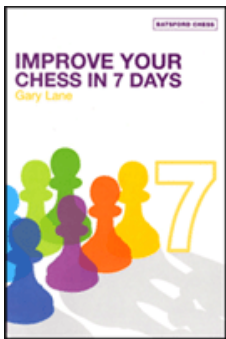




COLUMNISTS

Opening Lanes

Gary Lane



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Bliss

It is difficult to remember long variations in your favourite opening, but you know things are going wrong when you are stuck before your opponent has finished writing your name on his score sheet.

Darin Brink from **Russia** writes, "Some people ask about what to play to maintain an edge against the Marshall gambit after 17...f5. I am wondering how White can break even on move three? A glance at the databases shows that Black is doing very well indeed after 1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Bb4. What is going on here? How can White be struggling for equality after two moves? How can I play for a win as White against this?"

I can understand your frustration, because with hundreds of games on your database in this line the big problem is determining which ones are good or bad. Still, at least with winter looming in Moscow you will have plenty of time to stay indoors and try to understand the position. This line has grown in popularity in recent years, which runs parallel to the huge success of the Rossolimo Variation 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5. In other words the position is the same with colours reversed, except White has an extra move. White usually chooses to continue with 3 g3, 3 Nf3, 3 e3 or 3 Nd5.

Vadim Malakhatko-Roman Ovetchkin Voronezh 2008

1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Bb4



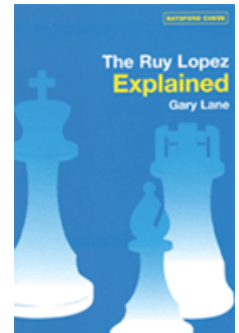
This line is the latest fashion. **3 e3 Bxc3** Black carries on with the idea of buckling the c-pawns before White has the chance to play Nge2. **4 bxc3 d6** Also possible is 4...Nf6 5 Ne2 d6 6 Ng3 0-0 7 Be2 Nbd7 8 0-0 Re8 9 e4 Nf8 10 d3 Ng6 11 f4 Nxf4 12 Bxf4 exf4 13 Rxf4 a6 14 Qd2 (the plan of doubling the rooks on the f-file is straightforward and dangerous) 14...b5 15 Raf1 Be6 16 Rxf6! gxf6 17 Nh5 Kh8 18 Nxf6 Rg8 19

Qh6 Rg7 20 Rf4 Qf8 (the sneaky threat is a discovered check with ...Rxc2+) 21 Qh5 Qe7 22 Qh6 Qf8 23 Kf1 1-0, A.Panchenko-V.Nevednichy, Bled 1991. **5 d4** 5 Ne2 and g3 are reliable alternatives. **5...c5** Or 5...Nc6 6 Bd3 Nf6 7 Ne2 (the good thing about this line is that White tends to have a basic plan that is easy to follow in view of Bd3, Ne2 and 0-0) 7...e4 8 Bc2 0-0 9 Ng3 Re8 10 0-0 Na5 11 f3 exf3 12 Qxf3 Bg4 (12...Nxc4 is well met by 13 Nh5!) 13 Qf2 led to double-edged play in V.Moskalenko-M.Peek, Sants 2003. **6 Bd3 Nc6 7 Ne2** White is busy developing his kingside pieces in preparation for castling. The knight on e2 does well to maintain the tension in the centre. **7...f5 8 e4 Nge7** Black is wise to ignore the possible captures in the centre by managing to safely bring another piece into the action. **9 d5 fxe4 10 Bxe4 Na5 11 Qd3**

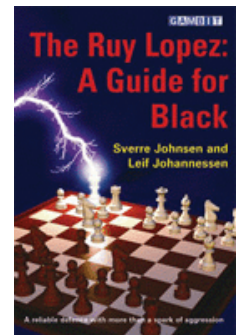


The queen is well placed here because apart from the obvious attributes of defending the c4-pawn and attacking the h7-pawn, it is also well placed to swing

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across the third rank to the kingside as part of a possible attack. **11...h6 12 f4** It seems a bit odd to play this before castling, but White is concerned that Black will try and stop the option upon **12 0-0** with **12...g5. 12...0-0 13 0-0**

Bf5 If **13...exf4**, then **14 Nxf4** brings another piece closer to the black king in anticipation of an attack. **14 Ng3 Bxe4** Not **14...Qd7?**, when **15 Nxf5 Nxf5 16 fxe5** highlights the fact that White has too many pieces attacking the knight on f5. **15 Nxe4** The knight on e4 is well placed, because it is awkward to remove it unless Black manages to transfer a knight to f6, which would take some time. **15...b6**



16 Bd2! This is the sort of simple move so often overlooked by club players who are eager to force matters with **16 fxe5**, which actually slows down the onslaught after **16...Rxf1+**. The point of the bishop move is to generate more attacking opportunities by making sure that if and when he takes on e5 that the rook on a1 is able to take back after an exchange of rooks. **16...Qd7 17 fxe5 dxe5 18 Bxh6!** A neat combination that has to be

worked out, but it certainly helps that the knight and queen are well placed to put direct pressure on the black king. **18...Rxf1+** Or **18...gxh6 19 Nf6+ Rxf6 20 Rxf6** (the big threat is **Qg3+** forcing checkmate) **20...Qg4 21 Raf1** the easiest way to win is to protect the f6-rook before contemplating advancing the d-pawn **21...Qg5 22 d6** with an easy win. **19 Rxf1 Rf8**



20 Nf6+! A wonderful move to make on the board as it is a visual delight. **20...Rxf6** If **20...gxf6 21 Qg3+ Kf7 22 Qg7+ Ke8 23 Qxf8** checkmate. **21 Rxf6 gxf6** Or **21...gxh6** there is a forced knockout upon **22 Qg3+ Kh7 23 Rf7+ Kh8 24 Qg7** checkmate. **22 Qg3+ Ng6** Or **22...Kf7 23 Qg7+ Ke8 24 Qf8** checkmate. **23 Qxg6+ Kh8 24 d6** The black queen has to stay on the seventh rank to stop checkmate. White advances the d-pawn

to step-up the pressure by adding the option of exchanging the queens on g7 to help advance the passed pawn. **24...Nb7 24...Nxc4** is punished by the line **25 Qg7+! Qxg7 26 Bxg7+ Kxg7 27 d7** and the pawn will promote. **25 Bf8 1-0** Black resigned rather than wait for **26 Be7** with a bind on the position.

Now I suspect that not everyone will want to have to cope with doubled c-pawns, so I would propose looking at **3 Nd5**, which has been favoured by Garry Kasparov. In the following game, a Croatian grandmaster playing white is surprised early in the opening.

Nenad Sulava-Maurizio Brancaleoni Arvier 2007

1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Bb4 3 Nd5 Bd6!?



This is a little bit unusual nowadays, but the idea is logical enough to play **...c7-c6** and, when the knight moves, drop the bishop back to c7 to eventually play **...d7-d5** with decent prospects. I have seen it played in at least two weekend tournaments in the last year and Black won both games. **4 d4!** This has evolved



to be regarded as the best reply to Black's plan by immediately posing questions connected with taking on e5. It

was also conspicuous by its absence in the games I saw played at weekend tournaments. **4...Nc6!?** This is an obvious way to continue, but hardly anyone has tried it. The main line runs 4...c6 5 dxe5 Bxe5 6 Nf3 d6 and now: a) 7 Nf4 Ne7 8 Nxe5 dxe5 9 Qxd8+ Kxd8 10 Nd3 f6 11 b3 with roughly equal chances. b) 7 Ne3 Bf6 (7...Ne7 8 Nxe5 dxe5 9 Qxd8+ Kxd8 10 b3 is similar to other lines in this variation where White has a slight initiative in the ending) 8 g4? h6 (8...Ne7? 9 g5 Bxg5 10 Nxc5 Qa5 + 11 Bd2 Qxg5 12 Nd5 is good for White) 9 h4 Ne7 10 Rg1! g5?! 11 Qc2 (if given the chance White will play Bd2 and 0-0-0) 11...Qb6 12 hxg5 hxg5 13 c5!? Qb4+ (or 13...Qxc5 14 Qxc5 dxc5 15 Nc4 Rg8 16 e4! intending e5 is very good for White, while 13...dxc5 14 Nc4 favours White) 14 Bd2 Qxb2 (14...Qxc5 15 Qxc5 dxc5 16 Nc4 Be6 17 Nd6+ Kf8 18 Nxc5 with an advantage) 15 Qxb2 Bxb2 16 Rb1 Ba3 17 cxd6 Bxd6 18 Nxc5 led to an advantage in M.Illescas Cordoba-J.Arizmendi Martinez, Pamplona 1997. c) 7 Nxe5 dxe5 8 Nc3 Qxd1+ 9 Nxd1 Be6 (or 9...a5 10 Nc3 Nf6 11 b3 Na6 is equal) 10 b3 with a level position, V.Salov-V. Kramnik, Linares 1993. **5 Nf3** This is the move played in the other lines after 4...c6 5 dxe5 Bxe5 6 Nf3, so it is logical here. However, Black's unusual move-order looks suspicious, so I think it might need to withstand a greater test upon the more forcing 5 c5!. For example, a) 5...Be7 6 Nxe7 Nxe7 (6...Qxe7 7 d5 Nd8 8 d6 cxd6 9 cxd6 Qe6 10 g3 when Black will have problems coordinating his pieces) 7 d5 Nb4 8 e4 looks good to me. b) 5...Bf8 and only now 6 Nf3 with the point being that 6...exd4 fails to 7 Bf4 targeting the c7-pawn. If anyone has played 5 c5 before, let me know. **5...Nge7** If Black is looking for an alternative after seeing what happens in the main game, then 5...e4 6 Ng5 this is the automatic move in, but I also like the look of 6 Nd2 given that 6...Nxd4? is flawed upon 7 Nxe4 Ne6 8 Nxd6+ cxd6 9 g3 with a very good position) 6...f5 (I prefer 6...Nf6, when 7 a3! is supposed to be good, but after 7...Be7 it is not clear how White can gain the advantage) 7 c5! Be7 8 Qb3! (8 Bf4 d6 9 e3 Nf6 10 Nxf6+ Bxf6 11 Bc4! Bxg5 12 Qh5+ g6 13 Qxg5 also gives White an edge) 8...Nxd4?? (8...Bxg5 9 Bxg5 Qxg5 10 Nxc7+ Kd8 11 Nxa8 Nxd4 12 Qc3 Nc6 13 e3 when White is much better) 9 Nf6+ Nxf6 10 Qf7 checkmate. **6 Nxe7 Bb4+!?** It seems a bit extravagant to add this check, but the idea is to deter White from having a queenside fianchetto and moving the bishop from c1-b2. **7 Bd2 Qxe7 8 d5** 8 dxe5 Nxe5 (yes, Black really is threatening ...Nd3 checkmate) 9 Nxe5 Bxd2+ 10 Qxd2 Qxe5 11 0-0-0 is worth investigating, but the chances should be level. **8...e4** 8...Nd4 is equal; for instance, 9 e3 Nxf3+ 10 gxf3 0-0 11 Rg1 with plenty of opportunities for both sides. **9 a3** Or 9 dxc6 exf3 10 Bxb4 Qxb4+ 11 Qd2 Qxd2+ 12 Kxd2 fxe2 13 cxd7+ Bxd7 14 Bxe2 with a dull endgame and a draw likely. **9...exf3?!** I like the look of 9...Bxd2+ 10 Nxd2 and now 10...e3! with good play. **10 axb4 Ne5** One can always hope to beat a grandmaster with a sneaky checkmate such as 11...Nd3, but then people normally wake up. **11 e3 fxg2 12 Bxg2 Nxc4?!** Perhaps 12...d6 is better, just to allow Black to activate the light-squared bishop when necessary. **13 Bc3 d6 14 Qd4** Not 14 Bxg7? because the pin with 14...Rg8 is fatal: 15 Qd4 Ne5 16 Bxe5 dxe5 17 Qe4 f5 18 Qf3 Qxb4+ 19 Kd1 Bd7 and White is in big trouble. **14...Ne5 15 0-0-0**



15...Bd7?! This is a timid response. Black should really be looking to stop White from playing f2-f4. Surely 15...Bg4! is the right way to handle the position: a) 16 f3 Bh5 17 Rdf1 f6 and Black's extra pawn is safe. b) 16 Rde1 17 f4?! Nf3 is very good for Black. **16 f4 Ng4 17 e4** Sulava is relying on his attacking skills to outfox his opponent. At the moment castling queenside allows ...Qxa7, while on the kingside it

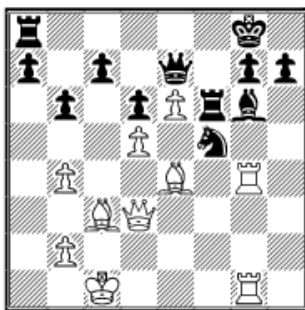
would receive the thumping condemnation of Qxg7 checkmate. This means Black has to overcome

some practical problems and there never seems to be enough time to do that when facing a grandmaster! The alternative 17 Qxg7 is an easy route to equality: 17...0-0 18 Qd4 Qxe3+ (18...Kb8 19 e4 Rhg8 is level) 19 Qxe3 Nxe3 20 Bxh8 Nxc2 21 Bc3 Re8 is roughly equal. **17...f6 18 Bf3 b6?** Black would like to castle queenside, but the queen on d4 is still taking aim at the a7-pawn. The b-pawn blocks this problem, but it does allow White to suddenly increase the pressure. It looks risky to castle into the attack by 18...Nh6 19 Rhg1 0-0, but this might well be the best option. **19 Rhg1 Nh6**



20 e5! The black king is stuck on its original square, so it makes sense to try and open the e-file to attack it. **20...Nf5** Or 20...fxe5 21 fxe5 dxe5 22 Qe4! 0-0-0? (22...0-0 23 Bxe5 with a strong position, especially as 23...g6? fails upon 24 Rxc6+! hxc6 25 Qxc6+) 23 d6! and the discovered threat of Qb7 checkmate will win. **21 Qd3 fxe5 22 fxe5 0-0** Black has been resisting castling queenside for some time and

now that he does it looks awful for him, since White is well placed for the onslaught. The desirable 22...0-0-0? turns out to be a dud after 23 e6, when the knight has lost its defender. **23 e6 Be8 24 h4 Qxh4** Black might not want to take the h-pawn, but he seems to have little choice, because otherwise White will play 25 Be4 and after 25...Bg6 the bishop will be deflected from its defensive duties by 26 h5. Actually, 24...a5 is the best hope for Black who should keep his fingers crossed: 25 Be4? (25 bxa5! Qxh4 26 Rg4 Qh6+ 27 Bd2 Qf6 28 Rh1 with an excellent game) 25...axb4 26 Bxb4 Qxh4 27 Bxf5 Qf4+ 28 Kc2 Rxf5 winning. **25 Rg4 Qe7 26 Rdg1** White does not even need to disguise his quest to take on g7. His pieces are very well placed to maintain the initiative, because remarkably they are all involved in the attack. **26...Bg6 27 Be4** The knight is defending the g7-pawn, so it makes sense to exchange it under the right circumstances. **27...Rf6**



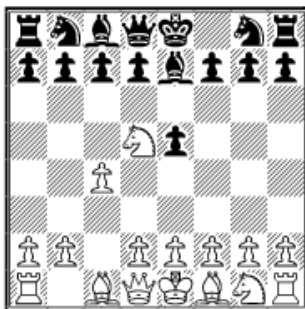
28 Bxf5 Rxf5 29 Qxf5! The ultimate way to force Black to allow the rooks to swoop in to cause havoc. **29...Rf8** Or 29...Bxf5 30 Rxc7+ Qxc7 31 Rxc7+ Kf8 32 Rf7+ Kg8 33 Rxf5 wins easily. **30 Rxc7 1-0**

Now is the time to witness a heavyweight encounter with this line.

Levon Aronian-Alexei Shirov Morelia/

Linares 2008

1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Bb4 3 Nd5 Be7



This line is very popular and Shirov has played it before. For example, the famous game would be against Kasparov at Novgorod in 1994, although he lost that encounter. Other lines, a) 3...Ba5 4 b4 c6 5 bxa5 cxd5 6 cxd5 (6 Qa4 is met by 6...dxc4 when Black is doing well) 6...Qxa5 7 e4 is considered to be another main line. b) 3...Bc5 4 Nf3 c6 (4...e4 can be met by 5 d4!) 5 Nc3 d6 6 d4 exd4 7 Nxd4 Nf6 8 e3 0-0 9 Be2

with equal opportunities, E.

Tomashevsky-V.Zvjaginsev, Dagomys 2008. c) 3...a5 4 a3 Bc5 (if 4...Be7, then 5 d4 is worth testing) 5 e3 Nc6 6 Nf3 Nf6 7 d4 Bd6 8 c5 Nxd5 9 cxd6 e4 10 Nd2 Nf6 11 d5 Ne5 12 Nxe4 Nxe4 13 Qd4 cxd6 14 Qxe4

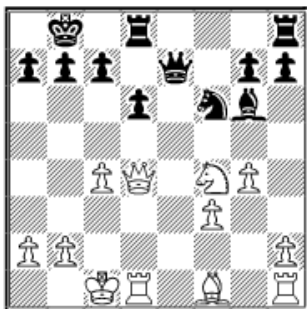
gave White the advantage in V.Popov-N.Kononov, St. Petersburg 2007. **4 d4 5 e4 Nf6** In the game G.Kasparov-A.Shirov, Novgorod 1994, Black tried another approach: 5...c6 6 Nxe7 Qxe7 7 Ne2 (7 d5!? has been suggested) 7...f5 8 dxe5 Qxe5 (8...dxe5 9 exf5 Bxf5 10 Ng3 favours White) 9 exf5 Nf6 10 Qd4! Bxf5 11 Bf4 Qa5+ 12 Qc3 Qxc3+ 13 Nxc3 0-0 14 0-0-0! with excellent chances. **6 Nxe7 Qxe7 7 f3** The position looks potentially immense for White. After all, he has a fine pawn structure, a pair of bishops, but has no pieces developed. **7...Nh5!?** A direct approach to threaten ...Qh4+ and make way for the advance of the f-pawn in order to undermine the white pawn centre. **8 Be3 f5** The point of the bishop being on e3 is revealed upon 8...Qh4+ 9 g3 Nxe3 10 Bf2, when the pin on the knight will help win. Also possible is 8...exd4 9 Qxd4 Nc6 10 Qc3 Qe5 11 Ne2 Bd7 12 0-0-0 0-0 13 g4 Nf6 14 h4 Rfe8 15 Rg1 a5 led to double-edged play in I.Smirin-O.Lehner, Vienna 1998. **9 exf5 Nf6**



10 Ne2 An interesting decision because Aronian could have tried to hold the extra pawn, but even world class players cannot defy the basic rules of development and always get away with it. Perhaps 10 g4 will be tested in the future and 10...0-0 does look likely with Black aiming to make the most of his extra development. **10...exd4** If 10... Bxf5, then 11 Ng3 promises a slight edge; for instance, 11...Bg6 12 Bd3

exd4 13 Bxg6+ hxg6 14 Qxd4. **11 Bxd4**

Bxf5 12 Qd2 Nc6 13 0-0-0 Instead, 13 Bc3?!, to preserve the bishop, is poorly timed in view of 13...Ne5!, when the c-pawn is attacked and the threat of ...Nd3+ is ominous. **13...0-0-0** Black just gets on with the job of completing development and, more importantly, whisking his king to safety. 13...Nxd4? is an error of judgement because 14 Nxd4 attacks the bishop on f5 and threatens a pin with Re1. **14 g4** Or 14 Bc3 Ne5 15 Qe3 Kb8 is equal. **14...Bg6 15 Nf4** The Armenian has emerged from the opening with no worries, but it is not easy to put much pressure against someone as strong as Shirov. **15...Nxd4 16 Qxd4 Kb8**



17 h4 A few people might be tempted to double Black's g-pawns with 17 Nxe6 hxg6, but Black is compensated by the semi-open h-file, which his king rook can use and will soon play ...g6-g5 to stifle White's play. **17...Bf7 18 Bd3 ½-½**

If you are still confused after all that then just play 1 c4 e5 and now 2 g3. I wish you luck and if you have any

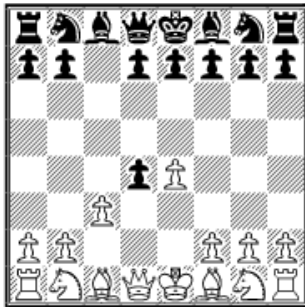
success with the new line please send me the game.

Richard B. Becker from the USA writes, "I play the Smith-Morra Gambit as white. The lines that give me the most trouble are those where black accepts the gambit, yet avoids the main lines by playing e6, followed by Bc5 or Bb4. These moves are not even considered in many opening books. MCO-15 has a footnote that says Bb4 without Bxc3 is good for white. If Bb4 isn't preceded by Nc6, I do fine with the immediate Qd4, but I recently faced an opponent, who first played Nc6, then e6, Bb4, and Bxc3. After 1 e4 c5 2 d4 cxd4 3 c3 dxc3 4 Nxc3 Nc6 5 Nf3 e6 6 Bc4 Bb4 7 O-O Bxc3 8 bxc3 Nge7, I wasn't really sure how to proceed. I know conceptually that I should be taking advantage of his weak dark squares and controlling the d6-square, but I wasn't sure of the best way to accomplish this. 9 Bf4 seems like the obvious next move, but what then? Normally to control d6 in this opening, I'd want to play Nb5, but that knight's already been traded away. How does White prove compensation for the gambit pawn when Black castles early and trades away White's attacking pieces?"

I looked at a number of games, but in recent years only lower rated players have tried playing 7...Bxc3. I suspect one of the reasons is the following game where the celebrated Argentine grandmaster emerges from the opening with a lot of trouble.

Cor van Wijgerden-Oscar Panno Amsterdam 1980

1 e4 c5 2 d4 cxd4 3 c3



The starting point of the Morra Gambit; it is named after the French player Pierre Morra (1900–69). **3...dxc3 4 Nxc3 Nc6 5 Nf3 e6 6 Bc4 Bb4 7 0–0 Bxc3?! This is wrong for Black because it seriously weakens his dark squares. Of course, when you have to exploit this at the board, it can be tough to do in a limited amount of time. Still, this is what is upsetting Mr. Becker. 8 bxc3 Nge7**



9 Ba3 The influential bishop on the a3-f8 diagonal really highlights the folly of exchanging on c3. White is a strong international master, but nowadays is famous in the Netherlands for writing and developing the [Step by Step](#) coaching method (with Rob Brunia). Also possible is a) 9 Bg5 Qa5 10 Qd6 f6 11 Be3 0–0 12 Rfd1 Qxc3 13 Rac1 Qa5 14 Bb3 Ng6 15 Rc5 Qb4 16 Rxc6! (a trick worth waiting for) 16...Qxd6 17

Rcxd6 with a massive advantage, K.Heynen-M.Vander Zwalmen, Antwerp 2003. b) 9 Qd6!? This sensible continuation tends to be neglected. I can only guess it is because many of the white players are lower rated and don't always find the right plan. The queen on d6 has the merit of stopping ...d7-d5 and the addition of Ba3 will put pressure on the e7-knight, making it very difficult for Black to create counterplay: 9...0–0 10 Rd1 b6 11 h4!? (11 Ba3 looks good to me) 11...f5 12 e5 Qe8 13 Ba3 h6 14 Rd3 Rf7 Black is struggling to untangle his pieces and this serious problem stems from the weaknesses of the dark squares, Nun-A.Ornstein, Eksjo 1982. **9...d5** Black takes the chance to advance the d-pawn before he is stifled. 9...0–0 can be met by 10 Bd6 or 10 Qd6 with the better chances, as it is difficult for Black to organise his pieces. **10 exd5 exd5 11 Bd3!** This is arguably the best square for the bishop because it is pointing towards the kingside in preparation for an attack after Black castles. Instead, 11 Bb3 maintains influence on the d5-pawn, which can act as a target 11...0–0 12 Re1 Bg4 13 Bc2 h6 (or 13...Re8? 14 Bxh7+ Kxh7 15 Ng5+ Kg8 16 Qxg4 is good for White) 14 Rb1 with roughly equal chances, H.Pusch-H.Lehmann, Bochum 1991. **11...h6 12 Re1 0–0 13 Nd4** White is doing well by seeking to undermine the defence of the knight on e7. White's pieces are well placed and the bishop on a3 is a monster, which yet again indicates that 7...Bxc3 is a positional mistake. **13...Re8** Not 13...Nxd4? because of 14 Bxe7 Qc7 15 cxd4 winning. **14 Nb5** The knight is poised to land on d6 and Black is in trouble. **14...Qa5** 14...a6 15 Nd6 Rf8 16 Bc2, intending Qd3 and consequently threatening checkmate on h7 is strong. **15 Bd6!**



The bishop moves out of the way and helps to repeat the threat of forking the rooks via the c7-square. **15...Be6 16 Nc7 Qxc3 17 Nxa8 Rxa8 18 Rb1 b6 19 Re3** White does not really think the grandmaster is going to fall for the discovered check with Bh7+, but just wants to make the queen move away. **19...Qf6 20 Rc1** Maybe 20 Qa4 is an



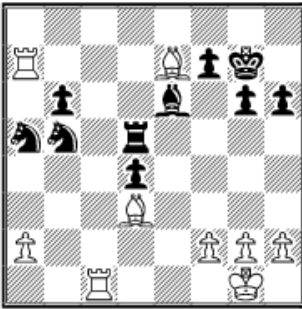
improvement, with the idea of doubling the rooks on the e-file depending how

Black responds. **20...Rd8 21 Ba3 d4 22 Rf3 Qe5 23 Qd2 Rd7 24 Bb1 Qd5 25 Rg3** The threat is Qxh6 because of the pin on the g-file. **25...Kh8 26 Re1 Nf5?**



27 Be4? White misses a glorious opportunity to wrap the game up in style by 27 Bxf5! and now: a) 27...Bxf5 28 Re8+ Kh7 29 Rxg7+! Kxg7 30 Bf8+ Kf6 (30...Kg8 31 Qxh6 wins) 31 Qxh6+ Bg6 32 Qh4+ Kf5 33 g4+ Kf4 34 Bh6+ Kf3 35 Qh3 checkmate. b) 27...Qxf5 28 Bf8! g5 29 Bxh6 g4 30 h3 and Black will soon resign, since he has lost a pawn and is king is badly exposed. **27... Qa5 28 Rd3 Qxd2 29 Rxd2 Na5 30**

Rc2 g6 It is never easy to win against a top player and Panno is making life difficult in the ending. **31 Bd3 Kg7 32 Rec1 Kf6 33 Bb4 Rd5 33...Nd6 34 Rc7 Nab7** is a tough position for White to crack, but the extra exchange will always count in the long-term ensuring the advantage. **34 Rc7 Nd6 35 Rxa7 Nb5 36 Be7+ Kg7**



37 Ra8 37 Ra6!, threatening to take the b-pawn is winning, which makes me wonder whether White was in time-trouble at this stage. A sample line runs 37...Nc3 38 Rxb6 Nxa2 39 Rc2 Nc3 40 Bb4 with a clear advantage. **37...Nc3 38 Rd8 Nxa2 39 Rb1 Nb3 40 Rxb3 Rxd8 41 Bxd8 Bxb3 42 Bxb6 1/2-1/2**

I hope you can now play this line with confidence.

Opening Lanes is based in large part on readers' questions. Do you have a question about a particular opening line? Baffled by a branch of the Benoni or Budapest? Submit your questions (with your full name and country of residence please) and perhaps Gary will reply in his next **ChessCafe.com** column...

[Yes, I have a question for Gary!](#)

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