

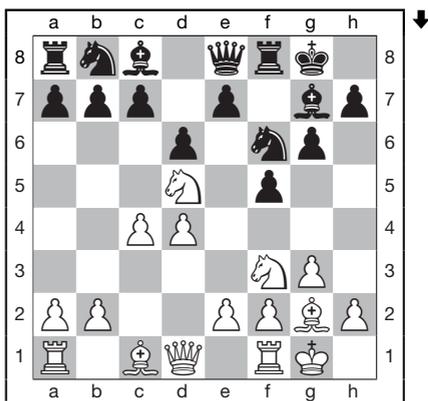


3.3.2 The knight move 8 ♖d5

Lugovoi – Kindermann

Neum 2000

1 d4 f5 2 g3 ♜f6 3 ♙g2 g6 4 ♜f3
♙g7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c4 d6 7 ♜c3 ♚e8
8 ♖d5!?

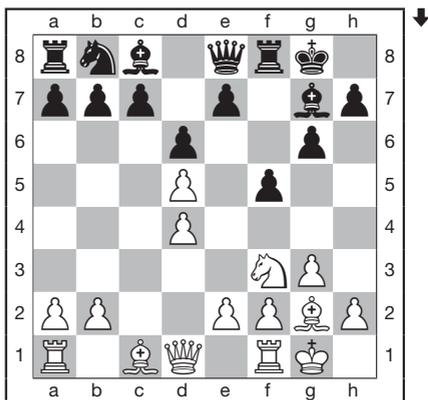


A very aggressive and interesting continuation. White brings about a radical change in the black pawn structure and exchanges Black's king's knight.

8... ♖d5

8... ♖a6?! 9 ♜f6 ♙f6 [9... ♜f6 10 ♙g5]
10 ♙h6.

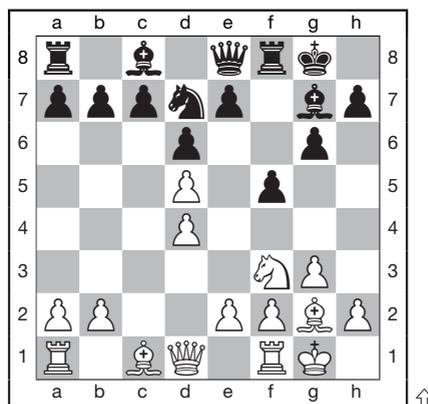
9 cd5



As compensation for the doubled pawns, the forward d-pawn exerts pressure on the sensitive square e6, White has chances on the half-open c-file, and the defence of the Black kingside has been weakened by the exchange of knights.

Being less keen on the position which Black gets after the traditional 9... ♚b5 10 ♜g5! (see sub-variation B on the following page), I began to look for new possibilities. The main problem here is to free oneself from historical precedents and to take a fresh and objective look at the actual position. 9... ♚b5, or the somewhat passive 9... c6, were almost invariably played at this point. How else might Black arrange his pieces? What about a developing move?

9... ♖d7!



The more I studied this straightforward move, the more I liked it: the knight would be superbly posted on b6 (or f6), from where it could exert pressure on d5. The weakness on c7 can be easily guarded, in the first instance by the queen and later by the rook. In some lines with the knight on b6, ...e6 also becomes an interesting idea, the intention being to counter White's de6 with

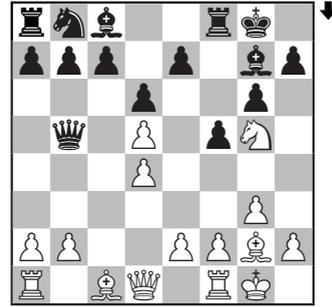


...d5! and to set up an impregnable centre. It is, of course, impossible to subject such a position to concrete analysis, and I had to wait some time before putting it to the test. My opportunity came in the last round of the European Cup in Neum (2000), when my club team, Graz, had to try for a maximum of wins to get to the top of the table. My opponent on this occasion was a relatively unknown Russian grandmaster. In the meantime I am proud to have acquired several prominent practitioners of my move. The very strong Ukrainian player Onischuk is currently, after Mikhail Gurevich, probably the highest-ranking 'Leningrader', whilst the leading Vietnamese woman player Hoàng has specialised in this defence – here she succeeds in brilliantly defeating not just the almost unbeatable, super-solid Hungarian Lukács, but also the talented German player Jan Gustafsson! To be absolutely honest, I cannot say for sure that the move 9...♟d7 was not discovered independently of my game, since many of the games at Neum went unrecorded in the current databases.

In the period following the publication of the first German edition of this book, this new idea has also proved its worth brilliantly. Subsequent White results against 9...♟d7! have been simply disastrous: the 4½–13½ in favour of Black recorded in my data banks tells its own story! But I still do not believe that 8 ♟d5 is 'busted'; after 10 ♟g5! ♟b6 11 e4! or 10...♟f6 11 ♟b3! particularly, I anticipate further exciting developments...

A) 9...c6 is probably playable, but somewhat passive.

B) 9...♟b5 is regarded by (almost) all theory books as the strongest reply. The move is, of course, tempting and gives Black's seventh move special significance! But in recent years the once strangely neglected knight move to g5 has proved to be quite dangerous for Black. 10 ♟g5! [10 ♟e1 This older move is much less effective.]



Some examples demonstrating the risks for Black:

a) 10...♟b6 11 ♟e3 a5 [11...♟d8 12 h4 a5 13 ♟d2 c6 14 ♟ac1 ♟b5 15 h5 ♟d7 16 hg6 hg6 17 ♟f4 ♟a6 18 e4 ♟b4 19 a3 ♟d3 20 ♟cd1 ♟b2 21 ♟b1 ♟c4 22 ♟e2 ♟a6 23 ef5 ♟f5 24 ♟bc1 ♟b6 25 ♟a2± Khalifman–Piskov, Bundesliga 1991/92 (1–0, 41). This convincing victory by the later FIDE World Champion rocketed the knight move to g5 to centre stage.] 12 h4 ♟a6 13 a3 ♟d7 14 ♟d3 ♟fc8 15 ♟e6 ♟e6 16 de6 c6 17 h5 Gelfand–Malaniuk, Elista 1998 (1–0, 34).

b) 10...h6 11 ♟e6 ♟e6 12 de6 d5 13 a4 ♟c4 14 e3! [14 ♟e3 The following game (unnecessarily) dismayed advocates of 8 ♟d5 for several years. 14...c6 15 ♟d2 ♟a6 16 ♟h6 ♟b4 17 ♟f4 ♟h6 18 ♟h6 ♟f6 19 ♟f4 ♟c8 20 ♟fc1 ♟c7 21 ♟c2 ♟g7 22 e3 ♟e6 23 ♟f3 ♟h8 Stohl–Topalov, Elenite 1992 (0–1, 37)] 14...c6 15 ♟d2 a5 16 ♟b1 ♟f6 17 b4 ab4 18 ♟c1 ♟a6 19 ♟b4 ♟e6 20 ♟ab1 ♟d6 21 ♟b7 ♟b7 22 ♟b7 Shcherbakov–Potapov, St Petersburg 1998 (1–0, 30).

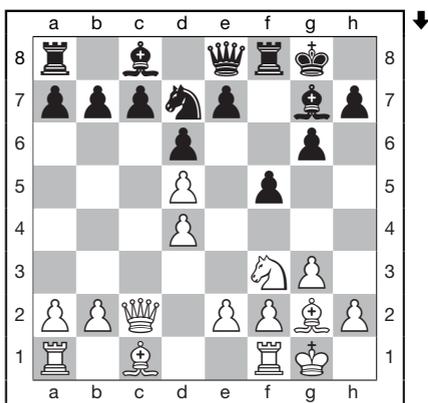
c) 10...♟a6 demonstrates one of my own unfortunate experiences: 11 h4 c6 12 dc6 bc6 13 d5! c5 14 h5! This is the crunch move; the thematic reaction ...h6 does not work, which means that the unpleasant opening of the h-file is no longer to be avoided. 14...c4 [14...h6? 15 ♟e6] 15 hg6 hg6 16 ♟b1 ♟c7 17 ♟h3 ♟b8 18 ♟e3 ♟b7 19 ♟f4 ♟f7 20 ♟a7 ♟a8 21 ♟d4 Horváth–Kindermann, Budapest 1992 (1–0, 39).



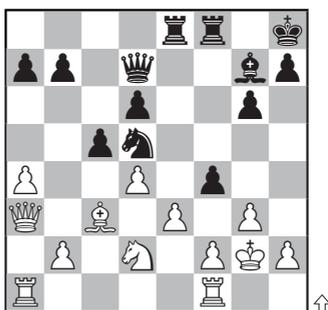
d) 10...a5 11 h4 ♖a6 12 a3 c6 13 dc6 bc6 14 d5 ♖c7 [14...c5 15 h5] 15 dc6 a4 16 ♙e3 ♖a6 17 ♖c1 h6 18 ♖h3 ♗b2 19 ♖f4 Bacrot–Koch, Montpellier 2001 (1–0, 30).

e) 10...c6 11 a4 [11 e4 fe4 12 ♖e4 ♗b6 13 dc6 ♖c6 14 d5 ♖e5 15 h3 ♙d7 16 a4 ♗b4 17 ♖g5 ♖ac8 18 ♖a2 b6 19 ♙d2 ½–½ Yakovich–Malaniuk, Samara 1998] 11... ♗b6 12 a5 ♗d4 [12... ♗b5 13 e4 fe4 14 ♖e4 cd5 15 ♖c3 ♗e8 16 ♖d5 ♖a6 17 ♙g5 e6 18 ♖e7 ♖h8 19 ♖c8 ♗c8 20 ♙e7 ♖f7 21 ♙d6 ♖d7 22 ♙a3 ♙d4 23 ♗g4 Yakovich–Terán Álvarez, Santo António 1999 (1–0, 74)] 13 ♗b3 c5 14 ♖e6 ♙e6 15 de6 ♖c6 16 ♗b7 ♖b4 17 ♗e7 ♖ae8 18 ♗d7 ♗e5 19 ♙f4 ♗e6 20 ♗d6 g5 21 ♗e6 ♖e6 22 ♙e3 Wells–Tozer, England 1999 (1–0, 40).

10 ♗c2



A) 10 ♗b3 ♖b6 11 ♙d2 e6! 12 de6 ♙e6 13 ♗c2 c6 14 ♙b4 ♗d7 15 e3 ♙d5 ♖ 16 ♖d2 ♖ae8 17 a4 ♙g2 18 ♖g2 ♖d5 19 ♗b3 ♖h8 20 ♗a3 c5 21 ♙c3 f4!



The Dutch lance leads to a complete rout. 22 ef4 ♖e2 23 ♖c4 ♖f4 24 ♖h1 ♖f2 25 ♖e3 ♖h2 26 ♖g1 ♗h3 0–1, Lagowski–Potapov, Pardubice 2003.

B) 10 e4 fe4 11 ♖g5 ♖f6 12 ♖e4 ♖d5 13 ♖d6 ed6 14 ♙d5 ♖h8 15 ♙e3 ♗b5 [15... ♙h3!?] 16 ♗b3 ♗b3 17 ♙b3 c6 18 ♖g2 d5 ♖ Fang–Grafl, Budapest 2003 (½–½, 24).

C) 10 ♖g5! is the most plausible alternative; often transpositions arise, since both the queen move to c2 and the knight move to g5 are inherent resources of the white position.

Now Black's decision about the placing of his knight is by no means of trivial importance. On b6 the knight lends support to the queenside and brings into play the fianchettoed bishop. But in adopting this set-up Black neglects the protection of his kingside, which becomes apparent after the immediate 11 e4! This problem could be solved by 10... ♖f6, but then the white queen move to b3 is that much stronger...

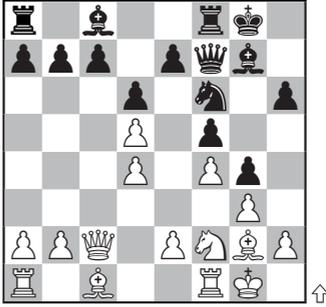
a) 10... ♖f6

a1) 11 ♗b3! Should this move turn out to be strong, it would be a clear argument in favour of 10... ♖b6, since after this latter move Black does not need to fear the pressure on b7, nor is the square c4 available to the white queen. [11 e4 fe4 12 ♖e4 ♖d5 ♖ see 10 e4, variation B] 11... ♖b8 12 ♗c4 ♗d8 13 h4 h6 14 ♖h3 e6!? 15 de6 d5 16 ♗a4 ♙e6 17 ♗a7 ♖e4 18 ♗a4 ♗f6 19 ♙f4 ♖a8 20 ♗b3 ♗d4 21 ♗b7 c5 Gonda–Markus, Budapest 2002 (0–1, 53). And here Black has some play for the sacrificed pawn.

a2) 11 ♗c2 h6 12 ♖h3 g5! 13 f4 [13 ♗c7?! f4! 14 ♖f4 gf4 15 ♙f4 ♖] 13...g4 14 ♖f2 ♗f7!

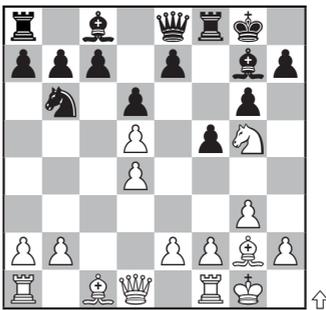
(see next analysis diagram)

This important position can be reached by various move sequences.



15 ♖c7 ♜d5 16 ♖a5 ♙e6 17 e4 fe4 18 ♙e4 b6 ♞ [18...♙d4? A dreadful move. Players of the Dutch defence really cannot ever allow White to play f5! 19 f5 ♜b6 20 ♙h6± Zaiatz–Kosintseva, Elista 2002 (1–0, 51)] 19 ♖b5 [19 ♖d2 ♙f5!] 19...a6 20 ♖d3 [20 ♖e2 h5 21 f5 Otherwise Black can again play ♙f5, with positional advantage. 21...♙f5 22 ♜g4 ♙g4 23 ♜f7 ♙e2 24 ♜f8 ♜f8 25 ♙d5 ♙d4 26 ♜g2 ♜c8] 20...♙f5 21 ♙f5 ♖f5 22 ♖f5 ♜f5 23 ♜g4 h5 24 ♜f2 ♙d4 ♞ followed by ...♜c8.

b) 10...♜b6



b1) 11 ♖c2 h6 12 ♜h3 g5 13 f4 [13 ♖c7 f4 ♞ 13...g4 14 ♜f2 ♖f7 15 ♖c7 ♜d5 Transposes to lines with 10...♜f6.

b2) 11 h4 This looks reasonable: on the one hand White seeks to secure the good square f4 for his knight, on the other, Black has now to reckon with the advance h4–h5. 11...c6!? Herewith two notable alternatives: [11...h6 12 ♜h3! (12 ♜e6?! ♙e6 13 de6 d5) 12...e6 13 de6 c6!? (13...d5 14 ♙f4! ♖e7 15 ♖c1) 14 d5∞; 11...e6!? 12 de6 d5 13 ♙f4 ♖e7!

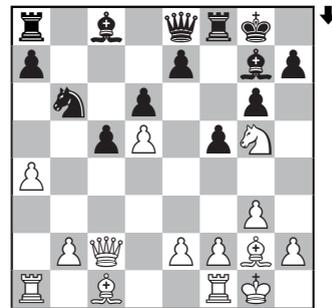
14 ♖c2 (14 a4!?) 14...c6 15 ♖c5!? ♖c5 16 dc5 ♜a4∞] 12 dc6 bc6 13 d5 c5 14 a4 [14 h5!?] 14...♜c4 15 ♜b1 ♜b8 16 b3 ♜e5 17 ♙d2 ♙d7 18 ♜e6 ♙e6 19 de6 ♖c8 20 ♙d5 ♖a6∞ Lukács–Hoàng, Budapest 2001 (0–1, 51).

b3) 11 a4!? This, and 11 e4, are the most dangerous replies to 9...♜d7! But, with precise play, Black's resources should prove completely adequate:

b31) 11...a5 12 h4 [12 ♖c2!± This is one of the important ideas behind 11 a4: the 'automatic' 11...a5 is weak, because after the white queen attacks c7, the knight on b6 looks dangerously insecure.] 12...♙d7 13 ♜e6 ♙e6 14 de6 d5 ♞ Erdős–Antal, Budapest 2002 (0–1, 48).

b32) 11...c6! Black aims to secure a strong-point for his knight on d5. 12 dc6 [12 ♜e6?! ♙e6 13 de6 d5 Now the advanced white pawn is surrounded. 14 a5 ♜c4 15 b3 ♜d6 16 ♙f4 ♜b5 17 e3 ♖c8 ♞ Knoll–Schroll, Austrian Championship, Hartberg 2003 (0–1, 72)] 12...bc6 13 d5 [13 ♖b3 ♜h8 14 a5 ♜d5 15 ♙d5 cd5 16 ♖d5 ♜b8 gives Black excellent compensation for the pawn. 13 a5 ♜d5 ♞] 13...c5

b321) 14 ♖c2 [14 a5 ♜c4 ♞]



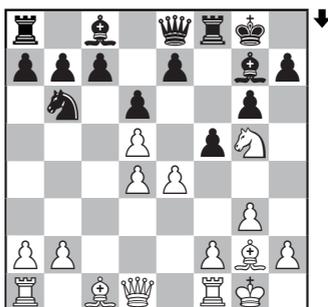
14...♜b8! Creates a refuge for the harassed knight on a8, from where it can transfer to the good square c7. 15 ♙d2 h6 16 ♜e6 Here I overestimated White's compensation after the imminent gain of a pawn and, having consulted my team captain, let myself



be tempted into a draw. ½–½, Komarov–Kindermann, French League, Clermont-Ferrand 2003 16...♗e6 17 de6 ♖c8 18 e4 ♗e6 19 ef5 gf5 20 ♖fe1 ♗f7.

b322) 14 ♖a2 ♖b8 15 b3 ♗d7 [15...♗a8!?] 16 ♗e6 ♗e6 17 de6 ♗a8 18 e4 ♗c7 19 ♖e2 ♖b4 [19...f4!? 20 ♗h3 (20 ♗f4 ♗e6)] 20...♗e5∞] 20 ♗d2 ♖d4∞ Bacrot–Bauer, Bundesliga 2003/04 (1–0, 46).

b4) 11 e4!



This natural-looking central advance is really dangerous with the knight on b6 and could persuade many players of Black to take a closer look at the rarely-played 10...♗f6!?. Then 11 e4 fe4 would lead by transposition to the completely harmless 10 e4.

b41) 11...fe4 12 ♗e4 creates some attacking chances for White, beginning with the threatened sacrifice on h7. 12...♗f5 [12...h6 13 ♗e6 ♗e6 14 de6 d5 15 ♗d3±; 12...c6? 13 ♗h7±] 13 ♗e2 which, in view of the gaping hole at e6, looks, to say the least, dubious.

b42) 11...e5!?

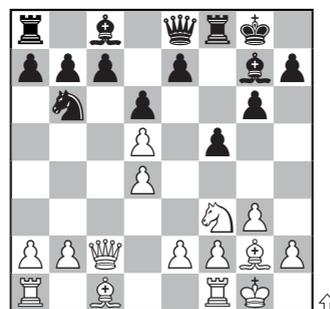
b421) 12 de6 This move only makes sense when followed by the knight move to f7. 12...h6 13 ♗f7! [13 ♗h3?! After this meek withdrawal, Black has no problems. 13...fe4 14 ♗e4 ♗e6 15 ♗g2 g5 16 f4 g4 17 ♗f2 h5 18 ♖e1 ♗f6 19 ♗e3 c6 20 ♗e4 ♗g6 21 ♗g5 ♗f5 22 ♖b3 d5] Karavade–Kosintseva, Panaji 2002 (0–1, 77)] 13...♗e6 [13...♗e6 14 ♗h6 ♗h7 15 ♖e1] 14 ♗h6 ♗h7 15 ef5 gf5 16 ♖e1 ♗g6 17 ♖e7 ♗h8 18 ♖c7 [18 ♖g7 ♗g7] 18...♗h6 19 ♗h6 ♖h6∞.

b422) 12 de5! is critical: 12...♗e5 13 ♖e1 [13 ♗f4 ♖b2 14 ♖c1 h6 15 ♗e6 ♗e6 16 de6 g5 17 ♗e3 f4∞] 13...h6 [13...fe4 14 ♖e4 ♗f6 15 ♖f4±; 13...♗f6 14 ♗f4±] 14 ♗f3 [14 ♗e6 ♗e6 15 ef5 ♗f5 16 de6 ♗f2 17 ♗h1 ♖ae8∞; 14 ef5 ♗f5] 14...♗f6 15 e5 de5 16 ♗e5 ♖e8∞.

10...♗d8?!

Unfortunately I had already forgotten my own analysis, made a long time previously! The knight move to b6 (or f6) is probably much more exact, and is what I had originally intended!

10...♗b6! [10...♗f6!?]



a) 11 ♗c7 ♗d5 12 ♖c4 This position alarmed me during the game for reasons which I now understand all too well. 12...e6! is more flexible and I prefer it to the queen move to c6. Black strives to develop his queen's bishop harmoniously, whilst asserting control over the central squares e4 and d5. [12...♗c6 13 ♖b3 e6 14 ♗f4 ♗d7 15 ♗g5 ♖fe8 16 ♖ac1 ♖b5 17 ♖b5 ♗b5 18 ♗e6 ♗f4 19 ♗f4 ♗e2 20 ♖fe1 ♗a6 21 ♗d5 ♗h8 22 ♗e6 ♗f6∞ Krivoshey–Onischuk, Bastia 2000 (0–1, 42)]

a1) 13 ♗g5 b5 14 ♖b3 ♗b7 15 e4 fe4 16 ♗e4 ♖d7 17 ♖e1 ♗d4 18 ♗h6 ♖f7] Gurieli–Hoàng, Batumi 2001 (0–1, 46).

a2) 13 ♖b3 b5 14 ♗d2 ♖d7 [14...♗b7 15 a4 a6 16 ♖fc1 ♖d7] 14...a5!?] 15 a4 ba4 16 ♖a4 ♖a4 17 ♖a4 ♖b8 18 b4 a6 19 ♖c1∞ Faragó–Deglmann, Böblingen 2002 (½–½, 38).



a3) 13 ♖f4 b5! 14 ♖b3 ♗d7 15 a4 b4 16 ♗d2 a5 17 ♖fe1 ♗b7 ♜ 18 e4 fe4 19 ♖e4 ♗b6 20 ♖h4 [20 ♖f4 ♗d5 21 ♗d1 ♖b7 22 ♗e1 ♗c4 23 ♗e2 ♗d2 24 ♗d2 ♖f4 25 ♖f4 ♗g2 26 ♗g2 ♗d5 ♜ Krivoshey–Rogovski, Alushta 2003 (0–1, 38)] 20...♗d5! Sets up a powerful battery of queen and bishop on the a8–h1 diagonal. 21 ♗d3 ♖b7 22 ♗e1 ♗g2 23 ♗g2 ♖f3 24 ♗e3 ♖f5 25 ♗e2 ♗d5 26 ♗d2 ♖ac8 27 ♗e1 ♗f6 28 ♖f4 ♗d5 29 ♗g2 e5 30 de5 de5 31 ♖f3 e4 32 ♖f4 ♖c2 33 ♖d1 ♖b2 34 ♗e3 ♖a2 35 ♗c4 ♖c2 36 ♗e3 ♖c5 37 ♗g4 ♖a4 38 ♗f6 ♗f6 39 ♖e4 ♖d5 40 ♖e1 ♖b5 41 ♖e3 ♗d3 42 ♗d3 ♖d3 43 ♗h6 ♗g7 44 ♗g7 ♗g7 45 ♖a1 b3 46 ♖e7 ♖f7 47 g4 ♖e7 0–1, Gustafsson–Hoàng, Budapest 2001. A strong positional performance by the Vietnamese woman expert!

b) 11 ♗g5 h6 [11...♗d4 12 ♖c7; 11...♖b5 12 ♖c7 ♗d5 13 ♗d5 ♗d5 14 ♖e7 ♗d4] 12 ♗e6 [12 ♗h3 g5 13 f4 (13 ♖c7 f4) 13...g4 14 ♗f2 ♖f7! 15 ♖c7 ♗d5] Leads by transposition to lines with 10 ♖c2 ♗f6 (Zaiatz–Kosintseva, variation a2 on page 70) 16 ♖a5 ♗e6 17 e4 fe4 18 ♗e4 b6! ♜] 12...♗e6 13 de6 This exchange, as usual, gives Black good play. The move ...c6, which reduces the effectiveness of the white bishop, plays a key role here. 13...c6 14 e4! Absolutely essential, since otherwise ...d5! follows. 14...fe4 15 ♗e4 ♖f6 16 ♖e1 ♗h8 17 ♗g2 g5 18 ♗d2 ♖h5 19 ♗d1 ♗d1 20 ♖ad1 ♖af8∞ Szeberényi–Hoàng, Budapest 2002 (½–½, 47).

11 ♗g5 ♗b6 12 h4!?

Very aggressive play! Faced with the Leningrad, White is often provoked into embarking on severe ‘punishment-expeditions’.

12...♗d4!

Black is right to grab this pawn!

13 h5 ♗f6!

13...gh5 14 ♗f3.

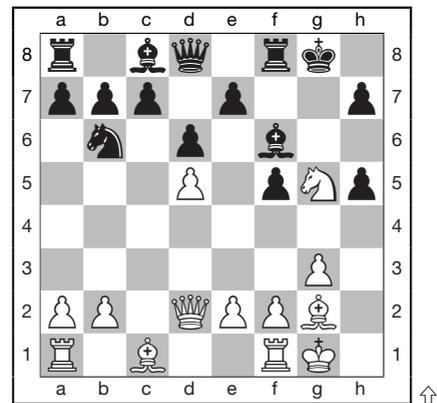
14 ♗d2?

With the transparent threat of a knight sacrifice on h7. Here, and in the continuation, Lugovoi loses the thread, which is no rare occurrence; in the strange and confusing positions that arise from the Leningrad, even strong players often play surprisingly badly!

I had expected the logical 14 hg6 hg6 15 e4!. 15...e5! 16 ♗e6 ♗e6 17 de6 ♗g7! 18 ef5 gf5 19 ♗b7 ♖b8 with an unclear position.

14...gh5!

14...♗c4? 15 ♖f4 ♗e5 16 ♗h7! Revealing White’s plan. 16...♗h7 17 ♖h6 ♗g8 18 hg6.



Now the second pawn can be defended – a golden rule of the Leningrad is: do not be afraid of playing ‘ugly’ moves!!

15 ♗f3 ♖e8 16 ♖c2!?

16 ♗g2 ♗c4 17 ♖f4 ♗e5.

16...♗d7!

16...♖g6 does not yet work [17 ♗h3 f4 18 ♗e4!], but ...

17 ♗g2

17 ♖c7 ♖c8 is very good for Black.

17...♖g6!

... now!

18 ♗e6

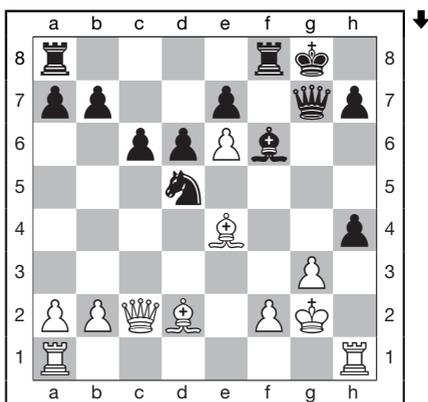


18 ♖h3 f4! 19 ♗e4 [19 ♖g6 hg6 20 ♖f4 ♗f7
21 ♗e4 ♖g8 with a solid pawn advantage.]
19...♗h3.

**18...♗e6 19 de6 c6 20 ♖h1 h4 21 e4
fe4 22 ♗e4 ♖g7**

Looked at objectively, Black now has a considerable advantage, but such sharp positions are not easy to play.

23 ♗e3?! ♖d5 24 ♗d2



24...h6??

A terrible move, made under some time pressure, which could have lost the game. The move played was intended to relieve the pressure on h7 and thus, in some lines, to make ...hg3 possible. As soon as I had played the move, ice-cold shivers ran up my spine because of... 24...♗e5! [24...♗d4 25 ♗h7 ♗h8 26 ♗f5] 25 ♖h3 For some strange reason I didn't like the look of this move. [25 ♖h4 ♖f2 is what I had foreseen.] 25...♖f6 26 ♖ah1 ♖af8 and Black wins, e.g. 27 ♗h7 ♖h7 28 ♖h7 ♗h7 29 ♖h4 ♗g6 30 ♖g4 ♗f5.

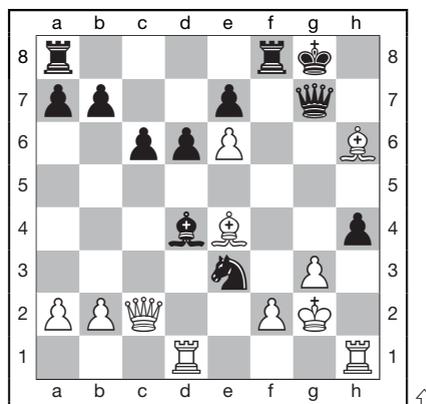
25 ♖ad1??

Misses his big opportunity! 25 ♗g6! would, at the very least, have given White very good play and it would have punished Black for carelessly weakening the square g6. 25...♗h8 26 ♗f7.

25...♗d4!

Now Black is back on track! But I needed some of my remaining time to calm down again.

26 ♗h6 ♖e3!



The decisive counter. The f-file, as is so often the case, plays a key role. 26...♖f4 27 ♗f4 ♖f4 28 ♖d4.

27 ♗e3 ♗e3 28 ♖df1

28 ♗h7 would have been objectively better, even though the resulting rook endgame is somewhat bad for White. [28 ♗f5 ♖f5 29 ♖f5 ♖f8; 28 ♗f3 hg3 29 fe3 ♖f3] 28...♖h7 [28...♗h8 29 ♗f5 ♗g5] 29 ♖h7 ♗h7 30 fe3 ♗g6 31 ♖h4 ♗f5.

28...♖f2!

Lugovoi had clearly overlooked this move.

29 ♖f2 ♖g3 30 ♗f1 ♗f2 31 ♗g6

31 ♖f2 ♖f8 32 ♗h7 ♗g7.

31...♗e3

31...♖f3 32 ♗e4; 31...♗d4 32 ♖f5 ♖f8 33 ♗f7 ♗g7 34 ♖h3.

32 ♖h2?

Simplifies Black's task. 32 ♗f7 ♗g7 33 ♖c3 ♗h6 [33...♖e5] 32 ♖f5 ♖f4.

32...♖g1 0-1

Thus the new move 9...♖d7! with its plus score of 4½–13½ is proving its worth!