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Games

(01) Ponkratov, Pavel (2618) - Matlakov, Maxim (2682) [D79]
M. Chigorin Memorial 2013 St. Petersburg (6), 10.10.2013
[IM Sitnikov, A]
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Bg2 0-0 6.0-0 d5 7.c:d5 c:d5 8.Ne5 Ng4!

9.N:g4 B:g4 Such simple way black makes it clear who is the boss. Now at symmetrical position an extra tempo in development is on the black side, so white must demonstrate accuracy. 10.Nc3 Nc6 11.h3 Bd7 12.N:d5 N:d4 13.Bg5 Re8

17...e:d5 [Very powerful was the intermediate move 17...b6 with idea to return the knight to d4, and in the case of 18.e:f5 B:d5 19.B:d5 Q:d5 20.Q:d5 e:d5 21.Ba3 g:f5 black has an extra pawn in the endgame] 18.e:f5 d4 19.B:c6 b:c6 20.f:g6 h:g6

14.Be3N It was logical 14. Rc1 and 15. e4

for strengthening the knight in the centre, and the bishop can be kept on the active position until the kick... 14...Nf5 15.Bc5 Bc6 Confrontation of light-squared bishops leads to neutrality on the big diagonal, but on the other one black bishop dominates. 16.Rb1 e6 17.e4


Original double blow. 32.Bb4 R:g3+ 33.Kh2 Rg5 34.Qe3 Be5+ 35.Kh1 Qd5+ 36.f3 Qe6 0-1

(02) Matlakov, Maxim (2682) - Eljanov, Pavel (2729) [E35]
M.Chigorin Memorial 2013 St. Petersburg (7), 11.10.2013
[IM Sitnikov, A]

13...Qc8!N That's right – away from a bunch and attacking the knight. 14.Ndb5 A vain attempt to avoid the loss of a pawn. Her death is imminent. Timely preventive measures by f2–f3 could limit the extent of black cavalry, and the white knight on the outpost d4 retained all the advantages of his position... 14...B:c3 15.N:c3 Ne4 16.Be7 N:c3 17.b:c3 R:c3 18.Qa4 Re8
It is easy to see that a pawn don't play a crucial role. Black's forces are ready for coordinated action, and the opponent has nowhere to go with his two bishops.


22.Bb5? White does not realize the danger of his position. Otherwise, he would prefer 22. Rfd1 and patient defense...


One by one the white pieces fall under the blows. No protection. 26.Rfd1 R:b5 27.Q:b5 Rc5 28.Rd8+ Q:d8 29.Q:c5 Qf6 0-1


[IM Sitnikov, A]


17.a3N [In previously played white chose without loss of time to move a pawn 17.B:c6 R:c6 18.b4 – but not everyone wants to give up so quickly with the bishop] 17...Ne5 18.Qf4 Ng6 19.Qf3 Qc7 20.b4 Nh4 21.Qf4 Q:f4 22.B:f4 Ng6 23.Bg3?! [Correct trim 23.Bd2 Ne5 24.Bb3 and white can hope for the future] 23...b6
24.c6?! White doesn't want to part with a pawn, but pays too high price... [It was possible to keep equality through passed pawn: 24.Rab1 b:c5 25.b5 a:b5 26.B:b5] 24...b5 25.N:b5 a:b5 26.B:b5 Nd5 27.Rac1 f5!

That's so unexpected at the white pieces staggered ground underfoot. 28.f3 Bg5 29.Ba6 B:c1 30.R:c1 Ra8


31.Bb7 [Had a chance to prolong resistance after 31.b5 f4 32.Bf2 Nc7 33.Bb7 N:b5 34.B:a8 R:a8 35.c7 Rc8 36.Bb6 Ne7 37.a4 Nd6 38.a5 Kf7 39.a6 Nd5 40.Bd4 Nb5 41.Be5 Ke7 42.Rc5 Nb:c7 43.a7 Kd7 and on the way to victory black must overcome some technical difficulties] 31...R:a3 32.c7 N:c7 33.B:c7 Ra7 0-1

(04) Zhigalko, Andrey (2615) - Areshchenko, Alexander (2714) [B90] M.Chigorin Memorial 2013 St. Petersburg

Wiser was taking the e4 for the neutralization of white bishop, but black intends to sharpen the situation. 26.e:d5 g6 27.Rh3 Bg7

Almost all the black pieces took strike positions. Will it be enough for an effective assault?

28.d:e6 Na3+ 29.b:a3 b:a3

[Black rook sleeps around and misses the chance to bring glory to his army: 31...Rf8 32.Qc6 B:d4+ 33.R:d4 Rf1! 34.B:f1 Q:c6 35.B:a3 Nc3 36.Rb4 R:b4 37.B:b4 Nd5 38.Rb3 N:b4 39.R:b4 Qc3+ 40.Rb2 a5 with a chance of winning, because white kingside pawns are unlikely to survive long] 32.B:a3?? Tragicomedy of blunders. [It looks like white humbled themselves with the role of defensive side and forgot how pieces to run forward: 32.Qf7+ Kh8 33.Rb3 B:d4+ 34.c3! B:c3+ 35.Kb1 Qc5 36.Rd7 and even the exchange of queens will not save black from defeat] 32...B:d4+ 33.R:d4 Qb1# 0-1

(05) Zhigalko,Andrey (2615) - Papaioannou,Ioannis (2633) [B90]
ECCC 2013 (2), 21.10.2013
[IM Sitnikov, A]

Black operates on the principle of preemptive strike, building activity on the flank, where the opponent is going to castle. [Delay may result in a very difficult position, for example 9...Be6 10.g5 Nfd7 11.Qd2 Nc6 12.0-0-0 a5 13.Kb1 a4 14.Nc1 a3 15.b3 Nd4 16.h4 Re8 17.N1e2 d5 18.N:d5 B:d5 19.e:d5 Nf5 20.Ng3 N:e3 21.f:e3 Bf8 22.Bb5 e4 23.Rhf1 g6 24.Qf2 Qe7 25.Rd4 and black it’s time to resign / Bruzon Batista, L (2717) – Ricardi, P]
14...Nc6 [Pending further test the idea of the pawn sacrifice after 14...d5 15.B:b6 Q:b6 16.e:d5 Bd7 an initiative for black] 15.Nd5 B:d5 16.e:d5 Na5 17.b3 a:b3 18.c:b3 f5 Black knight in trouble, so the army holds all the hope on the attack. 19.Rc1 f4 20.B:b6 Q:b6 21.b4 f3


10.a3 a4 11.Nc1 Be6 12.g5 Nfd7 13.h4 Nb6 14.N1a2

22...e4 23.Rg3?! Safer was to strengthen the defence line by 23. Rc3, but the white underestimates the obvious threat e4–e3 and black doesn't bring it to pass over several moves... 23...Rac8?! 24.Rg4?! Rc8?! 25.Rc3 h5 A desperate attempt to revive the bishop. 26.g:h6 Bf6

27.Re3? Black still going to break through the point e3, and the main combat unit is the queen. It would be nice to distract him from the original plan... [This goal was responsible simple taking piece: 27.b:a5 B:c3+ 28.N:c3 Qc5 29.Na4! Q:a5+ 30.Qd2 Ra8 31.Q:a5 R:a5 32.R:g7+ Kh8 33.Nc3 R:a3 34.Kd2 e3+ 35.fe3 f2 36.Ne4 Ra2+ 37.Kd3 Ra3+ 38.Kc2 Ra1 39.Bh3 f1Q 40.B:f1 Ra:f1 41.N:d6 Rf6 42.Rd7 b5 43.Kd3 b4 44.Kc4 Rh1 45.K:b4 R:h4+ 46.e4 Kg8 47.Kc5 Rh:h6 48.e5 Rf1 49.e6 Rc1+ 50.Kb6 Re1 51.e7 R:e7 52.R:e7 R:d6+ 53.Kc5 and white pawn makes a triumphant march] 27...Bd4 28.h:g7 Rf5 29.Qa4 Rfe5 30.Bb5 Nc6
White had not time to take the knight comfortably, and now forced to lose centre. The rook turns out bad blocker, and fortress quickly disintegrates. 31.d:c6 B:e3 32.Qb3+ d5 33.f:e3 [After a possible 33.Q:e3 Q:b5 34.c:b7 d4 35.Qb3+ Rd5 36.Nc1 Q:b7 37.Rg5 Red8 38.Qc4 Qf7 the case of white is bad] 33...Q:b5 0–1

(06) Vitiugov,Nikita (2729) - Halkias,Stelios (2568) [D31]  
ECCC 2013 (3), 22.10.2013  
[IM Sitnikov, A]  
1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4 Be7 4.c:d5 e:d5 5.Bf4 c6 6.e3 Bd6 7.Qf3 Ne7

8.B:d6N White naturally wants to obstruct the opponent development of the second bishop... [In a previously played game 8.Bd3 0-0 9.Nge2 Bf5 10.B:f5 N:f5 11.Qg4 Nh4 12.Qg3 Be7! 13.0-0-0 g5 14.B:b8 R:b8 black successfully solved the opening problems and have sufficient counterplay against the enemy king / Mamedyarov, S (2731) – Halkias, S (2584) / Bundesliga 2008] 8...Q:d6 9.Bd3 b6 Offer exchange bishops by g6 and Bf5 – then white could hardly avoid it. 10.Nge2 Ba6 11.Qc2 Nd7 12.0-0-0 0-0 Avoiding the exchange of bishops, white showed his aggressive intentions, and now for black safer looked long castling – closer to the bulk of his pieces. [Trying to eat pawns after 12...0-0!? 13.Q:f7 Rdf8 14.Q:g7 Rhg8 15.Q:h7 Rh8 led to a draw] 13.Nf4 Ng6 14.Nh5 b5

Spend the undermining of the center is not possible, and in search of initiatives black uses the "side" methods. However, now boldly marked defects position – limited bishop, weakness pawn "c" and complex of black margins. White immediately allowed his knight for the trophies. 15.Ne2! Nb6 16.Qg3 Nc4 17.Nef4 Qb4 18.Nd3 Qa5 19.Bb3 Qd8 Threats of black nipped in the bud. Queen dancing the twists and returns home empty–handed. 20.h4 Nd6 21.Nc5 Bc8 22.Bc2
Now it is obvious that white will smash the enemy fortress with knight sacrifice...

22...Nf5 23.B:f5 B:f5 24.N:g7! K:g7 25.h5 Qf6 26.Rh2 Kh8 27.h:g6 f:g6 28.Rdh1 Rf7 29.Rh6 Rg8 30.Kd2 Re8 31.Qh2 Qe7 32.a3 Bg4 33.Qg3 Bh5 34.Nd3 Qf8

41...Re4 [41...R:e3 42.Nf4 Qe8 43.Ng6+ Kg8 44.Ne5 R3:e5 45.d:e5 brings black little joy] 42.Ne5 R4:e5 43.d:e5 Rg7 44.Ke2 Q:b4 45.Qd8+ Rg8 46.Qf6+ Rg7 47.Rg5 Qe7 48.Q:g7+ Q:g7 49.R:g7 K:g7 50.b4 1-0

(07) Bartel,Mateusz (2638) - Sjugirov,Sanan (2635) [B52]
ECCC 2013 (3), 22.10.2013
[IM Sitnikov, A]
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Bd7 4.c4 Nc6 5.Nc3 e5 6.d3 Very competent scheme in the positional relation. Giving freedom to the bishop, white makes pawn redoubts on the fields of same color ... 6...g6 7.Nd5 Bg7 8.0-0 h6 9.b4N

35.R1:h5 g:h5 36.R:h5 Black almost equalized position, but to play here without clear goals difficult, as the white camp has no weaknesses. Protection simplified when exchange a pair of rooks, however, this goal is unattainable. Further course of events shows: white possesses undoubted initiative thanks to the outposts and mobile structure... 36...Re6 37.Qh4 b4 38.a:b4 Ref6 39.f4 Re6 40.g4 Rfe7 41.f5

The quickest way to seize the initiative –
in the spirit of the Volga and other gambits. Few dare to accept the gift, because the pressing on the open lines may be very powerful... 9...Nge7 10.b:c5 d:c5 11.Be3 The landscape is delineated an important nuance: to a possible jump Nd4 white can reply by simple taking, while a similar exchange on d5 leads to the formation of a strong passed pawn... 11...b6 12.Qc1 Now black cannot castle. Only way to move pawns...

9...Nge7 10.b:c5 d:c5 11.Be3

11...b6 12.Qc1

21...B:d5?! [Black cannot be avoided, but only postpone death by 21...f3 22.g3 Rf7 23.Rfa1 Rfb7 24.Qd1 Qg5 25.Qg4 Qf5 26.Rb1 Qg5 27.Rb:b6 B:c6 28.B:c6 B:c6 29.B:g7 More precisely 28. Ra7 – not giving black time for attack... 28...g3 [In case of more acute 28...Q:f2 29.Qg1 Q:d2 30.Q:g4 Qg2+ 31.K:g2 Q:d2 32.Qb6 Rh5 33.Ra6 1–0]

11...Nge7 10.b:c5 d:c5 11.Be3

11...b6 12.Qc1 Now black cannot castle. Only way to move pawns...

11...b6 12.Qc1

21...B:d5?! [Black cannot be avoided, but only postpone death by 21...f3 22.g3 Rf7 23.Rfa1 Rfb7 24.Nf1! Qd7 25.Nf3 b5 26.Qc1 b:c4 27.d:c4 h5 28.Nf5 Qe6 29.Be1! Kf7 30.Qg5 and queen sweeps the board one by one black pawn] 22.e:d5 f3 23.g3 Qq5 24.Rb1 Rook goes to the operating room, and to its place the queen may come in time to protect... 24...Nf4 25.g:f4 Qh4 26.Qc1 Re8 27.Qd1 Qg5 28.Kh1 e:f4

28.B:g7 More precisely 28. Ra7 – not giving black time for attack... 28...g3 [In case of more acute 28...Q:f2 29.Qg1 Q:d2 30.Q:g4 Qg2+ 31.Q:g2 f:g2+ 32.K:g2 K:g7 33.Rb:b6 white easily win the endgame] 29.N:f3 Qg4 30.Qd1 Re8 31.B:e5 g:f2 32.Ra:b6 Rh5 33.Re6 1–0

(08) Morozevich,Alexander (2734) - Laznicka,Viktor (2666) [A25]
ECCC 2013 (4), 23.10.2013

1.g3 e5 2.c4 Nf6 3.Bg2 Nc6 4.Nc3 Bc5 5.e3

White wants to develop pieces comforta-
bly and build a strong center, so black not hesitates... 5...d5! 6.c:d5 Nb4 7.Nf3 Nd3+ 8.Ke2 N:d5 9.Qa4+ Bd7 10.Qe4 N5b4


Black king feels quite comfortable with epaulettes as two rooks. White has also clearly traced the problem to the development and coordination of forces. Extra pawn doesn’t play a special role – not to move it from a king? However, Alexander Morozevich has own view on some things... 20.Ne4 Qe7 21.Qf5 f6 22.Nh4 Bb5 23.Kf3 Nc2 24.R:d3 R:d3 25.Qh5+ Kd8 26.Nf5 Qb4 [More accurate was 26...Qe6 – that, for example, to a careless 27.Kg4 Be8! 28.Qh6 Q:f5+ 29.Kf5 Bd7# capture the enemy monarch] 27.Kg4! Rd7 28.Kh3!

After a successful evacuation the position is not so clear. In addition to objective factors, psychological note: the scene of the king, strolling away with the board, can have profound effects on the nervous system of the leader of the black army... 28...Bd3 29.Qf3 c6 30.g4 h5 31.g:h5 Rh7 Black must seek approaches to the enemy. Otherwise, the white pawn can become a powerful force. 32.Ne4 Rfh8

33.e4?! Good idea with inaccurate performance. It is better first to wrap up the king with a warm blanket 33. Nh4, while also creating the threat of taking on c6 and f6,
and then disturb the black bishop by e3–e4. Predict the outcome of the battle would be difficult... 33...Qc4 34.Kh4? Kc7?! In the ecstasy of battle black passes elementary win. [34...R:h5+ 35.N:h5 Be2 36.d3 B:f3 37.d:c4 B:f2+ with checkmate] 35.b3

35...Q:b3?! [Once again, strong same idea: 35...Qf7 36.Q:d3 R:h5+ 37.Kg4 R:f5! 38.e:f5 Qg8+ 39.Kf3 Nd4+ and white has to give the queen] 36.Bb2 Q:b2 37.Q:d3 Rd7 38.Qf3 Nb4?! This can finish badly. Nobody bothered to capture one of pawns on the previous or current move. 39.Ne3 B:e3 40.d:e3 Nd3 41.Rd1 a5 42.Bh3 Rd6 43.Qg4 Rhd8 44.Qg7+ Kb6 45.h6

And now to wrestle how to stop this passed pawn... 45...Q:f2 46.Rb1+ Nb4 47.h7 Q:e3 48.Bf5 Rd2

49.Rh1?! Still, white mistaken the latest... [Black would have to make a draw after correctly 49.Kh3 Rh8 50.Q:h8 Qh6+ 51.Kg4 Qf4+ 52.Kh3=] 49...Qg5+ 50.Q:g5 f:g5+ 51.K:g5 a4 Black pawn says the final word in this game. 52.Kf6 a3 53.Be6 R2d6! 54.Nf5 R:e6+ 55.K:e6 Rh8 56.K:e5 a2 57.Ra1 R:h7 58.h4 Ra7 59.Ne3 Kc5

60.Rc1+ Kb5 61.Ra1 Ra3 62.Nf5 Kc4 63.h5 Nc2 64.R:a2 R:a2 65.h6 Ra7 66.Kf6 Nd4 67.Ne7 Ra1 68.h7 Rh1 69.Kg7 Ne6+ 70.Kg8 Rg1+ 71.Kf7 Ng5+ 72.Kg6 N:h7+ 73.K:h7 c5 74.Nf5 Re1 0-1
(09) Gunina, Valentina (2506) - Gaponenko, Inna (2400) [D22]
ECCCW 2013 (3), 22.10.2013
[IM Sitnikov, A]
1.d4 d5 2.c4 d:c4 3.Nf3 a6 4.e3 b5 5.a4 Bb7 6.a:b5 a:b5 7.R:a8 B:a8 8.b3 e6

Previously played 14. Bb5 – but noticeable it didn’t bring fruit. Move in the game, even if it seems more logical, is not free from drawbacks. As we see later, the white knight can be struck...


22.R:g7 N:e5 23.d:e5


Despite the limitations of the material,
white wins this ending easily. It is important that the black king haven't a time to reach the field g7, where he could protect the pawn. 33.Bg6+ Kd7 34.Bf8 Be5 35.h3 Bf4 36.Kh5 c5 37.B:h6 Bf2 38.Bf4 Ke7 39.Kh5 Bc1 40.B:h6 Bf2 41.Bf4 Ke7 42.Bg6 Bh4 43.Bc4 1–0

(10) Kosteniuk,Alexandra (2495) - Hou,Yifan (2621) [B82] ECCCW 2013 (4), 23.10.2013
[IM Sitnikov, A]

Most popular is an instant castling. Black can begin to storm the enemy monarch, not defining the location of his rook. However, the move in game is also good. 11.g4 b5 12.g5 Nd7 13.N:c6 Q:c6 14.Bg2 Bb7

15.Bd4 Black arsenal has the idea of Nc5 with further b5–b4, so white decided to protect the central pawn by rook. However, this leads to loss of time, which is very important when diverse castlings. In addition, the bishop can be struck. Perhaps it was better to transfer the knight to the kingside immediately – to protect the pawn and ready to take part in the attack... 15...0-0 16.Rhe1 Rfc8 The party barely out of the opening stage, and the balance is already noticeably declined in favor of black. The current World Women Champion takes the initiative in her hands, and from that moment a rival occupied only by reflection of threats that occur one after the other, like mushrooms after a rain. 17.Rd2 Qc7 18.Kb1 Qa5

Items a2 and c2 covered, but the rook on danger, after the coming march of black pawn. Once again, it is necessary to defend. 19.Qe3 b4 20.Ne2 e5 21.f:e5 N:e5 Everything is right on schedule. 22.b3 Ng6
The moment of truth: white pieces feel much more awkward than bare pedestrians in the puddles. Both no attack, no defense for pawn. 23.h4 N:h4 24.Bh1 B:g5 25.Qg1 Ng6 26.Rd3 R:c2!

Both fresh air through the window, and new reference points for the pieces. Quiet move underscores the hopelessness for white. 31.Red1 Bg5+ 32.Kf2 Nf4 33.Re3 Bc6 34.Rb1 Qf6 35.Ke1 N:e2 36.R:e2 Qc3+ 37.Kf2 Bb5 0–1

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Chief editor Roman Viliavin (ELO 2248)
email: chesszone@ya.ru