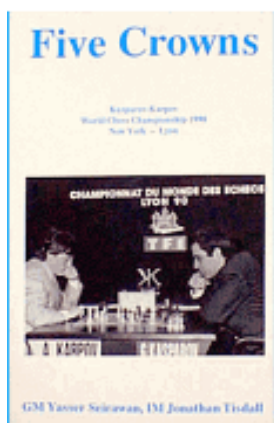


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Donner Memorial, 1995

1.e4 e6 2.d3!?

These closed treatments against the French, Caro-Kann and Sicilian are quite popular, though I don't think they should cause the second player any problems.

2...c5 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 g6?!

When White hasn't committed his knight to c3, this fianchetto doesn't work so well. Challenging the center with 4...d5, or even 2...d5, is safer and better.

5.c3! Bg7 6.Be3!

A poisonous little move. By forcing Black to protect his c5-pawn, White holds up Black's central counterplay. This allows White a "big clamp" in the center and Black is soon limited in space and quickly throttled.

6...d6 7.f4! Nge7 8.Nf3 O-O 9.O-O b6?!

Black's last chance of trying for any counterplay lay with 9...b5, aiming for ...b5-b4 and operations on the queenside.

10.Na3 Ba6 11.Re1 Qd7 12.Nc2 e5



Black has been drifting in the opening. He is now waking up to the realization he has no grip in the center and White drives this awareness home.

13.d4! cxd4 14.cxd4 exd4 15.Nfxd4 Rac8 16.Qd2 Nxd4 17.Nxd4 Bb7 18.Rad1 Rfd8 19.Bf2 Qe8

An admission that Black can't find an active plan. Instead of reacting to this admission with a flurry of

hyperactivity, White increases his advantage by gaining still more space on the queenside. Admirable self-restraint.

20.b3! Qd7 21.a4! a6

A none-too-happy decision. Black weakens the b6-pawn, but in view of a4-a5, this was bound to happen anyway.

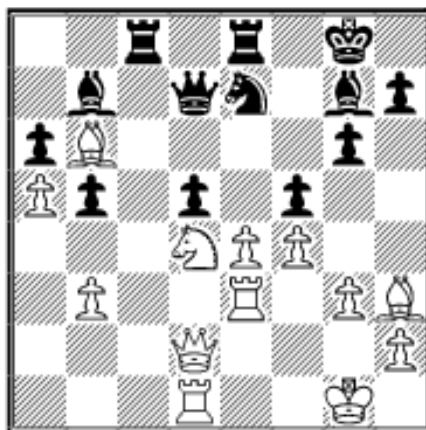
22.Ne2 b5 23.Bb6 Re8 24.a5!

A powerful decision. White, by anchoring in the b6-bishop, renders the d6-pawn indefensible.

24...Qe6 25.Nd4 Qd7 26.Re3!

With every move, White strengthens his grip on the position. The flexible text plays for control of either the d-file or e-file.

26...f5 27.Bh3 d5



White's position is marvelous, but what would you do now? Playing 28. exf5 Bxd4 29.Bxd4 Nxf5 30.Be5? d4! gives Black kicking chances.

28.e5!

Beautiful positional chess. The text electrocutes both of Black's bishops. Their diagonals are closed down and it's easy to see that the d5-pawn is pudding.

28...Bf8 29.Bg2 Ba8 30.Rd3 Kh8 31.Nc2 Bg7 32.Nb4 Bb7

Very much like me, Khalifman did not have a good day.

**33.Nxd5 Nxd5 34.Bxd5 Bxd5 35. Rxd5 Qe6 36.Qd3 g5 37.Rd6 Qe7
38.Bd8 Qf7 39.Rd7 Qe6 40.Bxg5 1-0**



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