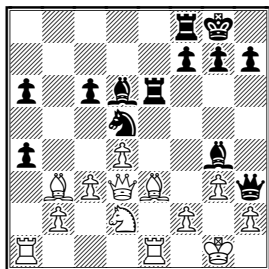


New developments in the main line of the Marshall Gambit (C89)

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♙b3 0-0 8 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 c6 12 d4 ♙d6 13 ♖e1 ♗h4 14 g3 ♗h3 15 ♙e3 ♙g4 16 ♗d3 ♖ae8 17 ♘d2 ♖e6 18 a4 bxa4



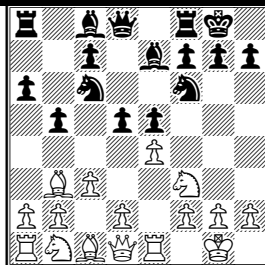
After 18...f5, White is able to successfully launch a counter attack with 19 axb5! as was impressively demonstrated by Daniel J. Quigley in his article "*Marshall: Busted!*" [5]. Since this article, the former main line 18...f5 is regarded as refuted [6]. However, Black can try to reach known territory with the transposition 18...bxa4, which is discussed in this article.
19 ♖xa4 f5 20 ♗f1 ♗h5

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Marshall Attack



by Martin Bennedik

Now White can choose between

A) 21 c4?

B) 21 ♖xa6!

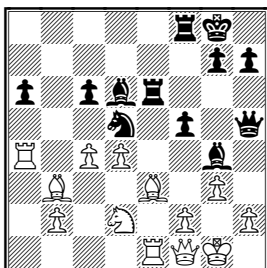
and **21 f4.**

If White plays 21 f4, the old main line is reached and Black can be satisfied, because these positions are generally thought to be fairly safe for him. In this article, the other two White moves are examined.

21 c4 is an old move. Theory had assessed this move as leading to advantage for White, and that was the reason for 18...f5 to be used more often than 18...bxa4. However, as we will see, this line was completely overestimated by theory. In fact, Black does not need to fear this line at all and at least equalises.

However, Ivanchuk's move 21 ♖xa6, launching the counter-attack on the queenside, is critical for the evaluation of 18...bxa4.

A) 21 c4?



21...f4 22 cxd5 Bxe3

Not 22...fxe3? 23 dxe6 Bxf2 24 e7+ Bh8 25 e8=Q+ Qxe8 26 Bxe3 Bxf1+ 27 Qxf1 and the two rooks are superior to the queen (Nunn).

23 fxe3 fxe3 24 dxc6+ Bh8 25 hxe3 Bxf1+

Interesting is 25...Bf3?, but after 26 Qxf3 Bxf3 27 Qxf3 Qxf3 28 Qd1! the white king has found refuge from the black queen's checks in the centre. White should be winning.

26 Bxf1

At this point Black usually plays 26...Bg5. Theory considers the resulting positions as better for White [1, 2]. Meanwhile, important improvements have been found for Black, which leads one to believe that after 26...Bg5 it is Black, who is in fact having winning chances.

Here, however, we will show a simple way for Black to reach a draw, which apparently has been overlooked by theory.

26...Qh6

With this move, Black achieves a draw at once. This is enough to show that 21 c4 is not leading to any advantage for White.

27 Qc4

With the queen on h6, White cannot

play 27 Bf4, because 27...Qxf4 28 exf4 (or 28 gxf4) 28...Qh3 Black stands ready to consume some more pieces.

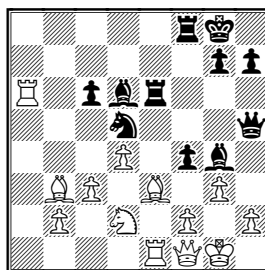
After 27 Bxa6 Qxe3+ Black again has (at least) perpetual check.

27...Qh3

There is no way for White to avoid the draw. The game Quigley–Bennedik ended after

28 Qxd6 Qxg3+ 29 Qh1 Qh3+ with a perpetual.

B) 21 Bxa6! f4



22 Qxf4!

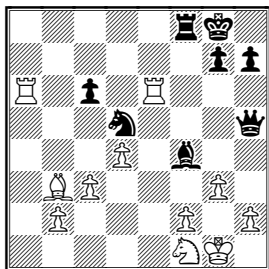
Ivanchuk's idea from his game against Short, Riga 1995. In a correspondence Lilienthal–Hallier, 1965 White did not succeed in solving the problems of the position: 22 Bxc6? fxe3 23 Bxe3 Qxe3 24 Qxe6+ Qxe6 25 Qe1 Qd5 and White resigned, for example 26 Bxd6 Qg4 27 h4 Qxf2 [1].

With 21 Bxa6 and 22 Qxf4 White launches a counter-attack on the queen-side. Ivanchuk now played **B1) 22...Qh3** against Short. Another idea is to continue with **B2) 22...Bxe1**.

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B1) 22...♙h3**23 ♖xe6 ♙xf1 24 ♜xf1 ♙xf4****25 ♖a×c6**

After 25 ♖exc6? Black would have the chance to play 25...♙xg3, e.g. 26 ♜×g3 ♙f3 27 ♙×d5+ ♖×d5 28 ♙e6 ♙f3 29 ♙e2 h5 with chances for both sides.

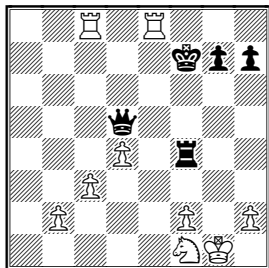
25...♙f3

Now 25...♙xg3 would lead to nothing, because after 26 ♜×g3 ♙f3 White could play 27 ♙e2 immediately.

26 g×f4

Ivanchuk now played 26 ♙×d5 ♖×d5 27 g×f4 ♙f3 28 d5 when Black can play 28...♙xf4! as happened in an email game Fernandez–Harding, 1998 which ended with a draw at this point. Indeed White has to give perpetual check now because of ...♙xf2+.

26...♙×f4 27 ♙e8+ ♙f7 28 ♙×d5+ ♖×d5 29 ♖cc8



A critical position of the whole line invented by Ivanchuk. In contrast to the

last note, White can answer 29...♙f3 with 30 ♙f8+ and 31 ♖xf4, defending against the threat ...♙xf2. This position is analysed in [9].

29...♙g6

After 29...♙f3 30 ♙f8+ ♙e7 31 ♖×f4 ♙×f4 32 ♜e3 Black can go for the b–pawn with 32...♙g5+ 33 ♙h1 ♙b5 but after 34 ♙c5 ♙×b2 35 ♙g2, although it may not be easy to win for White, I'd rather not dare playing Black in this position.

29...♙g4+ is premature, e.g. 30 ♜g3 h5 31 h3 ♙g5 32 ♙f8+ ♙g6 33 ♙c5 ♙b3 34 ♙×g5+ ♙×g5 35 ♙f5+ ♙g6 36 ♙×h5 ♙×b2 37 ♙c5 with a similar result as above.

30 ♙f8

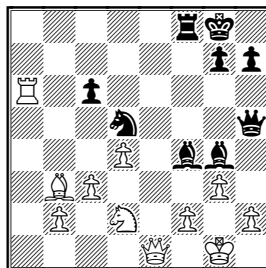
White has some other interesting, complicated moves like 30 ♜g3, 30 ♙e2 or 30 ♙e3. However, I'd like to propose this simple move here, with the idea of reaching a similar position as in the last note.

30...♙×f8 31 ♖×f8 ♙b5

31...♙g5+ 32 ♜g3 ♙c1+ 33 ♙g2 ♙×b2 34 ♜e4 or 31...h5 32 ♜e3 ♙b3 33 c4 ♙×b2 34 d5 h4 35 h3 look also good for White.

32 ♖c8 ♙×b2 33 d5 ♙e2 34 ♜e3

Obviously, the position after White's 29th move should be tested in a game or two, but at the moment I think White has the better chances.

B2) 22...♙xe1!**23 ♙xe1 ♙xf4**

24 ♖×c6

Black need not fear 24 gxf4. A CC game A.Bauer–Weissleder, 1995, ended with a draw after 24...♖e8 25 ♖a1 ♕e2 26 ♖a8 ♗g4 27 ♖h1 ♕f3 28 ♘f3 ♗f3.

24...♖e8

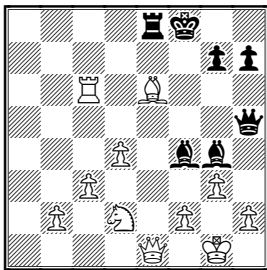
In his annotations, Ivanchuk considered 24...♕×d2 25 ♗×d2 ♕f3 26 ♖c5 ♗f5 27 ♗e1 ♗f7.

Alexey Suetin improved upon this with the text move [4].

25 ♕×d5+ ♗f8 26 ♕e6!

Until now, only 26 ♗xe8+? has been discussed. In my opinion, this move is wrong and leads to advantage for Black: 26...♗xe8 27 gxf4 ♖e2 28 h3 (Suetin analysed 28 ♘f1 ♕h3 29 ♕g2 ♕g2 30 ♖c8 ♗e7 31 ♗g2 ♗g4 and Black wins after ...♗xc8).

28 h3 was proposed by Van der Tak in the *New in Chess Yearbook* [3], but in my opinion, Black can play for a win with 28...♕×h3 29 ♘c4 ♗f1!



With the text move by Andrew Kaniak, White avoids the dangerous intrusion of the black queen after 26 ♗xe8? and intends to play an endgame with four pawns against a piece, having three connected passed pawns. In my opinion, White has the better chances.

26...♕×d2 27 ♗×d2 ♕×e6 28 ♖c5 ♗f7

28...♗f3 29 ♗f4+ and so on would be a transposition. Maybe Black should play 28...♗h3 to avoid the exchange of queens.

It still would not be easy for Black to activate his bishop, however.

The correspondence games Kaniak–Benedik and Kaniak–Claridge both continued with

29 ♗f4 ♗×f4 30 g×f4 ♕h3 31 ♖e5 ♖a8 32 f3 ♖a2 33 ♖b5 ♕d7 34 ♖b7 ♕c6 35 ♖b8+ ♗e7 36 ♗f2 ♗d6

Unfortunately at this point Kaniak retired from the tournament. In my opinion this line is critical for the whole Marshall main line.

Conclusion

With the idea of a counter attack on the queenside, White, with the protagonists Ivanchuk and Quigley, has given new life to the main line of the Marshall Gambit. The move order 18...f5 does not seem to be playable at the moment. If Black tries to avoid these lines with 18...bxa4, he need not fear the theory recommendation 21 c4, but White can again launch a dangerous counter-attack with Ivanchuk's 21 ♖xa6.

This article comes to the conclusion, that White is able to obtain realistic winning chances with correct play. Should this analysis be confirmed with more games, Black had to give up the intended f4–block positions entirely, and look for other ways to maintain the balance.

Fortunately for Black, there are quite a lot of these ideas. The grandmasters' recommendation is the Spassky variation (see [8], which however “manages” to overlook Quigley's 19 axb5! completely). Black could also abandon 17...♖e6 (introduced by Spassky as well) and replace it with the old 17...f5 (see games below) or the new 17...♗h5, which is played by Michael Adams.

Another idea, which is waiting for a test, is advocated by Miodrag Drazic: he wants to put the other rook on e8 with

16...♖fe8, to be able to counter a later White a4 with ...b4 (a6 would then be defended by the a8-♖) and avoiding the counter attack completely [7].

Finally, a similar idea was recently tried by your editor-in-chief in his correspondence game against Quigley: 15...♖a7, which usually transposes to 15...♖fe8.

Further Marshall games

Spanish Marshall (C89)

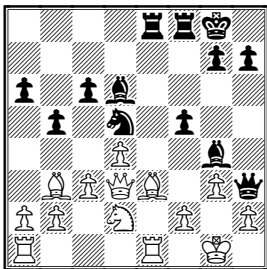
Heikki Arppi (FIN) -

Seppo Lyly (FIN)

Ekblom Memorial 1996-97

(Notes by Arppi, translated by Clas-Erik Johansson)

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♟c6 3 ♟b5 a6 4 ♟a4
 ♟f6 5 0-0 ♟e7 6 ♟e1 b5 7 ♟b3 0-0 8
 c3 d5 9 exd5 ♟xd5 10 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 11
 ♟xe5 c6 12 d4 ♟d6 13 ♟e1 ♟h4 14
 g3 ♟h3 15 ♟e3 ♟g4 16 ♟d3 ♟ae8 17
 ♟d2 f5



18 f4 ♟h8

Or 18...g5 19 ♟f1 ♟h5 20 ♟g2 gxf4 21
 ♟xd5+ cxd5 22 ♟xd5+ ♟g7 23 ♟xf4 ♟xf4
 24 gxf4 ♟h8 25 ♟e5 ♟d8 26 ♟c6 ♟c8 27
 ♟xa6 ♟f3 28 ♟f2 ♟e4 29 ♟xb5 ♟h4+ 30
 ♟e3 ♟h3+ 31 ♟e2 ♟b8 32 ♟c4 ♟xb2 33
 ♟f1 ♟xh2+ 34 ♟f2 ♟xd2+ 35 ♟xd2 ♟xf2+
 36 ♟e2 ♟xf4+ 37 ♟e3 ♟h2+ 38 ♟e2 ♟h6+
 39 ♟e3 ♟b6 40 ♟g5 ♟g8 41 ♟b5 ♟c6 42
 ♟c5 ♟xg5 0-1 J.Fernandez-H.Jongh,
 Marshall thematic 1998-99.

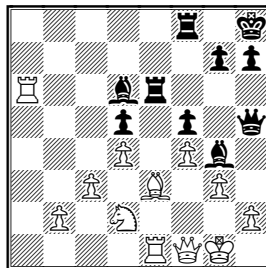
19 ♟xd5 cxd5 20 ♟f1 ♟h5 21 a4

The other main continuation 21 ♟g2 leads to an equal position.

21...♟xa4 22 ♟xa4 ♟e6

22...g5 23 ♟aa1 ♟e6 24 ffg5 ♟fe8 25
 ♟f2 f4 26 gxf4 ♟h3 27 ♟xa6=.

23 ♟xa6



The critical point in this game. White has two pawns but many positional weaknesses (diagonal a6-f1, e3-♟ with “wrong coloured pawns”, and Black’s pair of bishops). Black has many possibilities to fail.

23...♟fe8

a) 23...♟h3? 24 ♟f2 ♟e8 25 ♟f3 h6 26
 ♟e5 ♟c8 27 ♟ea1 ♟e7 28 ♟e2 (28 ♟g6+
 ♟xg6 29 ♟xg6 ♟f6) 28...♟h7 29 ♟xe6
 ♟xe6 30 ♟a6 ♟d6 31 ♟a5 ♟g4 32 ♟c6
 ♟f3 33 c4! ♟c8 34 cxd5 1-0 I. Mitroiu-
 R.A.Hubbard, Romania-England corr
 1960.

b) 23...♟e8 24 ♟f2+- (24 ♟f2?! ♟b5 ⇌
 25 ♟a2 ♟fe8) 24...♟e2? 25 ♟xd6!.

24 ♟f2

24 ♟b5 ♟h6! (24...g5 25 ♟xd5 gxf4 26
 ♟xd6 ♟xe3 27 ♟xe3 fxe3 28 ♟d8 exd2
 29 ♟e5+ ♟g8 30 ♟xe8+ ♟xe8 31 ♟xe8+
 ♟g7 32 ♟a4 d1♟+ 33 ♟xd1 ♟xd1±) 25
 ♟f1 (25 h4 ♟xf4 26 gxf4 ♟xa6 27 ♟xa6
 ♟xh4) 25...♟f3 26 ♟f2 ♟g8=.

24...g5 25 ffg5 ♟xg3=

25...f4 26 gxf4 h6 27 c4 hxg5 28 ♟xd6
 ♟xd6 29 ffg5 ♟h3 30 cxd5 ♟g4+ 31
 ♟g3+-.

26 ♖xg3 ♜xa6 27 ♜f4 ♜ae6 28 ♜e5+

A difficult question was: would it have been better to change the rook first?

28...♜g8 29 ♜f1

With the idea to bring the knight to e3–g2–f4.

29...♜f3 30 ♜e3 ♜e4 31 ♜g2 ♖f3 32 ♖xf3 ♜xf3 33 ♜f4 ♖b6 34 ♖a1!

The rook is on its way to the 7th rank.
34...♖f7 35 ♖f2 ♜e4 36 b4 ♜c6 37 ♜a3 ♜cc8

37...♜ec8?! 38 ♖a7+ ♖f8 39 ♜h5 ♜xc3??
40 ♜g7+ ♖e8 41 ♜f6+ ♖d8 42 ♜d7#.

38 b5 ♖a8 39 ♖b3

39 ♖xa8? ♖xa8 40 b6 ♖a2+ and 41. – Rb2.

39...♖a2+? 40 ♖e3 ♖xh2?? 41 b6 ♖a8
42 b7 ♖a1 43 ♜e2 1–0.

Spanish Marshall (C89)

Jose M. Gonzalez (CUB, 2315) –

Noel Rodriguez (CUB, 2390)

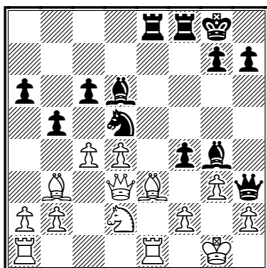
FECAP Marshall thematic 1997–98

(Notes by Rodriguez)

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜b5 a6 4 ♜a4
♜f6 5 0–0 ♜e7 6 ♖e1 b5 7 ♜b3 0–0 8
c3 d5 9 exd5 ♜xd5 10 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 11
♜xe5 c6 12 d4 ♜d6 13 ♖e1 ♖h4 14
g3 ♖h3 15 ♜e3 ♜g4 16 ♖d3 ♜ae8 17
♜d2 f5 18 c4?

In my records about this variation, I don't have this move. If it's a novelty, this game refutes it.

18...f4!–+



19 cxd5 fxd3! 20 dxc6+ ♖h8 21 fxd3 ♜xg3!

A demolition sacrifice to strip the ♖ naked.

22 hxd3 ♖xg3+ 23 ♖h1 ♜f3! 24 ♜f2

The other present cannot be accepted, but the consequences are the same.

24 ♜e4 ♖h3+ 25 ♖g1 ♜g3+ 26 ♜xg3 ♖xg3+ 27 ♖f1 ♜f8+ with mate.

24...♖h3+ 25 ♖g1 ♜ef8 26 ♖e2 ♖h5 0–1.

Because of the threat of ...♖h3.

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