

(The annotations to this game, by L. A. Shamkovich, are from *Shakhmaty v SSSR* (№ 10, 1958). The translation from the original Russian is by Douglas Griffin.)

Shamkovich – Spassky

9th round, 25th USSR Championship Semi-final, Leningrad 1957

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nc3 g6

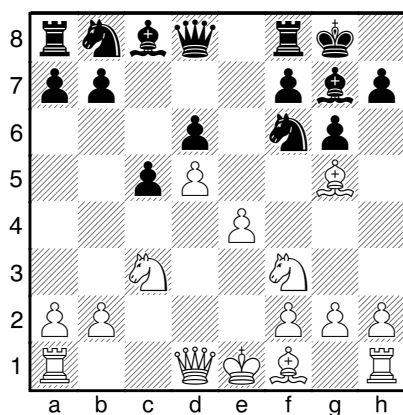
Here White must determine the arrangement of his pieces. The plan of attack is associated with the preparation of the break e4–e5; Black, however, has chances on the queen's flank, where he has a pawn majority.

Practice has shown that after 7.Nd2 (with the idea of putting the knight at c4) it is difficult for White to activate the c1–bishop. In connection with this, deserving attention is the move 7.Bg5, encountered in the match Bobotsov-Shamkovich (Match RSFSR-Bulgaria, Leningrad 1957). After 7...Bg7 8.e4 0–0 9.Be2 h6 10.Bh4 g5! 11.Bg3 Nh5 12.0–0 f5 Black seized the initiative. Subsequently the strong move 9.Nd2 was found. In the present game I happened to test this continuation for the first time.

(*Translator's note:* In fact, the position after 9.Nd2 had been reached previously in practice, e.g. in the game Kholmov-Petrosian (21st USSR Championship, Kiev 1954), albeit on that occasion via a transposition of moves - 8.Nd2 0–0 9.e4. - Griffin.)

7.Bg5 Bg7 8.e4 0–0

8...h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.Bg3 Nh5 will not do on account of 11.Bb5+!. (*Translator's note:* Subsequently, this line became a theoretical battleground – 11...Kf8 12.e5!? (or the more restrained 12.Be2) 12...Nxc3 13.fxc3, etc.)



9.Nd2! a6

(*Translator's note:* Petrosian, in the above-mentioned game, continued instead 9...Nbd7 10.Be2 Qe7 11.0–0 h6 12.Bh4 g5 13.Bg3 Ne5, etc.)

10.a4 Qc7 11.Be2 Nfd7

I expected 11...Ne8 12.0-0 f5. Then, playing 13.exf5 Bxf5 14.Nc4, White retains the advantage.

12.0-0 f6 13.Bh4 Ne5 14.f4 Nf7 15.Nc4 Re8 16.Qb3 Nd7 17.Rae1 Rb8 18.Bg4!

The weakness of the e6-square is an additional motif of White's attack. Clearly, Black cannot permit 19.Be6. Natural appears 18...Nf8. After 19.Bxc8 Rbxc8 20.Nb6 or 20.Qb6 hardly give White a real advantage, but possible becomes 20.e5! with the variations: 20...fxe5 (bad is 20...dxe5 21.d6! Qc6 22.fxe5 with a rout) 21.Ne4! Nd7 (22.fxe5 was threatened; if 21...exf4, then 22.Rxf4 g5 23.Rxf7) 22.f5!, and White's attack is very dangerous.

18...b5 19.axb5 Nb6

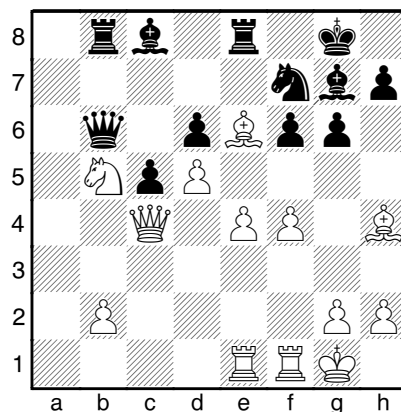
It transpires that bad is 19...axb5 on account of 20.Nxb5 Qb7 21.Be6 Qxb5 22.Bxf7+.

20.Be6 Nxc4

The exchange sacrifice – 20...Rxe6 21.dxe6 Bxe6 – is parried most simply of all with 22.Nd5 Nxd5 23.exd5 Bxd5 24.b6! and 25.Qc2.

21.Qxc4 axb5 22.Nxb5 Qb6

How is White to maintain the advantage? On the withdrawal of the knight there follows 23...Ba6, while 23.Bxc8 Rxc8 leads to equality.



23.Ra1!

Now White manages to retain his important light-squared bishop.

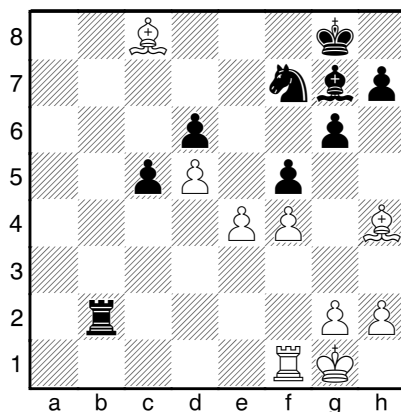
23...Qxb5 24.Qxb5 Rxb5 25.Ra8 Rxb2

On 25...f5 there would have followed, very strongly, 26.e5!.

26.Rxc8 Rxc8 27.Bxc8

White had been aiming at this position; 28.Be6 followed by 29.Ra1 is threatened. If 27...g5, then 28.Bg3 gxf4 29.Bxf4 Ne5 30.Be6+ Kh8 31.Ra1 Rb8 32.Ra7 with a dangerous initiative. All the same this continuation left Black with greater chances of a successful defence than that chosen by him.

27...f5



28.e5! Nxe5

Clearly, bad is 28...dxe5 29.Be6!, and Black is defenceless against the threats of d5–d6 and Ra1.

29.fxe5 Bxe5

Black has two pawns for the bishop and an active piece position. All the same, White gains the win without difficulty, continuing 30.Bg3!. For example, 30...Bxg3 31.hxg3 Kg7 32.g4! fxe4 33.Bxe4, or 31...h5 32.Re1 Rd2 33.Bb7.

Assessing the position incorrectly, White makes it more difficult for himself to achieve victory.

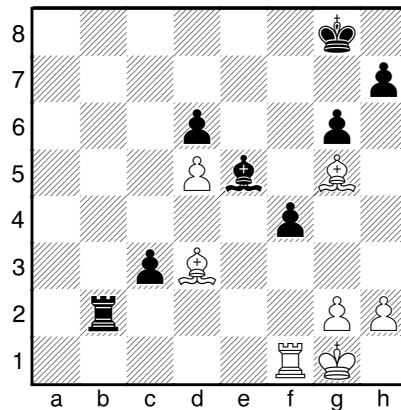
30.Bg5 c4 31.Ba6 c3

The passed pawn, supported by the bishop and rook, gives Black some chances of salvation.

32.Bd3

Much stronger was 32.g3! and only then Bd3 with the threat of Rb1.

32...f4!



33. Bxf4?

Leading to victory was 33.g3! fxg3 34.hxg3 Bxg3 35.Bh6 Rb8 36.Bb5 Be5 37.Bd7. For example, 37...Bg7 38.Be6+ Kh8 39.Bxg7+ Kxg7 40.Rf7+ Kh6 41.Rc7. But in time trouble the move 33.g3 seemed to me to be risky.

33...Bxf4 34.Rxf4 Rd2 35.Be4

An instructive drawing position arises after 35.Bf1 c2 36.Rc4 Kg7. White's extra piece does not give him winning chances on account of the poor position of the king.

35...Re2

A reply that had not been foreseen by White. He had studied only 35...Rd4 36.g3!, winning.

Now a draw is inevitable.

36.Kf1 c2 37.Bxc2 Rxc2 38.Rf6 Rd2 39.Rxd6 Kg7 40.Rd7+ Kf6

Agreed drawn.