

# Junior Tay

## The Schliemann Defence

**move by move**

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# About the Author

Junior Tay is a FIDE Candidate Master and an ICCF Senior International Master. He is a former National Rapid and Cairnhill Open Champion and has represented Singapore in international events, including the 1995 Asian Team Championships. He is a frequent opening surveys contributor to *New in Chess Yearbook* and also writes articles for *CHESS* magazine. He has been a chess trainer, author and editor for the past three years, after working as a school teacher for seventeen years.

## **Also by the Author:**

*The Benko Gambit: Move by Move*

*Ivanchuk: Move by Move*

*The Old Indian: Move by Move*

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# Introduction

## What is the Schliemann Defence?

The Schliemann is an opening variation of the Ruy Lopez which occurs after 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 f5!?. Here Black immediately challenges the central white e-pawn with a flank thrust, seeking to demolish it instantly. By eschewing development in favour of such blatant aggression, it is not surprising that Black frequently finds himself the e5-pawn down, especially when he has to complete development himself in the process. The opening of the f-file and, often, the attainment of the bishop pair (after White plays ♘xc6) does, however, afford him chances to attack and complicate.


Black's king is usually the more exposed one, though the tactical nature of the position provides him with a truckload of tactics to get by, especially at lower levels. I tend to see the Schliemann Defence as akin to the Vienna Game (1 e4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘f6 3 f4), where White tries to scuttle the black centre on move three.


### Why play the Schliemann?



♙ If you are aiming for a street brawl when handling Black and seek to unbalance the game as early as possible, the Schliemann is right up your alley. Black ups the ante on move three with Freddie the f-pawn and plays to wrestle the centre from White, as well as to open the f-file. On the other hand, if you prefer to aim for solid equality as Black in the opening, the Schliemann is definitely not for you.

♙ It's not so easily to deal with Black's initiative in practical play. In this computer age, engines might be able to show the way to a White plus versus the Schliemann. Fortunately, most mortals do not have the prodigious memory required to recall what the engine proposes to reach that plus, and even when they do it is another issue to win from there. On many occasions, I go wrong in the Schliemann and give

my opponent a big edge, but the complex nature of the positions still gives me chances to turn the tables. It is interesting to note that, in MegaBase, the Schliemann has the second best percentage for Black among the defences to the Ruy Lopez, with White scoring 52.8% (up to 2016). If you're interested, the Smyslov System (3...g6) is top of the class with 52.7%.

 Top players have given the Schliemann a go, even against world-class opponents. For example, Andreikin, Aronian, Carlsen, Ivanchuk and Radjabov have punted the Schliemann on several occasions. Special mention must be made of Radjabov, who has used it successfully to reach a plus score versus opposition ranging from Elo 2560 to 2800. His Schliemann even held 2700+ opposition to an even score, as well as securing three draws against the current World Champion, Magnus Carlsen. Other notable Schliemann users are GMs Ivan Sokolov and Roeland Pruijssers and the late IM/CC-GM Josef Boey (all Dutch), as well as the Bulgarian GM Ventsislav Inkiov.

 I guess personal experience is the best way to relate the viability of the system. Please bear with my explanation of how this line became my favourite Black opening.

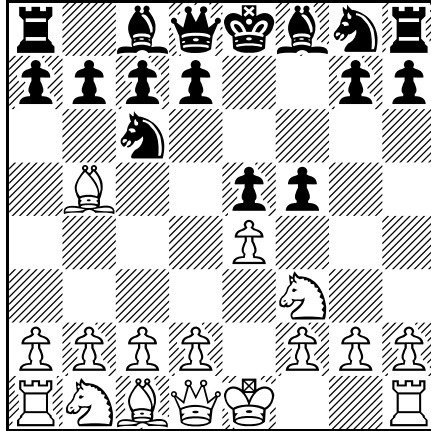
About four years after I learned chess (1986), I often joined my chesspal Chia Keng San in the home of Wang Mong Lin (a CC Senior IM and former British Universities Champion) for overnight blitz games. Chia was very annoyed and frustrated at Wang's frequent usage of the Ruy Lopez Exchange Variation (3 b5 a6 4 xc6), spoiling his Marshall Attack preparation. One day, he came across a *New in Chess* magazine game where British GM Jonathan Speelman, facing imminent defeat and elimination from the World Championship Candidates Quarter-finals, deployed the Schliemann against Jan Timman.

*Example 1*  
**J. Timman-J. Speelman**  
Candidates (7th matchgame), London 1989

**1 e4**

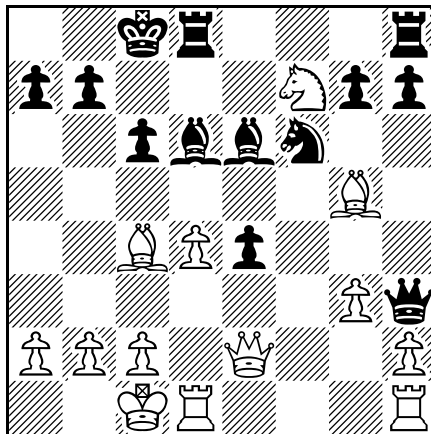
Timman had previously only used 1 d4 in the match. But if his idea was to surprise his opponent, the tables were swiftly switched when Speelman chose something quite uncommon (for him) on move one.

**1...e5 2 f3 c6 3 b5 f5!?**



Speelman seldom plays 1...e5, let alone the Schliemann Defence. In the previous two years, he had tried 3...♗c5, 3...♞f6, and the Closed Ruy with 3...a6 4 ♗a4 ♞f6 5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♜e1 b5 7 ♗b3 d6. But dire situations – one point down with two games left – require drastic measures. I will gloss over the next twelve moves as the theory will be explained later in the book.

4 ♞c3 fxe4 5 ♞xe4 d5 6 ♞xe5 dxe4 7 ♞xc6 ♜g5 8 ♜e2 ♞f6 9 f4 ♜xf4 10 ♞e5+ c6 11 d4 ♜h4+ 12 g3 ♜h3 13 ♗c4 ♗e6 14 ♗g5 0-0-0 15 0-0-0 ♗d6 16 ♞f7



White wins the bishop pair after this ‘fork’. Curiously, both *Stockfish* and *Houdini* prefer this move too. The result of the exchange is that Black’s slight congestion has been alleviated, while White’s remaining light-squared bishop doesn’t seem to have much influence.

16...♗xf7 17 ♗xf7 ♜hf8 18 ♗c4 ♜de8

Structurally, this looks like a Caro-Kann or 2...♜xd5 Scandinavian, where Black has gotten the e-pawn moving after trading off f-pawns. Black’s activity accords him good

## The Schliemann Defence: Move by Move

chances, even if White still has a small plus.

### 19 d5!?

Many annotators have deemed this to be an error; in actuality it is by no means bad, though it does represent the turning point of the game. Timman had used a lot of time prior to making this move and his logic was probably to prevent Black from getting ... $\text{d}5$  in with a comfortable position.  $19 \text{Bhf1}$  is the main move, as we will see in Chapter Four.

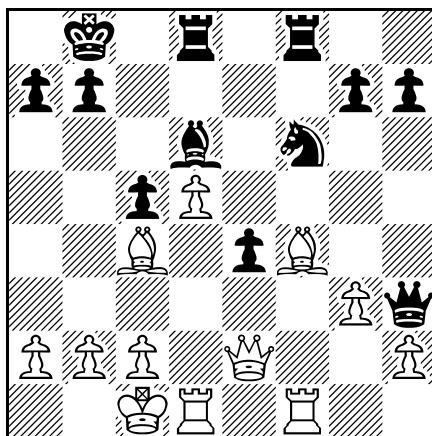
### 19...c5!

This reduces the scope of White's light-squared bishop. The d5-pawn is firmly blockaded and, if White trades on d6, Black's knight will become a stronger piece than White's remaining bishop.

### 20 Bhf1 $\text{c}6$ b8 21 $\text{e}4$ !?

Speelman attached a dubious mark to this move in *ChessBase Magazine*. Again it is not objectively that bad if combined with the idea of removing Black's blockader of the passed d-pawn.

### 21... $\text{e}8$ d8



Speelman keeps the pressure on by targeting the d-pawn indirectly.

### 22 $\text{e}4$ g5?!

Perhaps a prelude to repeating moves, supposing Black replied  $22... \text{e}8$ d8. Instead, the 'Speelwolf' takes the opportunity to increase the tension by adding a ...b7-b5 outflanking possibility.

Stronger was  $22 \text{e}4$ xd6+!  $\text{e}8$ xd6  $23 \text{e}4$ b3  $\text{e}8$ dd8  $24 \text{c}4$   $\text{e}8$ d7  $25 \text{c}4$ b1  $h6$   $26 \text{e}8$ de1  $\text{e}8$ fe8  $27 \text{e}8$ e3  $\text{e}8$ d6  $28 \text{e}8$ a4  $\text{e}8$ e5 and it is not easy for either player to improve their position. Black cannot get ...b7-b5 in easily without compromising his king's safety, and White cannot target the e4-pawn (with  $\text{e}8$ c2) without relinquishing his hold on the b5-square. Computers rate this position as slightly better for White, perhaps on the basis of a spatial edge and protected passed d-pawn, though for humans it is tough to play either side!

### 22...a6!

All of a sudden, Black threatens to advance on the queenside and lock in the light-squared bishop. Timman responded less than ideally to the pressure exerted by the wily Englishman.

**23 ♗xf6?!**

This is where Timman, in seeking trades, starts losing thread of the game. As the position opens up, the difference in the strength of the bishops become more apparent.

It was more prudent to restrain Black on the queenside. Hence 23 a4 is better, when the game might continue 23...♖d7 24 b3 ♜de8 25 ♙b1 h6 26 ♗e3 with equal chances, even if White's light-squared bishop is looking more and more like a duck.

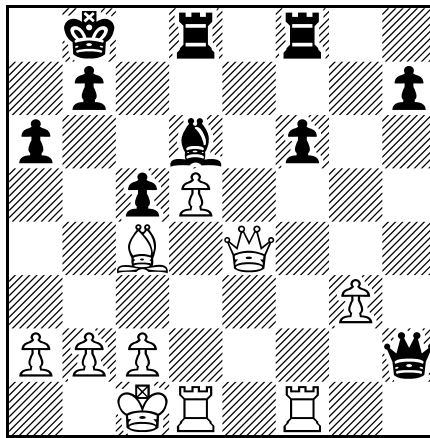
**23...gxf6**

Keeping more tension by not allowing a rook trade after 23...♜xf6.

**24 ♖xe4**

Technically speaking, there is nothing wrong with this move either, but it requires White to play with great accuracy as the black pieces now become very active. In particular, Black's bishop increases in power once the h2-pawn is munched, and the difference between the two bishops' strengths will soon be apparent.

**24...♖xh2**



**25 ♜h1?!**

Losing a pawn, since White cannot afford to capture on h7. Instead, the ever-creative Speelman recommended 25 ♜f3!, with the idea of ♗xa6, and this can very well occur after 25...♜fe8 (or 25...♗xg3 26 ♗xa6) 26 ♖d3 ♜g8 27 ♗xa6 bxa6 28 ♖xa6 ♜xg3 29 ♜xf6 ♜g1 30 ♖b6+ ♗c8 31 ♖c6+ ♗b8 32 ♖b6+ with a draw by perpetual check.

**25...♖xg3**

Not just snagging a pawn, this also frees the f4-square for the black bishop.

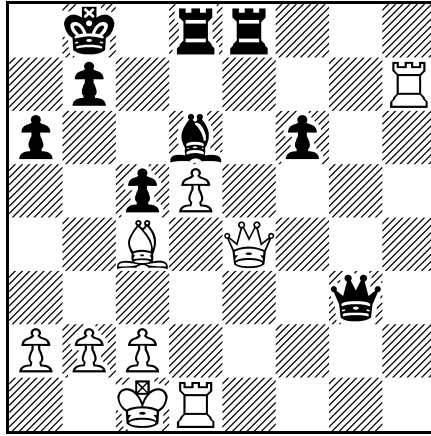
**26 ♜xh7??**

This is the move that actually loses the game for White, whose back rank is left exposed after Black's reply. White has no choice but to grovel a pawn down with 26 ♜df1; for exam-



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ple, 26...♖h8 27 ♜h5 ♜de8 28 ♚f3 ♚xf3 29 ♜xf3 ♘e5 30 ♘f1 h6 31 c3 and so on.  
**26...♜fe8**



Now White is well and truly lost: ...♜e1 is coming, followed by ...♘f4+, nudging the king away from the defence of the d1-rook, while Black threatens to embarrass the white bishop with ...b7-b5 and ...c5-c4 as well.

**27 ♚f5**

Nothing else is any better: 27 ♚d3 ♜e3 28 ♚f1 ♜de8 is curtains for White, and 27 ♚h4 ♚f3! wins at least a piece; e.g. ♜f1 ♚e3+ 29 ♚d1 (or 29 ♚b1 ♜e4 and the bishop drops) 29...b5 30 ♘d3 c4 and the bishop has nowhere to go without allowing ...♚e2+, snagging the f1-rook.

**27...b5**

There goes the bishop. 27...♜e1 28 ♜h1 ♜de8 29 ♜f1 b5 also wins.

**28 ♘f1 ♜e1 29 ♚h5 ♚f4+ 30 ♚b1 ♚xf1 0-1**

Timman resigned, thus allowing Speelman to draw level at 3½-3½ (though Timman recovered to win the next game and the match).

Both Chia and I were instantly hooked on this arcane way of dealing with the Ruy Lopez, and he did get quite a few blitz points off Wang with it. As for me, this was what occurred in my first tournament game with the Schliemann against an experienced National Master.

### Example 2

**L.O.Choong-J.Tay**




Cairnhill Open, Singapore 1991


**1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘b5 f5 4 ♘c3 fx4 5 ♘xe4 d5**





Tartakower's 5...♘f6 is the other main line.










## Chapter Five









# Tactical Tartakower:

4  c3 fxe4 5  xe4  f6

Rather than push his d-pawn at once, as in the previous chapter, by playing 5...f6 Black concentrates on rapid development. White has three ways to respond.

With 6 xf6 xf6 7 0-0, White plays for swift development too. Then Games 34-36 see Black replying with 7...d4, after which White can decide between a quick draw (as shown in the notes to Game 34) or playing for a blitzkrieg assault on the black king following a queenside fianchetto (as in Games 35 and 36). In the latter case Black's resources seem adequate provided he plays the counter-intuitive ...d8 when White checks on the e-file.

GM Sokolov prefers 7...e7, which is examined in Game 37. I am rather doubtful of Black's ability to generate sufficient play if White just sits on the isolated e-pawn after 8 xc6 dxc6 9 e1, so I have included 8...bxc6! as a viable alternative. This follows the current preference for the b-pawn capture in the 7 e2 e7 8 xc6 variation, where White plays simply to win the e-pawn. Here Black often has to navigate a queenless middlegame a pawn down, but the extra central pawn and possibility of developing the light-squared bishop to a6 after 8...bxc6 (Games 39-40) offer more counterplay than after 8...dxc6 (Game 38), where Black's main aim is to hold a fortress with opposite-coloured bishops.

White's third option is to play 6 e2 first, waiting for 6...d5 before exchanging with 7 xf6+ gxf6, after which he can damage Black's pawn structure with 8 d4 g7 9 dxe5 0-0 10 e6 or 10 xc6 bxc6 11 e6. This is given a work over in Games 43 and 44. White has some unorthodox and trappy sidelines too: 8 d4! is discussed in Game 42, while 7 xe5! and 7 eg5! are scrutinized in Game 41.

*Game 34*  
**Li Ruifeng-J.Tay**  
World Mind Games, Internet (rapid) 2014

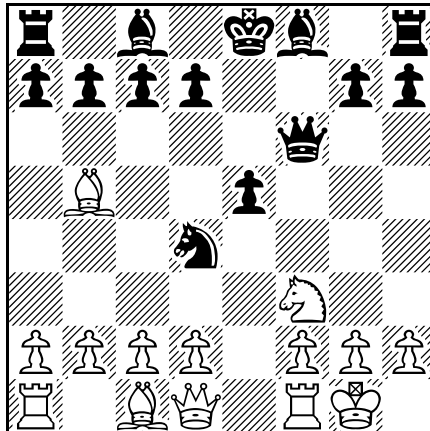
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♗c6 3 ♙b5 f5 4 ♘c3 fxe4 5 ♗xe4 ♘f6 6 ♗xf6+ ♚xf6

The advantage for White of taking on f6 at once is that, unlike in the 6 ♚e2 variation, Black is virtually obliged to recapture with the queen, since gambling with 6...gxf6? is too risky. After 7 d4! ♙g7 (if 7...e4 8 ♘g5! ♙b4+ 9 c3 0-0 10 ♗xe4, White is already winning, Y.Quesada Perez-S.Palit, Barcelona 2012; or similarly 7...d6 8 ♘g5! fxg5 9 ♚h5+ ♙d7 10 d5 ♚f6 11 ♙xg5 ♚f6 12 dxc6+ bxc6 13 ♙d3 e4 14 ♙e2, N.Ristic-D.Bokan, Serbian Team Championship 2002) 8 dxe5 0-0 9 exf6 ♚xf6 10 0-0 d6 11 c3 ♙g4 12 ♙e2 ♚ae8 13 ♚b3+ ♙h8 14 ♙e3, Black has no compensation for his pawn minus, H.Faber-P.Leisebein, correspondence 2013.

7 0-0

This has been superseded by 7 ♚e2 in the past two decades. However, it remains a low-risk line for White to play, especially if he doesn't mind a draw.

7...♗d4



This seems like a very counter-intuitive move to make, doesn't it? Instead of focusing on development, Black is asking White to trade off his only developed minor piece and open the e-file as well.

**Question:** Why would Black allow all that?

**Answer:** It does seem like a bad variation of the Spanish Bird's (3...♗d4), but there are some counter-arguments. Firstly, Black resolves the problem of the typically weak e5-pawn by diverting it to the d-file after the exchange on d4. Secondly, if the white rook goes to e1, Black will have queen and rook bearing down on the f2-pawn after he castles. Lastly, White will not find it so easy to mobilize the rest of his queenside pieces.

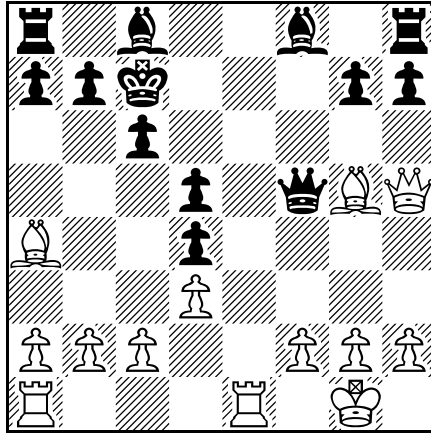
The alternative 7...♙e7 is covered in Game 36.

8 ♗xd4 exd4 9 ♚e1+

White can accelerate his development by playing 9 b3 and bringing the c1-bishop out to a3 or b2. This dangerous plan is covered in the next two games.

**9...♗e7**

Here 9...♗d8!? is an interesting way to avoid the drawing variation below. Surprisingly, it seems only to have been tried once, and Black almost got into trouble: 10 d3 c6 11 ♗a4 d5 12 ♖h5 ♗c7? (12...h6 is mandatory with equal chances) 13 ♗g5! ♖f5



**Exercise:** How can White exploit the awkward placement of the black king and queen?

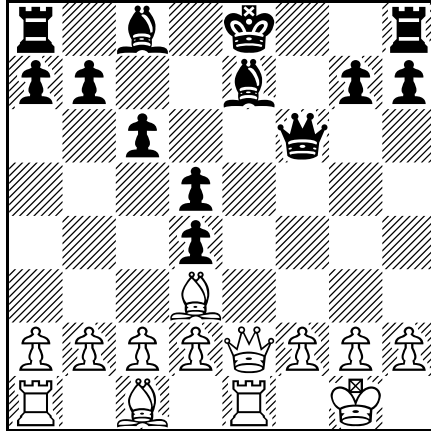
**Answer:** White has the powerful 14 ♖e5! (it looks very tempting to play 14 ♗d8+ ♗xd8 15 ♖e8+ ♗c7 16 ♖xf5 ♗xf5 17 ♖xa8, but things are not so simple after 17...♗c8, cutting off the rook) 14...♖g6 (or 14...♖xh5 15 ♖xd5+!) 15 ♗f4 ♗d6 16 ♖e7+ ♗d7 17 ♗xd6+ ♖xd6 18 ♖xg7 with a big advantage.

Instead, G.Hitter-M.Lyell, Budapest 2010, continued 14 ♖e8 b5 15 ♗b3 ♗b7, and even here 16 ♖h4! would have kept Black on the defensive.

**10 ♖e2**

Alternatively, 10 ♖h5+ g6 11 ♖h6 (if 11 ♖e5 ♖xe5 12 ♖xe5 c6 13 ♗d3 ♗f7 14 b3 ♗f6 15 ♖e2 d5 16 ♗b2 ♗d7 17 ♖ae1, as in G.Laketic-V.Tseshkovsky, Moscow 1992, then 17...c5 gives Black a space advantage and potential queenside expansion ideas) 11...c6 12 ♗f1 (12 ♗a4 ♗f7 13 ♗b3+ d5 14 d3 ♗d7 is about equal, W.Lay-J.Tay, Singapore rapid 2012) 12...d5 13 d3 ♗f7 14 ♖xe7+!? (Kupreichik's idea) 14...♖xe7 15 ♗d2 can be met by 15...♖f6 16 ♖e1 g5! 17 ♖h5+ ♖g6 18 ♖f3+ and the players agreed a draw in S.Grodzensky-U.Ploder, correspondence 1994.

**10...c6 11 ♗d3 d5**



Ho-hum. I was bracing myself for the inevitable draw now.

**12 f3!?**

A surprise for me.

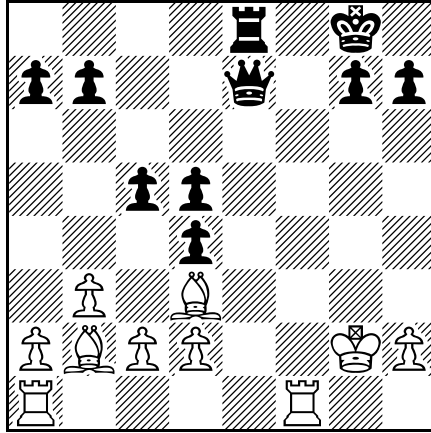
**Question:** What is the point of this move? Doesn't it weaken White's kingside structure?

**Answer:** Well, apart from preventing ...♖xf2+ when Black castles, White also gives his queen the f2-square to attack the d4-pawn and perhaps it can even use the g3-square later.

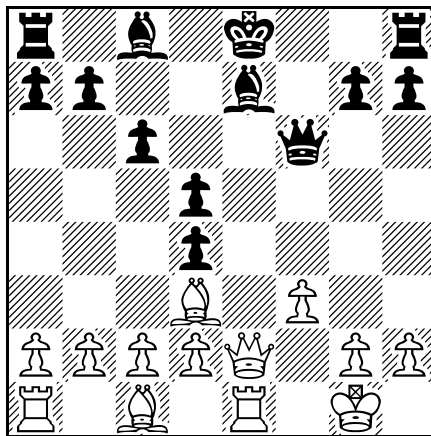
White can also push the pawn further with 12 f4. If Black responds with 12...♔f7, then 13 c4 dxc3 14 bxc3 ♕c5+ (not 14...♖e8? 15 ♖h5+) 15 ♕e3 ♕xe3+ 16 ♖xe3 ♕d7, as in W.Wittmann-K.Pytel, Holzoster am See 1981, and now 17 ♗f2! ♖hf8 18 g3 ♔g8 19 a4, keeping an eye on the a-pawn, might give White a little something. So Black should probably send his king the other way: 12...♔d8 13 c4 (or 13 b3 a5!? 14 ♕b2 ♕c5 15 ♗f2 ♖f8 16 ♖f1 g6 17 a3 ♕d7 18 ♖ae1 b5 19 a4 b4 with even play) 13...dxc4 14 ♕xc4 ♕d6 15 d3 ♔c7 16 ♕d2 ♕d7 and I think Black is at least equal, R.Zelcic-B.Lalic, Croatian Championship, Rijeka 2009.

The other option is 12 b3 0-0 13 ♖xe7 ♗xf2+ 14 ♔h1 ♕h3!, when 15 gxh3 ♗f3+ 16 ♔g1 ♗f2+ with perpetual check is the drawing variation.

White can play on with 15 ♖g1!? ♖ae8 16 ♗xf8+ ♗xf8 17 ♖f1 and Sokolov considers this to be good for White, but Black seems able to hold his own despite the material disparity. The main drawing idea is to trade a pair of rooks and harass the white king with the queen: 17...♕xg2+! 18 ♔xg2 ♗e7 19 ♕b2 c5



20 ♖f2 (20 ♖f5 can also be met by 20...♗f8, or even 20...♗e6!?) 21 ♖af1 c4 22 bxc4?! dxc4 23 ♗a3 g6 24 ♖f8+ ♗xf8 25 ♖xf8+ ♖g7 26 ♗f1? d3 27 ♖f2 ♗g4+ 28 ♖h1 ♗d4 29 ♖g1, when a draw was agreed drawn in B.Haas-K.Shoup, correspondence 1995, though in fact 29...dxc2 and a queenside pawn push is now winning for Black) 20...♗f8 21 ♖af1 ♖xf2+ 22 ♖xf2 leaves White with rook and two bishops for the queen, but his bishops are too passive and king too exposed for him to have serious hopes of winning. For example: 22...g6 (restricting the light-squared bishop) 23 c3 ♗g5+ 24 ♖f1 (or 24 ♖h1 ♗h4) 24...♗g4 25 ♗c2 (25 cxd4 ♗d1+ is a draw at once) 25...dxc3 (25...♗h3+ 26 ♖e2 ♗g4+ 27 ♖e1 ♗g1+ 28 ♖f1 ♗xh2 29 cxd4 might offer some chances) 26 bxc3 (or 26 ♗xc3 d4, keeping the dark-squared bishop a useless one) 26...b5 27 ♗c1 a5 28 ♗e3 b4 29 ♗xc5 (or 29 cxb4 d4 30 ♗f4 d3) 29...dxc3 and although White has activated his bishops somewhat, he is still a long way from finding a safe haven for his king, while Black now has counterplay with the central pawns.



12...♔f7

This is more natural than 12...♔d8.

**Question:** What's the difference?

**Answer:** When White attacks the pawn centre with b3-b4, c2-c4, or c2-c3, it is clearly preferable to have the king sitting safely on g8 rather than c7 or d8, especially if White has a rook ready on c1.

Nevertheless, 12...♔d8!? still seems playable; for example, 13 b3 (or 13 c4 ♖d6, intending 14 cxd5 ♗h4 15 g3 ♙xg3! etc) 14...♙d6 14 ♙b2 ♜f8 15 ♜ac1 (or 15 ♗f2 c5 16 b4 b6 17 a4 ♗f4 18 g3 ♗xf3 19 ♗xf3 ♜xf3 20 ♙xh7 ♔c7) 15...♙d7 16 c4 dxc3 17 ♙xc3 ♗h4 18 ♙e5 ♜e8 19 f4 ♙xe5 20 fxe5 ♗d4+ 21 ♗e3 ♗xe3+ 22 ♜xe3 g6 and the position is equal.

13 b3

Note that 13 c4, as in J.Niewold-J.Duriez, correspondence 2000, can be met by 13...dxc3 14 dxc3 ♜e8!, since the f3-pawn blocks ♗h5+, and 15 ♙e3 ♙f5 16 ♗c2 ♙xd3 17 ♗xd3 ♗g6 is just equal.

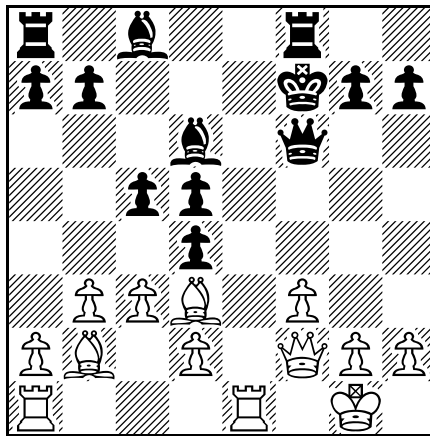
13...♙d6 14 ♙b2 ♜f8

Preparing artificial castling.

15 ♗f2

Ruifeng starts aiming at the black centre.

15...c5 16 c3



16...♔g8?

I tried to be too clever here, thinking that f2-f3 was a weak move because of the possibility of ...♗f4, winning the f3-pawn after losing the one on d4. The correct continuation was 16...dxc3! 17 ♙xc3 (or 17 dxc3 ♔g8) 17...d4, which I casually rejected because of 18 ♙c4+ ♔g6, not realizing that the king is perfectly safe on g6! For instance, after 19 ♙b2 ♗f4 20 g3 ♗xf3 21 ♗xf3 ♜xf3 22 ♙d5 ♜f8 23 ♜f1 ♜xf1+ 24 ♜xf1 ♙f5 25 ♙xb7 ♜e8, Black

has the more active pieces in an otherwise equal game.

**17 cxd4 ♗f4 18 g3 ♗xf3 19 ♗xf3 ♖xf3 20 ♖f1**

I only now realized that I was in serious trouble! The c5-pawn is in danger after ♖a3 and I also need to guard the d5-pawn after ♖g2, and then there is the matter of my abysmal development.

**20...♖d7 21 ♖g2 ♖f5**

This puts the rook on a really odd square, but what choice did I have at this stage?

**22 ♖a3!**

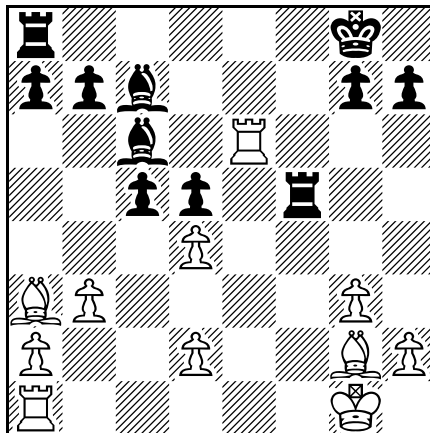
No matter how Black tries to work things out, the c5-pawn cannot be saved. It is futile to defend it with 22...b6 because of 23 dxc5 ♖xc5+ (or 23...bxc5 24 d4 and the c-pawn is a goner) 24 ♖xc5 bxc5 25 ♖ac1 ♖c8 26 ♖e7 ♖c7 27 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 28 ♖h3 ♖ff7 29 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 30 ♖xc5 and White has decent winning chances in this ending.

There is nothing left to do except hope that the pawn loss won't be too significant (some hope).

**22...♖c6 23 ♖e6**

Gaining a tempo to connect the rooks. Just taking on c5 at once, or inserting 23 ♖h3 first, is good too.

**23...♖c7!**



**Question:** Black is clearly much worse. So why award this move an exclamation mark?

**Answer:** This is my only chance of getting back into the game. The c5-pawn is lost, but how should it be captured. 24 dxc5 straightens White's pawn structure but shuts out his dark-squared bishop temporarily, while 24 ♖xc5 only gives White the advantage of a doubled d-pawn. Well, the difference between these two captures will become apparent on the next move.



**24 dxc5?**

Ironically, the capture that seemingly improves his structure is the wrong option, whereas after 24 ♗xc5! White is probably winning already. The key is that the bishop not only controls the f8-square, Black also needs to cover the e7-square; e.g. 24...♗d8 25 ♖ae1 ♗g5 26 ♜1e2 with a dominant position for White.

**24...♗e5!**

A sigh of relief for me. My bishop gets out of jail and soon has the best scope among the remaining pieces. As for the bishop on a3, well, it is now a mere spectator. Of course I am still a pawn short, but activity is just as important in rapid chess.

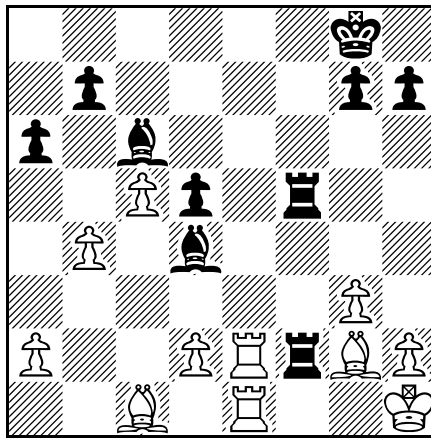
**25 ♜e1 ♗d4+ 26 ♖h1 ♜af8 27 b4 ♜f2 28 ♜6e2**

I didn't consider 28 b5!? ♗xb5 29 ♗xd5 during the game, but Black has enough to secure a draw after 29...♜f1+ 30 ♖g2 (or 30 ♜xf1 ♜xf1+ 31 ♖g2 ♜f2+ with perpetual, since 32 ♖h3? loses to 32...♗d7) 30...♜8f2+ 31 ♖h3 ♗d7 32 g4! ♗xe6 33 ♜xe6 ♜f3+ 34 ♖h4 g5+! (not 34...♜xa3?? 35 ♜e8 mate) 35 ♖xg5 ♖g7 36 ♗b4 ♜h3 37 ♜e7+ ♖f8 38 ♜e6 ♖g7 39 ♜e7+ etc.

**28...a6**

No more b4-b5 tricks

**29 ♗c1 ♜8f5!?**



**Question:** What is the point of this rook lift?

**30 a3 ♖f7**

**Answer:** That's the point, to clear the path for the king to advance, especially if White wants to liquidate my hyperactive rooks. I hope at least to get my king sufficiently centralized to issue threats to White's pawns.

**31 d3**

The line I was roughly aiming at was 31 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 32 ♜f1 ♜xf1+ 33 ♗xf1 ♖f6 34 ♖g2 ♖e5 35 ♗d3 g6 36 ♖f3 ♗a1 and I doubt White can make any headway; e.g. 37 ♗c2 (or 37

♙e3 ♗d4+ 38 ♙e2 ♗a1) 37...♙d4 38 ♙g4 ♙c4 39 ♙g5 ♗g7 and Black is alright.

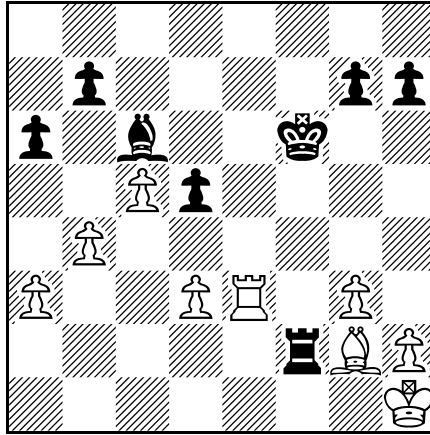
**31...♖xe2 32 ♖xe2 ♙f6!**

Forward of course!

**33 ♗e3?!**

White should try 33 g4!? ♗e5 34 g5+ ♙e7 35 ♖xe5+ ♗xe5, though Black is surely edging closer to a draw, even with a pawn deficit.

**33...♗xe3 34 ♖xe3 ♖f2**



I believe I have done enough to get a draw. To my surprise, White decided to liquidate when he really shouldn't!

**35 ♖f3+??**

Thanks to Black's advanced king, this rook trade leads to a lost ending for White. There is no way to stop the black king from marching down the queenside to collect the a- and b-pawns. Instead, 35 ♙g1 ♖a2 is just a drawn ending, as Black will quickly regain his missing pawn.

**35...♖xf3 36 ♗xf3 ♙e5**

The king cannot be denied from his queenside lunch.

**37 ♙g2 ♙d4 38 ♗e2 ♙c3 39 ♙f3 ♙b3 40 ♙f4 ♙xa3 41 ♙e5 ♙xb4 42 d4 a5 43 ♗d3 h6 44 ♙e6 ♙c3 45 ♗b1 ♙xd4 46 ♙f7 a4 47 ♙xg7 ♙xc5 48 ♙xh6 a3 49 g4 d4 50 g5 d3! 51 g6 ♗d5 0-1**

*Game 35*  
**A.Berescu-D.Dinic**  
Felix Spa 2007

**1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♞c6 3 ♗b5 f5 4 ♟c3 fxe4 5 ♗xe4 ♟f6 6 ♟xf6+ ♟xf6 7 0-0 ♟d4 8 ♟xd4 exd4 9 b3**