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### **Ivan's Chess Journey**

### **Games and Stories**

**by**

### **Ivan Sokolov**

Ivan Sokolov was one of the most furious attacking and creative players of his time. The author presents an overview of his life in Chess, full of entertaining unpublished material. He is not shy to share his opinions and promises the reader a personal roller coaster loaded with fun stories and unexpected twists. We are convinced you will enjoy the ride!

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## Ivan's Chess Journey Games and Stories



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Ivan Sokolov was born in Bosnia in 1968. He was and still is one of the most flamboyant attacking players of his time, reaching several times, over a period of 13 years, the top 12 spot in the FIDE ranking. He notably has beaten world chess champions like Smyslov, Kasparov, Kramnik, Anand and Topalov. The list of first places he took in his life time achievement is immense, we remember him winning most recent, the World Open (Philadelphia), the Politiken Cup (joint first, in Denmark) in 2012 and the Admiral Niels Cup in 2013. Not to forget he was also the national Yugoslav champion in 1988 and Dutch in 1995 and 1998. He is also a successful and beloved writer bringing bestsellers as "Winning Chess Middlegames", "The Ruy Lopez Revisited", "The Strategic Nimzo-Indian" and "Sacrifice and Initiative". His columns in the last Chess Informants are also widely appraised. As a commentator he was best known to entertain his public at the Tata Steel tournaments in Wijk aan Zee. He is currently being employed in Dubai as a National team coach.

IVAN SOKOLOV

Ivan's Chess Journey : Games and Stories



## Ivan's Chess Journey Games and Stories



Ivan Sokolov

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## Bronstein & Geller



David Bronstein (photo Jos Suttmuller)

In the fall of 1987 I played a GM round robin tournament in Pancevo, Yugoslavia (nowadays Serbia).

My play in the tournament had (as usual) up and downs, the highlight of the tournament being an opportunity to play the two legends I studied a lot of games from... Bronstein and Geller!

I will start with Bronstein.

David Ionovich Bronstein was very popular in the former Yugoslavia.




Every serious player read his legendary book 'Zurich 1953', everybody knew his 12–12 versus Botvinnik and the crucial endgame he lost.

I have studied his KIDs since my very early years... His book 'Zurich 1953' in the Russian I








language version was a present from my father that kept me happy for weeks.

Now, having an opportunity to play a game against David was something very special for me (at the time).

At the moment of our game, I was almost 100 elo points higher rated... But the game itself was a one sided affair. In a standard isolated pawn position I got easily outplayed and lost like a patzer!

	Bronstein, David I	(2435)
	Sokolov, Ivan	(2525)
	Pancevo 1987	

---

1. d4 f6 2. f3 g6 3. c4 g7 4. c3 d5 5. b3 dxc4 6. xc4 c6!?

# Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories



Position after: 6... Nc6

Nowadays this 6... Nc6 line is played a lot. Back in 1987 it was considered to be a side line. My coach at that time, Velimirovic was enthusiastic about this Nc6 line and even did some work for Kortschnoj to prepare him for the Candidates against Portisch. So theoretically I was well armed. But this was not enough as my general knowledge needed some extra education... ☺

## 7. e4 0-0 8. Bc2 Bg4

The pawn sacrifice 8... e5 9. d5 Nxd4 10. Nxd4 exd4 11. Bxd4 c6 is played a lot nowadays.

## 9. d5 Na5



Position after: 9... Na5

## 10. Bb3?!

Bronstein, true to himself, is trying to avoid the mainstream theory. However this move is not precise and Black now immediately equalises.

10. Bb4 (or 10. Ba4) are both better moves, the main point being that 10...c6?? now simply blunders a piece to 11.e5. Actually after 10. Bb4 (or 10. Ba4) White's threats are either capturing the Knight on a5 or win a piece with 11. e5. So Black is forced to exchange with 10... Bxf3 11. Bxf3 and only then play 11... c6 A position with an isolated pawn will be reached and consequently giving White a small plus.

## 10... c6 11. h3 Bxf3

Had I been flexible enough I would have realized that now I could have kept the pair of bishops. I am not forced to enter an isolated pawn position and could have played 11... Bd7! with an idea to take 12...cxd5 and after 13. exd5 Black has 13... Bf5. After 11...Bd7, Black has a very comfortable game (actually White should be careful not to get worse!).

## 12. Bxf3 cxd5 13. exd5



Position after: 13. exd5

An isolated pawn position has been reached. A kind of Tarrasch colours reversed. The position is balanced.

## 13... a6?!

Poor strategic judgement and the start of a faulty plan.

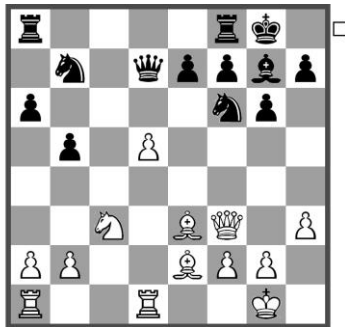
It is difficult to explain why I rejected the natural 13... Bc8 14. 0-0 Nc4=

## 14. 0-0 b5

# Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories

By playing 13...a6 and 14...b5 I was under the impression to be 'taking space' and getting 'an initiative' ☺ on the queenside. In reality my queenside became vulnerable to White's a2-a4 pawn push and also, as later became clear, my c6 square is weak. A strategic lesson was under way!

15. ♖d1 ♞b7 16. ♙e3 ♚d7



Position after: 16... ♚d7

17. ♚f4

Bronstein is preparing his a2-a4 pawn push compromising my queenside.

Due to tactical reasons even the immediate 17. a4! was possible, Black not really having a good answer

A) 17... ♞d6 18. axb5 axb5 19. ♙c5±

B) 17... b4 18. ♞a2 ♚xa4 19. ♙d2 b3 20. ♞b4 ♚d7 (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 20... ♚d7

21. ♞c6! yes, the weak c6 square! Thanks to my 13...a6 & 14...b5 pawn push! 21... a5 22. ♙c3± White can get his pawn back

anytime he likes with numerous ideas and a clear advantage.

17... ♞d6 18. a4



Position after: 18. a4

18... ♞f5?

This move forces White to improve his position placing a Bishop on a better diagonal. 18... ♖fc8 19. axb5 axb5 20. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 21. ♙c5 ♞fe8±

19. ♙c5 ♖fc8 20. ♙a3 ♖ab8 21. axb5 axb5 22. ♙b4±



Position after: 22. ♙b4

Black is in serious trouble. The 'a' file is lost, the 'b5'-pawn is weak, the square 'c6' ready to be penetrated, the whole queenside vulnerable, 'e7'-pawn potentially weak and zero counter play in sight.

22... ♞d6

22... ♞e8 23. ♖a6 ♞ed6 24. g4! ♞h4 25. ♞e4±

23. ♖a6 ♞c4?!

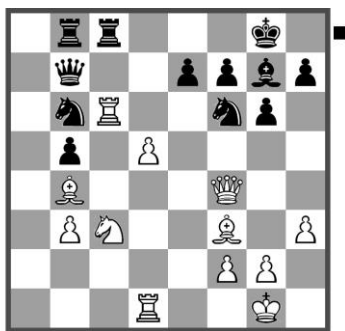
## Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories

This 'pseudo-active' move will only make matters worse. 23... ♖fe8 however allows further weaknesses 24. ♙g4

A) 24... ♘f5 25. ♙xf5 gxf5±

B) 24... f5 25. ♙e2±

24. b3 ♙b7 25. ♖c6 ♘b6 26. ♙f3+—



Position after: 26. ♙f3

The plan to advance the queenside pawns (13...a6 and 14...b5) ended in the worst possible way. White has achieved all his strategic objectives. Black cannot prevent an immediate collapse.

26... ♙d7 27. ♙e3 ♘e8 28. ♘xb5 ♘a8 29. ♘a7 ♖c7 30. ♖xc7 ♘axc7 31. ♘c6 ♖b5 32. ♘xe7+ ♙h8 33. d6 1-0

My next game against Bronstein was in Reykjavik 1994... the complicated game finished in a draw.

In the next years I was to visit Iceland many times and David was often around (invited for the Reykjavik open or something similar).

In 2002-2003 we talked on a number of occasions. David was quite unhappy about the discrepancy between his financial problems and the entire chess community celebrating how 'great' he was. I remember one occasion quite vividly. I was in Reykjavik playing something and David was also there. I was close to being rated 2700, one of the highest rated players invited and appropriate to my rating, the organizer gave me an accommodation in one of the best hotels in Reykjavik – 'hotel

Borg' (a famous hotel, where Alekhine stayed during his Reykjavik visit in 1931).

On one of the sightseeing trips the organizer told me we were to pick up Bronstein to join us. Very much to my surprise David was given a modest 'hostel'. Yes, you are reading it correctly – not a hotel... a 'hostel'!

I was quite shocked and once alone with the organizer suggested him perhaps to provide David with a more appropriate accommodation. 'No, no need Ivan... David is quite happy there' – was a quick reply.

What to do... once alone with David, I asked him whether he was happy with his treatment. David was not furious, he was simply too disappointed to be angry or to complain. He simply disappointedly said something like: 'it's been like this for years... people treat me (materially) like shit, while constantly telling me how great I am and how honoured they are having me as a player!'

Efim Petrovich Geller is a player I would strongly advise every young aspiring player to study a bit.

In early 1987 (some months before the Pancevo GM tournament) I got a hold of the Soviet Championships '1950-1956' books. I found them accidentally in an antiquarian book shop somewhere in Belgrade and bought them all. The books were like tournament bulletins (tables, results & games)... with occasionally some short comments.

Geller's games immediately caught my eye... Such a principal play with the white pieces! Predominantly 1.d4 (like me). Against Nimzo – a full centre Saemisch (what I also liked!). Against Slav – a Geller gambit (who cares about a pawn- let's take space!).

Geller's whole White's repertoire was based on space, space and more space! Contrary to my extensive conversations with Bronstein, Smyslov or Spassky, I never spoke to Geller about anything apart exchanging our views on the two games we played.

# Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories

At the time of the game we played in Pancevo 1987, Efim Geller was already at an advanced age. Geller's style however... did not change a single bit! Space, space and more space! It was an interesting game, with an interesting opening idea...

♚ Geller, Efim P (2515)  
 ♜ Sokolov, Ivan (2525)  
 🌐 Pancevo 1987

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘c6  
 5. ♘b5 d6 6. c4 ♘f6 7. ♘1c3 a6 8. ♘a3 b6  
 9. ♙e2 ♙b7 10. 0-0 ♘e5



Position after: 10... ♘e5

This standard hedgehog position has been reached. Instead of playing the 11. f3 what most (like 90%) players do, Geller came up with a rather aggressive idea (a novelty at the time!).

11. f4 ♘ed7 12. ♙f3 ♙e7 13. ♚e2 0-0 14. g4!?



Position after: 14. g4

Straightforward play! Despite being 62 years old, at the time of the game, Geller follows

the principles he learned in his youth – space, space and space! Actually White's set-up (starting with 11.f4) is an interesting idea and a bit surprising not really to have found many followers (not even in rapid games). White's only drawback is his misplaced knight on a3 as it will take some time for this Knight to enter the fray... meaning that in many sharp lines... White simply might be a piece down on the kingside. Surprised by White's opening idea and not willing to touch my kingside pawns (f.i. with 14... h6), I decided to answer my opponent's flank attack – by the most recommended response: a central pawn break!

The other interesting idea (for White) is to first to develop and then try follow up with the g4 pawn push 14. ♙e3

A) 14... ♚c7 15. ♜ac1 ♜ac8 16. g4∞

B) 14... ♜c8 15. ♜ac1∞ with (depending what Black does) - 16. ♘ab1, ♘d2 (first improving the White's ♘a3) , g4 to follow or even an immediate 16. g4.

14... d5!?

A) Computer engines propose 14... h6 and though after

A1) 15. h4?! is premature for White.

A1.1) 15... b5 16. cxb5 d5 17. e5 ♘e4♣

A1.2) 15... ♘h7 16. g5 hxg5 17. hxg5 e5!  
 18. ♚h2 exf4 19. ♙f2

A1.2a) 19... ♘xg5! wins for Black 20. ♜h1 f5+

A1.2b) 19... ♙xg5

White's coffee house attack objectively does not offer sufficient compensation... though eventually Black messed it up and lost in Sanz Alonso,F (2420)– Franco Ocampos,Z (2490) /Leon 1989 / EXT 1997 (63).

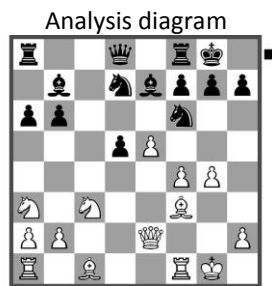
# Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories

**A2)** 15. ♖e3 evaluations start with something like 0.00, the position however looks messy and unclear to me.

**B)** 14... e5 15. f5 h6 is another computer proposal with evaluations starting with the same 0.00, and again the position looking rather unclear to me.

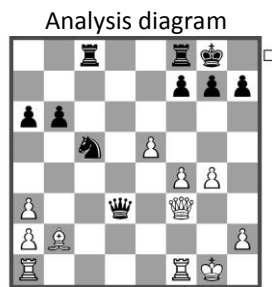
**15. exd5**

15. cxd5 exd5 16. e5



Position after: 16. e5

leads to positions where due to White's open position of his King (and overextended king-side's pawns), Black has compensation for the sacrificed pawn 16... ♗xa3 17. bxa3 ♖c8 18. ♖b2 ♗e4 19. ♗xe4 dxe4 20. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 21. ♔xe4 ♗c5 22. ♔f3 ♔d3 (see analysis diagram)



Position after: 22... ♔d3

**A)** 23. ♖ad1 ♔c4

**B)** 23. f5 ♔xf3 24. ♖xf3 ♖fd8

**15... exd5 16. g5 ♖e8 17. ♔g2 ♗e4 18. ♗xd5 ♖xd5 19. cxd5 f5**



Position after: 19... f5

**20. gxf6**

White wants to destabilize the black Knight on e4. However, Black has enough tactical resources and now will get his sacrificed pawn back obtaining descent play.

20. ♗c2± hanging on to his extra pawn can be improvement for White.

**20... ♖c5+**

This check is playable, but also was not necessary – as it actually improves White's king and also (later) his Bishop will come under attack with 23.b4. I guess in the case of an immediate 20... ♗dxf6= I probably was not totally feeling confident about but Black is just fine after 21. ♖e3 ♗xd5=

**21. ♔h1 ♗dxf6 22. ♗c2 ♔xd5 23. b4 ♖f8 24. ♖b2**



Position after: 24. ♖b2

It looks as if Black came under some deadly pins... but Black has some defensive (tactical) resources in store...

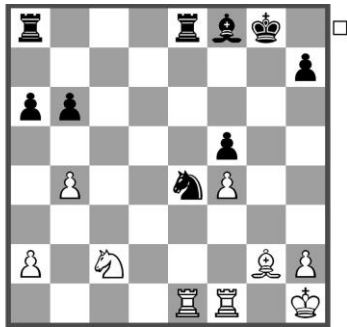
**24... ♔d2! 25. ♖xf6**



# Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories

25. ♖xd2 ♜xd2 26. ♙xa8 ♜xf1=

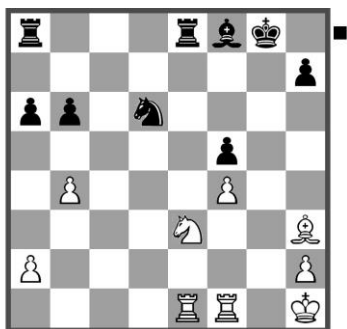
25... ♖xg2+ 26. ♙xg2 gxf6 27. ♖ae1 f5



Position after: 27... f5

After this tactical struggle, the smoke has cleared. White perhaps has some light pressure, but far from enough to create any real winning chances. Now after almost 30 years time, I do not remember whether I erred because my alertness level went down (thinking the 'tough part' had passed and now it's a 'dead draw') or I simply got outplayed in this 'simple' ending. Whatever it was... I was not able to hold the balance until the time control, move 40, was reached.

28. ♙h3 ♜d6 29. ♜e3

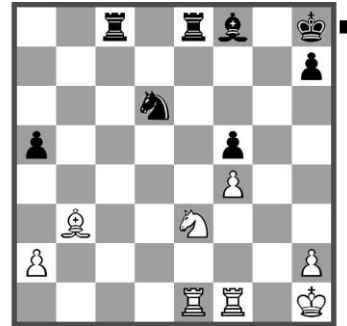


Position after: 29. ♜e3

29... a5!

A clever move, simplifying matters further.

30. ♙g2 ♖ac8 31. bxa5 bxa5= 32. ♙d5+ ♔h8 33. ♙b3



Position after: 33. ♙b3

33... ♙h6

Trying to get active I underestimated my opponents reply...

A) 33... ♖e4=

B) 33... ♖cd8=

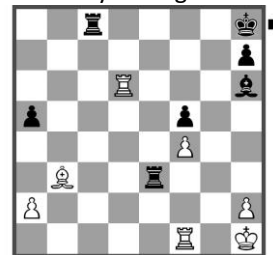
34. ♖d1!

Now was the time to get focussed again! However, I became uncertain and my time pressure also played a role...

34... ♖cd8?!

Only now I understood that 34... ♖xe3 35. ♖xd6 (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 35. ♖xd6

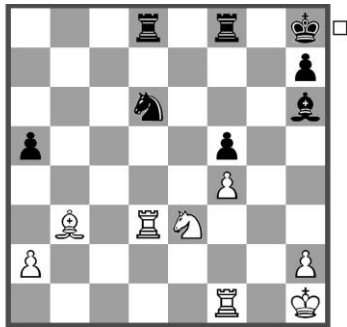
is not an 'immediate' draw. However, simplifying (further) was a principled decision as I would have found most likely 35... a4! 36. ♙xa4 ♖e4 37. ♙b3 ♙xf4 38. ♖d5 ♖f8 there is not much material left for White to harbour any hopes for a full point, Black makes an easy draw here.

35. ♖d3±

# Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories

Now White is getting real winning chances.

35... ♖f8



Position after: 35... ♖f8

36. ♔g2?!

Enabling Black to save his skin by tactical means. 36. ♖d5!± or 36. ♗a4±

36... ♖f6

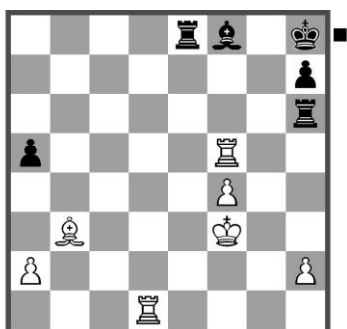
36... a4!

A) 37. ♗e6 ♖f6=

B) 37. ♗xa4 ♘c4! was the way to go and the tactical idea behind 36...a4!

C) 37. ♗c2 ♘e4=

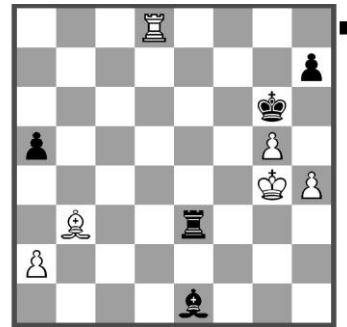
37. ♔f3 ♖e8 38. ♖fd1 ♗f8 39. ♖d5± ♖h6  
40. ♘xf5 ♘xf5 41. ♖xf5



Position after: 41. ♖xf5

The time control has been reached. Black is in real problems. Not only a pawn down, but also his King is getting trapped in a mating net. Geller's execution was guided by a steady hand.

41... ♗b4 42. ♔g3 ♖g6+ 43. ♖g5 ♔g7 44. ♖d7+ ♖e7 45. ♖d8 ♖xg5+ 46. fxg5 ♔g6  
47. h4! ♗e1+ 48. ♔h3 ♖e3+ 49. ♔g4

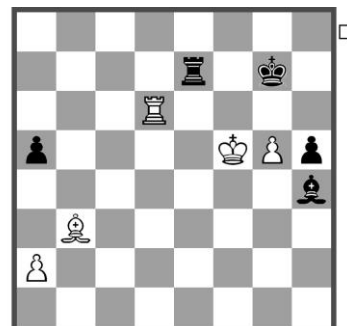


Position after: 49. ♔g4

49... h5+

49... ♖e4+ 50. ♔f3 ♖xh4 loses a piece to 51. ♖g8+ ♔f5 52. ♗c2+ ♔e5 53. ♖e8+—

50. ♔f4+— ♖e7 51. ♖d6+ ♔g7 52. ♔f5  
♗xh4



Position after: 52... ♗xh4

53. ♖g6+ ♔h8 54. ♖g8+ ♔h7 55. g6+ ♔h6  
56. ♖h8+ ♔g7 57. ♖h7+ ♔f8 58. ♖xh5  
♗e1 59. ♖h8+ ♔g7 60. ♖h7+

After this game I played Geller only once more, in Dortmund, the grandmaster tournament 1989. I was playing Black again. We drew in a Ruy Lopez Anti-Marshall.

1-0

## Chapter 2 – The Pre Computer Era



Anatoly Karpov (photo Jos Suttmuller)

♁ Karpov, Anatoly (2700)  
♚ Van der Wiel, John (2555)  
🌐 Brussels 1986

---

The next example we are going to witness is remarkable as both players had a team of world class players working for them!

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘c6  
5. ♘b5 d6 6. c4 ♘f6 7. ♘1c3 a6 8. ♘a3



Position after: 8. ♘a3

What we all have in common is not being able to be fully objective about our own ideas! They always per definition look to us better than they in reality might be.

Nowadays, unfortunately, when it comes to opening novelties in chess – there is a cold shower called the computer engine(!) with Houdini or Stockfish or some other engine, they will quickly show us our place and kill our 'inventor's enthusiasm'!

Well, in the 'pre computer era', some twenty+ years back, it was a rather different story!

Very often flying on his optimism and own belief, a player would produce (objectively dubious) a novelty. Feeling like a genius and influencing his opponent with his 'energetic radiation', such novelties often scoring excellent in practice.

One of the best examples comes from the famous K-K World Championship match.

**8... d5?!**

The novelty of the K-K World championship match! Based on Kasparov's brilliant victory in the 16th game, this opening idea was instantly praised by many.

**9. cxd5 exd5 10. exd5 ♘b4 11. ♙e2**

11. ♙c4 was Karpov's previous reaction: 11... ♙g4 12. ♙e2 ♙xe2 13. ♚xe2+ ♚e7 14. ♙e3 ♘bxd5 15. ♘c2 ♘xe3 16. ♘xe3 ♚e6 17. 0-0 ♙c5 18. ♚fe1 0-0 ½ - ½ Karpov,A (2720)–Kasparov,G (2700) / Moscow 1985 / MainBase.

**11... ♙c5**

# Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories



Position after: 11... Re5

## 12. Re3!

It took Karpov a whole year to find this simple tactic (!! ) and it was equally missed by the teams of seconds and commentators!!  
 12. 0-0 0-0 13. Re3 Re5 leads to a famous Kasparov 16th game victory: 14. Rg5 Re8  
 15. Qd2 b5 16. Bb1 Nd3 17. Nc1 h6 18. Rh4 b4  
 19. Na4 Rd6 20. Rg3 Rc8 21. b3 g5!  
 22. Rxd6 Qxd6 23. g3 Nd7 24. Rg2 Qf6  
 25. a3 a5 26. axb4 axb4 27. Qa2 Rg6  
 28. d6 g4! 29. Qd2 Qg7 30. f3 Qxd6+  
 31. fxg4 Qd4+ 32. Qh1 Nf6 33. Bf4 Ne4  
 34. Qxd3 Nf2+ 35. Bxf2 Rxd3 36. Bfd2 Qe3  
 37. Bxd3 Rc1 38. Nb2 Qf2 39. Nd2 Bxd1+  
 40. Nxd1 Re1+ 0-1 Karpov, A (2720)–Kasparov, G (2700)/Moscow 1985.

## 12... Re3 13. Qa4+

This simple check was missed by the both Ks and their mighty teams during the World championship match. Nowadays, such a mistake would never occur in our computer era. White is a healthy pawn up.

## 13... Nd7



Position after: 13... Nd7

## 14. Qxb4

14. fxe3± was probably a better move, not allowing Black to keep the dark squared Bishop.

## 14... Re5 15. Qe4+ Qf8 16. 0-0±

To make Karpov's misery in this line even bigger, Van der Wiel would escape with a draw in this game.

½-½

I had a number of similar situations of my own, but the one I remember the most comes from the Dutch championship in 1994.

A few Qb3 Gruenfeld specialists participated in the event (Piket, Sosonko...), being (at the time) a Gruenfeld player myself, I thought it would be handy to surprise them.

A couple of days before the event I came up with an 'interesting novelty'. The tournament drawing of lots gave me Black in the first round against Sosonko – well, 'a perfect occasion' I thought.

To make things even better, I agreed with Jan Timman to, after the drawing of lots, visit him at his home in Amsterdam. 'Excellent' I thought, Jan is also a Gruenfeld player himself, so I can show him my novelty and ask for his judgment.

The former 'Best of the West' welcomed me in a jovial mood... 'Ahaa Ivan, look, this is Meerlust Rubicon, an excellent wine from South Africa... yes... yes... interesting novelty... ahaa... let me give you some more wine... yes... sure... it will work perfectly against Genna(!)... should I open another bottle...? These rhetorical questions...

The more we were drinking, the more my novelty was looking better and better... ☺  
 Now, let's show you how my game the following day proceeded!

# Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories

♁ Sosonko, Gennadi (2525)  
 ♀ Sokolov, Ivan (2650)  
 🌐 Amsterdam 1994

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 d5 4. ♘f3 ♙g7 5. ♚b3



Position after: 5. ♚b3

5... c5?!

This was my new idea. But actually it was played before in one of Euwe's games which I was not aware of. Because of my debacle in this game the idea didn't get many followers. In fact only 6 games in the mega database can be discovered with this 5...c5 line. The idea appeared to me as a 'typical Gruenfeld' and encouraged by my natural optimism together with Jan's approval ☺. I played it without a second of thoughts! The main problem is that the resulting positions are not much fun for Black. Either he gets passive or a pawn down for only dubious compensation.

6. cxd5!

White's best. 6. dxc5 gives Black a 'Gruenfeld type' play 6... d4 7. ♗b5 ♗e4 8. ♚a3 a6 9. e3 0-0

A) 10. exd4 axb5! 11. ♚xa8 ♙xd4∞

B) 10. ♗bxd4 e5

B1) 11. ♗b3 ♗c6∞ with ...a5, ... ♗b4 to follow.

B2) 11. ♗b5

B2.1) 11... ♗c6 12. ♗d6±

B2.2) 11... axb5! 12. ♚xa8 ♗a6 I am not sure how objective this all is, but it has the advantage of being messy and that was the kind of game I was aiming for.

6... 0-0

Probably Black's best is 6... cxd4! however after (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 6... cxd4

A) 7. ♚a4+ ♗fd7 8. ♗xd4 0-0 9. e3 ♗b6

A1) 10. ♚b3 a5∞

A2) 10. ♚a5 ♗a6 11. b3 ♗c7 12. ♙c4 ♗xc4 13. bxc4 ♙f5 14. ♗xf5 ♗xd5

A2.1) 15. ♗h6+ ♗h8=

A2.2) 15. ♚xd8 ♙xc3+ 16. ♗e2 ♗fxd8 17. ♗b1 gxf5 18. cxd5=

B) 7. ♗xd4 ♗xd5 8. ♗xd5 ♙xd4 (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 8... ♙xd4

B1) 9. e3 is the old Euwe game mentioned 9... ♙g7 10. ♙b5+

B1.1) 10... ♗c6! 11. 0-0 0-0 12. ♗d1 ♙e6 is fine for Black.

# Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories

**B1.2)** 10... ♔d7 11. 0-0 0-0 12. ♖d1 e6  
13. ♘c3 ♚c7 14. ♙d2 ♘a6 15.  
♚ac1± ½ (47) Euwe, M-Cortlever,N/  
Amsterdam 1939/HCL (47).

**B2)** 9. g3!± leads to a safe advantage for White. Black may be close to equality, but still remains rather passive.

**B2.1)** 9... e6 10. ♘c3 ♚b6 11. ♚xb6  
♙xb6 12. ♙g2±

**B2.2)** 9... 0-0 10. ♙g2

**B2.2a)** 10... ♘c6 11. 0-0 e6 12. ♘c3  
♚b6±

**B2.2b)** 10... e6 11. ♘c3 ♚b6 12.  
♚xb6 axb6 13. 0-0 ♘c6 14. ♚d1±

7. e3 ♘bd7 8. ♙e2 cxd4 9. ♘xd4



Position after: 9. ♘xd4

This is a difficult position for Black. It resembles a kind of reversed Catalan. Black has some activity for the pawn, however the compensation is insufficient.

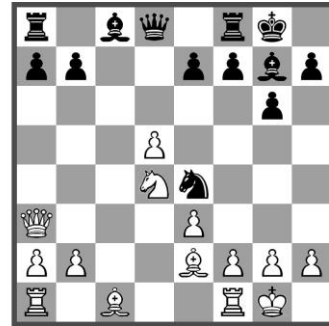
9... ♘c5

9... ♘b6 10. ♙f3 ♙g4 11. ♙xg4 ♘xg4 12.  
♘de2 again yes, some play for Black, but simply not sufficient compensation for the deficit of a pawn.

10. ♚a3 ♘ce4 11. ♘xe4 ♘xe4 12. 0-0

(see diagram next column)

It is obvious that my experiment did not produce the desired 'flashy Gruenfeld play'. I was behind on the clock, a pawn down, my



Position after: 12. 0-0

best hope being somehow to get my pawn back and draw.

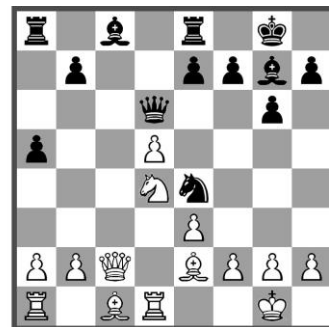
12... ♚e8

In the case of 12... ♚xd5 13. ♚xe7 it is not really possible for Black to take an advantage of White's exposed Queen.

13. ♚b3 ♚d6 14. ♖d1 a5

14... ♙d7 15. ♙f3 ♘g5 16. e4 ♘xf3+ 17.  
♚xf3 is also difficult for Black (though perhaps better than the game).

15. ♚c2!±



Position after: 15. ♚c2

15... ♘c5 16. e4 ♙d7 17. ♙e3 ♖ac8 18.  
♖ac1

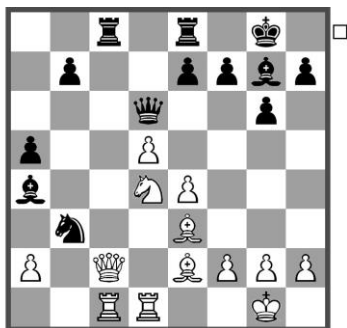
Black is now a pawn down for no compensation at all. However, I will lose in three moves. Here, I found a 'tactical' trick.

18... ♙a4? 19. b3 ♘xb3?

# Ivan's Chess Journey, Life and Stories



Genna Sosonko (photo Jos Suttmuller)



Position after: 19... Nxb3

20. ♔xc8

It is really not difficult to see that Black is getting mated.

20... ♞xd4

Or 20... ♞xc1 21. ♜xc1 ♞xd4 22. ♞xd4 The black King is still mated.

21. ♜xd4

Here I resigned not wanting to wait for 21... ♜xc8 22. ♜xc8 ♞f8 23. ♞h6 1-0. I was totally devastated after this loss. Sosonko did not spend more than 45 minutes to crush my 'novelty'. Normally, after such a loss I try to leave the playing hall as fast as possible and find some consolation in a nearby bar. Here, contrary to my usual behaviour, I asked Genna whether he wanted to analyse. His response was: 'I would love to, but I have theatre tickets and I am already late!'. Then it dawned on me - Genna had wanted to offer a quick draw, but I forced him with my 'ingenious novelty' to beat me in only 20 moves!!

1-0