjavik 1972 (A77)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5
d6 6.♗c3 g6 7.♗d2 ♘bd7 8.e4 ♙g7 9.♙e2
0-0 10.0-0 ♞e8 11.♞c2 ♗h5?!

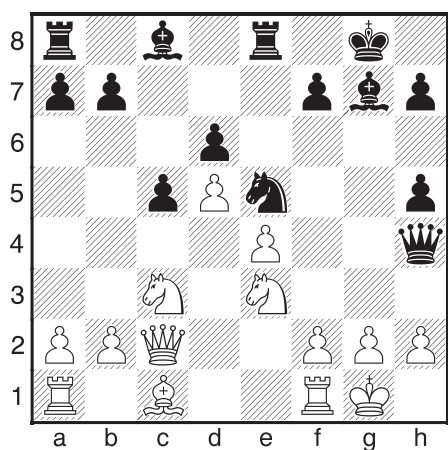
11...♗e5 is the main line.

12.♙xh5 gxh5 13.♗c4

The critical continuation is 13.a4 ♗e5 14.♗d1!
from the game S. Gligoric – L. Kavalek, Skopje
1972.

13...♗e5 14.♗e3 ♞h4

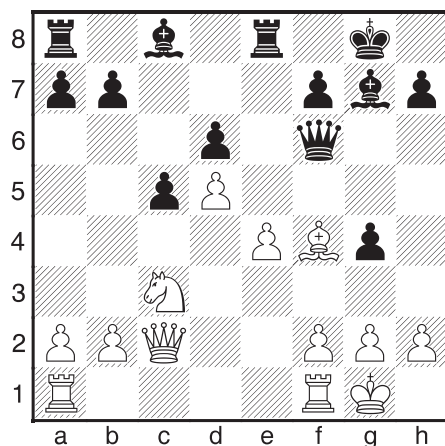
14...♗g4!?



15.♙d2?

According to R. Byrne, 15.f3!? is better for
White.

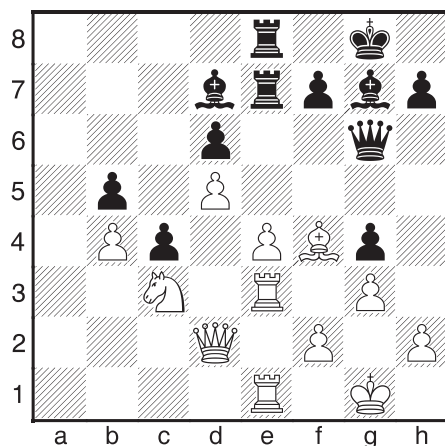
15...♗g4 16.♗xg4 hxg4 17.♙f4 ♞f6



18.g3?

Since this careless move permanently weak-
ens the e4-pawn and the light squares, 18.♙g3
should be tried instead.

18...♙d7 19.a4 b6 20.♞fe1 a6 21.♞e2 b5!
22.♞ae1 ♙g6 23.b3 ♞e7 24.♞d3 ♞b8
25.axb5 axb5 26.b4 c4! 27.♞d2 ♞be8
28.♞e3

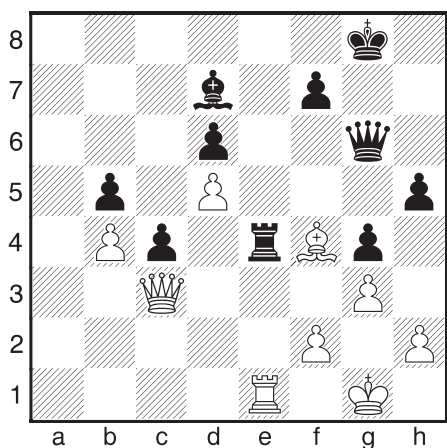


28...h5!

Fischer first improves his position before winning the e4-pawn, since it can't run away anyway.

28...♙xc3? 29.♚xc3 ♖xe4 30.♗xe4 ♖xe4 31.♗xe4 ♚xe4 allows the reply 32.♗f6! (Byrne, Gligoric).

29.♖3e2 ♔h7 30.♗e3 ♔g8 31.♖3e2 ♙xc3 32.♗xc3 ♖xe4 33.♗xe4 ♖xe4



34.♖xe4?

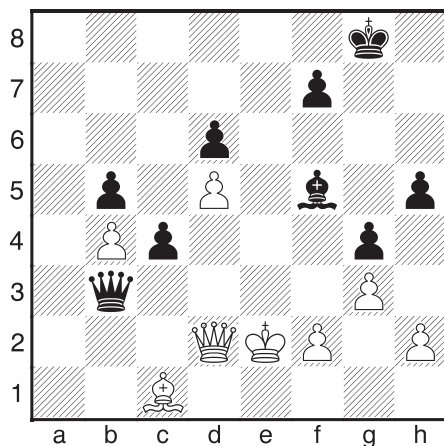
34.♔f1 offered better drawing chances.

34...♗xe4 35.♙h6

– 35.♙xd6? loses after 35...♗xd5 36.♙f4 ♗d1+.

– And 35.♗f6? can now be met by 35...♙f5 36.♙d2 ♗b1+ 37.♔g2 ♗d3–+.

35...♗g6 36.♙c1 ♗b1 37.♔f1 ♙f5 38.♔e2 ♗e4+ 39.♗e3 ♗c2+ 40.♗d2 ♗b3



41.♗d4?!

After this inaccuracy, Fischer can decisively disrupt White's coordination.

41.♔e1!? is met by 41...c3 42.♗g5+ ♙g6 43.♗d8+ ♔h7 44.♗xd6 c2–+.

41...♙d3+ 0-1

Fischer's sealed move. Spassky resigned at the resumption, when he saw the right move; 42.♔e3 ♗d1 just loses.



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Boris Spassky (2660)**Robert James Fischer (2785)**

Reykjavik 1972 (B46)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♘c3
♘c6 6.♙e3 ♘f6 7.♙d3 d5!?

When choosing this very rarely played continuation, Fischer was possibly inspired by an old game by Adolf Anderssen.

8.exd5 exd5 9.0-0 ♙d6 10.♘xc6

After 10.♙f5?! 0-0 11.♙g5 ♙e5 Black had no problems in C. Göring – A. Anderssen, Leipzig 1877.

10...bxc6 11.♙d4 0-0 12.♙f3?!

12.♘a4 is a more critical continuation, since Black has no worries after the following endgame transition.

12...♙e6 13.♙fe1 c5 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.♙xf6
gxf6 16.♙ad1 ♙fd8 17.♙e2 ♙ab8 18.b3 c4!

To open lines for the black troops.

19.♘xd5

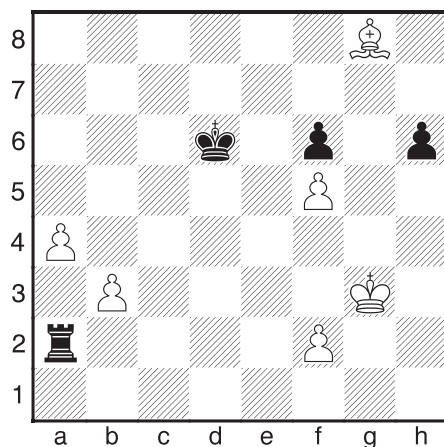
Spassky reacts with an active exchange sacrifice, and in fact it's difficult to suggest a better alternative.

19...♙xd5 20.♙xd5 ♙xh2+ 21.♘xh2 ♙xd5
22.♙xc4 ♘d2 23.♙xa6 ♙xc2 24.♙e2 ♙xe2
25.♙xe2 ♙d8 26.a4 ♘d2 27.♙c4 ♙a2

After 27...♙xf2 the white a–pawn can advance; e.g. 28.a5 ♘f8 29.a6 ♙b2 30.♙d5 ♙a2 31.♙c4 with good drawing chances.

28.♙g3 ♘f8 29.♙f3 ♘e7 30.g4 f5! 31.gxf5

f6 32.♙g8 h6 33.♙g3 ♘d6



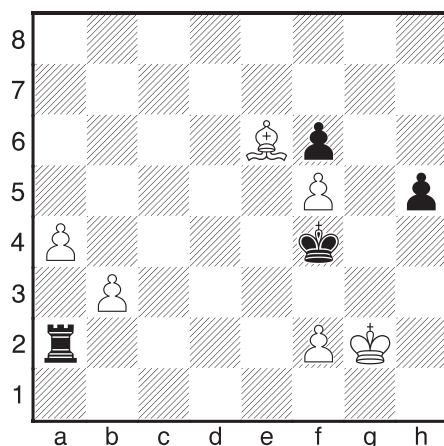
34.♙f3?

After this mistake, Black's king can penetrate. Therefore, the direct invasion route should be closed with 34.f4=.

34...♙a1! 35.♙g2

35.♙e6? ♙g1 36.♙f7 ♘e7 37.♙d5 h5 38.a5
♘d6–+

35...♘e5 36.♙e6 ♘f4 37.♙d7 ♙b1 38.♙e6 ♙b2
39.♙c4 ♙a2 40.♙e6 h5



41.♙d7 0-1

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 'Hamburg 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 ChessBase Magazine since 2006.



12 of his books have already been published by 'Joachim Beyer Verlag':

- Schachtaktik
- Positionsspiel
- Verteidigung (with Merijn van Delft),
- Schachstrategie (with Alex Markgraf),
- Italienisch mit c3 und d3 (with Georgios Souleidis)
- Magical Endgames (with Claus Dieter Meyer)
- The Human Factor in Chess (with Luis Engel)
- The Best Endgames of the World Champions (volume 1 and 2)
- The Best Combinations of the World Champions (volume 1 and 2) (with Jerzy Konikowski)
- World Chess Championship 2021 – Ian Nepomniachtchi vs. Magnus Carlsen (with Jerzy Konikowski and Uwe Bekemann)