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## **Grandmaster Insides by Maxim Dlugy**

‘Grandmaster Insides’ take you into the inner world of Maxim Dlugy, as he recounts and analyses what a young player went through to become a champion and what areas of development are important for self-improvements as a chess player. As the highest rated player in the world in the age group of 15 and until he became World Junior Champion at 20, Maxim had an ideal vantage point from which to recount the exploits of a talented young player. He became the highest rated blitz player in the world, won numerous International tournaments and even tied for 1-4<sup>th</sup> place in the first World Rapid Championship in Mazatlan.

His games and interaction with World Chess Champions will give the reader a deeper look at some of the best players



in history such as Tal, Smyslov, Karpov, Kasparov, Kramnik and even Carlsen.

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## Grandmaster Insides

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Maxim Dlugy is a former US Junior Champion, World Junior Champion, 2 times National Open Champion, 2 times World Open Champion, and a Former President of the US Chess Federation. He has helped prepare both Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov for major international events (including world chess championship matches), has an opening variation named after him and many young students in the top 50 lists in the US. His shows on ICC and chess.com has attracted a large audience as he explains his thoughts during the games.

Grandmaster Insides

Maxim Dlugy



## Grandmaster Insides



Maxim Dlugy

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## Introduction

I started to play chess when I was 7 years old, which was average for Russia, or more precisely the Soviet Union, the country I was born in. I immediately fell in love with the game of chess, and still carry that love more than 40 years later. I loved chess because, thanks to the tutelage of my father and grandfather, I was able to challenge adults and felt special being able to compete with many of them on even terms.

After a successful career in finance and management, I recently came back to my big love – chess, by deciding to spend a substantial amount of time teaching the game that gave me so much joy and happiness. As I am no longer an active professional chess player, having left the circuit about 25 years ago, my current level of play is extremely volatile; one day I could be beating a 2700 player, while the next I may lose to a good club player who manages a creative attack. This gives me an excellent vantage point from which to examine what makes a Grandmaster tick, as both strong moves and horrible blunders can be produced by one and the same head – not only in the same tournament, but even in the same game.

The concept of explaining precisely what a Grandmaster sees and what he does not came to me after some of these roller-coaster events. I firmly believe that understanding the true scope of an average Grandmaster's potential will help players of all levels better their game.

How? You may ask. My answer is simple: by showing the human side of Grandmasters, players of all levels will know that their aspirations to become better are quite realistic, as even the highest title in chess does not guarantee against a healthy portion of mistakes, miscalculations and outright blunders.

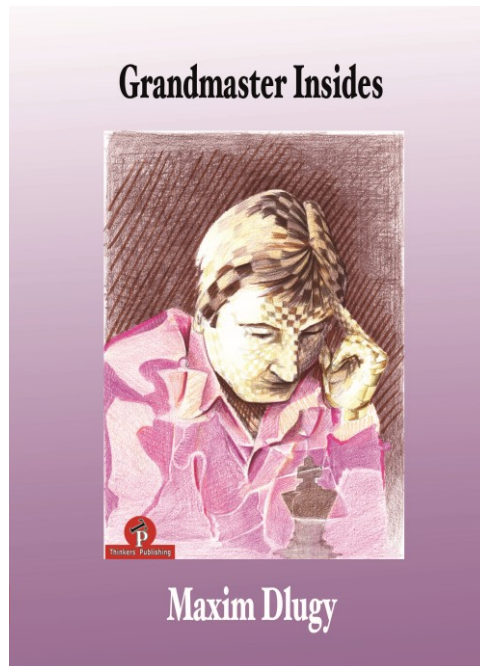
Besides this hopefully inspirational chapter, which you will find towards the end of the book, you will also be able to follow my exploits as a player who once made it to the top 50 in the world. In my relatively short professional career, spanning about 6 years, I came close to qualifying for the Candidates tournament, won the World Junior Championship and all the major Open tournaments in the U.S.

Although this book will by default be quite biographical in nature, my real goal here is to make it very instructional. The focus will be on how to improve your game whether it is for your child who is five or six years old, or for a master that has

stalled in his progress. By making a note of what and how I studied at every stage of my development and what mistakes I have made, you will find many interesting examples of ideas you may want to repeat or avoid yourself from my career. I will put these in italics in the text so you, dear reader, will have an easier time spotting them in the book.

Hopefully those memories, along with games and opening analysis from the past, will guide you towards a better understanding of how to improve in chess.

Maxim Dlugy  
January 2017



# Chapter 14a



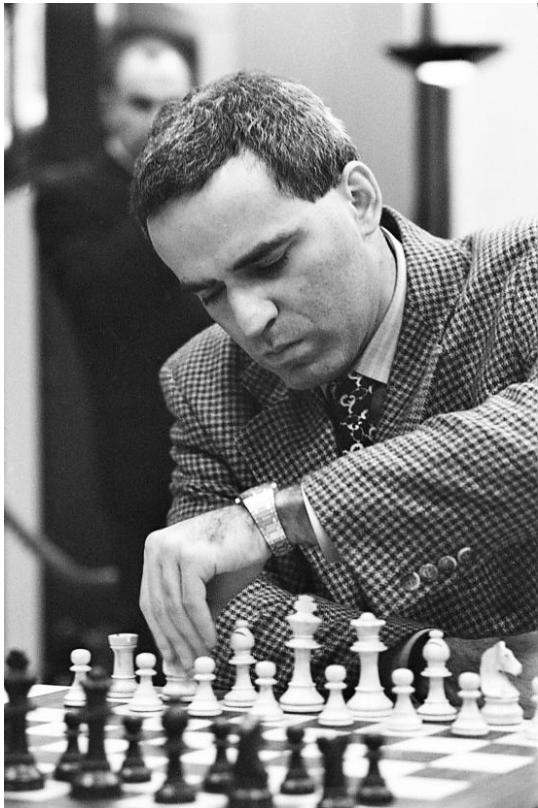
## Rubbing shoulders with the Greats

### Kasparov

When my family immigrated from the Soviet Union in 1976, any chess player showing anti-Soviet tendencies would *a priori* become our friend, even if we didn't know them personally. Such was the case with Viktor Korchnoi, Boris Gulko, and Garry Kasparov. Viktor defected from Soviet Union and then played for the World Championship against Karpov, Boris was not allowed to leave for fear he would help Korchnoi take the title away from Karpov, and Kasparov – uncharacteristically for a Soviet player – made a brave move and spoke out openly against the joint decision of the Russian Sports Federation and Campomanes to cancel his first match with Karpov. That decision split the chess world, and I was among those who were categorically against the cancellation of a match where the challenger, after a heroic effort to stay in a match he was losing badly, just won two games in a row and finally had a reasonable shot at the crown. I met Kasparov during my stint at the 1986 World Championship match described above. It was a strange meeting, as I was going somewhere within the Park Lane Hotel and he was on the way somewhere during a free day with his entourage. We were heading towards each other and he just stopped, looked at me and without saying a word extended his hand, which I shook. After that, he went off on his way and I, happy to have met a legend who was only three years my senior, went off on mine.

Later in the year, I was playing on the U.S. Team at the Dubai Olympiad and during our match with the Soviet team, when I was facing Rafael Vaganian with the Black pieces on board 4, Kasparov would stop to look at our game intently and then walk off with Rafael discussing something. That was basically our second interaction, and it was not that pleasant to imagine what Garry might have been saying. Nevertheless, I drew that game, and after Yasser Seirawan won a slightly inferior endgame against Garry we even won the match!

A bit more than a year later, we were paired to play in the second elimination round of the World Blitz Championship. This was a tough match, with me winning game one, losing the next two, and then forcing myself to play a King's Indian Defence to win on demand with Black against the reigning World Champion. When I won that game the theatre, packed with about 800 spectators, exploded. It was rare to see the reigning World Champion not to be able to draw with White to clinch the match. Armageddon games were not invented then, so we were playing until the first win with alternating colours in case of a draw. Garry picked White, and I stoically defended a really difficult Rook and pawn ending to eke out a draw in game five. As Garry was prancing nervously on stage, I forgot my preparation! Before the match, I told myself not to play the  $\text{♞f4}$  variation against Garry's Grünfeld, and somehow my hand played that move. I kept hoping Garry wouldn't know the novelty played against me by Maya Chiburdanidze a couple of months back, and like a hypnotized rabbit kept playing the same moves, finally being hit by the same idea once again. I lost a pawn and never recovered. Garry won the game and the match  $3\frac{1}{2} - 2\frac{1}{2}$ . Let's take a look at two of my wins:

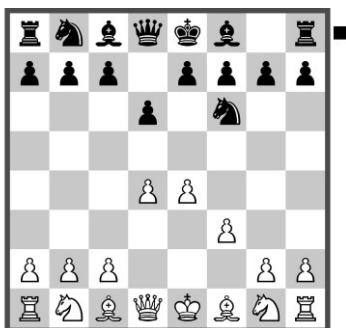


*Garry Kasparov (photo Jos Suttmuller)*

♁ Dlugy, Maxim (2550)  
♚ Kasparov, Garry (2750)  
🌐 Saint John 1988 (2)

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1. d4 d6 2. e4 ♘f6 3. f3!



Position after: 3. f3!

This was my first ever game against Kasparov and, of course, the tension was quite high. Still, my blitz results were quite impressive; to get into the World Blitz Championship I played in an GM qualifier, where I started with 14(!) wins against 7 different grandmasters. I remember Bernard Zuckerman, a strong IM and a blitz specialist, who was one of the only non-GMs in the qualifier, asking me how many games I played and how many points I had. He kept repeating his question, as he simply couldn't believe the answer. I offered him to play, but he ran away. Of course I caught him later and finished him off with a characteristic 2-0. Garry had never seen 3. f3! and consumed over a minute trying to understand how to deal with this reasonably smart move order discovered by my coach Vitaly. He

liked it so much that soon afterwards he played it himself in a match against Curt Hansen, winning a nice game. While writing this comment I noticed that Anand also took up this move in his match against Mikhail Gurevich after failing to equalize against me in Wijk Aan Zee 1990.

3... ♘bd7 4. c4 e5 5. d5 ♖e7 6. ♖e3



Position after: 6. ♖e3

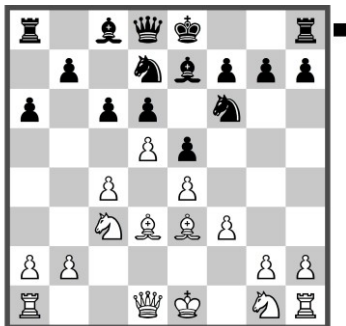
The position is similar to the Saemisch King's Indian, except Black's Bishop is not fianchettoed. Considering that Black needs some positional compensation for surrendering space on the queenside, it seems Black would be better off with the Bishop on g7 where it could become active if the game opened up.

6... c6 7. ♘c3 a6

Garry is a bit reluctant to show his hand as the position is quite new for him. Probably castling immediately would be a sounder decision.



8. ♖d3

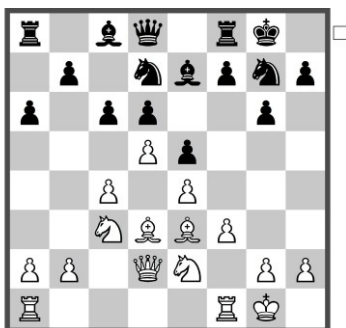


Position after: 8. ♖d3

8... 0-0

Black should not be playing on the queenside where he has less space and is therefore weaker. After a possible 8... cxd5 9. cxd5 b5 10. b4 ♘b6 11. a4! Black would get saddled with a weak pawn on the queenside, although after 11... ♘c4 12. ♖xc4 bxc4 13. ♘ge2 0-0 14. 0-0 ♖d7 15. ♙d2 there would still be a lot of proving to do in order to establish a clear advantage.

9. ♘ge2 ♘h5 10. ♙d2 g6 11. 0-0 ♘g7



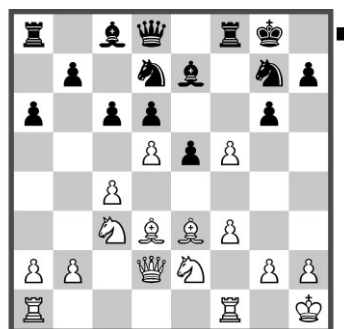
Position after: 11... ♘g7

Garry is reluctant to spend time to transfer his Bishop to g7, and prepares his only remaining counterplay f5 with the Knight on g7. I prepare for the opening up of the position.

12. ♙h1!

A strong prophylactic move, aiming to open up the position with g4 when the possibility arises.

12... f5 13. exf5



Position after: 13. exf5

13... gxf5?

This turns out to be an inaccuracy. Capturing correctly on f5 is an art in the King's Indian and similar structures. Here, surrendering the e4-square is not as important, as Black stands to grab my e3 Bishop after capturing with the Knight. After 13... ♘xf5 I would have to choose between the passive 14. ♖f2? when Black would be close to equality after 14... ♖g5! 15. ♙d1 ♘f6, or the real test of the position: 14. ♖xf5! gxf5

15. ♖h6 ♜f6 16. g4 ♘b6 17. b3 with some advantage for White.

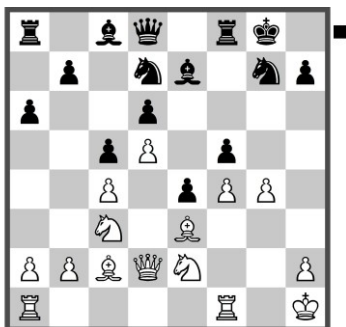
#### 14. f4

Considering Black's misplaced Bishop on e7, it was even stronger to play 14. ♖h6 ♜e8 15. g4 e4 16. fxe4 fxg4 17. ♘g3 ♘e5 18. ♙e2 c5 19. ♜xf8+ ♙xf8 20. ♜f1 with the initiative.

#### 14... e4 15. ♙c2 c5

It may have been objectively better to play 15... ♘f6 keeping the pawn structure fluid, but Garry was clearly worried that after 16. b4 he would be eventually saddled with a weak d6 pawn.

#### 16. g4!



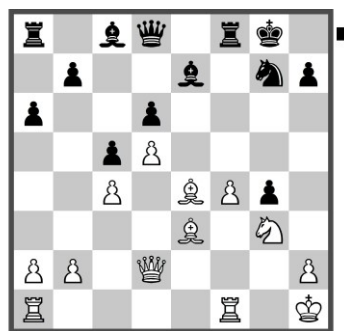
Position after: 16. g4

I am carrying out the typical plan for White in these positions - blowing up the kingside for my pieces to come in.

#### 16... fxg4 17. ♘xe4 ♘f6

Black's options here would not make much difference. On 17... b5 I could simply play 18. b3, and if Black ever contested the b-file with his Rook, I could fight for it with ♜b1. On 17... ♘f5 I would continue by attack with 18. ♘2g3 ♘xe3 19. ♜xe3 ♘f6 20. ♘g5 and it's quite clear that the Knights are going to crush through to the King.

#### 18. ♘2g3 ♘xe4 19. ♙xe4



Position after: 19. ♙xe4

#### 19... ♙f6?

This was inaccurate. It was important to create a diversion with 19... b5! here. After 19... b5 I could play in many different ways, but Black would get some counterplay in all cases. One example is: 20. ♜c2 h5 21. ♙xc5!? dxc5 22. d6 ♜a7 23. dxe7 ♜xe7 24. ♜ad1 ♜b6 25. ♙d5+ ♘h8 26. f5 ♜ee8 27. b4 h4 28. f6 ♜xf6 29. bxc5 ♜xf1+ 30. ♜xf1 ♜h6 31. ♘e2 bxc4 32. c6 ♘f5 33. ♜c3+ ♜g7 34. ♙xc4 ♜xc3 35. ♘xc3 g3 and Black somehow survives.

#### 20. ♜c2!



Position after: 20. ♔c2!

After this Black is forced to weaken his kingside and my advantage becomes obvious.

### 20... h5?

Objectively this move already loses, but finding the killing shot in a blitz game was a challenge I was not up to. Still, even after the relatively better 20... ♔h8 21. ♖xh7 ♖xb2 22. ♜ab1 ♔e7 23. ♜fe1 ♖f6 24. ♖xc5 Black is in dire straits.

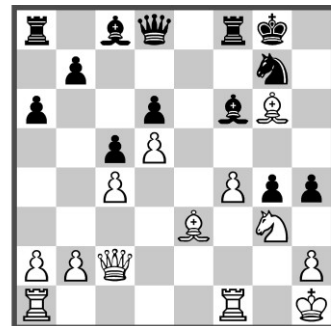
### 21. ♖g6?

Missing the deadly attacking idea 21. ♖h7+ ♔h8 22. ♜g6! when there is simply no defence to ♜h6.

### 21... h4

Black's best chance lay in taking out the g3-Knight with 21... ♖h4! 22. ♖xh5 ♖xh5 23. ♖xh5 ♖f5 24. ♜e2 ♖e4+ 25. ♔g1 ♜f6 26. ♜xg4+ ♜g7 27. ♜ad1 when Black's activity partially compensates for the absence of two

pawns! Meanwhile after 22. f5!? ♖xg3 I could still launch a dangerous attack with 23. f6! ♖e5 24. fxg7 ♖xg7! (24... ♔xg7 25. ♖xh5 is game over.) 25. ♜e2! ♜f3 26. ♖xh5 ♜f6 27. ♜xf3 ♜xf3+ 28. ♜xf3 gxf3 29. ♖xf3 ♖xb2 30. ♜g1+, but after all the fun White is only slightly better in this endgame.



Position after: 21... h4

### 22. ♖h5

Not a bad move under the circumstances, though the killer idea 22. ♖h7+ ♔h8 23. ♜g6! would still win. After 23... hxg3 24. ♜h6 ♜f7 25. ♖g6+ ♔g8 26. ♜h7+ ♔f8 27. ♖d4!



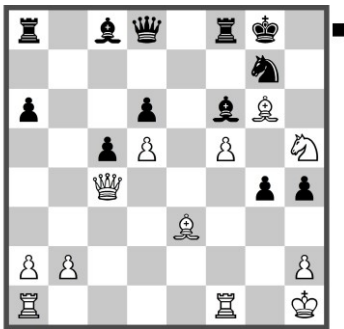
Position after: 27. ♖d4!

27... cxd4 28. ♜ae1 Black's King cannot escape the mating net.

22... b5

Understandably, Garry wants to create counterplay, but concentrating on defence with 22... ♖xh5 23. ♙xh5 ♙g7 24. f5 g3 25. ♙g6 and only now 25... b5 may have been better, though I would still have the edge after 26. ♜ae1! ♚f6 27. b3 bxc4 28. bxc4

23. f5 bxc4 24. ♚xc4



Position after: 24. ♚xc4

24... ♙b7

This looks like an option that complicates White's life, but in fact it's now easier to play. The best choice would have been 24... ♖xh5 25. ♙xh5 ♜a7 (instead after 25... g3, 26. ♚g4+ ♙g7 27. ♙g5 ♚b6 28. ♜ab1 and White's threats are stronger) 26. ♚xg4+ ♜g7 27. ♙g6 ♙xb2 and although White is better, there are still problems to be resolved.

25. ♜ad1!

*Over-protection of a weak point is your road to success, to paraphrase Nimzowitsch.*

25... ♚e7

Garry is in trouble and he is panicking. After 25... ♖xh5 26. ♙xh5 g3 27. ♚g4+ ♙g7 28. ♙g5 ♚d7 29. ♙xh4 gxh2 30. ♜de1 ♙xd5+ 31. ♚xh2 ♜ab8 32. ♜e7 ♜xb2+ 33. ♚h3 my threats would be decisive.

26. ♙h6



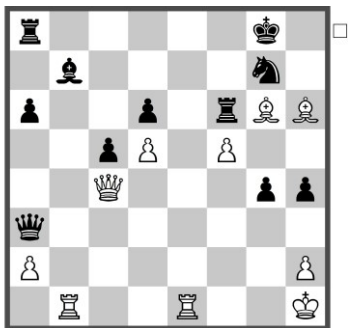
Position after: 26. ♙h6

A strange decision. The simplifying 26. ♖xf6+ ♚xf6 27. ♚xg4 would be completely decisive, as I am threatening ♙g5 followed by f6 or ♚xh4 and ♚h7 mate.

26... ♚e5 27. ♜fe1

In mutual time-trouble, I spotted the Bishop on b7.

27... ♔xb2 28. ♖b1 ♕a3 29. ♞xf6+  
♜xf6



Position after: 29... ♜xf6

30. ♜xb7?

Not the best.

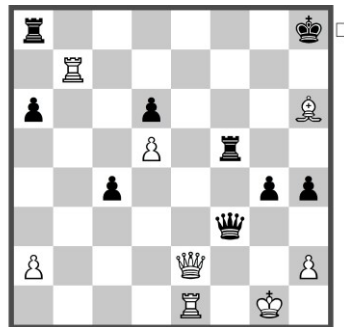
After *zwischenzug* 30. ♜e3! Black would just resign, as there's no counterplay starting with ♕f3 next move.

30... ♕f3+ 31. ♔g1 ♞xf5 32. ♙h7+  
♚h8 33. ♙xf5?

With my flag rising considerably, my instincts took over, and all thinking seized.

After 33. ♜f1! Black would be lucky to play on after 33... ♞xh6 34. ♜xf3 ♜xf3 35. ♙c2 when the end would be near around the h7-square.

33... ♜xf5 34. ♕e2 c4



Position after: 34... c4

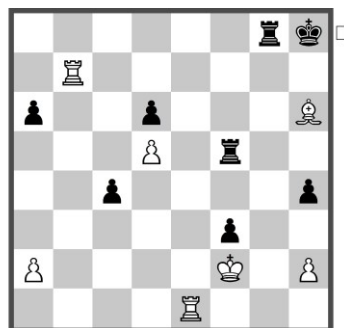
35. ♕xf3

This is not bad, although the engines announce mate in 12 after 35. ♙g7, while the sounder looking 35. ♕e8 is "only" mate in 18.

35... ♟xf3 36. ♔f2

Going for mate with 36. ♜ee7 would get there in 21 moves after the best series according to Komodo.

36... ♜g8

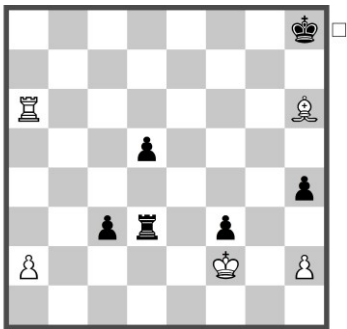


Position after: 36... ♜g8

37. ♜g1??

This is just hand motion! Black has no mating threats, so why not just double on the 7th rank and see what gives? Now I am just much better.

37... ♖xg1 38. ♔xg1 ♖xd5 39. ♔f2  
 ♖d3 40. ♖b6 d5 41. ♖xa6 c3



Position after: 41... c3

42. ♖c6?

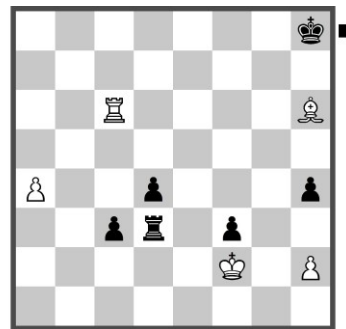
This should have led to an objectively drawn position. The best, although not the only move, was 42. ♙f4 to defend the h2 pawn, then after 42... ♖d4 43. a4 ♖d2+ 44. ♔xf3 ♖a2 45. ♔e4 c2 46. ♖c6 I will pick up all the pawns, winning as in the game.

42... d4?

Very short on time, Garry misses his chance to draw! After 42... ♖d2+ 43. ♔xf3 ♖xh2 44. a4 d4 45. ♙g5 h3 46. ♙f6+ ♔h7 47. ♙xd4 ♖a2 48. ♖xc3 h2 49. ♖c1 ♖xa4 50. ♙e5 Black would still have a challenge of making a draw in this ending with hanging flags, but at

least theoretically the position would be drawn.

43. a4?



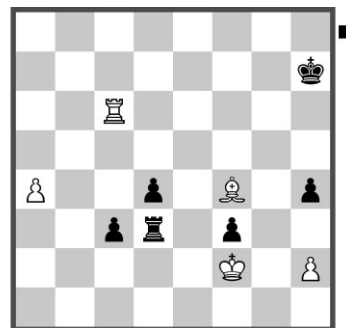
Position after: 43. a4?

And once again I miss the mark. Defending the h2-pawn was of paramount importance. After 43. ♙f4 I would still be winning.

43... ♔h7?

Here it is – the final mistake! After 43... ♖d2! it was still a draw. We both simply missed this tactic.

44. ♙f4!



Position after: 44. ♙f4!



Garry Kasparov (photo Jos Suttmuller)

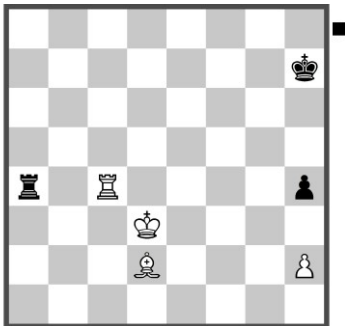
Finally winning.

44... ♖d1 45. ♔xf3 ♜a1 46. ♜c4 ♜d1  
 47. ♔e4 d3 48. ♜xc3 d2 49. ♔d3 ♜a1  
 50. ♙xd2 ♜xa4 51. ♜c4

51... ♜a3+ 52. ♙c3 ♔g6 53. ♜xh4  
 ♔f5

And with lightning speed I finished off the game, so that even the DGT boards couldn't get all the notation. It felt good to beat my idol in the first ever game against him.

1-0



Position after: 51. ♜c4

The right corner on h8 secures an easy win.

♁ Kasparov, Garry (2750)  
 ♚ Dlugy, Maxim (2550)  
 🌐 Saint John 1988

1. c4 ♘f6 2. ♘c3 g6

I was in a must win situation against a player who hardly lost any games with the White pieces.

The only chance I had was to play an opening where most pieces remain on the board for as long as possible.

With no chance for my favourite Queen's Gambit Accepted, I had to make up theory as I went.

I did the same thing during my 4 game exhibition match with Jonathan Speelman played during the 1986 K-K match.

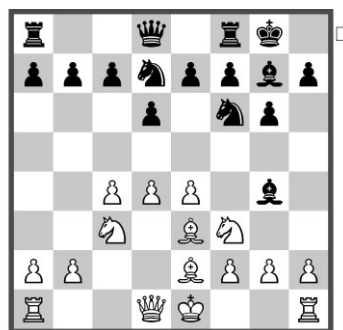
I won that game to even the match, and now was trying to do the same against one of the main protagonists!

3. e4 d6 4. d4 ♘g7 5. ♘e2 0-0 6. ♘f3 ♘g4

I did not know the theory of this variation, and just relied on my common sense to find reasonable moves.

I realized that I will not be equalizing in the opening, so I tried to move the main fight to the middlegame.

7. ♘e3 ♘bd7



Position after: 7... ♘bd7

A rare though not completely ridiculous move. I am ready to part with my light-squared Bishop, but will keep flexibility in determining the pawn structure in the centre and on the queenside.

8. h3

It's interesting that some years later I won a nice game against Fred Lindsay, a solid U.S. master, playing the same way. That game went 8. ♘d2 ♘xe2 9. ♖xe2 e5 10. d5 ♘h5 11. g3 a6 12. 0-0 ♖e8 13. f3 f5 14. ♘f2 ♘hf6 15. b4 ♘h6 16. ♘b3 ♘h5 17. ♖d3 fxe4 18. fxe4 ♘df6 19. ♖g2 ♖e7 20. c5 ♘g4 21. ♘g1 ♖g5 22. ♖h1 ♘e3 23. ♖xe3 ♖xe3 24. ♘xe3 ♘xe3 25. ♖ae1 ♘f2 26. ♖d1 b6 27. c6 ♘e3 28. ♖g2 b5 29. ♖f3 ♖xf3 30. ♖xf3 ♘b6 31. ♖g2 ♖f8 32. ♖f1 ♘f6 33. ♘d2 ♘e3 34. ♘db1 ♖g7 35. h3 ♘d4 36. ♖f3 ♖b8 37. ♖f1 h5 38. ♖e2 h4 39. g4 ♘h7 40. ♘d2 ♘g5 41. ♖d3 ♖f8 42. ♘d1 ♖f4 43. ♖a3 ♖f6 44. ♖xa6 ♘xh3 45. ♖a5 ♘g1+ 46. ♖d3 h3 47. ♖a8 ♖g7 48. ♖c8 ♘b6 Fred Lindsay – Maxim Dlugy National Open, Las Vegas 1993 0-1.



8... ♖xf3 9. ♖xf3 c6!



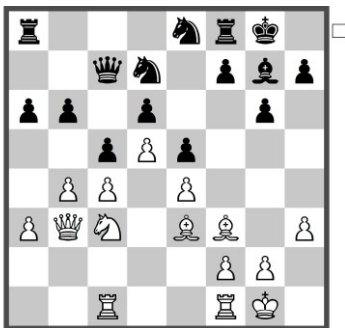
Position after: 9... c6!

When playing for a win, keeping the pawn structure as fluid as possible is an important component of forcing your opponent to think.

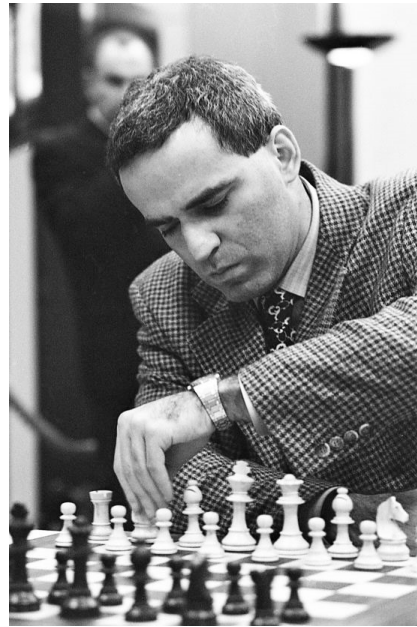
10. 0-0 a6 11. ♖c1 e5 12. d5

Keeping the tension in the centre is not so easy for White. After 12. ♖d2 exd4 13. ♖xd4 ♖e8 14. ♖fd1 ♖e7 the Bishop on f3 is slightly misplaced, giving Black a reasonable position.

12... c5 13. a3 ♖e8 14. b4 ♖c7 15. ♖b3 b6



Position after: 15... b6



Garry Kasparov (photo Jos Sutmuller)

typical blitz trick. I am hinting that I want to recapture with the b-pawn on c5, when I am actually planning something completely different.

16. bxc5?

A positional concession. Garry would be better off continuing to improve his position with let's say 16. ♖e2 before deciding when to capture on c5.

16... dxc5!

Clearly the sharpest continuation and therefore the best under the circumstances. My Knight on d6, will be targeting c4 and e4 and supporting the f5-advance. Hopefully there won't be any endgame to play!