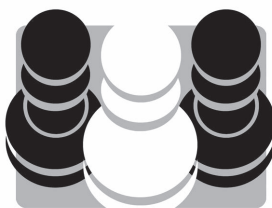


Dynamic Decision Making in Chess

by

Boris Gelfand

with invaluable help from Jacob Aagaard



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Publisher's Foreword

The last few years have been everything I could ever dream of as a chess writer. My books are selling enough for me to buy new soles for my second-hand shoes, readers from all over the world are telling me that they enjoyed the books, and strong players are even pretending that they were useful for them in their tournament preparation.

But the biggest joy has been working with Boris Gelfand on this project. Boris loves chess immensely and it is impossible not to fall in love with the game all over again when discussing it with him. Our analysis sessions have been spirited and enjoyable, and I have been able to learn a lot about the game from them, all of which is hopefully included in this book!

Writing a book is a difficult job, even when it is co-writing. You still have to choose the right words, structure, restructure and then restructure some more. A point made in August might be easier to understand if added to a game analysed in February. You get the idea. When the ideas are not in your head, but in someone else's, this does not become an easier process.

What has made writing these two books amazing is the time spent with Boris. His warmth and wit dominate our conversations. I laugh more in our sessions than at any other time during a normal week. I will leave you with one extract from one of our conversations in 2014:

Boris: Hi Jacob, how are you?

Jacob: Good thank you, and you?

Boris: Is it raining in Scotland?

Jacob: What do you mean?

Boris: Water falling from the sky.

Jacob: Well, it's Scotland. It is always raining a little bit.

Boris: Here we had no rain for two weeks. How warm is it?

Jacob: Heat wave.

Boris: What does this mean, heat wave?

Jacob: Eighteen degrees.

Boris: Ha! Here it is thirty-five degrees.

Jacob: ...

Boris: You should come and visit!

Jacob: ...

Then our conversation was interrupted. A siren rang out weakly somewhere outside Boris's house. He stood up immediately.

Boris: Sorry, I will be back in ten minutes.

Boris returned ten minutes later.

Boris: So, Jacob. Is it still raining in Scotland?

Being a part of this project is an ongoing joy. I hope some of this joy has spilled over into the pages and makes this not only an instructional book, but also a pleasure to read.

Jacob Aagaard
Glasgow, May 2016

Chapter 1

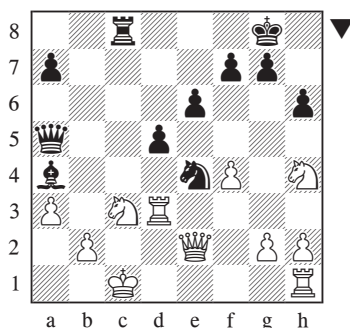
Minsk 1979



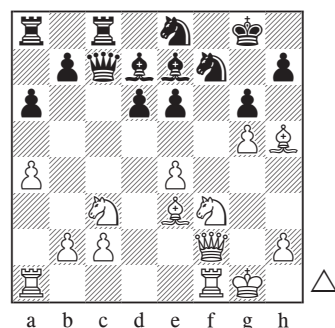
Geller – Yusupov

Diagram Preview

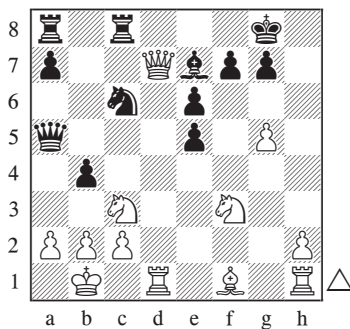
On this page you will find a few diagrams with critical moments from the coming chapter. If you want to compare your thinking with the games, you have the possibility. Take as much time as you need or want. This is not a test, but a chance to 'think along' with the grandmasters in the games.



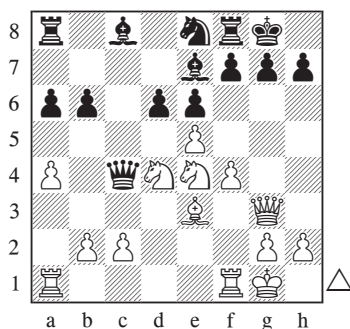
Find the winning move!
(see page 24)



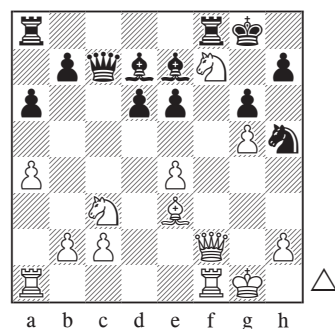
How would you destroy the
black kingside?
(see page 30)



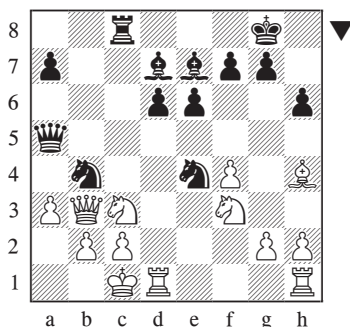
Can you find Negi's novelty?
(see page 22)



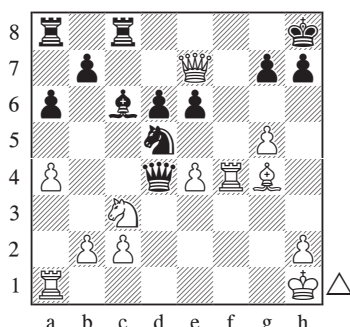
How did White start an
attack?
(see page 27)



Do you know this famous
combination?
(see page 30)



How should the attack be
continued?
(see page 24)



White wins with accurate
play; but how?
(see page 29)

I was incredible lucky that I had the chance to be present at the 1979 Soviet Championship, which was played in Minsk. I would go to the playing hall and watch the games; every day, every minute. Some of the games made a big impression on me and we shall look at them briefly in this chapter.

Alexander Nikitin and Boris Postovsky gave me the tip to write down what I was thinking during the game, in order to analyse the games afterwards and of course to compare it with what the players chose during the game. I did this and it helped my development immensely. As with *Positional Decision Making in Chess*, I want to show not only what I have been able to do in the field of dynamics, but also where my understanding of dynamics comes from.

You can find amazing games everywhere

While working on this book, I showed Jacob Aagaard some of the games from this Soviet Championship. Most of them were new to him. But then he assured me that he would be able to find amazing games from Danish tournaments that I do not know. I believe him. There are many talented chess players in the world, and although many have failed to fulfil their ambitions because of various shortcomings, you will not see this in their best games. And when you are 11 years old, as I was then, it can make a big impression on you to see the winner of the previous year's championship being blown off the board by a caveman.

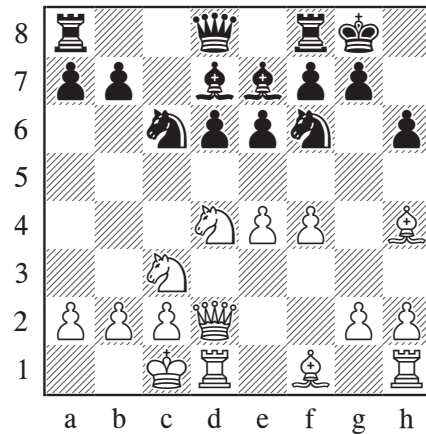
And with full respect for Danish events, I can say that the Soviet Championship was in a different league.

Vitaly Tseshkovsky – Viktor Kupreichik

Minsk 1979

Tseshkovsky is an amazing attacking player, but in this game he got totally mated!

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6
5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♙g5 e6 7.♚d2 ♙e7 8.0–0
0–0 9.f4 h6 10.♙h4 ♙d7



This variation was very popular at the time. My friend Ilya Smirin played it a lot in the 1980s.

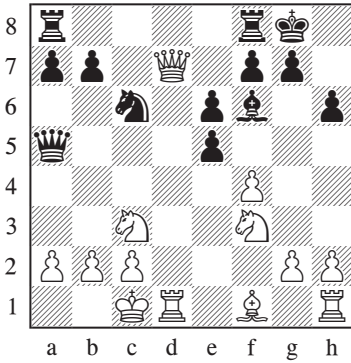
11.♘f3

Against 11.♘db5 Kupreichik has played both 11...♘xe4 and 11...d5.

11...♚a5 12.♙c4

This is probably already an inaccuracy. Tseshkovsky is an expert on playing the Sicilian with White, and I have no experience whatsoever, but this is still what I believe.

12.e5?! dxe5 13.♙xf6 ♙xf6 14.♚xd7 has been played in a few games.



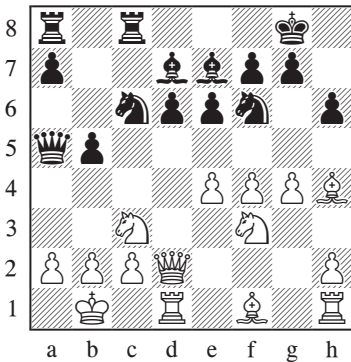
So far no one has played 14...e4!N 15.♘xe4 ♕xb2†! 16.♗xb2 ♖ad8 when White will be fighting for equality in the endgame.

I remember a game from a Soviet junior tournament that made a big impression on me. I think this can be deduced already from the fact that I remember it 30+ years on...

12.♖b1 ♖fc8

12...♖fd8 is the main move, when White is supposed to be doing well.

13.g4 b5

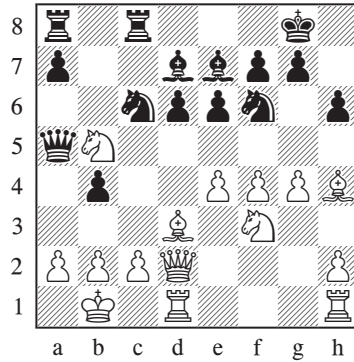


14.♕d3

There is nothing wrong with this move at all; it scores very well.

But we should still mention that the Indian opening specialist Parimarjan Negi in his book *1.e4 vs The Sicilian II* recommends 14.♕xf6! ♕xf6 15.e5 dxe5 16.g5! when White has a very strong attack. Negi's idea relies on a powerful novelty: 16...hxg5

17.fxg5 ♕e7 18.♖xd7 b4 19.♘d5!N exd5 20.g6! with a winning attack.
14...b4 15.♘b5!!



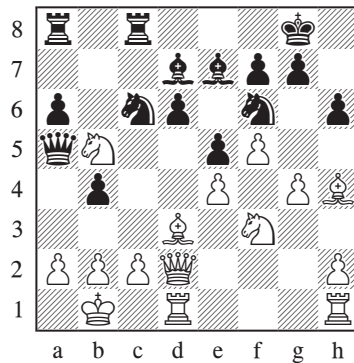
This was young Ivanchuk's novelty. Other players had played 15.♘e2 against Smirin, and young Vassily came up with this idea.

15...♖ab8

Smirin goes all in, but is soon left without any clothes on. (If chess ever gets bored with me, I can always get a job commentating on poker events on late-night TV with all these great metaphors...)

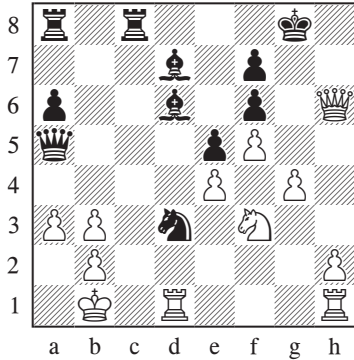
a) The direct break in the centre is dubious: 15...d5 16.♕xf6 ♕xf6 17.g5! hxg5 18.fxg5 ♕e7 19.g6! White's attack arrives early.

b) 15...e5 also looks bad. We analysed a bit and came up with: 16.f5!N a6 This is not forced, but without it, Black would have to admit his position is bad.



17.♘xd6! ♕xd6 18.♕xf6 gxf6 19.♖xh6

with a strong attack. For example: 19...b3 (19...♙f8 20.♚h4 b3 21.cxb3 ♖b4 22.a3 ♗xd3 also does not work. White plays 23.g5! with a winning attack: 23...♙c5 24.♙xd3 ♙c2† 25.♙a2 ♙xd3 26.gxf6 and mate is coming.) 20.cxb3 ♖b4 21.a3 ♗xd3



22.♗g5! A nice intermediate move. White is planning ♙xd3-h3. Black is busted.

c) 15...a6 is also possible and what the engine suggests. Black is threatening to take on b5, which would open the a-file, so White has to play 16.♗bd4, when after 16...♗xd4 17.♗xd4 White is still much better. The engine says that Black is more or less OK, but I have analysed a lot of positions like this, and believe that it will take between half an hour and an hour with a computer to prove that White has a winning attack.

16.♙xf6 ♙xf6

16...gxf6 17.♗bd4 gives White a solid edge. The black knight is exchanged before it gets a chance to get into battle, and Black is left without an attack, but facing one on the kingside all the same.

17.♗xd6 ♙c3 18.♙e2 b3 19.cxb3 ♖b4 20.bxc3 ♙xc3 21.♗d4

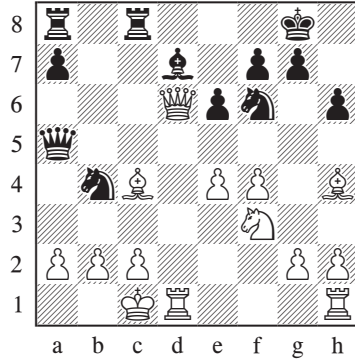
Black's attack is not happening.

21...e5 22.♗c4 ♙xc4 23.♙xc4 ♙xg4 24.♙g2 ♙xd1 25.♙xd1 exd4 26.♙g1 g5 27.fxg5 hxg5 28.♙f1 ♙b7 29.♙f5 ♙b6 30.♙xg5† ♙f8 31.♙g8† ♙e7 32.♙g5† ♙d7 33.♙f5†

1–0 Ivanchuk – Smirin, Klaipedā 1985.

12...b5 13.♙xb5

13.♗xb5 has scored a solid 2–0 for White, but Black can improve with 13...♗b4! 14.♗xd6 ♙xd6 15.♙xd6 ♙fc8 with enough compensation for the pawns.



The engine wants us to play 16.♗d4 ♙c6 17.♙e5 ♙c5 18.♙d6 ♙c6 with a repetition. Solve the draw death: take a sledgehammer to your laptop...

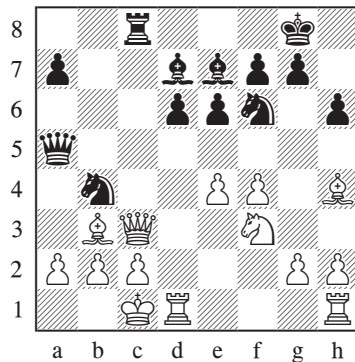
13...♙fc8 14.♙c4?!

White should probably vary earlier, on move 12, but if you do reach this position, then a move to investigate is 14.e5.

14...♗b4 15.♙e2

White might have had better saving chances in the following line:

15.♙b3 ♙xc3! 16.♙xc3 ♙c8



White is struggling, but not dead yet.

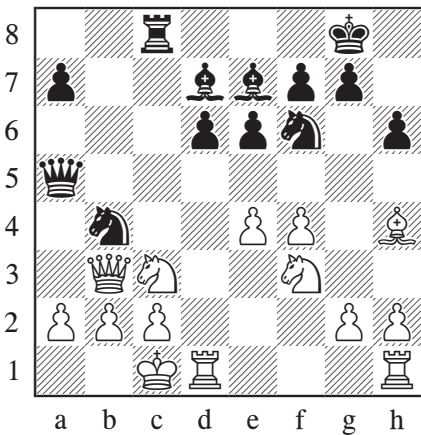
White should avoid 17.♔xf6 ♕xf6 18.♖e3 ♕a4 19.♞d2 ♕xb3 20.♗xb3 ♜xa2† 21.♜d1 ♜c3† 22.bxc3 ♖a1† 23.♜e2 ♗xh1 24.♜f2 ♕xc3 when his situation is grim.

But 17.♖e1 ♕a4 18.a3 ♕xb3 19.♗xb4 ♖xb4 20.axb4 ♕xc2 offers at least some hope. Black is certainly better, with his threatened discovered checks, and the weakness of e4 and b4, but the game is not over yet.

15...♞xc4!

Black's attack flows; if the bishop had reached b3, it might have been a useful defender.

16.♖xc4 ♞c8 17.♗b3



17...♜xe4!!

Black refuses to let any defender block the c-file.

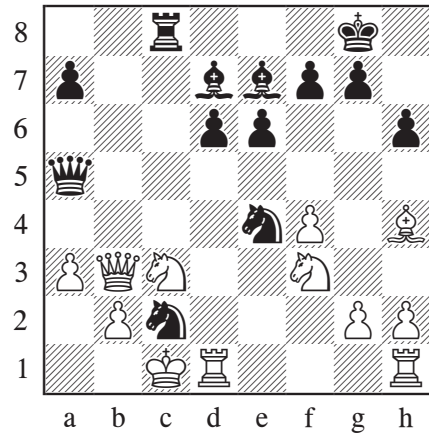
18.a3

This does not help, but neither would any other move.

18.♜xe4 ♕a4 is devastating.

And after 18.♕xe7 ♜xc3 19.bxc3 ♞xc3 20.♕xd6 ♜xa2† 21.♜b2 ♞xb3† 22.cxb3 ♕c6 Black wins comfortably.

18...♜xc2!!



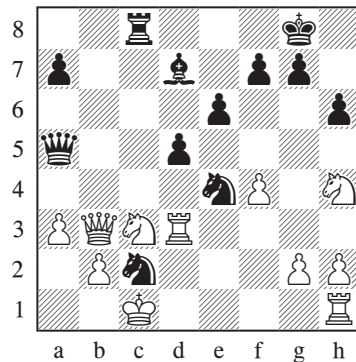
A very energetic sacrifice, continuing Black's c-file rampage.

19.♖xc2

White is running out of options.

19.♜xe4 ♜d4† wins the queen, while keeping a vicious attack.

19.♞d3 ♕xh4 20.♜xh4 d5 also gives Black a winning attack.



A very human way for the game to end could be 21.♗xc2 ♕a4 22.♖e2 ♕b5! 23.♞hd1 ♜xc3 24.bxc3 ♞xc3† 25.♜b1 ♕xd3† 26.♞xd3 ♖b5† and Black takes everything.

19...♜xc3 20.♕e1 ♕f6 21.♜e5

There are many wins. Kupreichik finds a simple one.

21...♙a4 22.♙xc3 ♗xc2 23.♙xa5 ♗xd1†
 24.♗xd1 dxe5 25.fxe5 ♗xe5 26.b4 ♖c3
 27.a4 ♖a3 28.♗c2 ♗d4 29.♗d1 e5
 0–1

When you are watching this live in the tournament hall as a child, you cannot help but be overwhelmed. This is one of the reasons why I think young players should be encouraged to watch top tournament games. If they cannot make it to the tournament hall, then at least follow the games online. Be entirely focused on the games, without online commentary or a mind-numbing engine, trying to find ideas of your own, calculating the various possibilities as the players think about them.

Efim Geller

One player in this tournament fascinated me more than the others...

Efim Geller's golden years were 1949 to 1980. Born in 1925, he won the USSR Championship qualifier in Tbilisi in 1949, and subsequently took joint 3-4th place at the main championship. He became a grandmaster in 1952 and also played for the first time in the Soviet team that year. He was a strong force for these three decades, scoring +6 in almost 200 games against the six World Champions he faced, suffering a majority of his defeats against Spassky, but achieving a plus score against Botvinnik, Smyslov, Petrosian and Fischer.

He was one of the most respected players in the Soviet Union, and acted as second for Karpov for many years. Before Kasparov's 1993 match against Nigel Short, he asked Geller what he should do against the Marshall Attack, which Short employed at the time. Geller suggested a system with h3, d3 & ♗bd2 and slow play, which worked well for Kasparov and stayed popular for the next 15 years.

There were some young players in the tournament. For example, 19-year-old Artur Yusupov took second place in his first-ever championship. Artur kindly shared his memories of Geller from this tournament:

When I first arrived at the tournament, my impression of Geller was that Grandad had decided to play. I liked that, but at first his results did not impress. In the first seven rounds he made all draws, before winning a fine strategic game against Romanishin. But it was in Rounds 10 and 11 that everything changed. First, Razuvaev made a horrific blunder in the opening, and lost to Geller in 21 moves. Then the next day, Tshshkovsky, in an equal position, blundered his queen right after exiting his adjournment analysis.

Geller was an experienced card player, so he immediately realized his luck was in. He transformed completely and played with such energy – beautiful attacking chess. It was truly fascinating.

I was able to use this experience much later in my career, in the German Championship, when Alexander Graf blundered his queen against me in an equal position. I remembered Geller, and knew I just had to show up and play, and luck would be on my side. In the last round, the next day, I misplayed my position a little, and my opponent offered a draw. I rejected it, because of Geller. I had to play! And immediately my opponent made mistakes. You have to use the luck! This is what I learned from Geller at the 1979 championship.

Actually, Geller had already made an impression on me in the first round against Dolmatov. Sergey had played quickly and confidently in making a draw with Black,

which was a decent result. Geller, on the other hand, had been thinking a lot, and was low on time when the game ended, as was his habit.

When they analysed the game afterwards, Dolmatov would say: “Here I can play this, this or this, but I chose that.” Geller said: “Really, you think you can play this?” and then he showed the most beautiful refutations of Sergey’s suggestions, one after the other. None of this happened in the game, which was not so interesting. But it seemed that Sergey had been lucky, and by intuition had chosen the only move again and again.

For those not blinded by age, but still interested in numbers, let me offer you something solid: by 1979 Geller was 54 years old and had not played in the Olympiad team for a decade. He was certainly not over the hill though – his highest Elo rating was as recent as 1976, when 2620 made him Number 8 in the world. By 1979 he was still Number 28 in the world, whereas Yusupov was Number 128 in the world and Dolmatov Number 45.

This recollection is quite pleasant for me: I absolutely would like it to be the attitude of young players that they have to beat me, no matter what. I have been declared ‘finished’ for decades. In 1998 there were a lot of articles where they announced the end of me.

After I lost the candidates match to Short in 1991, I defied the expectations of some people. I went on to win in Belgrade, tying for second with Kasparov in Reggio Emilia 1991/92 and, shortly thereafter, won in Wijk aan Zee 1992. After the last of these events, a journalist confided in me, saying that after the match with Short, “I thought you were finished.” I was 24 years old...

I want to point out that this was a very pleasant person, who spoke from the heart.

I think he meant that I might have needed a few years to recover, but as no one had told me about this earlier, I simply played well and won the tournament.

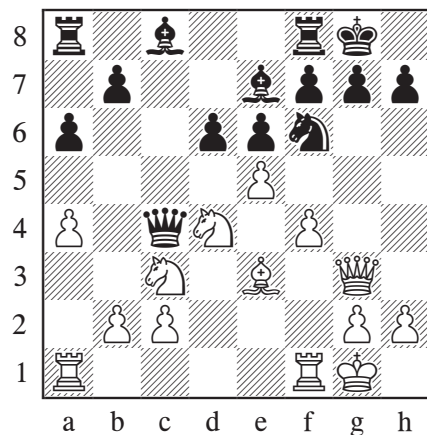
Boris the Attacker – 1979

To understand how exciting the following Geller game was to me at the time, it is necessary first to see a game I played just before the tournament.

Boris Gelfand – Eduard Raisky

Minsk 1979

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6
5.♘c3 e6 6.♙e2 ♙e7 7.0–0 0–0 8.f4 ♘c6
9.♙e3 a6 10.a4 ♖c7 11.♗e1 ♘a5 12.♗g3
♘c4 13.♙xc4 ♗xc4 14.e5



14...♘e8!?

14...♘d5 is more natural, but the move in the game is not bad if Black plays accurately afterwards.

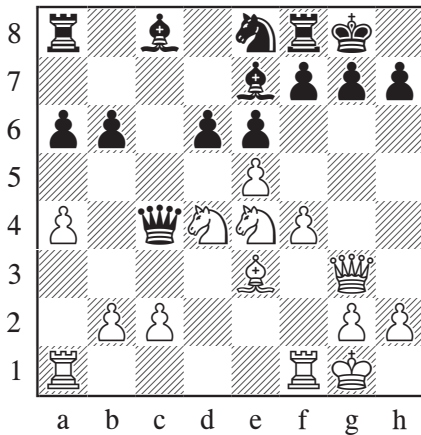
15.♘e4 b6?

Luckily he does not.

15...d5 would allow White to keep a stable advantage with his massive lead in development. A quick shift to the queenside

would be very effective: 16.♘d2 ♖c7 17.c4! dxc4 18.♖fc1 Black is weak on b6, d6 and all the way down the c-file.

15...f6! was the best move. After 16.b3 ♖d5 17.exf6 ♘xf6 18.♘xf6† ♙xf6 Black managed to equalize in Klovans – Polugaevsky, Yerevan 1975. I think White could find an advantage somewhere in this line, but it would not be overwhelming.



16.f5!

White should not waste any time.

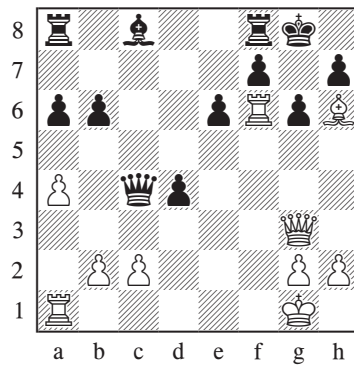
16...dxe5

This is the critical test, but as it does not work, Black had to accept that his position is a disaster.

16...exf5 would be poor on account of 17.exd6, and White has a big advantage with this impressive passer.

17.f6! ♘xf6 18.♘xf6† ♙xf6 19.♖xf6 ♔h8!?

Black realizes that 19...exd4 is hopeless. White not only wins the exchange after 20.♙h6, but can choose to go for mate instead: 20...g6

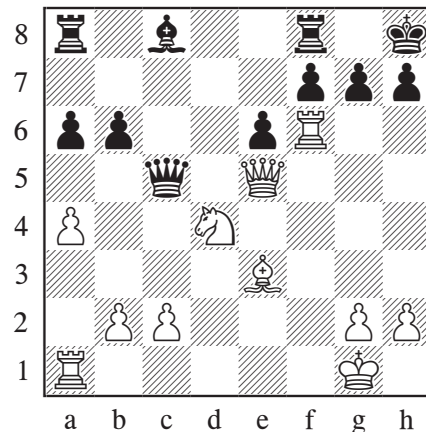


21.♖e5! with the threat of ♖xg6† and ♖g7#. Black can try 21...♖a7, but after 22.♖af1 mate is close anyway. For example: 22...♖e8 23.♖xf7!

20.♖xe5 ♖c5

The last try.

20...gxf6 21.♖xf6† ♔g8 22.♙h6 and wins.



21.♖e4!

The simple path. White would also be winning after 21.♖g3 gxf6 22.♘xe6 ♖g8 23.♖f3 ♖e7 24.♙d4 ♖g6 25.♘f4 and White wins at least a piece.

21...gxf6 22.♖xa8 e5 23.♖f3!
1-0

After the first nine moves of Geller's 14th round game, I was understandably excited: