

Exeter Chess Club: Bishops: good, bad and both.

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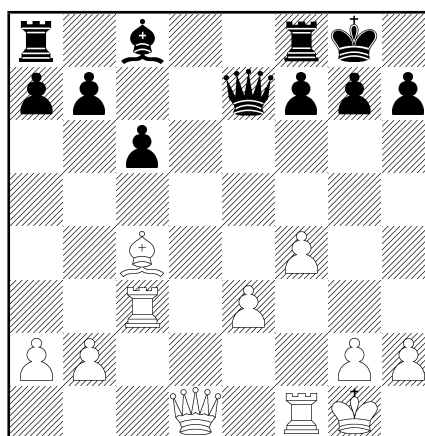
Chapter 1

Good and bad bishops

1.1 Good bishops: active bishop used for attack

1.1.1 Euwe - Thomas, 1934

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♞f6 4. ♕g5 ♙e7
5. e3 O-O 6. ♗f3 ♞bd7 7. ♖c1 c6 8. ♙d3
d×c4 9. ♙×c4 ♞d5 10. ♙×e7 ♚×e7 11.
O-O ♞×c3 12. ♗×c3

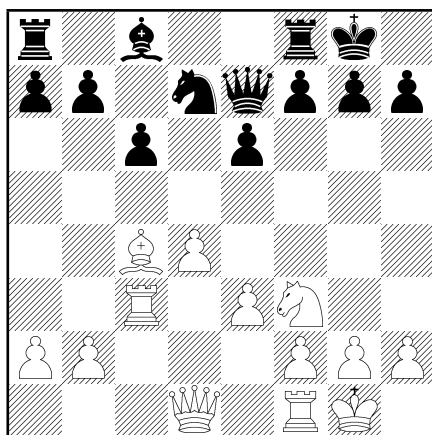


White has the better bishop, currently pointed at Black's King's side, but this is only a temporary advantage. Left alone, Black can play ...Be6 or move the b-pawn and play ...Bb7. White's only hope of a win is to keep Black on the hop.

16. f5

Stops ...Be6 well enough, but Euwe has further plans for this pawn - namely, to run it to f6, disrupting the K-side and using the good bishop for attack.

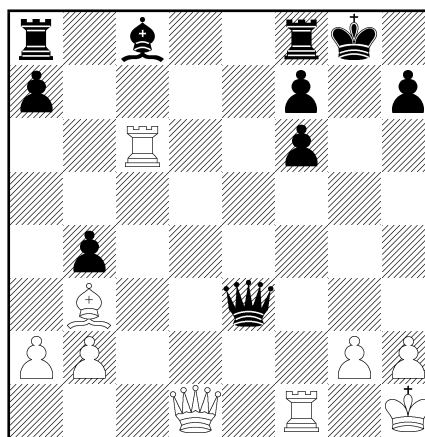
16. ..., b5 17. ♙b3 b4 18. f6! g×f6 19. ♗×c6 ♚×e3+ 20. ♙h1



This was the main continuation from this opening, although it is now considered pretty played out. Black has a bad bishop on c8, so...

12. ..., e5 13. d×e5 ♞×e5 14. ♞×e5 ♚×e5
15. f4

Black has a choice of several queen moves. In the first game we examine what happened after 15. ..., ♚e7 [next diagram]



20. ..., ♖b7 Euwe and Kramer give the alternatives:

[20. ..., ♖e6 21. ♗×e6 ♜×e6 22. ♖g4+ ♖g5 [22. ..., ♗h8 23. ♖c7] 23. ♖×e6+ ♗h8 24. ♖×f6 ♖g8 [24. ..., ♖fe8 25. ♖f7] 25. ♖f2 winning a pawn]

[20. ..., f5 21. ♖h5 with strong attack]

21. ♖c×f6 ♖e4 22. ♖d2 ♗h8

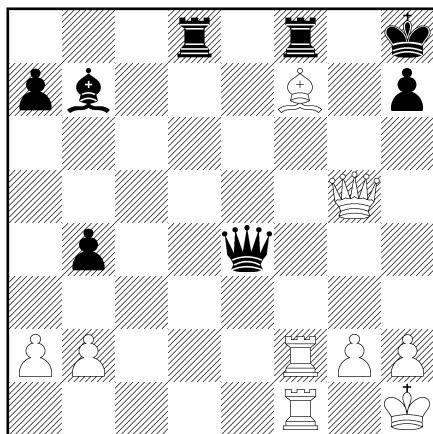
[Or 22. ..., ♖ad8 23. ♖g5+ ♗h8 24. ♖×f7]

23. ♗×f7 ♖ac8

[Much better was 23. ..., ♖ad8 with good drawing chances, despite White's pressure e.g. 24. ♖g5 [Rg8 25. ♗×g8 ♖×g8 26. ♖f8 ♖×g2+ =, or 24. ♖f2 ♖e7 25. ♗b3 ♖×f6 26. ♖×f6+ ♖×f6 27. ♖×f6 ♗d5 =]

24. R 6f2 ♖cd8 [24. ..., ♖g4]

25. ♖g5 (NEXT DIAGRAM)



25. ..., ♖d6

[Not 25. ..., ♖d4 26. ♗d5 ♖g7 [or 26. ..., ♖×f2 27. ♖×d8+ ♗g7 28. ♖g5+ ♗f8 29. ♖g8+ ♗e7 30. ♖e1+ ♗d6 31. ♗×b7] 27. ♖×f8+ ♖×f8 28. ♖×f8+ ♖×f8 29. ♖e5+ ♖g7 30. ♖e8+]

26. ♗d5! 1-0

26. ..., ♖×f2 27. ♖g8#

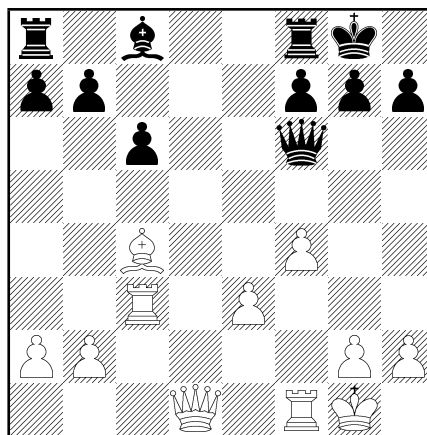
The QGD is not a win for White; here Black solves the problem of the Bc8.

1.1.2 Stahlberg-Trifunovich, 1951

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♗f6 4. ♗g5 ♗e7 5. e3 O-O 6. ♗f3 ♗bd7 7. ♖c1 c6 8. ♗d3 d×c4 9. ♗×c4 ♗d5 10. ♗×e7 ♖×e7 11. O-O ♗×c3 12. ♖×c3 e5 13. d×e5 ♗×e5 14.

♗×e5 ♖×e5 15. f4

Here Black tried an alternative Q move 15. ..., ♖f6, stopping the f5-f6 rush.



16. f5 a5 17. a4

[17. a3 b5 18. ♗a2 b4 19. ♖c5 ♗a6 20. ♖e1 ♗b5, with the Black bishop having good play]

17. ..., ♖b8 18. ♖c2 ♗d7

[Not 18. ..., b5 19. a×b5 c×b5 20. ♗×b5 ♖×b5 21. ♖×c8]

19. ♖d3 ♖bd8 20. ♖d2 b5

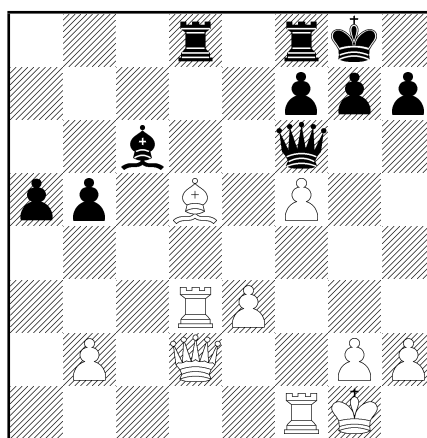
[Not 20. ..., ♗c8 21. ♖×a5 ♖×d3 22. ♗×d3 ♖×b2 23. f6]

21. a×b5 Alternatives are no better:

[21. ♖d6 ♗c8]

[21. ♗×b5 c×b5 22. ♖×d7 ♖×d7 23. ♖×d7 ♖×b2 24. ♖×b5 ♖×b5 25. a×b5 ♖b8 "with meagre chances for White" - Euwe]

21. ..., c×b5 22. ♗d5 ♗c6



With the full entry of this piece into the game, Black has at least equal chances

23. e4

[23. ♖×c6 ♜×d3 24. ♞×d3 ♞×c6 may even be better for Black, since Black's Queen-side majority look like the most important feature of the game]

23. ... , ♖×d5 24. e×d5 ♞b6+ 25. ♞f2 ♞×f2+ 26. ♔×f2 draw agreed

21. ♗d5 ♖×d5 22. e×d5 ♖g5 (exchanging the off White's best minor piece)

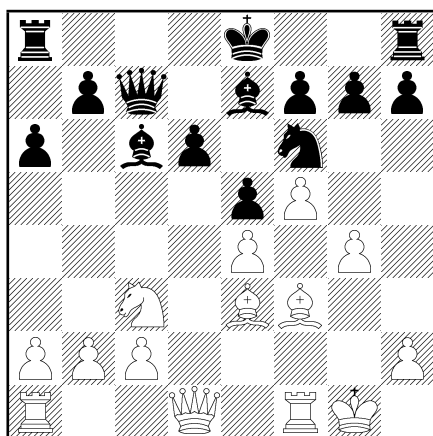
23. ♜fe1 ♞e7 24. ♖e4 ♖×c1 25. ♜×c1 h5 26. ♞g3 h×g4 27. ♞×g4 ♞f6 28. ♖d3 ♜h4 29. ♞g3 ♗b6 30. ♜e4

(30. ♖e4 ♜c4) ;

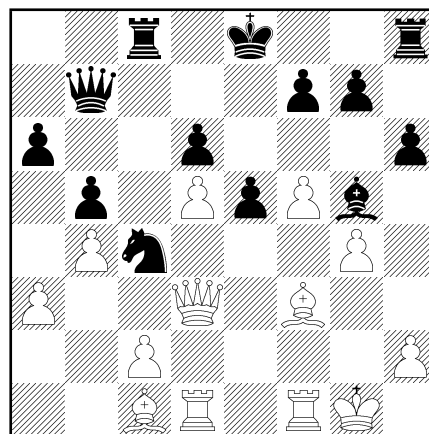
1.2 Bad bishops

Bs move on squares of only one colour. A bishop hemmed in by its own pawns on the same colour squares is called a *bad bishop*. It is sometimes tempting to put pawns on the same colour squares as the bishop, particularly in the ending, with the hope that the bishop will defend them. Well, unfortunately, the bishop will probably be so blocked by the pawns that it can hardly defend itself. Depending on what other pieces there are on the board, the opponent's king will probably be able to slip in between the pawns, and the bishop won't be able to stop it. You want your pawns on one colour square, and the bishop on the other, in the middle game and in the ending. (And if you've got two bishops in the middle game, you generally want your pawns right out of the way.) So be careful where you put your pawns, and don't get your bishops stuck one side or the other of a chain of pawns.

[Event "bad bishops"][Site "-"] [Date "1956.??.?"] [Round "?"] [White "bar-den"] [Black "rossolimo"] [Result "1-0"]
 1. e4 c5 2. ♗f3 d6 3. d4 c×d4 4. ♗×d4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 a6 6. f4 e6 7. ♖e2 ♞c7 8. O-O ♗c6 9. ♖e3 ♖d7 10. g4 ♗×d4 11. ♖×d4 ♖c6 12. ♖f3 e5 13. ♖e3 ♖e7 14. f5 ?!



14. ... , h6 15. ♞d2 b5 16. ♜ad1 ♜c8 17. a3 ♞b7 18. ♞d3 ♗d7 ! 19. b4 ♗b6 20. ♖c1 ♗c4



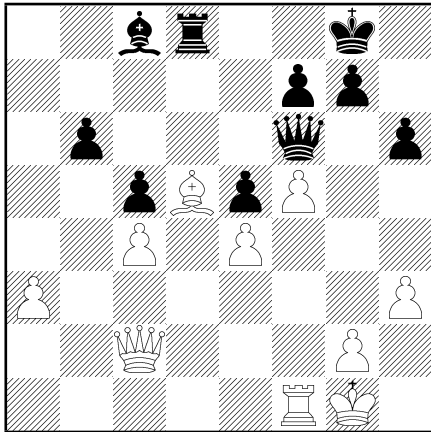
30. ... , ♜h5 31. ♜g4 ♗×d5 32. ♜×g7 ♗f4 33. ♜g8+ ♔d7 34. ♜×c8 ♔×c8 35. ♞g8+ ♔b7 ! 36. ♔h1 ♞h6 37. ♞g1 ♗×d3 38. c×d3 ♜×h2+ 1-0

(38. ... , ♜×h2+ 39. ♞×h2 ♞×c1+ 40. ♔g2 ♞d2+ 41. ♔g1 ♞×h2+ 42. ♔×h2 ♔c6)

Please don't interpret this too rigidly: a bishop is bad only if it lacks scope.

1.3 Bad bishop?

Botvinnik-Kann, 1939 1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♖b4 4. ♗f3 c5 5. a3 ♖×c3+ 6. b×c3 ♞a5 7. ♖d2 ♗e4 8. ♞c2 ♗×d2 9. ♗×d2 d6 10. e3 e5 11. d×e5 d×e5 12. ♖d3 h6 13. O-O O-O 14. f4 ♗d7 15. f5 ♗f6 16. ♗e4 ♞d8 17. ♗×f6+ ♞×f6 18. ♖e4 ♜b8 19. ♜ad1 b6 20. h3 ♖a6 21. ♖d5 b5 22. c×b5 ♜×b5 23. c4 ♜b6 24. ♜b1 ♜d8 25. ♜×b6 a×b6 26. e4 ♖c8



White's theoretically 'bad' bishop dominates the board and gives White a winning game. It is *Black's* bishop that is stuck behind White's pawns on white squares!

27. ♖a4 ♗d7 28. ♖a7 ♗e8 29. ♖b1 ♖d6
 30. a4 ♜h7 31. a5 b×a5 32. ♖×a5 ♖a6 33.
 ♖×c5 ♖a2 34. ♖e3 ♖a6 35. ♖b8 ♖a4 36.
 ♜h2 ♖a3 37. ♖c5 ♖a2 38. ♖a8 ♖×a8 39.
 ♗×a8 ♖×a8 40. ♖×e5 ♗c6 41. ♖c7 1-0

Chapter 2

The two bishops

"Deux fous gagnent toujours, mais trois fous, non!"
– Alexander ALEKHINE, on the advantage of the Two Bishops at amateur level

The bishop is a longer-range piece than the knight. This advantage is sometimes called the minor exchange, for, all else being equal, the bishop will be a better piece than the knight. Two bishops, provided they can make use of their better range and aren't blocked by pawns, are rather better than two knights or a knight and a bishop, particularly in fully open positions. (Think how easy it is to mate with the two bishops. Have you ever tried to mate with two knights?)

Capablanca advised rehearsing the mate with the two Bishops, not because it was particularly likely to occur in practice, but to experience directly the power of two Bishops cooperating in an open position.

So in OPEN positions, the two bishops are boss.

In CLOSED positions, the knights may be better.

In SEMI-OPEN positions. well...

The side with the two bishops must not let the knight(s) settle on any outposts, and can create trouble on both sides of the board at once when the poor knights will be hard-put to keep up. It's generally though that the two bishops are good enough to win. Paulsen made use of this in the middle 1800s, but the technique was perfected and publicised by Steinitz.

Let's have a look at these in turn.

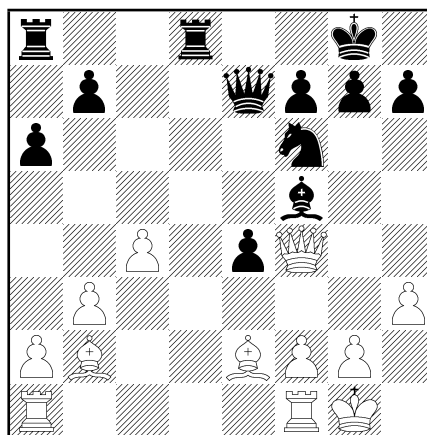
2.1 Bishops: two bishops in ending

This was my introduction to the power of the two bishops.

Ditmas,H - Regis,D (March, 1979) 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. $\text{N}\text{d}2$ c5 4. $\text{e}\times\text{d}5$ $\text{W}\times\text{d}5$ 5. $\text{N}\text{gf}3$ $\text{c}\times\text{d}4$ 6. $\text{Q}\text{c}4$ $\text{W}\text{d}6$ 7. O-O $\text{N}\text{c}6$ 8. $\text{N}\text{b}3$ $\text{N}\text{f}6$ 9. $\text{N}\text{b}\times\text{d}4$ $\text{N}\times\text{d}4$ 10. $\text{N}\times\text{d}4$ a6 11. b3 $\text{W}\text{c}7$ 12. $\text{Q}\text{b}2$ $\text{Q}\text{d}6$ 13. h3 O-O 14. $\text{Q}\text{d}3$ e5 15. $\text{N}\text{f}5$ e4 16. $\text{N}\times\text{d}6$

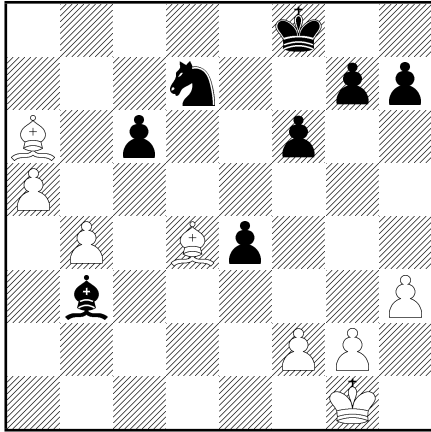
White sensibly takes the two bishops.

16. ..., $\text{W}\times\text{d}6$ 17. $\text{Q}\text{e}2$ $\text{W}\text{e}7$ 18. c4 $\text{W}\text{d}8$ 19. $\text{W}\text{c}1$ $\text{Q}\text{f}5$ 20. $\text{W}\text{f}4$



Black must make a concession - in the event, I buried the bishop on g6. White's two bishops and queen's side majority win the game.

20. ..., $\text{Q}\text{g}6$ 21. $\text{W}\text{fd}1$ $\text{W}\times\text{d}1+$ 22. $\text{W}\times\text{d}1$ $\text{W}\text{d}8$ 23. $\text{W}\text{e}5$ $\text{W}\text{e}8$ 24. $\text{W}\times\text{e}7$ $\text{W}\times\text{e}7$ 25. b4 $\text{W}\text{d}7$ 26. $\text{W}\times\text{d}7$ $\text{N}\times\text{d}7$ 27. c5 $\text{Q}\text{f}8$ 28. c6 $\text{b}\times\text{c}6$ 29. $\text{Q}\times\text{a}6$ f6 30. $\text{Q}\text{d}4$ $\text{Q}\text{f}7$ 31. a4 $\text{Q}\text{b}3$ 32. a5



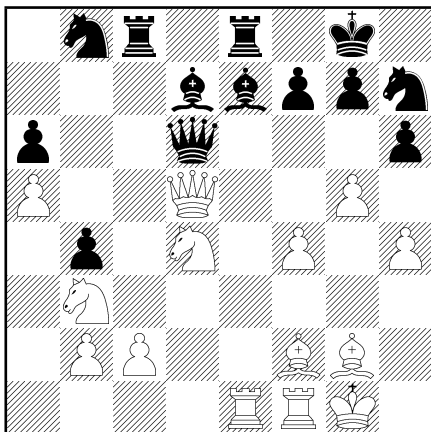
1-0

It's worth dwelling on this for a moment. Material is equal, and Black can think about getting his own majority moving, but its all too late. The two bishops cover all the key squares, and Black can hardly stop the advance of the a-pawn.

2.2 Bishops: two bishops in open middlegame

This is the other easy case: the bishops usually chop up the opposition.

Nunn - Tal (Wijk Ann Zee, 1982) 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 a6 6. g3 Nc7 7. Bg2 Nf6 8. O-O h6 9. Nb3 g7 10. a4 d6 11. f4 O-O 12. g4 g7 13. h4 b5 14. g5 Nh7 15. g7 e3 b4 16. Nc2 d5 17. exd5 exd5 18. Nxd5 Nac8 19. a5 Nb8 20. Ned4 g4 21. Nae1 Nfd8 22. Nde4 Nf8 23. f2 g7 24. Nf5 Nf6



Here is an instructive moment from the

Nunn/Griffiths book. White has many advantages, including an extra pawn.

25. Nf5 !

“White is still in no hurry to exchange queens: he permits his opponent the option of 25. ..., g7 26 Nxf5 instead of the game continuation. EITHER WAY HIS BISHOP-PAIR WILL DOMINATE THE BOARD. But he is also returning the extra pawn: possibly as instructive a piece of Grandmaster thinking as anything that has gone previously. The point is not that the variations are difficult to calculate, but that Nunn is thinking boldly; dynamically. Time and again we see how his thinking is the reverse of a weaker player. It is not, ‘If I play Nf5 I shall lose a pawn; I will only do that as a last resort’; but rather, ‘I can simplify the position by Nf5 and continue to generate powerful threats; it would be a miracle if Black could get away with ... Rxc2 ”

25. ..., Nxd5 26. Nxe7+ Nxe7 27. g7 Nxd5 Nxe1 28. Nxe1 Nxc2 29. Nf7

It's all starting to clear up nicely.

29. ..., g7 30. g7 Nf8 31. Nc7 hxc7 32. g7 1-0

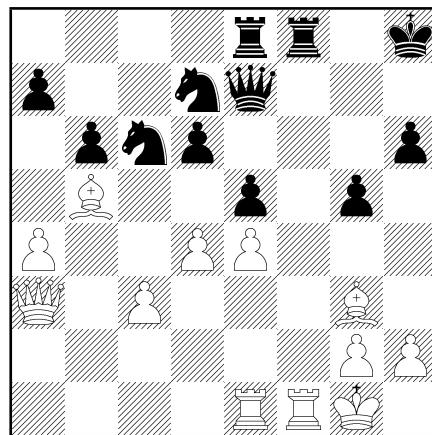
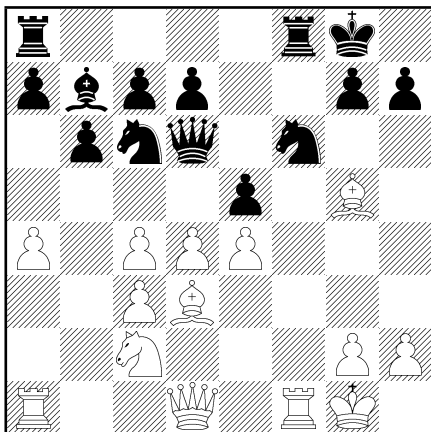
2.3 Bishops: two bishops in a semi-open or closed middlegame

This is not so easy. The side with the two bishops must open lines, but if it were easily possible, the Nimzo-Indian would not be a viable defence..

Here are two fine examples where the Bishops win, one more open, one more closed.

2.3.1 Bronstein D - Golombek H (Moscow) [E43] 1956

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 g7 4. Nf3 b6 5. e3 g7 6. g3 Nc6 7. O-O g7 8. bxc3 O-O 9. Nc1 f5 10. f3 Nf6 11. a4 Nc6 12. e4 fxe4 13. fxe4 e5 14. g5 Nf7 15. Nc2 Nf6



Black is doing his best to get White to play d4-d5, when as well gaining the square c5, Black would expect the blocked pawn formation to favour the Knights. White finds an interesting way of resisting the encouragement.

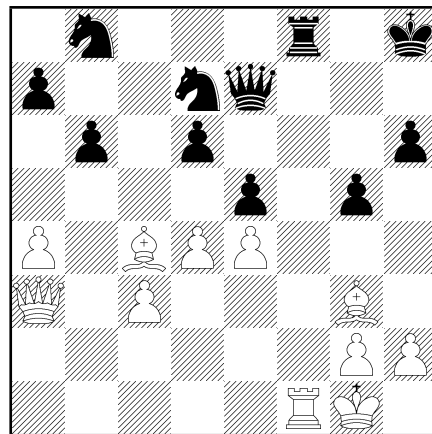
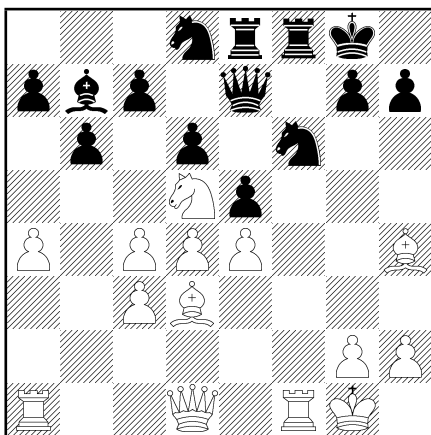
16. ♖h4 ♜ae8 17. ♔g3 ♚e7 18. ♞e3 d6 [18. ... , e×d4 19. ♞f5] 19. ♖h4 ♞d8 20. ♞d5

After the pins on the King's-side have finally been disposed of, White starts up in the same trade on the Queen's-side!

27. ... , ♜×f1+ 28. ♜×f1 ♞cb8

this decentralising move doesn't look right

29. ♔c4 ♜f8



This leap into the (still) empty d5 point provokes Black into giving up the remaining Bishop. It should not be supposed that Golombek was unaware of the dangers in this, but considered it relatively best, given the pressure on f6. 20. ... , ♔×d5 21. c×d5 c6 22. ♚b3 ♞h8 23. ♜ae1 h6 24. ♚a3 g5 25. ♔g3 ♞d7 26. d×c6 ♞×c6 27. ♔b5

Black's position now falls apart

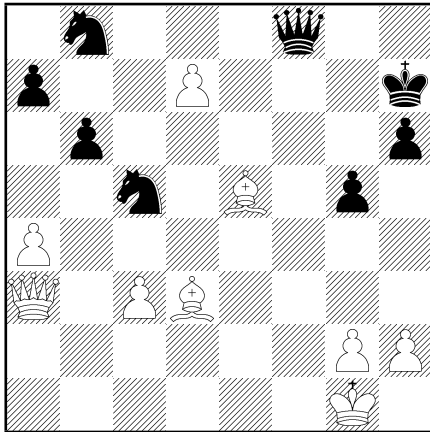
30. ♜×f8+ ♚×f8 31. d×e5 ♞c5 32. e×d6 ♞×e4

[Have the Knights finally secured a defence?]

33. d7 ! 33. ... , ♞c5

[33. ... , ♚×a3 34. d8=♚+ ♞g7 35. ♚g8+ ♞f6 36. ♚f7#]

34. ♔e5+ ♞h7 35. ♔d3+



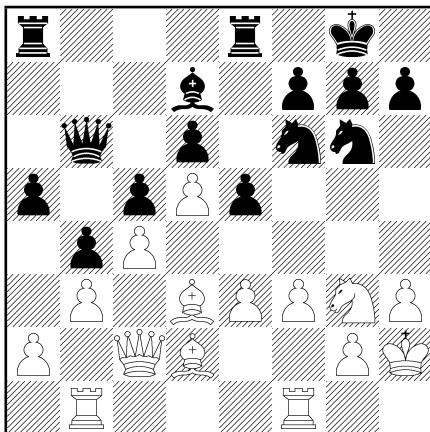
Golombek comments that these weren't mere Bishops, but Archbishops! 1-0

2.3.2 Rubinstein - Nimzovitch (Berlin, 1928)

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♙b4 4. ♖c2 d6 5. e3 c5 6. ♙d3 ♗c6 7. ♗ge2 e5 8. d5 ♙×c3+

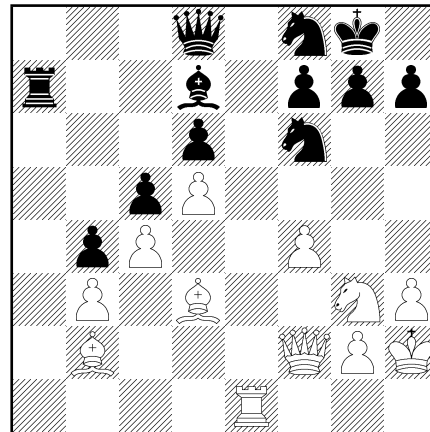
Normally in the Nimzo-Indian Defence, Black hopes to double the c-pawns to give a target for attack in the event that White disappears off to the King's side. Not here, so Black can only hope to gum up the game for his knights.

9. ♖×c3 ♗e7 10. ♖c2 O-O 11. O-O ♗g6 12. ♗g3 ♜e8 13. f3 ♙d7 14. ♙d2 a6 15. h3 b5 16. b3 ♖b6 17. ♚h2 a5 18. ♜ab1 b4



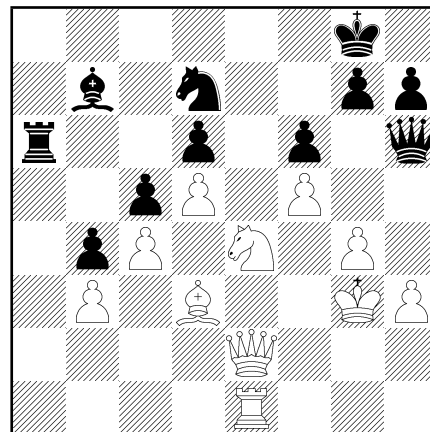
White's bishops are well-placed for attack and defence. The knights don't seem to know where to go next to be useful.

White's next move forces open line for the bishops.
19. f4 e×f4 20. e×f4 ♗f8 21. ♙c1 ♖d8 22. ♖f2 a4 23. ♙b2 ♗g6 24. ♜bd1 a×b3 25. a×b3 ♜a7 26. ♜de1 ♜×e1 27. ♜×e1 ♗f8



White's next move may look odd, but the Nf6 is Black's best defensive piece. White can take it off, then bring his knight into play on e4. Black will be forced to make entry points for White.

28. ♙×f6 ♖×f6 29. ♗e4 ♖h6 30. f5 ♜a3 31. ♜b1 ♜a6 32. g4 f6 33. ♚g3 ♙c8 34. ♜e1 ♙b7 35. ♖e2 ♗d7



White's forces are ideally placed, and Black's are scattered. The following combinational finish should come as no surprise.

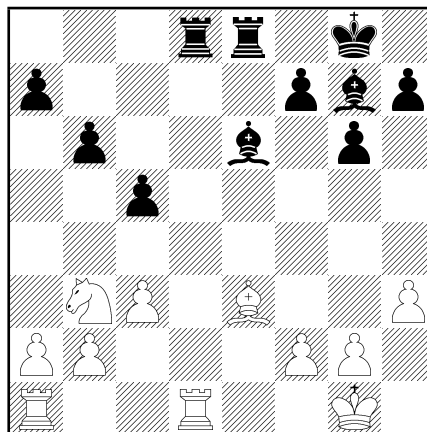
36. ♗×d6 ♜×d6 37. ♖e8+ ♗f8 38. ♜e7 g6 39. ♖f7+ ♚h8 40. ♜e8 ♜d8 41. ♖×f6+ ♚g8 42. ♖e6+ ♚g7 43. f6+ 1-0

2.4 The two bishops in a semi-open endgame

And this is the hardest case, which Paulsen and Steinitz perfected. The side with the two bishops must deny the knights any stable outposts while advancing on both sides of the board.

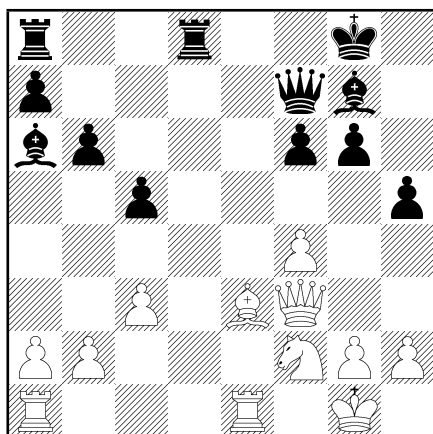
2.4.1 [Event “Two Bishops?”][Site
 ””][Date “1873.??.??”][Round
 ”?”] [White “Rosenthal”][Black “Steinitz ”][Re-
 sult “0-1”]

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♗f3 g6 4.d4 e×d4
 5.♗×d4 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♗ge7 7.♗c4 d6 8.O–O
 O–O 9.f4 ♗a5 10.♗d3 d5 11.e×d5 ♗×d5
 12.♗×d5 ♖×d5 13.c3 ♖d8 14.♖c2 ♗c4
 15.♗×c4 ♖×c4 16.♖f2 c5 17.♗f3 b6 18.♗e5
 ♖e6 19.♖f3 ♗a6 20.♖fe1 f6 21.♗g4 h5
 22.♗f2 ♖f7



The poor knight isn't really sparkling.

20.♗g5 f6 21.♗f4 ♖f7 22.f3 g5 23.♖×d8
 ♖×d8 24.♗e3 h6 25.♖e1 f5 26.f4 ♗f6
 27.g3 a5 28.♗c1 a4 29.a3 ♗c4 30.♖f2 g×f4
 31.♗×f4 ♗g5 32.♗×g5 h×g5 33.♖e3 ♖f6
 34.h4 g×h4 35.g×h4 ♖e8+ 36.♖f2 ♖×e1
 37.♖×e1 ♖e5 38.♗e2 ♗×e2 39.♖×e2 ♖f4
 40.c4 ♖g4 41.♖e3 f4+ ! 42.♖e4 f3 43.♖e3
 ♖g3 0-1



23.f5 g5 24.♖ad1 ♗b7 25.♖g3 ♖d5 26.♖×d5
 ♖×d5 27.♖d1 ♖×f5 28.♖c7 ♗d5 29.b3 ♖e8
 30.c4 ♗f7 31.♗c1 ♖e2 32.♖f1 ♖c2 33.♖g3
 ♖×a2 0-1

2.4.2 Englisch-Steinitz

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗b5 g6 4.d4 e×d4
 5.♗×d4 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♗f6 7.♗c3 O–O 8.O–O
 ♗e7 9.♖d2 d5 10.e×d5 ♗e×d5 11.♗×d5
 ♖×d5 12.♗e2 ♗g4 13.♗×g4 ♗×g4 14.♗b3
 ♖×d2 15.♗×d2 ♖ad8 16.c3 ♖fe8 17.♗b3 b6
 18.h3 ♗e6 19.♖fd1 c5

(squashing White's knight out of the game)