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Rock Solid Chess

**Volume 2 – Piece Play
Tiviakov's Unbeatable Strategy**

New In Chess 2024

Introduction

It's amazing how quickly time flies: it's already been a year since we published our first book in this series, on typical pawn structures.

It's nice to remember how, in the fall of 2022, we, together with the staff of the New in Chess publishing house, polished it to perfection, and in January 2023 it was published and was then met with excellent reviews from players and chess critics.

Before the onset of all these events, in the conclusion to our work *Rock Solid Chess: Pawn Structures* we promised that we would not stop there, that there would be a continuation... and now, while we are waiting for the mass publication of our manuscript, we are incredibly happy about the fact that we managed to keep our word to our readers.

We would like to say that the story of the creation of the second book began earlier than the first. Most of its chapters appeared during the COVID-19 pandemic – for us it was a creatively productive time. However, the logic of presenting the educational material suggested starting the *Rock Solid Chess* series of books from the very basics, namely, pawn structures.

In our second volume, *Piece Play*, a special place is occupied by chapters devoted to the comparative assessment of positions, the comparative value of tempi and various pieces, depending on the position on the board. These moments, in our opinion, are extremely important in the game, but they receive very little attention in chess literature. For that reason, we tried to fill this gap.

In addition, on the pages of this book we will talk about popular and at the same time very important topics, such as 'The advantage of the two bishops', 'Opposite-coloured bishops', 'Centralization' and 'Domination'. And it ends with a study of how to play in cramped positions, choosing a game plan and finding an answer to the question of when and where to castle.

One small point to note is that you will find several games appearing more than once in this book: in one chapter, they are examined by reference to a certain theme, and then they re-appear in a later chapter, on another theme. This is a characteristic of my (ST) teaching style – I like to examine the same material from different points of view.

After our long work on the predecessor of this volume, we have become more experienced, and, as a result, more professional. Therefore, we guarantee that studying *Piece Play* will improve your understanding of many aspects of the game, and everyone will discover something new, regardless of their chess level.

We wish you pleasant reading!

Sergei Tiviakov and Yulia Gökbulut
Groningen, Netherlands/Kirikkale, Turkey
January 2024

CHAPTER 1

The effect of moving one pawn on the assessment of the position

Our first book was about commonly encountered pawn structures. True, we did not include chapters on the 'Isolated Pawn' or the 'Isolated Pawn Pair', since these topics have been carefully examined by other authors. However, in my previous work I also did not cover one other important question that haunted my inquisitive mind: 'Are there situations in which the location of the pawns does not matter at all?' Reflecting on this, I collected relevant information, studied it and came to the conclusion that the presence of such positions belongs to the genre of fiction. But I would not like this chapter to consist of three words, so I will answer the question posed, as always, in detail, confirming my conclusions with examples.

The only case in which the location of the pawns does not matter at all is if they are completely absent from the chessboard. But in other situations there are always some moments and nuances associated with their minimal rearrangement. In this regard, it is possible to change the assessment of the position, the strategy and the set of playing methods that will be used to achieve the goals. Let's say one of the sides has an absolute advantage, but if one small detail appears or disappears, the result of the game can be completely opposite.

As educational material, I will deliberately use and modify not only new examples, but also those that occurred in the previous book, so that you see and understand the difference in the positioning of pawns, understand certain types of positions and remember them for life; and sometimes I will dwell on certain points not related to the specified topic in order to improve your understanding of chess.

Game 1 Queen's Indian Defence
Tigran Petrosian
Vasily Smyslov

Moscow ch-URS 1961

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♗c3 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.d4
 ♗b7 5.a3 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.e3 ♗e7
 8.♗b5+ c6 9.♗d3 c5 10.♗xd5 ♖xd5
 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.♗d2 ♗c6 13.♖c1
 ♗d6 14.♗c2 ♖c8 15.0-0 h6 16.♗fd1
 0-0 17.♗c3 ♗b8



Question: Assess the position and decide how White should play.

18. ♗a4!

Petrosian plays for the attack. It is interesting to ask whether Black can save himself.

Question: What happens after best play for both sides?

After 18. ♗a4 White wins: he has an advantage which is bordering on the decisive. In order to survive, Black must give up material and try to hold without it.

On 18...g6, the attack crashes through as follows: 19. ♗g4 ♖h7 20. ♗xg6+ fxg6 21. ♖d7. This means that in this example, the

pawn structure is of enormous significance: White's idea can only be realized with the black pawn on h6.

18... ♖fd8

Black misses his only chance to prolong his resistance.

Let us consider this position from the viewpoint of defence.



diagram before Black played 18...♖fd8

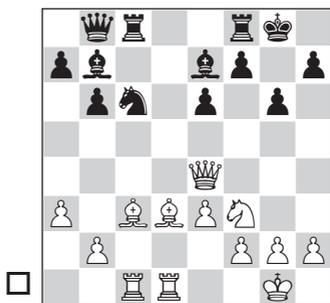
Question: Which move was strictly the only one?

So as not to lose, Black has to play 18...e5, when his opponent can continue the attack by means of 19.g4.

I give the remaining moves, so you can see how White realized his plan and earned the full point:

19. ♗e4 g6 20. ♗g4 h5 21. ♗h3 f5
 22. ♗c4 ♖xd1+ 23. ♖xd1 ♖f7 24.e4
 ♗f4 25. ♖e1 ♗g4 26.exf5 ♗xc4
 27.fxg6+ ♖e8 28.g7! e5 29. ♗xh5+
 ♖d7 30. ♖d1+ ♗d6 31. ♗xe5 ♗d4
 32. ♗xd4 1-0

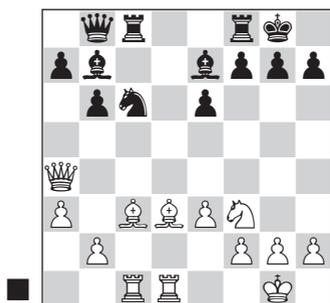
Now let us modify the position, putting the h6-pawn back on h7 and adding the moves ♗e4 and ...g6.



Question: How should we assess the position with the pawn on h7?

White is slightly better, but now he should bring the queen back with 1.♔a4, because here 1.♔g4 does not break up the enemy fortress.

In the following diagram, we put the black kingside pawns back on their original squares.



1...♗fd8

Question: Assess the position and find a move for White.

It seems that Black has an ideal pawn structure, because he has not created a single weakness.

2.h4

A totally correct and flexible move, which maintains a clear advantage!



In this fourth variant from the game between the two world champions, we have doubled pawns. Traditionally they are regarded as a serious weakness, because they complicate their owner's life. For example, in an endgame with centralized kings, the doubled pawns will in all likelihood become an indefensible target.

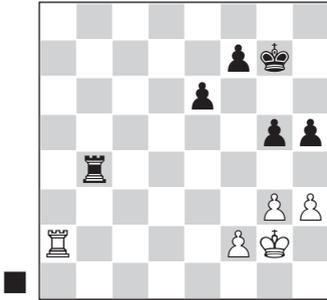
Question: To whom are the doubled pawns favourable here?

In this case, they fulfil the role of an impassable barrier, which is naturally in Black's favour, since his king feels much safer.

The position is equal. The white pieces are a little more active, but they cannot accomplish anything significant.

Since I talked about the endgame earlier, it would be logical to compare the positions of the pawns at the very end of the game. I think the chess public will always have a demand for material on rook endings and even if you have studied them previously, it makes sense to repeat them.

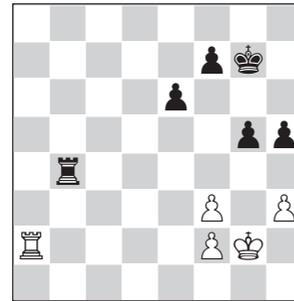
I first bring to your attention the frequently encountered rook endgame of three pawns against four on one flank. This is a theoretical position that has been analysed by many chess gurus.



In this position, Black has very good winning chances using the idea of ...h5-h4, although the immediate 1...h4 is met by 2.g4, drawing. Therefore Black should first play 1...f5. Now White cannot advance any of his pawns: not 2.h4, nor 2.g4, nor even 2.f3. In the latter case, the white king is cut off from the centre and his rook will have to defend him passively against checks on the second rank, which allows Black easily to activate his king and create a passed e-pawn. The weaker side must instead just wait patiently, for example with 2.♖c2. Then there follows 2...h4 3.♖a2, and after the exchange 3...hxg3 4.♔xg3 (4.fxg3 loses without a fight) Black will try to advance the pawn with ...e5-e4, supporting it with his king. Then, if he puts the king on f4, he wins easily. The stronger side wins if he can achieve all of this.

But how to clearly oppose this plan is a difficult question. In my opinion, nowhere has it been said exactly how to defend for White. One can only guess and make vague assumptions that his position, despite the absence of a pawn, is somehow tenable. In fact, at the end of a real game, the weaker side will have a hard time solving practical problems with a limited amount of time.

Let's move on to a modified version of this endgame.



Question: What is the difference between the two positions?

The first example was a 'theoretical draw'. But when I was young, I lost this ending against Epishin.

Additional exercise: Look at my childhood game against the well-known grandmaster.

Game 2 Queen's Indian Defence

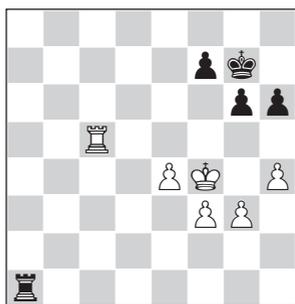
Vladimir Epishin

Sergei Tiviakov

Croatia tt 1989

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.♘c3
♙b7 5.a3 d5 6.cxd5 ♗xd5 7.e3 ♗d7

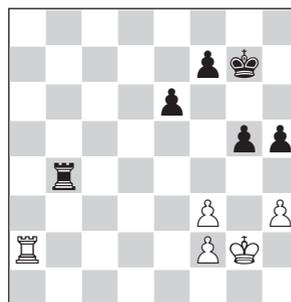
8.♔d3 c5 9.e4 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♖c7
 11.0-0 ♕e7 12.♞e1 0-0 13.♞e2
 ♞ac8 14.♙b2 c4 15.♙c2 b5 16.♙c1
 e5 17.♞b1 a6 18.a4 ♖a5 19.♙d2
 ♙d6 20.axb5 axb5 21.dxe5 ♗xe5
 22.♗d4 ♙a6 23.♞h5 g6 24.♞g5
 ♞fe8 25.♗f5 ♞d8 26.♗xd6 ♞xd6
 27.♙e3 ♗d3 28.♙xd3 cxd3 29.♙d4
 ♞c4 30.♞d5 ♞d8 31.♞g5 ♞xd4
 32.cxd4 ♞xd4 33.♞d2 ♞c8 34.♞b2
 ♞c4 35.♞xd4 ♞xd4 36.♞ed1 b4
 37.f3 ♖g7 38.♞b2 ♞c4 39.♞dd2 ♙b5
 40.♖f2 ♙a4 41.♞xd3 ♙c2 42.♞d7
 b3 43.♖e3 ♞c6 44.h4 ♖f6 45.♖d4
 ♞a6 46.♞c7 ♞a1 47.♖e3 ♞h1
 48.g3 h6 49.♞c6+ ♖g7 50.♖f4 ♞f1
 51.♞bxc2 bxc2 52.♞xc2 ♞a1 53.♞c5



53...♞a4
 53...h5=.
 54.h5 g5+
 54...gxh5 55.♞xh5 f6±.
 55.♖g4 ♞d4 56.♞e5 ♖f6 57.♞e8
 ♞a4 58.f4 gxf4 59.gxf4 ♞a1 60.e5+
 ♖g7 61.f5 ♞f1 62.♞a8 ♞f2??
 62...♞h1±.
 63.f6+?
 63.e6 fxe6 64.fxe6 ♞e2 65.♖f5
 ♞e3 66.♞a7+ ♖f8 67.♖f6 ♞f3+
 68.♖g6 ♞e3+-.
 63...♖h7± 64.♞a3 ♖g8 65.♞f3 ♞h2
 66.♞f1 ♞e2 67.♖f4 ♖f8 68.♞a1 ♖g8

69.♞a8+ ♖h7 70.♞a3 ♖g8 71.♞e3
 ♞a2 72.♞g3+ ♖f8 73.♞b3 ♞a4+
 74.♖f5 ♖g8 75.♞d3 ♞h4??
 75...♞a8.
 76.♞d8+ ♖h7 77.e6+- ♞a4 78.♞d7
 ♞a5+ 79.♖e4 ♞a4+ 80.♖d3 ♞a3+
 81.♖c4 ♖g8 82.♞xf7 1-0

The position (below) is of a practical nature: Black has a plan that can create serious problems for White. Therefore, in such situations, the weaker side needs to play very carefully. It is especially dangerous when White does not have a pawn on the h4-square. By the way, this endgame is discussed in detail in the first chapter of Viktor Korchnoi's book on rook endings (see the Bibliography in the back of this book).



Question: Comment on the sides' chances.

Incidentally, this very important endgame of 3 pawns against 4 was seen recently in the game Abdusattorov-Caruana, Wijk aan Zee 2023.

Additional exercise: Analyse this game yourself.

CHAPTER 3

The relative value of pieces depending on their position on the board

In this chapter, to delve into the topic stated in the title, we will first study the basic concepts associated with developing pieces in the opening and establishing control over the centre, and then complex examples designed for chess players of the highest level.

Everyone knows that in the opening, middlegame and endgame, pieces can stand on the edge of the board or in the middle of it, control the central squares, or perform a more modest function in the game. And every day we ask ourselves the question: 'How much is it worth?' We want to know the price of any phenomenon in exact equivalent. Using specific examples, I will show how the value of a piece changes when its location changes and comment on the resulting difference in the evaluation of the position.

So, when developing pieces at the beginning of the game, you need to know on which squares they will stand best, how much this will amount to in numerical terms, and how it will affect the mathematical assessment of the position.

Let's take the French Defence, for example, and talk about knights:
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5



Question: What is the strongest move for White from the viewpoint of the computer and in terms of practical results?

In this position, the most common moves are 3.e5, 3.♘c3 and 3.♘d2.

Question: Where does the knight stand better: on c3 or d2, and why?

Possibly you prefer d2, so as after 3...♗b4 to be able to evict the bishop from your half of the board with 4.c3 and avoid the pin on the knight after 3.♘c3. But, in my view, the knight stands better on c3, from where it attacks the squares d5 and e4.

Point to note: The main factor which affects the assessment of the position is piece control of the centre.

Due to the fact that the move 3.♘d2 does not exert such influence over the centre of the board, Black has a good chance of equalizing with the help of the 3...c5 break.

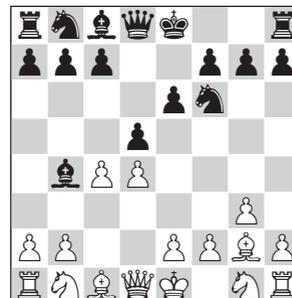
To represent the difference in the position of the knights in numerical terms, I offered this position to the computer. Its indicators showed equality (+0.08=): neither side has an advantage. As for the move 3.♘c3, it gives White an advantage of +0.41±, almost half a pawn. It turns out that the knight is better on c3 than on d2. The same applies to the position of its colleagues on f3 instead of on e2; on c6 instead of d7 and on f6 instead of e7. In addition, there is a significant difference between the position of the knight on the edge of the board and in the centre.

This knowledge helps when choosing opening variations. Fate has often confronted me with the Catalan as Black, and I have responded to it in the spirit of the Queen's Indian Defence. Let us look at the position after the moves

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5

4. ♗g2 ♗b4+,

which is a variation I like very much:



Question: Why is 4...♗b4+ one of the most popular variations of the Catalan and also appears in variations of the Queen’s Indian Defence?

Answer: Because after 5.♙d2 ♗e7 the bishop stands worse on d2 than on c1.

Let us compare two positions: diagram 1 after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 ♗b4+ 5.♙d2 ♗e7



and diagram 2 after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 ♗e7.



Instead of 4...♗b4+, Black could immediately go 4...♗e7, and not waste a whole tempo (the same piece made two moves in a row in the opening!), during which the opponent developed the bishop on the d2-square. But now, being on

its new square, it cannot take an advantageous position. In this case, the temporary vulnerability of the d4-pawn does not matter – it can be supported by the bishop from square c3.

Question: What do you think is the preferable bishop position in this pawn structure?

The ideal arrangement of pieces is one that puts maximum pressure on the centre: b3 and ♗b2. With the bishop on d2, White cannot achieve an optimal position: if he plays ♗c3, then the knight will have to be placed on the unsuccessful square d2; if you give square c3 to the knight, then the bishop on d2 will remain a ‘bone in the throat’. To get out of this situation, you need to lose momentum, returning the bishop to c1, or, developing it on f4, accepting the worst. Because on other squares than b2, its area of action is much narrower: it does not have the maximum impact on the centre, does not protect it from enemy breakthroughs, and leaves the d4-pawn without support.

Now let us consider what happens in the event of

5.♘d2
(after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 ♗b4+):

5...0-0 6.♘gf3

Modern theory prefers the move 6...b6, but 6...dxc4 is also a decent alternative.

7.0-0 ♗b7

Then the bishop retreats, either to d6 or e7. The loss of the tempo brings Black clear dividends: he has worsened the manoeuvrability of the enemy knight.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4. ♖g2 ♜b4+ 5. ♙d2 ♚e7 6. ♘f3 0-0 7.0-0 c6 8. ♚c2 b6 9. ♙f4 ♜b7 10. ♞d1



Question: To which square do you think the black knight should be developed?

My favourite continuation is 10...♞a6. This is how I have played in many games, carried out deep analyses and had good practical results. Despite the fact that I have my own personal preferences, 10...♞bd7 is objectively the strongest move due to the large difference between the knights' positions: after it, the evaluation of the position is $+0.23\pm$, a quarter of a pawn; after 10...♞a6 – $+0.60\pm$, which is already more than half a pawn. But even the rarer 10...♞a6 has its advantages: the theory of this variation is still not very well developed, which may puzzle our opponent.

Point to note: Whenever our units are close to the middle of the playing field, it is good for us. But there is one twist to this statement. Pieces with a short range of action need to spend at least a couple of moves to cover the distance from the edge to the middle of the board. Long-range pieces (bishops, queens, rooks) can cover a large distance in one move. Therefore, the difference in the assessment of the position with their distant position is not as large as in the case of knights, kings and pawns.

Let's talk about one more theoretical position, which is obtained after the following moves:

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♘f3 b6 4.e3

A continuation which to this day is seen regularly at top level.

4... ♜b7 5. ♙d3 d5 6.0-0



Question: Which piece should Black develop as a priority?

6...c5?! involves concrete play in the centre whilst the development is not yet complete and does not bring anything good to its side.

Therefore it is necessary to determine where the bishop should be developed. 6...♜b4 is ruled out at

once, not only because it lacks point but because a piece is lost after 7. ♖a4+: 7... ♗c6 8. ♗e5 ♘d6 9. cxd5 ♗xd5 10. ♙b5+-. That leaves the squares d6 and e7.

In this structure, the bishop clearly stands better on d6: ♙e7 does not prevent the enemy plan of b3-♙b2-♗bd2-♗e5 with an attack on the king, which is possible thanks to the control of e5 (there is more on this in the chapter on centralization).

From the computer's viewpoint, ignoring further continuations, the assessment of the position is 0.20±. This is the minimal advantage that White can achieve from the opening. With subsequent correct play the move 6... ♙d6 gives Black equality. If he prefers 6... ♙e7, then the assessment of the position goes up slightly to +0.35±. This is roughly one third of a pawn, a noticeable advantage.

And now I want to turn to a world-famous classic and put the accent on one important moment.

Game 28 Queen's Indian Defence
Boris Spassky
Tigran Petrosian

Moscow Wch m 1969

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♗f3 b6 4.a3 ♙b7
 5. ♗c3 d5 6.e3 ♗bd7

The same variation with 6... ♗bd7, which I discussed above.

7.cxd5 exd5



8. ♙e2?

Question: What was the correct move for White?

8. ♙d3 is assessed by the computer as '0.00±', whilst 8. ♙e2 is '-0.17±'. At the level of an elite GM, a difference of 0.20, 20% of a pawn, is an impressive difference.

8... ♙d6 9.b4 0-0 10.0-0 a6 11. ♖b3 ♗e7! 12. ♖b1 ♗e4

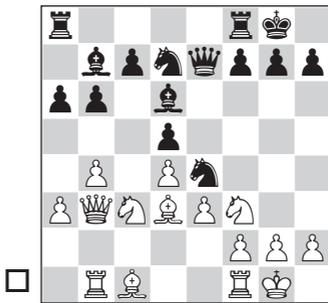


Question: What is the assessment of the position after this move 12... ♗e4 ?

Black has a stable plus – '-0.40±'.
 13.a4 ♗df6 14.b5 ♗xc3 15. ♖xc3 ♗e4 16. ♖c2 ♖fc8 17. ♙b2 c6
 18.bxc6 ♙xc6 19. ♖b3 ♖d7 20. ♖a1 b5 21.a5? ♙b7± 22. ♗e5 ♖d8
 23. ♖fd1 ♖h4 24.g3 ♖e7 25.f3 ♗g5
 26.h4 ♗e6 27.f4 f6 28. ♗f3 ♗d8

29. ♖f2 ♗f7 30. ♗d2 ♜c4! 31. ♖d3
 ♜e8 32. ♗f3 ♗b4 33. ♗a3 ♗xa3
 34. ♜xa3 ♗d6—+ 35. ♜e1 f5 36. ♜aa1
 ♗e4+ 37. ♗xe4 fxe4 38. ♖b1 ♖d7
 39. ♜a2 ♜ec8 40. ♗xc4 dxc4 41. d5
 ♗xd5 42. ♜d1 c3 43. ♜c2 ♖h3
 44. ♜g1 ♖g4 45. ♗g2 ♖f3+ 46. ♗h2
 ♖xe3 47. f5 ♖c5 48. ♜f1 b4 49. f6 b3
 50. ♜cf2 c2 51. ♖c1 e3 52. f7+ ♗f8
 53. ♜f5 b2 54. ♖xb2 c1♖ 55. ♖xg7+
 ♗xg7 56. ♜g5+ 0-1

Now let us change the position of the bishop from e2 to d3.



Question: How can White obtain an advantage of +0.80±?

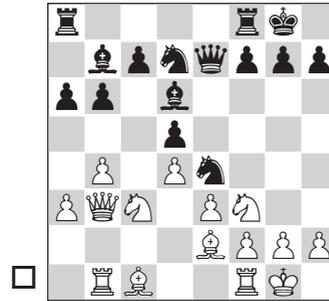
13. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 14. ♖xd5 ♗c3.

Point to note: After the exchange sacrifice, we must prevent the opponent from developing counterplay, so he cannot show any activity and exploit his rooks on the open lines.

15. ♖c6 ♗xb1 16. ♗xb1+—, which means that after 13. ♗xd5 Black should not reply 13... ♗xd5. So as to avoid a lost position, he must instead choose 13... ♖e6 14. ♗f4

♖xb3 15. ♜xb3 ♗xf4 16. exf4 (0.80±). With the bishop on e2, 13. ♗xd5? would have lost after 13... ♗xd5 14. ♖xd5 ♗c3 with a triple fork.

Let us return to the game Spassky-Petrosian, the position after 12... ♗e4.



Question: With which move can White improve his situation after 12... ♗e4 ?

Spassky did not correct his mistake: he did not play 13. ♗d3, and so Black retained an advantage.

Point to note: If we do not develop our pieces to their best squares, then we later have to spend tempi to improve their positions. And in order to avoid loss of time, in the opening it is important to choose the best possible squares for our fighting units, so they immediately battle for the centre.

The previous classical example involved the position of a bishop, and I would like to continue this theme by showing you an example from my own practice.

Game 29 French Defence

Sergei Tiviakov 2610

Amirreza Pourramezanali 2529

Bandar-e Anzali 2019

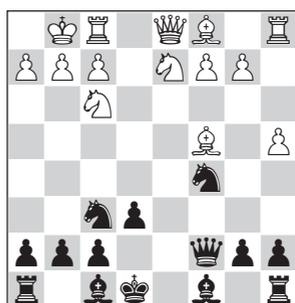
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2

Earlier I explained why 3.♘d2 is not the strongest move in the French Defence and with which move Black can achieve equality. But let us see how it works out in practice.

3...c5 4.exd5 ♖xd5 5.dxc5 ♜f6

6.♜gf3 ♖xc5 7.♙d3 ♖c7 8.0-0

♜bd7 9.a4 ♜c5 10.♙c4



Question: Which move allows Black to equalize?

10...♙d6

If you made this move, you deserve praise and applause, because you already understand where to develop the bishop. On d6 it stands much better, since it controls the e5-square, puts pressure on the h2-pawn, and will help Black use his pawn majority on the kingside and in the centre, in pushing the e-pawn forward.

My individual statistics are indicative: of the three games that began with this variation, in two meetings I won after 10...♙e7, as my

opponent's loss of the centre had its effect, and after 10...♙d6 the game ended amicably.

Additional task: Look at these games, where Black was crushed after 10...♙e7:

Tiviakov-Diermair, Trieste 2018: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.exd5 ♖xd5 5.dxc5 ♜f6 6.♜gf3 ♖xc5 7.♙d3 ♖c7 8.0-0 ♜bd7 9.a4 ♜c5 10.♙c4 ♙e7 11.♖e2 0-0 12.a5 ♙d7 13.♜e5 ♜fd8 14.♜xd7 ♜xd7 15.♜f3 ♜c8 16.c3 ♙d6 17.g3 a6 18.♙e3 ♜g4 19.♙g5 h6 20.♙d2 ♜f6 21.♙e3 ♜g4 22.♙d4 e5 23.♙xc5 ♙xc5 24.♜a4 h5 25.♙a2 ♜cd8 26.♜c4 b5 27.♜xg4 hxg4 28.♜g5 ♜d2 29.♖e4 ♜xf2 30.♜xf2 ♙xf2+ 31.♙xf2 ♜d2+ 32.♙e1 ♖d7 33.♖a8+ ♖d8 34.♖xd8+ ♜xd8 35.♜xf7 ♜b8 36.♜xe5+ ♙h8 37.♜xg4 b4 38.♙c4 bxc3 39.bxc3 ♜c8 40.♙xa6 1-0

Tiviakov-Kuipers, Groningen 2017: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.exd5 ♖xd5 5.dxc5 ♜f6 6.♜gf3 ♖xc5 7.♙d3 ♖c7 8.0-0 ♜bd7 9.a4 ♜c5 10.♙c4 ♙e7 11.♖e2 0-0 12.a5 b6 13.a6 ♙d7 14.♜d4 ♜ac8 15.♜b5 ♖b8 16.b3 ♙xb5 17.♙xb5 ♜d5 18.♙b2 ♙f6 19.♙xf6 ♜xf6 20.b4 ♜cd7 21.♜f3 ♖c7 22.c4 ♜b8 23.♜fd1 ♖e7 24.♜ab1 ♜e8 25.♙xe8 ♜fxe8 26.b5 ♖c7 27.♜bc1 ♜ed8 28.g3 h6 29.♜e5 ♜d7 30.♜c6 ♜e8 31.♜d2 ♜c5 32.♜cd1 e5 33.♖g4 ♜e6 34.♜d8+ ♜xd8 35.♜xd8+ ♙h7 36.♜a8 ♜f6 37.♜c8 ♖d6 38.♜d8 ♖c7 39.♖c8 1-0

Point to note: Whenever you develop pieces correctly, good results await you.

11. ♖b5+ ♕d7 12. ♘c4 ♙e7 13. ♗d4
 ♙xb5 14. axb5 ♜d8 15. ♖f4 ♗xf4
 16. ♙xf4 ♘d5 17. ♙e5 f6 18. ♙g3 a6
 19. bxa6 ♘xa6 20. ♘d4 ♖f7 21. ♜fe1
 e5 22. ♘f5 ♙b4 23. c3 g6 24. ♘xe5+
 fxe5 25. ♘h6+ ♖g7 26. ♙xe5+ ♗xh6
 27. ♙xh8 ♜xh8 28. cxb4 ♘axb4
 29. ♜a7 ♜b8 30. g3 ♖g7 31. ♜a5 b5
 32. ♜a7+ ♖g8 33. ♜e6 ♜d8 34. ♜b7
 ♘d3 35. ♜e2 ♜c8 36. ♜d2 ♘5b4
 37. ♜xb5 ♜c1+ 38. ♖g2 h5 39. ♜e2
 ♖f7 40. ♜b7+ ♖f6 41. ♜b6+ ♖f7
 42. ♜ee6 ♘d5 43. ♜bc6 ♜xc6 44. ♜xc6
 ♘xb2 45. ♜d6 ♘e7 46. ♜d4 1/2-1/2

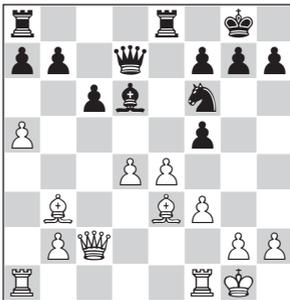
From the assessment of positions, which fluctuates depending on the location of the pieces during development, let us move on a little to other situations on the board.

Game 30 Slav Defence

Ivan Sokolov 2654
Dalibor Stojanovic 2481

Sarajevo 2010

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 4. ♘f3
 dxc4 5. a4 ♙f5 6. ♘h4 e6 7. ♘xf5 exf5
 8. e3 ♙b4 9. ♙xc4 0-0 10. 0-0 ♘bd7
 11. ♗c2 ♘b6 12. ♙b3 ♗d7 13. a5
 ♘bd5 14. f3 ♜fe8 15. ♘xd5 ♘xd5
 16. e4 ♘f6 17. ♙e3 ♙d6



Question: Assess this position and find the strongest move and plan for White.

The advantage of two bishops and the possession of a dynamic centre is estimated by the computer at '+1.20±', one and a fifth of a pawn. The bishop on b3 occupies an excellent position: it puts pressure on the f7-pawn. Thus, Ivan Sokolov has two types of advantage in this position. And he needs to do something not only to maintain the advantage he has achieved, but also to increase it and win the game. An attack on the black knight with 18.e5 suggests itself, but it will lead to the surrender of the d5-square, on which Black will be able to organize a blockade, removing a piece from the battle.

Point to note: The advantage of the two bishops works well with a mobile pawn structure.

18.a6 is possible, but this is not the strongest, because it saves Black from the hanging pawn on a7 at the end of possible exchanging variations. The move 18. ♙g5 contains a good idea, but in this position it is not effective due to 18... ♙c7 – with Black to move, the d4-pawn will be taken with a check. 19. ♗c3 h6, and even after spoiling the opponent's pawn structure, White will lose his advantage. And now let us talk about the comparative position of the pieces. If one of White's pieces had been on

another square, he would have won easily. I mean the king.

18. ♔h1

Absolutely the best move is a preventative move, giving White two game plans. After the future 19. ♕g5, the d4-pawn will not be taken with check, which gives the attacking side additional opportunities.

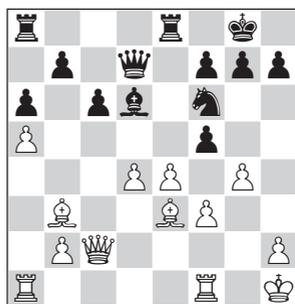
When I showed this example to various players during training sessions, many found this decision. I hope that you also followed grandmaster Sokolov's path.

18...a6

Question: And now what strong move does White have?

19. ♕g5 ♖c7 20. ♖ad1!. A possible continuation is 20... ♗h8 21. ♕xf6 gxf6 22. e5+-. As well as the move 19. ♕g5 White also has another plan, which is again possible thanks to the safe position of the white king on h1:

19.g4



CHAPTER 8

Playing cramped and passive positions

I want to devote an entire chapter to this topic. In my opinion, it is very complex, and understanding it on your own is not easy. A cramped passive position is a position in which the opponent has a clearly defined spatial advantage and, due to the centre he has captured, has strategic superiority.

My many years of experience show that the weaker party should use the following methods of defence:

- 1) exchanging the maximum number of playing units to free up space and solve the problem of moving pieces from one flank to the opposite;
- 2) refusal to fight simultaneously on two flanks.

First let's look at a classic game.

Game 73 King's Indian Defence

David Bronstein

Tigran Petrosian

Amsterdam/Leeuwarden ct 1956

1.c4 g6 2.♘c3 ♙g7 3.♗f3 d6 4.d4 ♗f6 5.e4 0-0 6.♙e2 e5 7.0-0 ♖bd7 8.♞e1 c6 9.d5 c5 10.a3 ♜e8 11.♙g5 f6 12.♙d2 f5 13.♗g5 ♗c7 14.exf5 gxf5 15.f4 e4 16.♙e3 h6 17.♗h3



White has a large spatial advantage due to the d5-pawn, which takes away a significant number of squares from the opponent. White can easily maneuver his pieces, moving them from one flank to the other, while his opponent is deprived of this opportunity.

Question: How can Black play so as to avoid simultaneous play on both flanks?

17...♙xc3

This is a clean example of how exchanges can be used to prevent the opponent becoming active on one flank. (The same game is examined in Chapter 1, where it is suggested that according to my computer 17...♙xc3 is not the

strongest move. But Petrosian's simple human decision to reduce the play on the board only to the king flank accords with both points of our rules of play in passive positions.)

Question: If Black had not played 17...♙xc3, then what plan could White have executed on the queenside?

White's plan would be the encircling pawn advance b4, ♗f2, h3, g4.

18.bxc3

But after this exchange, the area of battle is restricted to one flank only.

18...♗f6 19.a4 ♜h8 20.♗f2 ♙g8 21.♜h1 ♞e8 22.♞g1 ♞g6 23.♞d2 ♙d7 24.g3 ♞ae8 25.a5 ♞e7 26.♞ab1 ♙c8 27.♞g2 ♞eg7 28.♞bg1 ♗ce8 29.h3 h5 1/2-1/2



Let us look at another example of a similar prophylaxis.

Game 74 King's Indian Defence

Bukhuti Gurgenzidze

Lev Polugaevsky

Tbilisi 1956

1.c4 ♗f6 2.♗c3 g6 3.d4 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♙g5 c6 7.♞d2 a6 8.♙d3

♖bd7 9. ♗ge2 b5 10. 0-0 e5 11. d5 b4
 12. ♗a4 c5 13. g4 ♖a5 14. b3 ♖c7
 15. ♗g3 a5 16. ♗b2 ♗b6

Question: Find the strongest continuation and plan for White.

17.a4



We will start from this position, because from now on the entire fight will take place only on the king's side, which will facilitate Polugaevsky's resistance: he will have a chance of salvation.

17... ♗e8 18. ♖ae1 ♗f6

Because of his shortage of space, it is essential for Black to exchange pieces.

19. ♗h6 ♗g7 20. ♖e2? ♖d8

A sensible decision was to organize a blockade on the dark squares:

20... ♗h4 21. ♗d1 (21. ♗f5 gxf5 22. gxf5 f6) 21... f6 22. ♗f2 ♖e7 and hold by drawing in his defenders.

21. ♖g2 ♖a7 22. ♗h1 ♗h4

Polugaevsky has been able to stabilize the situation and after

23. ♗xg7?

he was not worse.

23... ♗xg7

By playing only on one flank, the stronger side cannot employ

the principle of two weaknesses. Knowing this, Black defends with all his might.

Question: What plan should White pursue if he wishes to win the game?

24. ♗f5+



Sacrificing the knight on f5 is a standard method of attack in Spanish positions. To take or not to take – that is the question.

24... ♗g8?!

Correct was 24... ♗xf5 25. exf5, counting not only on equalizing, but even on an advantage: 25... ♗g5, taking control of the dark squares (25... ♖g5=), 26. ♖c2 ♖h8 27. ♗d1 ♗f4 28. ♗f2 – the weaker side has constructed a blockade and will in the future prepare the move ...h7-h5.

25. ♖h6 ♗f6

Now he should have gone for simplification with 25... ♗xf5 26. gxf5 ♗f6, followed by ...♗g7, defending against all of the white threats.

26. ♖fg1?

Bukhuti Gurgenidze was a very strong GM in Soviet times, but here he plays incorrectly. In attacking the king, one must employ the appropriate methods: 26. ♖g3!.



26...♙h8?

Going totally passive is the decisive mistake. The move 26...♙xf5 looks logical, ensuring his pieces additional space and in the process eliminating the annoying intruder, 27.gxf5 ♙g7=.

27.♞d1

The knight prepares to join the attack.

27...f6 28.♞de3 ♙g7 29.♞xg7 ♜xg7 30.♞f5 ♜gf7 31.g5

And gradually the play opens up on the kingside.

31...♚c7 32.h4 fxg5 33.♜xg5 ♜f6 34.♜xg6+ hxg6 35.♜xg6+ ♜xg6 36.♚xg6+ ♘h8 37.♚h6+ ♘g8 38.♚g5+ ♘h8 39.♞e7 1-0

In positions with spatial advantage, three types of pawn structures can arise.

The first type includes pawn structures in which there is no contact between pawns; for example, Hedgehog-type positions. We will first look at a diagram position from my 1993 game against Kramnik after move 10. We will have a closer look at the game further below.



Kramnik-Tiviakov, Belgrade 1993, after move 10

In order to successfully defend in such configurations, firstly, you need to be patient and prepare the liberating advances ...d7-d5 and/or ...b6-b5; secondly, do not allow weaknesses to appear, do not create 'hooks' for your opponent that he can attack.

I will tell you in detail about the purposes of getting into passive positions in another chapter. And now I will briefly say that if we still unintentionally find ourselves in them, then we must painstakingly defend ourselves and wait... for the opponent to start doing something aggressive.

In Hedgehog positions, Black has no obvious weaknesses, so White must take some bold steps.

Question: What kind of winning game plans can you name? Which one is the most effective?

For example, the idea f2-f4/e4-e5 does not lead to the set goal, because after the exchange of pawns dxe5 fxe5, White has a weakness on the e5-square. But

f4 on its own, without the move e5, helps to capture space. Then, according to the situation, White plays g4-g5 or h4-h5. To achieve victory by attacking the enemy king, White will need to play a risky game, but not all chess players are ready to do it.

My game with Vladimir Kramnik was played at the highest level. I was in the prime of my life and in 1993 I qualified for the Candidates matches.

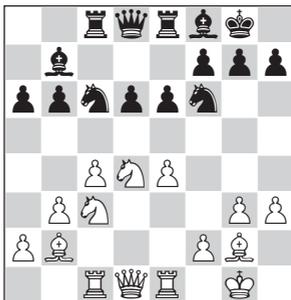
Game 75 English Opening

Vladimir Kramnik

Sergei Tiviakov

Belgrade 1993

1. c3 f6 2. c4 b6 3. g3 e6 4. g2
 b7 5. 0-0 e7 6. c3 0-0 7. e1 c5
 8. e4 c6 9. d4 cxd4 10. xd4 c8
 11. b3 a6 12. b2 d6 13. c1 e8
 14. h3 f8



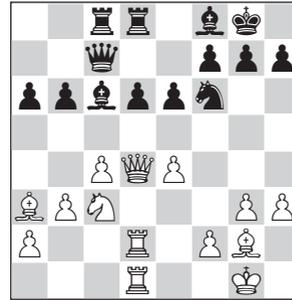
Question: Offer an assessment of this position.

Black has a passive position and hopes to overcome his difficulties with the help of stubborn defence.

15. c2 xd4 16. xd4 c7 17. d2
 c6 18. a3 e8

I maintain patience and look for breaks that will free me from my opponent's shackles.

19. e1



Question: Which move can I make in this position (but unfortunately did not play) which Stockfish very much likes?

One must consider breaks. Should it be ...d5 or ...b5 ?

19... b7

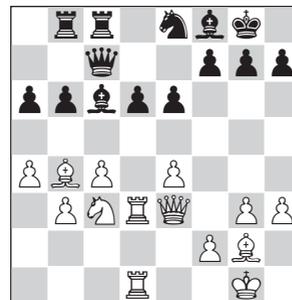
19...b5 20. cxb5 axb5 21. b4 and White has a minimal advantage, but Black has a defensible position.

20. e3 e8

20...b5 was again possible, even at the cost of sacrificing a pawn.

21. b4 b8 22. a4 dc8

23. d3 c7



Because I have delayed with ...b5, my position lacks counterplay.

Question: What do you think the computer recommends here? Probably I was lucky that Kramnik refrained from the variation.

24. ♖d2

Since my queenside is completely covered, 24.g4 seems like absolutely the only ambitious game plan. If Black waits then White continues g5 and h2-h4-h5, trying to further create weaknesses in the opponent's position.

True, throughout my chess career I won many difficult, frankly hopeless positions: the enemy launched an attack with pawns in front of his king, thereby weakening him, and the side 'in distress' had counterchances.

24... ♖b7 25. ♕h2 ♖a8 26.f4 ♖b7 27.f5?



I can force a draw.

Question: Find how.

Hint: Black plays a series of active moves, breaking out from his passive position and then either equalizing or even seizing the initiative.

27...exf5 28.exf5 ♕xg2 29. ♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 30. ♕xg2

It was essential to include

30...a5.

There followed:

31. ♕a3 d5

Because the bishop on a3 is hanging, Black escapes from his unenviable position: he gets in ...d5 in a correct form.

32. ♕xf8 dxc4 33.bxc4 ♕xf8 34. ♖d4 1/2-1/2

Patience brings salvation. Black, like an alligator on the hunt, waited for his moment, and then took advantage of his opponent's mistake and made a draw.

I would like to tell you about another fighting method that I often use in passive positions: 'cutting off the opponent's most advanced central pawn'. It means the following: the weaker side is obliged to prevent the possibility of the enemy strengthening his centre with neighbouring pawns: to play around, flow around it.

Game 76 King's Indian Defence

Anton Kovalyov 2623

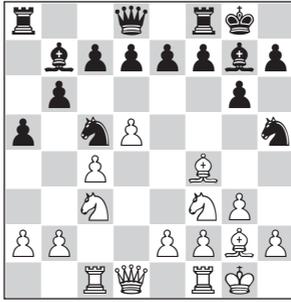
Sergei Tiviakov 2621

Bogota 2010

1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 ♕b7 4. ♕g2 g6 5.d4 ♕g7 6.0-0 0-0 7.d5 ♘a6

The black knight intends to continue its development to the square c5, so as to take control of e4.

8. ♘c3 ♘c5 9. ♕f4 a5 10. ♖c1 ♘h5



A situation has arisen that rarely occurs in my practice: I did not make a single pawn move along the c-, d-, e-, f- files. The engine shows that White is slightly better, but Black's position is solid.

Task: Follow the operations of the two sides for the rest of the game.

11. ♖e5 ♜h6 12. e3 d6 13. ♜f4 ♜g7
 14. g4 ♜xf4 15. exf4 e6 16. ♞e1 exd5
 17. cxd5 ♞d7 18. h3 ♞fe8 19. ♞xe8+
 ♞xe8 20. ♜d4 ♞e7 21. ♞d2 ♜a6
 22. ♜db5 ♜xb5 23. ♜xb5 ♞e2
 24. ♞xe2 ♞xe2 25. ♜f1 ♞xb2 26. a3 f5
 27. f3 ♜f7 28. ♞e1 ♜b3 29. ♞e2 ♞b1
 30. ♞c2 ♜c5 31. ♜g2 ♜b2 32. ♜c4
 ♜c1 33. ♜xc7 ♜xf4 34. ♜e6 ♜e3
 35. f4 b5 36. ♜a2 ♞a1 37. ♜f3 ♜g1
 38. gxf5 gxf5 39. ♜d8+ ♜f8 40. ♜c6
 a4 41. ♜b4 ♜b3 42. ♞c8+ ♜g7
 43. ♞c7+ ♜h6 44. ♜xb3 axb3 45. ♜d3
 ♞xa3 46. ♜e2 ♞a2+ 47. ♜d1 ♜d4
 48. ♞c6 ♞a1+ 49. ♜d2 b2 50. ♞xd6+
 ♜h5 51. ♜xb2 ♜xb2 52. ♞d7 ♜g6
 53. ♞d6+ ♜f6 54. ♞b6 ♞a4 55. ♜e3
 ♞e4+ 56. ♜f3 b4 57. d6 ♞d4 58. ♜e3
 ♜f7 59. ♞b7+ ♜e6 60. ♞xh7 ♞xd6
 61. ♞b7 ♜d4+ 62. ♜d3 ♞b6 0-1

To consolidate the method of playing 'cutting off support', I offer

you another game of mine for your consideration.

Task: Watch how Black first surrounds the enemy centre and then destroys it.

Game 77 Queen's Indian Defence

Loek van Wely
Sergei Tiviakov

Gausdal 1992

1. d4 ♜f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♜f3 b6 4. g3 ♜b7
 5. ♜g2 ♜e7



Why do I, being an experienced classical grandmaster, sometimes agree to passive positions? My calculation is this: against less experienced opponents, I use a strategy of psychological provocation, hoping for their activity: what if they don't want to make a draw with me? And if they get carried away with the process of playing to win, I take the initiative. I will not hide that such adventurous conclusions can lead to extreme situations, because capturing the centre in most cases brings its owner an advantage: I have to act very carefully so as not to be defeated.

6.0-0 0-0 7.♘c3 ♘a6 8.d5



I have reached this position many times. For example, in my game against Yuri Razuvaev, where I sacrificed the exchange on e3 in the style of Petrosian.

Additional task: Look through this game.

Razuvaev-Tiviakov, Rostov-on-Don 1993:

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♙e7
 5.♙g2 ♙b7 6.♘c3 0-0 7.d5 ♙b4 8.♙d2
 ♘a6 9.0-0 ♘c5 10.♘e1 ♙e8 11.♘c2
 ♙xc3 12.♙xc3 exd5 13.cxd5 ♘ce4
 14.♘e3 ♘xc3 15.bxc3 ♙xe3 16.fxe3 d6
 17.♙d4 ♘d7 18.♙f4 ♙e7 19.♙af1 ♘e5
 20.♙e4 ♙f8 21.♙d3 ♙c8 22.♙e4 g6
 23.♙f6 ♘g7 24.c4 ♙d7 25.h4 ♙xf6
 26.♙xf6 ♘xf6 27.♙d4 ♙e8 28.♘f2
 ♘g7 29.♘e1 f6 30.♘d2 ♘g4 31.e4 ♘e5
 32.♙c3 ♙e7 33.♙a3 a5 34.♙b2 ♘f7
 35.♙c2 ♙e5 36.♙a3 ♘f8 37.♙a4 ♙g4
 38.♙d3 ♘e7 39.c5 dxc5 40.♙b5 ♘d6
 41.♙c6 ♘d8 42.♙c2 ♙c8 43.♙a8 g5
 44.♙c6 gxh4 45.gxh4 ♙h5 46.e5 fxe5
 47.♙a4 e4 48.♙b3 ♙b7 49.♙c3 ♙xd5
 50.♙f6+ ♘d7 51.a4 ♘c6 52.♙e7 ♘b7
 53.♘c3 ♙c6 54.♘b2 c4 55.♘c3 ♘c8
 56.♙f6 ♙c5 57.♙h6 ♘e7 58.♙xh7
 ♘d5+ 59.♘d4 c3 60.♙xe4 ♘b4

61.♙g6 ♙xa4 62.h5 c2 63.♙xc2 ♙xc2
 64.♙f7 a4 65.h6 a3 0-1.

Question: Find a strong move for Black that prevents White from strengthening his centre.

The basis of my plan is the method of cutting off the central pawn d5 from the 'base'. Therefore, there is now a lively struggle for the important square e4.

I have encountered this position in twelve games, in which I scored 75%, that is, 9 points, using the same method of play. Do you agree that this is a good result for such a defensive situation?

Note that, unlike the previous game against Vladimir Kramnik, this position refers to a different type of pawn structure. Previously, we looked at a pattern without pawn contact, but this time exchanges are possible, there are dynamics.

8...♙b4

8...♘c5? does not act against the c3-knight and White then gets a decisive advantage: strategically Black's position is very difficult.

9.♙d2

The player who has seized the centre tries to defend it. But Stockfish shows that White should have exchanged 9.dxe6 and returned part of the extra space: 9...dxe6 10.♙c2± with a normal opening position.

9...♘c5

Black continues his policy of cutting the d5-pawn off from its

base. Now this is already a very strong move.

10. ♖h4 ♜e8

With each action, I exert pressure on the centre. Look how harmoniously my pieces operate!

11. ♜c1 a5 12. ♜e1 d6 13. ♛c2 exd5
Black has successfully solved all of his opening problems.

14. ♗xd5 ♗xd5

The computer likes 14... ♗xd5
15. cxd5 ♗fe4=.

15. cxd5 ♜e5 16. e4 c6



This time I use the method of 'breaking up the enemy centre' by attacking the d5-pawn.

17. ♗xb4 axb4 18. ♗f3 ♜e8 19. dxc6
19. ♗d4±.

19... ♗xc6 20. e5

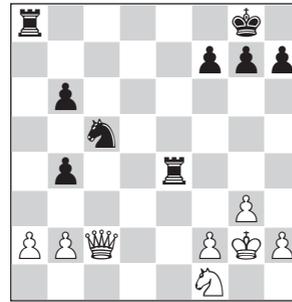
White has lost the thread of the game. Probably Van Wely has already made a mistake somewhere, because after...

20... dxe5 21. ♗g5 e4 22. ♗xe4 ♛e7

... Black suddenly obtains a large advantage on account of his unending pressure on the centre, even after the white pawns have quit the centre of the board.

23. ♗d2 ♛xe1+ 24. ♜xe1 ♜xe1+

25. ♗f1 ♗xg2 26. ♗xg2 ♜e4



27. ♛d2 h6 28. b3 ♜e6 29. f3 ♜a7
30. ♗h3 ♗h7 31. ♗e3 ♜d7 32. ♛c2+
g6 33. ♗c4 ♜d5 34. f4 ♗d3 35. ♗e5
♗xe5 36. fxe5 ♗dx5 37. ♛f2 ♜f5
38. ♛d2 ♜e4 39. ♛d3 ♗h5+ 40. ♗g2
♜he5 41. ♛d6 ♜e6 42. ♛d7 ♗g7
43. ♗f3 ♜e3+ 44. ♗f2 ♜e2+ 45. ♗f3
♜xh2 46. ♛d4+ ♜f6+ 0-1

I have also won other games in similar fashion.

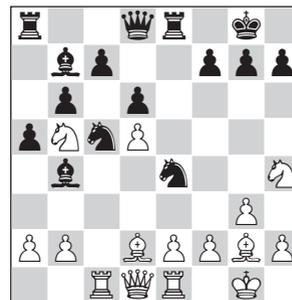
Game 78 Queen's Indian Defence

Chandra Purnama Tirta 2380

Sergei Tiviakov 2651

Jakarta 2014

1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗f3 b6 4. g3
♗b7 5. ♗g2 ♗e7 6. d5 ♗a6 7. 0-0 0-0
8. ♗c3 ♗b4 9. ♗d2 ♗c5 10. ♗h4 ♜e8
11. ♜e1 d6 12. ♜c1 a5 13. ♗b5 exd5
14. cxd5 ♗fe4



A familiar situation: the pawn on d5 is far from its support and I can exploit this to force the opponent to weaken his position.

15. ♖xb4 axb4 16. ♔d4 b3 17. a3 ♖a4

Again Black's play is built on by-passing White's pawn fortifications.

18. ♜c4 ♜xc4 19. ♝xc4 ♝d7 20. ♜d4 ♜e5 21. ♞xb3 ♞xd5 22. ♞xc5 bxc5 23. ♝c2 ♜e8=



Thus, the central problem is solved: it has been destroyed and the black pieces have become active.

24. ♜d1 ♞c6 25. f3 ♜f6 26. e4 g6 27. ♞f1 ♜b8 28. ♞c4 ♝e8 29. ♜g2 ♜d7 30. ♞f2 ♜e5 31. ♜d2 ♜xb2 32. ♝xb2 ♜xc4 33. ♝c3 ♜xd2 34. ♝xd2 ♝e5 35. ♜e3 ♝a1 36. ♜c4 ♝h1 37. ♞e3 g5 38. g4 ♝g1+ 39. ♞e2 h6 40. ♝b2 ♝xh2+ 41. ♞d3 ♝f4 42. ♞e2 d5 43. exd5 0-1

Incidentally, White was not obliged to lose this game.

I used to play the Maroczy System as Black and because of the lack of central control my pieces would often be placed on the last three ranks.

Game 79 Sicilian Defence

Nigel Short

Sergei Tiviakov

Douglas 1998

1. e4 c5 2. ♜f3 ♜c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♜xd4 g6 5. c4 ♜f6 6. ♜c3 d6



Black does not have it any easier in the variation 6... ♜xd4 7. ♝xd4, despite the exchange of a pair of knights: White has additional opportunities due to the centralized queen.

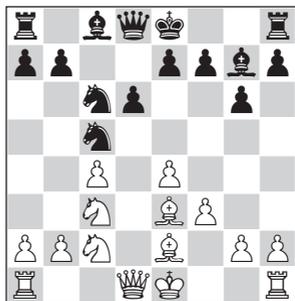
7. ♜c2

A dangerous continuation that I don't like as Black. Mega Database statistics point to the fact that after playing Short in this variation I started to experience problems.

Question: Why is it considered one of the strongest lines for White?

Without calculating any variations, simply based on chess principles, it is clear that White prefers not to exchange pieces, in order not to help his opponent solve his space problems.

7... ♞g7 8. ♞e2 ♜d7 9. ♞e3 ♜c5 10. f3



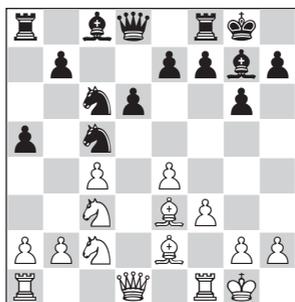
In this original position, as well as the standard plan, there is an interesting possibility to sharpen the play.

Question: My situation is not enviable, how can I escape from it?

10...0-0

Let me remind you that this game took place back in 1998, when I had to rely on my own analyses and ideas about chess. In the twenty-first century, the computer exchanges bishop for knight: 10...♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 f6 12.0-0 ♔a5, confident that the doubled pawns will bring trouble to White, who will not be able to organize a deadly attack on the king with the help of the two bishops.

11.0-0 a5



As a result, emerging from the opening I found myself in a passive position. Black cannot do anything in the centre: the opponent has complete control over it, so I plan to play a 'bypassing' strategy.

12. ♖d2 a4 13. ♘a3 ♙e6 14. ♜ad1 ♕a5

Note that all of the pieces are on the board and not a single one has been exchanged.

15. ♘ab5 ♜fc8 16.f4 f6 17.f5 ♙f7

The bishop has to move back.

18. ♕c2 ♘d7

But we have the possibility of controlling e5.

19. ♕b1 ♘ce5 20.b3 axb3

21.axb3 ♕d8

Black's position is very restrained, but is prepared to repel attacks.

22. ♘d5



Question: Which strong move should be played in this position?

Hint: The solution is similar to what I used earlier in the game against Vladimir Kramnik.

In the Maroczy System, a business partnership between the black queen and bishop is often concluded: ♕f8/♗h6.

22...♙xd5 23.exd5 ♖f8 24.♗d4 ♙h6
25.♙f2 ♖h8

White can put the knight on e6, but I organized my game in such a way that I can act around it without paying attention to it. We saw the same thing in the game against Anton Kovalev, in which I gave the centre to my opponent.

26.♖c2 ♖f7 27.g3 ♜a5 28.♖b2
♜ca8 29.♜a1 ♖g8 30.♜a5 ♜a5
31.♜a1 ♖a8 32.♜xa5 ♖xa5

White maintains pressure throughout the game. He stands better due to his control of the middle of the board, but he cannot win because there are no weaknesses in my position.

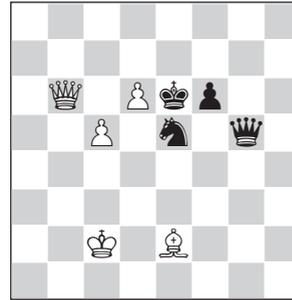
33.fxg6 hxg6 34.b4 ♖a8 35.♗b5 b6



I prevent the move 36.c5. And now a tough struggle arose with many mistakes on both sides:

36.♗d4 ♗g8 37.h4 ♖c8 38.♖c2
♖a6 39.♗g2 ♖a3 40.♗c6 ♗f8
41.h5 ♙e3 42.hxg6 ♙xf2 43.♗xf2
♗g7 44.♗xe7 ♖xb4 45.♗f5+ ♗xg6
46.♗xd6+ ♗g7 47.♗f5+ ♗f8 48.♗f1
♗e8 49.d6 ♗d8 50.♖e4 ♖a4
51.♗e7 ♖a3 52.♖d5 ♗f8 53.♗c6+
♗xc6 54.♖xc6 ♖c5 55.♖a8+
♖c8 56.♖e4 ♖d7 57.c5 ♖h3+

58.♗f2 ♖h2+ 59.♗f1 ♖h3+ 60.♗f2
♖h2+ 61.♗e3 ♖xg3+ 62.♗d2
♖g5+ 63.♗d3 ♗g6 64.♖a8+
♗d7 65.♖b7+ ♗e6 66.♖c8+ ♗f7
67.♖c7+ ♗e6 68.♖c8+ ♗f7 69.♗c2
♗e5 70.♖b7+ ♗e6 71.♖xb6



White has at his disposal not only an extra pawn, but also well-advanced passed pawns. However, after the correct move, the position is a draw. But I went wrong and lost.

Question: Play better than me.

71...♖g2?

71...♗d5 and White can't strengthen his position because 72.d7 ♖f5+ 73.♗c3 ♖h3+ 74.♗b4 ♖xd7 is equal.
72.♖b3+ ♗f5 73.♖e3 ♗e6 74.♗c3
♖h1 75.♗b4 1-0

Now let us examine a game with a different pawn structure.

Game 80 Queen's Indian Defence

Roman Lovkov 2424

Sergei Tiviakov 2674

St Petersburg 2012

1.d4 ♗f6 2.♗f3 e6 3.g3 b6 4.♙g2
♙b7 5.0-0 d5 6.c4 c6 7.♗c3 ♙e7