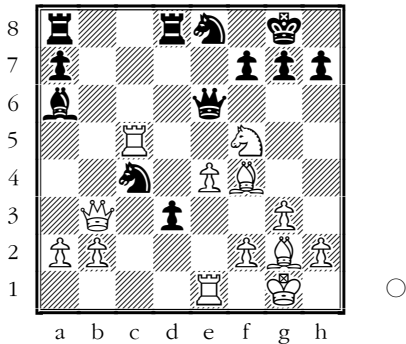


Test Yourself!

Makarov(2513) – I. Ibragimov(2611)
53rd Russian Ch, Samara, 22.06.2000



On This Day

by GM Alex Baburin

Russian GM **Marat Makarov** turns 45 today. His current [rating](#) of 2535 makes him No. 83 in Russia. His best rating so far has been 2560 (in 1996). Recently Makarov wrote a book for [Chess Stars](#) – 'The Endgame'.



World Chess News

After the FIDE Grand Prix in Baku and the European Championships in Plovdiv the chess world has gone quiet, but this period won't last long – the MTeL Masters and some other tournaments are starting soon.

Four Nations Chess League

The last three rounds of the 4NCL were played near London last weekend. Since I've been on a strict 'diet' chess-wise, I decided to play in order to get some practice before the Irish Championship (July 2008). That was my first appearance for *Wood Green* this season. My result was not too good (+1 –1 =1), but I got practice.

4NCL has become less interesting in recent years as there is just one 'super club' – **Guildford-A&DC**. Its first team won the league with 21 match points out of 22, while its second team took silver with 20 points. *Barbican-1* came third with 17 points. *Wood Green* got 8 points, but curiously it lost 5 (!) matches with the score of 3½–4½. If only that score could be reversed, we'd be third in the league!

[Official website](#); [X-table](#)

Annotated Game

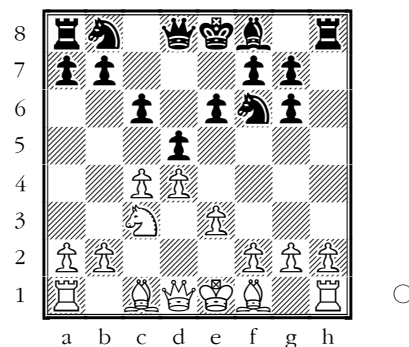
by GM Alex Baburin

Today I'd like to show one game from the last 4NCL weekend, while in the next issue you will see a selection of interesting endgames from it.

White: GM Alex Baburin (2542)
Black: IM Mark Ferguson (2406)
The Slav Defence – [D12]
4NCL (9), Sunningdale, 03.05.2008

Although I've often seen IM Mark Ferguson at 4NCL and tournaments in UK, this was our first game. In 4NCL you know the name of your opponent one hour prior to the game, so I did a quick research and found that my opponent had a very limited repertoire, relying on the Slav.

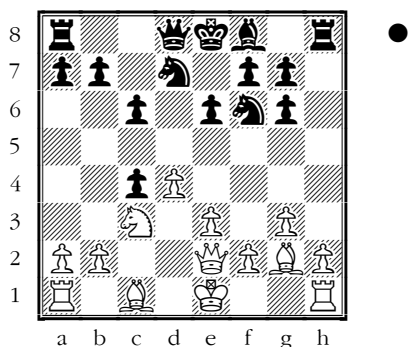
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♕f5
5.♙c3 e6 6.♘h4 ♕g6 7.♙xg6 hxg6
(D)



So far everything went as expected. I too played this position a few times, so I suspected that my opponent had prepared for it.

8.g3 In Elista Topalov introduced two interesting moves: 8.a3 and 8.♖b1, but 8.g3 remains the main line.

8...♗bd7 9.♕g2 dxc4 10.♖e2 (D)



10...♗b6 Somehow I thought that keeping the pawn wasn't too good, while in fact this is the main line here! This just shows that half-knowledge is dangerous... Well, this is typical for semi-retired players like me.

I had some experience in this position:

10...♗e7 11.♖xc4 e5 12.0-0 ♗b6
 13.♖e2 exd4 14.♖d1 0-0 15.♖xd4 ♖c8
 16.b3 ♖e6 17.♗b2 ♗c5 18.♖d3 a5
 19.♖c2 ♖e7 20.♗a4! ♗xa4 21.bxa4
 ♖fd8 22.♖ad1 ♗d6 23.♖b3± ♖ab8
 24.♗f3 (24.♗xf6!? gxf6 25.♗xc6 bxc6
 26.♖xd6±) 24...♖d7 25.♖b6 ♖a8
 26.e4? ♖ad8 27.♖xa5 ♗xe4 28.♖e1
 ♗c5 29.♖e3 ♖f8 30.a5 ♖e7 31.♖xe7
 ♗xe7 32.♖xd8 ♖xd8 33.♗a3 ♗f8 ½-½
 Baburin-Hansen, Turin 2006.

11.0-0 ♗b4

Passive defence is dangerous for Black – after 11...♗e7 12.♖d1 ♗fd5 13.e4 ♗b4 14.♗e3 0-0 15.a3 ♗a6 16.h4 White has a lot of play for a pawn. One example: 16...♗c7 17.a4 ♗b4 18.a5 ♗d7 19.♖xc4 ♗a6 20.d5 cxd5 21.exd5 ♖c8 22.♖b5 ♗xc3 23.bxc3 e5 24.♖xb7 ♗ac5 25.♖b4+- Sasikiran-Shirov, D'Ajaccio 2005.

12.♖d1

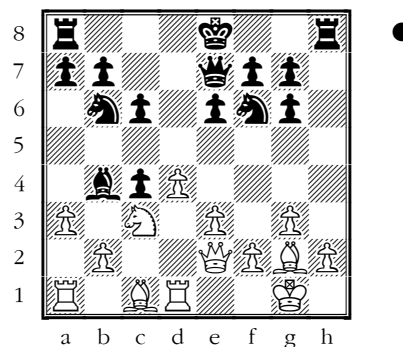
Black also did pretty well after 12.a3 ♗a5 13.♗d2 0-0 14.♗e4 ♗xd2 15.♗xd2 ♖e7 16.♗xc4 ♗xc4 17.♖xc4 e5 18.dxe5 ♖xe5 19.b4± Tregubov-Shirov, Sochi 2007 and 12.♗d2 0-0 13.♗e4 ♖e7 14.♗xb4 ♖xb4 15.♗c5 ♖ab8 16.♖fc1 ♖fd8 17.♖c2 ♗fd7 18.♗e4 e5 19.a3 ♖e7 20.♖e1 ♗f6 21.♗g5 exd4 22.exd4 ♖d6± Aronian-Kramnik, Yerevan rapid 2007.

This issue is prepared by GM Alex Baburin; technical editor: Ralph Marconi

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12...♖e7 13.a3 (D)



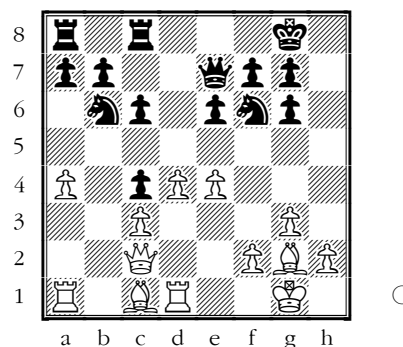
13...♗xc3? This is a serious mistake – with the b-file semi-opened, the knight on b6 will be rather shaky, which means that White will have a better chance of taking the c4-pawn. Strong pawn centre and a bishop pair will be excellent compensation for a pawn. Black had to play 13...♗a5. After 14.e4 e5 15.♗e3 a draw was agreed in Ponomarev-Shirov, Foros, 2006. I considered 15.d5 0-0 16.♗g5, but Black is just fine as long as he does not take on d5 too soon. My opponent was concerned about 15.dxe5 ♖xe5 16.f4, but Black is fine after 16...♖e7 or 16...♖e6.

14.bxc3 ♗fd5

The line 14...0-0 15.a4 ♖fe8 16.a5 ♗c8 17.♖xc4 gives White a very comfortable edge.

15.♖c2 0-0? Black *had* to play 15...f5, fighting for some squares for his knights. After 16.e4 ♗f6 White can choose between 17.♗g5 and 17.f3, but at least he has to fight for an advantage. In that game that came easy.

16.e4 ♗f6 17.a4 ♖fc8?! (D)



The best place for that rook was on e8 or d8.

18.♖b1! ♖d8?

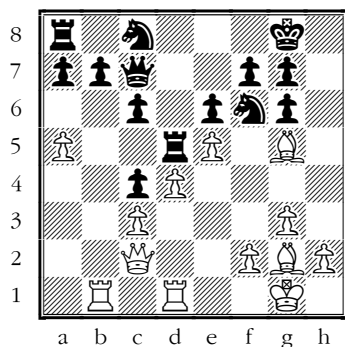
It was better to play 18...♖e8.

19.a5 ♗c8 20.♗g5! ♖c7

In case of 20...e5 I was going to play 21.dxe5 ♖xd1+ 22.♗xd1 ♕xe5 23.♗d8+ ♖h7 24.♗xf6. Then after both 24...♗xf6 25.♗xf6 gxf6 26.♖xb7 ♖g7 27.e5 (or 27.♗d7) 27...fxe5 28.♗xc6 and 24...gxf6 25.♖xb7 Black is lost.

Fritz 11 favours 21.f4, while I felt that things could get messy after 21...exd4 22.cxd4 ♖a3 Well, objectively White is close to winning after 23.f5!.

21.e5 ♖d5 (D)



22.h4! Clearly I did not want to give the d5-square to the black knight with 22.♗xd5 ♖xd5. The line 22.♗xf6 gxf6 23.♗xd5 cxd5 24.f4 (24.exf6?! ♖d6) was appealing, but 22.h4! was a better choice.

22...♖h7

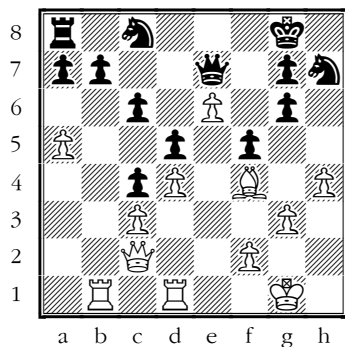
After 22...♖d7 23.♗xd5 cxd5 24.♖g2! Black is helpless against attack on the h-file: 24...♖b8 25.♖h1 ♗xa5 26.h5 ♖f8 27.h6!.

23.♗xd5 exd5

Black would have preferred to capture on d5 with the other pawn, but 23...cxd5 24.♗a4 is very unpleasant for him.

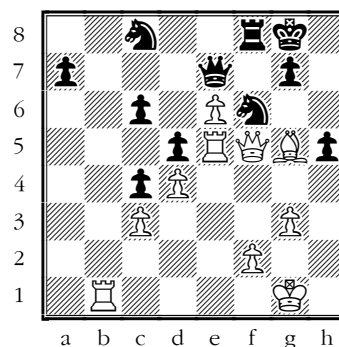
24.♗f4 ♖e7 25.e6!? Rooks need open files and this is what this move is designed to deliver. But it seems that 25.♖e1 ♖f8 26.♖g2 followed by ♖h1 and h4-h5 might be even better.

25...f5 (D) More stubborn would be 25...♗xe6 26.♖xb7 ♖f6.



26.h5! gxh5 27.♗xf5+- b5 28.axb6 ♗xb6

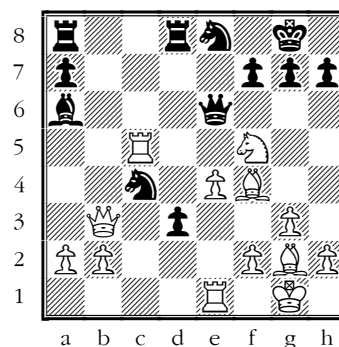
Or 28...axb6 29.♖a1! ♖xa1 30.♖xa1+-.
29.♖e1 ♖f6 30.♗g5 ♖f8 31.♖e5 ♖c8 (D)



32.♗xf6 ♖xf6 33.♗xh5 g6 34.♗h4 ♖d6 35.♖b8+ 1-0.

Solution to our Quiz:

Makarov(2513) – I. Ibragimov(2611)
53rd Russian Ch, Samara, 22.06.2000



22.♖c6! 1-0.

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