



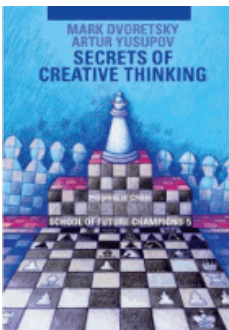
C O L U M N I S T S

The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky

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My Last Game

In [last month's column](#), I described a tournament from my childhood. And now I'll show you a game by a "chess retiree" whose competitive career ended a long time ago, that I played very recently. Obviously the criteria for evaluating old games and a new one are completely different. But what they have in common, besides the name of one of the players, of course, is also the fact that the story of these games (with a few changes) is going into the autobiographical book that I'm working on.

I really like Holland. I used to play at Wijk aan Zee myself, then I took Sergey Dolmatov to Groningen for the European Junior Championships, seconded Vadim Zvjaginsev at the same place in 1997 at the knockout World Championship, and went there for candidates matches in Wijk aan Zee and Tilburg. I still have the fondest memories about the hospitality of the Dutch organizers.

At a certain point trips started being organized for me to work with Dutch players. So, I worked in Tilburg in the late '90s three times with the country's then top grandmaster (along with Timman) Loek Van Wely. I also gave lessons in Amsterdam and other cities. The young talents Erik Van Den Doel, Daniel Stellwagen, Jan Werle, Erwin L'Ami and Jan Smeets, who would soon form the backbone of the national team, participated in my training sessions several times.

From 1998 I began regularly being invited to Apeldoorn. The energetic chess organizer Karel van Delft had initiated systematic work with children in his city, which was done by both local players and players who visited from other towns (Holland is a small country), in particular the wonderful study composer Yochanan Afek, who lived in Amsterdam. After me Artur Yusupov started going to Apeldoorn regularly.

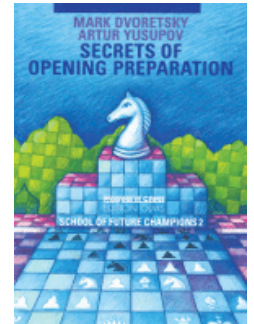
I held training and study sessions in Apeldoorn with local players and with members of the Homburg Apeldoorn team. Some of them quickly became international masters and grandmasters. I even played for the team myself a few times.

In the summer of 1999, van Delft organized an interesting event – a match-tournament between junior teams from Israel and Germany and two Dutch teams. The playing was also combined with coaching sessions. Yusupov and I not only examined the kids' games, but also gave additional lessons. I think this format works superbly for youth competitions – the children don't just play, but also get lessons from professionals. Of course, that isn't feasible at the European and World Championships and so on, where the battle for a result is the most important thing. But there are also unofficial tournaments and festivals where there isn't as much responsibility bearing down on the players.

I liked the idea, and a few months later there was a reciprocal visit to Germany by a Dutch team. The German and Dutch juniors competed again, and Yusupov and I gave them lessons. The coach who was working, very energetically and successfully, with the German junior team at the time, was the young grandmaster Michael Bezold, whom we knew well. He also organized a session at the famous Pulvermühle hotel, which has been host to such chess greats as Bobby Fischer and Paul Keres. He participated in analyzing the games that were played, and at the same time took on the physical preparation of the team, as Michael is also a very good athlete.

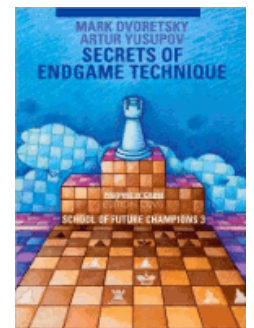
We had planned to continue working with Bezold, but unfortunately that

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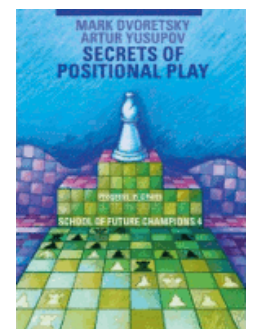
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didn't happen. As a rule federations don't tolerate active and independent people, even if they demonstrate excellent results – it wasn't surprising that Bezold soon lost his job.

I've already mentioned my appearances for the Apeldoorn club team. During one of my visits there in 1999 I played two games on first board. I beat a Dutch master and then faced Viktor Korchnoi as black. The battle continued for almost ninety moves, but I still lost to him. It's surprising: we both lived in the Soviet Union for so many years and never once met over the board, but we managed to play in Holland.

I was invited to play for the local club again in 2010. For the first time I found myself on the same team as Yusupov: Artur was playing on first board and I was on second. I managed to win a rather fun game. Artur said afterwards that he had been looking at my board more than his own – he was so fascinated by what was going on there. I was pleased with my play at first, but when I looked at the game at home with my computer, of course it turned out that I hadn't noticed many fairly simple things. Well, what to do? It's absurd to demand precise play from oneself, not having trained for so many years. My previous game with a normal (not a rapid) time control was actually the one against Korchnoi, eleven years previously!

Dvoretzky – De Jong

Apeldoorn, 2010
Slav Defense [D10]

1.c4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.cd cd 4.d4 Nc6?! (4...Nf6)

I remembered that the move Black had made was at some point considered inaccurate because of the reply 5.e4. There my theoretical knowledge ended, and in particular I didn't know if the indicated evaluation had changed in the past few years. But I realized that I had to make my move very quickly: either immediately decide to go into a position that was new for me or reject it. Thinking here wouldn't change anything: anyway it was impossible to calculate and evaluate the variations that would arise.

5.e4!? de (5...Nf6 and 5...e6 have also been encountered) 6.d5 Ne5



[FEN "r1bqkbnr/pp2pppp/8/3Pn3/4p3/2N5/PP3PPP/R1BQKBNR w KQkq - 0 7"]

It was clear to me that the primitive 7.Nxe4?! didn't make any claims to an advantage. At first I was attracted by 7.Qd4 Nd3+ 8.Bxd3 ed 9.Nf3, with the hope of exploiting my obvious lead in development. But I didn't manage to find anything after 9...Nf6 10.0-0 e6. And then I turned my attention to the idea 7.Bf4!? Ng6 (7...Nd3+ 8.Bxd3 ed 9.Qxd3 Nf6 10.Nf3 is bad here now, as on 10...e6?! there's 11.d6, and if 11...Nh5?!, then 12.Qb5+) 8.Bg3. Having noticed that in the case of 8...f5 White had the strong move 9.h4!, I decided to play that way.

White's logic would have been irreproachable if not for one circumstance: my list of candidate moves turned out to be incomplete. For some reason I missed the elementary 7.Qa4+! Bd7 8.Qxe4.

7.Bf4!? Ng6 8.Bg3 f5 (8...Nf6 is more solid) 9.h4!

Looking in the megabase on my computer after the game I didn't find a single game in which White played 7.Bf4 (which isn't surprising: the check with the queen from a4 is far too attractive). But still my move wasn't a novelty – a few days earlier this position had arisen at a tournament in Nice in the "rapid" game Aronian – Smeets. After 9...f4 10.Bh2 e5 (10...Nxb4 11.Bxf4) 11.de Bxe6, the simplest way to prove White's advantage is 12.Qa4+! (Levon Aronian preferred 12.h5 Ne5 13.Bxf4 Nd3+ 14.Bxd3 Qxd3 15.Qa4+).

9...h5?!

A poor choice, in my view, although also the corresponding "first string" from the computer. 9...e5!? 10.de (10.h5 Nf4) 10...Bxe6 is probably preferable, although after 11.Bb5+ Kf7 12.Nh3, White has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

10.Nh3 Nf6 11.Ng5 a6



[FEN "r1bqkb1r/1p2p1p1/p4nn1/3P1pNp/4p2P/2N3B1/PP3PP1/R2QKB1R w KQkq - 0 12"]

The most natural means of developing: put the queen on b3, preparing both castling queenside and d5-d6. It's possible to play 12.Qb3 immediately, or give check first: 12.Qa4+!? Bd7 (12...b5 13.Bxb5+), and only now 13.Qb3. I realized that it made sense to think for a while and compare the two alternatives, but I was too lazy to do that, which I regretted a move later.

12.Qb3 f4 13.Bh2

13.d6 e6! (13...fg? 14.Qf7+ Kd7 15.0-0-0+-) gave nothing, and if 14.Nxe6, then 14...Qxd6. Now with a black bishop on d7 the move d5-d6 would have led to victory.

13...e6?

After a long think my opponent makes a suicidal move. 13...Qd6 14.0-0-0 Nxb4 was necessary.

14.de (14.0-0-0!? ed 15.Bc4 is also strong) 14...Bc5 15.Ngxe4

15.Rd1 Qb6 gave nothing, and 15.Bb5+!? Ke7(f8) didn't seem completely clear either. I didn't look at taking on e4 with the other knight, not wanting to expose the a5-e1 diagonal, and this was evidently wrong. Both 15.Ncxe4!? and the even stronger 15.Qa4+! Kf8 16.Ncxe4 put Black in a very difficult position. Then again, the move in the game wasn't bad either.

15...Nxe4 16.Qa4+ Ke7

16...Kf8 17.Qxe4 Qf6 is more stubborn, but here again you wouldn't envy Black.

17.Qxe4 Qd4



[FEN "r1b4r/1p2k1p1/p3P1n1/2b4p/3qQp1P/2N5/PP3PPB/R3KB1R w KQ - 0 18"]

18.Qxg6?

I had seen other possibilities, but I didn't start to study them, as I thought that the move in the game was winning by force. And only after making it on the board did I notice the mistake in my calculations.

18.Nd5+! Kd6 (18...Kf8 19.Qxd4 Bxd4 20.0-0-0 Bxf2 21.Bd3 is also hopeless) 19.Qxg6 Qxf2+ 20.Kd1 Kxd5 21.Rc1!+- led to the aim.

18...Qxf2+ 19.Kd1 Rd8+ 20.Bd3 Bxe6

Going into this variation I had in mind 21.Re1 Rd6 22.Bg1, but Black, of course, replies 21...Be3. It would have been worthwhile for me to have studied the position that arises more carefully and to establish that on 22.Re2 there follows not 22...Bg4? (which I feared) 23.Qxg7+ Ke6 24.Qg6+ Ke7 25.Kc2+-, but 22...Rxd3+! 23.Qxd3 Qf1+ 24.Kc2 Qxa1 (threatening 25...Qc1#) 25.Rxe3 fe-/+. The continuation 21.Kc1 Be3+ 22.Kb1 Rxd3! 23.Qxd3 Qxg2 24.Rd1 Qxh2 isn't clear either.

21.Qxg7+ Ke8?!

After 21...Bf7, White would have to be satisfied with perpetual check.

22.Qg6+ Ke7?

22...Bf7? 23.Qe4+ is bad here now, but 22...Kf8! maintained equality, bearing in mind that 23.Qxe6?? Rxd3+ 24.Kc1 is refuted by means of 24...Rxc3+!. On 23.Kc1!?, there's 23...Rxd3! 24.Qxd3 Be3+ 25.Kb1 Qxg2 26.Rd1 Qxh2 27.Qg6 Qh3! =

23.Qg5+?

If I'd accurately studied the variation 21.Re1, I would have known that after the destruction of the g7-pawn this move leads to a win: 23.Re1! Be3 24.Re2 Rxd3+ 25.Qxd3 Qf1+ 26.Kc2 Qxa1 27.Rxe3 fe 28.Qh7+. But I was only counting on 24...Bg4, and so I wanted to eat up the h5-pawn with checks first. Which I did manage to do, but only with my opponent's cooperation, of course.

23...Ke8? (23...Kf8 24.Qf6+ Bf7= or 24.Qh6+ Ke7 25.Qh7+ Kf8=) 24.Qxh5 + Ke7?

The final blunder. With 24...Bf7 25.Qe2+ Qxe2+ 26.Kxe2 Bh5+ 27.Kd2 Bg6 the outcome of the battle still remains unclear.

25.Qg5+ Ke8 26.Qg6+ Ke7



[FEN "r2r4/1p2k3/p3b1Q1/2b5/5p1P/
2NB4/PP3qPB/R2K3R w - - 0 27"]

The same position as the one after Black's twentieth move has arisen, but without the g7- and h5-pawns. Now nothing is stopping me from carrying out my final attack.

27.Re1 (27.Kc1!?) **27...Be3** **28.Re2 Rxd3+** (28...Qf1+ 29.Kc2 Qxa1 30.Qg7+ Bf7 31.Bc4) **29.Qxd3 Qf1+** **30.Kc2 Qxa1** **31.Qh7+ Bf7** **32.Rxe3+ fe** **33.Nd5 + Ke8** **34.Qe4+ Kf8** **35.Qe7+ Kg8** **36.Qg5+ 1-0**

Quite possibly this was the last "serious" game of my life.

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