

# **From Ukraine with Love for Chess**

**Contributions by Vasyl Ivanchuk,  
Ruslan Ponomariov,  
Mariya and Anna Muzychuk  
and many, many others**

**New In Chess 2022**

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# Preface

First of all, thank you very much for purchasing this book. All funds from the sales will be used to help the Ukrainian people. By doing something good, I hope you can also enjoy and share a passion for chess with us.

I remember well the day of February 24 when I woke up, as usual, to prepare my kids for school and start the working day. But the morning was not happy at all. My smartphone was already receiving messages in non-stop mode – the war in Ukraine had started.

I was deeply shocked and depressed for the first week. What to do? How to help? Leave my family safe and join the military forces?

When Peter Boel contacted me on 7th March with an idea to make a book on Ukrainian chess, I didn't think for long. At least now I could do something. And chess is what I have dedicated my whole life to.

In your hands is the work of many authors and contributors. It was not a simple task, as it would be in normal circumstances. Some of them had fled from their homes without knowing what would happen on the next day. Some were hiding in a bomb shelter, trying to survive. But we managed to do it!

This book is not an Encyclopedia of all Ukrainian chess players. I am sure, for example, Vasyl Ivanchuk could write a book just with his own best games. But I hope that everyone can find something interesting here: middlegame ideas, complex positions for calculating, psychological tricks over the board, etc. What's the secret of the 'Ukrainian chess school'?

When I just started to learn chess as a small kid, replaying annotated brilliancies over the board was always inspiring for me, and it helped me to study and play better myself.

I hope we can meet one day in happier circumstances, and we can discuss chess in person or, if you are a book collector, all contributors could sign your copy of the book.

Well, farewell, my dear reader.

Ruslan Ponomariov  
Getxo, April 2022

## Acknowledgments

This book is a tribute to Ukrainian chess. It is far from complete, as it was assembled in haste, but these stories and games provide a wonderful picture of the richness and strength of Ukrainian chess players.

The book celebrates the older generation of Stein and Savon, who played most of their games within the Soviet Union. Vasyl Ivanchuk chose to annotate his favorite game of Stein.

There are numerous games from the next generation, the first one playing for the yellow-and-blue flag of an independent Ukraine. Ivanchuk, who won dozens of elite tournaments, leads the pack. This generation was very successful at the Chess Olympiad, winning two times, in 2004 and 2010.

The Ukrainian women won the Olympiad, in 2006. The female successes further include the World Championship in classical chess by Anna Ushenina and Mariya Muzychuk and in rapid and blitz by her sister Anna.

This book started with an email by Steve Giddins, chess author, translator, and contributor to New In Chess. He wanted to share his desire to help the Ukrainian chess community in the terrible times after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. If New In Chess was planning to publish anything by Ukrainian chess players, Steve offered to translate their writings for free.

We embraced his idea and decided to publish a book to support Ukrainian chess and Ukrainians in need. All proceeds (all revenue minus costs such as printing and distribution) will go to Ukrainian charities. At the end of 2022, we will share the results via email with all New In Chess customers.

Peter Boel, our book editor, suggested an anthology of games from the best Ukrainian players. The next step was asking Ukrainian top GM Ruslan Ponomarev. The FIDE World Champion has been a frequent contributor to our New In Chess Yearbooks and we know him well. Ruslan immediately joined our efforts and offered to reach out to his countrymen and -women and coordinate their contributions. All players he asked were prepared to cooperate, insofar as they could find the time. Some players were busy with other tasks; Natalia Zhukova, for example, is a member

of the city council in Odessa. She permitted us to reprint her game notes from *New In Chess* magazine.

We have added excerpts from *New In Chess* magazine, written by editor-in-chief Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam, highlighting the victories of the Ukrainian teams at the Chess Olympiads of 2004, 2006, and 2010.

Grandmaster Oleg Romanishin goes into great detail about his secret training matches with World Champion Mikhail Tal, the magician from Riga. Last but not least, Dutch Grandmaster Jan Timman showcases some of his favorite endgame studies by Ukrainian composers, a story that was also published in *New In Chess* magazine 2020#3.

Steve Giddins translated and edited the games. Dutch design studio Buro Blikgoed created the cover without sending us any invoice. Everyone from the editorial team at *New In Chess* has been working on this book in their spare time, especially our designer Anton Schermer. Chess journalist Colin McGourty from Chess24 helped with some of the biographies. Our printers in Poland and the USA have printed the book at a huge discount.

Thank you all!

Remmelt Otten  
Publisher *New In Chess*  
Alkmaar, April 2022

## Alexander Beliavsky



Alexander Beliavsky (born 1953 in Lviv) not only won the World Junior Chess Championship in 1973, he was victorious in the USSR Chess Championship no fewer than four times (in 1974, 1980, 1987 and 1990).

Beliavsky won four gold team medals with the USSR: 1982, 1984 (top board), 1988 and 1990. Later he also played for Ukraine in 1992 and since 1996 ten times for Slovenia where he is currently living.

In 1983 he made it to the Candidates matches, losing to the eventual winner

Garry Kasparov in the quarterfinals.

For decades, Alexander the Great was one of the most active and successful tournament players, winning numerous tournaments. In November 2009, he was the oldest person among the world's top 100 active players, and in 2013 he tied for 1st-8th places in the European Individual Chess Championship in Legnica, thus qualifying for the FIDE World Cup 2014.

Beliavsky shares the record with Paul Keres and Viktor Kortchnoi for having defeated the most undisputed World Champions. He has defeated nine – every undisputed World Champion since Vasily Smyslov except Bobby Fischer. He also wrote several books in collaboration with Adrian Mikhalchishin. His autobiography, published in 1998, is called *Uncompromising Chess*.

### NOTES BY

Alexander Beliavsky

Game 6 Queen's Gambit Declined

**Boris Gelfand** 2700

**Alexander Beliavsky** 2640

Linares 1991 (7)

**1.** ♖f3 d5 **2.d4** ♖f6 **3.c4** e6 **4.** ♗c3  
 ♕e7 **5.** ♕f4 0-0 **6.e3** c5 **7.dxc5** ♕xc5  
**8.** ♖c2

At Belgrade 1993, Vladimir

Kramnik played 8.a3 ♗c6 9.♖c1

against me, but after 9...d4 10.♗xd4  
 e5! (10...♗xd4 11.b4!?) 11.♗b3  
 ♕xa3 12.bxa3 exf4 13.♖xd8 ♖xd8  
 14.exf4 ♕e6 Black gained good  
 compensation for the pawn.

**8...** ♗c6 **9.a3** ♖a5

Since the variation where White  
 castles queenside is considered  
 dangerous for Black, 9...♕e7 comes  
 into consideration, when after  
 10.0-0-0 (10.♕d3 dxc4 11.♕xc4 a6  
 12.0-0 b5 13.♖fd1 ♖b6 14.♕d3 ♕b7  
 15.♗e4 ♗xe4 16.♕xe4 f5 17.♕d3

♠ac8 18.♞e2 ♘f6 with mutual chances, Radjabov-Beliavsky, Moscow 2002) he gains an important tempo to launch a counter-attack on the c-file by 10...♙d7, since if 11.cxd5? ♘xd5 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.♞xd5 ♠c8 with a clear advantage.

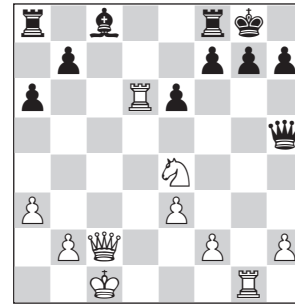


### 10.0-0-0

This variation was devised by grandmasters Mikhail Gurevich and Grigory Kaidanov.

### 10...♙d7

In later games of mine there were some amusing developments in the alternative variation 10...♙e7 11.g4. The following year in Linares I played against Gelfand 11...dxc4 12.♙xc4 a6?! (more vigorous is 12...e5, as played in Van Wely-Short, Wijk aan Zee 1997: 13.g5 exf4 14.gxf6 ♙xf6 15.♘d5 ♘e7 16.♘xf6+ gxf6 17.♞hg1+ ♙h8 18.e4 b5 19.♙d5 ♘xd5 20.exd5 b4 21.axb4 ♞a1+ 22.♙d2 ♞a6 23.♞c6 ♞d8 24.♙c3!? ♙b7 25.♞xa6 ♙xa6, and Black maintained the balance) 13.g5 ♘h5 14.♙d6 ♙xd6 15.♞xd6 ♘e5 16.♙e2 ♘xf3 17.♙xf3 ♞xg5 18.♘e4 ♞f5 19.♙xh5 ♞xh5 20.♞g1.



analysis diagram

Here Boris offered a draw, which I accepted. However, this game was ‘continued’ at the 1996 Olympiad. Vladimir Akopian did not offer a draw, and I decided to prevent the threatened check at f6 by 20...f5, after which I was considerably surprised by the reply 21.♘f6+!. It turned out this move had been analysed in one of the issues of *New In Chess*, which I had not seen. The game continued 21...♞xf6 22.♞c7 ♞h6 23.♞d8+ ♞f8 24.♞xf8+ ♙xf8 25.♞d1 ♙d7 26.♞xd7 b5 27.♙b1 ♞e8, and when Akopian failed to find the best continuation 28.♞d6+ (28.♞f7+ ♙g8 29.♞d7 ♞d8! (29...♞f8 30.♞e7) 30.♞xg7+ ♞xg7 31.♞xd8+ ♙f7=) 28...♙g8 29.♞a7± and played instead 28.♞e5? ♞e7, I managed to escape from the vice.

The best defence against the check at f6 is probably 20...♙h8 or 20...♞h6, but of course this does not solve all Black’s problems.

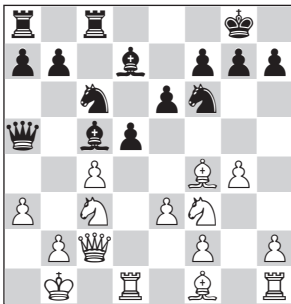
### 11.g4

This may not have been the best move. 11.♙b1!?, as played against me by Chernin in a rapid game



(Aubervilliers 1996), not only moves the king to a safer square, but also threatens the d5-pawn. It is not possible to win it immediately:  
 11.cxd5 ♖xd5 12.♗xd5 exd5  
 13.♞xd5? ♕xe3+.

**11...♞fc8 12.♖b1**



**12...b5!?**

12...♕f8 13.g5 ♗h5 14.♕g3 ♖e7  
 15.♗e5 ♕e8 16.♕e2 and White had the initiative in Gelfand-Beliavsky, Linares 1990.

**13.cxb5**

A) After 13.♗xb5 a6 White is drawn into forcing play, where Black's attack develops of its own accord:

A1) 14.♗bd4 ♗xd4 15.♗xd4 (15. exd4 ♕xa3 16.bxa3 ♞xa3) 15...♕a4  
 16.♞d2 ♞b6 17.♞c1 ♗e4 with dangerous threats;

A2) 14.♕c7 ♞xc7 15.♗xc7 ♞b8!  
 16.cxd5 ♕xa3;

A3) 14.♗c3 ♕xa3! 15.bxa3 ♞xa3  
 16.♞b2 ♞ab8 17.♕xb8 ♗xb8 18.♗b5 ♞a5 and Black regains his piece with a continuing attack.

B) White also cannot be satisfied with 13.cxd5 ♕xa3!, when he comes under a fierce attack after both 14.dxc6 ♕xc6 and 14.♕xb5 ♗b4.

If 13...b4 14.dxc6 ♕xc6 15.♗e5!  
 (15.axb4 ♕xb4 16.♕e2 ♕xc3 17.bxc3 ♕e4 18.♞d3 ♞ab8+-) 15...♕xh1  
 16.♗c4 ♞a6 17.♗d6 ♞c6 (17...♞a5  
 18.♗c4 ♞a6=) 18.♕b5 ♞f3 19.♗xc8  
 ♞xc8 20.♕a6 ♞e8 21.g5 bxc3 22.gxf6  
 is unclear;

C) The inclusion of 13.g5 ♗h5 and now 14.cxb5 runs into 14...♗xf4!  
 (not 14...♗e7? 15.♕e5 a6 16.b4 ♞xa3  
 17.bxc5 axb5 18.♞b2, when White parries the threats, retaining his extra piece) 15.exf4 (both 15.bxc6 ♕xc6 16.exf4 d4 17.♗e4 ♕a4 and 15.♞a4 d4! also favour Black)  
 15...♗e7 16.♗e5 ♕e8, when Black gains the advantage.

**13...♗e7 14.♗d2**

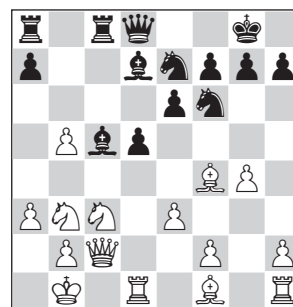
White threatens a fork, but 14.♞c1!  
 and 14.♞a4! were also interesting

**14...♞d8!**

Against the threat of 14...♕xa3 there follows 15.♗b3 ♞b4 16.♞d4.

**15.♗b3**

15.♕e2 was simpler, completing his development.



**15...♗e4!?**

Attacking the c3-knight which is covering the queen.  
 White was hoping after 15...♕b6 to develop his bishops more actively

by 16.♔d3 ♘g6 17.♕g5. However, disillusionment awaits him.

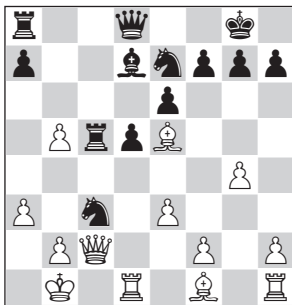
**16. ♖xc5**

Now if 16.♖xe4 there follows 16...♕xe3 17.♖xc8 (17.♘ec5 ♕xf4±) 17...♗xc8 18.♕xe3 dxe4 with advantage to Black, while if 16.♕e5 Black diverts the bishop with 16...♕d6! 17.♕xd6 ♘xd6, gaining the advantage.

**16... ♗xc5 17. ♕e5 ♘xc3+**

The simplest.

If 17...♘g6 18.♕d4 ♘xc3+ 19.♕xc3! (19.bxc3 ♗xb5+ 20.♕xb5 ♕xb5 with compensation) 19...♕xb5 20.♕xb5 ♗xb5 21.h4 and White stands better.

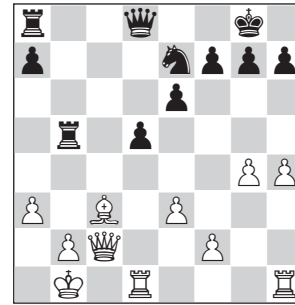


**18. ♕xc3 ♕xb5 19. ♕xb5**

Of course, not 19.b4 ♕a4!.

**19... ♗xb5 20.h4**

The situation appears to have clarified, but apparent simplicity is deceptive. White's king is less securely covered, and he has to reckon with the possible manoeuvre of the knight to c4, from where it attacks the a3- and b2-pawns. White hopes by the advance of his h-pawn to lengthen the a1-h8 diagonal for his bishop, but even so I was more afraid of 20.f4! with the idea of f4-f5.



**20... ♗c8?!**

Too slow. After 20...♗c8! the knight could have gone via b6 or d6 to c4 with dangerous threats: 21.h5 ♘d6 22.h6 ♘c4 23.♖a1 (23.♖xh7+ ♖g6 25.♗h8 ♘xb2 26.♕xb2 ♗xb2+ 27.♖xb2 ♖f6+) 23...g6 24.♖d3 ♗ab8 25.f4 ♖b6.

Things are even worse for White after 21.♖a4 ♘d6 22.♖d4 f6 23.g5 e5 24.♖g4 f5 25.♖g3 ♘c4 26.♕xe5 ♖b6.

**21.h5 ♖d6 22. ♖a4**

While defending the a3-pawn, White removes a defender from the b2-pawn.

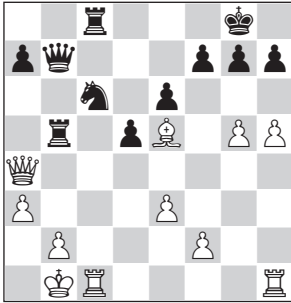
A) Gelfand did not like 22.h6 ♖xa3 23.hxg7 ♘g6 24.♗d3 ♖a6! with the threat of 25...♗a5, when Black's attack gets there first: 25.♖e2 (or 25.♖d1 e5 26.g5 d4! 27.♖h5 ♘h4! 28.♗xh4 ♗xb2+ 29.♖xb2 ♖xd3) 25...♗b3 26.♗c1 d4!;

B) The simplest was 22.♖a1!?, with less predictable consequences.

**22... ♖b8! 23. ♕e5 ♖b7 24.g5?**

The immediate 24.♗c1 was better, although after 24...♘c6 25.h6 (25.♖a1!±) 25...d4! 26.♕xd4 ♗b8 Black's initiative is very dangerous.

24...♖c6 25.♗c1



25...d4! 26.♗xd4 ♖b8 27.♗c3 ♗xb2+  
28.♗a1 ♗b6 29.g6

After 29.♗c2 ♗a6 30.♗a2 Black  
wins by 30...♗b4 31.g6 hxg6 32.hxg6  
(or 32.h6 ♗a4 33.h7+ ♗h8 34.♗xg7+

♗xg7) 32...♗a4 33.gxf7+ ♗xf7  
34.♗g6+ ♗xg6 35.♗cg1+ ♗f5.  
29...♗a6 30.gxf7+ ♗xf7 31.♗f4+  
♗g8 32.♗d6



32...♗d4!  
White resigned.

## Ruslan Ponomariov

Ruslan Ponomariov (born 1983 in Horlivka) was a true chess prodigy. At twelve, he already won the European Under-18 Championship, and at thirteen he took the Under-18 World title. He became a grandmaster at fourteen in 1998, the youngest grandmaster ever at the time. He won many strong tournaments and earned the gold medal on board two for Ukraine at the Istanbul Olympiad in 2001 (8½ out of 11). In 2002, at eighteen, Ponomariov became the FIDE World Champion by beating his fellow countryman Vasyl Ivanchuk in the final. He held this world title for two years. He has been living in Spain since 2012. In April of this year Ponomariov had a nice comeback, ending shared third in the European Championship in Terme Catez. Ponomariov was an important and faithful contributor to New In Chess Yearbooks from 2018 to 2022.

### NOTES BY

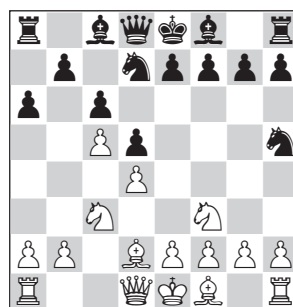
Ruslan Ponomariov

Game 14 Slav Defence

**Ruslan Ponomariov** 2699

**Vladimir Malakhov** 2722

Danzhou 2017 (7)



**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6!?**

This is a modern piece of chess theory: the so-called Chebanenko Variation. My opponent has played many games with it, and he is one of its specialists. True, his choice was not difficult to predict, and it was easy for me to prepare for the game.

**5.c5 ♘bd7 6.♙f4 ♘h5 7.♙d2 ♘hf6 8.♙f4**

The time control gets faster every year, and if I can, I don't mind gaining some time on the clock by repeating moves.

**8...♘h5 9.♙d2**

Now Black has to repeat moves:

**9...♘hf6**

If 9...g6 10.e4 dxe4 11.♘xe4 ♙g7 12.♙c4 0-0 13.0-0 ♘df6 14.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 15.♚b3 ♘d5 16.♚fe1 (Podgaets-Ponomariov, Odessa 2005), White's position is much easier to play. He has free development and more space for his pieces to manoeuvre.

**10.♚c2 g6 11.g3**

My opponent and I had already played this variation at the World Cup semi-finals. That game went 11.h3 ♚c7 12.♙g5 ♙g7 13.e3 e5 14.0-0-0 0-0 15.♙h4 exd4 16.exd4 b6 17.♙g3 ♙h6+ 18.♔b1 ♙f4 19.cxb6 ♘xb6 20.♙xf4 ♚xf4

21. ♖d3 Ponomariov-Malakhov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009. The opposite-side castling guarantees a complex game with chances for both sides.

11... ♗g7 12. ♗g2 0-0 13.0-0



### 13... ♖e8

Later in the same tournament, Vladimir tried to improve Black's play by 13...b6 14.b4 a5 15.a3 ♖e8 (Yu Yangyi-Malakhov, Danzhou 2017), and now by analogy 16. ♖ad1 makes little sense, since Black can profitably open the position by 16...axb4 17.axb4 bxc5 18.bxc5 e5 with good play, e.g. 19.dxe5 ♘xe5 20.♗xe5 ♗xe5 21.e4 ♖a6 22.♗f4 ♖e8 23.♖fe1 ♗a5.

But White can also play more strongly: 14.cxb6!? ♗xb6 15.♗e5 ♖f5 16.e4 dxe4 (16...♗xe4 17.♗xe4 ♖xe5 18.dxe5 dxe4 19.♖h6 ♖e8 20.♖xe4 ♖xe4 21.♗xe4 ♗d5 22.♖fe1±) 17.♗xc6 ♗d7 18.♗xe4 ♗xe4 19.♖xe4 e6 20.♖ac1 ♖fc8 21.♖xf5 gxf5 22.♖a5 ♗d5 23.♗a4 ♖xd4 24.♗xb4 ♖xc6 25.♖xc6 ♗xc6 26.♖d2 ♗b6 27.♗xb6 ♗xb6 28.♖c1.

In both cases, he has a small but persistent advantage without the slightest risk of losing.

### 14. ♖ad1

A slightly mysterious rook move to a closed file. But in fact, White must constantly ask himself what Black wants. It is obvious that Black has less room for his pieces and to somehow free himself he must play either ...e7-e5 or ...b7-b6, which is what White is preparing for. In general, the opening manuals and statistics promise an advantage for White, but everything is not so simple.

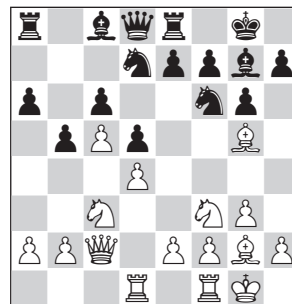
### 14...b5

Now on 14...b6 15.b4 a5 there is 16.b5 ♖b7 17.♗e5 with uncomfortable pressure: 17...♗xe5 18.dxe5 ♗d7 19.bxc6 ♖xc6 20.♗xd5. It is clear that White is now better prepared to open the position.

### 15. ♗g5!?

A new idea. At the same time, the move is far from the first that the engines suggest.

In the event of the natural 15.b4 a5 16.a3 axb4 17.axb4 ♗f8 18.♗e5 ♖f5 19.♗b3 ♗c8 it is not so easy to break through Black's position, which was shown in the game Fressinet-Malakhov, Tromsø 2013.



### 15...a5



**Ruslan Ponomarev in Dortmund in 2014.**

Played after long thought. In a practical game, it is not so clear which move to choose:

A) It is clear that White is very well prepared for the showdown 15...e5 16.e4;

B) 15...h6 16.♙f4 g5 17.♙c1 only leads to additional weakening on the kingside;

C) For tactical reasons, Black cannot just complete his development by 15...♘f8 16.♘e5 ♖c7 17.♙xf6! ♙xf6 18.♘xc6 (it turns out that the move ...b7-b5 has its drawbacks) 18...♙f5 19.♘xd5 ♗xc6 20.♗c3 and Black cannot avoid additional material losses;

D) Perhaps best was 15...b4!? 16.♘a4 ♖a7! (16...a5 17.♘e5 ♘xe5 18.dxe5 ♘g4 19.♘b6 ♖a7 20.e4) 17.a3 (17.♘e5 ♘xe5 18.dxe5 ♘g4) 17...a5, maintaining the semi-closed nature of the position. However, I would have been pleased with this as well. The black pawn on b4 has broken away from the rest of its pieces, which provides an additional object for attack.

The move played by Black in the game is quite principled, forcing White, in fact, to go for subsequent complications.

### 16.e4 b4 17.exd5!

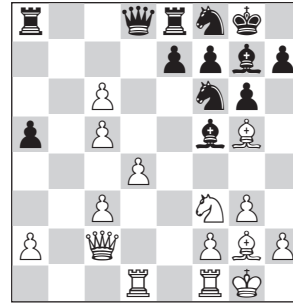
This was also one of the ideas behind the move 15.♙g5. Now the bishop on d2 is not attacked.

### 17...bxc3 18.dxc6 ♘f8 19.bxc3

This position is what I aimed for in my home preparation. It seems to me that the three pawns, although tripled, would be stronger than

Black's minor piece. How often it happens that analysing everything at home is impossible, and the position remains hard to play.

### 19...♙f5



### 20.♗b3

I wanted to somehow consolidate my position and start pushing the passed pawns.

First I planned 20.♗c1 but then I didn't really like it over the board:

A) 20...♗d5 (attacking the white pawns) 21.♘h4 (White can regain the piece with 21.♙xf6 ♙xf6 22.♘h4 ♙e4 23.c4 ♗xc6 24.d5 ♗xc5 25.♙xe4 ♖ac8 26.♙d3 ♙xh4 27.gxh4 e6, but then Black has a rather simple game. An extra pawn looks like little consolation for such a bad pawn structure on the kingside.) 21...♙e4 (21...♗xa2 22.♘xf5 gxf5 23.d5 ♗c4 24.d6 with a White initiative) 22.f3 ♙f5 23.♘xf5 gxf5 looks unclear. Such complications are rather in Black's favour;

B) Perhaps the strongest move is the computer recommendation 20.♗d2!?, for example: 20...♘e4 (20...♙e4 21.♙xf6 ♙xf6 22.d5; 20...♗d5 21.♙xf6 ♙xf6 22.♘e5;

20...♖e6 21.♙xf6 ♘xf6 22.♗fe1)  
21.♚e3 ♘g5 22.♘g5 and then  
White can finally start pushing his  
pawns. But in a practical game, it  
is not so easy to understand the  
difference between the various  
retreats of the queen.

**20...a4**

Black also had the alternative  
20...♖b8 21.♚a3 ♘e6 22.♙e3 ♘d5  
(22...♙e4 23.c4) 23.c4 ♘xe3 24.♚xe3  
♖b4 25.d5 ♘c7 26.♘d2 ♙c2 27.♖c1  
♖b2, still with a complicated  
position. But it seems to me that it's  
easier to play with White here.

**21.♚a3**



**21...♘e4?!**

A miscalculation, perhaps. Here  
the knight is very unstable, and  
temporary attacks are not so  
difficult to refute.

A) 21...♚a5, saving the move ...♘e4  
as a threat, looks more logical  
at first, e.g. 22.♘d2 ♙d3 23.♗fe1  
♘e6 24.♙xf6 ♘xf6 25.♖e3 ♙c2  
26.♖de1±;

B) But even stronger is 21...♙c2!/?  
luring the white pieces into sub-  
optimal positions: 22.♖d2 ♙e4  
23.d5 e6 24.c4 (24.dxe6 ♚e7)  
24...♚a5 25.♖fd1 exd5 26.♙xf6

(26.cxd5 ♘xd5 27.♖xd5 ♙xd5  
28.♖xd5 ♚b5) 26...♙xf6 27.cxd5  
♖ad8 and the white pawns won't be  
going any further...

**22.♙e3 ♚a5 23.♖c1!**

Perhaps Black underestimated this  
move, and he had been hoping only  
for 23.c4 ♚c3 with counterplay. The  
move in the game not only protects  
the pawn, but also the c3-square.

**23...♚a6**

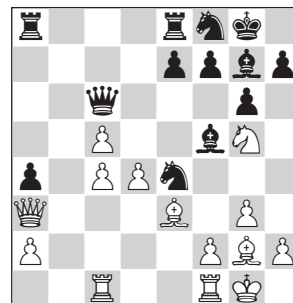
If 23...♖ac8, then 24.♖fd1 ♖xc6  
25.♘d2 ♖e6 26.d5±.

**24.c4 ♚xc6**

Black has finally taken the most  
advanced passed pawn, but now the  
e4-knight falls under a deadly pin.

**25.♘g5**

Even stronger was 25.♘d2 ♖ab8  
26.g4! (over the board I thought I  
had to play 26.♘xe4 ♙xe4 27.d5  
♙b2 28.♚xb2 ♖xb2 29.dxc6 ♙xg2  
30.♚xg2 ♘e6 when White is better,  
but I wanted more) 26...♚d7 27.gxf5  
♘xd2 and now I did not notice the  
quiet move 28.♖fd1! with a large  
and probably decisive advantage for  
White.



**25...e6**

My idea was that after 25...♖ab8  
26.d5 ♙b2 27.♚xb2 ♖xb2 28.dxc6



the knight on d2 is not under attack and I can save the pair of bishops: 28...♖xg5 29.♗xg5 ♘e6 30.♗e3 ♜xa2 31.♞fd1 a3 32.♞d7 ♜b2 33.♞b7 ♜b8 34.♞a1 a2 35.♞xa2 ♜b1+ 36.♗f1 ♞8xb7 37.cxb7 ♞xb7 38.f3+–.

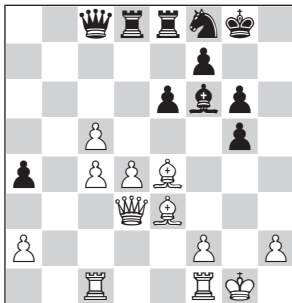
### 26.g4 h6 27.gxf5 hxg5 28.f6!

With this tactical shot, White wins back the piece, remaining with an extra pawn and a pair of active bishops. It seemed that the game had already been decided. But my resourceful opponent, despite time trouble, finds opportunities to play on.

### 28...♗xf6 29.♞d3 ♞ad8

I expected 29...♘xc5 30.dxc5 ♞c8 31.♗xa8 ♞xa8 32.♞fd1 ♞f3 33.♗d4, easily stopping the attacks by the black queen, with a further simple technical stage of converting the material advantage. The move in the game, which puts pressure on the d4-pawn, looks more unpleasant from the practical point of view.

### 30.♗xe4 ♞c8



### 31.♞c3

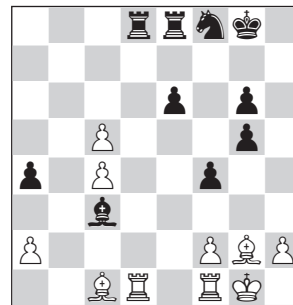
I was not so sure about straightforwardly beginning to advance the pawns: 31.d5 ♘d7 32.c6 ♘e5 33.♞d1

exd5 34.cxd5 ♘g4 (Black activates his pieces) 35.♗g2 ♘xe3 36.fxe3 ♗e5 37.♞xa4 ♞c7. Despite the two minus pawns, Black has good counterplay on the dark squares. With the queens on the board, the white king also feels uncomfortable.

### 31...♗g7 32.♗g2 f5 33.♞cd1

I did not want to return the extra pawn, but at the same time, I wanted to avoid unnecessary complications after let's say 33.f3 f4 34.♗f2 e5!? 35.d5 e4 36.♗d4 ♗xd4+ 37.♞xd4 e3 38.♞b1 ♘e6 39.♞f6 ♞xc5.

### 33...f4 34.♗c1 ♞xc5 35.dxc5 ♗xc3



### 36.♗c6?!

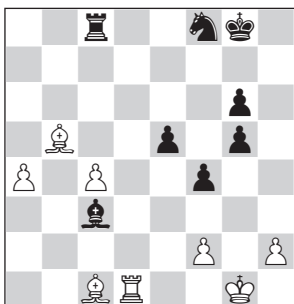
There were four more moves before the time control. Before that, the play had been more or less forced. By inertia, I wanted to calculate some concrete lines and was afraid to make a mistake and spoil my position.

But I should have calmed down and played the simpler 36.c6! ♞b8 37.♗a3 ♗e5 38.h3, slowly improving my position and keeping all the pieces on good squares. Black is unable to defend all of his weaknesses.

**36...♖xd1 37.♗xd1 ♜c8 38.♙xa4  
♜xc5 39.♙b5 ♜c8 40.a4**

Better was 40.♗d3, immediately forcing the black bishop to decide where to go: 40...♙b4 41.a4 e5 42.♗d5 etc.

**40...e5**



**41.♗d5**

The time trouble phase is over, but the position has not become easier, as material is equal. It is clear that White should try to move his passed pawns forward as quickly as possible. But at the same time, he must watch out for Black's possible counterplay.

A) For example, after the straightforward 41.c5 ♙d4 (41...♜xc5 42.♙a3 ♜c8 43.♜c1+–) 42.c6 ♘e6, White's pawns are stopped. And Black, on the contrary, can improve his position. So after much deliberation, I decided to try to keep my rook active;

B) Even stronger with the same idea was 41.♗d6! e4 (41...♙b4 42.♗d5) 42.♙a3 ♖g7 43.h3, gradually starting to advance the passed pawns, but also keeping an eye on Black's possible active play.

**41...♘h7 42.♗d6 ♖g7**

The natural move: protecting the pawn and activating the king in the endgame.

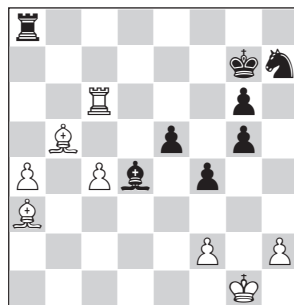
But Black had an interesting chance here: 42...♙b4! (material is not as important as the activity of the pieces) 43.♜b6 (43.♜xg6+ ♖f7 44.♜c6 ♗d8) 43...♗d8 44.♖g2 g4 45.♜xg6+ ♖f7 46.♜xg4 ♖e6 47.♗g7 ♘f6. White has two extra pawns, but it's too early to talk about any clarity, since all his pieces are poorly coordinated. However, it's quite difficult to find all these moves in a practical game.

**43.♙a3 ♙d4 44.♜c6**

Eventually the white pawns move faster. Black lacks just a little bit to start his counterplay on the kingside.

**44...♗a8**

44...♜xc6 45.♙xc6 ♘f8 46.♙d6 ♘e6 47.a5+–.



**45.♜c7+ ♖h6 46.c5 ♘f6 47.♗f7  
♘e4!?**

Again, the players were already in time trouble. Here too Black finds an opportunity to set a trap.

**48.c6**

Tempting was 48.♙c6 ♜a6 49.♙xe4 ♜xa4 50.c6 ♜xa3 51.c7

♖c3 52. ♘b7? (52.h3! ♘b6 53. ♖f6!  
 ♘xc7 54. ♖xg6+ ♔h5 55. ♖g7 g4  
 56.hxg4+ ♔h4 57.g5+–), but then  
 52... ♖c1+ 53. ♔g2 g4 and White  
 can't win. If 54.c8 ♖ f3+ 55. ♖xf3  
 ♖xc8 56. ♘xc8 gxf3+ 57. ♔xf3.  
**48... ♘xf2+ 49. ♔g2 g4**  
 49... ♘c5 50. ♘xc5 ♗xc5 51.c7 ♖c8  
 52. ♖e7+–.

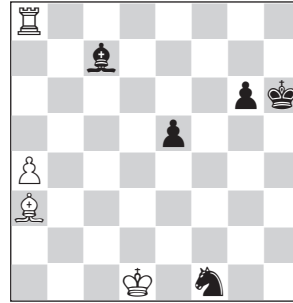
**50.c7 f3+ 51. ♔f1**

Unfortunately, Black cannot create more threats.

**51...g3**

51... ♘b6 52. ♖f8.

**52.hxg3 ♘b6 53. ♖f8 ♗xg3+ 54. ♔e1**  
**f2+ 55. ♔d1 f1 ♖+ 56. ♘xf1 ♘xc7**  
**57. ♖xa8 ♗xf1**



**58.a5**

The passed rook's pawn is especially strong against the knight.

**58... ♗e3+ 59. ♔e2 ♗d5 60.a6 ♘b6**  
**61. ♔f3 ♗c7 62. ♖c8**

And here at last, Black resigned. A tense game from start to finish!

## CHAPTER IV

# Heroic Ivanchuk leads Ukraine to victory at the Calvia Olympiad in 2004

Ukraine won the 36th Olympiad, played in 2004 in Calvia on the Spanish island of Mallorca. In this interview, published in *New In Chess* magazine, the happy team captain **Vladimir Tukmakov** explained to Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam what was behind this huge success.



The Calvia Olympiad, 2004.

Some sports successes are so impressive and astounding that they seem almost unrepeatable. Everything goes your way, everything falls into place and in the end you can only marvel at what you've achieved. In Calvia, Ukraine was an unstoppable, well-oiled machine. The men's team started with three clean sweeps, beat arch-rivals Russia in Round 4 and never looked back. A proud coach tells us when the oiling started and how they kept the machinery greased.

'For me, everything started in the beginning of January, when I became the official trainer of the Ukrainian team. At first nothing much was happening; there were no sessions with the best players or anything. But I did have problems with the selection of the team. The main problem was the first board. I thought that it was very important to have Ivanchuk on first board. Ponomarev had a higher rating and was still the reigning World Champion, but he hadn't been playing at all for more than one year. Ivanchuk feels much better when he plays as a leader on the first



**Ukraine's captain Vladimir Tukmakov:**  
**'We had one great goal, we knew the direction and we moved.'**

board against really strong opposition. Obviously I had to convince Ponomariov. This was not an easy task, but I managed to convince him.

Another complication was that I have not taken part in Ukrainian chess life for many years, because of my opposition against the federation and its President, and that most of the candidates were very young people whom I didn't know personally. So I was hoping to organize at least one or two sessions to meet and watch them. This didn't work out and in the end the only possibility was to have a training session during the Ukrainian Championship. It was a knockout

championship and I could start working with the losers. Ironically this proved to be a very fruitful solution for me, as almost all candidates lost in the first or second round! After the first round I could already work with Ponomariov, Karjakin, Eingorn and Eljanov. And in the second round Ivanchuk was eliminated. I don't know what these meetings meant to them, but for me they were very useful.

Right before the Olympiad, the situation was not ideal either. Ivanchuk competed in the European Club Cup but he played badly, three out of seven. And it was not only his form I was worried about. I believe that the worst possible preparation one could imagine for Karjakin and Ponomariov was what they actually did: playing against computers in Bilbao.

First of all, Ivanchuk should be mentioned, he was the real hero of our team. My expectation was that he would 'close' the first board and score plus three, which would have been a very good result. But he scored plus six and played games of such quality... and he remained focused and ambitious till the very last day. I participated in the preparation for his game against Lautier in the last round. I would have preferred a quieter opening, but he opted for the King's Indian. We looked at a number of variations and each time his choice was for the most complicated and most unbalanced position. That is a man in form and in the right mood.

Ivanchuk's position in the team was a very special one. We had team meetings every evening after dinner, but only six people would be there: me and five players – no Ivanchuk. He was so wrapped up in his own world of chess and his preparation that I didn't disturb him. He was much

more important for the team during the playing sessions.

Likewise, I did expect a good result from Karjakin, but I had not foreseen that he would crush his opponents so easily and quickly. His result was great, but it was not just the result. He plays just natural and simple-looking moves and somehow he wins almost effortlessly.

On the other hand, the plus five of Volokitin was just what I had expected from him. I have a very high opinion of his level of chess and his approach. He is a very strong player and I am sure that he will progress further. Eljanov is very stable, both as a person and as a chess player. These are very important members to have in a team, because it was clear that it was better to let Volokitin play with the white pieces as often as possible. At one moment he even played four white games in a row.

The division of the colours was my responsibility and my decision, but I am also a chess player and I understand how they feel about this. There are also personal ambitions, thoughts about rating and performance. But luckily we had such a splendid start and after the win over Russia, we no longer considered second place a success. Our only goal was first place. In this situation the team was much more important than personal ambitions and my boys understood this very well. We had not one conflict or quarrel about who would play or with which colour or whatever. This was the team spirit. And in our case this was not just empty words. We had one great goal, we knew the direction and we moved.

Finally, a few words about Moiseenko, who is a very good and strong player. He made huge progress after the Bled Olympiad and his rating now is 2653. The first half of the Olympiad he played very well. Then he overestimated his chances with White and after this he lost his balance. He only made plus two, which nevertheless corresponded with his rating, and he too was an important part of the team.

To lead from the very first round to the very end and to keep your concentration is hard. I believe we saved a lot of team energy by not discussing who would play. My only question was: who doesn't want to play? Usually everybody wanted to play. If someone didn't, he was automatically not playing. This never caused any problem, except for the last round. Now it was not a matter of not wanting, but they preferred not to play. But they all said, if you need me, okay. After that I named the people and that was it.

In 2004 Karjakin, who was born in Crimea, still played for Ukraine. In 2009 he emigrated to Russia. In 2022 he was banned by FIDE for six months because of his public support of Putin's choice to invade Ukraine. (Editor)



**Vasyl Ivanchuk in Bilbao in 2011.**

Here, too, Ivanchuk held a different position. At the last Olympiad in Bled he played all 14 games. This is very tough, particularly in 15 days, as here the second free day was canceled. My original idea was for Ivanchuk to play twelve games and to give him two rest days. My first attempt was before the third round, before the match with the Czech Republic and after he had won his first two games. I told him: 'Vasya, it's a long distance and if we win this match convincingly, most probably we will play against Russia. Maybe it's a good idea to take a rest.' He told me: 'It's your choice, it is your final decision, but I feel that I am in good shape and I would like to play.' And he played a very good game against Navara and won. Then he won a fantastic game against Morozevich and I didn't raise the issue again. But it emerged one more time, before the match with Azerbaijan. We were White on Board 1 and our second board, Ponomariov, who was not playing well, had asked me for a rest. So I put Ivanchuk on first board and Volokitin on second. But because Vasyl wasn't present at the team meeting, he didn't know how this had gone. At four in the morning my telephone rang. A call from Ivanchuk. He couldn't sleep and of course he didn't know what time it was... he asked me why I didn't put Ponomariov into the team. Because of the black pieces? And he said that if this was the reason, he could take a rest and Ponomariov could play on first board with White. And I said: 'Vasya, think about your game and forget about this.' And he immediately answered: 'Okay, I understand.' That was it. And he played a fantastic game against Radjabov. The only time he didn't play was against Georgia, but that was something else.

Our victory in Calvia was a historic win, not only for chess but for Ukrainian sport in general. This was a magnificent achievement, not just because we won, but also because of the way we won. Typical was the way we also won the last match very convincingly. During the match Lautier offered me a draw, four draws, but I rejected. Our only goal was to win the gold medals. If there had been any risk, I would have accepted, but in this case there was no reason. I am very satisfied with the job we did in Calvia. I can even say that I am happy.

The prospects for Ukrainian chess are excellent. Our team is very young and more youngsters are waiting in the wings. The only problem is that our success is not the confirmation of a good chess organization. Just the contrary. Therefore it must be hoped that this win has a positive impact on the organization and the development of chess in Ukraine.'



**NOTES BY**

Vasyl Ivanchuk

Game 22 Caro-Kann Defence

**Alexander Morozevich** 2758

**Vasyl Ivanchuk** 2705

Calvia Olympiad 2004 (4)

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘f5 4.f4!?**

I find it hard to understand why this quite logical move occurs so rarely. However, fashion in opening variations is very changeable.

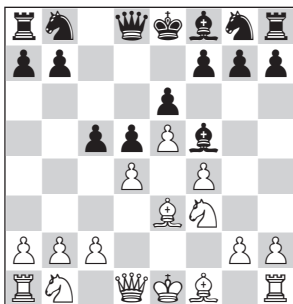
For example, a couple of years ago the currently popular move 4.♙e3 hardly ever occurred in top grandmaster events.

**4...e6 5.♘f3 c5**

This thematic undermining of the centre by Black could well have been delayed. Moves such as 5...♘e7 or 5...♘d7 were perfectly possible.

But in general Black cannot get by without playing ...c6-c5, since here the plan with ...f7-f6 looks very dubious, as White's e5-pawn is better supported than in many other branches of the 3.e5 ♘f5 variation.

**6.♙e3**



**6...cxd4**

Black takes a pawn! What could be more natural? But in fact this capture is a novelty, with which the independent play in this game essentially begins. I did not want to play 6...♘c6 in view of 7.dxc5, when it is not so easy to regain the pawn, since after 7...♙a5+ 8.c3 ♙xc5 9.b4 Black has to sacrifice a piece for rather dubious compensation.

**7.♘xd4 ♘e7**

Even the most unfamiliar position in chess always reminds one of something. In the given case one very much wants to compare this situation with the variation 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♙f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♙e2 c5 6.♙e3 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘e7.

Here White tries to fight for the initiative by playing either 8.c4 or 8.♙g5!?. In fact, the difference between these two positions is not so great. Instead of ♙f1-e2, in the game White has played f2-f4. Whom does this favour? It is hard to give a straightforward answer to this question. On the one hand, White's e5-pawn is better defended and after the retreat of the bishop from f5 to g6 Black constantly has to reckon with the possibility of f4-f5. In addition, the bishop at f1 can be developed on a more active square than e2. On the other hand, now White does not have the bishop sortie to g5, in some variations the bishop at e3 may be hanging, and the slight weakening of the g1-a7 diagonal may tell after he has castled kingside, which in addition still has to be prepared...

**8. ♖b5+**

This move, made on the principle of ‘development first and foremost’, is one that I somehow did not expect. 8.c4!? looks very logical, especially taking into account the fact that it is extremely dangerous for Black to play 8... ♖bc6?!, in analogy with the variation where instead of f2-f4 the white bishop is at e2, in view of 9. ♖b5! (the e5-pawn is defended!).

Apparently he has to fight for equality with 8... dxc4 (8... a6!?) 9. ♖c3 (9. ♖xc4 ♖bc6) 9... ♖bc6 (9... a6!?) 10. ♖a4 (10. ♖db5 ♖d5 11. ♖xd5 exd5 12. ♖xd5 is also possible, with very unclear complications) 10... a6 11. ♖d1 (11.0-0-0) 11... ♖d3! (11... ♖a5?! 12. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 13. ♖xa5 ♖xa5 14. ♖b6 ♖c6 15. ♖xc4, or 14... ♖b4 15. a3 ♖xc3+ 16. bxc3 ♖c6 17. ♖xc4, with some advantage for White in both cases) 12. ♖xd3 cxd3 13. ♖xd3 b5 or 13... ♖a5. Even 13... ♖f5!? may be possible (the bishop at e3 is hanging!).

**8... ♖d7!?**

I did not want to play either 8... ♖bc6 9.0-0 a6 10. ♖xc6+ bxc6 in view of Black’s retarded

development, or 10... ♖xc6

11. ♖xf5 exf5, since I did not like Black’s resulting pawn structure. But 8... ♖bc6 9.0-0 ♖g6!? was a reasonable alternative to the move in the game.

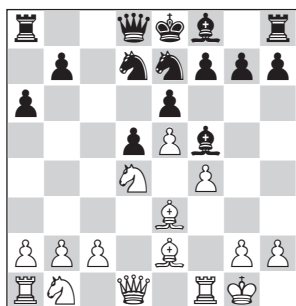
**9.0-0 a6 10. ♖e2**

It is clear that White could not fight for an advantage by exchanging on d7. But instead of the move in the game, 10. ♖a4!? b5 11. ♖b3 was quite possible, switching the bishop to a more active position (especially if at some point he is able to play f4-f5!) and forcing Black to forget about the possibility of queenside castling.

However, I am not convinced that Black has to play 10... b5. True, it is dangerous for him to play 10... ♖g6?! 11.f5! ♖xf5 12. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 13. ♖xf5 exf5 14. ♖xd5 with a very strong attack for White, but 10... ♖c7 or 10... ♖c8 deserves serious consideration. After 10... ♖c7 11. ♖c3 0-0-0 Black does not stand badly, since 12. ♖db5? axb5 13. ♖xb5 does not work in view of 13... ♖a5!. For White it would be interesting to play 11. ♖d2, in order after queenside castling to have the possibility of attacking the centre with c2-c4. If 11... b5, White can, of course, modestly retreat his bishop to b3, but 12. ♖xb5! is also quite possible (for certain tactical reasons the black queen is not so well placed on c7!), 12... axb5 13. ♖xb5 and the white knight will then pick up the black rook at h8. Therefore, instead of 11... b5 Black does better to confine

himself to the modest retreat of his bishop to g6, although even then, among other things, he has to reckon with 12.g4.

Whereas 10...♔c7 has the aim of preparing queenside castling, 10...♖c8 has an altogether different idea. Black prepares play with 11...b5 12.♙b3 ♘c5 (the immediate 10...b5 11.♙b3 ♘c5? is not possible in view of the knight sacrifice on b5, with which, exploiting the fact that the knight at c5 is undefended, White would win a pawn). After 10...♖c8 11.♘c3, apart from the aforementioned 11...b5 12.♙b3 ♘c5, Black can also play 11...h5, forcing White to forget forever about a possible g2-g4. Instead of 11.♘c3 White can play 11.♘d2, and if 11...♙g6, then 12.g4. But apart from 11...♙g6 Black can play either 11...h5 or 11...b5 12.♙b3 ♘c5 13.g4 ♙e4 with an unclear game. Also, he can even begin with 10...h5!?



### 10...g5!?

Of course, it was possible to play more quietly (for example, 10...♙g6) but then the position would have been somewhat better for White in view of the rather unfortunate

position of the black knight at d7. I did not want to reconcile myself to going onto the defensive, and I decided to take a risk, attempting to simultaneously bring two passive pieces into play: the knight at d7 and the bishop at f8.

### 11.g4?!

This move leads to interesting complications, which were not possible to calculate fully during the game, nor even to exhaust by detailed home analysis. But to a certain extent it resembles an attempt to put out a fire by pouring petrol on it. White wants to attack, but, with his rook at a1 and knight at b1 undeveloped, he seriously weakens the position of his own king and, what is also important, the black rook, which hitherto was standing peacefully in the corner at h8, now becomes very active.

The simple capture on g5 was a safer alternative for White. In this case I was afraid of allowing the exchange sacrifice on f5 both after 11.fxg5 ♙g7 12.♘xf5 ♘xf5 13.♖xf5 exf5 14.♘c3 and in the event of 11...♘xe5 12.♘xf5 ♘xf5 13.♖xf5 exf5 14.♘c3.

Therefore, in reply to 11.fxg5 I was planning 11...♙g6, when I considered the resulting position to be double-edged. In the centre, after the fall of the e5-pawn, Black will have some advantage, but White is well developed and has the possibility of play involving both c2-c4, and in some cases h2-h4-h5. It now seems to me that 11...♙g6,

which is good in general, is not strictly the only move. 11...♖c7 is also possible, after which 12.♟xf5 ♘xf5 13.♞xf5 exf5 is not so dangerous for Black, as in the variations examined earlier, since after 14.♟c3 or 14.♞xd5 there follows the advantageous exchange of the dark-squared bishops after 14...♟c5! (the weakening of the g1-a7 diagonal is felt!).

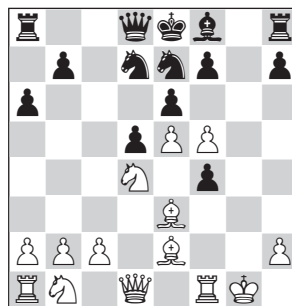
Interesting complications can arise after 11...♞c7 12.♟c3 ♟g6 (otherwise White will be unable to refrain from sacrificing the exchange on f5 in favourable circumstances) 13.♟db5!? axb5 14.♟xb5 ♞b8! (after 14...♞xe5? 15.♟f4! ♞xb2 16.♟c7+? ♟d8 17.♟xa8 e5 things are not so bad for Black, but, firstly, instead of 16.♟c7+? much stronger is 16.♞b1! followed by 17.♟d6 ♟d8 18.♟b7, and secondly, instead of 15.♟f4! White wins altogether simply by 15.♟d4!) 15.♟d6+ ♟d8 16.♟xf7+ ♟xf7 17.♞xf7 ♟f5 (17...♟xe5 18.♞f6 gives White a strong attack) 18.♞xf5! (after the tempting 18.♟b5 ♟xe3 19.♞xd7+ ♟c8 Black does not stand badly, in my opinion) 18...exf5 19.♟f4!. How should this position be evaluated? I don't know! Black is a rook up, but he has many weaknesses and his king is insecure.

Of course, all these variations are not obligatory. For example, after 11...♞c7, apart from 12.♟c3, 12.♟d2 is also possible, in order to play c2-c4...

### 11...gxf4

It is obvious that after 11...♟e4 12.f5 exf5 13.e6 or 12...♟xe5 13.fxe6 the initiative is with White, and since this is so, the move made by Black must to some extent be considered forced.

### 12.gxf5



### 12...♟xf5!

Possibly it was this largely intuitive piece sacrifice that my opponent underestimated when he played 11.g4. In other variations, things would have been significantly better for White. For example, 12...fxe3 13.fxe6 fxe6 (or 13...♟xe5! 14.exf7+ ♟xf7 15.♟c3 with the initiative for White) 14.♟h5+! (14.♟xe6 ♞b6! is less convincing) 14...♟g6 15.♞g4 ♟xe5 (15...♞e7 16.♟xg6+ hxg6 17.♞xg6+ ♟d8 18.♟xe6+ ♟c8 19.♟c3) 16.♞xe6+ ♞e7 17.♟c3 ♞xe6 18.♟xe6 ♟d7 (18...♟d6 19.♟xd5 ♟d7 20.♞f6) 19.♟xf8+ ♞xf8 20.♟xd5 ♟e6 21.♟xe3 ♟f4 22.♟f3! (22.♟d1 ♞hg8+ 23.♟h1 ♟h3!) 22...♟h3+ 23.♟g2 ♞hg8+ 24.♟g4+ ♟xg4 25.♟xg4 and White is a pawn up in the endgame.

### 13.♟xf5

13.♟f2, which is desirable from the positional point of view, runs

into the strong tactical rejoinder 13...♖g8+ (13...♔g5+ 14.♕h1 ♘g3+ is weaker in view of 15.♙xg3 fxg3 16.♖g1!) 14.♕h1 ♘g3+! 15.♙xg3 fxg3 16.♖g1 and here Black has a pleasant choice between 16...♖b6, 16...♘xe5, 16...♖h4 and 16...♙c5.

**13...fxe3**



**14.♘c3!?**

White is ready to return the piece, but Black does not want to take it... I have to admit that I overlooked this possibility in my preliminary calculations. If 14.♘d6+ ♙xd6 15.exd6 I was intending to play 15...♖h4, although I was not convinced that this really was the strongest move. After 14.♘g3 Black can play, for example, 14...♖g8 or 14...♖b6.

**14...♖g8+ 15.♕h1 ♔g5 16.♙f3?!**

A fresh surprise for me, but from the purely chess viewpoint 16.♘g3 was perhaps better, a move which I considered to be strictly forced on White's part. I remember that then 16...♖h4 did not seem very convincing to me in view of 17.♘h5, and therefore I was planning to play either 16...♖xe5 or 16...0-0-0 17.♖xf7 h5 18.♙xh5 ♘xe5.

During the game the resulting positions appeared completely unclear to me, but my intuition suggested that they should be good for Black!

**16...♘xe5**

Of course, not 16...♖xf5? in view of the reply 17.♙h5!, while I rejected the move 16...0-0-0 because of 17.♘d6+ ♙xd6 18.exd6, with an unclear game.

**17.♖e2**

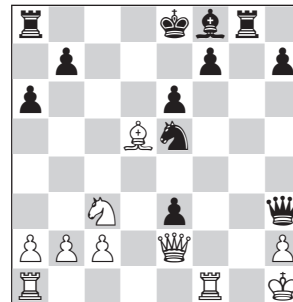
If 17.♙xd5 or 17.♘xd5 I was intending to castle long, and then see what would happen next.

**17...♖xf5**

Of course, 17...0-0-0 18.♘xe3 ♙c5 (18...d4 19.♖g1 ♖xe3 20.♖xe3 dxe3 21.♙xb7+ ♕xb7 22.♖xg8) was also interesting, but with the move in the game Black finally regains the piece, retaining an advantage.

**18.♙xd5 ♖h3**

If 18...♖g4, White had the reply 19.♖xe3, and after 19...0-0-0 (19...♘c4? 20.♖f2!) 20.♖g1 (20.♙xb7+? ♕xb7 21.♖g1 ♙c5! or 21...♙h6!) 20...exd5 21.♖xg4 ♘xg4 Black merely has sufficient compensation for the queen.



**19.♙xb7 ♖a7**

I did not have very much time left and I wanted to play as safely as possible. 19...♖d8 may have been stronger. I was afraid of the queen capture on a6, but it would appear that in this case 20.♙xa6 ♕d6! gives Black a decisive attack. For example: 21.♘b5 (21.♖ad1 ♘f3!) 21...♙b8 22.♙c6+?! ♘xc6 23.♙xc6+ ♖d7 24.♙c8+ ♖e7 25.♙xf7+ (25.♙c5+ ♕d6) 25...♖xf7 26.♙xd7+ ♖f6 27.♙d4+ ♕e5. Instead of 20.♙xa6 White can play 20.♖ad1, but then too after 20...♖xd1 21.♖xd1 f5! 22.♙xa6 ♖f7 it is extremely difficult, if at all possible, for White to defend his position.

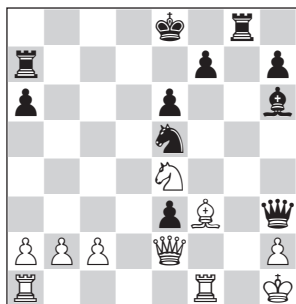
### 20. ♕f3

Of course, not 20. ♕g2 ♖g4! and Black transposes into a won endgame.

### 20... ♕h6

Of course, I very much wanted to defend my e3-pawn, but other moves were also perfectly possible: 20...♘xf3 21.♖xf3 ♖g4; 20...♕e7 21.♙xe3 ♘xf3 22.♙xf3 ♙xf3+ 23.♖xf3 ♖c7; or 20...♕c5 21.♘e4 ♕e7 22.♙xe3 ♘xf3 23.♙xf3 ♙xf3+ 24.♖xf3 f5. In the endgame Black has the advantage.

### 21. ♘e4



### 21... ♖e7!

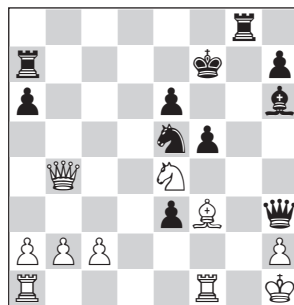
This would appear to be a mistake, after which White could have saved the game.

Stronger was 21...♖g6! 22. ♕h5 (22.♖ad1 f5 23.♘d6+ ♖f8 or 22.♘d6+ ♖f8) 22...♖g7 23.♖ad1 (23.♖f6 ♕g5) 23...♖e7 24.♖f6 (24.♘f6 ♖h4!?) 24...♖h4! (on no account 24...♘g4? 25.♖xf7+! ♖xf7 26.♕xg4, while if 24...♕g5, then 25.♙e1 is possible) 25.♖d4 ♕f4, retaining the advantage.

### 22. ♙e1 f5

There is no particular choice. After 22...f6 (RR: after both 22...♖b7 and 22...a5 23.♙c3 ♘d7 24.♙a3+ ♖d8 Black is still winning) it is bad to play 23.♘xf6? ♖g1+! 24.♖xg1 ♘xf3+ 25.♖xf3 ♙xf3 and Black wins, but after 23.♙b4+ ♖f7 24. ♕h5+! White has a very dangerous attack.

### 23. ♙b4+ ♖f7

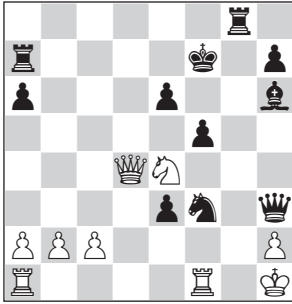


### 24. ♙d4?

After the correct 24.♘d6+! ♖f6 25.♘e4+ Black has nothing better than to agree to a repetition of moves after 25...♖f7. It is extremely dangerous for the king to step onto the g-file, not only in view of the rook check from g1, but also

on account of the possible bishop retreat to g2.

**24... ♖xf3**



**25. ♖f6+**

It appears that White can gain a draw after 25. ♖xa7+ ♔g6 26. ♖g1+ ♕g5 (26... ♖h5!?) 27. ♖xg5+ ♖xg5 28. ♖xg5 ♖xg5 29. ♖g1+ ♔h6 30. ♖xg8 ♖f1+ 31. ♖g1 ♖f3+ 32. ♖g2, but this is not so. In fact, Black wins by playing 27... ♖h6! (instead of

27... ♖xg5) 28. ♖h5+ (28. ♖c7 ♖xg5)

28... ♖xh5 29. ♖xe3+ ♖g5!

**25... ♖e8 26. ♖xe6+ ♖f8 27. ♖f6+**

RR: 27. ♖c8+ ♔g7 28. ♖c3+ ♖g6

29. ♖c6+ ♖h5 30. ♖f6+ ♖h4

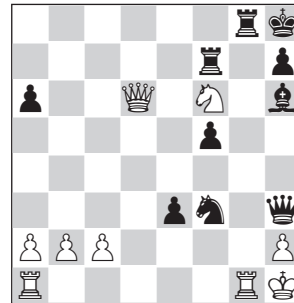
31. ♖xf3=.

**27... ♖f7 28. ♖d6+**

If 28. ♖d8+ ♔g7 29. ♖g1+ Black has

29... ♕g5.

**28... ♔g7 29. ♖g1+ ♖h8 30. ♖f6**



And White resigned.



**Mariya (above) and Anna Muzychuk (photos Lennart Ootes).**



## NOTES BY

Mariya Muzychuk

Game 41 Petroff Defence

**Mariya Muzychuk** 2563

**Humpy Koneru** 2580

St Louis 2020 (2)

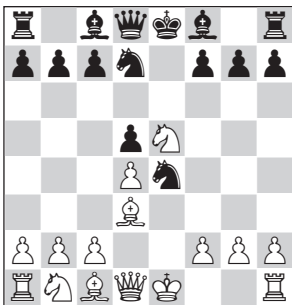
### 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6

The Petroff Defence is a very solid opening choice. Just to remind you, both Caruana and Nepomniachtchi chose it in their World Championship matches against Magnus Carlsen. Humpy also played it in the second game of her World Championship match versus Hou Yifan.

### 3.d4

3.♘xe5 was played in the first round of the same tournament: 3...d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.♘c3 ♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♖e7 7.♖e3 ♘c6 8.♖d2 ♖e6 9.0-0-0 ♖d7 10.h3 h6 11.♗b1 0-0-0 12.♘d4 ♘xd4 13.♖xd4 ♖hg8 14.♖e3 a6 15.c4± and White's pieces are more active but Black's position is pretty solid. Slowly she managed to equalize, ½-½ (40) M.Muzychuk-Ju Wenjun, St Louis 2020.

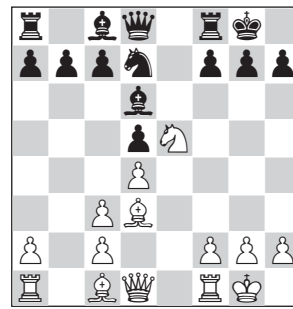
### 3...♘xe4 4.♖d3 d5 5.♘xe5 ♘d7



### 6.♘c3!?

An interesting option that became trendy recently. It was also recommended by Gawain Jones in his book *Coffehouse Repertoire 1.e4 Volume 2*, published in 2021. It looks like White isn't worried about the doubling of his c-pawns and is playing for fast development. 6.♘xd7 ♖xd7 7.♘c3! has a similar idea.

### 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♖d6 8.0-0 0-0



### 9.♖e1

The main move nowadays. 9.♘xd7 ♖xd7 10.♖h5 is just a transposition to the very well investigated opening lines. Next time it would be interesting to try 9.♖f4! which has been played in just a few games so far: 9...♖xe5 10.♖xe5 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 f5. This pawn structure reminds one of the game Carlsen-Shirov, Douglas 2019. Here Black is probably solid and benefits more from the exchange of dark-squared bishops but there is still lots of play ahead.

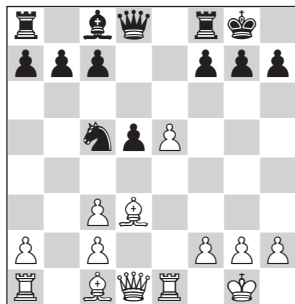
### 9...♖xe5

Black's problem from a practical point of view is the wide choice of different options White has.

A) 9...♞xe5 10.dxe5 ♕c5 doesn't look very logical as Black could have exchanged knights on the 7th move; after 11.♞h5 g6 12.♞h6± having the rook on e1 is beneficial for White;

B) Black could also play 9...c5!? but after 10.♞f3!? it's still too early to say that Black has solved all the problems, e.g. 10...c4 11.♕f5 ♞xe5 12.dxe5 ♕c5 13.♕xc8 ♜xc8 14.♕e3 ♕xe3 15.♞xe3 b6 16.♞ad1 ♞d7 (Shankland-Rapport, Wijk aan Zee 2022), and now instead of 17.e6?!, which only simplifies the position, it's interesting to try 17.f4!?, maintaining pressure in the centre with an initiative on the kingside.

### 10.dxe5 ♞c5



### 11.♞b1?!

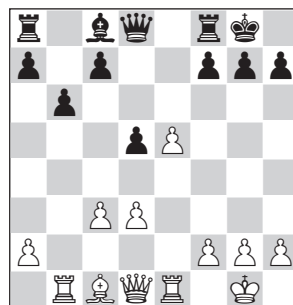
Beginning an interesting plan of attacking on the kingside, which worked perfectly.

However it might be stronger to play 11.♕f1!, keeping the pair of bishops which can be a long-term advantage in this open position. A logical continuation is 11...♞e8 (11...♕f5 12.♕e3 b6 13.♕b5±) 12.♕a3 (12.♕e3 b6 13.c4 ♜xe5 14.♕xc5 ♜xe1 15.♞xe1 bxc5 16.cxd5 ♕f5! 17.c4

♞d6=) 12...b6 13.c4 d4 14.♕xc5 bxc5 15.♞b1 (or 15.♞f3!? ♞b8 16.♞a3! ♞e7 17.♞xa7 ♕e6 18.♕d3±) 15...♕d7 16.f4 ♞b8 17.♞xb8 ♞xb8 18.♕d3 and White is better, as played in Steinkellner-Zajontz, cr 2013.

### 11...♞xd3 12.cxd3 b6?!

Black doesn't sense the danger and is just thinking how to finish her development on the queenside. She should have opted for 12...d4! in order to prevent White's plan of regrouping the pieces: 13.c4 (13.cxd4 ♞xd4 14.♞c2 b6 15.♕e3 ♞d5=) 13...b6. Now it's not so easy to bring the rook on b1 into play and therefore White's attack on the kingside is not so dangerous: 14.♞f3 ♕e6 15.♞g3 ♞d7 16.♕g5 ♖h8 17.♞e4± ♕f5 18.♞h4 ♞ae8.



### 13.♞b4!

This is the main point of 11.♞b1. Despite equal material the existence of the opposite-coloured bishops benefits the attacking side.

### 13...♕f5

Black needs to do something against ♞h5 and ♞h4, but now the bishop comes under attack.

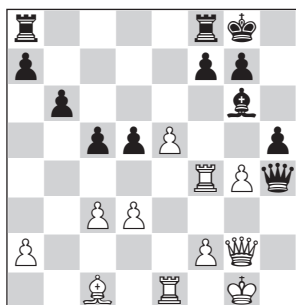
### 14.♞f3 c5 15.♞f4 ♕g6 16.h4! h5 17.g4!?

This is the most logical move from the human point of view.

However the engine suggests 17.d4 with the idea 17...♖c8 18.e6 ♖d6 19.exf7+ ♜xf7 20.♜xf7 ♙xf7 21.♙f4 ♜f6 22.♜h3, keeping the initiative.

**17... ♜xh4 18. ♜g2!**

Threatening to capture Black's queen after g4-g5. No wonder that Black collapses under such pressure.



**18... ♜e7??**

Probably the decisive mistake. It was really hard to find 18...♜g5!. Black's queen is not safe here, but after 19.e6 (19.♖a4 ♜h4! 20.♜f4 ♜g5=) 19...♜fe8! is another only move which doesn't lose: 20.♜h3 (or 20.♙d2 d4 21.cxd4 cxd4) 20...hxg4 21.♜xg4 ♜f6 22.♙g5 ♜f5 and there is nothing really decisive for White, e.g. 23.♜e3 ♜xe6 24.♜f3 ♜e5 25.♜h4 (25.♜e3 ♜f5=) 25...♜xg5+ 26.♜g3 ♜xh4 27.♜xh4 ♜e5 28.♜h3 ♜h5 with counterplay for Black.

**19.gxh5 ♙xh5**

19...♙xd3 20.♜g4 ♙e4 21.♜xg7+ ♙h8 22.♜g3+-.

**20. ♜e3!**

Bringing all the pieces into the attack.

**20... ♜fe8 21. ♜h2**

21.♜h3 was also good enough, e.g. 21...♜xe5 22.♙e3+-; or 21.e6 fxe6 (21...f6 22.♜h4+-) 22.♜h3 ♜f8 23.♜xh5+-.

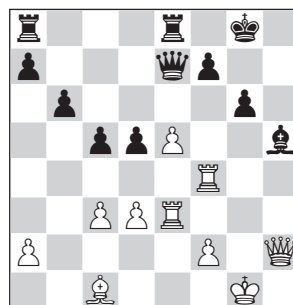
**21...g6**

21...d4 22.♜g3 ♜xe5 23.♜e4 ♜f5 24.♜g5+-.

**22. ♜f5 ♙g4**

22...♙g7 23.e6+-.

**23. ♜f4 ♙h5**



**24.e6!**

The following line was forced, but still from the aesthetic point of view the sacrifice of the second pawn and the whole attack in the style of AlphaZero is very beautiful.

**24...fxe6 25. ♜g3 ♙h7**

25...♜h7 26.♜g5 e5 (26...♜f8 27.♜h4 ♙f7 28.♜hxh5 gxh5 29.♜c7+-) 27.♜h4 ♙f7 28.♜xe5 ♜g7 29.♜hxh5 gxh5+ 30.♜g5+-.

**26. ♜h4 ♜f7 27. ♜g5 ♜g8 28. ♙f1!**

Another quiet move in the middle of the attack.

**28... ♜f3 29. ♜hxh5+ gxh5 30. ♜c7+! ♙h8 31. ♜e5+ ♙h7 32. ♜xh5+ ♙g6 33. ♜g5+ ♙f7 34. ♜h7+**

And just one move before the checkmate, Black resigned.