



## COLUMNISTS

*Inside Chess*

Yasser Seirawan

*Winning Chess  
Combinations*

by Yasser Seirawan

## Yasser Annotates:

## Short - Topalov, Linares 1995

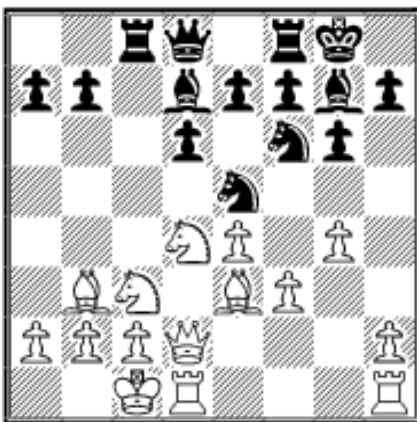
While as popular as ever at the club level, the Sicilian Dragon isn't a frequent guest at the GM level. The reason is quite simple. In this day and age, where high ELO ratings determine invitations, players have become averse to taking risks. In the Dragon, and especially against the Yugoslav Attack, a single misstep can cost the game and five precious ELO points. Only the most courageous – and well prepared – are willing to mix it up.

*Nigel Short (2655) - Veselin Topalov (2630)*

Linares (2) 1995

Sicilian Dragon [B78]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.f3 Nc6 8.Qd2 O-O 9.  
Bc4 Bd7 10.O-O-O Ne5 11.Bb3 Rc8 12.g4!?



White is the first to blink. The sharpest lines involve 12.h4 h5(!) 13.Bg5 Rc5 with massive complications, but the text certainly contains its own brand of poison.

White might continue with h2-h4-h5, when he's a tempo behind in certain lines, but there is no h-pawn sacrifice. Or White might play g4-g5, provoking ...Nf6-h5 and the slow Nc3-e2-g3, trying to open the kingside. And White has provoked Black to be daring on the queenside.

12...b5!?

Well, that was certainly daring! Black can also consider 12...a5!? and 12...Nc4 13.Bxc4 Rxc4, preparing a c-file attack. The text is based on the weakened f3-pawn.

13.g5

The f6-knight has to be chased away. If 13.Ncxb5 Nxf3 (13...Bxb5!?) 14. Nxf3 Bxb5, both the g4- and e4-pawns are weak.

13...Nh5 14.Ncxb5 Nc4

After 14...Bxb5 (14...Nxf3 15.Nxf3 Bxb5 16.Bxa7! is good for White. Although he has open lines, Black will be unable to budge White enough on the queenside to justify the sacrifice.) 15.Nxb5 Nxf3 16.Qe2, the pawn rip 17.Nxa7! works out in White's favor.

### 15.Bxc4 Rxc4 16.Qd3

Now that the b3-bishop – the glue that held the queenside together – is missing, grabbing material with 16.Nxa7? Ra4 17.Nac6 Rxa2! is good for Black.

### 16...Rb4! 17.Nc3 Qb8



### 18.Nb3?!

This attempt to block the b-file is awkward. White isn't happy about making weaknesses on the dark squares, but 18.b3 puts the onus on Black to prove his attack. Since 18...a5? 19. Nd5 Rb7 20.Nxe7+ Kh8 21.Ndc6, followed by Qd3xd6, is bad for Black, he will likely play 18...Rb7 19.Nd5 Re8 20.Ne2. White has ideas like Be3-d4 or Ne2-g3 with a sharp game in his favor.

### 18...Be6

Preventing Nc3-d5 and getting ready to rev up the a-pawn.

### 19.Qa6

Blocking the a-pawn, but allowing the breakup of his queenside. White has abandoned his kingside attack and now plays to win the game on the queenside, where he has won a pawn. Black's sacrifice has netted him the initiative.

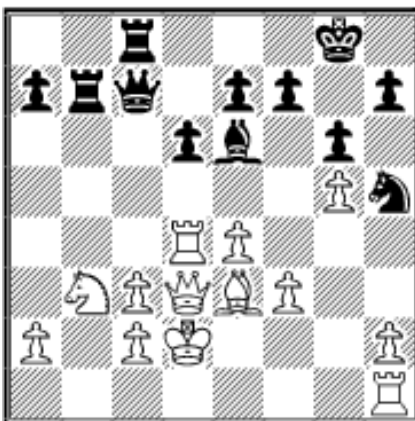
### 19...Bxc3!

Topalov gives up the precious Dra-gon bishop, but in return, cripples White's queenside. After this move, Black has no worries about his pawn-sac, as he now has excellent compensation. Perhaps he already has the advantage.

### 20.bxc3 Rb7

Also tempting was 20...Bc4, menacing ...Bc4-e2. The ending 21.Qxa7 Qxa7 22.Bxa7 Ra4 is good for Black. There is nothing wrong with the text either. Black is going to get good play on the c-file.

### 21.Rd4 Rc8 22.Kd2 Qc7 23.Qd3



### 23...d5!

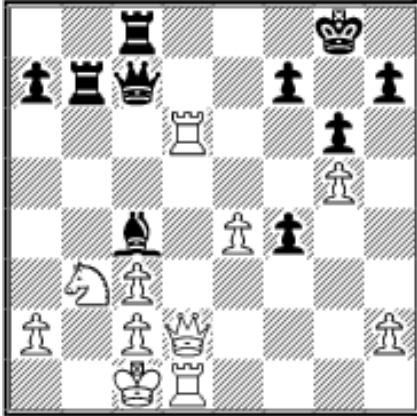
A powerful shot. Black freezes the h1-rook to the h2-pawn and introduces the possibility of ...Nh5-f4, leaping into the game. White can't sacrifice the exchange with 24.exd5 Bf5 25. Re4 Bxe4 26.fxe4 Nf4 27.Qd4 (27.Bxf4 Qxf4 + and ...Rb7-c7 will cost White the game on the c-file), because 27...e5! 28.dxe6 Nxe6 is excellent for Black. In these variations it's important to note just how *ineffective* the b3-knight is in handling Black's attack.



**24.Kc1 dxe4 25.fxe4 Bc4 26.Qd2 e5! 27.Rd6 Nf4**

Now all of Black's pieces are taking part in the attack. The threatened ...Nf4-e2+ can't be tolerated. If 28. Bxf4, then 28...exf4 29.Qxf4 Bxb3 30.cxb3 Qxc3+ 31.Kb1 Rxb3+ and White will find himself mated.

**28.Bxf4 exf4 29.Rd1**



While not happy, White seems to be okay. Threats include Qd2xf4, as well as the material-reducing Rd6-d8+.

**29...f3!**

Sterling play! Now 30.Rd8+ Rxd8 31.Qxd8+ Qxd8 32.Rxd8+ Kg7 33.Rd2 Be2 is good for Black.

**30.Qf4 Qe7!**

The g5-pawn is a danger to the black king. With the text, Black hits the a3-square and the g5- and e4-pawns. He also stops a potential Rd6-d7.

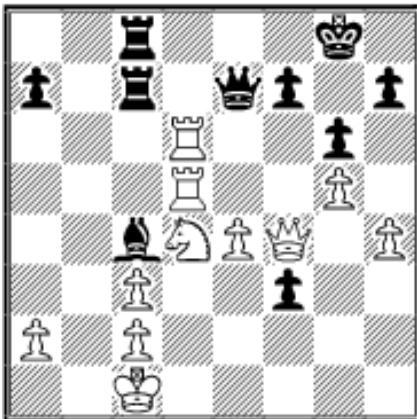
**31.h4 Be2 32.R1d5 Rbc7**

Black has handled the attack magnificently. He is now ready to cash in on the c-file.

**33.Nd4**

There is nothing better. If 33.Qd2 Qxe4, with the threat ...f3-f2. While 33.Re5 Qf8! leaves White with the same problems and now his d6-rook has lost protection.

**33...Bc4!**



Now that White can no longer play Nb3-d2, Black wins the exchange. If 34.Re5 Qxd6 35. Re8+ Rxe8 36.Qxd6 f2 wins.

**34.Qxf3 Bxd5 35.Rxd5 Rxc3 36.Qf6 Qc7 37. Qf2 Qc4 38.Kb2 Qb4+ 39. Ka1 Rh3 40.Qf1 Re3 0-1**

An excellent game by Topalov that will be enjoyed by club players around the world.

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