

Karsten Müller

Typical King's Indian

Effective Middlegame Training



JBV Chess Books

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Preface

If someone decides to learn Spanish (the language, mind you - and not the opening!), he will appropriately acquire textbooks that deal with Spanish – not those that deal with *all* Roman languages or even all *European* languages.

Let's take this comparison a little further: If a dictionary is something like an opening book, then a grammar is something like a textbook for the middlegame. True, one could fill entire libraries with opening books on the subject of Spanish alone, but what about a corresponding 'grammar'?

Of course, in every middlegame textbook there is one or the other position that is clearly recognizable as *Spanish*, but their number is negligible in the context of French, English, Russian, Italian, Dutch and so forth. And so too for all these other European languages - no excuse me – of all these other *openings* whose middlegame treatment the reader doesn't want to learn at all.

For example, isn't dealing with the issues of hanging pawns and minority attack - the author asks with good reason - just as dispensable for an e4 player as it is essential for a d4 player? – Why should a die-hard enthusiast of Indian openings care about the strategic intricacies of positions resulting from all those complicated Queen's Gambit systems? And of course vice versa: what can a player who 'by nature' avoids fianchetto openings do with all these subtleties of Indian positions?

And it is precisely this conspicuous and astounding vacuum in the area of middlegame literature that inspired me to make an appropriate attempt at improvement: If you want to learn *Spanish* (the *opening*, mind you, and not the language!), you will get a textbook and exercise book in which only *Spanish* is 'spoken' or played.

However, this book only deals with the King's Indian Defense - more precisely: with positions in which Black attacks the white pawns on c4, d4 and e4 with the central advance e7–e5 (and not c7–c5) – or those positions that can arise from this basic structure, as shown in detail in the overview following the preface.

And I would like to make one more important point in advance. It is an enormous challenge for every chess author to do justice to a readership with the broadest possible skill level. So it would be absurd in the field of opening and endgame literature to offer, for example, 'Sicilian Defense' or 'Rook Endgames' for players between 1400 and 1600, between 1600 and 1800, between 1800 and 2000 and so on. Accordingly, one only writes one book on the respective topic and tries to explain all important things as precisely and comprehensibly as possible – and then it is up to each individual reader how intensively he is willing to work with the books in order to achieve the greatest possible benefit.

The task becomes much more difficult with a book like this, which consists exclusively of exercises. Because if the author chooses consistently very simple or consistently somewhat more difficult examples, then in the first case more advanced players shy away because they are underchallenged – In the second case less advanced players because they feel overwhelmed.

And therefore here's a good advice – regardless of your skill level. Take each task seriously, but don't let it become torture! As soon as you encounter too many obstacles or too much resistance, just take the liberty to open the solution section and turn the test book into a textbook!

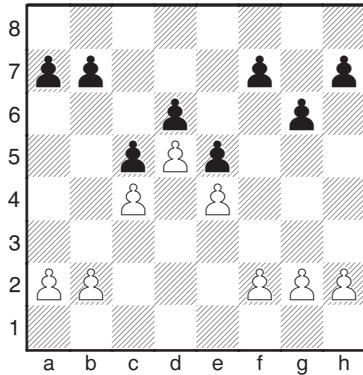
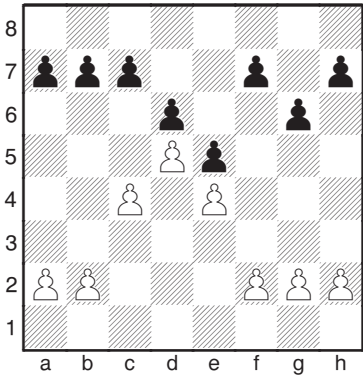
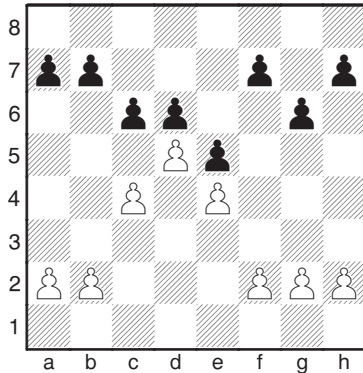
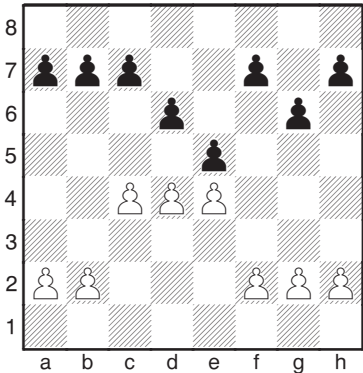
I would like to thank Rainer Woisin and Frederic Friedel from ChessBase for the great idea of working with QR Codes, Thomas Beyer for the very well done layout and – last but not least – the publisher Robert Ullrich for the overall excellent production.

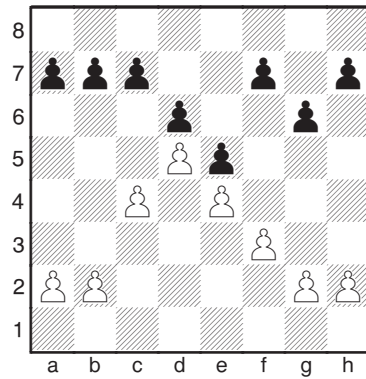
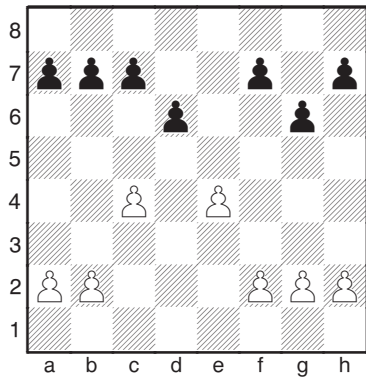
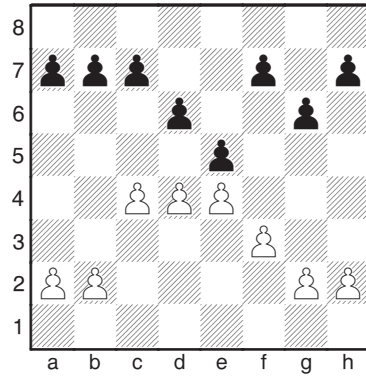
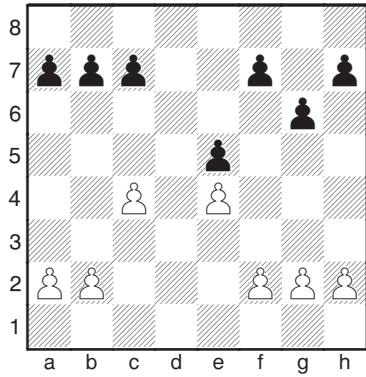
Karsten Müller, Hamburg, August 2024

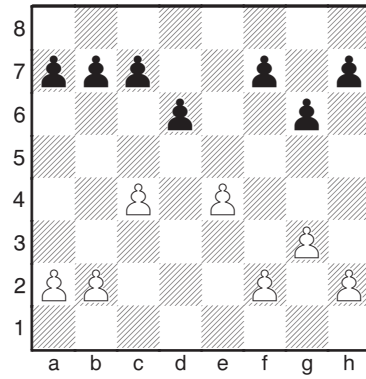
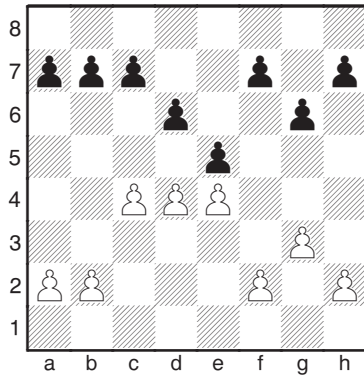
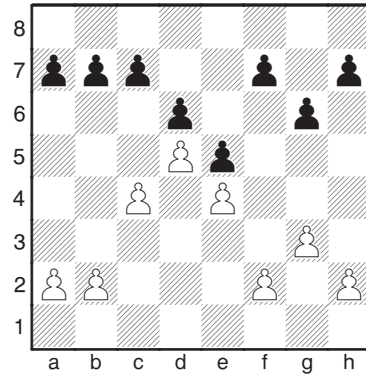
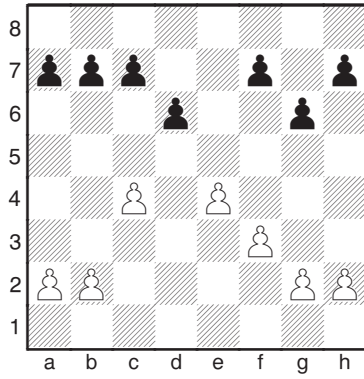
Explanation of symbols

| | |
|------------------|--|
| ! | good move |
| !! | excellent move |
| ? | weak move |
| ?? | blunder |
| !? | remarkable move |
| ?! | dubious move |
| +− | White has a decisive advantage |
| ± | White is better |
| ± | White is slightly better |
| = | the position is equal |
| −+ | Black has a decisive advantage |
| ∓ | Black is better |
| ∓ | Black is slightly better |
| Δ | with the idea |
| ▷ | better is |
| ∞ | unclear |
| ∞ | with compensation for the material deficit |
| x | takes |
| + | check |
| # | mate |
| ~ | with a tendency to |
| +++ | and many more |
| VARIATION | not the original game continuation |

The following pawn structures are treated





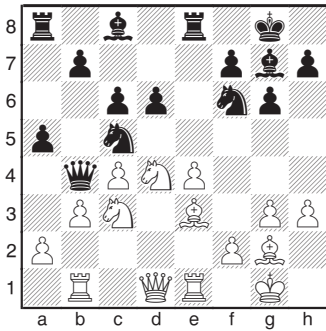


Exercices

Concrete question (solutions starting on page 40)



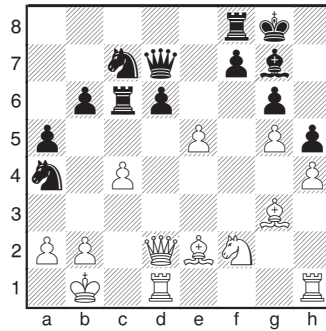
1



Where is Black's weak spot?
How can White exploit it?



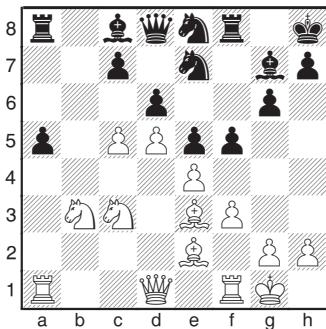
3



Did White blunder a pawn
with his last move 24.e5?



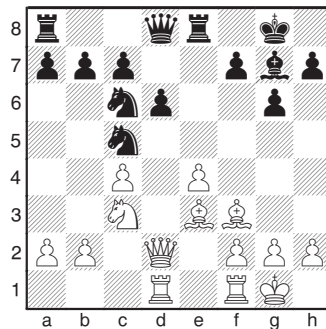
2



How can Black best keep White's
positional pressure play under control?



4

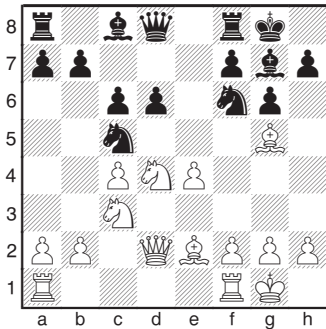


Can White hope for a minimal advan-
tage despite the weakness on e4?

Candidates (solutions starting on page 44)



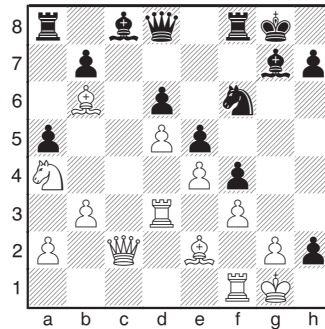
5



Which of the moves 11.f3, 11.g3, 11.h4 is a bad mistake?



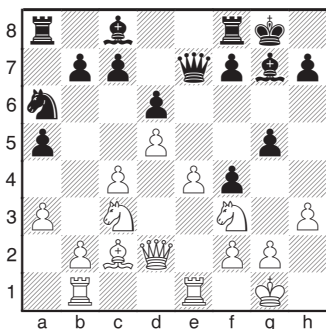
7



Is 21.g1 or 21.g2 better?



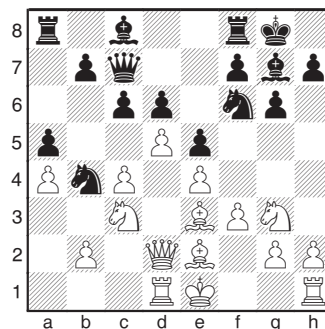
6



Which of the candidates 15...h5 and 15...c5 is strongly discouraged?



8



Is 13...e8 better than 13...d7?

Solutions

1

Hansen – Kunze

Germany 1999

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♗c3 g6 3.g3 ♕g7 4.♖g2 0-0
5.d4 d6 6.♗f3 ♗bd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 c6
9.h3 exd4 10.♗xd4 ♜e8 11.b3 ♗c5
12.♞e1 ♞b6 13.♕e3 a5 14.♞b1 ♞b4

In an already difficult position, the queen's pseudo-active advance has conjured up ghosts, which can no longer be controlled after the pointed answer ...

15.♗db5!

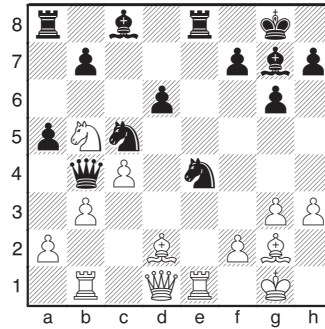
This blocking sacrifice (which also works in the version 15.♗cb5!) not only cuts off the cheeky queen's escape route back to b6, but also denies her the emergency solution ♞a3. In addition, 16.a3 is apparently threatening.

15...cxb5?

As often happens, when you're in a state of shock you can't find the best defense. In the given case this would have been 15...♗cxe4 16.♗xe4 ♗xe4 Δ17.a3 (▷17.♗c7 Δ17...♗c3 18.♕d2!+-) 17...♞xe1+ 18.♞xe1 cxb5 19.cxb5 with initially only ~+-.

16.♗xb5 Δa3 16...♗fxe4 17.a3!

With 17.♕d2?!, White could make things too easy for himself.



Because after the safety measure for the back rank 17...♕g4! and the forced continuation 18.♕xb4 ♕xd1 19.♕xc5 dxc5 or 19...♕c2 he would remain with only a small advantage.

17...♞xb5

After 17...♗c3, the reply 18.♕d2 tops the list of winning moves.

18.cxb5 ♗c3 19.♕xc5

2

Alber – Müller L.

Germany 2022

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♕g7 4.e4 d6
5.♗f3 0-0 6.♕e2 e5 7.0-0 ♗c6 8.d5 ♗e7
9.b4 a5 10.bxa5 ♜xa5 11.♗d2 b6 12.♗b3
♞a8 13.a4 ♗e8 14.♕e3 f5 15.f3 ♖h8
16.a5 bxa5 17.c5

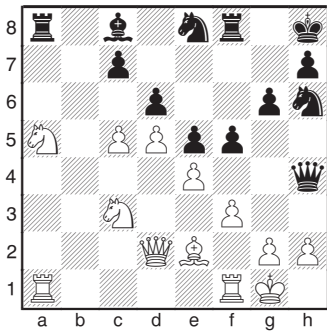
With his temporary pawn sacrifice, White aimed at the advance of the c-pawn and thus at opening lines on 'his' wing before his opponent can do anything on the other side that could be described as an attacking measure in the broadest sense. Accordingly, it goes without saying that

Black has to react with extreme precision and not allow himself to proceed according to any 'off-the-shell' pattern.

1) The move **17...♞g8?** should have turned out to be very bad. On the one hand, counterplay is not yet an option and on the other hand, the knight in the center was in exactly the right place to enable the most effective defense (see **Line 2**).

18.♞d2?

White evidently thought it was important to prevent the exchange of the bad King's Indian bishop via h6. However, this would have been bad if the game had continued consistently on the queen-side; e.g. **18.♞xa5± Δ18...♞h6?** (Δ18...fxe4) **19.♞xh6 ♞xh6 20.♞d2 ♞h4** ...



... and after this apparently only move against the double threat ♞xh6 and ♞c6, White's queenside action is unstoppable: **21.g3 ♞h3 22.♞c4 ♞xa1 23.♞xa1+- Δ23...f4 24.gxf4!** (24.♞f1) **24...exf4** (24...♞xf4 25.♞a8) **25.cxd6 cxd6 26.♞b5** etc.

18...♞gf6?

Instead of halfway equalizing the game with **18...fxe4** or **18...a4!?**, Black gives his opponent the opportunity to make up for his previous failure.

19.♞xa5+-

2) As already mentioned, it was precisely the presence of the knight on e7 that enabled the powerful counterplay **17...c6!∞**.

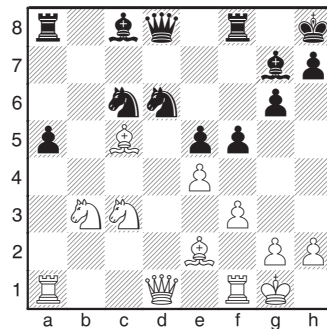
- The stereotyped move **17...f4?** would be bad, because after **18.♞f2** Black would be left without counterplay on the king-side in the long run, and **18...c6 19.dxc6 ♞xc6 20.♞c4±; 20.♞b5** would now come too late.

- However, the series of exchanges **17...fxe4!?** **18.fxe4 ♞xf1+ 19.♞xf1** (**19.♞xf1 c6!∞**) **19...dxc5 Δ♞d6** also deserves attention, because after **20.♞xa5**, White's minimal advantage would hardly be worth mentioning.

18.dxc6

The transposition of moves **18.cxd6 ♞xd6 19.dxc6 ♞xc6 20.♞c5** etc. makes no difference.

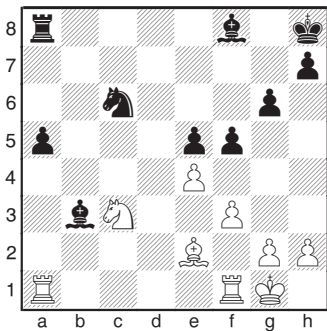
18...♞xc6 Δ19.cxd6 ♞xd6 20.♞c5



This position does indeed look precarious at first glance, but in fact Black has even *two* adequate defensive measures.

a) After **20...♞d4!?** **21.♞xd4 exd4 22.♞xd4 fxe4 23.♞xg7+ ♞xg7**, the king position could possibly still prove problematic.

b) On the other hand, after **20...♞e6!** **21.♞xd6 ♞xd6 22.♞xd6 ♞xb3 23.♞xf8 ♞xf8** ...



... , one of the secrets of the King's Indian becomes apparent: If the bad bishop gets into the open after his counterpart has disappeared, he is often even worth an exchange. In this case, of course, the almost unstoppable passed pawn also plays an important role.

3

Hlavac – Holly Slovakia 2022

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♘g7 4.e4 d6
5.♙e2 0-0 6.♙e3 e5 7.d5 ♘bd7 8.g4 ♘c5
9.f3 a5 10.h4 h5 11.g5 ♘e8 12.♘h3 ♙e7
13.♙d2 ♙d7 14.♘f2 c6 15.0-0-0 b6
16.dxc6 ♙xc6 17.♘d5 ♙xd5 18.♙xd5
♙c8 19.♙b1 ♙d7 20.f4 exf4 21.♙xf4 ♙c6
22.♙g3 ♘c7 23.♙d2 ♘a4 24.e5

The advance of the e–pawn was more of a necessity to shake off the massive pressure on the long dark diagonal. If Black now decides to use the tactical circumstances to capture this pawn, it must be taken into account that in addition to the e4 square, the long *light* diagonal has also been opened, and under certain circumstances the e–file could gain in importance too.

1) In the game, Black grabbed the pawn with **24...♙xe5??** **25.♙xe5 ♙f5+** – apparently in the belief that his consistent pressure play on the queenside had

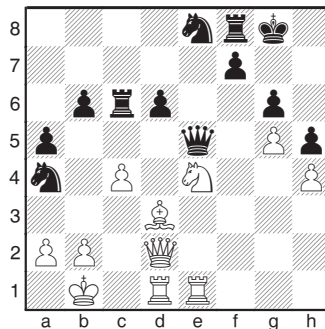
logically led to a gain in material ‘elsewhere’.

a) In fact, after the inherently suspect refutation attempt **26.♘d3??** and the continuation **26...dxe5 27.♙hf1 ♙e6 28.b3 ♘c5∞**, he escaped unscathed – or rather, after his opponent continued the incorrect combination with **29.♙f6?? ♘e4**, he even got a winning position.

The correct continuation was **29.♘xc5 bxc5 30.♙xa5; 29...♙xc5 30.♙f6** with distributed chances.

b) **26.♙c2??** would have been just as wrong, because after **26...♙xc2+ 27.♙xc2 dxe5 28.b3 ♘c5 29.♙f3 ♙e6 30.♘e4**, White would have had nothing more than ample compensation.

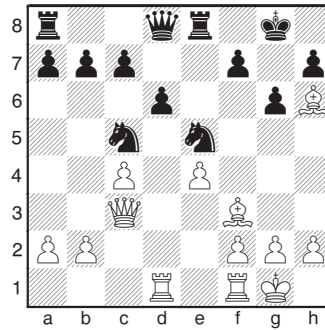
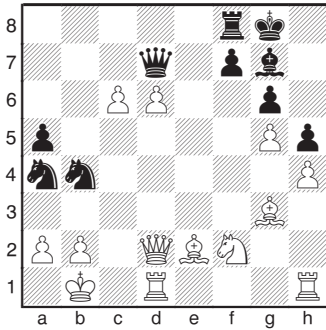
c) On the other hand, after **26.♙d3 ♙xe5 27.♘e4+– Δ27...♘e8 28.♙he1 ...**



... the importance of the cleared lines and squares would have become apparent.

2) With the powerful counterattack **24...b5!∞** (24...♙b8!? Δb5) Black could have pointed out that the pawn on e5 is itself pinned because of the threat to the neuralgic point on b2.

a) For example, **25.exd6??** would run into **25...♘a6! 26.cxb5 ♘b4! 27.bxc6 ...**



... with a spectacular defeat after the deceptively quiet move **27... We6-+**.

b) And after **25.cxb5 Bb6 ΔΔxb5** it would have been *Black* who could have enjoyed ample compensation.

4

Najgebauer – Manik

Slovakia 2022

1.d4 Δf6 2.Δf3 g6 3.c4 ♖g7 4.Δc3 0-0
5.e4 d6 6.♙e2 e5 7.0-0 ♙g4 8.♙e3 ♙xf3
9.♙xf3 exd4 10.♙xd4 Δc6 11.♙e3 Δd7
12.♙d2 ♙e8 13.♙ad1 Δc5

In positions of this kind (which are also often found in the Pirc Defense with the pawn on c2), protecting the e4 pawn with the bishop is usually impractical because it can be harassed by a knight on e5. However, since capturing this pawn would only be possible by giving up the King's Indian bishop, White could also consider a concept based on a pawn sacrifice in order to then make full use of his bishop pair.

I) After the careless game move **14.♙g5?** and the intermediate exchange **14...♙xc3 15.bxc3**, the continuation **15...♙d7** would have led to a clear *disadvantage* for White.

II) After the direct sacrifice approach **14.♙h6 ♙xc3 15.♙xc3**, the multifunctional move **16...Δe5!** ...

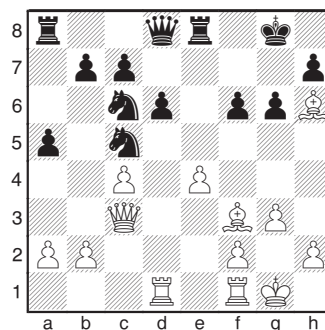
... not only prevents checkmate but maintains the positional equilibrium at the same time. Because after **17.♙e2?! Δxe4 18.♙c2 ♙h4**, White could even end up with a disadvantage.

III) The subtle point of the preventive measure **14.g3!** is that Black must find a sufficient defense against the now existing threat **♙h6**.

A) First of all, after declining the sacrifice offer with, for example, **14...a5**, White's plan **15.♙h6!** would work; e.g. **15...♙xc3** After **15...Δe5**, the bishop can retreat with **16.♙e2±** because the e4 pawn is no longer in danger.

16.♙xc3 f6

After **16...Δe5?!**, the planned retreat **17.♙g2±** already leads to a greater advantage.



And now White proudly presents the textbook clearing sacrifice **17.e5!!**, especially for the benefit of his bishops.

1) 17...fxe5?? 18.♙d5+ ♔h8 19.f4+-;
18...♗e6 19.f4

2) 17...♞xe5?? 18.♙d5+ ♔h8 19.f4+-
Δ19...♞h5 20.♙g5; 19...♞e8 20.♞de1

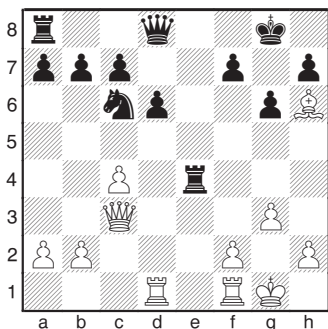
3) 17...♗xe5 18.♙d5+

a) 18...♗e6?? 19.♞de1+-

b) 18...♗f7?? 19.♙e3+- Δ19...♞e7
20.♙xc5 dxc5 21.♞fe1; 21.♙xb7

c) 18...♔h8 19.♙e3±

B) And after the immediate **14...♙xc3**
and the continuation **15.♞xc3 ♗xe4**
(15...♞e7 16.♞fe1) **16.♙xe4 ♞xe4 17.♙h6**
the following position emerges:



1) 17...♗e5?? 18.f4+- Δ18...♞xc4
19.♞b3

2) 17...f6 18.♞b3± Δ18...♗a5?!
(Δ18...♞d7) 19.♞d3 ♞e5 20.♙f4 ♞f5
21.c5!± Δ21...d5 22.♞e3 Δg4

a) 22...h5 23.h3

b) 22...♞d7 23.g4 ♞e8 24.♞f3

c) 22...♗c4 23.♞e6+ ♔g7 24.♞fe1
Δ24...♗xb2 25.♞d4 Δg4

5

Farago – Berg

Tastrup 1990

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6
5.♙e2 0-0 6.♙g5 ♗bd7 7.♞d2 c6 8.♗f3
e5 9.0-0 exd4 10.♗xd4 ♗c5

1) When White chose **11.f3?**, he over-
looked the fact that the overload of his
queen could be exploited with **11...♗fxe4!**.
In all subsequent lines, Black's advan-
tage is more or less clearly in the ♣
range.

12.fxe4

12.♗xe4 ♗xe4 13.fxe4 ♙xd4+

- 14.♞xd4?! ♞xg5

- 14.♙e3?! ♙xe3+ 15.♞xe3 ♞e8 +++

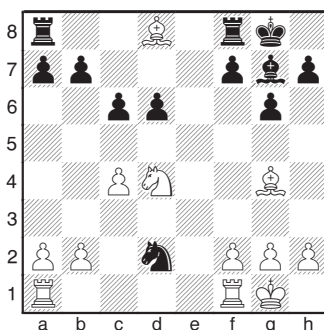
- Δ14.♔h1 ♞b6 15.♞ad1 ♙e5

12...♙xd4+ 13.♞xd4 ♞xg5 14.♞xd6

14.♞ad1!?

14...♞e3+ 15.♔h1 ♗xe4 16.♗xe4 ♞xe4

2) **11.♙f3** may look positionally inhar-
monious, but cannot necessarily be dis-
missed; e.g. **11...♙g4!?** (11...a5∞;
11...♞b6) **12.♙xg4 ♗fxe4 13.♗xe4 ♗xe4**
14.♙xd8 ♗xd2



... with unclear complications.

3) And although **11.♞f4!?** may look *tac-*
tically vulnerable, White might be more
likely to hope for a hint of a minimal

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Schachmagazin 64

About the author

GM Dr. Karsten Müller was born on November 23rd, 1970 in Hamburg. He studied mathematics and received his doctorate in 2002. From 1988 to 2015 he played for the 'Hamburger SK' in the German 'Bundesliga' and in 1998 he was awarded the title of Grandmaster.

The busy and globally recognized end-game expert was named 'Trainer of the Year' by the German Chess Federation in 2007



He is the author (or co-author) of the following highly esteemed works:

- Secrets of Pawn Endings (with Frank Lamprecht, Everyman/GAMBIT 2000)
- Fundamental Chess Endings (with Frank Lamprecht, GAMBIT 2001)
- Danish Dynamite (with Martin Voigt, Russell 2003)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book: Test and Improve Your Tactical Vision (Russell 2004)
- How to Play Chess Endgames (with Wolfgang Pajeken, GAMBIT 2008)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book 2: Test and Improve Your Positional Intuition (Russell 2008)
- Bobby Fischer, The Career and Complete Games of the American World Chess Champion (Russell 2009)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book 3: Test and Improve Your Defensive Skill! (with Merijn van Delft, Russell 2010)
- Chess Cafe Puzzle Book 4: Mastering the positional principles (with Alexander Markgraf, Russell 2012)
- The Magic Tactics of Mikhail Tal: Learn from the Legend (with Raymund Stolze, Edition Olms 2012)
- Fighting chess with Hikaru Nakamura (with Raymund Stolze, Edition Olms 2013)
- The slow (but venomous) Italian (with Georgios Souleidis, New in Chess 2016)
- The Magic of Chess Tactics 2 (with C.D. Meyer, Russell 2017)

His excellent series of ChessBase-DVDs Chess endgames 1-14 also attracted attention.

Müller's popular column Endgame Corner was published at 'www.ChessCafe.com' from January 2001 until 2015, and his column Endgames is published in Chess-Base Magazine since 2006.

To date, numerous of his books have been published by JBV Chess Books (Joachim Beyer Verlag) – a total of 24 in German and the following titles also in English:

- Magical Endgames (2020) (together with Claus Dieter Meyer)
- The Human Factor in Chess (2020) (together with Luis Engel)
- The Human Factor in Chess, The Testbook, Find out your Player Type (2022) (together with Luis Engel and Makan Rafiee)
- The Best Endgames of the World Champions Vol 1 – From Steinitz to Tal (2021)
- The Best Endgames of the World Champions Vol 2 – From Petrosian to Carlsen (2021)
- World Chess Championship 2021 (together with Jerzy Konikowski and Uwe Bekemann)
- Chess Training with Matthias Blübaum, His way to the European Champion (2022) (together with Matthias Blübaum and Matthias Krallmann)
- The Best Combinations of the World Champions Vol 1 – From Steinitz to Tal (2022) (together with Jerzy Konikowski)
- The Best Combinations of the World Champions Vol 2 – From Petrosian to Carlsen (2022) (together with Jerzy Konikowski)
- Bobby Fischer 60 Best Games (2022)
- Karsten Müller – Attack (2023)
- Karsten Müller – Endgame Magic (2023)
- The Chess DNA of a Genius (2023)
- Typical Sicilian, Effective Middlegame Training (2023)
- Typical Queen's Gambit, Effective Middlegame Training (2023)
- Typical French, Effective Middlegame Training (2024)
- Typical King's Indian, Effective Middlegame Training (2024)