## TimmAN'S

## TRIUMPHS

NEW FIN CHESS

My 100 Best Games
Jan Timman

Jan Timman

# Timman's Triumphs <br> My 100 Best Games 

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## Introduction

In August 2018, I started making a selection of 100 of my best games for this book. As I had expected, it was a difficult task. When you've had a long career in chess, and played many thousands of games, there will be hundreds among them on which you can look back with satisfaction. Siegbert Tarrasch published his book Dreihundert Schachpartien in 1895, when he was 33 years old. In such a case, with so many games, the selection process is much 'looser'. In 1998, Anatoly Karpov also published a selection of 300 games from a period of three decades. Thus, he, too, had more freedom to show all his special victories to the public.

I myself published Timman's Selected Games with Cadogan in 1995, which was brought out by New In Chess under the title Chess the Adventurous Way. It features 80 games from the period 1983-1994. Curiously, I have only included 10 games from that selection in this book. This illustrates the difficulties I experienced with my new selection. Sometimes you think back with great pleasure on games that, after a check with the computer, turn out to be not so good after all. The reverse also occurred: games I had considered to be messy at the time, turned out to be very well conceived.

Notably, also, while I was making my first selection for the present book, the final two games, against Feygin and Bartel, hadn't been played yet. Thus, a period of 52 years has now been covered. I have included only two draws - the first from the beginning of my career, the second from my later years. It would have been different if I had brought out a selection of my most interesting games. Such a selection would also have included several of my losses. Perhaps I will write such a book someday.

There have been much-applauded victories in my career in which the element of a struggle was lacking. For example, in the first SWIFT tournament in Brussels, 1986, I won the brilliancy prize for my game with Tony Miles. However, this was a walkover. It was decided in an elegant way, but in this case many roads would have led to Rome. The same goes for my 5th match game against Robert Hübner at Sarajevo 1991. At an early stage, Hübner made a very grave mistake, which I adequately exploited. Also here, many roads led to Rome (this game can be found in Selected Games).

I haven't included any rapid games in this selection. This is a matter of principle. Nevertheless, I almost deviated from this principle in one case. I am talking about my White game against Garry Kasparov in the Immopar tournament in Paris 1991.

King＇s Indian Defence

## Jan Timman <br> Garry Kasparov

2630 2770

Paris Immopar rapid 1991 （4）

1．d4 ©f6 2．c4 g6 3．©c3 䓢g7 4．e4 d6 5．f3 0－0 6．崽e3 c6 7．䓢d3 e5 8．d5
 gxf5 12．0－0 eld $^{2}$ 13． 14．罥c4 a6 15．b4 ©d7 16．a4 所e8


 25．気g1 䜌f7


## 26．쁘xa6

Up to this moment，I had played in exemplary fashion，building up a winning position by strategic means．However，the text move is too rash．White should have played first 26．${ }^{\text {Q }} \mathrm{d} 4$ ！，to exclude any counterplay by Black．After 26．．． m fif 27．皆xa6 寛h6 28．f4，Black has nothing left to hope for．
26．．．f4
The only chance．
27．鼻d4
Strategically correct，but tactically this is a mistake．With 27． $\mathrm{Q}_{\mathrm{g}}^{\mathrm{x}} \mathrm{xf} 4$ exf3
 have maintained his advantage，
although after 29．．．邕ef8，Black has some compensation for the pawns．
 I played this quickly，and apparently self－confidently， speculating that Kasparov，who had almost run out of time，would fail to find the right path．Necessary was 29．0e2，although Black has the advantage after 29．．．exf3．


29．．．gxh2

An enormous relief．If Kasparov had had more time，he would certainly have found 29．．． | 皆 h 5 |
| :--- |

 has no squares．On the next day， Kortchnoi gave me a hand－written note on which he had jotted down a few variations．He claimed that
 White wouldn＇t have had reason to despair．I appreciated this gesture highly；he wanted to hearten me． Indeed，this doesn＇t look too bad for White，but the computer is relentless：after 32 ．．．量e6 33 ．${ }^{\text {星a8 }}$＋宽e8，Black is winning．

## 30．${ }^{\text {üff1 }}$ exf3

Now everything turns out right after all．With 30．．．量gf8 Black could have held the balance．

## 31．嵝xf3

The pin along the f－file is deadly．

 This was almost a model game！But anyway，my victory in the Immopar tournament was no less glorious for it．

There were also games with the classical time control that I would have included if there hadn＇t been serious errors in the conversion．An example is the following game．

## Caro－Kann Defence

Jan Timman
2590
Peter Leko
2630
Groningen 1996 （1）







## 15．${ }^{\text {Ëh }} \mathrm{H} 1$

This little move had been played shortly before by Topalov in Las Palmas in his game against Ivanchuk．White prepares to push his g－pawn．

## 15．．．c5 16．dxc5 嵝xc5 17．a3！

This little pawn move too stems from Topalov．
17．．．a5
The first new move．Ivanchuk had opted for 17．．．0－0，but after
 g6 21．．xh6，White had a large advantage．The drawback of the text move is that the b－pawn becomes weak．

On its way to 55 ．


The point of the 20th move．
24．．．e5
 27．${ }^{\text {en }} \mathrm{xb} 7$ ．


## 25．© exb $^{(1)}$

A vigorous piece sacrifice．

28．${ }^{\text {E．}} 6$
The most elegant path to the win

 followed by the capture on f ．Black is powerless．

## 

A combination with a big hole．
With 29．鼻c6 㗀xf5 30．
could have decided the game in a simple way．

Fortunately，Leko doesn＇t see it． With 30．．． Qe4 $^{\text {！}}$ ！，Black could have turned the tables．Suddenly White has to fear for his life．

## 31．毞c8＋気e8 32． 0 f5

Now the combination works out well．

## 32．．．h5

After 32．．．寢e6 33．鼻d7，the queen has no squares．

Black resigned．
My error in the conversion in this game was not entirely coincidental． While screening my games，I saw this pattern more often；even in my best games，irregularities occurred in the final phase．I also noted that I regularly got dubious positions with black in the opening phase． In a number of cases，this had to do with the fact that I was playing for a win with black．Sometimes， I got into trouble due to superior preparation by my opponent，like in the second match game against Kortchnoi in Brussels 1991 （Game No．65）．This is a far from flawless struggle that I have included anyway，after long hesitation， because my counterattack was very well conceived．

Three games that just failed to make it to the selection each contained a magnificent，study－like move．

Jan Timman
2550
Haji Ardiansyah
2330
Luzern ol 1982


## 25．皇xa7！

This looks like a simple win of a pawn，but there is more to it． 25．．．c3 26．bxc3 皆xc3 27．嵝xc3 嵝xe2 28．שel 1 d5
It looks as if Black has created just sufficient counterchances．
29．宸c8＋！！
A fantastic desperado，and at the same time the real point of White＇s 25th move．

Thus，White manages to maintain his extra pawn．
 34．当b3
It＇s a close call，but White hauled in the point after the technical phase：



気 $\mathbf{a}$ 46．h5 1－0

In the World Cup tournament in Belfort 1988，not much was going my way．Still，I managed to beat

Beliavsky，who was a difficult opponent for me in most of our encounters．

## Alexander Beliavsky 2645 Jan Timman 2675

Belfort 1988 （2）


This double－rook ending is equal． In the time－scramble，however， both of us became ambitious：

## 

A staggering resource that puts
Beliavsky off－balance．

A hesitation that turns out fatal for
White．After 36．b4 axb4 37．㿥b2，the draw would be on the horizon．
36．．．d5 37．b3 ́ㅕf5
Suddenly，White has no defence against the march of the d－pawn．

41．${ }^{\text {Uld }}$ d
I won the Koge Open tournament in 1997 together with the Estonian grandmaster Lembit Oll．Against the Russian grandmaster Yuri Yakovich，I played an excellent game．

Jan Timman
Yuri Yakovich
2610
Koge 1997 （8）


White has a plus pawn，but Black is threatening to win it back． Energetic play is called for．

## 52．g4！！

A fantastic breakthrough．
52．．．鼻xg4
If Black takes with the pawn，the white h－pawn decides the issue．
Now，however，the a6－square becomes available for the rook．
53．…a6＋흘 b 5
 amount to the same after 54．क्子d d 4


 59．${ }^{\text {■ea5＋}}$
Here，Black lost by forfeit，before he had time to resign．White will liquidate to a winning pawn ending．
In this fragment，my great penchant for endgame studies comes clearly to the fore．

For my analyses of the games in this book, I have used the engines Stockfish 10 and Houdini 5. For the final chapter I have used Stockfish 11.

I'd like to express my gratitude to Erwin l'Ami, who ran an extra check on all the analyses in this book, which resulted in a number of useful corrections and additions.

Jan Timman,

Arnhem, March 2020

## CHAPTER 1

## The road to the top (1967-1977)

In the life of a 20-year-old professional chess player, ambitions go hand in hand with dreams that are nourished by restless travelling from one tournament to another, from one country to another. In such a life, there are no school desks or college halls, there's no pressure to get up early, no duty to give account for anything. A triumphant feeling takes possession of you. You are your own boss, governed only by your own abilities.

During tournament games, the chess clock is the only instrument that exerts control on a player's thoughts. Forty moves have to be made within $2^{11 / 2}$ hours, then 16 within an hour. The monotonous ticking of the clock is anchored in the chess player's brain. A rising flag causes the tension to mount, and the heart to pound faster. Then, after the time control, the player feels freedom again - for an hour. After the game is over, your freedom is limitless - at least until the next game begins. The end of a tournament is the onset of an even longer period of freedom.

That is how I saw it in the old days, more than three decades ago. The above is, word for word, what I wrote in my book Het smalle pad ('The narrow way'), which is about my experiences in the World Championship cycles until 1986. I was talking about the year 1972, the time of the Spassky-Fischer match in Reykjavik. Shortly after that match, I played my first zonal tournament in Finland - the first step on the long road to the World Championship title.

How different things are today! A chess player's thinking time is more limited now, and there are no more adjourned games. You can no longer hear the chess clock ticking, as we have electronic clocks now. Also, there are no flags anymore. But above all, professional chess is now ruled by the computer. I think that in these times I wouldn't have become a professional chess player. Knowledge has become too important, you cannot live on your talent only.

Chess used to be different. I won't say 'better', since computers are a blessing for me when I make endgame studies. Still, I am glad that my great models, my sources of inspiration, were made of flesh and blood: Mikhail Botvinnik and Vasily Smyslov, Boris Spassky and Bobby Fischer. They were the players who pointed out the course that I followed.

Actually, I never doubted that I would become a professional player. At 14, I earned my first money prize by winning the 'Haagse Schaakdagen'
('The Hague Chess Days'): 75 guilders. 'You have to do something special with that money,' adult members of the Delft Chess Club told me. I didn't. I saw the money as a first instalment of what was coming: a regular income, to be earned by sitting behind the chessboard and making moves. A visual artist once told me how much he admired my trade: earning your money exclusively by thinking. After all, the moves I carried out on the chessboard were much less of an exertion than his brushstrokes on the canvas.

In my secondary school years in Delft, however, there was hardly any time for intensive chess study. I was only able to play in tournaments during holidays. My first success was third place in the World Junior Championship in Jerusalem 1967, shortly after the Six-Day War. For political reasons, there were no representatives from the Eastern Block, with the exception of Romania, who did send a youth player to Jerusalem; Ceausescu was pursuing his own policy at the time. Nevertheless, the field of participants was strong, as is shown by the fact that Robert Hübner came in fourth. In the summer vacations that followed, I twice won the Biel Open tournament - the first time shared with the Swiss master Edwin Bhend. First prize was 800 Swiss francs, which was a lot of money for a schoolboy. During Christmas holidays, I twice played in the Niemeijer youth tournament, which later developed into the European Youth Championship. A high point was the traditional Hastings tournament, which was held at the turn of the year 1969/'70. It felt an honour to be invited, and I didn't disappoint the organizers. With black, I made good draws against Smyslov and Portisch. This gave me hope for the future, but first I had to take my final exams at grammar school.

By winning the Hoogovens Masters group in 1971, I became an International Master. After that, I suffered something of a standstill. Other champions of my generation developed more quickly. Henrique Mecking was a prodigy, and there is no need to mention Anatoly Karpov; he was already playing Candidates Matches in 1974. But also Ljubomir Ljubojevic, Ulf Andersson and Zoltan Ribli joined the world elite more quickly than I did.

Nevertheless, in May 1974 I became the youngest grandmaster-butone in the world. This was because I was the youngest-but-one of my generation; only Mecking was one month younger. With the grandmaster title, my travels around the world intensified; tournament victories alternated with disappointments. It was a fantastic profession, a great life, but my discipline wasn't always optimal. Only as late as 1978 did I manage to stabilize my play and push through to the world top, at 26 years of age.


## 

The standard move，but $10 . \sum^{2} \mathrm{~b} 5$ came into great consideration in these altered circumstances．
 strong）11．龍c2，Black has no easy task，as practice has borne out．
10．．．0xc3 11．宸xc3 d6


Black can be satisfied with the result of the opening，as it is not at all certain whether White＇s queen＇s bishop is standing well on $f 4$ ．

## 12．彎d3

With the clear intention to push e2－e4．
In the game Giri－Rapport，Wijk aan Zee 2017，White opted for the

 advantage．
12．．．f5

Best．In a rapid game Ding Liren－ Wang Yue（2015），Black allowed the march of the e－pawn，but White was better after 12．．． 0 d7 13．e4 䔬f6 14．葸e3 g6 15．量ad1．

## 13．断e3 楼d7 14．畧g5

The only way to play for an advan－ tage．

## 14．．．巴е 8

The most flexible reaction．Now， White achieves nothing with the bishop trade．

## 15．를ad1 思f8

A good move，as White now has to take care of his queen＇s bishop．But Black could have achieved equality also with 15．．．崽e4．
16．謄 c3


## 16．．．暻e4

A strategic move that mainly serves as preparation for the knight development to c6．An interesting alternative was $16 \ldots . \mathrm{c} 5$ ，which is possible as the d－pawn is solidly protected．White wouldn＇t have any way to obtain an advantage in that case．

## 17．d5 exd5

Black lifts the tension in the centre， to take aim at the white d－pawn next．The alternative was $17 . . .06$ ． After 18． 0 d4 寞xg2 19．dxe6 蔮xe6

20．舟xg2 当e4，chances are almost equal．



## 20．．．a4

Somewhat committal，but
Kortchnoi has a special intention with the march of his a－pawn．
The alternative was 20．．．©a6．After
 a4，the position is balanced．

## 

That was the idea；Black is going to further harass the white d－pawn．
An interesting alternative was 21．．． g 5 ，after which the play becomes very sharp．A possible continuation is $22 . \mathrm{f} 3$ 鼻xd5 23．皆xd5 㗀xd5 $24 . f 4$崄e6 25．fxg5 量a5 26．鼻d2，and White has sufficient compensation for the exchange．

## 



Kortchnoi must have underesti－ mated my next move．Better was the retreat 23 ．．．邕e 8 when 24.0 g 2 g 5 25．h4 鼻 97 is approximately even．

## 24．賭 4 ！

Bull＇s eye！I had carefully prepared this powerful bishop move．

## 24．．．昍x2

It wasn＇t very well possible to capture the d－pawn．After 24．．． White has a large advantage．
 ©d7 28．g4！
Strongly played．The characteristics of the position justify White＇s expansion on the king＇s wing．


## 28．．．g6

This is a weakening that the black position can no longer bear．He should have tried 28 ．．．$\circlearrowright \mathrm{e} 5$ ，even though White has a large advantage

29．亿h4
29．．． Ce 5 was a better defence，as

 chances to hold the ending．I think， however，that Kortchnoi was not so pessimistic about his position and didn＇t fancy playing an inferior endgame．

## 30．f4！

Further expansion．
30．．． 0 c5


## 31．断f3

Up to this moment，I had played excellently，but now，plagued by slight time pressure，I failed to put the crown on my work．White could have obtained a winning attack with 31．${ }_{\text {Ming h }} \mathrm{h} 3$ ．During the game，I didn＇t see how to continue after 31．．． 0 e4，but then White can push through with $32 . g 5$ ！© © 34．bxc3 hxg5（or 34．．．gxf5 35．g6， with death and destruction） $35 . f x g 6$
隌e3＋39．产h1，and Black can still trade the queens，but this doesn＇t stop the attack．Incidentally，also after the text move，White keeps a large if not winning advantage．
31．．．르e4 32．f5 g5 33．$勹 \mathrm{~g} 2$ 登ae8


## 34．${ }^{\text {unfe1 }}$

A wrong plan that had a mainly psychological background．Because my score against Kortchnoi was bad－6－1 with 7 draws－I had a lot of respect for him．Moreover，I was impressed by the way he had activated his pieces．It seemed to me that we were engaged in a battle for the initiative，and that I had to neutralize the pressure on the e－file． I didn＇t realize that actually the rook on e4 is only in Black＇s way，as it blocks the square for the knight， which is thereby shut out of the defence．This is a problem that Black cannot easily solve，as there are hardly any squares available for the centralized rook．So，there is every reason for White to keep on playing for the attack． In themselves，these considerations do not look all too complicated． And yet，I didn＇t condemn the text move in my book Studies and Games， and neither did Robert Byrne in his New York Times column．And neither was this moment discussed during the post－mortem．
A strong move was $34 . f 6$ ．The play might continue as follows：34．．．$\frac{4}{3}$ g6

 and Black will have to give the exchange to escape the pressure．

## 34．．．．ٔ．g．g8

It was better for Black to enter a wholesale rook trade here：
寞 $g 7$ ，and the position is equal． It looks as if Kortchnoi was very
ambitious during this stage of the game．
35．h4
Despite the fact that I had little time left on the clock，I decided to sharpen up the play nevertheless． Objectively，35．${ }^{\text {eff }} \mathrm{f} 1$ was the correct move，after which White can retain an advantage．

## 35．．．． 是 $^{2} 7$

During the game－and after it－I was impressed by this plan，which appears to be sharply calculated．In spite of this，Black had two stronger continuations：he could still have opted for the rook trade，but also 35．．．h5！was an excellent attempt to grab the initiative．There could


 in the endgame，the chances are approximately equal．

## 36．f6



## 36．．．gxh4

The consequence of Black＇s play，but also here，36．．．量xe1＋was stronger．
White can take back in two ways：
A） 37.0 xe 1 鼻 $\mathrm{h} 8!38.0 \mathrm{~g} 2$ 包 4
（ $38 . . . \varrho \mathrm{d} 7$ is also possible） 39 ．包xc3 40．bxc3 党f8 41．hxg5 hxg5

has sufficient compensation for the pawn，but not more than that；
 39．hxg5 㬐g6！（stronger than 39．．． hxg5，upon which White can take full control of the position by

 ©d7 44．．g．g2，and the ending offers White winning chances．
37． m f！


The fact that I had to calculate the tactical possibilities in this position put me back on the right path． White again has a decisive attack．
37．．．鼻f8 38． ®xh $^{2}$
Without thinking，I took back the pawn，thereby complicating the attack．White had the powerful move 38．㟶f5！．Black still has the problem that the e4－square is inaccessible to the knight，so he has no good way to avert the threat of the g－pawn push．To avoid being swept away in an onslaught，Black has to give up the exchange，but after 38 ．．．． 4 e 45 39．里xe5 党xe5 40 ．错f3，White＇s win is a matter of technique．

## 38．．．．${ }^{\text {em }}$ 3 39．宸g2

A natural move，but 39 ． $\mathrm{\omega}$ 崖 $f 4$ was stronger，since White can still
take advantage of the lack of coordination between the black rooks．However，it was very hard to see that after 39．．．． 8 es 40 ．
 calling the shots．With 42 ．${ }^{\text {gig }} 1 \mathrm{~h} 5$ 43．苞xg4＋曾xg4 44．．．．d 4 ，he manages to exchange all the rooks while maintaining his attack．

## 39．．．と） 4

Finally，the black knight reaches the ideal square．
40．© 45 xc3
Kortchnoi thought for quite a long time about this logical move． With hindsight，he suggested that the surprising exchange sacrifice 40．．． e e2 might have been better after all．During the post－mortem， we came to the conclusion that this move would indeed have been playable，but we missed an important finesse．After 41．膤xe2 ©xc3，White has the surprising

 45．档xd1，Black has insufficient compensation for the exchange． After Kortchnoi had captured the bishop，the game was adjourned．


41． Vxe3 $^{2}$

The sealed move．During the two－ hour break，I thought at first that I had good winning chances．When I rushed to the playing hall after a frantic analysis，however，I had already reconciled myself to a draw． A closer analysis had borne out that the black defensive line was strong enough to avert any danger．



## 43．．．管g6？

A pleasant surprise．Already two moves after the adjournment， Kortchnoi commits a serious mistake．In my analysis，I had mainly reckoned with 43．．．를g5， and this is indeed Black＇s strongest move．White has the following options：
A）44．曾f4 is a logical move that Kortchnoi had considered so strong during his analysis that he had assessed the adjourned position as bad，if not lost．However，Black has nothing to fear after the cautious 44．．．总g6．A possible continuation

 and the position is nearly even；
B）The sharp knight move 44.0 e4 was indicated by Robert Byrne．Its
intention is to meet 44 ．．． exd5 with 45．g5．However，now Black saves himself with 45 ．．．홀h7！instead of Byrne＇s 45．．． $\begin{aligned} & \text { Ugg6，which runs into }\end{aligned}$ the strong 46．f7＋；
C）The rook move 44 ． $\mathrm{m} f 5$ looks promising，but after 44．．． 曷xf5
 has enough counterplay thanks to his active queen．



45． 2 e 2 ！
The refutation of Black＇s 43rd move．The knight is on its way to e6，rendering the loss of a piece inevitable for Black．
 48．気6 鼻e7 49．f8宸鼻xf8


## 50．${ }^{-\quad \text { f }} 7$＋！

The most precise．With this in－between check，White indirectly protects his d－pawn．

 56．当4
With the exchange of rooks，White breaks all further resistance．

59．$\triangleq$ c3 d5 60． $0 \times$ xb5 1－0
My first victory over Tal was achieved in the final round of a tournament in which almost nothing had gone my way．Perhaps it had to do with the fact that I drove to the tournament from Amsterdam by taxi every day；it＇s always better to stay in the town itself．
On the evening before the final round，I had visited the poetess Judith Herzberg，and we had talked about all kinds of things． Late at night，shortly before my departure，I told her I had to play Tal the next morning．Thereupon， she conjured up a tube of ointment with the superscription＇Tal＇－also in Hebrew；in that language＇tal＇ means＇dew＇．She advised me to rub some of this ointment on my hands before the game．Absent－mindedly， I put the tube in my coat pocket． The next morning I arrived early in Wijk aan Zee and decided to take a walk on the beach．I felt the tube in my coat pocket and rubbed some of the ointment on my hands－I didn＇t want to disappoint Judith． Did it help？Whatever the case may be，the game with Tal was very good from a technical point of view， just like my last－round game with

Andersson had been in the previous year．In those morning rounds，I didn＇t excel in sharp battles，but I did in technical endgames．

Game 39 Ruy Lopez
Jan Timman
2655
Mikhail Tal
Wijk aan Zee 1982 （13）

It was no surprise to me that Tal played the Open Spanish．He had worked as a second for Karpov during the latter＇s matches against Kortchnoi；he must have done extensive research on this variation during the preparation．
6．d4 b5 7．息b3 d5 8．dxe5 鼻e6 9．響e2 The Keres System，so called because Keres beat Euwe with it in Moscow 1948.

12． 最xc4 $^{2}$


## 12．．．宴c5

Euwe＇s old move，which had been given a new lease of life by Kortchnoi．Larsen＇s move 12．．．${ }^{4} \mathrm{~d}$ d7 has fallen into complete disuse．The best method to obtain an advantage
is 13.0 C 3 ．After 13．．． Qxc $^{\text {x }} 14 . \mathrm{bxc} 3 \mathrm{f} 6$ 15．exf6 宽xf6，Fischer＇s move 16．宽g5 is considered strongest．White exerts strong pressure on the black position．
 Qa5 16． 0 bd2
The old move．In Caruana－Giri， Shamkir 2016，White played 16.0 d4， after which the further course of the play is forced：16．．．c5 17． Uxe6 $^{\text {xe }}$ fxe6 18．f3 c4 19．fxe4 cxb3 20．exd5
 things weren＇t easy for Black． 16．．．謄 27


After making this move，Tal offered a draw．After a long think，I decided to refuse；I had seen a new idea in the position：

## 17． $4 x=4$

This offers White more perspectives than the trade on a7．
17．．．断xe3 18．fxe3 $0 x{ }^{2}$ 19．axb3

Later that year，Tal got the same position with the white pieces against Sturua in Yerevan．Here， Black deviated with 20 ．．．量fb8， which was repeated several times later on．After 21．惜dc1 蔂xb3
22．唱xc7 寞 e 6 ，it is hard for White to

Now, the same position has come on the board as two moves earlier, but without the white e-pawn. This is a well-known theme in the world of endgame studies: a piece or a pawn disappearing via a sacrifice.
 -c8 22. 气e4


## 23. ©e5+!

An elegant pseudo-sacrifice.
23... -xe5

Or 23...fxe5 24. $£ \mathrm{~g} 5+$ and wins.

White could have already sacrificed on f 5 here, but there is no hurry.
26... Ёd8 27. .̈xf5!

Now, yes, the exchange sacrifice.



Total domination.



In 2014, I did do well in the Challengers; I shared second place with Baadur Jobava. It could have been even better, however. In the fifth round, against Benjamin Bok, I allowed a draw by repetition in a winning position. This had never happened to me before, and there was a special cause. I had broken my hand in a fall shortly before the tournament. This meant that I had to write down moves with my left hand. My notation was virtually unreadable. And so, I wasn't able to check my scoresheet deep into the endgame.
Otherwise, miraculously, my broken hand had a positive effect. I slept well, and my concentration was excellent. Towards the end of the tournament, fatigue started playing a role. In the eleventh round, I let an easily won endgame slip against Jobava, and in the penultimate round, I ceded a draw against Merijn van Delft because I was exhausted.
I played my best game against the 15 -year-old Jan-Krzysztof Duda, who grew up to be a top- 20 player a few years later. The struggle is worthwhile in all its phases.

Game 97 English Opening
Jan Timman 2607
Jan-Krzysztof Duda 2553
Wijk aan Zee 2014 (9)





In general，this bishop move is ascribed to Kortchnoi；he beat Greenfeld with it in 1995．However， it had already been played 17 years earlier by the Malaysian FIDE master Christie Hon Kah Seng． Probably，it is insufficient for an opening advantage，but it does lead to highly interesting and sharp positions．
8．．． 0 fg4 9．e3
The alternative is Aronian＇s 9．Ma4．

analysis diagram
It is downright staggering that White can just allow Black to capture on $f 2$ ．However，the sharp edges of this queen move were already softened a long time ago， since it leads to a draw by force． In Shankland－Leko，Tsaghkadzor World Teams 2015，there followed





 was agreed．Black gives check on c6，after which perpetual check becomes unavoidable．

## 9．．．a6 10．皆a4

In the stem game Hon Kah Seng－ Mascarinas，Jakarta 1978，White played 10．h3．Objectively，this is probably White＇s best choice，but after 10．．．axb5 11．hxg4 包xc4，

analysis diagram
he doesn＇t have an advantage：
A） $12 .{ }^{3} \mathrm{~m}$ b3 d5 13．寞 xc 4 dxc 4
 an equal ending；
B）Anish Giri surprised Ian
Nepomniachtchi with 12 ．亘c1 in the first round of the Candidates Tournament that was broken off halfway this year．After 11 minutes＇ thought，Black found the best reply： 12．．．d5！（12．．． $\begin{aligned} & \text { una } \\ & \text { 5 was played in an }\end{aligned}$ email game Sedlacek－Suarez Sudeno in 2004．After 13．b3 畧a3 14．bxc4蔂xc1 15．兹xyc1 bxc4 16．e4，White had a winning position）and the game
took a highly interesting course： 13．b3 鼻b4 14．bxc4 宏a3 15．鼻e5 f6
苞xc3 19 ．雨f1 b4，and the position was balanced．
The text move stems from Maxime Vachier－Lagrave．I had prepared this thoroughly，and realized that White cannot boast any opening advantage．What mattered to me were the interesting complications． 10．．．g5
For the moment，Duda follows the game Vachier－Lagrave－Dominguez， Istanbul 2012．With the text move，Black forces a trade on e5，gaining the bishop pair．The drawback of the push is that it weakens the black position．During my preparation，I had mainly occupied myself with the question of what White should do against the improbable little rook move 10．．．．äa7！？．


Two years later，this was indeed played in the game Topalov－ Caruana in the Candidates Tournament in Moscow．The play develops as follows：11．h3 axb5


A）After 13．hxg4，the lines split up again：

analysis diagram
遇a8．Thus far，Topalov－Caruana． Now，16．0－0－0！（instead of the game move 16．a3）would have been strong． White doesn＇t have to worry about

 A2） 13 ．．．$\smile \mathrm{d} 3+$ ！is a useful zwischenschach that was played in Rambaldi－Nagy，Wunsiedel 2016：14．鼻xd3 崄xh1＋15．鼻f1 嵝c6 $16.0-0-0$ ，and here the situation is less favourable for White than in Topalov－Caruana，since the white bishop is less active．Nonetheless， White has sufficient compensation for the exchange，e．g．16．．．b6（if 16．．． f 6 ，White continues 17．e4）17．寕b3
坒 a 821 ．鼻b4，and the position is dynamically balanced．
B）13．累xe5（thus，White prevents the zwischenschach on d3） $13 . . . \Delta x$ xe5 14．峌xe5，and now，if Black captures the rook，the white queen will invade on b8．But Black has the powerful push 14．．．b5！，after which things can continue as follows：

 $0-020.0 \mathrm{~d} 4$ ，and this uncommon position is balanced．
11．寞xe5 包xe5 12．0－0－0


White has reached the position he wanted，but he doesn＇t have a clear opening advantage．

## 12．．．曽e7 13．崽e2 0－0 14．0d4 d6

Duda is on his guard．The text move is much stronger than $14 \ldots$ ．．． m b4， the move Dominguez played．The reason is that the endgame is clearly better for White，as I had found out in my preparation．After 15．欮xb4宽xb4 16．f4 gxf4 17．gxf4 ${ }^{2}$ g6， White could have obtained a large advantage with 18．${ }^{\text {engh}}$ ．After the text move，the position is probably dynamically balanced．
15．f4 0c6 16．©e4
The most direct continuation． White wants to induce Black to swap on f 4 ．The standard move was
 best for Black to agree to the queen exchange，after which the endgame is slightly more pleasant for White．
 18．㝈c2 b5 19．c5！dxc5 20．©f5！，with a large advantage to White．

16．．．嘪d7
Highly interesting was the sharp 16．．．d5．White can react in two ways：

analysis diagram
A） 17.0 xg 5 e5 18.0 C 2 h 6 （less good
 better） 19.0 f3 罳f5，with sufficient compensation for the pawn；
B）17．cxd5 exd5 18． $\mathrm{Exg}^{\mathrm{x}} 5$ 睍d7

 has to return the extra pawn．

## 

Best．If Black evades the queen swap with $17 . .$. 断c c ，White gets the
 19．皆c1，it is hard for Black to create counterplay．The white c－pawn is firmly protected，and there are no good breaking moves．
边


## 21．© 4

Again，I opted for the most direct continuation，and this time with success．If 21．क्sbb1，Black plays 21．．．鼻e8，with equality．

## 21．．．gxf4

In principle，this is a concession， since now the g－file is opened as an attacking base for the white rooks． Black had the hidden option of
 e5 is also interesting）23．cxb5 d5 24． 0 xg5 axb5 25．寞h5 畕e8 26．置f6，and Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn）
 with roughly equal chances．

## 22．gxf4 鬼e8 23．\＃ّhg1＋あf8

In a certain sense，this is a natural move；Black wants to keep his forces together．Yet，it is a serious mistake，since the black king will land in big trouble．During the game，I didn＇t know exactly what to do against 23．．．tgh8．Probably best is $24 .{ }^{\text {b }} \mathrm{b}$ b f 625.0 g 3 ，with a slight positional edge．
24．르g d5 25．cxd5 exd5 26．르dg1䙾h4


## 27．Ëh3

It was very hard to see，but here it was even stronger to first force
the black king to e7，and only then attack the bishop．After 27．${ }^{\text {mag }} 8+$ ！罗e7 28．品8g4，White probably has a decisive advantage，e．g．28．．．常ac8
崽xe4＋32．©xe4 dxe4 33. 曽xh7，and White has a healthy extra pawn． Moreover，his bishop is slightly stronger than the black knight． 27．．．当ac8 28．啚b1


28．．．鼻d7！
A fantastic move，which I had missed in my calculations．The bishop is on its way to f5．

## 

The wrong square for the king； probably，my concentration was slightly affected by missing Black＇s
 The point becomes clear after 30．．．
 33．曽xh7 ${ }^{\text {exe3 }} 34$ ．当e1．With the king on a1，this entire variation would be impossible．White wins the e－pawn，after which he has winning chances．
Incidentally，30． D bc5 was $^{2}$ not effective under these circumstances，in view of $30 \ldots$ ．．． 0 e7！， and here it becomes clear why White had to force the black king to e7 on move 27.

30．．．dxe4 31．畧g4 畕xg4 32．${ }^{\text {Ëhxg4 }}$


I was disappointed by the recent developments here．My advantage had gone，but I still had some hope of achieving something in the time scramble after all．
32．．．屯ُ en 7
This gives me new chances．After 32．．． 0 e7 33． 0 d 4 界c5，the position would have been balanced．

## 33．f5！

Of course．Black can＇t defend the e－pawn．

## 

Also 34．．．曾e5 35． 0 c5 wouldn＇t have solved Black＇s problems．

## 



White has won a pawn after all． However，the win is still far off．
Black has no weak spots in his camp， and material has been depleted．

White starts to manoeuvre，to place his pieces as favourably as possible． Here，I was already intent on the possibility of a double－rook ending．

 44． V $^{2}$ ！
A good decision，especially from a practical viewpoint．The double－ rook ending poses Black some tough problems．
44．．． $0 x$ xd4 45．exd4 皆e4
More accurate was 45．．．䍖ed5．After
 more active than in the game．



## 48．当h7！

An important move．White prevents Black bringing a rook to the h－file．
48．．．党d2 49．

## 51．h4

It＇s time to get the passed pawn moving．The problem for Black is that his king is much less favourably placed than White＇s． With the king on，e．g．，a6，he would have good drawing chances．Under the current circumstances，his queenside pawns are permanently weak．

東e4 57． 59．를․
An ideal square for the rook．
60．．．를d6 61．르g4＋忽e3


## 62．${ }^{\text {Eng }} 6!$

Thanks to this elegant finesse， White reaches a technically winning endgame．
62．．．르레1
On 62．．．总xh5，White had the winning intermediate check 63．${ }^{\text {mib }} \mathrm{b} 3+$ up his sleeve．

## 東g4 66．

Since 2014，Loek van Wely is the tournament director of the annual Hoogeveen tournament，which has been held since 1997．The first change he implemented was an excellent one：he replaced the double－round four－player event by two six－game matches．There was a time when Loek wanted to stand diametrically opposed to me，like a fighting cock，but these days the sharp edges have been softened－ we get along well．This also meant that I got another chance to play in Hoogeveen for the first time in 14
years．My new debut was miserable： Jobava beat me convincingly． In the next year，I got a second chance．Against 16－year－old Jorden van Foreest，I did much better． The third game was especially instructive：I demonstrated how to manoeuvre strategically when your opponent remains passive．

Game 98 Caro－Kann Defence
Jorden van Foreest 2548
Jan Timman 2562
Hoogeveen m 2015 （3）

1．e4 c6 2．d4 d5 3．e5 畕f5 4． Vf3 $^{\text {e6 }}$

$8 . c 3$
More common is 8.0 b3，but Van Foreest had also played the text move in the first game against me． He wants，if possible，to transfer his knight to f1．

## 8．．．㧘c7

I played 8．．． Qg $^{2}$ in the first game， and it ended in a draw after many wild adventures．After the opening， however，White was winning；it is not good to block the return route of the bishop on f 5 －at least，not in these circumstances．

## 9．${ }^{\text {当e1 }}$



