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Game 9
Lev Polugaevsky – Albin Planinc
Skopje 1971
 Réti Opening [A07]

- | | | | |
|----|------|------|--|
| 1 | ♘f3 | ♞f6 | |
| 2 | g3 | d5 | |
| 3 | ♙g2 | c6 | |
| 4 | b3 | ♙f5 | |
| 5 | ♙b2 | e6 | |
| 6 | 0-0 | ♙e7 | |
| 7 | d3 | h6 | |
| 8 | ♞bd2 | 0-0 | |
| 9 | ♚e1 | ♙h7 | |
| 10 | e4 | dxe4 | |
| 11 | dxe4 | ♞a6 | |
| 12 | ♚e2 | ♞c5 | |

Your turn. Choose between:

- 13 e5
- 13 ♞e5
- 13 ♞d4

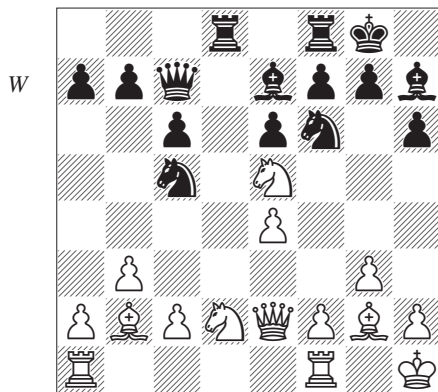


- 13 ♞e5

2 points. Black has used Lasker's system against the Réti Opening. With the slightly unusual set-up he has employed, he now besieges the e4-pawn. The chosen move is the best defence, since it places the knight on a dominant position, and is more flexible than 13 ♞d4, against which the reply ...e5 must be considered.

The advance 13 e5?! must be made only if there is no alternative, because it gives new life to the h7-bishop.

- | | | | |
|----|-----|----------|--|
| 13 | ... | ♚c7 | |
| 14 | ♚h1 | ♞ad8 (D) | |



15 Your turn



- 15 f4

1 point. The centre is stable, and according to chess logic, it should be possible to make progress on the kingside. This is the consequence of 13 ♞e5 and 14 ♚h1.

- 15 ... ♞e8

Against 15...♞fd7, how would you reply?

Your turn after 15...♞fd7. Choose between:

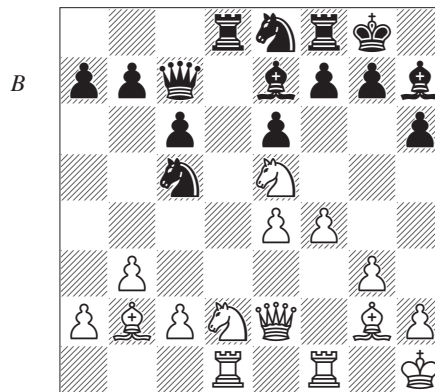
- 16 ♞xd7
- 16 ♞d3
- 16 ♞g4



Answer:

“Whoever has more space must keep the pieces on the board”, and even more so with the uncomfortable connection of the knights on d7 and c5. 16 ♞xd7? will cost you **1 point**. Instead, the knight's two retreats, with very different ideas in mind, get **2 points** each.

- 16 ♞ad1 (D)



- 16 ... ♞d6

Your turn. Choose between:

- 17 g4
- 17 ♞g4
- 17 ♚e3



- 17 ♚e3!

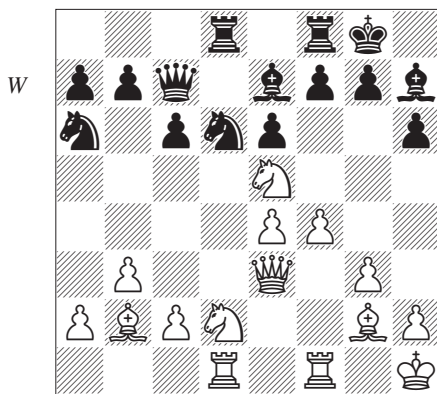
2 points. The position only offers flexible manoeuvres, without any immediate purpose. The queen moves, attacking the c5-knight, and with several other ideas, as we shall see. Also interesting, although less flexible, is 17 g4 (**1 point**): White exerts pressure on the kingside, anticipating Black's knight manoeuvre. If 17... $\text{b5?!$, the difference in the number of pieces on the kingside is too great, and White gets excellent chances with 18 f5! ; e.g., 18... f6 19 e5! , etc. 18... d4 isn't be possible either, as after 19 f2! the threats against the kingside are too strong.

Instead, the decision to opt for a bayonet attack with 17 g4? is premature – White has too many points to take care of. Black is well off after 17... f6! 18 ec4 (unfortunately g4 is no longer possible) 18... xc4 19 xc4 (19... xc4? loses a pawn after 19... xd1) when after, for example, 19... d7 , the justification for 17 g4 would be hard to find. 18 d3 in this line would lead to a level game after 18... xd3 19 xd3 b5 20 e3 c5 21 f3 d7 , etc., but it is clear that after 17... f6! White would have rather left his pawn on g3 .

17 ... a6 (D)

If 17... d7 , White would certainly avoid the exchange by playing 18 d3 . If 17... c8 then 18 c3! , when the threat of moving the e5-knight forces 18... f6 , which doesn't bring about the same results as it did after 17 $\text{g4?!$.

Against 17... b6 , White could rely again on 18 g4 , in order to play 19 c3 .



Your turn. Choose between:

18 xa7

18 a3

• • • • •
18 a3

1 point. Instead, 18 xa7? loses **2 points**. Besides 18... c5 , Black can play the simple 18... xe4! , when the threat of ... c5 makes it evident how wrong 18 xa7 was.

Your turn. Choose between:

18... f6

18... b5

18... c5

• • • • •
18 ... f6?

A move whose defects are greater than its advantages. The first thing to do was to obtain a stronghold in the centre, and the clearest way was 18... b5! (**3 points**) which White was going to meet by 19 b4 c5 20 c4 d4 21 b5 with a slight advantage for White, but with the game still to be played. There could follow, for instance, 21... b8 22 df3 f6 23 g4 h5! 24 f2 e5 , etc. If White defends his a3 -pawn with 19 a4 there could follow 19... c5 20 f3 d4 , and the position would still be complex after 21 c3 .

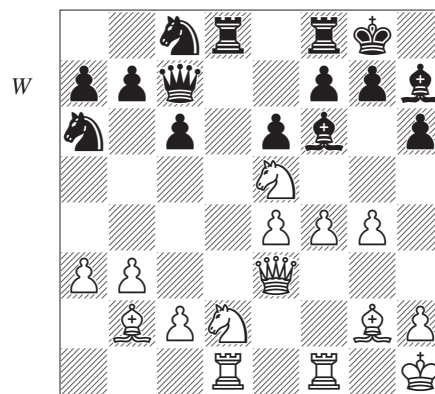
The third option, 18... c5 seeking to transpose by 19... b5 , is less convincing because of the reply 19 e2 , and so gets no points.

19 Your turn

• • • • •
19 g4!

4 points. This is the main defect of Black's move: it helps the pawn attack. Again, deviating with 19 xa7? is a mistake, since it is not possible to keep the pawn. Black has at least a draw after 19... c5 20 dc4 c8 21 a8 d6 , etc.

19 ... c8 (D)



Your turn. Choose between:

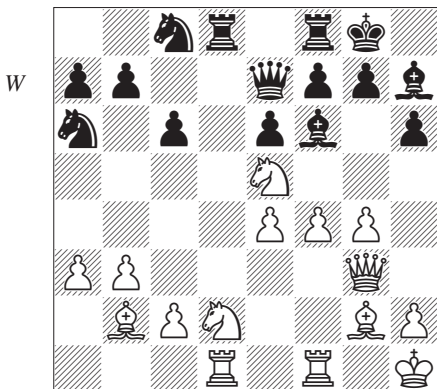
- 20 ♖g3
- 20 ♜df3
- 20 ♜dc4



20 ♖g3

2 points. Wholly justifying the moves 17 ♖e3! and 19 g4!, since it protects the e5-knight and threatens 21 g5. Also possible – with the same idea – is 20 ♜df3 (**1 point**) although it unnecessarily allows simplification by exchanging rooks. By contrast, 20 ♜dc4?!, moving away from the kingside, is not consistent with the previous play, and allows the trade of rooks under better circumstances for Black than after 20 ♜df3.

20 ... ♖e7 (D)



21 Your turn



21 g5!

4 points. At the price of a pawn White gains several tempi for the attack. No other move deserves any points. As Larsen’s saying – already known to us – goes, “opportunities like these must not be wasted.”

- 21 ... hxg5
- 22 fxg5 ♙xg5
- 23 ♜df3 ♙f6 (D)

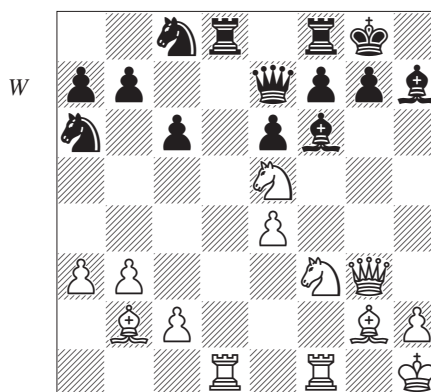
23... ♙h6 is met by 24 ♜g4 with decisive threats; e.g., 24... ♙g6 25 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 26 ♜xh6+ gxh6 27 ♜e5 ♖g5 28 ♜g4, etc.

24 Your turn



24 ♜xc6!

3 points. This is the main idea behind the pawn sacrifice. With this elegant blow White



gets a very strong attack. But the game is not decided yet.

- 24 ... bxc6
- 25 e5

Your turn. Choose between:

- 25... ♙h4
- 25... ♖c7
- 25... ♙xe5



25 ... ♙h4?

Black thus manages to slow down the involvement of the b2-bishop in the attack, but this is not the most tenacious defence.

Also bad is 25... ♙xe5?, leaving the b2-bishop active and letting the f3-knight spring into action with 26 ♜xe5. After, for example, 26... ♖c7 (not 26... ♜xd1? 27 ♜xc6 ♜xf1+ 28 ♙xf1, winning the queen because of the threat against g7) 27 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 28 ♖f2 f6 29 ♜xc6 White has a very superior position, with the bishop-pair and the exposed black king.

The queen exchange would bring some relief: 25... ♖c7! (**3 points**) 26 exf6 ♖xg3 27 hxg3, and now, how would you defend? **Your turn** after 27 hxg3. **Choose between:**

- 27... ♜xd1
- 27... ♙xc2

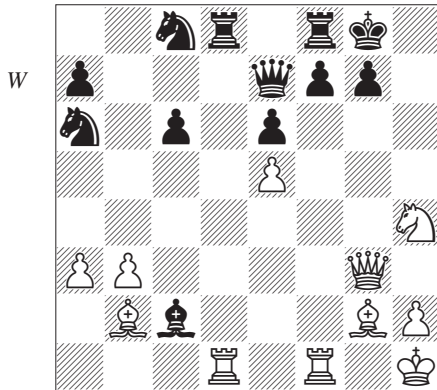


Answer:

Giving up the d-file with 27... ♜xd1? is not good: 28 ♜xd1 gxf6 29 ♙xf6 ♙xc2 30 ♜d4!, winning, as Polugaevsky points out.

27... ♙xc2! (**2 points**) is necessary, when although White has the better position, the game is far from over. He has many ways to continue; for example, 28 ♜c1 ♙xb3 29 fxg7 ♜fe8 30 ♜d4, with a better position.

26 ♖xh4 ♙xc2 (D)



Your turn. Choose between:

27 ♗xd8

27 ♗d6

27 ♗c1

• • • • •

27 ♗c1

2 points. This was a very difficult choice. The text-move is the most straightforward, but 27 ♗d6! (**2 points**) is also strong; for instance, 27...♗c5 28 ♗xc6 ♙e4 29 ♗g1!, with a tremendous attack.

Of course 27 ♗xd8?, simplifying the position, is no good.

27 ... ♙h7

28 Your turn

• • • • •

28 ♗g1

2 points. The first thing to do is to attack g7; the c6-pawn can wait.

28 ... ♗d3?

This only quickens the end, but there is no defence. If 28...♗c5 29 ♙xc6 g6, which is the quickest way to win? **Your turn** after 29...g6.

• • • • •

Answer:

With 30 ♗c3!, as Polugaevsky points out, which besides defending d3, brings the b2-bishop into the attack, with devastating consequences (**2 points**).

29 ♗g4 ♗e3

If 29...g6, White storms the castled position by 30 ♙e4 ♗xb3 31 ♙xg6!, with a winning attack: 31...fxg6 32 ♗xg6 ♗f7 33 ♗cf1 ♗xg6 34 ♗xe6+ ♗g7 35 ♗xg6+ ♙xg6, and here 36 ♗g1, among others.

30 ♙d4 ♗d3

31 ♙f1 1-0

Some lessons from this game:

1) It is important to find the right moment for something as radical as a bayonet attack (17 g4?, 19 g4!).

2) Even in the most delicate positions, there are still defensive resources (25...♗c7!).

Maximum score: 35 points.

30 points or more: Super Grandmaster.

Between 25 and 29 points: Grandmaster.

Between 20 and 24 points: International Master.

Master.

Between 15 and 19 points: Good level.

Between 10 and 14 points: Fairly good.

Less than 10 points: The next one will be better!