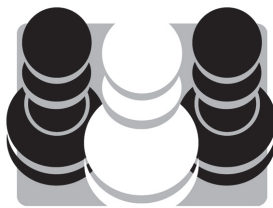


Chess Structures

A Grandmaster Guide

By

Mauricio Flores Rios



Quality Chess
www.qualitychess.co.uk

Contents

Foreword by Axel Bachmann	5
Keys to Symbols used and Bibliography	6
Preface	7
Introduction	9
Family One – d4 and ...d5	
1 The Isolani	12
2 Hanging Pawns	36
3 Caro-Kann Formation	51
4 Slav Formation	69
5 The Carlsbad Formation	86
6 Stonewall	103
7 Grünfeld Centre	122
Family Two – Open Sicilian	
8 Najdorf Type I	138
9 Najdorf Type II	155
10 The Hedgehog	178
11 The Maroczy	205
Family Three – Benoni	
12 Asymmetric Benoni	226
13 Symmetric Benoni	242
Family Four – King's Indian	
14 KID Type I	261
15 KID Type II	281
16 KID Type III	297
17 Open KID	323
18 KID Complex	338
Family Five – French	
19 French Type I	353
20 French Type II	364
21 French Type III	383

Miscellaneous

22	Various Structures	400
	The 3–3 vs. 4–2 Structure	400
	The Panov Structure	403
	The Dragon Formation	408
	The Scheveningen Structure	411
	The Benko Structure	415
	The Closed Ruy Lopez	417
	The Lopez Formation	421

Training

23	Exercises	424
24	Solutions	437
	Name Index	460

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Quality Chess editorial team for believing in the project this book proposed. In particular I would like to thank David Friedgood and John Shaw for a wonderful job editing my manuscript.

The content of this book could not have been presented as well without the help of Aura Salazar and Javier Cortes who carefully studied earlier versions of this work and provided many useful suggestions to make the exposition clearer. Their questions and criticism encouraged me to expand certain topics and find examples to illustrate my message in a better way.

Finally, I would like to thank Aura for encouraging me to regain my ambition in chess, both as a player and trainer. This ambition and her support drove me through the challenging process of writing this book.

Foreword

I first met Mauricio ten years ago, as we both competed in Pan-American youth competitions. Later we both received a chess scholarship to attend the University of Texas at Brownsville. We were teammates for four years and spent countless hours studying chess together, though our training preferences were very different. Mauricio read books, analyzed his games and prepared openings. I did these things too, but in reality the vast majority of my time was spent looking over current chess games and playing. I was surprised when Mauricio told me he had written a book partially inspired by my training methods, and I was certainly interested to see what was in it.

The truth about my training method is that looking over a game for just a couple of minutes can actually be a wonderful investment, *if done correctly*. The key is searching for **repeating patterns**; this takes some practice but is feasible. In my career I have seen close to 100,000 chess games, including most of the grandmaster-level games played over the past decade. The cumulative experience from spending a minute or two on each of these games has allowed me to gain an excellent positional understanding. Staring at a position for a few seconds is often enough for me to see who is better, which plans will work, which pieces should be traded, etc.

Acquiring such a level of experience and positional knowledge requires many years. Going through thousands and thousands of games takes a very long time, even if you only spend a couple of minutes on each. Most importantly, being able to actually **see the patterns** does not come easily to everyone. Addressing these two difficulties is exactly the purpose of this book.

Chess Structures – A Grandmaster Guide is an excellent selection of model games. By studying the 140 games and fragments in this book, the reader will learn many of the most important plans, patterns and ideas in chess. The organization of this book is particularly helpful in this regard. The pawn structure is the most important factor to determine the nature of a game; therefore, studying model games classified by structure allows the reader to acquire reliable strategic knowledge much more easily. Mauricio's detailed explanations allow the reader to identify the key elements in each example. Moreover, each game constitutes a building block toward the understanding of the structure as a whole.

I am certain the readers of this book will find it both useful and entertaining. They will complete the opening phase understanding the strategic landscape of the position. Most importantly, studying this book will help them to better understand the opening itself, and even to choose variations depending on what middlegame position they wish to play. I give this book my highest recommendation, and I feel sure readers will profit from it.

GM Axel Bachmann
Ciudad del Este, Paraguay
December 2014

Preface

The idea for this book was in the back of my mind for several years before coming to fruition. The book was born out of my desire to guide players who, like me, struggle to apply their strategic knowledge to a practical game. My aim is to provide something new to chess literature; to write the book I should have studied myself earlier in my career. This is not the typical strategy book, but before I tell you what this book is, let me tell you how I realized this book is necessary, especially for self-learners.

My progress in chess was very fast, but very difficult, even frustrating. Due to geographical and financial constraints I drew most of my knowledge from books, rather than learning from an experienced master. I studied many strategy books and I remember embracing every word in them as a piece of gold written in ink. However, as I scaled the rating ladder I was dazzled by my inability to correctly evaluate positions despite my supposedly *vast strategic knowledge*. I was well versed in modern strategy but sometimes the concepts in my books were contradictory, or difficult to apply in practice. I often lost games without ever understanding the reason; *my books had no answers!*

By the time I had become a FIDE Master, I had concluded that the strategic rules in my books only worked sometimes, and this was not good enough. I was afraid to use potentially incorrect rules and I changed my style to avoid dealing with them. I became a strong tactician and avoided strategy at all costs. Unfortunately, I could not always obtain sharp positions and in quiet games my lack of understanding often led me to lose miserably. In fact, I became a grandmaster at eighteen knowing less than half of this book's contents.

There already exist dozens of books providing an excellent introduction to chess strategy, and I recommend you read one. These books are a starting point, but they are insufficient. They teach strategic elements without shedding much light on which factors will play a bigger role in a specific position. It is like giving you several tools without telling you which one to use. A different class of strategy book provides many concrete examples and shows how the strategic tools are selected and used. Such books are often entertaining and even inspiring, but they lack specificity. At times reading these books can leave you more confused than before, as you have learned rules but do not exactly know when to apply them. My experience as a coach has only confirmed this phenomenon.

Chess Structures – A Grandmaster Guide emphasizes clarity, precision and completeness over generality. I do not intend to teach rules applicable to every position. Such rules typically do not exist. Moreover, even if such rules existed, the chance that such a complex message will be misunderstood is far too high. Let's not risk it! My aim is to provide an easy-to-understand strategic guide to the most frequently-occurring classes of positions in chess. I hope readers will find this helpful, as it greatly reduces ambiguity; it is clear when rules will be valid and when they will not. In this sense, this book is a collection of analyzed model games, logically organized into families of similar positions with common strategic ideas. As Capablanca said in his book *Chess Fundamentals*, every player should have a collection of games and ideas within his chess knowledge. This book intends to provide developing players with a fine selection of such games and ideas. These games are presented within the context of well-defined classes, to enhance the learning process and prevent confusion.

Naturally, the best (and least ambiguous) way to classify chess positions is based on their pawn structure. I divide this book into twenty-four chapters, which discuss the most *interesting* and

common structures in modern practice. These positions encompass a wide variety of openings and middlegames, which are present in the vast majority of all chess games. I hope my readers will find this book to be a practical and, most importantly, an accessible guide to learning how these specific positions should be conducted.

Mauricio Flores Rios
Minneapolis, December 2014

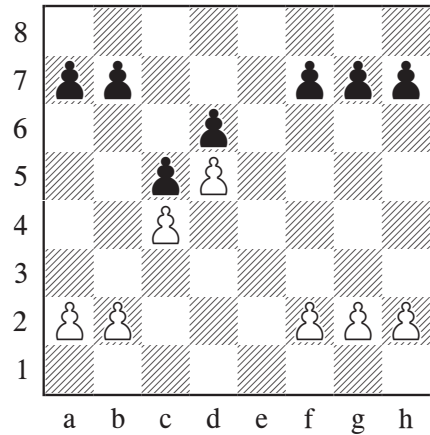
Chapter 13

Symmetric Benoni

The symmetric Benoni structure is one of my favourites, and it is one of the structures that motivated me to write this book. It often arises from Benoni variations in which White recaptures exd5 instead of cxd5 , which yields the more typical Benoni position we studied in the previous chapter. Unlike the previous chapter in which Black had clear plans to gain counterplay, now Black faces a dilemma of what to do. Black can often develop his pieces to obtain what seems to be an equal position, but White usually retains a small spatial advantage. This advantage increases if White manages to expand on the kingside, restricting Black's pieces substantially. Black's play can be rather difficult, and great precision is required to avoid being asphyxiated. A main theme in this variation is whether Black manages to trade off some minor pieces to decrease his space problem. In addition, the control of the e4 -square is often an important factor to determine whether Black can equalize or not. Let's discuss specific plans:

White's plans

1. Expand on the kingside with f2-f4 , g2-g4 and potentially create an attack.
2. Attack the vulnerable d6 -pawn with a bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal and a knight on e4 .
3. Sometimes White will also play b2-b4 , but there is really not much to be gained on the



queenside. In fact, opening the queenside could give Black chances for much-needed counterplay.

Black's plans

1. Control the e4 -square and occupy it with a knight.
2. Break on the queenside with ...b7-b5 , and obtain counterplay against a potentially weak d5 -pawn.
3. Trade off minor pieces to decrease the space problem. Sometimes this can be achieved with the sequence $\text{...}\text{Bb6}$, $\text{...}\text{Qf5}$ and $\text{...}\text{Ne4}$ which can also create pressure against the b2 -pawn.

White's kingside expansion is the most important plan in the position, and Black's plans are aimed at fighting against it. After White plays f2-f4 , Black should typically reply with ...f7-f5 to claim some space before it is too late. Later he should be ready to prevent g2-g4 , as White could gain a decisive spatial advantage with this expansion. Black's Plan 2 is probably the most active and interesting reaction, and should be considered in a variety of positions even in the form of a pawn sacrifice. The virtue of this sacrifice is that it opens many lines, and may turn White's kingside expansion into a weakening.

The first game in this chapter is an older example which illustrates White's Plan 1 being executed to perfection. Then, the second game is a more modern version where Black finds a better defensive plan, though still remaining passive. The third game illustrates White's Plan 2, while White's Plan 3 is not really covered simply because it is not as important or useful. Then, the last three games in the chapter illustrate Black's Plans 1-3 in that order.

Boris Spassky – Robert Fischer

Sveti Stefan/Belgrade (26) 1992

Learning objective: This game illustrates how White's kingside expansion can totally suffocate Black's forces.

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♗c3 g6 5.e4 ♕g7
6.♕d3 0-0 7.♗f3 ♕g4 8.h3 ♖xf3 9.♗xf3
♗bd7

Planning the trade ...♗e5xd3.

The alternative 9...e6 does not change the character of the game. For example: 10.0-0 exd5 11.exd5 ♗fd7!? (or 11...♗bd7 12.♗d1± transposing to the game) 12.♗d1 ♖e8 13.f4 f5 14.♗f3 ♗a6 15.a3 ♗c7 16.g4!± This is somewhat similar to the game.

10.♗d1!

The game is heading toward a symmetric Benoni, hence trading pieces must be avoided to make use of the space advantage.

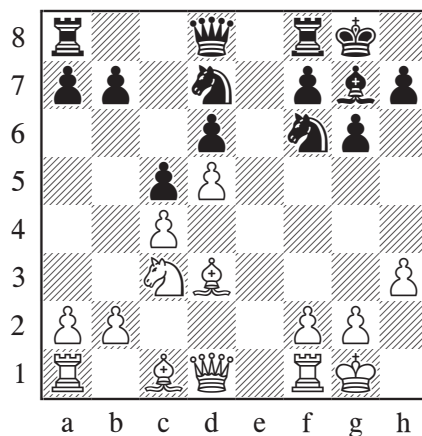
Imprecise is 10.0-0?! ♗e5 11.♗e2 ♗xd3 12.♗xd3 a6= when Black has good counter-chances associated with the break ...b7-b5.

10...e6 11.0-0 exd5 12.exd5!±

An appropriate decision. White has firm control of the e4-square and Black will soon run out of useful moves.

Worse is 12.cxd5?! a6 13.a4 ♖e8 14.♕g5 ♗c7 reaching the previous chapter's structure. In

this case White has nothing special, as none of his standard plans are strong in this position, while Black's pieces are very well arranged. In addition, Black's light-squared bishop, the least useful piece in the structure, is already off the board.



12...♗e8 13.♕d2

The alternative 13.♕f4!? has pros and cons: it pressures the d6-pawn, but prevents the f2-f4 expansion.

13...♗e5

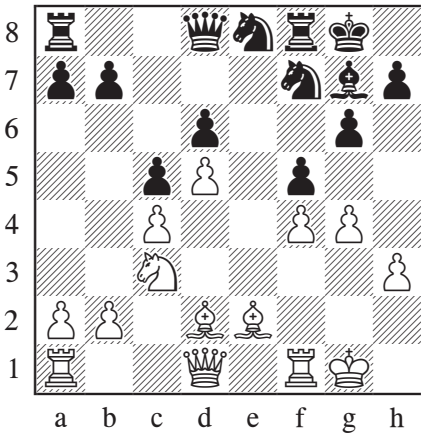
A standard move is 13...♗c7!? intending to create queenside counterplay with ...b7-b5, and now a possible continuation is 14.♗b3 temporarily preventing it. (White should refrain from 14.a4?! weakening the b4-square too soon, and after 14...f5! claiming space on the kingside, 15.♗b3 ♖b8 16.f4± Black is quite close to equality.) 14...♗e5 (14...b5? 15.cxb5±) 15.♕e2 f5 16.f4 ♗d7 17.♖ae1± With a small advantage due to space.

14.♕e2 f5 15.f4

Gaining space on the kingside, and preventing Black's counterplay with ...f5-f4.

15...♗f7 16.g4!

White does not miss a chance to put pressure on Black's kingside; his advantage is already evident.

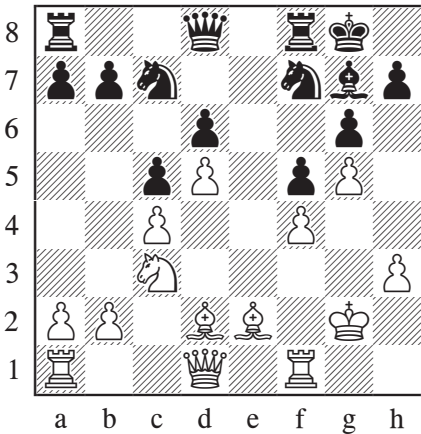


16...♘h6

The try 16...♗h4?! is simply met by 17.♔g2± threatening g4-g5 trapping the queen.

If 16...fxg4 17.hxg4 White's king is much safer than Black's. For example, 17...♙d4† 18.♔g2 ♘c7 19.♞h1 ♗f6 20.♘e4 ♗g7 21.♛c2± where White has a significant advantage due to his superior space and coordination.

17.♔g2 ♘c7 18.g5 ♘f7



19.♞b1

This move is rather unnecessary.

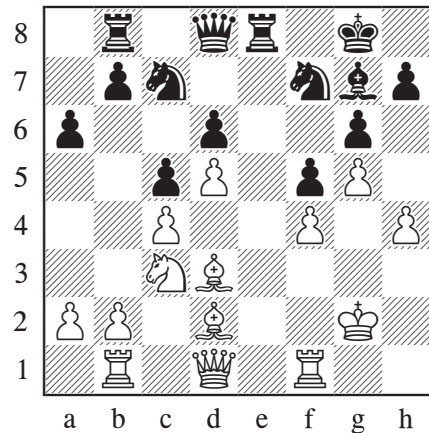
It was better to develop the kingside initiative with 19.h4 and then:

a) The break 19...b5? is premature due to 20.cxb5 ♞b8 21.a4± as there is no compensation for the pawn.

b) 19...h5!? This double-edged move might be necessary. 20.gxh6 (or 20.♙d3!± aiming to sacrifice a piece on the kingside by means of ♘e2-g3-f5 or h5) 20...♘xh6 21.h5 gxh5 22.♙xh5 ♙d4 23.♞h1± White is much better prepared to fight along the g- and h-files.

c) 19...a6 20.a4 ♞b8 21.h5± White may play positionally with h5-h6, or tactically with ♞h1, ♙d3 and ♗f3-h3. Black's pieces are very restrained, making defence difficult.

19...♞e8 20.♙d3 ♞b8 21.h4 a6



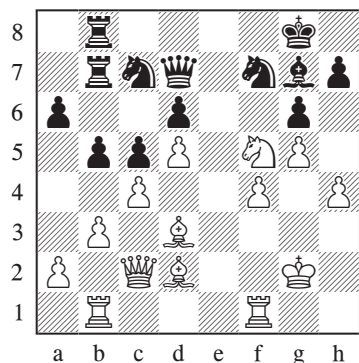
22.♗c2

Also possible is 22.a4!? since the break 22...b5?! does not work as well: 23.axb5 axb5 24.♘xb5 ♘xb5 25.cxb5± Though Black's chances of counterplay are better here than in the game.

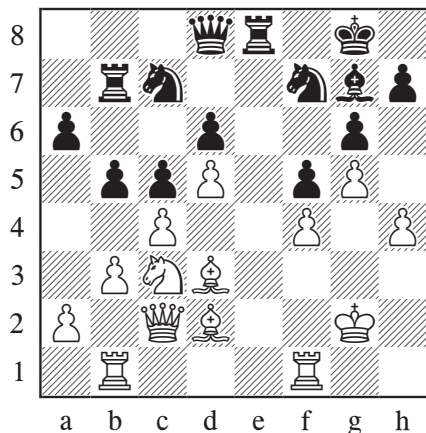
Instead 22...a5 with the idea of ...♘a6-b4 is too slow, for example 23.h5 ♘a6 24.♗f3 ♘b4 25.♞h1 ♘xd3 26.♗xd3 followed by a decisive invasion down the h-file.

22...b5 23.b3 ♞b7

Another option was 23...♗d7 planning to double rooks on the b-file. Ftacnik suggested the interesting variation: 24.♘e2 (24.h5!±) 24...♞b7 25.♘g3 ♞eb8 26.♘xf5!!



26...bxc4 (26...gxf5 27.♙xf5 ♖d8 28.♙xh7+ and White's attack is devastating) And now Black's counterplay is repelled with: 27.bxc4 ♖b2 28.♗g3!± ♖xc2? 29.♖xb8+ ♗e8 30.♙xc2+–



24.♖be1

Trading a pair of rooks limits Black's counterplay, while White's attacking chances remain intact.

The immediate 24.h5!± was strong too.

24...♖xe1 25.♖xe1 ♖b8

Preventing the expansion h4-h5-h6 with 25...h5!± allows 26.♗e2! threatening ...♗g3xf5 or ...♙xf5, and now 26...♖b8 27.♗g3 bxc4 28.♙xc4 ♗b5 29.♖d3± leaves Black in a precarious position due to the weakened kingside and the lack of counterplay.

26.♙c1

Covering the b2-square.

Again 26.h5!± is possible. After 26...bxc4 27.♙xc4± White's queenside remains rock solid while his kingside play keeps on rolling.

26...♖d8

26...bxc4 doesn't help after 27.bxc4± since Black does not have any targets down the b-file.

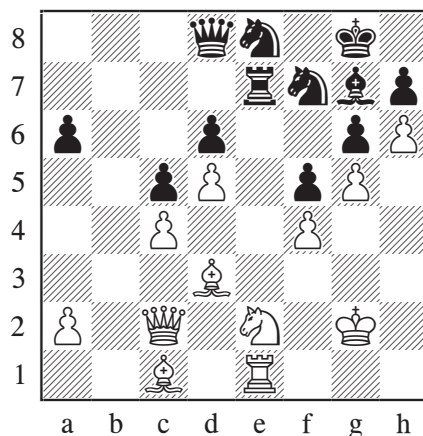
27.♗e2 bxc4 28.bxc4

Note that Black has no entry points on the b-file.

White is also better after 28.♙xc4?! but the d5-pawn is turned into a weakness unnecessarily.

28...♗e8 29.h5 ♖e7 30.h6!+–

Another strong continuation was 30.♖h1 ♖b7 31.♗g1! planning ♗f3-h4 pressuring the g6-pawn. Black's position is about to collapse. For example: 31...♖e7 32.♗f3 ♗d8 33.hxg6 hxg6 34.♗h4 ♗f7 (or 34...♖f7 35.♙e2!+– followed by ♗xg6) 35.♖d1!+– And there is no good defence against the threat of ♗xg6.

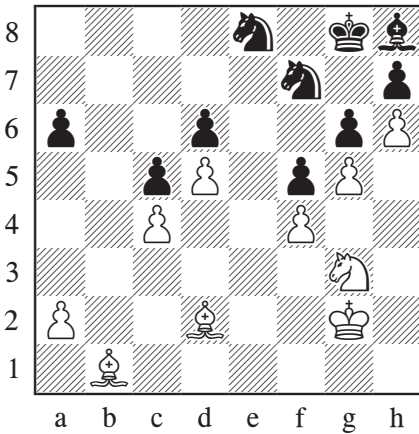


The game is positionally won and the rest is a beautiful example of Spassky's technique.

30...♗h8

Even worse is 30...♗f8?! 31.♙b2 since White's occupation of the long diagonal is deadly for Black.

31.♙d2 ♖b7 32.♖b1 ♖b8 33.♗g3 ♖xb1 34.♖xb1 ♖xb1 35.♙xb1



Now White's king will march to the queenside while Black's king cannot easily abandon the kingside, due to the potential sacrifice $\text{f}5$ followed by $\text{g}5$ and $\text{h}7$.

35...g2 36.f3 f8 37.f2

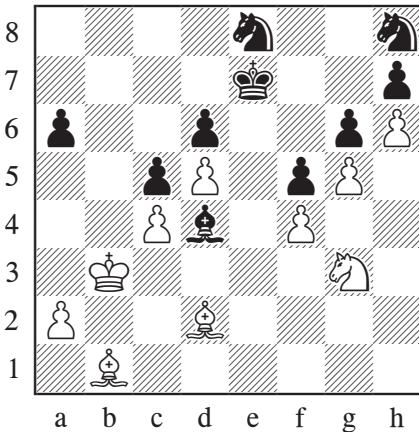
Another option was: $37.\text{f}5!$? $\text{g}5$ $38.\text{g}5$ $\text{g}8$ $39.\text{c}8$ $\text{c}7$ $40.\text{a}5+$

37...h8

Preparing ... $\text{e}7$. Centralizing the king at once with $37...\text{e}7?$ fails to $38.\text{f}5!$! $\text{g}5$ $39.\text{g}5$ followed by $\text{h}7$ winning easily.

38.f1 f7 39.f2 f4 40.f3

Black's queenside is defenceless.



40...f2

$40...\text{d}7?$ runs into $41.\text{f}5!$ $\text{g}5$ $42.\text{g}5$ $\text{e}7$ $43.\text{h}7$ and the pawns quickly decide the game.

41.f1!

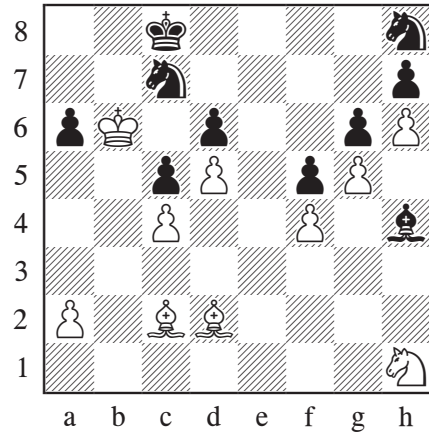
This is unnecessary, but still winning.

Easier was $41.\text{f}5!$! $\text{g}5$ $42.\text{g}5$ $\text{f}7$ (now there is no time for $42...\text{g}6?$ $43.\text{g}6$ $\text{h}7$ $44.\text{h}7$) $43.\text{h}7$ when the three passed pawns win easily.

41...h4

$41...\text{d}4$ doesn't help due to $42.\text{a}4$ $\text{d}7$ $43.\text{a}5$ $\text{c}7$ $44.\text{g}3!$ followed by $\text{f}5$ winning.

42.f4 f7 43.f5 f7 44.f6 f8 45.f2

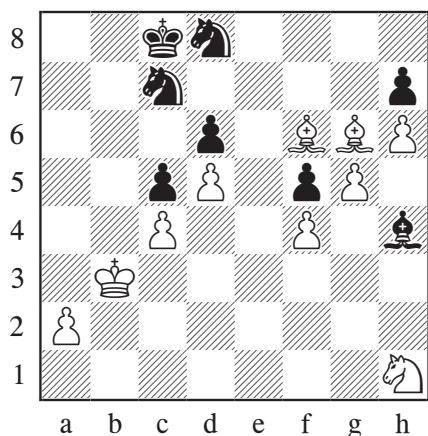


The entrance of White's bishops decides the game; the rest is simple.

45...f7 46.g4 f8 47.f7 f8 48.f3!

Black is in zugzwang.

48...a8! 49.fxa6 f7! 50.f6 a8! 51.f5 f7 52.f5 f7! 53.f4 a8 54.f3 f7 55.f8 f8 56.f6 f7 57.f6!



57...hxg6 58.♙xd8
1-0

Final remarks

1. I feel amazed every time I see this game. Black was positionally crushed, and it is not even obvious what his mistake was.
2. I believe Black's biggest mistake was choosing to play this type of structure under unfavourable conditions. In recent years, White has scored over 80% from the position after 10.♞d1; this should tell us something.
3. Black's biggest problem was being unable to prevent White's expansion with g2-g4. In an ideal case, Black would have had a knight on f6 and a bishop on c8 preventing such an advance.
4. After White's 18th move g4-g5, I cannot find any good suggestions for Black. His position is bad, and his defensive task near impossible to conduct.
5. As the reader may have noticed, the opening of the kingside often turned out to favour White. This is a characteristic inherited from the structure c4-d5 vs. c5-d6: this tiny spatial advantage makes all the difference.

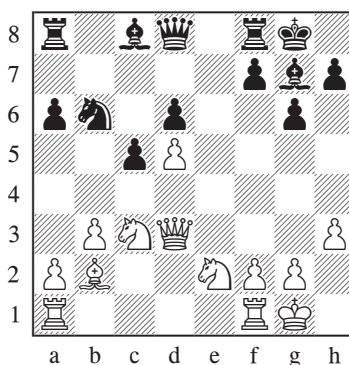
Vladimir Malakhov – Alexander Grischuk

Russian Championship, Moscow 2010

Learning objective: This game is an example of how the symmetric Benoni structure is treated in modern practice. It is important to note how Black prevents the expansion g2-g4.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7 4.e4 0-0 5.♙d3 d6 6.♘ge2 c5 7.d5 e6 8.h3 exd5 9.exd5 ♘fd7 10.f4

Inaccurate is 10.0-0?! ♘e5, as White is now unable to keep his d3 bishop on the board. 11.b3 ♘xd3 12.♞xd3 b5! Black gains activity! 13.cxb5 (or 13.♙f4! g5 14.♙h2 f5∞) 13...a6! 14.b6 (14.bxa6? loses material after 14...♙xa6+ due to the pin down the a1-h8 diagonal) 14...♘d7 15.♙b2 ♘xb6+

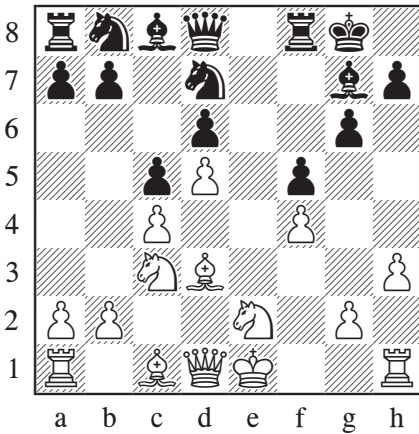


White's position is aimless. The once-glorious d5-pawn is now a weakness, while Black's pieces are very well coordinated.

10...f5

Claiming some space on the kingside and blocking White from expanding further.

10...♞h4+?! 11.g3 ♙xc3+?! (the option 11...♞e7 leads to a position similar to the game) 12.♙f1! (12.bxc3? ♞e7= Now Black will easily gain control of the critical e4-square.) 12...♙xb2 13.♙xb2 White has good compensation due to Black's exposed king (and also possible was 13.gxh4!?).



11.0–0 ♖e8

Preventing ♗c1–e3.

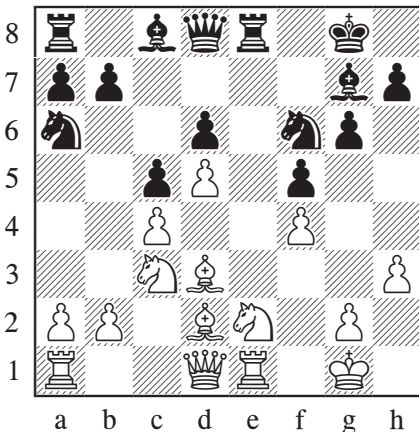
The possibility 11...♗a6! is analyzed later in this chapter, on page 253.

12.♗d2 ♖a6 13.♞e1

Attempting to expand with 13.g4? loses a pawn after 13...fxg4 14.hxg4 ♖h4.

Inaccurate is 13.♖b3?! ♗b4 14.♗b1 b5! when Black once again obtains a good position by correctly breaking with ...b7–b5: 15.cxb5 ♗b6 16.a3 ♗4xd5! 17.♗xd5 ♗e6 18.♗ec3 c4! 19.♖d1 ♗xd5

13...♗f6



Unlike the previous game, Black now keeps an

eye on the key squares e4 and g4. Note how the key advance g2–g4 is temporarily unfeasible.

14.♗g3 ♞xe1† 15.♗xe1

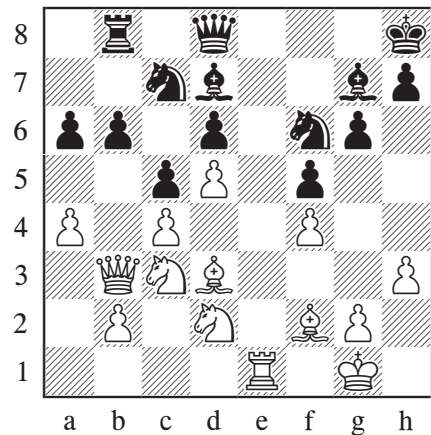
The current position is relatively flexible, and for the next several moves both sides play schematically. Black prepares a potential ...b7–b5 break, which White intends to prevent.

15...♗d7 16.a3 ♗h8 17.♗f2 ♞c8 18.♖b3 ♞b8 19.♞e1 b6 20.♗f1

The knight on g3 was not very useful, so White heads to f3 via d2.

20...♗c7 21.♗d2 a6 22.a4

Preventing ...b6–b5.



22...♗h5 23.g3 ♗e8 24.♗f3 h6

This is necessary to prevent ♗g5.

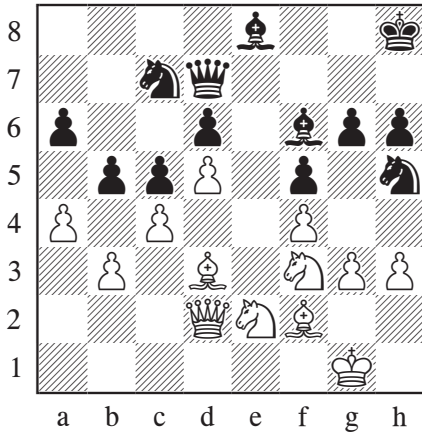
25.♖c2 ♗f7

The desired break 25...b5?! runs into tactical problems after: 26.axb5 axb5 27.♗xb5 ♗xb5 28.cxb5 ♗xb5 29.♗xb5 ♞xb5 30.♗h4! ♗h7 (30...♖f6? 31.♞e6+–) 31.♗xg6! This is the key move. 31...♗xg6 32.g4 ♖f8 (32...♗f6? fails to 33.♖xf5† ♗f7 34.g5+–) 33.gxh5† ♗h7 34.♖a4 ♞xb2 35.♖d7 Black is under pressure.

26.♖c2 ♗f6 27.♖d2 ♖d7 28.b3 ♞e8 29.♞xe8† ♗xe8 30.♗e2 b5!†

This break only favours White, as it allows a queen invasion.

Better was 30...a5 eliminating all queenside breaks, though White preserves a small edge, say after 31.♘h2 preparing g3-g4: 31...♘a6 32.g4 ♘g7 33.♖g2 ♘b4 34.♙b1±



31.axb5 axb5 32.♖a5

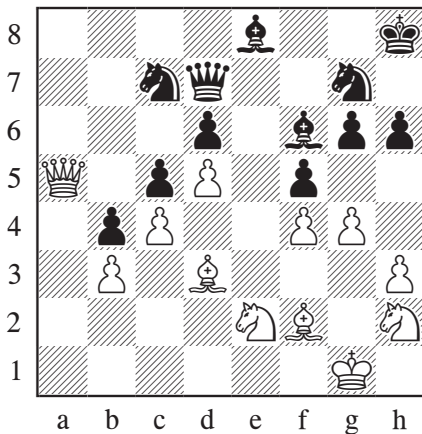
Another option was 32.b4!? bxc4 33.♙xc4 cxb4 34.♖xb4± when White has more space and good piece coordination.

32...b4 33.♘h2!

An important move, preparing g3-g4.

33...♘g7 34.g4!±

In similar style to the Spassky – Fischer game, this advance secures White an advantage.



34...♖e7

Releasing the tension with 34...fxg4 does not help Black, as it increases White's central dominance: 35.hxg4 h5 36.g5 ♙d8 37.♖a1± White preserves a small edge due to the weaknesses on d6 and g6.

35.♘f3

The alternative 35.♘f1!± followed by ♘e3 deserves attention.

35...♖d7 36.g5!

A well-timed advance.

36...♙d8

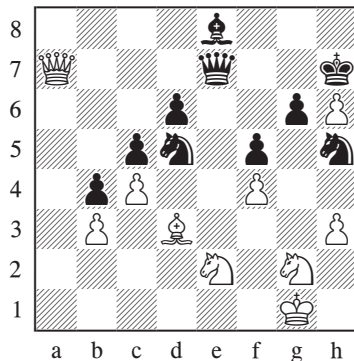
36...hxg5?! This trade only gives White a nice square on f4. 37.fxg5 ♙d8 38.♖a1 ♖h7 39.♘f4± White is in control.

Now, as Krasenkow points out, White should have played:

37.♖a1!

In fact, I like this move so much I will leave it as the main variation.

Instead, Malakhov spoiled his position with 37.gxh6? throwing away his positional edge and weakening his structure. 37...♘h5 Now Black threatens to play ...♘d5, so: 38.♖a7 ♖h7 39.♙h4? This careless move allows Black to take the lead (better was 39.♖a1 ♙f6 40.♖d1 ♖xh6 41.♖g2= which should be drawn). 39...♙xh4 40.♘h4 ♖e7! 41.♘g2? (41.♖b8! would have offered more resistance.) 41...♘d5!



Black was winning and White resigned on move 56. A sad result for White, after a very good game.

37...♖h7 38.♜g3

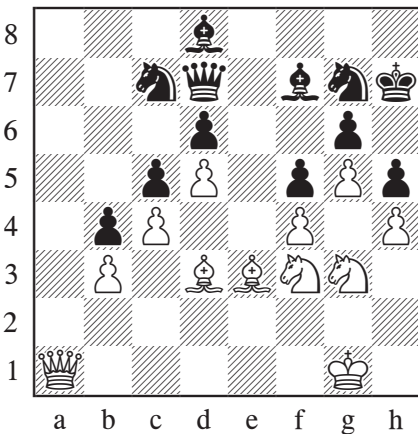
Instead 38.h4?! would be met by 38...♜h5! pressuring the f4-pawn and preventing most of White's threats.

38...♙f7?!

Allowing White to consolidate further.

Somewhat better is 38...hxg5 39.♜xg5† ♔g8 40.h4± though White retains an advantage and has a potential h4-h5 break.

39.h4 h5 40.♙e3±



The position is fairly symmetrical and relatively simplified, but White has great winning chances due to his ideal piece arrangement and spatial advantage. Let's see a possible continuation:

40...♙e7 41.♖f2

The imprecise 41.♙c1?! could be met by 41...♜xd5!? 42.cxd5 ♙xd5 43.♜d2 ♖e6 with some chances of counterplay.

41...♙f8 42...♙c1 ♖e7 43.♙b2

Creating pressure down the main diagonal. Black's pieces slowly become tied up.

43...♔g8

43...♜ge8, attempting to play ...♙g7 to decrease the pressure, runs into 44.♜xh5! gxh5 45.♙xf5† ♔g8 46.♙d3! followed by f4-f5 or g5-g6 with a big advantage.

44.♜e1

Improving the other knight, heading towards e3 to prepare a potential piece sacrifice.

44...♖d8 45.♜c2 ♖e7

A better defence was 45...♙e8 46.♜e3 ♙d7 keeping an eye on the f5-pawn, though after 47.♖b1! this sacrifice is still threatened.

46.♜e3 ♖h7?

A careless move which accelerates White's winning attempts.

Again 46...♙e8 was more stubborn.

47.♖b1!

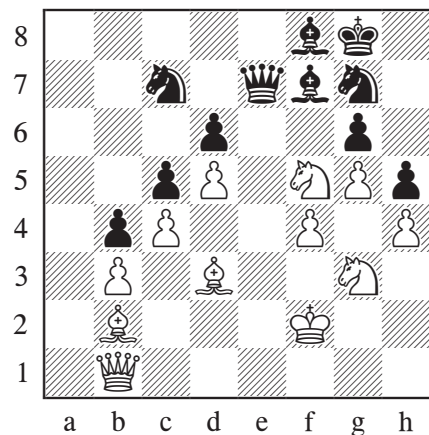
Threatening to win with ♜xf5.

The immediate 47.♜exf5!? is tempting but somewhat premature.

47...♔g8

47...♜ce8? loses on the spot after: 48.♜gxf5! gxf5 49.♜xf5 ♜xf5 50.♙xf5† ♔g8 51.♙h7#

48.♜exf5!+-



48...gxh5 49.♙xf5
Threatening ♙h7#.

49...♗xf5 50.♖xf5
Threatening ♗e4-f6.

50...♙g7
Or 50...♙e8 51.♗e4 ♙g7 52.♙f6 ♖d7
53.♖xd7 ♙xd7 54.♙xg7 ♗xg7 55.♗xd6+—
followed by ♗e4xc5.

51.♙xg7 ♗xg7 52.♖c8!
And now Black cannot prevent material loss.
This fictitious game could have finished after:

52...♙g6 53.f5 ♖f7 54.♗g1 ♙h7 55.f6† ♗g6
56.♖f5#

The reader should remember that the actual game was won by Grischuk, as Malakhov chose the wrong path with 37.gxh6.

Final remarks

1. Black played much better than in the game Spassky – Fischer. The main difference was a more precise piece arrangement which prevented an early g2-g4 expansion.
2. Despite Black's precise opening sequence, White always preserved a small plus, which becomes manifest around move 30 due to his unstoppable plan to play ♗h2 followed by g3-g4 claiming some kingside space.
3. White's mistake 37.gxh6 was a colossal positional concession. Instead, the calm 37.♖a1 would have provided excellent winning chances without any risks.

Ivan Morovic – Mahmood Lodhi

Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010

Learning objective: This game illustrates how White may pressure Black's vulnerable d6-pawn.

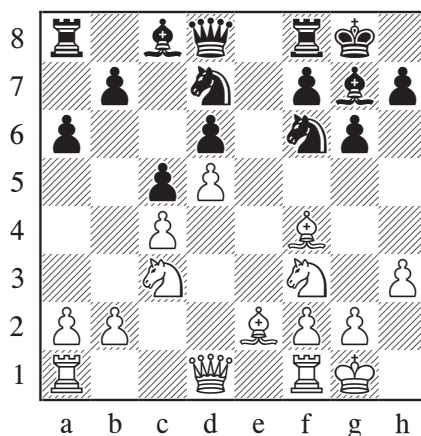
1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♗c3 g6 5.e4 ♙g7
6.♗f3 0–0 7.h3 e6 8.♙e2 exd5 9.exd5 ♗bd7?!

More common is 9...♞e8 10.0–0 ♗e4 trading off a piece to alleviate the space disadvantage. 11.♗xe4 ♞xe4 12.♙d3 ♞e8 13.♙g5± White's position is preferable due to his space and lead in development.

Another option is 9...♙f5 10.g4 ♙e4 11.♙f4 (11.0–0!?) 11...♙xf3 12.♙xf3 ♗e8 with a double-edged position, as in Goloshchapov – Vaulin, Zadar 2000.

10.0–0 a6 11.♙f4!±

Due to the inaccurate 10...♗bd7, the d6-pawn has become a weakness.



11...♖c7 12.♖d2 ♞e8

If 12...♗e8 intending to follow up with ...♗e5 simplifying the position, then 13.♞ad1! leaves Black in an awkward position since 13...♗e5? is met by: 14.♙xe5 dxe5 15.d6 ♖d7 16.♞fe1 ♞b8 17.♖d5+—

13.♞fe1 ♗b6