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Legendary Chess Careers

Eugenio Torre



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY TO SYMBOLS	5
PREFACE	7
PHOTOGALLERY	9
INTERVIEW	11

KEY TO SYMBOLS

=	Equality or equal chances
±	White has a slight advantage
∓	Black has a slight advantage
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+ -	White has a decisive advantage
- +	Black has a decisive advantage
∞	unclear
∞̄	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
↑	with initiative
→	with an attack
Δ	with the idea
□	only move
N	novelty
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
+	check
#	mate

PREFACE

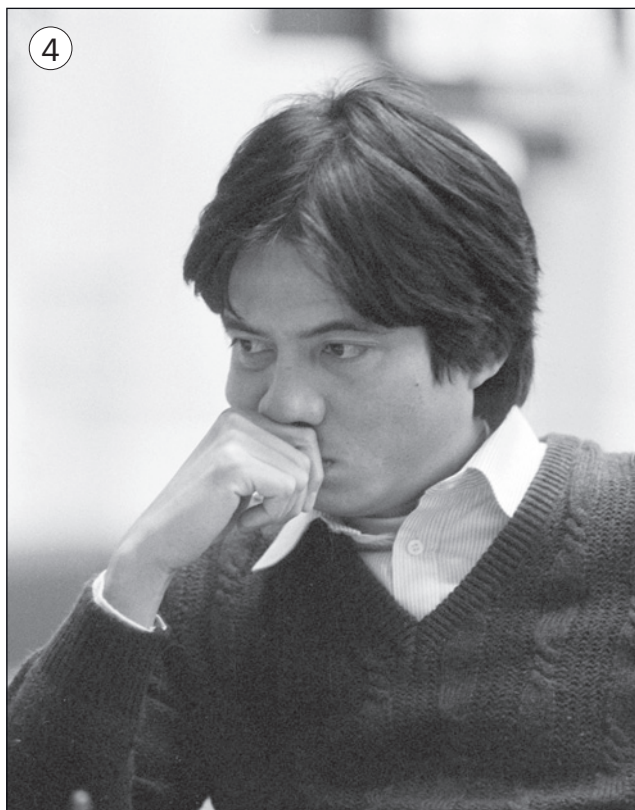
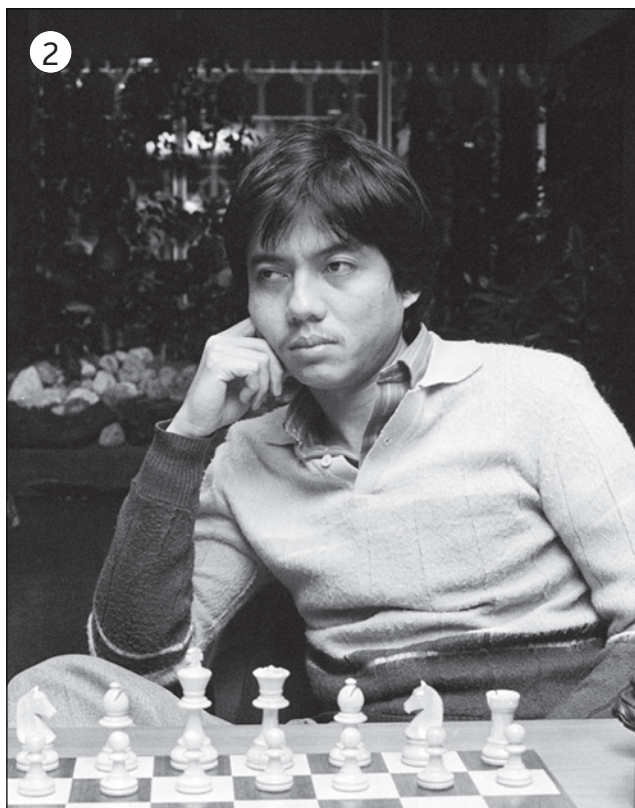
My interview with Eugenio took place roughly a decade ago in Manila. The original idea was to make a book of interviews with former world class players who made it to the world championship candidates matches. Unlike present day top players they can talk much more freely about their secrets and approaches to chess. Also, the achievements of the world champions are well known, but less is known about the achievements of players who were just a bit below that level, although on their day, they were able to beat anybody. However, the original idea never materialised. Grandmaster Csaba Balogh came up with the idea to make separate books of these interviews as he thought there was enough rich material in each interview for a whole book. I am grateful to him for this. The first two books of the series were on Timman and Portisch. Fortunately these books were successful. Therefore Chess Evolution decided to publish some more. Dear reader, in this book first you can read the original interview with Torre. As it is a whole book on Torre I feel lucky to be able to provide more material, so I happily analysed some more superb games from the Filipino grandmaster. He was kind to answer more questions, so that a second, smaller interview can be found in this book as well.

I would like express my gratitude to many people who helped with this book. First the strong players who know Torre very well and wrote appraisals on their contemporary. Niall Murphy, Dave Path and Nick Aplin helped me with the English in the interviews. Several people helped in parts: Jeslin Tay, Dennis Monokroussos, William Paschall, Sylvester Urban, Sagar Shah, Mark Lyell and Dave Kennedy. I received some pictures from Kristianus Liem. Of course the biggest thanks go to Torre himself who was kind to give the interviews. I hope the quality of the book will please him.

The way I selected games for the second part of this book changed a bit. I chose games in which he beat world champions. These victories illustrate how strong Torre was, but they will serve at least two more purposes: they will entertain you and one can learn a lot from them.

Dear reader, at the end of the book I show you a few positions from games Torre found worthy to share.

EUGENIO TORRE PHOTOGALLERY





1. Torre with former World Champion Smyslov, 1980 [photo from E. Torre archives].
2. Eugenio Torre, Tilburg 1982 [photo by Hans van Dijk / Anefo].
3. Torre vs Karpov, Tilburg 1982 [photo from E. Torre archives].
4. Eugenio Torre, 1984 [photo by Rob Bogaerts / Anefo].
5. Torre vs Karpov, 1986 [photo from E. Torre archives].
6. Opening Ceremony of 2013 Asian Continental Manny Pacquiao Cup [photo from E. Torre archives].
7. Eugenio Torre [photo by Kristianus Liem].



INTERVIEW

Eugenio Oliveros Torre, popularly known as Eugene Torre in the Philippines, placed his name permanently into chess history by becoming the first grandmaster from Asia.

He holds the record for playing in 19 consecutive Olympiads and the record for 22 non consecutive appearances.

His highest world ranking was 17th and he played all the world champions from Smyslov to Anand, except Fischer and Kramnik. He played 37 games against the world champions winning 6 games, which is a high percentage against these giants with 19 draws and 12 losses.

When I worked in Singapore, I shared a flat with a group of Filipino players.

I enjoyed spending time with them and talking about various issues and people.

I particularly remember one time walking with Rico Mascarinas and being surprised when he talked about Eugene, the player he considered the best Filipino ever. I was really surprised how much and how sincerely Rico liked Torre.

More than two decades after a game, Rico still was unhappy Eugenio did not find the winning move.

I also recall Ignatius Leong once saying that over several decades, Torre did not cause him even the slightest trouble.

After talking in detail with my Filipino friends I was interested to watch his performance at the 2003 zonal tournament

My impression was that he was somewhat struggling in the openings. However it was striking how disciplined he was, he fought in every single game. This is not a common characteristic of grandmasters in their fifties. Torre finished high but missed qualification.

I played tennis a few times against him and his physical shape was impressive. Incidentally, only a few professional chessplayers play better tennis than him.

I still remember when I was a junior how much I was marvelled when my trainer Peter Szilagyi showed me the Karpov-Torre, Manila 1976 game.

When I wrote the Endgame Virtuoso Anatoly Karpov book, I selected his draw against Karpov, which Karpov called the most difficult game of his life.

I consider it the most important single game of Karpov's career.

The grandmaster helped me by relating his memories of that game. When I was a second at the Subic City tournament, the idea came to me to interview him.

Of course I was very happy when the very popular national sport icon agreed to give an interview.

////////////////////////////////////

T.K.: Can you talk about your family background?

E.T.: *I am the seventh of ten children. My father was a lawyer and a chess fan who loved the game, but he was not a player. However, he was happy that I was playing.*

T.K.: In which city were you raised and when did you learn to play chess?

E.T.: *I was born in Iloilo City and spent my first six years there. My brothers played chess and used shoe leather to make demo board pieces. I already knew the moves by 1958 when my family migrated to Manila.*

T.K.: *Did any of your brothers or sisters play Chess?*

E.T.: *Three of my brothers play chess well and one of them, Vicente, was a decent player. He made it to the Philippine Olympic team in 1978. It was the only occasion when two brothers represented our country at the same Olympiad.*

T.K.: I read that you excelled at math as well, do you still keep that interest?

E.T.: *Not so much; in school I was interested in anything that involved solving problems.*

T.K.: Who was your trainer in your junior years?

E.T.: *I had no trainer, I learnt from practice. Actually, apart from my world championship candidate's match against Ribli, I never had a second. I was on my own even at the very tough highest-level tournaments.*

T.K.: Who had a strong effect on your chess in your junior years?

E.T.: *The world champions Alekhine, Capablanca but the most influential was Bobby Fischer, who was so dominant when I was young. His results were inspiring. Botvinnik influenced my play as well as I had the book Botvinnik's Selected Best Games.*

T.K.: I checked the database and all your wins until your first Olympiad came by tactically outplaying your opponents. Did you realise that?

E.T.: *(He doesn't say anything. But a small smile appeared on his face. I felt he thought I (Eugene) was not a bad tactician.)*

T.K.: I selected a few of your wins – the ones I liked the most. Here is the list. Aguilar-Torre Manila 1968, Torre-Estimo also Manila 1968, Torre-Saidy, Malaga 1969, Kristiansen-Torre World Youth 1969, Torre-Craske, World Youth 1969 and Torre-Rogoff, World Youth 1969 games. My first choice is the Estimo game and the second is the Rogoff. What do you think?

E.T.: *(After a while reflecting) I don't think I played Saidy that is a mistake. The Kristiansen game was nice and the Rogoff as well. The Estimo game I no longer remember.*

T.K.: Here it is:



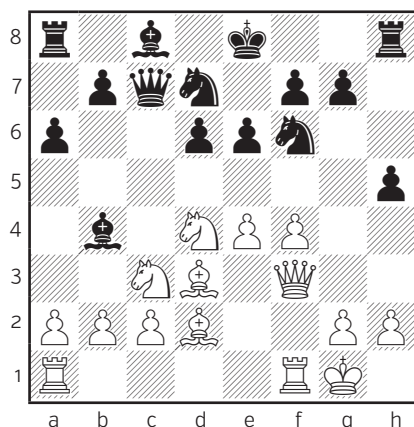
• E. Torre • N. Estimo [B43]

MANILA [9], 1968



1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♙d3 ♘f6 6.♘c3 ♙c7 7.f4 ♙b4 8.♙d2 d6 9.♚f3 ♘bd7 10.o-o h5?

Black sets up a trap; but he himself will fall into it. 10...♙c5! was the right move.



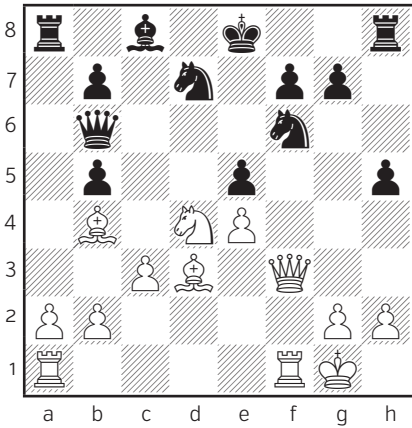
11.♘cb5!!

Torre's opponent may have been happy that the young player notices his chances, but Estimo hoped to out-calculate his opponent.

11...axb5 12.♙xb4 ♚b6!

Black played for this pin; it wins the d4-knight. However, Black is under-developed. The intermediate sequence 12...♖a4 13.a3 makes no difference.

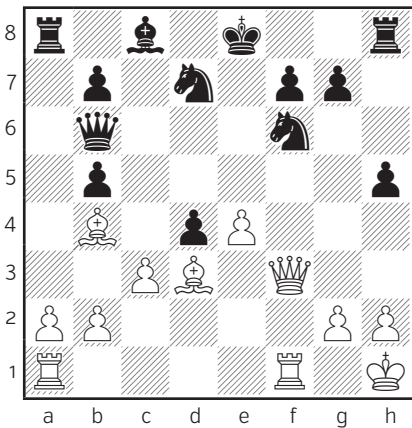
13.c3 e5 14.fxg5 dxg5



15.♔h1!

Or 15.♖f2! exd4 16.e5 dxc3 17.♖xb6 ♘xb6 18.exf6 cxb2 19.♖ae1+ ♕e6 20.fxg7 Black is in trouble.

15...exd4



16.e5!

This is the motif Torre had to see in advance and his opponent probably just stopped his calculation at the point when he wins the d4 knight. It makes the pawn move especially nice

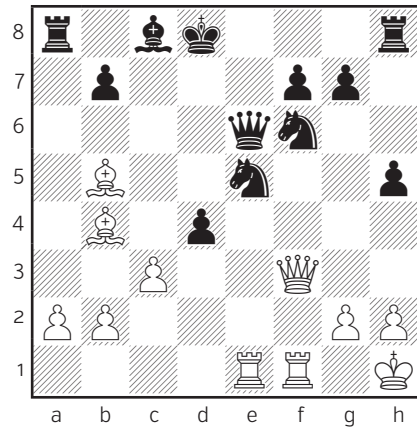
since the pawn is unprotected. And it is far from the end of the tactics.

16...♘xe5 17.♖ae1 ♖e6

This is the only move here.

18.♕xb5+ ♔d8

Blocking the check offers less resistance: 18...♕d7 19.♖xb7 wins, or 18...♘fd7 19.♖g3 ♔d8 20.cxd4 and White wins.



19.♖f4!

Torre remains alert, if he had calculated all the way to here it's remarkable. 19.♖g3 Pinpoint accuracy. Objectively, there is nothing wrong with pinning the knight from the other square on the diagonal, but White still has obstacles to overcome. 19...♘fg4 20.cxd4 h4!!

a) 21.♖f4 21...h3 22.dxe5 hxg2+ and Black is still kicking.

b) 21.♖c3 h3 22.dxe5 hxg2+ 23.♕xg2 ♖xh2+ 24.♕g1! (24.♕g3?)

♖h3+!! 25.♔xh3 ♘e3+! 26.♔g3 ♗g4+ 27.♕f2 ♗f4+ 28.♔e2 ♕g4+ 29.♕d3 ♕f5+ funnily enough both sides survive a ferocious attack and the position is equal) 24...♗b6+ 25.♕c5 ♗xb5 26.♖xf7 and White wins.

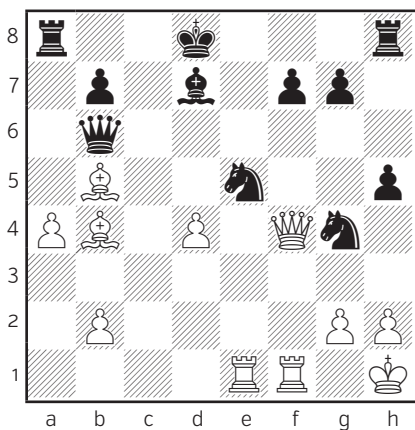
19...♘fg4 20.cxd4

Black is pinned and his king is far too open and White has many more pieces in play in order to save the game.

20...♗b6

After 20...♗d5 21.dxe5 ♗xb5 22.♗xf7 White wins.

21.a4 ♕d7



22.dxe5

Black played on but of course it is in vain.

22...♕xb5 23.axb5 ♖a4 24.♖d1+ ♕c8 25.♖c1+ ♕b8 26.e6+ ♕a8

27.exf7 ♘f6 28.♖a1 ♖a7 29.f8♗+ ♖xf8 30.♕xf8 1-0

////////////////////////////////////

E.T.: *I agree with you the game deserves to be selected.*

T.K.: What were your expectations before the 1969 World Junior Championships?

E.T.: *I did not know what to expect. I had no idea what it was like to travel abroad to a foreign country. Everything was new to me. The start gave me a huge burst of energy. I nearly beat Karpov in the preliminary round robin, he was already well-known. Winning the B-group gave me confidence.*

T.K.: How did you evaluate the tournament and what conclusions did you draw concerning your play?

E.T.: *I was in a strong group; I felt I would have qualified for the A-final from another group. Winning the B-final was a big success. I was satisfied with my play.*

T.K.: I would like to show your Kristiansen game first.

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• J. Kristiansen • E. Torre [E73]

WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL B
STOCKHOLM (3), 1969

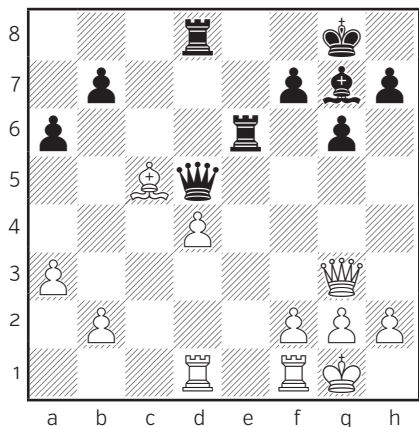


1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♕g7 4.e4
d6 5.♕e2 o-o 6.♕g5 ♖bd7

Torre later faced the Averbach variation several times, he employed this move only one more time to draw Portisch.

7.♗d2 c6 8.♘f3 e5

8...d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.o-o dxc4
11.♕xc4 a6 12.a3 ♖b6 13.♕a2 ♖bd5
14.♘xd5 ♘xd5 15.♕xd5 ♗xd5
16.♕xe7 ♖e8 17.♕c5 ♕g4 18.♗f4
♖e4 19.♗g3 ♕xf3 20.♗xf3 ♖d8
21.♖ad1 ♖e6 22.♗g3



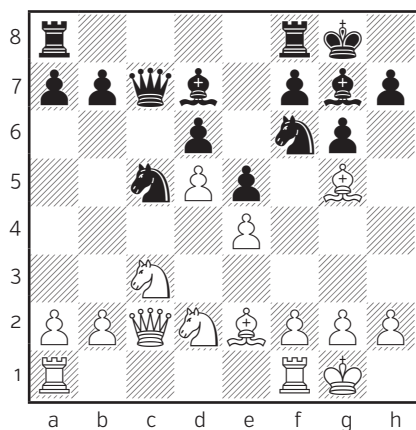
22...♕e5! 23.♗d3 ♕f6 24.♗g3 ♕e5
25.♗c3 b6 26.♗c2 ♕f6 27.♕b4 ♕xd4
The position is equal and the game

ended in a draw, L. Portisch (2600)-
E. Torre (2570) Indonesia 1983.

9.d5 cxd5 10.cxd5 ♘c5 11.♗c2
♗c7?!

A somewhat naive move, creating
a threat, but leaving the queen on c7,
where it does not stand well .

12.♘d2 ♕d7 13.o-o-o



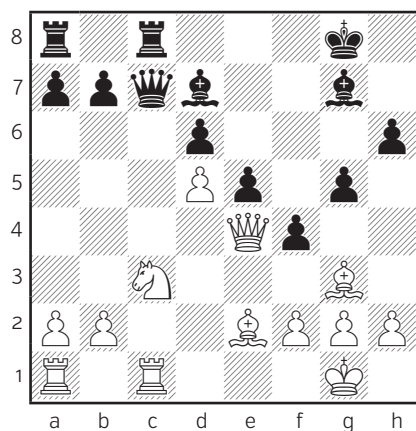
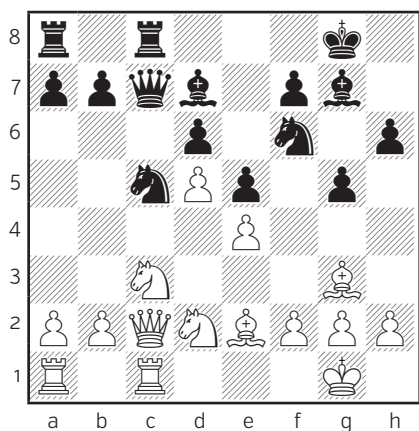
13...♖fc8 14.♖fc1

After 14.a4 White would be better.

14...h6 15.♕h4

15.♕e3! would give some advantage
as 15...♘g4? doesn't work. 16.♕xg4
♕xg4 17.♖b5 ♗d7 18.♘xd6 White
wins.

15...g5 16.♕g3



16...♖cxe4?

This is a flashy combination, but positionally unjustified. Black should play 16...♘a4! 17.♙b3 ♘xc3 18.♖xc3 ♙d8 19.a4 White is just a bit better.

17.♘dxе4 ♘xe4 18.♙xe4 f5 19.♙e3

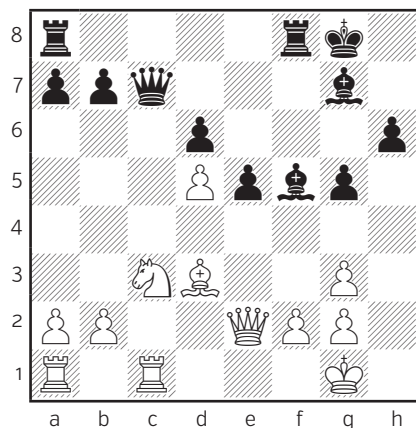
This is not a bad square for the queen, but not the best. Staying on the diagonal was even stronger. 19.♙b1! f4 20.♙g6 fxg3 21.hxg3 White would have a clear advantage thanks to his domination on the white squares.

19...f4 20.♙e4

20...♖f8!

Torre fights for the white squares.

21.♙d3 ♘f5 22.♙e2 fxg3 23.hxg3



23...e4!

Black has to sacrifice a pawn to avoid having a very passive bishop on g7.

24.♘xe4?

Again not the best. 24.♙xe4 ♖ae8 25.♙d3 ♘xe4 (25...♙xc3? 26.♙xf5

wins.) 26. ♖xe4 ♔e7 27. ♘c3 White would be a pawn up for not too much.

24... ♖b6 25. ♖c2

After 25. ♖ab1 ♜ae8 26. ♖c4 ♜e7 Black has some compensation for the pawn, it would be not easy as white to do something with the position.

25... ♜ae8 26. ♔h1 ♔d4!

The queen is annoying for White in the centre.

27.f3 ♜e5?!

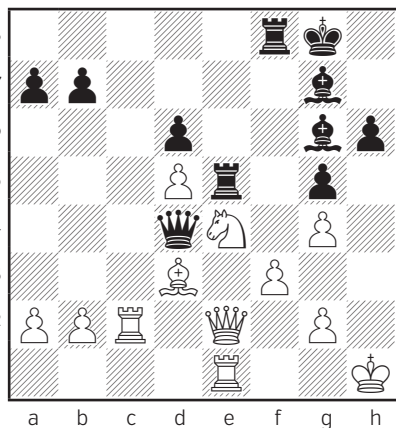
This is not a bad place for the knight, but not best as it, yet it is not the best as it allows White to consolidate his position. 27...g4! Softening White's pawn structure at once was the right way to start the attack. After 28. ♖f1 ♘g6 White's position is tough to defend as Black may play ♜e5 soon.

28.g4!

Now White organises his defence.

28... ♘g6 29. ♜e1?

White strengthens the e4-knight. The right idea is to chase the queen from the centre. 29. ♖d1! h5 30. ♘b5! White improves the bishop considerably. 30... ♖b4 (30... ♖b6 31. ♘d7 hxg4 32. ♘xg4 ♖f4 33. ♖c4) 31. a3 ♖b3 32. ♘d7 hxg4 33. ♘xg4.



29...h5!!

A brilliant idea; Black softens White's pawn structure with this beautiful move.

30.gxh5?

Perhaps White misses Black's superb reply. Chasing the queen from its ideal square with 30. ♖c4! was necessary. 30... ♖xd5! (30... ♖b6 31. gxh5 ♘xh5 32. g4 White would obtain an edge again.) 31. gxh5 ♘xh5 32. ♖d2! ♖e6 (32...b5 33. ♖c7) 33. ♖cc1! The position would be balanced with mutual chances.

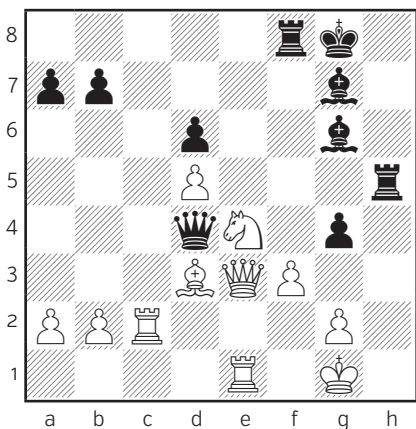
30...g4!!

Torre correctly spots this tactical possibility to accelerate the attack.

31. ♖e3?!

White avoids getting checkmated, but at the cost of losing much material. After 31. fxg4 ♘xe4 32. ♘xe4 ♖f4 loses as well, but avoids instant capitulation.

31... ♖xh5+ 32. ♔g1



32... ♔xe3!

This is the simplest and the most practical solution.

33. ♖xe3 ♕d4 34. ♖ce2 gxf3 35. ♖e1 ♕xe4 36. ♕xe4 f2+ 0-1

This game strongly suggests that Torre as a junior already possessed great imagination, but had not obtained yet the precision of a world class player.

T.K.: I will also show the readers your Rogoff game as well.

• E. Torre
• K. Rogoff [D42]

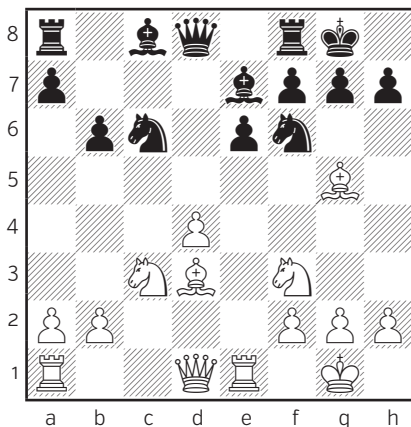
WORLD YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP U20
FINAL -B- STOCKHOLM (11), 1969



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♖f6 5.♗c3 e6 6.♘f3 ♕e7 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♕d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♖e1 ♘f6 11.♕g5

11.a3 b6 12.♕c2 ♕b7 13.♖d3 ♖c8 14.♕g5 g6 15.♖ad1 ♗d5 16.♕h6 ♖e8 17.♕a4 a6 18.♗xd5 ♖xd5 19.♖e3 ♕f6 20.♕b3 ♖h5 21.d5 ♗d8 22.d6 and Karpov was not able to neutralise the passed pawn; Smyslov-Karpov, Leningrad 1971 USSR.

11...b6



12.a3! ♕b7

In order to play ♕a6 in one move I prefer 12...g6!? or 12...♖e8!?

13. ♖c2 ♕a6?!

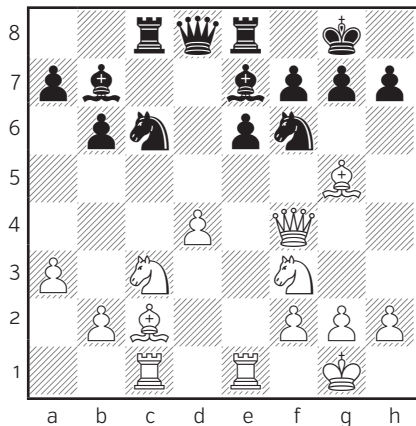
In the above-mentioned Karpov game White was allowed to put the queen on d3.

14. ♖c1

A reasonable developing move, however I find Szabo's 14. ♔d2!? even stronger: 14... ♖c8 15. ♗f4 ♖e8 16. ♖ad1!? h6 17. ♕xf6 ♕xf6 18.d5 exd5 19. ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 20. ♗f5 ♕xc3 21. ♗h7+ ♖f8 22.bxc3 and White has a nice advantage and went on to win in the L. Szabo-Unzicker, Amsterdam 1954.

14... ♖c8 15. ♔d2 ♖e8 16. ♗f4!

Swiftly building up the attack.

16... ♕b7**17.d5!!**

It is a well-know theme: Wirthensohn-Tal, Lucerne 1982 and Portsich-Karpov, Milan 1975 are nice examples of such a sacrifice. Objectively it doesn't bring down Black, but it

injects a lot of fuel into the position. Black has to work hard to find adequate defensive plans.

17... ♗xd5

Removing a piece that was defending the king is a dangerous thing, but Black had no safe options. On 17...exd5 White can increase the pressure in several ways however Black can just about survive.

a) 18. ♖xe7? ♗xe7 19. ♕xf6 gxf6 20. ♗xf6 ♗g6 and Black wins.

b) 18. ♕xf6 ♕xf6 19. ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 20. ♗f5 ♗e5 21. ♗xh7+ ♖f8 and Black's bishops keep him in the game.

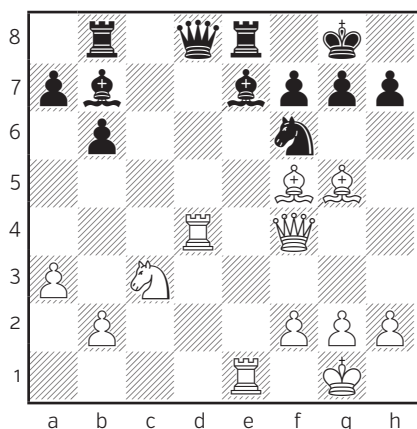
c) 18. ♖cd1!? Brings the rook into play. 18...d4

(18... ♔d6 19. ♗xd6 ♕xd6 20. ♕xf6 ♖xe1+ 21. ♖xe1 gxf6 22. ♗xd5 ♖g7 and Black should be able to live with the double pawn.)

19. ♕f5

(19. ♗b5 ♗d5)

19... ♖b8 20. ♗xd4 and it looks like Black is in trouble, but after 20... ♗xd4 21. ♖xd4



21... ♕d6!! the threatened back rank mate allows Black to hold the position. Following 22. ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 Black just equalises.

d) 18. ♖b5!? White tries to punch from another direction. This move reminds me of Kasparov's play, in the midst of an attack against his king he creates threats on the other side of the board.

d1) 18...a6? 19. ♕xf6 ♕xf6

(19...axb5 20. ♕xg7! ♔xg7
21. ♖g4+ wins)

20. ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 21. ♖d6 and Black loses material.

d2) 18... ♖h5? 19. ♕xh7+! ♔xh7
20. ♖xf7 ♕xg5 21. ♖xe8 ♔xe8
22. ♖xg5+ ♔h6 23. ♖xb7 ♔xg5
24. ♖d6 wins.

d3) Black can just step aside by 18... ♖b8, but this also fails to equalize: 19. ♕xf6 ♕xf6
20. ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 21. ♖f5 ♖e5
22. ♖xh7+ ♔f8 when White is somewhat better.

d4) 18... ♖e4 19. ♕xe4

(19. ♕xe7 ♖xe7 20. ♖cd1 ♔e8 and Black is safe)

19...dxe4 20. ♖cd1! exf3 this queen sacrifice doesn't completely solve Black problems: 21. ♖xd8 ♖xcd8
22. gxf3 ♕xg5 23. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8
24. ♖xg5 ♖e5 25. ♖d4 ♖xf3+
26. ♖xf3 ♕xf3 27. ♔f1 when White is somewhat better as has a chance to grab a pawn on the queenside.

18. ♖xd5 exd5?

18... ♖xd5 Black desperately needs to keep the e-file closed.
19. ♖ed1

a) 19. ♖cd1 ♔c5

b) 19. ♕xe7 ♖xe7

(19... ♖xe7 20. ♕e4 ♖g6! leads to an interesting perpetual check:
21. ♖xc8

(21. ♕xd5 ♖xf4)

21... ♕xc8 22. ♖xf7+ ♔xf7
23. ♕xd5 exd5 24. ♖g5+ ♔f8

25. ♖xh7+ ♔f7 26. ♗g5+ when both side must settle for the draw)

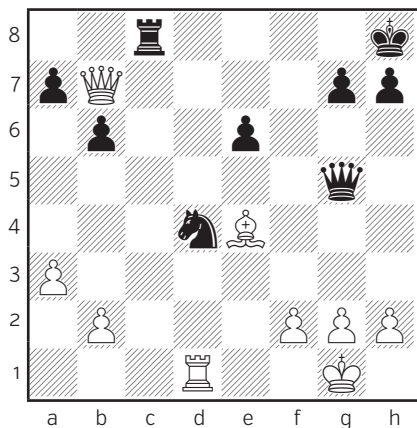
20. ♕e4 ♖d8 21. ♗g5 g6 22. ♖h4 f6 and Black is safely holding the position.

c) 19. ♕e4 ♖d8 20. ♖ed1

(20. ♕xc6 ♕xc6 21. ♗e5 ♕xg5 22. ♖xf7+ ♔h8 23. ♖xc6 ♕f6 24. ♖ec1 ♖a8 25. ♖h5 ♖d5 Black is doing all right here)

20... ♕xg5 21. ♕xh7+ ♔f8 22. ♗xg5 ♖f6 23. ♖h4 ♗d4 and Black is living dangerously but he should have a playable game.

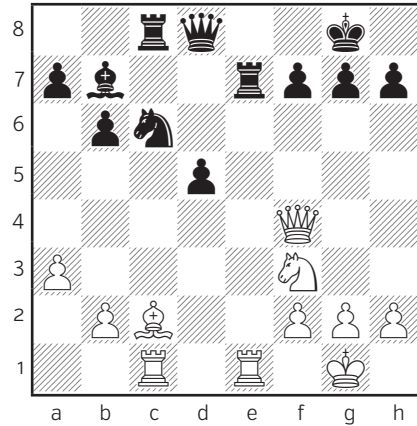
d) 19... ♕xg5! Would you believe that Black survives here because White has not opened the back rank? 20. ♗xg5 ♗d4! This cold-blooded move opens the long diagonal: 21. ♖xf7+ ♔h8 22. ♕e4 ♖xg5 23. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 24. ♖xb7 (24. ♕xb7 ♖d2!)



24... ♖c1!! And Black solves his problems.

Back to the actual game.

19. ♕xe7 ♖xe7



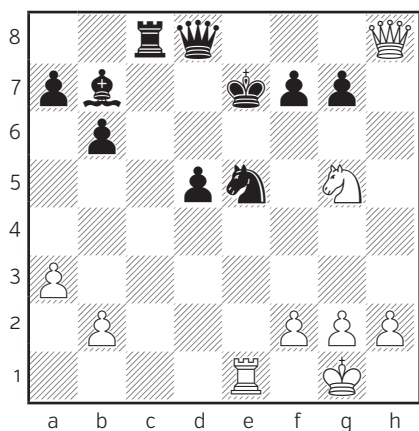
20. ♕xh7+!

Torre opens up the king decisively.

20... ♔xh7 21. ♖h4+ ♔g8 22. ♗g5 ♖xe1+?

Throwing in the towel. Instead after 22... ♖e5 23. ♖h7+ ♔f8 24. ♖h8+ ♔e7 25. ♖xg7 ♖d6 26. ♖xf7+ ♔d8 27. ♖xb7 ♖xg5 28. f4 (28. ♖f7? ♗e5!) 28... ♖g8 29. ♖f7 ♖f8 30. ♖e6 White will soon have a winning rook ending.

23. ♖xe1 ♗e5 24. ♖h7+ ♔f8 25. ♖h8+ ♔e7



26. ♔xg7!

The last finesse. 26. ♖xe5+? wastes the win because of 26Δ ♔f6.

26... ♔d7 27. ♔xe5 ♖f8 28. ♞h7 1-0

It is a very nice attacking game that reminded me of Kasparov's style.



T.K.: Did you have to win this game to win the B-final?

E.T.: Yes.

T.K.: Who was your favourite player?

E.T.: I liked very much Fischer, Capablanca and Alekhine's play. But now I also like Kasparov and Karpov's style.

T.K.: When did you decide to become a professional player?

E.T.: My father and I decided that I would dedicate 2 years to chess after winning The Asian Zonal tournament in 1972. If I succeeded I would continue.

T.K.: Did you set a goal for yourself to achieve so that you could remain as a professional chessplayer?

E.T.: We made no exact target, in 1974 the GM title made certain that I would be a professional chessplayer.

T.K.: Could you talk about your first Olympiad?

E.T.: I played at the Siegen Olympiad in 1970. I was the youngest of the team and I played on the second board. From 1972 to 2004 I played on the first board. I manned the 2nd board in Turin 2006. I never missed any Olympiad since. I have played in 19 already and I will continue to play as long as I can help my country's team. I was satisfied with my result at my first Olympiad and I had a nice game against Siaperas.



Tibor Károlyi

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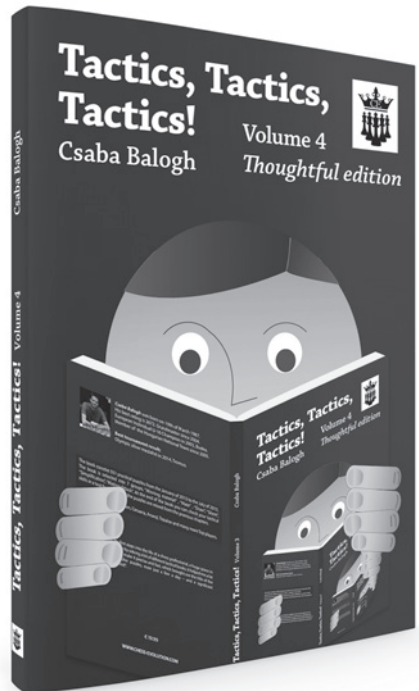
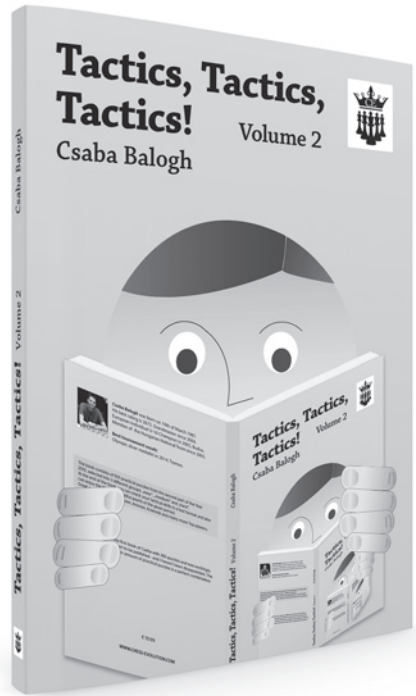
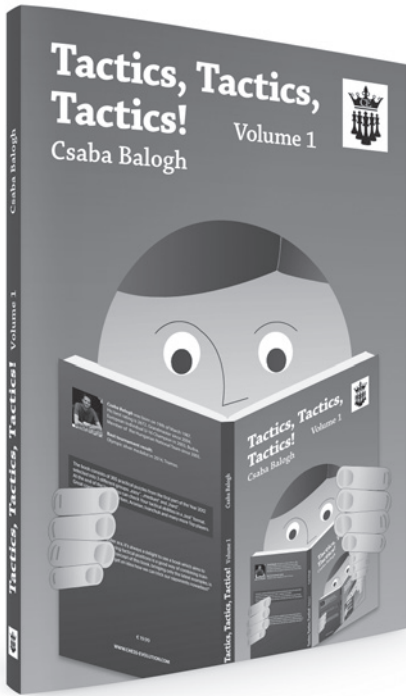


Yasser Seirawan



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Arkadij Naiditsch
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Aronian vs Anand
16...  de5!!



Arkadij Naiditsch
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Best fighting games of 2012–2015



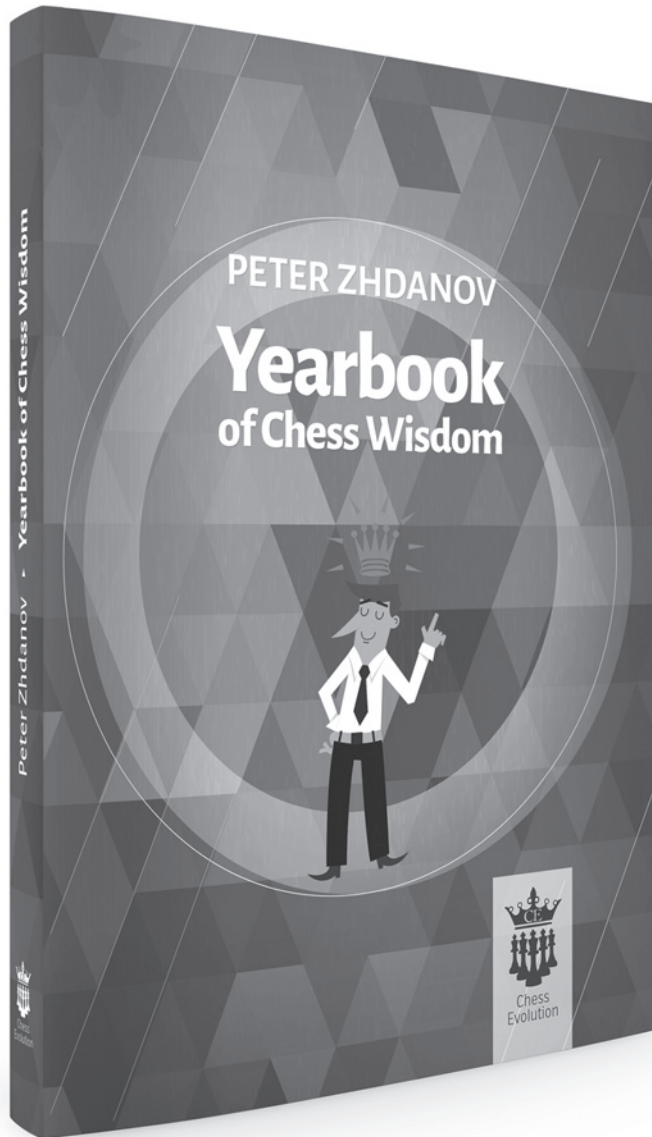
Carlsen vs Li Chao
24.d5!!



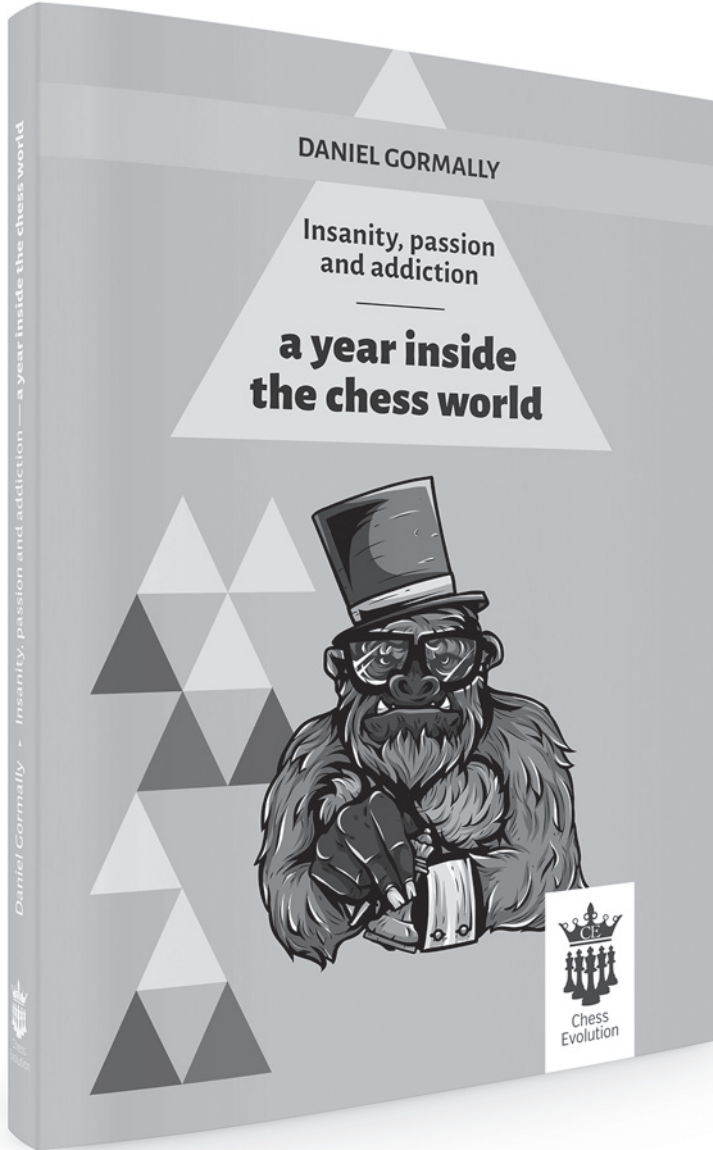
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