Rubinstein – Capablanca
13th round, San Sebastián, 13th March 1911

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 c5 3.c4 e6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.g3 Be6
Black strives to get away from well-beaten paths and sharpens the game from the first moves. The tournament in San Sebastián was Capablanca’s first appearance in Europe. Later, he rarely played in risky fashion in the opening. Normal here are the moves: 6...Nf6 7.Bg2 Be7 8.0–0 0–0.

7.Bg2 Be7 8.0–0 Rc8?!
A continuation of the same tactics. It was still not too late to stop and to return to the known variation with 8...Nf6.

9.dxc5 Bxc5
White has a lead in development, and in addition Black has a weak pawn at d5. All of this proved to be sufficient for Rubinstein to carry out a complicated and pretty combination, as a result of which White’s advantage becomes more noticeable.

10.Ng5! Nf6 11.Nxe6 fxe6

12.Bh3
The beginning of the difficult combination. In our view, this was not the only method of developing the initiative. Also deserving attention is the natural 12.e4. For example, 12...d4 13.Na4 Be7 (13...Qe7?! 14.Nxc5 Qxc5 15.Qb3) 14.Qb3, and it is difficult for Black to defend; 12...dxe4 13.Qb3 Qe7 14.Nxe4, or 13.Nxe4 Qxd1 14.Rxd1 Nxe4 15.Bxe4 0–0 16.Be3.

12...Qe7 13.Bg5 0–0
“Too late! Now the storm breaks” (H. Kmoch).
14.Bxf6 Qxf6
Had Capablanca foreseen White's 17th move, he would have preferred 14...gxf6. In this case
White plays 15.Nxd5, and after 15...exd5 16.Bxc8 Rxc8 17.Qxd5+ Kh8 White has the advantage,
but to realise it is very difficult.

15.Nxd5! Qh6
Bad, of course, is 15...exd5 16.Qxd5+ Kh8 17.Bxc8 with the complete extermination of Black's
army. No better is 15...Bxf2+ 16.Kg2 Qf7 17.Nf4 with a quick win.

16.Kg2 Rcd8

17.Qc1!!
A brilliant blow, which it was necessary to foresee in advance. Evidently, it was precisely this
move that Capablanca had not found in his preliminary calculations. The situation on the board
is remarkably similar to the game Rubinstein-Lasker (St Peters burg, 1909). It is interesting that
Rubinstein defeated two World Champions with virtually one and the same tactical blow.

17...exd5
Only thus. Bad is 17...Rxd5 18.Qxh6 gxh6 19.Bxe6+ etc. Or 17...Qxc1 18.Bxe6+, and White
wins.

The game has passed into an ending. White has an extra pawn and a good bishop, and,
consequently, winning chances. Black's sole trump is a slight advantage in development.

21...Rfe8 22.Bg4
Weaker, as indicated by Tarrasch, is 22.Rfe1 Nc2 23.Rxe8+ Rxe8, and Black has definite
counter-play.

The move in the game is also sufficient for victory.

Here 28.Rd7 is not so clear on account of 28...Ne5, and the b7–pawn is defended.

28...Ke8 29.Bf7+ Kd7 30.Bc4

30...a6!
Black’s only chance is the extra pawn on the queen’s wing.
31.\text{Rf7+} \text{Kd6} 32.\text{Rxg7 b5} 33.\text{Bg8 a5} 34.\text{Rxh7 a4} 35.\text{h4 b4} 36.\text{Rh6+ Kc5} 37.\text{Rh5+ Kb6}

38.\text{Bd5?}
A mistake, which could have put all of White’s efforts in doubt. Leading to the win was 38.\text{Bc4!} followed by 39.\text{Rb5+}.

38...b3?!
Capablanca passes up a remarkable saving chance, and moreover, the final chance. Black could play 38...\text{Rxa2!!}. If 39.\text{Bxa2}, then 39...b3, and it is not apparent how the pawns are to be stopped.

The majority of commentators, in reply to 38...\text{Rxa2}, recommended the following variation: 39.\text{Bc4 Rc2} 40.\text{Rb5+ Kc7} 41.\text{Bg8}. Here the variation was cut off, but in our view, for a definitive assessment of it, it is necessary to continue. 41...a3 42.\text{h5 a2} 43.\text{Bxa2 Rxa2} 44.\text{h6 Ra8} 45.g4, and White indeed has chances of victory.

Interesting too is 39.\text{Rh6 Rc2} 40.\text{h5}, and now the following variations are possible:

a) 40...b3 41.\text{Re6 b2} 42.\text{Ba2 Rc1} (42...\text{Kc5} 43.\text{h6 Nb4} 44.\text{h7 Nxa2} 45.\text{h8=Q b1=Q} 46.\text{Qe5+ and White wins}) 43.\text{h6 Ra1} 44.\text{h7 Rxa2} 45.\text{h8=Q b1=Q} 46.\text{Qb8+, and White wins;}

b) 40...a3 41.\text{Re6 a2} 42.\text{Re1 Nd4} 43.\text{h6 b3} 44.\text{h7 Rc8} 45.\text{Bg8}.

39.\text{axb3}
Also possible was 39.\text{Bxb3}, but the move in the game wins more quickly. Now on 39...\text{axb3}, 40.\text{Rh6} decides.

39...a3
40.Bxc6! Rxb3
On 40...a2 there would have followed 41.Rb5+ Ka6 42.Rb8 a1=Q 43.Ra8+ etc.

41.Bd5 a2 42.Rh6+!
Black resigned. Now on 42...Ka5 or 42...Ka7 43.Rh8 followed by Rh8–a8+ wins, while on 42...Kb5 43.Bc4+ and 44.Ra6 decides.