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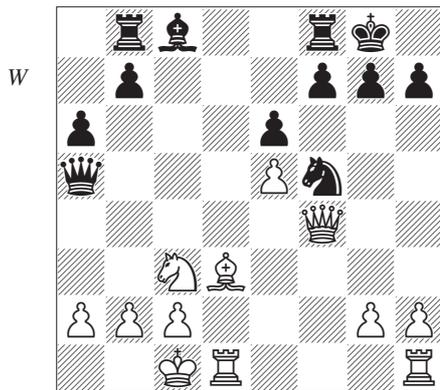
## Game 18 [B65]

## Alex Yermolinsky – Dmitry Gurevich

Chicago Open, Oak Brook 1998

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3  
 ♗c6 6 ♖g5 e6 7 ♗d2 ♕e7 8 0-0-0 0-0 9 f4 h6

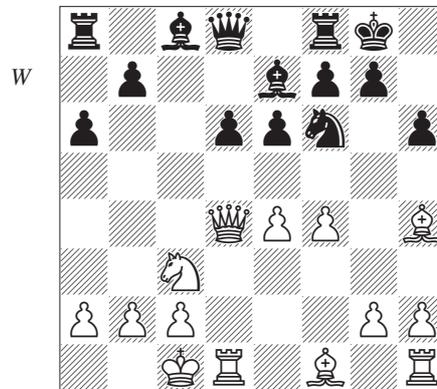
Why can't Black do without this move? He actually can, as 9...♗xd4 10 ♗xd4 a6 is well-known to theory. Once again, we need to slow down and try to grasp the difference. Here besides the standard 11 ♖c4 – similar to the game continuation – White can also consider the quietly poisonous 11 ♖e2. Since 11...b5 12 ♖f3 is unattractive (how does Black stop e5?), the likely continuation will be 11...♗a5 12 e5 dxe5 13 fxe5 ♗d5 (13...♗d8 does White no harm, as his rooks are connected – the main purpose of the 11 ♖e2 move) 14 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 15 ♖d3 ♗f5 16 ♗f4 ♗b8 (D).



W

10 ♖h4 ♗xd4 11 ♗xd4 a6 (D)

This brave little move shows that Black has no fear of either e5 or ♖xf6. He also plans to expand on the queenside with ...b5, thus gaining a good square for his light-squared bishop and in some cases managing to drive the c3-knight away.



W

Can Black be punished for taking such liberties?

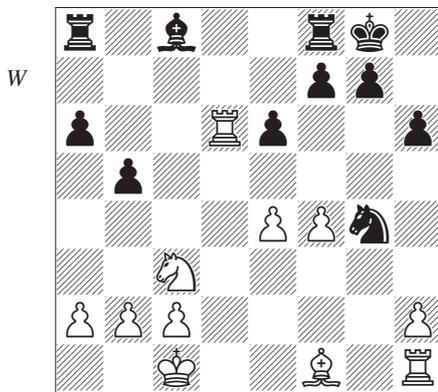
12 e5 falls short of reaching that target. Winning a piece after 12...dxe5 13 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 14 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 15 fxe5 is an illusion: 15...g5!, and White can hardly count on any advantage in the ending.

Remember the 12 ♖e2 idea? Here comes an important subtlety. With the moves ...h6 and ♖h4 already thrown in, Black easily equalizes with the shot 12...♗xe4!. By the way, the same thing happens in reply to 12 ♖b1.

Happy with your ...h6 move? Wait till you see 12 g4!. Now the threat of g5 forces Black's hand: 12...♗xg4 (12...b5 amounts to suicide: 13 g5 ♗h5 14 ♗g1, etc.) 13 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 14 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 15 ♗xd6 b5 (D).

Usually to get to such endings White has to exchange off his e-pawn for Black's d-pawn. Here he has a better pawn presence and the half-open g-file immediately attracts attention.

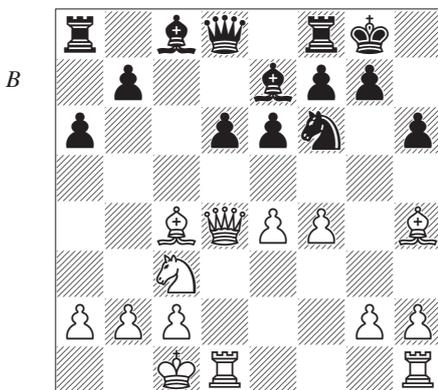
A typical situation: White has pushed through his main idea of driving the knight away from f6. Yet if he doesn't succeed with his attack, the e5-pawn might eventually become weak. Black is late with his counterplay on the queenside, but still it could be possible for him to survive here if it weren't for the energetic 17 ♗e4!, when 17...♗xa2? is punished by 18 g4 ♗e7 19 ♗f6+. This line and many similar ones lead us to believe that in case White plays e5, Black needs to have his bishop on the a8-h1 diagonal to exchange off that knight as soon as it arrives on e4.



However, the impatient 16 ♖g1 gives Black counterchances after 16...♟xh2!? 17 ♙e2 f5 18 exf5 exf5 19 ♖xh6 ♟g4 20 ♗b6 ♘a7 (Grünfeld-Smirin, Israeli Ch, 1992). Instead, White should forget about the g-file and play strictly through the centre: 16 ♙e2! ♟f6 17 e5 ♙b7 18 ♖hd1 ♟d5 19 ♟xd5 ♙xd5 20 ♖d4 ♗fc8 21 a3 ♟f8 22 ♟d2, with a clear edge for White, as in the game Dolmatov-Smirin, Olympiad, Manila 1992.

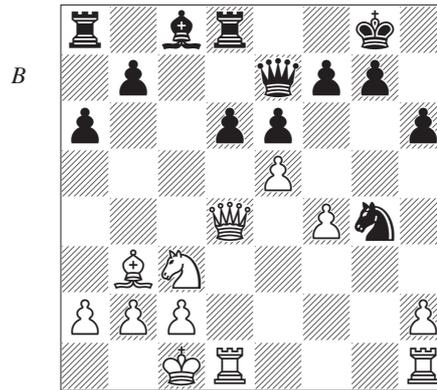
I don't know how well I would have done in this endgame, but as the game went I was able to decide the outcome in the middlegame, so I shouldn't be too unhappy about my lack of theoretical knowledge. I knew some ideas (such as ♙c4 being good against the ...♗a5 lines) rather than these specifics, so the move I now played seemed good on general principles:

12 ♙c4 (D)



12...b5

Black could use the position of the white bishop to get 12...♗c7 13 ♙b3 ♖d8 in, but then with both e5 and ♙xf6 ruled out, White has no choice but to turn to 14 g4 ♟xg4 15 ♙xe7 ♗xe7 16 e5! (D) (better than 16 ♖hg1 ♗h4 17 e5 d5, and the daredevil g4-knight stays alive).



Now the knight is cut off and threatened with execution. It takes a considerable effort to find the best defence 16...♙d7! (hoping for 17 h3? dx5), but even then after 17 exd6 ♗f6 18 ♗d2 White is clearly on top.

13 ♙b3 ♗c7

In case of 13...♙b7 I intended to continue with 14 ♖he1 ♖c8 15 f5 e5 16 ♗d3 b4 17 ♟a4. We haven't seen this Najdorf-like set-up before, but here, augmented by the strong b3-bishop, it seems pretty effective.

Dmitry's move left me a one-move (...♖d8 is coming next) window of opportunity to proceed with a standard plan. A non-standard idea would be to play 14 f5!? with unclear consequences.

14 ♙xf6 ♙xf6

Dmitry, who unlike me knew the existing theory of this line, didn't hesitate for one minute to sacrifice the d-pawn. Of course, 14...gxf6 would have been a major positional concession in any case, but here, with the pawn on h6 it could just be losing.

15 ♗xd6 ♗a7?!

Gurevich didn't play this variation to go to a cheerless ending by 15...♗xd6 16 ♖xd6 ♙xc3 17 bxc3 ♙b7 18 ♖e1 ♖fc8 19 ♟b2.

After the game he told me he hoped to repeat Black's success in Fishbein-Smirin, Tel Aviv