

# MY CHESS WORLD

by  
David Navara



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# KEY TO SYMBOLS

!	a good move
?	a weak move
!!	an excellent move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
□	only move
=	equality
∞	unclear position
∞	with compensation for the sacrificed material
±	White stands slightly better
∓	Black stands slightly better
±	White has a serious advantage
∓	Black has a serious advantage
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
→	with an attack
↑	with initiative
↔	with counterplay
△	with the idea of
▷	better is
≤	worse is
N	novelty
+	check
#	mate





# TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This book is a fully-revised combination of two collections of David Navara's games and blogposts published in Czech, *Můj šachový svět* (Prague, 2015) and *Můj světový šach* (Prague, 2017). The titles, *My Chess World* and *My World Chess*, betray the fact that David doesn't only like to play chess, he also likes to play with words. I have tried to maintain his unique voice and the spirit of his writing in English.

The correct heading above should be 'Translators' note' because there was more than one translator involved in the production of this book, largely David and I, but some games were also translated by GM Igor Štohl. Translating with the author means that the work remains very much David's.

I'm not a professional translator or a professional chess player, but a chess enthusiast who happens to speak English and Czech. You may note that certain words appear regularly in the book. 'Luckyly' is one of them. I count myself very lucky to have cooperated with David on this book. It has been a rewarding experience. Experts maintain that luck does not exist, but that it is chance experienced individually. It was a chance meeting in Prague that led to our cooperation on this book.

My thanks go to David for giving me this opportunity, as well as for his patience and diligence. Thanks also to Pavel Matocha for his support. Finally, I thank my wife, Ludmila, for her always helpful suggestions and long-suffering understanding.

Mike Kwan, Munich, October 2019



# PREAMBLE – THE DIFFICULT LIFE OF THE ANNOTATOR

I feel that for a career as a professional chess player to make sense, it must be devoted to a considerable degree to the public. This is why I agreed to write the book you now have in front of you. I publish many of my games for the chess public, but don't take only the result into consideration. I often include my losses. There were considerably more in the original Czech book, but when working on the English version, I decided that my opponents can write up their victories over me themselves.

There might appear to be nothing easier than annotating your own games, but it's actually not that easy. I often come up against the so-called Navara Antinomy:

1. Substantial games are interesting.
2. Substantial games require extensive annotations.
3. Extensive annotations are boring.

I couldn't make this a true paradox, but that wasn't really my aim, quite the opposite!

Interestingly, my writing style differs from my reading tastes, not only in writing articles, but maybe even more so in annotating games. As a reader, I like concise and clear comments without too many variations, whereas as an annotator, the unrealised possibilities generally appear too important to leave out. I would like to assure you that I offer the reader my personal insights into how a player thinks, combined with important computer precision.

I made extensive use of chess programs in the annotations, but I generally do not reference them. When I do refer to Stockfish, Komodo or other engines, it indicates the absence of my own thoughts, rather like the expressions 'anyway', 'that is to say' or 'well' in colloquial language.

I recall how Pavel Matocha once told me that I should give fewer variations, but more diagrams and written commentary. He emphasised that many people don't play through annotations, and generally skip long variations. I had to smile, because I myself belong to that

group of readers. Despite this, I haven't learnt how to write concisely. Often something jumps into my head and I diverge completely from the original topic. What did I actually want to write about?

About my own play of course. I can immodestly claim that I have played many interesting games in the course of my career. Rather more humbly, I should add that they were often far from perfect.

No matter how I write this book, it couldn't include all the games I would like to see in it. For this publication, I have chosen almost exclusively games played at a classical (slow) time control. I generally chose games against strong opponents and avoided games which I have already annotated for Chess-Base. I made some changes from the Czech version, and included sever-

al games from my most successful competitions.

I don't rule out writing another book, but I have no plans at the moment because I've seen how much work it is to write.

Finally, I would like to thank my grandparents and parents for all the care which they have devoted to me, all my trainers for helping me develop my talent and Pavel Matocha for the opportunity to exercise my acquired ability. As well as Pavel, I thank everyone who contributed to the production of this publication, in particular Mike Kwan for the translations and GM Igor Štohl for his great help with annotations to four of the games presented below. And last but not least, I thank you, the reader. Although it may not always appear so, I didn't write this book for myself!

# LIFE ON SIXTY-FOUR SQUARES – MY CHESS BIOGRAPHY

## ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCES

I have no recollection of it, but according to reliable sources, I was born on 27 March 1985. My father was a mathematician and university lecturer, my mother a dentist. They have remained in their professions. I didn't have any proper work at birth, and that has remained the same with me as well.

A lot of time has passed since then. I went through nineteen years of schooling, which must have left its mark on me. I learnt a great deal at school, then forgot a great deal as well. Nothing has changed up to now. I've been a fully-fledged professional chess player since I was twenty-five. You could question whether a lot or only a little has changed since then, but I'm not going to go into that here.

Since this book is dedicated to chess, I will try to outline my chess biography. I make no claim to completeness. If you know my style of

annotation, you will surely understand that if I was to write about every detail of my career, I would produce a long, chaotic and boring book. I leave it to you to judge how well I have managed to achieve it.

## BORN A KANGAROO

I began to play chess at the age of six. Apparently I was being naughty because I was bored, so my grandmother gave me a chess book.

It helped me a lot. The first book you read should be written in such a way that it doesn't remain the last one you ever read. It shouldn't only tell you the rules, but also be interesting and instructive. I was lucky in this regard, and it stayed with me. When my parents recognised that my interest in chess was serious, they decided to find a chess club for me.

A work colleague of my father, Prof. Pavel Pták, a strong practical and correspondence player, recommended the TJ Bohemians Prague club. The club's nickname is the 'Kangaroos', a legacy of a 1927 tour

of Australia where the club was given two live kangaroos which they donated to Prague zoo.

On my first visit, they put me in with the absolute beginners. It soon turned out that I didn't belong there, so by the second lesson, I was already amongst the moderately advanced.

Our youth group was run by Mr Zdeněk Müller, a kind man of pensionable age with a decent understanding of the game. He evidently had educational talent, because from my group of about eight pupils alone, one became a GM and two others IMs. Mr Müller showed us various classic games and impressive combinations, and also left us to play each other.

The best player at that time was Jiří Jirka, who was (and still is) about two years older than me, and had already had success at national level. As a child I dedicated a lot of time to chess and eagerly read various chess books. I thus already knew a number of the games they showed us at the club.

I didn't know other games, but nevertheless I could often discover the correct tactical twist so quickly that Mr Müller and others thought that I knew the example.

I definitely had talent, but it wasn't so easy to break through in tournaments. The age of the thirteen-year-old GM had not yet arrived. In 1994, I won the U10 national championship for the first time. A year later, when I made 9/9, the Czech chess officials decided that instead of playing in the national championship, I would only play a match with the winner in my age group for qualification for the World Youth Championship. Back then, most countries only sent one player in each category, but I twice increased the number of Czech participants in my age group to two by winning a medal at the previous World Youth Championship.



First chess photo of David Navara  
[archive of David Navara].

## TRAINERS AND CLUBS

At that time, there was quite a lot happening. My first personal trainer was CM Antonín Ambrož. Afterwards I began to train with CM Miloslav Vanka, and thanks to the initiative of several people, we succeeded in arranging training sessions with GM Luděk Pachman. He spent most of his time in Germany, so there weren't that many sessions, but Mr Pachman was very generous to me, my parents and others. He didn't ask for payment for the sessions and was pleased when I occasionally brought a mistake in one of his books to his attention. He wrote a lot of them, and they significantly helped my chess development.

As a child, I played for the TJ Bohemians Prague youth team with Jiří Jirka and Lukáš Černoušek and we often also met at national events. At the time, I was a bit of an enfant terrible. My friends shared my passion for blitz, but it took me a while to realise that not everyone wants to blitz at six in the morning.

At eleven years of age I switched to the DP Mláď Prague club and was placed under the wing of IM Josef Příbyl. We considered moving a year earlier, but my parents decided (probably after consulting with

me as well) to leave me as a 'Bohemian'. I remember being less than impressed by the offer of number nine in their Extra League lineup — after all, it's played over eight boards! At the time, I didn't know about the problems with players being unavailable for matches, so I didn't take up the offer until a year later. The chance to play in the Czech Extra League, and especially individual training with IM Příbyl, distinctly hastened my chess growth. He was also very generous, both financially and with his time.

Primarily due to his guidance, I became an IM in the space of a few years, during which I won a bronze medal in the U12 World Juniors in Cannes in 1997 and silver in the U14s in Oropesa del Mar a year later. I gained my final IM norm in a closed international tournament in Olomouc in 1999. That same year, after consulting with my parents and other people, I moved to the Dům armády Prague club in order to train with GM Vlastimil Jansa. Training with him significantly helped me with openings, and fundamentally improved my feel for strategy. Immediately following this move, I played very poorly at the World U14s, making only 50%, but a year later, I finished sixth in the European U20s in Avilés and fifth in the World U18s in Oropesa

del Mar. GM Jansa trained me until 2004, and after a four-year break, we started up again with renewed vigour. From 2007, I frequently worked with GM Igor Štohl and IM Michal Konopka, and trained about six times with IM Mark Izrailevich Dvoretsky, the renowned Russian trainer and author for decades of great chess books.

Looking back, I can say that I was exceptionally lucky with my trainers. I worked with the right people at the right stages of my chess development. During my career, I have met many people who contributed to my chess growth, so many that

it's not possible to name them all. Thank you!

Allow me to make an observation about my frequent moves between clubs. In my case, time has smoothed over the occasional disagreement, so that I became a strong player and have friends and acquaintances in my many previous clubs, but many don't enjoy the luck that I had.

If you think that I stayed with one club after coming of age, I must disappoint you. In 2003, *Dům armády* were relegated from the Extra League, and after the captains had consulted, we moved with GM



David Navara at a book signing of the legendary GM Luděk Pachman  
(archive of David Navara).



Jansa to the Mahrla Prague club. My first season was very poor, but I stayed with the club and my results improved over time, particularly with the memorable gold medal in the 2008–9 season. Mr Mahrla did a great deal for the club in his role as cornerstone and generous sponsor, and I think that the victory brought great satisfaction to him. Several years later, the club experienced a poor season and surprisingly went down. Since then, I have had a long and fruitful link with the Nový Bor chess club, of which more later.

## FOR THE HOMELAND

I've been particularly successful representing the Czech Republic in team events. In 2001, at my first appearance at the European Team Championships in León in Spain, I surprisingly made 7/9 on board two, exceeding the GM norm by 1.5 points! Without the (unintentional) help of my opponents, I could never have achieved such a result, but even so, I rate this performance as an exceptional success. Despite playing well in subsequent years for the Czech Republic, I only achieved comparable successes several years later. I would also like to mention in particular the 2006 Olympiad in Turin, where I scored 8.5/12 on board one, placing me amongst the

world elite, the European Championships in Crete in 2007 and 2017, where I scored 6/9 on board one on both occasions, and above all, the 2012 Olympiad in Istanbul where I won the gold medal for board two with 9.5/11, the second-best performance in the whole event.

My successes are not limited to team competitions. In 2004, I finished sixth in the European Individual Championship in Antalya, Turkey. That was the first time I made the World Cup, in which I have played regularly ever since. It's true that I didn't qualify in 2013, but received a wild card. I've had other good results in this championship, the best being 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> places in Jerusalem in 2015. I was very pleased with a silver medal because I've had as many unsuccessful European competitions as successful ones. I had my best result in the World Cup in 2011 in Khanty-Mansiysk in Russia, when I made it to the quarter-finals, but after winning four matches, I lost to GM Alexander Grischuk. I was close to winning this one as well, but my frequent companions, nerves and carelessness, brought about my downfall. But I accept that the responsibility for my mistakes is fully mine.

Of other successes in individual competitions, I can mention unex-

pectedly finishing first on tiebreak with 9.5/11 in the massive rapid chess tournament in Mainz in 2007. Over 700 players finished behind me, including GMs Ivanchuk, Kamsky, Mamedyarov, Grischuk and many others. In December 2014, I won the European Blitz Championship in Wrocław. The top European players weren't there, but that wasn't my fault. There were about sixty GMs, so it wasn't a weak tournament.

## GOLD NEVER LOSES ITS LUSTRE

I'd like to add a few words about the Czech championships. For various reasons, I've often not participated in the top Czech competition in classical chess, but I've almost always returned from my home championship with a medal. When I first played in 2001, I shared 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> places. From 2004 to 2019, I won every Czech championship in classical chess that I took part in. In total, I finished first nine times, seven times on my own and twice on tiebreak. I particularly remember the competition in Ostrava in 2010. In an open tournament with almost all the top Czech players, practically everything went right for me. I finished with 8.5/9, and only missed out on 100% through

a draw in the last round with GM Tomáš Polák.

Man lives not by classical chess alone. What would life be like without blitz, rapid or Fischer Random chess? I have won several national championships in all these disciplines, I believe, eight times in both Fischer Random and blitz, and six times in rapid chess. On several occasions, I only won on tiebreak, so at this point I would like to thank Herr Buchholz.

I've been part of the winning team in the Czech Extra League seven times, once with ŠK Mahrla Prague and six times with the Nový Bor chess club. With Nový Bor, we once won gold at the European Club Cup in Rhodes in 2013, and three times silver, at Bilbao in 2014, Rhodes in 2018 and Ulcinj in 2019, although I have to admit that these successes were largely down to my teammates. After all, the team finished third in Rogaška Slatina in 2011 before I joined them.

I have helped my team, Katowice, to win the Polish league several times, but my contribution to those successes was not that great except for the years 2015 and 2018, whereas in 2009 I was one of the main architects of the ETF Osijek team victory in the Croatian league. My

best league results came in Britain's Four Nations Chess League in 2005–6, and in the German Bundesliga in 2016–17, when in both cases, I achieved 6/6. En passant, I also managed this in Poland, but in Britain and in Germany I didn't get the chance to spoil my result by the end of the competition.

## PLAY MAGNUS

I have also played in some elite tournaments, but mostly without much success. My results in Wijk aan Zee 2007 (6.5/13), Reggio Emilia 2010–11 (5/9), Biel 2015 (5.5/10) and perhaps also Shamkir 2019 (4/9) can be considered moderate successes, whereas most of my other performances in elite tournaments can be considered neither successes nor moderate. I have always found it difficult to prepare adequately for such events, mostly starting the real work only when the tournament was about to begin and getting tired towards the end. That said, I finished shared first (second behind Luke McShane, to be honest) in the Tata Steel Challengers in 2011 with 8.5/13, ahead of many strong players, and clear second with 10/13 in 2015 behind Wei Yi, who scored an incredible +8! That said, I am one of the highest-rated players never to have

won a strong international tournament with a classical time control.

## NOT ALL TITLES ARE THE SAME

Talking of titles, I have also achieved a masters degree in Logic at the Charles University in Prague. It took me six years and cost me sweat, toil and tears; maybe only Churchill's blood was missing. But it ended well, and without loss of life. Having sat my finals in the summer of 2010, I took a sober look at my logic skills and lack thereof, and became a professional chess player. This markedly deepened my relationship with my suitcase, and in the darker moments of my current career I can look back on my logic studies with nostalgia. I had a lot of good times at college, even if the exam season was not among the best of them. I recollect one of my exam moments: "Prove this theorem", the professor asked, and I proved unable to do so.

## I'LL GET IT RIGHT SOONER OR LATER!

My chess biography would not be complete without mentioning the Prague matches organised by Pavel

Matocha and the Prague Chess Society, the first of which took place in the autumn of 2003. Over time, I have encountered many personalities of the chess world in Prague: GMs Viktor Korchnoi, Alexei Shirov, Anatoly Karpov, Vladimir Kramnik, Vassily Ivanchuk, Judit Polgár, Hou Yifan, Wesley So, Peter Svidler, Hikaru Nakamura and others. True, the vast majority ended in my defeat. In addition, I lost a match 1.5–4.5 with Viktor Láznička in Nový Bor in 2011. Sometimes it feels like I've lost the most matches of any Czech or Czechoslovak players! It reminds me of this joke. A patient asks the doctor before a difficult operation: "Doctor, how many times have you performed this operation?". "Eleven", replies the doctor. "That's reassuring", says the patient. "Yes, I'll get it right sooner or later!", says the doc.

## SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Those who know me know that I like chess a lot. I know myself even better and know that too, however I'm not exactly sure what my love of chess consists of. I undoubtedly enjoy chess enough to be able to read about it for long stretches, but on the other hand I often lack the patience to solve difficult problems, and during tournaments I oc-

asionally lose the appetite to play. It's clear that my relationship with chess cannot only be explained by rational arguments.

## A GENTLE WARNING

Based on this text, you might have the impression that my chess journey from first steps right up to super-tournaments was a walk in the park. I have to correct this impression in case I create too rosy a picture for parents and trainers of gifted children.

The path to the top is rarely easy. You need a lot of patience and sometimes also self-denial. Talent can make a big difference, but even so, the journey is demanding, both for the player and those around him.

It was difficult for me to combine tournaments and studying. I've experienced great times as well as unpleasant conflicts at the board, and, due to my calling, there are a number of things I've never got around to. I can't drive or dance, and my knowledge of films and TV series is minimal. If your child or protégé sets off on the journey to top chess, he/she will have to overcome many obstacles, perhaps different to those that I encountered, but probably just as difficult. I could expand at length

on this topic, but I don't want to. Chess is my choice. It has given me a lot: fun, success, friends, self-realisation, money, popularity, memo-

ries and the chance to travel. I could go on. If I want all the nice things chess can offer, I have to be prepared to sacrifice something.



# BLOG PAST ITS SELL-BY DATE

Thanks for this book are primarily due to Pavel Matocha, including the perseverance with which he drove me on whenever I faltered with the commissioned work. I've been annotating my games for chess magazines since my childhood, and even though there is a certain difference between a book and a magazine, that task is entirely within

my means. But Pavel (partly) convinced me that the book should also include my blogs.

I never kept a diary as a child, and began to write a blog for the Prague Chess Society around 2009, starting as an overly-prolific author and ending up as an inactive one, having been disappointed by increasing



Editor and publisher Pavel Matocha and I presenting two different editions of the new book [Photo by Anežka Kružíková].

rudeness on the internet. But how to adapt blogs for a book? I mainly wrote my articles as news, in which I tried to record the current events in my life, many of which have now been forgotten beyond recall. Yet a book should be timeless. This is easier said than done. Hopefully you will excuse the unseemly comparison, but I feel like a salesman who has to polish up old goods so that they look new. I sincerely hope that my essays cause you no discomfort despite being past their sell-by date. In any case, returns will not be accepted.

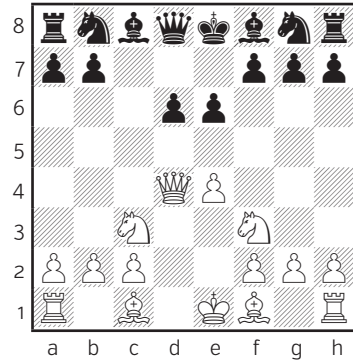
## 1

- ▶ **Emil Sutovsky [2664]**
- ▶ **David Navara [2499]**

Leon 2001

This game was played in the opening round of my first and, for some time, most successful European Team Championship. I got the opportunity to play strong opponents and seized the chance with both hands. I managed to garner seven points from nine games and win the silver medal for my board.

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 d6 4.d4 cxd4  
5.♙xd4



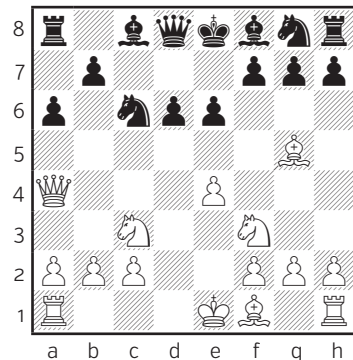
### 5...a6

Alternatively 5...♘c6 6.♙b5 transposing to the variation 2...d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♙xd4, which I didn't actually want to play.

### 6.♙g5

6.♙e3 was interesting, with the idea 7.♙b6. I intended to reply 6...b5 with good play, e.g. 7.o-o-o ♘c6 8.♙b6 ♙d7.

### 6...♘c6 7.♙a4



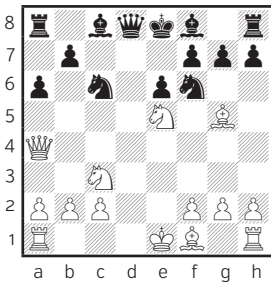


After the normal 7. ♖d2 ♜f6 the position would be equal.

**7...f6?!**

Black weakens the e6-pawn, but on the other hand, the queen on a4 is poorly placed. Originally I gave this move an exclamation mark, but it is time to correct this assessment.

Given that 7... ♖c7 8. ♞d5!? exd5 9. exd5 with a subsequent 10. dxc6 (unless Black plays 9... b5? 10. ♙xb5) might be slightly better for White due to his more compact pawn structure, while 7... ♙e7 8. ♙xe7 ♞gxe7 9. o-o-o o-o 10. ♖a3 leaves the d-pawn exposed, Black should probably play 7... ♜f6, when 8. e5 dx5 9. ♞x5



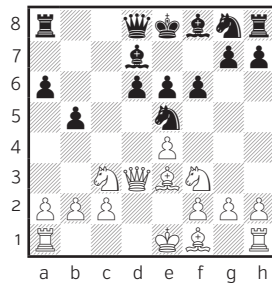
9... ♙d7 (even 9... ♖c7!? 10. ♞xc6 ♙d7! 11. o-o-o ♙xc6 12. ♙b5 ♙e7 13. ♙xc6+ bxc6 is around equal, as Black's pawn islands on the queenside cannot be annexed in the midgame) 10. ♞xd7 ♖xd7 is probably equal, as White's knight is not greatly placed.

**8. ♙e3 ♙d7**

Black could also play 8... ♞ge7 and 9... ♞g6, but I wanted to attack White's queen. This eventually worked out well, but White could have improved on his following move.

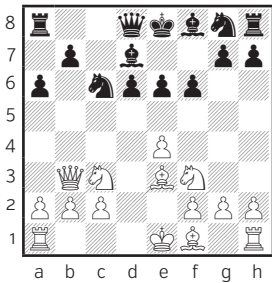
**9. ♞d4?!**

a) On 9. ♖c4 b5 10. ♖d3 GM Sotovsky suggested the interesting reply 10... ♞e5!?



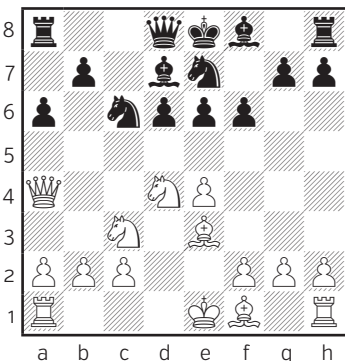
After 11. ♞xe5 fxe5 12. f4 ♜f6 Black would be fine because the doubled pawns on the e-file would control a number of important squares. White can fight for an edge with 11. ♖d1 or 10. ♖e2, but in many lines Black just plays ... ♞g8-e7, then moves the knight further and completes kingside development. It is not easy for White to achieve anything real.

b) My electronic co-author likes 9. ♖b3!



9...b5 (9...♞a5 10.♞b6 is slightly better for White, as Black's central pawns are vulnerable and the threat of 11.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 12.♙b6 has to be respected) 10.a4! and White is clearly better after something like 10...♞a5 (after 10...b4 11.♞a2± Black has too many weaknesses to attack White's queen) 11.♞a3 d5 12.♙c5 ♙xc5 13.♞xc5 ♞b7 14.♞a3! (14.♞e3 b4 gives Black counterplay) 14...d4! 15.♞xd4 ♞b6 16.axb5 ♞xd4 17.♞d1 ♞b6 18.♙e2. I dare not comment on the striking simplicity of the 'first line'. I would prefer to return to human chess.

9...♞ge7



Black would lose an important pawn after 9...♞a5? 10.♞xe6!.

**10.0-0-o?!**

GM Sutovsky is a very active player who is prepared to sacrifice in the fight for the initiative, but in this instance he misjudged the defensive possibilities.

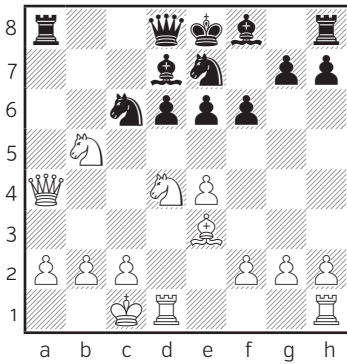
There's a time to go forward and a time to go back. White should do the latter, for instance 10.♞c4 b5 11.♞d3 (11.♞e2?! ♞xd4 12.♙xd4 ♞c6 is already more pleasant for Black) 11...♞e5 12.♞d1 b4 13.♞ce2 (13.♞b1!?) 13...♞c4 14.♙c1. That said, adherents of the Open Sicilian are very unlikely to play like this.

**10...b5 11.♙xb5?**

White is following a misconception.

11.♞b3 ♞a5 (11...♞xd4 12.♙xd4 ♞c6 is a simpler way to achieve a promising position) 12.♞a3 ♞ec6 13.♞xc6 ♞xc6 would also be very good for Black thanks to the threats of 14...b4 and 14...d5, but White would have some compensation for the pawn after 14.♞e2! d5 15.♙c5, e.g. 15...dxe4 (15...b4 16.♞e3) 16.♙xf8 ♞xf8.

**11...axb5 12.♞cxb5**



White not only threatens a cute smothered mate, but also the small combination 13. ♖xa8 ♜xa8 14. ♘c7+.

12... ♘d5!

After 12... ♔f7 13. ♘xd6+ ♔g8 14. ♘xc6 ♘xc6 15. ♜b3 White would have almost adequate compensation for the piece.

13. ♜xa8!

This exchange is forced because 13. ♜b3 ♘a5! is hopeless for White (but not 13... ♘xe3? 14. ♘xe6!).

13... ♜xa8 14. exd5

Again threatening the fork on c7.

14... ♜b7 15. dxc6 ♘xc6 16. ♘xc6 ♜xc6 17. ♘d4 ♜d5

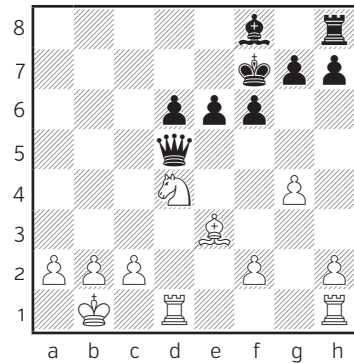
The dust has settled and it's time to assess the result of the compli-

cations. Black has a small material advantage. He's behind in development, but there are no concrete threats, so he will stand better once he has developed his pieces.

18. ♔b1 ♔f7

The king is safe on f7 and I attack the pawn on g2.

19. g4?!



This move creates another weakness, so something like 19.f3 was better.

19... h5!

The pawn advance is a quick and efficient way to activate my rook.

20. ♘b3 ♜e5 21. gxh5 ♗xh5 22. ♖d4

White places his hope in the passed a2-pawn rather than try to defend the h2-pawn.

22... ♖xh2 23. ♖hd1

Threatening 24. ♗f4.

23...g5

White is unable to exploit the weakened king.

24.a4

After 24. ♖d2 ♖f5 Black parries both forks (♗f3 and ♖c4).

24... ♖h4! 25.c4

This move further weakens White's position, but Black easily stops White's passed pawn after 25.a5 ♖xd4 26. ♖xd4 ♖b5+.

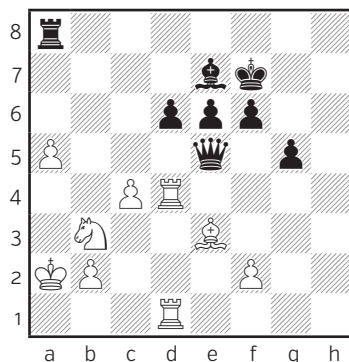
25... ♗e7

25... ♖f5+! 26. ♖a2 e5 is even stronger. After the exchange on h4, the passed black pawn decides or the c4 pawn falls.

26.a5 ♖h8

The rook has completed its work on the h-file and now switches to the other side of the board. Advancing the white pawns has weakened the king.

27. ♖a2 ♖a8



28. ♗d2

The bishop eyes b4. It would indeed be well placed there, but Black can defend against this redeployment. After the game, GM Sutovsky suggested 28. ♖d3! which would have been more resilient. Still, Black's position remains technically winning and 28... ♖h2!? with the idea ...f6-f5-f4 should be convincing enough.

28... ♖e2! 29. ♖h1

White seeks active play. Passive defense was also fairly hopeless due to the several weaknesses (c4, f2). Maybe 29. ♗b4 e5 30. ♖d2 was best, but Black wins fairly easily with 30... ♖f1.

29...e5 30. ♖h7+ ♖e6

30... ♖g6?? 31. ♖xe7+-

31. ♗b4 ♖xf2 32. ♖d2 ♖f4