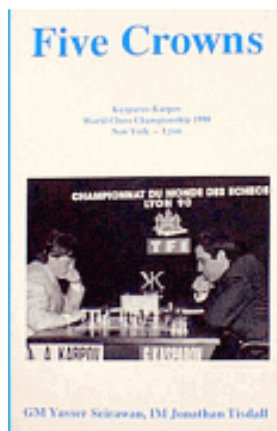


Inside Chess

Yasser Seirawan

**Orders? Inquiries? You can
now call toll-free:**

1-866-301-CAFE



Order the highly acclaimed
Five Crowns
by Yasser Seirawan
and
Jonathan Tisdall

Yasser Annotates:

Kasparov-Topalov
Wijk aan Zee
1999 Hoogovens Tournament
Round 4

The following analysis is really a joint effort. While I take a lot of credit for the prose and many of the variations I was considerably assisted by GM's Lubosh Kavalek, Lubomir Ftacnik, Garry Kasparov and Veselin Topalov. IM Gert Ligterink had the most incredible find for which I'm also very appreciative. Michael Greengard (MIG) on the popular web site, The Week In Chess (TWIC) collected a large number of lines from many sources including computers and went to town. While I found some of the analysis at the TWIC site to be pleasure seeking and trimmed accordingly, it was extremely useful and I'm grateful to Michael for his prodigious efforts. I've tried to give credit to the players and sources involved but this wasn't easy and apologies in advance for not giving the credit or the blame to whom it was due! I believe the analysis below is sound and features the most germane lines of play. YS

White: Garry Kasparov
Black: Veselin Topalov

1.e4 d6!?

At the highest levels the Pirc Defense is a rare guest as White has a large number of combative systems to choose from. We must already admire Topalov's courage.

2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Be3 Bg7?!

Against this particular move order by White, Black has to be very careful with how he uses his tempi. I think the text is a mistake and that 4...c6! 5.Qd2 b5 6.f3 Nbd7 is required. In the first place, White is quickly forced into playing f2-f3 thereby ruling out other options such as Bf1-e2 and f2-f4 or g2-g4 and in the second place after 7.g4 Nb6



The Chess Cafe E-mail Newsletter

Each week, as a service to thousands of our readers, we send out an e-mail newsletter, ***This Week at The Chess Cafe***. To receive this ***free*** weekly update, type in your email address and click Subscribe. That's all there is to it! And, we do not make this list available to anyone else.

[Click Here to Subscribe](#)

8.g5 Nfd7 is convenient for Black as the b8-Knight has already been evacuated. Finally, with the Bishop having moved to g7, the move Be3-h6 is more attractive as Black has used a tempo.

5.Qd2 c6 6.f3 b5 7.Nge2?!

The same criticism as before also applies here. Kasparov fails to take advantage of the opportunity offered by his opponents inaccurate move order. After 7.O-O-O Nbd7 8.Bh6! Bxh6 9.Qxh6 e5 gives White more opportunities to use his tempo more constructively. For instance both d4-d5 and h2-h4 are serious alternatives to the text.

7...Nbd7 8.Bh6 Bxh6 9.Qxh6 Bb7 10.a3 e5 11.O-O-O Qe7 12.Kb1!?

Kasparov is about to embark on a long maneuver to get his Knight to the a5-square. It seems more promising to me to play 12.g3 O-O-O 13.Bh3 immediately. In this way, White could also quickly double Rooks on the d-file. On the other hand, Kc1-b1 is a useful move.

12...a6 13.Nc1 O-O-O 14.Nb3 exd4 15.Rxd4 c5 16.Rd1 Nb6 17.g3 Kb8 18.Na5 Ba8

White has spent a lot of time getting this Knight to the a5-square, but, I don't know what it does.

19.Bh3 d5! 20.Qf4+

In his post game comments, Garry explains that the up-coming double Rook sacrifice had just been spied by himself. Greatly encouraged by the lack of something else in the position, he decided to go for it.

20...Ka7 21.Rhe1 d4



At first blush Kasparov looks to be in trouble. After a lame retreat of the c3-Knight, 22.Ne2 Nc4!? 23.Nxc4 bxc4 for instance, it is obvious that Black has seized the initiative having pried open the b-file. Kasparov plunges ahead.

22.Nd5 Nbx d5 23.exd5 Qd6



Once more, on the surface of things, Black appears to be in great shape. After 24.Qxd6? Rxd6 25.Re7+ Kb6, White is in serious trouble. A line like 24.Nc6+ would just become a lost ending for White. Garry now uncorks his shot.

24.Rxd4!!

Born of necessity the combination is nonetheless stunning.

24...cxd4?

A bad move which is completely understandable. If we go back a diagram or two, it is easy for Black to get caught up in the euphoria of the moment. Veselin was undoubtedly thinking that somewhere, somehow, Garry has gone wrong. Perhaps it was that Knight trek to the a5-square? Who cares, I like my position! White is obviously desperate and is sacrificing material. Black can equalize the position by 24...Kb6! (Kasparov) 25.Nb3 Bxd5 or Black can clip a whole Rook. Based on his belief that he was playing from a position of strength, Topalov took the Rook. Who can blame him?

25.Re7+!!

The key follow up. Black's King is forced to march up the board.

25...Kb6

Taking the second rook is a second bite of the poisoned apple: 25...Qxe7?? 26.Qxd4+ Kb8 27.Qb6+ Bb7 28.Nc6+ Ka8 29.Qa7 Checkmate.

Dropping back is also losing: 25...Kb8? 26.Qxd4 Nd7 (26...Rd7?? 27.Rxd7 and the h8- Rook drops. While 26...Qxe7?? Just transposes into the mate given above.) 27.Bxd7 Bxd5 (As White's d7-Bishop can't be captured and the threat of Na5-c6+ is winning, the d5-pawn must go. At the same time, Black has the trick of ...Bd5-a2+ in order to bail out.) 28.c4! (A fiendishly clever move. The trick of ...Bd5-a2+ is just stopped. White had to avoid 28.Nc6+?? Qxc6 29.Bxc6 Ba2+ and ...Rd8xd4 when Black has survived the crisis.) 28...Qxe7 (28...bxc4 29.Nc6+ is now winning for White. Once more the d7- Bishop is immune due to the h8-Rook.) 29.Qb6+ Ka8 30.Qxa6+ Kb8 31.Qb6+ Ka8 32.Bc6+ Bxc6 33.Nxc6 (Now, despite the lopsided material count, Black has to part with his Queen 33...Qb7?? 34.Qa5+ and mate next

move.) 33..Rd7 34.Nxe7 Rxe7 35.Qxb5 winning. Thus the text is forced.

26.Qxd4+ Kxa5

In the apt words of IM Nikolay Minev, "If Black is going to die, he will die with a full stomach!" The capture is forced: 26...Qc5? 27.Qxf6+ Qd6 28.Qd4+ Qc5 (Now: 28...Kxa5?? 29.b4+ Ka4 30.Qc3 makes no sense as we are right back in the game but Black is missing his f6-Knight.) 29.Qf6+ Qd6 Now White avoids the repetition and finds the winning move: 30.Be6!!



A marvelous move. White's Queen needs a rest in order to set up a mating net. Naturally the Bishop is invulnerable as 30...fxe6?? 31.Rxe6 Qxe6 32.Qxe6+ Kxa5? 33.b4+ and mate next move. From the analysis diagram, Black would have to play: 30...Bxd5 29.b4!! This is White's magnificent point. He merely wants to play Qf6-d4+ winning. 29...Bc6 (29...Ba8!?) 30.Qxf7 Qd1+ 31.Kb2 Qxf3 32.Rc7 Qxf7 33.Rxc6+ Ka7

34.Bxf7 With a winning ending.

It's interesting to ask if either Kasparov or Topalov saw the move 30.Be6(!)? I suspect that Topalov only realized that 26...Qc5? 27.Qxf6+ Qd6 28.Qd4+ gave White at least a repetition and he wasn't about to let Kasparov off the hook! After he took the Rook, Topalov was likely set on taking the Knight as well.

27.b4+ Ka4



Okay, so far it was easy to calculate. Black's King has been driven up the board and is securely locked in. But what's going on? The extra Rook and Knight are certainly nice for Black. It's easy to see that White's Queen wants to deliver mate on the b3-square, but, this can be covered. How to proceed?

28.Qc3(!?)

A natural move or an inaccuracy? It depends on your point of view. According to GM Lubomir Kavalek in his column from the *Washington*

Post, the text is dubious and nearly allows Topalov to escape. Immortality could have been had as follows, I quote Lubosh:

"Kasparov is usually very good at weaving mating nets, but he loses the golden thread here. The most elegant and efficient way to finish the game starts with the subtle 28.Ra7!!, combining mating threats on the a-file and on the square b3."

According to Kavalek, Black has three defenses: **A) 28...Nxd5**, **B) 28...Bxd5** and **C) 28...Bb7** all of which fail.

A) "The defense, 28...Nxd5 loses in a staggering way to 29.Bd7!!"

Okay, this is a bit freakish. I mean my goodness what a move! In an exchange of e-mail's with Lubosh he confessed that 29.Rxa6+ Qxa6 30.Qb2 Nc3+ 31.Qxc3 Bd5 32.Kb2 was a winner. But, he liked the spectacular text even more. Well one win is good enough but the lines are simply extraordinary and I hope the reader will enjoy the fruits of Kavalek's labors.

"On 29...Rxd7 30.Qb2 wins either after 30...Nc3+ 31.Qxc3 Bd5 32.Kb2 Qe6 33.Rxa6+ Qxa6 34.Qb3+ Bxb3 with the pretty 35.cxb3 mate; or after 30...Nxb4 31.Rxd7 Qc5 32.Rd4 Qe7 33.Rxb4+ Ka5 34.Qxh8 with a decisive material advantage. The most complicated finale comes after 28.Ra7!! Nxd5 29.Bd7!! Rc8!? 30.Qd3 Nc3+ 31.Kb2 Qf6 32.Qd4!! Nd1+ 33.Kc1! and the black queen is out of squares on the 6th rank to avert the mate on a6.

B) "Perhaps the simplest win occurs after 28...Bxd5 with 29.Qc3! and now White mates either on 29...Rhe8 30.Kb2 Re2 31.Qc7! Qxc7 32.Rxa6+ Qa5 33.Rxa5 mate. Or after 29...Bc4 30.Kb2 Ra8 31.Qb3+ Bxb3 32.cxb3 mate.

C) "If after 28.Ra7!! Black plays 28...Bb7 all defenses fail to 29.Rxb7: For example, on 29...Qxd5, White does not have to transpose into the game with 30.Qc3. Instead, he can use the extra move for a direct assault with 30.Rb6!, e.g. 30...Ra8 31.Qxf6 a5 32.Rd6 Qc4 33.bxa5 Kxa5 34.Rc6 winning; Or 30...a5 31.Ra6! Ra8 32.Qe3!!



"And after this quiet move black has no defense despite being two Rooks up. After 32...Rxa6 [On 32...Rhe8 comes 33.Rxa8! winning.] 33.Kb2! [Threatening 34.Qb3+] 33...axb4 34.axb4 Kxb4 35.Qc3+ Ka4 36.Qa3 mate."

Black appears to be a bit too cooperative. He should try 34...Qa2+ 35.Kxa2 Kxb4+ 36.Kb2 although he is still lost. [YS]

"Also after (28.Ra7!! Bb7 29.Rxb7) 29...Nxd5 white wins with 30.Bd7!! threatening 31.Bxb5+." This is an echo of the previous line.



"For example 30...Ra8 31.Bxb5+ axb5 32.Ra7+ Qa6 33.Qxd5 Qxa7 34.Qb3 mate." Or 30...Rxd7 31.Qb2 Nc3+ [On 31...Nxb4 32.Rxd7 Qc5 33.Rd4 wins.] 32.Qxc3 Qd1+ 33.Ka2 Qd5+ [Or 33...Rd3 34.Ra7! winning.] 34.Qb3+ Qxb3+ 35.cxb3 mate.

"And finally on (28.Ra7!! Bb7 29.Rxb7) 29...Rhe8 30.Bf1!! Re1+ 31.Kb2 Rxf1 32.Qc3 Rb1+ 33.Kxb1

Qxd5 34.Ra7 Rd6 35.Kb2 and White mates soon." Analysis by GM Kavalek.

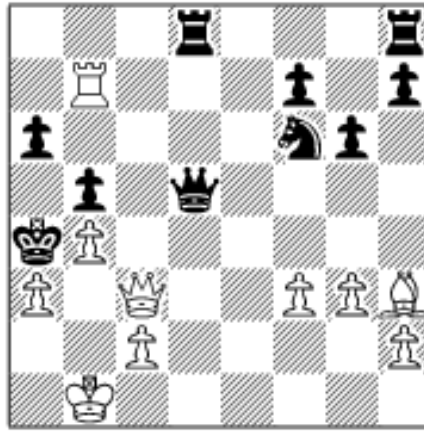
This is a lovely piece of work that was quite inspired. Such work deserves a reward and I'm sending Lubosh a box of Pacific Northwest Smoked Salmon post haste. We want to keep Lubosh strong.

While the above is a fine piece of analysis it turns out that the move Kasparov chose was also winning, so any criticism is misplaced as we'll see.

28...Qxd5 29.Ra7 Bb7

Black has to toss his Bishop as 29...Rd6? 30.Kb2 Qd4 31.Qxd4 wins.

30.Rxb7



30...Qc4(?)

Once more, according to GM Kavalek, this is where Topalov goes astray. He could have punished White's inaccurate twenty-eighth move. I quote from the *Washington Post*:

"Topalov misses 30...Rhe8 31.Rb6 Ra8 and now after either 32.Rxf6 Qc4 or 32.Be6 Rxe6 33.Rxe6 Qc4!

[Not 33...fxe6 34.Kb2 with the threat 35.Qb3+ winning] he should be able to save the game." - GM Lubosh Kavalek

Unquestionably, 30...Rhe8 was a key defense.

I too mistakenly thought that this defense might be able to save the game but felt it would still be an uphill battle as Black's great material bounty has all but disappeared: 30...Rhe8! 31.Rb6 Ra8 32.Qxf6 Re1+ 33.Kb2 Qe5+ 34.Qxe5 Rxe5 35.Bf1 Re3 36.Bd3 f5 37.f4 with a rather quizzical position as Black's King is still locked in a vault. White's winning try is to play Rb6-d6 and c2-c4 but there is no guarantee of success here.

Topalov had a similar thought with a totally different twist. He too believed that 30...Rhe8! saved his bacon: 31.Rb6 Ra8 32.Be6 [Topalov] 32...Rxe6 33.Rxe6 Qc4 34.Qxc4 bxc4 35.Rxf6 Kxa3 36.Rxf7 c3 and Black holds. GM Ftacnik too had discovered this line with 32.Be6 and thought that Black could have saved the game.

What all of us Ftacnik, Kavalek, Topalov and I had missed is a lovely retreat: 30...Rhe8! 31.Rb6 Ra8 32.Bf1!! This appears to be the tinkering of IM Ligterink who had been working on the lines and had analyzed it the next day with Kasparov. White appears to win by taking a break in the action! The key point is to 'keep' the position and to set up mating patterns utilizing the Bishop. Black's Queen is denied the c4-square and Black seems to be strangely paralyzed. Some of the lines involve a marvelous tactical feast so do your best to plow your way through the lines. You're sure to enjoy them!

So what is Black to do after 32.Bf1(!)? Protect the f6-Knight? Move the Knight? Hit White's Queen? Let's have a look:

A) Protecting the Knight by 32...Re6? 33.Rxe6 Qxe6 34.Kb2 is an easy winner for White as Qc3-b3+ will be mate and Black has lost the key defensive ...Qd5-e5 possibility.

B) Hitting White's Queen by 32...Rec8? 33.Qxc8! is a nasty surprise: 33...Qd1+ 34.Ka2 Qd5+ 35.Bc4 Qxc4+ (35...bxc4 36.Rxa6+ Kb5 37.Qxa8 wins) 36.Qxc4 bxc4 37.Rxf6 winning.

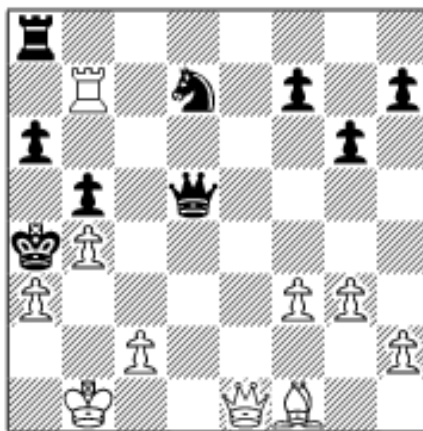
C) Black seems to be better off moving his Knight. He has two ways to go: D) 32...Nh5 and E) 32...Nd7.

Let's take each move in turn.

D) 32...Nh5 trying to save his skin leaves it up to White to show his hand. Which he promptly does! 33.Rd6! This is White's point. After Bh3-f1, he wants to push Black's Queen away from controlling the b3-square: 33...Rec8 (As: 33...Re1+ 34.Kb2 Qe5 35.Rd4! Block's Black's Queen and sets up Qc3-b3 checkmate. After 35...Qxd4 36.Qxd4 Rxf1 37.Qd3 White wins.) 34.Qb2 Rxc2 35.Rxd5 Rxb2+ 36.Kxb2 When Black's King is in a mating net.

E) It seems much more reasonable to keep Black's Knight in the action by: 32...Nd7 33.Rd6 Re1+ 34.Kb2 Re3 (The same blocking line as above reappears after: 34...Qe5 35.Rd4! Qxd4 36.Qxd4 winning) 35.Qxe3 Qe5+ 36.Qxe5 Nxe5 37.f4 Nc4+ 38.Bxc4 bxc4 39.Rd5! wins.

F) We are now gaining a healthy respect for the problems that Black is facing. Hitting White's Queen, protecting the Knight, moving the Knight all fail. It is time for desperate measures! Black seems to be advised to sacrifice his Rook: 32...Re1+ 33.Qxe1 (33.Kb2? Qe5 is what White must avoid.) 33...Nd7 (After, 33...Qd4 the mating net is impossible to overcome: 34.Rd6! Nd5 [34...Qxd6 35.Qc3 Qd5 36.Kb2 with a favorite checkmate to come.] 35.Rxd5 Qxd5 36.Qc3 a5 37.Kb2 and Black can choose how to lose.) 34.Rb7!!



The Rook can't be captured this time because of an unusual checkmate: 34...Qxb7? 35.Qd1!! Another brilliant move which keeps Black's Queen out of the defense. Our favorite checkmate 35.Qc3 Qd5 36.Kb2 Qe5 isn't reached this time. 35...Kxa3 36.c3! Black will soon be mated. Due to White's threat to capture the d7-Knight, it is forced to move. 34...Ne5 tries to meet this stunning Rook shot. Of course, with

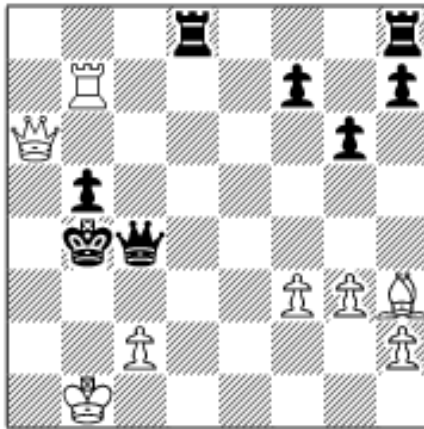
material equality now re-established White is winning. 35.Qc3 Qxf3 36.Bd3 Qd5 37.Be4! A familiar decoy sacrifice as we've seen with Rb6-d6. Black's Queen must move. 37...Qc4 38.Qxe5 Winning a piece and the game.

The inescapable conclusion seems to be that Topalov's 30...Qc4 is a bad move, not because he missed a save with 30...Rhe8, rather it's a bad move because 30...Rhe8 can only be overcome with extraordinary skill. This analysis was discovered only after a few hundred man and silicon hours were spent on this position!

31.Qxf6 Kxa3?

This is at least one of the moves that everyone seems to agree is a bad slip. Both Kavalek and I think that Black must play: 31...Rd1+ 32.Kb2 Ra8 33.Qb6 Qd4+ 34.Qxd4 Rxd4 35.Rxf7 when White has winning chances. This line is similar to the note with 30...Rhe8 and White has to be happy that he clipped the f7-pawn. I suspect that Topalov has missed White's thirty-sixth move.

32.Qxa6+ Kxb4



33.c3+!!

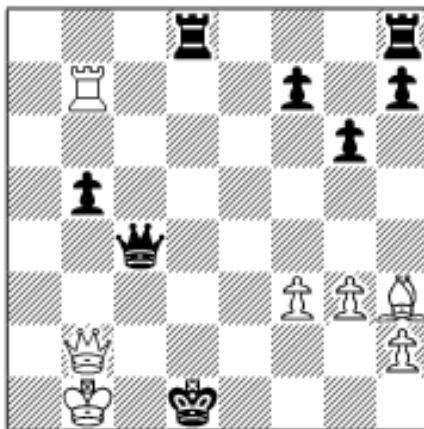
Another beautiful move which is marvelous in its delivery. Black's King is lured forward this time into a different web. Now White is winning.

33...Kxc3

The only move as 33...Kb3?
34.Qb2+ Kxc3 35.Qb2+ Kd3

36.Bf1+ wins easily.

34.Qa1+ Kd2 35.Qb2+ Kd1



Black's weary King seems to have settled down, it is precisely at this moment that White has an incredible study like win! As if it was predetermined, Black is denied a check on the e4-square.

36.Bf1!! Rd2

Allowing a breathtaking finish but what to do? Capturing the Bishop allows mate: 36...Qxf1? 37.Qc2+

Ke1 38.Re7+ Qe2 39.Qxe2 Checkmate. While 36...Qd5 37.Qc1 Checkmate is rather utilitarian.

37.Rd7!!

Simply beautiful. Black is neatly pinned and must lose material.

37...Rxd7 38.Bxc4 bxc4

There is no time to save the h8-Rook. The checkmate on the c1-square hasn't gone away.

39.Qxh8 Rd3 40.Qa8 c3 41.Qa4+ Ke1 42.f4 f5 43.Kc1! Rd2 44.Qa7! 1-0

A fantastic game. Garry was so moved as to crown this game as his finest accomplishment. Destined for the hall of fame. Which leaves me wondering how fleeting immortality truly is. After all, what would have happened had Topalov thumbed his nose and played 24...Kb6 declining the sacrifices?

*This column is available in **Chess Cafe Reader** format. Click [here](#) for more information.*



[\[ChessCafe.com Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Reviews\]](#) [\[Bulletin Board\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Studies\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About The Chess Cafe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2003 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

"The Chess Cafe®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.