

Round 1. Game 1  
27 May 2007

Carlsen-Aronian

Ruy Lopez

Notes by grandmaster

Ruslan Scherbakov

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.d3 Magnus deviates from the main line, possibly delaying his Marshall test until the later games.

6...b5 7.♙b3 d6 8.a4 ♖b8 A logical move – Black is not rushing to determine position of the c8-bishop, planning to develop it to e6 later.

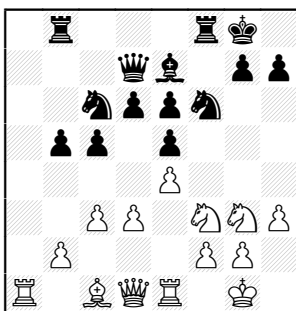
9.axb5 axb5 10.♘c3 10.c3 seems like a good alternative, limiting the c6-knight and preparing d3-d4, after which White could expect a small edge.

10...0-0 11.h3 White tried 11.♘e2 and 11.♘d5, but without success.

11...♘b4!? The a5-square is not available for the knight, but Black finds the way to move the c-pawn. This knight maneuver is a novelty. In the games played about 100 years ago, Black preferred an immediate 11...♙e6, and after that the line fell out of fashion completely.

12.♘e2 c5 13.♘g3 ♙e6 A typical maneuver that neutralizes White's strong light-squared bishop. Sometimes Black is ready to spend two tempi on it (when the bishop is first developed to b7).

14.♙xe6 fxe6 15.c3 ♘c6 16.♖e1 ♗d7



Black solved the opening problems, if there were any to begin with. All his pieces are well developed and ready for action, and the doubled pawns increase control of the center and give Black the f-file.

17.d4 Perhaps White should have delayed this advance in favor of something like 17.♙e3 or 17.♙g5.

17...exd4 18.cxd4 c4! This reply probably already gives Black better chances, because his queenside pawns are strong. White cannot benefit from his pawn center, because his pieces are not very active. Of course, not 18...cxd4? 19.♘xd4, and Black's central pawns can become vulnerable.

19.♙g5 h6 20.d5?! A tempting, but very responsible decision. White plays his trumps, but it gives Black a strong bishop in addition to powerful queenside pawns.

20.♙xf6!? ♙xf6 21.e5 was probably objectively stronger, with good chances to equalize, for instance, 21...dxe5 (or 21...♙d8!? 22.exd6 ♗xd6 23.♘e4 ♗d5 24.♘c3) 22.dxe5 ♗xd1 23.♖axd1 ♙e7 24.♖d7 etc.

20...exd5 21.♙xf6 ♙xf6 22.♗xd5+ ♖f7! Apparently, White underestimated this resource, planning on 22...♗h8?! 23.e5! Now the b2-pawn hangs, and the pin of the rook does not trouble Black at all.

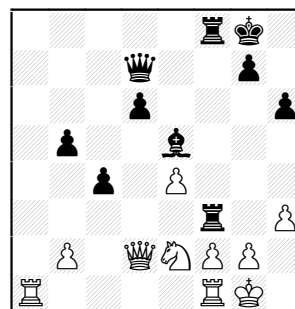
23.♗d2 The White's position is unpleasant. It would be much better if he traded out the Black's strong bishop by ♘h5!

23...♘e5! Right on time!

24.♘xe5 ♙xe5 25.♘e2 One has to turn to defense. Attempts of active play could only sharpen the position without solving any of White's problems. For instance, 25.♘f5? d5!, and Black's trumps outweigh: 26.f4 ♙c7 27.g4!? ♙b6+ 28.♖h1 d4 or simply 28...dxe4 with a big advantage. By the way, unattractive 25.♖ad1 is not the worst idea – the knight would have a chance to get to f5 at some point.

25...♖bf8 26.♖f1 In case of 26.f3? a rook sacrifice decides: 26...♖xf3! 27.gxf3 ♗xh3 with winning attack. For example, 28.♖a3 (or 28.f4 ♗g4+ 29.♖h1 ♗f3+ 30.♖g1 ♖f6! 31.f5 ♗xe4, and White is helpless) 28...c3!!, cutting the White's extra rook off the kingside: 29.♖xc3 ♙xc3 30.bxc3 ♗xf3! 31.♘d4 ♗g3+ 32.♖h1 ♖f2 etc.

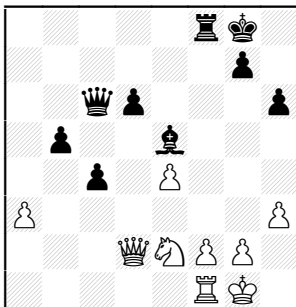
26...♖f3!!



Nevertheless!! This brilliant resource is both attacking and defensive, as White threatened to drive the bishop away from its stronghold on e5.

27.♖a3? The previous move caught Carlsen completely unprepared, and the Norwegian failed to keep cool. 27.gxf3 also loses: 27...♖xf3 28.♗d5+ (28.♘g3 ♗xh3 or 28.♘f4 ♙xf4 29.♗d5+ ♖h7 30.♗f5+ ♗xf5 31.exf5 ♙e5 is hopeless for White) 28...♖h7 29.♖a8 ♗xh3!, and the Black's king runs away from the checks: 30.♗g8+ ♖g6 31.♗e8+ ♖g5 32.♗e7+ ♖h5! (but not 32...♙f6?? 33.♗xd6) 33.♗e8+ g6 etc. White must play 27.♗d5+! ♖h7 28.♖ad1 with the idea ♗xe5. Black can reply by

28...♖c8!, but White creates counterchances: 29.♗xb5!? (or 29.♘d4 ♗xh3 30.♘f5 (weaker is 30.♘e6? ♙h2+ 31.♖h1 ♗h4 32.♘xf8+ ♗xf8) 30...♗b3 31.f4 ♙xb2 32.♘d6) 29...♗b3 (29...♗xh3!? 30.f4!) 30.♗d5 ♗xb2 - Black's advantage is undisputable, but White retains good drawing chances. 27...♗xa3 28.bxa3 ♗c6

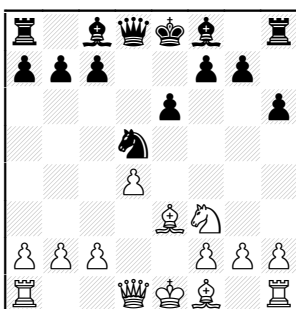


Now Black has a strong passed c-pawn, and White lacks counterplay. The rest is a matter of technique. 29.♘d4 ♙xd4 30.♗xd4 ♗a8 31.♗a1 c3 32.♗b4 ♗c5 33.♗b3+ ♖h8 34.♗a2 ♗a4! 35.♗e2 ♗xa3 36.♗d1 ♗a8 White resigns.

### Leko-Gurevich French Defense

Notes by grandmaster Ruslan Scherbakov

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 dxe4 This line of the French has become quite a troublesome for White, as he cannot find any advantage. Maybe Nimzovich and Sveshnikov are right about 3.e5!? 5.♘xe4 ♘bd7 6.♘f3 h6 7.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 8.♙e3 Another option is 8.♙h4, but 8...c5 gives Black a decent game. 8...♘d5



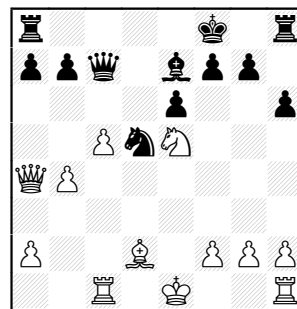
9.♙d2 Leko decides to keep the bishop. In case of 9.♙d3 Black takes on e3: 9...♘xe3 10.fxe3 ♙d6 11.0-0 (Black holds the ending after 11.e4 e5! 12.dxe5 ♙c5 13.♙b5+ c6 14.♗xd8+ ♖xd8 15.♙c4 ♖e7, Leko-Ivanchuk, Monaco 2007. White also tried long castling after 11.♗d2 or 11.♗e2, but Black has enough

counterplay in that case, too), and here Gurevich tested 11...♗e7 (safer is 11...0-0) 12.c3 (12.c4!?) 12...♙d7 (12...0-0!? again looked okay) 13.♗b3 0-0-0 14.♗ae1 c6, and won after a long struggle (Acs-Gurevich, St. Vincent 2002). White also played 9.♗d2, preparing a long castling, but Mikhail played some games on this subject as well.

9...c5 10.♙b5+ White tried different approaches, but never could create any real problems for the opponent. Even such a theorist as Ivanchuk failed to obtain an advantage after 10.dxc5 ♙xc5 11.♙d3 0-0 12.♗e2 ♗c7 13.0-0-0 ♘f4 14.♙xf4 ♗xf4+ 15.♖b1 b6 16.g3 ♗c7 17.♙e4 ♙b7 18.♙xb7 ♗xb7 19.♘e5 ♗ad8, and Black equalized in Ivanchuk-Drozdoskij, Odessa 2006. The text-move looks interesting - White gains time to develop the initiative.

10...♙d7 11.♙xd7+ ♗xd7 12.c4 ♘b6 13.♗c1 ♙e7 Black also played 13...♗c8, but Gurevich prefers to prepare short castling.

14.dxc5 ♙xc5 15.b4 ♙e7 16.c5 ♘d5 17.♘e5 ♗c7 18.♗a4+ ♖f8



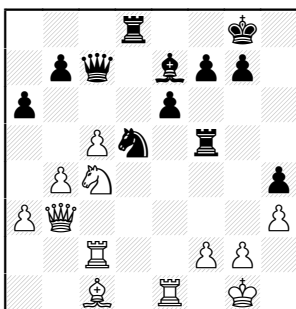
Series of energetic moves allowed White to deprive the opponent of the right to castle. The Black's position looks dangerous. However, Mikhail encountered such situations many times in the Meran - a strong knight on d5 helps Black to keep control of the position and gain time to complete development.

19.♘c4 h5! In Iordachescu-Meier (Dresden 2007) Black preferred 19...g6 20.0-0 ♖g7 21.♗b3 ♗hd8 22.♗fe1 ♗ac8 and eventually won the game, although White's queenside majority offers him better chances. Apparently, Black's rooks on the back rank seemed too passive for Gurevich, and he found an excellent way to direct one of them in a different way!

20.0-0 In case of 20.h4 Black continues 20...g6 followed by ♖g7, while the pawn on h4 makes it more difficult for White to develop. 20.♗a5 also gives nothing: 20...♗xa5 (or 20...b6!? 21.♘xb6!? ♘xb6 22.cxb6 ♗xb6 23.♗xb6 axb6 24.♗c6 ♙d8) 21.♘xa5 b6, and a strong knight on d5 saves Black from trouble.

20...h4 21.h3 ♗h5 22.♗fe1 An attempt to trade the strong knight by 22.♘e3 is always met by 22...♘f4.

22...a6 23.♗b3 ♗d8 24.a3 ♖g8 25.♗c2 ♗f5 26.♙c1



White cannot find a plan to make use of his queenside majority, therefore one can conclude that Black equalized the game.

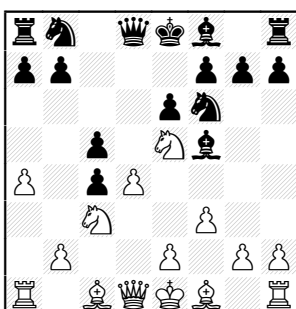
26...♟f4 27.♞xf4 ♜xf4 28.♞e5 ♜fd4 29.♞c4 ♜4d5  
30.♞f3 ♜d3 31.♞c3 ♜3d5

A draw agreed – neither side can improve his position.

### Ponomarev-Rublevsky Slav Defense

*Notes by grandmaster Ruslan Scherbakov*

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♞f3 ♟f6 4.♞c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♞f5  
6.♞e5 e6 7.f3 c5!?



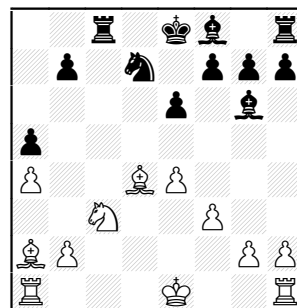
This move became popular after the Kramnik-Topalov match, Elista 2006. I should remind that Sergey Rublevsky was among the Kramnik's helpers during the match.

8.e4 ♞g6 9.♞e3 cxd4 10.♞xd4 ♞xd4 11.♞xd4  
♞fd7 12.♞xd7 ♞xd7 13.♞xc4 White obtained a certain advantage: his pieces are more active, while the Black's bishop is locked on g6. However, it is hard to gain anything serious, as the Black's position is very solid.

13...♞c8 After a more common 13...a6 Black usually holds the position. For instance, in the 6<sup>th</sup> game of the Topalov-Kramnik match Black neutralized the opponent's initiative after 14.♞e2 ♜g8 15.♞hd1 ♞c8 16.b3 ♞c5 17.a5 ♞e7. However, in the recent match Aronian-Kramnik (Yerevan 2007) Levon created problems for the opponent by 14.h4 ♞c8 15.♞a2 h6 16.♞c1 ♜g8 17.♞e2 ♞c5 18.♞xc5 ♞xc5 19.♞b1 ♞e7

20.♞xc5 ♞xc5 21.h5 ♞h7 22.♞c1 ♞d7 23.♞d2, and Black did not manage to bring his light-squared bishop back into the game without queenside losses. As we'll see, Rublevsky plans a different role for his a-pawn.

14.♞a2 Interesting is 14.♞b5!? a6 15.♞xd7+ ♞xd7 16.♞e2 ♜g8 17.♞hd1 ♞e8 18.♞b6 with some pressure, which does not seem too promising, though.  
14...a5!?



A completely new idea! Black is not worried about the knight arriving on b5, preferring to establish a firm control of the b4-square and block the activity of White's queenside pawns.

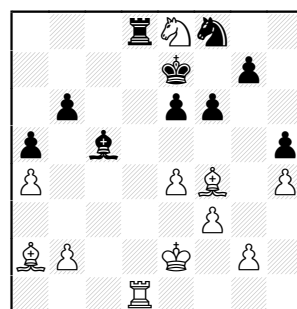
15.h4 h5 A small clarification on another wing – Sergey does not yield anywhere!

16.♞c1 ♜g8 17.♞e2 ♞c5 18.♞b5 ♞e7 19.♞c3 b6  
20.♞hd1 f6 21.♞d2 ♜gd8 Black gradually brings his pieces into the game, while White has no chance to initiate anything active, because it is very difficult to find a decent breakthrough.

22.♞cd1 ♞f8 23.♞a7 ♞xd2+ 24.♞xd2 The bishop had no business on c3 – one should try to break the fortress on the queenside.

24...♞c7 25.♞b5 ♞c8 26.♞f4 ♞e8 A safe approach. Also possible is 26...e5 27.♞e3 ♞xe3 28.♞xe3 ♞c2. Black was worried about 29.♞c3 ♞xb2 30.♞d5+ , but detailed analysis shows that he can hold: 30...♞e8 (or even 30...♞d6 31.♞xf6+ (31.♞c4 f5!) 31...♞c5 32.♞c1+ ♞d6 with a move repetition) 31.♞c7+ (31.♞c4? ♞e6 32.♞b5+ ♞f8) 31...♞e7 32.♞d5+ (32.♞c4? ♞f7) 32...♞e8 with a draw. Being under time pressure, Sergey was understandably reluctant to make his king a target. The text-move solves all the problems.

27.♞d6 ♞d8 28.♞xe8



28...♖xe8! This is more accurate than 28...♖xd1  
 29.♗xd1 ♗xe8 30.g4 with good chances to remove  
 the h4-pawn from the dark square, although it is  
 unlikely to provide any real winning chances – the  
 position remains too closed for bishops.

29.♙d2 ♘g6 30.♖c1 Threatening to take on a5 at  
 some point.

30...♖d8! The most accurate. Taking the pawn is  
 unnecessary: 30...♗xh4?! 31.♖h1 ♘g6 (31...♗xg2??  
 32.♖h2) 32.♖xh5 etc.

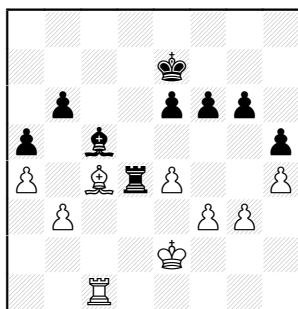
31.g3 After 31.♙xa5? ♗f4+ 32.♗f1 ♗d3! White  
 risked losing: 33.♖xc5 ♗xc5 34.♙xb6 ♖c8 35.a5  
 ♗d3 etc.

31...♗e5 Black has solved all the problems.

32.♙c3 32.♙xa5 achieves nothing in view of  
 32...♗d3.

32...♗c6 The knight goes to d4 – a draw is imminent.

33.♙c4 ♗d4+ 34.♙xd4 ♖xd4 35.b3 g6



Here the players agreed to a draw.

### Gelfand-Kasimdzhanov

Slav Defense

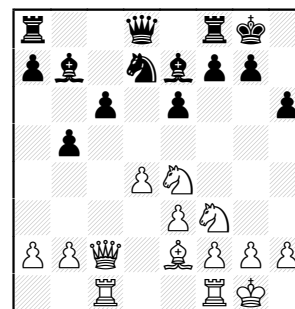
Notes by grandmaster Ruslan Scherbakov

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 e6 5.♙g5 h6  
 6.♙xf6 The Anti-Moscow Gambit (6.♙h4), which  
 leads to extremely sharp game, is more popular  
 recently, however, Gelfand selects a calmer  
 continuation.

6...♗xf6 7.e3 ♗d7 8.♖c2 ♖d8 Kasimdzhanov goes  
 for rather passive setup. An alternative plan is linked  
 with 8...g6 and ♙g7.

9.♙d3 ♙e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖ac1 dxc4 12.♙xc4 b5  
 13.♙e2 ♙b7 A typical position of the variation. Black  
 can solve his problems if he advances the c-pawn,  
 getting rid of a backward pawn and unlocking the light-  
 squared bishop. Otherwise White retains a lasting  
 advantage.

14.♗e4!?



A new move that poses serious problems – White  
 increases control of the key c5-square. In Novikov-  
 Nosenko (Simferopol 1991) White played 14.a3, and  
 now 14...b4!? 15.axb4 ♙xb4 followed by ...c6-c5 when  
 appropriate deserved attention.

14...♗a5 15.a3 Threatening b2-b4, after which taking  
 on a3 is impossible due to the queen getting trapped.  
 Black's reply is forced.

15...b4 16.axb4 ♙xb4 In case of 16...♗xb4 17.♗e1!  
 Black is practically forced to sacrifice a pawn: 17...c5!?  
 18.♗xc5 ♗xc5 19.dxc5 ♖c8 20.♗d3 ♗b5, but the  
 compensation may be insufficient.

17.♖a1!? An interesting rearrangement! After  
 17.♗fd2!? Black can play 17...c5!? 18.♗b3 ♙xe4  
 19.♗xe4 ♗b6. White stand more actively, but Black  
 has no obvious weaknesses.

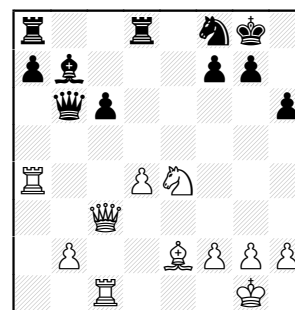
17...♗b6 18.♖fc1 ♖fd8 In the event of 18...♖fc8  
 White has 19.♗fd2! ♙xd2 20.♗xd2 c5 21.♗c4 ♖d8  
 (21...♗c7? 22.♗a5) 22.♗d6, winning an exchange.

19.♗e1! White gradually brings his pieces in the right  
 direction.

19...e5 Black tries to undermine White's pawn chain  
 from another side, but it brings no relief.

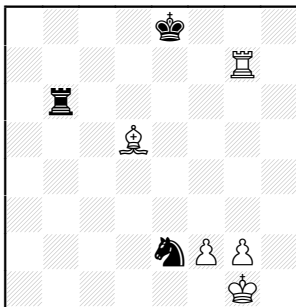
20.♗d3! exd4 21.♗xb4 ♗xb4 22.♖a4 ♗b6 23.exd4!  
 Weaker is 23.♖xd4?! c5!, because the c5-pawn is  
 untouchable: 24.♗xc5?? ♗xc5 25.♖xd8+ ♗xd8  
 26.♗xc5 ♖c8, and wins.

23...♗f8 24.♗c3



White's strategy proved right – he controls the c5-  
 square and exerts pressure on the backward c-pawn. He  
 has a clear advantage.

24...♙c8 25.♘c5 ♖b8 26.b3 ♗c7 Black could try to trade the strong knight by 26...♘e6!? 27.♙c4 ♘xc5 28.dxc5 ♗c7, but this position is also hard to defend.  
 27.♗g3?! White exchanges an influential defender, but eases the Black's task. More natural is 27.♙c4, retaining the advantage.  
 27...♗xg3 28.hxg3 ♘e6! 29.♙c4 ♘xd4 30.♖xa7 ♙e6 31.♘xe6 fxe6 32.♗e1 ♖h8 33.♗e3 c5 34.g4 Black has achieved a lot, but White still has an edge. The rook ending is drawn, but how can one play for a win without taking on e6?  
 34...♗d6 35.g5! This is the only way!  
 35...hxg5 36.♗g3 ♗db6 37.♖xg5 ♖6b7 38.♖xb7 ♖xb7 39.♖xc5 ♘b3?! More accurate is 39...♖h7 40.♗e5 ♖g6 with some drawing chances, although White can try to convert an extra pawn.  
 40.♖h5+ ♖g8 41.♙xe6+ ♖f8 42.♙d5 ♖b6 43.♖f5+ ♖e8 44.♖f7 ♘d4!? 45.♖xg7? Going right into the trap! After 45...♖c7 White still had winning chances.  
 45...♘e2+



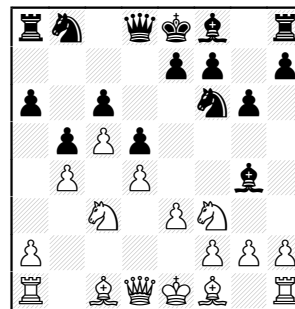
46.♖f1 46.♖h2?? ♖h6, checkmate!  
 46...♘c3 Threatening the mate from another side!  
 47.♖b7 A draw is agreed – Black can simply take the d5-knight.

### Kamsky-Bacrot Slav Defense

*Notes by grandmaster Yuri Yakovich*

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 The Chebanenko Variation of the Slav Defense is one of the safest openings for Black at present time.  
 5.e3 b5 6.c5 White gains space, planning to carry out a2-a4 and seize the a-file.  
 6...g6 A popular move. 6...♙g4 is weaker because of 7.♗b3! followed by a4. In Hillarp Persson-Arlandi (Calvia (ol) 2004) White carried out a typical plan for this variation: 7...♘bd7 8.a4 ♙xf3 9.gxf3 e5 10.♗a3 ♖c8 11.axb5 axb5 12.♙h3 exd4 13.exd4 ♙e7 14.♗a5! 0-0 15.♗xd8 ♖fxd8 16.♖a6 with a clear advantage.  
 6...♘bd7 7.b4!? a5! also offers decent equalizing chances.

7.b4 ♙g4!? More common is 7...a5 8.bxa5 ♗xa5 9.♙d2 b4 followed by ♘e4 with a roughly equal game.



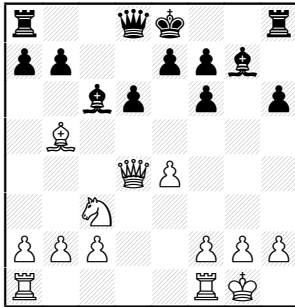
8.h3?! Too slow. More active is 8.a4!? ♘bd7 9.♙b2 (Kozul-Kuljasevic, Warsaw 2005) or 9.♗b3 (Lalic – Gupta, Port Erin 2005) with a complex struggle. Now Black equalizes without difficulties.  
 8...♙xf3 9.gxf3 a5 10.bxa5 ♙g7 11.f4 ♗xa5 12.♙d2 b4 13.♘e2 ♘e4 14.♙g2 ♘xd2 15.♗xd2 ♘d7 In the near future the a- and b- pawns will be traded with complete equality.  
 16.0-0 0-0 17.♖ab1 ♗xa2 18.♖b2 ♗a6 19.♖xb4 ♖fb8 20.♖fb1 ♖xb4 21.♖xb4 h6 22.♙f3 ♖b8 23.♘c1 ♖xb4 24.♗xb4 e6 25.♗b1 g5 26.fxg5 hxg5 27.♘d3 ♙f6 28.♙e2 ♗a7 Game drawn.

### Grischuk-Malakhov Sicilian Defense

*Notes by grandmaster Yuri Yakovich*

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 In the Sicilian, Malakhov shares his love between the Dragon and the Rauzer. In today's game he selected the latter variation.  
 6.♙g5 ♙d7 Normally Vladimir plays 6...e6, but he failed to solve opening problems in recent games against Yakovich and Inarkiev, played in the Russian Club Championship in Dagomys. Malakhov's second Alexey Dreev often employs 6...♙d7.  
 7.♗d2 ♘xd4 7...♖c8 is common, which leads to exceptionally sharp position after 8.f4 ♘xd4 9.♗xd4 ♗a5 10.e5 dxe5 11.fxe5 e6 12.0-0-0 ♙c6 13.♘b5 ♙xb5 14.exf6.  
 8.♗xd4 h6 9.♙xf6 gxf6 According to Botvinnik, disadvantages of the pawn structure in such positions are compensated by the bishop pair and control of the central squares. However, recently White started to get an edge, utilizing his development lead and precarious location of the Black's king.  
 10.♙b5! Depriving Black of the two bishop advantage.  
 10...♙c6 Trying to improve the pawn structure. Weaker is 10...♙xb5 11.♘xb5 ♗a5+ 12.♘c3 with an advantage to White (Luther-Schlichtmann, Crans Montana 1999).

11.0-0 ♖g7 The f6-f5 advance is in Black's plans, so he develops the bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal.



12.♖ad1! Planning a rook lift in case Black castles short.

12...♔f8?! Black keeps the rook on h8 to defend the king, however, it gives White a stable advantage. Black cannot obtain any counterplay, and it is impossible for him to connect rooks and coordinate pieces. Perhaps Vladimir should have developed his queen to b6 or a5 instead.

13.♖d3 ♖a5 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♘e2! The White's knight goes to f5, so Black's reply is practically forced.

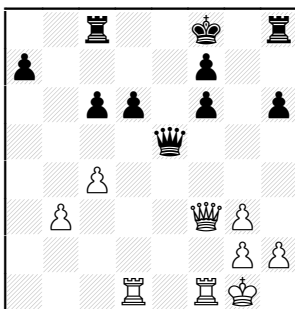
15...f5 16.exf5 ♖xa2 17.b3 White has a clear advantage, and soon he will start attacking the king.

17...♖a5 18.♖f3 ♖c8 19.♘g3 ♗e5 20.c4 From now on White is able to meet Black's ♖c3 by ♖d3.

20...♗xg3 Black trades the last minor piece, but it does not bring him any relief, because he is unable to coordinate his major pieces. Bad king becomes a decisive factor.

21.fxg3! Planning 22.f6.

21...♖e5 22.f6 exf6



23.♖de1!

Of course, not 23.♖xf6? ♖xf6 24.♖xf6 d5 with saving chances. White plays against the king.

23...♖g5 24.h4 ♖g6 25.♖e4! Brining the rook to the f-file.

25...h5 26.♖f4 ♖h6 27.♔h2 Black is stalemated. Grischuk is in time trouble, and therefore plays with extra care. The White's queen will soon get to the queenside and start collecting the harvest. The rest is relatively easy technical job.

27...c5 28.♖c3 ♖g7 29.♖d2 ♖d8 30.♖a5 ♖d7 31.♖b5 ♖d8 32.♖a5 ♖d7 33.♖a4 ♖d8 34.♖xa7 ♖h8 35.♗e1 ♔g7 36.♖c7 ♖f8 37.♗e7 ♖a8 38.♖xd6 ♖a7 39.♗fe4 ♖b7 40.♗e3 ♖xe7 41.♗xe7 ♖g6 42.♖xc5 Black resigns.

## Polgar-Bareev

Caro Kann Defense

Notes by grandmaster Ruslan Scherbakov

1.e4 c6 Previously Evgeny preferred the French Defense, but recently turned to a safer Caro Kann.

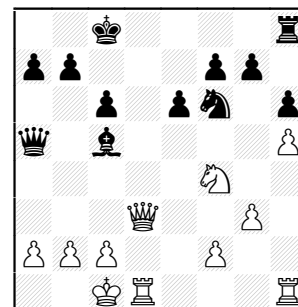
2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♗f5 5.♘g3 ♗g6 6.h4 h6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.h5 ♗h7 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♖xd3 e6 11.♗f4 ♖a5+ 12.♗d2 ♖c7 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.♘e4 ♘g6 15.g3 ♘xe4 16.♖xe4 ♘f6 17.♖e2 A well-known position that occurred in practice many times.

17...♖d5!? A fresh idea – Black simply attacks a pawn! Usual 17...♗d6 18.c4 c5 19.♗c3 leads to a slightly inferior game for Black. It looks like Evgeny decided to check whether Judit is ready for such a turnaround. Of course, it was all prepared at home...

18.♘e5 A principled continuation – White activates the knight, but sacrifices a central pawn. However, the fact that Judit spent more than half an hour on this move, suggests that the opponent's move surprised her. In any event, it was difficult to create real problems for Black. The tournament practice saw 18.c4 ♖xh5 19.♖xh5 ♘xh5 20.♖e5 ♖xe5 21.♘xe5 (or 21.dxe5 g6) 21...f5, and Black holds, or 18.♗f4 ♗d6 19.♗xd6 ♖xd6 20.♘e5 ♖hd8 with an acceptable game.

18...♖xd4 19.♗f4 ♖e4! Correct! 19...♖xd1+? loses to 20.♖xd1, as Black cannot defend against the knight jumps to g6 or c4.

20.♖d3 ♗c5 21.♘g6 ♖xf4 22.♘xf4 ♖a5!?



An interesting novelty that was also prepared at home, judging by the speed of play. In Jakovenko-Zelcic (Saint Vincent 2005) Black continued 22...♗xf2 23.♖hf1 ♗c5 24.♖f3 ♗d6 with a good game, although later he had problems with active possibilities.

23.f3?! A dubious decision. Safer is 23.♔b1 ♕xf2 24.♖hf1 ♕b6 25.♗e2, but here after 25...♗g5 White has to struggle for equality.

23...♗xa2 24.c3 ♕b6 25.♔c2 ♗a5 Black's advantage becomes clear. After the queen comes to g5, White will have problems defending her kingside pawns, while Black has already snatched a pawn on the queenside!

26.♔b1 ♗g5 27.♗e2 White loses one of the pawns in any case.

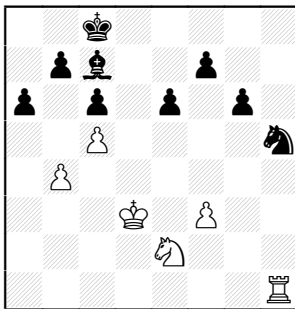
27...♖d8 28.♗c2 ♖xd1+ 29.♖xd1 ♗xh5 30.g4 ♗c5 31.♗d3 ♗d5 In principle, when playing against an extra exchange, one should keep the major pieces on board, but in this particular case it was difficult to achieve without making concessions: 31...♗e7 32.♗g3 followed by ♗g3-e4, or 31...♕c7 32.♗g3. Possibly Black should keep the knight by 32...♗d5!?

32.♔c2 32.♗xd5?! cxd5 strengthens Black's central pawns.

32...♗xd3+?! One should have abstained from this exchange. The choice is 32...h5!? 33.gxh5 ♗xh5, 32...♕c7!?, or 32...a5!?, although in any case it is hard to break White's defense.

33.♗xd3 h5 33...a5!? deserved attention again, gaining space on the queenside.

34.gxh5 ♗xh5 35.b4! a6 36.c4 ♕c7 37.♖h1 g6 38.c5

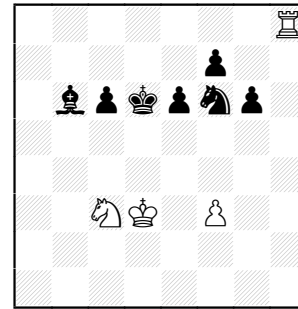


The Black's task has become significantly harder. It is quite possible that the position is already objectively drawn – a rook is very strong in such positions. One should push pawns, but what pawns? Moving the kingside pawns can make the b7-pawn vulnerable. Creating a single passed pawn on the queenside should not be dangerous for White.

38...a5 Although Black is generally reluctant to trade the b4-pawn, Evgeny could be worried about his queenside majority being counterfeited after, for example, 38...♔d7 39.♗d4 ♗f4+ 40.♔c4 g5 41.♖h7 ♔e7 42.♗b3 followed by ♗a5.

39.bxa5 ♕xa5 40.♖a1 ♕c7 41.♔c4 ♗f6 42.♖h1 b6 43.cxb6 ♕xb6 44.♗c3 ♔d7 45.♖h8 Despite three extra pawns, it is very difficult for Black to create really strong passers. It would be great to get a connected pair, but this can only be achieved by e5-e4 or g5-g4 followed by recapturing with a king or a knight. I think the rook can prevent it.

45...♔d6 46.♔d3



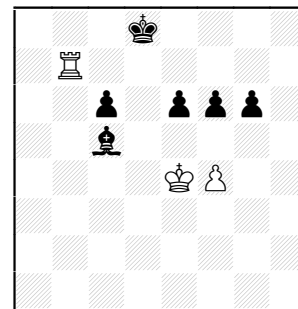
46...♕a5?! The knight had to be kept. A bishop has an unfortunate disadvantage – it cannot control half of the squares. 46...♗d5!? is more promising. Black needs the knight to obtain connected passed pawns, because the king cannot go far from weak pawns.

47.♗e4+ ♗xe4 48.♔xe4 ♕b4 Maybe Black should move the pawns starting with 48...g5, but there is no winning plan to be seen – the rook will attack the pawns and prevent them from advancing further.

49.♖b8 ♕a3 50.♖d8+ ♔e7 51.♖a8 The bishop feels lonely playing against the rook.

51...♕c5 52.♖b8 f6 Nothing is achieved by 52...e5 53.♖b7+ ♔e6 54.♖c7, and Black cannot keep all the pawns: 54...f5+ 55.♔d3 ♔d5 56.♖g7.

53.♖b7+ ♔d8 54.f4



Now a draw is near – Black did not manage to improve his position.

54...♕e7 55.♖a7 ♔e8 56.♖c7 c5 57.♖b7 ♔f8 58.♖b8+ ♔f7 59.♖b7 ♔f8 60.♖b8+ ♔g7 61.♖b6 ♔f7 62.♖b7 ♔e8 63.♖b6

Game drawn.

## Adams-Shirov

French Defense

Notes by grandmaster Yuri Yakovich

1.e4 It is extremely difficult to predict Shirov's response to this move. He can play virtually anything. In this game Alexei played

1...e6 2.d4 d5 Adams is, in turn, adamant in his tastes, and almost exclusively meets the French by

3.♘d2 It is considered that the easiest equality for Black is 3...c5, but Shirov prefers a more risky and ambitious move.

3...♗f6 4.e5 ♗fd7 5.c3 c5 6.♙d3 ♗c6 7.♗e2 cxd4 8.cxd4 f6 9.exf6 ♗xf6 10.♗f3 ♙d6 11.0-0 Black undertook both typical French breaks c5 and f6, and developed his pieces naturally. White plans to play against a weak pawn on e6 and a weak square e5.

11...♞c7 Preventing ♙f4. Another popular continuation is 11...0-0.

12.g3 Fashion of the 80s. White weakens his kingside to some extent, but insists on developing the bishop to f4.

12...0-0 13.♙f4 ♙d7 14.♞c1 ♗e4!? A rare move. Black is ready to sacrifice an exchange by 15...♙xf4 16.♗xf4 ♞xf4, getting a pawn and a better structure in return. More common is 14...♞ae8, preparing e6-e5. My game against Beliavsky (Kiev 1986, USSR championship) went on 15.♞e1 ♙xf4 16.♗xf4 ♞b6 17.b3 (17.♞e3!?) 17...g6 18.♙b1 ♞e7 19.♞c3 ♗e8 20.♞ce3 with some advantage to White. Safer is 15...♞b8!? 16.♞d2 ♗h8 17.♙xd6 ♞xd6 18.♗f4 ♗g4!, and Black carries out e6-e5 under more comfortable circumstances. Brynell-Gleizerov (Stockholm 1986) ended in a draw after 19.♙f1 e5 20.dxe5 ♗gxe5 21.♗xe5 ♗xe5 22.♙g2 d4 23.♙xb7 ♙g4 24.♗d3 ♗xd3 25.♞xe8 ♞xe8 26.♞xd3 ♞b4 27.♙e4 ♞xb2.

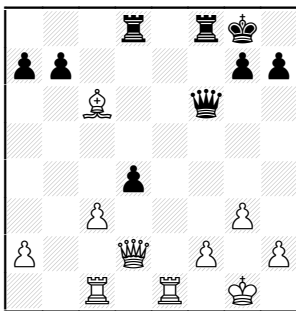
15.♙xd6 Naturally, Adams does not allow an exchange sacrifice on f4.

15...♞xd6 16.♗c3 ♗xc3 Bad is 16...♞xf3? due to 17.♞xf3 ♗xd4 18.♞e3.

17.bxc3 e5 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.dxe5 ♞xe5 Black managed to advance e6-e5, but White still enjoys a symbolic advantage, as his king is safer, and the d5-pawn is more vulnerable than the c3-pawn.

20.♞e1 ♞f6 21.♞d2 ♞ad8 22.♙f1 ♙c6?! Shirov rushes to force the matters. Interesting is 22...♙f5!?, planning to meet 23.♙g2 by 23...♙e4.

23.♙g2 d4 24.♙xc6



24...bxc6 At the press conference after the game Alexei said that he counted on 24...dxc3?, but here realized that after 25.♙d5+ ♗h8 26.♞d3 ♞xf2+ 27.♗h1 ♞d2 28.♞cd1 Black has no compensation for the sacrificed piece.

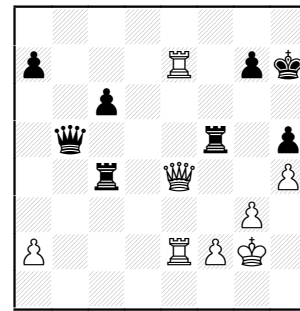
25.cxd4 ♞xd4 26.♞e3 It may seem that a draw can be agreed soon in this major piece ending, but actually White has a stable advantage based on better king location and Black's inferior pawn structure. Adams must keep all the

pieces on board and shift back and forth from attacking the enemy king to pressuring against his pawn weaknesses. Exchanges favor Shirov, whose aim is a drawn rook or queen ending with three pawns against two on the same flank.

26...♞fd8 27.♞b3+ ♞d45 28.♞c5 ♗f8 On 28...♞d6 29.♞ec1 is unpleasant.

29.♞c4 ♞d6 30.♞f4+! 30.♞b7 does not give an advantage because of 30...♞d1 31.♞f4+ ♗g8 32.♞f7+ ♗h8.

30...♗g8 31.♞fe4 h5 32.h4 ♗h7 33.♞e6 ♞c5 34.♞b1+ ♞f5 35.♞1e2! White removes the rook from the first rank, making it more difficult to trade pieces. 35...♞dd5 36.♗g2 ♞b5 37.♞e4 ♞c5 38.♞e7 ♞c4

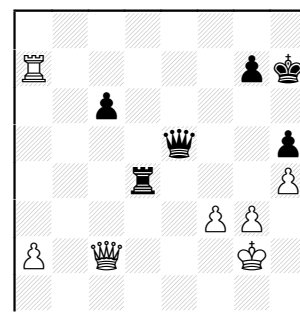


39.♞d3 39.♞e6!? deserved attention! Now 39...♞d5+ 40.♞xd5 cxd5 41.♞xa7 leads to a lost rook ending, while in other lines it becomes hard for Black to defend his king.

39...♞a4 39...♞d5+? leads to the line above.

40.♞c3 ♞d5+ 41.f3 ♞d4 42.♞xa7 ♞e5 White won a pawn, but Black centralized. Converting the material advantage becomes difficult.

43.♞xe5 ♞xe5 44.♞c2+ ♗g8 45.♞a8+ ♗f7 46.♞a7+ ♗g8 47.♞b3+ ♗h7 48.♞b1+?! ♗h6 49.♞c1+ ♗h7 50.♞c2+



Adams misses a threefold repetition, which occurs after 50...♗g8. Following Shirov's claim, the game was announced a draw. Nevertheless, one can hardly find a clear-cut way to use the White's extra pawn. After 51.a4 ♞b4! 52.♗h3 ♞e6+ 53.♗h2 ♞e5; 51.a3 (depriving the Black's rook of the b4-square) 51...♞d8 52.♞b7 ♞e3; 51.♞b7 c5 52.♞b5 ♞d5 Black has good drawing chances.