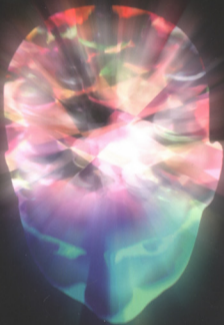


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inside the chess mind



how players
of all levels
think about the game

EVERYMAN CHESS JACOB AAGAARD

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has ever been done before. It has. The Dutch psychologist and chess fan Adriaan de Groot tested a lot of top chess players in the late 30's and early 40's (the decades, not the age groups). This led to different conclusions, which it is logical to relate to.

But then we are already at the second consideration. What kind of book would I like to write, and with that comes: what kind of book would I personally have liked to read, had I not disposed of my last name in favour of my middle name at the age of 12 (which would have meant that someone else would have been asked to write the book). I quickly came to the conclusion that a scientifically-oriented book was not really something that interested me. What fascinated me about this project was the diversity I expected in the tests, originating from the test subjects' different personalities, age, idiosyncrasies and backgrounds. This is what I have tried to bring into the book by quoting the players as precisely as possible while still making sense; i.e. avoiding redundancy and less coherent talking or, in other words, changing spoken language into written language.

Still, though this book should be seen mostly as an empirical study – where the author has allowed the material to take its own form, and found himself messed up and confused as a twelve-year-old boy in a nudist colony – there has been some room for basic questions and conclusions along the way. The main conclusion is the limitation of the experiment as such. It almost instantly became obvious to me that the selection of exercises could have been cleverer and more rounded. Also, that in order to make any conclusions of scientific value, more tests would have been needed. Probably the best way would have been to do the tests at least three times (though maybe with different exercises from time to time), allowing the possibility of reshaping the tests based on the conclusions of the first set of results. For practical reasons this was not possible, mainly because it was hard to summon the guts to ask people like Peter Heine Nielsen and Artur Yusupov to participate even once in the testing. Asking them to participate almost regularly would simply have been impossible – and indecent.

Another important conclusion was that performance in the tests would never fully correspond with the actual playing strength of the different participants. (This goes beyond the obvious diversity of form on the day.) Practical use of and knowledge about opening theory does not play a great part in the testing (mainly because, as an author of many opening books, the subject has a tendency to be represented enough in my writing already); neither does the ability to see simple tactics, nor the psychological aspect of the game; minor piece endings and pawn endings are not represented; chaotic positions are simply absent; closed positions also did not get a fair representation here (mainly because I had decided to give a solution to all exercises and would not have been able to write anything decent about a closed position). That every position has a final solution is both a strength and a weakness. It is certainly a strength for the book as a reading experience, but it does influence the comparative value of the exercises, as this greatly favours the logical player over the intuitive player (Peter Heine Nielsen vs. Artur Yusupov could be mentioned).

What is very important for me to stress – Silence now. Shut that book and listen. Hey! Open it again, I was just kidding – is that the exercises are not meant to be competitive in any way. To judge the performance of Peter Heine Nielsen against Yusupov, or Skovgaard against Skovgaard is not really interesting, as it would in no way reflect how these people would do in a real over-the-board game. The strength of a player in a fluent situation is not the same as that of the test room. The positions will naturally appeal more to some than others, and concentration level will not be that of the tournament hall for everyone. Talking into a microphone might decrease the abilities of one and increase the ability of another.

What *is* interesting is to examine the thought process itself, and try to judge when it is successful and when it is unsuccessful, and why. Not that there will be an answer on how best to think, or a certain algorithm to follow. There simply cannot be, as there is no single answer. But with all its imperfections and reservations, this is a book about chess as the sport of the mind. It is a deep study of ten positions of different origin and character, and an insight into what different chess players of different strength have thought about them. This can be used as infotainment or even as a mirror to the reader, who is of course invited to do the exercises himself.

Rather than giving answers, this book sets out to pose questions. Rather than to teach and preach a truth, this book is intelligent. Rather than being scientific or instructional, this book wants to inspire and communicate. Chess is a game of beautiful complexity, evolved to give the most possible meaning to our many-sided imagination, as well as the greatest possible challenge to our minds. Chess thinking is the essence of chess as an art and as a competitive sport. It is where we can be rewarded for our attempts to grasp the depth of this artistic combinatorial mathematics with moments of clarity and revelation.

This book is dedicated in great gratitude to its heroes: the people who were brave enough to open up their minds for the rest of us to gain some insight into the diversity of chess thinking.

Jacob Aagaard,
Copenhagen,
May 2004.

CHAPTER ONE

The Test Positions

The following ten positions will be discussed for the next 150 pages of this book by chess players at all levels. But first you have the chance to compare your own findings with those of GMs Peter Heine Nielsen and Artur Yusupov, as well as those of IM Jesper Hall, Dr. Ivo Timmermans, *Finix 8* t15, and several other really nice and smart people who play chess at different levels and who were kind enough to help me with this little project.

The best method would probably be to try to solve the exercises in exactly the same fashion as they did. In order to do this you need to have a tape recorder or recordable minidisk, or just a microphone inserted into a computer. In case the reality check is of less importance to you, you can of course jot down candidate moves and the most important main lines on a piece of paper. Only for Test Position 2 you need to have opposition of some kind: either a friend who can use the comments in this book to play the strongest reply to almost any move you can come up with, or maybe more realistically, by playing the position

against a strong chess-playing program such as *Finix 8*. Here the computer should be given at least 10 seconds to come up with an answer, but not much more than that. That is if your computer has 256 Mb RAM and a processor of at least 1000 MHz. If your computer is slower, then give it more time. If you do not own a computer you can try the old trick with a piece of paper and the solutions.

I would recommend that you do all the tests before proceeding with the book, as did the subjects, though the order in which you do them is completely irrelevant. This will give a more continuous thought process: you will be concentrated and not starting from scratch each time. To complete the test will take somewhere around three hours all in all. The main reasons for doing these exercises as a reader is that, if you have not faced these positions with uncertainty yourself, it will be very difficult to associate with the challenges and difficulties of the participants in this experiment. The danger is that you will then find it less valuable to go through their

differently structured thought processes. The second best option is that you look at the positions and then follow the thought processes of the participants in order to learn more about the position as you go along. In both cases it is *highly important that you refrain from looking at the solutions to the different exercises* before you actually get to that part of the book. The eyes that see do structure the world, just as far as the world exists and is thereby within the structures we see.

Imagine that you do not know the rules of chess and then try to look at the board without seeing possible moves, but only chunks of wood. It should not be possible. Or that you do not see possible captures. You cannot unlearn the rules of

chess or forget how to take a piece. Equally, only with the assistance of time would you be able to forget the solutions, and be able to meet the positions anew. But it would be strange to go through the solutions to the 10 exercises and then put the book away in a drawer for three years before you continue reading it.

So why not forget about looking at the solutions for now, and take a trip into the unknown together with these wonderful and intelligent and highly different people, who have been so kind as to look at these exercises and share their thought processes, well aware of the mistakes they were bound to commit.

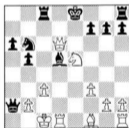
Without further ado, let us turn to the different positions.

Test Position 1



White to move. Take 5 minutes to find the strongest continuation, talking into a microphone or writing down your thoughts afterwards.

Test Position 2



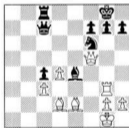
White to move. Take 30 minutes and play the white position as if it was a game and you had 30 minutes to the end of the game. This can be done against a friend who is finding the relevant replies in this book, or against a computer chess-playing program like *Fritz*.

Test Position 3



White to play. Take 7 minutes to find the strongest continuation, talking into a microphone or writing down your thoughts afterwards.

Test Position 4



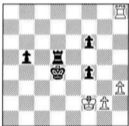
White to move. Take 10 minutes to find the strongest continuation, talking into a microphone or writing down your thoughts afterwards.

Test Position 5



Black to move. Take 6 minutes to find the strongest continuation, talking into a microphone or writing down your thoughts afterwards.

Test Position 6



White to move. Take 8 minutes to find the strongest continuation, talking into a microphone or writing down your thoughts afterwards.

Test Position 7



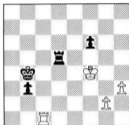
White to move. Take 5 minutes to find the strongest continuation, talking into a microphone or writing down your thoughts afterwards.

Test Position 8



Black to move. Take 12 minutes to find the strongest continuation, talking into a microphone or writing down your thoughts afterwards.

Test Position 9



Black to move. Take 10 minutes to find the strongest continuation, talking into a microphone or writing down your thoughts afterwards.

Test Position 10



White to move. Find the strongest continuation. Do this talking to a microphone or taking notes on a piece of paper at timely intervals. Take the time you find necessary and write it down too.

CHAPTER TWO

The Participants

Grandmaster Artur Yusupov

Artur is originally from Moscow, but now lives with his wife and his two children, a 12-year-old girl and a 10-year-old boy, in Weissenhorn in southern Germany. He considers his greatest achievement in life to be becoming a father to his children, but in chess reaching the semi-final of the candidates tournament on three separate occasions. His best world ranking was 3rd, in 1986, after Kasparov and Karpov.

He used to be a professional chess player, but these days he calls himself a professional trainer – probably!

At the age of 43 he has an Elo rating of 2589 and is ranked 7th in Germany and 142 in the world (as of January 1st 2004). According to this author, this is mainly due to his peaceful nature and lowered ambitions; Yusupov is still a very strong player.

During the testing Yusupov was calm and focused, scratching his legendary big red beard, mumbling out phrases in English, often with Russian syntax. His attitude towards the test was generally very relaxed and full of adventure. 'I no

longer consider myself a professional player,' he would say. 'I no longer do any training and I am no longer in top shape.' To the fact that he had recently departed from FIDE's top 100 list, he exclaimed: 'What a relief! Now I no longer have to worry about such silly things as rating.'

Testing Yusupov was a very pleasant experience, except for a most unfortunate feature: during the fourth test position the microphone broke. The failure to the microphone was minor, but sufficient to ruin the taping. This was only discovered some days after the test had finished and the poor writer had few choices at his disposal:

One was to completely disregard the participation of this, the most famous of participants. Definitely not fair to the readers, though it would save the author's face.

Another was to rearrange the test, hypnotise the German grandmaster and make him lose all recollection of the positions and do the test all over. Unfortunately the writer did not possess the abilities required for this Harry Potter

solution, nor the owl-number of Harry Potter himself. So he was left with:

The third and only option. When the mistake was discovered the writer had a complete fit and threw his laptop out the window. A few minutes down the line, when no improvement to the situation had been detected, the writer did the only possible thing. He sat down and reconstructed Yusupov's answers and thoughts to the best of his ability. The writer of this book would like to express his deepest regrets to the readers for the absence of a complete account of the testing of Grandmaster Yusupov. I hope that the book will not lose greatly in overall value from this obvious flaw.

On the way I would like to thank God for yet another sublime lesson in humility. If you continue this way I am sure very small things are in store for me indeed.

The game I have chosen to present Yusupov is one he himself considered to be his best ever.

Yusupov-Sokolov

Moscow Championships 1988

Catalan Opening

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♗g2 dxc4 5 ♖f3 c5 6 0-0 ♖c6 7 ♗e5 ♗d7

Sokolov played this line all the time against the Catalan in the 80's.

8 ♖xc4!?

Not the main choice at the time; 8 ♖a3 was more mainstream.

8...cxd4 9 ♗f4 ♖d5 10 ♖d6+ ♗xd6 11 ♗xd6 ♖de7 12 ♖d2 0-0 13 ♗b3 ♗c8

A new move at the time.

14 ♖c4 ♗e8

In *Informant 46* Yusupov gives 14...♖a5 15 ♗xc7 ♖xb3 16 ♗xd8 ♖xa1 17 ♗c7 as clearly better for White, but after 17...♖c2 this is not so clear, as White cannot play 18 ♗c1?? because of 18...d3! and Black is much better. After 18 ♖d6 White would still keep the advantage though.

15 ♗fd1 ♖f5 16 ♗c5 e5

Black is trying to cling on to the extra pawn – his excuse for giving away the two bishops.

16...♗f6 is brutally met by 17 g4! ♖h4 18 ♗xc6! and Black is very weak on the dark squares and might be about to lose material.



17 e4!

A wonderful positional decision. Black is allowed to have a passed pawn, but White has the initiative and the two bishops, and therefore also the advantage.

17...♖fe7

The alternative was 17...♖h6 18 ♖d6 ♗c6 19 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 20 ♗h3 ♖a5 21 ♗d5 and White wins the exchange. The endgame is only slightly better for him, but in practice this might prove to be

torture for Black.

18 ♖d6 ♚f8 **19** ♖xb7

This is not about winning a pawn, as it does not do so, but about eliminating the black bishop.

19... ♗xb7

19... ♗c7? was probably better here.

20 ♗xb7 ♚b8



21 ♗a6!

After 21 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 22 ♗xa7 Yusupov gives 22... ♗d6! and Black has good counterplay along the open files and against the ill-placed white queen. In our time and age *Fritz 8* thinks the position is simply equal.

21... ♚xb2 **22** ♗a4!? ♗b8?!

Yusupov thinks that 22... ♗c8 is better, but after 23 ♗a3 he likes the compensation given to him by his two bishops and the better coordination.

23 ♗f1!

The second bishop is brought into play.

23... ♖f5!? **24** ♗a3 ♚b6

24... ♖xe4? 25 ♗xb2 ♗xb2 26 ♗b3+ and Black will have a difficult endgame.

25 exf5 ♖b4

25... ♗xf5 26 ♗ac1 was the alternative (preferable according to Yusupov), but White is much better here as well.

26 ♚ab1! ♖ec6?

After this White is able to organise a strong attack. Necessary was 26... ♖ed5 when Yusupov was intending 27 ♗c4 ♖h8 28 ♗xb4 ♚xb4 29 ♚xb4 ♗xb4 30 ♗xb4 with excellent winning chances in the endgame. White has a superior bishop against knight and the black king has difficulties getting into the game.

27 ♗g2 ♗d8

27... ♗c8 28 ♗xb4 ♖xb4 29 a3 ♖c6 30 ♚xb6 ♗xb6 31 ♗c1 and White wins material.

28 ♗xc6! ♖xc6 **29** ♚xb6 ♗xb6 **30** ♗c4+ ♖h8



31 ♗f7!

With the threats 32 ♗f8 and 32 ♖6.

31... ♗g8

Forced. If 31... ♖b4 32 ♖6! ♗g8 33 ♖g7+ ♗xg7 34 ♗f8+ and White wins a piece.

32 ♖6 ♗d8 **33** ♗e7!

With the idea 34 ♖g7+ and 35 ♗f6.

33... ♖xe7 **34** ♖xe7 ♗d7 **35** ♗d3!

With the idea 36 ♗f3 and 37 ♗xg8+ winning.

35... h6

35... e4 36 ♗xd4! ♗xd4 37 ♗xg8+ ♖xg8 38 e8 ♗ mate.

36 ♗f3 ♗c8

This attempt at counterplay is futile, probably the product of time trouble.

37 ♖f8+ ♖h7 38 ♚f7 ♚c1+ 39 ♖g2 ♖c6+ 40 ♖h3 ♖e6+ 41 ♖h4 1-0

Grandmaster Peter Heine Nielsen

Peter is a 30-year-old grandmaster, born May 1973, living in Aarhus, Denmark. He is currently Scandinavia's number one by a narrow margin, but will soon lose this position due to a few bad results. But that he belongs to the absolute top here is beyond question. He is well known for his preparation and for his great physical size: 1 metre and 98 cm in height he is a true tower, terribly intimidating when he leans over the board.

His best result so far was to win the North Sea Cup in Esbjerg 2001 together with Peter Svidler, but I am sure that even greater things will happen to him over the years. His Elo at the time of writing is 2638, but as said he will lose a few points on the next list.

Outside of tournament life he is single, at times a history student, and also the joint author of *The Accelerated Dragon* with Carsten Hansen (Batsford 1998).

During the test Peter had a few problems concentrating but, as he said, these kind of exercises are not the natural playing field for him, which also explains some of his mistakes. He sees himself more as an intuitive player.

Here is a very attractive game from him, in which he beat the Bulgarian no.2.

Nielsen-Kir.Georgiev

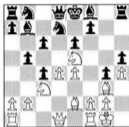
Istanbul Olympiad 2000

Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♖f3 d5 3 c4 c6 4 ♖c3

e6 5 ♖g5 h6 6 ♖h4 dxc4 7 e4 g5 8 ♖g3 b5 9 ♖e2 ♖b7 10 h4 g4 11 ♖e5 h5 12 0-0 ♖fd7?!

Certainly an invitation. Peter's first thought was: is this really possible? His answer to this question was: probably not.



13 ♖xf7!!

With this sacrifice White opens the black king's position for a perpetually ongoing attack.

13... ♖xf7 14 f3 ♖g8

14...gxf3 was played in another game, but did not help Black much.

15 fxg4 e5 16 g5!

Peter Heine explains: 'The idea is to take on h5 with bishop, as well as controlling f6, making sure Black's knights will have their problems protecting their king.'

16 gxf5 was also dangerous for Black.

16...exd4

16...♖c8!? was maybe better, but after 17 d5 Peter thinks that the white attack is very dangerous. An important point here is that it is hard for Black to develop the queenside, as the pieces seem to be in each other's way.

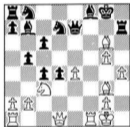
17 ♖xh5 ♚h7

White's attack is very strong. The following line given by Peter shows how

lowing line given by Peter shows how dangerous the attack is. 17...dxc3 18 ♖f7+ ♜g7 19 ♞d4+ ♜f6 20 ♞xc3 ♜xf7 21 ♞xf6+ ♜g8 22 ♞g6+ ♜h7 23 ♞f3 and White wins.

18 ♖g6 ♞e7

Against 18...♞g7 the German grandmaster Christopher Lutz gives the following winning line 19 ♞h5 ♞e7 20 ♞f3! dxc3 21 ♞af1 when Black has no defence. He might in principle be two pieces up, but he has 3 or 4 pieces out of play, so White has more pieces where it counts; e.g. 21...♞e6 22 ♖f7+ ♞xf7 23 ♞xf7 ♖g7 24 g6 and White wins.



19 ♖d6!

A wonderful shot that increases the pressure with gain of tempo.

19...♞g7

19...♞xd6 loses to 20 ♖xh7+ ♜xh7 21 ♞h5+ ♜g8 22 g6 ♞e7 23 ♞f7 and it seems like it is all over. A computer might come up with 23...♜f6 24 ♞xf6 ♜d7 25 ♞f7 ♜f6 26 ♞xf6 dxc3 27 e5 exb2 28 ♞af1 and White wins with 29 ♞f7.

20 ♖xh7+ ♞xh7 21 ♞g4!

After destroying the black pawn structure on the light squares, White can enter as he pleases.

21...♞g6

21...♖xd6 22 ♞e6+ ♜h8 23 ♞f7 and White wins.

22 ♖xf8 ♜e5

Black cannot save the position. After 22...♜xf8 White wins in the following way: 23 ♞xf8+ ♜xf8 24 ♞f1+ ♜c7 25 ♞f6 ♞g8 26 ♞f4 ♜d7 27 ♞d6+ ♜d8 28 e5 ♜c8 29 ♞f2 dxc3 30 e6 exb2 31 ♞xd7+ ♜b8 32 ♞d6+ ♜c8 33 e7 b1♞+ 34 ♜h2 and wins (Nielsen).

23 ♞h3 ♜bd7 24 ♖e7 ♞e8

Black accepts simply being material down as well as under attack. But then 24...dxc3 25 h5 ♞e8 26 ♞e6+ ♜h7 27 ♞h6+ ♜g8 28 ♖f6 and Black is toast.

25 h5 ♞g7 26 ♖f6 ♜xf6 27 gxf6 ♞f7 28 ♞f5 ♜h7 29 ♞g3 dxc3 30 ♞xe5 exb2 31 ♞f1 ♞xe5 32 ♞xe5 ♖c8 33 ♞xb2 ♖e6 34 ♞e5 b4 35 ♞f3 c3 36 ♞g3 c2 37 ♞f4 c1♞+ 38 ♞xc1 ♞xh5 39 ♞g5 ♞h4 40 g3 ♞h3 41 ♞g7+ ♜h8 42 ♞g5 1-0

International Master Jesper Hall

Chess writer, teacher and player. 32 years old. Elo 2487. Currently working on both chess books and a children's book. From Lund in Sweden, but has recently purchased a house in the countryside with his wife, with whom he has a baby daughter.

Hall-Sadler

German Bundesliga 2002

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 ♜c3 d5 3 ♜f3

This is a less standard variation, which suits the non-theoretical and non-standard Hall well.

3...♖g4 4 h3 ♖xf3 5 ♞xf3 ♜f6 6 d3

e6 7 ♖d2 ♜bd7 8 g4 b5!?

Many moves have been played here.

9 g5 b4 10 ♖d1 ♜g8 11 ♖e3

11 d4 with a slight edge was also possible.

11...♗d6 12 h4 ♖e7 13 h5 ♗b8 14 ♗g2 ♗e5 15 ♗b1

15 0-0-0? would bring the white king into a true thunderstorm, as the majority of the white pieces are aimed at the king-side. Black would have a winning attack after 15...♗a5!

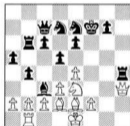
15...♗c7

15...♗c3! (Lukacs) was stronger, in order to rid White of the two bishops.

16 ♗e2 a5 17 ♗h4 ♗b6?!

This looks very artificial. Better 17...a4? with unclear play (Lukacs).

18 ♗h3 ♗c3! 19 g6 hxg6 20 hxg6 ♗xh4 21 gxf7+ ♗xf7

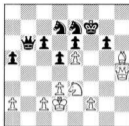


White is always better now. He has fewer pawns islands, and Black will suffer from the weakness of the g-pawn for a very long time. Theoretically that is. In the game he just loses that pawn without much resistance.

22 ♗xh4 ♖f6 23 bxc3 bxc3 24 ♗xb6 cxd2+ 25 ♗xd2 ♗xb6 26 e5!

White starts his attack on the black king.

26...♖d7 27 ♗h5+ g6



28 ♗xg6+!

This tactic decides the game.

28...♖xg6 29 ♗h7+ ♗f8 30 ♗xg6 ♗b4+ 31 ♗e2 ♗e7 32 ♗g7+ ♗d8 33 ♗g8+ ♗e7 34 ♗g5+ ♗e8 35 ♖g4 ♗c3 36 ♗d1 ♗d4 37 ♖f6+ ♖xf6 38 ♗xf6 ♗g4+ 39 ♗d2 c5 40 a3 a4 41 f3 ♗g8 42 ♗c3 ♗d7 43 ♗f4 d4+ 44 ♗d2 ♗c6 45 ♗e4+ ♗b6 46 ♗g4 ♗f7 47 f4 ♗b5 48 ♗e2 ♗b7 49 ♗f3 ♗h7 50 ♗d2 ♗b6 51 ♗c1 ♗h4 52 ♗e4 ♗f2 53 ♗b2 ♗d2 54 ♗g6 ♗c3+ 55 ♗b1 ♗xa3 56 ♗xe6+ ♗c7 57 ♗c4 ♗b4+ 58 ♗a2 ♗d7 59 f5 a3 60 ♗b3 1-0

Dr. Ivo Timmermans

Ivo Timmermans is a medical doctor from Maastricht, Holland. He was born famously on April 1st 1960. When his parents sent a telegram to his grandparents, they replied, 'Ha ha, very funny.' For the last 12 years Ivo has worked as drug researcher for different biotech companies. He is single and with no children is not responsible for overpopulating the planet.

His highest ever Elo was 2295. In the past few years he has circled around

2200, but recently he has improved somewhat and now has 2237 Elo. His playing level varies much from day to day: one day he can beat two strong IMs, as indeed happened at Santa Domingo 2003, and the next he can lose like a child. His best result is probably Groningen Open 1997, a 2400 performance where he had a game for the IM norm. He was also ghost writer and assistant for Xie Jun's autobiography *Chess Champion from China* (Gambit 1998), which comes highly recommended.

Of his other achievements it could be mentioned that Ivo has twice completed an Ironman triathlon (swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles, then run a marathon), has run a marathon in just over 3 hours, has a helicopter licence and a brilliant sense of humour.

The following game justly makes him proud.

Timmermans-Hennigan

Boca Chica 2003

Sicilian Defence

This is the second game in a double round in Santa Domingo. In the morning Ivo had won against Rene Stern, a very strong German IM, with Black in only 25 moves. Here, in the afternoon, he proved to himself that it was no coincidence.

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♙c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♙xd4 ♖f6 5 ♙c3 d6 6 ♙g5 e6 7 ♗d2 a6 8 0-0-0 ♙d7 9 f4 ♙e7 10 ♙f3 b5 11 ♙xf6 gx6 12 ♙b1 b4?!

12...♗b6 is considered more solid.

13 ♙e2 ♗b6 14 f5 e5

This is considered forced. The threat

of White's last move is to play as follows: 14...a5 15 ♙f4 ♗c5 16 fxc6 fxc6 17 g3 ♗a7 18 ♙h3 and the light squares in the black camp are under heavy fire (Radulov-Padevskij, Bulgaria 1975).

15 ♗h6 ♙a7

This is a new idea and though it looks dubious, it might be the entire line which is to blame. A previous game continued 15...0-0-0 16 ♙g3 ♙a5 17 ♙h5 ♙c6 (Yeo-Hennigan, Swansea 1995), and now White could have gained a clear advantage with 18 ♙xf6! because of 18...♙xf6 19 ♗xf6 ♙xe4 20 ♙xe5! and White is winning.

16 ♙g3

Ivo correctly targets the black camp where it is weakest. First he develops, then he strikes.

16...♙b5 17 ♙c4 ♗c5 18 ♙b3 a5 19 ♙h5 ♗f8

19...a4 20 ♙xf7+! ♙d8 21 ♙xf6 and White is winning.



20 ♙g5!!

The only inactive minor piece is brought into the game. If White had played with less imagination the game would probably have ended with a draw: 20 ♙xf6+ ♙xf6 21 ♗xf6 a4 22 ♙d5 ♗c8 23 ♙g5 (23 ♗c1? a3 24 ♙g5 axb2

and Black even wins) 23...♖a3+ 24 bxa3 ♖xc2+ with perpetual check to come.

20...fxg5

Black is also worse after 20...a4 21 ♖g7+ ♗d8 22 ♖xf7+ ♗e7 23 ♖e6+ ♗xc6 24 ♗xc6 a3 25 ♗d5 ♖c6 26 ♗xb5! ♖xb5 27 ♖h7 and White has managed to protect his king and win some pawns. Black's fragile king and his inability to activate his rooks gives him a bleak future.

21 f6 ♗c6

21...♗d8 22 ♖g7 mate.

22 fxe7 ♗xe7 23 ♖xg5+ ♗d7 24 ♖f6+ ♗c8?

Better was 24...♗c7 when White needs to find 25 ♖g7! (25 ♖h7 ♗g8 26 ♖c7+ ♗b6 27 ♖xf7 ♗xg2 28 ♖f6 a4 29 ♗c4 ♖d4 is not clear) 25...♖d4 26 ♗d2 with a clear advantage.

25 ♖f5+ ♗c7 26 ♖xh7 a4 27 ♖xf8!

Everything has been calculated very accurately.

27...axb3

27...♗xh8 28 ♗d5 ♖d4 29 ♖f2 and White is technically winning.

28 ♖xf7+ ♗b6



29 axb3!

Again a matter of accuracy. After 29 cxb3? White loses to 29...♗xe4+ 30 ♗a1

♗xa2+! 31 ♗xa2 ♖c3+ 32 bxc3 ♖a5+ 33 ♗b2 ♖a3 mate.

29...♖d4

29...♖c3+ looks tempting, but White wins with 30 bxc3 ♖xc3 (30...bxc3 31 ♖c7+ ♗xe7 32 ♖e6+ ♗b6 33 ♖xc5 and it is all over) 31 ♖d7+ ♗d7 32 ♗xd6+ ♗c6 33 ♗xc6+ ♖xc6 34 ♗f1 and Black has no chance.

30 ♗xd4! exd4

30...♖xd4 31 ♖e6 ♖xe4 32 ♖c7+ ♗b5 33 ♖xd6 and White wins.

31 ♖e6

The start of a brilliant cooperation between the knight and the queen.

31...♖e5 32 ♖c7+ ♗b5 33 ♖d8 ♗xe4 34 ♖f7!

It is beautiful, don't you think?

34...♖d5 35 ♖xd6+ ♗a6 36 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 37 ♖c4+ ♗a5 38 ♖c5+ ♗a6 39 ♗f1 1-0

Tom Skovgaard

Residence: Skovlunde, Denmark

Born month and year: February 1951

Profession: IT consultant

Height: 1.78m

Family status: Married, 4 children

Highest Elo rating ever: 2076 (current)

Best result: No. 1 with 4½/5 in 'Sydkysten', October 1998 (performance rating 2384; average of the opponents' rating 2020)

Skovgaard-Mortensen

Danish Primary League 1972

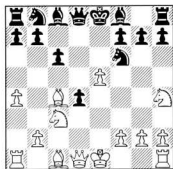
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 a6 5 ♗d3 ♖c6 6 ♗e3 ♖c7 7 0-0 ♖f6 8 ♖b3 ♗e7 9 ♖c3 b5 10 a3 0-0 11 f4 d6 12 ♖f3 ♗b7 13 ♖h3 e5 14

CHAPTER TEN

Test Position 8

Test Position 8



Black to move. Take 12 minutes to find the strongest continuation, talking into a microphone or writing down your thoughts afterwards.

Sten Vesterli

'We are still in the opening. I am a pawn up. Let us take a look.'

'He has a knight on h4. He is attacking f7 with the bishop. My knight is hanging, his knight is hanging.'

'I can take his knight. He can then either recapture with the b-pawn. This will give him two isolated pawns, which is not in his interest. But he can take on f6,

and then I will recapture with the queen. Then I am also threatening his knight on h4. It is not in White's interest.'

'If take on c3, then he will exchange queens with check and I will lose the possibility of castling. He will take my knight. Then I will have two isolated pawns. It is not terribly ingenious. I will lose the right to castle without material gains. It cannot be right.'

'If I move the knight he will play e6, bishop takes e6, bishop takes e6, pawn takes e6, queen takes the knight (g4).'

'1...♘g4 2 e6'



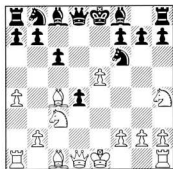
'2...fxe6.' (long pause)

'I have to do something about the ♘f6. Either I have to move it or I need

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'1...♖g4 2 e6'



'2...fxe6.' (long pause)

'I have to do something about the ♖f6. Either I have to move it or I need

4 ♖c7+ ♜bd7 ...'



'1...dxc3 2 ♙xf7+ ♚xf7 3 ♖xd8 cxb2
4 ♖c7+ ♜bd7 5 ♙xb2 ♙b4+ 6 ♚f1
♜d5 7 e6+.'

'What else is there. Hmm.'

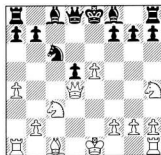
'What else? 1...♙g4 perhaps, no he always has 2 ♖b3, that does not look right somehow. 2...♖c7 and now just castling or something terrible.'

'Maybe 1...♙b4. If he plays 2 exf6 maybe 2...0-0. So 1...♙b4 2 exf6. No, that does not look right either.'

'1...dxc3 2 ♙xf7+ ♚xf7 3 ♖xd8 no, it does not look good enough. What else?'

'1...♜d5 maybe. Then 2 ♖xd4 ♙e6, maybe. What is that position like? Maybe that is ok. Yes.'

'1...♜d5 2 ♙xd5 cxd5 3 ♖xd4 ♜c6, that is ok.'



'Maybe 1...♜d5 is at least playable. 2

♜xd5 cxd5 3 ♙b5+ ♜c6. It seems possible at least.'

'Just a last check 1...dxc3 2 ♙xf7+ ♚xf7 3 ♖xd8. (pause)'

'Yeah well, I just cannot get this to work. So what is left?'

'1...♜d5. My intuition is not completely happy.'

'Knight, phew.' (pause)

Time up.

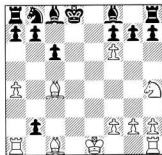
'I would have played 1...♜d5 as I feel right now. Maybe White is a little bit better then. Maybe there is something even better, I just could not get it to work.'

Tom Skovgaard

'So we have a fairly sharp position early in the opening. White has developed three pieces, and Black has only developed one, and it is threatened. However, Black has a pawn.'

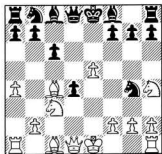
'Let us take the obvious, sharp line.'

'1...dxc3 2 exf6. Oh my God, this goes on and on. 1...dxc3 2 ♖xd8+ ♚xd8 3 exf6 cxb2'



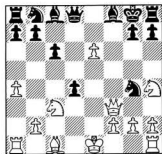
'4 ♙xb2 (Not 4 fxc7 of course). So if White exchanges the queens, I cannot recapture, as it will lose the rook. But I can keep the pawn there if I wish. No. Maybe. 4...g5, I might play that. Letting the white pawn be.'

'Let us look for alternatives. Maybe 1...♖a5. Maybe moving my knight, threatening the ♖h4. To g4? To d5? No, not to d5, it will simply help him to get rid of the threat. Maybe 1...♗g4.'



'Certainly a candidate move.'

'Maybe I have a problem with 2 ♗xf7+. 2...♖xf7 3 ♖f3+. Oh. It looks a little bit dangerous. But maybe not that much. 3...♗g8 or 3...♖e8. What then. 3...♗g8 4 e6.'



'No.'

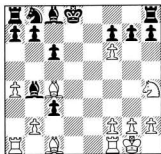
'If White does not sacrifice the bishop, what then. He can protect e5 with 2 ♖f3. No, I am still threatening ...dxc3.'

'He could play 2 ♗e4.'

'I like this move. 1...♗g4. 2 ♗e4 ♗xe5 and Black has a good position. I can even give a check on b4 if I wish.'

'I can also play 1...♗b4 now. It is also an interesting idea. So we have 1...♗g4 and 1...♗b4. I think the first line I considered with 1...g5 is not that interesting.'

'1...♗b4 2 exf6 dxc3 3 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 4 0-0. Hmm.'



'4...0-0.' (Jacob: Here it is really not clear if Tom is talking about 3 0-0 0-0, which makes sense, or if he is really thinking what he says he is thinking. I would guess 3 0-0 0-0, but I will leave it to the reader to decide.) 'Yes. Of course it is messing up my king's position, but I am at least one pawn up. And maybe I will also win the f6-pawn. But I am way behind in development.'

'What about 1...♖a5. 2 exf6 dxc3 3 0-0. No. I will not get my king into safety. 1...♗b4 looks better, as I can castle. But he can exchange the queens then, when I take the knight on c3.'

'What was the problem with the 1...♗g4 line. It was the reply 2 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 3 ♖f3+ ♗g8, and White has no attack.'

'But 1...♗g4 is only threatening the e5-pawn. He can protect that with 2 ♗f4 or 2 f4, and my knight will get into trouble later. But I can capture his knight then, and I will win a piece. He needs to move the knight. 1...♗g4 2 ♗e4 ♗xc5'



'3 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 4 ♘g5+. Oh we have a problem here, 5 ♖b3+. I might be mated here. 4...♙c7 5 ♖b2. It looks very dangerous. Maybe 1...♗b4 is better. He cannot move his knight. He probably will have to capture my knight then, or play 2 ♗d2. No, then 2...dxc3. 1...♗b4'



'2 ♗exf6 dxc3 3 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 4 0-0. Hmm.'

'No - a better line... 1...♗b4 2 ♗exf6 0-0. 3 0-0 ♖xf6, threatening the other knight. I am at least a pawn up. I can play 3...dxc3. No, he has 4 ♗xf7+, breaking up my king's position.'

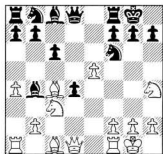
'Maybe 1...♗b4 2 ♗exf6 0-0. No, that was not it.'

'2 ♗exf6 ♖xf6. Yes. This looks very good. I am two pawns up. He cannot save his knight. But he can castle.'

'1...♗b4 2 0-0. Can I move the knight

then? Oh, there is another option here. Can I play 1...♗e4 2 ♗xc4 ♖xh4. No. That is bad. 3 ♗xf7+.'

'1...♗b4 2 0-0. That was the problem. 2...0-0, of course.'



'And if White moves his knight, I will move my knight somewhere - g4. Threatening his knight. This looks fine. I am a pawn up.'

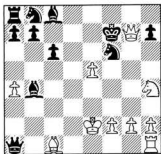
1...♗b4, with 1 min. and 54 sec. remaining on the clock.

Peter Heine Nielsen

'A well-known position from the Slav. Or known is maybe too much. I cannot remember everything accurately, but I do recollect something with a queen sacrifice here, or could it be another position. No, what I remember is 1...dxc3 2 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 3 ♖xd8 and then'



'3...♖b4 seems to be a typical desperado. But of course it does need a fair bit of calculation. 4 ♜xh8 cxb2+ 5 ♔e2 bxa1 ♜6 ♜xg7+'



'which could immediately be considered as relatively uncomfortable.'

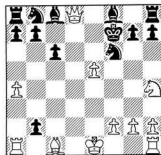
'A good question is: What alternatives are there here?'

'Another obvious move is 1...♗g4, which might not threaten 2...dxc3, which can be considered later, but at least threatens 2...♜xh4. So let us say 1...♗g4 2 ♗f3 and we have similar problems as before.'

'Are there other candidate moves?'

'Let me calculate the sharp lines.'

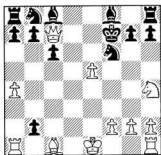
'1...dxc3 2 ♖xf7+. I have to take it. 2...♔x7 3 ♜xd8. Now I am calculating 3...♖b4, but also to be considered is 3...cxb2.'



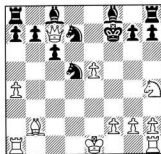
'Let us take the simplest lines first. 3...cxb2 4 ♖xb2 ♖b4+ 5 ♜d2 ♖xd2+ 6 ♜xd2 ♗e4+. There I have a piece more, which is to be considered as satisfactory.'

'So let us try to continue. Once again, the queen sacrifice and 3...cxb2.'

'His obvious move is 4 ♜c7+, and it seems to come to me as something which someone has played once.'



'4 ♜c7+. I would typically consider to put something in between, but it all ends rather unfortunately. I would like to play 4...♗bd7 5 ♖xb2 ♗d5, trapping the queen.'



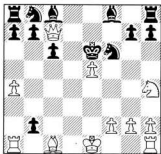
'However, as far as I can see, he then has 6 e6+ at his disposal, after which the queen escapes. Hmm.'

'Now I am calculating psychopathic moves such as 3...cxb2 4 ♜c7+ and then 4...♔e6, but what I fear than is 5 ♖xb2.

Now my problem is that after 5...♖b4+ 6 ♖e2 ♔d5 then the g7-pawn is hanging. But 4...♗c6 5 ♖xb2 I seem to have 5...♔a6. I cannot see any problems then. 5...♔a6 seems to trap the queen.'

'Okay. I will try to go through the lines again.'

'1...dxc3 2 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 3 ♖xd8 cxb2 4 ♖c7+ (seems like only move) 4...♗c6.'

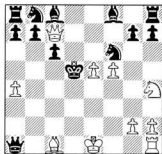


'With how many pieces am I trailing? Now I have two pieces for the queen. So if he castles and I take a queen, he is missing just about every piece there is.'

'On 5 0-0 I would play 5...♔a6 before I take my queen.' (pause)

'I find it difficult to see any problems with this line, but then of course I have preconceptions because it is this line that I think I remember. (long pause)'

'I have arrived at a place where I cannot see any reasons to depart from my main line, which goes 1...dxc3 2 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 3 ♖xd8 cxb2. And now the only move that seems to make sense is 4 ♖c7+, and then you play 4...♗c6 to block the e-pawn's march forward. Now 5 ♖xc8+ ♔bd7 and 5 ♖xb2 ♔a6 makes no sense for White, so we are talking about a really special move if White is to be saved. It could be 5 f4 bxa1 ♖ 6 f5+ ♔d5, but it does not seem to be realistic.'



'5 ♖xf6, then I either play 5...bxa1 ♖ or 5...♖b4+ and then 6...bxa1 ♖. Again, it is hard to believe that White has enough attack to compensate the material losses, but still it is possible that this is the road by which he should travel.'

'I am pretty sure that this is what I would have played, as I did not really see any alternatives. Well, that is, I did not really finish concluding on 1...♔g4 actually. I would believe that after 1...♔g4 2 ♖f3 then 2...♔xc5 or even 2...♖xb4. 1...♔g4 2 ♔f3 then 2...dxc3 is not so fortunate, as 3 ♖xf7+ now wins. And after 2...♖c7 he probably has 3 ♔c4 and then it looks as if it is not so clear. But of course it could be questioned.'

'But I saw no problems with the theoretical line 1...dxc3, so this is my final choice.'



Artur Yusupov

Artur was shaking his head when I presented him with this position: 'What are you doing to me, Jacob?' he exclaimed, then sank into thought. He calculated several moves and liked many of them, before finally settling for lines similar to those given above by Peter Heine Nielsen, with

1...dxc3.

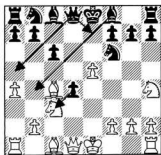
Ivo Timmermans

'The last moves must have been ...d4 and e5, so let me see. White is one pawn down. He has three minor pieces in play. Black has just one, the knight on f6.'

'What does Black want?'

'There are some problems in the position. For instance: If the d-file opens, then ♖xf7+ could be a problem at some point. If the knight on f6 moves, then ♘h4 is hanging.'

'White is close to castling, while Black needs one more move. So it should probably be one of Black's objectives: to get the king into safety. But let me first check the candidate moves. Obviously both knights are hanging.'

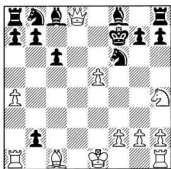


'1...dxc3 is one move. Another candidate is 1...♗b4. One more is 1...♞a5, but I am not sure if this is any good. 1...♞c7

seems a bit odd after 2 0-0. Then 2...dxc3 3 exf6 leaves White fully developed.'

'Let us start by looking at 1...dxc3. There might be other candidates like 1...♞b6, but let us first look at the normal moves.'

'1...dxc3 2 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 3 ♞xd8 exb2, threatening ...♗b4+. Okay...'

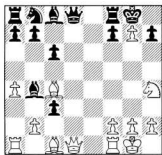


'1...dxc3 2 ♖xf7+ ♔e7 3 exf6+ and something nasty, I suppose. Okay.'

'1...dxc3 2 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 3 ♞xd8 exb2 – oh 3...♗b4 straight away. No, I think I will take on b2. Take, take, take. If ...♗b4+ then ♞d2 and ...♗xd2+ and it is ok. This is probably not what you want to do. White will take on f6 and Black has a horrible pawn structure, so it is probably not good. (It is not clear to me exactly what line Ivo was looking at here. Maybe 2 ♞xd8+ – see the following.)'

'So White has the advantage in both 2 ♖xf7+ and the 2 ♞xd8+ line. So do you want to play 1...♗b4? This is interesting. At least there is no more threat of ♖xf7+ if I take on c3. So Black cannot escape the pin. Now he can take on f6, he can castle, he can play ♞b3. If 2 ♞b3 then even 2...♘d5 3 ♖xd5 ♗xc3+ and then both d5 and h4 are hanging, and I can

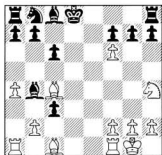
castle. So 2 ♖b3 is not so dangerous. What you probably do is 2 0-0 dxc3 3 exf6 0-0 and then you cannot... Well, you can play 4 fxe7, well, it is a bad position.'



'1...♗b4. Okay, let us say that you play 2 0-0 and I play 2...0-0 3 exf6. Okay not very...'

'1...♗b4 2 0-0 dxc3 threatening to exchange queens. 3 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 4 exf6. And then I can play... Hmm. I will just go back again.'

'1...♗b4 2 0-0 dxc3 3 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 4 exf6.'



'I might play 4...gxf6 in this line. Or 4...♗c6, but White is still better in this line.'

'So what I would like to do here is to play something more active like 1...♘g4, possibly. Okay, now the knight is hanging on h4. So what do you do after

1...♘g4? You can save the knight on h4, not by playing in to f5. You can play 2 ♖f3, threatening... Because then 2...♖xh4 is not possible – 3 ♖xf7+.'

'2...♖xh4 3 ♖xf7+ ♔d8. Okay, try again.'

'1...♘g4. Okay, if he plays 2 ♘f3 or something, I will play 2...♗b4 and I castle, without problems. Or maybe I will play 2...♗c5.'

'2 ♘e4 ♗b4+, and you got a pretty normal position. Black is still a pawn up, so...'

'1...♘g4. The critical line is maybe 2 ♖f3 ♖xh4 3 ♖xf7+ ♔d8.'



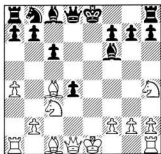
'and maybe 4 h3, or 4 e6 or 4 ♘e4. Black should be able to hold this position. If the knight goes away from c3 you got a check on b4. And ...♗f8 is coming up.'

'So 1...♘g4.'

'Okay, so 1...dxc3 is not working. 1...♗b4 gives a bad position. 1...♘g4 seems ok, very sharp, but you can probably survive the attack. As White cannot castle directly, you can always sacrifice a piece back with ...♖xf2+ if you do not like it. Black can probably survive this position. Are there other candidates that I have missed?'

'1...♗e7 is interesting. Missed that.'

'1...♙e7 with the idea 2 exf6 ♗xf6 and both knights are hanging.'



'If you play 3 ♘f3 then 3...dxc3. If 3 ♖e2+ then 3...♗f8 you can always escape via g8 and h7.'

'1...♙e7 2 ♘e4 ♘e4. If 2 0-0 then 2...0-0 as well without ruining your pawn chain. Yes, I like that move. Let me just check if it does not fail tactically. 2 exf6 ♗xf6 3 ♘e4 ♗xh4 then 4 ♗f4 is coming, maybe with ♘d6+, but you simply play 4...0-0 and you are out of harm's way. Let me just check.'

'1...♙e7 2 exf6 ♗xf6. Another idea is to play 3 ♖f3 because f7 is hanging, but you play 3...0-0. Okay, 4 ♘e4 ♗xh4 5 ♖h5. It is possible that it gives some initiative. But I can always play...'

Okay – time up.

1...♙e7' is my first choice and my second choice is 1...♘g4.'

Sidsel Høeg

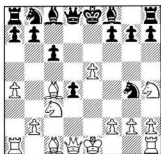
'That it is a mess is easy to state. First thought is if I should take the knight or not. If I take then he can exchange the queens with check. It ruins Black's right to castle. Maybe I can move my knight with a threat on h4. That might sustain it – I don't know if it is a precise term – pressure. Maybe it would also be possible

to do something wise and pull myself together and get closer to castling. (pause)'

'Black is perhaps behind in development. The question is if there is a way to get the initiative.' (pause)

'Does White have enough initiative for the pawn?' (pause)

'Where can I play the knight? If I play it to g4, then I am threatening the ♘h4. But it is also advancing a piece that has already been developed. If White played 2 ♘f3, then the black knight will be hanging loose on g4. But then maybe then it will be prudent to take the knight on c3?' (pause)



'2 f3 ♖xh4+ 3 g3. It also looks as if it is going to be very messy, but White will have a loose position on the kingside, so maybe it pays off.'

'Taking on c3 does not look good, as he can exchange queens and take on f6. Then I will have a doubled f-pawn. It is of course not necessarily so always, but f5 looks as if it will be good for the knight. Or the bishop after exchanges.'

'1...♙g4 does not look right on account of 2 f3 – right in the face.'

'The knight might also be able to go to d5. 2 ♘xd5 cxd5 and the knight on h4 will be hanging.' (pause)

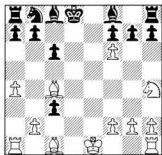
Time up.

'Ok 1...♘g4 and now possibly 2 ♖f3 as the best move. Then I considered taking on 2...dxc3 or 2...♙b4, which I am more likely to go for.' Sidsel did not like 2...dxc3 3 ♜xd8+, not realising that she would be a piece up in the endgame. She did not see the ideas with ♙x17+ at all at any point.

Still she managed to solve this position which so few others could do!

Peter Skovgaard

'Two knights are hanging, and of course it seems most obvious to take the white knight, as the black knight does not have that many good squares. But if 1...dxc3, then probably 2 ♜xd8+ ♙xd8 3 exf6.'



'What can you play then? I could play 3...♙b4 for example. If 4 fxg7 then 4...exb2+ and 5...bxa1♜ which protects the ♖h8. But if instead of 4 fxg7 he plays 4 0-0, for example, then I can plan... Hmm, yes what can you play then?'

'Right, 1...dxc3 2 ♜xd8+ ♙xd8 3 exf6 ♙b4 4 0-0. Then I can just recapture with 4...gxf6, but then his rooks enter at e1 and d1. It is probably not so good.'

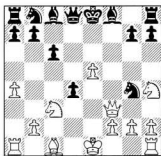
'Maybe the first move is 1...♘g4. What good possibilities does he have? Maybe he can play 2 ♜f3, threatening f7.'



'What can I do then? Then I have 2...♗xe5, which defends f7, threatening both the queen and the bishop. And after 3 ♜c4 I can play 3...♜e7, which looks really good – for me. So he cannot play 2 ♜f3 on 1...♘g4, so what else?'

'1...♘g4 then comes...' (pause)

'I am threatening two knights. Maybe he can play 2 ♙x17+ or maybe it is just a senseless sacrifice. 2 ♙x17+ ♙x17 3 ♜f3+ ♙e8...'



'then it seems to be over.'

'What else will he be able to play on 1...♘g4. How can he protect the knights?'

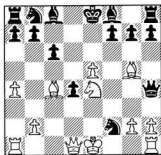
'He might be able to play.' (pause)

'I cannot see how he can protect both knights.'

'Maybe 2 ♗e4 and if 2...♜xh4 then 3 ♙g5 and the queen is not so well placed. In the case of 3...♜h5 then 4 ♜xd4.'

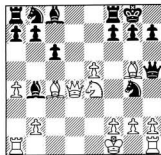
What should Black do then? He seems to be forced to play 4...♙e7, and the question is if White has some tempting possibilities. He can maybe play 5 ♙xc7 ♜xc7 6 ♚d6+ ♜e8 and then maybe 7 ♚c7, threatening the bishop on c8 and ♜d6+. Black is probably in trouble.'

'1...♜g4 2 ♜e4 ♚xh4 3 ♙g5, then Black might have some other moves. Something like 3...♜xf2'



'but White can just play 4 ♜xf2, and Black has gained nothing. But 3...♚h5 and then 4 ♚xd4. Then maybe 4...♜d7, but then 5 ♜d6+ ♙xd6 6 exd6, no, then the bishop is hanging on g5. So he cannot play 5 ♜d6+.'

'Or maybe 1...♜g4 2 ♜e4 ♚xh4 3 ♙g5, then maybe 3...♙b4+. It looks pretty ok. Then 4 ♜f1 and 4...♚h5. Then maybe 5 ♚xd4 0-0.'



'It looks ok for Black.'

1...♜g4. On 2 ♜f3, which Peter had not considered, he fell into thought.

Fritz 8

In this position the program used more time to get to a serious depth, as there were a lot of tactics and a lot of pieces on the board. The evaluation got stable after about 5 min., and did not change, could not change, as it needed to control all the silly moves (after 7 min. 1...♙g8, which only appeared for a very brief moment; *Fritz* uses more time on 'better' moves) before it can start over with the primary candidates. After 8 min. we stopped the program.

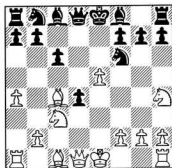
1...♜g4.

Proposed solution

Test Position 8

The position for this puzzle is known to theory and arises after the following sequence.

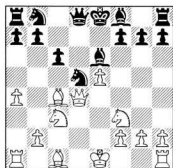
1 ♜f3 d5 2 d4 ♜f6 3 c4 c6 4 ♜c3 dxc4 5 a4 ♙f5 6 ♜h4 ♙c8 7 e4 e5 8 ♙xc4 exd4 9 e5



This position is of course highly confusing. Many moves are ok, but only two give Black a certain edge, and only one of them is clearly strong. But let us

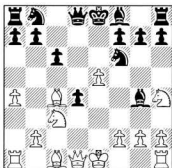
of them is clearly strong. But let us take them all in ascending order.

a) 9...♖d5?! 10 ♖xd4 ♘e6 (10...♘c7 11 ♖f3 ♖b6 12 ♖xd8+ ♘d8 13 ♘b3 ♖a6 14 ♘c3 ♘c6 15 ♘xc6 fxe6 16 ♖d4 ♖d7 17 ♖d1 gave White a slight edge in Mitletu – Pfeiffer, Leipzig 1960) 11 ♖f3



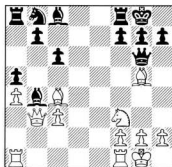
11...♘e7 (11...♘b4? 12 ♘xd5 ♘xc3+ 13 ♖xc3 ♘d5 14 ♘g5 ♖d7 15 ♖a3 h6 16 ♘h4 g5 17 ♘g3 ♖e7 18 0-0 with an unclear game) 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♖e4 ♖f4 14 ♖d6 ♘d6 15 ♘xf4 ♘e7 16 ♖c3 ♘xc4 17 ♖xc4 and White is a little better here, where Forintos and Sokolov agreed a draw at Wijk aan Zee 1970.

b) 9...♘g4?! is not that clear.



After 10 ♖b3 ♖c7 11 h3 dxc3 12 hxg4 ♖xg4 13 e6 ♖e5 the position is a mess.

c) 9...♘b4?! also only leads to a mess. 10 exf6 ♖xf6 11 0-0 dxc3 (11...♖xh4 12 ♖e1+ ♘c7 13 ♖e4 ♖f6 14 ♖f4 with a strong attack for White is not recommendable) 12 ♖b3 a5 13 ♖f3 0-0 14 ♘g5 ♖g6 15 bxc3



and the position does not seem clear to me.

d) 9...dxc3?!



It is of course very tempting to sacrifice the queen. And in Avni's *Creative Chess* (yes, again!) this move is given an '!'. Actually, despite the deeply fascinating and original tactics, this move hardly leads to an advantage, and is therefore a

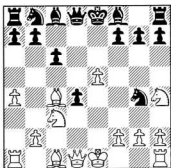
lot of energy spent on virtually nothing. **10** ♖xf7+ (10 ♜xd8+ ♘xd8 11 exf6 ♙b4 leaves Black with slightly better chances) **10...** ♗xf7 **11** ♜xd8 cxb2 (11... ♙b4? 12 ♜c7+ and White wins) **12** ♜c7+ ♙e6! **13** ♜xc8+ ♖bd7



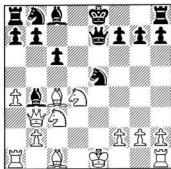
14 ♜xb7?! (White realises that he has gone wrong and tries to create a mess. But stronger was 14 ♜xd7+ ♖xd7 15 ♙xb2 ♙b4+ 16 ♗c2 ♖xe5 which gives Black a better game, but only just. 17 f4 ♖c4 18 ♙xg7 regains the pawn, though White is lacking in development and will be under attack) **14...** bxa1♜ **15** ♜xc6+ ♙f7 **16** e6+ ♙g8 **17** 0-0 ♜e5 **18** ♜xa8 ♜xe6 **19** ♜xa7 ♜d5 **20** ♜c7 ♙f7 **21** ♖f3 ♙d6 **22** ♜c2 h6 **23** ♖h4 ♜e4 **24** ♙a2+ ♙e7 **25** ♖f3 ♖e5 **26** ♖xe5 ♜xe5 **27** g3 ♜d5 **28** ♜c2 ♙f7 **29** ♚d1 ♚c8 **30** ♜e2 ♜e6 **31** ♜f3 ♚c2 **32** ♙e3 ♚a2 **33** ♜b7+ ♙e7 **34** ♙c5 ♚e2 **35** a5 ♜c4 **36** ♙e3 ♜a4 **37** ♚d4 ♜xa5 **38** ♜b3+ ♙e8 **39** ♜b8+ ♙f7 **40** ♜b3+ ♙e8 **41** ♜b8+ ♙f7 **42** ♜b3+ and a draw was agreed in Larsen-Teschner, Wageningen 1957. It is not without reason that a book on Bent Larsen was called *Bent Larsen – the Fighter!*. Still, Black is of course winning even here...

e) 9... ♙e7!? This is interesting and probably one of the only two moves to guarantee an advantage. **10** exf6 ♙xf6 **11** ♖e4? Now White is just much worse. 11 ♜c2! ♜e7 12 ♖e4 ♙xh4 13 ♙f4 ♙e6 also looks good for Black, but it was a better try. **11... ♙xh4** **12** 0-0 **13** ♜h5 ♙e7. So far Inkiov – Velikov, Plovdiv 1982. Black went on to win, though not in the safest way.

f) 9... ♖g4! is strongest.



10 ♖f3 (Forced. If 10 ♖e4 ♖xe5 and that dream is over. The same goes for 10 ♜f3 ♖xe5 11 ♜e4 ♜c7 and wins) **10... ♙b4!** Now White will come out of the opening a pawn down for absolutely nothing. **11** ♜b3 ♜e7 **12** ♖xd4 ♖xe5

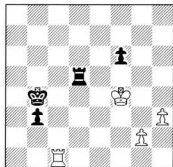


and Black is probably just winning.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Test Position 9

Test Position 9

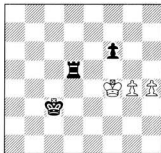


Black to move. Take 10 minutes to find the strongest continuation, talking into a microphone or writing down your thoughts afterwards.

Peter Skovgaard

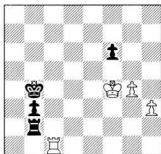
'It is the same position as I had before, almost, where I was White instead of Black. But, with the black pawn racing down to promote, it is all a matter of calculation now.'

'The advance 1...b2 looks pretty obvious, then play ca continue with the sequence 2 ♖b1 ♕b3 3 g4 ♕c2 4 ♗xb2 ♕xb2 5 h4 ♕c3'



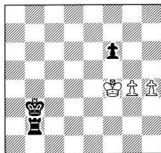
'6 h5 ♕d4 7 h6 ♗d8. It does not look good. So that is probably not it.'

'It might be possible to play 1...♗d2 2 g4 ♗b2'



'3 h4 ♕a3, no then he has 4 ♗c3.'
(pause)

'1...♞d2 2 g4 ♞b2 3 h4 ♔a3 4 ♞c3 ♔a2 5 ♞xb3 ♔xb3'



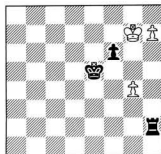
'6 h5. Maybe 6 ♔f5 instead. 6...♞f2+ 7 ♔g6 ♔c4 8 h5 ♔d5 9 h6 ♔e5 10 h7 ♞h2 11 ♔g7 ♔f4 12 h8♞ – this wins for me at least. So, does he have other opportunities?'

'1...♞d2 2 g4 ♞b2 3 h4 ♔a3 4 h5 ♔a2 5 h6, no, then I have 5...♞h2 after which I can take the pawn.'

'1...♞d2 2 g4 ♞b2 3 h4 ♔a3 4 h5 ♔a2. It looks pretty good for me. Maybe 5 ♞c8 then comes 5...♞f2+ 6 ♔g3.'

'1...♞d2 2 g4 ♞b2 3 h4 ♔a3 4 h5 ♔a2 5 ♞c8. Hmm.'

'Maybe 1...♞d2 2 g4 ♞c2 3 ♞b1 b2 4 h4 ♔b3 5 ♔f5 ♞f2+ 6 ♔g6 ♔a2 7 ♞xb2+ ♔xb2 8 h5 ♔c3 9 h6 ♔d4 10 h7 ♞h2 11 ♔g7 ♔e5'



♔xg4 15 ♔xf6.'

'This looks pretty drawish.'

'1...♞d2 2 g4 ♞c2 3 ♞b1 b2 4 h4 ♔b3 5 ♔f5 ♞f2+ 6 ♔g6 ♔a2 7 ♞xb2+ ♔xb2. This is just the same variation as before.'

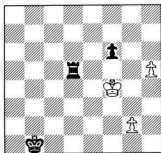
1...♞d2 executed with 1½ minute left on the clock, and the conclusion that it leads to a draw.

Sten Vesterli

'At first glance it looks obvious. 1...b2. Of course his b-pawn has now become passed. He cannot simply place the rook in front of the pawn, I will then advance with my king and threaten his rook, so it will have to go away.'

'His king cannot cross the d-file.'

'1...b2 2 ♞b1 ♔b3 3 h4 ♔a2 4 ♞c1 b1♞ 5 ♞xb1 ♔xb1 6 h5, then it should be won for Black.'



'My king would be on b1. I would in reality have rook and pawn against king and two pawns.'

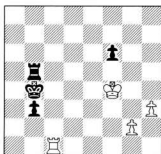
'If he sacrifices his rook for my pawn, then maybe he has counterplay on the kingside. My alternative is to play on the kingside. But 1...♞g5 2 g4 does not really improve anything.'

'Maybe 1...♞d2 2 g3 (pause) 2...♞h2 3 h4. All I have achieved is to advance the white pawns. Anyway, my rook is fine

'12 h8♞ ♞xh8 13 ♔xh8 ♔f4 14 ♔g7

where it is.'

'1...♖b5!?'



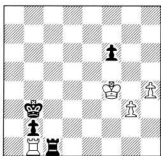
'No it seems to achieve nothing.' (Obviously calculating).

'1...b2 2 ♖c6, threatening my pawn on f6. No, I will queen, so that is no good.'

'1...b2, rook away. Then 2...♖c5 and 3...♖c1 queening the pawn.'

'If 1...♖c5 then he can move to the side. I might as well just play 1...b2 immediately.'

'1...b2 2 ♖b1 ♔b3 3 h4 ♖c5 4 g3 ♖c1 – it has to win.'



'1...b2 2 ♖b1 ♔b3 3 h4 ♖c5 with the threat of ...♖c1. It looks pretty good. What can he do with his pawns. If I get a queen, no, he will have to give up his rook. But my king cannot make it to the kingside in time. (Calculating).'

'The question is if he can make it on

the kingside. His h-pawn is passed after all.'

Time up.

1...b2

Sidsel Høeg

'Black has a centralised rook, which is keeping the white king away from the f-pawn. The white king might go to e4 to chase the rook away, but not really improve his position. But the white rook might be able to get hold of the pawn.'

'It looks natural for Black to try to advance his passed pawn. It reminds me of some kind of theoretical position.'

'The black pawn is so far advanced that my first thoughts would circle around getting it across the finish line.'

'The question is, what is the most dangerous thing White can do? If I push my pawn, then what can White do? The question is if White's best chance is to advance his own passed pawn, or to give checks to the black king in order to prevent the pawn from queening.'

'It would be great if I could arrange for an exchange of rooks.'

'White should be careful not to give too many checks, as Black will be able to put the rook in between.'

'I am considering if the best thing is to advance the pawn or to advance the king first. My first reflex is to play ...♔a3, but at the same time there is something that tells me that the pawn needs to be advanced.'

Time up.

1...b2.

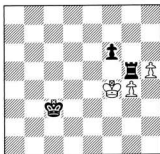
Tom Skovgaard

'Equal position. Two pawns each. However, Black's pawn is quite close to promotion. Let us see.'

motion. Let us see.'

'The obvious move is 1...b2.'

'1...b2 2 ♖b1 ♕c3 3 h4 ♕c2 4 ♖xb2 ♕xb2 5 h5, no, 5 g4 ♕c3 6 h5. Hmm. What then. 6...♙g5 maybe?'



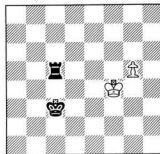
'And on 7 h6 just 7...♙g6 8 h7 ♖h6 and Black wins.'

'1...b2, what can he do? Maybe 2 ♖h1.'

'2...♙c5 is a possible move, threatening ...♙c1, then he needs to play 3 ♖b1 ♕c3. So now the rook is on c5 instead of d5. That makes no difference.'

'Why does this not just simply win right away. Oh, he can play g4-g5 with support from the h-pawn instead. Let us calculate it.'

'1...b2 2 ♖h1 ♙c5 3 ♖b1 ♕c3 4 g4 ♕c2 5 ♖xb2 ♕xb2 6 h4 ♕c3 7 g5 fxg5 8 hxg5. No, that is no win.'



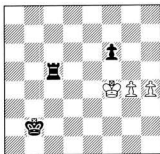
'8...♕d4 9 g6. What then? The king is

cut off. Maybe 8...♕d4 was wrong.'

'Do we have a problem with that pawn. We need to stop that pawn. Let us take it from the beginning again.'

'1...b2 (not 2 ♖c8 because of 3...♖b5). So 5 ♖xb2 ♕xb2. How was it.'

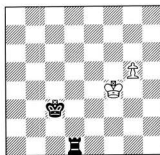
'1...b2 2 ♖h1 ♙c5 3 ♖b1 ♕c3 4 g4 ♕c2 5 ♖xb2 ♕xb2 6 h4. ahem.'



'6...♕c3 7 g5 fxg5 8 hxg5 ♕d4. Oh, the rook is on c5 if he goes to h1 first. Maybe it will be on d5.'

'After 7 hxg5, what can we play.'

'We can play 7...♙d1 maybe.'



'8 g6 ♕d4 9 ♕g5. Oh, this is simply winning.'

'Can he do something else?'

'1...b2 2 ♖b1 ♕c3 3 ♕e4 maybe. No, it is a waste of time.'

'3 g4 ♕c2 4 ♖xb2 ♕xb2 5 h4 ♕c3 6 g5 (6 h5 ♙g5 did not work) 6...fxg5 7

hxg5 ♖d1, this must be the move. He will probably play 8 ♖e5 ♖c4 9 g6 ♖e1+, no, this is not good.'

'He makes it with his king here. 7...♖d1 is not good enough. 7...♖c4 maybe.'

'It was 5...♖c3 6 g5 fxg5 7 hxg5. No. This is not easy. 7...♖d4, still. 8 g6 ♖e5 9 g7 ♖e8 10 ♖f5 ♖d5 11 ♖f6 ♖d6 and the position is drawn. It is not easy to stop that g-pawn.'

'Maybe we just need to go down the g-file. Yes, that's it! 5...♖c3 6 g5 fxg5 7 hxg5 ♖d1 8 g6 ♖g1 9 ♖f5 ♖d4.'



'He needs to stay with the pawn. My king will come to the d-file. 10 ♖f6 ♖d5 11 g7 ♖d6 12 ♖f7 ♖f1+. I do not make it. Is there anything else I can do? I am out of time, I need to play 1...b2.'

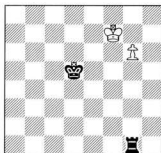
1...b2.

Tom afterwards said that it was only in the end, with 10 seconds left on the clock, that the idea of looking for alternatives struck him. Then, of course, it was too late, and he had to play the move he had calculated.

Peter Heine Nielsen

'Well, the obvious idea is of course to play 1...b2, approach with the king and take a race. This line is probably what should be calculated first.'

'1...b2 2 ♖b1 ♖c3 3 g4 ♖c2 4 ♖xb2+ ♖xb2 5 h4 ♖c3 6 g5 fxg5 7 hxg5 but this doesn't look promising. 7...♖d1 8 g6 ♖g1 9 ♖f5 ♖d4 10 ♖f6 ♖d5 11 ♖f7.'

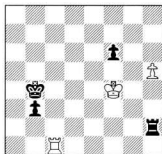


'Njet.' (pause)

'I am starting to calculate 1...♖d2 now. My idea is that after 2 g4 I want to play 2...♖f2+ in order to bring his king out of balance. Even though it seems as a rather artificial idea, it is still an idea.'

'1...♖d2 2 g4 (looks like only move) then 2...♖f2+ was my idea, but ok, let us say he plays 3 ♖g3 then I wanted to play 3...♖c2. Then I expected 4 ♖b1, then I have 4...♖c3+ and there it looks as if White is in trouble. Let us try again.'

'1...♖d2 and if 2 h4 then 2...♖xg2 3 h5 ♖h2, so it is obvious he needs to hang on to his pawns.'



'So 1...♖d2 then it seems to be very

f5

14 ♖d5 is a more obvious choice, but as the text move turns out to work well, there are no reasons for complaints.

14...♖d8?

This does not seem like the most natural move., but still it is not the reason for Black's downfall. Still it was more natural to play something like 14...♖a5? with chances for both sides.

15 g4 h6 16 ♖ae1

16 g5? is more thematic, opening lines on the kingside.

16...♖c6?

After this Black has simply wasted two tempi. Necessary was 16...d5! with the idea 17 exd5 ♖xa3? and the position remains complicated, even though White is to be preferred.

17 ♖f3 ♖ad8



18 ♖xh6!

White is ready to begin his attack. No piece could be improved upon.

18...♖d4

The only move. If 18...gxf6 19 ♖xh6 ♖h7 20 ♖h3 ♖h4 21 f6! leads to mate.

19 ♖g3 d5

White has a winning attack after 19...♖xb3 20 g5 ♖c8 21 ♖xg7! ♖xg7 22 g6 fsg6 23 fsg6 ♖h4 24 ♖xh4 ♖c6 25

♖d5 ♖xd5 26 exd5 and Black has all the problems one could possibly invent for him.

20 g5!

White does not hesitate.

20...♖h7

The win against 20...♖e8 is less obvious, but still to be found: 21 f6! ♖xb3 22 ♖xg7! ♖xg7 23 exd5 ♖c5+ 24 ♖h1 and Black is soon to be mated.

21 ♖xg7! ♖b6

21...♖xg7 22 f6+ and White wins.

22 ♖h1

22 ♖xd4 was perhaps slightly more accurate.

22...dxe4 23 ♖xe4 ♖c8

23...♖xg7 24 f6+ ♖xf6 25 gxf6+ ♖h8 26 ♖g7 still mates.

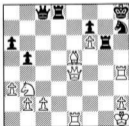
24 ♖xe5 ♖xf5

24...♖xb3 25 ♖xh7+! ♖xh7 26 ♖h3+ and Black is mated.

25 ♖f6+ ♖xf6 26 gxf6+ ♖h8 27 ♖xf5

White has won a piece and the attack continues.

27...♖xf5 28 ♖xf5 ♖c6+ 29 ♖e4 ♖c8 30 ♖g4 ♖g8 31 ♖h4 ♖g6



32 ♖xg6!

A nice way to end the show.

32...fxg6 33 f7 mate

Peter Skovgaard

Peter lives with his family in Skovlunde, Denmark, which obviously includes his father Tom. He was born in April 1990 and still attends school. (In Denmark we have a system of 1st to 9th grade of compulsory schooling.) He is a slender boy of normal build (1 metre and 67 cm tall) with a pleasant mood. He is into computer games, sports and other usual teenage activities.

His Elo has been circling 2050 for some time. It is my impression that he is very talented, but raw talent is only an opportunity. He is a generally talented boy, likely to find happiness in whatever endeavour he pursues.

During the test Peter was focused and relaxed, not at all intimidated. I attach this to his general easy-going character, and not to the fact that we know each other. Occasional lapses in concentration are bound to happen to 13-year-olds, and did to Peter. Still, his overall performance left a positive impression.

His best result by far is the 2003 Nordic championship in his age group. The Nordic countries include Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland and the Danish self-ruling colony, the Faeroe Islands. He won this event with 4½/6 in a convincing fashion, even though he occasionally was in trouble. When I asked him to present a game for this book, he chose the following swift kill.

Skovgaard-Olsen

Lyngby 2003

Modern Defence

(Express notes by P. Skovgaard)

1 e4 c6 2 d4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♙f3

♙g4 5 ♙e3 ♙g7 6 h3 ♙xf3 7 ♖xf3
e6 8 ♙d3 ♙e7 9 ♚d1!? f5!? 10 e5
0-0 11 ♙e2!

The knight is going to f4. The e6-pawn is weak.

11...b5

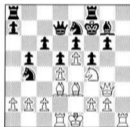
11...c5 12 c3.

12 ♙f4 ♖d7 13 ♖g3!

...g6-g5 is prevented and the attack on the king initiated.

13...♙a6 14 h4 ♙b4 15 h5 ♙f7 16
hxg6+ hxg6

Now comes the winning attacking move...



17 ♙xf5!!

The bishop can be captured by three pieces, but all these moves lose.

17...♙xf5

If 17...gx5 18 ♚h7 ♙g8 19 ♙h5 ♙g6
20 ♙h6!

18 ♖xg6+ ♙e7

18...♙g8 also does not last: 19 ♙xc6
♙xc3 (19...♙f7 20 ♖h7 mate or
19...♙xc2+ 20 ♙d2) 20 ♖h7+ ♙f7 21
♖xg7+ ♙xc6 22 ♚h6+ and so on...

19 g4

The exact continuation.

19...♙xc2+ 20 ♙d2 ♙fxd4 21
♖xg7+ ♙f7

21...♙e8 22 ♖xd7+ ♙xd7 23 ♚h7+

♖c8 24 ♜c1! and Black loses material.

22 ♖g6+ ♗d8



23 ♖g8+! 1-0

Black resigned as the rook on a8 is lost.

Sidsel Høeg

Sidsel is 23 years old, a student of political science, living in the heart of Copenhagen, with a penthouse view over the city from her student flat (allegedly). Her best results as a chess player have been winning her groups at the North Sea Cup in 2002 with 6/7 and in her club Bronshøj with 7½/9 in 2000. Her highest rating has been 1535, but recently she has dropped to the area around 1400. As national ratings are different from country to country, this probably does not say so much. It would be higher in the US, lower in Australia and probably about the same in the UK.

She has not yet settled down nor produced future world champions of her own.

Sidsel deviates from the other participants first and foremost by being the only female player involved in the testing. Also, she is the most calm by far. This showed in her approach to talking

into the microphone. Often she would say nothing for 45 seconds or so, keeping parts of her thought process to herself. As this was the natural way for her to do her part of the test, I did press her to talk more than she did. When she spoke, it was open and direct, and the final result gives a good image of her thought process excellently all the same.

The following game is a good representation for Sidsel as a chess player.

Bloom-Høeg

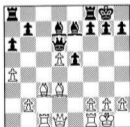
Hastings 2002/03

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 cxd4
 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 e6 6 ♖f3 a6 7 a4 ♗e7 8
 ♗d3 0-0 9 0-0 ♖c7

White has emerged from the opening with a slight edge, but in the coming middlegame struggle he is not able to keep up the pressure.

10 ♗d2 ♖c6 11 d5 exd5 12 ♖xd5
 ♖xd5 13 exd5 ♖e5 14 ♖xe5 dxe5
 15 ♜c1 ♖d6 16 ♗c3 ♗d7!



Though the e-pawn is indirectly threatened, Sidsel concentrates on her development.

17 ♖h5?! h6?

After this White has strong pressure. 17...f5 would give Black full equality.

18 b3?!

White misses 18 ♖xe5 ♖xc5 19 ♙xc5 ♙xd7 20 ♖c7 with a strong position.

18...♖xd5?!

This is probably too risky. 18...♙g5! would have solved all problems immediately.

19 ♙c4 ♖c6 20 ♙xe5 ♖b6 21 ♙c7

21 ♖fd1! with the idea 21...♖ad8 22 ♙c7! and White wins.

21...♖f6 22 ♖fd1

22 ♙d5 looks strong here.

22...♙c6!

Black is out of the worst problems with this move.

23 ♙d5 ♖g5!? 24 ♖f3

24 ♖xg5 ♙xg5 25 f4 ♙xd5 26 ♖xd5 ♙f6 27 ♖d7 would have kept up the pressure.



24...♖ac8!

Again Sidsel is highly aware of the importance of bringing her pieces into action.

25 ♙f4?

This is a miscalculation. Sidsel now wins the game with ice cool clarity.

25...♙xd5! 26 ♙xg5 ♙xf3 27 ♙xe7 ♙xd1

White probably overlooked that 28 ♙xf8 ♖xc1 loses the game.

28 ♖xd1 ♖fe8

Now we enter a purely technical phase.

29 ♙b4 ♖e2 30 ♖f1 ♖cc2 31 ♙e1

♖e7 32 a5 ♖ec7 33 b4 ♖c1!

The exchange of a pair of rooks prevents all counterplay.

34 ♖xc1 ♖xc1 35 ♖e2 ♖f8 36 ♙d2

♖c6 37 ♙e3 h5 38 ♖d3 g6 39

♙c5+ ♖e8 40 ♖c4 ♖d7 41 ♖d5 ♖f6

42 g3 ♖f5+ 43 ♖c4 ♖c6 44 h4 f6

45 ♖d3 ♖xc5 0-1

Sten Vesterli

Sten Vesterli is a 37-year-old IT-consultant from Haraskovby in Denmark. He has been invited to participate in this experiment because he only recently started to play chess in a chess club. He did so at the same time as his 9-year-old son, who won the F-group in the Danish children championships shortly before the testing. Sten is married and has no results nor any recollection of any great games from his career.

I would like to thank him immensely for participating in this project. It was very important to me that an intelligent adult with little experience in chess should share his thoughts, so that we would have a sound basis to compare with the more accomplished players. One thing that I have changed in his answers is recurring problems with the terminology and problems with naming the right squares. Often the g5-square became f5, f3 became c6 and so on. All of this was obviously caused by a chess board without letters and numbers at the sides.

inside the chess mind

What separates a Grandmaster from a club player? How do the thought processes of a world-class competitor differ from that of an amateur? What techniques can an enthusiastic chess player employ when striving to reach the next rung on the ladder? Jacob Aagaard provides the answers to these questions in this revolutionary and entertaining new book. He supplies numerous meticulously selected challenges to a group of chess players of a very wide range of ages and playing strengths. Once all the participants have attempted the tests, their discoveries, solving methods and difficulties with the exercises are evaluated and compared, and conclusions are drawn, while the players are also interviewed about their exercise techniques, ideas and opinions about chess in general. *Inside the Chess Mind* enters fresh territory in chess literature by providing a thought-provoking insight as to how the chess brains of the great, the good and the improver operate.

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