

West Of England & South Wales Team Tournament

Market Lavington, Saturday 26th January 2007

Introduction

- I've given each of the games a quick run-through, and made some overall comments.
- 3 games (or fewer!) is not a lot to go on, so if you think I have got things wrong, you may know better than me. Also I missed a few games: if you send them in, I'll have a look and add them to the list.
- Do read the comments on other player's games.
- If you want me to explain any more about what I've said, please feel free to ring on 01392 431 785 or e-mail me at chessnut@blueyonder.co.uk
- If you want to know what books or other materials might help you, I can suggest a few things (but I'd hate it to feel like homework!)
- I've got a bunch of stuff for young people on the Internet at <http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/juniors.html>
- If you don't have access to the Internet, or have trouble using it, then get in touch with me directly and I can print it out or recommend some other study material.
- Previous instalments of these U14 match reviews can be found online:
 - http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/Praxis/u14_20043.pdf
 - http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/Praxis/u14_2005b.pdf
 - http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/Praxis/u14_2006.pdf
 - And this one is: http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/Praxis/u14_2007.pdf
- Again, if you can't get at them, and want to read them, let me know.
- I managed to drop a couple of games down the back of the computer; I'm really sorry if it was one of yours. If you want to send it to me, I'll send you back some notes.

Dave Regis, February 2007

Results

Board Number	U14	Colour	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		TOTAL
			Opponent	Colour	Opponent	Colour	Opponent	Colour	
1	Harry Mann	B	1	B2 B	0	B1 W	0	A1	1
2	Robert Thompson	W	0.5	A2 W	0	A1 B	1	B2	1.5
3	George Darling	B	1	A3 B	1	A4 W	1	B3	3
4	William Norton	W	0.5	B3 W	0	B4 B	1	A4	1.5
5	Tim Seah	B	0.5	B6 B	1	B5 W	1	A5	2.5
6	Laurens Stegink	W	0.5	A6 W	1	A5 B	1	B6	2.5
7	Alex Billings	B	1	A7 B	1	A8 W	1	B7	3
8	Kieran Stanbury	W	0	B7 W	0.5	B8 B	0	A8	0.5
9	Charles Rochford	B	0	B10 B	0.5	B9 W	0.5	A9	1
10	Blaise Radley	W	1	A10 W	0	A9 B	0	B10	1
11	Sam Head	B	1	A11 W	1	A12 W	0	B11	2
12	Savanna Bonstow	W	0	B11		B	1	A12	1.5
12	Max Biddlestone	W		B11 W	0.5	B12			
R	Max Biddlestone	B	0.5	A13			1		2.5
R	Savanna Bonstow			B	1	A13			
R	Chris Clay		1	u9	1		0.5		2.5

Games of each round

Three games that stuck in my mind from each of the three rounds:



Round ① Alex had a fantastic back-and-forth fight – having been dead lost, he kept going, kept active, took his chances and won! Great attitude even if some of the moves weren't quite as great.

Round ② Laurens' very sensible game – not in the least bit spectacular but it was all very calm and in control and did plenty enough to win.

Round ③ Charles' very gritty defence over 70 moves where he stood worse from about 10! It takes a lot of character not to play carelessly and not to give up, and he fully deserved the half-point.

It was a tough year: last year Harry and Rob played a couple of games each that were just great examples of junior chess – this year they couldn't show us what they can do because the opposition wouldn't let them!

Some comments below are made with punctuation:

! Good move !? Tricky or interesting move

? Poor move ?! Dodgy or risky move

Openings

This is what you played:

Bd	Rd		Player	ECO	Opening name	Result	Moves
1	1	B	Harry	D53	Queen's Gambit Dec	1	18
1	2	B	Harry	B78	Sicilian Defence, Dragon Variation	0	19
1	3	W	Harry	A50	Black Knight's Tango	0	17
2	1	W	Rob	A45	Trompovsky	½	42
2	2	W	Rob	A45	Trompovsky	0	33
2	3	B	Rob	E70	King's Indian Defence	1	52
3	1	B	George	C68	Ruy Lopez (Spanish Game)	1	31
3	2	B	George	C60	Ruy Lopez (Spanish Game)	1	36
3	3	W	George	D00	Queen's Pawn game	1	30
4	1	W	William	C70	Ruy Lopez (Spanish Game)	½	22
4	2	W	William	C63	Ruy Lopez (Spanish Game)	0	7
4	3	B	William			1	
5	1	B	Tim	D50	Queen's Gambit Dec	½	34
5	2	B	Tim			1	16 p
5	3	W	Tim	C49	Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defence	1	33
6	1	W	Laurens	D35	Queen's Gambit Dec	½	14
6	2	W	Laurens	D50	Queen's Gambit Dec	1	29
6	3	B	Laurens	B54	Sicilian Defence, Accelerated Dragon	1	10
7	1	B	Alex	C10	French Defence	1	39
7	2	W	Alex	C00	French Defence	1	53
7	3	W	Alex	C64	Ruy Lopez (Spanish Game)	1	59
8	1	W	Kieran	C11	French Defence	0	32
8	2	W	Kieran	C65	Ruy Lopez (Spanish Game)	½	39
8	3	B	Kieran	C46	Old Stodge	0	48
9	1	B	Charles	C44	Three Knights' Game	0	30
9	2	B	Charles	C50	Four Knights' Game	½	10
9	3	W	Charles	C44	Old Stodge	½	73
10	1	W	Blaise			1	
10	2	W	Blaise	C55	Two Knights' Defence	0	38
10	3	B	Blaise			0	1 p
11	1	B	Sam	C55	Two Knights' Defence	1	25
11	2	W	Sam	C20	Scholar's Mate variation	1	11
11	3	?	Sam	B31	Sicilian Defence	0	10
12	1	W	Savanna	B27	Sicilian Defence	0	32
12	2	B	Savanna			1	27
12	3	B	Savanna	C20	Scholar's Mate variation	1	27
13	1	B	Max	B07	Pirc/Modern Defence	½	61
13	2	W	Max	A04	Irregular opening	1	45
13	3	?	Max	C44	Old Stodge	1	32
14	1	?	Chris			1	
14	2	W	Chris	C25	Irregular King's Pawn Opening	1	51
14	3	?	Chris			½	

ECO = Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings code

Opening tally

OPENING	COUNT
Ruy Lopez (Spanish)	7
Sicilian Defence	5
Queen's Gambit	4
Other King's Pawn	4
French Defence	3
Old Stodge (sigh)	3
Other Queen's Pawn	2
Trompovsky Attack	2
Two Knights' Defence	2
Scholar's Mate Variation	2
King's Indian	1
Irregular opening	1

General comments on the openings

Some of you aren't following the basic rules of the opening: I don't know if anyone has explained all these to you before, so, just to be clear:

There are 3 basic goals of the opening

① Get all your pieces out – as quickly and aggressively as you can

You should aim to develop so quickly and so aggressively in the opening, that if you opponent makes the slightest mistake, they are going to get checkmated early on. Some of you were content just to get a piece or two out safely...

② Get castled

③ Get at least a share of the centre

I sometimes add a fourth one, just because it's something people find hard to do:

④ Open a file for your rooks

To get your rooks going, you have to open a file; to open a file, you have to arrange a pawn swap. So, right from the start, you have to be thinking about which file you are going to open. For example, after 1.e4 e5, then you should be thinking that you should play d2-d4 or f2-f4.

Some other tips about getting all your pieces out quickly:

①a Don't move the same piece twice (especially your Queen)

①b Don't make necessary moves with Pawns - you have to move two to get your bishops out, and maybe you move your bishop-pawns to support the advance of your d-pawn or to hit at the centre or open a file. But otherwise, you need a very good reason to move a pawn.

One last point: **try and avoid blocked positions** where no pawns have been exchanged or can be exchanged. They are hard to play for both sides and players often complain that they don't know what to do. This particularly applies to the very common Old Stodge system (1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.d3 d6); so my fifth rule is:

⑤ Don't play Old Stodge

Some of you are still playing 'baby' openings like **Old Stodge** and going for the four-move Scholar's Mate: **learn a proper opening**. If you play the **Giucoco Piano** with **1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5** you really have to play **4.c3** or the **Evans' Gambit** with **4.b4**. I've written a lot about this before, and don't want to repeat it all here. You can find it online in the links on the front page; if you can't get online to read them, I'll send you one. I think it's also explained in some book or other, which I could lend you... or sell you...

Having said all that, I was actually quite impressed with the team's opening play. In the last 5 years, I have written a lot about the 'baby' openings, but this year there was a lot of **Ruy Lopez** openings (also known as the Spanish Game) about, which is a very grown-up system. Some players, when they stop playing Old Stodge, often go right the other way, playing Queen's Pawn openings and Semi-Open Defences, but there's nothing wrong with playing other e-Pawn openings like the **Scotch Game** and Ruy Lopez, which are still played by Grandmasters.

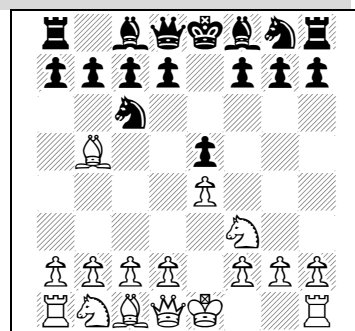
I haven't written about the Ruy Lopez in these booklets before, because I haven't had the pleasure of seeing it played. So...


How to play the Ruy Lopez

This opening is named after the Spanish priest who was the strongest player of his day. The opening is still generally considered the best way to keep White's initiative going.


1 e4, e5; 2 Nf3, Nc6; 3 Bb5 **DIAGRAM**

The house that Ruy built: the Bishop attacks the Knight that defends the Pawn attacked by the Knight. Simple enough, but the Ruy Lopez (Spanish Game) has proven to be a very rich land to explore, full of variety, and players of every style have played it for both sides.




 *White cannot win the e-pawn straight away*

It would be great if it worked so simply: even if Black doesn't move at all, **4 Bxc6, dxc6! 5 Nxe5?! Qd4!** (or **5...Qg4!**) and Black will regain his pawn through the *double attack*. So, the immediate threat to the pawn isn't quite so deadly, but the pawn on e5 is a lot easier to get at than the one on f7, and Black can get badly tied up or just stiff and cramped trying to hold on to his claim to the centre.

 *Simple development gives Black a cramped game*

The most natural sequence of moves lead to trouble for Black: after **1 e4, e5; 2 Nf3, Nc6; 3 Bb5, d6; 4 d4, Bd7; 5 Nc3, Nf6; 6 0-0, Be7; 7 Re1, exd4; 8 Nxd4, O-O; 9 Bf1!** (to stop the exchanges threatened by 9...Nxd4) when Black has lots of pieces and not enough space.

 *Black cannot hold the e-pawn by simple development*

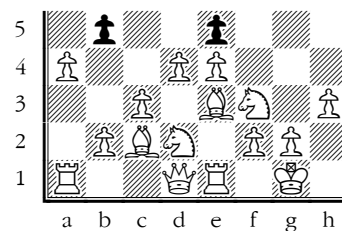
Why play **7...exd4** when the idea is to hold on in the centre? Tarrasch's famous trap showed that Black cannot play **7...0-0** because of the forcing continuation **8 Bxc6, Bxc6; 9 dxe5, dxe5; 10 Qxd8, Raxd8; 11 Nxe5, Bxe4; 12 Nxe4; Nxe4; 13 Nd3, d5; 14 f3, Bc5 +; 15 Nxc5** (if 15 Kh1, Nf2+ uncovers an attack on the Rook), **...Nxc5; 16 Bg5, Rd5; 17 Be7, Rf7** and now **18 c4** wins the exchange. (If instead 10...Rexd8 White would have 15 Kh1 (15...Rxd3; 16 fxe4).) This analysis had a strong effect on players who started to realise just how good the Ruy Lopez is. The Giucoco Piano is a great opening for your early chess years; the Ruy Lopez is an opening for life.

White can get a strong, flexible position by playing natural moves

White often plays the moves that William played in his first game, arriving at this sort of position. It's very easy to understand and very flexible.

- White has an advantage in the centre (two pawns to one) and at any point can either block (d5) or open (dxe5) the centre when Black isn't ready.
- White can attack on the Queen's-side along the a-file
- White can attack on the King's side by playing Nd2-f1-g3-f5!

You might wonder about the moves of the Rook's pawns: a4 is often played to attack a pawn on b5, and h3 is often played to stop Black pinning the Knight. Black's position can usually hold 3 minor pieces easily enough, but with all four it can feel a bit cramped, so denying g4 to the Bc8 is a good idea in this position.



Defending the Lopez as Black

Black has many lines, which fall into basically two approaches (as usual): defence or counterattack. Defence of the strong point at e4 we have looked at with **3...d6**, the *Steinitz Defence*, (or **3...a6; 4 Ba4, d6**, the *Deferred Steinitz Defence*), but we have seen that the point cannot be held for long; counterattack may be attempted with **3...Nf6**, the *Berlin Defence*, or **3...a6; 4 Ba4, Nf6**; the *Morphy Defence*. In reply to the Morphy, the obvious **5 Nc3** is rather boring, but White can play **5.O-O** as Black cannot really win the e4 pawn. The Morphy has itself a strong point line, **5 O-O, Be7; 6 Re1, b5; 7 Bb3, d6**, the *Closed Morphy Defence*, and a counter-attacking line, **5 O-O, Nxe4; 6 d4, b5; 7 Bb3, d5**, the *Open Morphy Defence*. These are real Grandmaster openings, which means they are very strong, but there's also a lot to them, and you will always find players who know a bit more than you about them. But that's true of any opening!

There are lots of alternative defences for Black

Almost everything on move three has been tried for Black: a6 a5 Nd4 Nge7 g6 g5 f5... Continuing with the basic plan of c3 and d4 is usually OK for White, but some of them do need you to have thought about before you get to the board (like 3...f5).

Avoiding the main lines as White

One way of avoiding the heavy theory of the Morphy defences is to try and open the centre with **5 d4** or first **5 Qe2** (idea O-O and Rd1). These moves lead to more familiar open and attacking e-pawn styles of game. An example: **1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. d4 exd4 6. O-O Be7 7. Re1 b5 8. Bb3 d6 9. Bd5 Nxd5 10. exd5 Ne5 11. Nxd4 O-O** **DIAGRAM**

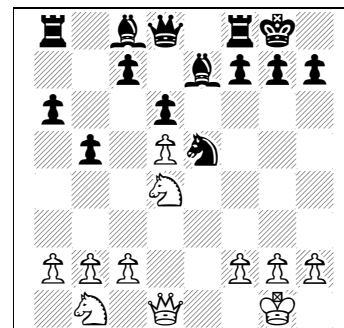
This is about even, and, I hope, a game you would enjoy playing as either colour.

See also:

<http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/Openings/ruylopez.html>

http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/Endings/ruy_xchg.html

<http://www.chesskids.com/grownups/lopez06.pdf>



Middlegame

Strategy

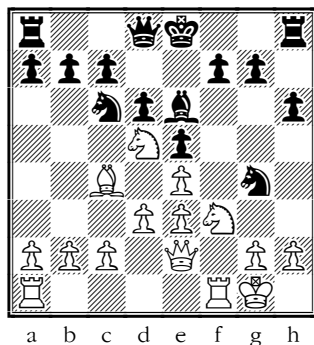
Some comments occurred in lots of games:

- Don't go on a raid with just one piece
- If your opponent makes a raid with just one piece, don't waste time worrying about it!
- Playing safe can be dangerous: you must play actively!

This is all pretty obvious, but here I've pulled together a few ideas that are not so obvious.

The first thing is, **play openings that suit you**. That is likely to be open games and not stodgy ones.

This game was agreed Drawn at this point



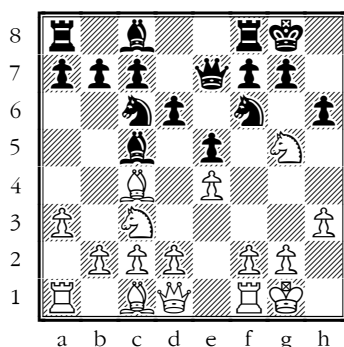
A comment after the game was interesting: "I couldn't think of anything to do". That's the trouble with these Old Stodge positions.

You need something better to play than Old Stodge – and if you can avoid it as Black too, all the better.

As you are playing the opening, you should be starting to think about how to play the early middlegame. If you don't know what to do, then find out or choose another opening!

I found myself writing a lot this year about **exchanges**. A lot of beginners tend to swap off automatically, or try to avoid exchanged. Most exchanges are a little bit better for one side or the other, and . Take a look at these examples:

<p>In this position, should Black try to exchange Bishops with ...Be5?</p>	<p>In this position, should White exchange rooks with 28.Rxe8?</p>	<p>In this position, should White exchange with 17.Nxe7+?</p>
<p>YES. When you're winning, swap off pieces!</p>	<p>I thought NO, because it gives Black control of the e-file.</p>	<p>A good Knight for a bad Bishop? NO. White leaves himself with a rotten Bishop against a very good-looking Knight.</p>



One last example:

Here, White swapped twice on f7:

9 Bxf7+ Rxf7

10 Nxf7 Qxf7

Most of White's developed pieces vanish while Black loses only a sleepy Rook.

Usually it takes forever for White to get the Rooks into play. In the meantime, Black's pieces will romp all over White's position!

There are lots of others below: have a browse and see if you can improve your thinking about exchanging.

Something that I think some of you don't do ever so well is **set your opponent problems**. This is similar to the 'play actively' comment above. You're sometimes too content just to play a move and wait for your opponent to make a mistake. You might get lucky, playing that way, but your opponent is much more likely to make a mistake if you set them some problems, put some pressure on their position.

I think this is how NOT to do it. White has developed all their pieces to safe squares... but they are all too safe, really. They aren't attacking anything and they aren't putting any pressure on Black's position. Black is free to develop how they like.

Black wants to put the Bf8 on the 'Italian' diagonal with 6...Bc5. So...

6.Be3!
Gives Black a problem about how to develop actively.

31 b4
Not bad, but not really trying to set Black any problems.
[Instead, White should be trying things like 31.Nd4! Bf7 32.bxc4 bxc4 33.Bh5! Bg8]

Neither of these suggestions is a killer, but if you make life difficult for your opponent, I promise you, they will make mistakes!

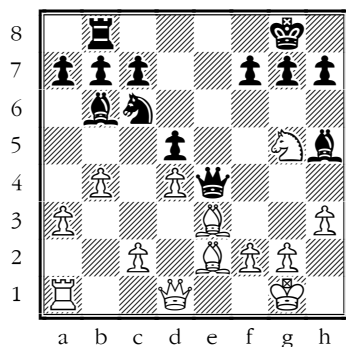
Tactics

First of all, some basics.

I (and other coaches) often say there are four responses to a threat:

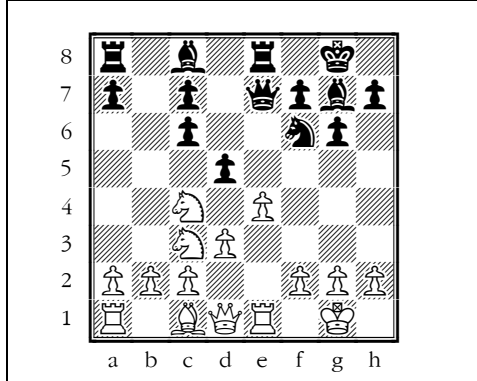
- A = Avoid (move)
- B = Block
- C = Capture
- D = Defend

In fact there is one more: **counterattack!** Let's see:



Complicated! Black has a Bishop and Queen under threat... What should Black play?

18 ... Qf5?
*Actually just lost a piece
But 18...Bxe2! is a counter-attacking move which saves the piece..*



This was an amazing moment. In order to make opportunities work for you:

- Look at every check
- Look at every capture

This should have been enough for Black to have at least one look at:

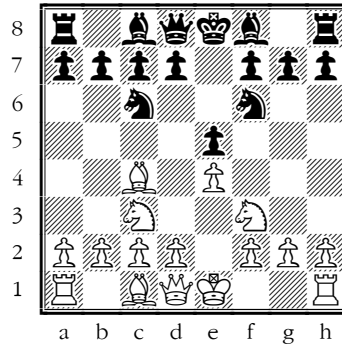
11...Qxe1+ 12.Qxe1 Rxe1#
The instinct to protect the Queen is a good one, but it's not the most important thing in chess – that's checkmate!

A common position from the **Two Knights' Defence** after

3...Nf6

and

4. Nc3

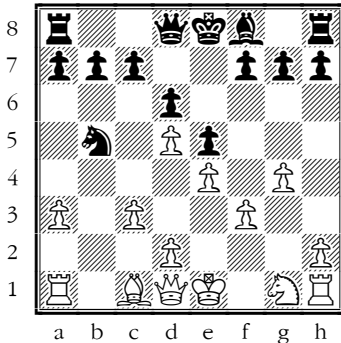


4...Nxe4!

is a simple equaliser for Black.

I mention this every year. Pass it on!

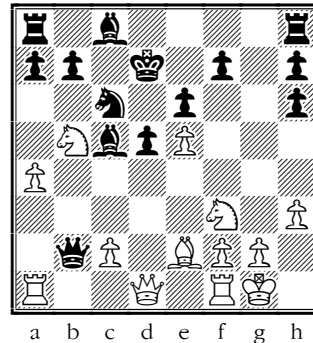
The tactical theme that I noticed particularly this year were **nets** (the others are mates, jumps (discoveries), pins, forks, and ties (undermines and overloads)).



Here's a simple one: Black has developed only one piece, but maybe it is about to disappear!

12. a4!

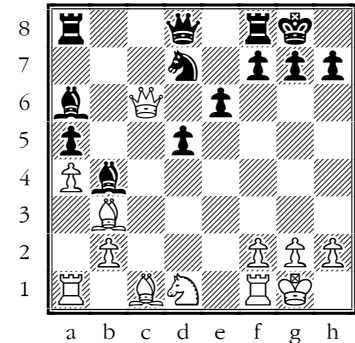
Wins the Knight, which has no retreat.



They always say, don't snatch pawns with your Queen...

13.Rb1! nets it

If 13...Qa2 14.Nc3 Qa3 15.Rb3 traps the Queen, making Black give up a piece with 15...Bxf2+]

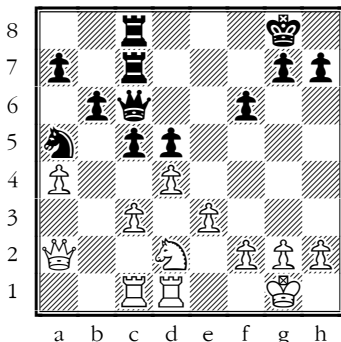


Another Queen has made a solo raid into enemy territory...

18...Ne5 19.Qc2 Bd3

Catches it! Rather a neat one; usually if the Queen can get back to her own lines, she's safe... not this time!

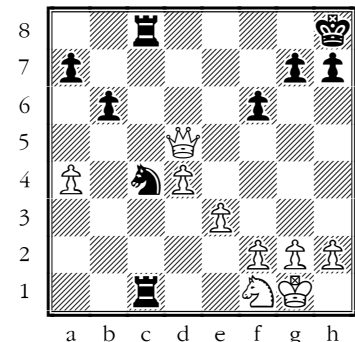
Related to the comments I made above about exchanges, there were a couple of opportunities for people to give up their Queen in exchange for 2 rooks or other material. I don't know how you feel about that: I would jump at the chance. It can be hard to keep a Queen under control, but if you are careful it's usually a win for the pieces over the Queen. Here was ones:



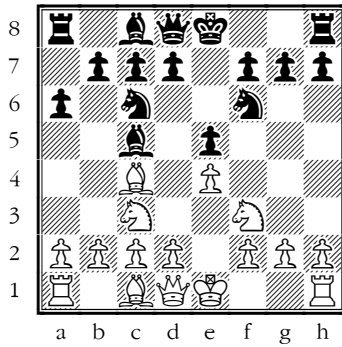
Black in this position can exchange Queen and Pawn for two Rooks and a massive bind:

[32...cxd4 33.cxd4 Qxc1 34.Qxd5+ Kh8 35.Rxc1 Rxc1+ 36.Nf1 Nc4!]

Not necessarily winning, but maybe the best attempt.



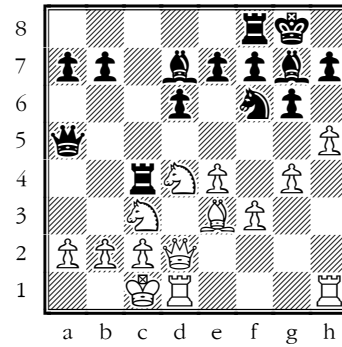
Also, make sure the ideas you know from books or advice actually work in the position in front of you.



Can White play the standard trick with...

6. Nxe5?

Because 6...Nxe5 also attacks White's own Bishop on c4, this trick doesn't work.



Can Black play the standard sacrifice

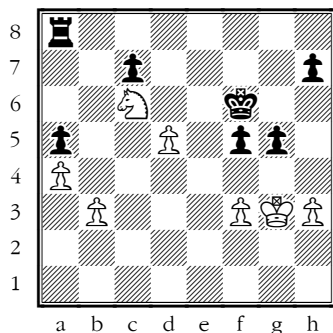
15...Rxc3?

Black normally hopes to get something more than a pawn out of this: either destroying White's centre (after ...Nxe4), or breaking up White's defences (after bxc3) or getting an attack (after ...Qxa2). In the game, Black didn't get any of these, as White exchanged Queens with

16. Qxc3 Qxa2 17. hxg6 fxg6 18. Qb3 +!

Endgames

Through some expert score-keeping this year, I actually had a lot of endgames to look at. Here are some key ideas in the endgame, which occurred in your games:



You know that in the endgame you should try and make and advance a **passed pawn**. So, surely that means you shouldn't make a passed pawn for your opponent!

Here, White played f3-f4, which allowed Black to make a Passed pawn straight away.

Don't help your opponent!

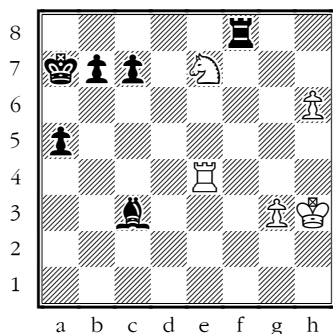
[Actually, "Don't help your opponent!" applied to lots of games – see the games for other examples!]

In this position, Black moved back with the King to b8.

In the endgame, if you're in no danger of being checkmated, then your King is a useful fighting piece – maybe worth more than a Bishop or a Knight!

In Exeter we say "KUFTE": King Up For The Endgame!

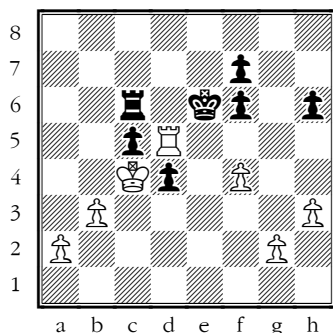
So, rather than retreat to defend the c-pawn, ...c7-c5! Would have been better, followed by moving the King up to support the pawns.



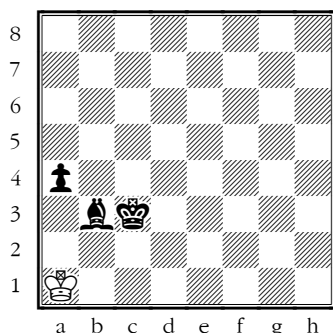
White won this endgame even though Black's passed pawn is further advanced.

White has got the dangerous pawn firmly blockaded but can also point to one big advantage: White's own passed pawn is an **outside passed pawn**.

Black is going to have to go a long way over to try and stop it, and then White can nibble the King's side.



There are some **basic endgame positions** you should know... and this is one of them. Sadly, it's a draw, because Black cannot control the **queening square**, and so the White King can never be squeezed out of the corner.

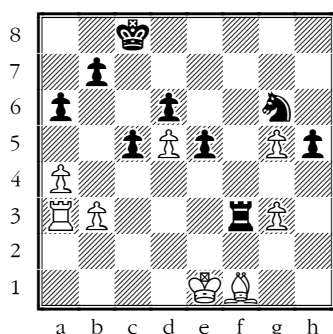


White is in a lot of trouble here. They moved:

31 Ra2

Good! Leaving the Rook defending there was just losing.

Rooks are rotten defenders. If you can **make your Rook active**, even at cost of a pawn sometimes, then you must.



The Games

Harry Mann

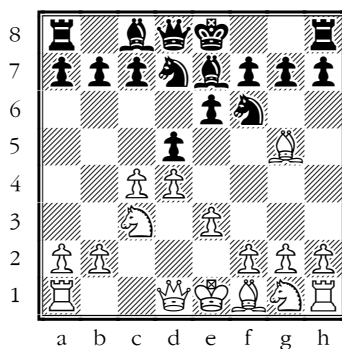
General: Not a huge number of moves to go on – of course you're right to concentrate on the game and not keeping score. Of the opening moves and early middlegames that I have, you're playing solid, thoughtful chess, but there were things to improve on in each opening. Unfortunately, you're playing at a level where your opponents are good enough to take advantage of them!

If you have some complete games kicking about, and you'd like some comments, feel free to send them to me.

Harry (Black) [D53] (1.1)

You had a tricky position to handle as Black after an early inaccuracy and dealt with it very well.

1 d4 d5
2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Nf6
4 Bg5 Nbd7
5 e3 Be7

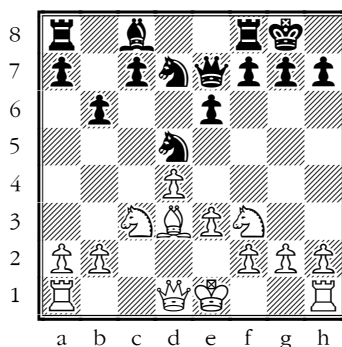


6 cxd5 Nxd5

leaves Black without a stake in the centre.

[6...exd5]

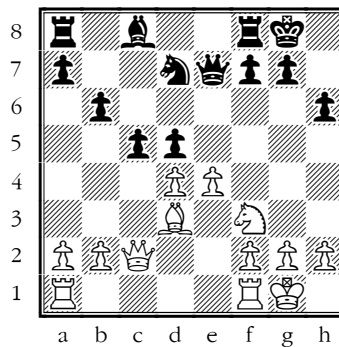
7 Bxe7 Qxe7
8 Bd3 0-0
9 Nf3 b6



10 Nxd5

[10.e4 makes the point about Black's lack of central control.]

10 ... exd5
11 0-0 c5
12 Qc2 h6
13 e4

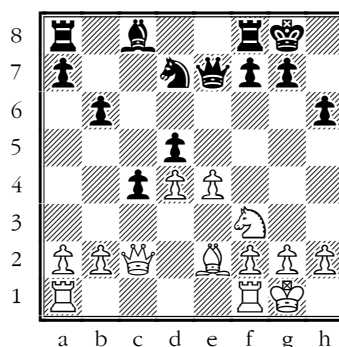


13 ... c4!

A good solution to Black's problems.

[13...dxe4 14.Bxe4 Rb8
15.Rfe1±;
13...Bb7 14.Rfe1±]

14 Be2

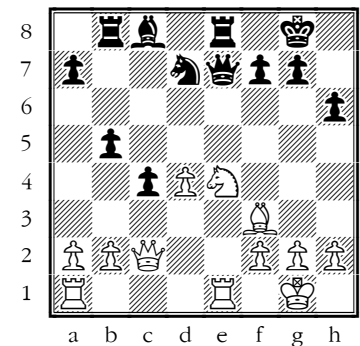


14 ... dxe4

[14...Qxe4 I think is a very slightly better choice:
15.Qxe4 dxe4 16.Nd2 Nf6
17.Nxc4 Rd8 18.Rfd1 Be6
White's d-pawn is weak,


even though the e-pawn is more exposed.]

15 Nd2 b5
16 Nxe4 Re8
17 Bf3 Rb8
18 Rfe1



White's more active pieces probably still give him an edge, so I'm guessing you did well to win this.

...0-1

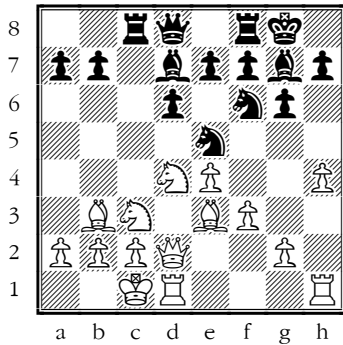
 Always make sure you have a share of the centre

Harry (Black) [B78] (2.1)

A stock sacrifice somehow didn't work well for you; as you improve you will understand when the ideas in books do and don't work.

1 e4 c5
2 Nf3 d6
3 d4 cxd4
4 Nxd4 Nf6
5 Nc3 g6
6 f3 Bg7
7 Be3 Nc6
8 Bc4 0-0

9 Qd2 Bd7
 10 0-0-0 Rc8
 11 Bb3 Ne5
 12 h4

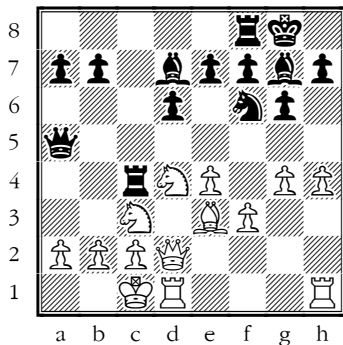


White intends to deliver the traditional checkmate mate by Bh6 h5 Bxg7 hxg6 Qh6, perhaps throwing in a Rook sacrifice if Black plays ...Nxb3. This is probably mate in 7-8 moves, so Black had better hurry with some distraction.

12 ... Nc4

[12...h5 can be a hard nut to crack.]

13 Bxc4 Rxc4
 14 g4 Qa5



A very knowledgeable opening from both players!

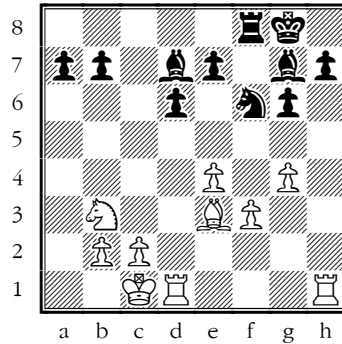
15 h5 Rxc3

A good idea as a rule, but it's better if you can double White's pawns. Often then you don't need pawns in compensation because White's position is so weak.

[15...Rfc8]


16 Qxc3 Qxa2
 17 hxg6 fxg6

18 Qb3+ Qxb3
 19 Nxb3



One pawn is not enough for the exchange, especially now the Queens are off. (In opposite-side castling positions, being the exchange down somehow doesn't seem to matter: you're both attacking with the same number of pieces – but you do need the Queens to stay on.)

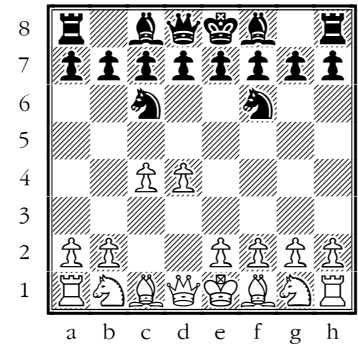
...1-0

 Pay attention to which pieces you want to swap off and which you want to keep on the board.

 **Harry (White) [A50] (3.1)**

This happens occasionally; you meet something new and miss the point. (My first game at a chess club went 1.e4 e5 2.Qh5 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Qxf7#... I was Black.) However, there was one point when the story could have been very different; White and Black weren't really looking!

1 d4 Nf6
 2 c4 Nc6



The Black Knight's Tango. Not bad and not very well known. One idea you saw in the game, to blockade with e5 (like in the King's Indian and Old Indian) before shutting in the King's Bishop by d7-d6.

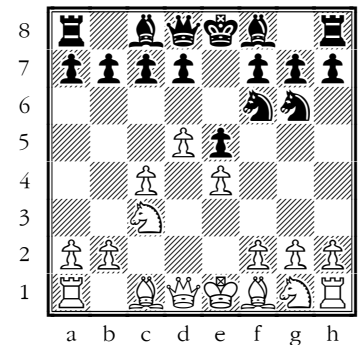
3 Nc3

[3.Nf3 seems to cut across Black's idea nicely]

3 ... e5
 4 d5 Ne7
 5 e4

[5.h4! immediately makes the point about the congested knights.]

5 ... Ng6



6 Bd3

White's Bishop is just queuing behind the e-pawn.

[6.Be2 offers more of an active role.]

[6.Be3! stops Black's natural Bishop development.]

6 ... Bc5
 7 Nge2

Just developing, not really thinking about ideas Black might have.

[In hindsight, threatening a King's-side advance like the Sämisch line in the King's Indian might have been best:
7.f3!?

Black's Knights might be good targets. However, White still has obvious dark-square problems.]

7 ... Ng4!

and White is losing at least a pawn.

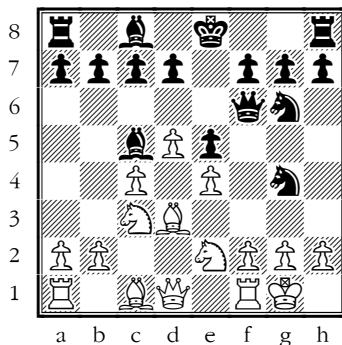
8 0-0?

makes things worse!

8 ... Qf6?

looks reasonable but lets White off the hook.

[8...Qh4! just wins!]



9 h3

Just forces Black to carry out their idea: literally anything else would have been more constructive.

[9.Qe1! holds!;

9.Be3 is as bad as the game.]

9 ... Nxf2

10 Rxf2 Qxf2+

11 Kh1 Nh4

12 Nf4

[12.Qg1! is relatively best.]

12 ... exf4

13 Qf1 Qxf1+

[13...f3]

14 Bxf1 f3

15 gxf3 Nxf3

16 Bf4 d6

17 Nb5

And White is toast.

...0-1

Even when it looks like you're losing, look again!

Don't help your opponent carry out their plan.

Robert Thompson

General: Bags of ambition, lots of chess common sense – a shame you didn't come away with more points, but at one moment I was afraid you were going to come away with fewer! I didn't spot any tactical oversights in your game, which is most impressive, so I have made some general strategic observations which are really just dusting in the corners. The basic thing that you could work on is becoming more paranoid – is this really good? What could go wrong here?

Rob(White) [A45] (1.2)

A very interesting long game, with lots to enjoy and learn from.

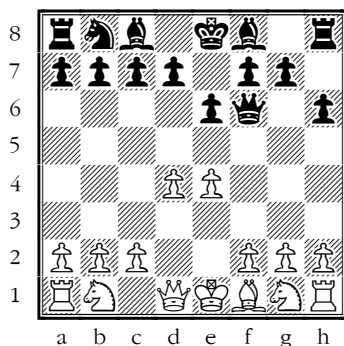
1 d4 Nf6

2 Bg5 e6

3 e4 h6

[3...c5]

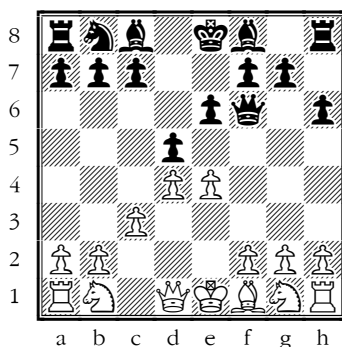
4 Bxf6 Qxf6



5 c3

[5.Nc3 Bb4 is the 'interesting' system, which might suit your style better.]

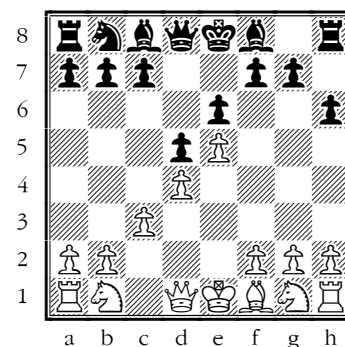
5 ... d5



Andrew Martin raves about this approach - going for a French Defence with the two Bishops - but it also acquires a dead Bc8 and changing the pawn structure so that White's Bishop will thrive, so I tend to prefer to the old Karpov recipe of keeping the pawns back, even if it means

Black always has to watch for a White break.

6 e5 Qd8



7 f4

Ambitious!

7 ... Be7

If Black were a French player, they would play

[7...c5!]

8 Nf3 0-0

9 Bd3 Re8

[9...c5!]

10 0-0 c5

At last! Black has to put pressure on the White centre.

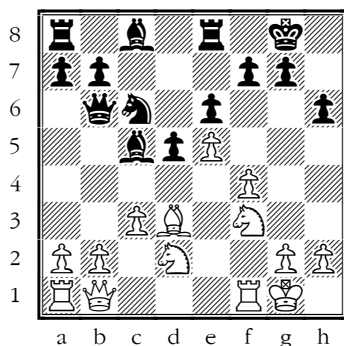
11 Nbd2 Nc6
12 Qb1

looks awkward - not just for the Queen, but also the Ra1

12 ... Qb6
13 dxc5

[13.Nb3 just about works:
13...c4 14.Bh7+ Kh8
15.Nbd2]

13 ... Bxc5+



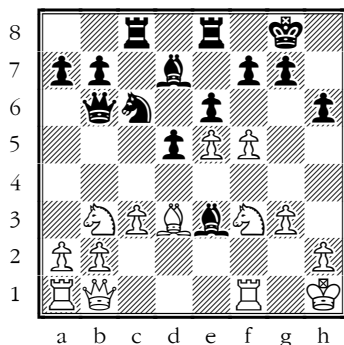
This is the sort of thing that spooks me about the Tromp: losing control of the central dark squares. I prefer Black's position here.

14 Kh1 Be3

Doesn't co-ordinate with anything.

15 g3 Bd7
16 Nb3 Rac8
17 f5

Good idea!



17 ... Qc7

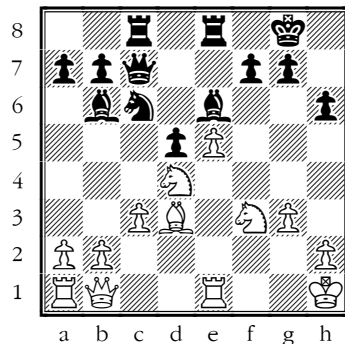
[17...exf5 18.Bxf5 Bxf5
19.Qxf5 g6 Not an easy move to spot, but wins a

pawn as the Be3 holds the h-pawn.]

18 Re1 Bb6

Black is starting to get congested after his optimistic ...Be3 move.

19 fxe6 Bxe6
20 Nbd4

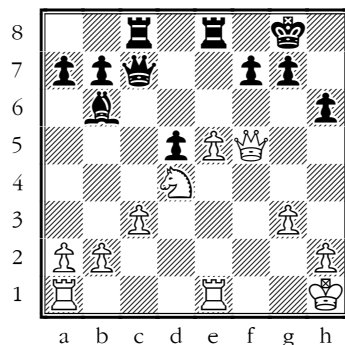


20 ... Bg4

[After the counter-intuitive 20...Bxd4 I think Black has a plus:

A) 21.Nxd4 Nxd4
22.cxd4 Qb6 and it's awkward: 23.Rd1? (23.Qd1 Kh8 24.Be2 Bf5 25.Bf3 Rc4) 23...Bg4;
B) 21.cxd4 21...Qb6 Black snags the d-pawn.
22.Rd1 Bg4]

21 Bf5 Bxf5
22 Qxf5 Nxd4
23 Nxd4



23 ... Rcd8

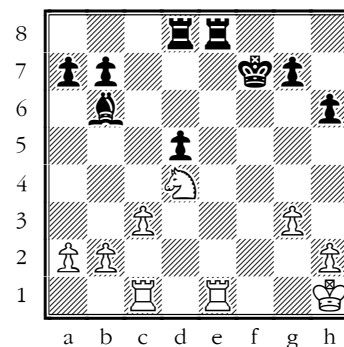
[23...Bxd4 24.cxd4 Qc2]

24 Rac1 Qd7

White is getting hold of the tiller again.

25 e6 Qe7
26 exf7+ Qxf7

27 Qxf7+ Kxf7



28 Rxe8

Played instantly, but this exchange leaves Black with the file.

28 ... Rxe8
29 Rf1+ Kg6
30 Nf3?

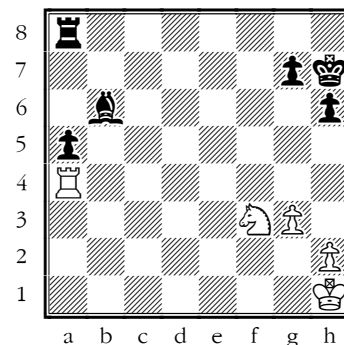
Allows the enemy Rook in.

[30.Kg2 before you get trapped.; 30.Rd1 drawing attention to the weak d-pawn]

30 ... Re2
31 Rd1 Rxb2
32 Rxd5 Rxa2
33 Ne5+ Kh7
34 Rd7 Rc2
35 Rxb7 Rxc3
36 Rd7 Rc7

[36...a5 is the toughest to meet.]


37 Rd1 Rc8
38 Nf3 Ra8
39 Ra1 a5
40 Ra4




½-½

Drawn here, but Black would lose nothing by playing on, for example:

- 40 ... Re8
 41 Kg2 Re2+
 42 Kh3 Kg6

 Exchanges are usually good for one side or the other: make sure it's you!

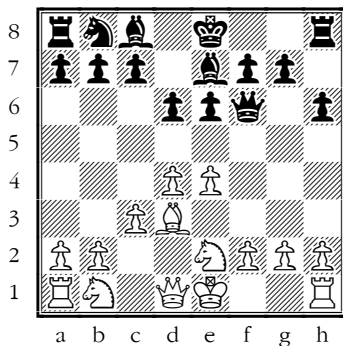
 **Rob (White) [A45] (2.2)**

A game where you got your pieces out of synch with your pawns – a shame in your specialist opening!

- 1 d4 Nf6
 2 Bg5 e6
 3 e4 h6
 4 Bxf6 Qxf6
 5 c3

[5.Nc3]

- 5 ... d6
 6 Bd3 Be7
 7 Ne2



- 7 ... e5

Black makes the other advance, when again holding back may be a smarter idea.

[7...a6 8.0-0 b6]

- 8 d5

Sends both King's Bishops to sleep. It's another of those positions where Black has two Bishops and a solid position but not much scope for one of the Bishops. Who will activate their King's

Bishop first is an important question!

[I would have been happier to keep the tension with 8.Nd2 or; 8.0-0 which are moves you are always going to want to make.]

- 8 ... Qh4

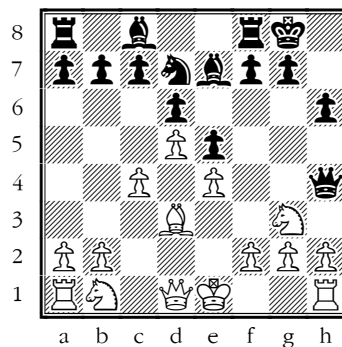
I'm not convinced by this lunge of Black's: what is this supposed to co-ordinate with?

- 9 Ng3 0-0

- 10 c4

[10.Nd2 is always going to be useful.]

- 10 ... Nd7



- 11 b4

White isn't developed enough for this, and just hands Black the half-open a-file against a weak pawn. What threat do you have here if it was White to move?

- 11 ... a5!

- 12 bxa5

[12.b5 is ugly (starting to play draughts!) but has hopes of restricting Black's activity.]

- 12 ... Rxa5

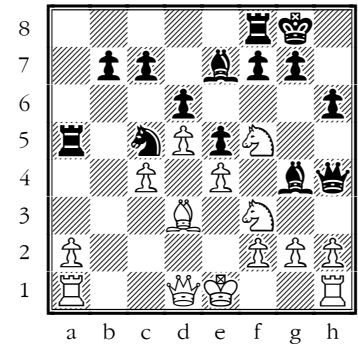
[12...Nc5 Black is better on both sides of the board.]

- 13 Nd2 Nc5

- 14 Nf3 Bg4

[14...Qf6]

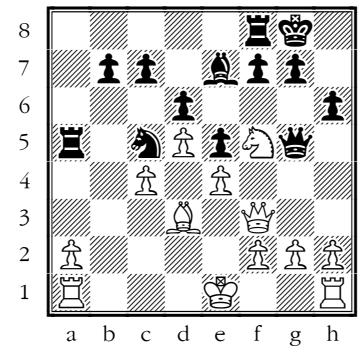
- 15 Nf5



- 15 ... Bxf3

[15...Qf6! idea ...Bxf5 and ...e4]

- 16 Qxf3 Qg5



- 17 Nxe7+

A good Knight for a bad Bishop! White leaves himself with a rotten Bishop against a very good-looking Knight.

- 17 ... Qxe7

- 18 Be2 Qh4

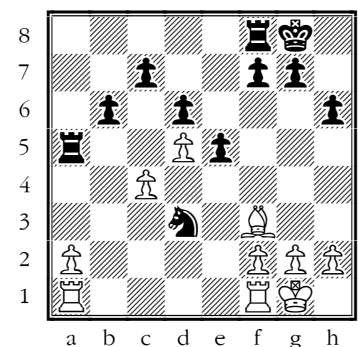
Black seems determined to attack with the Queen: this time, it does co-ordinate with the Knight to attack e4.

- 19 Qe3 b6

- 20 0-0 Qxe4

- 21 Bf3 Qd3

- 22 Qxd3 Nxd3



It's hard to see how White is going to make trouble for Black, mostly because the Bishop is still not doing anything positive.

23 **Be4** **Nb4**
 24 **a3** **Na6**
 25 **g4**

Yeuch, another pawn on a white square.

25 ... **Nc5**
 26 **f3** **Rfa8**

The penny has dropped for Black about where he should be attacking.


27 **Kf2** **Rxa3**
 28 **Rxa3** **Rxa3**
 29 **Bf5** **Rc3**
 30 **Ra1** **g6**
 31 **Bb1** **Rxc4**


White is busted.

32 **Ra7** **Rc1**
 33 **Be4** **Nb3**

[33...b5! 34.Rxc7 Nxe4 + 35.fxex4 Rxc7]

0-1

 Again, exchanges are usually good for one side or the other: make sure it's you!

 **Rob (Black) [E70] (3.2)**

A classic King's Indian Queen's-side attack – but make sure you win when you're winning!

1 **d4** **Nf6**
 2 **c4** **g6**
 3 **Nc3** **Bg7**
 4 **e4** **0-0**
 5 **Bg5** **d6**
 6 **Bd3**

Looks as though White is making it up as he goes along.

[6.Be2 is the Averbakh and ;

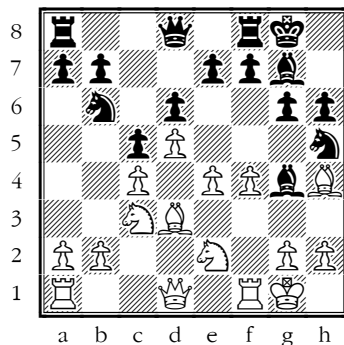
6.f3 looks like a Sämisch.]

6 ... **h6**
 7 **Bh4** **Nbd7**

Looks a little passive to me: I'd like it to go to c6 if possible.

[7...c5; or 7...e5]

8 **f4** **Nh5**
 9 **Nge2** **c5**
 10 **d5** **Nb6**
 11 **0-0** **Bg4**



12 **Rc1**

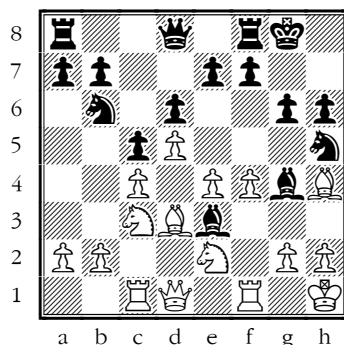
I don't see the point of that. White should be building up on the e-file and planning e4-e5 or f4-f5.

[12.Qd2! saves the pawn against Black's idea.]

12 ... **Bd4+**
 13 **Kh1**

[13.Bf2 Bxc3 14.Rxc3 Nxf4]

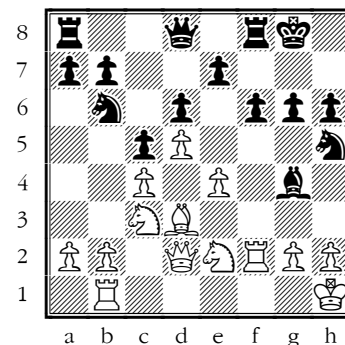
13 ... **Be3**



Very neat: Black has got behind the hollow shell of White's centre and the Bh4 looks terribly misplaced.

14 **Rb1** **Nxf4**
 15 **Bg3** **Nh5**
 16 **Bf2** **Bxf2**

17 **Rxf2** **f6**
 18 **Qd2**



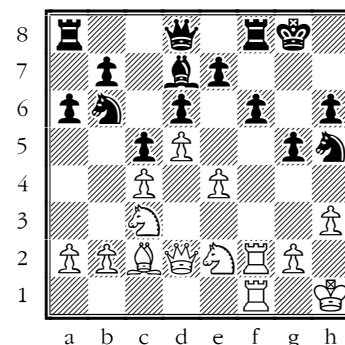
18 ... **g5**

Just starting to play draughts... don't lose that light-squared Bishop!

[18...Kh7!]

19 **h3** **Bd7**
 20 **Rbf1** **a6**
 21 **Bc2?**

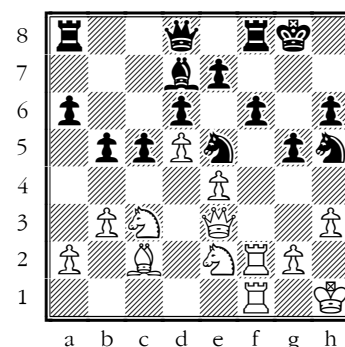
[21.b3]



21 ... **Nxc4**

"They're like peanuts, you know." - Stephan Gerzadowicz.

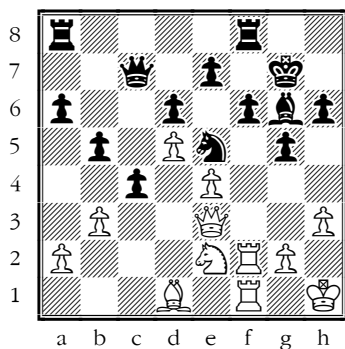
22 **Qc1** **b5**
 23 **b3** **Ne5**
 24 **Qe3**



OK, what's your plan here? You end up playing ...c5-c4, but if that's the best idea,

then don't move all your pieces over to the King's-side first!

24 ... Qc7
 25 Ng3 Ng7
 26 Bd1 Be8
 27 Nf5 Nxf5
 28 Rxf5 Bg6
 29 R5f2 Kg7
 30 Ne2 c4



31 b4

Not bad, but not really trying to set Black any problems.

[Instead, White should be trying things like 31.Nd4! Bf7 32.bxc4 bxc4 33.Bh5! Bg8]

31 ... Nd3
 32 Rf3 Nxb4
 33 a3 Nd3
 34 Ng3 Qa5

[34...Qc5; 34...a5]

35 Nf5+ Bxf5
 36 exf5 Ne5
 37 Rg3 Rfc8

[37...Rac8]

38 h4 Rc5

39 Bf3 c3

There is only one thing that can go wrong with this position, and it nearly did! [Namely, Black moves everything over to the Queen's-side and allows a blow on the other wing.]

I think around this point, you were actually showing some ideas to another player on another board. It's possibly illegal, probably rude but definitely asking for trouble – concentrate on your own game!

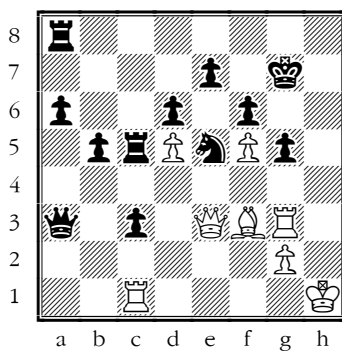
[39...Rh8 is prudent.]

40 Rc1

Unnecessary.

[White should go for his plan now: 40.hxg5 hxg5 41.Rxg5+ fxg5 42.Qxg5+ Kf8 43.Qh6+ (43.Bh5; 43.f6)]

40 ... Qxa3
 41 hxg5 hxg5



42 Rxg5+!?

You're lucky that this isn't a draw by perpetual, or worse.

42 ... fxg5
 43 Qxg5+ Kf8
 44 Bh5

[44.Qh6+; 44.f6!?!]


44 ... Nf7
 45 Qg6 Qxc1+


Killing.

46 Kh2 Qf4+
 47 g3 Qd2+
 48 Kh3 Ng5+
 49 Kh4 Rc4+
 50 Bg4 Nf3+
 51 Kh5 Qh2+
 52 Bh3 Qxh3#

I always like these King's Indian games where Black starts off manoeuvring on g6, then b6, then b3, then g3, a big sweep around the whole board.

0-1

 The main thing that can go wrong, when you are winning, is for you to think: 'nothing can go wrong'.

 There is no position which is so good you can't lose from it, and no position which is so hopeless you can't escape from it.

George Darling

General: Just fine: good moves, good score, very little to complain about. I wasn't terribly convinced by your game plan as White – have another think about how to handle moves 8-16 in your games. Otherwise you just need to dig a little deeper all round to get better – but that is true for every chess player!

George (Black)[C68] (1.3)

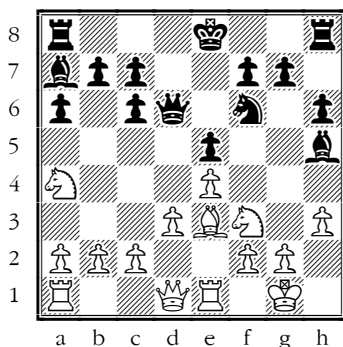
A tough, slow game of manoeuvre, but you came out of it all the winner.

1 e4 e5
2 Nf3 Nc6
3 Bb5 a6
4 Bxc6 dxc6
5 d3

[5.d4 is an easy system to understand, but it's only equal.;

5.0-0 Bg4 6.h3 h5 is the crucial line... White is supposed to get a small advantage eventually, but it needs a good memory and/or steel nerves to get it.]

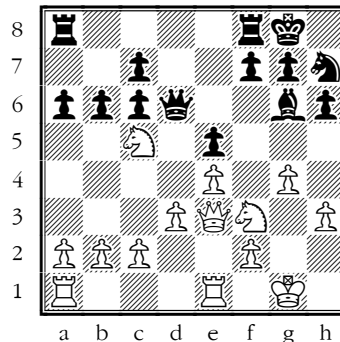
5 ... Bc5
6 0-0 Bg4
7 Nc3 Nf6
8 h3 Bh5
9 Bg5 Qd6
10 Na4 Ba7
11 Re1 h6
12 Be3



12 ... Nh7

[12...Bxe3 13.Rxe3 0-0-0 says Fritz, but I fancy (13...Bxf3 before White sends the Bishop to sleep with g4, like the Winter game.)]

13 g4 Bg6
14 Bxa7 Rxa7
15 Qd2 0-0
16 Qe3 Raa8
17 Nc5 b6



18 Nb3

That knight hasn't been happy all game.

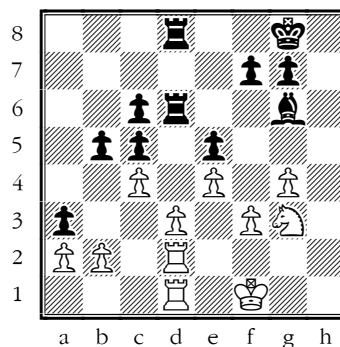
18 ... c5
19 Kf1 Rfd8
20 Rad1 Qe6
21 Rd2 h5

[21...f6]

22 Ng5 Nxc5
23 Qxc5 hxg4
24 Qxc4 Qxc4
25 hxg4 a5


[25...f6]

26 c4 a4
27 Nc1 a3
28 f3 c6
29 Red1 Rd6
30 Ne2 Rad8
31 Ng3 b5

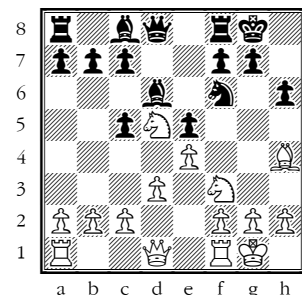


[I didn't have, or couldn't make sense of, the score past this point.]

The bishop has gone to sleep, but you can get it going again with f7-f6 and Bf7 ...0-1

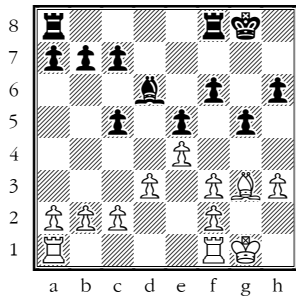
 Make sure your pieces stay in the game

[Here's a game to compare with the comment at move 12: 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Bb4 5.0-0 0-0 6.Bxc6 dxc6 7.d3 Bd6 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 c5 10.Nd5



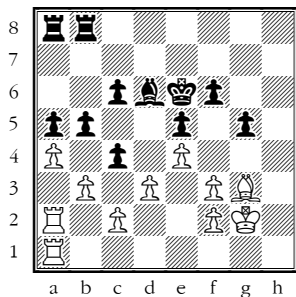
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Capablanca famously remarked about this position, that Winter should have realised that a player of Capablanca's calibre would never have allowed such a move if it were good! 10...g5 11.Nxf6+ Qxf6 12.Bg3 Bg4 13.h3 Bxf3 14.Qxf3 Qxf3 15.gxf3 f6




ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Neither bishop is good, but White's is actually dead and buried, while Black can advance on the Queen's-side. 16.Kg2 a5 17.a4 Kf7 18.Rh1 Ke6 19.h4 Rfb8 20.hxg5 hxg5 21.b3 c6 22.Ra2 b5 23.Rha1 c4



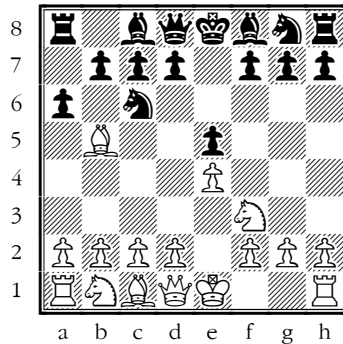
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Black is a piece ahead for the purposes of his attack. 24.axb5 cxb3 25.cxb3 Rxb5 26.Ra4 Rxb3 27.d4 Rb5 28.Rc4 Rb4 29.Rxc6 Rxd4 0-1 Winter, W-Capablanca, /offside piece position 1919]

 **George (Black)[C60] (2.3)**

A game that you won twice – shame you got only one point for it!

- 1 e4 e5
- 2 Nf3 Nc6
- 3 Bb5 a6

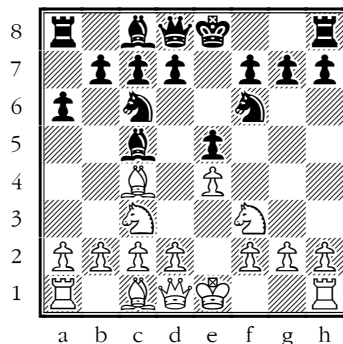


4 Bc4

Makes me ask: Why go to b5 first?


[4.Ba4]

- 4 ... Nf6
- 5 Nc3 Bc5



6 Nxe5?

Often a good trick to equalise as Black, but does nothing for White's position as a rule - and it doesn't ever work with your own Bishop on c4!

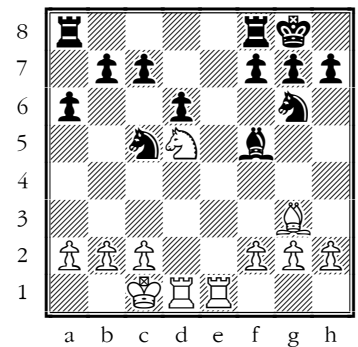
 Tricks in books don't always work in the position in front of you!

- 6 ... Nxe5
- 7 d4 Nxc4
- 8 dxc5

Black's just a piece ahead: no need to relax, mind...

- 8 ... Qe7
- 9 Qd4 Ne5
- 10 Bf4 Nc6
- 11 Qe3 d6
- 12 Qg3 Nxe4
- 13 Qe3 Nxc5
- 14 Qxe7+ Nxe7
- 15 0-0-0 0-0

- 16 Rhe1 Ng6
- 17 Bg3 Bf5
- 18 Nd5



18 ... c6?

weakening

[18...Ne6]

19 Nb6 Rae8?

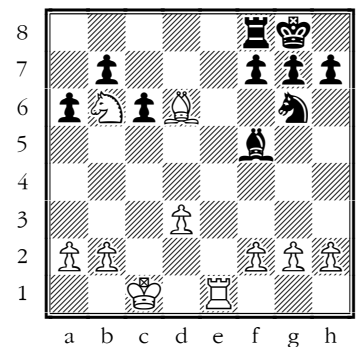
makes it worse...

20 Bxd6 Rxe1

21 Rxe1 Nd3+

[21...Ne6 and Black is still ahead]

22 cxd3



Now Black has to win all over again.

22 ... Rd8

23 Bb4

[23.Bc7]

23 ... Bxd3

24 Nd7 h6

25 Nc5 Bc4

[25...b6 keeps the pawn.]

26 Nxb7?!

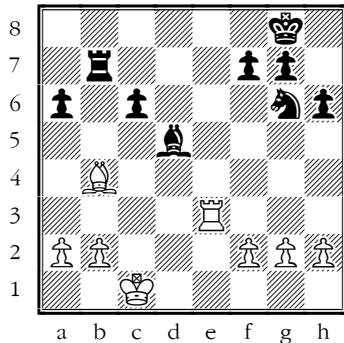
Risky, setting up a pin. White has two undefended pieces, which should have reminded them: Loose Pieces Drop Off!

26 ... Rb8

27 Re4

[27.Na5 Rxb4 28.Re4 is still about equal, but that isn't a natural way to play and so is hard to spot.]

27 ... Bd5
28 Re3 Rxb7



Now it should be easy.

29 a3 Bxg2
30 Rc3 Rd7
31 Rc5 Be4
32 Ra5 Nf4
33 Bd2 Nd3+
34 Kd1 Nxb2+
35 Kc1 Nc4
36 Be1 Nxa5
0-1

Loose Pieces Drop Off!

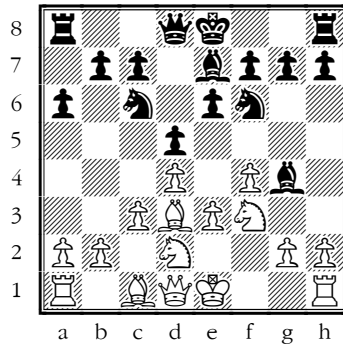
George(White) [D00]
(3.3)

In the end, a nice win, but if you are going to play the Stonewall as White, you could play it more directly for an attack.

1 d4 d5
2 e3 Nf6
3 Bd3 Nc6
4 f4 Bg4

[4...Nb4]

5 Nf3 a6
6 c3 e6
7 Nbd2 Be7

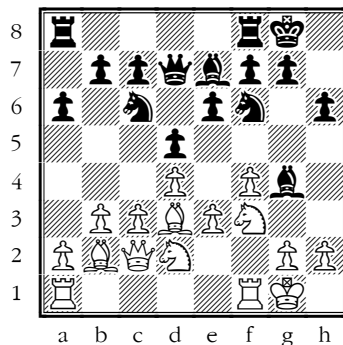


8 b3

Not bad, of course, but feels like a change of gear: this system was devised so that you could play a king's-side attack with a lock on the centre. And having shut in your dark-squared bishop, the position could turn on you if you don't get on with something.

[8.0-0 0-0 9.Qe1]

8 ... h6
9 Bb2 0-0
10 Qc2 Qd7
11 0-0

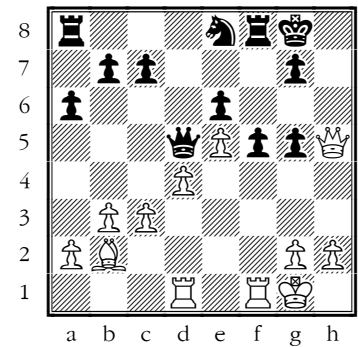


11 ... Bf5

Good move: without the light-squared Bishop, White's position doesn't have a lot going for it.

12 Ne5 Nxe5
13 fxe5 Bxd3
14 Qxd3 Ne8
15 e4 Qb5
16 Qf3 Bg5
17 Rad1 f6
18 exd5 Qxd5
19 Ne4 f5

20 Nxc5 hxc5

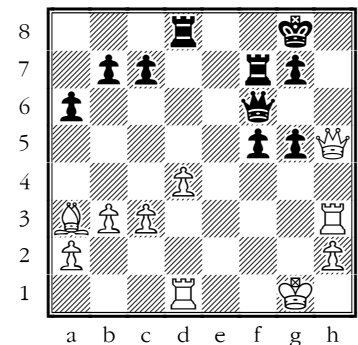


21 Qh5

White is starting to have some positive ideas.

21 ... Qd8
22 Ba3 Rf7
23 g4 Nf6??
24 exf6 Qxf6
25 gxf5 exf5
26 Rf3 Rd8

I think I lost track of the score here



27 Rh3 Qh6

Black shouldn't swap off anything unless they have to.

28 Qxh6 gxh6
29 Rxh6 Kg7
30 Re6

Winning

...1-0

You need to do something in positions where you have a disadvantage, or the position is likely to turn against you

William Norton

General: Not so many moves to go on here: I liked your opening play in the first game, not sure how the win escaped you. I'm guessing that you should have a move or two up your sleeve against the non-standard defence to the Lopez. [By the way, the electronic scoresheet is made by MonRoi: (<http://www.monroi.com/products/ecm.php>) but it's outrageously expensive. Maybe a handheld voice recorder would interest you; blind players use them all the time.]

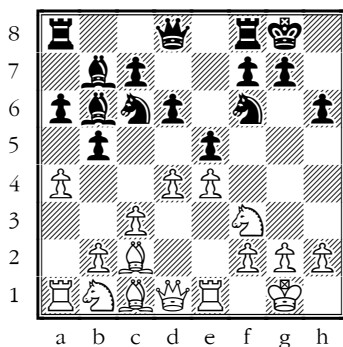
William(White) [C60] (1.4)

I thought your opening play was great and you were winning in the last position I saw – so not much wrong there!

1 e4 e5
2 Nf3 Nc6
3 Bb5 a6
4 Ba4 b5

A bit early, forcing White to attack f7.

5 Bb3 Bc5
6 c3 h6
7 O-O Nf6
8 Re1 d6
9 d4 Bb6
10 a4 Bb7
11 Bc2 O-O



12 h3

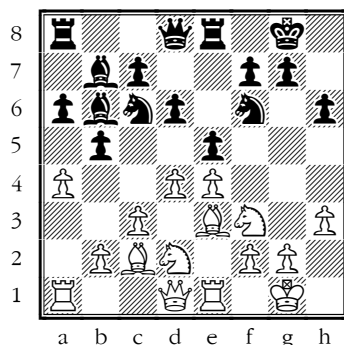
The Ruy Lopez has a special secret: it's an opening where you can play h2-h3 and it's a often a good move! But not here. The idea of h2-h3 in the Lopez is to make sure Black can't undermine the d4 pawn by pinning the Nf3, and also means Black can't get rid of a pair of pieces in a slightly cramped position.

But of course, that black Bishop is on b7, nowhere near g4...

12 ... Qe7
13 Be3

Good! Makes use of having played h3, because now the Nf6 can't threaten to swap it off.

13 ... Qd8
14 Nbd2 Re8

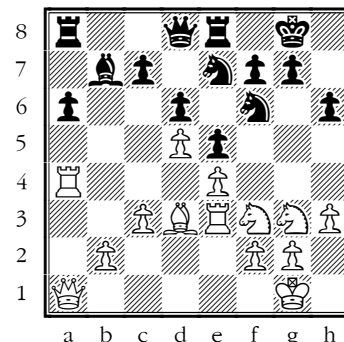


This is what I love about the Ruy Lopez, you don't have to make any odd-looking moves to get a strong, flexible position. White's next move is questionable: it fixes pawns on light squares at a time when Black can swap off the dark-squared bishops. It has to be said that Black's light-squared Bishops isn't doing much after White's next move: closed positions are for Knights.

15 d5 Bxe3
16 Rxe3 Ne7
17 Nf1 Ng6
18 Ng3 Qb8
19 Bd3 bxa4

Ooh, not good: gives White an open file against a weak pawn on a6.

20 Rxa4 Qd8
21 Qa1 Ne7




[I didn't have, or couldn't make sense of, the score past this point.]


Not sure how you managed to let this one slip, you have all the advantages of the position at the moment. Putting away positions like this is something we all need to learn!


22 Bxa6

is fine, probably winning, but may not have been your next move.

...Drawn

 It's good to play openings where you can get a great position by playing fairly obvious moves.

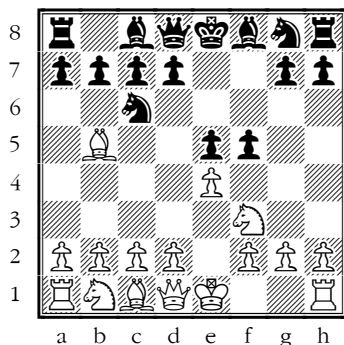
 Closed positions have a big effect on Bishops: think carefully before closing the position.

 You must learn to win won games.

William (White) [C63]
(2.4)

One of those evil gambits that you just have to learn a line against.

- 1 e4 e5
2 Nf3 Nc6
3 Bb5 f5



One of a number of gambits Black can try against the Spanish.

- 4 exf5

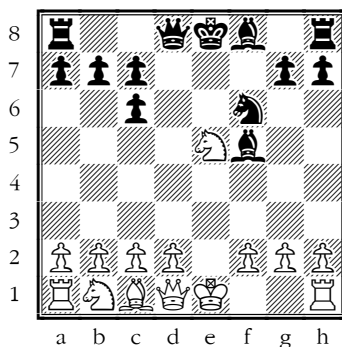
This must be what Black wants you to do!

[4.Nc3 is the book move;
4.d3 is the safe move]

- 4 ... Nf6

[4...e4 is the right move, which can lead to an unusual draw: 5.Bxc6 dxc6 6.Qe2 Qe7 7.Nd4 Qe5! 8.Nf3 Qe7 9.Nd4]

- 5 Bxc6 dxc6
6 Nxe5 Bxf5



- 7 Nc3

[7.0-0 Bd6 8.Re1 is a sharper way to play.]

- 7 ... Bb6

was as much as I could manage from the score, I'm afraid.

- ...0-1

We all know to check for our opponent's threats. But we should also try to decide what the opponent is trying to do with a move – and, if possible, upset it!

William (Black) [A00]
(3.4)

Sorry, missing the score.

- 0-1

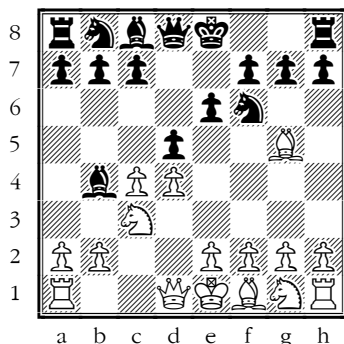
Tim Seah

General: Couldn't ask for much more from you than 2½/3... Nice balanced play all round, but you need to know the minor lines of the Ruy Lopez a bit better than you do.

Tim (Black) [D50] (1.5)

A good solid game of positional play from Black – could have given you a win.

- 1 d4 d5
2 c4 e6
3 Nc3 Nf6
4 Bg5 Bb4



Bold! Black is assuming that he can hit as hard as White, but White hits first. It's called the Ragozin variation,

and is reckoned to be only slightly better for White.

- 5 Qa4+ Nc6

Normally, I'd tell you to keep the Knight back until you had played ...c7-c5, but this line is all about active pieces.

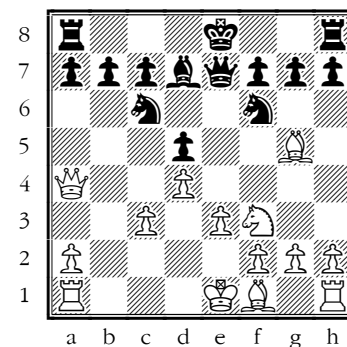
- 6 e3

[6.a3]

- 6 ... Bxc3+

No need to exchange without being asked first.

- 7 bxc3 Qe7
8 Nf3 Bd7
9 cxd5 exd5



- 10 Bb5

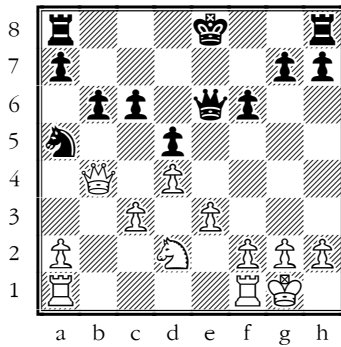
[10.Bxf6 Qxf6 11.Qb3 is awkward for Black, even if it doesn't drop a pawn.]

- 10 ... Qe6

[10...0-0 is more urgent.]

- 11 Bxf6 Qxf6
12 Qb3 Qf5
13 0-0 Na5
14 Bxd7+ Qxd7
15 Qb4 b6
16 Nd2 Qe6
17 Qa4+ c6

18 Qb4 Nb7
 19 Qa4 Na5
 20 Qb4 f6



Black has played solidly, and has a perfectly secure position.

21 Nf3

[21.Rab1]

21 ... Nb7

good idea if it's heading for d6

[21...Nc4 gets the outpost straight away.]

22 Nd2 Qd6

[22...Nd6 keeps an eye on all the key squares.]

23 a3 0-0

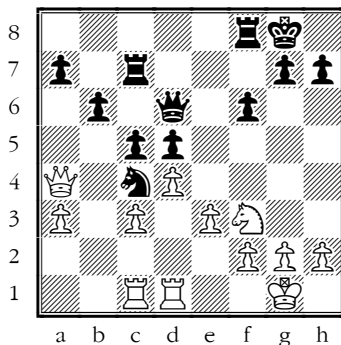
24 Nf3 c5

25 Qb3 Rac8

26 Rac1 Rc7

27 Rfd1 Na5

28 Qa4 Nc4



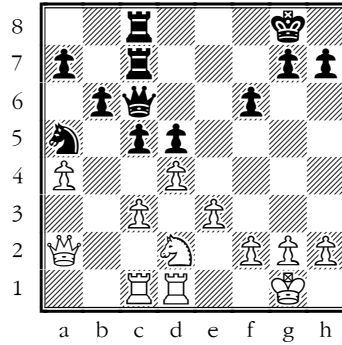
Black is accumulating positional gains.

29 Qb3 Qc6

30 Nd2 Na5

31 Qa2 Rfc8

32 a4



32 ... Nb7

Looked OK where it was. Why did you move it? Couldn't you think of a way to improve your position?

[32...cxd4 33.cxd4 Qxc1 drops a pawn but gets a massive bind. 34.Qxd5+ Kh8 35.Rxc1 Rxc1+ 36.Nf1 and now 36...Nc4! might not be winning, but looked a good try.]

33 Rb1 cxd4

This exchange is now more obviously good for Black.

34 cxd4

I don't have your next move here, but I hope it was 34...Qc2! Black has all the chances here because the black pieces are all more active than White's.

...Drawn

Piece activity is the most important thing in chess.

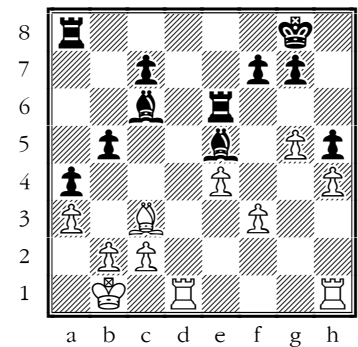
Tim (Black)(2.5)

A tidy follow-up after White's early blunder.

I managed to drop the first half of this game down the back of the computer. I remember White being clever after Black's ...Bxf3, playing Bxc6 instead of recapturing on f3, only to be surprised by ...Bxc6! It's sometimes hard to remember

that pieces can move backwards.

26 ... Be5



When you're winning, swap!

27 Bb4 Bd6

28 Bxd6 Rxd6

29 Rxd6 cxd6

30 Rd1 Rd8

31 Rd3 Kf8

32 e5 Ke7

33 Rc3 Be8

34 exd6+ Rxd6

35 Rc5 f6

36 Rc7+ Rd7

37 gxf6+ gxf6

38 Rc3 Bf7

39 b4 axb3

40 cxb3 Bg6+

41 Kb2 Rd3

An efficient demolition.

0-1

When you're winning, swap off pieces

It's only Pawns that can't move backwards!

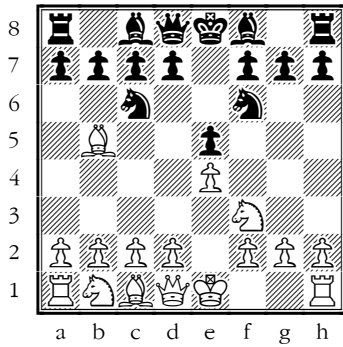
Tim (White) [C49] (3.5)

Again, a nice calm win after an early wobble. There's lots to look at in the first twelve moves.

1 e4 e5

2 Nf3 Nc6

3 Bb5 Nf6



4 Nc3

These positions with all the knights square are difficult to get going.

[4.0-0! Nxe4 5.d4! is the main line;

4.d4 can also be played.]

4 ... Bb4

5 Bxc6 bxc6

6 Nxe5 0-0?

[6...Qe7 recovers the pawn.]

7 Nf3 Re8

8 d3 d5

9 0-0 Bg4

[9...dxe4 recovers the pawn.]

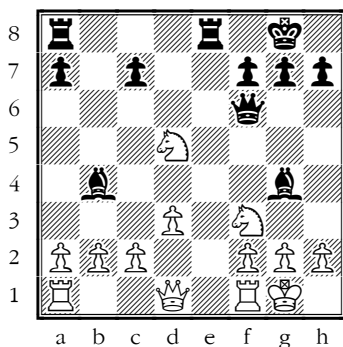
10 Bg5 Qd6

[10...Bxc3 11.bxc3 dxe4 is a position where Black is better.]

11 exd5 cxd5

12 Bxf6 Qxf6

13 Nxd5



Now it's swung the other way.

13 ... Qd6

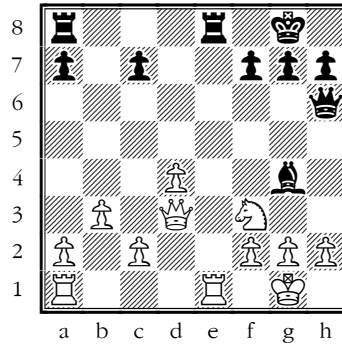
14 Nxb4 Qxb4

15 b3 Qc5

16 d4 Qd6

17 Qd3 Qh6

18 Rfe1



18 ... Qh5

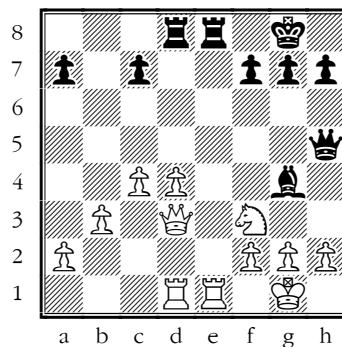
I think Black should have made a plan to get the Ra1 into play.

19 c4

[19.Re5]

19 ... Rad8

20 Rad1



20 ... c5

It's hard to suggest a constructive plan for Black, but there's no need to hand White a passed pawn without making them work

for it. If you don't know what to do, at least you should know what to avoid.

21 d5 h6

22 Re2 Bxf3

23 Rxe8+ Rxe8

24 Qxf3 Qxf3

25 gxf3 Re2

26 d6 Re8

27 Kg2 a5

28 f4 f5

29 d7

[29.Rd5!]

29 ... Rd8

30 Rd5 Kf7

31 a3 Ke6

32 Rxc5 Rxd7

33 Rxa5

...and the rest should have been straightforward for White.

1-0



Play with all your pieces



Don't help your opponent!

Laurens Stegink

General: There are some obvious wrinkles to get out of your opening lines in games 1 and 3. Missing the Queen swap for other pieces in Game 2 is something a lot of players would have passed up, even if they had considered it (there's another example in a game Tim played). Otherwise a nice tidy performance and an excellent score.

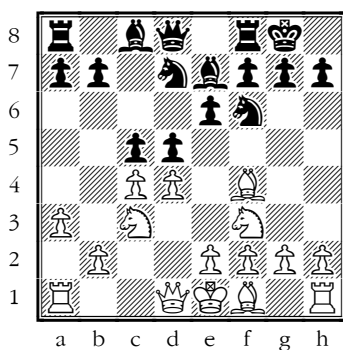
Laurens (White) [D35] (1.6)

Could have been tidier in the early part of the game; you must have done well in the part I didn't see!

1 d4 e6
2 c4 d5
3 Nc3 Nf6
4 Bg5 Be7
5 Bf4

Loses time; why not move it straight to f4.

5 ... 0-0
6 Nf3 Nbd7
7 a3 c5



8 Nb5

An invasion into nowhere, threatening nothing, when Black is better developed.

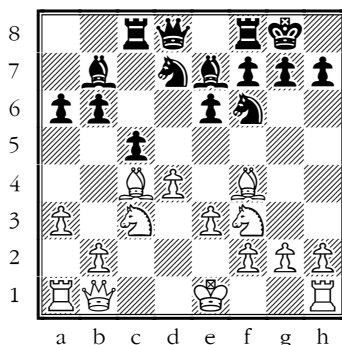
[8.e3]

These heroic attacks by a single piece should always fail. Chess is a team game!

8 ... a6
9 Nc3 b6
10 e3 Bb7
11 Qc2 Rc8

Setting up a discovery!

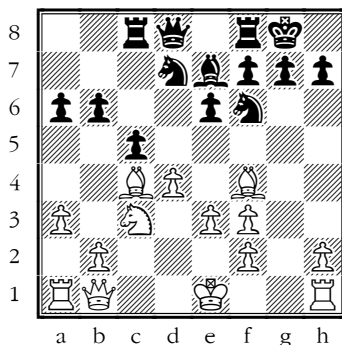
12 Qb1 dxc4
13 Bxc4



13 ... Bxf3

[13...cxd4 attacks two pieces at once, and should win.]

14 gxf3




[I didn't have, or couldn't make sense of, the score past this point.]


14 ... cxd4

Still wins a piece.

...Drawn

Wow, you did well to hold that one!

 Attack only when and where you have an advantage

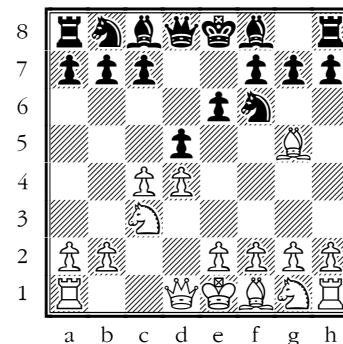
 Chess is a team game! Use your pieces to gang up on targets, don't send out one piece on a raid.

Laurens (White) [D50] (2.6)



Very little to complain about; there were three little tactical points which you missed, but we all miss these things in a long game.

1 d4 d5
2 c4 Nf6
3 Nc3 e6
4 Bg5



4 ... g6

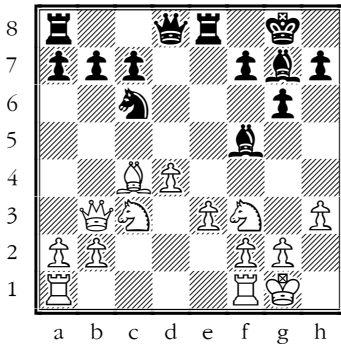
Yeuch - draughts not chess! The fact that it loses a pawn is an appropriate punishment, but it's a bad move even without that.

[4...Be7 is simple and; 4...Nbd7 is a little trap, in case White wants to win a pawn: 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Nxd5? loses a piece to 6...Nxd5 7.Bxd8 Bb4+]

5 cxd5 exd5
6 Bxf6 Qxf6
7 Nxd5 Qd8
8 Nc3 Bg7

- 9 Nf3 0-0
- 10 e3 Re8
- 11 Bc4 Nc6
- 12 0-0 Bg4
- 13 h3 Bf5
- 14 Qb3

All good sensible moves from White.



- 14 ... Be6?

Walking into a pawn fork.

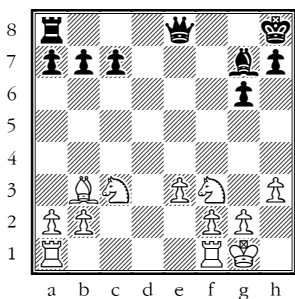
- 15 d5 Na5

A good defensive idea.

- 16 Qb4

It's hard to see, but White should keep going with

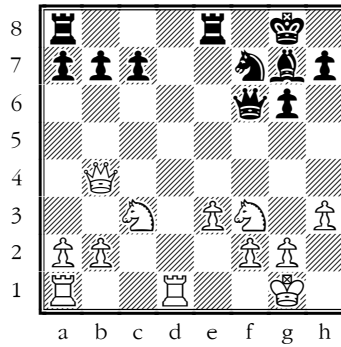
[16.dxe6 Nxb3 17.exf7 + Kh8 18.fxe8Q+ Qxe8 19.Bxb3



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

when White has more than enough for the Queen. Would you fancy playing this for White? Juniors often fear the Queen, but if you keep everything defended as you go forward, it won't be able to do much on its own.]

- 16 ... Nxc4
- 17 dxe6 Nd6
- 18 exf7+ Nxf7
- 19 Rfd1 Qf6

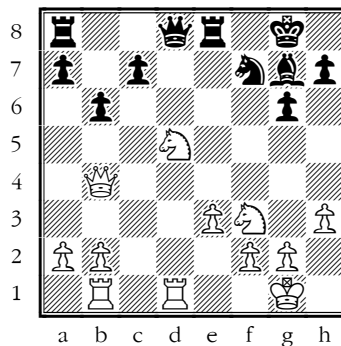


- 20 Rab1

Safe enough.

[20.Nd5! is good, aiming at c7]

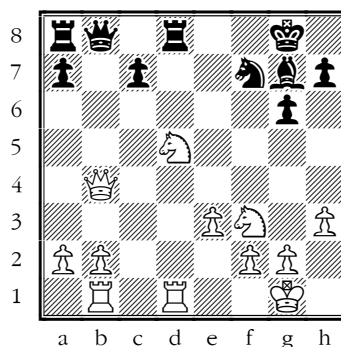
- 20 ... b6
- 21 Nd5 Qd8



- 22 Nxb6!

Very smart!

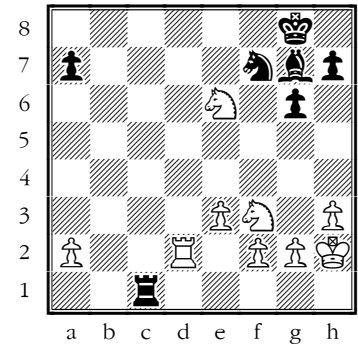
- 22 ... Qb8
- 23 Nd5 Rd8



- 24 Qxb8

[24.Qc5! picks up another pawn 24...Rc8?? 25.Ne7+]

- 24 ... Raxb8
- 25 Nxc7 Rxd1+
- 26 Rxd1 Rxb2
- 27 Rd2 Rb1+
- 28 Kh2 Rc1
- 29 Ne6



White should still win this comfortably.

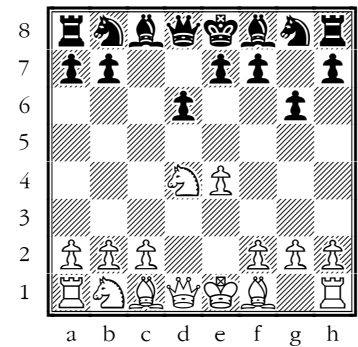
...1-0

If you can look twice at things you calculate, you will find some little gems

Laurens (Black)[B54]
(3.6)

Not a lot of moves to comment on: but you might check that you are playing them in the right order.

- 1 e4 c5
- 2 Nf3 d6
- 3 d4 cxd4
- 4 Nxd4 g6

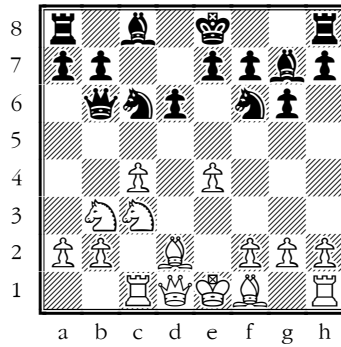


- 5 c4

Probably strongest, and no fun to play for Black: had you seen this move before? This is why Black usually plays ...Nf6, to make White play Nc3 and put the Knight in front of the c-pawn. If you do want to develop the Bishop early (the Accelerated Dragon), then hold back the d-pawn, because you might

get a chance to move it all the way to d5.

- 5 ... Bg7
- 6 Be3 Qb6
- 7 Nb3 Qb4+
- 8 Bd2 Qb6
- 9 Nc3 Nc6
- 10 Rc1 Nf6



I don't have the score past this point; White has the usual small advantage, based

on extra space: Black needs to find a plan to make some counterplay or steer for exchanges.

...0-1

Know the ideas behind your openings: compare the moves you play with the books after each game.

Alex Billings

General: Congratulations on 3/3 – great stuff! It's not as if they were easy games: you were busted in Game 1 but held on until the game turned in your favour. Two bits of advice, I think: have a look at the tactical points you missed and make sure you don't overlook them in the future. And have a deeper look at how you play the Ruy Lopez; there's more to it than the way you played it.

Alex (Black)[C10] (1.7)

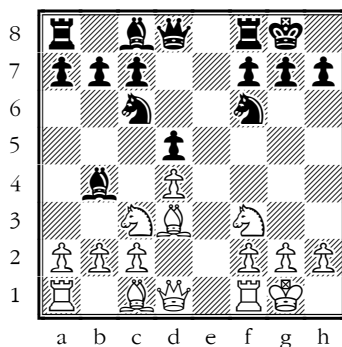


A really exciting fight that swung both ways at different times.

- 1 e4 e6
- 2 Nc3 d5
- 3 exd5 exd5
- 4 d4 Nc6

[4...Bf5 gets the Bishop to its best square]

- 5 Nf3 Nf6
- 6 Bd3 Bb4
- 7 0-0 0-0



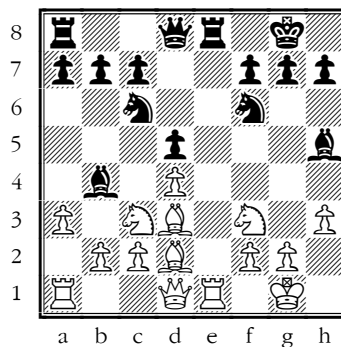
8 Bd2

[8.Bg5 is more aggressive.]

- 8 ... Re8
- 9 Re1 Bg4
- 10 h3 Bh5

[10...Rxe1+ is good, as in the next note.]

11 a3



11 ... Ba5

[11...Rxe1+ 12.Bxe1 Bxf3 13.gxf3 (13.Qxf3 Nxd4 wins a pawn) 13...Bd6 and White's position is a mess.]

12 Bb5 Rb8

[12...Rxe1+ is good, as in the last note]

13 Rxe8+ Qxe8

14 b4 Bb6

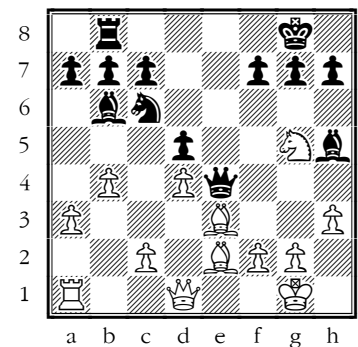
15 Be3 Qe6

16 Be2 Ne4

17 Nxe4 Qxe4

18 Ng5

[Instead of this trappy move, 18.b5 looks a useful poke]



18 ... Qf5?

I (and other coaches) often say there are four responses to a threat:

A = Avoid (move)

B = Block

C = Capture

D = Defend

In fact there is one more: counterattack!

[18...Bxe2! is a counter-attacking move which saves a piece]

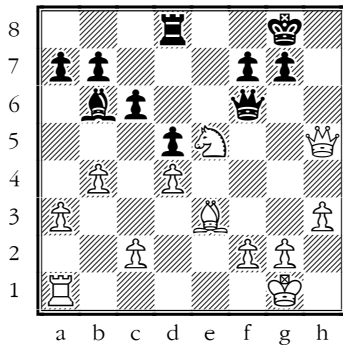
19 Bxh5 h6

20 Bg4 Qg6

21 Nf3 h5

22 Bd7 Rd8

23 Bxc6 Qxc6
 24 Ne5 Qf6
 25 Qxh5 c6



26 Bg5

Should be winning! But White has reached the top of the hill, and now rolls down again.

26 ... Qf5!?

27 Qxf7+

[27.g4! Qe6 28.Bxd8]

27 ... Qxf7

28 Nxf7 Rf8

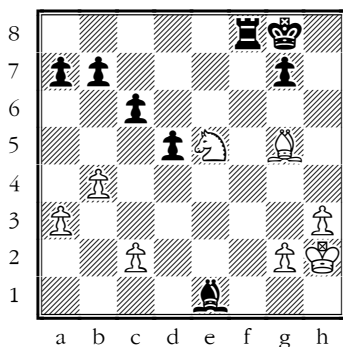
29 Ne5? Bxd4

30 Re1 Bxf2+

31 Kh2??

[31.Kf1]

31 ... Bxe1



...And now Black is ahead on points!

32 c4 d4
 33 b5 cxb5
 34 cxb5 Rf5
 35 Bd8 Rxe5
 36 b6 axb6
 37 Bxb6 d3
 38 a4 d2
 39 a5 d1Q

And Black soon mated...

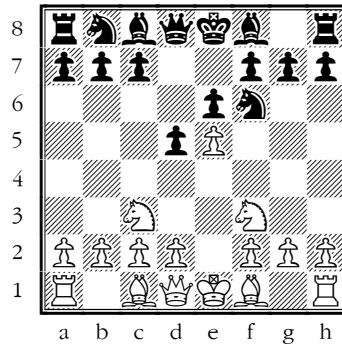
...0-1

Always check the four basic defences to an attack... but don't forget about the fifth: counterattack!

Alex (Black)[C00] (2.7)

You nearly got your Queen stuck... but once out of danger, you always looked nicely in control of the game.

1 e4 e6
 2 Nf3 d5
 3 Nc3 Nf6
 4 e5



4 ... Ng4

[4...Nfd7 is the book move, keeping the Knight attacking the centre without being in danger of falling off.]

5 d4 c5
 6 h3

Just chases the Knight to where it might have to go anyway.

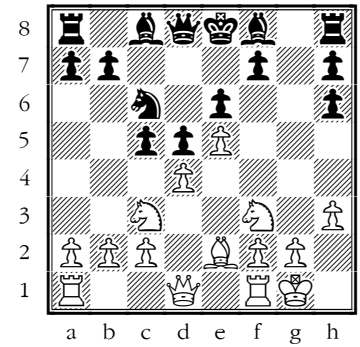
[6.Bf4;
 6.Bd3]

6 ... Nh6
 7 Bxh6 gxh6
 8 Be2 Nc6

White's centre is creaking...

9 0-0

[9.dxc5 Bxc5 10.0-0]

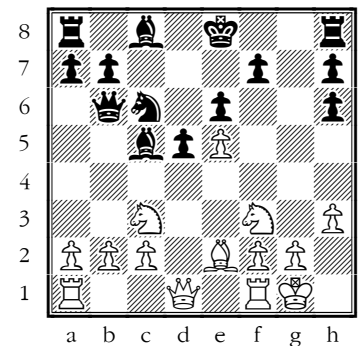


9 ... Qb6

An ordinary move in the French

[But after the better move 9...cxd4! the centre breaks.]

10 dxc5 Bxc5

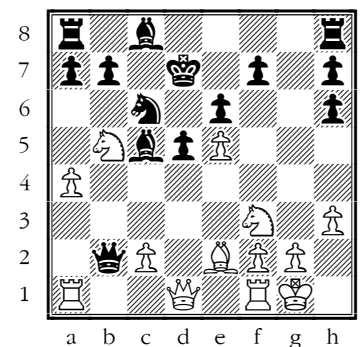


11 a4

Just invites Black to play their idea. This may actually be the best move here, but for reasons that I don't think White realised.

[So, 11.Na4 was the move White should have played.]

11 ... Qxb2
 12 Nb5 Kd7



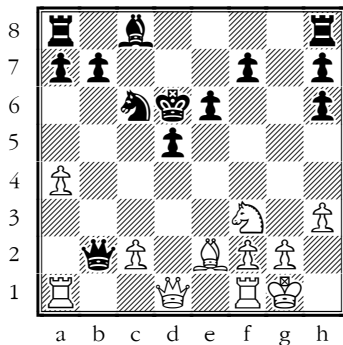
All very natural.

13 Nd6?

Misses an opportunity: worse, just loses another pawn.

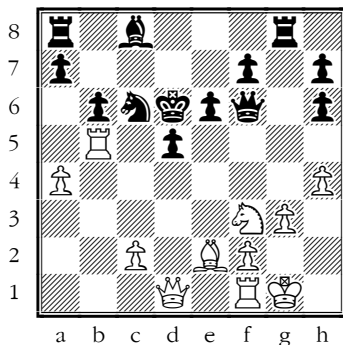
[13.Rb1! Qa2 14.Nc3 Qa3
15.Rb3 traps the Queen,
making Black give up a
piece with 15...Bxf2+]

13 ... Bxd6
14 exd6 Kxd6



If Black can get sorted - that is, getting the rest of the pieces out - they will win.

15 Rb1 Qg7
16 g3 b6
17 h4 Qf6
18 Rb5 Rg8



19 c4!

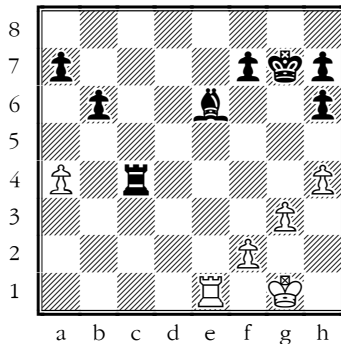
Very much the right attitude from White, trying to keep Black from getting sorted out.

19 ... Qf5
20 cxd5 exd5
21 Rxd5+?

White can't count?


21 ... Qxd5
22 Qxd5+ Kxd5
23 Rd1+ Ke6
24 Bc4+ Ke7
25 Re1+ Be6
26 Bd3 Rg7
27 Be4 Rc8


28 Rc1 Nb4
29 Re1 Nc2
30 Bxc2 Rxc2
31 Nd4 Rc4
32 Nf5+ Kf6
33 Nxc7 Kxc7



Should be plain sailing from here.

34 Ra1 a6
35 a5 bxa5
36 Rxa5 Rc6
37 f3 Bc4
38 g4 Rf6
39 Kf2 Bb5
40 Ra3 h5
41 gxh5 Kh6
42 Re3 Kxh5
43 Re4 Bc6
44 Rc4 Rxf3+
45 Ke2 Bb5
46 Kd2 Bxc4
47 Kc2 a5
48 Kd2 a4
49 Kc2 a3
50 Kd2 a2
51 Kc2 a1Q
52 Kd2 Qb2+
53 Ke1 Qe2#
0-1

 If you see a good move, it may divert you from a great one! Think twice...

 Winning or losing, don't let your opponent get settled!

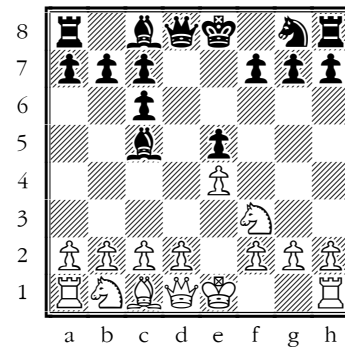
 Alex (White) [C64] (3.7)

A good win in the endgame after the early part gave you nothing.

1 e4 e5
2 Nf3 Nc6
3 Bb5 Bc5
4 Bxc6

[4.c3; or 4.0-0 are better]

4 ... dxc6



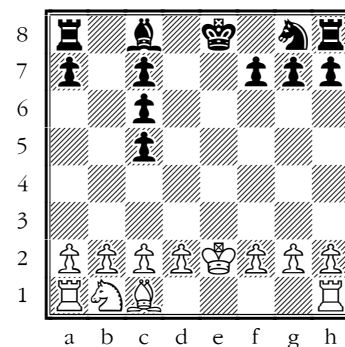
5 Nxe5

Rather innocent; if you play the Spanish you should know this rarely wins a pawn, and that your strongest plan is usually c3 and d4 (0-0 and a quick d4 is another approach, if the Bishop isn't on c5!).

5 ... Qd4
6 Nd3 Qxe4+
7 Qe2 Qxe2+
8 Kxe2 b6

Yeuch.

9 Nxc5 bxc5



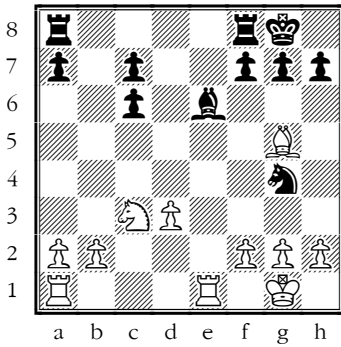
Now Black has some weaknesses and White has a plan.

10 Re1 Nf6

- 11 Kf1+ Be6
- 12 Nc3 0-0
- 13 d3 c4

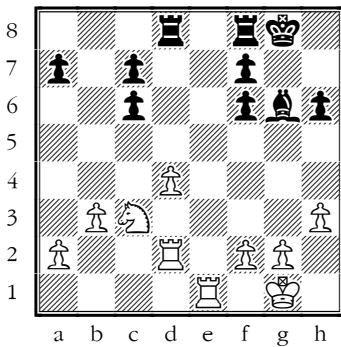
Now dxc4 by White would stop Black making a target in White's own position.

- 14 Bg5 Ng4
- 15 Kg1 cxd3
- 16 cxd3



Giving White a weakness but opening up a file against the doubled pawns. So White should have been thinking about the natural plan Rc1!

- 16 ... h6
- 17 Bh4 Rab8
- 18 b3 Bf5
- 19 h3 Nf6
- 20 Bxf6 gxf6
- 21 d4 Rbd8
- 22 Rad1 Bc2
- 23 Rd2 Bg6

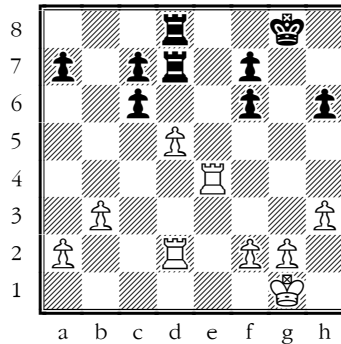


- 24 d5

Just puts the Pawn in a pin!

[24.Re7 "A rook's first duty to the King is to seize an open file"... and the seventh rank!]

- 24 ... Rd7
- 25 Ree2 Rfd8
- 26 Ne4 Bxe4
- 27 Rxe4



- 27 ... Rxd5

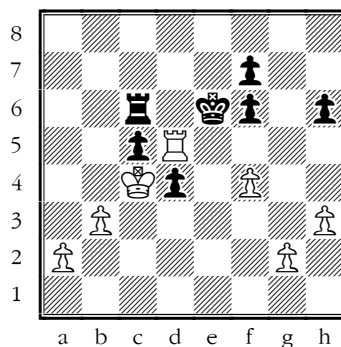
Natural but I think I prefer the other one.

[27...cxd5]

- 28 Rxd5 cxd5
- 29 Re7

White is now in good shape.

- 29 ... Rc8
- 30 Rd7 c6
- 31 Rxa7 d4
- 32 Rd7 c5
- 33 Kf1 Kf8
- 34 Ke2 Ke8
- 35 Rd5 Ke7
- 36 Kd3 Rc6
- 37 Kc4 Ke6
- 38 f4



- 38 ... f5

Hard to suggest anything good for Black, but this just shuts off a route through for the black King.

- 39 g4 fxg4
- 40 hxg4 Rd6
- 41 Rxd6+ Kxd6
- 42 a4 Kc6
- 43 f5 f6
- 44 b4 d3
- 45 Kxd3 cxb4
- 46 Kc4 b3
- 47 Kxb3 Kc5
- 48 Kc3 Kb6
- 49 Kb4 Ka6
- 50 a5 Kb7
- 51 Kb5 Ka7
- 52 a6 Kb8
- 53 Kb6 Ka8
- 54 Kc6 Ka7
- 55 Kd5 h5
- 56 gxh5 Kxa6
- 57 h6 Kb5
- 58 h7 Kb4
- 59 h8Q

and White checkmated shortly after.

1-0

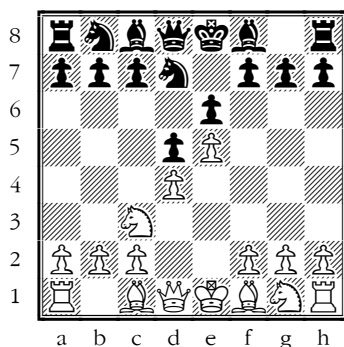
Everyone should know the basic ideas behind the Spanish Game (Ruy Lopez Opening)

General: You could play a lot more actively in the opening than you do – really try to set your opponent problems from the very beginning of the game, and you will pick up some easy wins. There were little tactical points here and there that you missed – we all do that, but make sure you don't miss the same ones in future. You did very well to hold the ending in your second game. It looks to me as you could think more about what plan you are trying to follow – and that will help you use your pieces as more of a team.

Kieran (White) [C11]
(1.8)

You didn't really get a grip on this game. Have a think about how to set your opponent problems in the French

- 1 e4 e6
- 2 d4 d5
- 3 Nc3 Nf6
- 4 e5 Nfd7



- 5 Nf3

Not bad but not the most testing, according to theory.

[5.f4 (Classical);
5.Nce2 (Steinitz)]

- 5 ... c5
- 6 dxc5 Bxc5

[6...Nc6 is usually played first, in case Black gets a chance to take on e5.]

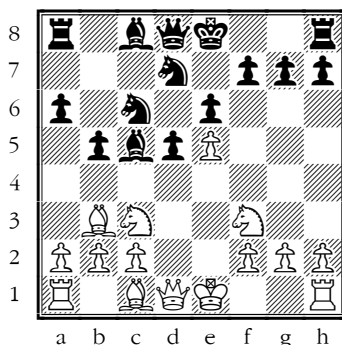
- 7 Bb5

[7.Bd3 is the usual move.]

- 7 ... a6
- 8 Ba4 b5
- 9 Bb3

The bishop is now pointing at a solid line of pawns and not the vulnerable h7 point.

- 9 ... Nc6



White's position is already starting to get awkward.

- 10 0-0?

[10.Qe2]

- 10 ... Ncxe5
- 11 Nxe5 Nxe5

With the disappearance of the centre pawns, White is just in a poor position.

- 12 Qe2 Nd7
- 13 a4

A bit short-sighted: White should have thought about what would happen next, and didn't listen to what the Knight thought about it!

[13.Bf4]

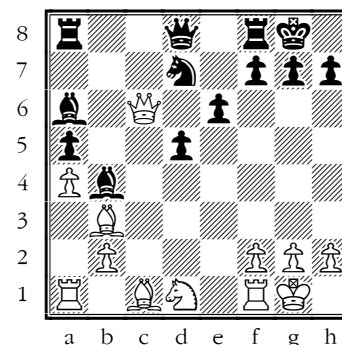
- 13 ... b4
- 14 Nd1

Not a happy knight!

- 14 ... a5
- 15 c3 0-0
- 16 cxb4 Bxb4
- 17 Qb5?

[17.Qg4]

- 17 ... Ba6
- 18 Qc6



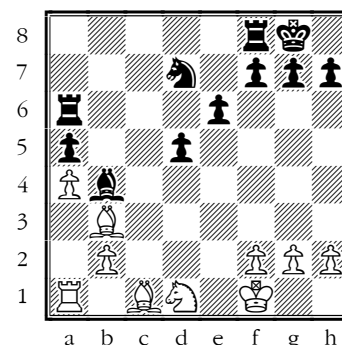
- 18 ... Bxf1

[18...Ne5 19.Qc2 Bd3 netting the Queen, is the sort of thing computers are good at spotting]

- 19 Kxf1 Qc8

I'm not sure about the notation here: presumably White didn't leave the Queen hanging and Black didn't miss it.


- 20 Qb6 Qa6+
- 21 Qxa6 Rxa6



Black just needs to swap off the pieces to win.

- 22 Be3 Nc5
- 23 Bc2 Rc6
- 24 Rc1 Ne4
- 25 f3 Bd2
- 26 Bxd2 Nxd2+
- 27 Ke2 Nc4
- 28 b3 Ne5

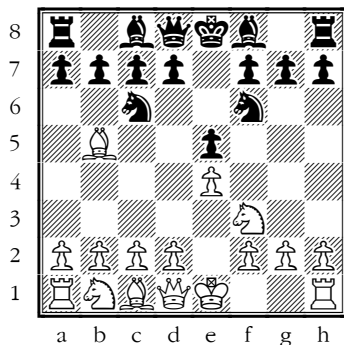
- 29 f4 Ng6
- 30 Kd2 Rfc8
- 31 Ne3 Nxf4
- 32 g3 d4
- 0-1

 It's not enough to get a stake in the centre in the opening, you also have to keep it!

 **Kieran (White) [C65] (2.8)**

Apart from the unexploded bomb at move 10, this was a good long defensive effort.

- 1 e4 e5
- 2 Nf3 Nc6
- 3 Bb5 Nf6



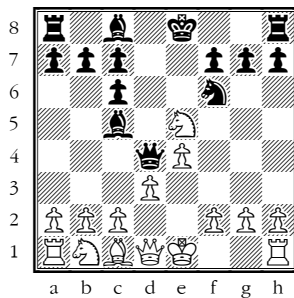
- 4 d3

[4.0-0 is better, getting on with development and staying as active as possible. Most of the time you are thinking about playing d4 at some point in the Ruy Lopez.]

- 4 ... g6?

Once White defends the e4-pawn, Black may be dropping the e5-pawn.

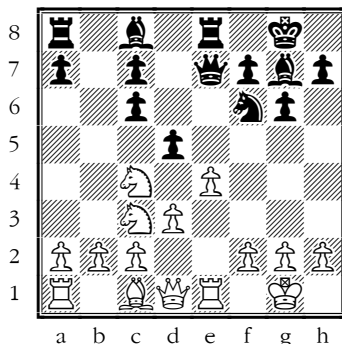
[4...Bc5. Bxc6 dxc6 6.Nxe5 Qd4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

is a common trick for regaining the pawn.]

- 5 Bxc6 bxc6
- 6 Nxe5 Qe7
- 7 Nc4 Bg7
- 8 0-0 0-0
- 9 Re1 Re8
- 10 Nc3 d5

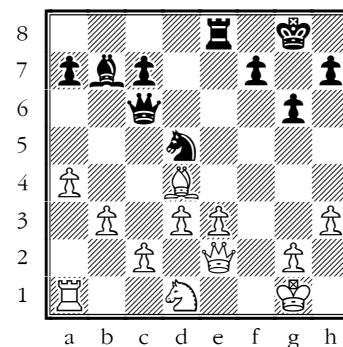


Now comes a wonderful double oversight:

- 11 exd5?? Qf8??

[11...Qxe1 + 12.Qxe1 Rxe1# was hard to watch without twitching!]

- 12 dxc6 Ba6
- 13 b3 Re7
- 14 h3 Qe8
- 15 Re3 Rxe3
- 16 Nxe3 Qxc6
- 17 Bb2 Bb7
- 18 a4 Bh6
- 19 Qe2 Bxe3
- 20 fxe3 Re8
- 21 Nd1 Nd5
- 22 Bd4



- 22 ... Nb4

[22...Nf4! is clever, winning a pawn.]

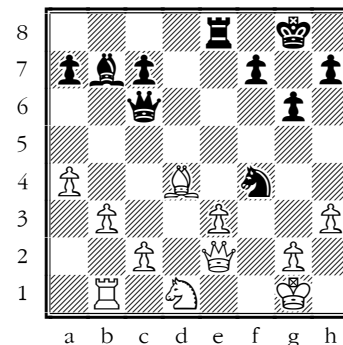
- 23 Rc1

[23.Nc3]

- 23 ... Nxd3!

Also clever!

- 24 Rb1 Nf4



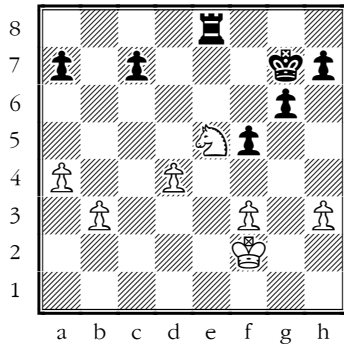
- 25 Qf3?

[25.Qd2]

- 25 ... Qxc2

After the disaster on move 12, Black is doing well with these little tactics. None of them are very complicated but they are the sort of things that win games: spotting something your opponent has missed.

- 26 Rb2 Qxb2
- 27 Nxb2 Bxf3
- 28 gxf3 Ne2 +
- 29 Kf2 Nxd4
- 30 exd4 Kg7
- 31 Nd3 f5
- 32 Ne5



32 ... a5

Right idea, normally, but here just sends the Rook to sleep.

[32...c5 33.Nc6 cxd4
34.Nxd4 Kf6]

33 Nc6! Ra8

34 d5 Kf6

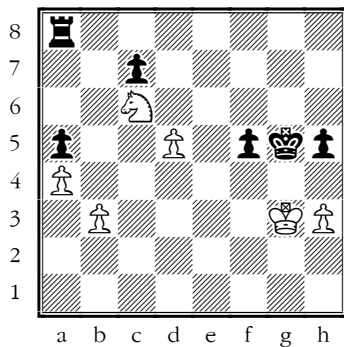
35 Kg3

[35.Ke3; 35.f4]

35 ... g5

36 f4 h5

37 fxg5+ Kxg5



White has allowed Black to create a passed pawn without really fighting against it.

38 Kf2 Rh8

39 Kg3

White is losing in theory but did well in the end!

...Drawn



Know the ideas behind the openings you play – that is, what moves would you hope to play up to move 12?



Little tactics win games!

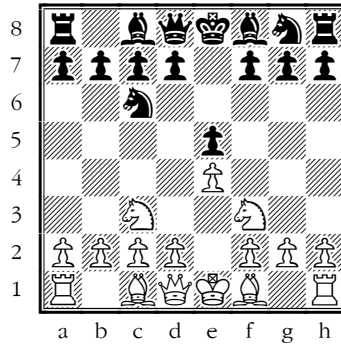
Kieran (Black)[C46] (3.8)

Another long endgame which you might have been unlucky to lose.

1 e4 e5

2 Nf3 Nc6

3 Nc3



3 ... d6

Shuts in the Bf8 without good reason.

[3...Nf6 may be a yawn but is also best and easiest for Black.]

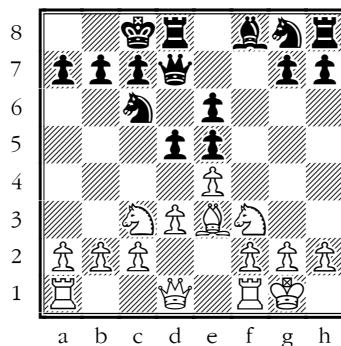
4 Bc4 Be6

5 Bxe6 fxe6

6 0-0 Qd7

7 d3 0-0-0

8 Be3 d5



9 exd5

Sorts out Black's pawns for him.

9 ... exd5

10 Nb5

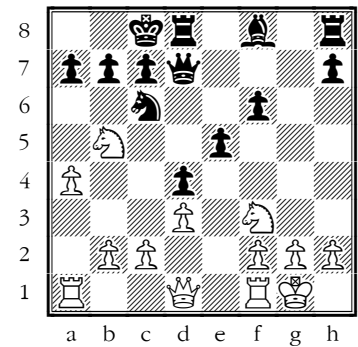
Doesn't really co-ordinate with anything.

10 ... d4

11 Bg5 Nf6

12 Bxf6 gxf6

13 a4



13 ... Qd5

[13...Rg8 Rooks belong on open files.]

14 c4 dxc3!ep

I wonder if White had missed this recapture.

15 Nxc3 Qxd3

16 Qxd3 Rxd3

17 a5 a6

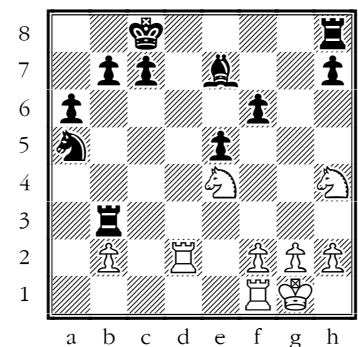
18 Ne4 Be7

19 Rad1 Rb3

[19...Rhd8 keeps control of the file.]

20 Rd2 Nxa5

21 Nh4



21 ... f5?

Asleep?

[21...Nc4 getting that piece back into play is important for Black.]

22 Nxf5 Bb4

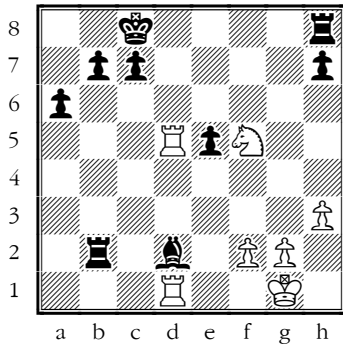
23 Rd5 Nc4

24 Rc1 Rxb2

25 h3 Nd2

26 Nxd2 Bxd2

27 Rd1



27 ... Bf4?

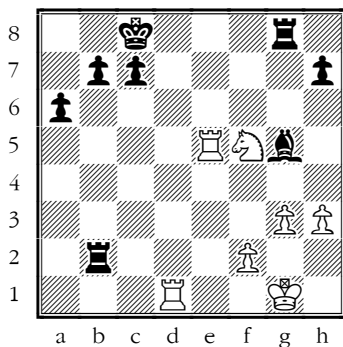
[27...Bb4! 28.Rxe5 and Black should then get the Queen's-side pawns rolling.]

28 g3?

[28.Ne7+ Kb8 29.Rd8+ Rxd8 30.Rxd8+ Ka7 31.Nc8+ and White gets a draw by perpetual – which I think he should take!]

28 ... Bg5

29 Rxe5 Rg8



Black is looking disorganised. Material (points) doesn't matter as much as activity and co-ordination.

30 h4 Bf4
[30...Rd8! is an alternative.]

31 Ne7+ Kb8

32 Nxc8

[32.Re4!]

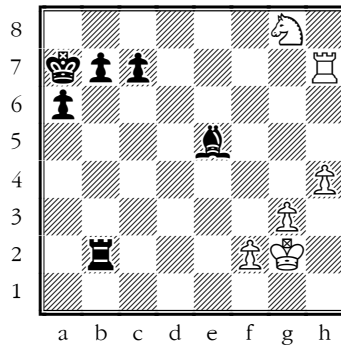
32 ... Bxe5

33 Rd8+ Ka7

34 Rd7 Rb1+

35 Kg2 Rb2

36 Rxh7



Level material but I always fancy the side with the Bishop when there is play on both wings.

36 ... Rd2

37 h5 a5

38 Re7 Bd4

39 h6

[39.Kf3]

39 ... Rxf2+

40 Kh3 Rf8

41 Re4

[41.h7]

41 ... Bc3

42 Ne7 Kb8

Nervous. In Exeter we say "KUFTE": King Up For The Endgame!

43 Nd5 Rh8?

Oops.

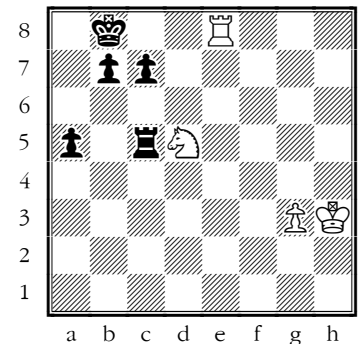
44 Nxc3 Rxh6+

45 Kg2 Rc6

46 Nd5 Rc2+

47 Kh3 Rc5

48 Re8+



There are drawing chances if Black can get the pawns going.

1-0

Material (points) doesn't matter as much as activity and co-ordination.

KUFTE: King Up For The Endgame!

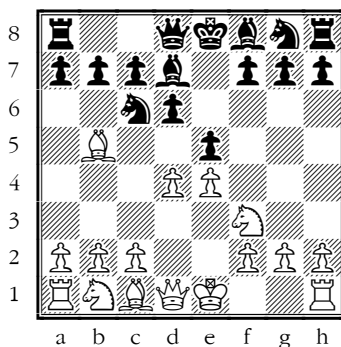
Charles Rochford

General: Really characterful defence in your third game — well done. You could do a lot more with your choice of opening moves – it all looks like you're in second gear, when you could be speeding away to the finishing line.

Charles (Black)[C44] (1.9)

You were never really in this game because of your slow opening play.

- 1 e4 e5
 2 Nf3 Nc6
 3 d4 d6
 [3...exd4 is best.]
 4 Bb5 Bd7

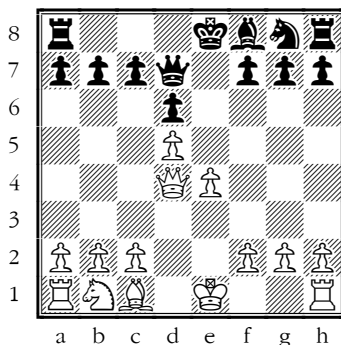


Now we're in a Ruy Lopez position.

- 5 d5
 [5.Nc3]
 5 ... Nd4?

Oops - Black just needed to count the attackers and defenders.

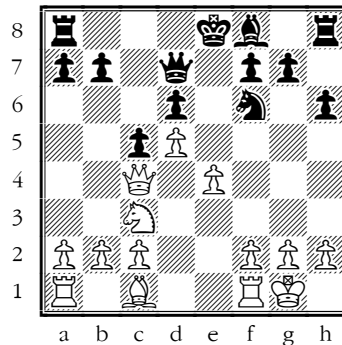
- [5...Nce7]
 6 Nxd4 exd4
 7 Bxd7+ Qxd7
 8 Qxd4



OK, now Black is behind, the idea is to develop like

lightning and try and make trouble for White.

- 8 ... c6
 9 Nc3 c5
 10 Qc4 Nf6
 11 0-0 h6

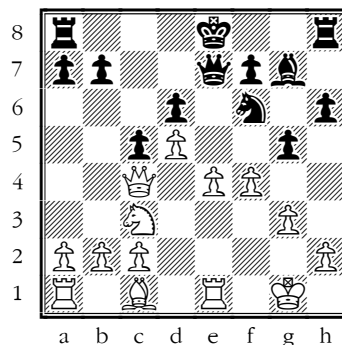


Black has just fallen behind in development with all those pawn moves. Little moves like h6 are often thought of as being 'safety first', but because they waste time, they are very dangerous!

- [11...Be7]
 12 Re1 Qe7

Moving the Queen onto the same file as the King is asking for trouble!

- [12...Be7 and castling was much better.]
 13 g3 g5
 14 f4 Bg7



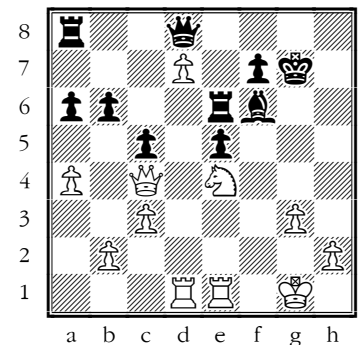
Now White can break in the centre before Black has castled – very dangerous.

- 15 e5 dxe5
 16 fxg5

White is distracted by winning a pawn.

[16.fxg5 is consistent and very strong for White.]


- 16 ... hxg5
 17 Bxg5 0-0
 18 Bxf6 Bxf6
 19 Ne4 Rfe8
 20 d6 Qd8
 21 d7 Re6
 22 Rad1 b6
 23 c3 a6
 24 a4 Kg7



- 25 Rf1! Ra7

Black is in trouble but this just loses.

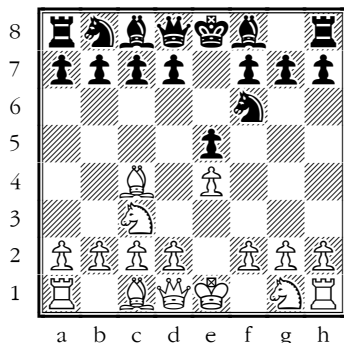
- 26 Nxf6 Rxf6
 27 Rxf6 Rxd7
 [27...Kxf6 28.Qh4+]
 28 Rxd7 Qxd7
 29 Rxb6 Qe7
 30 Rxa6
 1-0

 Little moves like h6 are often thought of as being 'safety first', but because they waste time, they are very dangerous!

 **Charles (Black)[C50] (2.9)**

The game got bogged down in sticky toffee... yeuch.

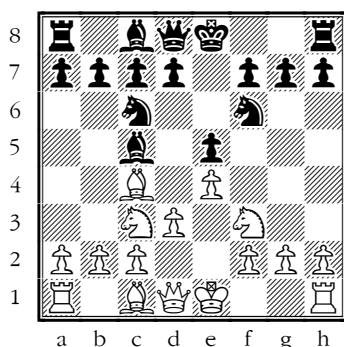
- 1 e4 e5
- 2 Bc4 Nf6
- 3 Nc3



- 3 ... Bc5

[3...Nxe4! livens things up: White should reply 4.Qh5!]

- 4 Nf3 Nc6
- 5 d3



Oh no... it's the dreaded Old Stodge!

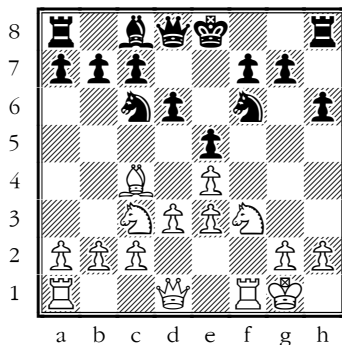
- 5 ... h6

Oh dear... a very slow, unnecessary and defensive move. That's the opposite of the way Black should be playing!

- 6 0-0 d6
- 7 Be3

Not bad.

- 7 ... Bxe3
- 8 fxe3



Now White has a half-open f-file to attack down.

- 8 ... Ng4

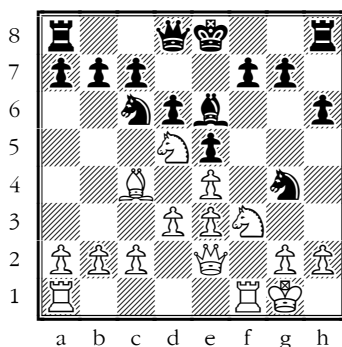
A solo effort like this is bound to be stopped easily by the defence.

- 9 Nd5

[9.Qe2]


- 9 ... Be6


- 10 Qe2



Drawn at this point

Your comment after the game was interesting: "I couldn't think of anything to do". That's the trouble with these Old Stodge positions.

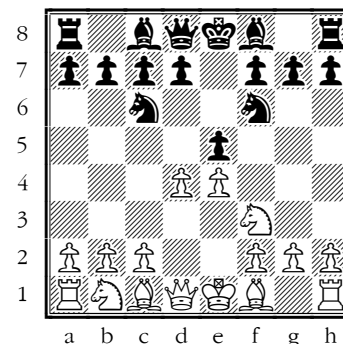
 You need something better to play than Old Stodge – and if you can avoid it as Black too, all the better.

 **Charles (White) [C44] (3.9)**



A great effort of defence: White just refused to lose!

- 1 e4 e5
- 2 Nf3 Nc6
- 3 d4 Nf6

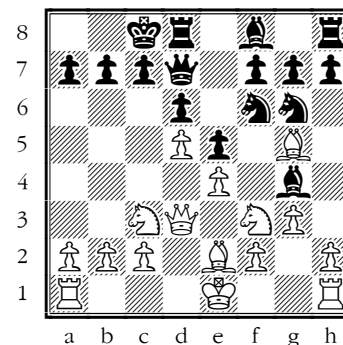


- 4 Qd3

Rather defensive from White already.

[4.Nc3! is the Scotch Four Knights, but I also liked the look of 4.dxe5 Nxe4 5.Qd5, trying to set some problems.]

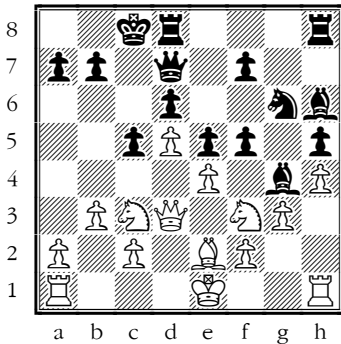
- 4 ... d6
- 5 d5 Ne7
- 6 Bg5 Ng6
- 7 g3 Bg4
- 8 Be2 Qd7
- 9 Nc3 0-0-0



- 10 Qe3

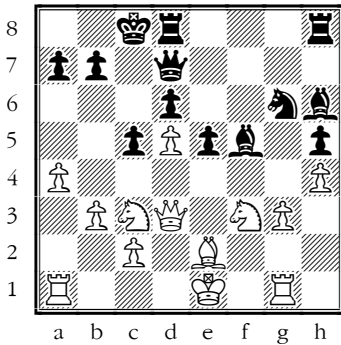
[10.h3 is a trap: 10...Bxh3? 11.Ng1 nets the Bishop]

- 10 ... c5
- 11 b3 h5
- 12 Bxf6 gxf6
- 13 h4 Bh6
- 14 Qd3 f5



Black is starting to take control of the game.

- 15 a4 f4
- 16 Rg1 fxg3
- 17 fxg3 f5
- 18 exf5 Bxf5



- 19 Qb5

[19.Ne4 isn't pretty, but at least doesn't lose a pawn.]

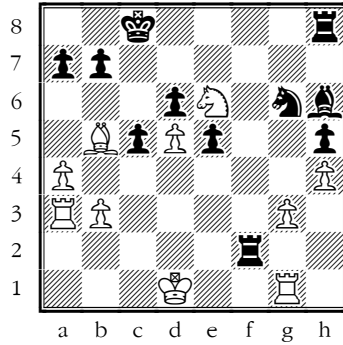
- 19 ... Qxb5
- 20 Bxb5

[20.axb5! Bxc2 21.Rxa7]

- 20 ... Bxc2
- 21 Ng5 Rdf8
- 22 Ne6 Rf6
- 23 Ra3 Rf3
- 24 Nd1 Bxd1

[24...Rg8]

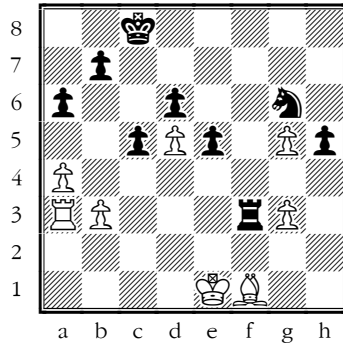
- 25 Kxd1 Rf2



- 26 Ng5

[26.g4 looked worth a try to me at the time but at home I see 26...Rd2+]

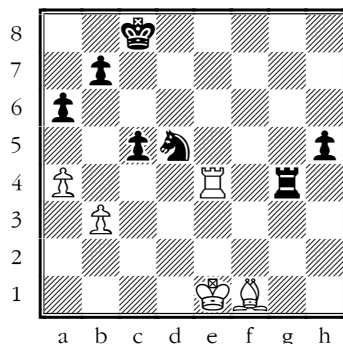
- 26 ... Rhf8
- 27 Ke1 a6
- 28 Rf1 Rxf1+
- 29 Bxf1 Bxg5
- 30 hxg5 Rf3



- 31 Ra2

Good! Leaving the Rook defending there was just losing.

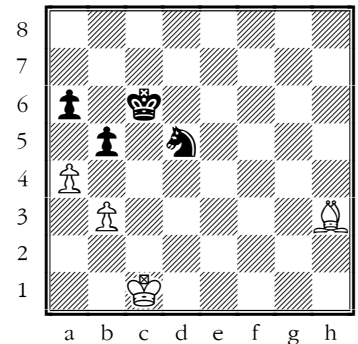
- 31 ... Rxg3
- 32 Rf2 Rxg5
- 33 Rf6 Ne7
- 34 Rxd6 e4
- 35 Re6 Nxd5
- 36 Rxe4 Rg4



- 37 Re5

[I was just hoping you would see 37.Bh3! but your move also makes a lot of progress.]

- 37 ... Nf6
- 38 Rxc5+ Kd7
- 39 Be2 Re4
- 40 Kd1 h4
- 41 Rc3 Rd4+
- 42 Kc1 Nd5
- 43 Rd3 Rxd3
- 44 Bxd3 h3?
- 45 Bf5+! Kc6
- 46 Bxh3 b5

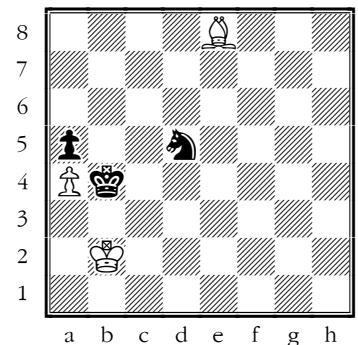


Now it should be a draw.

- 47 Bf1

[If White wants a draw, then the easiest way to go for it is 47.axb5+ axb5 (47...Kxb5 48.Bf1+ Ka5 49.Bxa6) 48.Bg2 Kc5 49.Kd2]

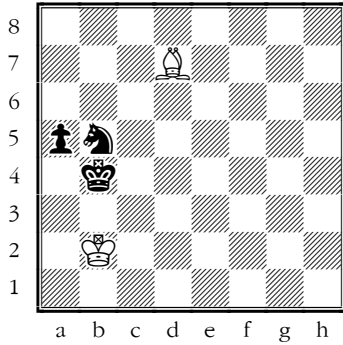
- 47 ... bxa4
- 48 bxa4 a5
- 49 Bb5+ Kc5
- 50 Kb2 Kb4
- 51 Be8



Black keeps coming up with ideas about how to win this: I was impressed.

- 51 ... Nc7

- 52 Bd7 Na8
- 53 Be8 Nb6
- 54 Ka2 Nxa4
- 55 Ka1 Nb6
- 56 Ka2 Nd5
- 57 Kb2 Nc7
- 58 Bd7 Nb5

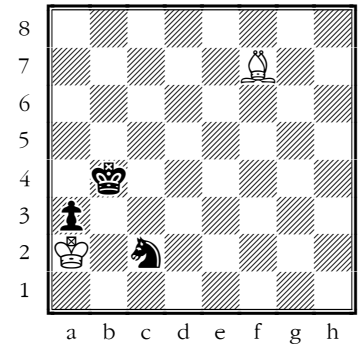


59 Kc2

[59.Bxb5 Kxb5 60.Kb3 and everyone should know how to draw this.]

- 59 ... a4
- 60 Kb2 a3+
- 61 Ka2 Nc3+
- 62 Ka1 Kb3
- 63 Be6+ Kc2
- 64 Bf7 Kc1
- 65 Bg8 Kc2
- 66 Bf7 Kd3
- 67 Bg8 Kd4
- 68 Bf7 Kc5
- 69 Bg8 Kb4
- 70 Bf7 Nd1
- 71 Bg8 Ne3
- 72 Bf7 Nc2+

73 Ka2



Drawn

A very gritty defense by White when it would have been easy to get careless or give up.

Blaise Radley

General: I'm sorry that the most moves I have are from the game you lost! However, that was a good scrap, with lots of things to learn from it.

I'd really like you to be playing a different opening – having said that, you could have finished the game at move 10! So I think you should be looking twice at your moves, making sure you aren't playing something OK-but-not-great when you have a big opportunity on the board.

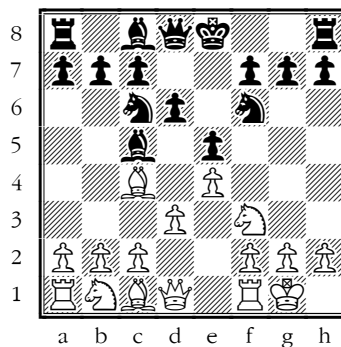
Blaise(White) [A00]
(1.10)

1-0
Sorry, I don't have the score of this game

Blaise (White) [C55]
(2.10)

A good long scrap which could have been a lot shorter!

- 1 e4 e5
- 2 Nf3 Nc6
- 3 Bc4 Nf6
- 4 d3 Bc5
- 5 0-0 d6



More Old Stodge.

6 Ng5

Moving a piece twice in the opening is usually a waste of time.

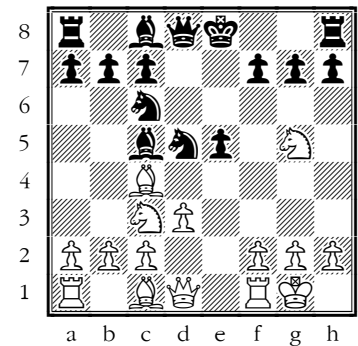
6 ... d5?

This is OK in similar positions, but just loses a pawn here.

[6...0-0 is fine: White shouldn't be in a hurry to lose two active developed pieces for a Rook that is still half-asleep.]

7 exd5 Nxd5

8 Nc3

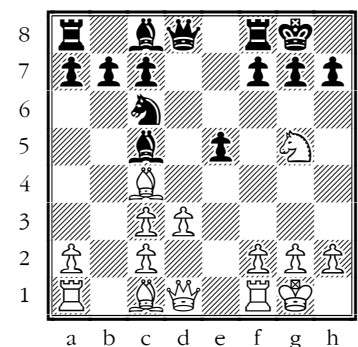


8 ... Nxc3

9 bxc3

[9.Bxf7! + picks up a pawn]

9 ... 0-0



Castling into it!

10 Nf3

[10.Qh5! wins]

The third move by that Knight... This is how most early attacks end, in retreat...

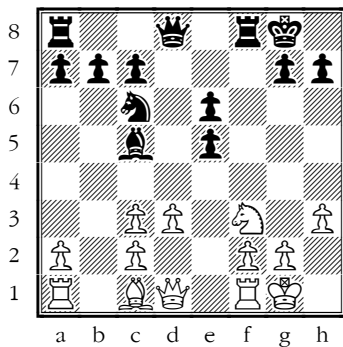
10 ... Bg4

Now all is calm again.

11 h3 Be6

[11...Bh5]

12 Bxe6 fxe6



Black's pawns are terrible.

13 d4?

White can't count.

[13.Ng5 is best, hitting h7 and e6 and with an idea of settling on e4]

13 ... exd4

14 cxd4 Bxd4

15 Nxd4 Nxd4

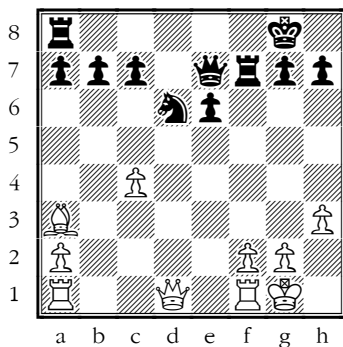
16 Ba3 Rf7

17 c3 Nb5

18 Bb2 Qe7

19 c4 Nd6

20 Ba3



20 ... Qh4

I would be happier to get that last piece into play.

[20...Rd8; 20...Raf8]

21 Bxd6 cxd6

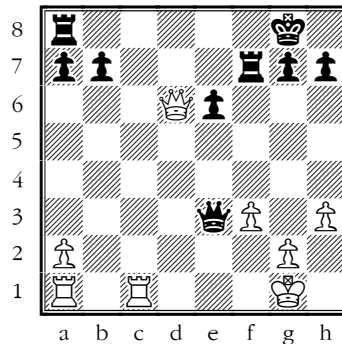
22 Qxd6 Qxc4

23 Rfc1 Qe4

24 f3

[24.Re1 Qf5]

24 ... Qe3+



25 Kf1

[25.Kh1!]

25 ... Re8

[25...Raf8! is good, threatening to checkmate after detonating f3.]

26 Re1 Qf4

27 Qc5 b6

28 Qb5 Ree7

29 Rad1 g6

30 Rd3 Kg7

31 Red1 h5

32 g4 hxg4

33 hxg4 Qxg4

34 Ke1

[34.Qe5+ Kh7 35.Qh2+ Qh5 36.Qg3]

34 ... Qg3+

35 Kd2 Rxf3

36 Rxf3 Qxf3

37 Rf1

Not sure I got these next couple of moves down correctly!

37 ... Qd5+

38 Qxd5 Kh6

0-1



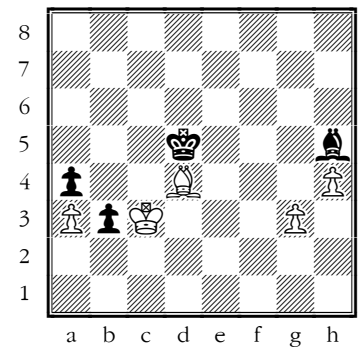
Most early attacks end in retreat... Build up your attacks, and you will be able to keep going



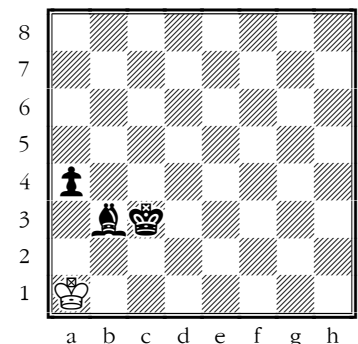
Even if you see a good move, make sure you aren't missing a great one!



Blaise (Black)(3.10)



I'm sorry to say I over-wrote the first part of this game because I wanted to collect this position; Black should have tried 1...b2 2.Kxb2 Kxd4 but tragically it's still a draw even after White loses all three pawns because Black is left with the 'wrong rook's pawn'.



DRAW

And, given that a draw is the best you could ever do, you should have forced it straight away.

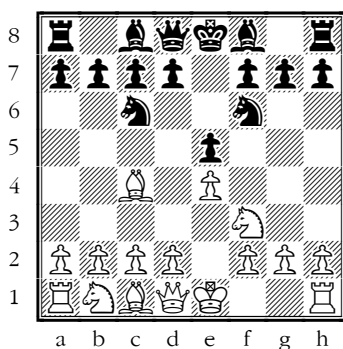
Sam Head

General: The third game showed me that you really understand what you are supposed to be doing in the opening; the other two games showed me that you need to know a bit more about the openings you play, so you get a chance to show what you can do. Twice in the first game you hit at knights arriving near your position; these moves are often weakening or a waste of time – or both! Find something positive to do instead, if your opponent isn't threatening anything.

Sam [C55] (Black)(1.11)

A nice game where White lost control after a too-early attack.

1 e4 e5
2 Bc4 Nc6
3 Nf3 Nf6



The Two Knights' Defence: one of the basic openings that everyone should know a bit about.

4 Nc3

[4.d4 exd4 5.0-0 is what I recommend for White.;

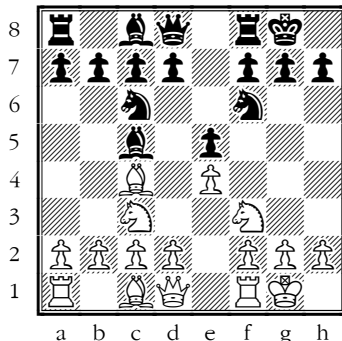
4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 b5 is what I recommend for Black 6.Bxb5 Qxd5;

4.d3 is a miserable move, but often played.]

4 ... Bc5

[4...Nxe4! is a simple equaliser; I mention this every year!]

5 0-0 0-0



Early castling in these 'Old Stodge' positions can actually be dangerous - which is one reason why I don't think juniors should play them.

[5...d6]

6 a3

In this quiet position, time-wasting like this is not dangerous, but it is pointless. It usually tells me that a player hasn't a clue what to do in the position - and if that's true, White shouldn't be playing these positions.

6 ... d6

7 h3

Another miserable tiny pawn move, although actually ...Bg4 can be quite dangerous if you have castled.

7 ... Qe7

8 Ng5

This Knight won't do much on its own.

[8.d3]

8 ... h6

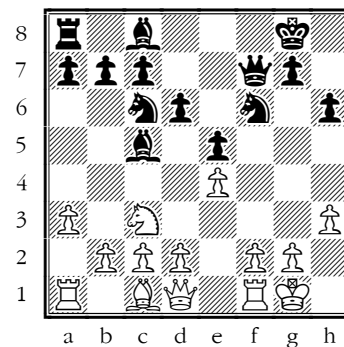
No need for this, although it does make most of White's developed pieces vanish

while Black loses only a sleepy Rook.

Don't force your opponent to play their plan!

9 Bxf7+ Rxf7

10 Nxf7 Qxf7



11 Nb5

Again, not even a threat.

[11.d3]

11 ... a6

...so it's not important to chase it away.

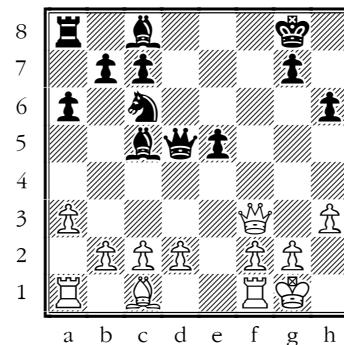
[11...Be6 is a natural developing move, which also has the nasty threat of ...Bc4.]

12 Nc3 d5

13 exd5 Nxd5

14 Nxd5 Qxd5

15 Qf3



15 ... Qxf3

[15...e4 keeping the Queen makes more of Black's

activity, but winning a pawn can't be bad either.]

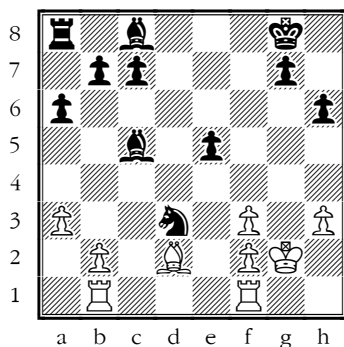
- 16 gxf3 Nd4
 17 Kg2 Nxc2
 18 Rb1 Nb4

Not sure I have the position right here!

- 19 d3

[19.axb4]

- 19 ... Nxd3
 20 Bd2



- 20 ... Nxf2
 21 Bc3?

[21.Rxf2 restores the number of pieces although the pawns are another matter.]

- 21 ... Bxh3+!
 22 Kg1 Bxf1
 23 Rxf1 Rf8
 24 f4 exf4

[24...Nd1 + forces the exchange of another piece.]

- 25 Kh2 Ng4+

with a simple win.

...0-1

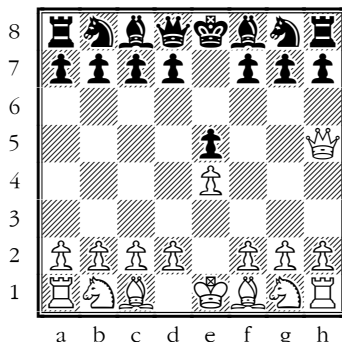
A sequence like Nxf7 Rxf7; Bxf7 + Kxf7 usually leaves the attacker without any active pieces

Unless you have a very good reason to nudge forward a rook's pawn, sit and think of a better idea! It's nearly always better to get a different piece into play.

Sam [C20](White) (2.11)

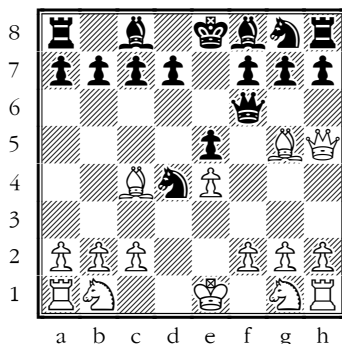
This time you attacked too early... glad you escaped the usual penalty!

- 1 e4 e5
 2 Qh5



I was surprised to see this played at this level. Mind you, that's not as surprised as GM Sasikiran when US Champion GM Nakamura played it against him. It all depends on what ideas you have to show... On this evidence, White should play a line where they can show more ideas than mating on f7.

- 2 ... Nc6
 3 Bc4 Qf6
 4 d4 Nxd4
 5 Bg5



- 5 ... Qg6

Safe enough.

[It's risky, but Black can get way with 5...Nxc2 + 6.Kd1 Qxf2 7.Nf3 g6!]

- 6 g4

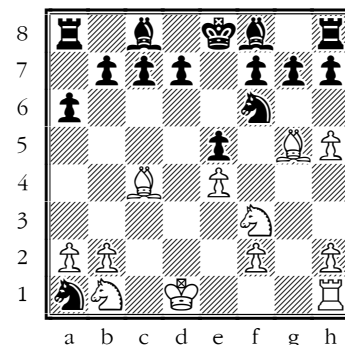
This move threatens nothing.

- 6 ... Qxh5

- [6...Nxc2+!
 6...Qxe4+ 7.Kf1 g6!]
 7 gxh5 Nxc2+
 8 Kd1 Nxa1

White has been trying to lose a Rook all game...

- 9 Nf3 Nf6
 10 Bb5 a6
 11 Bc4



...1-0

White did well to turn this one around!

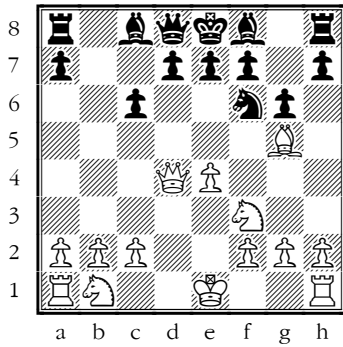
I know I keep saying players need to know the ideas behind their openings, but this opening really doesn't have more than one idea, and if your opponent spots it, you will be left with nothing, maybe worse...

You need a better idea in the opening than going for a simple checkmate from move 1.

Sam(White) [B31] (3.11)

Oops.

- 1 e4 c5
 2 Nf3 Nc6
 3 Bb5 g6
 4 Bxc6 bxc6
 5 d4 cxd4
 6 Qxd4 Nf6
 7 Bg5



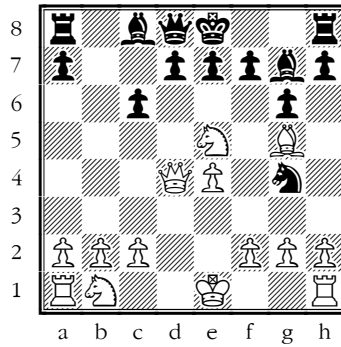
I like all those moves for White: quick and aggressive development.

7 ... Bg7
8 Ne5

But I didn't like that one, moving a piece twice without good reason.

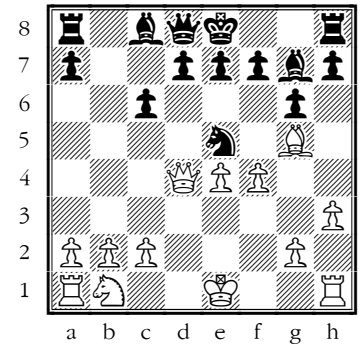
[8.Nc3]

8 ... Ng4



It's already bad for White.

9 h3
[9.f4 h6 10.Bh4 g5]
9 ... Nxe5
10 f4



Nearly brilliant, but:

10 ... Nf3+
0-1

These discoveries are always hard to see coming.

Don't move a piece twice in the opening without good reason: it's nearly always better to get a different piece into play.

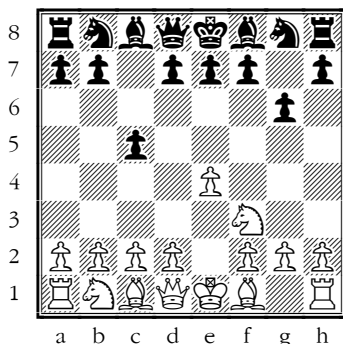
Savanna Bonstow

General: Your play in the first game showed a lack of ambition; you should aim to develop so quickly and so aggressively in the opening, that if your opponent makes the slightest mistake, they are going to get checkmated early on. The other two games were very clean-cut victories.

Savanna(White) [B27] (1.12)

White developed too slowly to afford to drop a pawn in the opening.

1 e4 c5
2 Nf3 g6



3 d3

Ooh, too slow.

[Better ideas include: 3.Bc4; 3.c3; 3.c4 See Laurens' third game; 3.d4]

3 ... Bg7

4 Be2

[4.g3 is the best way to develop, otherwise all White's pieces will be very tame.]

4 ... Nc6
5 0-0 d6
6 c3 Qb6
7 Be3?

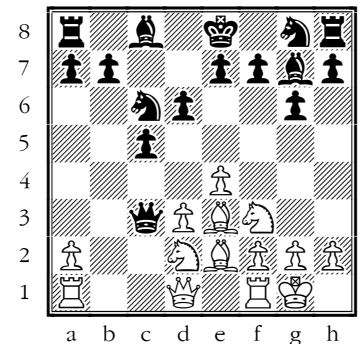
overlooking Black's idea.

[7.Na3 Nf6

8.Nc4 Qc7

9.a4]

7 ... Qxb2
8 Nbd2 Qxc3



Black has spent a bit of time collecting the pawns, but White's tightly bunched pieces are not creating any pressure on Black's position, and it's hard to see how they are going to do that quickly enough to get White back into the game. If White had developed pieces into more active positions early on, then Black would probably have some problems getting sorted. This is another example of how 'safe' moves

in the opening can lose the game for you!

9 Qa4 Bd7
10 Qb3?

I think White missed Black's idea again.

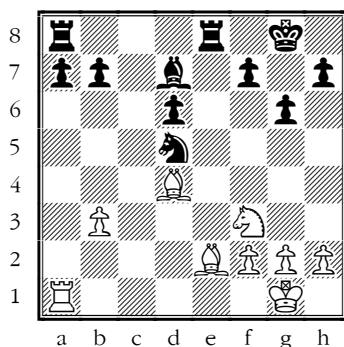
10 ... Qxb3
11 axb3 Bxa1
12 Rxa1 Nf6
13 d4 cxd4
14 Nxd4 Nxd4
15 Bxd4 0-0
16 e5

[16.Bxa7]

16 ... Nd5
17 exd6 exd6
18 Nf3

[18.Ne4 Rfe8 19.Bf3 makes more of a fight of it.]

18 ... Rfe8



19 Re1

Just invites swaps, if nothing worse! White needs to keep pieces on, and not risk getting into a pin like this.

[19.Bc4]

19 ... Nf4
20 Kf1

[20.Be3 keeps pieces on]

20 ... Nxe2
21 Rxe2 Rxe2

[21...Bb5! wins another exchange. It's always worth one last look.]

22 Kxe2 Bg4
23 h3

[23.Kd3]

23 ... Bxf3+

24 Kxf3 b6
25 b4

I think I must have gone wrong earlier: the score says "a4"!

25 ... Re8
26 g4 a5
27 bxa5 bxa5
28 Kg3 d5
29 f4 Re4
30 Bb2 d4
31 h4 d3
32 Kf2

[32.Bc3]

32 ... a4

[32...d2!]

0-1

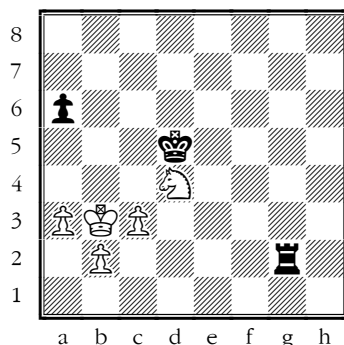


You must play as actively and aggressively in the opening as you can. Playing safe is too dangerous!



Savanna [Black] (2.12)

A good killer instinct!



Black finishes off well from here. (Sorry I lost the first bit!)

43 Ka4 Rxb2
44 Ka5 Ra2
45 a4 Ra3
46 Ne2 Kc4 !
47 Kxa6 Rxa4+
48 Kb6 Ra2
49 Nc1 Rc2
50 Nb3 Kxb3
51 c4 Rxc4

52 Kb5 Rb4+
53 Kc5 Rh4
54 Kd5 Kc3
55 Ke5 Kd3
56 Kd5 Rh5+
57 Ke6 Kd4
58 Kf6 Ke4
59 Kg6 Ra5
60 Kf6 Rb5
61 Ke6 Rb6+
62 Kd7 Kd5
63 Kc7 Rh6
64 Kd7 Rh7+
65 Ke8 Ke6
66 Kf8 Kf6
67 Kg8 Ra7
68 Kh8 Kg6
69 Kg8 Ra8#
0-1

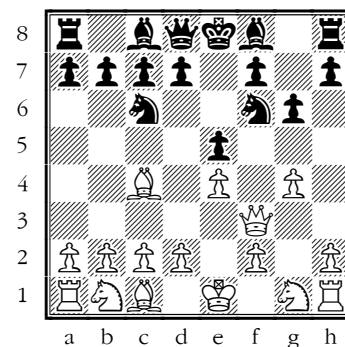
Very deft, quick play. It's possible to checkmate more quickly using king and rook, but I think that's the easy way to do it.



Savanna (Black)[C20] (3.12)

A real wipe-out – vigorous and mostly accurate.

1 e4 e5
2 Qh5 Nc6
3 Bc4 g6
4 Qf3 Nf6
5 g4



5 ... Qe7

Not bad; the Bishop can come to g7.

[5...Nd4]

6 d4

Ah, White makes you play it!

6 ... Nxd4

7 Qc3 Nxe4

8 Qd3 f5

9 gxf5 gxf5

10 f3

Oops.

10 ... Qh4+

11 Kd1 Nf2+

12 Kd2 Nxd3

13 Bxd3 d6

14 Kd1 e4

15 fxe4 fxe4

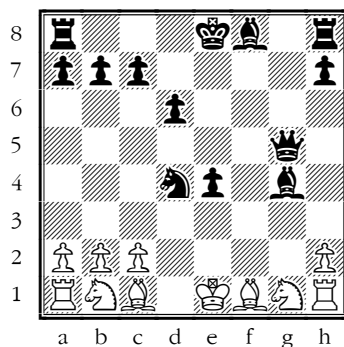
16 Bf1

[It doesn't matter, but
16.Be2 is better.]

16 ... Bg4+

17 Kd2 Qg5+

18 Ke1



Here's a puzzle for you:
mate in 3!

18 ... Qxc1+

[18...Nxc2+ 19.Kf2 Qh4+
20.Kg2 Ne1#]

19 Kf2 Qxc2+

20 Be2 Bxe2

21 Nd2 Qxd2

22 Re1 Bd3+

23 Ne2 Bxe2

24 Rb1 Bf3+

[24...Rg8 is quicker.]

25 Kg3 Bxh1

26 Rxh1 Rg8+

27 Kh3 Qh6#

They always say White's
attack should re-bound; this
was a perfect illustration!

0-1

Attacking without good
reason should lead to a
bad position.

Max Biddlestone

General: The first thing to say is, I was very impressed with your consistent and accurate score-keeping – you can see above how many of the players on higher boards either gave up or made a mess of it. You had a clear advantage in all three games and could have come away with the full three points with better technique. I would like to see you play a proper opening and not make things up as you go along.

Max [B07] (Black)(1.13)

White lost control and
should have lost the game.
As you get better, you will
learn how to win more won
games!

1 d4 d6

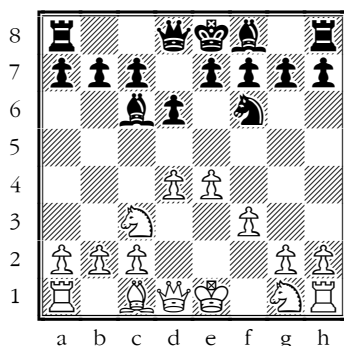
2 e4 Nf6

3 Nc3 Nc6

4 Bb5 Bd7

5 Bxc6 Bxc6

6 f3

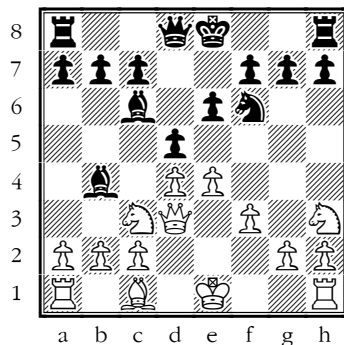


6 ... d5

Right: Black was in danger of
letting White grab all the
centre.

7 Qd3 e6

8 Nh3 Bb4



9 0-0?

Sleepy! Loses the e-pawn

[9.e5 or;

9.Nf2 are better]

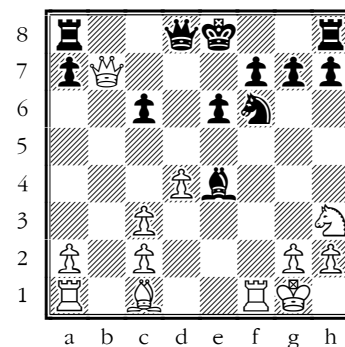
9 ... Bxc3

10 bxc3 dxe4

11 fxe4 Bxe4

12 Qb5+ c6

13 Qxb7



White hasn't lost a pawn, but
has lost control.

13 ... 0-0

14 Qb4 Bxc2

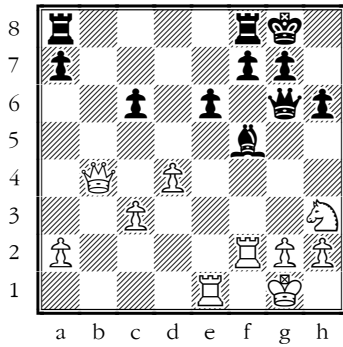
OK, now White has lost a
pawn.

15 Rf2 Bf5

16 Bg5 h6

17 Bxf6 Qxf6

18 Re1 Qg6



19 Rf4?

[19.Nf4]

19 ... Bxh3

20 Re2 Bg4

21 Ref2

White is doing well to get some attack.

21 ... Rab8

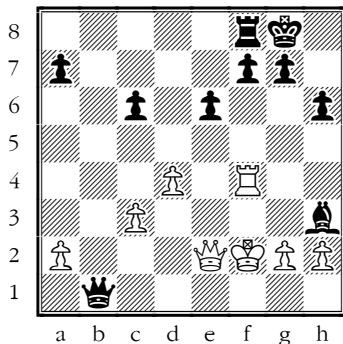
22 Qc4 Rb1+

23 Rf1 Bh3

24 Qe2 Rxf1+

25 Kxf1 Qb1+

26 Kf2

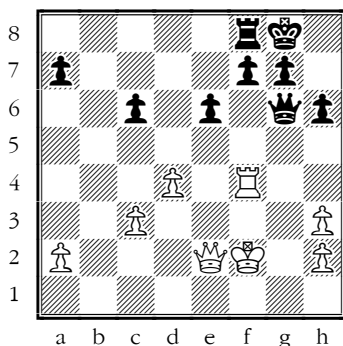


Coming to this position fresh, I'm sure you would have moved the Bishop away!

26 ... Qg6?

[26...Rb8; 26...Bf5]

27 gxh3



White is fighting with 2 pieces and Black only 1.

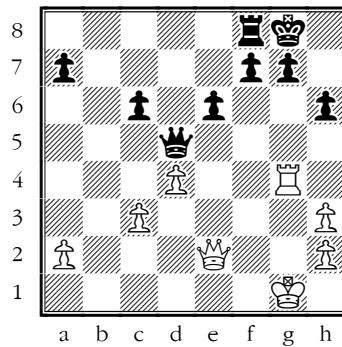
27 ... Qg5

[27...Rb8 looks like the right idea. Passing up this chance, Black gets into a very defensive position.]

28 Rg4 Qf5+

29 Kg2 Qd5+

30 Kg1



30 ... g6

Weakening and unnecessary right now.

[30...Rb8]

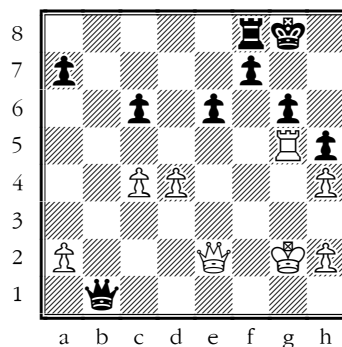
31 c4 Qf5

32 h4 h5

Weakening again.

33 Rg5 Qb1+

34 Kg2



34 ... Qb7

[34...Rb8 threatens to win the Queen.]

35 a4

[35.Qxh5 is the sort of chance White should have been looking for: it's not actually a big problem for Black but White should not have been allowed to build

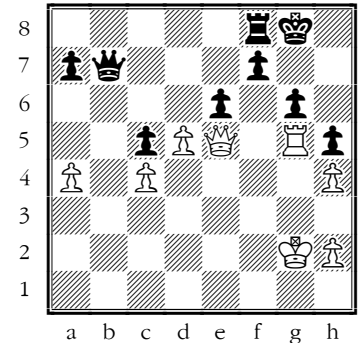
up the attack in the first place!]

35 ... c5+

36 d5 Re8

[36...exd5]

37 Qe5 Rf8



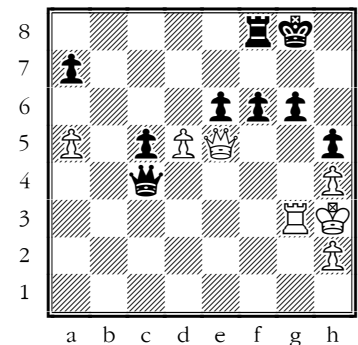
38 Kh3

[38.Rxh5! gxh5? and White draws by perpetual check. 39.Qg5+]

38 ... Qb3+

39 Rg3 Qxc4

40 a5 f6



Ouch, another weakening move in front of the King, and this time it could have been fatal.

41 Qe3

[41.Rxg6+ Kf7 (41...Kh8 42.Qxh5#) 42.Rxf6+ Ke8 43.Qxe6+ Kd8 44.Rxf8+ Kc7 45.Qc6#]

41 ... Qf1+

42 Rg2 Qb1

[42...Qf5+ defends most of the weak points.]

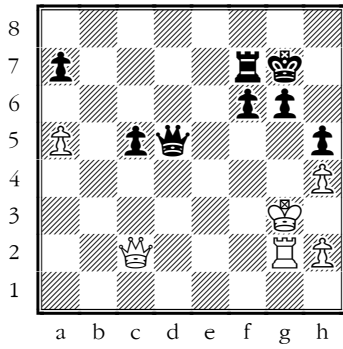
43 Qxe6+ Kg7

44 Qe7+ Rf7

45 Qe2 Qf5+

46 Kg3 Qxd5

47 Qc2



Black now plays a series of checks, I think just hoping something will turn up. You need more than that in County chess!

47 ... Qd6+
 48 Kf2 Qf4+
 49 Kg1 Qd4+
 50 Kh1 f5
 51 Qe2 Qxh4
 52 Qe6 Rf6
 53 Qd7+

[53.Qe7+ is a perpetual check again! 53...Rf7??
 54.Qxh4]

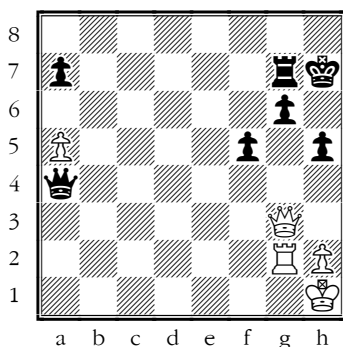
53 ... Rf7
 54 Qd6 Rf6
 55 Qxc5

[55.Qe7+ and White should be glad of a draw.]

55 ... Qe1+
 56 Rg1 Qe4+
 57 Rg2 Qa4

I don't have the score down correctly: Black took the a-pawn here.

58 Qc7+ Rf7
 59 Qc3+ Kh7
 60 Qg3 Rg7



Now Black has a solid fortress on the King's side.

61 Qg5

How can Black go about winning this position? The idea must be to advance the pawns, forcing White to abandon the attack on g6, then either force an exchange or go over to the attack by activating the rook.

Drawn

There is lots to learn from this long game:

Don't move the pawns in front of your castled king

Don't play a series of checks, just hoping something will turn up

Use all your pieces

Keep your eyes open for tactics – ones for you and ones for your opponent

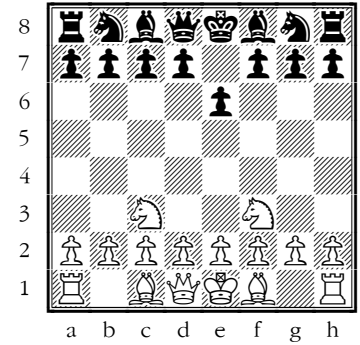
When you are losing, you should still try to make problems, and get some sort of attack

When you are winning, you have to keep control and keep as active as you can

Max (White) [A04] (2.13)

A real back-and forth game, and a shame about the accidental draw.

1 Nf3 e6
 2 Nc3



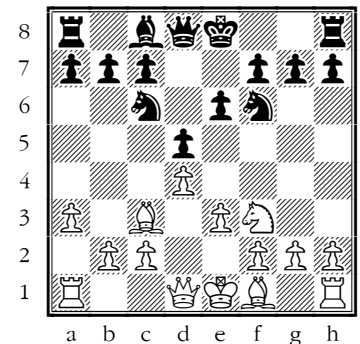
Those aren't exactly bad moves but look a bit as though you're making it up as you go along.

2 ... Bc5
 3 d4 Bb4
 4 Bd2

That's usually too slow to do much. Black has no threat here.

[4.Bf4]

4 ... Nf6
 5 a3 Bxc3
 6 Bxc3 Nc6
 7 e3 d5



Having got rid of the dark-squared bishop, Black shouldn't be putting pawns on light squares.

8 Bb5
 [8.Bd3]
 8 ... Bd7
 9 0-0 Ne4
 10 Qd3 a6
 11 Bxc6

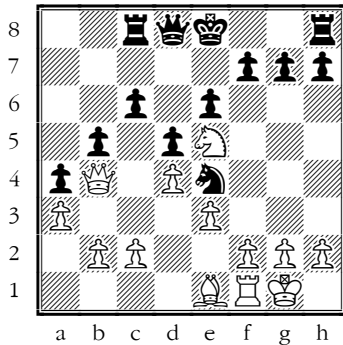
[11.Ba4]

11 ... Bxc6
 12 Bb4?

Good idea, but misses Black's threat.

[12.a4]

12 ... Bb5
 13 Qb3 Bxf1
 14 Rxf1 a5
 15 Qa4+ c6
 16 Be1 b5
 17 Qb3 a4
 18 Qb4 Rc8
 19 Ne5



There now starts a real grisly episode...

19 ... c5?

Threatening to lose two pawns!

[19...Qg5!]

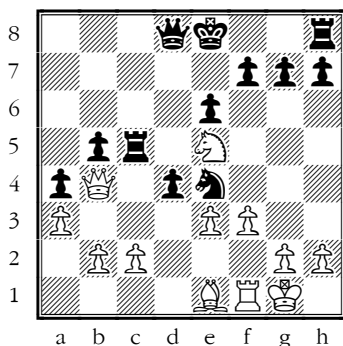
20 dxc5

[20.Qxb5+]

20 ... Rxc5

[20...0-0! is safer: 21.Qxb5 Qc7 22.Nd3]

21 f3 d4?



This is actually very tricky. White has a winning move here, but plays three bad ones in a row instead!

[21...Qb6!]

22 fxe4?

Still tricky!

[22.Nxf7! and every Black piece is attacked!]

22 ... Rxe5

23 Rf4?

[23.exd4!]

23 ... dxe3

24 Bc3? Qd1+

[24...e2!]

25 Rf1 e2

26 Re1 Rf5??

I can see the good idea behind this move, but...

27 exf5 exf5

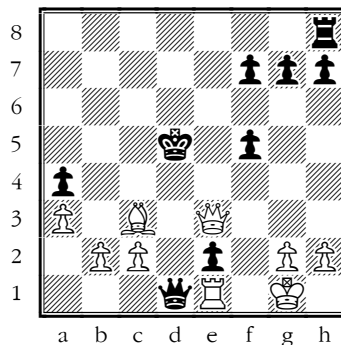
It's ended up with White being a piece ahead, and it could get better...

28 Qxb5+ Ke7

29 Qc5+ Kd7

30 Qa7+ Ke6

31 Qe3+ Kd5



32 Qxe2

Whew!

[32.Qf3+! is even stronger!

32...Ke6 33.Rxd1 exd1Q+ 34.Qxd1]

32 ... Qxe2

33 Rxe2 Rb8

34 Rd2+ Kc6

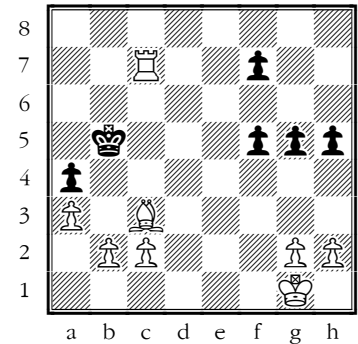
35 Rd4 Kb5?

36 Rb4+ Kc5

37 Rxb8 g5

38 Rc8+ Kb5

39 Rc7 h5



White can mate the King here:

40 Rxf7

[40.Bd4 f4 41.c4+ Ka6

42.Ra7# Not easy to spot!

Much more straight forward to promote the c-pawn, in fact...]

40 ... f4

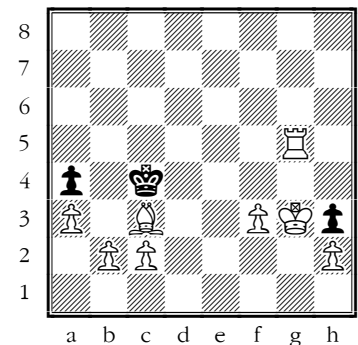
41 Rf5+ Kc4

42 Rxc5 f3

43 gxf3 h4

44 Kf2 h3

45 Kg3



Stalemate! Always think about your opponent's reply, they say, including whether they have one at all! But not an easy one to see coming.

Drawn

Make sure your pawns help your pieces

Always think about your opponent's reply

Max [White? [C44] (3.13)

Black had most of the ideas, but you coped with them all.

1 d3

Looks home-made: in County chess, you need to play moves you know a bit about!

1 ... e5
2 e4

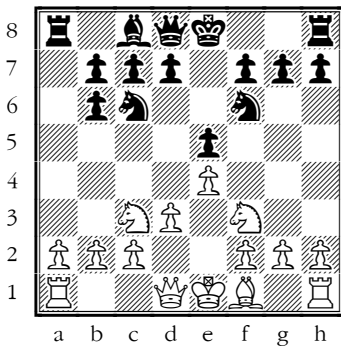
Now I'm already feeling sorry for the Bf1: how is it going to get out?

2 ... Nc6
3 Nf3 Nf6
4 Nc3 Bc5
5 Be3 Bb6
6 Bxb6

The exchange doesn't do anything for White's position.

6 ... axb6

Two pieces developed each.



7 Nd5

Moving a piece twice without good reason.

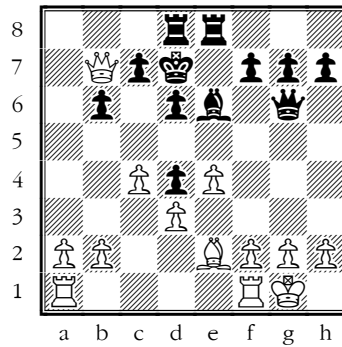
7 ... d6
8 Be2 Be6
9 Nxf6+ Qxf6

Now Black has one more piece developed than White!

10 0-0 0-0-0
11 c4 Nd4
12 Nxd4 exd4
13 Qa4 Rhe8

[13...Kb8]

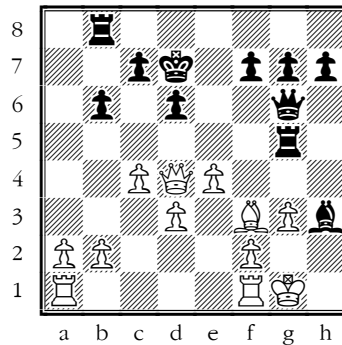
14 Qa8+ Kd7
15 Qxb7 Qg6



16 h3?

Oops.

16 ... Bxh3
17 Bf3 Rb8
18 Qd5 Re5
19 Qxd4 Rg5
20 g3




20 ... Rxc3+


I like Black's attitude!

21 fxg3 Qxc3+
22 Kh1 Bxf1
23 Rxf1 Qh3+
24 Kg1 Qg3+
25 Bg2

Sadly, the attitude was the best thing about Black's idea.


25 ... Rd8
26 a3 Re8
27 Qc3 Re6
28 Rf3 Qh4
29 Qxg7 Kc6
30 Qxf7 Rh6
31 Qd5+ Kd7
32 Rf7+
1-0

 Exchanges are nearly always better for one side or the other: make sure any exchange you make is actually better for you

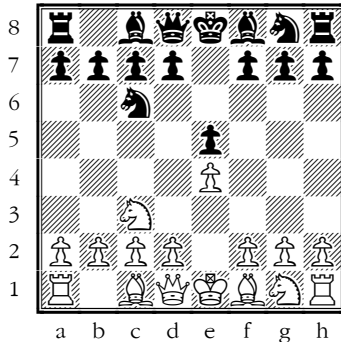
 Don't move a piece twice in the opening without good reason

Chris Clay

General: Just the one game here Chris, where you got your knight stuck but then seemed to want to win with just your Queen. There are several things to learn from this game, so have a look at all the comments.

 Chris [C25] (Black)(2.14)

1 e4 e5
2 Nc3 Nc6



There are several ideas for White in this position, but

3 f3

looks awful to me.

3 ... d6

Why block in your Bishop so early?

[3...Bc5 If White actually continued with their plan of 4.g4, then 4...Qh4+ is terrific for Black, maybe even mating!]

4 g4 Nf6

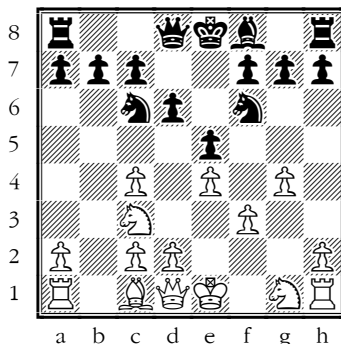
[4...Qh4+ 5.Ke2 Nd4+

6.Ke3 Nf6 gets your Queen the goal side of your Knight]

5 Bc4 Be6

6 b3 Bxc4

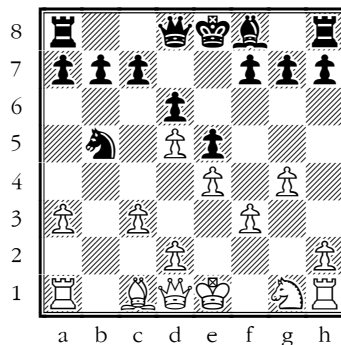
7 bxc4



7 ... Nb4

I don't like these solo raids:
don't let your pieces play the lone hero, make sure they play as a team!

8 a3 Nc6
9 Nd5 Nxd5
10 cxd5 Nd4?
11 c3 Nb5



12 c4

[12.a4! nets the Knight, which has no retreat.]

12 ... Nd4

13 Bb2 Nxf3+?

14 Nxf3 Qf6

15 g5 Qf4

16 c5? Qxe4+

17 Kf1? Qc4+

18 d3 Qxc5

Black has gathered enough pawns for the piece.

However, It's just the Queen doing all the work.

19 d4? Qb5+

20 Kg1 Qxb2

21 Nd2 Qxd4+

22 Kg2 Qxd5+

Black is winning.

23 Kg1 Be7

24 Qa4+ b5

25 Qa5 Qc5+

26 Kf1 Bxg5

27 Rg1 Be3

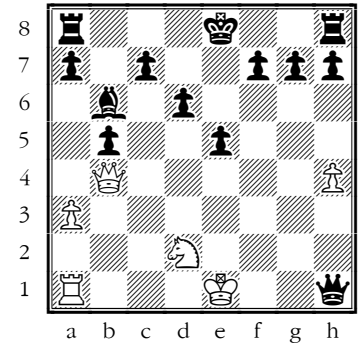
28 Ne4 Qc4+

29 Ke1 Bxg1

30 Nd2 Qc6

31 h4 Bb6

32 Qb4 Qh1+



If you can get your Rooks into the game, it's all over. Without an open file, just castle, and then push your f-pawn.

[32...0-0]

33 Nf1 Qc6

34 Rd1 h6

I don't have the score right here.

35 Qg4 Qc3+

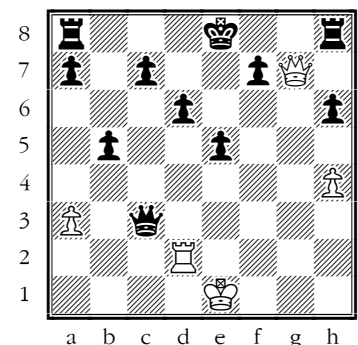
36 Nd2 Be3

37 Qxg7

Now you do have an open file!

37 ... Bxd2+

38 Rxd2



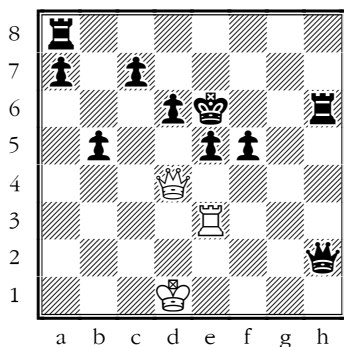
To finish off the game quickly, Black should just play

38 ... Rf8

[38...0-0-0 and put a rook on the g-file.]

- 39 Kd1 Qb3+
- 40 Rc2 Qxa3
- 41 Qxh6 Qh3
- 42 h5 Ke7
- 43 Qh7 Qh4
- 44 h6 Qh3
- 45 Qg7 Rh8
- 46 Qg5+ Ke6
- 47 Re2 Rxh6
- 48 Re3 Qh2
- 49 Qg4+ f5

50 Qd4



50 ... c5

[50...Qa2 threatens mate by Rh1: White is going to

struggle to hang on for even a few moves after that.]

51 Qc3
0-1

♙ When you move a piece to a square, always have a think about where it's going next!

♙ Don't let your pieces play the lone hero, make sure they play as a team!

All the tips:

- ♙ Always make sure you have a share of the centre 12
- ♙ Pay attention to which pieces you want to swap off and which you want to keep on the board. 13
- ♙ Even when it looks like you're losing, look again!14
- ♙ Don't help your opponent carry out their plan. 14
- ♙ Exchanges are usually good for one side or the other: make sure it's you!16
- ♙ Again, exchanges are usually good for one side or the other: make sure it's you!.....17
- ♙ The main thing that can go wrong, when you are winning, is for you to think: 'nothing can go wrong'. 18
- ♙ There is no position which is so good you can't lose from it, and no position which is so hopeless you can't escape from it.18
- ♙ Make sure your pieces stay in the game19
- ♙ Tricks in books don't always work in the position in front of you!.....20
- ♙ Loose Pieces Drop Off!.....21
- ♙ You need to do something in positions where you have a disadvantage, or the position is likely to turn against you.....21
- ♙ It's good to play openings where you can get a great position by playing fairly obvious moves.22
- ♙ Closed positions have a big effect on Bishops: think carefully before closing the position.22
- ♙ You must learn to win won games.....22

- ♙ We all know to check for our opponent's threats. But we should also try to decide what the opponent is trying to do with a move – and, if possible, upset it! 23
- ♙ Piece activity is the most important thing in chess. 24
- ♙ When you're winning, swap off pieces. 24
- ♙ Play with all your pieces 25
- ♙ Don't help your opponent!..... 25
- ♙ Chess is a team game! Use your pieces to gang up on targets, don't send out one piece on a raid. 26
- ♙ If you can look twice at things you calculate, you will find some little gems 27
- ♙ Know the ideas behind your openings: compare the moves you play with the books after each game. 28
- ♙ Always check the four basic defences to an attack... but don't forget about the fifth: counterattack! 29
- ♙ If you see a good move, it may divert you from a great one! Think twice... 30
- ♙ Everyone should know the basic ideas behind the Spanish Game (Ruy Lopez Opening) 31
- ♙ It's not enough to get a stake in the centre in the opening, you also have to keep it! 33
- ♙ Know the ideas behind the openings you play – that is, what moves would you hope to play up to move 12? 34
- ♙ Little tactics win games!..... 34
- ♙ Material (points) doesn't matter as much as activity and co-ordination. 35

☞	KUFTE: King Up For The Endgame!	35	☞	When you move a piece to a square, always have a think about where it's going next!.....	51
☞	Little moves like h6 are often thought of as being 'safety first', but because they waste time, they are very dangerous!	36	☞	Don't let your pieces play the lone hero, make sure they play as a team!	51
☞	You need something better to play than Old Stodge – and if you can avoid it as Black too, all the better.	37			
☞	Most early attacks end in retreat... Build up your attacks, and you will be able to keep going	40			
☞	Even if you see a good move, make sure you aren't missing a great one!.....	40			
☞	A sequence like Nxf7 Rxf7; Bxf7 + Kxf7 usually leaves the attacker without any active pieces	42			
☞	Unless you have a very good reason to nudge forward a rook's pawn, sit and think of a better idea! It's nearly always better to get a different piece into play.	42			
☞	You need a better idea in the opening than going for a simple checkmate from move 1.	42			
☞	Don't move a piece twice in the opening without good reason: it's nearly always better to get a different piece into play.	43			
☞	You must play as actively and aggressively in the opening as you can. Playing safe is too dangerous!	44			
☞	Attacking without good reason should lead to a bad position.	45			
☞	Don't move the pawns in front of your castled king	47			
☞	Don't play a series of checks, just hoping something will turn up.....	47			
☞	Use all your pieces	47			
☞	Keep your eyes open for tactics – ones for you and ones for your opponent.....	47			
☞	When you are losing, you should still try to make problems, and get some sort of attack.....	47			
☞	When you are winning, you have to keep control and keep as active as you can	47			
☞	Make sure your pawns help your pieces....	48			
☞	Always think about your opponent's reply	48			
☞	Exchanges are nearly always better for one side or the other: make sure any exchange you make is actually better for you	49			
☞	Don't move a piece twice in the opening without good reason	49			