

# Yearbook

NEW  IN CHESS 134

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***CHESS OPENING NEWS***

**Edited by Jan Timman**

## From the editor



### A keen eye

The best prepared player in the Tata Steel Tournament in Wijk aan Zee this year was not one of the top guns, but the Dutch 'outsider' Jorden van Foreest. He showed deep knowledge in various openings. An example is his White game against Firouzja with 6.♖g1 in the Najdorf. The rook move was popular at the turn of the century, but had almost been forgotten. Tibor Fogarasi wrote the Survey.

Another young player with interesting opening ideas is Daniil Dubov. Michael Adams investigates his baffling 8...d5! in the Anti-Marshall.

It is a sensation when a top player like Alexander Grischuk loses in 24 moves. Erwin l'Ami shows how the young Spanish star David Anton Guijarro managed to do this in a Four Knights English. L'Ami's analysis features in the Survey by José Vilela.

David Navara is in general very well prepared, but recently he fell victim to incidents in two different openings. In the Forum Section, Robert Ris explains how the Czech GM got confused in a topical Sicilian Four Knights line and Tibor Karolyi illustrates in his Survey how Maxime Vachier-Lagrave outprepared Navara in a Two Knights Caro-Kann.

Correspondence games don't come to the fore often, and therefore it is important that Erwin l'Ami keeps a keen eye on the theoretical developments in this field. In the Forum Section about the Novelty of the Year we can also see the importance of following the developments in correspondence chess.

Highly instructive is Caruana's DVD on the Ruy Lopez. Glenn Flear writes the review, as always, on this remarkable publication as well as four others.

**Jan Timman**

# Opening Highlights

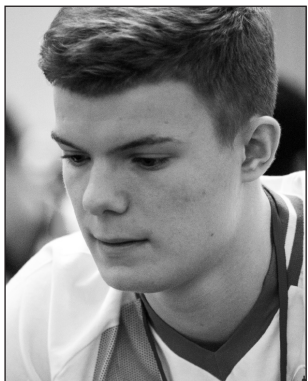


## Jorden van Foreest

After ceding the Dutch title to his younger brother Lucas last year, the coming Dutchman made some remarkable progress. It all came to the surface at the Tata Steel tournament, where Jorden outstripped his illustrious compatriot Anish Giri and surprised the world top with many fresh ideas. One such idea was **6.♘g1!? against the Najdorf in a fascinating game** with the other revelation of the event, Alireza Firouzja. Tibor Fogarasi investigates this umpteenth Najdorf sideline on page 53.

## David Anton Guijarro

At Gibraltar and Isle of Man last year, the Spaniard, a GM since he was 18, proved he can compete with the very best. In Douglas he just barely missed a spot in the Candidates, but in January he did qualify for the Tata Steel Masters of 2021. At the FIDE Grand Swiss, Anton produced a shocker by defeating Candidate Alexander Grischuk with **the testing 6.♘h4 in the English Reversed Sicilian**. This sensational game is analysed by Erwin l'Ami in José Vilela's Survey on page 209.



## Kirill Alekseenko

Some are sceptical about the wildcard's chances in the Candidates coming March. Meanwhile, we are talking about a 22-year-old who only lost to Ding Liren in the playoffs of the fourth round in the World Cup, and who occupied third board for Russia in the European Team Championships. There, he took **a lot of risk in a Bogo-Indian Catalan** that is provided with some awesome analysis by Ivan Sokolov (page 154), but we're sure the young Russian will be armed to the teeth in Yekaterinburg!

## Daniil Dubov

For Daniil Dubov the word 'impossible' doesn't exist. **If you really want to avoid the ...d7-d5 push in the Ruy Lopez, you play the Anti-Marshall with 8.a4**, right? Well, unless you're facing Dubov, as 15-year-old GM Jonas Buhl Bjerre did at the European Teams. Is 8...d5 any good though? 8.a4 specialist Michael Adams investigates from page 119. And be sure not to miss another stunning Dubov novelty: **8.0-0-0 in his QGD spectacle versus Svane**, analysed by the Russian himself in René Olthof's Survey on page 125.





### Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

The French matador quite tragically missed the Candidates, while there is no chess aficionado who wouldn't like to see him sparkle there. As White, MVL has been actively **reviving the Two Knights Variation against the Caro-Kann**, with which Bobby Fischer was so unlucky in the 1959 Candidates. MVL is doing much better with this line and has refreshed it with many new ideas. In Tibor Karolyi's Survey on page 97, Vladimir Barsky analyses MVL's defeat of Navara with this line.

### Alojzije Jankovic

Alojzije Jankovic is a strong GM and proficient theoretician from Croatia. In his first Yearbook Survey he presents a **creative Old Indian/King's Indian hybrid to get white players out of book early**. It's something of a Croatian rapid/blitz specialty, characterized by the early, and probably surprising for many opponents, queen sortie ... ♖a5+. Ideal for practical players, and a very nice 'universal' weapon against 1.d4 ! See Jankovic's Survey on page 193.



### Nico Zwirs

IM Nico Zwirs missed qualification to the Tata Challengers by a hair's breadth in January. He is one of the most active players in the Apeldoorn scene, and is focussing on furthering his chess career this year. Zwirs is a Najdorf connoisseur, and for his Yearbook debut he has written a Survey on a **new black weapon versus the fashionable 6.h3 Najdorf**. Check out his Survey on page 59, and see also how Jan Timman handled this line during his match with Zhansaya Abdumalik in his Survey on page 67.

### Yuriy Krykun

Our third new contributor is an originally Ukrainian FM living in the USA. Yuriy is active as a writer in various chess media, and is a highly versatile opening researcher. His first Survey highlights a **clever reply against White's treacherous set-up with 5.♗d2 in the Rubinstein Nimzo-Indian**. This line has been played by Sergey Karjakin and his second, the eminent theoretician Alexander Riazantsev. Quite something to come up against. See how Yuriy Krykun cracks this job on page 163.



# Your Variations

## Trends & Opinions

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**HOT!** = a trendy line or an important discovery

**SOS** = an early deviation

**GAMBIT** = a pawn sacrifice in the opening

## Don't be afraid!

The FORUM is a platform for discussion of developments in chess opening theory in general and particularly in variations discussed in previous Yearbook issues.

Contributions to these pages should be sent to: [editors@newinchess.com](mailto:editors@newinchess.com)



Murali Karthikeyan

### And the winner is...

by the Editorial team; game analysis by Davorin Kuljasevic

KI 30.7 (E71) YB 132

... Murali Karthikeyan! For his queen sacrifice in the Neo-Makogonov Variation of the King's Indian, the young GM from India got more than 60 percent of the votes! 236 of 392 readers favoured him. 42 votes went to Magnus Carlsen for his 11...♗a6 novelty against Ding Liren in the Open Catalan (Yearbook 133, page 173). Third in the contest came Benjamin Gledura with his move 10.gxh5 in the Slav (Wijk aan Zee 2019 – 37 votes), on which the Hungarian GM wrote a Survey himself in Yearbook 131, page 149. Andrea Stella received 28 votes for his novelty 9.exf5! against the English Defence, on which the Italian GM also wrote a Survey in Yearbook 132 (page

145). There were 21 votes for Alexander Grischuk's early 6.e3 in the 3.h4 line against Maxime Vachier-Lagrave's King's Indian (Yearbook 133, page 212). 18 votes went to Wesley So for his new move 7.♗d3 against Shakhriyar Mamedyarov's Marshall Gambit vs the English (Yearbook 133, page 227). And finally, 10 readers voted for Pier Luigi Basso's novelty 14.♖xe6 against Rajpara Ankit's Vienna Variation (Yearbook 133, page 183). One of the voters, W.A. Oudheusden, pointed our attention to two predecessors, by the way. Grischuk's 6.e3 was already played in the correspondence game Leimgruber-Laghetti (2017), and Basso's 14.♖xe6 had already been seen in the correspondence game Putman-Schaub (2018). It gets harder and harder these days! John Saunders was kind enough to catch the winner,

Murali Karthikeyan, on camera for us towards the end of the Gibraltar Masters. There, the Indian did excellently too with 7 points out of 10 games, drawing, amongst others, with top GMs Adams, Navara and MVL. The winner of the raffle was Matt Guthrie (USA). He will receive a year's subscription to the Yearbook (4 issues). The winning game featured in the notes of Davorin Kuljasevic's Survey in Yearbook 132 (page 205). For this occasion, the Croatian GM provided us with a more extensive analysis of this entire amazing game:

**Alireza Firouzja**  
**Murali Karthikeyan**

Xingtai Ach 2019 (5)

Among many beautiful opening ideas from 2019, one caught particular attention of the chess public. In the game Firouzja-Karthikeyan, Black made a remarkable intuitive queen sacrifice for two pieces in a topical variation of the King's Indian Defence as early as move 9! Considering the high profile of this game (Firouzja is perhaps the most promising young player in the world at the moment!) as well as the convincing way in which Karthikeyan made a case for the sacrifice, I believe that it is worth examining in more detail.

**1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.♟c3 ♁g7**  
**4.e4 d6 5.h3 0-0 6.♁e3**

The Neo-Makogonov Variation of the KID has caught on lately.

**6...c5 7.♟f3 ♖a5**

Karthikeyan chooses a sideline, with the idea to quickly put pressure on the e4-pawn. The main line is 7...cxd4.

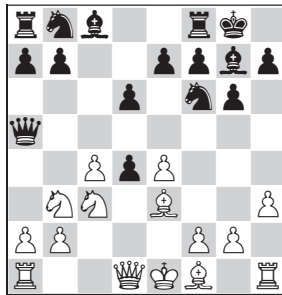
**8.♟d2**

Judging by Firouzja's 5-minute think here, this rare

and ambitious move is likely an over-the-board inspiration rather than home analysis. White's idea makes sense – he wants to resolve the issue of the e4-pawn by expelling the queen from a5 with a subsequent 9.♟b3. However, White can gain a slight advantage with the simpler 8.♁d3, as analysed in YB 132.

**8...cxd4 9.♟b3**

So far, everything is according to the script. White is planning to get a Maroczy Bind with a slight plus once Black moves his queen. There are many reasonable options for Black here, but the one that Karthikeyan played after long deliberation completely changes the course of the battle.



**9...♖xc3+IN**

A stunner! Karthikeyan shows that he is not afraid, which deserves the highest praise from a sporting point of view. From a general chess perspective, the idea to sacrifice the queen in return for two pieces and a superior pawn structure, while quite rare in practice, is viable. A similar opening concept in the King's Indian was presented in Bobotsov-Tal, Varna 1958 (successfully), and Karpov-Velimirovic, Skopje 1976 (unsuccessfully). Karthikeyan's move is a definite improvement over the previously played 9...♖h5

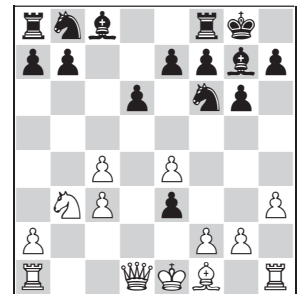


**Davorin Kuljasevic**

10.♁e2 ♁g4 11.♟xd4 ♁xe2 12.♟dx2 ♟c6 13.0-0± 1-0 (36) Kursova-Chistiakova, Menorca 1996.

It is interesting that 9...♖xc3 is not on most engines' radar even at greater depths. The preferred move seems to be 9...♖e5! which retains the pressure on the e-pawn. After 10.♁xd4 ♖e6 11.♁d3 ♟c6 12.♁e3 b6 we get a double fianchetto Hedgehog position, with mutual chances.

**10.bxc3 dxe3**



This is an important moment for White. He has to choose between speeding up his development but allowing further damages to his pawn structure and keeping some structural integrity at the expense of his piece coordination. Firouzja chooses the latter, which proves to be an unsuccessful strategy.  
**11.f3?**



# How hard it is to win

by Erwin I'Ami



In this column, Dutch grandmaster and top chess coach Erwin I'Ami scours the thousands of new correspondence games that are played every month for important novelties that may start new waves in OTB chess also. Every three months it's your chance to check out the best discoveries from this rich chess source that tends to be underexposed.

It is hard to win games in correspondence chess. Having recently finished six games myself, I can surely testify to that. With just one win and five draws my debut in the world of correspondence chess is less 'stormy' than I had planned! Nevertheless, the deep exploration needed in this field is enjoyable to me, and so I've just started four new games!

That it is very much possible to win correspondence games is proved every time I need to pick new games for this column. There is simply too much to choose from! I hope you will enjoy my selection for this issue.

## Sasikiran's amazing find in the Scotch Gambit

KP 13.15 (C44)

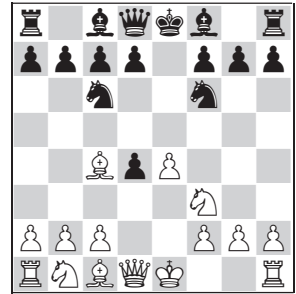
Games by Krishnan Sasikiran seem to be a recurring theme in this column. I can't help it though; he keeps coming up with fascinating ideas! This time he revolutionizes a line in the Scotch Gambit with a long-term piece sacrifice.

### Wieland Belka Krishnan Sasikiran

2019 USA - A (USA) ICCF

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♙c4**

The Scotch gambit! A rare guest in high level games.  
**4...♘f6**



### 5.e5

As a child I often played the line 5.0-0 ♘xe4 6.♙e1 d5 7.♘c3, which looks like fun but Black can reach an endgame with a healthy extra pawn with a few precise moves:

A) 7...♙e6 8.♙xd5 dxc3 9.♙xe4 ♖xd1 10.♙xd1 cxb2 11.♙xb2 f6;

B) 7...dxc4 8.♙xe4+ ♙e7 9.♘xd4 f5 10.♙h6??! is one of the reasons I fancied playing this line when I was 12. The idea was 10...fxe4 (10...gxh6 11.♖h5+ ♔f8 12.♘xf5 is bad) 11.♙xg7 ♗f8 12.♖h5+ ♗f7 13.♙d1 'with huge threats'. In 2020 though, the engine spits out 13...♖d6 14.♘db5 ♖f4 15.♙h6 ♖xf2+ 16.♔h1 ♙d7! and it's time to resign.

For completeness sake, 7.♙xd5 ♖xd5 8.♘c3 is the way to go, but here too, Black is on the good side of things. **5...d5 6.♙b5 ♘e4 7.♘xd4 ♙d7 7...♙c5!?** is a more direct alternative: 8.♘xc6 ♙xf2+ 9.♔f1 bxc6 10.♙xc6+ ♔f8 is dangerous for White, but practice has also shown that after 8.♙e3 the double pawn sacrifice 8...0-0 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♙xc5 ♘xc5 11.♙xc6 ♗b8 12.♖xd5 ♖e7 is pretty

# Chess without castling

by Tibor Fogarasi

- |    |      |      |
|----|------|------|
| 1. | e4   | c5   |
| 2. | ♘f3  | d6   |
| 3. | d4   | cxd4 |
| 4. | ♗xd4 | ♗f6  |
| 5. | ♖c3  | a6   |
| 6. | ♖g1  |      |

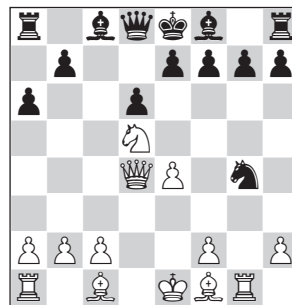


The latest news has it that the recently retired ex-World Champion Vladimir Kramnik is testing his reform scheme with artificial intelligence AlphaZero. The Russian GM's aim was to bring back blood-curdling excitement into the game of chess. The proposal sounds shocking at first: let's eliminate the opportunity of castling! Kramnik tried 'castling-free' chess with Alpha Zero, which learned it the same way as it learned normal, traditional chess. The sample games show that king safety is gone, and the arising positions are full of interesting tactical motifs. Who knows, maybe we will have tournaments with this new rule in the near future? In Round 8 of this year's Wijk aan Zee Super GM tournament we saw a clash of two excellent young GMs. If a beginner played 6.♖g1 in the Najdorf, his trainer would probably advise him to quit chess immediately – except, of course, if he

was well-versed enough in opening theory, and recognized that his pupil is ahead of his level in this respect. The move 6.♖g1 occurred quite a few times in tournament practice in the 1990s: it was tried by my compatriots Judit Polgar and Peter Leko, as well as by Vasily Ivanchuk, Michael Adams, Vadim Zviagintsev and many others. They all followed in the footsteps of GM Goran Todorovic.

## The fundamental idea

The advantage of 6.♖g1 is that it avoids the 'tedium' of popular lines with 6.♗g5 or 6.♗e3, and Black has to face an unusual task at a very early stage. Even Garry Kasparov, the world's strongest Najdorf specialist, gave in to this strange rook move, even if 'only' in a rapid game. In this aggressive attacking set-up White prepares g2-g4. The fundamental idea of the variation is that 6...♗c6 is met by 7.g4! ♗xd4 8.♗xd4 ♗xg4 9.♗d5!,



and White has great positional pressure for the sacrificed pawn.

## A stunning game

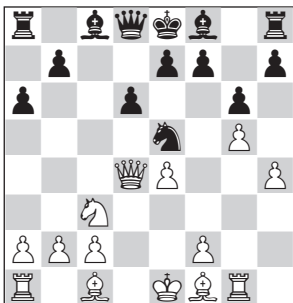
In the starting position, Black's options are 6...g6, 6...♗c6, 6...b5, 6...e6 and the

most common reply 6...e5. According to the latest theory and to common knowledge, 6.♖g1 is not a dangerous continuation, as Black equalizes in all of these lines. However, my own experience does not justify this claim, as the move 6.♖g1 brought me 2 points out of 2 games, although it was 18 years ago... The incentive for this article is the stunning game Jorden van Foreest-Firouzja from the latest Tata Steel Chess Tournament. Firouzja, of Iranian origin, played under the FIDE banner in Wijk aan Zee. He is only 16 years of age and already the top junior of the world. He was leading the pack in the tournament until in rounds 9-11 he was stopped by the illustrious trio Carlsen, Caruana and Anand.

### The Dragon set-up

Against 6.♖g1 he chose the ‘Dragon set-up’ (also favoured by Garry Kasparov) in this game. In Dorian Rogozenko’s Survey ‘The Potential of 6.♖g1’ in Yearbook 64, page 20, much less emphasis was put on this continuation.

After 6...♗c6 7.g4 g6 8.g5 ♗d7, Van Foreest’s move 9.h4 is a novelty: after 9...♗xd4 10.♙xd4 ♗e5



11.♗d1!! ♖g8! 12.♗d5!, the weak b6-square guarantees White’s advantage. The big question is whether this move is really necessary.

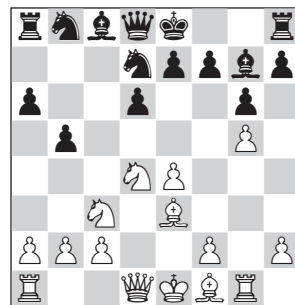


Jorden van Foreest

White can also play 9.♗e3 ♗g7 10.♙d2 ♗de5 11.♗e2 ♗a5 12.b3, and it is very hard to think up a feasible plan for Black (Moradiabadi-Ibraev, Moscow 2005). White simply takes the initiative in the centre by ♗d5 and f4.

8.♗e3 ♗g7 9.f3 was played by Kasparov against Ivanchuk (2002). Danner transposed to a main line Dragon with a small twist.

Black’s other option is to leave the knight on b8 and play the ‘Dragadorf’ plan ...b7-b5 and ...♗b7. After 6...g6 7.g4 ♗g7 8.g5 ♗fd7 9.♗e3 b5,

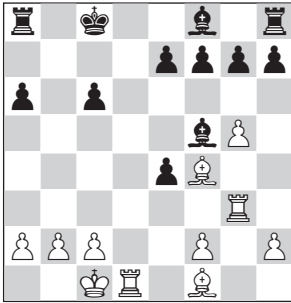


GM Todorovic’s immediate kingside pawn storm h4-h5 is extremely dangerous for Black.

The more ‘leisurely’ 10.♙d2 ♗b7 11.0-0-0 ♗b6 12.♗b3! pointed out the weakness of the a5-square in Petrosian-Ibraev, Alushta 2008.

## Playing for an early ...d6-d5

6... ♖c6 7.g4 d5 8. ♗xc6 bxc6 9.g5 ♗xe4  
10. ♗xe4 dxe4 11. ♔xd8+ ♕xd8 12. ♕f4  
♕f5 13.0-0-0+ ♖c8 14. ♖g3!



We can see that Black's kingside has got stuck, and Gashimov's pieces overwhelm Black like an avalanche!

6... ♗bd7!? also prepares the early break ...d6-d5: 7.g4 d5 8.exd5 ♗b6 9.g5 ♗fxd5 10. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 11.c4 ♗b4 12. ♔a4+ ♔d7 13. ♔xb4 e5! 14. ♔b3 exd4 led to a position with chances for both sides in Fogarasi-Szeberenyi, Budapest 2002.

## Conclusion

Things are not going well for Black in these Najdorf-Dragon hybrids. I am curious to see whether 6... ♖g1! will have a revival.

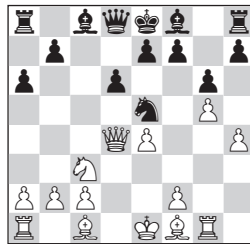
## Dragon set-up 6...g6

### Jorden van Foreest Alireza Firouzja

Wijk aan Zee 2020 (8)

The clash of the two young titans took place in round 8 of the Tata Steel Masters tournament: **1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 a6 6. ♖g1!** This 'mystic' move was used successfully several times by GM Todorovic in the 1990s. Then the brilliant Vasily Ivanchuk also became interested, and followed suit... **6... ♗c6 7.g4 g6 8.g5 ♗d7 9.h4** It's a big question whether this new move is really necessary. Adherents of castling would certainly prefer the 'boring' 9. ♕e3. After 9... ♕g7 10. ♔d2 ♗de5 11. ♕e2 ♗a5 12.b3, Black forgot about the weak b6-square, and played 12... ♕d7?! (12...0-0!?) 13. ♗d5! 0-0 14.0-0-0 ♗c8 15.f4 ♗ec6 16. ♗xc6 (16. ♗f3!?)± 16... ♗xc6 17. ♕b6 ♔e8 18.f5! (and Black found himself in a very difficult situation. 18.h4!?) 18... ♕e5 (18...gxf5? 19. ♗f6+!+-) 19. ♕c4 ♗h8 20. ♔f2 e6 21. ♗c7 ♗xc7 22. ♗xc7 b5 23. ♗xd6 ♗xd6 24. ♗xd6 bxc4 25. ♗gd1 cxb3 (25... ♕c8 26.fxc6 fxc6 27. ♔b6!+-) 26.axb3 exf5 27. ♗xd7 ♔xe4 28. ♔c5 ♗g8 29. ♗d6! ♗c8 30. ♗xc6 1-0

Moradiabadi-Ibraev, Moscow 2005.  
9... ♗xd4 10. ♔xd4 ♗e5



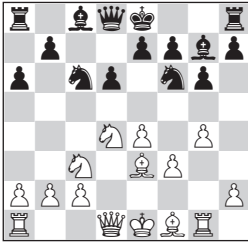
Now AlphaZero turns into a man of flesh and blood! The young Dutch GM's shocking reply was played 'a tempo', so it was clearly the result of home analysis. **11. ♗d1!** The only way! The schematic 11. ♕e2, or 11. ♖g3 is met by 11... ♕g7, and White has to lose a tempo with the queen. In a sharp Sicilian, this can be fatal. **11... ♖g8!** It may sound incredible, but this is the only move! A real 'no castling' chess game! After the rook move, Firouzja's face broke into a smile... **12. ♗d5! ♕e6** 12... ♕g4+?! 13. ♗xg4! (13. ♕e2?! ♕xe2+ 14. ♕xe2 ♗d7!±) 13... ♗xg4 14. ♗b6 ♗c8 (14... ♕g7?? 15. ♔a4+ ♗f8 16. ♗d7+ ♕e8 17. ♗f6+ ♗f8 18. ♗xh7#) 15. ♗xc8 ♔xc8 16.f3 ♕g7 17. ♔a4+ b5 18. ♔b3 ♗e5 (18... ♗h2!?) 19.a4!±. **13. ♔b4** 13. ♔a4+! ♗d7 (13... ♕d7 14. ♔b3±)

14. ♕e3±. **13... ♗b8 14.f4!** 14. ♕e3!?! b5 15.a4!f. **14... ♗c6 15. ♔b6 ♔xb6 16. ♗xb6 ♕g7 17.c3** White has some space advantage in the endgame. therefore Black compensates with active play: **17...f5! 18.gxf6 ♗xf6 19. ♗d5! ♗d7 20. ♗h1 ♕g4+!** **21. ♕e2** 21. ♕c2 ♗bf8 (21... ♕f3? 22. ♕h3+! ♗d8 23. ♗e1±) 22. ♕d3±. **21... ♕xe2+ 22. ♕xe2 b5 23. ♕e3** 23. ♗xf6+ exf6 24. ♕e3 b4!±. **23... ♕g7! 24. ♗ad1 b4!** 24...e6! 25. ♗b4 (25. ♗b6+ ♗c7 26.h5 g5! 27.fxc5 ♗gd8!±) 25... ♗xb4 26.cxb4 ♗e7 27. ♗d2±. **25.e5** 25.cxb4 ♗xb4 26. ♗b6+ ♕e6=, **25...bxc3 26.bxc3 ♗b2+ 27. ♗f3 ♗f8** 27... ♗xa2 28.h5!±. **28.exd6 exd6 29. ♗b1! ♗b5!** An excellent defensive move! It is safer than winning a pawn by 29... ♗xa2 30. ♗b7+ ♕e6 31. ♗d1!±. **30. ♗xb5 axb5 31. ♗b1 ♗b8 32.h5! gxh5!?** 32... ♗e7! 33. ♗xe7 ♕xe7 34.hxc6 hxc6 35.c4 b4=, **33. ♗g1!** 33. ♗b6+± ♕e6 34. ♗xb5±. **33... ♕h8 34. ♗g5 ♗e7!**= **35. ♗xe7 ♕xe7 36. ♗xh5 ♕xc3** ½-½

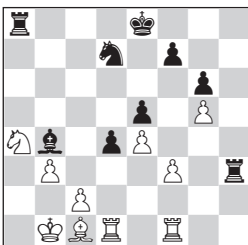
### Vasily Ivanchuk Garry Kasparov

Moscow tt 2002 (1)

**1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 a6 6. ♖g1 g6 7.g4 ♕g7 8. ♕e3 ♗c6 9.f3**



9...e5 10. ♖xc6 bxc6 11. ♗d2 ♕e6  
 11...d5 12.g5 d4 13.gxf6 ♕xf6 14. ♕f2  
 dxc3 15. ♗xc3 0-0 16. ♖d1 ♗c7 17. ♕c4  
 ♖g7 18. ♖e2 a5 19.a3 ♕e8 20. ♖d3 ♕h3  
 21. ♖d2 ♖ad8 22. ♖c1 ♖xd3 23.cxd3  
 ♖b8= Spraggett-Zapata, Madrid  
 2002. **12.0-0-0 ♕f8** 12...d5? 13.g5  
 ♖xe4 (13...d4 14.gxf6 ♕xf6 15. ♕h6  
 dxc3 16. ♗xc3 ♗c7 17.f4!±) 14.fxe4 d4  
 15. ♕f2 dxc3 16. ♗xc3 ♗c7 17. ♕c5±.  
**13. ♖a4 h5!? 14.h3 ♖d7** 14...d5?!  
 15. ♖c5 ♕xc5 16. ♕xc5 dxe4 17. ♗c3  
 ♖d7 18.fxe4 and Black's king is stuck  
 in the middle of the board. **15. ♗c3!**  
**hgx4 16.hgx4 d5!** A passive waiting  
 move like 16... ♗c7 is not to be  
 expected from Kasparov! 17.f4 ♖f6  
 18.fxe5 ♖xe4 19.exd6 ♖xc3 20.dxc7  
 ♖xa4 21. ♕g2. **17. ♗xc6 d4** 17...♖c8  
 18. ♗xa6 ♖a8 19. ♗b5 ♖b8 20.exd5!  
 The queen sac gives White a decisive  
 attack: 20... ♖xb5 21. ♕xb5 ♕xg4  
 22. ♖xg4+- **18. ♕d2 ♖c8 19. ♗b7**  
**♖b8** 19... ♕xa2!?. **20. ♗xa6 ♖a8**  
**21. ♗b5 ♕xa2** 21... ♖b8!?. **22. ♕c4!**  
**♕xc4** 22... ♖b8 23. ♖d5!?. **23. ♗xc4**  
**♕f6?!** 23... ♕g7!?. **24.g5!** ♗d6  
 24... ♗xf3 25. ♗c6 ♖b8 26. ♕a5!±.  
**25. ♖b1 ♖h3 26. ♖gf1 ♕e7 27.b3**  
**♗a3 28. ♕c1! ♗b4 29. ♗xb4 ♕xb4**



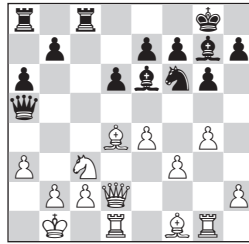
**30.f4!** This forceful break  
 demolishes Black's centre.  
**30... ♖h4 31. ♖h1! ♖xh1 32. ♖xh1**  
**♖e7 33.f5! ♖a6 34. ♖h7 ♖c5**  
**35. ♕d2!! ♖xa4** 35... ♕xd2 36. ♖xc5  
 ♖c6 37.f6+ ♖d8 38. ♖d3 ♕e6

39. ♖xf7 ♕e8 40. ♖g7 ♕xg5 41. ♖xg6  
 ♕xf6 42. ♖b2+- **36.fxg6!!** An  
 elegant finish! **36... ♕xd2 37. ♖xf7+**  
**♕e6 38. ♖f6+ ♖e7 39.bxa4 ♖xe4**  
**40. ♖f5** Kasparov resigned, as  
 Ivanchuk's g-pawn is unstoppable!  
**1-0**

**Tibor Fogarasi  
 Georg Danner**

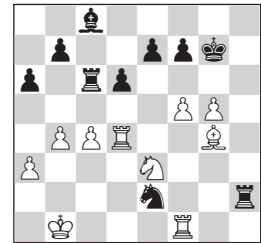
Budapest 2003 (2)

**1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4**  
**4. ♖xd4 ♖f6 5. ♕c3 a6 6. ♖g1 g6**  
**7.g4 ♕g7 8. ♕e3 ♖c6 9.f3 0-0**  
**10. ♗d2 ♖xd4 11. ♕xd4 ♕e6**  
**12.0-0-0 ♗a5 13. ♖b1 ♖fc8** The  
 game transposed into a Dragon  
 where both players have an extra  
 move: White has played ♖g1, and  
 Black has played ...a7-a6. **14.a3**



**14... ♖d7?** 14...b5! 15.g5 (15. ♖d5  
 ♗xd2 16. ♖xd2 ♖xd5 17.exd5  
 ♕d7=) 15... ♖h5 16. ♖d5 ♗xd2  
 17. ♖xd2 ♕xd5 18.exd5±. **15. ♖d5**  
 15. ♕xg7 ♖xg7 16.f4!±. **15... ♗d8**  
**16. ♕xg7 ♖xg7 17. ♖e3!** An ideal  
 square for the white knight!  
 ♖f5+ is always a threat, and  
 the c4-square is under control.  
 17. ♖f4!?. **17... ♗b6 18.f4 ♖f6**  
**19. ♗d4?!** White goes for a slightly  
 better endgame. 19. ♕d3! ♗d4 20.c3  
 ♗c5 (20... ♗a4 21. ♕c2 ♕b3 22. ♕xb3  
 ♗xb3 23.g5 ♖d7 24.f5!±) 21.g5  
 ♖d7 22. ♕c2± was more ambitious.  
**19... ♗xd4 20. ♖xd4 h6 21.h4 ♖c5**  
**22. ♕e2** White is better thanks  
 to his space advantage. **22... ♖h8!**  
 A fine defensive move. Black  
 prepares counterplay if the h-file  
 is opened. 22...b5 23.a4!±. **23.c4**  
**♕c8 24.b4! ♖c6 25.g5** 25. ♕f3!±.  
**25...hxg5 26.hxg5 ♖h5 27.f5?**  
 After the surprising 27.e5! dxe5  
 28.fxe5 ♖e6 29. ♖e4 b5 30. ♖c2!±  
 Black would have been in trouble!

**27... ♖f4! 28. ♕g4 ♖h2** 28... ♖h3!?  
 29. ♕xh3 ♖xh3 30. ♖d5 e5 31.fxe6  
 ♕xe6 32. ♖b2=. **29. ♖f1 gxf5?**  
 29...e5! 30.fxe6 ♖xe6 31. ♖d5 ♖c7!!  
 32. ♖d3 ♕e6!±. **30.exf5 ♖e2**



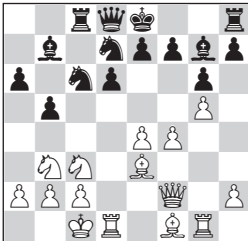
**31.f6+! exf6?** This recapture  
 seems to be natural, especially  
 in time trouble, but the black  
 king becomes vulnerable after  
 the opening of the g-file. The  
 surprising 31... ♖g6! 32. ♖d2!  
 (32.fxe7? ♖c3+ 33. ♖c1 ♖a2+  
 34. ♖d1 ♕xg4+ 35. ♖xg4 ♖c3+  
 36. ♖c1 ♖a2+=; 32. ♕xe2 ♖xe2  
 33. ♖d5 e5! 34. ♖d3 ♖xc4 35. ♖e7+  
 ♖xg5 36. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 37. ♖g3+ ♖h4  
 38. ♖g7 ♖cc2=) 32... ♕xg4 33. ♖xg4  
 ♖c3+ 34. ♖c2 ♖xd2+ 35. ♖xd2  
 ♖e4+ 36. ♖e3 e6!! 37. ♖xe4 ♖xc4+  
 38. ♖f3 ♖xg5 gave Black a chance  
 to escape. **32.gxf6+ ♖g6 33. ♕xe2!**  
**♖xe2 34. ♖d5!+- ♕f5+ 35. ♖a1**  
**♖e4 36. ♖e7+ ♖xe7 37.fxe7 ♕d7**  
**38.c5?!** 38. ♖g4+! ♖h5 39. ♖g8+-  
 would have been more elegant.  
**38...f6 39. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 40.cxd6 ♖f7**  
**41. ♖c1 f5 42. ♖c7 ♕c6** 42... ♖e6  
 43.e8 ♗+-+. **43. ♖c8 ♖e8 44. ♖d8**  
**f4 45.d7 ♕xd7 46. ♖xd7 1-0**

**Davit Gevorgi Petrosian  
 Nurlan Ibraev**

Alushta 2008 (7)

**1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4**  
**4. ♖xd4 ♖f6 5. ♕c3 a6 6. ♖g1 g6**  
**7.g4 ♕g7 8.g5 ♖d7 9. ♕e3 b5**  
**10. ♗d2** 10.h4 ♕b7 11.h5! b4?!  
 (11... ♖c6!? 12.h6 ♕xd4 13. ♕xd4 0-0  
 14. ♕g7 ♖e8∞) 12. ♖d5 e6 13. ♖xb4  
 ♕xe4 14.h6! ♕e5 15.f4 a5 16.fxe5  
 axb4 17.exd6 e5 18. ♗g4 ♕d5  
 19. ♕g2 ♗a5 (19... ♕xg2 20. ♖e6!  
 fxe6 21. ♗xe6+ ♖f8 22. ♖xg2+-)  
 20. ♖b3 ♗b5 21. ♕xd5 ♗xd5  
 22. ♗xb4 0-0 23. ♗d2 ♗e6 24.a3±  
 Todorovic-Perisic, Nis 1995; 10.a3

♟b7 11.f4 ♟b6 12.h4 ♟d8d7 13.h5±  
Euler-Carmelle, Germany tt  
2007/08. **10...♟b7 11.0-0-0 ♟b6**  
**12.♟b3!** a5>. **12...♟c6** 12...♟c4  
13.♟xc4 bxc4 14.♟c5 ♟c6 15.♟d4  
♟xd4 16.♟xd4 0-0 17.♟xc4±;  
12...♟d8d7!; 12...b4 13.♟d5 ♟xd5  
14.exd5 a5 15.♟b5+ ♟d7 (15...♟f8!?)  
16.♟d4 0-0 17.♟xg7 ♟xg7  
18.♟d4±. **13.f4 ♟c8** 13...0-0!?.  
**14.♟f2 ♟d7?!** 14...♟a4! 15.♟xa4  
bxa4 16.♟c5 (16.♟b6! ♟xb3!  
17.♟xd8 bxa2 18.♟d2 ♟d4 19.♟g2  
♟xd8 (19...♟xb2!?) 20.♟a1 ♟e6∞)  
16...♟c7∞.



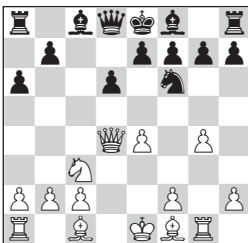
**15.e5 dxe5?** 15...0-0!?. **16.♟h3!**  
**16.♟c5! ♟c7 17.♟h3 ♟c8**  
**18.♟xd7 ♟xd7** 18...♟xd7  
19.♟b6+- . **19.♟b6 ♟xd1+**  
**20.♟xd1 ♟d5 21.♟c3 ♟c4**  
**22.♟xc8+- b4 23.♟e2 ♟xf4+**  
**24.♟e3 ♟h4 25.♟xa6 0-0**  
**26.♟xc6 bxc3 27.♟xc3 1-0**

**The fundamental idea**  
**6...♟c6**

**Melor Bedia**  
**Alexander Netrebko**

Dombai 2010 (7)

**1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4**  
**4.♟xd4 ♟f6 5.♟c3 a6 6.♟g1 ♟c6**  
**7.g4 ♟xd4?!** 8.♟xd4



**8...♟xg4?** 8...♟xg4 9.♟d5!±;  
8...e5 9.♟a4+ (9.♟d1 Zviagintsev-

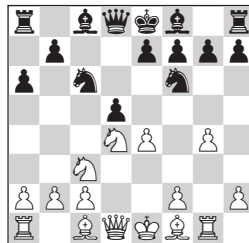
Ivanchuk, Elista rapid 1998  
– YB/49-25) 9...♟d7 10.♟b3±  
b5?! (10...♟c6!) 11.g5 ♟e6 12.gxf6!  
♟xb3 13.axb3→ Handke-Murdzia,  
Hamburg ch-city 2002 – YB/64-  
21. **9.♟xg4! ♟xg4 10.♟a4+ ♟d7**  
10...b5 11.♟xb5 e6 12.♟xd6+  
(12.♟c7+ ♟e7 13.♟xa8 ♟xa8  
14.♟e2 ♟f6 15.f3 ♟a7 16.♟f1+–)  
12...♟e7 13.♟f4+- . **11.♟b5 axb5**  
**12.♟xa8+ ♟d8 13.♟xb7+- b4**  
13...♟xh2 14.♟xb5+- . **14.♟d5**  
**♟d7 15.♟xb4 ♟xh2 16.♟f4 ♟f3+**  
**17.♟e2 ♟g4 17...♟h4 18.♟b8+**  
**♟d8 19.♟b5+ ♟d7 20.a4+- .**  
**18.♟b8+ ♟d7 19.♟c7+ ♟e8**  
**20.♟e3! 1-0** 20...♟d4+ 21.♟d3!+-;  
20...♟g1+ 21.♟f1!+- .

**Playing for an early ...d6-d5**

**Vugar Gashimov**  
**Ernesto Inarkiev**

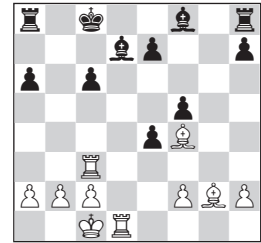
Athens 2005

Let's commemorate Azerbaijani  
genius Vugar Gashimov, who  
passed away at the tragically young  
age of 27! **1.e4 c5 2.♟c3 d6 3.♟f3**  
**♟f6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♟xd4 a6 6.♟g1**  
**♟c6 7.g4 d5**



**8.♟xc6 8.exd5 ♟xd5 9.♟xd5**  
**♟xd5 10.♟e3 ♟d7 11.♟g2 ♟a5+**  
12.c3 e5 13.♟xc6 ♟xc6 14.♟xc6+  
bxc6 15.♟b3± Todorovic-Lazic,  
Svetozarevo 1990. The oldest  
game with 6.♟g1 in the Online  
Database. **8...bxc6 9.g5 ♟xe4**  
**10.♟xe4 dxe4 11.♟xd8+ ♟xd8**  
**12.♟f4 ♟f5 13.0-0-0+ ♟c8**  
**14.♟g3!** 14.♟d4 e6 15.♟c4 ♟b7  
16.♟g2 ♟e7 17.f3 e5 18.♟xe5 ♟xg5+  
19.f4 ♟he8 20.♟b4+ ♟c8 21.♟xe4  
♟xe4 22.♟xg5 ♟g6 23.♟xg7±  
Pridorozhni-Potkin, Sochi 2017.

**14...f6 14...e6 15.♟b3!+- . 15.gxf6**  
**gxf6 16.♟c3 ♟d7 17.♟g2 f5 17...e5**  
18.♟xe4! Δ 18...exf4 19.♟xd7 ♟xd7  
20.♟xc6+ ♟e6 21.♟xa8±.

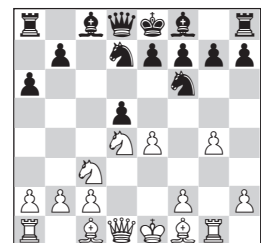


**18.♟g3!** A beautiful move,  
after which Black's kingside is  
stalemated! **18...♟e6 19.♟h3! ♟a7**  
**20.♟c3! ♟b7 20...♟d7 21.♟b3 ♟a8**  
22.♟f1!+- . **21.♟xf5 21.♟d7+!! ♟b6**  
(21...♟xd7 22.♟b3+ ♟c8 23.♟b8#)  
22.♟e3+- . **21...♟h6 22.♟xh6**  
**♟xf5 23.♟c5 ♟g4 24.♟d4!**  
The culmination of White's  
dark-square strategy! **24...♟b6**  
**25.♟dc4 ♟d7 25...♟c7 26.♟f4 ♟cc8**  
27.♟e3+- . **26.♟xc6+ ♟b7 27.b3!**  
White has an extra pawn, plus the  
more active pieces. Gashimov's  
play is immaculate in the final  
stage as well. **27...♟e2 28.♟c3**  
**♟g8 29.♟f4 ♟f8 30.♟g3 ♟g4**  
**31.♟b2 ♟f7 32.a4! ♟f6 33.♟c7+**  
**♟a8 34.♟c8+ ♟b7 35.♟b8+**  
**♟a7 36.♟b4+- ♟b6 37.♟xe4**  
**♟f5 38.♟ec4 e6 39.♟f4! ♟a8**  
**40.♟e3 ♟bd6 41.♟b4! ♟d8 42.♟c7**  
**♟d7 43.♟xd7 ♟xd7 44.♟b6 ♟a7**  
**45.♟d6!** Black resigned, as he loses  
the a6-pawn too. **1-0**

**Tibor Fogarasi**  
**Adam Szeberenyi**

Budapest 2002 (7)

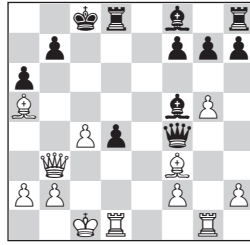
**1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4**  
**4.♟xd4 ♟f6 5.♟c3 a6 6.♟g1**  
**♟bd7?!** 7.g4 d5



## Sicilian Defence – Najdorf Variation

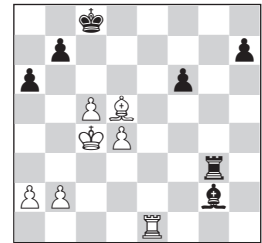
**8.exd5 ♖b6 9.g5 ♜fxd5 10.♗xd5 ♜xd5 10...** ♗xd5 11.♕g2 ♖e5+ 12.♜e2∞ Δ 12... ♗xh2? 13.♙f4 ♗h5 14.♗d3+- **11.c4** 11.♞g3!?, 11.♕g2!?. **11...♜b4** 11...♜b6 12.♙e3 e5 13.♜c2 ♗c7 14.♗e2∞. **12.♗a4+** ♗d7 **13.♗xb4** 13.♗xd7+?! ♙xd7 14.♙f4 f6 (14...0-0-0!?) 15.gxf6 gxf6 16.a3 e5 17.0-0-0 exf4 18.axb4 ♙xb4- **13...e5!** 13... ♗xd4? 14.♙e3!±. **14.♗b3** 14.♗b6!?. **14...exd4** **15.♙d2 ♖e7+**? 15... ♗c7! 16.0-0-0 ♙e6 17.♙b1 b5 18.♗f3 ♞c8 19.♙f4 ♗c5 20.♙h3! bxc4 21.♙xe6 fxe6 22.♗e4!† – White would be better because Black’s king is stuck in the middle; 15...♙d6 16.0-0-0 0-0∞. **16.♙e2 ♙f5 17.0-0-0! 0-0-0** 17... ♗e4? 18.♙d3! ♗xd3 19.♞ge1+ ♙e7 20.♞xe7+! ♙f8 (20...♙xe7 21.♗xb7+ ♙e8 22.♗xa8+ ♙d7 23.♗b7+ ♙e8 24.♞e1+ ♙e6 25.♗c8+ ♙e7 26.♙b4#) 21.♗xd3 ♙xd3 22.♙b4 ♙g6 23.♞de1+- **18.♙f3!** 18.♙d3? ♗c5!. **18...♗c7 19.♙a5!** ♗f4+ Now a spectacular

and surprising move turns White’s initiative into a decisive advantage.



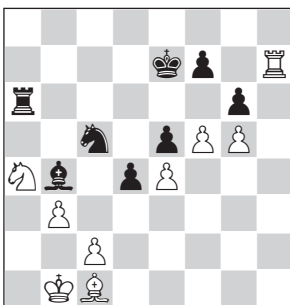
**20.♗e3!** 20.♙d2 ♗c7 21.♙a5=; 20.♞d2 ♞d7 21.♙b6∞. **20...♙d6**□ **21.♞xd4 ♗xe3+** **22.fxe3 ♙xh2** **23.♞f1± ♞xd4 24.exd4 ♙f4+** 24...♙e6 25.d5 ♙d7 (25...♙h3 26.♙h1 ♙f4+ 27.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 28.♙xd2 ♙f5 29.c5±) 26.♙e4!±; 24...♙g6 25.♙d5±; 24...g6 25.♞h1 ♙f4+ 26.♙d2 ♙g3 27.♙e3 b6 28.♙d2±. **25.♙d2 ♙xd2+** **26.♙xd2 ♙h3** 26...♙g6!?. **27.♞e1!** ♞d8 **28.♙c3** In spite of material equality, Black’s position is

hopeless in the endgame. **28...f6** 28...♙c7 29.c5! b6 30.b4 bxc5 31.bxc5 ♙e6 32.a3±; 28...b6 29.♙d5! ♞d7 30.♞e8+ ♙c7 31.♞a8!+- **29.gxf6 gxf6 30.c5!** Fixing the weak b7-pawn. **30...♞g8 31.♙c4 ♞g3 32.♙d5 ♙g2** 32...h5 33.♞e8+ ♙d7 34.♞h8 ♙f1+ 35.♙b4 ♞d3 36.♞h7+! ♙d8 37.♞xh5 ♞xd4+ 38.♙a5!+-.



**33.♞e7!+-** h5 **34.♞h7 a5** 34...♞g5 35.♙e6+ ♙b8 36.d5 ♞e5 37.♞h8+ ♙a7 38.d6! ♞xe6 39.d7+- **35.♙e6+!** ♙d8 **36.d5 ♙f1+** **37.♙d4 ♞d3+** **38.♙e4 ♞d2 39.♗xb7 h4 40.c6 ♞c2 41.d6! 1-0**

### Exercise 1

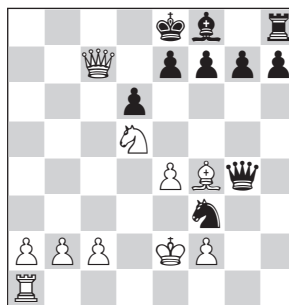


position after 34...♜d7-c5

The next move is a bolt from the blue!

(solutions on page 244)

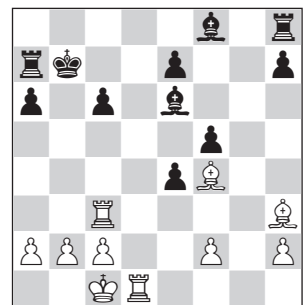
### Exercise 2



position after 19...♜d7-e8

Sometimes pieces can move backwards as well. A backward move hits Black as a deadly strike in this position.

### Exercise 3











position after 20...♙c8-b7

A beautiful distraction is possible here, although it did not happen in the game.

# A revival of the Two Knights – Part I

by Tibor Karolyi (special contribution by Vladimir Barsky)

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | <b>e4</b>   | <b>c6</b>   |
| 2. |  c3  | <b>d5</b>   |
| 3. |  f3  |  g4  |
| 4. | <b>h3</b>   |  xf3 |
| 5. |  xf3 |  f6  |
| 6. |  e2  | <b>e6</b>   |
| 7. | <b>0-0</b>  |  c5  |



If we compare today's top chess with before Kasparov we can spot a lot of differences. One of them is that today's great players play a lot of blitz and rapid tournaments. This is reflected in their selection of openings. There are lines they mainly employ in games with shorter time limits. The Two Knights Variation is such a line. According to my



Etienne Bacrot

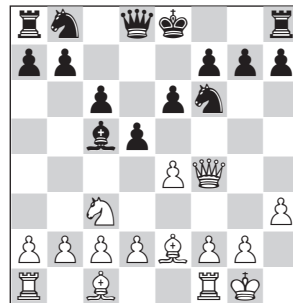
database, not only is Maxime Vachier-Lagrave the top player who employs the line most frequently, but he also does well with it, by scoring 10 wins, 6 draws and only one loss. After 3...Bg4 (the most common move) 4.h3 Bxf3 5.Qxf3 Nf6 6.Be2 e6 7.0-0 Bc5 8.Td1 Bd4 he surprised Navara with 9.Qf4, which is a pawn sacrifice. The number 1 Czech player did not take the pawn; even though the queen move was not a novelty, Navara seemed not to know what to do. He blundered a piece and resigned on move 19.

## Stopping d2-d4

In this small Two Knights series I will present a review of what is happening after the move 7.0-0. In this first instalment we will cover the bishop move 7...Bc5, designed to stop the central advance d2-d4.

The continuation 8.e5 (Game 1) looks premature. After 8...Nfd7 Black is ready to open the centre.

Dragan Solak introduced the move 8.Qf4 against Berkes in 2011 (Game 2).



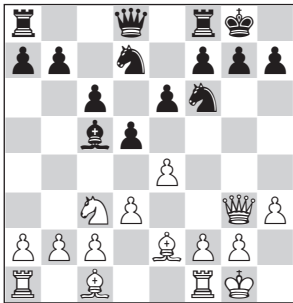


The Hungarian grandmaster answered with 8...♘b6 and the game ended in a draw relatively quickly. I think White can obtain an edge and refer to my notes.

### Bring out your pieces!

White can also play 8.d3, intending to just bring out his pieces.

Then Black can obtain an easy position in several ways, but 8...♗bd7 9. ♖g3 0-0 is the accepted main line.



This position can also arise by other move orders. White may choose between several lines. 10. ♗g5 was seen in Dolezal-Peralta (Game 3). In Ni Hua-Le Quang Liem (Game 4), White was able to open up the position a bit after 10. ♗h6 ♖e8 11. ♗f4, but it meant little danger for Black. Neither did 10. ♗f4 in Zelbel-Svetushkin and Ziaziulkina-M. Muzychuk (Games 5-6).

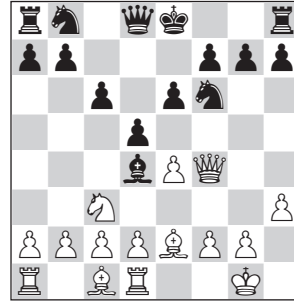
In Guo-Xiong (Game 7) White prepared the push f2-f4 with 10. ♖h1, but after the accurate 10...♗d4 White was unable to make much headway.

Overall the line with 8.d3 has proved to be innocuous.

### Pushing d2-d4

It is logical for White not to accept no for an answer and to try to push d2-d4 anyway with 8. ♖d1. If Black is consistent he will also stick to his concept with 8...♗d4.

The traditional reply to this is 9.exd5, as already seen in Klovans-Simagin, Moscow 1964. However, in November 2018, Etienne Bacrot introduced the pawn sacrifice 9. ♖f4.



In Ragger-Fontaine (Game 8), Black played 9...♖b6 and White obtained an edge. Neither did Dreev's reply 9...♗bd7 yield equality.

Vladimir Barsky analysed Vachier-Lagrave-Navara in New In Chess 2019/6 (Game 9). Black soon headed towards disaster. Instead of the move 9...e5?!, which also featured in the stem game in 2018, Barsky recommends winning a pawn with 9...♗xc3 ('more critical'). It looks reasonable for both sides and has been tested a few times since in high profile women's tournaments. See Games 10 + 11.

### Conclusion

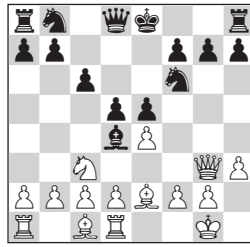
I was surprised how many games have been played recently in this line. It may remain popular for some time to come.

In the second Part of this series we will look at all other black replies except 7...♗bd7 8.d4 dxe4 9. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 10. ♖xe4 ♗f6, which is the main line with well over 100 games in the Online Database.

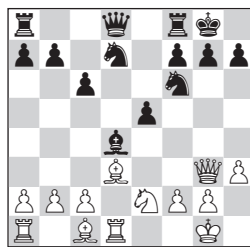
10...cxd5 11. ♖b5 e5 12. ♗f5 ♖bd7  
 13. ♜xd4±. **11. ♜xd5 cxd5 12. a4**  
**♜f6 13. a5 ♗c6 14. c4** Logic says  
 that opening the position works  
 for White, still maybe keeping the  
 position closed would work better  
 as it limits Black's counterplay,  
 e.g. 14. c3!? 0-0 15. d4 ♜d7 16. ♙d3±.  
**14...0-0 15. ♙f3** 15.cxd5 ♗xd5  
 16. ♙f3 ♗b5 17. ♗a4 ♗xa4 18. ♞xa4  
 ♜c6 19. d4±. **15...♜a6 16.cxd5**  
**exd5 17. d4** 17.d3 ♞fe8 18. ♙e3  
 ♙xb2 19. ♞ab1 ♙e5 20. ♗g5±.  
**17...♞fe8 18. ♙d2** 18. ♙e3 ♞ad8  
 19. ♗f5 ♖b4 20. ♞dc1 ♗d6 21. ♞c3=.  
**18...♞ad8 19. ♞e1** 19. ♗f5 ♜c7.  
**19...♞xe1+ 20. ♞xe1 h6 21. ♗g4**  
**♗a4 22. ♙xh6 ♗xa5= 23. ♞c1**  
**♜c7 24. ♙g5 ♙xg5 25. ♗xg5**  
**♜e6 26. ♗e7 ♗d2 27. ♞d1**  
**♙xb2 28. ♞e1 ♗b6 29. ♞xe6**  
**fxe6 30. ♙g4 ♞d6 31. ♗e8+ ♖h7**  
**32. ♗h5+ ♖g8 33. ♗e8+ ♖h7**  
**34. ♗h5+ ♖g8 ½-½**

**Maxime Vachier-Lagrave 9**  
**David Navara**

Riga 2019 (1)  
**1. e4 c6 2. ♜f3 d5 3. ♜c3 ♙g4**  
**4. h3 ♙xf3 5. ♗xf3 ♜f6 6. ♙e2 e6**  
**7. 0-0 ♙c5 8. ♞d1 ♙d4 9. ♗f4!?** We  
 will not delve into the opening  
 subtleties, but merely mention that  
 the Two Knights Variation against  
 the Caro-Kann Defence is firmly  
 in the repertoire of Etienne Bacrot,  
 who was helping MVL in Riga.  
 Now the battle revolves around  
 the d2-d4 advance. The gambit  
 continuation in the game is not a  
 novelty; it was introduced last year.  
 Nevertheless, to all appearances,  
 for Navara it came as an unpleasant  
 surprise. **9...e5?!** More critical, of  
 course, is 9...♙xc3 10.bxc3 (in this  
 way the bishop gains access to the  
 a3-square, and the rook will be able  
 to create pressure on the b-file; in  
 the event of 10.dxc3 ♜xe4 11. ♙d3  
 (11.c4 0-0 12.cxd5 (12. ♙e3 ½-½  
 Soltanici-Istratescu, Arad 2019)  
 12...cxd5 13.c4 ♜c6± Karolyi) 11...  
 f5 Black is alright) 10...♜xe4 11. ♞b1  
 or 11. ♙a3!? – White has an active  
 game, but a pawn is a pawn. See the  
 next game. **10. ♗g3**



**10...dxe4** In the source game  
 Bacrot-Zelcic, Zagreb 2018, 10...0-0  
 11.d3 ♗d6 12.exd5 cxd5 13.♖b5  
 was tried, with the initiative for  
 White. **11.d3 exd3 12. ♙d3 ♜bd7**  
**13. ♜e2?!** The straightforward  
 13. ♗xg7 ♞g8 14. ♗h6 with the  
 threats of 15. ♙f5 and 15. ♙g5 would  
 appear to be stronger – the black  
 king will not feel safe either in  
 the centre or on the queenside.  
 An important nuance: if 14...♗b6,  
 White replies 15. ♙f5!, ignoring  
 the threat to the f2-pawn, when  
 it would appear that Black's  
 position collapses. **13...0-0?** Now  
 Black becomes the co-author of  
 an opening catastrophe. 13...♙b6!  
 was correct, and after 14. ♗xg7 (RR  
 14. ♙f5 g6 15. ♙xd7+ ♜xd7 16. ♙g5  
 (16. ♜c3 f5 17. ♙g5 ♗c7 18. ♞d2 0-0  
 19. ♞ad1 ♞f7 20. ♜a4±) 16...♗c7?!  
 (16...f6!?) 17. ♞xd7?! (17. ♜c3 f5  
 18. ♞d2 – 16. ♜c3) 17...♖xd7 18. ♞d1+  
 ♖c8 19. ♙f6 ♞e8 20. ♜c3 ♖b8  
 21. ♜e4 a6 22. ♜d6 ♞e6?! (22...♖a7!  
 23. ♙xe5 ♞ad8 24. ♞d3 ♗e7 25. ♜xe8  
 ♞xe8 26. ♙c3±) 23. ♙xe5 1-0 (58)  
 Pätz-Gunina, Skolkovo 2019  
 23...♞xe5 24. ♗xe5 ♖a7±) 14...♞g8  
 15. ♗h6 he has 15...e4! 16. ♙c4 ♗e7  
 with counter-chances – his king  
 can hide on the queenside.



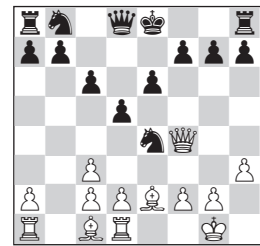
**14. ♙f5!** Now the white bishops  
 become a powerful force, whereas  
 the black bishop, by contrast,

becomes a target for attack.  
**14...♜c5?** The decisive mistake,  
 after which the centralized bishop  
 loses all its retreat squares. It was  
 possible to defend after 14...♞e8  
 15.c3 ♙c5 16. ♙g5 ♗c7 17. ♗h4  
 h6!? 18. ♙xh6 ♜f8, and if 19. ♗g5,  
 then 19...♜e6. Of course, this  
 entire defensive construction  
 looks suspicious, but here, at least,  
 Black does not lose immediately.  
**15. ♙h6 ♜h5** Black is also lost after  
 15...♜e6 16. ♙xe6 ♜h5 17. ♗g4 fxe6  
 18. ♗xe6+ ♖h8 19. ♙e3. **16. ♗g4**  
**♗d6 17. ♗xh5 ♗xh6 18. ♗xh6**  
**gxxh6 19.c3 1-0**

Barsky M/19-6-52

**Elisabeth Pätz 10**  
**Valentina Gunina**

Monaco 2019 (6)  
**1. e4 c6 2. ♜f3 d5 3. ♜c3 ♙g4 4. h3**  
**♙xf3 5. ♗xf3 ♜f6 6. ♙e2 e6 7. 0-0**  
**♙c5 8. ♞d1 ♙d4 9. ♗f4 ♙xc3**  
**10. bxc3 ♜xe4**

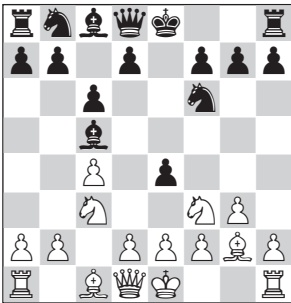


**11. ♞b1 ♗e7 12. ♙f3 ♜g5 13. ♙h5**  
**0-0 14. d3 f6 15. ♗a4 15. ♞e1±**  
 ♜f7 16. ♗b4 (16. ♗g4!?) 16...♗xb4  
 17. ♞xb4 ♜d8 18. ♙a3 (18.c4!?) 18...g6  
 19. ♙g4 ♞e8 20.c4 ♜d7 21.cxd5 cxd5  
 22.f4 (≥ 22.c4 ♜e5 23. ♙e2 ♞c8±)  
 22...♞c8± Lahav-Giryra, Batumi  
 Ech-tt W 2019. **15...♗c7?! 16. ♞e1**  
 16. ♗g4! e5 17. ♙a3 c5 18.h4 ♜f7  
 19. ♗e6 g6 20. ♙f3 ♜d7 21. ♙xd5  
 ♜b6 22. ♙f3±. **16...e5 17. c4** 17. ♙a3  
 ♞d8 18. ♗g4 g6 19.f4! (19.h4 gxxh5  
 20. ♗f5 ♜f7 21. ♞e3 ♜h8 22. ♗xf6  
 ♜g6=) 19...♜d7 (19...gxxh5 20. ♗f5  
 ♜f7 21. ♞e3 ♜h8 22. ♗xf6 ♜g6  
 23.f5+–) 20.fxxg5 f5 21. ♗h4 gxxh5  
 22. ♗xh5 ♜f8 23. ♗h6±. **17...♜d7**  
**18. ♙a3** 18.cxd5 cxd5 19. ♗b3 ♗d6  
 20. ♙a3 ♜c5 21.f4!±. **18...♞f8?!**  
 18...♞f8; 18...♜b6 19. ♗a5 ♞fc8.

# A knight on the rim

by José Vilela (special contribution by Erwin l'Ami)

- |    |            |            |
|----|------------|------------|
| 1. | <b>c4</b>  | <b>e5</b>  |
| 2. | <b>g3</b>  | <b>♘f6</b> |
| 3. | <b>♙g2</b> | <b>♙c5</b> |
| 4. | <b>♘c3</b> | <b>c6</b>  |
| 5. | <b>♘f3</b> | <b>e4</b>  |



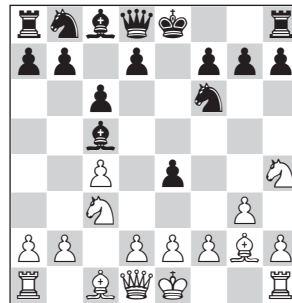
Black's idea with 4...c6 is, of course, to establish a strong pawn centre e5/d5. Meanwhile, by immediately attacking the pawn on e5 with 5.♘f3 White hopes to force Black to defend his e5-pawn with 5...d6, thus renouncing his intended central advance. That would be, to some extent, a psychological and positional success for White. But the real test, and the reason why 5.♘f3 has been so scarcely played at high level in the past, is 5...e4, driving away the king's knight and winning space in the centre, without renouncing the advance ...d7-d5. In the diagram position White is at a crossroads. Where to move the knight? The alternatives are 6.♘g5, 6.♘g1 and 6.♘h4.

In the recent Isle of Man Grand Swiss, the young rising Spanish GM David Anton Guijarro chose the latter of the three paths vs Russian star Alexander Grischuk. It places the knight into a

visually not very attractive position, where it even runs the risk of being trapped in some variations. The game quickly became very sharp and went completely astray from the theoretical roads. In the ensuing complications, Anton played brilliantly, sacrificing a piece and eventually finishing off his strong opponent in just 24 moves. The game was one of the absolute highlights of the event.

## Knight on the rim – 6.♘h4

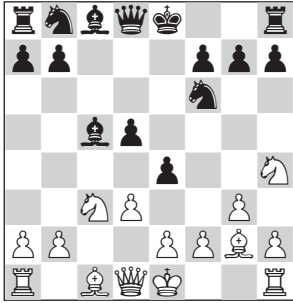
The placement of the knight on the rim has not been White's main line in the past (6.♘g5 has been more popular).



With 6...d5, Black not only defends his e-pawn, but also denies White's knight the f5-square and even threatens to trap the knight by ...g7-g5.

The move 6.♘h4 was first registered in 2007, and after a couple of low-level encounters, it made its debut at master level in 2014, in the game Heberla-Artemiev at the Turkish Team Championship (see Game Section). Both Heberla and Anton followed in what can be considered the most principled

way (after Black's natural 6...d5): the exchange 7.cxd5 cxd5 followed by the undermining of the black centre by 8.d3.



In this position, Artemiev played 8...♖b4. But Grischuk came up with the far more aggressive and critical move 8...♗g4!?. By the way, this move had already been played in a game Khismatullin-Paravyan in 2016, an encounter which disembarked into this position after no less than 10 moves, through a most unexpected move order (1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♖b4 3.♗d5 ♗c5 4.♗f3 c6 5.♗c3 d6 6.g3 ♗f6 7.♖g2 e4 8.♗h4 d5 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.d3).

About one month after Anton's game, the same line (6.♗h4) featured again in a rapid encounter Nepomniachtchi-Anand, during the very strong Tata Steel Rapid and Blitz Tournament in Kolkata, India. This time the Russian grandmaster deviated with 7.d4, a move that had not been tried before. The game developed positionally for some moves, but then Black erred and a quick combination abruptly decided the issue.

And then, when yours truly's article was ready for print, another important game at the highest level appeared: Caruana-Van Foreest, at the Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2020. Caruana followed in Khismatullin's footsteps with 8...♗g4 9.0-0 g5 and now played 10.dxe4 instead of Anton's 10.d4. Van Foreest produced a couple of weak moves which brought

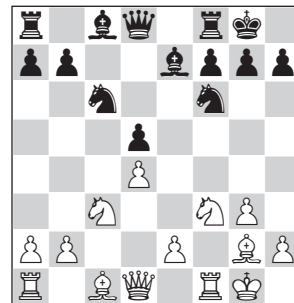


David Anton Guijarro

him quickly to the edge of the abyss. But when Caruana failed to deliver the final blow, he came back into the game and was even close to getting a full point. In the end they settled for a draw.

It should also be mentioned that White has the option of not inserting 7.cxd5 cxd5 before the break d2-d3. For this line we refer to Petrov-Jakovenko and its inserted fragments.

Finally I have included under Iturrizaga-Grigoriants, games that have reached at some point the following position...



White to move

... which, by the way, is the same position that would have arisen in Nepomniachtchi-Anand had the Russian Candidate taken with the knight on f3, instead of the rook. It has occurred in several games (through different move orders though!), only one of them with a classical time control. So one should be

careful with drawing conclusions based on the available material.

### More popular – 6.♘g5

The first move that probably comes to mind is 6.♘g5, attacking the e4-pawn while placing the knight in an advanced position, from where, if necessary, it will be able to retreat to h3. But to play this with full confidence requires that White first assess ‘une petite combinaison’ that Black has at his disposal: 6...♙xf2+!? 7.♙xf2 ♘g4+ 8.♙g1 (or 8.♙e1) 8...♙xg5.



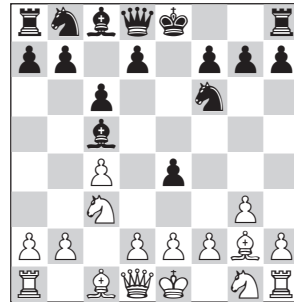
White will take back on e4 now, restoring the material balance. Meanwhile the first player has lost the right to castle, but he has acquired the bishop pair, which might prove useful in the ensuing middlegame. This annotator thinks that the position is quite rich in possibilities for both sides, and in principle these tactics should not be a reason for White to avoid playing 6.♘g5. There are some available games with this tactical line, but unfortunately not of a high enough level. Nevertheless I have included one in the Game Section, to be able to discuss the subject to some extent.

That said, the most usual reply after 6.♘g5 is the natural 6...d5. You can find three examples in the Game Section. In one of them White attacks Black's centre with d2-d3, in the other two the first player bypasses the attack on the

centre by advancing d2-d4. The struggle is strategically rich in all these cases. My personal impression is that Black can be satisfied with the positions that arise after the opening moves.

### Undeveloping – 6.♘g1

Undeveloping the knight is not an attractive option.



If the final destination for this knight will be h3 anyway, in principle it is preferable to place it on g5 rather than on g1. But from g1 White can also deploy it to e2 (preferably after bringing the queen bishop outside the pawn chain). Nevertheless, understandably, few (and not strong) players have opted for this knight retreat. In the Game Section you can find one sample, the game Del Rosario-De los Santos, where White used the strategy of bringing out the bishop and then deploying the knight to e2.

### Conclusion

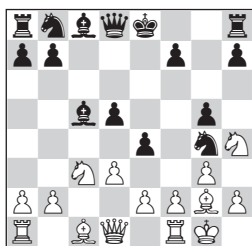
Anton's spectacular victory, and later on Nepomniachtchi's success vs Anand and Caruana's near-win vs Van Foreest, will most surely raise the interest in the 6.♘h4 line. The line is very rich in possibilities for both sides, so there are enough reasons to test it further, either in the variation 6...d5 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.d3 (Anton and Caruana) or in the variation 6...d5 7.d4 (Nepomniachtchi).

**Knights on the rim****6. ♖h4****David Anton Guijarro  
Alexander Grischuk**

Douglas 2019 (8)

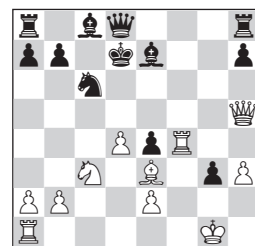
**1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♟f6 3. ♖g2 ♖c5**

**4. ♖c3 c6** This aggressive approach, aiming for central action, fits an earlier statement of Grischuk's that after 1.c4 e5 Black should be able to play on equal terms. **5. ♟f3 5.e3 0-0 6. ♟ge2 d5 7.cxd5 ♟xd5 8.d4 exd4 9. ♟xd5 cxd5 10. ♟xd4** has been seen in a couple of games but is very harmless. Anton's reply is the real test of this system. **5...e4 6. ♖h4 d5 7.cxd5 cxd5** J.Vilela: Trying to trap the knight at once with 7...g5 fails to 8.d4! **8.d3 ♟g4 9.0-0 g5** Both players have been striving for this position. Black is horribly overextended but with his last move he has trapped the knight on h4.



**10.d4 ♖e7 10... ♖b6!?** would stop 11.h3, as now 11...gxf4 12.gxf4 ♖c6! is strong, putting pressure on d4. White has better though, with 11. ♟f3!?, the idea being 11...exf3 12.exf3 ♟f6 13. ♟xg5 h6 14. ♖h4 0-0 15.f4 with huge compensation. 16. ♟xd5 is a threat and after, for example, 15... ♖c6 (15... ♗d6 16. ♟b5!) 16. ♟xd5 ♟xd4 17. ♗xd4! ♟xd4 18. ♟xf6 ♗a5 19. ♟xd4, with just two pieces for the queen White is nevertheless dominating. Perhaps 11...h6! (after 11. ♟f3!?) is the way forward for Black when 12. ♟e5 ♟xe5 13.dxe5 ♖e6 14. ♟h1 ♖c6 15.f4 ♗d7 offers good chances of resistance. There is nothing wrong with the game continuation though. **11.h3 ♟xf2** This move was widely condemned but I believe

that's too harsh. The alternative 11...gxf4 12.hxf4 leads to extremely messy complications following both 12... ♖c6 or 12...hxf3. J. Vilela: Perhaps it is worth mentioning that insisting to win the piece is not a good idea: 11... ♟h6 12. ♗b3! ♟g8 (12...gxf4 13. ♟xh6+-) 13. ♗xd5 gxf4 (13... ♗xd5 14. ♟xd5 ♖d8 15. ♟xg5! ♟xg5 16. ♖c7+ ♖d8 17. ♖xa8±) 14. ♗e5! ♟f6 15. ♟xe4 with massive compensation for the piece. **12. ♗xf2 gxf4 13. ♗b3 hxf3** This inclusion is likely a mistake. With 13... ♟e6! 14. ♗xb7 ♗d7! 15. ♗xa8 0-0 Black could have asked some tough questions. White's queen is confined on a8 and with Black's centre still intact I believe the position is far from clear. The line continues 16. ♖h6 ♗d8 17. ♟xe4 ♖a6! 18. ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 19. ♖c3 hxf3 20. ♗f3 ♖d6 and with the g3-pawn still alive, I think Black is alright. J.Vilela: In this line, Spanish GM José Cuenca mentions that 17... ♖c6 (instead of 17... ♖a6!) 18. ♖c5! ♟xc5 19. ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 20.dxc5 should be considered better for White. **14. ♗f4 ♖c6** The big difference after 14... ♟e6 15. ♗xb7 ♗d7 16. ♗xa8 0-0 is 17. ♗g4+! ♟xg4 (or 17... ♟h8 18. ♖h6! ♗d8 19. ♟g7+ ♟g8 20. ♟e5+ ♟xg4 21. ♟xb8) 18. ♗xd5 and the queen escapes! That's why including 13...hxf3 14. ♗f4 is not to Black's advantage. **15. ♗xd5 f5 15... ♗xd5 16. ♟xd5 f5** is an enterprising way to continue the fight for the initiative, but after the logical 17. ♖c7+ ♟f7 18. ♖xa8 ♟xd4 19. ♗f1 Black doesn't quite have enough compensation for the rook. **16. ♟xe4!** An important follow-up. After any other move, Black is simply better. **16...fxe4** This loses swiftly. 16... ♟xd4 17. ♖d3! is also hugely unpleasant, but 16... ♗xd5 17. ♟xd5 ♖d7, despite being surely better for White, would still lead to a game where there is all to play for. **17. ♗h5+ ♖d7 18. ♖e3** Calmly finishing his development. Black is hopelessly lost with the king on d7.



**18... ♗g8 19.d5 ♟d8 20. ♟xe4 ♗g6 21. ♗e5 ♟f7 22. ♗xf7!** Powerplay! **22... ♗xf7 23. ♖c1 ♗f8 24. ♟g5!** Very pretty, as 24... ♟xg5 runs into 25. ♗c7+ ♟e8 26. ♟d6 mate. **1-0**

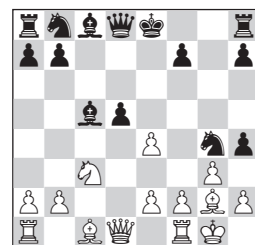
Erwin l'Ami M/19-8-35

**Fabiano Caruana  
Jorden van Foreest**

Wijk aan Zee 2020 (5)

**1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♟f6 3. ♖g2 ♖c5****4. ♖c3 c6 5. ♟f3 e4 6. ♖h4 d5****7.cxd5 cxd5 8.d3 ♟g4 9.0-0 g5**

**10.dxe4** David Anton's choice vs Grischuk was 10.d4. The text move had been employed in 2016 by Khismatullin vs Paravyan. White sacrifices the piece in a straightforward way. **10...gxf4**



**11. ♖f4** Caruana puts maximum emphasis on quick mobilization. Khismatullin-Paravyan, Chigorin Memorial, St Petersburg 2016, continued instead: 11.exd5 hxf3 12.hxf3 f5 (probably directed against an eventual ♟e4, but it weakens Black's position significantly) 13. ♟f4 ♗b6 14.e3 ♖d6 15. ♟xd6 ♗xd6 16. ♗d4 0-0 17. ♟b5 ♗b6 (17... ♗h6!) 18. ♗c4 (the endgame after 18. ♗xb6 axb6 is quite complex, and not without compensation for White) 18... ♟e5 19. ♗b3 ♖a6 20.d6+ ♟f7 21. ♗fd1 ♖d7 22.a4 ♗ac8 23. ♗d4 ♖c5

# DVDs, Videos, or Books?

by Glenn Flear



Englishman Glenn Flear lives in the south of France. For every Yearbook he reviews a selection of new chess opening books. A grandmaster and a prolific chess author himself, Flear's judgment is severe but sincere, and always constructive.

These days all sorts of new-fangled media are used for studying chess. Apart from e-books (which can be considered as a halfway house between traditional paper books and computers), both online videos and DVDs have an increasing influence. For most of us, ChessBase is almost indispensable when we are dabbling with various chess activities on our computer, but this Hamburg-based company is also the leader in producing DVDs for all levels, an example being Caruana's set of three on the Ruy Lopez. Of course, for some of us, there is nothing like the feel of paper as we turn the pages of an opening monograph. Granted, but for a change you might enjoy a verbal explanation from time to time.

*Fabiano Caruana*  
**Navigating the Ruy Lopez**  
 (volumes 1-3)  
 ChessBase DVD 2019

It's pricey, the technology takes some getting used to (well it did for me!), but you might find it worth the effort. One of the DVDs kept crashing my ChessBase, but I will put this down to my out-of-date-and-out-of-shape computer plus general ineptitude on my part. Once my problems were sorted, I found it fascinating listening to the World No.2 explaining his way of thinking about the various options in the



Spanish. If you are able to give 16 hours attention, then you have a repertoire for White with 3. ♖b5 whatever Black then throws at you. Caruana's English is of course excellent as is his ability to calmly but eloquently highlight the main aspects. These vary from the basic plans, with the aims and wishes of both sides evoked, right up to how the thinking by the elite has evolved. I suspect that it's actually easier to understand the pros and cons of a particular theme when they are described 'out loud'. A slight change in the tone of voice can better emphasize and put across the feelings of an expert than a clever turn of phrase on a page. I noted that Caruana's approach against the Breyer has been working well for White in some analogous positions.

**1.e4 e5 2.♟f3 ♘c6 3.♟b5 a6**  
**4.♟a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♟e7 6.♞e1**  
**b5 7.♟b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘b8**  
**10.d4 ♘bd7 11.♘bd2 ♟b7**