

The French Winawer: Food for Thought

The Candidates tourney has been paused at the ½ way mark. There are two leaders thanks to a seventh-round win by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (MVL) over Ian Nepomniatchi (Nepo). Nepo trotted out the French Defense against the Frenchman, but had his head handed to him after the dust had settled.

Nepo was roundly criticized for his choice of opening by the various commentators. After all he had used it earlier against Alekseenko, and had “barely” survived that game as he struggled to a draw. Why use it again?

I found this criticism laughable. Just as in any football game, it was based solely upon ‘a result’ and not well-founded thoughtfulness. I know of no football team that calls a play in the huddle that it thinks will surely fail... They have their reason for calling it. But when it fails dramatically, due to a breakdown, a good play by the defense, or due to the fact that maybe it wasn’t the right call.... They will often be lambasted for it due to its failure – after the fact...

Now, I do think that the French Defense is a bit risky to play as black. I know I never got a handle on how to play it, and mostly I failed spectacularly when I did try to play it. Although, I will admit that I did have that one brief moment in the sun where I had learned a new “and tricky” sideline (that could be used against three ♔d2 or ♔c3) that brought me three quick wins against two masters and a lesser player. The surprise value didn’t hurt, of course, as well as the newness of the line. I will also say I just as quickly shut down the French and haven’t used it since (with, I may add, no plans to ever do so again!).

I have always had success as white against the French. Both with a little known “Two Knights” system [Here I even won a game in 5’ total time for both players!!] and the main lines. The wonderful annotations of French games by Tal (in his magnificent book on his match against Botvinnik was particularly inspiring), Fischer (My 60 Memorable Games), and Byrne (with respect to Fischer’s great win against Larsen in their match) will surely lead one to want to face down the French.

Nepo has played the French (but mostly long ago in his junior years) and his current main weapon against the king-pawn is the Najdorf. Clearly there would be surprise on his part, if he used the French. Such surprise is warranted in battles for the highest crown (even if they might fail spectacularly: viz Fischer-Larsen). I did go a step further and researched all of his possible opponents and their experience vs the French.

Guess what??

They didn’t have a lot, and the lines that showed up were often not the most critical lines. If black faces a “safe” line against the French (say the exchange, Advance, or Tarrasch) then he often has to suffer, some, but he can survive... Think, too, about Kortchnoj in his battles vs Karpov, for example. Only challenging black in the sharpest lines, can white hope to really bother black. One thinks of Botvinnik as being a huge French player, but in his battles at the highest level, his score with the French is actually mediocre, especially against the “best’ white lines.

Now, as far as criticizing Nepo for repeating the line; well I’m thinking that he found something(s?) for black, and would like to spring them on somebody [Perhaps like Caruana wished to do in the SLAV defense.] In the first game his ‘mine’ didn’t go off, so why not try again? MVL, though, repeated Alekseenko’s line and had a bit more potent continuation ready (which I believe was simply in tourney prep). In the game, itself, MVL played better than Nepo, and Nepo’s novelty [which as we will see has interesting origins(!)] really wasn’t good enough, given MVL’s nice play. Just as Fabio fared poorly when Ding didn’t back down and played well in his lone victory.

I find this game very instructive for various chess reasons that could be used in any game. If you wish to simply skip to the “**MAIN COURSE**” then, by all means, please do! [\[See Page 15\]](#)

Before we start, though, a brief overview and an historical supplement from the 60’s!

The French Winawer: Food for Thought

1.e4 e6
 2.d4 d5
 3.♘c3 ♙b4
 4.e5 c5

[Not surprisingly Aron Nimzowitsch did a lot of pioneering work on this opening structure.]

Moves	Games	Score	Last y
4...c5	41021	56.2%	2020
4...♞e7	10008	53.9%	2020
4...b6	3436	56.2%	2019
4...♞d7	2944	55.5%	2019

By far the most popular move

In reality this will just transpose to 6. ... ♞e7 lines.

These last two options are positional in nature. Black will often keep his ♙ if it is attacked by retreating to f8. Petrosian is known for playing in this manner. (see pages 5 & 6)

5.a3 ♙xc3+

Black has an option here to play 5. ... ♙a5. [It is a sharp line, associated with Botvinnik. (see page 8)]

6.bxc3 ---

Moves	Games	Score	Last y
6...♞e7	15958	55.4%	2020
6...♞c7	6322	57.2%	2020
6...♞a5	3402	54.8%	2020
6...♞c6	1493	57.5%	2019

This reserves the ♞'s possibilities for deployment.

A sharper line, but with a later ♞e7 it could just transpose to the above.

A very sharp line associated with Lajos Portisch and William Hook. (see page 10)

A typical French move, but perhaps it commits the ♞ too soon. (see page 12)

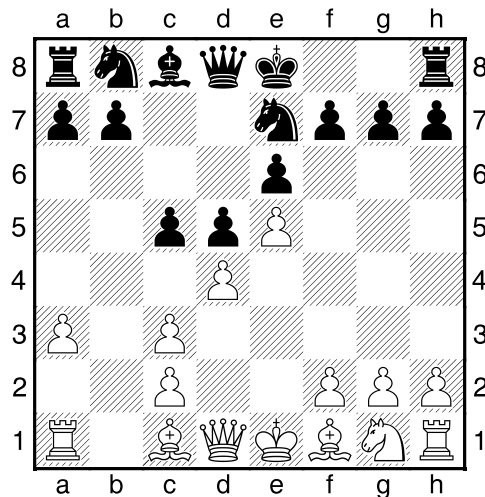
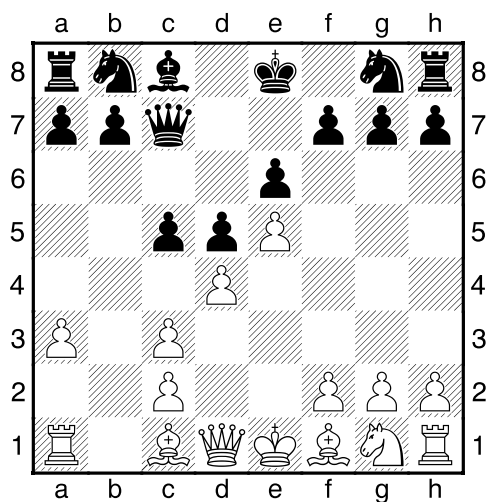
We will look at the two main moves:

6.bxc3 ♞c7

Moves	Games	Score	Last y
7...♞g4	2933	58.0%	2019
7...♞f3	2722	57.6%	2020
7...♞d2	233	53.4%	2019
7...♞d3	84	61.3%	2018
7.f4	69	41.3%	2018
7.h4	62	63.7%	2019

6.bxc3 ♞e7

Moves	Games	Score	Last y
7...♞g4	11510	56.0%	2020
7...♞f3	5546	53.4%	2019
7.h4	1777	59.4%	2019
7.a4	1690	55.7%	2019

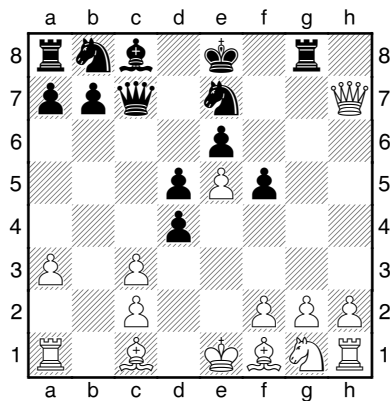


Two Tal-Botvinnik games will be our look at the ♞c7 line.
 One from each of their two World Championship Matches [1960 & 1961]

This will be the “Main Course”.
 A look at a recent game from the Candidates tournament.
 MVL vs Nepo {page 15}

The French Winawer: Food for Thought

7. ♖g4 f5
 8. ♖g3 ♘e7
 9. ♖xg7 ♙g8
 10. ♖xh7 cxd4

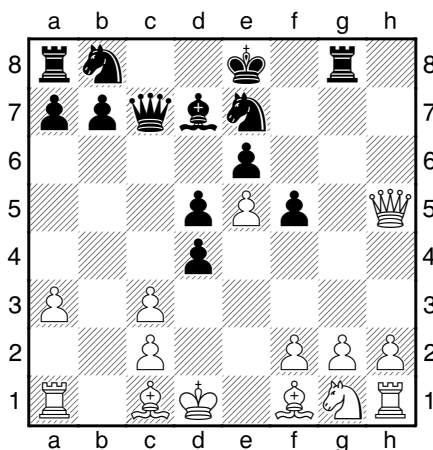


11. ♔d1 ...

[This move was first played in the Candidates tournament, Gligoric-Petrosian] Belgrade 1959, but it had been suggested as early as 1948 by Euwe.]

- 11... ♙d7!

12. ♖h5+ ...



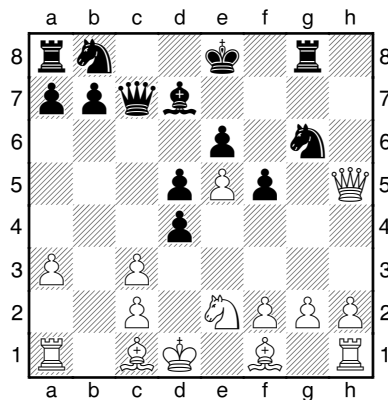
Both games reached this position:

Tal - Botvinnik [C18]

World-ch22 Moscow (1),
 15.03.1960

- 12... ♘g6?

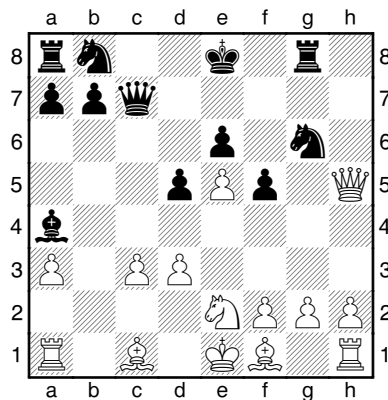
13. ♘e2



- 13... d3

14. cxd3 ♙a4+?

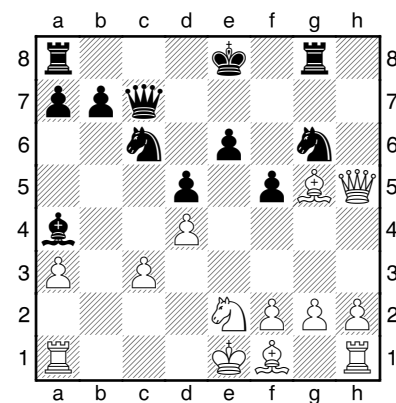
15. ♔e1



- 15... ♖xe5?!

16. ♙g5! ♘c6

17. d4 ♖c7



18. h4!

- e5

19. ♖h3

- ♖f7

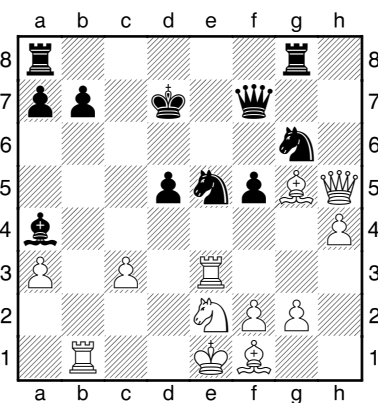
20. dxe5

- ♘xe5

21. ♖e3

- ♔d7

22. ♖b1



- 22...

- b6?!

23. ♘f4

- ♖ae8

24. ♖b4

- ♙c6

25. ♖d1

- ♘xf4

26. ♖xf4

- ♘g6

27. ♖d4

- ♖xe3+

28. fxe3

- ♔c7

29. c4!

- dxc4

30. ♙xc4

- ♖g7

31. ♙xg8

- ♖xg8

32. h5

- 1-0

The French Winawer: Food for Thought

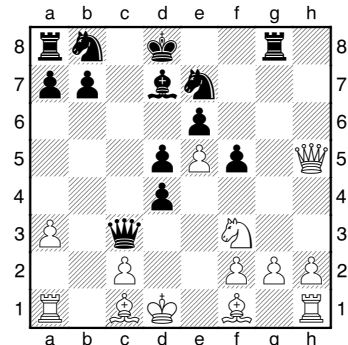
Tal - Botvinnik [C18]

World-ch23 Moscow (12), 14.04.1961

12... ♔d8!

Botvinnik improves.

13. ♖f3 ♔xc3?!

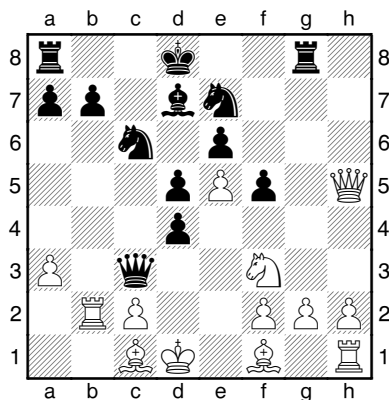


14. ♖a2!

["This ugly move is practically forced." (Tal 75)]

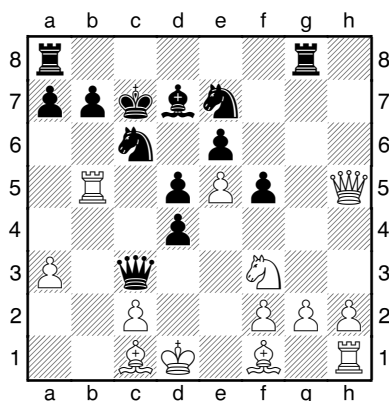
14... ♘bc6

15. ♖b2



15... ♔c7

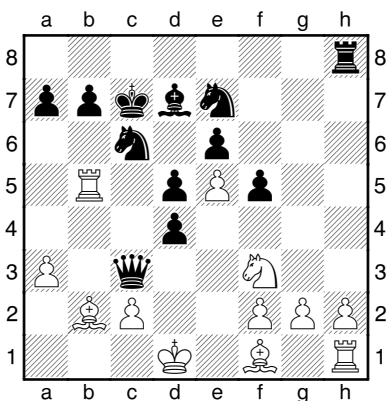
16. ♖b5!



16... ♖h8

17. ♔xh8?! ♖xh8

18. ♕b2



18... ♔xf3+! ♖

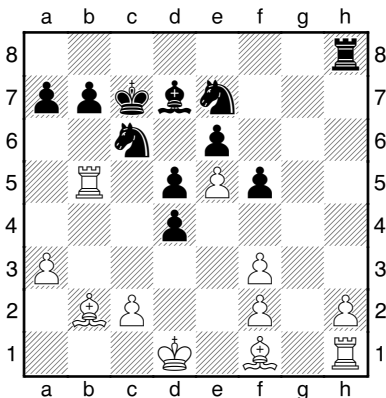
[18... ♔a5? 19. ♖xa5 ♘xa5

20. ♕xd4± (Gligoric) (20. ♘xd4± (Euwe));

18... a6? 19. ♕xc3 axb5

20. ♘xd4± (Tal 75)]

19. gxf3



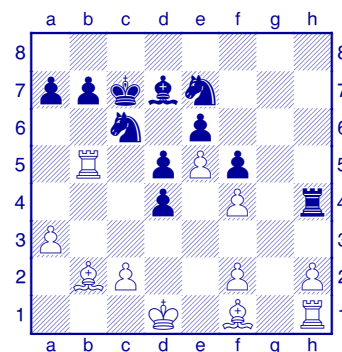
[White's e-pawn will be virtually impossible to defend, and after its elimination, the Black center pawn mass becomes menacing. However, White has the characteristically powerful passed h-pawn as compensation.]

19... ♘g6?!

[19... ♖h4! ♔

(Botvinnik)

20. f4!



(20. ♕c1 f4 (Tal 75))

20... ♘g6 (20... ♖xf4 21. h4

♘xe5 22. ♖b3 "Black [will]

have a hard struggle

against White's passed

pawn." (Tal 75) 22... ♘g4

23. ♔e1 ♕a4 (23... ♘xf2

24. ♕c1!; 23... e5 24. ♕e2!

♘xf2 25. ♖f1 (Moles 75))

24. ♖g3 ♕xc2 25. ♕e2

(≤25. ♕c1 ♖e4+ 26. ♔d2

♘xf2 27. ♖h2 ♘g4 28. ♖xg4

fxg4! 29. ♔xc2 g3 (Moles

75)) 25... d3 26. ♕xg4! ♖xg4

27. ♖xg4 fxg4 28. ♔d2!+-

(Moles 75)) 21. ♕c1 ♘xf4

22. ♕xf4 ♖xf4 23. h4! ♘xe5

24. ♖b3 (24. ♖b4 ♘g4 ♔

(Euwe, eco 81)) 24... ♘g4

a) 24... ♕a4 25. ♖b4;

b) 24... ♖xf2 25. h5 (25. ♔e1

♖xc2; 25. ♕e2 d3) 25... ♕a4

26. ♖b4 (26. ♖g3? ♖xc2!)

26... ♕xc2+ 27. ♔e1 ♖f4

28. h6 ♘f3+ 29. ♔e2!+-

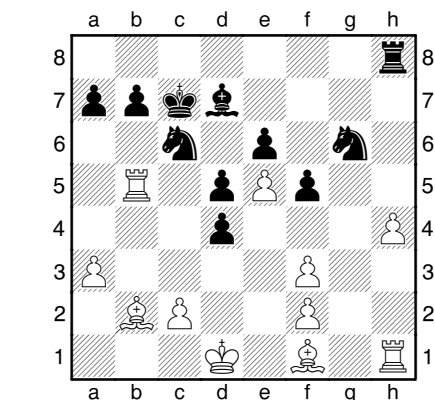
(Moles 75);

25. ♔e1 ♘xf2 (25... ♕e8?

26. h5 ♘xf2 27. h6! ♘xh1

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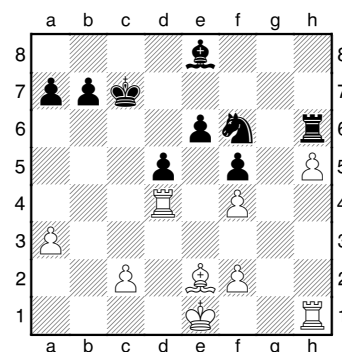
28.h7 ♖h4 29.♞h3+- (Moles 75) 26.♞g1 (26.h5? ♜xh1 27.h6 ♖h4 28.♞h3 ♞xh6 29.♞xh6 ♜g3? (Moles 75)) 26...♜g4 27.h5 ♙e8 28.♞h3 ♞e4+ 29.♙e2!+- (Moles 75) (29.♜d2 ♞e3!); 19...♜xe5? 20.♙xd4!]



20... ♜gxe5?!

[20...♞xh4 21.♞xh4 ♜xh4 22.f4± (Gligoric, Euwe, Tal); 20...♜cxe5!? 21.♞c5+ (21.♞b3 ♜c6 22.h5 e5? (Euwe)) 21...♜d6 22.♙xd4 ♞xh4± (Flohr) 23.♞xh4 ♜xh4 24.♞c3 (24.f4 ♜ef3!) 24...♜hxf3 (Moles 75); 20...♜xh4 21.f4± (Moles 75)]

21.h5 ♜f7?!
 22.f4!± ♜d6
 23.♞b3 ♜e4
 24.♜e1 ♞h6
 25.♙e2 ♙e8
 26.♞d3! ♜f6
 27.♙xd4 ♜xd4
 28.♞xd4
 [see diagram next column]
 28... ♙xh5?
 29.♞d3 ♞h7
 30.♞dh3 ♙g6
 31.♞xh7+ ♜xh7
 32.♞h6 ♜f8



33.♞h8 ♜d7
 34.♞g8 ♙f7
 35.♞g7 ♙e8
 36.♞e7 ♜d8
 37.♞xe6 ♙f7
 38.♞h6 ♜e7
 39.♙d3 ♙e6
 40.♞h5 ♜f6
 41.♞g5
 [41.♞g5 ♜e4 42.♙xe4 dxe4 43.♞g7+ ♙f7 44.♜d2+- (Euwe)]
 1-0

Positional options at move 4 for Black

Tseshkovsky, Vitaly (2550) -
 Petrosian, Tigran V (2635) [C16]

URS-ch44 Final Moscow (8), 07.12.1976

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♜c3 ♙b4 4.e5 b6 5.♙d2 ♜e7
 6.♞g4 ♜f5 7.♜f3 ♙a6 8.♙xa6 ♜xa6 9.♞f4 c5
 10.dxc5 bxc5 11.g4 ♜e7 12.h4 0-0 13.h5 f5
 14.exf6 ♞xf6 15.♞g3 ♜c6 16.0-0-0 ♞c7 17.♜g5
 ♞xg3 18.fxg3 ♜d4 19.♙f4 ♙xc3 20.bxc3 ♜e2+
 21.♜d2 ♜xf4 22.gxf4 ♜c7 23.♜h3 ♞b8 24.♞b1
 ♞ff8 25.a4 h6 26.♞hg1 ♜f7 27.g5 hxg5 28.fxg5
 ♞xb1 29.♞xb1 ♜e7 30.♜d3 e5
 0-1

Dominguez Sanz, Juan Pedro (2295) -
 Petrosian, Tigran V (2615) [C16]

Las Palmas-09 Las Palmas, 1980

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♜c3 ♙b4 4.e5 b6 5.a3 ♙f8 6.f4
 h5 7.♜f3 ♜h6 8.♙e3 c5 9.♙b5+ ♙d7 10.♙xd7+
 ♞xd7 11.♜e2 ♙e7 12.c3 a5 13.h3 ♜f5 14.♙f2 a4
 15.g3 ♜c6 16.♜f1 ♜a5 17.♜g2 ♜c4 18.♞c1 ♞b5

19.♞e1 ♞xb2 20.♞xb2 ♜xb2 21.g4 ♜h6 22.♞h1
 ♜c4 23.♜g3 hxg4 24.hxg4 ♜d7 25.♜h2 cxd4
 26.♙xd4 ♙xa3 27.g5 ♜g8 28.♙xb6 ♜e7 29.♙d4
 ♙b2 30.♞a2 a3
 0-1

Beliavsky, Alexander G (2620) -
 Petrosian, Tigran V (2585) [C16]

Moscow Moscow (12), 04.1981 [Belov, I]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♜c3 ♙b4 4.e5 b6 5.♞g4 [5.a3
 ♙f8 6.♙b5+ (6.♜f3 ♜e7 7.h4 h5 8.♙g5 ♙a6
 9.♙xa6 ♜xa6 10.0-0 ♞d7 11.♞d3 ♜b8 12.♜e2
 ♜bc6= Sokolov, A-Portisch, L/Moscow/1990/0,5
 (34) Inf 49/349/) 6...c6 7.♙a4 ♙d7 8.♙b3! ♜e7
 9.♜ce2 c5 10.c3 ♙b5 11.♙c2 ♜bc6 12.h4!±
 Hodgson, Ju-Johansen, P/Kuala Lumpur/1992/0,5 (62) Inf 54/269/]
 5...♙f8 6.a4 [6.♜h3 ♙a6 7.♙xa6 ♜xa6 8.♜f4 ♜b4! 9.♞e2 ♜e7
 10.a3 ♜bc6= Kovalev, A-Vaganian, R/Tilburg/1992/1:0 (54) Inf 56/311/;
 6.♜f3 ♞d7 7.♙b5 c6 8.♙e2 ♙a6 9.0-0 ♜e7

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10.♠d1 ♘f5 11.a3± Mokry,K-Ravikumar,V/Dieren/1990/1:0 (39) Inf 50/319/; 6.h4!? h5 7.♖d1 c5 8.♙g5 ♗d7 9.♙b5 ♘c6 10.♘ge2 a6 11.♙xc6 ♗xc6 12.♘f4∞ Blatny,P-Psakhis,L/Amsterdam/1989/1:0 (40) Inf 48/400/; 6.♗g3 ♘e7 7.♙g5 ♘f5 8.♙xd8 ♘xg3 9.hxg3 ♘xd8 10.0-0-0 ♙e7 11.f4± Ljubojevic,L-Portisch,L/Linares/1989/Inf 47/(364)/] 6...♘c6 7.♙b5 [7.♘h3 ♗d7 8.♙b5 a6 9.♙xc6 ♗xc6 10.0-0 a5! 11.♘f4 ♙a6= Chesney-Gulko,B/Somerset/1986/0:1 (41) Inf 42/357/] 7...♙d7! [7...♙b7 8.a5±] 8.♙g5 ♘ge7 9.♘f3 h6 10.♗h3 [10.♙xe7 ♘xe7 11.♙d3 c5 12.0-0 ♘c6 13.♗fe1 ♗c7=; 10.♙h4 g5 11.♙g3 ♘f5∞] 10...♘b4 11.♞c1 a6 [11...♙xb5 12.axb5 a6 13.bxa6 ♞xa6 14.0-0±] 12.♙e2 c5 13.0-0 ♗c7 14.dxc5□ bxc5∞ 15.♗fe1 [× e5/] 15...♞g8 16.♙d2 ♘bc6 [16...g5?! 17.♗h5±; 16...♘g6!? Δ ♘bc6/] 17.♙d3 g6 18.b3 ♙g7 19.♗g3 ♘b4 [19...♘f5? 20.♙xf5 gxf5 21.♙xh6±] 20.h4 ♞b8 21.♙f1 ♘f5 22.♗f4 ♙f8 23.♘d1! ♙c8 24.♘e3 ♘xe3 25.♗xe3± ♘c6 [25...♙b7 26.♙xb4 cxb4 27.c3±] 26.♙d3 ♘b4 27.♙f1 ♘c6 28.♘h2! [Δ ♘g4/] 28...h5 29.♘f3 ♘e7 30.g3!? ♘f5 31.♗e2 ♙b7 32.♙g2 [32.♙h3!?] 32...♙e7 33.♙g5 a5?! [33...♙f8!?] 34.♙xe7 ♘xe7 35.♘g5 [Δ ♘h7-f6/] 35...♞h8 36.♗d2 ♗b6 37.♞b1! ♘f8 [37...♗b4 38.c3] 38.♘h2 ♘g7 39.♙h3!? [Δ ♙f5/] 39...d4!? [39...♘e7?! 40.♗f4+--; 39...♘h6 40.♗f4 ♞bf8□ 41.c3±] 40.♗f4 ♗c6 41.♘e4 ♗c7 [41...♙a8 42.♗g5 ♞hd8 43.♘f6±] 42.♘d6! ♗e7 [42...♘xd6 43.♗f6+ ♘g8 44.exd6 ♗xd6 (44...♗d7 45.♞xe6) 45.♙xe6!+--] 43.♙xf5 gxf5 44.c3± ♙d5 45.b4! dxc3 [45...axb4 46.cxb4 ♞xb4 47.♞xb4 cxb4 48.♗xd4 ♞b8 49.♘f5+±] 46.b5 ♘h7 47.♞bc1 ♞hg8 48.f3 ♞bd8! 49.♞xc3 f6± 50.♘c4□ ♞a8?! [50...♙xc4!? 51.♞xc4 ♞d5 52.♞c2 ♞gd8±] 51.exf6! ♗xf6 52.♗e5± ♗g6 53.♘d6! ♞g7 54.♞xc5?! [54.b6!?!; 54.♞g1!?!±] 54...♙xf3 55.b6 ♗h6 [Δ ♗d2/] 56.♞c2 f4 57.♞g1□ [57.gxf4?? ♗g6-+] 57...♗g6 58.♞d2 ♞f8 59.♞b2 ♗g4 60.b7 fxc3+ [60...♞b8 61.♗xf4+--] 61.♗xg3 ♞b8 62.♞b5 [Δ ♞h5/] 62...♞d7 63.♞xa5! ♗xg3+ [63...♞xd6? 64.♞xh5+!+--] 64.♞xg3 ♙d5?! [64...♞xd6 65.♞xf3 ♞xb7 66.♞xh5+ ♘g6 67.♞g5+ ♘h6±] 65.♞a6! ♙xb7 66.♞b6+-- ♞c7 67.a5 e5 68.♞b2! [68.a6?! ♞c2+ 69.♘g1 (69.♘h3 ♙g2+ 70.♞xg2 ♞c3+--)]

69...♞c1+ 70.♘f2 ♞f8+ 71.♘e2 ♙d5∞] 68...♞d7 69.♘e4 ♞d1 70.♞g1 ♞d4 [70...♞xg1 71.♘xg1 ♞g8+ 72.♘g5+--] 71.♘g5+ ♘h8 72.♘f7+ ♘h7 73.♘g5+ ♘h8 74.♘f3 ♞f4 [74...♞d7 75.♘xe5] 75.♞b6! ♘h7□ 76.♘g5+ ♘h8 77.♘h3! [77.♘h3! ♞xh4 78.♞h6#] 1-0

Anand,Viswanathan (2788) - Ivanchuk,Vassily (2739) [C16]

Wch Blitz 4th Moscow (2), 16.11.2009

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 b6 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♗d7 7.♗g4 f5 8.♗g3 ♙a6 9.♙xa6 ♘xa6 10.♘e2 ♘f7 11.h4 ♗a4 12.♗d3 c5 13.♞b1 ♘e7 14.h5 ♞hc8 15.♞b2 ♘g8 16.♘f4 ♞c6 17.0-0 ♞ac8 18.♗g3 ♞f8 19.h6 g6 20.♘h5 cxd4 21.♗h4 ♞f7 22.♘f6+ ♘h8 23.♘e8 ♘g8 24.♘d6 ♞f8 25.♗d8 ♞c8 26.♗xc8

1-0

Leko,Peter (2752) - Ivanchuk,Vassily (2739) [C16]

Wch Blitz 4th Moscow (6), 16.11.2009

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 b6 5.♗g4 ♙f8 6.♘f3 ♘e7 7.♙d2 ♗d7 8.♙d3 ♙a6 9.♙xa6 ♘xa6 10.♘e2 c5 11.0-0 cxd4 12.♘fxd4 ♘c5 13.c3 ♘d3 14.f4 ♘xb2 15.f5 exf5 16.♗g3 ♘c4 17.♙g5 g6 18.♙f6 ♞g8 19.♞ad1 0-0-0 20.♘f4 ♞e8 21.♗f3 ♙h6 22.g3 ♙xf4 23.gxf4 ♘b8 24.♘c2 ♞c8 25.♘b4 ♞ge8 26.♞d4 ♘c6 27.♞xd5 ♗b7 28.♞fd1 ♘e7 29.♞5d3 ♗xf3 30.♞xf3 ♘c6 31.♞d5 a5 32.♘c2 ♞c7 33.♞fd3 ♞ec8 34.♘d4 ♘b7 35.♞b5 ♘a6 36.♞b1 b5 1-0

Vidit,Santosh Gujrathi (2711) - Cvek,Robert (2518) [C16]

CZE-chT 1819 Czech Republic (2.6), 04.11.2018

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 b6 5.♗g4 ♙f8 6.♘f3 ♘e7 7.♙g5 ♘bc6 8.a3 ♙b7 9.♙d3 ♗d7 10.b4 h6 11.♙d2 0-0-0 12.♘e2 f5 13.exf6 gxf6 14.♘f4 e5 15.♗xd7+ ♞xd7 16.b5 e4 17.bxc6 ♘xc6 18.♘g6 ♞g8 19.♘xf8 ♞xf8 20.♙xh6 ♞e8 21.0-0-0 exd3 22.cxd3 ♞de7 23.♙e3 ♘b8 24.h4 ♙c8 25.♞dg1 ♞g8 26.h5 ♞h7 27.h6 ♘e7 28.♘h4 ♞g4 29.♘d2 ♘b7 30.f3 ♞g8 31.g4 ♙e6 32.g5 fxc3 33.♞xg5 ♞xg5 34.♙xg5 ♘f5 35.♘xf5 ♙xf5 36.♞h4 ♞d7 37.♞f4 ♙h7 38.♞f8 c5 39.dxc5 bxc5 40.f4 ♘c6 41.f5 ♘d6 42.♘e3 c4 43.d4 ♘c6

1-0

Sakharov, Yuri N - Petrosian, Tigran V
[C16]

URS-ch24 Semifinal Tbilisi (16), 13.12.1956
 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5 ♗d7 5.♗ge2 b6
 6.a3 ♙xc3+ 7.♗xc3 ♗e7 8.b4 0-0 9.♙d3 c5 10.0-0
 ♗bc6 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.bxc5 ♗xe5 13.♙xh7+ ♗xh7
 14.♗h5+ ♗g8 15.♗xe5 f6 16.♗e2 ♖b8
 17.a4 ♖b4 18.♖d1 ♗c6 19.♗b5 ♙a6 20.♗e1 ♖e4
 21.♗a5 ♖b8 22.♖b1 ♖a8 23.c3 ♗c8 24.c4 ♗c6
 25.♗d2 ♖xc4 26.♗d6 ♗d7 27.♗xc4 ♙xc4 28.♗f4
 d4 29.♗d6 ♖d8 30.♗xd7 ♖xd7 31.f3 e5 32.g4 ♙e2
 33.♖e1 ♙xf3 34.h3 ♗f7 35.♗f2 ♙d5 36.♙d2 g5
 37.a5 e4 38.a6 ♗e5 39.♗g3 ♗d3 40.♖ed1 ♗xc5
 41.♙b4 ♗e6 42.♖bc1 0-1

Olafsson, Fridrik - Petrosian, Tigran V
[C16]

Bled 30th Anniversary Bled (11), 19.09.1961
 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♘b4 4.e5 ♗d7 5.♗g4 f5
 6.♗g3 [6.exf6 ♗xf6] 6...b6 7.h4 ♙b7!? [7...♙a6
 8.♙xa6 ♗xa6 9.♗h3 0-0-0 10.♗f4 ♗b7 11.a3?!
 (11.♙d2) 11...♙xc3+ 12.bxc3 (12.♗xc3 c5)
 12...♗b8 Zatulovskaya-Javanovic/Vrnjacka
 Banja/1965/] 8.♙d3!? [8.♙d2 ♗c6 9.♗f3 0-0-0
 10.0-0-0 Δ 11.♗e2, 12.♗f4 ± Clarke] 8...♗c6
 9.♗ge2 [9.♗f3 0-0-0 10.♙d2] 9...0-0-0 10.♙d2
 ♗h6! 11.a3?! [11.0-0-0!?!; ▽ 11.♙xh6! gxf6
 12.♗e3 Δg3, ♗f4 Keres] 11...♙e7! 12.♙b5
 [12.♗xg7? ♗g4] 12...♖dg8 [12...♗b8?! 13.♙xc6
 ♙xc6 14.♗xg7 ♗g4 15.♙g5!; 12...a6?! 13.♙xc6
 ♙xc6 14.♗xg7 ♗g4 15.♙g5± Clarke] 13.♗d3 ♗f7
 14.0-0-0 ♗b8! 15.♗f4 ♗c8! 16.♗ce2 ♗cd8!↑
 17.♗b3?# [Losing a pawn] [17.c3 c5 18.♗b1#
 Clarke] 17...c6! 18.♙d3 c5 19.dxc5 ♙xc5#
 [19...bxc5?! 20.c4] 20.♗h3 ♗xe5 21.♙f4 ♗df7
 22.♙b5 [22.♗g5 ♙d6; 22.♗c3 ♙d6] 22...♗a8
 23.♗d4 ♗g6 24.♗a4 ♙xd4 25.♙d7 ♗f8 26.♖xd4
 [26.♙xe6!? ♙e5! 27.♙xd5 (27.♖xd5 ♙xf4+
 28.♗xf4 ♗xf4 29.♗xf4 ♗e7!-+) 27...♙xd5
 28.♖xd5 ♗b8! 29.♗c6+ (29.♖d7 ♙xf4+ 30.♗b1
 ♖c8) 29...♗b7 30.♗xb7+ ♗xb7 31.♖d7+ ♗c6
 32.♖xf7 ♙xf4+--+ Clarke] 26...e5! 27.♖b4
 [27.♖xd5 ♗xf4!; 27.♙c6 ♗c8] 27...exf4 28.♖xb6
 ♗fe5 29.♖xb7 ♗xb7 30.h5 ♗d6 31.hxg6 ♗xd7
 32.♗xf4 ♗xg6 0-1

Leko, Peter (2713) - Georgiev, Kiril (2655)
[C16]

FIDE GP Dubai (4.2), 07.04.2002 [Finkel, A]
 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♘b4 4.e5 ♗d7 5.a3 ♙f8
 6.♗f3 b6 [Slightly passive, but rock solid line
 intending to exchange the light squared bishop
 via a6.] 7.b4!? [The most ambitious
 continuation.] [7.♙e2 ♙a6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♙xa6
 ♗xa6 10.♗d3 ♗b8 11.♗e2 ♗bc6 12.♙d2 ♗g6
 13.♖ac1 ♙e7 14.g3 0-0 15.h4± Abramovic, B-
 Benjamin, J/Hastings 1984] 7...c6?! [7...♗c6
 8.♙d3 ♙b7 9.0-0 0-0-0 10.♙d2 ♗b8 11.♗a2
 ♗ce7 12.♗e2 ♗c8 13.♖fb1 c6 14.a4 ♗h6
 15.♗c1± Jaureguiberry, C-Vallin, G/Creon 1999;
 7...♗e7 8.♙d3 c5 9.bxc5 bxc5 10.♗b5 ♗f5
 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.c3 ♗c6 13.0-0 a6 14.g4 ♗fe7
 15.♗bd4 ♗c7± Ciocaltea, V-Maric, R/Monte
 Carlo 1969] 8.♖b1 [8.♙d3 ♙a6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♖e1
 ♗g6 11.♖b1 ♙xd3 12.♗xd3 ♙e7 13.♗e2 0-0
 14.♙g5 ♖c8 15.h4 h6 16.h5± Eickhoff, H-
 Renner, K/Germany 1995] 8...♗e7 9.a4 [Aimed
 to prevent typical exchange of the bishops by
 ♙a6. Now ♙a6 runs into b5!] [9.h4!? ♗c7 10.h5
 h6 11.♙d3 ♗d7 12.0-0 ♙b7 13.♗h4 a6 14.♗e2
 0-0-0 15.f4± Tischbierek, R-Baum, B/Meisdorf
 1996; 9.♙d3 ♙a6 10.b5 cxb5 11.♗xb5 ♗ec6
 12.0-0 ♗a5 13.♗e2 ♙b7 14.♙f4 ♗bc6 15.♖fe1
 h6 16.h3± Zhelnin, V-Alekseev, V/Tula 2000]
 9...♗f5 10.♙d3 ♗a6 11.b5 ♗b4?! [Knight has
 nothing to do on b4, so better was] [11...♗c7
 12.bxc6 ♗xc6 13.♗b5 a6 14.♗xc7+ ♗xc7 15.0-0±
 even though in this case white also has a clear
 advantage.] 12.♙xf5! exf5 13.0-0± ♙e7 [Hoping
 to escape with the king from the centre but
 permitting white to decide the game in his favor
 with typical pawn sacrifice.] 14.e6! ♗xe6 [There
 is no choice.] [14...fxe6 15.♗e5 followed by Qh5
 check is crushing.] 15.♖e1 ♗d6 16.♙a3+- c5
 17.dxc5 bxc5 18.♙xb4 cxb4 19.♗xd5! [Forcing
 an exchange of the queens to get technically
 winning position.] 19...♗xd5 [Nothing changed
 19...♗b8 20.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 21.♗c5+ ♗d6 (21...♗f6
 22.♗d4+ ♗e7 23.♗d5+ ♗e8 24.♗xg7 ♖f8
 25.♖e1+ ♙e6 26.♖xe6+ fxe6 27.♗e7#) 22.♖e1+
 ♙e6 23.♗d5+ ♗d7 24.♗e5+-] 20.♗xd5 ♙e6
 21.♗c7+ ♗d7 22.♗xa8 ♖xa8 23.♗e5+ ♗e8
 [23...♗c7 24.♗xf7!] 24.♗c6 ♙f6 25.♗xb4 [White
 is an exchange+pawn up and nothing can save
 black here!] 25...♗d7 26.♖ed1+ ♗e8 27.♗c6

The French Winawer: Food for Thought

♠a2 28.♠b4 ♠c3 29.♠f4 g6 30.♠f3 ♠f6 31.♠e3+
♠e6 32.c4 ♠g5 33.♠ee1 ♠c8 34.♠d6 ♠f8
35.♠exe6!? fxe6 36.♠xe6 ♠c7 37.♠d6 ♠e7
38.♠d5 ♠f7 39.♠f1 [It's time for the king to join
the party!] 39...♠f8 40.♠e2 ♠e6 41.♠d3 ♠d6
42.h3 h5 43.a5 h4 44.♠d4+ ♠e7 45.b6 axb6
46.axb6 ♠b7 47.c5 ♠xc5 48.♠xc5 ♠xb6 49.♠c6
♠b2 50.♠e3 ♠f7 51.♠f3 f4+ 52.♠e4 ♠xf2
53.♠e5+ ♠e7 54.♠xg6 1-0

Short, Nigel D (2702) - Girinath, PDS (2368) [C16]

Commonwealth-ch Mumbai (1), 10.01.2004

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♠c3 ♠b4 4.e5 ♠d7 5.♠d2 b6
6.♠b5 c6 7.♠a4 ♠a6 8.♠ce2 ♠f8 9.h4 ♠e7 10.h5
h6 11.c3 ♠d3 12.♠f4 ♠h7 13.♠f3 a5 14.0-0 ♠a6
15.♠c1 ♠c7 16.♠e2 b5 17.♠c2 ♠xc2 18.♠xc2
♠c8 19.♠d3 ♠a6 20.♠e3 ♠b6 21.b3 ♠e7
22.♠h2 ♠c8 23.♠g4 ♠h7 24.♠c5 ♠xc5 25.dxc5
♠a8 26.♠f3 ♠f8 27.a3 ♠g8 28.b4 ♠c7 29.♠d4
♠h8 30.f4 f5 31.♠g6 ♠f8 32.g4 fxc4 33.♠g2 axb4
34.axb4 ♠a8 35.♠xg4 ♠a3 36.f5 exf5 37.♠xf5
♠xc3 38.♠f7 ♠e8 39.♠f5 1-0

Polgar, Judit (2728) - Andrez, Marc Olivier (2173) [C16]

Neully Ernst Young sim Neully (8), 04.04.2004

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♠c3 ♠b4 4.e5 ♠d7 5.a3 ♠xc3+
6.bxc3 b6 7.♠g4 f5 8.♠h5+ ♠f7 9.♠h4 ♠a6
10.♠xa6 ♠xa6 11.♠e2 ♠e7 12.a4 ♠c6 13.h3
♠a5 14.g4 0-0 15.♠g1 c5 16.♠g5 ♠ac8 17.♠f4
♠c7 18.♠f6 ♠e8 19.gxf5 exf5 20.♠xd5 ♠ff7
21.♠xg7 ♠xg7 22.♠f6+ ♠f8 23.♠xg7 ♠xg7
24.♠xe8 ♠g1+ 25.♠e2 ♠xa1 26.♠f6 ♠g1
27.♠xh7 1-0

Vachier Lagrave, Maxime (2713) - Tischbierek, Raj (2472) [C16]

Gibraltar Masters 11th Caleta (5), 26.01.2013

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♠c3 ♠b4 4.e5 ♠d7 5.♠d3 b6
6.♠g4 f5 7.exf6 ♠xf6 8.♠e2 0-0 9.a3 ♠xc3+
10.bxc3 c5 11.dxc5 e5 12.cxb6 axb6 13.♠b2 ♠a5
14.♠e3 ♠g4 15.♠xb6 ♠a7 16.0-0-0 ♠b7 17.♠c5
♠c7 18.♠xh7+ ♠xh7 19.♠xf8 ♠e6 20.♠h3 ♠g6
1-0

Anand, Viswanathan (2793) - Adams, Michael (2745) [C16]

London Classic Pro Biz Cup 6th London (1.1),
09.12.2014

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♠c3 ♠b4 4.e5 ♠d7 5.a3 ♠xc3+
6.bxc3 b6 7.♠g4 ♠e7 8.♠xg7 ♠g8 9.♠xh7 ♠a6
10.h4 ♠c6 11.♠d2 ♠xf1 12.♠xf1 ♠d7 13.♠d3 0-
0-0 14.♠g5 ♠de8 15.♠f3 ♠h8 16.h5 ♠g6 17.g3
♠b7 18.♠g2 ♠gf8 19.♠ae1 ♠h7 20.♠f4 ♠eg8
21.h6 ♠a4 22.♠c1 ♠df8 23.♠h4 ♠c6 24.♠f3 a5
25.♠d2 ♠a4 26.♠c1 ♠c6 27.♠h5 ♠a4 28.♠eh1
♠c6 29.♠g1 ♠g6 30.♠e2 f6 31.exf6 ♠xf6 32.h7
♠g7 33.♠g5 ♠e4 34.♠xg6 ♠xg6 35.f3 ♠g7 36.fxe4
dxe4 37.♠e3 ♠gxh7 38.♠xh7 ♠xh7 39.♠f4 ♠f7
40.♠g1 ♠a7 41.♠g6 ♠b5 42.♠f4 e5 43.dxe5
♠xe5 44.♠d4 ♠e8 45.♠e3 ♠d7 46.♠c4 ♠d1+
47.♠f2 ♠b8 48.♠e6 ♠f7+ 49.♠f4 e3+ 50.♠e2
♠h5+ 51.♠xe3 ♠d7 52.♠c6 ♠d5 53.♠xc7+ ♠c8
54.♠xd5 ♠xd5 55.♠f4 ♠d1 56.♠d4 ♠d7 57.♠e4
♠a1 58.♠b5 ♠c6 59.c4 ♠d1 60.♠e3 ♠d8 61.g4
♠e8+ 62.♠d3 ♠g8 63.g5 ♠e8 64.♠d4+ ♠b7
65.♠f5 ♠e6 66.♠d4 ♠g6 67.♠f6 ♠g8 68.♠e7
♠d8+ 69.♠c3 ♠d6 70.g6 ♠xf6 71.g7 ♠f3+ 72.♠d4
a4 73.g8 ♠xa3 74.♠d5+ ♠a7 75.♠c6 ♠a1
76.♠c8 b5 77.cxb5 ♠b6 78.♠c5+ ♠a5 79.♠c6#
1-0

Anand, Viswanathan (2757) -

Caruana, Fabiano (2822) [C16]

Bucharest Superbet blitz Bucharest (10),
10.11.2019

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♠c3 ♠b4 4.e5 ♠d7 5.♠g4 f5
6.♠g3 b6 7.♠d2 ♠c6 8.♠b5 ♠b7 9.a3 ♠f8 10.♠f3
0-0-0 11.h4 ♠h6 12.♠xh6 gxh6 13.♠e2 ♠e7
14.♠f4 ♠dg8 15.g3 ♠g6 16.♠d2 a6 17.♠d3 ♠a5
18.♠f4 ♠c4 19.♠c1 ♠g4 20.b3 ♠a5 21.0-0 ♠hg8
22.♠h2 c5 23.b4 cxb4 24.axb4 ♠c4 25.c3 ♠b8
26.♠g2 ♠4g6 27.♠e1 b5 28.♠f4 ♠g4 29.♠e2 ♠d8
30.♠g1 ♠4g7 31.♠gh3 ♠f7 32.♠d3 ♠e7
33.♠xh6 ♠g6 34.♠c1 ♠f8 35.♠g1 ♠h6 36.h5 ♠c8
37.♠hf4 ♠g5 38.♠g2 ♠a7 39.♠h1 ♠g8 40.♠h3
♠b6 41.♠xg5 ♠xg5 42.f4 ♠e7 43.♠f2 ♠d7
44.♠c5 ♠xc5 45.dxc5+ ♠b7 46.♠xc4 dxc4
47.♠d1 ♠c6 48.♠h2 ♠d5 49.♠a2 ♠e8 50.g4 fxc4
51.♠xg4 ♠f8 52.♠e3 ♠c6 53.♠h3 a5 54.♠g3 a4
55.♠g7+ ♠xg7 56.♠xg7+ ♠a6 57.♠d2 ♠d5
58.♠g5 ♠c6 59.f5 exf5 60.♠d6 ♠xd6 61.cxd6 ♠d7
62.♠d4
1-0

Black Retreats at move Five

Smyslov, Vassily V -

Botvinnik, Mikhail Moisevich [C18]

World-ch19 Botvinnik-Smyslov +7-7=10
Moscow (9), 03.04.1954

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3
♘a5 6.b4 cxd4 7.♖g4 ♘e7 8.bxa5 dxc3
9.♗xg7 ♖g8 10.♗xh7 ♘d7 11.♞f3 ♘f8
12.♗d3 ♗xa5 13.h4 ♘d7 14.♙g5 ♖c8
15.♞d4 ♞f5 16.♞b1 ♖c4 17.♞xf5 exf5
18.♞xb7 ♖e4+ 19.♗xe4 dxe4 20.♞b8+ ♘c8
21.♙b5+ ♗xb5 22.♞xb5 ♞e6 23.♙f6 ♖xg2
24.h5 ♙a6 25.h6
1-0

Timman, Jan H (2640) -

Vaganian, Rafael A (2625) [C18]

Candidates Tournament Montpellier
Montpellier (9), 10.1985

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3
♘a5 6.b4 cxd4 7.♖g4 ♘e7 8.bxa5 dxc3
9.♗xg7 ♖g8 10.♗xh7 ♞bc6 11.f4 ♗xa5
12.♞b1 ♘d7 13.♞xb7 ♞d4 14.♗d3 ♞ef5
15.♞f3 ♞xf3+ 16.♗xf3 ♖c8 17.♙d3 ♘c6
18.♞xf7 ♙xf7 19.♗h5+ ♙e7 20.♙xf5 ♖cf8
21.♗h4+ ♙e8 22.♗h6 ♗c7 23.♗xe6+ ♙d8
24.♙h3 d4 25.0-0 d3 26.cxd3 ♗b6+
27.♞f2 ♙c7 28.♗c4 ♖h8 29.d4 ♗b1 30.d5
♗xc1+ 31.♞f1 ♗e3+ 32.♙h1 ♙b8 33.dxc6
♙c7 34.♗b4
1-0

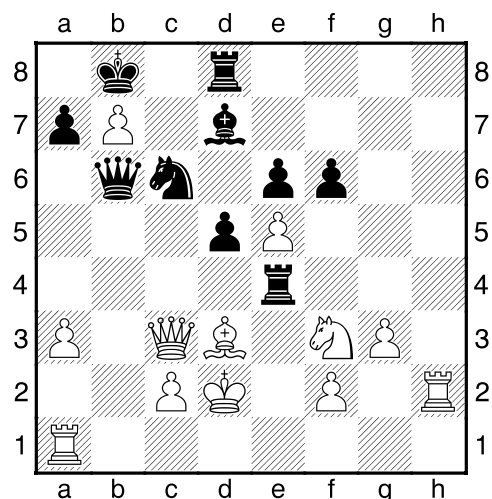
Ganguly, Surya Shekhar (2654) -

Sambuev, Bator (2540) [C18]

Edmonton 11th Edmonton (4),
21.06.2016 [*Fischer, J*]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3
♘a5 6.b4 cxd4 7.♖g4 ♘e7 8.bxa5 dxc3
9.♗xg7 ♖g8 10.♗xh7 ♞bc6 11.♞f3 ♗c7
12.♙f4 ♘d7 13.a6 0-0-0 14.axb7+ ♙b8
15.♗d3 ♖g4 16.g3 ♞g6 17.♗xc3 ♞xf4

18.h3 ♞xh3 19.♞xh3 ♖e4+ 20.♙d2 f6 [The
first new move. A previous game
continued 20...♗b6 21.♞h2 d4 22.♗b3
♗a5+ 23.♙c1 ♞xe5 24.♞xe5 ♗xe5
25.♙d3 ♖e1+ 26.♙b2 ♖xa1 27.♙xa1 ♙c6
28.♞h7 ♖d7 29.♗b4 a5 30.f4 axb4 31.fxe5
bxa3 32.♙a2 ♙xb7 33.♙xa3 ♙b6 34.♙b4
♖a7 35.g4 ♖a4+ 36.♙b3 ♖a7 37.♙c4 1/2-
1/2 (37) Dos Santos, R (2376)-
Converset, J (2270) Buenos Aires 2006]
21.♙d3 ♗b6 22.♞h2



22...♞xe5 [Black decides to give the
exchange to create counterplay. But
objectively this should not be enough.]
[However, after 22...♞g4 23.exf6 White is
three pawns up and it is difficult to see how
Black can create convincing threats.]
23.♞xe5 fxe5 24.♙c1 ♞d4 25.♞b1 ♗d6
26.♞h7 ♞c6 27.♙b5 ♞d4 28.♙d3 ♞c6
[Offering a repetition of moves - which
White declines more or less politely.] 29.f3
♙e8 30.♞h8 e4 31.fxe4 dxe4 32.♙xe4 ♞d4
33.♗d3 ♞e2+ 34.♙d2 [34.♗xe2?? ♗xa3+
35.♞b2 ♗a1+ 36.♞b1 ♗a3+ and Black has
a perpetual.] 34...♞d4 35.♞b4 e5 36.♞c4
♗e7 37.♞c8+ [Now it is White who

attacks.] 37...Rxc8 38.bxc8W+ Qxc8
39.Wa6+ Qd8 40.Wa5+ Qc8 41.Qe1 Wg5
42.Wc5+ Qd7 43.Rh7+ Qe6 44.Wd5+
1-0

**Dominguez Perez,Leinier (2739) -
Topalov,Veselin (2740) [C18]**

Saint Louis Champions Showdown rapid
Saint Louis (8.4), 21.02.2019

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Qc3 Qb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3
Qa5 6.b4 cxd4 7.Wg4 Qf8 8.Nb5 Qb6
9.Nf3 Nc6 10.Qb2 a5 11.Nbxd4 axb4
12.Nxc6 bxc6 13.axb4 Rxa1+ 14.Qxa1 c5
15.bxc5 Qxc5 16.Qd3 Wa5+ 17.Qe2 Nf6
18.Wf4 Qa6 19.Rb1 Rg8 20.Qd4 Qxd4
21.Wxd4 Qxd3+ 22.cxd3 g5 23.g4 Qg7
24.Qf1 Rc8 25.We3 Wd8 26.h3 Ng8
27.Nxg5 h6 28.Nf3 Ne7 29.h4 Ra8 30.h5
Ra4 31.d4 Nc6 32.Wf4 We7 33.Qg2 Rc4

34.Rb2 Rc3 35.Ra2 Rc4 36.Ra8 f6
37.exf6+ Wxf6 38.Rg8+
1-0

**Dominguez Perez,Leinier (2750) -
Shubin,Kirill (2404) [C18]**

RUS-chT Sochi (8.2), 09.05.2019

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Qb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3
Qa5 6.b4 cxd4 7.Wg4 Qf8 8.Nb5 Qb6
9.Nf3 Nc6 10.Qb2 Nge7 11.Nbxd4 h5
12.Wf4 Ng6 13.Nxc6 bxc6 14.Wg3 h4
15.Wg4 h3 16.g3 c5 17.Qd3 Ne7 18.bxc5
Qxc5 19.0-0 a5 20.Ng5 Nf5 21.Nxf7
Qxf7 22.Qxf5 Wf8 23.Qd3 Qg8 24.a4 Qd7
25.Qc1 Rb8 26.Qd2 Qb4 27.c3 Qc5
28.Qe3 Rb3 29.Qb5 Qc8 30.Qd4 Rh6
31.Rab1 Ra3 32.Qe2 Qxd4 33.Wxd4
1-0

The Early Queen advance at move Six

**Fischer,Robert James -
Hook,William [C18]**

Olympiad-19 Preliminaries C Siegen (5),
09.09.1970

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Qc3 Qb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3
Qxc3+ 6.bxc3 Wa5 7.Qd2 Wa4 8.Wg4 Qf8
9.Wd1 b6 10.h4 Ne7 11.h5 h6 12.Rh4 Qa6
13.Qxa6 Nxa6 14.Rf4 Wd7 15.Wf3 Nc6
16.Nh3 Rc8 17.g4 We8 18.g5 Ne7
19.gxh6 gxh6 20.Rf6 Nf5 21.Nf4 Qe7
22.Nxd5+ Qd8 23.Ne3 Nxe3 24.Qxe3
Rc7 25.dxc5 Nxc5 26.Rd1+ Qe7
27.Qxc5+ bxc5 28.Rxe6+
1-0

**Byrne,Robert Eugene (2540) -
Jamieson,Robert Murray (2420)
[C18]**

Olympiad-22 Haifa (5.1), 30.10.1976

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Qc3 Qb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3
Qxc3+ 6.bxc3 Wa5 7.Qd2 Wa4 8.Wb1 c4

9.Qe2 Nc6 10.Nf3 Nge7 11.0-0 Qd7
12.Re1 h6 13.Qf1 0-0-0 14.g3 Rdf8
15.Qh3 g5 16.Re2 Rhg8 17.Qg4 Rh8
18.Ne1 h5 19.Qf3 g4 20.Qh1 f5 21.exf6
Rxf6 22.Ng2 Ng6 23.Nf4 Nxf4 24.Qxf4
Qe8 25.We1 Qf7 26.Qg2 Qd7 27.h4 Re8
28.f3 Qg6 29.fxg4 hxg4 30.Qg5 Rff8
31.Wd2 b6 32.Wc1 Rf5 33.Wb2 Rff8
34.Rae1 Rf5 35.Wc1 Wa5 36.Re3 Qh5
37.Qf4 b5 38.Qh1 Wd8 39.Qg5 Wc7
40.Wd1 Wd6 41.We2 a6 42.Qh3 Rf3
43.Rxf3 gxf3 44.We3 Qg6 45.Qf4 We7
46.Wxf3 Qe4 47.Rxe4 dxe4 48.Wxe4 Nd8
49.Wd5+ Qc8 50.Wa8+
1-0

**Caruana,Fabiano (2817) -
Naroditsky,Daniel (2646) [C18]**

USA-ch Saint Louis (8), 06.04.2017

[Marin, M]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Qc3 Qb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3

The French Winawer: Food for Thought

♟xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖a5 7.♙d2 ♖a4 8.♗g4 ♔f8
 [For more details about this line please check my article on French trends, published on this same DVD, written shortly before analysing this new game.]
9.♘f3 b6?! [A rare continuation and as it will turn out not a very inspired one. The problem is that it does not contribute directly to what Black needs most - development.] [In the article I have mainly examined 9...♘e7 Motylev,A (2660)-Kovalenko,I (2667) Poikovsky 2016 (1-0, 60)] 10.c4N [Abstractly the most logical continuation. Given Black's delay in development and the recent weakening of the long diagonal, he needs to open the center. One important detail is that this way he removes the pin along the fourth rank.] [In practice the unpinning move 10.♖f4 has worked out well but mainly because of Black's inaccurate play. 10...h6?! (Not a developing move, the same as 10...♗xc2?! 11.♘g5 ♖f5 12.♗xf5 exf5 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♙e3 c4 15.0-0-0 ♙e6 16.♙xc4± Butkiewicz,L (2430)-Bednarek,S (2333) Mrzezyno 2011 (½-½, 42). The point is that 16...dxc4 17.♖d8+ ♔e7 18.♖hd1+- leaves Black with both (!!)) wings undeveloped for instance 18...♙d7 19.♖1xd7+ ♘xd7 20.♖xa8; 10...c4 is more solid, preventing dxc5, but it also looks like a slight concession. Still, after 11.♘g5 ♖e8 the whole fight lies ahead.; Abstractly I prefer the developing 10...♘e7 for if 11.dxc5 ♖xc2∞) 11.dxc5 ♖xf4 12.♙xf4 bxc5 13.♙e3 c4 14.♙c5+ ♔e8 15.♘d4 ♘a6 16.♙d6± ½-½ (22) Kim,A (2460)-Szwed,J (2369) Marianske Lazne 2016] 10...♘e7!± [Black tries catching up in development in the 25th hour.]

[10...cxd4? 11.♙b4+ ♘e7 12.cxd5+-; 10...dxc4? 11.dxc5±] **11.♙d3!** [Same policy for White. This is a particular case with central tension when at least in the beginning it is best for both sides to avoid releasing it.] [11.cxd5 exd5 simplifies Black's play by clearing space for his minor pieces. 12.♖f4 ♘bc6 13.c3 h6 14.♙e2 ♘d8!?! (14...♔g8 15.0-0 ♙f5 also looks fine) 15.0-0 ♘e6 16.♖e3 ♙a6 with normal play for Black.; 11.dxc5 may run into 11...b5!?! 12.♖f4 bxc4 13.♘g5 ♖e8∞ In the long run the c5-pawn is doomed and White does not have enough development for starting an effective attack.] **11...dxc4?! [deviating from the principle mentioned above.] [11...♙a6!?! 12.0-0 ♙xc4 13.dxc5 ♘bc6 (13...bxc5 14.♙xc4 ♘d7 15.♖ab1±) 14.cxb6 axb6 15.♖ab1 b5 16.♙b4±] 12.dxc5 [12.♙e4 ♘bc6 13.0-0± looks slightly stronger as Black would not have a clear way of neutralizing White's minor piece activity. After the game move Black will get another chance of keeping his disadvantage within tolerable limits.] 12...bxc5?! [Once again failing to keep the tension with a developing move.] [12...♘d7!?! 13.cxb6 axb6 (13...♘xb6 defends c4 but leaves the back rank vulnerable. The difference with respect to the next line is felt after 14.♙e4± c3 15.♙g5 ♘g6 with ...axb6 instead of ...♘xb6 this would already be better for Black due to the pin along the fourth rank but here White has either the simple 16.♖d1 followed by ♖d4 or the stronger 16.♘d4+- based on 16...♖xd4 17.♖d1 f5 18.exf6 ♖e5 19.fxg7+ ♔xg7 20.♙e3) 14.♖xc4 (14.♙e4?! does not work out so well now: 14...c3 15.♙xc3 ♘d5**

16.♙d4 ♘a6 17.♙xd5 ♚a5+ 18.♗d2 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♚a5 7.♙d2 ♚a4 8.♚g4 ♗f8 ♙xd5) 14...♚xc4 15.♙xc4 ♙b7± Black is a pawn down but at least his position looks normal strategically.] 13.♗g5! [The start of a decisive attack.] 13...h6 14.♗h7+ ♚xh7 [14...♗g8 15.♙xh6 ♗g6 16.♙xg6 fxg6 17.♗f6+ ♗f7 18.♚f3+–] 15.♙xh7 ♙b7 16.0–0 [White has won an exchange and his attacking chances are intact. The rest is a mere formality even for a lesser player than Caruana.] 16...♗bc6?! [It makes more sense to defend the d-file with 16...♙d5 After the game move the bishop will be passive and exposed.] 17.♚ab1 ♙a6 18.♙e3 ♚a5 19.♚fd1 ♗xe5 20.♚g3 f6 [20...♗5c6 21.♚d7!?!; 20...♗7c6 21.f4!?!] 21.♚d6 ♙c8 22.♚bd1 ♗d5 23.♙f4 ♚b8 [23...♗xf4 24.♚d8+; 23...♗f7 and 24.♚6xd5 exd5 25.♙d6+ lead to a mating attack.] 24.♙xe5 fxe5 25.♚xe5 ♚d2 [This looks like some sort of spite check before resigning. Still, it would have been more elegant to do it a few moves earlier.] 26.♚d8+ ♗f7 27.♙g8+ ♗g6 28.♚e4+ ♗f6 29.♚f3+ 1–0

Caruana, Fabiano (2804) -

Lenderman, Aleksandr (2599) [C18]

USA-ch Saint Louis (2), 19.04.2018

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3

♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♚a5 7.♙d2 ♚a4 8.♚g4 ♗f8 9.h4 ♗c6 10.h5 h6 11.♚d1 cxd4 12.♗f3 dxc3 13.♙xc3 g5 14.hxg6 ♚e4+ 15.♙e2 ♚xg6 16.♚d2 ♗ge7 17.♙d3 ♚xg2 18.♗e2 ♚g4 19.♚h4 ♚g7 20.♚g1 ♗g6 21.♚f4 ♗ce7 22.♙b4 a5 23.♚xg6 1–0

Dominguez Perez, Leinier (2750) -

Yu, Yangyi (2739) [C18]

Hengshui IMSA blitz Hengshui (19),

18.05.2019

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♚a5 7.♙d2 c4 8.♚g4 g6 9.h4 h6 10.♚f4 ♚a4 11.♚a2 ♗c6 12.♗f3 ♙d7 13.♙e2 ♗ge7 14.♗h2 g5 15.♚f6 0–0–0 16.♗g4 ♚b5 17.♚a1 ♚b2 18.♚c1 h5 19.hxg5 ♗f5 20.♗h6 ♗xh6 21.gxh6 ♚h7 22.♚xh5 ♚dh8 23.♚h4 ♚xa3 24.♚g4 ♗e7 25.♚g7 ♗f5 26.♚xf7 ♚xg7 27.hxg7 ♚h1+ 28.♙f1 ♗xg7 29.♚xg7 a5 30.♚b1 ♚a2 31.♚f8+ ♗c7 32.♚d6+ ♗c8 33.♚b6 ♙c6 34.♚b2 ♚xb2 35.♚xb2 a4 36.f3 b5 37.♚a2 ♙e8 38.♗f2 ♙g6 39.♙c1 ♗c7 40.♙a3 ♗c6 41.g4 ♙h7 42.♚a1 ♙xc2 43.♚e1 ♙g6 44.♙g2 ♚h8 45.♚h1 ♚g8 46.♗g3 ♙d3 47.f4 ♙f5 48.♙f3 ♙d3 49.♚h6 ♗d7 50.♚f6 ♚b8 51.♚f7+ ♗c6 52.♚e7 b4 53.♚xe6+ ♗c7 54.♙xb4 ♚xb4 55.cxb4 a3 56.♚a6 1–0

The Queen's Knight development at move Six

Gligoric, Svetozar (2475) -

Maksimovic, Branimir (2375) [C18]

YUG-ch Podgorica (10), 1996 [Knaak, R]

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.♗c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♗c6 7.♚g4! [or 7.♗f3 Kuczynski, R-Matlak, M/ POL-ch/1996/CBM 53] 7...g6 8.a4! f5 9.♚d1 ♚a5 10.♙d2 ♗ge7 [10...c4 11.h4! Δ♗h3–

f4] 11.♙b5! [11.♗f3 c4!?! 12.h4 h6 13.♚c1 ♗d8! (13...♙d7 14.♚b1! ♗c8! 15.♙xh6 ♗b6 16.♙d2 0–0–0 17.♚b2∞ Vukovic, Zd-Maksimovic, B/Jugoslavija 52/(287) 1990) 14.♚a3 ♙d7 15.♚g1!?! (15.♙e2 ♗f7 16.0–0 ♗c8!?! Δ ♚d8, g5, Δ ♗b6 ×a4) 15...♚c8! Δ ♚c6 16.♚b4 (16.g4 ♚c6 17.gxf5 exf5!?) 16...♗ec6 (16...♚xb4 17.cxb4 c3!?!∞) 17.♚b2 ♗e7∞ 1–0 Gligoric, S-

Maksimovic,B/Jugoslavija i52/287 1991 (40)] 11...♙d7 12.♘f3 c4 [12...a6!?] 13.♙xc6 ♘xc6 14.♚c1 ♘d8 15.♚a3 ♘f7 16.♘g5! 16...h6 17.♘xf7 ♔xf7 18.h4± ♙c6 19.♔e2 ♚d8 20.a5 a6 [20...♚f8 21.♚c1] 21.♚ag1 g5?! 22.f3 [22.hxg5? hxg5 23.♚xh8? ♚xh8 24.♙xg5? ♚h5+--+] 22...gxh4 [22...♔g7 23.hxg5 hxg5 24.♚xh8 ♔xh8 25.♚c1+--; 22...f4 23.g3+--] 23.♙e1 ♚e7 24.♚a1 ♚ag8 25.♙xh4 ♚f8 26.♙f6 ♚h7 27.g4 fxg4 28.fxg4 ♚g6 29.g5 ♔e8 30.♚h5 ♔d7 31.♚f1 ♚f7 32.♚h3 ♙a4 33.♚b1 b5 34.gxh6 ♚gxf6 35.exf6 ♚xf6 36.♚f1 ♙xc2 37.♚xf6 ♚xf6 38.h7 ♙d3+ 39.♔e3 ♚h8 40.♚g5 ♚f6 41.♚g3 1-0

Atlas,Valeri (2455) - Weinzettl,Ernst (2410) [C18]

AUT-chT 9798 Austria (1), 12.10.1997

[Atlas,V]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘c6 [A rare move, which, however, often leads to a sharp play.] 7.♚g4 g6 8.a4!? [Fogarasi had shown a convincing treatment of this position in the recent game: 8.♘f3 ♚a5 9.♙d2 ♚a4 10.♚a2 h6 11.♙d3 b6 12.h4 ♙a6 13.0-0 ♙xd3 14.cxd3 cxd4 15.♚c1 ♚b5 16.♘xd4 ♘xd4 17.cxd4 a5 18.♚f3 ♚h7 19.♚ac2 ♚d8 20.♚c7 ♚a6 21.a4 ♚d7 22.♚d1 f5 23.♚7c6 ♚he7 24.♚b3 ♚b7 25.♚d6 ♔f7 26.♚cc6 ♚a8 27.♚xb6 ♚xb6 28.♚xb6 ♚c8 29.♚b5 ♚a7 30.♚b8 ♚d7 31.♚a3 ♘e7 32.♙xh6 ♚b7 33.♚f8# 1-0 Fogarasi,T-Totsky,L/Budapest FS03 GM 1996] 8...♚c7 [8...f5 9.♚d1 ♚a5 10.♙d2 ♘ge7 11.♘f3 (11.h4 ♙d7 12.♘f3 c4 13.♚c1 h6 14.♚b1 ♘c8 15.♙xh6 ♘b6 16.♙d2 0-0-0 17.♚b2 ♚dg8 18.♙e2 ♘d8 19.♘g5± 1-0 Vukovic,Z-Maksimovic,B/JUG-chT

Cetinje 1990 (35)) 11...c4 12.h4 h6 13.♚c1 ♘d8 14.♚a3 ♙d7 15.♚g1 ♚c8 16.♚b4± 1-0 Gligoric,S-Maksimovic,B/JUG-chT Cetinje 1991 (41); 8...cxd4 is met by 9.cxd4 ♘b4 10.♙b5+ (10.♚d1 fails to 10...♚c7) 10...♙d7 11.♚e2±] 9.♙d2 [Setting control over the b4-square. Black was threatening 9...cd4 10.cd4 ♘b4.] 9...f6 10.♘f3! [After 10.exf6 ♘xf6 Black has a dangerous initiative. Using tactical features of the position, White retains a positional advantage.] 10...fxe5 11.♘xe5 ♘f6 [11...♘xe5 leads to a better ending for White after 12.♚f4! (12.♚g3?! ♘f6±) 12...♘e7 13.♚xe5 ♚xe5+ 14.dxe5 , with the idea ♙g5-f6.] 12.♚f4 0-0 13.♘xc6 [13.♘xg6 proves a dubious undertaling after 13...♚xf4 14.♘xf4 cxd4] 13...♚xc6 14.♙b5 [The key move in this line. White wins an important tempo for developing his pieces.] 14...♚b6 15.dxc5 [15.0-0? would be a big mistake, since after 15...c4 the white b5-bishop is imprisoned.] 15...♚xc5 16.♚d4 ♚xd4 [If 16...♚e7 then 17.0-0 a6 (17...e5? falls short after 18.♚ae1!) 18.♙d3 e5 19.♚ae1 ♚e8 20.♚h4 ♙g5±/±.] 17.cxd4 ♘e4 18.f3 ♘d6 [The most stubborn. After 18...♘xd2 19.♔xd2 White has all the chances to convert his ending advantage.] 19.♙d3 [19.♙b4 is dubious in view of 19...♘xb5 20.♙xf8 ♘xd4 21.0-0-0 ♘xf3] 19...♘f5? [An imprecise move. Stronger was 19...♘c4.] 20.c3 ♙d7 21.0-0 ♚ac8 22.♚fb1 ♘d6 23.h4 [Not missing the opportunity to push the h-pawn. White prepares an attack on the kingside.] 23...♙c6 24.♙e1! [From e1 the bishop can access the diagonal b8-h2.] 24...♚fe8 25.♙g3 ♘c4?!

The French Winawer: Food for Thought

[Another imprecision. This time knight had to go to f5.] [25...♖f5 26.♙f2 e5 27.g4 ♘d6 28.dxe5 ♜xe5 29.♙xa7±] **26.♙f2 ♘a5?** [The final mistake. Black does not feel the danger. Correct was 26...♜e7] **27.h5!** [The decisive blow! Now White develops irresistible attack.] **27...gxf3 28.♞h1 ♙d7 29.♞xh5 ♜xc3** [29...♜e7 allows an elegant combination: 30.♞ah1 ♜xc3 31.♙xh7+ ♙f7 32.♙g6+! ♙xg6 33.♞h6+ ♙f7 (33...♙f5 34.♞1h5#) 34.♞h7+ ♙e8 35.♞h8+ ♙f7 36.♞1h7+] **30.♙xh7+ ♙f7** [30...♙f8 loses after 31.♙d6+ ♙f7 32.♙b4] **31.♞g5! ♙e7 32.♞g7+ ♙d8 33.♙g6! ♞h8 34.♙e5!** [Threatening ♙d7+. Hunting the h8-rook, the white dark-squared bishop aims at the rook on c3!] **34...♞f8** [34...♞b3 35.♞a3 ♞h6 36.♙d6! ♞xg6 37.♞xg6 ♜c2+ 38.♙e3 ♜c3+ 39.♙f4+–] **35.♙d6 ♞b3** [35...♞h8 loses after 36.♙b4] **36.♞h1!** [Mobilizing the last resource.]

1–0

Volokitin, Andrei (2695) - Ponomarev, Ruslan (2723) [C18]
San Sebastian KO GpA San Sebastian (5), 03.01.2012

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘c6 7.♞g4 g6 8.♘f3 ♞a5 9.♙d2 ♞a4 10.♙e2 c4 11.♞a2 ♙d7 12.♞h4 h6 13.0–0 ♘ce7 14.♙g5 ♙c6 15.g4 ♞a5 16.♞b1 ♘c8 17.a4 ♘b6 18.♞b4 ♘xa4 19.♙f6 ♘xf6 20.exf6 b5 21.♞g3 ♞d8 22.♞e5 ♞d6 23.f4 ♘b6 24.f5 g5 25.♞b1 ♙d7 26.fxe6 ♞xe6 27.♞e1 ♙d8 28.♙f3

♞xf6 29.♞ea1 ♞e8 30.♘d7 ♘xd7 31.♙xd5 ♜c8 32.♞xa7 ♞e7 33.♙b7 ♞b8 34.♙c6 ♞f4 35.♞xf4 gxf4 36.♞a8 ♞e3 37.d5 ♙e7 38.♞xb8 ♘xb8 39.♙xb5 ♙d6 40.♞a8 ♙c7 41.d6+ ♙b7 42.♞a4 ♜xc3 43.♞b4 ♘c6 44.d7 ♘d8 45.♞xc4 ♜xc4 46.♙xc4 ♙c6 47.♙f2 ♙d6 48.♙f3 ♙e5 49.h4 f6 50.c3 ♘c6 51.♙b5 ♘d8 52.c4 ♘e6 53.c5 ♘d4+ 54.♙f2 ♘e6 55.c6 ♙d6 56.♙c4 ♘d8 57.♙d5 ♙xd5

1–0

Nepomniachtchi, Ian (2767) - Ivanchuk, Vassily (2747) [C19]

Wch Rapid Doha (11), 28.12.2016

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘c6 7.♘f3 ♘ge7 8.♙e2 ♞a5 9.0–0 c4 10.♙d2 ♞a4 11.♘g5 ♙d7 12.♙h5 0–0 13.♞e1 h6 14.♘h3 f6 15.exf6 ♞xf6 16.♙f4 ♙e8 17.♙g4 ♙g6 18.♞xe6 ♞xe6 19.♙xe6+ ♙h7 20.♙d6 ♞d8 21.♙c7 ♞f8 22.♘f4 ♙xc2 23.♞d2 ♙f5 24.♙xd5 ♘xd5 25.♘xd5 ♞f7 26.♙g3 ♘a5 27.♞e3 ♞d7 28.♞e5 ♘c6 29.♞d6 ♞xd6 30.♙xd6 ♞d7 31.♘e3 ♙d3 32.♙g3 ♘e7 33.a4 ♙g8 34.h4 ♙f7 35.♘g4 ♘c6 36.f3 ♞d5 37.♘e3 ♞d7 38.a5 ♘e7 39.♙f2 ♘d5 40.♘xd5 ♞xd5 41.♙b8 a6 42.g4 ♞b5 43.♙d6 ♞b1 44.♞xb1 ♙xb1 45.h5 ♙e6 46.♙f8 ♙f7 47.♙c5 ♙e6 48.f4 ♙e4 49.♙e3 ♙c6 50.f5+ ♙f6 51.♙f4 ♙g2 52.♙d6 ♙h1 53.♙e5+ ♙f7 54.g5 hxg5+ 55.♙xg5 ♙f3 56.♙c7 ♙g2 57.♙b6 ♙f3 58.♙d8 ♙e8 59.f6 gxf6+ 60.♙xf6 ♙e4 61.♙f4 ♙c2 62.♙e5

1–0

This survey is by no means exhaustive (nor was it meant to be) about the French Winawer, but you can easily gain some good ideas and insight as to how it has been played.

I concentrated upon games by players that are interesting to follow in their opening choices.

Vachier-Lagrave,Maxime (2767) - Nepomniachtchi,Ian (2774) [C18]

FIDE Candidates 2020 Yekaterinburg (7.2), 25.03.2020

[FM Lester VanMeter]

I wish to highlight what I think is important in this game from a learning standpoint. The reader can find thorough analysis on the internet sites, and MVL annotated it in NIC #3. [But if you need more info about this then please feel free to contact me.]

I'll add in Nepo's prior experience (mostly all as white)

The major story is to look for the theme of development, and effectively getting all of your pieces to their best squares efficiently. A recurring theme is improving your worst piece, but bearing in mind that to improve your worst piece, you might have to move other pieces first.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘e7 [6...Qa5 is the modern continuation.] 7.h4

[C.J.S. Purdy makes a shrewd observation in an article he wrote in the mid-40's[!]. "There are several continuations here, positional or tactical, but quite likely Lajos Steiner's idea of a quick h2–h4–h5 etc could very well be best."

This comes from my current reading of the new edition (#3) of the compilation *'The Search for Chess Perfection'* of some of Purdy's best writing. I was lucky enough to get one of the first copies off the press (I had advanced ordered it, because it was to be improved, and I certainly enjoyed my first edition when I read that in the 90's)

If you can pick up a copy of any edition: First, second or third, it is highly recommended. Be warned, though, you better hurry, as the publisher was brutally murdered early this year, and they're hard to find.]

7...♙c7

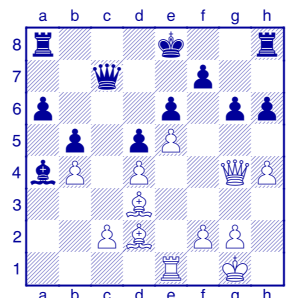
[7...♘bc6 8.h5 h6 9.♙g4 ♘f5 10.♙d3 0–0 11.♘e2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♙a5+ 13.♙d2 ♙a4 14.♙b1 ♘xe5 15.♙h3 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 ♙xd4 17.♙g3 ♘xd3+ 18.cxd3 ♙f6 19.0–0 b6 20.♙b4 d4 21.♙f4 ♙d8 22.♙e5 ♙g5 23.♙xd4 ♙xd4 24.♙xg5 hxg5 25.♙xd4 ♙a6 26.♙c1 f6 27.♙c7 e5 28.♙e3 ♙xd3 29.f3 ♙b5 30.♙f2 ♙e8 31.g4 ♘h7 32.♙e1 ♙a4 33.♙f2 ♘h6 34.♙e2 ♙b3 35.♙f2

♙a4 36.♙e2 ♘h7 37.♙f2 ♙b3 38.♙e2 ♘g8 39.♙f2 ♘h8 40.♙e2 ♘h7 41.♙f2 ♘h6 42.♙e2 ♙e6 43.♙f2 ♙d5 44.♙d7 ♙c4 45.♙c7 ♙a2 46.♙g3 ♘h7 47.♙f2 ♘g8 48.♙g3 ♙d8 49.♙xa7 ♙d3 50.♙f2 b5 51.♙a8+ ♘h7 52.♙a7 ♙c4 53.♙c5 ♙d5 54.♙f8 ♙xf3+ 55.♙e1 ♘g8 56.♙xg7 e4 57.h6 ♙c4 58.♙e7 e3 59.♙d1 e2+ 60.♙d2 ♙f1 61.h7+ ♘xh7 62.♙xf6+ ♙g6 63.♙c3 ♙d1+ 64.♙c2 ♙d3+ 65.♙b2 ♙b1+ 66.♙a2 ♙g1 67.♙e3 ♙c4+ 68.♙b2 ♙xg4 69.♙c2 ♙g1 70.♙d2 g4 71.♙c3 ♙a1 72.♙d4 ♙d1 73.♙c3 ♙f5 74.♙c2 ♙a1 75.♙b4 ♙f4 76.♙d2 ♙a2+ 77.♙c1 ♙f5 78.♙b4 ♙a1+ 79.♙c2 ♙g1 80.♙c3 g3 81.♙e5+ ♙f4 82.♙e7 g2 83.♙d2+ ♙f3 84.♙e3+ ♙f2 0–1 (84) Nepomniachtchi,I (2729)-Savchenko,B (2616) Olginka 2011;

7...b6 8.h5 h6 9.♙g4 ♘f8 10.a4 ♙c7 11.♙h3 ♙a6 12.♙f3 ♘g8 13.♙f4 ♘ec6 14.♙b5 ♙h7 15.♘e2 ♘a5 16.♙e8 1–0 (16) Nepomniachtchi,I (2626)-Shimanov,A (2535) St Petersburg 2009]

8.h5 [C18: French: 3 Nc3 Bb4: Main line: 7 h4 and 7 Qg4.]

[From an earlier round: 8.♘f3 b6 9.♙b5+ ♙d7 10.♙e2 ♙a4 11.0–0 ♘d7 12.♙e3 h6 13.♙a2 ♘f5 14.♙f4 ♙c6 15.♙b2 a6 16.dxc5 ♙xc5 17.♙b4 b5 18.♙d3 ♘e7 19.♙d2 ♘c6 20.♙e2 ♘xb4 21.axb4 ♙c7 22.♙e1 ♘b8 23.♘d4 ♘c6 24.♙g4 ♘xd4 25.cxd4 g6



The French Winawer: Food for Thought

26.h5 (26.♟xg6 fxc6 27.♞xe6+ ♞e7 28.♞c6+ ♟f7 29.h5 with a strong attack. Alekseenko didn't play the sacrifice, "...because I could not analyse it all the way to a win..." "What would Tal say?") 26...gxh5 27.♞xh5 0-0-0 28.f4 ♟b8 29.c3 ♟b3 30.f5 ♟c4 31.♟c2 ♞dg8 32.♟f2 a5 33.bxa5 ♞xa5 34.♞xf7 ♞a2 35.♞xe6 ♞xc2 36.♞b6+ ♟c8 37.♞c6+ ♟b8 38.♞b6+ ♟c8 39.♞c6+ ♟b8 40.♞b6+ ½-½ (40) Alekseenko, K (2698)-Nepomniachtchi, I (2774) Yekaterinburg 2020]

8...h6

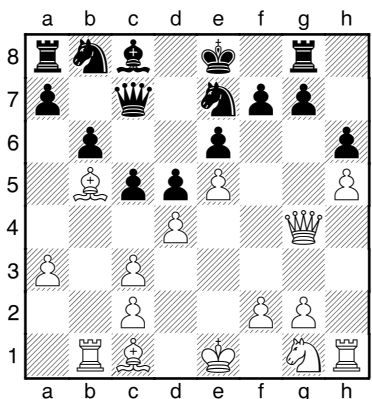
[The pawn does need to be stopped. MVL's next is logical. He mentioned how he was surprised that earlier in the event Nepo had played this way. He didn't expect to see it in this game, but just in case he did come prepared for it.]

9.♞b1

[9.♞f3 ♟bc6 10.a4 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♟b4 12.♟d2 0-0 13.♟a3 ♟bc6 14.♟d6 ♞d8 15.♟d3 f5 16.c3 ♟a5 17.♟h4 ♟d7 18.f4 ♞f7 19.g4 fxc4 20.♟xe7 ♞xe7 21.♞c2 g5 22.♟g6 ♞d8 23.♞hg1 ♞b8 24.♞xg4 b5 25.♟e3 bxa4 26.fxc5 ♟b5 27.♟xb5 ♞xb5 28.♞xa4 hxg5 29.♟h4 ♟f8 30.h6 ♞c7 31.♞xa5 ♞xa5 32.♞b3 ♞b5 33.♞xb5 ♞xc3+ 34.♞d3 ♞e1+ 35.♞e2 ♞c3+ 36.♞d3 ♞c1+ 37.♞d2 ♞a3+ 38.♞d3 ♞c1+ 39.♞d2 ♞xd2+ 40.♟xd2 gxh4 41.♞xh4 ♟g8 42.♟c3 ♞b7 43.♞f4 a5 44.♞f6 ♞b6 45.♞g6+ ♟h7 46.♞g7+ ♟xh6 47.♞a7 ♟g5 48.♞xa5 ♟f4 49.♞a1 ♟e3 50.♞e1+ ♟f2 51.♞h1 ½-½ (51) Nepomniachtchi, I (2768)-Sanikidze, T (2497) Batumi 2018]

9...b6 10.♞g4 [The position is equal.]

10...♞g8 11.♟b5+



[This begins the dance of the ♟'s. Black by playing b7-b6 would like to exchange them from a6, and by this check white wants to entice the ♟ to block on d7, whereupon white would withdraw his ♟.]

11...♟f8N [White must now prevent ...c4.]

[Predecessor: 11...♟d7 12.♟d3 ♟f5 13.♞f4 ♟c6 14.♟xf5 exf5 15.e6 ♞xf4 16.exd7+ ♟xd7 17.♟xf4 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♟xd4 1-0 (36) Bartel, M (2629)-Jaroch, K (2254) Zgierz 2017]

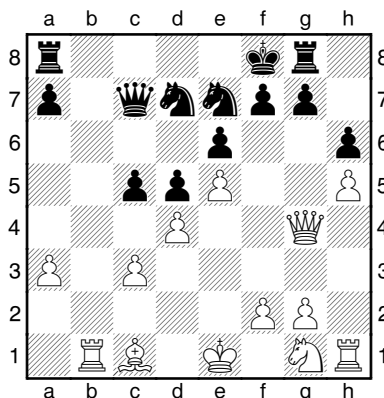
12.♟d3 ♟a6 13.dxc5!

[How to play against the French is a difficult task, and it has taken a long time to fathom. White would like to use his space advantage, and to do that he needs open lines. This exchange is a bit counter intuitive, but the positional basis is that the black ♟ & ♞ are tied up on the kingside. Their lack of mobility is what white needs to exploit.

You can exploit a space and mobility advantage by exchanging off pieces (also counterintuitive) if the pieces that you leave the opponent are still unable to free themselves.

I really enjoyed ChessBase India where IM Sagar Shah analysed with super GM Vidit. Vidit's analysis and insights (He is 2700+, the second strongest Indian player) were illuminating and just invaluable.]

13...♟xd3 14.cxd3 ♟d7 15.d4 bxc5

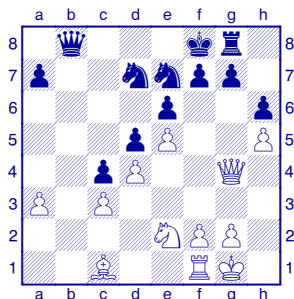


[Here is a key moment in the game. In actuality the worst piece for white right now is the ♔!

A natural plan is to play for f2–f4–f5, and that would entail O-O and ♞g1–e2–g3 maybe. Black will seek counter play on the queen side where he holds more space. If the ♞ goes to e2 now it would block off the ♔ and how would she participate effectively? When one attacks the queen is often better coming up from behind in the second or third wave. Additionally white needs to have some defense for the queen side light squares.]

16. ♔d1!

[But let's say that white does play the natural move 16. ♞e2 ♖b8 17. ♖xb8+ ♗xb8 18. 0–0 and we get here. 18...c4



What should white be thinking about? A key point is that the ♖g8 is still bad, and as black tries to free it white needs to understand where his pieces will be best placed. In this case the ♖f1 stands out, and white should seriously consider the plan ♖f1–d1–d2–b2... to neutralise the b-file.]

16... ♔a5 17. ♕d2 [Again, when you consider the ♖g8, white would be happy to give the a-pawn]

17... ♖b8 18. ♞e2 c4 19. 0–0 ♖b6 20. ♔c2! [Development! If you had gone back to

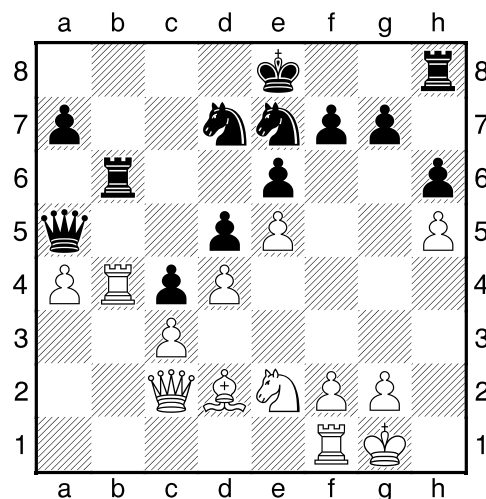
move 16 and asked where is my ♔ best placed to attack the kingside, then this square c2 might have suggested itself as better than g4 due to the weakness at h7 for invasion. That the queen could also defend and support the queen side makes it a "no-brainer"]

20... ♖h8

[The g-pawn is no longer under attack, and so the rook guards h7. It is still a huge liability mobility wise. White now has his pieces placed pretty well, and when that is the case one can always contemplate changing the pawn structure. In this case, white says, "You had your chance at the a-pawn, but it is now off-the-table, and I can attack on the queen side..."]

20... ♖a6±

21. a4!± ♕e8 22. ♖b4



[Here he comes. If you just saw this position, you might think O-O would be good now...]

22... ♞c6 [Unfortunately this does not even threaten to capture on b4... so it can be ignored]

23. f4! ♞e7 [But not 23... ♞xb4?! 24. cxb4 ♔a6 25. b5±]

The French Winawer: Food for Thought

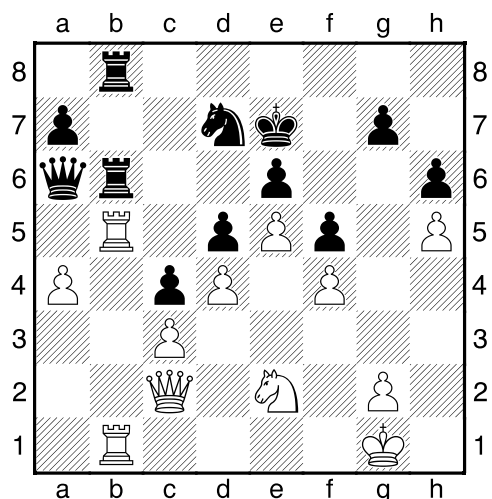
24. ♖fb1 f5 [Hoping to throw some confusion into the position, but white calmly goes about improving his pieces to their best squares. Let's get that "slacker" on d2]

25. ♖b5 ♔a6 26. ♕c1 ♖f7 [White stays focused until the end.]

[26... ♖f8±]

27. ♕a3 ♖hb8 [Finally the rook comes out!; But it is too late...]

28. ♕xe7! ♖xe7



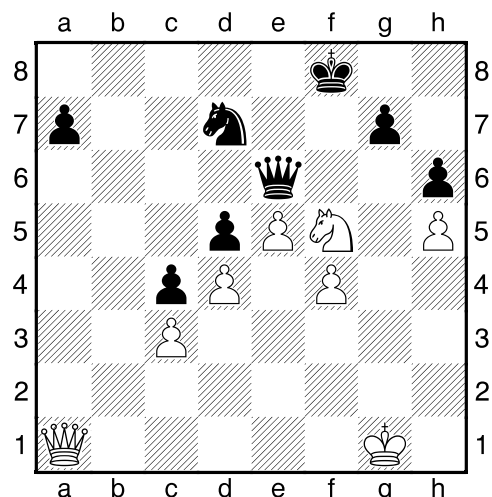
29. g4! [Opening the second front, where only the king is now defending by itself.]

29... ♖xb5 30. axb5 ♖xb5 31. gxf5 [Threatens to win with Rxb5.]

31... ♖xb1+ 32. ♔xb1 exf5 33. ♖g3! [No need to rush, play with ALL of your pieces.]

33... ♔b6 [Δ33... ♔a3]

34. ♖xf5+- ♖f8 35. ♔a1! ♔e6



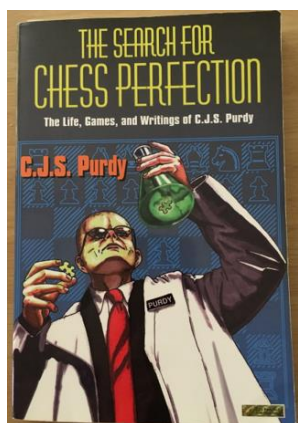
[Δ35... ♔g8 36. ♖e7+ (36. ♖h2 Danny King in his video gave some nice lines here just to illustrate white's dominance) 36... ♔h8]

36. ♖g3! ♔g4? [36... ♔b6 was necessary. 37. ♔a3+ ♖f7]

37. ♖g2 ♔xf4 38. ♔xa7 ♖e7 39. ♔a3+ ♖d8 40. ♔d6 g5 [intending ...g4.]

41. hxg6 h5 42. g7

[Accuracy: White = 97%, Black = 62%.] 1-0



I find Purdy's writings to be both instructive and insightful.

I also have the four-volume series of his game annotations. His collection of end game articles

The book of his winning the 1st World Correspondence Chess Championship.

Plus, his three books on World Championship Matches. Both of the Euwe-Alekhine encounters, as well as the Fischer-Spassky match.

This has been a bit more technical theory article, but hopefully the instructive note to MVL-Nepo are easily digestible. Next time we will look at a positional game based on the theme of development.