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Legendary Chess Careers  
**Alexander Beliavsky**

PART 2



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OZMedia/Ingram Publishing  
Alexander Beliavsky photo by Andreas Kontokanis / Wikipedia

Typesetting  
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First edition 2017 by Chess Evolution

*Legendary Chess Careers – Alexander Beliavsky. Part 2*  
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ISBN 978-615-80713-9-0

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Printed in Hungary

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY TO SYMBOLS	5
FOREWORD	7
PREFACE	9
PHOTOGALLERY	11
THE WORLD CLASS PLAYER	13
THE LEGENDARY PLAYER	129
EPILOGUE	239



## 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



## FOREWORD

It has been such a pleasure to conduct interviews with former world-class players who, having retired from active play, are free to talk about their secrets. Also, these players produced some magnificent games and it is definitely worth looking at the highlights of their distinguished careers. In this book I look at a special player's career with the help of interviews with him. The player is the four-time Soviet champion, Alexander Beliavsky. Apart from becoming the individual World champion, he obtained every honour possible: he was a World Championship candidate, an Olympic champion, World Team champion, a World Junior champion, Soviet individual and team champion, and European Clubchampion. He is a record-holder, only the great Keres and Korchnoi matching him in winning against nine world champions in regular games. None of the world champions have managed this huge achievement, while Beliavsky also defeated quite a lot of the players who have a chance at the title in the future, so he may end up having beaten even more world champions. He is one of the few players who, when he was on song, was able to keep up with the pace of the dominating players of the eighties Karpov and Kasparov, regularly being in the top ten of the world rankings. I was fortunate to play many seasons in the Hungarian Team Championship alongside Alexander, for the same club of Miskolc. I can tell you that he earned enormous respect from all the team members. He not only scored an incredibly high percentage, but he was also very modest and friendly, and his attitude towards his games was fully professional. I made an interview with him in 2009 in Budapest, and I hoped that there would be a second opportunity to ask him questions, but for a few years the idea of the interview was sleeping. In 2016 Chess Evolution decided to publish this book, so I tried to contact him once again, but I was unable to reach him. On the other hand, I was able to get Viktor Kart on Skype. I think his junior and long-time trainer's words about his pupil are very, very interesting.

In this series he is the first player from the former Soviet Union. It was something special to be a super-Grandmaster in the Soviet Union — bringing some serious advantages and of course some serious disadvantages. He produced a lot of brilliant games; it is a pleasure for me to present you some of these. He wrote a book, which is very interesting because of his annotations — his

comments are short and always to the point. I think he has produced so many interesting games, so it makes sense to look at his career from a different angle. In some cases I analyse the same games, but very often I selected others. One of the reasons for this is that I wanted to spot the moments when he reached new heights. Your author is a trainer of juniors who finds investigating the early part of a career extremely interesting. Beliavsky starts his selection of games from the age of 19, while in this book I discuss much earlier parts of his career. I conducted an interview with Viktor Kart, who was his junior trainer and played a fundamental role in his journey in chess. Beliavsky's book *Uncompromising Chess* (a great title) was published back in 1998; computer analysis can uncover a lot and also add a lot to the level of analysis. All these great players offered fantastic advice in my books, but I think the best I ever heard was given by Alexander in our interview. These things very much justify writing a new book on Beliavsky's great career. I think it is also worth looking at for players who just want to enjoy great fighting games, and also for players who want to improve their chess understanding.



## PREFACE

The opportunity to increase the scope and size of the book with a second volume mainly resulted in a different finale to the book than I had envisaged. Originally I wanted the end to cover recent years and show a few games from the later stages of his career, in which he gave 'lessons' to some future great players, including the present world champion Magnus Carlsen.

In the first volume I selected the games with which he achieved new heights, combined with his best, most instructive and entertaining games. As an established world-class player he was often able to make the life of the superstars of the eighties very difficult indeed. I covered his route to becoming a World Championship candidate, and also showed many of the games which helped him to win some of the very best tournaments in the world. In the 80's Alexander reached equal 3rd place in the world rankings and in the 90's he also had some 'blooming' periods, for example reaching 2700, which was a much bigger achievement then than now.

In the second volume I gradually shift to selecting his games on the basis of their quality. The questions he answered 'last minute' are mainly included in this second part. Virtually no present-day world class player is able to avoid losing at least a game and players who want to improve can profit a lot from his suggestions as he speaks about his successes as a trainer.

One extremely strong feature of Alexander is that he has always been able to produce fighting, exciting and highly entertaining games.

Dear readers join me in traversing the second half of Beliavsky's journeys in the world of chess and Alexander's masterpieces!



# ALEXANDER BELIAVSKY PHOTOGALLERY





1. Alexander Beliavsky, 1984 [photo by Bogaerts/ Anefo].
2. Beliavsky vs Korchnoi, 1985 [photo by Croes/Anefo].
3. Beliavsky vs Korchnoi, 1984 [photo by Bogaerts/ Anefo].
4. Alexander Beliavsky, 1984 [photo by Croes/Anefo].
5. Beliavsky vs Georgiev, 1985 [photo by Croes/Anefo].
6. Budapest 2017 [C. Balogh archives].
7. Alexander Beliavsky, Baku 2016 [photo by Kontokanis/Wikipedia].
8. Beliavsky discusses the game with Topalov.
9. Alexander Beliavsky, Iraklion 2007 [photo by Kontokanis/Wikipedia].
10. Alexander Beliavsky, Iraklion 2007 [photo by Kontokanis/Wikipedia].
11. Alexander Beliavsky, 2008 [photo by Kontokanis/ Wikipedia].

# THE WORLD CLASS PLAYER

## 1981

On the 1981 January Elo list he was rated 2620 and shared the World ranking: 7-9, breaking into the top 10.

Beliavsky started 1981 playing in the first rapid tournament held in the Soviet Union. It was a team event, and he beat Rashkovsky and Bagirov 1½:½ and scored 1:1 against Mikhalchishin.

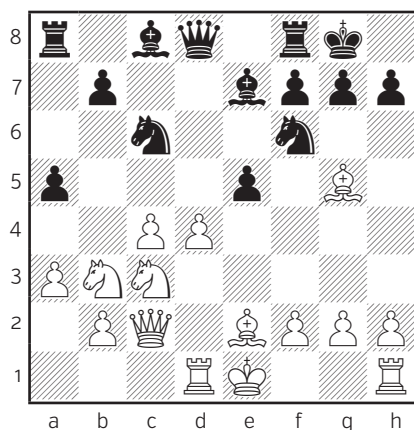
He continued with a super-tournament in Moscow. In the first 6 rounds he was twice outplayed, losing to Kasparov and Karpov, and also drew 4 games. Then he met Portisch...

- L. Portisch
- A. Beliavsky

MOSCOW [7], 1981

////////////////////////////////////

1.c4 e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 ♕e7 4.♘f3  
♘f6 5.♕f4 o-o 6.e3 c5 7.dxc5  
♕xc5 8.♖c2 ♘c6 9.♖d1 ♖a5 10.a3  
♕e7 11.♘d2 e5 12.♕g5 d4 13.♘b3  
♖d8 14.♕e2 a5 15.exd4



15...a4!

Portisch's last move was a novelty; Beliavsky reacts to it well and sacrifices a pawn.

16.♘xa4 ♘xd4

16...♖xa4?! would be a mistake because of 17.d5!

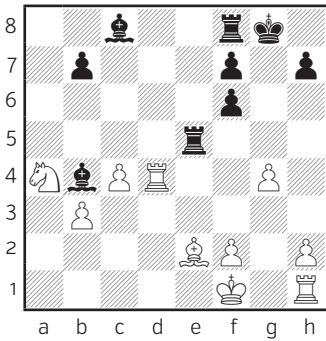
17.♘xd4 exd4 18.b3

18.o-o ♖a5 19.♕xf6 ♕xf6 20.b3  
♕d7 and Black would be doing all right here as well.

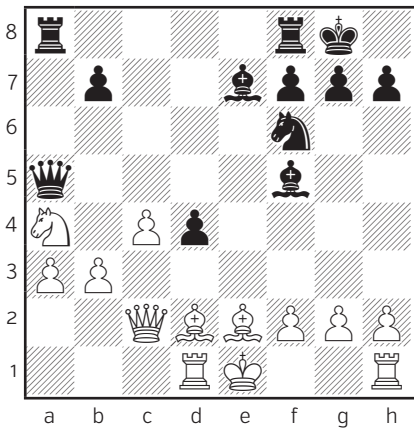
18...♖a5+ 19.♕d2?!

The move Portisch plays gives no hope for an advantage, probably the reason it was not repeated. A few months later, the same opening occurred in the World Championship

final, and Korchnoi deviated here:  
 19. ♔d2 ♕xa3 20. ♖xa5 ♗xa5 21. ♘xf6  
 ♙b4+ 22. ♚f1 gxf6 23. ♖xd4 ♗e5  
 24.g4



24...b5! Black got compensation  
 and the players went on to draw  
 in Korchnoi,V-Karpov,A Merano (11)  
 1981.



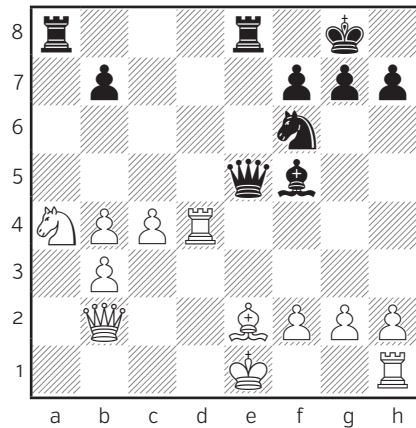
19... ♕f5!

It is nice to develop with tempo and  
 not to move one's attacked queen,  
 but 19... ♖e5 20.f4 ♗e6 would also be  
 pleasant for Black.

20. ♖b2 ♗e5 21. ♙b4

The long-time Hungarian number  
 one player is a fighter, and he doesn't  
 want a repetition. 21. ♘e3 ♖a5+ (21...  
 ♕xa3!? 22. ♖xd4 ♙b4+ 23. ♚f1 The  
 position is balanced; Black has enough  
 compensation for the pawn.) 22. ♘d2  
 ♗e5 and it would be a repetition.

21... ♙b4+ 22.axb4 ♗fe8 23. ♖xd4



23... ♘c2!

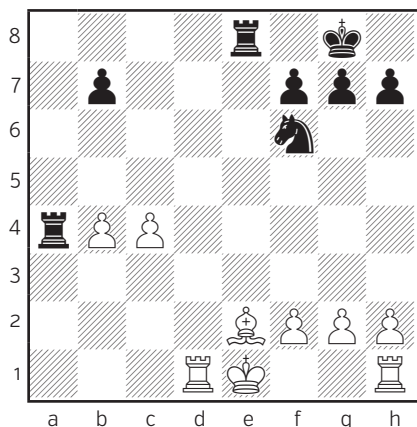
A lovely move, which confuses  
 White's pieces. Black could also play  
 in a different way: 23...b5 24.cxb5  
 ♗ac8 25. ♖c4 ♗xb2 26. ♘xb2 ♗a8  
 27. ♘d1 ♘d3 28. ♘e3 ♘xc4 29.bxc4  
 and perhaps White is a bit better.

24. ♗d2!

If 24. ♖xc2 ♖xd4 25.o-o ♗ad8  
 Black's pieces stand well, so White  
 would struggle.

24... ♘xb3 25. ♖xb3 ♗a1+ 26. ♖d1  
 26. ♗d1 ♖xa4 27. ♖xa4 would only  
 mean a different move order.

26...♔xd1+ 27.♖xd1 ♖xa4



28.f3

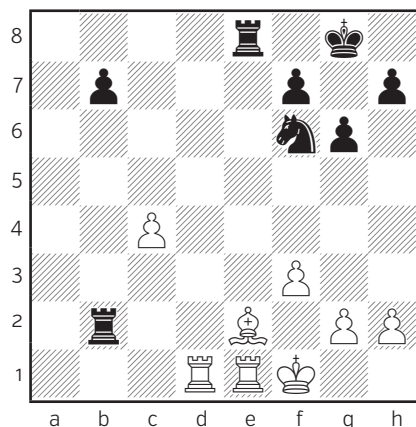
The dust settles and Portisch faces a long-lasting disadvantage and has to choose from unpleasant possibilities. Portisch suggested 28.g3!?, which would keep the f3-square free for the bishop. Against it the ambitious 28...♗e4 gives away the advantage after 29.o-o ♗c3 30.♙g4! ♗xd1 (30...♖xb4 31.♖d4) 31.♙d7 as White holds. But 28...♖xb4 29.♙f1 and 28...g6 would give a small, lasting edge as in the game. White could consider giving away an exchange for a pawn to free himself from passivity: 28.b5 ♗e4 29.o-o ♗c3 30.♙f3 ♗xd1 31.♖xd1 White has chances to hold despite the exchange deficit.

28...♖xb4 29.♙f2 ♖b2

Black has a small edge mainly because of the knight having more power than the bishop here.

30.♖he1 g6 31.♙f1?!

White could try 31.♖d3!? to ease Black's pressure with ♖e3, and Beliavsky says that it would equalise. It is hard to argue with such a player, but anyway I disagree with him and think that it would also not equalise fully because after 31...♙g7 32.♖e3 ♖c8 or after 31...♗h5 32.♖e3 ♖d8 33.♖e5 ♗f4 34.♙g3 ♖d4 Black would hold the initiative.



31...♗h5!

Alexander improves the knight.

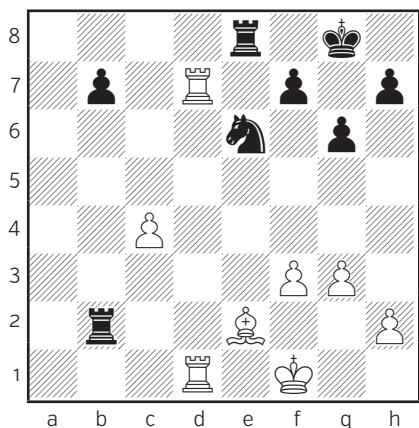
32.g3 ♗g7! 33.♖d7?!

33.f4! White should improve the bishop as if it reaches f3 it offers excellent chances to take the b7-pawn. 33...♗f5 34.♙f3 ♖e3 (34...♗e3+ 35.♙g1 ♙f8 36.♖b1 White manages to demolish the b7-pawn and secures the draw. Or 34...♖xe1+ 35.♙xe1 ♖xh2 36.♖d7 when White would be active enough to hold.) 35.♖d8+ ♙g7 36.♖xe3 ♗xe3+ 37.♙g1 ♗xc4 38.♖d7 b5 39.♙d5 ♗b6 40.♖xf7+

♔h8 41. ♖e6 and White gets away with it.

### 33... ♘e6 34. ♖ed1??

Portisch expects Beliavsky to place the knight on c5 and he wants to ease his position by exchanging a pair of rooks. But his move is a blunder and a cold shower awaits him. After 34. ♖d5 b6 White would certainly suffer a lot, but it would be far from clear whether Black could win. Interestingly Beliavsky attaches not even a single question mark to Portisch's blunder.



### 34... ♘d4!

This move forces a winning simplification. On 34... ♘f4 35. ♖d8 and on 34... ♘c5 35. ♖7d2 would bring White closer to holding.

### 35. R1xd4

Giving up the exchange would no longer resist because of 35. ♖xb7 ♖xb7 36. ♖xd4 ♖b2.

### 35... ♖exe2

The two rooks on the seventh are devastating: White can probably avoid getting mated, but it will cost him too many pawns.

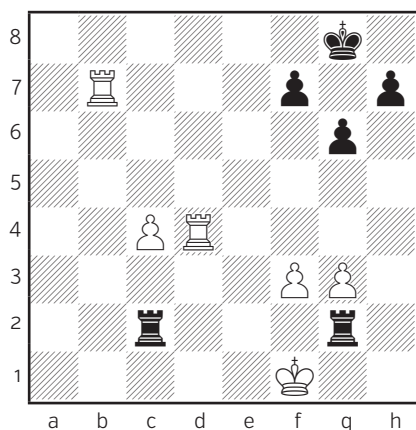
### 36. ♖xb7

36.h4 would likely last longer. 36... ♖h2 37. ♔g1 ♖bg2+ 38. ♔f1 ♖f2+ 39. ♔g1 ♖hg2+ 40. ♔h1 ♖xg3 41.h5 ♖h3+ (41... ♖xf3? 42.h6! White holds.) 42. ♔g1 ♖xf3 and Black wins.

### 36... ♖f2+ 37. ♔g1 ♖g2+ 38. ♔h1

Going in the other direction doesn't help: 38. ♔f1 ♖bf2+ 39. ♔e1 ♖a2 40. ♔f1 ♖xh2 41. ♔g1 ♖hg2+ 42. ♔h1 ♖gf2! Black must go after the f-pawn not the g-one. (42... ♖xg3?? 43. ♖f4) 43. ♔g1 ♖xf3 It may take some time, but Black surely wins.

### 38... ♖xh2+ 39. ♔g1 ♖bg2+ 40. ♔f1 ♖c2 41. ♔g1 ♖hg2+ 42. ♔f1



### 42... ♖gf2+ 0-1



Portisch resigns. The game was probably adjourned here and Portisch saw that he had no hope after 43.♔g1 ♖xf3 44.g4 ♖a3 45.♖b1 ♖a4 when White would lose a second pawn. By the way, on the last move Black could have ruined the win, as on 42...♖xg3?? 43.♖f4 and White can survive.



Believsky finished the event with 6½ points out of 13 games, sharing 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> places with Balashov. It was another world-class performance.

In the Soviet Team Championship he played well again, winning three games, drawing two and losing only one.

After a long time away, he produced a modest result in his home town of Lvov. His 6½ points out of 13 games and 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> place must have been a disappointment. It would be interesting to know why he lost 5 games?

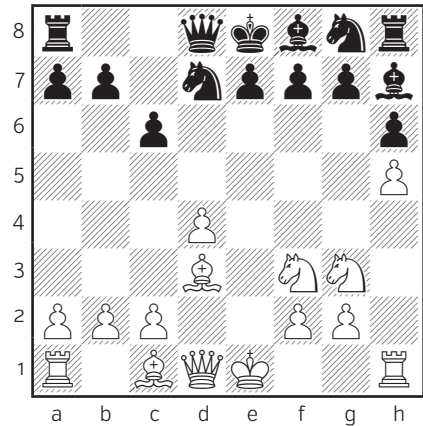
His next event was the Tilburg super-tournament. Believsky started the event with 1 win and 4 draws, and then he met Larsen. Let's look at that blitzkrieg victory!

• **A. Believsky**  
• **B. Larsen**

INTERPOLIS TILBURG [6], 1981



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗f3 ♘d7 8.h5 ♕h7 9.♕d3

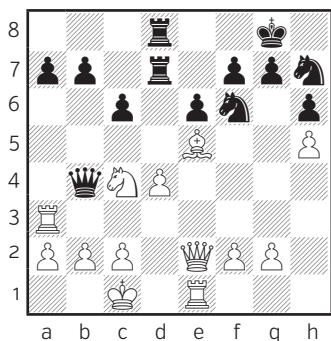


9... ♕xd3

Larsen will deviate from this game in their match-up at the USSR-Rest of the World match in 1984: 9...♗gf6 10.♕xh7 ♗xh7 11.♖e2 e6 12.♕d2 ♕e7 13.o-o-o ♖b6 14.♗e5 ♖d8 15.♖he1 o-o 16.♗g6 ♖fe8 17.♗xe7+ ♖xe7 18.♗f5 ♖ee8 19.♗d6 ♖f8 20.♕f4 ♗df6 21.♕e5 ♖d7 22.♖d3 ♖a5 23.♖g3 ♖fd8 24.♖a3 ♖b6 25.♗c4 ♖b4

• A. Believsky  
• B. Larsen

USSR-WORLD LONDON (4), 1984

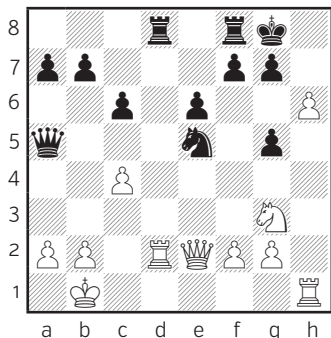


26. ♖d6! ♜xd6 27. c3 ♚b5 28. ♜a5!  
Believsky beautifully trapped Larsen's queen and went on to win.



10. ♚xd3 ♞gf6 11. ♙f4 e6 12. 0-0-0  
o ♙e7 13. ♞e5 a5

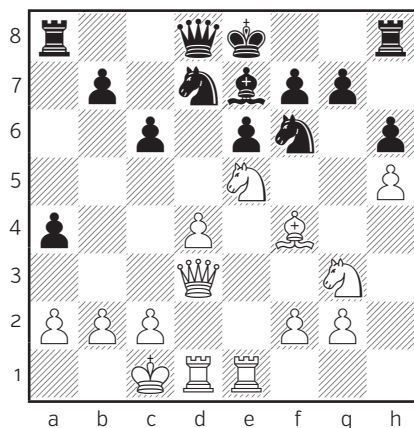
Larsen wants to improve on Believsky's game against Tal from the 1981 Soviet Team Championship which went 13...0-0 14. ♚e2 ♚a5 15. ♙b1 ♜ad8!? 16. c4 ♞xe5 17. dxe5 ♞d7 18. ♜d2 ♙g5! 19. ♙xg5 hxg5 20. h6 ♞xe5



21. ♜d5!! ♜xd5 (21...cxd5 22. ♚xe5 gxh6 23. ♜xh6 or 23. ♞h5 wins.) 22. cxd5 ♚xd5 23. hxg7 ♙xg7 and they agreed a draw here, ½-½ Believsky, A-Tal, M Soviet Team Championship, Moscow 1981. If they had played on the game would have ended like this: 24. ♞h5+ ♙g6 25. ♞f4+ gxh4 26. ♚h5+ ♙f6 27. ♚h4+ and White gives perpetual check.

14. ♜he1 a4??

This is a losing mistake; it's a luxury the great Danish player has no time for. 14...0-0 and 14...♞xe5 are both playable moves.



15. ♞g6!

Very nice, but not difficult to see.

15...♞d5

The knight on g6 is poisoned: 15...fxg6 16. ♚xg6+ ♙f8 17. ♜xe6 ♙g8 (17...♚e8 18. ♜de1 ♚xg6 19. hxg6 ♙b4 20. c3 ♙a5 21. ♙d6+ ♙g8 22. ♞f5 Black is hopelessly lost.) 18. ♞f5 ♙f8 19. ♞xh6+ White has

broken in. Beliavsky mentions that Larsen should have played 15...a3 on which he had planned 16.♔b1 with a clear advantage. He mentions that 16.♖xh8 axb2 17.♔b1 ♖a3 18.♗f7 ♕a8 and here the computer indicates that instead of his wrong 19.♖g6, the superior 19.♗d6 would win.

**16.♗f5!**

Beliavsky brings another piece against the king. 16.♖xh8 ♗xf4 17.♖f3 ♗g5 18.♔b1 would win as well.

**16...♗f8**

On 16...♗xf4?? 17.♗xg7 checkmates, or if 16...♗f6 17.♗xg7+ ♔d7 18.♗e5+ ♔c8 19.♗xf7 Black's position falls apart. The knights are poisoned: 16...exf5 17.♗xe7 ♗xf4 (17...♗xe7 18.♗d6) 18.♗xc6+ ♔f8 19.♖a3+ crushes Black, or if Black takes the other knight: 16...fxg6 17.♗xg7+ ♔f7 18.♖xg6+ followed by checkmate on the next move.

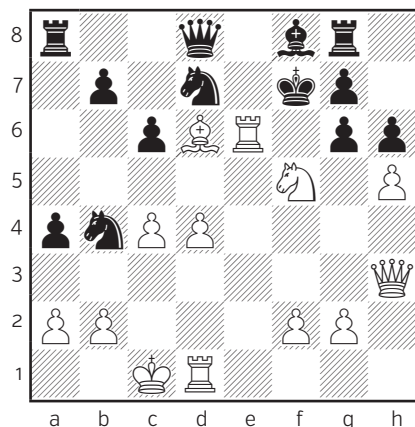
**17.♗d6**

White has far too many pieces around Larsen's king.

**17...♖g8 18.c4 ♗b4 19.♖h3 fxg6**

Larsen is kind to his younger colleague and allows him to enjoy himself. 19...♖a5 20.a3 ♗a6 21.♗xf8 ♗xf8 22.♗d6+ wins as well.

**20.♖xe6+ ♔f7**



**21.hxg6+ ♔xe6 22.♖e1+ ♗e5 23.♗xe5 1-0**

Larsen resigns. This was a massacre against a player who had a very bad day.



After this victory he won two more and then lost to Portisch. In the penultimate 10<sup>th</sup> round, Petrosian, who had the same number of points, did not try to beat him as White. And in the last round Petrosian did not try to win, while Beliavsky was White against Timman who also had the same number of points. Alexander beat the Dutch number one player in the Poisoned Pawn variation of the Najdorf. That game and his Huebner win can be seen in the notes to the Polugaevsky game.

He scored 7½ points, 5 wins, 5 draws and one loss. His openings worked incredibly well and he virtually won 4 in the opening, 3 of them in a ♗g5 Sicilian. His Tilburg event was a truly great performance.

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**T.K.:** When did you start to anticipate that you could win the Interpolis tournament?

**A.B.:** *Actually I was always sure I can win any tournament, if God will help me.*

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As usual, the year ended with the Highest League of the Soviet Championships. He was around 50 percent during most of the event after winning and losing quite a few games. With two wins in the last three rounds, he finished the event with 9 points, sharing 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> places. In 1981 he again proved that he belonged to the elite of world chess.

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#### Beliavsky's best results in 1981

Soviet Team Event Moscow — 3½/6  
 Supertournament Moscow — 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>  
 place — 6½/13  
 Soviet Team Event Moscow — 6/9  
 Lvov — 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> place — 6½/13  
 Tilburg — 1<sup>st</sup> place — 7½/11  
 Soviet Championship Frunze — 6<sup>th</sup>-  
 7<sup>th</sup> place — 9/17

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## 1982

On the 1982 January Elo list he was rated 2620 and shared the World ranking: 8-9.

In early 1982 Beliavsky participated in the Sarajevo Grandmaster tournament and had a great success, winning the event with 12½ points from 15 games. He remained undefeated, although 2 of his 5 draws looked pre-arranged. He produced one game with a fantastic finish; of course we will look at it.

### • A. Beliavsky • P. Popovic

SARAJEVO, 1982

////////////////////////////////////

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5  
 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♕g7 7.♘f3  
 c5 8.♖b1

The 8.♖b1 variation started to become popular in these years and Beliavsky employs this variation here for the first time, having already beaten Adorjan and Ljubojevic with 8.♕e3.

8...o-o 9.♕e2 b6 10.o-o ♖b7  
 11.♗d3 cxd4?

This is no longer in fashion, experience showing that 11...♕a6 and 11...e6 are more successful moves.