All,  
Although I would not usually write up a "friendly" game, I think this is worthy of note. It was played in competitive conditions down in Teignmouth in Devon on the south coast of England.  
This game shows how ideas from the greatest players can be replicated. Perhaps not in exactly similar positions, but how they can be imitated in a different fashion.  
The concept I duplicate here is the famous Karpov 24 Ba7! plan in his match against Unzicker in the 1974 Olympiad.

All will become clear at move 21.  
If nothing else is learnt from this, then simply take away the fact that lessons can be learnt from our predecessors.

Study and learn!  
[Event "Friendly"]

[Site "Teignmouth, ENG"]

[Date "2012.06.26"]

[Round "1"]

[White "Ross, Chris"]

[Black "Brusey, Alan"]

[Result "1-0"]

[ECO "C07"]

[WhiteElo "2231"]

[BlackElo "2033"]

[Annotator "Chris Ross"]

[PlyCount "63"]

[EventDate "2012.06.26"]

{C07: French Tarrasch}

1. e4 e6

2. d4 d5

3. Nd2 c5

4. exd5   
{It is interesting to note here that I paused when reaching this position, taking 60 seconds to decide on what variation I wished to play and to what setup I was going to adapt.   
I have taught other players that when you reach such a position after the second or third move in a game, take a breath, make a decision and then, you should be able to whip out your next 7 or 8 moves within seconds of each other. Make that decision, feel confident, and demonstrate to your opponent that you know perfectly well what you are doing, and how you wish to go about it. My next 14 moves were played in a matter of moments. It was move 17 when I next paused for thought.  
In a competitive game, this would give me a huge advantage on the clock.}  
4... Qxd5

{4... exd5 is the other main variation in this Tarrasch line. Both variations, I have scored heavily against.}  
5. Ngf3 cxd4

{Black wishes to liquidate the centre, seeking some freedom for development. This exchange though gives white a queen-side majority, which is important in an end-game.}

6. Bc4 Qd6

7. O-O Nf6

8. Nb3 Nc6

9. Nbxd4 Nxd4

10. Qxd4   
{A line designed to head for an end-game. White has the aforementioned queen-side majority, and the purpose of this side-line is to target the black queen-side weaknesses. The exchange of queens seems desirable for black, as it frees up his development concerns somewhat. Ultimately though, this takes away from his aggressive intensions. For my style of play, this suits me excellently, as I need not fear king-side attacks etc.  
10. Nxd4 is the main line, but a lot of theory has to be learnt there.}  
10... Qxd4

{10... Qc7 is the only way in which black can reject the offer of queen exchanging. White has a big lead in development then and a swift Bf4 or Bg5 will only increase this advantage.}  
11. Nxd4 a6

{The cracks in the black queen-side begin to appear. Nb5 was a big move for black to deal with as then the d6, c7 and a7 dark-squares are coming under a lot of pressure.

With this PR3 move though, it is the light squares around the black queen-side that now appear slightly vulnerable.}  
12. Be2   
{A curious move to conceive, but again, I have copied this idea from other strong players, such as Nigel Short.

The point is to relocate the bishop onto the long diagonal and target the black queen-side, especially so, the b7 pawn. The black queen-side development would then become rather awkward.  
The white light-squared bishop also steps away from the queen-side to permit the white pawn majority to begin it's advance. C2-c4 is also facilitated to control the important d5 outpost.}

12... e5

{An understandable break for freedom, but one which tends not to score very well for black. Indeed, if development is compared on both sides, white is very much in the lead. Although this central advance gains tempo, it also makes the E-pawn that much weaker. Black is wishing to begin his own majority advance and to open up his bishop on c8. If black can develop unhindered, he will equalise.}  
13. Nf3   
{The correct retreat for the knight. Pressure is placed on the e5 pawn, not giving black time to settle and develop. The tactics now become apparent in this opening.}  
13... e4?!

{Once again, black attempts to complete development by tempo-gaining moves. However, this only drives the knight back to its dominating central square and weakens the E-pawn even more.  
13... Bd6 has to be preferred. White then has a choice. He can attack the bishop immediately with 14. Rd1 gaining yet more time for development, or go for the subtle 14. Re1, with latent threats down the E-file and on the e5 pawn. I have played both before.}   
14. Nd4 Bc5

{Once again, black is under the allusion that tempo-gaining moves will aid him in his development difficulties.

14.. Bd6, with the idea of Be5 has to be the only real way to do this. The bishop would stand centrally and may have a future on f6. White would then place his rooks quickly on the E and D files and attempt to open things up with a future f2-f3.}

15. Nb3

{Each side is trading tempo-gaining ideas. This effectively cancels out the point of black's aim to equalise with threats. So, the development move Bf8-Bc5 has now not achieved anything at all, since the bishop has to relocate.}

15... Ba7

{15... Bd6 with the idea of Be5 has to be black's preferred choice here. As stated before, the bishop would stand centrally and would exert pressure on the white queen-side. As it is, the bishop targets the f2 square, which in fact, is not a weakness. The white king and rook defend the square adequately and unless another black piece can aim at it, the bishop is just a redundant piece. Yes, white has to be careful of e4-e3 tactics, but even those are easily deflected. The white king is perfectly safe on hg. There are plans for the white king though, which can be seen later.}

16. Bg5

{Completing development and finding the best square for the bishop. There is another obvious square for the piece, but that requires a deeper explanation. I was prepared to relocate to that if white had forced me to do so with an immediate 16... h6, but at least in that line, I would have forced the weakness, h7-h6. It is quite curious though that the initial destination for the bishop is actually effective, and the plan-B concept for the bishop is used for a different plan instead. All will become apparent soon enough. Move 21 is the key strategy moment.  
See below for opening references for the alternative plan for move 16.}

16... O-O

{A plucky plan. Black declares that he is not concerned about the doubling of his pawns. He considers the bishop pair and the open G-file an adequate enough compensation for the shattered pawn formation. Although this is a sound evaluation, it needs deeper consideration, which will soon come into play. 16.. Nd5 is worthy of note.}

17. Rad1

{The first time I paused for thought. Naturally, the rooks need development, but where are the rooks destined. I was aware that the queen's rook may be needed for the queen-side advance, and hence, 17. RFd1 came into contention. However, abandoning the E-file so easily did not seem a great idea. Then, came the concept of black forcing an eventual e4-e3. Or, indeed, a capture on e3. If that was so, then, I would need the king's rook to control the half-open F-file. A consideration, which is important in the long-term schemes of things. Again, we look forward to move 21 here, which was an idea I was already edging my play towards.  
Naturally, the 7th-rank penetration square, d7, is a key square for consideration. As it is, there is no easy way to get there. For the time being, that is.   
Eventually, I landed on the easiest and simplest route, figuring that the queen-side majority would have to take a slower path to advance.}

17... Bf5

{This bishop's development is almost impossible to resolve.  
17... Bg4 has tactical consequences, and the simple 18. Rfe1 would exert pressure down the E-file if nothing else. The e4-pawn would come under tremendous pressure eventually.}

18. Nd4   
{Relocating the knight with tempo. The knight is passive on the queen-side, but a deeper plan is now initiated.}  
18... Bg6   
{The bishop is retreated from attack. However, this bishop retreat releases the protection of the d7 square, my penetration square. This is critical now for black.}   
19. c3   
{Solidifying everything. An excellent consolidation move. There are no longer any e4-e3 and then Bxc2 tactics looming for black. The knight on d4 is secured and black needs to find a plan.}

19... h6?  
{After which, black is pretty much in a losing position.

The PR3 move only provokes white into his course of action, which is massively deeper than what black perceived. Black is wishing to form, and advance, some kind of king-side pawn advance. Although this is an acceptable plan of action, the tempi lost in its execution is fatal.

The only way for black to continue in this game was 19... Nd5, when 20. g3 (to stop Nf4 ideas - as well as provide a flight square for the king on g2, when f2-f3 is played) gives black hope to cling on.}  
20. Bxf6 gxf6

{The crucial position. White now needs to instigate his winning strategy.  
Here, the Karpov game, previously mentioned, gave me the inspiration to understand how to proceed with this game. The strategy is similar if not exactly replicated.   
This position needs some deep consideration. I would suggest that time is taken over this and a long-term game plan formed. The notes to my 21st move are extensive.}  
21. Nc2!  
{Several features now need to be taken into consideration. We first track back to move 16. Bg5. In the opening references below, we can see that 16. Be3 has been played before. This is a plan to neutralise the bishop on a7, but as I have explained, the black dark-squared bishop has little danger for white. No, it is the pawn formation, which is important there. Take the f2 pawn and then put that on e3 in the current position. Yes, the pawn would be isolated, but in fact, it would not be weak in the slightest. The dark-squared bishop, which could attack the apparently weak pawn, would have had to be exchanged to force the pawn there. The F-file would become open, and the f5 square controlled. The black doubled F-pawns would become a huge target.  
With that in mind, white does not fear any exchanges on e3, as then the white pawns would stand on dark squares, opposite to that of black's remaining bishop, on g6, and hence, not a weakness in an ending.

Now consider the knight on d4. Yes, it is ideally out posted and stands solidly. What squares is it actually controlling though? b5, c6, e6, f3 and f5 are all controlled by black forces.

Solid as the piece is on d4, it can seek out a better outpost, and as our friend Nimzowitsch keeps reminding us, a outposted knight should be blocking an isolated pawn. OK, the e4 pawn is not strictly speaking isolated, but black is reluctant to play f6-f5 if he can avoid it, as this would block in his bishop.  
From e3, the knight controls c4 (assisting a queen-side pawn advance by white), d5 (an important central point, from where the knight can spring into the black king-side or mop up some valuable queen-side pawns), f5 (also a mini outpost), and g4. In effect, maximising the potential of the outposted knight.

Let us study the white light-squared bishop. How is that to participate in the white game-plan. This can emerge on c4, controlling the d5 square, which is a solid plan. White is wishing to eventually advance on the queen-side, and c2/c3-c4 will be prevented in that regard. So, we focus our attention on the other route, onto g4. ON g4, the bishop would control the f5 square, a mini outpost in front of the black doubled F-pawns. So, Bg4 appears to be a good positional plan.   
OK, now comes the most important feature. The open D-file. Open files are to be controlled. The knight manoeuvre allows the D-file to become open and controlled by the white rooks.  
How though, since black can challenge the open file by placing a rook on the open file himself.  
How then, is white to double on the open D-file without extensive exchanges occurring?  
Here, good old Karpov provides the answer.

Karpov has demonstrated how the penetration square (often the 7th rank of an open file) can be used as a plug to permit the doubling of rooks behind it, until the time, when deemed necessary by the doubler, to unplug the file with advantage to the controller of the file.   
Confoluted in it’s wording, but the basic concept is clear. Control the 7th rank with a plug and double behind it. When possible unplug it and win tactically.

How then, is the open file to be temporary blocked.   
Here is the Karpov game in its entirety. Move 24 is the key plan in this particular game:

Karpov-Unzicker, Olympiad 1974.  
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. O-O Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 O-O 9. h3 Na5 10. Bc2 c5 11. d4 Qc7 12. Nbd2 Nc6 13. d5 Nd8 14. a4 Rb8 15. axb5 axb5 16. b4 Nb7 17. Nf1 Bd7 18. Be3 Ra8 19. Qd2 Rfc8 20. Bd3 g6 21. Ng3 Bf8 22.

Ra2 c4 23. Bb1 Qd8 24. Ba7 Ne8 25. Bc2 Nc7 26. Rea1 Qe7 27. Bb1 Be8 28. Ne2 Nd8 29. Nh2 Bg7 30. f4 f6 31. f5 g5 32. Bc2 Bf7 33. Ng3 Nb7 34. Bd1 h6 35. Bh5 Qe8 36. Qd1 Nd8 37. Ra3 Kf8 38. R1a2 Kg8 39. Ng4 Kf8 40. Ne3 Kg8 41. Bxf7+ Nxf7 42. Qh5 Nd8 43. Qg6 Kf8 44. Nh5 1-0

So, my positional plan now is to play my bishop around to g4, plug up the D-file by playing Bd7 and simply double up behind the bishop.}  
21... Rad8

{Black challenges the open file. Naturally. Otherwise, the immediate Rd7 is penetrating).  
22. Ne3 f5

{Black had little choice now. As stated, the positional plan of Bg4 and Bd7 is just too strong to meet.  
White would then play Rd5 and Rfd1 and uncover the bishop, unplugging the D-file at the same time, when it becomes tactically beneficial for white. A simple, but extraordinarily strong plan.}

23. g3

{Now black has played f6-f5 (to prevent Bg4/Bd7), his own light-squared bishop has been rendered temporarily useless. However, despite the apparent deceptive nature of the f5-pawn, it is actually a weakness. White now intends to target that weakness.  
First, f5-f4 has to be prevented, disturbing the knight on its outpost. A deeper reason for the move is actually the idea here.}

23... Kg7

24. Kg2

{No, not mimicking black, but actually getting on with the implied strategy. White is removing the king off the a7-g1 diagonal and tactical tricks by the bishop on a7 are avoided. White is now intent on forcing f2-f3, opening up the F-file and making the f5 pawn a big target. Sure, the knight on e3 will need a flight square first and d5 seemed to be its route. F2-f3 then would put the question to the pawn on e4.}

24... Kf6

{Black seemingly wishes to centralise his king and defend his weak pawns. Again, a neat enough plan, but in reality he is running his king into grave danger.}  
25. Nd5+   
{Executing the aforementioned plan. The white F-pawn is now free to move.}   
25... Ke5?

{After which, there is no hope. Black steps into dangerous tactics. The idea of a centralised king is nice, but it cannot be maintained. Due to the loose nature of the black king, the tactics have to work for white.   
Black had to grim and bear the misery now and step backwards with 25... Kg7 and hope to hold. F2-f3 would put the question to the black centre and whether black can hold it, is another question in itself.}   
26. f4+

{Perhaps the idea black had missed. The black king is becoming entombed and discoveries are looming everywhere here.}  
26... Kd6

{A very scary move to have to play. 26.. exf3 allows 27. Bxf3 and the F-file has become open (making f5 a big target), but then Rfe1+ is going to be very awkward to meet. The black king is being cut down along the central files. Notice that 27. Bxf3 protects the apparently loose knight on d5. Again, when in a Positionally superior position, the tactics often work themselves out. However, here cool calculation is required to find the coup de grace. Again, all the positional features should be taken into consideration and no immediate knock-out sought.}   
27. g4!  
{Hitting that "weak" f5 pawn, as previously mentioned. There is no immediate good discovery with the knight move. If nothing is apparent, then the discovery is not necessary. Keeping it in bay is more effective than its actual execution.

All the tactics just flow for white now. The base of the pawn chain (e4-f5) is struck, thereby weakening the spearhead (e4), and files and ranks forced open. Black is now in zugzwang.}  
27... Ke6

{27... fxg4 28. f5 wins the bishop on g6. Any retreat to h7 or h5 allows an effective discovery with the knight, by 28. Nf6+ winning the loose black light-squared bishop. Any other move by black would allow Ne3+ discoveries and gxf5. A rook move to g8 allows Nf6+ and any other rook move is not improving its position. The text-move is desperately attempting to find a tactic to solve the situation. The knight on d5 is now loose.}

28. Bc4

{Black moves out of one discovery, just to step into another. The last white piece is activated. The knight is once again placed in a discovery position. The black king has no sanctuary. Black has not got a decent move available.}  
28... fxg4

{Not finding any solution to his problems, black desperately sacrifices his bishop for two pawns, hoping that his pawn mass will provide him some compensation.}

29. f5+ Ke5

{29... Bxf5 loses even more radically to 30. Ne3+ and then either Nxf5+ or Rxf5# will be played.}

30. fxg6 fxg6

{Black has some pawns for his piece. As stated previously, good positional strategy often allows the tactics to find themselves. Once again, white has a resource to demonstrate his positional superiority. The natural instinct here was 31. Ne7 but there is no response to 31... Rxf1 32. Rxd8 Rf2+ when that bishop on a7 has been justified. Note that 31. Ne7+ Rxf1 32. Nxg6+ allows Kf6.   
That in itself gave me the clue to the finesse here, since the king can step onto the F-file after the exchange on f1. How then to stop Rxf1 and allow Nxg6?}

31. Nf4   
{There is some irony that the f4 square is used as a springboard to win further material. The black king has no safety in the centre of the board.}   
31... Rxf4

{31... Rxd1 32. Nxg6 and the point is that the black king cannot step onto the F-file. 32... Kd6 is forced, when I can take on d1 with check and then snaffle the rook on f8 with the knight. Lovely finishing tactics.}

32. Rxd8

{Winning a rook. There are no Rf2+ tactics and the rook on f4 must be exchanged. The game is over.}

32... 1-0

Opening references  
  
A.

13... Bd6 14. Rd1 Bc7 15. Bd2 O-O 16. Bb4 Re8 17. Bd6 Bxd6 18. Rxd6 Bd7 19. Rad1 Bc6 20. Nd2 Rac8 21. Kf1 Kf8 22.

Nc4 Ne4 23. f3 Nxd6 24. Nxd6 Ke7 25. Nxe8 Bxe8 26. Bd3 g6 27. Re1 Kd6 28. Rd1

Bakalarz,M (2408)-Andersson,U (2579)/Warsaw POL 2005/1/2-1/2 (95)}

B.

15. c3 O-O 16. Bg5 Ng4 17. Rad1 Ne5 18. Nb3 Bb6 19. Be7 Re8 20. Bc5 Bxc5 21. Nxc5 f5 22. Rd6 Nf7 23. Rb6 Nd8 24. Rd1 Ne6 25. Bc4 Kf7 26. Rdd6 1-0 Westerinen,H (2335)-Andersen,D (1899)/Ballerup DEN 2012}

C.  
16. Be3 Bxe3 17. fxe3 Be6 18. Nd4 Rc8 19. c4 Ke7 20. b3 Rhd8 21. Rad1 a5 22. h3 h6 23. Rf2 Rc7 24. Bf1 Nd7 25. Rfd2 Rcc8 26. g4 Nc5 27. Bg2 h5 28. g5 f5 29. gxf6+ gxf6 30. Rf1 Rg8 31. Kh2 Rg5 32. Nxe6 Nxe6 33. Bxe4 Nc5 34. Bd5 Re5 35. Rg2 Ne6 36. Bxb7 Rb8 37. Bd5 Rxe3 38. Rf3 Rxf3 39. Bxf3 a4 40. bxa4 Rb4 41. Re2 Kd6 42. Bxh5 Rxa4 43. Bf7 Ng5 44. Bd5

Ra3 45. Bg2 Ne6

Atakisi,U (2406)-Al Modiahki,M (2564)/Athens GRE 2006/1-0 (77)

Chris Ross  
June 2012