

# **Coaching Kasparov, Year by Year and Move by Move**

Volume II: The Assassin (1982-1990)

Alexander Nikitin

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Front cover photo: Nikitin and Kasparov with Norik Grigorian, Kasparov's fitness coach

Photos provided by 64 Publishing House

Analysis of the twenty Kasparov vs Vladimirov and Kasparov vs Timoshchenko training games was carried out by Grandmaster Dorian Rogozenco in 2020 using modern computer engines. The author and publisher wish to express their gratitude to the Kasparov family for providing these games especially for this book, in which they are published for the first time. Analysis of the other games has generally not been updated since it was completed by the author in the early 1990s, although a small number of corrections have been made, as the main purpose of the analysis is to explain the thought process of Kasparov and his opponents in the context in which they played

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*At the beginning of my career as a coach I promised to do my utmost, using all my strength, knowledge and experience, to bring up a challenger capable of replacing Karpov on the throne. I am proud that I kept my promise and achieved my aim*

## **Chapter 1. Reaching the Summit (1982-1984)**

---

Garry's rapid chess progress not only threatened Karpov's reign but also created masses of problems for the people working with him. The lad had to cope with a number of painful trials, each of which could have broken him. World fame was growing even more rapidly than his chess ability. The praise gushing from newspaper pages and television screens blurred his thinking. A boy whom the System had taught to live in the crowd had now been hoisted far above it on the crest of the wave of public recognition, before he had time to digest his true significance. His stunning victories at chess tournaments, his famous victims – all this started to create a superiority complex within him, and he turned out to lack immunity against celebrity disease. Moreover, he had to handle the first signs of a cold war launched against him by the sporting functionaries and which took the form of measures incompatible with the concepts of honesty and fairness that had embedded in the lad's mind after graduating from school. Only a strong personality could protect himself in such circumstances, one with a tough character and the wisdom of a philosopher capable of fighting against fate itself.

So what was Garry like prior to the start of these new serious trials? He was a tall, handsome lad with thick, black hair and an athletic figure. He liked sport due to his love of risk. He hence willingly ran around with a football at his feet, swam like a fish in the Caspian Sea, and would try to run a hundred meters in just 12 seconds. His passion for reading was as strong as ever. His ability to read entire pages at once, rather than just line by line as we lesser mortals are used to, enabled him to read a thick book from beginning to end in an evening. His excellent memory resembled an endless chest from which he quickly and accurately extracted dates, figures, facts, and large pieces of poetry. Although Garry spurted information of an unusually large range – from chess to politics – he constantly strived to learn more and more.

At the base of his spiritual qualities stood kindness and a striving for justice. However, while the latter is typical of the majority of young people, the former is a quality that far from everybody possesses. Even then, we could trace the lad's creative nature, which he had inherited from his father. From an early age he stopped fearing the full audiences of the playing halls and,



*Garry and me with Timoshchenko (left) and Vladimirov (right), Vilnius, 1984*



*The chief arbiter examining a chair. Match vs. Karpov, Moscow, 1984*

## Chapter 7. Select Games (1982-1989)

---

### Game 1

The Yugoslav city of Bugojno hosted a grandmaster tournament that proved to be the scene of one of Kasparov's most stunning performances. He achieved a number of combinational victories, though by that time we were all used to those. For me, a win that on the surface looked quite simple was a real phenomenon. Above all, it was a victory over himself. Up until Bugojno he had only managed a single draw versus the ex-world champion. Two fierce attacks by Garry had crashed against the armor of fantastically skilled defense.




Several months before the Yugoslav tournament, another ex-world champion, Boris Spassky, my childhood friend, had flown into Moscow. The three of us spent several evenings engaged in long conversations that were most useful for Garry. In one of them, the lad complained that he found it impossible to break the defenses of Iron Tigran. Boris, who had of course played two world title matches with Petrosian and had studied his play thoroughly, gave a quite surprising reply: "Tiger, however paradoxical it sounds, possesses fantastic tactical vision that against the background of his immensely subtle understanding of positions and supernatural sense of danger nobody notices. Try not to sacrifice anything, and in general, don't play directly against him. He'll always find a defense, no matter how improbably, against concrete threats. His Achilles heel is defense in a slightly worse position, especially when he has no counterplay. Even then, you have to positionally squeeze him gently, without rushing and without making any sudden movements."

The careful reader might note that the recipe for beating the great defender contained components that were quite alien to the playing style of the young and temperamental grandmaster. I had no doubt that two or three years later Garry would learn to play in that style, too. However, when it came to chess improvement he preferred leaps to measured walking. Half a year after our conversations with Spassky the lad once again met the cunning Tiger in battle. Well, take a look at how he digested the lessons of the former matador.

#### G. KASPAROV – T. PETROSIAN

Bugojno. International tournament. 15.05.1982

*Bogo-Indian Defense. [E11]*

1.d4  f6 2.c4 e6 3. f3  b4+

In the language of professionals,

this check is a demonstration of a peaceful frame of mind. Petrosian

clearly didn't want to repeat their recent clash in the sharp 3...b6 4.a3 ♘b7 5.♘c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 system, which he only won after a massive effort.

**4.♙d2 ♖e7 5.g3 ♙xd2+ 6.♖xd2 0-0 7.♙g2 d5 8.0-0 dxc4 9.♘a3 c5**

A hard-to-spot inaccuracy dictated by black's confidence that the boredom being created on the board was not Kasparov's cup of tea and that a peace treaty was around the corner. It was more accurate to advance this pawn after the initial 9...♖d8 10.♖c2.

**10.dxc5 ♖xc5 11.♖ac1 ♘c6 12.♘xc4 ♖e7 13.♘fe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5**

The exchange of knights actually deepens black's difficulties in developing his queenside. It was only his absence of pawn weaknesses and the young man from Baku's volatile chess temperament that gave Petrosian hope that the threat would pass, even if more slowly than he would have liked.

**14...♘d5 15.♖fd1 ♘b6 16.♖a5!**

A wonderful queen maneuver paralyzing black's queenside. It suddenly transpires that the black knight's transfer has been a complete waste of time, as he cannot even pressure white in the center. So instead he needs to make the last possible useful move.

**16...g6**

The previously planned 16...f6 weakens the seventh rank, and this sharply strengthens the effect of the

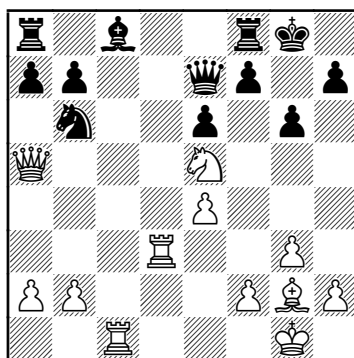
white pieces' invasion along the c-file – 17.♘c4 ♘xc4 18.♖xc4 b6 19.♖c3 ♙a6 20.♖c7 ♖ad8! 21.♖xe7 (21.♖xd8 ♖xd8 22.♙f1 ♖f7) and then 21...♖xd1+ 22.♙f1 ♙xe2 23.♖c7! ♖xf1+ 24.♙g2 ♙d3 25.♖xg7+ ♙h8 26.♖g4 with a win.

**17.♖d3!**

An excellent move, stamping out the attempt at a further exchange – 17...♖d8? 18.♖c5! while preparing to gain the c7 square for the white pieces.

**17...♘d5 18.e4! ♘b6**

He needs to go back, as 18...♖b4? 19.♖xd5!, 18...♘b4? 19.♖c7, and 18...b6 19.♖d2 ♘b4 20.♖d6! are equally unappealing. Petrosian again hopes to chase the white knight from the center.



**19.♙f1!**

Just a year earlier Garry could not have come up with such a move – his level wasn't there yet. It's rare when a piece returning to its starting square decides the game. Now, Petrosian's sole hope of saving the game by breaking out with 19...



## Game 12

### G. KASPAROV – E. VLADIMIROV

Training game. 25.01.1983

*Slav Defense [D17]*

*Commentary by Dorian Rogozenco*

**1.d4 [01] d5 [00] 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 [02] ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 [02] 5.a4 [03] ♙f5 [03] 6.♘e5 [06]**

Until 1983 Kasparov used to play exclusively the 6.e3 variation here. In the present game he is testing 6.♘e5 against the Slav for the first time.

**6...e6 [04] 7.f3 ♙b4 [05]**

7...c5 8.e4 cxd4 9.exf5 ♙b4 10.♙xc4 ♖d6? 11.♙b5+ saw a large advantage for white in G. Kasparov – A. Shirov, Dos Hermanas 1996.

**8.♘xc4 [09]**

8.e4 is the main continuation.

**8...0-0 9.♙g5 [13]**

In modern theory 9.♖f2 is considered to be white's only attempt to fight for an advantage in the 8.♘xc4 line.

**9...b5!? [15]**

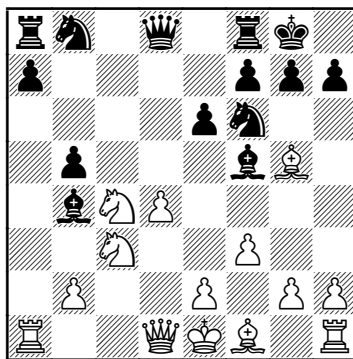
9...h6 10.♙h4 c5 is nowadays the established way to neutralize 9.♙g5. Vladimirov's 9...b5 has never been played in a grandmaster game even up to the present, but it also seems to be a good move for black. The problem is that from a practical point of view 9...b5 is rather difficult to play, since it leads to positions where the price of each mistake is very high.

**10.axb5 [29]**

10.♘e5 h6 11.♙h4 c5 12.dxc5 ♖c7 is not a real option for white,

because he is practically forced to continue 13.♖d6 ♖xd6 14.cxd6 ♙xd6 15.f4 (15.♙g3 ♘h5?), leaving black with many attractive possibilities in a good position.

**10...cxb5 [16]**



**11.♘a3 [32]**

Exchanging on b5 on the previous move (which provides the c6 square to the opponent's knight) and then retreating the knight to a3 looks quite a dangerous strategy. White hasn't castled yet and such play can easily backfire. But Kasparov trusts his outstanding calculating abilities and as long as he does not see a concrete refutation, he always plays principled moves. White's opening play is actually based on a very simple and healthy strategy: to occupy the center with pawns and

limit the activity of the opponent's light-squared bishop. The retreat of the knight to a3 attacks the pawn on b5 and at the same time prepares to consolidate the position with e2-e4 and ♖a3-c2.

11. ♖e5 allows black to wrest the initiative with 11...h6! (11...♖c7 12. ♖d2!) 12. ♖h4 (or 12. ♖xf6 gxf6!) 12...♖c7 13. ♖c1 ♖d5.

**11... ♖c6 [27]**

An interesting alternative is 11...h6 12. ♖h4 (12. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 13.e4 is no good in view of 13...♖xa3 14.bxa3 ♖c6 15.exf5 ♖xd4 16. ♖d3 ♖fd8 17.0-0 ♖xf5 with an advantage for black) 12...g5 (or 12...♖c6 13.e4 ♖xd4!? 14.exf5 exf5 and unclear) 13. ♖g3 ♖d5 and unclear.

**12.e4 [35]**

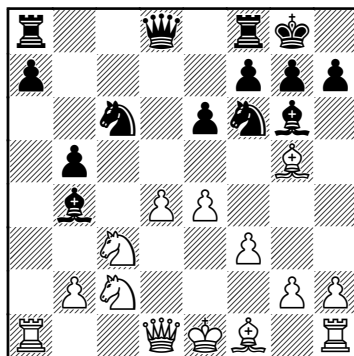
Of course not 12. ♖axb5 a6.

**12... ♖g6 [58]**

Generally it was not typical of Vladimirov to think for long in these games, but this retreat of the bishop alone took him more than half an hour. Most certainly he was trying to make the bishop sac work: 12...♖xd4 13.exf5 exf5 14. ♖xb5 ♖e7+ 15. ♖f1 ♖fd8 is indeed interesting. The main problem is that in this line white also has other options, for instance, to leave the bishop hanging on f5 for the moment and start with 13. ♖e3, or take the pawn with 13. ♖xb5. In the arising variations it is impossible to calculate everything over the board. Black will be a piece down without entirely clear compensation, so after a long thought Vladimirov decided

to keep material equality (which is objectively the correct decision).

**13. ♖c2 [39]**



Finally, white consolidates the center and can be optimistic about the future. Under these circumstances black should usually try to create some tactical counterplay, otherwise he will have to defend a passive and strategically inferior position. And this is exactly the problem in such positions for black: to keep the balance between strategic play and try to feel the right moment for starting complications.

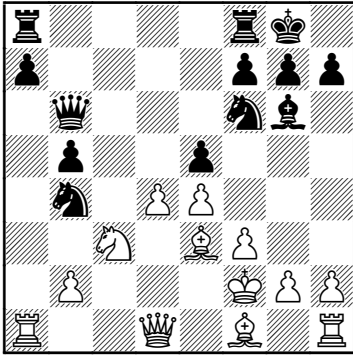
**13... ♖b6 [59] 14. ♖xb4 [47]**

If white planned to place the bishop on e3 on the next move, then it made sense to do it at once in order to have it protected by the knight and not allow e6-e5.

**14... ♖xb4 15. ♖e3 [58]**

The path to an advantage is quite narrow here: 15. ♖xb5 ♖fd8 (15...♖xd4 16. ♖xd4 ♖c2+ 17. ♖f2 ♖xd4 18. ♖a6 ♖ab8 19. ♖a2±) 16. ♖a4! (16. ♖e3 e5, or 16. ♖e2 a6 17. ♖c4 ♖xd4 is less clear) 16...♖xd4 17. ♖e2±

**15...e5 [65] 16. ♖f2 [60]**



It seems that black must exchange on d4, but Vladimirov finds a strong tactical way to keep the board on fire.

**16...♖c2!** [66]

16...exd4 17.♗xd4 ♗xd4  
18.♙xd4 ♘c2 19.♖d1 ♘xd4  
20.♖xd4 a6 21.♙e2 leads to a better endgame for white.

**17.♗xc2** [62] **exd4** **18.♗d3** [63]  
♖fd8 [81]

Possibly black missed that after 18...dxe3+ 19.♗xe3 ♗b8 20.♙xb5 he has 20...♙xe4!= This means that instead of taking the pawn on b5 white should play 20.♙d3 or 20.♙e2, but then black continues 20...b4 followed by 21...♖e8, which is very close to equality.

But 18...♖ad8! 19.♙e2 b4 20.♘a4 is even stronger (in case of 20.♘b5 dxe3+ 21.♗xe3 ♗b8 black has good play everywhere; for instance, white is already worse after 22.♘xa7 ♖de8), followed by 20...dxe3+ 21.♗xe3 ♗b8. This is the point of 18...♖ad8: the queen does not block the rook on a8, while the king's rook will go to e8, helping to create different tactical

ideas. Black is by no means worse: 22.♖ad1 (22.g3 ♖fe8 with double-edged play) 22...♖xd1 23.♙xd1 ♖c8 24.g3 h5 25.♖e1 h4=

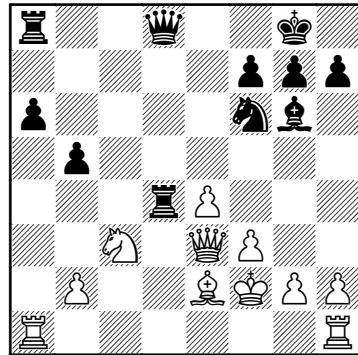
**19.♙e2** [64]

Now white's prospects are preferable.

**19...a6** [88]

White also has an advantage after 19...b4 20.♘a4 (20.♘b5!?) 20...dxe3+ 21.♗xe3 ♗b8 22.g3, although black retains chances to save the game here as well.

**20.♙xd4** [79] **♖xd4** [89] **21.♗e3**  
♗d8 [95]



**22.e5** [95]

The immediate 22.♘xb5? would be a mistake in view of 22...♘g4+ (even stronger than 22...♘xe4+ 23.♙g1) 23.fxg4 ♖xe4, but 22.♖hd1 ♖xd1 23.♖xd1 ♗c7 24.♗d4 is an attractive alternative, leaving the bishop out of play on g6.

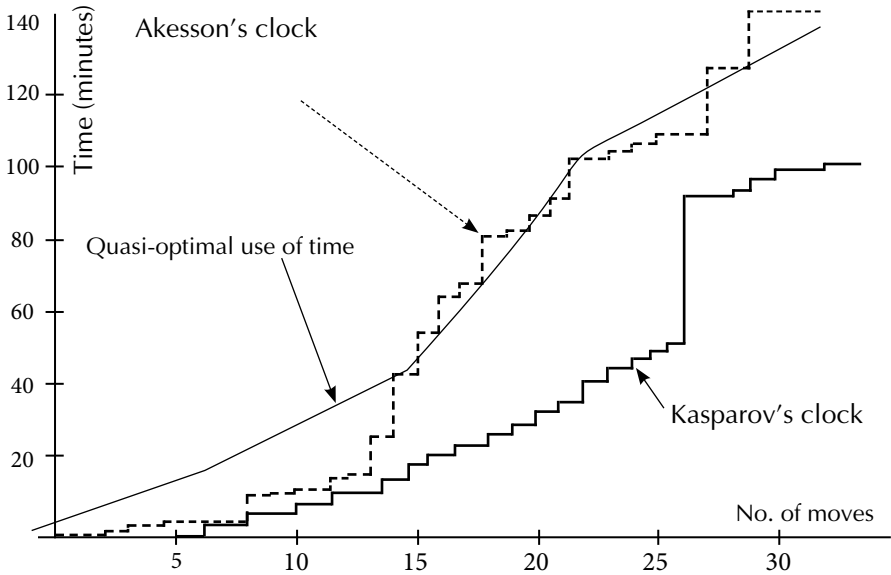
**22...♘h5?** [97]

This apparently active move was probably based on the wrong assessment of the position. Black is not able to provide any serious activity

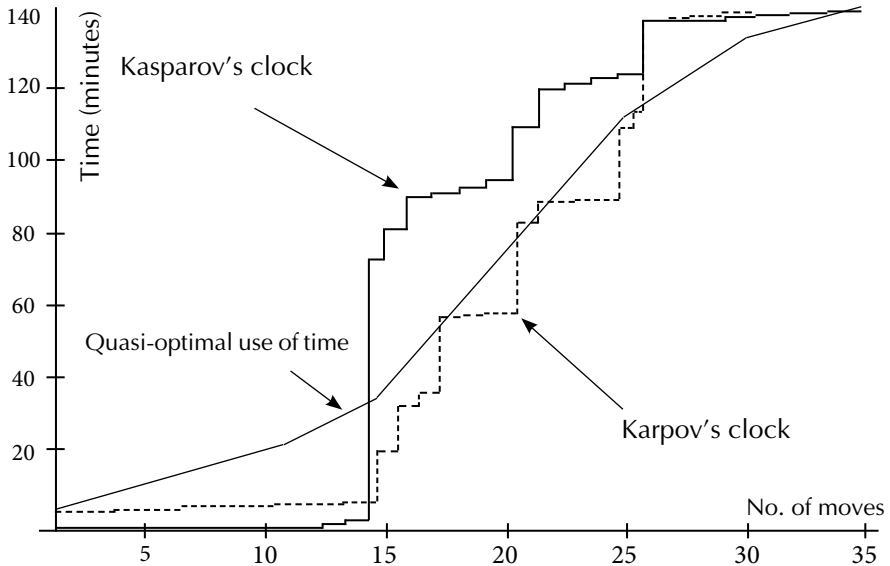
## APPENDIX 4

### The Benefits of Chess Chronometry

#### Chronometry of the game Kasparov vs. Akesson, 1980 <sup>22</sup>



#### Chronometry of the game Karpov vs. Kasparov, Seville match, game 5, 1987 <sup>23</sup>



<sup>22</sup> Game 42 in Volume I

<sup>23</sup> Game 33 in the present Volume

these two types of analysis. Decent analysis of a game provides useful facts and conclusions when combined with graphic analysis, which often points to the need for additional chess analysis in various areas allowing you to reach deeper conclusions and make recommendations for chess study that are of more use to the player. The wide use of chess computers during a player's preparation allows you to recommend such a type of full analysis for constant improvement. In particular, you should subject games that made you think about the reasons for your wins and, above all losses, to such analysis.

Reading the story of Kasparov's games in this book, you may have noticed how the author attempted to explain many moves with reference to chronometry. We will try to obtain some conclusions that you can make by viewing only the main, chronometric chart, from the game Kasparov - Akesson (game No. 42 in Volume I of this book).

The chart shows three chronometric curves. The top and bottom indicate the amount of time spent by each player on thinking over moves. From the very start of our collaboration, I made Garry also write down the time use of his opponent, which proved to be very useful during matches, as it enabled us to uncover weaknesses in the chess thinking of his opponents that they of course attempted to hide.

The middle curve is purely indicative; the optimal expenditure of time according to which time spent on each move is distributed evenly, although there are differences depending on the stage of the game. The parameters of this curve are determined by the players themselves depending on their opening knowledge, playing style and readiness for the tournament. For example, I consider that it makes sense to spend only two minutes on each of the first ten moves of the game, followed by no more than three minutes on each of the next five. The main expenditure of time is usually on the middlegame (from around move 16 to move 25), when there are still no concrete targets to attack and hence there are no concrete action plans, or, alternatively, when a fierce battle is under way whose outcome depends on the quality and quantity of calculations made. I estimate the norm for thinking per move at seven minutes. Then the norm gradually declines back down to two minutes for each of the last ten moves prior to time control. These norms, dictated by my experience, are of course subjective, but they may nevertheless serve as a useful benchmark for a player with a tendency to think too slowly.

For the currently popular time control of two hours for forty minutes, a different timing structure may be more appropriate: to spend no more than fifteen minutes on the first ten moves; another fifteen minutes on the next five moves; then on the most difficult part of the game (moves 16 to 25) no



ПАРТИЯ №

„25“ января

БЕЛЫЕ: Каспаров

ЧЕРНЫЕ: Владимиров

№№ ходов	Белые	Черные	№№ ходов	Белые	Черные
1	d2-d4	01	d7-d5	21	g6-g5
2	e2-c4	-	c7-c6	22	e4-e5
3	Kg1-f3	02	Kg8-f6	23	Kc3-b5
4	Kb1-a3	-	d5-d4	03	Mad-d1
5	a2-a4	04	Ce8-f5	04	g2-g3
6	Kf3-e5	05	e7-e6	04	h4-h3
7	f2-f3	-	e7-e6	05	g4-g3
8	Ke5-d4	06	Cd	06	
9	Ce2-g5	13	f7-f5	15	
10	ae1-g5	14	e6-b5	15	
11	Ka1-a5	20	Kb8-c6	27	
12	e2-e4	35	Cf5-g6	32	
13	Ka3-a2	34	g6-g5	33	
14	Ke2-b4	47	Ka6-b4	34	
15	Cg5-e3	51	e6-e5	05	
16	Keel-fc	00	Kb4-c2	06	
17	Hf1-e2	00	e5-d4	37	
18	Fa2-d3	03	Hf1-d6	81	
19	e1-e2	04	c7-c8	82	
20	Ce3-d4	49	Hd1-d4	83	

№№ ходов	Белые	Черные	№№ ходов	Белые	Черные
41			61		
42			62		
43			63		
44			64		
45			65		
46			66		
47			67		
48			68		
49			69		
50			70		
51			71		
52			72		
53			73		
54			74		
55			75		
56			76		
57			77		
58			78		
59			79		
60			80		

Результат партии: Белые 1 Черные 0

Время: Белые 14 мин Черные 12.5 мин

Подписи участников: Белые [Signature] Черные [Signature]

Главный арбитр \_\_\_\_\_