

West Of England & South Wales Team Tournament

Peter Lea School, Cardiff, Saturday 26th January 2008

Introduction

I've given each of the games a quick run-through, and made some overall comments. Well done one and all; it appears that the message about James' third round result didn't get through, so we actually came clear second.

Three 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>

And for anyone at

<http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/coaching.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

http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/Praxis/u14_2007.pdf

And this one is: http://www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/Praxis/u14_2008.pdf

Again, if you can't get at them, and want to read them, let me know.

I managed to miss a few games; I'm really sorry if it was one of yours. If you want to send any missing games to me, I'll send you them back with some notes.

Dave Regis, February 2008

Results

		Round 1			Round 2			Round 3			
		Col.	Res.		Col.	Res.		Col.	Res.		Tot.
1	Laurens Stegink	W	½		B	½		W	½		1½
2	George Darling	W	1		W	1		B	1		3
3	Oliver Demeger	B	1		W	0		B	1		2
4	Alex Billings	W	1		B	1		W	0		2
5	James Rampersad	B	½		B	1		W	1		2½
6	Freddie Sugden	B	0		W	0		B	0		0
7	Charles Rochford	B	1		W	½		W	1		2½
8	George Coulson	W	0		B	0		W	1		1
9	Tom Senior	W	1		B	1		B	1		3
10	Blaise Radley	W	½		W	1		B	1		2½
11	Christopher Clay	B	1		W	0		B	0		1
12	Jack Stephenson	W	1		B	1		W	0		2
		Round score	6½			6			7½		(1-10)
		Overall score	6½			12½			20		
		Position	3			3			3		

Some comments below are made with punctuation:

! Good move **!? Tricky or interesting move**
? Poor move **?! Dodgy or risky move**

Tips worth reading are shown like this:

☞ Something everyone should know.

And they're listed together at the end.

Here are two that I say every year:

☞ **You have to put pressure on your opponent if you want them to make mistakes.**

This is what is wrong with 'playing safe': your opponent will be comfortable and confident and free to attack when and where they like. Playing safe is actually very dangerous!

This has a related tip:

☞ **It's not over until it's over!**

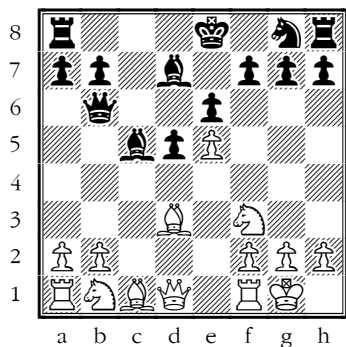
It's surprising how many losing positions can be won if you fight. Use your pieces actively and aggressively and you can still win. But if you play normally, you will lose.

Endgames

There weren't very many close endgames that I saw played. And of the ones I did see, three of them were played by Chris!

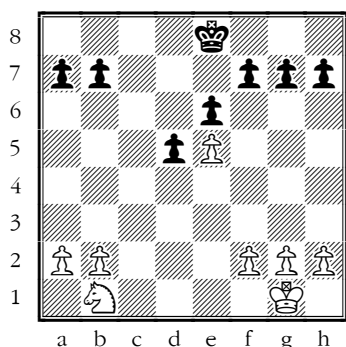
Chris did one thing very well, which you might have a think about, which was change gear between middlegame and endgame.

Have you thought about that before? Endgame ideas are different to middlegame ideas. Endgames are all about active Kings, passed Pawns and squashing your opponent's counterplay. You need to change the set of ideas that you are playing with.

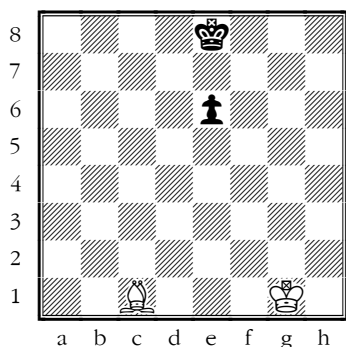


There was another set of ideas which lots of players got wrong: how should you play if you are a piece ahead?

- ☞ **When you are winning, swap pieces but keep pawns on.**
- ☞ **When you are losing, keep pieces on but swap pawns.**



Do you understand why? If you have 5 pieces and your opponent has 4, your army is $1\frac{1}{4}$ as strong as your opponent's. If you swap and get to 4-3, your army is $1\frac{1}{3}$ as strong. Another swap, it's $3\frac{2}{3}$ and you are $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as strong. But two swaps later, it's 1-0! Your single piece can do what it likes and your opponent won't be able to stop it. So then, you take a few pawns, get an extra Queen, and then the win is easy.



If you are losing, but swap off all the pawns, it doesn't matter if you get down to an endgame where your opponent has a single piece and you have just your king -- there's no way to force checkmate with just a piece! And while you still have pieces, you can use them to cause trouble, and maybe get back in the game.

- ☞ **When you're winning, you should stop for a moment and work out what you should be doing, which is being brutal and simple, not making any complications.**

So, it's another time when you should change gear, even if it still looks like a middlegame. Once your opponent has lost a piece (or more), you should play a totally different style -- don't let your opponent make a mess. Forget about attacking for the moment, just swap off and win later with an extra Queen.

Middlegame

I've said some of this in earlier years...

■ Choosing a move

☞ **Always ask yourself: what was the point of my opponent's last move? Do they have any threats?**

Of course, that really applies throughout a chess game, not just the middle game.

If you think you already do that, then the next level of chess skill is:

☞ **Try and spot your opponent's threats before they arrive on the board - you may not have a defence!**

☞ **Look for danger signs in every position.**

There are often clues that there may be a big chance for you or your opponent, so look for:

1. unsafe pieces
2. unsafe king
3. or both at once!

An **unsafe piece** is either one that is not defended at all, or is attacked once and defended once but can easily be attacked again. Once Mike Cook played 100 training blitz games with GM John Nunn, expecting to learn all sorts of clever Grandmaster ideas. Instead, he said that the main thing that he had learned was:

☞ **Loose Pieces Drop Off!**

An **unsafe king** is usually open to attack -- either in the middle with open files, or castled but the pawns in front of it have moved. But a King that doesn't have any moves at all is also unsafe -- if it really can't move, then any check might be checkmate!

These are the obvious danger signs, but really, there is no time when you shouldn't be looking for chances for you and for your opponent. Get into the habit of looking at the sorts of forcing moves that make tactics work - checks and captures.

☞ **Every move, look at every check and every capture, even daft-looking ones**

You will see below where players could have made a big difference by playing forcing moves. This rule has a counterpart:

☞ **Don't play a check or a capture unless you are sure it brings good things to you!**

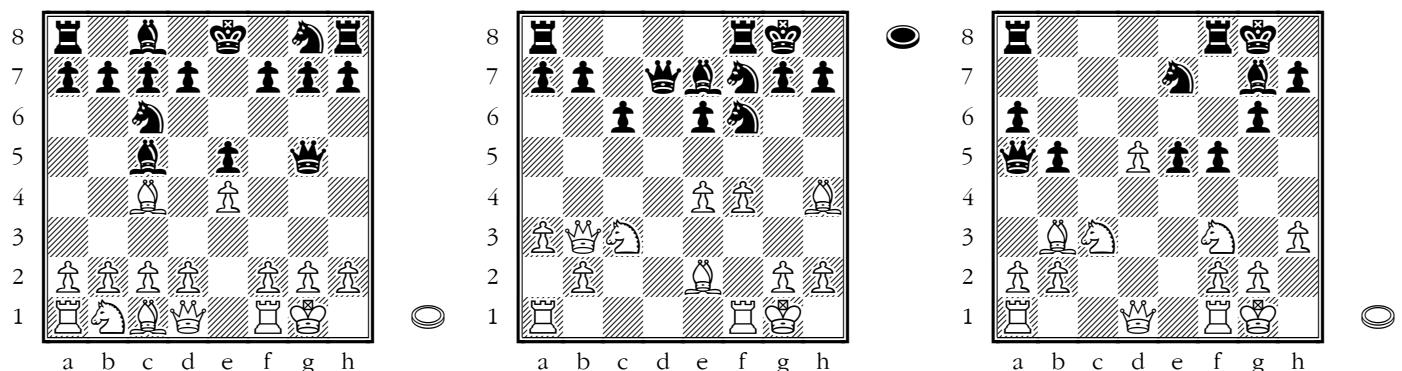
Too often I saw players taking because they could, or checking just because they could, or even just making an attacking move because they could. Sometimes these were exactly the wrong time -- see if you can spot them below!

■ Tactics

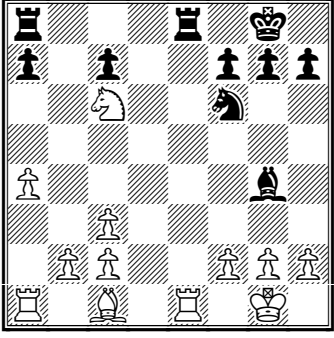
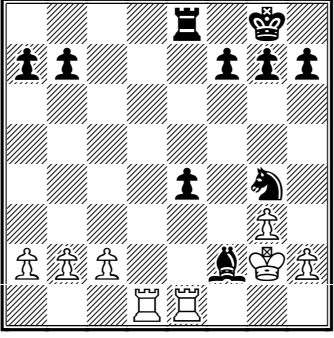
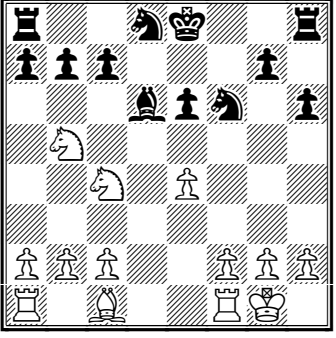
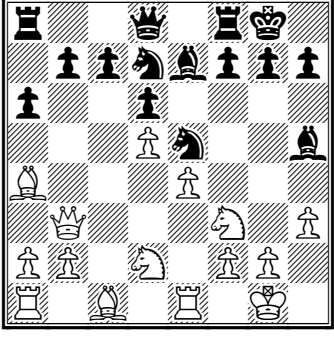
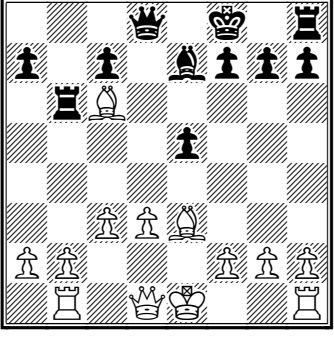
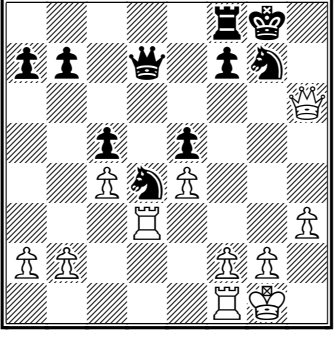
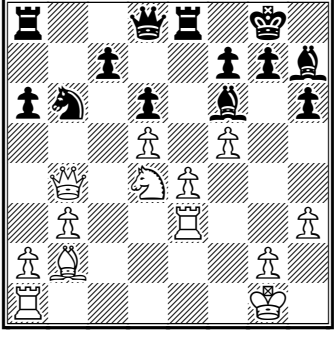
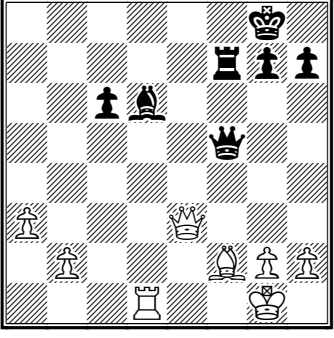
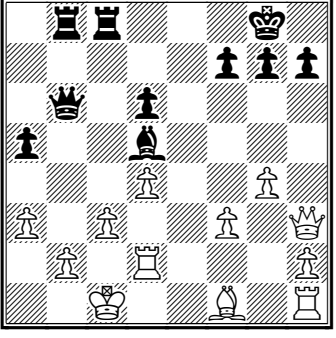
As usual, back rank mates and discoveries made up many of the things our players and their opponents missed.

☞ **The hardest tactics to spot are discoveries - so get your eye in before you get a surprise!**

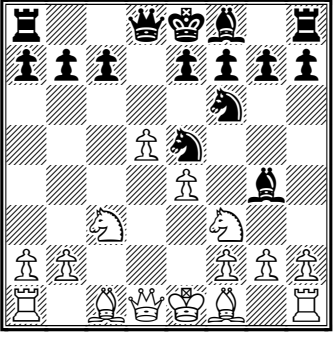
Here are three discoveries to practice on (☉☐ show the side to move):



Here are a selection of puzzles drawn from your games. Can you see what your team colleagues saw... or what they missed?

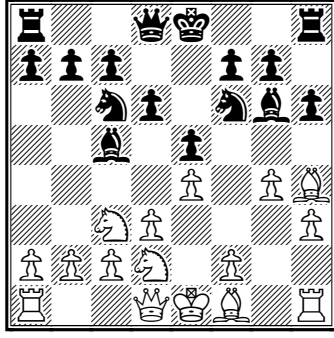
 <p>Hint: Back rank</p>	 <p>Hint: back rank</p>	 <p>Hint: fork</p>
 <p>Hint: net</p>	 <p>Hint: take a more powerful piece</p>	 <p>Hint: discovered attack</p>
 <p>Hint: pin</p>	 <p>Hint: undermining</p>	 <p>Hint: pin</p>

Lastly, here are a couple of spectacular Queen sacrifices that could have been played:



1. Nxe5!! Bxd1 2. Bb5+ c6 3. dxc6

and Black is oddly helpless against the discovered check.



1... Nxe4!! 2. Bxd8?? Bxf2+ 3. Ke2 Nd4#

A beautiful little idea called Legall's mate.

 **Playing with a plan**

Every move, if someone asks you, *why did you do that?* you should have a good reason. Let's unpack that a little:

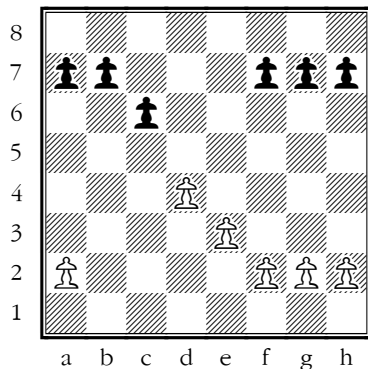
1. Sometimes it's not obvious what you should do or what your opponent is trying to do. But if that's true, you should then play **Adolf Anderssen's All-Purpose Chess Plan:**

☞ Improve the position of your worst-placed piece.

You can always do that!

But if you get into a position where there is no attack, and not much difference in piece activity, what do you do then?

The answer to this question might take you the rest of your chess life to answer, but it starts with looking at the pawns. You can usually read off a plan from the pawns, for example:



If there are open lines → put your rooks on them

If there are no open lines → open one! There is usually a pawn break that you can play somewhere.

So, White might have two good plans here:

put rooks on b1 and c1 and attack the Black pawns

put rooks on d1 and e1 and advance the e-pawn, perhaps after f3

Black doesn't look so good in this position because White has better control of the centre.

2. You need a better game plan than, "attack something, if it doesn't move, take it".

I have already suggested:

☞ **Unnecessary checks often lead to trouble.**

If you can't tell me a better reason for making a check than 'sometimes it works', then don't play it. Sometimes the checking piece gets into a bad position, sometimes the King is chased into a good position, and sometimes both happen at once! You should have a good reason for making a check, like

1. You can see a forced checkmate
2. You are chasing the King out into the open where it will be easy to attack
3. You are making a winning fork or discovered attack
4. You gain time for development
3. Leave your pawns alone.

If you don't know what to do, don't reach for a pawn. Especially not a Rook's Pawn.

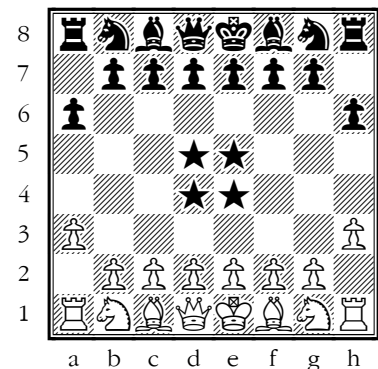
☞ **When I see a single step forward by a rook's pawn, I think this is code for, "I've run out of ideas".**

Sometimes, it will stop your opponent making an awkward pin, and sometimes, it will stop your opponent making a swap that is good for them, but I think 99% of the times I see players make a move with a Rook's Pawn, it's a complete waste of time.

☞ **The centre is where the game is won and lost!**

If your pawn move doesn't improve your position, leave it alone. Instead:

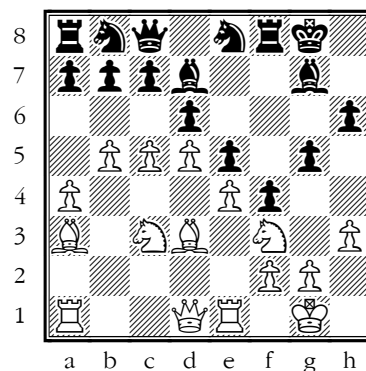
☞ Get your pieces working for you!



4. Don't swap without thinking first.

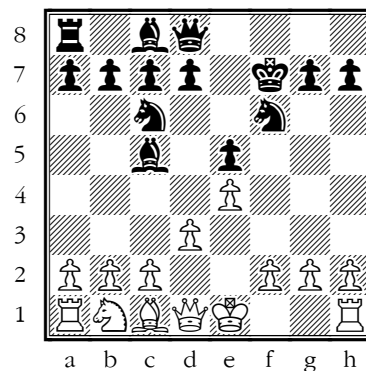
An exchange is nearly always better for one side and worse for the other. Each side will have good and bad pieces, pieces that are active and working and those which are either doing nothing or even doomed to be useless for the rest of the game. Keep your good pieces and get rid of your bad pieces if you can; don't help your opponent by swapping off their duff pieces.

What are the good and bad pieces in this position?

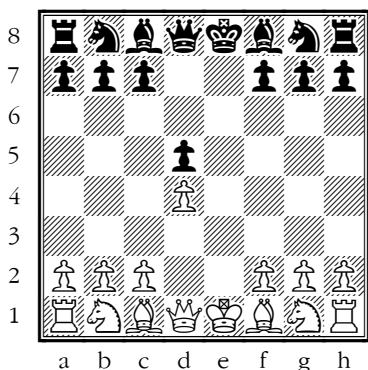


Something I also noticed in a couple of games:

- **Two pieces usually do better than a single Rook.**
- **It's usually a poor idea to give up two active pieces for Rook and Pawn; in the opening the pieces are more important.**



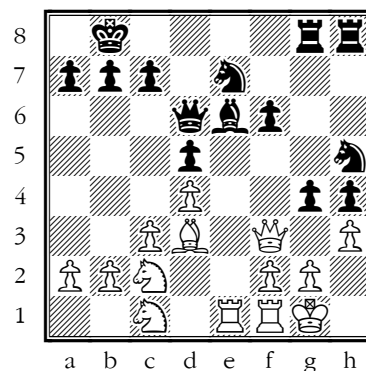
➤ How do you win when your opponent won't fight?



Sometimes you find an opponent who really isn't trying to win, they are just trying not to lose. This can be frustrating. If they really don't do anything, you can build up your attack as you please, but some players want to guide the game into boring level positions. I'll have some things to say about stodgy openings in the next section, but what about the middle game?

If you do get into a balanced symmetrical position, you can win by sticking to playing good chess, coming up with ideas and trying to set some problems. Oliver's last round game was a good example of this.

But earlier than that, in the opening, you can try making the position more unbalanced, and castling on opposite sides. Then you can play an unusual type of game where you race your pawns towards your opponent's castled king, because of course your own king is safe on the other side. Safe, that is, as long as your opponent doesn't advance on that side!







































And one last point:

- **If it doesn't help your opponent for other reasons, always take a chance to make a mess of their pawns.**

When both sides know how to attack and defend, and don't leave too many pieces to be taken, the game can be decided by weak pawns.

Openings

This is what you played:

Player	Board	Round	W/B	Result	[ECO] Opening
Laurens	1	1		½	[D07] Queen's Gambit, Tchigorin Defence
Laurens	1	2		½	[C01] French Defence, Exchange Variation
Laurens	1	3		½	[D35] Queen's Gambit, Orthodox Defence
George D	2	1		1	[D00] Stonewall Attack
George D	2	2		1	[D00] Stonewall Attack
George D	2	3		1	[C44] Four Knights' Game
Oliver	3	1		1	[C14] French Defence, Classical Variation
Oliver	3	2		0	[B22] Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation
Oliver	3	3		1	[C01] French Defence, Exchange Variation
Alex	4	1		1	[C62] Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Variation
Alex	4	2		1	[C00] French Defence
Alex	4	3		0	[C66] Ruy Lopez
James	5	1		½	[B00] --
James	5	2		1	[C50] Giuoco Piano
James	5	3		1	[D37] Queen's Gambit, Orthodox Defence
Freddie	6	1		0	[C46] Old Stodge
Freddie	6	2		0	[E90] King's Indian Defence, Classical Variation
Freddie	6	3		0	[E70] Kings' Indian Defence, Classical Variation
Charlie	7	1		1	[B20] Sicilian Defence
Charlie	7	2		½	[D10] Queen's Gambit, Slav Defence
Charlie	7	3		1	[B23] Sicilian Defence, Closed Variation
George C	8	1		0	[C55] Old Stodge
George C	8	2		0	[C50] Italian Game
George C	8	3		1	[B00] --
Tom	9	1		1	[D06] Queen's Gambit, Marshall's Defence
Tom	9	2		1	[C41] Philidor's Defence
Tom	9	3		1	[C10] French Defence, Exchange Variation
Blaise	10	1		½	[C55] Old Stodge/Two Knights' Defence
Blaise	10	2		1	[C55] Old Stodge/Two Knights' Defence
Blaise	10	3		1	[D06]
Chris	11	1		1	[D20] Queen's Gambit Accepted
Chris	11	2		0	[C44] Petroff's Defence
Chris	11	3		0	[C44] Scotch Game
Jack	12	1		1	[C48] Four Knights' Game
Jack	12	2		1	[C55] Old Stodge
Jack	12	3		0	[C48] Four Knights' Game

ECO = Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings code

■ Opening tally

Opening	Count	Score
[D06] Queen's Gambit	7	5½
[C00] French Defence	5	4½
[B20] Sicilian Defence	3	2
[C44] Four Knights' Game	3	2
[C55] Old Stodge	3	2
[D00] Stonewall Attack	2	2
[C50] Italian Game/ Giuoco Piano	2	1
[C62] Ruy Lopez	2	1
[E70] Kings' Indian Defence	2	0
[C41] Philidor's Defence	1	1
[C55] Two Knights' Defence	1	½
[C44] Petroff's Defence	1	0
[C44] Scotch Game	1	0
[Z99] Not known	4	2½

■ General comments on the openings

Every year, it seems to me, I have been wailing about everyone playing Old Stodge and not understanding basic opening ideas. This year, the standard of opening play was very much improved, with some proper grown-up openings being played, and played rather well. Popular openings as White were the Ruy Lopez and Queen's Gambit -- you can't get better than that! ñ and I was very happy with the way several of you were handling the French Defence as Black. I was delighted to see so few Old Stodges (maybe you wanted to but your opponents didn't let you?!) and there weren't too many examples of its similarly dull cousin, the Four Knights' Game.

(You haven't heard me complain about Old Stodge and the Four Knights'? I always say, *put your opponent under pressure, so they make mistakes*, and these two openings don't do that at all. Both sides just get their pieces out, there is no tension among the centre pawns, and then usually the game gets bogged down in sticky toffee. See the 2004 edition of this document!, and the website)

There's always room for improvement, of course, and you can find pointers throughout all the games below, but the overall impression is much better.

- **In the opening, when you have a choice between a pawn move and a piece move, I'd go for the piece move**
- **Every move in the opening should help you achieve one of your aims: Get your pieces out, get castled, get a stake in the centre...**
- **Don't reach for a pawn when you can activate a piece.**

We saw a lot of Queen's-side openings, which tend to be slower and less open than the King's Pawn games.

- **As a rule, as Black against 1.d4 you need to get a pawn break in, (either ...e5 or ...c5), to challenge White's centre and open a file for the Rooks. ...c5 looks easier to start with, so don't play ...Nc6 too early when you might be blocking your c-pawn.**

I liked Cecil Purdy's comment:

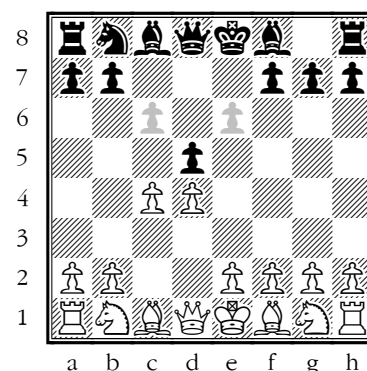
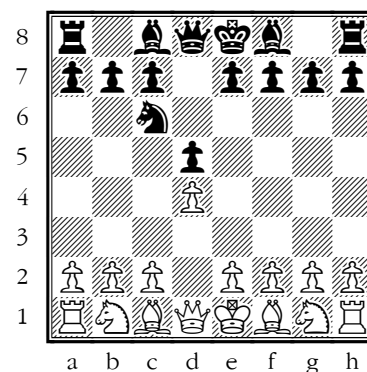
"we should test an opening chiefly for the prospects it offers to ambitious young Rooks."

This explains clearly what is wrong with blocking your c-pawn. If you don't manage to play ...e5, your Rooks will be blocked in.

The most common of these close openings was the Queen's Gambit.

- **If you decline the Queen's Gambit, you should support your central d5 pawn with another pawn.**

If not, White will take your d-pawn, leaving you without a stake in the centre.

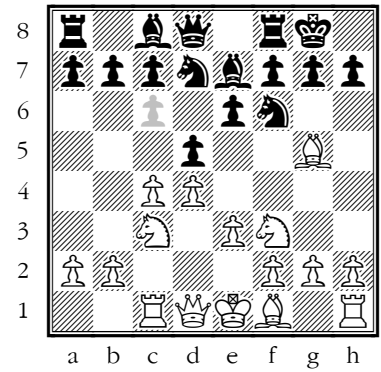
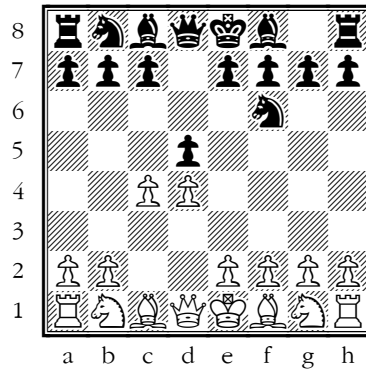
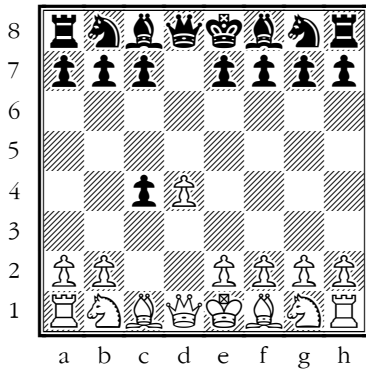


■ Notes on individual openings

I wrote a lot about the Ruy Lopez last year, so I'll give it a miss this time; if you can't find the online copy, give me a ring and I'll post you one. Same goes for the Italian Game (Giuoco Piano and Old Stodge), which I write about every year. (I've actually written about all the common openings before, so it might be worth digging all those old notes out of the website!)

Opening	Count	Score
[D06] Queen's Gambit	7	5½

It's hard to put pressure on your opponent's game just by moving pieces; you have to create some tension with your pawns. After 1.d4 d5 you're not going to manage e2-e4 very quickly, but 2.c4! is strong.



If Black accepts your gambit, you can play the exciting modern line with 3.e4 (which is actually very old) or play more slowly with 3.Nf3 and then 4.e3. Black cannot expect to keep the pawn because something like **1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3 b5 4.a4 c6 5.axb5 cxb5 6.Qf3** is fatal. 3...Be6 can be met with 4.Ng5!

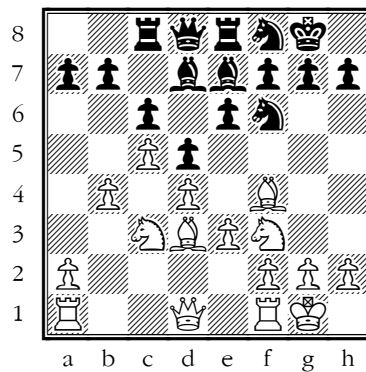
If Black doesn't accept the gambit, they really have to prop up the d5 pawn with ...c6 or ...e6. If not, White will take over the centre by taking the d5 pawn and then playing e2-e4.

If Black sensibly props up the pawn in the Orthodox Defence, wait a while before playing Bd3, or else Black can take your c-pawn and you will be a move behind in the Accepted variations.

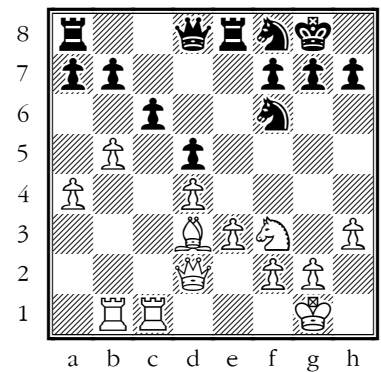
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 Be7 6.Nf3 O-O 7.Rc1

You can attack down the c-file or in the centre after e3-e4. Black now usually plays 7...c6 or 7...h6

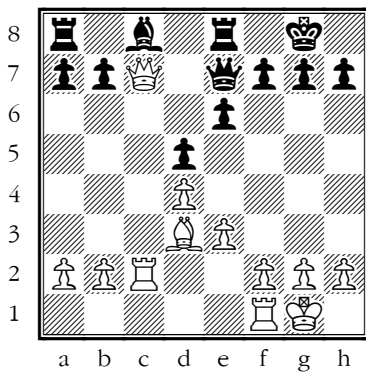
Reuben Fine in his classic *The Ideas Behind the Chess Openings*, describes five positional goals for White in the Queen's Gambit:



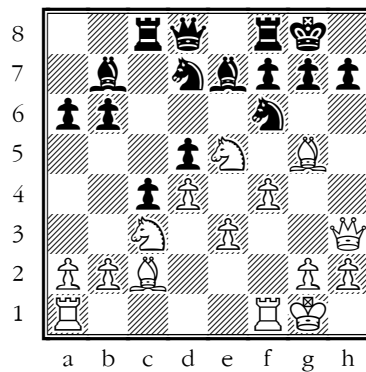
Queen's-side bind



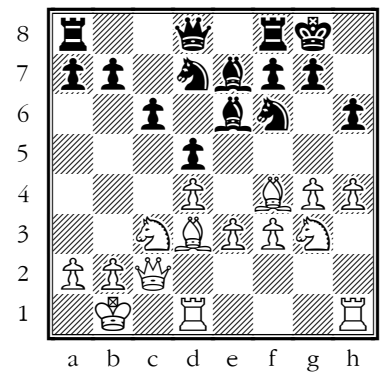
Minority Attack



Superior Development



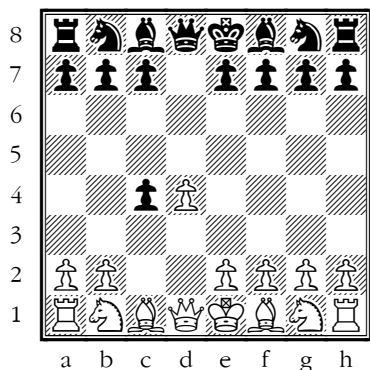
King's-side attack with pieces (Pillsbury Attack: see Laurens' 3rd game)



King's-side attack with pawns (and opposite-side castling)

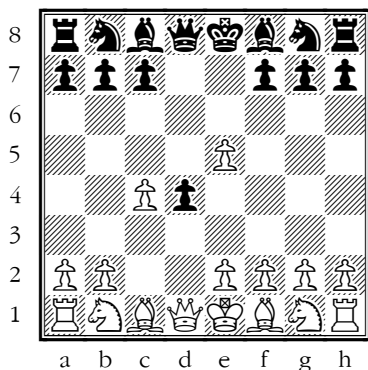
While you are playing the White side, perhaps have one of these models in mind, so you have a picture about what sort of position you are trying to reach. How would you follow up your advantage in each of these positions?

Playing Black against the Queen's Gambit is a matter of style. You don't have to learn a fancy Indian defence, just reply 1...d5 and after 2.c4:



Queen's Gambit Accepted

If you like an exciting fight in an open game, take the pawn on c4 then hit back at the centre with ...c5 or ...e5.



Albin Counter-Gambit

If you like to attack, you can play a Gambit against it! The Albin Counter-Gambit with

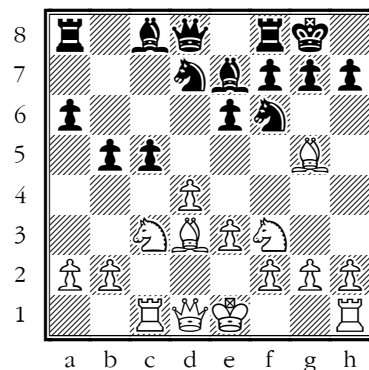
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5!? 3.dxe5 d4

contains one truly wicked trap, due to Lasker:

4.e3?! Bb4+ 5.Bd2 dxe3! 6.Bxb4? exf2+!

(7.Kxf2?? Qxd1)

7.Ke2 and now, so not to allow White a free move, **7...fxg1N+!! 8.Rxg1 Bg4+** winning. Wicked.

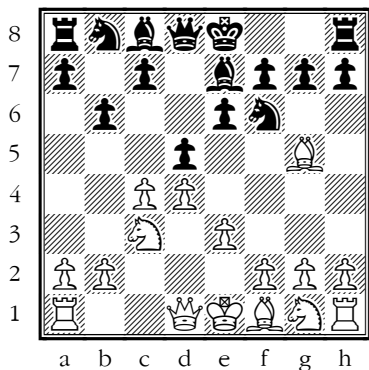


Swiss Defence

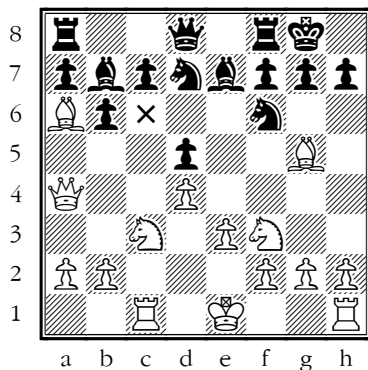
The main line with **4.Nf3 Nc6 5.g3 Nge7!?** has often been played by Russian superstar Morozevich.

If you're a more solid soul, then the Orthodox Defence is perfectly OK. After the line given above, I recommend the Swiss Defence with **7...a6:**

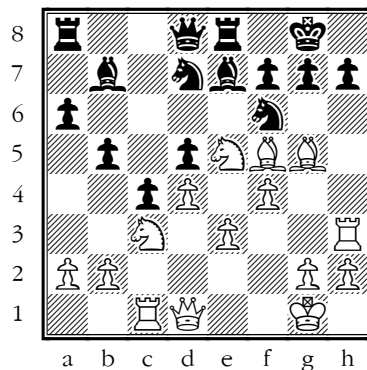
If White continues automatically with **8.Bd3** (which is a good reply to 7...c6) you get an easy game with **8...dxc4! 9.Bxc4 b5! 10.Bd3 c5!**



a b c d e f g h



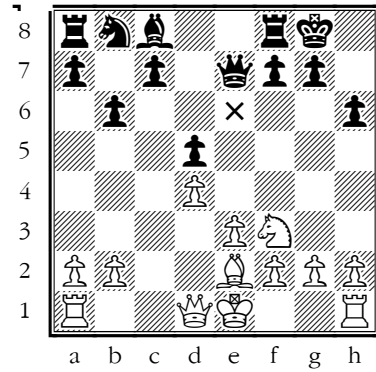
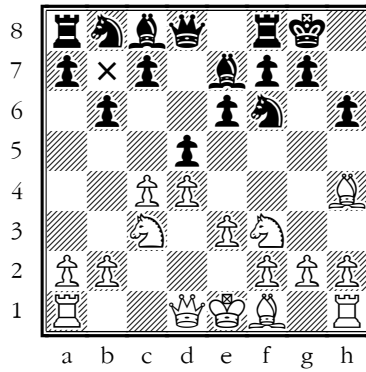
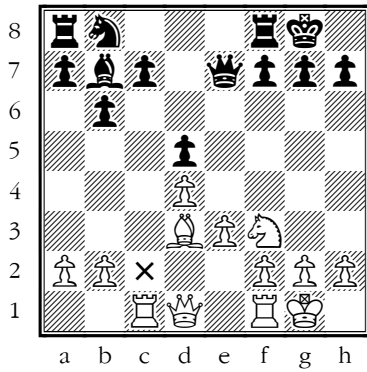
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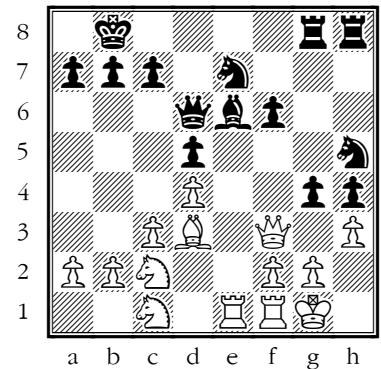
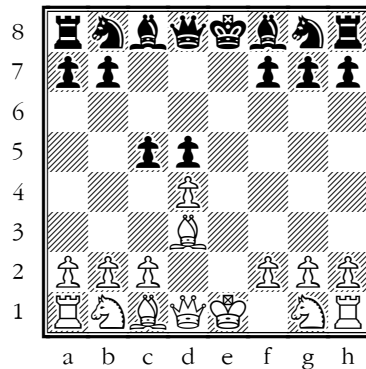
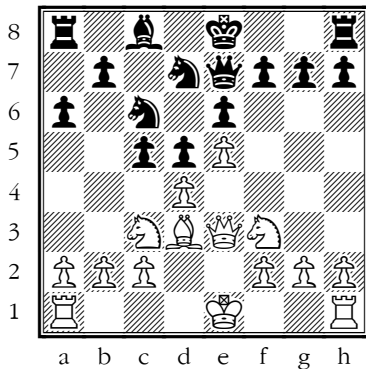
In the Gambit Declined, the main problem for Black is how to get out the Bc8. Fianchettoing (Callum R3) is good if you can get away with it, but if you're going to play the Queen's Gambit as White, you need to know how to set Black problems. Either White dances all over the weak light squares on the Queen's-side (rather like James did in Round 2) or waits until Black has arranged all their pieces pointing at the Queen's-side then attacks on the other wing (rather like Laurens' game in Round 3).

Black can play a good Fianchetto line if you are careful with the move order. This is the Tartakower Variation, which is the main line for Black these days.



First, Black plays ...h6, to avoid a fork from c2 by the Queen hitting c7 and h7. Then if White swaps off in the centre, hoping to make the fianchetto pointless... ..Black then can change plans and move the Bishop to e6 instead of having it shut in on b7. Black then makes use of the ...b6 move by playing ...c5.

Opening	Count	Score
[C00] French Defence	5	4½



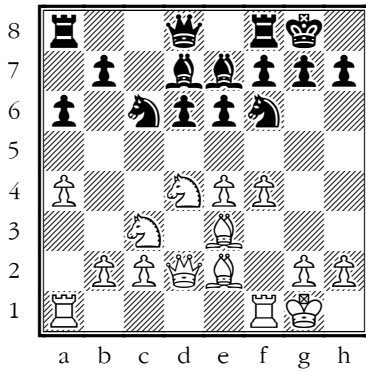
If your opponent has nothing better to play than Old Stodge, it can be hard to make progress and play for a win as Black. That's one of the reasons I recommend the French Defence to better players; it sets White problems from the start and is a good way to play for a win. If you want to see the main lines working well, have a look at Oliver's Round 1 game. Ordinary moves often lead to trouble for White.

The most common variation chosen by White is the Exchange Variation, which returns the position to something dull and symmetrical. So, if you want to play for a win as Black, you have to introduce some tension, some difference in the formation for each player. That's easy enough if White plays 4.Bd3 when you can play 4...c5! and go for an Isolated Queen's Pawn (IQP) type of game.

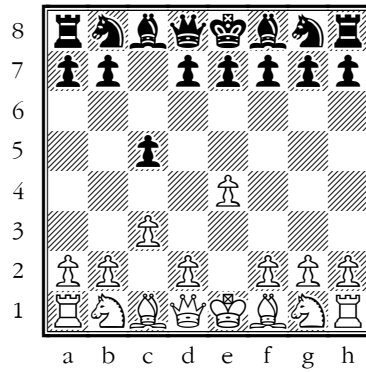
Otherwise, you can grind out a win by playing sensibly in position that starts out equal, or try playing a bit more aggressively by castling long and advancing the King's-side pawns. The example above is given in the notes to Laurens' Round 2 game.

Opening	Count	Score
[B20] Sicilian Defence	3	2

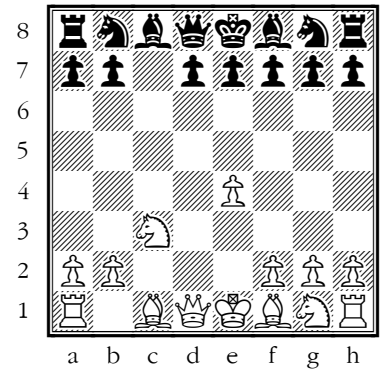
The Sicilian is a proper grown-up opening, but it's quite hard to handle for juniors. Black holds back from getting a stake in the centre and often plays lots of little pawn moves to keep White from rolling forward over Black's position. And remember, that strategy is more or less the opposite of the way you are usually advised to play in the opening (get a stake in the centre, move pieces and not pawns). So you must be quite a good player to know how far you can break those rules. Now, while there's nothing wrong with that theoretically, it can be hard to do that without getting squashed.



Typical Sicilian play



Alapin Variation

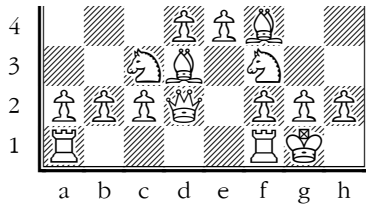


Morra Gambit

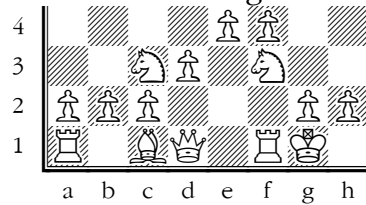
If you have to face the Sicilian as White, I recommend you play something which is going to work well if Black doesn't get the balance right: try taking over the centre with 2.c3 and 3.d4 (the Alapin Variation), or play a gambit for fast development with 2.d4 and, after ...cxd4 3.c3 (the Morra Gambit).

Or if you have a formation that you like to play, like Nc3 and f4, or the King's Indian Attack, you can play it against the Sicilian, French, Caro-Kann and all the rest.

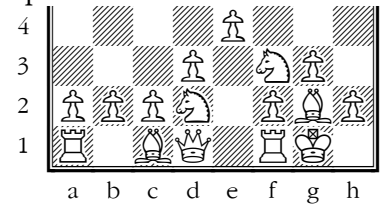
There are three basic attacking formations for White against these half-open defences.



Fast attacking game with d4 and open centre. [In the Sicilian, Black will swap off your d-Pawn, or should do!]



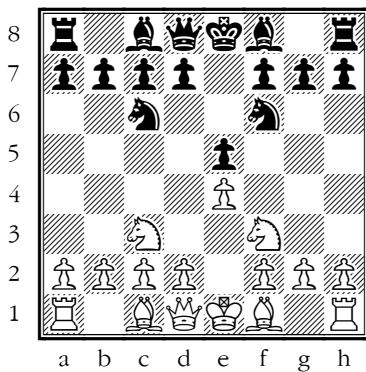
Slower attack with f4 and a closed centre, maybe pushing forward with e5 to gain space.



King's Indian Attack with a closed or flexible centre.

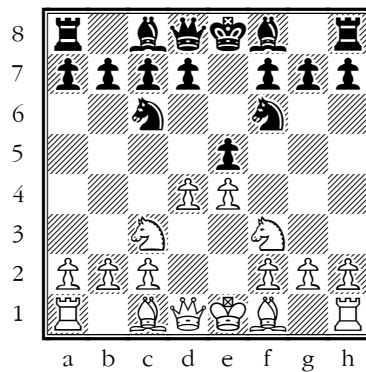
Decide on one of these plans and learn enough about it to play it.

Opening	Count	Score
[C44] Four Knights' Game	3	2

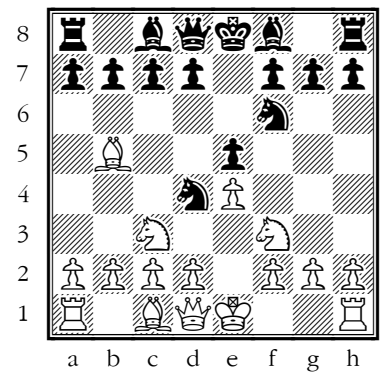


This is a cousin of Old Stodge, developing the Knights all square and **not putting any pressure on the Black position by playing or threatening d2-d4**. Usually the players make moves like Bb5, d3, O-O (and the mirror image for Black), and then they get stuck.

And if **4.Bc4, Nxe4!** equalises easily (George C please note!).

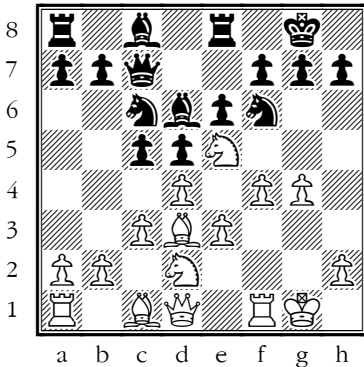


One idea for White to liven things up (if, say, you get tricked into playing it by someone playing the Petroff Defence), is to play the Scotch Four Knights' Game with 4.d4!, which stops everything getting gummed up.



And if you are Black and getting bored, there is a decent gambit line with **4.Bb5 Nd4!**, which has to be learned but is perfectly sound.

Opening	Count	Score
[D00] Stonewall Attack	2	2



The Stonewall Attack is more or less a one-idea opening, but that one idea seemed to be working quite well at the tournament. White builds up a 'Stone wall' in the centre and attacks on the King'-side, often sacrificing on h7 to force a way in.

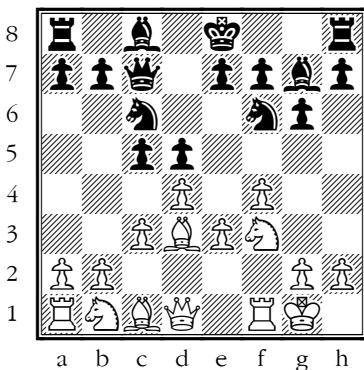
One of the main virtues of the Stonewall is that the 'solid' defence that someone might have learned to play in the Orthodox Defence against the Queen's Gambit is fatal against the Stonewall Attack.

1. d4 d5 2. e3 Nf6 3. Bd3 c5 4. c3 Nc6 5. f4 e6 6. Nf3 Bd6 7. O-O O-O 8. Ne5 Qc7 9. Nd2 Re8 10. g4 and White has a huge attack.

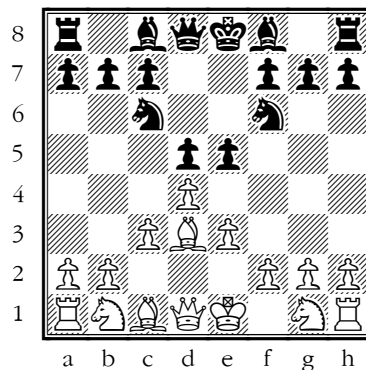
Well, Black was not really making it awkward for White: in that line Black shut in the Bc8 and castled into Black's attack, leaving the Bd3 unchallenged.

A more thoughtful defence might be to hold up castling, to play the Bc8 out early, to play ...g6 and block the diagonal, and to challenge White's attacking Bishop. When your opponents learn to play like this, you will have to find another opening system.

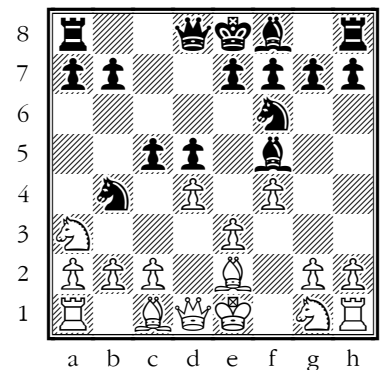
The simplest way to play against the Stonewall Attack for Black is to be awkward with the move order 1.d4 d5 2.e3 Nf6 3.Bd3 Nc6!, when after 4.c3 Black equalises with 4...e5! (1), and if 4.f4 Nb4! 5.Be2.Bf5! 6.Na3 c5! makes a nonsense of White's opening (2).



More thoughtful defence



Being awkward 1



Being awkward 2

There's more about this at www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/Openings/disaster.html

The Games

■ Laurens Stegink

Three draws on top board can't be bad, especially since one of them was a flag fall when I think you were two Queens up.

I haven't got much general advice for you: just that you should stick with your chosen openings, get to know them better and play them better, dig a little deeper into each position, and the wins will come.

Laurens Stegink - Opponent

[D07] Queen's Gambit, Tchigorin Defence

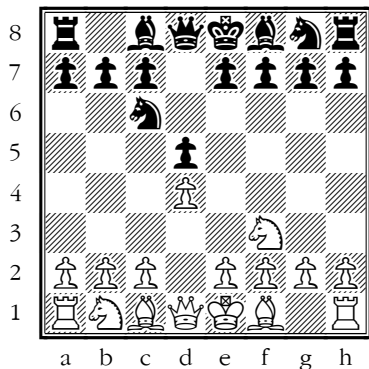
A nice looking game with some hidden tactics; shame

you didn't have time to win it!

1. d4 d5
2. Nf3

Solid, but doesn't put as much bite on your opponent as you might want.

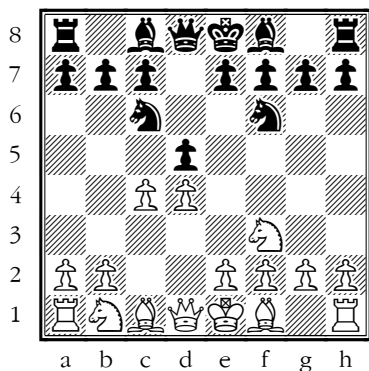
- 2 ... Nc6



As a rule, as Black against 1.d4 you need to get a pawn break in, (either ...e5 or ...c5), to challenge White's centre and open a file for the Rooks.

Now, after Nf3, it doesn't look likely that Black is going to get in ...e5, so Black shouldn't be putting a Knight on c6 until after playing ...c5.

3. c4 Nf6



If you decline the Queen's Gambit, you should support your central d5 pawn with another pawn.

Black hasn't done this, so now you have two ways of making trouble:

4. Nc3

[4...cxd5! and now either 4...Qxd5 5.Nc3 ...with e2-e4 to follow or 4...Nxd5 5.e4 with a big centre. If you aren't looking to play either of those ideas, why are you playing c2-c4?]

4 ... Bg4

5. cxd5

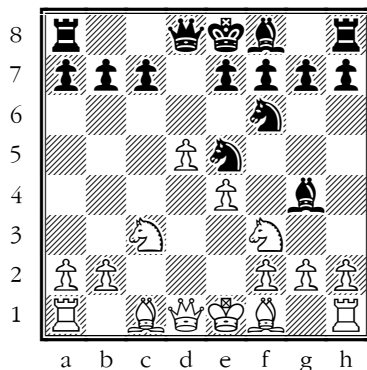
[5.Ne5! shows Black that it wasn't a real pin: now White threatens both making a

mess on c6 and pinching a Bishop.]

5 ... Nxd5

6. e4 Nf6

7. d5! Ne5



8. Be2

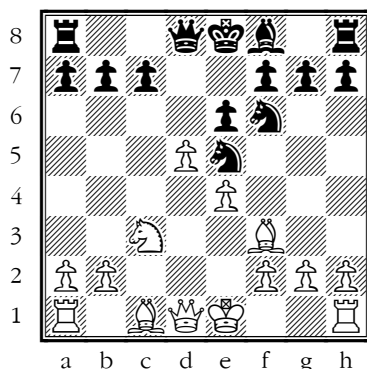
[8.Nxe5! is a neat tactic that also occurs in the Centre Counter 8...Bxd1 9.Bb5+ c6 10.dxc6 and Black is oddly helpless: 10...a6 11.c7+ axb5 12.cxd8Q+ Rxd8 13.Nxd1]

[1.e4 Nc6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.d5 Ne5 5.Bf4 Bg4 6.Bxe5 Bxd1 7.Bb5+ c6 8.dxc6 Bg4 9.cxb7+ Bd7 10.Bxd7+ Kxd7 11.O-O-O+ Ke6 12.Rxd8 Rxd8 13.b8Q Goring-N.N./Berlin 1890 and White will be a piece ahead, so Black resigned.]

Every move, look at every check and every capture, even daft-looking ones

8 ... Bxf3

9. Bxf3 e6



10. a3

[10.dxe6! splits up Black's pawns, making them weaker.]

If ever you find yourself reaching for your a-

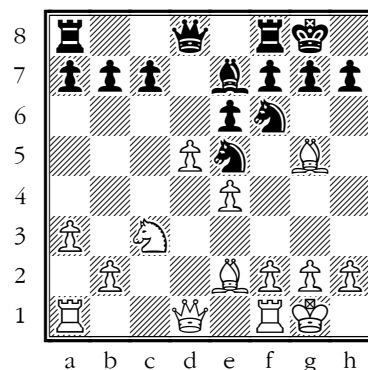
pawn, you probably have a better idea available!

10 ... Bd6

11. O-O O-O

12. Bg5 Be7

13. Be2

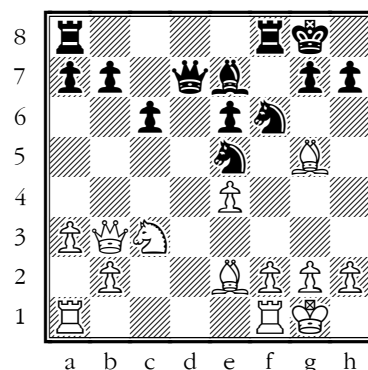


13 ... c6

[13...exd5 looks like a tactic which can win a pawn, but 14.exd5 Nxd5 15.Qxd5! (15.Bxe7 Nxe7) 15...Qxd5 16.Nxd5 Bxg5 17.f4! leaves White in charge.]

14. dxe6 fxe6

15. Qb3 Qd7

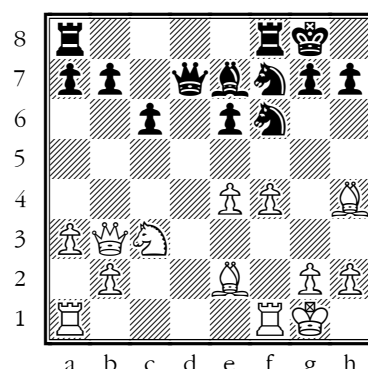


16. f4

[16.Rad1! looks like a nice easy way to bring the Rook into play with gain of time ("with tempo").]

16 ... Nf7

17. Bh4



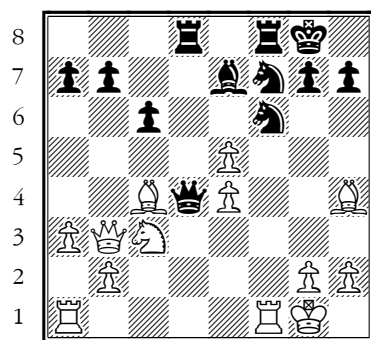
17 ... Rad8

[17...Nxe4! now works.]

Loose (undefended) pieces can often be the target of a tactic.

The hardest tactics to spot are discoveries ñ so get your eye in before you get a surprise!

18. Bc4 e5
19. fxe5 Qd4+



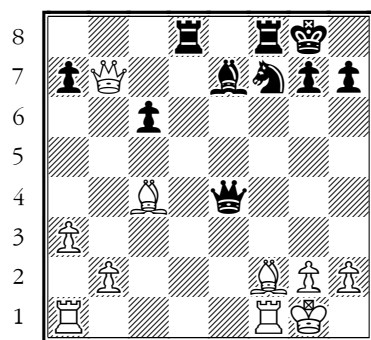
a b c d e f g h

Here you quite reasonable went after the a-pawn but there are bigger fish to fry.

20. Bf2

[20.Kh1! Qxe5 21.Bg3 Qc5 22.Bxf7+ Rxf7 23.e5! winning.]

20 ... Qxe5
21. Qxb7 Nxe4
22. Nxe4 Qxe4



a b c d e f g h

23. Bxf7+

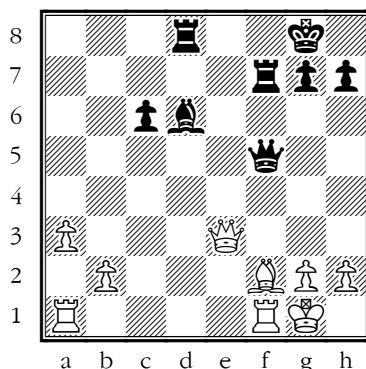
That's a good bishop swapping itself for a duff Knight.

[23.b3!]

Exchanges are usually better for one side or another; when you swap, make sure it's you!

23 ... Rxf7
24. Qxa7 Bd6

25. Qe3 Qf5



a b c d e f g h

There's a little trick for Black, from the Petroff Defence:

(1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.d4 d5 6.Bd3 Bd6 7.O-O O-O 8.c4 Bg4 9.Re1 f5 10.Nc3? Bxb2+! 11.Kxb2 Nxf2 12.Qe2 Nxd3 13.Qxd3 Bxf3 14.Qxf3 Qb4+ 15.Qb3 Qxe1)

26. Rad1?

[26.b4!]

26 ... Qf6?

[26...Bxb2+! 27.Kxb2 Rxd1 28.Rxd1 and now 28...Qb5+! picks up the Rook(not 28...Qxf2?? 29.Rd8+ Rf8 30.Qxf2)]

27. Bg3 Qg6

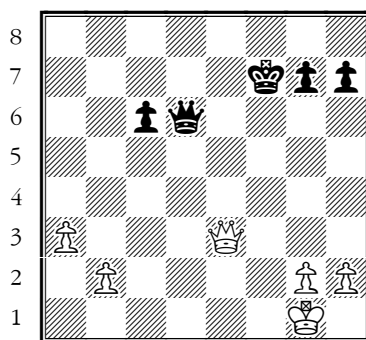
28. Rxf7 Kxf7

29. Rxd6

[29.Qb3+ Kf8 (29...Ke8 30.Re1+ Kf8 31.Bxd6+ Rxd6 32.Qb8+ Kf7 33.Qe8+ Kf6 34.Qe7+ Kf5 35.Qe5+ Kg4 36.Qg3+ Kh5 37.Re5+) 30.Bxd6+ Rxd6 31.Qb8+]

29 ... Rxd6

30. Bxd6 Qxd6



a b c d e f g h

...and White drew, flag falling with Black having a bare King.

Did you recognise that you should be winning this?

A passed Pawn is a deadly weapon in a Queen endgame!

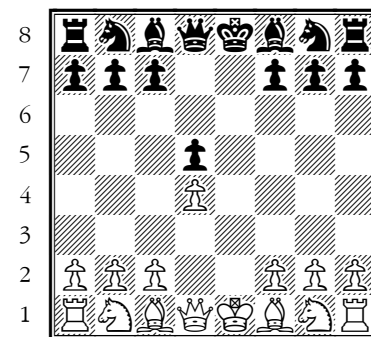
Drawn

Opponent - Laurens Stegink

[C01] French Defence, Exchange Variation

You played a lot of good chess here, but weren't able to put pressure on White.

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. exd5 exd5



a b c d e f g h

As Black, I'm always happy when my opponent swaps pawns, although it does lead to a different sort of game.

4. Bf4

[After the usual move 4. Bd3 Black usually follows up with 4...Nc6. If you want to play a more unbalanced game, try castling long and then advancing on the King's-side:

5. c3 Bd6 6. Nf3 Nge7 7. Qc2 Bg4 8. Bg5 Bxf3 9. gxf3 Qd7 10. Na3 b6 11. Be3 a6 12. b4 g6 13. Kf1 Nd8 14. Re1 Ne6 15. Qd2 O-O-O 16. b4 f5 17. Qe2 Rde8 18. Nc2 Ng8 19. Qd1 Nf6 20. Na1 Nh5 21. Nb3 Nef4 22. Nc5 Bxc5 23. bxc5 Re6 24. Bc2 Rhe8 25. Qd2 Qf7 26. Rh2 g5 27. Qc1 g4 28. fxc4 fxc4 29. Kg1 Nh3+ 30. Rxc3 gxc3 Stockl-Uhlmann/Baden-Vienna 1961/White resigns (30);

5. Ne2 Bd6 6.O-O Nf6 7. b3 Be6 8. c3 Qd7 9. Bf4 O-O 10.

Bxd6 Qxd6 11. Ng3 Ne7 12. Na3 Kb8 13. Nc2 b5 14. Qf3 b4 15. Ne2 Nb5 16. Rae1 g5 17. Nc1 Rdg8 18. Re5 f6 19. Ree1 g4 20. hxxg4 Bxxg4 21. Qe3 Nf5 22. Qe6 Bf3 23. Qxd6 Rxxg2+ 24. Kh1 Nhg3+ 25. Qxxg3 hxxg3# White resigns Bach, M-Schian, T/2. BLN9697 Kreuzberg-HSK II 1997/BL2-N]

4 ... Nf6
5. Nc3

Rather an automatic move: that Knight doesn't have anywhere very useful to go next.

5 ... Bb4

Not bad, of course, but when the knight isn't holding up a pawn on e4 the pin is not a problem for White.

[I would have been keen to get my 'problem' bishop out into play with 5...Bf5. It's a problem because if it doesn't get on this diagonal it may end up looking at the back of the d-pawn.]

6. Bd3 O-O

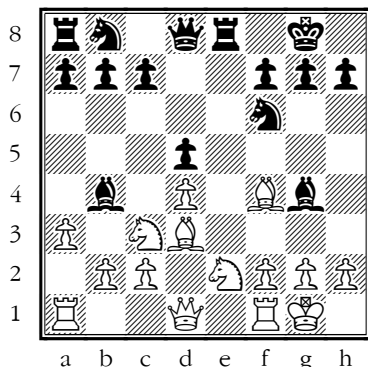
One way to play for a win in these positions is to castle on the opposite side to White.

➔ Symmetrical positions are equal until one side can't (or won't) copy the other; castling opposite sides will always create tension.

7. Nge2 Re8

Good, although it's unusual to be able to invade on the e-file for a long while.

8. O-O Bg4
9. a3



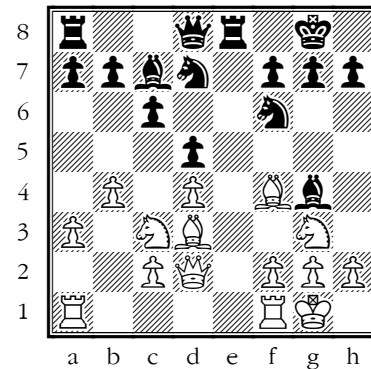
9 ... Ba5?!

[9...Bxc3 does give White doubled pawns - otherwise, what was the point of playing ...Bb4 to start with?]

10. b4 Bb6

I was afraid this Bishop would be stuck out of play on this square, but you saw the problem too and solved it neatly.

11. Be3 Nbd7
12. Qd2 c6
13. Ng3 Bc7
14. Bf4

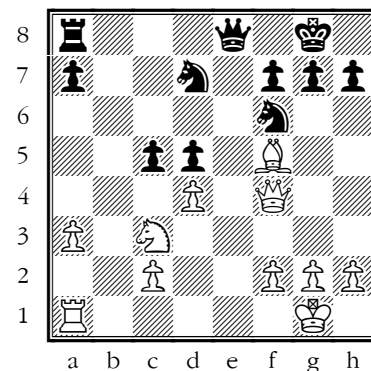


That's a good decision by White, swapping your better Bishop.

14 ... b6
15. Rfe1 Bxf4
16. Qxf4 Qb8
17. Rxe8+ Qxe8
18. Nf5 Bxf5
19. Bxf5

[19.Qxf5]

19 ... c5
20. bxc5 bxc5



21. Bxd7

[21.dxc5 makes more trouble for you, exposing your isolated d-pawn and opening up the game for the White Bishop.]

21 ... Qxd7

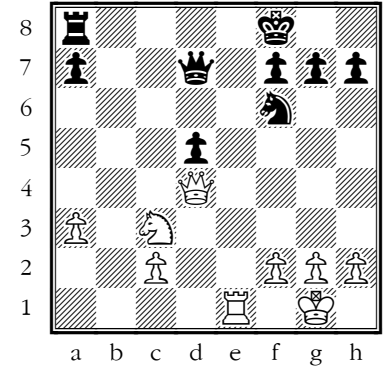
22. Re1

[22.dxc5]

22 ... cxd4?!

No need for this, bringing White's Queen to an ideal square.

23. Qxd4 Kf8

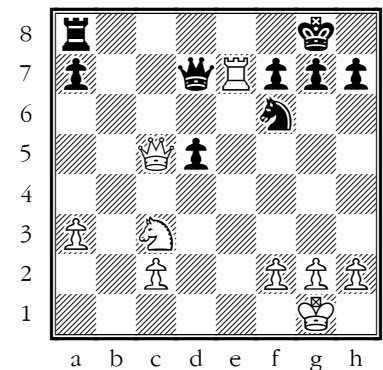


24. Qc5+

[24.Rd1! would threaten the pawn but 24...Rb8! defending by counterattacking, is right here.]

24 ... Kg8

25. Re7



25 ... Qg4

[25...Re8! is a tricky move which might make White blink. 26.Rxe8+ Qxe8 27.Kf1]

26. Rxa7 Rb8

27. h3

... Was there much more of this? White is a pawn up with a winning game, so I was happy that you drew it!

Draw agreed

Laurens Stegink - Opponent

[D35] Queen's Gambit, Orthodox Defence

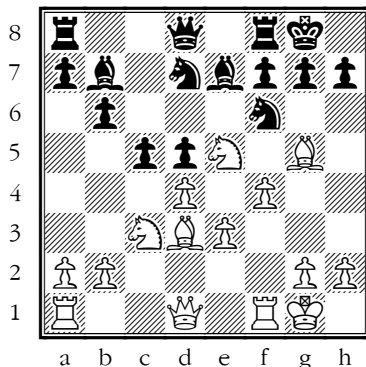
A draw against a stronger opponent is never a disappointment, but there was nothing to stop you playing for a win!

1. **d4 d5**
2. **c4 e6**
3. **Nc3 Nf6**
4. **Bg5 Be7**
5. **cxd5 exd5**
6. **e3 O-O**
7. **Bd3**

This is inaccurate if Black has played ...c6, as Black can then equalise easily with ...Ne4.

[7.Qc2!]

- 7 ... **b6**
8. **Nf3 Nbd7**
9. **O-O c5**
10. **Ne5 Bb7**
11. **f4**



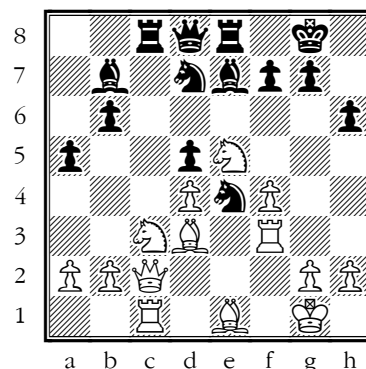
Admirable aggression from White.

- 11 ... **Re8**
12. **Qc2**

After saying he is going to play on the King's-side with f2-f4, he really wants the Queen in front of the Bishop, or on somewhere like h5.

- 12 ... **a5**
- [12...b6 13.Bb4]
13. **Rf3 h6**
14. **Bh4 Rc8!**
15. **Rc1 cxd4**
16. **exd4 Ne4**

17. Be1



I think Black is getting the better of this, with all the pressure on c3.

- 17 ... **f5?**

That gives White a better hold on e5.

[17...Nxe5 18.fxe5 Bg5]

18. **Qe2 Ndf6**
19. **Bd2 Bb4**

OK, not a bad result, but I was starting to prefer Black's ideas!

[19...Nxd2 20.Qxd2 Ne4]

Draw agreed

George Darling

It's hard to improve on 3/3! But there were a couple of moves that could have been improved. I like the fact that you are willing to sacrifice (because lots of players don't dare), but you are still finding your range at the moment -- you don't have to sacrifice in every game! And there were sacrificial combinations that you missed... Next time!

The most interesting game from a strategy point of view was the last one, where you could have ended up on the wrong end of an idea from Capablanca.

George Darling - Opponent

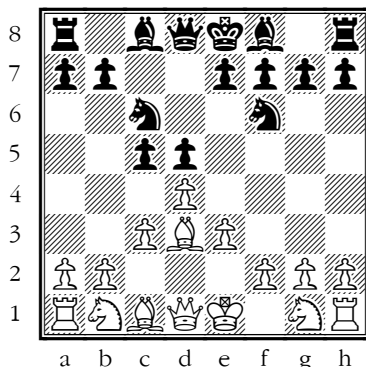
[D00] Stonewall Attack

A nice game where you knew what you were doing and your opponent didn't.

1. **d4 d5**
2. **e3 c5**

[2...Bf5!? and already White has to think again.; the bet line is 2...Nf6 3.Bd3 Nc6! 4.c3 (4.f4 Nb4!) 4...e5!]

3. **Bd3 Nf6**
4. **c3 Nc6**



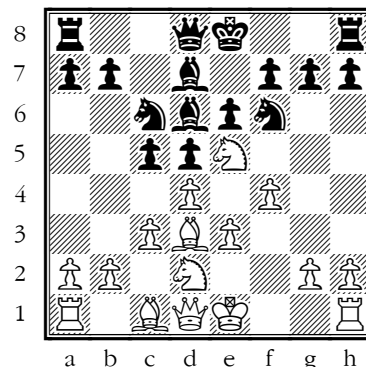
5. **f4**

[5.dxc5! may be a stronger move, in fact, now you have played c3: 5...e5 6.b4]

- 5 ... **e6**

[5...g6 and delaying castling is a good plan here.]

6. **Nf3 Bd6**
7. **Ne5 Bd7**
8. **Nd2**



The Stonewall. I have a few things in my repertoire about which I say, "I'd give this rubbish up, but I keep winning with it". Now, the

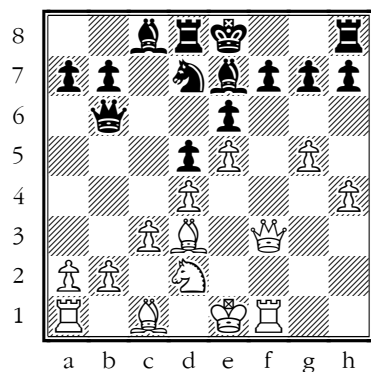
Stonewall is pretty well a one-idea opening, so I don't think it's going to last you very long, and so I think the time you spend playing it you aren't learning about other openings. But 2/2 is hard to argue with...

8 ... cxd4?

removes the one weak point in White's set-up, the backward Pe3.

☛ Nearly every exchange favours one player or other, so think before you swap.

- 9. **exd4 Qb6**
- 10. **Qf3 Rd8**
- 11. **g4 Bc8**
- 12. **g5 Nd7**
- 13. **h4 Ncxe5**
- 14. **fxe5 Be7**
- 15. **Rf1**



15 ... O-O

I thought Black had decided, quite wisely, not to castle into White's clockwork attack.

16. Bxh7+!

A standard sacrifice, which I can tell you are fond of, but

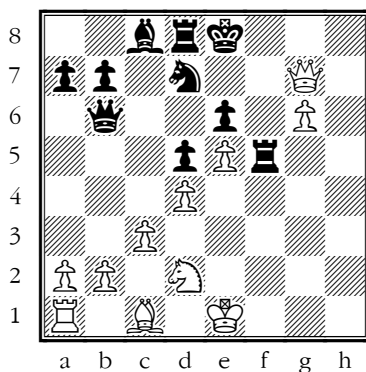
[16.Qb5! is an easier way forward. 16...g6 17.Qg4 and b4-b5 should be an easy attack.]

- 16 ... **Kxh7**
- 17. **Qh5+ Kg8**
- 18. **Rxf7!**

Very good! This shows great confidence and accuracy in your thinking.

- 18 ... **Rxf7**
- 19. **g6 Bxh4+**
- 20. **Qxh4 Rf5**

- 21. **Qh7+ Kf8**
- 22. **Qh8+ Ke7**
- 23. **Qxg7+ Ke8**



24. Qh8+!?

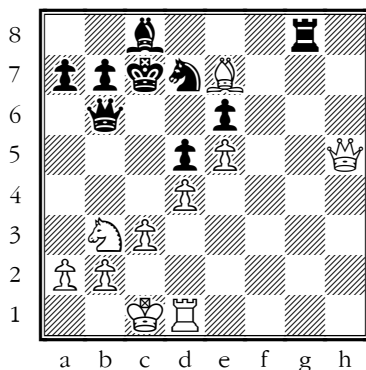
It's hard to quarrel with a winning move, but you did have a brilliant one available:

[24.Nc4!! dxc4 25.Bg5! and mate can hardly be stopped 25...Qc5]

- 24 ... **Rf8**
- 25. **g7 Kf7**
- 26. **gxf8Q+ Rxf8**
- 27. **Qh5+ Ke7**
- 28. **Nb3**

[28.Nc4! (again) doesn't give Black time to run: 28...dxc4 29.Bg5+ Nf6 30.Bxf6+ Kd7 31.Qb7+ Kc6 32.Qe7 Rg8]

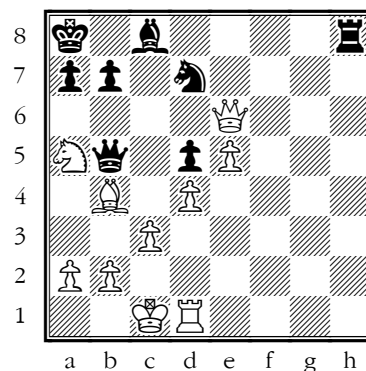
- 28 ... **Kd8**
- 29. **Bg5+ Kc7**
- 30. **Be7 Rg8**
- 31. **O-O-O**



The dust has settled and White has a pawn and a dominating position.

- 31 ... **Kb8**
- 32. **Qf7 Rh8**
- 33. **Bd6+ Ka8**
- 34. **Qxe6 Qc6**
- 35. **Na5 Qb5**

36. Bb4



36 ... Nc5?

A flashy discovery, but Black doesn't want the Knight on that square.

37. Qf6

That's the problem: Black now has two pieces attacked.

- 37 ... **Rh2**
- 38. **Qd8**

[38.Qf8!]

- 38 ... **Kb8**

[38...Qd7!]

- 39. **Qd6+ Ka8**
- 40. **Qxc5 Qxc5**

Black resigns



George Darling - Opponent

[D00] Stonewall Attack

The Stonewall crashes through again when Black doesn't do anything to get out of the way. I wish chess was always this easy!

- 1. **d4 d5**
- 2. **e3 Nf6**

[2...Bf5!/?]

- 3. **Bd3 Nc6!**

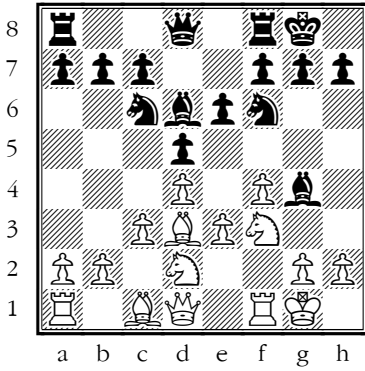
One of the best defences.

- 4. **f4 Bg4**

[4...Nb4! 5.Be2 Bf5! 6.Na3 c5! makes a nonsense of White's opening. Andrew Soltis recommends Marshall's idea, 5.Nf3 Nxd3+ 6.cxd3 when White at least has control of e4]

- 5. **Nf3 e6**
- 6. **Nbd2 Bd6**
- 7. **c3 O-O**

8. O-O

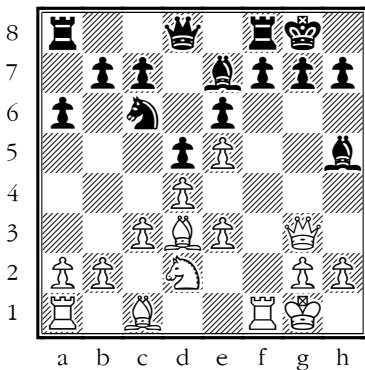


8 ... a6

➔ When I see a single step forward by a rook's pawn, I usually think this is code for, "I've run out of ideas".

[8...Bf5! is a good idea, when after 9.Bxf5 exf5 White's backward e-pawn is exposed.]

- 9. Qe1 Nd7
- 10. Ne5 Ndx5
- 11. fxe5 Be7
- 12. Qg3 Bh5

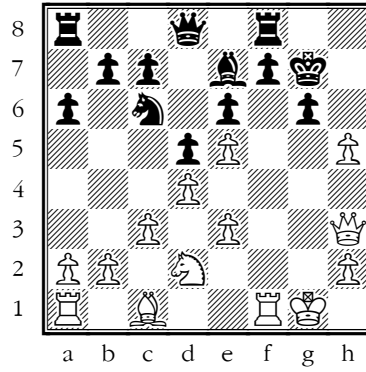


13. Bxh7+

I can tell you're fond of this move, and while it works here, just:

[13.Qh3! Bg6 14.Bxg6 hxg6 15.e4 was enough for a simple advantage.]

- 13 ... Kxh7
- 14. Qh3 g6
- 15. g4 Kg7
- 16. gxh5



16 ... gxh5

[16...Rb8! when the attack is more difficult.]

17. Qxh5

Now White is winning.

17 ... Qe8

[17...Bg5]

18. Rf3 Rh8

Right idea, wrong time.

19. Rg3+ Kf8

20. Qxh8#

Very neat!



Opponent - George Darling

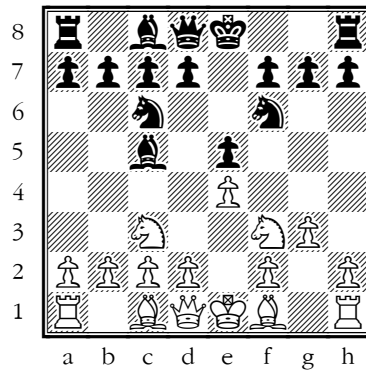
[C44] Four Knights' Game

A third sacrifice! This was one too far, although you recovered well and won. But there was another sacrifice which would have been the best of the lot...

- 1. e4 e5
- 2. Nf3 Nc6
- 3. g3

Unusual, but not bad.

- 3 ... Nf6
- 4. Nc3 Bc5



5. d3

[5.Nxe5! is an ancient trick, which I keep pointing out each year.]

- 5 ... d6
- 6. Bg5 Bg4

[6...b6! when White's Bishop has nothing better to do than swap itself. 7.Bxf6 Qxf6 when 8.b3 is essential.]

➔ These Four Knights'/Old Stodge positions don't have much meat in them if both sides know how to handle the possible pins.

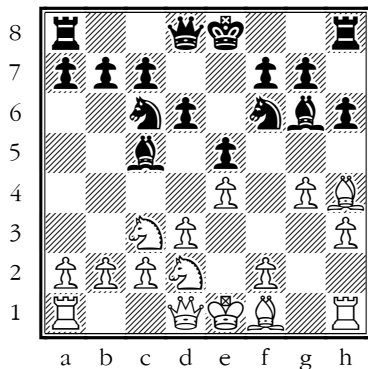
- 7. h3 Bh5?
- 8. g4! Bg6
- 9. Nd2

[9.Nd5! when White is suddenly doing very well: after a swap on f6, Black's Bg6 will be locked in for the entire game. Play over this Capa game to see how a World Champion does it:

[1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Bb4 5.O-O O-O 6.Bxc6 dxc6 7.d3 Bd6 8.Bg5 b6 9.Bh4 c5 10.Nd5

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 Neither bishop is good, but White's is actually dead and buried, while Black can advance on the Queen's-side, where White's Bishop will be missed. 16.Kg2 a5 17.a4 Kf7 18.Rb1 Ke6 19.b4 Rfb8 20.hxg5 hxg5 21.b3 c6 22.Ra2 b5 23.Rha1 c4 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 0-0 1 Winter, W-Capablanca, J/offside piece position 1919]

- 9 ... h6!
- 10. Bh4



Black has a fantastic tactic here, a version of Legall's Mate.

10 ... Bxf2+?

That wasn't it! This just loses a piece, so I'm not sure what your idea was here.

[10...Nxe4!! 11.Bxd8?
(11.Ndxe4! Qxh4 when
White is only a pawn down.)
11...Bxf2+ 12.Ke2 Nd4#]

➔ A loose piece and a discovered attack add up to a tactic

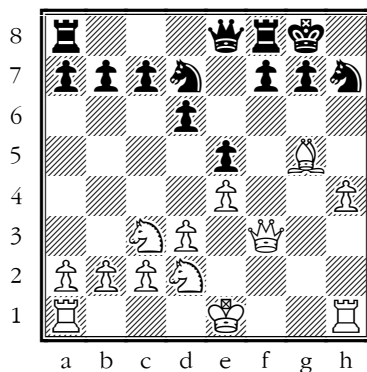
11. Bxf2 O-O
12. Bh4 Nb8
13. Bg2 Nbd7
14. g5

[14.Nd5 returns to the plan of caging the Bg6.]

14 ... hxg5

[14...Nb7! gets out of the pin.]

15. Bxg5 Qe8
16. h4 Bh5
17. Bf3 Bxf3
18. Qxf3 Nh7



19. h5?

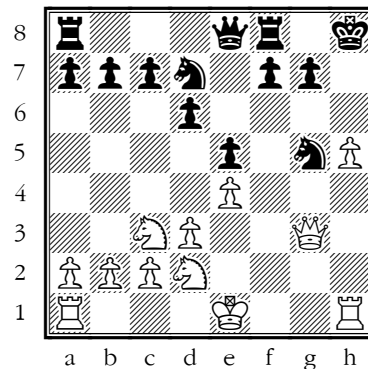
[19.Nd5! should win.]

19 ... Nxc5

Ta! That does help.

20. Qf2 Kh8

21. Qg3



Now I couldn't make sense of the score here; if you get it straight let me know!

21. ... ???
22. Nd5 Qd8
23. Rg1 c6
24. Nc3 Nf8

[24...Ne6]

25. Nf3 Nxf3+
26. Qxf3 Qb6

[26...Qb4+]

27. Qf5 a5

[27...Qxg1+]

28. h6 g6
29. h7 Rg7
30. Rxc6 Nxc6
31. O-O-O Rgg8
32. Rg1 Qxg1+
33. Nd1 Qg5+
White resigns

■ Oliver Demeger

I thought you played with a lot of character and played whole strings of sound chess moves after the point where some players would have given up, so well done. I quite like the isolated-pawn positions you get out of the system you played against the Sicilian, but endgames are usually better for Black, so do try and stay in the middlegame and keep pieces on.

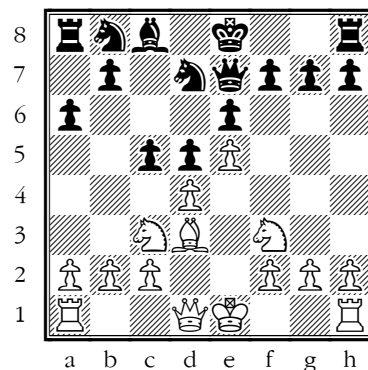
Opponent - Oliver Demeger

[C14] French Defence, Classical Variation

I do like the French Defence for Black: it's a way of showing your better understanding and create some trouble, rather than getting stuck in a boring Four Knights' position.

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. Nc3 Nf6

4. Bg5 Be7
5. e5 Nfd7
6. Bxe7 Qxe7
7. Nf3 a6!
8. Bd3 c5



A very grown-up treatment of the French Defence by both sides.

9. Qe2? Nc6

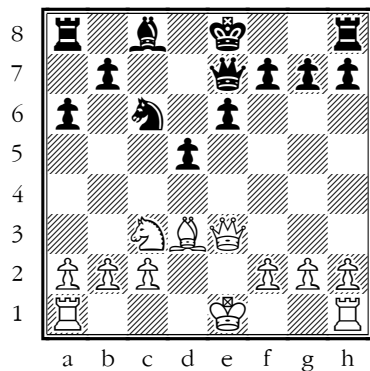
[9...c4!? nets the Bishop!
White gets some
compensation, but I
wouldn't hesitate. 10.Bf5
exf5 11.Nxd5 Qd8 12.Qxc4
O-O -+]

10. Qe3

[10.dxc5! is necessary,
running away before it gets
lost.]

➔ Ordinary moves aren't
enough for White in the
French Defence; the
pawn centre comes
under a lot of pressure.

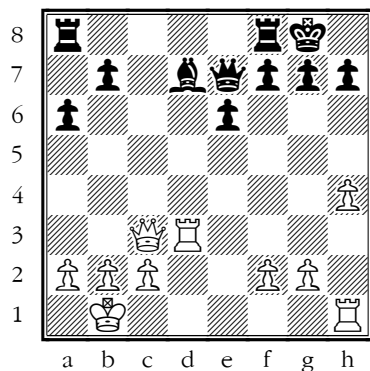
10 ... cxd4
11. Nxd4 Ndx5
12. Nxc6 Nxc6



13.O-O?

Missing one...

13 ... d4!
14. Qd2 dxc3
15. Qxc3 O-O
16. h4 Nb4
17. Kb1 Nxd3
18. Rxd3 Bd7?



Natural but gives White a big
chance to get the piece back.

19. Rg3

[19.Qc7! Rad8 20.Rhd1]

19 ... f6
20. h5 h6

h5-h6 is no threat, although
there is no harm in stopping
it.

[20...Rac8]

21. Qe3 Kh8
22. f4 Rae8
23. Rf3 Bc6
24. Rf2 Rd8
25. Rg1 Qd6
26. a3 Qd4
27. Re2 f5
28. g4 Bf3
White resigns



**Oliver Demeger -
Opponent**

[B22] Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

You played some OK ideas
in the opening, but after the
wobbles on move 12 you
found it hard to get going,
and eventually let Black's
Rook into your guts.

1. e4 c5
2. c3!

I quite like this system for
White, it's simple to learn,
but you have to be careful
about development.

2 ... d6

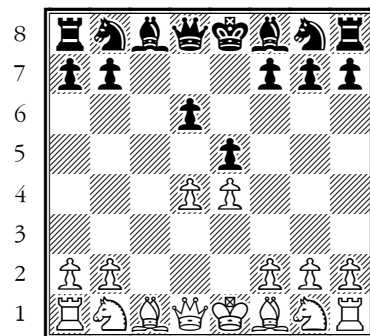
The main lines are

[2...Nf6 3.e5 Nd5 4.d4 cxd4
5.Nf3 d6; and

2...d5 3.exd5 Qxd5 4.d4 Nf6
5.Nf3 Bg4]

3. d4 cxd4
4. cxd4 e5?

Too ambitious.



5. dxe5

[5.Nf3! is simple, when Black
might be tempted to solve his

problems by 5...exd4 when
White has a superb position]

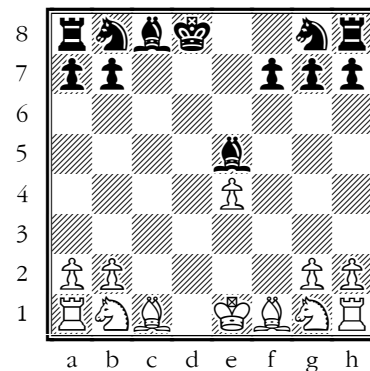
➔ In the opening, when
you have a choice
between a pawn move
and a piece move, I'd go
for the piece move

5 ... dxe5
6. Qxd8+ Kxd8
7. f4

[I like 7.Bc4, developing a
piece and giving Black a
problem to solve.;

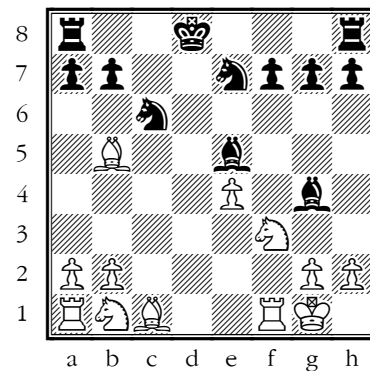
Also 7.Nc3 idea 7...Nc6
8.Bg5+ f6 9.O-O-O+ Bd7
10.Be3 with fast
development]

7 ... Bd6
8. fxe5 Bxe5



Black has somehow got
ahead in development and
White has an isolated pawn
in an endgame! White must
have had something better to
do earlier on.

9. Nf3 Nc6
10. Bb5 Nge7
11. O-O Bg4



12. Bg5

[12.Ng5! wins at least a
pawn]

12 ... f6

[12...Bxb2! wins an exchange.]

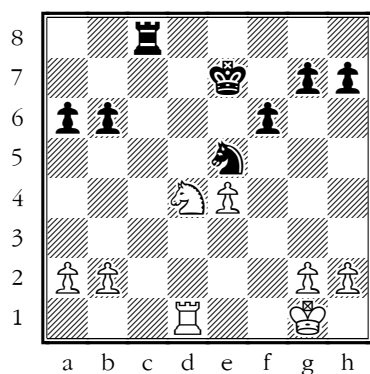
- 13. Nxe5! Nxe5
- 14. Bf4 N7g6
- 15. Nc3 a6
- 16. Bxe5 Nxe5
- 17. Be2 Bxe2
- 18. Nxe2 Ke7

Black is getting closer to his ideal position with a blockading Knight.

- 19. Rfd1 Rhd8
- 20. Nd4

Yes, more than enough exchanges so far!

- 20 ... b6
- 21. Rac1 Rac8
- 22. Rxc8 Rxc8

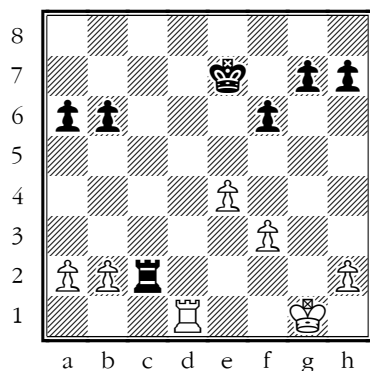


Oh dear, more exchanges.

- 23. Nf3

[23.Nf5+ and 24.Rd2 is a little better]

- 23 ... Nxf3+
- 24. gxf3 Rc2



As usual, this unanswerable invasion to the seventh rank gives Black a winning position. Did you see this move coming?

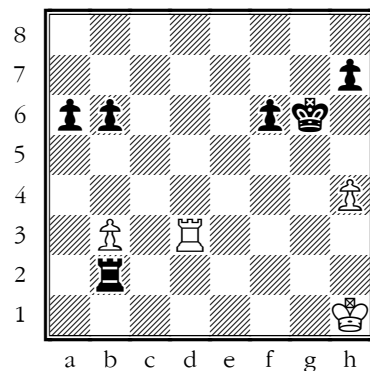
☞ Try and spot your opponent's threats before they arrive on the board -

you may not have a defence!

- 25. Rb1 Ke6
- 26. b3

[26.a4 is better, but then Black walks in on the weak squares with 26...Ke5 27.b3 Kf4 28.Rf1 Rb2]

- 26 ... Rxa2
- 27. f4 g6
- 28. Kh1 Re2
- 29. f5+ gxf5
- 30. exf5+ Kxf5
- 31. Rf1+ Kg5
- 32. h4+ Kg6
- 33. Rd1 Rb2
- 34. Rd3



...and White lost.

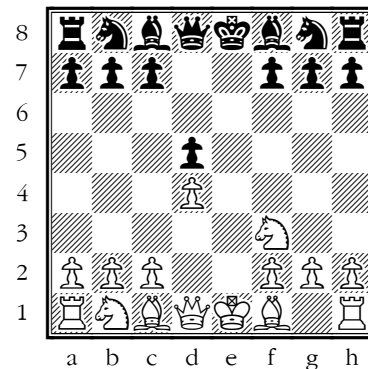


Opponent - Oliver Demeger

[C01] French Defence, Exchange Variation

A very patient and grown-up win in the French, waiting for your opportunities and taking them nicely. There were several points where you could have played better, but the overall impression is very good.

- 1. e4 e6
- 2. d4 d5
- 3. exd5 exd5
- 4. Nf3



4 ... Bd6

[4...Nf6 may be more accurate]

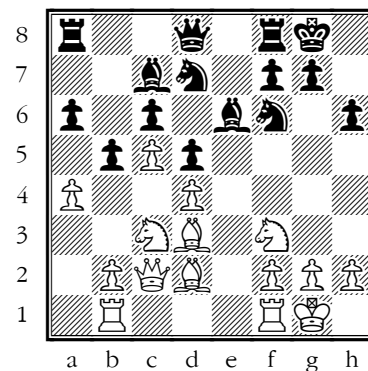
- 5. c4!

Now Black has blocked the defence of the d-pawn by the Queen, this is a more appealing idea for White.

- 5 ... c6
- 6. Bd3 Be6

[6...Qe7+ is an idea]

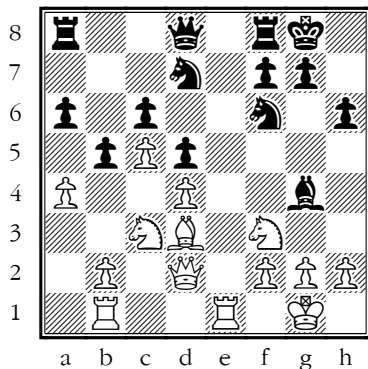
- 7. c5 Bc7
- 8. Nc3 Nf6
- 9. Bd2 Nbd7
- 10. O-O O-O
- 11. Rb1 b5
- 12. a4 a6
- 13. Qc2 h6



It's hard for either side to inject life into this position, which has little tension in the pawns or the pieces.

- 14. Rfe1 Bg4
- 15. Re3 Bf4
- 16. Ree1 Bxd2
- 17. Qxd2

[17.Nxd2 is better, of course, not submitting to doubled pawns.]



17 ... Bxf3!

Very good. Now Black has something to aim at.

18. gxf3 Qc7

19. Kh1 Rfe8

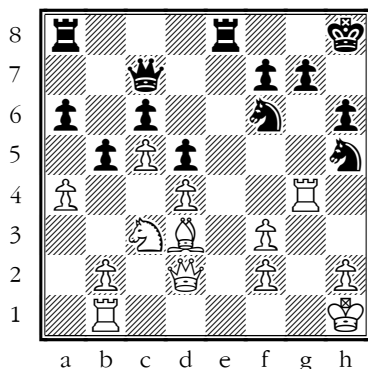
20. Rg1

White correctly tries to make the most of the positive points of his position, including the half-open g-file.

20 ... Kh8

21. Rg3 Nh5

22. Rg4 Ndf6



23. Rg2?!

Now White just slides downhill.

[23.Rxg7!? Kxg7 24.Rg1+ Kf8 25.Qxb6+ Ke7 and the King slides out of danger.]

23 ... Nf4

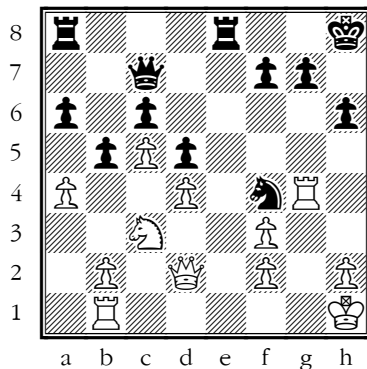
With a plus for Black.

24. Rg3 Nxd3

25. Qxd3 Nh5

26. Rg4 Nf4

27. Qd2



27 ... Ng6

It's a shame to retreat! The best line was hard to spot:

[27...g5! 28.b4 f5! 29.Rgg1 Qf7! 30.bxg5?? Qb5#]

28. Rbg1 Re6

29. R1g3 Rae8

30. Rg1 Qe7

[30...b4 31.Nd1 a5 32.Ne3 Rf6]

31. Rf1 Qf6

32. Rg3 Nh4

33. f4 Ng6

[33...Nf5! 34.Rd3 when Fritz says that Black's advantage in position is worth two pawns.]

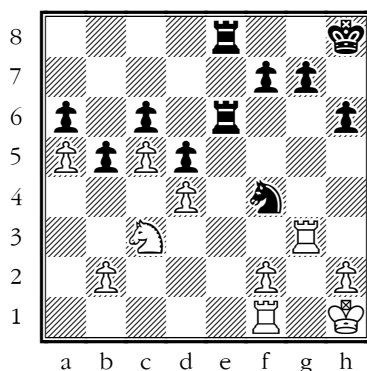
34. Rf3 Qh4

[34...Nb4 35.Rd3 b4 36.Nd1]

35. a5 Qg4

36. Rg3? Qxf4

37. Qxf4 Nxf4



38. Rfg1 Rg6

39. Rxg6 Nxg6

40. b4 Ne7?

gets in an unnecessary pin.

[40...Nf4; 40...Re6]

41. Re1! Kg8

42. Kg2 Kf8

43. Kf3 Nf5

44. Rxe8+ Kxe8

Exchanges help Black, of course.

45. Kg4?

[45.Ne2!]

45 ... Nxd4

46. Na2 Ke7

47. h4 Ke6

48. f4 g6

49. Nc1 Nc2

50. Nd3 f6

51. f5+ Kf7

[There's nothing wrong with 51...gxf5+ 52.Kf4 d4 and Black has a way in for the King: 53.b5 Ne3! 54.Kg3 Kd5]

52. h5 gxh5+!

Neatly done, I was expecting you to go the other way.

[52...gxf5+ 53.Kxf5]

53. Kxh5 Ne3!

That was what I had missed: White cannot defend f5.

54. Kxh6 Nxf5+

55. Kh5 Ke6

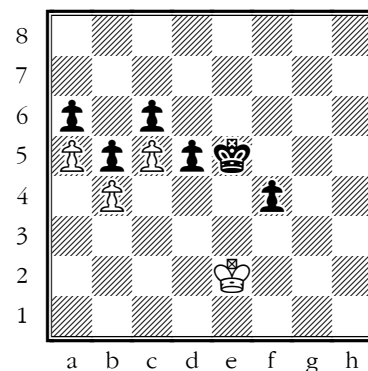
56. Kg4 Nd4

57. Kf4 f5

58. Ne5 Ne2+

59. Kf3 Kxe5

60. Kxe2 f4



White resigns

Patience rewarded! Lots of players just agree a draw in an equal position, it takes some character to play for a win.

■ Alex Billings

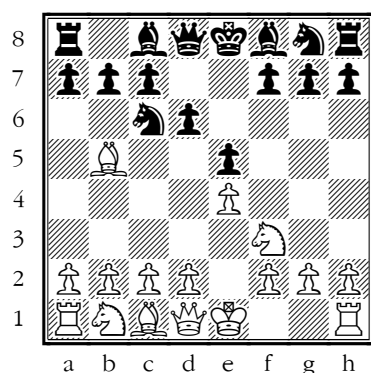
I think you have the basic idea of the Ruy Lopez sorted well enough, but take a look at some of these sidelines; often a quick d4 is awkward for Black. The game you lost you might want to forget all about, but have a look at the sorts of things you missed, and look for them in the future.

 Alex Billings - Opponent

[C62] Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Variation

A good steady win, sensible build-up and took your chances.

- 1. e4 e5
- 2. Nf3 Nc6
- 3. Bb5 d6



4. h3

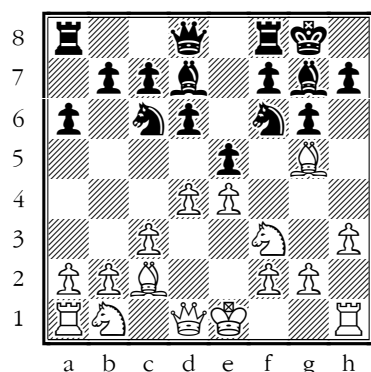
Too slow. I know people often play h2-h3 in the Lopez but unless you're sure it's 'book' then play something more forcing.

[4.d4!; 4.O-O!]

- 4 ... Bd7
- 5. c3 a6
- 6. Ba4 Nf6
- 7. Bc2 g6
- 8. d4 Bg7
- 9. Bg5

[9.d5!? looks a useful way of crowding Black's pieces.]

9 ... O-O



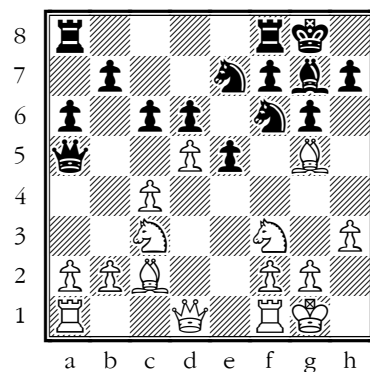
10. O-O

[10.d5!]

- 10 ... Be6?
- 11. d5!

I'll bet you're glad you didn't play that earlier.

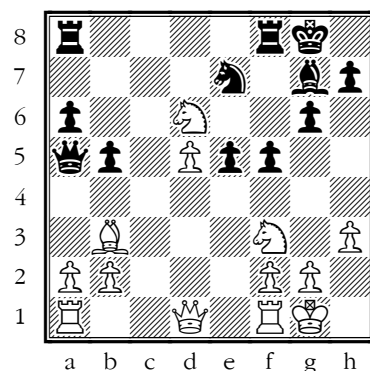
- 11 ... Bxd5
- 12. exd5 Ne7
- 13. c4 c6
- 14. Nc3 Qa5



15. Bb3

[15.Ne4! is sharper, keeping the pressure on. 15...Nxe4 16.Bxe7 Rfe8 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.Bxe4 Rxe7 19.Bxc6]

- 15 ... cxd5
- 16. cxd5 b5
- 17. Bxf6 Bxf6
- 18. Ne4 Bg7
- 19. Nxd6 f5



20. Re1

[20.Nb7! prepares a wicked discovery. 20...Qb6 21.d6+! Kh8 22.dxe7 Rfe8 23.Nd6]

- 20 ... Qb6
- 21. Nxf5

[21.Nxb5 axb5 22.d6+ Kh8 23.dxe7 Rfe8 24.Nxe5]

- 21 ... Nxf5
- 22. Nxe5 Rfe8
- 23. d6+ Kf8??
- 24. Nd7#

An unbelievably strong move. . . checkmate AND it wins the Queen!

 Opponent - Alex Billings

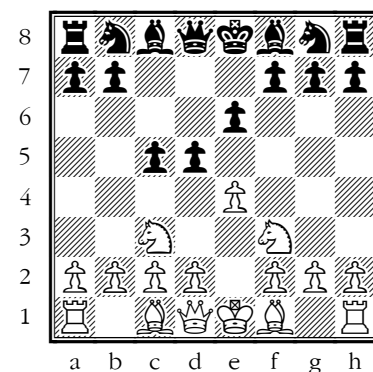
[C00] French Defence

You steered past some difficulties after the opening to steer home a calm victory.

- 1. e4 e6
- 2. Nf3 d5
- 3. Nc3

[3.e5 c5 4.b4 is the main reason for playing White's unusual second move.]

3 ... c5



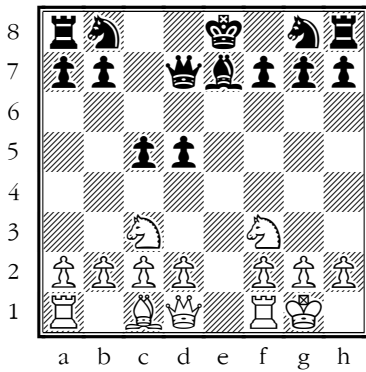
4. Bb5+

A common mistake, swapping off Black's worst piece and helping Black's development!

☞ In most positions, there are pieces you want to keep and some you want to swap. So don't help your opponent by getting rid of their problem pieces!

- 4 ... Bd7
- 5. Bxd7+ Qxd7
- 6. exd5 exd5

7. O-O Be7



8. d4!

White can hope to get pressure on Black's d-pawn.

8 ... Nf6

9. Ne5 Qf5

10. Nb5

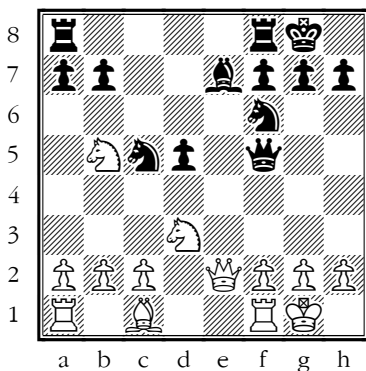
[10.Re1]

10 ... Na6

11. Qe2 O-O

12. dxc5 Nxc5

13. Nd3



13 ... Qe4

I'd develop a rook.

14. Qxe4

Hmm, juniors often exchange when they don't have to. This gets Black's pawns back into two islands and gives up White's best plan. It reinforces what I was saying above about exchanges.

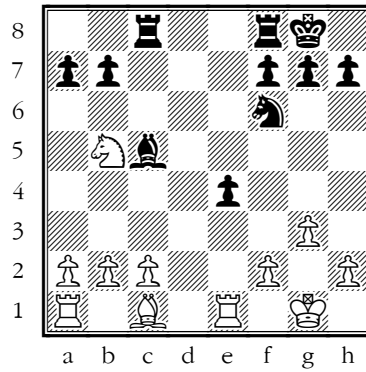
[14.Re1; 14.Be3]

14 ... dxe4

15. Nxc5 Bxc5

16. g3 Rac8

17. Re1



17 ... Rfe8

[Fritz recommends the plan 17...Ng4! 18.Rxe4 Nxf2 19.Re2 a6! 20.Nc3 Nd1+! 21.Kf1 Nxc3 22.bxc3 when Black has big pressure against the weak White pawns. Hard to spot that line, though.]

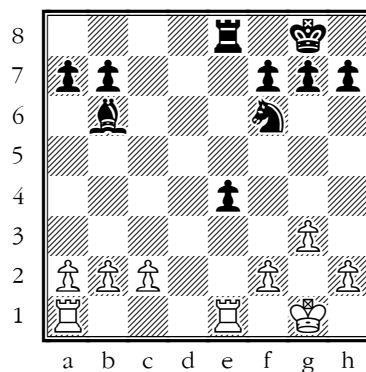
18. Be3 Bxe3

19. Nd6?

[19.Rxe3 Rxc2 is the lesser of two evils for White]

19 ... Bb6

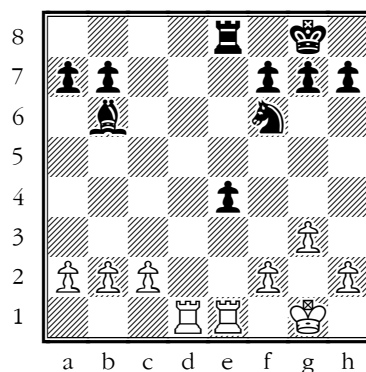
20. Nxe8 Rxe8



Two pieces usually do better than a single Rook.

Here White doesn't even have a pawn to show for it.

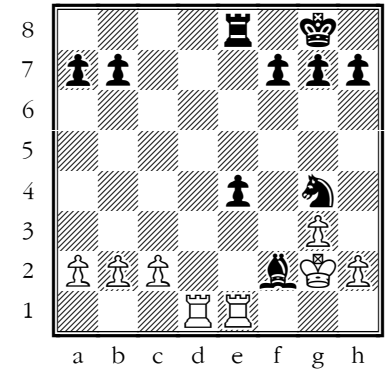
21. Rad1



21 ... Ng4!?

22. Kg2 Bxf2

[22...Nxf2!]



23. Re2??

[White missed an important trick here: 23.Rxe4! Rxe4?? 24.Rd8+ Re8 25.Rxe8# but 23...Ne3+ 24.Kf3! should win for White.]

23 ... Ne3+

24. Rxe3 Bxe3

25. Rd7 b5

26. Rb7 Bb6

27. b3 e3

28. Kf3 e2

29. Rb8 e1Q

30. Rxe8+ Qxe8

31. c4 bxc4

32. bxc4 Qe3+

33. Kg4 Bd8

34. h4 g5

35. Kh5 Qxg3

36. hxg5 Qxg5#

Alex Billings - Opponent

[C66] Ruy Lopez

The opening was OK but after that it went from bad to worse. Don't forget about this game, but look at the danger signs that were there before each blow.

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 Nc6

3. Bb5 Nf6

4. O-O d6

An odd move order, but not bad.

Re1

[5.d4! puts pressure on the Black position.]

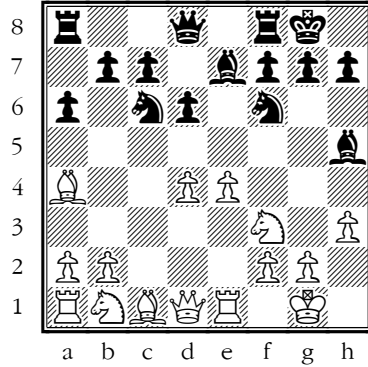
5. ... a6

Also doesn't really fit.

- 6. **Ba4 Bg4**
- 7. **h3 Bh5**
- 8. **c3 Be7**
- 9. **d4**

It can be awkward to hold the d-pawn up when your Nf3 is in a pin.

- 9 ... **exd4**
- 10. **cxd4 O-O**



- 11. **d5**

[11.g4 is probably easiest here; although it's weakening you have pressure on your centre.]

- 11 ... **Ne5**
- 12. **Nbd2 Nfd7**
- 13. **Qb3?**

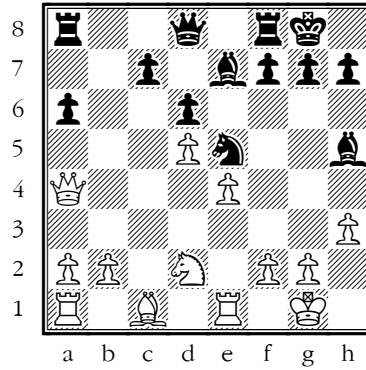
That leaves the Bishop without a sensible move.

[13.Bxd7! gets rid of a Bishop which is becoming bad and allows Qb3 getting out of the pin as you intended.]

- 13 ... **b5**

Oops.

- 14. **Nxe5 bxa4**
- 15. **Qxa4 Nxe5**



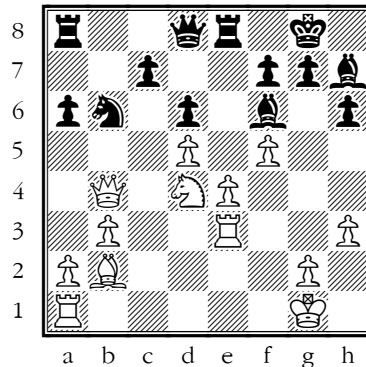
Now, you are losing this, but you can play actively and make problems.

- 16. **Nb3 Bf6**
- 17. **Re3 h6**
- 18. **f4 Nd7**
- 19. **Nd4 Nb6**
- 20. **Qb4 Bg6**
- 21. **b3?**

Asking for trouble on the long diagonal.

[21.Nc6! Qd7 22.Bd2]

- 21 ... **Re8**
- 22. **f5 Bh7**
- 23. **Bb2**



As the man says, Loose Pieces Drop Off - or, Loose Pieces Lead to Trouble. The undefended Rook on e3 is the reason for the next trick, and the undefended Bishop on b2 isn't happy either.

☞ Look for danger signs in every position.

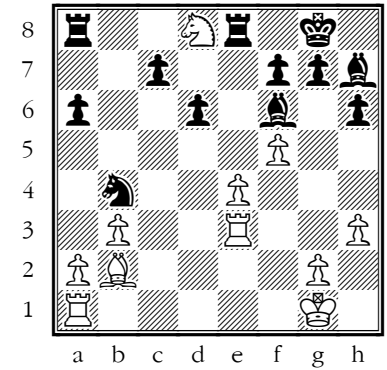
- 23 ... **Nxd5!**

- 24. **Ne6?**

I like the attitude but this just makes a bad situation worse. Can you see now what's wrong with this counterblow?

- 24 ... **Nxb4**

- 25. **Nxd8**



So, takes, takes, is level, a queen each... but now you have two pieces hanging.

- 25 ... **Bxb2**

- 26. **Rb1**

[26.Rd1 stops Black's next move.]

- 26 ... **Bd4**

- 27. **Kf2 Rxe4**

- 28. **Kf3 Rxe3+**

- 29. **Kf4 Nd5+**

- 30. **Kg4 Rxd8**

[Black has a faster win with 30...Be5 31.Nc6 Nf6+ 32.Kb4 Bg3#]

- 31. **Rd1 Bxf5+**

- 32. **Kxf5 g6+**

- 33. **Kg4 h5+**

[Black has a faster win with 33...f5+ 34.Kb4 Bf6#]

- 34. **Kg5 Bf6+**

- 35. **Kh6 Rg3**

- 36. **Rxd5 Bg7#**

White resigns

James Rampersad

As we discussed, these two quick wins don't tell me a lot about the sorts of mistakes you are making, and how to improve. I've made a couple of points below, and if you have some longer struggles on file, I'd be happy to look at them.

Oppt - James Rampersad

[B00] --

e4

I was sorry we never caught up with this game!

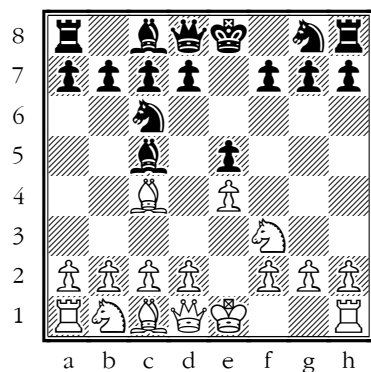
...Draw agreed

Opponent - James Rampersad

[C50] Giuoco Piano

A neat kill against inferior opposition.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Bc5



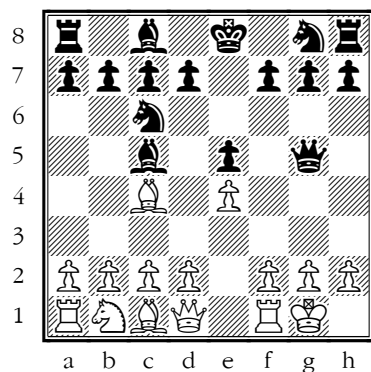
4. Ng5??

[4.d3 Dull;

4.b4!? Exciting;

4.c3! Best]

- 4 ... Qxg5
5. O-O



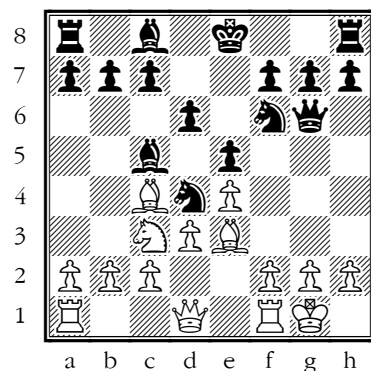
5 ... Qg6!

Dodging the discovered attack by d2-d4

6. Nc3 Nf6
7. d3 Nd4

Very good: I missed your idea.

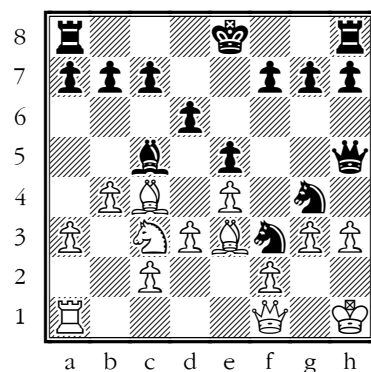
8. Be3 d6



9. a3?

Missing Black's idea too, when it was even more important!

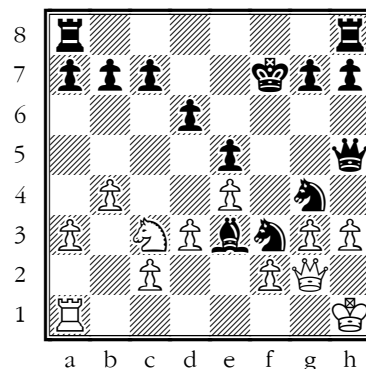
- 9 ... Bh3
10. g3 Bxf1
11. Qxf1 Ng4
12. b4 Qh5
13. h3 Nf3+
14. Kh1



- 14 ... Bxe3
15. Bxf7+

Well, he's losing anyway, but this is pointless.

- 15 ... Kxf7
16. Qg2



16 ... Nxf2+!

Very neat.

17. Qxf2 Qxh3+
18. Qh2 Qxh2#

James Rampersad - Opponent

[D37] Queen's Gambit, Orthodox Defence

A breezy win against minimum resistance. There was one trick I think you might have missed, and I wonder if you could play the opening a little more aggressively.

1. d4 d5
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. Nf3

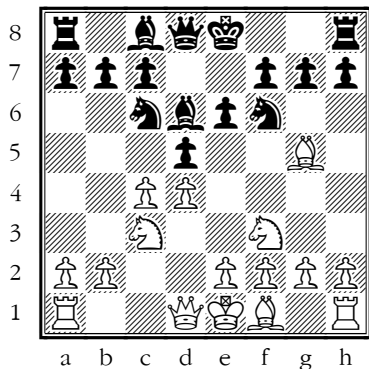
[Not bad, of course, but 4.Bg5 or 4.Bf4 put more pressure on your opponent.

4. Bg5 Nbd7 is the famous Elephant Trap. 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Nxd5 Nxd5 7.Bxd8 Bb4+]

- 4 ... Nc6

➤ In the Orthodox Queen's Gambit with ...e6, Black needs to play ...c5 or ...e5 at some point, to hit back at White's centre and make an open file for the Rooks.

5. Bg5 Bd6

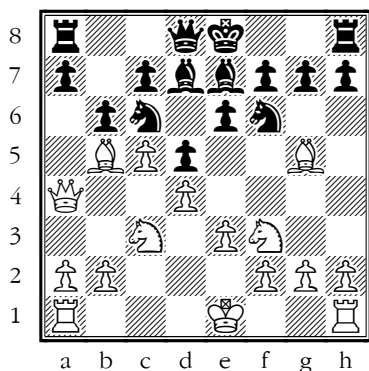


White is winning a pawn here:

6. c5

[6.cxd5! exd5 7.Nxd5! when Black's usual trick with 7...Nxd5 8.Bxd8 Bb4+ fails because White can play 9.Nd2. (7.Bxf6 Qxf6 8.Nxd5 is also good enough.)]

6 ... Be7
7. e3 b6
8. Bb5 Bd7
9. Qa4



Maybe you do know how to play aggressively! Black is starting to creak...

9. ... bxc5?

[9...Nb8!]

10. Bxc6 Rb8

[10...cxd4]

11. Bxd7+ Nxd7

12. Bxe7 Qxe7

13. O-O Rxb2

14. Qxa7 Rb8

15. Qxc7 cxd4

16. Nxd4 O-O

17. Nc6 Qe8

18. Nxb8 Nxb8

19. Rab1 Nd7

[21...e5]

22. Rfd1 Rd8

23. Rxd4 Qe8

24. Rxd7 Rxd7

25. Qxd7! Qf8

26. g3

[26.Rc1!]

26 ... h6

27. Qc7 Qa3

28. Rb8+ Kh7

29. Nc3 Qc1+

30. Kg2 Qg5

31. Qxf7 e5

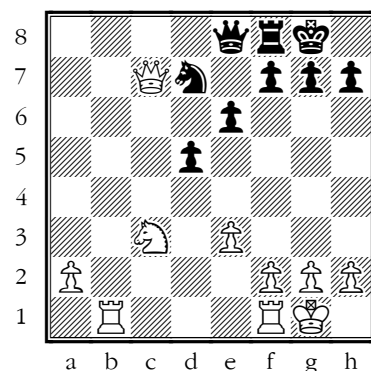
32. Rg8 h5

33. Rxxg7+

[33.Qe8]

33 ... Kh8

34. Qf8# Black resigns



20. e4

[20.Rb7! Nf6 21.Rfb1 is faster]

20 ... d4

21. Na4

[21.Nb5!]

21 ... Qe7

Freddie Sugden

Have a good long think about your move 4 in the first game; there are some elementary mistakes that you should have left behind you. I'm sure I don't need to tell you that you need more of an idea about what to play against the King's Indian (if nothing else), but I thought your last game was really terrific, an exciting game where both players had a proper sense of strategy. It's a shame you didn't have more to show for it!



Oppt - Freddie Sugden

[C46] Old Stodge

A good scrap where both sides saw things and both sides missed things.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Nc3

Yawn.

3 ... Bb4

[3...Nf6 may be necessary; 3...g6 was Paul Keres' way of injecting some asymmetry into the position, but I think it's risky.]

4. Bc4

[4.Nd5!]

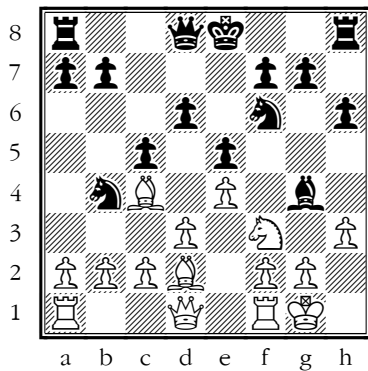
4 ... h6

Every move in the opening should help you achieve one of your aims: Get your pieces out, get

castled, get a stake in the centre...

This little poke doesn't get you nearer any of those things.

5. Nd5 d6
6. Nxb4 Nxb4
7. O-O Nf6
8. d3 Bg4
9. Bd2 c5
10. h3



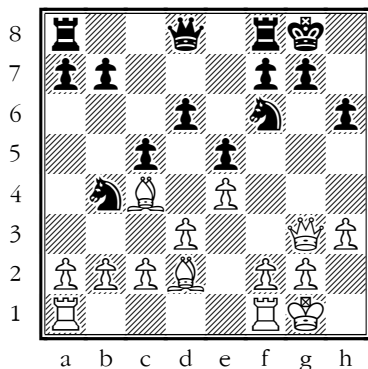
10 ... Bxf3
11. Qxf3

[11.gxf3 was essential, with an interesting position which might favour Black's two Knights.]

11 ... O-O

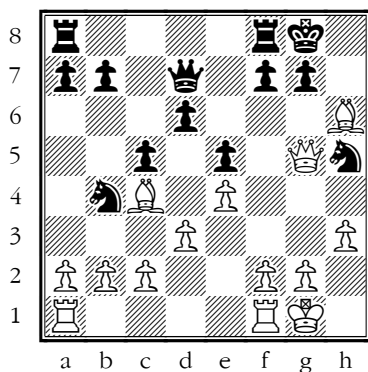
[11...Nxc2!]

12. Qg3



Always ask yourself: what was the point of my opponent's last move? Do they have any threats?

12 ... Qd7?
13. Bxh6 Nh5
14. Qg5



14 ... g6?

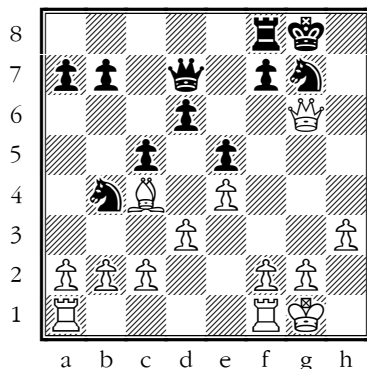
Not necessary (Qxh5 gxh6) but hard to resist.

[14...b5!/?]

15. Bxf8

[15.Qxg6+! wins straight away: 15...Kh8 16.Qxb5]

15 ... Rxf8
16. Qxg6+ Ng7



17. Rae1

[17.c3! d5! 18.Qg3! keeps White on top]

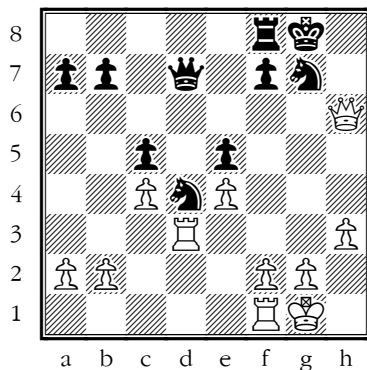
17 ... d5!
18. Qh6?

[18.Bxd5 at least gets a pawn in return.]

18 ... dxc4
19. dxc4 Nxc2

That's evened things up a lot!

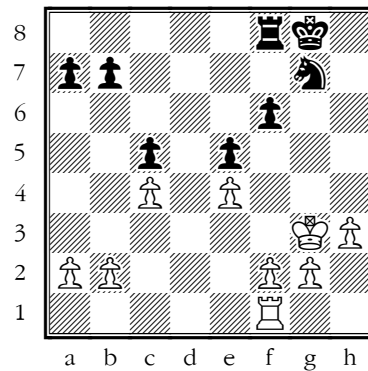
20. Rd1 Nd4
21. Rd3?



21 ... Qe6

[21...Ne2+! is a wicked discovery. 22.Kh2 Qxd3]

22. Qxe6 Ngxe6
23. Rg3+ Ng7
24. Rg5 f6
25. Rg3? Ne2+
26. Kh2 Nxc3
27. Kxc3

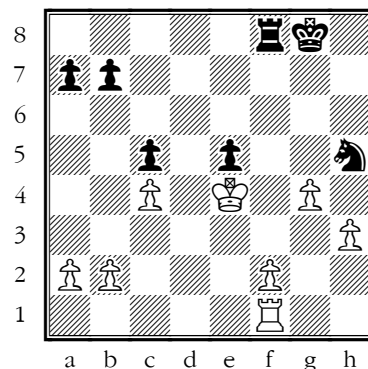


When you're winning, you should stop for a moment and work out what you should be doing, which is being brutal and simple, not making any complications.

27 ... f5!?

[27...Rd8! A Rook's first duty is to seize the open file.]

28. Kf3 Nh5
29. g4 fxe4+
30. Kxe4



Black should be doing OK here but there are dangerous reefs...

30 ... Rf4+

An unnecessary check that leads to trouble:

[30...Ng3+!]

31. Kxe5

Now Black has two pieces attacked...

31 ... Rxc4

[31...Ng3! is a clever move to escape 32.Kxf4 Nxf1]

32. gxh5 Rh4
33. Rg1+ Kh7

[33...Kf7]

34. f4 Rxh3
35. f5 Rxh5

36. Ke6 Rh6+

☞ Unnecessary checks often lead to trouble.

[The right way to defend with a pawn against passed pawns is from the other end of the board, looking back: 36...Rb2]

37. f6 Rh2

Right idea, a little too late.

38. f7 Re2+

39. Kf6 Rf2+

40. Ke7 Rxb2

[40...Re2+! doesn't save the game but worth a go 41.Kf8 Rf2]

41. f8Q Re2+

42. Kd7 Rd2+

43. Kc7 Rxa2

44. Qg7#

Freddie Sugden - Opponent

[E90] King's Indian Defence, Classical Variation

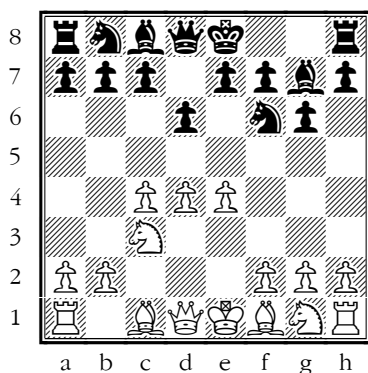
You didn't get far out of the opening before getting hit for six.

1. d4 Nf6

2. c4 d6

3. Nc3 g6

4. e4 Bg7



White has several plans in this position: pick one and learn it!

5. Nf3 Bg4

6. Bd3

[6.Be2 is better: Black is likely to play 6...e5 when White's Bd3 will be queuing up behind the pawn on e4

for the rest of the early game.]

6 ... Nc6

7. e5

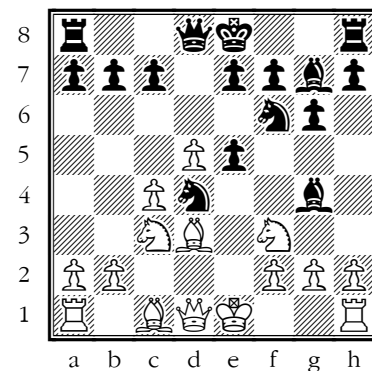
Nice idea, but counting should have told you this wouldn't work. In fact, even if you can play it without losing a pawn, ...Ng4 adds two more pieces attacking e5.

7 ... dxe5

8. d5

[8.dxe5 Nxe5]

8 ... Nd4



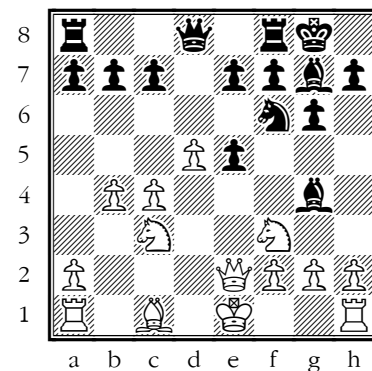
Now Black has a threat or two, which both players miss.

9. b4 O-O

[9...e4!]

10. Be2 Nxe2

11. Qxe2



11 ... Ne8

[11...e4!]

12. Qd3 e4

Finally!

13. Qxe4

[13.Qe3]

13 ... Bxc3+

Yeuch, it's all gone horrible.

14. Bd2 Bxf3

15. Qxf3 Bxa1

16. O-O Bg7

17. a4 e6

18. Be3 Nd6

19. c5 Nc4

20. Rd1 Nb2

21. Rd2 e5

22. d6 cxd6

23. cxd6 Nc4

24. Rd1 Nxe3

25. fxe3 Bh6

26. e4 Qb6+

27. Kf1 Rfd8

28. Qc3 Rxd6

29. Rxd6 Qxd6

30. Qb3 Rc8

31. b5 Rc1+

32. Ke2 Qd2+

Black resigns

Now, after that I was all ready to give you a lecture on White's plans in the King's Indian, but then...

Freddie Sugden - Opponent

[E70] Kings' Indian Defence, Classical Variation

One of those rare games where I felt each side knew what they were supposed to be doing and were getting on well with it. I'm sorry you didn't get a better result but you played well enough to win.

1. d4 Nf6

2. c4 g6

3. Nc3 Bg7

4. e4 d6

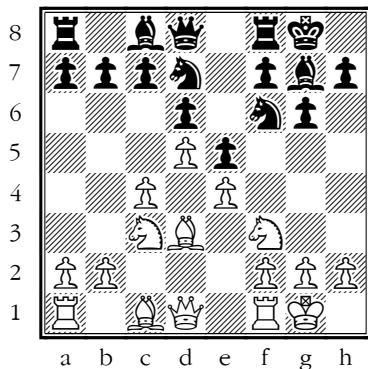
5. Bd3 O-O

[5...e5]

6. Nf3 Nbd7

7. O-O e5

8. d5

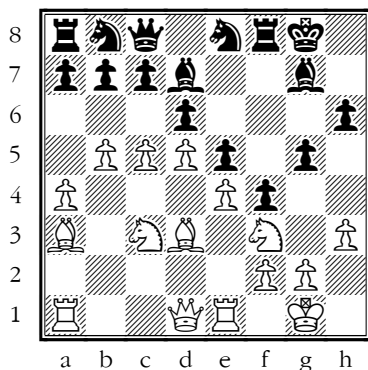


Again, this pawn formation is not kind to the Bd3.

8 ... Ne8
9. b4!

Excellent: play where you have more space.

9 ... Nb8
10. a4 f5
11. Re1 f4
12. Ba3 g5
13. h3 Bd7
14. c5 h6
15. b5 Qc8

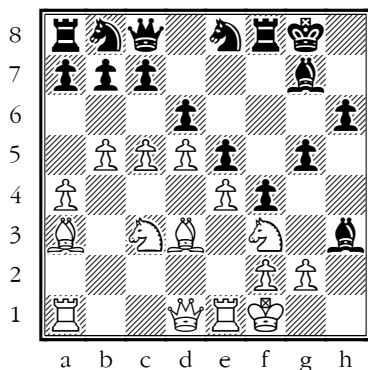


There's a little trick here for White, which you can remember for next time:

16. Kf1

[16.c6! Bxb3 17.cxb7!;
16.Bf1]

16 ... Bxb3

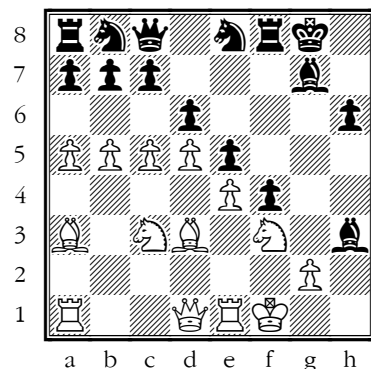


17. Ng1

[You can take that if you want... Yes, it is dangerous but 17.gxb3 Qxb3+ 18.Ke2 g4 19.Nd2 f3+ 20.Ke3 Bf6 21.Bc2! and the King slips out... 21...Qb4 22.Rf1]

Some sacrifices really don't work so don't decline 'on principle'; if you sit and work out an escape, the fastest way for you to win is take it and run!

17 ... Bg4
18. f3 Bh5
19. a5 g4
20. fxc4 Bxc4
21. Nf3 Bh3

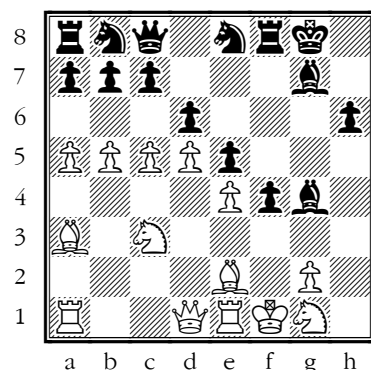


He's keen on that idea, I can tell.

22. Ng1

[22.gxb3 Qxb3+ 23.Kg1 Rf6 24.Bf1 Rg6+ 25.Kf2 Qg3+ 26.Ke2 and again White escapes.]

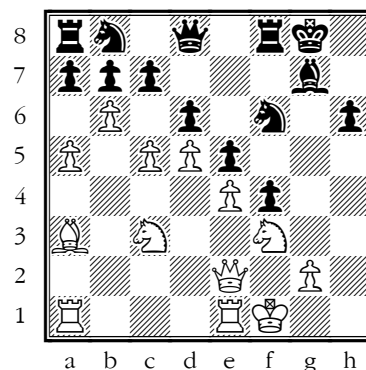
22 ... Bg4
23. Be2



23 ... Bxe2+
24. Qxe2

That exchange leaves Black with a bad Bishop, although it will be good if he can get it to h4.

24 ... Qd8
25. Nf3 Nf6
26. b6



This has turned into a classic battle of Queen's-side attack against King's-side attack. There's a lot of tension and it's no surprise that both players make mistakes.

26 ... dxc5
27. bxa7?!

[27.Bxc5! as you realised, is better: 27...Re8 (27...Rf7 28.Nxe5) 28.bxa7 Na6 29.Bf2]

27 ... Na6
28. Na4 Ng4?

[28...Nd7]

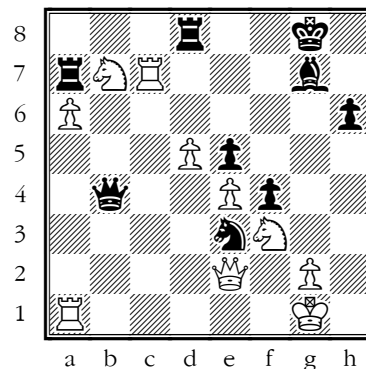
29. Bxc5

[29.Nxc5! Nxc5 30.Bxc5 Rf7]

29 ... Nxc5
30. Nxc5 Qd6
31. Nxb7 Qb4
32. Reb1 Qc3?
33. Rc1 Ne3+
34. Kg1 Qb4
35. Rxc7

[35.Nc5]

35 ... Rxa7
36. a6 Rd8



37. Qd3?

[37.Qa2 doesn't lose, but much better was; 37.Rxg7+! Kxg7 38.Nxd8]

37 ... Qb2

with double attack on a1 and g2.

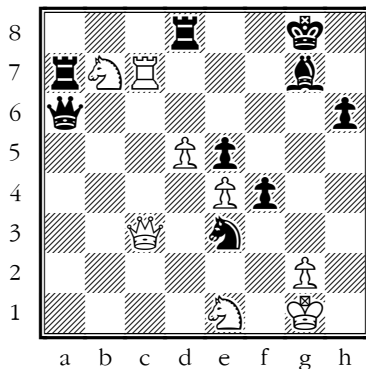
38. Ne1?

Slightly despairing.

[38.Qd2! Qxa1+ 39.Rc1 Qxa6 40.Nxd8 when White is an exchange down but still fighting]

38 ... Qxa1

39. Qc3 Qxa6



40. Nd3

[40.Rxg7+ was a last slim chance to make trouble: 40...Kxg7 41.Qxe5+]

40 ... Rxb7

41. Qc6 Rb1+

42. Kh2 Qxc6

[Black had a quicker win with 42...Ng4+ 43.Kh3 Qxd3+ 44.Kxg4 Qg3+ 45.Kf5 Qg5+ 46.Ke6 Qf6#]

43. Rxc6 Nf1+

44. Kh3 Rb3

45. Kg4 Ne3+

46. Kh5 Rxd3

47. Rc7 Nxc2

[47...Rd1 is a faster win]

48. Kg6 Rd6+

49. Kf5 Nh4+

50. Kg4 Rg3+

51. Kxh4 h5

52. Rc8+ Kh7

53. Rc7 Rdg6

[53...Kg6 again is faster 54.Ra7 Bf6#]

54. Re7 R6g4+

55. Kxh5 Rg6

56. Kh4 Rh6#

A sad result but an exciting game where both sides had plenty of chances; I hope you enjoyed it and felt OK about it.

■ Charles Rochford

A nice little set of games and a nice total of points. I think you could be a lot sharper in the opening; otherwise there's a sense of move-to-move improvisation in your chess, I don't have the impression that you have a clear plan in mind, or a side of the board where you think you should be playing. If that seems to you a fair comment, have a think about how to make a chess plan.:

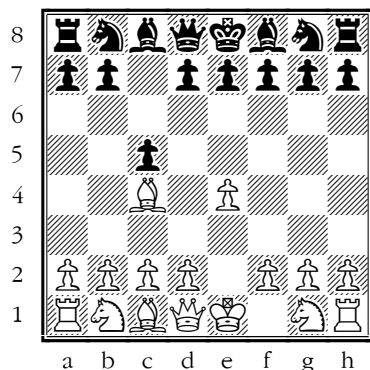
 **Opponent - Charles Rochford**

[B20] Sicilian Defence

A slow start led to a good win.

1. e4 c5

2. Bc4



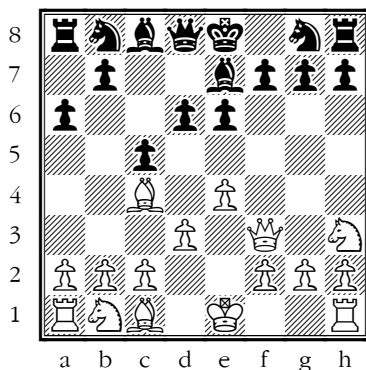
2 ... d6

[White hasn't got a clue, I reckon; you can make trouble immediately by 2...e6! 3.Nf3 d5! and Black already has the initiative.]

3. Qf3 e6

4. Nh3 Be7

5. d3 a6



I'm getting a bit anxious about the number of pawn moves here. Strong players often do play these sorts of moves in the Sicilian, but they also usually have a clear idea about what they would like to do...

What would Black like to do here? Develop and castle... Hit at White's pieces and White's centre with ...b5 and ...d5...

Your moves all look a little bit timid.

6. Nc3 Nc6

7. Be3 Bd7

8. Rd1 b5

Happy to see that one!

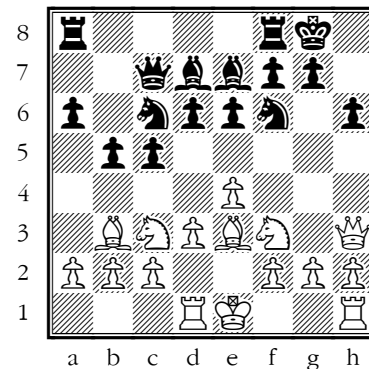
9. Bb3 Nf6

10. Ng5 h6

11. Qh3 O-O

[11...d5!]

12. Nf3 Qc7



13. d4?

Loses a piece in two ways...

13 ... c4

[13...cxd4 14.Nxd4 Nxd4
15.Bxd4 e5! when the Bd7
hits the Qb3]

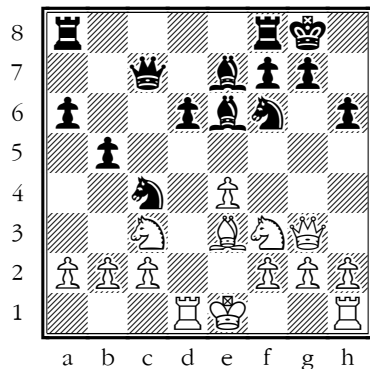
14. d5 Na5

[14...exd5! uncovers an
attack on the Queen again]

15. Bxc4 Nxc4

16. dxe6 Bxe6

17. Qg3



17 ... Nxe3

[17...Nb5! nets the Queen.]

18. Rd3 Nxc2+

19. Kf1 Bc4

[19...Nb5! again!]

20. Nh4 Bxd3+

21. Ne2

[21.Qxd3]

21 ... Bxe2+

22. Kxe2 Qa5

23. h3 Nxe4

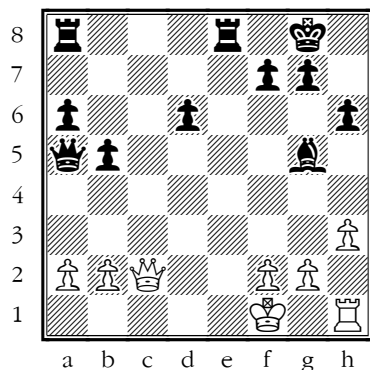
24. Qf4 Bxh4

25. Qxe4 Bg5

[25...Rfe8!]

26. Qxc2 Rfe8+

27. Kf1



Not sure what happened
next, or if I have the position
correct, but what was written
down I think was...

27 ... d5

[Instead, 27...Re1# looked
good!]

White resigns



**Charles Rochford -
Opponent**

[D10] Queen's Gambit,
Slav Defence

1. d4 d5

2. c4 c6

3. Nc3

[3.Nf3 is thought to be more
accurate, in case Black
wants to make a break with
3...e5]

3 ... Nf6

4. Bg5 dxc4

This is Black's other way of
making trouble.

5. Bxf6 exf6

It's usually better to capture
towards the centre with a
pawn, if you have a choice.

[5...gxf6]

6. e3 c5

[6...b5 makes use of having
played ...c6.]

7. Bxc4 cxd4

8. exd4

Black has abandoned the
centre, leaving White with a
passed pawn.

8 ... g6

9. Nf3

[9.Nge2]

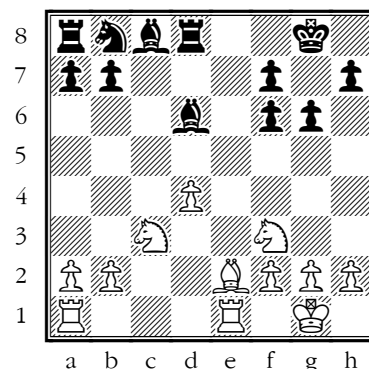
9 ... Qe7+

10. Qe2 Qxe2+

11. Bxe2 Bd6

12. O-O O-O

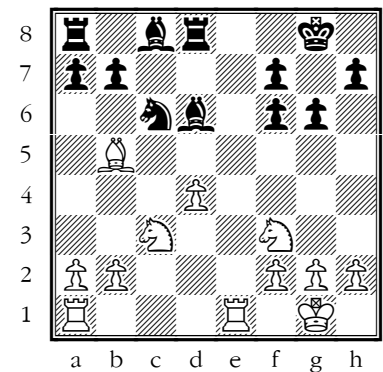
13. Rfe1 Rd8



14. Bb5

[14.Rad1!]

14 ... Nc6



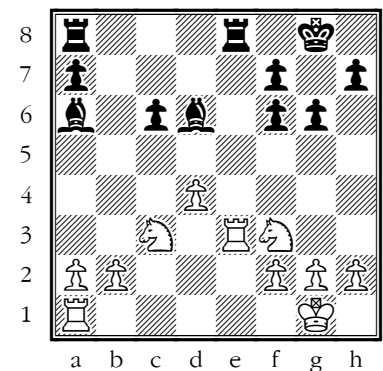
15. Bxc6

Not a bad idea, making more
of a mess of Black's pawns,
but the two Bishops will
have a good time in an open
position, and you no longer
have a passed pawn.

15 ... bxc6

16. Re2 Ba6

17. Re3 Re8

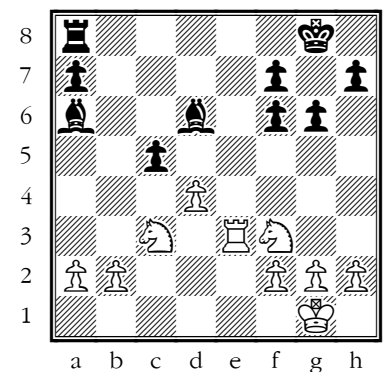


18. Rae1

[18.Ne4!± drives Black into
defending 18...Be7 19.Rc1
Bb5 20.b3]

18 ... Rxe3

19. Rxe3 c5! =



Gets rid of both isolated
pawns, with equality.

20. d5! Kf8?

Missing...

21. Ne4! Rd8

22. Rc3

[22.Nxf6 is safe enough]

22 ... c4

23. b3 cxb3

24. Rxb3 g5

25. Nc3

[25.Nxf6! is still OK; maybe I have the moves down wrongly]

25 ... Bc5

26. h3 Bc4

27. Rb7

[27.Rb2 ! is better; your move is the right attitude but...]

27 ... Rc8

[27...Bb6! traps and wins the Rook for a Bishop.]

Draw agreed



Charles Rochford - Opponent

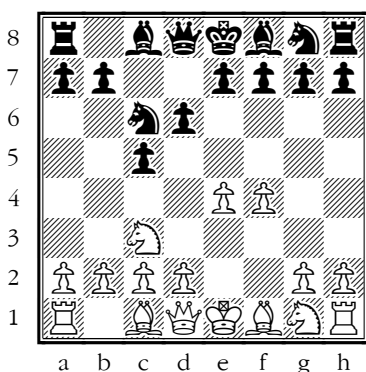
[B23] Sicilian Defence, Closed Variation

You could have played more crisply in the opening but I'm sure that's true of all of us. Otherwise good sensible chess.

1. e4 c5

2. Nc3 d6

3. f4 Nc6



There are several ways to play the Closed Sicilian, depending on where you want to put your King's Bishop: b5, c4 or g2. The other option, Be2, also isn't bad, or course. In your opening in this game you didn't put it anywhere for a long while, which means you didn't get castled, and so you weren't developing as fast and aggressively as you could.

4. Nf3

[4.Bb5; 4.Bc4]

4 ... a6

That's an OK move in the Open Sicilian, but rather slow for the Closed.

5. d3

[5.a4; 5.g3]

5 ... e6

6. Be3 Nf6

7. Qe2

[7.g3 is another development]

7 ... Be7

8. Qf2 b5

[8...Ng4! removes the better of White's Bishops]

9. e5? Nd7

[9...Ng4! 10.Qg1 dxe5]

10. exd6 Bxd6

11. Ne4 Qc7

12. Bxc5?

[12.Nfd2 is an odd move but holds the f-pawn; 12.g3 defends f4 and prepares to get the Bf1 onto the open long diagonal.]

12 ... Nxc5

13. Nxc5 Bxc5?

[13...Bxf4!]

14. Qxc5

White has a cheerful extra pawn.

14 ... Bb7

15. g3 Rc8

16. Bg2

Better late than never... But that was a decision you should have taken at move 3!

16 ... Ne7

17. Qxc7 Rxc7

18. O-O O-O

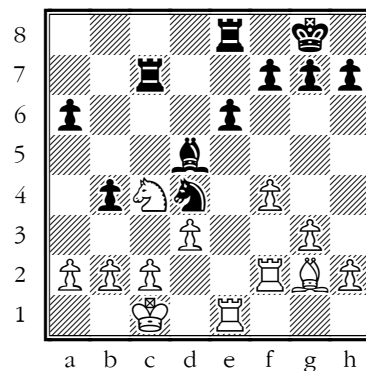
19. Rhf1 Nf5

20. Rde1 Re8

21. Rf2 b4

22. Ne5 Nd4

23. Nc4 Bd5



That was the last move recorded: but of course after

[23...Bd5 24.Bxd5! wins a piece]

Black resigns

■ George Coulson

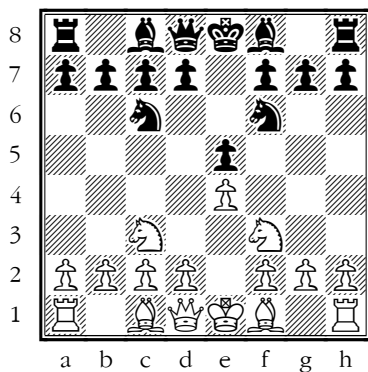
There's lots of good chess sense in your game and lots of good moves, but you need to make sure you aren't missing ideas for your opponent and you must play more actively - keep going forward and leave your pawns alone!

George Coulson - Opponent

[C55] Old Stodge

A positive start to the game and to the tournament; I'm sorry we couldn't decipher more of the score! But I do think you need a serious revision of your opening ambitions - Old Stodge is a game for children, young man!

- 1 e4 e5
- 2 Nf3 Nc6
- 3 Nc3 Nf6



4 Bc4?

A whole question mark might seem harsh for a move that doesn't lose any material, but it throws away all of White's advantage.

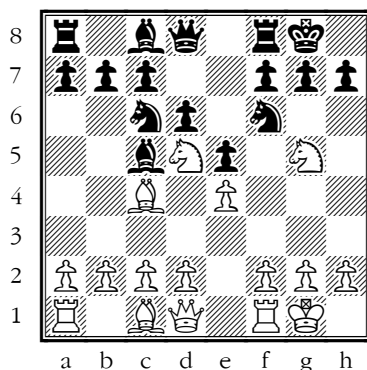
[4.Bb5 doesn't allow the game to be simplified and 4.d4! is a serious try for the advantage, leading to a more open game.]

4 ... Bc5?

Again, doesn't lose, but overlooks a really important idea in this sort of position.

[4...Nxe4! equalises easily. Black can always do this if there is no black Bishop on c5.]

- 5 0-0 d6
- 6 Ng5?! 0-0
- 7 Nd5?!



Black can connect their Rooks with just two more moves, while you will take at least three.

I like that you want to go forward but with Black developing quickly and without weaknesses, you are never going to force your way through here. Leave the pieces that you have developed where they are, and race to get the rest of your team out onto the pitch.

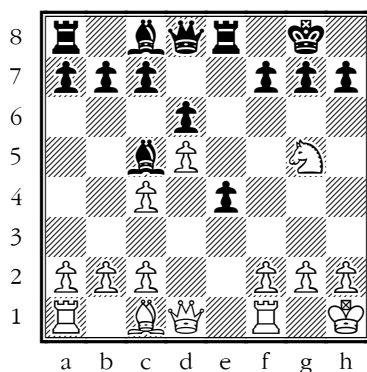
- 7 ... Nxd5
- 8 exd5 Na5

[8...Nd4! is a little better; that Bishop is not a very good one while it is looking at the back of the pawn on d5]

- 9 d3 Nxc4
- 10 dxc4 Re8?

[10...Bf5!; 10...f5]

- 11 Kh1 e4?



These last two moves allow you to make sense of all your earlier moves!

- 12 Qh5!

Wins a pawn and Black's King will feel nervous for some time to come.

- 12 ... h6
- 13 Qxf7+ Kh8

I would have liked to see more of this! You are already threatening to win a pawn with [13...Kb8 14.Qb5 Qe7? (14...Kg8!) 15.Re1!]

...Black resigns

Opponent - George Coulson

[C50] Italian Game

You didn't really take the game to White in the opening, and did well to keep battling throughout the rest of it.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 h6

Not necessary right now, and probably, not necessary at all.

[3...Bc5!

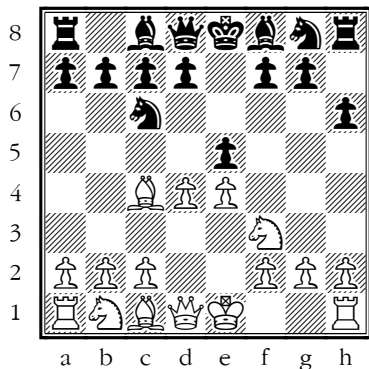
Now 4.Ng5? Qxg5;

4.d3 Nf6 5.Ng5? O-O 6.Bxf7+ Rxf7 7.Nxf7 Kxf7 and White will regret that exchange: the two pieces are more effective than White's lone Rook.

3...Nf6! 4.Ng5!? d5! 5.exd5 b5! 6.Bxb5 Qxd5 when Black has given up a pawn but has an excellent position, while White's scattered pieces don't give a good impression.

So Ng5 is not much of a threat, so ...h6 is not much of a move.]

4. d4



That's the problem: White is put under no pressure and can take over the game.

4 ... d6?

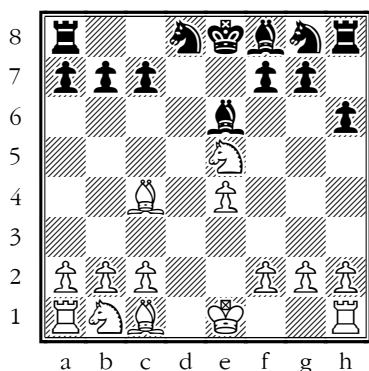
loses a pawn.

[4...exd4 5.Nxd4 Nf6 6.Nc3 d6 when Black is worse but not too badly off.]

5. dxe5 dxe5

6. Qxd8+ Nxd8

7. Nxe5 Be6



8. Bxe6 fxe6

[8...Nxe6 is better]

9. Nc3 Bb4
Black resigns Nf6

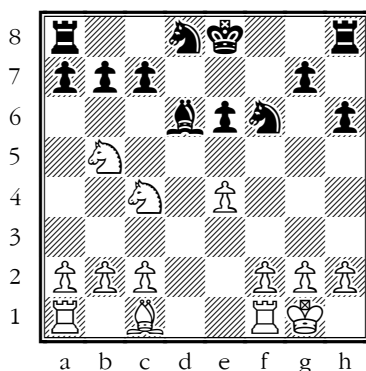
[10...Bxc3 11.bxc3 Nf6 12.Re1 O-O and you might bold.]

11. Nb5 Bd6?

Natural, but White creates two threats with his next

move, and Black can't defend against both. Unlucky!

12. Nc4!



12 ... Rb8

Fortunately, White missed the other threat!

13. Ncxd6+

[13.e5! wins]

13 ... cxd6

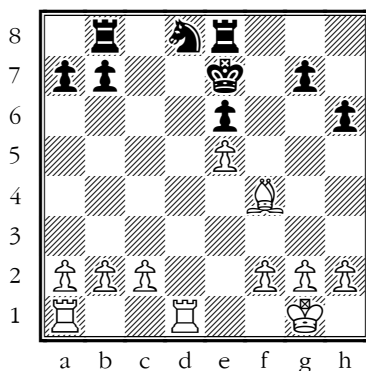
14. Nxd6+ Kd7

15. Rd1 Ke7

16. e5 Ne8

17. Nxe8 Rxe8

18. Bf4



OK, Black has three pieces covering on the back rank. If Black is not to lose, he needs to get them out and make trouble!

18 ... h5

And not make a harmless pawn move...

19. Bg5+ Kf8

20. Rd7 Nc6

21. f4 Red8?

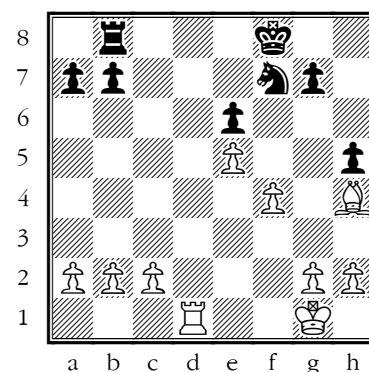
22. Rxd8+?

[22.Bxd8!]

22 ... Nxd8

23. Rd1 Nf7

24. Bh4



24 ... a5?

[24...Rc8! still loses, but might provoke a mistake. Keep making trouble!]

☞ Don't reach for a pawn when you can activate a piece.

25. Rd7 Re8

26. Rxb7 Nd8

27. Ra7 Nc6

28. Ra6 Nb4

Black resigns

George Coulson - Opponent

[B00] --

1. e4 Black resigns

■ Tom Senior

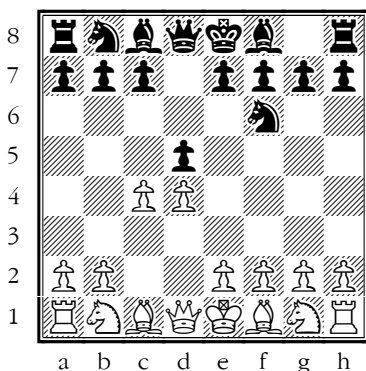
I always feel a bit of a fraud making suggestions to players who score 3/3, but there were a couple of loose moves where you didn't see your opponent's threats & you will get your eye in over time, but do make sure you always look even if you don't always see.

Tom Senior - Opponent

[D06] Queen's Gambit, Marshall's Defence

A comfortable win with the extra exchange, but there were some places in the opening where you could have played more tightly.

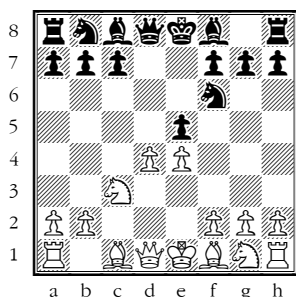
1. **d4 d5**
2. **c4 Nf6**



Marshall's Defence.

3. **Nc3?!**

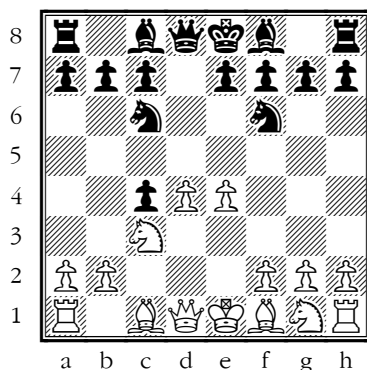
[3.cxd5! doesn't give Black a chance to repair the mistake. 3...Nxd5 4.e4?! Nf6 5.Nc3 e5]



is the idea behind this unusual defence, when Black equalises easily with 6.dxe5 Qxd1+7.Kxd1 Ng4.

Instead 4.Nf3! prevents Black's best defence when White has e2-e4 to follow with a dominating centre.]

- 3 ... **dx c4**
4. **e4 Nc6**



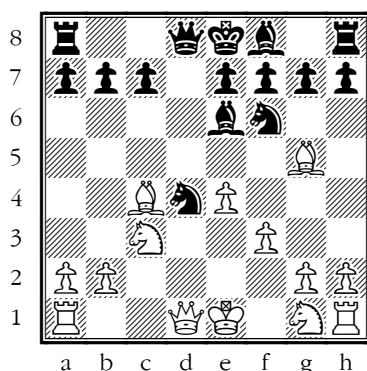
[4...e5]

5. **Bg5?**

I have a feeling you had this move in mind before seeing what Black played!

☞ What is the idea behind your opponent's last move? Is there a threat?

- 5 ... **Nxd4**
6. **Bxc4 Bg4**
7. **f3 Be6**



8. **Nge2? Bxc4**

[8...Nxf3+! 9.gxf3 Qxd1+ 10.Rxd1 Bxc4 -+]

9. **Nxd4 e5**
10. **Ndb5**

[10.Qa4+! Qd7 11.Qxc4 exd4 12.Bxf6 gxf6 13.Nd5±]

- 10 ... **Qxd1+**
11. **Rxd1 Bb4?**
12. **Nxc7+ Ke7**
13. **Nxa8 Rxa8**
14. **a3 Bxc3+**
15. **bx c3 h6**
16. **Bxf6+ gxf6**
17. **Rb1 b5**
18. **a4**

[18.Kf2]

- 18 ... **Ba2**
19. **Rxb5 Rd8**

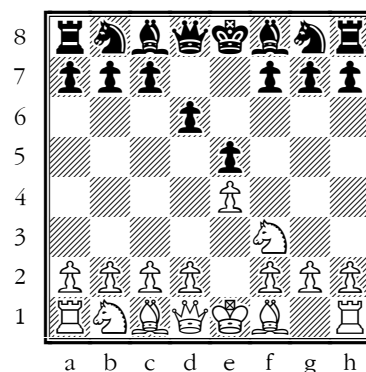
20. **O-O Bc4**
21. **Rb7+ Black resigns**

Opponent - Tom Senior

[C41] Philidor's Defence

I was happy to see you win after struggling all game!

1. **e4 e5**
2. **Nf3 d6**



An interesting defence, not as bad as the books might say.

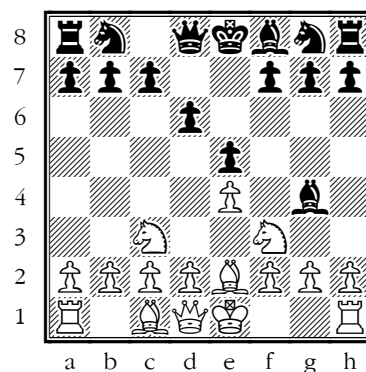
3. **Nc3**

[3.d4! is the most important move in attack.]

- 3 ... **Bg4**

I'm afraid you might miss that Bishop.

4. **Be2**



White has 3 pieces out to Black's 1.

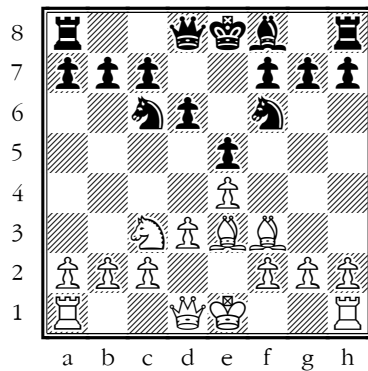
- 4 ... **Bxf3**
5. **Bxf3**

Now White has 2 pieces out to Black's 0. If White had been able to take back with the Queen it would be three-nil!

- 5 ... **Nf6**
6. **d3**

Tame.

- 6 ... Nc6
7. Be3



- 7 ... d5?

Can't count!

[7...Be7]

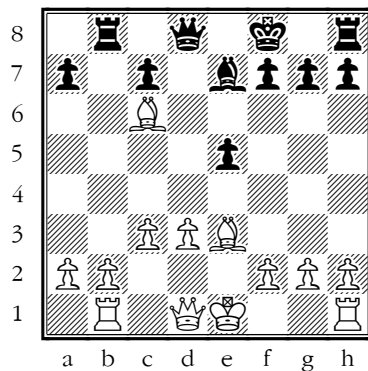
8. exd5 Nxd5??

[8...Nb4]

9. Nxd5 Nb4

I wouldn't try and swap pieces when you're behind.

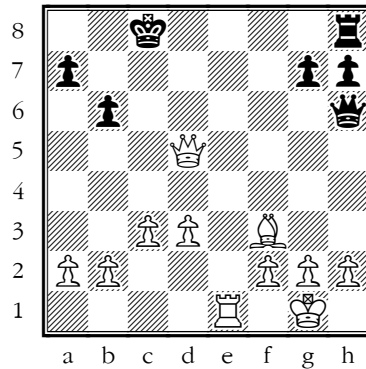
10. Nxb4 Bxb4+
11. c3 Be7
12. Bxb7 Rb8
13. Bc6+ Kf8
14. Rb1



- 14 ... Rb6?

Oops.

15. Bxb6 cxb6
16. O-O Bc5
17. Re1 Qf6
18. Bf3 Bd6
19. Re4 Qh6
20. Qe2 f5
21. Rxe5 Bxe5
22. Qxe5 Kf7
23. Qxf5+ Ke7
24. Re1+ Kd8
25. Qd5+ Kc8



White has a forced mate, but...

26. Re4?

[26.Qb7+ Kd8 27.Bg4]

- 26 ... Qc1+!

☞ It's not over until it's over!



Opponent - Tom Senior

[C10] French Defence, Exchange Variation

I think you have a good aggressive frame of mind, which some of your team mates lack, but you do need to slow down sometimes and do the boring bit of finishing development.

1. e4 e6
2. Nc3

[2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.Bd3 c5! When White has blocked the attack on the centre by his Queen, then you can play for an IQP position in this way.]

- 2 ... d5
3. exd5 exd5
4. d4 c5

I like the attitude, but it's risky!

☞ If you open up the position when you are behind in development, that means your opponent will have lots of open lines to attack you along!

5. Nf3

[5.dxc5! takes a pawn and threatens to take another. This is awkward for Black.]

- 5 ... Nc6
6. Bb5 Bd7
7. Bxc6

[7.Nxd5]

- 7 ... Bxc6
8. Bf4 Nf6
9. O-O Ne4

Again, I like the aggressive attitude but it's better to carry on developing and get your King castled.

[9...Be7]

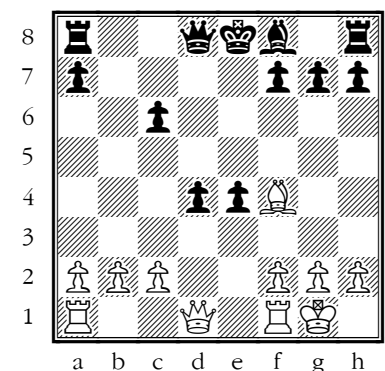
10. Nxe4 dxe4
11. Ne5

[11.Re1!]

- 11 ... cxd4
12. Nxc6

[12.Re1 Qd5 13.Qe2 f5]

- 12 ... bxc6



13. c3?!

Not so good, because of the next note.

[13.Re1]

- 13 ... dxc3

[13...d3! would have been more awkward for White.]

14. Qxd8+

[14.bxc3 is just a losing endgame, but 14.Qa4! is awkward for Black.]

- 14 ... Rxd8
15. bxc3 Rd3
16. c4 Rd4

[16...Bc5]

17. Rac1 Ba3
18. Rc2 O-O
19. Re1 Bb4
20. Rf1 h6

[20...Rfd8! bringing the last piece into play is simplest, with a winning endgame.

21.Be3 Rd1 22.Bxa7? Rxf1+ 23.Kxf1 Rd1+ 24.Ke2 Re1#]

21. Be3! Rd3?!

[21...Rd7 keeps the extra pawn.]

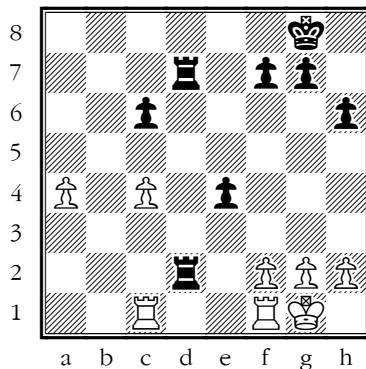
22. Bxa7 Rfd8

23. Rcc1 R8d7

24. Be3 Bd2

25. Bxd2 Rxd2

26. a4

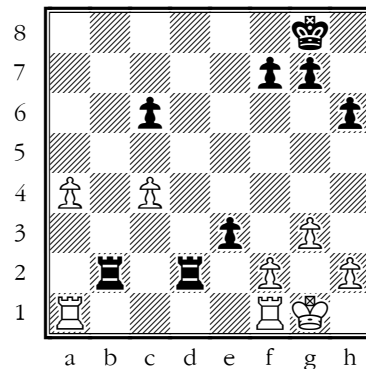


Simply equal, really.

26 ... Rb2

27. Ra1 Rdd2

28. g3 e3!



Nice idea!

29. fxe3? Rg2+

30. Kh1 Rxh2+

31. Kg1 Rbg2#

Very neat.

■ Blaise Radley

Nice score and not too many complaints about the games. You were guilty of a couple of over-quiet pawn moves and there is some room for you to play your openings with a better grasp of the ideas. I'm sure you have the ability to take the next step up! But that means either giving up these 'baby' openings or studying them properly.

Blaise Radley - Opponent

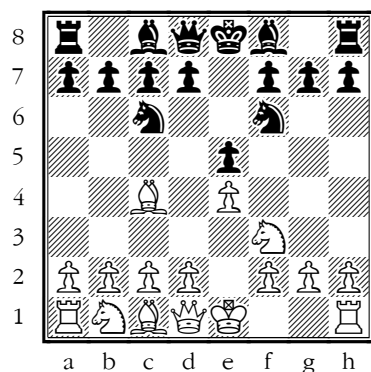
[C55] Two Knights' Defence/Old Stodge

A comfortable win with the extra exchange, but there were some places in the opening where you need to tighten up.

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 Nc6

3. Bc4 Nf6



4. d3

You should know a better move than this stodgy effort by now.

What's better?

The ABC of the Two Knights' Defence:

You will find in a book that this is B for Boring...

[A. 4. Nc3 Awful... 4...Nxe4!;

C. 4. Ng5!? Complicated... 4...d5! 5. exd5 and now:

(1) 5... b5! 6. Bxb5 Qxd5;

(2) 5... Nxd5? 6. Nxf7!? (6. d4!±);

(3) 5... Na5 6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8. Be2;

D. 4. d4! Dynamic and best. There is a bit more on this in our openings book.]

4 ... Bc5

5. Bg5

[5.Nc3; 5.c3]

5 ... h6

6. Be3

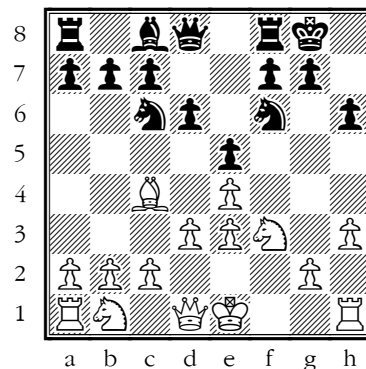
Makes me wonder why it went to g5.

6 ... Bxe3

[6...Bb6! doesn't give White a chance to play down the f-file.]

7. fxe3 d6

8. h3 O-O



Castling is simple and good.

9. d4? Qd7?

[9...Nxe4!]

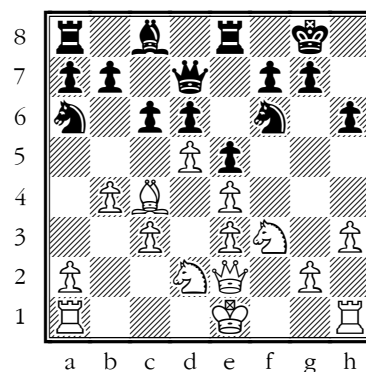
10. Nbd2! Re8

11. d5 Nb8

12. c3 Na6

13. b4 c6

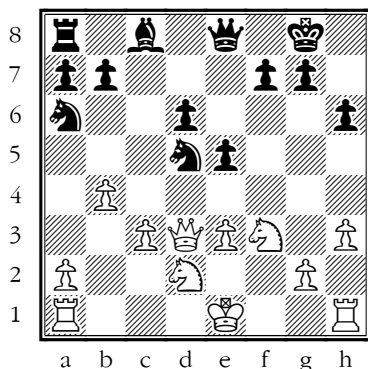
14. Qe2



14 ... cxd5?

[14...Nc7!]

15. Bb5! Qd8
 16. Bxe8 Qxe8
 17. exd5 Nxd5
 18. Qd3



18 ... Nf6

[18...Nac7]

19. Qxd6 Bf5
 20. O-O Rd8
 21. Qxe5 Qxe5

Exchanges must favour White.

22. Nxe5 Be6
 23. Ndf3 Ne4

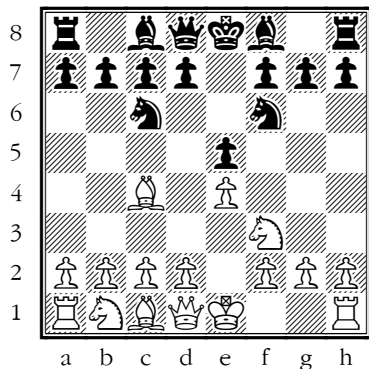
Black resigns

Blaise Radley - Opponent

[C55] Two Knights' Defence/Old Stodge

A decent win with both sides making mistakes. You missed a big opportunity to make a mess of your opponent's defences, which is a very common idea in this system. But perhaps it's time to give up this system as White, and play something more active, take the game to your opponent, and making them make more mistakes.

1. e4 e5
 2. Nf3 Nc6
 3. Bc4 Nf6



4. d3

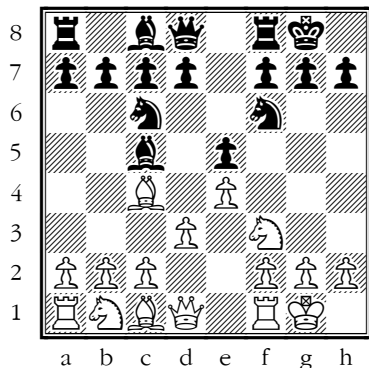
[4.Ng5 to grab a pawn and hang on against an attack;

4.d4 offers a pawn or two for an attack]

4. ... Bc5
 5. 0-0

Possibly too early; you often want to play h3 and g4 against a Bishop pin and that doesn't fit with castling.

5. ... 0-0



6. Bg5

This move has no threat.

[6.Nc3 d6 7.Bg5 Bg4? 8.Nd5!;

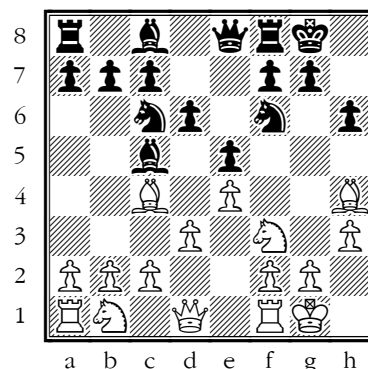
6.Be3!? idea 6...Bxe3 7.fxe3 d6 8.Qe1 Kb8 9.Nb4 Kg8 10.Nf5]

6. ... h6
 7. Bh4 d6
 8. h3

Too quiet. It's not a bad idea in this system where the Bg5/...Bg4 plans are more or less the main theme, but I'd like you to get out of the habit of playing this sort of move unless you absolutely have to!

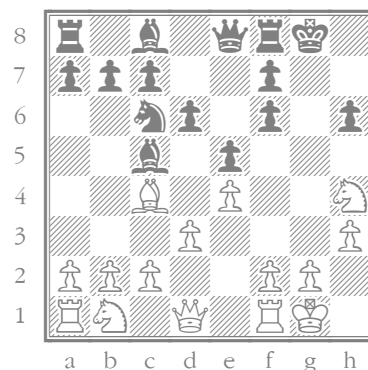
[8.Nc3 Bg4 9.h3! Bxf3 0.Qxf3 Nd4 11.Qd1]

8. ... Qe8



9. Nbd2

[9.Bxf6 gxf6 10.Nb4



Analysis Diagram

when White has lots of simple ways to put the squeeze on Black:

(10...Bd7 11.Ng6!) or if something simple like

11...Kb8, then

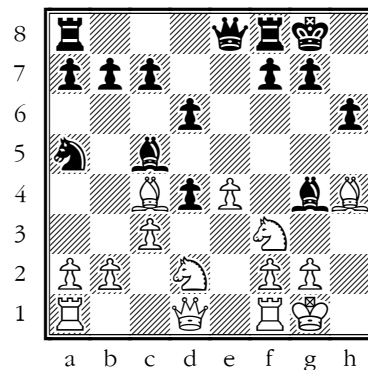
11.Qb5 or

11.Kh1 / 12.f4 / 13.Rf3 / 14.f5]

9. ... Ng4?

Just loses a piece

10. hxg4 Bxg4
 11. c3 Na5
 12. d4 exd4



13. b4!?

Needlessly complicated.

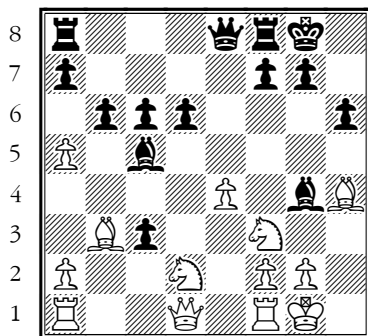
13. **dx c3**

14. **bxa5 b6**

[14...cxd2! when Black is more or less even on material, a Knight for three pawns.]

15. **Bd5 c6**

16. **Bb3**



a b c d e f g h

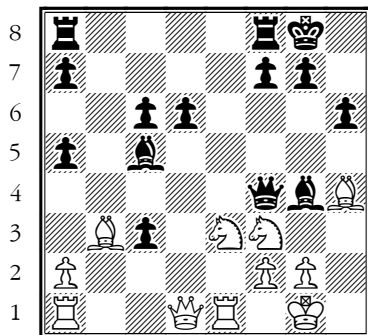
16. ... **bxa5**

[According to the moves you read out, it looks like Black could still play 16...cxd2 here.]

17. **Nc4 Qxe4**

18. **Re1 Qf4**

19. **Ne3**



a b c d e f g h

Black has a simple undermining/discovered attack idea here:

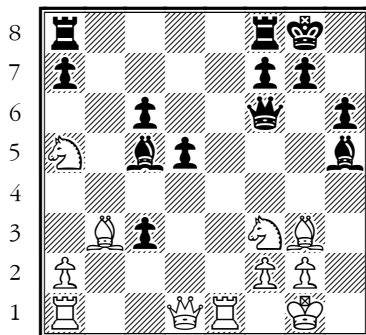
19. ... **Bh5**

[19...Bxf3! 20.Qxf3 Qxb4]

20. **Bg3 Qf6**

21. **Nc4 d5**

22. **Nxa5**



a b c d e f g h

22. ... **Rab8**

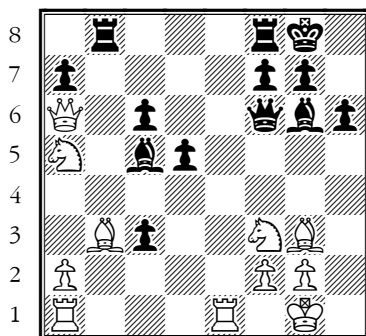
Not what you read out, but sort of fits.

23. **Qd3**

[If that really was the move then you should have played 23.Bxb8!]

23. ... **Bg6**

24. **Qa6**



a b c d e f g h

24. ... **Kh8 ???**

Again, I'm not sure what the actual move played was: I assume next move you didn't allow Black to play ...Bxa7! winning.

25. **Qxa7 Rb5**

26. **Qc7 Bb6!**

27. **Qxc6 Rxa5**

28. **Qxf6 gxf6**

29. **Rac1 c2**

30. **Bxc2 Raa8**

31. **Bxg6 fxc6**

32. **Bc7 Ba7**

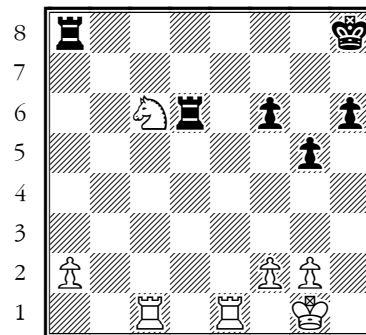
33. **Bf4 g5**

34. **Be3 d4**

35. **Bxd4 Bxd4**

36. **Nxd4 Rfd8**

37. **Nc6 Rd6**



a b c d e f g h

And White won, as he should have.

1-0



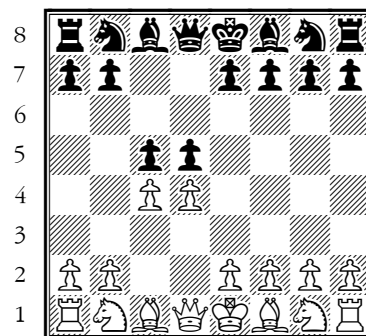
Opponent - Blaise Radley

[D06] Queen's Gambit, Symmetrical Defence

A satisfying win I'm sure. Not much to improve on here but I do think you need to find a sounder defence to the Queen's Gambit and you need to find better moves than ...h6.

1. **d4 d5**

2. **c4 c5!?**



a b c d e f g h

A very unusual defence, but it isn't rubbish.

[2...e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 O-O 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.Rc1 a6!? 8.Bd3?! Not best, but it's often played. (8.c5; 8.cxd5) 8...dxc4 9.Bxc4 b5 10.Bb3 c5! is an easy way to equalise, called the Swiss Defence.]

3. **cx d5 cx d4**

[3...Nf6 4.e4! is Bondarevsky's recommendation: 4...Nxe4

5.dxc5 Nxc5 6.Nc3 e6 7.b4 Qf6 8.Qc2 and White has a plus.]

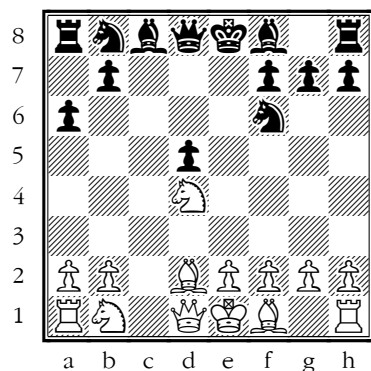
4. Nf3

[4.Qxd4! wins a pawn more simply.]

4 ... e6
5. Nxd4 exd5
6. Nb5

That's a waste of time.

6 ... a6
7. Nd4 Nf6
8. Bd2



Tame.

8 ... h6

Oh dear, was there really nothing better to do?

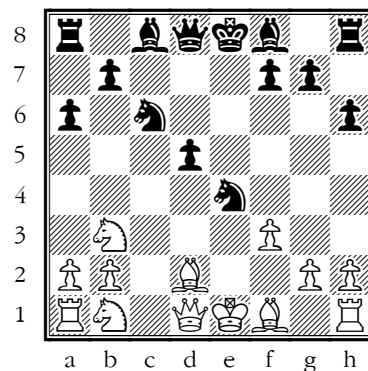
☞ I do hate to see these fiddly pawn moves on the edges; the centre is where the game is won and lost!

[8...Nc6; 8...Bc5; 8...Bd6]

9. Nb3 Nc6
10. e4?

Can't count.

10 ... Nxe4
11. f3?



11 ... Nxd2

[11...Qb4+! 12.g3 Nxc3! wins for Black.]

12. N1xd2 Bb4

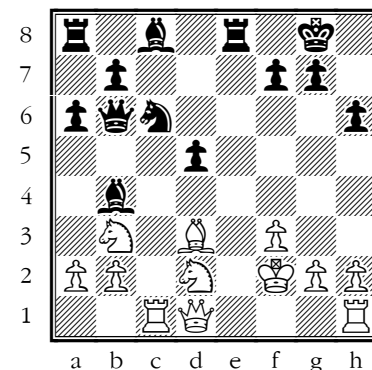
13. Rc1 O-O

14. Bd3 Re8+

15. Kf2?

[15.Kf1!; 15.Be2 d4!]

15 ... Qb6+



16. Kg3??

Sprightly but suicidal.

[16.Kf1!]

16 ... Bd6+

17. f4 Re3+

[17...Bxf4+! is slightly faster:

18.Kb4 (18.Kxf4 Qe3#)

18...Qd8+ 19.Kh5 Qg5#]

18. Kh4 Qd8+

19. Kh5 Bxf4

20. g4? Qg5#

■ Christopher Clay

Three really great endgame battles, and I was impressed at how confidently you switched into endgame gear, running your pawns forward and looking for chances for counterplay. But you must be very clear about when you are supposed to swap and when you should not - that will save you points again and again! Lastly, I was happy to keep score for you but I think you could start doing this for yourself.

♟ Opponent - Chris Clay

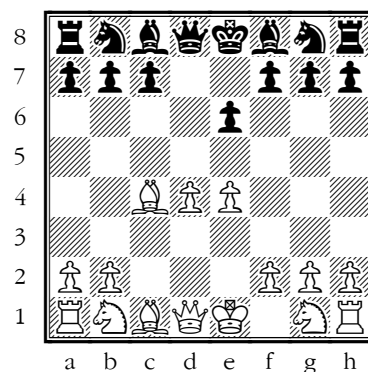
[D20] Queen's Gambit Accepted

A scrappy start but some vigorous endgame play got you the full point - well done.

1. d4 d5
2. c4 dxc4
3. e4 e6

[3...e5 is OK as a reply to 3.e4, although there's a lot of theory on it.]

4. Bxc4



The Queen's Gambit Accepted is a reasonable way of getting an open game from a possibly stodgy opening. But you do give White a big centre and at some point you need to hit it with ...c5, which is why your next move isn't right.

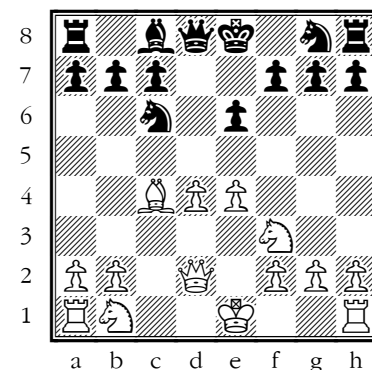
4 ... Nc6

[4...c5]

5. Nf3 Bb4+

6. Bd2 Bxd2+

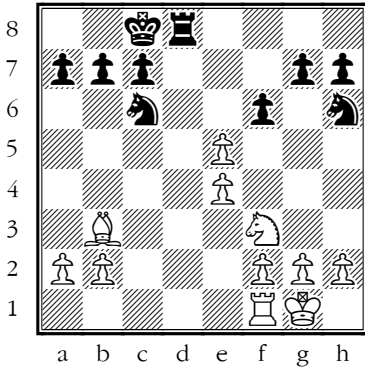
7. Qxd2



7 ... e5

This can work but here it just loses a pawn. Count if you're not sure!

8. **dxe5 Qxd2+**
9. **Nbxd2 Bg4**
10. **O-O O-O**
11. **Rad1 Bxf3**
12. **Nxf3 Nh6**
13. **Rxd8+ Rxd8**
14. **Bb3 f6**

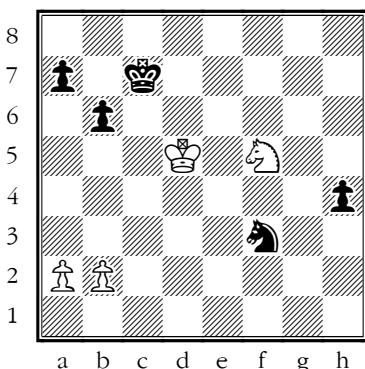


15. **exf6**

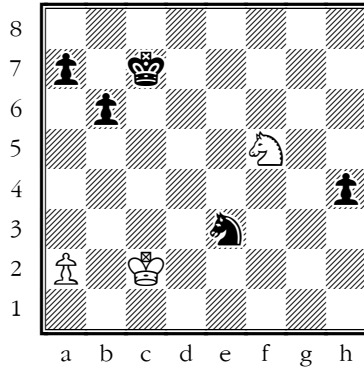
[15.e6 would make life more awkward for Black.]

- 15 ... **gxf6**
16. **Rd1 Re8**
17. **Rd2**

I think this is all OK from your opponent's score sheet, but he got something written down wrong around here and I couldn't follow it. You then got into an interesting endgame with Knights and Pawns ... A bit like this:



1. **Ke4 Nd2+**
2. **Ke3 Nc4+**
3. **Kd4 Nxb2**
4. **Kc3 Nd1+**
5. **Kc2 Ne3+**



I'm not sure if that was daft or (nearly) brilliant: had you spotted that it forced White's Knight away from the pawn? Sadly, it can nip straight back...

6. **Nxe3 h3**
7. **Ng4 b5**
8. **Kc3 a5**
9. **Kd4 Kd6**

Now White forgets about keeping the Black passed pawn under lock and key.

10. **Ne5 h2**

...and Black won with the extra Queen.

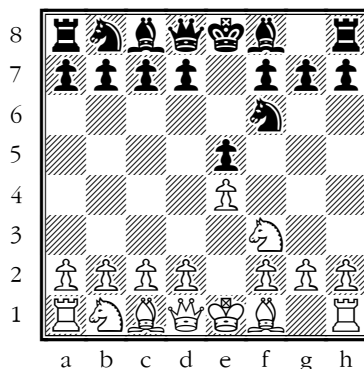


Chris Clay - Opponent

[C44] Petroff's Defence

An interesting scrap, where your vigorous endgame play nearly pulled the whole point back.

1. **e4 e5**
2. **Nf3 Nf6**



A cracking little defence, and favourite of many top players.

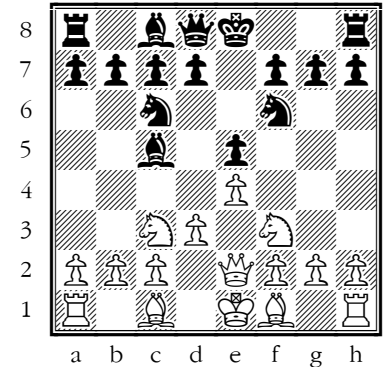
3. **d3**

Not the best reply!

[3.Nxe5! d6! 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.d4 d5; 3.d4! Nxe4! 4.Bd3 d5

5.Nxe5 Nd7!; 3.Nc3 is OK but dull.]

- 3 ... **Nc6**
4. **Nc3 Bc5**
5. **Qe2**



Not sure how White plans to get out the Bf1.

- 5 ... **d6**
6. **Be3 Bxe3**
7. **Qxe3 Bd7**
8. **Qd2?**

You must have had some idea behind this, but it just wastes time. You should get your Rooks connected.

- 8 ... **Nd4**
9. **Nxd4 exd4**
10. **Nd5 Nxd5**
11. **exd5 a6**

As usual, this little move with a Rook's pawn shouts "I've run out of ideas".

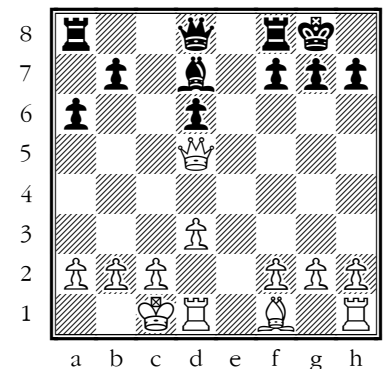
12. **O-O O-O**
13. **Qf4!**

Great!

- 13 ... **c6**

[13...c5 14.dxc6 Bxc6 15.Qxd4]

14. **Qxd4 cxd5**
15. **Qxd5**



- 15 ... **a5**

Another aimless move with a Rook's pawn. You don't win games with moves like this!

[15...Be6!]

16. d4

[16.Qxd6!]

16 ... Be6!

17. Qxb7 Rb8

18. Qa6

[18.Qe4]

18 ... Ra8

19. Qd3 Qb6

[19...Bxa2! when 20.b3? doesn't trap the Bishop, because of 20...a4]

20. a3 Rfc8

21. Rd2

[21.c3 is safe.; 21.d5! is even better, shutting the Black Bishop out of the attack.]

21 ... Rab8

Black is playing some intelligent attacking moves here, it could get nasty...

22. c3 Bc4

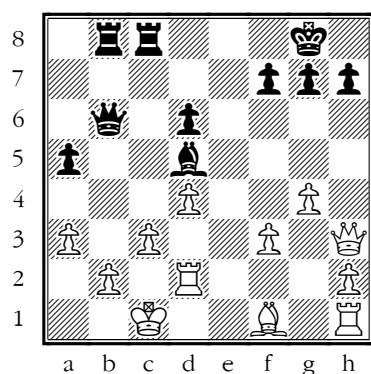
[22...Qb3! is awkward.]

23. Qh3 Be6

24. g4 Bd5

[24...Rxc3+!? 25.Qxc3 Rc8 picks up the Queen for two Rooks, but that's not a good swap for Black.]

25. f3?



White still has half his pieces in bed, and this cuts off the most important one from the game! Black has a big trick here which he misses for move after move...

25 ... Qb3

[25...Rxc3+! 26.Kd1 (26.Kb1 Qb3! wins) 26...Bxf3+ 27.Ke1 Rc1+ 28.Kf2 Bxb1]

26. Bd3 g6

[26...Rxc3+! is still good: 27.bxc3 Qxc3+ 28.Rc2 (28.Kd1 Bb3+ 29.Ke1 Re8+ 30.Be2 Qc1+) 28...Qxd3]

27. Qf1 Qb6

[27...Qa2!]

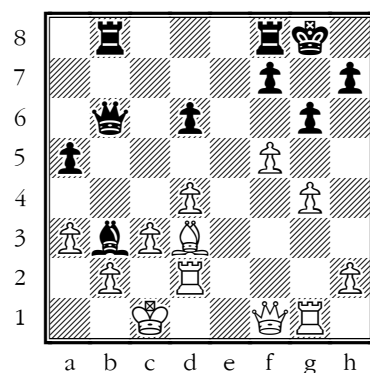
28. Rg1 Re8

29. f4

White is getting control of things again.

29 ... Bb3

30. f5 Rf8



31. fxc6?

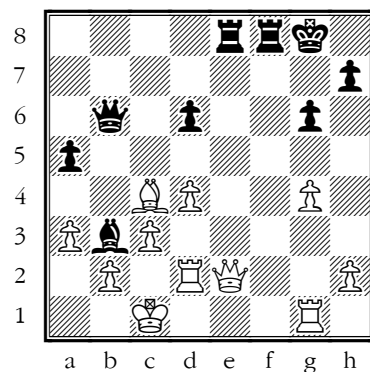
[31.f6! threatens Qf1-f4-b6, which will give Black some headaches even if he spots it.]

31 ... fxc6

32. Qe2 Rbe8

33. Bc4+?

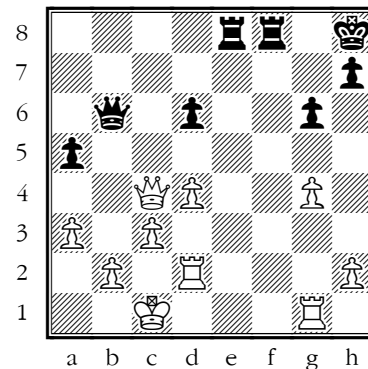
Unnecessary checks often lead to trouble...



33 ... Bxc4?

[33...d5! and White has two pieces hanging.]

34. Qxc4+ Kh8



35. b4?

Having survived Black's attack on the King, White shouldn't make any more weaknesses!

Have a calm think about how to win when you're ahead on material (the answer is: swap!).

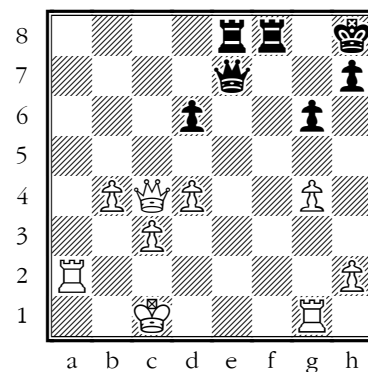
[So, 35.Re2! is the right approach.]

35 ... axb4

[35...Rc8! 36.Qb3 axb4 37.axb4 Rf3! and White is struggling]

36. axb4 Qa7

37. Ra2 Qe7



White just isn't coordinated...

38. d5?? Qe3+!

Loose Pieces Drop Off, says Mike Cook.

39. Kb2 Qxg1

40. Qd4+?

When you are losing, keep pieces on!

40 ... Qxd4

41. cxd4 Rf2+!

Black's got the idea.

42. Kb3 Rxa2

43. Kxa2 Re2+

[43...Kg7 44.Kb3 Kf6 45.b5 Ke7 46.b6 Kd7 47.Kb4 Kc8 is an easier win for Black: KUFTE! (King Up For The Endgame!)]

44. Kb3 Rxb2
45. b5

I will say, Chris, in the endgame you play with tremendous focus and energy to get a pawn home, and it's exactly the right gear-change to make. Sorry you didn't get a result this time, but it's good to watch!

45 ... Re2
46. b6 Re7
47. Kb4 Rb7
48. Kb5 Kg7
49. Kc6 Rb8
50. b7 Kf6
51. Kc7 Rxb7+
52. Kxb7 h5
53. Kc6 hxg4
54. Kxd6 g3
55. Kc6 g2
56. d6 g1Q
57. d7 Qc1+
58. Kd6 Qf4+
59. Kc6 Qe4+
60. Kc7 Qc2+
61. Kd6 Qh2+
62. Kc6 Qg2+

[62...Qb8 63.d5 Ke7]

63. Kc7 Qg3+
64. Kc6

[64.Kc8 still loses but leaves a threat.]

64 ... Ke7
65. d5 Qd6+
66. Kb5 Qxd7+
67. Kc5 Qd6+
68. Kd4 White resigns

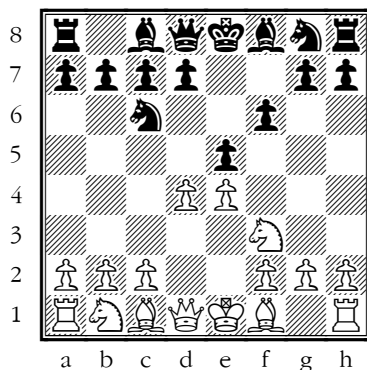
Opponent - Chris Clay

[C44] Scotch Game

Loose opening play meant that you were always worse in this game, but again I like the way you get into endgame gear. But remember, exchanges of

pieces are good for the winning side, they make it simpler to win. However, swap pawns whenever you can.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4 f6



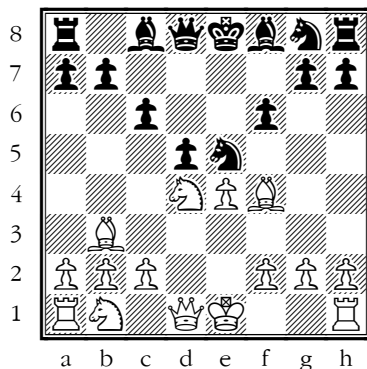
No, very unlikely to be the right move: it does nothing for development and weakens your king's-side.

[3...exd4! 4.Nxd4 (4.Bc4; 4.c3) 4...Bc5! 5.Be3 (5.Nxc6 Qf6!) 5...Qf6! 6.c3 Nge7]

4. Bc4 exd4?

Inconsistent: if you're going to spend time holding a strong point at e5, keep going!

5. Nxd4 Ne5
6. Bb3 c6
7. Bf4 d5?



This move looks right but you are too far behind in development for this to be safe. You could lose a pawn right away, and you do lose a pawn quite soon.

➡ The opening is a race to get your pieces out.

8. exd5?

[8.Bxe5 fxe5 9.Qh5+]

8 ... cxd5
9. O-O?

[9.Bxe5! fxe5 10.Qh5+ wins at least a pawn.]

9 ... Bg4
10. Qd2 g5
11. Bxe5 fxe5
12. Ba4+ Bd7

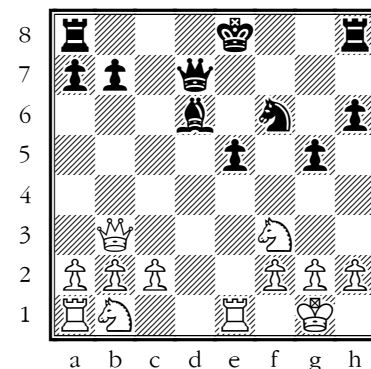
Natural, but drops a pawn.

[12...Kf7! might hold.]

13. Bxd7+ Qxd7
14. Re1 Bd6

[14...e4 15.c4]

15. Nf3 h6
16. Qxd5 Nf6
17. Qb3

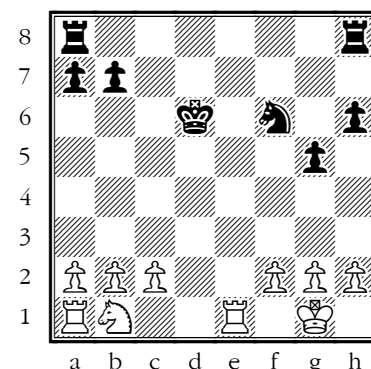


White finally has won his pawn. Now Black needs to make some trouble for his opponent, and to do that, he should avoid swapping off pieces.

17 ... Qc7

[17...O-O-O]

18. Qe6+ Qe7
19. Qxe7+ Kxe7
20. Nxe5 Bxe5
21. Rxe5+ Kd6
22. Re1



Two pawns down, Black needs to keep pieces on.

22 ... Rhe8?

23. Rxe8 Rxe8

24. Nc3 Ne4?

Still trying to swap off, still wrong!

25. Nxe4+

[25.Re1!]

25 ... Rxe4

26. f3 Re2!

Good! Half-way there.

27. Rd1+ Kc6

28. Rc1 b5

Good, try and swap pawns off.

29. h3 Re3?

Lets White escape from the bind.

[29...Rd2! 30.Kf1 a5 31.Ke1? Rxg2]

30. Kf2 Re5

31. Re1 Rc5

32. c3 a5

33. Re6+ Kd7

34. Rxh6 b4

35. cxb4 axb4

36. b3 Rc2+

37. Kg3 Rxa2

38. Rb6

That's a shame; you've been playing all the right moves so far.

38 ... Ra5

39. Rxb4 Kc6

40. Rg4 Rd5

41. h4 gxh4+

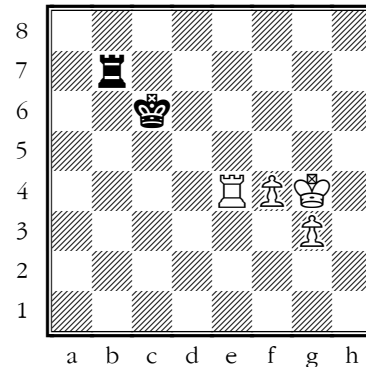
42. Rxh4 Rd3

43. Re4 Rxb3

44. Kg4 Rb5

45. g3 Rb7

46. f4



An interesting thing happened here: the Rook left b7 and landed on g6! So I haven't got all the rest of the moves written down properly!

46 ... Rg6+

47. Kf3 Kd5

48. g4 Re7??

☞ Don't swap pieces when you're losing!

49. Rxe7...

■ Jack Stephenson

Three crunching checkmates: I'm sorry that you were on the receiving end of one of them! Nothing very wrong with your game, but there are little things you can do to help yourself in the opening and middlegame.

♞ Jack Stephenson - Opponent

[C48] Four Knights' Game

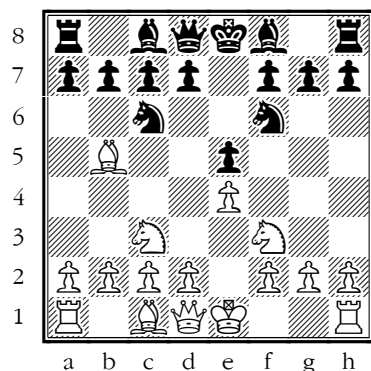
A game that swung backwards and forwards with a very neat finish. The finish tells me you can spot tactics when you look; some of the earlier play told me that you don't always look!

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 Nc6

3. Bb5 Nf6

4. Nc3



We've got from the Ruy Lopez to the Four Knights' Game, a much less interesting opening.

You can play 4.d4!? or 4.O-O! here without fear. Try it!

4 ... Bc5

[4...Bb4 is the normal move with a level game.;

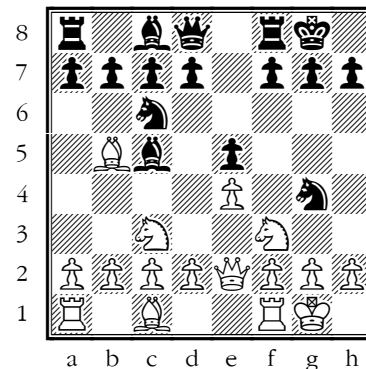
Black can try and make it more lively here by 4...Nd4! is a fun gambit 5.Nxd4 exd4 6.Nd5 Nxd5 7.exd5]

5. O-O

[5.Bxc6 dxc6 6.Nxe5 doesn't win a pawn: 6...Bxf2+ 7.Kxf2 Qd4+]

5 ... Ng4

6. Qe2 O-O



7. h3

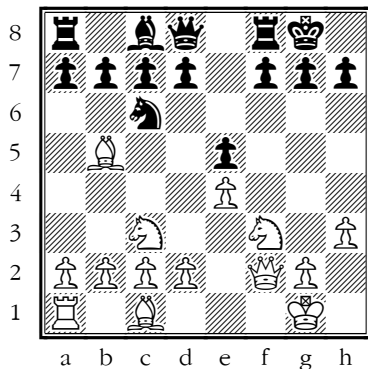
No need to waste a move with this: Black might take on f2 anyway!

7 ... Bxf2+

[7...Nf6 8.Bxc6 dxc6 9.Nxe5]

8. Rxf2 Nxf2

9. Qxf2

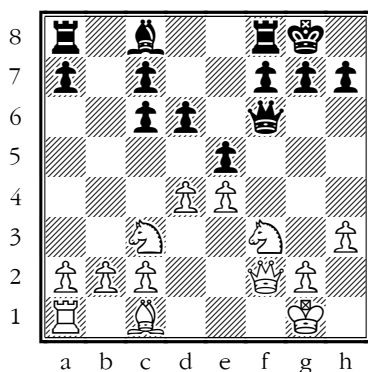


☛ It's usually a poor idea to give up two active pieces for Rook and Pawn; in the opening the pieces are more important.

9 ... d6
10. d4 Qf6

[10...exd4]

11. Bxc6 bxc6

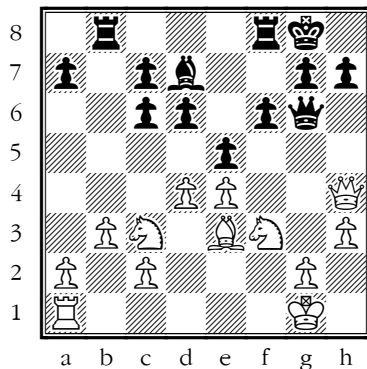


12. Bg5

[12.dxe5 dxe5 makes a real mess of Black's pawns, and they will be hard to defend.]

☛ If it doesn't help your opponent for other reasons, always take a chance to make a mess of their pawns.

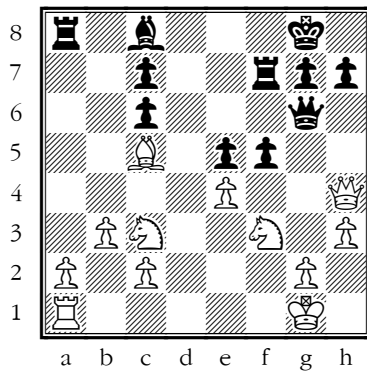
12 ... Qg6
13. Qh4 Rb8
14. b3 f6
15. Be3 Bd7



16. dxe5 dxe5

[16...fxe5 looks a little better, keeping the central pawns as a group, and threatening 17.Bxa7 Ra8 18.Be3 Rxf3!]

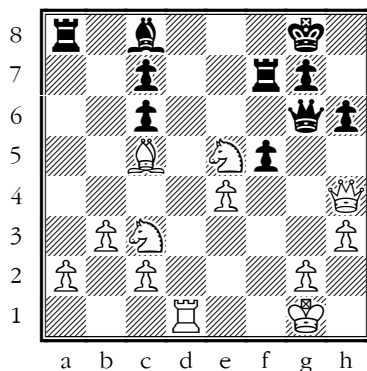
17. Bxa7 Ra8
18. Bc5 Rf7
19. Be3 Bc8
20. Bc5 f5??



21. Rd1

[21.Qd8+ Rf8 22.Qxf8#]

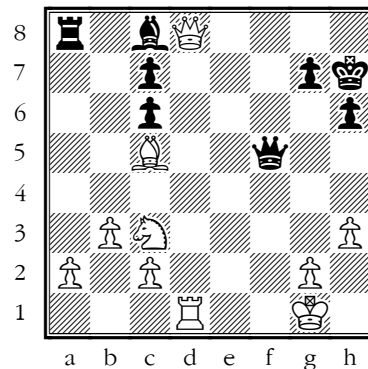
21 ... h6
22. Nxe5



22 ... Qe6

[22...Qf6 saves the Rook by a counter-attack on the Queen. 23.Rd8+ Kb7 24.Qxf6 Rxf6]

23. Qd8+ Kh7
24. Nxf7 Qxf7
25. exf5 Qxf5



☛ OK, you're winning, so you can and should change the way that you are playing. What's the easiest and safest way to win?

26. g4?

Pointless, a one-move attack which can be met with one move; it also happens to miss a winning idea for Black. If it didn't, it would still expose your King without good reason.

☛ You need a better game plan than, "attack something, and if it doesn't move, take it".

[26.Qd3! is the right idea, trying to swap off everything and win without giving Black the tiniest chance.]

26 ... Qxc5+

Getting two pieces for free!

27. Kf1 Qxc3

[27...Ba6+!#+]

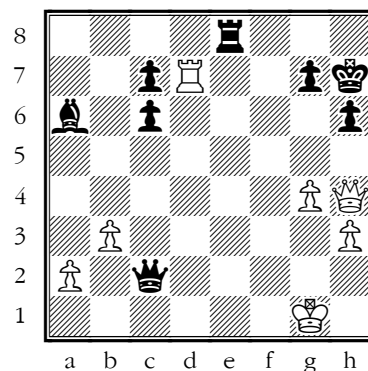
28. Qh4

[28.a4 Be6]

28 ... Ba6+

29. Kg1 Qxc2

30. Rd7 Re8



31. g5

Excellent, keep fighting!

31 ... Re4??

32. Qxh6+!

Not so easy to spot: well done!

32 ... Kg8

33. Qxg7#



Opponent - Jack Stephenson

[C55] Old Stodge

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Nc3

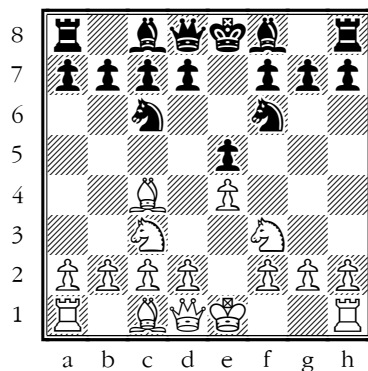
Yawn.

[3.Bb5; 3.Bc4; 3.d4]

3 ... Nf6

4. Bc4?

One of the worst moves in this position!



4 ... Bb4

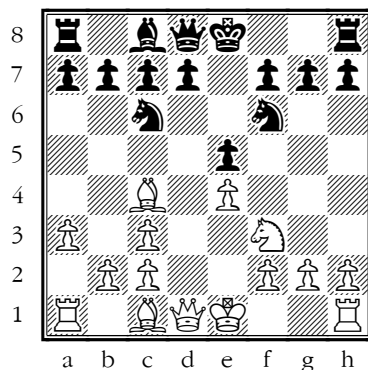
[4...Nxe4! 5.Nxe4 d5! equalises easily.]

5. a3?

Missing a point.

5 ... Bxc3

6. dxc3



6. ... O-O

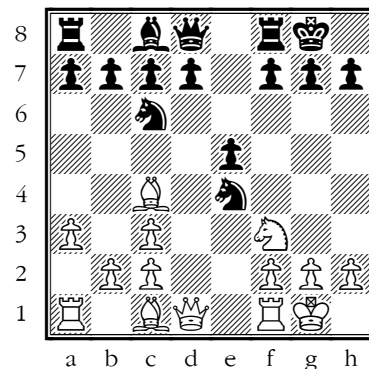
[6...Nxe4! 7.Qe2? d5! and Black is doing very well;

7.Bxf7+! Kxf7 8.Qd5+ Ke8
9.Qxe4 d5 is also fine for Black.]

7. O-O Nxe4

8. a4

[8.Re1!]



8 ... d5

This is usually a great idea but here it's just outnumbered.

[8...d6!]

9. Bxd5 Nf6

10. Bxc6 Qxd1

11. Rxd1 bxc6

12. Nxe5

Black is not doing well here but because of White's doubled c-pawns, not losing yet.

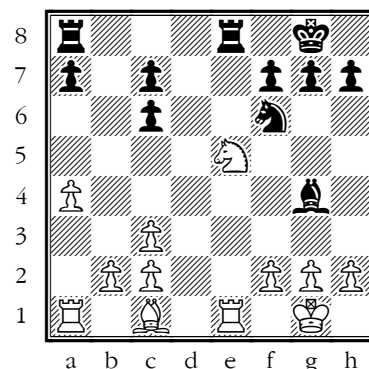
12 ... Bg4

[12...Bf5!]

13. Re1

[13.Nxg4 Nxg4 14.Bf4]

13 ... Rfe8



14. Nxc6?? Rxe1#

Well spotted!



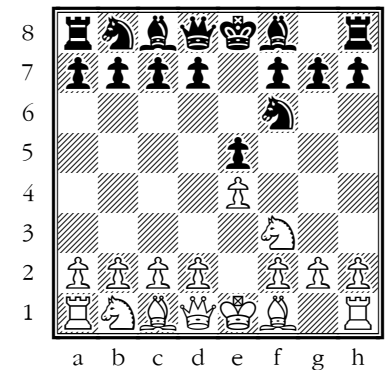
Jack Stephenson - Opponent

[C48] Four Knights' Game

You were doing fine in this short game until you trod on a banana skin. Look for the point of your opponent's moves!

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 Nf6



3. Nc3

Dull, try something else!

☞ You have to put pressure on your opponent if you want them to make mistakes.

[3.d4 Nxe4 4.Bd3 d5 5.Nxe5;

3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.d4 d5 6.Bd3]

3 ... Nc6

4. Bb5 d6

Tame.

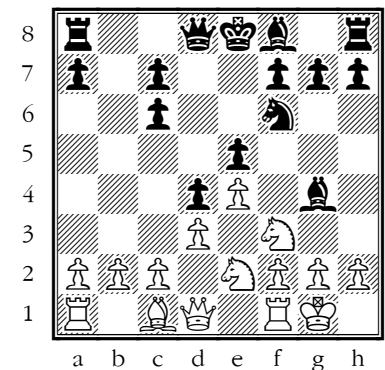
[4...Bb4!; 4...Nd4!]

5. Bxc6+ bxc6

6. O-O d5?

7. d3 d4

8. Ne2 Bg4?



9. Nxe5! Qd6

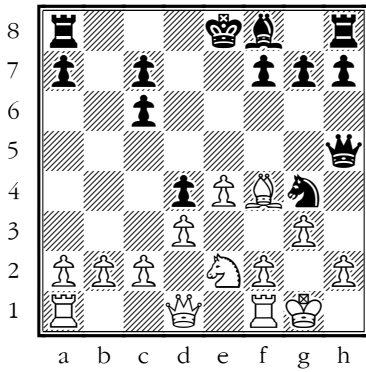
10. Nxg4 Nxg4

11. g3 Qe5

12. Bf4

[12.b3!? was likely to end all that, although Black might try 12...b5 13.bxg4 hxg4 with the idea of arranging ...Qb4]

12 ... Qh5



The next bit is a shame.

☞ What's the point of my opponent's last move? Do they have any threats?

13. Nxd4

[13.b4]

13 ... Qxh2#

■ **All the tips:**

Improve the position of your worst-placed piece. . 6	Every move in the opening should help you achieve one of your aims: Get your pieces out, get castled, get a stake in the centre... .. 29
Get your pieces working for you!..... 6	Always ask yourself: what was the point of my opponent's last move? Do they have any threats?30
As a rule, as Black against 1.d4 you need to get a pawn break in, (either ...e5 or ...c5), to challenge White's centre and open a file for the Rooks..... 15	When you're winning, you should stop for a moment and work out what you should be doing, which is being brutal and simple, not making any complications. 30
If you decline the Queen's Gambit, you should support your central d5 pawn with another pawn.15	Unnecessary checks often lead to trouble..... 31
Every move, look at every check and every capture, even daft-looking ones 15	Some sacrifices really don't work so don't decline 'on principle'; if you sit and work out an escape, the fastest way for you to win is take it and run! . 32
If ever you find yourself reaching for your a-pawn, you probably have a better idea available!..... 15	Don't reach for a pawn when you can activate a piece. 37
Loose (undefended) pieces can often be the target of a tactic. 16	What is the idea behind your opponent's last move? Is there a threat?..... 38
The hardest tactics to spot are discoveries – so get your eye in before you get a surprise! 16	It's not over until it's over! 39
Exchanges are usually better for one side or another; when you swap, make sure it's you!..... 16	If you open up the position when you are behind in development, that means your opponent will have lots of open lines to attack you along! 39
A passed Pawn is a deadly weapon in a Queen endgame! 16	I do hate to see these fiddly pawn moves on the edges; the centre is where the game is won and lost! 43
Symmetrical positions are equal until one side can't (or won't) copy the other; castling opposite sides will always create tension. 17	As usual, this little move with a Rook's pawn shouts "I've run out of ideas". 44
Nearly every exchange favours one player or other, so think before you swap. 19	Unnecessary checks often lead to trouble..... 45
When I see a single step forward by a rook's pawn, I usually think this is code for, "I've run out of ideas". 20	Have a calm think about how to win when you're ahead on material (the answer is: swap!)..... 45
These Four Knights'/Old Stodge positions don't have much meat in them if both sides know how to handle the possible pins..... 20	Loose Pieces Drop Off, says Mike Cook. 45
A loose piece and a discovered attack add up to a tactic 21	When you are losing, keep pieces on! 45
Ordinary moves aren't enough for White in the French Defence; the pawn centre comes under a lot of pressure. 22	The opening is a race to get your pieces out. 46
In the opening, when you have a choice between a pawn move and a piece move, I'd go for the piece move 22	Don't swap pieces when you're losing! 47
Try and spot your opponent's threats before they arrive on the board - you may not have a defence!23	It's usually a poor idea to give up two active pieces for Rook and Pawn; in the opening the pieces are more important. 48
In most positions, there are pieces you want to keep and some you want to swap. So don't help your opponent by getting rid of their problem pieces! 25	If it doesn't help your opponent for other reasons, always take a chance to make a mess of their pawns. 48
Two pieces usually do better than a single Rook. 26	OK, you're winning, so you can and should change the way that you are playing. What's the easiest and safest way to win? 48
Look for danger signs in every position..... 27	You need a better game plan than, "attack something, and if it doesn't move, take it". 48
In the Orthodox Queen's Gambit with ...e6, Black needs to play ...c5 or ...e5 at some point, to hit back at White's centre and make an open file for the Rooks. 28	You have to put pressure on your opponent if you want them to make mistakes..... 49
	What's the point of my opponent's last move? Do they have any threats?..... 50