For Friends & Colleagues

VOLUME II

Reflections on My Profession

Mark Dvoretsky
For
Friends
&
Colleagues

by
Mark Dvoretsky

Volume 2

Reflections on My Profession

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by Mark Dvoretsky

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From the Author

In general, Volume 2 is compiled from my articles and interviews published either on the web or in chess periodicals over the last few years. However, readers will be able to find some earlier publications, with fresh chess examples in some cases and original material in this book.

There are no purely analytical studies here; we will deal with more general questions. Coaches may become interested in the articles reflecting my views on the coaching vocation, tips on the choice of chess literature and digestion of its contents, in some personal characteristics and the analysis of the factors that may influence the results shown by individual players or chess teams. Other materials reflect my views on the chess situation both in Russia and the world, as well as on problems and prospects of chess development.

The publication source for each article may be found at the end of the book. Most of my articles have been published both in Russian and in English; for those, both citations are given, Russian and English.

I had to make some corrections, both stylistic and analytical, in my earlier texts here and there. If those changes are insignificant and non-essential, I do not set them off, but, in more serious cases, the additions, explanations, and corrections are set off in a different kind of font. As usual, all citations are italicized.

Mark Dvoretsky
Moscow
March 2015
For Friends & Colleagues

Signs, Symbols and Abbreviations

!  a strong move
!! a brilliant or unobvious move
?  a weak move, an error
?? a grave error
?! a move worth consideration
?! a dubious move
=  an equal position
≥  White stands slightly better
≤  White has a clear advantage
+-  White has a winning position
≥  Black stands slightly better
≤  Black has a clear advantage
→+ Black has a winning position
∞  an unclear position
#  mate
(D) See the next diagram

SCE-1 School of Chess Excellence: Endgame Analysis
SCE-2 School of Chess Excellence: Tactical Play
SCE-3 School of Chess Excellence: Strategic Play
SCE-4 School of Chess Excellence: Opening Developments

SFC-1 School of Future Champions: Secrets of Chess Training
SFC-2 School of Future Champions: Secrets of Opening Preparation
SFC-3 School of Future Champions: Technique in Chess
SFC-4 School of Future Champions: Positional Play
SFC-5 School of Future Champions: The Development of Creative Thinking

DEM  Dvoretsky’s Endgame Manual
TIE  Tragicomedy in the Endgame
DAM  Dvoretsky’s Analytical Manual: Practical Training for the Ambitious Chessplayer
SFPP Studies for Practical Players (with Oleg Pervakov)
Competitions

I wrote many articles for various periodicals on competitions in which my students or I had participated. The specific nature of this genre is such that readers tend to lose interest in such reports in due time. However, some of those articles are not limited to accounts of the battles at some particular tournament or of its everyday details. They also comprise reflections on various teaching, sporting, and creative problems which, in my opinion, remain relevant today, as well as some vivid and instructive chess fragments. Such articles are included in this book.
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Spartakiad of Second Category Players

In 64 – Shakhmatnoye Obozreniye magazine there is a section titled “Junior.” Since about the end of 2007, they have been publishing games annotated by well-known chessplayers, which games were played by them in their youth. I also wrote such a story, but it was not a story of a single game but of a whole tournament called the “Spartakiad of Second Category Players.”

The narrative was preceded by a short introduction that you can find in the section “Beginnings” that opens the first chapter of Volume 1.

Qualifying standards were enormously high: a score of 75 percent. That meant 9 points out of 12, but, as we had to play 13 games and the standards were never rounded down, it was necessary to win 10 games out of 13. I outscored that norm by a half-point, won first place, and was awarded the first category title.

Gorelik – Dvoretsky (Round 1)
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.c4 c5 4.c3 cxd4 5.cxd4 Nc6 6.Qc2 Qe7?! 7.a3

White fails to take advantage of Black’s opening inaccuracy, well-known in theory. In Euwe-Kramer (Zaandam 1946), there followed 7.dxc5! Qc7 8.Nd4! (the exclamation mark is from the old books and notes; in fact, no less strong is 8.Na3!? 8...cxd4 9.h5 Bc5 10.Qd4!, and it is about time for Black to resign.

Unfortunately, it was not my habit then to check a reference book either before a game or after it, to look into the books in order to get to know an opening variation better, so I was doomed to repeat my mistake sooner or later. Indeed, a year later, when I was already a student in the Palace of Pioneers, my friend Sasha Shvartz caught me in the variation.

However, I managed to keep my wits about me and after 8...Qxe5 (instead of the losing 8...cxd4?) 9.0-0 (White intends to obtain an overwhelming advantage on the queenside by playing b2-b4) 9...f5 10.f4 Qf6 11.h5, started to confuse the game with the non-standard 11...exf5? (after 11...Qxf5 12.Qe3+, White’s task is simpler).

“Fritz” on my PC has no particular objections to my partner’s subsequent moves; nevertheless, the position soon becomes unclear: 12.Qe3 fxe6 13.Qxd2 0-0-0 14.Qf3 d4! 15.cxd4 Qxc5 16.Qc1 Qb6 17.Qe5 Qd5 18.Qf3 g7 19.Qxd5 Qxd5 20.Qxc6+ bxc6∞. On move 36, the game ended in a draw.

7...cxd4 8.cxd4 Qf5 9.Qc2 Qb4+ 10.Qf1 Qc7 11.a3?!
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Theory recommends here 11.h4 or 11.g3, followed by 12.g2. My opponent chooses an ineffective plan, resulting in a considerable lag in development.

11...d7 12.b4 c8 13.g4? h4 14.xh4 xh4 (with the threat of 15...xe5!) 15.e3 f6 16.f4 0-0 17.g2

Has any kind of association occurred to you in connection with the position that has been created? One did occur to me during the game. In my case, “slithering” through opening theory did not mean no interest at all in chess literature or in general chess theory. I recalled a game between Alekhine and Capablanca at the 1938 AVRO Tournament in Holland where Alekhine moved his king forward to destroy an enemy piece that had wandered into his camp.

31.g3! f7 32.xg4 h4 33.xh4 xh5+ 34.g3 f7 35.f3, and Black resigned.

So, I started to worry about losing my bishop after a king move to h3. I did not want to take on e5 with my pawn because of the reply 18.dxe5. Of course, I thought about a reciprocal attack on

My dad watches my friendly game against Sasha Shvartz.
Near Moscow, summer of 1967.
For Friends & Colleagues

the vulnerable c2-knight. Having figured out a forced (as it seemed to me then) variation, I immediately saw its impressive concluding move.

17...\textit{Qc7!} 18.\textit{Qh3} \textit{Qa4}

There is a simpler way to play: 18...\textit{Qg6} 19.\textit{Qd3} \textit{fxe5} 20.\textit{Qxg6} (20.\textit{fxe5} \textit{Qf2}) 20...\textit{fxe4}+, but I was so enchanted with the idea I had found that I was not looking around anymore.

And, I did not look around later either; this game was not subjected to critical analysis for many years after it was played. The reason is obvious. Subconsciously, I did not wish to throw doubt on an idea I was justifiably proud of. And, only recently, Fritz the Merciless put everything in its place; it became clear that Black had many ways to obtain a great advantage, and the one chosen by me, although not bad, objectively is not the best.

19.\textit{Qd3} \textit{c5}

There are worthy alternatives here as well; for example, this combination is very strong: 19...\textit{Qxc2} 20.\textit{Qxc2} \textit{fxe5} 21.\textit{Qxh4} exf4, followed by 22...\textit{e5}+

20.\textit{d2} \textit{Qc7} 21.\textit{Qhc1} \textit{Qc8} 22.\textit{Qa2}

22...\textit{Qc1}!!

Right under three strikes! In \textit{Lasker's Manual of Chess}, which was unavailable to me at the time, such thrusts are called “desperado.” The world champion showed that pieces seemingly doomed to death are capable of all kinds of craziness. I will speak of “desperadoes” at greater length in the opening section of the chapter dedicated to the art of coaching.

Understandably enough, I have never ever considered any other move, although 22...\textit{fxe5} 23.dxe5 (23.\textit{fxe5} \textit{g5}) 23...\textit{g5}! (but not 23...\textit{Qg6} 24.\textit{Qxg6} \textit{hxg6}, counting on 25.\textit{Qxh4}? \textit{g5+!}, because of 25.\textit{Qd4!} 24.\textit{fxg5} \textit{Qxe5}+) is not bad.

23.\textit{Qxe1} \textit{Qxc2} 24.\textit{Qxc2} \textit{Qxc2} 25.\textit{Qxc2} \textit{Qxc2} 26.\textit{Qxf6} (this is preferable to exchange queens immediately) 26...\textit{gxf6}

The picture of the battle has changed sharply. Black has a clear advantage because of the opponent’s “bad” bishop (it has been my favorite positional theme since childhood!) and my possession of the open c-file. However, this latter factor becomes irrelevant if White manages to knock all the major pieces off the board.

27.\textit{Qc2}!!

27.\textit{Qxc2} \textit{Qxc2} 28.\textit{Qc1} is better, on which Black replies 28...\textit{Qc4}+. The text move allows him to create an attack with queens still on the board, continuing 27...\textit{Qg6}+, but I was already in the mood for a favorable endgame.

27...\textit{Qxd2} 28.\textit{Qxd2} \textit{Qf7} 29.\textit{Qe3} \textit{Qc2} 30.\textit{Qxe1} \textit{Qc4} 31.\textit{Qd3} \textit{b5}!

Correct: my opponent’s pawns are fixed on the squares which are the color of his bishop.
32.\texttt{g3} \texttt{c8}!

The knight comes closer to the “holes” in the pawn chain, the e4- and c4-squares.

33.\texttt{f3} \texttt{d6} 34.\texttt{e2} \texttt{c2}+ 35.\texttt{d2} \texttt{c3} 36.\texttt{d3} \texttt{d3}

The temptation to win a pawn was too strong. Although it is not impossible that, with rooks still on the board, it would have been easier for Black to make the best of his advantage.

37.\texttt{x3} \texttt{d6} 38.\texttt{f2} \texttt{a3} 39.\texttt{g3} \texttt{g6} 40.\texttt{h3} \texttt{c4} 41.\texttt{f2} \texttt{d6} 42.\texttt{e1} \texttt{e4} 43.\texttt{e3}

In this position, the game was adjourned. I had to analyze it myself; computer programs did not exist in those days, and I had no coach. Of course, I evaluated my position as easily winning, but, to my surprise, it all turned out to be not so simple. In the end, I managed to find a correct plan. As it turned out, my analysis was very useful for the future; it helped me to understand important peculiarities of similar endings.

A knight by itself cannot win the game. Black has to create a path to his opponent’s camp for his king. For that, you have to exchange one or two pairs of pawns on the kingside.

The immediate 43...\texttt{f5} is a mistake because of 44.\texttt{g5}, so I sealed the move 43...\texttt{h6}. 44.\texttt{f3}

My opponent chose a waiting tactic. During analysis, I had to account for a more active try, 44.\texttt{h4}?. On the direct 44...\texttt{h5}?, White replies 45.\texttt{f5+! e\texttt{x}f5} 46.\texttt{gxh5+ d\texttt{x}h5} 47.\texttt{f4}, with sufficient counterplay. I intended 44...\texttt{d6} 45.\texttt{h5+ f7}, with a subsequent \texttt{e8-g7} (taking the h5-pawn in my sights), and only then \texttt{f6-f5}. I do not know how convincing that plan was, but I did not see a better one.

44...\texttt{d6} 45.\texttt{c3} \texttt{c8}!

Now, it was already possible to play \texttt{f6-f5}, then exchange on \texttt{g4} and \texttt{h6-h5}. But what then? The white king gets in the way of the black one! It was the “principle of two weaknesses” (about which I had not the slightest idea at the time, of course) that came to my aid. Transferring the knight to \texttt{c6} creates a threat of breaking through with \texttt{a7-a5}; and to prevent this breakthrough, the white king must get closer to the queenside. Then, undermining the pawn chain on the kingside has more force.

46.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e7} 47.\texttt{d2} \texttt{f5}! 48.\texttt{e1} \texttt{f4} 49.\texttt{h4} \texttt{h5}

Black’s knight is positioned ideally. On 50.\texttt{g5}, the continuation 50...\texttt{d5+ 51.e3} \texttt{h4} 52.\texttt{f2} \texttt{h3} 53.\texttt{g1} \texttt{g3} decides matters. And, the main idea of Black’s plan is displayed in the variation 50.\texttt{h3} \texttt{h4+ 51.\texttt{x}h4} \texttt{e6!} 52.\texttt{c3} \texttt{a5} 53.\texttt{bxa5} \texttt{b4} 54.\texttt{d2} \texttt{b3} 55.\texttt{c3} \texttt{a5.}
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50.g×h5+ ęd×h5 51.ędf3 ęc6
52.ęd3

The same thing again: 52.ęc3 a5!
53.b×a5 b4++.

52...ęg4

In my comments on an episode from an ending in the first Karpov-Kasparov match, I wrote:

In such positions, the opponent’s king is slowly pushed back, the knight comes to f3, and after the king’s forced retreat, the black king goes to f3, followed by another knight check, etc. (In relation to this endgame, the specific squares and the color of the pieces have been changed). As you can see, I mastered this typical plan back in my childhood game with Gorelik.

53.ęd2 ęe7 54.ęc1 ęg6

54...ęf5+ corresponded to the plan described above, but it is also possible to play this way: first gobble the pawn, and only then, drive the king back.

55.ęd2 ęxf4 56.ęc3 ęg6 57.ęb2 ęc7 58.ęc3 ęf5+ 59.ęd3 ęf3 60.ęc1 ęc7 61.ęb4 ęg6 62.ęf6 ęf4+ 63.ęd2 ęe4 64.ęe5 ęg2 65.ęf6 ęc3 66.ęe5 ęc4+ White resigned.

The grandmaster did not spoil his opponents with a variety of openings (a line from my favorite novel by Ilf and Petrov, The Twelve Chairs), and I also followed the example of the “great con man” Ostap Bender. In my next game, as Black, as in almost all my subsequent ones, my favorite French Defense was played.

Komov – Dvoretsky (Round 3) (D)

19.h4! ęh4?!

Impudent play. Black does not want to defend accurately with 19..ęfe8 20.h5 (20.ęh7?? ęh7!) 21.h5 ęc3 22.h×g6+ ęxg6 23.ęg2 ęd4 24.ęd1, and only after a queen retreat, 25.ęh1+ is unclear) 20...ęf8 21.ęh6 ęc3.

Objectively, the best reply is 19...ęh6! 20.ęe6, and now either 20...ęf4 21.ęd2 ęg5??, with a sharp position, or 20...ęe6? 21.ę×g6 ęc3, with good play for Black. Here, and later, I am giving (far from exhaustive) variations only for objectivity; in second-category tournaments, no one calculates them accurately. That is a difficult task even for masters and grandmasters.

The main drawback of the text move is the opening of the h-file, on which White will attack. By luring his opponent’s king there (20...ęh7+! ęh8 21.ęg3! , but not 21.ęd3 ęc3), he achieves a decisive advantage.

For example, 21...ęd3+ (sacrifice of a piece for two or three pawns does not help either: 21...ęc3 22.ęh4 ęd4 23.ęg3, with a subsequent ęg2) 22.ęg2! (22.ęf3 ęh7 is unclear) 22...ęcd2 (22...ęg5 23.ęg5 ęh7 24.ęh1+ ęg8 25.ęh5++) 23.ęf3 ęxh1 24.ęfx1 (24.ęd3 ęxg3 25.ęxg3 ęg8 26.ęh1 ęfd8 27.ęh5 is also good,
intending $\text{h}1$ and $\text{g}5$) 24...$\text{h}7$
25.$\text{h}1+$ $\text{g}8$ 26.$\text{h}5$ $\text{xc}2$ 27.$\text{h}1$
$\text{f}6$ 28.$\text{e}x\text{f}6$ $\text{g}x\text{f}6$ 29.$\text{g}5+$ (or
29.$\text{d}6+-$).

20.$\text{h}\times\text{h}7$?

My opponent was tempted with an
attack on the rook, hoping to mate me
after 20...$\text{e}88$ 21.$\text{g}5！$ $\text{f}3+$ 22.$\text{g}2$
$\text{g}x\text{g}5$ (22...$\text{x}d4$ 23.$\text{f}6+$ $\text{f}8$
24.$\text{h}1$) 23.$\text{g}x\text{g}5$. However, Black
could defend successfully here too, by
continuing 21...$\text{g}6$! (instead of
21...$\text{f}3+$?), as 22.$\text{f}6+$ $\text{g}6$ 23.$\text{h}x\text{f}6$
$\text{d}2$ does not work. And, on 22.$\text{c}4$
(with the idea of 22...$\text{x}c4$? 23.$\text{c}6$+!),
there follows 22...$\text{h}7$ or 22...$\text{c}3$.

I solved this problem in a much
simpler way, with a positional exchange
sacrifice.

20...$\text{c}3$!

In such a sharp position, the rook
is no more valuable than a minor piece.
And time is what is really important
here. It is vital to create reciprocal
threats as quickly as possible.
Counterplay in the center, according
to the well-known classical principle, is
the best way of opposing a flank attack..

For a sophisticated player, the
solution for Black is probably obvious,
but, for a young second-category
player, this was a small discovery.

21.$\text{f}8$ $\text{f}8$
21...$\text{x}d4$! is stronger.

22.$\text{e}3$

22.$\text{g}5$ $\text{f}3+$ 23.$\text{g}2$ $\text{c}d4$ (for
24.$\text{h}1$ is threatened) 24.$\text{f}4$ (24.$\text{c}3$?
$\text{e}5+$) 24...$\text{x}f4$ 25.$\text{c}x\text{f}4$ $\text{c}x\text{e}5$? (or
25...$\text{f}x\text{e}5$) leads to a favorable
endgame for Black.

22.$\text{g}3$? $\text{d}4$! (22...$\text{f}3$?+ 23.$\text{g}2$, with a subsequent $\text{h}1$)
23.$\text{h}4$ $\text{g}4+$ 24.$\text{g}3$ $\text{e}5$ 25.$\text{f}4$
$\text{f}3+$ deserves attention, and now,
White either agrees to a repetition of
moves, 26.$\text{g}2$ $\text{h}4+$ 27.$\text{g}1$ $\text{f}3+$, or
continues the battle in the double-edged
position that arises after 26.$\text{h}1$
$\text{h}3+$ 27.$\text{h}2$ $\text{c}6$?

22...$\text{f}3$+ 23.$\text{g}2$ $\text{d}4$
24.$\text{c}d4$?

A hasty exchange. 24.$\text{h}1$ $\text{e}8$ is
better, with mutual chances.

24...$\text{x}d4$ 25.$\text{g}5$

25...$\text{e}5$?
The simple 25...$\text{e}5$ brings Black
a clear advantage. Without thinking
twice, I made a natural-looking move,
attacking everything at once ($\text{g}4$, $\text{c}2$,
$\text{d}3$), after which my opponent could
force a draw. Alas, I was not able to rid
myself of this kind of “flunk”
throughout my entire playing career.

26.$\text{h}1$ $\text{g}8$
26...$\text{e}8$ 27.$\text{g}7$ also led to
equality. For instance: 27...$\text{x}c2$
(27...$\text{g}4+$ 28.$\text{g}4$ $\text{g}4$ 29.$\text{h}4$! $\text{f}5$
30.$\text{f}3$ is risky) 28.$\text{h}8+$ $\text{f}7$ 29.$\text{b}5+$
(29.$\text{c}8$ $\text{d}3$ 30.$\text{g}8+$) 29...$\text{c}7$
30.$\text{c}8+$ $\text{c}8$ 31.$\text{c}1$ $\text{e}4+$ 32.$\text{g}1$
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Neither player noticed the interesting retort 28...f5?! On 28...g6, it is possible to play 29.h4 (the g4-pawn is defended). On the other hand after 29...g6 30...xg6 f×g6, the position remains drawn. 28...f6 29.h8+ f7 30.h5+ f6 31...xg6 f×g6 32...h8 e×f5 33.g×f5 (33...g7+ f6) 33...c6 34.g×g6+ f5 probably leads to the same outcome, but via a more complicated path.

28...g8 29.h5??

Fighting spirit triumphs over reason – this reminded me of a phrase from Bronstein’s book about the 1953 Candidates Tournament. My opponent does not want to repeat moves, but playing for a win turns out to be playing for a loss.

29...g×g4+ 30.g×g4 c×g4
31.b3 f5
Black has too many pawns for the exchange, and his opponent does not manage to win a piece.

32.b1 b6 33.g3? c×c2!
A straightforward tactic: 34.c1
c3.
34...c2 35.0-0 f6 36...b1 37.b3 f7 38.f3?
g5+ White resigned.

Weak play? Of course it was weak, but it was not devoid of ideas.

Dvoretsky – Romanov (Round 6)
1.d4 f6 2.c4 e5 3.d3 c5 4.e3 d6 5.g3 d5 6...d3 0-0 7.0-0 c×d4
8.c×d4 d×c4 9.g×c4 b6 10.g5 a6 11.b7 12.a2 c7 (11...b2)
12.f1 (12.f1) 12...c7?
13.b3 (13.a1) 13...c6
14.a1 ac8

The typical breakthrough in the center, 15.d5, suggests itself. However, after 15...exd5 16...xex5 a×d5 17...xg5 h6, White does not obtain anything. 16...xf6...d6 (there is also 17...d4? 18...f6+ g×f6 19.d4 c×c1=) is useless too.

Despite my younger age and low chess qualification, I managed to find an unusual solution to the problem. As a result, I not only won the point I needed, but also added a useful little brick to the wall of my future strategic arsenal.

15.d5! c×d5 16...d5! This move, when it is not the knight that is being exchanged, but the bishop, is discussed in the book School of Future Champions 2, “In the Footsteps of One Game.”

16...e8 17.c4
This queen thrust seemed very strong to me, but my computer confirms that this is not the case for the reply 17...e5, and it suggests, instead, 17.f×d5+, with the idea of 18.f5.

17...e5 18.d5 b8
19.f4
Black is defenseless. On 19...a8, the move 20.c×c7 is decisive, and on 19...d6, either 20.d6 d×d6 21.g×b6, or 20.f6+ g×f6 21.d×d6 e8 22.f4+.

19.a5 20.c×e7+ b×e7
21.c×c8! Black resigned.

Not all my games ended so favorably. I suffered two defeats and made one draw, and I had to score 1½ points in the last two rounds to achieve the first-category norm. I had to play Black in both games. However at that