

West Of England & South Wales Team Tournament 2014

Cardiff, Saturday 29th March 2014

I hope you still remember the games! I've given each of the games a quick run-through, and made some overall comments. Three games (or fragments!) is not a lot to go on, so if you think I have got things wrong when talking about your chess, you may know better than me.

This booklet is in two parts: general advice pulled from all the games, and then going through each player in turn. This took me AGES – but that's because the games were so hard, because they were so good. It took me a long while to work out what was going on in some of them – I still don't understand a couple of points!

Many things I have had to complain about in every single year previously (Old Stodge, Dreadful Little Rook's Pawn Moves) were completely missing from your games – fantastic!

Do read the comments on other player's games; I've usually put a diagram before important ideas, so you don't need to play over the games. Although, if you do want to go over the games, I have put them on the Exeter Junior Chess Club blog.

Look especially all the tips which look like this:

▶ Something everyone should know.

For example:

▶ **A combination of a bit more opening science and a little more tactical skill would have produced better results all round.**

And if you don't know how to acquire either of those, please ask! (or see the [notes from the U14 training day](#)).

Getting better

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!).

Make sure you put your nose in a book of tactics puzzles or the **Chess Tactics Server** online at chess.emerald.net.

Also, if there are other games of yours that you would like some feedback on, let me know.

Dave Regis, April 2014

If you want me to explain any more about what I've said, please feel free to ring on 01392 431 785 or email me at chessnut@bluevonder.co.uk

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I've got a bunch of stuff for young people on the Internet at: www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/juniors (especially the [notes from the U14 training day](#))

There is more stuff for players of any age at: www.exeterchessclub.org.uk/index

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://exeterchessclub.org.uk/content/devon-u14-chess-team>

That page also has some sort of index to topics.

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

I hope you all continue to enjoy the game and thrive in the future.

Just the facts...

U14	Name	Grade	Welsh	RI	Opp	col	R2	Opp	col	R3	Opp	col	Total
1	Theo Slade	173	2034	1	161	w	1	155	b	1	142	b	3
2	Reece Whittington	119	1602	1	155	w	1	142	w	0	153	b	
3	Vignesh Ramesh	114	1562	1	1100	b	1	130	b	1	125	w	3
4	Nicky Bacon	111	1538	1	135	b	1	105	w	1	130	w	3
5	Jim Knott	108	1514	0	1600	b	0			1	88	w	
6	Edmund Kelly	104	1482	1	1386	w	1/2	1554	b	1/2	118	w	
7	Taylor Finch	90	1370	1		b	1		w	1		b	3
8	Jack Bellamy			0		w	1/2	1329	w	1	1016	b	
9	Leif Hafstad	96	1418	1	954	b	1			1	1069	b	3
10	(rotated)			0			1			1			
	Nandaja Narayanan	92	1386	0		b	1	941	b	1		w	
	James Milne	88	1354	1	def	-	1	1069	w	1	941	w	3
	Ben Sturt	77	1266	1		w	1	850	b	1/2			
	Round score			7			8			8 1/2			
	Overall score			7			15			23 1/2			
	Position			1 st			1 st			1 st			

Well done! We won the Eustis U14 cup for the first time since 2006, and did so with a thumping score.

The Welsh were very sporting to spread their considerable strength over two teams (Glamorgan and Gwent) so we stood a much better chance this year, but I was enormously pleased with the eventual score (23 1/2) and the style of our victory. I think our boards 2, 3 and 4 were outgraded in every game, and yet over 9 games the dropped just one point between them - fantastic results!

Special congratulations are due to Theo, Vignesh, Nicky, Taylor, Leif and James, who all scored 3 points (James on his birthday!). I was also really pleased with Round 2, where I thought we were clearly losing in four games (you know who you are...) but out of those four games we scored 3 1/2 points! I mean, any fool can win a won game, but to win a lost one takes a bit extra.

So, win or lose, thanks to everyone for turning out, and thanks very much also to all mums and dads (and others!) for their support and organisation.

N.B.

Welsh chess uses a four-figure rating system. In fact, they're not odd in doing this, quite the opposite – everyone in the world uses a four-figure system apart from the English. A rough Welsh-to-English Grade conversion is:

2000	169	1600	119	1200	69
1900	156	1500	106	1100	56
1800	144	1400	94	1000	44
1700	131	1300	81	900	31

I've given you all a rough Welsh equivalent of your English grade above, and added the opponent's English grade or Welsh rating as far as I know them.

Some general principles to look out for below

► Chess is a game of mistakes

If you both play without mistakes, there will be a draw (I believe)

So, first of all, you should try to avoid mistakes

"Avoidance of mistakes is the beginning, as it is the end, of mastery in chess." - Eugene Znosko-Borovsky

► OK, so how do you do that?

- You need to know your stuff (openings and endgames)
- You need to check your moves (we talked a lot about that on the U14 training day)
- You must spot your opponent's mistakes (that too)
- You need to be in practice – either by playing regularly, or practising at home, or both

"The winner of a game of chess is the one who makes the next-to-last mistake." – Tartakower

There is a less obvious principle that you should use:

► Put pressure on your opponent so they make mistakes

You can wait for a mistake to turn up, but do try to set your opponent problems. Ask a question, and they might get the answer wrong. Don't make their life easy!

So, do things with your moves that do a bit more than get your pieces out – play with a plan.

This is the positive side of playing with a purpose.

A complementary idea:

► Playing Safe is Dangerous

If you let your opponent build up threats or carry out their plan without interference, you will probably lose.

They will make threats, and maybe you will find that by the time a threat arrives, you can't do anything about it. (Ramesh–Choo-yin)

Also, if you make a mistake in defence, it might be fatal. (Wang–Whittington)

You must create some sort of play for yourself

If you have active play, it will distract your opponent from carrying out their plan

- Sometimes you make a threat they have to meet on the board
- Sometimes you make them confused and worried

Often, if you have active play, you will do both!

Sometimes, you just have to sit and suffer, but I urge you always to look for active counterplay.

"Errors have nothing to do with luck; they are caused by time pressure, discomfort or unfamiliarity with a position, distractions, feelings of intimidation, nervous tension, overambition, excessive caution, and dozens of other psychological factors." - Pal Benkö

► Fair exchanges rarely are

Nearly always, a swap of pieces or pawns will be better for one side or the other – maybe only a little, but still, make sure that any swaps you agree to are better for you!

We did see lots of swaps that one side should have never agreed to, or even thought about! (Kelly–Fowler, Kett–Hafstad)

You should always have an idea about whether you want to swap pieces (in general) or get rid of particular pairs of pieces.

"The mistakes are all there, waiting to be made." -- Tartakower

All the Tips

If you aren't sure what some of these mean, have a look at the positions in the game, and if you still aren't sure, ask!

- ▶ A combination of a bit more opening science and a little more tactical skill would have produced better results all round. ... 1
- ▶ Chess is a game of mistakes..... 3
- ▶ OK, so how do you do that?..... 3
- ▶ Put pressure on your opponent so they make mistakes.. 3
- ▶ Playing Safe is Dangerous 3
- ▶ Fair exchanges rarely are..... 3
- ▶ Learn how to dodge the Stodge! (See Nandaja's second game as Black!) 5
- ▶ Pawns are the soul of the game, said Philidor 10
- ▶ Even if you can quickly see a good move, have a quick check for something better..... 12
- ▶ You must use your King actively in the endgame..... 13
- ▶ Top tip: don't take your 'phone into the playing room! ... 14
- ▶ You should have a definite system worked out for meeting all the usual openings and defences that you will meet..... 16
- ▶ It's often a good idea to make such a Bishop choose a diagonal: 16
- ▶ If you are worse, it's OK (if unpleasant) just to defend; if you are losing, you have to make trouble to get a mistake out of your opponent. 18
- ▶ If you castle before your opponent does, be careful that you are not vulnerable to a snap attack. That especially applies in positions with a closed centre..... 19
- ▶ Playing safe is dangerous!..... 19
- ▶ Keep pawns on the opposite coloured squares to your lone Bishop one, look carefully at the position! 19
- ▶ Playing safe, as usual, is dangerous..... 20
- ▶ Always look for counterplay – even if you still stand worse, you are more likely to force a mistake from your opponent than if you lie down and wait to be murdered in your bed..... 20
- ▶ Castle early and often! 21
- ▶ Terrible things befall uncastled kings..... 21
- ▶ An attack on the wing is often well-met by a blow in the centre 22
- ▶ If you leave your opponent alone until they can hit you, you may get hit! 23
- ▶ An attack on the wing is again well-met by a blow in the centre 23
- ▶ Zugzwang is a powerful weapon in Pawn endings..... 26
- ▶ Look at every check and every capture, every move! 27
- ▶ Chess is a team game! 28
- ▶ Point all your team at the weakest point in the opponent's position 28
- ▶ Pawns are the soul of the game, said Philidor 28
- ▶ But you should assume that 'fair exchange' is never equal, and ask, who does it benefit? 29
- ▶ Don't make lots of pawn moves in the opening 30
- ▶ When you put all your pawns on the same colour squares, you will struggle to keep out your opponent from the holes between, 30
- ▶ Keep pieces on when you're losing: if you're not going to lose, you have to make your opponent make a mistake, and you can't do that without any pieces left!..... 31
- ▶ Swaps are always better for one side or the other, so don't make them unless you know who!..... 32
- ▶ Swapping pieces is good for the side ahead on material. . 33
- ▶ Don't accept a passive position if you don't have to..... 34
- ▶ One weakness means you have to defend, while two weaknesses are usually enough to lose..... 35
- ▶ Exchanges usually favour one side or the other – so make sure it's better for you to swap 35
- ▶ Don't help your opponent! As well as knowing what you are trying to do in a given position, you should have a good idea about what your opponent is trying to do..... 35
- ▶ Look at every check, and every capture, every move! 36
- ▶ Gang up on a weakness. 36
- ▶ You mustn't swap your way to defeat in the endgame.... 37
- ▶ Avoid pawn moves in the opening, unless you need them to develop a piece. 37
- ▶ The more pieces you have, the better!..... 38
- ▶ If you block a check, you are in a pin! 38
- ▶ Become an expert in the openings you play most often.. 40
- ▶ Moving a piece twice in the opening needs a good excuse! 40
- ▶ So, even if you know lots about tactics, you have to practice them at home, if you don't play very often. 41
- ▶ Loose pieces drop off..... 41
- ▶ I always say, think about your opponent's best reply... If there isn't one, look carefully at the position! 42
- ▶ Use all your pieces 43
- ▶ Swaps are usually good when you are pawns ahead..... 43
- ▶ Every player should know how to play IQP positions from both sides 46
- ▶ All your moves should fit in with your game plan (and not your opponent's game plan!) 46
- ▶ Doubled, isolated and backward pawns are weak – avoid them! 47
- ▶ Swap pieces when you are ahead, pawns when you are behind. 47
- ▶ Do learn the common tricks in the openings you play..... 48
- ▶ Dodge the Stodge! 48
- ▶ Playing safe is still dangerous..... 51
- ▶ Endgames with just pawns and opposite-coloured Bishops are drawish, because there will be some squares you can never control. 52
- ▶ There are some basic endgames everyone should know. 53
- ▶ Open lines towards the uncastled King for your Rooks.. 56
- ▶ Swap off pieces to drain the opponent's attack of energy 56
- ▶ Look at every check and capture, they say, and especially moves that are both! 57
- ▶ Usually, you want to leave the c-pawn free to move in d-pawn openings. 58
- ▶ Listen to your pieces! Are they happy where they are? . 59

Openings advice

Openings index

These are the openings you actually played:

[D35: Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation]	11	[C01: French Defence, Exchange Variation]	36
[C01: French Defence, Exchange Variation, Modern system].....	14	[B22: Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation]	37
[E19: Queen's Indian Defence, Fianchetto Variation]	14	[C02: French Defence, Advance Variation].....	38
[E94: King's Indian Defence, Classical Variation]	16	[C30: King's Gambit Declined]	39
[D58: Queen's Gambit Declined, Rubinstein Variation]	18	[C30: King's Gambit Declined]	41
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[B56: Sicilian Defence, Scheveningen Variation].....	23	[C44: Ponziani Opening].....	47
[B15: Caro-Kann Defence, Two Knights' Variation].....	25	[C50: Old Stodge]	48
[E61: King's Indian Defence, Smyslov Variation]	26	[D00: Blackmar-Diemer Gambit]	49
[B14: Caro-Kann Defence, Panov-Botvinnik Variation]	28	[D94: Slav Defence, Schlechter Variation].....	51
[B40: Sicilian Defence, Irregular Variation].....	30	[D06: Queen's Gambit, Marshall Variation]	53
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[B32: Sicilian Defence, Maròczy Bind]	34	[D02: London System].....	57
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The most common openings were:

French Defence	5
Sicilian Defence	4
Queen's Gambits	4
Indian Defences	3
Scotch Game	2
Two Knights' Defence	2

- Great to see Devon players using the Two Knights', French and Sicilian – all fine counter-attacking defences that will make White tremble!
- Also great to see so few Old Stodges – last year it was the most common opening of all! And it wasn't our fault that White wanted to play one.

► Learn how to dodge the Stodge! (See Nandaja's second game as Black!)

- And nice to see some unusual systems to worry your opponents – Bishop's Opening, King's Gambit, Blackmar-Diemer – none of which are easy to meet!

A bird's eye view of the openings:

I hope I've got these right!

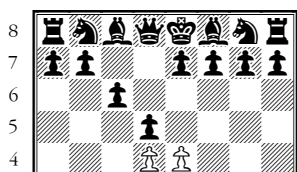
		<u>Main White System</u>	<u>White vs odds</u>	<i>Black vs. 1.e4</i>	<i>Black vs. 1.d4</i>
1	Theo Slade	Queen's Gambit	Trompowsky	French	Nimzo/Queen's
2	Reece Whittington	Queen's Gambit	Bg5 systems?	French Defence	Grünfeld
3	Vignesh Ramesh	Ponziani	Main lines?	Two Knights'	Tarrasch
4	Nicky Bacon	Queen's Gambit	Bg5 systems?	Caro-Kann	
5	Jim Knott	Scotch Gambit		Sicilian Defence	
6	Edmund Kelly	Scotch Game	IQP systems	Sicilian Scheveningen	slav Defence
7	Taylor Finch	Scotch Gambit	IQP systems	French Defence	
8	Jack Bellamy	Bishop's Opening		French Defence	
9	Leif Hafstad	Scotch Game	IQP systems	French Defence	
10	Nandaja Narayanan	Blackmar-Diemer Gambit		Two Knights'	
Res	James Milne	Queen's Gambit			
Res	Benjamin Sturt	Bishop's Opening			

Last year I described some systems that you can play against all Queen's-side openings.
 This year I want to describe some systems to play against all the half-open defences to 1.e4.



French Defence

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5



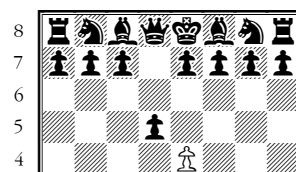
Caro-Kann Defence

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5



Sicilian Defence

1.e4 c5



Scandinavian Defence

1.e4 d5

I recommend steering for an IQP centre against these systems – that way, you are always playing the same sort of game, then you become a fearsome expert!

French Defence, Modern Exchange Variation

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.c4

Caro-Kann Defence, Panov-Botvinnik Attack

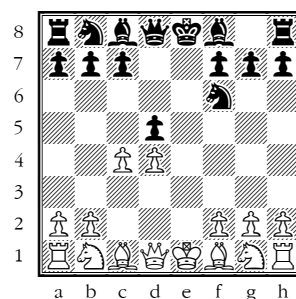
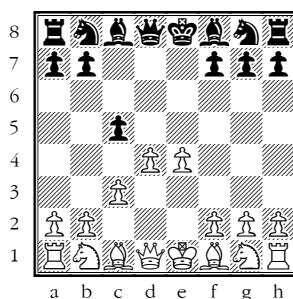
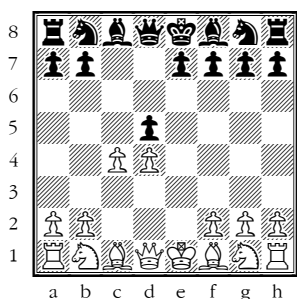
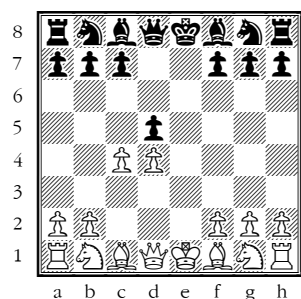
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4

Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

1.e4 c5 2.c3 and 3/4 d4

Scandinavian Defence, Gambit Declined

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.c4



How do you play IQP centres? See the next section!

I've written about some of your chosen openings before, and don't want to repeat myself or copy big chunks of these old booklets. So, check out these (click blue links to read):

Index to writing about opening lines in old booklets:

- 2004 2 pages on Old Stodge (yeuch), 1 page each on the Sicilian Defence, French Defence, Queen's Gambit, ½ pages on the Queen's Pawn Game, King's Gambit, Scotch, Stonewall Attack
- 2005 A paragraph on several openings, a bit more on the QGD Exchange
- 2006 Just a paragraph on several openings
- 2007 Old Stodge (again!), 2 pages on Ruy Lopez
- 2008 2 pages on Queen's Gambit (1 pages on the French Defence, Sicilian Defence, Four Knights, Stonewall Attack)
- 2009 Just a paragraph on several openings
- 2010 Just a paragraph on several openings
- 2011 Old Stodge (oh no, not again...!), Petroff and Philidor Defences
- 2012 Bishop's Opening, Caro-Kann and King's Indian
- 2013 Scandinavian, Danish, QGA, Slav, Colle, Hypermodern systems (Grünfeld, Réti)
- 2014 Blackmar-Diemer Gambit

Blackmar–Diemer Gambit

This is how it starts:

1.d4 d5

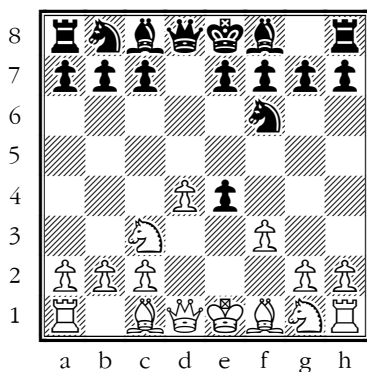
2.e4 dxe4

Now, White intends to gambit a pawn with f2-f3, but right now 3.f3? e5!, so

3.Nc3! Nf6

4.f3

Now 4...e5 is not so good.



Now

4...exf3

5.Nxf3

gives Black a certain extra pawn but an uncertain future. White gets fast development and open lines.

Master-level players, who know how to defend, are pretty scornful of White's idea here, but even strong players can get blown away by White's natural attack.

Here's a game between two juniors graded over 200 each:

5...e6

6.Bg5 Be7

7.Bd3 Nbd7

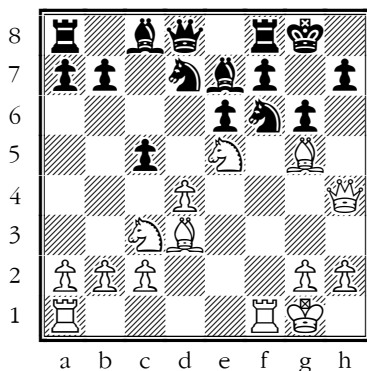
8.0-0 0-0

9.Qe1 c5

10.Qh4 g6

11.Ne5

All White's moves are easy to understand. Now Black overlooks something important...



11...Re8??

12.Nxf7! Qc7

(12...Kxf7 13.Qxh7+ Kf8 14.Bh6#)

13.Bxg6 hxg6

14.Qh8+ Kxf7

15.Qh7+ Kf8

16.Bh6# 1-0

Houska,M (2364)-Moskovic,D (2260)
Witley 1999

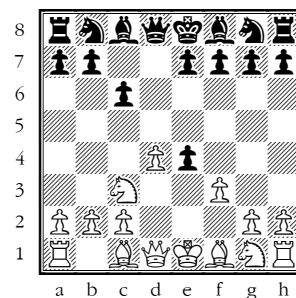
There are some related ideas that 1.e4 players can use against half-open defences.

Caro-Kann Defence

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.f3!?

As above, 4...e5! is awkward to meet, so try:

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Bc4! Nf6 5.f3!?



Scandinavian Defence

1.e4 d5 2.d4 dxe4 transposes

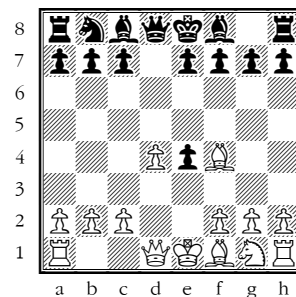
Alekhin Defence

1.e4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d5 3.e4!? dxe4 4.f3

transposes.

With this move order, Black has another option, taking on e4 with the Knight:

3...Nxe4 4.Nxe4 dxe4 5.Bf4 (as usual, trying to avoid ...e5) or **5.Bc4**

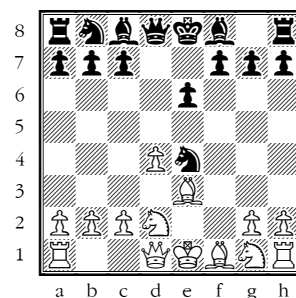


French Defence

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Be3 dxe4 4.Nd2 Nf6 5.f3

The French version seems to me the worst of the three (5...Nd5!), although I remember losing a horrible miniature against Gerry Jepps after

4.f3 Nf6 5.fxe4! Nxe4 6.Nd2



Middlegames

Middlegame: Tactics

I think every single game had at least one moment where a player was given a huge chance to get ahead – winning a piece or something. And they didn't always take these chances!

I've marked them in the games with a → symbol, so you can use this book as a training test.

If you aren't sure about some of these, have a look at the games, and if you still aren't sure, ask me!

This year, I've also put in some CLUES that should have told the players something was about.

→ TACTIC: fork 12	→ Clue: weak back rank..... 31	→ Clues: undefended N, exposed K.....
→ Tactic: pin 16	→ Tactic: discovered attack... 32	→ Tactic: discovered attack... 42
→ Tactic: discovered attack... 16	→ Clues: exposed K, only-just-defended P.....	→ Clues: undefended Q, pieces in a line.....
→ Tactic: undermining..... 19	→ Tactic: fork 35	→ Tactic: discovered attack... 42
→ Tactic: pin 20	→ Clue: undefended P..... 35	→ Tactic: take a more important piece.....
→ Tactic: fork 20	→ Tactic: pin 37	→ Tactic: pin 46
→ Tactic: net 21	→ Tactic: discovery 38	→ Tactic: net 47
→ Tactic: net 26	→ Clues: only-just-defended Bb5, discovered	→ Clue: Bc4 had no retreat... 47
→ Tactic: outnumbered..... 27	attack from Bd7 38	→ Tactic: fork 47
→ Tactic: discovered attack... 28	→ Tactic: fork 39	→ Tactic: fork 52
→ Tactic: outnumbered..... 28	→ Clue: uncastled K 39	→ Tactic: overloading 55
→ Tactics: forks, discovered attack.....	→ Tactic: fork 29 40	→ Tactic: take a more important piece.....
→ Tactic: Skewer 30	→ Clue: undefended Rg7 and Ra1.....	→ Tactic: discovered attack... 57
→ Clue: K & Q in a line..... 30	→ Tactic: discovered attack (on f2).....	→ Clue: undefended Pd5..... 57
→ Tactic: fork 30	→ Clue: exposed K 40	
→ Tactic: overloaded 31	→ Tactic: Fork 41	

You can see how common forks are, but these aren't just Knight forks, they are also forks with every other piece, including Pawns!

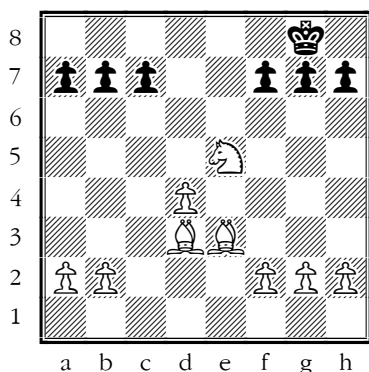
- See how many tactics have a CLUE in the position just before – an unsafe King or a loose piece
- See how many tactics could have been found (or avoided!) by doing the look-before-you-leap safety checks – looking for possible checks, captures or threats in reply to your chosen move

Pawns – the soul of chess

Pawns are worth less than other pieces, and they can move only forwards, but they can't take backwards. This means that the middle of the board often gets occupied by pawns butting heads, and nothing can get through them, they have to go around. If a pawn attacks a piece, it has to move. This means that the best squares for your pieces, and the best side for you to get your pieces to, will be determined by pawns. You can see this in several of the games below.

Pawns are good at keeping pieces out, and a wall of pawns is your best defence. But if you get holes in the wall, or the wall gets messed up in some way, then again, your pieces suddenly know where they belong. So, weak pawns and weak squares make a big difference to how the game goes.

You get to know different pawn formations like you get to know your openings and endgames. I particularly recommend that you learn how to play Isolated Queen's Pawn openings for both sides, as they turn up a lot, and you can often aim for them. If you are an expert in them, you can win a lot of games without having to work out what to do.

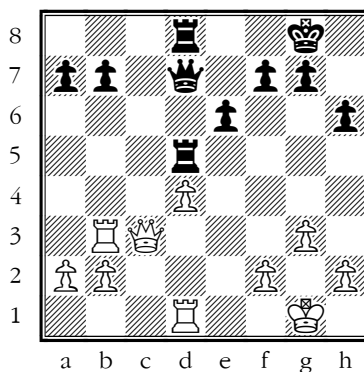


If you have an IQP, so what?

- you have more space, so you can move about and attack more quickly, so don't agree to swaps, leave the pieces on
- the pawn has to be defended by pieces, so leave enough pieces on that the pawn is defended and you are still free to attack
- you have an outpost of sorts on e5: a Knight there can be driven away, but Black won't enjoy playing ...f7-f6
- you will have a better and worse Bishop: the B on the same colour square as the P may end up defending it, while the other is free to attack
- if you have only one piece each in an endgame, it's going to be rough for you – for example, if your last piece is the Bd3, you can't defend the Pd4, but if it's the Be3, then you have to defend the Pd4! Endgames are to be avoided.

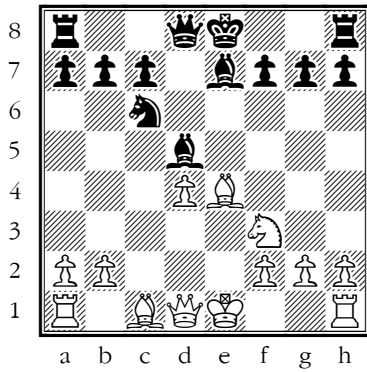
If your opponent has the IQP:

- you should restrain or blockade the pawn in case it advances.
- you have a target to aim at.
- you have less space and should seek exchanges.
- the weakness of the IQP will get worse in the endgame, so you should seek exchanges



This is Kortchnoi-Karpov 1981; Black won by creating more weaknesses

We had a couple of really interesting moments in one of Leif's games, where two possible IQP positions could have been reached.

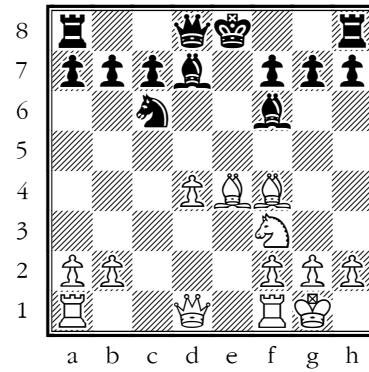


This is a poor IQP position for White.

White is behind in development, so there is no attack, but Black is getting in some swaps, with good prospects of showing the d-pawn to be weak.

Black will try to swap pieces off, especially White's good Be4.

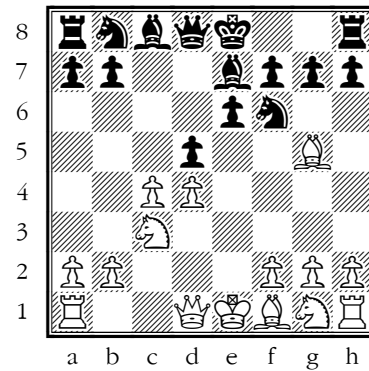
Similarly, in one of Nicky's games, the players faced the choice for several moves, about whether to allow or prevent the formation of an IQP position.



This is a good IQP position for White!

White is ahead in development and the d-pawn is not blocked or weak, yet can gain more space with d4-d5

White will try to move pieces over to attack the black King.



The tension between the pawns on c4 and d5 can be resolved either by the moves ...d5xc4 or c4-c5. Both sides ignore their chances to make these moves!

Pawns are the soul of the game, said Philidor

The Games

Some comments below are made with punctuation:

! Good move **?! Tricky or interesting move**

? Poor move **?! Dodgy or risky move**

I showed the games to Fritz, the chess computer programme, and some of its suggestions are included. If you see a move in brackets without any sort of comment, it's probably one from Fritz. [TJP] means a comment from Tim Paulden.

You might not agree, but it's worth a think!

There are also some evaluations done as symbols. So, = means an equal position (and not a draw offer).

± **A little better for White** ± **Definitely better for White** + **White is winning**

∓ **A little better for Black** ∓ **Definitely better for Black** - **Black is winning**

Again, you might not agree!

Smaller blue/grey diagrams mean this is a position that could have happened, but didn't appear in the actual game.

Board 1: Theo Slade

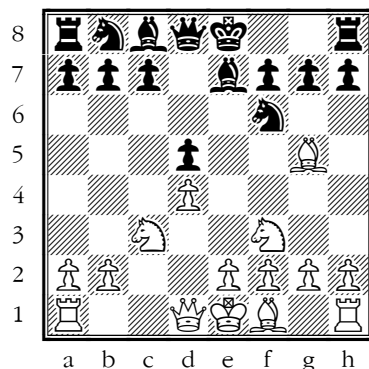
Three wins against three strong players – well done! I think you outgraded your opponents on paper, but the two games that got out of the opening were tough throughout. As you might expect, analysing rapidplay games throws up some improvements for both sides, but there is very little for me to complain about! ”

1.1 Slade, Theo – Bennett, Rhys

[D35: Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation]

White's logical pressure cost Black time on the clock, and it's hard to know what was most important during the game. The game is full of interest throughout.”

1. **d4** **d5**
2. **Nf3** **Nf6**
3. **c4** **e6**
4. **Nc3** **Be7**
5. **cxd5** **exd5**
6. **Bg5**



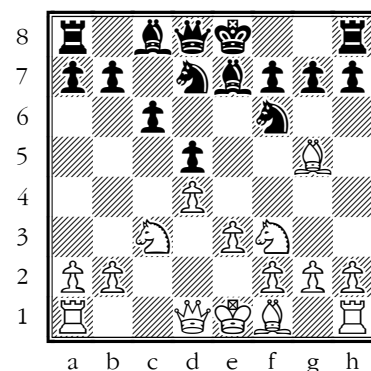
6 ... **Nbd7?!**

It probably doesn't matter, but Black might want to move the Bc8, so should give themselves the chance.

[6...c6! 7.e3? (7.Qc2!) and now Black can develop with 7...Bf5! =;

6...0-0=]

7. **e3** **c6**



8. **Bd3**

Maybe 8.Qc2 is more accurate (and, as we just saw, might have to be played to stop ...Bf5, with equality).

Sometimes ...Nxe4 is best met with Nxe4, but with a B on d3 that costs a piece

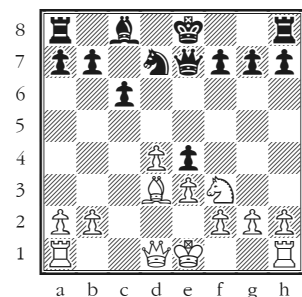
Sometimes Nxd5 will pick up the Bishop on c8 or the Queen after Bc7.

Perhaps it all comes to the same thing in the end, but I suspect that Qc2 keeps more options open.

8 ... **Nh5?!**

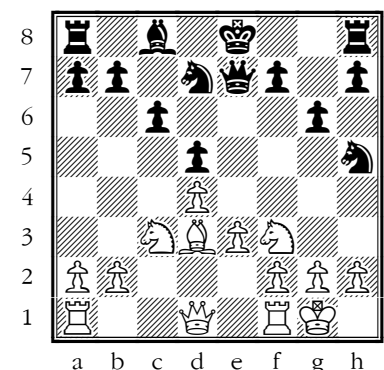
[That's an alternative way of seeking exchanges to the usual ...Ne4. Maybe Black can make use of it by playing ...f5-f4.]

[Just to see the difference that Bd3 can make to your options: 8...Ne4 9.Bxe7 Qxe7 10.Nxe4 dxe4



Oops!

9. **Bxe7** **Qxe7**
10. **0-0** **g6?!**



As Theo knows very well, the most common method of handling these Queen's-Gambit-

Exchange positions is to push the b-pawn, but the next move shows some fresh thought. It takes advantage of Black's disorganised pieces and uncastled King.

▶ Even if you can quickly see a good move, have a quick check for something better.

[10...0-0 11.Qc2 Nhf6±]

11. e4!±

[11.Re1!?, 11.Rb1!?,

11.Qc2 is the most common move here but I think yours is better]

11 ... Nb6

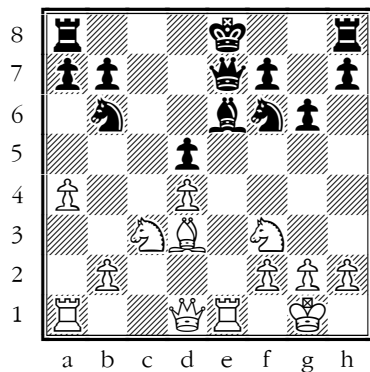
12. exd5 cxd5

13. Re1

[13.a4!?,]

13 ... Be6

14. a4! Nf6

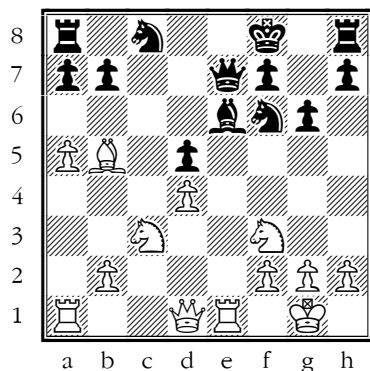


15. Bb5+

[Even more awkward for Black is 15.a5! Nbd7 16.Qb3! Rb8 17.Nb5!±]

15 ... Kf8

16. a5 Nc8!±



The d6 square will be an ideal place for the black Knight, but White has a big advantage here.

17. Bd3

Mission accomplished, the Bishop returns to its post, but White can press harder.

[17.Ng5!±;

17.a6!± Rb8 18.axb7 Qxb7

19.Qd2]

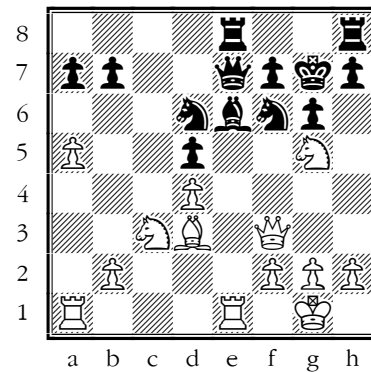
17 ... Nd6

18. Ng5 Re8

19. Qf3

[19.Nxe6+! fxe6 20.Na4±]

19 ... Kg7



The players now lose the thread a little.

20. Na4?! Nd7!]

[20...Nfe4! 21.Nxe6+ (21.Nxe4? dxe4 22.Bxe4 Bf5 and White is in trouble) 21...Qxe6 22.Nc5 Qe7=]

21. Nh3?!=

[I think it was about time to take the Bishop 21.Nxe6+±;

21.Qg3!± is recommended by the computer.]

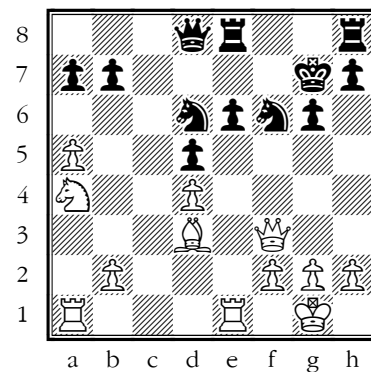
21 ... Qd8

22. Nf4 Nf6

23. Nxe6+

Finally, White takes the Bishop; Black hasn't done much with the time White has given him.

23 ... fxe6!±



This supports d5 but creates a weakness on e6; the structure now reminds me of a French Defence (following ...f6 and e4xf6).

[23...Rxe6± was safer]

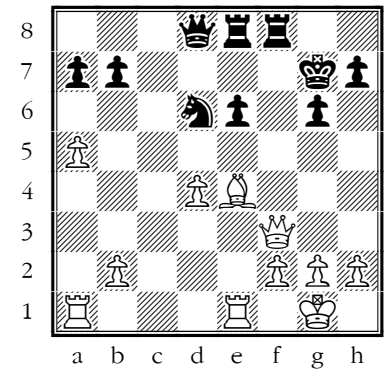
24. Nc5!

Winning a pawn.

24 ... Nfe4

25. Nxe4 dxe4

26. Bxe4 Rhf8±



White can now happily keep improving his position - Black can't afford to swap off pieces into a losing K+P endgame, but can't afford to leave White's pieces in good positions either.

27. Qd3 Qf6

28. f3 Rd8

29. Rad1 Rf7

30. Qb3 Nxe4

31. Rxe4 Rd5

32. Kf2

[32.Qe3!?,]

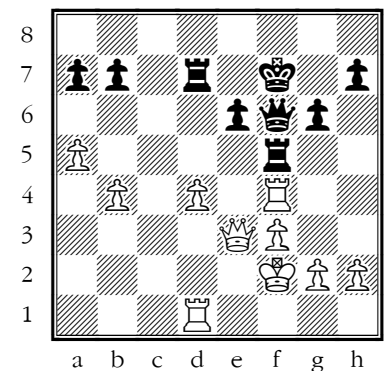
32 ... Rfd7

33. Qc3 Kf7

34. b4 Qg7

35. Qe3 Qf6

36. Rf4 Rf5



37. Rxf5 exf5

Capturing this way mends Black's pawn skeleton but leaves the way free for a white passed pawn. White now fidgets without pushing the pawn.

38. Qb3+

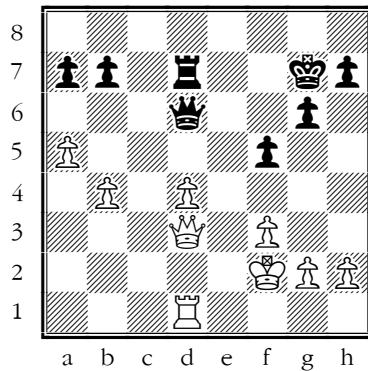
[38.d5!?]

38 ... Kg7

39. Qd3?!

[39.d5!±]

39 ... Qd6! =



→ TACTIC: fork

Forking h2 and b4 (CLUES: undefended pawns)

40. b5?! Qb4?!

[40...Qxh2! had to be tried.]

White doesn't have much here.

"Well, well. IM (and correspondence GM) Douglas Bryson once told me that he almost never plays a game that flows smoothly from start to finish; there is always a "moment" of sorts where someone misses a big defensive opportunity or the nature of the position changes more than one might reasonably expect. This was such a "moment".— Jonathan Rowson, *British Chess Magazine*, October 1999 p.553

We will see this point often in the other games... and once more below!

41. a6!±

White is back in control.

41 ... b6

42. d5 Qc5+

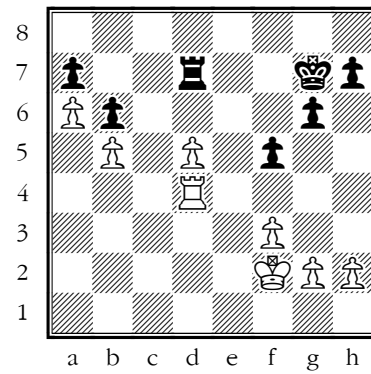
43. Qd4+?

A cross-check, a valuable weapon in Queen endings. But I think it's better to keep the Queens on.

[43.Kf1!± idea d6]

43 ... Qxd4+

44. Rxd4



In this exact position, Black can not just blockade the pawn, but win it!

44 ... Rd6?±

[44...Kf6! = 45.f4 Ke7 46.Ke3 Kd6 = and ...Kc5 will pick up the d-pawn. Hard to spot at speed! But it's a good illustration of the importance of the King in an ending.]

▶ You must use your King actively in the endgame.

45. Ke3 Kf6

46. f4 g5

47. g3± g4?+–

That doesn't really help.

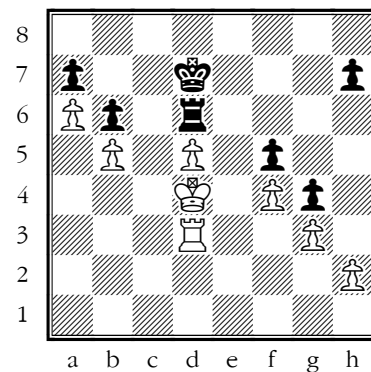
48. Rd3

Compare the last variation:

White can keep the pawn and also free the Rook.

48 ... Ke7

49. Kd4 Kd7



50. Rc3

Not bad

[50.Ke5!+– wins - a similar idea to the one the players missed earlier.]

50 ... Rf6

51. Rc6

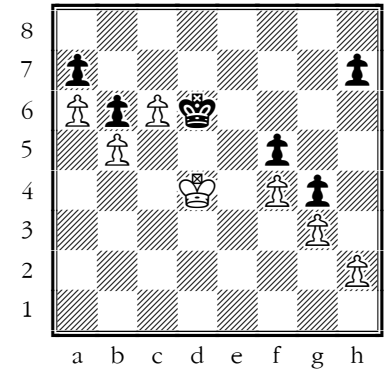
Also not bad

[51.Ke5! still wins most quickly]

51 ... Rxc6

With the exchange of the last piece, Black's last hope vanishes.

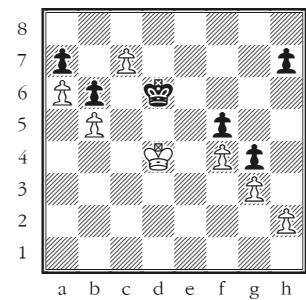
52. dxc6+ Kd6



53. Kc4

White is content to make little improvements to his position while Black's time runs out, but the game can be decided at once.

[53.c7!]



gives up one pawn 53...Kxc7 54.Ke5 to win the game on the other side.]

53 ... Ke6

54. Kd4 h5

55. Kc4 Kd6

56. Kd4 Ke6

57. Ke3

[57.c7! still wins]

57 ... Kd6

58. Kf2 Ke6

59. Kg2 Kd6

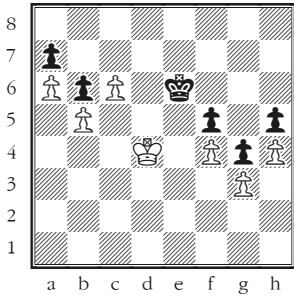
60. h3 Ke6

61. h4 Kd6

62. Kf2

1–0 (time)

[62.Kf2 Kc7 63.Ke3 Kd6 64.Kd4 = Ke6



and finally it is once more time for

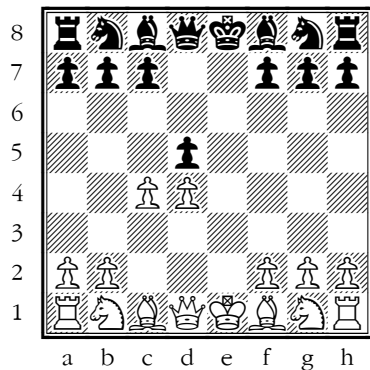
65.c7! Kd7 66.c8Q+ Kxc8 67.Ke5 Kc7 68.Kxf5 Kd6 69.Kg6 Ke7 70.f5 Kf8 71.Kf6+–

I.2 Thomas, Ben – Slade, Theo

[C01: French Defence, Exchange Variation, Modern system]

An interesting start was cut short by a phone call.”

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. exd5 exd5
4. c4

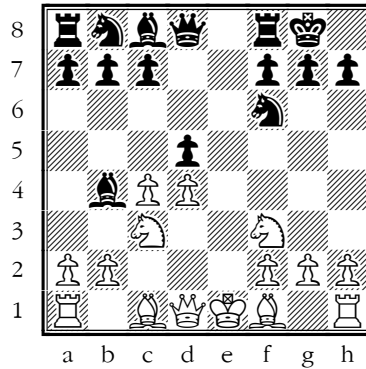


I think this is a good system for getting French players out of their standard way of playing.

- 4 ... Nf6

[4...Bb4+ 5.Nc3 Ne7= aims at rapid castling.]

5. Nf3 Bb4+
6. Nc3 0–0



7. Be3

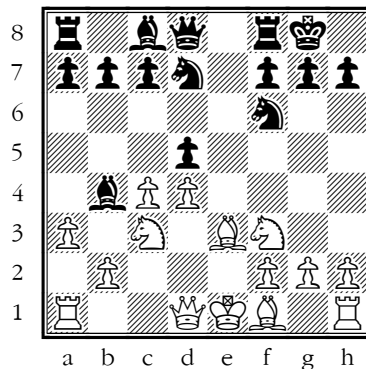
I expect White should find a way to castle quickly; this doesn't help.

- 7 ... Nbd7

[That looks over-cautious. It's not an ideal square for the piece and it blocks the Bc8]

[7...Re8; 7...Bg4]

8. a3



8 ... Be7

At this point White's phone made a noise, and he sportingly owned up straight away.

0–1

[8...Bxc3+! 9.bxc3 Re8= doesn't lose momentum;

8...Be7 9.Bd3± and White has a small plus, and, I would expect, just the sort of game he is looking for.]

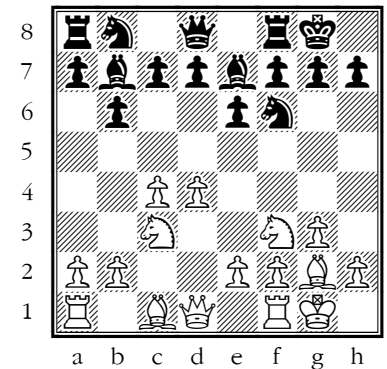
► **Top tip: don't take your 'phone into the playing room!**

I.3 Bennett, Owen – Slade, Theo

[E19: Queen's Indian Defence, Fianchetto Variation]

Another really interesting game, played with full commitment by both players. Black tried unsettling the situation on the Queen's-side, getting a position where both sides had advanced but unprotected pawns. But as pieces came off, Black took over the endgame.”

1. d4 e6
2. c4 Nf6
3. Nf3 b6
4. g3 Bb7
5. Bg2 Be7
6. 0–0 0–0
7. Nc3



7 ... Ne4

Going for equality.

[Tiviakov likes 7...Na6!? avoiding simplification.]

8. Qc2

[8.Bd2 is the current fashion, e.g. ½-½ Aronian,L -Grischuk,A London 2013]

- 8 ... Nxc3
9. Qxc3

A very well-known position.

- 9 ... c5±

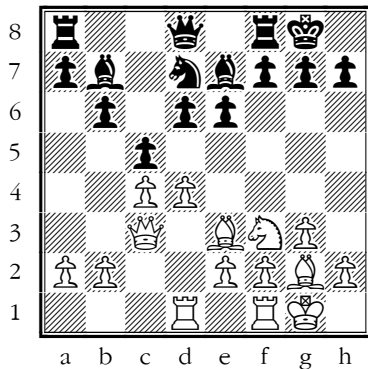
The most popular try.

[I have a soft spot for the old-fashioned 9...f5=]

10. Be3 d6
11. Rad1

[11.Rfd1 is more common]

- 11 ... Nd7

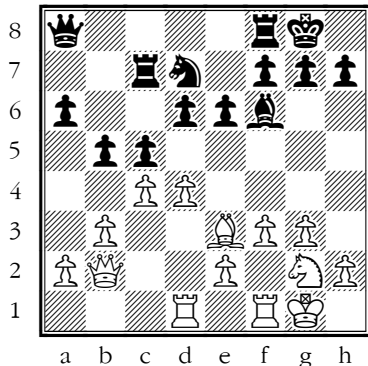


A murky position, where many moves have been made but where much has yet to be decided.

12. b3

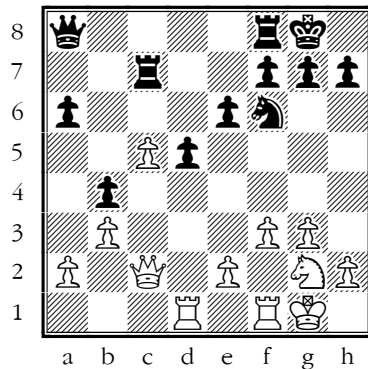
[12.Ne1 is most common here, but we are already off the beaten track.]

12. ... Rc8
 13. Rfe1 Rc7
 14. Qb2 Qa8
 15. Rf1 a6
 16. Ne1 Bxg2
 17. Nxc2 Bf6
 18. f3 b5



Black is starting to get on top, finding more constructive things to do than is White.

19. Qc2 cxd4
 20. Bxd4 d5!
 [20...bxc4!? is another good try]
 21. Bxf6 Nxf6
 22. c5 b4



The passed c-pawn is also effectively isolated and may be weak.

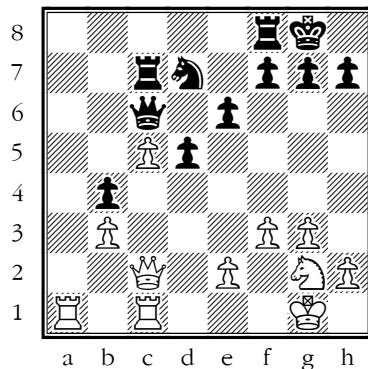
23. a3+ a5!=

That makes a couple of concessions: the a-file and a target on b4.

[23...Qb7!];

23...bxa3! 24.Ra1 (24.Ne1 Qa7 25.Nd3 Nd7 26.b4 a5-+)
 24...Qb7 25.Rxa3 Nd7 26.Qd2 Rxc5

24. axb4 axb4
 25. Ra1 Qc6
 26. Rfc1 Nd7



27. Ra5

Can Black take the c-pawn without getting into a pin?

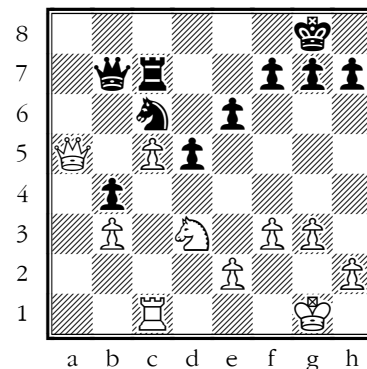
27 ... Ra8=

I think the answer is 'yes, probably' but not something I'd like to have to decide in rapidplay.

[27...Rfc8! but White can counter-attack the b-pawn 28.Qd3!
 (28.Qd2!! Qb7 29.Ra4 Rxc5+;
 28.Ne1 Qxc5+! 29.Rxc5 Rxc5+)
 28...Qb7 29.Qb5! Qxb5 30.Rxb5 Nxc5 31.Rxb4= and White's passed pawn is no great asset]

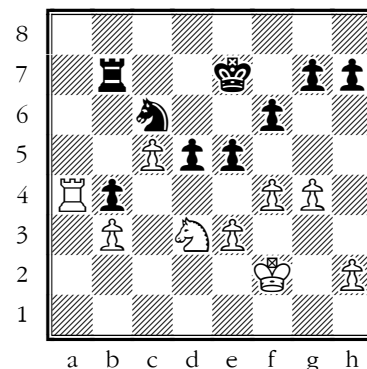
28. Qa2 Rxa5
 29. Qxa5 Qb7

30. Ne1 Ne5
 31. Nd3 Nc6±



Now only the b-pawn is weak, and White has a clear plus.

32. Qa4 f6
 33. f4 Qa7
 34. Ra1 Qxa4
 35. Rxa4 Rb7
 36. e3 Kf7
 37. Kf2 Ke7
 38. g4 e5



Is this counterplay or a new target?

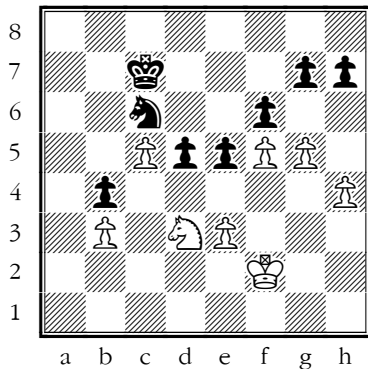
39. f5!?

That stops it being a target, so Black has equal chances now.

- 39 ... Kd7
 40. h4 Kc7=

[40...Rb5!+ forces the issue
 41.Ra8 e4 42.Nf4 Rxc5 43.Rg8]

41. Ra8 Rb8
 42. Rxb8 Kxb8
 43. Nb2 Na5
 44. Nd3 Nc6
 45. g5 Kc7=



46. Nb2? Na5

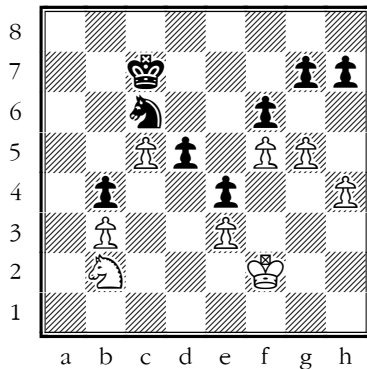
[46...e4!-+]

47. Nd3 Nc6

48. Nb2?

Asking twice...

48 ... e4!-+



Clamps down on the last squares that White's Knight can use, and opens up more for Black's Knight. White tries a brave run on the King's-side.

49. gxf6 gxf6

50. Kg3 Na5

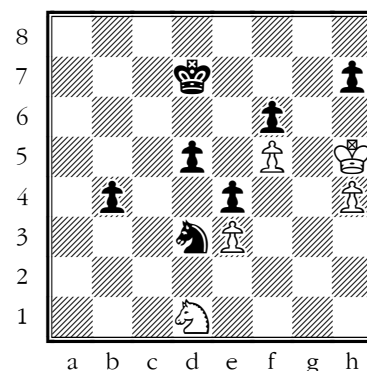
51. Kg4 Nxb3

52. Na4 Kc6

53. Kh5 Nxc5

54. Nb2 Nd3

55. Nd1 Kd7



Can White's King carry on and save the day?

56. Kg4

[Answer, no: 56.Kh6 Ke7 57.Kxh7 Kf7 58.Kh6 b3 59.Nc3 b2 60.Kh5 Nf2 61.Kh6 d4 62.exd4 e3-+ and one of the Black pawns must get through]

56 ... b3

0-1

Board 2: Reece Whittington

Two great wins – a thrilling scrap against a very strong player in the first round and an amazing endgame save in the second. Sad to see you go down in the third; your opponent seemed to know exactly what she was doing in that system, and you let her do it! You needed to play that opening with a bit more oomph, and the same in round 2, I believe. A lesson for next time, perhaps, but overall, you showed your usual sensible chess and fighting character.”

2.1 Whittington, Reece – Thomas, Ben

[E94: King's Indian Defence, Classical Variation]

White found himself with a huge plus after the opening and soon won the exchange, but then gave up a piece for nothing which made life more complicated! In fact, Black did their best to create chaos on the board, which got several mistakes out of White, but, in the end, White made better use of their remaining pieces.”

1. d4 Nf6

2. Nf3

[2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5 is the Averbakh system]

2 ... g6

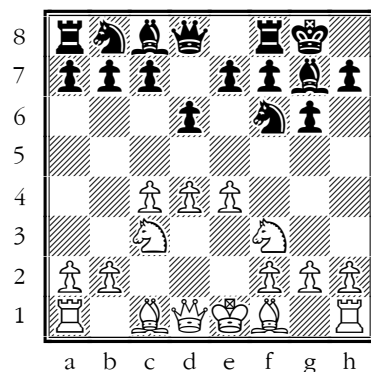
3. c4 Bg7

4. Nc3 0-0

5. e4

[5.Bg5 See Nicky's game in this line.]

5 ... d6



6. Bg5

Not a bad move but not a recognised system (at least, I didn't recognise it!). Bg5 is played usually played earlier, on move 5 (Averbakh & Smyslov), or much later (Petrosian).

[6.Be2 e5 7.d5 Nbd7 8.Bg5 is the Petrosian line]

► You should have a definite system worked out for meeting

all the usual openings and defences that you will meet.

6 ... Nbd7

7. Be2 c6

[Controls b5+d5]

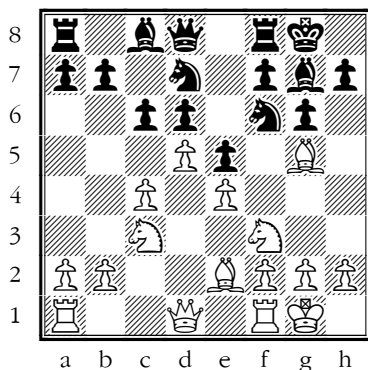
[7...h6

► It's often a good idea to make such a Bishop choose a diagonal:

either White gives up the pin or Black makes sure they can break it if they have to (...g5).]

8. 0-0 e5

9. d5



White wins space, and the position now looks very much like a Petrosian position.

9 ... Qe7

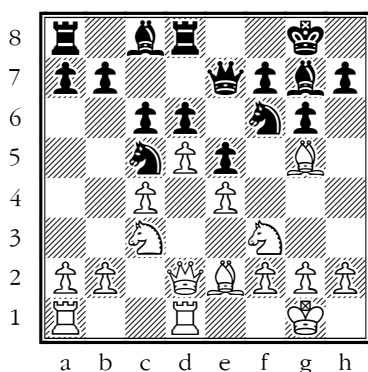
10. Qd2

[White's eventual plan is to play b4 and c5, but before then White wants to shut down Black's play on the King's side, and swap off the good Bishop on c8. 10.Nd2 intends Bg4]

10 ... Rd8

If the Queen moves, Black will still be in a pin...

11. Rfd1 Nc5±



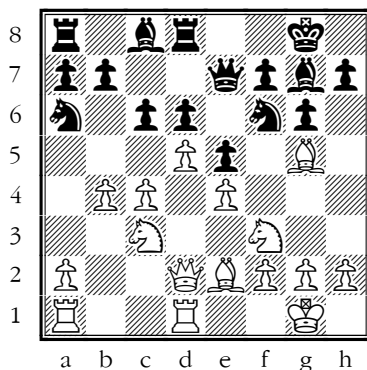
Black isn't ready to support a N on c5 by playing a5, and this move just encourages White to get on with their plan of b4 and harassing the queen's-side.

[11...c5!? looks essential ;

11...a5? 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.Qxd6]

12. b4! Na6

[If instead 12...Nxe4, 13.Nxe4 Nxe4 14.Bxe7 Nd2 15.Bxd8 and Black loses a Rook.]



White can already cash in:

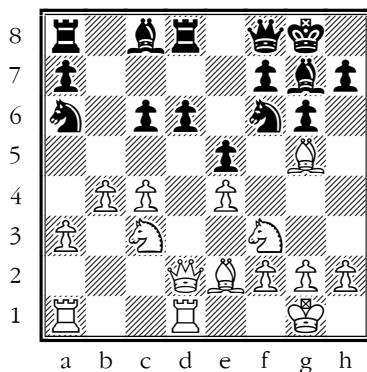
13. a3±

[Better is 13.dxc6!? bxc6 14.b5+- Nc5 (14...cxb5?? 15.Nd5+-) 15.bxc6 Qe8 16.Bxf6 Bxf6 17.Nd5±]

13 ... Qf8±

[13...c5!? . is worth consideration 14.Rdb1 b6± and White still has to get through the defensive wall.]

14. dxc6! bxc6



→ Tactic: pin

15. Nxe5!

Using the pin.

The clues aren't obvious, but you can feel that the Re8 in a cross-fire of the battery down the d-file and the pin from g5. So then it's worth looking through the different forcing moves, of which Nxe5 is the most obvious.

15 ... Nxe4!+--

→ Tactic: discovered attack

[Hitting back (with a discovered attack from g7), but, if anything, makes things worse!]

[15...Bb7!? 16.Ng4 Nxg4 17.Bxg4 Re8+-]

16. Nxe4 Bxe5

17. Bxd8 Qxd8

18. Ra2+-

White is on top.

[18.Nxd6!? Bxa1 19.Rxa1 Be6+-]

18 ... Qh4

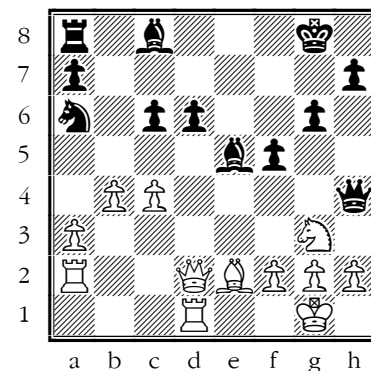
Fighting back, as Black must.

19. Ng3

Safe enough!

[My computer likes 19.f4!? Bxf4 20.g3!?!]

19 ... f5



[19...Bb7]

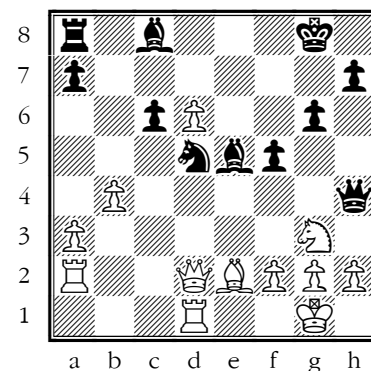
20. c5!?

[20.Bf3! seems even better 20...Bb7 21.b5 Nc5 22.bxc6 Ba6+-]

20 ... Nc7?

[20...d5]

21. cxd6 Nd5



22. Bc4??±

Under other circumstances, this would lose instantly, but White's position is so good, he can lose a piece for nothing and still stand better!

→ Clue: loose piece

[22.Bf3!+-;

22.Rc2!+-]

22 ... Qxc4

23. Rc2 Qb3

24. Rxc6

Opening the c-file gets White a lot of play

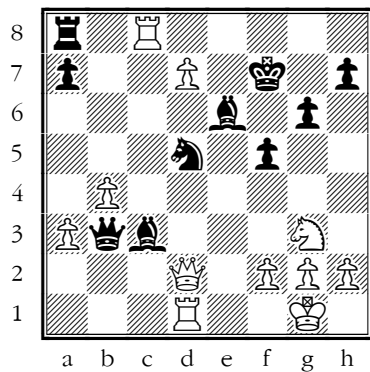
24 ... Be6+-

[24...Nb6!?±]

25. d7 Kf7?+-

[25...Bxd7 had to be tried 26.Rc5 Be6 27.Rxd5 Bxd5 28.Qxd5+ Qxd5 29.Rxd5 and White should be able to convert the extra pawn]

26. Rc8 Bc3!?



a b c d e f g h

It's wonderfully complicated! The computer wants to give Black's last move '??' but I sympathise with Black. Black is punching as hard as possible, and even though more defensive play might last longer, this is more likely to get a mistake out of White.

► If you are worse, it's OK (if unpleasant) just to defend; if you are losing, you have to make trouble to get a mistake out of your opponent.

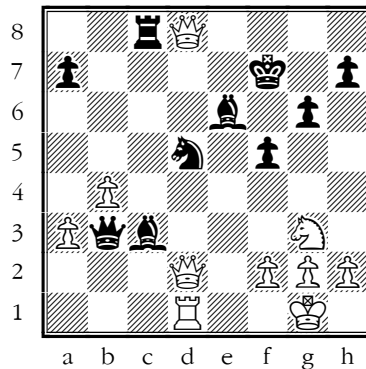
[26...Rxc8 is best but losing 27.dxc8Q Bc3 28.Qxc3 Nxc3+- 29.Re1 Qxa3 30.Qe3 Qb3 31.Qxa7+ Kg8 (31...Kf6 32.Qxh7) 32.Qe7]

27. d8Q??

And there's the mistake!

[⊔27.Rxa8 27...Rxc8 . finishes off the opponent 27...Bxd2 28.d8Q (<28.Rxd2 28...Qxd1+ 28...Bxd7 29.Rxa7 Ke6 30.Ra6+ Ke5⊖) 28...Qxd1+ 29.Nf1+-]

27 ... Rxc8!



and White must lose one of the Queens

28. Qxc8?=-

Everything is hanging, but there is a better capture:

[28.Q2xd5 Bxd5 29.Qd7+ Kf6 30.Rxd5 with an extra pawn]

28 ... Bxd2

[Threatening mate: Qxd1]

29. Qb7+ Ne7

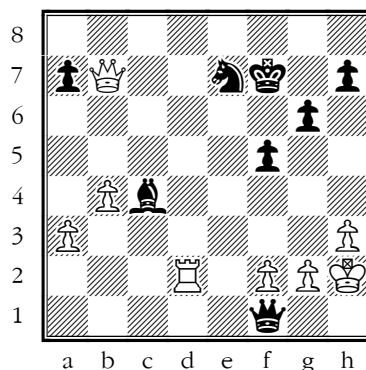
30. Rxd2 Qb1+

31. Nf1 Bc4

And White has to give back another piece to avoid mate.

32. h3 Qxf1+

33. Kh2



After all that, it's equal!

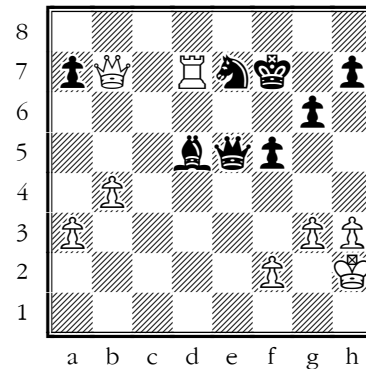
R+P=B+N

33 ... Qe1

34. Rd7 Qe5+

35. g3 Bd5?!±

[⊔35...Qe6= 36.Rxe7+ . would keep Black in the game]



36. Rxe7+!

White grabs at a chance to win B+N for R

→ Tactic: undermining

→ Clue: overworked Q

36 ... Qxe7

37. Qxd5+

and White won the endgame. A thrilling contest.

[37.Qxd5+ Kf6 38.h4±]

1-0

2.2 Whittington,Reece – Bennett,Owen

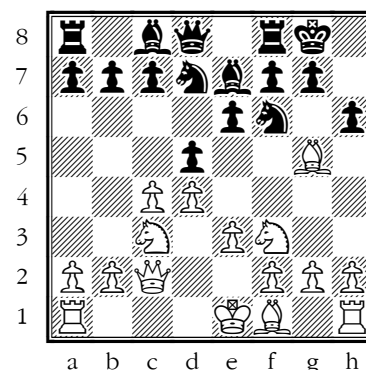
[D58: Queen's Gambit Declined, Rubinstein Variation]

White did well to hold the endgame with such a very bad Bishop."

1. d4 d5
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. Nf3 Be7
5. Bg5 Nbd7
6. e3 0-0
7. Qc2

Rubinstein's line, which I used to play at the same age.

7 ... h6



8. Bh4

[8.h4!? is my favourite move here!]

► If you castle before your opponent does, be careful that you are not vulnerable to a snap attack. That especially applies in positions with a closed centre.

8 ... b6

[...b6 systems don't work so well after Nbd7: there are some holes like c6 that a Knight on b8 would look after.]

9. Bd3

[White must pounce with 9.cxd5! exd5 (9...Nxd5? 10.Nxd5 exd5 11.Bxe7 Qxe7 12.Qxc7) 10.Bb5 Bb7 11.0-0 I think White has a 100% score here. A couple of examples:

11...c6 12.Ba4 Rc8 13.Rad1 a5
14.a3 b5 15.Bb3 b4 16.axb4 axb4
17.Na4 Ba6 18.Rfe1 Ne4 19.Bxe7
Qxe7 20.Nd2 Bb5 21.Nxe4 dxe4
22.Rc1 Rfd8 23.Nc5 Nxc5 24.Qxc5
Qxc5 25.Rxc5 Rb8 26.h3 g6
27.Rec1 Rb6 28.Re5 Bd3 29.Re7
Rf8 30.Rc7 Bb5 31.Ra1 Ba6
32.Ra5 Kg7 33.Re5 Rb7 34.Rxc6
Bd3 35.Rec5 Ra8 36.Rc7 Raa7
37.Rxb7 Rxb7 38.Kh2 g5 39.Kg3
Kg6 40.Rc6+ f6 41.h4 gxh4+
42.Kxh4 Bb5 43.Rc8 Bf1 44.Bd5
Re7 45.g4 Bg2 46.Rg8+ Kh7
47.Rb8 Bf3 48.Rxb4 Kg6 49.Rb7
1-0 Nikolic,P (2540)-Kapelan,M
(2300) Vrsac 1983)

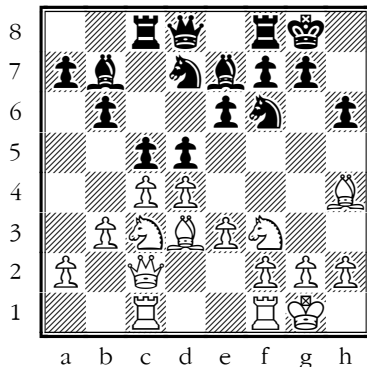
11...c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.Rfd1 Nb6
14.a4 d4 15.a5 Nc8 16.Be2 Nd5
17.Bxe7 Qxe7 18.Nxd5 Bxd5
19.exd4 Qe6 20.Ra3 cxd4
21.Nxd4 Qf6 22.Qc5 Ne7 23.Re3
Rfe8 24.Bb5 Qg5 25.g3 Qg4 26.f3
Qg5 27.Rde1 Rac8 28.Qxa7 Ra8
29.Qc7 Qf6 30.Qf4 Qxf4 31.gxf4
Red8 32.Rxe7 Rxa5 33.Re8+ Rxe8
34.Rxe8+ Kh7 35.Bd3+ g6 36.Kf2
Ra4 37.Ke3 Rb4 38.Re5 1-0
Bykov,A (2313)-Gataullin,A (2137)
Ishevsk 2005]

9 ... Bb7

10. 0-0 Rc8

11. b3 c5

12. Rac1



White has played solidly but a bit too safely, and that's always dangerous! Black has been allowed to develop smoothly and can now give White some weaknesses.

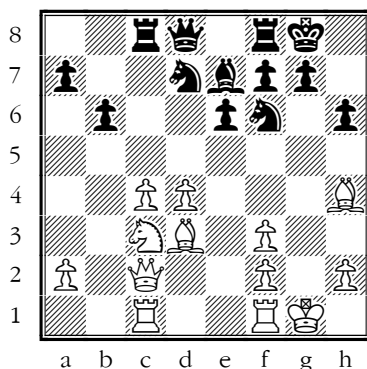
► Playing safe is dangerous!

12 ... dxc4!

13. bxc4 Bxf3!

14. gxf3 cxd4!

15. exd4



Black has done well and stands well.

15 ... Qc7?!

That just helps White get sorted. Now it's about equal.

16. Bg3 Qb7

17. Ne4 Nh5

18. Bd6!?

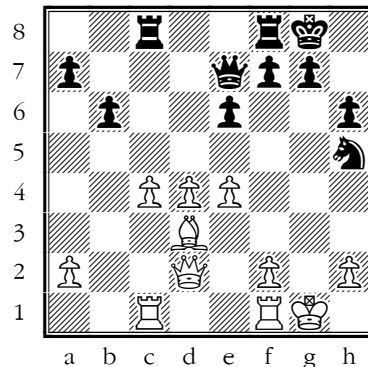
[18.Nd6!?!]

18 ... Ndf6

19. Bxe7 Qxe7

20. Qd2 Nxe4

21. fxe4



White has patched up the pawns a little, but Black still has plenty to aim at.

21 ... Qg5+

[21...e5! This is an important idea: Black fixes the White pawns on white squares. That turns White's Bishop into not much more than a tall pawn, and Black can blockade the White pawns and make mischief with the knight. The structure gives it an outpost on f4.]

► Keep pawns on the opposite coloured squares to your lone Bishop

22. Qxg5 hxg5

Now White should have prevented the ...e5 idea by playing e4-e5 himself.

23. Kh1 Nf4

24. Rfd1

[There was a lot more of this! White did end up playing d4-d5 with horrible dark-square weaknesses, but I didn't see how he won. Well done anyway!]

1-0

2.3 Wang, Alyssa – Whittington, Reece

[D85: Grünfeld Defence, Exchange Variation]

Black played a sharp main line but got saddled with a passive position where White could just get on with their plan unbothered."

1. d4 Nf6

2. c4 g6

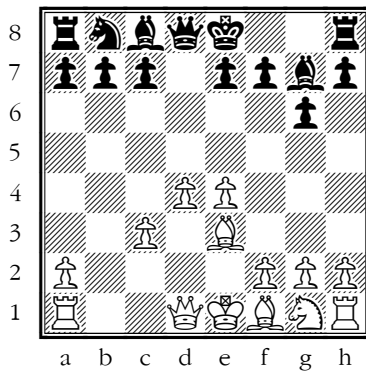
3. Nc3 d5

4. cxd5 Nxd5

5. e4 Nxc3

6. bxc3 Bg7

7. Be3



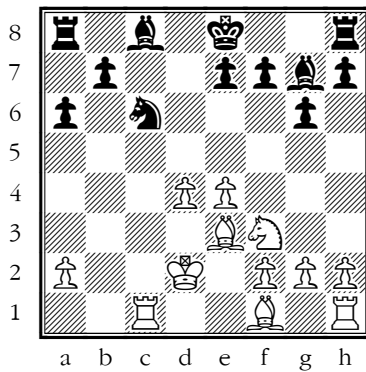
A new try, used by Kramnik. White wants to play d4-d5, winning space and in the long term looking to get a passed d-pawn. So, Be3 and Rc1 allow White to play d5.

- 7 ... c5
- 8. Nf3 Nc6
- 9. Qd2 Qa5
- 10. Rb1 a6!?

We're still in Grandmaster theory here.

[Another move often used is 10...0-0!? "Do your worst!"]

- 11. Rc1 cxd4
- 12. cxd4 Qxd2+
- 13. Kxd2



So far, White's plan is working out fine. Black must hit back, to make their pieces active and to find some targets.

13 ... 0-0!?

▶ **Playing safe, as usual, is dangerous.**

[13...f5! 14.e5 Be6 15.Bc4 Bxc4 16.Rxc4 with only an edge for White, if anything]

14. d5! Ne5

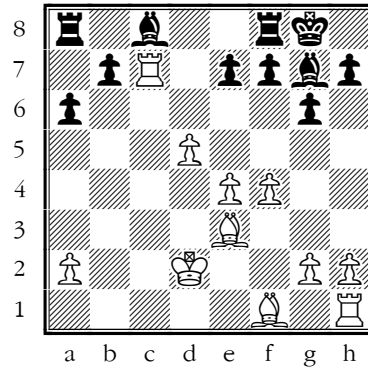
15. Nxe5 Bxe5

16. f4 Bg7?

The Bishop doesn't have much future here, and it allows White's next deadly move.

[16...Bd6]

17. Rc7!

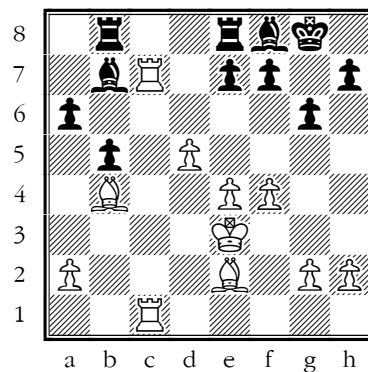


Black is close to losing here, I think.

As usual in the Grünfeld, there are no weaknesses, but Black lacks any sort of counterplay and can only wait for White to decide how to break through.

▶ **Always look for counterplay – even if you still stand worse, you are more likely to force a mistake from your opponent than if you lie down and wait to be murdered in your bed.**

- 17 ... Re8
- 18. Be2 b5
- 19. Rhc1 Bf8
- 20. Bc5 Rb8
- 21. Bb4 Bb7
- 22. Ke3



White has been calmly improving their position. There now follows a double blunder:

22 ... Rec8??

→ Clue: Rb8 is doing two jobs, protecting b7 and c8.

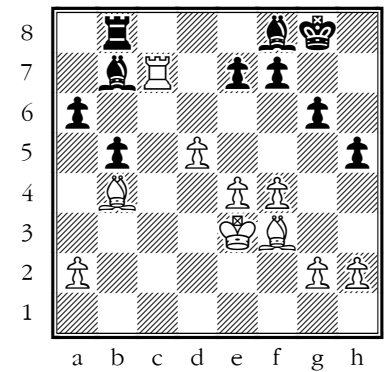
[22...f5]

23. Bg4??

[23.Rxb7!]

Tactic: undermining

- 23 ... Rxc7
- 24. Rxc7 h5
- 25. Bf3



I'm struggling to find some advice for Black. "Don't start from here!"

25 ... e6?

That obviously helps White.

26. d6! Bxe4?

Suicidal, but there was no way to save the game from here.

[26...a5]

- 27. Bxe4 Rd8
- 28. Rc6 a5
- 29. Bxa5 Rxd6
- 30. Rc8 f5
- 31. Bb4 Ra6
- 32. Rxf8+ Kg7
- 33. Bf3 Rxa2
- 34. Rb8 Ra4
- 35. Rxb5

1-0

Board 3: Vignesh Ramesh

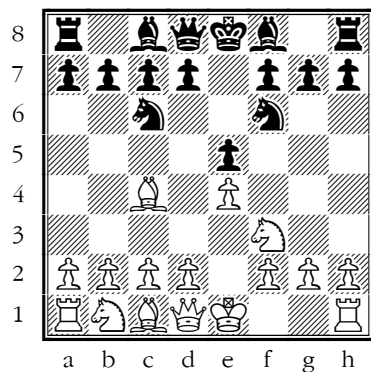
Another superb 3/3, well done! Such a good performance leaves me very little to add! You have just the positive style to cause trouble to any opponent. ”

3.1 Barwise, Christopher – Ramesh, Vignesh

[C55: Two Knights' Defence]

The players spend a little while deciding who, if anyone, is to be a pawn ahead, but agree to emerge with equal material. Then White leaves the King and Queen in a line for one move too long.”

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



4. c3?!

White is better off playing one of the standard lines:

[4.Ng5 grabs a pawn but submits to an attack ;

4.d4 exd4 5.0-0 offers a pawn for an attack (5.e5!?)]

- 4 ... d5?!

[4...Nxe4 I think that's a pawn Black can and should take.]

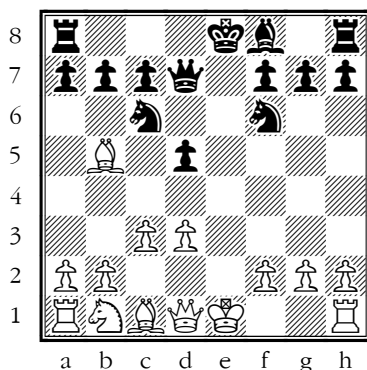
5. Bb5?!

[5.exd5! = Nxd5 6.0-0]

- 5 ... Nxe4?!

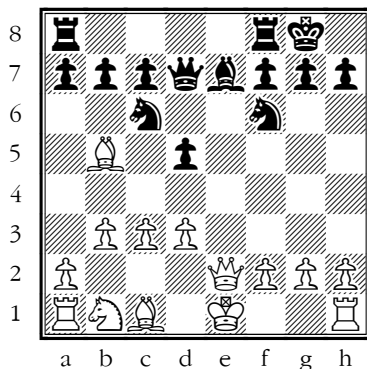
[5...dxe4]

6. d3 Nf6
7. Nxe5 Bd7
8. Nxd7 Qxd7



The opening has finally settled to a position of equality, although Black is ahead in development.

9. Qe2+ Be7
10. b3 0-0



11. Ba3?!

[11.0-0! castling was useful and essential]

► Castle early and often!

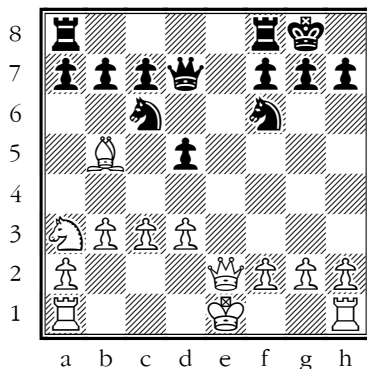
- 11 ... Bxa3

12. Nxa3

[12.0-0!]

► Terrible things befall uncastled kings

→ Clue: royalty in a line



- 12 ... Rfe8!

Oops.

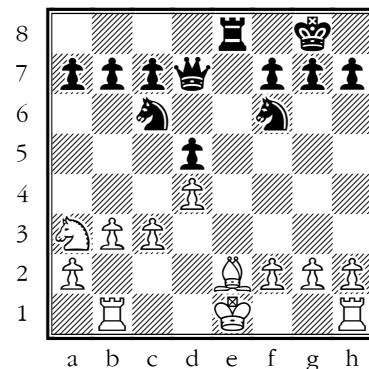
→ Tactic: pin

13. d4 Rxe2+

14. Bxe2 Re8

15. Rb1

→ Clues: loose piece on a3, only-just-defended and immobile piece on e2.



- 15 ... Qe7!

[Forking a3 and e2]

→ Tactic: fork

16. Rb2 Qxa3

17. Rd2

[-1 : 17.Rc2-1]

- 17 ... Qc1+

18. Rd1 Qxc3+

19. Rd2?!

[-#9 : 19.Kf1-1]

- 19 ... Nxd4

[Threat ...Rxe2+]

20. Kd1

[20.0-0!]

- 20 ... Qa1#

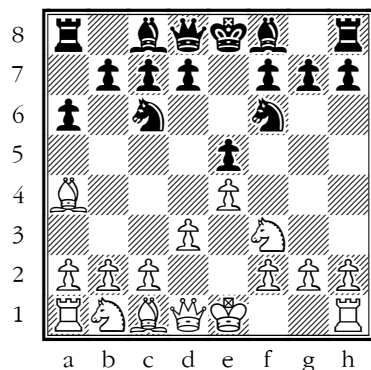
0-1

3.2 Katsande, Nyasha – Ramesh, Vignesh

[C77: Ruy Lopez, Anderssen-Steinitz Variation]

A fascinating and seriously grown-up Ruy Lopez battle, where we had a typical game all about seeking small advantages ... until White got the Queen trapped.”

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 a6
4. Ba4 Nf6
5. d3



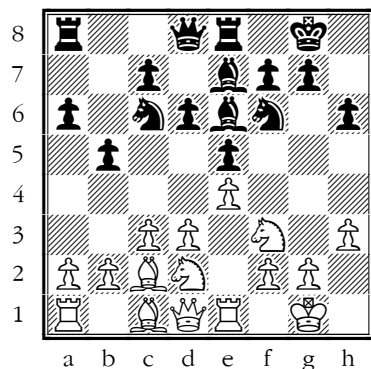
- 5 ... d6

[5...b5 6.Bb3 Bc5 is the most active, and most common, line for Black]

6. c3 Be7

[6...g6 might give the Bf8 more say in the game; it also keeps the white Knight out of f5 (see later!)]

7. 0-0 0-0
8. h3 b5
9. Bc2 Be6
10. Re1 h6
11. Nbd2 Re8



12. Nf1

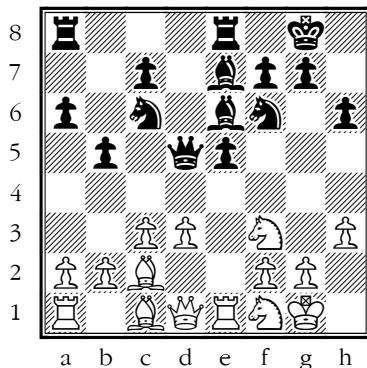
[The Knight is heading to f5]

- 12 ... d5!

Good: Black should not wait for White to arrange a King's-side attack.

► An attack on the wing is often well-met by a blow in the centre

13. exd5 Qxd5



Black is fully developed with an easy game. White now logically creates some pressure on the e5 pawn.

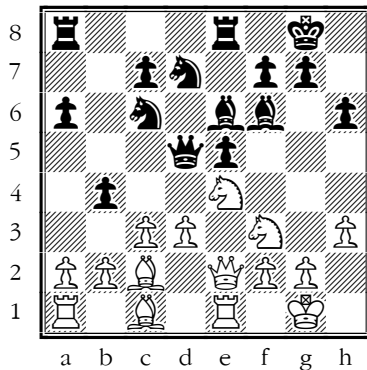
14. Qe2 Nd7

15. Ng3 Bf6

[15...Bf8]

16. Ne4 b4?!

Loosening.



Black wants some targets, but this move creates more holes for White to use than for Black.

17. Nxf6+

[17.Ba4!+= is good, when Black faces problems.]

- 17 ... Nxf6

18. Bb3

[18.Nxe5?? Bxh3!]

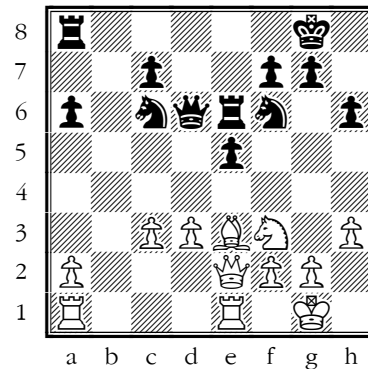
- 18 ... Qd6

Equal again.

19. Bxe6 Rxe6

20. Be3 bxc3

21. bxc3



- 21 ... Rd8!

Black is seeking the initiative, making some threats and hoping to make progress or force White into some concessions.

22. Red1 Nd5!

23. Bd2 Rde8

24. Qe4 Nf6

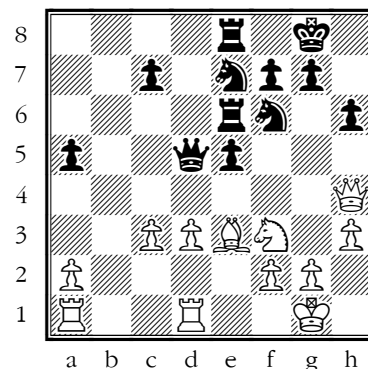
25. Qc4 a5

26. Be3 Qd5

27. Qh4

Hoping for some King's-side threats, but none emerge.

- 27 ... Ne7



Back to equality. I think both players have handled this difficult and tense position rather well so far. But White's Queen is awkwardly placed.

→ Clue: Q has only one square to move to – g3

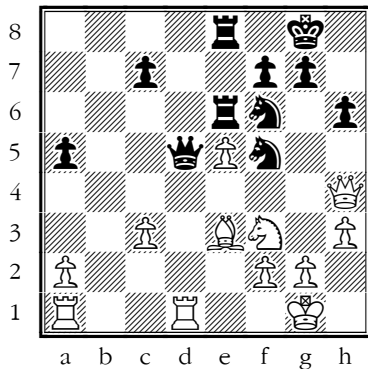
28. d4??

[28.Qa4!]

- 28 ... Nf5!

→ Tactic: net

29. dxe5

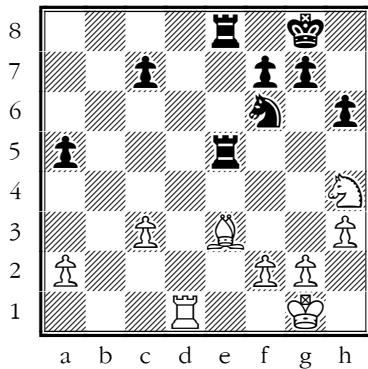


29 ... Qxd1+?

[29...Nxf4! wins more cleanly - 30.Rxd5 Nxf3+ 31.gxf3 Nxd5 with an extra Rook.]

30. Rxd1 Nxf4

31. Nxf4 Rxe5



emerging only(!) the Exchange ahead

32. Nf3 Rd5

33. Rb1 Ne4

34. Rb3 Rd3

35. c4 Rxb3

36. axb3 Nc3

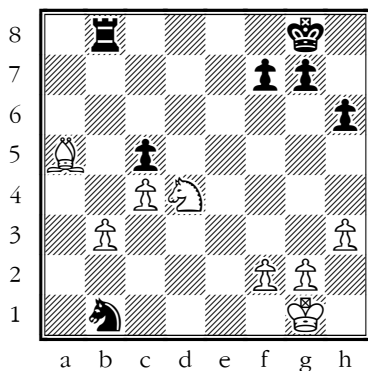
[36...c5]

37. Nd4 Rb8

38. Bd2 Nb1

[38...c5]

39. Bxa5 c5



There may have been more than this played, but the game looks over here.

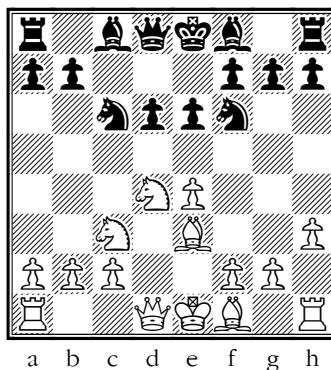
0-1

3.3 Ramesh, Vignesh – Choo-yin, Benjamin

[B56: Sicilian Defence, Scheveningen Variation]

Black had too few ideas to counter White's barnstorming attack, and once White was able to start making concrete threats, Black fell apart."

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4 cxd4
4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 d6
6. Be3 e6
7. h3



That's either stopping a move that Black can't make (...Ng4) or preparing a move that White can make already (g4), but it might come in useful later!

[7.Be2 Be7 8.f4 a6 9.a4 0-0 10.g4 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 e5 12.Be3;

7.f3 is the English Attack]

7 ... Be7

8. Be2

[8.g4 a6 9.g5 Nd7 This position has been reached 48 times at least, and in 42 of those games White continued 10.h4]

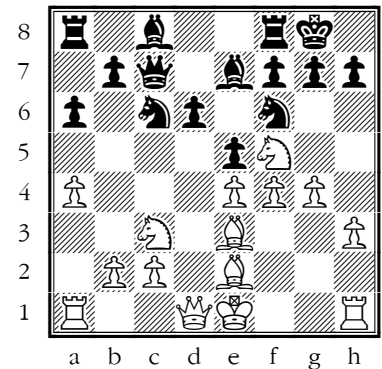
8 ... 0-0

9. f4 a6

10. a4 Qc7

11. g4 e5

12. Nf5!?



White is playing some very logical and powerful moves, but the real situation is that Black has done little wrong and should be able to defend.

However, that doesn't mean sitting back and hoping to be able to deal with any threat that White arranges - it means hitting back in the centre. If White is allowed to move pieces over to the King's-side the threats may be too strong to meet. So, time to hit back!

12 ... Be6?

Not a blunder, but really not showing enough urgency.

► If you leave your opponent alone until they can hit you, you may get hit!

[12...Bxf5! - 13.gxf5 (13.exf5 d5! Threatening to win a piece, and putting White off their attack.) 13...d5! 14.exd5 Nb4 15.0-0 e4 when nothing is left of the White attack, and, despite being a pawn behind, Black is better.

► An attack on the wing is again well-met by a blow in the centre

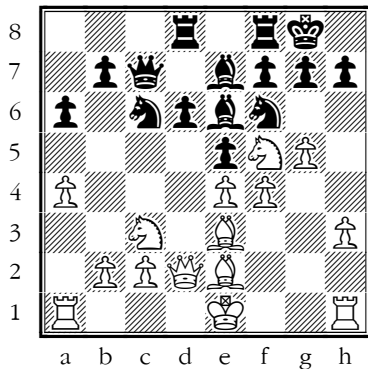
But, if Black is better in that line, where did White go wrong earlier? I don't know! Maybe Nf5 was too eager.

13. Qd2 Rad8

[Same again: setting up ...d5, but it's too slow.]

14. g5!

Ready or not, here I come!



14 ... Nd7??

Faced with the first threat, Black immediately goes wrong. Defending is hard, but in fact the position already is better for White.

[14...Nxe4!?!+-; 14...Ne8!±]

15. Nd5!

Winning a piece.

15 ... Bxd5

16. exd5 g6

17. Nh6+ Kg7

18. dxc6 Qxc6

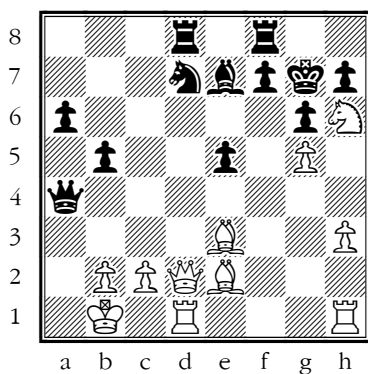
19. 0-0-0

[19.0-0]

19 ... Qxa4

20. Kb1 b5

21. fxe5 dxe5



[21...Nxe5]

22. Qc3

[22.Qd5! ties Black down even more]

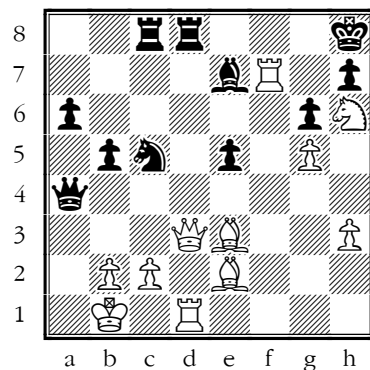
22 ... Rc8

23. Qd3 Rfd8

24. Rhf1 Nc5

[#5 : 24...f5]

25. Rxf7+ Kh8



26. Qa3?

Not wrong, exactly, but missing

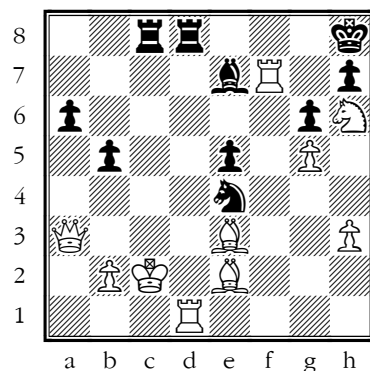
[26.Qxd8+! mates #4 26...Rxd8
27.Rxd8+ Bxd8 28.Rf8+ Kg7
29.Rg8#]

26 ... Qxc2+?!

Clever! It doesn't really help much, but it does give White some chances to go wrong.

[26...Rxd1+]

27. Kxc2 Ne4+



[27...Nd3+]

28. Kb1?

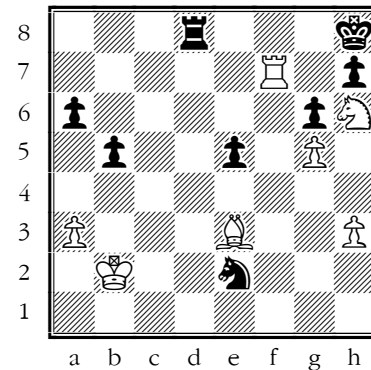
[28.Bc5! keeps more material]

28 ... Bxa3

29. Rxd8+ Rxd8

30. bxa3 Nc3+

31. Kb2 Nxe2



The final result of Black's idea is pulling back a pawn, but all the swaps have made life easy for White.

[#8 : 31...Na4+]

32. Rf2

[32.Bb6 is faster: we still have the idea of Rf8-g8 mate if the Black Rook leaves the back rank, but if so Bxe5 or Bf6 will also be mate #8]

32 ... Ng3

33. Nf7+

1-0

Board 4: Nicky Bacon

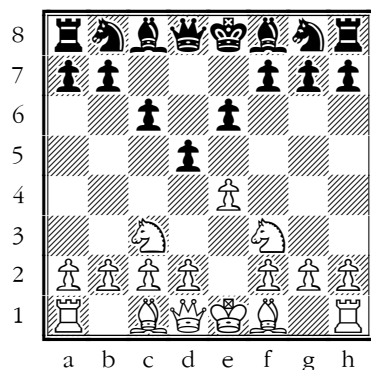
Some really nice, calm, strong chess games. Not many young players have the skill or confidence to win in the endgame the way you did in Round 1, and your good eye for tactics gave you your other two wins. Not much to improve! Perhaps you spot your chances more easily than you spot chances for your opponent? (But we all do that!) Do make sure you practise spotting tactics. ”

4.1 Du Toit, Stephanie – Bacon, Nicky

[B15: Caro-Kann Defence, Two Knights' Variation]

A very nice win in the endgame, which many players would have given up as drawn, but you won it with a lot of confidence and skill - well done! There was a way of winning it even more quickly, though...”

1. e4 c6
2. Nf3 d5
3. Nc3 e6



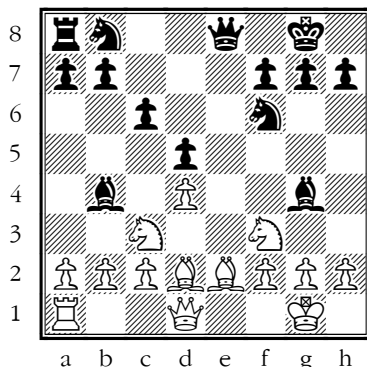
Solid, of course, but really we have the disadvantages of both the French and Caro-Kann together, with neither the Nb8 or the Bc8 able to develop as they wish.

[Usual tries are 3...Bg4; 3...dxe4; 3...d4]

4. d4 Bb4
5. exd5! exd5

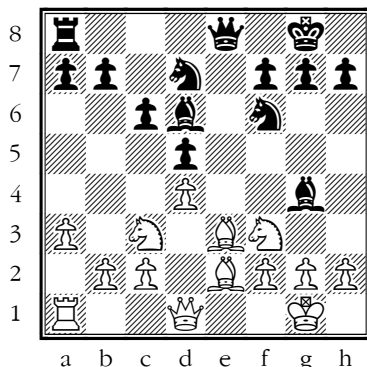
[That helps the Bc8!]

6. Bd2 Nf6
7. Bd3 0-0
8. 0-0 Bg4
9. Re1 Re8
10. Rxe8+ Qxe8
11. Be2



White is over-cautious and has allowed Black to develop actively

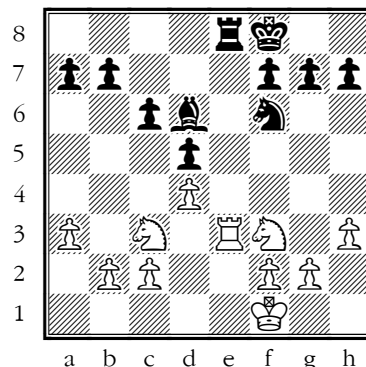
11. ... Nbd7
12. a3 Bd6
13. Be3



13. ... Rc8

[I expect the right place for that piece is e8.]

14. Nd2 Bxe2
15. Qxe2 Qe6
16. Re1 Ng4
17. Nf3 Nxe3
18. Qxe3 Qxe3
19. Rxe3 Nf6
20. h3 Kf8
21. Kf1 Re8



22. Rd3

Seeking to keep pieces on, but White can't really abandon the e-file.

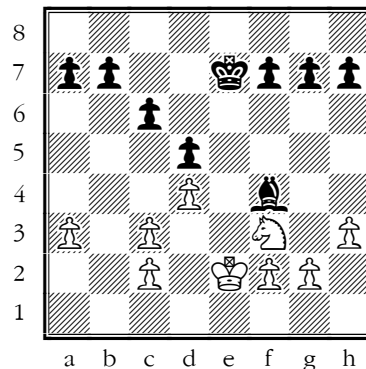
22. ... Ne4
23. Re3?!

[23.Nd2! =]

23. ... Bf4
24. Re1

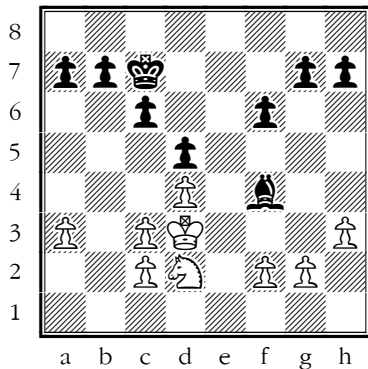
[24.Rd3!]

24. ... Nxc3!
25. bxc3 Rxe1+
26. Kxe1 Ke7
27. Ke2



It's pretty dry, but Black can point to two definite advantages: better pawn structure and Bishop over Knight.

27. ... f6
28. Nd2 Kd7
29. Kd3 Kc7



30. c4?

[30.Nb3]

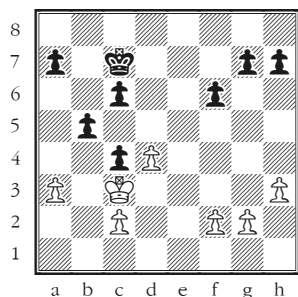
30 ... Bxd2!

→ Tactic: overloading

31. Kxd2 dxc4

32. Kc3 Kd6?

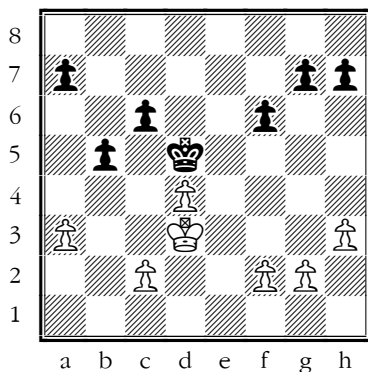
[32...b5!]



is simpler, winning for Black]

33. Kxc4 b5+

34. Kd3 Kd5



Black still has better pawns and now has the better King.

35. f3

White would like to leave the pawns at home, as far away from the Black King as possible, but moving the King instead, allows the Black King inside the defensive line.

35 ... a6

36. Kc3 a5

37. h4 g6

38. Kd3 h6

39. g3 c5

40. dxc5 Kxc5

41. Kc3 Kd5

42. Kd3 Kc5

43. Kc3 f5

44. f4 h5

45. Kb3

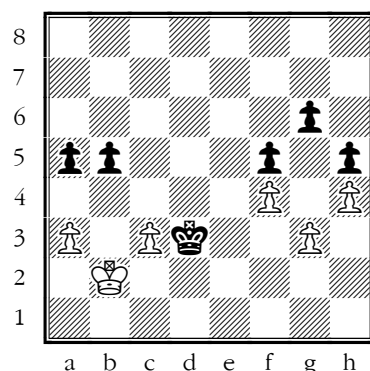
[45.Kd3]

45 ... Kd4

[45...a4+! - 46.Kc3 b4+! 47.axb4+ Kb5-+ when White is in ZugZwang]

46. c3+ Kd3

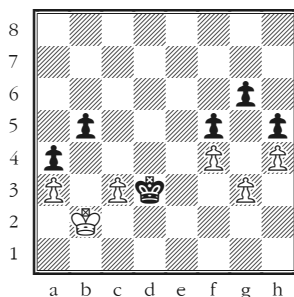
47. Kb2



47 ... Ke3

Black dashes off to attack the King's-side. The UII team manager and I saw Black doing some careful counting before setting off, but it wasn't really necessary!

[47...a4!]



and it's Zugzwang again for poor White.]

► Zugzwang is a powerful weapon in Pawn endings

48. c4

[48.Kb3]

48 ... bxc4

49. Kc3 Kf3

50. Kxc4 Kxg3

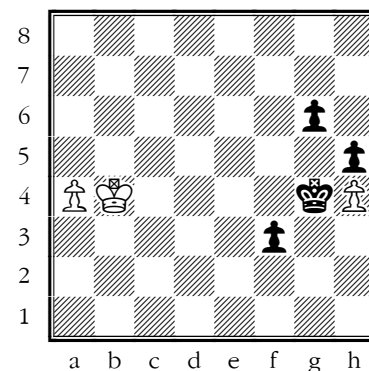
51. Kb5 Kxf4

52. Kxa5 Kg4

[52...Ke5]

53. Kb4 f4

54. a4 f3



and Black's pawn is faster

55. a5 f2

56. a6 f1Q

57. a7 Qa6

0-1

4.2 Bacon, Nicky – Lutchman–Singh, Karanvir

[E61: King's Indian Defence, Smyslov Variation]

A game marked by tactical errors on both sides, and a fine example of Tartakower's remark about the next-to-last blunder."

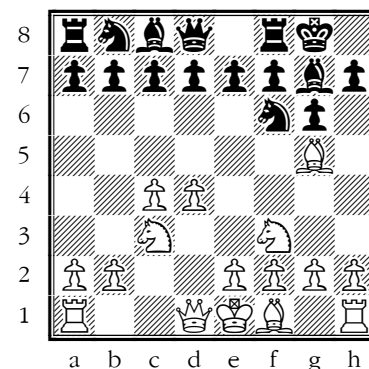
1. d4 Nf6

2. c4 g6

3. Nc3 Bg7

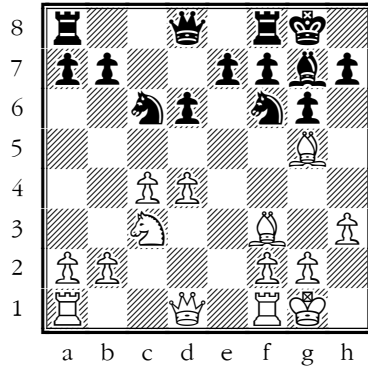
4. Nf3 0-0

5. Bg5



I think this is quite a good moment for Bg5 (compare Reece's first game); Black doesn't get their usual structure, doesn't get their usual attack, and can be tempted to weaken their King's-side trying to attack when they shouldn't.

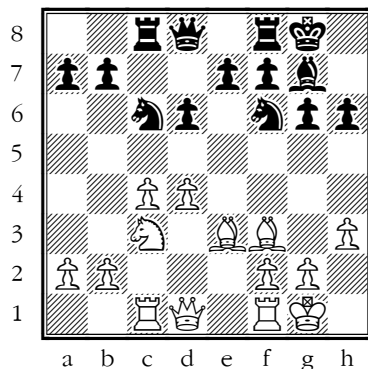
- 5 ... d6
 6. e3 c5
 7. Be2 cxd4
 8. exd4 Nc6
 9. 0-0 Bg4
 10. h3 Bxf3
 11. Bxf3



- 11 ... h6

[11...Qb6 looks more like it, but after 12.d5 (12.Bxc6!?) 12...Ne5 13.b3 Nfd7 14.Rc1 White is still quite OK]

12. Be3 Rc8
 13. Rc1



White is simply better here, with more space and the Bishop pair.

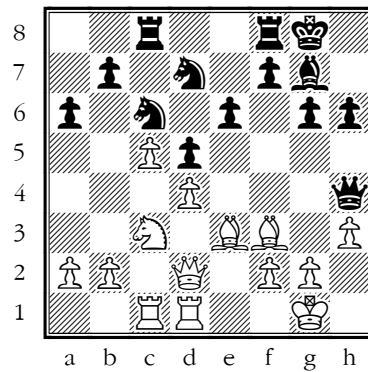
- 13 ... e6
 14. Qe2 d5
 15. c5 Nd7
 16. Rfd1 Qh4

[Black goes for the King's-side attack, but not much about this position says that is likely to succeed. Most of Black's pieces are on the other side! In fairness, White's plan must be b4, a4 and b4-b5, so if Black is going to do anything, it must be on the King's-side.]

17. Qd2

[17.Nb5!?)

- 17 ... a6



18. Bg4

[I guess preparing g3, but it rather invites Black's pawns to rush forward.]

- 18 ... f5!
 19. Bf3?

→ Clue: The Be3 has no retreat.

[19.g3! Qf6 20.Be2]

- 19 ... f4!

→ Tactic: net

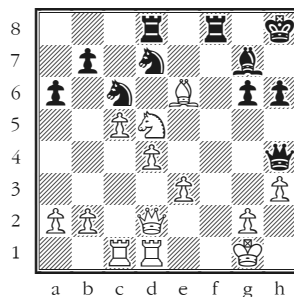
Winning a piece, although White can get fair value in return.

20. Bg4 fxe3
 21. Qxe3?

[21.Bxe6+!

▶ Look at every check and every capture, every move!

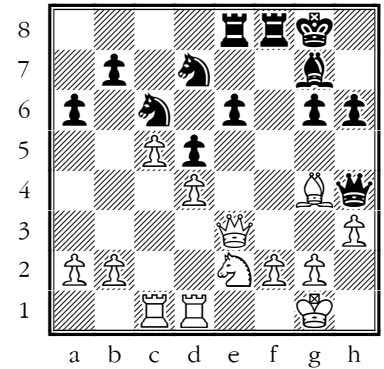
21....Kh8 22.fxe3 Rcd8 23.Nxd5!



... With three pawns for the piece. Although we're a long way off the endgame, central pawns are more valuable in the middlegame, so White has fair chances here.]

- 21 ... Rce8! -+
 and White gets just one pawn for his Bishop.

22. Ne2



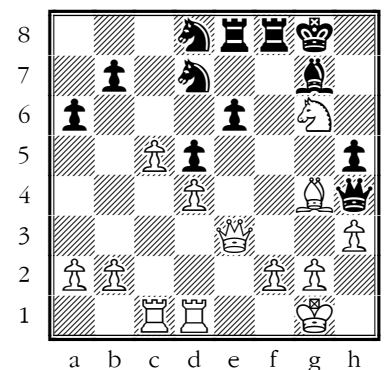
- 22 ... Nd8

[22...h5! 23.Bf3 Kh7! idea ...Bh6]

23. Nf4 h5?

[23...Qg5!; 23...Qf6!]

24. Nxc6

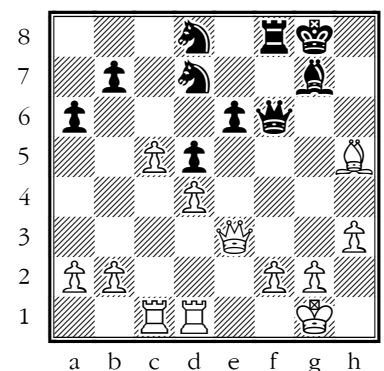


- 24 ... Qf6?

[24...Qxf2+! keeps black on top - 25.Qxf2 Rxf2 26.Kxf2 hxg4 27.hxg4 Nc6 28.Ke3 Kf7 29.Nf4 e5!⌘]

25. Nxf8 Rxf8

26. Bxh5=

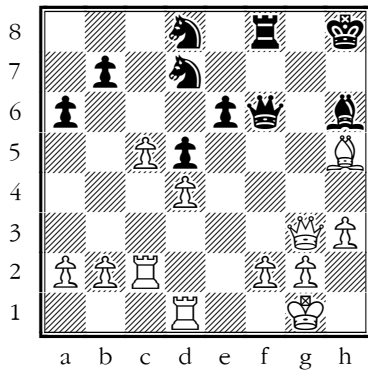


with level material and level chances.

- 26 ... Bh6

27. Qg3+ Kh8

28. Rc2



[28.Rc3!]

28 ... Rg8

[28...Nc6! Black must get all his pieces working.]

► Chess is a team game!

29. Qf3

[29.Bg4! White should gang up on Black's weakness at e6]

► Point all your team at the weakest point in the opponent's position

29 ... Qg7

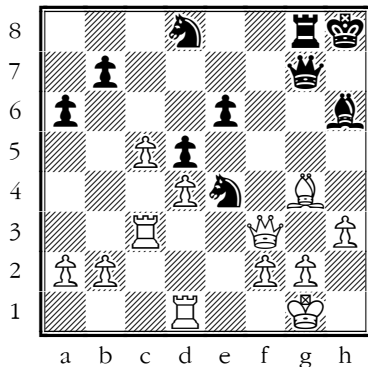
[29...Qh4!]

30. Bg4

[30.Re2!]

30 ... Nf6

31. Rc3 Ne4



Now e6 is hard to attack, and f2 is a target.

32. Rb3?

Missing Black's idea.

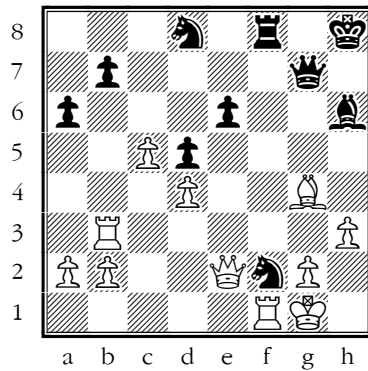
[32.Qe2]

32 ... Rf8!

33. Qe2 Nxf2

[33...Rxf2!]

34. Rf1!



→ Clue: well, just learn to count!

34 ... Qxd4??

[Looks forceful, but it's 3 vs 2 on f2.]

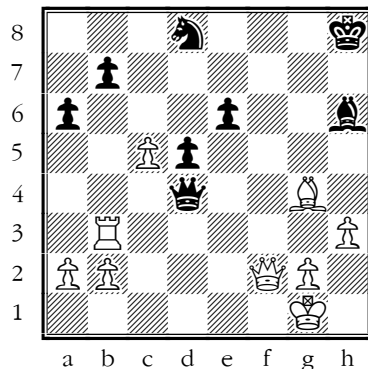
[34...Ne4!]=]

→ Tactic: outnumbered

35. Rxf2! Rxf2

[35...Qxc5]

36. Qxf2



36 ... Kg7??

Oh dear.

[1 : 36...Qxf2+]

37. Qxd4+ Kg6

38. Rf3 Nc6

39. Qf6+

[1 : 39.Bh5+#5]

39 ... Kh7

1-0

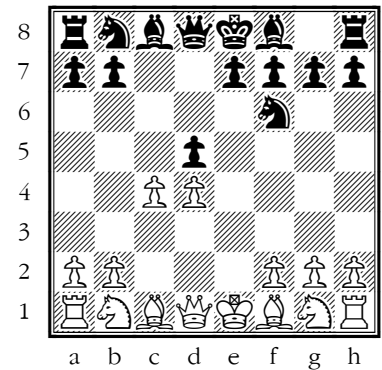
4.3 Bacon, Nicky – Katsande, Nyasha

[B14: Caro-Kann Defence, Panov-Botvinnik Variation]

An interesting game from the point of view of strategy, but what made the difference was White's keen eye for tactical chances."

1. d4 Nf6

2. c4 c5
3. e3 cxd4
4. exd4 d5



This is now a Caro-Kann, Panov-Botvinnik attack. Not sure if either or both of you knew that!

[1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 gets to the same position using different moves]

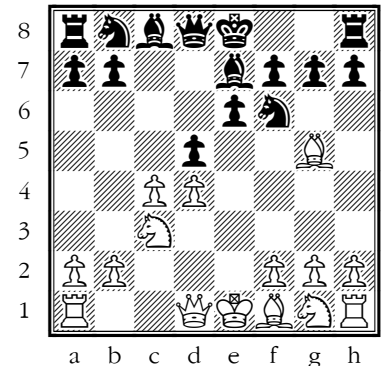
5. Nc3 e6

6. Bg5!?

Not bad.

[6.Nf3! is played 10 times more often]

6 ... Be7



The tension between the pawns on c4 and d5 can be resolved either by the moves ...d5xc4 or c4-c5. Both sides ignore their chances to make these moves!

► Pawns are the soul of the game, said Philidor

[6...Nc6!]

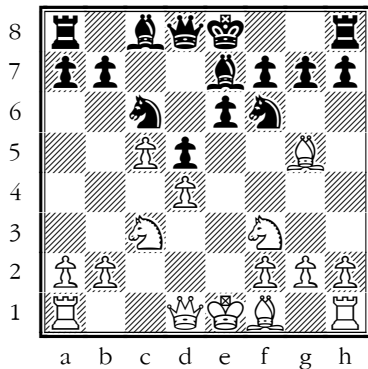
7. Nf3

[7.c5!?

7 ... Nc6

8. Be2

[8.c5!?



with the idea b4–b5. White has a 63% score from here!

8 ... 0-0

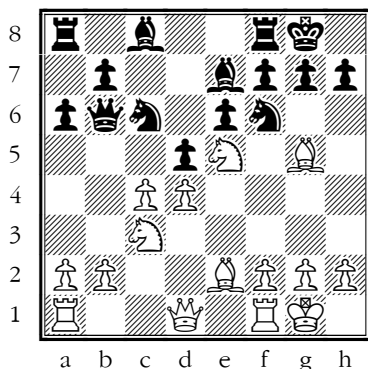
[8...dxc4! makes White waste time with the Bishop, giving a standard IQP position and at least equality. Black has a 60% score from here!]

9. 0-0 a6

10. Ne5

[10.a3]

10 ... Qb6?!



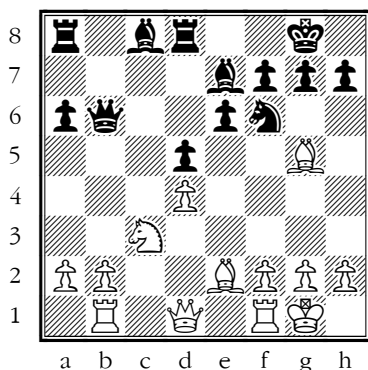
11. Nxc6

[11.c5! is still best, as 11...Qxb2? loses: 12.Na4! Qa3 13.Bc1 Qb4 14.a3 Qa5 15.Nxc6 bxc6 16.Nb6!]

11 ... bxc6

12. Rb1 Rd8

13. cxd5 cxd5



The structure has finally settled down, and White has a d-pawn

which is isolated but not so easy to attack. It's about equal.

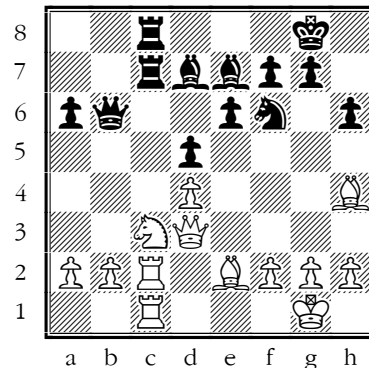
14. Qd3 Bd7

15. Rfc1 Rdc8

16. Rc2 h6

17. Bh4 Rc7

18. Rbc1 Rac8?!



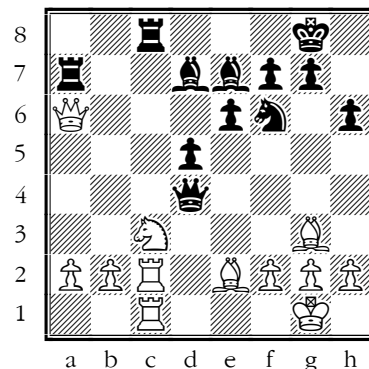
Both sides queue up on the open c-file, and Black thinks the a-pawn is a fair swap for the d-pawn.

▶ But you should assume that 'fair exchange' is never equal, and ask, who does it benefit?

Here Black gives White two connected passed pawns.

19. Qxa6 Qxd4

20. Bg3 Ra7

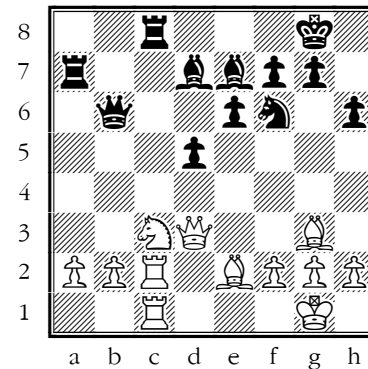


[20...Rc6]

21. Qd3

[21.Qxc8+! is best, but you have to peer a long way ahead to see why! 21...Bxc8 22.Nb5 Qe4 23.Rxc8+ Kh7 24.Bf3 Qa4 25.Nxa7 Qxa7 26.R8c7! The sting in the tail! 26...Qxa2 27.Rxe7 Qxb2 28.Rec7 and White's four pieces should be able to out-manoeuver Black's two.]

21 ... Qb6?!



→ Tactic: discovered attack

→ Tactic: outnumbered

Clues: battery down c-file and discovered attack.

[21...Qxd3!]

22. Nxd5!

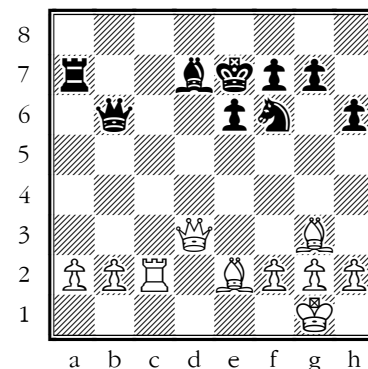
That's a fine tactic to spot.

22 ... Rxc2

[22...exd5]

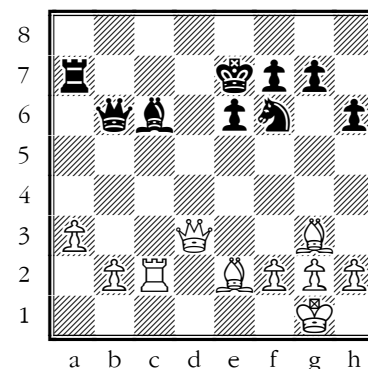
23. Nxe7+ Kf8

24. Rxc2 Kxe7



The extra pawn is nice, but at least as nice is the activity of White's pieces. The two Bishops are breathing fire, while the Queen's-side pawns are never needed!

25. a3 Bc6?!



Black overlooks something important.

[25...Ba4]

26. **Bd6+!?**

Good enough, but

[26.Qd6+! is best of all 26...Ke8
27.Bf3!!]

26. . . . **Ke8**

27. **Bc5** **Qa5**

28. **Bxa7** **Be4?**

[#3 : 28...Qxa7]

29. **Rc8+**

Mating

29. . . . **Ke7**

30. **Bc5+**

1-0

Board 5: Jim Knott

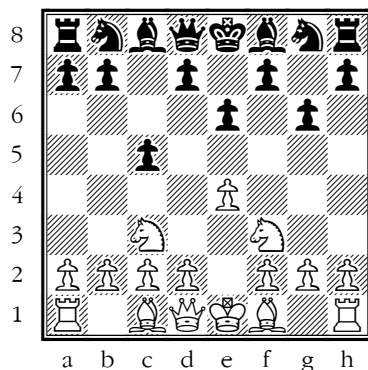
I expect you've learned the lesson of Round 1 (don't play draughts during a chess game) and I don't know what you might have learned from Round 3! Round 2 was a solid effort – well done.”

5.1 Evans, James – Knott, Jim

[B40: Sicilian Defence, Irregular Variation]

Black made lots of holes on the dark squares and White made good use of them, picking up the Black Queen. Amazingly, White managed to hand back the Queen but his position was so good that it didn't matter!”

1. **e4** **c5**
2. **Nc3** **e6**
3. **Nf3** **g6?**



You've already made an escape route for this piece.

Don't make lots of pawn moves in the opening

What's happened now is that you have dark square holes in your pawn structure on h6 f6 and d6, and your dark-squared Bishop can't guard all three.



If White's pieces get active, they will jump all over these weaknesses. (Agreed, g6 is usually a good idea when White has given up on d2-d4, since the

Pc5 is in your way, but I don't think that's true here.)

► **When you put all your pawns on the same colour squares, you will struggle to keep out your opponent from the holes between,**

It's a bit like playing draughts during a chess game!

4. **d4!**

Correctly opening up lines to get at the holes in Black's position.

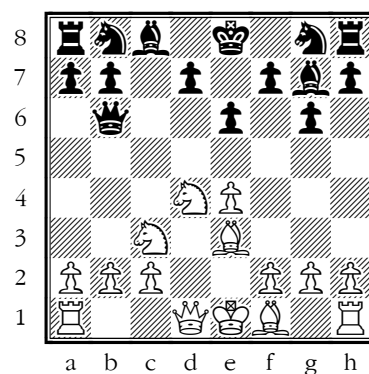
4. . . . **cxd4**
5. **Nxd4**

[5.Qxd4! looks very good too: White is racing ahead in development.]

5. . . . **Bg7**

[5...d6! gives you some hope of guarding your weaknesses.]

6. **Be3** **Qb6?**



That should lose on the spot.

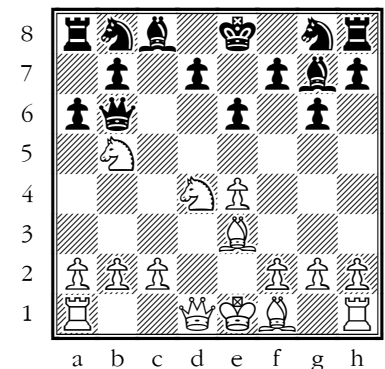
[6...a6]

7. **Ncb5!?**

Good enough!

[7.Nf5! wins 7...Bxc3+ (7...Qxb2 8.Nxg7+ Kf8 9.Bd4!) 8.bxc3 Qd8! 9.Nd6+ Kf8 10.Qd4 f6 11.Qc5 Ne7 12.e5! and the computer thinks White's attack is worth a piece. 12...f5 13.Bg5 b6 14.Bxe7+ Kxe7 15.Nxc8+ Kf7 16.Nd6+ Kg7 17.Qe3]

7. . . . **a6?**



► **Clues: discovered attack, exposed K**

[7...Qa5+]

► **Tactics: forks, discovered attack**
8. **Nd6+**

[8.Nxe6!+- and Black can resign with a clear conscience.]

8. . . . **Ke7**

[8...Qxd6]

9. **N4f5+**

Winning a Queen for a piece.

[9.Nxc8+! looks like an improvement, winning a Queen AND a piece!]

9. . . . **gxf5**

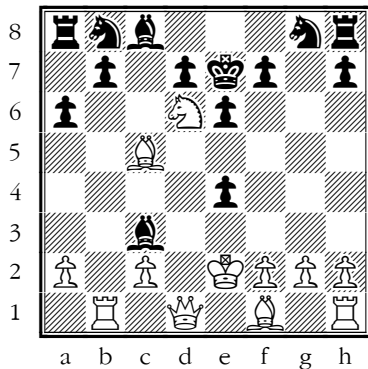
10. **Bxb6** **Bxb2**

11. **Rb1** **Bc3+**

12. **Ke2** **fxe4**

[1 : 12...Nc6]

13. **Bc5**



[13.Nxc8+ still looks good to me]

13 ... e5

There's no real advice to give Black, but moving pawns is not going to help, Black must get the pieces out.

[#7 : 13...Nc6]

14. Nxe4+ Ke8

15. Nxc3

[1 : 15.Qd6! mates quickly #4]

15 ... Nf6

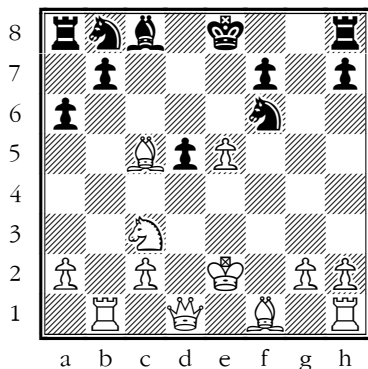
[1 : 15...Nc6!]

16. f4?

[16.Qd6! still works 1]

16 ... d5

17. fxe5??



→ Tactic: Skewer

→ Clue: K & Q in a line

[17.h3]

17 ... Bg4+!

Amazingly, Black is allowed to win back the Queen, but it shouldn't really matter.

18. Kd3 Bxd1

19. Rxd1 Ng4

20. Kd4

[20.Nxd5! was better ;

After 20.Kd4, 20...Nf2 could be tried, but 21.Rd2 Nxh1

22.Nxd5!+- threatens mate and a fork on c7.]

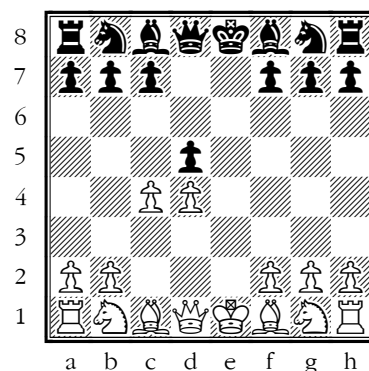
1-0

5.2 Knott, Jim – Bell-Thomas, Jamie

[C01: French Defence, Exchange Variation]

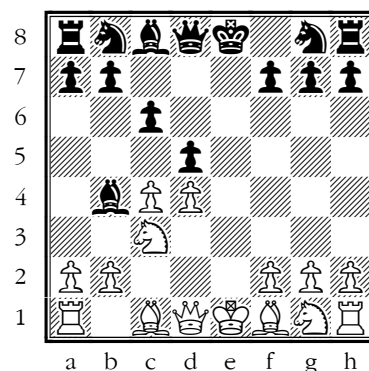
A slightly hesitant opening was soon followed by Black missing an important trick."

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. exd5 exd5
4. c4



Yes, a good system for White I think.

- 4 ... c6
5. Nc3 Bb4



6. Bd2

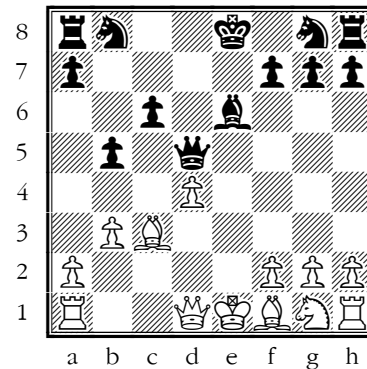
That's not really in the spirit of the system. Black doesn't have a threat here, so get castled!

[6.Bd3!]

- 6 ... Bxc3?!
7. Bxc3 Be6
8. cxd5 Qxd5
9. b3

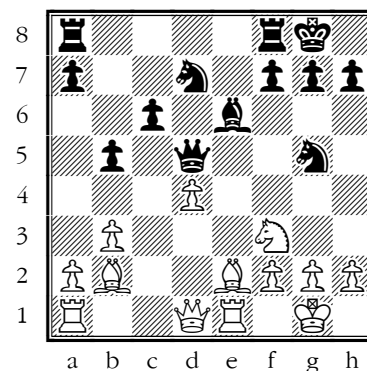
[9.Nf3]

- 9 ... b5



Ooh, that looks very weakening (Pc6 for starters)

10. Nf3 Nf6
11. Be2 Ne4
12. Bb2 0-0
13. 0-0 Nd7
14. Re1 Ng5



→ Tactic: fork

15. Qc1!

[I like that one, forking c6 and g5. Black notices the attack on c6...]

→ Clue: loose piece on g6

15 ... Rac8

[...but not the one on g5!]

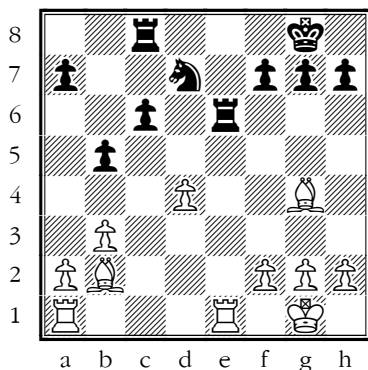
[15...f6]

16. Qxg5 Qxg5?

Swaps are going to help White, not Black.

► Keep pieces on when you're losing: if you're not going to lose, you have to make your opponent make a mistake, and you can't do that without any pieces left!

17. Nxc6 Rfe8
18. Nxe6 Rxe6
19. Bg4



19 ... Rxe1??

Black swaps his way to further disaster.

→ Clue: weak back rank

[19...Rd6!]

20. Rxe1 h6

The penny drops...

→ Tactic: overloaded

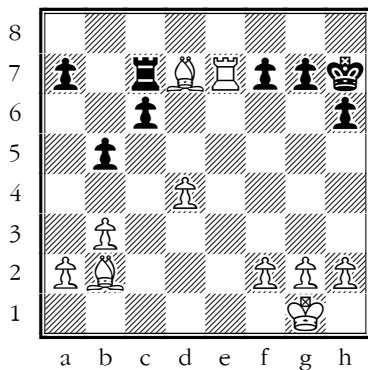
[20...Rc7? 21.Bxd7 Rxd7??]

22.Re8#]

21. Bxd7 Rc7

22. Re8+ Kh7

23. Re7



It's all over.

23. ... Kh8

24. Ba3 f6

25. Bd6 Rb7

26. Bxc6 Rb6

27. Re8+ Kh7

28. Be4+ g6

29. Re6 a5

30. Rxf6 Ra6

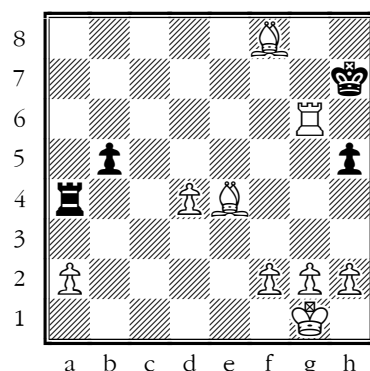
31. Rxc6 a4

[31...Rxd6]

32. bxa4 Rxa4

[32...Rxd6]

33. Bf8 h5



[#5 : 33...Rxd4!]

34. Ra6+

[34.Rg5+ mates, apparently, but White is in no danger of letting this one slip. #5]

34. ... Kg8

35. Rxa4 bxa4

36. Bb4 Kf7

37. d5 Ke8

38. d6 Kd7

39. Bf5+ Ke8

40. d7+ Kd8

41. Ba5+ Ke7

42. d8Q+ Kf7

43. Bb4 a3

44. Qe7+ Kg8

45. Qh7#

1-0

5.3 Knott,Jim -NN

Missing! "I made a right mess of that game," was your comment afterwards. Well, maybe, but I would have liked to have seen it! There was probably more to learn from it than you thought."

Board 6: Edmund Kelly

It's hard to complain about a fine score like 2/3 without loss! But I'm going to... As I have mentioned, your chess feels a bit too cautious, particularly regarding exchanges. More energy in the approach, and a willingness to avoid exchanges, will see a big improvement in your results, I'm sure."

6.1 Kelly,Edmund - Fowler,Hugo

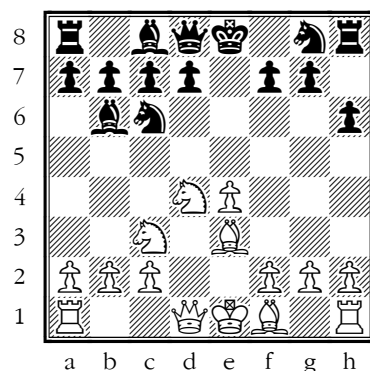
[C45: Scotch Four Knights' Game]

Black gave up a pawn early on, and White smoothly swapped his way to victory. Very tidy!"

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4 exd4
4. Nxd4 Bc5

5. Be3 Bb6

6. Nc3 h6?!



White has more space, thanks to the forward e-pawn, so White should avoid swaps. If Black wants to swap, Black will pull your pieces to the centre.

7. Nxc6

[7.Bc4!]

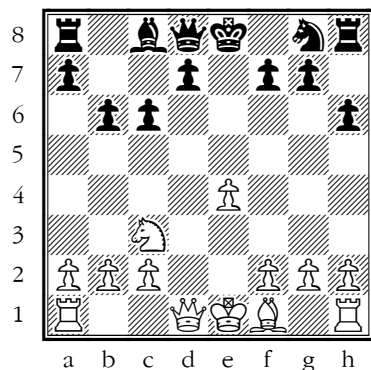
7 ... bxc6

8. Bxb6

Swaps are always better for one side or the other, so don't make them unless you know who!

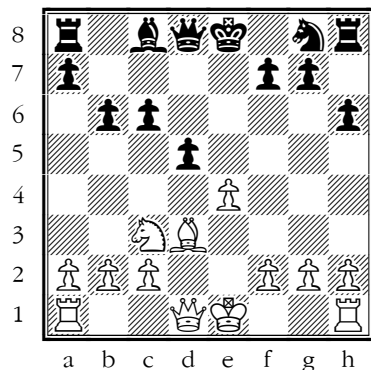
I expect those swaps made Black feel a lot less cramped.

8 ... cxb6?



Capture towards the centre, they say! This makes a hole on d6. Now 9.Qd4! is ±.

9. Bd3 d5?



At best, this is going to give Black a weak isolated pawn on d5, but in fact it just drops off.

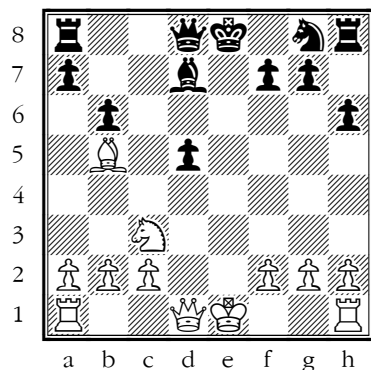
[9...Qg5!?!]

10. exd5 cxd5

→ Tactic: discovered attack.

→ Clues: exposed K, only-just-defended P

11. Bb5+ Bd7



12. Bxd7+

[12.Qxd5! gets the pawn and keeps more initiative. 12...Bxb5 13.Qxb5+ Qd7 14.Qxd7+ Kxd7 15.0-0-0+ Kc6 16.Rhe1]

12 ... Qxd7

13. Qxd5 Qxd5

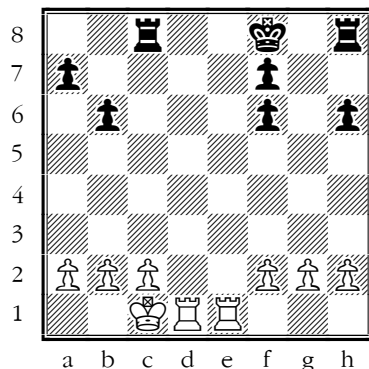
14. Nxd5 Rc8

[14...0-0-0]

15. 0-0-0 Nf6

16. Nxf6+ gxf6

17. Rhe1+ Kf8



All the differences in position favour White, and White has an extra pawn.

18. g3 Re8

19. Rxe8+ Kxe8

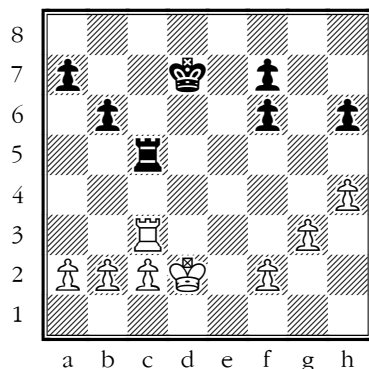
20. Re1+ Kd7

21. Kd2 Rg8

22. Re3 Rg5

23. h4 Rc5

24. Rc3



24 ... Rxc3??

Suicide: Black needs to Rook to make problems for White.

► Swapping pieces is good for the side ahead on material.

[24...Re5]

25. Kxc3 Kc6

26. Kd3 f5

27. a3

What was the point of that?

[27.Kd4!]

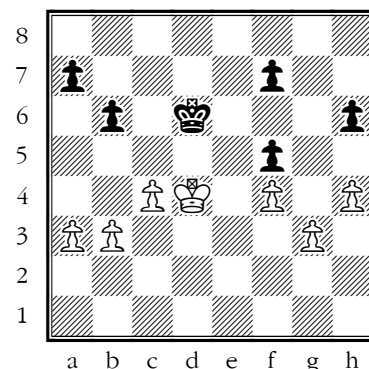
27 ... Kd5

28. b3 Ke5

29. f4+ Kd5

30. c4+ Kd6

31. Kd4



Back on track.

31 ... a5

[31...a6]

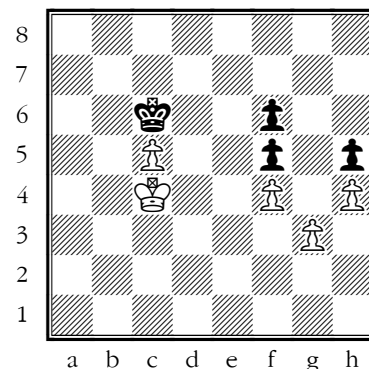
32. b4 axb4

33. axb4 f6

34. c5+ bxc5+

35. bxc5+ Kc6

36. Kc4 h5



and White finishes off smoothly.

37. Kd4 Kd7

38. Kd5 Ke7

39. Kc6 Ke6

40. Kb7 Kd5

41. c6 Ke4

42. c7 Kf3

43. c8Q Kxg3

44. Qxf5 Kxh4

45. Qxf6+ Kg4

46. Qg5+ Kf3

47. Qxh5+

[#7 : 47.f5!]

47 ... Kxf4

48. Kc6 Ke3

49. Qh4 Kf3

50. Kd5 Kg2

51. Qa4 Kf3

- 52. Ke5 Kg3
- 53. Kf5 Kh3
- 54. Kg5 Kg3
- 55. Qa3+ Kg2
- 56. Kg4

[56.Kf4]

- 56 ... Kf2

[56...Kf1 57.Qa2 Kg1 58.Kf3
(58.Kg3 is #2) 58...Kh1 59.Qg2#]

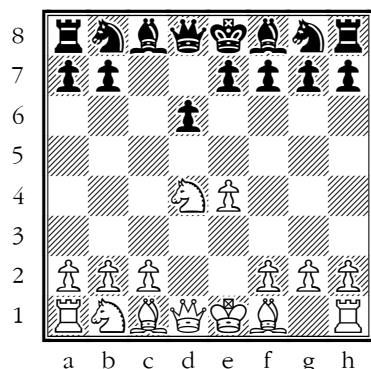
1-0

6.2 Siromani, Daniel – Kelly, Edmund

[B32: Sicilian Defence, Maròczy Bind]

Black allowed the fairly dreaded Maròczy Bind. Despite Black allowing a huge hole on d5, White couldn't find an effective way of using it. But this is to be avoided!"

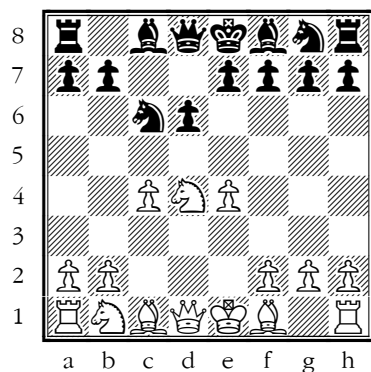
- 1. e4 c5
- 2. Nf3 d6
- 3. d4 cxd4
- 4. Nxd4



- 4 ... Nc6

[4...Nf6! encourages 5.Nc3 when White is going to have to spend a long while arranging c2-c4.]

- 5. c4



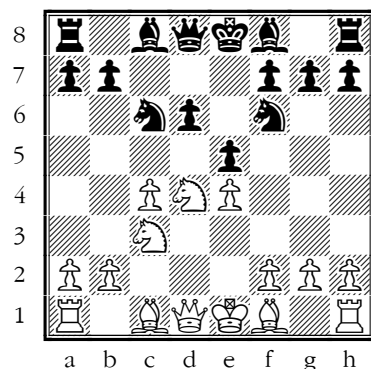
Ah, the fairly dreaded Maròczy Bind.

Why dreaded? Well, lots of Black's counterplay in the Sicilian depends on organising ...b5 and/or ...d5 at a good moment, and c2-c4 stops both. Black faces a dull defensive game after c4, which is not why we play chess, and certainly not why we play the Sicilian.

It's only fairly dreaded, as we think these days that Black can get an equal game, but life is struggle enough!

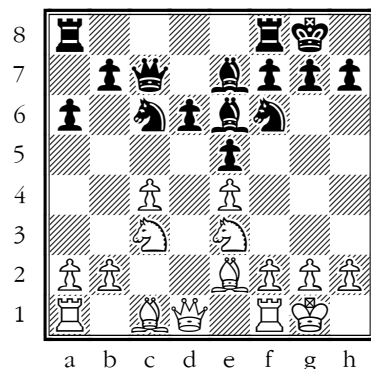
► Don't accept a passive position if you don't have to

- 5 ... Nf6
- 6. Nc3 e5?!



That creates a big hole on d5. That might not be a complete disaster, but why give White anything?

- 7. Ndb5 a6
- 8. Na3 Be7
- 9. Nc2 Be6
- 10. Be2 0-0
- 11. 0-0 Qc7
- 12. Ne3



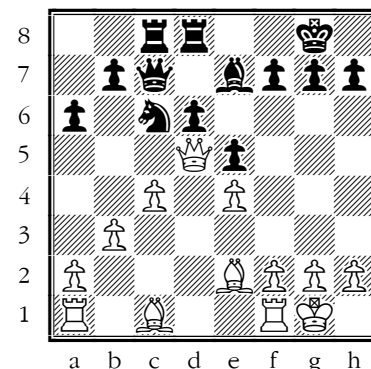
White correctly prepares to occupy d5 with a Knight, but it's all a bit too straightforward. White could try first (a)

swapping off a defender of d5 with Bg5, and/or (b) swapping off light-squared Bishops with Bg4. In an ideal world, White would swap off three pairs of minor pieces, and Black would be left with just the Be7 while White would still have a Knight on d5.

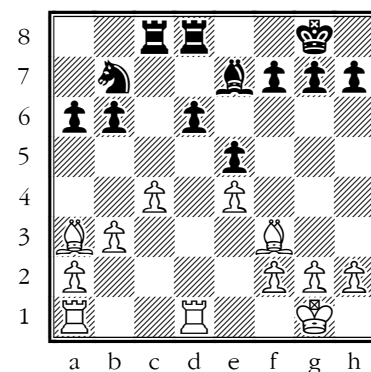
- 12 ... Rac8
- 13. b3 Rfd8
- 14. Ncd5 Bxd5
- 15. Nxd5 Nxd5

[White has run out of Knights to put on d5.]

- 16. Qxd5



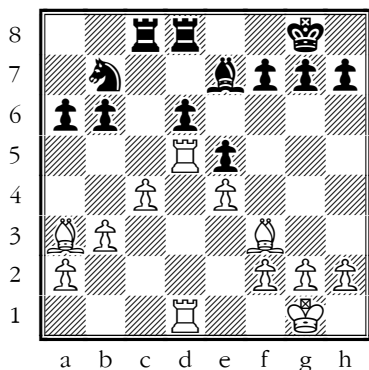
- 16 ... Qa5
- 17. Qxa5 Nxa5
- 18. Rd1 b6
- 19. Ba3 Nb7
- 20. Bf3



Black's dark-squared Bishop is just a tall pawn, but White's light-squared Bishop isn't much better off.

- 20 ... Re8
- 21. Rd5 Red8
- 22. Rad1±

½-½



There was no real reason for White to accept a draw here -- Black is very tied down and if Black made a second weakness, White would have a winning game.

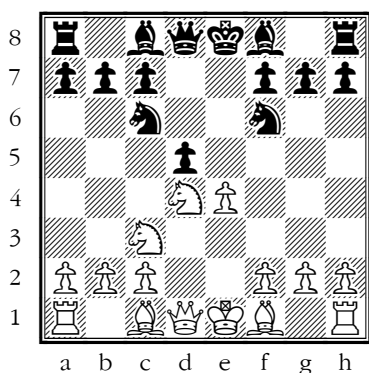
► **One weakness means you have to defend, while two weaknesses are usually enough to lose.**

6.3 Kelly, Edmund – Evans, James

[C45: Scotch Four Knights' Game]

White played a little too cautiously at the start and at the end. ”

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4 exd4
4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 d5!?



I've never seen this before, and it looks like Black is trying to equalise too soon. White should

try to get a permanent advantage now, but how?

[5...Bb4!]

6. Nxc6

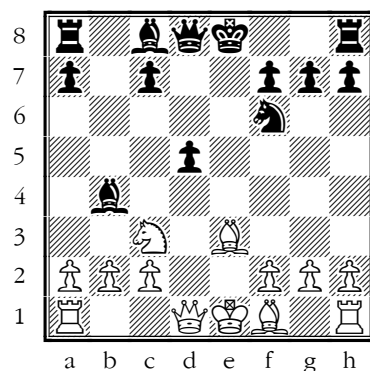
[6.Bb5! Bd7 7.exd5! is the key;

6.Bg5!?! Bb4 7.Bb5 is promising]

6 ... bxc6

7. exd5 cxd5

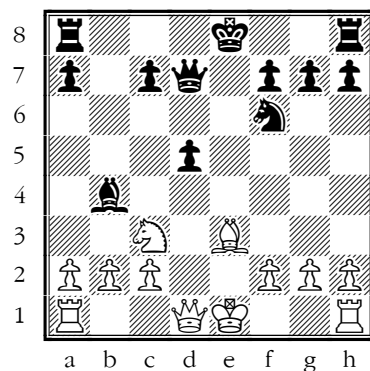
8. Be3 Bb4



Each side has two pieces developed. It's White's turn.

9. Bb5+ Bd7

10. Bxd7+ Qxd7



Magically, Black has developed a piece over the past two moves while White has developed nothing!

► **Exchanges usually favour one side or the other – so make sure it's better for you to swap**

In your games, Edmund, you must think more carefully about swapping. There are several examples of swaps that you should not have made, as they helped your opponent.

► **Don't help your opponent!**

As well as knowing what you are trying to do in a given position, you should have a good idea about what your opponent is trying to do.

11. 0-0 0-0

12. Bd4 Ne8

13. Qf3 Rd8

14. a3

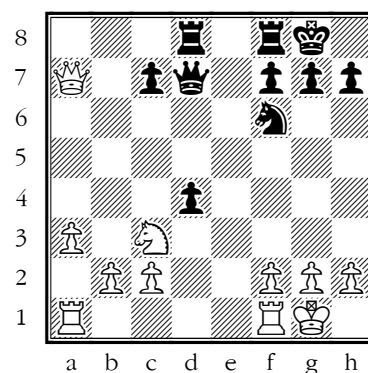
[14.Bxa7]

14 ... Be7

15. Qe3 Bf6

16. Bxf6 Nxf6

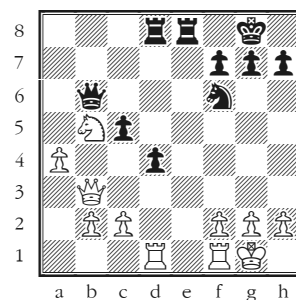
17. Qxa7 d4



1/2-1/2

Again, there was no very good reason to agree a draw here. White has more than one way to get the Queen back into play, and it's actually making some threats where it is.

[17...d4 18.Rad1! looks correct now, when 18...Qc6 19.Qa4 Qb6 20.Nb5 c5 21.Qb3 Rfe8 22.a4



leaves White with an easy plan]

Board 7: Taylor Finch

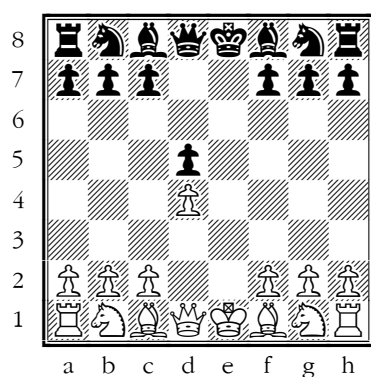
A cracking 3/3 with only the occasional wobble revealed by analysis. Very pleasing – I like your positive approach to the game and a bit of practice plus getting your eye in for tactics should make you unstoppable. At the moment, you are missing some good chances for you – and your opponent!”

7.1 NN – Finch, Taylor

[C01: French Defence, Exchange Variation]

Some nice ideas by Black and a fine win, but the impression is that your play needs tightening up!”

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



Without some pawn tension in the position, the game goes rather flat.

4. Nc3
- 4 ... Ne7

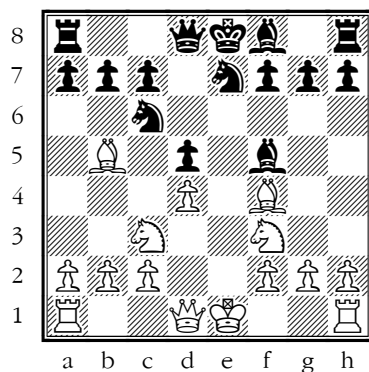
[Also not best. Your Bishop on f8 is no doubt pulling a sad face :(]

[4...c6 is OK;

4...Nc6 is fine too;

4...Bf5 looks logical: sometimes this fails to a quick Qe2 (idea Qb5+ picking up the pawn on b7) but not here: 5.Qe2+ Ne7 6.Qb5+ Nbc6 7.Qxb7 Rb8 8.Qa6 Nb4]

5. Nf3 Bf5
6. Bf4 Nbc6
7. Bb5



- 7 ... g6!?

I see the logic, but this is getting awkward fast

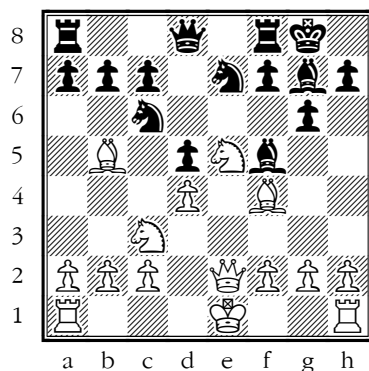
[7...a6! is essential here]

8. Ne5!?

[8.Be5!]

- 8 ... Bg7

9. Qe2 0-0



Now Black is out of the pin...

→ **Tactic: fork**

→ **Clue: undefended P**

10. h4??

[10.0-0-0!]=]

- 10 ... a6??

A daft double blunder – you both missed something big!

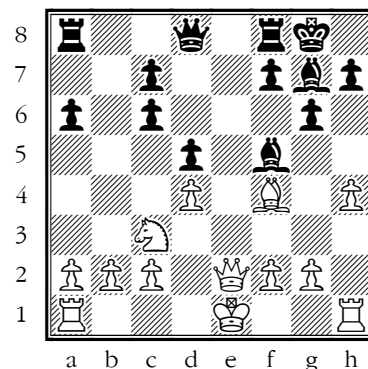
[10...Nxd4! wins on the spot - 11.Qd2 Nxc2+ 12.Kf1 Nxa1 and Black can likely rescue the Knight]

► **Look at every check, and every capture, every move!**

A move that was rubbish just earlier, might now win – that's just what happened here.

11. Bxc6 Nxc6

12. Nxc6 bxc6



Now all White needs to do is spot the threat to d4 at last...

13. h5?

[13.0-0-0!]

- 13 ... Re8!

14. Be3 Bxd4!

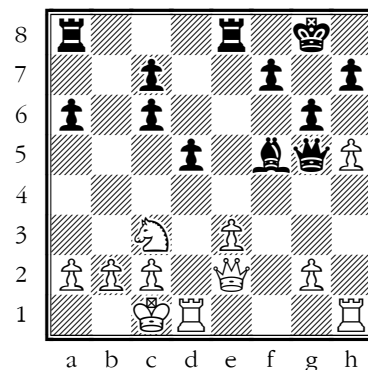
15. 0-0-0

[15.hxg6]

- 15 ... Bxe3+

[15...Bxc3]

16. fxe3 Qg5!



Putting more pressure on e3 - rather a theme of this game.

► **Gang up on a weakness.**

17. Rde1

[17.hxg6]

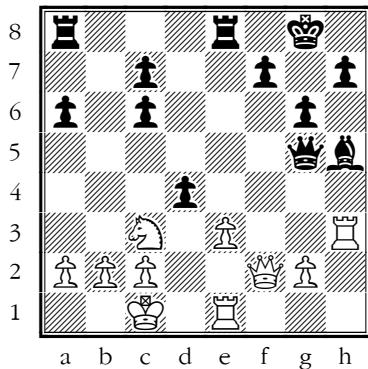
- 17 ... Bg4

18. Qf2 Bxh5

19. Rh3

[19.Qf4]

- 19 ... d4!



And finally the e-pawn falls.

20. Na4 dxe3

[20...Rxe3!]

21. Rxe3 Rxe3

22. Qxe3 Qxe3+

[22...Rd8!]

23. Rxe3 Rd8

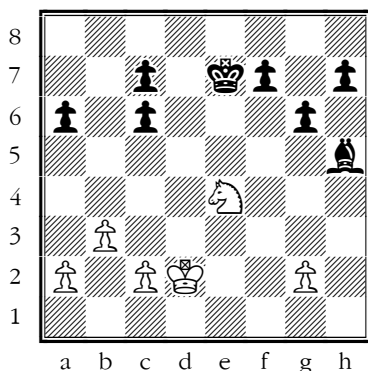
24. Nc3 Kf8

25. b3 Re8

26. Rxe8+ Kxe8

27. Ne4 Ke7

28. Kd2



Black is two pawns up, and as long as we keep control, all will be well.

28 ... f5?

Putting the win at risk.

[28...Bg4!]

29. Ng3?

[29.Nc5! and White starts some counterplay on the Queen's-side. Bishops are normally good at controlling play on both sides of the board, but not here! Compare this possibility for making problems with the dismal course of the game for White.]

29 ... Ke6

30. Nxe5?

As usual, swaps in the endgame are suicidal. Black now finished off without problems.

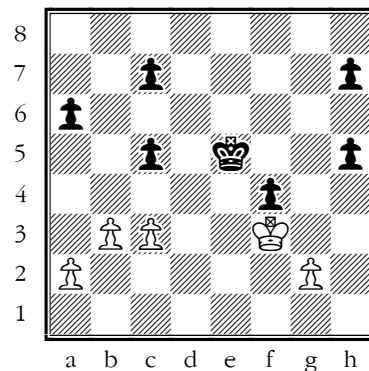
► You mustn't swap your way to defeat in the endgame.

30 ... gxh5

31. Ke3 Ke5

32. Kf3 f4

33. c3 c5



34. b4

[34.Kf2]

34 ... cxb4

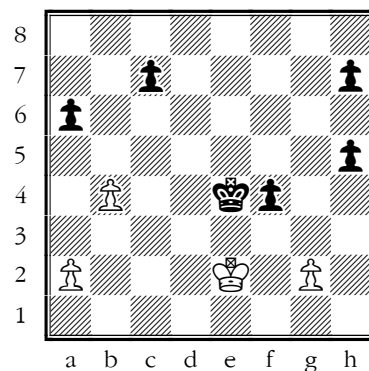
35. cxb4 Kf5

[35...Kd5]

36. Kf2 Ke4

[36...Kg4]

37. Ke2



37 ... f3+!?

[37...Kd4 also wins without fuss - 38.Kf3 Kc4 39.Kxf4 Kxb4]

38. gxf3+ Kf4

39. Kf2 h4

40. Kg2 h3+

41. Kxh3 Kxf3

42. Kh4 Ke4

0-1

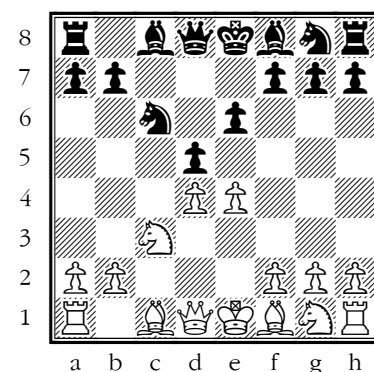
White had seen enough. Without a King's-side pawn, White has no illusion that there is any counterplay.

7.2 Finch, Taylor – NN

[B22: Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation]

Black grabbed a chance to attack but giving up B+N for R+P was always going to be risky; in the end, Black soon lost a piece on top."

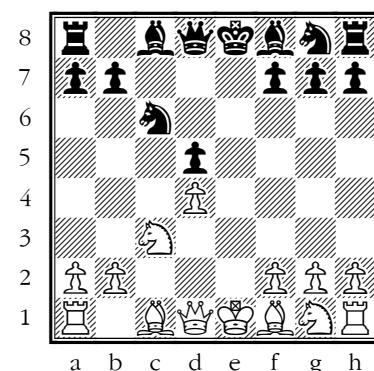
1. e4 c5
2. c3 Nc6
3. d4 cxd4
4. cxd4 e6
5. Nc3 d5



6. exd5

[6.e5! gives White a good version of the French: normally White either has to use c3 for a pawn, or suffer doubled c-pawns after Nc3 and ...Bb4. No danger of either, here!]

6 ... exd5



7. g3

Making a pawn move to develop a Bishop that can already be developed... probably not best!

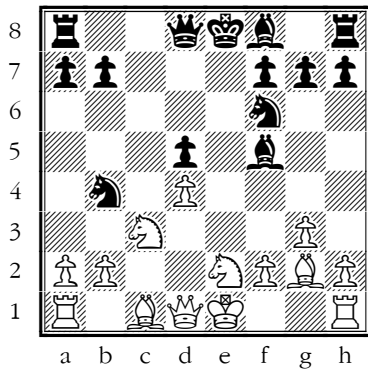
► Avoid pawn moves in the opening, unless you need them to develop a piece.

If you want the Bishop to point at d5, Bf1-e2-f3 takes as many moves and makes fewer holes.

[7.Bd3!? can be played as a gambit: 7...Nxd4 8.Nf3 Nc6 9.0-0=;

7.Be2 Nf6 8.Nf3 Be7=]

- 7 ... Nf6
8. Bg2 Bf5
9. Nge2 Nb4



10. Qa4+

[10.0-0! Nc2 looks drawn after 11.Rb1 (but White can play more positively with 11.g4! Bg6 12.Nf4 Nxa1 13.Re1+) 11...Nb4 12.Ra1]

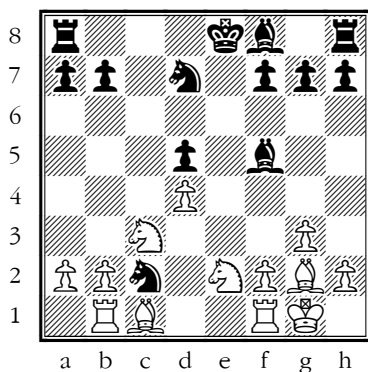
10 ... Qd7

[10...b5!]

11. Qxd7+ Nxd7

12. 0-0 Nc2

13. Rb1



13 ... Nxd4?

R+P is about the same as B+N but I usually fancy the two pieces; there are more ways for them to co-ordinate with other pieces, the more so the earlier in the game.

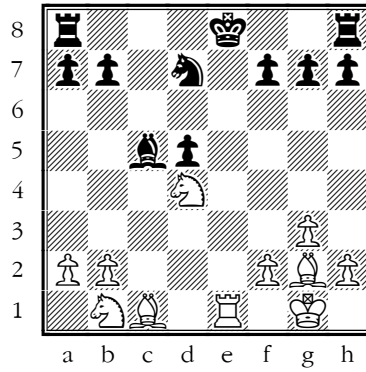
► The more pieces you have, the better!

[13...Nb4 really is a draw, now]

14. Nxd4 Bxb1

15. Nxb1 Bc5

16. Re1+



16 ... Be7??

Entering a pin

→ Tactic: pin

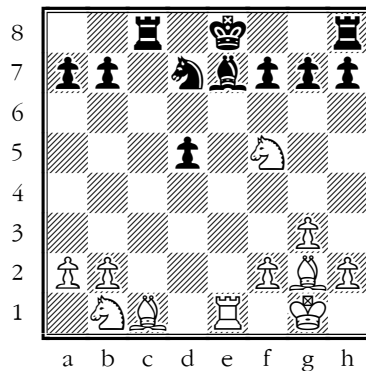
[16...Kf8]

► If you block a check, you are in a pin!

17. Nf5!

Ganging up on a weak point again.

17. ... Rc8



[17...Kd8]

18. Nxe7??

Simple enough, but White has two better ideas:

[18.Nd6+! Kd8 19.Nxf7+ Ke8 (19...Kc7 20.Bf4+ Kb6 21.Rxe7) 20.Nd6+ Kd8 21.Nxb7+ Kc7 22.Rxe7 Kxb7 23.Rxd7+;

18.Bg5! f6 19.Nxe7]

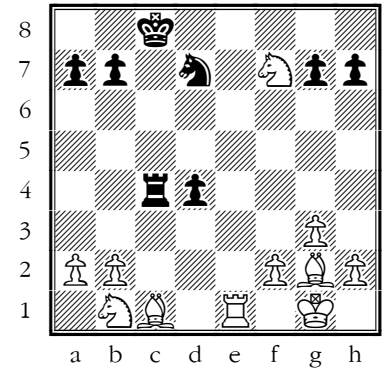
18 ... Rc4?

[18...Rxc1! keeps Black's losses to a minimum - still a whole piece!]

19. Ng6+! Kd8

20. Nxb8 d4

21. Nxf7+ Kc8



[21...Kc7]

22. Nd6+

Hard to avoid playing once you see it!

[But 22.Bf4!+- is a mating net]

22 ... Kc7

23. Nxc4 d3

24. Bf4+ Kd8

25. Bxb7 d2

26. Nbx d2 Nb6

[#4 : 26...g5]

27. Nxb6 axb6

28. Nc4 g5

29. Rd1+

[29.Bxg5+ mates more quickly, as if you care #5]

29 ... Ke7

[#5 : 29...Ke8]

30. Bxg5+ Ke8

31. Ne5 Kf8

32. Bf6 Ke8

33. Rd8#

1-0

7.3 Neave, Guto – Finch, Taylor

[C02: French Defence, Advance Variation]

White lost a pawn early on but could have done more to make life awkward for Black."

1. e4 e6

2. d4 d5

3. e5 c5

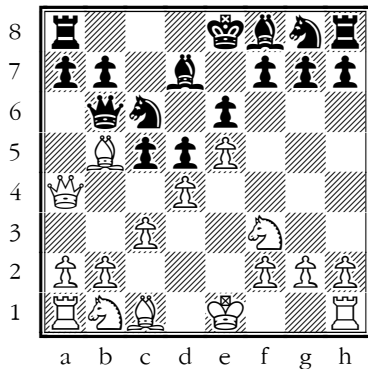
4. c3 Nc6

5. Nf3 Qb6

This is a pretty common position.

6. Qa4?! Bd7

7. Bb5?!



→ Clues: only-just-defended Bb5, discovered attack from Bd7
It's all very energetic from White, but this is not how it's usually played, and Black shows why:

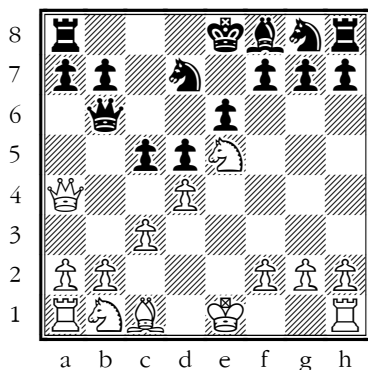
[7.dxc5]

7 ... Nxe5!

→ Tactic: discovery

8. Bxd7+ Nxd7

9. Ne5

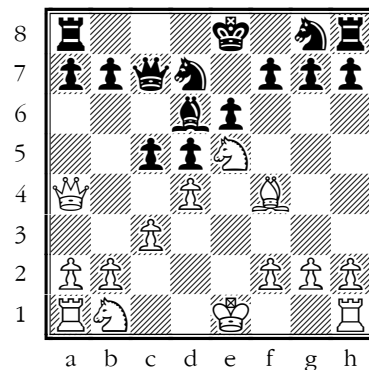


9 ... Qc7

Not so accurate: this exposes the Queen to some awkward threats.

[9...Rd8!; 9...Ngf6!]

10. Bf4! Bd6?



11. Qxd7+?

[11.Na3!± Qd8! (11...a6 12.Nb5!)]

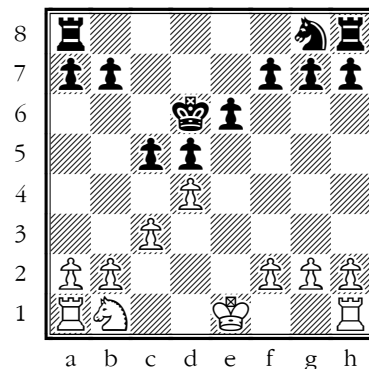
12.Nb5 Bxe5 13.Bxe5 Nxe5

14.dxe5 Kf8 and Black can still hope to untangle with his extra pawn.]

11 ... Qxd7

12. Nxd7 Kxd7

13. Bxd6 Kxd6



As usual, all the swaps have made life much better for one side, and here it was Black.

14. Nd2 cxd4

15. cxd4 Rc8

16. Nf3

[16.Ke2]

16 ... Ne7

[16...Rc2]

17. Ne5 Rhf8

18. Kd2 Ng6

19. Ng4

[19.Rhe1]

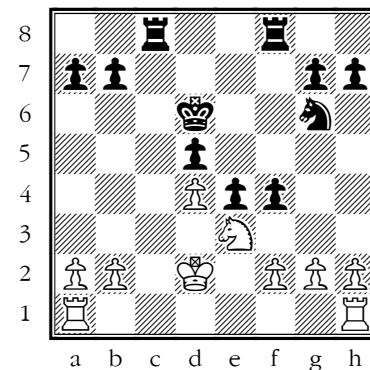
19 ... f5

[19...Rc4]

20. Ne3 e5

21. Nc2 e4

22. Ne3 f4



I don't know if there was more of this, but it's not too early to resign.

0-1

Board 8: Jack Bellamy

I can see you know what you are doing, but at the moment you're not sharp enough in spotting tactics to make the most of your chances. I recommend some practice in getting your eye in for these tactical patterns, and then you will be a formidable opponent indeed."

8.1 Bellamy, Jack – Neave, Guto

[C30: King's Gambit Declined]

Both sides missed plenty of chances in a sharp opening, but it all fizzled out to equality. Sadly, White then grabbed a very poisoned pawn."

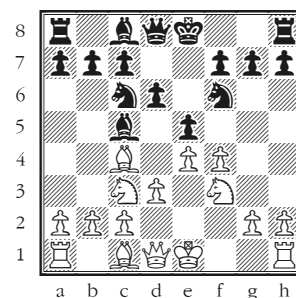
1. e4 e5

2. Bc4

This is Bishop's Opening – at least, so far.

[2.f4 Bc5 3.Nf3 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6

5.Bc4 Nc6 6.d3



is the usual way of arriving at the game position]

2 ... Nc6

[2...Nf6 is better]

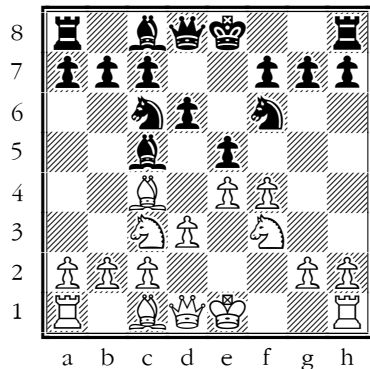
3. d3 Bc5
4. f4

[4.Nf3]

- 4 ... d6

[Black can steal a pawn here, but I think White gets excellent King's-Gambit-style compensation. 4...Bxg1 5.Nf3 5.Rxg1 Qh4+ 6.g3 Qxh2 7.Be3]

5. Nf3 Nf6
6. Nc3



We have reached a well-known position from the King's Gambit Declined. I don't know if you've been playing like this for a while, but this is a common place to arrive from Bishop's Opening, and well worth learning a bit more about.

Become an expert in the openings you play most often

- 6 ... h6

[6...a6! looks like a Dreadful Little Rook's Pawn Move, but it's the main line of theory here. Black wants to keep the strong Bc5 in play. White's tries then are 7.f5 / 7.fxe5 & 8.Bg5 / 7.Rf1 / 7.Na4:]

7. Bb5?!

Moving a piece twice in the opening needs a good excuse!

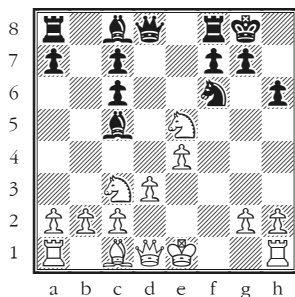
By which I mean, a BxQ excuse... I'd prefer one of the ideas just seen:

[7.Rf1! / 7.fxe5; / 7.f5; / 7.Na4! (showing why ...a6 is played these days) - I know I said don't move a piece twice without a good excuse, but the Bc5 is Black's best piece and it's stopping you from castling, and that's good enough excuse.]

- 7 ... Bd7

[Black doesn't really meet the threat to e5 with this move, but Black doesn't really need to! Let's see:

- 7...0-0! 8.Bxc6? bxc6 9.fxe5 dxe5 10.Nxe5??



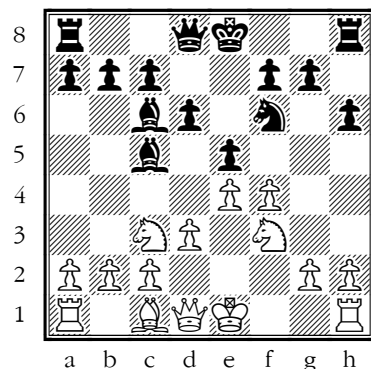
→ Clues: loose piece on e5, exposed and uncastled King

10...Qd4!

→ Tactic: fork

-+]

8. Bxc6 Bxc6

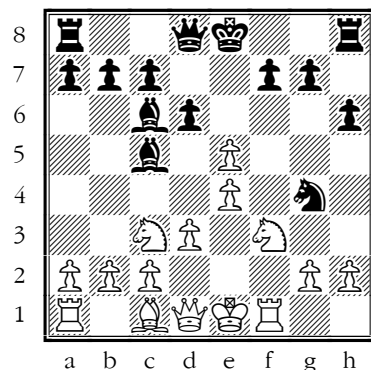


9. fxe5 Ng4?!

It's tough to see far enough ahead here.

[9...dxe5! 10.Nxe5 Qd4 11.Ng4 Nxe5 12.Qxg4 0-0 13.Bxh6 f5! and Black has good chances]

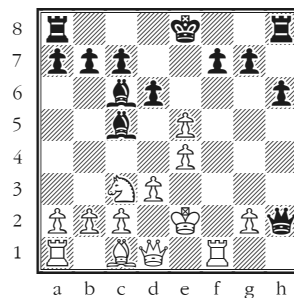
10. Rf1



[10.d4]

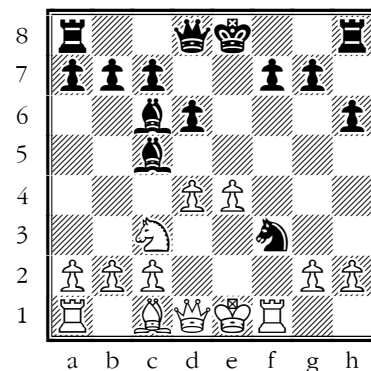
- 10 ... Nxe5??

- [10...Nxh2! - 11.Nxh2 Qh4+ 12.Ke2 Qxh2]



13.Be3 Qxg2+ 14.Rf2 Qg4+ 15.Ke1 Qxd1+ 16.Nxd1 Bxe3 17.Nxe3 dxe5 should win for Black.]

11. d4! Nxf3+



→ Tactic: fork

→ Clue: uncastled K

12. gxf3?

[12.Qxf3! with attacks on c5 and f7]

- 12 ... Bb4

[12...Qh4+ 13.Rf2 Bb6]

13. Bd2 Qd7

[13...Bxc3!]

14. d5 Bb5

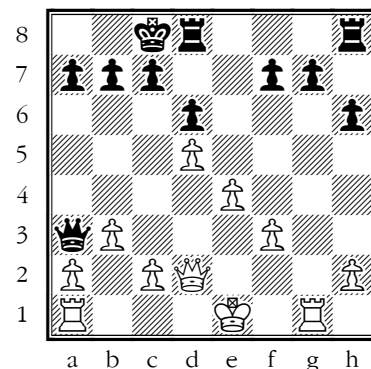
15. Nxb5 Qxb5

16. b3 Qc5

17. Bxb4 Qxb4+

18. Qd2 Qa3

19. Rg1 0-0=



After all the mad tactics, the position has settled down to rough equality. There is just one trick left to spot...

20. Rxc7??

[20.Qc3]

→ Clue: undefended Rg7 and Ra1

20 ... Qb2!

with an unusual fork of the Rooks.

→ Tactic: fork

I'm sure you have seen ideas like this before – but you have to spot them before your opponent can play them!

► **So, even if you know lots about tactics, you have to practice them at home, if you don't play very often.**

We discussed ways of training yourself to spot tactics on the U14 Training Day – look on the website for what we did. One of the main things I wanted people to learn was checking for clues. Example:

► **Loose pieces drop off**

Your Rook on g7 is not attacked, but it's also not protected (loose), so if Black can attack it and something else, you will lose material... and that's what happened.

21. c3 Qxa1+

22. Kf2 Rdg8

23. Rxc7+ Rxc7

24. Qe1

[24.Ke3]

24 ... Rg2+!

25. Kxc2 Qxe1

26. Kh3 h5

27. f4?

[#2 : 27.Kg2 lasts a little longer]

27 ... Qg1

28. e5 Qg4#

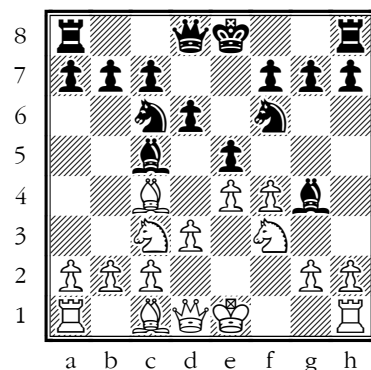
0-1

8.2 Bellamy, Jack – Bart, Anna – Lena

[C30: King's Gambit Declined]

White got a bit muddled in a very sharp opening and Black took their chances, but somehow failed to win."

1. e4 e5
2. Bc4 Bc5
3. d3 Nf6
4. f4 d6
5. Nf3 Nc6
6. Nc3 Bg4!?



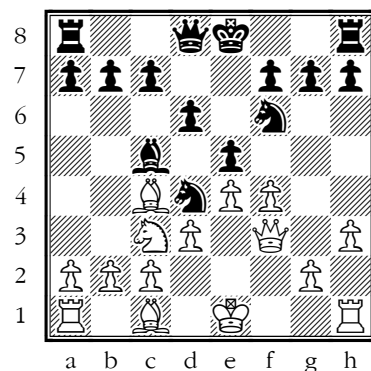
An ancient try, known for centuries.

7. h3

[7.Na4 is the other main try here.]

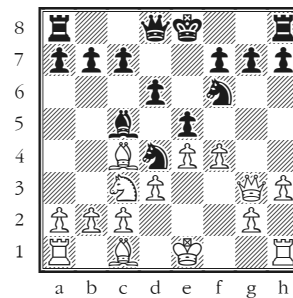
7 ... Bxf3

8. Qxf3 Nd4



9. Qd1

[Also known, but it seems not known to White, is the move 9.Qg3!]



and now 9...Nxc2+ cannot be risked: (9...Qe7 10.fxe5 dxe5 11.Kd1 0-0-0 12.Rf1 still gives White great attacking chances) 10.Kd1 Nxa1 11.Qxg7! Rf8 12.fxe5! dxe5 13.Bg5! Be7 14.Rf1 and Black is dead. In this line, Black wastes time with pieces that are already developed, and that's one thing you can't do in the opening]

9 ... 0-0

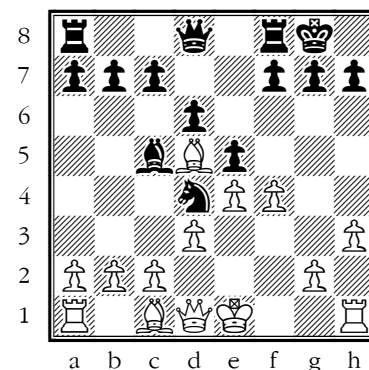
10. Nd5?

Oh dear...

[10.fxe5!]

10 ... Nxd5

11. Bxd5



11 ... c6

[11...Qh4+! would give White some headaches!]

12. Bc4

[12.g3!]

12 ... Qh4+

Still good!

→ Clue: exposed K

13. Kf1 Nb3!

→ Tactic: discovered attack (on f2)

14. Qe2 Nxa1

15. Be3

[15.d4]

15 ... Bxe3

16. Qxe3 Nxc2

17. Qd2 Qxf4+
 18. Qxf4 exf4
 19. Ke2 Nd4+

I don't know how much more there was of this, but a draw is an amazing result, whatever the clock situation! Do I remember that Black allowed stalemate?

▶ I always say, think about your opponent's best reply... If there isn't one, look carefully at the position!

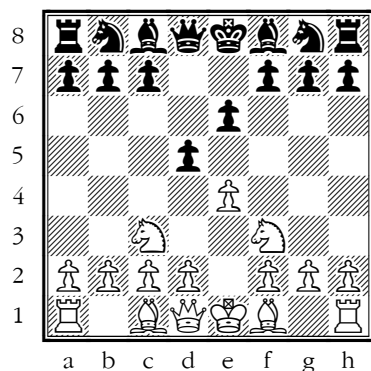
1/2-1/2

8.3 Nock,Harold – Bellamy,Jack

[B24: French Defence, Two Knights' Variation]

Black won a pawn early on but took huge risks before things settled down. Once you are winning, there is no need to give your opponent any hope! Some simple tactics could have won the game for White on half-a-dozen occasions."

1. e4 e6
 2. Nf3 d5
 3. Nc3

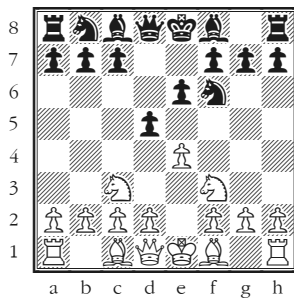


A tricky system.

- 3 ... c5

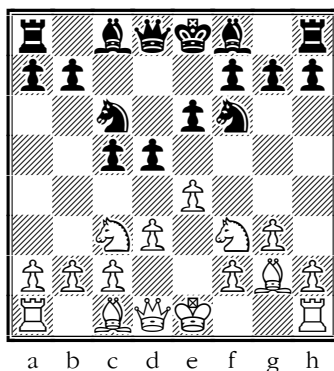
[Chris Baker, who plays and recommends this system, thinks that 3...dxe4 4.Nxe4 c5 is a good reply. But I have a feeling that 5.d4! will give White quick development and continued pressure, e.g. 5...cxd4 6.Qxd4 Qxd4 7.Nxd4 a6 8.Bf4;

So I think the proper move is 3...Nf6!



inviting 4.e5 Nfd7 and leading to more familiar French positions. 5.d4 c5 6.dxc5 Nc6 7.Bf4 Bxc5 8.Bd3 f6!= (8...0-0? 9.Bxh7+!) 9.exf6 Nxf6 (9...Qxf6)]

4. g3 Nc6
 5. Bg2 Nf6
 6. d3



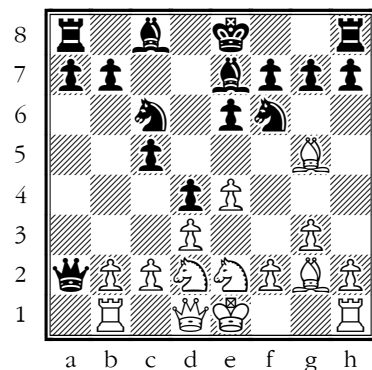
- 6 ... Be7

[Black can get an equal but dull game easily: 6...dxe4 7.Nxe4 Nxe4 8.dxe4 Qxd1+ 9.Kxd1 e5=]

7. Bg5 Qb6
 8. Rb1 d4
 9. Ne2 Qa5+

[9...e5= is a King's Indian structure]

10. Nd2 Qxa2

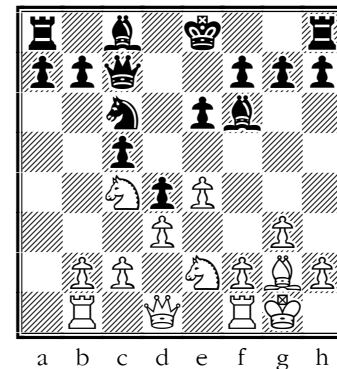


Now, as Black is a pawn up, many juniors would say that Black is winning, but my computer would sooner be White here.

11. Bxf6

[11.Nc4 Qa4 12.Ra1 Qb5 and White has more compensation for the pawn (a-file, and the bQ is awkwardly placed)]

- 11 ... Bxf6
 12. 0-0 Qa5!
 13. Nc4
 Too late to be awkward.
 13 ... Qc7+

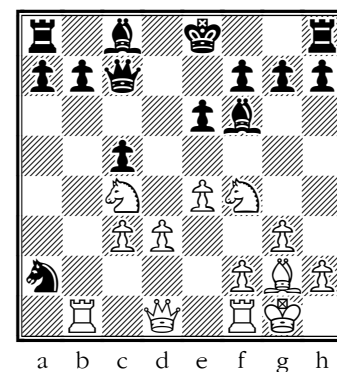


Now this really is better for Black.

14. Nf4 Nb4?!
 Trying too hard. Black has an extra pawn, so does not need to take any risks to win.
 15. c3?!

[15.Nh5! White wants to start an attack before Black gets sorted out.]

- 15 ... dxc3
 16. bxc3 Na2??



[16...Bxc3!]

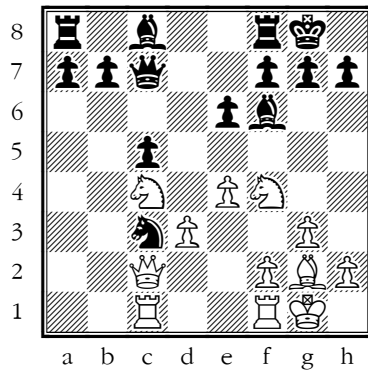
- Tactic: Fork
 17. Qc2??

[17.Qa4+! The same trick Black used to win the a-pawn, can be used by White to win the Knight! It's amazing that neither side spotted this.]

- Clues: undefended N, exposed K
 17 ... Nxc3
 18. Rbc1

[18.Rb3! - Na4 19.e5 idea Qa2!]

18 ... 0-0



[18...Bd4]

19. Nh5??

[19.e5! cuts off support to the Knight]

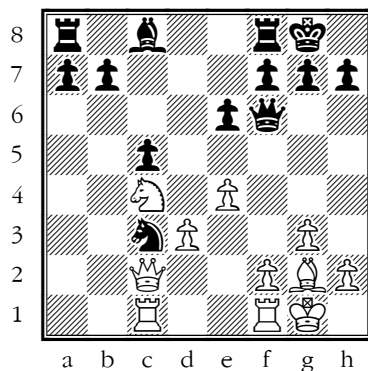
→ Tactic: interference

→ Clue: only-just-defended piece

19 ... Qe7??

[19...Bd4! saves the Knight]

20. Nxf6+ Qxf6



→ Clue: loose piece

White is given another chance to win the Knight.

21. Rfe1??

[21.e5!; 21.Qxc3!]

→ Tactic: outnumbered

21 ... Nb5

22. e5 Qd8

23. Qe2

[23.Nd2! picks up the c-pawn]

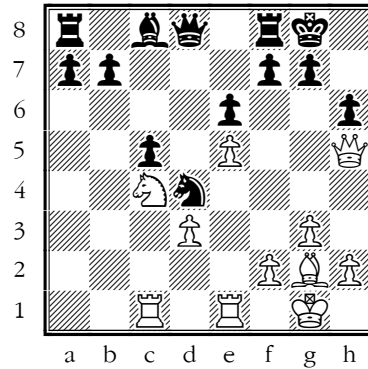
23 ... Nd4

[23...Rb8]

24. Qh5

[24.Qb2!]

24 ... h6



Black is still playing with only one piece and White is far from lost.

► Use all your pieces

[24...Rb8]

25. Be4

[25.Nd6]

25 ... Qg5

[25...Rb8]

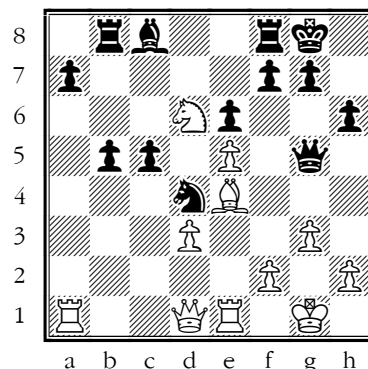
26. Qd1

[26.Qxg5]

26 ... Rb8

27. Ra1 b5

28. Nd6



28 ... Qxe5??

Oh dear.

→ Clues: undefended Q, pieces in a line

[28...Qe7]

29. Nxc8??

Oh dear, oh dear!

[29.Bh7+! should have been played almost instantly. And White even gets a second chance to spot it!]

→ Tactic: discovered attack

29 ... Rbxc8??

[29...Qf6]

30. Kf1??

→ Tactic: discovered attack

[30.Bh7+!]

30 ... Qg5

Whew!

[30...Qc7]

31. Kg2

[31.Rxa7]

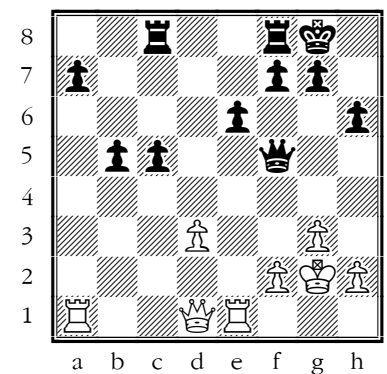
31 ... Nf5

[31...Qe7]

32. Bxf5

[32.Rxa7]

32 ... Qxf5



Finally we have reached a position where the Black pieces are starting to speak up and the extra pawns mean something.

33. d4 Qd5+

34. Kf1 Qxd4

Agreed:

► Swaps are usually good when you are pawns ahead.

[But here 34...cxd4! is much better, keeping the strong Queen on the board. 35.Rxa7?? d3! Threat Qh1# 36.Kg1 d2 37.Re2 (37.Rf1 Rc1) 37...Rc1]

35. Qxd4 cxd4

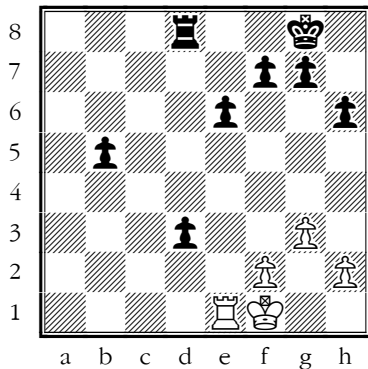
36. Rxa7 d3

37. Rd7

[37.Rd1]

37 ... Rfd8

38. Rxd8+ Rxd8



And Black has a winning endgame, three pawns ahead.

39. Rd1 b4
40. Ke1 b3
41. Kd2 b2

42. Rb1 Rb8
43. Kxd3 f5
44. Kd4 Kf7
45. Ke5

[45.Kc3]

45. ... Rb5+
46. Kd4 Kf6
47. h3 e5+
48. Kd3 g5
49. g4 f4
50. Ke4 Rb4+
51. Kd3 e4+
52. Ke2

[52.Kc3]

52. ... Ke5

53. f3 Rb3
54. fxe4 Kxe4
55. Kf2 Rxb3
56. Rxb2

[-#7 : 56.Re1+]

56. ... Rh2+
57. Kg1 Rxb2
58. Kf1 Ke3
59. Kg1 Kf3
60. Kh1 Kg3
61. Kg1 Rb1#

0-1

Board 9: Leif Hafstad

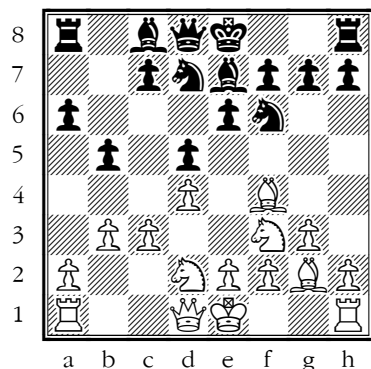
Another 3/3 score – very well done. From the two games I saw, the main thing you could do better is to spot more tactics – I don't know what you could have learned from the missing game! ”

9.1 Clark, Greg – Hafstad, Leif

[D02: London System]

Another game with some decent ideas but some awful oversights by both sides.”

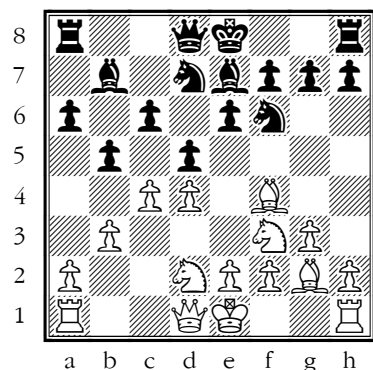
1. d4 d5
2. Nf3 e6
3. Bf4 Nf6
4. g3 Nbd7
5. Bg2 Be7
6. Nbd2 a6
7. b3 b5
8. c3



8. ... Bb7

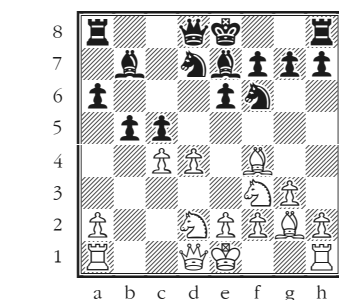
[8...c5! gives Black more play]

9. c4 c6



This move is not kind to the Bb7.

[9...dxc4! 10.bxc4 c5!= equalises:



]

10. cxd5

[10.c5!± makes the point about the Bishop. In reply, 10...b4! is necessary, planning ...a5 and ...Ba6]

10. ... cxd5

11. Rc1 0-0

12. Rc3 Rb8?!

An interesting choice of square!

→ Tactic: take a more important piece

[12...Qa5! - 13.Rc2 Rfc8±;

12...Rc8!?)

13. Rc2??

[Of course, Rooks should occupy open lines, to control them or fight for them, but the main reason ...Rc8 is better here is 13.Bxb8!]

13. ... Rc8

Black makes a useful adjustment...

14. Qc1 Rxc2

15. Qxc2 Qc8

16. Qxc8 Rxc8

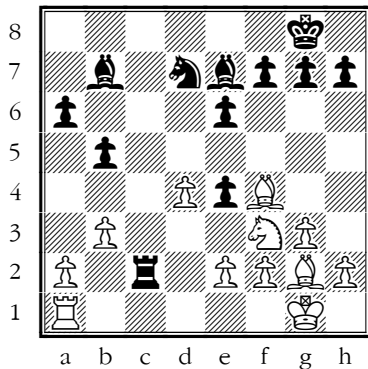
17. 0-0 Rc2!

Black's control of the file gives him the better game.

18. Ra1 Ne4

[18...Bb4 is the right way to apply more pressure.]

19. Nxe4 dxe4



20. Rcl??

Not best!

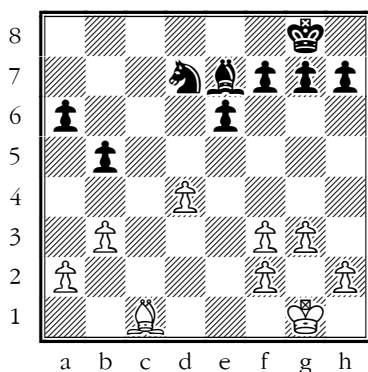
[20.Ne1=]

20 ... Rxc1+

21. Bxc1 exf3

22. Bxf3 Bxf3

23. exf3



And Black is simply a piece up. From here, Black makes no mistake and White's lone Bishop cannot create problems.

23 ... Bf6

24. Bb2 e5

25. dxe5 Nxe5

26. Kg2 Kf8

27. f4 Nd7

28. Ba3+ Be7

29. Bcl Bc5

30. h4 Ke7

31. f3 Ke6

32. g4 f5

33. Bb2 g6

34. h5 gxh5

35. gxh5 Nf6

36. Bxf6 Kxf6

37. Kg3 h6

38. a4 Be3

39. axb5 axb5

40. Kh4 Ke6

41. Kg3 Kd5

42. Kg2 Kd4

[-1 : 42...Kc5]

43. Kf1 Kc3

0-1

9.2 NN – Hafstad,Leif

Missing! ”

9.3 Kett,David – Hafstad,Leif

[D35: Queen's Gambit Declined, Exchange Variation]

White lost a piece, making it easy for Black. There were some good positions to learn from earlier, about what makes a good and a bad Isolated Queen's Pawn (IQP).”

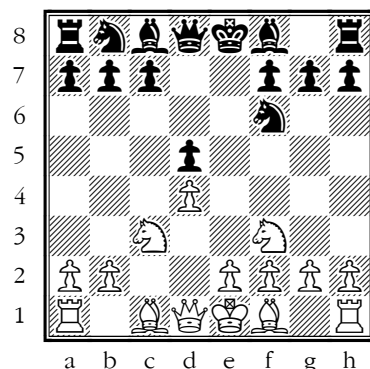
1. d4 d5

2. c4 e6

3. cxd5 exd5

4. Nc3 Nf6

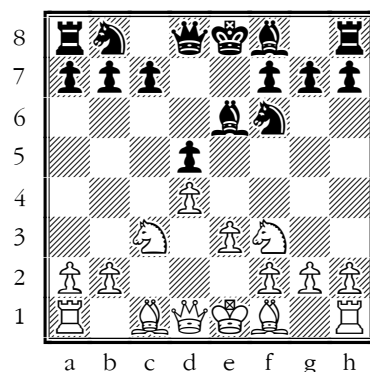
5. Nf3



5 ... Be6

[The bishop can't reach any more squares here than on c8, so why not make a move that you get more out of? e.g. 5...Be7 allows castling.]

6. e3?!



That just shuts in the Bcl.

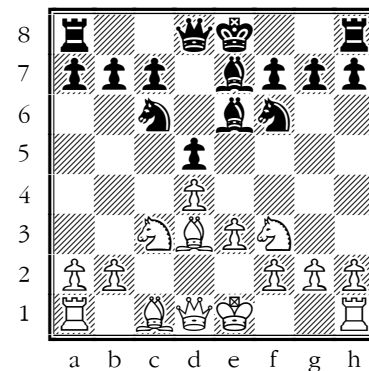
[6.Bg5; 6.Bf4]

6 ... Nc6

In most Queen's-side openings, you want to leave your c-pawn free to move.

[6...c6]

7. Bd3 Be7



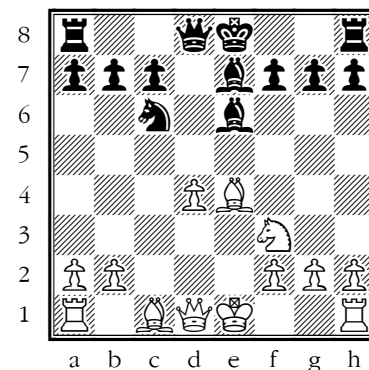
8. e4

[Releasing the Bcl, but allowing an IQP. In the Colle, which uses the same e2–e3–e4 idea, White leaves the c-pawn on c3, and might play d4xc5, to avoid this fate.]

8 ... dxe4

9. Nxe4 Nxe4

10. Bxe4

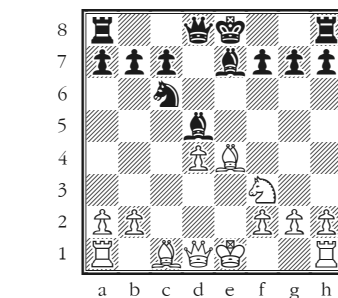


Threatening d4–d5

10 ... Bd7

Over-solid.

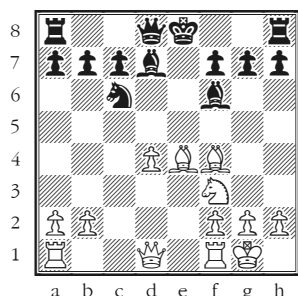
[10...Bd5!]



This is a poor IQP position for White. White is behind in development, so there is no attack, but Black is getting in some swaps, with the prospect of showing the d-pawn to be weak.]

11. 0-0 Bf6
12. Be3

[12.Bf4!



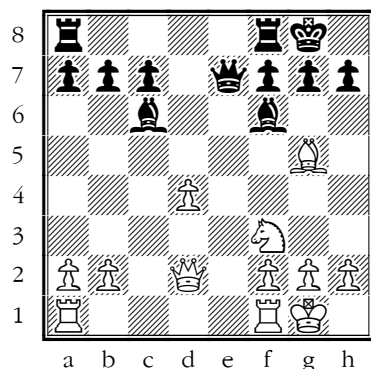
is a good IQP position for White! White is ahead in development and the d-pawn is not blockaded or weak, yet can gain more space with d4-d5]

► Every player should know how to play IQP positions from both sides

12. ... Qe7
13. Bxc6 Bxc6
14. Qd2

[14.Re1]

14. ... 0-0
15. Bg5?

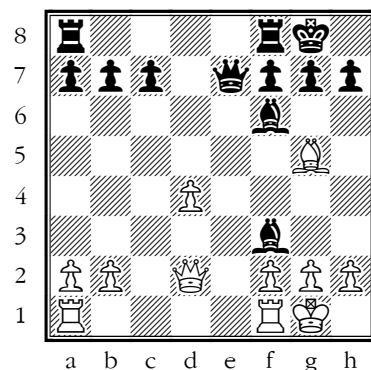


White doesn't understand the position: every 'fair' swap actually brings him nearer to defeat in a bad IQP endgame. This move also loses a pawn, but White should never have looked at the move!

► All your moves should fit in with your game plan (and not your opponent's game plan!)

[15.Ne5]

15. ... Bxf3



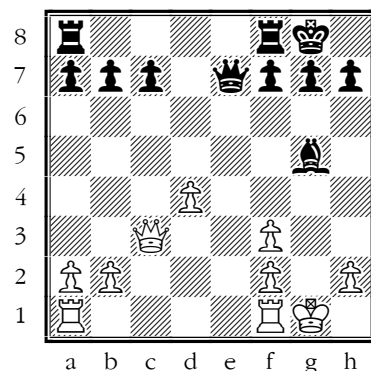
16. gxf3??

White loses a piece instead of the pawn.

[16.Bxf6! - Qxf6 17.gxf3 Qxf3]

16. ... Bxg5

17. Qc3



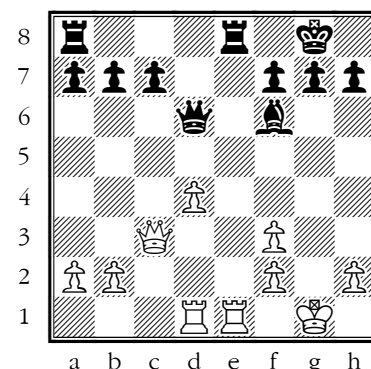
17. ... Qd6

[17...Bf4! embarrasses the White Royalty 18.h3 Qg5+ 19.Kh1 Qh4

20.Kg2 Rae8 threat ...Re6-g6+
21.Rae1 Qg5+ 22.Kh1 Bd2
23.Rxe8 Bxc3 24.Re5 Qf4 25.bxc3 Qxf3+ 26.Kh2 Qxc3]

18. Rfe1 Bf6

19. Rad1 Rfe8



20. Rxe8+ Rxe8

21. Re1 Rxe1+

22. Qxe1 h6

23. Qe8+ Kh7

24. Qb8 Qb6

25. Qe8

There was more of this game, but we've seen enough to predict the result. A Queen is a strong piece to make a nuisance with, so Black still needs some care.

...0-1

Board 10: Nandaja Narayanan

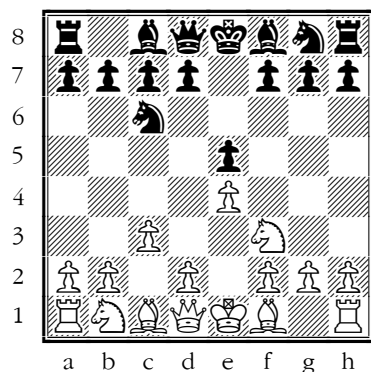
Lots to celebrate with two wins and plenty to appreciate about your chess. The main thing to remember is to keep your pieces on when you are behind. The BDG is a very sprightly choice for White, but a very good one in club chess, so stick with it but do learn a bit more theory."

10.1 Jenkins, Aled – Narayanan, Nandaja

[C44: Ponziani Opening]

A small error in the opening led to a lost pawn and a lost game, but Black made it easier for White by volunteering for swaps."

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. c3



The Ponziani Opening, a rare visitor to the chessboard. It's not at all pointless and Black can go wrong...

- 3 ... d5
4. Bb5!?

One of the two moves of theory.

[4.Qa4! does the same job and defends e4]

- 4 ... dxe4
5. Nxe5 Qd5!
6. Qa4 Nge7
7. Nxc6

[7.f4 is more common, but we have already reached a position where Black wins more often than White (most openings go 5.5–4.5 in White's favour, this one is the other way around).]

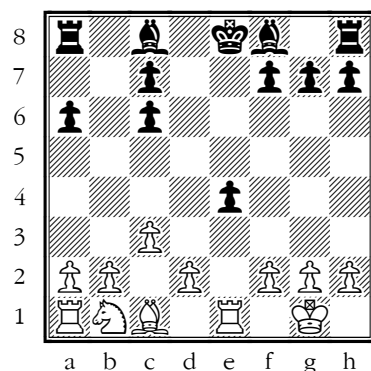
- 7 ... Nxc6
8. 0–0 a6

[The threat is not ...a6xb5 (Qxa8) but ...Qxb5. Yet White can make a real mess of Black's pawns now.]

[8...Bd7! was better, developing and keeping the pawns neat. Do messy pawns really matter? See later! (move 30)]

Doubled, isolated and backward pawns are weak – avoid them!

9. Bxc6+ Qxc6
10. Qxc6+ bxc6
11. Re1±

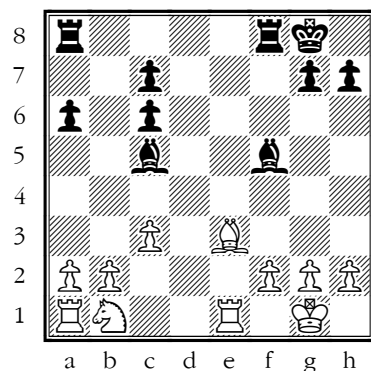


With an advantage to White; White can win the e4 pawn, but Black's two Bishops make up for some of it.

- 11 ... f5
12. d3!

→ Tactic: pin

- 12 ... Bc5
13. dxe4 0–0!
14. exf5 Bxf5
15. Be3



- 15 ... Rfe8

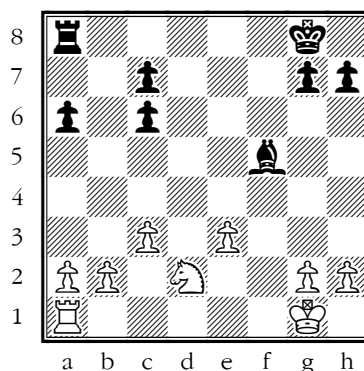
[15...Bd6! Black should avoid piece exchanges, of course.]

Swap pieces when you are ahead, pawns when you are behind.

16. Nd2 Bxe3

[Ahem. Did I mention that Black should avoid swapping pieces? Well, I guess Black gets a target on e3 this way.]

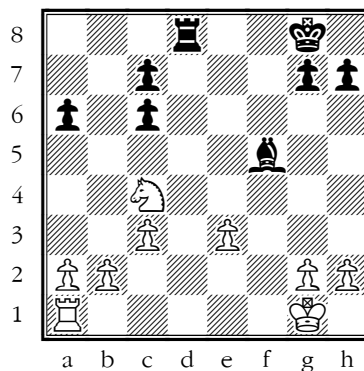
17. Rxe3 Rxe3
18. fxe3



- 18 ... Rd8!

Black must make best use of every move now.

19. Nc4?



Black is given one last chance.

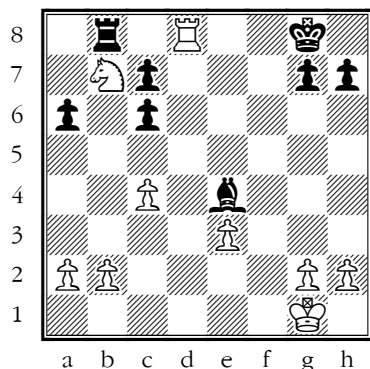
[19.Nb3! keeps the enemy Rook out of d2 19...Be6 20.Nc5]

- 19 ... Re8

[19...Be6! 20.Na5 Rd2! = with enough activity to recover the pawn]

20. Re1 Bd3
21. Na5 Be4
22. Rd1! Bd5
23. c4 Be4
24. Nb7 Rb8

25. **Rd8+!**



And White is keen to see another swap.

25. ... **Rxd8**

26. **Nxd8 Bb1**

27. **a3 c5**

28. **Nb7 Ba2**

29. **Nxc5 Bxc4**

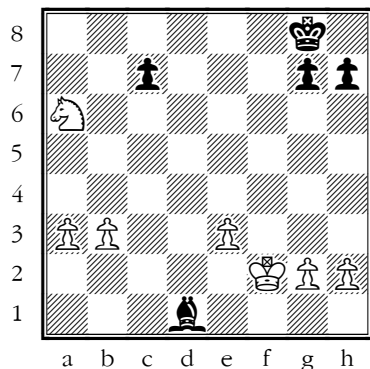
Pawn swaps, on the other hand, are good for Black.

30. **b3 Be2**

[30...Bf7! is a little better, but the weak Black pawns will be impossible to defend forever. This is why Black should have kept them neat on move 8!]

31. **Kf2 Bd1**

32. **Nxa6**



Pawn losses... Well, you can work that out yourself! There's nothing more Black can do now.

32. ... **Bxb3**

33. **Nxc7 Kf7**

34. **Ke2 h5**

35. **Kd3 g5**

36. **Kc3 Ba4**

37. **Kb4 Bd1**

38. **a4 Ke7**

39. **a5 Kd7**

40. **Nb5 Kc6**

41. **Nd4+ Kb7**

42. **e4 Bg4**

43. **e5 Ka6**

[43...Bc8]

44. **e6 h4**

45. **e7 Bh5**

46. **Nf5 g4**

47. **Ng7 Bg6**

48. **e8Q Bxe8**

49. **Nxe8 g3**

50. **hxg3 hxg3**

51. **Nf6 Ka7**

52. **Ne4 Ka6**

53. **Nxg3 Kb7**

54. **Nf5**

[54.Kb5]

54. ... **Ka6**

55. **g4 Kb7**

56. **g5 Kc7**

57. **g6 Kc6**

58. **g7 Kd5**

59. **g8Q+ Ke5**

60. **Qe8+ Kd5**

1-0

10.2 Khot,Ritika – Narayanan,Nandaja

[C50: Old Stodge]

After missing the chance to dodge the Stodge, Black found some ways of seeking play, but in the end lost control of the position and went a pawn down. White then had a moment's blindness and dropped a whole piece, after which Black made no mistakes."

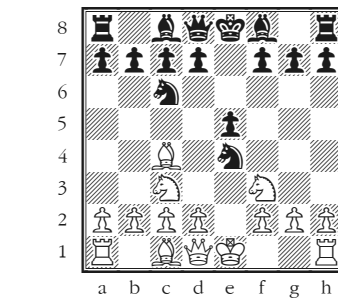
1. **e4 e5**

2. **Nf3 Nc6**

3. **Nc3 Nf6**

4. **Bc4 Bc5**

[4...Nxe4!



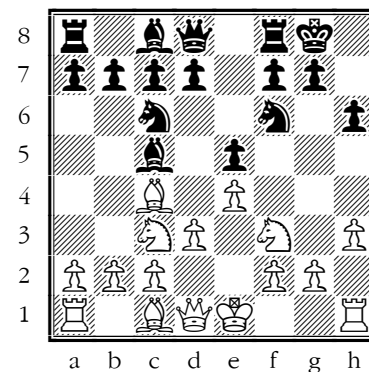
should have been played so quickly it made White jump. Black gets an easy game. 5.Nxe4 (5.Bxf7+ Kxf7 6.Nxe4 d5 7.Neg5+ Kg8=) 5...d5 6.Bd3 dxe4 7.Bxe4 Bd6=]

► **Do learn the common tricks in the openings you play.**

If you don't know any, talk to me!

5. **d3 h6**

6. **h3 0-0**



The ghastly spectre of Old Stodge appears once more on the chessboard, bringing despair and congestion to all those who love chess.

► **Dodge the Stodge!**

What's wrong with Old Stodge? Well, it's blocked and boring, and, like a lot of closed positions, it's actually quite difficult to play. Juniors may think its safe and familiar, but it's not usually safe because they often don't really understand it.

7. **b3?!**

[As I suggested, White shows that they don't understand what's going on. The Bc1 already has a perfectly good route out to e3.]

7. ... **a6**

[7...d6 is more sensible, but I think Black has a cunning plan...]

→ **Clue: Bc4 had no retreat**

8. Nd5 b5!

→ Tactic: net

[Quite right! aNother thing b3 did was to take away the retreat of the Bc4. Sadly, White has an easy escape.]

9. Nxf6+ Qxf6

10. Bd5 Rb8

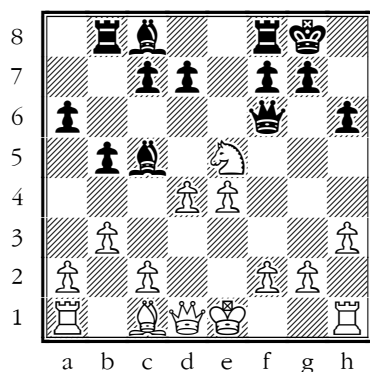
[10...Bb7]

11. Bxc6 Qxc6

Risks losing the e-pawn.

12. Nxe5 Qf6

13. d4



13. ... Bb6?

After this, White has a pawn extra with good chances, but there was a better move, hard to spot.

→ Clues: only-just-defended Knight on e5, loose Rook on a1, loose Pawn on e4...

[13...Re8! saves the day 14.dxc5 (14.Bb2? Rxe5! 15.dxe5?? Qxf2#) 14...Qxe5 forking e4 and a1.

→ Tactic: fork

This is all too much like hard work: 10...Bb7 (or 4...Nxe4) would have made life easier!]

14. Nxd7??

Baffling.

[14.c3]

14 ... Bxd7

Thanks!

15. Be3 Rfe8

16. Qd3?!

[16.f3!?

16 ... c5!?

[16...Qg6!?

17. c4?!

[17.0-0-0!]

17 ... cxd4

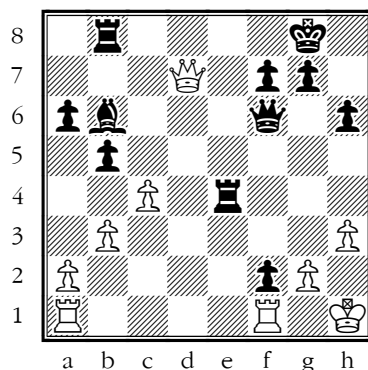
18. 0-0?

[18.Bd2]

18 ... dxe3

19. Qxd7 exf2+

20. Kh1 Rxe4



Black has an extra piece and a dominating position.

21. Qd2 Rd8

22. Qc1 Be3

23. Re1 Bxc1

24. Raxc1 Rxe1+

25. Rxe1 fxe1 Q+

26. Kh2 Qf4+

27. g3 Rd2#

0-1

10.3 Narayanan, Nandaja – Heeney, Lorca

[D00: Blackmar-Diemer Gambit]

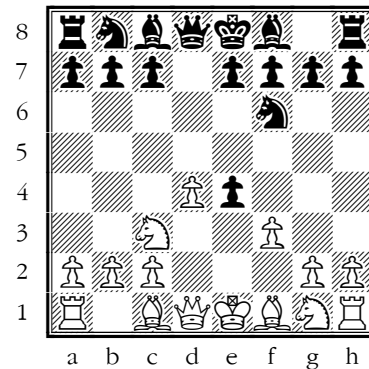
The game was just getting interesting when Black dropped a Queen! But I'm sure you will be able to put up with being a boring Queen ahead rather than having an exciting opposite-side-castling battle..."

1. d4 d5

2. e4 dxe4

3. Nc3 Nf6

4. f3



The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit -

quite a contrast to the last opening system! White offers a gambit for fast development and open lines. It gives me pleasure to see it played! White wants to win and is not afraid of taking risks.

4 ... Bf5

A solid defence to White's gambit

5. Bg5?!

The sort of natural move you make when you're not a pawn down! White needs to play more forcefully, I think. Some sample lines:

[5.g4!? Bg6 6.g5 Nd5 7.Nxe4 e6 8.h4 Nc6 9.Bb5 Bb4+;

5.fxe4!? Nxe4 6.Qf3! Nd6 7.Bf4 e6 8.0-0-0 c6 9.g4 Bg6 10.Qe3 Be7]

5 ... Nd5

6. Nxe4

OK, you're not a pawn down any more...

6 ... f6

7. Bd2 Nc6

8. c3

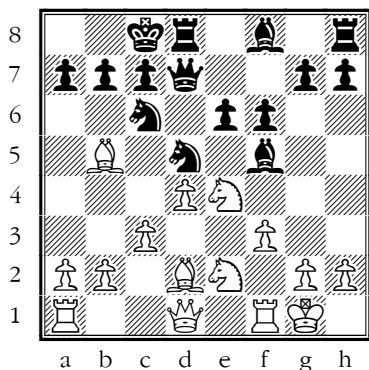
[8.Bb5!?

8 ... e6

9. Bb5 Qd7

10. Ne2 0-0-0

11. 0-0



With opposite-side castling, we can usually look forward to a race to mate the king on each wing.

11. ... a6
 12. Ba4 Bxe4
 13. fxe4 Nb6
 14. Bb3 f5
 15. e5

[15.Qc2!?!]

15. ... Be7
 16. Nf4

→ Clue: loose Pawn on d4.

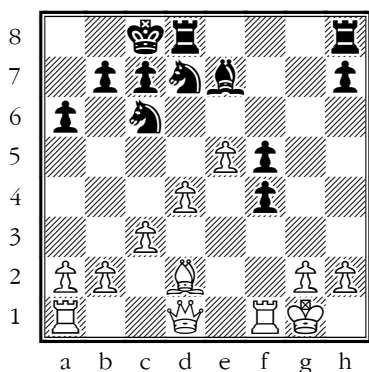
→ Also: What did the last moves change? (answer: Nc6 can now move)

16. ... g5??

Black decides to mix it - logical enough, but there's an obvious thing wrong with this one!

[16...Nxd4!]

17. Bxe6! gxf4
 18. Bxd7+ Nxd7



White is 'only' a piece ahead overall.

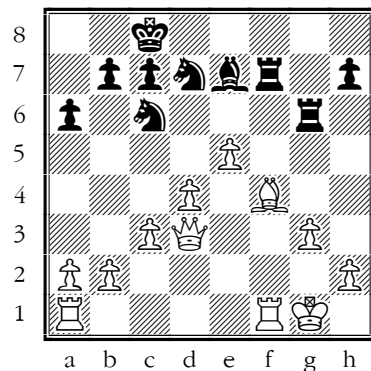
19. Bxf4 Rhg8
 20. g3 Rg7
 21. Bh6

There's no need to keep trying to win - put your pieces in strong positions, and Black will either be

driven back or you will get the swaps you want to win safely.

[21.Qe2]

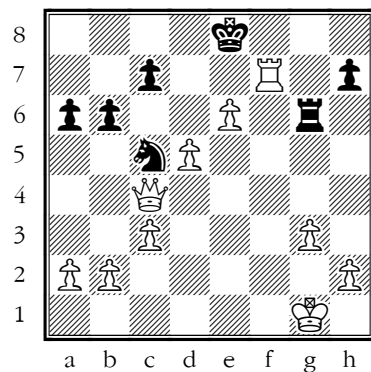
21. ... Rg6
 22. Bf4 Bh4
 23. Qh5 Be7
 24. Qxf5 Rf8
 25. Qd3 Rf7



26. Be3

[26.Rae1 Until this piece is in play, you're not really winning!]

26. ... Rxf1+
 27. Rxf1 Nd8
 28. Bf4 Nf8
 29. d5 Bg5??
 30. Bxg5 Nd7
 31. Bxd8 Kxd8
 32. e6 Nc5
 33. Qc4 b6
 34. Rf7 Ke8



35. Rxh7

[35.Qh4! mates]

1-0

Is your middle name Houdini? The birthday present in Round 1 was followed by an amazing turnaround in Round 2! The last game was pretty muddled: you and your opponent both made a mess of working out who was winning or losing a piece."

11.1 Milne, James– default

1–0

Happy Birthday!"

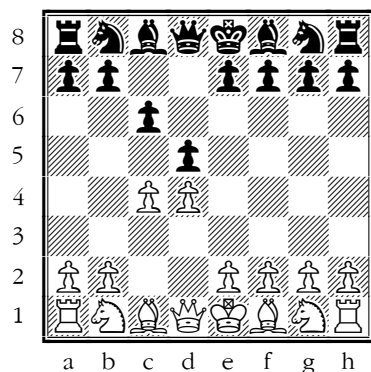
11.2 Milne, James – Kett, David

[D94: Slav Defence, Schlechter Variation]

An amazing save by White. Black stole a pawn and used the 4–2 Queen's-side majority just as he should, but somehow White was allowed to nibble both of the pair of connected passed pawns and even won an opposite-coloured-bishops endgame. In less enlightened times, you would have been suspected of witchcraft!

Have a careful look at the play after Black took the c-pawn – you had several chances to win back the pawn, which would have made life a lot easier!"

- 1. d4 d5
- 2. c4 c6

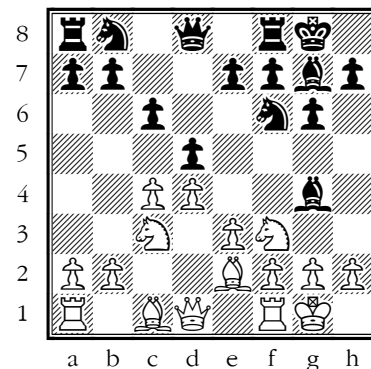


The Slav accepts a moment's awkwardness about where to put the Nb8 for solid defence of d5 and perhaps a chance to steal the c-pawn.

- 3. Nc3 Nf6
- 4. e3 g6

4.e3 is the Closed Variation, and 4...g6 makes it the Schlechter Variation, after a famous World Championship game between Schlechter and Lasker in 1910.

- 5. Nf3 Bg7
- 6. Be2 O–O
- 7. O–O Bg4

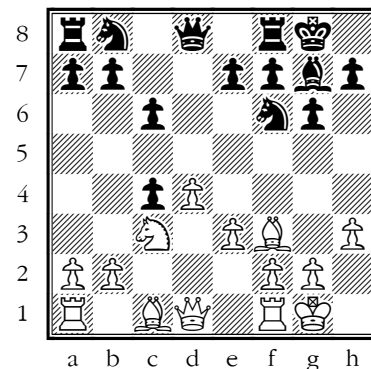


All well-known to theory so far

- 8. h3

[8.cxd5; 8.Qb3]

- 8 ... Bxf3
- 9. Bxf3 dxc4



[Having given up the Bishop pair, I'd keep it closed, with 9...e6, but Black thinks he can take and keep the c-pawn.]

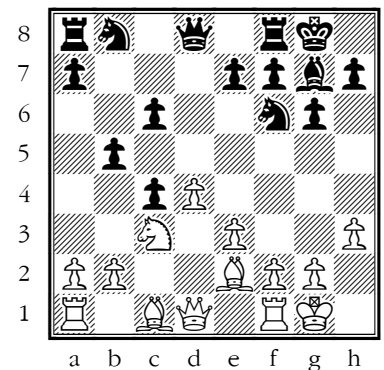
- 10. Be2?

Hmm, now I too think Black can keep the pawn!

[10.Qe2! b5 11.Nxb5! gets it back, with advantage]

→ Tactic: pin

- 10 ... b5



A typical Slav idea: Black's position is full of holes, but he has an extra pawn, and a natural plan to advance on the Queen's-side. White does have an extra central pawn, but doesn't look well-placed to advance it.

- 11. a3 a5

Ready or not, here I come!

- 12. Bd2

White is playing very solidly, but that's not going to help.

▶ **Playing safe is still dangerous**

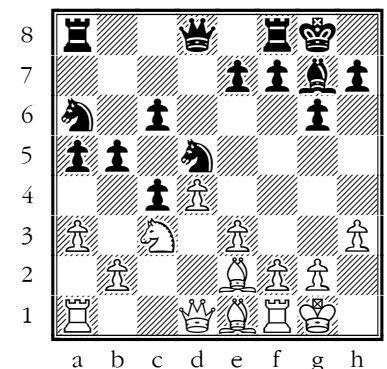
White must try to win the pawn back or quickly roll down the middle with their extra central pawn.

- 12 ... Na6

- 13. Be1

[13.Bf3 Rc8]

- 13 ... Nd5

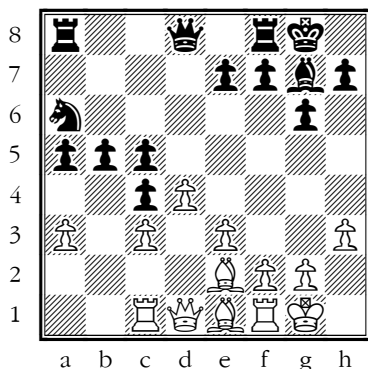


- 14. Rc1

[14.b3!? undermines the Black pawn mass 14...cxb3 15.Qxb3 Nac7 16.Rc1=]

- 14 ... Nxc3

15. bxc3 c5!?



Black is trying to win by just moving pawns!

[15...f5! OK, it's another pawn move, but one that holds the d5 point for Black's Knight]

16. Rb1

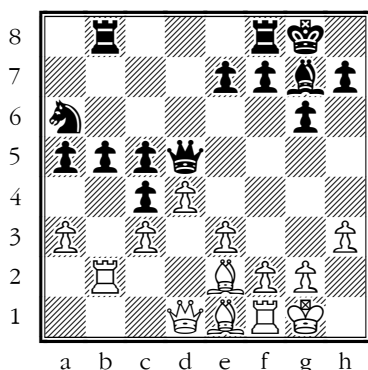
[16.a4! breaks up the strong Black pawn mass and wins back the pawn.]

16 ... Rb8

17. Rb2

[17.a4! is still best]

17 ... Qd5



I think your scoresheet says here Qd6, but that doesn't make any sense at move #26 when Black could play ...Qxb4

18. Rb1

White still doesn't have any ideas about how to stop Black's plan, and can only hope for Black to make a mistake.

[At risk of being boring, 18.a4! is best]

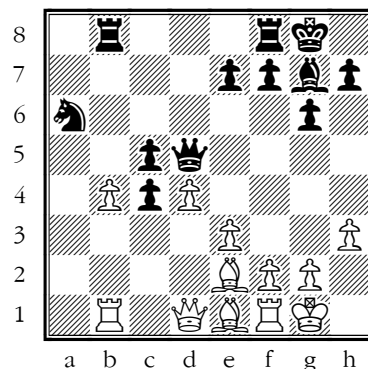
18 ... b4

19. axb4

[With the Queen on d6, 19.Bxc4! is possible here and on several later moves.]

19 ... axb4

20. cxb4



20 ... Nxb4?

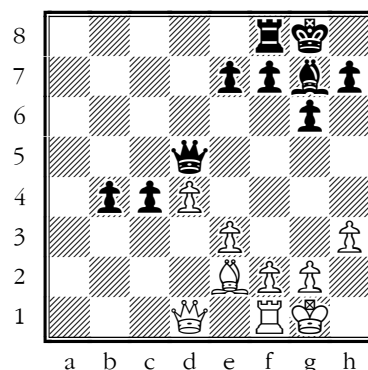
[20...cxb4!]

21. Bxb4?

[21.Rc1! cxd4 22.Rxc4!]

21 ... Rxb4

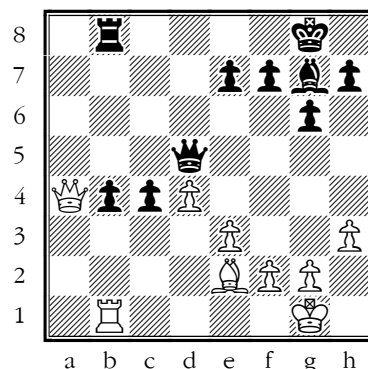
22. Rxb4 cxb4



Black's connected passed pawns are monstrously strong, but Black can't quite find the right ideas to force them through.

23. Qa4 Rb8

24. Rb1



24 ... c3!

A good decision, even if it allows:

25. Rxb4!?

Winning a pawn, but abandoning the back rank.

25 ... Rxb4

26. Qxb4 c2

27. Qb2 Qc6

28. Qc1 e5!?

[28...Qc3! should win for Black - 29.Bf3 (idea: Be4) 29...Qd3!-+]

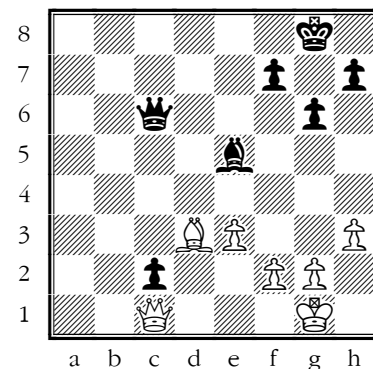
29. dxe5

[29.Bd3! =]

29 ... Bxe5

[29...Qc3! still wins]

30. Bd3!



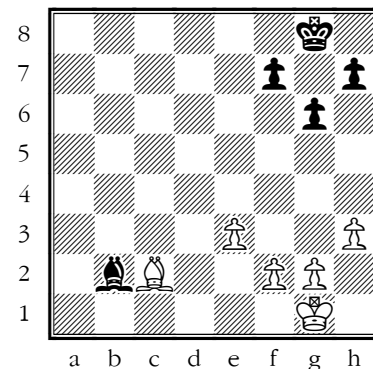
and, amazingly, White gets to win both Black pawns.

30 ... Bb2!?

A bright idea, but

31. Qxc2! Qxc2

32. Bxc2



We now have an opposite-coloured-bishop endgame, which should be drawn with best play.

► Endgames with just pawns and opposite-coloured Bishops are drawish, because there will be some squares you can never control.

32 ... Kg7

33. Kf1 f5

34. Ke2 Kf6

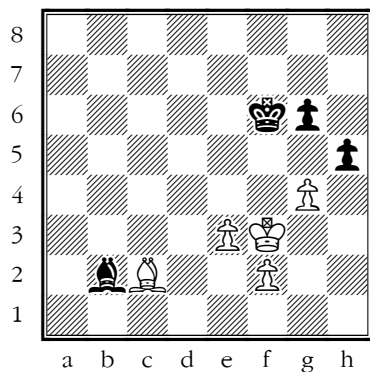
35. Kf3 h5

36. g4

[36.h4]

36 ... fxg4+

37. hxg4



37 ... Bc3

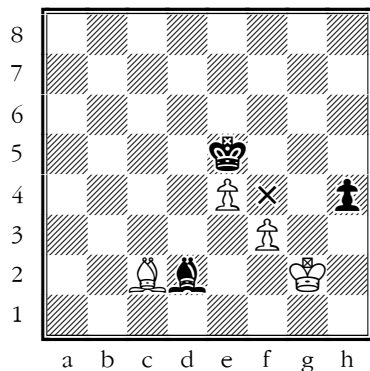
[37...h4!?: 37...hxg4+]

38. gxh5 gxh5

39. Kg2 h4

40. f3 Bd2

41. e4 Ke5



Now White has no way of controlling e5 or f4, so as long as Black just keeps the Bishop on the c1-h6 diagonal, the game must be drawn. How the win (or the draw) is dropped and picked up over the next few moves is important to understand!

► There are some basic endgames everyone should know.

42. Kh3 Kf4

43. Bd1 Bc1

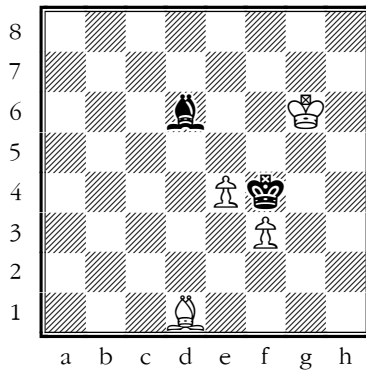
[43...Be1]

44. Kxh4 Ba3

[44...Bb2!]

45. Kh5 Bd6

46. Kg6



Same thing really: Black just shuffles the Bishop between b8 and e5

46 ... Ke5?

Ooh, don't touch the King!

[46...Be5!]

47. Kg5! Ke6??

Black gives ground - not necessary, and positively suicidal here.

[47...Bc5! = heading back to e3]

48. f4 Kf7

49. f5??

Losing control of the dark squares again. White mustn't get the pawns blockaded on light squares.

[49.e5! Be7+ 50.Kf5 Bc5 51.Bb3+ +-]

49 ... Ke7??

[49...Be5! =]

50. Kg6

[50.f6+]

50 ... Kf8??

Black keeps retreating, which can only encourage White...

[Last chance for 50...Be5! =]

51. Kf6 Bc7

52. e5 Bxe5+?

Black is lost anyway.

[#8 : 52...Ke8]

53. Kxe5

And White won

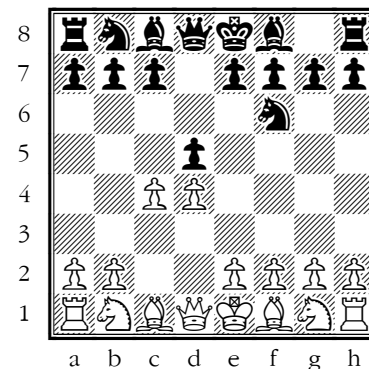
1-0

11.3 Milne, James – Khot, Ritika

[D06: Queen's Gambit, Marshall Variation]

Some interesting themes early on followed by some chaotic tactical play led to a level endgame, but Black shed a couple of pawns and lost without fuss after that."

1. d4 d5
2. c4 Nf6

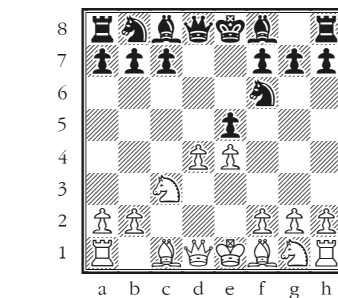


Defending d5, but not with a pawn

3. Nc3

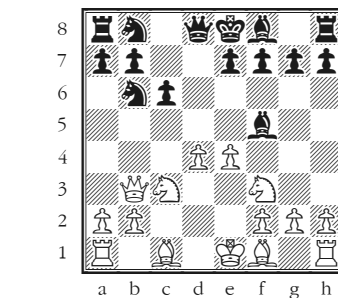
[3.cxd5! with an extra central pawn. There is a trick, found by the ingenious Frank Marshall: 3...Nxd5 4.Nf3! threatening e2-e4

(4.e4?! Logical but too early 4...Nf6 5.Nc3 (5.e5 Nd5=) 5...e5!]



6.dxe5 Qxd1+ 7.Kxd1 Ng4 8.Nh3 Nxe5=)

After 4.Nf3, the game might go 4...Bf5 5.Qb3 Nb6 6.Nc3 c6 7.e4!±



and Black has a miserable position.]

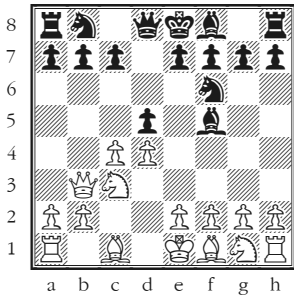
3 ... Bf5?!

[3...dxc4]

→ Clues: undefended Pb7, only-just-defended Pd5

4. e3

[4.Qb3!]



→ Tactic: fork

hitting d5 and b7 is best here!

4 ... e6

5. Nf3 Bb4

6. Bd2 Bxc3

7. Bxc3 Ne4

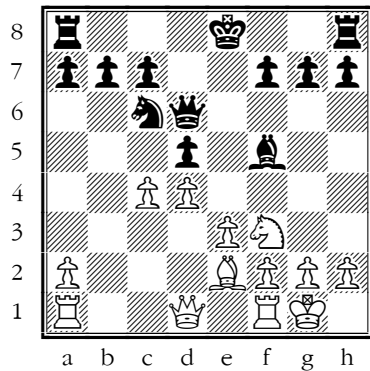
8. cxd5 Nxc3

9. bxc3 exd5

10. Be2 Qd6

11. 0-0 Nc6

12. c4



There is a short period of chaos now...

12 ... Qg6??

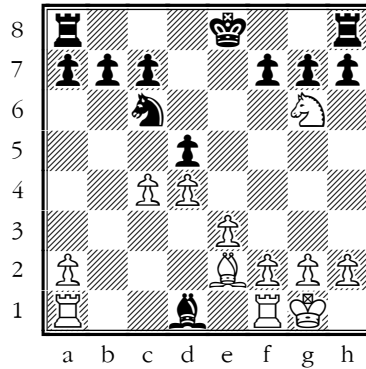
[12...dxc4!]

13. Nh4

[13.cxd5!]

13 ... Bc2??

14. Nxc6 Bxd1



Black should be able to win the Knight on h8 while keeping their own minor pieces on the board... The chaos continues.

15. Nxc6?

[15.Rfxd1! hxg6 16.cxd5!]

15 ... Bxe2

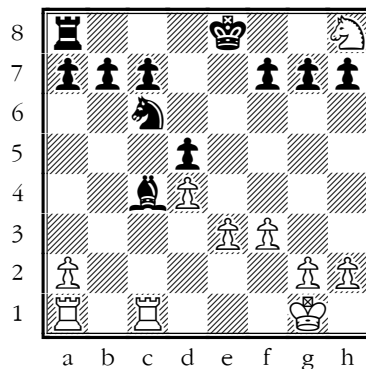
The Bishop can escape, but not the Knight in the corner.

16. Rfc1

[16.cxd5!]

16 ... Bxc4

17. f3



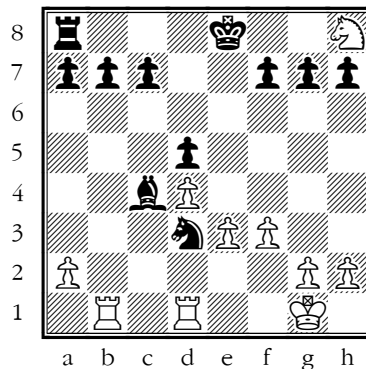
17 ... Nb4

[17...f6! and Black can nibble the Knight at leisure.]

18. Rab1 Nd3?

[18...Nxa2]

19. Rd1



[19.Rc3!]

19 ... 0-0-0??

[19...b5!]

20. Nxf7!

Freedom!

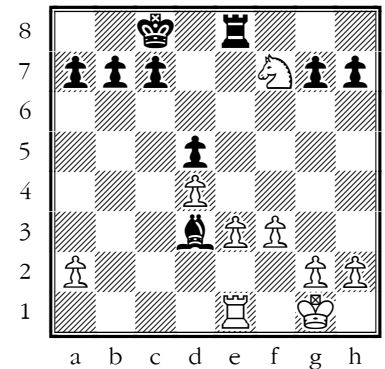
20 ... Re8

21. Rxd3?!

Keeping the pawn at cost of the Exchange.

21 ... Bxd3

22. Re1



After the chaos, a level endgame - no-one expected that!

22 ... Bg6

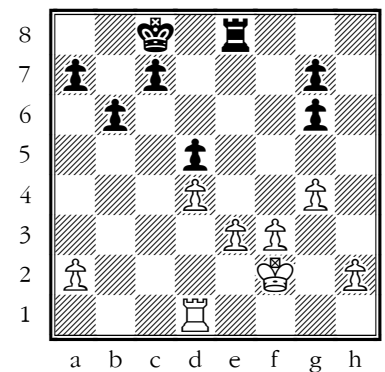
23. Ne5 Bh5

24. g4 Bg6

25. Nxc6 hxg6

26. Kf2 b6

27. Rd1



27 ... c5?

[27...g5]

28. dxc5!

[Unmasking an attack on d5]

→ Tactic: discovered attack

→ Clue: undefended Pd5

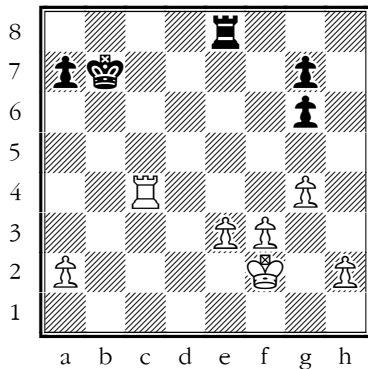
28 ... bxc5

[28...Rh8]

29. Rxd5 c4

30. Rc5+ Kb7

31. Rxc4



With two extra pawns.

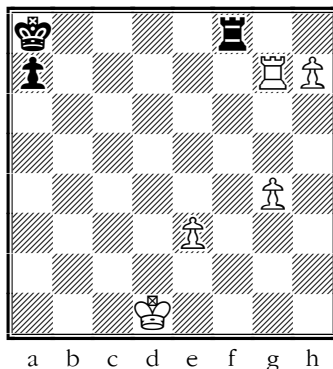
31. ... Rd8
 32. Ke2 Kb6
 33. Rd4 Rc8
 34. Kd2 Ka5

[34...Rh8]

35. Rd5+ Ka6
 36. Rg5 Rd8+
 37. Ke2 Rc8

[37...Rd6]

38. Rxc6+ Kb7
 39. Rxc7+ Ka8
 40. h4 Rc2+
 41. Kd1
 [41.Kd3]
 41. ... Rxa2
 42. h5 Rf2
 43. h6 Rxf3
 44. h7 Rf8



45. g5

[45.Rg8! was a lot simpler! I believe this is the legendary 'Rook thingy' (c) Mr Onions]

45. ... Rd8+
 46. Ke2 Rh8
 [#9 : 46...Kb8!]
 47. g6 Rb8
 48. Rf7 Rb2+
 49. Kf3 a5
 50. h8Q+ Rb8
 51. g7 Rxh8

[51...a4#2]

52. gxh8Q#

1-0

Board 12: Ben Sturt

I'm still sorry to put you on bottom board, Ben. There were a whole bunch of you at about the same level and no easy way to choose between you. I hope you will take revenge, as Jim did last year, but becoming Devon U18 champion.

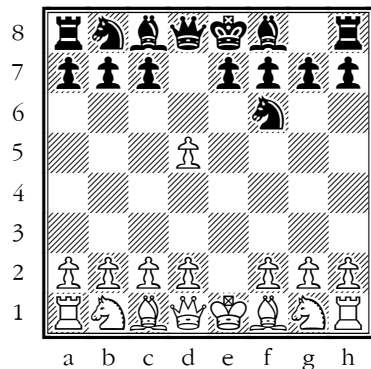
I like your forward-going style: a bit more tactical sharpness and you will be an awesome force."

12.1 Sturt, Ben – Heeney, Lorca

[B02: Scandinavian Defence]

White had some excellent attacking positions, but twice lost momentum. Yet justice was done in the end!"

1. e4 d5
 2. exd5 Nf6



3. Bc4

[3.Bb5+!? is interesting;

3.d4 is the simplest way to play it;

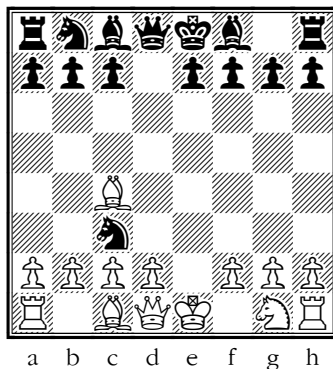
3.c4!? is what I would do!

Now:

3...c6 4.d4 cxd5 has turned into the system I recommend against the Caro-Kann (the Panov-Botvinnik Attack);

3...e6 4.d4 (4.dxe6 Bxe6 is a wicked gambit – avoid!) 4...exd5 is the system I recommend against the French]

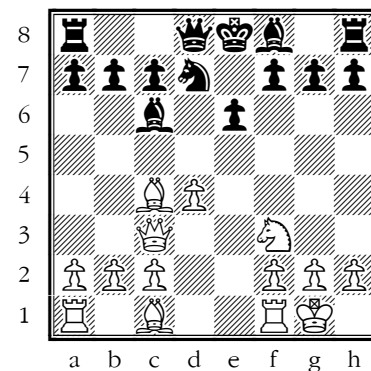
3. ... Nxd5
 4. Nc3 Nxc3



5. Qf3!

A nice trick

5. ... e6
 6. Qxc3 Bd7
 7. Nf3 Bc6
 8. 0-0 Nd7
 9. d4



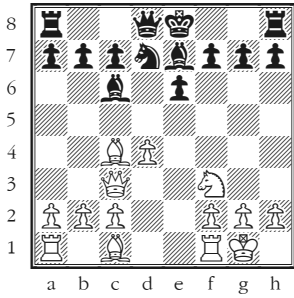
[9.Nd4 Grabbing the Bishop pair looks good]

9. ... f6?!

[Weakening, although if Black spotted what was wrong with ...Be7, they did well.]

[9...Qf6!=-;

9...Be7?!



10.d5! Bf6 11.Qe3 Nb6 12.dxc6 Nxc4 13.Qc5 Nd6 14.cxb7 Rb8±

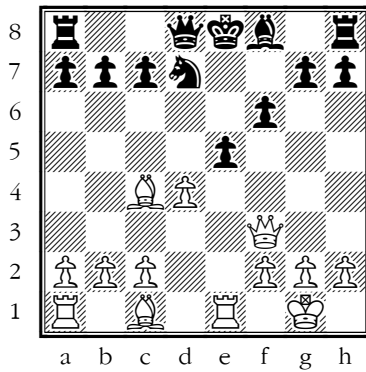
10. Re1+-

White is now winning, but the evaluation of the position swings crazily up and down for the next phase of the game.

10 ... Bxf3?

[10...Be7]

11. Qxf3 e5?



[11...c6]

12. Qxb7

[12.dxe5! is even stronger
12...Nxe5? 13.Rxe5+! Be7
14.Bh6!!+-]

► Open lines towards the uncastled King for your Rooks

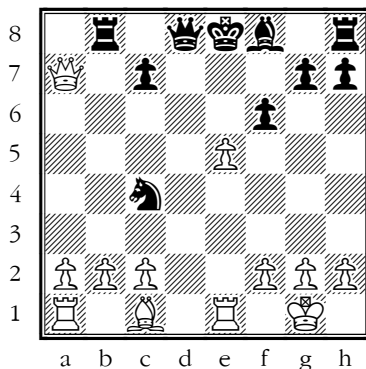
12 ... Rb8

[12...Be7]

13. Qxa7 Nb6

[13...Bb4]

14. dxe5 Nxc4



→ Clue: loose piece, exposed King.

15. exf6±

[15.Qa4+!+- regains the piece and keeps the attack]

→ Tactic: fork

15 ... Kf7

16. Qa4!±

Mistimed! But White's attack is probably still worth the piece.

[16.Bf4!±]

16 ... Ne5

17. Bf4 Rb4?+-

[17...gxf6±]

18. Qa5?=-

[18.fxg7!+- overloads the Bf8]

18 ... Nc6??+-

[18...Nf3+!=-; 18...Rxf4!=-]

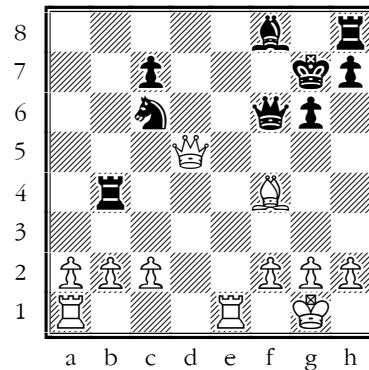
19. Qh5±

[19.Qf5!+- sets up all sorts of trouble for Black.]

19 ... g6

20. Qf3 Qxf6

21. Qd5+ Kg7±



22. Re6?!±

[22.Qd7+!± with one idea Bd2!]

22 ... Rd4?

[22...Qxf4!± - 23.Qxc6 and White's attack is running out of pieces]

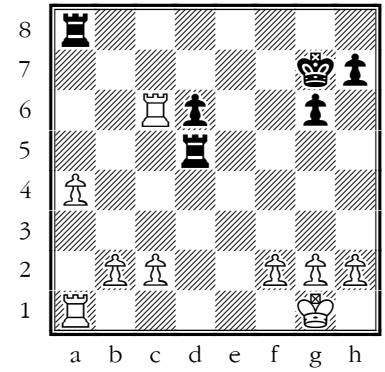
► Swap off pieces to drain the opponent's attack of energy

23. Rxf6 Rxd5

24. Rxc6 Bd6

25. Bxd6 cxd6

26. a4 Ra8



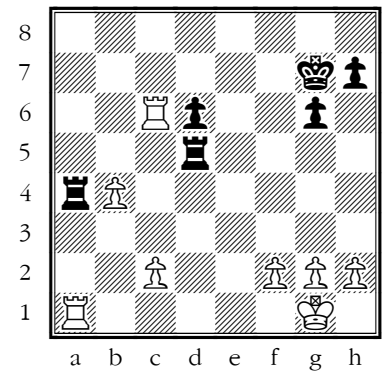
After all the excitement, White has a Rook endgame with three extra pawns.

→ Clue: The back rank is weak.

27. b4??

[27.Kf1!+-]

27 ... Rxa4!

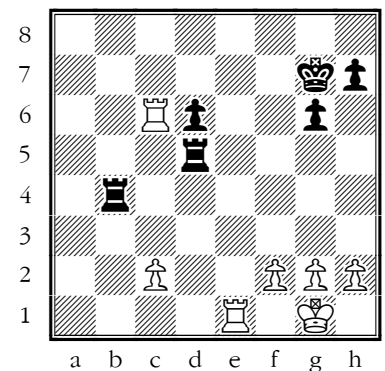


Well done, Black!

→ Tactic: overloading

28. Rb1 Rxb4!

29. Re1



Now it's a much tougher game! White's extra pawn is hard to make use of while the Black Rooks are so active.

29 ... Rbd4

30. Kf1 Rc5

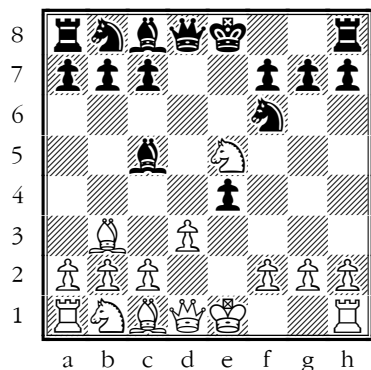
31. Rxc5 dxc5

32. Ke2 Re4+

33. Kd2 Rd4+

34. Ke3 Rd7
 35. Kf4
 [35.Re2!]
 35. ... Rd4+
 36. Ke5 Rd7
 [36...Rd2!]=
 37. Kf4 Rd6
 [37...Rd2!]=
 38. h4

- [38.Re5]
 38. ... h5
 [38...Rd2]
 39. f3
 and White won in the end
 1-0



6 ... 0-0? =

[6...Bxf2+!]

► Look at every check and capture, they say, and especially moves that are both!

7.Kxf2 Qd4+ 8.Be3 Qxe5 9.h3 Qxb2]

7. Nc3?

[7.0-0!]

7 ... exd3?

[7...Bxf2+! is still on]

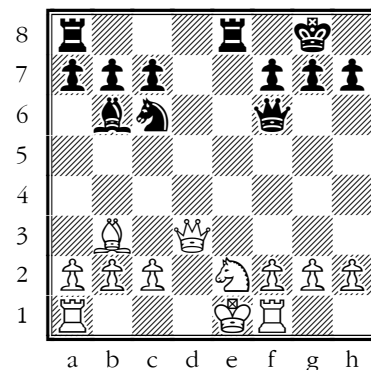
8. Nxd3 Bb6

9. Bg5 Nc6

10. Bxf6

[10.0-0]

10 ... Qxf6



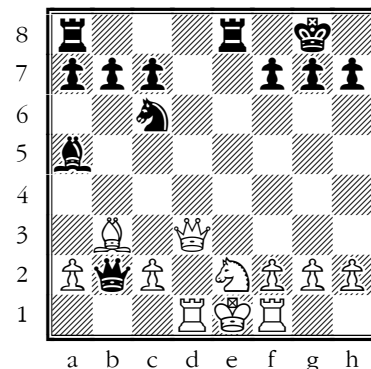
14 ... Qxb2

[14...Rad8 everything is good here!]

15. Rd1

[Oddly enough, White's best move is 15.Bxf7+! with the idea 15...Kxf7 16.Qb3+ Qxb3 17.axb3]

15 ... Ba5+!



What White's position needs now is a good blunder...

16. Rd2?

[16.c3-#7]

16 ... Qc1#

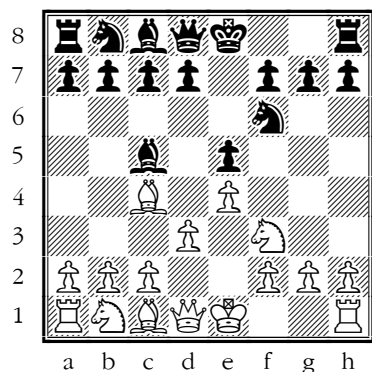
0-1

12.2 Hale-Smith, Ella – Sturt, Ben

[C24: Bishop's Opening]

White left their King on the open e-file, and disaster followed."

1. e4 e5
 2. Bc4 Bc5
 3. d3 Nf6
 4. Nf3



4 ... d5?!±

The right idea in lots of positions, but not here

[4...Nc6! is safe enough;

4...0-0!? might suit your style:

5.Nxe5?! d5! 6.exd5 Re8!±;

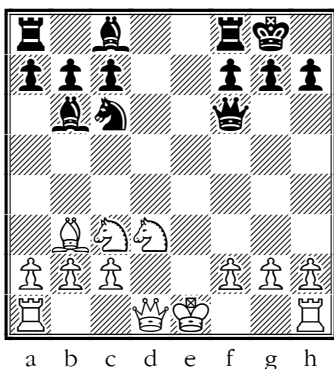
4...d6 is too]

5. Bb3?±

[5.exd5!±]

5 ... dxe4!

6. Nxe5



11. Rf1??

[11.0-0!]

→ Castle early and often!

11 ... Re8+!

The rest of the game is another sad tale of an uncastled king.

12. Ne2 Bf5

[12...Nd4!]

13. Qd2

[13.f4]

13 ... Bxd3

14. Qxd3

12.3 Clawl, Greg – Sturt, Ben

[D02: London System]

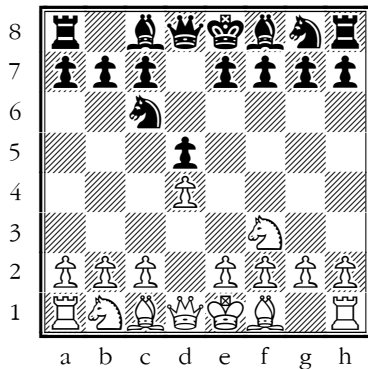
An interesting struggle, nearly all strategy and few tactics. Black didn't seem to have a good plan in the early opening but played pretty well after that, listening to the pieces. "

1. d4 d5

2. Nf3

[2.c4 Nc6 is a sound line, but there we expect at some point a pawn swap, and Black also can hope to play ...e7-e5.]

2 ... Nc6



► Usually, you want to leave the c-pawn free to move in d-pawn openings.

It's all about getting your Rooks into the game later.

Your opening scheme should include a plan to get your Rooks going.

"The value of an opening scheme should be assessed on the prospects it offers to young, ambitious Rooks." - Cecil Purdy

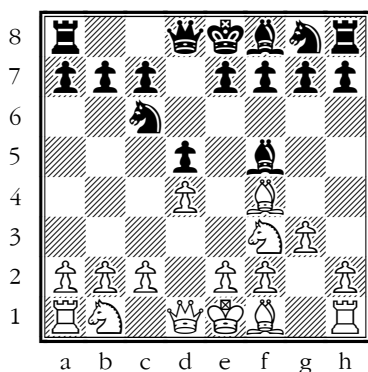
[2...Nf6]

3. Bf4

[Now, you aren't going to be able to play ...e7-e5 very easily, and you can't move your c-pawn, so I already feel sorry for your Rooks!]

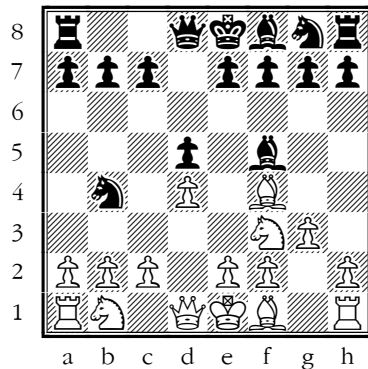
3 ... Bf5

4. g3



[4.e3; 4.c3]

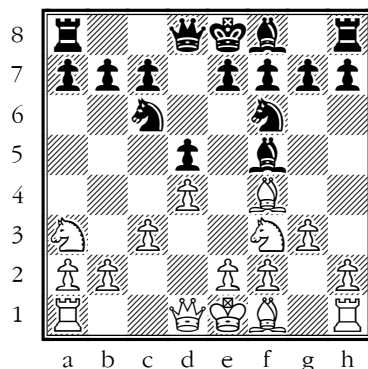
4 ... Nb4



That's too early an attack.

5. Na3 Nf6

6. c3 Nc6



Over the last three moves, White has played c2-c3 and Nb1-a3, and what has Black achieved?

7. Bg2

[By contrast, 7.Nb5 Rc8 8.Ne5 gives White a little pressure.]

7 ... e6

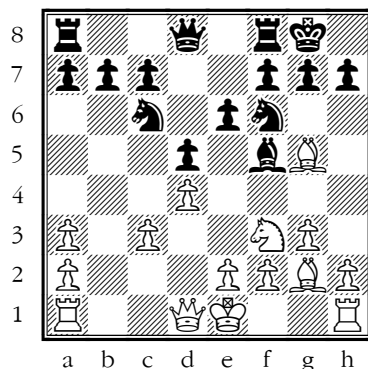
8. Bg5

[8.Qb3 is often a good idea, once the Bc8 has moved.]

8 ... Bxa3

[8...h6]

9. bxa3 0-0



There now follows a curious double blunder:

[9...h6]

10. Rb1?? Rb8??

→ Tactic: take a more important piece

[10...Bxb1! 11.Qxb1]

11. Rb2!

White adjusts!

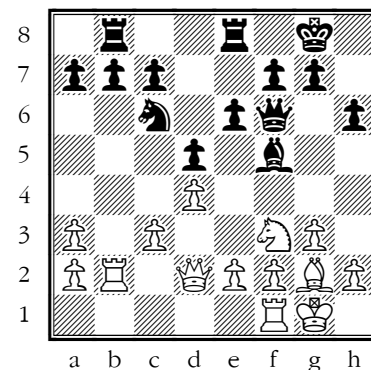
11 ... Re8

[11...h6]

12. 0-0 h6!

13. Bxf6 Qxf6

14. Qd2



14 ... e5?

Right, well done, you're opening up a line for your Rooks! But moving the e-pawn leaves the d-pawn undefended...

[14...b6]

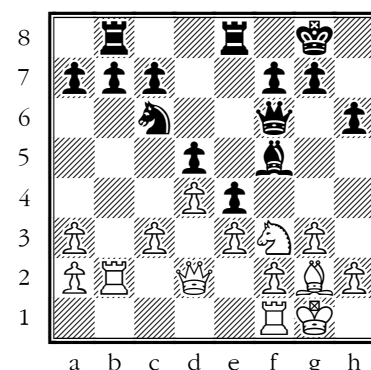
→ Tactic: discovered attack

15. e3?

[White can win a pawn very simply: 15.dxe5! Nxe5 16.Qxd5!]

→ Clue: undefended Pd5

15 ... e4

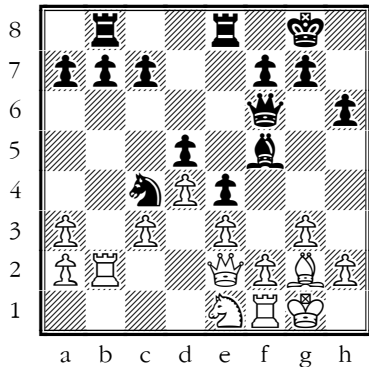


The landscape has changed, with locked pawns. Black's pawns are on the same colour square as his Bishop, making the Bishop a poor one. You might think that White's Bishop should be a good piece, not blocked by its own pawns, but in fact it doesn't have

a very good view either. With the Rooks not having much to do, the game depends on who can make best use of their minor pieces. You can, for example, ask the N on c6, where it would best like to stand?

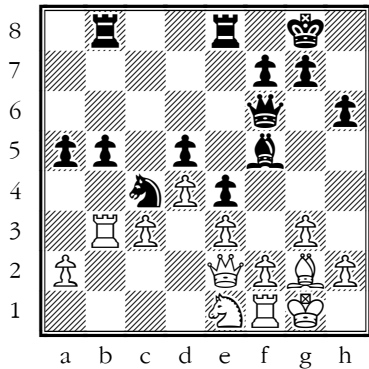
► **Listen to your pieces! Are they happy where they are?**

16. **Ne1** **Na5**
 17. **Qe2** **Nc4**



That's a great start by Black.

18. **Rb5** **c6**
 [18...Qc6]
 19. **Rb3** **a5**
 [19...Qe6]
 20. **a4** **b5**
 21. **axb5** **cxb5**

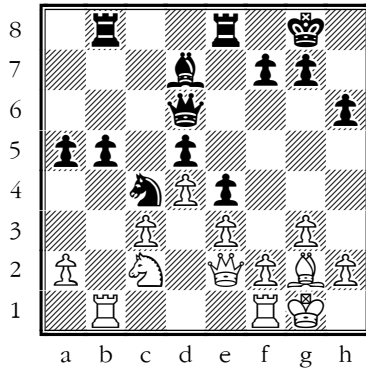


The exchange of pawns wakes up the Rooks.

22. **Nc2** **Qd6**
 23. **Rbb1** **Bd7**

That's the lot!

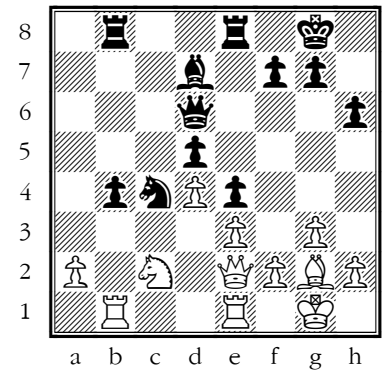
Best wishes for your future games



Again, very good: Black puts the lazy Bishop to work on the Queen's-side.

24. **Rfe1**
 [The scoresheet says "Rb1"]
 24 ... **b4?**
 [24...Nb6; 24...Rec8

] 25. **cxb4** **axb4**†



Was there much more of this? Black is clearly better at the moment, so only the clock could have justified a draw here. ½-½

[25...axb4 26.Rec1 Ba4 27.Na1 Na3 28.Rb2 Bb5 29.Qe1 Bd3 and White can hardly lift a finger, although Black has yet to break through.]

Dave Rogit's

Appendix 1: Look up information about your openings.

If I haven't written about the openings you played this year, I hope that's because I have written about them in previous years.

Here is an index:

ECO	Name	Booklet
B02	Scandinavian Defence	2013
B14	Caro-Kann Defence	2012
B22	Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation	2004, 2008
B30	Sicilian Defence	2004, 2008
C00	French Defence	2004, 2008
C24	Bishop's Opening	2012
C30	King's Gambit Declined	2004, 2005
C44	Ponziani Opening	
C45	Scotch Four Knights' Game	2004
C50	Old Stodge	2004, 2007, 2012
C55	Two Knights' Defence	2013
C77	Ruy Lopez	2007
D00	Blackmar-Diemer Gambit	2014
D02	London System	2010
D06	Queen's Gambit, Marshall Variation	2008
D35	Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation	2005
D85	Grünfeld Defence, Exchange Variation	2013
D94	Slav Defence,	2013
E19	Queen's Indian Defence, Fianchetto Variation	
E61 E94	King's Indian Defence,	2013