

1 e4 c5
 2 Nf3 d6
 3 d4 cxd4
 4 Nxd4 Nf6
 5 Nc3 g6
 6 Be3 Bg7
 7 Be2 Nc6
 8 O-O O-O
 9 Qd2

I played this quiet but very solid variation twice in this tournament.

Dr Peli is well known as an attacking player, who is very much at home in the sort of complex tactical lines that arise from the Yugoslav attack (7 f3 O-O 8 Qd2 Nc6 9 Bc4). I was hoping that this positional line would be less to his liking.

9 ... Ng4
 10 Bxg4 Bxg4
 11 Nd5 Bd7

11... e6 would send the knight back to c3, but would block the retreat of the bishop at g4.

12 c4 Ne5
 13 b3 Ng4

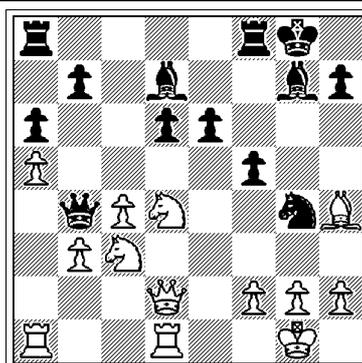
A suggestion of Botvinnik.

In the same tournament Guy West of Australia played 13 ... e6 instead, and equalised after 14 Nc3 Qa5 15 h3 a6 16 a3 b5 (better than 16 ... f5 17 f4 Nf7 18 b4 Qc7 19 exf5 gxf5 20 Rac1 Rac8 21 Nce2! intending 22 Ng3 and 23 Nh5 Read v Herbrechtsmeier, Great Britain v West Germany Board 1 1985/6) 17 f4 Nc6 18 b4 Qc7 19 cxb5 Nxd4 20 Bxd4 Bxd4+ 21 Qxd4 axb5 22 Rfd1 Rfc8 23 Rac1 Qa7!

14 Bg5 f6
 15 Bh4 a6
 16 a4 e6
 17 Nc3 Qb6?!

The beginning of a plan which is too ambitious. Black is hoping to combine his bishop on g7 with his queen to create play on the a1-h8 diagonal.

18 a5! Qb4
 19 Rfd1! f5
 20 exf5 gxf5



(position after 20 ... gxf5)

The crucial point of the game. At first sight it appears that Black, with the two bishops, his central pawns and pressure on the long a1-h8 diagonal, is doing well. However the subtle point of White's 18th and 19th moves is that after ...

21 Na4!

... Black is forced to swap queens, and to give up one of his bishops.

21 ... Qxd2
 22 Rxd2 Bxa4
 23 Rxa4

Now, as a consequence of Black's premature attack, his pieces are uncoordinated (the knight on g4 looks particularly lonesome!), and his central pawns come under heavy fire.

23 ... Rae8
 24 Ne2 d5
 25 cxd5 exd5
 26 h3 Nf6
 27 Bxf6 Bxf6
 28 Kf1

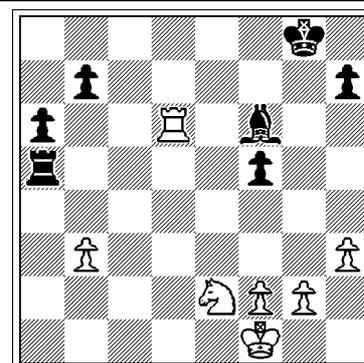
Black must now lose a pawn.

28 ... Re5
 29 Rad4 Rc8!

The move which gives Black the best counter chances. White can still obtain a won endgame, but he has to find a whole series of only moves.

Instead 29 ... Rxe2 is worse since 30 Kxe2 Bxd4 31 Rxd4 Rd8 32 Rf4 and if 32 ... Rf8 then 33 Kd3 leaves Black with a passive position to go with his soon-to-be pawn minus.

30 Rxd5 Rc5
 31 Rxe5 Rxe5
 32 Rd6 Rxa5



(position after 32 ... Rxa5)

33 g3!

White had to avoid 33 Rxf6? Ra1+ 34 Nc1 Rxc1+ 35 Ke2 Rc2+ 36 Ke1 Rb2! (safer than 36 ... Rc5 37 Rb6 Re5+! 38 Kf1! Re7 39 g3 when White's king is going to be very active) 37 Rb6 Kg7! (the freedom of the king is worth a pawn) 38 Rxb7+ Kg6 with a probable draw.

After the quiet text move, Black has no way of retaining material equality. If 33 ... Bg7 then 34 Rd8+ Bf8 35 Nd4 Re5 36 Kg2 and the king will advance to f4.

33 ... Be7
 34 Rd7 Bc5
 35 Rxb7 Ra1+
 36 Kg2 Rb1

Now the future of White's b-pawn appears to be bleak. Black intends to play 37 ... a5 followed by 38 ... Bb4 to block the view of White's rook. However, White has a neat tactic up his sleeve which keeps the position under control.

37 Nf4 a5
 38 Ne6 Bb4
 39 Rg7+! Kh8
 40 Rd7

This is the point! White threatens Rd8 mate. Black must expend a tempo avoiding this, and White will then re-locate his rook to defend the b-pawn horizontally.

40 ... Kg8
 41 Rd3 Kf7
 42 Nd4

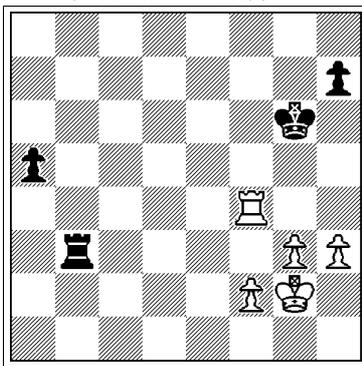
Now a further point of White's rook manoeuvre becomes evident. The rook can combine with the knight in an attack on the f-pawn.

42 ... f4
 43 Rf3

At this point, it is necessary for both sides to decide which type of

ending game they are aiming for. It is well known that the ending of rook plus f and h-pawns versus rook can often be drawn. However rook plus f,g and h-pawns versus rook plus h and a-pawns is won for the stronger side, subject to him having the more active rook and king. This explains moves 42 to 46 for both sides.

43 ... Bd6
 44 Ne2 Kg6
 45 Nxf4+ Bxf4
 46 Rxf4! Rxb3



(position after 46 ... Rxb3)

White is now faced with a critical decision. Does he put his rook behind the passed a-pawn by 47 Rf8 and 48 Ra8? or does he blockade the pawn by 47 Ra4, forcing 47 ... Rb5?

One of the basic principles of rook and pawn endings is that rooks belong behind passed pawns so let us look at 47 Rf8 a4 48 Ra8 Ra3 first.

Clearly Black will continue with ... Ra1, ... a3, and ... a2 regardless of what White does. This will:

- a) tie White's rook to the a-file, and
- b) force White to keep his king hidden in front of his pawns (ie the king is safe on f3 if White has his pawn on f2, but 1 Ke3 loses to 1 ... Re1+ and 2 ... a1=Q).

Black can also play ... h5 to which White will play g4 at some point, and meet ... hxg4 with hxg4.

Therefore we must examine the following position :

White : R on a8, K on g3, pawns on f3 and g4.

Black : R on a1, K on g6, pawn on a2.

1 Kf4 (not 1 Kh4?? Rh1+) 1 ... Kg7 2 g5 Kf7 and White can make no further headway as 3 Kf5 Rf1! 4 Ra7+ Kg8 5 Rxa2 Rxf3+ 6 Kg6 Rf8 7 Ra7 Rb8 is a well-known theoretical draw.

It must be admitted that the same position with a pawn on f2 instead of f3 is a win after 1 Kf4 Kg7 2 Kf5 as 2 ...

Rf1 now loses to 3 Rxa2 covering the f-pawn.

But the f-pawn is White's passed pawn, and he would prefer to be able to move it in the event of Black rushing his king to help his a-pawn.

As will be seen, it is easier to play ...

47 Ra4

In order to stop Black's rook from getting behind White's passed pawns.

47 ... Rb5
 48 g4 Kf6
 49 Kg3 Ke6
 50 f4 Kd6
 51 f5 h5
 52 Kh4 hxg4
 53 hxg4 Ke7

The advance of the f-pawn brings Black's king back to his kingside.

The rest is easy provided that White doesn't walk into a rook check on b4 that forces an exchange of rooks when his king is outside of the a-pawn's queening square.

54 Kg5 Kf7
 55 Kf4 Kg7
 56 g5 Rc5
 57 Kg4 Rb5
 58 Ra3

Intending 59 Rc3 then 60 Rc7+

58 ... Rb4+
 59 Kh5 a4
 60 Rc3 Rb7
 61 f6+ Kf7
 62 Rc6! Rb8
 63 g6+ Ke8
 64 Rc7 a3
 65 g7 Rb5+
 66 Kg6 Resigns