

Round 2. Game 4

10 June 2007

Shirov-Aronian

Ruy Lopez

Notes by grandmaster

Ruslan Scherbakov

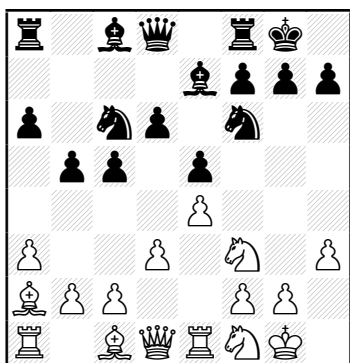
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♙b3 0-0 8.h3 ♙b7 9.d3 d6 10.a3

Alexei already played this unhurried variation in the match with Michael Adams.

10...♘a5

Adams achieved a good game after 10...♖d7 11.♘c3 ♖fe8, but Aronian prefers playing in his usual manner, placing a pawn on c5 and neutralizing the White's light-squared bishop by ...♙b7-c8-e6.

11.♙a2 c5 12.♘bd2 ♘c6 13.♘f1 ♙c8



14.c3

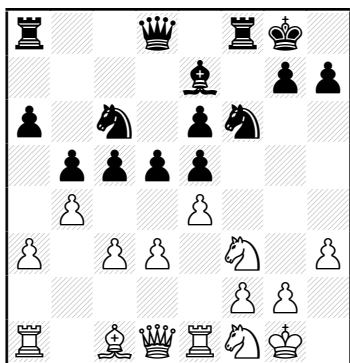
Recently White often played 14.♙g5, and in most cases Aronian was the defender of Black's position, so Shirov decided not to test the opponent in such a familiar variation. However, Levon has sufficient experience in other lines, too, for example, 14.♘e3 ♙e6 15.♙d5 ♙d7 16.♙b3 ♙e6 17.c3 ♙xb3 18.♖xb3 g6 19.♖a2 a5 20.a4 b4 21.♙d2 with a slight advantage to White (Anand-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2006).

14...♙e6 15.♙xe6 fxe6 16.b4

The alternative 16.♘g3 was also tested frequently.

16...d5

Black failed to equalize in Bacrot-Aronian (Turin (ol) 2006): 16...♖d7 17.♘g3 a5 18.bxc5 dxc5 19.♖b3 ♖ab8 20.a4 b4, because of numerous pawn weaknesses in his camp.



17.♘g3!?

A novelty. Previously White played 17.exd5 ♖xd5! 18.♖e2 ♖fd8 19.♘xe5 ♖xe5 20.♖xe5 ♘xe5 21.♖xe5 ♖xd3 22.♖xe6 ♖f7 23.♖e3 ♖ad8 with sufficient compensation for a pawn (Karjakin-Grischuk, Foros 2006).

17...dxe4?!

Levon overestimates his chances, attempting to play more actively. This recapture loses a pawn without sufficient compensation almost by force.

18.♘xe4 c4 19.dxc4 ♖xd1 20.♘xf6+ ♙xf6

In the case of 20...gxf6? 21.♖xd1 bxc4 22.♙e3 the c4-pawn is too weak.

21.♖xd1 e4 22.cxb5 axb5 23.♘g5 ♘xb4

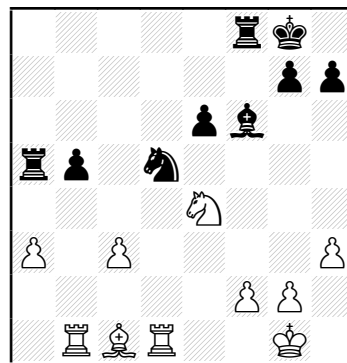
Black breaks the opponent's pawn structure, however, the extra pawn is still on board. Weaker is 23...♙xc3? 24.♖b1 ♙d4 25.♘xe4 with an extra pawn AND good pawn structure.

24.♘xe4 ♘d5 25.♖b1

Correct decision. White has nothing against trading the weaknesses c3 and b5.

25...♖a5

Of course not 25...♘xc3? 26.♘xc3 ♙xc3 27.♖xb5 with good winning chances.



26.♘xf6+!?

White must keep at least one queenside pawn, therefore pointless is 26.♙d2? ♖xa3 27.♖xb5 ♘xc3 28.♙xc3 ♙xc3 29.♖b7 (29.♖d3 ♖a1+; 29.♘xc3 ♖xc3 30.♖b7 ♖c5) 29...♙e5, and although White is a pawn up after 30.♘c5, the position after 30...♖a1 31.♖xa1 ♙xa1 32.♘xe6 ♖e8 is drawish. In the case of 26.♖b3, Shirov was concerned about 26...♙e7 with pressure against the a3-pawn, and Black has good chances to destroy all the opponent's pawns on the queenside.

26...gxf6 27.♖b3 ♖c8 28.♙d2

Interesting is 28.♖d3! and only then ♙c1-d2.

28...♖c4 29.♖db1 ♘c7 30.♖f1 ♖f7 31.♖b4

White is reluctant to make this move without improving his position, but there could be no such opportunity in future.

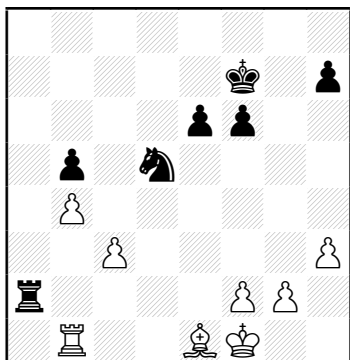
31...♖xb4

The a3-pawn cannot be taken: 31...♖xa3?? 32.♖xc4 bxc4 33.♖b7.

32. axb4 ♖a2 33. ♗e1

The more active 33. ♗e2 ♘d5 34. ♗d3 runs into 34...e5 35. ♖d1 (35.f3 f5) 35...♗e6, and the White's king is insecure, for example, 36.g4 f5 37.gxf5+ ♗xf5, etc.

33...♘d5



Activity of Black's pieces makes White's winning chances problematic.

34. ♖d1

One could first check by 34. ♖c1 whether Black is willing to prevent c3-c4.

34...h5 35. ♖d3 ♖a1 36.g3 f5 37. ♗e2 ♖a2+ 38. ♗d2 ♘b6

38...h4! is very interesting, and Black's strong central pawns secure his adequate counterplay: 39. ♗f3 hxg3 40. ♗xg3 (or 40.fxg3 ♘b6 41. ♗e1 ♘c4) 40...♗g6 or 40...♖a3 with the idea to take on b4.

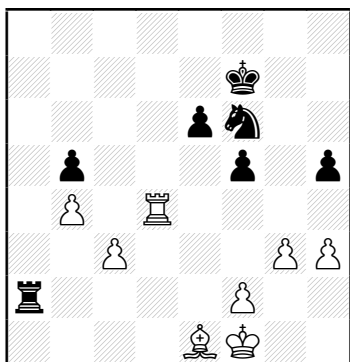
39. ♗f1

In the case of 39. ♗f3?! ♘c4 White must retreat his king: 40. ♗e2.

39...♘d5 40. ♖d4 ♘f6

If Black prevents c3-c4 by 40...♖c2, White can consider 41. ♗e2 followed by ♗e2-d3, although in this case achieving real progress is difficult, too.

41. ♗e1



41...♖c2

On 41...♘d5 Shirov would play 42.c4 bxc4 43. ♖xc4, but maybe Black can hold after 43...♖b2.

42. ♖d8 ♘e4 43. ♖h8 ♗f6 44. ♖xh5

44. ♖h6+!? ♗e5 45. ♖xh5, but 45...♘xc3 46. ♖h8 ♘e2! gives Black decent counterplay. Still, White retains winning chances by 47.h4 ♘d4 48.h5 ♘f3 49.h6 ♖c7! (49...♖c1? 50. ♖e8! ♖xe1+ 51. ♗g2

♘g5?? 52.f4+) 50. ♖e8 ♘xe1 51. ♗xe1 ♖h7 52. ♖b8 ♗d4 53. ♖xb5 ♖xh6 54. ♗e2. The Black's is not hopeless here, too.

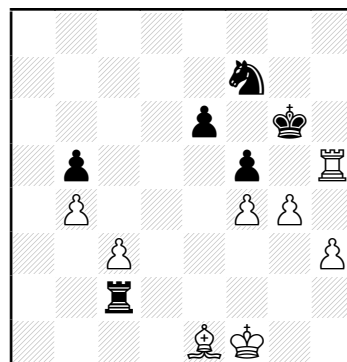
44...♘g5!

A very strong resource that was foreseen by Black – the White's rook gets cut off. In the case of 44...♘xc3 45. ♖h8 ♘e2 46. ♖d8 Black's counterplay is insufficient.

45.f4

White gains nothing by 45. ♗g2 ♖e2 46.h4 ♘f7 47. ♗f1 ♖c2.

45...♘f7 46.g4 ♗g6



The White's rook is completely offside, but Black's king and knight are also immovable. The question is whether White's king and bishop can outplay the Black's rook. The mission seems impossible, as the opponent's rook has a chance to attack the pawns.

47. ♗g1

White gradually improves his position, using zugzwang.

47...♖e2 48. ♗f2 ♖c2

Rejecting 48...♖e4!? 49. ♖h4 (49. ♗g3 ♖c4) 49...♖xf4 50.gxf5+ ♖xf5, and White retains winning chances, although it is not impossible that this position can be held.

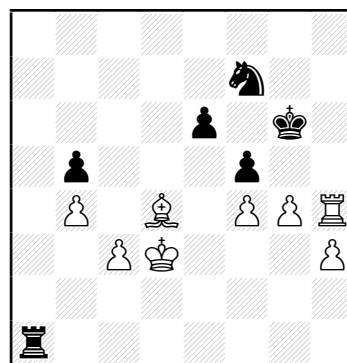
49. ♗d4 ♖e2 50. ♖h4 ♖e4?!

After 50...♖c2!? White can start moving his king on the queenside: 51. ♗f1, etc.

51. ♗g2 ♖e2+

Inconsistent, but Levon did not dare playing the position arising after 51...♖xf4 52.gxf5+ ♖xf5.

52. ♗f3 ♖c2 53. ♗e3 ♖c1 54. ♗d3 ♖a1



55. ♗e5

White is unable to create a passed pawn so far: 55.c4?

Rd1+! However, interesting is **55.♙e3!?**, and it is possible that Black cannot deal with two ideas: breaking to the b5-pawn with the king, and carrying out the c3-c4 break by d2. For example, **55...♘h6** (55...♖e1 56.♙d4) 56.♖h5 ♘f7 57.♙d4 ♖e1 58.♖h4! ♘h6 59.c4! bxc4 60.♙d2! ♖d1 61.♙c3 ♘f7, and now something like **62.g5!?** ♙g7 63.b5!?, although here Black is still kicking.

55...♖d1+

Swapping the bishop is tempting: **55...♘xe5+ 56.fxe5 ♖d1+ 57.♙e2 ♖d5**, however, White has real winning chances after **58.gxf5+ exf5 59.c4 ♖xe5+ 60.♙f3 bxc4** (or **60...♙g5 61.♖d4 bxc4 62.♖xc4 ♖e1** (62...♖d5 63.h4+ ♙h5 64.♙e3) 63.h4+! ♙f6 64.♖c6+ ♙e5 65.h5!, and the h-pawn becomes a threat) **61.♖xc4 ♖e1 62.h4 ♖b1 63.♙e3 ♙f6 64.♙d3!** intending ♙d3-c2 and b4-b5.

56.♙c2 ♖e1 57.♙d4

In the case of **57.♙c7 ♖e4** White is unable to carry out c3-c4 without bringing the bishop to d4, while **57.c4** runs into **57...♖e4!**

57...♖e2+ 58.♙d3 ♖e1 59.♙c5

And again **59.c4?** is met by **59...♖d1+!**

59...♖e4

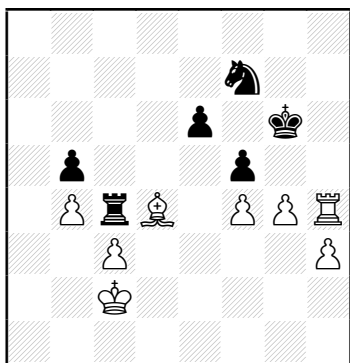
It seems after **59...♖c1** Black was concerned by **60.♙e3**, and White implements the ideas quoted in the note to the 55th move under more favorable circumstances.

60.♙e3

White uses the opportunity to drive the rook away by zugzwang.

60...♖c4 61.♙d4 ♘h6 62.♙d2 ♘f7 63.♙c2

Or **63.♖h5 ♖c8 64.♙c5** immediately.



63...♘h6

As we shall see later, as long as the White's rook is on h4, Black must not retreat his rook from c4!

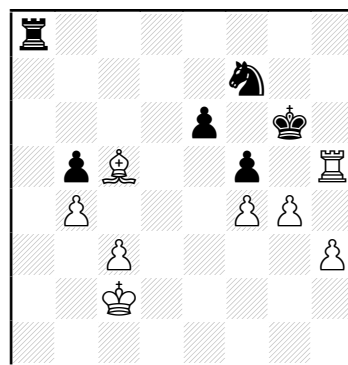
64.♖h5 ♘f7 65.♙b3 ♖c8

Only now this retreat is indeed forced.

66.♙c5 ♖d8 67.♙c2

67.c4? ♖d3+.

67...♖a8



68.♖h4!?

Unfortunately for White, the c3-c4 break cannot be done without concessions: **68.c4!?** bxc4 69.♙c3 ♖a3+ 70.♙xc4 ♖f3, and Black wins the f4-pawn. Nevertheless, after **71.♖h4! ♖xf4+ 72.♙b3** White retains decent winning chances thanks to a strong bishop and an extra passed pawn. Black's hopes are pinned with limited material remaining on board, which gives him a chance to escape to R+B vs. R ending.

68...♖a1!

The only defense! In the case of **68...♖a2+?** 69.♙d3 White breaks through: **69...♖a3** (on **69...e5** there is **70.♙e3**) **70.♙d4 ♖a1 71.♙b6**.

69.g5

This continuation allows White to protect the f4-pawn and restricts the knight, but now **...e6-e5** becomes a lot more effective. However, Alexei was already very short on time, and could not search for alternatives.

69...♖a2+

Black seeks counterchances!

70.♙d3

After **70.♙b3 ♖d2** Black prevents the c-pawn advance.

70...e5! 71.fxe5

There is no sense in allowing **...e5-e4**.

71...♘xe5+ 72.♙e3 ♙xg5 73.♙e7+

Otherwise Black gives perpetual check starting with **...♘e5-c4** etc.

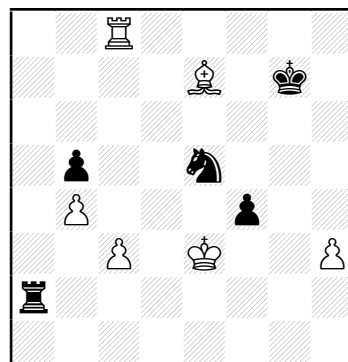
73...♙g6 74.♖h8 ♙g7

Perhaps **74...♘c4+!?** **75.♙d4 ♖e2** is more accurate.

75.♖c8

75.♖h5!? deserves attention, with the idea to meet **75...♙g6** by **76.♖g5+**.

75...f4+



An excellent resource!

76. ♖e4?

This move loses all winning chances. After the correct 76. ♖d4! Black still has to work hard for a draw.

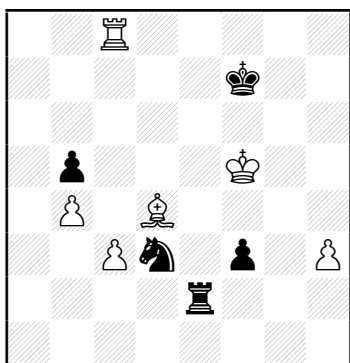
76... ♖e2+ 77. ♗f5 f3

The f-pawn gives Black a draw.

78. ♗c5 ♗d3?

In mutual time trouble both players act inaccurately. More precise is 78... ♗f7 with possible cute line 79. ♗d4+ ♖h7 80. ♗f6!? f2 81. ♗xf7 f1 ♖+ 82. ♗f6 ♖e8! 83. ♖xe8 ♖c4+, drawing, or the simpler 78... ♗g6 79. ♗d4+ ♗f7, etc.

79. ♗d4+ ♗f7



80. ♖b8?

White forces a draw. He still could make Black suffer by 80. ♖c6!, bringing the rook to f6: 80... f2 81. ♖f6+ ♗e7 82. ♗g5.

80... f2 81. ♖b7+ ♖e7 82. ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 83. ♗xf2 ♗xf2

A draw is agreed: White easily trades the only remaining Black's pawn.

Bareev-Leko

Nimzo-Indian Defense

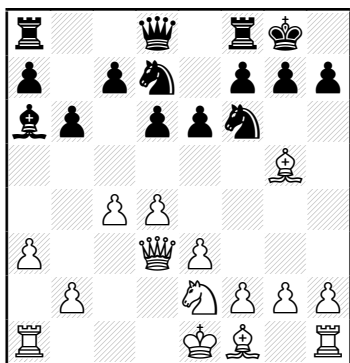
Notes by grandmaster

Yury Yakovich

1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♗b4 4. ♖c2 0-0 5. a3 ♗xc3+ 6. ♖xc3 b6 7. ♗g5 ♗b7 8. e3 d6 9. ♗e2

This continuation recently gained popularity. White moves his knight to c3, where it controls the center well. Naturally, Black has enough time to set up counterplay while White carries out such a time-consuming maneuver.

9... ♗bd7 10. ♖d3 ♗a6



11. ♖c2!?

White attempted to get an advantage in the diagrammed position by 11. ♗c3, but after 11... d5 12. ♖c2 ♗xc4 13. ♗xc4 dxc4 14. ♖a4 c5 Black's problems on the way to equality does not look serious. Considering the match situation and Leko's impeccable technique, Bareev decides to complicate the struggle.

11... ♖c8!?

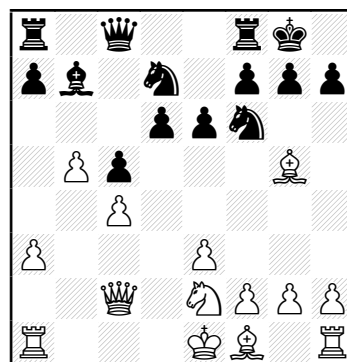
This move was introduced by Lev Psakhis. I like it more than the immediate c7-c5, which gave White a small advantage in Agrest-Korhcnoi (Malmoe 1996) – 12. dxc5 ♗xc5 13. ♗c3. Black is ready for 12... c5, and if 13. dc, then 13... ♖xc5, attacking the g5-bishop and the c4-pawn.

Of course, bad is 11... d5?! in view of 12. cxd5 exd5 13. ♖c6! with White's advantage.

12. b4!?

Ivan Sokolov did not prevent Black's plans against Rasul Ibrahimov (Warsaw 2005) – 12. ♗c3, and after 12... c5 13. ♖d1 cxd4 14. ♖xd4 ♖c5 15. ♗h4 e5! (weaker is 15... d5, played in the actual game, because White has 16. ♖a4) 16. ♖d2 ♖ac8 Black could obtain an easy game.

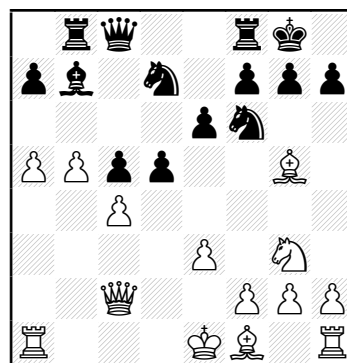
12... c5 13. dxc5 bxc5 14. b5 ♗b7



15. a4!?

Bareev gains space on the queenside at cost of delayed development of the kingside. Naturally, Leko counterattacks in the center.

15... d5 16. a5 ♖b8 17. ♗g3



If White completes development without any positional concessions, his queenside advantage and the bishop pair will influence the outcome of the game decisively, therefore Black acts very energetically.

17...♖c7! 18.♗e2 ♜e5 19.♗xf6 ♘xf6 20.0-0 h5!
21.h4

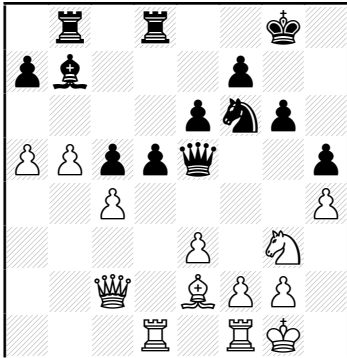
Otherwise the Black's pawn gets to h3, threatening the White's king.

21...♗fd8

On 21...g5?! Bareev planned 22.♖a3!? (22.♘h5 ♗h5 23.♗xh5 gxh4 24.♗f3 is also acceptable) with the idea f2-f4.

22.♗ad1 g6

The match score encourages solid play by Black. 22...♗g4?! allows White to get a comfortable position after 23.♗xg4 hxg4 24.cxd5 ♖xd5 25.♖xd5 ♜xd5 26.e4 ♜e5 27.♗d1.



23.♗f3?!

Allows Black breaking in the center.

After the game Leko suggested the prophylactic 23.♖fe1!? In my opinion, the more concrete 23.cxd5!? is interesting, too. 23...♖xd5 24.♗c4, and now:

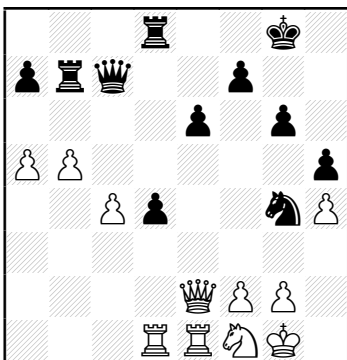
A) 24...♖xd1 25.♖xd1 ♘g4 26.a6 ♗a8 27.♖d7 ♜f6 (or 27...♗xe3 28.fxg3 ♜xg3 29.♜f2 with advantage to White) 28.♖xa7 ♜xh4 29.♗f1;

B) 24...♖dd8 25.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 26.♖c1 ♘g4 27.♗e2 ♗xe3 28.♜xc5, and White possesses the initiative in a complicated game.

23...d4! 24.♗xb7 ♖xb7 25.♖fe1 ♜c7 26.exd4 cxd4 27.♜d3 ♗g4 28.♗f1

Despite being in time trouble, Bareev apparently did not even consider 28.♜e4!? due to the possibility of 28...♗f6 29.♜d3 ♗g4.

28...♗e5 29.♜e2 ♗g4



30.a6?!

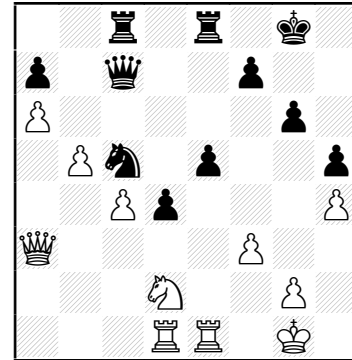
Clearly, such move cannot be explained in chess terms. White improves position of the Black's rook, at

the same time impairing his own pawn structure. However, in the case of 30.♜d3 Black repeats the position by 30...♗e5, which could not satisfy Bareev, trailing in the match by two points.

30...♖bb8 31.♜d3 ♖bc8 32.♗e4 e5

Black is better. His pieces are active, and the pawn chain is movable.

33.f3 ♗f6 34.♖ee1 ♗d7 35.♗d2 ♗c5 36.♜a3 ♖e8



37.♗b3!

Being in a difficult position and under severe time pressure, Bareev decides to transpose to a rook ending without a pawn. If White hesitated for one more move, Black would probably win the game after f7-f5.

37...♗xb3

Now Leko has no time for 37...f5? due to 38.♜xc5 ♜xc5 39.♗xc5 ♖xc5 40.♖xd4.

38.♜xb3 ♜xc4

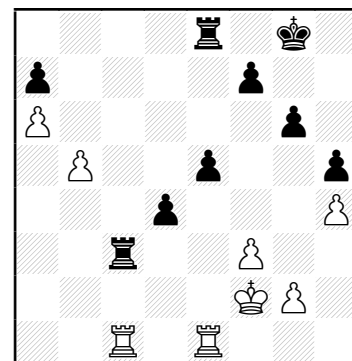
One could continue the game with even material by 38...♜c5!? followed by advancing the central pawns, but the rook ending also offers Black decent winning chances.

39.♜xc4 ♖xc4 40.♖c1 ♖c3!

Weaker is 40...♖b4 due to 41.♖c5 f6 42.♖c7.

41.♗f2

The only move. 41.♖xc3? loses to 41...dxc3 42.♖c1 ♖c8 43.♗f2 ♗g7 44.♗e3 ♖c5.



41...♖ec8?!

This natural move played by Leko after the time control is a serious mistake. Black leaves the e5-pawn unprotected, and full control of the c-file does not bring him anything. The prophylactic 41...♗g7! creates more difficult problems for White. How he should react?

42.♗e2 is bad because of 42...♖b8. On 42.♖a1 Black

has both 42...♖e6 43.♗ec1 ♖b6, and 42...♗c2+.

Let us consider the forced play after 42.♗xc3 dxc3 43.♗c1 (or 43.♕e2 ♖b8 44.♕d3 ♖xb5, etc.) 43...♗c8 44.♕e3 (44.♕e2!? does not save in view of 44...♗c5 45.b6 axb6 46.♗a1 c2! 47.a7 ♗a5! 48.♗xa5 c1♗ 49.a8♗ ♗c2+ 50.♕e3 ♗c3+, and the queen ending is won easily) 44...♗c5 45.♕e4 (or 45.b6 axb6 46.a7 (46.♗a1 c2 47.a7 ♗a5 48.♗xa5 c1♗+) 46...♗a5 47.♗xc3 ♗xa7 with decisive advantage) 45...♕f6 46.b6 axb6 47.a7 ♗c4+ 48.♕e3 ♗a4 49.♗xc3 ♗xa7 50.♗c6+ ♕f5 51.♗xb6. White managed to obtain a rook ending with 3 pawns against 4 on the same flank, but Black's piece activity allows him to win: 51...♗a2 52.g3 ♗g2 53.♗b4 f6! (there is still a chance to lose the game: 53...♗xg3?? 54.♕f2 ♗h3 55.♕g2) 54.♗a4 g5!, and Black wins a second pawn and the game.

So, it is difficult to find an adequate reply to 41...♕g7!, which means Leko had real winning chances in that line.

42.♗a1!

Apparently, Leko overlooked this possibility. Now White carries out the b5-b6 break, and his strong a-pawn secures a draw.

42...♗c2+ 43.♕g3 ♗2c5 44.♗eb1 ♕g7

Or 44...♖b8 45.b6 axb6 46.a7, etc.

45.b6 axb6 46.♗xb6 ♗5c7 47.♗d6

Black is unable to make progress.

47...♗c1 48.♗a5 ♗8c5 49.♗a4 ♗1c4 50.♗a1 ♗c1

51.♗a4 ♗1c4 52.♗a1 ♗c1

Game drawn.

Rublevsky-Grischuk

Scotch Game

Notes by grandmaster

Yury Yakovich

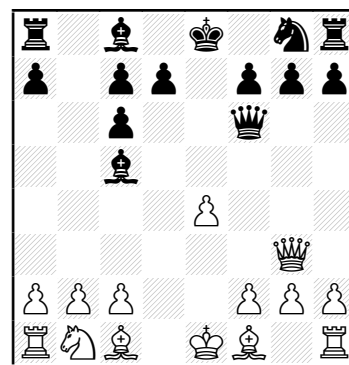
1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♗xd4 ♗c5

The Scotch Game is on agenda again, but this time Rublevsky prefers **5.♗xc6!?**, because 5.♗e3 did not give him a slightest advantage in the second game of the match.

5...♗f6 6.♗f3 bxc6

Although recently Black succeeded holding the ending arising after 6...♗xf3 7.gxf3 bxc6 8.♗e3 ♗xe3 9.fxe3 ♗e7 10.♗c3, such course of struggle is clearly in White's favor. Maybe this is why Grischuk decides to remain in the middlegame.

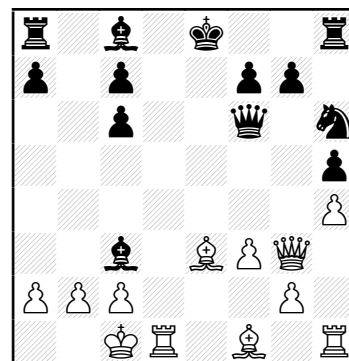
7.♗g3



7...h5!?

The idea of Evgeny Najer, which brought him success against Ni Hua (Ergun 2006).

8.h4 ♗h6 9.f3 d5 10.♗c3 ♗b4 11.♗d2 dxe4 12.0-0 e3 13.♗xe3 ♗xc3



14.bxc3

Surprise! Rublevsky keeps following Ni Hua, although this year in Poikovsky he played 14.♗g5!? and quickly defeated Tkachiev after 14...♗xb2+ 15.♕b1 ♗e6 16.♗xf6 ♗xf6 17.♗e1 ♖b8+ 18.♕c1 ♗f5 19.♗xc7 0-0 20.♗xe6 fxe6 21.♗c4 ♗b2+ 22.♕d2 ♖bd8+ 23.♗d3 ♗f6 24.♗xc6 ♗d6 25.♗e4 ♗c8 26.g4 ♗d4 27.g5 ♗e5 28.f4. Probably Sergey and Alexander both found an improvement for Black.

Here Grischuk fell into lengthy thought, and finally played **14...0-0?**

An unsuccessful novelty. Maybe Grischuk analyzed only 14.♗g5, and did not pay sufficient attention to the alternatives. Or maybe Alexander found holes in his home analysis, and deviated from it, but the resulting position turned out to be clearly in White's favor. 14...♗xc3?? loses immediately to 15.♗d4. I think we will not find out the reason why Grischuk rejected Najer's 14...♗f5 until the end of the match. After 15.♗g5 ♗xe3 16.♗xe3+ ♗e7 17.♗xe7+ ♕xe7 18.♗c4 ♗e6 Evgeny gradually equalized the game, and won the endgame after the opponent's inaccuracy.

15.♗g5!

On 15.♗d4?! Black plays 15...♗f5!

15...♗f5

The lesser of evils. 15...♗xc3?? loses to 16.♗d4, and 15...♗xg5 16.hxg5 ♗f5 17.♗f4 is also bad for Black.

16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♗f4

White has a big and possibly decisive advantage in the endgame due to his better pawn structure and the bishop pair.

17...♙e6 18.♙a6

Of course, Rublevsky does not allow Black proceeding to an endgame with opposite-colored bishops by 18.♙xc7?! ♞e3.

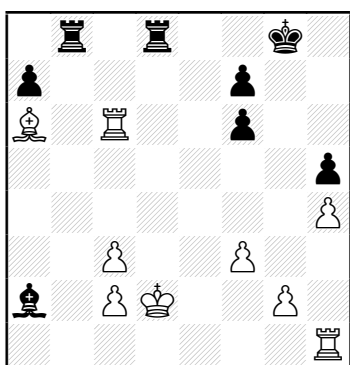
18...♞d6

Grischuk gives up a pawn to get rid of the White's dark-squared bishop. After 18...♙xa2 19.♙xc7 the bishops control the entire board, and Rublevsky has a pleasant choice of either targeting the weak pawns or opening the files on the kingside by g2-g4.

19.♙xd6 cxd6 20.♞xd6 ♞ab8

On 20...♙xa2 White plays 21.♞xc6, but not 21.c4?? ♞fb8 22.♙d2 ♞b6, and Black wins!

21.♞xc6 ♙xa2 22.♙d2 ♞fd8+



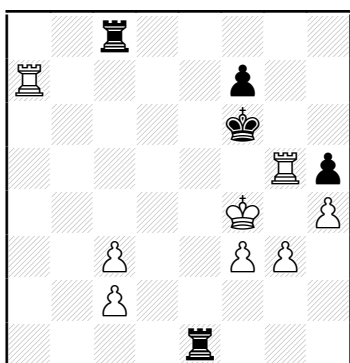
23.♙d3

White is a pawn up, has better pawn structure and active pieces. His position is won easily.

23...♙e6 24.♞a1 ♞d7 25.♞c5! f5 26.♙e3

The king goes to g5.

26...♞e7 27.♙f4 ♞b2 28.g3 ♙g7 29.♙g5 ♞d7 30.♞a3 ♞b1 31.♞ca5 ♞e1 32.♞xa7 ♞d8 33.♞a1 ♞e5 34.♞1a5 ♞e1 35.♙xf5 ♙d5 36.♙f4 ♞f1 37.♙e4 ♙xe4 38.♙xe4 ♞e1+ 39.♙f4 ♞c8 40.♞g5+ ♙f6



The time control is passed. Grischuk keeps resisting only by inertia.

41.♞a6+ ♙e7 42.♞e5+

42.♞f5 wins quicker, but the text-move is also sufficient.

42...♞xe5 43.♙xe5 ♞xc3 44.♙e4 ♞xc2 45.♞a5

White obtains two connected passed pawns.

45...♞c4+ 46.♙d3 ♞c1 47.♞xh5 ♞g1 48.g4 ♞h1 49.♞e5+ ♙f6 50.♞f5+ ♙g7 51.h5 ♞e1 52.♞f4 ♞a1 53.♙e3 ♞a3+ 54.♙f2 ♞a2+ 55.♙g3 ♞a1 56.♞f5 ♞h1 57.♙f4 ♞h3 58.♙g5 ♞h1 59.f4 ♞h2 60.♞d5 ♞a2 61.h6+ ♙g8 62.♞d8+ ♙h7 63.♞d7 ♙g8 64.h7+ ♙h8 65.♞xf7 ♞a7 66.♞f8+ Black resigns

Gelfand-Kamsky

Slav Defense

Notes by grandmaster

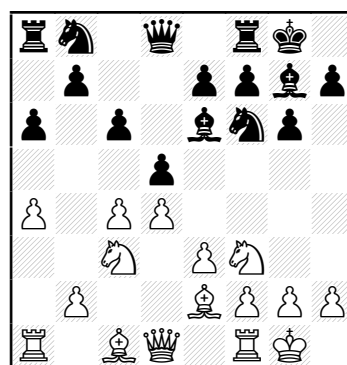
Ruslan Scherbakov

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♞c3 ♞f6 4.♞f3 a6 5.e3 g6 6.♙e2 ♙g7 7.0-0 0-0

From the Chebaneko System the game transposes to the Schlechter Variation, in which ...♙c8-g4 is more popular than ...a6.

8.a4 ♙e6

Gata had played 8...♙g4 more frequently, but it seems he was not satisfied with the results. For example, Bacrot-Kamsky (Turin (ol) 2006): 9.♞b3 ♞a7 10.h3 dxc4 11.♞xc4 ♙f5 12.♞g5 b5 13.♞b3 h6 14.e4 ♙c8 15.♞f3 with a clear advantage to White.



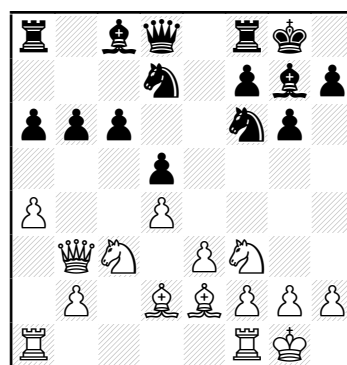
9.♞g5!?

This unexpected knight thrust is a novelty. The idea behind it is logical – White suggests Black to waste time on some useless move like ...h7-h6.

9...♙c8 10.♞b3 b6 11.♙d2 e6 12.♞f3

Consequently, Black failed to develop the c8-bishop. White arranged his pieces well and has an undisputed advantage.

12...♞bd7 13.cxd5 exd5



Perhaps 13...cxd5 is safer, but Black did not want to play it after the knight that in this case belongs to c6 was developed to d7.

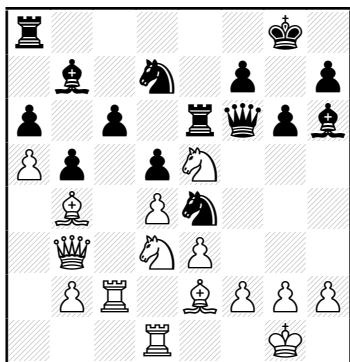
14.a5!

Right on time - White creates his opponent some queenside weaknesses.

14...b5 15.f3 16.g4 17.h4 18.g5

Of course 16...xa5? 17.gxd5 18.gd8 19.gb4 cannot satisfy Black. Maybe he could try to sac a pawn: 16...c5!? 17.gxd5 c4 18.gxf6+ 19.gxf6 19.gxa3 20.g6 with activity.

17.g2 18.g3 19.g4 20.g5 21.g6 22.g7 23.g8



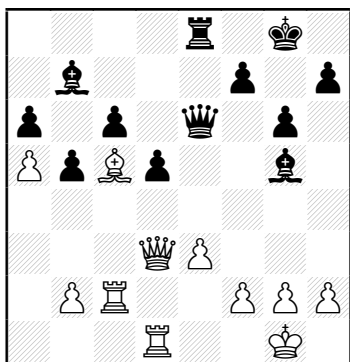
22...gxe5 23.dxe5 24.gxe5!

Black had almost no choice. In the case of 23...g4 24.g3 25.gd8 26.f4 White would eventually break in the center.

24.gxe5 25.gxe5

Black has no compensation for the sacrificed exchange, because his position contains weaknesses.

25.gf3 26.g8 27.gxe4 28.gxe4 29.gc5 30.g5 31.gd3 32.g6



Normally trading major pieces in not recommended for the player without an exchange, but perhaps 28...gxd3 29.gxd3 f5 is more tenacious. In this case Black can use his king in defense, and White has problems breaking through.

29.gd4?!

Having achieved a serious advantage, Gelfand plays indecisively. A more concrete plan deserved attention: 29.g4! h5 30.gd4 31.g7 32.gc3, intending 33.gd3-d4. Trading the dark-squared bishops is equal to resignation for Black, but avoiding it without additional concessions is impossible.

29...g7 30.gdc1 h5 31.gd2 32.g6 33.g4 f6!

Neutralizing White's anticipated battery on the a1-h8 diagonal, which would be difficult with the queen still on d3.

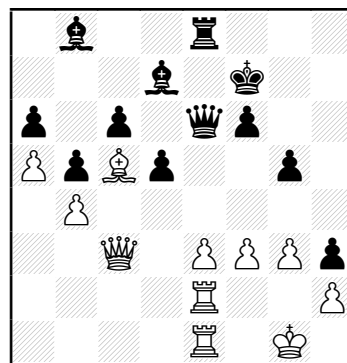
33.gd3 34.g7 35.g5 36.g8 37.f3

Now White prepares the only possible break - e3-e4, however, Black made considerable progress.

35...g8 36.g2 h4 37.g3 h3?!

This is logical - Black attempts to draw the opponent's attention to possible threats on g2. However, White's material advantage is still convertible with perfect play. More tenacious is 37...g5!?, forcing the queen trade.

38.g3 39.g7 40.gce1 g5



40.e4?

A rushy control move! The preliminary 40.gd3! would make the break decisive: 40...f5 (or 40...g7 41.e4) 41.e4 dxe4 42.fxe4 f4 43.e5! 44.g7 44.gxf4 45.g4+ (44...gxf4 45.gf2) 45.g3, and White advanced the e-pawn while the opponent's bishops are restricted.

40...dxe4 41.gxe4 42.g2!

Black uses the opponent's mistake for creating counterchances. This move is impossible with the White's queen standing on d3.

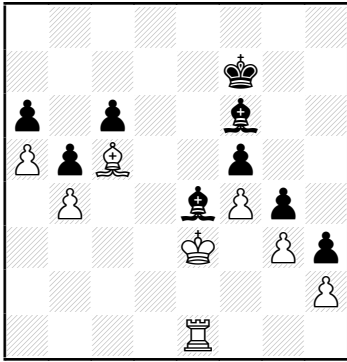
42.g1e2

White must show some alertness. The careless 42.gf2? 43.gxe4 44.gxe4 runs into the unexpected 43...g3!, and the game ends in a draw after 44.hxg3 h2+ 45.g2 h1g+ 46.gxh1 47.gxf2 etc., while after 42.g7+ 43.gxe7 44.gxe7+ 45.g6 46.gd3+ (44.gf2?! 45.g3! 46.hxg3 h2+ 47.g2 48.g3+ 49.gxh2 50.gxf2+ 51.gxh3 52.gf1+ with perpetual) 44...g5 45.g2 53.gb1+ 46.gf1 54.gc2 making progress is very hard for White.

42...gb1+ 43.g1e1 44.g1e2 45.g2 46.g1e1 47.gxe1 48.g6

Now breaking into the Black's camp becomes nearly impossible.

47.gf2 f5 48.g4e2 49.g7 49.gd2 50.gd8 Trading rooks is okay for Black. 50.gxd8 51.gxd8 52.gd1 53.g5 54.g3 55.gf6 56.g1e1 57.g4



55. ♖d4 is of course responded by 55... ♗e7. Game drawn.