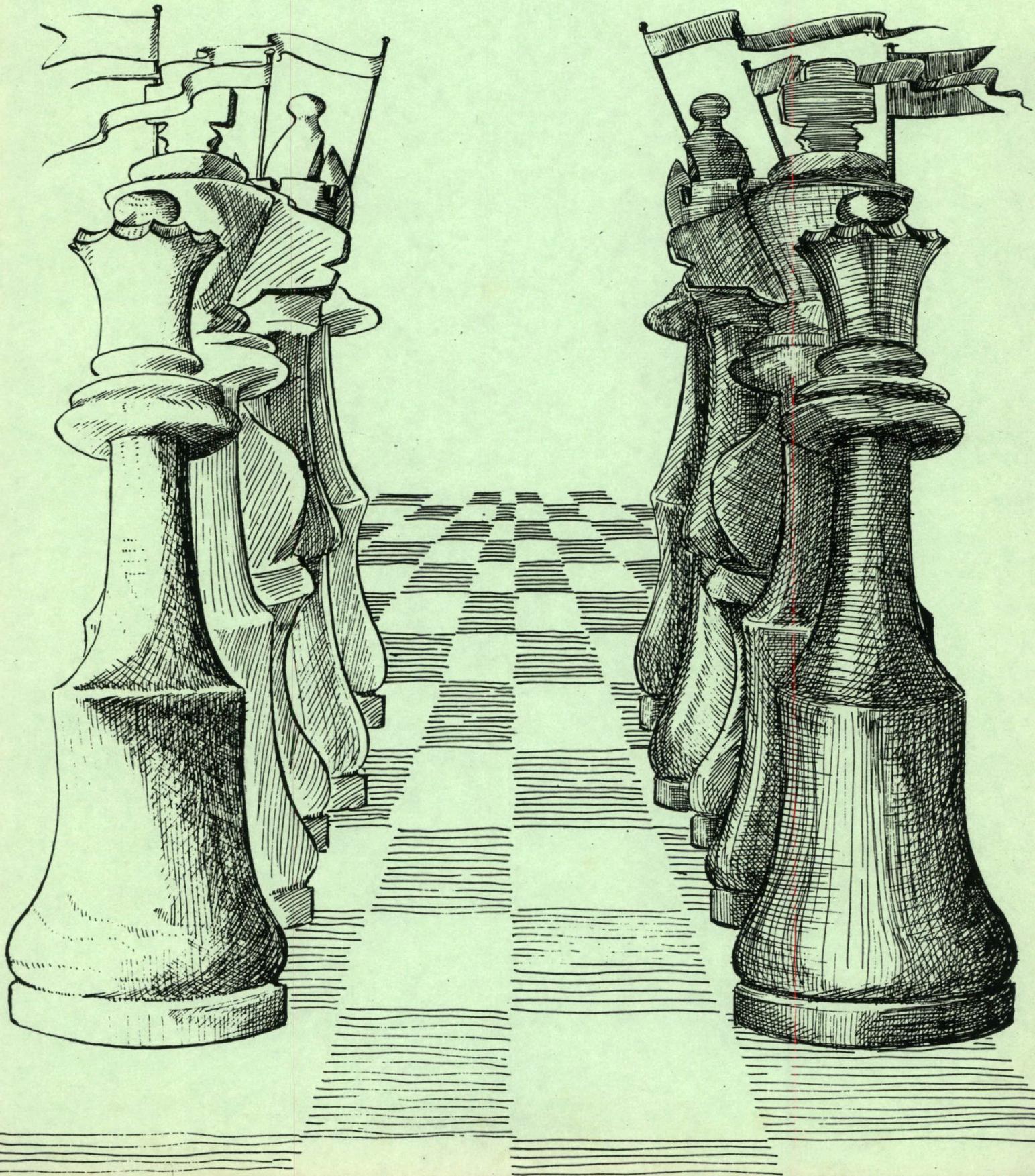


POPULAR CHESS

No. 13

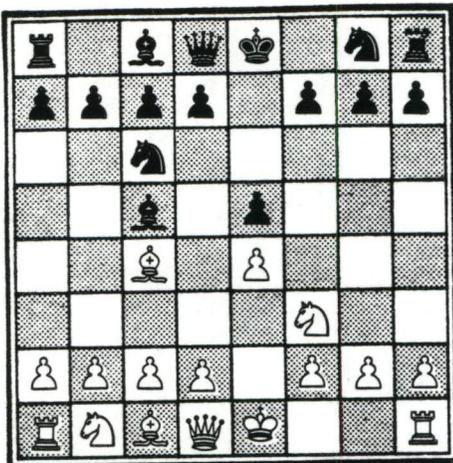


Countering the Two Knights defence

Many people would play the GuiocoPiano more often if they did not have to face the Two Knights Defence on the way.

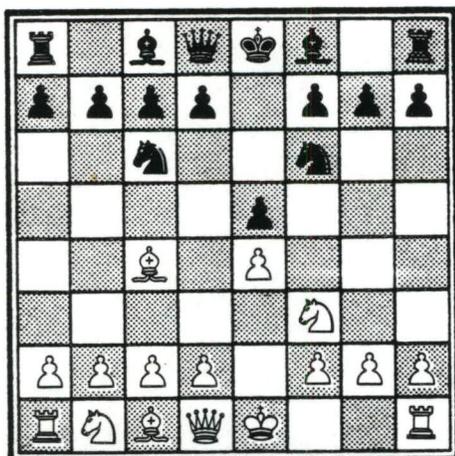
The Guioco Piano (discussed thoroughly in Rabbits Review No. 9 and also in the Chief Checker's Gold Course Book) begins

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



and now, with the move 4 c3, white threatens to build a powerful centre to drive the developed enemy pieces from their central posts.

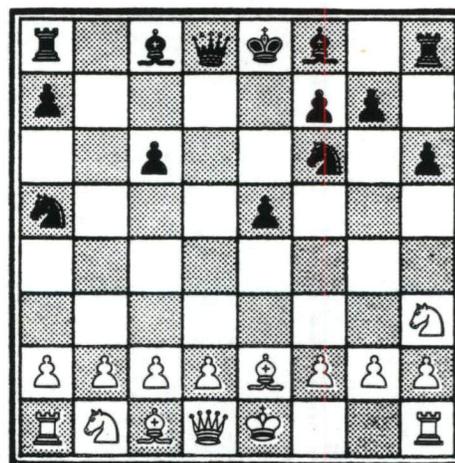
Yet instead of 3. ... Bc5, which makes a target of the bishop at c5, black often chooses a more challenging continuation, 3. ... Nf6, which immediately mounts a counter attack against the white pawn at e4.



Here it is often suggested to play 4 Ng5 with an immediate attack upon the weak pawn at f7. This attack often leads to quick victories, as for example, might occur from the Fried Liver Attack: 1 e4 e5, 2 Nf3 Nc6 3Bc4 Nf6 4Ng5 d5! 5exd5 Nxd5 6Nxf7!? Kxf7 7Qf3ch and now the only way black can defend his knight at d5 is by playing 7 ... Ke6 8 Nc3 Nb4 9 Qe4 c6 10 a3 Na6 11 d4 when a piece down, but with the black king in the centre of the board, white has a strong attack.

However, after white's 4 Ng5, black can often turn the tables upon white with a pawn sacrifice. This drives the enemy pieces back and gains black the initiative. For example:- 4 Ng5 d5 5 exd5 Na5! (this is better than the recapture 5 ... Nxd5, because the white bishop is driven from her attacking post) 6 Bb5ch c6 7 dxc6 bxc6 8Be2 (the first retreat) 8 ... h6 9 Nf3 (and now the second) e4 10 Ne5 Bd6 (black is gaining time for development at the expense of the white pieces) 11 d4 exd3 en passant 12 Nxd3 0-0 13 0-0 Qc7 (again development with a gain of time by attacking the pawn at h2) 14 h3 Bf5 15 Nc3 Rad8 and as we can see black is completely developed and has good lines for his pieces - well worth a pawn sacrificed.

I often recommend the old Steinitz move 9 Nh3 instead of 9 Nf3



This retreat adds a bit of interest to white's game, and ensures he will not be simply a passive punch bag in the face of black's accelerating development.

The retreat of the knight ensures that white will not lose further time by the further movement of the knight, and there are unusual positions that arise after the capture of the knight at h3 by black's bishop.

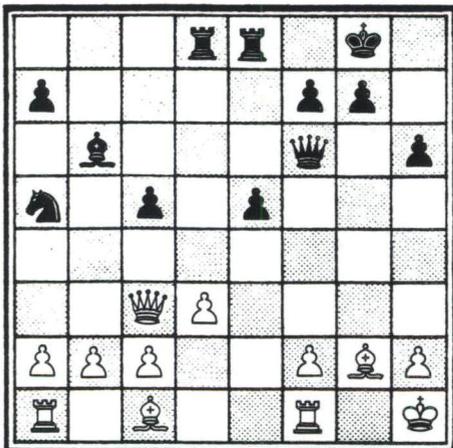
At first sight this capture is disastrous for white, for his king position is shattered and the pawn at h3 is also a target for black's attack. However, white gains the two bishops and his bishop coming round via f3 to g2, provides the defensive structure to support the white king. As white does not fall so far behind in development, the position stabilizes and we notice other advantages for white in the position - the split and scattered nature of the black pawns as opposed to white's threatening queenside mass, and the off-side nature of the knight at a5.

At any rate, World Champion Fischer, admirer of the old 19th century Champion Steinitz, thought 9 Nh3 good enough to try out in 3 games. Here is one of them against Arthur Bisguier.

After 9 Nh3 black played 9 ... Bc5
10 O-O O-O 11 d3

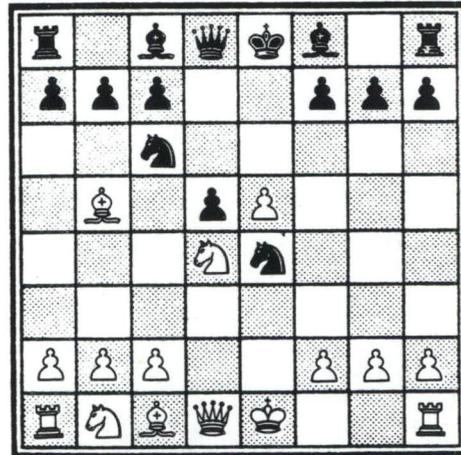
This move is absolutely vital to hold back the black forces by controlling the e4 square. It is because black is able to play e4 himself that the 9 Nf3 move is so dubious.

11 ... Bxh3 12 gxh3 Qd7 13 Bf3 Qxh3
14 Nd2! (white returns the pawn to continue his strategy of controlling e4) Rad8 15 Bg2 Qf5 16 Qe1! (another excellent move controlling e4) Rfe8 17 Ne4 Bb6 18 Nxf6 Nxf6 19 Kh1 c5 20 Qc3 and white gained the advantage with a later f4.



However, this article is not about this particular variation! A little while ago Otto Hardy came along with a tape on a promising line against the Two Knights. It begins

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d4 exd4
5. e5 d5
6. Bb5 Ne4
7. Nxd4



There are some deviations possible after white's 4 d4, though they are not usually as strong as the line given, since with the moves d5! and Ne4! black establishes a strong situation in the centre of the board.

At the same time white has his plans in this position and they come under two headings. The first is the attack on black's king-side involving the pawn advances f3 - f4 - f5 - f6. In the process of this advance, the knight at e4 provides a valuable target for the pawn rush. The second plan involves the exploitation of the weak squares and pawns on the queenside that arise after the sequence 7 ... Bd7 8 Bxc6 bxc6. Black has doubled pawns at c6 and c7 and a potential weak square at c5.

If white manages to exchange the black squared bishops and plant a knight at c5 (for example by the manouvre Nd2 - b3 - c5 or Nc3-a4-c5) he often obtains a powerful bind on the queen's wing. So let us look at these two plans in action; First:

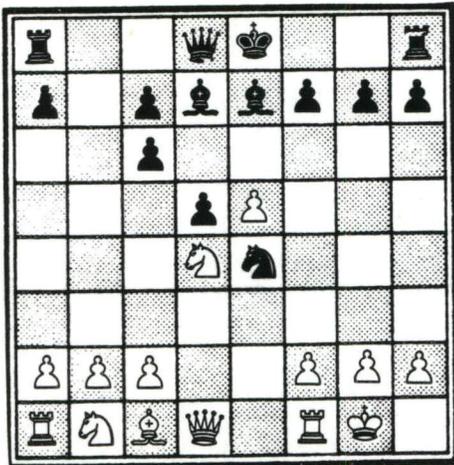
THE KING SIDE ATTACK

The sample game will be Hardy v Tayer Birmingham 1962.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4

(In this game white reached the basic position after a different order of moves).

3. ... exd4
4. Bc4 Nf6
5. e5 d5
6. Bb5 Ne4
7. Nxd4 Bd7
8. Bxc6 bxc6
9. O-O Be7

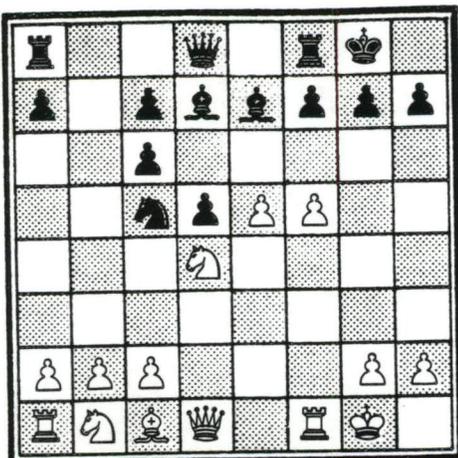


White is now ready to start his f pawn rolling

10. f3 Nc5
11. f4 O-O

As we can see, it is rather difficult for black to set up a decent blockade at f5; the white knight attacks the f5 square so the bishop at d7 cannot reach it; and if black plays 11 ... f5 here, he immediately gives white a supported passed pawn at e5.

12. f5



The first stage of white's plan has been quickly achieved. The two pawns have menacing positions at e5 and f5 and the threat, sooner or later, will be to play f6, with or without a pawn sacrifice, which will open up the black king. First however, white must complete development of the queenside pieces since they are lagging behind at home and will be needed in the attack.

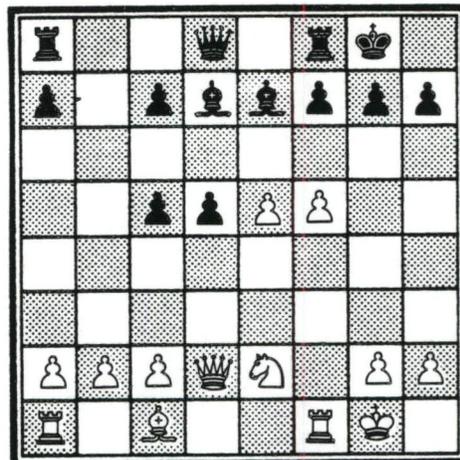
- 12 ... Ne4
13. Nbd2 c5

Possibly 13 ... Bc5 would have been better here; the bishop is doing little at e7 and it is high time to exchange off some of the white attackers.

14. Ne2!

A retreat that does not jeopardise white's chances as his pawns at e5 and f5 hold their ground.

- 14 ... Nxd2
15. Qxd2



An interesting decision. It was more natural to recapture with the bishop, but white has two plans with this move. In the first place the pawn at d5 is under attack so a tempo may be gained; and secondly, the queen is headed for f4 to support the pawn push to f6.

15. ... Bc6

A meek reply. 15. ... Bb5 might have led to a head on collision. White would then have to choose between 16 Rf3, or the immediate attack by 16 f6!? For example 16 gxf6 17 Qh6 fxe5 18 Ng3 Bxf1 19 Nh5. Hardy himself suggests 16 a4 here.

All very thematic. The pressure to play f6 now forces black to block the square himself - but this is what he does not want to do!

16. ... f6

This move is always available to black, but after white's regular reply, the black game is cut in two and he is without counter chances.

17. e6!

The pawn wedge holds the black king securely in his king side trap. Nor can black eliminate the monster at e6, for any undermining move such as g7-g6 would severely damage the king position further.

17. ... Bd6

18. Qh4

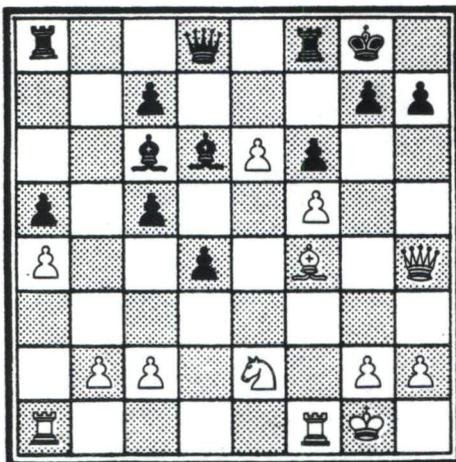
White now has the leisurely threat of Rf3-h3, aiming at h7; and should black counter with h7-h6, then a sacrifice by Bxh6 would follow shortly.

18. ... d4

This prevents Rf3

19. Bf4 a5

20. a4!!

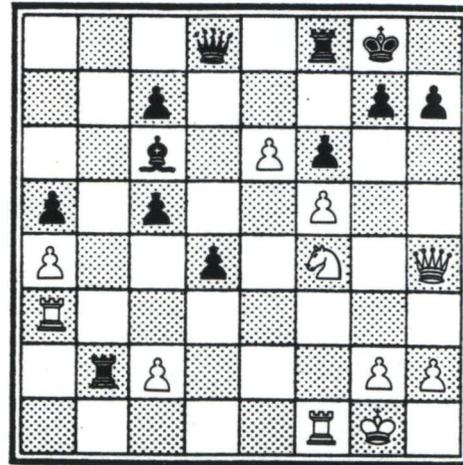


A brilliant conception to bring the white rook over to the king side in double quick time.

20. ... Rb8

21. Ra3 Bxf4

22. Nxf4 Rxb2

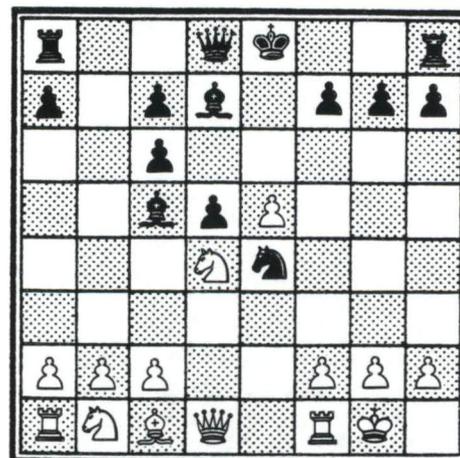


Black is quite oblivious to the hidden tactical point of white's last move. As a result, white finished off the game with a few brilliant strokes. Can you see them?

Besides the plan of advancing the king-side pawns, white has an alternative which involves settling in on the queenside weaknesses.

2. EXPLOITING THE QUEENSIDE WEAKNESSES

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d4 exd4
5. e5 d5
6. Bb5 Ne4
7. Nxd4 Bd7
8. Bxc6 bxc6
9. O-O Bc5

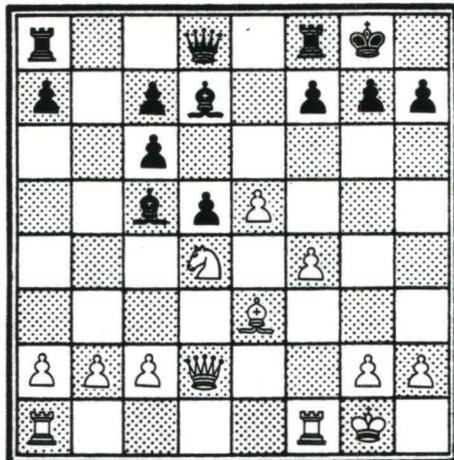


When black plays the move Bc5 instead of Be7, there is often pressure along the diagonal leading to white's king, so the immediate f3-f4-f5 advance is dangerous. White must first neutralise the pressure with Be3, then begin the

advance. With black's bishop at c5, there is a greater chance of the black squared bishop being exchanged which will weaken the c5 square, a potential outpost for white.

The game ESTRIN - VISTANECKIS
1960 continued:-

10. Be3 O-O
11. f3 Ng5
12. f4 Ne4
13. Nd2 Nxd2
14. Qxd2

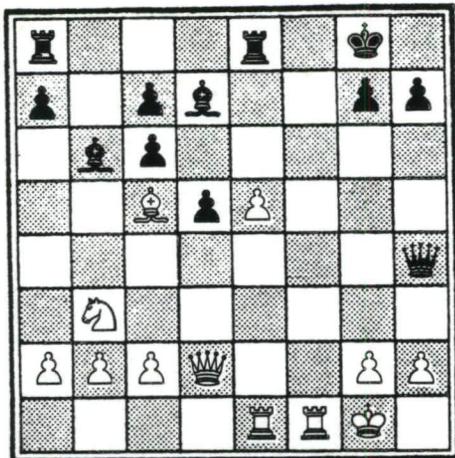


White has managed to complete development and eliminate the dominant black central knight. Now black needs to counter the threat of Pf5-f6 by attacking the advanced white e-pawn.

14. ... f6
15. Nb3!

White now switches plans to obtain control of the c5 square.

15. ... Bb6
16. Bc5 Re8
17. Rae1 fxe5
18. fxe5 Qh4



Black's position is looking unpromising with his weaknesses on the queen-side and his inability to mount a real attack on the pawn at e5. His 'advantage of the bishops' does not seem evident in this position. One bishop is suffocated at b6 the other dangles uselessly on the arm of the pawn at c6.

19. Rf4 Qh5
20. Qc3 Re6
21. a4!

Threatening to dislodge the bishop entirely from b6.

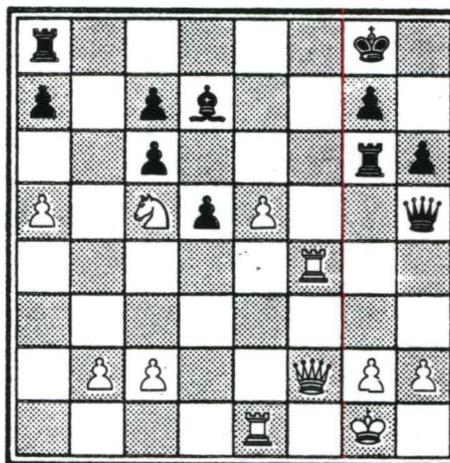
21. ... Rh6?

21. ... a5 looks stronger than this small attempt to checkmate.

22. Qg3 Rg6
23. Qf2!

White's queen finds herself once more on the critical diagonal leading to the c5 square and throws in a kingside threat as well - mate starting Rf8ch!

23. ... h6
24. a5 Bxc5
25. Nxc5

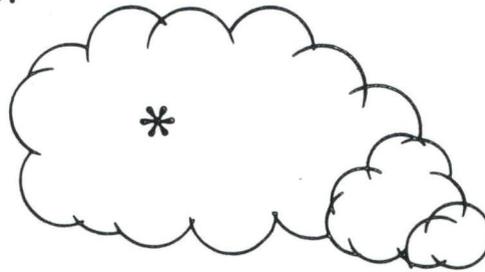
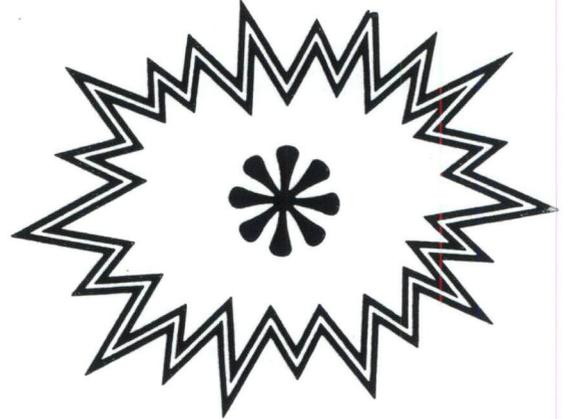


- and here we can leave the game as it is clear that white has fully acquired the positional objectives he was seeking. The knight stands proudly on the c5 square and is far superior to the bishop at d7.

White has the basis for a good kingside attack with his well placed queen and rooks, and his passed pawn at e5 is both a nuisance in the middle game and ending. In fact, should black be fortunate enough to exchange the major pieces into an ending, the good knight versus the bad

bishop, coupled with the weak pawns on the queenside (particularly the one at a7) should be easily enough to give white the victory.

More details of this variation can be found on the excellent cassette by Otto Hardy 'Countering the Two Knights Defence'. I don't often recommend cassettes in Popular Chess articles, but this one appeals to me as very suitable for a large number of Popular Chess readers who might have been worried by the counterplay black often obtains after the moves 1. e4 e5!



EDITORIAL.....

I intend to stabilise the publication of Popular Chess to about three times a year, coinciding with the school holidays. Any greater number leads to rushed articles, and lower quality work. Subscriptions will also be stabilised, so that they all terminate at the same issue (number 18).

Popular Chess specialises in instructional articles for the lower graded player, frequently analysing amateur games instead of those by Masters. Our sister magazine, the Myers Openings Bulletin, which specialises in unusual opening variations, looked like fading out due to Hugh Myer's weakening finances. However, it has now reached 38 issues, and Hugh has landed himself a good job producing the bulletins for the World Olympiad in Dubai this November. So this magazine too, will soon be flourishing after its lean years.

Meanwhile, I can strongly recommend the new computer produced by Novag. I've played it several times, and it frequently beats me even on level 1. What's more, at a price of only £80, it's a real bargain. Details of this stupendous machine, capable of beating an International Master at level 1, can be obtained from Eureka Electronics in Brighton. Telephone Brighton (0273) 202016

POPULAR CHESS is published 3 times a year. Editor is Michael Basman. Single issues (numbers 1-12) are £1.00 each. Single issues numbers 13-18 are £1.20 each. Six issue subscriptions are £6.50, numbers 13-18. All prices post free from Audio Chess, 7 Billockby Close, Chessington, Surrey KT9 2ED. Make cheques payable to Audio Chess.

UNCLEAR DECISIONS

It is only in other people's games, or when one is playing against complete beginners, that decisions seem clear cut. At all other times, and at all other stages of the game, the player is racked by indecision. What opening should he choose? Should he attack and possibly over reach, or play safe and let in a dull draw? Who is better in the position that results out of this crucial piece of analysis? What is the opponent likely to play next move, and why did he make that particular move? Am I spending too much time on this move, or will my superficial play lose the game for me before we even reach the time control? And finally, when the player reaches a won position he usually lets it slip, sometimes through over confidence, sometimes through under confidence.

All these thoughts keep our regular chess neurotic in a state of constant tension throughout the game, and if he cannot banish uncertainty he must live with the situation and establish for himself what is "more likely" to be true. If he cannot banish tension he needs to find ways to minimise it.

In this game which we are about to examine, there are many areas of uncertainty. In order to draw you into the analysis, I shall ask you to cover the page and lower the sheet until you come to a ♘♘♘♘ sign. At that point you should stop and analyse the position, without moving the pieces on the board. You may not be able to go through the whole game in one session, so allocate yourself 1 hour sessions where you can give the game your full attention. Points will be awarded for finding good moves, and others for the analysis behind the moves - but don't forget that cut and dried continuations are not always possible for 'we see through a glass darkly' and chess thinking is more akin to clairvoyance than computer logic.

I shall also be giving bonus points for earlier good analysis, and retrospective points for seeing something a few moves earlier, which in the notes I did not point out at the time, in case it should give unnecessary clues to a player who had not found the move.

The game was played in round 8 of the British Chess Championship. White was your editor Michael Basman; black was International Master Jon Levitt.

YOU HAVE THE WHITE PIECES, and the game began.

1 d4 Nf6

2 Nf3 e6

3 c3

White wishes to play the Torre Attack, which was discussed, along with the Colle. in Popular Chess No.7. However, if he plays an immediate 3 Bg5,...c5 followed by ...Qb6, threatening the white pawn at b2, is troublesome. So c3 is something of a waiting move, while white decides whether to continue with the Torre with Bg5 or go into a Colle - uncertainty already! But another word for uncertainty may be subtly.

3 ... b6

With this move black clears up the uncertainty. His queen will never reach b6 now, so white goes ahead with his Torre set up.

4 Bg5 Bb7

5 Nb1 d2 Be7

6 e3

There is a lot of harmony in white's position - his bishop at g5 is developed outside the pawn pyramid, and his other bishop is not limited by these same centre pawns.

6 ... 0-0

Now try to guess white's next move.



7 Bd3

2 points. A natural developing move, which aims at the black king side as well as the central e4 square. 1 point for the less active Be2, and nothing for 7 Bc4, which just leaves the bishop as a target to the black pawn thrust ...d5

7... d5

Though this move blocks the bishop at b7, it puts pressure on the e4 square, and both prevents the move e4 by white, as well as threatening in some cases to free the black position with ...Ne4.



8 Qc2!

3 points for this move. 2 bonus points if you realised that the move has drawbacks if black is able to play ...c5, ...Nc6 and ...Rc8, with threats of ...c4 driving the bishop back to e2 or ...cxd4 followed by ...Nb4 taking advantage of the pin along the c file to exchange of white's strong bishop at d3. 8 Qc2 is possible here because of black's error on move 6 - he castled king side too quickly, too automatically, and white has an attack brewing, as well as a tempo gaining threat of Bxf6 followed by Bxh7+ 2 points for 8 0-0 or 8 Qe2, both good developing moves.

8 ... Nbd7



9 Ne5!

Again the sharpest. 3 points. White threatens again, 10 Nxd7 Qxd7, 11 Bxf6 and Bxh7+. and if black tries 9 ... Nxe5 here, 10 dxe5 drives the knight away from f6 and allows Bxh7+ after all. 2 points for 9 0-0, and 1 point for 9 e4, which, however, leads to exchanges and loses much of white's advantage. Give yourself 2 retrospective points if you chose Ne5 on your last turn.

9... h6



10 h4!

2 points for Bh4, 10 Bf4 or 10 Bxf6, but 4 points for this move which reveals the point of white's delaying of castling. Give yourself one retrospective point if you intended 9 h4 if black had played 8...h6 instead of 8... Nbd7.

1 bonus point for analysing the sequence 10... hxg5 11 hxg5 Ne8 12 Bh7+ Kh8 13 Bg8+! Kxg8 14 Qh 7 mate. Another bonus point if you saw 10... hxg5 11 hxg5 Ne4! 12 Nxe4 dxe4 13 Bxe4 Bxe4 14 Qxe4 g6 15 Qh4 and white mates.

2 bonus points if you considered black's reply 10...c5 here, and decided that this was unclear but you would probably play 11 f4 or (simpler) 11 Bxf6 Bxf6 12 Nxd7 Qxd7 13 g4 with attack.

10... Nxe5



11 dxe5

1 point. 2 bonus points if you considered 11... Nd7 for black now and intended 12 f4! (guarding the pawn at e5) 12 ...Nc5 13 0-0-0 Nxd3+ 14 Qxd3 c5. Another bonus point here if you were unclear in this position whether to play the natural 15 g4 or not, since it allows 15...d4 16 exd4 Bxh1, sacrificing the exchange for possibly insufficient attack.

11... Ng4

Take a bonus point if this move came as a surprise to you.



12 Nf3!

2 points. Clearly, white can no longer play 12 f4 (deduct two points) because of the replay 12... Nxe3. This move safeguards the pawn at e5 and still ensures that black cannot play 12... hxg5 without risking mate. Take a bonus point if you had ideas here of playing Rh3-g3, to corral the loose knight at g4.

12... f6

A bonus point if you did not expect this move.



13 exf6

2 points. Only 1 point for 13 Bf4, when black can block with ...f5 or free his game with ...fxe5. Take 1 bonus point if you now intended to answer 13 ... Nxf6 with 14 Ne5, 13 ... Bxf6 with 14 0-0-0.

13 ... gxf6

1 bonus point if this move came as a surprise to you.



14 Bxh6!

5 points for this brilliant idea, and 4 points for 14 Bf4, intending to answer 14 ...e5 by 15 Bf5.

14 ... Nxb6



15 Ba6!

3 points for this move, and two bonus points if you worked out the continuation 15 ... Bxa6 16 Qg6+ Kh8 17 Qxh6+ Kg8 18 Qg6+ Kh8 19 Ng5!! f5 20 hxg5+ and mate. 1 retrospective bonus point if you had worked out this idea on your previous move, when you played 14 Bxh6. No points here for 15 Bh7+, which runs aground after 15 ... Kh8.

15 ... f5!


16 Bxb7
 1 point. Two retrospective points if you had foreseen black's reply 15 ... f5 when you played 14 Bxh6 and were uncertain about the position despite your extra pawn due to a) black's strong centre b) the possibility of the white bishop becoming lost in the queen side wilderness.

16 ... Rb8


17 Bc6
 2 points for this move, and two points also for 17 Ba6. 1 extra point if you couldn't decide which one was better.

17 ... b5


18 a4!
 2 points for this energetic thrust, which strives might and main to save the bishop at c6 from the 'octopus' attacks by Qd6 or Rb6, which threaten to engulf the poor thing in the shrouds of the queen side pawns. Only 1 point for 18 Nd4 or Ne5, which may be only throwing good money after bad, for example 18 Nd4 Qd6 19 Bxb5 e5 and too many white pieces are hanging. Or 18

Ne5 Qd6 19 f4 Bf6 and again the white minor men are in trouble.

18 ... a6


19 axb5
 1 point

19 ... axb5
 You may like to take a break here before you continue with the rest of the game.



20 Ra6!
 3 points for this move. 1 point for Nd4 or Ne5, and 2 points for 20 Ra5, which is also powerful. After 20 Ra5, however black may be able to defend with 20 ... Rb6 21 Bxb5 c6 (21 ... Qb8?! 22 Nd4) 22 Be2 Rxb2 23 Qxb2 Qxa5. 2 bonus points if you saw this in your analysis. Nothing for 20 Qb3 which loses a piece after ... Qd6 21 Bxb5 c6. 1 point for 20 Qd3 Rb6 21 Bxb5 Qb8 22 Ba4 Rxb2 when black's rook is active.

20 ... Qc8
 1 bonus point if you saw you had prevented both 20 ... Qd6 (because of Bxb5) and 20 ... Rb6 (because of 21 Rxb6 cxb6 22 Bxb5) with your last move.



21 Ra5!
 2 points. 1 point for 21 Ra7, which is less forcing, as it does not threaten the b pawn.

21 ... Rb6


22 Ra8

3 points for this, and 1 retrospective bonus point if you had planned the sequence on playing 20 Ra6; the point is that with the black queen at c8, he cannot play ...Qd6 anymore in this position, and must allow a trade of rooks. 1 point 22 Bxb5 which gives black counterplay after 22 ...Qb7!; for example 23 Be2 Rxb2 and black invades on the queen's side.

22 ... Rb8



23 Rxb8

1 point. Deduct 2 points if you tried to obtain a draw by repeating moves with 23 Ra5.

23 ... Qxb8



24 Nd4

2 points for this. The position is again unclear. White should not be in danger of losing his bishop anymore but there is still doubt about the best way to extricate it. 1 point only for 24 Ne5, which may entail white giving up two pieces for rook and pawn after 24 ... Qb6 25 Qb3 Bf6 26 Nd7 Qxc6 27 Nxf8. 2 points for 24 Qb3, when white gains two pawns, but stays under pressure after 24 ... Qb6 25 Qxb5 Rb8 26 Qxb6 Rxb6 27 Bd7 Kf7 28 b4 Bf6 29 Kd2 Ng4. It is interesting that since white's sacrifice on move 14, he has not had the ghost of an attack against the black king, despite removing virtually all black's pawn cover!

24 ... Qb6



25 Bd7

2 points for this. 2 points also for 25 Qb3 which is another unclear line. Two bonus points if you saw the

variation 25 Qb3 Rb8 26 Bd7 (26 Qxb5 Qa7; 26 Bxb5 c5) c5 27 Nxe6 Qd6 or 27 Bxe6+ Kh8 28 Nxf5 Qxe6 and felt the white pieces were getting in a tangle. 2 bonus points if you intended to answer (25 Bd7) c5 with 26 Nxe6 Ra8 27 Rh3! Ra1+ 28 Kd2 Qd6 29 Rg3+ Kh8 30 Rg6 (Levitt said I was going to play this line if he chose 25 ...c5 here, but I can't remember if I was).

25 ... Rf6



26 Qb3

2 points. This is now vital, because black threatens ... c5 here. 2 bonus points if you intended to answer 26 ... Kf7 now with 27 Bxe6+! Rxe6 28 Qxd5 Kf6 29 Qxe6+ Qxe6 30 Nxe6 Kxe6, when white has rook and three pawns against two minor pieces and should have liquidated into a clearly winning ending.

26 ... c5



27 Qxb5

2 points. No point for retreating the knight. 1 bonus point if you considered black's reply here of 27 ... Qa7 and intended to reply to this with 28 Nc2, stopping the queen check at a1.

27 ... Qd6!



28 Ne2

2 points. 2 points also for 28 Nf3. It is not clear which of these moves is better.

28 ... Ng4



29 Qc6
 2 points. 2 bonus points if you could not see a clear continuation after 29 ...Qe5 here, but noticed that after 30 Nf4 (attacking e6) Kf7 black may have threats of ...d4 or ... Nxe3 attacking white's king position.

29 ... Qxc6


30 Bxc6
 1 point

30 ... Ne5


31 Bb5
 1 point. Black is threatening ... Nd3+ so nothing for anything else.

31 ... c4


32 Nf4
 No points for this natural move, which defends against black's threat of ...Nd3+ and also attacks the pawn at e6.

3 points instead for 32 0-0 and 1 bonus point if you saw that 32 ... Nd3 could then be answered by 33 b3. With two extra pawns, white should then be able to start to capitalise on his extra material. For example (32 0-0)
 Rh6 33 Nf4 Ng4 34 Ra1.

Deduct two retrospective points if you relaxed after the exchange of queens on move 29 - your troubles are not yet over!

32 ... Rf8!

Stirring up fresh complications as the time control approaches. Though it cannot be penalised in this test, white has made an error in allowing himself to drift into time trouble through taking too long over the unclear decisions between moves 18 and 29.



33 Nxe6
 1 point. 1 point also for Ba4 or 0-0; neither of which prevents the black rook from invading on b2.

33 ... Nd3+


34 Kf1
 2 points. 1 point for 34 Ke2 or Kd2, which are weaker because they allow the white rook to come to b2 with check.

34 ... Rb8!


35 Nd4
 1 point

35 ... Bf6


36 Bc6
 2 points. White's king is going to get clobbered but he must try to clear up as many pawns as he can meanwhile. 1 point for 36 b4, sacrificing a piece for three pawns in order to keep the black rook out of the attack. After (36 b4) Bxd4 37 exd4 Rxb5 the white pawn at c3, however, looks dangerously weak.

36 ... Rxb2



37 Bxd5+
1 point

37 ... Kh8



38 Rh3
2 points. 4 points, however for the braver continuation 38 Bxc4, after which Levitt said he would have won a piece by 38 ... Ne5, since he has the double threat of ... Rb1+ showering white's king and rook, and ... Nxc4. However, after (38 Bxc4 Ne5) 39 g3 Nxc4 40 Nxf5 Bxc3 white can scarcely lose this position and may even be better. I was afraid of (38 Bxc4) Nxf2 when black starts to weave mating next with ... Ng4. This continuation, however, is less terrifying than it looks. With 39 Rh2 Be5 (39 ... Ng4 40 Rh3) 40 g3! Bxg3 41 Rg2 Bxh4 42 Nxf5 white turns the tables again. Note also that after 38 Bxc4 Rb1+ 39 Ke2 Rxh1 40 Kxd3 white also acquires an advantage in material. 2 bonus points if you considered this line beginning 38 Bxc4 Nxf2; 1 bonus point if you also saw 38 Bxc4 Ne5.

38 ... Rb1+



39 Ke2
1 point

39 ... Rb2+



40 Kf1
2 points for accepting the draw with this move, but deduct 10 points for playing on stubbornly with 40 Kf3 Rxf2+ 41 Kg3 Be5 mate.

No credit for 40 Kd1, when black has another pendulum draw with 40 ... Nxf2+ 41 Ke1 Nd3+ and may consider trying for more with 41 ... Nxb3.

40 ... Rb1+

41 Ke2 Rb2+
and here the game was agreed drawn.

Now add up your points.

There were a total of 106 points to be gained. 69 ordinary points, 30 bonus points and 7 retrospective points.

85 - 106 You are obviously at master strength in analysis - so why not show it in over the board play? Possibly you need to learn to cope with over the board tensions.

65 - 84 A very promising score; puts you in the 160 plus bracket for analysis.

45 - 64 Average score; we hope you have learnt a great deal from the game.

25 - 44 Weaker club player, 100 grade or below.

below 25 Novice; but don't give up!; you did well to play through to the end of this difficult game.

In addition, there are several psychological errors that you may have committed when you played through this game.

- You gave up halfway through because you became embarrassed by your poor score and inability to find the correct moves.

This result shows lack of perseverance, an inferiority complex, and unwillingness to face difficulties. These are likely to be reflected in your chess play, for example, by weak defence in bad positions; by withdrawing from a tournament early after one or two defeats; or heavy depression following defeats. These weaknesses in your play need to be countered.

- You gave up the test because you got bored quickly.

This may be a general problem, showing lack of effort. The danger is that boredom can be insidious and eventually incapacitate a person so badly that he may be unable eventually even to "push a broom across a floor".

- You did not have time to do the test.

This would be acceptable if Popular Chess were a monthly publication, instead of appearing only 3 times a year.

- You found the piece of paper with which you covered up the moves continually slipped, allowing you to see the next move played.

This sounds like an argument for using the Audio Chess tapes. You can't see the next move on a cassette, and there are several tapes designed simply to give you practice in analysis!

Pointless Play

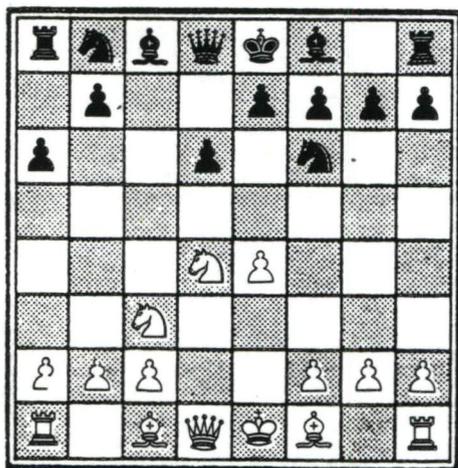
A human can usually beat a computer, provided he does not commit material or tactical errors, because his play is generally more purposeful. Whereas a computer will be content to mark time in an even position, the human will be generating plans, one of which will eventually ensnare his flat-footed opponent.

The following game is an example of this.

White: CONCHES ESCORTER (PRACTICE LEVEL 4)
Black: VICTOR MATHIAS

Notes by Victor Mathias; notes in brackets by Michael Basman.

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 1. P-K4 | P-QB4 |
| 2. N-KB3 | P-Q3 |
| 3. P-Q4 | PxP |
| 4. NxP | N-KB3 |
| 5. N-QB3 | P-QR3 |



(A line of the Sicilian called the Najdorf variation, after the Argentinian Grandmaster who pioneered it. Its original idea is to prepare for the move P-K4 by black without allowing the check B-QN5, followed by a transfer of the knight on Q4 round to K3 (via KB5), where it fixes the outpost square at Q5. If you have an understanding of weak squares, bad bishops, outposts, backward and isolated pawns, you will understand this last comment.)

Later it was found that P-QR3 was a very useful move, preventing also the knight reaching QN5, preparing the expansion on the queen side by P-QN4 and B-N2, safeguarding the square QB2 for the black queen. So now P-K4 does

not always follow the move P-QR3 - P-K3, QN-Q2, P-QN4, P-KN3, Q-B2, Q-N3, N-QB3 - all these are possible.)

6. B-Q3

(Rather a dull reply as it weakens the pressure along the queen file.)

6. ... N-B3!

(Developing with a gain of time, by attacking the loose knight at Q4)

7. NxN?

(This is bad because it strengthens black's pawn centre. But the computer did not want to lose time by retreating its knight.)

7. ... PxN
8. O-O P-K4

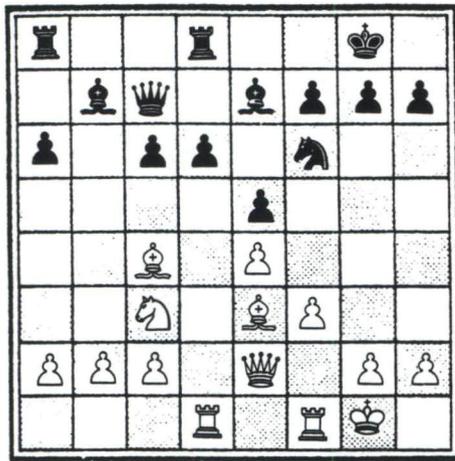
(Black now has a pawn superiority in the centre of the board. White should challenge this with K-R1 followed by P-B4, though not P-B4 straight away as this could lose a pawn after Pxp 10. Bxp Q-N3 ch 11. K-R1 QxNP).

9. B-K3 B-K2
10. P-B3?

Half hearted. It blocks the Q and makes no attempt to open the f-file for white's castled KR. 10. P-B4 would have been far more enterprising if the f-pawn was to be moved at all.

(Though here P-B4 might need to be prepared for by P-KR3 or B-K2 otherwise black plays N-N5 and swaps off the strong white bishop at e3.)

10. ... O-O
11. Q-K2 Q-B2
12. B-QB4 R-Q1
13. QR-Q1 B-N2



(Black is very logically playing for P-Q4 to increase his share of the centre of the board. However, white's next tactical move scotches that idea for a long time to come.)

14. Q-B2!

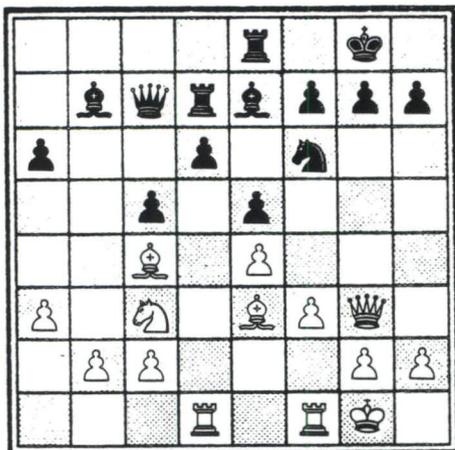
A clever move whose immediate aim could easily have been overlooked. The threat now is 15. B-N6!!

14. ... P-B4?

(I would have played this move with reluctance as it renounces all hope of P-Q4. Possibly black could have played 14. ... Q-B1 15. B-N6 R-Q2, when he still has the threat of the central pawn roller starting P-Q4.)

15. P-QR3 R-Q3
16. Q-N3 R-K1

(We are now in for a bout of fairly aimless play by both sides.)



17. B-R6

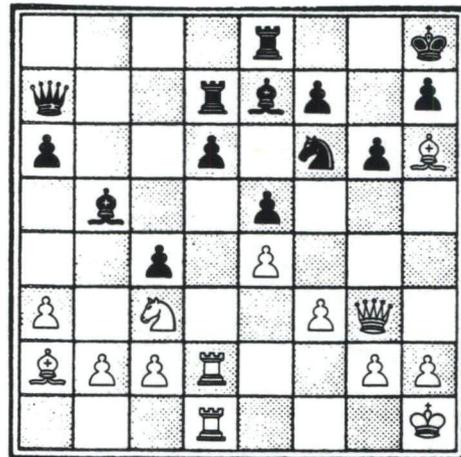
As I had no rook on f8, this move is not so powerful as it often is when this g-pawn is pinned.

Escorter lost its grip on this game, not by obvious errors, but by harmless moves (e.g. 18. B-N3 and 19. R-Q2) which enabled me to grab the initiative. Till then, I had almost written the game off as a dull draw. But suddenly with 20. ... P-B5; I simultaneously shut white's white squared B out of the game and opened a diagonal to white's king.

17. ... P-N3
18. B-N3 B-B3
19. R-Q2 B-N4
20. KR-Q1 P-B5!
21. B-R2 Q-R2 ch

It was hard to decide which of the three squares to check from. The one chosen places my Q furthest from being attacked itself and leaves the maximum of future space for my rooks.

22. K-R1 K-R1



This leaves my f-pawn unprotected but (a) makes my king a bit safer (b) clears the g-file for a possible rook and (c) enables me to challenge the B by N-N1 (... B-B1 would leave my rook awkwardly placed back on f8 if I tried an exchange by THAT method) - but, see later.

(Black is busily generating plans whereas white ...)

23. N-Q5 NxN
24. RxN R-N2
25. Q-K1 B-QB3
26. B-K3 Q-N1

Should it go to a8 or b8? On a8 it continues to defend the QRP, but is on an unproductive diagonal and, if I subsequently play the natural looking R/1-QN1 to double rooks on that file, my queen is totally hemmed in by its own comrades in arms.

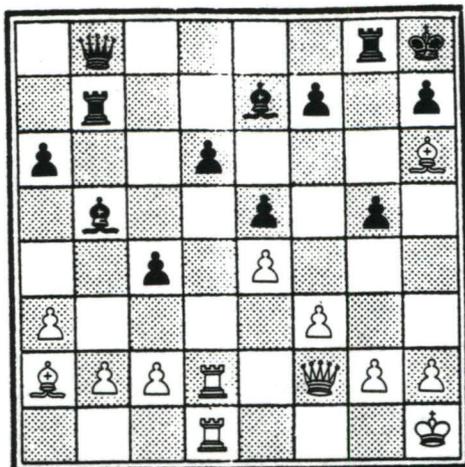
27. R/5-Q2
28. B-R6?

B-QN4

This is not only a pointless repetition of moves, but invites me - now that I have vacated g8 with my king - to aim to imprison and capture the bishop.

28. ...
29. Q-B2

R-N1
P-N4!



My plan - see above - has been too subtle for the machine to beware of. The trap snaps shut on the unfortunate bishop.

30. Q-N3 Q-QB1!

White tries gamely to protect the imprisoned B by moving his Q to H3, but I watch that square first with my own queen.

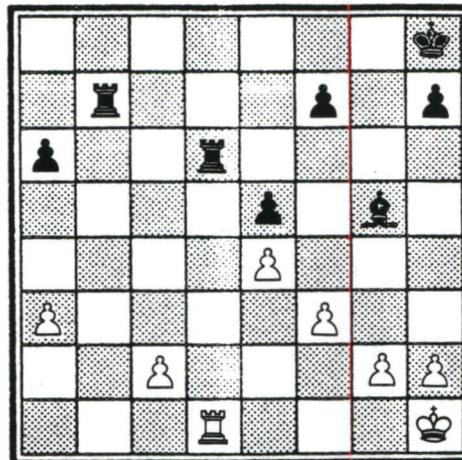
31. P-N3 R-KN3!
32. PxP

Releasing the other entombed bishop and drawing my queen away from its watch on the h3 square.

32. ... BxP
33. BxB QxB
34. Q-R3! Q-K3!!

Finally clinching the win of B for P, without even having to double my own pawns.

35. QxQ RxQ
36. BxP BxB
37. RxP? RxR!!



This appears to be just one of a mini-series of exchanges, but in fact, as the machine notices, if 38. RxR?? then ... R-N8 checkmates.

38. R-K1 R-QB3!!

The computer could, of course, have resigned a move earlier but this move of mine polishes off its last worthwhile asset. Its little passed c-pawn cannot be protected.

White resigns.

Pawn play

The second weakness that computers manifest is a lack of understanding of pawn play. Concerned to develop their pieces to central positions, they will often expose these pieces to pawn thrusts which drive them to inferior positions and, in some cases, the piece often pays for exposure with his life. In this game white fails to clinch victory due to tactical errors, but the theme of pawn play is still clearly discernible.

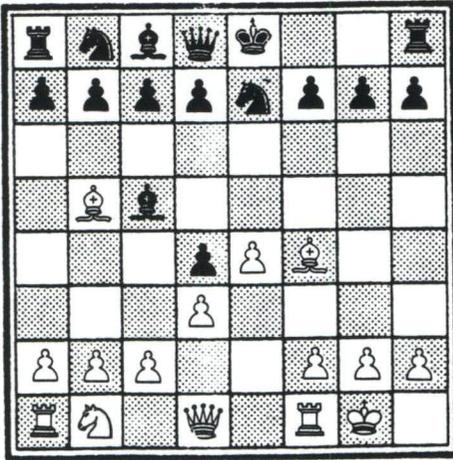
White: VICTOR MATHIAS
Black: CONCHES ESCORTER, LEVEL 4.

Notes by Victor Mathias, notes in brackets by Michael Basman.

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 1. P-K4 | P-K4 |
| 2. N-KB3 | N-QB3 |
| 3. B-N5 | N-Q5 |

(Bird's defence to the Ruy Lopez, named after the 19th century, Henry Bird, It is a favourite of the early Conchess

- 4. NxN PxN
- 5. P-Q3 B-B4
- 6. O-O N-K2
- 7. B-KB4



The first time I've played this move in this particular position. I myself can always very things, even if this computer, by contrast, doesn't seem to find it easy to slimb out of its rut.

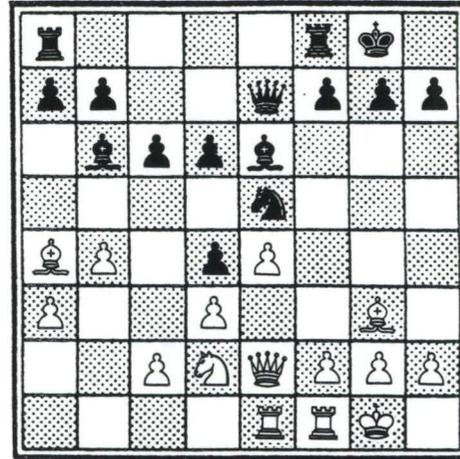
- 7. ... P-QB3
- 8. B-R4 N-N3
- 9. B-KN3 P-Q3
- 10. P-QR3

To stop the bishop at c5 from relocating itself via b5 and a4 and giving a possible hideaway hole on a2 to my own hemmed in bishop.

- 10. ... B-K3
- 11. P-N4

Perhaps the blocked black bishop should have been left to fume where it was; but I couldn't find anything better at this juncture.

- 11. ... B-N3
- 12. N-Q2 O-O
- 13. Q-K2 Q-K2
- 14. QR-K1 N-K4



(Black has centralised his pieces at e5 and e6, but without the protective pawns in the centre, they are vulnerable to the thrusts P-B4-B5. Even if white does not win a piece immediately, the pawn advancing further to f6 will cause disruption to black's king side.)

- 15. P-R3

(The immediate 15. P-KB4 looks even stronger as, if black plays 15. ... B-N5 16. Q-B2 N-Q2 17. P-B5, the bishop at g4 is liable to be trapped on the kingside.)

- 15. ... QR-B1

(The computer has a second chance to pull its pieces out of the endangered central area, but seems oblivious.)

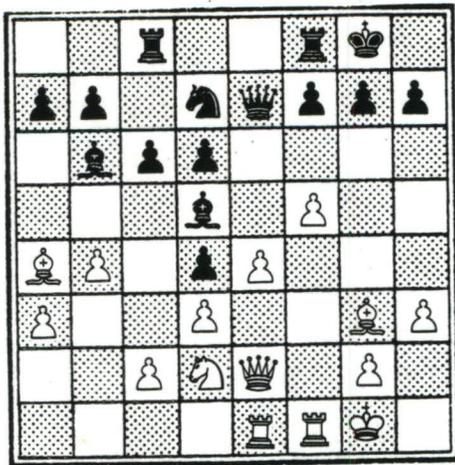
- 16. P-KB4!

(The pawns roll forward.)

- 16. ... N-Q2
- 17. P-B5

Now for some action! Black's white squared B is very awkwardly placed, though my first crude attempt to corner it is craftily thwarted.

- 17. ... B-R7
- 18. R-R1 B-Q4
- 19. QR-K1?



(White sees that if he plays PxB, he loses his queen; but he does not notice that here 19 Q-B3 would break the pin and win the piece after all.)

19. ... B-R7?

The bishop is not going to escape so easily a second time! I'm sure that 19. ... BxP! was preferable for when I take the B, 20. ... P-Q6 is check!

(This analysis seems wrong; after 19. ... BxP white does not need to lose his queen after 20. PxB? P-Q6 ch, but can play 20. QxB QxQ 21. RxQ and keep his extra piece.)

20. Q-Q1 N-K4?

This is a blunder because 20. ... P-B3! gives the beleaguered bishop at a2 an escape square (f7), and blocks my pawn advance along the f-file.

21. BxN PxB
 22. Q-R1! B-Q4
 23. PxB PXP

I had thought that this uncovered an attack on my c-pawn, until I noticed that the pawn was covered by my B - luck not planning!

At this point, with bishop for pawn and the time about 11.30 p.m., I ought to have ended the game and declared myself the winner. I got myself ready for bed and, finding Maureen was asleep, I thought I'd play on for a while ... This decision deserves a '!'.

The computer still didn't play what I think it ought to have played, i.e., a dangerous e-pawn advance to try and open the diagonal to my King.

24. R-K2 Q-Q3
 25. K-R1

My king is safer here.

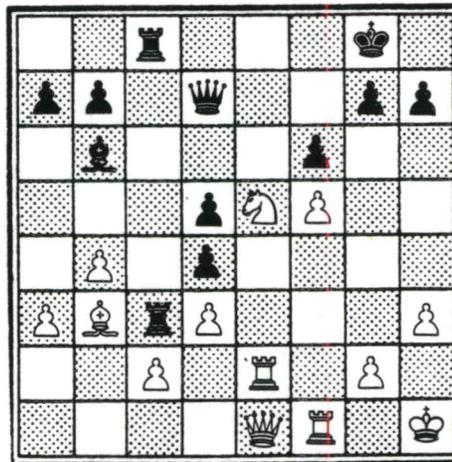
25. ... R-B6
 26. B-N3

To release my queen from the paltry job of defending my a-pawn.

26. ... KR-QB1
 27. N-B3! P-B3

My knight leaps into action and uncovers a further defence for my little backward c-pawn.

28. Q-K1 Q-Q2
 29. NxKP!



I almost gave two exclamation marks. It seems to me a sacrifice that is positionally fully justified. It gives black back his material deficit but look what it achieves! (a) It opens the f-file for me; (b) it opens the e-file for me and (c) leaves the black queen looking very exposed to danger. And, in fact, as the next move shows, I do not yield back my MATERIAL lead, once the consequences of this fine looking move have been played through. At this point I was glad I'd stayed up!

29. ... PxB
 30. RxP K-R1
 31. RxP

(31. P-B6 PxB 32. RxBP with the threat of R-K7 looks a stronger way of continuing the attack. If 32. ... R/6-B2 then 33. BxP threatens R-B7)

31. ... Q-B3
 32. P-N5! Q-K1

33. R-K5! Q-Q1
 34. R-K7 R/6-B2!

This backward move of the advanced rook I'd not foreseen. It solves many of black's defensive problems, which had been posed by my possession of the seventh rank.

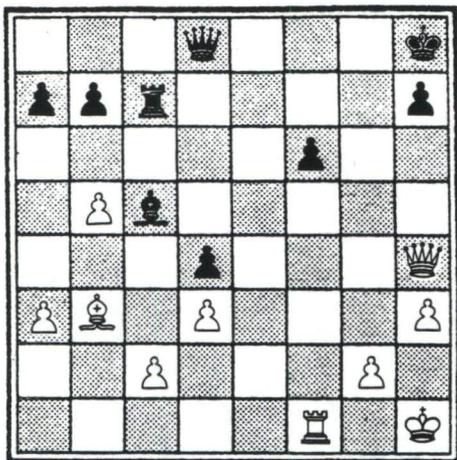
35. RxR RxR

(White is two pawns ahead, but anxious to attack, is still suffering from his slip in move 31 when he could have broken up the enemy king position by P-B6. Here 36. R-B4 followed by R-K4 looks strong.)

36. P-B6?

My first real slip. A careless move, made at about 1.30 a.m. I wanted to open up more lines onto black's king, but merely, in the event, gave up a valuable little advanced pawn for nothing.

36. ... PxP
 37. Q-R4 B-B4!



Black at last gets the initiative with the raising of this bishop from the dead! Its threat to my a-pawn is easily countered, but the bishop can then move to its 'natural' place at e7.

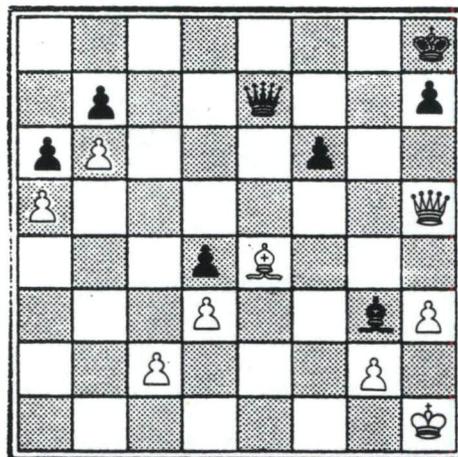
38. P-QR4 B-K2
 39. R-B5

More to block ... P-B4 than for any other reason; a measly function for the rook to perform ... and in the text, black dislodges it easily from its blocking role.

39. ... R-B4
 40. RxR BxR
 41. Q-R5 Q-B2
 42. B-Q5

It was hard to resist the obvious Q-K8ch but I couldn't see any way in which I was going to corner the black king by that means; so I put my own bishop on a hyper-active square instead.

42. ... B-Q3
 43. B-K4 B-N6
 44. P-R5 P-QR3
 45. P-N6 Q-K2!



The game ends with a series of coups that cancel each other out. First, this move defends the e8 checking square, and still watches h7, while threatening, at some time, a black queen incursion via a3 - a1. If my bishop moved at this point, black has a back row mate at his disposal.

46. Q-B3!

At first sight I thought this move might even have won the game for me! How on earth can black defend the bishop and the b-pawn?

(46. Q-KB5 looks even stronger, since white is then threatening Q-B8 ch and QxNP, picking off the queenside pawns. However, black seems to have a defence in 46. ... B-K8!)

46. ... Q-K4!

But black finds the move that achieves the impossible, since if 47. BxP? Q-K8 mate. I am a pawn ahead BUT with (a) bishops of opposite colours (b) lots of apparently fruitless play and (c) the time standing at 2.30 a.m. I conceded the machine a draw in this our first encounter at Escorter's Practice Level 4.