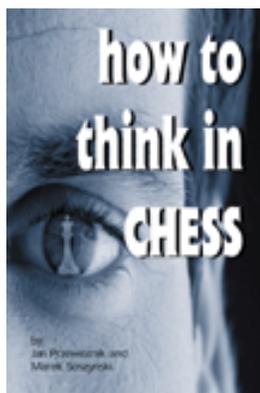




COLUMNISTS

The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



Training with Grandmasters

“Every missed opportunity to play better - even in a drawn game, or a difficult game to win - is your loss. That is why it is necessary for you to return again and again to study your oversights, regardless of how the game turned out.” - Garry Kasparov

In the days of my youth, the nation’s leading grandmasters frequently gave simultaneous exhibitions against young Moscow players. I always loved to participate in these, perhaps first and foremost because of the understandable urge to acquire one more famous grandmaster’s scalp. But there was another reason: the games played in those exhibitions, or at least episodes from them, usually proved educational. The ideas I discovered in them, etched solidly into memory, would later prove useful to me in tournament games. This form of training is undoubtedly useful for young players.

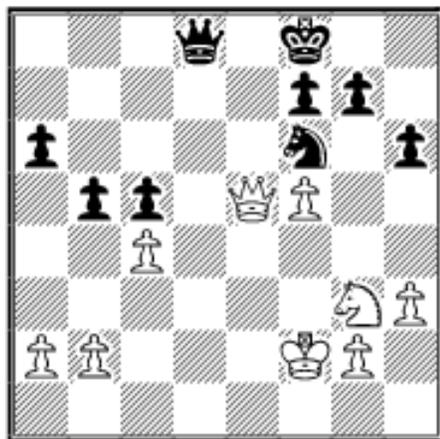
Truth be told, I remember hardly any occasion in a simultaneous exhibition (either the normal kind, or with clocks on a small number of boards) where it was the grandmaster’s decision that revealed anything to me. It was my own discoveries and omissions that I learned the most from. No surprise there. The simul-giver, after all, has no time to give serious consideration to his moves, and therefore plays superficially; while his opponent will occasionally be able to penetrate deeply into the position, and guess its secrets. And, on the whole, each of us is inclined to concentrate on his own thoughts, plans, discoveries and side tracks - absorbing others’ experience is psychologically much more difficult.

I’d like to offer some examples of my participation in simultaneous displays, and, with their assistance, to show



what point of view the chessplayer must take in considering games he has played, in order to extract useful information from them. Here, perhaps, it would be useful to recall an aphorism of Kozma Prutkov: *“When you throw a stone into the water, pay attention to the ripples that spread out from it; otherwise, it’s nothing but empty entertainment.”*

Bronstein – Dvoretsky Moscow 1963



29...Qd2+ 30 Ne2 Nd7! 31 Qc7 Ke7

Note that neither White’s nor Black’s queen can give a single check. Conclusion: **A knight placed next to the king provides secure shelter against queen checks.** This was the first game in which I

encountered this technique, which I was to employ frequently later on.

Here, White should choose either the careful 32 Qb7 Qxb2 33 Qxa6 b4, with a significantly inferior position, or sacrificing a pawn to create a passed pawn, with 32 cb!? ab 33 Qb7 Qxb2 34 a4. However, Bronstein committed the sort of awful oversight so common in simuls: **32 Kf3??**, and lost quickly after **32...Qd3+ 33 Kf2 Qxf5+ 34 Ke3 Qe6+ 35 Kf2 Qxc4**.

Botvinnik - Dvoretsky Moscow 1964

1 g3 Nf6 2 Bg2 g6 3 e4 d6 4 Ne2 Bg7 5 0-0 0-0 6 d4 c5?! 7 c3

7 dc!?

7...Nc6 8 h3 Qc7 9 Be3 Rd8 10 Nbd2

White has an obvious space advantage. To avoid a positional squeeze, I resolved to undertake a central diversion, figuring that, even if it led to the loss of a pawn, I would have definite compensation in the open lines.

10...cd 11 cd d5 12 e5 Ne4 13 Nxe4

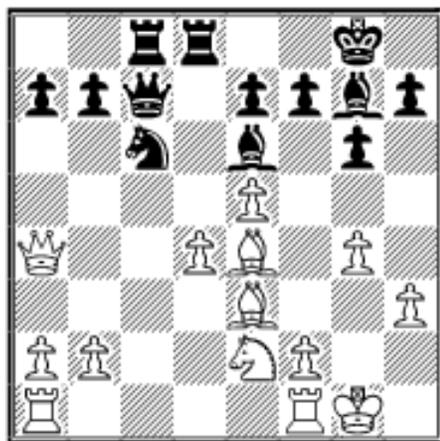
Another good line was 13 Nb3 f6 14 f3 Ng5 15 Bxg5 fg 16 Qd2, with advantage to White.

13...de 14 Qc2 Bf5 15 g4 Be6 16 Bxe4

Both players missed the strong positional move 16 Nf4!

16...Rac8 17 Qa4!?

17 Rac1



17...Qd7! (threatening ...Nxe5) **18 Qa3 h5**

The sacrifice on g4 is incorrect: 18...Bxg4? 19 Bxc6 Rxc6 20 hg Qxg4+ 21 Ng3 h5 22 Qxe7.

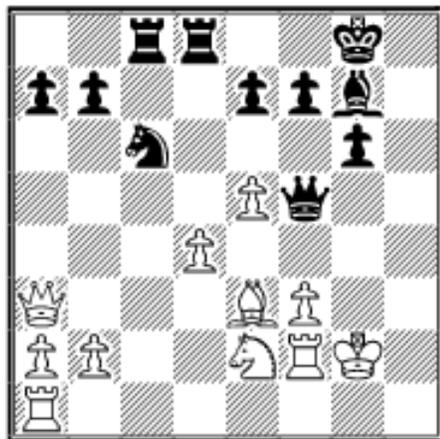
19 f3?!

The positional exchange sacrifice with 19 gh!? Bxh3 20 hg was worth considering.

19...hg 20 hg Bxg4! 21 Rf2

Botvinnik judged the position after 21. Bxc6 Rxc6 22. fg Qxg4+ 23. Kf2 Rc2 too dangerous. Simulgivers, on the whole, tend to avoid such adventures.

21...Bf5 22 Bxf5 Qxf5 23 Kg2



23...f6?

Having played an excellent opening, White, by his uncertain play thereafter, found himself in an inferior position. The text move looked completely natural to me, attacking the enemy center, and bringing the inactive darksquare

bishop into the game.

But when I showed the game to GM Simagin the following day, and got to the move f7-f6, he stopped me, and asked in surprise:

- Why are you weakening your king position, and giving White counterplay? Can't you play anything else here, but this?

- Well, what should I do instead?, I asked.

- Look at the "holes" in White's position on the light squares. Your knight dreams of reaching them - replied Simagin; and he proposed a move which, I admit, never entered my head: 23...a5!! Black's knight obtains an excellent transfer point at b4, from which he threatens to invade at c2, d3 or d5.

No further comment is needed here. Such episodes become fixed in memory for a long time, increasing a chessplayer's positional understanding.

24 Qb3+ Kf8 25 ef Bxf6 26 Rh1 Nxd4 27 Nxd4 Rxd4!

27...Bxd4 28 Rh7 Bxe3 29 Qxe3 is dangerous.

28 Rh7

On 28 Bxd4? Bxd4 29 Re2 (29 Qxb7 Qg5+ 30 Kh3 Rc4!) 29...Qg5+ 30 Kf1 (30 Kh3 Kg7) , the quickest decisive line is 30...Rc1+ 31 Re1 Qd2!

28...Rd5 29 Qxb7

This complex position offers equal chances to both sides, as the further course of the game confirmed.

29...Kg8 30 Rh3 Rc2 31 Qb8+ Kf7 32 Rh7+ Ke6 33 Qb3 Rxf2+ 34 Kxf2 g5 35 Rh5 Qg6 36 Rh Qf5?! (36...Qd3) 37 Rd1 Qe5 38 Rxd5?! (38 Kf1!) 38...Qxd5 39 Qxd5+ Kxd5 40 Bxa7 Bxb2 41 Be3 e5 42 Bxg5 e4 43 f4 Bc1 44 Ke2 Kc6 45 Kd1 Bxf4, draw.

In my study of the classic works, I took note of how often they differed in their treatment of one and the same question of chess strategy. Thus: Aron Nimzovich generally played to exploit weak squares in the enemy position; while Richard Reti, by contrast, often mounted an attack on the most solidly defended enemy point, attempting first to weaken, and then to destroy it, thereby bringing down the enemy's entire defense. For example, after 1. Nf3 d5, Nimzovich developed his bishop to b2, in order to control the weakened dark squares (first and foremost, e5). Reti would play to break up the d5 strong point with c2-c4, and attack it again by developing his bishop to g2.

Fortunately, I already had enough sense to avoid getting into foolish arguments, such as who's right, or whose strategy is superior. I understood that, depending upon the particular circumstances, one would give preference to one strategy or the other - or that one might sometimes need to combine them. Nevertheless, Nimzovich's ideas were closer, more understandable to me, and I often used them. I first employed a Reti-style plan - that is, a logical attack on

the most highly fortified spot in the enemy camp - in a game played as part of a clock simultaneous.

Vasiukov – Dvoretsky Moscow 1965

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 Ne7 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bc c5 7 a4 Nbc6 8 Nf3 Qa5 9 Bd2 Bd7 10 Be2

10 Bb5 later became popular.

10...c4

10...f6 was preferable, since now White has the strong knight maneuver 11 Ng5! h6 12 Nh3 0-0-0 13 Nf4 Kb8 14 0-0 Nc8 (14...g6 was better) 15 Nh5! Rhg8 16 Bg4!, when Black has no active play (Kavalek - Uhlmann, Manila Interzonal 1976).

11 0-0 f6 12 ef!? gf 13 Re1

Theory recommends that White play for restriction by 13 Nh4!? 0-0-0 14 Bh5, to which Black usually responds by sacrificing a pawn with 14...Ng6!?

13...0-0-0 14 Bf1 Ng6

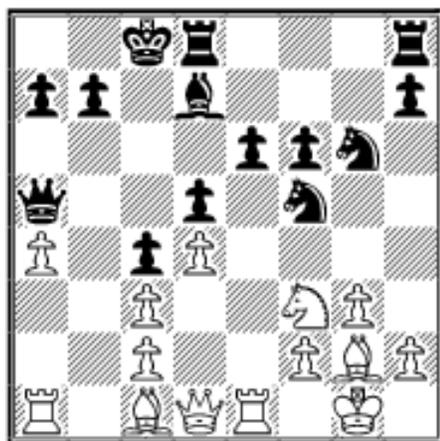
Black achieved an excellent position in Suetin - Uhlmann, Berlin 1967, with 14...Nf5 15 Qc1 h5 16 Qa3 Rdg8 17 Rab1 Nd8 18 Rb4 Bc6.

15 g3 Nce7

Now White must think about the maneuver ...Nf5-d6-e4.

16 Bc1 Nf5 17 Bg2

17 Bh3 was more logical, when, as I recall, I was considering the positional pawn sacrifice 17...Nd6!? 18 Bxe6 Ne4 19 Bxd7+ Rxd7.

**17...h5**

Black intends to hit the foundation of White's kingside defense, the pawn at g3, with everything he's got. First, he will play h7-h5-h4xg3; then comes Nf5-d6-e4 and f6-f5. The pawn at f5 supports the knight at e4, and also prepares to

attack g3, by moving one more step forward.

18 Ba3 Qa6

It's important to hold the d6 square for the knight.

19 a5 h4 20 Bc5 hg 21 hg Nd6 22 Nd2 f5! 23 Bxd6

Otherwise, the knight will turn up on e4.

23...Qxd6 24 a6?! b6 25 Qf3?!

A typical simul one-mover: White creates the threat of 26 Nxc4. The immediate 25 Nxc4 dc 26 Qf3 (hoping for 26...Qb8? 27 Rxe6!) is refuted by 26...Rdg8! But 25 f4 or 25 Nf3 was stronger.

25...Qc7!

Now the threat is neutralized, and White can no longer stop f5-f4.

26 Reb1 f4 27 Rb4 fg 28 fg Rdf8 29 Qe3



The g3-pawn has been turned into a serious weakness. The knight goes to f5, to attack it yet again; and if necessary, the rooks can join in the assault, too, via the g-file.

29...Ne7!

Black's plan - triumphant! He has a strategically won position.

30 Rf1 Nf5 31 Qf4 Qxf4 32 Rxf4 (32 gf Rhg8 or 32...Ne3) **32...Nxg3 33 Rxf8+ Rxf8 34 Bf3 Kc7 35 Kg2 Nf5 36 Kf2 b5 37 Rb1 Kb6 38 Ra1 Bc8 39 Nf1 e5 40 de Nh4 41 Nh2 Nxf3 42 Nxf3 Bg4 43 Kg3 Bxf3 44 Rf1 Kxa6 45 Rxf3 Rxf3+ 46 Kxf3 Kb6 47 Kf4 Kc7 48 Kf5 Kd7**
White resigned.

Probably my most memorable game was beating a World Champion in a clock simultaneous.

Petrosian – Dvoretsky Moscow 1965

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 Nc3 Nc6 4 Bb5 Nge7 5 0-0 a6 6 Be2!?

An odd move. Why bring the bishop out to b5, then? In order to provoke the knight into developing at e7, instead of f6? I don't think the knight stands any worse here.

6...d6 7 d3 g6 8 Bg5

8 d4 deserved consideration. After Black has set himself on developing the bishop to g7, it would make sense for White to play on the weakness of the d6-pawn by opening the d-file.

8...Bg7 9 Qc1 Nd4 10 Bh6 0-0

It would make no sense to complicate the game by
 10...Bxh6 11 Qxh6 Nxc2 12 Rac1 Nd4 13 Qg7 Rg8 14
 Qxh7.

13 Nxd4 cd 12 Bxg7 Kxg7 13 Nd1



The standard plan in such positions is to reconfigure the pawns on dark squares: e6-e5, f7-f6, etc. But I chose a better line, by the process of “prophylactic thinking” (for, I believe, the first time in my life). What does White want to play here? Probably f2-f4; but Black should also consider

queenside pawn moves. The c2-c3 break is useless, as long as Black can easily support the d4 square. But c2-c4 has a point: White rids himself of the backward pawn at c2, thereby strengthening the queenside, which is where I would like to develop my own attack.

13...b5! 14 c4?! (I guessed right!) 14...bc 15 Qxc4 e5

Black has opened the b- and c-files, and will soon occupy them with his rooks.

16 f4 Be6 17 Qb4 Rc8 18 Nf2 Nc6 19 Qd2

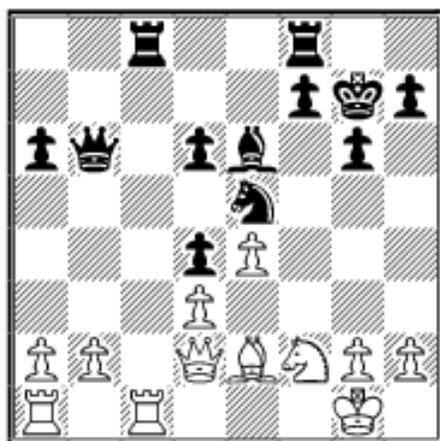
Again, we employ prophylactic thinking. White would probably love to get rid of his bad bishop by playing 20 Bg4 - the reply ..f7-f5, in the absence of a bishop at g7, weakens the kingside. For example, 19...Qa5?! 20 Qxa5 Nxa5 21 fe de 22 Bg4! (22 Rfc1!?) 22...f5 23 ef gf 24 Bf3, with mutual chances.

19...ef! 20 Qxf4 Ne5

Black has effected a favorable transformation of the position. By somewhat weakening his pawn structure, he obtains the excellent square e5 for his knight. His opponent now has no time for 21 Bg4, since he must parry the threatened rook incursion at c2.

21 Rfc1 Qb6 22 Qd2

I shall comment on the final stage of this game, first, as I then understood it.



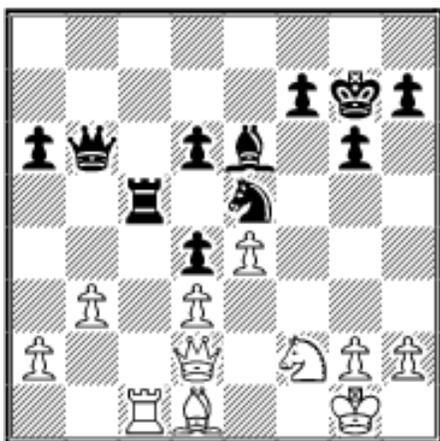
22...Rxc1

Black exploits the fact that the enemy rook is tied to the defense of the a-pawn.

23 Qxc1 Rc8 24 Qd2 Rc5 25 Bd1 Rb5!

It's important to induce the move b2-b3, weakening the dark squares and reducing the White bishop's activity still further. My opponent has no choice, since the pawn sacrifice 26 Bb3 Bxb3 27 ab Rxb3 does nothing to alleviate his position.

26 b3 Rc5 27 Rc1?



Seeking simplification, Tigran Petrosian overlooks a tactical nicety.

27...Rxc1 28 Qxc1 Qa5!

The decisive fork! This wins a pawn, and with it, the game.

29 Kf1 Qxa2 30 b4?

A standard “simul blunder” in a lost position.

30...Qxf2+!

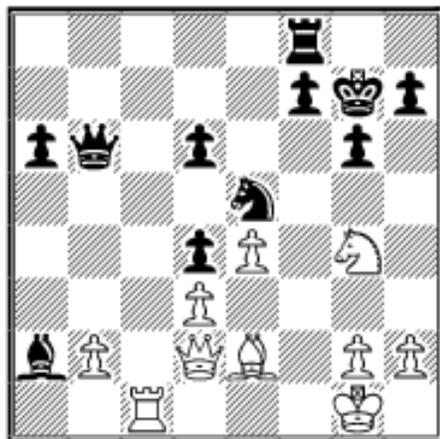
White resigned. A good positional game!

About two decades later, searching for suitable lesson material, I returned to this encounter with Petrosian. As a trainer, my interest at that time was in the problem of defending a difficult position and exploiting the advantage achieved. Looking at the concluding moves from this point of view, I saw that my actions were hardly above reproach, for they offered my opponent the chance to obtain counterplay.

Return to the second-last diagram. From a positional standpoint, the move a6-a5 is good for Black. The fact that he never found the time to play it does not speak well of the technical mastery of the Black player. True, as the game went, the absence of a pawn from a5 was in my favor, since it allowed me the decisive move 28...Qa5!; but that was almost accidental.

Instead of exchanging rooks, Black could have played 22...a5!?!; and if 23 b3, then either 23...Qb4 or 23...Rc5 (the immediate 22...Rc5 would be met by 23 b4). 23 a3 is strongly met by 23...Rb8 or 23...Rc5, followed by 24...Rb8 (24 b4 ab 25 ab Rb5).

But why is 22...Rxc1 bad, when White has to recapture with the queen? That's just it: he doesn't. Instead, he should have given serious consideration to 23 Rxc1!?! Bxa2, except that instead of 24 b3? Bxb3 25 Rb1 a5, he should continue 24 Ng4!



Mate is threatened, which Black cannot prevent by 24...f6? in view of 25 Qh6+ Kg8 26 Nxf6+! Rxf6 27 Rc8+. After 24...Nxc4 25 Bxc4, the disappearance of the e5-knight, which had cemented Black's position, allows White chances to exploit the weakness of the doubled d-pawns. 25...Rb8 is met by 26 b4!; and if 25...Bb3, 26 Ra1, intending 27 Qa5. After 25...Be6 26 Bxe6 fe 27 h3, the Black king is too exposed.

I believe the only real way to try for the win would have been to refuse the exchange of knights by 24...Nd7!, followed by 25...Be6. Would that have been an easy decision?

But if 22...Rxc1!? and 22...a5!? are nevertheless of roughly equal value, then the next move, 23...Rc8?! is a serious inaccuracy. If it's a good idea to induce the weakening move b2-b3, then better to do so at once by 23..Rb8! A possible continuation was 24 b3 Rc8 25 Qd2 a5 26 Rc1 Qb4! Black would have to lose time later on the maneuver Rc8-c5-b5-c5, and this delay would have given his opponent some counterchances.

After 23...Rc8?! 24 Qd2 the move 24...Rc5 looks right. On 24...a5 25 Bd1 (intending 26 Bb3) 25...Rc5, Black must consider 26 h3! Rb5 27 Bb3!? Bxb3 (a more dangerous path was 27...a4! 28 Bxe6 Rxb2) 28 ab Rxb3 29 Qxa5 Qxa5 (29...Rxb2 30 Qxb6 Rxb6 31 Ra4) 30 Rxa5 Nxd3 (30...Rxb2 31 Rd5 draws) 31 Nxd3 (31 Ra3!?) 31...Rxd3 32 Rd5.

Back to the game: instead of the losing 27. Rc1?, White had to try 27 b4!? (here's where the absence of a black pawn on a5 matters) 27...Rc3 28 Rb1, intending 29 a4. 28...a5 29 b5 Ra3 30 Rb2 poses no threat to him. After 28...Ra3 White has a choice between 29 Rb2 and 29 Bb3; the latter move involves a small trap: 29...Bxb3 30 ab Nc6? 31 Ng4! If Black tries the prophylactic 30...h5, White could consider the maneuver 31 Nh3!? Although White's position remains shaky, he could still fight on.

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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