

## Learning from Fischer

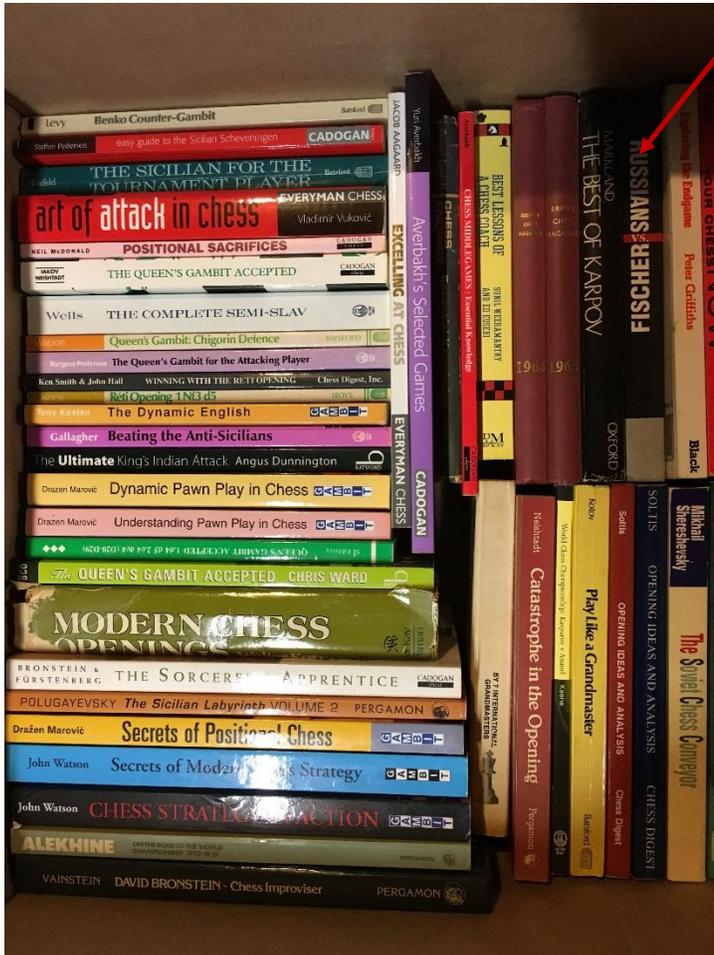
In the first three articles we looked a bit abstractly at what was important to think about in chess in order to understand its secrets. This was deliberate as I wanted to give you a glimpse of the foundation from which I work when helping players improve.

Here you would see a bit more “traditional” type of study method. I am going to present (again just a glimpse, as one short article simply cannot contain everything) a game from Robert Fischer. It is “only” a game from a simultaneous exhibition, but his games are often so clear cut that that is what is instructive.

Indeed, you can find in the wonderful book *“Russians v Fischer”* many insights from the Soviets regarding Fischer’s style of play. The book itself covers every game that Fischer played against Soviets and details the events where they were held. There are many more archival documents from their past in how they planned to “deal with the Fischer problem”.

GM Danny King on his PowerPlay YouTube Chess video site has a thread where he deals with the road to Reykjavik. This book is one of sources for many insights into Fischer’s games.

One observation was that Fischer is a very pragmatic player. He doesn’t show much imagination, but simply plays ‘good’ moves in a straightforward plan. Of course, it was duly noted, that while one could easily see what Fischer was up to in these positions it was extremely difficult to stop him since the plans were so good, and he did see the possibilities far in advance of his unsuspecting opponents.



A small sample of the Quality Used Books I have available.

Naturally the analogy here is that in the 1960’s everybody knew what Vince Lombardi’s Green Bay packers were going to do. You even knew the play that was coming! Stopping it, well that was a different story...

This simul has a history. Only recently have the games become available! It was played just after the Siegen Olympiad in 1972, and Vlastimil Hort had helped in arranging it for Bobby.

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GM Hort has been publishing his remembrances from the past and the players he knew on the ChessBase news site. The organizer of that simul saw it and remembered that he had kept all of the scoresheets from that simul, and he released them for all to see! Fischer played twenty games and when you look at a picture from the layout you note that he actually took black on every other board. That is unusual.

### Let us move on to the chess:

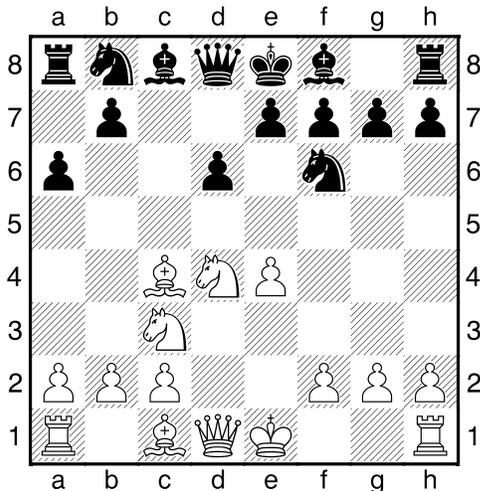
In an actual session we would look at this game (either in person, or live over the internet) and I would put you through the paces. Working upon your ability to analyze variations, find your (and your opponent's) plans, understand how you are choosing your moves (and what you should be looking at), and seeing how deeply you are analyzing while helping you see just how far you should be looking.

In essence we work on your basic chess skills. From these observations, we see where we need to work further. Also, each game we would look at would have a theme associated with it. In this case, a hint ... we will be looking at attacking play...

### Fischer, Robert James - Middendorf [B87]

Muenster sim, 27.09.1970 [VanMeter, Lester]

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙c4 [



The Fischer attack against the Sicilian. He liked this ♙f1–c4 against most lines, but in particular vs the Najdorf, Classical, or Dragon.

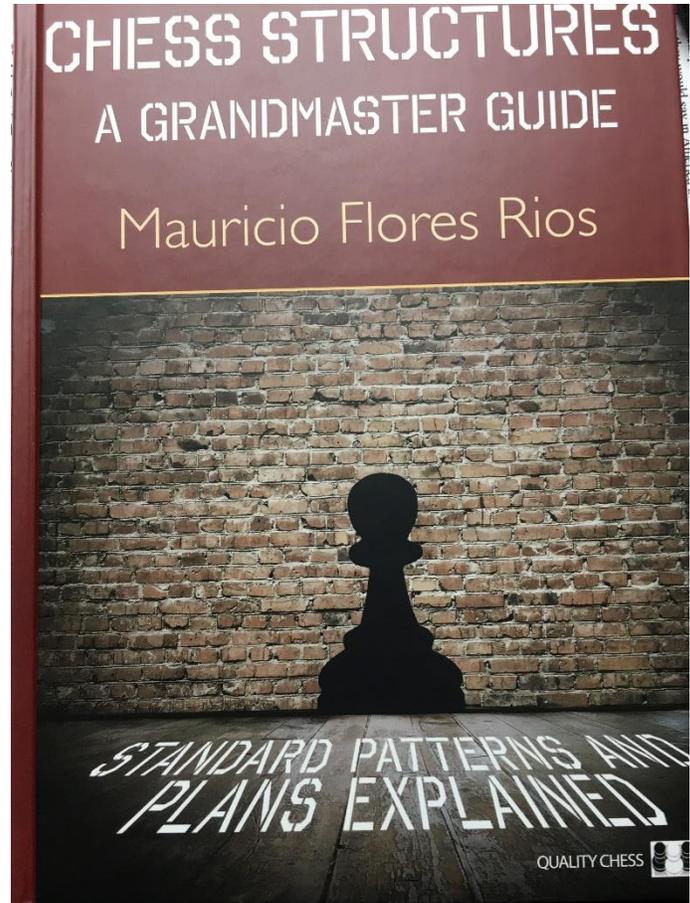
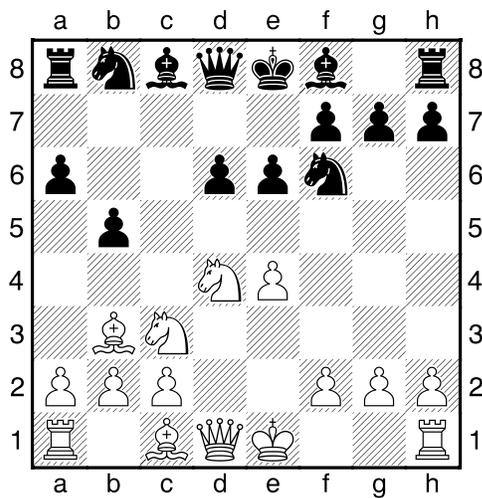
Each and every opening has its associated strategies and logic that would allow you to help orient yourself, rather than simply memorize a series of moves. We will not go into depth here regarding this line, but the main idea for white is to push forward with f2–f4–f5 and attack the e6 point to allow for a kingside attack and take over the d5 square.

There are good books that talk about openings in this manner. General works covering all the openings such as: *Ideas Behind the Chess Opening* by Rueben Fine; A two book series by Andy Soltis, *Opening Ideas and Analysis*; and an all-time classic, *How to Open a Chess Game* by seven(!) prominent GM's who all played in the San Antonio 1972 tournament. (I have a first edition from RHM press of that one available) [See the photo earlier in the article.]

6...e6 7.♘b3

[In another game in this same simul, Bobby was black: 7.0-0 ♘e7 8.♖h1 b5 9.♙d3 ♚c7 10.f4 ♞bd7 11.♗f3 ♙b7 12.a4 b4 13.♞ce2 ♞c5 14.♞g3 h5 15.♞d1 h4 16.♞f1 h3 17.g4 g5 18.fxg5 ♞fd7 19.♞b3 ♞e5 20.♗e2 d5 21.♞xc5 ♙xc5 22.♞e3 ♞xd3 23.♗xd3 0-0-0 24.♞xd5 ♞xd5 0-1 (24) Kellmann-Fischer,R Muenster sim 1970 [VanMeter,Lester]]

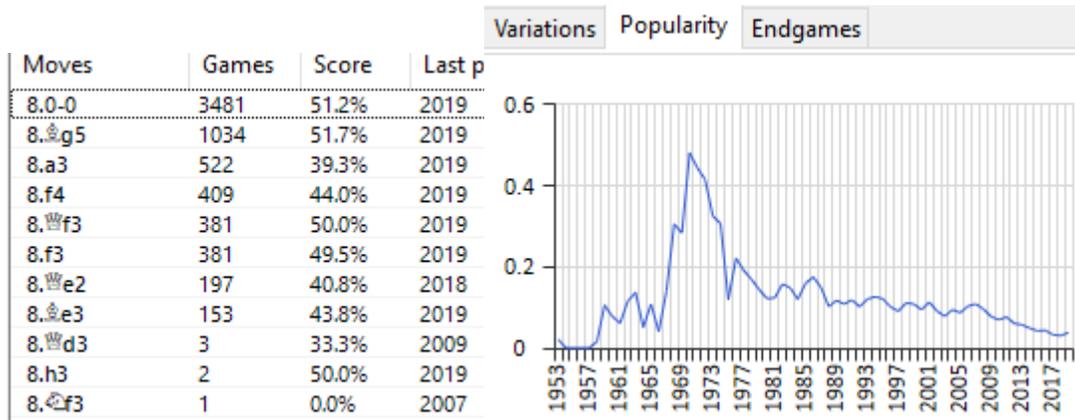
7...b5



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Whether, or not black can take the pawn is still analyzed. Fischer's experience with this line (both colors!) can be seen from the charts below, as well as another Najdorf aficionado.



Fischer	Rubinetti	1-0	1970	Interzonal-08
Fischer	Zuckerman	1-0	1965	USA-ch New York
Fischer	Olafsson	½-½	1960	Buenos Aires International
Fischer	Gadia	1-0	1960	Mar del Plata International-23
Fischer	Tal	0-1	1959	Candidates Tournament

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Byrne	Fischer	0-1	1967	<i>Interzonal-07+</i>
Garcia Soruco	Fischer	0-1	1966	<i>Olympiad-17 Preliminaries C</i>

### How did Garri play?

Govbinder		Kasparov	1/2-1/2	1979	<i>URS Spartakiad</i>
Morozevich	2749	Kasparov	2827	0-1	2001 <i>Astana</i>
Short	2655	Kasparov	2805	1/2-1/2	1993 <i>PCA-World-ch Kasparov-Short +6-1=.</i>
Short	2655	Kasparov	2805	1/2-1/2	1993 <i>PCA-World-ch Kasparov-Short +6-1=.</i>
Short	2655	Kasparov	2805	1-0	1993 <i>PCA-World-ch Kasparov-Short +6-1=.</i>
Short	2665	Kasparov	2815	0-1	1993 <i>London rapid m</i>
Tiliskin		Kasparov	0-1	1976	<i>URS U18-ch Tbilisi</i>

In this article we will not go into details, but I recall a huge article in the ICLA Bulletin regarding this Fischer attack by Larry "D" Evans (the other one, not the GM!).

One night at the RPI Union Michael Carey and I spent several hours analyzing a ♖c4 line. And when it was getting late, we decided we needed to go backwards and find out just where we had "come from"...

Well, we had given white two moves in a row(!) to see if he had a threat...It was that complicated! And we concluded, that yes, he did have a threat.

Today they let the SM [Silicon Monster] run all night to find that stuff out. We both played this line for a while, as we had improvements over some games (or so we thought!). In the end, my conclusion was that this type of opening was indeed tricky, but it seemed to be based upon tremendous tactical "tricks".

Fischer himself talked about his reading of a Soviet book on Questions of Opening Theory by Lipnitsky, in order to try and understand how to play with regard to the threat to white's e-pawn.

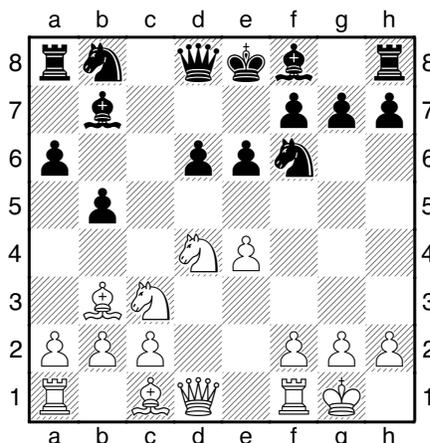
It brings to mind a typical Fischer story. He was having dinner with a friend, and he was raving about this great book he was reading about a tournament by a Soviet player. He was asked about what it was, and it was Bronstein's magnum opus, Zurich 1953. The guy exclaimed, but Bobby isn't that only in Russian?

Yeah, sure, but you should learn Russian to read it, it's that good!

I learned Russian to read their chess stuff...

8.0-0 [8.f4]

8...♖b7



[8...b4 9.♘b1 (9.♘a4 gives a strong attack) 9...♙d7 (The stem game for this line and referenced ahead of time by Bobby: 9...♘xe4 10.♚f3 d5 11.c4 bxc3 12.♘xc3 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♙d6 14.♘f5 0-0 15.♘xd6 ♚xd6 16.♙f4 ♚d8 17.c4 ♘c6 18.♚ad1 ♘e7 19.♚h5 d4 20.♙c2 f5 21.♚d3 ♘g6 22.♙g5 ♚e8 23.♚xd4 ♙b7 24.♚d6 h6 25.♚e1 ♙e4 26.♙xe4 fxe4 27.♙e3 ♘f4 28.♚xe8 ♚axe8 29.♚xa6 ♘d3 30.♚b1 ♚b8 31.♚xb8 ♚xb8 32.h3 ♚b1+ 33.♙h2 ♙f7 34.c5 e5 35.♚a7+ ♙e6 36.♚xg7 ♙d5 37.♚d7+ ♙c6 38.♚d6+ ♙c7 39.♚xh6 ♚b2 40.♚h4 ♙c6 41.♚xe4 ♙d5 42.♚a4 ♘xf2 43.♚a3 e4 44.♚c3 ♙c6 45.♚c4 ♙d5 46.c6 ♙xc4 47.c7 ♙d3 48.♙c5 e3 49.c8 ♚ ♘e4 50.♚a6+ ♙d2 51.♙xe3+ ♙e1 52.♙g1 ♘g3 1-0 (52) Lipnitsky,I-Aronin,L Moscow 1950 URS-ch)] 10.♙e3 ♘c6 11.f3 ♙e7 12.c3 bxc3 13.♘xc6 ♙xc6 14.♘xc3 0-0 15.♚c1 ♚b8 16.♘d5 exd5 17.♚xc6 dxe4 18.fxe4 ♚b5 19.♚b6 ♚e5 20.♙d4 ♚g5 21.♚f3 ♘d7 22.♚b7 ♘e5 23.♚e2 ♙f6 24.♙h1 a5 25.♙d5 ♚ac8 26.♙c3 a4 27.♚a7 ♘g4 28.♚xa4 ♙xc3 29.bxc3 ♚xc3 30.♚xf7 ♚c1+ 31.♚f1 h5 32.♚xc1 ♚h4 33.♚xf8+ ♙h7 34.h3 ♚g3 35.hxg4 h4 36.♙e6 1-0 (36) Fischer,R-Sherwin,J New York 1957]

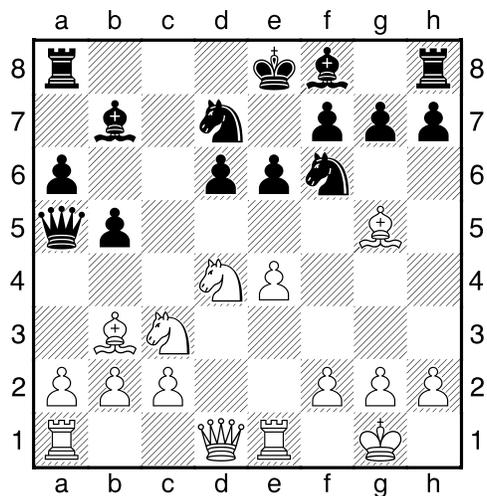
9.♚e1

[Fischer was a pioneering trailblazer in this line. Two previous games of his had gone:]

[9.♙g5 ♘bd7 10.♙xe6 fxe6 11.♘xe6 ♚c8 12.♘xf8 ♚xf8 13.♚xd6 ♚c6 14.♚ad1 ♚xd6 15.♚xd6 0-0-0 16.♚fd1 h6 17.♙e3 ♘e5 18.♚xd8+ ♚xd8 19.♚xd8+ ♙xd8 20.f3 ♙d7 21.♙f2 ♙c6 22.b3 ♙e6 23.h3 ♙b7 24.♘e2 ♘c6 25.h4 ♙c8 26.♘d4+ ♘xd4 27.♙xd4 g5 28.hxg5 hxg5 29.♙xf6 ♙xf6 30.c3 ♙e6 31.♙e3 ♙e5 32.g3 a5 33.f4+ gx4+ 34.gxf4+ ♙d6 35.f5 ♙g8 36.♙d4 ♙h7 37.c4 bxc4 38.bxc4 ♙c6 39.a3 a4 40.♙e5 ♙g8 41.♙f6 ♙xc4 42.♙e7 ♙c5 43.e5 ♙d4 44.♙d6 ♙e4 45.f6 ♙f5 46.♙c5 ½-½ (46) Fischer,R-Cardoso,R New York 1957;

9.f4 ♘c6 10.♘xc6 ♙xc6 11.f5 e5 12.♚d3 ♙e7 13.♙g5 ♚b6+ 14.♙h1 0-0 15.♙xf6 ♙xf6 16.♙d5 ♚ac8 17.♙xc6 ♚xc6 18.♚ad1 ♚fc8 19.♘d5 ♚d8 20.c3 ♙e7 21.♚a1 f6 22.a4 ♚b8 23.♘xe7+ 1-0 (23) Fischer,R-Gadia,O Mar del Plata 1960]

9...♘bd7 10.♙g5 ♚a5N  
[diagram at right]



## Learning from Fischer

### B87: Sicilian Scheveningen/Najdorf: 6 Bc4, with early ...b5

In a simul, perhaps Middendorf was thinking that Bobby is so busy, he won't see my veiled threat of b5–b4 hitting two pieces.

[10...h6 11.♘e3 ♘c5; Predecessor: 10...h6 11.♘h4 ♘c5 12.♘d5 ♚b6 13.♘xf6 gxf6 14.♚h5 0–0–0 15.♘xb7+ ♘xb7 16.♖ad1 ♜d7 17.♞e3 ♞g8 18.h4 ♚b8 19.b4 1–0 (39) Polgar,I-Filep,T Budapest 1969]

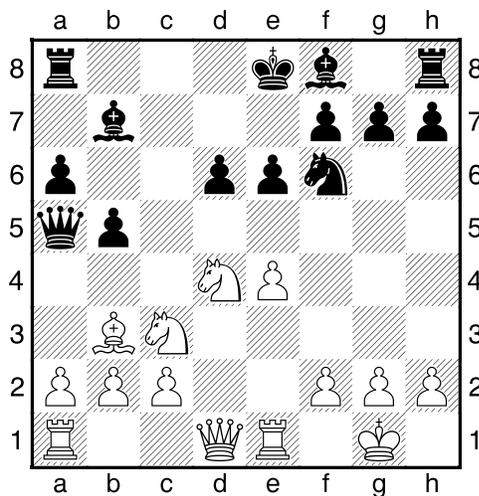
#### 11.♘xf6

[This position actually appeared later in a GM event, and irony of ironies David Bronstein was playing the white pieces!

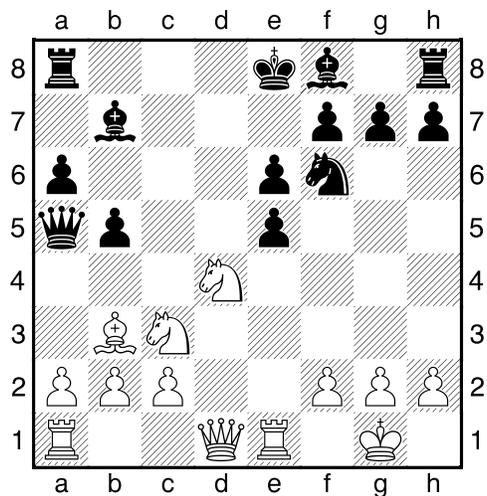
He decided to keep his bishop, but Bobby was surely playing freely. In his simul games he played much more attacking and free styling chess.]

[11.♘d5 with more complications. 11...♞c8 12.♘xf6+ gxf6 13.♘d2 ♚b6 14.c3; 11.♘h4 b4 12.♘a4 ♚h5 13.♚xh5 ♘xh5 14.♞ad1 ♘e7 15.♘xe7 ♚xe7 16.c3 bxc3 17.♘xc3 ♞hc8 18.f3 g5 19.♞d2 ♘c5 20.♘c2 ♘f6 21.♞ed1 g4 22.♚f2 gxf3 23.gxf3 h6 24.♘de2 d5 25.e5 ♘h5 26.♞d4 ♘d7 27.♞h4 ♘g7 28.f4 ♞h8 29.♘d4 f6 30.♞g1 ♘c5 31.♞h5 1–0 (31) Bronstein,D-Infante Meyer,S San Salvador 1974]

#### 11...♘xf6



#### 12.e5 dxe5



Black is slightly better.[SM]

#### 13.♘xe6!

[No doubt played immediately by Bobby, and certainly it would be a "shock and awe" move. Black does not capture, perhaps because the GM might have something...

At any rate he tries to shore up his defense of e5, and by attacking the ♘c3 he tries to gain time.

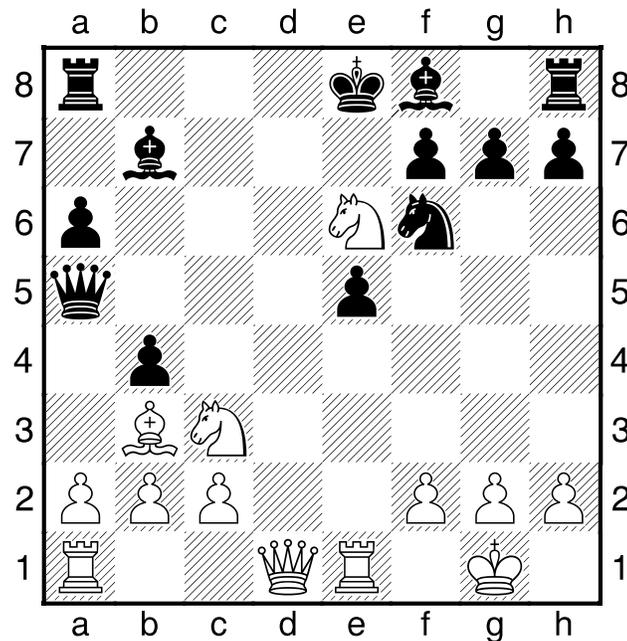
#### 13...b4?

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[13...fxe6 keeps the upper hand. 14.♖xe5 ♕e7]

With both knights under siege they both cannot escape...

In the end, though, he clearly misses the next move...]



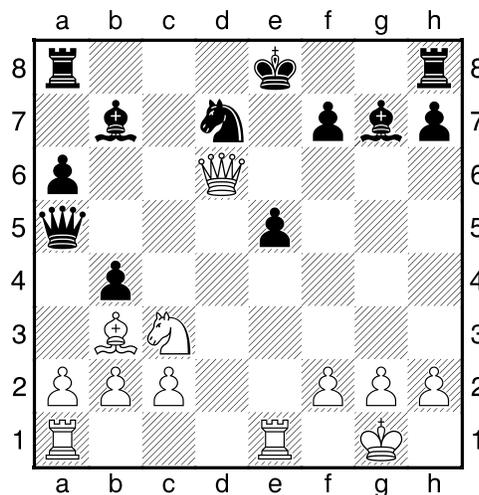
What would you play?

14.♘xg7+!+-

[This Deflection sacrifice is decisive. When you're playing a mating attack you wish to "trap the king" and then give check to finish him. Many players try to, check check check the king pushing him around. A big lesson from this game: Watch Bobby trap the king (!) to threaten mate, rather than just checking.]

14...♕xg7 15.♔d6 [White wants to mate with Ba4+.]

15...♘d7 [



## Learning from Fischer

A logical try to stop a check along the a4–e8 diagonal and guard the ♖e5 so he does not lose his queen. Also, when attacking the king... There is no need to hold back, ATTACK with everything you got, have no slackers. Take out defensive pieces. The logical follow up here is... ??]

16. ♙xf7+! [ Deflection, Decoy]

16... ♚xf7? [Black chooses his poison...maybe white will just capture material back.]

[16... ♚d8]

17. ♜xd7+ [ Double Attack]

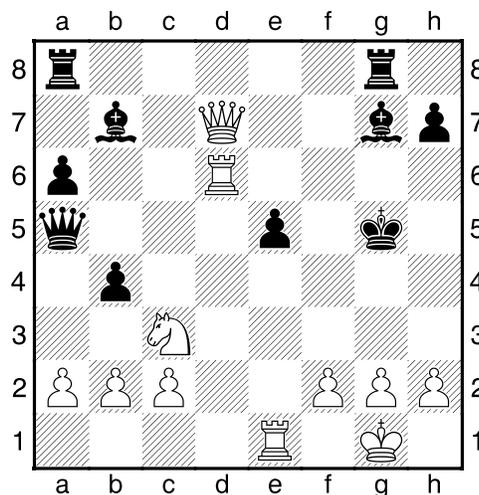
17... ♚f6 [Wandering down a dark isolated New York alley is just "asking for trouble" Now what do you do?]

[17... ♚g8 18. ♖ad1 h6 19. ♜xb7 ♜d8]

18. ♖ad1 [Yes, you bring up the slacker on a1 towards the undefended square d6 to threaten mate starting with Rd6+. Desperately black realizes he must guard the ♙g7]

18... ♜hg8 19. ♖d6+ [White has a mating attack, but let's be accurate! How do you do it? If you answered trap the king first, then you're a winner, but do you see it like Bobby?]

19... ♚g5 [



## Learning from Fischer

20.h4+! ♖xh4 21.♙f5

[The same theme as at move 15.

Now, all I have to do is give a check.

In desperation mode, black "survives until his last breath" ...]

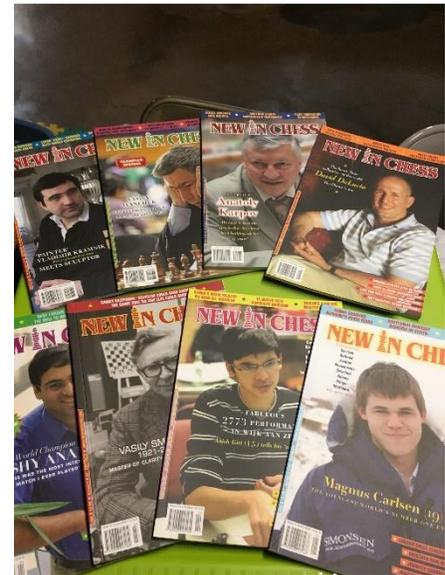
21...♗xg2 22.♖xg2 ♗h6+ 23.♖f3 [ Accuracy: White = 69%, Black = 8%.]

1-0

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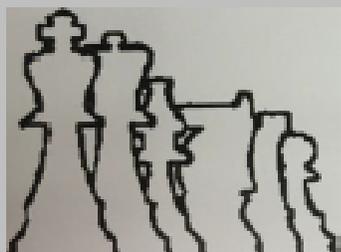
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