

Round 2. Game 6.
12 June 2007

Shirov-Aronian

Ruy Lopez

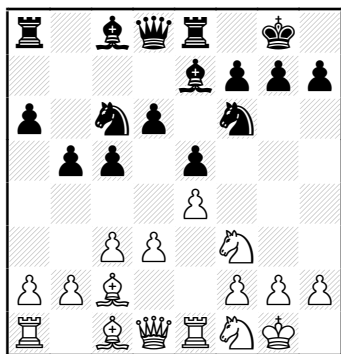
Notes by grandmaster

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.d3

Shirov, as usual, avoids complications of the Marshall Attack. At present time, White fails to show any advantage in that variation. In the previous White game, Alexei preferred another scheme: 8.h3 ♙b7 9.d3 d6 10.a3 ♘a5 11.♙a2 c5 12.♘bd2 ♘c6 13.♘f1, then Levon neutralized the opponent's light-squared bishop by 13...♙c8 14.c3 ♙e6 with a good game.

8...d6 9.c3 ♘a5 10.♙c2 c5 11.♘bd2 ♘c6 12.♘f1
♖e8



13.a3

Other known continuations do not alter much the character of the struggle.

13...h6 14.b4

The plan of playing on the queenside does not seem promising. Michael Adams, Shirov's opponent in the first match, handled this position as follows: 14.♘e3 ♙f8 15.♙b3 ♖b8 (15...♙e6!? looks more logical, Bologan-David, Dijon 1994) 16.h3 ♙e6 17.♙xe6 ♖xe6 (normally Aronian takes with the pawn) 18.♘d5 with a minimal advantage, but the Black's position here is very solid, Adams-van der Sterren, GER-chT 1995).

14...♙e6

A new move. Previously Black retreated with the bishop – 14...♙f8, intending to meet 15.d4 by 15...cxd4 16.cxd4 ♙g4 with a good game, as in Kokkila-Viljava (Finland 1991), but Alexei is not in a rush to push the central pawn.

15.♘g3

In the case of 15.d4 Black has 15...exd4 16.cxd4 cxd4, and now 17.♘xd4?! leads White to difficulties after 17...♘xd4 18.♙xd4 ♘g4 with initiative.

15...d5

As a result of rather cautious handling of the opening,

Black becomes first to start the central action.

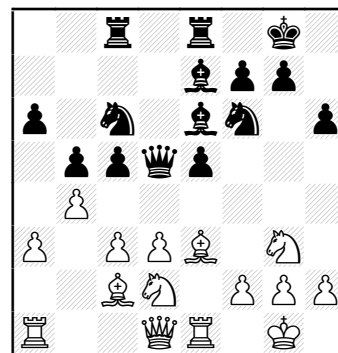
16.exd5 ♙xd5!?

16...♘d5 is also possible. Black could be worried about 17.d4!?, however after 17...cxd4 18.cxd4 (18.♙d3 ♘f6) 18...♘xd4 19.♘xd4 exd4 20.♙d3 ♘f6 21.♘h5 ♙d6 22.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 he holds the position. Yet, the text-move is safer.

17.♙e3 ♖ac8

Interesting is 17...a5!?, but Aronian prefers to strengthen his position.

18.♘d2



18...♘b8!

An excellent maneuver – the knight is heading to d7, protecting the only weakness in the Black's camp. After that White has no objects of attack.

19.♘ge4 ♘bd7 20.♙b3

Otherwise White cannot express any activity. On 20.♙f3 Black calmly continues 20...♘xe4 (20...♙c6!?) 21.dxe4 ♙c6.

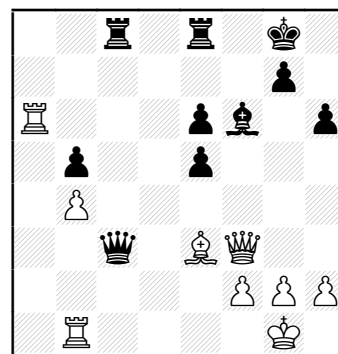
20...♙xd3 21.♙xe6 fxe6 22.♙f3

White managed to create a couple of weak pawns in the opponent's camp, however, one of those pawns is an extra pawn!

22...cxb4

Black simplifies the position, and White cannot do anything about it.

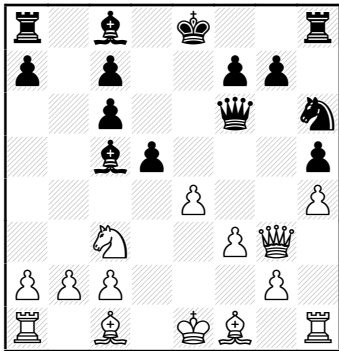
**23.axb4 ♘xe4 24.♘xe4 ♘f6 25.♘xf6+ ♙xf6
26.♖xa6 ♙xc3 27.♖b1**



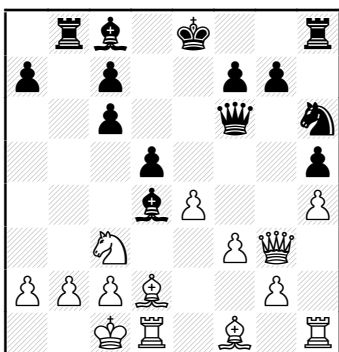
Only Black can play for a win after 27...♖c4. Therefore, Shirov offered a draw, and Aronian accepted and proceeded to the World Championship in Mexico.

Rublevsky-Grischuk
 Scotch Game
Notes by grandmaster
 Yury Yakovich

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♗xd4
 Continuing the Scotch Game discussion.
 4...♙c5 5.♗xc6!? ♖f6 6.♖f3 bxc6 7.♖g3 h5!?
 Despite losing the Game 4, Grischuk again selects the same line.
 8.h4 ♗h6 9.f3 d5 10.♗c3



10...♗d4!
 Here comes the improvement! In the Game 4, Alexander played 10...♗b4, but after 11.♗d2 dxe4 12.0-0-0 e3 13.♗xe3 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 0-0? 15.♖g5! Rublevsky won convincingly.
 11.♗d2 ♖b8
 Unlike the Game 4, the rook can attack on the b-file.
 12.0-0-0



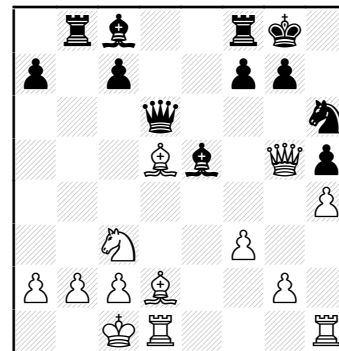
12...♗e5!
 Of course, not 12...dxe4? in view of 13.♗g5, winning. The bishop's pirouette makes a strong impression. In the case of 13.f4?! the bishop returns to d4 - 13...♗d4,

and Black obtains the g4- and f5-squares (the latter is achieved by trading on e4), which increases his chances to develop harmoniously and being the attack. Therefore, Rublevsky wants to proceed to an endgame, in which Black's pawn weaknesses can tell.

13.♖g5 ♖d6!
 Black wants to castle and then attack the king by either ♖b4 or (if the situation is right) by sacrificing a rook on b2. Here 13...dxe4?! is dubious in view of 14.♖e1! ♗f5 (now after 14...0-0 the White's rook is very well placed on e4 - 15.♖xe4, and 15...♗f5? is bad due to 16.♖xe5! ♖xe5 17.g4 f6 18.♗c4+) 15.♗xe4!? ♗xb2+ 16.♗d1 with initiative.

14.exd5
 Not trying to win a pawn, but intending to secure a route for the bishop (via c4 to b3).

14...0-0
 14...cxd5?? loses in view of 15.♖e1! f6 16.♖xg7. 14...♖xb2? does not work yet: 15.♖e1! ♗f5 16.♖xe5+ ♖xe5 17.♗xb2.
 15.♗c4 cxd5 16.♗xd5



So far Grischuk handles the game very well. Now he faces a difficult choice: either to finish the game in a draw by perpetual, or sacrifice an exchange and obtain strong initiative in a position that is difficult to assess.

16...♖xd5
 A pity! As chess lover and chess professional I'd very much to see 16...♖xb2! 17.♗xb2 ♖xd5. The bishop must be attacked, otherwise Black plays 18...♗e6 with a devastating attack. Therefore, 18.♖he1. Bad is 18.f4? in view of 18...♖b7+ 19.♗c1 (or 19.♗a1 ♗f6) 19...f6 20.♖g3 ♗d6. 18.♖de1 leads to similar lines.

18...♗f5!
 18...♗f5 leads to an unclear game: 19.♗c1 ♖d6 20.♖xe5 ♖xe5 21.♖e1. The Black knight is out of play, so it may be difficult for Black to use insecure position of the White king.

19.♖xe5!
 19.g4? loses spectacularly to 19...♖b7+ 20.♗c1 (or 20.♗a1 ♗d4! 21.♖c1 f6 22.♖g6 ♗f5! 23.gxf5 ♖b8 wins) 20...f6 21.♖g6 ♗d6 22.♗b1 ♖xf3! 23.gxf5? ♗xf5 24.♖g1 ♗a3+ 25.♗xa3 ♖xa3+ 26.♗b1 ♖b8+

27. ♔a1 ♚b2#.

19... ♜xe5 20.g4

Dubious is 20. ♜xh5?! in view of 20... ♙e6 21. ♔a1 (and again White has an opportunity to lose spectacularly after 21.g4? ♜b8+ 22. ♔a1 ♞e3! 23. ♖c1 ♜d6! 24. ♙xe3 ♜a3) 21... ♖d8 with dangerous initiative to Black.

20... hxg4 21. fxg4 f6 22. ♜f4!?

After 22. ♜h5 ♞d4 23. ♜xe5 fxe5 it is hard for White to defend against the rook invasion to the second rank.

22... ♞xh4 (now 22... ♞d4!? can be met by 23.g5 with an unclear game) 23.g5!?, and White retains drawing chances.

My conclusion is that the exchange sacrifice could give Black decent winning chances. Rublevsky would have to find several accurate defensive moves. However, Grischuk's choice is easy to understand – he did not want to gamble with his chance of playing in Mexico.

17. ♞xd5 ♙xb2+ 18. ♚b1 ♙c3+ 19. ♚c1 ♙b2+ 20. ♚b1 ♙c3+

Draw.