

West Of England & South Wales Junior Team Tournament 2020

Chepstow, Sat 11th January 2020



		Round		1		2		3		Total
U14		Opp	Col	Opp	Col	Opp	Col			
1	Benny Bacon	F	B	0	E	W	1	A	B	0 1
2	Aarv Paul	B	W	½	C	B	0	F	W	1 1½
3	Niranjana Narayanan	E	B	½	A	W	0	B	W	1 1½
4	Suhayl Abdalla	C	B	0	F	W	½	E	B	1 1½
5	Charlie Hill	A	B	0	B	W	0	C	W	1 1
6	Nathan Ng	F	W	1	E	B	1	A	W	0 2
7	Caleb Caleshu	B	B	1	C	W	½	F	B	1 2½
8	Toby Page	E	W	1	A	B	0	B	W	1 2
9	Alfie Sequeira	C	W	½	F	B	½	E	B	1 2
10	Tom Bracey	A	W	0	B	B	0	C	B	0 0
11	Joshua Keay		B	0		B	1		B	0 1
12	Roman Mokhovik		B	0		B	1		B	1 2
				4½		4½		7		16
U18		Round		1		2		3		Total
1	Nicky Bacon	A	B	0	C	w	0	B	B	0 0
2	Isaac Kennedy-Bruyneels	A	W	½	C	b	½	B	W	0 1½
3	James Gibbs	A	B	0	C	w	0	B	B	0 0
4	Bradley Holland	A	W	0	C	b	1	B	W	0 1
5	Evan McMullan	A	B	½	C	w	1	B	B	1 2½
6	Oliver Mortimer	A	W	0	C	b	½	B	W	1 1½
				1		3		2		6

We rotated the last three U14 players, so everyone had a chance to play a first team game for Devon.

The other U14 teams were: Glamorgan (A), Somerset (B), Wiltshire (F) Gloucester (E) and Gwent (C).

The other U18 teams were: Glamorgan (A), Gloucester (B), and Gwent (C).

It was easy to ignore our less-than-50% score in the U14s, but once again Glamorgan were hoovering up everyone's points, while we were doing less badly than some of the rest. So, a most welcome equal second place performance, with medals for all!

The top boards of other teams were all very strong, and so every half-point gained there was well-earned.

Well done to anyone who scored more than 50%, especially Caleb and Evan.

You can play through the games at <http://exeterchessclub.org.uk/content/u14-games-2020>



Some of you could look more pleased!

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THE VERDICT

Some old and some new themes emerged...

Most games featured some sort of **tactical blunder** and most games went off the best **opening lines** early on. So, getting better at tactics (solving puzzles and doing other exercises like the eight queens problem) and getting better at the openings (just reading books or watching videos) should be the most important thing you can do for yourselves, if you want to get better. You can do a lot of that right here...

Opening advice

You need to know about the dodges

If you don't play a proper opening, it's easy to waste your advantage as White and get into trouble quickly as Black.

A proper opening is:

one with a name, that has been worked out before, there is a usual place (or places) for most or all of your pieces to go and there is a usual plan (or plans) for you to follow once you have got your pieces out. As White, you have to get a second pawn into the centre.

You need 3 main openings: one to play as White, one to play as Black against 1.e4, and one to play as Black against 1.d4 (and everything else).

Now, most of you are doing all those three quite well.

The next step, and it's an important one is:

☞ **You also need a fourth set of systems to play when Black tries to dodge your main White opening.**

You should know where all the pieces go in a typical line, all the way up to when you connect Rooks.

'Normal' opening moves, that you play against main line openings, often come to nothing against the less common defences, and can even lead to trouble.

There are too many good ones around to try and make up your own systems at this stage. You can just copy great ideas that have been worked out before, and you don't have to work it all out while your clock is ticking.

☞ **I don't mind what you play as long as it has a name!**

If you don't know what to play against the dodgy defences, try:

1.e4 players: head for an Isolated Queen's Pawn (IQP) position when you can. More on this under the middlegame section.

Alekhin

Exchange Variation

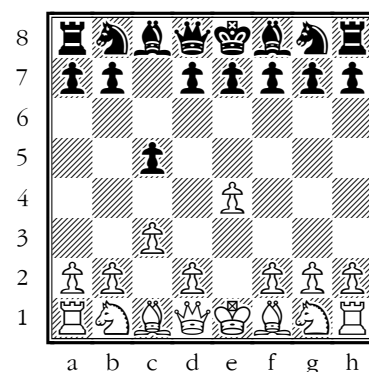
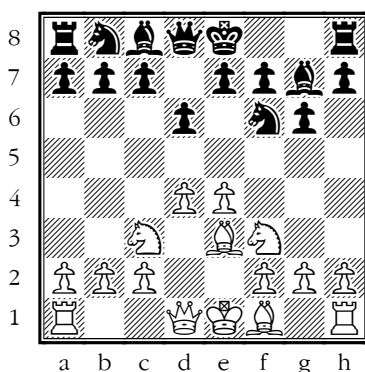
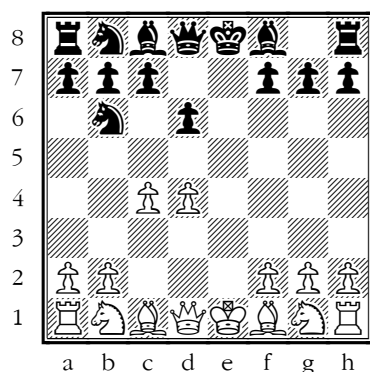
Pirc/Modern

150 Attack

Sicilian

Alapin-Sveshnikov

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.c4 Nb6 4.d4 1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Be3 1.e4 c5 2.c3 d6 5.exd6

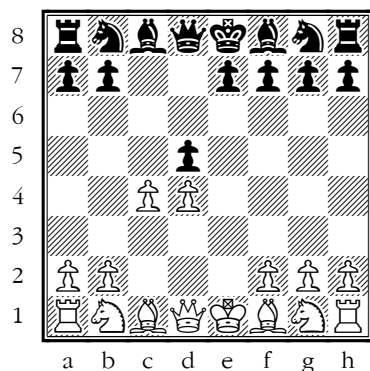


Against the Sicilian and French and Caro-Kann, you get into an Isolated Queen's Pawn position, which everyone needs to know how to play for both sides, as they crop up a lot.

Caro-Kann

Panov-Botvinnik Attack

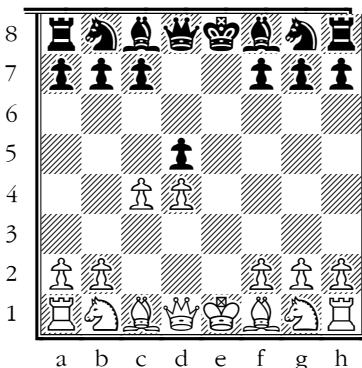
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4



French

Monte Carlo Variation

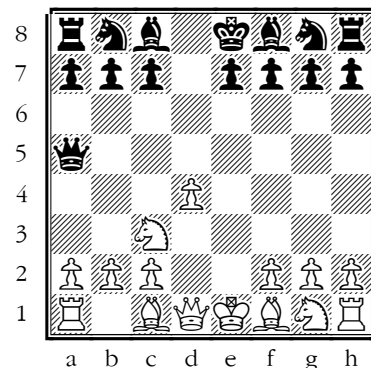
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.c4



Scandinavian

Main lines 2...Qxd5; Panov/Monte

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qa5 4.d4
1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.c4 e6 (or c6) 4.d4

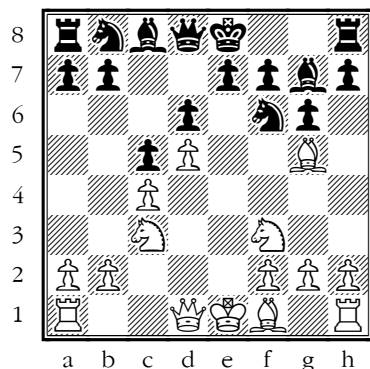


1.d4 players: play Nc3 Nf3 and Bg5 against most things

Benoni

Uhlmann System

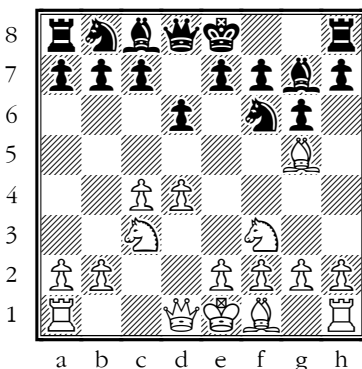
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3
exd5 5.cxd5 g6 6.Nf3 Bg7 7.Bg5



King's Indian

Smyslov System

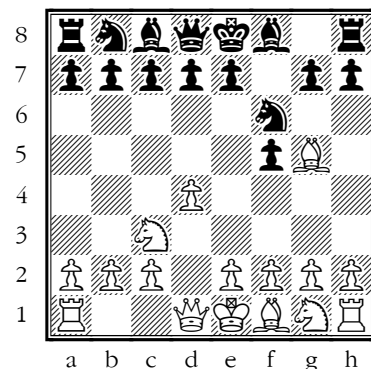
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7
4.Nf3 O-O (or d6) 5.Bg5



Dutch

Nc3/Bg5 system

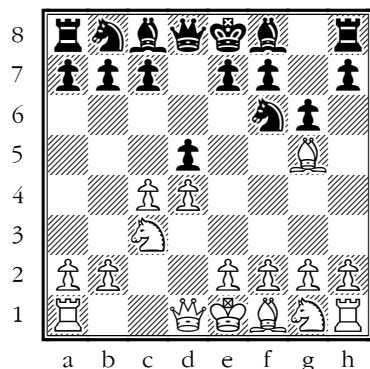
1.d4 f5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Bg5



Grunfeld

Taimanov System

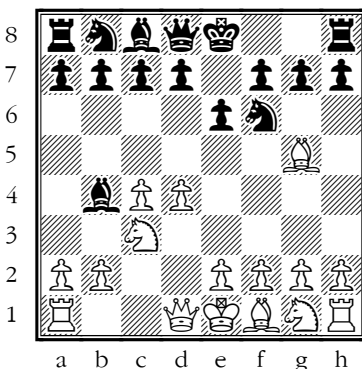
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Bg5



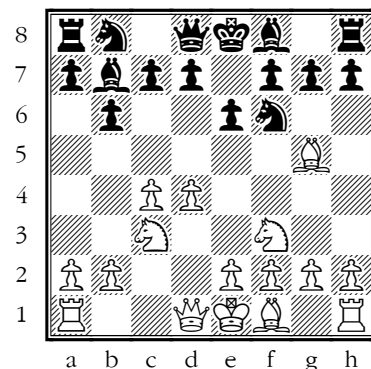
Nimzo/Queen's Indian

Leningrad/Hybrid systems

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4
4.Bg5



1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.Nf3 Bb7
(or Bb4 or Be7) 5.Bg5



I've got and can send little booklets and databases that explain the very basics of all of these approaches.

Specific openings

The top openings played were (with number of games):

Sicilian Defence	9	King's Indian Defence	3
Queen's Gambit	7	Pirc Defence	3
French Defence	6	Grunfeld Defence	2
Giuoco Piano, and Two Knights' Defence	6	London System	2
Queen's Gambit	5	Vienna Game	2
Scotch Four Knights' Game	4	Old Stodge and many others	1
Ruy Lopez Berlin/Classical Defence	4		each

That's quite a pleasing set of choices. Only one Old Stodge was played, and that was the opponent's fault. The rest all look like proper grown-up openings. Lots could be played a bit better, I'm sure, but that is always true, and you are on the right page.

I've revealed the list of openings booklets I have available and won't comment more here about the plans behind the different openings. The Pirc and Grunfeld were chosen only by opponents, so I don't think you need more than a plan for White, and I've done a bit more on the King's Indian for you.

I've written about many of these in the past, so if there isn't a booklet, can I first point you to those pieces, instead of trying to find a new way of saying the same things.

I wanted more of an overview of your choices this year, so thanks for filling in the forms, if you did:

U14	Main opening	White vs. dodges	Black vs 1.e4	Black vs. 1.d4
1 Benny Bacon	Queen's Gambit or Halloween Gambit	Main lines with d4	Two Knights' or Caro-Kann	1...d5
2 Aarv Paul	Queen's Gambit	'Normal' moves	Sicilian Dragon	
3 Niranjana Narayanan	Italian	IQP	Scandinavian	
4 Suhayl Abdalla	Queen's Gambit	Main lines with d4	Main lines 1...e5/Nimzowitsch	
5 Charlie Hill	Queen's Gambit	London System	Sicilian	Nimzo-Indian
6 Nathan Ng	Italian	Main lines with d4	Two Knights'	
7 Caleb Caleshu		Main lines with d4	Sicilian Pin	King's Indian
8 Toby Page	Ruy Lopez	Main lines	Main lines 1...e5	1...d5
9 Alfie Sequeira	Stonewall/London		French	1...d5
10 Tom Bracey	Ruy Lopez/Italian		Two Knights	
11 Joshua Keay	Italian		Two Knights	
12 Roman Mokhovik		Main lines with d4	Two Knights	1...d5

U18	Main opening	White vs. dodges	Black vs 1.e4	Black vs. 1.d4
1 Nicky Bacon	Queen's Gambit or Vienna Game	Main lines	Modern Scandinavian 3...Qd6	Benko Gambit or Queen's Gambit Accepted or Symmetrical London
2 Isaac Kennedy-Bruyneels	Italian	Main line with d4	Two Knights'	
3 James Gibbs		Main line with d4	Main lines 1...e5	
4 Bradley Holland	Queen's Gambit	Main lines	Sicilian	
5 Evan McMullan	Ruy Lopez		Sicilian	King's Indian
6 Oliver Mortimer	Queen's Gambit			King's Indian

What I got from that was, some of you think you are playing main lines, but I can see from your games you aren't, not quite yet, and if you are starting off down a main line, you start playing your own moves pretty early on! But that's cured with just a bit of study – and this is all a lot better than I'm used to seeing.

Middlegame advice

Get your eye in for tactics

If you can, practise spotting things. You can use books of puzzles (or online puzzles) and you can do little exercises which help you spot threats over the whole board (like the 8 Queens Puzzle).

A little list of tactics for you to warm up with: some you spotted, some you did not!

→ TACTIC: fork, pin.....9	→ TACTIC: pin.....28	→ TACTIC: fork, skewer47
TACTIC: undermining10	→ TACTIC: undermining.....30	→ TACTIC: discovery48
→ TACTIC: outnumbered/fork ...12	→ TACTIC: skewer.....30	→ TACTIC: discovery49
→ TACTIC: net13	→ TACTIC: mating attack/pin32	→ TACTIC: mate49
→ TACTIC: decoy15	→ TACTIC: undermining.....32	→ TACTIC: mate/ decoy/discovery50
→ TACTIC: fork.....17	→ TACTIC: net33	→ TACTIC: pin.....51
→ TACTIC: attack a pinned piece18	→ TACTIC: fork.....33	→ TACTIC: pin.....52
→ TACTIC: mating attack18	→ TACTIC: mating attack33	→ TACTIC: back rank mate53
→ TACTIC: skewer19	→ TACTIC: mate/undermining36	→ TACTIC: pin.....54
→ TACTIC: back rank mate19	→ TACTIC: fork.....36	→ TACTIC: fork55
→ TACTIC: undermining.....20	→ TACTIC: fork.....36	→ TACTIC: pin.....57
→ TACTIC: back rank mate22	→ TACTIC: fork.....36	→ TACTIC: fork57
→ TACTIC: mating attack22	→ TACTIC: pin.....37	→ TACTIC: Discovery58
→ TACTIC: mating attack23	→ TACTIC: fork.....37	→ TACTIC: discovery58
→ TACTIC: mating attack23	→ TACTIC: mate37	→ TACTIC: fork58
→ TACTIC: fork, mate23	→ TACTIC: discovery39	→ TACTIC: fork59
→ TACTIC: outnumbered.....24	→ TACTIC: fork.....39	→ TACTIC: back rank mate.....59
→ TACTIC: mating attack24	→ TACTIC: pin.....40	→ TACTIC: fork60
→ TACTIC: pin.....25	→ TACTIC: fork.....41	→ TACTIC: discovery61
→ TACTIC: pin.....26	→ TACTIC: fork.....43	→ TACTIC: skewer62
→ TACTIC: mate.....27	→ TACTIC: fork.....44	→ TACTIC: interference63
→ TACTIC: fork.....27	→ TACTIC: net44	→ TACTIC: discovery63
→ TACTIC: mate27	→ TACTIC: mate44	→ TACTIC: decoy64
→ TACTIC: undermining.....28	→ TACTIC: back rank mate45	→ TACTIC: undermining64
→ TACTIC: pin.....28	→ TACTIC: fork.....46	→ TACTIC: discovery65
→ TACTIC: back rank mate28	→ TACTIC: back rank mate46	

I often notice how many discovery tactics were missed by one side (or both): so learn your disco moves!

However, this year, there were quite a lot of fork moves, so don't get too fancy...

A couple of things I haven't written about before:

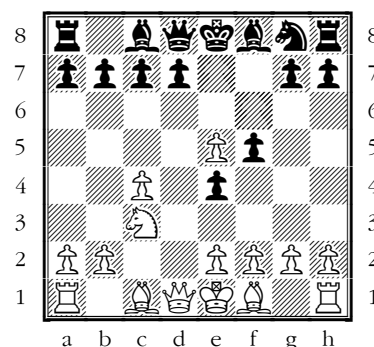
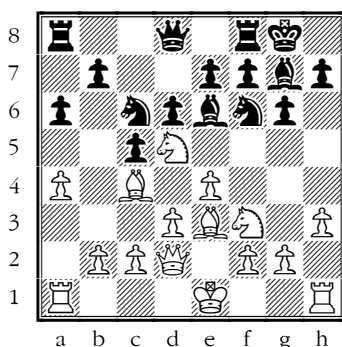
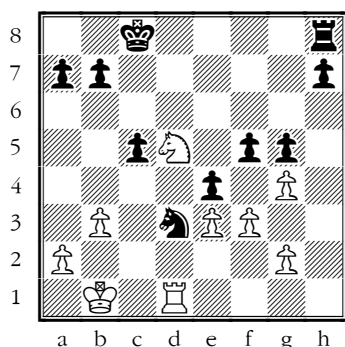
A leap in the dark?

We had several games where one side or the other got out their Knights and Bishops then pretty quickly played a Knight forward. Sometimes that is good but nearly every time I saw it, it was bad.

Sometimes it exposes an undefended Knight to attack (James Round 2) but even if defended, a swap can leave a pawn in trouble (Isaac Round 1, Roman Round 3).

Undefended Knight in trouble

Advanced pawns vulnerable after exchange



Take your opponent's threats seriously

I think I caught a couple of you ignoring your opponent's threats. Even if you play sensible moves, you can face a threat that is too much to cope with. You must pay attention to what your opponent is planning, and, if you can't meet it, avoid it!

But not too seriously

Don't decline a sacrifice 'on principle' – there is no principle! Sometimes the only or best way to win is to take it and hang on to win.

Playing safe is dangerous

☞ The most important feature of a chess position – opening, middlegame and especially endgame – is the activity of the pieces (Michael Stean)

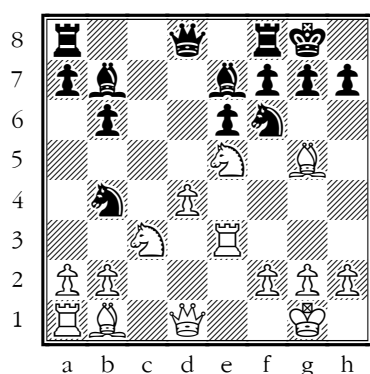
Going 'solid' can mean going quiet or passive, and is objectively worse (your pieces are less active, your opponent can take the initiative) and subjectively worse (your opponent has no problems to solve and can play and plan with confidence).

Even if you want to draw, try to win! Make them work for it. Chessplayers often say that playing for a draw is **playing for only two results** – a draw or a loss. If you keep winning chances on the board, you may have to settle for a draw, but it could be the best way to get one, if you keep your opponent worried.

Isolated Queen's Pawns

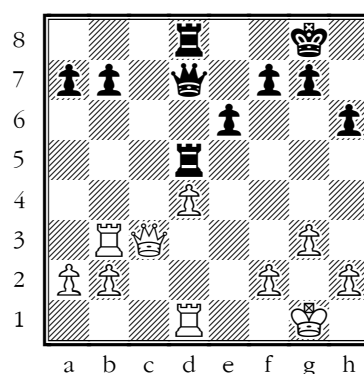
Lots of openings – Queen's-side openings especially, but also the half-open defences – end up in isolated Queen's-Pawn (IQP) positions. You can search this document for mentions and find a few. So, make a virtue of this – learn how to play them, for both sides, and head for them when you can. You then get a position you know how to play and can feel confident in.

Playing with an IQP



- you have more space.
- therefore, you should avoid exchanges.
- you are able to move about the board more easily.
- you are able to attack.
- you have a support point on e5 for a Knight.
- you have a pawn break with d4-d5 (or ...d5-d4)
- Play for an attack on the King with Ne5 and Re3
- Play with energy and conviction!

Playing against 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
- one weakness is not usually enough to lose, so make more if you can by other threats
- In a major piece endgame, you might exploit a pin by ...e5!

Endgame advice

We still have players breaking the two cardinal rules:

☞ If you're winning, swap off pieces (not pawns)

☞ If you're losing, swap off pawns (not pieces)

Which is also to say:

☞ Avoid being left with just your King if you stand worse

By the time you reach a Pawn endgame, the result may be decided and the game may already be over! It's very hard to create counterplay if you have only a King, but with an active Rook, you might be fine.

THE GAMES:

Key to Symbols

Symbol	Meaning	Symbol	Meaning
−+	winning for Black	∞	unclear
±	good for Black	≡	with compensation
±	better for Black	→	with an attack
=	equal	↑	with the initiative
±	better for White	↔	with counterplay
±	good for White		
+−	winning for White		

I showed all these games to my computer which has a free install of Stockfish (former Computer Chess Champion) on it; where Stockfish found a better move than the one played, this is shown as a variation.

Nicky

“ That was a tough day at the office; you’re playing with skill and judgement and getting good positions, but against some fierce opposition you went astray enough to let the points escape. There’s lots to praise about your chess and I hope you can see that in the games. ”

R1: MacDonald,Duncan vs. Bacon,Nicky

[A27 English, Reversed Sicilian]

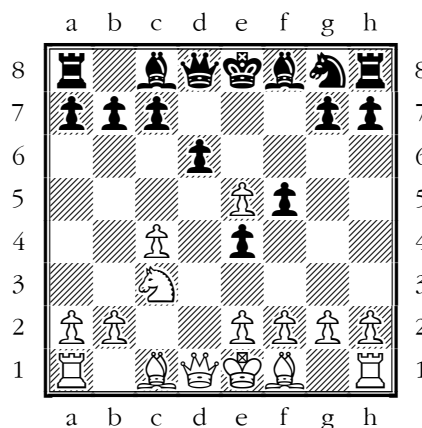
I thought you were making it up in the opening but that was White, and it was going very well for a while. But going for d3 was ambitious for a player with only one piece in play, and an oversight brought the ceiling down.

1. c4 e5
2. Nc3 Nc6
3. Nf3 f5
4. d4 e4
5. Ne5

Unusual: White normally plonks something on g5

[5.Ng5; 5.Bg5]

- 5 ... Nxe5
6. dxe5 d6



7. Qd4

[7.Bf4 is best, with equality]

7 ... Be6

not very pointed, but turns out well

[7...Ne7! threatens to go to c6, and Black has an edge]

8. Bf4

[8.g4 is better, undermining Black's set-up.]

8 ... c5?

Now Black is rather loose.

9. Qd2?

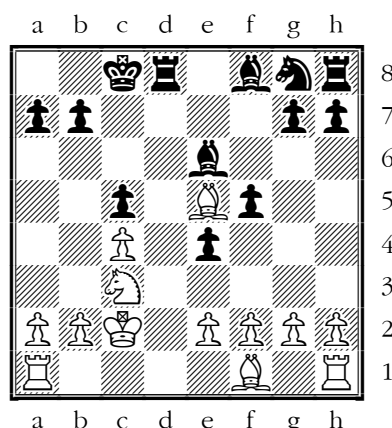
[9.Qe3 is better, with chances of a plus for White]

9 ... dxe5!

10. Bxe5 Qxd2+

11. Kxd2 0-0-0+

12. Kc2



Black is better coordinated

12 ... Bxc4

[12...Ne7! Again, the transfer to c6 is best]

13. b3 Ba6

[13...Be6!]

➤ **TIP: centralise your pieces**

14. e3

[14.g4! starts to break up Black's pawn structure]

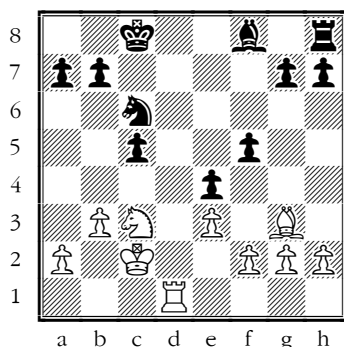
14 ... Bxf1

15. Rhxf1 Ne7

16. Rad1 Rxd1

17. Rxd1 Nc6

18. Bg3



Black has a comfortable extra pawn, but needs to finish development.

18 ... Nb4+?!

The start of a mistaken plan.

19. Kbl Nd3?

This solo adventure ends badly.

[19...Be7 ≠ keeps Black on top]

20. Nd5

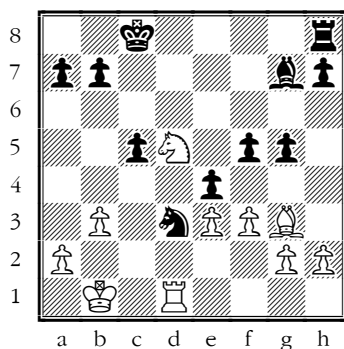
Making it awkward to develop.

[20.f3! wins back the pawn, with equality]

20 ... g5

[20...h5!]

21. f3 Bg7??



→ **TACTIC: fork, pin**

[21...h5 is still right]

22. Ne7+

Not just winning a pawn by a fork, but a Knight by a pin.

22 ... Kd7

23. Nxf5

Black cannot save the bishop without dropping the knight.

23 ... Ke6

24. Nxc7+ Kf6

25. fxe4 Rd8

26. Nf5

White faces no problems in winning from here.

1—0

R2: Bacon, Nicolas vs. Fowler, Hugo

[C30 Vienna Game]

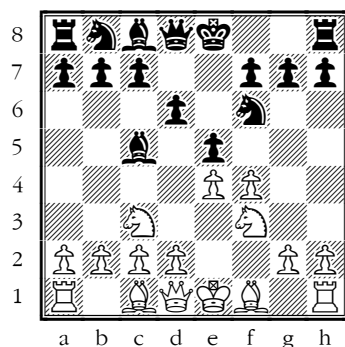
A terrific build-up was largely unopposed early on and you got serious winning chances very quickly (again), despite some lack of urgency. A misstep taking on d4 lost your momentum, which you never got back.

1. e4 e5

2. Nc3 Bc5

3. f4 d6

4. Nf3 Nf6



5. h3

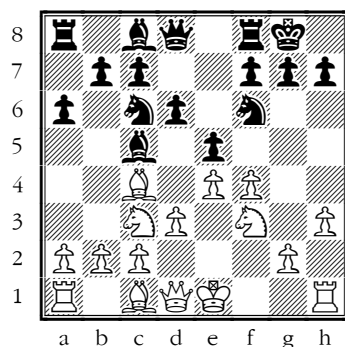
That's rather slow for this nineteenth-century opening!

[5.Bc4! and now 5...Ng4 is no threat: 6.d4 (or 6.Qe2) give White a fine game)]

5 ... 0-0

6. Bc4 Nc6

7. d3 a6



8. f5!?

[8.a3! Perhaps a similar move to the one I just criticised, but White needs that Bishop to attack with.]

8 ... h6

9. Bd2

That move doesn't offer the Bishop more squares, and only castling long justifies it.

White has done well with 9.g4! Kh7

(9...b5 10.Bb3 Nd4 11.g5 Nh7 12.gxh6 Qf6 13.Nd5 Qd8 14.Rg1 Nxf3+ 15.Qxf3 Bxg1 16.Qg4 Ng5 17.Bxg5 Qd7 18.Nf6+ Kh8 19.hxg7+ Kxg7 20.Bh4+ Kh8 21.Qg5 1-0 (21) Zizka,P (1429) - Vaskova,M Hrdonov 2012)

10.Bd2 b5 11.Bb3 Nd4 12.g5 Nxb3 13.axb3 Ng8 14.Qe2 Bb7 15.0-0-0 c6 16.gxh6 gxh6 17.Ng5+ Kh8 18.Qh5 Qf6 19.Nf3 d5 20.d4 exd4 21.Ne2 dxe4 22.Nfxd4 b4 23.Be3 Rfd8 24.Rhg1 Kh7 25.Bg5 Qe5 26.Bxd8 Bxd4 27.Rxd4 1-0 (27) Siemes,R-Gillmann,W (1667) Duesseldorf 2002

9 ... Re8

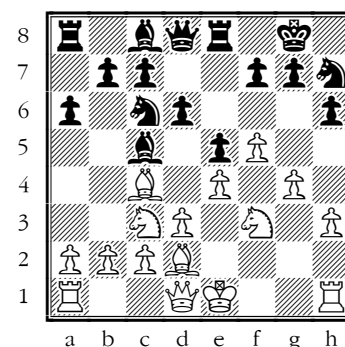
I don't understand that move.

10. g4!

Much easier to appreciate!

10 ... Nh7?

[10...Na5! should hang on]



11. h4!?

Good, but

[11.g5! is more or less winning.]

11 ... Nd4

12. Nxd4

Masters sometimes say "To take is a mistake", and it's true here. You lose a couple of moves for the attack, when you need to be urgent.

☞ **To take is a mistake (sometimes)**

[12.g5! is still the right way forward.]

12 ... **exd4**

13. **Ne2 c6**

Only the Bc4 looks aggressive, and it's about to get d5 in its face, which also suddenly makes sense of the Re8 move.

14. **Bf4? a5**

[14...d5!]

15. **a4**

...d5 can hardly be stopped, but your attack is actually good enough to try 15.Bxf7+!? Kxf7 16.g5! It's probably -/+ but what you played is -+

15 ... **d5!**

16. **exd5**

16 ... **cxtd5**

Stockfish likes 16...Nf6!? re-animating the mummified Knight.

17. **Bb3**

Another retreat.

[17.Bb5 Bd7 18.Kf1 and White doesn't stand too badly.]

17 ... **Bb4+**

[17...Nf6!]

18. **Bd2**

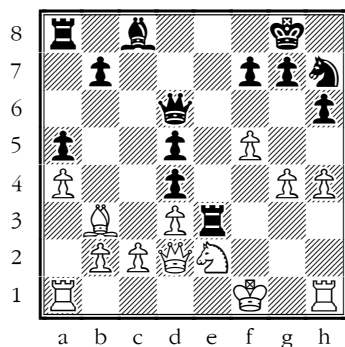
[18.Kf2!?]

18 ... **Qd6**

19. **Kf1 Bxd2**

At risk of repeating itself, Stockfish prefers 19...Nf6!

20. **Qxd2 Re3?!**



TACTIC: undermining

21. **Rg1??**

[21.Nxd4! is not easy to see to the end: 21...Qf4+ 22.Qf2 Qxd4 23.Rh3 Qxb2 24.Rxe3 Qxa1+ 25.Re1 Qa3 (25...Qf6? 26.Re8+ Nf8 27.Qc5) 26.Re8+ Nf8 27.Qf4 and Black is in a bind, despite the extra piece.]

21 ... **Qe5**

[21...Qh2]

22. **c3**

[22.Rg2]

22 ... **dxcc3**

23. **bxcc3**

23 ... **Bd7**

[23...Bxf5! is more to the point 24.gxf5 Qxf5+ 25.Ke1 Rae8 26.Ra2 Nf6 and the Knight saunters in to finish off]

24. **Bc2**

[24.Bxd5]

24 ... **Re8**

25. **Rg2 Nf6**

26. **d4 Qd6**

27. **Re1**

[27.Kg1 is less rough, but still bad]

27 ... **Rf3+**

[27...Nxc4! 28.Rxc4 Qh2-+]

28. **Kg1 Ree3**

29. **Rf1 Rxf1+**

30. **Kxf1 Rf3+**

31. **Kg1 Ne4**

... **0-0**

R3: Stubbs, Oliver vs. Bacon, Nicky

[D02 London System]

You didn't quite get to grips with White's fashionable opening and you were caught out on the c-file.

1. **d4 Nf6**

2. **Nf3 d5**

3. **Bf4 Nc6**

I'm never fond of developing a knight in front of the c-pawn in Queen's-side openings; which file do you plan to open for your Rooks?

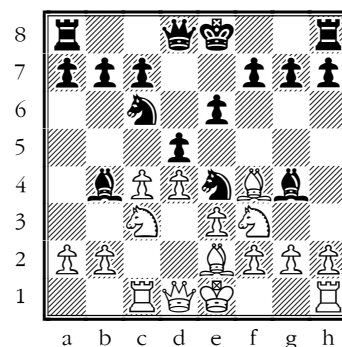
4. **e3 Bg4**

5. **c4 e6**

6. **Nc3 Bb4**

7. **Be2 Ne4**

8. **Rc1**



8 ... **Qe7**

9. **0-0 Nxc3**

[9...Bxc3!? is more consistent; your knight has used up a lot of moves. 10.bxc3 dxc4 11.Bxc4 e5! and your Knight on c6 is suddenly a hero!]

10. **bxcc3 Bd6**

11. **Bxd6 Qxd6**

12. **cxcd5 exd5**

13. **Qb3 Rb8**

[13...0-0]

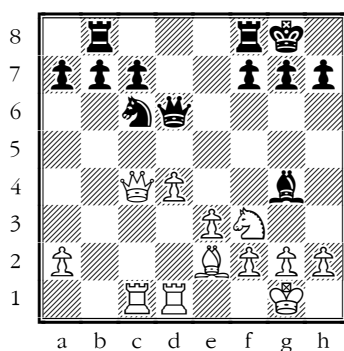
14. **c4!**

The last of the once-doubled pawns advances to wipe out your stake in the centre.

14 ... **dxcc4**

15. **Qxc4 0-0**

16. Rfd1



White's centre is ready to roll and c7 is vulnerable.

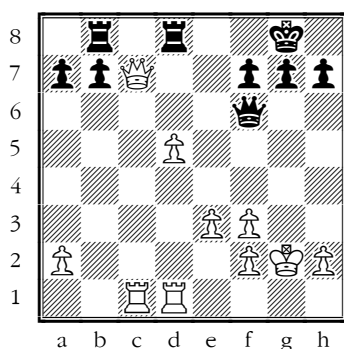
16 ... Rfd8?

Missing (or ignoring) the threat.

☞ **You must take your opponent's threats seriously**

[16...Rfc8± is still pretty good for White, but you're still on your feet 17.h3 Bh5 18.e4]

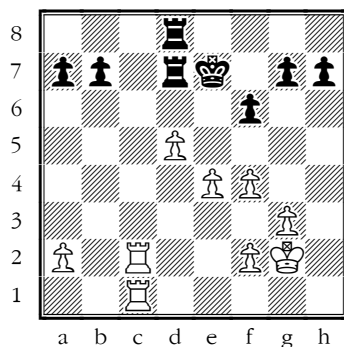
17. d5!+- Bxf3
18. Bxf3 Ne5
19. Qxc7 Nxf3+
20. gxf3 Qf6
21. Kg2



21 ... Qg5+
22. Qg3 Qxg3+

The endgame will be nothing but pain, so keep Queens on.

23. hxg3 Rd7
24. e4 f6
25. Rc2 Kf7
26. Rdc1 Rbd8
27. f4 Ke7



28. Kf3?

[28.f3!]

28 ... Kd6?

[28...f5! exploits a moment's wobble in the White set-up.]

29. a4

[29.Ke3]

29 ... a6

[29...f5 might still be best: get some pawns off.]

30. g4

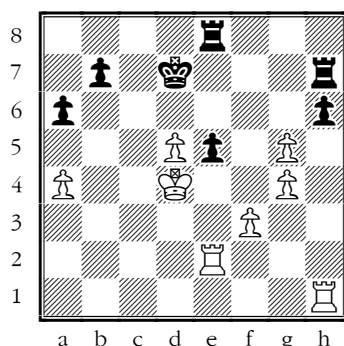
[30.a5!]

30 ... h6

31. Ke3

It's hard to give Black advice.

31 ... Rh8
32. Kd4 Re8
33. Re2 Rde7
34. f3 g5
35. Rh1 Rh7
36. e5+ Kd7
37. fxg5 fxe5+



38. Rxe5

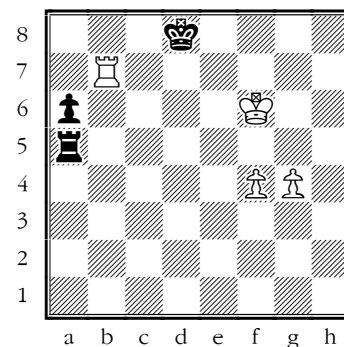
[38.Ke4! might be smart, keeping the pressure down the h-file.]

38 ... Rxe5
39. Kxe5 Re7+

40. Kf6 hxg5
41. Rb1 Kd8
42. Kxg5 Re5+
43. Kf6 Rxd5
44. Rxb7 Rd4
45. Ke5 Rxa4

[45...Rc4!]

46. f4 Ra5+
47. Kf6



47 ... Rb5??

Some counting should have shown swapping off as suicidal. (Didn't I catch you doing this last year too?)

[47...Ra4]

48. Ra7?

[48.Rxb5! axb5 49.Ke5! or even 49.g5 b4 (49...Ke8 50.g6 Kf8 51.g7+ Kg8 52.Kg6 b4 53.f5 b3 54.f6 b2 55.f7#) 50.g6 b3 (it's too late 50...Ke8 51.g7) 51.g7 b2 52.g8Q+ Kc7 53.Qa2]

48 ... a5
49. f5 Kc8
50. g5 Kb8
51. Re7 a4
52. Re2 a3
53. Ra2 Ra5
54. g6 Ra6+
55. Kg5 Kc7
56. g7 Ra8
57. Kg6

[57.Rxa3 is no better but lets Black know who's winning]

57 ... Kd7
58. Kf7 Ra5
59. g8Q Rxf5+
60. Kg6
1-0

Isaac

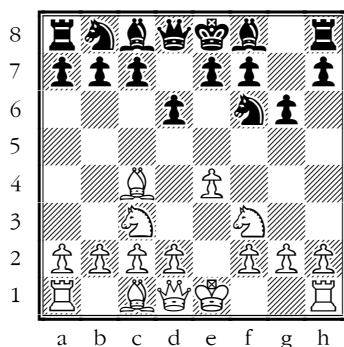
“ Once you get into a game, you play with a good deal of thoughtfulness and obtained one clearly winning position, but you don't come away with much to show from the opening as White and you risk trouble as Black. Have a look at Nicky's second game, or Aarv's in the same round, to see the difference made by playing with a clear opening scheme.”

R1: Kennedy-Bruyneels, Isaac vs. Smith, Callum

[B07 Pirc Defence]

Your home-made system didn't give you any pressure and an attempt to get some with Nd5 led to trouble.

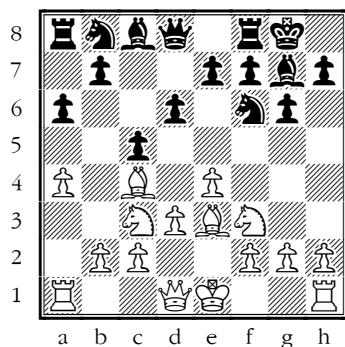
1. e4 d6
2. Nf3 Nf6
3. Nc3 g6
4. Bc4



It feels like you're making this up as you go along, playing moves that are 'normal' against 1...e5. They might not be good against non-standard replies, and you should be playing with a definite system in mind.

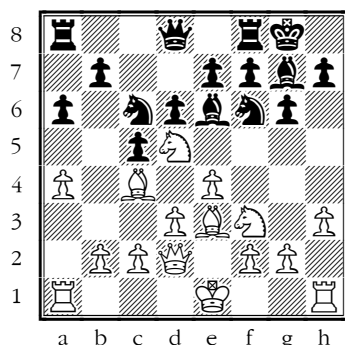
☞ There are lots of systems against each 'dodging' defence, but your normal opening moves might not fit any of them.

- 4 ... Bg7
5. d3 a6
6. a4 0-0
7. Be3 c5



The position is now more like a Sicilian.

8. Qd2 Nc6
9. h3 Be6
10. Nd5?



→ TACTIC: outnumbered/fork

White loses a pawn through this move, although it's not obvious how if you recapture with the bishop.

[10.Bxe6 ± is a fair choice, muddling the Black pawns.]

- 10 ... Bxd5
11. exd5

[11.Bxd5!? is more testing
11...Nxd5 12.exd5 Nb4 13.c4
Bxb2! 14.Qxb2?? Nxd3+]

- 11 ... Nb4
12. Bg5 Nbx5
13. Bxf6

I don't like giving up the Bishop pair without good reason.

[13.0-0]

- 13 ... Nxf6
14. 0-0 d5
15. Bb3 Qd6
16. c3 b5
17. c4?!

This is unkind to the remaining bishop.

[17.Rfe1 is natural and better]

- 17 ... dxc4

[17...bxc4! first is better 18.dxc4 d4 when Black has a passed pawn and White's Bishop needs re-positioning.]

18. dxc4 Qxd2
19. Nxd2 Rfd8
20. Rfd1 b4
21. Bc2 Rd6
22. Nb3 Rc6
23. Rab1

There is plenty of game left, but Black won in the end.

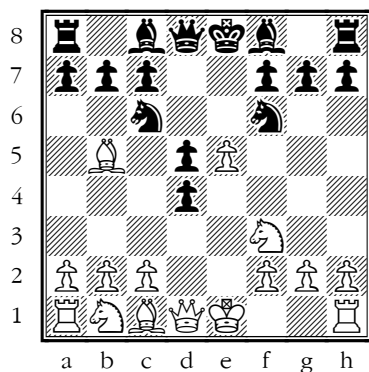
... 0-1

R2: Smith, Madeleine vs. Kennedy-Bruyneels, Isaac

[C55 Two Knights' Defence]

You didn't really know this variation but it didn't seem to matter, as you got a fine position, winning at one stage and still better when you drew.

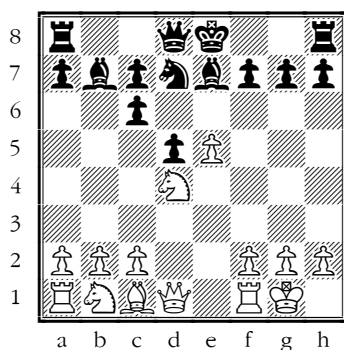
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d4 exd4
5. e5 d5
6. Bb5



6 ... Nd7

[6...Ne4 has been the main line for a century, after which hundreds of games have continued 7.Nxd4 Bd7 8.Bxc6 bxc6]

7. 0-0 Be7
8. Bxc6 bxc6
9. Nxd4
9 ... Bb7

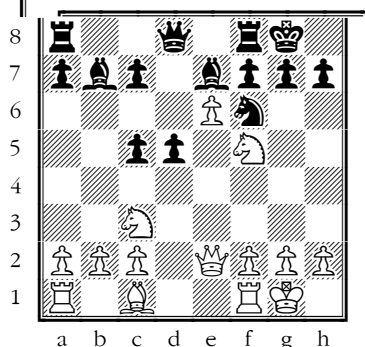


That rather side-tracks the Bishop

10. e6

Enterprising, but White doesn't have enough development to make this hurt.

10 ... Nf6
11. Qe2 0-0
12. Nc3 c5
13. Nf5



13 ... g6?

Weakening – specifically, makes a big hole on h6.

[13...fxe6 or 13...d4 give Black a small edge.]

14. exf7+

[14.Nh6+]

14 ... Kxf7
15. Nh6+ Kg7
16. Re1 Bd6
17. Bg5

Both players get the next bit wrong.

17 ... d4?+-

[17...Qd7 ≠ is fine for Black]

18. Na4?

[18.Nb5!± and White is pressing hard]

18 ... Qe8≠

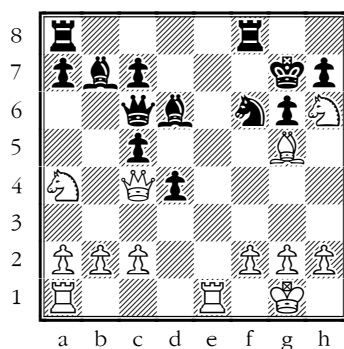
asks a hard question of the Knight: where are you going next?

[18...Qd7!+- is even better, connecting the rooks and keeping the Queen for ammunition. 19.b3 Ne4! wins a piece]

19. Qc4

[19.Qxe8]

19 ... Qc6



→ TACTIC: net

This is now great for Black, not because of the mate threat, but because the Knight is trapped.

20. f3 Qd5

Rather cautious

[20...Ba6 wins a piece, as the Queen cannot stay in touch with the Knight 21. Qb3 c4! -+]

➤ Forcing moves (threats, captures, checks) are the key to chess tactics.

21. Qxd5 Bxd5

White is horribly uncoordinated.

22. Ng4?

[22.b3]

22 ... Nxg4

23. fxg4 Rfe8

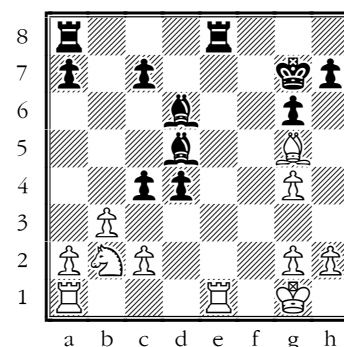
That Rook was OK where it was.

[23...Rae8;

23...Bc6 24.b3 Bxa4 25.bxa4 Rab8]

24. b3 c4

25. Nb2



This is quite good for Black, with a pawn majority supported by the bishop pair, but drawn.

½-½

R3: Gao, Ian vs. Kennedy-Bruyneels, Isaac

[B34 Sicilian Defence, Accelerated Dragon]

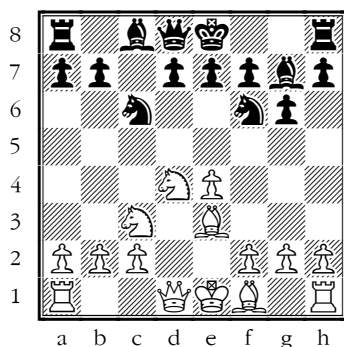
A tricky defence was tailor-made to thwart your intended set-up, and you got a slightly worse game that rather withered as it went on.

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 g6
3. d4 cxd4
4. Nxd4

[4.Qxd4 is not a bad approach, against this line and many others - theory has little to say and you can

develop in a way you are familiar with.]

4 ... Nc6
5. Nc3 Bg7
6. Be3 Nf6



The Accelerated Dragon does not permit White to set up the Yugoslav Attack. You get into one of the types of trouble that can happen if you try to insist on it. It's a shame, because having a plan like the Yugoslav is just how I want you to play, but it doesn't work against this move order.

7. Qd2

[7.Bc4! 0-0 8.f3?! (8.Qd2 Ng4) 8...Qb6! 9.Bb3 Nxe4!;

7.f3 0-0 8.Qd2 d5!]

7 ... 0-0

[7...Ng4]

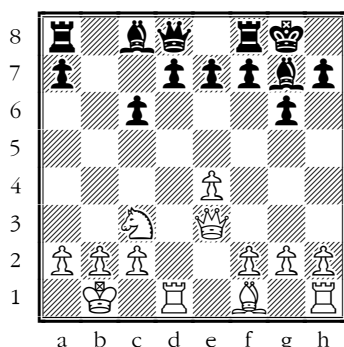
8. 0-0-0

[8.Rd1 d5]

8 ... Ng4!

Black gains the bishop pair, and the Dragon bishop will breathe fire.

9. Nxc6 bxc6
10. Kbl Nxe3
11. Qxe3



At a glance, this position might be thought equal, but I believe all the long-term chances are with Black, who has two Bishops and a file open against the enemy king.

11 ... Qb6

I'd prefer to play for the attack with Qa5 and Rb8

12. Qxb6 axb6

13. Bc4 Bxc3

14. bxc3

Black has given up the dark-squared Bishop to make a mess of white's pawns

14 ... d6

15. h4 b5

16. Bb3 Be6

17. f4 c5

18. Bd5 Bxd5

19. exd5 h5

20. Rhg1

[20.Rhe1]

20 ... f5

[20...Kg7]

21. Rge1 Kf7

22. Kb2

[22.Rd3]

22 ... Ra4

Black makes good use of the half-open file

23. g3 Rfa8

24. Ra1 Rc4

[24...b4]

25. Re2

[25.a3]

25 ... Raa4

26. Rael Re4

Both sides need to weigh their chances in the endings with two four or no rooks.

27. Rxe4

[27.Kcl e6-/29]

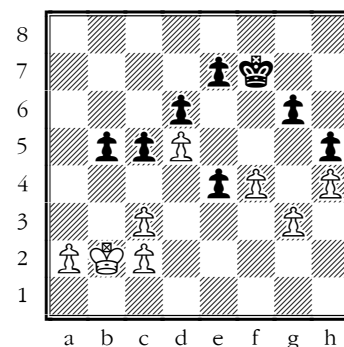
27 ... Rxe4

[27...fxe4]

28. Rxe4

[28.Rd1]

28 ... fxe4



That was actually the worst outcome for White: the passed pawn makes the endgame a win for Black. With the c3 pawn on b3, White would even win.

➡ If you stand worse, keep pieces on

But I expect you know that rule, so perhaps you thought you were better?

29. c4 b4

30. c3

[30.Kcl]

30 ... Kf6

31. cxb4 cxb4

32. Kc2

[32.Kb3 was the consistent move, but it's all too slow 32...Kf5]

32 ... Kf5

33. Kd2 Kg4

34. Ke3 Kxg3

35. Kxe4 Kxh4

36. Kd3

[36.f5]

36 ... Kh3

37. Ke4 Kg4

... 0-1

James

“ You were unlucky not to come away with something from your game with White, where your change of pace seemed to unsettle your opponent. It didn't seem as though you had your chess head on in the first game! The last round was a shame, as your activity might have been enough to hold it. ”

R1: Evans, James vs. Gibbs, James

[C50 Old Stodge]

Two tactical mistakes, one of which White missed, and the other you rather called attention to!

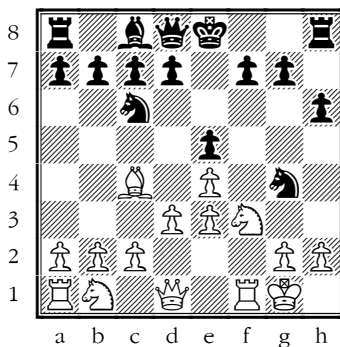
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Bc5
4. 0-0 Nf6
5. d3
- 5 ... h6
6. Be3
- 6 ... Bxe3

[6...Bb6 avoids doing White any favours.]

7. fxe3

With doubled pawns? But d4 is covered and the f-file half-open, so that's pretty good for White.

- 7 ... Ng4?



A one-move-threat that cannot be good, even if White didn't have a tactic.

→ TACTIC: decoy

[7...0-0=]

8. Qe2

[8.Bxf7+!]

- 8 ... d6

[8...0-0!]

9. d4

[9.Bxf7+! still works]

- 9 ... 0-0=

Whew

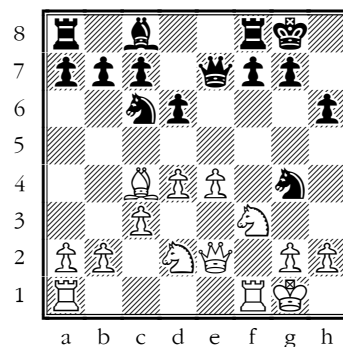
10. c3 Qe7

11. Nbd2

- 11 ... exd4

straightens out White's pawns.

12. exd4



- 12 ... Bf5??

[12...Bd]

13. exf5 Qxe2

14. Bxe2

Black must have missed this backwards move. Sadly, White is now a piece ahead and has no problems.

☞ Backwards moves are the hardest to spot

- 14 ... Ne3

15. Rf2 Rfe8

[15...Ng]

16. Bd3 Re7

17. Nf1 Rae8

18. Nxe3 Rxe3

19. Rd1 a6

20. Rdd2 Kf8

21. Rfe2 Na5

22. Kf2 b5

23. Rxe3

... 1-0

R2: Gibbs, James vs. Smith, George

[D31 Queen's Gambit]

You started with a lot of bounce and energy, which, had you kept it going, could have given quick rewards. But you got a bit sidetracked and Black was able to break when your King was embarrassed to be caught in the centre.

1. d4

[1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 c5 4.c3 cxd4 5.cxd4 dxe4 6.Nxe4]

- 1 ... d5

2. c4 e6

3. Nc3 c6

4. cxd5

[4.e4 is a good time for this move, which usually leads to a gambit 4...dxe4 5.Nxe4 Bb4+ 6.Bd2 Qxd4 7.Bxb4 Qxe4+ 8.Be2 (8.Ne2)]

- 4 ... cxd5

[4...exd5 makes more sense]

5. e4 dxe4

6. Nxe4

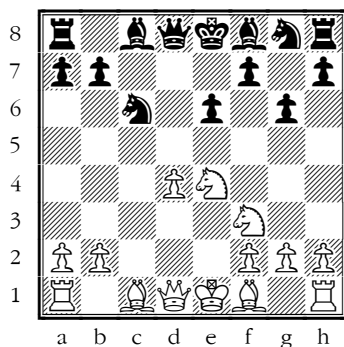
We normally arrive at this position from the French Defence - and Black might not play this way in King's Pawn openings.

☞ TIP: all players should know how to handle IQP positions from both sides.

- 6 ... Nc6

[6...Be7]

7. Nf3 g6



Black is playing draughts! There are now too many dark-square holes for one bishop to cover.

[7...Nge7]

8. Bb5

[8.Bd3!]

8 ... Bg7

[8...Qa5+]

9. Be3

[9.Bf4!± targeting d6 with a big plus]

9 ... Nge7

10. Rc1 0-0

11. Qd2 a6?!

12. Bxc6 Nxc6

13. Rd1

Castling is best

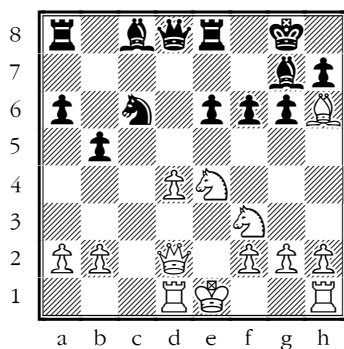
[13.0-0!]=]

13 ... Re8

[13...Ne7 or; 13...b6 are more in keeping with the anti-IQP plan]

14. Bg5 f6

15. Bh6 b5



White needs to castle; the Re8 is lurking.

TIP: castle early and often!

16. Nc5

[16.Bxg7 Kxg7 17.0-0 and White's structure is no worse than Black's]

16 ... Rb8

[16...e5! ≠ catches White with their King in the middle]

17. h4

[17.0-0!±]

17 ... Qd5?

[17...e5! ≠]

18. a3?

No idea what that was supposed to achieve.

[18.Bxg7! Kxg7 19.0-0± e5? is sharp but losing 20.dxe5! Qxc5 21.exf6+ Kh8 22.Rc1! Qb4 23.Qh6+-]

18 ... e5!≠

At last! And it's very good for Black

19. Bxg7?

Irrelevant here

[19.0-0]

19 ... exd4+ -+

20. Kf1 Kxg7

21. Nd3

[21.Rc1]

21 ... Bg4

22. Nf4 Qc4+

23. Qd3

[23.Nd3]

23 ... Ne5

[23...Bf5 is brutal]

24. Qxc4

[24.Nxe5]

24 ... bxc4

25. Re1 d3

26. Nxe5 Rxe5

27. f3 Rxe1+

28. Kxe1 Re8+

[28...Rxb2! is more accurate.]

29. Kd2 Bd7

30. Rb1 Ba4

31. Rc1 Bb3

32. g4

[32.Re1]

32 ... h6

[32...Kf7]

33. h5?

It's pretty hopeless, but you shouldn't force your opponent to find the right plan!

[33.Rh1]

33 ... g5

34. Nd5

[34.Nxd3-1]

34 ... Re2+

35. Kc3 d2

36. Rb1 Re1

... 0-1

R3: Tye,Jack vs. Gibbs,James

[C65 Ruy Lopez]

Rather a messy start, with mistakes on both sides, led to an endgame position where your pawn structure was messy. You dropped a pawn, but it only started looking important after you played a 'safe' retreat.

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 Nc6

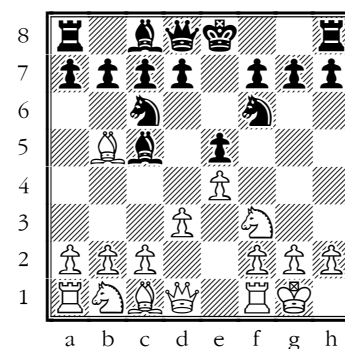
3. Bb5

As we know, not a threat to win a pawn.

3 ... Nf6

4. 0-0 Bc5

5. d3



NOW it's a threat to win a pawn.

5 ... 0-0?

[5...Nd4 or; 5...d6 are better]

6. Bg5?

[6.Bxc6! dxc6 7.Nxe5± Qd6 8.Nf3 Bg4±]

6 ... a6

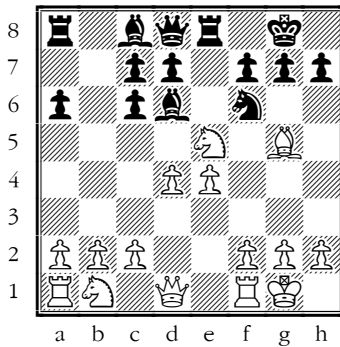
Black forces White to find the right idea.

7. Bxc6 bxc6

8. Nxe5 Re8

[8...Bd4!]

9. d4 Bd6



10. Nxc6?

Clever, but just hands back the pawn. Black is best advised not to take it, however.

[10.f4!]

10 ... dxc6

11. e5 Bxe5

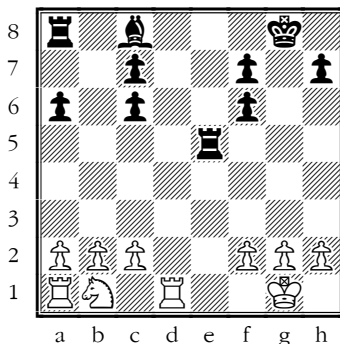
12. dxe5 Qxd1

13. Rxd1 Rxe5

Hard to resist.

[13...Ng4!]

14. Bxf6 gxf6



Black's pawns are a mess.

15. Rd8+ Kg7

16. Nc3 c5

17. Nd5 Bb7

18. Rxa8 Bxa8

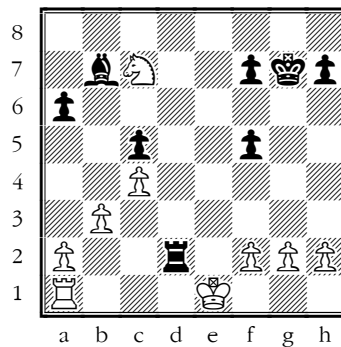
19. Nxc7 Bb7

20. c4 Re2

21. b3 Rd2

22. Kf1 f5

23. Ke1



23 ... Rd7?

Retreating can't be right.

➔ **TIP: Playing safe is dangerous!**

And in particular:

➔ **Rooks hate defending**

[23...Rc2; 23...Rb2]

24. Nd5 Rd6?!

[24...Bxd5 25.cxd5 Rxd5 Had to be worth a try]

25. Rd1

Now White has very good chances to convert the extra pawn.

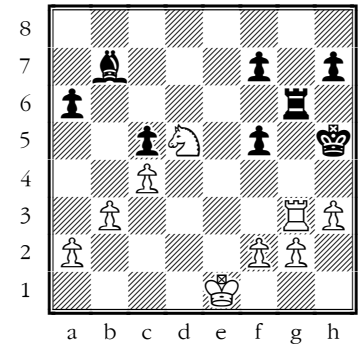
25 ... Rh6

[25...Bxd]

26. h3 Kg6

27. Rd3 Kh5

28. Rg3 Rg6?



➔ **TACTIC: fork**

29. Nf4+ Kh6

30. Nxc6 fxc6

31. Kf1 Be4

32. Rc3 Kg5

33. a3 a5

34. f3 Bb1

35. Kf2 Kf4

36. g3+ Kg5

37. Ke2 f4

38. gxf4+ Kxf4

39. Re3 h5

40. Re7 Bc2

41. Rc7 Bxb3

42. Rxc5 a4

43. Rc8 Bc2

44. Rf8+ Ke5

45. Ke3 Bb3

46. f4+ Ke6

47. Kd4 Bc2

48. c5 Ke7

49. Ra8 Kd7

50. Kd5 Kc7

51. Ra7+ Kb8

52. Re7 Kc8

53. Kd6 Bf5

54. c6 Bxh3

55. Re8#

Bradley

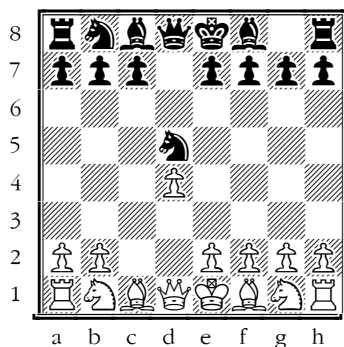
“ One nice win and chances in the others, so that’s not a bad day’s chess. A little bit more science in your opening play and bit more focus with the tactics, and you could have had three!”

R1: Holland, Bradley vs. Chung, Joel

[D06 Queen’s Gambit, Marshall Defence]

How nice to win a piece, but how horrible to have it all fall apart! Never mind, there are some easy lessons to learn from this one.

1. d4 d5
2. c4 Nf6?
3. cxd5! Nxd5



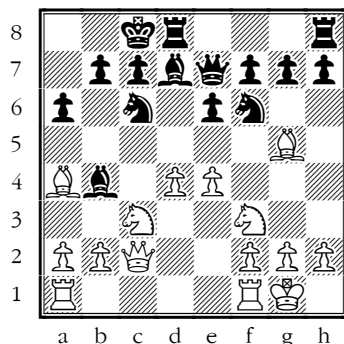
4. e4!?

[4.Nf3! is the right move here]

- 4 ... Nf6
5. Nc3 e6?!

[5...e5!? is Marshall's trick which was thought to equalise and is worth avoiding. 6.dxe5 Qxd1 + 7.Kxd1 Ng4!]

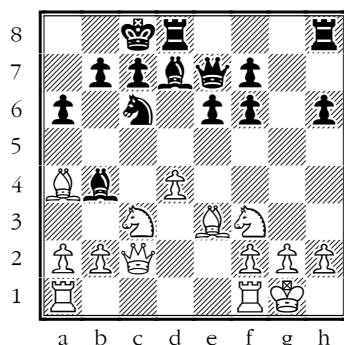
6. Nf3 Bb4
7. Qc2 Nc6
8. Bb5 Bd7
9. 0-0 a6
10. Ba4 Qe7
11. Bg5 0-0-0?!



→ **TACTIC: attack a pinned piece**

[11...h6 was essential, although White still stands very well
12.Bd2±]

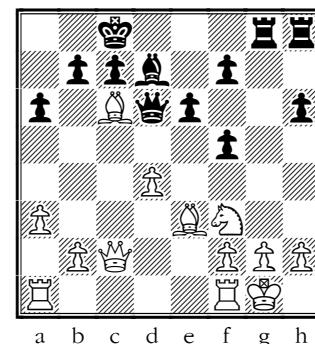
12. e5! h6
13. exf6 gxf6
14. Be3



Black now plays the attack with verve, as though material is equal - quite the right approach if you are losing.

☞ If you’re losing, you have to throw the game out of its expected course by playing actively and making opportunities for mistakes.

- 14 ... Rdg8
15. a3 Bd6
16. Ne4 f5
17. Nxd6+ Qxd6
18. Bxc6?



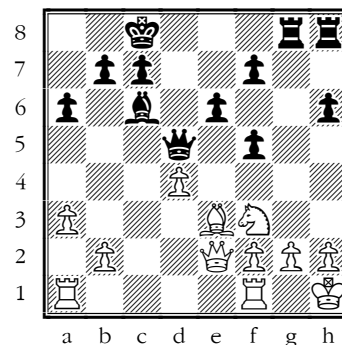
Generally, exchanges favour the winning side, but this just points an unopposed black bishop at White's king!

[18.Rac1]

- 18 ... Bxc6

Black is already better: White must return the piece to avoid mate.

19. Qe2 Qd5
20. Kh1



→ **TACTIC: mating attack**

[20.Bf4 or -; 20.g3 were required here]

- 20 ... Rxd6!

Very good

21. Kxg2 Rg8+

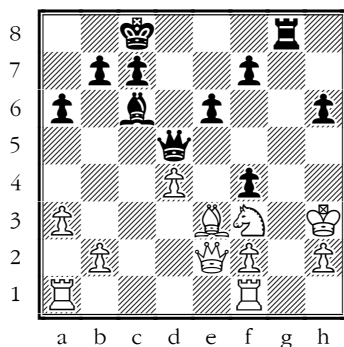
[21...Bb5]

22. Kh3

[22.Kh1 Qxf3+ 23.Qxf3 Bxf3#]

- 22 ... f4

In fact 22...Bb5 is best here, since 23.Qd1 Bxf1+ 24.Kh4 Qe4+ forces mate



23. Ne5??

[23.Rg1! saves White's hide. -#2]

23 ... Qg2+

24. Kh4 Qxh2#

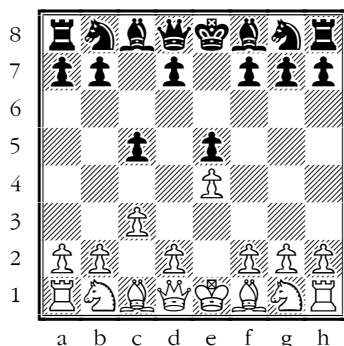
R2: Stevenson, Neil vs. Holland, Bradley

[B22 Sicilian Defence, Alapin]

Your choice of defence made me blink a bit but most of the rest made me smile. You played with focus and energy and got a well-deserved win.

1. e4 c5

2. c3 e5



A risky approach, weak on the light squares.

3. Nf3 Nc6

4. Bc4 Be7!

5. 0-0

[5.d4 must be right]

5 ... Nf6

6. d3 0-0

7. Be3 d5!

8. exd5 Nxd5

9. Bb5

Black has a fine game.

9 ... Bd6

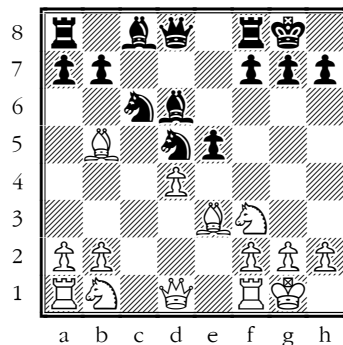
[9...f6]

10. d4

[10.Nbd2]

10 ... cxd4

11. cxd4



Black still has a fine game!

11 ... Bg4!?

Black is doing well after this but has better

[11...e4! is the best way forward, knocking back the white pieces 12.Nfd2 Nxe3 13.fxe3 Qh4!]

➔ **Pawns are the sappers of the chessboard, undermining defences.**

12. dxe5 Bxe5

13. Nbd2 Nxe3

14. fxe3 Bxb2

15. Rb1 Bc3

16. Qc2 Bxd2

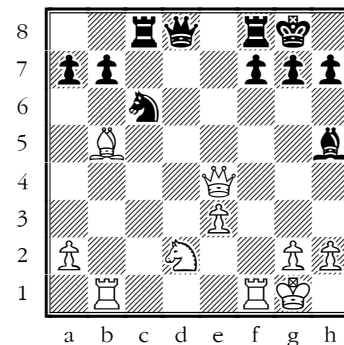
17. Nxd2 Rc8

18. Qe4?

[18.Rf2]

18 ... Bh5

[18...Qxd2 19.Qxg4 Qxe3+-]



19. Nf3?

➔ **TACTIC: skewer**

[19.Rb2 but Black is still very much in the driving seat.]

19 ... Bg6

20. Qa4 Bxb1

21. Rxb1 Qf6

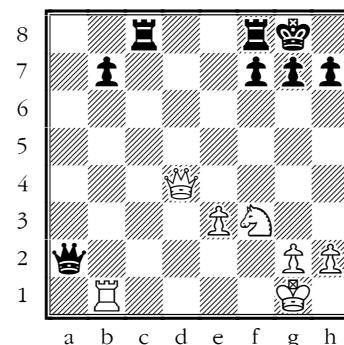
White now chases an unimportant pawn

22. Bxc6 Qxc6

23. Qxa7 Qd5

[23...Qe4!]

24. Qd4 Qxa2



➔ **TACTIC: back rank mate**

25. Rxb7??

[25.Qb2-#3]

25 ... Rc1+

26. Ne1 Rxe1#

R3: Holland, Bradley vs. Mullaney, William

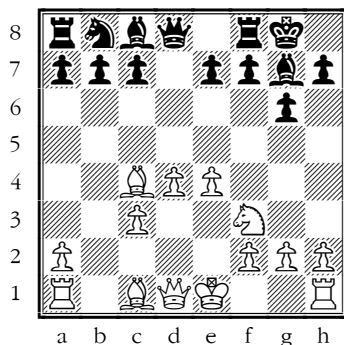
[D85 Grunfeld Defence, Exchange Variation]

You were always on the back foot in this game; with a better worked-out opening you could press, but your centre crumbled, and you lost the thread of the endgame a pawn down. There was one glorious moment, though, when you could have looked twice...

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 g6
3. Nc3 d5
4. cxd5 Nxd5
5. e4 Nxc3
6. bxc3 Bg7
7. Nf3

[7.Bc4 c5 8.Ne2 was the main line when I was starting out, but now lots of other ideas have been tried; 7.Rb1; 7.Bg5; 7.Be3]

- 7 ... 0-0
8. Bc4



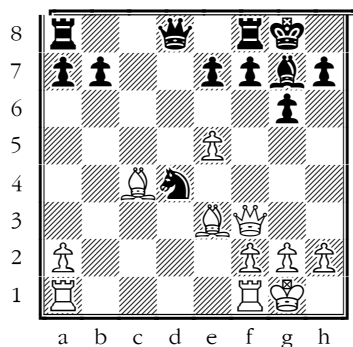
This fits better with Ne2

[8.Be2]

- 8 ... c5
9. 0-0 Nc6
10. Be3 Bg4

This pin is the trouble; White can't hold on to the centre. But White has plenty of mobility and might get the pawn back.

11. e5 Bxf3
12. Qxf3 cxd4
13. cxd4 Nxd4



14. Qxb7

That's swapping an important pawn for an unimportant pawn.

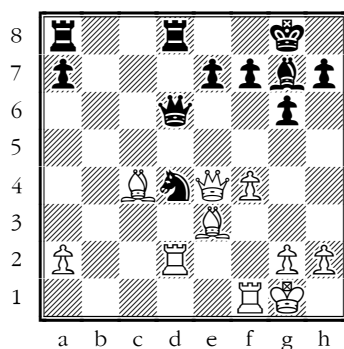
[14.Qe4 makes it a good gambit: White's centre is half-broken but you have compensation for the pawn in space and activity. 14...Rc8 15.Rac1 Nc6 16.f4]

➔ Activity and central control can compensate for a pawn.

- 14 ... Bxe5

You're still a pawn down but without the centre or activity to show for it.

15. Qe4 Qd6
16. Rad1 Rfd8
17. f4 Bg7
18. Rd2



➔ TACTIC: undermining

- 18 ... Qc6??

[18...Rab8]

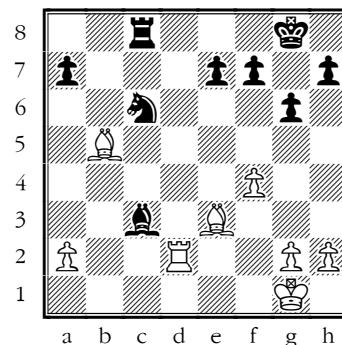
19. Qxc6

[19.Rxd4! wins on the spot]

- 19 ... Nxc6
20. Rfd1 Rxd2
21. Rxd2 Rc8

Normal service is resumed: Black is a pawn up against the Bishop pair, and White has little to fear.

22. Bb5 Bc3



23. Re2

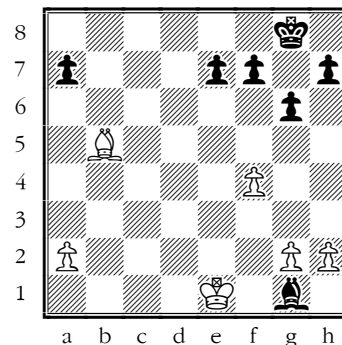
Over-thinking it?

[23.Rd7! should be fine]

- 23 ... Nd4
24. Bxd4 Bxd4+
25. Kf1 Rcl+
26. Re1 Rxe1+
27. Kxe1

Normally, the opposite-coloured Bishops are a strong drawing factor, but Black is allowed to round up one more pawn.

- 27 ... Bg1



➔ TACTIC: net

28. h3?

[28.g3! Bxh2? 29.Kf2! nets the Bishop]

- 28 ... Bh2
29. Kf2

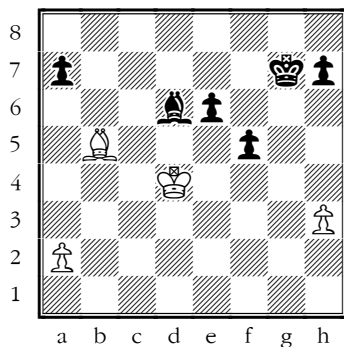
[29.f5 The pawn is going anyway, so make a mess]

- 29 ... Bxf4

30. Kf3 Bd6
31. Ke4 e6
32. g4 Kg7
33. Kd4 f5
34. gxf5

[34.Be2]

34 ... gxf5



Now Black has connected passed pawns, you need a miracle to draw.

35. Bc4 Kf6
36. Bd3

[36.h4]

36 ... e5+
37. Kd5 Bc7
38. Kc6

[38.h4]

38 ... Bb6
39. a4

[39.Kd5]

39 ... e4
40. Be2 f4

[40...Ke5! 41.Bf1-1/30]

41. Kb5

[41.Kd5 was worth a try: 41...e3? and White can dream again of drawing (41...f3! wins)]

41 ... f3

42. Bc4

[42.Bd1-#18]

42 ... e3

43. a5 e2

Good night, nurse.

0-1

Evan

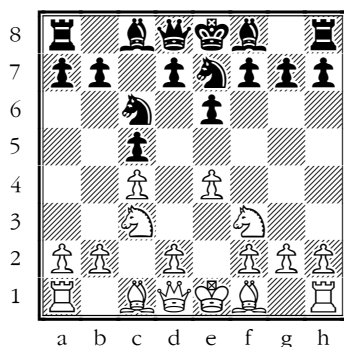
“ I was pretty happy with your chess: not perfect but mostly good stuff and the things that need polishing just need a polish and not repair.”

R1: Leggett, Neirin vs. McMullan, Evan

[B20 Sicilian Defence]

The players go to and fro about who is going to be a pawn up, and eventually get into a drawn endgame (which Black, however, lost)

1. e4 c5
2. c4 Nc6
3. Nf3 e6
4. Nc3 Nge7



White's system has no name..

5. g3

...although 5.d4 would return us to known ground.

5 ... d5
6. cxd5 exd5
7. exd5 Nxd5

White must now face life with an isolated Queen's pawn, but their pieces are not on the right squares to harmonise with it.

8. Bg2 Nxc3

That mends white's pawn formation.

[8...Ndb4!?

8...Qe7+! pushes for an endgame where the IQP will be weak.]

9. bxc3 Qe7+

Good idea, wrong moment!

☞ As the pawn structure changes, so do the best places for your pieces, and indeed which pieces are best.

10. Qe2 Qxe2+
11. Kxe2 Be7
12. Re1 Be6
13. Kf1 0-0
14. d4 cxd4

[14...Rad8 keeping the tension is better]

☞ TIP: To take is a mistake

15. Nxd4 Nxd4

16. cxd4

White now threatens b7, which Black seems to forget about

16 ... Bc4+

[16...Bb4 17.Re3!= (17.Rd1 Bc3!)]

17. Kgl Bb4

18. Re3

Now Black must rescue the b-pawn.

18 ... Rfe8

[18...Rad]

19. Bxb7! Rab8

20. Rxe8+ Rxe8

21. Be3 Rb8

22. Rcl

A 'counterattack' which returns the pawn

[22.Bc6!]

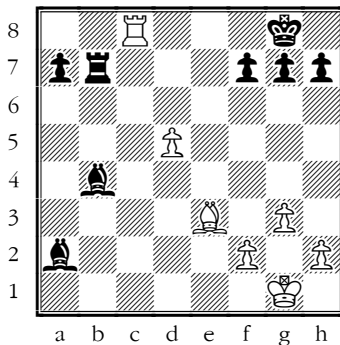
22 ... Bxa2

23. d5

[23.Bc6]

23 ... Rxb7

24. Rc8+



→ **TACTIC: back rank mate**

Black can grovel out of this one by returning the stolen bishop, but can go a pawn ahead.

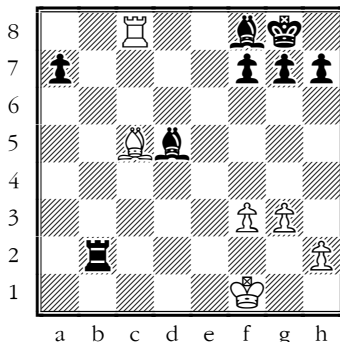
24 ... Bf8

25. Bc5 Rb1+

26. Kg2 Bxd5+

27. f3 Rb2+

28. Kf1



The White king is unable to join the fight

28 ... Bc4+

Puts the Bishop in danger

[28...h5]

29. Ke1 Rb1+

But that move releases the trapped King

30. Kd2 h6

31. Rxf8+ Kh7

32. Bxa7 Rb7

33. Bd4 Rb3

34. Bc3 Rb7

35. f4 Rd7+

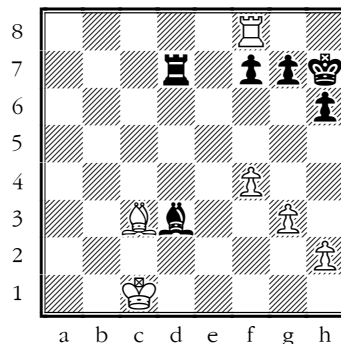
36. Kc2

The King is cut off on the empty Queen's wing, at least for now.

[36.Ke1]

36 ... Bd3+

37. Kc1??



I don't think there is any reason for White to lose this one, though.

[37.Kd2! returns the King to the relevant wing.]

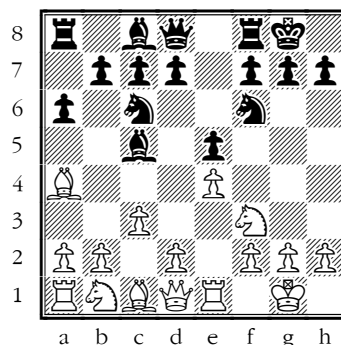
... 0-1

R2: McMullan, Evan vs. Goodfellow, Sam

[C78 Ruy Lopez]

A bit of a slugfest which could have gone either way, but in the end, you get in the knockout punch. The devil is in the details: many moves turned out to be critical, and the advantage swung from side to side.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 a6
4. Ba4 Nf6
5. 0-0 Bc5
6. c3 0-0
7. Re1



A fairly standard Lopez

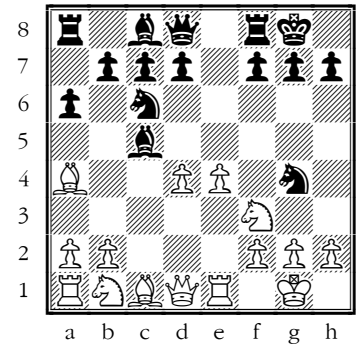
[7.d4 is the plan, so play it!]

7 ... Ng4!?

I thought: this just forces White to carry out their plan, and is a bad move, but my computer saw further

8. d4 exd4

9. cxd4



→ **TACTIC: mating attack**

[9.h3]

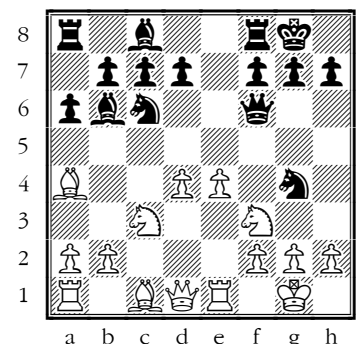
9 ... Bb6

[9...Nxd4! 10.Nxd4 Qh4 11.Be3 Qxh2+ 12.Kf1 Qh1+ 13.Ke2 Qxg2 and Stockfish thinks that Black has more than enough attack for the piece. Not a very human line!]

10. Nc3

[10.Bg5 is even better]

10 ... Qf6?



I like the attitude but Black can be driven back

[10...Nxd4 is still best, but White keeps a plus 11.Nxd4 Qh4 12.Be3 Qxh2+ 13.Kf1 d6 14.Nf3 Qh1+ 15.Ke2 Qxg2]

11. e5!?

[11.Nd5! is even better, taking out the Bb6]

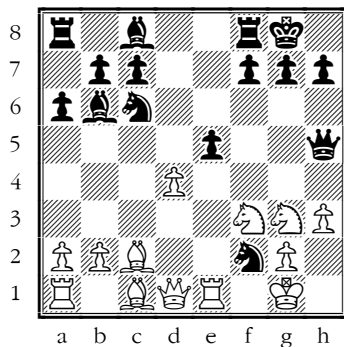
11 ... Qf5
 12. Bc2 Qh5
 13. h3 d6
 14. Ne2

[14.hxg4 Bxg4 15.Be4 Nxd4 gets White into unnecessary bother, although it's clearly better for you]

14 ... dxe5

[14...Nxd]

15. Ng3 Nxf2



→ TACTIC: mating attack

16. Qe2

[16.Kxf2 is best; Black is bluffing]

16 ... Nxf3+

17. Kf1?

This 'safe' move is a disaster!

[17.gxh3]

☞ There is no 'declining on principle' – it's either good for you or not.

17 ... Qg4

18. Qe4

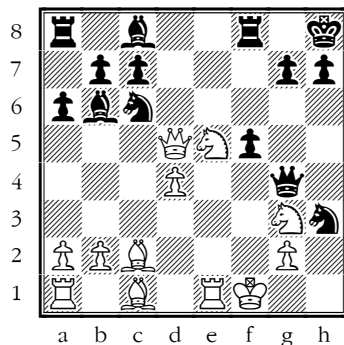
A solid threat but Black is all over the White position like a rash

[18.Qd3]

18 ... f5

19. Qd5+ Kh8

20. Nxe5

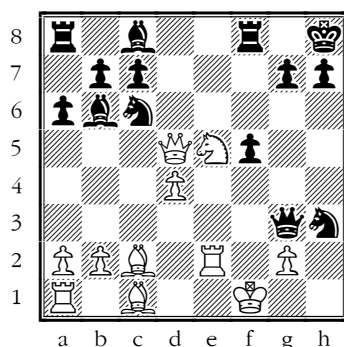


→ TACTIC: mating attack

20 ... Qxg3

[20...Nxe5! 21.Rxe5 Qxg3 with a crushing advantage for Black]

21. Re2



→ TACTIC: fork, mate

[21.Nf7+ is the right move, but you get another chance...]

21 ... Nf4

A very tempting fork, but it's mate!

[21...Nxe5 wins for Black 22.Qxe5 f4 and Black has an extra piece and a strong attack.]

22. Nf7+!

22 ... Rxf7

Too cooperative!

[22...Kg8 would have forced you to explore 23.Nh6+ Kh8 and now you should know... 24.Qg8+ (24.Nf7+ is perpetual check) 24...Rxf7 25.Nf7# ... (but did you?!)]

23. Re8+ Rf8

24. Rxf8#

R3: Goodhew, Finn vs. McMullan, Evan

[A48 London vs King's Indian Defence]

White played a solid opening rather too solidly, and your greater energy and determination gave you a crisp attacking win.

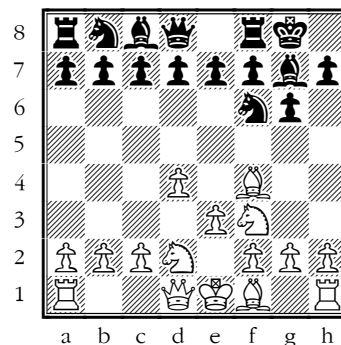
1. d4 Nf6

2. Nf3 g6

3. Bf4 Bg7

4. Nbd2 0-0

5. e3



White is playing with extreme caution: usually a recipe for trouble!

5 ... Nc6

[5...d6 might fit better, after which I think ...c5 is more trusted than ...e5]

6. c4

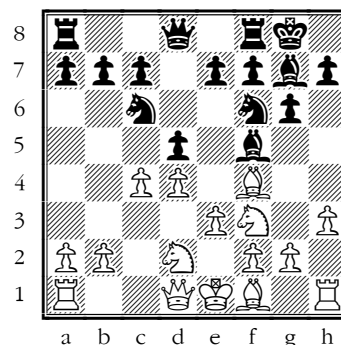
A flicker of ambition

6 ... d5

This gives up the centre more than it hits back there

[6...d6 is more of a King's Indian move]

7. h3 Bf5



8. Qb3

[8.Rc1! and White has some unpleasant pressure down the c-file]

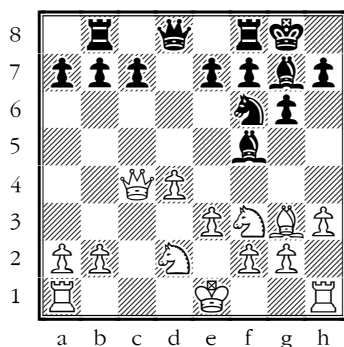
8 ... Rb8
9. cxd5 Nxd5
10. Bg3 Nf6
11. Bc4

[11.Be2! keeps a pleasant plus for White]

11 ... Na5!

Of course! Now White may struggle, facing the Bishop pair.

12. Qc3 Nxc4
13. Qxc4



→ **TACTIC: outnumbered**

Black's natural capture has brought another piece to attack c7

13 ... Ne4?

[13...Rc]

14. Qc1

[14.Bxc7!]

14 ... Rc8

Better late than never!

Black looks better now

15. Bh2?

Much too passive.

[15.Be5]

15 ... c5!

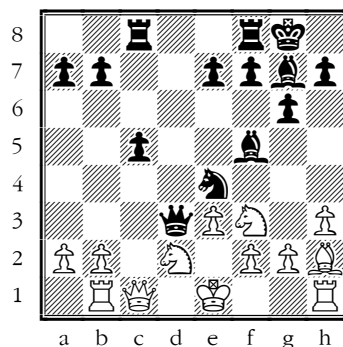
Excellent, hitting the centre and embarrassing the queen.

16. d5 Qxd5

17. Rb1

[17.0-0]

17 ... Qd3!



Now the King is unhappy too

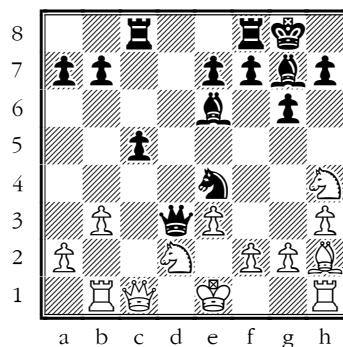
18. Nh4

[18.Nc4]

18 ... Be6

[18...Nxd2]

19. b3



→ **TACTIC: mating attack**

That's a shocking move, creating holes in a position already very wobbly.

☞ **Every pawn move loosens the position, says Tarrasch**

[19.Nxe4]

19 ... b5

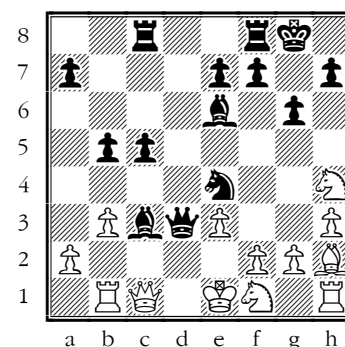
rather off the point

[19...Rfd8; 19...Nxd2 20.Qxd2 Qxb1+; 19...Nc3 20.Qd1 Nxd1]

20. Nf1

[20.Nxe4]

20 ... Bc3+



→ **TACTIC: mate**

It's mate in four

0-1

Oliver

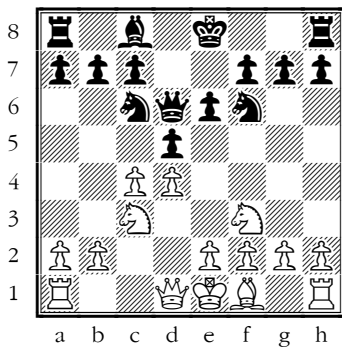
“ A nice 50% score and you did well enough to hope for better in your first game, which was by no means easy. Perhaps you can balance that against your draw! Your Queen's Gambit looks like a dangerous weapon but have a look at move 6 in your game as Black.”

R1: Mortimer, Oliver vs. Twohig, Tycho

[D35 Queen's Gambit]

You were unlucky here: clearly winning at one stage, you slipped on some of the steps to a win, and from the drawing path slipped again from safety.

1. d4 d5
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. Bf4 Bd6
5. Bxd6 Qxd6
6. Nf3 Nc6



Black makes it hard to develop their Queen's-side smoothly.

7. e3 0-0
8. Bd3 h6
9. 0-0 b6

White stands comfortably while Black is still trying to get sorted out.

10. cxd5 exd5
11. Rc1 a6
12. Re1 Re8

[12...Bg4]

13. Qc2

[13.e4]

- 13 ... Nb4

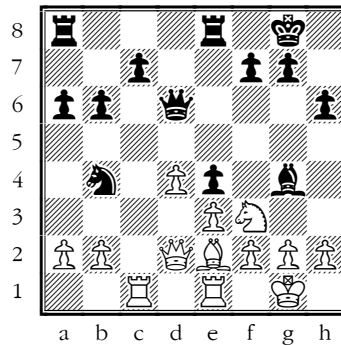
Good: Black should be pleased to get rid of White's strong bishop

14. Qd2 Bg4
15. Be2 Ne4
16. Nxe4

[16.Qd1]

- 16 ... dxe4

The game now enters a murky stage, dominated by tactical chances.



→ **TACTIC: pin**

17. Ne5 Rxe5
18. Bxg4 Nxa2

Looking for trouble?

[18...Rg5]

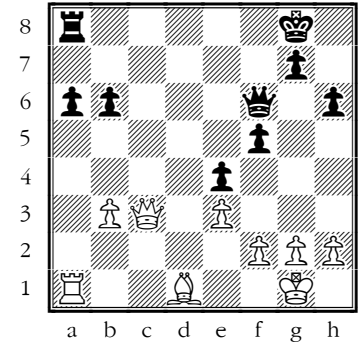
19. Rxc7

[19.Rc6 is a little better]

- 19 ... Qxc7
20. dxe5 Qxe5

[20...Rd]

21. Ra1 f5
22. Bd1 Qe6
23. b3 Nc3
24. Qxc3 Qf6



Black got the trouble they deserved! Now White can swap off and win, but instead gets into trouble of their own by pushing for more.

☞ If you're winning, stop trying to win - the best way you play when you're winning is very different! i.e. swap, control risks and win the endgame

25. Qc4+

[25.Qxf6 gxf6 26.Kf1 is a simple enough win for White]

- 25 ... Kh7
26. Rxa6 b5

Suddenly, White is walking a tightrope of 'best' or 'only' moves

27. Rxf6! bxc4

I peered at this game from a distance, not sure what was going on!

28. Rd6!

best! well done

- 28 ... c3!

29. Bc2?

Not the best, but you can hang on and win from here

[29.f3! resolving to give up the Bishop avoids the difficulties of the game 29...Ra2 30.fxe4 c2! (30...fxe4 31.Bh5) 31.Bxc2! Rxc2

32.exf5 with three pawns instead of a piece - a good transformation in an endgame!]

29 ... Ra2

30. Kf1?

That lets the win slip: it's now equal

[30.Bb1! c2 (30...Rb2 31.Rd1) 31.Bxc2 Rxc2 32.g3]

30 ... Rxc2

31. Rc6 Rc1+

32. Ke2 Rc2+

33. Kd1?

but that is 'playing for the loss'

[33.Kf1 Rc1+ offers a draw, in effect]

33 ... Rxf2

34. Rxc3 Rxd2

35. Rc2

[35.b4]

35 ... Rxc2

36. Kxc2 Kg8

Black is winning, but that looks like the start of a mistaken idea

[36...Kg6 37.Kc3]

37. Kc3

[37.Kc3 That's as far as we know, but if Black chose here 37...Kf8? White can now draw with 38.Kd4 Ke7 39.Ke5]

... 0-1

R2: Phillips,Rhys vs. Mortimer,Oliver

[E91 King's Indian Defence]

A rather rambling start, where the advantage passed back and forth, was followed by some clear chances for White which were not taken, and you deserved your draw.

1. d4 Nf6

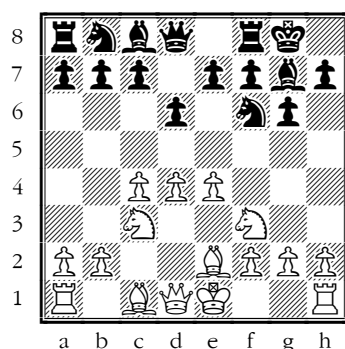
2. c4 g6

3. Nc3 Bg7

4. e4 d6

5. Nf3 0-0

6. Be2



A standard King's Indian beginning, and the starting point for thousands of games.

6 ... e6

An unusual choice!

[6...Na6!?:

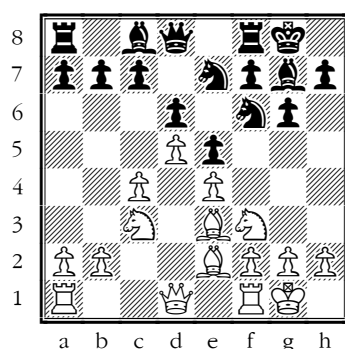
6...e5 is the main line, as 7.dxe5 offers White nothing: (7.0-0)

7...dxe5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Nxe5 (9.Bg5 Re8) 9...Nxe4]

7. 0-0 Nc6

8. Be3 e5

9. d5 Ne7



By a curious route, we have a standard sort of position, but Black is behind with their plan.

10. c5 Bd7

11. h3

That's a poor choice, creating a weakness and wasting time.

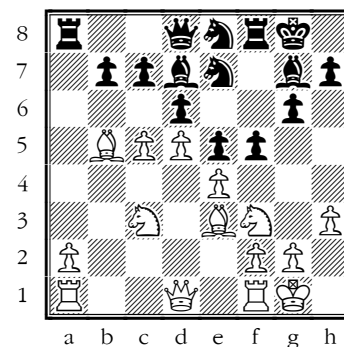
11 ... Ne8

12. b4 a6

Much the same might be said about this move!

13. b5 axb5

14. Bxb5 f5



Definitely a good idea to consider in this position, but Black is too far behind in development to make it work

15. Bxd7 Qxd7

16. cxd6

This allows Black to get sorted out

[16.Qb3 Qc8 17.Ng5 and White stands much better]

16 ... Nxd6

17. Qc2 fxe4

18. Nxe4

[18.Ng5 was better]

18 ... Nxd5

[18...Nxe4 was better 19.Qxe4 Ra4 20.Qc2 (20.Nxe5 Qe8 21.Nc4 Bxa1) 20...Nxd5]

19. Bc5

[19.Nxd6]

19 ... Ra6

[19...Rxf3 20.gxf3 Nf5 with advantage to Black: your pieces are very active]

20. Rfd1

20 ... Ne7

There is not much point to this retreat

[20...Nf4=]

21. Rd3

[21.Qb3+ Kh8 22.Rac1 ± and White stands very well]

21 ... Nec8

[21...Qa4! ≠ starts to put pressure on White]

22. Qb3+

[22.Nf5=]

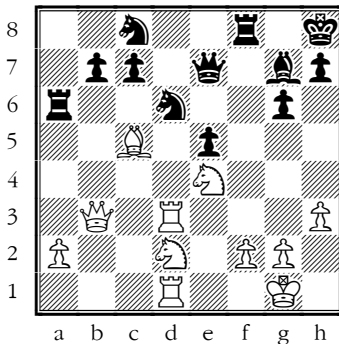
22 ... Kh8

[22...Qf7=]

23. Rad1 Qe7

[23...Qa4=]

24. Nfd2

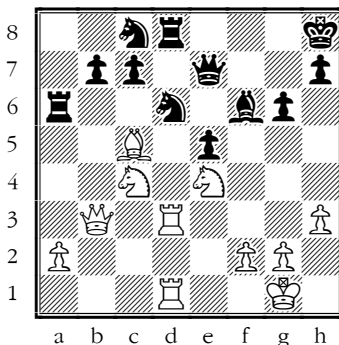


White's pressure on d6 is enormous, but perhaps will yield only a pawn, and Black has plenty of chances to hit back

[24.Nf5!±]

24 ... Rd8

25. Nc4 Bf6



→ TACTIC: pin

This brings a piece into range of the knights, and White can strike a deadly blow.

[25...Bf8; 25...h5]

26. Qb4?

White misses the chance

[26.Nxf6! Qxf6 27.Nxe5]

➡ As usual, focussing on forcing moves like captures could have revealed this win to either player.

26 ... Qe6

Black should have repaired things with 26...Bg7 when white is better but not winning

27. Ncxd6 Nxd6

[27...cxd6]

28. Nxd6

[28.Bxd6 is much better for White, if Black tries to hang on to material, White gets to the King! 28...cxd6 29.Nc5 dxc5 30.Rxd8+ Bxd8 31.Rxd8+ Kg7 32.Qxb7+ Kh6 33.Rh8]

28 ... cxd6

29. Rxd6

[29.Qxb7]

29 ... Raxd6

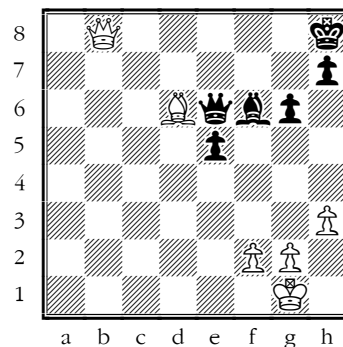
30. Rxd6 Rxd6

31. Bxd6 Qxa2

[31...Qd5]

32. Qxb7 Qe6

33. Qb8+



→ TACTIC: mate

33 ... Kg7??

[33...Qg8!]

34. Bf8+

I might have these moves out of order but if not

[34.Qf8#! mates!]

34 ... Kf7

Drawn after a lot of excitement!

½-½

R3: Mortimer, Oliver vs. Seymour, Daniel

[D37 Queen's Gambit]

A nice game, showing the sunny side of the Queen's Gambit - or two sunny sides, winning a pawn on the Queen's-side, then a very pretty mate on the other wing!

1. d4 e6

2. c4 d5

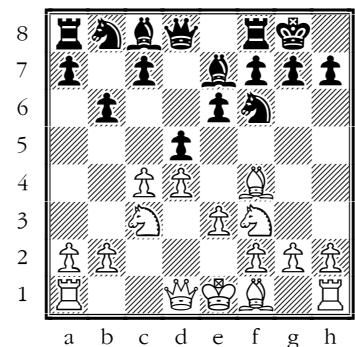
3. Nc3 Nf6

[This is a good moment for 4.cxd5]

4. Bf4 Be7

5. Nf3 0-0

6. e3 b6



7. cxd5!?

Releasing the tension; I'd sooner leave Black guessing about the eventual central structure, if you don't regularly play the Exchange Variation.

[7.Rc1; 7.Be2]

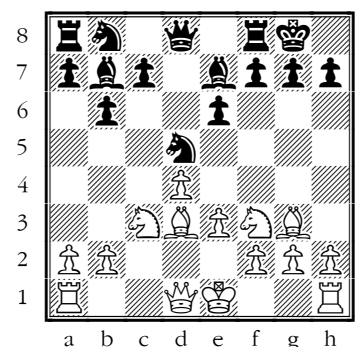
7 ... Nxd5

8. Bg3

White has hopes of a plus

8 ... Bb7

9. Bd3



→ **TACTIC: fork**

9 ... Nd7?!
 [9...c5]
 10. Nxd5 exd5?
 11. Qc2!

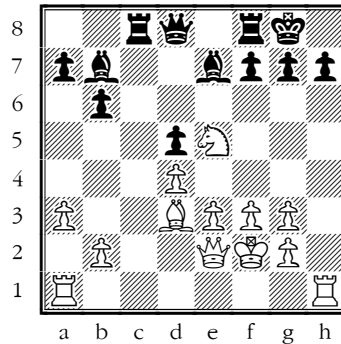
Hitting c7 and h7

11 ... Nf6
 12. Bxc7 Qd7
 13. Bf4 Rac8
 14. Qe2 Bb4+
 15. Kf1 Ne4

Black is fighting back but it doesn't come to anything

16. a3 Be7
 17. Ne5 Qd8
 18. f3 Nf6
 19. Kf2 Nh5
 20. Bg3 Nxc3

[20...g6]
 21. hxg3



Black has the bishop pair but the attack on h7 comes alive again

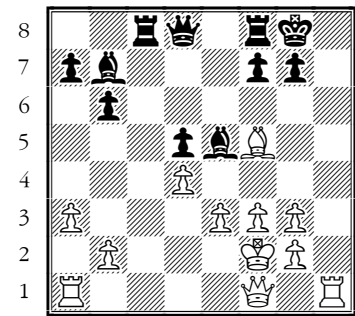
→ **Taking on g3 when White hasn't castled opens a file against the Black King**

21 ... Bd6
 [21...h6 22.f4]
 22. Bxh7+ Kh8
 23. Bf5+

[23.Qd3 is a faster way to mate: threat Bg8+]

23 ... Kg8
 24. Qf1 Bxe5

Black is oblivious



→ **TACTIC: mate**

[24...g6 is horrible but had to be tried]

25. Rh8+ Kxh8
 26. Qh1+

Finish of the day!
 1-0

Benny

“ Great win as White but you had some troubles as Black – just a little more science would have kept you out of difficulties, but even when worse you played with a lot of thought and courage.”

R1: Headlong, Georgia vs. Bacon, Benny

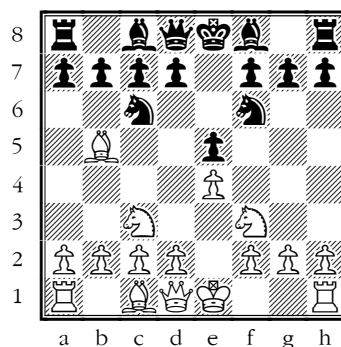
[C48 Four Knights' Game]

A good fighting game, but White found ways to keep pulling ahead.

1. e4 e5
 2. Nf3 Nc6
 3. Nc3

It's hard to believe this is best.

3 ... Nf6
 4. Bb5



4 ... d6

That can't be best either, however solid.

[4...Bc5;
 4...Bb4;
 4...a6;

4...Nd4 is my recommendation, offering a pawn for active play, which might fit with your Two Knights' choice.]

→ **TIP: choose openings that fit together in style.**

5. d4
 5 ... a6?

Black forces White to win a pawn.

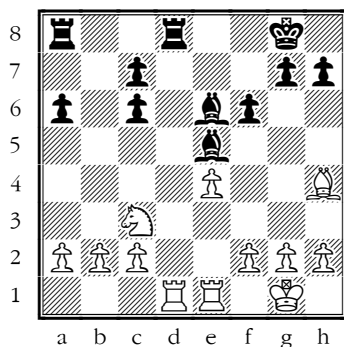
→ **TACTIC: undermining**

[5...exd4; 5...Bd7]

6. Bxc6+ bxc6
 7. dxe5 Nd7
 8. exd6

[8.Bg5]

8 ... Bxd6
 9. 0-0 0-0
 10. Re1 Re8
 11. Bg5 f6
 12. Bh4 Ne5
 13. Nxe5 Bxe5
 14. Qxd8 Rxd8
 15. Rad1 Be6



Black has some compensation with the centralised Bishop pair, and can hope that White has an accident.

16. a3?

Accident-prone.

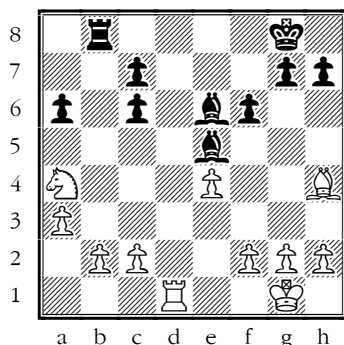
[16.Na4!]

16 ... Rab8?!

[16...Rdb8!=]

17. Na4 Rxd1

18. Rxd1



Now there is a difficult sequence which I expect neither side saw all of!

18 ... Bxb2

19. Rb1!

→ **TACTIC: pin**

19 ... Rd8!

→ **TACTIC: back rank mate**

20. Nxb2 Rb8!

→ **TACTIC: pin**

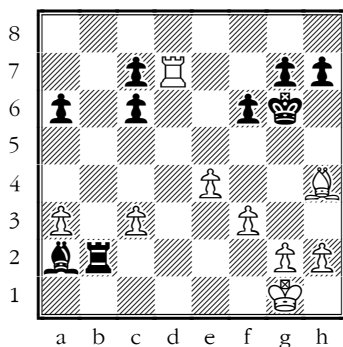
21. f3 Ba2

22. Rd1 Rxb2

23. Rd8+ Kf7

24. Rd7+ Kg6

25. c3



25 ... Rb3

[25...Rb1+! This is often a pointless check, but here it has a point of stopping Be1: 26.Kf2 Rc1 27.Rxc7 Rc2+ 28.Ke3 Rxc3+ 29.Kf4=]

26. Be1 Rxa3

27. Rxc7 Bc4

28. Rxc6

White is a pawn ahead again, but Black has chances to hold.

28 ... Ra1?!

[28...Bb5 29.Rc7 Ra1 30.Kf2 Ra2+ 31.Kg3 h5=]

29. Kf2?!

[29.Rxc4!]

29 ... Ra2+

30. Kg3 Bb5

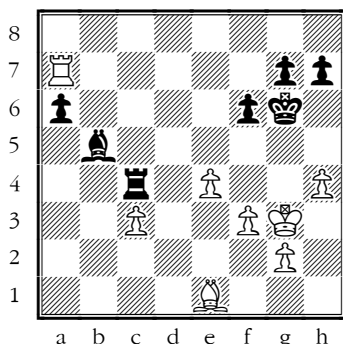
[30...Bf1!]

31. Rc7 Ra4?!

[31...h5 is a nice threat; 31...Bf1 is too]

32. h4 Rc4

33. Ra7



33 ... Ra4

[33...h5! is now an essential preventative move]

34. Kh3

[34.h5+! Kxh5 35.Rxg7 and Black stands badly, as in the game.]

34 ... Ra1

35. Bd2 Ra2

36. Be3 Bf1

[36...h5 last chance!]

37. h5+ Kxh5

38. Rxg7 Rc2

39. Rxh7+

The next moves are hard to reconstruct!

[39.Bd4 and Black is in a mating net.]

39 ... Kg6

1—0

R2: Bacon, Benjamin vs. Kan, Toby

[A60 Benoni]

A nice crunching win, where you looked deeper and got your reward.

1. d4 Nf6

2. c4

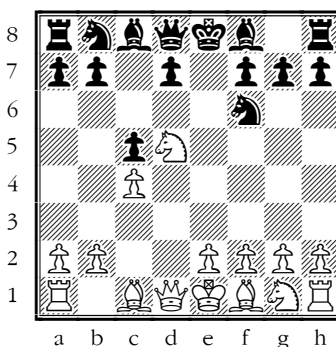
[2.Nf3 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.Nxd5 is the better move order, with chances of a plus]

2 ... c5

3. d5 e6

4. Nc3 exd5

5. Nxd5



If you want to use this plan of keeping d5 free for a piece, you shouldn't play c4.

5 ... d6

[5...Nxd5 6.Qxd5 Nc6 and Black can annoy the Queen, with equality.]

6. Bg5

[6.e4! Nxe4? 7.Qe2]

6 ... Nbd7

7. Nf3 h6

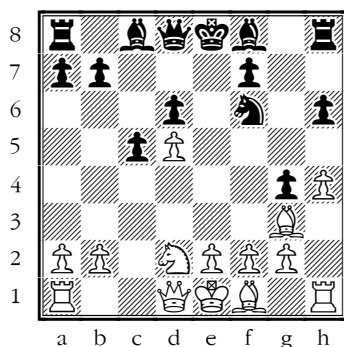
8. Bh4 g5

9. Bg3 Nxd5

10. cxd5 Nf6

11. h4 g4

12. Nd2



12 ... Bf5

Hoping to prevent e4, but White sees further.

[12...Nh]

13. e4! Bxe4??-+

[13...Bd]

14. Nxe4

[14.Qa4+ first is even better

☞ **TIP: if you see a good move, hesitate: there may be a better one!]**

14 ... Nxe4

[14...Qa5+ 15.Nc3 0-0-0 is bad, but not the worst]

15. Qa4+ Ke7

[15...Qd7?? 16.Bb5]

16. Qxe4+ Kf6

17. 0-0-0 Qd7

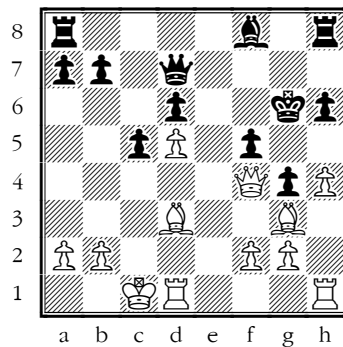
18. Qf4+ Kg7

19. Be2 f5?!

Black needs piece activity

[19...Rg]

20. Bd3 Kg6?



[20...Qf7]

21. h5+

but what you played made Black resign anyway!

[21.Bxf5+! is a nice trick, 21...Qxf5 22.h5+ Kf6 23.Bh4+

→ **TACTIC: undermining**

1—0

R3: Smith, Ellison vs. Bacon, Benny

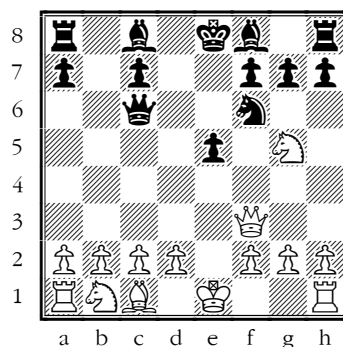
[C57 Two Knight's Defence]

In a gambit opening, you never got back the pawn down and White exchanged into a better endgame.

- 1. e4 e5**
- 2. Nf3 Nc6**
- 3. Bc4 Nf6**
- 4. Ng5 d5**
- 5. exd5 b5**

I am pleased to see this move played so often.

- 6. Bxb5 Qxd5**
- 7. Bxc6+ Qxc6**
- 8. Qf3**



8 ... Qxf3?

A gambit pawn down, you want to keep Queens on

[8...e4!

☞ **TIP: keep pieces on when you're losing; keep queens on when you play a gambit!]**

9. Nxf3 Bf5

[9...e4! keeps White off-balance]

10. d3 Bd6

11. Nc3 Rb8

12. 0-0 0-0

If White can finish developing without accident, they will stand better

13. b3 e4

14. dxe4 Nxe4

15. Nxe4 Bxe4

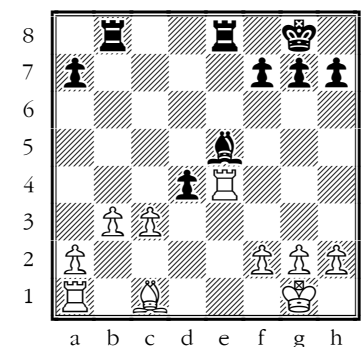
16. Nd4 Be5

Trying to produce an accident, but it's tricky

17. c3 c5

18. Re1! cxd4

19. Rxe4 Rfe8



→ **TACTIC: skewer**

20. Bf4

[20.Rxe5! Rxe5 21.Bf4 Ree8 22.Bxb8 Rxb8 23.cxd4 and with two pawns, White should win without trouble.]

20 ... Bxf4

21. Rxf4 dxc3

22. Rc4 Rbc8

23. Rxc8 Rxc8

24. Rc1 Kf8

Black has chances to draw this, but must expect to lose the c-pawn and eventually went down in the endgame.

... 1-0

“ 50% was a good score and you could have played on cheerfully in your first game, which you were in no danger of losing. I'm not sure what to say about the loss – there are always wrinkles you don't know, so it depends if you can shrug these things off whether you might want a different system to play.”

R1: Paul,Aarv vs. Fields,Ernie

[D85 Grunfeld Defence]

A nice positive and solid performance as White; with a little more refinement you could have expected to win.

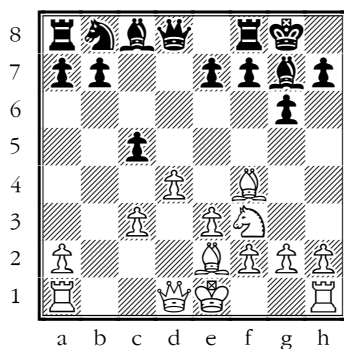
1. **d4** **Nf6**
2. **c4** **g6**
3. **Nc3** **d5**
4. **cxd5**

[4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Qb3 is the steady line (5.Bf4 is also played.)]

- 4 ... **Nxd5**
5. **Nf3**

[5.e4 is the main line.]

- 5 ... **Nxc3**
6. **bxc3** **Bg7**
7. **Bf4** **0-0**
8. **e3** **c5**
9. **Be2**

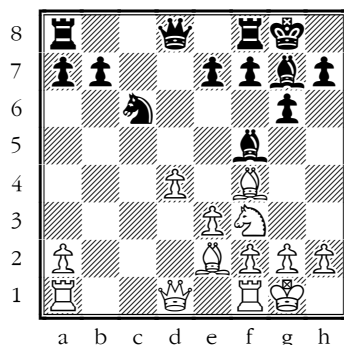


reaching a position from the 5.Bf4 variation.

- 9 ... **Nc6**

[9...Qa5 10.Qd2 Nc6 11.0-0 Rd8 is a logical continuation, where Black is putting maximum pressure on the White centre.]

10. **0-0** **cxd4**
11. **cxd4** **Bf5**



That bishop belongs on b7 or g4; it's a target here for e3-e4

12. Qb3

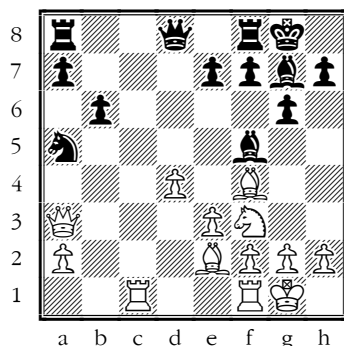
[12.Rc1 Rc8 13.a3 Be4 14.Qb3 h6 15.Rfd1 Bd5 16.Qb1 g5 17.e4 gxf4 18.exd5 Qxd5 19.Qxb7 Qe6 20.Bc4 Qd6 21.Bb5 Nxd4 22.Rxc8 1-0 (22) Stremavicius,T (2444) - Grib,R (2445) Panevezys 2018]

- 12 ... **b6?**

[12...Be4!; 12...Qb6!?]

13. **Rac1** **Na5**

14. **Qa3**



Rather than trying to push their extra central pawn, White is trying to turn their space into attack.

➔ **Attack where you have more space, where your pawns are pointing, and where your pieces can get to most easily.**

- 14 ... **Bf6**

15. **Rc3**

[15.Ne5!]

- 15 ... **Rc8**

16. **Rfc1**

[16.Rxc8 Qxc8 17.Rc1 Qa8± is more forceful]

- 16 ... **Rxc3**

17. **Rxc3** **Qd7?**

Making a target of itself.

[17...Qd5]

18. **Rc7!**

[18.Ne5!? also hits the Queen, with advantage]

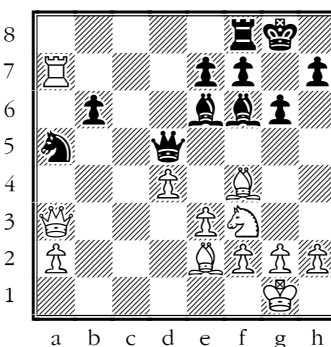
- 18 ... **Qd5**

19. **Rxa7**

[19.h3]

- 19 ... **Be6**

[19...Rc8!?]



20. Ra6?!

Doesn't throw away the win, but there were better lines

[20.Rc7! Qxa2 21.Qxa2 Bxa2 22.g4!+- and White's space is giving Black pain. (22.Ne5!?) ; 20.Qb2! improves with pressure]

- 20 ... **Qxa2**

21. **Qxa2** **Bxa2**

22. Rxb6 Rc8

23. Rb8

[23.g4! is the magic formula again]

23 ... Rxb8

24. Bxb8

White is a healthy pawn up and could happily play on.

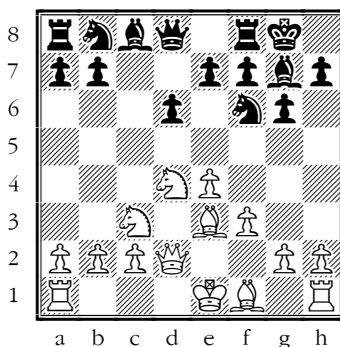
½-½

R2: Postans, Harrison vs. Paul, Aarv

[B76 Sicilian Dragon]

I like to see people play main lines, but this is a notoriously dangerous one to pick, and you were shot to pieces without doing anything obviously wrong. The only way to avoid this is to learn more or play a safer line! But do you win more than you lose? Then maybe you're OK as you are.

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 d6
3. d4 cxd4
4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 g6
6. Be3 Bg7
7. f3 0-0
8. Qd2



White is heading for the sharpest line against the Dragon, the Yugoslav attack, where White plays a well-established plan. Black's best defence is different against each line!

[8.Bc4 Nc6 9.Qd2 Bd7! is the main line 10.0-0-0 (10.h4 h5

11.0-0-0 Rc8 12.Bb3 Ne5 13.Bg5 Rc5 (13...Nc4) 10...Rc8]

8 ... Bd7

It's too early to commit to this.

[8...Nc6 9.0-0-0 (9.g4 and now 9...Be6 is thought to equalise) 9...d5!]

9. g4 Nc6

10. 0-0-0

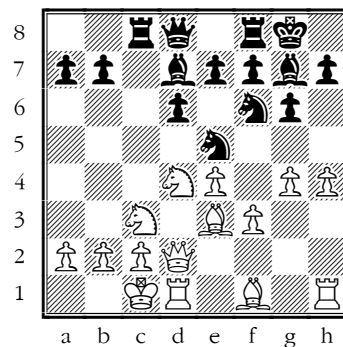
Black has stumbled into a line where their pieces may not be on the best squares, which can be deadly in such a sharp line. It's as if White says, "Oh, I can see checkmate in 10 moves" and you have to prove them wrong!

10 ... Rc8

11. h4

[11.Kb1!?]

11 ... Ne5



This position has been reached in 500 games, and White has scored about 7/10!

➔ Some variations and some defences are easier to play for one side than the other, even if theoretically they're equal..

Is it easier to play Black in the French Defence but White against the Sicilian Defence?

[11...h5]

12. h5

[12.Kb1 scores best of all]

12 ... Nc4

This is a better idea in the h2-h4, h7-h5 lines; here it seems too slow, as White hasn't touched the Bf1 yet.

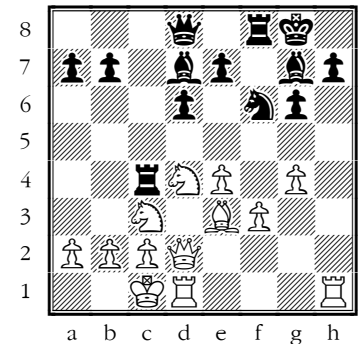
[12...Qa5 is essential.]

13. Bxc4

A knight that has moved three times disappears.

13 ... Rxc4

14. hxg6 fxg6



➔ **TACTIC: mating attack/pin**

15. Bh6

[15.e5! dxe5 16.Ne6! and White is winning. In the game, White hits on the idea a little later.]

15 ... Rf7+-

[15...Bxh6!?]

16. Bxg7 Rxc7

17. e5! dxe5

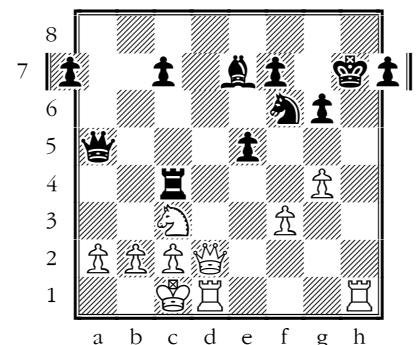
[17...Ne8 18.Nf5 gxf5 19.Qd5+]

18. Ne6!

Now it's even better!

18 ... Qa5

19. Nxc7 Kxc7



➔ **TACTIC: undermining**

20. g5! Be6

21. gxf6+ Kxf6

22. Ne4+

Ah well, you have to put up with a few of these when you play the Sicilian, but probably a few more than usual if you play this line. Have a look at Isaac's game in the Accelerated Dragon; that might be a more practical choice, as it prevents the Yugoslav Attack.

1—0

R3: Paul,Aarv vs. White,Oliver

[D31 Queen's Gambit]

You were gifted a piece early on and converted smoothly, striking tactically when you needed to. Good stuff!

1. d4 d5
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Bb4

A bit early for this.

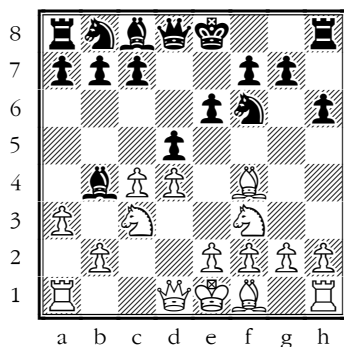
4. Nf3
4 ... h6?!

And that's a clear waste of time.

5. Bf4

[5.Qb3! ±; 5.Qa4+ Nc6 6.e3 (6.Bd2)]

5 ... Nf6
6. a3?!



That too is a waste of time here. It can be played if you want to force the issue and follow up with f3 and e4, but your Nf3 and Bf4 don't fit that plan.

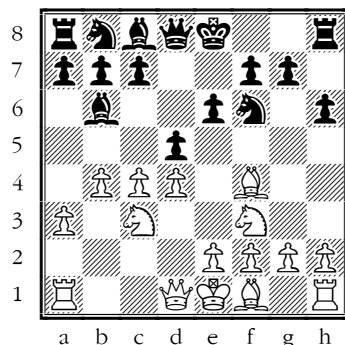
[6.e3]

6 ... Ba5??

But this game will not be decided by strategic plans...

[6...Bxc3+!]

7. b4 Bb6



→ TACTIC: net

8. c5 Nc6
9. e3 0-0
10. Bd3 a5

[10...Nh]

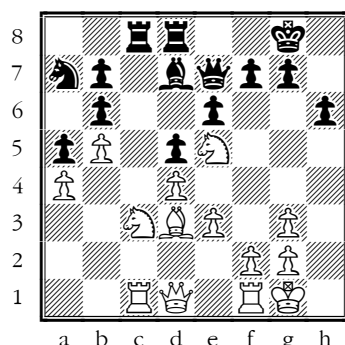
11. cxb6 cxb6
12. b5 Na7

That looks very awkward.

13. 0-0 Bd7
14. a4 Rc8
15. Rcl Nh5
16. Bg3

[16.Bd6! Re8 17.Ne5 Nf6 18.Ba3 with a huge bind and an extra piece]

16 ... Nxc3
17. hxc3 Qe7
18. Ne5 Rfd8



The rest of the game is a nice example of the winning plan: "take care, swap and win".

☞ If you are winning, change to the swap-off-and-win-the-endgame plan

19. Nxd7

[19.Bb]

19 ... Qxd7
20. Qd2 Qe7
21. Rc2 Rc7
22. Rfc1 Rdc8
23. Ne2 Rxc2
24. Rxc2 Qa3
25. Qc1 Qxd3

[25...Qxc1+]

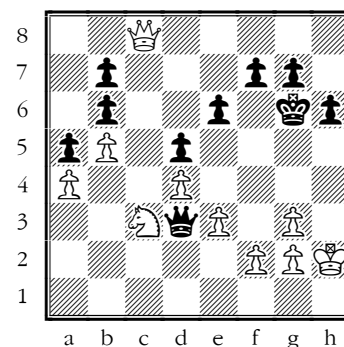
26. Rxc8+ Nxc8
27. Qxc8+ Kh7
28. Nc3

[28.Nf4! is best]

28 ... Kg6

[28...Qd]

29. Kh2



→ TACTIC: fork

29 ... Qc2?..+

[29...Kh7 30.g4/23]

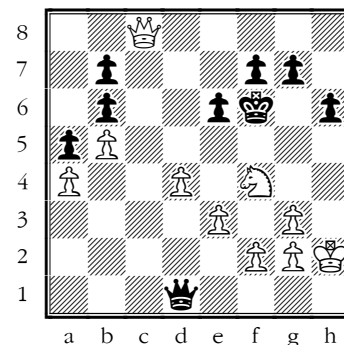
30. Nxd5!

Excellent

30 ... Qd1

[30...Qxc8 31.Ne7+ Kf6 32.Nxc8+-]

31. Nf4+ Kf6



Now it's mate

→ TACTIC: mating attack

[31...Kh7#5]

32. Qxb7

[32.Qd8+!]

32 ... Kf5

[32...g5 grovels on a while longer #2]

33. Qxf7+ Ke4

[33...Kg4 34.Qh5#]

34. Qxe6#

Niranjana

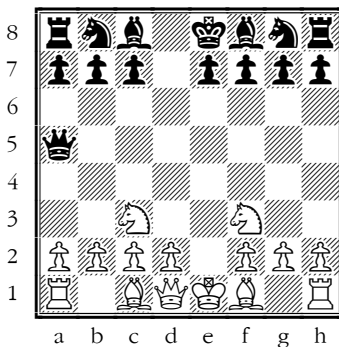
“ I’m always happy with half-marks in this tough competition, and all your moves made sense. You needed to play your gambit opening with a bit more verve – trust the position to come right if you just play more actively.”

R1: Acharya,Kandara vs. Narayanan,Niranjana

[B01 Scandinavian Defence]

A good account from both players: you played the opening with a lot of aggression but allowed White chances against your King. Yet you held off the attack and even stood a little better at the end.

1. e4 d5
2. exd5 Qxd5
3. Nc3 Qa5
4. Nf3



4 ... e5!?

I like the attitude! Might be a bit ambitious though: you're trying to equalise too quickly.

5. h3

Can't be right!

5 ... Bf5

[5...Nf6 Knights before Bishops, as a rule]

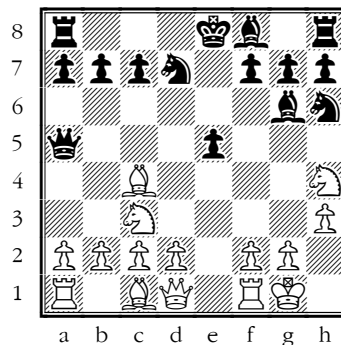
6. Bc4 Nd7

[6...Nf6]

7. 0-0

[7.Nh4!]

7 ... Bg6
8. Nh4 Nh6

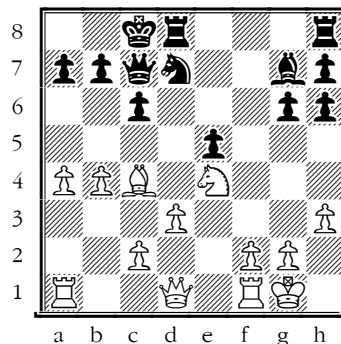


[8...Ngf6 and castling short is realistic. You're trying for a very ambitious set-up here!]

9. d3 0-0-0
10. Bxh6 gxf6
11. Nxf6 fxg6
12. a3 c6
13. b4 Qc7
14. Ne4 Bg7

[14...Be7 central is better]

15. a4



15 ... b6?

Creating weaknesses where White wants to attack!

☞ Touch the pawns in front of your King only with infinite delicacy, says Alekhin.

16. Ba6+

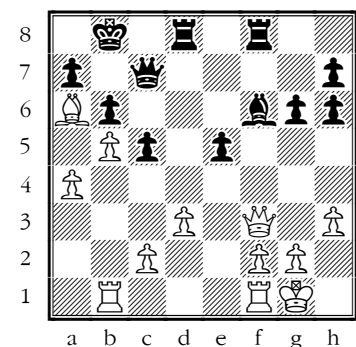
[16.a5! when 16...b5 is pretty rough but best]

16 ... Kb8

17. Rb1

[17.a5! b5 18.c4 and White's attack is a tidal wave]

17 ... Nf6
18. Nxf6? Bxf6
19. Qf3 Rhf8
20. b5? c5



With the closing of the Queen's-side, White's attack is at an end. Both sides seem to be playing some sort of draughts, but the relevant thing is that White has to do without their Bishop.

21. Qc6 Qe7?

Again, I like the attitude, but you're being brave with all those pieces pointing at your king.

[21...Rd4 22.Ra1 ♯; 21...Qxc6 22.bxc6 Kc7 23.Bb7 Rd4 24.a5 Ra4 25.axb6+ axb6 26.Rfe1 ♯]

22. Rfe1

[22.a5]

22 ... **Rd6**

23. **Qe4** **Rd4**

24. **Qc6**

½-½

R2: Narayanan, Niranjana vs. Szakmany, Bence

[C54 Giuoco Piano, Moller Attack]

You played a sharp gambit line but wasted time trying to arrange a check on h6. You were allowed to build up the attack again, but when the moment came to strike, you stumbled. Deserved a better fate!

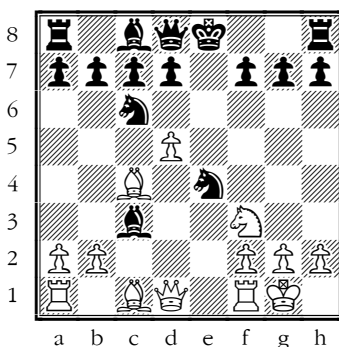
1. **e4** **e5**
2. **Nf3** **Nc6**
3. **Bc4**

[3.Bb5]

- 3 ... **Bc5**
4. **c3** **Nf6**
5. **d4** **exd4**
6. **cxd4**

[6.0-0; 6.e5]

- 6 ... **Bb4+**
7. **Nc3** **Nxe4**
8. **0-0** **Bxc3**
9. **d5**



Nice to see this old attacking line played again!

- 9 ... **Na5**
10. **Qe2** **0-0**
11. **Qxe4** **Re8**
12. **Qd3**

[12.Qc2]

12 ... **Nxc4**

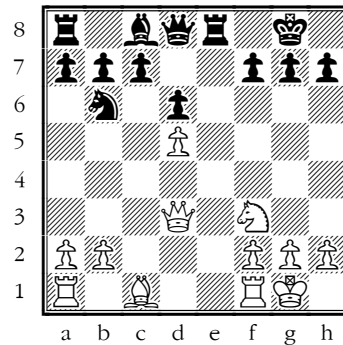
[12...Bf6]

13. **Qxc3**

[13.Ng5]

13 ... **Nb6**

14. **Qd3** **d6**



White is a pawn down and will lose an endgame, so should attack with all speed.

➔ Some positions demand you play with more energy.

15. **h3**

That is not all speed! Bg4 was no threat. Black should be able to untangle and win from here.

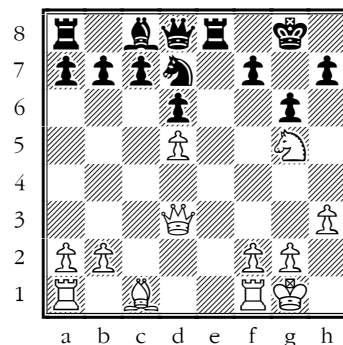
15 ... **Nd7**

[15...Qf6]

16. **Ng5**

Better!

16 ... **g6**



Weakening, and should have pleased White; the game is about equal now.

[16...Nf6]

17. **Qg3**

Fidgeting with the Queen loses important time.

[17.Bd2 is best, bringing in another piece, connecting Rooks...]

17 ... **Nf8**

A passive move, which again should be encouraging to White

[17...Nf6! ♡]

18. **h4** **h5**

19. **b3**

[19.Bd2]

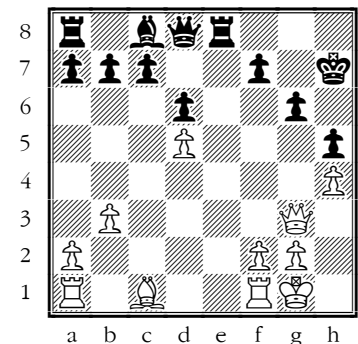
19 ... **Nh7**

[19...f6]

20. **Nxh7**

[20.Bb2±]

20 ... **Kxh7**



I think you had a concrete idea to make a check on h6, but in the end it's just a one-move threat. You could play with a more general optimism, assuming that with some positive moves, like Bb2 and Rael, something will turn up in your favour.

21. **Qf4**

[21.Bb2± Bf5 22.Rae1 Rc8

23.Qc3 Rg8 24.Re3± and it's easier to arrange threats with more pieces in play!]

21 ... **Bf5**

22. **Qh6+** **Kg8**

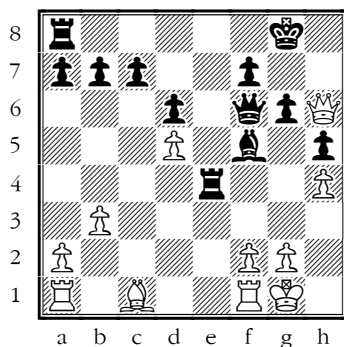
23. **Qf4**

Now Black takes over

[23.Bb2= is still the best idea]

23 ... **Re4**

24. **Qh6** **Qf6**



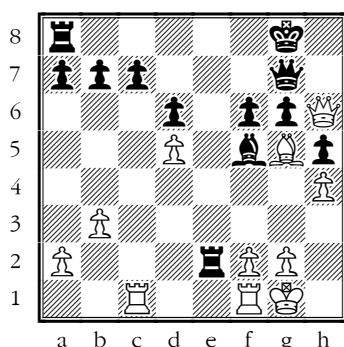
And suddenly White looks very outgunned. But it's not over...

25. Rb1?!

The rook is not much safer here!

[25.Bg5 Qg7 and White is worse but far from dead]

25 ... Re2
26. Bg5 Qg7
27. Rbc1 f6??



→ **TACTIC: mate/undermining**

I am sure you smelled a tactic here, and you were right! But sadly the one you played didn't work.

☞ **Can you smell a tactic?**
 Loose pieces, overworked pieces, and exposed Kings are all clues.

28. Rxc7??

[28.Qxg7+! Kxg7 29.Rxc7+ with a big advantage 29...Kf8 30.Bxf6 Rae8 31.Rxb7 Rxa2 32.Rc1 Rc2 33.Ra1 a6!+- 34.Bg5! (34.Rxa6? Bc8!)]

28 ... Qxc7
29. Bxf6 Qh7
30. Qf4 Rae8
31. Qxd6 Qd7
32. Qc5 Rd2

33. Qxa7 Rxd5
0—1

R3: Narayanan, Niranjana vs. Pilton-Brandes, Bentley

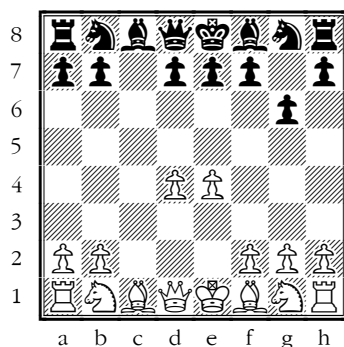
[B31 Sicilian Defence, Alapin]

A powerful attacking performance and a nice win to go home with.

1. e4 c5
2. c3

[2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 g6 4.Bxc6 and White hobbles the black pawn structure]

2 ... g6
3. d4 cxd4
4. cxd4



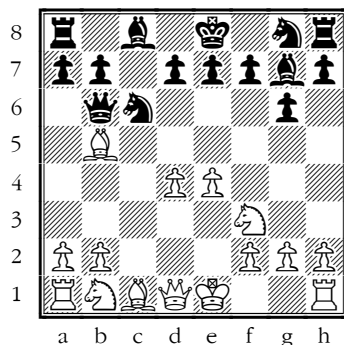
4 ... Bg7

Oddly enough, the right move here is 4...d5 5.exd5 (5.e5 Nc6) 5...Nf6

5. Nf3 Nc6
6. Bb5?!

This isn't even a pin, so the only point can be Bxc6, but that gives up the bishop pair for not much in return (compare the variation with 3.Bb5 above)

6 ... Qb6



→ **TACTIC: fork**

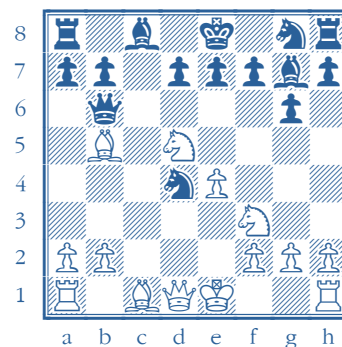
Black has mighty pressure on d4

7. Bxc6=

This looks forced, but is not!

[7.Nc3! Nxd4 (7...Bxd4 8.Nxd4 Qxd4 9.Qe2±) 8.Nd5!+-

VARIATION DIAGRAM



→ **TACTIC: fork**

8 ... Nxf3+ 9. Qxf3 Qd8 10. Bf4 and White has huge compensation for the pawn]

That's another nice example of playing and trusting things too turn in your favour.

7 ... bxc6?!

Towards the centre is usually the right capture

[7...dxc6! is better here, releasing the Bishop.]

8. 0-0 Nf6
9. Nc3 d5?

Black creates a backward pawn on an open file

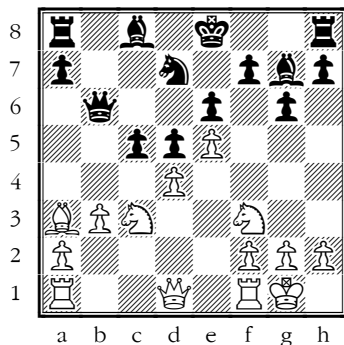
10. e5 Nd7
11. b3±

[11.Re1; 11.Na4]

11 ... e6?+-

and this nervous-looking move allows White to seize the diagonal

12. Ba3! c5?



→ **TACTIC: fork**

13. Na4! Qa5

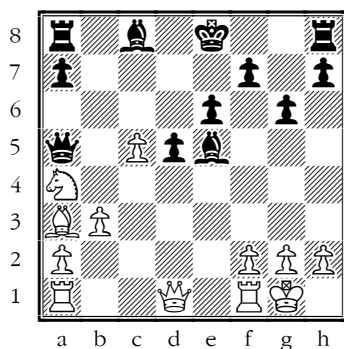
14. dxc5?!

[14.Bxc5!+- is right here]

14 ... Nxe5

15. Nxe5 Bxe5

16. Re1?



Bold, but not necessary, so maybe too bold

[16.Rc1!]

16 ... Bc3?

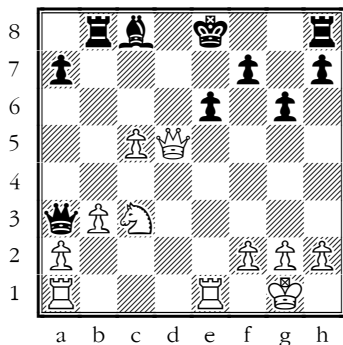
[16...Bxa1!]

17. Nxc3! Qxa3

→ **TACTIC: pin**

[17...0-]

18. Qxd5! Rb8



→ **TACTIC: fork**

[18...Bb]

19. Qe5!

That's a fine idea, unusual too!

19 ... 0-0

20. Qxb8 Qxc5

21. Ne4 Qe7

22. Qf4 Bb7

23. Nf6+ Kg7

24. Ng4 Kg8

[24...f6!]

25. Rac1 Rc8

[25...e5]

26. Qe5 Qf8

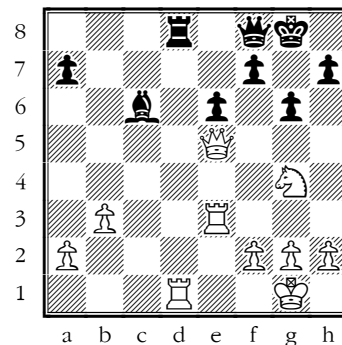
27. Rcd1

[27.Rxc8! Bxc8 (27...Qxc8 28.Nh6+ Kf8 29.Rd1 mates) 28.Rc1 Ba6 29.Nf6+ Kh8 30.Rc7 h6 31.Rxa7 with unstoppable threats like Nd7+ and Ra8]

27 ... Bc6

[27...Qg7]

28. Re3 Rd8



→ **TACTIC: mate**

29. Rde1

[29.Nh6+ mates]

29 ... Rd5

30. Nf6+ Kg7

31. Nxd5+ f6

32. Qxe6 Bxd5

33. Qxd5 h5

34. Qd2 Kf7

35. Re7+ Qxe7

36. Rxe7+ Kxe7

37. Qd4 a6

38. Qa7+ Ke6

39. Qxa6+ Ke5

40. b4 g5

41. b5 f5

42. b6 g4

43. b7 h4

44. b8Q+ Kd4

45. Qe6 Kc5

46. Qbd6+ Kb5

47. Qc8 Ka5

48. Qdb8 Ka4

49. Qa6#

Nice to go home with a win!

1-0

“ Your burglar alarm needs tuning – it should have been ringing loudly when you were running into trouble as Black, but it seemed to go off when you had an advantage as White! Experience will help I’m sure, as you play good chess for the most part..”

R1: Griffiths,Steffan vs. Abdalla,Suhayl

[C28 Vienna Game/
Old Stodge]

You found yourself manoeuvred into an Old Stodge position and fell foul of White's simple plan. You had more optimism than science!

1. e4 Nc6

2. Nc3

[2.Nf3 d5]

2 ... e5

If you're going to agree to an e4/e5 position, you might as well play 1...e5!

[2...Nf6 keeps it independent 3.d4 is best, when one idea is 3...d5!?

4.e5 Nd7!? 5.Nxd5 Ndb8! 6.Ne3 Qxd4!]=]

3. Bc4 Bc5

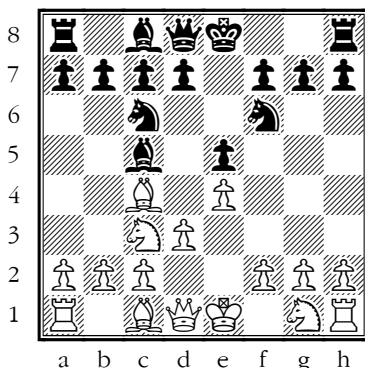
4. d3

[4.Qg4! is the right approach

4...Qf6 5.Nd5! Qxf2+ 6.Kd1 Kf8

7.Nh3 and Black is in big trouble.]

4 ... Nf6



We're approaching the sadly familiar territory here of Old Stodge. White has better ideas to go forward.

5. Bg5

That's one of them! White can follow up with Nd5, but right now, Nd5 can be met with Be7

[5.f4! keeps a more lively game]

5 ... 0-0

Perhaps a bit early.

[5...h6!]

6. Nf3

6 ... d6?!

Now Be7 is impossible

[6...h6 first was important. 7.Bh4 and if 7...d6 8.Nd5 g5 has to be played, but there are risks, showing the bad side of castling 9.Nxg5! hxg5? (9...Nxd5! 10.Bxd5 hxg5 11.Qh5 gxh4 (11...Qf6 12.Bxg5 Qxf2+ 13.Kd1 Be6=) 12.Qg6+ is a draw) 10.Bxg5! and White should win

6...Be7 is perfectly safe, but is an argument for 5...Be7]

➤ Some threats are too powerful to be defended you have to see them coming and do something before they arrive.

Doing otherwise is what Dan Heisman calls 'Hope Chess' – you just hope that any threat can be defended because you've been sensible. Not always true!

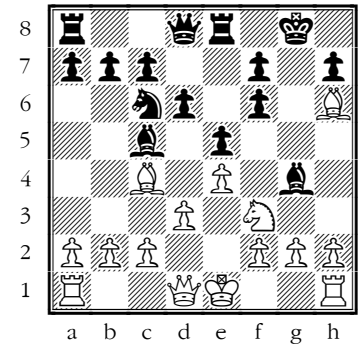
7. Nd5!

and this is now very strong

7 ... Bg4

8. Nxf6+ gxf6

9. Bh6 Re8



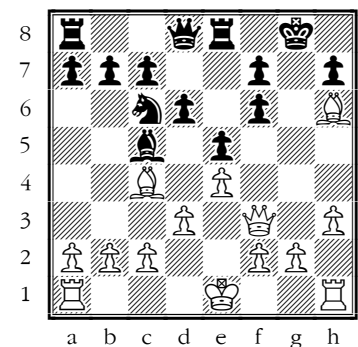
Black is in some trouble, but no need to panic.

10. h3 Bxf3?

Once the White Queen gets into the penalty area, Black is dead.

[10...Be6 11.Nh4 Kh8 12.Qh5 Rg8 is still pretty rough but Black is alive]

11. Qxf3



Now it's time to panic...

11 ... Nd4??

That's too much panic...

[11...Kh8#2]

12. Qg3+ Kh8

13. Qg7#

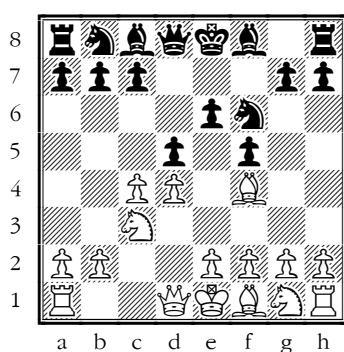
R2: Abdalla,Suhayl vs. Ashraf,Zoha

[A40 Benoni]

Overall, a nice positional attack on the Queen's-side, which you could have played on to win. There were some

tactics under the surface but neither player spotted them!

1. d4 e6
2. c4 f5
3. Bf4 Nf6
4. Nc3 d5



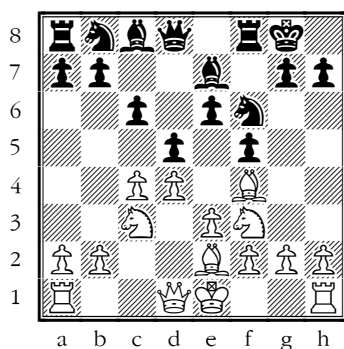
White has the perfect position to play against the Stonewall.

5. e3 Be7
6. Be2

The most dangerous plan is:

6.Bd3 c6 7.Qc2 0-0 8.Nf3 Ne4 9.g4 fxg4 10.Ne5 and Black has big problems. 10...Nf6 11.h3 g3 12.fxg3 Nbd7

- 6 ... 0-0
7. Nf3 c6



8. Ne5

[8.Qc2 keeps castling long in mind]

- 8 ... Nbd7
9. 0-0 Nxe5

10. Bxe5

[10.dxe5]

- 10 ... Bd7

11. f3

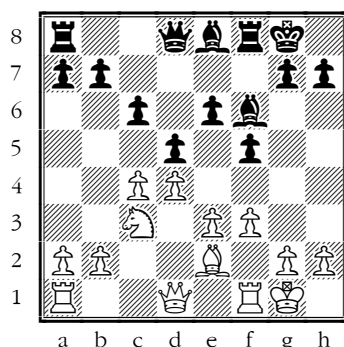
That's a good idea, but not so easy to carry out.

- 11 ... Be8

12. Bxf6

[12.Qb3]

- 12 ... Bxf6



→ **TACTIC: discovery**

13. e4?

[13.f4 is better]

- 13 ... Rc8

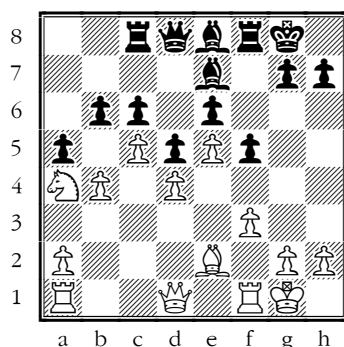
[13...dxe4! discovers an attack on d4]

14. e5! Be7

15. c5 b6

16. b4 a5

17. Na4



White has a strong initiative on the Queen's-side.

[17.a3]

- 17 ... axb4

18. Nxb6! Rb8

19. Na4?

Heading backwards for no very good reason. Were you

spooked by Black sacrificing the exchange? That may be their best idea but you should welcome it!

[19.a3; 19.Rb1]

- 19 ... f4

[19...Qa5]

20. a3

[20.Bd3]

- 20 ... bxa3

21. Rxa3 Bg6

22. Bd3 Bxd3

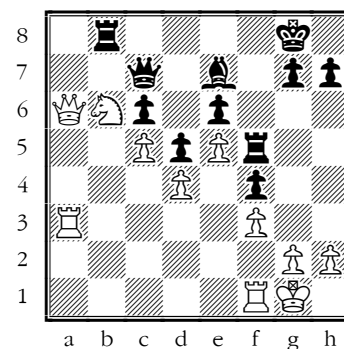
23. Qxd3 Rf5

24. Qa6

[24.Rfa1 is also strong]

- 24 ... Qc7

25. Nb6



→ **TACTIC: fork**

- 25 ... Rbf8

[25...Rxe5! is an amazing idea, but obvious once you see it! 26.Qa7= (26.dxe5?? Bxc5+ 27.Kh1 Bxa3 28.Nxd5 cxd5 29.Qxa3 Qxe5 with a crushing position for Black)

26. Rfa1

You could have played on happily here with little danger of losing.

☞ If your opponent offers you a draw, try and work out why they think they are worse! – Nigel Short

[26.Na8 and; 26.Qa7 are even better]

½-½

R3: Ahmed,Bilal vs. Abdalla,Suhayl

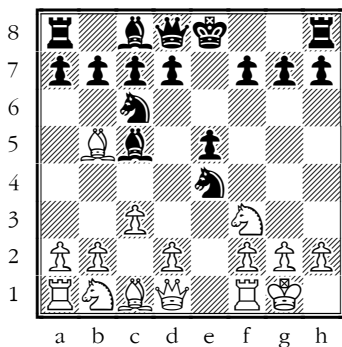
[C65 Ruy Lopez Berlin/Classical Defence]

You got caught early on when White pinned a piece to your King. Again, you were too optimistic and not enough paranoid!

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 Nf6
4. 0-0 Bc5

Black can get away with 4...Nxe4, after which 5.d4 Nd6 6.Bxc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 Nf5 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 9.Nc3 Ke8 is fashionable and OK for Black

5. c3 Nxe4?!



This is very risky here.

[5...0-0 is much safer; 5...Bb6 may be OK too]

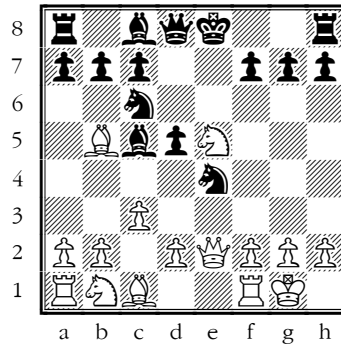
6. Qe2

[6.d4!± and White already stands better.]

- 6 ... d5

[6...Bxf2+ is often played, I see. I thought it was probably digging the hole deeper, but Black may get enough with two pawns and play against the King. 7.Kh1 d5 8.d3 Ng3+ 9.hxg3 Bxg3±]

7. Nxe5?!



White jumps at this chance, but it's not the most accurate.

Nonetheless, your burglar alarm should have been ringing loudly here: all the clues are on the board (loose pieces, exposed king).

➔ **Get your burglar alarm serviced!**

[7.d3 Nf6 8.d4 Bb6 9.Qxe5+±]

- 7 ... Bd7??

➔ **TACTIC: pin**

[7...0-0= It's essential to get out of the pins]

8. Nxd7 Qxd7

9. d3

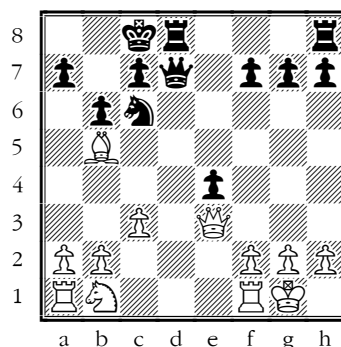
And White has won a piece by simple means.

- 9 ... 0-0-0

10. dxe4 dxe4

11. Be3 Bxe3

12. Qxe3 b6?



Needlessly weakening

[12...Kb8]

13. Qxe4 Kb7

14. Na3 a6

15. Ba4 b5

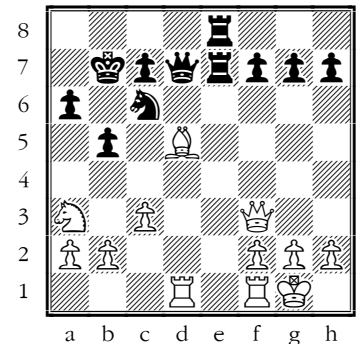
16. Bb3 Rde8

17. Qf3 Re7

[17...Re]

18. Bd5 Rhe8

19. Rad1



White has a huge bind and an extra piece, although the Na3 is pretty irrelevant at the moment.

- 19 ... Kb8?

Abandons c6

[19...Re6]

20. Bxc6 Qxd1?

A last hope? But you have to expect White to play the best move.

[20...Qe6]

21. Qxd1

[21.Rxd1?? Re1+ 22.Rxe1 Rxe1#]

- 1-0

Charlie

“ No questioning your attitude, what you need is experience, and that's hard to add quickly. I know you are putting a lot into your studies, and we could have a chat about how best to balance your curriculum.”

R1: Lawrence, Alex vs. Hill, Charlie

[B56 Sicilian Pelikan]

I fear White knew what they were doing and you did not! I like that you want to play proper grown-up openings but you need to know your way around them.

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 d6
3. d4 cxd4
4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 e5
6. Nf3

The main lines start 6.Ndb5

- 6 ... Be7

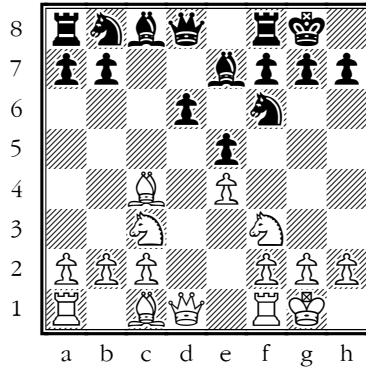
This used to be thought bad for Black, but there are dynamic chances which compensate. Black has a backward pawn on d6. This makes the Be7 a bad Bishop, and White has a Knight outpost on d5. White can hope to attack d6 and/or swap off everything that could swap off a Knight on d5. Black can defend d6 well enough and hope to make a nuisance on the wings.

In the game, White carried out their plan without much opposition.

➤ **TIP: you must know the ideas in the openings you play.]**

[6...Nc6]

7. Bc4 0-0
8. 0-0



8 ... b6

[8...a6 9.Bg5 b5 is a more aggressive stance on the Queen's wing; 8...Be]

9. Bg5

[9.Bd5]

9 ... Ba6

[9...Nbd7]

10. Bxa6 Nxa6

11. Bxf6 Bxf6

White has got the swaps they were looking for.

12. Qe2 Nb4

13. a3 Nc6

14. Nd5 Rc8

15. c3 g6

Black creates some more targets for White and the poor Bishop will be over-stretched.

16. Rad1 Bg7

d6 is now defended by only the Queen, which is always the worst choice of defender.

17. Rd2 f5

This is definitely the right sort of plan but not the right moment.

[17...Na5! is more to the point here]

18. Rfd1 fxe4

19. Qxe4 Qd7

[19...Bh]

20. Ne3 Rf6

21. Nc4!

21 ... Rf4

[21...Bf8 was unattractive but had to be tried.]

22. Qd5+ Kh8

23. Qxd6

[23.Nxd]

23 ... Qxd6

[23...Qe8 might hold out more hope]

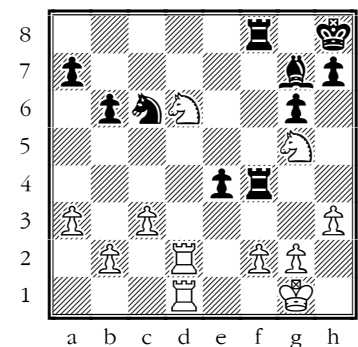
24. Nxd6 Rcf8

25. h3

[25.Ng]

25 ... e4

26. Ng5



➔ **TACTIC: fork**

26 ... Ne5

[26...Bh]

27. Ne6 e3

I understand the desire to hit back and create some sort of accident for White, but you actually make things worse here.

28. fxe3 Rh4

[28...R4f]

29. Nxf8 Rxh3

30. gxh3 Nf3+

31. Kg2

[31.Kf2]

31. ... Nxd2
32. Rxd2 Bxf8
33. Nb5 Kg7
34. Rd7+ Kh6
35. Rxa7 Kh5
36. Rxh7+ Bh6
37. e4 g5
38. e5 Kh4
39. Rxh6#

R2: Hill,Charlie vs. Trethaway,Nathanael

[D35 Queen's Gambit]

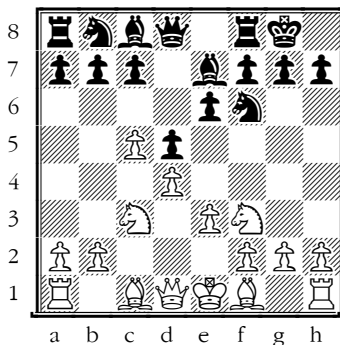
Black gradually worked their way into the heart of your position, and some 'active' moves by you actually made your position weaker.

1. d4 d5
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. e3

That is unkind to the Bc1

[4.Bg5; 4.Bf4]

4. ... Bd6
5. Nf3 0-0
6. c5 Be7



7. Ne5

A bit of a leap in the dark here.

[7.b4! supports the pawn chain before Black can undermine it]

7. ... Nbd7
8. f4 Nxe5
9. fxe5 Ne4
10. Bd2

[10.Nxe4]

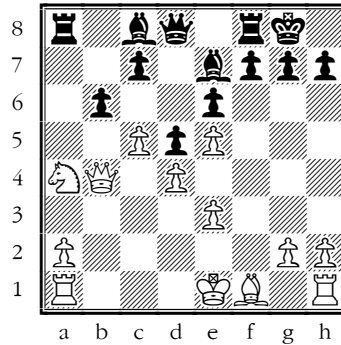
10. ... Nxd2
11. Qxd2 b6!
12. b4

[12.c6]

12. ... a5
13. Na4

[13.b5]

13. ... axb4
14. Qxb4



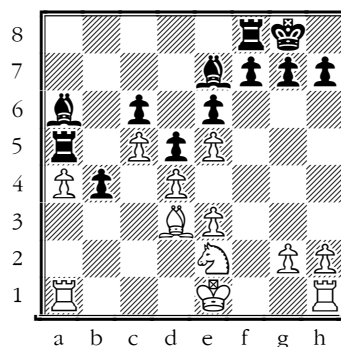
14. ... c6?

[14...f6!; 14...Bd7!]

15. Bd3

[15.Nxb6! ±]

15. ... b5
16. Nc3 Qa5
17. Qxa5 Rxa5
18. a4 b4
19. Ne2 Ba6



20. Bc2

[20.Nf4!-; 20.Bxa6 Rxa6 21.Nc1 Rfa8]

20. ... Bg5

Black is well-mobilised but White can hang on.

[20...f6! ±]

21. e4?

It looks nicely active, but White cannot afford another non-developing, loosening move.

➤ Opening lines favours the better-placed side, so sit tight when defending.

[21.Kd2! =]

21. ... Be3
22. Rd1

Overloading the Bc2

22. ... dxe4
23. Bxe4

[23.Rf1]

23. ... Rxa4
24. Bxc6 Ra2
25. Nc1??

[25.Bf3#1]

25. ... Bf2#

R3: Hill,Charlie vs. Wynn,Jacob

[D30 Queen's Gambit]

Your will to win saw your attack through to success, although there were wobbles along the way.

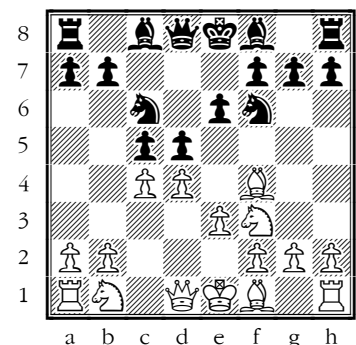
1. d4 d5
2. c4 Nf6
3. Nf3

[3.cxd5 Nxd5 4.Nf3 Bf5 5.Nbd2 Nb6 6.b3 e6 7.e4 Bg6 8.Bb2]

3. ... e6
4. Bf4

Better!

4. ... c5
5. e3 Nc6

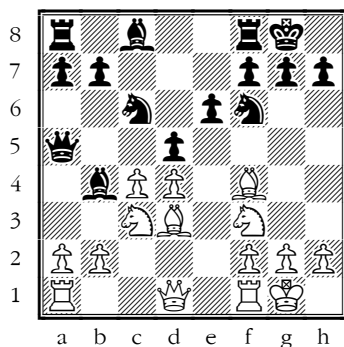


6. Bd3

[6.Nc3 is more usual: the Knight nearly always goes to c3, but the Bishop can wait, especially if you think Black might take on c4.]

6 ... cxd4
7. exd4 Bb4+
8. Nc3 0-0
9. 0-0 Qa5

[9...dxc4=]



10. Qc2

[10.c5! and you will get the Bishop pair 10...Bxc3 11.bxc3 Qxc3 12.Bd6 Rd8 13.Re1±]

10 ... Rd8??

[10...dxc4!±]

11. Be5

[11.cxd5!+- wins a pawn: it's obvious after Nxd5, but exd5 is worth following closely: 11...exd5 (11...Nxd5 12.Bxh7+-) 12.Nb5 (threat Bc7) 12...Rd7 13.a3 Bf8 14.Ne5 Re7 15.Nxc6 bxc6 16.Qxc6 Bb7 17.Qc3+-]

11 ... dxc4

12. Bxc4 Qb6

13. Ne2!!

Going backwards

[13.Bxf6 gxf6 120 14.a3 Be7 15.d5!±]

13 ... Ng4?!

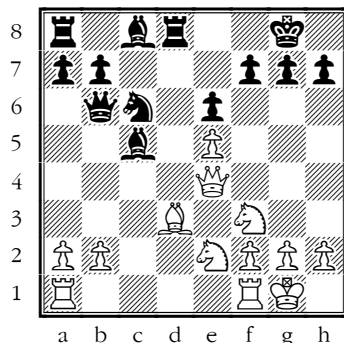
14. Qe4

[14.Bf4=]

14 ... Ngxe5

15. dxe5 Bc5

16. Bd3



White has finally organised a battery against h7

16 ... Qxb2?

That's very optimistic!

[16...g]

17. Qxh7+ Kf8

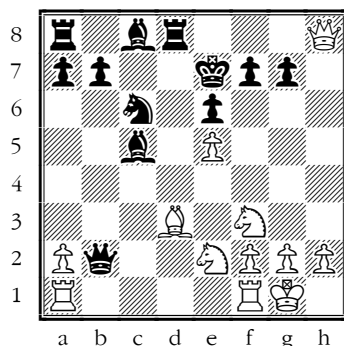
18. Qh8+?!

A check that creates more problems for White than for Black! But White is still OK...

☞ Checks sometimes improve the position for the checked!

[18.Rfb1!]

18 ... Ke7



Now White has pieces attacked on h8 and d3

19. Qxg7?

Too bold - hang on to that Bishop!

[19.Qh4+!+- Ke8 20.Rab1]

19 ... Rxd3

20. Ng5?+-

and hang on to that Knight!

[20.Nf4!÷ and White has about enough attack for the piece]

20 ... Nxe5

[20...Qxe2!? is also OK for Black]

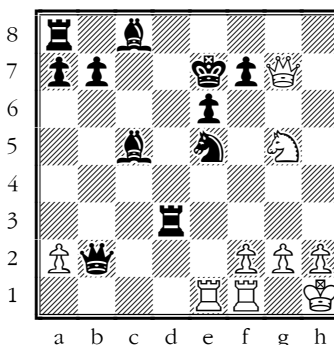
21. Kh1

I thought that was far too slow but you were right

21 ... Qxe2

Now White is attacking with only two pieces, which is rarely enough, so bring up the reserves.

22. Rae1! Qb2??



Exactly the wrong square!

[22...Qh5]

23. Rxe5!?=

Hard to criticise, but not the most accurate.

[23.Nxf7!± and White's attack flares back into full heat]

23 ... Bd4?!+-

[23...Qd4! covers the Queen against discoveries.]

24. Qxf7+ Kd8?

The Black King had to flee with 24...Kd6

25. Qf6+

[25.Rxe6! mates in 5 25...Bd7 (25...Bxe6 26.Nxe6+ Kc8 27.Qc7#) 26.Rd6 Qb5 27.Ne6+ Kc8 28.Qe8+ Bxe8 29.Rd8#]

25 ... Kc7

26. Nxe6+?

[26.Qe7+!= with perpetual check]

26 ... Bxe6+-

White's attacking team is down to two pieces again

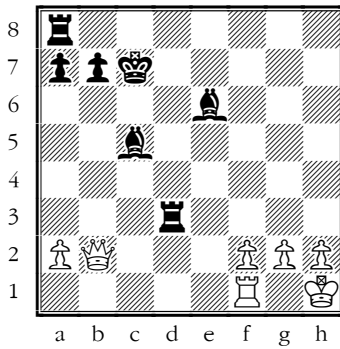
27. Rc5+?

[27.Qxe6]

27 ... Bxc5??

[27...Kd6! and Black should win]

28. Qxb2



Great! But it's still about equal.

28 ... Rad8?+-

[28...b6]

29. h3?+-

→ **TACTIC: fork**

[29.Qe5+! picks up a Bishop and should win for White.]

... 1-0

Nathan

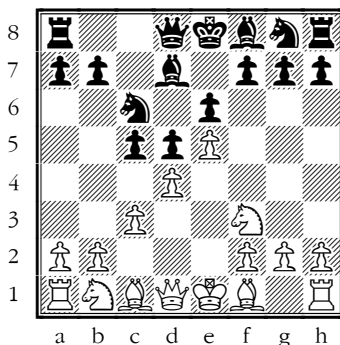
“ I like the dynamism in your play and you're spotting your chances well; what you lack is a bit of paranoia! You are playing too optimistically at times, and missing chances for your opponent..”

R1: Ng,Nathan vs. Ashworth,Jaime

[C02 French Defence, Advance]

Some loose play against the French led to a lot of trouble, but Black blinked at the wrong moment and you pounced on your chance!

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. e5 c5
4. c3 Nc6
5. Nf3 Bd7



6. b3?!

The moves known to work here are 6.Be2 and ; 6.a3; The tricky 6.Bd3 can also be tried.

6 ... Qb6

[6...cxd4 7.cxd4 Bb4+ 8.Bd2 Rc8 ≠]

7. c4?!

Too ambitious, especially with only one piece developed,.

[7.Bb2]

This is a common type of position and it's easy to learn how to play it, although I think it's easier to play for Black.

7 ... cxd4

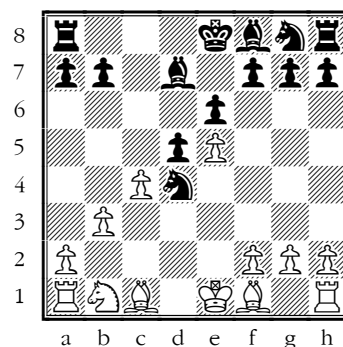
8. Nxd4??

[8.cxd5!]

8 ... Qxd4

[8...Bb4+ is even better]

9. Qxd4 Nxd4



10. cxd5??

Oh dear, your burglar alarm was firmly off!

→ A bit of practice will help you get your eye in for tactics and help avoid blunders.

→ **TACTIC: fork**

10 ... Nc2+

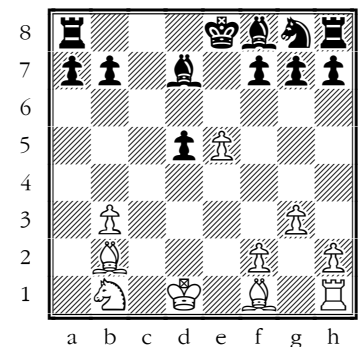
Oh dear

11. Kd1 Nxa1

12. Bb2 Nxb3

13. axb3 exd5

14. g3



Same as usual: Black should aim to avoid accidents, swap and win! White's task is to keep active, avoid piece swaps, and keep looking for chances to hit back

14 ... Bc5

Setting up an accident...

[14...Rc8-;

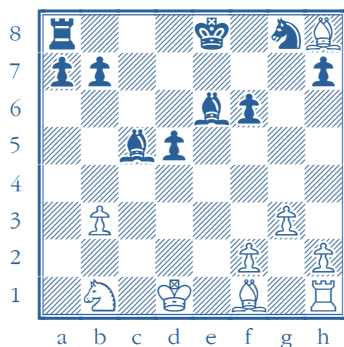
14...Ne7

14...Be6]

15. e6! f6

[15...Bxe6 16.Bxg7 f6 17.Bxh8

VARIATION DIAGRAM



→ **TACTIC: net**

17 ... Kf7 and Black will be more than a piece ahead after catching the bishop.]

16. exd7+ Kxd7

17. Bh3+ Kd6

This is still pretty good for Black...

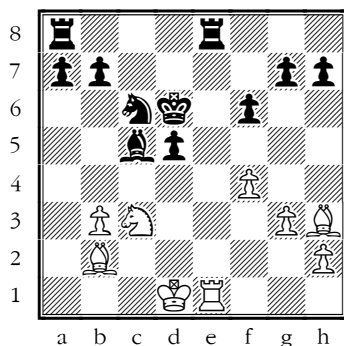
18. f4

[18.Re1]

18 ... Ne7

19. Re1 Rhe8

20. Nc3 Nc6??



→ **TACTIC: mate**

[20...Ng6#1]

21. Nb5#

And there's that accident!

R2: Zeng,Jonathan vs. Ng,Nathan

[C57 Two Knights' Defence]

A fine vigorous display of chess in a gambit line. Next time, try and keep the Queens on; your activity is even more dangerous with a full army.

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 Nc6

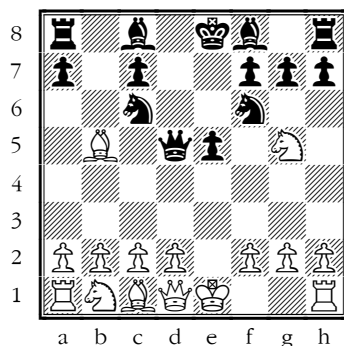
3. Bc4 Nf6

4. Ng5 d5

5. exd5 b5

I do like this move

6. Bxb5 Qxd5



For the sake of a pawn, Black has active pieces and easy development

7. Bxc6+ Qxc6

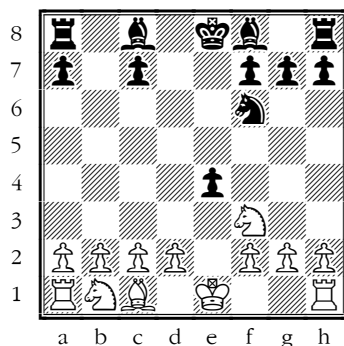
8. Qf3

This seems to be today's idea!

8 ... Qxf3

[8...e4! still must be right, retaining Queens]

9. Nxf3 e4



10. Nh4??

"Wozu?" (where to?) asked Alekhin in a terse note.

[10.Ne5]

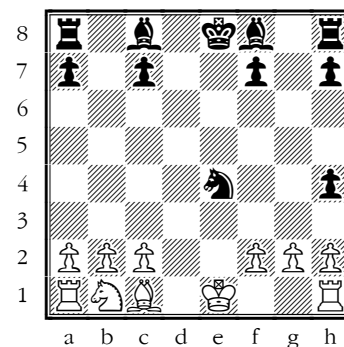
10 ... g5!

11. d3 gxh4

12. dxe4

[12.Bg5]

12 ... Nxe4



Great! Black is winning. Time to change gear: develop, swap and win the endgame, all the while avoiding accidents.

13. 0-0 Rg8!?

Looking for more? It could have cost a piece!

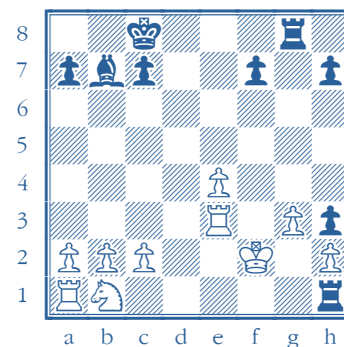
Playing safe is the right approach when you're winning

14. Re1! Bb7

15. h3

[15.f3!? does win a piece, but Black's position is so good, it doesn't matter! 15...0-0-0 16.fxe4 h3 17.g3 Bc5+ 18.Be3 Bxe3+ 19.Rxe3 Rd1+ 20.Kf2 Rh1]

VARIATION DIAGRAM



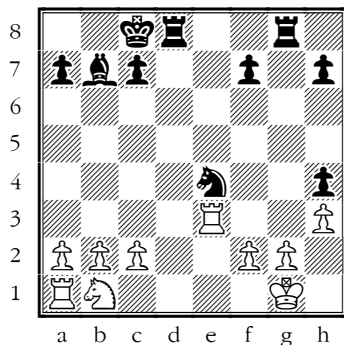
With level material but a massive advantage to Black]

15 ... Bc5

16. Be3 Bxe3

[16...0-0-0]

17. Rxe3 0-0-0



→ **TACTIC: back rank mate**

18. f3

[18.Rd3 was sadly necessary -#6;
18.Na3? Rd2! is crushing]

18 ... Rd1+

mates

19. Kh2 Nf2

[19...Ng3-2]

20. Re2

[20.g4-#1]

20 ... Rh1#

**R3: Ng,Nathan vs.
Choudhury,Anish**

[C02 French Defence, Advance]

Loose against the French again,
and while Black won their pawn
as they should, they didn't follow
up accurately, and you got some
chances. However, a bit more
loose play let a piece go, and this
time Black made no mistake in
finishing off.

1. e4 e6

2. d4 d5

3. e5 c5

4. Nf3

This move is usually played with
a eye to sacrificing the d-pawn

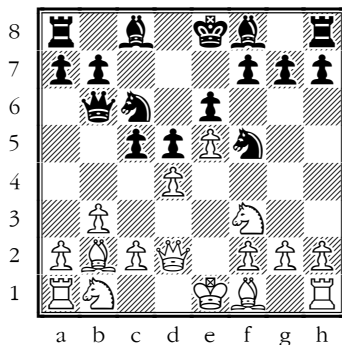
4 ... Qb6

[4...cxd4 5.Bd3; 4...Nc6 5.Bd3
cxd4 6.0-0 Bc5 7.Nbd2 Nge7
8.Nb3 Bb6 9.Bf4 Ng6 10.Bg3 0-0
11.h4 with some pressure for the
pawn]

5. b3 Nc6

6. Bb2 Nh6

7. Qd2 Nf5



White has defended the pawn
chain and can make life awkward
for Black.

[7...cxd4]

8. c4?

This is too ambitious again: the
d-pawn must fall (attacked 4
times) and White gets not much
in return.

[8.dxc5 is awkward for Black to
meet: 8...Bxc5 9.Nc3 idea Na4
9...Be7 10.Bd3 ±]

8 ... cxd4

9. Qf4

[9.Ba3!]

9 ... dxc4

[9...Bb4+!]

10. Bxc4 Bc5

11. 0-0 Bd7?!

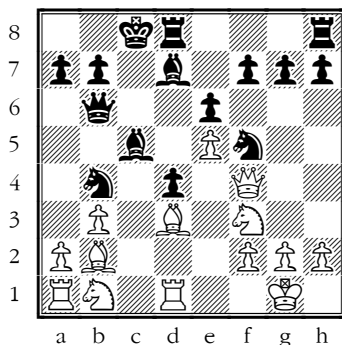
[11...0-0!]

12. Bd3! Nb4?!

13. Rd1

[13.Bxf5 and White gets the pawn
back, with a fairly level position, but
it only just works 13...exf5
14.Bxd4= Nc2!? 15.Bxc5 Qxc5
16.Rc1!]

13 ... 0-0-0



[13...Nxd3 is consistent and good
for Black]

There's now a bit of a tactical
phase where neither player gets
it right.

14. Na3??

[14.Bxf5 is still best]

14 ... Nxd3

15. Rxd3

→ **TACTIC: fork**

15 ... Qa6?!

[15...Bxa3 is the right move order
16.Bxa3 Qa6]

16. Rdd1?

[16.Nc4! ≠ saves the piece, with
fair chances to hold the game.]

16 ... Bxa3

17. Bxd4?

[17.Qc1+ saves the piece in a
different way, but with a worse
position 17...Kb8 18.Bxa3 Bc6
19.Nd2 Bd5-+]

17 ... Nxd4

18. Rxd4 Bc6

19. Rad1 Qb6

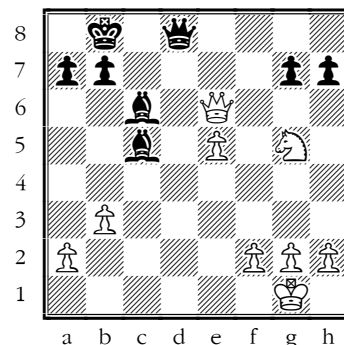
20. Qxf7 Bc5

21. Qxe6+ Kb8

22. Rxd8+ Rxd8

23. Rxd8+ Qxd8

24. Ng5??



→ **TACTIC: back rank mate**

Again, your burglar alarm is
silent.

[24.h4 is pretty hopeless -#1]

24 ... Qd1#

[24...Qxg5 should win too!]

Caleb

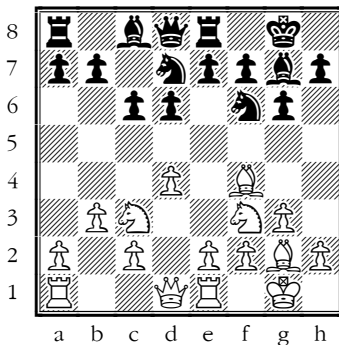
“ Undefeated against strong opposition was a fine performance. You are playing some difficult openings mostly very well, but I wonder if you could make life easier for yourself with some simpler choices! In that respect the Tarrasch is a good choice against the French, but 4.c3 is too slow.”

R1: Donohue, Toby vs. Caleshu, Caleb

[A49 King's Indian Defence]

A long murky period of play started to turn in your favour, when White got caught with a skewer.

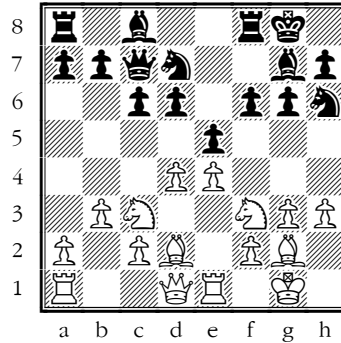
1. **d4** **Nf6**
2. **Nf3** **d6**
3. **g3** **g6**
4. **Bg2** **Bg7**
5. **O-O** **O-O**
6. **Nc3** **Nbd7**
7. **b3** **Re8**
8. **Re1** **c6**
9. **Bf4?!**



Walks into ...e5

[9.e4 e5=]

- 9 ... **Qc7**
10. **e4** **e5**
11. **Be3** **Ng4**
12. **Bg5**
- [12.d5]
- 12 ... **f6**
- [12...exd4]
13. **Bd2** **Rf8**
14. **h3** **Nh6**



Finally there is contact between the two armies, but the position is hard to handle for both sides. I always like it when the pawn structure tells me what to do, but here it just shrugs...

➔ Positions with fixed pawn formations are easiest to plan in.

15. **Qc1**

[15.Be3 and Black lacks active play; White can follow up with a4, Qd2, Rad1]

15 ... **Nf7**

16. **g4**

[16.a4!? takes ...b5 away from Black.]

16 ... **Nb6**

17. **d5?!**

[17.dxe5]

17 ... **Qd7**

[17...cxd5! 18.exd5 f5! and Black's position has come alive]

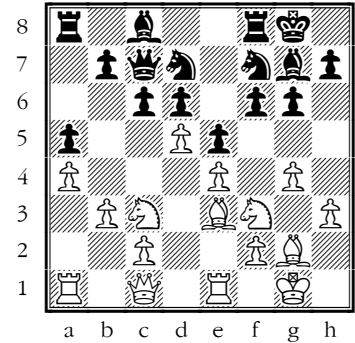
18. **Nh2** **Qc7**

19. **a4** **a5**

20. **Be3** **Nd7**

[20...cxd5 is still right]

21. **Nf3**



The Knight returns without reward. White is struggling to find a set-up, let alone a plan.

[21.Nf1 and Ng3 is better]

21 ... **Nc5**

22. **Nh4**

[22.Nd2]

22 ... **Qe7**

23. **Qd2** **Rd8**

24. **Nf3**

[24.Rad1]

24 ... **Bd7**

25. **g5**

[25.Nh2 is the right plan]

25 ... **f5**

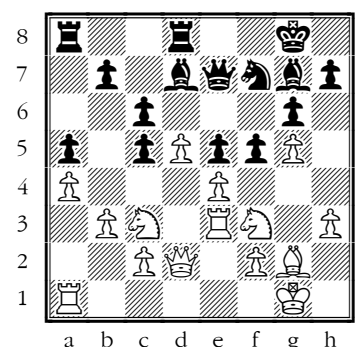
26. **Bxc5**

That's too useful a bishop to let go in this structure

[26.exf5]

26 ... **dxcc5**

27. **Re3**



[27.h4]

27 ... f4!±

Black's position is starting to come together.

28. Rd3 Be8

[28...Nxc5! is simple and best]

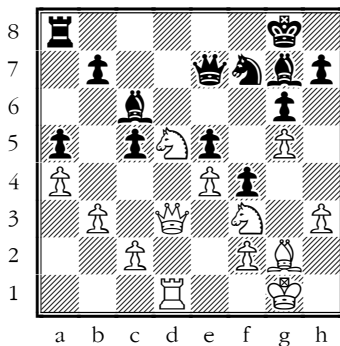
29. Rd1 Rd6

[29...Nxc5!]

30. dxc6! Rxd3

31. Qxd3 Bxc6

32. Nd5?



White has missed a couple of tactical points, and collapses.

[32.Qc4!±]

32 ... Bxd5

→ **TACTIC: fork, skewer**

33. Qxd5

If White had seen Black's next, they would have preferred the other capture

[33.exd5 e4! and White can't wriggle out 34.d6 Qe6 35.Qe2 Qf5 36.Nd2 f3!]

33 ... Rd8!

34. Qd3

[34.Qxd8+]

34 ... Rxd3

35. Rxd3 Nxc5

36. Nxc5 Qxc5

37. Rd5

[37.Kf1]

37 ... f3

38. Kf1 Qxc5

39. Ke1 Qg1+

40. Kd2 Qxf2+

41. Kc3 Qe1+

42. Kc4 Qb4+

43. Kd3 f2

44. Rd8+ Bf8

45. Ke3 Qe1+

46. Kf3 f1Q+

47. Kg4 Qxe4+

48. Kg3 Qfg2#

R2: Caleshu, Caleb vs. Gilbert, Harri

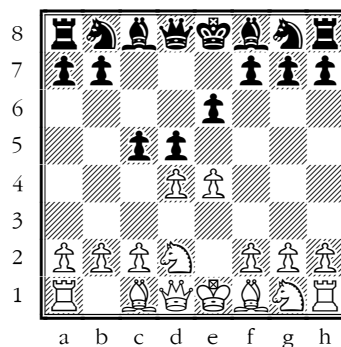
[C07 French Defence, Tarrasch Variation]

A wild game where Black did well to create enough confusion to get a draw, although standing back you might kick yourself for not winning this one.

1. e4 e6

2. d4 d5

3. Nd2 c5



4. c3

The main lines start 4.exd5 exd5 (4...Qxd5 and White has more space after 5.Ngf3 cxd4 6.Bc4 Qd6 7.0-0 Nf6 8.Nb3 Nc6 9.Nbxd4 Nxd4 10.Nxd4 a6 11.Re1 Qc7 12.Qe2) 5.dxc5 and you can play against the IQP; If you want a less committal move here, 4.Ngf3 is best

4 ... Nd7?!±

[4...Nc6]

5. Ngf3 cxd4

6. cxd4

[6.Nxd4 avoids an IQP]

6 ... Bb4

[6...dxe4 7.Nxe4= and Black can play against a white IQP]

7. Bb5

[7.e5! and Black's pieces are on the wrong squares for this structure]

7 ... dxe4!±

8. Ne5 Ngf6

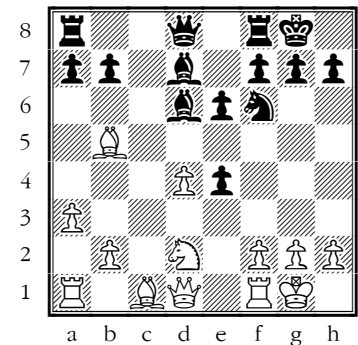
[8...a6; 8...Ne7]

9. 0-0 0-0

[9...a6]

10. a3 Bd6

11. Nxd7 Bxd7



12. Be2? e5?!

A bit greedy

[12...Bc7 and Black has a pawn and the better position.]

13. Nc4 Qe7

14. Bg5

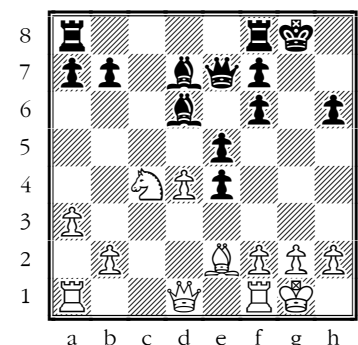
Creating some useful tension

14 ... h6?

Black doesn't appreciate the dangers in this position.

[14...exd4! 15.Qxd4 Bc7]

15. Bxf6 gxf6



→ **TACTIC: discovery**

16. dxe5?

[16.Nxd6! is the right move order 16...Qxd6 17.dxe5 Qe6 18.exf6 Rfd8 19.Qd4 Bb5 20.Qe3±]

16 ... fxe5??

[16...Bxe5! escapes]

17. Nxd6

White is a clear piece up, but now Black does a good job in playing a losing position actively.

☞ If you are worse, defend carefully; if you are losing, you must take risks.

17 ... Kh8

18. g3?

[18.Qd2 keeps all of White's advantage.]

18 ... Bh3

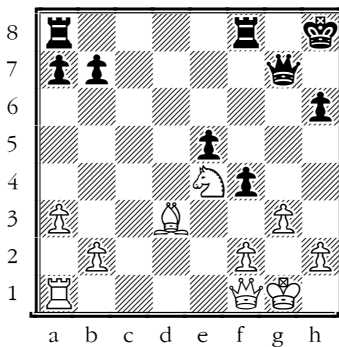
19. Nxe4 Bxf1

20. Qxf1 f5

21. Nc3 f4

22. Bd3 Qg5

23. Ne4 Qg7



24. Qh3

[24.Qe2 central is better]

24 ... f3

[24...Rf7 25.Nc5/21]

25. Kf1

[25.Nc5 targeting e6; White can't go passive.]

25 ... Rad8

26. Rd1

[26.Bc]

26 ... Rd5

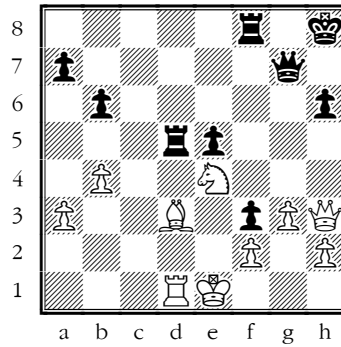
[26...Qg]

27. b4

Not on point.

[27.Nc3 or ; 27.Bc2 reorganise your pieces]

27 ... b6



[27...Rfd8 looks more constructive]

28. Ke1 Rf4!?

Nearly brilliant!

[28...Rfd8 29.Bc2]

29. Qc8+

[29.gxf4! is actually fine, both sides must have been seeing ghosts!

29...Qg1+ 30.Bf1!+- and White

has it in the bag (even after

30.Kd2 Rxd3+ 31.Kxd3 Qxd1+

and Black can't pick off the Knight

32.Nd2!+- (32.Kc3? Qc1+ 33.Kd3

Qb1+ is perpetual check; 32.Kc4

Qe2+ 33.Kd5 Qd3+ 34.Kxe5))]

29 ... Rf8

30. Qh3

[30.Qc6]

30 ... Qg6

31. Qh4

[31.Bc2 untangles and should win]

31 ... Rd4

32. h3

again a bit off the pace

½-½

R3: Hidouci,Naila vs. Caleshu,Caleb

[B40 Sicilian Defence, Pin Variation]

A sharp variation led to some early wobbles, but you played a fine attack once the game settled down.

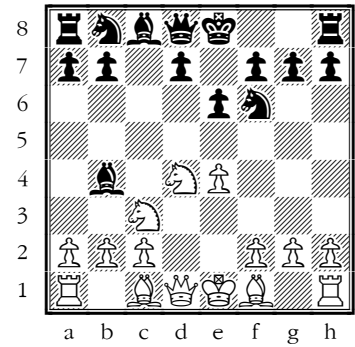
1. e4 c5

2. Nf3 e6

3. d4 cxd4

4. Nxd4 Nf6

5. Nc3 Bb4?



I like the attitude, but you shouldn't play trappy variations where your opponent has a path to advantage. I think I caught you doing this last year too!

☞ A good trap is where you set a trap with a good move, and your opponent has no path to advantage.

6. Bd3

[6.e5! Nd5 7.Qg4! and White has a winning game, even if Black has counterplay See

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwipCjxqGiM>]

6 ... Qa5?

Probably trying a bit hard

[6...d6 covers e5]

7. Bd2 a6?

Too slow for this position!

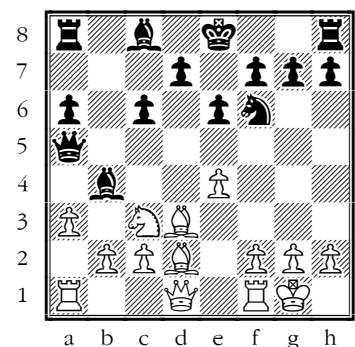
8. 0-0

[8.a3]

8 ... Nc6

9. Nxc6 bxc6

10. a3



→ **TACTIC: discovery**

10 ... Bd6??

[10...Bf8!?!± is ugly but survivable]

11. Re1

[11.Nb5!+- wins]

11 ... Qe5

Active, but at this stage of the game, just a target. We now go through an odd phase where White gives Black lots of chances to play Qxh2+ and Black declines.

[11...Qc7! ± hangs on]

12. Qf3?

[12.f4!+-; 12.g3!?±]

12 ... g5?

[12...Qxh2+! ≠]

13. Be3

[13.g3!+-]

13 ... g4?±

[13...Qxh2+!]

14. Qd1??

[14.Qg3!±]

14 ... Qh5

[14...Qxh2+!]

15. Kf1

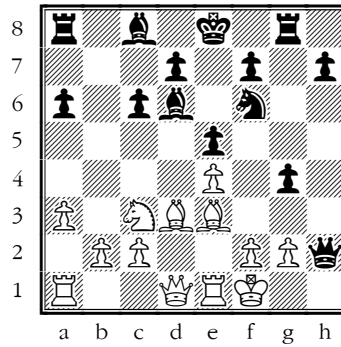
[15.g3!±]

15 ... Rg8≠

[15...Qxh2!-+]

16. Bd4 e5

17. Be3 Qxh2



At last!

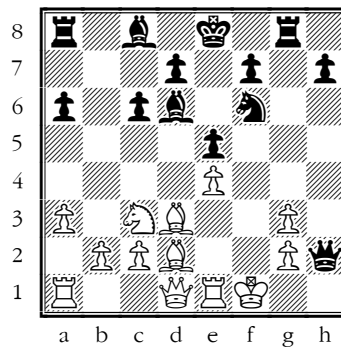
18. Bd2??

No idea what that was supposed to achieve.

[18.g3]

18 ... g3!

19. fxg3



→ TACTIC: mate

[19.Ke2]

19 ... Qh1+

The most accurate move was the most obvious one.

[19...Rxc3! and White has to play 20.Qf3 to avoid mate]

20. Kf2 Ng4+

[20...Qh2!]

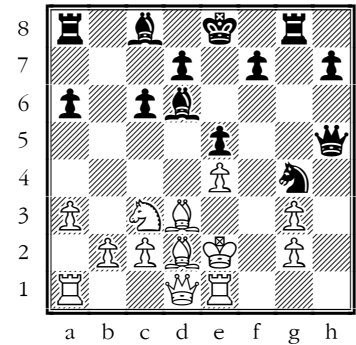
21. Kf3

[21.Qxg4!]

21 ... Qh5

22. Ke2

[22.Rh1]



22 ... Qh2

→ TACTIC: mate/
decoy/discovery

[22...Ne3+! wins the Queen or the King 23.Kxe3 Bc5#]

23. Kf3

[23.Rg1]

23 ... Rg6

[23...Ne3]

24. Bc4

[24.Qb1]

24 ... Rf6+

The poor white king is bullied until it's mated.

25. Ke2

[25.Bf4]

25 ... Qxg2+

26. Kd3 Nf2+

27. Ke3 Nxd1+

28. Raxd1 Qf3# 0-1

Toby

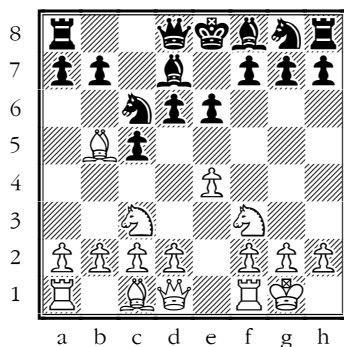
“ Pretty good – two nice wins and your loss was by no means outclassed. The usual treatment of a bit more openings study and a bit more tactical awareness will get you to the next level without trouble, I expect.”

R1: Page, Toby vs. Liu, Jerry

[B50 Sicilian Defence]

Some vague early play led to some carelessness by Black, and you seized your chances very well.

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 d6
3. Nc3 Nc6
4. Bb5 Bd7
5. 0-0 e6



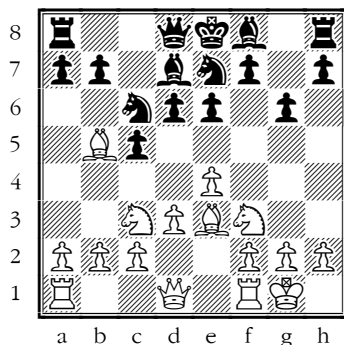
White is playing 'normal' moves, which usually leads to trouble as Black and equality at best for White. But Black is playing the Sicilian, which is the most accident-prone of defences...

6. d3 Nge7

Unnecessarily cramping the Bishop.

[6...Be7; 6...Nf6]

7. Be3 g6??



Black now has targets on d6 f6 and h6, and can hardly defend them all. This is the trouble with the Sicilian; Black is often tempted to lots of pawn moves, and that can be dangerous.

➔ Every pawn move loosens the position, says Tarrasch (again)

[7...a6 and Black has hopes of a plus]

8. d4!

Good timing!

- 8 ... b6?

[8...a6 or ; 8...cxd4 9.Bxd4 e5 should have been tried]

9. d5! Na5

[9...exd5! 10.Bg5! d4 11.Nd5 threatening mate! 11...Qb8 12.c3 is winning for White]

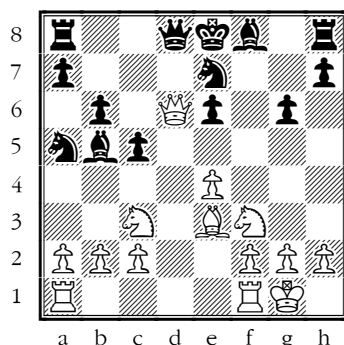
10. dxe6

[10.Ng5! is even better]

- 10 ... fxe6

11. Qxd6 Bxb5

[11...Nec6]



12. Qxd8+

This develops a Black piece.

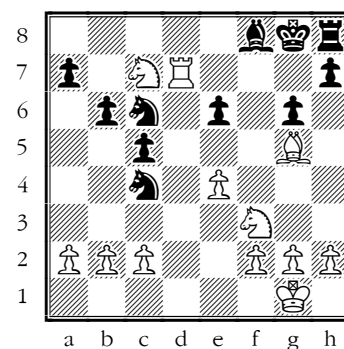
[12.Nxb5! keeps up the pressure 12...Qxd6 13.Nxd6+ Kd7 14.Rad1+-]

- 12 ... Rxd8

13. Nxb5 Nec6
14. Rfd1 Rxd1+
15. Rxd1 Nc4
16. Nc7+ Ke7

[16...Kf7]

17. Bg5+ Kf7
18. Rd7+ Kg8



I often say, you won't get mated in the endgame, but White's attack persists after the Queen swap.

[18...Be7]

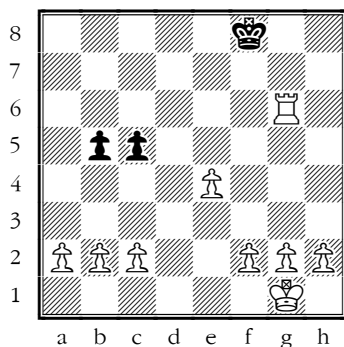
19. Nxe6 N4e5
20. Nxe5 Nxe5
21. Rxa7 Nf7
22. Bf6

[22.Ra8!]

- 22 ... Nh6
23. Bxh8 b5

[23...Kxh8]

24. Nxf8 Kxh8
25. Rxh7+ Kg8
26. Rxh6 Kxf8
27. Rxg6



And White won without further incident.

- 27 ... c4
 28. e5 Kf7
 29. Rf6+ Ke7
 30. Rb6 c3
 31. bxc3 Kd7
 32. e6+ Ke7
 33. f4 Kf8
 34. Rb7 Ke8
 35. e7 b4
 36. cxb4 Kf7
 37. e8Q+ Kf6

[37...Kxe8 might as well!]

38. Qe5+ Kg6
 39. Rb6+

[39.Rg7+ Kh6 40.Qg5#]

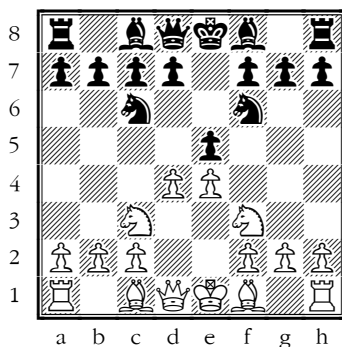
- 39 ... Kf7
 40. Qc7+
 1—0

R2: Swamy, Anshul vs. Page, Toby

[C47 Scotch Four Knights' Game]

A fairly level opening led to a fairly level endgame, when you were tempted to try an idea that had previously worked, but now led to disaster.

1. e4 e5
 2. Nf3 Nc6
 3. Nc3 Nf6
 4. d4



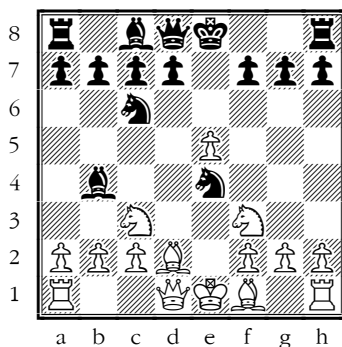
- 4 ... Bb4?!

This has been played but is believed to be bad for Black.

[4...exd4 is best, when 5.Nxd4 Bb4 is the main line]

Do learn how to play against White's less common openings.

5. dxe5?! Nxe4
 6. Bd2

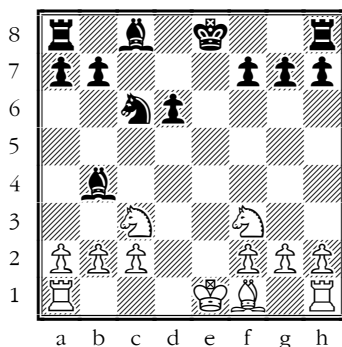


→ TACTIC: pin

- 6 ... Nxd2

[6...Bxc3 7.Bxc3 Nxc3 8.bxc3 makes a mess of White's pawns, then 8...Qe7 should win the e-pawn]

7. Qxd2 d6
 8. exd6 Qxd6
 9. Qxd6 cxd6



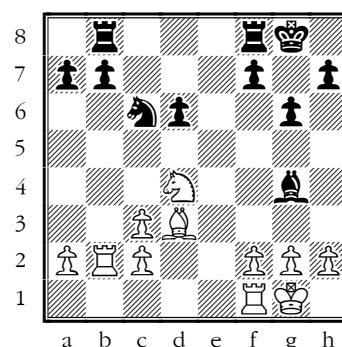
Sadly for Black, they end up with the messier pawns!

[9...Bxd6]

10. Bd3 Bxc3+
 11. bxc3

More mess; the mess and the position are about equal.

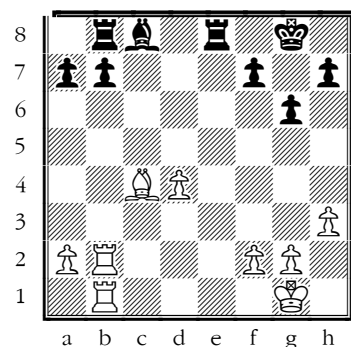
- 11 ... Bg4
 12. Nd4 0-0
 13. 0-0 g6
 14. Rab1 Rab8
 15. Rb2



- 15 ... Nxd4

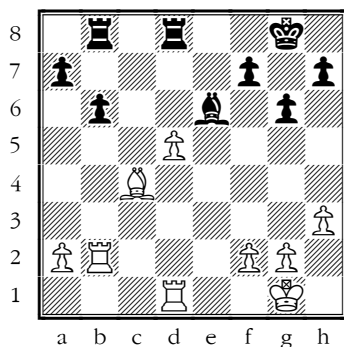
[15...Rfc8; 15...Ne5]

16. cxd4 d5
 17. Rfb1 Rfe8
 18. h3 Bc8
 19. c4 dxc4
 20. Bxc4



White has managed to make a passed pawn, but it's still equal.

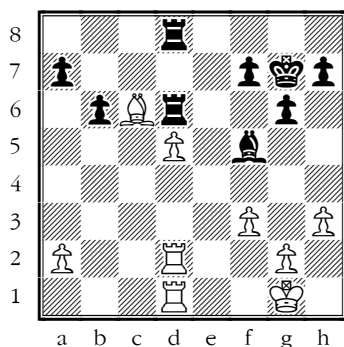
- 20 ... b6
 21. d5 Rd8
 22. Rd1 Be6!?



Tricky!

→ **TACTIC: pin**

23. Rbd2 Bf5
24. Bb5 Rd6
25. Rcl Rbd8
26. Rcdl Be4
27. Bc6 Kg7
28. f3 Bf5



White's game looks good, but it has reached a peak and can't go forward easily.

29. g4 Be6??

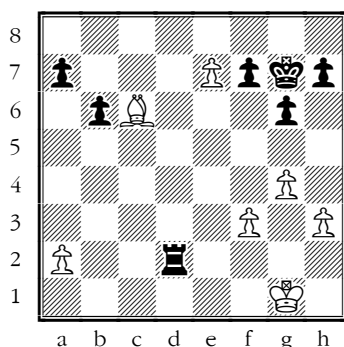
It worked then but not now!

[29...Bd]

30. dxe6! Rxd2

[30...Rxe]

31. Rxd2 Rxd2
32. e7



and White goes a piece up, not an exchange down.

32. ... Re2

33. e8Q

[33.Be]

33. ... Rxe8

34. Bxe8 Kf8

35. Bb5 a5

[35...Ke]

36. Kf2 Ke7

37. Ke3 Ke6

38. Kd4 Kd6

39. Bc4 f6

40. f4 h6

41. h4 g5

42. fxg5 fxg5

43. hxg5 hxg5

44. Ke4

- 1—0

R3: Page, Toby vs. Kumar, Ishaan

[B28 Sicilian Defence]

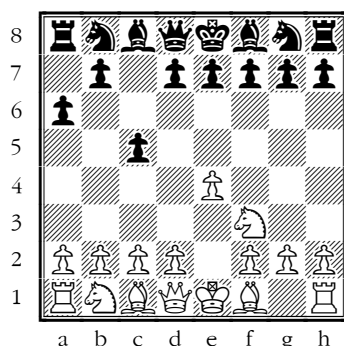
You were a bit vague early on, and while you kept coming up with ideas, it was hard to make them stick. But two weakening moves by Black made you sit up and notice, and in the end Black allowed a back rank mate.

1. e4 c5

2. Nf3

[2.c3 is my recommendation.]

2. ... a6



O'Kelly's variation, which has a cunning plan.

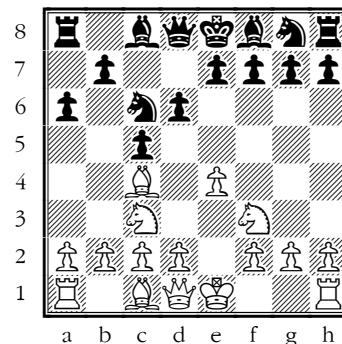
3. Bc4

[3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5! 6.Nf3 Bb4! and Black is doing very well;

3.c3 or; 3.c4 ask harder questions, like, how does ...a6 help Black now?]

3. ... Nc6

4. Nc3 d6



'Normal' moves again; you need a proper system!

☞ **Pick a system with a name, don't be satisfied with normal moves against Black's different defences.**

You now waste time getting rid of your fine Bishop.

5. Bd5 Bd7

6. Bxc6 Bxc6

7. d4 cxd4

8. Nxd4 Nf6

9. Nxc6 bxc6

10. Bg5 e5

Creating a backward pawn on d6.

[10...e6]

11. Qf3

[11.Qd3 Be7 12.0-0-0± and Black has problems.]

11. ... Be7

12. Bxf6 Bxf6

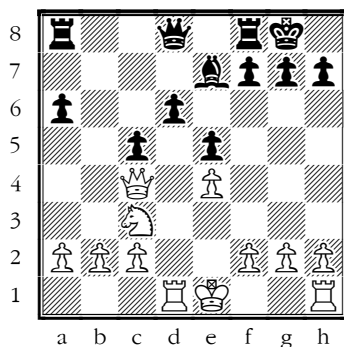
13. Rd1 0-0

14. Qd3 Be7±

15. Qc4

[15.0-0 is natural and good]

15. ... c5??



Suddenly this is perfect for White, with a monster Knight against a bishop not much better than a pawn.

[15...Qb6 16.b3/21]

16. Nd5

No rush!

16 ... Re8

17. Nxe7+

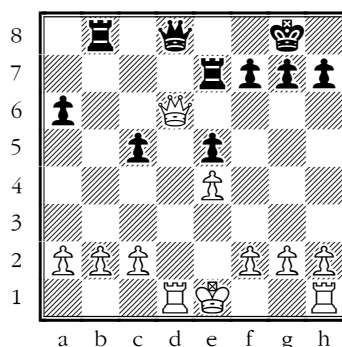
If that doesn't win a pawn, you should keep the Knight.

[17.0-0±]

17 ... Rxe7

18. Qd5 Rb8

19. Qxd6



→ **TACTIC: back rank mate**

19 ... Qxd6?

[19...Qa5+ 20.Qd2 (20.c3 Ree8 and Black gets back a pawn) 20...Qxa2 21.Qd8+ Re8]

20. Rxd6 Rxb2??

[20...f6#2]

21. Rd8+

1-0

Alfie

“ A nice undefeated 2/3 score was fine in this company, and it could have been better if you'd had time to see your second-round game home. I'd have a look again at the first few moves in the games where you were Black – there are some easy improvements.”

R1: Sequeira, Alfie vs. Rathkey, Nia

[D00 Queen's Pawn]

A fair start to a game but a premature conclusion!

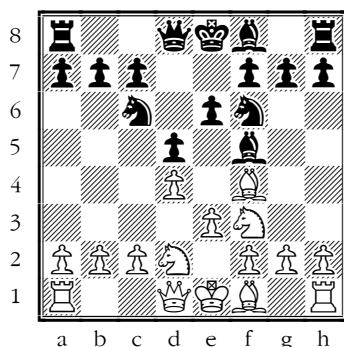
1. d4 d5
2. Bf4 Nf6
3. e3 Bf5
4. Nf3

[4.c4]

4 ... e6
5. Nbd2

[5.c4 Bxb1 6.Rxb1 Bb4+ 7.Ke2]

5 ... Nc6

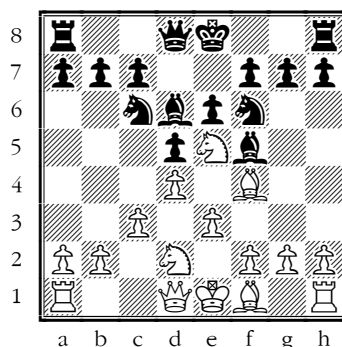


I would keep the c-pawn free; put your Knight on d7, or move the c-pawn to c5 first. That way, your Rc8 might have a proper job!

➔ An opening should be judged according to the prospects it offers to young ambitious Rooks, says Cecil Purdy

[5...Nbd7]

6. c3 Bd6
7. Ne5



We saw lots of these 'leaps into the dark' in Chepstow; usually they lost a pawn, or risked doing so, like this one!

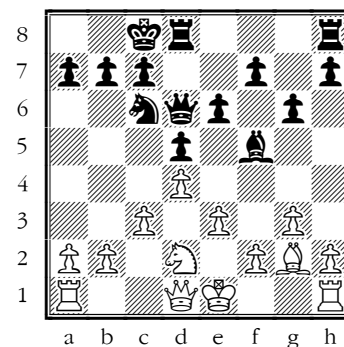
7 ... Nd7

[7...Bxe5! 8.dxe5 (8.Bxe5 Nxe5 9.dxe5 Nd7 10.f4 ≠ Qe7) 8...Nd7 9.Nf3 (9.Bb5!) 9...Be4]

8. Nxd7

[8.Nxc6! is best, making a mess of Black's pawns.]

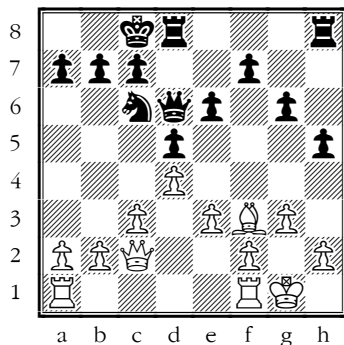
8 ... Qxd7
9. Bxd6 Qxd6
10. g3 0-0-0
11. Bg2 g6



Making many weaknesses and risking leaving the Bishop in a net!

[11...e5]

12. 0-0 h5
13. Nf3 Bg4
14. Qc2 Bxf3
15. Bxf3



White's Bishop is theoretically 'good' but is actually very blocked in. So Black is a little better, but has spent too much time on the clock to want to try and win it.

[15.Bxf3 h4 (15...f5; 15...e5)]
½-½

R2: Miles, Elliot vs. Sequeira, Alfie [C00 French Defence]

Black got hold of this game nicely and White was tempted to unsound means to continue, and found themselves losing. But you let them off when you agreed a draw in time trouble.

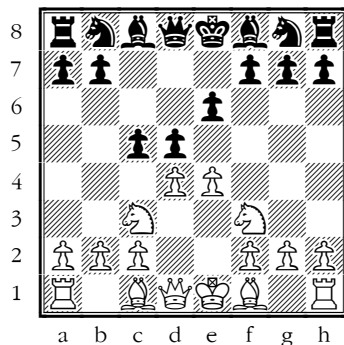
1. e4 e6
2. Nf3 d5
3. Nc3 c5

This can be risky, as lines open up when you're behind in development. ...c5 is a move to be played after the centre is closed with e4-e5, or maybe after an awkward move like Nd2

⇒ Open lines favour the better-developed player.

[3...Nf6]

4. d4

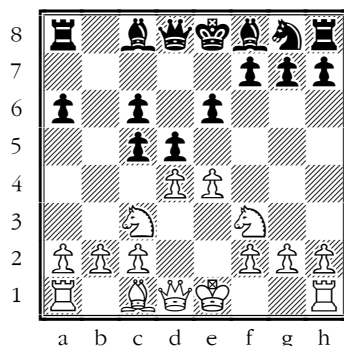


Correctly opening the centre

- 4 ... Nc6
5. Bb5

[5.Bf4!±]

- 5 ... a6
6. Bxc6+ bxc6



This swap has strengthened the Black position and made it easier to hold files at least half-closed.

7. Be3 Nf6?

[7...cxd4! 8.Bxd4 c5 9.Be5 d4 10.Ne2 ≠ Black has no development, but it doesn't matter, as their mighty centre cannot be got around.]

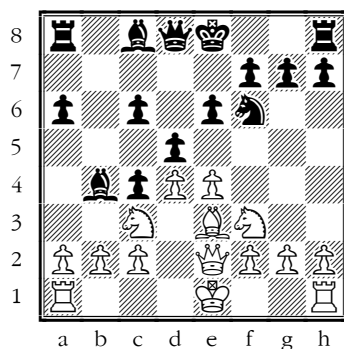
8. Qd3

[8.dxc5!± is awkward for Black]

- 8 ... c4

[8...cxd4!?]

9. Qe2 Bb4



→ TACTIC: pin

10. a3?

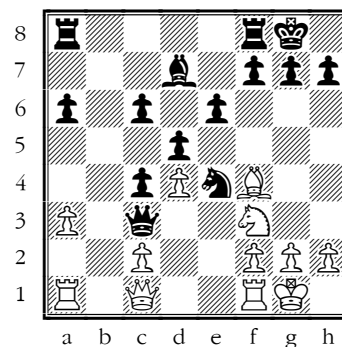
Forcing Black to carry out their threat!

[10.e5]

- 10 ... Bxc3+
11. bxc3 Nxe4
12. Bf4 Qa5

[12...Nxc3 is fine too]

13. 0-0 0-0
14. Qe3 Qxc3
15. Qcl Bd7



16. Bh6??

White must have had a rush of blood to the head.

[16.Re1]

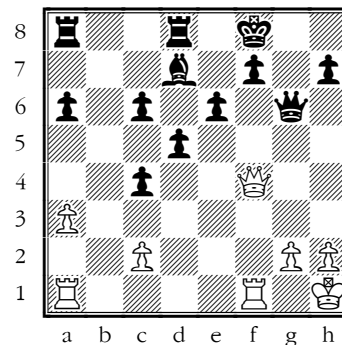
- 16 ... gxh6
17. Ne5

[17.Qxh6 f6 and White has no attack.]

- 17 ... Rfd8

[17...Rad8 18.Qxh6]

18. f3 Qxd4+
19. Kh1 Qxe5
20. fxe4 Qxe4
21. Qxh6 Qg6
22. Qf4 Kf8



That's probably not the right way to run
even 22...f6 is nice for Black,
daring White to take the pawn
and swap Queens

23. Qd6+ Ke8

Drawn again for want of time. I expect you are fretting over small differences early on, which are too small to affect the result of the game, and then getting very short of time, which does affect the result!

☞ Give time to moves that need it, but seeking perfection means you will run out of time.

½-½

R3: Godfrey, Benjamin vs. Sequeira, Alfie

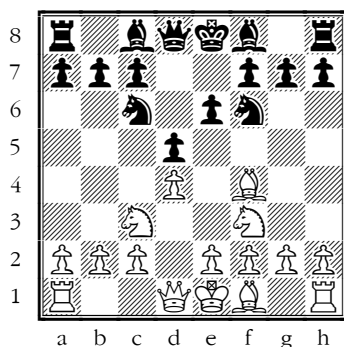
[A45 London System]

This came together nicely in the last round, when you played positively and soundly and got a good win to go home with.

1. d4 Nf6
2. Nc3 e6
3. Nf3 Nc6
4. Bf4

[4.e4]

4 ... d5



We have ended up in a blocked d-pawn position where both c-pawns are blocked by Knights. I ask both players the same question: along which file will you develop your Queen's Rook?

☞ The fourth, and often ignored, rule of the openings is: open a file for your Rooks

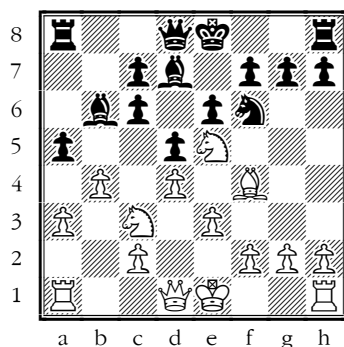
5. e3 Bb4
6. a3 Ba5

[6...Bxc3+ makes more sense; the bishop might get buried on b6]

7. b4

[7.Bb5 Bd7 8.Bxc6 bxc6 9.Ne5]

7 ... Bb6
8. Bb5 Bd7
9. Bxc6 bxc6
10. Ne5 a5



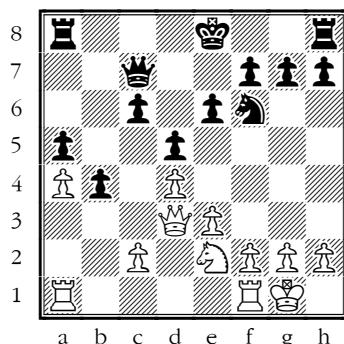
This is pretty good for White; Black's pieces lack scope.

11. b5??

Drops a pawn and releases Black's bishops

[11.0-0]

11 ... cxb5
12. Nxd7 Qxd7
13. Qd3 c6
14. 0-0 Bc7
15. Bxc7 Qxc7
16. a4 b4
17. Ne2



Quite a transformation!

17 ... 0-0

18. Rab1 Rab8

[18...c5! finally opens the c-file (and gets rid of the backward pawn)]

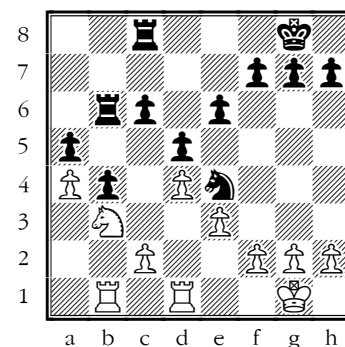
19. Qa6

[19.c3]

19 ... Qb6

[19...c5!]

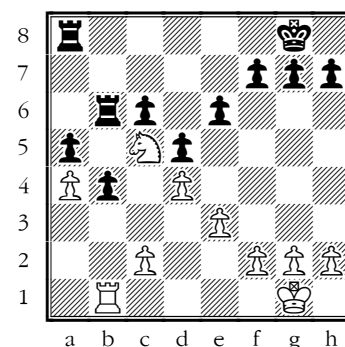
20. Qxb6 Rxb6
21. Nc1 Ne4
22. Nb3 Rc8
23. Rfd1?



➔ TACTIC: fork

[23.f3]

23 ... Nc3
24. Re1 Nxb1
25. Rxb1 Ra8
26. Nc5



That's a fine square for the Knight, and Black's rooks are still looking for a file to work on.

26 ... Re8!

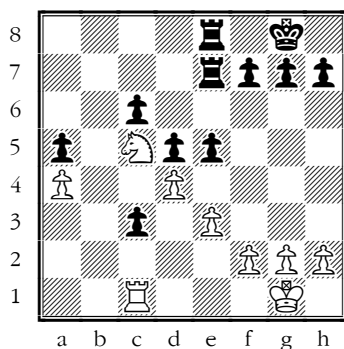
That will help!

27. Nd7 Rb7
28. Nc5 Rbe7
29. c3

[29.f4 doesn't really help: 29...f6!]

29 ... bxc3

30. Rcl e5!



31. Rxc3?

[31.dxe5 Rxe5 32.Rxc3 (32.Kf1 d4; 32.Nd3 Re4 33.Rxc3 Rxa4) 32...d4!]

31 ... exd4!

32. Rd3 dxe3

33. Rd1

[33.Kf1]

33 ... e2

34. Re1 Rb8

35. Nd3 c5

36. g3 c4

37. Nf4

37 ... Rb2

[37...d4! is crisp: 38.Rxe2 (38.Nxe2 d3) 38...Rxe2 39.Nxe2 d3 40.Nc3 Rb3]

38. Nxd5 Rd7

39. Nc3 Rdd2

40. Kg2 Rbc2

41. Nb1 Rd1

42. Rxe2 Rxe2

43. Nc3 Red2

44. Ne4 Rd4

45. Nc5 c3

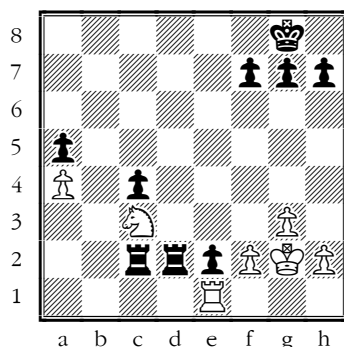
46. Nb3 c2

47. Nxa5 c1Q

48. Nb3 Rg1+

49. Kh3 Qh6#

0-1



Something must give.

Tom

“ I was sad for you today – you know what you are supposed to be doing but somehow it’s not working. I expect practice will work its magic in the end – not just playing chess, but doing puzzles too.”

R1: Bracey, Tom vs. Nukalapati, Sarthak

[C68 Ruy Lopez]

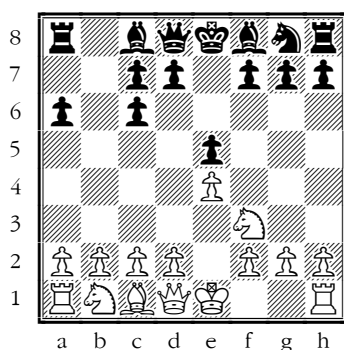
There were some minor points to note early on but the big events were some threats that you overlooked.

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 Nc6

3. Bb5 a6

4. Bxc6 bxc6



That's the worse capture.

[4...dxc6]

5. Nxe5

[5.d4 is best, ignoring the chance to grab the e-pawn, as you can't hang on to it.]

5 ... Qe7

[5...Qg5 is also OK]

6. d4

6 ... f6

[6...d6 is more often played:

7.Nxc6 Qxe4+ 8.Qe2 Qxe2+

9.Kxe2 Bb7 10.d5 Bxc6 11.dxc6

Ne7=]

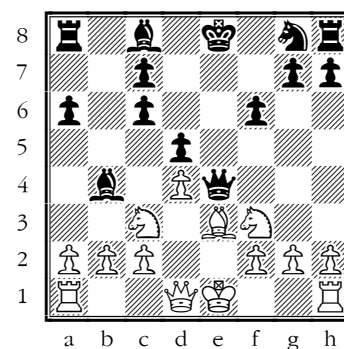
7. Nf3 Qxe4+

8. Be3 d5

9. Nc3

[9.Nbd2 is a little more accurate]

9 ... Bb4



10. Nd2?

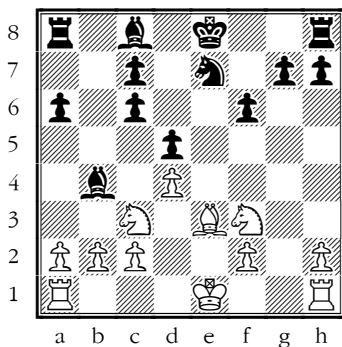
retreating and losing a pawn!

Even if the Queen went away to g6, this is still a worse spot for the Knight, so at best this is a one-move-deep idea that after it is defended turns out better for Black. As it happens, though, Black can make lots of trouble for you.

⚡ Threats, captures and checks can feel good but be bad for you.

[10.Qd2 and White has a whisper of a plus]

10 ... Qxg2
11. Qf3 Qxf3
12. Nxf3 Ne7

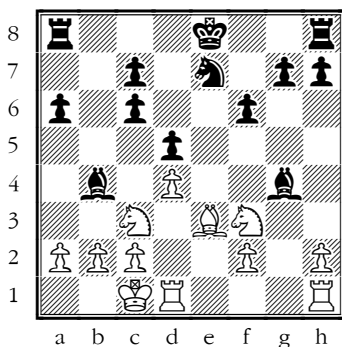


→ **TACTIC: pin**

13. 0-0-0?

Oddly, the best move might be 13.Nd2

13 ... Bg4



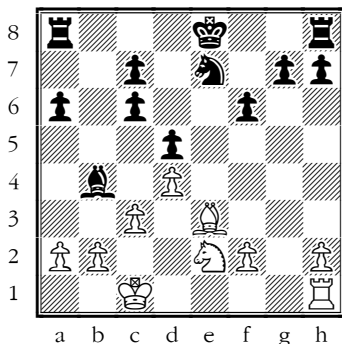
14. Ne2??

Digging the hole deeper!

→ **TACTIC: fork**

[14.Nh4]

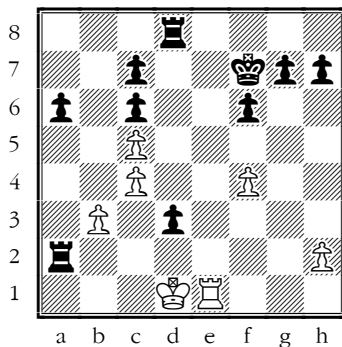
14 ... Bxf3
15. c3 Bxh1
16. Rxh1



White is a rook down with no active play.

16 ... Ba5

17. Nf4 Ng6
18. Ne6 Kf7
19. Nc5 Bb6
20. Nd7 Rad8
21. Nc5 Bxc5
22. dxc5 Ne5
23. f4 Nc4
24. Bd4 Rhe8
25. b3 Ne3
26. Kd2 Nf5
27. Bf2 d4
28. c4 d3
29. Rf1 Re2+
30. Kd1 Ne3+
31. Bxe3 Rxe3
32. Kd2 Re2+
33. Kd1 Rxa2
34. Re1



34 ... Ral+

[34...Rb8 mates]

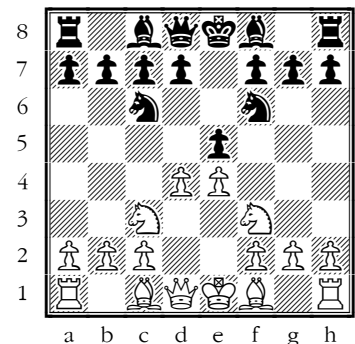
35. Kd2 Rxe1
36. Kxe1 g5
37. f5 h5
38. Kd2 g4
39. Ke1 d2+
40. Kd1 h4
41. b4 g3
42. b5 g2
43. b6 g1Q+
44. Kc2 Qc1+
45. Kb3 d1Q+
46. Kb4 Qb2+
47. Ka5 Qd1#

R2: Matthews,Rhys vs. Bracey,Tom

[C47 Scotch Four Knights' Game]

Again, you missed something important! You fought back well and hard but you had a mountain to climb, and in the end it was too much to recover.

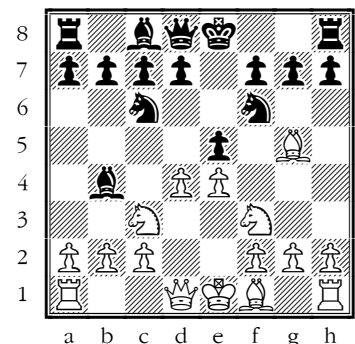
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Nc3 Nf6
4. d4



4 ... Bb4

[4...exd4 5.Nxd4 Bb4 is the right approach.]

5. Bg5



5 ... Nxe4??

Hard to understand how you missed what comes next!

☹ **Your opponent has a right to exist!**

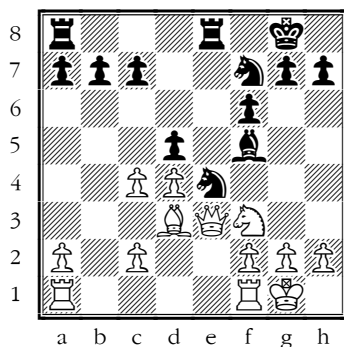
[5...exd4 is OK]

6. Bxd8 Bxc3+

[6...Nxc]

7. bxc3 Nxd8
8. Qd3 d5
9. Nxe5 Bf5
10. Qe3 0-0
11. Bd3 f6

12. Nf3 Re8
13. 0-0 Nf7
14. c4

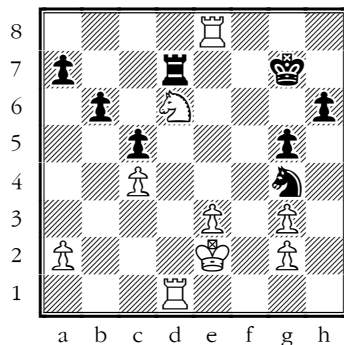


→ TACTIC: Discovery

14 ... Ng3
15. hxc3 Rxe3
16. fxe3 Be6
17. cxd5 Bxd5
18. Kf2 c6
19. Rh1 h6
20. c4 Be6
21. Rac1 Nd6
22. Rh5 Bg4
23. Rh4 Bf5
24. Bxf5 Nxf5
25. Rf4 Nd6
26. d5 c5
27. Nd2 g5
28. Rxf6 Nf7
29. Ne4 Re8
30. Kf3 Ne5+
31. Ke2 Ng4
32. Re6 Rf8
33. d6 b6
34. Rd1 Rd8
35. d7 Kf8?

Bad, but for a reason that was hard to see coming.

36. Nd6 Rxd7
37. Re8+ Kg7



→ TACTIC: discovery

38. Nf5+ Kf6?

[38...Kf7 39.Rxd7+ Kxe8 40.Rxa7]

39. Rxd7 Kxf5

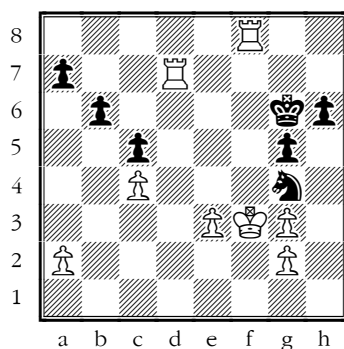
Stockfish tells me it's mate in 12 from here.

40. Kf3 Kf6

41. Rf8+

Have I got the moves right? If so, 41.Kxg4 looks best!

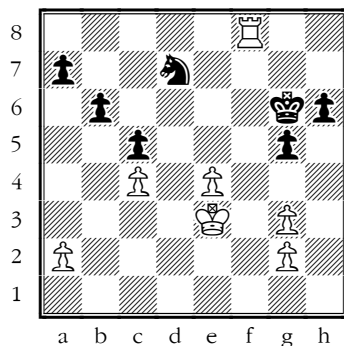
41 ... Kg6



→ TACTIC: fork

42. e4 Ne5+

43. Ke3 Nxd7



From losing a queen, You've got quite a bit of the way back, but it's still very tough; I don't think either player missed anything important for the rest of the game.

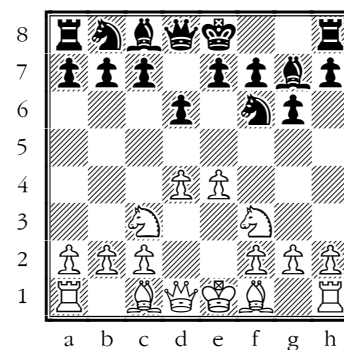
44. Rf1 a6
45. Kd3 Ne5+
46. Kc3 b5
47. Rf5 Nd7
48. Rd5 Nf6
49. Rd6 b4+
50. Kb3 Kf7
51. e5 Ne4
52. Rd3 Ke6
53. a3 bxa3
54. Kxa3 Kxe5
55. Ka4 Nd6
56. Rd5+ Ke6
57. Rxc5 Ne4
58. Rc6+ Ke5
59. Rxa6 Nxc3
1—0

R3: Bracey, Tom vs. Ryan, Tabitha

[B08 Pirc Defence]

You were a little on the back foot and keen to win back a pawn when you overlooked a back rank mate.

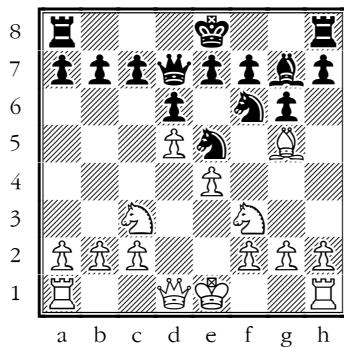
1. e4 d6
2. d4 Nf6
3. Nc3 g6
4. Nf3 Bg7



5. Bg5

[5.Be3 is an easy system to try; 4.Bg5 fits with 5.f4]

5 ... Nc6
6. Bb5 Bd7
7. d5 Ne5
8. Bxd7+ Qxd7



9. Qd2

[9.Nxe5 dxe5 10.f3 and White has much the better bishop.]

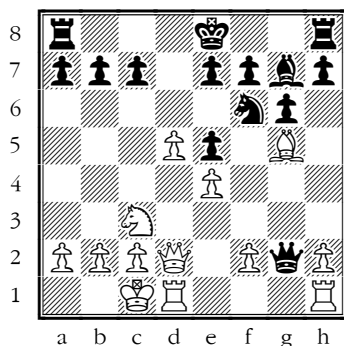
9 ... Qg4

10. 0-0-0

[10.Nxe5 Qxg2 11.0-0-0 dxe5 12.Rhg1 Qh3 13.Kb1]

10 ... Qxg2

11. Nxe5 dxe5

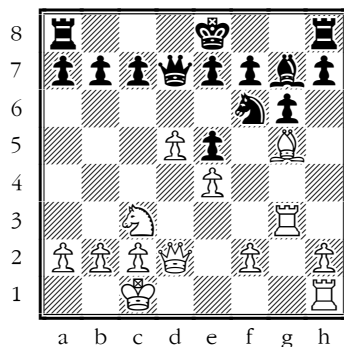


12. Rdg1

[12.Rhg1 or; 12.Qe3 would be better]

12 ... Qh3

13. Rg3 Qd7



White is a pawn down and needs some active plan.

14. Bh6?

Swaps a good bishop for a pretty duff one.

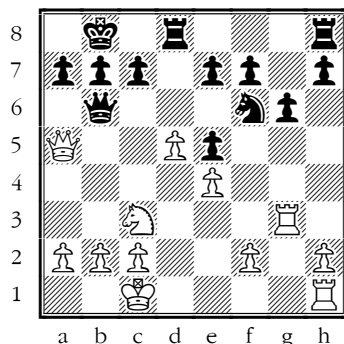
14 ... Bxh6

15. Qxh6 0-0-0

16. Qe3 Kb8

17. Qc5 Qd6

18. Qa5 Qb6



→ TACTIC: fork

Black correctly seeks a Queen swap.

19. Qa3

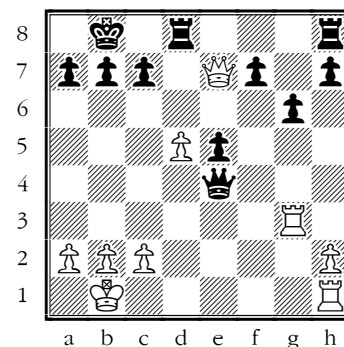
[19.Qxb6 was better]

19 ... Qxf2

20. Qxe7 Qf4+

21. Kb1 Nxe4

22. Nxe4 Qxe4



→ TACTIC: back rank mate

23. Qxf7

[23.Rc1 #3]

23 ... Qxh1+

0-1

“ Your cheerful and generous nature should not be allowed to spill over into your chess! You gave away pieces in all three games, so I can heartily recommend some exercises to get your eye in for these straightforward attacks and tactics.”

<http://exeterchessclub.org.uk/content/eight-queens-problem>

<http://exeterchessclub.org.uk/content/get-your-eye-basic-practice-noticing-attacks>

R1: Keay, Joshua vs. Ryan, Tabitha

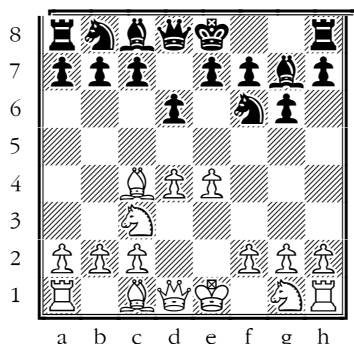
[B07 Pirc Defence]

I don't think you knew what to do against Black's system, but while that's confusing, there were a couple of bad misses in your thinking.

1. e4 d6
2. d4 Nf6
3. Nc3 g6
4. Bc4

Not a bad system

- 4 ... Bg7



5. Bg5

[5.Qe2 Nc6 6.e5 Nxd4 7.exf6 Nxe2 8.fxg7 Rg8 9.Ngxe2 Rxe7 10.Bh6 Rg8 11.0-0-0 is an amazing line; White is worse on paper but on the board their many pieces will coordinate better than Black's 11...e6 12.h4 Qf6 13.Ne4 Qe5 14.N2c3 d5 15.Bxd5! exd5 16.Nxd5 f5 17.Nef6+ Kf7 18.Rhe1 Qxe1 19.Rxe1 Be6 20.Nxc7 Rac8 21.Nxg8 Rxc7 22.Bf4 1-0 (22) Bagrationi, A (2485) - Skorchenko, D (2487) Dombai 2014

- 5 ... Nc6
6. d5

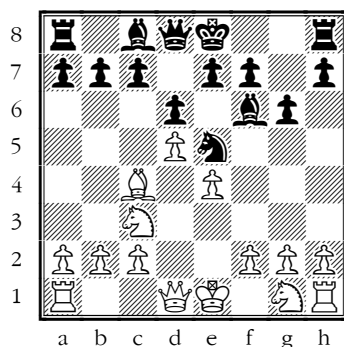
That's not kind to the view of your Bishop.

- 6 ... Ne5

7. Bxf6

[7.Be2]

- 7 ... Bxf6

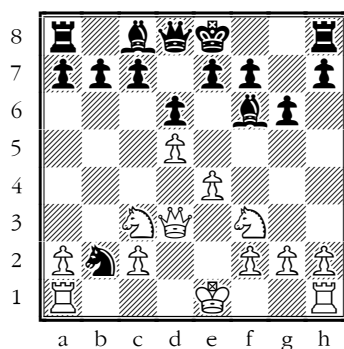


8. Nf3??

[8.Bb3]

- 8 ... Nxc4

9. Qd3 Nxb2?



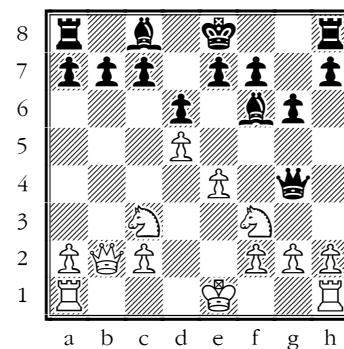
→ **TACTIC: fork**

☞ Loose pieces drop off, says John Nunn

10. Qb5+! Qd7

[10...c6]

11. Qxb2 Qg4



12. h3?

Having dug your way out of one hole, you jump down another!

[12.0-0]

- 12 ... Qxg2

[12...Qxe4+]

13. Rg1??

[13.Ke2]

- 13 ... Qxf3

14. Qb5+

[14.Rg3-2]

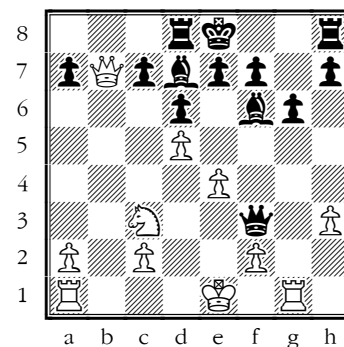
- 14 ... Bd7

15. Qxb7

[15.Qe2#5]

- 15 ... Rd8

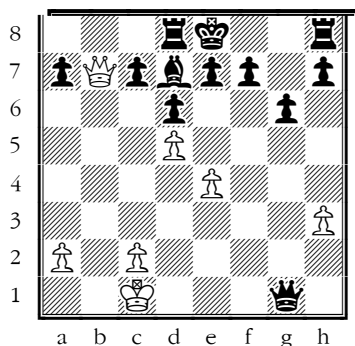
[15...Bxc3+]



16. Rd1??

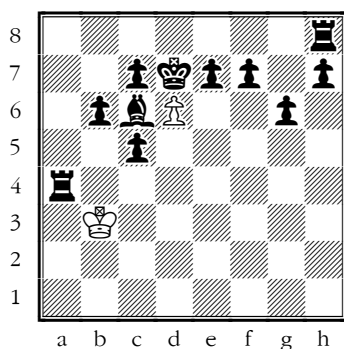
[16.Ne2]

16 ... Bxc3+
17. Rd2 Bxd2+
18. Kxd2 Qxf2+
19. Kcl Qxgl+



Black has been given a winning position.

20. Kb2 Qb6+
21. Qxb6 axb6
22. Kb3 Bxh3
23. a4 Ra8
24. c4 Bg2
25. Kb4 Bxe4
26. Kb5 Kd7
27. c5 dxc5
28. d6 Bc6+
29. Kc4 Rxa4+
30. Kb3



I can't follow the rest; the score gives Nh4 but 7.Bxf6 and Qxb2 removed the Knights!

... 0—1

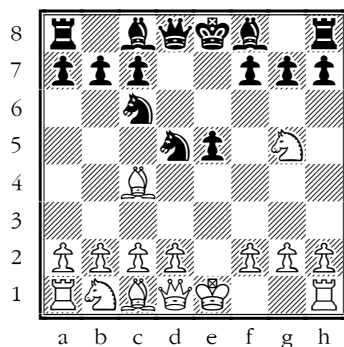
R2: Cummins, Thomas vs. Keay, Josh

[C57 Two Knights' Defence]

Another blunder, but not as painful as White's!

1. e4 e5

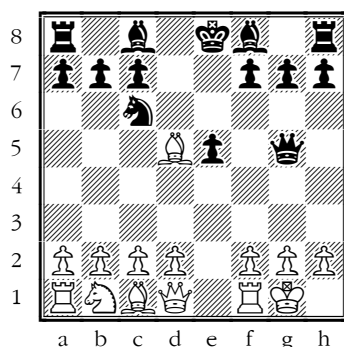
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. Ng5 d5
5. exd5 Nxd5?



6. 0-0?

[6.Nxf7!? and; 6.d4!? are both dangerous for Black, so try instead the 5...b5 line played by Benny and Nathan]

6 ... Qxg5
7. Bxd5



→ **TACTIC: discovery**

Black should step out of the way of the Bcl

7 ... Be6?!

[7...Qg6]

8. d4 Bxd5??

[8...Qf5!]

9. Bxg5 exd4

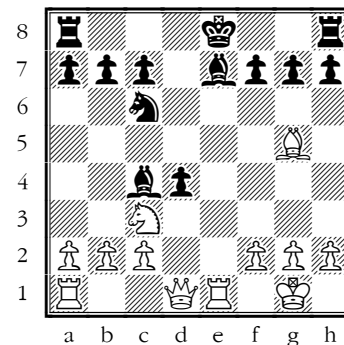
10. Re1+ Be7?

11. Nc3

[11.Bxe7 Nxe7 12.Qg4]

11 ... Bc4??

[11...Be6!!]



12. Na4

[12.Rxe7+! is more direct
12...Nxe7 13.Qxd4 Be6 14.Qxg7 Rg8 15.Qf6 Nc6 16.Re1]

12 ... 0-0

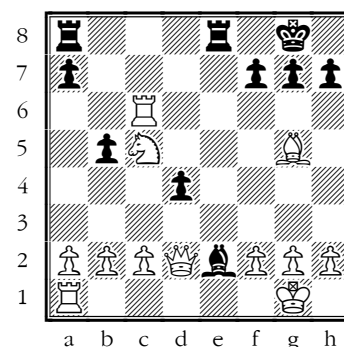
13. Rxe7 b5

14. Nc5 Rfd8

15. Rxc7 Re8

16. Rxc6 Be2

17. Qd2



White has a crushing advantage here, but I believe a back rank mate upset the expected result – Well done!

... 0—1

R3: Keay, Josh vs. Matthews, Rhys

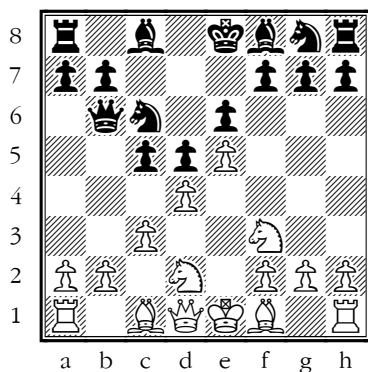
[C02 French Defence]

Black did all the right French things early on, and got a winning game, but took some terrible risks in picking fights with a smaller gang. So there was one glorious moment when you could have turned things around, and even after that you had chances to tie things up. Seize the carp!

1. e4 e6

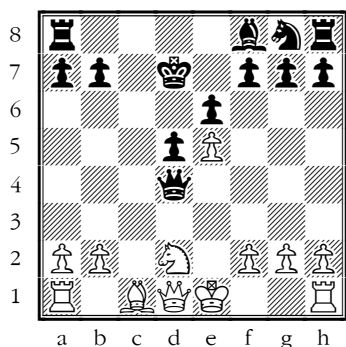
2. d4 d5

3. e5 c5
4. c3 Nc6
5. Nf3 Qb6
6. Nbd2



Now we see the variation where Black grabs the pawn

6 ... cxd4
7. cxd4 Nxd4
8. Nxd4 Qxd4
9. Bb5+ Bd7
10. Bxd7+ Kxd7



11. Qf3

White must race to develop and attack, or they will just lose the endgame

[11.0—0!]

11 ... Ke8

There was no harm in 11...Qxe5+first

12. Nb3

[12.Qe2]

12 ... Qxe5+

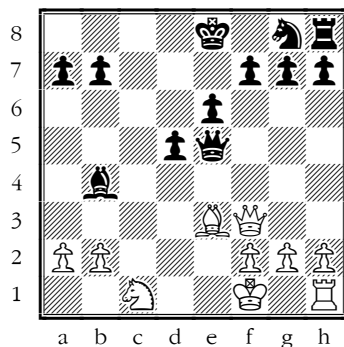
13. Be3 Bb4+

14. Kf1 Rc8

15. Rcl

[15.Bd4]

15 ... Rxc1+
16. Nxc1



Now Black is winning, the main thing is to avoid accidents, and that suggests a knight move and castling. Instead, Black keeps attacking.

⇒ This could be what Tarrasch called 'playing for the loss'!

16 ... Qxb2
17. Nd3 Qb1+
18. Bcl Ba3

[18...h5]

19. Ke2

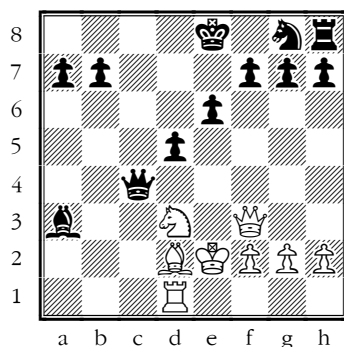
[19.g3]

19 ... Qxa2+

20. Bd2 Qc4

[20...Nf6]

21. Rd1



21 ... Bc5

is 'attacking' but it's really two against four. That's one fake attack too many!

→ TACTIC: skewer

22. Be3??

[22.Rcl wins for White]

22 ... Bxe3
23. Qxe3 Qa2+

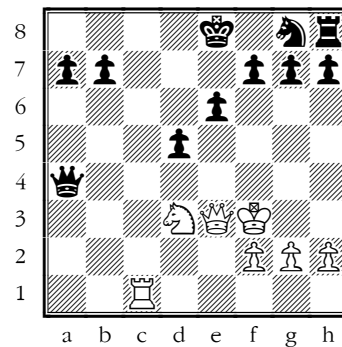
[23...Qe4]

24. Kf3

[24.Rd2]

24 ... Qa4

25. Rcl



25 ... Qb5

If you're ever in the same position, please get your king safe! 25...Ne7

26. Qxa7

[26.Rc8+ and White stands better as Black is tied up]

26 ... Qxd3+

27. Kf4

[27.Qe3]

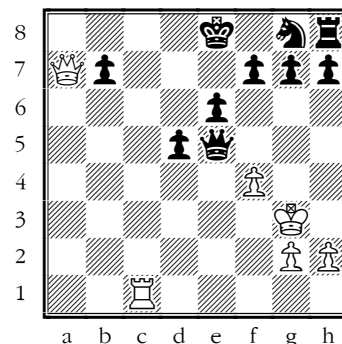
27 ... Qe4+

[27...e5+]

28. Kg3 Qe5+

[28...Qg6+; 28...Nh6]

29. f4



and Black won.

... 0-1

Roman

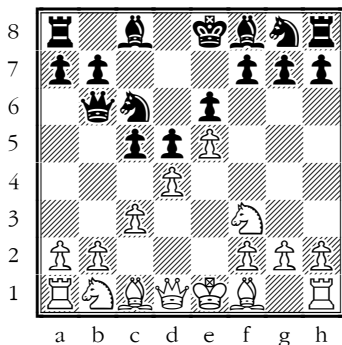
“ A bit more science against the French could have seen you go home with a perfect score! There are more things to learn about the openings and you could look deeper and more often for tactical chances, but that is advice that fits just about everybody all the time.”

R1: Mokhovik, Roman vs. NN

[C02 French Defence, Advance]

A bit of a home-made system against the French left you defending a poor position, when further errors are easy to make.

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
3. e5 c5
4. c3 Nc6
5. Nf3 Qb6



→ TACTIC: interference

6. Nbd2

This unusual move is effectively a gambit, as it reduces the defences of the d-pawn

- 6 ... Bd7

[6...cxd4 7.cxd4 Nxd4 8.Nxd4 Qxd4 grabbing the pawn accepts that White can nudge the King out of being able to castle 9.Bb5+]

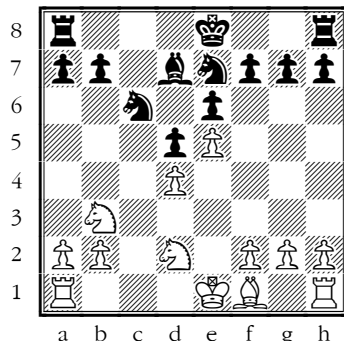
7. Qb3

[7.Nb3]

- 7 ... Qxb3

[7...cxd4]

8. Nxb3 cxd4
9. cxd4 Bb4+
10. Bd2 Bxd2+
11. Nfxd2 Nge7



→ TACTIC: discovery

This is about equal, but your next move allows Black to win a pawn after all.

12. Bb5

[12.Nf3]

- 12 ... 0-0

[12...Nxe5]

13. Nc5

That undefends d4

- 13 ... Bc8

14. b4

[14.Nf3]

- 14 ... Nxd4

15. Bd3 a5

[15...Nec6]

16. Rb1

[16.bxa5]

- 16 ... b6

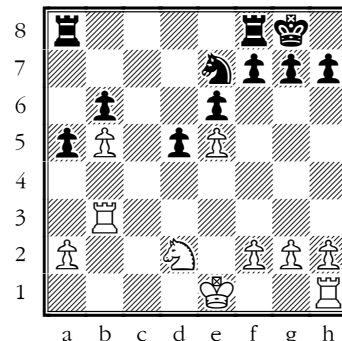
17. Ncb3 Nxb3

18. Rxb3 Ba6

[18...axb4]

19. Bxa6 Rxa6

20. b5 Raa8



Black is a clear pawn up, and it's passed, too. White needs to find some threats, fast.

21. a4

Too slow!

[21.Nf3]

- 21 ... Rac8

22. 0-0

[22.Ke2 In an endgame, you won't get mated, so use your King to fight!]

- 22 ... h6

23. f4 Nf5

24. Rd3 Rfd8

25. Nb3

[25.g4]

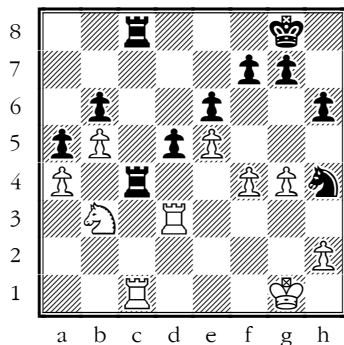
- 25 ... Rc4

26. g4 Nh4

27. Rcl

[27.Nd4]

- 27 ... Rdc8

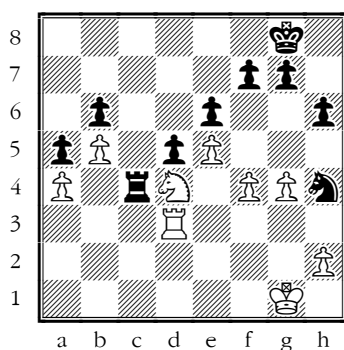


Things have got worse

28. Rxc4 Rxc4

[28...dxc4]

29. Nd4



→ **TACTIC: decoy**

[29.Rh3]

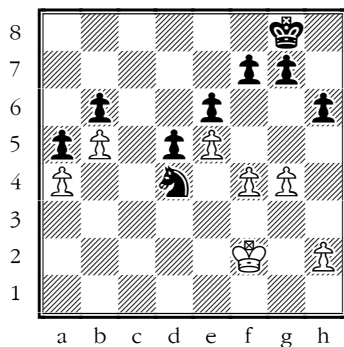
29 ... Rxd4

30. Rxd4

[30.Rc3]

30 ... Nf3+

31. Kf2 Nxd4



Black is winning

32. Ke3 Nb3

33. f5 Nc5

34. Kd4 Nxa4

35. fxe6 fxe6

36. Kd3 Nc5+

37. Kd2 Nb3+

38. Kc3 Nc5

39. Kd4 a4

40. Kc3 Nd7

41. Kb4 Nxe5

42. h3 0-1

R2: Ryan, Tabitha vs. Mokhovik, Roman

[D02 London System]

Some back-and-forth play settled down with Black pressing hard, and you won nicely in the end.

1. d4 d5

2. Nf3 Nf6

3. Bf4 Bg7

4. e3

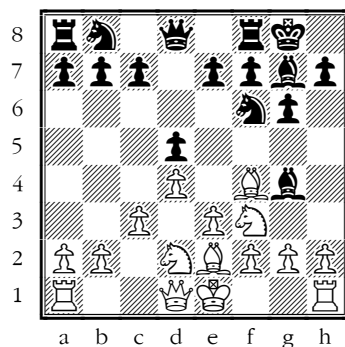
4 ... g6

[4...e6]

5. c3 Bg7

6. Nbd2 0-0

7. Be2



A solid position for both sides and it's about equal. It's not clear what either player should be trying to do.

7 ... Ne4

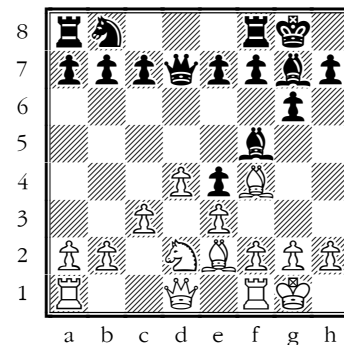
But that just leads to trouble.

I'd be happy to grab the Bishop pair with 7...Nh5

8. Nxe4 dxe4

9. Nd2 Bf5

10. 0-0 Qd7



→ **TACTIC: undermining**

[10...Nd7]

11. Be5

[11.g4 wins a pawn]

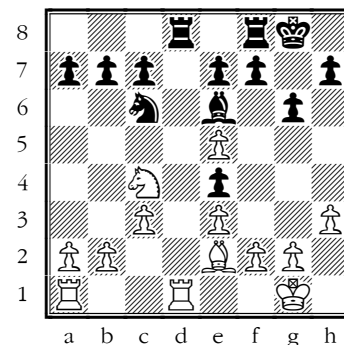
11 ... Bxe5

12. dxe5 Nc6

13. Nc4 Qxd1

14. Rfxd1 Rad8

15. h3 Be6



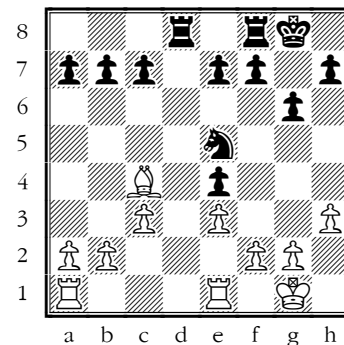
Now Black undermines White's forward pawn!

16. Re1

[16.Nd2]

16 ... Bxc4

17. Bxc4 Nxe5



18. Bd5

[18.Bb3]

18 ... Nd3

Have I got this position right?
18...Rxd5 was simple enough

19. Re2

[19.Bxe4]

19 ... Rxd5

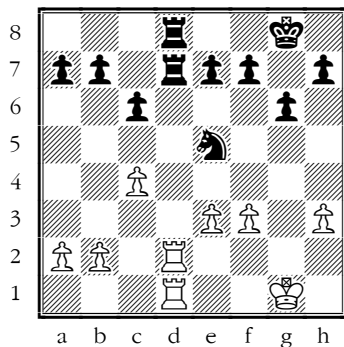
20. c4 Rd7

21. Rd2 Rfd8

22. f3 exf3

23. gxf3 c6

24. Rad1 Ne5



It's grim for White, but it's even worse with no pieces left to fight with, so White shouldn't have swapped everything off here.

25. Rxd7 Rxd7

26. Rxd7 Nxd7

27. Kf2 Nc5

28. b4 Na4

29. a3 b6

30. Ke2 0-1

R3: Lewis, Wynn vs. Mokhovik, Roman

[C47 Two Knights' Defence]

A blunder put you ahead early on. White did have one brief moment to turn things around, but happily they missed the chance!

1. e4 e5

2. Nf3 Nc6

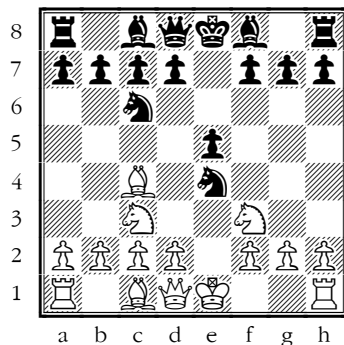
3. Bc4 Nf6

4. Nc3

[4.d4 or; 4.Ng5 are much better]

4 ... Nxe4

A standard trick to equalise.



5. Nxe5??

[5.Nxe4 is equal -;

5.0-0 is a gambit, if you like gambits 5...Be7! avoids any risks]

5 ... Nxe5

attacking the Bishop, and so winning a piece

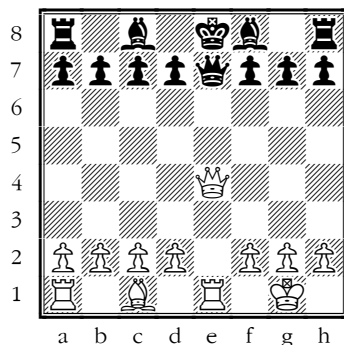
6. Nxe4 Nxc4

7. 0-0 Nd6

8. Qe1 Nxe4

9. Qxe4+ Qe7

10. Re1



[10.Qf3 White should keep Queens on]

10 ... d5??

→ TACTIC: discovery

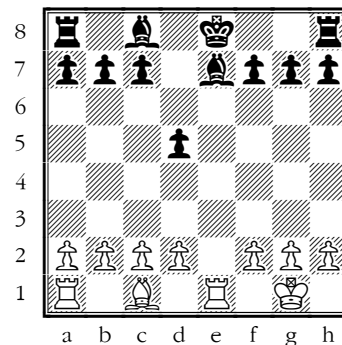
⇒ TIP: Look at every check...

[10...Qxe4! should win simply enough]

11. Qxe7+??

[11.Qa4+! discovers an attack from the Rook, winning the Queen.

11 ... Bxe7



The moment has passed, and there's not much more White can do.

12. d4 Bf5

13. Bg5 f6

14. Bf4 Rc8

15. Rac1 Kf7

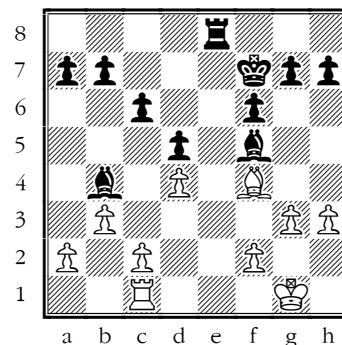
16. Re2 Rhe8

17. b3 Bb4

18. Rxe8 Rxe8

19. g3 c6

20. h3 Re1+!



Nice, forcing a swap

21. Rxe1 Bxe1

22. g4 g5

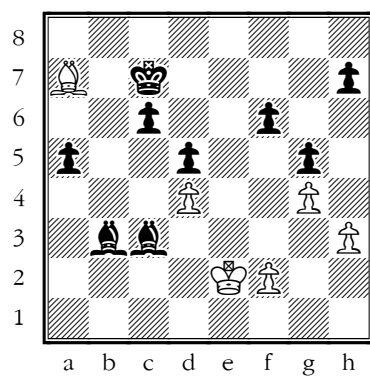
23. Bb8 Bxc2

24. Bxa7 Bc3

25. Kg2 Ke6

26. Kf3 Kd6

27. Ke3 Kc7
 27. Ke3 Kc7
 28. a4 b6
 29. a5 bxa5
 30. Ke2 Bxb3



0-1

All the tips:

- ☞ You also need a fourth set of systems to play when Black tries to dodge your main White opening..... 3
- ☞ I don't mind what you play as long as it has a name! 3
- ☞ The most important feature of a chess position – opening, middlegame and especially endgame – is the activity of the pieces (Michael Stean) 7
- ☞ If you're winning, swap off pieces (not pawns) 7
- ☞ If you're losing, swap off pawns (not pieces)..... 7
- ☞ Avoid being left with just your King if you stand worse 7
- ☞ TIP: centralise your pieces 8
- ☞ To take is a mistake (sometimes)..... 10
- ☞ You must take your opponent's threats seriously..... 11
- ☞ There are lots of systems against each 'dodging' defence, but your normal opening moves might not fit any of them. 12
- ☞ Forcing moves (threats, captures, checks) are the key to chess tactics..... 13
- ☞ If you stand worse, keep pieces on..... 14
- ☞ Backwards moves are the hardest to spot..... 15
- ☞ TIP: all players should know how to handle IQP positions from both sides..... 15
- ☞ TIP: Playing safe is dangerous! 17
- ☞ Rooks hate defending 17
- ☞ If you're losing, you have to throw the game out of its expected course by playing actively and making opportunities for mistakes. 18
- ☞ Pawns are the sappers of the chessboard, undermining defences. 19
- ☞ Activity and central control can compensate for a pawn..... 20
- ☞ As the pawn structure changes, so do the best places for your pieces, and indeed which pieces are best.... 21
- ☞ TIP: To take is a mistake 21
- ☞ There is no 'declining on principle' – it's either good for you or not. 23
- ☞ Every pawn move loosens the position, says Tarrasch 24
- ☞ If you're winning, stop trying to win - the best way you play when you're winning is very different! i.e. swap, control risks and win the endgame..... 25
- ☞ As usual, focussing on forcing moves like captures could have revealed this win to either player. 27
- ☞ Taking on g3 when White hasn't castled opens a file against the Black King..... 28
- ☞ TIP: choose openings that fit together in style. 28
- ☞ TIP: if you see a good move, hesitate: there may be a better one!] 30
- ☞ TIP: keep pieces on when you're losing; keep queens on when you play a gambit!] 30
- ☞ Attack where you have more space, where your pawns are pointing, and where your pieces can get to most easily. 31
- ☞ Some variations and some defences are easier to play for one side than the other, even if theoretically they're equal..... 32
- ☞ If you are winning, change to the swap-off-and-win-the-endgame plan..... 33
- ☞ Touch the pawns in front of your King only with infinite delicacy, says Alekhin. 34
- ☞ Some positions demand you play with more energy. 35
- ☞ Can you smell a tactic? Loose pieces, overworked pieces, and exposed Kings are all clues. 36
- ☞ Some threats are too powerful to be defended you have to see them coming and do something before they arrive..... 38
- ☞ If your opponent offers you a draw, try and work out why they think they are worse! – Nigel Short 39
- ☞ Get your burglar alarm serviced!..... 40
- ☞ TIP: you must know the ideas in the openings you play.] 41
- ☞ Opening lines favours the better-placed side, so sit tight when defending. 42
- ☞ Checks sometimes improve the position for the checked! 43
- ☞ A bit of practice will help you get your eye in for tactics and help avoid blunders. 44
- ☞ Playing safe is the right approach when you're winning 45
- ☞ Positions with fixed pawn formations are easiest to plan in..... 47
- ☞ If you are worse, defend carefully; if you are losing, you must take risks..... 49
- ☞ A good trap is where you set a trap with a good move, and your opponent has no path to advantage. 49
- ☞ Every pawn move loosens the position, says Tarrasch (again)..... 51
- ☞ Do learn how to play against White's less common openings..... 52
- ☞ Pick a system with a name, don't be satisfied with normal moves against Black's different defences..... 53
- ☞ An opening should be judged according to the prospects it offers to young ambitious Rooks, says Cecil Purdy 54
- ☞ Open lines favour the better-developed player..... 55
- ☞ Give time to moves that need it, but seeking perfection means you will run out of time. 56

- The fourth, and often ignored, rule of the openings is: open a file for your Rooks 56
- Threats, captures and checks can feel good but be bad for you 57
- Your opponent has a right to exist! 58
- Loose pieces drop off, says John Nunn 61
- This could be what Tarrasch called 'playing for the loss'! 63
- TIP: Look at every check... 66

Appendix: Opening vs. notes vs. from vs. previous vs. years

u14_20043.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2004	Openings: Old Stodge, Giuoco Pianissimo, Sicilian Defence, French Defence, Queen's Gambit, Queen's Pawn Game without c4, King's Gambit, Scotch Game and Gambit
u14_2005b.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2005	Openings: Two Knights', French Defence, Scotch Game, Queen's Game and Gambit, King's Gambit, Sicilian Defence, Old Stodge
u14_2006.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2006	Openings: Time-wasting, Italian Game & Old Stodge, French Defence, Queen's Gambit Declined
u14_2007.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2007	Openings: General Opening Principles, Ruy Lopez
u14_2008.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2008	Openings: Queen's Gambit, French Defence, Sicilian, Four Knights, Stonewall
u14_2009.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2009	Openings: General Principles, Old Stodge, Italian Game, Sicilian, Queen's Gambit, Ruy Lopez, Scandinavian Defence,
u14_2010.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2010	Openings: Old Stodge & London System, Double King-Pawn Opening, Semi-Open Games, Queen's Gambit, Unusual Openings
u14_2011.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2011	Openings: Petroff and Philidor Defences (and another rant about Old Stodge)
u14_2012.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2012	Openings: Bishop's Opening, and the Caro-Kann and King's Indian defences
u14_2013.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2013	Openings: Colle, Scandinavian, Danish, Hypermodern, QG Accepted&Slav
u14_2014.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2014	Openings: The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit
u14_2015.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2015	Openings: tips on Ruy Lopez, Two Knights' Defence, Philidor Defence, Queen's Gambit
u14_2016.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2016	
u14_2017.pdf U14 Jamboree games with comments 2017	Openings: tips on Old Stodge, Two Knights

[u14_2018.pdf](#)

U14 Jamboree games with comments
2018

Openings: tips on Old Stodge, King's Gambit, Colle, Queen's Gambit, Ruy Lopez, Playing Black in Queen's Pawn Openings, Sicilian

[u14_2019.pdf](#)

U14 Jamboree games with comments
2019

Openings: tips on Old Stodge, Colle, Meeting the Sicilian

Appendix: YouTube vs. videos

I keep pushing my little booklets but you can find things on YouTube:

1.e4 players: head for IQP positions and small space advantages

Alekhin Exchange Variation

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.c4 Nb6 4.d4 d6 5.exd6

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqKjRUTwk2o>

Pirc/Modern I50 Attack

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Be3

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHOZ65s-IY>

Sicilian Alapin-Sveshnikov

1.e4 c5 2.c3

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNILn33kAq8>

Caro-Kann Panov-Botvinnik Attack

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWLTjQ8LMeE>

French Monte Carlo Variation

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ce3lhH4CdAk&t=1000>

Scandinavian Main lines 2...Qxd5;

Panov/Monte

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qa5 (or 3...Qd6) 4.d4

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.c4 e6 (or c6) 4.d4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buSBC9wflas>

1.d4 players: play Nc3 Nf3 and Bg5 against most things

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Benoni Smyslov System

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 g6 6.Nf3 Bg7 7.Bg5

<https://youtu.be/9dokTA8p8tM?t=2982>

King's Indian Smyslov System

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 O-O (or d6) 5.Bg5

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_rY85p0ZQ

Dutch Nc3/Bg5 system

1.d4 f5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Bg5

??

Grunfeld Taimanov System

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Bg5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9rlsTqReYI>

Nimzo/Queen's Indian Leningrad/Hybrid systems

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Bg5

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.Nf3 Bb7 (or Bb4 or Be7) 5.Bg5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhwoiFpV-0Y>

If you find (or make) any more, let me know!