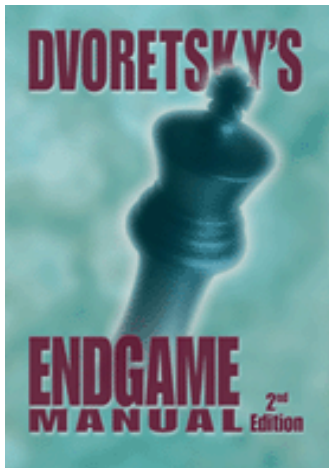




C O L U M N I S T S

The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



A Trainer's First Steps

After graduating from Moscow University, I spent a further three years working in the chess department of the Physical Institute. Unwilling to limit myself to just teaching, I organized a little group of three first-year students for further sports development. My first pupils were master-candidates Andrei Deev and Sergei Arkhipov (one of whom would go on to become a master and the other a grandmaster), and the Mongolian player Lhagva. The following year, I also began working with master-candidate Valery Chekhov; two years later, our work was crowned by his annexing the title of world junior champion. Soon, my students Artur Yusupov and Sergei Dolmatov became world junior champions as well. Three champions in four years! Remember: over the course of the preceding twenty years, the Soviet Union only produced three players – Boris Spassky, Anatoly Karpov, and Alexander Beljavsky – who achieved such success.

Serious work with young players usually begins with the identification of the student's strengths and weaknesses. The easiest of the three to diagnose was the Mongol. It was immediately clear that nothing about his game would have to be changed. Lhagva's native talent was beyond doubt: he made good, natural moves, went over to the attack at the first appropriate moment, and had a good eye for tactics. Plus his personal qualities – strong health, great reserves of energy, fighting spirit, good work ethic – were also very much in order.

The only problem was his complete lack of education – he literally was ignorant in all stages and elements of chess. But then, I didn't really need to do anything about that. I gave Lhagva a few excellent books to study; and in our work sessions, any judgment I had to offer, on practically any subject from opening to endgame, was taken to heart.

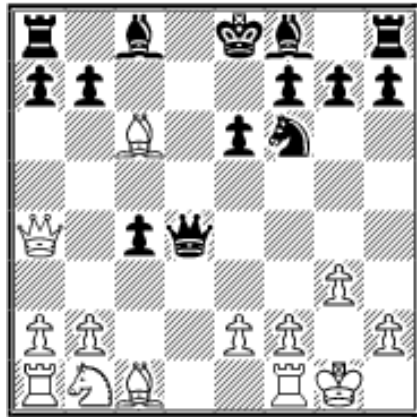
Of course, within a relatively small number of working sessions, it would have been unrealistic to expect anything too impressive in the way of progress – especially when the Mongolian Federation did not have the means to send its players to international tournaments, meaning they had to “stew in their own juices.” But we did all that we could. Before our work began, Lhagva took sixth place in his national championship; but within a year, he would be champion – an achievement he was to repeat several times, while also leading the Mongolian team to the Olympics.

I would like to show you an interesting game that is characteristic of my student's style. It was played against the American grandmaster Larry Christiansen. Although the outcome of the game went against Lhagva, he put up a good fight, posing complex problems for his considerably stronger and more

experienced opponent. Christiansen was unable to resolve some of these problems correctly, even in his later commentary for *Chess Informant*.

Christiansen – Lhagva
Lucerne Olympiad, 1982

1 d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2 c2-c4 e7-e6 3 Ng1-f3 d7-d5 4 g2-g3 d5xc4 5 Bf1-g2 c7-c5 6 0-0 Nb8-c6 7 Qd1-a4 c5xd4 8 Nf3xd4 Qd8xd4 9 Bg2xc6+



Here, Black usually continues 9...Bd7, and after 10 Rd1, rather than accept the inferior endgame with 10...Bxc6 11 Qxc6+ bc 12 Rxd4, he will sacrifice his queen by 10... Qxd1+ 11 Qxd1 Bxc6. Theory rates the ensuing position as somewhat better for White.

9...b7xc6!?

A brave decision! The positional exchange sacrifice this move entails had only been played a couple of times previously, by rather unheralded players; so I am sure that Lhagva thought it up on his own (although I don't know if it was at the board or during home preparations). It's hardly been played since – mostly, I think, because of the “White is better” verdict rendered by *ECO*, precisely on the basis of the present game. I won't presume to judge how accurate that verdict might be, but we shall soon see that the game we examine here does not support it.

10 Qa4xc6+ Qd4-d7 11 Qc6xa8 Bf8-c5 12 Nb1-c3 0-0 13 Rf1-d1

A debatable move. Black will have to take his queen off the d7-square anyway, but, in some cases, the white rook would be more useful on f1 (protecting the f2-square) or on e1. 13 Qf3!? Bb7 14 e4 was worth considering.

13...Qd7-c7 14 Qb7-f3 Bc8-b7 15 Bc1-f4

Christiansen considers this *zwischenzug* strongest. On 15 e4, he points out 15... Bb4 (or 15...Qc6); while on 15 Qf4, Black would answer 15...e5.

15...Qc7-b6

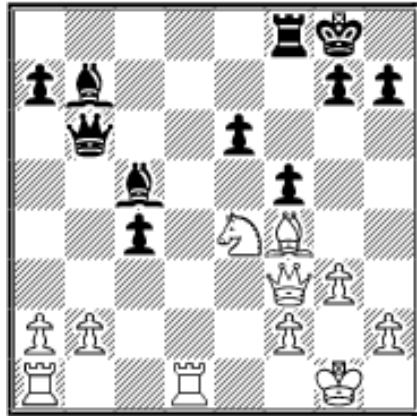
The most natural retreat for the queen, although 15...Qc8!? also had some sense to it. Of course, 15...e5?? would be impossible, because of 16 Bxe5.

16 e2-e4 Nf6xe4!

Again, Black takes the most natural course. 16...Qxb2?? would lose to 17 Rab1, but 16...Bb4!? might be worth a look as a backup line. Christiansen gives 17 Be5 Bxc3 18 bc Nxe4 19 Rab1, and calls this a winning position for White;

however, in my view 19...Qc6 leaves matters unclear.

17 Nc3xe4 f7-f5



On 18 Qe2 (or 18 Qc3) 18...Bxe4, Black would retain excellent compensation for the sacrificed exchange. And 18 Rd7 would be met by 18...Bxe4 19 Qe2 (19 Qc3? Bxf2+ 20 Kf1 Bd3+; 19 Be5? Rf7-/+) 19...Bd3, with equality (Christiansen).

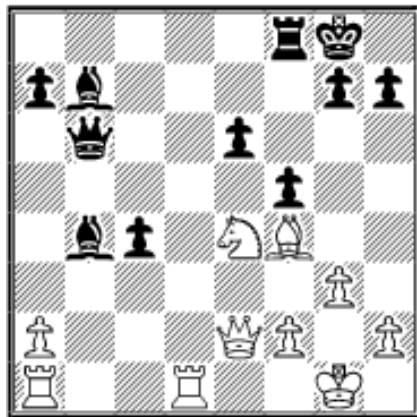
18 b2-b4!?

An outstanding counterstroke! White tries to simplify and open lines for his rooks, as after 18...cb 19 Qxb3+/- . And 18...Qxb4 19

Rdb1! Bxe4 20 Rxb4 Bxf3 21 Rxc4 also leads to an advantage for White (Christiansen).

18...Bc5-d4!?

Not a bad reply, but hardly the only possibility. I believe that **18...Bxb4!** would have been stronger. White had intended to reply **19 Qe2!**

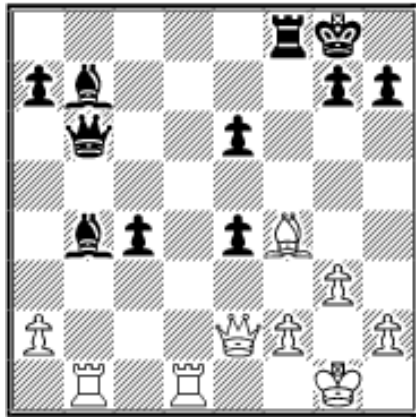


After 19...Bxe4 20 Qxc4, Christiansen gives the evaluation "advantage to White." This is not completely obvious – the variation should be continued: 20...Bc5 21 Qe2 Ba8 22 Be3 Qc6 23 f3 Bxe3+ 24 Qxe3 Qxf3 25 Qxf3 Bxf3 26 Rd7. This endgame is undoubtedly better for White; the only question being: just how great is his advantage? I note also that instead of 24...Qxf3, Black could certainly try 24...f4!? 25 gf e5.

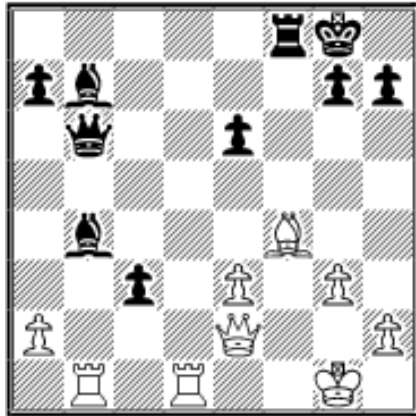
Still, there's no point in delving too deeply into the analysis of this continuation, since in my opinion, the other capture, **19...fe!**, would be stronger. Christiansen limits himself to the reply 20 Qxc4?, which in fact would have landed White in serious difficulties after 20...Bc5. Now 21 Qe2 loses to 21...e3, while after 21 Rd6!, Black continues 21...Bxf2+ 22 Kf1 Bd5!-/+.

20 Be3? Qc7-/+ is no better

The only serious try is **20 Rab1!**



But Black has the excellent reply **20...e3!**
 (it's important to open the long diagonal) **21 fe** (21 Bxe3 Qc6 22 f3 a5-/+ **21...c3!**)



Now 22 a3?! Qc6 23 Rxb4 c2 is bad for White. On 22 Qc4, Black has a draw either with 22...Rc8 23 Qxb4 c2 24 Qxb6 ab, or with 22...c2 23 Qxc2 Rxf4! 24 gf Qxe3+ 25 Qf2 Qe4 26 Rd8+ Kf7 27 Rd7+ Kf8 28 Rxb7 Qxb1+ 29 Kg2 Qg6+.

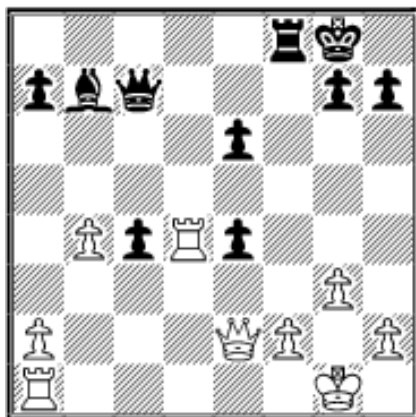
22 Rd7!? contains a trap: the careless 22... Bc6? would be refuted by 23 Rxc7+! Kxc7 24 Qg4+ Kf7 25 Bh6. So Black would reply **22...Qc6 23 Rxb7 Qxb7**; and after 24 a3 a5

25 ab Qe4 26 Rc1 ab-/+ , Black's far-advanced passed pawns are stronger than White's piece, while after **24 Bd6 Rc8 25 Rxb4 Qc6 26 Rd4 c2 27 Ba3**, the sharp struggle ends in well-deserved equality.

19 Bf4-c7! Qb6xc7 20 Rd1xd4 f5xe4!

Stronger than 20...Bxe4 21 Qc3, with better chances for White.

21 Qf3-e2



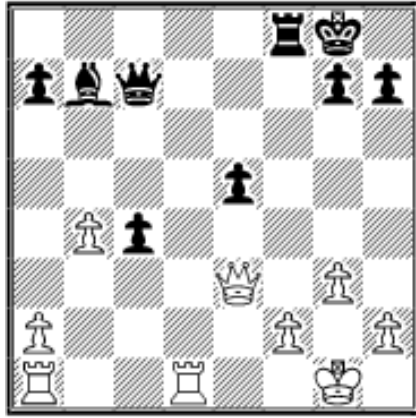
21...e4-e3?!

The critical moment of this game. Lhagva continues with his maximally active play, but objectively this is precisely where his position turns difficult. 21...Bd5! deserved preference here: 22 Rc1 (threatening 23 Rxc4), and here, not 22...c3 23 Qe1 Rf3 24 Rxe4 Bxe4 25 Qxe4+/-, but simply 22...Rc8, with chances for both sides.

22 Qe2xe3 e6-e5

22...Qc6? 23 f3 Rxf3 does not work, in view of 24 Qxf3! Qxf3 25 Rd8+ Kf7 26 Rf1+-.

23 Rd4-d1



23...Bb7-f3?!

Once again, 23...Qc6 24 f3 Rxf3 was not possible, for the same reason: 25 Qxf3!, etc. Black should have tried 23...Qc8!?, intending either 24...Bf3 or 24...Qh3. Here his opponent would at least have had to give up his f-pawn. However, after something like 24 Rd6 Qh3 (24...Bf3? 25 Qxe5, intending 26 Qe6+) 25 f3 Bxf3 26 Rd2, the advantage would have remained with White.

24 Rd1-e1

Christiansen turned down the more active move 24 Rd2! because of 24...Qc8, when, in his opinion, Black is already better. But, in fact, White can easily parry Black's threat of a queen invasion on h3 by 25 Qc3 Kh8 (25...Qh3 26 Qxc4+ Kh8 27 Qf1) 26 Rc1, when Black can't play 26...Qh3 because of 27 Qxf3!.

24...e5-e4



24...Qc8? is bad, because of 25 Qxe5 Qh3 26 Qe6+.

Yet another crisis point.

25 Qe3-c5?

As Christiansen rightly indicated, White retains the advantage by playing 25 Rac1! Qd7 26 Qc3! Rc8 27 Re3!.

25...Qc7xc5 26 b4xc5 Rf8-c8

The game is now even. White later went on to win, but only because of his opponent's endgame errors.

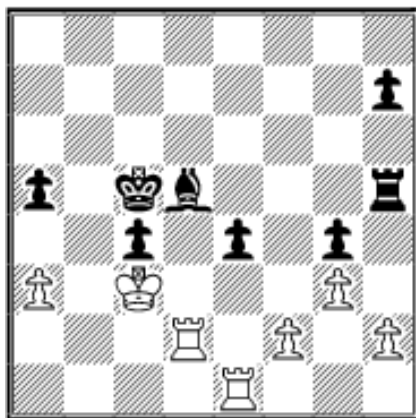
27 Re3 Rxc5 28 Rc1 Kf7 29 Ra3 a5 30 Kf1 Ke6 31 Ke1 Kd5 32 Kd2 Kd4 33 Rac3 Bg4 34 R1c2 Be6 35 Rc1 g5 36 Kc2 Rf5?

Time-pressure takes its toll. As Christiansen indicated, 36...Bg4 would have held the balance. However, contrary to his opinion, the text move was not the game's "decisive error."

37 Rd1+ Kc5 38 Rd2 g4 39 Ra3 Kb4 40 Re3 Rh5

40...Bd5 would have been simpler.

41 a3+ Kc5 42 Kc3 Bd5 43 Re1



43...Rhx2?

And here is where Black finally loses the thread of the game. I don't see how White could make progress after 43...Rf5. His rook on e1 would be unable to get to the b-file, considering the check threat at f3.

44 Rb1 Bc6

44...Rh6 (to get the enemy pawn to a4) 45 a4 Bc6 46 Rd4 Rf6 47 Rxc4+ Kd6+/- would

have held out longer.

45 Rd4 Rh6 46 Rxc4+ Kd6 47 Rb6 Kc7 48 Ra6 Rf6 49 Rxa5 Rf3+ 50 Kd4 Rxf2 51 Rac5 Rf6 52 Rxc6+ Rxc6 53 Rxc6+ Kxc6 54 Kxe4 1-0

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