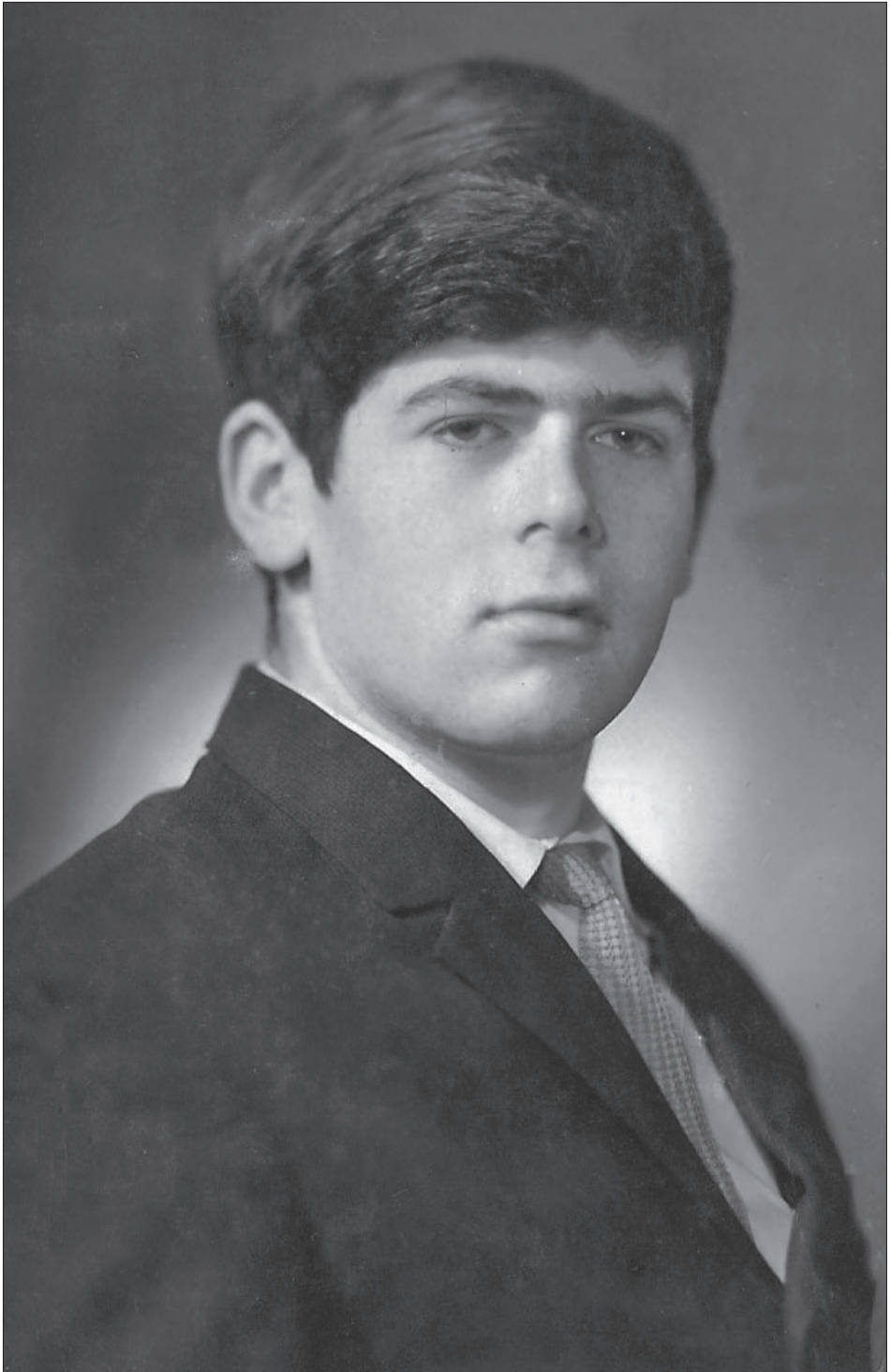


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Preface to the English edition

This English edition of Vladimir Barsky's 2018 Russian original is largely an unabridged translation. A very small number of the tribute pieces in the first half of the book have been omitted, as has a final interview, which largely repeated material already in the book.

As regards names, almost all of the contributors to the book referred to Dvoretzky using the formal Russian style of name and patronymic, i.e. as Mark Israelevich. The same is true with reference to his wife ('Inna Yanovna'), as well as people such as Karpov ('Anatoly Evgenyevich'), etc. To a Russian, it would be unthinkable, even discourteous, to do otherwise, but to English ears this formulation can sound somewhat clumsy. We have therefore decided to omit the patronymics in this English edition and to refer simply to 'Mark', 'Inna', etc. Naturally, no disrespect is intended.

A keeper of knowledge

by Garry Kasparov, 13th World Champion

Five years ago, Mark Dvoretsky released the two-volume autobiography *For Friends and Colleagues* with a fascinating story about the coaching profession. Who would have thought then that so soon we would have to publish the reply *From Friends and Colleagues* – a book in memory of an outstanding coach and author of wonderful chess textbooks... I met Mark at the very beginning of my chess career, back in 1974, when I began to travel regularly to sessions of the Botvinnik school, where Dvoretsky worked as an assistant to the ex-world champion. Often he gathered the boys together in his free time and talked with us. He was an excellent methodologist: both classes at school and deeply thought-out homework brought much benefit to the students. We were indebted to him for our basic knowledge of the endgame and the improvement of our playing technique. I remember that I was terribly proud of one of my victories with a spectacular mating attack, but was rightly criticized by Botvinnik and Dvoretsky for ‘ugly play’ in the opening and early middlegame.

Overall, Dvoretsky made a great contribution to our chess education. There was a feeling that he was obsessed with the idea of creating his own, original system for training high-class chess players. At the same time, he also played: he was the champion of Moscow (1973), a participant in the finals of the USSR championships (1974 and 1975), he won two foreign tournaments – Polanica Zdroj (1973) and Wijk aan Zee B (1975), and then played together with Tal in the A tournament (1976). Tal later recalled how they analysed one opening variation there, and Dvoretsky stunned him with a very unexpected move, specifying: ‘This is Garik’s idea.’ I think my long-term coach Alexander Nikitin is right when he says: ‘Being a grandmaster-level practitioner, Dvoretsky found his true calling in research and teaching: he developed innovative methods for teaching chess strategy and endgames, and created a file of training positions now known to all professionals.’

Already his first coaching experiences brought him great success. Suffice it to mention the names of three world junior champions – Valery Chekhov, Artur Yusupov and Sergei Dolmatov. Artur and Sergei are from my generation, I was friends with them, and competed first at the youth

level, and then at the adult level. We were all analysts and resisted the dry practicality that had come into vogue since the late 1970s. Against this background, the advantages of the Dvoretsky method were revealed, and having mastered it, his best students achieved serious sporting success. Their coach, like me, in the Botvinnikovian way, believed that an analytical approach to the study of chess, all other things being equal, should give a clear advantage over a practical chess player, that perfection in chess is impossible without analysis. In the computer age, this has become an axiom.

A long time ago I had the pleasure of writing the preface to Mark Dvoretsky's first book, *Iskusstvo Analyza* (1989), published in English as *Secrets of Chess Training*. In that and his numerous subsequent books, he also summarized the experience gained over the years of coaching, talked about the methods he used and convinced readers of the need for an analytical study of chess. He sought not only to reveal the secrets of specific positions, but also to reveal the principles of analysis itself. And he did not limit himself to a purely theoretical study of chess problems, but constantly remembered the need to use the knowledge he had acquired in practice and gave a lot of useful practical advice. This testifies to the integrity and versatility of his coaching worldview. Of the great teachers of the past, Siegbert Tarrasch was probably the closest to Dvoretsky in terms of method: both of them were the leading chess systematizers of their eras.

It seems to me that Dvoretsky's most striking achievements are in the study of endings: in minor-piece positions, he was able to more clearly demonstrate the advantages and merits of his methods. Not without reason, at the beginning of the 21st century, my favourite chess book was the brilliant Dvoretsky's *Endgame Manual*, which has already gone through four English and two Russian editions!

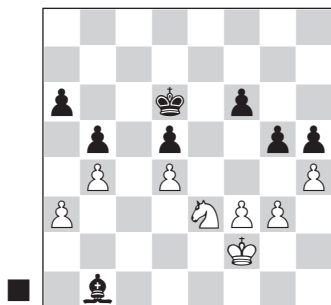
This book also contains the dramatic finale of the 9th game of my first match against Karpov – the well-known ending with a 'bad' bishop against a 'good' knight, which was annotated in the press by many analysts, but in the most detailed way by Mark Dvoretsky, Mihail Marin, Karsten Müller and your obedient servant in the book *The Great Confrontation* (2008). One hardly needs to say who highlights all the mistakes more resolutely than anyone else, regardless of names, and who provides the most instructive of all the notes.

First, in a previous example, Dvoretsky gives clear guidelines for realizing the superiority of the knight over the bishop: 'First of all, you need to activate the king as much as possible... it is useful to deprive the enemy of tactical chances... fix the pawns!... the final stage of the plan is to create a zugzwang position.'

Anatoly Karpov

Garry Kasparov

Moscow 1984 (m/9)



position after 46.b2-b4

‘Here White’s task is significantly more complicated. His king does not yet have a path into the enemy camp and he needs to continue by using the device of ‘widening the beachhead’. The pawns blocking the way on the kingside can be removed in two ways: g3-g4 or the exchange on g5, followed by f3-f4.’ (Dvoretsky)

46...gxh4?

Counting on the automatic recapture 47.gxh4 (the basis of our analysis), when after 47...♙g6 White cannot penetrate.

The most accurate move was agreed to be 46...♚e6!, which gives Black a relatively safe position.

47.♘g2!!

This unexpected and brilliant move, which we missed in our home analysis, shocked me, and my resistance dropped to almost zero. I intuitively felt that now Black’s position was hopeless...

47...hxg3+ 48.♙xg3

White quickly wins the h5-pawn and penetrates with his king.

48...♚e6

As Marin demonstrated, no better is 48...♙g6 49.♘f4 ♙f7 50.♚h4 ♚e7 51.♘xh5 etc.

49.♘f4+ ♚f5 50.♘xh5 ♚e6

Necessary in view of the threat of ♘g7-e8-c7.

51.♘f4+ ♚d6 52.♙g4 ♙c2 53.♚h5 ♙d1 54.♙g6

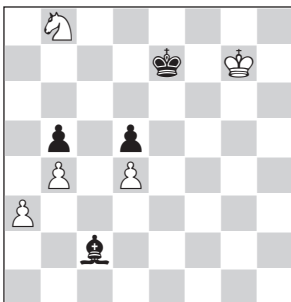
**54...♔e7!**

Of course, not 54...♙xf3? 55.♕xf6 winning the d5-pawn and the game. 'In such cases, one uses the device of "the gradual driving back of the enemy king": the knight transfers to f5, and after the forced retreat of the king (the pawn ending is lost) the white king comes to e5 or e7, and then the knight gives another check, etc.' (Dvoretsky)

55.♘xd5+?

This instant recapture turns out to be a very serious mistake: the d5-pawn only hinders Black! It was much stronger to play the move nobody noticed at the time: 55.♘h5!. Now insufficient for Black is 55...♙c2+ 56.♕g7 ♖e6 57.♘xf6 ♙b1 (57...♖f5 58.♘xd5 – Dvoretsky) 58.♘g4 ♖f5 59.♖f7 ♖f4 60.♖e6 ♖xf3 61.♘f6 ♖e3 62.♖xd5 winning (Marin).

Black must play 55...♙xf3 56.♘xf6 ♙e4+! 57.♖g5 ♙d3!, but joint analysis by Marin and Dvoretsky in 2005 showed a beautiful win for White after 58.♘g4! (again not 58.♘xd5+ because of 58...♖d6 59.♘c3 ♙f1! 60.♖f4 ♙g2 61.♖e3 ♙h3! drawing) 58...♙f1! 59.♘e5 ♙h3 60.♖g6! (60.♘g6+ ♖f7! 61.♘f4 ♙c8 62.♘xd5 ♖e6 draws) 60...♖e6 61.♘c6 ♖d6 62.♘a5 ♖e7 63.♘b3 ♙d7 64.♘c5 ♙c8 65.♖g7!. Black loses the a6-pawn, but can temporarily trap the white king on g7 – 65...♙f5 66.♘xa6 ♙d3 67.♘b8 ♙c2.



analysis diagram

68.♖c6+! ♗e6 69.♗f8! ♕g6 70.♘a7 ♕d3 71.♗e8 ♕e2 72.♖c6! ♗d6 73.♘e7! ♗e6 74.♗d8 ♗d6 (74...♕f1 75.♖c6) 75.♘f5+ ♗e6 76.♖e3 ♗d6 77.♗c8 ♗c6 78.♗b8, and the king gets to the b5-pawn, after which a3-a4 decides. And if he defends the raid along the 8th rank with 68...♗d7 69.♘e5+ ♗e7, then White realises the extra pawn by means of 70.♘g4 and ♖e3, 'and then cannot be stopped from returning his king into its own camp and beginning to prepare a3-a4, transferring the knight to c3 at the appropriate moment.' (Dvoretsky)

Admittedly, all this was established only 20 years after the match, under the watchful eye of the computer...

55...♗e6

Immediately after the game I regretted not playing 55...♗d6!?. The Soviet commentators diplomatically pointed out that after 56.♖xf6 ♕xf3 'the win is not so simple', which, translated into modern language, means 'the position is a dead draw'. Also, after 56.♖c3 ♕xf3 57.♗xf6 ♕g2(c6) we reach a position which analysts showed is drawn.

56.♖c7+ ♗d7?

Unnecessarily giving up the second pawn. Mentally, I was already resigned to defeat and did not suspect how difficult is White's task! Much stronger was 56...♗d6 with the idea of 57.♘xa6 ♕xf3 58.♗xf6 ♗d5 (Averbakh) 59.♖c7 ♗xd4 60.♘b5+ ♗c4 draws, or 57.♖e8+ ♗e7 (but not 57...♗d5? 58.f4!) 58.♖xf6 ♕xf3 59.♗f5 ♗d6 60.♗f4 ♕g2 61.♗e3 ♕h3 – draw.

But the most surprising thing is that, as deep analysis shows, Black is not lost even two pawns down!

57.♖xa6 ♕xf3 58.♗xf6 ♗d6 59.♗f5 ♗d5 60.♗f4 ♕h1 61.♗e3 ♗c4 62.♖c5! ♕c6

Also possible was 62...♕g2 63.♖d3 ♕h1 or 63...♕b7.

63.♖d3 ♕g2

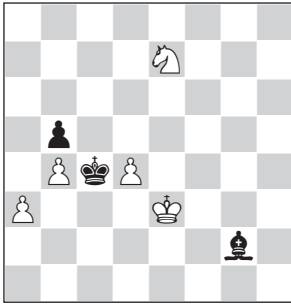
'An interesting idea was 63...♕e8 64.♖e5+ ♗d5 with hopes of holding,' (Averbakh) thanks to the activity of the king: 65.♘g4 ♕g6 66.♖f6+ ♗e6 or 65.♗d3 ♕h5 66.♖d7 ♕g6+ 67.♗c3 ♗d6 68.♖c5 ♕e8 69.♖e4+ ♗e6 70.♗d3 (70.d5+ ♗e5) 70...♕g6 71.♗e3 ♗d5 72.♖f6+ ♗e6 73.♘g4 ♗d5 draws.

'Even with two extra pawns, the outcome of the game is not obvious, as the black king is too active. He must just not go hunting after the a3-pawn (White will block him in by placing his own king on c3).' (Dvoretsky)

64.♖e5+ ♗c3

64...♗d5!? Averbakh.

65.♖g6 ♗c4 66.♖e7

**66...♙b7?**

Only this is the decisive mistake: now Black perishes because of zugzwang. Even during the game, many observers pointed out the more tenacious 66...♙h1! and here no win has been found to this day:

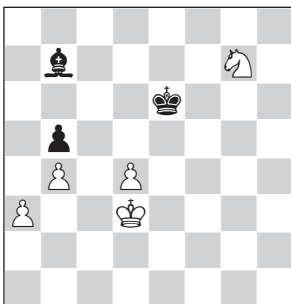
A) 67.♘f5 (67.d5? ♙xd5 draws) 67...♙d5! 68.♘g3 (68.♙f4 ♙e4! Marin) 68...♙g2 69.♙d3!? – after this move of Dvoretsky's there is Müller's reply 69...♙f3!? 70.♘f1 ♙e4+ 71.♙c3 ♙f3 72.♘e3+ ♙e4 73.♘c4! ♙d5! 74.♘b2 ♙c6 75.a4 bxa4 76.♘xa4 ♙h5(g4) with a tablebase draw;

B) 67.♘c8 ♙d5 68.♙d3 ♙e4+ 69.♙c3 ♙c6 (Timman), and my try 70.♘e7+ ♙d7 71.♘g8 ♙e6 72.♘h6 ♙f3 73.♙d3 ♙h1 74.♘g4 (with the idea of 74...♙g2? 75.♘f2! ♙f3 76.♘e4 or 75...♙f1+ 76.♙e3 and ♘d3-f4 wins) Dvoretsky parried with 74...♙f3! 75.♘e3 ♙d6 or 75.♘f2 ♙d5.

67.♘f5 ♙g2?!

'Again 67...♙d5 poses White greater problems' (Averbakh). Indeed, much greater! After 68.♙d3 ♙e6!, according to lengthy analysis by Marin and Dvoretsky, White is not winning after either 69.♘e3 ♙f3! (preventing ♘d1-c3) 70.♙c3 ♙d6! 71.♙b3 ♙c6, or 69.♘g3 ♙g2 70.♘e4 ♙f1+ 71.♙e3 ♙d5 72.♘c3+ ♙c4 draw.

To win, White must transfer his knight to c3. This can be done only with the paradoxical move 69.♘g7+!!, found in 2005 by Müller (obviously, it would be extremely difficult to find such a move at the board, if possible at all).



analysis diagram

Sample variations: 69...♗d6 70.♘e8+! ♗d7 (70...♗e7 71.♘c7 ♗c6 72.d5) 71.♘f6+ ♗e6 72.♘e4 ♗c6 73.♘c3 or 69...♗d7 70.♘h5 ♗g2 (70...♗d6 71.♘f6 and ♘e4-c3) 71.♘f4! ♗f1+ 72.♗e4 ♗d6 73.♗e3! (zugzwang) 73...♗c4 (73...♗c6 74.d5+ ♗d6 75.♗d4 ♗c4 76.a4) 74.♘e2 ♗d5 75.♘c3+, 'and the square c4, essential for the king, is taken by the bishop.' (Dvoretsky) **68.♘d6+ ♗b3 69.♘xb5 ♗a4 70.♘d6!**

Black resigned: after 70...♗xa3 71.b5 he must give up the bishop for this pawn.

Mark Dvoretsky has countless similar examples, and a chess player of any level can learn a lot of interesting and valuable things for himself.

With the departure of each keeper of knowledge and understanding of the game, the chess world changes. Unfortunately, there is no substitute for such people. But, fortunately, their books remain.

PART I

Memories' authors in alphabetical order

Jacob Aagaard, Grandmaster
Vishy Anand, 15th World Champion
Nana Alexandria, Grandmaster
Vladimir Barsky, International Master
Victor Bologan, Grandmaster
Magnus Carlsen, 16th World Champion
Sergey Dolmatov, Grandmaster
Alexey Dreev, Grandmaster
Inna Dvoretzkaya
Leonid Dvoretzky
Pavel Elianov, Grandmaster
Ernesto Inarkiev, Grandmaster
Alexander Motylev, Grandmaster
David Navara, Grandmaster
Alexander Nikitin, Honoured Trainer of the USSR
Oleg Pervakov, Grandmaster of Chess Composition
Boris Postovsky, Honoured Trainer of Russia
Vladimir Potkin, Grandmaster
Boris Rivkin
Mikhail Shereshevsky, Honoured Trainer of Belarus
Eugene Sokolov
Evgeny Sveshnikov, Grandmaster
Vladimir Tukmakov, Grandmaster
Sergey Yanovsky, Grandmaster
Artur Yusupov, Grandmaster
Igor Zaitsev, Grandmaster
Boris Zlotnik, International Master
Vadim Zviagintsev, Grandmaster

My principal chess teacher

Artur Yusupov

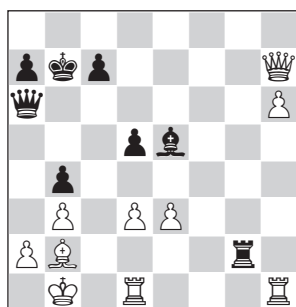
I first met Mark in 1972 at the training camp of the youth team of the Moscow Palace of Pioneers. Even then, he made a very strong impression on me. Dvoretzky offered us tasks in which there were always very difficult, often paradoxical solutions. And to this day I remember these classes and some of the positions for solution.

For example, the following:

Lucarelli

Carra

Bologna 1932



White to move

Black has created unpleasant mating threats. The natural defence is 1.d4, but this loses to 1...♔e2. White cannot afford to allow such a mating set-up on the second rank.

1. ♖d2!!

This fantastic resource gives White a decisive advantage.

1... ♜xd2 2.d4 ♔e2

Now Black's heavy pieces are the wrong way round and achieve nothing, since there is the move **3. ♕c1** and White wins.

In the autumn of 1975, I began studying with Mark. Almost every week I came to his small apartment in Lefortovo, where we worked long hours. Each training session enriched me with valuable experience, and hard work quickly led to an increase in my chess strength. However, I learned not only chess from Mark, but also adopted many human and cultural values, expanding my horizons. Dvoretzky was not formally a dissident, but the totalitarian system was alien to his free spirit. He explained the

real world to me and helped me understand the immorality and absurdity of the communist state.

Mark collected songs of Soviet bards, and it was from him that for the first time I heard the critical words of Galich and Vysotsky, as well as the lyrical, but internally free songs of Okudzhava. His audio collection grew, and later it was replenished with records by Kim, Nikitin, Sukhanov, Egorov, Kulin, Vizbor and then Starchik. Thanks to Dvoretzky, I 'met' with Bulgakov and Solzhenitsyn and many of Orwell's books, such as *Animal Farm* and *1984*. They were banned in the USSR at that time, but Mark ignored such restrictions, and he had several banned books brought from abroad. In order to survive in a totalitarian society, a person had to accept various compromises, but I learned from Dvoretzky that one must still have one's own moral values that cannot be discarded; a certain border must not be crossed in any case.

Mark was not only a fantastic coach, but also a successful author of books. We (Yusupov's Chess Academy) are very glad that we have translated his latest books into German and can publish them. In 2010, Dvoretzky was awarded the FIDE Boleslavsky Medal for his books *Dvoretzky's Endgame Manual* and *Tragicomedies in the Endgame*. In general, I recommend all his books – they are just great!

We were bound by forty years of cooperation and a long friendship. For me, he was not only a coach and second, but also the most important chess teacher in my life. It is to him that I owe my biggest chess successes.

He suffered from cancer for several years. There was hope that everything would return to normal, but the disease returned and began to progress rapidly...

I didn't get to talk to him. I had just bought a ticket to Moscow and received a visa, when the news of his death came. I really wanted to see Mark again and knew perfectly well that we were talking about only a few days. At least I managed to honour him in the Central Chess House. It was very touching! Many participants of the Tal Memorial came to say goodbye. Everyone wanted to say a few words...

In the last few years, we did not have such intense contact, but we communicated a lot on the Internet. Dvoretzky continued to work very hard, looking for high-quality material for his books. Sometimes I was able to show him some beautiful position, but more often he shared with me his latest discoveries. It was impressive! And he continued to write.

Naturally, I cannot be completely objective, but in my opinion, Mark was the best coach in the world, and as a coach he remains a model for me. In my chess tutorial series, I try to promote and develop Dvoretzky's

methods to the best of my ability. I hope that I have enriched his method a little with my experience.

I learned a lot from my mentor. In my work, I use his methodology, and I relied on it in my educational books. Unlike other specialists, Mark paid special attention to the analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the play of students. He tried, first of all, to eliminate the weaknesses of his wards and trained them purposefully to work on the decision-making mechanism.

I really miss Mark. With him I could talk about anything, discuss any subject. The fact that I became a strong player and coach is, first of all, due to Mark. I don't think I could have made it without him.

The best trainer in the world

Nana Alexandria

To play well, you need to train well. And in order for the training to be useful and interesting, you need a good coach. I had such a coach – Mark Dvoretsky. I was one of the first to understand and announce: Dvoretsky is the best coach in the world!

It was always exciting to train under Mark's guidance. I significantly improved my practical strength, although, unfortunately, I did not manage to become the number one – my match with Chiburdanidze ended with a score of 8:8. But that was not Mark's fault! It was just that we should have met a little earlier...

And yet it's great that our meeting took place! I am deeply grateful to Mark for his work, for the books he wrote, for his unique methods – he helped many, many chess players become much stronger. His departure is a huge loss for the entire chess world. Farewell, Mark!

One of those who are irreplaceable

Sergey Yanovsky

There are people who leave a bright mark in your life. Mark was one of those people.

In my youth, he was just a semi-legendary personality for me. Chess players with admiration retold stories about a magician of a coach who turned children into champions with his unique system. I heard a lot about him and therefore, when the opportunity arose to get to know him, I looked forward to it.

My first meeting with Mark Dvoretsky took place at the training camp of the Smyslov school in a rest house near Moscow. I remember the beginning of the lesson very well.

Mark said: 'Recently, about half a year ago, a wonderful book of Geller's selected games with his comments was published. I'm sure you've all seen it by now. I would like to dwell on one very interesting moment in the game against Korchnoi. Well, you probably remember this game...'

Mark looked around the audience and realized that his optimistic forecast about the erudition of the audience was not true.

'Have you not read it?' Mark asked sadly. 'How come? After all, there are very few good books by chess players of this level, for you this is a unique opportunity to talk in absentia with one of the best chess players in the world... I came to this gathering to communicate with young talents, not in order to retell to them what can be read in books, but in order to reveal to them what cannot be found in books.'

I will always remember this phrase, and later on I communicated this inspired and indisputably true idea to young chess players more than once: try to master on your own what you can take from books, and from communication with a coach you need to get what is not yet written in books.

The solution of the exercises from Mark's card index, already famous at that time, made a very vivid impression on my memory. I had several sheets of transcribed exercises, which were given to me as a friend and which I considered of great value.

But solving the exercises in class with Mark was a kind of little spectacle. During the analysis, Mark could tell an interesting background story about each position, then he made curious psychological conclusions about the playing preferences of the student who chose one or another way of solving the proposed problems, and at the end, for comparison, he gave statistics on how his students had coped with this position – Yusupov, Dolmatov, Dreev... over the years, this list has noticeably expanded, several dozen chess players have taken a place in the chess elite, having passed the 'university' of Mark Dvoretsky.

And finally, in addition to highly professional purely chess communication, Mark also paid attention to the discussion of moral issues. In the period that is now called the era of stagnation, Mark rather calmly talked about matters that could easily be classified as 'anti-Soviet'. He tried to instil in the guys the idea that by walking in common formation and voting together with everyone, you do not relieve yourself of responsibility for what is happening around you. He explained that for a person with moral principles there is always a certain choice. In particular, he did not hide the fact that he had decided not to join the Komsomol, although in those days it was a certain challenge to public morality and could greatly complicate life...

Later, when working with the youth team of Russia, I always tried to give talented guys the opportunity to listen to Mark’s lectures, work with him at the training camp, and feel the unique atmosphere that he created. For many future grandmasters, this became a real revelation, a cherished path to the treasury, where inexhaustible depths of knowledge were revealed.

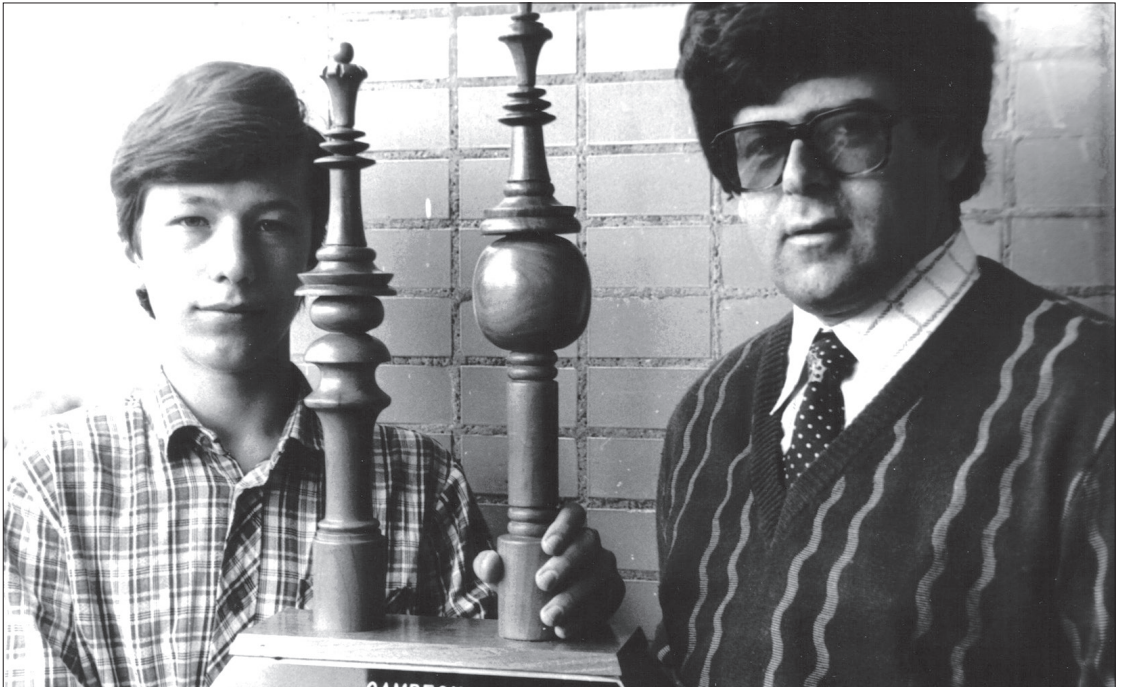
Communication with Mark Dvoretsky played an important role in my personal improvement in many aspects, and I will always remember him with great warmth and gratitude.

An irreplaceable loss

Alexey Dreev

The departure of Mark Dvoretsky is a huge loss for the entire chess world. It’s hard to disagree with Garry Kasparov, who said that there probably won’t be such people anymore...

Mark and I met in 1980, when I was 11 years old, in Kislovodsk. He was the second of Nana Alexandria; in this city, which is very close to my native Zheleznovodsk, she was playing a Candidates match with Elena Akhmylovskaya. We already knew that there was such a famous coach, and my father brought me to see him. Dvoretsky gave me some tasks, I worked on them and sent the answers. He liked them, and invited me to Moscow.



From that moment our cooperation began. I can't say that it was very active, and it ended quite early, when I was 17, but of course it left a huge mark on my chess life, and not only chess.

We were separated by 1600 kilometers; therefore, meetings with Dvoretzky were episodic, but they were worth a lot. When he realized that the classes were fruitful, we began to meet more often and held training camps. I remember I went to the First League of the USSR Championship in Sverdlovsk, where Dvoretzky helped Sergey Dolmatov, and in his free time he worked with me. We didn't even study, but went on tours together. I was in the analysis room, watching how strong chess players analysed. He believed that such immersion was very beneficial for my development. I soaked it all up and joined in big chess. Dvoretzky had a whole methodology, and he acted according to it. He immediately told me: 'I'm taking you to make you a world champion.' It seemed completely unbelievable to me then, but his confidence was transferred to me, because it was clear that he was not fantasizing – by that time Dvoretzky had already led Valery Chekhov, Artur Yusupov and Sergey Dolmatov to world junior champion titles. Gradually, I began to meet with Mark more and more often.

I achieved my first success at the qualifying tournament for the U16 World Championship, which took place in the spring of 1982 in Sochi. I was accompanied by Dvoretzky. I managed to share 1st-2nd places with Evgeny Bareev. After that, a match between us took place in Moscow for the right to represent the USSR at the World Championships. Zhenya won this match, but Mark reassured me: 'It's okay, don't be upset. Next year will be yours!'

And so it happened. Dvoretzky immediately said: 'We will win the qualifier, then you will go to the World Championship and win it.' Although at first I did not really believe in such an outcome, it all happened just like that. Mark knew how to arrange not only chess, but also psychological work – he instilled faith in his students. It was enough just to follow his instructions, and surprisingly everything worked out.

Until I was 17, we trained regularly, but then, unfortunately, our meetings became very rare. It just happened like that. Mark as a coach has always set high goals. When he worked with young men, he set the task of winning the world under-16 and under-20 championships, and for some mysterious reason at one moment they stopped letting me go abroad, and I fell out of the cage. But, of course, it was not only this, it was as if one superimposed on the other. To be honest – and in memory of this man we must speak honestly – Mark had firm principles. First of all, he saw a personality in a chess player, and he did not really like some of my human

qualities. He wanted me to be different, I did not agree with him in everything, and we parted. Already in the first month after parting, I felt that I had lost a lot, but there was no turning back. In any case, Mark and I still had good relations, and when we occasionally met, we communicated very well, and in his book *For Friends and Colleagues* he wrote a lot of kind words about me.

What else can I remember about Mark? Much has been said and written about his methods of work. He created a fantastic card index, and without the help of a computer. This was truly a titanic work! Dvoretsky systematized entire sections of chess. How did he work? First, he looked for weaknesses in the student and then he engaged in correcting them. For every chess weakness, he had a whole stack of exercises, by solving which the student would gradually get rid of his shortcomings and expand his horizons. Sometimes we managed to refute some positions, sometimes we had creative disputes. When the computer appeared, Mark checked everything and transferred it to the computer. Some of the exercises had to be weeded out, because the machine is sometimes ruthless to creative thought. Nevertheless, the majority remained, and this material is now used by many in their work. On this foundation, Dvoretsky wrote a lot of instructive books.

It remained a mystery to me why Dvoretsky, being a very strong practitioner (no doubt, he played at the strength of an outstanding grandmaster), left chess so early. Why did Mark switch to a completely different activity in his prime? Of course, he was a brilliant coach, but let's not forget that he was also a fine player. If you study his work, you can be sure of this. Moreover, after a 20-year break, in the mid-90s (when he was already almost 50) he went to Spain for two tournaments: he won one of them and also performed very well in the other. This was really amazing: a person who had not played for so long, just went somewhere to move the pieces a little – and took first place! Literally until the end of his days, he retained colossal practical strength.

It was very interesting to work with Mark. He never forced me to work, but he offered very interesting positions for solving, and the analysis of tasks was also very exciting. One could talk about this for a long time. It was Dvoretsky who made me interested in serious chess. And he taught me to work, because I was very lazy. All of Mark's students, starting with Yusupov, Dolmatov, Bologan, Motylev – the list will be very long – did not just make any old move, but always tried to find the best continuation. The coach taught me that this was the most important thing: to strive to make the best move. The result could even be secondary, the quality of the game was more important for him.

What Dvoretzky didn't teach was openings. He didn't know openings at all. True, at first he would give something from his repertoire. I remember playing the Ponziani Opening at his suggestion, although, to be honest, it did not inspire much confidence. I played it until Malaniuk beat me with Black. But everything else Mark did, except for openings, was at a level that no one could ever dream of.

Mark understood that he could not really help in the opening, and without any jealousy he invited opening specialists. Thus I met my future coach Alexander Filipenko – it was Mark who recommended him. He also invited other chess players; he was completely relaxed about this. There are coaches who do not share their students with anyone, but Dvoretzky introduced other specialists easily, because for him the most important thing was not personal ambition, but the benefit that he wanted to bring to his students. That was obvious.

Mark assigned a large role to personal development, as I have already mentioned. He could recommend some books and films, and did it completely unobtrusively. Mark was a man of principle, absolutely open and impeccably honest, which, in general, is a rarity. Sometimes it seemed to me that he saw only black and white in the world, and did not notice any shades. On the other hand, he proved his adherence to principles many times – to his own detriment he said what he considered necessary, and he was not afraid of anything. Although in those days it was not easy to defend your position. For example, Mark did not want to join the Komsomol. This once again emphasizes that not only in chess, but also in life, he was a very principled person. Dvoretzky had many friends who sometimes argued with him and disagreed with him, but at the same time they respected him very much, and appreciated his opinion.

When I started working as a coach myself, I learned a lot from Mark. After all, he summarized almost everything, from chess psychology to endgames and decision-making methods. Of course, I use this material all the time and recommend it to others. He certainly left a colossal legacy for many years to come. I don't even know if a coach of this magnitude will ever appear again. It seems to me that any modern mentor will use his methods in one way or another, which is actually happening right now.

When I learned about his death, I could not believe it. Maybe these are lofty words, but the chess world has actually become an orphan. People who knew him closely will, of course, agree with me, and those who did not know him can take my word for it. This is truly an irreparable loss. But in any case, he is invisibly present with us in his books, observing what is happening through his students. I think the chess world will never forget him!

Dutch compromise

Game 20 Dutch Defence A88

Mark Dvoretzky

Evgeny Vasiukov

Leningrad 1974, USSR Championship

Notes by Ernesto Inarkiev

1.c4 g6 2.♘c3 ♕g7 3.g3 f5 4.d4

An interesting opening battle over the first three moves: Mark Dvoretzky did not want to play the King's Indian Defence and Evgeny Vasiukov did not want the English Opening. As a result, we have a compromise – the Dutch Defence!

4...♗f6 5.♕g2 0-0 6.♗f3 d6 7.0-0 c6

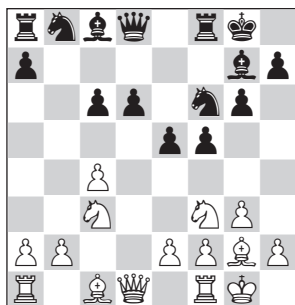
8.d5 e5 9.dxc6

A rare continuation.

Here is a relatively recent example of the main move 9.dxc6 – 9...♕xe6 10.b3 ♘a6 11.♕b2 ♖e7 12.♗g5 ♕d7!? 13.♖d2 h6 14.♗h3 ♕e6 15.♗ad1 ♗ad8 unclear, Gelfand-Kamsky, Tashkent 2012.

9...bxc6?!

An ambitious decision. Black wants to create a pawn avalanche, but now it is more difficult to bring his pieces to normal squares. Simpler was 9...♗xc6!? with comfortable play.



Black has a flexible pawn centre, but since the centre is open, this becomes a target for the white pieces. The result of the opening depends on whether Black will manage to hold onto his centre.

10.b3

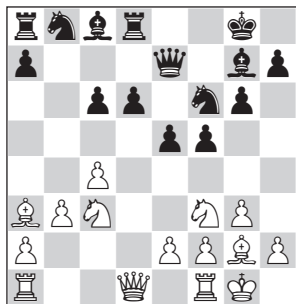
A good method of completing development: the bishop immediately comes to a threatening position. Now Black faces a difficult task.

10...♖e7?!

It turns out that Black cannot keep the structure flexible. It is necessary to decide on something, White's initiative is developing too quickly.

In addition to purely chess complexity, there is also a psychological point: on the previous move Vasiukov played aggressively (9...bxc6), so it is not easy to immediately abandon ambitious intentions. The clearest way was 10...d5!? 11.cxd5 (or 11.♕a3 ♗e8 12.cxd5 e4!) 11...e4! 12.♗d4 ♗xd5! 13.♕b2. The position doesn't look safe, but Black is in time: 13...c5 (an interesting alternative is 13...♗b6!? 14.♗a4 ♗xa4 15.bxa4 ♖d5! 16.f3 ♗d7) 14.♗db5 a6 15.♖xd5+ ♖xd5 16.♗xd5 ♕xb2 17.♗ab1 axb5 18.♗xb2 ♗d8!. Black has completed his development in a cunning way – he has opened the files for the pieces in their initial positions!

11.♕a3 ♗d8

**12. ♖d2?!**

The threat of an attack on d6 forces Black to worsen his pawn structure, which is of course an achievement for White, but he had a more resolute decision: 12.e4!. This move is like a ‘jab’ in boxing – it keeps the opponent at a convenient distance from you. It’s the same here: White fixes the black pawns on d6 and e5 in their places, and then mercilessly attacks them.

A head-on collision in the centre favours White:

- A) 12...fxe4 13.♗g5;
 B) 12...♗xe4 13.♗xe4 fxe4 14.♗d2;
 C) 12...f4 13.gxf4! ♗h5 (13...exf4 14.e5) 14.fxe5 ♗f4 (14...♗xe5 15.♗xe5 ♖xe5 16.♗e2) 15.♗xd6;
 D) 12...♗a6 (the most stubborn) 13.exf5 ♗xf5 14.♖e2. Now the black centre will also be attacked along the e-file, and in addition, all the white pieces have good prospects.

12...e4!

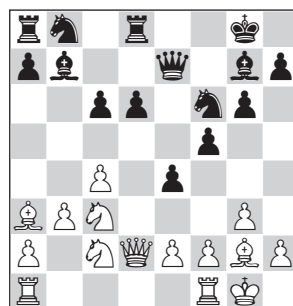
He has to surrender the flexibility of his structure so as to avoid the opening of lines. After 12...♗b7? 13.♖ad1 ♗f8 14.e4! the black position crumbles.

13.♗d4 ♗b7

Thanks to 12...e4! Black has avoided an immediate opening of the position, which has become unclear.

14.♗c2

Prophylaxis: in any event, White defends against ...e4-e3 and prevents ...♗bd7. More natural was 14.♖ad1!, and after 14...♗a6!? (bad is 14...e3? 15.♖xe3 ♖xe3 16.fxe3 ♗g4 17.♗e6, but 14...♗bd7!?) 15.♗c2 transposes into a position from the game.

**14...♗a6**

The knight’s prospects on a6 are obscure, whilst the centre remains under pressure.

It was worth considering 14...c5!?, radically solving the problem of defending the d6-pawn and retaining the possibility of bringing the b8-knight to a better square. 15.♗e3 ♗c6 16.♗ed5 ♗xd5 17.♗xd5 ♖f7 18.♗b2 (the knight on d5 is very strong, but Black has managed to negotiate something in return) 18...♗d4!? 19.e3 ♗c6’, and the knight obtains the good e5-square (also possible is 19...♗xd5!? 20.exd4 ♗c6).

15.♖ad1

Thanks to the advance ...e5-e4 there are breaches in the black pawn

chain and now it is clear that these pawns are weak – White has the initiative.

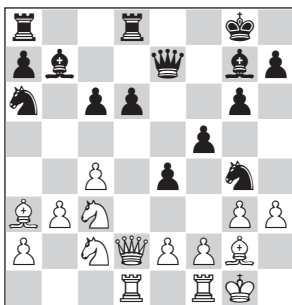
15...♘g4?!

Vasiukov tries to exploit his trumps, space on the kingside, and by tactical means to get rid of the pressure on the d-file.

It was possible to exploit the brief pause to activate the other rook – 15...♖d7!?, since White cannot take: 16.♙xd6? ♕e6, and the bishop has insufficient support among the enemy surrounding troops.

16.h3!?

White must play energetically, otherwise Black will bring his pieces out and strengthen their advanced positions. 16.f3! was stronger, but it was necessary to clearly assess the consequences of the knight's invasion on f2: 16...e3 17.♕e1 ♘f2 18.♖b1! with a small advantage. It is important here that White manages to attack e3 with the bishop from c1.



16...♙h6?!

The whole game is built around whether White will be able to successfully open files. This can only be done by f2-f3. Black should try to

bring his pieces out without giving White a chance to open the position up. The position is complicated and it is difficult to guess what was the true motive behind the decision to put the bishop on h6, but it turns out that the queen on e1 helps the undermining f3 – it protects the g3-square.

Also useless is 16...e3? 17.fxe3. In the analysis, it becomes clear that advancing the pawn to h3 significantly weakens the g3-square, and therefore Black should have immediately retreated with the knight – 16...♘f6!, and now 17.f3?! ♘h5 reveals a weakness.

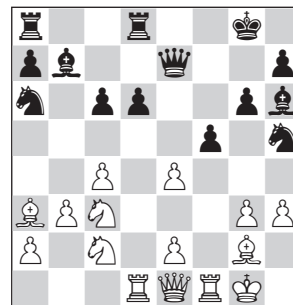
17.♕e1! ♘f6

17...♙e5 18.f3 with an edge. And now it is time:

18.f3! ♘h5!?

Complicating the game. White is better after both 18...e3 19.f4 and 18...exf3 19.exf3, whilst after 18...c5! White continues the undermining with 19.g4!.

19.fxe4



19...♕e5!?

Opening lines looks attractive for White, but Black has superiority on the dark squares on the kingside

and so it is unclear how the direct battle will turn out.

Not 19...f4 20.g4! (20.gxf4? ♖xf4) 20...♗g3 (or 20...♗f6 21.e3) 21.♖f3 ♗xe4 22.♗xe4 ♔xe4 23.♖fd3 and White has a decisive advantage.

20.♖d3!

A strong move. Note how all of White's pieces are working.

There was also a more forcing continuation – 20.exf5!? ♗xg3 21.♖f3 ♗xf5 22.e4 ♗g7 (22...♗e7 23.♗e3).

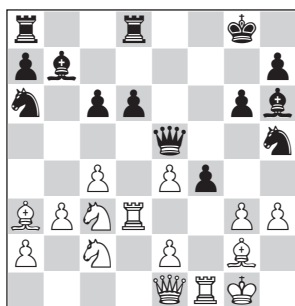
It seems that Black is OK, but it is easier for White to bring up the reserves: 23.♗e3!, and the difference in piece activity is substantial.

20...f4?!

Sticking to his guns, Black fights for the initiative. However, it was already time to minimize his losses:

20...♗c5! 21.♙xc5 dxc5! (worse is 21...♔xc5+ 22.♖f2 ♖xf2+ 23.♖xf2 f4 24.g4 ♗g7 25.♗d4) 22.exf5 gxf5.

The white knights are inactive for the moment and Black has serious chances of a successful defence.



21.♙c1!

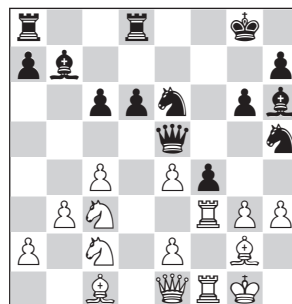
The key resource (of course, bad is 21.g4? ♗g3). White manages to regroup and the blitzkrieg crushes Black.

21...♗c5

He cannot strengthen his position:

21...g5 22.gxf4 ♗xf4 (or 22...gxf4 23.♗d4 ♗c5 24.♗f5) 23.♖g3 ♗xg2 (23...♙h8 24.♗e3) 24.♖xg2 with a clear advantage.

22.♖df3 ♗e6



It may seem as though Black is holding, but the infantry charge drives his pieces back and then lines open with decisive effect.

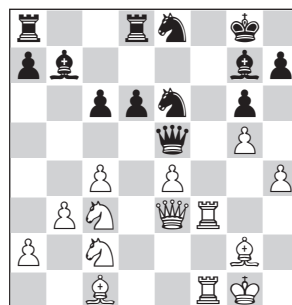
23.g4! ♗hg7

If 23...♗f6, then 24.e3 g5 25.♗b4 with a clear advantage.

24.h4! ♗e8

Or 24...g5 25.e3 ♖f8 26.♗b4.

25.e3! fxe3 26.g5! ♙g7 27.♖xe3



An extra pawn and the better position. White has activated all his pieces and the black army is stranded on the queenside.

27...♖8c7 28.♗a4

It is already hard to offer Black any advice.

28...d5

Even worse was 28...♗d4 29.♗xd4 ♖xd4 30.♖f7.

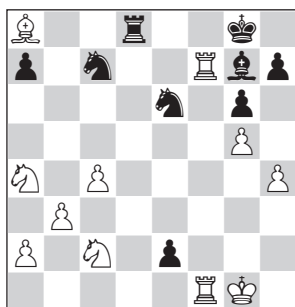
29.exd5 cxd5 30.♖f7!

Dvoretzky plays energetically, without slowing down.

30...♖xe3+

Black would like to exchange the active white rooks for his own passive ones with 30...♖f8, but this leads to new losses: 31.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 32.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 33.♖xa7.

31.♗xe3 d4 32.♗xb7 dxe3 33.♗xa8 e2



Unfounded aggression

Game 21 Petroff Defence C43

Viktor Kupreichik

Mark Dvoretzky

Leningrad 1974, USSR Championship

Notes by Mark Dvoretzky,
Artur Yusupov's additions in italics

I remember that this game made a strong impression on me when Mark and I began to prepare the Russian Game.

34.♖xg7+!

The last trick.

34...♗xg7 35.♖e1 ♗xa8 36.♖xe2

The rest is understandable without commentary.

36...♗f7 37.♗c3 ♗ac7 38.♖f2+ ♗e7

39.♗b4 ♗d4 40.♖f6 ♗ce6 41.♗e4 ♗f4 42.♖xf4 a5

42...♗e2+ 43.♗f2 ♗xf4 44.♗c6+.

43.♗d5+ ♖xd5 44.♗c3 ♖d8 45.♗d5+

♖xd5 46.♖e4+ ♗d6 47.cxd5 ♗xd5

48.♖e7

Black resigned.

A powerful game. Starting from 18.f3, Mark developed the initiative very vigorously. Of course, Vasiukov aggravated his position, not wanting to switch to defence and trying to create counterplay at all costs, but there are many examples in his play when opponents could not have withstood such pressure. Dvoretzky, on the other hand, acted very clearly and played the game almost literally in the same breath.

I realized that in this opening Black not only defends, but also expects to go on the counterattack at an opportune moment.

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.d4 ♗xe4 4.♗d3 d5 5.♗xe5 ♗d6

I used this system many times with success for Black, and later Artur Yusupov adopted it. The main objection gradually became 6.0-0 0-0 7.c4 ♗xe5 8.dxe5 ♗c6 9.cxd5

Better to be first in the village than second in Rome!

An interview by Sagar Shah, ChessBase India

It was the 15th of March, 2016, the fourth round of the Candidates tournament in Moscow. Sitting in the press room, I was working on the analysis of the four games that were in progress. Suddenly I noticed Amruta (my wife), who was busy taking pictures, making a dash into the press room. With heavy breath and great excitement, she blurted, 'He is here, he is here, come quick!' I left all my work. I knew who had entered into the tournament venue. Before coming to Moscow, Amruta and I had decided that if any of us saw Mark Dvoretsky we would leave whatever it was that we were doing, no matter how important, and spend maximum time with the legend.

When I was around 2200 and unable to make tangible progress in chess, it was Dvoretsky's books that came to my rescue. He taught me how every sound idea had to be backed up with variations. He asked questions which made me think deeply about the game, and his didactic answers almost always cleared my doubts. This man who had helped me become a strong chess player and in general improved the quality of not only my chess understanding, but also my life, was now sitting right in front of me, in person. He was alone in the spectator's area, staring at the big screen projecting the games. I went up to him and introduced myself in a way that many people must have done to him in the past: 'Hi Mark, I have read almost every book that you have ever written and I am a big big fan of your work.' Mark smiled and replied in a calm manner. I immediately started to feel comfortable and we discussed the game between Karjakin and Anand that was going on. 'It's an extremely difficult position for Black to defend,' said Mark. He had looked at the position for only a few seconds, but he understood it quite well. That turned out to be Anand's first loss to Karjakin in any format.

As I stood with Mark, a lot of people came and greeted him. It was difficult to have a serious conversation in this environment. Hence, I asked him whether he would be fine if we met at his apartment for an interview for the ChessBase newspaper. It came to me as a great surprise that Mark didn't hesitate for a second. 'Sure, why not.' He took out a visiting card from his pocket, 'Contact me a day before you would like to come.'

As the ninth round came to an end, I called Dvoretsky. 'Mark, tomorrow is a rest day at the Candidates. Can we meet at 5 p.m.?' He replied positively and on the 22nd of March Amruta and I got ready to go to Tallinnskaya street in Moscow to do an interview with the famous Mark Dvoretsky.



‘... a huge library of carefully selected books...’ Photo: Amruta Mokal

Mark greeted us warmly and took us to his study. It was a perfect place to work in peace. Absolute quiet, well lit, the desk was littered with books and a computer, which Dvoretsky had to reluctantly use. He sat in his chair with a smile as I gathered everything around me. I was in the room of one of the greatest chess trainers and authors of all time. I asked him the first question and he replied with energy and enthusiasm. Seconds turned into minutes and minutes into hours as I spoke with Mark for nearly three hours. Amruta took pictures of his every emotion. One of the features of Mark's interview was the ease with which he would answer the questions. No matter how deep it was, he answered immediately. Chess was second nature to him, and this was clear from his replies.

Due to my personal commitments and a huge chess trip, I couldn't work out this interview immediately. After coming back from my 90-day Europe trip, I started carefully transcribing the audio files. And while I was working on this interview I received the news of his death. Here I had been listening to his voice for hours on end, and there in Moscow Mark was no more. It will be my regret that he will not be able to read this interview, but I hope I will be able to make the readers understand what made Dvoretsky special and why was he one of the best trainers and authors who ever lived.

Mark, everyone knows you as a great trainer and an author. But tell us about your beginnings. How did you start playing chess?

I learnt the rules of chess even before I became a school boy. I was around five or six years old. However, I started to study chess seriously and participate in tournaments only when I was in the fifth grade. Before that I had a different interest – mathematics. One fine day our math teacher was changed and a very boring one was the replacement. I lost my interest in the subject and I moved towards chess. I was around 11-12 years old when I enrolled myself in a chess club in Moscow. I succeeded in becoming a master by the end of my school. It wasn't bad, but not too great by today's standards. Just to give you an idea of how things were back then, when I finished my school I played for the Soviet team in the match against Scandinavia on the fourth board. Karpov played on board seven!

At the start of my University days, I was a weak master. When we finished University I got a diploma in mathematics and economics. It was then that I started to teach chess in the Institute of Physical Education. Once I made this switch my results started to improve in chess. I practically did not work on my own game, I just taught others. But it was enough.

What were your initial successes as a trainer?

My first serious student, Valery Chekhov, became the World Junior Champion in 1975. Two years later it was Yusupov and then Dolmatov. It was amazing because the Soviet Union started sending players to Junior Championships from 1950s onwards. Until 1970, that's twenty years, they had only three World Junior Champions – Spassky, Karpov and Beliavsky. And as a coach I prepared three more champions in four years! [laughs] The surprising thing is that this training not only helped my students but also made me into a really strong player. For many years I was the strongest master in the world according to rating. I was around 35th in the Elo rating list by the time I was thirty years old!

While working with the juniors I was also training senior players like Nana Alexandria, who competed in two World Championship Matches. Unfortunately she never won the title. Soon these juniors grew up and I helped them in important matches, like the Candidates and other events.

How did you create such strong players? What were the secret ingredients?

Several elements. I understood right from the very beginning that some methods of training work are reasonable, rational, and can bring success. Before starting to train I read a lot of chess books, mainly Russian. So, I had a good chess education.

Second, I believe that a trainer can be successful if he really likes his work. He wants not his own success, but the success of his students. It's the natural stimulus for work. Not money, not anything else. And I always had it. I became very good friends with all my students and we have always remained that way.

Thirdly, I think common sense is very important. I had good general education from the University and before that I studied in the mathematical school. So, I could analyse well and feel what the most rational way was in a given situation. The simple logic which I used for chess worked well. I always wondered why this simple logical thinking is not so common! [Laughs]

For example, a game of chess is a long battle. You will most certainly not be successful in winning the game most of the time in the opening. It makes sense to study the middlegame and endgame as well. The opening is just a part of the work, but many trainers dedicate all their time to it. I focused on all the phases of the game for my students and this led to a much more harmonious development. This is especially true for young players. When we deal with Kramnik or Carlsen, we can see that they are good in all other areas, so for them the opening becomes extremely important. Even for them it is not exactly true, but when you work



With Sergey Dolmatov (right) and Artur Yusupov.

with young players, who have a lot of weaknesses, there are much more promising areas of improvement, areas which bring more success.

And lastly, I feel that many chess trainers think that chess is a game based on information. They try to collect data from various sources, learn them and then teach it to their students. But we mustn't forget chess is also a sport and to be successful at a sport it is not enough to just have knowledge, you should have skills too. And for the development of skills you need to train. This is absolutely normal for any sport. It is also true for a subject like mathematics. You not only remember a lot of formulae and theorems, but you also solve a lot of problems. Therefore, training was a permanent part of my work with the students. If I gave them some knowledge, we would simultaneously train to understand it much better. There are many skills in the game of chess, like combinational vision, attack, defence, etc., and I always worked on these areas with my students. It's absolutely natural and common sense, not a deep discovery!

What is natural for you is not so easy for many trainers because the training material is not so easy to create.

It's just a continuation of this logic. For example: if I want to train, I need to use very good material for that purpose. From the very beginning of my work I started collecting many training positions. I could open a book and demonstrate something from that, but that could be done by

anyone sitting at home. Hence, I tried to collect original positions and use different material for different training purposes. [While saying this Mark opens his drawer and shows his card files]

Wow! These are the famous Dvoretsky card files.

Yes, these are my card files. I have them in computer format also. I have arranged them based on topics like manoeuvring, prophylaxis, exploiting an advantage, training of intuition, gaining counterchances, imagination, comparisons, etc. I write the initials of the players on each card file to know who have solved them already. For example here you can M, I, Z. That's Motylev, Inarkiev and Zviagintsev.

This is only part of my collection. All this has been preserved right from the time when I first started training. It was very important to think about the form in which I would keep this material so that I would avoid duplication, and also it would make it easier for me to rectify positions which contained errors. So look here – I have ten positions on the page. If something is wrong I still have space for two more. In this way, on every sheet of paper, I will always have ten positions related to a topic.

[I looked at all the hand-made drawings on paper] Did you draw all of these positions?

Yes, of course, this is done by me. Nowadays I save them simultaneously in the computer as well, but paper is very useful when I have to go to some place. I just carry a couple of them with me and I can give a good lecture!

But isn't it possible to just print out from the computer? Why should you undertake the hardship of drawing all of these by hand?

Yes, it's possible, but I am not sure there is any way to get it in the format that I would like. I want four positions in a row and ten in one page. I don't think there are any settings to achieve that. Hence, I continue doing it by hand.

How do you start working with a student who comes to you? What is the initial step?

Different approaches for different players. It is important to see what his strengths and weaknesses are, and what is it that we would like to work on. A typical way to begin is with the diagnosis. Sometimes he sends me games beforehand, or sometimes we discuss his games, or we just analyse something. While doing this work I am trying to figure out his weaknesses and to get to know things about his personality. And then when I spot a recurring problem, our work usually begins from this point onwards.



That's respect: three of the most talented Russian youngsters, Maxim Matlakov, Ildar Khairullin and Ian Nepomniachtchi, analyse a position with Mark Dvoretsky at the Candidates Tournament, Moscow 2016.

Also, it happens quite rarely that a completely new guy comes to me. I usually work with players whom I have seen before or analysed a few of their games, so I already know a thing or two about them.

Once the diagnosis is done and you have located the weaknesses, then you use your card index to give him positions?

Not always. Sometimes we work on some game from the starting position, analyse it together. Sometimes I give him homework to study some article or book, which I know is of a high quality and will benefit him. But it is not sufficient to only find out what the student's shortcomings are. It is also important to find out the reason why specific mistakes are being made. In this aspect it helped me a lot that I was a strong over-the-board player.

You were definitely very strong as a chess player. And if you had devoted more time to your play you would have become a high-class grandmaster. As things stand, you did not complete your GM title and are still an IM. Does this give you feeling of incompleteness?

I didn't worry about this fact. It was Soviet times. The opportunity to play norm tournaments in foreign countries was very limited. I once got

a chance to play in a foreign country and I played poorly because of bad form. But on the whole I do not think too much about the GM title. I was ranked 35th in the world and if I worked hard I would have reached somewhere around the 20th position. I understood that no matter how hard I tried I would not be able to become World Champion or fight for the highest title. You know this famous saying, right [laughs]: It is better to be first in the village than second in Roma [Rome]. Sure, training work was less profitable and less prestigious, but I understood immediately that here I could be more successful than anyone else. Hence, I dedicated my life to training others.

In all these years that you have trained others, who has been the most talented one according to you?

My most successful student was Artur Yusupov. He was ranked number three in the world. But the most talented was definitely Alexey Dreev. His talent was not less than that of Kasparov or Karpov. When he was young, his results were also better than Kasparov's results. Kasparov became a Soviet Master when he was 15. Dreev became one at 13! And he didn't have the support that Karpov or Kasparov received. When Dreev played the World Cadets Championship under-16 twice, he was 14 and 15 years old. He won both of them. He didn't lose any games. Kasparov didn't win both his Cadet Championships. There was no doubt that Dreev's results were higher than those of anybody at that age.

But then the Soviet system, coupled with his own family, environment, and the city in which he lived stopped him from progressing. He missed his opportunity to travel abroad. All these factors prevented him from becoming a real star. He became a very strong grandmaster who represented his country at the Olympiad. So it's not a bad result, but he had potential for more.

I saw Dreev when he came to play in the Delhi Open in 2007. Chess seemed very natural to him and it seemed as if he had a deep feeling for the game. Is it because of the training done when he was young?

On the one hand, he got good chess education when he was young. So that was surely part of the reason for his success. He wasn't so strong in the endgame. We then worked on this phase and it became the strongest feature in his play, and helped him in his entire chess life. On the other hand, it was his natural talent. Dreev really had an amazing natural talent, natural feel and natural understanding for the game, right from his childhood.