

Editorial Panel: O.Biriukov, IM A.Tsepotan
Technical Editors: WIM Olga Krylova, IM Semko Semkov

Translation by: Kate Krylova, Eugene Landa, Natalia Lugovaia,
Elena Tsoy

With annotations by
International Grandmasters

Alexander KHALIFMAN
Alexei BEZGODOV
Alexander GOLOSHCHAPOV
Konstantin SAKAEV
Sergei SHIPOV
Evgeniy SOLOZHENKIN
and
IM Maxim NOTKIN

Special notes by Alexander Khalifman are written in *italics* and
marked as A.Kh.

Cover design by Creative Center (Sofia)

© Sergei Soloviov, 2003

Printed in Bulgaria by “Chess Stars” Ltd. – Sofia
ISBN

IM Sergei SOLOVIOV

**Leko's
One Hundred Wins**

**Edited by
Alexander KHALIFMAN**

“STRATEGY OF SUCCESS”

Peter Leko became one of the youngest Grandmasters in the chess history at the age of 14 and he started speaking about his intentions to become World Champion rather frankly. Later he was avoiding that particular topic in interviews with journalists since he had to deal with plenty of other serious problems in his life.

Leko did not like the concept that the Elo rating system might also be a criterion of his intellect! As for the field of chess – Leko simply wanted to become one of the best players and find his own way in chess as well as in life... He practises Yoga and leads a vegetarian way of life so that might explain his drawing too many chess games sometimes!? His excellent defensive skills are obviously hereditary. Geza Maroczy was a real legend of the Hungarian and world chess and he was a superior defender. He had a lot of consistent successes and proved to be a worthy contender for the World chess title, but failed to provide the necessary funds for the match with Lasker, though ...Peter Leko found it no less difficult to ensure sponsors for the tournament in memory of Geza Maroczy in Hungary. Leko tried hard to finance his life and chess career, but he managed to do that only in Germany. His friend and manager Carsten Hensel (Peter had known him for six years) dealt with the financial aspects while Leko enjoyed the opportunity to improve in the super-tournaments of the world elite players. These tournaments now are inconceivable without Leko's participation.

Leko won the tournament in Dortmund in 1999 (which used to be often won by Kramnik before) and that was universally accepted as routine. (Meanwhile Carsten Hensel now happens to be Kramnik's manager as well as Leko's. He will be in a delicate situation during April and May 2003 ...!)

Leko was not very impressive in the World Championships until his superior win in the Dortmund Challengers tournament in 2002. He has always been too cautious as if forgetting that chess is most of all a game in which you have to fight till the very end. His tentativeness was obviously due to his style, but he managed to overcome it. His father-in-law and coach Arshak Petrosian gave him a helping hand. Leko's marriage proved to be extremely successful in

many aspects though...

Peter Leko is not very fond of discussing the problems of the contemporary chess world in public, but shares the opinion that Internet is the future of chess.

The Hungarian chess school is proud with brilliant individuals: the Polgar sisters, Almasi...not to forget Portisch, Adorjan and Ribli before them. Everyone is outstanding, but the excellent human relations are dominant over the rivalry. All that might be due to the peculiar Hungarian mentality?!

Leko's opening preferences are more or less predictable. He plays 1.e2-e4 with White and invents a lot of novelties in the modern lines. He answers 1.e2-e4 with 1...c7-c5 Sicilian – the Cheliabinsk variation with Black. You should refrain from trying to prove him wrong! His opening preparation is just flawless and he is not afraid of anybody. Presently he is more than confident about himself and his chess strength.

Peter Leko is a Hungarian player but he is still a part of the international chess world. The match with Kramnik lies in the future and he has left behind now plenty of achievements as a true chess professional. He is very young but still insistent and strong-minded challenger to the world chess crown. Peter Leko's greatest victory is yet to come....

Alexander Khalifman, World Ex-Champion

St. Petersburg, May2003

Leko – Kramnik

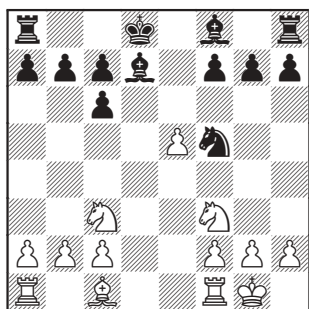
Game 8 (rapid), Budapest 2001

Notes by K. Sakaev

One of the few games of Kramnik in the Berlin Defence, where his opponent proved a better understanding of the position.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♗f6 4.0-0 ♗xe4 5.d4 ♗d6 6.♙xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♗f5 8.♚xd8+ ♚xd8 9.♗c3 ♙d7

This idea was tested by Kramnik on top level for the first time in his match against Kasparov. Black hurries to evacuate his king to the queenside, while his minor pieces occupy waiting positions.

**10.♙d1**

It is rather early for White to define the position of his king's rook, however, this is connected with a concrete idea – Black's light-squared bishop is lured to a passive position. The other plan involves 10.b3 h6 11.♙b2 ♚c8 12.h3 b6 13.♙ad1, keeping the white rook on a potentially more active position. In the original game was played 13...♗e7 14.♗e2 ♗g6 15.♗e1 h5 16.♗d3 c5 17.c4 a5 18.a4 h4 19.♗c3 ♙e6 20.♗d5 ♚b7 21.♗e3 ♖h5 22.♙c3 ♖e8

23.♙d2 ♚c8 24.f4 ♗e7 25.♗f2 ♗f5 and due to a complete pawn blockade, the opponents agreed to a draw, Kasparov – Kramnik, London (m/1) 2000.

10...♚c8 11.♗g5 ♙e8

11...f6? is bad both positionally and tactically, due to 12.♗f7 ♖g8 13.e6 and White wins. The move 11...♙e6?! is not good in the strategic sense; after 12.♗xe6 fxe6 13.♗e4 Black loses the main positive feature of his position – his bishop pair advantage and obtains an additional weakness on e6.

12.b3

The most consistent continuation, other opportunities are weaker.

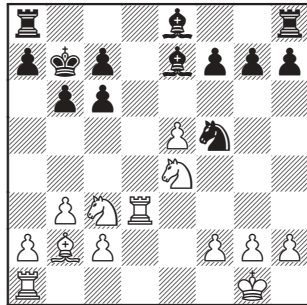
Too hazardous is 12.g4?! ♗h4 13.f4 h5 14.h3 hxg4 15.hxg4 when 15...f6! reveals the vulnerability of White's construction on the kingside and the g4-pawn in particular.

Another option is 12.♗ge4 b6 (a planned move, deflecting on the way the threat of ♙c1–g5) 13.h3 ♚b7 14.g4 ♗e7 (also possible is 14...♗h4 15.f4 c5 16.♙f2 ♗g6 and White cannot accomplish the programmed f4–f5 advance, Acs – Cvek, Charleville 2000) 15.♙f4 h5 16.f3 c5 17.♙f2 ♗c6, transferring the knight via d4 to e6 and obtaining an equal play, Kasparov – Kramnik, Zurich 2001.

The move 13.b3 meets a strong concrete objection: 13...c5! (not bad is also the standard 13...♚b7 14.♙b2 ♙e7 followed by ♖a8–d8 and achieving a favourable swap of the rooks) 14.♙b2 ♗d4 15.♙d2 ♚b7 16.♗d5 ♙d8 17.c4 ♙c6 – White's pieces cannot keep their central places and the forced discharge operation do not bring success: 18.♙xd4 cxd4 19.♙xd4 ♙a3! 20.♙d2 ♖he8

21.♖e1 f6!, effectively attacking the white centre, Leko – Kramnik, Budapest (rapid m/4) 2001.

12...b6 13.♙b2 ♘e7 14.♞ge4 ♚b7
15.♞d3



15...♞d8!

Trading off a couple of rooks is in Black's favour. Meanwhile, White's pressure would only increase after 15...c5? 16.♞d5 ♙c6 17.c4 ♞he8 18.♞f3 ♞h6 19.h3 ♞ad8 20.♞d1 g6 21.g4! ♙h4 22.♞fd3 ♞g8 23.f4 and White obtained a complete domination in Grischuk – Morozevich, Wijk aan Zee 2002.

16.♞ad1

Less precise is 16.♞xd8 ♙xd8 17.♞d1 ♚c8 18.♞e2?! (after the knight's retreat from c3 White must reckon with c6-c5, followed by ♙e8-c6, attacking the e4-knight with tempo. Deserving attention is the sly 18.h3!? with the idea of g2-g4 and if 18...h5, then 19.♙c1, designing an exchange of the bishops on g5) 18...h5 19.♞d3 (19.♙c1 is not appropriate here, due to 19...c5 20.♙g5 ♙c6) 19...a5 20.a4 c5! 21.c4 ♙c6 22.f3 h4 and Black got rid of his problems in the game A. Sokolov – Aleksandrov, Ohrid 2001.

16...♞xd3 17.♞xd3 h5

Kramnik is hampering the advance

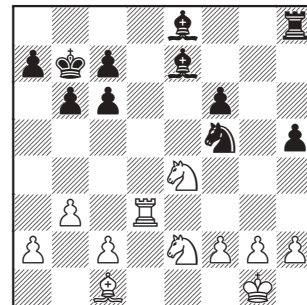
g2-g4, which would repel the f5-knight to some less comfortable square.

18.♙c1! f6

If Black neglects White's manoeuvres, contending himself with some useful move, then after 18...♚c8 19.♙g5 ♙xg5 20.♞xg5 White would play for the win with no risk at all, since Black has lost his main trump – the bishop pair advantage.

19.exf6 gxf6 20.♞e2

Transferring the white knight to the the most stable position – the f4-square.



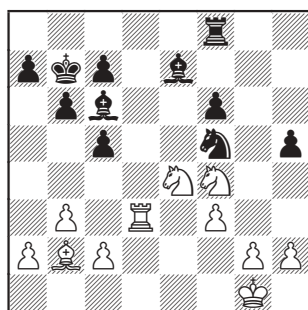
20...c5?

Kramnik's only serious mistake in this game. In the arisen pawn structure Black should have been extremely cautious with the c5-advance, because the other white knight can also attack the f6-pawn from d5. Correct is 20...♞d6, exchanging White's most active piece. 21.♞e3 (after 21.♞xd6+ possible are both 21...♙xd6 and 21...cd6) 21...♞xe4 (Black's serious problems remain after 21...♞f5 22.♞f3 ♞h4 23.♞h3 f5 24.♞g5 ♞g6 – even worse is 24...♙xg5 25.♙xg5 ♞g6 26.♞g3 f4 27.♞xh5 ♙d7 28.♞xf4 ♙xh3 29.♞xh3 ♞e8 30.♚f1, and White's pawns will start to advance gradually – 25.♞e6.

The forced f6-f5 would limit Black's light-squared bishop, while White could choose between the options of exchanging the bishops on g5 or incorporating a powerful knight on f4) 22.♖xe4 ♕d8 23.♗f4 ♕f7 and Black's position is extremely firm. In perspective he could even dare to exchange the rooks on e8. Nothing especially harmful for Black can be found also after 20...♕f7 21.♕b2 ♖h6.

21.♕b2 ♖f8 22.♗f4 ♕c6 23.f3!

Complete triumph of White's strategy – his pawns are on the light squares, while his minor pieces attack Black's weak pawns.



23...♗h4?!

In case of 23...h4 White can calmly improve his position with 24.♗f2 (not so clear is 24.♗g6 ♖f7 25.♗xe7 ♖xe7). Black's position is not to envy, but at least he maintains the material equilibrium.

24.♗d5

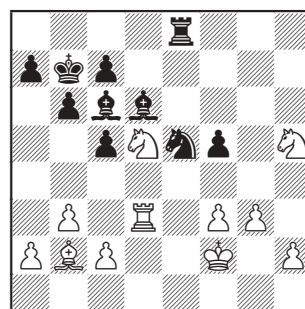
Even more convincing is 24.♗xh5 f5 25.♗ef6, but Leko prefers more centralising strategy. In any case Black already cannot protect both his weak pawns, so he must yield one of them.

24...f5 25.♗ef6 ♕d6

Bad is 25...♕xd5 26.♗xd5 ♕g5 due

to, for instance, 27.♕e5.

26.g3 ♗g6 27.♗xh5 ♖e8 28.♗f2 ♗e5



29.♕xe5!

White is not afraid of phantoms. The knights in the centre are not weaker than the enemy bishops, while the extra pawn is very real.

29...♕xe5 30.♗hf4 ♕d4+ 31.♗f1 a5

Perhaps 31...b5 is psychologically more unpleasant for White; in prospect his pawn on c4 would not be so well supported, as it actually was in the game. However, it is difficult to answer the question – how should Black attack it?

32.c3 ♕g7 33.c4 ♕d4

After 33...a4 White can calmly keep to his plan: 34.h4, gradually rolling his passed pawns.

34.a4 ♖h8

This only urges White, but Black seems to be without useful moves.

35.h4 ♖g8 36.♗g2 ♖e8 37.♗f1 ♖g8 38.♗e2 ♕xd5 39.cxd5 ♕e5 40.f4 ♕d6 41.♗f2

Black's achievements are rather poor – the light squares in his camp and the f5-pawn are weak, “for compensation” he is a pawn down. The rest

is a matter of elementary technique. Kramnik would rather have resigned here, but the short time control accounts for Black's resistance till the very end...

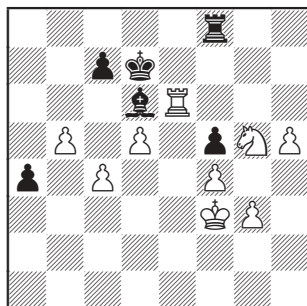
41...♖c8 42.♖f3 ♗d7 43.♘c3 ♕e7 44.♘d1

White does not hurry, transferring his knight to a more active position.

44...♗f8 45.♘e3 ♗f6 46.♘c4 ♕d6 47.♗e3 ♗h6 48.♘e5+ ♖c8 49.♘f7 ♗f6 50.♘g5

White could have transposed to an easily won rook ending after 50.♘xd6+ ♗xd6 51.h5!

50...♖d7 51.♗e6 ♗f8 52.h5 b5 53.axb5 c4 54.bxc4 a4



Black has managed to obtain his own passed pawn, but at a very high price – the number of White's extra pawns is overwhelming.

55.♗e2 ♕b4 56.♗b2 ♕c3 57.♗c2 ♕h8 58.♗a2 ♗a8 59.♘f7 ♕c3 60.h6 ♖e7 61.♘e5 a3 62.h7 ♕b2 1-0

99

Ju. Polgar – Leko

Budapest 2003

Notes by A. Bezgodov

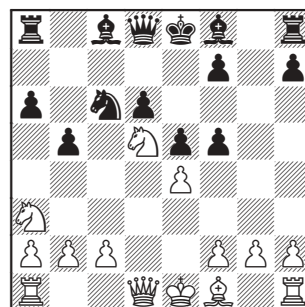
White players have been trying for

several decades already to undermine the reliability of the Sveshnikov system in the Sicilian, without big achievements. Peter Leko is playing this challenging variation regularly and successfully, not fearing any home preparation of his rivals. In the present game the recently initiated into "Club Elo 2700" great Hungarian player Judith Polgar opted for one of the most principal and sharp ways.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5 6.♘db5 d6 7.♕g5 a6 8.♘a3 b5 9.♕xf6

With the years the calmer variation 9.♘d5 ♕e7 10.♕xf6 ♕xf6 11.c3 drifted out of fashion.

9...gxf6 10.♘d5 f5



11.♕d3

Played after the principles of quick development. Frequently seen is also 11.c3!?, to be met by 11...♕g7! (bad is 11...fxe4? 12.♕xb5! axb5 13.♘xb5±).

11...♕e6

Black defends indirectly the f5-pawn, counterattacking the d5-knight. The premature 11...f4 would lead to favourable for White opening of files after 12.g3!±.

12.♖h5

Massive tournament examination

underwent the more flexible 12.c3 ♖xd5! 13.exd5 ♜e7 which is currently considered as harmless.

12...♖g8!

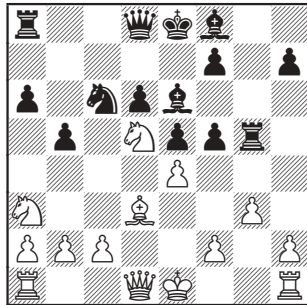
The position is so double-edged that the “classical rules of development” are sent to the backstage in favour of concrete decisions. Now the rook is superbly positioned, challenging White’s aggressive set-up.

13.g3 ♖g5

Leko is compelling the opponent to define his intentions. Equally complex positions arise after the interesting and not too evident move 13...♖g4!?

14.♗d1

We risk to lose ourselves in the jungle of variations after the enticing 14.♗xh7. I’ll only note that the seemingly attractive check 14.♞c7+?? runs into ♔d7! when 15.♞xe6 would be met by 15...♖a5+ winning the white queen.



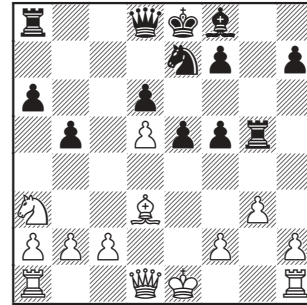
14...♖xd5!

Practice showed that the white knight should be exterminated on the spot. Then Black is entitled to count on a rich counterplay thanks to his pawn fist on the kingside.

15.exd5 ♜e7

(diagram)

16.♞xb5?!N



Looks like an obvious move. Why Judith was the first to try it? The knight is untouchable, isn’t it? Well, true for the knight, but not for the precious b2-pawn. Then White will suffer of weak dark squares – do not forget the still dozing, but potentially dangerous black bishop! Certainly Judith carefully weighed the pros and cons of the text move and hoped that the concrete threats along the inevitably opening b-file would prevail. Perhaps, however, she nevertheless underestimated the inner strength of Black’s position and that led her to defeat. I employed this variation myself and I would commend the more flexible 16.c3!, which faces Black with problems still waiting to be solved.

16...♖b6!

16...axb5?? 17.♖xb5+-.

17.♞a3

White is sure to give back the pawn immediately. Against the common sense looks 17.♖c1? ♖h6 18.♞c3 e4 and White is in danger.

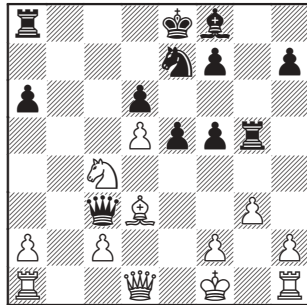
17...♖xb2 18.♞c4

This active possibility attracted White’s knight when choosing the retreat to a3.

18...♖c3+ 19.♖f1

Undoubtedly the loss of the right to

castle was in the Judith's agenda at the home preparation. The white king is still a very distant target, Black has to deal first with the urgent problem of defending the pawn on d6.



19...Rd8!

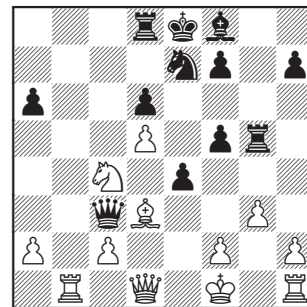
A wise choice! Leko is not obliged to check up the opponent's analyses after a possible taking on d5. It is hard to evaluate all the consequences of that move, but White is likely to run less risks: 19...Rd5 20.Bb1 Qd4 (20...e4 21.Bb3 Qg7 22.h4 Qh6 23.Qg1 Rg4 24.Qe2±; 22...Rg4 23.Qxe4 Rxe4 24.Qxd5 Rc8 25.Qe3±) 21.Qd2 Rg6 22.Qa5 e4 23.Qa4+ (23.Bb7?? Qa1+ 24.Qe2 Qc3+) 23...Qe7 24.Bb7+ Qf6 25.Rxf7+ Qxf7 26.Qxd6+ Rxd6 27.Qxd4 exd3 28.Qxd3∞.

20.Bb1

The next link of Judith's plan. The only open file is in White's possession and Leko has to use all his resourcefulness to create some counterplay. 20.f4? would have been too jerky without full mobilisation of the forces and would lead to defeat following 20...exf4 21.gxf4 Rg4 22.Qe3 Rxf4+ 23.Qe2 (23.Qg2 Qg7+) 23...Qh6+; 20.h4?! would have been a try to repel the rook, but in fact it would come only closer:

20...Rg4! 21.Qe3 Ra4 and soon the black bishop will come into play with fanfares. Altogether possible was the prophylactic retreat 20.Qe2 which could be met by 20...e4 (20...Qxd5? 21.Bb1 Qf6 22.Bb3 Qd4 23.Qxd4 exd4 24.Qd2±; 20...f4 21.Qd2 f5 22.Bb1) 21.Qe3 (21.Bb1 f4 led only to a transposition of moves) 21...Qg7 22.Bb1 Qd4 23.Bb3 Qc5. The domination over the dark squares, result of the pawns trade in the opening, gave Black the initiative.

20...e4



21.Qe2?

An inaccuracy, turning the initiative over to Leko, who does not let it slip till the end. Judith had to disturb the opponent's queen first: 21.Bb3 Qf6 (The best retreat. 21...Qd4?? would fail to 22.Qxd6+! Rxd6 23.Qb5+ axb5 24.Qxd4+) Now it is turn of the rook: 22.f4! Rg8 (only new weaknesses would create 22...exf3?! 23.Qxf3 Qg7 24.Qe3±) 23.Qe2 Qg7 (23...Qg6 24.Qe3∞) 24.Qe3! (it is still early for expanding on the queenside: 24.Bb6 Qg6 25.Qe3 Qd4∞; 25.Bxa6 Qxf4!! 26.gxf4 Qh4 with dangerous threats, e.g. 27.Qxd6+ Rxd6 28.Ba8+ Qe7 29.Rxg8 e3 30.Qe8+ Qxe8 31.Qb5+ Qf8 32.Qf3 Rxd5) 24...Qd4 25.Qg2 Qc5 26.Qd2 Qd4

27.c4∞. White could not boast with an advantage, but she would have been able to hold the position. That would have been the correct continuation.

21...f4!

Breaking a trail to the white king!

22.♖b3

22.gxf4? ♖h3+ 23.♔e1 ♜xd5+.

22...♖f6

The black pawns are of primary importance and Judith prefers to trade off a couple.

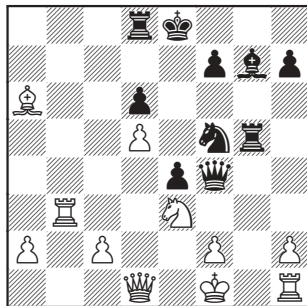
23.gxf4

23.♟b6 ♙g7 24.♙xa6 ♜f5! 25.♜e2 ♟f8 26.c4 ♙d4+.

23...♜xf4 24.♟e3 ♙g7

Leko does not pay any attention to the a6-pawn.

25.♙xa6 ♟f5



26.♟g2

White would have gladly swapped the terrible black knight, but it would lead to irresistible pressure over the f2-pawn: 26.♟xf5 ♜xf5 27.♜e2 ♙d4+.

26...♜e5 27.h4 ♜g6 28.♜hh3 ♟f8

How like Peter Leko! Here is yet another example of the typical for him prophylactics: having deprived the opponent of useful moves, he transfers the king to a safer place, taking no chances at all.

29.♜b1 ♙f6 30.h5 ♜g8

30...♜g5!?

31.♙e2

White's position is already hopeless, the extra pawn being of no importance.

31.c4 ♟d4 32.♜be3 ♟f3 33.♜hxf3 exf3 34.♜xe5 fxe2+ 35.♟g1 ♙xe5+.

31...♟d4 32.♜be3

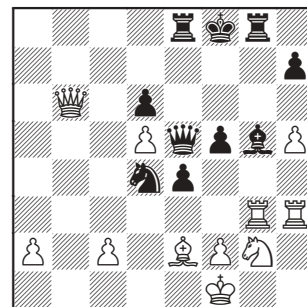
32.♜bg3 ♜xg3 33.fxe2 ♜xd5+.

32...♙g5

This move does not drop the victory, but a simple exchange would have left White without any chances: 32...♟xe2

33.♜xe2 ♜g5 34.♜g3 ♜xh5 35.♜xg8+ ♟xg8 36.♜e1 ♟h8 37.♟e3 ♜h1+ 38.♟e2 ♜f3+ 39.♟f1 ♙c3 40.♜d1 f5 41.♜b6 ♜c8 42.♜b7 ♜h3+ 43.♟e2 f4+.

33.♜b6 ♜e8 34.♜eg3 f5



Black's set-up is beautiful – his forces display a perfect harmony.

35.♟h4

35.♙b5 ♟f3 36.♟e1 f4 37.♙xe8 fxe2 38.♜xg3 ♟d2+ 39.♟g2 ♟xe8+.

35...♟xe2 36.♟xe2 f4 37.♜b3 f3+ 38.♟f1 ♜xd5 39.♟xf3 ♜c4+ 40.♜d3 exd3 41.♜xd6+ ♙e7 42.♜h6+ ♜g7 43.♜g3 dxc2+ 44.♟g2 ♜c3 0-1

In this game Peter Leko made prove of his superiority in the understanding of the ideas behind one of the topical and most complex opening systems.