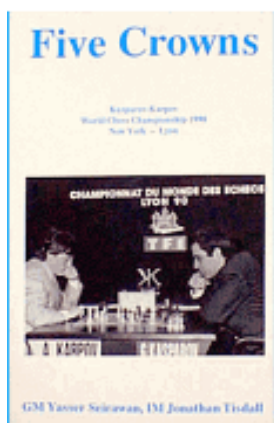


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Gurevich - Kamsky, Los Angeles 1991

Ilya Gurevich-Gata Kamsky

U.S. Championship Los Angeles (1) 1991

1.e4 e5 2.f4

Surprise! The King's Gambit doesn't get a lot of respect in GM circles as it has a reputation of allowing Black too many counterattacking possibilities. However, a well-prepared King's Gambiteer can be a formidable opponent.

2...Bc5

This is a neutral response. The sharp lines stemming from 2...exf4 3.Nf3 g5! present the most problems for White.

3.Nf3 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Bc4 Nc6 6.fxe5

In principle, White should delay this capture, keeping open the possibility of f4-f5. More natural was 6.d3, angling for Nc3-a4. In this case, Ilya may have been concerned about 6...Bg4 (6...Be6!?) 7.Na4 Nd4!? 8.Nxc5 dxc5 9.fxe5? Nxe4, but 9.O-O gives White a clear plus. The advantage of the text is that in clarifying the central tension, White establishes his advantage by virtue of his extra center pawn.

6...dxe5 7.d3 h6?

Preventing Bc1-g5 is a costly loss of tempo. More in the spirit of the opening is 7...Be6 with reasonable counter chances. In addition to weakening the kingside (such a pawn structure invites white's knight to f5), the h6-pawn is a target if Black castles on that side.

8.Na4! Bd6 9.O-O!



The opening has been a complete strategic success for White. The center belongs to White: it is solidly secured and the e5-pawn can be given a bit of seasoning. Meanwhile, Black's kingside majority, far from representing opportunity for counterplay is a target for White's pieces. Whether Black's king goes left or right, he's sure to be harassed.

9...Na5

Eliminating the pressure on the f7-pawn; the move also means no queenside castling for Gata as a key defensive piece is now missing and the a-file is opened.

10.Bb3 O-O

So, the hunt for Black's king is on. White needs to flood the kingside with pieces.

11.Qe1 Nxb3 12.axb3 a5?!

Quiet desperation; Black is seeking counterplay, but this creates additional weaknesses. The move does feature an interesting psychological twist in that it gives White the possibility of trying to win the game on the queenside as well the kingside. In any case, Black has little choice.

13.Bd2!? b5 14.Nc3 c6 15.Nh4?!

Not crispy enough for my taste. White's knight on f3 is performing a valuable function by hitting the e5-pawn. I prefer 15.Nd1! in order to play Nd1-e3-f5. Play would likely proceed 15...a4!? 16.bxa4 bxa4 17.Ne3 Be6 18.Bc3 when White has secured his queenside, hits the e5-pawn, and continues his kingside piece migration.

15...Kh7 16.Nf5 Bxf5! 17.Rxf5 Ng8!

Well-played; the knight on f6 was just a target. White is beginning to regret that his knight is out of play.

18.Kh1 Ne7 19.Rf3!? Ng6 20.Ne2?

This is a weak move. A key ingredient in most victories is *flexibility*; the ability to change plans in midstream *as well* as the ability to strike out in different directions. With this redeployment, Ilya makes his plan clear. He

will play Ne2-g3-f5. Yet he could accomplish the same maneuver *and* open an additional opportunity by 20.Nd1 a4 21.bxa4 bxa4 22.Ne3 when White is ready to flex his muscles on the kingside with Ne3-f5 or in the center with Ne3-c4 and Bd2-c3. Whether this option would have changed the knight's direction from f5 is not the point. Retaining flexibility is what's important.

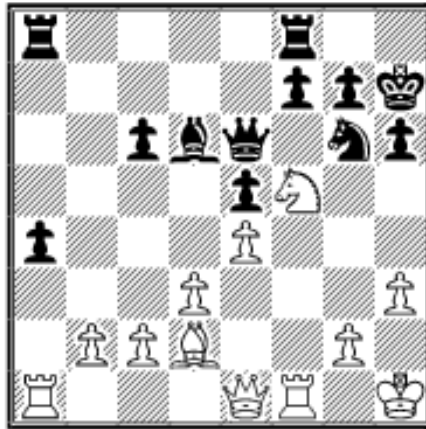
20...a4 21.bxa4 bxa4 22.Ng3 Nh4

An annoying defensive move! White's dreams of Rf3-h3 followed by sacs against the h6-pawn are spoiled. Still, Black's game is no bargain.

23.Rf1 Qd7 24.h3!?

Such pawn moves tend to interfere with attacking plans.

25...Qe6?! 25.Nf5! Ng6



If 25...Nxf5 26.exf5 Qf6 (26...Qd5 27.f6 is good for White.) 27.Qe4 with domination.

26.Qg3?

A lackadaisical move that permits Black to defend; Black is picked apart by the ungainly shot 26.Ba5!, underscoring his weaknesses on the queenside. If 26...Rfb8 (26...a3 27.bxa3 and a3-a4 is an extra pawn.)

27.Qc3 Ne7 (27...Rb5? 28.Qxc6) 28.Nxd6 Qxd6 29.Rxa4 wins a pawn and the game.

26...Rfd8!

Just in time for ...Bd6-f8.

27.h4 Bf8 28.h5?

Now White won't be able to play g2-g4-g5 and break in on the kingside. White had to play 28.Bc3 f6 (28...Nf4? 29.Nxg7) 29.Qf3 (29.Qg4!?) keeping the hit g2-g4-g5 as a possibility.

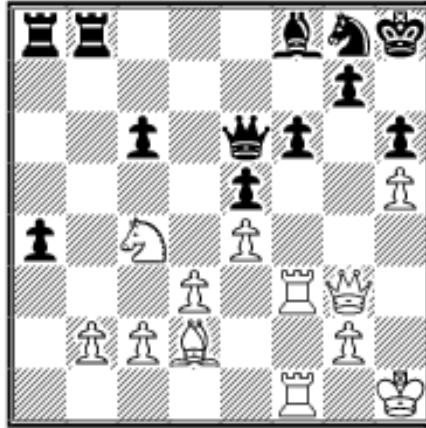
28...Ne7 29.Ne3 f6!

Kamsky has now managed to secure his center and kingside. Barring any queenside breakthroughs, he should snare a draw.

30.Nc4 Rdb8 31.Rf3?

Chasing a ghost; White's best chance is 31.Ra2 and Rfa1, his kingside attack ended with h4-h5.

31...Kh8! 32.Raf1 Ng8!



Superb defense; now White has to be careful that he doesn't become worse, since keeping the queenside closed is now impossible.

33.Qh4 a3 34.bxa3 Bxa3 35.Rg3 Bf8 36.Bc3

Admitting his errors; the bishop adopts an entirely defensive role.

36...Rb5 37.Rg6 Ra2 38.Ne3 Ra3 39.Bd2 Qa2 40.Qe1 Ra8 41.Rg3 1/2-1/2

Black has no problems after 41...Rab8 preparing an exchange by ...Rb5-b1. White's kingside "attack" has hit a closed door.

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