

DOUBLED PAWNS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE



SERGEY KASPAROV

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A Practical Guide

Sergey Kasparov



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Doubled Pawns: A Practical Guide
by Sergey Kasparov

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Introduction

Dear Reader!

A grandmaster from Belarus (please, do not confuse it with Russia!) is working for you. We may know each other from previous books or articles. Belarus is a country in Eastern Europe, located between Poland and Russia.

As always, the technical part of the work has been performed by my wife Tatiana (WIM), and the Russian-English translation has been done by our daughter Eva. You might have also met them at some tournaments.

So, now to the subject itself. As is known, according to the rules of chess, a pawn captures “diagonally, one square forward (to the left or right)”. Thus, after a capture, let us say, $g7 \times f6$, already two black pawns may appear on the f-file ($f7+f6$). In addition, we shall keep in mind that pawns are the only pieces that cannot go back, so a “defect” like that may last a long time.

In this book I will present typical structures, arising from different openings, and we will try to figure out whether **doubled pawns** are a weakness, or if everything is not so clear.

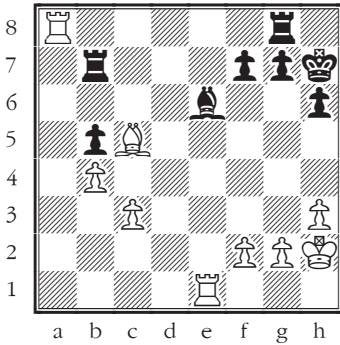
Attention, please! This is not about mastering opening nuances, but about only showing *plans* of the struggle in different structures with doubled pawns.

Sergey Kasparov
Belarus

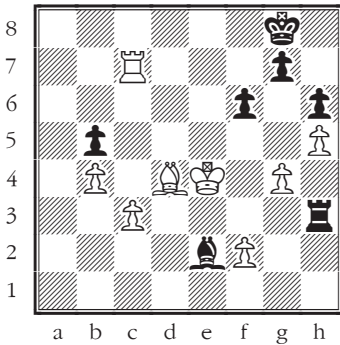
Signs and Symbols

!	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

Doubled Pawns



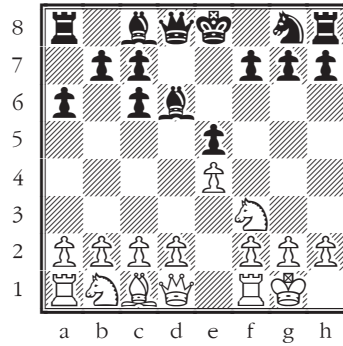
within his forces. 29.♖a6 ♜bb8
 30.♗e5 ♜a8 31.♗a5 ♜c4 32.♙d4
 ♜ge8 33.♗×a8 ♜×a8 34.g4 ♖a2
 35.h4 ♜d2 36.♗g3 f6 37.♗c5 ♙e2
 38.h5 ♜d3+ 39.♗f4 ♗f3+ 40.♗e4
 ♜h3 41.♗c7 ♗g8



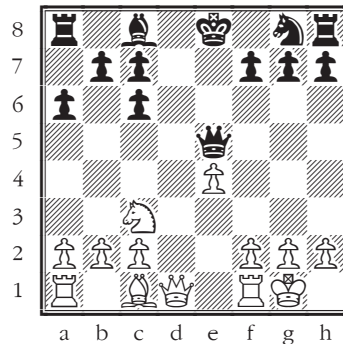
The bishop “hooks” the white pawns from behind which prevents the king from moving to the queenside.
 42.♗f5 ♗f3+ 43.♗e4 ♗g6??
 ♙d3# 43...♜h3 44.♗f5 ♗f3+
 45.♗e4 ½-½

It is not very popular to defend the central pawn with a bishop. The line is quite viable, but Black will almost surely lose the advantage of the two bishops while the doubled pawns remain on the board. All of these titanic struggles took place on the shores of the Ionian Sea. In all of them, White enjoyed comfortable play which however could not always be converted to the full point.

(63) S.Kasparov (2536) – Sriram (2425)
 Cutro 2007
 Ruy Lopez [C68]
 1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♙b5 a6
 4.♙×c6 d×c6 5.0-0 ♙d6



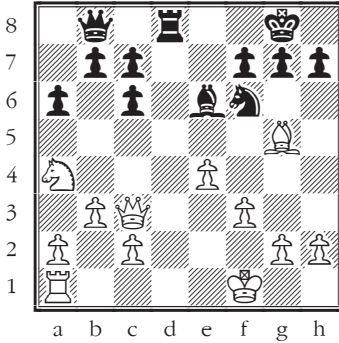
6.d4 One should hurry to break up the center as otherwise c6-c5 might follow. 6...e×d4 It is unreasonable to combine different plans, 6...f6! This should have been done one move before. 7.d×e5 ♙×e5 (7...fxe5 8.♗×e5± ♙×e5? 9.♗h5+) 8.♗×d8+ ♗×d8 9.♗×e5 f×e5 10.f4± S.Kasparov-Believsky, Wroclaw 2009. It is hard to recommend the straightforward 6...♗e7: 7.d×e5 ♙×e5 8.♗×e5 ♗×e5 9.♗c3



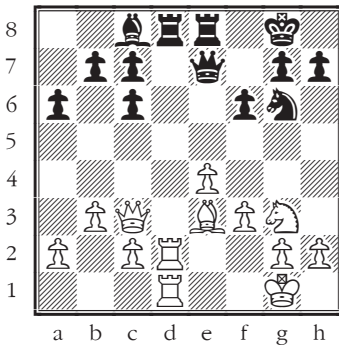
It turns out that Black does not have any compensation for the doubled pawns. With a large number of pieces still on the board, opposite-color bishops

“Spanish” Formations

do not have such a big influence. 9...♟f6
 10.f3 ♖c5+ 11.♞f2 ♜e6 12.♞f4 ♞d8
 13.♜e1 ♞d7 14.b3 0-0 15.♞a4± ♜a7
 16.♜c3 ♞fd8 17.♞e3 (17.♞c5 ♞d1+
 18.♞xd1 ♞xd1+ 19.♞f1+-) 17...♞d1+
 18.♞f1 ♞xf1+ 19.♜xf1 ♜b8 20.♞g5±

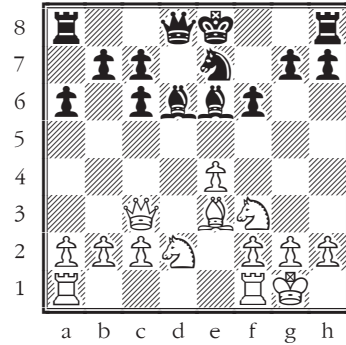


S.Kasparov-Karl, Citta di Arco 2015. The queen maneuver ♜d8-e7-e5-c5-a7-b8 looks artificial, doesn't it?
7.♜xd4 f6 The g7-pawn was hanging.
8.♞e3 There is also another option, 8.♞bd2 ♜e6 9.b3 ♞e7 10.♞c4 0-0 11.♞xd6 ♜xd6 12.♜c3 ♞ad8 13.♞e1 ♞g6 14.♞e3 ♞fe8 15.♞d4 ♜c8 16.f3 ♞e5 17.♞e2 ♞h5 18.♞g3 ♞e5 19.♞e2 ♞ee8 20.♞d2 ♜e7 21.♞ad1±, S.Kasparov-Kniest, Deizisau 2004.

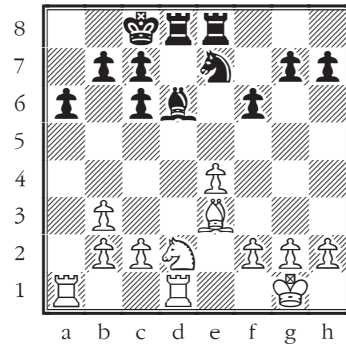


The better pawn structure heralds comfortable play for White. **8...♞e7**
9.♞bd2 Please note that with the pawn on c6, the knight does not want to go to c3 as it will feel hemmed in. **9...♞e6**

10.♞ad1 The rook protects the queen on d4 before the knight leaps to c4. Perhaps the prophylactic 10.♜c3 is better.

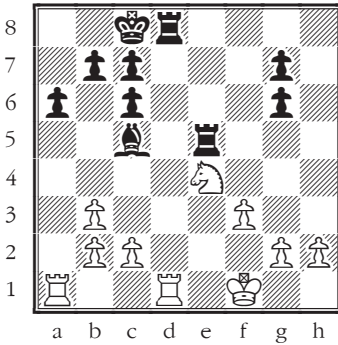


The queen vacates the d4-square for the knight and gets away from the opposition with major enemy pieces. In all lines, White stands at least slightly better. 10...♜d7 (or 10...♞g6 11.♞d4 ♜e7 12.♞xe6 ♜xe6 13.♜b3 ♜xb3 14.axb3 and White is better. Vallejo Pons-Sasikira, Wijk aan Zee 2009; 11.♞d4 0-0-0 12.♞xe6 ♜xe6 13.♜b3! ♜xb3 (13...♜e5 14.f4 ♜h5 15.♞c4 ♜b8 16.♞xd6 ♞xd6 17.♞ae1 with the initiative. Mladenov-Colin, Saint-Affrique 2010; 14.axb3 ♞he8 15.♞fd1

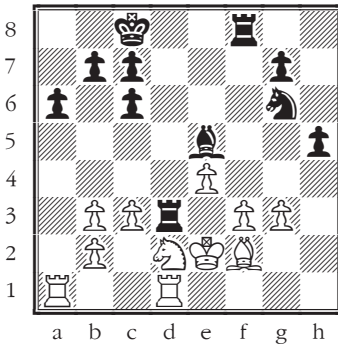


After a2xb3, the a-file could be used for maneuvers. The rook will move from a1 to a5 at the proper moment. 15...♞g6 16.f3 f5 17.g3 (even better is 17.exf5!? ♞xe3 18.fxg6 hxg6 19.♜f2 ♜c5 20.♜f1 ♞e5 21.♞e4±)

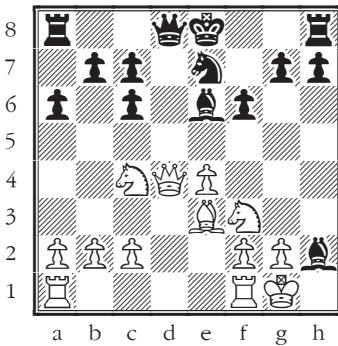
Doubled Pawns



17...Qe5 18.c3 f4 19.Qf2 Rf8
20.Qg2 fxg3 21.hxg3 Bd3 22.Qf1 h5
23.Qe2± Muzychuk-Kosintseva,
Geneva 2013;

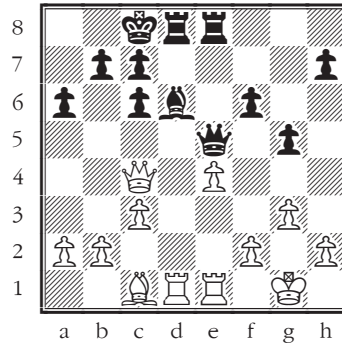


The immediate 10...Qc4? would lose a pawn, 10... Qxh2+!

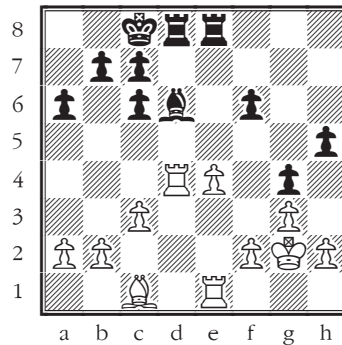


11.Qxh2 Qxd4 12.Qxd4 Qxc4.

10...Qg6 11.Qc4 Qxc4
12.Qxc4 Qe7 13.Bfe1 0-0-0
14.c3 Bhe8 15.Qc1 Qe5 16.Qxe5
Qxe5 17.g3 g5



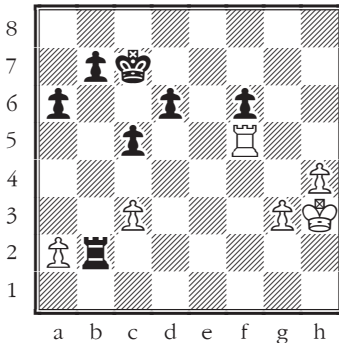
A characteristic pawn structure. White virtually has an extra pawn on the kingside. All the exchanges which have taken place have simplified White's game. 18.Qd4 Qxd4 19.Bxd4 Now even queens have left the board, so how did I manage to lose *this* position?! 19...g4 20.Qg2 h5



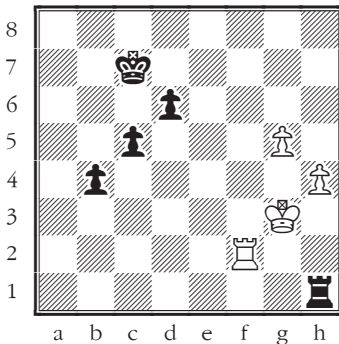
The Indian master reasonably prevents his adversary from building a flexible formation on the kingside. The e4-pawn is cut off from the others. Or 20...f5 21.f3 Bxe6 22.fxg4 fxg4 23.e5 Bxe5 24.Bxe5 Qxe5 25.Bxg4 Bd1 26.Qf4 Qf6 27.Bg8+ Qd7 28.Bf8± 21.f3 Bxe6 22.Qf4 Bde8 23.Qxd6?! An inaccuracy which squarely falls within the book's subject

“Spanish” Formations

matter. One should not hurry to improve the state of his opponent’s pawns. I would say, a more logical option is 23.h3 f5 24.hxg4 hxg4 25.fxg4 fxg4 26.e5 with the initiative. **23...cxd6 24.♖f1 ♘c7 25.h4 ♖g8 26.fxg4 ♖xg4 27.♖f5 c5 28.♖d2 ♖gxe4?! Correct** is 28...♖xe4, threatening ♖e3xg3 which would more or less maintain the balance. **29.♖xh5 ♖e2+ 30.♖xe2 ♖xe2+ 31.♘h3 ♖xb2 32.♖f5 ±**



This looks very impressive as White obtains two connected passed pawns. **32...♖xa2 33.♖xf6?! 33.h5!** is more accurate, 33...♖a1+ 34.♔g2±, and the black rook has to rush headlong to the seventh/eighth ranks via e1. **33...♖a1 34.♖f2 a5 35.g4** As usual, time-trouble errors begin. **35.♖h2! 35...♖h1+ 36.♘g3 b5 37.g5? 37.h5 a4 38.♔g2 ♖h4 39.♔g3 ♖h1 40.♔g2** would have led to a draw. **37...b4?! 38.cxb4 axb4**



39.♖g2? There was still a possibility to escape with 39.g6! ♖g1+ 40.♖g2 ♖xg2+ 41.♔xg2 b3 42.g7 b2 43.g8♖ b1♖ 44.h5 with a draw. **39...♘d7 40.♘g4 b3 41.g6 ♘e7 42.♘g5 c4 43.♖e2+ ♘d7 44.♖g2 ♘e7 45.♖e2+ ♘f8 46.♖f2+ ♘g8 47.♖b2 ♘g7 48.h5 ♖g1+ 49.♘f5 ♘h6 50.♖e2 c3 51.♖e7 ♖g5+ 52.♘f6 ♘xh5 0-1**

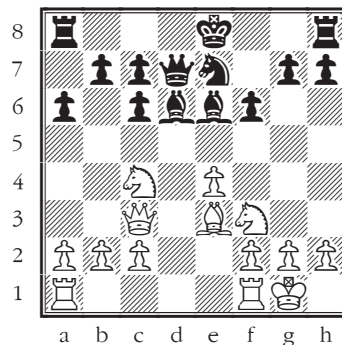
In the following game, the Ukrainian grandmaster’s handling of the simple major-piece ending was a model. I had an opportunity to play against him earlier, and even in his youth, Anton was quite a strong player, while now his level is around a 2700 Elo rating. So, Korobov hid his king behind the doubled pawns neatly and then launched a queenside offensive. In the meantime, he did not allow White to organize the advance of his pawns on the opposite flank.

(64) Solak (2631) – Korobov (2700)

Baku 2015

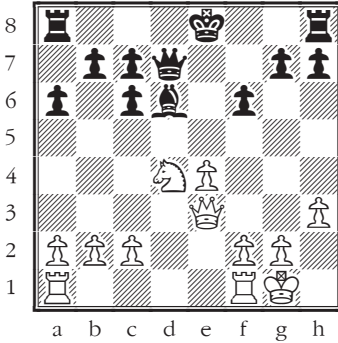
Ruy Lopez [C69]

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♖b5 a6 4.♖xc6 dxc6 5.0-0 ♖d6 6.d4 exd4 7.♘xd4 f6 8.♖e3 ♘e7 9.♘bd2 ♖e6 10.♘c3 ♘d7 11.♘c4

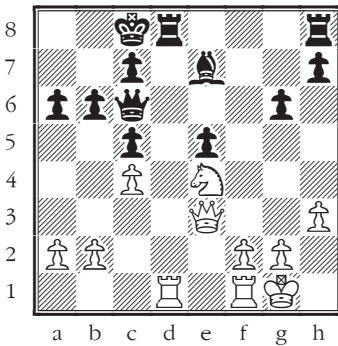


11.♘d4 is likely to be somewhat more promising. **11...♖xc4 12.♘xc4 ♘g6 13.♘d4 ♘e5 14.♘e2 ♘g4 15.h3 ♘xe3 16.♘xe3**

Doubled Pawns

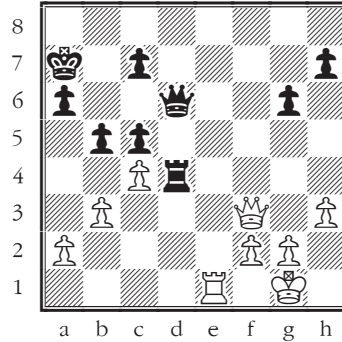


The situation has simplified even more. Let us see how the knight will fight against the bishop. **16...g6 17.♖ad1 0-0-0 18.♗b3 b6 19.c4 c5!** Otherwise the white pawn will continue to advance, damaging Black's pawn structure. **20.e5!?** A positional sacrifice aimed at getting a perfect blocking point for the knight. **20...f×e5 21.♗d2 ♖c6 22.♗e4 ♗e7**

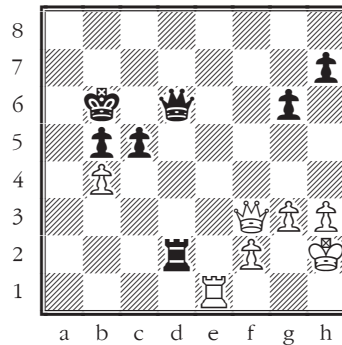


White would be doing well if only his opponent would not be constantly threatening to infiltrate of one of the major pieces to d4. **23.♖×d8+ ♖×d8 24.♗c3 ♖d4 24...♖e6!?** **25.♖×e5 ♖f6 26.♖e2** This looks like aggressive intentions. The Turkish grandmaster is likely to have hoped to take advantage of the defects in the enemy's pawn structure. The following leads to a balanced position: **26.♖×f6**

♗×f6 27.b3 ♖d7=. **26...♗d6 27.♗e4 ♖e5 28.♗×d6+ ♖×d6 29.♖f3 ♖b8 30.♖e1 ♗a7 31.b3 31.♖e8?** does not work, **31...♖d1+**, and Black's attack comes first. **31...b5** with a counterplay.



Please note that the doubled pawns are quite good, protecting the black king both diagonally and horizontally. Meanwhile, the centralized positions of the queen and the rook create opportunities for a queenside offensive where Black has a numerical pawn superiority. **32.c×b5** White should not have captured on b5, maintaining the compactness of the black pawns. **32.g3 b×c4 33.b×c4 ♖×c4 34.♖e8; 32.♖f7!?** **32...a×b5 33.g3 ♖b6 34.a4 c6 35.a×b5 c×b5 36.♖h2 ♖d2 37.b4**



37...c×b4 38.♖f7?? After **38.♖e4**, the situation remains unclear.