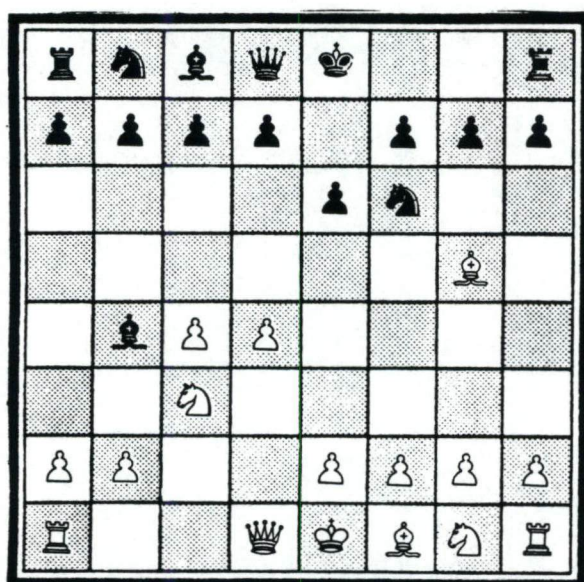


NIMZO-INDIAN

LENINGRAD

M Macdonald-ross



The Leningrad: a strong line against the Nimzo

Introduction

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5

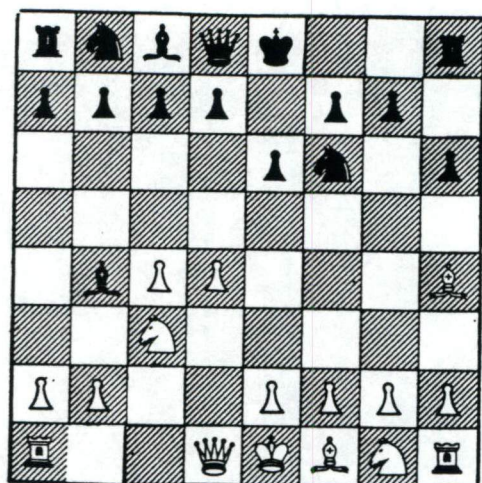
This move was played a few times in the 1920s, and then discarded. Analysed by Zak and taught to his pupil Boris Spassky, 4 Bg5 emerged again in the 1950s as a well-founded strategic idea. It has taken 25 years more for Zak's move to be accepted as a major option against the Nimzo-Indian. Spassky and Korchnoi have played this line for over 20 years; now Timman, Miles, Keene and Hartston regularly adopt it. I have played the line since 1963, with these results: P33; W19, D11, L3. Against six ex-British champions my results are: P10; W5, D4, L1. The experience I've gained is now in this tape for you.

The logical structure of the variation is:

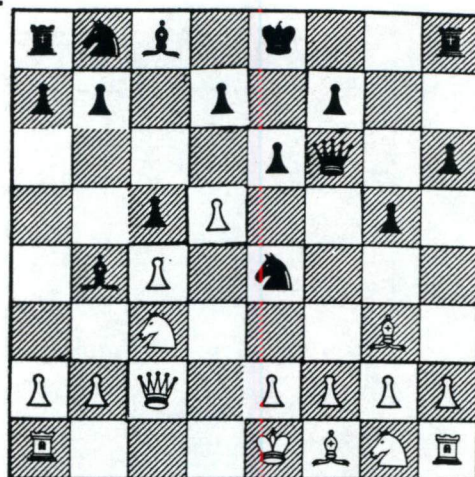
1. Early depins
 - 1.1 ...g5, ...Nf6-e4xg3
 - 1.2 ...Qa5
 - 1.3 ...Nxd5
2. Ragozin-style ...d5
3. Benoni-style ...c5
 - 3.1 ...b5 gambit
 - 3.2 ...e6xd5
 - 3.3 ...e5
 - 3.3.1 the d6 wedge
 - 3.3.2 main line blockade

The tape looks at 4 Bg5 from White's point of view, using the games to illustrate plans and judge crucial positions. Each side of the tape starts with a simple (but good) game which shows the strategic ideas clearly. Then you get more complex games until you reach theoretically crucial lines at the end of each side. Since tape is a narrative medium, I have sometimes bent the logical order for dramatic reasons.

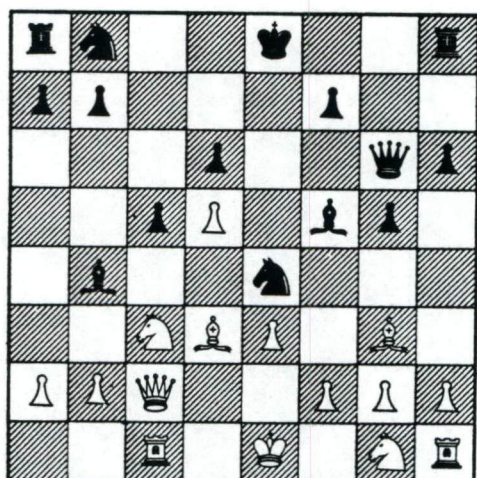
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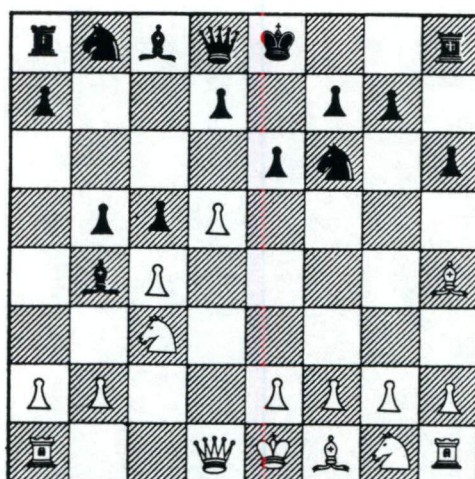
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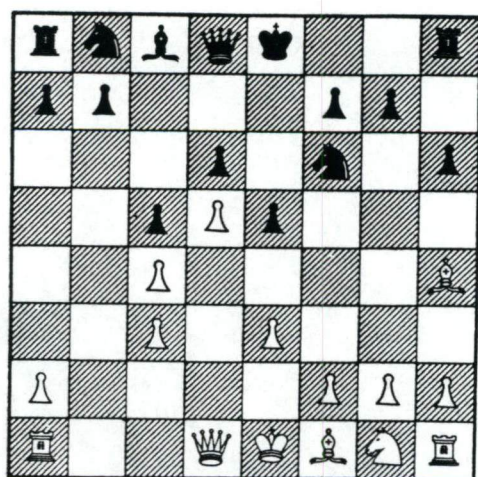
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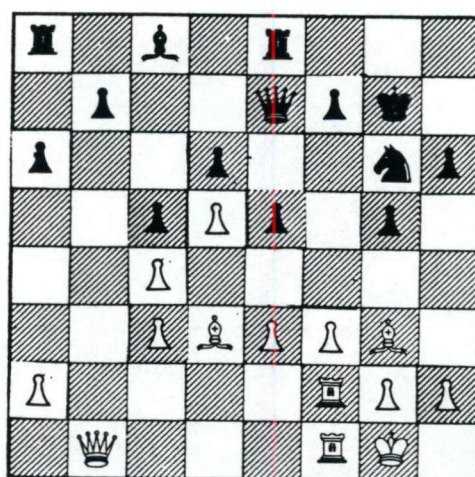
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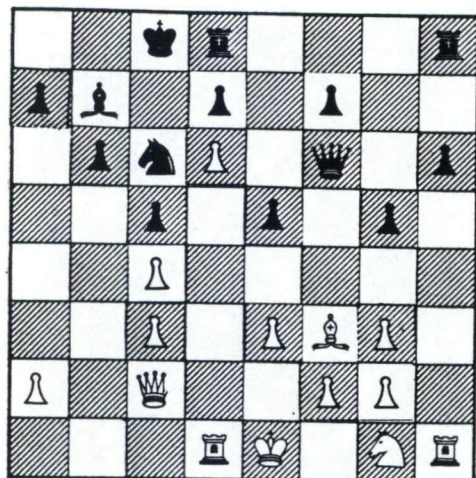
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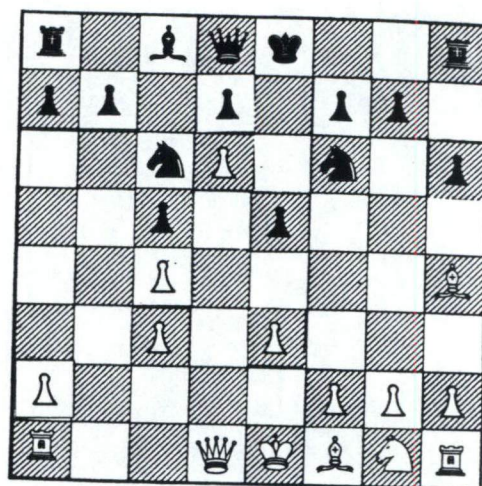
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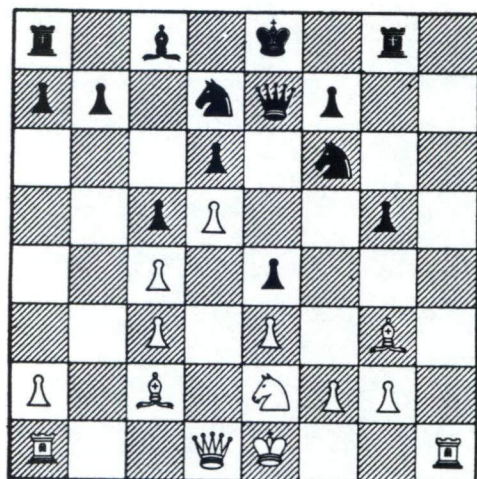
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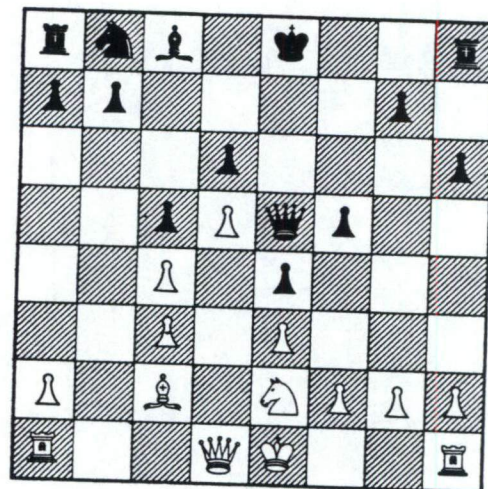
8



9



10



Games on the tape: side 1.

I: Early depins

Macdonald-Ross - Golombek, Kent v Bucks 1964. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 g5 7 Bg3 Ne4 8 Qc2 Qf6
9 Rcl Bxc3+ 10 bxc3 Nxc3 11 hxc3 e5 12 e3 d6 13 Nf3 Kf8 14 Bd3 Kg7
15 Nd2 Bd7 16 Rbl b6 17 Ke2 Qe7 18 f3 Na6 19 g4 Nc7 20 Nf1 Rae8
21 Ng3 b5 22 Bf5 Kf8 23 Bxd7 Qxd7 24 Qf5 Qxf5 25 Nxf5 bxc4
26 e4 Rd8 27 Rb7 Rd7 28 Rxh6 Rxh6 29 Nxc6 a5 30 Nf5 a4 31 Ra7 a3
32 Rxa3 Ne8 33 Ra8 f6 34 Ne3 Ke7 35 Nxc4 Nc7 36 Rh8 Nb5
37 Kd2 Kf7 38 a4 Kg7 39 Rb8 Na7 40 Nxd6 Rxd6 41 Rb7+ Kf8
42 Rxa7 Rb6 43 Kc2 1 - 0

Timman - Garcia, Orense 1976. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4
4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 d6 7 e3 g5 8 Bg3 Ne4 9 Qc2 Qf6 10 Rcl exd5
11 cxd5 Bf5 12 Bd3 Qg6 13 Rd1 Nd7 14 Ke2 Nxc3 15 hxc3 Bxd3+
16 Qxd3 Qxd3+ 17 Kxd3 Ne5+ 18 Ke2 Bxc3 19 bxc3 Kd7 20 Nf3 Ng4
21 Rbl Kc7 22 Rb2 Rae8 23 a4 b6 24 Ral f5 25 a5 Rb8 26 axb6 axb6
27 Nd2 Nf6 28 c4 Ra8 29 Rba2 Rxa2 30 Rxa2 Kb7 31 Nbl b5
32 cxb5 Nxd5 33 Rd2 Nc7 34 Rxd6 Nxb5 35 Rd5 Kb6 36 Rxf5 Rd8
37 Rf6+ Ka5 38 Rxh6 c4 39 Rc6 Kb4 40 Rb6 Kc5 41 Rg6 c3
42 Rxc5+ Kc6 43 Rg4 Kc5 44 Nxc3 Nxc3+ 45 Kf3 Nd1 46 Rg5+ Kc4
47 g4 Rd2 48 Rg8 Rxf2+ 49 Kg3 Ra2 50 Re8 Kd3 51 Rd8+ Ke2
52 e4 Nf2 53 Kf4 Nd3+ 54 Kf5 Ke3 55 g5 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Macdonald-Ross - Milner-Barry, Paignton 1964. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 Qa5 7 Bxf6 gxf6 8 Qc2 d6
9 e3 Bxc3+ 10 bxc3 e5 11 Bd3 Rg8 12 Kf1 Na6 13 Ne2 Nc7 14 Ng3 Rb8
15 f3 b5 16 Rbl Rb6 17 Kf2 bxc4 18 Bxc4 Ke7 19 Rb2 Bd7 20 Rhbl Rgb8
21 Kgl Qa3 22 Rxb6 axb6 23 f4 b5 24 fxe5 fxe5 25 Qf2 Rf8
26 Ne4 f6 27 Rf1 Ne8 28 Bd3 b4 29 Qc2 Ba4 30 Qd2 f5 31 Qf2 Nf6
32 Qxf5 Bd7 33 Qg6 Be8 34 Qxh6 bxc3 35 Rxf6 Qcl+ 36 Bfl:Rxf6
37 Qxf6+ Kd7 38 Qxd6+ Kc8 1 - 0

II: Ragozin-style ...d5

Macdonald-Ross - Fazekas, British Championship 1965. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 0-0 6 e3 d5 7 cxd5 exd5 8 Bd3 b6
9 Ne2 c6 10 0-0 Be7 11 Bxf6 Bxf6 12 b4 Re8 13 Nf4 Bb7 14 Rcl b5
15 a4'a6 16 a5 Qd6 17 Nh5 Nd7 18 Bf5 Nf8 19 Qg4 Kh8 20 Ne2 g6
21 Nxf6 Qxf6 22 Bbl Qd6 23 Qf4 Qxf4 24 Nxf4 Kg7 25 Rfel Rad8
26 f3 Kf6 27 Kf2 Rd6 28 Rc3 Ke7 29 Recl Kd8 30 Ba2 Nd7 31 h4 g5
32 Nh5 Rg8 33 g4 Nf6 34 Ng3 Ne8 35 Rh1 Rf6 36 Bbl Nd6 37 hxc5 hxc5
38 Rocl Nc4 39 Bf5 Bc8 40 e4 Bxf5 41 gxf5 dxe4 42 fxe4 Rd6
43 Rod1 Ke7 44 e5 Rd5 45 Rh7 Rgd8 46 e6 Nd6 47 Rcl Rc8
48 exf7 Nxf7 49 Rel+ Kf8 50 Re4 Re8 51 Rxe8 Kxe8 52 Ke3 Ke7
53 Rg7 Kf8 54 Rg6 Nd6 55 Rxc5 Nc4+ 56 Kd3 Kf7 57 Rh5 c5
58 bxc5 Nxa5 59 Ke4 Rd8 60 Rh7+ Kg8 61 Rh6 Nb3 62 Rxa6 Rxd4+
63 Ke5 Rc4 64 c6 Nd4 65 Kd6 Kf7 66 c7 b4 67 Rb6 b3 68 Kd7 Nf3
69 c8=Q Ne5+ 70 Kd8 1 - 0

III: Benoni-style ...exd5

Macdonald-Ross - Fazekas, Kent v Essex 1965. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 exd5 7 cxd5 d6 8 e3 Nbd7
9 Bd3 Ne5 10 Ne2 Nxd3+ 11 Qxd3 O-O 12 O-O Re8 13 a3 Ba5 14 Ne4 Bf5
15 N2g3 Bg6 16 f4 Rxe4 17 Bxf6 Qxf6 18 Nxe4 Qf5 19 Qb5 Qxe4
20 Qxa5 Qxd5 21 Rad1 Qe6 22 Qc7 Qxe3+ 23 Kh1 Be4 24 Qxd6 Qe2
25 Rg1 Bc6 26 Rd2 Qe3 27 Qd3 Qxf4 28 Rf1 Qe4 29 Qxe4 Bxe4
30 Rd7 Rf8 31 Rc1 Rc8 32 Rcd1 Rc6 33 Rxb7 Rf6 34 Rb8+ Kh7
35 Kgl c4 36 Re8 Bd3 37 g3 g5 38 Re7 a6 39 Rd2 Bg6 40 Rc7 Re6
41 Rxc4 Rel+ 42 Kf2 Re6 1 - 0

IV: The ...b5 gambit

Macdonald-Ross - Mooney, Hastings Challengers 1975/76. 1 d4 Nf6
2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 b5 7 dxe6 fxe6 8 cxb5 O-O
9 e3 Qa5 10 Bxf6 Rxf6 11 Ne2 a6 12 b6 Qxb6 13 Nf4 d5 14 Nh5 Rf7
15 Bd3 d4 16 Bg6 Re7 17 exd4 cxd4 18 a3 dxc3 19 axb4 cxb2
20 Rbl Qxb4+ 21 Qd2 Qxd2+ 22 Kxd2 Bb7 23 Rxb2 Nc6 24 Rhbl Na5
25 Ke2 Rd8 26 Ng3 Bd5 27 Bd3 Nc4 28 Rb8 Rxb8 29 Rxb8+ Kf7
30 Rc8 Nd6 31 Rd8 Nb5 32 Ne4 Bxe4 33 Bxe4 Nc3+ 34 Ke3 Nxe4
35 Kxe4 Ra7 36 Kd4 a5 37 Kc5 Rc7+ 38 Kd4 Rb7 39 Ra8 Rb4+
40 Kd3 a4 41 g3 Rb3+ 42 Ke4 Rb5+ 43 Ke3 Kf6 44 h4 Kf5 45 Ra7 g6
46 Ke2 Ke4 47 Ra6 Rb2+ 48 Kel Kf3 49 Rxe6 h5 50 Rf6+ Kg2
51 Ra6 Rxf2 52 Rxa4 Rf3 53 g4 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Cooper - Adamski, Nice Olympiad 1974. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4
4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 O-O 7 e3 b5 8 dxe6 fxe6 9 cxb5 d5
10 Bd3 d4 11 exd4 cxd4 12 a3 Ba5 13 b4 dxc3 14 bxa5 Bb7 15 Ne2 Bxg2
16 Rgl Bf3 17 Bc2 Nbd7 18 Qd6 Bxe2 19 Kxe2 Qxa5 20 a4 Qb6
21 Rxg7+ Kxg7 22 Rgl+ Kf7 23 Bg6+ Kg8 24 Bf5+ Kf7 25 Bg6+ Kg8
26 Qe7 Kh8 27 Bc2 Nh5 28 Qh7++ 1 - 0

Games on side 2:

V: The d6 wedge

Bagirov - Keene, Tbilisi 1974. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4
4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 Bxc3+ 7 bxc3 e5 8 d6 Nc6 9 Qc2 g5
10 Bg3 Nh5 11 e3 Qf6 12 Rd1 b6 13 Be2 Nxc3 14 hxc3 Bb7 15 Bf3 O-O-O
16 Ne2 h5 17 Rxh5 Rxh5 18 Bxh5 Na5 19 Bf3 Bxf3 20 gxf3 Qxf3
21 Ng1 Qg4 22 Qh7 Qxc4 23 Ne2 Nc6 24 e4 Qxa2 25 f3 Qe6 26 Kf2 Qf6
27 Rh1 Qxd6 28 Qxf7 g4 29 Qd5 Qxd5 30 exd5 Ne7 31 c4 Rf8
32 f4 exf4 33 gxf4 Nf5 34 Rgl Rg8 35 Ng3 Nd6 36 Ke3 Nxc4+
37 Ke4 Kc7 38 f5 Nd6+ 39 Kf4 c4 40 f6 b5 41 Ral Kb6 42 Ke5 Nf7+
43 Kd4 Rg6 44 Rf1 a5 45 Rf2 a4 46 Ne4 g3 0 - 1

Macdonald-Ross - Kiefer, Hastings Challengers 1975/76. 1 d4 Nf6
2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 Bxc3+ 7 bxc3 e5
8 d6 Nc6 9 e3 Kf8 10 Nf3 g5 11 Bg3 Qe8 12 Nd2 Qe6 13 h4 Rg8
14 hxg5 hxg5 15 Qc2 Qxd6 16 Rh6 Qe7 17 Ne4 Nxe4 18 Qxe4 d6
19 O-O-O Be6 20 f4 exf4 21 exf4 Bg4 22 Rel Qxe4 23 Rxe4 Rd8
24 fxg5 Be6 25 Rf6 Ke7 26 Bh4 Kd7 27 g6 Rg7 28 gxf7 Bxf7
29 g4 Re8 30 Rxe8 Bxe8 31 Bd3 Ne5 32 Bf5+ Kc7 33 Rf8 Bg6
34 Be6 Be4 35 Ra8 Nc6 36 Rc8+ Kb6 37 Rh8 Rh7 38 Rxh7 Bxh7
39 Kd2 Ne5 40 Ke3 Kc7 41 Bg3? Kd8 42 Bh4+ Ke8 43 Bf6 Bg8
44 Bxe5 Bxe6 45 Bxd6 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

VI: The ...e5 blockade

Macdonald-Ross - Bonham, Paignton 1964. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 d6 7 e3 e5 8 Qc2 Nbd7 9 Bd3 Bxc3+ 10 bxc3 Qe7 11 f3 O-O 12 Ne2 Re8 13 Ng3 Nf8 14 Ne4 g5 15 Nxf6+ Qxf6 16 Bg3 Ng6 17 O-O Kg7 18 Rf2 Qe7 19 Rf1 a6 20 Qb1 Qc7 21 f4 exf4 22 exf4 Nxf4 23 Bxf4 gxf4 24 Rxf4 Re5 25 Qd1 b5 26 Qf3 Ra7 27 cxb5 axb5 28 Bxb5 1 - 0

Timman - Smyslov, Teesside 1975. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 d6 7 e3 Bxc3+ 8 bxc3 e5 9 f3 g5 10 Bg3 e4 11 f4 Qe7 12 Be2 Rg8 13 Nh3 Bxh3 14 gxh3 gxf4 15 Bxf4 Nbd7 16 Rb1 Nb6 17 a4 Rb8 18 Kd2? Rg2 19 Qf1 Nxc4+ 20 Ke1 Rxe2+ 21 Qxe2 Ne5 22 Bxe5 Qxe5 23 c4 Ke7 24 Rf1 b6 25 Kd2 Rg8 26 Kc2 Qg5 27 Rf4 Qg2 28 Qxg2 Rxg2+ 29 Kc3 Nd7 30 Rb2 Rg1 31 a5 bxa5 32 Rxe4+ Ne5 33 Rb7+ Kf6 34 Rxa7 Rcl+ 35 Kb3 Rbl+ 36 Kc3 Rcl+ 37 Kd2 Rh1 38 Rf4+ Kg7 39 Kc3 Rxh2 40 Rxa5 Rxh3 41 Ra6 Rxe3+ 42 Kd2 Rd3+ 43 Kc2 Rd4 44 Rxd4 cxd4 45 Kb3 d3 46 Kc3 h5 47 Ral f6 48 Kd4 Kg6 49 Rgl+ Kf5 50 Rf1+ Kg5 51 Ke4 h4 52 Rgl+ Kh5 53 c5 dxc5 54 d6 c4 55 Kd4 h3 56 Kc3 Kh4 57 Rg7 h2 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Hartston - Plachetka, Decin 1976. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 d6 7 e3 Bxc3+ 8 bxc3 e5 9 f3 Nbd7 10 Bd3 Qa5 11 Qd2 O-O 12 Nh3 Re8 13 O-O e4 14 Be2 b5 15 cxb5 Bb7 16 Bel exf3 17 gxf3 Nxd5 18 e4 N5b6 19 Qxd6 Re6 20 Qc7 Rb8 21 Rad1 Bc8 22 Rxd7 1 - 0

Williams - Karpov, Nice Olympiad 1974. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 d6 7 e3 Bxc3+ 8 bxc3 e5 9 Bd3 e4 10 Bc2 g5 11 Bg3 Qe7 12 h4 Rg8 13 hxg5 hxg5 14 Ne2 Nbd7 15 Qb1 Kd8 16 a4? a5 17 Ra2 Kc7 18 Rh6 Ra6 19 Qb5 Kb8 20 Rb2 Ka7 21 Qb3 Ng4 22 Rh1 f5 23 Kd1 Rb6 24 Qa2 Rxb2 25 Qxb2 b6 26 Bb3 Ba6 27 Ncl Nde5 28 Qe2 Ng6 29 Kd2 Nf6 30 Qd1 f4 0 - 1

Miles - Iskov, Dortmund 1976. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 d6 7 e3 Bxc3+ 8 bxc3 e5 9 Bd3 e4 10 Bc2 g5 11 Bg3 Qe7 12 h4 Rg8 13 hxg5 hxg5 14 Ne2 Nbd7 15 Ba4 Kd8 16 Bxd7 Bxd7 17 Rbl Kc7 18 Kd2 Ng4 19 Rh7 Rh8 20 Qb3 b6 21 Rxh8 Rxh8 22 a4 Ne5 23 a5 Rb8 24 Nd4 Qe8 25 Nb5 Bxb5 26 cxb5 Ng6 27 Ral f5 28 axb6 axb6 29 Ra7+ Rb7 30 Bxd6 1 - 0

Williams - Bellin, British Championship play-off 1974. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 Bxc3+ 7 bxc3 e5 8 e3 d6 9 Bd3 e4 10 Bc2 Qe7 11 Bxf6 Qxf6 12 Ne2 Qe5 13 Qb1 f5 14 O-O O-O 15 f3 Nd7 16 Qel exf3 17 Rxf3 Qe7 18 Nf4 Ne5 19 Rg3 Rf7 20 Qe2 Bd7 21 Rf1 Raf8 22 h3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Macdonald-Ross - Haygarth, British Championship 1976. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Bg5 h6 5 Bh4 c5 6 d5 Bxc3+ 7 bxc3 d6 8 e3 e5 9 Bd3 e4 10 Bc2 Qe7 11 Bxf6 Qxf6 12 Ne2 Qe5 13 Qb1 f5 14 h4 O-O 15 Ba4 Na6 16 Kd2 Nc7 17 Nf4 Rf7 18 Qb3 Rb8 19 h5 b5 20 cxb5 Bd7 21 c4 a6 22 b6 Bxa4 23 Qxa4 Rxb6 24 Rab1 Rb2+ 25 Rxb2 Qxb2+ 26 Qc2 Qb4+ 27 Ke2 Qb8 28 Rbl Qd8 29 Qb2 Rd7 30 Qb8 Qxb8 31 Rxb8+ Kf7 32 Kd2 Kf6 33 Kc2 Rf7 34 Kb3 Ke7 35 Ka4 Kd7 36 Ka5 Re7 37 Kb6 Rf7 38 Ng6 1 - 0

Further practice: cover up & think before looking!

Another look at Black's gambits:

1 d4 Nf6
2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Bb4
4 Bg5 h6
5 Bh4 c5
6 d5 Nxd5?!
7 Bxd8 Nxc3

What are you going
to do now?

8 Qb3 Ne4+
9 Kd1 Nxf2+
Where does your
K go?

10 Kc1
Because 10 Kc2 Nxh1
11 Bc7 Nc6! 12 e3 and
the third rank is blocked
(Vladimirov-Bakmatov 1956)

10 ... Nxh1
11 Qf3 Kxd8
12 Qxf7 Nc6
13 Qxg7 Re8
14 Qxh6

This is a win for White.
Analysis by Alekhine; Zak
claims 11 a3 also wins.
You might meet this line
in a 5-minute game, so
remember:

-use your Q on the third
rank

-put your K on c1 to
avoid that fork.

Incidentally, if this
line worked for Black
the Leningrad would be
dead. That's why Alekhine
and Zak spent so much time
analysing it.

1 d4 Nf6
2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Bb4
4 Bg5 h6
5 Bh4 c5
6 d5 b5
7 e4

This used to be the move; also
7 Rcl bxc4 8 e4 is possible
7 e3 is spineless ...Bb7!

7 ... g5
Also possible is 7...exd5 8 cxd5 g5
9 e5 ♣

8 Bg3 Nxe4
9 Be5
Portisch-Barcza went 9 Qf3 exd5
10 O-O-O Bxc3 11 Rxd5 ♣

9 ... O-O (not ...f6 10 Bd3! +-)
10 Qh5 d6
11 Bd3 Nxc3
12 Qxh6 Ne4+
13 Kf1 dxe5
14 Bxd4 f5
15 Qg6+ Kh8
16 Qh6+

$\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ by perpetual check. 16 h4 g4
or 16 g4 Qf6. This draw was played
in Penrose-Unzicker 1961, but
the whole line was analysed by Zak
years before.

More on the semi-benoni: Black's ...Qa5 pawn-snatch

1 d4 Nf6
2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Bb4
4 Bg5 c5
5 d5 d6
6 e3 exd5
7 cxd5 Nbd7
8 Bd3 Qa5

This is the pawn-snatch,
and you are playing
Timman-Karpov 1976.

9 Nge2 Nxd5
10 O-O Bxc3
11 bxc3 c4

This hits both Bs; did you
notice the one on g5 is
loose? 11...Nxc3 12 Nxc3
Qxc3 13 Be2 or Bb5 wins the
d-pawn with open lines for
White +=

12 Bf5 f6
13 Nd4! Ne7
If ...fxg5 14 Qh5+ g6
15 Bxg6 Kd8 16 Qxg5+ N7f6
17 Bf7 Rf8 18 Qg7 +-

14 Bxd7 Bxd7
15 Bf4 O-O
16 Bd6 Rfe8
17 Rb1 b6

White has his pawn back and
is +=. Karpov now plays fine
chess to save the game.

18 Bxe7 Rxe7
19 Nb5 Rc8
20 Nd6 Rc7
21 Rb4 Be6
22 Qf3 Qd5

Now Black's pieces are
recentralised he must be OK
White's last few moves have a
second-best look about them.
Surely he should struggle to
keep Black's Q out of the game?

23 Qxd5 Bxd5
24 Rd1 Be6
25 Rd4 Red7

26 f3 Kf8
27 Nb5 Rc5
28 a4 a6
29 Na3 Rxd4
30 exd4 Rc6
31 Nc2 a5
32 Rb2 Ke7
33 d5 Bxd5
34 Nd4 Rc5
35 Rxb6 h5
36 Kf2 Kd7
37 h4 Kc7
38 Re6 Kd7
39 Rb6 Kc7
40 Re6 Kd7
41 Ra6 Bb7
42 Rb6 Kc7
43 Re6 Kd7
44 Rb6 Kc7
45 Re6

$\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$

Spassky used to play
8/9 Bb5 instead of Bd3
to avoid the pawn-snatch.
If ...Qa5 now Bxd7+ Nxd7
Ne2 is +=, and Bxf6 is
also possible. If ...a6
then Bxd7+ Nxd7 10 Ne2
is again +=. As we
discussed on the tape,
it does White good to
get rid of this N
(all else being equal).

Nowadays we let Black
snatch the p if he wants
to. ...Qa5 is rarely
played, for White gets so
much play for the pawn.

More on the ...e5 blockade: Black avoids ...Bxc3

1 d4 Nf6
2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Bb4
4 Bg5 h6
5 Bh4 c5
6 d5 d6
7 e3 e5

You are playing Spassky-Keres
Candidates 1965.

8 Ne2 Nbd7
9 a3 Ba5
10 Qc2 O-O
11 Nc1

He could play f3, Bf2 & Ng3
instead. The move Nc1 allows
Keres the chance of ...Bxc3+
forcing bxc3 since Qxc3 is met
by ...Nxd5. But Keres is
determined to keep his B.

11 ... Re8
12 Na2 Qe7
13 f3 e4
14 f4 g5
15 Bg3

fxg5? Ng4 gives Black the
crucial square e5.

15 ... Nh5
16 Be2 Ng7
17 O-O Nf5
18 Qd2 Nf6
19 fxg5 hxg5
20 Be1 Ng7
21 b4!

At last! Now the skids
are under Black.

21 ... Bb6
22 Na4 Nd7
23 N2c3 Bd8
24 bxc5 Nxc5
25 Nxc5 dxc5
26 d6! Qe6
27 Rd1 Bd7
28 Bg3 f5
29 Nb5 Rf8

Black doesn't fancy the
a2/g8 diagonal after
...Bxb5 30 cxb5

30 Qc1 Qf6
31 Nc7 Rc8
32 Nd5 Qe6
33 Qb2 Ba4
34 Rcl Rf7
35 Be5 Qg6
36 g4!

It's worth pausing here
to look at the wonderful
placing of the White
pieces. Never mind, Black's
still got his two bishops...

36 ... Bc6
37 gxf5 Nxf5
38 Bg4 Bd7
39 Qxb7 Be6
40 Qb1 Nxd6
41 Bxe6 Qxe6
42 Bxd6 Qxd6
43 Qxe4 Rb8
44 Rxf7 Kxf7
45 Qh7+ Ke8
46 Rf1 Qe6
47 h3 Rc8
48 Qg7 Be7
49 Rf5 Bd6

Keres' last move played
with the piece that killed him.

50 Rf6

1 - 0

Two items of interest for Keres
fans: he was the first GM to
play the Leningrad in a post-
war international tournament
(Keres-O'Kelly Budapest 1952);
and he lost to Spassky once
before by trying to hang on to
his KB (USSR Champ. 1957).
Both games were in this blockade
variation.

More on the ...e5 blockade:

An unusual idea: White plays
dxe6 (Macdonald-Ross-Bernstein)

```

1 d4      Nf6
2 c4      e6
3 Nc3     Bb4
4 Bb5     h6
5 Bh4     c5
6 d5      Bxc3+
7 bxc3    d6
8 dxe6!? Bxe6
9 e3      g5
10 Bg3     Ne4
11 Qc2     Nxg3
12 hxg3    Nc6
13 Nf3     Qf6
14 Rd1     Ke7
15 Be2     Na5
16 Nd2     Bf5
17 Bd3     Bxd3
18 Qxd3    Rad8
19 g4      Qe6
20 Qe2     Qe5
21 Rc1     Qe6
22 Rh3     Ke8
23 e4      f6
24 Rd1     Ke7
25 f3      Nc6
26 Nf1     Ne5
27 Ne3     Kf8
28 Kf2     Ng6
29 g3      Ne5
30 Rdh1    Nf7
31 Qc2     Qd7
32 a4      Rc8
33 a5      Rc6
34 Qa4     Qd8
35 Rb1     Ra6
36 Rxb7    Qxa5
37 Rxf7+   Kxf7
38 Qd7+    Kg6
39 Nf5

```

1 - 0

Only play dxe6 if Black has already played ...Bxc3 -you must have protection against ...d5 & ...d4. If 9...O-O 10 Nf3 d5 11 Be2!(+= Zak) You must not play 11 cxd5, for this would free Black's pieces. In this line the W pawn at c3 props up your centre. Black can evade this line by playing 6...d6 7 e3 (NOT dxe6, there's still a pin on) and now 7...Bxc3+

A typical Leningrad endgame
(Macdonald-Ross - GD Lee 1975)

```

1 d4      Nf6
2 c4      e6
3 Nc3     Bb4
4 Bg5     h6
5 Bh4     c5
6 d5      Bxc3+
7 bxc3    d6
8 e3      e5
9 Qc2     Nbd7
10 f3     Qa5
11 Rb1     Nb6
12 Bxf6    gxf6
13 f4      Qa4
14 Qxa4    Nxa4
15 Kd2     Bf5
16 Bd3     Bxd3
17 Kxd3    Rg8
18 g3      Nb6
19 Nf3     O-O-O
20 Nd2     h5
21 fxe5    fxe5
22 Rbf1    h4
23 Rxf7    hxg3
24 hxg3    Rxg3
25 Rhh7    Rd7
26 Rxd7    Nxd7
27 Rh6     Rg1
28 Ne4     Rg2
29 Nxd6+   Kb8
30 Rh7     Kc7
31 Nxb7    Kxb7
32 Rxd7+   Kb8
33 d6      Rxa2
34 Ke4     a5
35 Kd5     a4
36 Kc6     a3
37 Rb7+    Ka8
38 Rb3

```

1 - 0

Endgames in the Leningrad are often good for White. The plan is: break open b, f or h files use white squares to infiltrate other pieces, then capture the Black d-pawn. Notice, your pawn at d5 is only three squares away from queening!

More practice on the main-line blockade

5-minute games are a good way to practice openings. Here's a game I played against Danny Wright in a 10-minute team tourney:

```

1 d4      Nf6
2 c4      e6
3 Nc3     Bb4
4 Bg5     h6
5 Bh4     c5
6 d5      d6
7 e3      Bxc3+
8 bxc3    e5
9 f3      Qe7
10 Qc2    Nbd7
11 Ne2
    It's better to play
    Bd3 first
11 ...    Nf8
12 Bf2    Ng6
    He might have tried
    ...e4 13 f4 Ng4
14 Bg1    h5!
13 Ng3    h5
14 Bd3    h4
15 Nf5    Bxf5
16 Bxf5    Nf8
17 O-O    g6
18 Bh3
    A good spot for the B.
18 ...    N8h7
19 f4     Nd7
    Black's h-pawn is
    en prise
20 Bxd7+  Kxd7
21 fxe5   dxe5
22 d6!    Qg5
    He wouldn't survive
    ...Kxd6 23 Qe4! Kc7
24 Bxh4!
23 Qe4    Rab8
24 Bxh4    Nf6
25 Rxf6    Rxh4
26 Rxf7+   Ke8
27 Qd5     Qxe3 +
28 Kh1

```

1 - 0

If you play 9 Bd3 this is something you should know about:

```

1 d4      Nf6
2 c4      e6
3 Nc3     Bb4
4 Bg5     h6
5 Bh4     c5
6 d5      d6
7 e3      Bxc3+
8 bxc3    e5
9 Bd3     Nbd7
10 Ne2    Qe7
    or 9...Qe7 & 10...Nbd7
11 Ng3!   e4
    if ...g5 12 Nf5: and
    if ...Nf8 12 Nf5 Bxf5
13 Bxf5 is simplest,
    though 12 Nh5 g5 13 Ng7+
    Kd8 14 Bg3 and 12 Bxf6
    Qxf6 13 O-O can also be
    played.
12 Nxe4   g5
13 Nxf6+  Qxf6
14 Bg3     Qxc3+
    White has a definite
    advantage. Miles-Peters
    continued:
15 Kf1     Ne5
16 Be2     Bf5
17 Qc1     Qa5
18 Qb2     Qc7
19 f4      +-
    and Macdonald-Ross - van
    Dongen continued:
15 Ke2     Ne5
16 Qd2
    Rcl is also good
16 ...    Qxd2+
17 Kxd2    Ke7
18 h4      g4
19 h5      +=

```

Spassky-Smyslov (Bucharest 1953)

During the 1950s Botvinnik and Smyslov were in a class of their own. 1953 was the year Smyslov won the Candidates, and his defeat by a 16 year-old Spassky was quite a surprise.

1 d4 Nf6
2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Bb4
4 Bg5 h6
5 Bh4 c5
6 d5 exd5
7 cxd5 d6
8 e3 Nbd7
9 Bb5

Played to avoid ...Qa5, since White doesn't mind playing Bxd7+; but 9 Bd3 is now usual.

9 ... O-O
10 Ne2 Ne5
11 O-O Ng6
12 Bg3 Nh5
13 Bd3

You see, it has to come back.

13 ... Nxg3
14 Nxg3 Ne5
15 Be2

A subtle point: one B swopped is OK, two isn't. But Smyslov persists; he knows White will gain space in the centre.

15 ... Bxc3
16 bxc3 Qh4
17 f4 Ng4
18 Bxg4 Bxg4
19 Qa4!

The point. 20 f5 is now a threat.

19 ... Bc8
20 e4 Qg4
21 Qc2 h5 (better is ...Bd7)
22 Rf2 b5
23 e5 h4
24 Nf1 Bf5
25 Qd2 dxe5 (better is ...Rad8)
26 fxe5 Bg6
27 Re1 h3
28 d6 Be4
29 Ne3 Qe6
30 Rf4 Bxg2 (if ...Qxe5 31 Ng4)
31 Nf5 Rfe8
32 Re3 Rad8
33 Nxg7 Rxd6 (...Kxg7 34 Rg3+ Kf8
35 Rxf7+ leads to ++)
34 Nxe6 1 - 0

Hartston-Grinza (Haifa 1976)

A lovely game by Hartston. All the tactics look complex, but are based on a positional theme: Control of the white squares.

1 d4 Nf6
2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Bb4
4 Bg5 h6
5 Bh4 c5
6 d5 Bxc3+
7 bxc3 d6
8 e3 e5
9 f3 Nbd7
10 Bd3 Qe7
11 Qc2 O-O
12 Nge2 g5
13 Bg3 b5
14 h4 g4
15 cxb5 Nxd5
16 Qd2 N5f6
17 e4 Kg7
18 h5 Nh7
19 Bh4 Ng5
20 a4

If Ng3 Nb6 would threaten both ...gxf3 and ...d5. So White prepares a5 to answer ...Nb6: a tactical melee follows in which Hartston's control of the white squares is unsuccessfully challenged by Black.

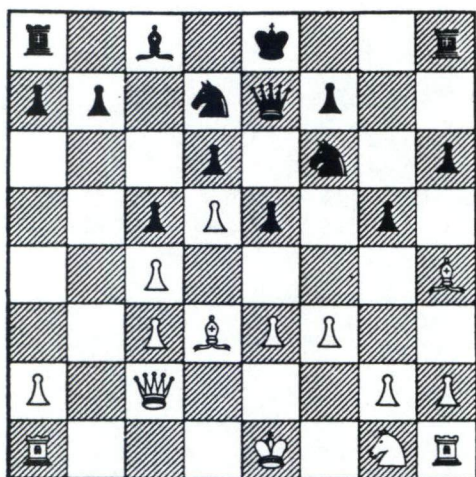
20 ... gxf3
21 Ng3 f5
22 exf5 e4
23 Nxe4 Bb7
24 Bxg5 hxg5
25 gxf3 Rxf5
26 O-O-O Ne5
27 Nxd6 Rxf3
28 Rhel Qf6
29 Be4 Rf2
30 Qe3 Bxe4
31 Nxe4 Nc4
32 Qxf2

1 - 0

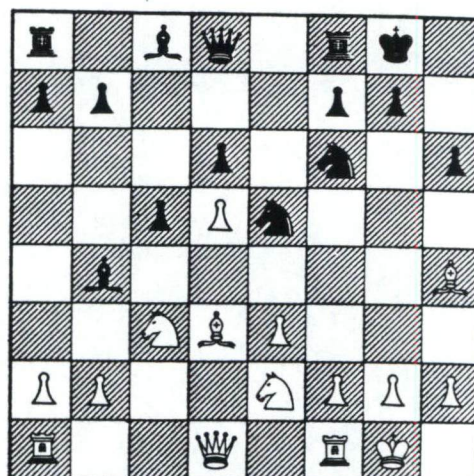
This game is definitely worth playing through two or three times; it's a good model for how you should resist active play by Black in the ...e5 blockade. Incidentally, note that Black's move order offered White the chance of 8 dxe6. That is one of the least-known ideas in the Leningrad Nimzo.

QUIZ

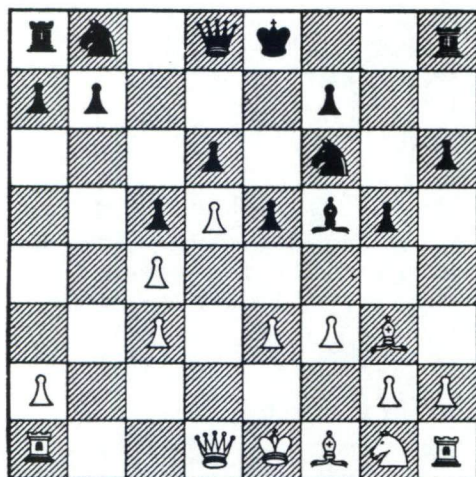
Test yourself: these problems are in order of difficulty.



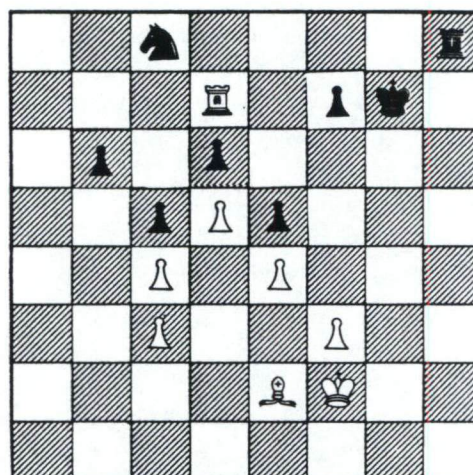
- 1: Here's a typical position. Where are you going to put the B? Why?



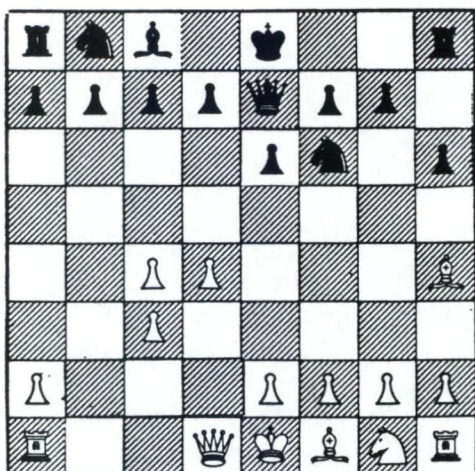
- 2: If Black plays ...Ng6, what will you do?



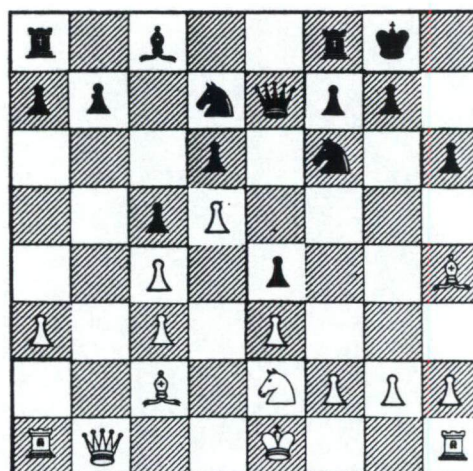
- 3: You've played 9 f3 in the blockade line and Black replies 9...g5 10 Bg3 Bf5. What should you play?



- 4: You reach this position at a weekend congress. As you have only 15 mins for all your moves, you can only spare 4 or 5 to organise a plan.



- 5: Your opponent has played 5...Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Qe7 facing you with a completely novel position. Evolve a reasonable plan.



- 6: You've just played 1 a3. How will you answer
a) 1...a6
b) 1...b6
c) 1...Re8
d) 1...g5 2 Bg3 Ne5

Answers to the Quiz:

- 1: If you played Bf2 so as to keep g3 open for your N, you can console yourself that some GMs have made the same mistake. Black will play ...e4 and now you may have to play Be2, for fxe4 Ne5 or Bxe4 Nxe4 2 Qxe4 Qxe4 3 fxe4 Ne5 looks like =+ 1 Bg3! is almost always correct, for ...e4 is now not on; your B attacks e5 & d6, e.g: 1 Bg3 e4 2 Bxe4 Nxe4 3 Qxe4 Qxe4 4 fxe4 Ne5 5 Bxe5 +- or 4...Ke7 5 h4 +-
Also, on g3 the B supports your f4 break, and if you have to you can drop it back to f2 later on.
- 2: Not Bxg6, for that opens the f-file for his R and the p on g6 protects his white squares. Play simply Bg3 and use f4 to squash his knights later on.
- 3: Black is trying to pre-empt those white squares. You must stop him! Moves like h4 or Ne2 don't tackle this problem: indeed, h4 may get you into trouble here - how would you reply to ...Nh5 or ...Rg8? The real choice is between e4 and Bd3. If you play 1 e4 the sequel could be ...Bc8! and ...Nb8-d7-f8-g6-f4 =+. You should try and avoid e4; it blocks your lovely white squares and opens f4 for the Black Ns. Correct is 1 Bd3 and if ...e4 then Be2 or Bc2.
- 4: There is only one plan: you must knock the N off c8 and capture the d-pawn. So 1 f4! exf4 (...Rh2+ 2 Ke3 exf4+ 3 Kf3 Rh8 4 Kxf4 - unfortunately for Black he needs his R at h8 to guard that N) 2 Bg4! (the point) Kf6 3 Kf3 Re8 4 Kxf4 Kg7 5 Bh5 Re7 6 Rd8 Rc7 7 Bg4 (aha!) Ne7 8 Rxd6 and White won. This occurred in Macdonald-Ross - Eley Birmingham Open 1977, and is a typical Leningrad endgame. The White R had already got through on the a-file, then the B got through on the white squares, then the N holding d6 was chased and the d-pawn captured. Incidentally, the manoeuvre Be2-d1-a4-c6-b7 also seems to get the d-pawn, so full marks if you got that idea.
- 5: Here Spassky-Lissitzyn went 7 e3 b6 8 Nf3 Bb7 9 Bd3 d6 10 O-O Nbd7 11 Nd2 and Donner-Grunfeld went 7 f3 d6 8 e4 e5 9 Bf2 Nc6 10 Ne2 b6 11 Ng3. If you got either of these plans worked out you did well. Donner's way seems best.
- 6: a) 1...a6 2 Bxf6 Nxf6 3 Qb6 Nd7 4 Qc7
b) 1...b6 2 a4 a5? 3 Bxf6
c) 1...Re8 2 Ba4
d) 1...g5 2 Bg3 Ne5 3 Bxe5 Qxe5 4 h4 and later Kd2, Ng3.
All these lines favour White. If Black doesn't play anything obliging White has plenty more moves like Ral-a2-b2 or Qbl-a2, Rbl and Kd2 which improve his position and offer Black ways of going wrong.

