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to keep his winning chances intact, White had to play with extreme accuracy. After he missed the critical moment (33 ♙d5! would have caused Black serious problems), Anand achieved the ideal kingside pawn-structure with 33... g6 and his following play was a model of purposeful defence. Notable moments in the final phase

were the timely 34... ♖xb3! and Black's vigorous use of his king (39... ♔e5 , 47... ♔e5!) to create active counterplay. An important component is also the knowledge and successful implementation of endgame theory (such as the position mentioned in the note to move 37), but at this level, it goes almost without saying.

Game 60

Vasily Ivanchuk – Sergei Volkov

European Clubs Cup, Saint Vincent 2005

French Defence, Burn Variation [C13]

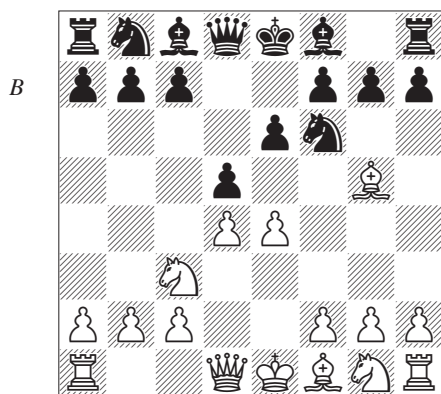
1 e4 e6
2 ♖c3

A harmless transposition. The line 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 was featured in Games 21 and 56.

2 ... d5
3 d4 ♖f6

The Winawer, 3... ♗b4 is, if anything, an even more complex and double-edged choice than the text-move (see Game 7).

4 ♙g5 (D)

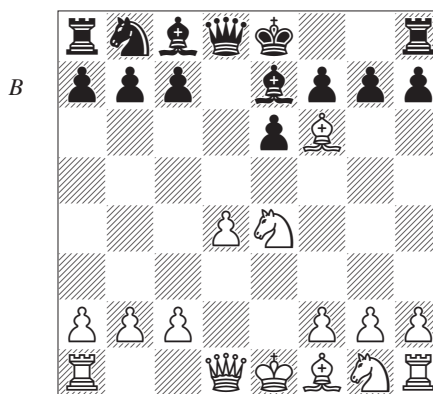


4 ... dxe4

At this point Black's choice is still a matter of taste. Volkov, contrary to his opponent (see the notes to Game 16), has a narrow repertoire and against 1 e4 plays only the French Defence. However, this doesn't make preparation against him much easier, as he knows his favourite opening inside out and plays a great diversity of its variations. For example, he has played all the main options in this position, and the many different types of positions to which they lead.

Although 4... ♗e7 has occurred only rarely in his practice, the sharper 4... ♗b4 is a regular choice. However, earlier in 2005 he had already played it against Ivanchuk and decided to deviate first.

5 ♘xe4 ♗e7
6 ♗xf6 (D)

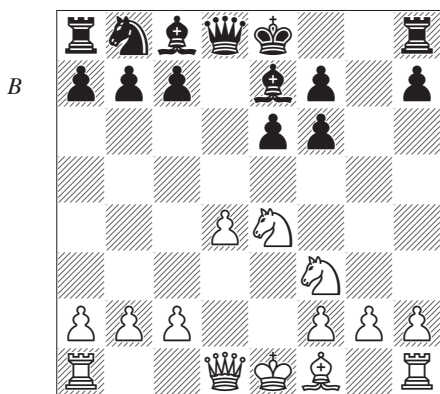


6 ... gxf6

This is a committal decision: Black voluntarily disrupts his pawn-structure to increase his central control. This move also enables him to retain his bishop-pair without losing time; after 6... ♗xf6 7 ♘f3 Black is later often forced to invest a tempo to play ... ♗e7 . On the other hand, retaking with the bishop is a more solid positional choice and has attracted a somewhat wider following and players of differing temperament (Bareev and Shirov are the most notable examples) have included it in their repertoires.

7 ♘f3 (D)

White hardly plays anything else, as the knight belongs on its natural square in most of the plans he can realize in this position. It's been known since the Fischer-Petrosian Candidates final in Buenos Aires 1971 that after 7 g3 direct pressure against White's centre with 7...f5 8 ♖c3 ♙f6 9 ♗ge2 ♘c6 gives Black excellent counterplay.



7 ... f5!?

Other moves:

1) The older continuation 7...b6 is somewhat passive; after 8 ♙c4 (8 ♙d3 is similar) 8...♙b7 9 ♖e2 White strives to limit his opponent's active potential by exchanging the light-squared bishops; this also makes it easier for him to advance his central pawns. A model example of this strategy is 9...c6 10 0-0 ♗d7 11 ♙a6 ♙xa6 12 ♖xa6 ♖c7 13 c4 0-0 14 ♖a4 ♗fd8 15 ♗ad1 ♗f8 16 ♖b3 ♗d7 17 d5! cxd5 18 cxd5 ♖b7 19 ♗c3 ♗ad8 20 ♗fe1! exd5 21 ♗e2 with excellent compensation for the pawn. Even after 21...d4 22 ♗xd4 ♙c5 23 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 24 ♗f4 White retained a slight but permanent edge due to his superior pawn-structure in Shirov-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 2004.

2) Interest in the 6...gxf6 concept was fading when in the late 1990s Morozevich successfully adopted 7...a6 and his original idea caught on. Just as in, for instance, the Meran, Black intends to play ...b5 and ...♙b7, and the bishop heads for d5, where it will play a far more active role than in line '1'. However, even here White gradually managed to develop methods to combat Black's idea. The most radical and ambitious reaction is 8 c4!? (a sound positional alternative is 8 g3, neutralizing the potential pressure on

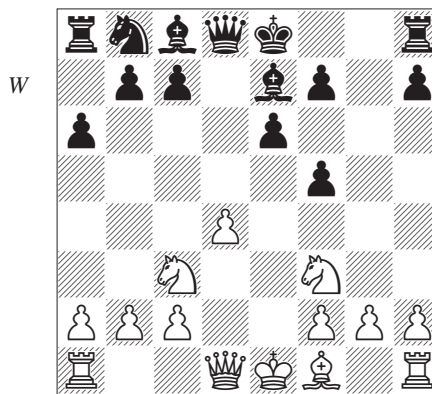
the long diagonal) 8...f5 9 ♗c3 ♙f6 10 ♖d2 c5 11 d5 0-0 12 0-0-0. Although Black has activated his unopposed dark-squared bishop, in practice White's attacking chances against the compromised kingside have usually carried more weight. Volkov strives to avoid this line, but he is still attracted by the idea of queenside expansion. In this sense, the text-move is a refinement of 7...a6.

8 ♗c3

The knight belongs in the centre; after 8 ♗g3 c5 (or even 8...h5!?) Black quickly gets good counterplay.

8 ... a6 (D)

We have already mentioned Volkov's intentions, but 8...♙f6 is an approximately equivalent alternative. Black makes a useful move and flexibly postpones the choice between ...a6 and ...b5, or the more direct ...c5, possibly even ...♗c6.



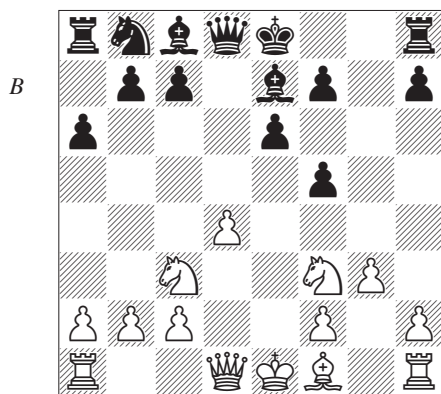
9 g3 (D)

Ivanchuk chooses the simplest and most effective way to develop his bishop. Other plausible options are connected with queenside castling, but here White's king is potentially more exposed than in the game:

1) After 9 ♖e2 b5 10 0-0-0 b4! (forced, as 10...♙b7? runs into 11 d5! and White breaks through in the centre) 11 ♗a4 ♖d5! 12 c4 ♖a5 13 b3 ♙d7 14 ♗c5 ♙xc5 15 dxc5 ♗c6 16 ♗g5 ♗d8 Black has sufficient counterplay and in Grishchuk-Sakaev, Moscow 2002, White decided not to pursue his luck any longer and forced a perpetual with 17 ♗xf7.

2) 9 ♖d2 seems more natural, but Black can react just as in line '1' and 9...b5 10 0-0-0 b4! (here Black can try 10...♙b7, but again he has

to reckon with the central break 11 d5, when after 11...b4 White has the dangerous piece sacrifice 12 ♖c4! (with a promising attack) 11 ♖a4 ♖b7 leads to a complex position with chances for both sides.



9 ... b5

Consistent, if Black wants to develop his c8-bishop. 9...♗f6 10 ♗g2 c5 leads to a different type of position, which, however, brought Volkov some unpleasant memories. After 11 d5!? ♗b6 (11...♗xc3+ 12 bxc3 exd5 13 0-0 gives White more than sufficient compensation, as Black's pawns are highly vulnerable; Black should try to stabilize the position and this may be the right moment for 11...e5!?, as suggested by Vasiesiu) 12 ♖b1 0-0 13 0-0 ♗d8 14 ♗d2 (Glek recommends 14 ♖d2!? with an advantage for White) 14...♗g7 15 ♗f1 ♖c6 16 ♖e1 ♖e5 17 ♖d3 ♖xd3 18 ♗xd3 ♖b8 19 ♗f3 ♗c7 20 g4! White was better and went on to win in Vasiesiu-Volkov, Romanian Cht (Tusnad) 2000.

10 ♗g2 ♗b7

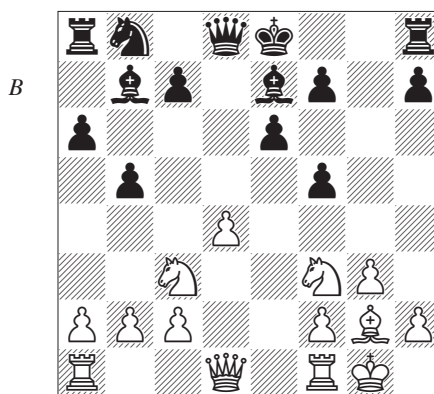
11 0-0 (D)

One of the merits of White's fianchetto is neutralization of the possible pressure on the g-file; here Black's chances for a successful kingside attack are practically nil.

11 ... c5

Black wants to resolve the situation in the centre and possibly ease his defensive task with exchanges. However, this move provokes immense complications, so it's worth having a look at some more sedate alternatives:

1) After 11...♗d6 12 ♖e5!? (Timman prefers 12 ♗e1 with an edge for White) 12...♗xg2 13 ♗xg2 0-0 (13...c5!?) 14 ♗f3 ♗a7 15 ♗ad1



c5 16 ♗e3 b4 17 ♖e2 ♖c6 18 ♖xc6 ♗xc6+ 19 d5!? exd5 20 ♗f3 White was slightly better in Timoshenko-Lupu, Bucharest 1993. This line shows one of the drawbacks of Black's 7th move – once White plants his knight on e5, it's not so easy to get rid of it without concessions.

2) Black can control e5 with his knight, but developing it immediately runs into White's central break d5. However, the so far untested 11...b4 12 ♖e2 ♖d7 deserves attention.

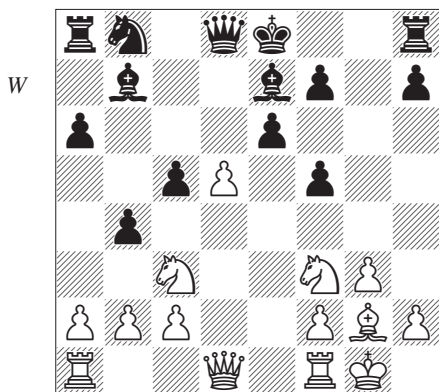
3) In subsequent practice Black has mostly played 11...0-0!?. The main tactical point behind this simple move is that the otherwise strategically desirable 12 ♖e5 ♗xg2 13 ♗xg2 b4 14 ♗f3 (after 14 ♖e2 ♗f6 or 14 ♖a4 ♗d5+ 15 ♗f3 ♗d8 Black equalizes; in the endgame the e5-knight is less dangerous) runs into 14...bxc3! 15 ♗xa8 ♗xd4 16 ♖d3 ♗b6! 17 ♗f3 cxb2 18 ♗ab1 ♗f6 and White does not appear to have an advantageous way to pick up the b2-pawn; e.g., 19 ♖xb2 ♗xb2 20 ♗fd1 (20 ♗fe1? ♗a5) 20...♖c6 and the knight enters the fray just in time.

12 d5!

Ivanchuk rises to the challenge and greatly ups the stakes. Although this typical central break is not without risk, it's definitely the only testing option. The meek 12 dxc5 allows Black to equalize after 12...♗xd1 13 ♗fxd1 ♗xc5 14 ♖e5 ♗a7 and although 12 ♖e2 leads to a more complex position, Black harmoniously completes his development with 12...0-0 13 c3 ♖d7 and has little to fear.

12 ... b4 (D)

Black's reaction is forced, as after 12...♗xd5? 13 ♖xd5 exd5 (13...♗xd5 14 ♖d2) 14 ♖e5 his position collapses.



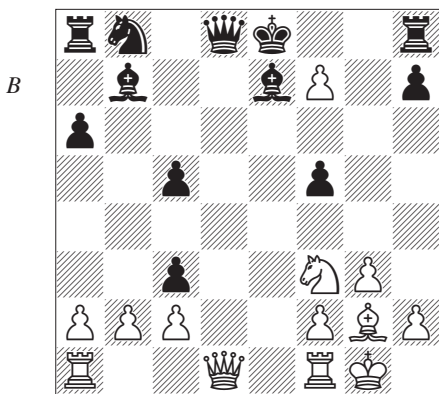
13 dxe6

White committed himself to this positional piece sacrifice with his previous move. A half-measure such as 13 ♘a4?! definitely doesn't interest Ivanchuk, as after 13... ♙xd5 White has only very vague compensation.

13 ... bxc3

This is again the only move. After 13... ♙xd1? 14 exf7+ Black loses a pawn and the 'modest' 13... fxe6? 14 ♖e2! (more forceful than 14 ♘e2, which also gives White an advantage) 14... bxc3 15 ♘e5 0-0 (15... ♙c8 fails to 16 ♖h5+ ♔d8 17 ♙xb7 ♖xb7 18 ♖f7! and White has a decisive attack) 16 ♙xb7 gives White a large advantage without any risk whatsoever.

14 exf7+ (D)



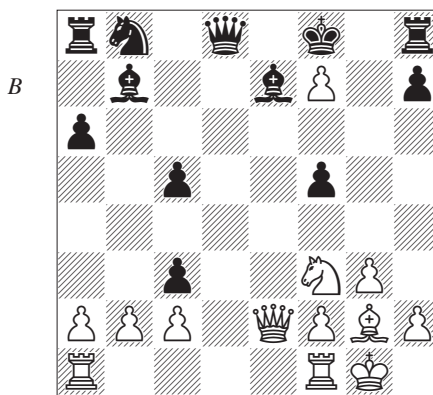
14 ... ♔f8

Volkov rightly keeps the extra material. After 14... ♔xf7?! 15 ♘e5+, the greedy 15... ♔f6? is suicidal due to 16 ♖h5!, when Black's exposed king can't survive for long; e.g., 16... ♙xg2 17 ♖h6+ ♔xe5 18 ♙ad1. This position reminds

one of the romantic lines from old Italian manuscripts. Ivanchuk almost certainly would not have felt the need to search for a forced mate, but would have evaluated it as winning for White while calculating his 12th move.

15 ♖e2 (D)

Most computer engines initially try a move like 15 ♖c1?!, which doesn't give White anything after 15... ♙d6!?. For a human player it's obvious without deeper calculation that to keep his initiative going, White must quickly concentrate his major pieces on the central files.



15 ... cxb2

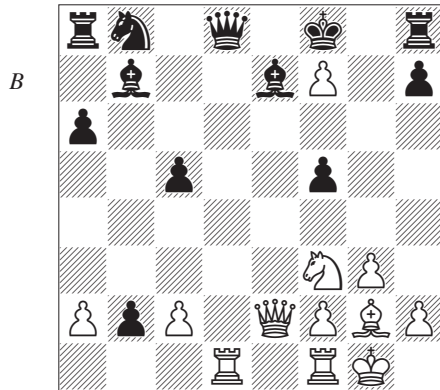
The series of forced moves is over and Black has to decide how to proceed. Volkov chooses the most natural option. Although it gives White a tempo for his development, on the other hand the advanced b2-pawn will greatly limit his attacking chances. The position still defies precise analysis and it's not so easy to compare the text-move with other options, but it seems he made the right choice:

1) After 15... ♘c6?! 16 ♙ad1 ♖c7 (16... ♙c8 is met by 17 ♘e5!, preventing ... ♔g7 and threatening ♙fe1; then 17... ♘xe5 18 ♙xb7 ♖xb7 19 ♖xe5 ♔xf7 20 ♖xf5+ gives White a strong and lasting attack) 17 ♖e6 White threatens ♙d7 and keeps the f7-pawn alive. The natural attempt to get rid of it by 17... ♙d8 18 bxc3 ♙c8 runs into 19 ♙xd8+ ♘xd8 20 ♖h6+ ♔xf7 21 ♘e5+ ♔g8 22 ♙d1 – another rook aims for d7 and Black is in trouble.

2) 15... ♙e4 is more to the point, as the bishop remains active. However, even here the simple 16 ♙ad1 ♖c7 17 bxc3 gives White good compensation. The natural 17... ♘c6 (the

pawn is taboo: after 17...♔xf7? 18 ♖g5+! ♕xg5 19 ♖h5+ ♔f6 20 f4 Black's king is trapped in the middle) is well met by 18 ♖h4! ♕xh4 (18...♕xg2 is weaker due to 19 ♖xg2, threatening ♖f4) 19 f3 with a continuing attack.

16 ♖ad1 (D)



16 ... ♖b6

The queen aims to help out on the kingside. The text-move is much better than 16...♖c8?!, when it's White who has a wider choice:

1) The direct 17 ♖e5 ♔xf7 18 ♖g5+ ♕xg5 19 ♕xb7 is met by Ivanchuk's 19...♖c6!! (19...♖xb7? 20 ♖xh8 is hopeless for Black) 20 ♖xb2 ♖b8. Although after 21 ♖b3+ ♔g7 22 ♕xc8 ♖xb3 23 ♖d7+ ♕e7 24 axb3 ♖xc8 25 ♖e1 White might have a slight endgame edge, a draw is the most likely outcome.

2) More ambitious is 17 ♖fe1 ♕e4 18 ♖e5 ♖a7 (18...♔g7 will transpose to line '2b' after 19 ♕xe4) 19 ♕xe4 fxe4 20 ♖xe4 and now:

2a) 20...♖b7 is a provocative idea, relying on the strength of his passed pawn. This shows in the plausible line 21 ♖d7+!? (after 21 ♖e3 ♔g7 22 ♖d6!? ♖h3 23 ♖d7! ♖xd7 the try to achieve more with the tempting 24 ♖c3+ {24 ♖e5+ ♔xf7 25 ♖xd7 transposes into the main line} 24...♔xf7 25 ♖xe7+ ♔xe7 26 ♖f6+ ♔e8 27 ♖xh8+ ♔e7 28 ♖f6+ ♔e8 29 ♖e6+ ♖xe6 30 ♖xe6+ ♖e7 only leads to a draw) 21...♖xd7 22 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 23 ♖e5 ♔xf7 24 ♖xh8 ♕f6! 25 ♖xb8 c4 and the question of whether White can convert his material advantage remains open.

2b) After 20...♔g7 21 ♖g4!? White's attack is dangerous, but he is still far from claiming a forced win.

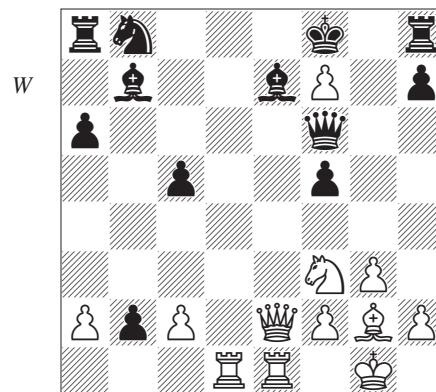
3) However, the most promising move is 17 ♖g5!, when the threat of ♖e5 forces the unattractive 17...♕e4 (17...♕xg5? loses to 18 ♕xb7 ♖xb7 19 ♖e8+ ♔g7 20 ♖xh8+, and after 17...♖c6? 18 ♖e6+ ♔xf7 19 ♖h5+! ♔xe6 20 ♖fe1+ ♖e5 21 ♖xe5+! ♔xe5 22 ♖f7 Black is trapped in a mating-net). After 18 ♖xe4 (18 ♕xe4 fxe4 19 ♖xe4 ♕xg5 20 ♖xa8 ♔g7 is unclear) 18...fxe4 19 ♖xe4 ♖a7 (an unforced but pretty line is 19...♖c6 20 ♖e3! ♔xf7 21 ♖h6 ♖b4 22 ♖fe1 ♕f6 23 ♕f1! c4 24 ♕xc4+ ♖xc4 25 ♖d7+ and White mates) 20 ♖e5 ♔xf7 21 ♕d5+ ♔g6 22 ♕e4+ ♔f7 23 ♕f5! ♖f8 24 ♖xb2 White has a distinct advantage, as Black can't develop his knight and his king is permanently exposed.

17 ♖fe1

White patiently piles on the pressure. 17 ♖e5?! ♕xg2 18 ♔xg2 ♖b7+ 19 f3 ♔g7 gets White nowhere and 17 ♖g5?! ♕xg2 18 ♖d8+ ♖xd8 19 ♖e6+ ♔xf7 20 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 21 ♔xg2 ♖d7 is also premature – White has squandered his attacking potential and must now fight for his life.

17 ... ♖f6 (D)

This is the consistent follow-up to Black's previous move and the only defence. After 17...♖c6? 18 ♖e6! ♔g7 19 ♖h4 ♕xh4 20 f8♖+! the attack breaks through and 17...♕e4?! 18 ♖e5 leaves the lonely black king facing White's fully coordinated army.



18 c3!

While Black had to waste time and energy on considering various alternatives on moves 15 and 16, White's play was straightforward and logical. Although now the natural attacking