



## COLUMNISTS

### Over the Horizons

Stefan Bucker



## CHESSTHEATRE

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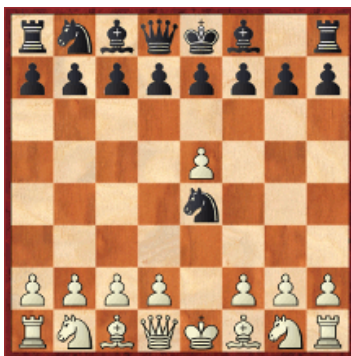


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## Just a Game

I knew that it had to end, one day. We are living in a world of fugacity. However, there are always a happy few which seem bigger than life. Angela Merkel, for example. The Soviet Union. Or Garry Kasparov, a former World Champion, remembered till today for the 10.3 gigabytes of analyses that he had collected when he decided to step down. Data that is now probably inhabiting a USB stick in a Norwegian laptop.

Sorry, I digress. But even for the greatest the long stream of victories suddenly comes to an end. Often caused by their own hubris. Finally it has happened even to my former pet defence, in the bygone year, 2009. It was defeated, adequately, at the end of a decade, like 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down. No, this article does not cover a mere sub-variation of the Ruy Lopez. But seriously, who could ever think that I might manage to lose a game with the Mokele Mbembe, **1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Ne4?**

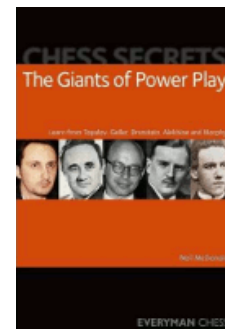


Okay, I haven't played it very often in tournament games, only about ten times. And I have already lost with the Mokele before, but that was a rapid game, it doesn't count. Now let's watch the fateful encounter in the Kieler Open, Germany, on a sunny day in August of 2009.

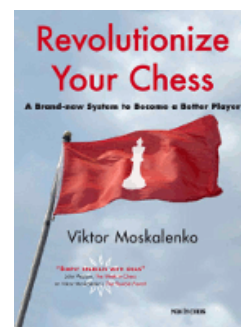


David Baramidze

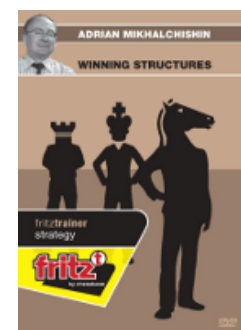
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**David Baramidze (2527) – Stefan Bucker (2345)**

Kieler Open (7), Kiel 2009

Mokele Mbembe [B02]

**1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Ne4 3 d3**

In several theoretical articles published on the Mokele, my main line used to be 3 d4. That was only to confuse future opponents, of course. Unfortunately David Baramidze hadn't read any of them. It may have saved him.

**3...Nc5 4 d4 Ne6 5 f4**

When Bent Larsen wrote his article on the Halloween Gambit and the Mokele Mbembe, he expressed his sympathy for the text move ("Ich habe keine Ahnung," in: [Kaissiber 28](#), 2007).

**5...g6 6 d5 Ng7**

It is so unfair that Rybka assesses this position as +0.60, about as good for White as the Marshall Attack of the Ruy Lopez. Here White is not a full pawn ahead! The placement of the knight on g7, which is slightly unusual, is only temporary. Not to forget the practical problems which White is facing in the Mokele, they are much larger than in the Marshall.

**7 Nf3 d6 8 c4 e6?!**

In home-analysis, a few days after the game, I found the reason for the defeat. My bishop should have gone to g4: 8...Bg4! 9 Be2 e6 10 Nc3 Nd7 11 Ng5 Bxe2 12 Qxe2 dxe5 13 fxe5. White's position is looking more active, but that's only temporary: 13...Be7 14 Nf3 0-0 15 Bf4 Re8 16 0-0 f6. Simplifying the situation. With every exchange White's pieces advance further to Black's king, which may look menacing. But these problems can be overcome: 17 Qd2 fxe5 18 Nxe5 Nf6 19 Rae1 exd5 20 Nxd5 Nxd5 21 cxd5 Nf5 22 g4 Nd6 23 Bh6 Bf8. Black is suffering from minor problems regarding his piece coordination. Nothing serious, however: 24 Bg5 Be7 25 Bxe7 Rxe7 26 Qd3 a6 27 a4 Re8 28 Nxg6 Qd7. Black's remaining problems in the ending are only temporary.



Oh, now I see that 29 Rf8+!! Rxf8 30 Ne7+ Kg7 31 Qd4+ Kf7 32 Qf4+ Kg7 33 Qg5+ Kf7 34 h3! +- wins by force. So it seems I still have some important work to do over the holidays. and will keep this article shorter than originally

intended.

**9 Nc3 Be7 10 Be2 0-0 11 0-0 c6?**

After 11...exd5 White's advantage would have been smaller (+/-). After too many blitz games, my c7-c6 in this set-up almost comes automatic. Similar situations must have occurred in dozens of my online blitz and bullet games. None of my opponents found the punishment, which is here demonstrated by the young German GM. It seems that playing against people with names like xyHAzard123 doesn't exactly help to deepen your opening knowledge.

**12 c5!**



Suddenly I recognized that my apparently superior strategy has gone terribly wrong.

**12...exd5 13 cxd6 Bxd6 14 exd6 Qxd6 15 Ne4!**

An elegant solution. Black's last hope was to advance his pawns and perhaps harass White's Nc3. This piece now finds a better place on g3. Over the next moves, Baramidze precisely crushes Black's position (mine!).

**15...Qe7 16 Ng3 f6**

To hold out longer with two pawns against a piece, 16...Re8 was the better choice.

**17 Kh1 Be6? 18 Bd3 Bf7 19 f5 Nd7 20 Qc2**



**20...g5 21 Nxg5! fxg5 22 f6 Nxf6 23 Bxg5 Be6 24 Bxh7+ Kh8 25 Bg6 1-0**

Thus I lost with the Mokele Mbembe to a GM. But I'll never lose with it against an International Master.

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