

Arkadij Naiditsch
Csaba Balogh

Best attacking games of 2012–2015



Chess
Evolution

Cover designer
Piotr Pielach

Typesetting
Piotr Pielach <www.i-press.pl>

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Best attacking games of 2012–2015
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All sales or enquiries should be directed to Chess Evolution
ul. Smutna 5a, 32-005 Niepolomice, Poland

e-mail: info@chess-evolution.com
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KEY TO SYMBOLS

=	Equality or equal chances
±	White has a slight advantage
∓	Black has a slight advantage
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+-	White has a decisive advantage
-+	Black has a decisive advantage
∞	unclear
∞̄	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
↑	with initiative
→	with an attack
Δ	with the idea
□	only move
N	novelty
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
+	check
#	mate

INTRODUCTION

Useful information for our valued readers.

- »» The book contains the 50 best attacking games from 2012 to 2015.
- »» The games were selected and analyzed by the authors GM Arkadij Naiditsch and GM Csaba Balogh.
- »» Most of the games are taken from the highest-level tournaments, such as Wijk aan Zee, FIDE Grand Prix series, Olympiads etc.
- »» Most of the games are played by top Grandmasters: Carlsen, Anand, Kramnik, Aronian, Caruana and many, many more of the world's best chess-players.
- »» The games are sorted in chronological order, from 2012 through to 2015.

EDITORIAL PREFACE

We are proud to present our first book in a series of 5 — “The best attacking games from 2012-2015”.

It was very interesting work trying to select and analyse the 50 best games from the past 4 years: the choice was so wide! We were aiming to find the most interesting, spectacular and, of course, useful attacking ideas which might also occur in our own practical games.

The main idea behind this book stands out clearly: We try to reduce the importance of opening theory, and rather get inside the workings of the best chess-playing brains on the planet in an attempt to explain the most complex attacking ideas in a simple and understandable way to any chess lover.

Another very important point of the book which we are proud of is, we have not used much 'engine' assistance during our commentary on the games. We try to see the game the way we would do in a practical game, which makes the commentaries very special - which in practice puts the reader fully in the shoes of the world-class players; this is exactly the best way to improve our own chess level.

Sadly, nowadays, we have more-and-more computer analyses and we can hear chess amateurs judging the play even of Carlsen. Yes, you can find tactical mistakes with an engine at home - but the question is, can you do the same during your practical game over the board?! Chess is a game where everyone is making mistakes - and this is what it is all about in the current book!

We would advise all our readers to take out a real chessboard and enjoy these beautiful masterpieces. This is how we learned to play chess and this is why we still enjoy every wonderful game, even after almost 20 years of being professional chess players!

Yours,

Arkadij Naiditsch & Csaba Balogh

■ GAME 1

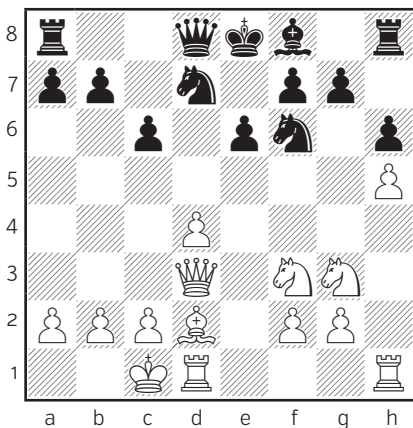
- ▷ **G. Kamsky (2741)**
- ▶ **Y. Seirawan (2643)**
 ch-USA 2012 Saint Louis USA (9)
 17.05.2012, [B19]
 Annotated by Balogh Csaba

Gata Kamsky won a beautiful game against the Caro-Kann Defense, and the game is interesting from a theoretical point of view as well.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5

Recently, the Caro-Kann has been having its best period ever and we very often encounter this opening, even at the highest levels. The advance variation with 3.e5 is White's favorite nowadays, but fashion changes from time to time.

3. ♘c3 dxe4 4. ♗xe4 ♕f5 5. ♗g3 ♕g6
 6. h4 h6 7. ♗f3 ♗d7 8. h5 ♕h7 9. ♕d3
 ♕xd3 10. ♖xd3 e6 11. ♕d2 ♗gf6
 12. 0-0-0



12... ♕e7

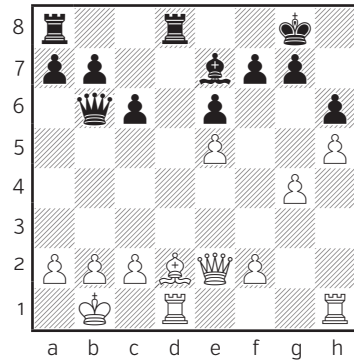
This is considered to be the basic position of the 3. ♗c3 line, where White can choose between 3 big setups. Black's other main option — with 12... ♖c7 followed by 0-0-0 — has gone out of fashion now.

13. ♗e4

13. ♖b1 and 13. ♖e2 are the two other approaches.

13... ♗xe4 14. ♖xe4 ♗f6 15. ♖d3 0-0

For Caro-Kann fans I would probably suggest 15... ♗g4. This is how the big opening expert, Alexey Dreev, played a few months ago. 16. ♖e2 0-0 The knight is very annoying on g4. It prevents the typical g4 pawn sacrifice, which we will see in our current game as well. 17. ♗e5 ♗xe5 18. dxe5 ♖b6 19. ♖b1 ♗fd8 20. g4



20... ♖b5! This is Black's defensive resource. 21. ♖xb5

(If White wants to keep the queens on the board with 21.c4 ♖c5 22.f4 b5! Black creates his counterplay against the provoked weakness of c4.)

21...cxb5 22. ♔e3 b6 23.c3 ♖ac8 Black was more or less fine in Guseinov-Dreev, Plovdiv 2012. The standard 15... ♖d5?! is not advisable here 16.c4 ♖e4 because of 17. ♖b3! b5 18. ♖he1 ♖f5 19. ♗e5! and Black has serious problems on the queenside.

16. ♖b1

Preparation for the g4 sacrifice. On 16.g4 a theoretically very important game was played 2 months ago: 16... ♗xg4 17. ♖hg1 ♗xf2 18. ♖e2 ♗xd1 19. ♔xh6 ♔f6 20. ♔xg7 ♔xg7 21.h6 ♖f6 22. ♖h2

(22. ♖xg7+ ♖h8 23. ♗g5 ♖xh6 24. ♖h7+ ♖xh7 25. ♗xh7 ♖xh7 26. ♖h5+ leads to a draw as well.)

22... ♖xf3 23.hxg7 ♖e3+! 24. ♖b1

(24. ♖xd1 ♖xd4+ 25. ♖c1 ♖xg1+ 26. ♖xg1 ♖fe8?)

24... ♗c3+! The only way to avoid mate 25.bxc3 ♖xg1+! 26. ♖xg1 ♖fd8 Everything was more or less forced until this moment. I remember that I was watching this game live, and both players were blitzing out the moves until this moment. This is what we call computer chess. 27. ♖g5 ♖h7 28. ♖f6 ♖d7 29. ♖b2 ♖g8 30. ♖h4+ ♖xg7 31. ♖g3+ ♖f8 32. ♖b8+ ♖g7 33. ♖g3+ ♖f8 34. ♖b8+ ♖g7 35. ♖g3+ 1/2–1/2 Hovhannisyanyan-Akopian, Plovdiv 2012.

16...c5

Black's main strategy in this opening is to open the position with this

c5 break, and in the endgames (after the heavy pieces are exchanged on the d-file) the h5 pawn might become a real weakness. Black has won many games this way...

17.g4!

And this is White's strategy! He must launch an attack against the Black king, which is also very natural in case of opposite-side castling. Of course, delivering mate has a higher value than one pawn. :)

17... ♗xg4

Black must accept the sacrifice. Allowing White to play g5 is too dangerous. 17...cxd4 18.g5 hxg5 19. ♔xg5 followed by an attack on the g-file.

18. ♖e2!

Kamsky protects the f2 pawn before playing ♖hg1. Seirawan reacts with the first choice of the machine, and probably they were both still in their preparation.

18... ♖h8

Moving out of the way of ♔xh6 after ♖hg1–Nf6. Another idea could be 18... ♖b6 to defend the e6 pawn after 19. ♖hg1 f5 but here White plays the energetic 20. ♗e5! ♗xe5 21.dxe5→ with huge pressure on the g-file.

19. ♖hg1 ♗f6 20.dxc5

20. ♔xh6 would have been premature 20...gxh6 21. ♖e3 ♖g8 22. ♖xh6+ ♗h7 23. ♗e5 ♖f8 Black defends against the concrete threats and preserves the extra piece.

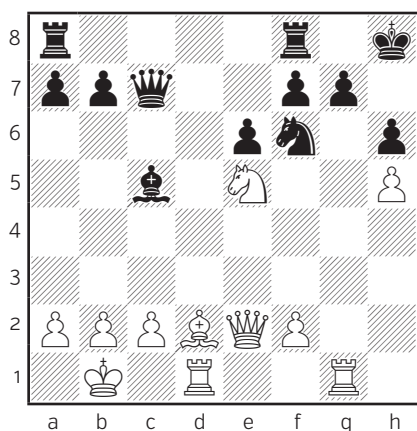
20... ♖c7

Black had to escape from the pin on the d-file.

21. ♘e5!

Kamsky brings his pieces into the attack, but Caro-Kann players know that Black's defensive possibilities are excellent in this opening.

21... ♙xc5?



21... ♖ad8! should have been played, when it is not at all easy to continue the attack 22.b4 might be the strongest move for White, but of course it has its downside as well.

(22. ♖de1 ♙xc5; 22.f4 does not work with the idea of ♖g2 22... ♙xc5 The bishop controls the g1 square; 22. ♖g3 ♙xc5 23. ♖dg1 ♖xd2! 24. ♖xd2 ♖xe5)

22...a5 23.a3 axb4 24.axb4 followed by ♙f4. White's prospects seem to be slightly preferable.

22. ♙xh6!! gxh6 23. ♖d7!!

A fantastic tactical shot to lure the knight from the defense! After 23. ♖d2? ♖xe5 24. ♖xh6+ ♘h7 White has nothing.

23... ♖xd7!

The only move to avoid mate, but it loses material. 23... ♘xd7 24. ♖d2! ♙h7 25. ♘g4!! This is the whole point! The mate is unavoidable.

24. ♘xd7 ♘xd7 25. ♖d2!

This double attack finishes the game.

25... ♙h7 26.b4

There was nothing wrong with 26. ♖xd7+-

26... ♖ad8 27.bxc5 ♘f6

27... ♘xc5 28. ♖f4+- with the threat of ♖f6.

28. ♖f4

Black could resign at this moment, but Seirawan tries for few more moves.

28... ♘e8

28... ♘xh5 29. ♖e4+ ♙h8 (29...f5 30. ♖xe6 +-) 30. ♖e5+ +-

29. ♖e4+

29. ♖g6! was the computer finish!

29... ♙h8 30. ♖xb7 ♘g7 31. ♖xa7 ♖c8 32. ♖d1 ♘f5 33. ♖d7 ♙g7 34.a4 ♙f6 35.a5 1-0

■ GAME 2

▷ **Nguyen Ngoc Trungson (2656)**

▶ **P. Harikrishna (2693)**

Asian Nations Cup ZaoZhuang,
China

24.05.2012, [E45]

Annotated by Balogh Csaba

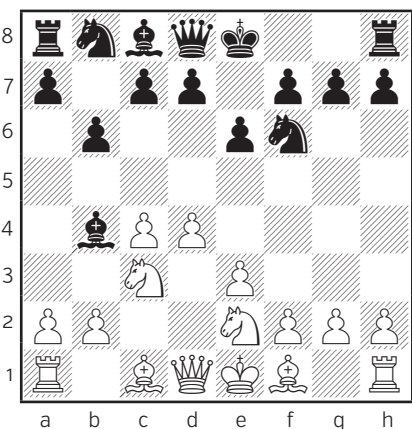
An impressive win in the Asian Nations Cup! Black probably mixed something up in his preparation and found himself in deep trouble right after the opening.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♕b4 4.e3

The Nimzo with 4.e3 is becoming really popular again. Probably the fact that Gelfand obtained an advantage with it in two games against Anand in the WCC match will also improve the opening's popularity.

4...b6 4...0–0 and 4...c5 are more common moves.

5.♘ge2



5... ♕a6

This is the old main line. Harikrishna probably wanted to surprise his opponent, but White was perfectly prepared for it. However, recently, if somebody plays 4...b6 it usually continues with 5...c5 6.a3 ♕a5 7.♖b1 ♘a6 with very sharp lines to follow.

6.♘g3

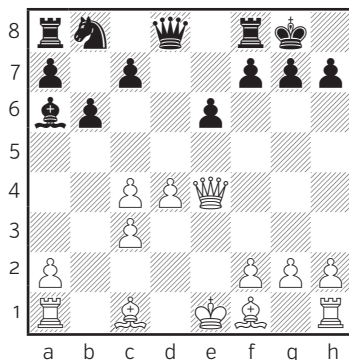
6.a3 is the other way to handle the position in order to keep a healthy pawn structure.

6... ♕xc3+ 7.bxc3 d5

This is Black's idea! Otherwise the move ♕a6 loses its point. Black had to take on c3 before playing this move, because of the check on a4. Fischer played a few games in the 60's with this setup.

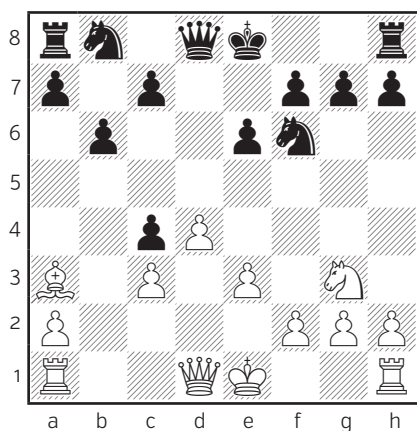
8. ♕a3!

The young Vietnamese GM knows the theory well. White prevents 0–0. There was a giant game after the move 8.♖f3 0–0 9.e4 dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.♖xe4. At this moment, Fischer came up with a fantastic idea.



11... ♖d7!! Preparing for the ♘c6-a5 maneuver, launching an immediate attack against the weak doubled pawns. White has a chance to obtain 2 rooks for the queen, but in this case as well the vulnerability of the queenside pawns will tell 12. ♙a3 ♗e8 13. ♙d3 Developing and forcing some weaknesses before taking the rooks 13...f5 14. ♖xa8 ♘c6 15. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 16.o-o ♘a5! This is the point: White loses a pawn and, in addition, the black knight is going to dominate the a3 bishop 17. ♗ae1 ♙xc4 18. ♙xc4 ♘xc4 and Black won later in the game Portisch-Fischer, Santa Monica 1966

8... ♙xc4 9. ♙xc4 dxc4



10.e4!

White tries to make use of the fact that the Black king is still stuck in the center. White could have recaptured the pawn, but this would give Black enough time to solve his opening problems, e.g. 10. ♖a4+ ♖d7 11. ♖xc4 ♖c6 White has to exchange

the queens and the endgame is about even.

10... ♖d7

Black wants to castle queenside and would also like to keep his extra pawn on c4. We are still in theory.

11.o-o ♖c6?

This is a terrible novelty, which just helps White to initiate an attack against the king. 11... ♘c6?! is less exact because of 12. ♖e2 ♘a5 13. ♙b4, when White is going to win back the pawn and enjoy a comfortable advantage due to his superior pawn formation. 11... ♖b5! is definitely the right move, with the idea of ♘c6 and o-o-o. White must act quickly here with 12.e5! ♘d5 13. ♖g4 creating holes in Black's camp, which the knight could seek to exploit from e4 13...g6 14. ♘e4 ♘d7 15. ♙c1! h6 16.a4 with a complex position. I personally prefer White's position; I think there is more than enough compensation for the pawn.

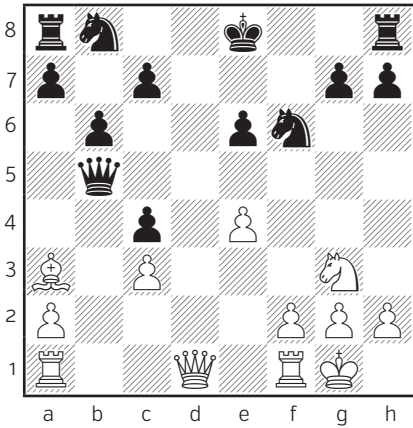
12.d5!

Of course, White opens the position with tempo.

12... ♖b5

White has to play energetically, otherwise after ♘bd7 and o-o-o Black enjoys an extra pawn. 12...exd5? It would be too optimistic to open the e-file 13.exd5 ♖xd5 14. ♖e2+ ♖e6 15. ♖f3+- when the rooks are joining the game with a winning attack.

13.dxe6 fxe6



14.e5!

The amount of pawns does not count now! White has to open lines at any cost! Unfortunately for Black he must co-operate with his opponent, because against any moves with the knight, ♖g4 is decisive.

14... ♖xe5

14... ♗d5 15. ♖g4 +-

15. ♖e1 ♖d5

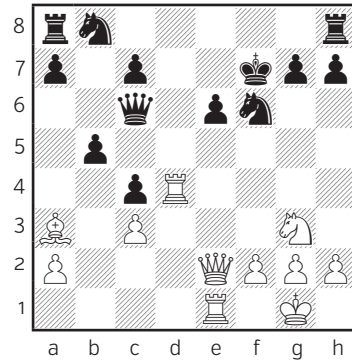
Black defends well, but his mistake on the 11th move was too grave. White cruelly punishes him for that.

16. ♖e2!

Of course, White needs the queens for the attack.

16... ♗bd7

The logical 16... ♖f7 is met by 17. ♖ad1 ♖c6 18. ♖d4! This is the "key", which is necessary for the advantage. White brings another piece into the attack 18...b5



(18... ♖e8 19. ♖xc4 ♖b7 20. ♗e4!+-)

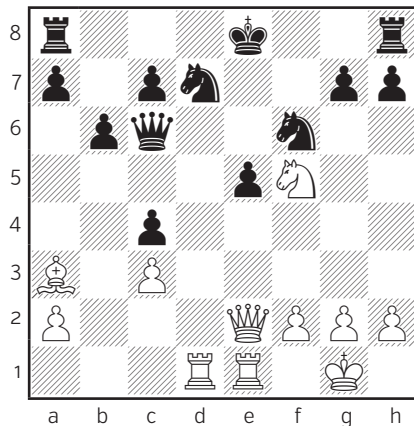
19. ♗e4! ♗xe4 20. ♖xe4 ♖e8 and here White gets the opportunity for a nice finish with 21. ♖f3+ ♖g8 22. ♖xe6! +- with mate on f8.

17. ♖ad1 ♖c6 18. ♗f5!

White creates many different threats (Nxg7, ♗d4, ♗e7) using the fact that Black has no ...o-o-o due to ♗e7.

18. ♖xe6+ ♖xe6 19. ♖xe6+ ♖d8 20. ♗f5± is also very good, but why exchange queens?!

18...e5



On 18...♔f7 19.♘e7 +- is the strongest. Black can not hold the e6 pawn.

19.g4!!

A fantastic move, with a double threat which Black cannot prevent! The obvious threat is g5 and the knight has no good square of escape, while the hidden idea becomes clear in the 19...h6 line.

19...♔f7

19...h6 20.♚xe5+!! A great queen sacrifice! 20...♘xe5 21.♙xe5+ ♔f7 22.♙e7+ +- followed by ♙xg7 mate. Thanks to the excellent 19.g4!! the knight on f5 is protected.

20.g5 ♖he8

Black preferred to give up the piece, which is basically equal to resignation. [20...♘d5 21.♚f3 +-;

20...♘g8 21.♙xd7+ ♚xd7 22.♚xe5+-

21.gxf6 ♗xf6

Black has 3 pawns for the piece, but his pawns are weak and White pieces are placed perfectly.

22.♘e3 b5 23.♘g4 ♗xg4 24.♚xg4 ♖e6 25.♚e4

White simplifies the position to a winning endgame. From now on almost all moves are winning, but Black plays on, because in a team tournament it is an especially bad feeling to resign a game...

25...♚xe4 26.♙xe4 ♖a6 27.♙c5 ♔f6 28.a3 ♔f5 29.f3 ♖g6+ 30.♔f2 c6 31.♙d7 a5 32.♙f7+ ♖f6 33.♙xg7

b4 34.cxb4 axb4 35.♙xb4 c5 36.♙c3 ♖e6 37.♙xc4 ♖xa3 38.♙xh7 ♖a2+ 39.♔e3 ♔g6 40.♖hh4 ♔g5 41.♖h8

Finally Black resigned. A nice attacking game and I especially liked the 19.g4 move with the idea of ♚xe5.

1-0

Arkadij Naiditsch
Csaba Balogh

Most interesting draws of 2012–2015



Caruana vs Gelfand

33... ♖e3!!



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Most instructive endgames of 2012–2015



Kramnik vs Tomashevsky

73. ♖xd5!!



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Carlsen vs Li Chao

24.d5!!



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Positional masterpieces of 2012–2015



Carlsen vs Anand
25. ♘h3!!



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