

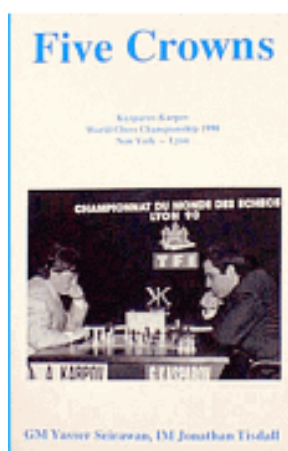


Inside Chess

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Yasser Annotates:

Svidler-Kasparov

Tilburg 1997

Peter Svidler, gambitting pawns in the opening, was very successful in his first encounter against Garry Kasparov. Svidler, then the current Russian Champion, avoided a theoretical duel against Kasparov's phenomenal opening knowledge and in a Closed Sicilian the then 21-year-old opted for a known idea. "[I] was content to play for a sure draw and some possibilities. I don't play him that often, so I tried to play something funny," he explained. The three-time Russian champion wasn't sure what was going on, but showed in the press center that after 24.Bc2 Black has serious problems. Garry responded with aggressive play where perhaps a more passive defense was called for. Svidler had seen everything and caused a major upset by defeating the strongest player in the world. Garry's only comment before he left was, "*I certainly did everybody a favor, didn't I?*"

Peter Svidler - Garry Kasparov
Tilburg (7) 1997 Sicilian Alapin B22

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.c3!?

An interesting switch to the Alapin now that Black has lost the ...d7-d5 defensive option.

3...Nf6

Of course, White's move order loses an option also, i.e., e4-e5 isn't available now.

4.Be2 Nbd7 5.d3 b6!?



White isn't satisfied with his d3- and e4-center pawns and aspires to play d3-d4 once the e4-pawn is protected. Garry intends to make it as difficult as possible for White to establish a classical center. In the future, Black may investigate 5...c4!? to prevent the formation of a big center.

6.O-O Bb7 7.Nbd2 g6



Now comes a truly surprising move.

8.d4!?

What? Black's development was designed to stop this move. Garry probably expected a line like 8.Re1 Bg7 9.Bf1, when White has spent a number of tempi to enforce d3-d4. In this line, it's

doubtful that the f1-square is the best one for White's light-squared Bishop. As we'll soon see, Peter's decision is quite justified.

8...cxd4

When my opponent is gambitting pawns in the opening I'm always wary of trading pawns and opening up the position, so the text deserves careful consideration. Black's idea is to prevent a possible d4xc5, which will expose the d6-pawn. A sample line is 8...Bxe4 9.Nxe4 Nxe4 10.Bb5 (threatening Bb5-c6) 10...Nf6 11.Re1 Bg7 12.dxc5 dxc5 (12...bxc5 13. Qxd6) 13.Ne5 with a big advantage to White.

9.cxd4 Nxe4

In view of e4-e5-e6, Black has no choice but to accept the sacrifice, but which way? After 9...Bxe4 10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.Bb5 Nf6 12.Re1 Bg7 13. Bg5 (13.Qe2 O-O 14.Qxe7 Ne5 15. Qb7 Qc8 should be satisfactory for Black) 13...O-O 14.Rc1 (14.Qa4!?), White has compensation for the pawn, but is it an advantage?

10.Nxe4 Bxe4 11.Ng5 d5

When *Inside Chess* Editor Michael Franett and I took our first look at this game, we were sure that Kasparov's 8...cxd4 was intended to make the d5-square safe. We didn't understand what was wrong with 11...Bd5 here, intending a line like 12.Bf3 Nf6 13.Qa4+ Qd7 14.Qxd7+ Kxd7 15.Bxd5 Nxd5 16. Nxf7 Rg8 with a reasonable game for Black. Through the wonders of e-mail our query was heard as far away as Reston, Virginia, where GM Lubosh Kavalek chimed in with the following analysis:

"You missed this: 11...Bd5 12.Bf3 Nf6 13.Bxd5 Nxd5 14.Qf3 Nf6 15. Qc6+ Nd7 16.Qd5 e6 17.Re1 Be7 18.Rxe6 (*ala* my game with R. Hubner, Montreal 1979) 18...fxe6 19. Nxe6 Qc8 20.Ng7+ Kf8 21.Ne6+ Ke8 22.Bg5 with vicious wishes."

Yikes! Those Virginians certainly do have some vicious wishes. This line helps explain why Garry opted for the text to keep the e-file closed.

12.Bb5

This appears to be even stronger than 12.f3 Bf5 13.g4 Be6 14.Nxe6 fxe6, which also offers White nice possibilities.

12...Bg7

Garry is anxious to castle and refuses 12...h6 13.Nxe4 dxe4 14.f3! a6 15.Bc6 Rc8 16.d5 with the attack. Even so, Black is going to have a difficult life.

13.f3 Bf5 14.g4!

Taking advantage of the misplaced Bishop. Now 14...Be6 15.Qe2 (15. f4!? h6 16.Nxe6 fxe6 17.Qd3 looks promising) Bxd4+ 16.Kh1!? leaves Black with awkward problems to solve.

14...h6 15.gxf5 hxg5 16.fxg6 a6 17. gxf7+ Kxf7 18.Ba4

Naturally, not 18.Bc6? Qc7 19. Bxd5+ e6, when the hit on the h2-pawn is telling. While 18.Bxd7 Qxd7 19.Bxg5 wins a pawn, 19...Qh3 20. Qd2!? Rag8!? allows Black to gain the attack. Peter was obviously hoping for more than this.

18...Rh5!?



An unusual and vexing position. I suppose one should simply say that White is better by pointing out the structure and relative King positions, but it isn't an easy position to judge. White's Bishops aren't yet terrors and his development is nothing to crow about. On the other hand, the open h-file and good b7-Bishop give Black

some trumps of his own. A puzzling position and I'm going to bail out with an verdict of "unclear."

19.Be3

Black scrambles to safety after 19.f4 g4 20.Qxg4 Bxd4+ 21.Kh1 Nf6: White's King will become a target. This line is a good example of why the position is unclear. White decides to complete his development and expects that eventually the two Bishops and the position of the Kings will give him the advantage.

19...Nf6 20.Qd2

White decides he can't afford the time to relocate his Bishop: 20.Bf2 Rh3 (intending ...Qd8-d6) 21.Kg2 (21.Bg3 Nh5 when Black has the initiative) 21...Qh8 22.Bg3 Nh5 with an attack for Black.

20...Qd6 21.Rf2

Grabbing the g5-pawn should be trouble: 21.Bxg5? Rg8 22.Kh1 Rxh2+ 23.Qxh2 Rh8 24.Bh4 Qxh2+ 25. Kxh2 Rxh4+ 26.Kg2 Rxd4 is one line that is okay for Black. He might have better.

21...Rah8 22.Rg2 Rh3 23.Rf1 R8h4



More confusion. Since the opening, Kasparov was supposed to have been forced into defensive mode. Clearly, that is not the case; his pieces have taken up active posts. Has White done something wrong? All he did was complete his development, so what is happening? My gut feeling tells me White must be better, but he has to be

accurate in prosecuting the attack.

24.Bc2!

Bringing his Bishop back into the game and trying to ward off the attackers. While 24.Bxg5 Bh6 25. Bxh6 Rxxh6 26.Qg5 looks nice, 26... b5, going after the h2-pawn, is a fine retort. The g5-pawn isn't running away and Black will be forced to sacrifice an Exchange.

24...Nh5

Forced. 24...e6? 25.Bxg5 Bh6 26. f4!? and the e4-square has been protected. 24...g4 25.fxg4 Qe6 26.Bg5 Rxxg4 27.Bf5 is not healthy for Black either.

25.Bf5 Nf4 26.Bxh3

Taking the loot at once. I thought that White should win a piece with 26.Bxf4 Qxf4 27.Qxf4 gxf4 28.Rd2 and, since the h3-Rook is trapped, Black has to get desperate: on 28... Bxd4+ 29.Rxd4 Rxxh2 30.Rxd5 (30. Rxf4? Rxf4) 30...Rxb2 White has the advantage, but winning will be difficult.

26...Nxxh3+ 27.Kh1 Qf6?

This just blunders away a pawn and the game. Black gets nowhere after 27...Nf4? 28.Rxxg5 Ne6 29.Rg4, winning, but 27...Bf6 is still a fight.

28.Rg3

Peter sees a potential threat in ...g5-g4 and reacts to a ghost. With

28. Bxg5 Nxg5 29.Qxg5 Qxg5 30. Rxd4 31.Kg2, his extra Exchange should win easily.

28...Qf5 29.Bxg5 Nxg5 30.Rxg5 Qh3 31.Rg2

Peter decides that it is easier to win in the middlegame than in the endgame. Again 31.Qg2 Qxg2+ 32. Kxg2 Rxd4 33.Rg4 should provide White with a comfortable win.

31...Bf6 32.Qd3 Rxd4 33.Qg6+ Ke6 34.Qe8 Rc4 35.Qd8

Setting up the terrible threat of 36.Re1+ winning on the spot.

35...Qf5 36.Re1+ Be5 37.Qb8! 1-0

A devilish finish. White's threat is 38.Rxe5+ Qxe5 39.Rg6+ Kf5 40. Rg5+ and there's nothing the Garry can do about it. A fine victory for Peter, as he played a complete game.

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