

THE NEW WINAWER REPORT

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A free, monthly electronic newsletter on the theory, practice, and history of the French Winawer. Available at <http://www.irlchess.com/tnwr>. Editor email: coffey@irlchess.com. © Seán Coffey 2014. All rights reserved.

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Winawer Praxis—II

There is no such thing as opening theory', says Sanakoev: 'Opening monographs and encyclopaedias are collections of games ... with brief and very often mistaken comments.' Moles is of the same opinion: 'Opening books ... are after all essentially just collections of games—some complete, most incomplete.'

This startling notion cannot tell the whole story, of course. Is a game 'just' a collection of moves? 'Theory' must mean a connected set of games, and furthermore take into account all commentary, analysis, and evaluations—and indeed misconceptions—to give all that is publicly known or believed about an opening. Yet there is a kernel of truth there too: who can deny that games provide both the backbone of existing theory and its harshest test?

This issue considers recent games in lines previously covered.

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Some recent games

Iordăchescu–Miedema

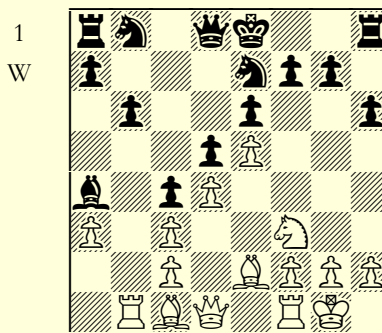
Iași Open 2014

TWIC 1019

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 e5 c5 5
a3 ♙xc3+ 6 bxc3 ♘e7 7 ♘f3
7 ... h6

An idea of Hertneck's, from **Anand–Hertneck, Munich SKA 1991** *Informator 51/(290)*, recently recommended above all others here by Berg *GMR-1 pp. 235-49*: 'a high-class waiting move'.

8 ♖b1!? b6
9 ♙b5+ ♙d7
10 ♙e2 ♙a4
11 0-0 c4(1)

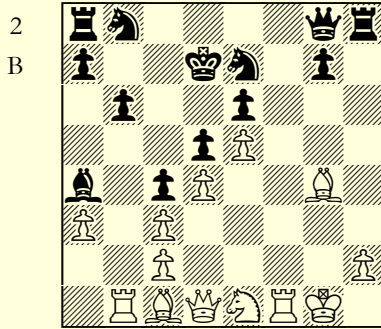


Cf. issue 16: Black plans ... ♖g8-h7. White tries a different setup than the h4-h5, ♙h3 and ♘e3 considered last time.

12 ♖e1 ♔d7
 13 f4 ♕g8
 14 g4 h5

The immediate 13 ... f5 would have been bad because of 14 exf6 gxf6 15 ♗g4±/±, with pressure against e6. After White's 14th blocks access to g4, though, the time is right for 14 ... f5! =: cf. the conclusion to issue 16. But the text should also be fine.

15 f5 hxg4
 16 fxe6+ fxe6
 17 ♗xg4(2)



17 ... ♕h7?

A critical moment. With the thematic 17 ... ♖a6! followed by ... ♗c7 Black could have equalised comfortably.

18 ♖f2 ♗a6?

Too late! After 18 ... g6 (forced) 19 ♗g5 followed by ♗f6 White is making progress but the advantage is still within manageable bounds.

19 ♗xe6+!

Revealing the drawback of Black's 17th: once again one of the squares c4, d5, and e6 proves Black's undoing.

There is no defence: the finish was 19 ... ♕xe6 20 ♕g4+ ♗f5 21 ♗f3 ♕h5 (21 ... ♕e7 22 ♗b4!±±) 22 ♗g5+ ♕e7 23 ♕xf5 ♗c7 24 ♕f7+ ♕d8 25 ♗e3

♕c8 26 ♕xh5 ♖xh5 27 ♖f7 1-0.

White's early f4-f5xe6 highlighted Black's vulnerability during the phase where the ... ♗a6-c7 fortress is being set up. With accurate play, though, Black should have nothing to fear.

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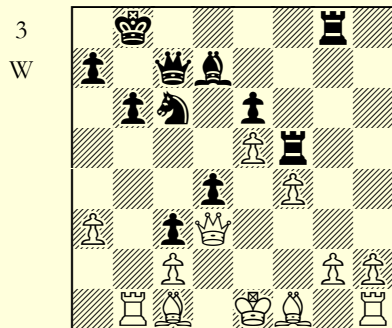
**Kidd-Vivante-Sowter
 BCCA/BL/Ch13 ICCF corr 2013
 ICCF monthly archive, February 2014**

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗c3 ♗b4 4 e5 ♗e7 5 a3 ♗xc3+ 6 bxc3 c5 7 ♕g4 ♕c7 8 ♕xg7 ♖h8 9 ♕xh7 cxd4 10 ♗e2 ♗bc6 11 f4 dxc3 12 ♕d3 d4 13 ♗g3 ♗d7 14 ♗e4 0-0-0 15 ♗d6+ ♕b8 16 ♖b1

16 ... b6

This line was previously discussed in issues 3 and 9. Black's last has the drawback of allowing White to take an immediate draw via 17 ♗b5 ♕b7 18 ♗d6, e.g. **Nasuta-Dobrowolski, Góra Świętej Anny Open A 2013**. Instead 16 ... ♗c8 (?!) Moskalkenko *WW* p. 198) is playable but objectively weaker: ... ♗xe5 will be unavailable later since the bishop cannot reach the long diagonal in time.

17 ♗xf7 ♖df8
 18 ♗d6 ♗f5
 19 ♗xf5 ♖xf5(3)



20 g3?!

White condemns himself to a difficult defence to eke out a draw. Berg *GMR-2 pp. 103-6* discusses at length the main alternative 20 a4 ♟xe5! 21 ♖xd4 ♟g6 22 ♜b3 ♜d5 23 ♖b4. Now, instead of 23 ... ♟h4 as previously played, and analysed by Berg to dynamic balance, **Caradonna-Andersen, EU/WS/M/036 ICCF corr 2012** continued 23 ... ♞c6!? 24 ♞e2 ♟h4 25 g3 ♟f5= 26 a5 ♟d4 27 axb6 axb6 28 ♜xc3 ♟xe2 29 ♞xe2 ♜b5 30 ♖d4 ♜c5 (only move) 31 ♜xc5 bxc5 32 ♖b2+ ♞c8 33 ♖a2 (White is two pawns to the good but takes Houdini's suggested draw; 33 ♜d1?! ♖b7 34 ♜d6 ♖xh2+ 35 ♞d3 ♞d5!♣ is probably drawn with best play but only Black has winning chances) 33 ... ♖h7 34 ♖a6+ 1/2-1/2.

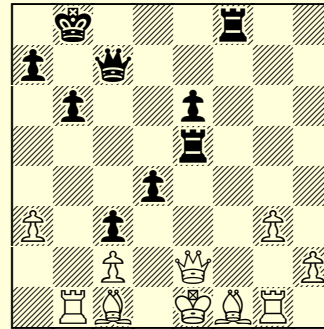
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|---------|-------|
| 20 ... | ♟xe5! |
| 21 fxe5 | ♞c6 |
| 22 ♜g1 | ♞e4! |
| 23 ♖xe4 | ♜xe5 |
| 24 ♖e2! | |

Watson's analysis 24 ♖xe5 ?! ♖xe5+ 25 ♞e2 ♖e4 26 ♞d1 ♜f8 'with pressure' *ChessPublishing.com, January 2011 & PIF-4 p. 245* was tested in **Coyne-Köhl, VWC6/pr25 ICCF corr 2013**. After 27 ♞d3 (27 ♞f4+?? ♜xf4++; 27 b4?? ♜/2 28 ♜e1 d3++) 27 ... ♖g4+ 28 ♞e2 (28 ♞e1? e5!++; so Black has the draw in hand) 28 ... ♖g7 29 h4 e5 30 ♜b5 ♖f6 31 ♞g5 ♖e6 32 a4? (but there appears to be no way to survive, e.g. 32 g4 e4 33 ♜f5 ♜xf5 34 gx5 ♖xf5 35 h5 ♖d5 followed by ... d3++) 32 ... e4++ and 0-1, 43.

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|--------|---------|
| 24 ... | ♜f8!(4) |
|--------|---------|

Watson's improvement ('♣' *PIF-4 p. 245*; cf. Berg '*IN♣ p. 104*) over the previ-

4
W



ously standard 24 ... e5: cf. issues 3 and 9. This is a useful move in itself, and at the same time rules out 25 ♜b5?, which loses immediately to 25 ... ♜xf1+!

25 ♜b4?

White's position is critical and this is a fatal waste of a move. The only defence appears to be 25 ♞d1 ♜xe2 26 ♞xe2, when 26 ... ♖h7 may be met by 27 ♜b5! (27 b4? ♜f2, ♣ at least: 28 ♞d3? ♖xd3+++; 28 ♜e1? ♜xe2! 29 ♜xe2 d3++; 28 ♞g5 ♜xe2 29 ♞xe2 ♖xc2+ ∞/♣), e.g. 27 ... ♜f2 28 ♜h5 ♖e4 29 ♞f4+= or 27 ... ♖xh2 28 ♜e1 ♖xg3 29 ♜g5! ♖f2 30 ♞d3 when it is not easy to break down White's carapace (30 ... ♜f3 31 ♞c4 d3 32 ♜g8+ with a perpetual, incidentally showing why White has not a moment to waste).

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|---------|-------|
| 25 ... | ♜xe2+ |
| 26 ♞xe2 | e5 |
| 27 h4 | |

What else? 27 ♞d3 ♖c6++, 27 ♜f1 ♜xf1+ 28 ♞xf1 ♖h7++, and 27 ♜b5 ♖h7++ all lose.

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| 27 ... | ♖d7 |
| 28 ♞g5 | |

If 28 ♞h6 ♜f7 29 ♞c4 ♖c6!++.

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|--------|-----|
| 28 ... | ♖h3 |
|--------|-----|

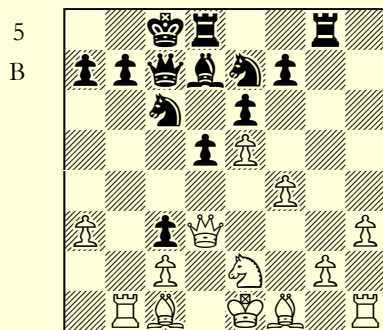
0-1

An over-the-board game might have seen more moves played out, but 29 ♖d1 (29 ♖b5 ♗b2 30 ♖f1 ♗xc3+ 31 ♖d1 ♖xf1+ 32 ♖xf1 e4) 29 ... ♖f2 30 ♖e1 ♗xc3 is hopeless.

* * *

Arcos Facio—Curi Milia
Uruguayan Ch, Montevideo 2014
TWIC 1013

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♖b4 4 e5 ♗e7 5 a3 ♖xc3+ 6 bxc3 c5 7 ♗g4 ♗c7 8 ♗xc7 ♖h8 9 ♗xh7 cxd4 10 ♗e2 ♗bc6 11 f4 ♖d7 12 ♗d3 dxc3 13 ♖b1 0-0-0 14 h3(5)



Robert Byrne's idea; issue 6 covered the original main line 14 ... d4 15 g4 ♗xe5?, now considered unsound. But what should Black play instead? Watson's survey *ChessPublishing.com, February 2010* recommended 15 ... ♗b8, and also the then-never-played 15 ... a6. The latter was the recommendation (!) of Berg *GMR-2 p. 109*, citing **Davidson—Tugsavul, 11th Afro Asia Zonal Ch final, ICCF corr 2011**: 16 ♖f2 (16 ♖g2 ♗a5 17 ♗xd4

♖c6 18 ♖e4 ♖xc4 19 ♗xc4 ♗c4 'with excellent chances', Watson; that's equal but 18 ... ♖d7 improves; 17 ♗xd4 ♖c6 18 ♗f2 ♖xc2 19 ♗xf2 ♗d5 'with counterplay', Berg) 16 ... ♗a5 17 ♗xd4 ♖c6 18 ♖g1 ♖d5 ∞/= (0-1, 62).

14 ... ♗b8
 15 g4 d4
 16 ♖g2 ♗f5?

The main line features the thematic regrouping ... b6 and ... ♖c8-b7; if White plays ♖a3, Black may follow up with ... ♗d5/f5-e3, with good chances. Watson gives extensive analysis; cf. Berg *p. 111* for a similar plan in a related line.

17 ♖e4

Even better 17 ♖f2±/±±. Black cannot afford to give up two tempi in this line.

17 ... ♗h4?!

Compounding the error; now the knight is misplaced (17 ... ♗f7 18 ♗d4±).

The chaotic sequel was 18 ♖f2 ♖e8 19 ♗g3± (19 ♖d1±/±±) 19 ... ♗a5?! 20 ♖d1 ♖h8? (20 ... ♖c6±) 21 ♗e2 ♗c6? (21 ... ♗g6±) 22 ♖g3? (22 ♗c4 and ♗xd4±±) 23 ... ♗e7± 23 a4 f6? (23 ... ♗b4; 23 ... ♗a8) 24 ♖a3? (24 exf6 ♗xf6 25 ♗a6±±) 24 ... ♗xa3 25 ♗a6 ♗c7 26 exf6 ♗c7 27 ♗xd4 (27 ♖xd4!±) 27 ... ♖xd4? (27 ... ♗f5+! ∞/±) 28 ♖xd4±± e5 29 ♖d6 exf4+ 30 ♖f2 ♖c8 31 ♗d3 f3 32 ♖d1 ♖d7 33 ♖xd7?? (the final twist; 33 ♖xc6 and 33 f7 are overwhelming) 33 ... ♗h2+ 34 ♖e3 ♗g2+ 35 ♖xf3 ♗e1+ 36 ♖xh3 mate.

An eventful game! But this too is representative of the Winawer in practice. ►

GMR-1 BERG, Emanuel, *The French Defence 1* (Grandmaster Repertoire 14) (Quality Chess 2013) —see issue 16.

GMR-2 —, *The French Defence 2* (Grandmaster Repertoire 15) (Quality Chess 2013)—see issue 13.

WW MOSKALENKO, Viktor, *The Wonderful Winawer* (New in Chess 2010)—see issue 16.

PtF-4 WATSON, John L., *Play the French*, 4th edition (Everyman 2012)—see issue 13.