This game was played in the final round of the 4th Chess Olympiad. The position of the teams was as follows:

1. USA - 46 points
2. Poland - 45.

The encounter of the leaders should have decided the champions, and, naturally, the games on the higher boards had enormous significance for the outcome of the match.

Kashdan (USA) – Rubinstein (Poland)
19th round, 4th Olympiad, Prague, 26th July 1931

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.e4 c6 4.Nc3 Nbd7 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 0–0 7.Qc2

I. Kashdan, then a young master, wanted in the decisive match to employ a psychological weapon – 7.Qc2, the favourite move of Rubinstein with White.

7...h6

Modern theory considers the most exact to be 7...c5. Now White can begin complications that are not unfavourable to himself with 8.h4!?. After the languid move in the game Rubinstein obtains fully equal play.

8.Bf4! c5 9.cxd5

The attempt to obtain an advantage 'by force' with 9.Nb5 runs into a simple refutation: 9...cxd4 10.Nc7 (10.Bc7 Bb4+) 10...Bb4+ 11.Kd1 e5 etc.

9...cxd4!

An important intermediate move.

Now after 10.dxe6 dxc3 11.exd7 cxb2 Black has the advantage. Black obtains good play on

10.exd4 Nxd5 11.Nxd5 exd5 12.a3

White 'plays safe'. The natural 12.Be2 looks better. For example, 12...Bb4+ 13.Bd2 Bxd2+ 14.Qxd2 with a level game.

12...Re8 13.Be2 Nf6 14.Bc7?

The result of an incorrect assessment of the position. Kashdan seeks the advantage in a level position and, as often happens in such cases, commits a mistake.

Correct was 14.0–0.

14...Bf5! 15.Qxf5 Qxc7 16.0–0 Qb6

The black pieces are mobilised, which guarantees him an initiative, but there are no great difficulties for White for the time being. Now there is threatened 17...Qxb2, and also 17...Bxa3, which was impossible on the previous move on account of 17.Bb5.

17.Rab1 Rac8 18.Qd3 a6 19.Nh4?

Already for the second time in this game, White displays unnecessary activity. Correct is 19.Bd1 followed by Bd1–b3 (pointed out by R. Spielmann).

19...Ne4 20.Nf5 Bf6 21.Rfd1 Rc4 22.Qf3 Rcc8?!

The tension of the final round tells on Rubinstein as well.

The natural 22...Rc2 retained the advantage for Black. Possibly, Rubinstein hoped to repeat moves in order to win time. However, Kashdan finds a possibility of sharpening the play.

23.Qg4 Kf8 24.Bf3
The culminating moment. It seems that the worst for White is behind him, but...

24...g6!!
Unexpected and beautiful. Now on 25.Nxh6 very strong is 25...Rc7!, and Black has a great advantage.

A mistake. More tenacious is 27.Kh1, although the endgame arising after 27...Qe6 would have been very difficult for White.

27...Qb5+!
Black forces the release of White’s attack on the knight at e4 and carries out a decisive regrouping.

28.Be2 Qe6 29.g3
Now on 29.Bf3 the following variation was possible: 29...h5! 30.Qf4 g5 31.Qf5 Qe4+ 32.Be2 Ng3+ 33.Kxf2 Rxe2+ 34.Kxg3 Qh4+ 35.Kf3 Qf2# mate (pointed out by R. Spielmann).

29...Ba7
Black has an extra pawn and, most importantly, an attack on the king with opposite-coloured bishops which, as is well known, increases the initiative in such cases.

30.Qf4 Kg7 31.Rbc1 Qe6
Now hanging over White are dark threats: 32...Nxg3+, 32...Rxc1, 32...Qh3+, and there is no
defence against all of them.

32.Bg4 Rxc1! 33.Bxe6
On 33.Rxc1 there would have followed 33...Qxd5.

33...Rxd1+ 34.Ke2 Rd2+
White lost on time, not being in time to resign. The time control in the Olympiad was 2 hours
for 36 moves. After a tough struggle the match all the same concluded in the score 2:2, and the
Polish team was left in 2nd place.