

Misha Interviews...

Misha Savinov



Interview with Konstantin Sakaev

Konstantin Sakaev is one of the Russia's strongest players. He is a former Russian champion and has won several Olympiad gold medals; his 2672 rating is the highest in his career. Konstantin was born on April, 13th – the same day as Kasparov, and turns 31 this year.

Misha Savinov: When did you learn chess?

Konstantin Sakaev: I started to play when I was four years old.

MS: You were born in a chess family – did you ask someone to teach you or was it your parents' idea?

KS: I don't remember, of course! They say my mom showed me the moves. I quite liked it. In Soviet times people had few choices for pastimes, and chess does not require much financially. One doesn't have to follow a kid to a stadium or buy expensive equipment. If a kid likes chess, it is very economical. That's probably why our country has enjoyed its superiority in chess. Now the situation is changing, so perhaps it is an indication that our life's improving.

I was fascinated and I became an avid chess student. First I studied it at home and then I went to the Pioneer's Palace when I turned six. There were some competitive successes, but I kept playing because I simply loved chess.

MS: How did you train?

KS: I read a lot. We had a good chess library at home, so I picked random books and scrutinized them if the games were appealing.

MS: When did you start reading?



KS: Actually, I learned chess notation before I was able to read. I even mastered Spanish descriptive notation. So, until I was six, I didn't pay attention to verbal annotations, but just played through the games.

MS: What were your favorite books?

KS: I studied Petrosian's game collection from the first page to the last. I was very proud of it and told my mom. She decided to test me; so she opened the book to a random page, and it was a moderately thick volume, and I had to tell which game it was and how it proceeded. I had not intended to memorize it, but somehow I knew it by heart. Later the same situation occurred with Alekhine's and Capablanca's books. Presently, I do not remember anything, of course. Although it probably has not been forgotten on some subconscious level and is reflected in my current chess understanding.

So I mostly accumulated the data. I also solved positions from Hort and Jansa's book *Together with Grandmasters*. I recommend it to all young chess players – it is a very good book. It contains a lot of excellent training positions and many errors in its solutions, so it is interesting both to solve the problems and to argue with the authors answers. Modern computers will probably find many more errors, but even my father, a first category player, was often confused because he did not know how to award me points. He would set up a position for me to analyze and my solutions were often deeper than the original ones.

I also quite liked Nimzovich's: *Blockade*, *My System*, and *Chess Praxis*. I've read all the books in our library.

MS: Who was your favorite player at that time?

KS: I enjoyed positional games by Petrosian. However, it is impossible to copy his style in modern chess; one has to play more aggressively. But his games formed my positional understanding. My play was very positional for a kid in those days. I often received best game awards, not for spectacular sacrifices, but for sound long-lasting plans, blockading, and correct exchange sacrifices. It wasn't uncommon for me to reposition my king to the queenside in a closed position to undertake an attack on the kingside.

Consequently, in my early years I strongly underestimated dynamic factors. Perhaps I should have paid more attention to the games of Tal and Nezhmetdinov. I studied them, too, but they did not appeal to me.

MS: What about Fischer's games?

KS: What I did not like about Fischer is that he often took serious strategic risks. He did not take tactical risks, like Tal, but he often created chronic pawn weaknesses, for example.

MS: And what about his pet “poisoned pawn” variation in the Najdorf? What kind of risks did he take with that?

KS: Exactly; this variation looks quite dubious strategically, but, according to modern theory, gives equality in its main line – actually, a forced draw.

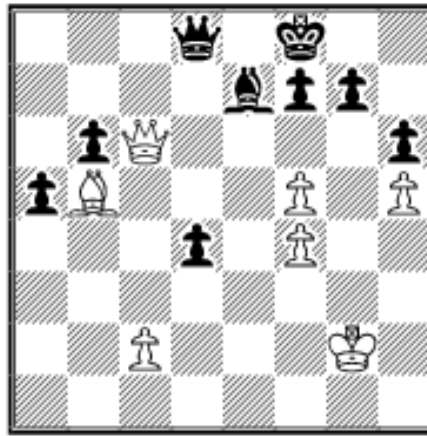


MS: How quickly did you start to dominate your age group?

KS: I didn't dominate – I competed with Gata Kamsky both in the city and at the national level. Such sharp competition probably served us both very well. He won the USSR under-18 championship in 1987, when he was only 13! It took me three more years, and I celebrated the victory in 1990, with only “two years to spare” (at age 16). We played well in those days...

Kamsky, G - Sakaev, K
[B82] Leningrad, 1986

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.f4 Be7 7.Be3 0-0 8.Qf3 e5 9.Nf5 Bxf5 10.exf5 Nbd7 11.0-0-0 Qa5 12.g4 Rac8 13.g5 Rxc3 14.bxc3 d5 15.gxf6 Nxf6 16.Kd2 d4 17.Bxd4 exd4 18.Bd3 Nd5 19.Ke2 Nxc3+ 20.Kf2 Nxd1+ 21.Rxd1 b6 22.Rg1 Bf6 23.Kg2 Qxa2 24.h4 Qa3 25.h5 h6 26.Qc6 Qe7 27.Be4 Re8 28.Re1 Qd8 29.Re2 Re7 30.Bd3 Rxe2+ 31.Bxe2 Be7 32.Bc4 Kf8 33.Bb5 Kg8 34.Bc4 Kf8 35.Bb5 a5



36.Kf3 Bc5 37.Kg2 Kg8 38.Bc4 Qf8
39.Kf1 Qb8 40.Kg2 Qxf4 41.Qe8+ Kh7
42.Qxf7 Qg4+ 43.Kf1 Qf3+ 44.Kg1
d3+ 45.Kh2 Qe2+ 46.Kh3 Qf3+
47.Kh2 Bd6+ 48.Kg1 Qg3+ 49.Kf1
Qh3+ 50.Ke1 Bb4+ 51.Kf2 Bc5+
52.Ke1 Qe3+ 0-1

MS: Who were your main rivals in junior competitions other than Kamsky?

KS: In my age group I can only name Kamsky and Tiviakov. Shirov and Akopian were two years older than me and played quite strong.

MS: When did you play international chess for the first time?

KS: I won two junior world championships: in 1990 in Singapore (under-16) and in 1992 in Germany (under-18).

MS: Was it more difficult to play abroad?

KS: Not at all. Winning at the world championship was as easy as taking candy from a baby. Compared to the USSR championship, there were literally no players to compete with. Not winning the champion's title following the tense Soviet qualifier was unthinkable. In 1992 it was little bit more complicated – the Soviet Union fell apart and there were many players from former Soviet republics, who could not previously pass our country's qualification events. Winning the USSR junior championship was almost equivalent to receiving an additional junior world champion title.

Today Russia has already been surpassed. Ukraine produces talented juniors like a cloning factory, and brilliant talents like Magnus Carlsen randomly appear in other countries. Children's chess in Russia is either destroyed or does not work properly. When I was a kid, I had a choice of adult tournaments at the city level: Leningrad championship quarterfinals and semifinals and trade union tournaments, in which I faced strong candidate masters and national masters who were highly formidable opponents. It helped me to develop quickly. Conversely, modern players have an opportunity to travel abroad and gain international experience; each time has its own benefits.

MS: How did you make your title norms?

KS: I don't remember. Becoming a national master was more complicated; once even a joint 1st place at the city championship, ahead of many masters, did not suffice for the norm. I finally qualified for it by winning the national under-18 championship and my very first tournament abroad brought me a

GM norm. I received the titles of FM, IM, and GM simultaneously.

As a result of my junior champion title, I received an invitation to a tournament in Sweden. That was a cultural shock because the living conditions in Singapore were inhuman, but everything was superb in Sweden. Their trains impressed me the most. My trainer, Lukin, and I boarded a train in Stockholm to travel to the tournament venue. I glanced out a window and noticed that we were actually moving at a speed of about 300 km/h, and the train only shook a tiny bit. Later I saw many excellent trains in France and in Germany, but those were not as good as that one in Sweden. However, maybe that's because Sweden was my first experience?

MS: Who was your chess coach?

KS: I mostly studied alone. There was a trainer in the Pioneer's Palace – Alexander Shishmariov, and Andrey Lukin assisted me at some stage.

MS: How did they assist you?

KS: The most valuable help was moral support. Of course, we had some opening and general chess lessons. But the psychological assistance was the most important – when you are a teenager, it is important to have someone who cares about you during the tournament. You don't need much chess assistance if you love chess and have a capacity for working; otherwise even the most brilliant teachers do not help.



I am very grateful to my trainers for not spoiling me, especially Shishmariov. Maybe this limited his contribution to my chess, but everything he gave me was very useful. This is very important. The same could be said about Lukin. Unfortunately, trainers often force their students to study particular openings, solve positions of their choice, and read books of their choice. I think most students would appreciate having more freedom. If I didn't like a book, I just put it aside.

When I studied in the Pioneer's Palace, Alexander Shashin, who also taught there, was very proud that one of his pupils had memorized 600 endgame positions. However, when my trainer set up one of those positions in a mirror reflection, the kid did not manage to solve it! So I don't think that such memorization is the universal method. It works very well for some players, but not for others.

The same could be said about Dvoretzky's teaching methods. He is a very special trainer, but his results fully depend on his student's attitude. For Yusupov, he was probably the best trainer in the world; but for Dreev, he

was simply unbearable. Dreev likes his freedom and may be lazier; while Yusupov is more prepared to be controlled, so he didn't mind Dvoretzky choosing positions to solve or the area to improve... There are very few really excellent trainers and it is very difficult to find the right one.

MS: Therefore maybe it is better not to take the risk and study alone?

KS: In any case, even the very best trainer will not substitute for your own brain. You have to take any information critically; whether it comes from your trainer or even from Kasparov's annotations to his games! You must always have your own opinion and be prepared to defend it. Only then you'll succeed.

MS: What kind of role is played by non-competitive games and blitz in one's improvement?

KS: I do not take blitz seriously. I personally enjoy "Swedish chess" – a game played in pairs on two boards, where the partners pass captured pieces to each other. I do not know how useful it is, but I quite like it.

MS: Whom do you play it with?

KS: With anybody I can manage to summon. I've played with Peter Svidler, with Sergey Rublevsky, and with Sasha Khalifman, but he will probably not recall it. After the FIDE championship in Libya I even tempted Levon Aronian... The most important thing is to find three other guys, and then everybody wants to play it! It is a very popular non-classical form of chess in the former USSR.

MS: And what about Western players, do they also like it?

KS: They learn it when they see us playing and want to join as well. Once I arrived in Monaco along with Volodya Kramnik and we played cards and Swedish chess for hours. Van Wely and Piket also enjoyed playing; those were very funny games.

MS: Do the players of your generation have the same appetite for card games as the grandmasters of the previous generation?

KS: I quit cards long ago, as did most other players. When you play cards during tournaments, it seriously harms your results. Sometimes I play cards when traveling, but it is nothing like the overnight sessions from some eight years ago.



MS: What do you do between tournaments?

KS: I rest. Rest and enjoy the life in all possible ways – one could say that.

MS: So, you walk, visit clubs? Rock concerts? Football matches?

KS: I walk and go to clubs. I don't go to rock concerts. As for football – I'd like to, but there are too many psychopathic football fans around. I once rented a flat a couple blocks away from the stadium and after "Zenit" games I had to park my car near my parents' house, because the football fans often used to break everything on their way back.

MS: Do you play sports?

KS: I go to a swimming pool and want to start weight training. We always played football after the lessons at school until sundown and returned in complete exhaustion, but later I either had no time or was too tired because of working on chess. Now I like to play table tennis and billiards.

MS: Did you play billiards against Svidler?

KS: He is much better than me, but I've won some matches, too. Peter is very serious about this game, and I just have a good eye and enjoy playing. A famous pool-player Boris "Bob" Fradkin once gave me a lesson about rolling in kicks. I was overjoyed and crushed everybody for a few days. It was in Kazan at the Russian club championship. Kostya Aseev (rest in peace!) was a brilliant pool-player, almost equal to Svidler, but completely unschooled – and after that lesson I've beaten him completely. But in a few weeks I forgot everything. This year I am going to play for the Yekaterinburg team, and Fradkin is from there – probably I should ask him to teach me once more (laughs)!

MS: You play on the ICC as well?

KS: Yes, but just for fun – when there are no drinking partners (laughs). I do not concentrate or prepare for a serious struggle – just go to play some nonsense. I could have many more points if I was more serious: such as playing sober and not leaving my seat for 30 seconds to pour a new portion of drink during a 3-minute blitz game. I could avoid blundering many of my pieces and easily get to 3300. But why should I? And besides, one has to train a lot to use a mouse like those youngsters. Blitz on a diagram is a different game; many people that I don't consider strong blitz players

produce outstanding results on the ICC.



Morozevich - Sakaev at the Moscow Blitz Championship

MS: Ivanchuk once said that since we all work with ChessBase, we are more accustomed to playing 2-dimensional chess...

KS: Well, I am not so sure. When you work in ChessBase, you also get accustomed with seeing a computer evaluation. Maybe those guys play Internet blitz so well because they see the computers advice?

MS: Do you analyze with the computer when you work on the opening?

KS: Of course, one can't do without it.

MS: How do you avoid following its recommendations too strictly?

KS: I never pay much attention to its suggestions. I just check my own ideas. Computers are good in tactical positions. Their suggestions have to be double checked as well, but if you miss some unexpected resource in one of the lines, the computer will notice it immediately.

MS: Are you worried about the expansion of modern theory?

KS: Not in the slightest. I work on my openings, but I can't say I'm a fanatic. I do not play such sharp lines that a single-move novelty could kill a variation, or such forced lines that forgetting something leads to an immediate loss. Nevertheless, I obtain good positions.

There are, however, grave examples. For instance, Volodya Kramnik: at present he is pathologically afraid to lose a game and he only can win at home. In Monaco, he conducted a nice attack against van Wely – I am sure that it came from his preparation. In the mid-90s his play was very interesting, and today – alas...

MS: Presently there are, so to speak, four world champions. Kramnik,

Kasimdzhanov, Kasparov – according to the FIDE rating list, and Fischer – according to himself. Maybe they should play a unification match-tournament?

KS: (Laughs) Kramnik might dare to play with an aging Fischer, but if Kasparov participates, this idea has no future... When Kramnik became champion, everybody was happy, as we thought it would be easier to unify the chess world; but he decided against undertaking any steps that can help chess which don't benefit him personally. People change, and, unfortunately, Volodya has changed as well.

MS: How much time do you spend working on the openings?

KS: I do not plan anything. I can work for 10 hours a day for a couple of weeks and then not do anything for a few months. It all depends on my mood and wishes.

MS: And at tournaments?

KS: Tournaments require a more serious approach. I prepare from 1 to 5 hours, depending on circumstances: my form, the game's importance, the opponent's strength and opening repertoire, etc; on average, one or two hours.

MS: You also write opening books...

KS: That's correct. Writing books is an interesting job. By the way, I do not only write about openings – I also annotate strong players' games.

MS: Have you played enough nice games to write your own collection?

KS: Quite enough. But now is not the correct time to write it. First I want to establish a reputation as an author. However, I would like to publish it as a tribute to my mom (she passed away this year – M.S.)... She was my most attentive supporter, as it often happens with parents; she collected all my press clippings, etc. And she always wanted to see my game collection...

Konstantin Sakaev Annotates

Sakaev, K - Kramnik, V (2490)

[A85] Pinsk, ch-URS under18, 1989

1.d4 f5 2.c4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.f3 d6 5.e4 Bg7

Or 5...fxe4 6.fxe4 Bg7 7.Nf3 with a small advantage.

6.e5 Nh5

After 6...dxe5 7.dxe5 Qxd1+ 8.Kxd1 White gets a better endgame.

7.g4 dxe5 8.gxh5 exd4 9.Nd5 e5

9...e6 10.h6 Be5 11.f4 Qh4+ (11...exd5 12.fxe5 Qh4+ 13.Ke2! Qe4+ 14.Kf2 Qxh1 15.Nf3+-) 12.Ke2 exd5 13.Nf3!+-.

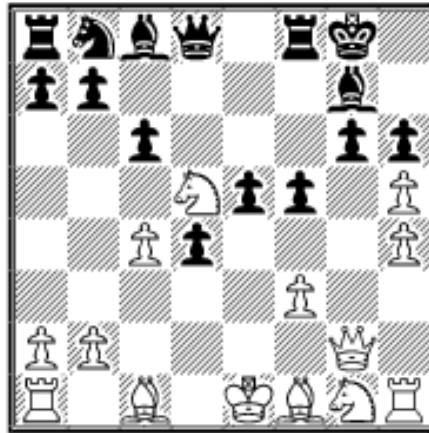
10.h4!± h6

Bad is 10...c6 11.Bg5 Qd6 12.Be7 Qd7 13.Nf6+-.

11.Qe2! 0-0

11...c6 loses to 12.Nf4!+-.

12.Qg2! c6



13.Bxh6! Bxh6

13...cxd5 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.Qxg6+ Kh8 16.Qh6+ Kg8 17.Nh3 with a winning attack.

14.Qxg6+ Bg7 15.h6 Rf7 16.Nh3!+-

Less convincing is 16.h7+ Kh8 (not 16...Kf8 17.Qh6!!+-) 17.Qxf7 cxd5 18.cxd5±.

16...cxd5 17.Ng5 Re7 18.Rg1 Nc6 19.cxd5 Qa5+ 20.Kd1 Qxd5 21.hxg7 1-0

Sakaev, K (2655) - *Belov, V* (2553)

[D87] 56th ch-RUS Krasnoyarsk (5), 08.09.2003

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Bc4 c5 8.Ne2 Nc6 9.Be3 0-0 10.0-0 Bd7 11.Rb1 a6 12.dxc5 Qc7

It is also possible to include an early 12...Na5 13.Bd3, but Black doesn't have to rush and d3 is a better square for the bishop.

13.Nd4!

Weaker is 13.f4 Na5 14.Bd3 Rfd8 15.Nd4 (in Nielsen – Ivanchuk, Malmö 2003 Black got good compensation for the exchange after 15.c6 Qxc6 16.Bb6 Bg4 17.Bxd8 Rxd8 18.h3 (18.Qc2 is also interesting) 18...Qc5+

19.Kh2 Nc4 20.hxg4 Ne3 21.Qd2 Nc4 22.Qd1 Ne3, and the game ended peacefully by repetition) 15...Qxc5! (15...e5 16.fxe5 Bxe5 leads to unclear play) 16.Nf5 Qa3 17.Nxg7 (Upon 17.Bc1, Black can draw with 17...Qc5+ 18.Be3 Qa3, or choose the complicated position that arises after 17...Qa2 18.Ne7 Kh8 19.Nd5 Bc6) 17...Ba4!, and White has concerns about the equality.

13...e6

I expected 13...Na5 14.Bd3 Rfd8; planning to reply 15.Qe2!, strengthening my position in the center. For example, 15...e6 16.f4! (White erred in Gulko – Shabalov, Seattle 2003: 16.Nb3?, and the players agreed to a draw) 16...Bf8 (16...e5 17.fxe5 Bxe5 18.h3, keeping an extra pawn) 17.Rf3 (the immediate 17.f5!? is also interesting) 17...e5 (17...Bxc5 18.Qf2 Be7 19.f5 with an attack). 18.fxe5 Bg4 19.e6! White has a pawn and a powerful group of pieces in the center for the sacrificed exchange, plus the black king is unsafe after the loss of the f7-pawn.

14.f4 Na5 15.Bd3 e5

On 15...Rfd8 White is able to transpose to the variation above with 16.Qe2, but the queen could be placed more actively with 16.Qf3. However, I like 16.Qe1! even better, as it prepares to move to h4 and does not interfere with the rook on f1, which creates threats along the f-file and could be mobilized via f3 to h3.



16.f5!!

This sacrifice was purely intuitive, as it is impossible to calculate everything at the board. Black's idea is clear after 16.fxe5 Bxe5 17.Bh6 (17.Nf3 is well met by 17...Bg4) 17...Bxh2+ 18.Kh1 Be5! 19.Bxf8 Rxf8, and despite being an exchange down, Black has full positional compensation. The natural 16.Ne2 also does not offer any advantage; Black only has to evaluate the position correctly and

play 16...Rad8!

16...Be6 is also insufficient: 17.fxe5! (the tempting 17.f5 Bxa2 18.f6 Bh8 19.Rb4 only leads to a draw: 19...Rfd8 20.Qc2 (20.Nc1 is well met by 20...Nc4! (while after 20...Be6 21.Qa4 White has an advantage) 21.Bf2 a5 22.Rb5 Qd7 (22...Qc6 23.Qa4 Nb2 24.Qxa2 Nxd3 25.Rb6 Qxe4 26.Nxd3 Rxd3) 23.Qa4 Nb2 24.Qxa2 Nxd3 25.Rxa5 Rxa5 26.Qxa5 Nxc1 27.Rxc1 Bxf6, and only Black can play for a win) 20...Bb3 21.Qb1 Ba2, with a repetition) 17...Nc4 (17...Bxe5?! 18.Nf4 Bxa2 19.Nd5 Bxd5 20.exd5 Bxh2+ 21.Kh1, and White has to win; 17...Bxa2 18.Ra1 Bc4 (bad is 18...Be6

19.Nf4 Bxe5 20.Nd5) 19.Nf4 Rad8 (19...Bxd3 20.Nd5 Qxe5 21.Qxd3 Nc6 22.Bf4 and the bishop gets to d6 with dreadful effect) 20.Bd4 Bxe5 21.Bxc4 Bxf4 22.Rxf4 (22.Rxa5 Be3+ 23.Kh1 Bxd4 24.cxd4 Qxa5 25.Qf3 Qc7 is unclear) 22...Nxc4 23.Qg4, with a powerful kingside initiative) 18.Bd4 (18.Bxc4 Bxc4 19.Rb4 Bb5 20.a4 Bc6 leads to equality) 18...Bxe5 19.h3 (19.Kh1!? Bxh2 20.Qc1, planning Ne2-f4 also deserves attention) 19...Bxd4+ 20.cxd4 Ne3 21.Qd2 Nxf1 22.Kxf1! (22.Rxf1 b6!) Black's position is very cramped, and White is ready to respond to 22...f5 with 23.e5.

Finally, on 17.fxe5 Bxe5 18.h3 (18.Nf4 Bxf4! 19.Rxf4 Bb5; 18.Kh1 Bxh2!) there is 18...Be6 (18...Ba4?! 19.Qxa4 Rxd3 20.Rf3 Rxe3 21.Rxe3 Qxc5 22.Nd4, and Black's compensation for the exchange is insufficient) 19.Qc2 Nc4 20.Bxc4 Bxc4 21.Bd4 Bxe2 22.Qxe2 Bxd4+ 23.cxd4 Rxd4 with equality.

16...exd4 17.cxd4 Rfe8

The most natural; however, the best defense is 17...gxf5! 18.exf5 Bf6! 19.Rf3! (Black manages to parry the attack otherwise: 19.Kh1 Bb5!; 19.Qh5 Rfe8 20.Rf3 Rxe3! 21.Rxe3 Bxd4 22.Qg4+ Bg7 23.Rc1 Nc6 with very unclear play; 19.d5 Qe5 20.Qf3 Rfe8 21.Bf2 White's compensation is barely sufficient) 19...Rfe8 20.Kh1 Bc6 21.Rh3 Rxe3 22.Rxe3. White has an edge in the resulting complex position.

18.f6 Bf8

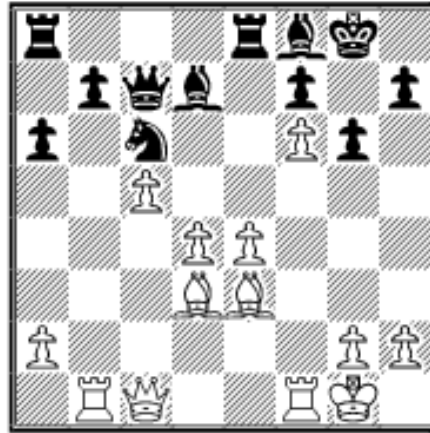
If Black plays 18...Bh8, White only has to strengthen his dark squares as follows: 19.Rb6! Bb5 (in order to undermine White's center) 20.Bf4! (If now 20...Qc8 21.Bd6 Re6 22.e5 Nc4 23.Bxc4 Bxc4 24.Qf3! (24.Rf2 Bd5 makes Black's position very solid) 24...Bxf1 25.Kxf1 Ra7. White doesn't have to hurry. He can play 26.h3 Re8 27.Kg1. The king goes to h2. Then it is useful to play a2-a4-a5, and then comes the time to move the center pawns: d4-d5, then •5-•6 or e5-e6, according to the circumstances. Black has no counterplay whatsoever, and even exchanging the queens doesn't make his life easier.) The main line is 20...Qd8 21.Rd6! Qc8 22.a4 Bxd3 23.Qxd3 Re6 24.Bg3! Rxd6 25.Bxd6 Qc6 26.Qc2 White can afford not to sacrifice his pawn on a4. 26...Rc8 27.d5 Qd7 (bad is 27...Qxd6 28.cxd6 Rxc2 29.d7 and the pawn queens) 28.e5. Black is fully paralyzed, and White's win is only a matter of time.

19.Qc1!

Preparing to mate on h6; 19.Qd2 is imprecise because of 19...Bb5 20.Bh6 Bxc5! 21.dxc5 Red8!, and now Black is attacking.

19...Nc6

Everything else loses by force: 19...Kh8 20.Bh6 Bg4 (20...Bxh6 21.Qxh6 Rg8 22.Rf4 g5 23.e5+-) 21.Bxf8 Rxf8 22.Qh6 Rg8 23.Rf4 Qd7 24.e5; 19...Bb5 20.Bxb5 axb5 21.Bh6 Rxe4 22.Bxf8 Kxf8 23.Qh6+ Ke8 24.Rbe1 Qc6 25.Qxh7 Rd8 26.Qh4 Rxd4 (26...Rxe1 27.Qxe1+ Qe6 28.Qxa5+-) 27.Rxe4+ Rxe4 (27...Qxe4 28.Re1+-) 28.Qh8+ Kd7 29.Rd1+ Ke6 30.Rd6+ winning the queen.



20.Kh1!

The king avoids any possible checks – the necessity of such a prophylactic move is illustrated by the following line: 20.Bh6 Nxd4 21.Bxf8 Rxf8 22.Qh6 Ne6, and 23.Bc4 is impossible in view of 23...Qxc5+.

20...h5

Vacating the h7-square for the king – there was no other defense against 21.Bh6.

21.Bf4!

The dark-squared bishop comes from another side. Nothing is achieved by 21.Bh6 Kh7 22.Bxf8 Rxf8 23.Qe3 Rad8.

21...Qd8

The pseudo-active 21...Qa5 leads to the loss of another pawn: 22.Bd6 Bxd6 23.cxd6 Kh7 (23...Nxd4 24.Qh6 Ne6 25.e5, and 26.Bg6) 24.Rxb7 Qd8 25.Qc4 Kg8 26.e5! Na5 27.Qc1.

22.Bd6 Kh7 23.Qe3

Black has nothing against the pawn phalanx that forms on the dark squares, which serves as a cover for White's decisive attack.

23...Bxd6

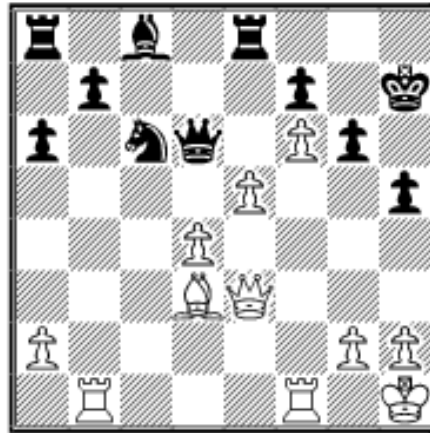
On 23...Bh6 there is the simple 24.Qf2, followed by 25.e4-e5.

24.cxd6 Bc8

White wins nicely after 24...b5 25.e5 Qb6 26.Qg5 Bg4 27.Rf4 Rh8 28.Rxg4! hxg4 29.e6! No better is 24...Qb8 25.e5 Qxd6 26.Qf3 Nxe5 27.Qxh5+ Kg8 28.dxe5 Rxe5 (there are no real saving chances in the endgame after 28...gxh5 29.exd6, not only because of material deficit, but

also because of the weakened kingside) 29.Qh6 Qf8 30.Qh4 Rh5 (defending against 31.Bg6) 31.Qg3 Rh6 32.Rfe1! (32.Rxb7 is parried by the unexpected resource 32...Rh3!) 32...Bc6 33.Re7 and Black is suffering.

25.e5 Qxd6



26.Bxg6+!

Simple tactics in the end.

**26...fxg6 27.f7 Qe7 28.fxe8=Q Qxe8
29.Rf6**

The black pieces lack coordination, so the mating attack is irresistible.

29...Qe7

On 29...Kg7 White could play 30.Rbf1 Be6 31.d5! Bxd5 32.e6.

30.Rbf1 Be6 31.Qe4 Bf5

Or 31...Rg8 32.d5.

32.R1xf5 gxf5 33.Qxf5+ Kg8 34.Rg6+ 1-0

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