

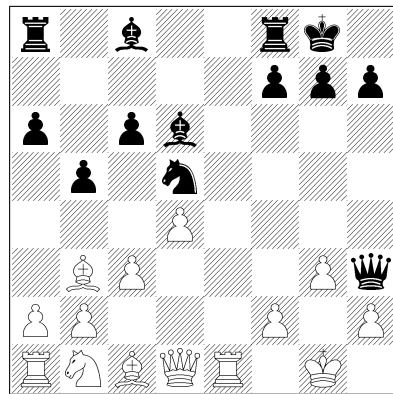
□ Schreiber, Jeff (2026)

Pittsburgh, 2005

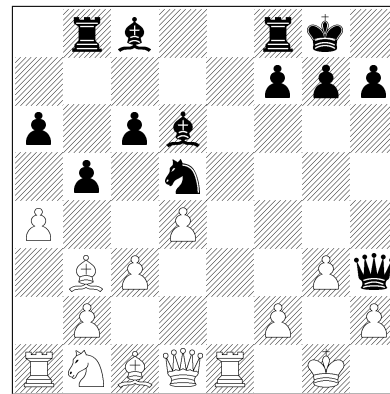
■ Garcia, Federico (1746)

(Anti-)Marshall – C88

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♚e1 b5 7 ♙b3 0-0
8 a4. Ever since Ivanchuk declared that 8 c3 was a mistake (!), my opponents
spend some time in this position—deciding whether to allow the Marshall or not.
In this case White went for the Anti-Marshall. I was sad enough... 8... ♚b8.
8... b4 is not totally successful at leaving the Marshall alive, because White is
free to bring the bishop to f1 via c4, killing most of Black's mating threats. The
text move is not accepted as best (8... ♙b7 is that), but White must know how
to continue. 9 c3?! 9 a×b5 is accepted as theory. With the text move, we enter
a modified Marshall Attack... and it seems that it is modified to Black's advantage.
9... d5! 10 e×d5 ♘×d5 11 ♘×e5 ♘×e5 12 ♚×e5 c6 13 d4 ♙d6 14 ♚e1 ♚h4
15 g3 ♚h3. The diagram at the left shows the equivalent position in the 'real'
Marshall. At the right, the current position of the game.



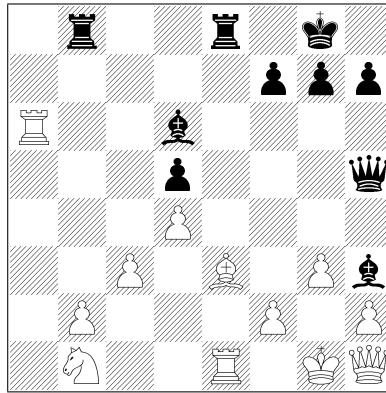
Normal (C89) position



Position in the game

What do we make of the difference? On the one hand, usual variations of the
Marshall include White's move a4, so that the main unique element of the posi-
tion in the game is the black Rook at b8. It seems to me it is better positioned
there than at a8: the Queen would not attack it from f3 (or the white Rook from
a6). In addition, if the b-file opens, the ♚b8 will be attacking b2, thus possibly
hindering the ♙c1's liberty of movement (although the theme of mating Black on
his first rank is common in the Marshall, so the Rook itself is not all that free...).
If the ♙b3 remains there, in addition, it hinders the white Queen herself. In fact,
I was considering 16... b×a4 as my next move. 16 ♙×d5. Jeff's opinion after the
game is that this was a mistake. I don't know: it certainly deals effectively with
the opening of the b-file discussed before. Of course, the bishop at b3 is a very
important element of White's defense in the Marshall (making it hard to move

the f7 or even the ♖f8), and the trade is a major drawback. But it seems justified here. Fritz, on the other hand, already out of the book and unable (o poor machine) to draw on the theory of the real Marshall, suggests 16 ♖e4. That of course is one of the lines of C89, and usually leads to White sacrificing the exchange but achieving equality (sometimes even forcing draw by combination). I analyzed these lines in the 'modified' position, and at no point did the ♖b8 seem to make a relevant difference. For example (one of the lines where White does not sacrifice): 16... g5 17 a×b5 a×b5 18 ♘d2 f5 19 ♖e3 f4 20 g×f4 ♖h6 21 ♘f1 g×f4 22 ♖g3+ ♘h8 and Black's attack is in full force. **16...c×d5 17 ♖f3 b×a4!** Maybe this is it: White allowed the opening of the b-file. It is true that it didn't play a major role in the remainder of the game—and that it was involved in a miscalculation on my part—but it only adds to Black's resources. **18 ♖×a4?** This, however, must be a mistake. The Rook just abandoned its partner in the defense of the first rank. It does seem that it will provide counterplay (attacking a6 and from there d6), but, alas, it will not have time for that. 18 ♘d2 (hurrying the Knight to f1) was in order. **18...♙g4?! 19 ♖g2?!** Here we share a slip. The variation I had seen was 19 ♖×d5 ♖b5 and the Queen cannot take the ♙d6 because 20... ♖h5 is lethal. But I didn't consider 20 ♖g2!, and after 20... ♖h5 the attack is gone. In fact, to 19 ♖×d5 the best try would have been 19... ♙f5 (19... ♖fe8 20 ♖×e8+ ♖×e8 21 ♙e3) 20 ♘d2 ♖fe8 21 ♘f3! (21 ♘e4 ♖bd8 22 ♖a5 ♖a8 23 d5 ♖h5 (△24 ♙×e4 ♖a×e4 25 ♖×e4 ♖×e4 26 ♖c1+) 24 f3 ♙d7 (24... ♖×f3 25 ♖f1)) 21... ♙d3 22 ♘e5 ♙b5 23 ♖×f7! ♘h8 24 ♖a5 ♙×e5 25 ♖×b5 a×b5 26 d×e5 and White has three pawns for the exchange. All these moves—hard to believe—are actually close to forced. **19... ♖h5 20 ♖×a6?** This is what is so dangerous about the Marshall: it is full of threats (on both sides!), but hardly one is obvious. How could you imagine here that Black has it all prepared for a final, diabolic attack? In the absence of any clear threats (and with the feeling that Black's last move was something of a 'retreat'), passing on to the offensive as the best defence is quite natural. "Where is the ♙d6 going to go now?" **20... ♖fe8!**—+ **21 ♙e3.** 21 ♖×e8+ ♖×e8 22 ♙e3 and I had prepared 22... ♙f3?! 23 ♖f1? ♙e2. It was as Jeff calculated his next move that I spotted 23 g4!, and focused on 22... ♙h3, which unfolds similarly to the way the game went. **21... ♙h3 22 ♖h1.** 22 g4!? ♖h4 23 ♖f3 (23 ♖×d5? ♖×g4+) 23... ♙×h2+ △♙×g4



And now what? **22... ♗f4!!** This is where the Bishop will go, a double sacrifice that doesn't even take anything! **23 ♖d2 ♗×e3!** **0-1**

Not a single one of my moves is new: they all happen in this or that variation of the Marshall Attack. It isn't that I know all of them from memory—of course not. But I'm sure that having seen them when studying the opening makes them spring to my mind more promptly. This is not to take merit away from me, however: the moves occur both in good and in bad contexts, sometimes the same move is brilliant and sometimes utterly incorrect. So in this game I still felt all the doubts and uncertainties that make playing chess such a wonderful thing.