

Illustrative Games

Game 18

□ M.Adams ■ P.Svidler

Dos Hermanas 1999

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be3 e5 7 Nb3 Be6 8 f3 Nbd7 9 g4 b5 10 g5 b4

Black responds to the attack on his king's knight with one of his own on the c3-knight – a typical idea in the Sicilian. 10...Nh5 is a sensible alternative.

11 Ne2

11 Nd5 is another common move. After 11...Nxd5 12 exd5 Bf5 13 Bd3 Bxd3 14 Qxd3 Black continues with ...Be7 and ...0-0.

11 gxf6 bxc3 12 fxg7 Bxg7 13 bxc3 leaves White a pawn up, but the doubled and isolated c-pawns rather compensate for this. Here Black can play 13...Bh6!, since 14 Bxh6?! Qh4+ regains the bishop and displaces the white king.

11...Nh5 12 Qd2 Be7

Preparing to castle, but Black should also consider delaying this in favour of 12...a5 counterattacking on the queenside. Indeed, in recent years 12...a5 has overtaken 12...Be7 as the main move, and Black's results after 13 Ng3 Nxd3 14 hxg3 a4 15 Nc1 Qa5 16 f4 g6 have been quite reasonable.

13 Ng3 (Diagram 26)

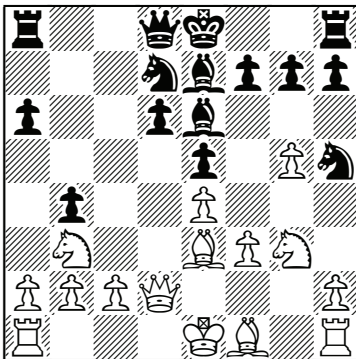


Diagram 26 (B)

White wants to open the h-file

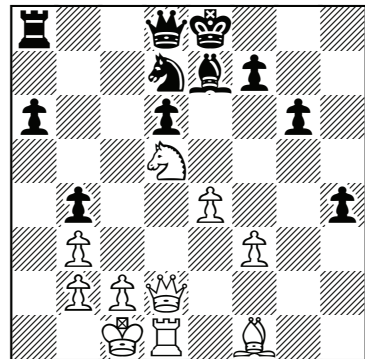


Diagram 27 (B)

White is ready to attack

Starting Out: The Sicilian

Challenging the black knight on h5. White can grab a hot pawn with 13 Qxb4 Bxg5 14 Bxg5 Qxg5 15 Qxd6, but after 15...Rd8 Black already has a dangerous threat of 16...Qh4+.

13...Nf4

13...Nxc3? 14 hxg3 gives White an excellent half-open h-file down which to attack.



WARNING: Be careful not to gift your opponent an avenue of attack.

14 h4

Protecting the g5-pawn.

14...h6!?

Black fights back on the kingside. Note that this is an advantage of delaying castling: ...h7-h6 wouldn't have been possible if Black had already committed his king to this side of the board.

15 Bxf4 exf4 16 Nh5 Bxb3 17 axb3 g6 18 Nxf4 hxg5 19 Nd5 Rxh4?

A mistake according to Adams. Black should have played either 19...gxh4 or 19...g4!?

20 Rxh4 gxh4 21 0-0-0 (Diagram 27)

Now White is well coordinated and his attack is worth more than a pawn.

21...Nf6 22 Bc4 Nxd5

22...a5 is answered by 23 Qh6!, planning to meet 23...Nxd5 with the decisive 24 Bb5+ (Svidler).

23 Qxd5 Bg5+ 24 Kb1 Ra7 25 e5! Kf8

Or 25...Rd7 26 e6! and White crashes through on the weakened light squares: for example, 26...fxe6 27 Qxe6+ Qe7 28 Qg8+ Qf8 29 Qxg6+ and Qxg5.

26 e6!

This is even stronger than 26 exd6.

26...Bf6

After 26...fxe6 27 Qxe6 Rg7 28 Rxd6 Black cannot hope to survive the onslaught.

27 exf7 Qe7 28 f4!

Preventing ...Qe5, which would otherwise force an exchange of queens.

28...Qxf7 29 Qxd6+ Qe7 30 Qb8+ Kg7 31 Rg1

Now White targets the g6-pawn and there is no defence.

31...Kh6 32 Bd3! Rd7 33 Qg8 1-0

The g6-pawn falls and Black is soon mated.

Game 19

□ D.Baramidze ■ A.Naiditsch

European Championship, Warsaw 2005

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be3 e5 7 Nb3 Be6 8 f3 Nbd7 9 g4 Nb6

This move has become pretty popular in recent years. It's unusual to block the b-pawn, since ...b7-b5-b4 is a typical source of counterplay, but 9...Nb6 does have its merits. For one thing, it brings into play the possibility of an early ...Nc4.

10 g5 (Diagram 28)

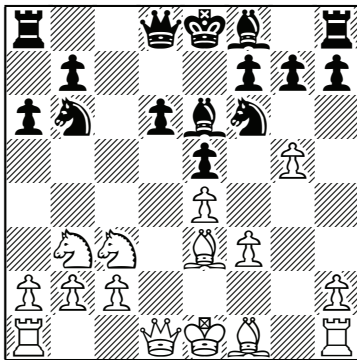


Diagram 28 (B)

10...Nh5 or 10...Nfd7?

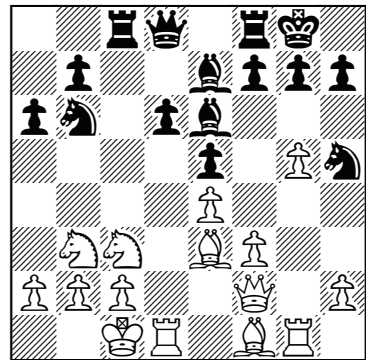


Diagram 29 (B)

Allowing a strong sacrifice

10...Nh5!

This seems at odds with Black's previous move, as the natural reaction would surely be to retreat the knight to the newly vacated d7-square. But modern chess openings are full of paradoxes, and here 10...Nh5! is definitely the best move: White finds it difficult to shift the knight that's blocking his kingside advance. In contrast, 10...Nfd7 11 Qd2 Be7 12 0-0-0 Qc7 13 h4 Rc8 14 Kb1 Nc4 15 Bxc4 Bxc4 16 h5 sees a White attack in full flow.

11 Qd2 Be7 12 0-0-0 Rc8 13 Rg1



NOTE: The typical plan of 13 Ne2??, intending Ng3 to oppose the h5-knight, is refuted by 13...Nc4! 14 Qd3 Nxe3 15 Qxe3 Bxg5 and Black wins.

13...0-0 14 Qf2? (Diagram 29)

Starting Out: The Sicilian

White wants to force the b6-knight to move so that his own one can reach d5, but it would have been wiser to prepare Qf2. After 14 Kb1! g6 15 Qf2 Nc4 16 Bxc4 (16 Bc1 has also been played) 16...Rxc4 17 Nd5 Bxd5 18 Rxd5 b5 the position is fairly level.

The immediate 14 Nd5 looks okay for Black after 14...Nxd5 15 exd5 Bf5, or even 14...Bxd5 15 exd5 Nc4.

14...Rxc3!

White must have been expecting 14...Nc4 and clearly overlooked the strength of this sacrifice. 15 bxc3 Na4 promises Black typical long-term attacking chances on the queenside now that White's pawns are shattered, so Baramidze takes the knight instead.

15 Bxb6 Bxg5+!

This is a crucial resource, which of course wouldn't have been available with White's king on b1.

16 f4

16 Kb1 Bh4! (the only move, but an effective one) 17 Rg3! (17 Bxd8 Bxf2 18 Rg5 Rxf3 is very good for Black) 17...Bxg3 18 hxg3 Rc7 had been played in the earlier game P.Svidler-V.Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 2004. After 18...Rc7 White can win back the exchange, but Black still has an extra pawn and White doesn't have much for it.

The idea behind Baramidze's 16 f4 is that after 16...Bxf4+ 17 Kb1 Black can no longer play ...Bh4.

16...Bh4! (Diagram 30)

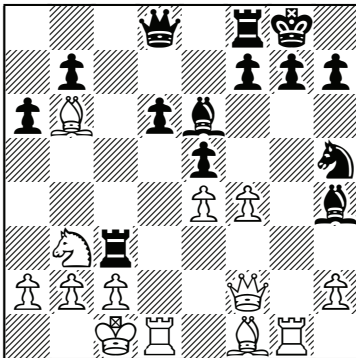


Diagram 30 (W)

Two queens and a rook en prise!

17 Qg2?

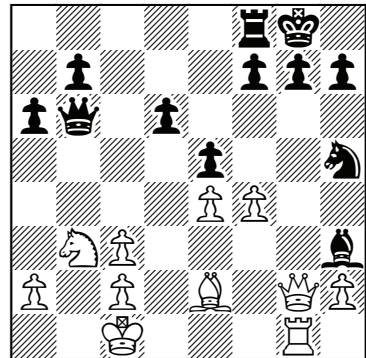


Diagram 31 (W)

White's queen is deflected

This loses. White had to play like Svidler with 17 Rg3, even if 17...Rc7 18 Bxc7 Bxg3 19 hxg3 Qxc7 leaves Black a good pawn ahead.

17...Qxb6 18 bxc3 Bf2!

At this moment White is an exchange for a pawn ahead, but his position is collapsing.

19 Be2

19 Rh1 Qe3+ is too demoralizing to consider – 20 Kb1 Nxf4 21 Qg5 f6! traps the queen – so White resorts to desperate measures.

19...Bxg1 20 Rxg1

White is hitting the h5-knight, which cannot move due to mate on g7, but Naiditsch has seen everything.

20...Bh3! 0-1 (Diagram 31)

Deflecting the queen away from its defence of g1. White resigned in view of 20...Bh3 21 Qg5 Qe3+ 22 Kd1 h6! 23 Qxh5 Qxg1+ etc.

Game 20

□ **A.Morozevich** ■ **L.Ftacnik**

German League 1998

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 f3

This move order, which has the advantage of cutting out Black's option of 6...Ng4 (see Game 22) is becoming quite popular.

6...e5

If Black wants to 'punish' White for his move order, then he could try either 6...Nc6 7 Be3 d5 or 6...Qb6!?, both putting early pressure on d4. After 6...Qb6 one of the main lines runs 7 Nb3 e6 8 g4 Nc6 9 Qe2 Qc7 10 Be3 b5 11 0-0-0 when the position resembles the English Attack against the Scheveningen (compare Chapter 3).

7 Nb3 Be6 8 Be3

Now we are back in the main line.

8...Nbd7 9 Qd2 (Diagram 32) 9...Be7

A major alternative here is 9...b5!?. Black's idea is to meet 10 g4 with 10...Nb6, vacating d7 and allowing 11 g5 to be answered by 11...Nfd7. When playing an early ...b5 Black must always consider the consequences of a2-a4, and indeed 10 a4 is an important move here. The main line runs 10...b4 11 Nd5 Bxd5 12 exd5 Nb6! (forcing White to part with his dark-squared bishop to eliminate the threat to the d5-pawn) 13 Bxb6 Qxb6 14 a5! (fixing the pawn on a6) 14...Qb7 15 Bc4 when White has good chances to exploit Black's weak pawns (b4 and a6), but Black will enjoy some counterplay due to the vulnerable dark squares in White's position. For ex-

Starting Out: The Sicilian

ample, 15...g6 16 Ra4 Rb8 17 Qd3 Ra8 18 Qd2 Rb8 19 Nc1 (spurning the chance of a quick draw by repetition) 19...h5! 20 Na2 Bh6 21 Qxb4 Qa7!.

10 g4 h6 (Diagram 33)

This move buys Black a bit of time as it dissuades White from playing g4-g5 for the moment. On the other hand, when White does finally arrange g4-g5 it might now arrive with greater force because Black has weakened his kingside. This is why playing a move such as ...h6 is usually a difficult decision.

10...0-0 11 0-0-0 transposes to Game 21, and this has become a more popular way for Black to proceed.

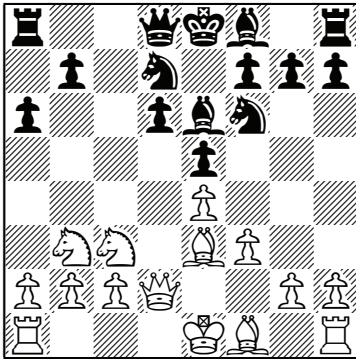


Diagram 32 (B)

9...Be7 or 9...b5?

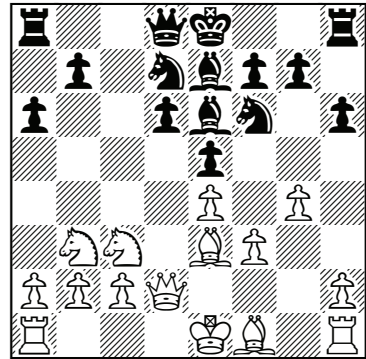


Diagram 33 (W)

A difficult decision over ...h6

11 0-0-0 b5 12 h4

Lending extra support to the g4-g5 push.

12...Nb6 13 Qf2 Rb8 14 Nc5!?

Making use of the pin on the d-file in order to activate the knight.

14...Bc8 15 Be2

Connecting the rooks and preparing the g4-g5 lunge.

In his notes to the game, Morozevich gives as an alternative the mind-boggling variation 15 g5!? hxg5 16 hxg5 Rxf1 17 gxf6 Rxf1! (17...Bxf6 18 Bxb5+ axb5 19 Rxf1 is favourable for White) 18 fxg7 Rxf2 19 g8Q+ Bf8 20 Bxf2 b4! 21 Ne2 Qf6 and Black is fine!

15...Qc7

Perhaps Black should have continued queenside operations with 15...b4!?

16 g5 dxc5

16...hgx5 highlights a negative feature of 10...h6. After 17 hxg5 Rxh1 18 Rxh1 it's White who is in possession of the open h-file.

17 gxf6 gxf6 18 f4! (Diagram 34)

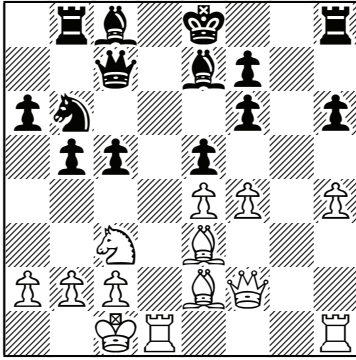


Diagram 34 (B)

Where is the black king going?

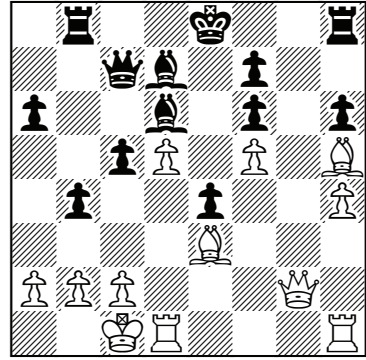


Diagram 35 (B)

Targeting f7

White is a pawn down, but more importantly Black's king has no safe haven. This headache stays with Black for the rest of the game.

18...b4 19 Nd5 Nxd5 20 exd5! e4 21 f5 Bd6 22 Qg2 Bd7!? 23 Bh5! (Diagram 35)

Targeting the weak f7-pawn, so often the Achilles' heel in Black's position.

23...Rf8

23...c4 loses to 24 Bxf7+! Kxf7 25 Qg6+ Ke7 26 Qg7+ and Qxh8.

24 Rhe1 Bxf5 25 Rf1 Qd7 26 Qg7!

The f6-pawn falls and Black's position is on the verge of collapsing.

26...Bh3 27 Rxf6 Qe7 28 Qxh6 Be5 29 Re6!

This temporary sacrifice is a killer. In the long run Black is forced to lose material.

29...Bxe6 30 dxe6 Qf6 31 exf7+ Rxf7 32 Bxf7+ Kxf7 33 Qh7+ Ke8 34 Qg8+ Qf8 35 Qe6+ Qe7 36 Qc6+ Kf7 37 Rd7 1-0