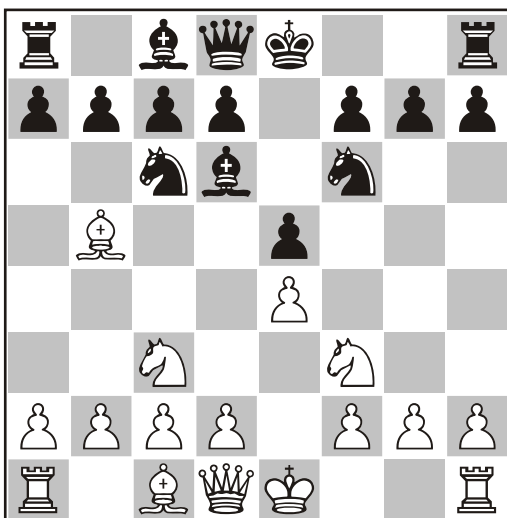


CHAPTER 4

Sokolov's surprise



NIC KEY KP 10.1

4...♙d6: a clever development scheme

It is not so easy for Black to play for a win against the Spanish Four Knights. A not too ambitious White player might use the symmetrical positions arising after 4...♙b4 for immediate peace negotiations. True, Rubinstein's 4...♘d4 often gives rise to very sharp play indeed. However, 5.♘d4 e4 6.e5 dc3 7.ef6 ♖f6 8.dc3 works like a cold shower on any fighting intentions that Black might have.

This SOS chapter presents a perfectly playable alternative in the form of 4...♙d6!?. It is an ideal weapon for those 1...e5 players who also seek to play for a

win as Black. Seen in that light it should come as no surprise that we find Ivan Sokolov behind the black pieces in our main game.

□ **Harmen Jonkman**

■ **Ivan Sokolov**

Leeuwarden ch-NL 2002

1. e4 e5
2. ♘f3 ♘c6
3. ♘c3 ♘f6
4. ♙b5 ♙d6!?

Why obstruct your own d-pawn with this unnatural looking move, thereby inhibit-

ing the development of your light-squared bishop? Let us examine the merits of 4...♗d6:

It develops a piece and counters White's threat of bishop takes c6. Moreover, Black is planning to follow a normal Spanish development scheme: 0-0, ♖e8, ♗f8 and d5. The idea is known from the Archangel Ruy Lopez:

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 b5 6.♗b3 ♗b7 7.d3 ♗d6! This is rather similar to positions mentioned below. Let us follow the game Bologan-Potapov, Moscow 1998, for a bit: 8.a3 0-0 9.♘c3 h6 10.h3, and if Black had now played 10...♗c5 he would have reached a perfect transposition to our main game. By the way, concerning this whole ♗d6 idea... The reader might like to compare this with chapter 7, which presents a defence to 1.b3.

5. d3

This threatens to pin the knight with ♗g5 and therefore tries to show that the bishop is misplaced on d6.

Let us investigate some alternatives:

A) 5.d4 ed4 6.♘d4 ♘d4 7.♖d4 ♗e7. Black is planning ♗e5 at some stage and is definitely OK here.

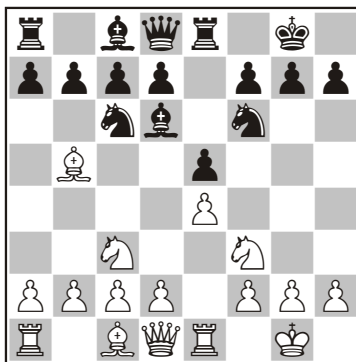
B) 5.♗c6?!, as in Swic-Malaniuk, Polanica Zdroj 2001, must be inaccurate, since after 5...dc6 the bishop is very well placed on d6 in this type of Spanish exchange position.

C) 5.0-0 0-0

C1) 6.d3 h6 7.♘e2 (this is an interesting plan. White repositions his knight Ruy Lopez fashion to g3, from where it will assist in a possible kingside attack. The bishop on d6 obstructs the d-pawn, so

Black has no time to counter this plan with d7-d5) 7...♖e8 8.♘g3 a6 (8...♗f8 planning d5 is a serious alternative. However, after 9.c4! d6 10.h3 ♗d7 11.♖e1 g6 12.♗d2 ♗g7 13.♗c3 ♖e7 14.♗a4 White was slightly better in Gallagher-Boudre, France 2001) 9.♗c6 (with the knight already on g3 this exchange is more promising) 9...dc6 10.b3 ♗e6 (10...♗g4 looks better) 11.♗b2 ♘d7 12.d4 and now instead of 12...ed4 13.♘d4, with a nice advantage, Gallagher-Cooper, English team championship 2001, Black should have played 12...♗g4, with a decent game;

C2) 6.♖e1 ♖e8



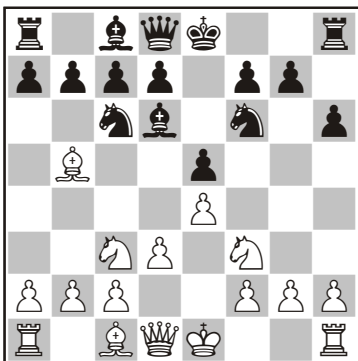
C21) 7.h3 ♘d4 8.♗c4 c6 9.a3 ♗c7 is another useful way of reshuffling the pieces. It is about equal, Bunzmann-Hector, Fürth 2000;

C22) 7.d4 ed4 8.♘d4 ♘d4 9.♖d4 is well met by 9...♗e5, followed by c6, and Black is fine. E.g. 10.♖d3 c6 11.♗a4 a5 12.a3 b5 13.♗b3 ♗a6 14.♖f3 ♖b8 15.g3 c5, and Black had the initiative in Barglowski-Malaniuk, Bydgoszcz 2001. The actual move order in this last game

was 6.d4 ed4 7.♘d4 ♖e8 8.♗e1 ♘d4 9.♙d4 ♙e5, etc.

5. ... a6

So far Black had mainly tried 5...h6. Sokolov's inclusion of 5...a6 6.♙a4 is useful. Let us examine some games with 5...h6, since the main ideas are of course very similar.



A) 6.a3 b6!? (uncommon but not bad) 7.♙c6!? dc6 8.h3 c5 9.♙e3 ♘d7 10.♙d2 ♙b7, and with the centre under firm control Black has a bright future ahead of him, Seibold-Hector, Fürth 2000.

B) 6.0-0 0-0 7.♘e2 a6 8.♙a4 b5 9.♙b3 ♘a5 10.♘g3 ♖e8 11.h3 ♙f8 is Koscielski-Rabiega, Bad Wiessee 2000. Note how Black has once again completed his general plan of castling, ♖e8 and ♙f8 in preparation of d7-d5. The fact that he has played ♙d6 rather than ♙e7 and d7-d6 means that he will eventually have saved a tempo.

C) 6.♘e2 a6 7.♙a4 0-0 8.♘g3 ♖e8 9.c3 ♙f8 shows the typical Ruy Lopez scheme already mentioned above. Black is ready for d5 and has completely equalized. In Nikolenko-Gorbatov, Moscow 1995, a draw was agreed.

D) 6.♙e3 0-0 7.h3 a6 8.♙a4 b5 9.♙b3 ♙b4!? (Black aims to push d5 as quickly as possible) 10.0-0 ♙c3 11.bc3 d5 12.ed5 ♘d5, and things are about equal, Frog-Kholmov, Moscow, Alekhine Memorial 1996.

E) 6.h3 is a tricky waiting move. Black is well-advised to develop his queenside first (a6, b5, ♙b7/♘a5) not falling into 6...0-0?! 7.g4!, with a dangerous attack:

E1) 7...a6, and now instead of 8.♙c6 dc6 9.♘e2 ♘h7 10.♘g3 c5 11.♘f5 ♖e8 12.♙e3 ♙f8 13.♙d2, with an unclear position, Podlesnik-Pavasovic, Ljubljana 2002, White should have simply continued with 8.♙a4, when it is more difficult for Black to open the centre.

E2) 7...♖e8 8.g5 (8.♖g1 is also possible) 8...hg5 9.♙g5 ♘d4 10.♘d5 ♙e7 11.♘e7 ♙e7 12.♘d4 ed4 13.♖g1 c6 14.♙f3 ♙b4 15.♘d1 and now Black should continue 15...♘e4! 16.de4 ♙b5 17.♙f6 gf6. Instead 15...♙b2?! was played in Emelin-Kharlov, Moscow 2002, and here 16.♙f6 g6 17.♙c1 ♘h7 18.♙b2 cb5 19.♙b4 is given as winning for White by Dolmatov and Zviagintsev.

E3) 7...♘d4 is essential according to Dolmatov and Zviagintsev.

Let us go back to Sokolov's 5...a6.

6. ♙a4

After the exchange on c6, the bishop is again well-placed on d6, e.g. 6.♙c6 dc6 7.h3 h6 8.♙e3 ♙e7 9.♙e2 ♙e6 10.a3 b5 11.a4 0-0, Koscielski-Mikhailchishin, Dortmund 2001.

6. ... h6

Preventing ♙g5.

7. h3

A useful waiting move that contains a trap (cf. Emelin-Kharlov above). However, the immediate 0-0 may be stronger. Another alternative is to regroup the knight with ♖c3-e2-g3.

7. ... b5

8. ♖b3 ♖b7

After 8...♖a5 there could follow 9.0-0 ♖b3 (9...♖b7) 10.ab3 ♖b7 11.d4 with a white plus.

9. a3

Another useful waiting move that preserves the bishop (after a possible ♖a5) and tries to lure Black into castling.

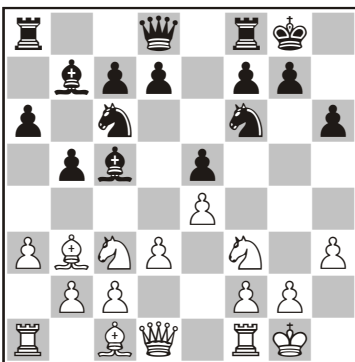
9. ... ♖c5

9...0-0? 10.g4! is what White was hoping for.

10. 0-0

White no longer has any useful waiting moves.

10. ... 0-0



I have mentioned above how this position could also have arisen via the Ruy Lopez Archangel.

11. ♖d5

11.♖e3 is playable of course, but not 11.♖h4?! ♖d4.

11. ... ♖d4!

Not 11...♖d5 12.♖d5, when White is slightly better. Note that 12.ed5 would be met by 12...♖d4.

12. ♖d4

Or 12.♖e5 ♖b3 13.♖f6 (13.cb3 ♖d5 14.ed5 ♖d5) 13...♖f6 14.♖g4 (14.♖d7? loses to 14...♖d6) 14...♖e6 15.cb3, and Black has lovely compensation for the pawn.

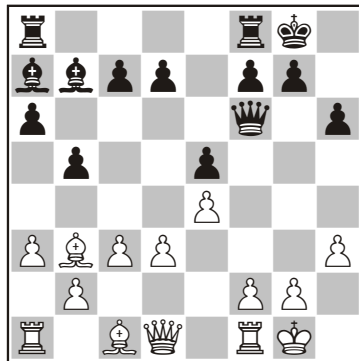
12. ... ♖d4

13. c3 ♖a7

14. ♖f6

Not 14.♖e3 d5.

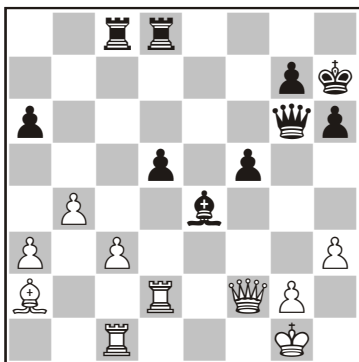
14. ... ♖f6



Black has an equal game. From a theoretical SOS perspective we can be fully satisfied. I will give the rest of the game with light comments.

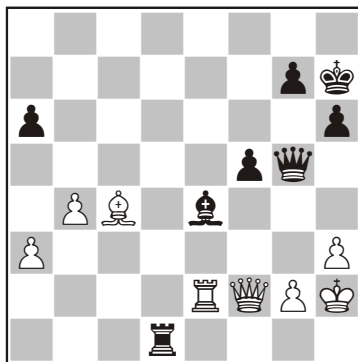
15.♖h1 Preparing f4. The alternatives are: 15.♖e3, and 15.♖g4 ♖ad8 16.♖e3 ♖e3 17.fe3 ♖e7=. **15...c5!?** **16.f4 ef4** **17.♖f4** Or 17.♖f4 ♖e7 18.♖d2=. **17...♖g6** **18.♖d2** 18.♖c2 d5; 18.♖a2 c4. **18...c4!?** Typical of Sokolov's play, he energetically grabs the initiative. **19.dc4 ♖e4** **20.cb5 ♖f5!** Making use of a little tactic to take back on b5 with the

queen. 20...ab5 21.♔d5 would be slightly better for White. 21.♖h2 ♜b5 22.♙a2 d5 Now Black has the more active position. 23.♞ad1 ♞ad8 24.b4?! This creates a weakness on c3. But it is not yet the losing move, of course. Simply 24.♞fe1 was better. 24...♞fe8 25.♞fe1 This threatens c4. After the immediate 25.c4 dc4 26.♞d8 ♞d8 27.♞d8 ♖h7 the rooks are not coordinating. 25...♙b6 26.♙e3 ♙c7 27.♙f4 ♜c6 28.♙c7 ♜c7 29.♖g1 ♖g3 30.♞e3 With accurate calculation White could have forced a draw here: 30.♙d5! ♞d5? (correct is 30...♙d5! 31.♞e8 ♞e8 32.♞d5) 31.♞e4! ♞d2 32.♞e8 ♖h7 33.♞d2 ♜c3 34.♞a2. 30...♜g6 31.♞f2 f5 Threatening f4. 32.♞e2 ♖h7 33.♞ed2 ♞c8 34.♞c1? 34.♙d5 ♞c3 35.♙e4 fe4 36.♞d6 ♞e6 is better for Black, but nevertheless it had to be tried. The game continuation is clearly worse. 34...♞ed8



35.c4? White walks into some rather

nice tactics. 35...dc4! 36.♙c4 Alternatively, 36.♞c4 ♞d2 37.♞d2 ♞d8 38.♞f2 ♞d1 39.♖h2 ♞d6 is immediately winning for Black, while 36.♞d8 ♞d8 37.♙c4 ♞g5! 38.♞e1 ♞d2 39.♞e2 ♞d1 40.♖h2 leads to the following position.



analysis diagram

Here the natural 40...♜c1 fails to 41.♞e4! ♞h1 42.♖g3 ♞g5 43.♞g4 fg4 44.♙d3 ♖g8 45.♙c4, with perpetual check. However, 40...♙g2! 41.♞g2 ♞f4 42.♞g3 ♞h1 just wins. 36...♙g2! Sufficient for the win, even though 36...♞g5! is even stronger, as it wins a full exchange. 37.♞g2 ♞d2 38.♞g6 ♖g6 39.♙f7 ♖f7 40.♞c8 ♞d3 This rook ending is an easy win. 41.♞c7 ♖g8 42.a4 ♞h3 43.a5 ♞b3 44.♞c4 ♖h7 45.♖f2 g5 46.♖e2 f4 47.♖d2 f3 48.♞c7 ♖g6 49.♞c6 ♖h5 50.♞a6 g4 51.♞b6 g3 52.a6 g2 53.♞b5 ♖h4 54.a7 g1 ♞ 55.a8 ♞ ♞e3

White resigned.

RECENT GAMES

□ Paolini Sequera

■ Jonny Hector

Bled ol 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.♙b5
♙d6 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 h6 7.h3 b6!?

Hector is fond of this move. See line A after 5...h6 6.a3 b6!? Seibold-Hector, Fürth 2000.

8.♗e2

In principal this manoeuvre (♗c3-e2-g3) is a good plan. The square f5 is vulnerable and a knight there would give White good attacking chances.

8...♙b7 9.c3 ♖e8 10.♗g3 ♙f8

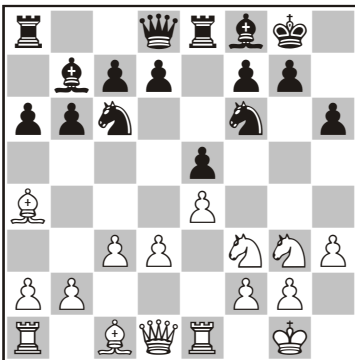
Here we are again. Everything according to our 'Archangel scheme'.

11.♖e1

Planning d4, however Hector gets the central thrust in first.

11...a6 12.♙a4

For, 12.♙c4 would be answered by 12...♗a5.



12...d5

Black has an easy game after the alternative 12...b5 13.♙b3 ♗a5 14.♙c2 and now 14...d5 or 14...c5.

13.♙e2?!

Here 13.ed5 ♙d5 14.c4 is a better try.

13...b5 14.♙c2 ♙d7 15.♗h4 g6 16.♙f3
♗h7

16...♙g7? 17.♙h6.

17.ed5 ♗a5 18.♗e4 ♙d5

Black has a slight advantage.

19.♙g3 ♙g7 20.♗f3 ♗b7 21.♗ed2
♗d6 22.♗h2

White lacks space meaning that his pieces have no good squares.

22...♙c6 23.♗hf1 ♗f5 24.♙h2

A perfect illustration of the previous point. This is no way to treat a lady!

24...♖ad8 25.♗e3 ♗e3 26.fe3 e4 27.d4

This gives Black a big positional advantage. However, after 27.♗e4 ♙e4 28.de4 Black has – among others – 28...♙c3 29.♖e2 ♙e5.

27...♙f8

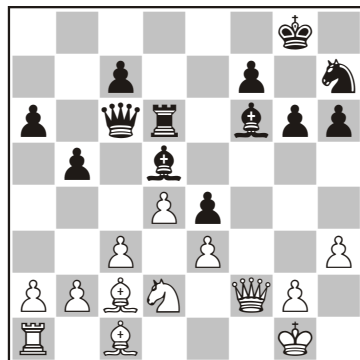
Ready to harrass the queen.

28.♙g3 ♙d6 29.♙f2 ♖e6 30.♖f1 ♖f6

31.♙h4 ♙e7 32.♖f6

32.♙h6? ♖f1 33.♗f1 ♙g5 loses the queen.

32...♙f6 33.♙f2 ♖d6



Having exchanged one pair of rooks

Black directs another one along the sixth rank. The undeveloped pieces on the queenside will be duly missed in the defence.

34. ♖f1 ♕e7 35. ♖d2 ♖f6 36. ♖e1 ♖e6
 Attacking a2 and regrouping his pieces.
37. b3 ♖d6 38. ♖e2 c5 39. ♖d1 ♖c7
40. ♖c1 c4

Gaining even more space.

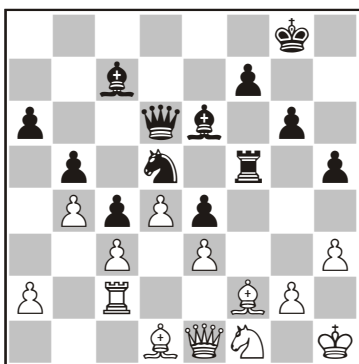
41. b4 ♖d6 42. ♖e1 ♖f5 43. ♖c2

Not **43. ♖g3? ♖f1**.

43... ♖e6

Changing the piece that blocks the d4 pawn.

44. ♖f2 ♖f6 45. ♖h1 ♖d5 46. ♖e1 h5



Cramping White still further. White's next is a desperate attempt to break out.

47. g4? hg4 48. hg4 ♖f6 49. ♖g1

49. ♖h4? ♖f1 50. ♖f1 ♖e3--+.

49... g5

Blocking the intrepid g4-pawn.

50. ♖f2 ♖d7

Winning g4 and the game.

51. ♖g2 ♖h6

Here **51... ♖c3** would have won faster.

52. ♖h2 ♖h3 53. ♖g1 ♖h2 54. ♖h2 ♖g4

55. ♖h3 ♖h3 56. ♖g3 ♖e6 57. ♖c2 f5

58. ♖d1 f4 59. ef4 g4 60. ♖h2 ♖f5

60... fg3 61. ♖g3 ♖f8 62. ♖h3 ♖h3

63. ♖h3 ♖c3 also wins.

61. ♖h5 ♖e7 62. ♖f2 ♖g5 63. ♖h1 ♖g4

64. ♖g4 ♖g4 65. ♖g2 ♖g2 66. ♖g2 ♖f7

White resigned.

□ **Bogdan Podlesnik**

■ **Dusko Pavasovic**

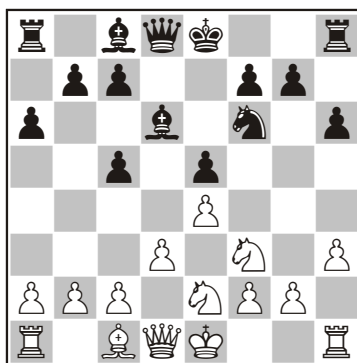
Dobrna 2002

1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖f6 3. ♖c3 ♖c6 4. ♖b5

♖d6 5. d3 h6 6. h3 a6

6... 0-0?! 7. g4 a6 was a previous game between these two players (Ljubljana 2002). See E1 in the comments under **5... a6**.

7. ♖c6 dc6 8. ♖e2 c5



In general Black has easy play in such a position.

9. b3 ♖e6 10. ♖b2 ♖d7 11. g4 h5 12. g5

h4 13. ♖d2 ♖e7 14. ♖c3 ♖f8 15. ♖d5

♖d5 16. ed5 ♖g6 17. ♖e3 0-0-0 18. 0-0-0

f5!

Black is better.

19. ♖de1? e4!--+ 20. ♖d2 ♖f4 21. ♖e2

♖d5 22. f3 e3 23. ♖b1 ♖g3 24. ♖e3 ♖e3

25. ♖e3 ♖f4 26. ♖d2 ♖e8 27. ♖e1 ♖d7

28. ♖c3 ♗g5 29. ♘d1 ♜de7 30. ♝g1 ♖e3
 31. ♘e3 ♜e3 32. ♝g6 ♜f3
 White resigned.

□ Victor Vehi Bach

■ Miguel Rada Equiza

Pamplona 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♗f6 4.♖b5
 ♖d6 5.d3 a6 6.♖c6 dc6 7.♗e2 h6
 8.♘g3 ♗g4
 8...♖e6
 9.h3 ♖e6 10.d4

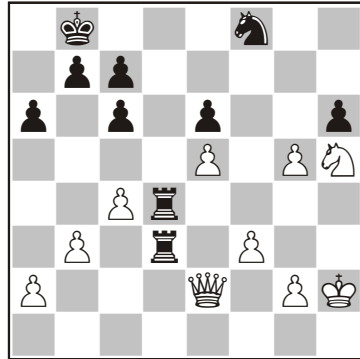
Otherwise Black plays c5 with a good position.

10...ed4 11.e5 ♖b4 12.♖d2 ♖d2
 13.♜d2 ♗h7 14.♗d4 ♜d5! 15.♜e3!?
 0-0-0

15...♜g2 16.♗e6 fe6 17.0-0-0 0-0 18.f4
 gives dangerous compensation.

16.♗e6 fe6 17.0-0 ♖b8 18.♗h5 g5
 19.b3 ♗f8 20.c4 ♜d4 21.♝ad1?!
 21.♜d4 ♝d4 22.♝ad1
 21...♜d1 22.♝d1 ♝d1 23.♖h2 ♗d7

24.f3 ♝d8 25.♗g3 ♗f8 26.♗h5 ♝1d2
 27.h4 ♝8d4
 Stronger is 27...♝8d3!
 28.hg5 ♝2d3 29.♜e2



29...♝d2

29...hg5! and Black is better, but Black was obviously satisfied with a draw versus his higher-rated opponent.

30.♜e3 ♝2d3 31.♜e2 ♝d2 32.♜e3
 ♝2d3
 Draw.