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Game 75

Garry Kasparov – Vasily Ivanchuk

Linares 1994

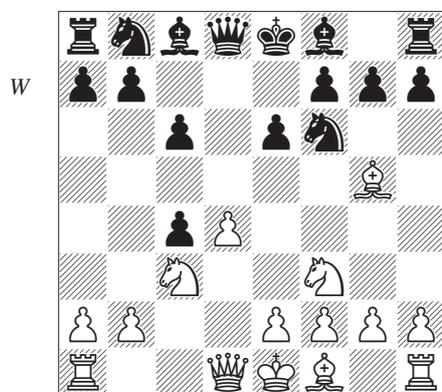
Queen's Gambit Declined, Semi-Slav Defence [D44]

1	d4	♘f6
2	c4	c6
3	♞c3	d5
4	♞f3	e6
5	♙g5	

We indicated in the notes to Game 23 that Kasparov rarely avoided a theoretical fight in the Botvinnik System. While 5 e3 appeared in his practice only sporadically, the text-move occurred regularly.

5 ... **dx c4 (D)**

One of the ways to avoid the Botvinnik is the so-called Moscow System with 5...h6. However, even this continuation leads to a double-edged position after the enterprising pawn sacrifice 6 ♙h4!? dx c4 7 e4. For more details about this line see Kasparov-Korchnoi, Horgen 1995 and Kasparov-Dreev, Russian Ch (Moscow) 2004 (Games 87 and 127 respectively).



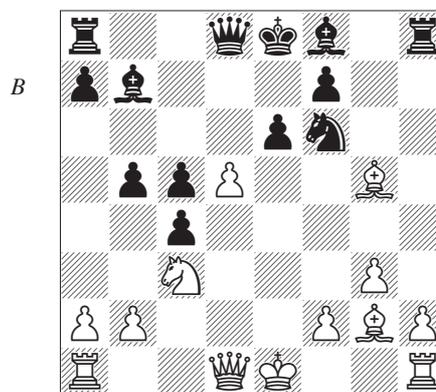
6	e4	b5
7	e5	h6
8	♙h4	g5
9	♞xg5	hxg5
10	♙xg5	♞bd7
11	exf6	♙b7
12	g3	c5
13	d5	♞xf6

13...♞b6 was played in the aforementioned Kasparov-Tal game from Volume 1 and still

remains the main line. However, it's not the only playable option; apart from the text-move the sidelines 13...♙h6 and 13...♞c7 14 ♙g2 b4 still retain a modicum of support.

14 ♙g2 (D)

White ignores the offered material and concentrates on his development. A wise precaution, as his king trapped in the centre gives Black excellent compensation despite the exchange of queens after 14 dx e6 ♙g7!? (14...♙e7 also deserves attention) 15 ♞xd8+ (15 ♞g1 ♞b6 16 ♞e2!? is more circumspect, but even here Black had a pleasant endgame after 16...♞xe6 17 ♞xb5 ♞xe2+ 18 ♙xe2 ♞e4 19 0-0-0 ♞xg5 20 ♞d6+ ♞f8 21 ♞xb7 ♞xh2 in Lobron-Kramnik, Dortmund 1993) 15...♞xd8 16 ♞g1 a6 17 exf7+ ♞xf7 18 ♙g2 ♙xg2 19 ♞xg2 ♞de8+, followed by ...♞g4. Also after 14 ♞xb5 ♞a5+ 15 ♞d2 ♞xd2+ 16 ♙xd2 ♙xd5 17 ♞c7+ ♞d7 18 ♞xd5 exd5, with his active pieces and strong central pawns, Black has nothing to fear.



14 ... **♙h6!?**

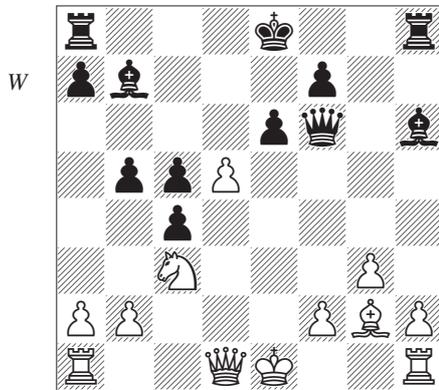
The level of Kasparov's opening preparation has enabled him to play the sharpest and most principled lines with confidence, but that doesn't mean he was completely immune to opening surprises. Here it's Ivanchuk who comes up with an interesting novelty. Although there appears to be nothing wrong with the

text-move, 14...♙e7 remains more popular. Recently mainly GM Karsten Müller has defended Black's cause; the position after 15 0-0 ♖xd5 16 ♙xe7 ♗xe7 17 ♜xb5 ♖b6 18 ♜a3 ♜h4! 19 ♗d2 ♜f4!? (19...♜g8?! is weaker due to 20 f4! with the point 20...♜xf4? 21 ♜xf4 ♜xf4 22 ♖xf4 ♖xb2 23 ♖d6+! and White wins) 20 ♜xc4 ♖a6 21 ♜e3!? (a fighting move; 21 ♙xb7 ♜h3+ 22 ♗g2 ♖xb7+ 23 f3 ♜d8 24 ♖c3 ♜xc4 25 ♖xc4 ♖xb2+ 26 ♗h1 ♜f2+ leads to a perpetual) 21...♜d8 22 ♖c2 ♜e2+ 23 ♗h1 ♜h5 gives Black enough king-side play for the pawn, Murdzia-K.Müller, Hamburg 2002.

15 ♙xf6!?

The most concrete reaction. 15 ♙h4 ♙g7! is unconvincing for White, as he has to reckon with ...♜xh4. Also after 15 ♙xh6 ♜xh6 16 ♜xb5 (16 ♗d2 ♜h5! is fine for Black, as White can't allow 17 ♜xb5? ♜e5+; also after 16 0-0 b4 17 ♜a4 ♙xd5 only Black can be better) Black has a choice of good moves; for example, 16...exd5 or even 16...♖b6!? and it's White who has to tread with care.

15 ... ♖xf6 (D)



16 0-0

16 ♜xb5 0-0-0 only transposes into the game after 17 0-0 (17 ♜xa7+? ♗b8 18 ♜b5 gave Black a tremendous attack after 18...♜xd5! 19 ♙xd5 exd5 20 0-0 d4 in Zakharevich-V.Popov, Russian Ch (Samara) 2000).

16 ... 0-0-0

Black's king also has to escape from the centre. 16...exd5? 17 ♜xd5 and 16...b4? 17 ♜e4 both spell trouble.

17 ♜xb5

White's move is forced as well. 17 ♜e4? is weak: 17...♖e5 18 ♜xc5 ♙xd5.

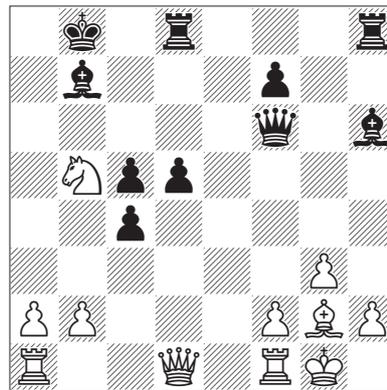
17 ... exd5?!

Creating a central pawn phalanx is natural enough; other methods of capturing the d5-pawn are clearly inferior: 17...♙xd5? 18 ♖a4 gives White a winning attack and 17...♜xd5?! 18 ♜xa7+ ♗b8 19 ♖a4 is not much better. However, Kasparov pointed out that the correct way to implement the idea from the game is 17...a6! 18 ♜c3 exd5. Now as far as long-term strategy goes, Black is more than OK with his pawn-centre and bishop-pair. Therefore White might consider a radical solution such as 19 ♜xd5!? (the alternative 19 ♖a4 ♖b6 favours Black) 19...♙xd5 (19...♖e6!? 20 ♜e1 ♜xd5 is more ambitious, but even here White has counterplay) 20 ♙xd5 ♖f5 21 ♖a4 ♖xd5 22 ♖xa6+ ♗c7 23 ♖a7+ and it's difficult for Black to avoid repetition.

18 ♜xa7+ ♗b8

19 ♜b5 (D)

B



The extra pawn in itself is not so important; it is more significant that Black's king is now permanently vulnerable. This is worth the time invested in the knight moves, and will eventually outweigh even the positional pluses mentioned in the previous note.

19 ... ♙g7

19...♖xb2? is suicidal due to 20 ♖a4 with threats such as ♖a7+ or ♜ab1. 19...♙g5 was a subsequent attempt to improve Black's play, but after 20 ♖e1! (20 f4 ♖h6 21 fxg5?! is too greedy and runs into the powerful 21...♖xh2+ 22 ♗f2 d4 23 ♜g1 ♜h4! 24 gxh4 ♖xh4+ 25 ♗e2 d3+ and Black has at least a perpetual,

because 26 ♔d2? even loses after 26...c3+!) 20...♗d7 (20...♖h6 is insufficient; after 21 h4 ♕xh4 22 gxh4 ♖xh4 23 ♖e5+ ♔a8 24 ♖g3 ♖h6 25 ♖a3+ ♔b8 26 ♖a7+ ♔c8 27 ♖xc5+ ♔b8 28 ♖c7+ ♔a8 29 ♗fc1 White threatens ♖a5-a7+ followed by ♗xc4+ and his attack comes first) 21 b3! ♖h6 (Ionov-V.Popov, St Petersburg Ch 1997) Lutz showed that White can again play 22 h4! ♕xh4 23 gxh4 ♖xh4 24 ♖e5+ ♔a8 25 ♖g3, followed by bxc4, when the queen rejoins the attack with decisive effect.

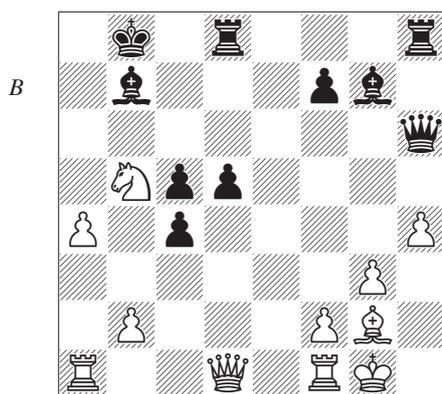
20 a4!

The impetuous 20 ♖a4? allows Black to swap queens advantageously with 20...♖a6. Therefore White's queen has to find a less direct route to the queenside. Kasparov's move reinforces the knight on its outpost; one of the reasons for this is seen in the line 20 ♖e1?! ♖b6 21 a4 ♗de8 and if White doesn't want to allow 22 ♖d2 ♖h6, the queen must go back to its original square.

20 ... ♖h6

Although now it's less clear than one move earlier, opening the b-file is playing with fire. After 20...♖xb2?! 21 ♗b1 ♖f6 (21...♖a2? is weak due to 22 ♖f3!) 22 ♔a3 or even 22 ♖e1?! Black's king is in serious danger. Kasparov recommended 20...♗h6 instead, but White still seems to be on top after 21 ♖d2 ♗dh8 22 h4, when 22...♗xh4? fails to 23 gxh4 ♖xh4 24 ♗fe1 d4 25 ♗e8+! ♗xe8 26 ♖a5.

21 h4 (D)



21 ... ♕f6?

Ivanchuk thinks he has all the time in the world, but Kasparov convincingly proves him wrong. After the text-move Black is practically

lost, so this is the last moment to look for an improvement:

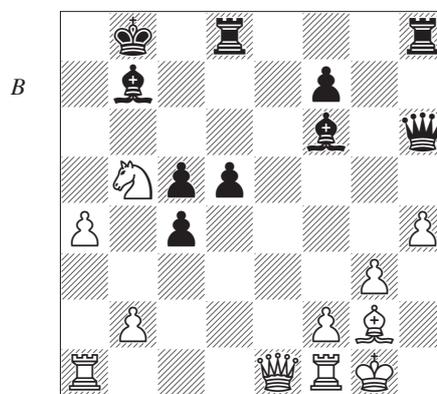
1) 21...♕xb2, with the idea of supporting the bishop and keeping the dangerous b-file closed, is interesting, but White retains the initiative after 22 ♗b1:

1a) 22...c3 23 ♖b3! (23 ♖c2 with the idea 23...♖g6 24 ♗xb2! cxb2 25 ♖xc5 is similar to line '1b' and is also good for White) 23...c4 (23...♖b6 24 a5 ♖xa5 25 ♔xc3 ♖xc3 26 ♖b5! gives White either a strong attack, or a technically won endgame after 26...♖b4 27 ♗xb2) 24 ♖b4 ♖f8 (after 24...c2? 25 ♖xb2 cxb1 ♖ 26 ♗xb1 White's attack breaks through) 25 ♗xb2! (25 ♖a5? ♖c5) 25...cxb2 26 ♖xb2 and with ♖d4, ♖e5+ and ♗b1 in the air Black will hardly be able to survive.

1b) 22...♖f6 is stronger, but after 23 ♖c2 ♕e5 (23...c3 is consistent, but 24 ♗xb2! cxb2 25 ♖xc5 ♖a6 26 ♖d4 gives White a large advantage) 24 ♔a3!? ♗d7 25 ♗b5 Black's position remains precarious.

2) Even though 21...♗he8?! limits White's queen, the patient 22 ♗b1 with the idea b4 should give White some advantage.

22 ♖e1! (D)



The queen effectively joins the attack. The text-move required accurate calculation, as now Black must resort to desperate measures.

22 ... ♕xh4

It's too late for 22...♕xb2 23 ♖a5!; for example, 23...♖a6 24 ♖xa6 ♕xa6 25 ♗b1 ♕g7 26 ♕xd5! and White gains a decisive material advantage. 22...c3 23 bxc3 doesn't help Black either; after 23...♕xh4 the simplest is 24 ♖e5+ ♔a8 25 ♗fb1 and White's attack comes first.

23 ♖a5

Possibly White could even have played 23 gxf4?!, but it would have been highly impractical. A plausible sample line is 23...♖xh4 24 ♖e5+ ♔a8 25 ♖g3 ♖h6 26 ♖c7 (White now doesn't have the decisive check from a3 as in the note to Black's 19th move) 26...♗dg8 27 ♖a5+ ♔b8 28 ♖a7+ ♔c8 29 ♖xc5+ ♔b8 30 ♖d6+ ♖xd6 31 ♗xd6 ♖h6! 32 ♗f5 ♖hg6 33 ♗g3 f5 and Black regains the piece with reasonable drawing chances.

Kasparov's attacking move limits the risks for White. Another way to reach the game position was 23 ♖e5+ ♔a8 24 ♖c7!, when Black has nothing better than 24...♙e7.

23 ... ♙e7

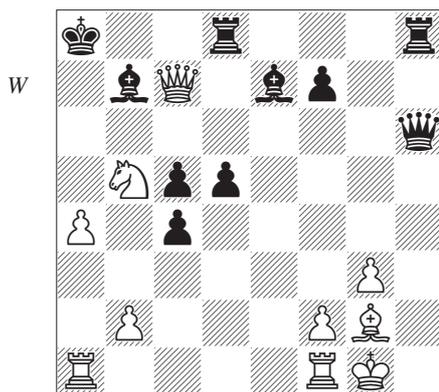
Black protects the c5-pawn. Other moves are hopeless:

1) 23...♙xg3 24 ♖a7+ ♔c8 25 ♖xc5+ ♔b8 26 fxg3 and White wins.

2) 23...♙f6 24 ♖a7+ ♔c8 25 ♖xc5+ ♔b8 26 ♖a7+ ♔c8 27 ♖fc1! and the threat of ♖xc4+ decides.

3) After 23...♖c6 24 ♖a7+ ♔c8 25 ♙h3+ ♗d7 White has the clever 26 ♖a5! and the threat of ♗a7+ nets him large amounts of material; e.g., 26...♔b8 27 ♙xd7 ♖xd7 28 ♖a7+ ♔c8 29 ♖xc5+ ♔b8 30 ♖a7+ ♔c8 31 ♖d4! ♙f6 32 ♖xf6 ♖h3 33 ♖f5+!.

24 ♖c7+ ♔a8
25 ♖a5+ ♔b8
26 ♖c7+ ♔a8 (D)

**27 ♗fe1!**

Kasparov parries the mating threat and continues his own attack.

27 ... ♙d6

Forced. White's onslaught quickly breaks through after 27...♖h2+ 28 ♔f1 or 27...♙f6 28 ♖xc5 ♔b8 29 a5!.

28 ♖b6

28 ♖a5+ ♔b8 29 ♖a7+ ♔c8 30 a5 was also possible, but Kasparov finishes in style.

28 ... ♙b8

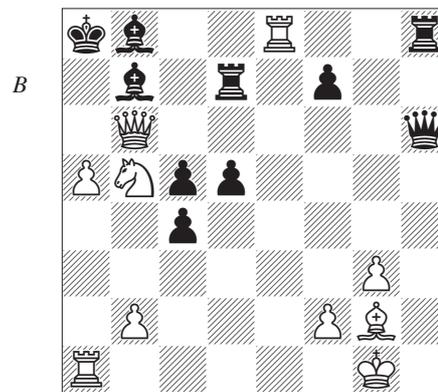
28...♔b8 loses quickly to 29 a5.

29 a5!

Creating the deadly threat of ♖e7. 29 ♖xc5? ♖c8 would considerably slow down the attack.

29 ... ♗d7

After 29...♖c6 30 ♖e7 White's main threat is a6 and 30...♗d7 31 ♖xc6 ♙xc6 32 ♖xd7 ♙xd7 33 ♙xd5+ leads to mate.

30 ♖e8!! (D)

Beautiful and decisive. Now both White's queen and rook are taboo and Black has no effective defence against ♖a7#.

30 ... ♖h2+

31 ♔f1 ♖xg2+

The only way to prolong the game. White mates after 31...♖xe8 32 a6.

32 ♔xg2 d4+

33 ♖xb7+!

The last finesse. White would still have to face technical problems after 33 f3?! ♖xe8.

33 ... ♖xb7

34 ♖xh8 ♖xb5

35 a6 ♔a7

36 ♖f8 ♖xb2

37 ♖xf7+ ♔a8

38 a7 c3

After 38...♙xa7 39 ♖axa7+ ♔b8 40 ♖ae7 ♔a8 41 ♖c7 White annihilates Black's pawns.

39 ♖f8 1-0