



## C O L U M N I S T S

*The Instructor*

Mark Dvoretsky

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## The Usefulness of the "Bad" Bishop

In my July column at [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com), I examined some situations in which, contrary to accepted practice, one should place one's pawns on the same color squares as his own bishop. Now we shall acquaint ourselves with some more exceptions to the "bad bishop" rule.

Normally, a "bad bishop" is a serious drawback in one's position - but not always:

***Possession of the initiative sometimes can outweigh the presence of a bad bishop - in fact, this bishop can sometimes take an active part in an attack.***

***And on the defense, as GM M. Suba once noted, sometimes "a bad bishop defends good pawns" (although it would be more accurate to say "important" or "necessary" pawns), and thus becomes a valuable piece, which the stronger side is forced to exchange in order to break through the defense.***

### ***Kimelfeld – Dvoretsky Moscow Team Championship 1972***

**1. e4 e6 2. Nf3 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. d4 c5 6. dc Nc6 7. Bf4 Bxc5 8. Bd3 f6 9. ef Qxf6!? 9...Nxf6 10. Bg3 10. Bg5!? 10...0-0 11. 0-0 Nd4**

Black must trade off the active enemy pieces: the bishop



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on d3 and the knight on f3. However, the straightforward 11..Nde5? fails against 12. Nxe5 Nxe5 13. Bxh7+!

## 12. Nxd4 Bxd4 13. Qe2

In Lein - Dvoretsky, Moscow Championship 1973, White continued 13. Qd2 Nc5=. White's move here aims at the occupation of the e5 square.

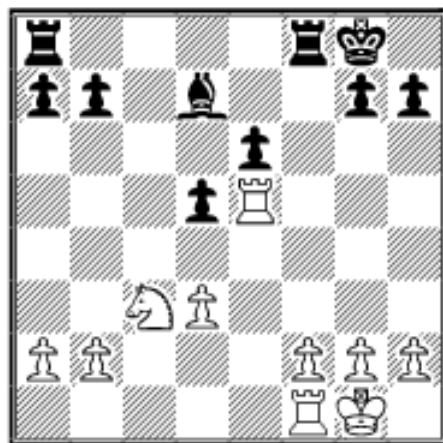
## 13...Nc5 14. Rae1

White obtains nothing from 14. Nb5 Bxb2 15. Rab1 Bd7.

## 14...Nxd3 15. cd Bd7

Of course, Black is not even going to look at the win of a pawn by 15...Bxc3? 16. bc Qxc3 - after 17. Be5, White develops a powerful initiative. The "opposite-colored" bishop can do little for the defense.

## 16. Be5 Bxe5 17. Qxe5 Qxe5 18. Rxe5



## 18...Ra8-c8=/+

Formally speaking, Black's bishop is bad; and if White could manage to get his knight to d4 (with a pawn at f4 too), Black's position would become strategically hopeless. But matters never get that far, since it is Black who has the initiative now. The threat of a rook invasion at c2 after either d5-d4 or b7-b5-b4 is not easily prevented.

## 19. f2-f4

The following variation is curious, although hardly

forced: 19. d4 Rc4 (the immediate 19...b5!-/+ is stronger) 20. Rd1 b5 21. Rd2 b4 22. Ne2 Rfc8 23. Kf1 Rc2 24. Ke1 Kf7 (intending Bb5) 25. Kd1? (25. Nf4 is better) 25...Ba4! 26. b3?! (26. Rxc2 is forced: 26...Bxc2+ 27. Ke1 Bf5, and Black has the initiative) 26...Rxa2! The “bad” bishop has a decisive hand in the final combination.

Many years later, the same variation occurred in a blitz game I played with GM Raul Becerra (Miami 2000). My opponent chose the cautious 19. Re2, which also failed to quench Black’s initiative: 19...b5 20. Rfe1 b4 21. Nd1 Rc1 22. f3 (White hopes to find an appropriate moment to bring the knight via f2 or e3 to g4, and thence to e5) 22...Rfc8 23. Ne3?! Bb5 24. Ng4 Bxd3 (also strong was 24...Rxe1+ 25. Rxe1 Rc2, or still more accurately 25...h5!, with 26...Rc2 to follow) 25. Rxe6 Bf5 26. Re8+ Rxe8 27. Rxc1 Bxg4 (27...Re2) 28. fg Re2 (either -/+ or -+) 29. Rc7 a5 30. Ra7 d4 31. h4 (31. Rxa5 Rxb2 32. Rd5 Rxa2 33. Rxd4 b3-+) 31...Rxb2 32. Rxa5 d3 33. Rd5 d2 34. Kf1 Rxa2, and White resigned.

**19...d5-d4! 20. Nc3-e2 Rc8-c2 21. f4-f5?!**

Better was 21. Nxd4 Rxb2 22. Nxe6 Bxe6 (22...Bc6 23. Rf2=; 22...Rc8 23. Nc5 intending Rf2=) 23. Rxe6=/+.

**21...e6xf5 22. Ne2xd4 Rc2xb2 23. Rf1-c1**

Black also has the advantage after 23. Re7 Rf7 24. Nxf5 Bxf5 (24...Kf8!? 25. Rxf7+ Kxf7 -/+) 25. Re8+ Rf8 26. Rxf8+ Kxf8 27. Rxf5+ Ke7-/+.

**23...g7-g6! 24. Rc1-c7**

24. Rd5 Rf7 (24...Bc6!?)

**24...Rf8-e8! 25. Nd4-f3**



terrifying, that White is prepared to give up a rook for it. On 28. Re3 g5! 29. hg Rxd4 30. Rae1 Bc6-+ is decisive.

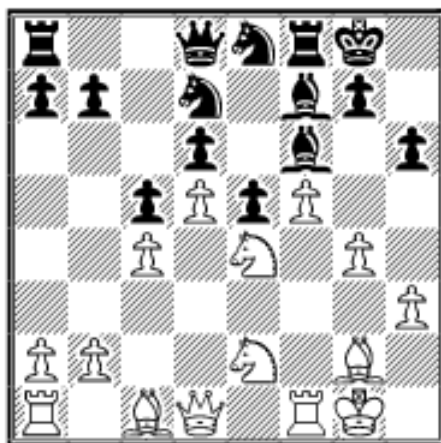
**28...Be4xd3 29. Rd1xd3 Qh5-g4 30. Rd3-c3**

30. Qe3 was more stubborn.

**30...Qg4xf4 31. g3xf4 Rd7-d5 32. Kg1-f1 Rd5-b5-+**

**33. Rc2 Kf7 34. h5 Ke7 35. Ke2 Kd7 36. Kd1 Ra8! 37. Nd2 Rb4 38. Nf3 a3 39. b3 Rxb3 40. Nd2 Rb4** White resigned.

### *Saigin – Timofeev USSR 1948*



White's positional advantage is obvious. The most natural plan would involve a kingside pawn advance. However, if Black gets in 16...Bh4!, it will be very difficult to break up the dark-square blockade. This is why White decided to exchange off his proud knight at e4 for

Black's "bad" bishop.

**16. Ne4xf6+!! Nd7xf6 17. Ne2-c3+/- Nf6-h7**

Now Black's queen is ready to occupy h4, but White will not allow it.

**18. Qd1-e1! Ne8-c7 19. h2-h4 Bf7-e8**

Black expects to get counterplay with 20...b5 - but he won't get that, either!

**20. a2-a4! Be8-d7 21. Bg2-h3!**

It's important to shore up f5 - both as a means of restraining the break h6-h5, and with the aim of promoting g4-g5. Black hasn't even the shadow of counterplay.

**21...Nc7-e8 22. Qe1-g3 Ne8-f6 23. g4-g5**

And this move could have been put off. White decides that he can afford to let the enemy knight occupy h5.

**23...h6xg5 24. h4xg5 Nf6-h5 25. Qg3-g2 Qd8-b6**

25...Nf4!?! 26. Bxf4 ef was more stubborn; but after 27. g6 Ng5 28. Rxf4, Black's position remains difficult.

**26. Nc3-e4 Ra8-d8 27. Bh3-g4 Nh5-f4 28. Bc1xf4 e5xf4 29. Rf1xf4 Rf8-e8 30. g5-g6 Nh7-f8 31. f5-f6 g7xf6 32. Ne4xf6+** Black resigned.

### ***Ivanchuk – Anand Linares 1992, 1st match game***

(Comments are based on those of Anand, from his book, "My Best Games of Chess")

**1. e2-e4 c7-c5 2. Ng1-f3 d7-d6 3. d2-d4 c5xd4 4. Nf3xd4 Ng8-f6 5. Nb1-c3 Nb8-c6 6. Bc1-g5 e7-e6 7. Qd1-d2 a7-a6 8. 0-0-0 h7-h6 9. Bg5-e3 Nc6xd4 10. Be3xd4 b7-b5 11. f2-f3**

11. Kb1!?

**11...Qd8-a5 12. a2-a3**

An immediate draw was available by 12. Qf2 b4 13. Bb6 Qg5+ 14. Be3 Qa5=.

After 12. Kb1 b4 13. Ne2? e5 14. Be3 Be6 15. Nc1 d5!-/+ is unfavorable to White (Anand - Dlugy, Philadelphia 1986). He must play 13. Bxf6! gf 14. Ne2. (The same

position can also be reached by the transposition 12. Bxf6 gf 13. Kb1 b4 14. Ne2.)

The game Kir. Georgiev - Gulko, Manila izt 1990 continued: 14...Qc5 (14...Bb7!?) 15. Qd4! Qxd4 16. Nxd4 Bb7 17. Bc4+/- (intending f4-f5).

### **12...e6-e5 13. Bd4-e3**

Later, Patrick Wolff strengthened White's play with 13. Bf2! Be6 (13...Be7 14. Bh4, and 14...Nxe4? is bad because of 15. fe Bxh4 16. Qxd6+-) 14. Bh4 g5 (14...Be7 15. Bxf6 Bxf6 [15...gf 16. Kb1+/-] 16. Kb1!? [intending Nd5] or 16. Qxd6+/-) 15. Be1! Rc8 (15...b4 16. Nd5 Bxd5 17. ed Rb8 18. Kb1+-) 16. Kb1+/- (Wolff - Fedorowicz, USA ch 1993).

### **13...Bc8-e6 14. Kc1-b1 Bf8-e7**

14...Rb8 15. Nd5.

### **15. g2-g4?!**

*Playing Nd5 is an option which is available to White at virtually every move. However, without any knights White can hardly expect to do anything against Black's slightly weakened queenside, so playing Nd5 is an admission that White can no longer gain the advantage.*

*The problem with Ivanchuk's move is that he is soon forced to play Nd5 in any case, when the move g4 not only fails to benefit White, but can even prove a weakening of his kingside. (Anand)*

15. Nd5= leads to an approximately equal position; things are also okay for Black after 15. h4 Rb8 16. Nd5 Qxd2 17. Nxf6+ gf 18. Rxd2 f5 (unclear).

### **15...Ra8-b8**

Black prepares b5-b4. An immediate 15...b4!? was also possible:

16.ab Qxb4 17. Nd5 Nxd5 18. ed Qxd2 19. Rxd2 Bd7=;

16. Nd5 Bxd5 17. ed Rb8 (unclear);

16. Na2 d5 17. ab Qc7, with compensation.

### 16. Nc3-d5 Qa5xd2



### 17. Nd5xf6+?

A serious error! Ivanchuk expected only 17...Bxf6 18. Rxd2 Ke7 19. h4+/=, underestimating his opponent's magnificent reply. Necessary was 17. Rxd2! Nxd5 18. ed Bd7 19. h4 (unclear) - here, Black

would be playing for f7-f5.

### 17...g7xf6!!

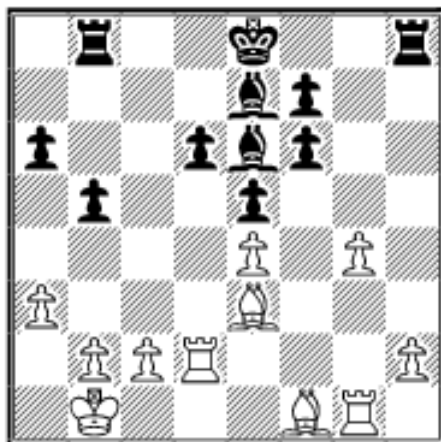
This original recapture assures Black the chance to break up his opponent's kingside pawns.

### 18. Rd1xd2 h6-h5! 19. Rh1-g1

19. gh Rxh5 intending 20...f5; or 19. Be2 hg 20. fg Rh3.

### 19...h5xg4 20 f3xg4





## 20...Be6-c4!!

The unexpected trade of his “good” bishop for his enemy’s “bad” bishop is completely justified here. 20...Kd7?! was much less exact, in view of 21. h3 (White intends Rg3 or Bg2).

*Just in time to stop White setting up some sort of fortress on the kingside by h3 and Rg3. Black’s bad e7-bishop will protect his pawns while he forces pawn exchanges eventually leading to connected central passed pawns. (Anand)*

## 21. b2-b3

On 21. Bxc4 bc (intending 22...c3) 22. Rd5, Anand indicates 22...Rb5!?!; but 22...Rxb2 23. Ra5 Re2 24. Rg3 Kd7 25. Rxa6 Rh8-/+ appears to be still stronger (Dvoretsky).

## 21...Bc4xf1 22. Rg1xf1 Rh8-h3!

22...Kd7?! would be justified after 23. Rf3? Rh4 24. h3 Rbh8-+. However, White continues instead with 23. g5! Ke6 (23...fg 24. Rxf7) 24. gf Bxf6 25. Rxd6+! Kxd6 26. Rxf6+ Ke7 27. Bg5, with counterchances (he intends 28. h4).

*Black appears to have committed a whole list of positional sins: allowing doubled f-pawns, giving White an outside passed h-pawn, and exchanging his good bishop with ...Bc4; yet he is better.*

*Paradoxical? Yes, but this does not mean that the old positional rules have been suspended for the course of*

*this game. Black's play depends on two things.*

*First of all, his long-term aim is to exchange his d-pawn for White's e-pawn by ...d5 and to exchange his f-pawn for White's g-pawn either by ...f5 or by forcing White to play g5. Then he will be left with two connected central pawns, supported by his king, whereas White will have pawns on c2 and h2 that aren't going anywhere.*

*Secondly, he can only put his plan into action because he has the initiative, and especially as the rook on h3 disrupts White's whole position and leaves both g- and h-pawns vulnerable to attack. Had Black wasted even one move, White would have fortified his kingside and the old positional values would have reasserted themselves.*  
(Anand)

It makes sense to compare Anand's pithy commentary with the methodical conclusions reached by the deep-thinking researcher and master Isaac Lipnitsky in his day, in his notable book, *Questions of Modern Chess Theory* (Kiev 1956):

*"It would be wrong to say that a creatively concrete approach to the position lessens the influence of the rules of chess or contradicts them. The whole point is that in any given position, the contradiction of any rules (or generalities) occurs only at the price of the reaffirmation and victory of other (rules)... Chess dogmatism does not occur only when: 1) established rules are followed without regard for circumstances, without consideration of all the concrete peculiarities of the position; it also occurs when: 2) the evaluation of a particular position is made primarily on the basis of only the obvious, the already known and established rules and generalizations."*

In our day too, there are some authors who assert that the

dynamic approach characteristic of modern chess has in effect made general rules and principles useless for the purpose of making decisions in the majority of concrete positions.

This point of view has probably arisen at least partly from the realization that, when we are playing the game, we are in fact occupied with concrete analysis of the position, and almost never recall those abstract principles. So why do we need them at all?

*A thorough acquaintance with the general principles, techniques and methods enriches and sharpens our intuition.* In the course of play, our feelings suggest moves which correspond to the principles (which we examined earlier) which are active in the position; the analysis of these possibilities or those ideas helps us to guess the proper line to take, to find the concrete solution. And the more “learned” the player, other things being equal, the more successfully and surely his intuition will operate.

### **23. Rd2-e2**

Ljubojevic offered 23. Bg1 Kd7 24. Rd3; but this defensive plan would not have changed the evaluation of the position. Black retains the better chances, even if rooks are exchanged: 24...Rxd3 25. cd Rh8 26. Rf3 d5! (Anand) 27. Kb2 d4 28. h3 Ke6 (intending Bf8-h6, with the initiative). However, 24...Rh4! is stronger still. Here are some possible lines:

25. h3 Rbh8 26. Rff3 f5! 27. Rxf5 Rxh3 28. Rxh3 (28. Rxf7 Rxd3 29. cd Rh1 30. Rf1 Bg5-+) 28...Rxh3 29. Bf2 Ke6-/+;

25. Rg3 Rg8 26. h3 Rgh8 27. Rff3 f5! 28. Rxf5 (28. gf Rxe4-/+; 28. ef e4 29. Re3 [29. Rc3? Bf6] 29...d5

[Anand] 30. g5!? [30. c4!? Bg5! 31. Rc3 Bd2-/+] 30...Rf4!-/ + [Dvoretsky] 28...Rxb3 29. Rxb3 Rxb3 30. Bf2 [30. Rxf7? Rg1 - or 30...Rg3-+ - 31. Rf1 Bg5 32. Re1 Bd2-+ is bad] 30...Ke6-/ + - *White's pawns on e4 and g4 are so weak that he might easily lose both of them.* (Anand)

### **23...Ke8-d7**

Threatening 24...Rbh8.

### **24. g4-g5 Kd7-e6 25. g5xf6 Be7xf6**

The point to Black's 22nd move is now obvious: the enemy rook stands passively, and cannot be sacrificed on d6. 26. Ref2?! Be7 is also useless.

### **26. Be3-d2 Bf6-e7!**

Less convincing is 26...Bh4 27. Bb4, or 26...Rg8 27. Ref2 Be7 28. Rxf7 Rg4 (Black wants to trade the e4-pawn for his d-pawn, not his f-pawn).

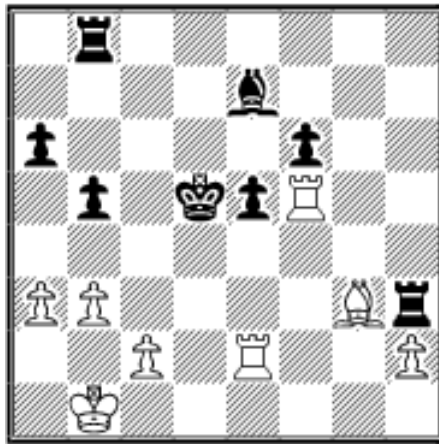
### **27. Bd2-e1 f7-f6 28. Be1-g3 d6-d5!**

28...Rd8 is less exact, because of 29. c4!

### **29. e4xd5+ Ke6xd5**

Black has executed the planned pawn exchanges. All that remains is to bring his king back to e6, and his position will be strategically won. Ivanchuk finds a way to cause his opponent significant problems.

### **30. Rf1-f5!**



Now 30...Ke6? is out because of 31. Bxe5! Re8 32. Rxf6+. 30...Rb7? is also a mistake, in view of 31. Bxe5! Ke6 (31...fe? 32. Rfxe5+ Kd6 33. Re6+ Kd5 34. R2e5+! Kd4 35. Rxe7+/-) 32. Bxf6+ Kxf5 33. Bxe7=.

And on 30...Bd8?! White whips up counterplay by 31. Rf3! Rh6 32. Rd2+ Ke6 33. Rc3 (Dvoretsky).

The only remaining move is

**30...Kd5-c6! 31. Re2-f2?**

The threat of 32. Rxf6+ is easily parried, after which the flame of White's initiative is snuffed out. Much more stubborn was 31. Rf3! (intending 32. Bxe5) 31...Rh7 32. Rc3+, and the Black king must trek still further away from the square of his desire - e6 - since he cannot play 32...Kd7? 33. Rd2+ Bd6 34. Rcd3 Rb6 35. Bf2 Rc6 36. Bc5+/- 32...Kb7-/+ is necessary, when Black will still have technical difficulties to overcome.

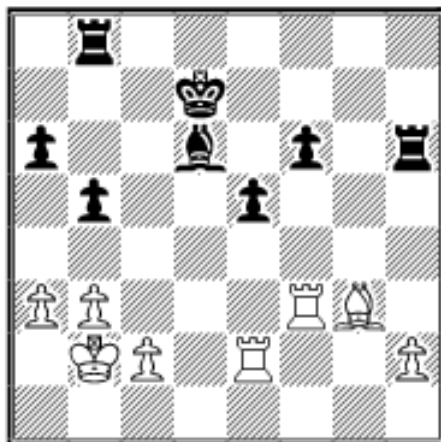
**31...Rh3-h6!**

Of course not 31...Kd5? 32. Rxf6 Bxf6 33. Rxf6.

**32. Kb1-b2 Kc6-d7! 33. Rf2-e2 Be7-d6!**

Parrying the threatened sacrifice on e5.

**34. Rf5-f3**



### 34...Rb8-c8!

Excellent technique! The rook finds the right moment to take control of the c-file. Anand rejected 34...Ke6, because of 35. Rc3 (intending counterplay with Rc6), when White apparently has hopes once again. On the

other hand, there was a tactical means to eliminate them: 35...Bxa3+! 36. Ka2 (36. Kxa3 b4+) 36...Rb6, and if 37. Bf2?!, then 37...Bb4+ (Dvoretsky).

### 35. Bg3-e1 Kd7-e6

*Mission accomplished.* (Anand)

### 36. Rf3-d3 Rh6-h7 37. Rd3-g3 Bd6-c5

*Black doesn't even have to push the pawns immediately. He can play to improve the position of his pieces, or try to exchange a pair of rooks to reduce the chances of a blockade.* (Anand)

### 38. Kb2-a2 Rh7-d7

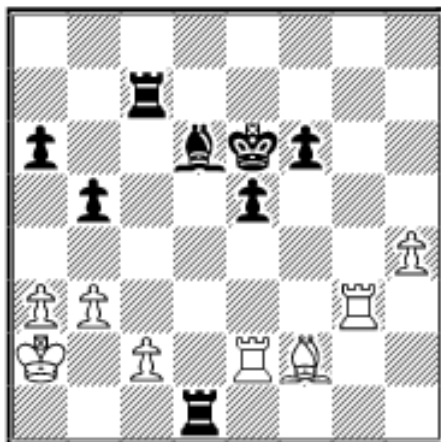
Threatening 39...Rd1 followed by 40...Bd4.

### 39. Rg3-c3 Rc8-c7!

39...Rd1? fails to 40. Bf2! (but not 40. b4? Bd4++)  
40...Bxf2 41..Rxc8 Bd4 42. c3+/-.

### 40. h2-h4 Rd7-d1 41. Be1-f2 Bc5-d6 42. Rc3-g3

42. Rxc7 Bxc7 and 43...f5-+ is also completely hopeless.



**42...e5-e4!**

Anand finishes elegantly. He threatens 43...Bxg3 or 43...Be5; and 43. Rg1 Rxf1 44. Bxg1 f5-+ is no help.

**43. Re2xe4+ Bd6-e5 44. Re4xe5+**

Forced (44. c3 Rd2+ 45. Kb1 Rxf2-+).

**44...f6xe5 45. Ka2-b2 Rd1-d2**

White resigned

In the second issue of the *American Chess Journal* (1993), an article by Boris Gulko was published, entitled, "The Mystery of Bad Bishops". After examining a number of interesting games (in some of which, the bishop was indeed "bad", whereas in others, it played an important role in the attack), the grandmaster came to a surprising conclusion:

*What can we conclude from these games? There appears to be only one common thread: Perhaps the solution to the mystery of bad bishops is that bishops retain the qualities of their owners, so stronger players have better bishops than weaker players. But even this cannot always be true.*

*In 1989 I gave a lecture at the Harvard Chess Club, where I discussed the game I won against Bent Larsen at Hastings 1988/89 (see Informant 47, game 609). In that game, my bad bishop played an important role in the attack. One listener told me afterwards, "Before your lecture I thought I understood one element of chess strategy - good and bad bishops. Now I realize that I*

*don't understand anything." I was proud to have raised at least one player's understanding of chess strategy to a higher level.*

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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