

## Yasser Seirawan-Anatoly Karpov

London, 1982

### *Queen's Gambit Declined*

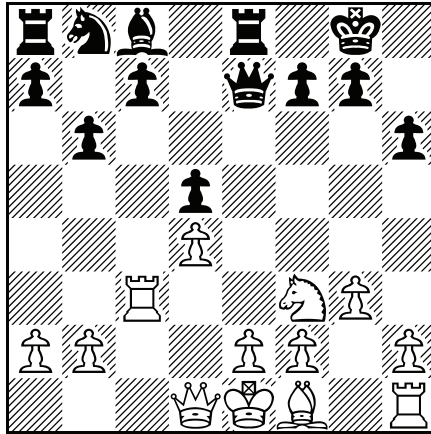
**1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.d4 Be7 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bh4 0-0 7.Rc1 b6 8.cxd5 Nxd5 9.Nxd5 exd5 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.g3!?**

A completely different approach from the main line: 11.e3 when White's f1-bishop finds it difficult to find gainful employment. The text envisions a fianchetto to put immediate pressure on the long diagonal.

**11...Re8!**

This is Black's best approach to the position.

**12.Rc3! (Diagram 79)**



**DIAGRAM 79. Black to Play**

This was Korchnoi's novel idea. In some variations, the rook can swing across the third rank to block Black's attack on the e2-pawn. Note that the immediate 12.Bg2 Ba6! would have undone White's strategy, as the e2-pawn becomes a sensitive point.

**12...Na6**

Karpov spent a mere 11 minutes of thought. Most grandmasters, when confronted with a novel idea, stew for about one hour in order to double-check the variations. Karpov's quick reaction caused a warning light to go off in my head. Who was trapping whom?

**13.Qa4**

This too was the intended follow-up that Korchnoi and I had analyzed together. The threat of Rc3-e3 made me believe that Karpov was in a heap of trouble. As I rose from the board and walked around the playing hall, I strolled by Efim Geller, Karpov's long-time trainer. Geller had excitedly grabbed Jan Timman by the arm and exclaimed "...c5!" Pretending I hadn't overheard, I continued my pace. "13...c5 – doesn't that lose a piece?" I thought.

**13...c5?**

When Karpov played this move, my heart sank. "Oh [bleep]!" I thought. I had obviously fallen into *his* preparation. Karpov had foreseen my strategy and had prepared a piece sacrifice. He doesn't sacrifice his pieces based on intuition, but rather when he is 99 percent sure that the sacrifice is correct. He had called my bluff. I thought for 15 minutes about declining the sacrifice with 14.e3 c4!, but in that case Black would have the better game.

In a subsequent rapid game played in Hamburg, as you will see, Karpov improved his play with 13...b5!, winning a very good game.

**14.Re3!**

Since I have no choice, I may as well ride the tiger and go for the gusto. At times like this, when a player is nervous about falling into a losing trap, having some extra material in hand provides some solace.

**14...Be6 15.Qxa6**

Reluctantly accepting the offered piece sacrifice. Despite my frantic analysis, I didn't see a winning line for Karpov.

**15...cxd4**

Opening the position to go after my king. My immediate problem is dealing with ...Qe7-b4+, which I have to stop. Black will use the open c-file for his rooks to launch an attack.

**16.Rb3**

Preventing ...Qe7-b4+ was priority number one. So far everything has been forced. Certainly Karpov had prepared the sacrifice, but he now surprised me by thinking for 34 minutes.

**16...Bf5!**

Best. While Karpov was thinking I saw that I can beat back the attacking 16...Qc5 with 17.Qd3! Qa5+ (17...Rac8 18.Nxd4 Qa5+ 19.Rc3 would save White's skin) 18.Qd2 Qxa2 19.Nxd4 Rac8 20.f3!! (making room for Ke1-f2, escaping to the kingside) 20...Qb1+ 21.Kf2 Rc1 22.Nxe6! fxe6 23.Qd3 Qa1 24.Ra3!, and wins.

Even easier would have been 16...Rac8 17.Nxd4 Rc1+ 18.Kd2 Rc4 (18...Qc5? 19.Rc3! wins) 19.Nxe6 fxe6 20.e3 when White emerges a bishop ahead.

While the text threatens 17...Bc2, snaring my b3-rook, it was also something of a relief. Now I would have just enough time to save my king.

**17.Bg2 Bc2**

Black has no choice but to pick off the b3-rook. The try 17...d3, threatening ...Qe7xe2 checkmate, would be a mistake. After 17...d3? 18.e3 d4 19.Nxd4 d2+

20.Kxd2 Rad8 21.Rd1 all of Black's threats would be finished; White would consolidate his king's position and pocket the point.

**18.Nxd4!**

This is what Karpov had missed in his preparation. He thought White would be forced to play 18.0-0, which would allow 18...Bxb3 19.axb3 Qxe2 20.Qxe2 Rxe2 21.Nxd4 Rxb2 with rough equality. But if I can retain the e2-pawn, all endgames will be winning for me.

**18...Bxb3 19.Nxb3 Rac8!**

A natural move as Black seizes the open c-file. Black must not be beguiled by 19...Qb4+?, since 20.Kf1 Rac8 21.Bf3! and Kf1-g2 would help me castle by hand, and only misplace Black's queen. The a7-pawn would lack protection.

**20.Bf3!**

The key – without sacrificing the e2-pawn by 20.0-0, I achieve a technically winning position. The protected e2-pawn neutralizes Black's battery on the e-file.

It was only here that Karpov allowed his poker face to slip. Efim Geller, who had been immersed in his own game, now surfaced to see Karpov's position. As Geller stared at our board in open astonishment, Karpov's face turned crimson. Disturbed by Geller's presence, he fixed him with a long scornful stare. The suggestion was clear: "Comrade, when we return to Moscow, we shall talk!" Geller hurried away. Karpov again returned to the board to think, and the poker face was back.

I felt exalted but knew it would be necessary to keep my killer instinct. I had slipped so many times before against Karpov I was determined not to let it happen again.

**20...Rc2?**

This would be Karpov's final mistake. Black intends to capture the b2-pawn, but the rook will be woefully misplaced. Black had to try 20...Qf6! 21.0-0 Qxb2, at which point the black queen would have a chance of causing some damage. This line is a strange echo of my Mar del Plata game with Karpov, where I too used a rook instead of my queen to invade the opponent's camp.

**21.0-0 Rxb2 22.Rd1!**

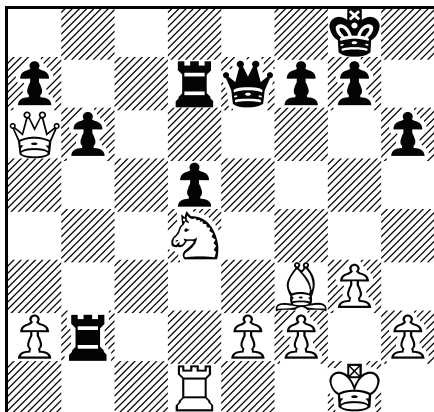
Overcoming my temptation to control the c-file. Now that my king is safely tucked away, I can concentrate on bringing my pieces to strong squares. Besides wanting to win the d5-pawn, I need to reposition the b3-knight and that means controlling the d4-square.

**22...Rd8**

Black hopes for 23.Rxd5? Rxd5 24.Bxd5 Rxe2, trading his weak d5-pawn for my strong e2-pawn – a swap I had no intention of making. My priority now was activating my knight.

**23.Nd4! Rd7 (Diagram 80)**

White's pieces are a picture of harmony. But how to win? Looking deeply into the position, I saw a combination based on Black's weak back rank as well as the hanging b2-rook.



**DIAGRAM 80. White to Play**

**24.Nc6! Qe8**

Karpov has no choice. He has to protect his back rank. For example, 24...Qc5? 25.Qc8+ wins the d7-rook, while 24...Qf8? 25.Bxd5 picks off the d5-pawn with impunity, as the e2-pawn is now adequately defended.

**25.Nxa7!**

Grabbing a pawn and challenging Black to do something about it.

**25...Rc7**

My main line was a forced win: 25...Qa8 26.Rc1 Qxa7 27.Rc8+ Kh7 28.Qd3+ g6 29.Qd4!, with the double threat of 30.Qh8, checkmate, and 30.Qxb2, capturing the b2-rook. Black would have to continue 29...Rb1+ 30.Kg2 f6 31.Qxf6 Rg7 32.Qf8 g5 when I anticipated 33.Qf5+, picking up the b1-rook.

**26.a4!**

Once more I challenge Black to accept my piece offer. If he doesn't, it will take only Na7-b5 and Qa6xb6 to complete the queenside harvest.

**26...Qa8**

At last the piece sacrifice becomes irresistible to Black. If he had chosen 26...Rb4, then 27.Nb5 Rcc4 28.Nd6 would win material.

**27.Rxd5!**

This was this move that I had in mind when my knight went pawn hunting.

**27...Qxa7**

The brave knight has given his all and will be redeemed when the rest of White's forces reach the black king.

**28.Rd8+ Kh7 29.Qd3+ f5 30.Qxf5+ g6 31.Qe6! 1-0**

Avoiding the last trick, 31.Qf6? when 31...Rc1+ 32.Kg2 Qg7! would give Black a chance of survival. As Black faced 31...Rg7 32.Qe8 g5 33.Be4+ or 31...Rc1+ 32.Kg2 Qg7 33.Rd7, winning the queen, Anatoly stopped the clock and congratulated me.