

Karsten Müller

Typical
Queen's Gambit
Exchange Variation

Effective Middlegame Training

JBV Chess Books

Contents

Preface	6
Explanation of symbols	9
Exercises	13
Solutions	46
About the author	174
Index of sources	176

Preface

If someone decides to learn Spanish (the language, mind you – and not the opening!), he will appropriately acquire textbooks that deal with Spanish – not those that deal with *all* Roman languages or even all *European* languages.

Let's take this comparison a little further: If a dictionary is something like an opening book, then a grammar is something like a textbook for the middle game. True, one could fill entire libraries with opening books on the subject of Spanish alone, but what about a corresponding 'grammar'?

Of course, in every middlegame textbook there is one or the other position that is clearly recognizable as *Spanish*, but their number is negligible in the context of French, English, Russian, Italian, Dutch and so forth. And so too for all these other European languages – no excuse me – of all these other *openings* whose middlegame treatment the reader doesn't want to learn at all.

For example, isn't dealing with the issues of hanging pawns and minority attack – the author asks with good reason – just as dispensable for an e4 player as it is essential for a d4 player? – Why should a die-hard enthusiast of Indian openings care about the strategic intricacies of positions resulting from all those complicated Queen's Gambit systems? And of course vice versa: what can a player who 'by nature' avoids fianchetto openings do with all these subtleties of Indian positions?

And it is precisely this conspicuous and astounding vacuum in the area of middlegame literature that inspired me to make an appropriate attempt at improvement: If you want to learn *Spanish* (the *opening*, mind you, and not the language!), you will get a textbook and exercise book in which only *Spanish* is 'spoken' or played.

However, this book only deals with the Queen's Gambit – more precisely: the *Exchange Variation* with white pawns on e3 and d4 against black pawns on c6 and d5 – the so-called 'Carlsbad structure'. The pawn structures that mostly arise and are treated in the examples are shown in some diagrams after the preface.

And I would like to make one more important point in advance. It is an enormous challenge for every chess author to do justice to a readership with the broadest possible skill level. So it would be absurd in the field of opening and endgame literature to offer, for example, 'French' or 'Rook Endgames' for players between 1400 and 1600, between 1600 and 1800, between 1800 and 2000 and so on. Accordingly, one only writes one book on the respective topic and tries to explain all important things as precisely and comprehensibly as possible – and then it is up to each individual reader how intensively he is willing to work with the books in order to achieve the greatest possible benefit.

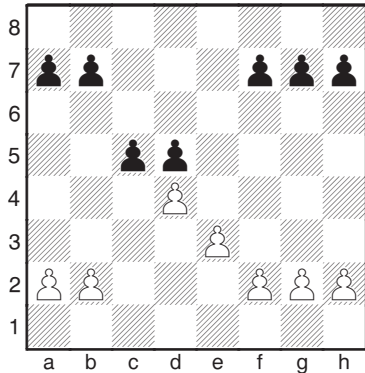
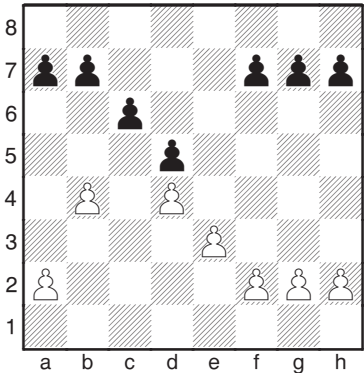
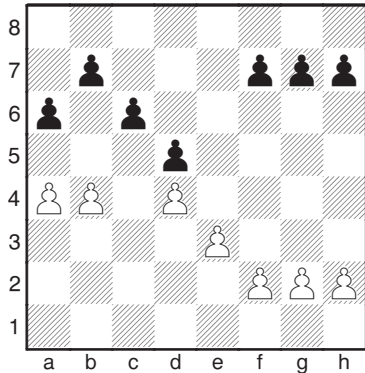
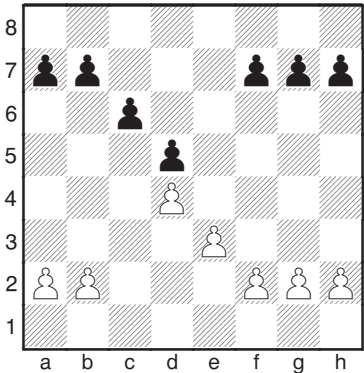
The task becomes much more difficult with a book like this, which consists exclusively of exercises. Because if the author chooses consistently very simple or consistently somewhat more difficult examples, then in the first case more advanced players shy away because they are underchallenged – in the second case less advanced players because they feel overwhelmed.

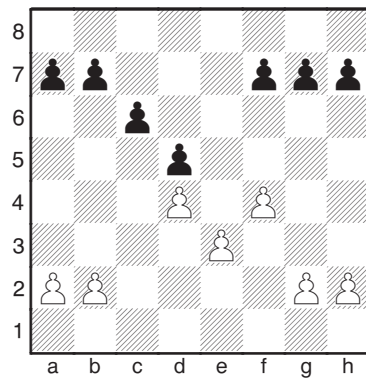
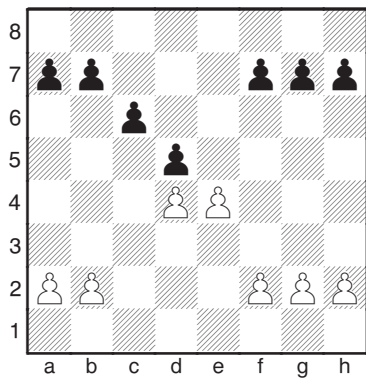
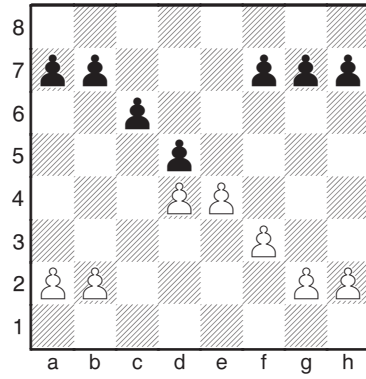
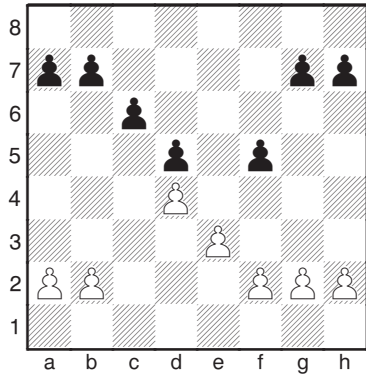
And therefore here's a good advice – regardless of your skill level. Take each task seriously, but don't let it become torture! As soon as you encounter too many obstacles or too much resistance, just take the liberty to open the solution section and turn the test book into a textbook!

I would like to thank Rainer Woisin and Frederic Friedel from ChessBase for the great idea of working with QR Codes, Thomas Beyer for the very well done layout and – last but not least – the publisher Robert Ullrich for the overall excellent production.

Karsten Müller, Hamburg, September 2023

The following pawn structures are treated



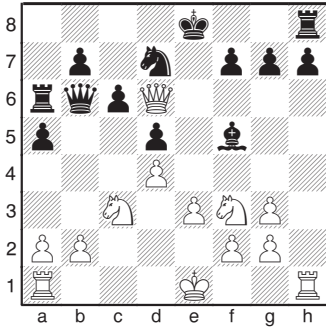


Exercices

Concrete question (solutions starting on page 46)



1

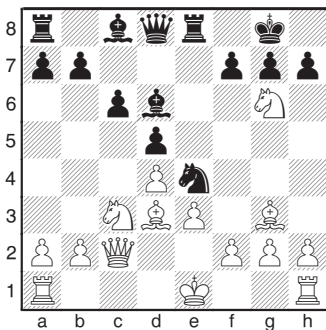


Why does the 'patent remedy'
14.0-0-0 fail?

Which alternative ensures
an advantage?



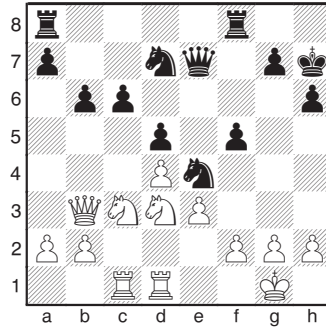
2



Is the pawn sacrifice
13...hxg6 correct?



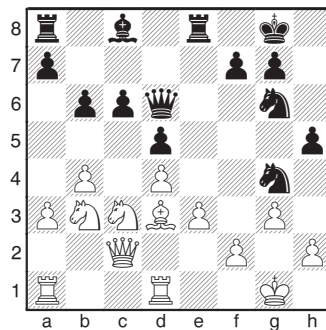
3



Does 17.♘b4 win a pawn?



4

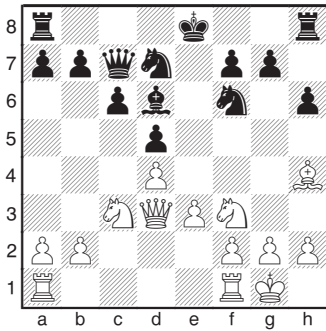


Can the h-pawn consistently
continue its advance?

Candidates (solutions starting on page 50)



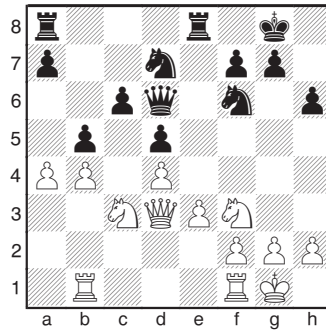
5



Should White play on the wing with 12.a3 or 12.♖fc1 – or in the center with 12.e4?



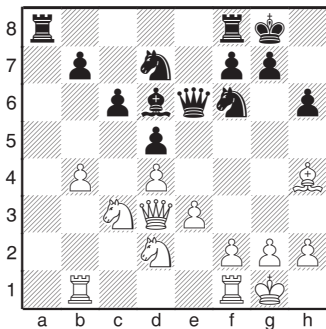
7



The best reaction to a2–a4 is 15...a6, 15...a5 or 15...bxa4?



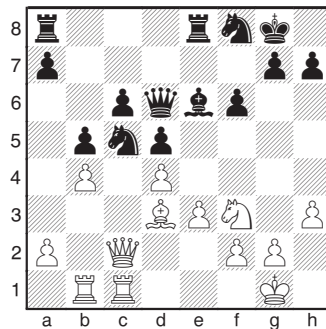
6



16...♖fe8, 16...b5, 16...♖a3
Which candidate doesn't quite fit into the picture?



8



Which candidate is best:
18.bxc5, 18.dxc5 or 18.♙xc5?

Solutions

1

Anastasian – Grabliauskas

Frunze 1989

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 e6 4.cxd5 exd5
5.♙f4 ♙d6 6.♙g3 ♘f6 7.e3 ♙f5 8.♚b3
♙xg3 9.hxg3 ♚b6 10.♚a3 a5 11.♘f3
♘a6 12.♙xa6 ♚xa6 13.♚d6 ♘d7

Black tries to forestall a possible attack on his uncastled king with a counter-action on the queenside.

1) In the game, White chose the almost brutally self-evident reply **14.0-0-0??** – perhaps to rub it in his opponent's face that the white king can indeed castle.

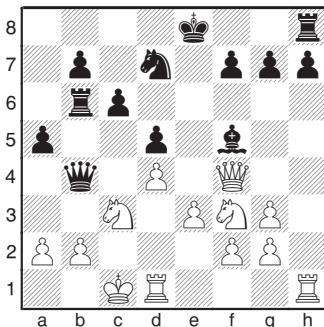
14...♚b4!

This turns the tide, because White cannot maintain the diagonal barrier preventing his opponent from castling, nor can he allow the queens to be swapped.

15.♚f4

Because after 15.♚xb4 axb4 16.♘e2 ♚xa2 White loses a pawn that is not insignificant.

15...♚b6



16.♘a4

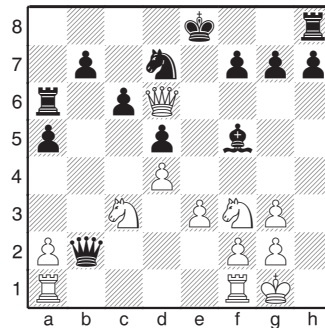
At the latest when White opted for this clear emergency solution, it will have dawned on him that the obvious defensive move 16.♘d2? allows the evil 'queen sacrifice' 16...♚xc3+!

16...♚c4+!

Black must not let the reins slip, because after the immediate 16...♚xa4? 17.♚xf5 ♚xa2♯ his advantage is limited.

17.♙d2 ♚xa4 18.♚xf5 ♚xb2+ 19.♙e1 g6-+

2) After the generous offer **14.0-0** Black must avoid the trap **14...♚xb2??** (♘14...♚b4).



Because after the giant move **15.♚ab1!!+-** White can still come back to the topic of the 'uncastled king'.

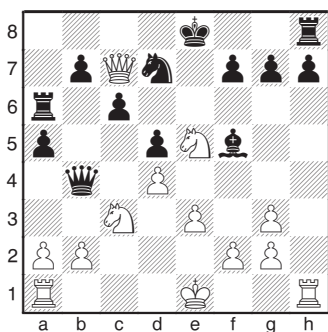
(A no less powerful secondary solution, however, is 15.♘a4!+- Δ15...♚b4 16.♘c5 Δ17.a3 followed by ♘xa6.)

Since after the possible continuation **15...♙xb1** (15...♚xc3 16.♚xb7) **16.♚xb1 c5 17.♚xd7+ ♙xd7 18.♚xb2** Black's rooks are real laughing stocks compared to the knights.

3) Only with the courageous approach **14.♖e5!** can White gain some opening advantage; e.g. **14...♗b4**

(After the supposedly witty 'clarification' **14...f6** and the continuation **15.♗xd7 ♘xd7 16.♗b8+ ♖d8 17.♗xb7 ♗b6 18.♗a7 ♗xb2 19.0-0** Black can castle, but after **♗ab1** White should still win thanks to the control of the b-file.)

15.♗c7



15...♗a8

– **15...♗xb2?** **16.0-0 0-0 17.♗xd7 ♘xd7 18.♗a4~+- Δ♗c5**

– **15...0-0?** **16.♗xd7 ♘xd7 17.♗xd7 ♗xb2 18.0-0 ♗xc3 19.♗xb7~+-**

16.0-0-0 (16.g4!?) **16...♗b6 17.♗xb6 ♗xb6 18.g4 Δg5**

2

Lorson - Vul

St. Ingbert 1991

1.d4 d5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.c4 e6 4.♗c3 c6 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗c2 ♗d6 7.♗g5 ♗bd7 8.e3 ♗f8 9.♗h4 ♗g6 10.♗g3 0-0 11.♗d3 ♗e8 12.♗h4 ♗e4 13.♗xg6

1) In the game, the pawn sacrifice **13...hxg6?! 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.♗xe4** could have led to an advantage for White with precise and vigorous play.

15...f5

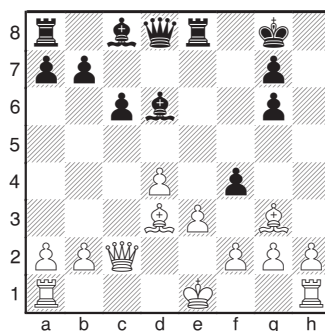
The whole approach is based on this

tempo advance with which Black wants to exploit the confrontation **♗e1/♗e8**.

After the alternative **15...♗a5+?! 16.♗f1±** the loss of the castling rights would turn out to be quite inconsequential and the extra pawn would count fully.

16.♗xd6

Instead of this rather 'friendly' approach, White could have safely tried to consolidate his minimal advantage after shifting the material stock with **16.♗d3!?** f4.



– **17.0-0-0!?** ffg3 **18.hxg3∞**

– **17.♗xg6 ffg3 18.hxg3±**

16...♗xd6 17.♗f3

△**17.♗d3 ♗xd4 18.♗c4+ (18.0-0-0) 18...♗h7 19.0-0±; 19.♗d1**

17...♗xd4 with a rather unclear position, in which White can only hope to exploit the structural weaknesses on the kingside.

2) After **13...♗xc3** Black could have continued much more carefree.

a) Both after **14.bxc3 hxg6** and after **14.♗xd6 ♗xd6 (14...hxg6?! 15.♗f4±; 15.♗e5) 15.♗e5 ♗e4**.

b) On the other hand, White should rather refrain from the adventure **14.♗e7+ ♗xe7 15.♗xh7+?! (△15.bxc3∞; 15.♗xd6)**; e.g. **15...♗f8 16.bxc3 g6 17.♗xg6 ffg6 18.♗xg6 ♗b8±; 18...♗xg3 19.hxg3 ♗g7±**.

3

Mirzoeva - Frolova

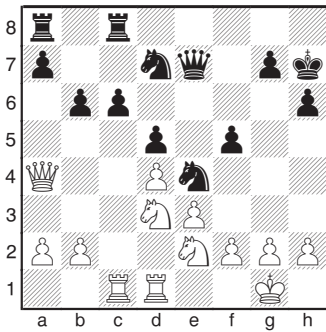
Moscow 2011

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 e6
5.cxd5 exd5 6.♙g5 h6 7.♙h4 ♙f5 8.♚b3
b6 9.♘e5 ♙e7 10.e3 0-0 11.♙d3 ♙xd3
12.♘xd3 ♘bd7 13.0-0 ♘e4 14.♙xe7
♚xe7 15.♞fd1 f5 16.♞ac1 ♖h7

1) The very direct move **17.♘e2** is okay, although in the game White had to live with the opponent's central knight indefinitely.

17...♞ac8

17...♞fc8 is followed by the further provocative attack on c6 with 18.♚a4.

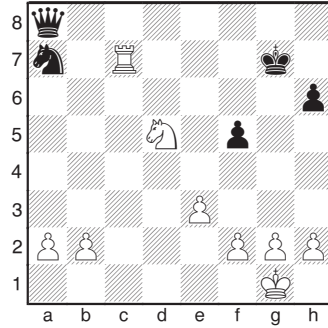


a) After 18...b5? 19.♚a6 ♠c2 followed by ♠dc1 the provocation would have led to ~+-.

b) After 18...c5 19.♘df4 ♘df6 20.dxc5 Black has to find the strong answer 20...♘g4! to limit White's advantage to ±.

c) And after 18...♚e8!? 19.♞c2 followed by ♠dc1 White would have a small but distinct advantage.

By the way, it's worth noting that the alleged mistake 19.♞xc6? followed by the longer and rather forced line 19...♘b8 20.♞xc8 ♚xa4 21.♠dc1 ♚a6 22.♘df4 ♘c5 23.♠d8 g5 24.dxc5 gxf4 25.♘xf4 ♚b7 26.♘xd5 ♖g7 27.cxb6 ♘c6 28.♞xa8 ♚xa8 29.bxa7 ♘xa7 30.♞c7+ ...



... leads to an extremely rare distribution of material, which is possibly not lost at all.

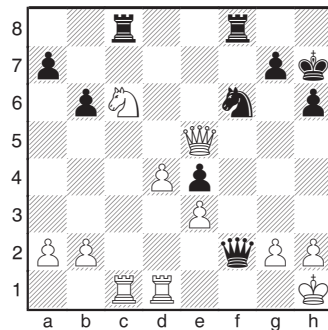
18.♞c2

Here, too, 18.♚a4!? (this time even as a double attack) would have been stronger; e.g. 18...♚d6 19.♘b4 (19.♚xa7? ♞a8 20.♚b7 ♞fc8!= ♠21...♞ab8 22.♚a6 ♞a8 etc.) with a clear minimal advantage.

18...♘df6 19.♠dc1 c5 and after this key move has been executed solidly, the position is in dynamic equilibrium.

2) The commentary claims that **17.♘b4** wins a pawn by force, given the possible intermediate exchange on e4. This claim is correct, but let's look at the position after **17...♞ac8**.

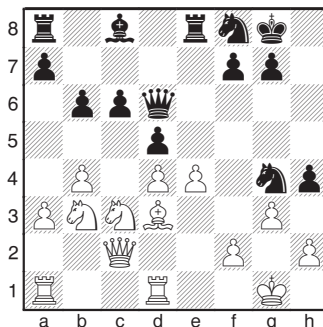
a) The line **18.♘xe4? fxe4 19.♘xc6 ♚f6 20.♚xd5 ♚xf2+ 21.♖h1 ♘f6 22.♚e5 ...**



... and now **22...♚xe3**, **22...♚xb2** or perhaps even better **22...♞fe8** would lead to a completely unclear position.

b) The fact is, however, that the alternatives **18.♖a4**, **18.♝c2** and **18.♗e2** would lead to a clear minimal advantage.

3) And for the sake of completeness, it should also be mentioned that the systematic approach **17.♝c2** followed by **♜dc1** may even be slightly better than the first-mentioned alternatives.



4

Mira - Makropoulou

Pula 1997

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.♗f3 e6
5.cxd5 exd5 6.♙f4 ♙e7 7.♖c2 0-0 8.e3
♖a5 9.♗d2 ♗a6 10.♙e2 ♗b4 11.♖b1
♖d8 12.a3 ♗a6 13.0-0 ♗c7 14.♜d1 ♝e8
15.♖c2 ♗e6 16.♙g3 ♙d6 17.♙xd6 ♖xd6
18.♗f3 ♗f8 19.♗e5 ♗6d7 20.♗d3 ♗g6
21.b4 ♗f6 22.♗c5 b6 23.♗b3 ♗g4 24.g3
h5 25.♙d3

Black correctly took the blatant lack of piece protection of the opposing king as an opportunity to send the h-pawn on its way as a battering ram.

1) The lame retreat **25...♗f8?** is inappropriate simply because this knight is not the more dangerous one and because its elimination would cost the light-squared bishop and thus the guardian of all light-square weaknesses.

26.e4

White uses the breather to create counterplay in the center as quickly as possible. This also eliminates all threats of a sacrifice on e3, which Black can fall back on in many of the better lines.

26...h4

27.exd5??

However, the counterplay was not supposed to happen quite so quickly.

True, Black would retain some attack after **27.e5 ♖h6 28.♖d2 hxg3 29.fxg3 ♖h5! Δf6; Δ♗e6-g5**, but a safe option was **27.h3 ♗e3 28.fxe3 ♖xg3+** with a foreseeable repetition of moves.

27...hxg3!+ 28.fxg3

28.hxg3 ♖h6

28...♗e3

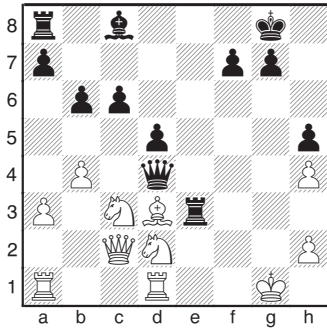
2) It's true that **25...♗h4?** is a harmless gimmick, although the fact that White would have to defend himself very precisely shows Black's enormous attacking potential; e.g. **26.d2**

After **26.♖e2 f5** or **26.♙e2 ♗f5** or **♙f5** Black would at least obtain a minimal positional advantages.

26...♗xf2!

The relatively harmless alternative **26...♖f6 27.♝f1 ♗xh2 28.♗xh2 ♖e6 29.gxh4 ♖h3+** would lead to perpetual check.

27.♗xf2 ♖f6+ 28.♗g1 ♝xe3 29.gxh4 ♖xd4



30. ♖e2

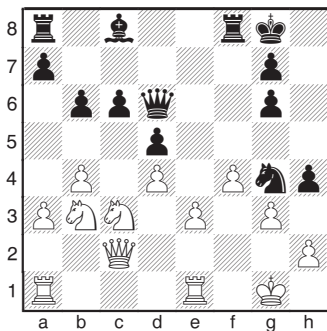
This move, which is not easy to find, is in fact the only one, because 30. ♖h1?? would simply lose after 30... ♗g4.

a) Now 30... ♗xe2+ 31. ♖h1 ♗xh2+ 32. ♖xh2 ♗xh4+ would again lead to perpetual check.

b) And after 30... ♗xd3 31. ♗xd3 ♗xd3 32. ♖f1 ♗h3 Black would at least have good compensation.

3) After the consistent continuation 25...h4!, White is on the edge of the abyss. This is evident from the following lines, in which, by the way, Black has a number of secondary solutions to choose from on almost every move.

a) For starters, after the exchange 26. ♗xg6 fxd6+ and the possible continuation 27. ♗e1 ♗f8 28. f4 ...



... 28...g5 Black breaks through on the kingside almost effortlessly.

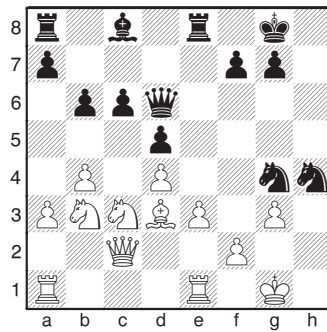
And in the two lines in which White relies on covering the weak spot on e3, the motive ♗h4, dismissed above as a 'harmless gimmick', still comes into its own.

b) 26. ♗d2 hxg3+ 27. fxd3 ♗xe3 or 27. hxg3 ♗h4!

c) 26. ♗e1 hxg3

- 27. fxd3 ♗xe3 (27... ♗xe3?? 28. ♗f2+-) 28. ♗xe3 ♗xe3 29. ♗e2 ♗g4+-+ (29... ♗c4)

- 27. hxg3 ♗h4! (27... ♗d7)



28. ♗d2 (28. ♗e2?! ♗xe3!+-) 28... ♗xe3 29. ♗xe3 ♗xe3+-+; e.g. 30. ♗b3 ♗ef5 (30... ♗g4)

5

Olhovik – Guseinov

Herculane 1994

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 c6 4. cxd5 exd5 5. ♗f3 ♗d6 6. ♗g5 ♗f6 7. e3 h6 8. ♗h4 ♗f5 9. ♗d3 ♗xd3 10. ♗xd3 ♗bd7 11. 0-0 ♗c7

1) The constellation ♗c7/♗d6 spontaneously attracts a rook, most likely 12. ♗fc1?! in view to consistent play on the queenside (12. ♗ac1?! 0-0!). However, Black can ignore the knight fork, because after 12...0-0! 13. ♗b5 ♗b8 14. ♗xd6 ...

(14. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15. ♗xd6 ♗xd6 16. ♗e5 e.g. 16... ♗d7 17. f4?! ♗f6 ♗e4 followed by f6)

About the author

GM Dr. Karsten Müller was born on November 23rd, 1970 in Hamburg. He studied mathematics and received his doctorate in 2002. From 1988 to 2015 he played for the 'Hamburger SK' in the German 'Bundesliga' and in 1998 he was awarded the title of Grandmaster.

The busy and globally recognized end-game expert was named 'Trainer of the Year' by the German Chess Federation in 2007



He is the author (or co-author) of the following highly esteemed works:

- Secrets of Pawn Endings (with Frank Lamprecht, Everyman/GAMBIT 2000)
- Fundamental Chess Endings (with Frank Lamprecht, GAMBIT 2001)
- Danish Dynamite (with Martin Voigt, Russell 2003)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book: Test and Improve Your Tactical Vision (Russell 2004)
- How to Play Chess Endgames (with Wolfgang Pajeken, GAMBIT 2008)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book 2: Test and Improve Your Positional Intuition (Russell 2008)
- Bobby Fischer, The Career and Complete Games of the American World Chess Champion (Russell 2009)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book 3: Test and Improve Your Defensive Skill! (with Merijn van Delft, Russell 2010)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book 4: Mastering the positional principles (with Alexander Markgraf, Russell 2012)
- The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal: Learn from the Legend (with Raymund Stolze, Edition Olms 2012)
- Fighting chess with Hikaru Nakamura (with Raymund Stolze, Edition Olms 2013)
- The slow (but venomous) Italian (with Georgios Souleidis, New in Chess 2016)
- The Magic of Chess Tactics 2 (with C.D. Meyer, Russell 2017)

His excellent series of ChessBase-DVDs Chess endgames 1-14 also attracted attention.

Müller's popular column Endgame Corner was published at 'www.ChessCafe.com' from January 2001 until 2015, and his column Endgames is published in Chess-Base Magazine since 2006.

To date, numerous of his books have been published by JBV Chess Books (Joachim Beyer Verlag) – a total of 24 in German and the following titles also in English:

- Magical Endgames (together with Claus Dieter Meyer)
- The Human Factor in Chess (together with Luis Engel)
- The Best Endgames of the World Champions Vol. 1 + 2
- World Chess Championship 2021 (together with Jerzy Konikowski and Uwe Bekemann)
- The Best Combinations of the World Champions Vol. 1 + 2
- Bobby Fischer 60 Best Games
- Chess Training with Matthias Blübaum (together with Matthias Blübaum and Matthias Kreilmann)
- The Human Factor in Chess – The Testbook (together with Luis Engel and Makan Rafiee)
- Typical Sicilian, Effective Middlegame Training
- Magnus Carlsen – The Chess DNA of Genius (2023)
- Karsten Müller – Attack (2023)
- Karsten Müller – Endgame Magic (2023)
- Karsten Müller, Typical Queen's Gambit (2023)

Index of sources

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Stockfish 14

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