

(The annotations to this game, by V. V. Smyslov, are from his autobiographical work *V poiskakh garmonii* (Fizkultura i Sport, 1979). The translation from the original Russian is by Douglas Griffin.)

Smyslov – Tal

6th round, 37th USSR Championship, Moscow, 14th September 1969

1.c4 Nf6 2.g3 c5 3.Bg2 Nc6 4.Nc3 g6 5.Nf3 Bg7 6.0–0 0–0 7.b3

White is playing the opening without any pretensions. A more active continuation is 7.d4 cxd4 8.Nxd4, aiming at gaining space in the centre.

7...d5 8.cxd5 Nxd5 9.Bb2 Nxc3 10.Bxc3 Bxc3

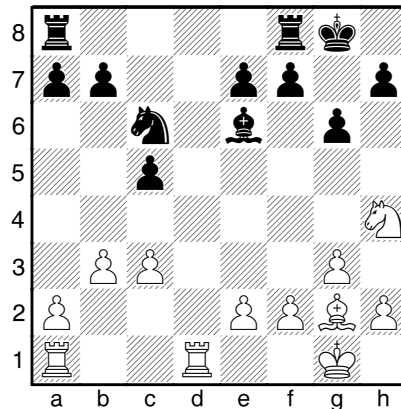
Leading to more substantive play, but Black carries out exchanges, believing that in the resultant endgame the chances of the sides will be level. 10...e5

11.dxc3 Qxd1 12.Rfxd1 Bf5

Here Black offered a draw. However, White has a slight initiative, and the struggle continued...

13.Nh4 Be6

On 13...Rfd8 White could continue 14.Nxf5 gxf5 15.f4 with the more pleasant game.



14.Bxc6!

The exchange of the long-range bishop for the knight is associated with a concrete assessment of the endgame. The weakening of Black's pawn chain secures White a small but stable advantage.

14...bxc6 15.Nf3

Threatening the transfer of the knight to e5, increasing the pressure on the doubled pawns. If 15...Bg4, then 16.Ne5 Bxe2 17.Re1 Ba6 18.Nd7 Rfe8 19.Nxc5 Bc8 20.Rad1 with a positional advantage. It is common to encounter endgames where in the presence of doubled pawns a knight proves to be stronger than a bishop.

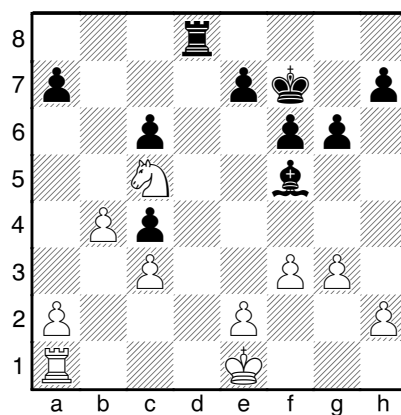
15...f6 16.Nd2 Rfd8 17.Ne4 c4

The further advance of the pawn is forced, but now the knight occupies a dominating position at c5.

18.Nc5 Bf5 19.f3 Bc2 20.Rxd8+ Rxd8

Black has managed to occupy the d-file. But this is of no great significance, since the white king is in time to enter the struggle and to take under control the d2-square, at which the black rook was aiming.

21.Kf2 Kf7 22.b4 Bf5 23.Ke1



23...e5

It was more circumspect to retreat the bishop to c8. On this there could follow 24.a4, strengthening the positional grip.

24.Nb7! Rd7

The black rook has no other square to go to. On 24...Rd5 there follows 25.e4, while on 24...Rb8 there is 25.Nd6+, winning a pawn.

25.Na5 c5 26.bxc5 Rd5 27.Nb7

27.e4 does not bring success on account of 27...Rxc5 28.Nb7 Rc7 29.Nd6+ Ke7 30.Nxf5+ (30.Nb5 Rb7) 30...gxf5 31.exf5 Rb7, and in the rook endgame it is easier for Black to defend.

27...Rd7 28.Nd6+ Ke7 29.g4!

A useful move, securing the square b1 for the rook. On 29...Bc2 there follows 30.Nxc4, and 30...Rc7 is impossible on account of 31.Ne3 with a double attack.

29...Be6 30.Rb1 Rc7 31.Rb7

White maintains the extra pawn. It is impossible to reply 31...Kd7 on account of 32.Rxc7+ Kxc7 33.Ne8+.

31...Rxb7 32.Nxb7 Kd7 33.Nd6

A difficult moment in the game. After 33.Na5 f5 34.gxf5 gxf5 there arises a position where White's plan involves the transfer of the king to b4. However, at some point Black gains freedom of action on the king's side. At d6 the knight occupies a more flexible position than at a5, and is ready to include itself in action on the king's flank.

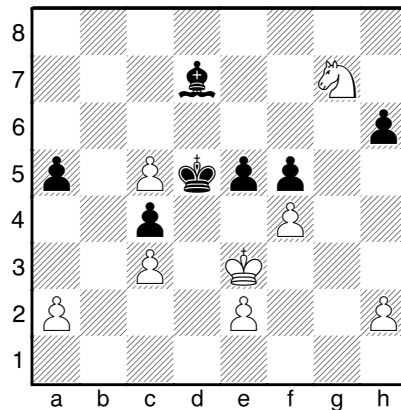
33...h6 34.Kf2 Kc6 35.Ke3

This move is possible, since on 35...Kxc5 there follows 36.Ne4+.

35...a5 36.Ne8 f5 37.Ng7 Bd7 38.gxf5 gxf5 39.f4

Just in time! Now on 39...Kxc5 there follows 40.fxe5 Kd5 41.Kf4.

39...Kd5



40.c6! Bc8 41.c7 Kd6 42.h4

This move was sealed by White. Black resigned without resuming play. On 42...Bd7 there follows 43.Nh5 Bc8 44.fxe5+ Kxe5 45.Nf4 followed by 46.Ng6+ Kf6 47.h5 and 48.Kf4. One may readily be convinced that the passed pawn at c7 restricts Black's manoeuvrability, and White realises the material advantage.