

(The annotations to this game, by L. A. Polugaevsky, appear in his report on the Haninge tournament, published in '64' (№ 14, 1988). The translation from the original Russian is by Douglas Griffin.)

Polugaevsky – Korchnoi
10th round, Haninge 1988

After the game with Chiburdanidze I took the lead. But I managed to score the final point in the struggle for first place in a principled encounter with Korchnoi in the penultimate round. He was a point behind me, and playing with the black pieces, but all the same he naturally cherished hopes of drawing level with the leader. Moreover, he probably took account of my very poor play against him in recent tournaments - both with White, and Black. Probably, Korchnoi believed that with White I would choose some sort of forced drawing continuation, and would play carefully. After all, a draw would essentially guarantee me victory in the tournament.

However, I asked myself at this moment, did I have the right to think only of a draw? I recalled many games against Korchnoi when just such a tactic had not brought success. And therefore I was firmly resolved - I was playing well in this tournament, while my opponent - badly (the quality of his games was not up to the mark). Thus, why should I avoid a struggle? Moreover, with White?

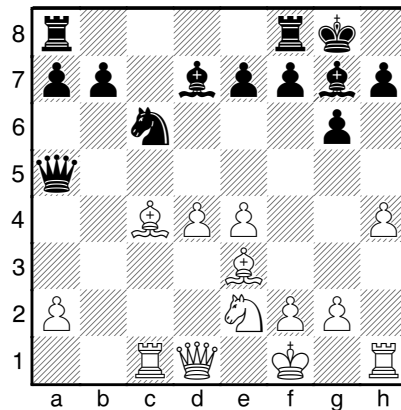
It is possible that, had I lost this game, I would have reproached myself. But before the start I decided that I would all the same fight. The more so since I understood that the Grünfeld Defence would be played - after all, in the Queen's Indian it is difficult to count on victory. (Incidentally, the Kasparov-Karpov match showed that even in the Grünfeld Defence White has many possibilities to choose a forcing variation, leading to a draw.) But I had decided, as we have already said, to fight, and what is more, I chose a very risky variation.

Such is chess: either we gain success, or we suffer for adhering to a principled approach to the method of conducting the struggle. Besides, I thought that it was necessary to overcome an incomprehensible factor that had arisen in my meetings with Korchnoi. We often encounter strange 'pairs' of grandmasters of roughly equal class, whose true relative strengths are unrealistically reflected in the games between them. This is all in the realms of psychology. And such a situation must, naturally, be broken. I preferred, in this very game, to 'break' myself.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 c5 7.Bc4 Bg7 8.Ne2 0-0 9.Be3 Nc6 10.Rc1 cxd4 11.cxd4 Qa5+ 12.Kf1

The idea of the variation - White loses the right to castle and prepares to begin (with the help of the rook at h1) a headlong offensive on the king's flank. Of course, such a risky plan was altogether not 'in the spirit' of my excellent tournament position.

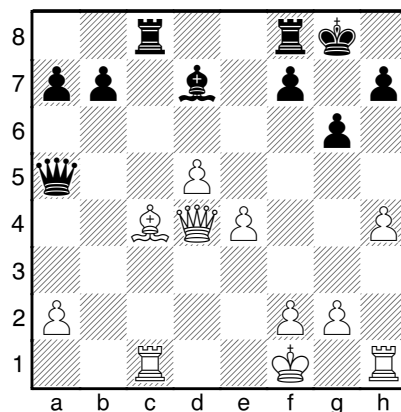
12...Bd7 13.h4



13...e5

A committal decision - now Black will be forced to sacrifice a pawn. Clearly, he hoped to exploit the at first sight not too secure position of the white king. But there will be chances for both sides.

14.d5 Nd4 15.Nxd4 exd4 16.Bxd4 Bxd4 17.Qxd4 Rac8



18.Ke2!

There was the threat of an exchange sacrifice at c4, followed by ...Bd7-b5 with an unpleasant pin on the diagonal f1-a6. But the king boldly goes to meet the danger.

18...Rfe8

In the case of 18...Qb4 there follows 19.Ke3!, while the variation 18...Rxc4 19.Rxc4 Bb5 20.Ke3 Bxc4 21.Qxc4 is clearly in White's favour.

19.f3!

A responsible and principled decision. Now Black obtains the possibility of bursting onto the

second rank with the queen, 'eating' the pawn at g2 with a dangerous attack on the white king from the rear. But I had foreseen everything in my calculation of the variations.

19...Rxc4 20.Rxc4 Qxa2+ 21.Ke3 Qxg2

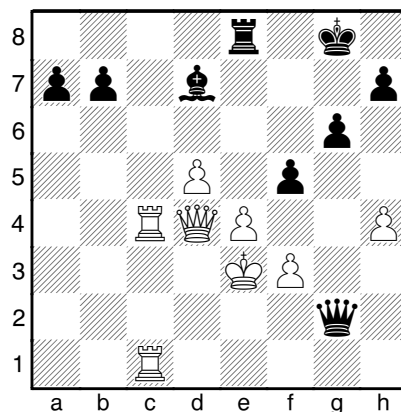
It seemed to be that best for Black was 21...Bb5 22.Rcc1 Qxg2 23.Rcg1 Qe2+ 24.Kf4.

22.Rhc1

The direction of the attack has changed - an invasion of Black's camp along the c-file is intended.

22...f5

After 22...Bb5 23.R4c2 Qg3 24.Qf6 Black is defenceless.



23.e5 g5

Korchnoi was in serious time trouble, but he noticed that in the case of 23...Qh2 24.e6 Bxe6 25.dxe6 Rxe6+ 26.Kd3, no good is either 26...Qe2+ 27.Kc3 Re3+ in view of 28.Kb4, or 26...Rd6 - 27.Rc8+ Kf7 28.R1c7+ Ke6, and Black is mated - 29.Re8#!

24.hxg5 Qh2

It is possible that in time trouble, Korchnoi thought that his king could flee via g6, but this does not happen.

25.e6 b5

In the case of 25...Bxe6 26.dxe6 Rxe6+ 27.Kd3 Rd6 Black is all the same mated - 28.Rc8+ Kf7 29.R1c7+ Kg6 30.Rg8+ Kh5 31.Rxh7+.

26.Rc7

Black resigned.