This game is annotated by Yu. S. Razuvaev in *Akiba Rubinstein* (Fizkultura i Sport, Moscow 1980). The translation from the original Russian is by Douglas Griffin.)

Tarrasch – Rubinstein
11th round, San Sebastián, 11th September 1912

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Bc5

A rare move in the repertoire of Rubinstein. At the beginning of his career he usually played 4...Bb4, then he developed his own 4...Nd4, while in his final tournaments he returned to 4...Bb4.

5.Nxe5 Nd4

Black plays in gambit style. 5...Bxf2+ and 6...Nxe5 would have been weaker. Now Black has active play for the pawn. As was subsequently established, White can fight for an advantage only with 6.Be2.

(Translator’s note: Of course, in the years since Razuvaev’s words were written, the theory of the Four Knight’s game has developed significantly.)

6.Ba4?! 0–0 7.d3

According to modern theory, 7.Nd3 also fails to secure equality for White. But Tarrasch could only have guessed about this!

7...d5! 8.Bg5 c6

“White has a pawn plus, but the position is difficult” (H. Kmoch).

Bad is 9.Nf3 on account of 9...Bg4. 9.h3 Re8 10.Nf3 Nxe4! led to Black’s advantage.


12...Nxe4!
A simple exchanging combination, with the help of which Black regains the pawn and takes the game into a better ending.

White defends accurately. 15...a5 and 15...f6 were threatened.

15...Nxe2 16.Kxe2 Re8

17.Kf1?!
Here Tarrasch proves to be too cautious. Better was the bold 17.Kd2!, and if 17...f6, then 18.Nxc6 Be3+ 19.Ke2 with great and unclear complications.

17...Bb7 18.c3 f6
First and foremost the most active white piece is driven to a passive position.

19.Ng4 h5 20.Nf2 Be3
White was threatening to stabilise the position with 21.d4.

21.Bd1!
Tarrasch is defending well. The bishop is transferred to f3, where it reliably covers the king’s flank.

21...h4 22.g3 a5 23.Bf3

The following part of the game presents itself as a classic example of the struggle of two bishops against bishop and knight in an ending. Above all it is necessary to open the play and to give space to the bishops.

23...b4! 24.Kg2 bxc3 25.bxc3 Ba6 26.c4!
Tarrasch does not let slip the slightest possibility of improving his position. Bad, of course, is 26...dxc4 on account of 27.Bxc6.

26...Rad8 27.cxd5 cxd5 28.Rhd1 Re7 29.Ng4
Black was threatening the manoeuvre ...Re7–c7–c2, and therefore White brings the c1–square under control.

29...hxg3 30.hxg3 Bd4 31.Rac1 Rb7 32.Rc2
White has defended the 2nd rank and for the time being is holding the position.

32...Kf7 33.Nf2
How is the position to be strengthened further? Rubinstein finds an interesting solution. Black strives to exchange both pairs of rooks, when the king will then break through on the queen’s flank along the corridor c5–b4–c3.
33...Rb2! 34.Rxb2 Bxb2 35.Rd2 Bd4 36.Nh3?! White fails to sense the danger. He should have tried to activate the rook with 36.Rc2.

36...Ke6 37.Rc2 Kd6 The d3–pawn is ‘poisoned’. 37...Bxd3 is impossible on account of 38.Rd2.

38.f5?! As often happens, in a poor position White’s stamina lets him down. It was better to patiently await the finale.

38...Rc8! The decisive manoeuvre: the exchange of the second pair of rooks deprives White of chances of salvation.

39.Bd1 Rxc2+ 40.Bxc2 Ke5
The black king triumphantly enters the opponent’s territory.

41.g4 Be3
The dark squares are completely under control. For White there remains nothing but to passively look on.

42.Kf3 Kd4 43.Bb3 Bb7!!
An inaccuracy. Better was 43...Bxd3 44.Bxd5 Bf1!

44.Ke2 Ba6 45.Bc2
Tarrasch does not tempt fate twice.

45...Bb5 46.a4
White defends against ...a5–a4, after which the black king picks up the a2–pawn.

46...Bd7 47.Kf3
On 47.Bb3, 47...g6! is decisive.

47...Kc3! 48.Kxe3 d4+!
Very elegant! On 49.Ke4 there would have followed 49...Bc6+ etc.

White resigned. “One of Rubinstein’s grand endings” (H. Kmoch).