

(The annotations to this game, by V. K. Bagirov, are from his report on the match in *Shakhmaty (Riga)* (№ 4, 1989). The translation from the original Russian is by Douglas Griffin. The game was later annotated by Tal in *Chess Informant* (vol. 46); variations from that source have been included at critical points.)

### Timman – Tal

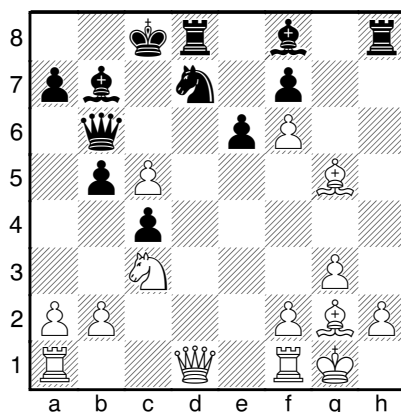
2<sup>nd</sup> match-game, Hilversum, 16<sup>th</sup> December 1988

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.Bg5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Nxg5 hxg5 10.Bxg5 Nbd7 11.g3

The other way, beginning with 11.exf6, gained even greater popularity after Polugaevsky's game v. Torre (Moscow, 1981).

11...Bb7 12.Bg2 Qb6 13.exf6 0–0–0 14.0–0 c5 15.dxc5

In this position White usually continues 15.d5 b4 16.Na4 etc. After lengthy thought Timman settled his choice on an old, little-studied continuation.



15...Nxc5!

Tal too was forced to think. He was able to recall the game Lilienthal-Kotov (Moscow, 1944), where after 15...Bxc5 16.Qe2 Bd4 17.Rad1 Nc5 18.Bxb7+ Qxb7 19.Rxd4 Rxd4 20.Be3 Re4 21.Nxe4 Qxe4 22.Qd2 Black gained a victory, although I cannot understand why this occurred - after all, White's advantage is unquestioned.

Purely intuitively, the Rigan chose a better continuation.

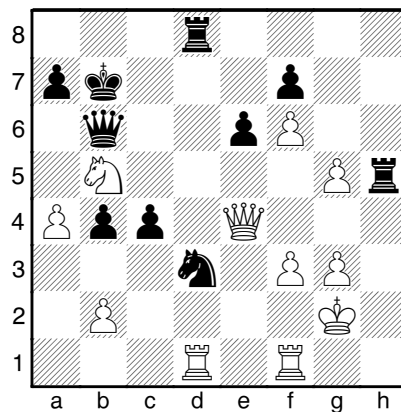
16.Qe2 Bxg2 17.Kxg2 Bh6 18.h4

It must be considered that after 18.Bxh6 Rxh6 19.a4 b4 20.Ne4 Nxe4 21.Qxe4 Qb7 the chances of the sides are approximately level. (*Translator's note:* Tal continues the analysis: 22.Qxb7+ Kxb7 23.Rac1 Rd4 24.Rfd1 Rxd1 25.Rxd1 Kc6, '∞'.)

18...Bxg5 19.hxg5 Qc6+ 20.f3 Rh5 21.a4 b4 22.Nb5 Kb7

(Translator's note: Here Tal analyses the alternative 22...Qd5(!) in detail. His main line runs: 23.Rfd1 Nd3 24.Qe3 Qxg5! (with the threat of 25...Qxg3+!) 25.Qe4 (25.Qxg5 Rxc5 26.Nxa7+ Kb7 27.Nb5 Rgd5!) 25...Qd5 26.Rxd3 cxd3 27.Qxb4 (27.Rc1+ Kb8 28.Qxb4 d2 29.Nc7+ Kc8 30.Rc3 Qxf3+!!) 27...d2 28.Nxa7+ Kc7 29.Nb5+ Kb8 30.Nc3+ (30.Qa5?! Rd7; 30.Nd6+?! Ka8) 30...Qb7 31.Qxb7+ Kxb7 with an unclear situation.)

23.Rad1 Nd3 24.Qe3 Qb6 25.Qe4+



The culminating moment in the game. Up to this point events had unfolded more or less forcibly, but now Black had a choice.

After 25...Qc6 26.Qe3! Qb6 27.Qe4+ Qc6 the matter would have come down to a repetition of moves, since Black does not fear the variation 26.Qxc6+ Kxc6 27.Nxa7+ Kc5!. (Translator's note: Tal mentions an alternative possibility for White, however: 26.g6 a6 27.g7 axb5 28.axb5 Qxe4 29.fxe4 Rg5, which he assesses as unclear.)

25...Kb8?

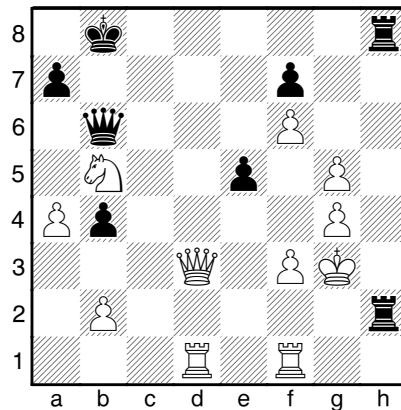
Essentially the only serious mistake that Tal made in the whole match, leading him to defeat in this game. Admittedly, this needed the excellent play of Timman in the concluding stage of the duel.

26.g4! Rh4

The pawn at g5 was defended thus: 26...Rxc5? 27.Rxd3! Rxd3 28.Qf4+.

27.Kg3!

(Translator's note: Tal gives the move in the text two exclamation marks. It seems likely that he under-estimated or missed it altogether, considering only the alternative variation 27.Qxc4 Rdh8! 28.Qxd3 Rh2+ 29.Kg3 e5!



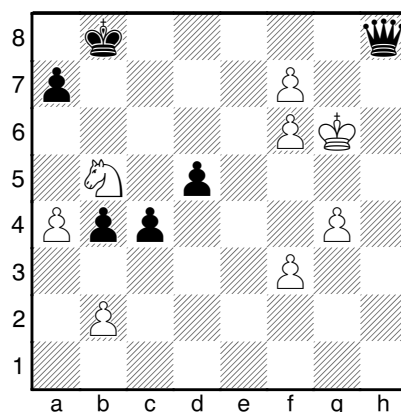
(Analysis diagram)

when White is forced to bail out with 30.Qd8+ Rxd8 31.Rxd8+ Qxd8 32.Kxh2, but after 32...Qd2+ followed by 33...Qxg5 Black's emerges with a material advantage.)

### 27...Rdh8

(Translator's note: Jan Timman analyses the current position in considerable detail in his book *Timman's Titans* (New in Chess, 2016). He examines the move 27...Rh1, which is indicated by modern engines. He relates that he and Tal had seen this possibility during the game, but rejected it on account of 28.Rxd3. Neither during play, nor during the subsequent post-mortem, had they noticed that Black has the surprising *zwischenzschach* 28...Rg1+!. However, Timman goes on to demonstrate that despite the computer's initial contention that Black is winning, the reverse is in fact true. He analyses as follows: 29.Kf4 Rxd3 30.Rxg1 Qxg1 31.g6! and now:

A) 31...Qh2+ 32.Kg5 Rd5+ 33.Qxd5 exd5 34.gxf7 Qh8 and now after 35.Kg6,



(analysis diagram)

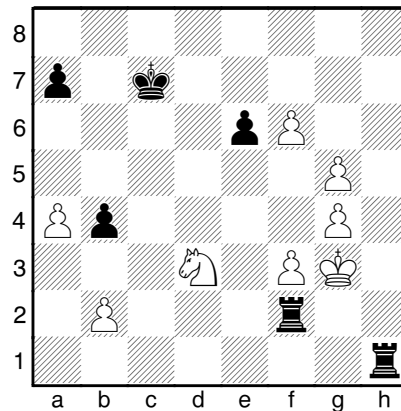
despite the enormous material disparity, Black is helpless against the advance of the g- and f-pawns.

B) 31...Rd5 (relatively best) 32.Qe2! Qc1+ (32...e5+ 33.Ke4) 33.Qe3 Qxe3+ 34.Kxe3 fxe6

35.Nd4! Rd7 36.Nc6+! Kc7 37.Ne5 Rd8 38.Nxc4, etc.)

28.Rxd3! cxd3 29.Qe5+ Ka8 30.Qe4+ Kb8

After 30...Qb7 31.Qxb7+ Kxb7 32.Nd6+ K- 33.Nxf7, it is impossible to fight against White's king-side pawns. (*Translator's note:* Here Timman continues the analysis: 32...Kc7 33.Nxf7 Rh1! 34.Rf2! R8h2 35.Ne5! Rxf2 36.Nxd3!,



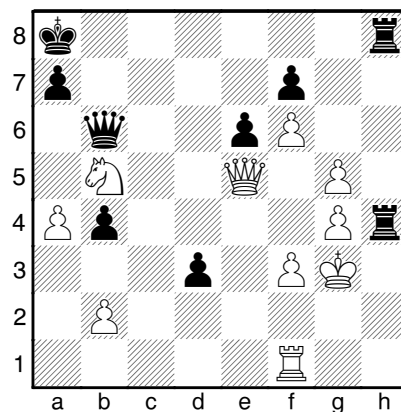
(analysis diagram)

and once again, despite Black's enormous material superiority, White's king-side pawns decide the outcome of the game in his favour.)

31.Qe5+

Now, and a little later, White repeats moves exclusively for the purpose of economising on time, when in *zeitnot*.

31...Ka8



32.g6!

A concluding subtly. Now the f6-pawn will cost Black at least a rook. With the understanding of 'total football' we are familiar with the play of Dutch chessplayers. Timman demonstrates an example of 'total chess'. A situation where all of the pieces, including the king, are taking part in the game, is not often encountered.

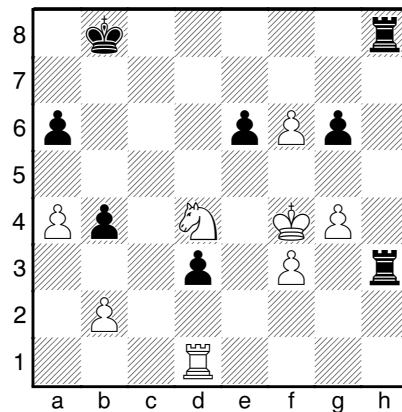
### 32...Rh3+

(Translator's note: As Tal points out, 32...fxg6 fails to 33.Nc7+ Kb7 34.Nxe6, while 32...d2 is met by 33.g7 (33...Rh3+ 34.Kg2 Rh2+ 35.Qxh2 Rxh2+ 36.Kxh2, etc.).)

### 33.Kf4 a6

Already here good advice for Black is at a premium. The final attempt by the ex-World Champion to give the play a confused character in Timman's time trouble fails to bring success.

34.Qe4+ Kb8 35.Qe5+ Ka8 36.Qe4+ Kb8 37.Qd4! Qxd4+ 38.Nxd4 fxg6 39.Rd1



As we have already said, Black is not in a position to fight against White's king-side pawns, and therefore Black recognised his defeat.

(Times: 1:59–1:32.)