

# West Of England & South Wales Junior Team Tournament 2026

Bristol Grammar School, Sat 10<sup>th</sup> January 2026

TEAM	BOARD	NAME	R1	R2	R3	TOT
U11	1	Ben K	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
U11	2	Andy	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
U11	3	Toby	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
U11	4	Robert	1	1	0	<b>2</b>
U11	5	Todd	0	½	1	<b>1½</b>
U11	6	Avin	1	1	0	<b>2</b>
U11	7	Piran	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
U11	8	Alexander	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
		Total	3	3½	4	<b>1½</b>
U14	1	Shreyas	0	1	1	<b>2</b>
U14	2	George	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
U14	3	Yuan	1	1	0	<b>2</b>
U14	4	Adrian	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
U14	5	Varnika	1	½	½	<b>2</b>
U14	6	Ananya	1	½	1	<b>2½</b>
U14	7	Isaac	0	1	1	<b>2</b>
U14	8	James	1	1	0	<b>2</b>
		Total	4	5	5½	<b>14½</b>
U18	1	Viacheslav	0	1	1	<b>2</b>
U18	2	Joe	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
U18	3	Dan	1	0	1	<b>2</b>
U18	4	Toby	0	½	1	<b>1½</b>
U18	5	Ben D	1	1	0	<b>2</b>
U18	6	Oscar	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
		Total	2	2½	4	<b>8½</b>

U11				U14				U18			
A	Glamorgan B	11½	4	A	Glamorgan B	8½	5	A	Glamorgan B	3½	5
B	Wiltshire	6½	7	B	Wiltshire	1	6	B	Somerset	4	4
C	Somerset A	14	3	C	Somerset	9	4	C	<b>Devon</b>	<b>8½</b>	<b>3</b>
D	<b>Devon</b>	<b>10½</b>	<b>5</b>	D	<b>Devon</b>	<b>14½</b>	<b>3</b>	D	Bristol & Glos	14½	1
E	Bristol & Glos	14½	2	E	Bristol & Glos	21½	1	E	Glamorgan A	14½	1
F	Glamorgan A	17	1	F	Glamorgan A	17½	2				
G	Somerset B	10	6								

**Pairings**

U11

**Devon**

	<b>D.01</b>	<b>D.02</b>	<b>D.03</b>	<b>D.04</b>	<b>D.05</b>	<b>D.06</b>	<b>D.07</b>	<b>D.08</b>
Round 1	W E.01 1	B F.02 0	B F.03 0	B B.04 1	B F.05 0	W A.06 1	W B.07 0	B A.08 0
Round 2	B A.01 0	W C.02 0	W G.03 1	W E.04 1	W G.05 1/2	W G.06 1	B C.07 0	W B.07 0
Round 3	B C.01 0	W G.02 1	B E.03 0	B A.04 0	W B.05 1	B F.06 0	B C.08 1	W E.08 1

U14

**Devon**

	<b>D.01</b>	<b>D.02</b>	<b>D.03</b>	<b>D.04</b>	<b>D.05</b>	<b>D.06</b>	<b>D.07</b>	<b>D.08</b>
Round 1	B F.01 0	W A.02 0	W A.03 1	W F.04 0	W B.05 1	W A.06 1	B E.07 0	W E.08 1
Round 2	B B.01 1	W E.02 0	W C.03 1	B E.04 0	B E.05 1/2	B F.06 1/2	W B.07 1	W C.08 1
Round 3	W A.01 1	B C.02 1	B F.03 0	B B.04 1	B A.05 1/2	B B.06 1	W C.07 1	B F.08 0

U18

**Devon**

	<b>C.01</b>	<b>C.02</b>	<b>C.03</b>	<b>C.04</b>	<b>C.05</b>	<b>C.06</b>
Round 1	W E.01 0	B E.02 0	B D.04 1	B A.04 0	W A.05 1	W E.05 0
Round 2	B A.01 1	W D.02 0	B E.03 0	W E.04 1/2	B B.06 1	W D.06 0
Round 3	B B.01 1	W B.02 0	W A.03 1	W B.03 1	B D.05 0	B A.06 1

“ Not too much silverware to bring home this year, but I thought you all played with great heart and concentration, not a lot of rushing and I was pleased to see so many of you get at least half-marks in your games – and well done Ananya, who dropped just a single half-point. If anyone managed a result against the Bristol/Gloucester or Glamorgan teams (highlighted above from Robert, James and Dan) who swept the podium in all sections, congratulations! Very well done to the U14 and U18 teams, whose 3<sup>rd</sup> places would have earned some medals in previous years.”

## Key to Symbols

Symbol	Meaning	Symbol	Meaning	Symbol	Meaning
!!	brilliant move	--+	winning for Black	∞	unclear
!	good move	⏏	good for Black	∞	with compensation
!?	interesting move	⏏	better for Black	→	with an attack
?!	inaccuracy	=	equal	↑	with the initiative
?	mistake	±	better for White	↔	with counterplay
??	blunder	±	good for White	Δ	with the idea...
+	check	+−	winning for White	□	only move
++	double check				
#	checkmate				

I got the computer chess engine **Stockfish 17** to go through the games, to provide a blunder-check and a rough evaluation.

**Stockfish's comments are shown in grey type**

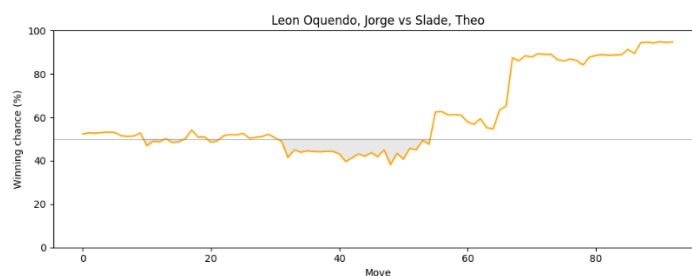
*Variations are mine and shown in blue italic type*

*Variation diagrams are also shown in blue.*

Stockfish comments on three sorts of move: inaccuracies, mistakes and blunders. I think you can ignore most of the 'inaccuracy' comments: I think it might take three inaccuracies to give you a losing game, and that only against perfect play by your opponent. The things that are losing your games are not inaccuracies but mistakes and blunders. So, I've put Stockfish's comments about inaccuracies in light grey type and I left the rest in a bold grey.

Evaluation charts are given on Lichess for each game in 'pawn's-worth' – above the line, White stands better, below, it's Black – yet it's not in equal steps, but in this 'fisheye' log scale – once you are a queen ahead, going 2 Queens ahead doesn't make much difference to the likelihood of winning – and you can get closer and closer to a certain win, but nothing is ever certain.

This year I used a Python script to spit out evaluation charts like this one:



Do read the notes on (and play through) other people's games – they will have experienced similar situations to you and perhaps responded better. In particular, look at games by players just a bit higher up the board order, or in an older or higher team.

I'm sorry I don't have all your games – but if you turn up any more, I will comment of course.

👉 **In fact, that's a standing invitation – if you want me to review any of your games, I will. For a proper check-up, I'd like about a dozen games, played at fairly slow time controls, then you can get a free chess MOT.**

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## THE VERDICT

Some old and some new themes emerged...

### Opening advice

In general:

What you are doing in the opening is mostly fine. You could stick closer to some general rules:

1. Develop Knights before Bishops, as a rule, (Knights have fewer useful squares to choose from) and King's-side before Queen's-side (so you can castle). That should mean you play Bb5/Bc4 before Nc3.
2. Finish development before attacking – make sure the Rooks can see each other.
3. All else being equal, move every piece once before you move any piece twice.
4. Your Rooks need an open file – or a half-open one to start with – so develop with that in mind.


#### ⤷ Automatic development is dangerous.

However, a few of you don't really have a lot of depth to your opening play – you should not just know a few moves to play against this or that opening, but have a proper understanding of what plans both sides should be following. Just getting your pieces out and castling isn't going to cut it at County level! You can quickly drift into trouble without realising it.

Especially if you play slow and safe – you give away the centre, or development, you won't be able to defend yourself when attacked. In fact:

#### ⤷ Playing safe is dangerous!

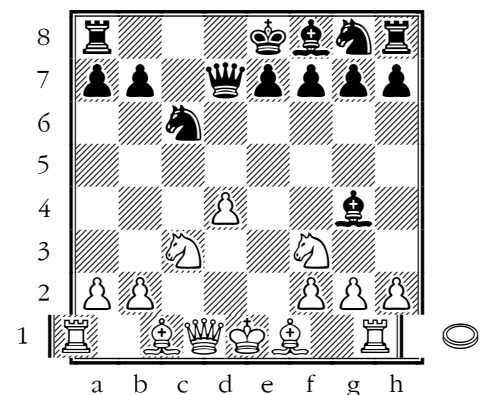
#### ⤷ Automatic development means you miss things

If you reach a position in the opening and you're not 100% sure you have seen it before and don't know the right move, then stop and think. You may miss one of those almost accidental opportunities that can happen when one side is not fully developed. A perfect example of this is in Shreyas' game from last year (right) .

A very interesting position has been reached, where Black seems ahead in development, but their King, facing open lines in the centre, is vulnerable to White's tactics. White actually played 8.Bb5, which is an OK move and gave White a small advantage.

But if I had tapped Shreyas on the shoulder and whispered, "White to play and win", he might well have found and played **8.d5!**, winning a piece.

Try and catch yourself making automatic developing moves, and you might be able to tap yourself on your own shoulder!



## Specific openings

B15 Caro-Kann, Tartakower Variation .....	11	Do2 London System.....	30
Do2 Queen's Gambit, Tchigorin Defence.....	12	E61 King's Indian Defence → London System .....	32
Do2 Queen's Gambit, Tchigorin Defence.....	13	B23 Sicilian Defence, Moscow Variation .....	33
C42 Vienna Game .....	15	A04 Nimzo-Larsen Attack.....	33
A23 English Opening, King's English.....	16	A21 English Opening, King's English .....	36
Co1 French Defence, Exchange Variation.....	17	B30 Sicilian Defence.....	37
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Co1 French Defence, Exchange Variation.....	20	B52 Sicilian Defence, Moscow Variation .....	39
Co0 French Defence .....	21	B22 Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation .....	40
Do0 Blackmar-Diemer Gambit Accepted: Ziegler Defense..	22	C45 Scotch Game.....	41
D38 Queen's Gambit, Ragozin Defence.....	23	B31 Sicilian Defence, Rossolimo Variation.....	42
B11 Caro-Kann, Two Knights' Variation .....	24	B10 Caro-Kann Defence, Exchange Variation .....	44
C57 Two Knights' Defence, Ulvestad Variation.....	25	B12 Caro-Kann Defence, Advance Variation.....	45
Bo8 Pirc Defence, Classical Variation.....	26	E20 Nimzo-Indian Defence.....	46
B20 Sicilian Defence .....	28	B23 Sicilian Defence, Closed Variation .....	47
A40 Van T'Kruij's Opening.....	29		

The level of openings erudition has shot up since COVID, I believe, and you can easily find a YouTube video promising to teach you the secrets of a new opening system in 10 minutes. Maybe not everything in 10 minutes, but there are much deeper treatments too – I recommend in particular the chess channels <https://www.youtube.com/@HangingPawns> and <https://www.youtube.com/@MoltonChess>. And there is always <https://www.youtube.com/@devonjuniorchess>

<b>Sicilian Defence</b>	<b>7 games</b>
This is a fine Grandmaster defence, perhaps the best to play for a win, maybe not so easy to play as Black at amateur level. The systems you are choosing as White – the Closed, Alapin and Moscow – are good choices.	
<b>Caro-Kann Defence</b>	<b>4 games</b>
A very popular defence at the moment; solid but with some asymmetry, and perhaps enough to pursue a win – but it's slow and rather subtle – not a great choice for juniors.	
<b>French Defence</b>	<b>3 games</b>
This is a very safe and practical defence at amateur level and I believe often easier to play with Black than White. The Exchange Variation is not a very challenging system to use against it – Black will usually feel some relief – unless White follows up with c4, creating an unbalanced IQP position.	
<b>Queen's Gambit</b>	<b>3 games</b>
Safe but plenty of flexibility about how to go forward – one of the great opening systems of chess. I guess these days the top players use more or less any opening, but when I was learning about openings, chess was dominated by the Ruy Lopez, Sicilian, Nimzo-Indian and ... the Queen's Gambit. I still think these are the openings most likely to last you all the while you play chess – the London system, not so much.	
<b>1.e4 e5 systems</b>	<b>3 games</b>
I rather like the Scotch Game for White; you get an open game with free development and chances to advance on the King's-side. You also get the practice in spotting tactics which some of you sorely need!	
<b>English Opening</b>	<b>2 games</b>
I have played Hypermodern openings for both sides for a lot of my own games, but I have a feeling that you shouldn't do that, and I shouldn't have done it either. I had lots to say about this in 2025, which I won't repeat, but you should read and heed!	

## 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: pin..... 12	→ TACTIC: mate..... 21	→ TACTIC: net..... 30
→ TACTIC: pin..... 13	→ TACTIC: mate..... 21	→ TACTIC: fork..... 32
→ TACTIC: undermine..... 14	→ TACTIC: disco..... 24	→ TACTIC: fork..... 34
→ TACTIC: fork..... 14	→ TACTIC: outnumbered..... 24	→ TACTIC: discovery..... 36
→ TACTIC: loose pawn..... 15	→ TACTIC: fork..... 25	→ TACTIC: fork..... 36
→ TACTIC: fork..... 15	→ TACTIC: skewer..... 25	→ TACTIC: then..... 37
→ TACTIC: fork..... 15	→ TACTIC: fork..... 25	→ TACTIC: mate..... 38
→ TACTIC: net..... 16	→ TACTIC: interference..... 26	→ TACTIC: skewer..... 39
→ TACTIC: undermine..... 17	→ TACTIC: pin/skewer..... 26	→ TACTIC: pin..... 40
→ TACTIC: fork..... 19	→ TACTIC: skewer..... 26	→ TACTIC: net..... 41
→ TACTIC: mate..... 19	→ TACTIC: pin..... 26	→ TACTIC: mate..... 44
→ TACTIC: undermine..... 20	→ TACTIC: outnumbered..... 27	→ TACTIC: fork..... 49
→ TACTIC: pin..... 20	→ TACTIC: fork..... 27	
→ TACTIC: loose piece..... 21	→ TACTIC: not a pin!..... 29	

☞ **Knowing all the tactics won't help if you don't look for them.**

### Blunder-proofing

To be fair, most of your mistakes this year were a bit deeper than your opponents' – you might have missed a two- or three-mover, while opponents were making some one-move clangers. But for the record:

TL;DR:

- (1) **do puzzles** (slowly and carefully) to learn tactical patterns — doing more easy ones and getting them all right is more important than doing puzzles any faster or harder;
- (2) on each turn, look **all round the board** for **checks and captures** (this move and next) that might add up to a tactic;
- (3) get into the habit of **checking your move** before playing it;
- (4) get these good thinking habits bedded in by playing **slow games** (speed up later)

☞ **STL; ADR: practice not blundering.**

The good news is that you can reduce the blunder rate in your games, and you do it by:

1. **SOLVING**. Making sure you are sharp tactically — that you know all the tactical **patterns** and can work out the mechanism — by doing regular tactical **puzzles**. Try and do puzzles that don't have a time limit and commit to a move only once you're sure you have seen all that there is to see. (Concentrate on 'how many can I get completely right in a row' not 'how many puzzles can I guess the right move for 5 minutes'. In the days of books, I used to say, write down all the variations before looking up the answer.)
2. Knowing enough tactical patterns is not the whole story. The puzzles you are offered online are perfect for developing your tactical ceiling (what's the hardest you can ever do when studying) but not so good for raising your tactical floor (what's the simplest you still miss in a game), for which you need to look at easier puzzles but repeat them. A good book for such drills is something like Hays' [Winning Chess Tactics](#), or the endgame exercises from [Thomas Willemze](#), or the Woodpecker Method.
3. **LOOKING**. In a game, you also have to **check for blunders** — yours and your opponents', before you decide on a move. Always **look for both sides**.
4. **Look twice**: once after your opponent moves (*what are they up to?*) and once after you move (*what am I about to let them do?*). I often hear: *I saw what was wrong with the move, the moment after I played*

*it!* Your task is to bring that moment of realisation a second or two earlier, before you commit to the move!

5. Always look at **forcing moves** – checks and captures — which are the easiest sort of moves to analyse and often contain tactical treasure. As Purdy says, “*Examine moves that smite!*”
6. And look **all around the board** — not just at the bit that was most recently busy.
7. SLOWING. I wonder if another reason you miss things is because you sometimes move **too fast**. (Again, that is a very familiar finding.) Some blunders happen with a move that a player had thought about for **a few seconds**, and I’d be surprised if a few more moments’ thought wouldn’t save you some embarrassments in your games. You have to **practice not blundering** — by playing slowly and carefully, and getting into the habit of checking your moves before playing them — you will become more careful and can then speed up.
8. This sort of care cannot be practised when playing blitz and it is not easy to do in rapidplay games — so I suggest you start playing some **‘classical’ time control games** or at least slower rapid games, or even correspondence games and using as much time as you need. It’s easier to add speed to your game once you are careful, then you can still be careful while still playing quickly. (Think about how we learn to play music, or drive a car — slowly and carefully first!) Playing slowly also gives you the chance to look for hidden threats and to find the most accurate move.
9. Use all your time — or, aim to **use most of your time in most of your games**. Some games I see that go on for 30-40 moves, but the players **still had more than half their time left**. That’s OK for games you win, but if you lose...There are no extra points for having time left at the end of the game!
10. A useful habit to get into is to make yourself **choose between two moves**. Rather than *think of a move then ask yourself if it’s OK*, think about two or more moves, and try and work out which one might be the best, and why. I hope this will open your eyes to more opportunities as well as threats against you. It does take more time!

Coaches often quote Emanuel Lasker:

*“When you see a good move — look for a better one!”*

[I’m not sure Lasker ever said that, but Ponziani did.]

You don’t get rid of blunders overnight, but you should aim to get the rate down from one in every 10 moves to one in 20, one in 30 and so on. If you have access to a computer opponent (e.g. online bot), play games where all you are trying to do is not blunder — aim for 15 moves without a blunder, then 25, 35... — and stop the game the moment you miss something and start another.

And once you get rid of one-move blunders, you can work to eliminate two-movers and calculation errors.

**See also:**

[YouTube short](#)

[YouTube video](#)

[Blunders2019 slideshow](#)

## Endgame advice

➤ When you are defending in the middlegame, swap off your opponent's strong pieces

➤ But when you are behind in material, then you should keep pieces on

...and try and make difficulties for your opponent.

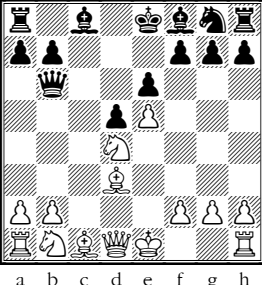
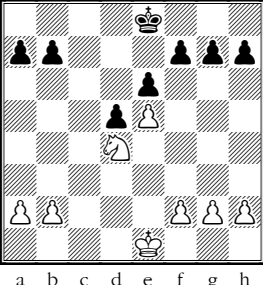
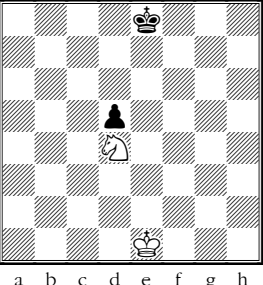
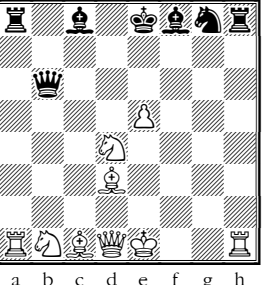
“ I say this every year, but every year our players (and our opponents) don't do it! ”

➤ When you are ahead on material, you should swap pieces off

...and deny your opponent any chance to trip you up.

Just to emphasise the point:

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Qb6 6.Bd3!? cxd4 7.cxd4 Nxd4?? 8.Nxd4

			
<p>Black has fallen for an ancient trap (8...Qxd4?? 9.Bb5+) so White is winning. But <u>with so many pieces still on the board, an accident can happen.</u></p>	<p>All the pieces get swapped off: <u>White wins without difficulty</u></p>	<p>All the pawns <u>and</u> pieces get swapped off: <u>White can no longer win</u></p>	<p>Only the pawns get swapped off – looks like chaos! and an <u>accident can happen.</u></p>

The rules for swapping off pawns are complementary: if you are losing then you should swap off pawns because if your opponent is left with simply an extra minor piece they can't force a win; similarly, if you have extra material then you may need pawns on both sides of the board in order to win.

## All the tips:

- In fact, that's a standing invitation – if you want me to review any of your games, I will. For a proper check-up, I'd like about a dozen games, played at fairly slow time controls, then you can get a free chess MOT. .... 3
- Automatic development is dangerous. .... 5
- Playing safe is dangerous!..... 5
- Automatic development means you miss things..... 5
- Knowing all the tactics won't help if you don't look for them. .... 7
- STL; ADR: practice not blundering. .... 7
- When you are defending in the middlegame, swap off your opponent's strong pieces ..... 9
- But when you are behind in material, then you should keep pieces on..... 9
- When you are ahead on material, you should swap pieces off ..... 9
- You must fight for the centre – either occupy it or keep it under restraint..... 11
- Always expect your opponent to play the best reply .. 12
- One of the biggest differences between top players and the rest of us is their dynamism..... 13
- "Some part of a mistake is always correct" – Saveilly Tartakower ..... 13
- When you set up your position in the opening, do think about where your Rooks are going to go. .... 13
- Exchanges are never neutral..... 14
- Think about what your opponent wants to do – and think about how to stop it. .... 15
- Players often rely on just a few ideas without considering enough options. .... 16
- These very slow hypermodern openings have just as much theory and are just as dangerous as the mainstream 1.e4 and 1.d4 openings, and you really need a proper worked-out system to play against them. .... 16
- If you see the clues for a winning tactic, think as long as you need..... 17
- Coordination is a difficult part of the game to get the hang of, but you really notice when you don't have it!. 18
- There's no such thing as an equal exchange ..... 19
- Change gear once you are winning. .... 20
- Don't encourage your opponent to make a good move! ..... 20
- "Never miss a check – it might be mate!" ..... 21
- Chess is a team game..... 22
- In the opening, I would always like to know what your plans are for opening a file for your Rooks ..... 23
- Bishops work best if they are on the opposite-coloured squares of their Pawns..... 23
- Doubled Rooks on the seventh – "enough to frighten you to death" (Marshall) – certainly enough to force a win. .... 24
- Develop, swap and win the endgame. .... 25
- If you are losing, you have to look for chances to arrange an accident..... 26
- Do find yourself a variation that makes sense to you and learn it! ..... 27
- You must use your pieces as a team. .... 28
- I can't help feeling your White opening needs more punch! ..... 29
- "An opening system should be judged on the prospects it offers to ambitious young Rooks" – Cecil Purdy..... 31
- Playing safe is dangerous ..... 32
- Sam Shankland's rule: look twice at the move you want to play but think you can't! ..... 34
- There is always danger early in the game when your King hasn't castled. .... 37
- Good development must be completed..... 38
- Positions with material imbalance are hard to judge. ... 41
- Picking the right plan is hard to do – but there's probably examples from top games that you could use..... 43
- In many systems and defences for Black, the second player would like to develop the king side first and castle, so often the last piece to be developed is the bishop on c8. This can often be an awkward piece to find a good home for. So, when deciding how to set out your stall as White, have a think about what Black might like to do with that Bishop, and see if you can stop it!..... 44
- You cannot allow your opponent to dominate the centre of the board. .... 47
- Undefended pieces should always make your antennae twitch! ..... 48
- Only turn on a chess engine to check your conclusions ..... 51

## THE GAMES:

I got rather fewer score sheets this year, which was a shame.

As always, could we have all the headings on the scoresheets filled in, please?

And some of your handwriting was pretty rough....

“ N.B. I couldn't decipher every move of every game, and some moves were clearly missed out or incorrect, so the moves analysed may not have been the ones you played.”

You can play through the games at

<https://lichess.org/study/VqWMI5J7>

or

<https://devonjuniorchess.co.uk/content/jamboree-games-2026> .

The best way to use this booklet may be to use it alongside the playthrough versions of the games online. The Lichess study should also give you the games looking at the position from your side of the board.

U14

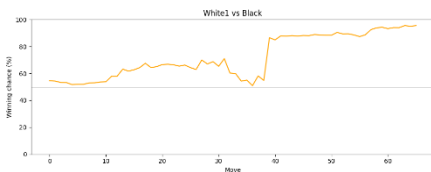
### James Darlington

“ I'm sad not to have any of your games, not even the start of them – it's not a bad idea to be in the habit of recording what you can and looking at it afterwards. If you have some other games written down (or recorded online), I'd be pleased to look at them and offer some tips.”

### Isaac Simmons

“ A nice couple of wins and ... one to learn from! ”

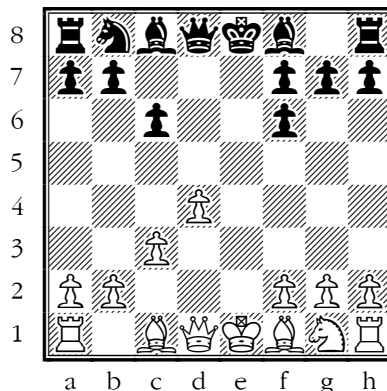
**Mahajan, Prakul - Simmons, Isaac**  
B15 Caro-Kann, Tartakower Variation



“ Nothing terribly wrong with this game but it was a bit like the horseshoe nail that eventually cost a kingdom... Moving your c-pawn to c5 on move 6 tempted forward the White pawn centre, which led to you losing a pawn, which leads to you trying to grab the pawn back, but you then

found yourself in a deadly pin.”

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4  
4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6  
6.c3**



[6.Bc4 Qe7+!? 7.Qe2 Be6 8.Bxe6 Qxe6]

#### 6...c5?!

That pawn should have been left where it was and the move even contains the seeds of your defeat. With the pawn on c6, White's centre is under some restraint but on c5 it just tempts it forward.

☞ **You must fight for the centre – either occupy it or keep it under restraint.**

[6...Bd6± 6...Bf5±]

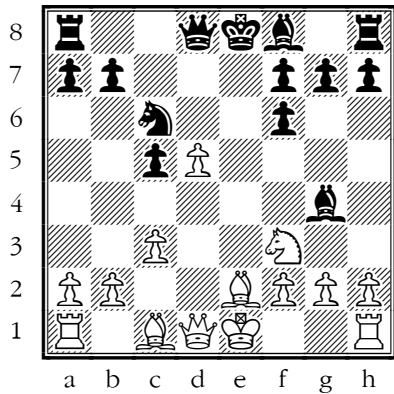
#### 7.Nf3 Bg4?!

Inaccuracy. Be7 was best.

#### 8.Be2

[8.Bb5+ Nd7 9.o-o± (9.h3±)]

#### 8...Nc6 9.d5

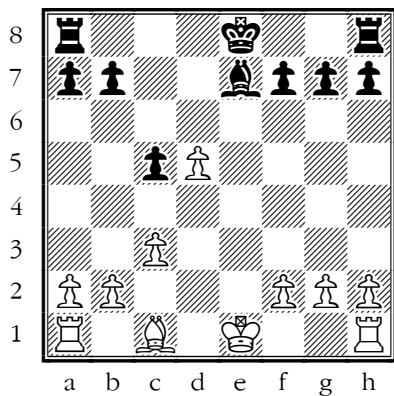


### 9...Ne5?

This loses a pawn to a three-move sequence that shouldn't have been too hard to calculate.

[9...Ne7]

10.Nxe5 Bxe2 11.Qxe2 fxe5  
12.Qxe5+ Qe7 13.Qxe7+ Bxe7



14.0-0

[14.Ke2!]

14...0-0?

Mistake. Kd7 was best.

[14...Kd7! With the Queens and some minors swapped off, there's little danger of checkmate, so you can keep your King centralised and active for the end game.]

15.Bf4 Rfd8 16.Rad1?!

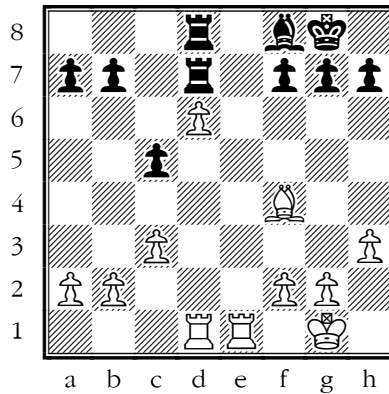
Inaccuracy. Rfd1 was best.

16...Rd7 17.d6?!

Inaccuracy. Rfe1 was best.

17...Bf8 18.Rfe1 Rad8

19.h3

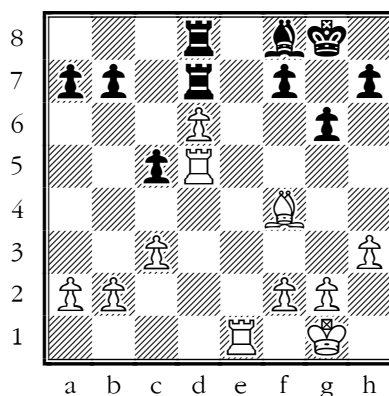


### 19...g6?!

Inaccuracy. f6 was best.

[19...f6 20.Rd5 b6 21.Kf1 Kf7= And it's up to White to show if they can make any progress. Stockfish dismisses this as a draw(!), it seems because the White pieces are tied to the defence of the d-pawn.]

20.Rd5



➔ TACTIC: pin

20...Bxd6??

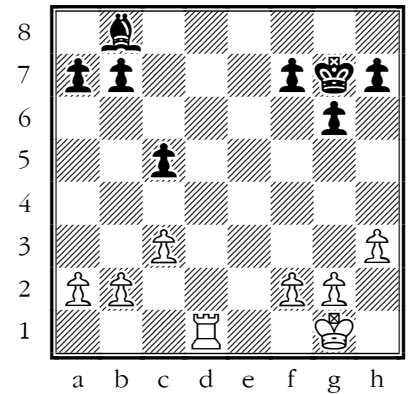
Blunder. b6 was best.

I'm sure you were delighted to think you could get the point back, but this move walks into a pin. White's reply wasn't so hard to guess.

👉 Always expect your opponent to play the best reply

21.Red1! Bxf4 22.Rxd7 Rb8

23.Rd8+ Kg7 24.Rxb8 Bxb8

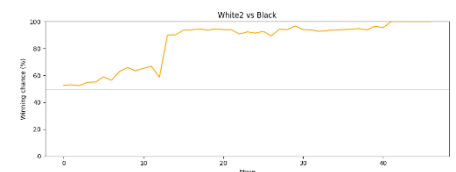


Being an exchange down isn't always too bad, but here the Rook can boss around the Bishop. There's not much you can do for the rest of the game.

25.Rd7 b6 26.Rb7 Be5  
27.Rxa7 b5 28.Rb7 b4  
29.cxb4 Bxb2 30.bxc5 Bd4  
31.c6 Be5 32.c7 Bxc7  
33.Rxc7 h5

1-0

Simmons, Isaac - Mistry, Tulsu  
D02 Queen's Gambit, Tchigorin Defence



“ After the very generous gift from your opponent on move 7, you were presented with few problems and made no mistakes.”

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3

This is not a bad way to approach the Queen's Gambit, particularly if Black is likely to reply:

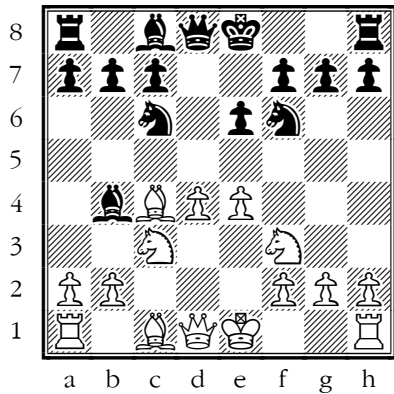
2...Nc6?!

This defence take a bit of study to

3.c4 dxc4 4.e4 e6?!

Inaccuracy. Bg4 was best.

5.Bxc4 Bb4+ 6.Nc3 Nf6?!



Inaccuracy. Nge7 was best.

**7.Bg5?!**

Inaccuracy. O-O was best.

→ **TACTIC: pin**

*[7.o-o!? This certainly doesn't look best because it drops a pawn, but Stockfish thinks having the Bishop pair and getting on with development is worth at least a pawn. 7...Bxc3 8.bxc3 Nxe4 9.Re1 Nd6 10.Bd3± Black's position is cramped and prospectless*

⇒ One of the biggest differences between top players and the rest of us is their dynamism

]

**7...Ng4??**

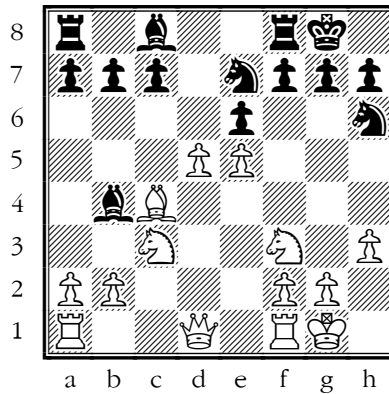
Blunder. h6 was best.

A simply amazing error by Black. I often quote:

⇒ "Some part of a mistake is always correct" – Saveilly Tartakower

...but I can't even guess why Black would want to play this move.

**8.Bxd8 Nxd8 9.o-o o-o  
10.e5 Nc6 11.h3 Nh6 12.d5 Ne7**



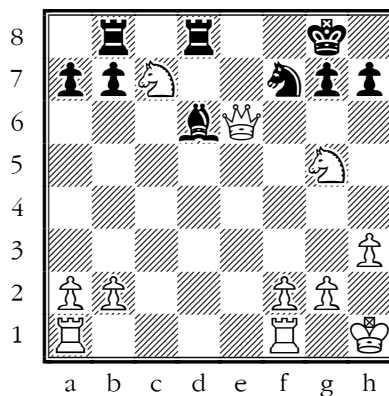
**13.Kh1**

*[Not played, but the score makes no sense with Nb5]*

**13...exd5 14.Bxd5 Nxd5  
15.Nxd5 Be7 16.Nxc7 Rb8  
17.e6 Rd8 18.Qb3**

*[Qc4]*

**18...Bd6 19.exf7+ Nxf7  
20.Ng5 Be6 21.Qxe6**



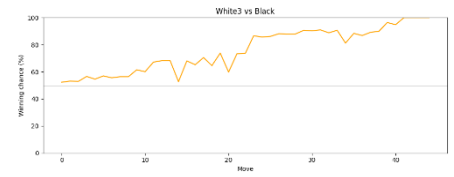
**21...Re8?**

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Rf8 was best.

**22.Qxf7+ Kh8 23.Nxe8 h6  
24.Qxg7#**

1-0

Simmons, Isaac - Parshall\*, John  
D02 Queen's Gambit, Tchigorin Defence



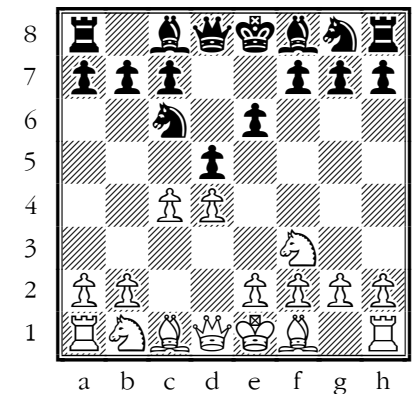
“ Another very nice game from you, where you took advantage of your opponent's mistakes and did little or nothing wrong yourself.”

**1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nc6!?**

This isn't a bad defence from Black but it is very hard to handle, I think.

⇒ When you set up your position in the opening, do think about where your Rooks are going to go.

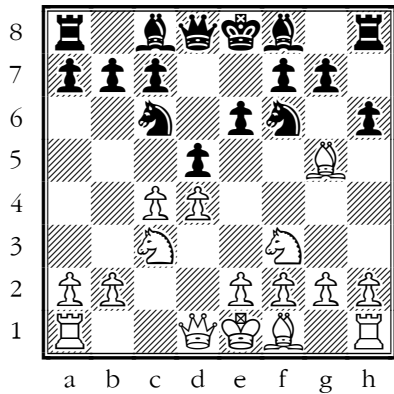
**3.c4 e6**



I am already feeling sorry for Black's Rooks.

*[3...Bg4]*

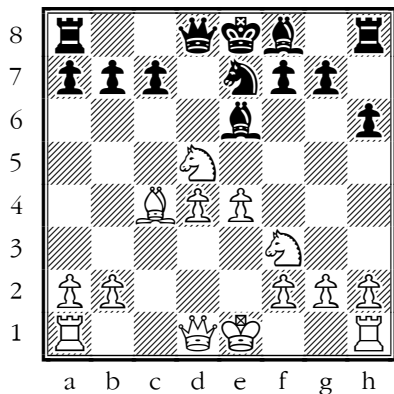
**4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Bg5 h6?**



→ TACTIC: undermine

This rather encourages White to win a pawn.

6. Bxf6 Qxf6 7. cxd5 exd5  
8. Nxd5 Qd8 9. e4 Be6  
10. Bc4 Ne7?!



Inaccuracy. g5 was best.

This doesn't help Black at all; Black needs fast development and chances of provoking a mistake.

11. Nxe7?

Mistake. Ne3 was best.

↪ Exchanges are never neutral

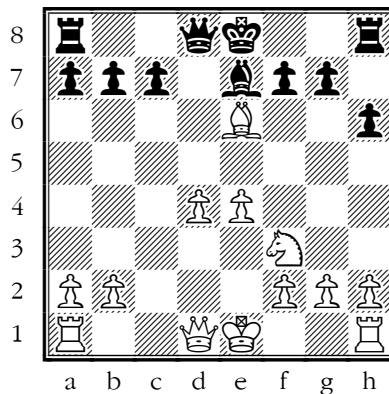
This one helps Black develop

[11. Ne3! Leaves Black's king side in a jam]

11... Bxe7?

Mistake. Bxc4 was best.

12. Bxe6

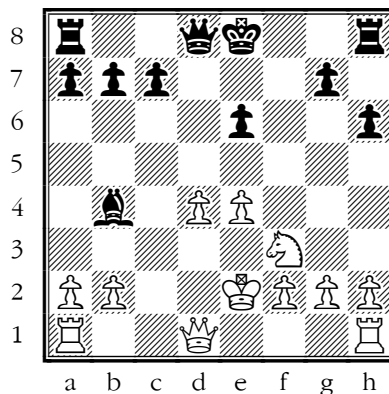


12... Bb4+?

Mistake. fxe6 was best.

Black seizes the chance to give a check, but it creates problems only for Black.

13. Ke2 fxe6

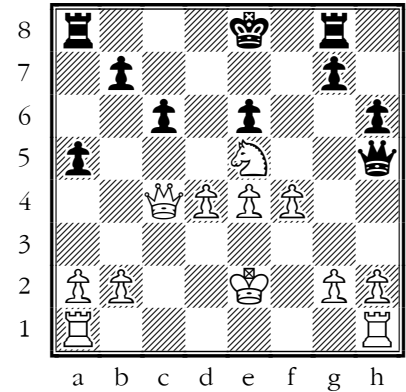


14. Qa4+

→ TACTIC: fork

With this fork, White picks up a piece to go with the pawn

14... c6 15. Qxb4 Qd7  
16. Ne5 Qc7 17. Ng6 Rg8  
18. f4 a5 19. Qc4 Qf7 20. Ne5  
Qh5+?!



Inaccuracy. Qe7 was best.

It's all pretty hopeless for Black but the Queen can do little on her own.

21. g4 Qh3?

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Qxe5 was best.

22. Qxe6+ Kf8 23. Qf7#

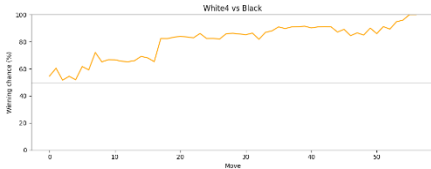
1-0

# Varnika Narella

“ All quite tidy and not much wrong – you could do with a bit more depth in your ‘book’ in the opening, you missed a fairly open goal in the second game, and you needed to keep your Rook on a tighter lead in the third. ”

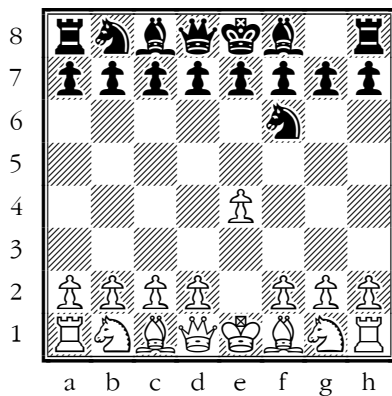
Nerella, Varnika - Patel, Aman

C42 Vienna Game



“ After an uncertain start, you took advantage of Black's generosity with great accuracy. ”

1.e4 Nf6



2.Nc3?!

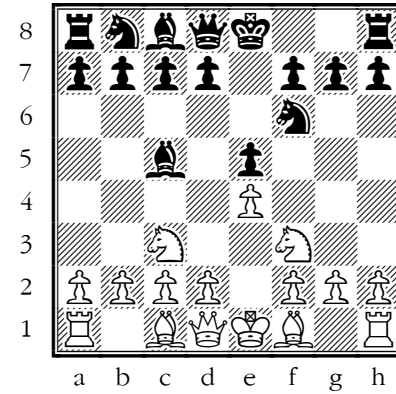
Inaccuracy. e5 was best.

This obviously isn't a bad move but Stockfish sees chances have an advantage only with e5.

2...e5 3.Nf3

*[3.Bc4 or, 3.f4 are more enterprising moves here, but perhaps this isn't a position you have reached before]*

3...Bc5?!



Inaccuracy. Nc6 was best.

→ TACTIC: loose pawn

Being generous, this is a poor gambit; being less generous to Black, they have been very careless to overlook an obvious capture.

4.Nxe5 c6?!

Inaccuracy. Bd4 was best.

5.Bc4

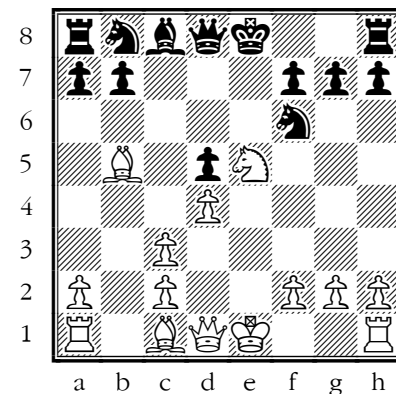
Again not bad but it invites Black's reply

*[5.d4! Bb4 6.Bd3]*

5...d5 6.d4 Bb4 7.exd5 Bxc3+?!

Inaccuracy. cxd5 was best.

8.bxc3 cxd5 9.Bb5+



→ TACTIC: fork

9...Nc6??

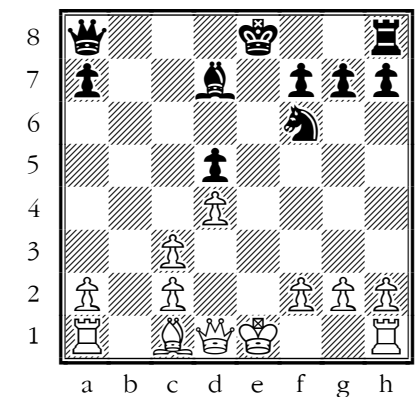
Blunder. Nbd7 was best.

Now Black overlooks a simple sequence whereby White wins the exchange

10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.Bxc6+

→ TACTIC: fork

11...Bd7 12.Bxa8 Qxa8



13.Rb1?!

Inaccuracy. Qe2+ was best.

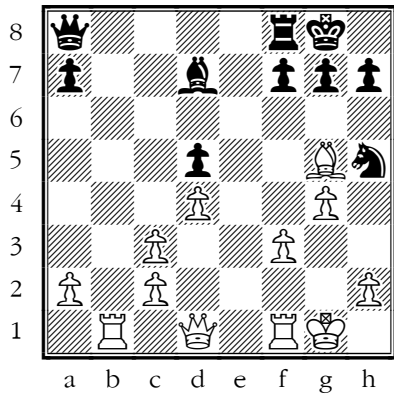
*[13.Qe2+!? Be6 14.Ba3! Keeps the Black king in the middle where it can be shot at]*

☞ Think about what your opponent wants to do – and think about how to stop it.

13...0–0 14.0–0 Ng4?!

Inaccuracy. Ne4 was best.

15.f3 Nf6 16.Bg5 Nh5 17.g4



➔ **TACTIC: net**

**17...f6?!**

Inaccuracy. h6 was best.

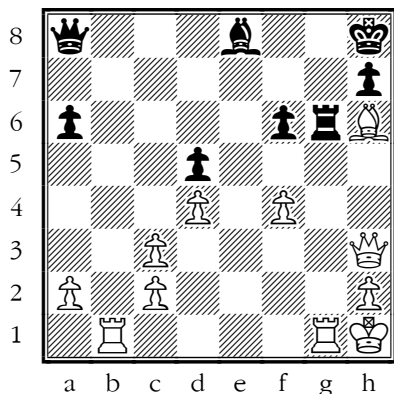
➔ **Players often rely on just a few ideas without considering enough options.**

Defenders should consider:

- Avoid
- Block
- Capture
- Defend

But there is more to defence than this ABCD that I often quote, in that you can counterattack – so full marks to Black for thinking of it here. Yet, after White defends simply, by avoiding the counterattack, the Knight has nowhere to go and is lost.

**18.Bd2 Rb8 19.gxh5 Bb5  
20.Re1 a6 21.h6 gxh6  
22.Bxh6 Re8 23.f4 Kh8  
24.Qh5 Rg8+ 25.Kh1 Be8  
26.Qh3 Rg6 27.Rg1**



Black is a whole rook down and there is little that they can do, but

Black now presses the self-destruct button.

**27...Bd7?**

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Qd8 was best.

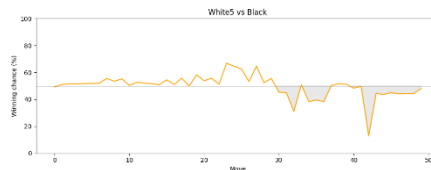
**28.Qxd7 Rxh6?!**

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Qg8 was best.

**29.Qg7#**

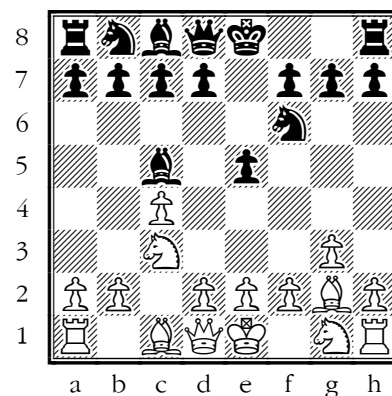
**Pamunuwa, Tarun - Nerella, Varnika**

A23 English Opening, King's English



“ Not bad. Your opening play looked a bit homemade, when you could have picked something off the shelf, but you got nicely into your stride and had a big advantage – yet overlooked a critical moment when you could have won a piece.”

**1.c4 e5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 Bc5  
4.Nc3**



**4...c6**

*[4...Nc6... is more usual here. Your opening system feels rather made-up on the spot..*

➔ **These very slow hypermodern openings have just as much theory and are just as dangerous as the mainstream**

**1.e4 and 1.d4 openings, and you really need a proper worked-out system to play against them.**

*The good news is, it's very likely that whatever you play against 1.d4 and the Queen's Gambit can be played against the English and Réti openings with confidence]*

**5.Nf3 d6**

*[5...e4! 6.Nh4 d5! ...c6 should be played with ...d5 in mind, otherwise it's just taking away a good square from your Nb8]*

**6.e3=**

*[6.d4!±]*

**6...Nbd7 7.o-o o-o 8.d4 Bb6**

*[8...Bb4!]*

**9.Qc2 h6?!**

Inaccuracy. Re8 was best.

*[9...Re8!]*

**10.Rd1 Qe7?!**

Inaccuracy. Re8 was best.

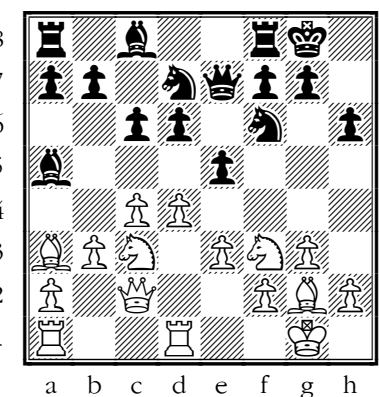
**11.b3?!**

Inaccuracy. Nh4 was best.

**11...Ba5?!**

Inaccuracy. e4 was best.

**12.Ba3?!**



Inaccuracy. Nh4 was best.

Neither side has played the opening particularly accurately, and the position is about equal.

**12...c5??**

Blunder. Bxc3 was best.

Understandable but it makes weak points on d6 and d5.

**13.dxe5 Nxe5 14.Nb5?**

Mistake. Nxe5 was best.

*[14.Nxe5! Qxe5 (14...dxe5 15.Nd5!±) 15.Bb2±]*

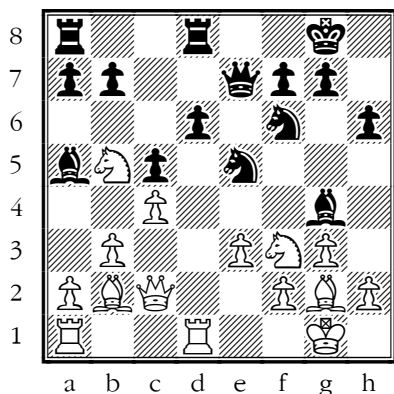
**14...Rd8?!**

Inaccuracy. Bg4 was best.

**15.Bb2?!**

Inaccuracy. Nxe5 was best.

**15...Bg4**



**16.Bxe5?**

Mistake. Nh4 was best.

In this fairly open position White is going to miss that Bishop

**16...dxe5 17.Rxd8+?!**

Inaccuracy. e4 was best.

**17...Bxd8??=**

Blunder. Rxd8 was best.

*[17...Rxd8! And White has helped you get your last piece into play]*

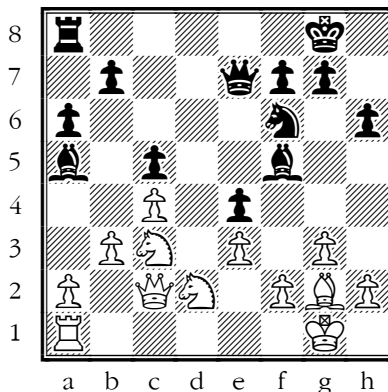
**18.Qb2?**

Mistake. h3 was best.

**18...e4 19.Nd2 a6?!**

Inaccuracy. Ba5 was best.

**20.Nc3 Bf5 21.Qc2 Ba5**



**22.Ncxe4??**

Blunder. Nd5 was best.

I can remember arriving at the board at this moment and thinking you can win a piece, but I didn't want to stop and think very long in case I gave you the idea you should be thinking harder!

White has grabbed a pawn, but it all looks very loose – The e4 Knight is defended only just enough, it's in a pin, and one of its defenders is under attack.

☞ **If you see the clues for a winning tactic, think as long as you need.**

Looking calmly at home, the solution is not hard:

**22...Kh8??**

Blunder. Bxd2 was best.

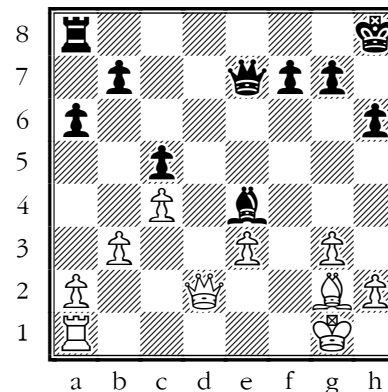
*[22...Bxd2*

➔ **TACTIC: undermine**

*23.Nxf6+ Qxf6 24.Qxd2? Qxa1+]*

**23.f3 Bxd2 24.Qxd2 Nxe4**

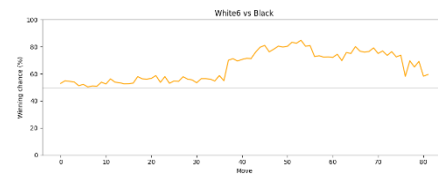
**25.fxe4 Bxe4**



Material is equal and, if anything Black stands slightly better because of the weak White e-Pawn, but this major piece endgame looks difficult to win.

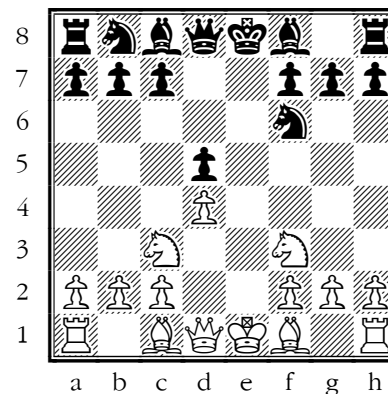
...1/2-1/2

**Srivastara., Angel - Nerella, Varnika**  
C01 French Defence, Exchange Variation



“ A few second best moves early on and some rather muddled manoeuvres with your Rook led to a very unhappy position, but White let you off the hook in the endgame.”

**1.e4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3**



**5...Nc6**

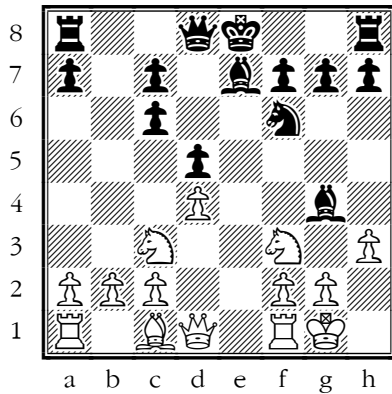
[5...Bd6 I think the usual recipe is right: develop your kingside pieces quickly, castle and bring your rook(s) to the open file; 5...Bb4]

## 6.Bb5 Bg4

[6...Bb4]

## 7.Bxc6+ bxc6 8.o-o Be7

## 9.h3



## 9...Bd7?!

Inaccuracy. Bxf3 was best.

As Black, I think I would be happy to have the Bishop pair, but this and some later moves are rather passive, and you get yourself into a mildly uncomfortable position

## 10.Re1 o-o 11.Bg5 Re8

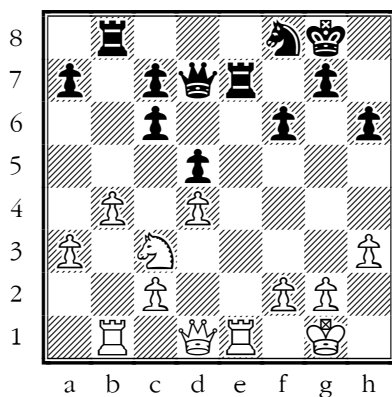
## 12.a3 Rb8 13.Rb1 h6

## 14.Bh4 Nh7 15.Bxe7 Rxe7

## 16.b4 Nf8?!

Inaccuracy. Rxe1+ was best.

## 17.Ne5 f6 18.Nxd7 Qxd7



## 19.Qd3

White is trying to make something out of the c5 point but I don't think it's going to add up to much.

## 19...Rb6??

Blunder. Rbe8 was best.

But this move gets your whole position in a bit of a tangle – the Rook has few or no prospects on the queen's side and your pieces become uncoordinated.

➔ Coordination is a difficult part of the game to get the hang of, but you really notice when you don't have it!

## 20.Na4 Rb8 21.Nc5 Rxe1+

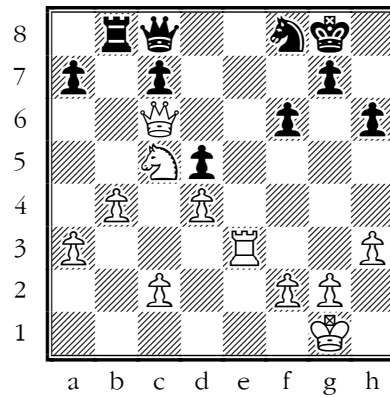
## 22.Rxe1 Qc8?!

Inaccuracy. Qf7 was best.

## 23.Re7 Qd8 24.Re3 Rb6

## 25.Qe2 Rb8 26.Qa6 Qc8

## 27.Qxc6



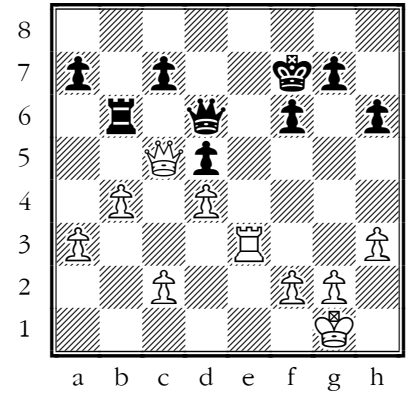
Going a pawn ahead – however creating a passed pawn won't be so easy.

## 27...Qd8 28.Ne6 Nxe6

## 29.Rxe6?!

Inaccuracy. Qxe6+ was best.

## 29...Kf7 30.Re3 Rb6 31.Qc5 Qd6



White's position is still very good but they need a plan of what to do with it

## 32.Qxd6?!

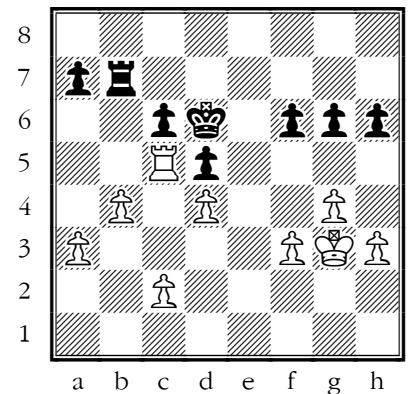
Inaccuracy. c4 was best.

## 32...Rxd6 33.Rc3 Rd7?!

Inaccuracy. c6 was best.

## 34.Rc5 Ke6 35.f3 Kd6

## 36.Kf2 c6 37.g4 Rb7 38.Kg3 g6



## 39.f4?!

Blunder. Ra5 was best.

It's important that White doesn't allow Black any activity so they should manoeuvre to tie down the Black pieces on the queen-side and then they can improve the position of their King.

[39.Ra5! Re7 40.Kf2 Rc7]

## 39...a6?

Mistake. Re7 was best.

## 40.Kf3 Rb5 41.Rxb5??

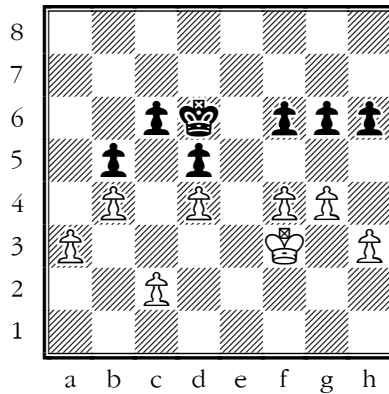
Blunder. Ke2 was best.

➤ **There's no such thing as an equal exchange**

This turns White's position from winning to pretty well dead drawn. The King has no entry point (another thing wrong with f4) and it's hard to create a passed pawn.

[41.f5 g5 42.Ke2 Kd7 43.Kd3 Kd6 44.c4]

**41...axb5**



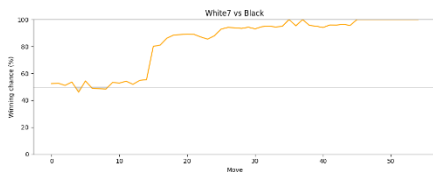
1/2–1/2

**Ananya Nerella**

“ Two nice wins and a rescue gave you the highest score of any Devon player on the day – well done! The trouble you got into was from pushing pawns – I hope your hand will move more readily instead to your pieces in future.”

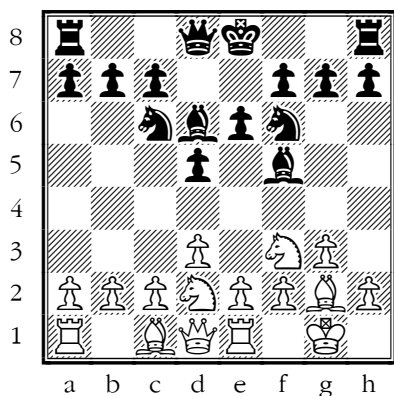
**Nerella, Ananya - Deng, Felix**

A07 King's Indian Attack



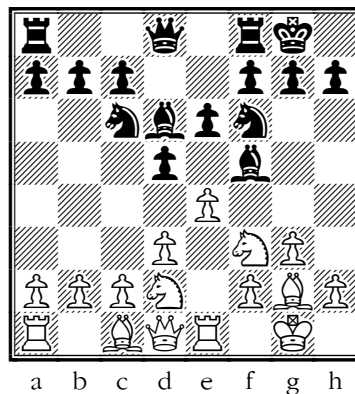
“ When opportunity knocked you were alert to the moment, winning a piece and making no mistakes after that”

**1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nc6 3.Bg2 Bf5 4.d3 Nf6 5.Nbd2 e6 6.o-o Bd6 7.Re1**



Of all the hypermodern openings, the King's Indian Attack is the one I disapprove of the least

**7...o-o 8.e4**



**8...Bg6??**

Blunder. Bg4 was best.

This apparently safe retreat is immediately fatal.

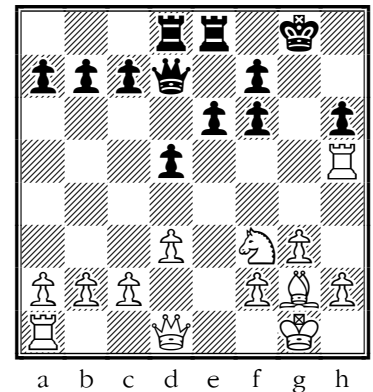
[8...Bg4! 9.e5?? Nxe5]

**9.e5!**

➔ **TACTIC: fork**

Black is now lost. The next few moves are unremarkable.

**9...Nxe5 10.Nxe5 Bxe5 11.Rxe5 Qd6 12.Nf3 Bh5 13.Bf4 Rad8 14.Rxh5 Qd7 15.Re5 Rfe8 16.Bg5 h6 17.Bxf6 gxf6 18.Rh5**



**18...Kh7?**

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Kg7 was best.

➔ **TACTIC: mate**

Stockfish now spots a checkmate, starting with Qd2, targeting h6. You get around to the h6 Pawn in the end, but it suggests you need more of a killer instinct!

**19.d4?**

Lost forced checkmate sequence. Qd2 was best.

That's the sort of move you play when you are trying to win – but you are already winning! Develop fast, swap pieces, win the endgame.

☞ Change gear once you are winning.

19...e5?

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Rg8 was best.

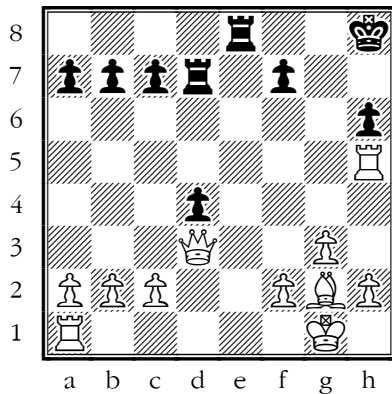
20.dxe5?

Lost forced checkmate sequence. Qd2 was best.

20...fxe5 21.Nxe5 d4

[21...Qe6 It's a measure of how terrible is Black's position, that Stockfish doesn't mark Black's move, losing the Queen, as a blunder.]

22.Nxd7 Rxd7 23.Qd3+ Kh8?



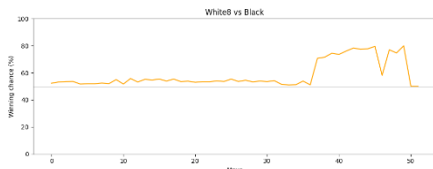
Checkmate is now unavoidable. Kg7 was best.

24.Rxh6+ Kg8 25.Qh7+ Kf8  
26.Qh8+ Ke7 27.Re1+ Kd8  
28.Qxe8#

1-0

Blankley, Toby - Nerella, Ananya

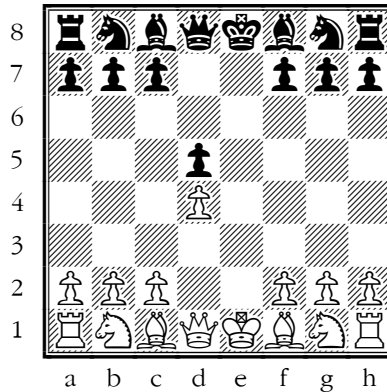
C01 French Defence, Exchange Variation



“ Two rather poorly judged moves with your Rooks pawns should have sunk your boat but you didn't give up and grabbed the chance of

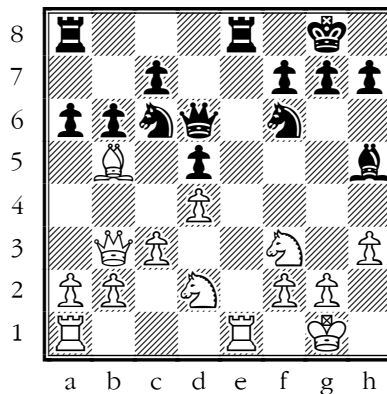
perpetual check when it turned up.”

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



There are much more fun ways to play against the French.

4.Nf3 Nc6 5.Bd3 Bg4 6.c3 Be7 7.Bf4 Nf6 8.o-o o-o  
9.Nbd2 Bd6 10.Bxd6 Qxd6  
11.h3 Bh5 12.Re1 Rfe8  
13.Qb3 b6 14.Bb5 a6?



Mistake. Rxe1+ was best.

This innocent-looking push should lose at least a pawn, as it gives White freedom to make mischief.

☞ Don't encourage your opponent to make a good move!

15.Bxc6?

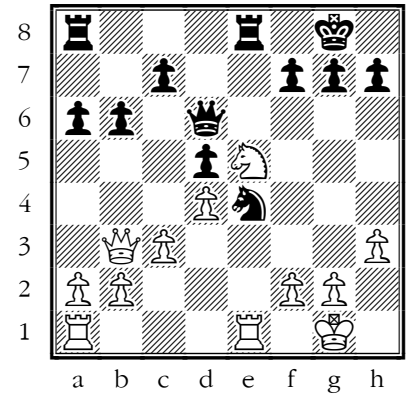
Mistake. Rxe8+ was best.

[15..Rxe8+!

➔ TACTIC: undermine

15..Rxe8 (15...Nxe8 16.Qa4!)  
16.Bxa6]

15...Qxc6 16.Ne5 Qd6  
17.Ndf3 Bxf3 18.Nxf3 Ne4  
19.Ne5

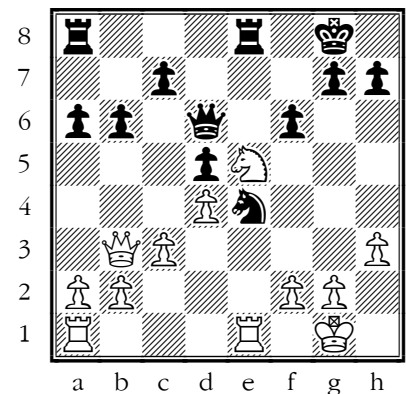


This really is rather equal, but...

19...f6??

Blunder. Re6 was best.

Another little pawn push, whose implications are fatal!



➔ TACTIC: pin

20.Rxe4! fxe5 21.Rae1 Kh8  
22.Rxe5 Rxe5 23.Rxe5 Qh6  
24.Re1??

Blunder. Qd1 was best.

24...Qg5??

Blunder. Qd2 was best.

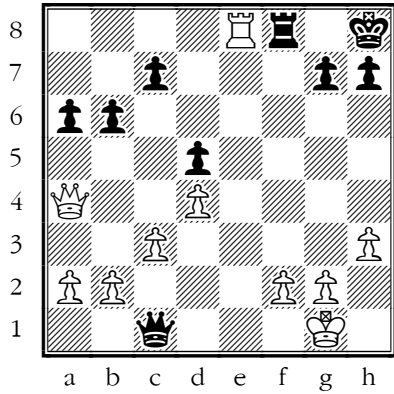
25.Qa4 Rf8?!

Inaccuracy. h6 was best.

26.Re8??

Blunder. Qxa6 was best.

26...Qc1+

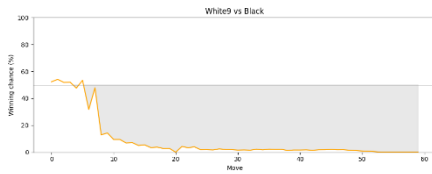


Black escapes with a perpetual check – whew!

1/2-1/2

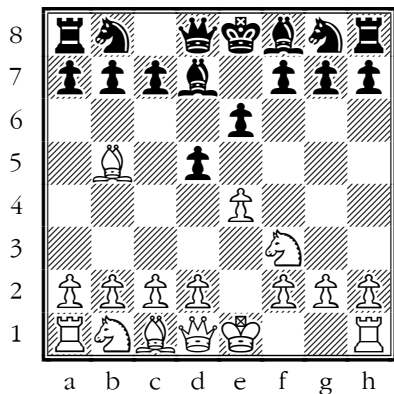
Patel, Neeva - Nerella, Ananya

C00 French Defence



“ A catastrophic opening for White left you firmly in control and you powered through to win – the only fly in the ointment was a missed mate in one.”

1.e4 e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Bb5+ Bd7



Both sides now make some rather simple blunders in turn.

4.Nc3??

Blunder. Bxd7+ was best.

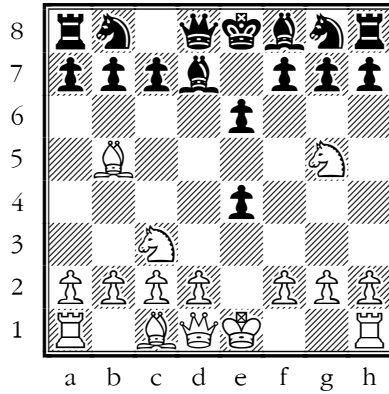
4...dxe4??

Blunder. Bxb5 was best.

[4...Bxb5! 5.Nxb5 dxe4!]

5.Ng5??

Blunder. Bxd7+ was best.



→ TACTIC: loose piece

5...Qxg5 6.d3 Qxg2

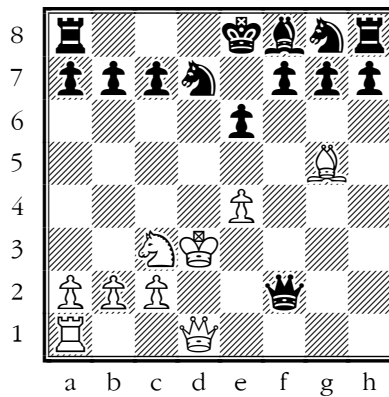
7.dxe4?!

Inaccuracy. Rf1 was best.

7...Qxh1+ 8.Kd2 Qxh2

9.Bxd7+ Nxd7 10.Kd3 Qxf2

11.Bg5?!



→ TACTIC: mate

11...Nc5+?

The game plods on a bit longer but the result was never in doubt.

[11...Ne5#]

“Never miss a check – it might be mate!”

– which doesn't mean you should always play it, but you must notice them.]

12.Kc4 f6 13.Qe2 Qxe2+

14.Nxe2 fxg5 15.Rd1 Nf6

16.e5 Ng4 17.Rg1 h5 18.b4

Ne4 19.Kd4 Nef2 20.b5 h4

21.b6 axb6 22.Nc3 h3

23.Nb5 Kd7 24.Kc3?!

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Rf1 was best.

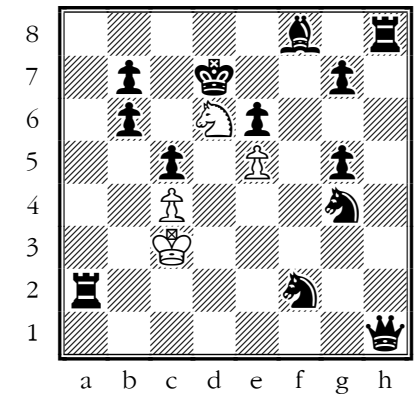
24...h2 25.Rh1?!

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Rf1 was best.

25...Nxb1 26.Kd3 Nhf2+

27.Kd4 h1Q 28.c4 c5+

29.Kc3 Rxa2 30.Nd6



→ TACTIC: mate

Nothing more on the scoresheet but I hope we also saw:

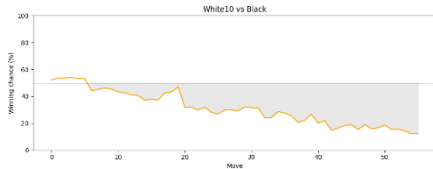
30...Rh3#

I'm not always sure the moves on the score sheet are complete or correct, but those the ones I've got!

“ I really like your forward-going attitude when you play and I was sorry not to see you get more reward for it. As you get more experience you will become a better judge of when to swap and when to keep the tension, when a sacrifice is likely to succeed, and when you can punch and when you should duck.”

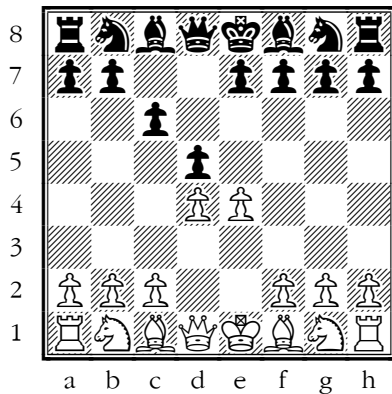
**Pratt, AD - Jones , Archie**

D00 Blackmar-Diemer Gambit Accepted: Ziegler Defense



“ I liked your enterprising opening and you built up a nice attacking position but I think your major mistake was an excess of optimism – don't be deceived by smashing examples in books and videos – positions that look ripe for plucking are sometimes very bitter! Your judgement will improve I am sure.”

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5**



**3.Nc3**

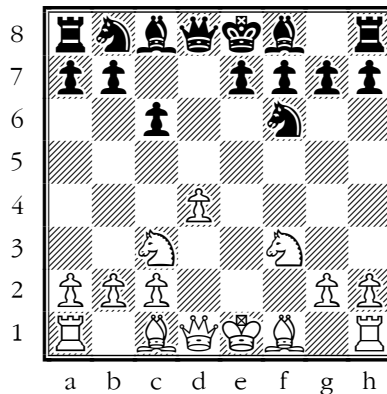
*[3.f3 The Fantasy Variation is always worth a look. The main line years ago used to be 3...dxe4 (3...e6 a dull choice which is the most popular nowadays.) 4.fxex4 e5 5.Nf3 Be6!? with ideas like 6.dxe5 (6.Nxe5? Qh4+!) 6...Nd7]*

**3...dxe4 4.f3?!**

Inaccuracy. Nxe4 was best.

*[4.Bc4!? Nf6 5.f3 b5! Short, Nigel D - Bareev, Evgeny, 0-1, Sarajevo Bosnia 30th, 2000, <https://lichess.org/kY4gVtF7>]*

**4...exf3 5.Nxf3 Nf6**

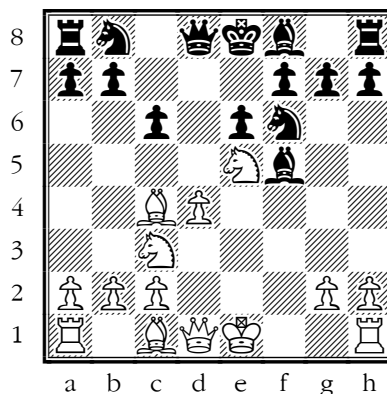


We have arrived at Doo Blackmar-Diemer Gambit Accepted: Ziegler Defence.

**6.Bc4 Bf5 7.Ne5**

*[7.o-o might have been preferred – Black is going to play e6 anyway]*

**7...e6**



**8.o-o?!**

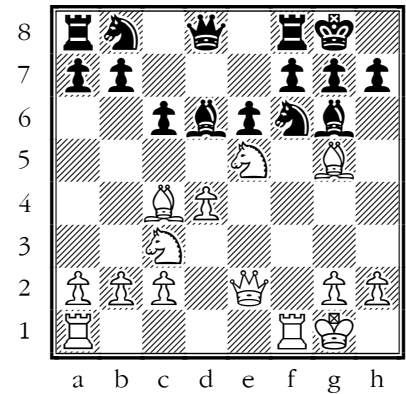
Inaccuracy. g4 was best.

*[8.g4 Bg6 9.h4 is a line i've tried in one of my games! It makes use of the Ne5]*

**8...Bg6 9.Bg5 Bd6?!**

Inaccuracy. Nbd7 was best.

**10.Qe2 o-o**



Now you swap off two attacking pieces for two defenders – not a good decision, as it turns out.

**Chess is a team game**

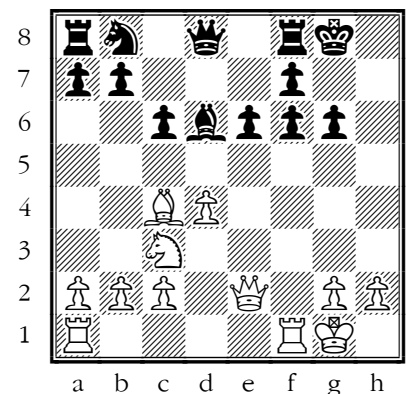
...And your attacking team is now mostly on the wrong side of the board.

**11.Bxf6?**

Mistake. Rad1 was best.

*[11.Rae1! with about equal chances – you have good compensation for the Pawn.]*

**11...gxf6 12.Nxg6 hxg6**

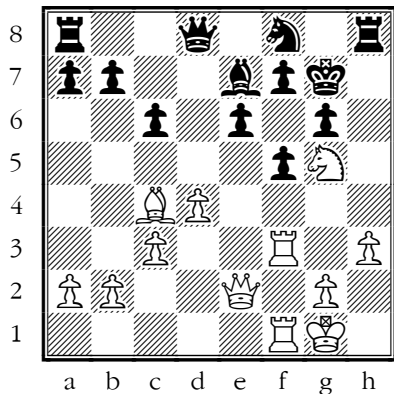


These piece swaps have taken away a lot of your attacking force – you now have more pieces on the Queen's- than the King's-side.

**13.Rf3?!**

Inaccuracy. g4 was best.

13...Kg7 14.Raf1 Rh8 15.h3  
Nd7 16.Ne4 Be7 17.Ng5  
Nf8 18.c3 f5



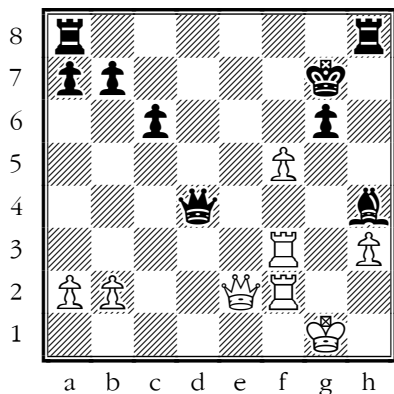
You have set up an excellent attacking formation, getting the most out of each piece, but the sad truth is that Black's position is completely solid – rather than Black suffering with weak doubled pawns, the f5 pawn is a strong defensive point.

19.Nxf7?!

Inaccuracy. Ne4 was best.

That's the right sort of move to look at, but you should have looked at it then looked at something else! Black can accept the sacrifice and beat off the attack.

19...Kxf7 20.g4 Kg7  
21.Bxe6 Nxe6 22.gxf5  
Nxd4 23.cxd4 Qxd4+  
24.R1f2 Bh4

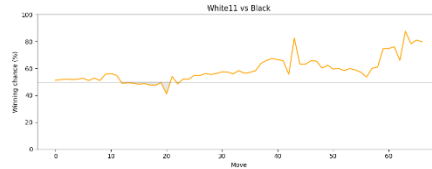


25.f6+?!

Inaccuracy. Qe6 was best.

25...Kh6 26.Kg2 Bxf2  
27.Rxf2 Rae8 28.Qf3 Qe4  
0-1

Tang, Carolus - Pratt, AD  
D38 Queen's Gambit, Ragozin Defence

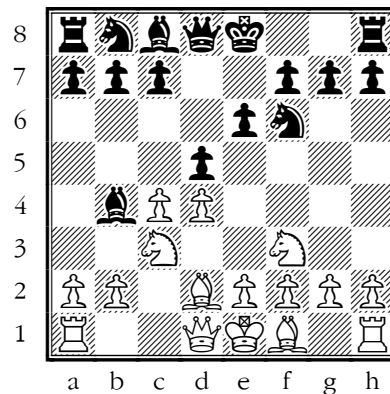


“ You didn't do a huge amount wrong in this game but a few second-best decisions led to difficulties and when it came to the crunch you were a move too late with your defence.”

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6  
4.Nf3 Bb4

[4...Nbd7]

5.Bd2



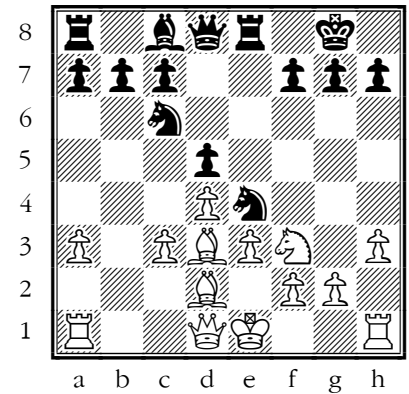
5...Nc6

not exactly a mistake, but:

➔ In the opening, I would always like to know what your plans are for opening a file for your Rooks

[5...Nbd7 leaves open the chance to play c5, which is often the key to freeing Black's game in Queen's Pawn openings]

6.e3 0-0 7.cxd5 exd5 8.Bd3  
Re8 9.h3 Ne4 10.a3 Bxc3  
11.bxc3?!



Inaccuracy. Bxc3 was best.

[11.Bxc3 Bf5=]

11...f5?

Mistake. Bf5 was best.

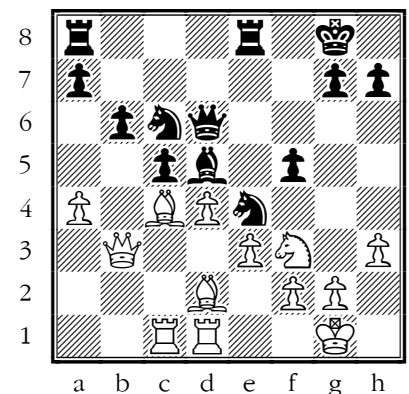
That looks a bit loose, when you are missing your dark-squared Bishop to cover the dark squares. And parking your pawns on light squares is not kind to your remaining Bishop.

➔ Bishops work best if they are on the opposite-coloured squares of their Pawns.

12.Rc1=

[12.c4± 12.0-0±]

12...Qd6 13.a4 Be6 14.0-0  
Ne7 15.Qb3 b6 16.Rfd1 c5  
17.c4 Nc6 18.cxd5 Bxd5  
19.Bc4±

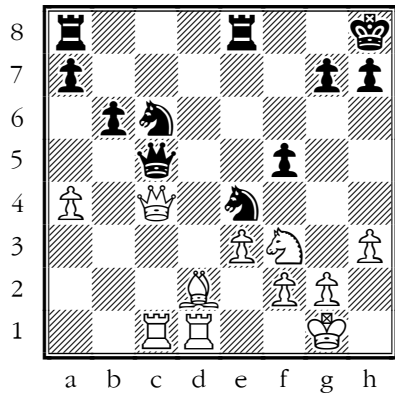


White has worked up some pressure.

19...Bxc4??

Blunder. Rad8 was best.

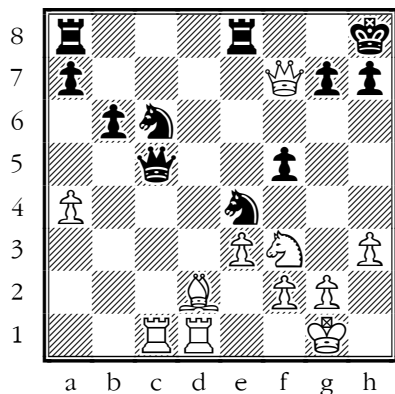
20.Qxc4+ Kh8 21.dxc5  
Qxc5



22.Qd3?

Mistake. Qf7 was best.

[22.Qf7!]



→ TACTIC: disco

wins a pawn

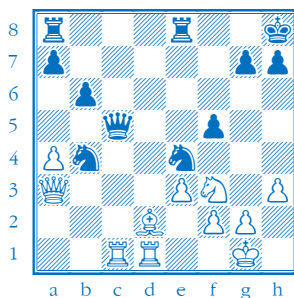
22...Nb4??

Blunder. Ne5 was best.

23.Qb3??

Blunder. Qa3 was best.

[23.Qa3!]



→ TACTIC: outnumbered

[rather simply wins material]

23...Nxd2

That hits the Queen, so you stay alive.

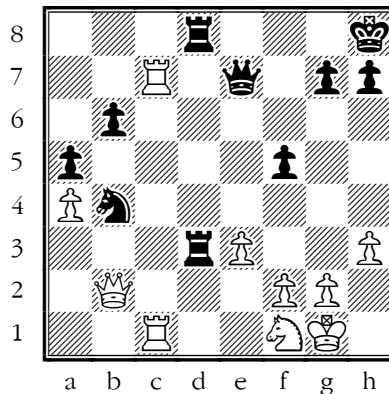
24.Nxd2 Qe7 25.Rc4 a5

26.Rdc1?!

Inaccuracy. Rd4 was best.

26...Red8 27.Nf1 Rd3

28.Qb2 Rad8 29.Rc7

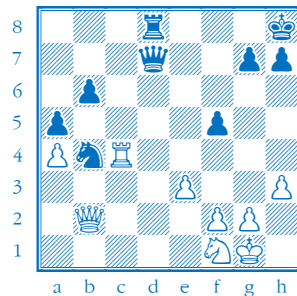


Black is a bit worse but still in the game.

29...Qf8?!

Inaccuracy. R3d7 was best.

[29...R3d7 immediately challenges the invader toe to toe 30.Rxd7 Qxd7 31.Rc4±]

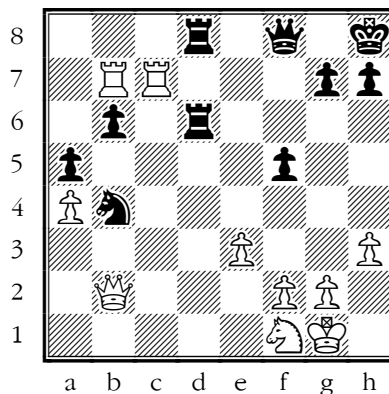


[White is better but Black isn't losing.]

30.Rb7 R3d6??

Blunder. R3d7 was best.

31.Rcc7!



→ Doubled Rooks on the seventh – "enough to frighten you to

death" (Marshall) – certainly enough to force a win.

31...Rg6 32.Ng3?

Mistake. Rf7 was best.

Where's that going?

32...Rb8??

Blunder. Nd3 was best.

[32...Nd3 was better but White is well on top: 33.Qc3 Nc5! 34.Rf7! Nxb7! 35.Rxf8+ Rxf8 36.Nxf5! Nc5+]

33.Nxf5?!

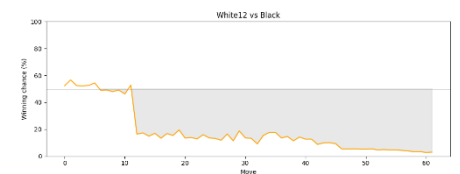
Inaccuracy. Rf7 was best.

33...Rxb7 34.Rxb7+–

... 1–0

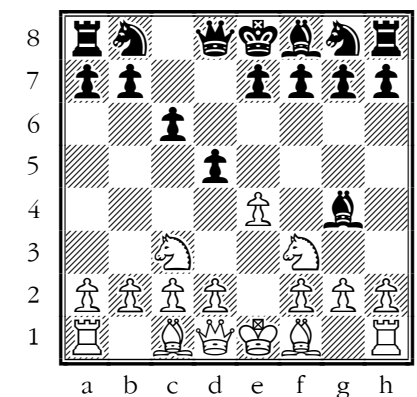
Dudam, Ish Ananth - Pratt, AD

B11 Caro-Kann, Two Knights' Variation



“ You had your head up and your eyes open when it mattered, and you scored a nice win.”

1.e4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Nf3 Bg4



4...exd5

[4.h3 is the only move I know to seek an advantage here.]

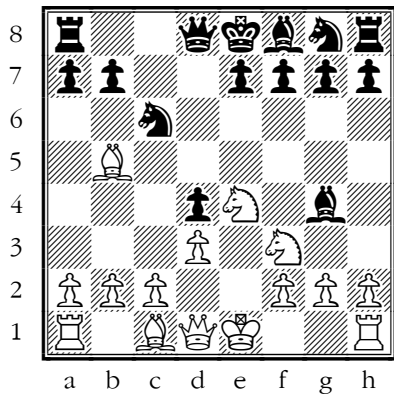
4...cxd5 5.Bb5+ Nc6 6.d3?!

Giving Black the better prospects in the centre.

6...d4?!

Inaccuracy. e6 was best.

7.Ne4??



Blunder. Bxc6+ was best.]

7...Qa5+

→ TACTIC: fork

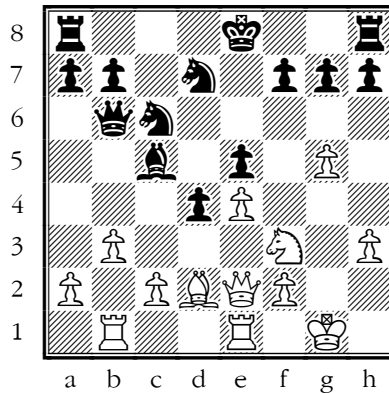
8.Bd2 Qxb5

Black has their hands on a win and doesn't let go for a moment.

9.Rb1 e5 10.h3 Bh5 11.g4 Bg6 12.o-o Bxe4 13.dxe4 Nf6 14.Re1 Bc5 15.b3?!

Inaccuracy. b4 was best.

15...Qb6 16.g5 Nd7 17.Qe2



17...f6?!

Inaccuracy. Bb4 was best.

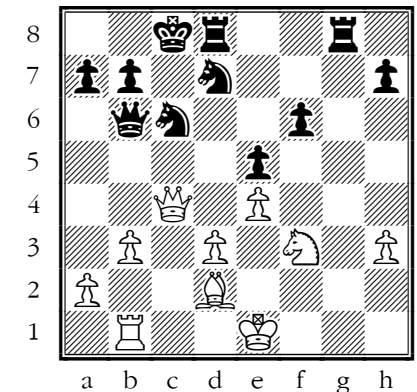
Develop, swap and win the endgame.

18.gxf6 gxf6 19.Qd3?!

Inaccuracy. b4 was best.

19...o-o-o 20.Qc4 d3 21.cxd3 Bxf2+ 22.Kg2 Rhg8+ 23.Kf1 Bxe1 24.Kxe1?!

Inaccuracy. Rxe1 was best.



→ TACTIC: skewer

24...Rg1+ 25.Nxg1 Qxg1+ 26.Ke2 Qxb1 27.Qc1 Qxc1 28.Bxc1 Nc5 29.b4 Nxb4 30.Ba3 Nbx d3 31.Bxc5 Nxc5

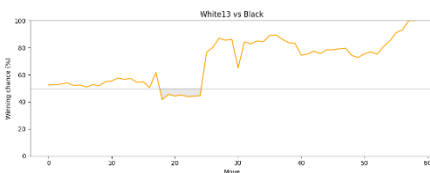
... 0-1

## Yuan Liu

“ Two fine wins, the first not at all easy, and one game that could have given you a perfect score. I was very pleased with your calmness at critical moments in the first two games. ”

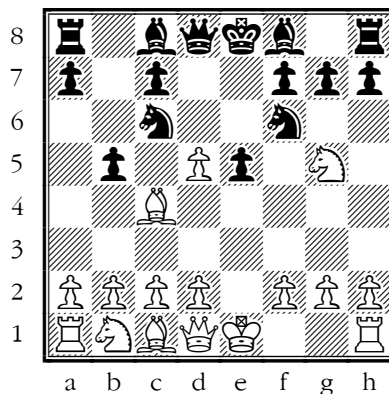
Liu, Yuan - Mattingley, Bethan

C57 Two Knights' Defence, Ulvestad Variation



“ Really quite a good game, you took advantage of Black's mistakes and successfully beat back Black's counterattack. ”

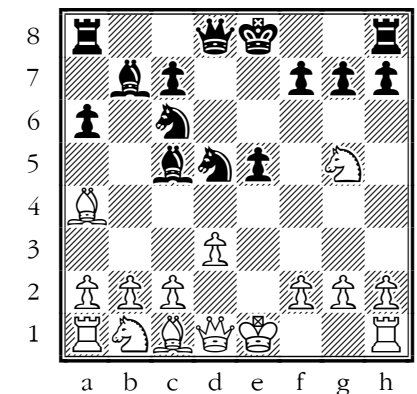
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 b5



6.Bf1!

Very good! not everybody knows that this odd-looking retreat is the best reply to Black's gambit

6...Nxd5 7.Bxb5 Bb7 8.d3 a6 9.Ba4 Bc5?!



Inaccuracy. h6 was best.

10.c4??

Blunder. Nc3 was best.

→ TACTIC: fork

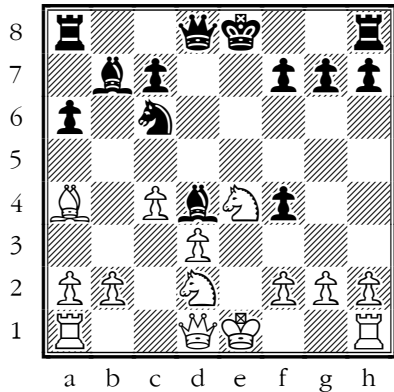
10...Nf4?!

Inaccuracy. Bb4+ was best.

[10...Bb4+ 11.Bd2 Bxd2+ 12.Qxd2 Nf4! Is the right way to use this idea.]

→ TACTIC: interference

11.Bxf4 exf4 12.Ne4 Bd4  
13.Nbd2



13...Bxb2??

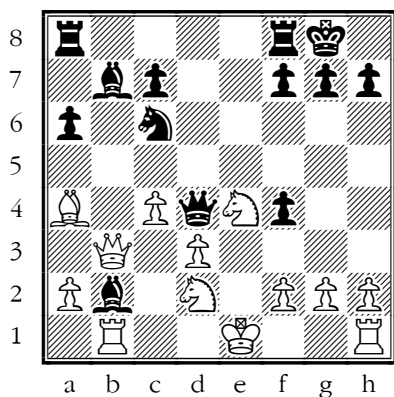
Blunder. f5 was best.

Asking for trouble!

14.Rb1!

→ TACTIC: pin/skewer

14...Qd4 15.Qb3! o-o



16.Rxb2??

Blunder. O-O was best.

Not really a blunder! But castling is classy.

[16.o-o! e.g. 16...Ne5 17.Qxb2 Qxb2 18.Rxb2 and Black cannot take on d3]

→ TACTIC: skewer

]

16...Na5?

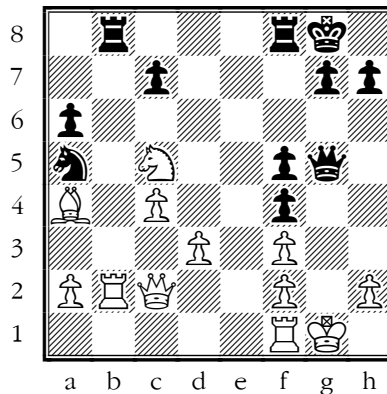
Mistake. Ne5 was best.

[16...Ne5! threatening ...Nxd3+]

17.Qc2 Rab8 18.Nf3 Qd8

19.o-o f5 20.Nc5 Bxf3

21.gxf3 Qg5+



Black now does their best to make mischief on the King's-side – as they should – but White has it all under control.

☞ If you are losing, you have to look for chances to arrange an accident.

22.Kh1 Qh5 23.Rg1 Qxf3+

24.Rg2 Rbe8?! 25.Qc3

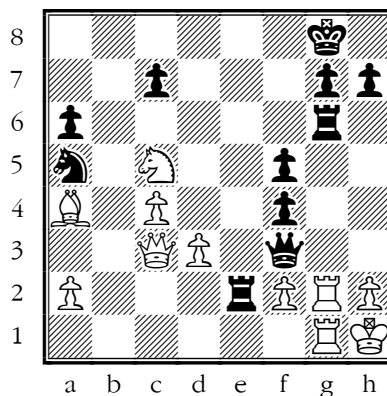
covering e1

[25.Bxe8 would have been my choice, but you are still OK 25...Rxe8 26.Rb1; 25.Rb1]

25...Rf6! 26.Rb1!

[26.Bxe8? Qd1+=]

26...Rg6 27.Rbg1 Re2?!



Inaccuracy. Nc6 was best.

Black does need a way to make more trouble, but this doesn't help.

28.Bd1

→ TACTIC: pin

28...Rxcg2?!

Inaccuracy. Nc6 was best.

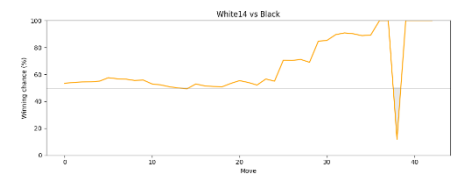
29.Rxcg2 Qh3?

Checkmate is now unavoidable. g6 was best.

30.Qxcg7#

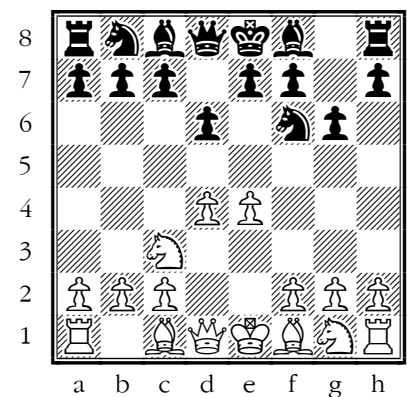
1-0

Liu, Yuan - Wu, Harry  
B08 Pirc Defence, Classical Variation



“ Again very good – you played sensibly, took your chances and showed nerves of steel to go for the mate – just one scary moment, when Black could have come back from the dead! ”

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

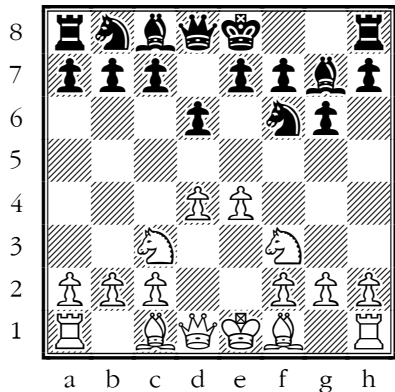


4.Nf3

Not bad, maybe a bit slow.

[4.f4; 4.f3 and; 4.Be3 are all good systems]

4...Bg7



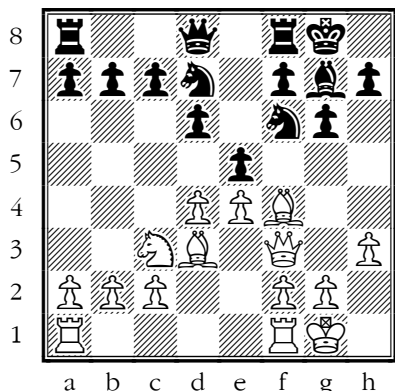
### 5.Bf4

Not a bad move, obviously, but not really part of a system.

Do find yourself a variation that makes sense to you and learn it!

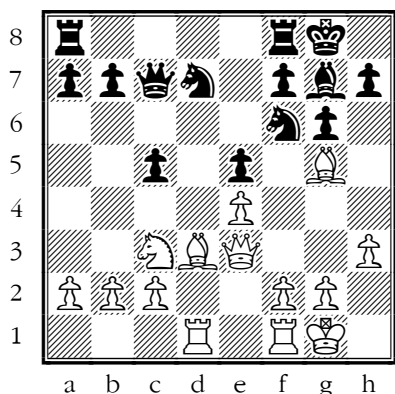
[5.Be3; 5.Be2]

5...0-0 6.Bd3 Bg4 7.h3 Bxf3  
8.Qxf3 Nbd7 9.0-0 e5



That's the trouble with Bf4 – Black is always angling for a central counter with ...e5, and if you can't stop it, it's going to be annoying.

10.dxe5 dxe5 11.Bg5 c6  
12.Qe3 Qc7 13.Rad1 c5??



Blunder. b5 was best.

Giving away all the light squares.

### 14.Bb5!

Making use of them!

### 14...Rad8?!

Inaccuracy. Nb6 was best.

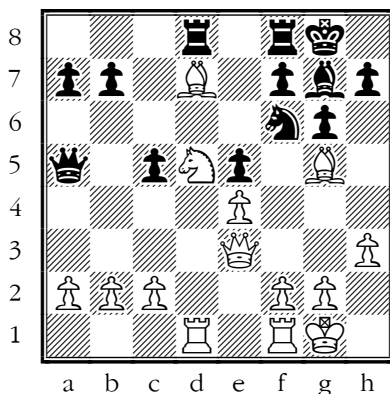
Walking into a pin

[14...Nb6 15.a4 a6 16.Be2 Rad8  
17.Rxd8 Rxd8 18.a5 Nc8 19.Nd5  
Qc6 20.c3+ and White has a  
dominating position. This is the sort  
of thing Karpov made a living out  
of.]

### 15.Nd5 Qa5?!

Inaccuracy. Nxd5 was best.

### 16.Bxd7



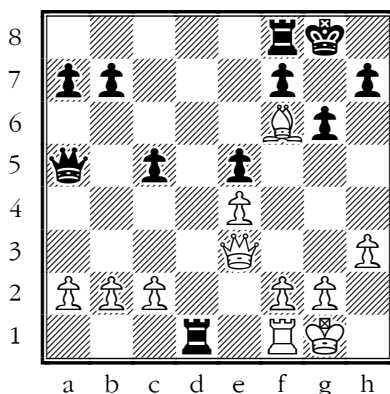
### 16...Rxd7?!

Inaccuracy. Nxd7 was best.

→ TACTIC: outnumbered

[16...Nxd7 Better to lose the  
Exchange than a piece.]

17.Nxf6+ Bxf6 18.Bxf6  
Rxd1??

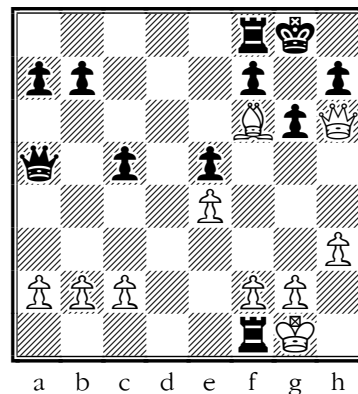


Checkmate is now unavoidable. Qa6 was best.

### 19.Qh6!

Very good! It takes a bit of steel not to take back on d1, bit you are absolutely right.

### 19...Rxf1+



### 20.Kxf1??

Lost forced checkmate sequence. Kh2 was best.

You just needed to hold your nerve for one more move!

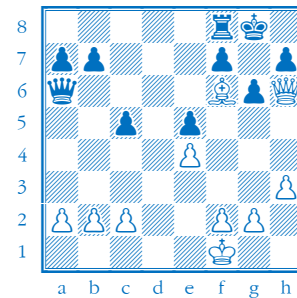
[20.Kh2 Rh1+ 21.Kg3 Qc3+ And  
Black has run out of distractions]

### 20...Qb5+??

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Qa6+ was best.

And we can breathe again...

[20...Qa6+



→ TACTIC: fork

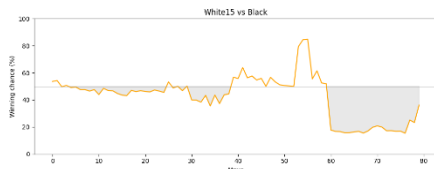
21.Kg1 Qxf6 and suddenly Black is winning! That would have been very cruel.]

21.Kg1 Qf1+ 22.Kxf1

...1-0

Zhuravlev, Andrei - Liu, Yuan

B20 Sicilian Defence

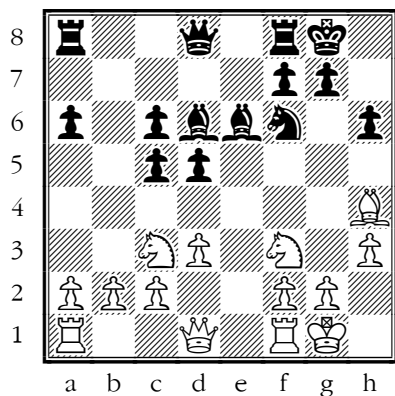


“ Time for a praise lasagne! Your opening was fine, but you got very uncoordinated in the middle and could have lost. Yet White didn't take their chances, you did, and you were set to finish off nicely – but somehow White won.”

**1.e4 c5**

I would have liked to play the main lines of the Sicilian more often, but Whites would never cooperate.

**2.Bc4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e6 4.d3 d5  
5.exd5 exd5 6.Bb3 Be6  
7.Nf3 Nc6 8.Ba4 Bd6 9.Bg5  
a6 10.Bxc6+ bxc6 11.o-o  
h6 12.Bh4 o-o 13.h3**



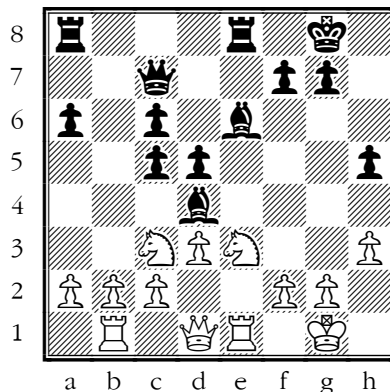
**13...Be7?!**

Inaccuracy. Qc8 was best.

**14.Ne5 Qc7 15.Re1 Rfe8  
16.Bxf6?!**

Inaccuracy. Na4 was best.

**16...Bxf6 17.Ng4 Bd4  
18.Rb1 h5 19.Ne3**



**19...Rab8?!**

Inaccuracy. Bxh3 was best.

Now you start to lose the thread.

*[19...Bxh3! is an unusual try but the best one. 20.gxh3 Bxe3 21.Rxe3 Rxe3 22.fxe3 Qg3+ 23.Kf1 (23.Kh1 Qxh3+ 24.Kg1 Qxe3+ 25.Kf1 Qf4+ 26.Kg2 Qg5+ 27.Kf2 Qh4+ 28.Kg2 Re8 Black has full value in pawns for the piece, and White's loose King will be a problem forever.) 23...Re8]*

**20.Qxh5 Bxc3?**

Mistake. Rxb2 was best.

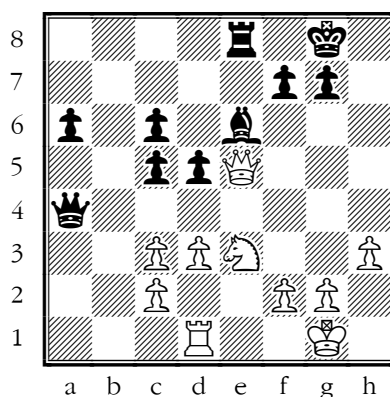
**21.bxc3 Qa5?!**

Inaccuracy. Rxb1 was best.

**22.Qe5?!**

Inaccuracy. Rxb8 was best.

**22...Rxb1 23.Rxb1 Qxa2  
24.Rd1 Qa4?!**



Inaccuracy. Qb2 was best.

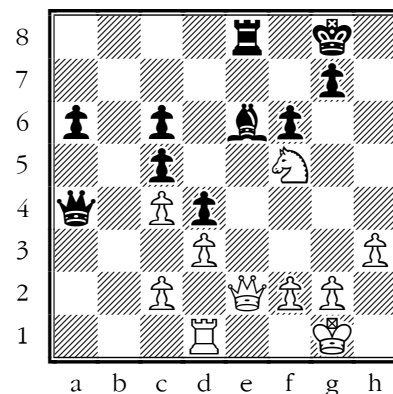
The Queen gets out of touch.

➔ You must use your pieces as a team.

**25.c4**

*[25.Re1! Black's army is uncoordinated and the Bishop is just a tall pawn.]*

**25...d4 26.Nf5 f6 27.Qe2=**



**27...Kf8??**

Blunder. Bd7 was best.

**28.Nd6 Re7 29.Re1??**

Blunder. Rb1 was best.

*[29.Rb1! and Black is in all sorts of trouble.]*

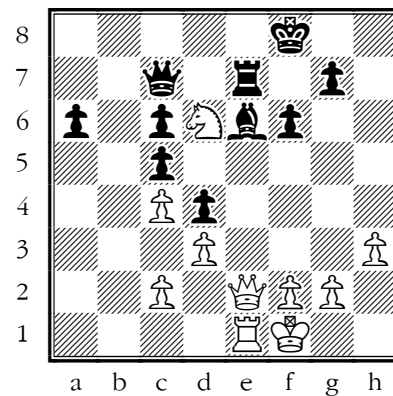
**29...Qa5**

Getting coordinated...

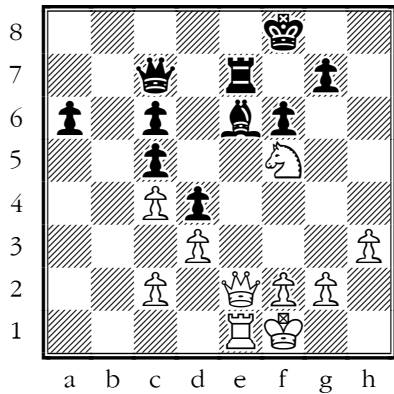
**30.Kf1?!**

Inaccuracy. Nf5 was best.

**30...Qc7**



**31.Nf5??**



➔ **TACTIC: not a pin!**

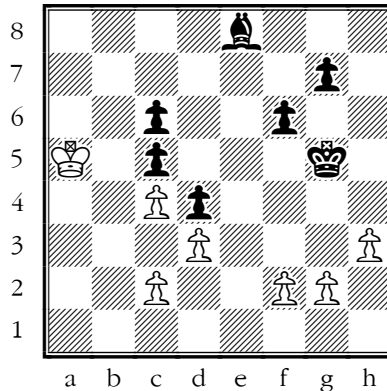
Blunder. Ne4 was best.

White is too optimistic about the pin down the e-file!

**31...Bxf5 32.Qxe7+?!**

Inaccuracy. Qf3 was best.

**32...Qxe7 33.Rxe7 Kxe7  
34.Ke1 a5 35.Kd1 Ke6  
36.Kc1 Bg6 37.Kb2 Kf5  
38.Ka3 Kf4 39.Ka4 Be8  
40.Kxa5 Kg5?!**



Inaccuracy. Bh5 was best.

You're still winning here I believe but something went wrong – the clock? Or did White manage to make trouble on the Queen's-side?

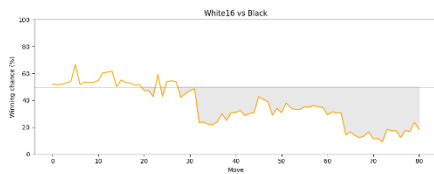
**...1-0**

## George Willett

“ A win and a loss is a good half-marks from your first outing at this level. Both games showed a lot of fighting spirit, which will see you well in your future games. ”

Willett, George - Liu , Yima

A40 Van T'Kruy's Opening



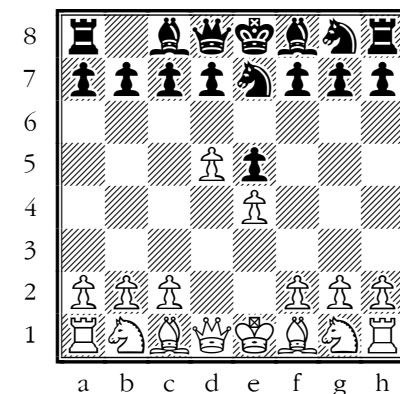
“ You grabbed a poisoned pawn and lost a piece, then it was too difficult to use your pawns to fight back effectively. ”

**1.e3**

☞ I can't help feeling your White opening needs more punch!

**1...e5 2.d4 Nc6 3.d5 Nce7**

**4.e4±**



Well, your opening has yielded a small plus!

**4...Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Bg5  
Ng6?!**

Inaccuracy. c6 was best.

**7.Bb5+ Bd7 8.Qe2?!**

Inaccuracy. Bxd7+ was best.

**8...Be7 9.Bxf6 Bxf6**

**10.Bxd7+ Qxd7 11.Qb5 c6**

**12.dxc6 Qxc6?**

Mistake. bxc6 was best.

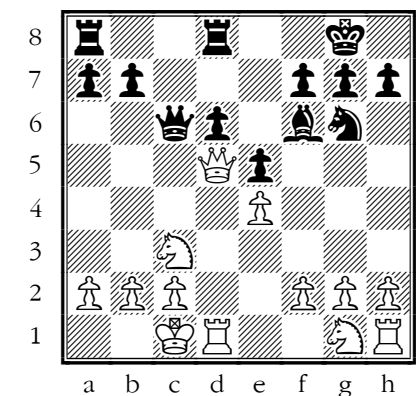
**13.Qd5?**

Mistake. O-O-O was best.

**13...o-o?!**

Inaccuracy. Nf4 was best.

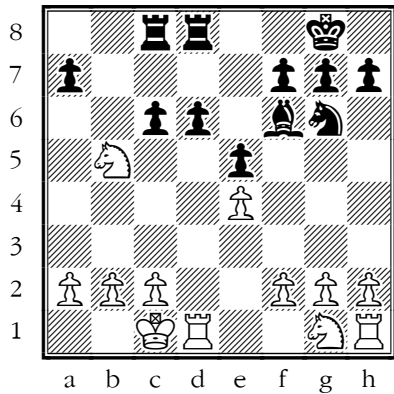
**14.o-o-o Rfd8**



**15.Nb5?**

Mistake. Nge2 was best.

**15...Rac8 16.Qxc6 bxc6**



### 17.Nxa7??

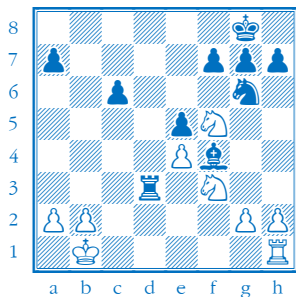
Blunder. Nxd6 was best.

This is a poisoned pawn – don't bite and don't swallow!

You just needed to see one move deeper...

### → TACTIC: net

[17.Nxd6! begins a long and fairly forced line, resulting in a roughly equal position. 17...Bg5+ 18.f4 Bxf4+ 19.Kb1 Rc7 20.Rd3 Rcd7 21.Nf5 Rxd3 22.cxd3 Rxd3 23.Nf3=



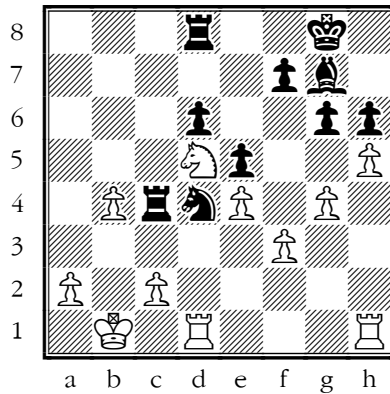
- 17...Rc7 18.Nxc6 Rxc6  
19.Ne2 Rc5 20.Nc3 Nf4  
21.g3 Ne6 22.Nd5 Bg5+  
23.Kb1 g6?

Mistake. Nc7 was best.

### 24.h4 Bh6 25.g4?

Mistake. b4 was best.

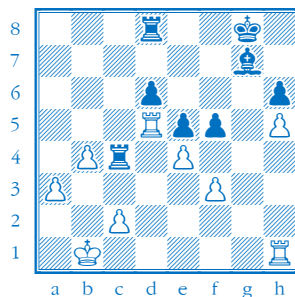
- 25...Bg7 26.h5 h6 27.b4  
Rc4 28.f3 Nd4??



Blunder. gxh5 was best.

I began to hope again for you here, you're not much behind in material, but you needed to keep your pawn chain intact.

[28...gxh5 29.gxh5 Nf4 30.a3 Nxd5 31.Rxd5 f5



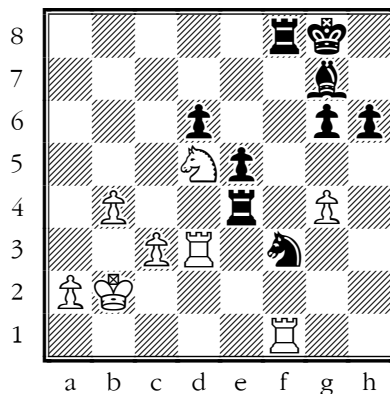
And Black is in control.]

### 29.c3?

Mistake. Rhf1 was best.

[29.Rhf1 gxh5 30.gxh5 f5 31.c3 Ne2  
And chances are about equal]

- 29...Nxf3 30.hxg6 fxg6  
31.Rhf1 Rf8 32.Kb2 Rxe4  
33.Rd3??



### 33...Re2+

Now Black invades to deadly effect.

### 34.Kc1

[34.Kb3 Nd4+! 35.cxd4 Rxf1+]

### 34...e4 35.Rdd1 e3?!

Inaccuracy. Ra8 was best.

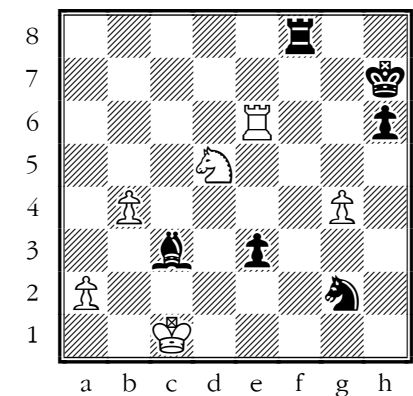
### 36.Ne7+ Kh7 37.Rxd6 Re1+?!

Inaccuracy. Rf2 was best.

### 38.Rxe1 Nxe1 39.Rxg6 Ng2 40.Re6 Bxc3?!

Inaccuracy. Rf2 was best.

### 41.Nd5?!

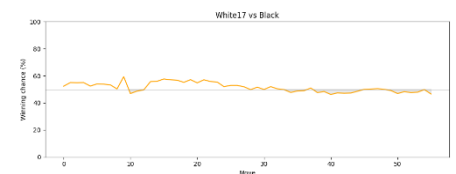


Inaccuracy. Nf5 was best.

...0-1

### Bailes, Cody - Willett, George

D02 London System

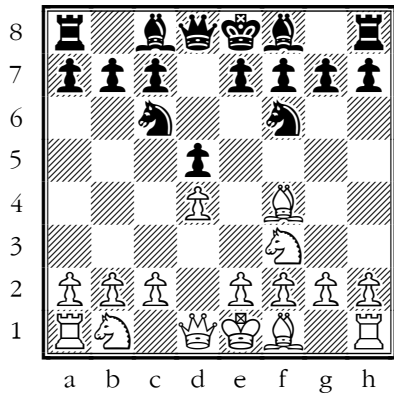


“ You had slightly the worst of it out of the opening put equalised and even went up on ahead a pawn ahead. Stockfish was very unexcited about your Rook end game, but in practise White was always going to struggle and you did well to win it.”

### 1.Nf3 Nc6?!

I don't like this because...

### 2.d4 d5 3.Bf4 Nf6±

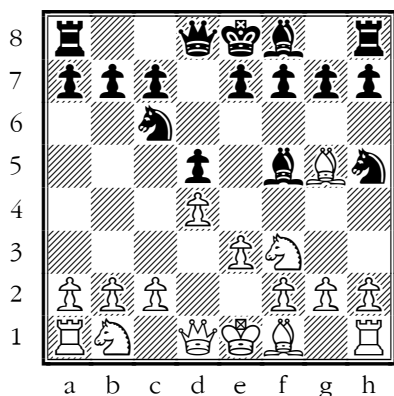


... you end up in this sort of position with few chances to open a file for your Rooks.

☞ "An opening system should be judged on the prospects it offers to ambitious young Rooks" – Cecil Purdy

Whatever system you play against 1.d4 and Queen's Gambit – and there are lots to choose from – can be tried against most White openings apart from 1.e4.

4.e3 Nh5 5.Bg5 Bf5?!



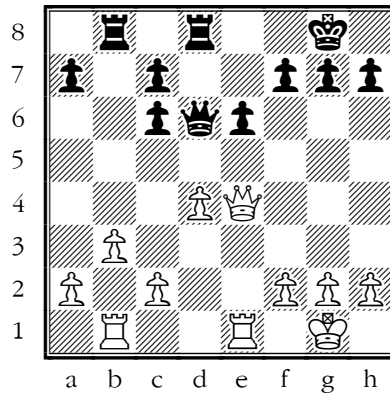
Inaccuracy. h6 was best.

[5...h6 would at least have been consistent, chasing the Bishop. (If you say A, you must also say B.)]

6.Bd3?!

Inaccuracy. c4 was best.

6...Bxd3 7.Qxd3 Nf6 8.o-o e6 9.Ne5 Be7 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.Nc3 Rb8 12.Rab1 o-o 13.e4 dxe4 14.Nxe4 Nxe4 15.Bxe7 Qxe7 16.Qxe4 Qd6 17.Rfe1 Rfd8 18.b3



18...Qxd4

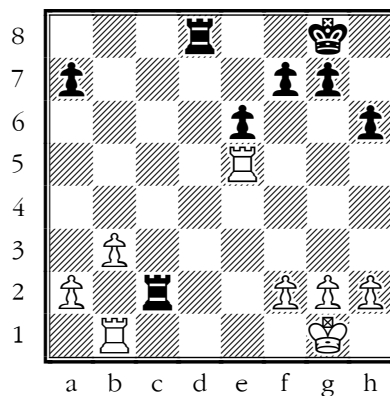
Black has snaffled a pawn, but

19.Qxc6 h6 20.Qxc7

...White comes out with the extra pawn for a moment, but only until ...

20...Rbc8 21.Qe5 Qxe5

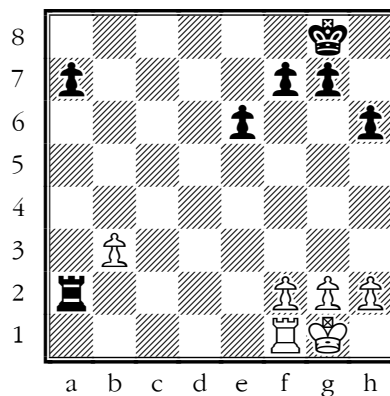
22.Rxe5 Rxc2



...Black recovers the material.

23.Ra5 Rdd2 24.Rf1 Rxa2

25.Rxa2 Rxa2



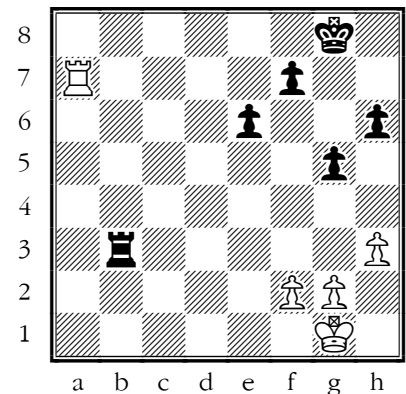
Black has come out a pawn ahead.

Now ideally you should try and keep the a-pawns on the board, but I don't think that's possible.

26.h3 Rb2

[26...Ra3 27.b4 Ra4 28.b5 Ra5 29.Rb1 g6 30.b6]

27.Ra1 Rxb3 28.Rxa7 g5



Well done on winning the end game from this position.

Many years ago, it seemed that these R+4P vs R+3P positions were lost – Capablanca won a couple (against Duras and Yates) which were so convincing that everyone assumed that the defender was bound to collapse against accurate play. But, not for the first time, further experience and research, and especially the use of computers, showed that the defender has good chances of holding the draw – if both sides play just about perfectly. In my imperfect world, though, I wouldn't choose to defend this!

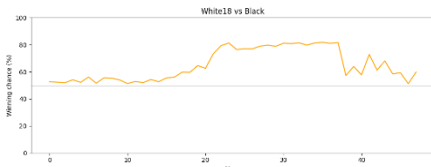
... 0-1

# Shreyas Pasupulety

“ Thirty-two pieces are hard enough to juggle without adding a clock, so I felt a bit sorry for you in your first game when you finally equalised only to lose on time. But the next tow games were very fine wins. I don't have a lot of advice to offer – a bit more aggression in the opening might do you some good? But you play with a lot of control and understanding – well done.”

**Murthy , Aarush - Pasupulety, Shreyas**

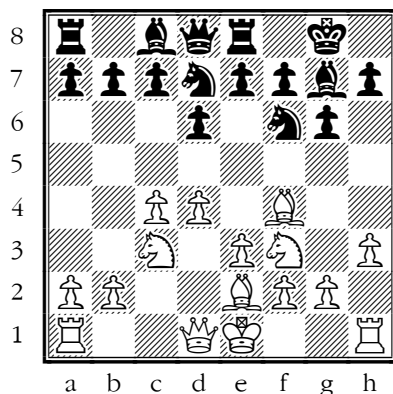
E61 King's Indian Defence → London System



1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7  
4.Nf3 d6 5.h3 o-o 6.Bf4  
Nbd7 7.e3 Re8

*[7...b6...Bb7 and either ...e5 or ...c5 is another approach.]*

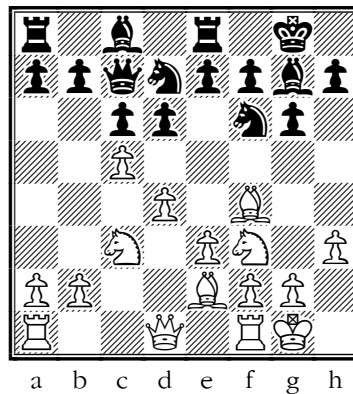
8.Be2



8...c6

*[8...e5! Should have been played as soon as possible]*

9.o-o Qc7 10.c5±



You've played a bit too carefully and have allowed White to get ahead – your position now is a bit difficult.

👉 **Playing safe is dangerous**

10...a5?!

Inaccuracy. Nf8 was best.

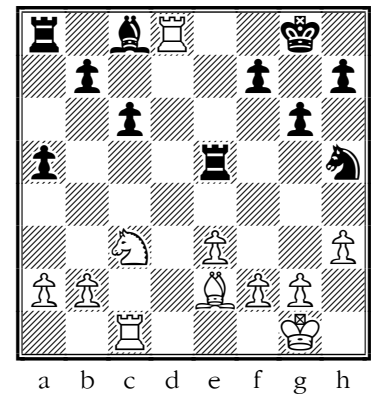
Intending ...e5.

11.Rc1 e5?

Mistake. Qb8 was best.

The right move at the wrong moment – this loses control of the game.

12.cxd6 Qxd6 13.dxe5  
Qxd1 14.Rfxd1 Nh5 15.Bh2  
Nxe5 16.Nxe5 Bxe5  
17.Bxe5 Rxe5 18.Rd8+



The problem on your back rank is the undeveloped queen side pieces.

18...Kg7 19.Bg4 f5  
20.Be2??

Blunder. Bxh5 was best.

*[20.Bxh5 gxh5 21.Na4!]*

➔ **TACTIC: fork**

]

20...Nf6 21.Rcd1 b5??

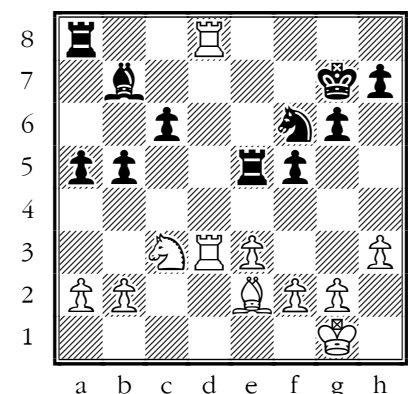
Blunder. Re8 was best.

22.R1d3?

Mistake. Bf3 was best.

*[22.Bf3 b4 23.Ne2 Ne4 24.Bxe4 fxe4 25.R1d6 Rc5 26.Nd4 And Black is dropping a pawn.]*

22...Bb7?!



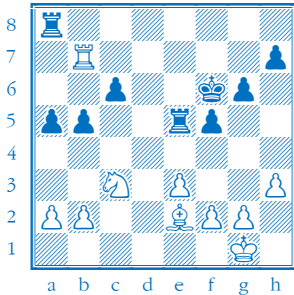
Inaccuracy. Kf7 was best.

You have been trying to untangle with this move for a while, but it should lose the game!

**23.Rxa8?**

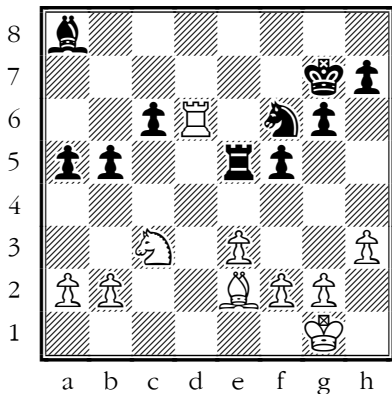
Mistake. R8d7+ was best.

[23.R3d7+! TACTIC: fork 23...Nxd7 24.Rxd7+ Kf6 25.Rxb7



and the two pieces are likely to run rings around the Rook.]

**23...Bxa8 24.Rd6?!=**



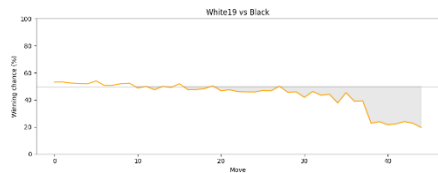
Inaccuracy. Bf3 was best.

You have achieved equality on the board, but not on the clock, I'm afraid.

**24...Bb7**

...1-0

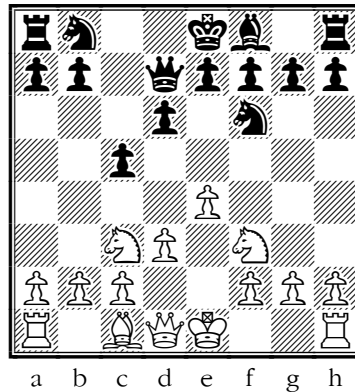
**Agrawal, Vyom - Pasupulety, Shreyas**  
B23 Sicilian Defence, Moscow Variation



“ That was a very nicely controlled game: you were never in trouble and took

good advantage of White's mistakes.”

**1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 d6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Bb5+ Bd7 5.Bxd7+ Qxd7 6.d3**



**6...e6= 7.e5 dxe5 8.Nxe5 Qd4 9.Nf3 Qd8**

[9...Qg4!?

**10.Bf4 a6 11.Bg5 Be7 12.d4 cxd4 13.Qxd4 Qxd4 14.Nxd4 o-o 15.o-o Nbd7 16.Rad1 Rac8 17.Nf3 Rfd8 18.Bxf6?!**

Inaccuracy. Rd3 was best.

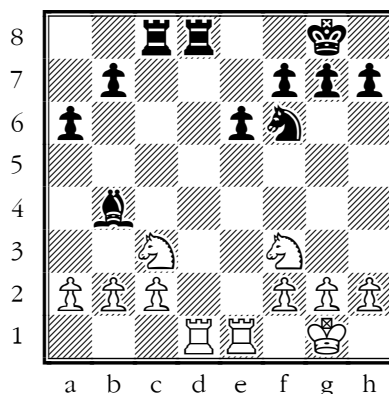
**18...Nxf6?!**

Inaccuracy. Bxf6 was best.

**19.Rfe1?!**

Inaccuracy. Rxd8+ was best.

**19...Bb4**



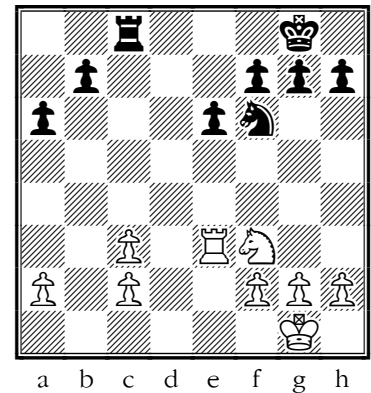
Your position has been getting better and better, and White now stumbles.

**20.Re3??**

Blunder. Rxd8+ was best.

[20.Rxd8+ Rxd8 21.Rd1 Rc8 22.Rd4 Bxc3 23.bxc3 Kf8 24.c4 is similar to the game, but White is more active here.]

**20...Bxc3! 21.Rxd8+ Rxd8 22.bxc3 Rc8**

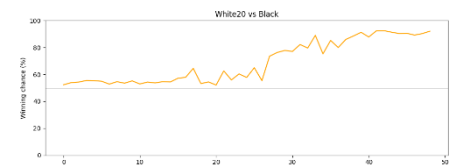


White has avoided losing material, but their pawns are a shambles – messy and likely to be lost. Black should be able to create a passed pawn on the King's -side, while White's extra pawn on the other wing is meaningless –more of a weakness than an asset.

**23.Ne5**

... 0-1

**Pasupulety, Shreyas – Powell, Rohan**  
A04 Nimzo-Larsen Attack



“ I was a bit concerned that your opening was slow and perhaps over-cautious, but it was very solid and proved a firm foundation for a very convincing attack.”

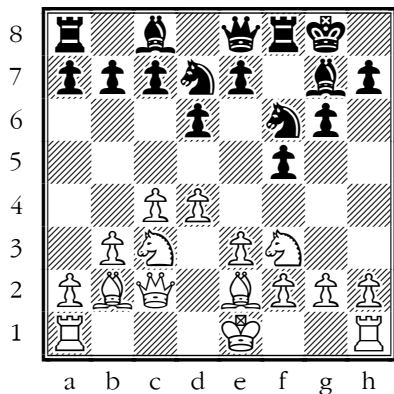
**1.Nf3 f5 2.b3**

[2.e4!? is an enterprising choice here. 2...fxe4 3.Ng5 Nf6 4.d3;

2.g3 Black having parked a pawn in the way of the Bc8, a fianchetto

tries to make the long diagonal awkward for the piece too.]

- 2...g6 3.Bb2 Nf6 4.d4 Bg7  
5.c4 o-o 6.e3 d6 7.Be2 Qe8  
8.Qc2 Nbd7 9.Nc3±



You have played modestly in the opening but stand well, because Black's setup is a little awkward. The next phase is not played accurately by either player.

9...e5?!

Inaccuracy. c6 was best.

10.o-o-o?

Mistake. Nb5 was best.

[10.Nb5! should win a pawn  
10...Qd8 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.Nxe5]

10...e4 11.Nd2?!

Inaccuracy. Ng5 was best.

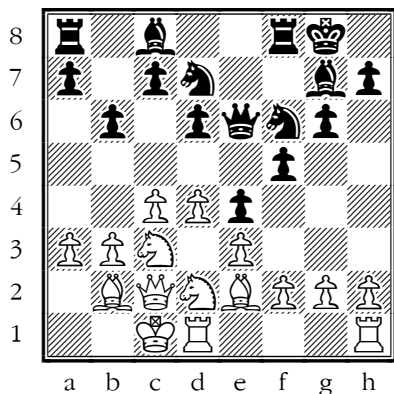
11...Qe6?

Mistake. Nb8 was best.

12.a3?!

Inaccuracy. h3 was best.

12...b6?!



Inaccuracy. c6 was best.

13.Rhg1?!

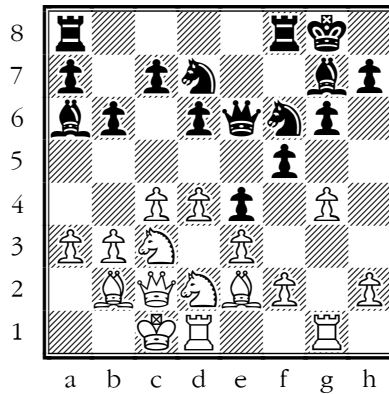
Inaccuracy. h3 was best.

[13.h3 is a better way of implementing the same plan]

13...Ba6?!

Inaccuracy. a6 was best.

14.g4?!



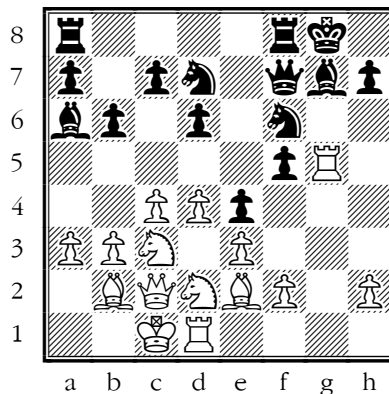
Inaccuracy. Kb1 was best.

14...Qf7??

Blunder. fxg4 was best.

[14...fxg4 15.Nxe4± and White will still have to work hard to open lines against the King.]

15.gxf5 gxf5 16.Rg5!

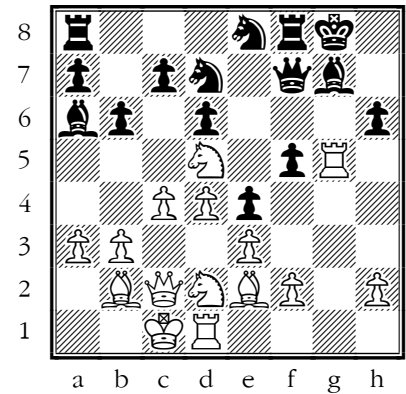


Now all is smooth sailing.

16...Ne8 17.Nd5?!

Inaccuracy. Bh5 was best.

17...h6?!



Inaccuracy. Qxd5 was best.

18.Bh5??

Blunder. Rxf5 was best.

→ TACTIC: fork

[18.Rxf5!]

⇒ Sam Shankland's rule: look twice at the move you want to play but think you can't!

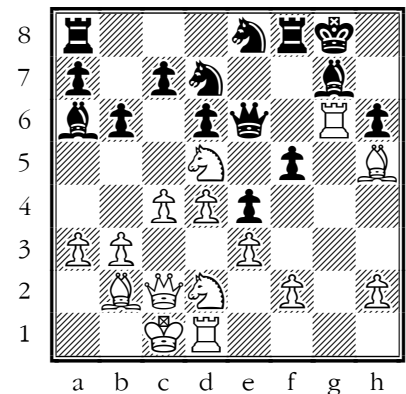
18...Qxf5?? 19.Ne7+]

18...Qe6?

Mistake. Qxd5 was best.

[18...Qxd5! 19.cxd5 hxg5+ with fighting chances]

19.Rg6+-



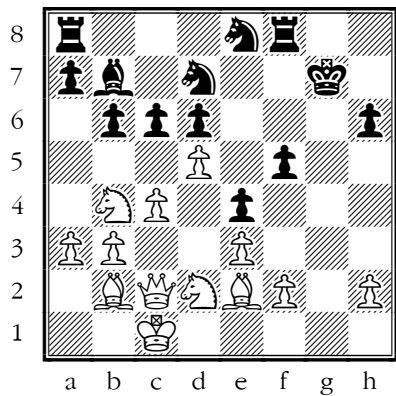
White is firmly in the driving seat with great activity and a clear plan.

19...Qf7 20.Rdg1 Kh8

21.Rxg7 Qxg7 22.Rxg7

Kxg7 23.Be2 c6 24.Nb4 Bb7

25.d5+



1-0

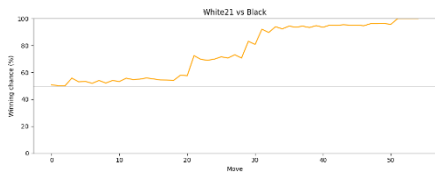
**Oscar Pocknell**

“ I’m sad not to have any of your games, not even the start of them – it’s not a bad idea to be in the habit of recording what you can and looking at it afterwards. If you have some other games written down (or recorded online), I’d be pleased to look at them and offer some tips.”

**Ben Darlington**

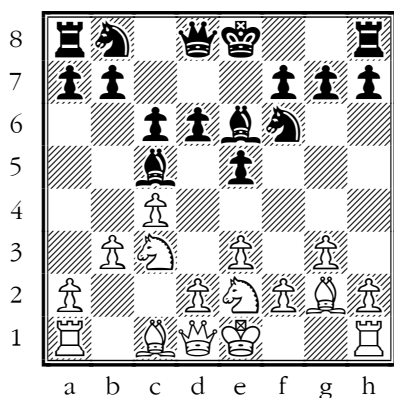
“ Two fine wins and the fragment of the third showed not much wrong there either, so well done. Your openings might do with a brush-up – maybe finding something a bit punchier as White, and something tighter as Black.”

**Darlington, Ben - Mistry\*, Dev**  
A21 English Opening, King’s English



“ After your favourite slow start, you uncoiled powerfully and pushed through very accurately for the win.”

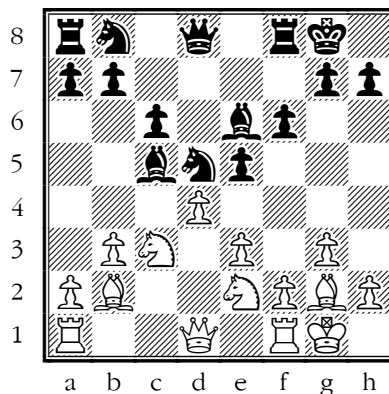
- 1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Bc5 3.g3 Nf6
- 4.Bg2 d6 5.e3 c6 6.Nge2
- Be6 7.b3



I think I have commented before that I'm not a big fan of this slow opening system, but you make it work for you. Black already rather invites you to hit the Bc5 with d4, and now sets up a pawn centre while losing a tempo. White is ideally placed to put pressure on

Black's position once they have park their deckchairs rather awkwardly in the centre.

- 7...d5?! 8.cxd5 Nxd5 9.o-o
- o-o 10.Bb2 f6 11.d4

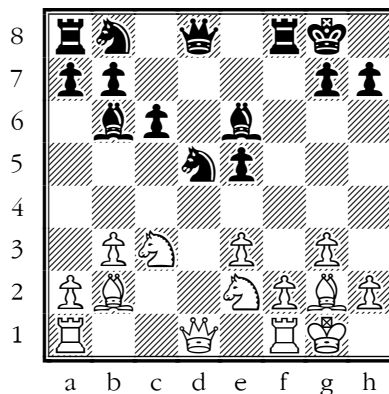


11...Bb6?

Mistake. Nxc3 was best.

This natural-looking retreat loses a pawn.

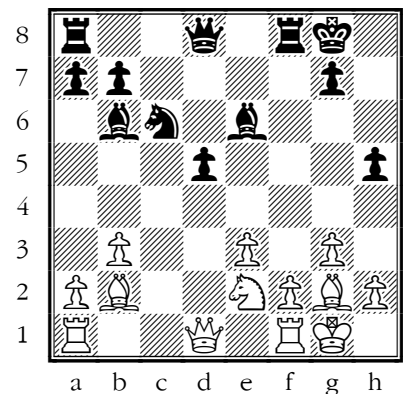
12.dxe5 fxe5



13.Nxd5!

→ TACTIC: discovery

- 13...cxd5 14.Bxe5 Nc6
- 15.Bb2 h5?



Mistake. Qd7 was best.

Black finds a way to lose another pawn.

16.Nf4!

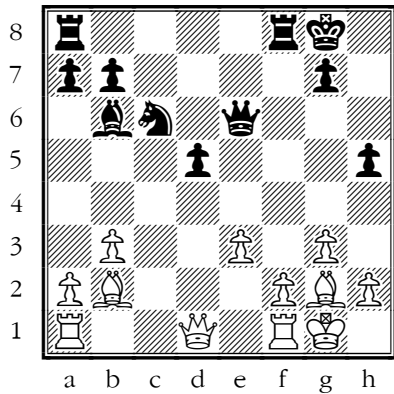
→ TACTIC: fork

16...Qd6?

Mistake. Rxf4 was best.

Black keeps digging their hole ever deeper. Now a piece must go...

17.Nxe6! Qxe6??



...If not a queen too!

**18.Bxd5**

→ then

**18...Qf7 19.Bxf7+ Rxf7**

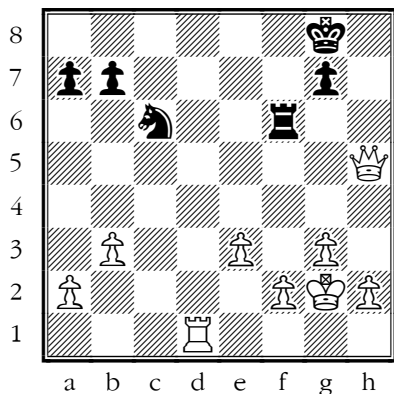
**20.Qxh5**

Black would be forgiven for resigning.

**20...Rd8 21.Rad1 Ne7**

**22.Rxd8+ Bxd8 23.Rd1 Nc6**

**24.Kg2 Bf6 25.Bxf6 Rxf6?**



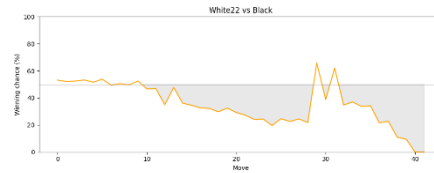
Checkmate is now unavoidable. **gxf6** was best.

**26.Rd7 Rh6 27.Qg5 b6**

**28.Qxg7#**

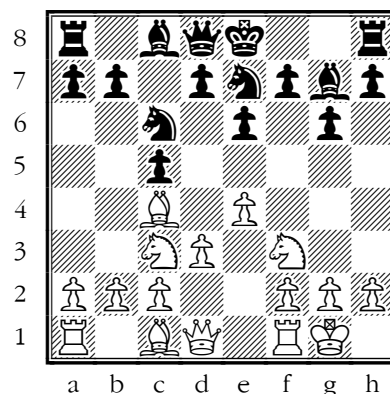
I think you played that game without the slightest mistake.

**Gillman, Beth - Darlington, Ben**  
B30 Sicilian Defence



“ It's sometimes moments when victory seems certain that are the most dangerous. After you declined (or overlooked) a chance to win a piece in the opening, you soon won a piece in a different way. You then looked good for the win, but one loose pawn move, with your King still uncastled, could have led to disaster.”

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.d3 e6 6.o-o Nge7**



A formation rather like your first game with reversed colours.

**7.Be3?**

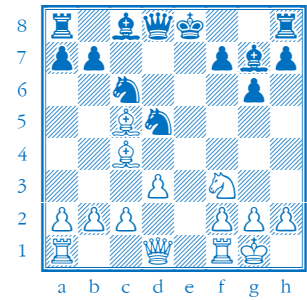
Mistake. **d4** was best.

*[7.d4!? This is a characteristic blow intending to show that you have too many weak Black squares for your Bishop to cope with - see the last game in this collection for a better example. 7...cxd4 8.Nb5 d5 9.exd5 exd5 10.Be2 ±]*

**7...b6??**

Blunder. **d5** was best.

*[7...d5! and ...d4 wins a piece. 8.exd5 exd5 9.Nxd5 Nxd5 10.Bxc5*



*and White gets two pawns for the Knight but it's not enough. Did you see this line? You should have gone for it!]*

**8.Nb5?**

Mistake. **d4** was best.

**8...d5 9.exd5 exd5 10.Bb3 a6 11.Na3?!**

Inaccuracy. **Nc3** was best.

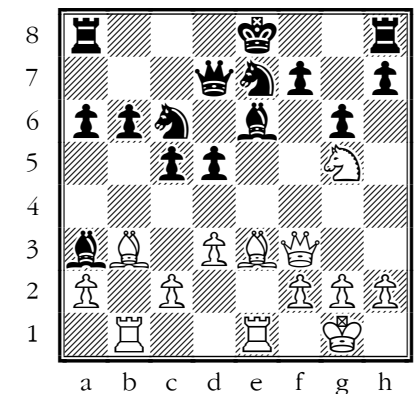
Overlooking something important.

**11...Bxb2 12.Rb1 Bxa3 13.Re1?!**

Inaccuracy. **Bh6** was best.

**13...Be6 14.Ng5 Qd7**

**15.Qf3**



**15...f5??**

Blunder. **h6** was best.

☞ There is always danger early in the game when your King hasn't castled.

**16.c4??**

Blunder. **Nxe6** was best.

*[16.Nxe6! Qxe6 17.Bf4 Qf6 18.Qxd5! and Black's position is being sliced apart. The immediate threat is 19.Rxe7+!! Your extra piece on a3 is irrelevant.. I think that was all a bit*

*too far into the future for White to see clearly]*

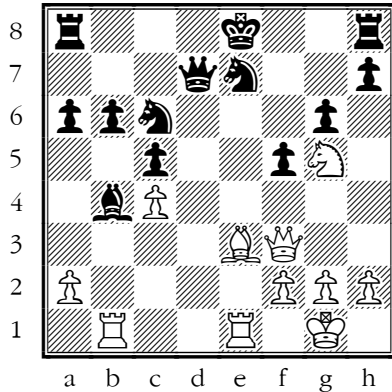
**16...dxc4?!**

Inaccuracy. O-O-O was best.

**17.Bxc4?**

Mistake. dxc4 was best.

**17...Bxc4 18.dxc4 Bb4**

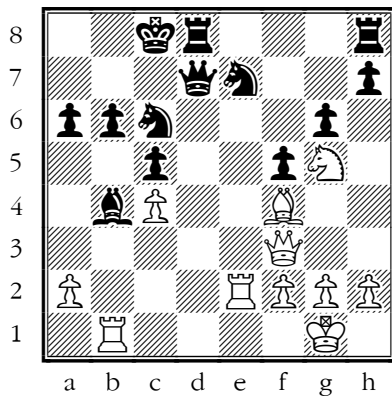


Black's position is still a little awkward but the danger has passed.

**19.Re2?**

Mistake. Red1 was best.

**19...o-o-o 20.Bf4?!**



→ **TACTIC: mate**

Inaccuracy. h4 was best.

**20...Qd1+ 21.Rxd1??**

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Re1 was best.

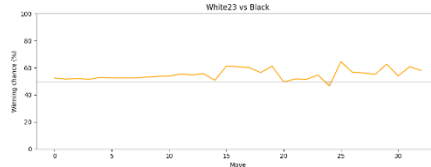
*[21.Re1 Qxf3 22.gxf3 Bxe1→]*

**21...Rxd1+**

**o-1**

**Punshon, Evan - Darlington, Ben**

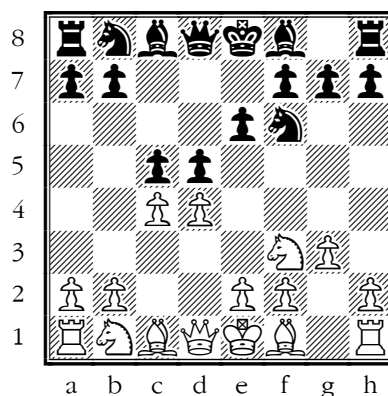
D02 Catalan Opening



“ You might have had lots of adventures in this game but I have only the opening and early middle game.”

**1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.c4 e6**

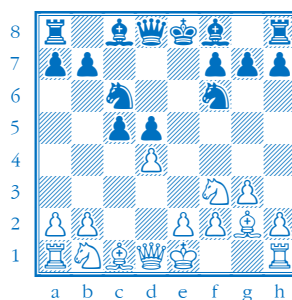
**4.g3 c5**



Are you aiming for a Tarrasch Defence position? Otherwise it's a bit loose against the Catalan

**5.Bg2 Nc6 6.cxd5 Nxd5?!**

*[6...exd5*



*This is the Tarrasch move, trading the potential weakness of the IQP for space and easy development.]*

**7.o-o Be7 8.a3 a5?!**

Inaccuracy. cxd4 was best.

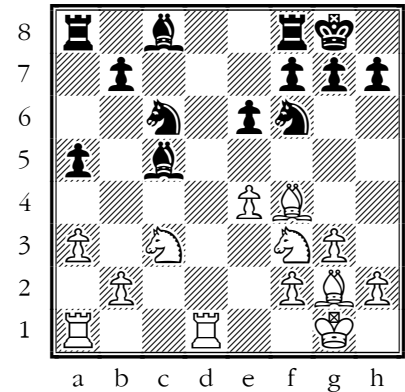
**9.dxc5 Bxc5 10.e4 Nf6**

**11.Nc3?!**

Inaccuracy. Qxd8+ was best.

**11...Qxd1 12.Rxd1 o-o**

**13.Bf4=**



This is equal, but you get sidetracked with your next move, neglecting the development of your Queen's-side, and White takes over the d-file.

☞ **Good development must be completed.**

**13...Nh5?**

Mistake. Ng4 was best.

**14.Bd6?!**

Inaccuracy. Bc7 was best.

**14...Bxd6 15.Rxd6 Nf6?!**

Inaccuracy. e5 was best.

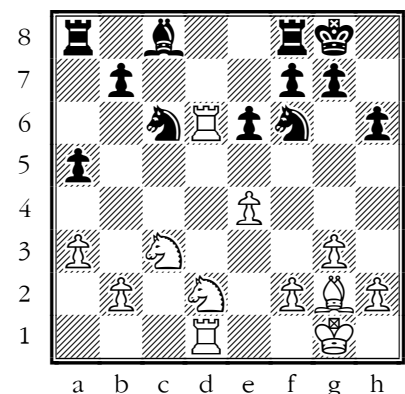
**16.Rad1?!**

Inaccuracy. e5 was best.

**16...h6?!**

Inaccuracy. e5 was best.

**17.Nd2±**



White has control of the d-file and Black's Bc8 is still looking for a role; White surely is better here but Black is far from lost.

**... 1-0**

## Toby Ralph

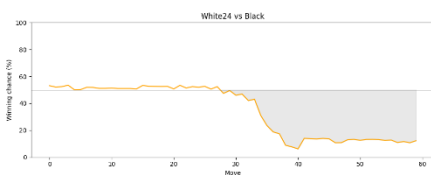
“ I’m sad not to have any of your games, not even the start of them – it’s not a bad idea to be in the habit of recording what you can and looking at it afterwards. If you have some other games written down (or recorded online), I’d be pleased to look at them and offer some tips.”

## Dan Smith

“ Nice to get wins at this level, and especially against the stronger teams – well done. The loss was a shame as it was shaping up to be an interesting game.”

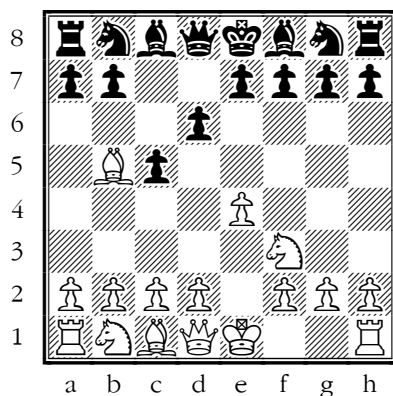
### Rayyan Mussa- Daniel Smith

B52 Sicilian Defence, Moscow Variation

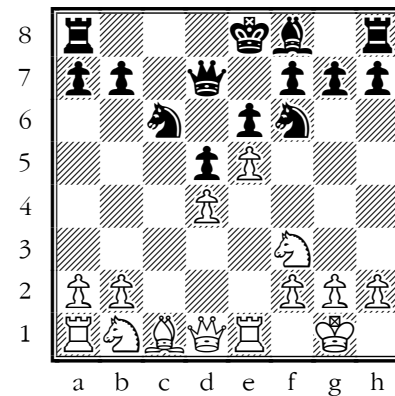


“ A pleasingly smooth game (95% accuracy) in a French pawn structure, and a valuable win against a player from one of the winning teams.”

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+

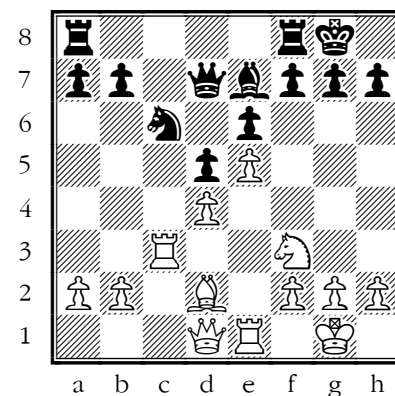


3...Bd7 4.Bxd7+ Qxd7 5.o-o  
o Nf6 6.Re1 Nc6 7.c3 e6  
8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 d5 10.e5



Sensible play on from both sides has led to a French Defence pawn structure; White would prefer for the Bishops to be on light squares.

10...Ne4 11.Nbd2 Nxd2  
12.Bxd2 Be7 13.Rc1 o-o  
14.Rc3=



14...f6!? ±

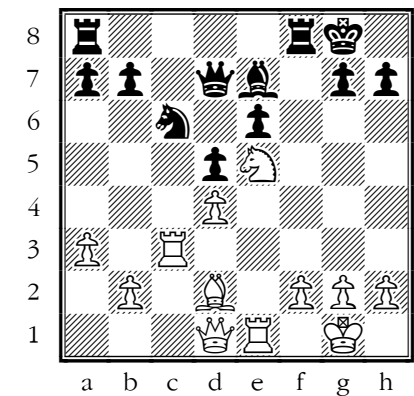
I thought this was obviously the right move, but Stockfish prefers not to make a weakness on e6 and instead manoeuvre on the Queen's-side.

[14...Rfc8 15.a3 b5=]

15.a3!?

Now Black's central initiative gives them a plus.

15...fxe5! ♞ 16.Nxe5?!



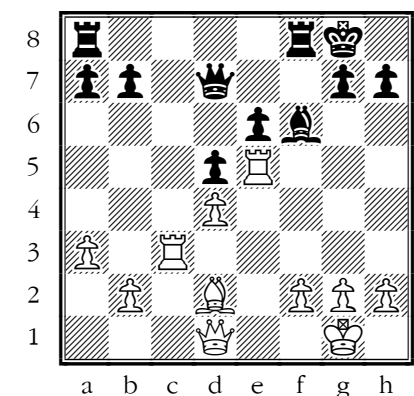
White is trying to use e5 as an outpost, but it backfires.

[16.dxe5]

16...Nxe5 17.Rxe5?

[17.dxe5]

17...Bf6

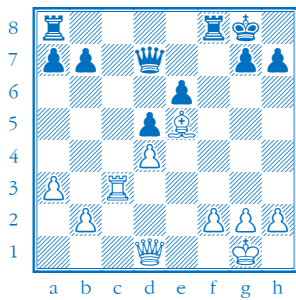


➔ TACTIC: skewer

18.Rh5??

Blunder. Bf4 was best.

[18.Bf4 Bxe5 19.Bxe5]



when the supported Bishop is very strong and gives White compensation for the lost Exchange.]

18...Bxd4 19.Rch3?!

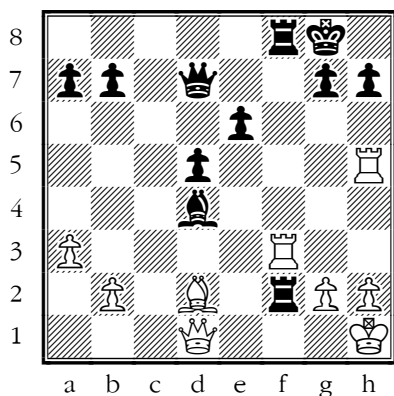
Inaccuracy. Rf3 was best.

[19.Rf3 Rxf3 20.Qxf3 Rf8 21.Qd3 Bxf2+ and Black stands very well.]

19...Rxf2 20.Kh1??

Blunder. Be3 was best.

20...Raf8 21.Rf3



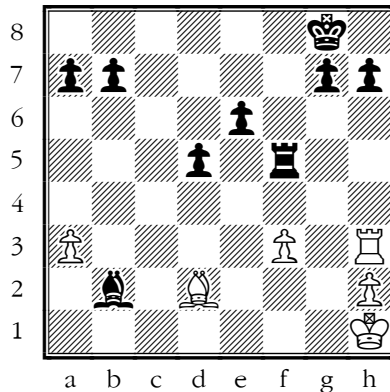
21...R2xf3?

Mistake. R8xf3 was best.

[21...R8xf3! 22.gxf3 Qb5! and White gets mated; 21...Qb5! works too]

22.gxf3 Qf7 23.Rh3 Bxb2

24.Qc2 Qf5 25.Qxf5 Rxf5

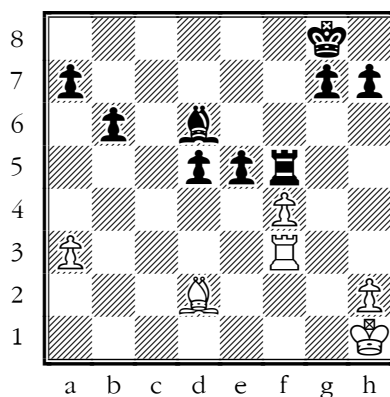


and Black has a winning endgame.

26.f4 Bd4 27.Rd3 Bc5

28.Rc3 b6 29.Rg3 Bd6

30.Rf3 e5

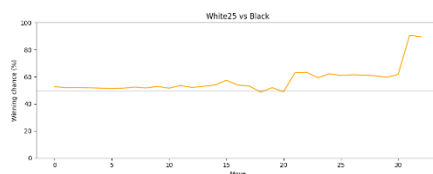


➔ TACTIC: pin

0-1

Groind Anadkumar- Daniel Smith

B22 Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

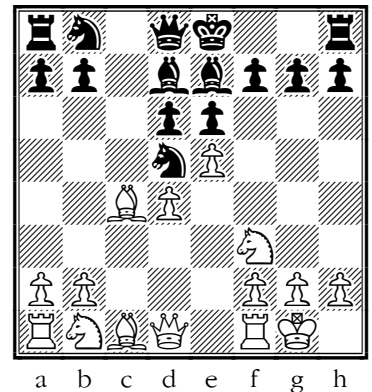


“ White tried an interesting sacrifice of a Queen for three pieces, which on paper is better for you but on the board probably wasn't, yet you promptly lost the Queen.”

1.e4 c5 2.c3 Nf6 3.e5 Nd5

4.Nf3 e6 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4

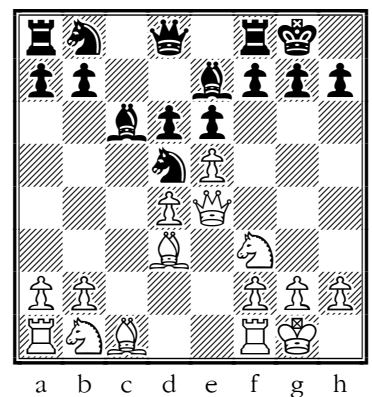
Be7 7.Bc4 d6 8.o-o Bd7



I think this pseudo-fianchetto is a nice idea, but only against Bd3

9.Qe2 o-o 10.Qe4 Bc6

11.Bd3



11...Nf6?

Mistake. g6 was best.

That's a very smart idea which I think is tactically sound but strategically suspect

[11...g6 12.Bh6]

12.exf6!? ±

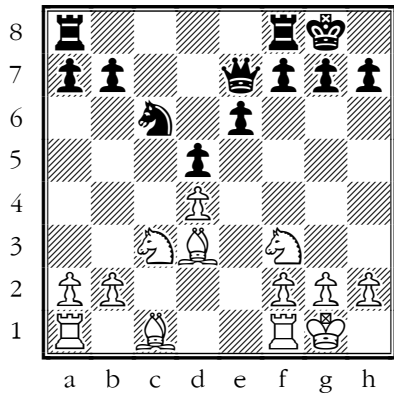
White now tries an interesting sacrifice of a Queen for three pieces, which on paper is better for Black but on the board probably isn't.

[12.Qh4 dxe5 13.Nxe5 Qd5 14.f3]

12...Bxe4 13.fxe7 Qxe7

14.Bxe4 d5 15.Bd3 Nc6

16.Nc3 ±



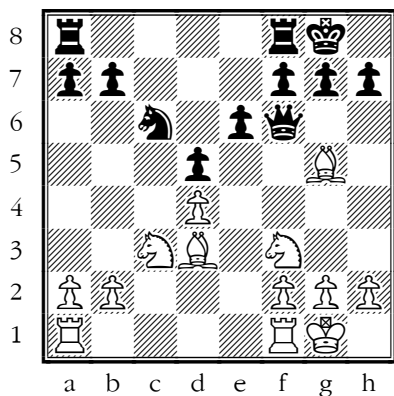
The Queen is struggling to assert her authority, but Black promptly lost the lady.

Positions with material imbalance are hard to judge.

16...Qf6??

Blunder. f6 was best.

17.Bg5

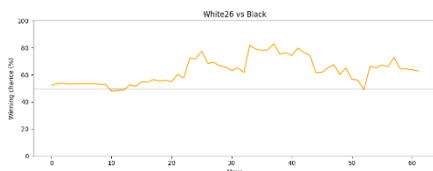


TACTIC: net

1-0

Daniel Smith- Kenul Herath

C45 Scotch Game



“ You worked up a nice attack but Black was able to derail it by swapping Queens; you then started again in the endgame and got through on the Queen's-side.”

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nxc6 dxc6

[5...bxc6 6.Nc3 (6.Bd3)]

6.Bd3?!

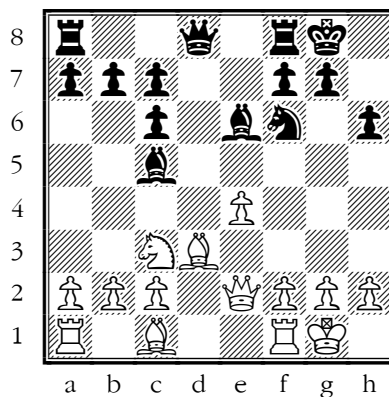
Inaccuracy. Qxd8+ was best.

[6.Qxd8+ Kxd8]

6...Bc5 7.o-o h6?!

Inaccuracy. Be6 was best.

8.Nc3 Be6 9.Qe2 o-o?!



Inaccuracy. Bd4 was best.

10.Na4?!

Inaccuracy. e5 was best.

A one-move attack with a one-move defence It's generally a good idea to hunt down Bishops but after this move and Black's reply, I don't think your position has improved relative to Black's

[10.e5 Clears e4 for the Queen or Knight 10...Nd5 11.Ne4 (11.Qe4)]

10...Be7 11.h3 Qd4?!

Inaccuracy. Nd7 was best.

[11...Nd7 12.Be3]

12.Nc3 a6?

Mistake. Nd7 was best.

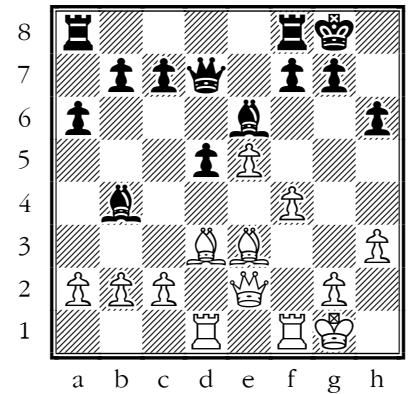
[12...Nd7]

13.Be3 Qd7 14.Rad1 Bb4

15.e5 Nd5 16.Nxd5?!

Inaccuracy. Ne4 was best.

16...cxd5 17.f4



17...Qc6??

Blunder. f5 was best.

[17...f5]

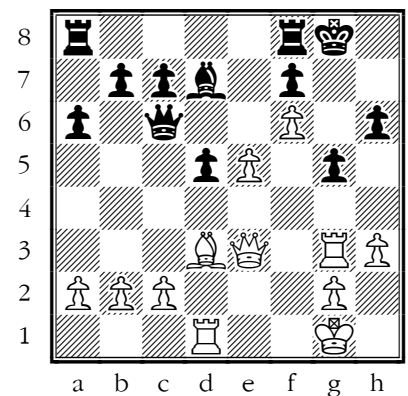
18.f5 Bd7 19.f6 Bc5 20.Rf3 Bxe3+ 21.Qxe3?!

Inaccuracy. Rxe3 was best.

21...g5?!

Inaccuracy. Qb6 was best.

22.Rg3?



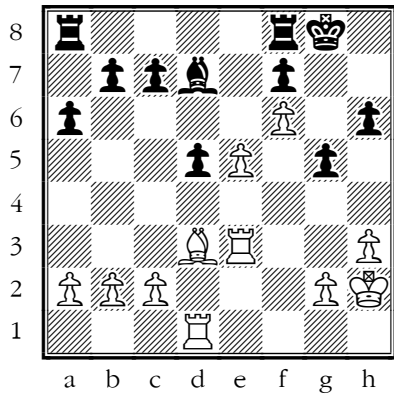
Mistake. h4 was best.

Your move threatens the magnificent Rg5+!! but Black has a simple enough defence.

22...Qb6 23.Kh2?!

Inaccuracy. Qxb6 was best.

23...Qxe3 24.Rxe3



Now with the Queens off, it's not obvious where you should focus your efforts. On the King's-side, there is an obvious target, but not an obvious way of breaking through.

**24...Be6 25.Rg3?!**

Inaccuracy. h4 was best.

*[25.h4 g4 26.Kg3! and then the King can play an active role. You have a strong position on the King's-side*

*but no obvious way of making progress.]*

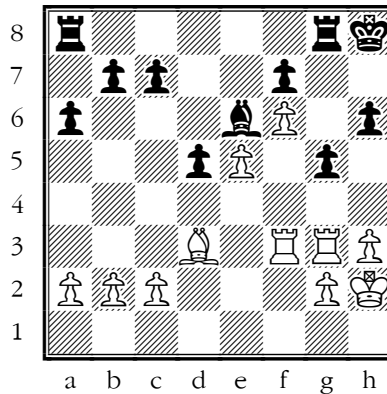
**25...Kh8?!**

Inaccuracy. c5 was best.

**26.Rf1?**

Mistake. h4 was best.

**26...Rg8 27.Rff3?!**



Inaccuracy. Rgf3 was best.

**27...h5??**

Blunder. c5 was best.

*[27...c5 Black should mobilise their own pawn majority]*

**28.Bf5! Raf8 29.Bxe6 fxe6**

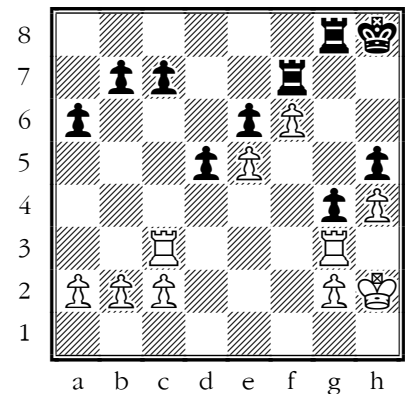
Now White has a passed pawn.

**30.Rc3?!**

Inaccuracy. Rb3 was best.

Correctly opening up a second front.

**30...Rf7 31.h4 g4**



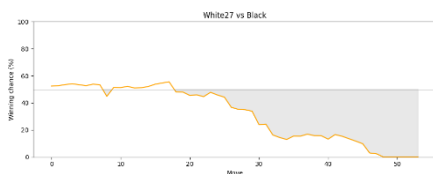
... 1-0

## Joe Forty

“ A tough day at the office! I know you to be a fine player with a keen tactical eye, but you couldn't get going in these games. It feels like a bit of opening study would do you some good – not to learn lots of unlikely variations, but to be able to take a plan off the shelf that you know has been successful in the type of position in front of you. ”

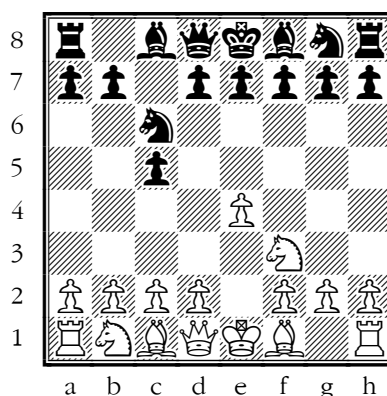
**Forty, Joe - Amoako, Selikem**

B31 Sicilian Defence, Rossolimo Variation



“ You came out of the opening on roughly equal terms but you didn't hit on a workable plan, weakened your king's-side and it went rapidly downhill after that. ”

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6**



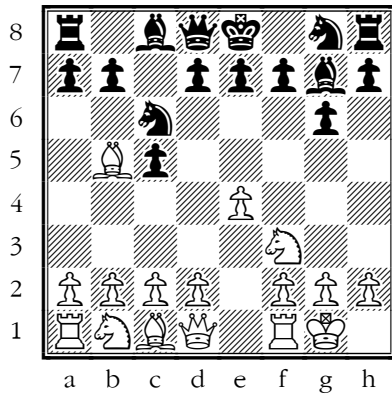
**3.Bb5**

Unlike the main lines of the Sicilian, this aims at a flexible strategic struggle in the manner of the Ruy Lopez. I'm not convinced this is a good fit for your style.

*[3.d4 is the main move, leading to well-known systems like the Classical, Accelerated Dragon, Taimanov and so on.;*

*3.c3 is not a bad moment for this approach.]*

**3...g6 4.o-o Bg7 ±**



### 5.c4?! =

A new move in this position! White will normally manoeuvre with a closed centre or prepare d2–d4 with c3.

*[5.Bxc6; 5.Re1; 5.c3 are the three most common moves played in this position]*

### 5...a6?!

White will normally volunteer to take the Knight and Black should not take the time to ask.

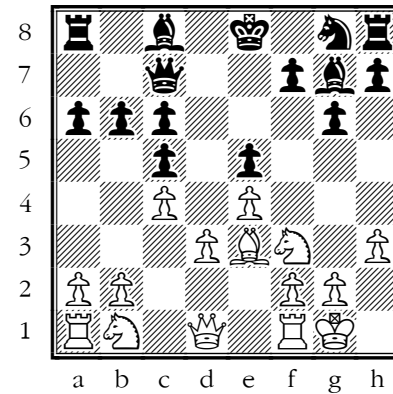
### 6.Bxc6 dxc6

I quite like the bishop B5 system but your rather home-made approach didn't work out well, and horrid King's-side weaknesses proved fatal.

### 7.h3 e5 8.d3=

It's about equal. White's DSB works well with the pawns on light squares, but the weak d3 pawn and that hole on d4 severely limit White's prospects.

### 8...Qc7?! 9.Be3 b6 ±



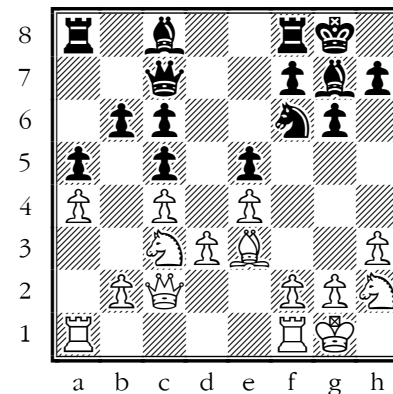
despite a rather homemade opening you have come out with a small plus. But the next move starts a long slide downhill.

### 10.a4? ♣

Mistake. Nc3 was best.

Black wasn't threatening ...b5, but this move wouldn't prevent it if they were. You need moves with more grip at this level, and perhaps more than that, you need an effective plan.

### 10...a5 11.Nc3 Nf6 12.Qc2 o-o 13.Nh2



I thought this might be preparation for f2–f4, which would fit the position better.

➔ Picking the right plan is hard to do – but there's probably examples from top games that you could use.

### 13...Nh5 14.g4?!

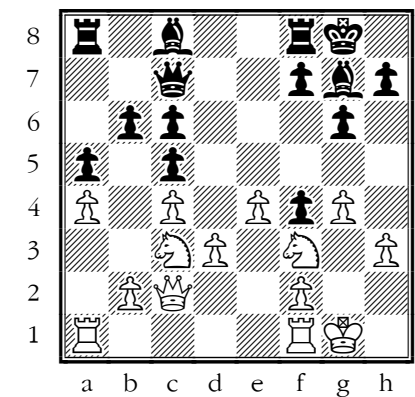
Inaccuracy. Ne2 was best.

This helps Black's King's-side attack more than White's!

### 14...Nf4 15.Bxf4 exf4

This is now better for Black: they have the Bishop pair and White's pawn structure looks more like draughts than chess!

### 16.Nf3?



Mistake. Kg2 was best.

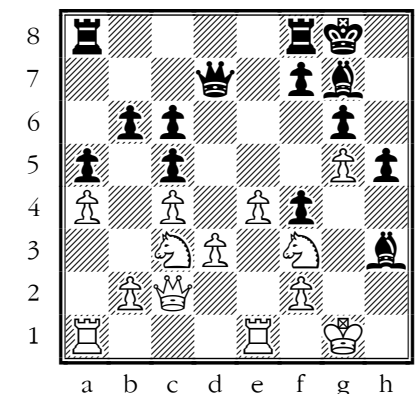
### 16...h5!

Shaking up the White structure: White must lose material.

### 17.g5?!

Inaccuracy. Kg2 was best.

### 17...Bxh3 18.Rfe1 Qd7



The White King's pawn cover is blown open and Black can invade.

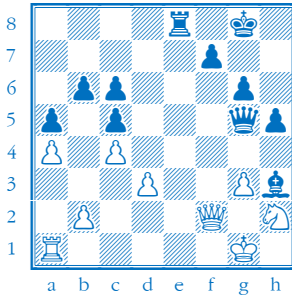
### 19.Nh2 f3 20.e5 Qf5 21.Ne4 Bxe5

It's hard to give White advice here.

### 22.Qd2??

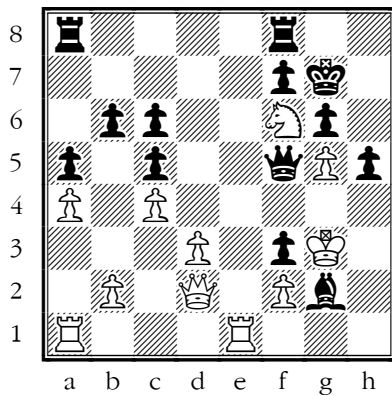
Checkmate is now unavoidable. Ng3 was best.

*[22.Ng3 Bxg3 23.fxg3 Rae8 24.Qd2 Re2! 25.Rxe2 fxe2 26.Qxe2 Qxg5 27.Qf2 Re8]*



and White can now avoid imminent checkmate but this is a lost position.]

22...Bxh2+ 23.Kxh2 Bg2  
24.Nf6+ Kg7 25.Kg3

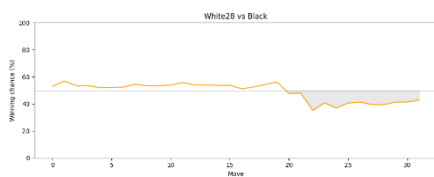


➔ **TACTIC: mate**

This is all I have; it's mate in three:  
25...h4+ 26.Kh2 Qh3+ 27.Kg1 Qh1#  
...0-1

### Forty, Joe - Cook, William

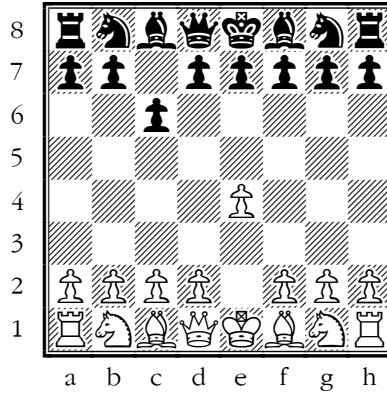
B10 Caro-Kann Defence, Exchange Variation



“ I don't have much of this game so most of my notes below are about the opening, which again looked a bit home-made, and after 12 moves, Black stood better. A lot is known about the openings and you don't have to go it alone! It's true, you can waste a lot of your time as

a young player memorising opening variations that never get played, but I think a little bit more science would do you good.”

1.e4 c6

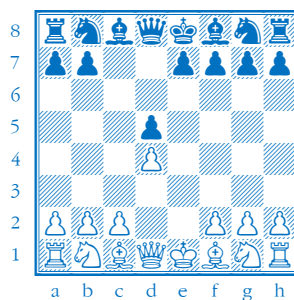


➔ In many systems and defences for Black, the second player would like to develop the king side first and castle, so often the last piece to be developed is the bishop on c8. This can often be an awkward piece to find a good home for. So, when deciding how to set out your stall as White, have a think about what Black might like to do with that Bishop, and see if you can stop it!

In the main variations of the Ruy Lopez and the Queen's Gambit, there is a theme of Black struggling to find a good way to develop the Bc8, and it can also be true for some lines of the Caro-Kann.

2.Nf3

[2.d4! d5 3.exd5 cxd5



If you are going to swap pawns against the Caro-Kann, then try instead this move order with 4. Bd3!

this move takes F5 away from the bishop on C8

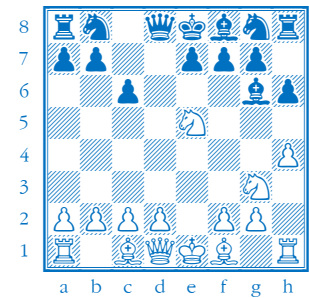
(4.c4!? is my usual recommendation)

4...Nc6 5.c3 Nf6 6.Bf4 now Black would like to develop the Bishop on C8 and then play E6 and develop the King side 6...Bg4 7.Qb3! Qd7 (7...Na5 8.Qc2) 8.Nd2 e6 9.Ngf3 Black has just about got what they want, but they are a move or two away from castling, and the Bishop on g4 is pinning nothing. 9...Bd6 10.Bxd6 Qxd6 11.o-o o-o 12.Rfe1 Bf5 13.Ne5]

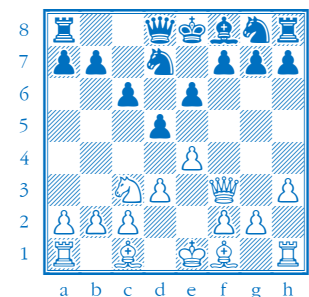
2...d5 3.exd5

this move doesn't fit quite so well with 2.Nf3 – are you making this up as you go along?

[3.Nc3 is the main try here, and was a favourite of bobby fisher 3...Bg4 (3...dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5? 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.h4 h6 7.Ne5!



this is one of the points of White's move order 7...Bh7 8.Qh5 g6 9.Bc4 e6 10.Qe2) 4.h3 Bxf3 5.Qxf3 e6 6.d3 (6.Be2) 6...Nd7

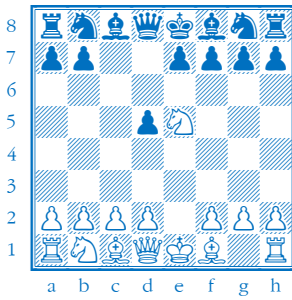


7.Bd2 (7.g3 is like a King's Indian Attack) 7...Ngf6 8.g4]

3...cxd5 4.d4

[[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caro%E2%80%99s\\_Kann\\_Defence#Apocalypse\\_Attack](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caro%E2%80%99s_Kann_Defence#Apocalypse_Attack) ]

[4.Ne5

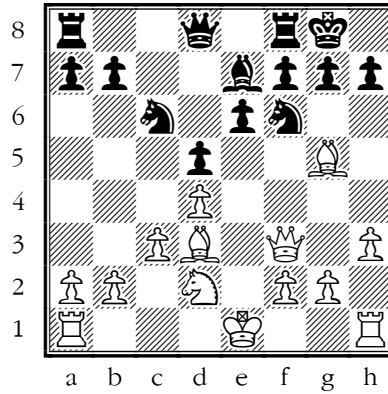


Karjakin, Sergey - Wei Yi, 1-0, Armageddon: Chess for TV, 2019, <https://lichess.org/QUIVO2dE> this very modern move known as the ApocalypseAttack, also has it in mind to make it awkward for Black to develop the Bishop from c8. 4...Bf5? 5.Bb5+!±

4...Bg4

[4...Nc6!; 4...Nf6; 4...Bf5]

5.h3 Bxf3 6.Qxf3 Nf6 7.Bd3 Nc6 8.c3 e6 9.Bg5 Be7 10.Nd2 o-o ±



You have a 'normal' White plus, including the Bishop pair, and stand a little better.

11.Bxf6?! ♖

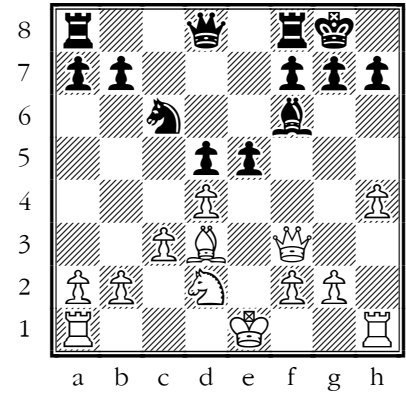
Stockfish ignores this move but I will not! Whose position does this benefit? You should either do what will help you (castle) or make unwise what Black wants to do (play ...e5)

[11.h4?! e5! ♜

11.Qe2 Qc7 12.Nf3 ♚

11.o-o e5 12.dxe5 Nxe5 13.Qe2 Nxd3 14.Qxd3 ♚]

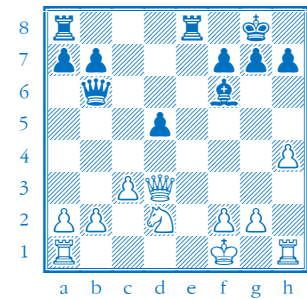
11...Bxf6 12.h4?! e5 ♜



Threatening a fork on e4

This is all I have but a plausible line is:

13.dxe5 Nxe5 14.Qg3 Nxd3+ 15.Qxd3 Re8+ 16.Kf1 Qb6 ♚



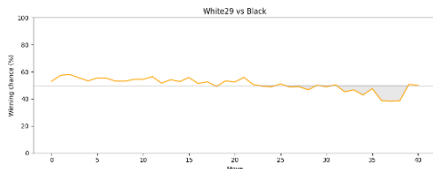
and Black stands rather better

... 0-1

## Viacheslav Ovcharenko

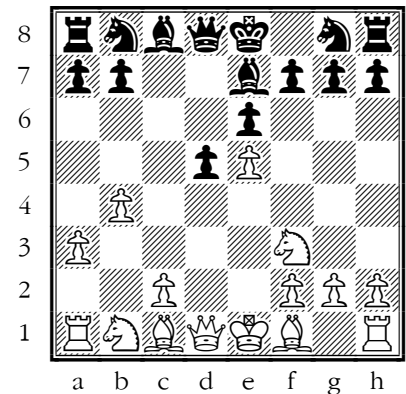
“ There’s not a lot wrong with your chess of course – and nothing general, I think the devil is all in the specifics – clock handling in the first game, the opening in the second, and a moment’s carelessness in the third. Your rescue in the last game was truly heroic!”

Ovcharenko, Viacheslav - Prabhu, Vismith  
B12 Caro-Kann Defence, Advance Variation



rest of the game, but I think the clock was a big factor in the loss.”

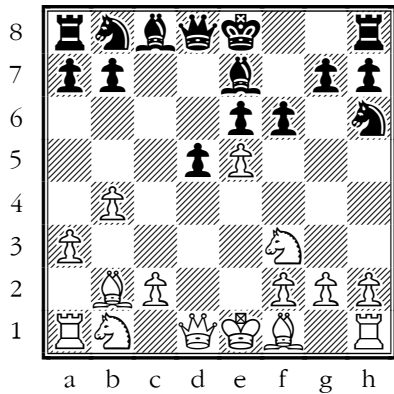
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 e6 5.a3 Bxc5 6.b4 Be7 7.Nf3



A position well-known to theory; White hopes to show a small plus.

7...f6 8.Bb2 Nh6 ±

“ Despite some impressive book knowledge, you couldn't quite extract an advantage from the opening. I don't know the whole story of the



Played only once before.

[Garfullina, Leya - Khotenashvili, B., 1-0, World Rapid Women 2023, https://lichess.org/OkLeiRH](https://lichess.org/OkLeiRH)

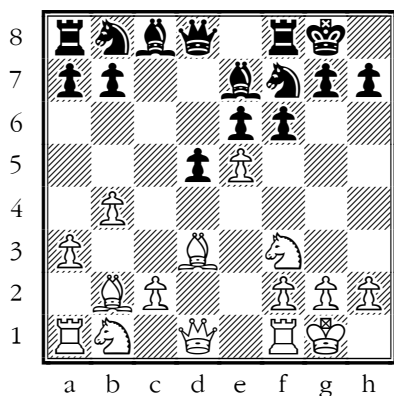
[8...a5 9.b5 Nd7 10.c4 Nxe5 11.Nxe5 fxe5 12.Bxe5 Nf6 13.Be2]

### 9.Bd3

[9.c4 is the key move but its timing is crucial]

“ Chess is a matter of delicate judgement, knowing when to punch and how to duck. ” – Bobby FISCHER

### 9...Nf7N 10.o-o o-o?!



Inaccuracy. Nd7 was best.

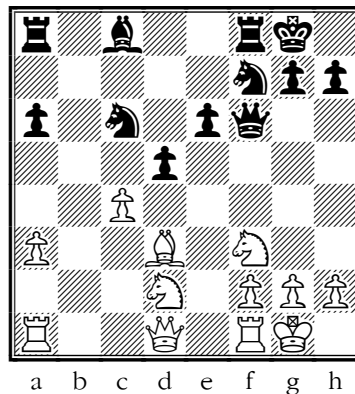
### 11.Nbd2

[11.c4! unsettles Black's pawn structure before they have got their pieces sorted out.]

### 11...a5 12.bxa5=

[12.c4!]

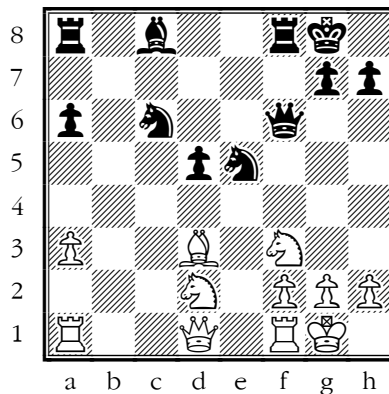
### 12...Nc6 13.exf6 Bxf6 14.Bxf6 Qxf6 15.a6 bxa6 16.c4=



Black is now better able to cope with this challenge.

[16.Re1]

### 16...Nfe5 17.cxd5 exd5



An unusual pawn formation which we sometimes get out of the French Tarrasch: Black has a passed d-pawn but this can be blockaded and might even be a weakness more than an asset, then White can try to make progress with other goals.

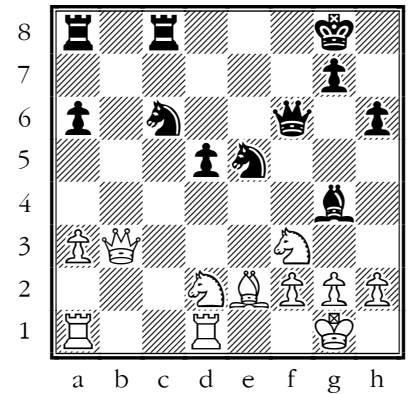
### 18.Qc2 h6 19.Rfd1?

Mistake. Qc5 was best.

### 19...Bg4 20.Be2 Rfc8?!

Inaccuracy. Kh8 was best.

### 21.Qb3



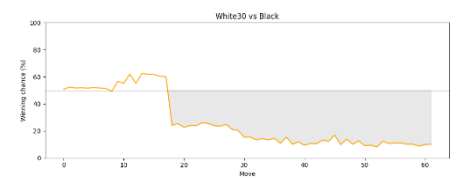
I think the clock got you in the end, but this position offers equal chances.

[21.Qc5!]

... 0-1

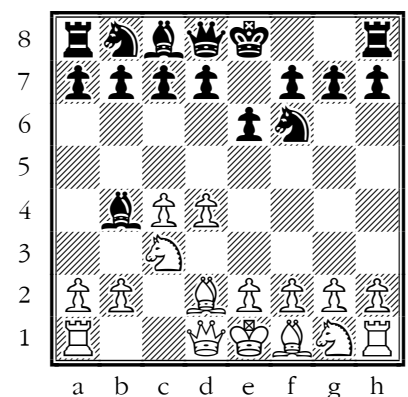
Belochkin, David - Ovcharenko, Viacheslav

E20 Nimzo-Indian Defence



“ The opening wasn't a success for you but White suddenly donated a piece, after which you neither slipped nor looked at all likely to slip. ”

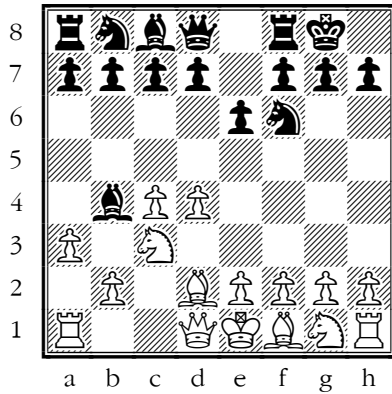
### 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Bd2



Always thought of as a beginner's move, this is now being researched at high levels: 700 master games have been played.

➤ Artemiev, Vladislav - Aronian, Levon, 1-0, Nations Cup Online Prelim, 2020, <https://lichess.org/FAi66BVQ>

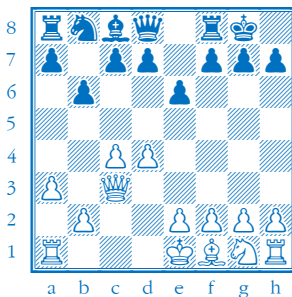
4...0-0 5.a3



5...Be7?!

This concedes the centre to White

[5...Bxc3! White won't be able to get everything they want. 6.Bxc3 Ne4 7.Qc2 Nxc3 8.Qxc3 b6=



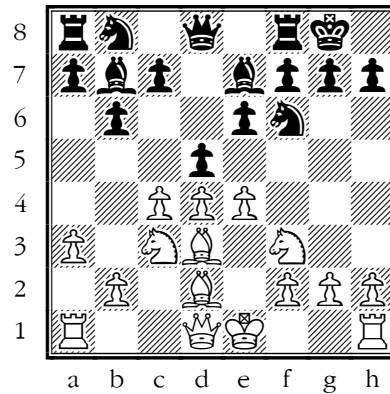
9.e4 Bb7 (9...d5 10.cxd5 exd5 11.e5 c5) 10.Qe3 c5=]

6.e4! b6?! ±

A normal Nimzo sort of move, but I am worried about that big White centre!

[6...d5!? isn't lovely but fights for space.]

7.Nf3 Bb7 8.Bd3 ± d5!



Making a challenge at last.

☞ You cannot allow your opponent to dominate the centre of the board.

9.e5 Ne4 10.Nxd5??

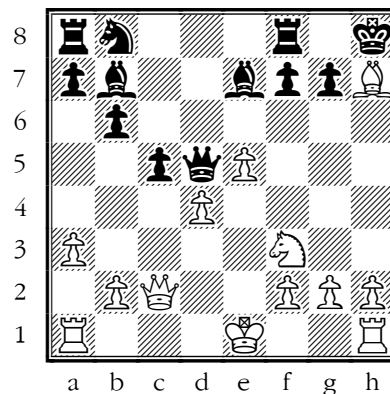
Blunder. cxd5 was best.

White has got their wires crossed.

10...exd5 11.cxd5 Nxd2

12.Qxd2 Qxd5 13.Qc2 c5

14.Bxh7+ Kh8



You're a comfortable piece ahead and the rest of the game proceeds without incident.

15.dxc5?!

Inaccuracy. O-O-O was best.

15...g6 16.Bxg6 fxg6

17.Qxg6 Qe4+ 18.Qxe4

Bxe4 19.c6 a6?!

Inaccuracy. Nxc6 was best.

20.Ke2 Nxc6 21.Nd2 Bxg2

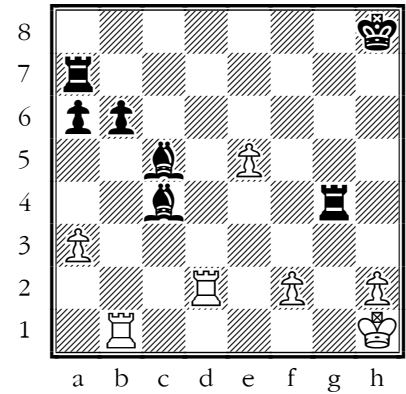
22.Rhg1 Bd5 23.Rg3 Ra7

24.b3 Rf4 25.Rh3+ Rh4

26.Rd3 Nd4+ 27.Kf1 Nxb3

28.Rb1 Nxd2+ 29.Rxd2

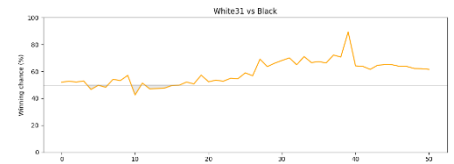
Bc4+ 30.Kg1 Rg4+ 31.Kh1 Bc5



... 0-1

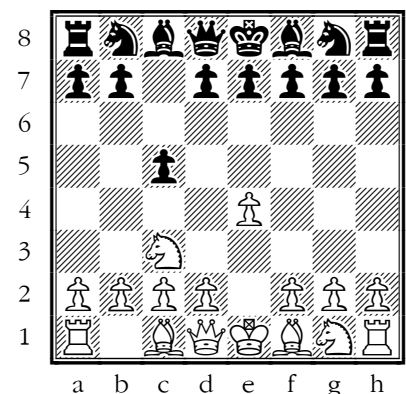
Spinney, Elliott - Ovcharenko, Viacheslav

B23 Sicilian Defence, Closed Variation



“ I think you mixed systems a bit in the opening, and White was able to saddle you with an IQP and even win it, heading for a Queen endgame with excellent chances. That you came out with a win is astonishing and a great tribute to your character and skill.”

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3



2...e6

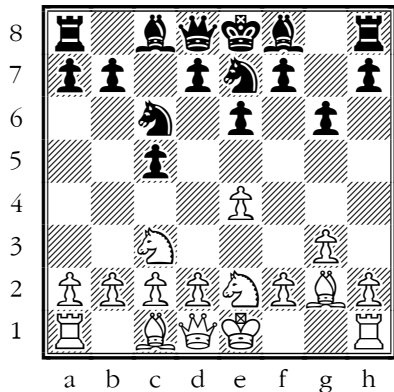
You can play something less committal here.

[2...Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.d3 d6 6.Be3 (6.f4)]

### 3.g3

[3.Nge2!? can be awkward to meet 3...d5 (3...Nc6 4.g3 g6 5.d4) 4.exd5 exd5 5.d4±]

### 3...Nc6 4.Bg2 Nge7 5.Nge2 g6



I quite like Black's flexible set-up, particularly against the English Opening, but White can show a problem with it.

### 6.o-o?!

Inaccuracy. d4 was best.

[6.d4! This switch to an Open Sicilian leaves you with dark-square weaknesses.]

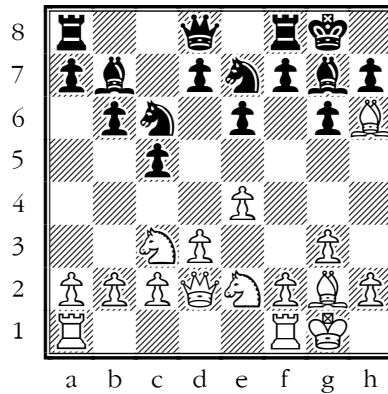
### 6...Bg7

White has missed their chance.

### 7.d3 o-o 8.Be3 b6

[8...d6 9.d4!? Qb6!?!]

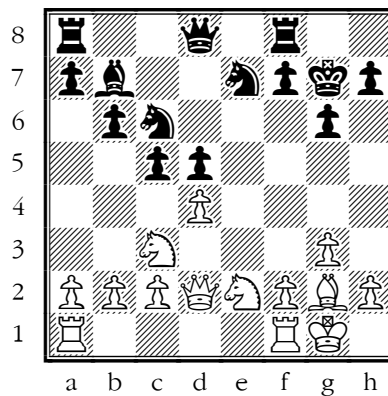
### 9.Qd2 Bb7 10.Bh6



It might feel like White is trying a King's-side attack but they have a flexible position that can be turned to other ends.

### 10...d5 11.Bxg7 Kxg7

### 12.exd5 exd5 13.d4!

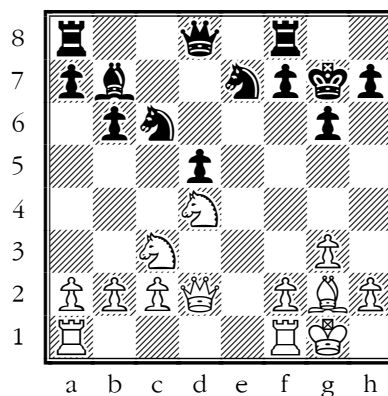


White turns their focus to the central Black pawns.

### 13...cxd4

[13...Nf5! is best, sacrificing a pawn 14.dxc5 d4 15.Ne4 Ne5 16.cxb6 Qxb6±]

### 14.Nxd4 ±



White has saddled Black with an IQP under better circumstances than usual (dark-squared Bishops

exchanged, Bg2 stronger than Bb7) and gets good prospects of an advantage.

### 14...Ne5?

Mistake. Qd6 was best.

### 15.b3?!

Inaccuracy. Rfe1 was best.

White should try to avoid creating a weakness.

[15.Rfe1! e.g. 15...Nc4 16.Qf4! Nxb2?? 17.Qe5+ Kg8 18.Qxe7+- winning a piece]

### 15...Rc8?!

Inaccuracy. Qd6 was best.

### 16.Rfe1 N5c6 17.Rad1 Re8

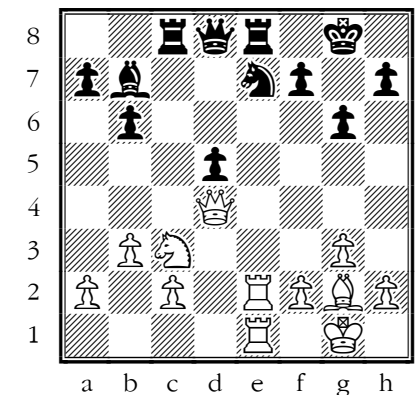
### 18.Re2!?

[18.Bh3!?, 18.Nxd5! Nxd5 19.Rxe8 Qxe8 20.Bxd5 Qe5 21.c4+-]

### 18...Nxd4

[18...Qd6 19.Ndb5 Qc5 20.Nxd5 Red8]

### 19.Qxd4+ Kg8 20.Rde1



White has continued sensibly and has created a bit of pressure on the Black position.

### 20...Qd7??

Blunder. Bc6 was best.

The loose Queen position could have proved disastrous.

➔ **Undefended pieces should always make your antennae twitch!**

### 21.Nxd5??

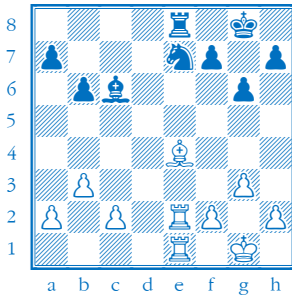
Blunder. Ne4 was best.

A logical pay-off for White's pressure, but it's not the best move!

[21. Ne4!

→ TACTIC: fork

This starts a fairly forcing line:  
 21...dxe4! 22. Qxd7 Bc6 23. Qxe8+!  
 (23. Qxa7 f5+ is also obviously good for White) 23...Rxe8 24. Bxe4+—



with a straightforward winning position]

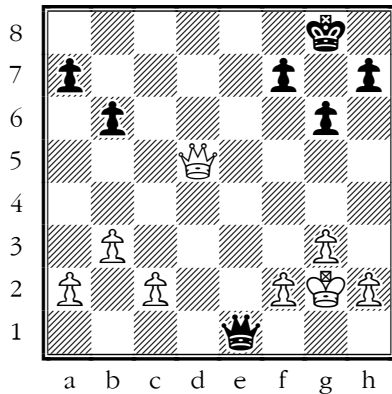
21...Nxd5 22. Rxe8+

[22. c4!± was even better]

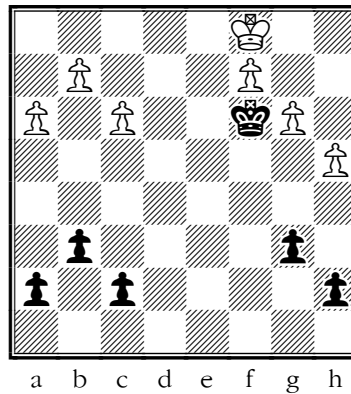
22...Rxe8 23. Rxe8+ Qxe8

24. Bxd5 Bxd5 25. Qxd5

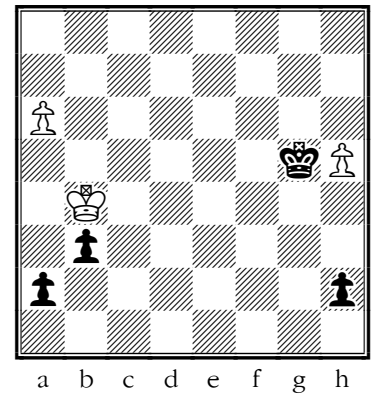
Qe1+ 26. Kg2



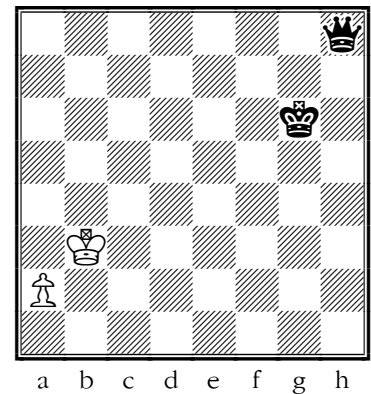
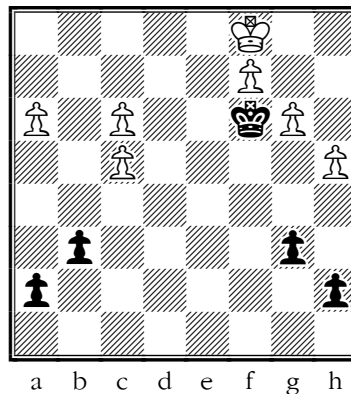
White is a clear pawn ahead with every prospect of victory. But then a chess miracle was performed... I think I can remember the story if not the exact positions.



At some point the Queens came off, which I thought would be fatal! But Black activated the King (with I expect some cooperation from White).



The opposing Kings then raided opposite wings.

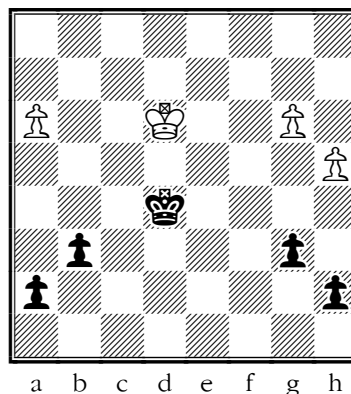


Black was able to promote first and seal the win with:

1...Qa1!

A remarkable save – very well done.

Then Black was able to hobble the White King's-side majority, and attack it with the King.



Having won a pawn on the King's-side, Black then recentralised:

## Appendix 1: Opening notes from previous years

<a href="#">u14_20043.pdf</a> 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
<a href="#">u14_2005b.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2005	Openings: Two Knights', French Defence, Scotch Game, QP Game and Q Gambit, K Gambit, Sicilian Defence, Old Stodge
<a href="#">u14_2006.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2006	Openings: Time-wasting, Italian Game & Old Stodge, French Defence, Queen's Gambit Declined
<a href="#">u14_2007.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2007	Openings: General Opening Principles, Ruy Lopez
<a href="#">u14_2008.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2008	Openings: Queen's Gambit, French Defence, Sicilian, Four Knights, Stonewall
<a href="#">u14_2009.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2009	Openings: General Principles, Old Stodge, Italian Game, Sicilian, Queen's Gambit, Ruy Lopez, Scandinavian Defence,
<a href="#">u14_2010.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2010	Openings: Old Stodge & London System, Double King-Pawn Opening, Semi-Open Games, Q Gambit, Unusual Openings
<a href="#">u14_2011.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2011	Openings: Petroff and Philidor Defences (and another rant about Old Stodge)
<a href="#">u14_2012.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2012	Openings: Bishop's Opening, and the Caro-Kann and King's Indian defences
<a href="#">u14_2013.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2013	Openings: Colle, Scandinavian, Danish, Hypermodern, QG Accepted & Slav
<a href="#">u14_2014.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2014	Openings: The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit
<a href="#">u14_2015.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2015	Openings: tips on Ruy Lopez, Two Knights' Defence, Philidor Defence, Queen's Gambit
<a href="#">u14_2016.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2016	
<a href="#">u14_2017.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2017	Openings: tips on Old Stodge, Two Knights
<a href="#">u14_2018.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2018	Openings: tips on Old Stodge, King's Gambit, Colle, Queen's Gambit, Ruy Lopez, Playing Black in QP Openings, Sicilian
<a href="#">u14_2019.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2019	Openings: tips on Old Stodge, Colle, Meeting the Sicilian
<a href="#">u14_2020.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2020	Openings: play proper openings!
<a href="#">u14_2023.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2023	Openings: Old Stodge, French Defence Exchange Variation
<a href="#">u14_2024.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2024	Openings: Two Knights' Defence
<a href="#">u14_2025.pdf</a> U14 Jamboree games with comments 2025	Openings: Hypermodern openings

## Appendix 2: Analysing your own games

Depending on how much time you have, you can do any or all of these things:

- **Make some notes after the game as soon as you can**
  1. What were you thinking? First of all, try and write down the main things you thought about during the game. Who was better or worse at each stage? Which moves were you sure of, which were you unsure of? Which moves were good or not so good? What were the alternative moves you thought about? This records your own thoughts, and you can come back and do the rest later. Can you tell the story of the game in a couple of sentences?
  2. What does the textbook say? Which side turned off the main line of the opening first? You might want to look up what you should have played in the opening. You don't have to know every move, but it's a good goal always to have your opponent be the one who runs out of book moves first.
  3. What went wrong? Next, try and find improvements — of the alternative moves you thought about, do you now think any of them were better than what you played? Can you find a better move than any of the ones you thought about at the time? Focus on (a) big mistakes not little ones, and (b) positions where the evaluation changed significantly (winning → equal, equal → losing). These moments where the expected result changes are the ones to learn from.
  4. Better next time? If you find some improvements in your later play, try and remember the point for later games. Improvement comes from fixing *thinking errors*, not just book moves or noticing a tactic.
- **When you have a group of reviewed games:**
  1. **Classify your mistakes by type**

For each serious error, label it e.g. Tactical mistake, Positional misunderstanding, Wrong or absent plan, Time trouble / too fast, Opening knowledge, Endgame technique. Are there themes? Patterns matter more than individual blunders. And a hard question: *why did you make that mistake?* If you can answer that question, you can think about a cure.
  2. **Turn 'better next time' lessons into rules or reminders**

e.g. "Don't push flank pawns when behind in development"; "In endgames, activate the king earlier — no need to castle"
  3. **Track recurring themes across games**

Keep a simple list of common issues (e.g. "missed back-rank tactics," "overoptimistic attacks"). Again, then you can think about a cure.
- **Compare with model games in similar positions**

If a game featured a common structure or opening, look at how strong players handle those positions. This helps you replace any mistakes or confusion with better ideas.

And most importantly:

- **You can do all this on paper or using a computer.**

BUT

### ➡ Only turn on a chess engine to check your conclusions

Use the engine to:

1. Confirm or refute your analysis
2. Reveal tactical shots you missed
3. Suggest better plans

Don't just click through moves—pause and understand *why* the engine prefers something
4. If you are doing the thinking, your thinking can improve. If the computer is doing all the work, then I can expect only the computer to improve!