

(The annotations to this game, by L. A. Shamkovich, are from *Shakhmaty (Riga)* (№ 2, 1961). The translation from the Russian is by Douglas Griffin.)

My opponent in the friendly match Moscow-Leningrad was the master Boris Vladimirov, who was well known to me from competitions in the RSFSR. We were meeting for the first time in the role of defenders of the sporting banners of the chess capitals. The first game, after tense play in which the advantage was on my side for a long time, ended in a draw. We were both somewhat disappointed in its outcome and on the following day resolved firmly to 'win or die'. Moreover, the team interests of both 'enemy' sides genuinely demanded the full point. Therefore it should not be surprising that a tense struggle began in the game. The Leningrader, playing White, managed to seize the initiative. To avoid the worse, on the 18th move I sacrificed a pawn. Here is what occurred.

B. Vladimirov (Leningrad) – Shamkovich (Moscow)

Board 15, 2nd round, Moscow-Leningrad Match, Moscow, 5th December 1960

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 0–0 5.Nge2 d5 6.a3 Be7 7.cxd5 Nxd5

7...exd5 8.Nf4 leads to positions that are, as it seemed to me, too studied.

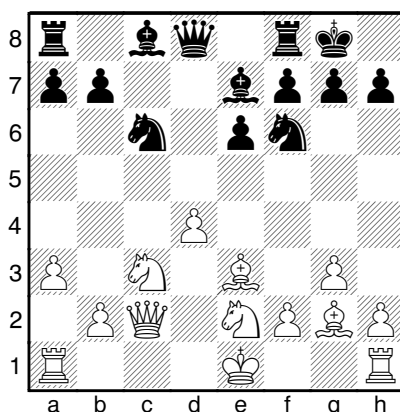
8.Qc2 Nf6

M. Taimanov recommends 8...Nd7, but the move in the text is also not bad.

9.g3 c5 10.Bg2

Stronger, probably, is 10.dxc5.

10...cxd4 11.exd4 Nc6 12.Be3

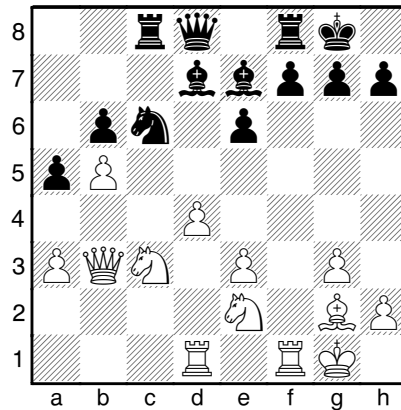


12...Bd7

I was attracted by the idea of a counter-attack along the c-file with the moves ...Rc8 and ...Na5. But the Leningrad master immediately suppresses this possibility. A good game was given by

12...Ng4 13.0-0 Nxe3 14.fxe3 Bg5. I proceeded to carry out this plan – alas! – with a delay.

13.b4! Rc8 14.Qb3 Ng4 15.0-0 b6 16.Rad1 Nxe3 17.fxe3 a5 18.b5



18...a4!

A positional pawn sacrifice. Now the black knight gains an excellent stance on a5. But a further serious trial still awaited me.

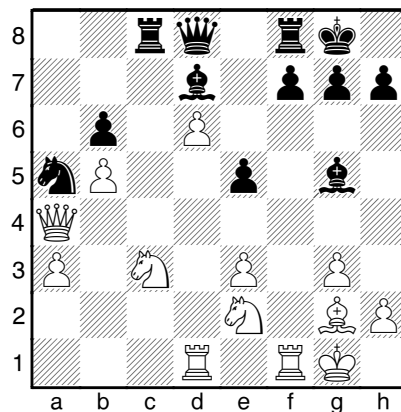
19.Qxa4 Na5 20.d5!

Black's reply is obvious: the white pawn cannot be allowed to get to d6 – 20...exd5 21.Bxd5 (21.Nxd5 Rc4) 21...Qc7 with excellent play for Black. However, for some reason I decided that it was dangerous to open the d-file, and I played

20...e5?

Encouraged by my mistake, White, with great energy and accuracy, soon achieved a decisive advantage.

21.d6! Bg5



22.Bd5!

An unexpected move: I had reckoned on 22.Qe4 Nc4 with not bad play. Returning the pawn, White centralises his pieces and goes over to the offensive.

22...Bxe3+ 23.Kg2 Qg5

Admitting his 'guilt', and deciding to go over to a purely tactical struggle, making the opponent's task as difficult as possible. Thus, on 24.Ne4? there follows 24...Bh3+!. But my opponent is on the alert.

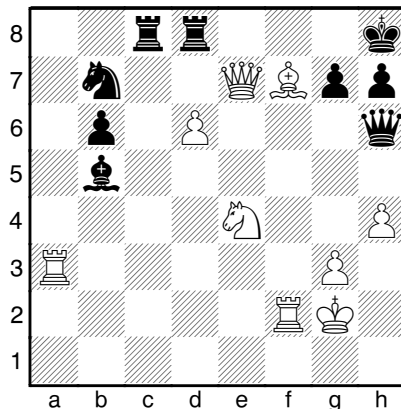
24.Qe4 Kh8 25.h4 Qh6 26.Rd3 Bc5 27.Bxf7 Bxa3 28.Qxe5 Nb7 29.Qe7 Rfd8

To avoid worse, I had to give up a pawn and direct all of my efforts at the elimination of enemy № 1 – the d6–pawn, which I had allowed with such ease to cross the 'frontier'. With the liquidation of this pawn Black would rid himself of all worries.

30.Ne4! Bxb5

The beginning of head-spinning complications, the consequences of which it was not easy to calculate to the end: mutual time trouble was setting in.

31.Rxa3 Bxe2 32.Rf2 Bb5



33.Bd5!

One again this move proved to be a surprise for me: being an optimist, I had not given up hope on the continuation 33.Qxb7 Bc6 34.Qe7 Qxd6!.

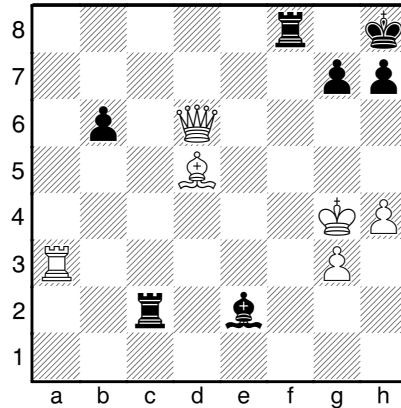
Now the time has come for Black to resign: 34.Ng5 is threatened, as is 34.Raf3. A final chance had to be tried.

33...Nxd6 34.Nxd6

Of course, it was tempting to win the queen, but simpler was 34.Raf3!, forcing Black to

capitulate immediately.

34...Qxd6 35.Rf8+ Rxf8 36.Qxd6 Rc2+ 37.Kh3 Bf1+ 38.Kg4 Be2+



All of these moves were made at lightning tempo. My opponent had 'loads' of time on the clock – around four minutes – and he fell into thought. After a couple of minutes there followed:

39.Bf3? Bxf3+ 40.Rxf3 h5+!!

I admit, I played this move with enormous pleasure. It is not so often that with a modest pawn move one manages to win a rook, opening an escape square for the king and thereby saving a hopeless game.

After

41.Kh3 Rxf3 42.Qd5

a peace agreement was signed.

Clearly, White should have played 39.Kg5 h6+ 40.Kg6, since 40...Rf6+ 41.Qxf6 gxf6 leads to mate (42.Ra8+). Admittedly, in this case the win is not so simple: 40...Rcc8 41.Bf7! Rcd8, and now in the case of 42.Qxb6 Bd3+ 43.Rxd3 Rxd3 White does not win, while after 43.Kh5 Be2+ 44.g4? Rxf7! 45.Qxd8+ Kh7 he even loses. Only 42.Qe7! is sufficient for victory.