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Test 82

Larsen – Ribli

Las Palmas IZ 1982

Queen's Gambit, Semi-Tarrasch [D41]

1 c4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗c3 e6 4 e3 ♗c6 5 d4 d5 6 cxd5

Releasing the tension in the centre.

6...♗xd5

The Semi-Tarrasch. The alternative is 6...exd5, reaching a Tarrasch.

7 ♖c4

This move puts pressure on the d5-knight, thus forcing Black to make a decision in the centre. Another very tested line is 7 ♖d3 ♖e7 8 0-0 cxd4 9 exd4 0-0 10 ♖e1 ♖f6 11 ♖e4 ♗ce7.

7...cxd4 8 exd4 ♖e7 9 0-0 10 ♖e1 ♗xc3

10...b6?! is a positional mistake on account of 11 ♗xd5 exd5 12 ♖b5 with advantage to White thanks to the better coordination of his pieces and the weakness produced by the move ...b6, Botvinnik-Alekhine, Amsterdam (AVRO) 1938.

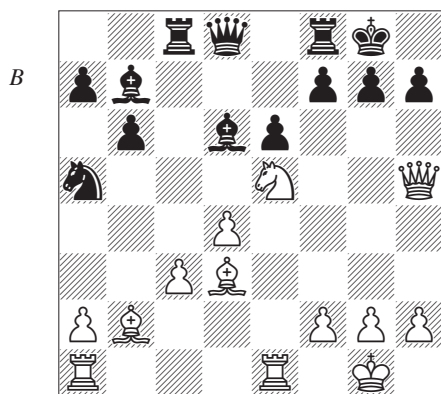
11 bxc3 b6 12 ♖e2

An interesting possibility is 12 ♖d3 ♖b7 13 ♖c2.

12...♖b7 13 ♖d3 ♗a5!

An ideal move: it frees the c-file for the rook, points to the c4-square and prevents ♖e4.

14 ♗e5 ♖c8 15 ♖b2 ♖d6 16 ♖h5 (D)



Black has started thematic action on the queenside with pressure against c3 and a glance

at the important square c4. At the same time, White is pointing his forces towards Black's kingside.

Black to play. How to avoid the mating threat?

Option A: 16...f5.

Option B: 16...g6.

Option C: 16...h6.

Test 83

Capablanca – Alekhine

Buenos Aires Wch (21) 1927

Queen's Gambit Declined [D63]

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 ♖g5 ♗bd7 5 e3 ♖e7 6 ♗f3 0-0

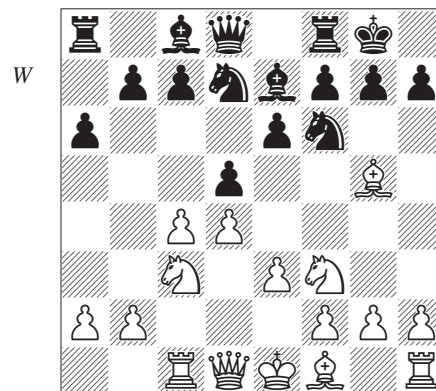
Black plays the Orthodox Variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined.

7 ♖c1

Both 7 ♖c2 and 7 ♖d3 are the main choices to the text-move.

7...a6!? (D)

Until the date of this game, the most used line in this position was 7...c6 8 ♖d3 dxc4 9 ♖xc4 ♗d5 10 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 11 0-0 ♗xc3 12 ♖xc3 e5. Nowadays there is also 7...dxc4 8 ♖xc4 c5 (8...a6!?) 9 0-0 a6.



8 a3?!

8 cxd5 and 8 c5 are better choices.

8...h6 9 ♖h4 dxc4 10 ♖xc4 b5 11 ♖e2?!

11 ♖a2, followed by ♖b1 and ♖c2, is better.

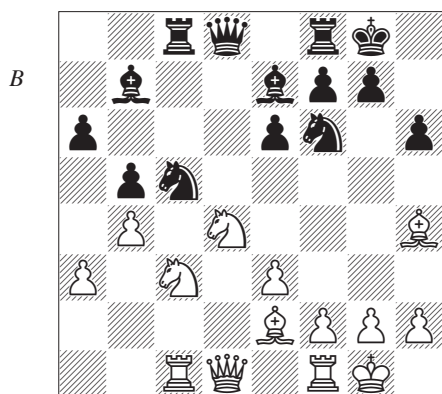
11...♖b7?!

11...c5!? is more sensible.

12 0-0?!

According to Kasparov, with 12 b4! White keeps a clear positional advantage, since after the logical 12...a5 White replies 13 ♖b3 axb4 14 axb4 g5 15 ♕g3 ♜d5 16 0-0 with a crushing advantage.

12...c5 13 dxc5 ♞xc5 14 ♞d4 ♚c8 15 b4 (D)



Here we have a symmetrical pawn-structure, distinctive of the Queen's Gambit, where the strategy of both sides hinges on the key squares c4 and c5. The present game is a perfect model of the strategy to follow in this kind of position.

Black to play. Choose one of the following possibilities:

Option A: 15...♞cd7.

Option B: 15...♞ce4.

Test 84

Kramnik – Yusupov

Dortmund 1998

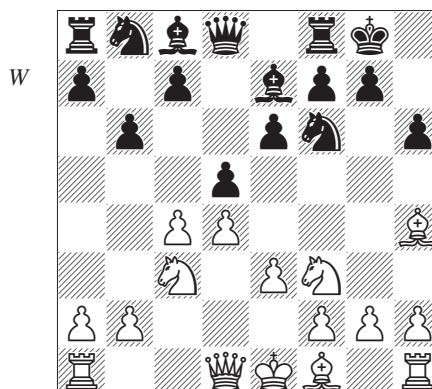
Queen's Gambit, Tartakower Defence [D58]

1 ♞f3 d5 2 d4 ♞f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♞c3 ♕e7 5 ♕g5 h6 6 ♕h4

The exchange on f6 was a fashionable choice after the world championship matches between Kasparov and Karpov.

6...0-0 7 e3 b6 (D)

Another well-explored possibility is 7...♞e4, known as Lasker's Defence.



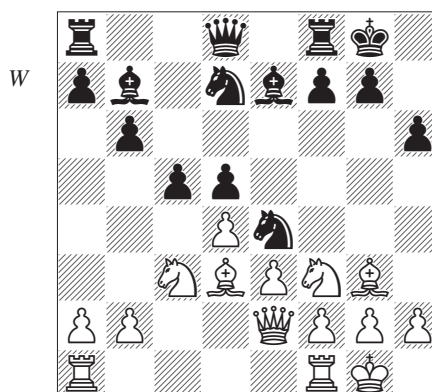
8 ♕d3

There are many other ideas, though without a doubt the preferred one is nowadays 8 ♕e2 ♖b7 9 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 b4.

8...♖b7 9 0-0 ♞bd7 10 ♖e2 c5 11 ♕g3

This move leads to a transposition to the normal lines that would arise by playing 11 ♚fd1. We shall explain this idea briefly. In this position Black lacks a good square for his queen, so he seeks exchanges by ...♞e4. White normally declines the exchange of bishops on e7, because it would solve Black's problems with his queen. When moving the bishop to g3, White also keeps more options open about where to place his rooks.

11...♞e4 12 cxd5 exd5 (D)



13 ♚ad1!?

The natural move seems to be 13 ♚fd1, saving the c-file for the other rook, where it would press against the hanging pawns. But White

knight, with pressure against the b2-pawn and follow with ...a5 planning a break at a4 with good counterplay. However, Black omits an important tactical detail, whereby he should play the rook to b8 first before playing ...a5, as we shall see later. 0 points for Option C.

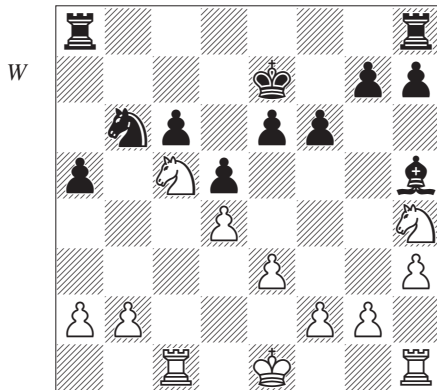
The idea behind Option A, of guarding the bishop against a possible jump of the knight to h4 by playing 16...g5 is not necessary since the bishop has the g4-square to escape. It is better not to lose time and he should seek counterplay along the a- and b-files without delay. 0 points for this choice.

16...♖hb8, suggested under Option B, is the right plan (and the right move-order). Now Black is ready to play 17...♘d7 (or maybe better ...a5 first) beginning the aforementioned counterplay. There is no need to worry about 17 ♘a6 ♗c8 18 ♘b4? due to 18...♗d6 and ...a5. If this was your choice, and you found that the other move-order fails tactically, then you have earned 5 points.

17 ♘h4! ♗g4?

17...♖hb8 was the only move, although after 18 ♘xf5+ exf5 White's advantage is evident.

18 h3 ♗h5 (D)



19 ♘xe6!

The key move. White forced the bishop from the defence of e6 and now the undefended b6-knight becomes apparent.

19...♗xe6 20 ♖xc6+ ♗d7 21 ♖xb6 ♖hb8 22 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 23 b3 a4 24 g4 axb3 25 axb3 ♖xb3 26 ♗e2

The situation is now clear and White has a healthy extra pawn.

26...♖b2+ 27 ♗f3 ♗f7 28 ♘f5 g6 29 ♘h6 ♗e6 30 ♖a1 ♖b7 31 h4 g5 32 hxg5 fxg5 33 ♖h1 1-0

The game would have ended as follows: 33...♗e7 34 ♘f5+ ♗xf5 35 gxh6 ♗f6 36 ♗g4 ♖b2 37 ♖xh7 ♖xf2 38 ♖h6+.

Option A: 0 points

Option B: 5 points

Option C: 0 points

Test 82 [Level 1]

Themes: Pawn-Formation c3-d4; Hindering the Threats

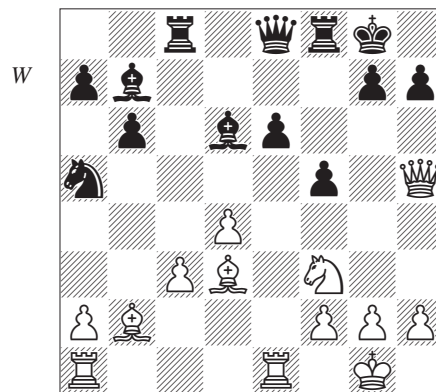
16...f5!

This is the right way to hinder White's threats, without fearing the weakness at e6, since we do not see how White can exploit this. We should remember that "a weakness is only a weakness if the opponent can take advantage of it"! Both 16...g6 and 16...h6, suggested under Options B and C, are a little weakening and thus they deserve no points. If this was your assessment and you chose Option A, ending White's attacking prospects, then you have earned 5 points.

17 ♘f3

Probing e6 and threatening 18 ♘g5.

17...♗e8! (D)



A logical follow-up. With this move, Black virtually forces the exchange of queens. After

this exchange, the c3-pawn will be more vulnerable than that at e6 (supported and protected by the black king).

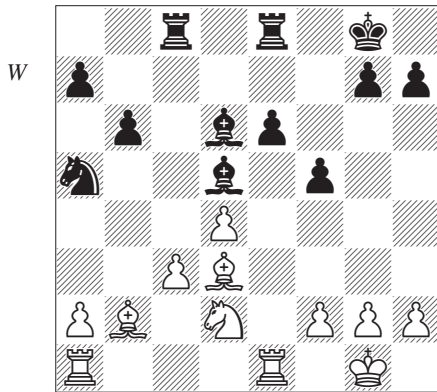
18 ♖xe8

Avoiding the exchange is no better since the queen remains in an unhappy position. Let us see a very likely continuation: 18 ♖h3 ♜f6! 19 ♙c1 (preventing 19...♞h6) 19...♞c6 (19...♞xc3?! 20 ♙xf5!) 20 ♙d2 ♜c4! (20...♞g6 gets nowhere: 21 ♜h4! forces the rook to return because if 21...♞g4? then 22 f3!) 21 ♙c1 ♞d5! and Black's advantage is beyond question.

18...♞fxe8 19 ♜d2

Necessary in order to control c4.

19...♙d5! (D)



A very complete move. From d5 the bishop attacks the a2-pawn, watches over the important c4-square and defends e6. The reader should notice the difference in activity between the bishop defending the 'weakness' at e6 and the other defending the weakness at c3.

20 a4 ♜f7 21 g3 g6! 22 f4

The only way to prevent 22...e5. The drawback of this move is that it gives Black the possibility of a break with ...g5, combining play on both flanks.

22...h6!

Preparing ...g5.

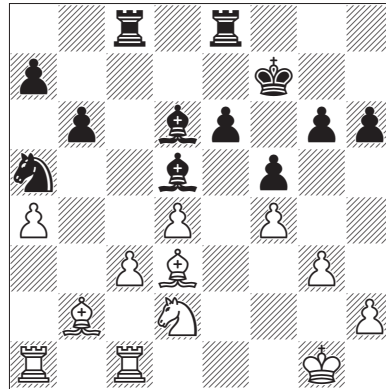
23 ♞ec1 (D)

Threatening to gain some space by pushing the c-pawn.

23...♙c4!

The right way to hinder the advance. The attempt to do so with the knight is not so effective:

B



23...♜c4 24 ♙xc4! ♙xc4 25 ♜f3 followed by 26 ♜e5 with some activity.

24 ♙c2 g5! 25 fxg5 hxg5 26 ♙a3 ♙xa3 27 ♞xa3 ♙d5!

Preventing ♜f3-e5 again.

28 ♙d3 ♞ed8 29 ♞e1

If 29 c4, then 29...♙b7 winning the d-pawn.

29...♞c7!

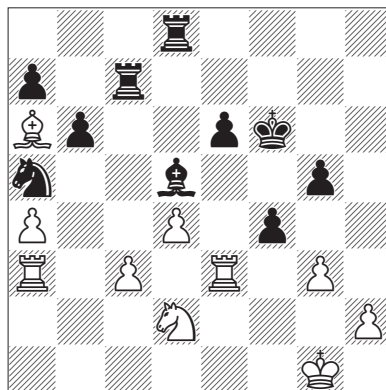
Preparing not only the doubling of rooks on the c-file but the rooks will also play on the other flank, one on the first rank and the other via the second.

30 ♞e3 ♜f6!

Centralizing the king and freeing the way for the rook.

31 ♙a6 f4! (D)

W



Beginning the final onslaught.

32 ♙d3 ♞h8 33 c4 ♙a8 34 gxf4 gxf4 35 ♞h3 ♞g7+! 36 ♜f2 ♞g2+ 37 ♜e1 ♞xh2 38 ♞xh8 ♞xh8

Black has won a pawn, thus realizing his positional advantage. The rest is just technique, since besides the material advantage, the white pieces are badly placed.

39 ♖f3 ♗d8! **40** ♕f2 ♙xf3 **41** ♕xf3 ♗xd4

Winning a second pawn. The rest of the game is not interesting.

42 ♗c3 ♖c6 **43** ♙b5 ♖e5+ **44** ♕e2 ♕f5 **45** c5 f3+ **46** ♕e1 bxc5 **47** ♗xc5 ♕f4 **48** ♗c7 ♕e3 **49** ♗e7 f2+ **50** ♕f1 ♗g4 0-1

Option A: 5 points

Option B: 0 points

Option C: 0 points

Test 83 [Level 2]

Themes: Weak Squares; Linked Squares

15...♗cd7!!

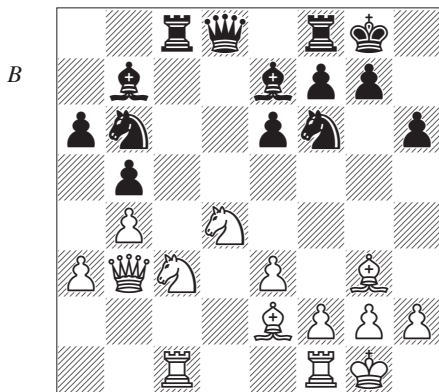
An excellent move. The knight is going to d7 with the idea of reaching c4 via b6. In this and similar positions, the game revolves around the c4- and c5-squares, and the side in a better position to take advantage of them gets the advantage. If this was your choice, then you have earned 5 points.

If instead you decided to play the natural 15...♗ce4, which leads to equal play, then you have scored 2 points.

16 ♙g3?

A serious mistake. White would get a more or less equal game after 16 ♗b3 and ♗a5, fighting for the c4-square.

16...♗b6 17 ♖b3 (D)



17...♗fd5!

With the idea of ...♗xc3 followed by ...♙d5-c4, and after the exchange of the light-squared bishops, the c4-square will be even weaker.

18 ♙f3 ♗c4! 19 ♖e4 ♖c8 20 ♗xc4?

According to Kotov, White should have played 20 ♖b1 with the idea of ♗d6 or ♗d2, fighting for control of the c4-square.

20...♗xc4 21 ♗c1 ♖a8! 22 ♗c3

White faced the threat of ...♗dx3.

22...♗c8 23 ♗xd5 ♙xd5 24 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 25 a4 ♙f6 26 ♗f3 ♙b2!

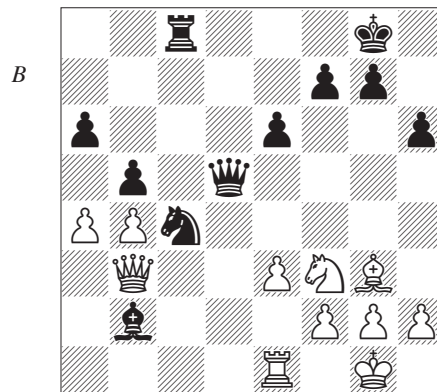
With the idea of ...e5 without blocking the bishop.

27 ♗e1 (D)

Let us examine other lines quoted by Alekhine:

a) 27 ♗d1 bxa4 28 ♖xa4 ♗b6 29 ♗xd5 ♗xa4 30 ♗d1 ♗c3 31 ♗e1 ♗c4 32 ♙d6 ♗e4 33 ♙e7 f6 34 ♗b1 ♕f7 35 ♕f1 ♙c3 winning.

b) 27 ♗b1 ♗a3! 28 ♖xb2 ♗xb1 29 ♖xb1 ♖b3!! 30 ♖f1 bxa4 31 h3 ♖c4, also winning.



27...♗d8 28 axb5 axb5 29 h3 e5 30 ♗b1 e4 31 ♗d4 ♙xd4 32 ♗d1 ♗xe3 0-1

Option A: 5 points

Option B: 2 points

Test 84 [Level 3]

Themes: Hanging Pawns; Realization of the Advantage

17 a4!