

Chess Room Newsletter



GM Elshan Moradiabadi joins the ranks of illustrious simul-givers at Mechanics'

Issue #1068 | February 7th, 2026 | Gens Una Sumus!

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Recent Tournaments at the Mechanics' Institute

By Alex Robins

2026 started at the chess room with our **25th Burger Memorial** - held in honor of longtime board member and chess club supporter Bob Burger - no relation to the TV show. The top section had a clear winner with **NM Daniel Cremisi** (2347) going undefeated with 3.5 points. Behind him, we had a tie with **Laurie Qiu** (2127) and **Zee Chin** (1949) splitting the prizes for second and third place.

The middle section was also won outright with 3.5 points - with a strong showing by **Ishaan Sinha** (1667). Behind Ishaan was **Frederic "Fritz" Dutter** (1900) - with only one working eye(!) and approaching 70 - imagine what he will do when he can see the whole board! Behind him, **Aavi Bharucha** (1721), **Travis Liu** (1699), **Kanav Maheshwari** (1521), and **Jonathan Dai** (1453) tied for fourth.

In the bottom section **Simone Pagan Griso** (1407) won with a perfect score! **Michael Kvasov** (1214) also went undefeated and took second place with 3.5 points. Third place was a tie between **Samuel Agdamag** (1496), **Volodymyr Kysenko** (1364), **Teresa Long** (1240), and **Maxwell Sills** (1200).

Full results can be found [here](#).

This tournament was directed by Senior TD Arthur Liou.

Our next tournament of the year was our **Monthly Scholastic Swiss** - and this one was a ton of fun! In the top section we were glad to see our camper **Keshav Raman** (1002) take first place undefeated, Mechanics' alumni **Tomas Moore** (1066) took second, **Ethan Leung** (1155) came in third, **Bradley Harger** (1231) was in fourth, and **Sairaghav Kumar** (1082) finished in fifth place.

In the middle section, first through fourth place all had three points with the results decided by tiebreaks with **Shivaansh Girish** (621) in first, **Keshav Mehta** (729) in second, **Jacob Cheung** (772) in third, **Ezra Mart** (690) in fourth, and **Abraxas Chapman** (634) in fifth.

In the under section, our former camper **Simon Rus** (unr.) and **Xander Elbogen** (unr.) both went undefeated with Simon winning on tiebreaks and third through fifth went in order to, Mechanics' camper **Jaylen Chen** (315), **Iksha Nair** (323), and **Parker Firmage** (354).

Full results can be found [here](#).

This tournament was directed by Senior TD Arthur Liou.

Our next Swiss tournament was our **MLK Day Scholastic Championship**, our first time holding a scholastic tournament on a holiday and it went very well! Thank you to all the families who joined us and please come and play with us on President's Day too!

In the upper section, **Michael Kvasov** (1214) won the tournament outright with a perfect score - congratulations to Michael! Mechanics' camper **Sasha Chugh** (1106) took second place with 3.5 points and behind her there was a three way tie that was split on tiebreaks in order to **Juliette Jones** (1148), **Prahalad Raghavendran** (1101), and **Harrison Lin** (1042).

In the middle section, we had another undefeated winner with **Ethan Bu** (850) scoring 4.5 points. Second through fifth went, in order, to **Simon Rus** (844), **Aiden Smuckler** (977), **Ezra Mart** (690), and **Cayden Chen** (792).

In the under section, **Tristan Kreitmann** (unr.) took home first undefeated with second through fifth place going to: **Silvan Lienhard** (unr.), **Xander Elbogen** (unr.), **Jack Abrams** (379), and **Parker Firmage** (354).

Full results can be found [here](#).

This tournament was directed by Senior TD Arthur Liou.

The following weekend we held our **3rd Annual Alla Kushnir Memorial**. In the top section, first place was taken with a perfect score by **GM Christopher Woojin Yoo** (2662), with **NM Sebastian Suarez** (2320) going undefeated for second place. Third was split five ways between: **NM Vedic Panda** (2325), **NM Jimmy Heiserman** (2280), **CM Jashith Karthi** (2240), **NM Vladyslav Shekunov** (2214), and **NM Jacob Chiang** (2207).

In the middle section, **Austin Bo Chen** (1647) went 4 for 4 with a strong showing and taking undisputed first. Behind him **Carson Armstrong** (1803) and **Gogo Dancig-Perlman** (1750) split for second place going undefeated and drawing each other in round 4.

In the under section, we had another perfect score with **Andrew Yu** (1351) taking home the first place prize. **William Ethan Carter** (1248) was behind him with 3.5 points and third place was split four ways between **Justin Ye**

(1022), **Cibran De La Fuente** (unr.), **Gerard Donahue** (unr.), and **Connor Sullivan** (unr.).

Full results can be found [here](#).

This tournament was directed by Senior TD Arthur Liou and FA, ANTD Scott Mason.

The day after that we held our day of fast chess with the **Mechanics' Institute Monthly Rapid** in the morning. These fast chess tournaments have been really fun and gotten surprisingly strong. This month **FM Ethan Guo** (2359) took first place with **NM Daniel Cremisi** (2347) taking second and losing only to Ethan. **WFM Jenny Qi** (2130) took third with her two losses coming from the other masters.

In the under section, **Rohith Prabakar** (1500) and **Peter Vu** (1371) split first place with **Ken Green** (1655) taking third place a half point behind them. Later that afternoon the competition got even stronger with two GMs duking it out in our **Mechanics Institute Monthly Blitz**. In the end **GM Christopher Woojin Yoo** (2662) went undefeated with his only draw coming from **GM Mark Heimann** (2599) who also went undefeated but took second place after also drawing to **FM Ethan Guo** (2359) who took third and whose only loss came from Christopher. Quite a strong tournament for a Sunday afternoon!

Full results can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

This tournament was directed by FA, ANTD Scott Mason.

Our final tournament of the month was a two day FIDE tournament, the **23rd Konig Memorial Tournament**. These tournaments have been extremely popular and this one sold out on Thursday morning - so make sure you sign up early for this month's Falconer Memorial on the 31st through March 1st.

In the top section we again had a three way tie for first between **GM Christopher Woojin Yoo** (2662), **GM Mark Heimann** (2590), and **Neil Chalisery** (2031) - congratulations to all but particularly Neil for hanging with the GMs!

In the middle section, **Vikram Scherfke** (1595) took home first place with a perfect score. **Ansh Ankit Doshi** (1654) went undefeated with 3.5 points and took home second. In third place we had a six way tie between **Theodore**

Miller (1778), Gabriel Enkhjargal (1761), Ritvik Reddy Vuluvala (1748), Anjali Rao (1746), Ayaan Saligram (1633), and Roshan Jagath (1615).

Congratulations to all the winners!

In the under section, Tuesday Night Marathon regular **Sawyer Stults (1535)** was the clear first place winner with 3.5 points. Second and third were split three ways between **Ahaan Jain (1326), Zihe Zachary Zhao (1317), and Pratham Jain (1134).**

Full results can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

This tournament was directed by IA, NTD Judit Sztarray and IA, Senior TD Abel Talamantez.

The Chess Archives Part 1: The 1991 Pan Pacific Grandmaster Invitational

By Christian Brickhouse

Mikhail Tal is the only world champion to play a rated tournament game at the Mechanics' Institute, and it was during the 2nd Pan-Pacific International Tournament. The 2nd Pan-Pacific was part of a series of three tournaments—held in 1987, 1991, and 1995—inviting grandmasters from around the Pacific rim to San Francisco for “the strongest such event in San Francisco history” according to the *New York Times* (Dec 20, 1987). The series brought the likes of Viktor Korchnoi, Susan Polgar, Xie Jun, Eugenio Torre, and Utut Adianto—to name just a few. The top-line coverage can be found in our newspapers, but what was the day-to-day like? For that, we'll explore the archives.

The Mechanics' Institute
presents...

THE 1991 PANPACIFIC GRANDMASTER CHESS TOURNAMENT

East meets West in San Francisco! Six of the most exciting international chess stars compete with six leading American players in the biggest event in years in the U.S.:

- Mikhail Tal
- Zsuzsa Polgar
- Ian Rogers, Eugenio Torre, Utut Adianto
- Lubomir Ftacnik
- Walter Browne, Larry Christiansen, John Fedorowicz,
Joel Benjamin, Patrick Wolff, Vincent McCambridge

Financial District Holiday Inn

Saturday March 2 through
Thursday March 14

Special Visitors Hotel Rate

MIKHAIL TAL is the former world champion from Riga, Latvia, who electrified the world with his exciting play for three decades.

ZSUZSA POLGAR led the Hungarian women's team to victory over the Soviet Union at the recent Olympiad -- a media sensation!

ROGERS, TORRE, AND ADIANTO are champions of Australia, the Philippines, and Indonesia, respectively. FTACNIK is a Czechoslovakian Grandmaster.

BROWNE has been U.S. Champion six times; CHRISTIENSEN twice. FEDOROWICZ and tournament organizer Nick deFirmian joined these two on the U.S. team that recently won the Silver Medal at the Olympiad. BENJAMIN and WOLFF are leading U.S. younger players. San Francisco is ably represented by International Master MCCAMBRIDGE.

THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT HOLIDAY INN is on Kearny Street across from Portsmouth Square (between Commercial and Clay Streets (415) 433-6600) Out-of-town visitors note: the special rate of \$89, single or double, enables you to take in two sessions on succeeding days with one night at this attractive rate. Please note that the "off" days are Thursday March 7 and Wednesday March 13 GAMES BEGIN 3 pm EXCEPT Mar. 2: 11 a.m.

GENERAL ADMISSION: \$5 STUDENTS, SENIORS: \$3 MECHANICS MEMBERS: \$2
Full Series of 11 sessions: \$40 Full Series, Special Seating: \$100

The Mechanics' Institute 4th Floor 57 Post Street, SF, CA 94104

A Flyer for the 1991 Pan Pacific Grandmaster Invitational which highlights the achievements of the players, lists the locations, and gives ticket prices.



Row 1 of the archives. The chess section is close to the middle of the row.

The archives relating to the Pan Pacific International are found deep in the basement: Row 1, Section 4, Shelf 4, Box 4. A box which is helpfully labeled: “Pan Pacific International Grandmaster Tournaments”. The box contains undigitized ephemera from the three Pan-Pacific International Tournaments hosted by Mechanics' Institute with a separate folder for each tournament. We will be exploring the second folder which contains objects from the 1991 edition.



The archive box contains materials on the Pan-Pacific Grandmaster Invitational.

When looking through the archives, sometimes objects tell you what they are and why they are interesting. For example, in a letter from Neil Falconer to Val Zemitis dated December 12, 1990, Falconer describes a meeting that would ultimately lead to Tal's appearance. Alexei Shirov, then 18 years old, was being considered for an invitation. But in a December 9, 1990 meeting Nick De Firmian said that he thought Mechanics' Institute could get Tal for "a reasonable figure". Falconer thought the storylines would be equivalent—"the setting sun and the rising sun"---but that the publicity value of a world champion would be greater. The committee decided to pursue Tal with Shirov as a backup, and as students of history we know ultimately Tal appeared (though famously late).

NEIL E. FALCONER
SUITE 3200
333 MARKET STREET
SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA 94105
(415) 777-3999

December 12, 1990

Mr. Val Zemitis
[REDACTED]
Davis, California 95616

Dear Val:

Thanks very much for sending me the copy of your father's book. You indicated it was the your last copy, and that you had to get it from your son. I do not feel entitled to deprive your son of the great pleasure and pride he must have in owning a work written by such a distinguished grandfather. Accordingly, I have had a few copies made, and am returning the original to you under separate cover, together with one of the copies for yourself.

Did you give a copy to the University library in Berkeley? You should consider this as to your father's next book.

I think you will remember Dr. Frank Ruys, who played with me on the UC chess team in the years 1940-42, and was also active at the Golden Gate Club in San Francisco in the early 1950's. He has been a lifelong amateur violinist, and I am sending him a copy. I am also sending a couple of copies to friends, who have relatives or neighbors who are professional violinists in symphony orchestras. If and when your dad's second book comes out, please be sure to let me know.

On another subject: I met with Burger, De Firmian and McClain Sunday, and advised of the changed situation as to Shirov, whom I continued to push. However, De Firmian now believes we can get Tal for the San Francisco tournament at a reasonable figure, and we all felt he would have much greater publicity value, as well as human interest value. (It is the old story of the setting sun and the rising sun -- there is much to be said for each.) If we can get Tal, we will pass on Shirov this time. If we cannot, I will call you to explore Shirov again.

I enclose a copy of the list of 10 players from whom De Firmian has acceptances. Tal will make Number 11 and Number 12

First page of a letter from Neil Falconer to Val Zemitis describing the decision between Tal and Shirov. The original shows Zemitis' full home address at the time.

Other times, archival objects seem straightforward but evolve into small puzzles like the yellow program and the white program which are slightly different; I think the white program had some internal use by staff or directors. The white program has additions from a typewriter which would be tedious to add to every program. It includes information like player

ratings, scores, and prize money alongside a printed list of donors to the tournament. These are missing from the yellow program which is more pared down and easier to produce. We also have more copies of the yellow program which suggests there were more of them made, presumably for the spectators. That's the fun of the archives: even little things can become fun puzzles to dig deeper and analyze more. So if anyone knows for sure why these programs are different let me know!

THE 1991 PANPACIFIC GRANDMASTER CHESS TOURNAMENT

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PRIZES:

1st - \$3,500
2nd - \$2,500
3rd - \$1,500
4th - \$1,000
5th - \$800
6th - \$700
7th - 12th \$100/point

2500	Joel Benjamin
2500	Walter Browne
2570	Mikhail Tal
2495	Uttu Adianto
2555	John Fedorowicz
2545	Ian Rogers
2590	Larry Christiansen
2590	Lucyomir Ftacnik
2530	Eugenio Torre
2385	John Grefe
2520	Patrick Wolff
2510	Zsuzsa Polgar

Benjamin	Browne	Tal	Adianto	Fedorowicz	Rogers	Christiansen	Ftacnik	Torre	Grefe	Wolff	Polgar
1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	6
1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	3
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	6
0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	5
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	5
1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	6
0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	6
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	6
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	5
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	3
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	6

The archives have other treasures I've yet to discover, and more I've found but not shared. The collection also continues to grow. We recently were contacted by someone with programs and letters from the 1987 Pan-Pacific which we don't have much material from. I'm excited! We also have old chess pieces and tons of physical photos from events. Recently, we found an old photo of the chess club members and I roped Myles Cooper and Mark Morgan into helping me figure out when it was taken and Tony Lama who identified some of the members in the photo. We're building on a rich history, and it's fun to bring out the artefacts for their time in the sun. Even the mundane things like old letters and pamphlets can reveal an interesting story.

Photos from GM Elshan Moradiabadi's Simul

Photos Courtesy of Miguel Dovale

Earlier in January we were honored to host GM Elshan Moradiabadi at our club for the first time and he gave a 16 board simul to our lucky players. It was a great time for everyone involved and our GM scored a perfect score. You can find out more about Elshan on his website [here](#) - check out his piece on the 9 imbalances here to get a brief rundown of the whole game of chess. I also want to give a shoutout to our photographer for the evening, Miguel Dovale, who was on vacation with his family and generously donated his time, skills, and equipment! It helped that his father-in-law is the president of a chess club in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia and played the top board in the simul. We always love hosting players from around the globe and I'm hoping we will soon have a sister-club in Mongolia!













I need to find a reason to go visit them in Mongolia! Thank you again to Miguel and his family as well as

Dynamic Equality

By Renate Otterbach

What makes chess such a powerful, exciting game? One critical factor is the dynamic equality of the pieces.

“What is dynamic equality?” It means that one side has a static advantage and the other side has a dynamic advantage, and both cancel out, leaving equality.

Whereas the above quote examines dynamic quality in the game, in this article, I want to examine the concept in terms of the assigned piece value—the same idea at a different level of analysis.

What creates dynamic equality or dynamic inequality in chess? I think there are at least three primary elements: the different functions of the pieces, the pieces’ strengths and weaknesses, and the pieces’ placement relative to the critical position on the board. This article focuses on one aspect: the strengths and weaknesses of the pieces. In this blog, I want to explore a different viewpoint.

I want to look at it from the viewpoint of the pieces, who cannot see the big picture. They are like us, going about their business, trying to make the best of their strengths and deal with their weaknesses. Most likely, throwing a wistful glance at others, they lament the perceived inequality, not seeing the symphony of the game but only their own “small” part.

I tried to capture this in the poem below:

Inequality

In chess, there is inequality – a bishop or a queen can never be,
He is assigned to his slot –
The Light Square or Dark
He changes not

Yet as a pair, his strength can greater be
For he covers all the diagonals, you see

And while a queen, he can never attack
He can take her with the help of a skewer check
Overcoming inequality

Greater than the queen, he can be

The queen, though strong, has a difficult lot
She must fight alone and must run a lot
Her companions can defend her only to a degree
Because everyone likes to take a powerful piece, you see
To whom can she turn for comfort and understanding?
The king whose life is her concern?
His danger signals her lot.
She sacrifices on the spot.

The king in majesty rules in his lair
The concern for his safety is beyond compare
Each piece is concerned with keeping him safe
Often smothering his life into the grave
Only allowed one square to go
His life is lonely in a way that only a ruler can know.

The knight, oh, how unpredictable is he
He jumps from place to place so carelessly
So free
Creating forks here and there
Threatening everyone everywhere

Closed or open position

He does not care

No limitations he can see

Yet unstable is he

With each move, he must let go of the territory he possessed

He can be driven to and fro

And a rock or bishop can jail him

With no place to go

The rock, the opposite is he

Sturdy and as predictable as predictable can be

In straight lines, he moves across the plain

Straight forward, always the same

From side to side, he may sway

But always in straight lines, he must stay

He destroys everything in his bullying way

Yet when blocked, he weeps in dismay

The pawn, oh, how difficult is its lot

He only gets to move one spot

He may start with two

But careful he must be

en passant

Ends hope for the future he can see.

Dreary is his life

Step by step, fighting to survive
But if, to the end, he makes his way
He can see
His is a promotion beyond compare
If only he could get there
He is the only piece that can transform
A tedious living
For a glorious morn
When he is reborn

Each piece has a unique position in the game
Their jobs are not the same
They differ in their personality
Some may call this inequality
Yet the differences make chess
The beautiful that it can be
Sameness would deny
The richness
That life can occupy

Annotated Games from the TNM

By IM Elliott Winslow

A selection of annotated games from the Fall TNM annotated by IM Elliott Winslow. All the games from the current TNM can be found here, and games from previous TNMs are in the [Tournament Archive](#).

☐ **Melville,Cailen Jeremiah** **E81**
☒ **Winslow,Elliott** **1950**
 2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (1.2) 6.1.26
[Winslow,Elliott]

As this newsletter is completing, five rounds of the first 2026 Friday Night Marathon are done. And somehow, Elliott Winslow (your game archivist and various other things) is in clear first place. My play hasn't been all that sound, but confusion has had a successful reign -- which means lots of fun attacks and such. For example, Round 1... **1.d4 2 Nf6 1:17 2.c4 8 g6 35 3.f3 9**

A lot of players of White like this, "discouraging" the Gruenfeld (...d5). But you have to be willing to play the Saemisch. It used to be a Caveman System (Be3, Qd2, g4, h4-h5, Bh6, Checkmate) but Black has crashed through to White's king in the center often enough that more subtle methods currently prevail. Still, Black might also ratchet up the volume... **3...Bg7 17 4.e4 12 0-0 12 5.Nc3 12**

[I give him a chance to push on with 5.e5]

5...d6 1:30 6.Nge2 8

[6.Be3 is still the main line]

6...a6 4:02 I've tried everything else, including this many years ago as well as recently, but I've lately seen some inspiring analysis by Greek GM Kotronias -- which includes a game or three by Naroditsky. I hope I'm not taking bullet game openings as serious!

7.Be3 1:57 Nbd7 1:19

[7...b5!? -- see below]

8.Ng3 1:38 looking to get the king castled, but not the greatest square for this piece.

[Relevant: 8.Qd2 b5 9.cxb5 axb5 10.Nxb5 c6 11.Nbc3 e5 12.Ng3 d5

13.Be2 h5 14.exd5 Nxd5 15.Nxd5 cxd5 16.0-0 h4 17.Nh1 Re8 18.Bb5 exd4 19.Bg5 Qb6 20.a4 Ba6 21.Bxd7 Re2 22.Qd1 h3 23.Nf2 d3 24.gxh3 Rxb2 25.Rb1 Bd4 26.Rxb2 Qxb2 27.Qd2 Qb3 28.Be3 Bc3 29.Qd1 Qc4 30.Kg2 d2 31.Rg1 Qb4 32.Bb5 Bxb5 33.axb5 Re8 34.Bg5 f6 35.Bxd2 Bxd2 36.Qb1 Kf7 37.Qd3 Be3 Vedit,S (2720)-Van Foreest,J (2697) Chennai 2025 ½-½]

8...h5 1:27 There are players who automatically respond to g2-g3 with ...h7-h5; I propose adding the knight on that square to that knee jerk. **9.Be2 1:03**

[9.Bd3! and my a- and h-pawn noodling could be just a waste of time...]

9...c6 5:20

[9...h4!? 10.Nf1 b5! This gambit of a pawn figures in a lot of variations with 6...a6 against the Saemisch, see Kotronias (the 2025 CBM article, not the Grandmaster Preparation book, which is falling behind the times as books do).]

10.a4 2:37

[10.f4!]

10...h4 4:47 11.Nf1 11 e5 1:07 12.d5! 38 cxd5 40 13.cxd5 57 Nh5! 57

14.Qd2? 12:58

[Last chance for some plus: 14.g3±]

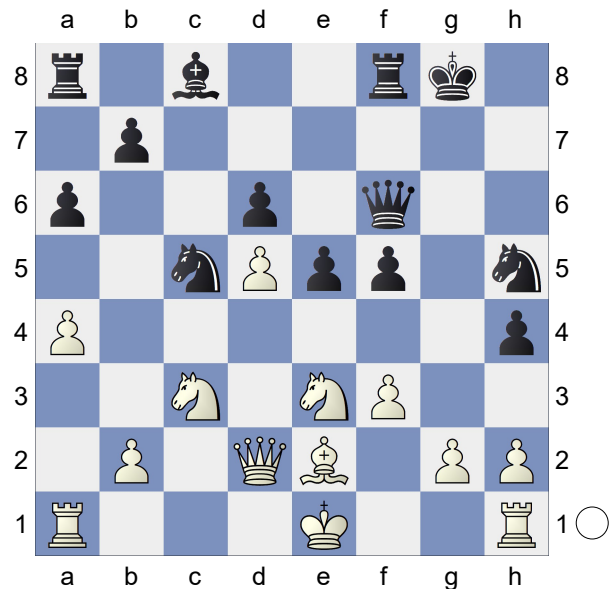
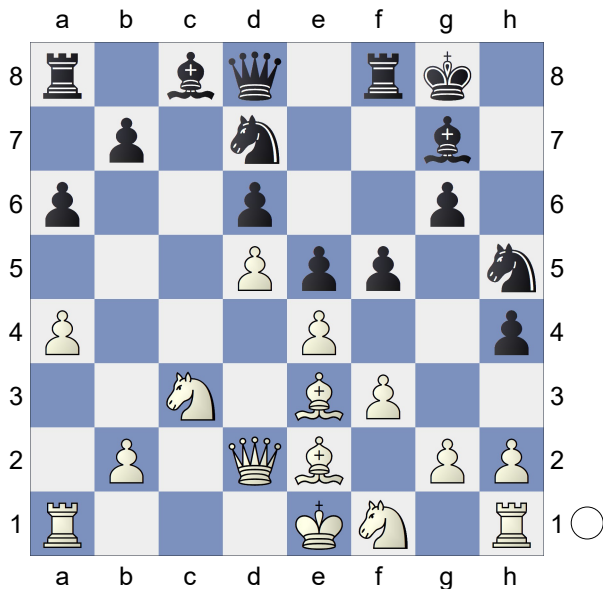
14...f5? 2:47 My bad habit of going bonkers with my pawns, especially those in front of my king.

[14...Nf4♣ is a stock pawn sacrifice that almost always (including here) turns out well for Black if White has to relinquish the dark-square bishop.]

(Diagram)

15.exf5N 2:24

[Predecessor: 15.Bg5 Bf6 16.Bh6



Rf7 17.g3 Nc5 18.Ra3 a5 19.exf5
 gxf5 20.f4 Ng7 21.Kd1 Qb6 22.fxe5
 Bxe5 23.Be3 Bd7 24.Nb5 Raf8
 25.Rg1 Bxb5 26.axb5 hxg3 27.hxg3
 Qd8 28.Bg5 Bf6 29.Bf4 Ne4
 30.Qxa5 Bxb2 31.Qxd8 Rxd8
 32.Rb3 Bd4 33.Be3 Be5 34.Bd3
 Ra8 35.Ke2 Ra4 36.Kf3 Ne8
 37.Nd2 Nc7 38.g4 Nxd2+ 39.Bxd2
 fxg4+ 40.Ke2 Nxd5 41.Bg6 Rf6
 42.Bc2 Rc4 43.Rd3 Nf4+ 44.Bxf4
 Rcx4 Brustkern,J (2299)-Lichmann,P
 (2314) Germany 2011 0-1]

15...gxf5 4:28

[15...Nf4!? 16.g4! gxf5 17.gxf5 Nf6
 18.Bd3= (18.Bxf4=; 18.Rg1=)]

16.Bg5?! 13:17

[16.g3! f4! 17.gxf4 exf4 18.Bd4 Ne5
 19.Rg1=]

16...Bf6?! 1:46 This had been my
 intention all along,

[but better was 16...Qe8 17.Bxh4
 Nc5 18.Ra3 Bd7]

17.Bxf6 39 Qxf6 14 18.Ne3 1:36 Nc5
4:42 Some annoyance on the other
 side...

(Diagram)

19.Ra3 57 There are a lot of knights in

the way of this rook lift "to the kingside"

[19.Bd1 is more likely to find a
 better square than the rook]

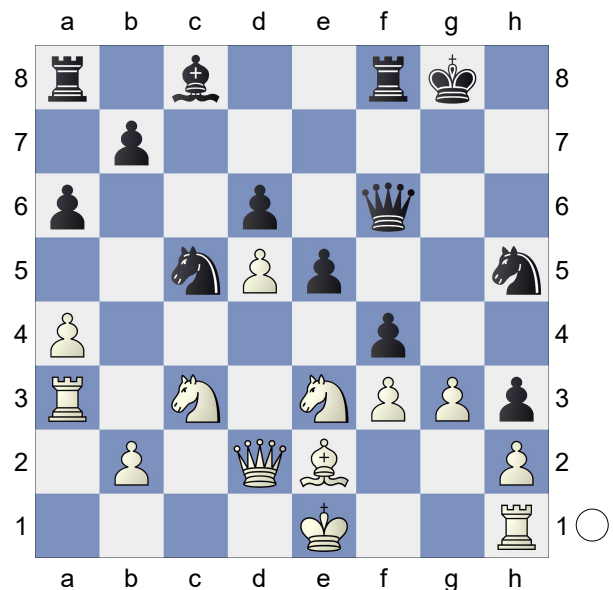
19...h3 8:45

[19...a5!]

20.g3 3:26 Perhaps he should be
 opening files, not closing them!?

[20.Rg1!?]

20...f4 1:44

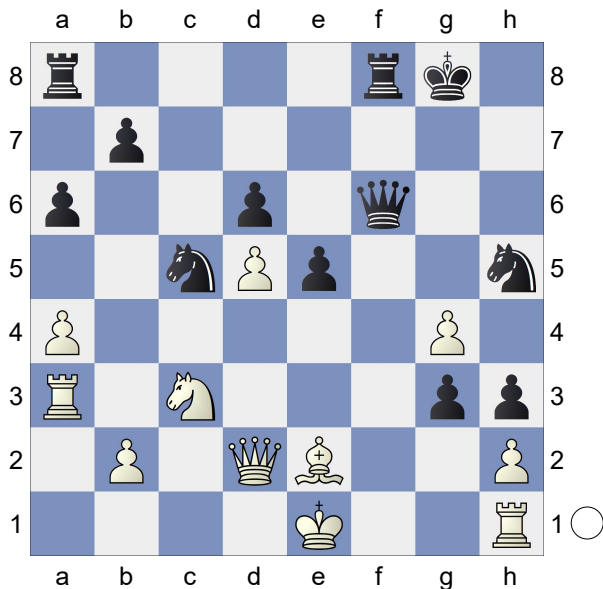


21.Ng4?? 3:30 Missing a shot.

[21.gxf4 Qh4+ 22.Kd1 Rxf4 /]
 [21.Nf1]

21...Bxg4+ 50 22.fxg4 17 fxg3! 4:29

(Diagram)



23.hxg3 38 Nxg3 1:09 24.Bf3 5:31

I saw the doubletake freeze,

[when he noticed that 24.Rxh3

was mate after Qf1+! 25.Bxf1 Rxf1#]

24...Qxf3 3:06 25.Qg5+ 22 Kf7 14

26.Rh2 2:40 Qf1+ 19 27.Kd2 3 Nce4+

35 A shaky but otherwise entertaining start to chess in 2026!

0-1

□ Winslow,Elliott **D11 2200**
 ■ Rajaram,Raghu **1821**
 2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (2.2) 13.1.26
 [Winslow,Elliott]

I manage to mangle this opening, which I knew pretty well once upon a time. But somewhere in there it slips into my favor.

I was solidly worse for quite a while though!

1.d4 16 d5 25 2.c4 7 c6 7

3.Nf3 1:04 Nf6 1:02 4.e3 21 Bg4 1:55

[4...Bf5 is the main theoretical "Slav" response to this little 4.e3;]

[4...e6 is what the Meranists are likely to play, when 5.Nc3 accepts the challenge, (while Avrukh suggests 5.b3 in his Grandmaster Repertoire series update.)]

5.Qb3 4:22 I was out of touch with this move

[5.h3!? is what Avrukh has switched to in his update. Somebody just played Bf5!? against me in a blitz game (!), and it's not so bad.]

[5.Nc3 e6 6.h3 (6.Qb3)]

5...Qb6 9:24 6.Ne5!? 1:54 Not as bad as I thought it was (so why did I play it?)

[6.Nc3 e6 7.Nh4 was Avrukh, first time around.]

[6.cxd5 Qxb3 7.axb3 Nxd5 8.Ne5 Bf5 9.Bd3 is a little bit for White.]

6...e6?! 4:16 He should save the bishop.

[6...Bf5]

[6...Be6!?]

7.c5 6:36 and I should take it! Now!

7...Qc7 6:12 8.Nxg4 1:41

[8.f3!? Bh5 9.g4 Bg6 10.e4!?±

Nbd7 11.Bf4 Nxe5 12.Bxe5]

[SF18 likes really? 8.e4!?]

8...Nxg4 13 9.Be2 12 The position is equal. **9...Nf6 36 10.f4?! 1:09**

The Slav seems to bring out my worst, overplaying, behavior.

[White should try 10.Qc3=]

[10.Qc2 Be7 11.Nc3 0-0 12.0-0 e5 13.b4 a6 14.dxe5 Qxe5 15.Bb2 Qc7 16.e4 dxe4 17.Nxe4 1-0 (56) Nguyen Thi Mai,H (2259)-Nguyen,T (1943) Can Tho 2012]

10...b6! 4:09 11.cxb6 53 axb6 43

12.Nd2?! 2:31

[12.0-0]

12...Nbd7 2:21

[12...c5 13.a4 Nc6]

13.0-0 3:31 Bd6 20:10 14.Nf3 2:42 Ne4 1:38 15.Qc2 3:48 c5?! 4:04 16.Bd3 1:06 Nef6?! 5:00

[16...f5]

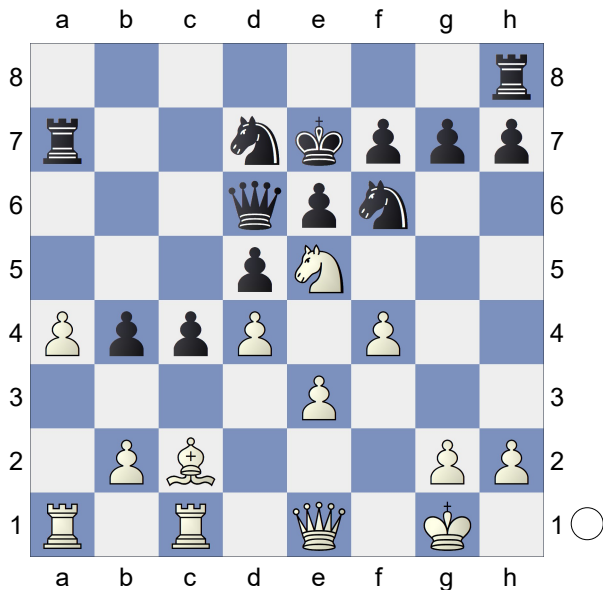
17.Bd2 1:50

[17.b3=]

17...c4! 2:14 18.Rfc1 2:22 Ke7 4:32

[18...b5 19.a3 Ra7 when Black has just what White was looking for with 7.

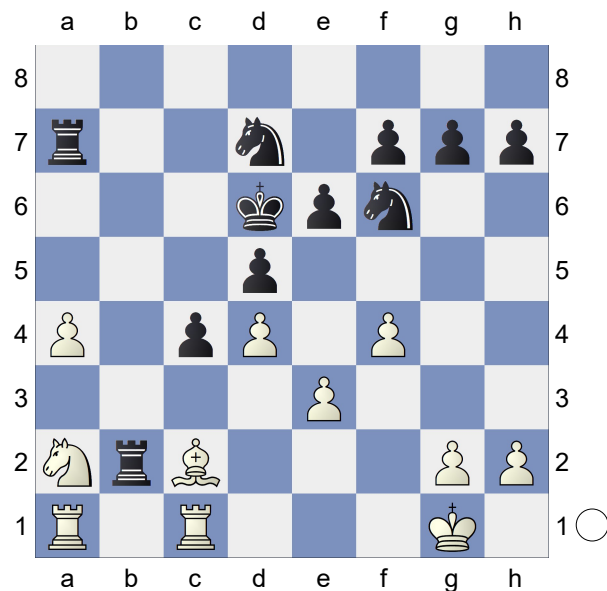
c5 (!).]
19.Qd1 4:44
 [19.a4!= deserves consideration.]
19...b5 1:53 20.Qe1 6:46
Space Advantage Black 20...Qb7 2:33
21.Bb4 1:04 Qb6 1:43
 [21...cxd3 22.Bxd6+ Kd8 23.Rc7+-]
 [21...Ne8!?]
22.Ne5 54 Ra4 2:30
 [22...Ra6 23.Bb1 Bxb4 24.Qxb4+ Qd6 (24...Ke8 25.Bc2±)]
23.Bxd6+= 9:49 Qxd6 23 24.Bc2 1:18
Ra7 21 25.a4 1:48
 [25.Qh4!?±]
 [25.g4±]
25...b4 8:18



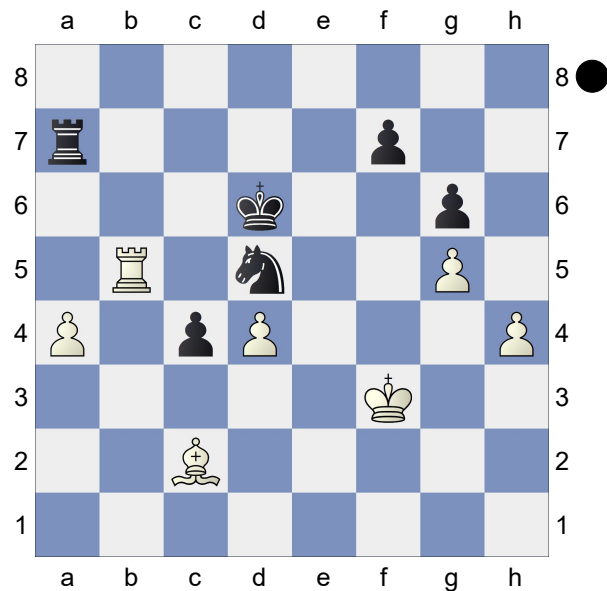
26.Qxb4? 35 Qxb4 6 27.Nc6+ 7 Kd6
6 28.Nxb4 4 Rb8 17
 [28...Ng4! 29...Rb8! is the strong threat. 29.Na2 Nxe3]
29.Na2= 13 Rxb2 45

(Diagram)

30.Nc3 11 Ra5 2:05 31.h3 56 h6= 44
 [31...g6 32.g4 h5]
32.Kf1 48 Ne8 1:59 33.Rab1 40 Rxb1
24 34.Rxb1 6 Kc6 19 35.Ke2 3:52
 [35.e4!?]
35...Nd6 31 36.g4 24 g6 1:59 37.Kf3



2:54 Ra7 1:02 38.g5 4:38 hxc5 4:31
39.fxc5 6 e5 10 40.dxe5 3:48 Nxe5+
15 41.Kf4 5 Nd7 8 42.Rd1 1:17 Nb6
58 43.h4 14 Kc5 56 44.Rb1 56 d4
2:29 45.Nb5 3:48 Nd5+ 4:59 46.Kf3 24
Nxb5 1:04 47.Rxb5+ 24 Kd6 9
48.exd4 47



Re7? 20 Loses the game.

[Better is 48...Nc3!± 49.Rc5 Nxa4 50.Rxc4 Nb6]
49.Be4+- 1:04 White is clearly winning.
49...Nc3 48
 [49...Nc7]
50.Rb6+ 54 Kc7 7 51.Rb7+ 4 Kd6 4
52.Rxe7 40 Kxe7 6 53.a5 52 Kd6 23

54.a6 17 Nb5 6 55.Ke3 20 Kc7 22
 56.Bd5 3:10 c3 2 Weighted Error Value:
 White=0.18 (very precise) /Black=0.45. I
 don't know where the "TA" gets this
 rubbish from; I was *not* "very precise"
 at all!
 1-0

Heiserman, Jimmy **B14**
2280
 Winslow, Elliott **2200**
 2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (3.1) 20.1.26
[Winslow, Elliott]

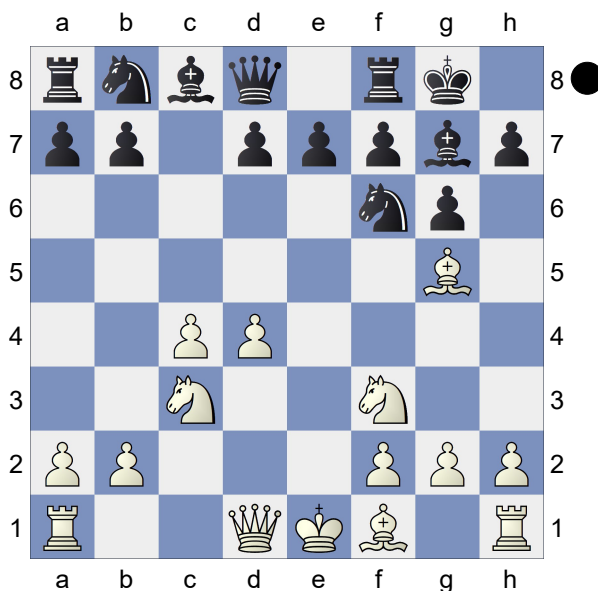
The key #1 vs. #2 game. I was pretty well prepared for the line Heiserman has been playing, but he surprised me with what is usually a lot quieter system. I guessed that he wasn't so sure of the ins and outs of the line and tried this gambit -- and he never quite seemed balanced. The queens came off, and then ... his king took a walk... 1.d4 2 Nf6 1:07 2.c4 7 g6 7 3.Nc3 7 Bg7 29 4.Nf3 9

[I expected 4.e4 d6 5.h3 0-0 6.Be3]
 4...0-0 17 5.Bg5 8 Perhaps he noticed how badly I play against this! I hate it when my opponents don't give me targets to attack when I play openings known for their counterattacks (King's Indian Defense!). 5...c5 1:55 I decided that whatever I do, it won't be ...h6 and ...g5, which has cost me countless points! But frankly, just nudging a bishop off to h4 is probably a good idea. 6.e3 2:26

[6.d5 gives me something to attack! Maybe even a Benko Gambit ...b5 at the right moment. Still, that's the avenue for White to seek an advantage. As he played, it took some turns, not in his favor.]

6...cxd4 4:33 Stockfish 17.1 (and now

18!) is already making Black better than equal, if only by a sliver (which will go away, so I better move to the next note...) 7.exd4 1:29 The piece captures might be more in line with the mood of 5.Bg5. Now Black can sacrifice a pawn -- disruption ensues! If in fact Heiserman is unfamiliar with this system, it could be unwelcome.



7...d5! 1:42 8.Bxf6 42 (Gotta try...)
 8...Bxf6 10

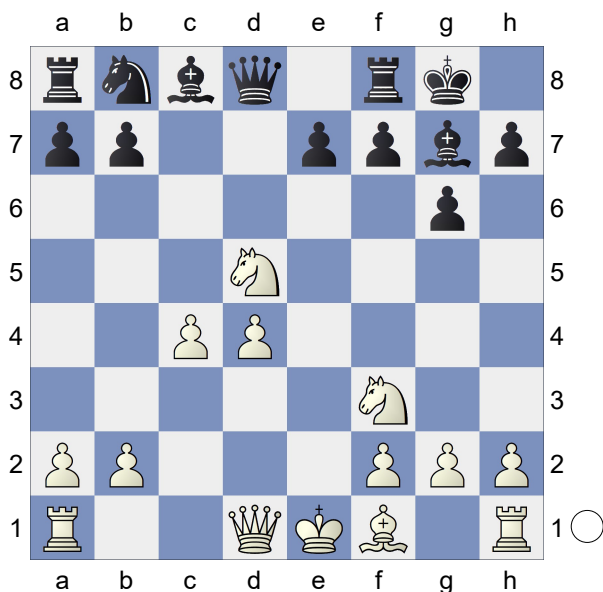
[Shows what *I* know -- analysis and comps (and past study that I'd forgotten) like 8...exf6! -- open e-file to the king! -- but having stuck my neck out with a gambit I'm already panicking on how I'll get my pawn back and keeping my pawns healthy. In fact, 9.Nxd5 Nc6 10.Be2 f5 11.0-0 Be6 wins back the pawn anyway, and the front f-pawn is an asset, not a liability.]

9.Nxd5 13

[Curiously 9.cxd5 is more stable. Have I really stumbled into a transposition to the Black side of the Panov Botvinnik Attack of the Caro Kann, which I've played so much for *White* the last 50 years, and have always found (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5

cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3 and now 5...g6!?)
 very uncomfortable (for White), even
 though I know it's supposed to be the
 least reputable of the main lines (5...
 e6, 5...Nc6) for Black? Turning the
 Tables!]

9...Bg7 21



Save that bishop! **10.Ne3?! 11:06**
 Grab and Hold, but ultimately
 problematic. This does provoke me to
 take my usual drastic steps.

[10.Nc3!= Bg4 (10...Qb6 11.Qd2!?))
 11.Be2 Nc6 12.d5 Bxf3 13.Bxf3
 (anytime White plays 13.gxf3 it's
 instant compensation for Black -- see
 game Na5 14.Be2 Rc8
 (14...Bxc3+!? Same for the
 queenside)]

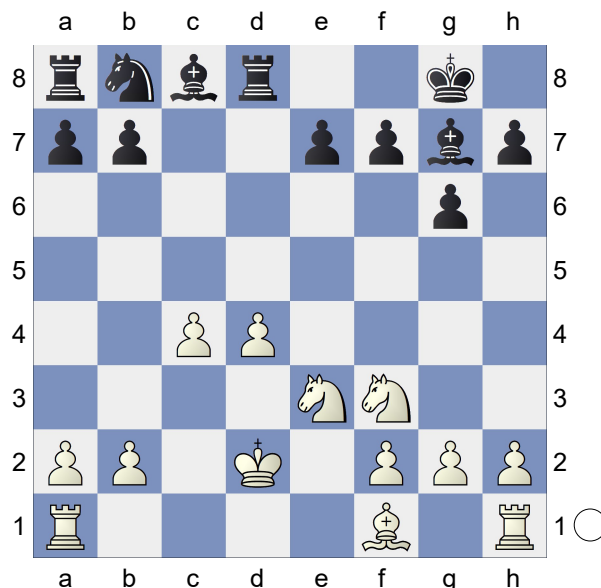
10...Qa5+ 3:46

[Stockfish Speaks: (well...) 10...Nc6!≠
 11.Be2 (11.d5 Bxb2 12.dxc6 Qa5+
 13.Nd2 Rd8 14.Rc1! Bxc1 15.Qxc1
 bxc6≠ interesting...) 11...Nxd4 12.0-0
 Nf5≠]

11.Qd2 10 Qxd2+ 53 12.Kxd2 9

According to Stocky, Black's plus is
 minimal. Still... **12...Rd8 1:01**

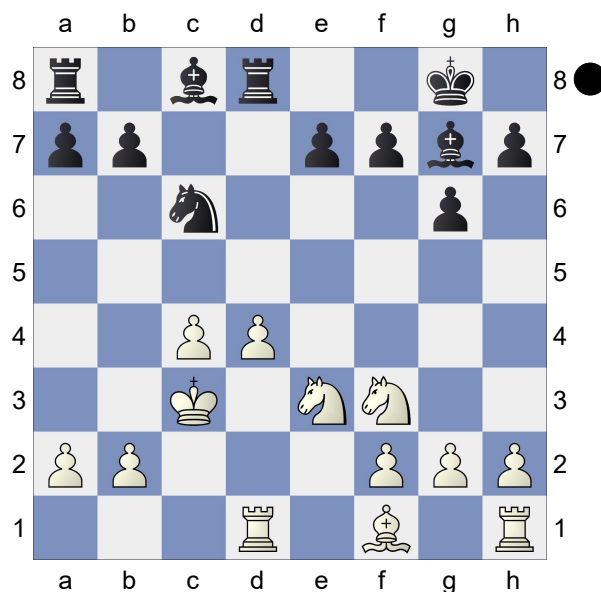
(Diagram)



13.Kc3N 5:22

[Predecessor: 13.Kc2 Bxd4 14.Nxd4
 Rxd4 15.Nd5 Nc6 16.Kc3 e5 17.f4
 Be6 18.fxe5 Rd8 19.Be2 Bxd5
 20.cxd5 R8xd5 21.a3 Rc5+ 22.Kb3
 Rd2 23.Bf3 Nxe5 24.Kb4 Nd3+
 0-1 (24) Roels,F (1949)-Sarrau,J
 (2305) Charleroi 2013]

13...Nc6 2:34 14.Rd1 51



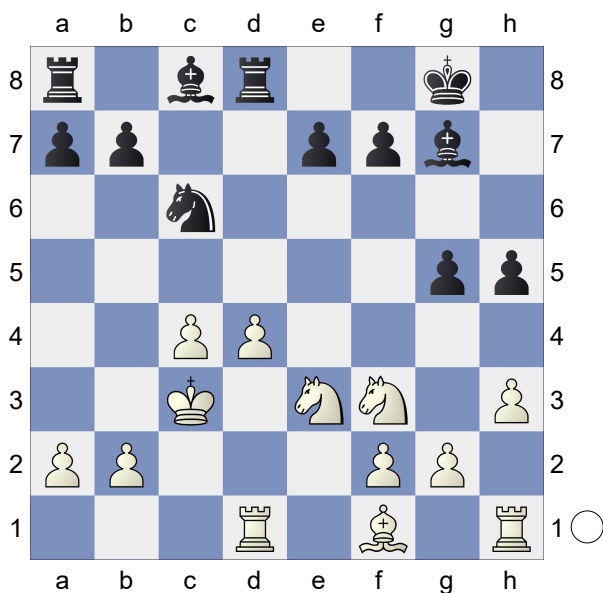
g5!? 5:06 The engine thinks this just
 hands an edge to White. Oh well, I'm
 used to that.

[14...e5 was the "Let's Make a Draw"
 line -- 15.dxe5 (15.d5?! e4+ 16.Kc2
 exf3 17.dxc6 Rxd1 18.Nxd1 Bf5+≠

19.Kc1 bxc6 20.gxf3 This reminds me of one of the early Grandmaster Repertoire books, The Sicilian Defense by Ljubomir Ftacnik. Ftacnik found, I think, dozens of novelties for mostly Black (it was after a repertoire book), with the template "here I found <bang>-<bang>-<bang> when Black's two bishops are at least adequate (or "more than enough") compensation for White's extra pawn." For someone (me) who took years to learn to play gambits, this was eye-opening.) 15...Rxd1 16.Nxd1 Bg4 17.Be2 Nxe5 18.Kc2!?= Just now I stepped away from the computer (I had a lot to do), and when I came back it was on depth 73(!!) -- 0.00s.]

[14...b6 is a donkey/2 try, with or without 14...h5; 15.h3. But zeroing after 14./15.Be2 (or anything else) ... Bb7.]

15.h3 4:37 (says SF, but it's already dropped into '=' territory before I could even type this.) **15...h5** 8:30

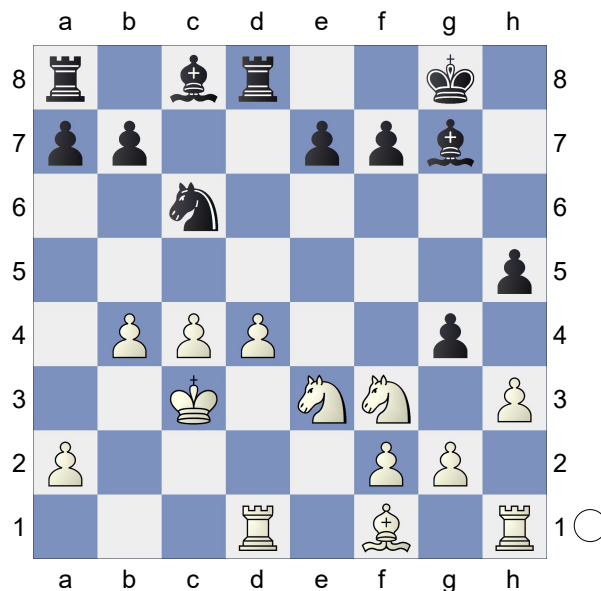


16.b4 8:32 This surprised me. I thought "wrong knight-pawn."

[16.g4 e5 17.d5 e4+ 18.Kc2 exf3 19.dxc6 Rxd1 Now that White's g-

pawn has moved, there's no threat of ...fxg2, so White can take on b7 (... Bxb7 then is no threat) with some little something.]

16...g4 2:44



17.b5? 40

[17.hxg4! Tossing this in gives White a resource I didn't notice at the time (although I suspected he got more out of the missing h-pawns, what with his now-working rook on h1): hxg4 18.b5! Now it's not only good, it's the only good. gxf3 19.bxc6 bxc6 20.Rh5! (stops ...c5!) (20.gxf3 c5) 20...e5!

A) 21.dxe5? Rxd1 22.Nxd1 Bg4 23.Rg5 (23.Rh1 Bxe5+ 24.Kc2 Bf5+ 25.Kc1 Rd8-+);

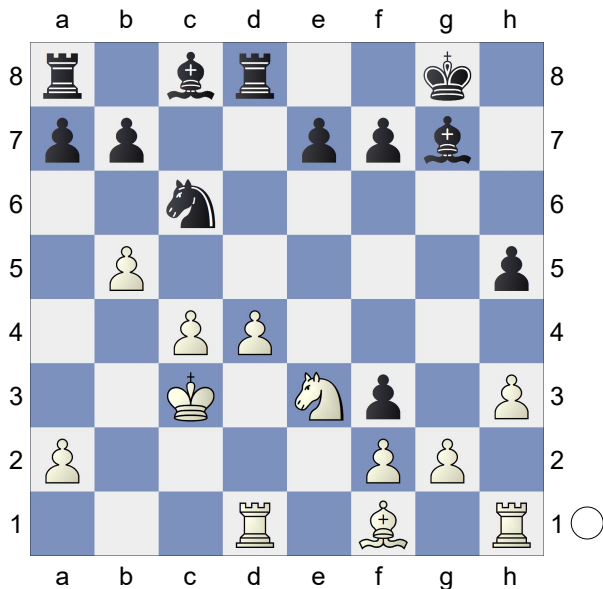
B) 21.Nf5! Bxf5 22.Rxf5 Rab8 (22...exd4+ 23.Kd3=);

C) 21.Kc2! exd4 22.Nf5=

The problem with this line (and 21. Nf5) is the opposite colored bishops. Endgame lore says "With OCBs, rooks on the board favor the side pressing for a win." But I'm not really sure that's me!]

17...gxf3 57

(Diagram)



18.bxc6 6 bxc6!-+ 1:22 19.gxf3 15:44 c5 2:53 Now it's not about passed pawns, it's about his exposed king.

[19...Rb8!?]

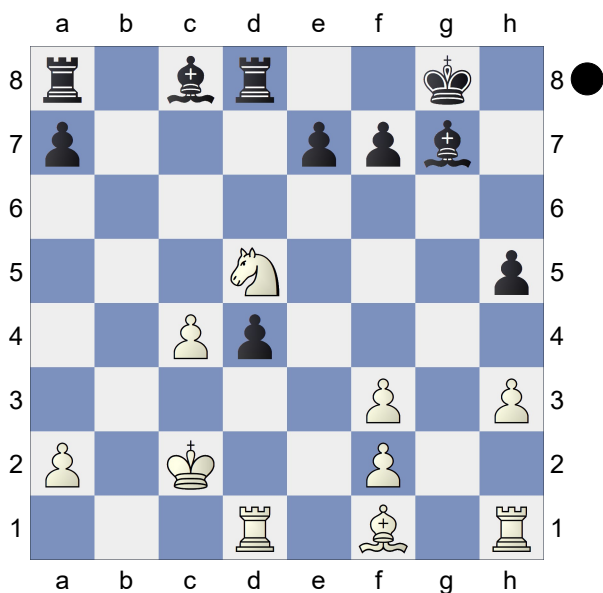
20.Kc2 1:10

[20.Kd2 is a bit better, when it's more feel than calculation.]

20...cxd4 4:34

[20...Bd7 is a move-order thing, if I'd seen the idea in the first place.]

21.Nd5 33



Bb7? 2:51 This is all wrong. Keeping the e-pawn was vital, as I realized as soon as I let go of the bishop.

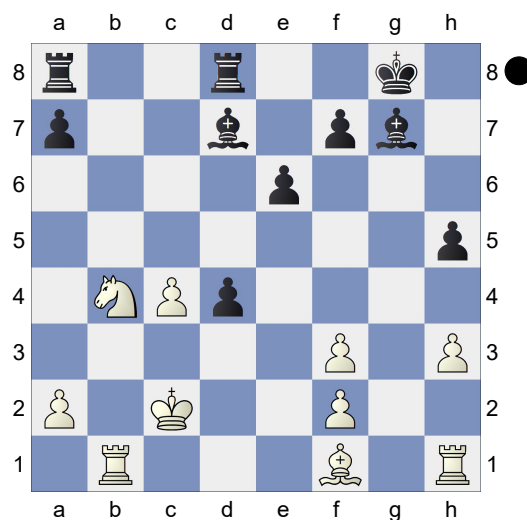
[21...e6?! is still a clear plus, as

22.Ne7+ Kf8 23.Nxc8 Raxc8 24.Bd3 is one of those OCB with rooks I mentioned before: White has a difficult defense but pretty good chances to hold.]

[21...Kf8!? 22.Rb1!? Bd7!

should be good enough to win,]

[and most accurate is 21...Bd7! right away (threatening the Exchange, so no time for 22.Nxe7+) 22.Rb1 e6 23.Nb4



d3+! Black trades pawns so that the dark-square bishop comes into its own. 24.Nxd3 Ba4+ 25.Kd2 Rac8 26.Rg1 Kf8 27.Rb4 Be8 and ...a5 will pick off c4, with a won game (still no king safety!)]

22.Nxe7+ 1:52 Kf8 13

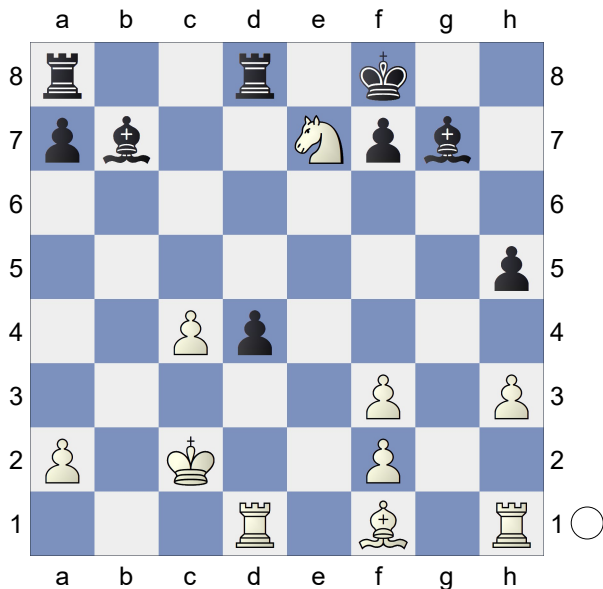
(Diagram)

23.Nd5?-+ 18 Back in the oven.

[It looks like best is: 23.Rg1! Bxf3 (23...Bf6 24.Ng8!) 24.Re1 d3+ 25.Bxd3 Rab8 26.Nf5! Rb2+! 27.Kc1 Bc3 28.Nh6! Bxe1 29.Kxb2 Rxd3 30.Rxe1 Bg2 31.Re5 White has found a number of nice moves; nobody's going to win this.]

23...Rac8-+ 2:50 24.Kb1 3:49

[24.Kd2 Bxd5 25.cxd5 Rc3 and Black is "in there" -- I think this



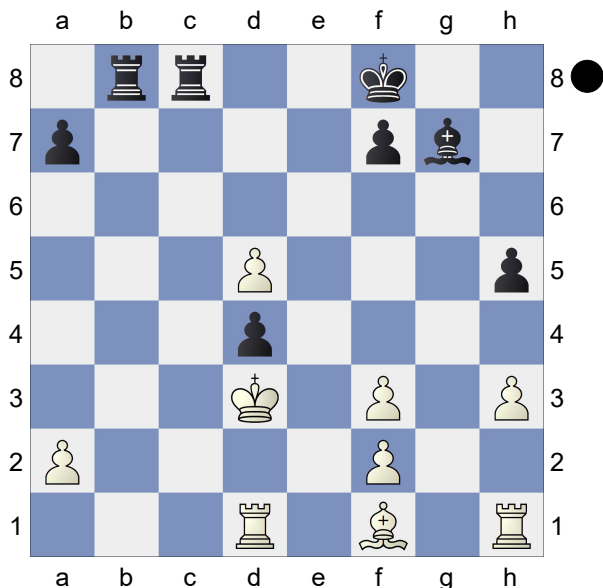
line might have hurt me when it came to the game continuation...]

24...Rb8 9:58 25.Kc2 1:55

[25.Ka1? d3+]

25...Bxd5 1:31 26.cxd5 5 Rdc8+ 7

27.Kd3 50



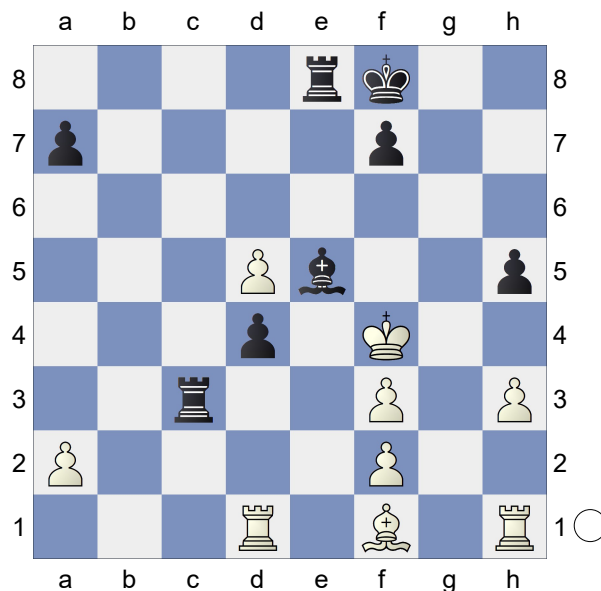
Rc3+?? 44 Maybe I'm once again not winning (although clearly better).

[There are other better moves than what I played, but 27...f5!-+ is textbook: don't check-force their king to get away; instead seal the exit first. I can't recommend enough the game Wei Yi vs. Lazaro Bruzon Batista, Danzhou 2015. I go over it

every few months; it has renewed value with Wei Yi making it into the Candidates.]

28.Ke4! 23 Re8+ 5:59 29.Kf4 11

(Threatening 30.Kg3) **29...Be5+ 1:59**



30.Kg5? 16 For me a pleasant surprise. I was pretty sure it was going to end in "Shakh matt."

[30.Kf5? Rxf3+ 31.Ke4 Rf4+ 32.Kd3 Rxf2-+ is fairly mundane.]

[The thing was, and I couldn't solve it, his king is quite safe on e4: 30.Ke4! There is no effective discovery, and winning the f-pawn costs the d-pawn (and lets his king live). Incredible.]

30...Rxf3! 1:38 (See note to Black's 27th.) **31.Bb5 6:39**

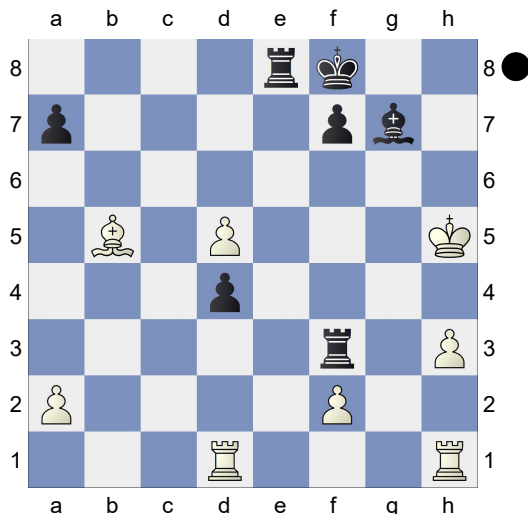
[Stockfish gives 31.Bd3 as "less hopeless" (my assess) when Kg7 is working on the corral.]

31...Bf6+ 2:48 32.Kxh5?! 4:36

[32.Kh6 Bg7+ 33.Kxh5

(Diagram)

Re4! (I might not have found this?) 34.Rdg1 (else 34...Bf6 and mate) Bf6 35.h4 Rff4! with an obscenely high numerical evaluation by Stockfish to not find mate.]



32...Rf4 28 White resigned. This propelled me to sole lead, which I have yet to relinquish.

[Again with the door-closing. Mate in one is threatened, as is 32...Rf4 33.h4 Re5+ 34.Kh6 Bg7+ 35.Kh7 Rh5#]

0-1

□ Winslow,Elliott **E06 2200**
 ■ Diller,Bradley R **2123**
 2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (4.1) 27.1.26
 [Winslow,Elliott]

1.Nf3 I was certain Brad had found a novelty in our previous game, so thought that, at least for now, I would "duck" it via some move order tomfoolery.

[That game between us had gone
 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 Bb4+ 4.Bd2
 c5!? 5.Bxb4 cxb4 6.Bg2 0-0 7.e4
 d6 8.Ne2 a5 9.a3 Na6 10.axb4
 axb4 11.0-0 Qc7 12.Nd2 e5 13.Qb3
 b6 14.Rfd1 Bb7 15.f3 Rac8
 16.Rac1 exd4 17.Nxd4 Nc5 18.Qe3
 Ra8 19.Nf1 Rfd8 20.Qd2 Ne8
 21.Qxb4 Ra4 22.Qc3 Ne6 23.b3
 Ra2 24.Ne3 Rda8 25.Nb5 Qc5
 26.b4 Qg5 27.Rd2 Bc6 28.Rxa2

Rxa2 29.Nd4 Nxd4 30.Qxd4 Qd8
 31.c5 1-0 Winslow,E (2197)-Diller,B
 (2143) 2024 Spring TNM: 2000+, San
 Francisco 19 Mar 2024]

1...Nf6 2.d4 e6 3.g3

[3.c4

A) 3...b6 4.g3 Ba6!?

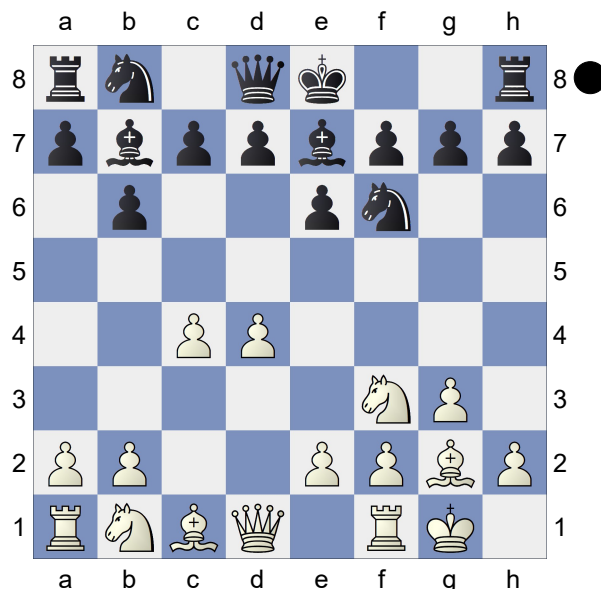
has now surpassed 4...Bb7 in "games in the database" (at least in this specific position) -- 44268 v 38822. (4...Bb7);

B) 3...Bb4+ 4.Bd2 c5 isn't the same thing as our previous game -- my knight is already on f3, so getting a fast e4 and Ne2 in can't happen.]

3...b6 I was a bit surprised he went right into the Queen's Indian, seeing as how committed he seemed to be to the BogolIndian.

[3...b5!? is an interesting way to "take advantage" of White's move order, and it's been played by various 2700-plus players like Caruana, So, Aronian, Firouzja, Giri etc. Oh, and *of course* by Carlsen, three times even -- with a negative score! 1-2 with Caruana winning as White.]

4.Bg2 Bb7 5.0-0 Be7 6.c4



So for a moment we're in an old-

fashioned Queen's Indian, with White fianchettoing and Black not having had a chance to play the now-most-popular ... Ba6 lines. But now he surprises me, in a number of ways: **6...d5!?** Credit to Brad for playing this full-blooded (I originally had "full-bloodied" in the round file!) line! It turns out, that he wasn't at all aware of the terrain he was entering.

[6...0-0 7.Nc3 Ne4 is how a lot of games went at the highest levels 60 years ago. I still remember looking at the tournament books from the Piatigorsky Cups of 1963 and 1966, every game annotated by the players. So many games happened like this, and ended in quick draws. This was the Berlin Defense of the era. Some of those games continued 8.Nxe4 Bxe4 9.Ne1 Bxg2 10.Nxg2 and a few more perfunctory moves before agreeing to draw. I remember thinking "What's wrong with these guys?" but I think now it was a practical matter; when Petrosian, Spassky and Fischer are pulling out the stops to finish at the top, and the appearance fees are significant, it behooved the likes of Ivkov and Olafsson to get their games out of the way and head for the Santa Monica Pier or something.]

[Brad's move also coincidentally (or rather accidentally!) avoids 6...0-0 7.d5!? which was quite a rage for a long time, even now still popping up. Dubov is a particular fan, going +6 =6 -0 with it over the years. exd5 8.Nh4 Ne4 (8...c6 9.cxd5 Nxd5 10.Nf5 Nc7 11.Nc3 d5 12.e4 Bf6 13.Bf4 Bc8 14.g4 Nba6 15.Rc1 Bd7 16.Qd2 Nc5 17.e5 Be7 18.Nxe7+ Qxe7 19.Bg5 Qe6 20.h3 Qg6 21.f4 f6 22.exf6 gxf6 23.Bh4 f5 24.b4 fxf4 25.hxg4 Nd3 26.Rf3 Nxc1

27.f5 Qg7 28.Qxc1 Rae8 29.Qd2 d4 30.Ne2 Nd5 31.Nxd4 Kh8 32.g5 Re4 33.Bf2 Qe5 34.Rg3 Rf4 35.f6 Be8 36.b5 c5 37.Nc6 Qa1+ 38.Bf1 Rf5 39.g6 Bxg6 40.Rxg6 R5xf6 41.Rxf6 Qxf6 42.Qe1 Rg8+ 43.Kh2 Qf4+ 44.Bg3 Rxg3 45.Qxg3 Qxf1 46.Qb8+ Kg7 47.Qg3+ ½-½ (47) Kasparov,G (2710)-Karpov,A (2700) World-ch30-KK1, Moscow 1984) 9.cxd5 Nd6 10.Nf3 a5 11.Nc3 f5 12.Bf4 Na6 13.Nd4 Nc5 14.Qc2 g6 15.Rad1 Ba6 16.Rfe1 Rf7 17.a3 a4 18.f3 Bg5 19.Bxg5 Qxg5 20.e4 fxe4 21.fxe4 Qe5 22.Nf3 Qh5 23.Nd4 Re7 24.Ne6 dxe6 25.e5 Ndb7 26.dxe6 Qh6 27.Nd5 Qg7 28.Nxe7+ Qxe7 29.Rd7 Nxd7 30.exd7 Qxd7 31.e6 Qe7 32.Qxa4 Nc5 33.Qc2 Rd8 34.b4 Nd3 35.Re3 c5 36.bxc5 Nxc5 37.h4 Rd3 38.Re1 Rxg3 39.Qf2 Rg4 40.Qf3 h5 0-1 (40) Guimard,C-Pilnik,H La Plata 1944] [6...0-0 7.Re1!? is also noteworthy (as in some 2700 games), although he might then go all Bogo on me with Bb4!?]

7.Ne5 I'm infected with the need to play this (see previous game with White).

[7.cxd5 is the modern continuation, scoring around 70%!]

7...0-0 8.Nc3 c6

[8...Nbd7= keeps the balance. We both wondered if I had anything with 9.Qa4 but no.]

9.Qc2 White has more active pieces. The black rooks are passive.

[Of course I should be playing 9.e4±]

9...Nbd7 10.Bf4

[And again: 10.e4±]

10...Nxe5= 11.dxe5 The position is equal. The position is equal. **11...Nd7**

12.cxd5 cxd5 13.h4 h6!N

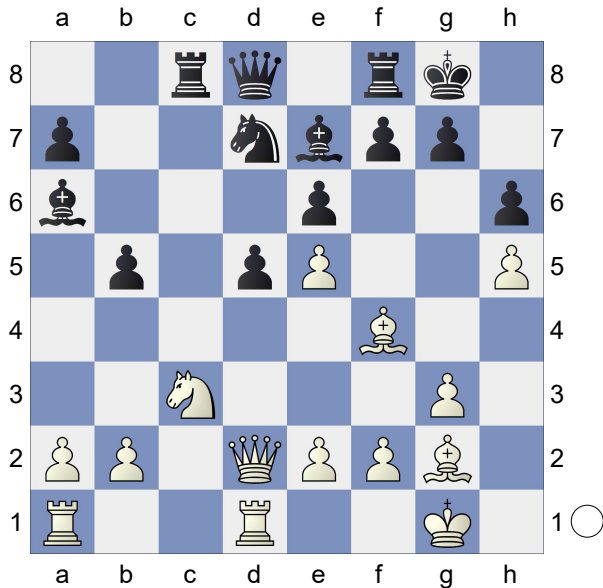
[13...Qb8 14.Rfd1 Nxe5 15.e4 d4 16.Rxd4 Bf6 17.Rad1 Qc8 18.Bg5

Bxg5 19.hxg5 1-0 (51) Tibensky,R (2440)-Lerner,K (2570) Lubniewice 1994]

14.h5 Stopping ...g5, but the pawn is now a real weakness (I didn't think so during the game). **14...Rc8 15.Qd2 Ba6** Black wants to play ...Bg5.

[Black should play 15...f6 16.exf6 Nxf6 17.Bf3 Qe8]

16.Rfd1 b5



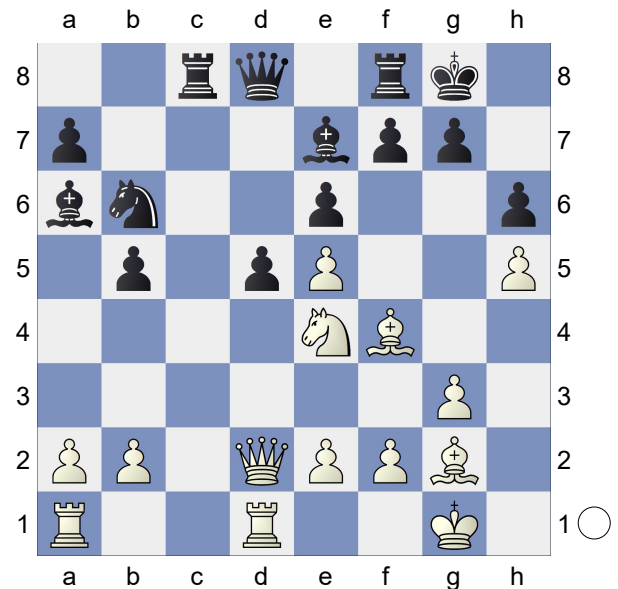
17.Ne4? Brad has noted quite a few times how I'd been thinking for a long time on each mover, and then I played this almost instantly! For my part, I was unaware how objectively bad my game was at this point, but I liked that I was aiming pieces towards his king. The problem is that he can defend accurately and it all stalls. **17...Nb6?**

[17...b4!-+ 18.Nd6 (18.a4!? b3) 18...Bxd6 19.exd6 e5 20.Bxh6 gxh6 21.Bxd5 Kg7 is nothing for me.]

(Diagram)

18.b3? " Strongly threatening Qa5." (TA). Yeah, yeah, but

[18.Qa5!± /± first was the way to go: Bb7 19.Nd6! Bxd6 20.exd6 a6!]

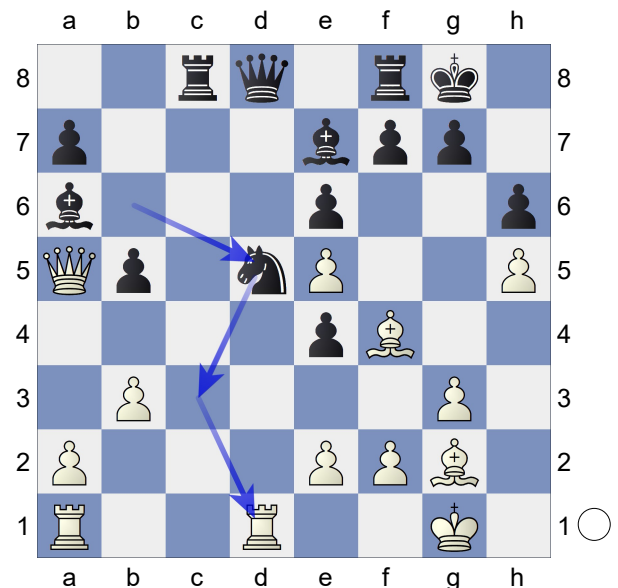


21.b3 Nd7!± /= 22.Qxd8 Rfxd8 23.a4 bxa4 24.bxa4 Rc5]

18...dxe4

[18...Nd7!?]

19.Qa5 Nd5



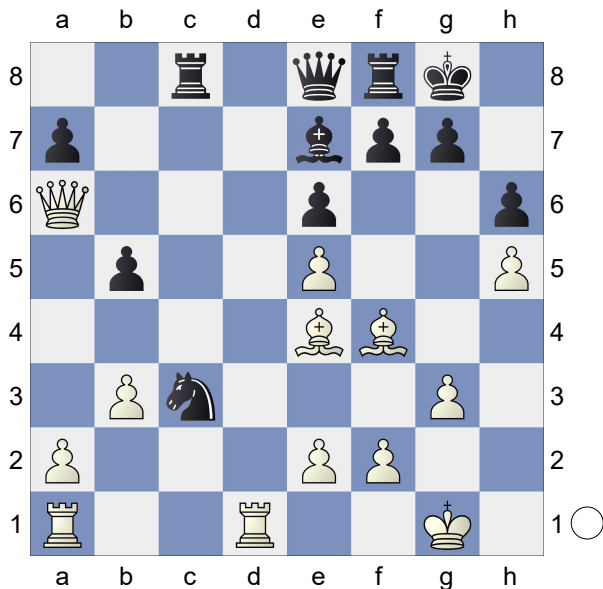
20.Qxa6 Qe8 21.Bxe4 Another pretty fast move. (For some reason we didn't have DGT boards this round.)

[21.Qxa7 Bc5 22.Qa5 Nc3-+]

21...Nc3±

(Diagram)

Black is fighting back **22.Bd3**↑ But so is White! This was the only move



to avoid disadvantage. Qb7! is in the air.
Black is under pressure. **22...Nxd1**
23.Rxd1 Rc7 "Black is weak on the
light squares" (TA) -- Artificial
intelligence at its best. **24.Bxb5 Qb8**

[24...Qa8 with more complications.
25.Bd3 Bc5 26.Qa5 Rcc8]

25.Bd3 Bc5 26.Qa4! Qb4 27.Qxb4
Bxb4 28.Bc4 Bc5

[28...a5±]

[28...Rcc8= keeps the balance.]

29.Kg2± Rb8 30.g4 Kf8 31.Bg3 Be7

32.f4 Rd8 33.Bd3

[White should try 33.Rf1]

33...Rdc8

[Black should try 33...a5]

(Diagram)

34.Bf2

[Better is 34.Bc4!±]

34...Bc5?

[34...Rc1!± 35.Rxc1 Rxc1]

35.Be1 Be3

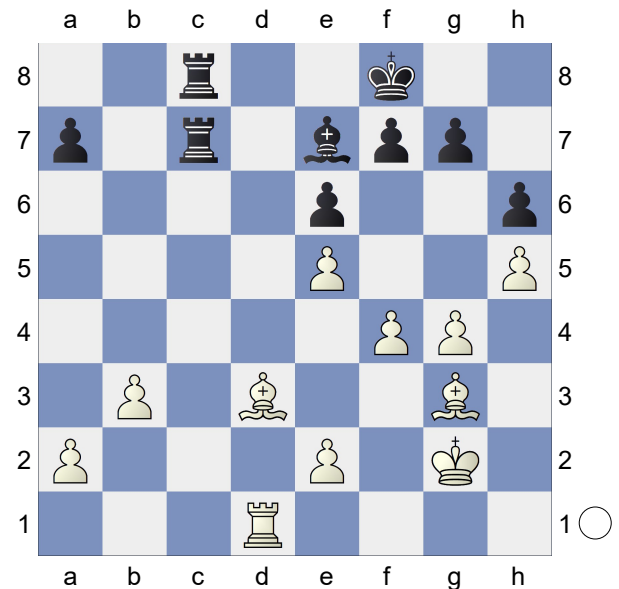
[35...Be7±]

[35...Be7±]

36.Bb4+ Bc5 37.Bd2 Ba3 38.Kf3 Ra8

[38...a5 39.Bxa5 Rc1 40.Rxc1

Rxc1]



39.Bc4 a5

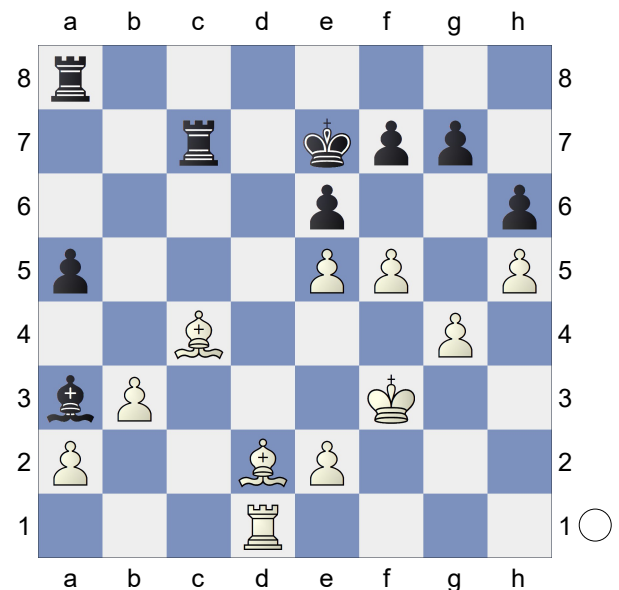
[39...Ke8 40.Rg1 Rcc8 (40...Rc5±
41.g5 hxg5)]

[Δ39...Ke7 40.Be1 Rc5]

40.f5+- Ke7

[40...Bb2 keeps fighting. 41.Bf4
(41.fxe6 fxe6 42.Bxe6 Bxe5±)

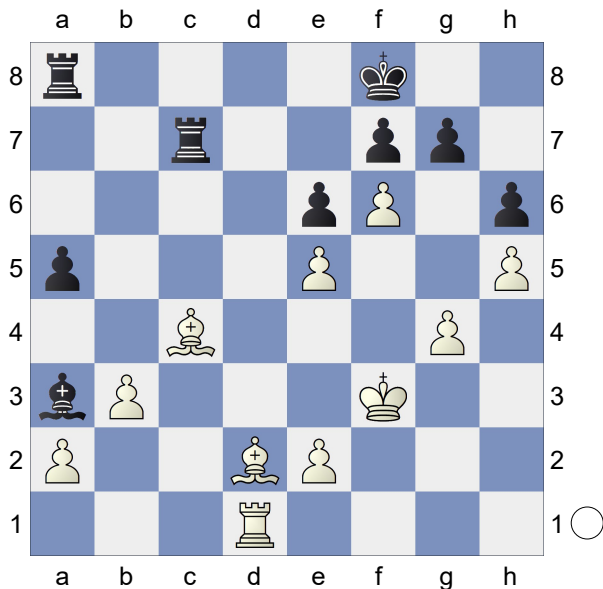
41...Rc5]



41.f6+! Kf8

[41...gxf6 42.exf6+]

(Diagram)



42.g5?

[42.Bxa5!+- " and the rest is easy." (TA-1) or if you prefer, "is the precise move to win." (TA-2) Rcc8 43.Bc3 *three* pawns for the Exchange; too many. Of course I overlooked it.]

42...hxcg5± 43.Bxcg5 Bb2?

[43...gxf6± when neither recapture is "winning," but taking with the bishop looks better on a deeper rollout (I've been looking at backgammon lately):

A) 44.exf6 (Rg1 is the strong threat) Kg8± was necessary -- and White's plus might be fading as the lines go deeper. (44...Rc5

45.Kg4!+-) 45.Rg1 Kh8 46.Bh6 Rd8!? 47.Bd3 Rc5 48.Bg7+ Kg8;

B) 44.Bxf6 Be7± 45.Bd3 Rc5 46.h6 Bxf6 47.exf6 Kg8±

This plus seems to sustain, around 0.70]

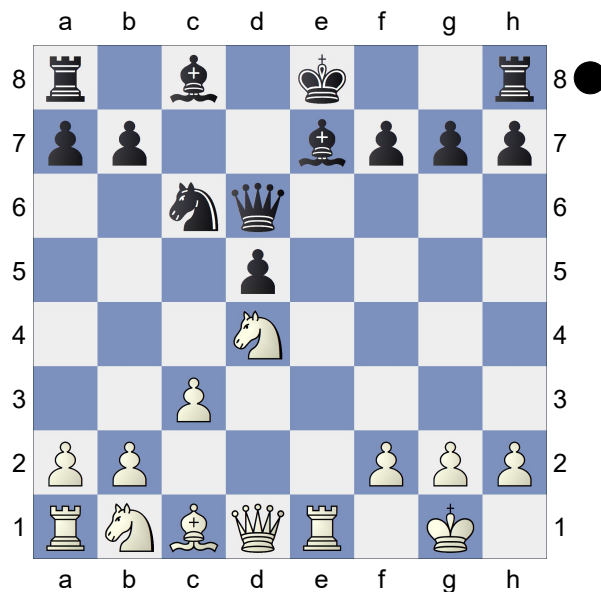
44.h6 White mates. 44...gxh6 45.Bxh6+ Kg8 46.Bg7 So it seems I ran this game *twice* through Chessbase's dubious "Tactical Analysis," with different parameters maybe, because I have two "summaries" -- the first says "Superbly played by Winslow!" and "Weighted Error Value: White=0.28 (precise) / Black=0.47" and the second give "A cool

game by Winslow." and "Weighted Error Value: White=0.39/Black=0.54". Moral: Don't Trust Tactical Analysis. Then again, maybe I should rerun my wins more often, so I can amass accolades...

1-0

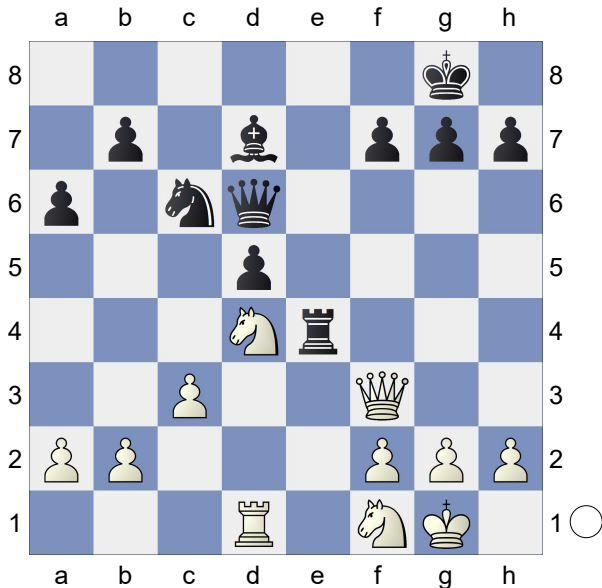
B22
 □ Cawthon,Jeremy David **2098**
 ■ Winslow,Elliott **2200**
 2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (5.1) 3.2.26
 [Winslow,Elliott]

This round just happened; I'll mostly save it for the next newsletter. Simply put: The Alapin is hard to beat. Or get anything going. And Jeremy is filling in his theoretical gaps faster than I can take advantage of them. So Heiserman (the only other 3-1 going into this round) came a half point closer... 1.e4 2 c5 8 2.c3 2 Nf6 8 3.e5 2 Nd5 7 4.Nf3 4 e6 30 5.Bc4 7 d6 1:12 6.0-0 8 Nc6 1:02 7.d4 6 Be7 1:16 8.Re1 2:00 cxd4 2:31 9.Bxd5! 9:19 exd5 8 10.exd6 7 Qxd6 9 11.Nxd4 10:43



(Black must pad delicately to avoid falling into a positionally lost game.)
11...a6 8:00 12.Bg5 8:51 0-0 3:35

13.Bxe7 1:30 Nxe7 55 14.Nd2 1:13
Bd7 4:41 15.Qf3 1:05 Rfe8 3:01 16.Nf1
57 Nc6 2:22 17.Rxe8+ 2:40 Rxe8 18
18.Rd1 26 Re4 9:53



19.Nxc6 1:25 Qxc6 22 20.Ne3 40 h6
1:13
[20...Be6?? 21.Qxe4]
[20...Qe6!=]
21.h3 2:01 Be6 2:16 22.Nf5 39 Bxf5
5:51 23.Qxf5 5 Qe6 13 24.Qf3 4:52 g6
10:27 25.b3 1:55 Kg7 2:40 26.Qd3 31
Qe5 2:54 27.g3 57 Re1+ 2:20 28.Rxe1
49 Qxe1+ 2 29.Kg2 2 Qe5 3:01 30.Kf3
46 b5 3:34 31.h4 1:38 h5 3:46 32.Qe3
4:01 Qf5+ 1:46 33.Kg2 12 Qc2 5:12
34.Qe5+ 43 Kg8 5 35.Qxd5 34 Qxa2
17 36.Qd8+ 1:11 Kg7 8 37.Qd4+ 46
Kg8 2 38.b4 19 Qe6 1:06 39.Kf3 37
Kf8 47 40.Kf4 26 f6 1:26 41.Qe4 2:00
Qd6+ 1:23 42.Ke3 34 Kf7 11 43.Qd4
2:10 Qe6+ 35 44.Kd3 9 g5 1:29
45.Qe4 1:05 Qd6+ 3:50 46.Ke3 46 Kg7
38 47.Qf5 35 Qc6 3:03 48.Kd2 1:55
Qd6+ 1:09 49.Ke3 56 Qc6 15 50.hxg5
2:52 Qxc3+ 6 51.Ke2 1 Qc4+ 49
52.Kf3 39 Qc6+ 47 53.Qe4 15:01 Qc3+
19 54.Kg2 1:36 fxg5 3:08 55.Qe7+ 25
Kg6 19 56.Qe8+ 2 Kh6 1:06 57.Qe6+ 2
Kg7 11 58.Qe7+ 4 Kg6 17 59.Qe8+ 1
Kh6 8 60.Qe6+ 4 Kg7 14 61.Qe7+

(Threefold repetition)

So to note: with 4½ I'm half a point
ahead of Heiserman and a point ahead
of Diller and Cawthon -- and I've already
played them all! There are 5 players at 3-
2, and I must play one of them. It's
looking fairly good...

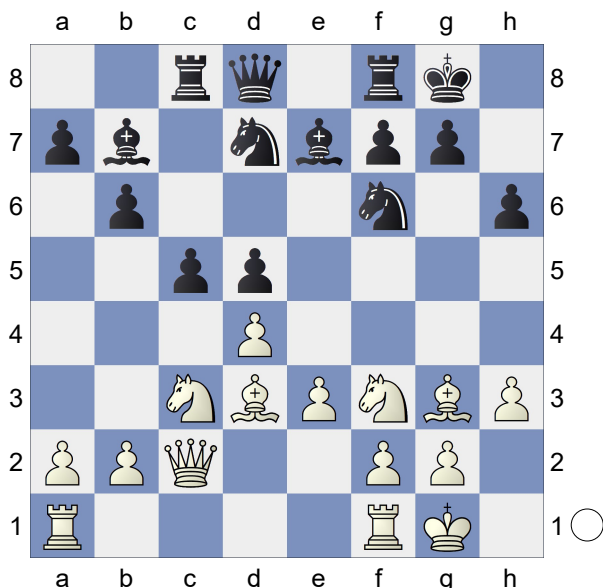
½-½

□ Heiserman, Jimmy D36
2280
■ Horowitz, Phineas F 1951
2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (1.1) 6.1.26
[Winslow, Elliott]

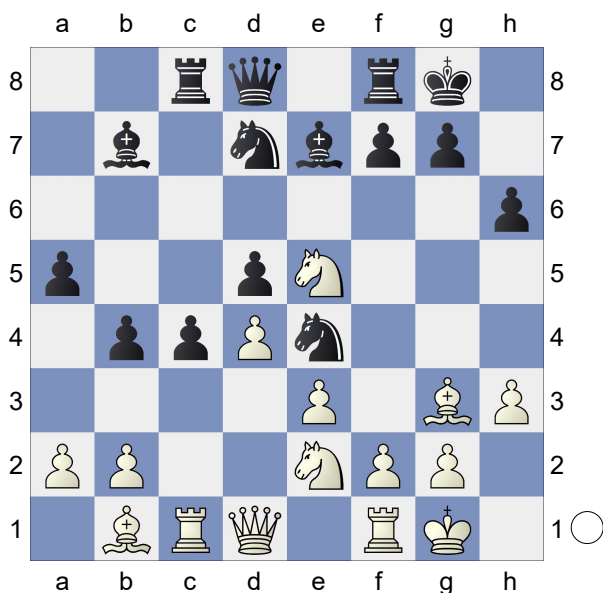
Heiserman also started out a bit rocky
but got the job done, expense of
Phineas Horowitz. 1.d4 2 d5 15 2.c4 6
e6 17 3.Nc3 7 Nf6 8 4.cxd5 11 exd5
3:47 5.Bg5 8 Be7 1:49 6.e3 10 c6 5:18
7.Bd3 14 0-0 3:29 8.Qc2 4:16 h6 1:59
9.Bh4 1:54 b6?! 8:00
[9...Nbd7 10.Nf3 Re8 11.0-0 Ne4]
[9...Nh5]
10.Nf3± 4:05 Bb7?! 5:09 11.0-0± 9:26
Nbd7 3:30 12.Bg3 3:16
[12.Rad1]
[12.Rfe1]
12...Rc8?! 5:52 13.h3 6:01
[13.Bf5!? g6 14.Bxg6!? fxg6
15.Qxg6+ Kh8 16.Qxh6+ Nh7]
13...c5 3:08

(Diagram)

14.Qa4? 9:24
[14.Rad1]
14...a6!= 5:35 15.Rac1?! 9:15
[15.Qc2 Ne4 16.Nxe4 cxd4
17.Nc3!=]
[15.dxc5 Nxc5 16.Qd1 Nfe4
17.Be5=]
15...b5 2:41 16.Qd1 7 c4 1:59
[16...Ne4]

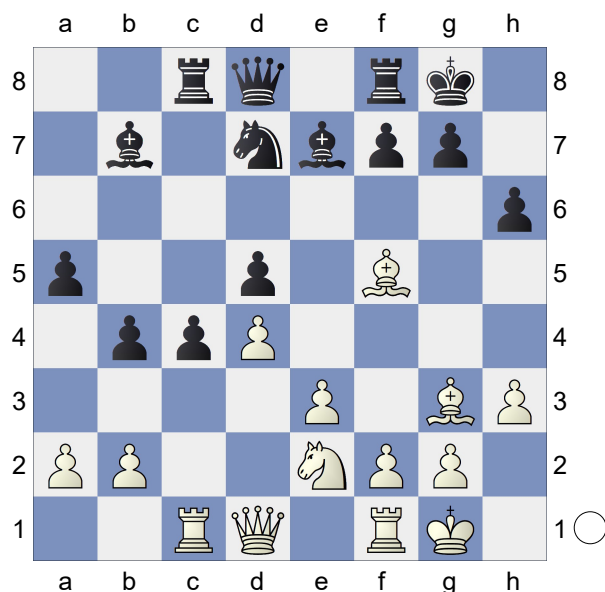


[16...b4]
17.Bb1 14 b4 6:05 18.Ne2 26 a5 4:08
19.Ne5 2:47 Ne4 9:09



20.Bxe4 3:31
 [Falling into a rabbit-hole: 20.Bf4
 Nxe5 21.Bxe5 Ba6 22.Re1 c3
 23.bxc3 Bxe2 24.Qxe2 Nxc3 25.Qg4
 Bf6 26.Qf5 g6 27.Qxf6 Qxf6
 28.Bxf6 Ne2+ 29.Kf1 Nxc1 30.Be7
 b3! 31.Bxf8 Kxf8 32.axb3 Nxb3
 33.Ba2 Nc1 (33...a4 34.Bxb3 axb3
 35.Rb1 Rb8 36.Ke2=) 34.Bxd5 a4
 35.Rd1 a3 36.Rd2 Rc3 37.Ke1
 Nd3+ 38.Ke2 Nb4 39.Ba2=]
20...Nxe5 3:15 21.Bf5 2:33

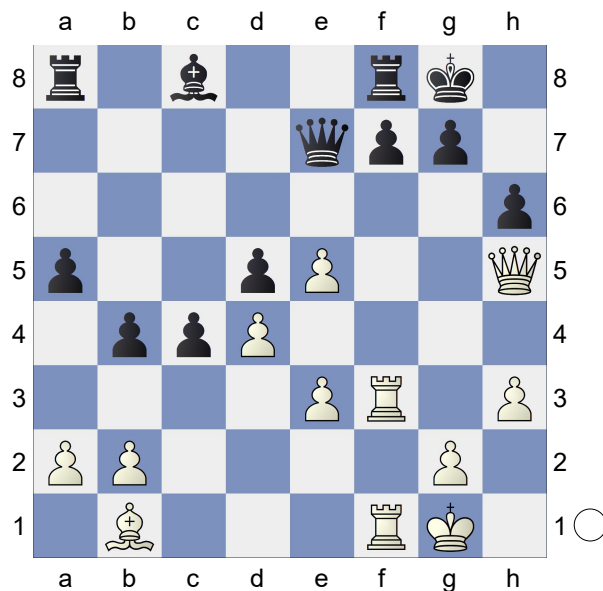
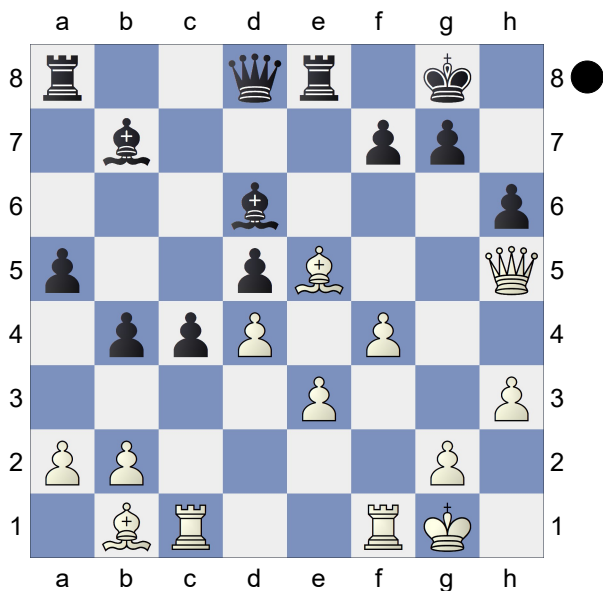
[21.Bb1 Nd7 22.Bf4 Re8 23.Ng3
 Nf6]
21...Nd7 22



22.Nf4 2:19
 [22.Qa4 Nb6]
22...Ra8 4:35
 [22...g6!]
23.Bb1 5:57
 [23.Re1]
 [23.e4!?]
23...Re8 4:47 24.Nh5?! 4:56 Nf6?! 3:41
 [24...g6 25.Qg4 Ra6]
25.Be5 1:18 Nxh5 2:38
 [25...a4]
26.Qxh5 6 Bd6? 1:26
 [26...Ra6]
 [26...Bf8]
 [26...Bc8]
 [26...a4]
 [26...Ra7]
27.f4! 55

(Diagram)

Bxe5? 3:25
 [27...Ra6]
 [27...Bf8]
 [27...Rf8]
 [27...a4]
28.fxe5+ 7



[32.Rf4 f5 33.exf6! Raxf6
34.Qxd5+]

32...Qh4 1:24

[32...Qd8!±]

33.Kh2!+- 1:03 Be6 2:31 34.Qe2! 58

Rc6 1:14 35.Rf4 52

[35.Qc2! Qe4 36.Qf2! (36.Qa4)

36...Qh4 37.Rxg7+]

35...Qe7 27 36.Rf6! 5:42 Kh8 34

37.Qc2 58

[37.Qh5!]

37...g6 11 38.Qf2 42 Bd7 38 39.Qf4

3:25 Kh7 43 40.Bxg6+ 38 fxc6 14

41.Rgxc6 5 Qg7 42.Rxg7+ 53 Kxc7 6

43.Qxh6+ 6 Kg8 2 44.Rxf8# 14

1-0

Qe7? 47

[Δ28...Re7]

29.Rf3?!+- 53

[29.Rxf7! Qxf7 30.Bh7+ Kf8 31.Rf1

Qxf1+ 32.Kxf1 Ra6 33.Bg6]

29...Bc8?! 3:09

[29...Ra6]

[29...Rf8]

30.Rcf1 47 Rf8 36

(Diagram)

31.Rg3 21

[31.Rf6! Ra6 32.R1f3]

31...Ra6 21 32.Qf3?! 5:27

C84

□ **Chen,Quincy**

2099

■ **Heiserman,Jimmy**

2280

2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (2.1) 13.1.26

[TA/Winslow,Elliott]

Heiserman pulls a relatively rare line out to try to trip up the youngster, unsuccessfully at first, but Wang gets caught on Move 14 trying to keep the material advantage. **1.e4 4 e5 3:53 2.Nf3 13 Nc6 13 3.Bb5 19 a6 6 4.Ba4**

4 Nf6 7 5.0-0 20 Nxe4 15

An Open Ruy Lopez, but on the next move it shifts into an off-road gear. 6.d4 37 Be7 17 And it's yet another variation where White has some sort of slight advantage, but Black is okay with accurate play.

[6...b5 7.Bb3 d5 8.dxe5 Be6]

7.Re1 2:04 (the best) 7...b5! 1:12

8.Rxe4 7:22

[8.dxe5 Nxf2+]

8...d5! 9 Nxe5! 1:24 Nxe5 8 10.Rxe5

7 White is slightly better. 10...bxa4 7

11.Nc3 7:06

[11.Qe2 is no big improvement, but it does put Black under more pressure.]

[11.Qf3!? c6!?]

11...0-0!= 30 12.Rxd5 1:33 Bd6! 13

Black sacrificed a pawn 13.Bf4 1:42

seems to push 13.Bg5 aside.

[13.Nxa4 Bxh2+ 14.Kxh2 Qxd5+]

[13.Bg5 Qe8 14.Bh4 f5 15.Qd3

Qe6 16.f3 a5 17.Qd2 Bb7 18.Re1

Qg6 19.Rxd6 cxd6 20.d5 a3 21.b3

Rfe8 22.Nb5 Rxe1+ 23.Bxe1 a4

24.b4 Re8 25.c4 f4 26.Nc3 Re3

27.Ne4 Rxf3 28.Nxd6 Re3 29.Nxb7

f3 30.g4 Qe4 31.Kf1 Qxc4+ 32.Kg1

Re2 0-1 (32) Kuybokarov,T (2600)-

Yoo,C (2599) Saint Louis 2024]

13...Be6 11:48

(Diagram)

14.Bxd6? 1:55

[14.Rxd6!= cxd6 15.Nxa4

White has to be careful not to be overrun by pawns, but should be okay.]

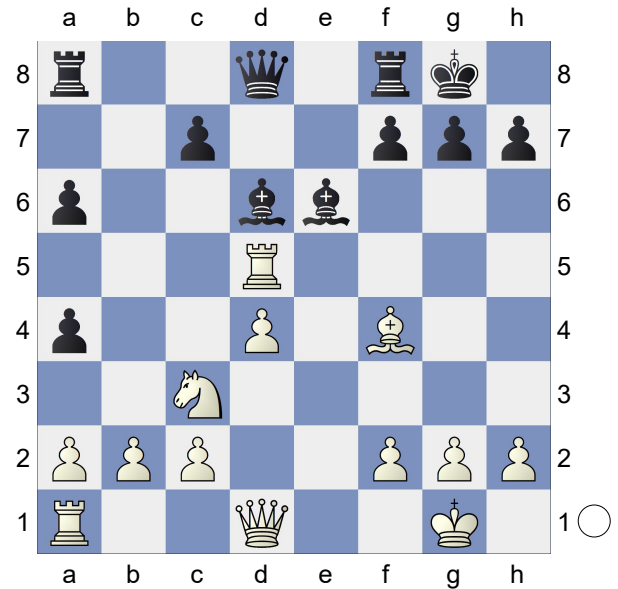
14...cxd6+ 55 15.Rh5 1:33

[White should play 15.Qd2 Bxd5

16.Nxd5]

15...g6 2:15 16.Rh6 23

(Diagram)



a3 3:31 17.bxa3 2:40

(Diagram)

Rc8! 8:09 18.Qd2 3:19 Wards off Qg5

18...Qa5↑ 2:18 Black is really pushing.

19.Ne4? 1:05 This costs White the game.

[19.d5!+ was the only defense.]

19...Qxd2+ 18

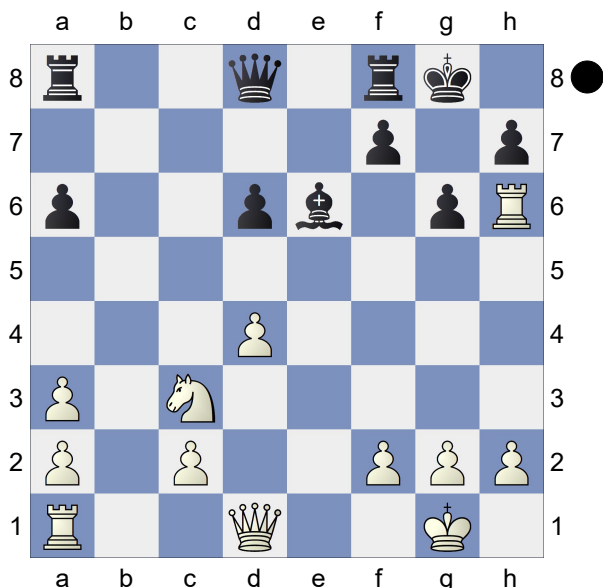
[19...Qxa3? 20.Qg5 f6 21.Rxg6+

(21.Nxf6+ Rxf6 22.Qxf6 Re8+-)

21...hxg6 22.Qxg6+ Kh8 23.Nxf6

Rxf6 24.Qxf6+ Kh7 25.Qxe6+-]

20.Nxd2 4 d5 42 21.Nf3N 2:33



[21.Rc1 Kg7 22.Rh4 g5]
 [21.Rh4 Rxc2 22.Nf3]
 [21.c4 dxc4 22.Ne4 Kg7 23.Rh4 c3
 24.Nc5 c2 25.Rc1 Rb8 26.Re4 Rb1
 27.Ree1 Rxc1 28.Rxc1 Rb8 29.Nd3
 Rb1 0-1 (29) Sidorenko,I (2395)-
 Mikhalevski,V (2581) Israel 2019]
21...f6 3:21
 [21...Rxc2 22.Rh4+]
22.Re1 5:33 Rfe8 1:44 White must now
 prevent ...Kg7!. **23.c4 10:12 dxc4 2:13**
 [23...Rxc4 24.Rh3+]
24.Rh4 3:07 Bf5 6:38 Prevents Rhe4
 [Weaker is 24...c3 25.Rhe4+]
25.Rxe8+ 9:58
 [25.d5 Rxe1+ 26.Nxe1]
25...Rxe8 6 26.d5 6 c3 6
 [Worse is 26...Be4 27.d6 Bd5
 28.Rd4=]
27.Rc4 1:37 c2 6 28.d6 2:42 Rc8 10
29.d7 2:04 c1Q+ 15 Weighted Error
 Value: White=0.83/Black=0.07 (flawless)
 -- Excellent play in all aspects by
 Heiserman! And Wang will be doing
 better and better (please not tonight! I'm
 playing him in Berkeley! :-))
0-1

C01
1989
2280
 2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (4.2) 27.1.26
[Winslow,Elliott]

The "boring" Exchange Variation went
 bad quickly for Parsons -- Heiserman let
 the noose slip once but quickly regained
 the advantage, and it was pretty fast.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.Nf3
Nc6 5.Bd3 Bd6 6.h3 Nb4 7.0-0
 [7.Bb5+= Bd7 8.Bxd7+ Qxd7 9.a3]
7...Nxd3 8.Qxd3 Ne7 Black is slightly
 better. **9.Re1 0-0 10.Nbd2**

[10.Bg5 f6 11.Be3 c6 12.Nbd2 Bf5
 13.Qb3 Qb6 14.c3 Rfe8 15.a4 Bd3
 (15...Qxb3+- 16.Nxb3 b6) 16.a5+
 Qxb3 17.Nxb3 ½-½ (79) Toropov,P
 (2308)-Terry,R (2514) Chess.com INT
 2024]

10...c6 11.Ne5

[11.c4+]

11...f6+ 12.Nef3 Bf5 13.Qb3



Qd7

[13...Qb6!+ 14.c4 Qxb3 15.axb3
 Hoping for c5. (15.Nxb3 b6)
 15...Rfe8 Bishops, better pawn
 structure, development: looking
 good.]

14.Nh4

[14.Ne4!= keeps the balance.]

14...Be6↑ 15.Qe3 Inhibits g5.

[Δ15.Nf1]

15...Bf7 16.Nf1 Rae8 Black is more active. 17.Qb3 g5⚡ Even in the symmetrical structure, Black can take an initiative, even initiate a pawn storm.

18.Nf3 Ng6

[18...Bg6⚡ 19.Bd2 h5]

[18...h5⚡]

19.Bd2⚡ Re4

[19...Be6⚡]

20.N1h2?

[20.Bb4= and White has nothing to worry.]

20...h5

[20...Rfe8+ 21.Nf1 h6 (21...h5+ 22.Ng3 h4)]

21.Nf1

[21.Bb4⚡ was called for.]

21...Kg7

[21...g4+ 22.hxg4 hxg4]

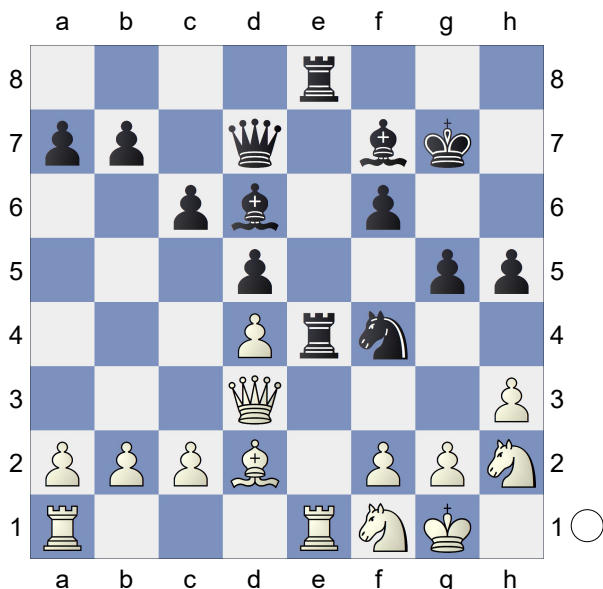
22.Qd3

[22.Bb4⚡ Bxb4 23.Qxb4]

22...Rfe8 23.N3h2?

[23.Ng3 was called for. Bxg3 24.fxg3]

23...Nf4+→

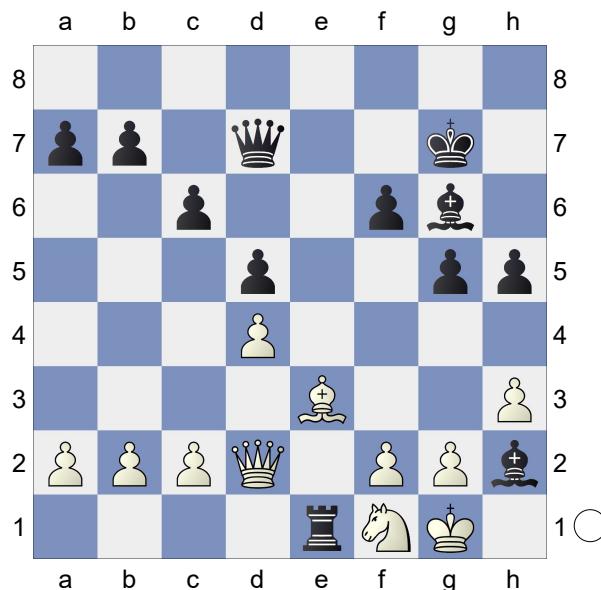


Deflection 24.Bxf4 Threatens to win

with Bd2. 24...Rxe1 Black is clearly winning. 25.Rxe1 Rxe1 26.Be3

[Δ26.Bxd6 Qxd6 27.a4]

26...Bg6 27.Qd2 Bxh2+



Deflection 28.Kxh2 Rxf1 29.Qe2 Rb1 30.c3 Qd6+ 31.g3 Qe6 Weighted Error Value: White=0.81/Black=0.26 (precise) 0-1

A47
 □ Heiserman, Jimmy 2280
 ■ Viadiu-Illaraza, Hector 1879
 2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (5.2) 3.2.26
 [Winslow, Elliott]

The most recent game: there will be notes in the round file and the next newsletter. 1.d4 2:01 Nf6 57 2.Nf3 23 e6 1:21 3.Bf4 10 b6 1:20 4.e3 1:52 Bb4+ 4:10 5.c3 28 Bd6 1:10 6.Bg5 5:36 h6 5:38 7.Bh4 3:49 Ba6 10:08 8.Bxa6 3:55 Nxa6 2 9.Nbd2 41 c5 4:26 10.Bxf6 8:37 gxf6 1:07 11.Qa4 3:46 Nc7 17 12.Ne4 2:43 Be7 1:09 13.dxc5 35 Bxc5 6:14 14.0-0-0 7:04 b5 8:05 15.Qa5 4:46 Be7 2:04 16.Nd4 2:56 Qb8 5:00 17.Nb3 8:16 f5 2:19 18.Nec5 9:10 d6 21 19.Na6 6 Nxa6 4:11 20.Qxa6 4 Qb6 7:12 21.Qxb6 7 axb6 1

22.a3 7 Rg8 7:35 23.g3 21 e5 1:44
 24.Rd5 46 Kd7 16 25.Rxb5 6:56 Kc6
 20 26.c4 7 Ra4 1:02 27.Rb4 6 Rxb4
 2:59 28.axb4 5 b5 15 29.Na5+ 1:28
 Kb6 39 30.Kc2 1:05 d5 3:05 31.cxd5
 3:46 Bxb4 21 32.Nc6 2:16 Bd6 2 33.b4
 3:28 Ra8 3:32 34.Kb3 1:48 f6 1:37
 35.Rc1 1:29 Ra4 1:22 36.Rc4 2:19 f4
 6:59 37.exf4 1:44 bxc4+ 3:16 38.Kxa4
 6 exf4 9 39.Na5 1:42 c3 3:30 40.Nc4+
 32 Kc7 3 41.Kb3 9 Bxb4 40 42.gxf4
 1:23 Bd6 3:36 43.Kxc3 20 Bxf4 3
 44.h3 6 Kd7 50 45.Kd4 14 Bh2 17
 46.Ke4 21 Bg1 41 47.f3 12 Bc5 33
 48.Kf5 21 Ke7 19 49.Kg6 23 Kf8 59
 50.Kxf6 13
 1-0

□ Chernobilskiy, Mikhail

■ Stults, Sawyer

2026 New Year TNM: 1600-1999 (1.13)

[Winslow, Elliott]

1.e4 e5 2.f4 d5 3.exd5 exf4 4.Nf3
 Nf6 5.Bb5+ Bd7 6.Bxd7+ Qxd7 7.c4
 Bd6 8.0-0 0-0 9.d4 c5 10.Ne5 Qc7
 11.Bxf4 cxd4 12.Nd3 Nbd7 13.Na3
 a6 14.Rc1 Rac8 15.b3 Ne4 16.Nb1
 Ndf6 17.Bxd6 Qxd6 18.Nf2 Qc5
 19.Nxe4 Nxe4 20.Qd3 Rfe8 21.Rce1
 Nf6 22.Rd1 Re4 23.Rxf6 Re3

(Diagram)

24.Qf5?

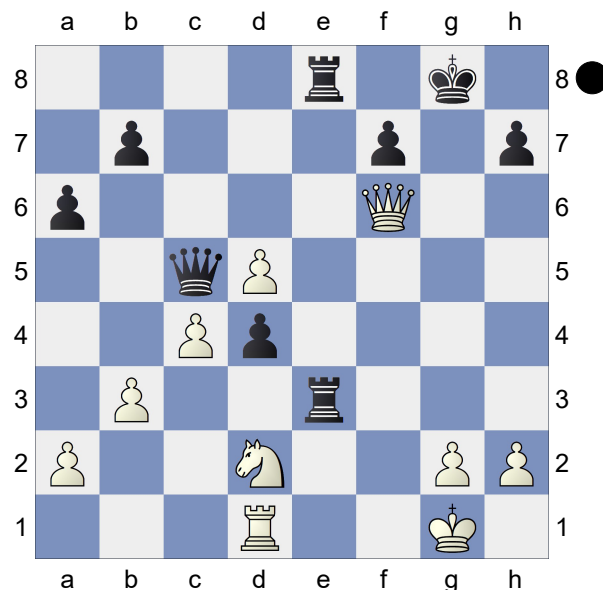
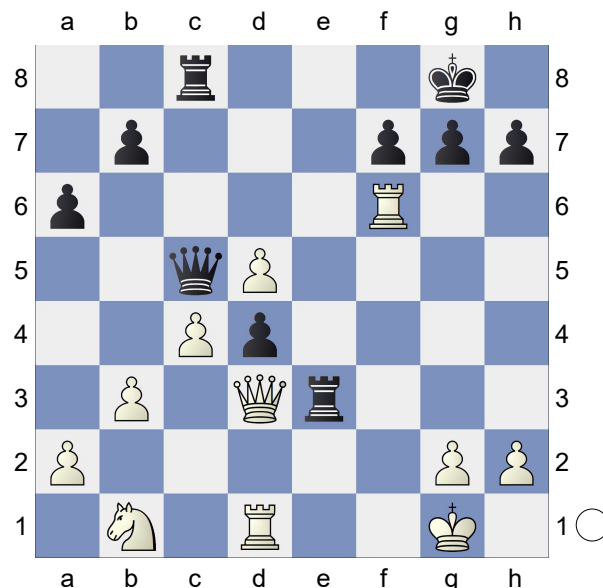
[24.Qxd4 Qxd4 25.Rxd4 gxf6
 26.Nd2=]

24...gxf6 25.Nd2 Rce8 26.Qxf6

(Diagram)

Re1+?

[26...d3! 27.Kf1 R3e5 28.Nf3



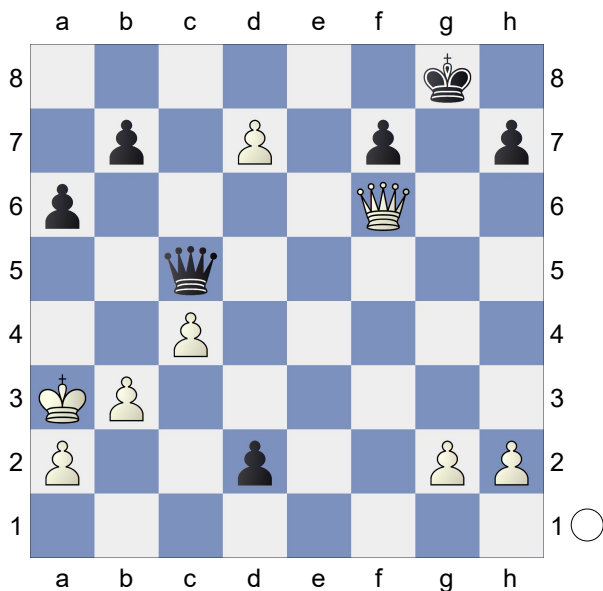
Qe3-+]
 27.Rxe1 d3+ 28.Kf1 Rxe1+ 29.Kxe1
 Qe3+ 30.Kd1 Qe2+ 31.Kc1 Qe1+
 32.Kb2 Qxd2+ 33.Ka3= Qe3? 34.d6±
 d2

[34...Qc1+]
 35.d7+- Qc5+

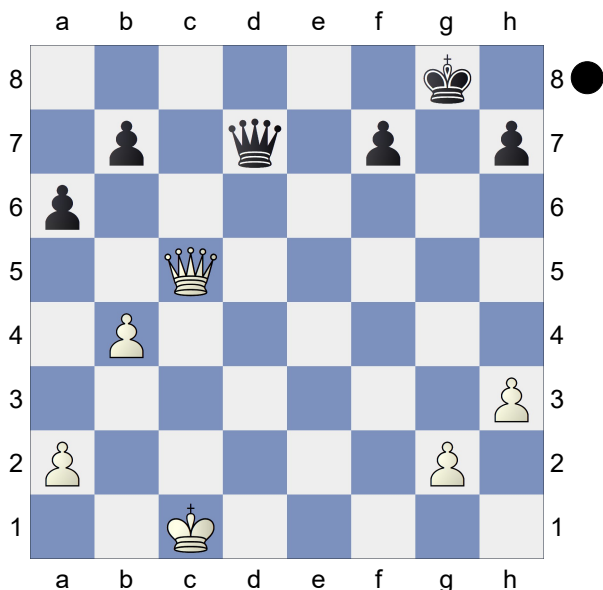
(Diagram)

36.b4?

[36.Kb2]
 36...Qe3+= 37.Kb2 d1N+ 38.Kc2
 Qe2+ 39.Kc1 Qxc4+ 40.Kxd1 Qd3+
 41.Kc1 Qxd7= 42.Qg5+ Kh8 43.Qc5



Kg8 44.h3



Qc6?? 45.Qxc6+- bxc6 46.Kc2 Kf8 47.Kc3 Ke7 48.Kd4 Kd6 49.g4 h6 50.h4 f6 51.h5! 1-0

Wickliffe,Zachary 1560
Finacom,Richard V 1868
 2026 New Year TNM: 1600-1999 (1.12)
[Winslow,Elliott]

1.e4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Nf3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Bc4

[It takes some willpower to restrain from the classic trap 5.Qe2 Ngf6?? 6.Nd6#]

5...Nb6 6.Bb3 Bf5 7.Ng3 Bg6 8.h4!
 At least as effective here as in similar positions in the classical lines with d2-d4 in. 8...h5 9.Ne5 Qd6 10.d4 Nh6 11.Qf3 Nd5 12.a3 Qf6 13.Bxd5 cxd5 14.Qxd5 Rd8 15.Qb5+ 1-0

B13
1774
1525
Powers,Christopher
Mehta,Soham
 2026 New Year TNM: 1600-1999 (1.15)
[Winslow,Elliott]

A nice, topsy-turvy slugfest from Round. And, seeing as how, after five rounds, Powers is in sole first place with 4½-½ behind Fritz Dutter and Calvin Dees at 4-1, a critical win for Christopher! And Soham Mehta, who was the clear winner of the Under-1600 section in the previous TNM, finds out that moving a section up inevitably means tougher games: see also his loss in Round 5.
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Bg4?



As so often in the Panov-Botvinnik vs. the Caro Kann, bringing the bishop out automatically means there are problems on b7 (and d5). 6.Qb3± Nc6!? 7.cxd5! Na5 8.Qa4+ Bd7 9.Bb5 a6 10.Bxd7+ Nxd7 11.Nf3!+- b5 12.Qc2

[12.Qd1!?]

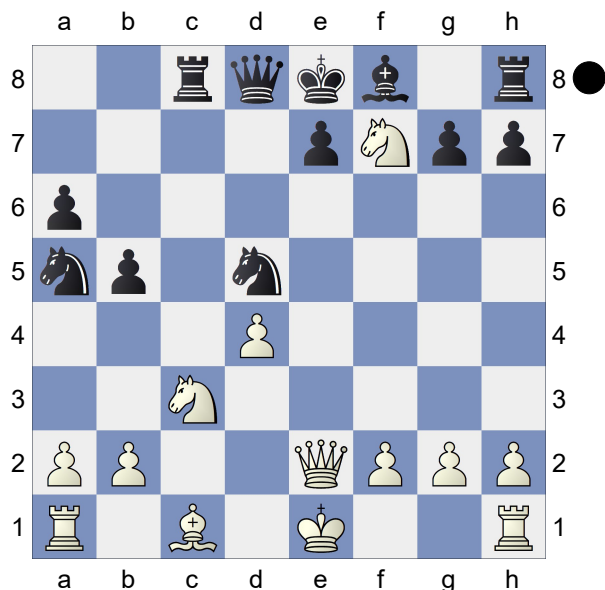
12...Rc8 13.Qe2 Nf6 14.Ne5

[14.0-0!]

14...Nxd5 Now Powers goes a bit over the top... 15.Nxf7?

[15.0-0± Nxc3 16.bxc3 e6

(16...Rxc3?? 17.Bd2 Rc8 18.Qf3 f6 19.Bxa5 Qxa5 20.Rac1!) 17.a4]



15...Nxc3??

[15...Kxf7 16.Qh5+ g6 17.Qxd5+ Qxd5 18.Nxd5 Bg7 SF18: (-0.26/d24)]

16.Qe6!+- Qd7 17.Qxd7+

[17.Nd6+ is okay, as long as after 17...Kd8 (17...Qxd6?! 18.Qxc8+ Kf7 19.Qxc3)

A) 18.Nf7+ Ke8 (18...Kc7? 19.Bf4+) 19.Qxd7+;

B) White doesn't play 18.Qxd7+? Kxd7 19.Nxc8 Nd5 20.Bd2 Nc4= 21.Rc1! Nxb2 22.Na7 Nd3+ 23.Ke2 Nxc1+=]

17...Kxd7 18.Nxh8+- Nxa2 19.Bd2

Nc4 20.Rxa2 a5 21.Nf7

In case anybody has lost count: White is one rook up. 21...a4 22.Ne5+ Ke6

23.Nxc4 Rxc4 24.Be3 Kd5 25.0-0 e6

26.b3! This is Stockfish 17.1's best move by almost 1.00, but things start to get curious...

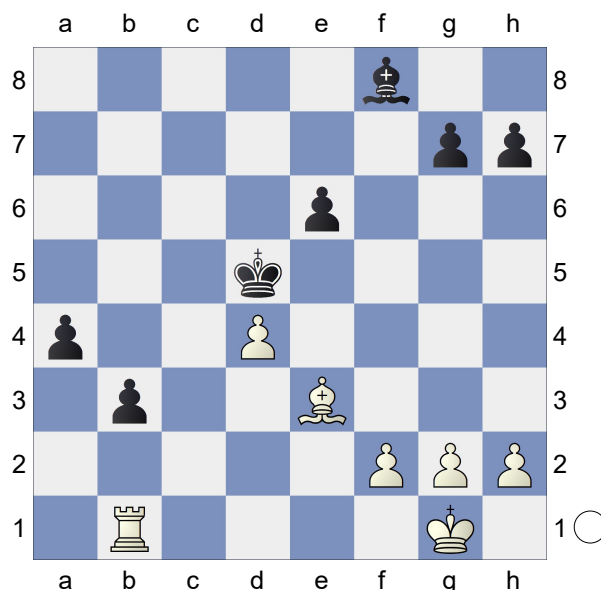
26...axb3 27.Ra5 Kc6

28.Ra6+ Kd5 29.Rb1 Ra4 30.Rxa4

(Still won, but ...)

[30.Rb6 Kc4 31.Rc6+ wins that front b-pawn.]

30...bxa4



31.Kf1?

[The only winning move now is 31.Bc1!]

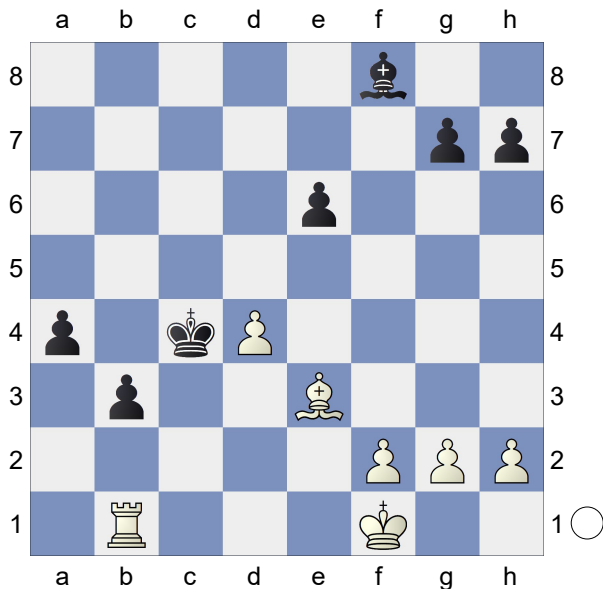
31...Kc4!=

(Diagram)

And this is the only move to draw...

32.Ke2??

[And *here* the only move to draw is 32.Rc1+! Kd3 (32...Kd5 33.Rb1! (or else ...b2 and ...a3 wins) Kc4!= repeats) 33.Rd1+ Kc3 (or 33...Kc2=; or 33...Kc4=; but not 33...Ke4?? when White is winning every which way, including 34.d5! a3 35.dxe6 b2 36.Bd4 b1Q 37.Rxb1 Kxd4 38.Rb7 a2 39.Ra7) 34.Rc1+



A) 34...Kb4?? 35.Bd2+ Ka3
 (35...Kb5 36.Rc8 a3 37.Bc1!±)
 36.Bc3 b2 37.Rb1 Bb4 38.Bxb2+
 Ka2 39.Ra1+ Kxb2 40.Rxa4;

B) 34...Kb2!? is precarious:
 35.Rc8! Bd6! 36.Rc6± Stockfish
 doesn't seem to connect the
 current evaluation with this long line
 yet: Bf8 37.d5!

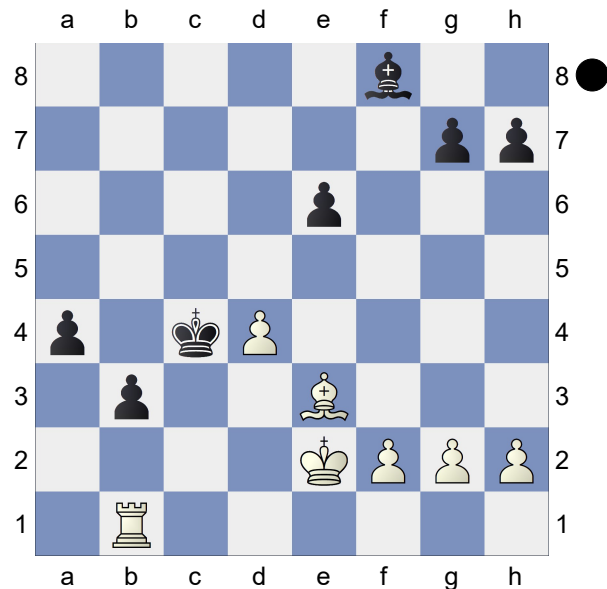
B1) 37...exd5? 38.Bd4+ Ka2
 39.Rc8 Bd6 40.Rd8 Bb4
 41.Rb8 Bd6 42.Rb6 Be7
 43.Rb7 Bf6 44.Ra7 a3 45.Bc5
 b2 46.Rxa3+ Kb1 47.Ke2 Kc2
 48.Ra2 Kb3 49.Ra7 b1Q
 50.Rb7+ Kc2 51.Rxb1 Kxb1
 52.Kd3 After all that, *this* is a
 winning ending. (52.Kd2);

B2) 37...Ka2! 38.dxe6 b2
 39.Rb6 b1Q+ 40.Rxb1 Kxb1
 41.Bd4 a3 42.Ke2 a2±
 Better to just take the repetition
 on Move 34!;

C) 34...Kd3!]
 [32.Bc1?? This loses: a3!-+]

(Diagram)

32...a3!-+ Winning; interesting that

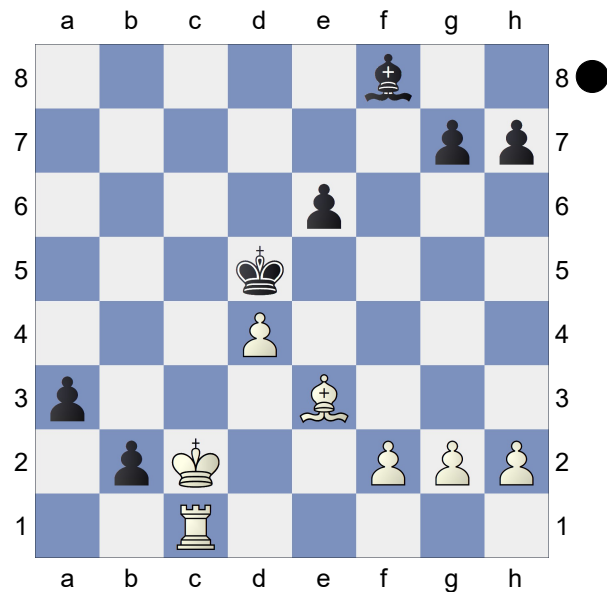


everything else *loses* (no draws!)

33.Rc1+

[33.d5 b2]

33...Kd5! 34.Kd3 b2 35.Kc2



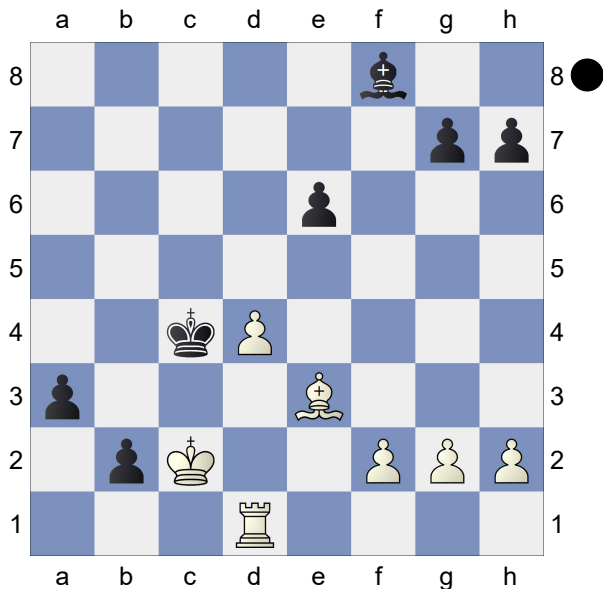
Kc4??

[Perhaps all Black could see was
 35...Kc4 36.Kb1+?? Kb3 37.Rc2
 a2#]

[35...bxc1Q+ 36.Kxc1 (36.Bxc1
 Kxd4) 36...Kc4 37.Kc2 Bb4 38.Bc1
 Kxd4 39.Kb3 Bd6 40.Bxa3 Bxa3
 41.Kxa3 Kd3-+]

36.Rd1!

(Diagram)



The unstoppable plan is 37.Bd2-c3xb2.

36...Bb4 37.Bd2 (anyway) 37...Bd6

38.Bc3 Kd5 39.Re1

[39.Bxb2 isn't bad, this is just easier.]

39...Kc4 40.Rxe6 Bb4 41.Bxb4 Kxb4

42.d5 A head-spinner!

1-0

□ Steger, Eric

■ Cawthon, Jeremy David

2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (2.12)

[Winslow, Elliott]

B17

1909

2098

Here's Jeremy Cawthon (who just held me to a draw, or vice versa) catching Eric Steger in a queen and pawn ending. The key concept is so often quality vs. quantity, which means pawns, passed: more advanced mainly. Actually the "catch" is once the queens are forced off. Nice little combination. 1.e4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 (The "Modern System" as it used to be called.)

[The Tartakower, 4...Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6, inexplicably still rages on as the "more modern" system. It just offends my sense of correctness.]

5.Nf3 One reason to play the Caro Kann is that opponents so often just don't have any finesse. White will have next to nothing in no time with this simple if simplistic development. But I should be careful what I say; Stockfish makes this the "simple and strong" way to play.

[I've always been fond of 5.Bc4!?

Ngf6 6.Ng5?! Fashions come and go -

- (Stockfish plays 6.Ng3) 6...e6

7.Qe2 Nb6 (7...h6?? 8.Nxf7!+-)

8.Bd3 (or there's also quite a bit about 8.Bb3!?, maybe it's the better move)

A) 8...Qxd4?? 9.N1f3 (ΔNe5xf7)

Bb4+?! (9...Qd5 10.Ne5 Qxg2!?

11.Rf1+- It's just not worth it) 10.c3!

Bxc3+ 11.Kf1!+-;

B) 8...h6 9.N5f3 c5! and Black is fully in the center and the game.]

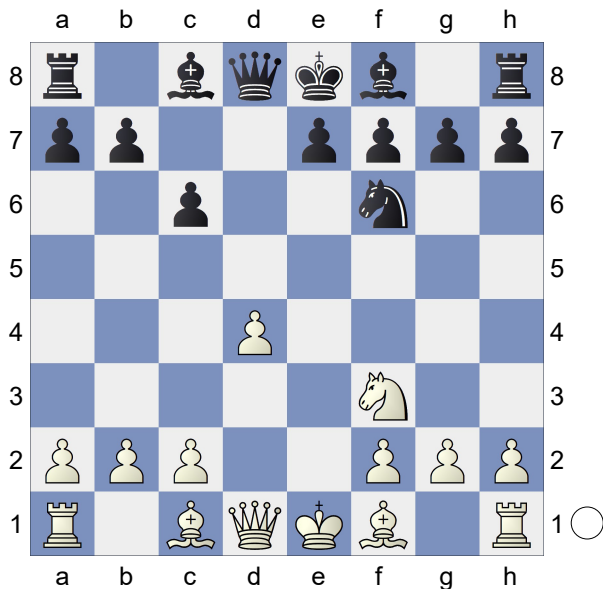
[Aha, I just learned something thanks to Stockfish 18: 5.Bd3!? used to be thought to be inaccurate because of e5 but "18" bluntly evals 6.Nf3!+- as no good for Black!]

[So it's on to 5.Bd3 Ngf6 (5...Ndf6!? 6.Ng3±) and now 6.Ng5 (which could have been played the move before!), another anti-proverb move ("Pieces should not be moved over and over in the opening") the point being 6...h6?! 7.Ne6! Black doesn't have to get mated, but White does get a jump on development (there's no need to take the bishop on f8). Qb6 8.Nf3! fxe6?? 9.Bg6+ Kd8 10.0-0+- is one to add to the file "PieceUp_Lost.cbh"]

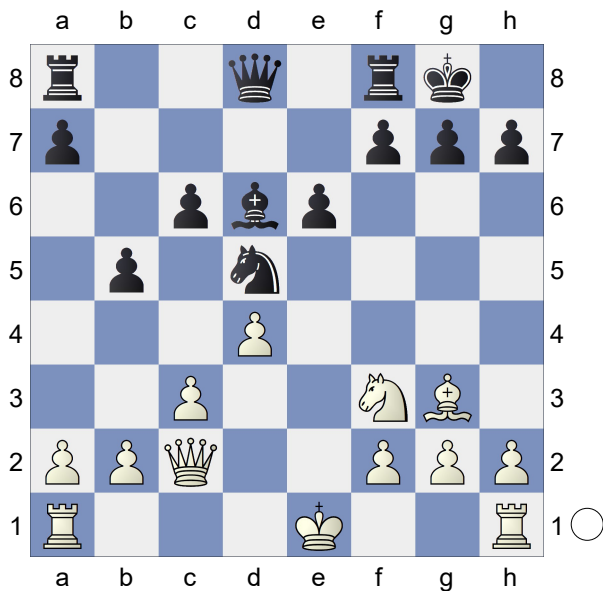
5...Ngf6 6.Nxf6+ Nxf6

(Diagram)

7.Bd3 Bg4 8.c3 White has less than +0.15 here, but it does seem to be "holding" (i.e. not fading to 0.00 as Stockfish grinds away). But Jeremy keeps his



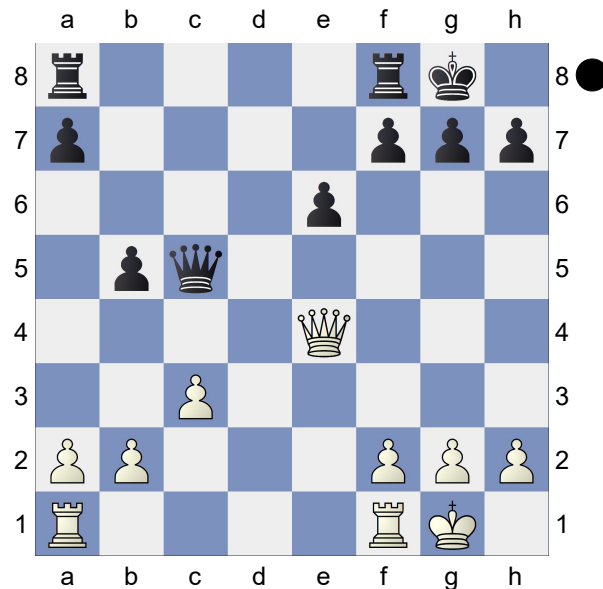
bearings, and it's fairly dead even in a few moves. 8...e6 9.Bf4 Bd6 10.Bg3 0-0 11.Bc2 b5 [11...c5!? some pull to Black.] 12.Qd3 Bf5 13.Qe2 Bxc2 14.Qxc2 Nd5



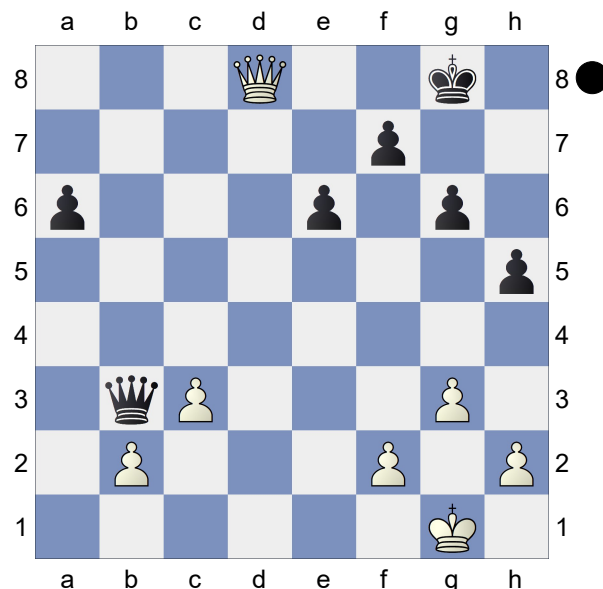
15.Bxd6 (White should leave the taking to Black.) 15...Qxd6 16.0-0 c5 17.dxc5 Qxc5 18.Ng5 Nf6 19.Ne4 Nxe4 20.Qxe4

(Diagram)

Somebody just asked me about heavy piece "endgames," which some folks

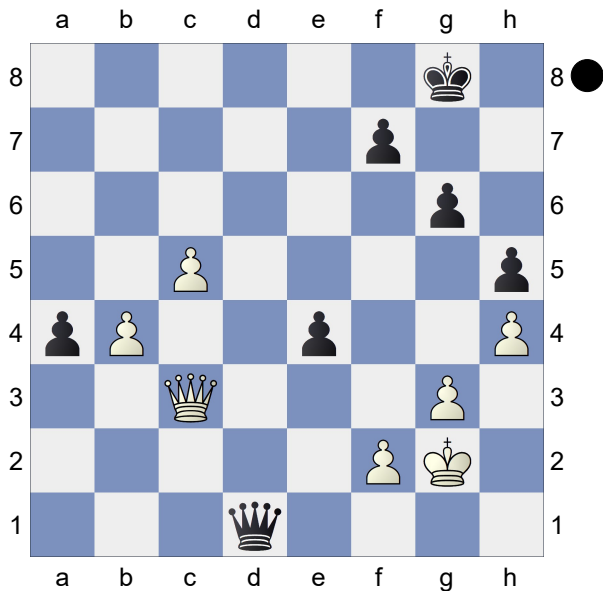


consider a fourth sort of game (after the opening, the middlegame and the ending); I told him about the old book "Endgame Artillery" (1982) by Alex Angos. With that much firepower floating around, no king is safe (or at least that's the idea). But in any case, the balance just doesn't get upset. 20...Rad8 21.Rfd1 Rd6 22.Rxd6 Qxd6 23.Qe2 Qd5 24.Rd1 Qxa2 25.Qxb5 a6 26.Qb7 Qa4 27.Qd7 Qb3 28.Rd2 g6 29.g3 (About time they both "made luft"!) 29...Rb8 30.Qc7 h5 31.Rd8+ Rxd8 32.Qxd8+

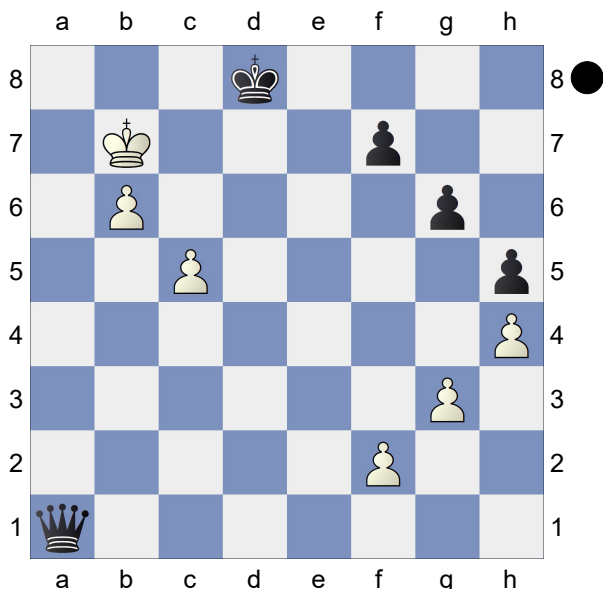


Kh7 33.Qd7 e5 34.Qd2 a5 35.h4 a4

36.Qc1 Qc4 37.Qe3 Qb5 38.Qc1 e4
39.c4 Qc5 40.Qc3 Kg8 41.b4 Qd6
42.c5! Qd1+ 43.Kg2??
[43.Kh2]



It's been even for so long, but Steger had just given Cawthon a far away passed pawn, and now -- there go the queens. 43...Qf3+! 44.Qxf3 exf3+ 45.Kxf3 Kf8! The point! Black steps into the square of both of White's passed pawns, but White can hardly follow suit. 46.b5 Ke7 47.Ke4 a3 48.b6 Kd8 49.Kd5 a2 50.Kc6 a1Q 51.Kb7



Qh1+ 52.c6 Qf3 53.Ka7 Qxc6 54.b7

Qc5+ 55.Ka8 Qa5+ 56.Kb8 Kd7
0-1

Viadiu-Illaraza,Hector

Smith,Olivia

2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (2.4) 12.1.26
[Winslow,Elliott]

B11

1879

2145

1.e4 49:00:44 c6 10 2.Nc3 9 d5 42
3.Nf3 5 dxe4 1:02 The 40,000 or so
games in the Chessbase database are
evenly split, frequency-wise, between
this

[and 3...Bg4 (but the bishop move
scores quite a bit better)]

[as does the distant third (in
popularity) 3...Nf6]

[4th-most-common 3...g6 does even
better]

[And the rare 6th-on-the-list 3...a6
(600+ games) does **quite** well.]

[**And** the **ultra-rare** 3...Qa5
scores even better than any of them!
31 games, 31% (that's for White). Oh,
and it might come as no surprise that
Magnus Carlsen (my favorite source
for silly opening comments) played 3...

Qa5 in 2022. Against Firouzja, in a
rapid game. And ... he **lost!** So if we
remove this "outlier," Black scores
even better! But I'll leave the game,
which is pretty cool: 4.Be2 dxe4

5.Nxe4 Bf5 6.Ng3 Bg6 7.0-0 Nd7

8.d4 e6 9.Nh4 Bd6 10.c4 Qd8

11.Nxg6 hxg6 12.d5 Qh4 13.h3

exd5 14.cxd5 c5 15.a4 a5 16.Bb5

Ngf6 17.Re1+ Kd8 18.Ra3 Re8

19.Rxe8+ Kxe8 20.Rc3 Kd8 21.Rc4

(quite the maneuver!) Qh8 22.Bg5

Nb6 23.Rh4 Qf8 24.Ne4 Kc8

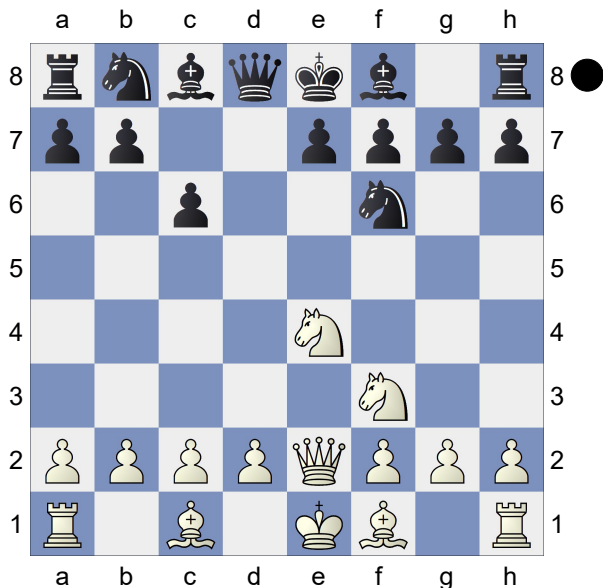
(Black just can't handle it) 25.Nxf6

gxf6 26.Bxf6 Kc7 27.Qd2

(27.Rh8?? Bh2+) 27...Qc8 28.Rh7

Qg8 29.Rh8 Qxh8 30.Bxh8 Rxh8
 31.Qxa5 Rh4 32.Qe1 Nd7
 (32...Nxa4 33.Qe8) 33.g3 Rh8
 34.Qa5+ Nb6 35.Qc3 Rxh3 36.Qg7
 1-0, Firouzja,A (2778)-Carlsen,M
 (2864) Miami (rapid) 2022]

4.Nxe4 16 Nf6 33 (Now the star move,
 both in # games played and %)(and
 Stockfish 17.1 puts it at the top) **5.Qe2**
2:51

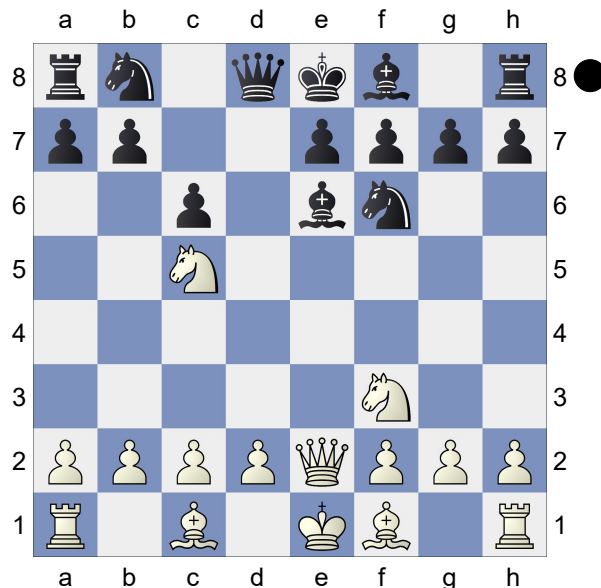


(Same for this!) **5...Be6!? 1:23**

A specialty of Mortazavi (26 games in
 the db!), but the Fish does *not*
 approve. **6.Nc5! 5:28**

[6.Neg5? is 7-1 in the db (all but 1 vs.
 Mortazavi), but the mighty engine has
 all of White's advantage (such as it
 was) erased. Bd5 7.c4 (7.d3= h6
 8.Ne4) 7...h6! 8.cxd5 (8.Nh3 Bxf3
 9.Qxf3 g5 was the scene of
 Martazavi's single win, against former
 Bay Area (now British Columbian)
 Ray Kaufman: 10.Qb3 Qc7 11.d4
 Nbd7 12.Be3 e6 13.0-0-0 a5 14.f4
 a4 15.Qc2 a3 16.b3 g4 17.Nf2 Bg7
 18.Bd3 Rc8 19.h3 g3 20.Ne4 Nxe4
 21.Bxe4 b5 22.f5 exf5 23.Bxf5 bxc4
 24.Qxc4 0-0 25.Rhe1 Rce8 26.Bd2
 Nb6 27.Qc5 Nd5 28.Rxe8 Rxe8
 29.Re1 Rxe1+ 30.Bxe1 Qf4+

0-1 (30) Kaufman,R (2255)-Mortazavi,
 A (2333) Titled Tuesday intern op 27th
 Oct 2020) 8...hxg5]



Discovered Attack. B11: Caro-Kann:
 Two Knights Variation. **6...Bf5?N 27:36**

[6...Bd5±]

[6...Bc8 was the five games played to
 here, even score (2-0 vs. Mortazavi).

7.d4± Nbd7 8.Nd3 g6 9.g3! Bg7
 10.Bg2 c5 11.dxc5 (11.Be3!)
 11...Nxc5 12.Nde5?! (12.Nxc5 Qa5+
 13.c3 Qxc5 14.Be3 Qh5 15.h3±)
 12...0-0 13.0-0± 0-1 (60) Tsaruk,M
 (2373)-Vorobiov,E (2472) Cheliabinsk
 2023]

7.Nxb7± 1:59 Qc7 40 (best) 8.Qe5!±
5:20 White is better. 8...Qxe5+ 1:10

9.Nxe5 1 e6 2:52

[9...Bxc2± 10.d3]

10.Bd3 2:04

[10.d3+-]

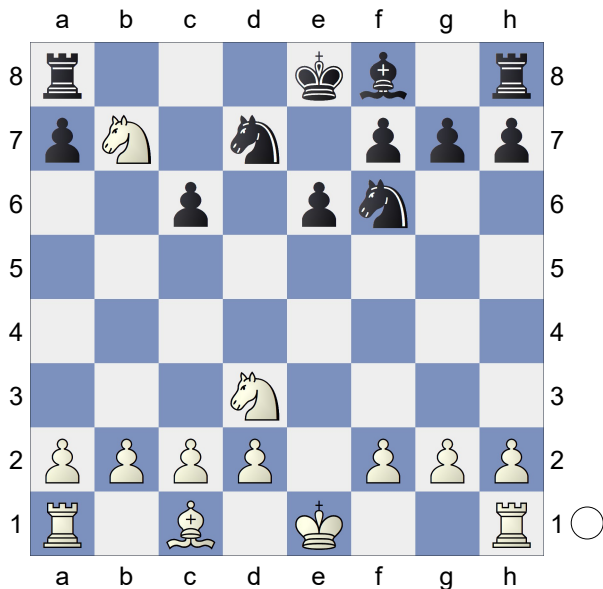
10...Bxd3 3:38 11.Nxd3+- 2 Nbd7 1:08

(Diagram)

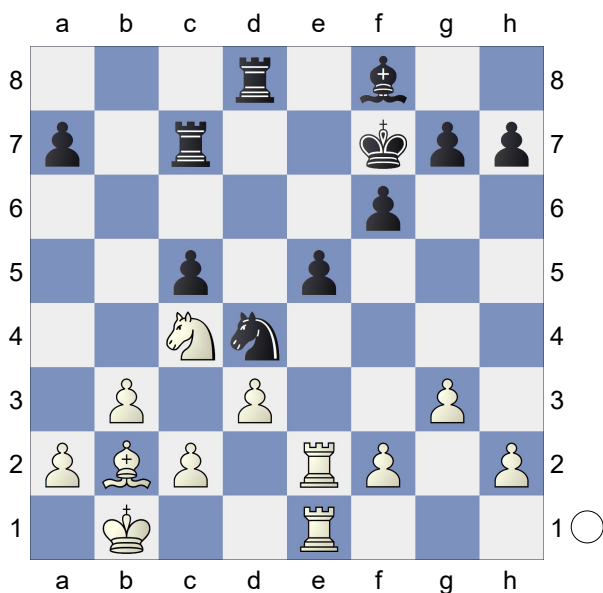
White must now prevent ...a5. **12.Na5 33**
c5 1:55 13.b3 2:54 Be7 2:25

[♖13...h5 14.Bb2 Nd5]

[♖13...Nd5]



14.Bb2+- 7:01 0-0 29 15.Ne5 3:02 Nb6 4:55 16.d3 1:02 Nfd5 1:44 17.0-0-0 3:02 f6 3:56 18.Nec4 1:35
[18.Nec6! Bd6 19.Rhe1]
18...e5 1:27 19.g3 5:00 Rfe8 1:22
20.Rde1 6:56 Bf8 7:13 21.Re2 1:08
Re7 1:13 22.Rhe1 2:01 Rc7 23.Ne3 3:33 Rd8 4:32 24.Nxd5 1:43 Nxd5 1:09
25.Nc4 2:34 Kf7 1:11 26.Ne3 1:13 Nb4 28 27.Kb1 53 Nc6 44 28.Nc4 32 Nd4 51



29.Bxd4 16 cxd4 28 30.Re4 1:36
[30.a3]
30...Bb4 5:03 31.R1e2 2
[31.Rg1!?]

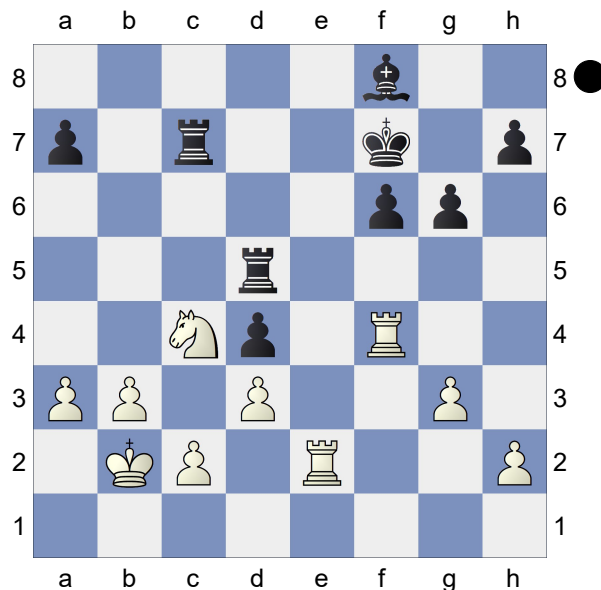
31...Rd5 2:43 32.a3 4:26 Bf8 24

[32...Bc3 33.f3 g6]

33.Kb2 1:19 g6 3:13

[33...h5 takes a more fighting stance.
34.Rh4 g6]

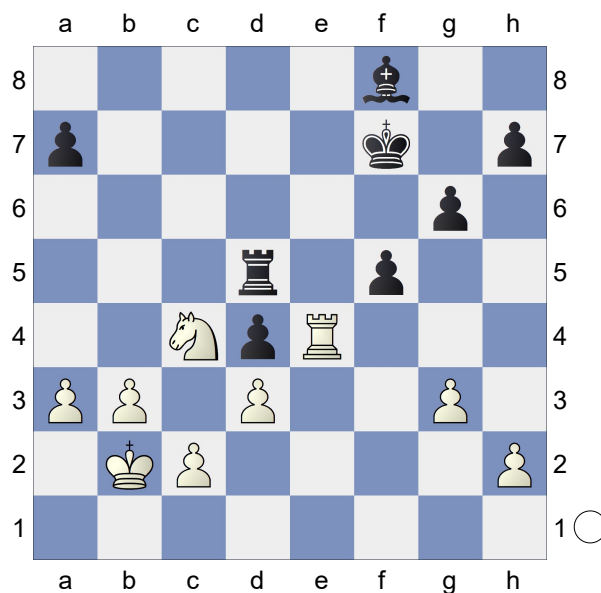
34.f4 2:56 exf4 24 35.Rxf4 12



Re7 56 36.Rfe4+- 1:05

[36.Rff2 h5 37.b4]

36...Rxe4 44 37.Rxe4 42 Endgame
KRB-KRN. White is a pawn up and
should win. 37...f5 1:30



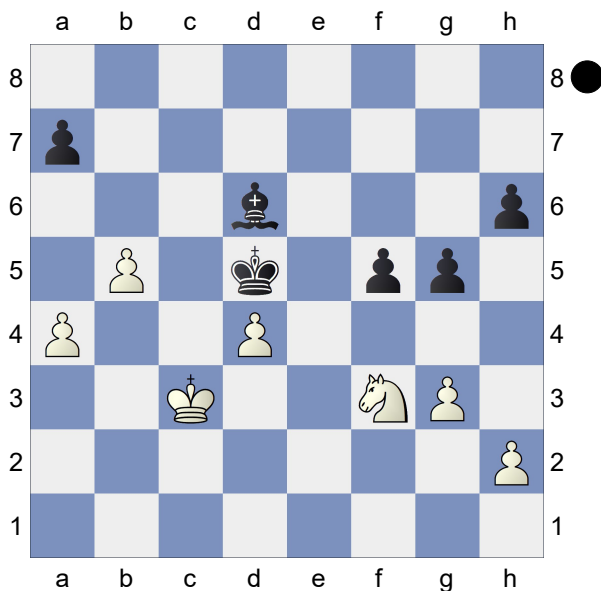
38.Re5? 2:23 It so happens that the
rooks on the board favor White.

[38.Re1 g5+]

[Interesting that 38.Re2!+-

does the best job of attack and defense.]

38...Rxe5!± 2:06 39.Nxe5+ 1 KB-KN
 39...Ke6 30 40.Nf3 5:35 Kd5 35 41.b4
 47 Be7 1:20 42.b5?!= 2:58 (Here come
 the 0.00s) 42...g5 43 43.a4 2:19 h6
 2:44 44.c4+ 1:19 or anything else (TA
 had this as a "Tactical Blunder")
 44...dxc3+! 9
 [44...Kd6+- 45.Kb3+- (45.Nxd4??
 Bf6 46.Kc3 Kc5-+)]
 45.Kxc3 1 Bd6 40
 [45...g4!]
 46.d4 1:18



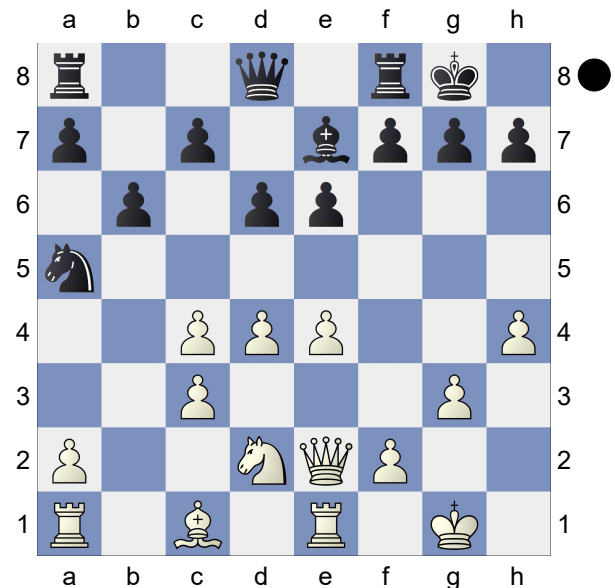
f4?? 2:44 This is the end of Black's resistance.

[She had to find 46...Bc7=]
 47.g4+- 1:31 Ke4 11 48.Nd2+ 3 Kd5
 44 49.Kd3 3:07 Bb8 1:32 50.Nf3 43
 Bc7 13 51.h4 56 Bd8 30 52.h5 11 Bf6
 23 53.a5 29 Bd8 18 54.a6 13 Bb6 17
 55.Kc3 5:59
 [Δ55.Ne5 Bxd4 56.Nd7 and 57.b6
 breaks through.]
 55...Ba5+ 13 56.Kd3 2:39 Bb6 12
 57.Ne5 1:48 Bxd4 28 58.Nf7 f3 1:29
 59.Nxh6 2 f2 28 60.Ke2 1 Kc4 1:08
 61.Nf5 2:34 Be5 1:14 62.b6 58 Bb8 22
 63.bxa7 28 Bxa7 5 64.h6 10
 Weighted Error Value: White=0.19 (very

precise) /Black=0.73
 1-0

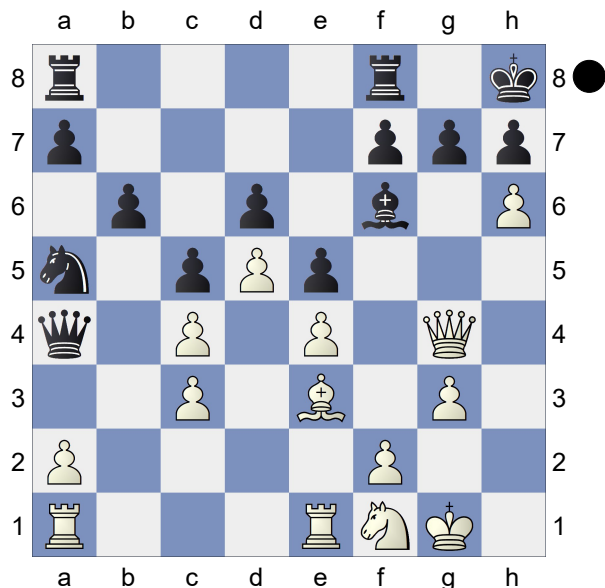
□ Horowitz, Phineas F E17 1951
 ■ Melville, Cailen Jeremiah 1950
 2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (2.13)
 [Winslow, Elliott]

Phineas Horowitz doesn't fall victim to
 Cailen Melville's 1...b6 (as has
 happened recently in the TNM), and in
 fact it was Cailen who "turned himself
 in" on the kingside when he didn't stop
 the h-pawn from going as far as it could.
 The finish was crisp: 1.d4 e6 2.c4 b6
 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.g3 Bb7 5.Bg2 Be7
 6.Nc3 Ne4 7.0-0 Nxc3 8.bxc3 Nc6
 9.Nd2 Na5 10.Bxb7 Nxb7 11.e4 Na5
 12.Qe2 0-0 13.Re1 d6
 [13...Qc8!=]
 14.h4
 [14.Nb3!]



14...Qe8 15.h5 e5
 [15...h6!]
 16.Nf1 Bf6 17.Be3
 [17.d5!?]
 17...c5?!

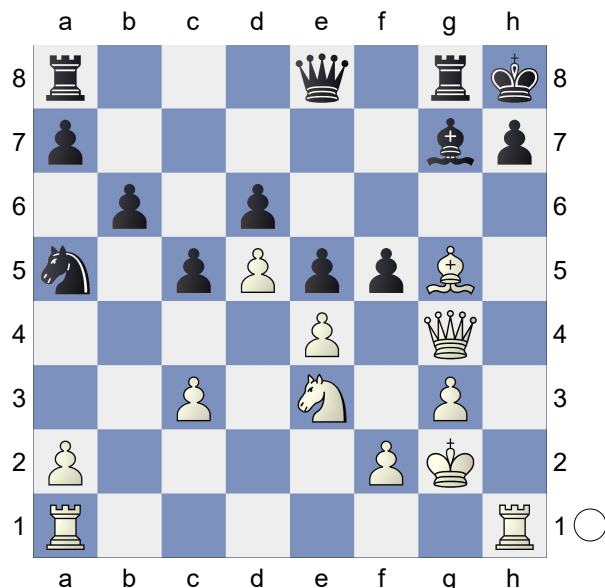
[17...h6!=]
18.d5 Qa4 19.Qg4?!
 [19.Nd2±]
19...Kh8?!
 [19...Nxc4!±]
20.h6!?
 [20.Nd2!±]



20...Qxc4??
 [20...g6!=]
21.Bg5 Rg8 22.Ne3 Qb5 23.Kg2
 [23.hxg7+! Bxg7 24.Kg2]
23...Qe8 24.hxg7+ Bxg7 25.Rh1 f5
 Hail Freddy!
 [25...f6 is in fact the same]

(Diagram)

26.Rxh7+! Kxh7 27.Qxf5+ Kh8
28.Qh3+ Bh6 29.Qxh6#
1-0



B76
1464
1596
 Quinn,Dahlia
 Schaezlein,Charlie
 2026 New Year TNM: 1600-1999 (2.21)
 [Winslow,Elliott]

The Yugoslav Attack remains a curse against the Dragon Sicilian. Ever since Minic-Lee, 1965 or so, I've admired White's king hunts when they succeed. Karpov-Korchnoi, 1974! **1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.f3 0-0**

[The game that lit my fire for the Yugoslav Attack was this win by (Yugoslavian) Dragoljub Minic: 7...Nc6 8.Bc4 0-0 9.Bb3 Bd7 10.h4 Ne5 11.h5 Nxh5 12.Qd2 Rc8 13.0-0-0 Nc4 14.Bxc4 Rxc4 15.g4 Nf6 16.Bh6 Bxh6 17.Qxh6 Rxc3 18.g5 Nh5 19.Rxh5 gxf5 20.Rh1 Qc8 21.Rxh5 Bf5 22.exf5 Rxc2+ 23.Nxc2 Qxf5 24.g6 1-0 (24) Minic,D-Lee,W Krakow 1964. Incredible!]

8.Qd2 Nc6 9.0-0-0!? A more positional continuation, when Black has tried mightily to infuse violence in the proceedings.

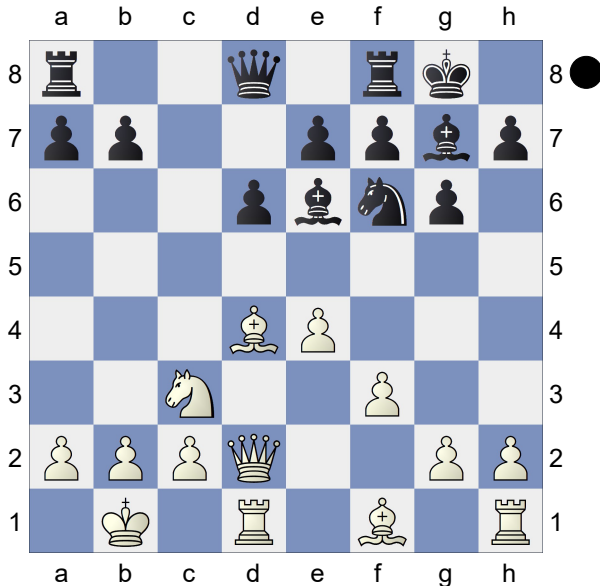
[9.Bc4!?]

9...Nxd4 A quieter line;

[9...d5!? the quixotic pawn sacrifice, still seems viable. Just a sample:

10.Kb1!? Nxd4! (10...dxe4??
11.Nxc6!) 11.e5!! Nf5! 12.exf6 exf6!
13.Bc5 d4!]

10.Bxd4 Be6 11.Kb1



Qa5?!

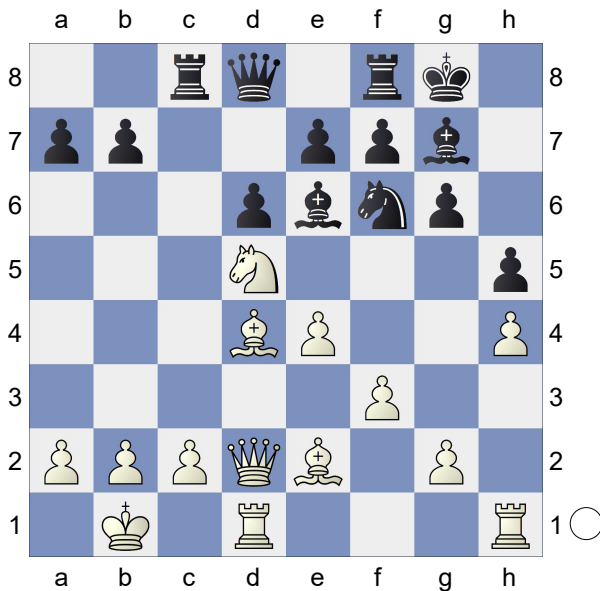
[11...Qc7 intending ...Rfc8 and then ...
Qa5, is standard.]

12.Nd5! Qd8 (This can't be good)

13.h4!+- h5 14.Be2

[14.g4!]

14...Rc8?!



15.g4! hxg4 16.h5 Nxh5 17.Bxg7
Kxg7 18.fxg4 Bxd5 19.exd5 Ng3
20.Qh6+ Kf6 21.g5+ (The fastest
mate!)
1-0

C43

1980

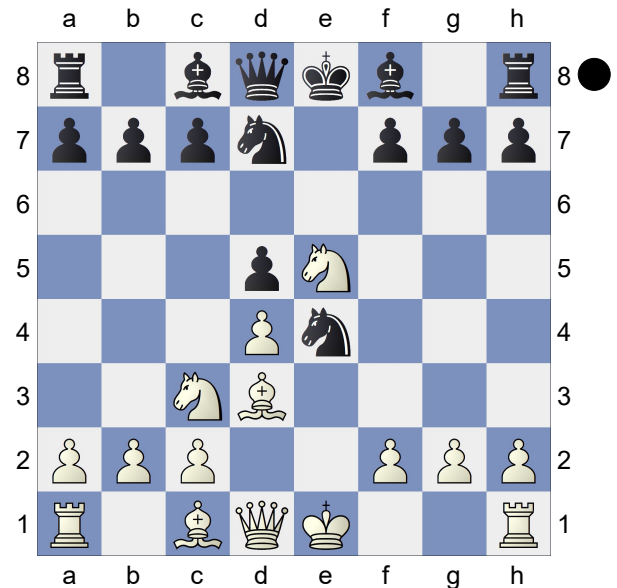
Walder, Michael

1987

Clemens, Kristian

2026 New Year TNM: 2000+ (5.4) 3.2.26
[TA]

Slow 90min+30sec The usual crappy
"Tactical Analysis" notes, but some
game references, and the fact that it's a
really well-played game by Walder. 1.e4
30 e5 2:23 2.Nf3 0 Nf6 16 3.d4 17
Nxe4 17 4.Bd3 9 d5 31 5.Nxe5 46
Nd7 1:09 6.Nc3 23



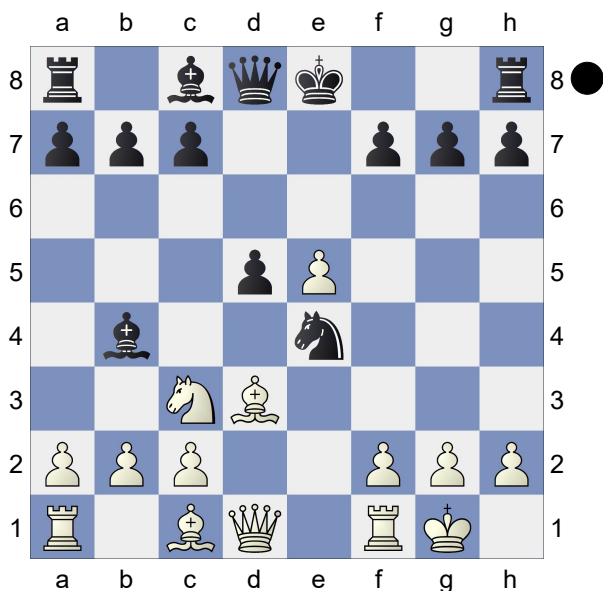
Bb4 4:11

[Relevant: 6...Nxe5 7.dxe5 Nxc3
8.bxc3 Bc5 9.0-0 0-0 10.Re1 f5
11.Be3 Bxe3 12.Rxe3 Be6 13.f4 d4
14.Rh3 Rf7 15.c4 Qe7 16.Qe2 Qc5
17.a4 a5 18.Kh1 Ra6 19.Rg1 g6
20.Qf2 Rc6 21.Rd1 Bxc4 22.Bxc4
Qxc4 23.Rxd4 Qxc2 24.Qf1 Rb6
25.Re3 Rb4 26.Red3 Qxa4 27.Qg1
Rxd4 28.Rxd4 Qc6 29.Qd1 b5

30.h3 a4 31.Kh2 Kg7 32.Qd3 h5
33.Rb4 Rd7 34.Qxb5 Qxb5 35.Rxb5
c5 36.Ra5 ½-½ Fedoseev,V (2731)-
Bluebaum,M (2671) Bundesliga 2526
Germany 2025 (12.1)]

7.0-0! 27 Nxe5 2:11 8.dxe5 1:24

[8.Bxe4 dxe4 9.dxe5 Qxd1 10.Rxd1
Bxc3 11.bxc3 b6=]



8...f5??N 1.06/21 5:55

[Better is 8...Nxc3± 0.43/26 9.bxc3
Bxc3]

[Predecessor: 8...Nxc3 9.bxc3 Bxc3
10.Rb1 0-0 11.Bxh7+ Kxh7 12.Qd3+
Kg8 13.Qxc3 a5 14.Rd1 Ra6
15.Rb5 Rc6! 16.Qd3 (16.Qxa5
Rxc2 17.Rbxd5 Qh4 18.R5d2 b6
19.Qb5 GM F.Svane vs GM
Cheparinov, Baku World Cup 2023
Qe4 20.Rxc2 Qxc2=)

A) 16...d4!? 17.Qe4 (17.Rxa5
Rc3 18.Qxd4 Qxd4 19.Rxd4

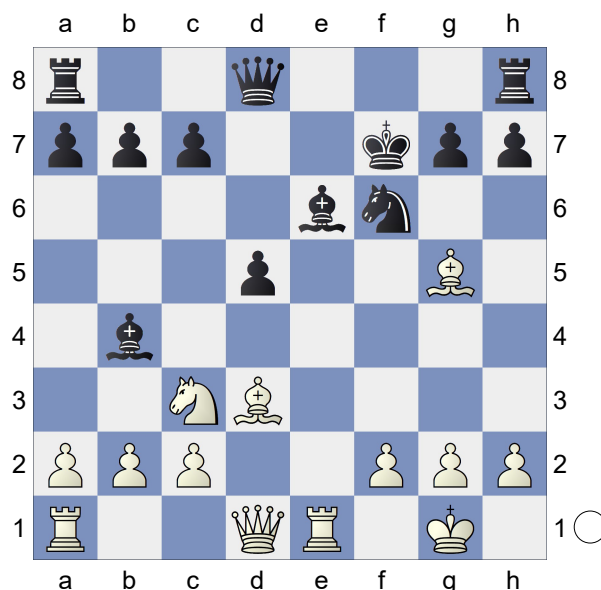
Rxc2±) 17...Qd7 18.Rxd4 Qf5±;

B) 16...Be6 17.Rxb7 Qh4 18.Rb3
Qe4 19.Rc3 Rxc3 20.Qxc3 c5
21.Re1 Qb4 22.Qxb4 axb4 23.a3
Rb8 24.axb4 Rxb4 25.c3 Re4
26.Rxe4 dxe4 27.h3 Kh7 28.Be3
c4 29.Kh2 Kg6 30.Kg3 Kf5
31.Kh4 Bd7 32.g4+ Kxe5 33.Kg5

Ke6 34.Bd4 f5 35.gxf5+ Kf7
36.h4 Ba4 37.Kf4 Bc2 38.Ke5
½-½ Abdusattorov,N (2727)-
Nakamura,H (2788) CCT Final
Survival Loser Toronto rapid 2023
(2.1)]

**9.exf6 2.26/23 5:37 Nxf6 1:32 10.Re1+
3:10 Kf7 5:26 11.Bg5+- 1:31 Be6?
5.75/22 14:03**

[11...g6 2.87/26 12.Qc1 (12.Qd2+-)
12...c6 13.Ne4! dxe4 14.Rxe4+-]



12.Rxe6!+- 3:56 Bxc3 6:25

[12...Kxe6 13.Bxf6 Kxf6 14.Qf3+-]

13.Bxf6 7:38

[13.Qe2 Bxb2 14.Re1+-]

13...Bxf6 4:18 Black is weak on the light
squares **14.Qg4 1:05 g6 5:33 15.Rae1
52 Kg7 1:58**

(Diagram)

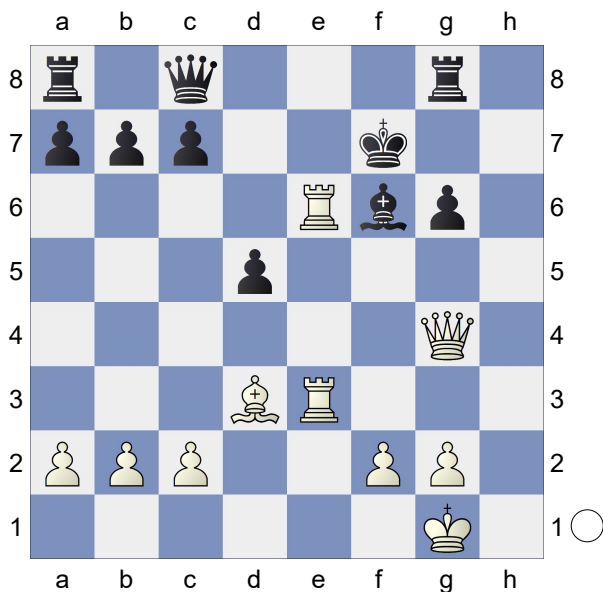
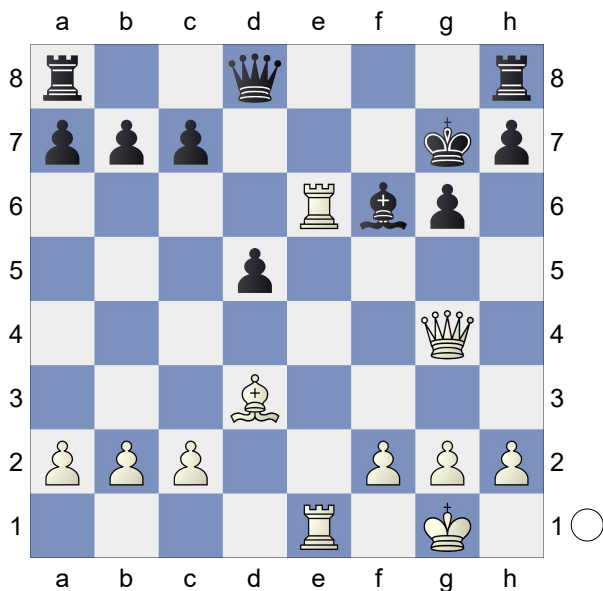
16.h4! 9:42 Rg8 4:09

[16...c5 17.h5+-]

**17.h5 7:21 Kf7 10:47 18.hxg6+ 21:00
hxg6 1:04 19.R1e3 1:45 Qc8 4:59**

(Diagram)

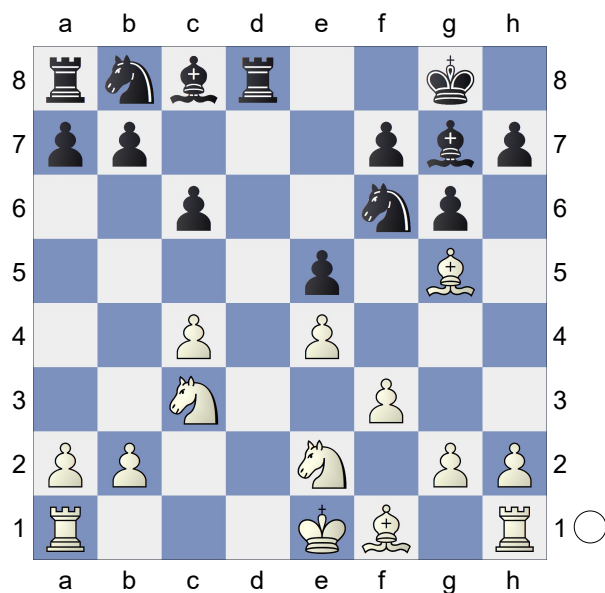
20.Rxf6+! 2:13 White mates. **20...Kxf6**



27 21.Qf4+ 1:03 Qf5 1:38 22.Qd4+ 1:38 Kg5 1:16 23.Rg3+ 57 Deflection 23...Kh6 15 24.Bxf5 12 Black got outplayed after the opening. Artfully played by Walder. Weighted Error Value: White=0.11 (very precise) / Black=0.90 1-0

Mehta, Soham 1525
Chernobilskiy, Mikhail 1801
2026 New Year TNM: 1600-1999 (5.14)
[Winslow, Elliott]

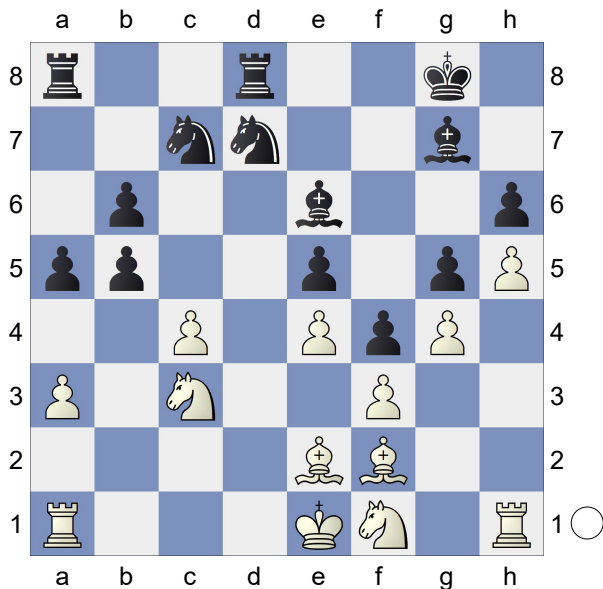
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 Bg7 4.e4 d6
5.Nc3 0-0 6.Nge2 e5 7.dxe5
[7.d5]
7...dxe5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Bg5
[9.Nd5 Ne8 10.Ne7+ Kh8 11.Nxc8
Nc6!= (11...Rxc8=)]
9...c6=



10.h4?! Be6 11.Ng3 h6 12.Be3 Na6
[12...h5!]
13.a3?
[13.h5 Nb4 14.Rc1 g5]
13...Nc7?
[13...h5]
14.Be2
[14.h5!=]
14...b6 15.b4 Nd7 16.h5 (too late!)
16...f5! 17.Nf1 f4 18.Bf2 g5 19.g4
a5
[19...Bf8]
20.b5! cxb5

(Diagram)

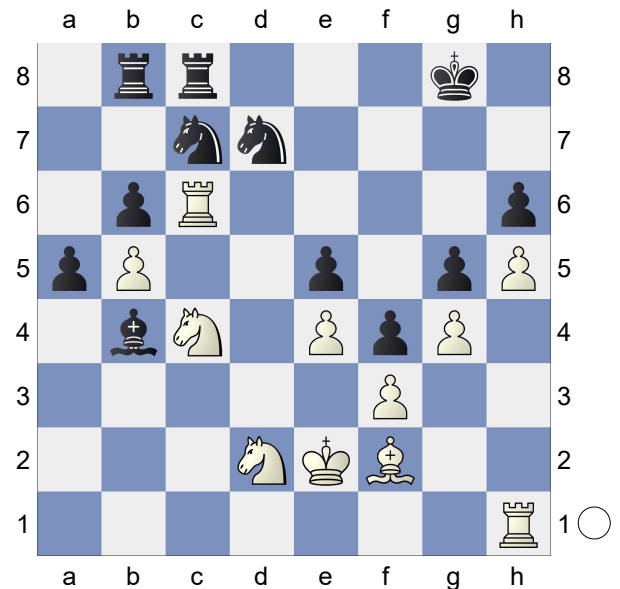
21.cxb5?!



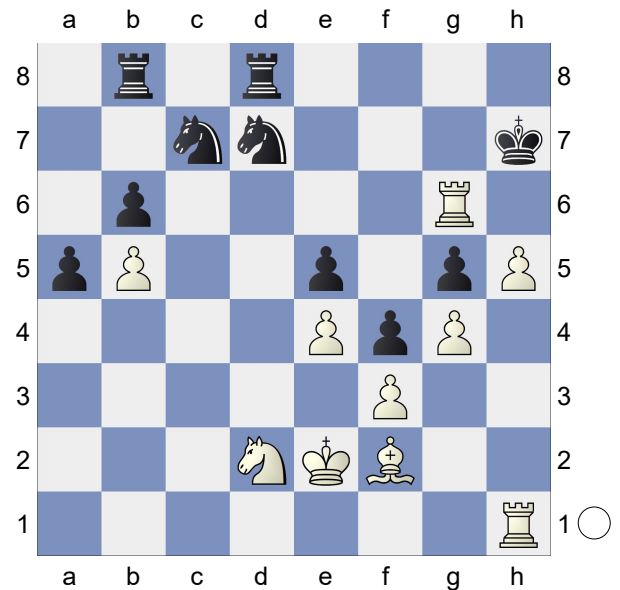
[21.Nd5 Bxd5 22.cxd5 Rac8 23.Nd2
Nxd5! 24.Bxb5! Nc3 25.Ba6 Rc7
26.Rc1 b5 27.Nb1 b4 28.axb4 axb4
29.Nxc3 bxc3 \bar{f}]
21...Bf8 \bar{f}
[21...Rac8! \bar{f}]
22.Na4 Rab8 23.Rc1?
[23.Nd2! \bar{f}]
23...Na8?
[23...Rdc8 24.Rc6 Bxa3 25.Nd2
Bb4+-]
24.Rc6= Bb3
[24...Kf7=]
25.Nb2?!
[25.Nc3 Rbc8 26.Nd2 Nb8!]
25...Bxa3 26.Bc4+?!
[26.Nd2! Bxb2 27.Nxb3 a4 28.Nc1
Bxc1 29.Rxc1=]
**26...Bxc4 27.Nxc4 Bb4+ \bar{f} 28.Nfd2
Rdc8?!=**
[28...Rb7 \bar{f}]
29.Ke2 Nc7

(Diagram)

30.Rxh6?
[30.Nd6 Bxd6 31.Rxd6 Nxb5
32.Rxd7 Nc3+ 33.Kf1 b5=
(33...a4=)]
30...Be7??+-

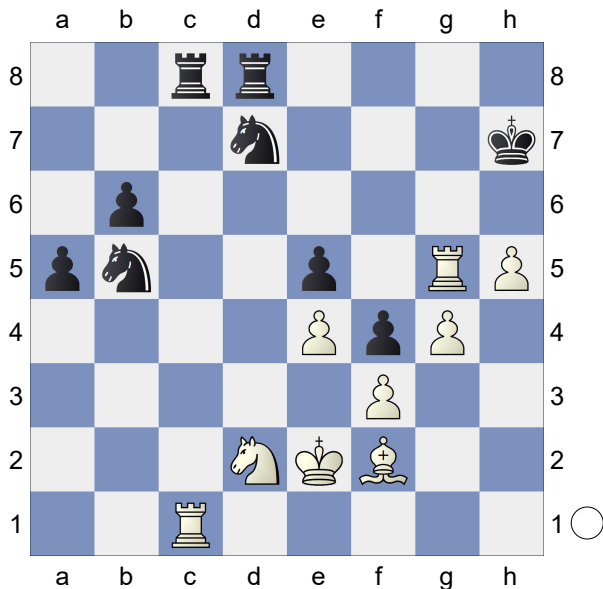


[30...Nxb5+- 31.Rg6+ Kh7 32.Rxg5
Bxd2 33.Nxd2 Rc2+-]
31.Nd6+-
[31.Rg6+-]
[31.Rb1+-]
31...Bxd6 32.Rxd6 Rd8
[32...Nf8]
33.Rg6+
[33.Rb1!]
33...Kh7



34.Rxg5??
[34.Rb1+-]
34...Nxb5= 35.Rc1 Rbc8 \bar{f}

(Diagram)



36.Rc4??

[36.Rxc8 Rxc8 37.Rg6 a4
38.Re6!=]

36...a4!-+ 37.Rg6 a3 38.Bxb6 Rxc4

[38...Nxb6 39.Rxb6 a2 40.Rxc8
Rxc8 41.Ra6 Rc1]

39.Nxc4?!

[39.Bxd8 Nd4+ 40.Kf1 a2 41.Ra6
Rc1+]

39...a2 40.Bxd8 Nd4+ 41.Kd3 Nc5+

42.Kc3 a1Q+ 43.Kb4 Nd3#!

0-1

□ **Robins,Alexander**

■ **Hack,Richard**

2026 New Year TNM: u1600 (5.33) 3.2.26
[Winslow,Elliott]

Our Chess Director Alex Robins, as well as Chess Program Manager Christian Brickhouse, have been playing in the Tuesday Night Marathon as well! Let's just say it's been bumpy at first, but this last round Alex rose to the occasion and won a bonafide miniature, with play worthy of anyone! I sent these notes to Alex and he agreed with my final note: it was an exhilarating game! **1.e4 c5**

2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6

5.Nc3 a6?! A bad time for this -- White can get in e5 without losing it to a queen check on a5. Richard Hack and I were corresponding this week about the O'Kelly Variation, 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 a6!? when White shouldn't play "normally" with 3.d4; I hope our discussion didn't somehow lead him to *this*!

[The main lines are: 5...d6

Classical, leading to the Rauzer, the Boleslavsky, the Sozin (Fischer's favorite)]

[5...e6 Sicilian Four Knights -- experiencing a comeback!]

[5...e5!? Sveshnikov -- still wild!]

[5...g6?! a sort of Accelerated Fianchetto with a shaky reputation]

6.Nxc6! I'm impressed! Alex grabs the moment. Simple development would have left a lot on the table. **6...bxc6?!**

[6...dxc6 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.Bc4
(8.f4!?)]

A) 8...b5 9.Bxf7 e6 (9...b4
10.Na4 Nxe4 11.Bf4+-

Just because queens have been traded, doesn't mean Black's king isn't in danger!);

B) 8...e6 9.a4!? the dark squares are a source of anxiety for Black.]

7.e5! With g7-g6 replacing a7-a6 this has been tried over the decades, but obviously here it's worse for Black. b6 and development. **7...Ng8**

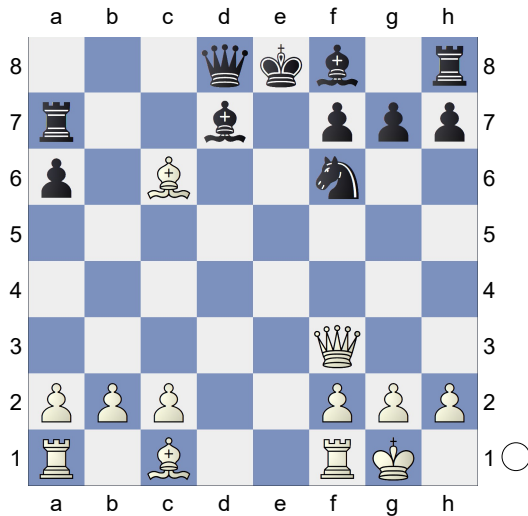
[7...Nd5?! 8.Nxd5 cxd5 9.Qxd5+-]

8.Bc4 d5 9.exd6 exd6 10.0-0?!

How can this be wrong? Stockfish 18 (yes!) shows that there is room for improvement:

[10.Qf3!? d5 11.Nxd5! cxd5
12.Bxd5 Ra7 13.0-0 Nf6!? 14.Bc6+
Bd7

(Diagram)



15.Bh6!!+- Shades of Browne-Bisguier,
US Championship 1974! (Look it up!)]

10...Nf6 11.Qf3?!

[11.Re1+ Be7 12.Bg5 0-0 13.Qe2
Ra7 14.Be3 Rb7 15.b3 a5 16.Ba6
Rb4 17.Bxc8 Qxc8 18.Rad1±
is a healthy enough positional
advantage]

[11.Bg5!? d5 12.Bxf6 Qxf6 13.Bxd5
cxd5 14.Qxd5 Ra7 15.Rfe1+ Be6
16.Rad1 Be7! 17.Qc6+ Kf8
Black hangs on (SF18 makes it +0.40/
24)]

11...Qc7?

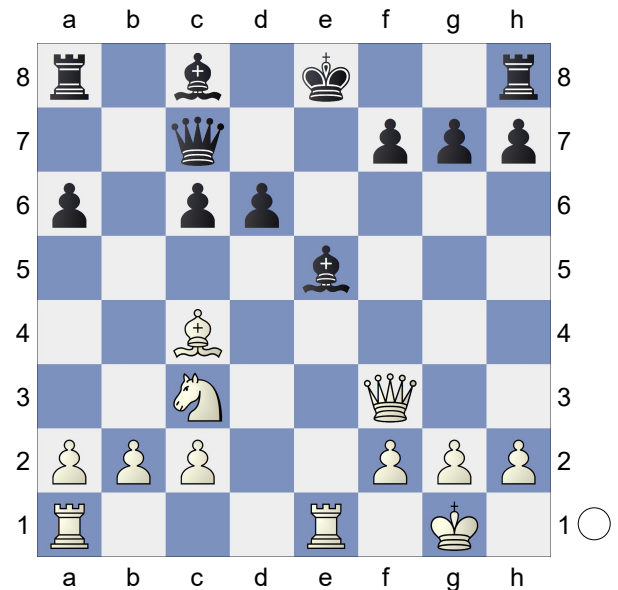
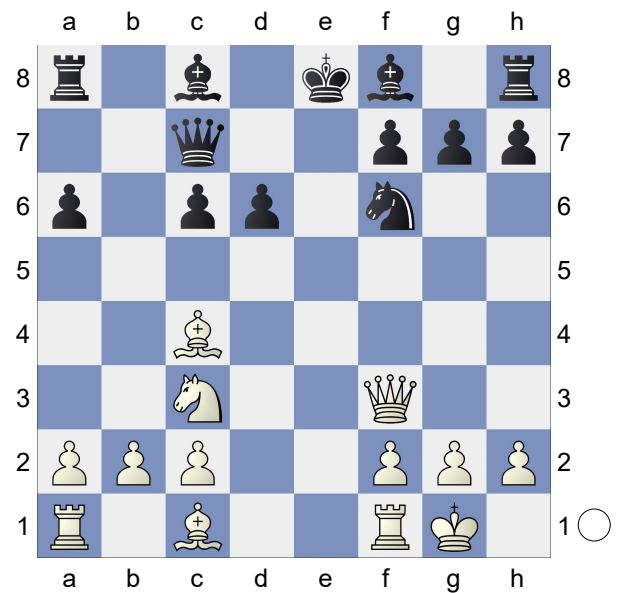
[Black might as well accept the
provocation and the hanging pawns'
advantage and push: 11...d5
(at least there is no sacrifice to bust
it open)]

(Diagram)

**12.Bg5!+- Be7 13.Bxf6! Bxf6
14.Rfe1+ Be5**

(Diagram)

15.Bxf7+! and it all comes together --
White wins a pawn, but more importantly
the king stays in the center. **15...Kd8**
[15...Qxf7 16.Qxc6+ Qd7 17.Qxa8

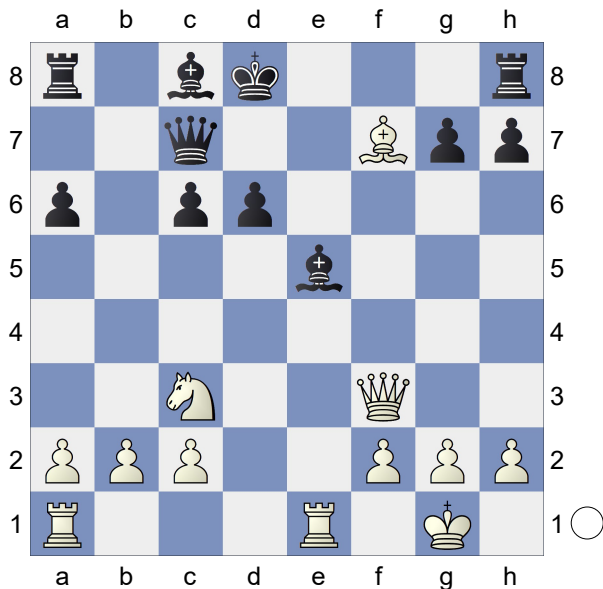


0-0 and here Stockfish 18 shows
possibly too much faith in the two
bishop by ridding the opponent of
them at a cost: 18.Qd5+!? (best!?)
Kh8 19.Rxe5 dxe5 20.Qxd7 Bxd7
21.Nd5+- Then again, this is pretty
good technique -- no counterplay!]

(Diagram)

16.Bh5

[16.Rxe5!? Another exchange
sacrifice for entirely different reasons:
getting at the king again. dxe5



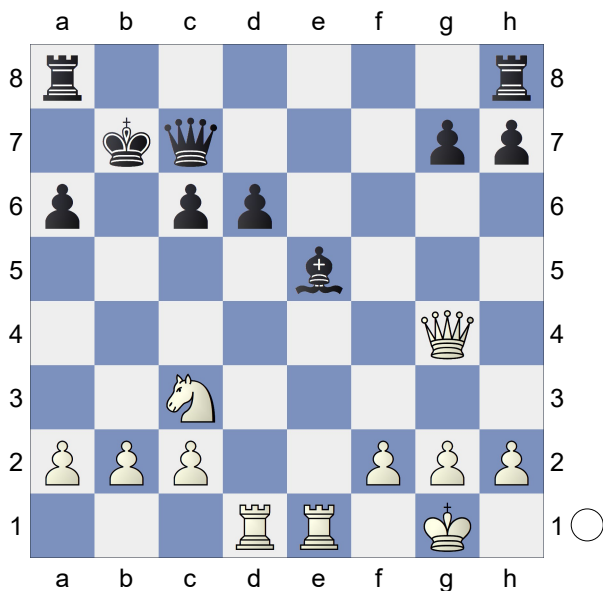
17.Rd1+ Ke7 18.Bc4 Rf8 19.Qe3

Quite won, but understandably Alex goes for stability. (Has he been reading Shankland's latest book, "Converting an Extra Pawn in Chess"?)]

16...Be6

[16...Qb7!? might yet provoke 17.Rxe5!]

17.Rad1 Kc8 18.Bg4 Bxg4 19.Qxg4+ Kb7 Safe? No...



20.Rxe5! The added tactic makes this a "petit combination" instead of a sacrifice, and clearly best. **20...h5**

[20...dxe5 21.Rd7 SF18 gives

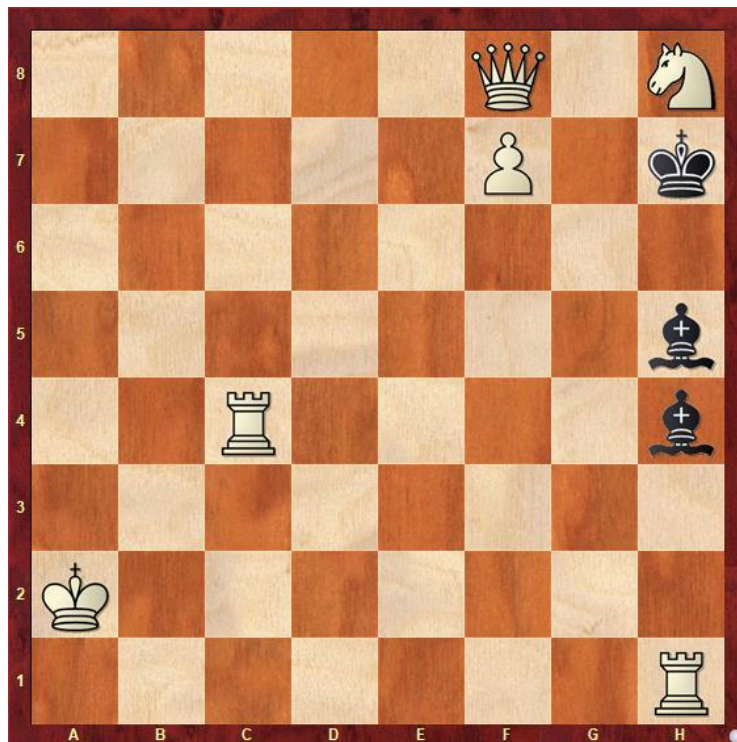
21...Rac8 as the best try but then White can even stop to take the g-pawn(!). 22.Rxg7!]

21.Qb4+ This must have been an exhiiarating win for Alex!

1-0

Tony's Teasers

White mates in 2 moves.



Solutions

For Tony's Teaser:

1. Rf2! (threatening a discovered mate with the c-pawn!), Bb4 2. c3#

Contact Us

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Our phone number is 415-393-0110.

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