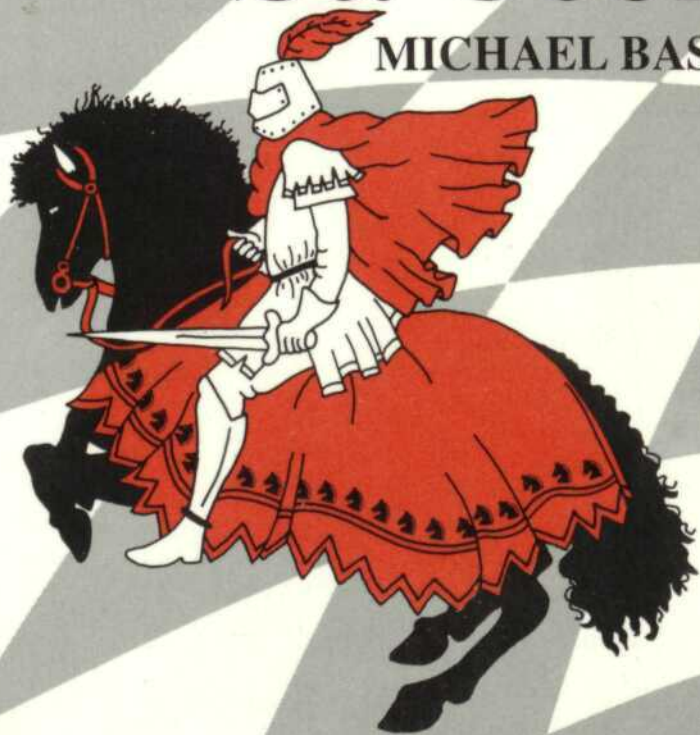


Play the St. George

MICHAEL BASMAN



Pergamon Press

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Play the St. George

MICHAEL BASMAN

International Master



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PART I

**The St. George's
Opening**

1

Introduction

The St. George's Opening begins with the moves 1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 Nf3 b5 or 1 e4 a6 2 d4 b5. I prefer to play it the first way for aesthetic reasons, but in the game Karpov-Miles, from Skara 1980, Miles played it the second way. However, in both cases the overall strategy is the same. Black develops his queen's bishop on the long diagonal, and reinforces his white square control by the moves ... a6, ... b5. He gains space on the queenside and his pieces develop to natural squares. His king remains behind a central fortress of pawns at d7, e6 and f7 and only according to need decides to castle kingside or queenside.

According to the diligent researches of Myers and Frank Skoff, the opening was played 100 years ago by an English player named Baker, and he succeeded in defeating both Steinitz and Blackburne with it in simultaneous

displays. But more of that in Appendix I. The first time the 'New St. George' was played appears to have been in the fourth (Saturday evening) round of the Islington weekend tournament, 1978, when under the appreciative eyes of Robert Bellin, the game Lexton - Basman began 1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 Nf3 b5 4 Bd3 Bb7 5 Be3 Nf6 6 Nbd2 c5 7 dxc5 Ng4 8 Bg5 f6. Unfortunately, Black lost this game, but the result of a game is never a good indication of its quality and in fact I think looking at results is just another example of human laziness which prevents them from learning to analyse games properly.

After this game I played the opening at least forty times in 1979 and was in the middle of recording the magnum 4 tape opus on ... e6, ... a6, ...b5! when news of the following occurrence broke upon a stunned British Isles.

English player beats world chess champion

By Leonard Harden.
Chess Correspondent

Tony Miles got England off to a flying start in the European chess finals in Skara, Sweden, yesterday when he beat the world champion, Anatoly Karpov, in a remarkable 46-move game where Karpov never recovered from a shock on move one. England tied 4-4 with the Soviet team, who have won all six previous European competitions.

Miles met Karpov's regular 1 P-K4 by 1 ... P-QR3, a move so rare in chess theory that it has no recognised name. Karpov floundered for a plan, lost first the initiative and then a pawn within 25 moves. Miles got the pair of bishops on an open board and punched home his advantage with powerful play until the pressure forced the world champion to concede a second pawn just before a d j o u r n m e n t . Overnight analysis convinced Karpov that he was helpless against the advance to queen of Miles' extra pawns and he conceded without resumption.

Miles's win was only the second this century by a British player against a reigning world champion and the first since Penrose beat Tal at the

1960 Leipzig Olympics. Britain's No. 1 has met Karpov seven times previously with the meagre haul of two draws in the 1977 BBC Master Game — and five defeats.

He decided on 1 ... P-QR3 to counter Karpov's massive book knowledge and after analysis at home at Birmingham. A very similar stratagem switching black's first and second moves has been used by the British expert Michael **B**asman on the Cutty Sark Congress circuit. But English team members said last night that the pawn push should be named...

Reprinted from *Guardian*
report January 1980 by
Leonard Barden, Chess
correspondent

I reproduce Miles's account from the *New Statesman* column of January 1980, with kind permission of the newspaper.

"A. Karpov (USSR)-A. Miles (England), European Team Championship, January 1980

1 e4

Karpov is always at home in well-known theoretical lines so it is best to avoid them. A couple of years ago I had a ridiculous(?) idea of an all-purpose defence to anything but as yet had not found a suitable opponent to test it on. Now, I decided, was as good a time as any.

1 a6!?

2 d4 b5

By this time the spectators' laughing was becoming embarrassing.

3 Nf3 Bb7

It's only 1 ... b6 with a bit more space really!?

4 Bd3 Nf6

5 Qe2 e6

6 a4 c5!?

7 dc

If 7 e5 c4 is unclear.

7 ... Bxc5

8 Nbd2 b4

9 e5 Nd5

10 Ne4 Be7

11 0-0

I expected Bg5.

11 ... Nc6

12 Bd2

Now if Bg5 f6 and a quick 0-0-0.

12 ... Qc7

13 c4 bc

14 Nxc3 Nxc3

15 Bxc3 Nb4

16 Bxb4 Bxb4

17 Rac1 Qb6

18 Be4 0-0

Black has a perfectly reasonable position. Now White tries to force matters prematurely.

19 Ng5 h6

20 Bh7+!? Kh8

21 Bb1 Be7

22 Ne4 Rac8

23 Qd3?

Presumably an oversight. The battery looks threatening but never gets time to operate.

23 ... Rxc1

24 Rxc1 Qxb2

25 Re1

25 Rc7 was the alternative but even then Black has a wide choice of strong continuations.

25 ... Qxe5

26 Qxd7 Bb4

27 Re3 Qd5

Forcing a winning ending. The rest is technique.

28 Qxd5 Bxd5

29 Nc3 Rc8

30 Ne2 g5

31 h4 Kg7

32 hg hg

33 Bd3 a5

34 Rg3	Kf6
35 Rg4	Bd6
36 Kf1	Be5
37 Ke1	Rh8
38 f4	gf
39 Nxf4	Bc6
40 Ne2	Rh1 +
41 Kd2	Rh2
42 g3	Bf3
43 Rg8	Rg2
44 Ke1	Bxe2
45 Bxe2	Rxg3
46 Ra8	

I now sealed ... Bc7 but Karpov resigned without resuming."

After the game there arose some quarrels over naming. The English team, anxious to avoid any association with its erstwhile member, but afraid to take the final step in calling the opening 'Miles's Defence', came up with the ludicrous title of 'Birmingham Defence'. Could anyone have thought of a worse name?! Even Miles's suggestion 'Bull Ring Defence'* was superior, but this was quashed as too esoteric.

I do not particularly like naming openings, any more than I like scrawling my name over the books that I buy — but I like the name of St. George, which shows on the one hand that this defence was developed by English players — and

*For the benefit of our foreign readers, the 'Bull Ring' is the name of the shopping centre in Birmingham, in addition to the more well-known meaning—Ed.

on the other that it was used in heroic rearguard circumstances. St. George, to my knowledge, only killed one dragon and Miles has only beaten Karpov once.

By a nice coincidence, Miles's birthday is on April 23rd.

Theoretically, how did this opening manage to arise independently in the minds of two players, without any discussion between either? (there is no truth in the idea that I briefed Miles for his game against Karpov).

The reason goes back to 1975, when the English Defence (1 c4 b6) was struggling for rebirth and many English Masters were also trying out Owen's Defence again (1 e4 b6). I played this defence many times in 1974-76 and suggested it to Miles, who jubilantly smashed up David Goodman in 18 moves with it.

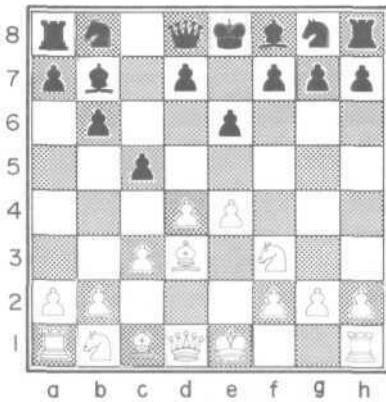
Later we thought of producing a cassette and Miles wrote half of it before it ground to a halt. He found no real counter play for Black if White played a quite simple and innocuous looking line; and there was even danger for Black being gradually pushed off the board.

The game Franklin-Miles from Lara 1975 was the real death knell to the variation; in a contest where Miles, already half a G M, should have been odds on winner, he struggled pitifully and went out whimpering. In fact, he lost two games in that tournament, in a

period when he was a weekend tournament 'killer'. (He has since graduated to international Swisses for his major successes.)

Let's have a look at this opening - the Owen's Defence.

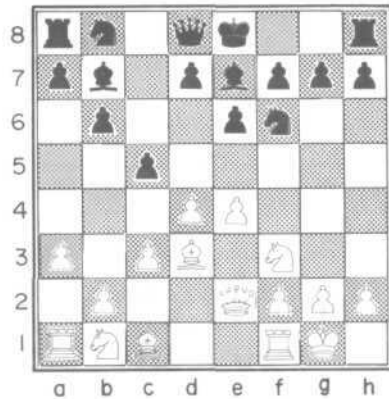
1 e4 b6 2 d4 Bb7 3 Bd3 e6
4 Nf3 c5 5 c3



The mark of White's system. White has had no difficulty in setting up his classical pawn centre and it looks as if he will have no difficulty in defending it. The question now remains — will Black be able to develop normally himself, despite the obvious cramping effect of White's central pawns. After all, the Pirc and Modern Defences have successfully combatted the double pawn centre before.

A few more moves.

5 ... Nf6 6 Qe2 Be7 7 0-0 Nc6
8 a3



Now Black begins to feel insecure. If he continues 8 ... Qc7 - the natural continuation — he runs into 9 e5 Nd5 10 c4 and his poor knight at d5 is trapped!

How subtle of White to play 6 Qe2 and not 6 Nbd2 to guard his e-pawn, because now f4 is unavailable to the black knight. How subtle to play 8 a3, which not only threatens expansion with b4, but also takes away the square b4 from the knight at d5.

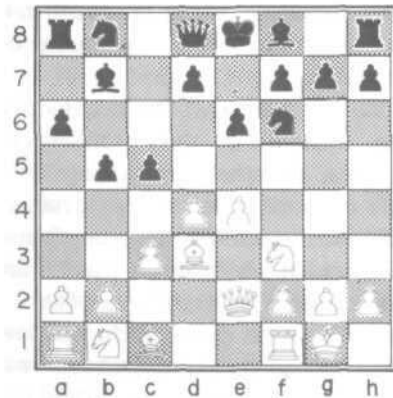
We can see that the problem of the system is the problem of knights, and their positioning of f6 and c6, which makes them vulnerable to the sudden thrusts e5 and d5. Incidentally, though 1 e4 b6 fell into disuse after experiences like the Franklin-Miles game, I do not feel such a logical system can be bad, and have made some suggested improvements in Appendix II.

Now we go on to Chapter 2.

2

Theory of the System

From the previous chapter it can be readily seen why the idea of the moves ... a6 and ... b5 should arise, because the pawns on those squares safeguard the position of the knight at d5 by restraining the move c4 by White.



This automatically means that the black knight on f6 feels that much

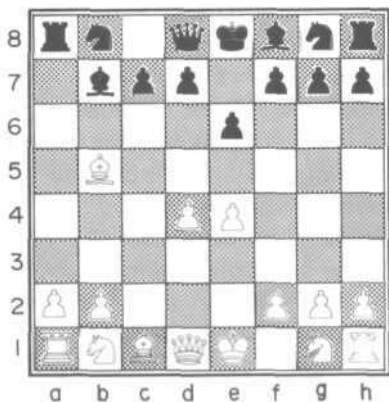
more at home, because the move e5 would no longer presage a pawn avalanche down the central files, driving Black's pieces back to base.

The position shown in the diagram above is just one which might arise from St. George's Opening, and, as you can see, there is only a slight difference to the 1 ... b6 opening in that Black's pawns are at a6/b5.

Continuing this logical train of thought, we return to base to look for improvements for White.

Starting with 1 e4 e6 2 d4 **a6** White asks himself "If d5 is such an important square for Black, and if Black is trying to play ... b5 and place his bishop on the long diagonal, why don't we take away this square immediately by playing 3 c4, and perhaps we can then play d5 and completely smother the poor black bishop."

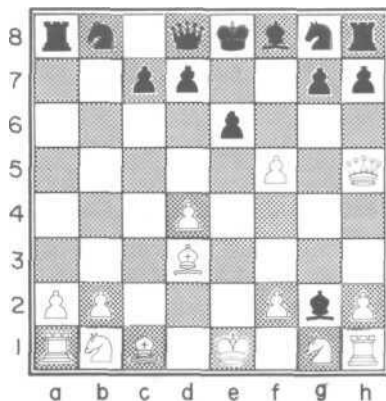
Thus arises one of the most exciting lines of the St. George Defence - the Three Pawns attack. In order to contest d5 and the white squares Black has no choice but to sacrifice a pawn by 3... b5! And after that 4 cxb5 axb5 5 Bxb5 Bb7 we ask ourselves — what has Black got for his pawn?



The answer is, a good deal. The points e4 and g2 are now tender weak spots in the white camp and Black is ready to assail them with moves like ... f5 and ... Nf6. What usually happens, in the most critical line, is that White sacrifices a rook but almost assassinates the black king — almost.

From the diagram White plays 6 Bd3 to guard the e-pawn — the bishop is anyway misplaced at b5 -

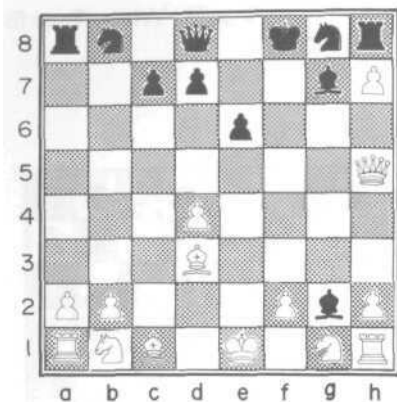
Black replies 6... f5; White 7 exf5 Bxg2 8 Qh5+.



We see now why White delayed the moves — which he could have interpolated w Nc3 b Bb4, because in that case Black would now have the square f8 for his king.

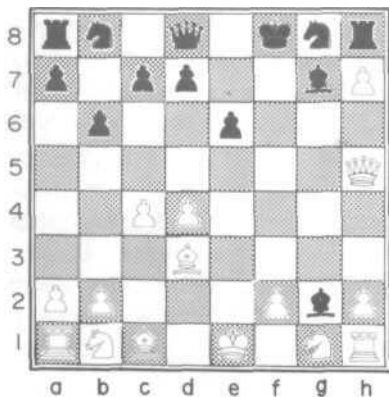
Now, however, there is only one move — which looks like suicide - and that is 8 ... g6 9 fxg6. Black has here only one move. And it isn't 9 ... Nf6 because with 10 g7+ Nxh5 11 gxh8 = Q White regains his queen with an attack to boot. Black's only move is 9 ... Bg7 stopping g7 discovered check.

This doesn't seem to help much. 10 gxh7+ Kf8. Worse seems to follow because White can now capture on g8 with check.



At this point I must diverge, but not into an appendix — and state that the sort of play that arises here is well known in the sister systems of the English Defence (1 c4 b6) and Owen's Defence (1 e4 b6).

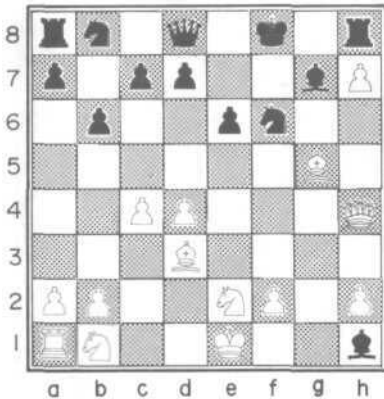
For reasons of clarity we shall trace the history of the famous English Defence. After 1 c4 b6 2 d4 e6 3 e4 Bb7 4 Bd3 f5 5 exf5 Bxg2 (White's rook is now a goner) 6 Qh5+ g6 7 fxg6 Bg7 8 gxh7 + Kf8.



We now reach an identical position to the previous one — except for the queenside pawn configuration — and for a long time nobody ever thought of playing anything but 9 hxg8 = Q+ Kxg8. What could be better than winning a piece with check? But eventually it dawned that despite this White was still going to end up the exchange down after 10 Qg4 Bxh1, and his stripping away of the pawns from Black's king did not give him enough compensation for this material loss. Besides this, Black obtained rapid play himself by moves like ... Nc6 (attacking d4) and Q-f8-f6 or Q-e8-h5. Black's bishop at g7 proved a powerhouse in both defence and attack, and of course endgames, with an extra exchange always favoured Black.

Then along came Browne (Walter Browne) and in a game against our favourite whipping boy, Tony Miles, he produced a full rook sacrifice. From the last diagram (got it?) he ignored the juicy morsel at g8 and simply brought his knight from g1 to e2. 9 Ne2. Black immediately saves his knight with tempo! (which shows what an inordinately difficult move 9 Ne2 is to find) by playing

9... Nf6 10 Qh4 Bxh1 11 Bg5.



White hasn't even got any direct threats here — he is just content to tie Black up with his pawn at h7 trapping the black rook, and his queen and bishop battery tying Black's pieces to the defence of f6.

Miles did not manage to untie himself and was demolished in this game in about 20 moves -- and those moves were:

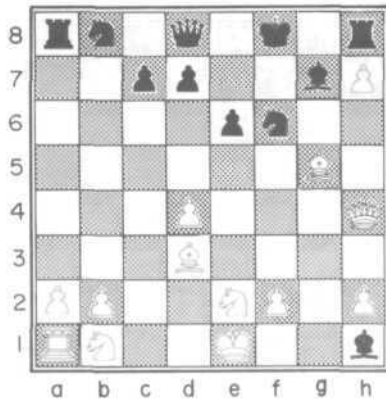
11 ... Nc6 12 Nf4 Kf7 13 Bg6+ Ke7 14 Nh5 (putting the screws on f6).



14... Qf8 15 Nd2 e5 16 0-0-0 Nxd4 17 Rxh1 Ne6 18 f4 (brilliantly opening the f-file) **d6 19 Ne4** (another one attacks f6) and the game did not last long.

Subsequent analysis showed that Miles's 12 ... Kf7 had not been correct, and then it was found that 12 Nf4 by Browne was wrong as well ... so the argument continues. The present last word can be found on Otto Hardy's cassette, 'The English Defence for the Eighties'.

Now we shall return to the St. George. In that opening if White plays the sort of line that Browne used against Miles, then Black has better resources.



For example, if we reach this position, and it is Black to play, he can always try something like ... Ra5 x bishop at g5 to break the pin on his knight, or something cool like ... Nc6-b4-d5 to defend f6 if he feels more confident.

What of the Owen's Defence? Well that line of it died a definite death at the hands of a Russian analyst. White's rook sacrifice was even more powerful than in the English Defence, mainly because Black had not played ... e6, and could not bring his queen to e7 in certain critical variations.

Here is one.

1 e4 b6 2 d4 Bb7 3 Bd3 f5 (if this doesn't work try ... e6 next time).

4 exf5 Bxg2 5 Qh5+ g6 6 fxe6 Bg7 7 gxh7+ Kf8.



There is no need to go to h4 anymore — there's nothing to pin. Now Black has his pick of White's pieces at f3 or h1, but whichever he chooses. White uses the other to build up a mating attack.

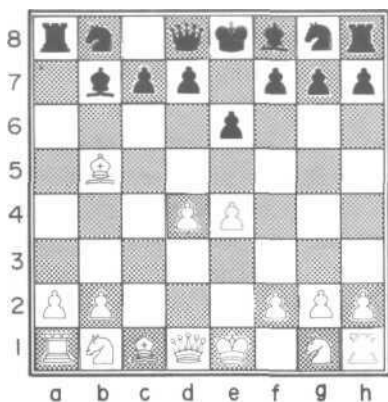
Note carefully how he does it — I suggest you try and win for White in the event of both 9 ... Bxh1 and 9 ... Bxf3 and then turn to the end of the chapter for the correct analysis.

For completeness, we'll mention that White does not need to go into the rook sacrifice line against the St. George or even against the English Defence. He can try to hold his centre with the move f3 at various points. This usually has the effect of conferring the initiative on Black.

For example, after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 c4 b5 4 cxb5 axb5 5 Bxb5 Bb7.



Seen it before? Note the different pawns — particularly the one at e7. 8 Nf3!! Nf6 9 Qg6!! Stupendous.



At this point White can play 6 f3, which messes up his natural kingside development (the knight cannot go to f3) and I usually play 6 ... Qh4+ here, either to persuade White to further weaken the long diagonal by 7 g3, Qh5 or to move his king with 7 Kf1.

Back to the diagram, White can play 6 Bd3 f5 and now 7 Qe2 Nf6

8 Nc3 Bb4 9 f3 at which point Black can simply develop with moves like ... O-O, ... Nc6 or fling into the attack with ... c5 and ... Qa5.

Relevant material on the ins and outs of these lines can be found on the cassettes by Keene and Hardy on the English Defence and the St. George cassette, but as they do not pose grave theoretical problems to Black, I will not deal with them here. ...

In the position after 9 Qg6, the main lines are:

9 ... Bxh1 10 Bh6! Rxh7
 11 Ng5!
 9 ... Bxf3 10 Rg1! Rxh7 11 Qg3!
 Be4 12 Bxe4 Nxe4 12 Qf3+ Kg8
 14 Qxe4 with the better game.

3

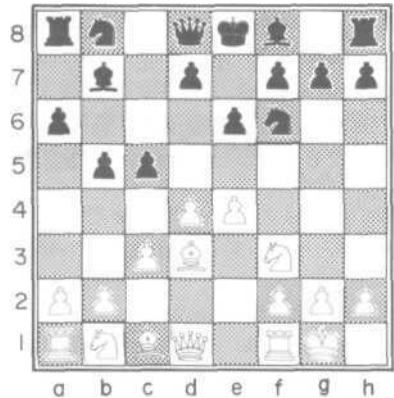
The Quieter Attempt at Refutation

White builds a two pawn centre, supports it, and castles.

White's development is so beautifully economical and harmonious in this line that we wonder how Black can bother to fight against it. But in chess there is room for everyone. It is one thing to set up a position; another to maintain and advance it. Black's position takes longer to set up, but because of this he can choose more carefully his plans, knowing already that a certain, fixed configuration opposes him.

We shall study the MAIN LINE.

Play 1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 Nf3 b5
4 Bd3 c5 5 c3 Bb7 6 0-0 **Nf6**.

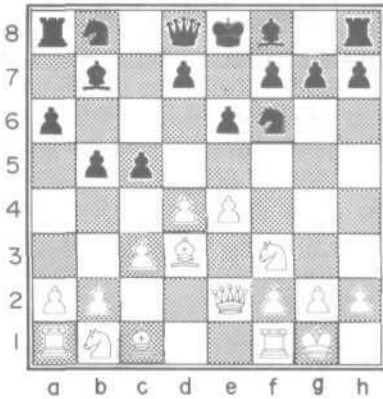


Here White has several ways to defend his e-pawn — with 7 Nbd2, 7 Re1, 7 Qe2. And other moves such as 7Bg5(?), h6 8 Bxf6 Qxf6 9 Nbd2 Qd8 and 7 e5(?) Nd5 which

help Black by clarifying the situation.

We shall look at the two most common moves, 7 Qe2 and 7 Re1.

7 Qe2. This has its own characteristics. One is that it may help a4 to happen because White's queen and bishop are lined up against the black pawns at b5 and a6. Another is that though the queen is not exposed along the e-file, she may be attacked in some positions by Nd5-f4, or the move ... g5-g4xf3 sometimes becomes possible because the pawn at f3 would gain a tempo by attack on the queen.



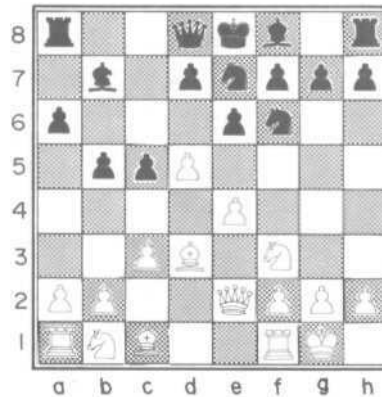
What is Black's plan to be here? An orthodox idea might be 7 ... Be7 and later ... 0-0, though Black must keep an eye open for greek gift sacrifices by w dxc5 Bxc5/w e5 Nd5/w Bxh7+ Kxh7 w Ng5+ etc. He can do this by keeping an eye on g5 by playing ... h6.

Black can choose to play more flexibly and develop more pieces before committing his king. Ideas like ... Be7, ... h6, ... g5 have been tried with success on the kingside, and on the queenside — Nc6 and Qb6.

In an early game with Bednarski (International Master) I tried 7 ... Be7 here but was not happy after the reply 8 a4! because if Black now answers 8 ... b4 9 e5 Nd5 10 c4! (that poor knight) 9 ... Nc7 and Black's knight is consigned to oblivion.

Later on I noticed that 7 ... Be7 was not necessary, and I could play 7 ... Nc6 straight away, without fearing 8 d5. I began to play 7 ... Nc6 and eventually a few elephants came around to fall into the trap.

8 d5?! **Ne7!** (Not of course 8 ... exd5 9 exd5+ Ne7 8 d6 winning a piece).



Black has carefully calculated that his knight — this time the queen's knight — though being chased will land in a good position, and that White has not the development to maintain his pawn on rush.

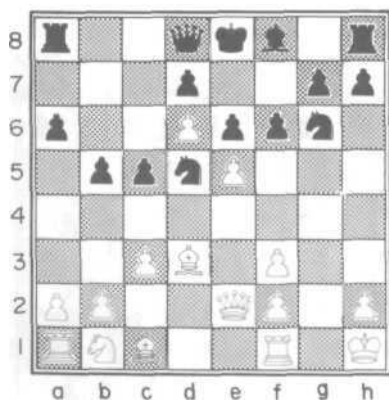
9 d6 Ng6 10 e5 Bxf3!

The point. White must now recapture with the pawn, because recapturing with the queen allows 11 ... Nxe5. Note that this whole line hinges on White having played Qe2 on move 7, rather than Re1. Had the positions been with white queen at d1 and rook at e1, then White could reply to ... Bxf3 with Qxf3 maintaining his kingside intact.

11 gxf3. Now Black gains real counter play.

11 ... Nd5 **12 Kh1** (Otherwise he gets mated by ... Nf4 and ... Qg5+).

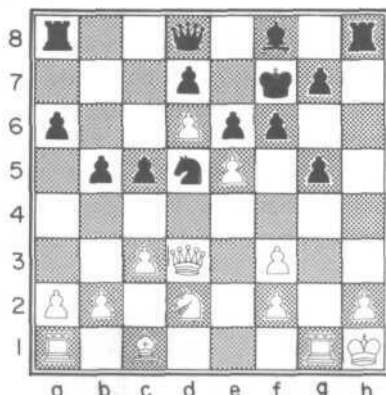
12...f6!



The thematic move. Black must not fear for his king, as long as he can break up the white pawn chain.

One of my games with the Israeli Afek now continued:

13 Bxg6+ hxg6 14 Qd3 Kf7 15 Rg1 (threatens a deadly check at g6) **g5! 16 Nd2.**



It is not clear at first sight who is attacking — Black's king is exposed on f7 and he cannot really consider 14 ... fxe5 because of the strong reply 15 Ne4. But his next move tears the bars of his cage asunder.

16 ... Bxd6!. Grr!

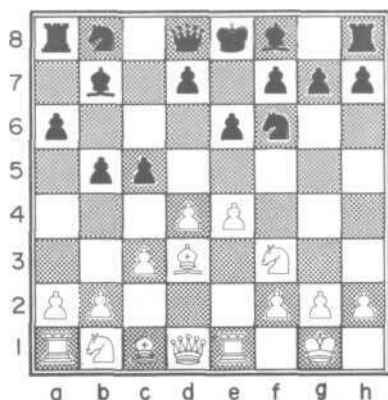
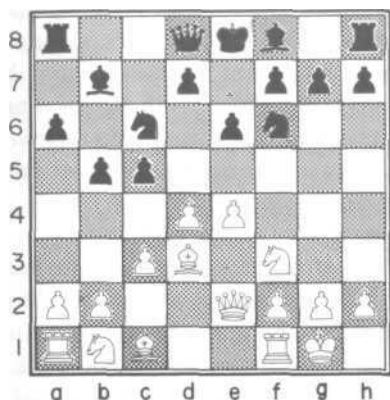
17 exd6 Rxf2+. Zop!

18 Kxf2 Qh8+. Splat!

19 Kg2 Nf4+. Crunch (Winning a queen).

Such wins are spectacular, but strictly of limited application, because White need not necessarily oblige by playing 7 Qe2 and next 8 d5.

Let us return to the position after 7 Qe2 Nc6.



Here White has a choice of alternatives, but he must be aware of Black's intention to play ... cxd4 and then ... Nb4 to exchange off the bishop at d3. In answer to this, 8 Nbd2 cxd4 9 cxd4 Nb4 10 Bb1 is not sufficient as Black can rapidly build up on the c-file before White can drive away the knight with a3.

Thus 10 ... Qc7 11 Nb3 Rc8 12 Ne1(?) Qc4 is quite okay for Black.

So earlier White would have to relinquish his double pawn centre, in the event of 8 Nbd2 cxd4 9 Nxd4 Qb6.

Another plan for White in the diagram position is 8 a3 (the ubiquitous move); but as the game in Part II shows, Sowray-Basman, Black has good counterplay.

Having looked at 7 Qe2, we'll pass on to the other major line, 7 Re1.

This immediately cuts out the reply 7... Nc6 because of the answer 8 d5; so Black must think clearly about his choice of plan here. I've always thought that 8 ... Qb6 is a good move, because I like the concealed threat to the white f2 square, left unguarded by the move 7 Re1. But this idea was severely tested in the game Nicholson-Basman from Part II of this book.

Shall we then play 7 ... Be7? Now a critical series of moves follows after 8 Nbd2 Nc6. At this juncture White chooses to advance. 9 e5 Nd5 10 dxc5 Bxc5 11 Ne4 Be7.

This sort of position is always interesting, and has similarities with Karpov-Miles. White gains little by playing 12 Nd6+ Bxd6 13 exd6, because of ... Qb8 and Qxd6. He also has to decide how he is going to defend his pawn at e5, if Black attacks it by ... Qc7, without mov-

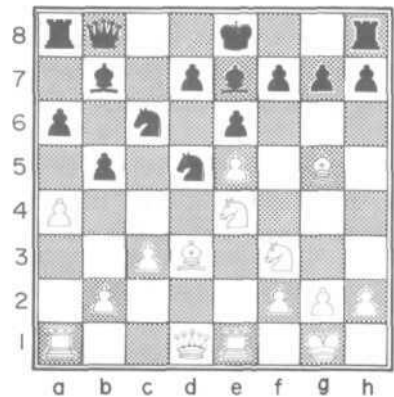
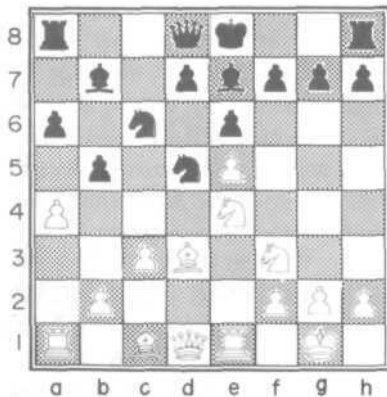
ing his knight from its good post at e4. But meanwhile it is White's move, and he can try the instant attack 12 Bg5. This has the threat of Nd6+, so Black's combination ... Nxe5 is of no use here. Equally of no use seems to be 12 ... Qc7 because of 13 Bxe7 Kxe7 14 Nd6 Nxe5 15 Nxb7 Nxf3+ 16 Qxf3 Qxb7 17 Be4. So let's turn to 12 ... f6. In the event of making this move, one has to be careful of the check on the d1-h5 diagonal.

Can White play 13 exf6 gxf6 14 Ne5 -- threat Qh5+ and Qf7 mate? No he can't — because Black has got a knight at c6, so after 14 ... Nxe5 15 Qh5+ Nf7 holds for Black.

Perhaps with these thoughts in mind the game A. Lewis-Basman, January 1980 (played on the same day as Karpov-Miles, and Lewis made a much better job of it!) continued with 12 a4! reaching our next diagram.

This sort of move sets Black problems with his knight at d5. Capturing at a4 is not so bad in that it opens the a-file, and White has pressure on an isolated a-pawn because this pawn is right at the edge of the board and can be compensated for by central play.

But after 12 ... bxa4 White has 13 c4. This is also interesting. The various exchanges of pawns on the queenside have at least ensured that Black has a secure outpost at b4, but after White's 14 Bb1, is it really much of an outpost — the knight is cut off from the centre of the board and fairly ineffectual. The actual game continued from the diagram with 12... Qb8 with a disguised defence of the b-pawn, and a counter attack on the White e-pawn. Yet White found a strong answer here in 13 Bg5!



It is unfortunate for Black that he is unable to capture at e5 now, because of the sequence 13 ... Nxe5 14 Nxe5 Qxe5 15 Nf6+ winning Black's queen for rook and knight. Black is, therefore, troubled by the threat to exchange bishops and invade on d6. He played 13 ... f6 (13 ... Bf8 looks the only alternative) **14 exf6 gxf6 15 Bh4.**

It is precisely because of this bishop retreat that White gains the advantage, because he can come with tempo to g3, attacking the black queen and then move into d6. After the further moves **15... 0-0 16 Bg3 Qd8 17 Nd6 Bxd6 18 Bxd6 Rf7** White had gained the two bishops and was set to win the pawn at b5. Though Black later cobbled a win out of this game, he was decidedly unhappy throughout.

So what can we say about the 7 Re1 line? It seems to give White chances of a lasting initiative, and Black must be careful about his choice of developing moves. We have looked at a straightforward idea, of playing first ... Be7, in order to allow ... Nc6 to happen without fearing d5 by White. But this still ran into difficulties due to the well timed blows a4! and Bg5! by White.

Of course, if one is worried by the Re1 line, it can be avoided by adopting Miles's move order of 1 ... a6 2 ... b5, as played against Karpov, because White has not time for 0-0

and Re1, and must guard his pawn with Qe2 or Nbd2, but then one passes up the chance of inveigling White into the Three Pawns attack.

So why not have another go?

Instead of 7 Re1 Be7 8 Nbd2 Nc6, try 8 ... h6 which reaches another diagram.



This is intended to prevent white pieces coming in on g5. Black is not too happy about making the move, because g6 is slightly weakened, which means that the thrust ... f7-f5 is less likely to happen.

Nonetheless, the move does have aggressive intent as well as defensive. In some lines ... g7-g5 is playable; in others, rather than block the b7 bishop's diagonal after e4-e5 Nd5, Black can retreat his knight to h7 and then leap out at g5.

If we follow White's last plan of 9 e5 Nd5 10 dxc5 (White must exchange now as otherwise Black achieves a favourable block by ... c4

or... cxd4) 10 ... Bxc5 11 Ne4 Be7. White may now continue 12 a4, thematically attacking the queen-side pawns, in order to be able to drive Black's knight away from d5 by a later c4.

Black plays 12 ... bxa4. White attains his objective by 13 c4 Nb4 14 Bb1 but now Black can play 14 ... Qc7, with an attack on the pawn at c4. White answers 15 Qe2, Black plays N8c6 16 Ng3 (to defend the king's pawn) and now after 16 ... Na5 White has once again to think of the defence of his pawn at c4.

This is one possibility, another is to argue; after 7 Re1 Be7 8 Nbd2 White has given up the chance of developing his knight at c3, so why not now exchange by 8 ... cxd4 9 cxd4 Nc6.

Both White's pawn thrusts d5 and e5 are here catered for, and there are threats of ... Nb4, but now comes 10 a3 Na5 11 b3 b4 12 a4 d5!?



The idea of playing this French Defence is based on the variation 13 e5 Ne4 when Black does not need to play one of the more passive lines of ... Nd7, but offers a pawn sacrifice to obtain white square control.

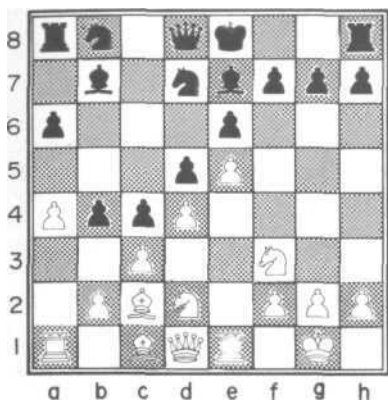
If 14 Nxe4 dxe4 15 Bxe4 Bxe4 16 Rxe4 Qd5 17 Re3 Black has full compensation for his lost pawn by castling and invading down the c- or d-file, and White's pawns at b3 and d4 are liabilities in turn.

Let us return to the position after 7 Re1 and make a few more remarks.

After 7 ... h6 White's immediate 8 d5 could be met by 8 ... c4 (otherwise White himself plays c4) 9 Bc2 Bc5 followed by ... 0-0, when White's pawn at d5 will be hard to maintain.

After 7 ... Be7, 8 a3 is possible, trying for space with b4. Black should wait for this advance to happen, then hit back with ... d5. For example, 8 ... h6 9 b4 cxd4 10 cxd4 d5. If now 11 e5 Nd7 and the knight can travel via b6 to c4, a beautiful outpost presented to Black by White's b4.

After 7 Re1 Be7 an immediate a4 is worth considering. Black can play a la Nicholson-Basman, an improved version with ... cxd4 cxd4 Nc6-b4, or move 7 ... c4 8 Bc2 b4 9 Nbd2 d5 10 e5 Nd7.



Black can then put some pressure on the queenside whilst White must play for f4-f5. I give some sample moves (not analysis): 11 Nf1 Qa5

12 Bd2 Nc6 13 Nh4 Nb6 14 f4 g6 15 g4 b3 16 Bb1 Nxa4 17 Qf3 Qb5 18 f5 gxf5 19 gxf5 0-0-0 and Black seemed to come out of that one quite well.

Sometimes Black can answer White's a4 semi-combinatively - after 7 Re1 Be7 8 Nbd2 Nc6 9 a4 Black now has the possibility of 9 ... b4 because after 10 e5 he does not need to allow his knight to be chased by Nd5 11 c4, but can play 10 ... bxc3 11 exf6 cxd2.

After that lengthy diagnosis, I shall leave my readers and wish them success in their games, whether they be against Anatoly Karpov or the man at the club.

PART II

The St. George in Tournament Play

INTRODUCTION

After its launching at the beginning of 1980, the St. George became a firm favourite among club players up and down the country. Some strong players even took it up, notably Julian Hodgson and Michael MacDonald-Ross.

This section of the book presents recent (1980-1) games, all annotated in immedia-style.

The St. George is a fairly universal defence, playable against both 1 e4 and 1 d4. Its characteristic moves are ... e6, ... a6, ... b5, followed by a queen's fianchetto.

Black usually plays ... Nf6 and if the knight is later disturbed by e5, it can settle on the outpost at d5, where the pawn at b5 prevents White from ejecting the knight by c4.

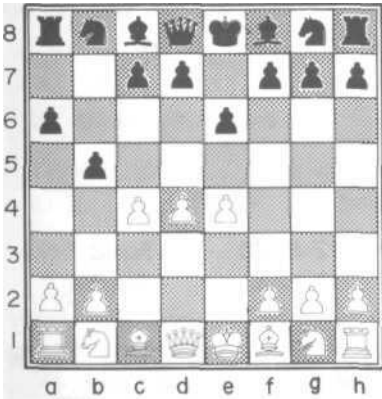
I have divided the material into several sections:

- a) the three pawns attack
- b) main line
- c) main line with White Be3
- d) Polish
- e) French
- f) Sicilian Close formations arising from 1 b4 as White.

4

The Three Pawns Attack

(1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 c4 b5)



The three pawns attack is rarely seen, partly I think because e4 players are not used to shoving up their c-pawns. Perhaps there is a better chance of getting it out of a delayed Polish (1 d4 a6 2 c4 e6 3 e4 b5), but then d4 players may not be used to moving up their e-pawns so soon.

White's intention is to overwhelm the centre with pawns, fight for the d5 square, and if necessary play d5 to stifle the bishop at b7. Against this Black must react aggressively, sacrificing a wing pawn for play along the central diagonal. An exciting game usually results with White very much on the defensive.

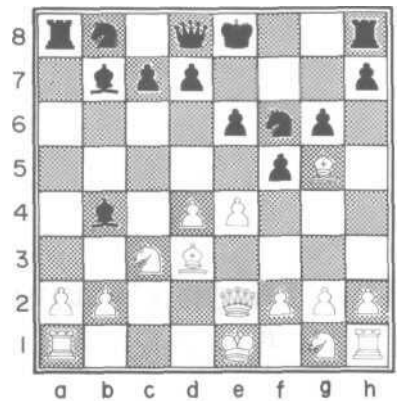
An interesting side line is where White stops short of accepting the gambit, and simply develops pieces. After 1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 c4 b5 White can play 4 Nc3. Perhaps best here is ... bxc4, assuring a central majority of pawns, because moves like 4 ... Bb7 5 d5 Bc5 6 dxe6 fxe6 7 Qxh5+ and 5 ... Bb4 6 Bf3 look rather unlikely to me.

After 4 Nc3 bxc4 5 Bxc4 Nf6 6 Nf3 (6 e5 d5) Bb7 7 Qc2 Bb4 8 Bd3 c5 is okay for Black. Needs testing.

Gambit customers in 1980 proved to be Sax (who left without paying), Pritchett (died of over consumption), and Short (won the middle game).

C. Pritchett-M. Basman, Manor Tyres, Bristol, 1980

1 e4	e6
2 d4	a6
3 c4	b5



The pressure on White's centre is now intense, but 10 f3 would have been better than this pseudo pin. Black bursts his bonds!

10 ...	fxe4
11 Bxe4	Nxe4!

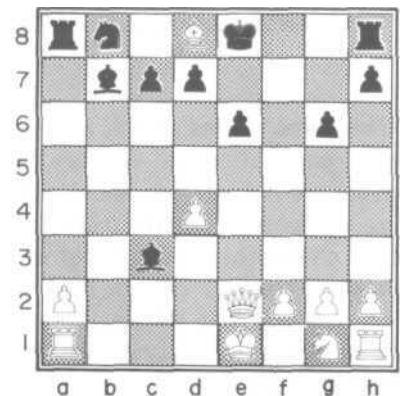
11 ... Bxe4 12 Bxf6 is also possible.

12 Bxd8	Nxc3
13 bxc3	Bxc3+



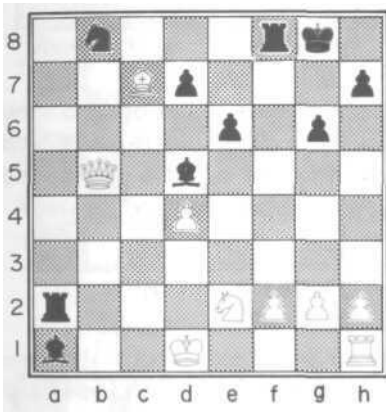
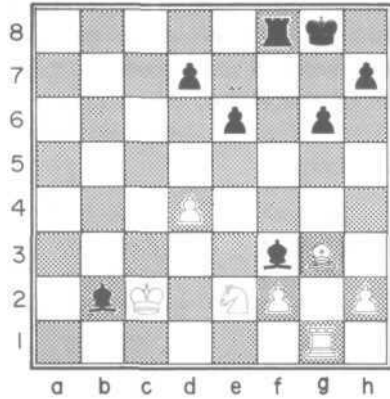
Black gambits a pawn to lure the white bishop from the defence of g2, and begins his counter attack along the central diagonal.

4 cxb5	axb5
5 Bxb5	Bb7
6 Nc3	Bb4
7 Bd3	f5
8 Qh5+	g6
9 Qe2	Nf6
10 Bg5	



White's king must now go into the centre as 14 Kf1 would lose back the queen after ... Ba6.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 14 Kd1 | Bxa1 |
| 15 Qb5 | Bd5 |
| 16 Bxc7 | 0-0 |
| 17 Ne2 | Rxa2 |

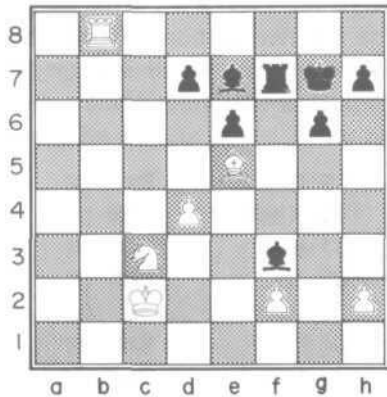


White begins to fight back. His first offer is to trade pieces into an opposite colour bishop ending.

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 22 ... | Ba3 |
| 23 Nc3 | Be7 |
| 24 Rb1 | Kg7 |
| 25 Rb8 | Rf7 |
| 26 Be5+ | |

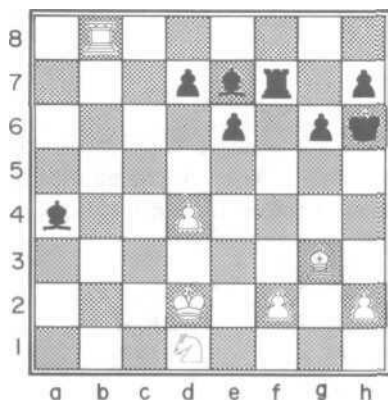
Black goes for the ending. No doubt he could have played the middle game attack more incisively.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 18 Bxb8 | Rb2 |
| 19 Qxb2 | Bxb2 |
| 20 Bg3 | Bxg2 |
| 21 Rg1 | Bf3 |
| 22 Kc2! | |



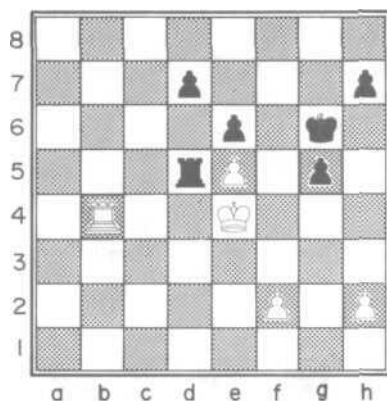
White continues to try for piece exchanges. He hopes to get to a finale with all pawns on the same side of the board, when his pawn deficit will not matter. But Black holds back.

26 ...	Kh6
27 Bg3	Bc6
28 Nd1!	Ba4+
29 Kd2	



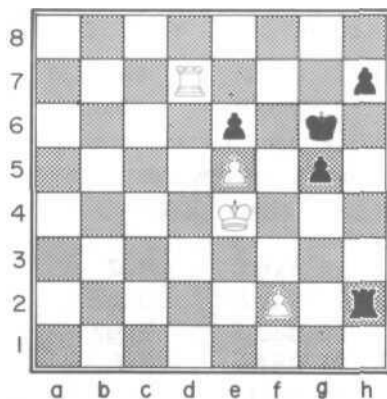
The troublesome knight must be eliminated, even if it means parting with the two bishops. Now Black reactivates his remaining pieces, and puts pressure on White's weak pawns.

29 ...	Bxd1
30 Kxd1	Rf5!
31 Ke2	Bf6
32 Ke3	Rd5
33 Rb4	g5
34 Ke4	Kg6
35 Be5	Bxe5
36 dxe5	



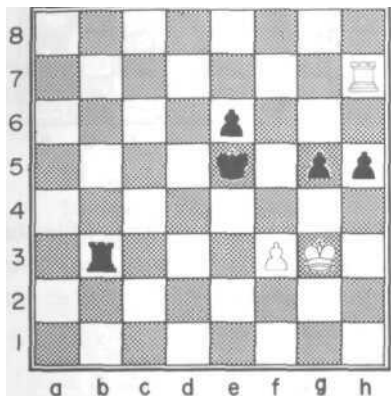
Bishops have come off and now Black abandons his d-pawn and goes after the white h-pawn. The first passed pawn will be created.

36 ...	Rd1
37 Rb7	Rh1
38 Rxd7	Rxh2



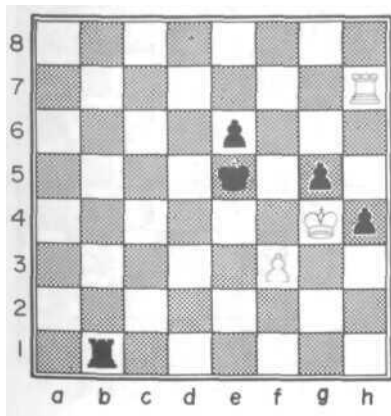
Now if White goes for the black e-pawn with 39 Re7, Black drives him back with ... Rh4+ and ... Kf5, swallowing White's e-pawn.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 39 Kf3 | h5 |
| 40 Kg3 | Rh4 |
| 41 f3 | Rb4 |
| 42 Re7 | Kf5 |
| 43 Rg7 | Rb3 |
| 44 Rf7+ | Kxe5 |
| 45 Rh7 | |



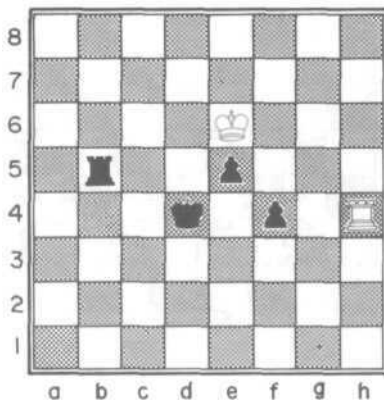
Has patient defence been rewarded? It looks like he will capture the stray h-pawn. But Black is ready with the dampener.

- | | |
|--------|------|
| 45 ... | h4+ |
| 46 Kg4 | Rb1! |



White can eat the g-pawn, but will lose after 47 Rg1+ 48 Kxh4 Rh1+—a skewer. Or he can trap his own king by 47 Kxg5 Rg1+ 48 Kh5 h3 and the pawn queens.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 47 f4+ | gxf4 |
| 48 Rxh4 | Ke4 |
| 49 Kg5 | e5 |
| 50 Kf6 | Rb6+ |
| 51 Kg5 | Rb8 |
| 52 Kf6 | Kd4 |
| 53 Ke6 | Rb5 |



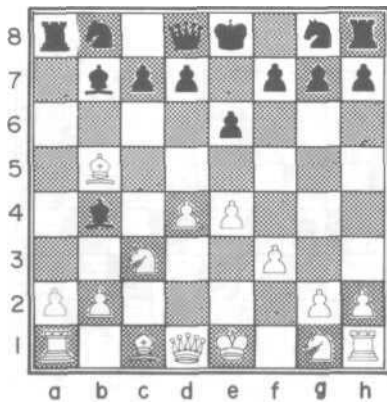
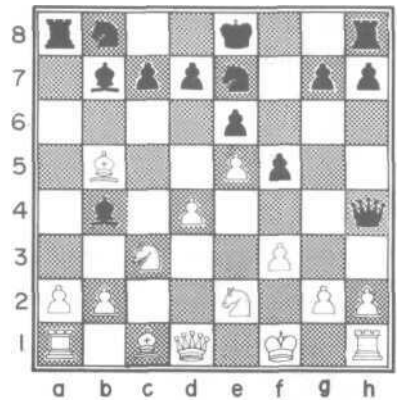
The two connected passed pawns will decide: Black is just making heavy weather of it.

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 54 Kf5 | Ke3 |
| 55 Rh1 | e4+ |
| 56 Kg4 | f3 |
| 57 Re1+ | Kd3 |
| 58 Kf4 | f2 |
| 59 Ra1 | e3 |

White resigns.

N. Short-M. Basman, Manchester, 1980 (June)

1 e4	e6
2 d4	a6
3 c4	b5
4 cxb5	axb5
5 Bxb5	Bb7
6 Nc3	Bb4
7 f3	



Either White lets the f-file be opened or he opens the long diagonal himself. White choses the lesser evil.

10 ... g5

Tally ho!

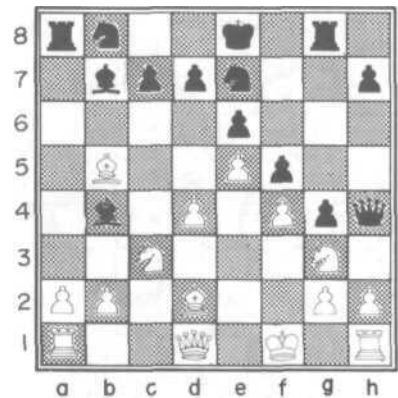
11 Bd2	g4
12 f4	Rg8
13 Ng3	

White sticks stolidly to his extra pawn at the expense of hampered kingside development.

7 ... Qh4+

Black exposes the queen to either weaken the long diagonal or disturb the king.

8 Kf1	Ne7
9 Nge2	f5
10 e5	

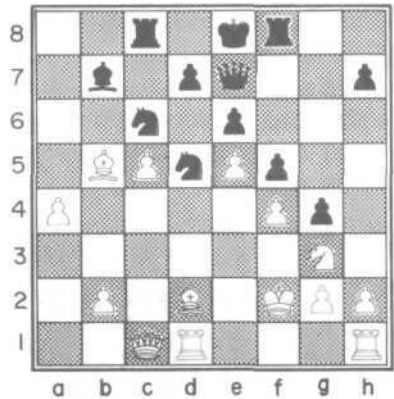


Black's honeymoon on the kingside is over and he is left with disjointed pieces. After the game I decided that 10 ... 0-0 followed by queenside play was better.

13 ... c5
 14 Na4!?

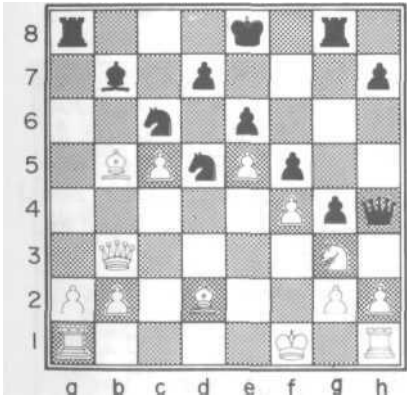
Short takes a risk, as this could have been answered by 14 ... Ra5! Better was 14 Nce2 with advantage.

14 ... Nd5?
 15 Nxc5 Bxc5
 16 dxc5 Nc6
 17 Qb3



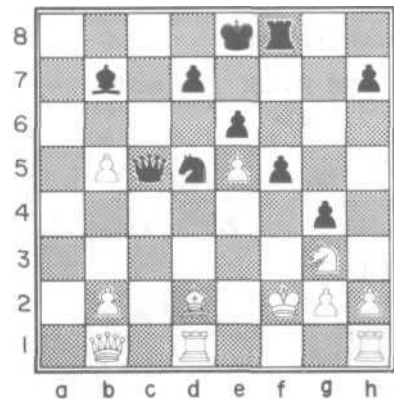
Black is desperate. He can't even prevent White's b4 because of... Ncxb4, Bxb4 Nxb4, Bxd7 +, exploiting the concealed weakness at d7.

22 ... Nxe5!?
 23 fxe5 Rxc5
 24 Qb1 Rxb5
 25 axb5 Qc5 +



Black has nothing to show for a two pawn deficit. He is threatened by 18 Nxf5! as well.

17 ... Rf8
 18 Rd1 Qe7
 19 Qc4 Na5
 20 Qc1 Nc6
 21 a4 Rc8
 22 Kf2



Black begins a furious counter attack. Unfortunately, Short rumbles that he is a rook ahead. Black is further hampered by being

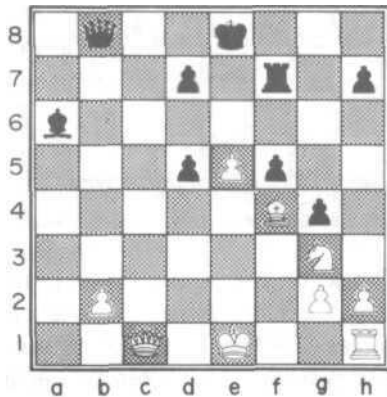
unable to play ... f4 because of Ne4.

26 Ke1	Qxb5
27 Bh6	Rf7
28 Qc1	Ba6
29 Rd2	Qb8



Hoping to force a concession from White with this attack on the e-pawn, but White blithely returns material to force a total blockade on the black squares.

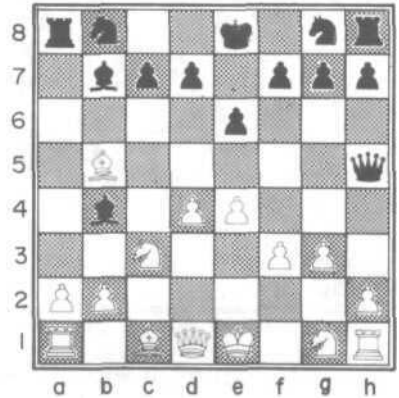
30 Rxd5!	exd5
31 Bf4	



The rest of the game was unrecorded due to Black's time trouble, but White won with his extra piece and better position.

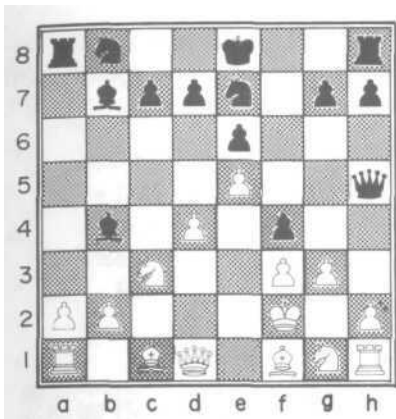
G. Sax (GM)-M. Basman, Surrey Open, 1980

1 e4	e6
2 d4	a6
3 c4	b5
4 cxb5	axb5
5 Bxb5	Bb7
6 Nc3	Bb4
7 f3	Qh4 +
8 g3	Qh5



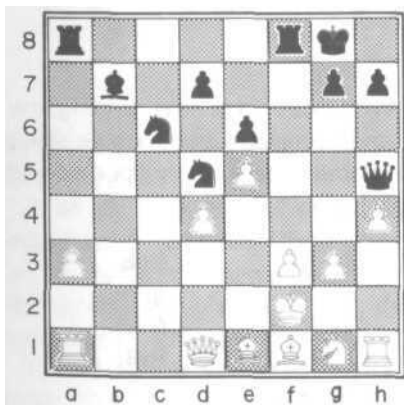
Sax decides to allow the central diagonal to be weakened, rather than move his king. But soon he decides to move his king as well!

9	Bf1	f5
10 e5		Ne7
11 Kf2		f4!



A second pawn sacrifice to open the f-file against the white king.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 12 Bxf4 | 0-0 |
| 13 h4 | c5 |
| 14 a3 | Bxc3 |
| 15 bxc3 | Nd5 |
| 16 Bd2 | cxd4 |
| 17 cxd4 | Nc6 |
| 18 Be1 | |



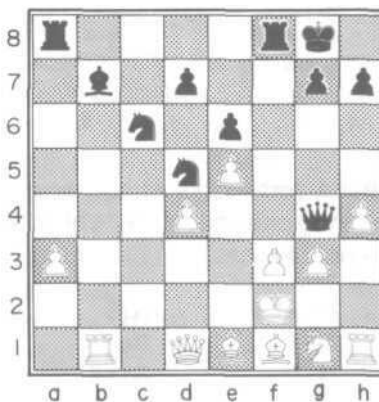
Apart from his two extra pawns White has little to be happy about in this position. An exposed king,

hampered development and several lines open to the black pieces. The black knights are also well placed and even the rook at a8 threatens to come into the attack.

18 ... Qg4

Putting pressure on the pawn at d4.

19 Rb1

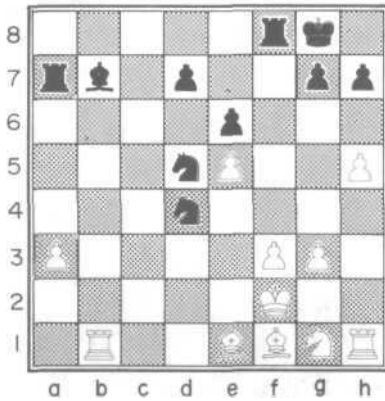


A good practical move to fluster Black, who spent a long time considering whether the piece sacrifice 19 ... Rxa3 20 Rxb7 Ne3 followed by ... Nxd4 works. Certainly the attack looks strong, with imminent explosions on the f3 square, but does it definitely win?

19 ... Ra7

Black bides his time, but if he was not going to sacrifice, a better way of continuing the attack, pointed out by Sax, was 19 ... Ba6!

20 h5! Qxd4 +
 21 Qxd4 Nxd4



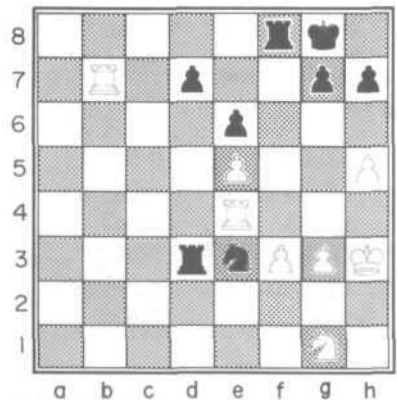
Black retains his attack even in the endgame, but now White has survival chances.

22 Rh4! Nf5
 23 Re4! Bc6
 24 Bb5 Bxb5
 25 Rxb5 Rxa3
 26 Rb7



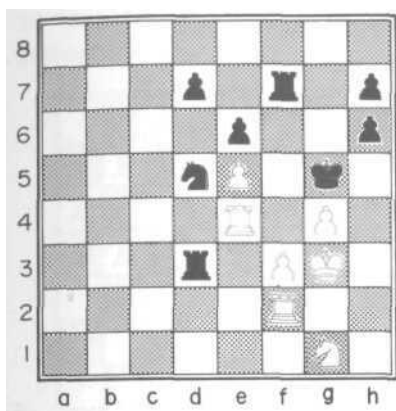
Material equilibrium is re-established and now the second wave of attack begins.

26 ... Nfe3
 27 Bd2 Nd1 +
 28 Kg2 N5e3+
 29 Bxe3 Nxe3 +
 30 Kh3 Rd3



With both sides now running low in that precious commodity time, the game accelerates to its destined conclusion.

31 g4 Rc8
 32 h6 gxh6
 33 Ne2 Nd5
 34 Kg3 Rf8
 35 Ng1 Rf7
 36 Rb2 Kg7
 37 Rf2 Kg6
 38 Ne2 Kg5
 39 Ng1



Black now, mentally unable to retreat, advances to his destruction.

39 ... Nf4

Chronic.

White's next move wins all Black's pieces.

40 Rxf4 Rxf4
41 Nh3+ Kg6
42 Nxf4+ Resigns

R. Granat—M. Basman, Islington, December 1981

1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 c4 b5 4 cxb5 axb5 5 Bxb5 Bb7 6 Nc3 Bb4 7 Bd3 f5 (as in Pritchett-Basman, but here Granat does not give the check; this improves his chances slightly).

8 Qe2 Nf6 9 Bg5 fxe4 10 Bxf6 exd3 11 Qh5+ g6 12 Qh4 Be7! This way Black gets an endgame

edge. 13 Bxe7 Qxe7 14 Qxe7+ Kxe7 15 d5 (15 f3 was more stubborn) exd5 16 Nf3 d4! (clears the way for the bishop to work) 17 Nxd4 Bxg2 18 Rg1 Nc6! 19 Rxg2 Nxd4 20 Kd2? He could have found a better move than that: 20 ... Nb3+ 0-1.

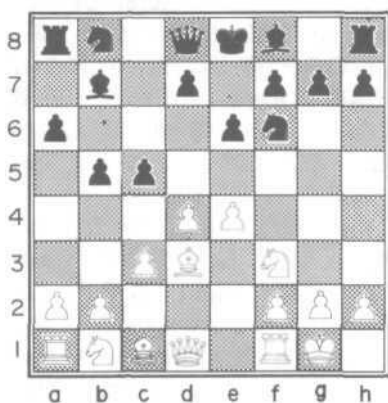
E. Formanek (I M)—M. Basman, King's Head International (London), February 1982

1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 c4 b5 4 cxb5 axb5 5 Bxb5 Bb7 6 f3 Qh4+ 7 g3 Qh5 8 Bf1 Nc6 (otherwise 9 Qb3) 9 Nc3 Bb4 10 Bg2 f5 11 e5 Na5 (to hamper White's natural development of Ne2 followed by 0-0) 12 Nh3 Ba6 13 Kf2 Ne7 14 Nf4 Qf7 15 Nd3 Bxc3 16 bxc3 Bxd3 17 Qxd3 Nb3! 18 f4 c6 19 Rb1 Rxa2+ 20 Bb2! (not 20 Kf1 Nxc1 21 Rb8+ Nc8!) 0-0 21 Rf1 Rb8 22 Kg1 Qe8 23 c4 Qc8 24 Bf3 Qa6? (Stupid. 24 ... Nc5 25 dxc5 Rxb2 is at least equal.) 25 Bc1! Qa4 26 Bd1! (White's backward bishop moves win him material.) Nxc1 27 Rxb8+ Kf7 28 Qe3! Qxc4 29 Bh5+ g6 30 Rxc1 Nd5! (Black swindles but it is not enough; the white rooks get in first.) 31 Rxc4 Nxe3 32 Rc3 Nd5 33 Rcb3! gxh5 34 R3b7 Ra1+ 35 Kf2 Ra2+ 36 Kg1 Ra1+ 37 Kf2 Ra2+ 38 Ke1 Ke7 39 Rh8 Ra1+ 40 Kd2 Ra2+ 41 Kc1 Nc3 42 Rxh7+ Kd8 1-0.

5

The Main Line

(1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 Nf3 b5 4 Bd3 c5
5 c3 Bb7 6 0-0 Nf6).



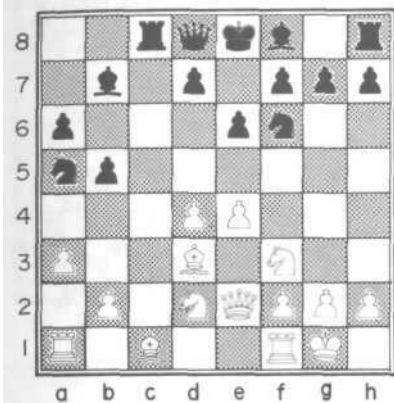
This is the typical main line position, though all games in this section will not reach it. However, it is attractive to White as he develops his king-side pieces normally and castles. He gains a two pawn centre and his pawn at d4 is supported by the pawn at c3. Nonetheless, Black has pressure in this position against both White's centre pawns (e4

by ... Nf6, ... Bb7; d4 by ... c5 [... g5!?!], ... Nc6, ... Qb6) and the black pieces also come to good developing squares. Black must be careful to develop his queen's knight at the right time, otherwise in some positions the move d5 by White is very strong. Black must also be flexible about his king, and not castle it kingside too early, otherwise he may run into a greek gift sacrifice on h7 (eg from the diagram 7 Re1 Be7 8 a3 0-0 9 e5 Nd5 10 dxc5 Bxc5 11 Bxh7+ Kxh7 12 Ng5+ Kg6 13 Qg4).

The games in this section feature several quick victories against middle range players, to show the reader how to carry out his plans against weak (BCF 160) grade opposition; for these are the players he will most frequently meet.

Two critical games against Sowray and Nicholson help the understanding of the line. In the Sowray game the continuation was 7 Qe2 Nc6 8 a3 cxd4 9 cxd4 Na5

10 Nbd2 Rc8 and Black obtained an active position.



However, 10... Rc8 may not have been the most accurate, as it deserts the guard of the pawn at a6, and White could here have caused trouble by 11 a4 (11 ... b4 12 Bxa6).

Perhaps better than 10 ... Rc8 was 10 ... Qb6, answering 11 a4 with b4, and more critically 11 b4 with ... Nc4!? 12 Bxc4 bxc4 13 Nxc4 Qb5.

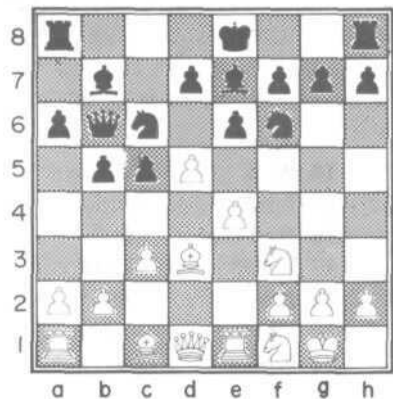
The game with Nicholson dealt a heavy blow to the continuation 7 ... Qb6 (from first diagram, after 7 Re1 Qb6). Nicholson played 8 a4! and the queen was awkwardly placed, because if Black plays here ... bxa4 or ... b4. White can later gain a tempo with Nb1-d2-c4 attacking the queen.

Possibly there will be improvements in the 7 ... Qb6 line, or perhaps the simpler 7 ... Be7 or even 7 ... h6 should be preferred. A

game C. Pritchett-J. M. Way (analysed in the *Monster Book of Audio Chess*) went 7 Re1 h6 8 Nbd2 Be7 9 e5 Nd5 10 dxc5 Bxc5 11 Ne4 Be7 12 a4 when Black could here have played 12 ... bxa4 13 Rxa4 Qc7! 14 c4 Nb4 15 Bb1 Qxc4.

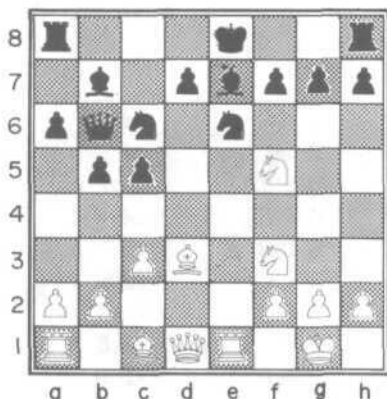
N. Bradbury-M. Basman, Borehamwood, 1980

- | | | |
|----|------|-----|
| 1 | d4 | b5 |
| 2 | e4 | a6 |
| 3 | Bd3 | Bb7 |
| 4 | Nf3 | e6 |
| 5 | 0-0 | c5 |
| 6 | c3 | Nf6 |
| 7 | Re1 | Be7 |
| 8 | Nbd2 | Nc6 |
| 9 | Nf1 | Qb6 |
| 10 | d5 | |



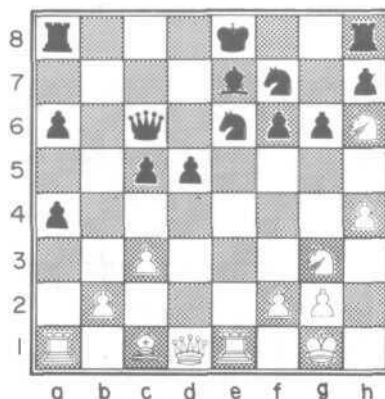
This sacrifice is always enticing, as if Black accepts he opens the e-file for the white rook. However, Black can then plug the e-file with a piece.

10 ...	exd5
11 exd5	Nxd5
12 Ng3	Nc7!
13 Nf5	Ne6



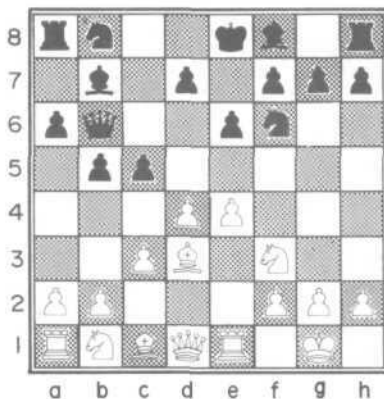
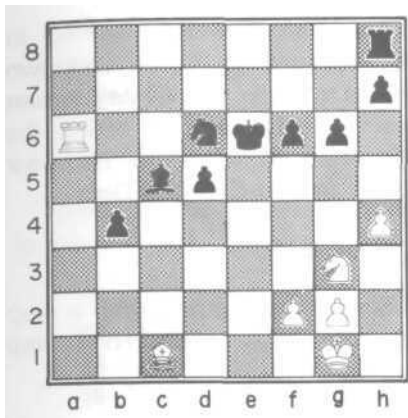
Manoeuvre completed. White's pressure down the e-file is suppressed and he thus has no compensation for the pawn loss.

14 Ng5	g6
15 Nh6	Ncd5
16 Be4	f6
17 Bxb7	Qxb7
18 Ne4	Qc6
19 a4	bxa4
20 Ng3	Nf7
21 h4	d5



Black's pawn moves ... f6 and ... d5 have weakened his defence along the e-file, but White is in no position to take advantage of this, for example by doubling rooks.

22 Qe2	Nxh6
23 Qxe6	Qxe6
24 Rxe6	Nf7
25 Rxa4	a5
26 b4	cxb4
27 cxb4	Kd7
28 Rb6	axb4
29 Rb7+	Ke6
30 Raa7	Rxa7
31 Rxa7	Bc5
32 Ra6+	Nd6



Black's king continues its gay centralization. The two extra pawns must soon decide.

33 Kf1	Rb8
34 Ke2	Rb6
35 Ra4	Bd4
36 Nf1	Ne4
White	
resigns.	

Black must be careful how he moves here. He mustn't play 7 ... Nc6 because of 8d5. So his alternatives are 7 ... Be7, to prepare ... Nc6, or 7 ... h6, to prevent a white bishop eventually arriving at g5, and the queen moves ... Qc7 or Qb6.

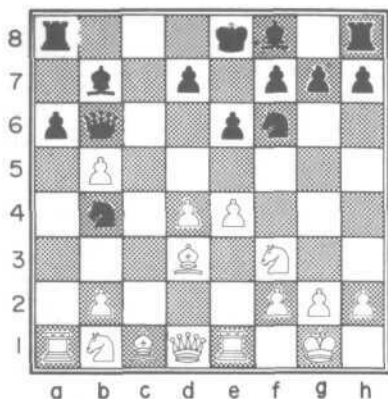
8 a4!

The sharpest. White will take advantage of the black queen by Nbd2-c4 if Black plays ... b4 or ... bxa4.

J. G. Nicholson-M. Basman,
Cambridge Open, 1980 (Ap)

1 e4	e6
2 d4	a6
3 Nf3	b5
4 Bd3	c5
5 c3	Bb7
6 0-0	Nf6
7 Re1	Qb6

8 ...	cx d4
9 cxd4	Nc6
10 axb5	Nb4!



Black produces a pawn sacrifice to hold the balance. He is prepared to exchange a side pawn to eliminate White's good bishop. If 11 bxa6 Nxd3 12 Qxd3 Rxa6 Black has adequate pressure.

11 Nc3!

Keeping up development impetus.

11 ... Nxd3
12 Qxd3 axb5
13 Rxa8+ Bxa8

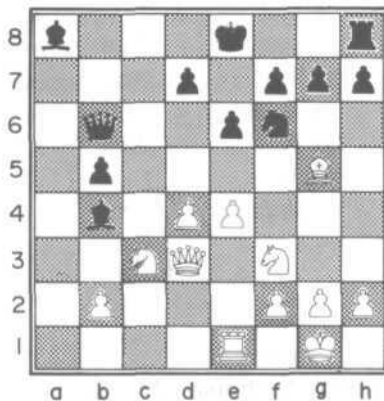


Black is now way behind in development, as it will take two moves to castle. But White does not see any advantage in taking the b-pawn as his own e-pawn is under fire. If 14 e5 b4 15 Na4 Qc6.

14 Bf4!

Simple development with a drop of poison - threat Nxb5 and Nc7+.

14 ... Bb4
15 Bg5!!



Finely played. Previously Black could have answered 14 Bg5 by ... b4, but now his bishop is in the way and Black has the niggling pressure on his knight at f6 to contend with. 15 ... h6 16 Bh4 g5 17 Bg3 is a dubious solution.

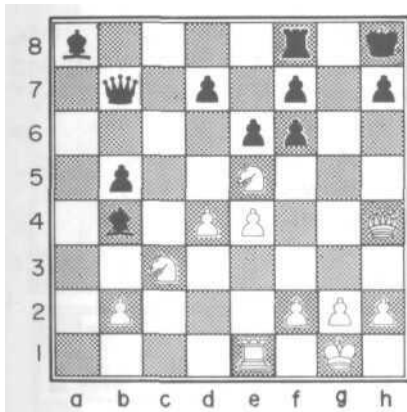
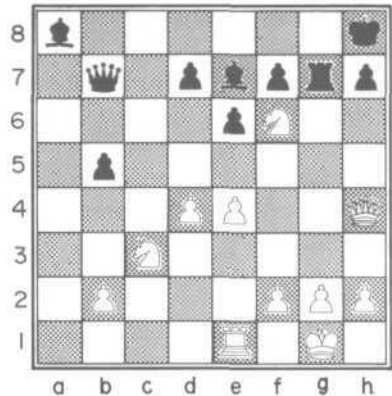
15 ... O-O

It's do or die! Black accepts a seriously weak kingside as he can see nothing else.

16 Ne5!

Threat: 17 Bxf6 and Nxd7 forking queen and rook.

16 ...	Qb7
17 Bxf6	gxf6
18 Qg3+	Kh8
19 Qh4!	



White is on top with an attack and an extra pawn. But now we see a superb demonstration of back row defence by Black.

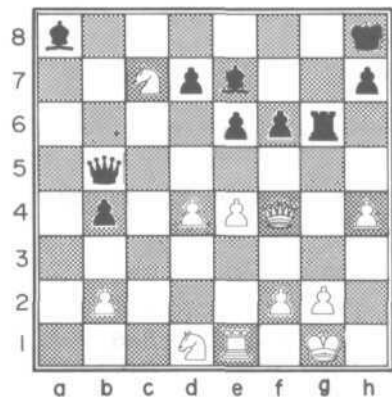
24 Qf4	b4
23 Nd1	Qb5
24 h4!	Rg6
25 Ne8	f6
26 Nc7	

White is not chickening out for a draw. He wants a mate after 19 ... fxe5 20 Qf6+ Kg8 21 Re3!

19 ...	Be7
20 Ng4	

Now Black must part with a pawn.

20 ...	Rg8
21 Nxf6	Rg7



The itinerant knight has so far caused havoc in Black's defences, but is now about to be lassoed.

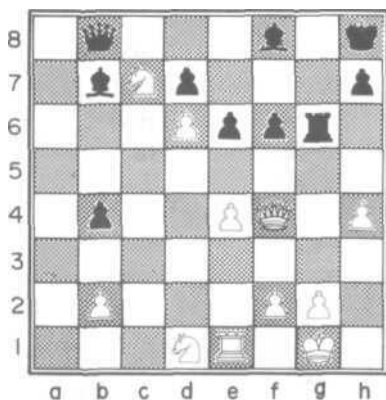
26 ... Qb8!

Intending to answer 27 Nxe6! by ... Bd6! or ... Qg8! Back row defence!

27 d5

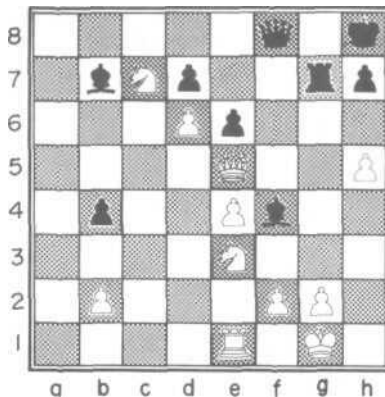
White keeps on coming but there is no threat of 28 dxe6 dxe6 29 Nxe6 because of ... Qg8, with a double attack on the knight at e6 and the pawn at g2.

27 ... Bb7
28 d6 Bf8



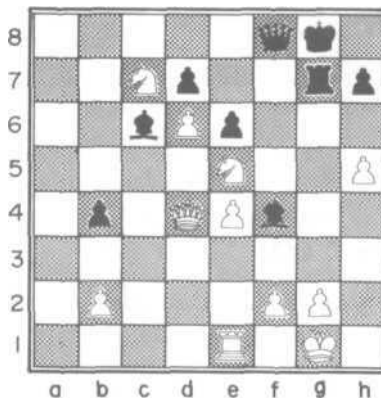
Now Black has real counter play with his active bishops.

29 h5 Bh6
30 Qf3 Rg7
31 Qxf6 Bg5
32 Qe5 Qf8
33 Ne3 Bf4



Black's counter play mounts. White's knight at c7 is cut off and the d6 pawn in danger.

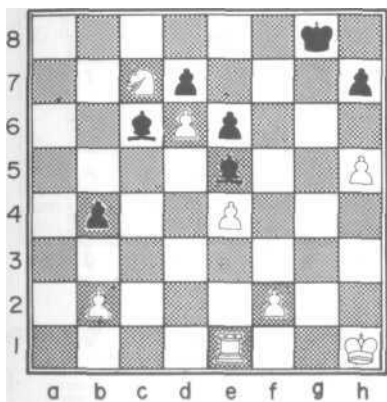
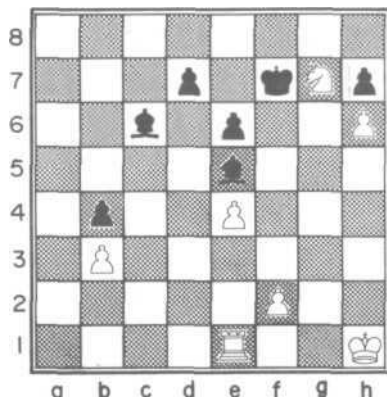
34 Qd4 Bc6
35 Nc4 Kg8
36 Ne5



White continues to cause trouble with his knights, and now hopes Black will allow one of his bishops

to be traded for the knight at e5, when he will be able to capitalize one of his extra pawns.

36 ... Rxg2+!!
 37 Kxg2 Qg7+
 38 Kh1 Qxe5
 39 Qxe5 Bxe5



A faulty exchange loses Black his good position. 43 ... Kg6 was correct. There followed a few more nonsensical moves and the players agreed a draw due to time shortage.

44 hxg7 Kxg7
 45 Kg2 Kf6
 46 f3 Ke5

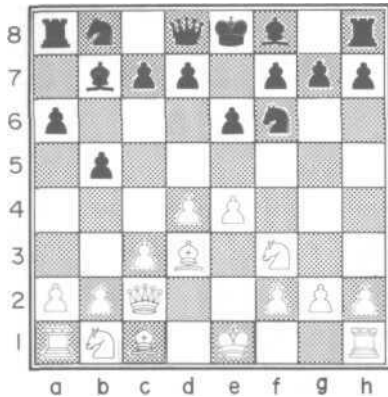
Drawn

Despite the material balance being very much in White's favour (exchange and a pawn ahead) the position is not and Black's bishops dominate. White must lose a pawn back and his knight is a pitiful short ranging crawler at the edge of the board.

40 b3 Bxd6
 41 Ne8 Be5
 42 h6 Kf7
 43 Ng7 Bxg7?

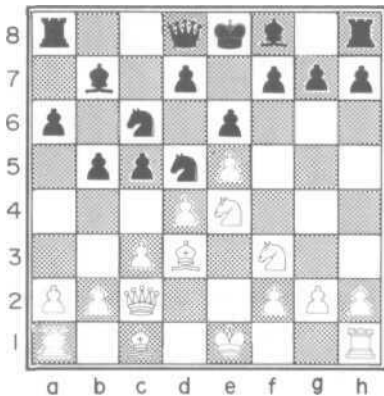
J. Molyneux-M. Basman, Manchester, April 1980

1 d4 b5
 2 e4 a6
 3 Nf3 e6
 4 c3 Bb7
 5 Bd3 Nf6
 6 Qc2



In general, this queen move cannot be good, because the queen is placed on a file which may be opened against her (the c-file).

- 6 ... c5
- 7 Nbd2 Nc6
- 8 e5 Nd5
- 9 Ne4



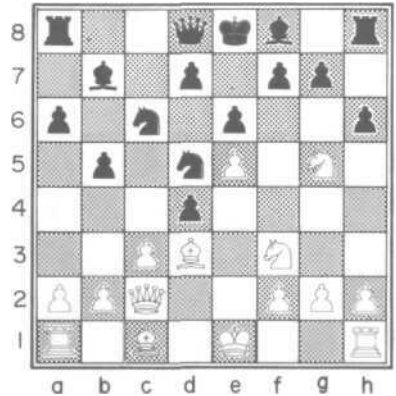
- 9 ... cxd4

Black applies the standard remedy, if White answers 10 Nxd4 Nxd4 11 cxd4 Nb4 nets Black the two bishops.

10 Neg5

White launches into a furious attack while his central structure collapses around him.

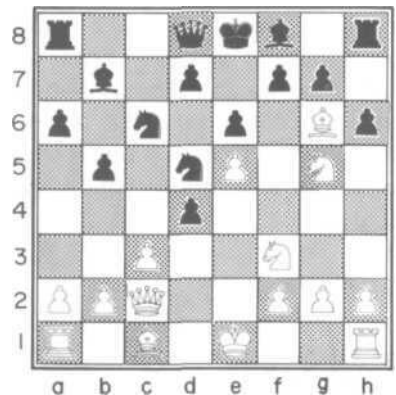
- 10 .. h6



Where are you going my pretty maid?

11 Bg6!!

Sir, she said.



But:

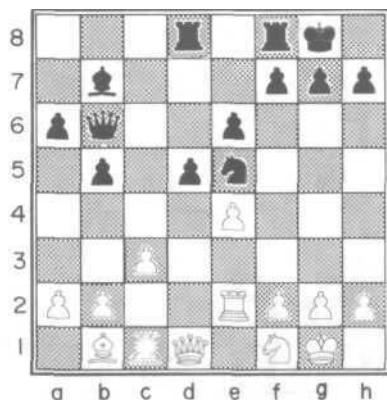
11 ...	hxg5
12 Nxg5	Nxe5
13 Bxf7+	Nxf7
14 Qg6	Qf6

White resigns

10 Be3	Bxe3
11 Rxe3	Ng4
12 Re2	Nc6
13 Nbd2	Rd8
14 Nf1	0-0
15 Rc1	Nce5
16 Nxe5	Nxe5
17 Bb1	d5!

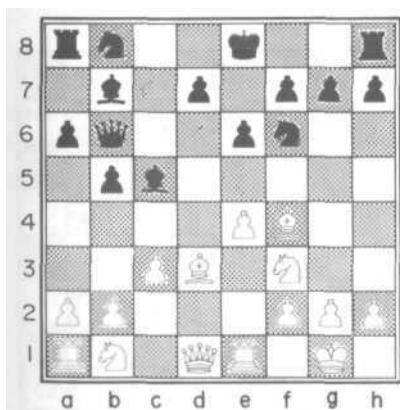
R. Abayasekera-M. Basman, Surrey, 5 April 1980

1 e4	e6
2 d4	a6
3 Bd3	b5
4 Nf3	c5
5 c3	Bb7
6 0-0	Nf6
7 Re1	Qb6
8 Bf4	Be7
9 dxc5	Bxc5

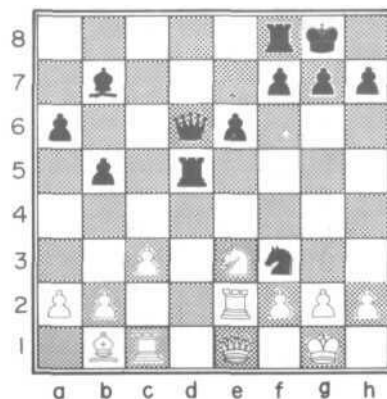


White cannot now block the position with e5, because there is a black knight in the way.

18 exd5	Rxd5
19 Qe1	Qd6
20 Ne3	Nf3 + !

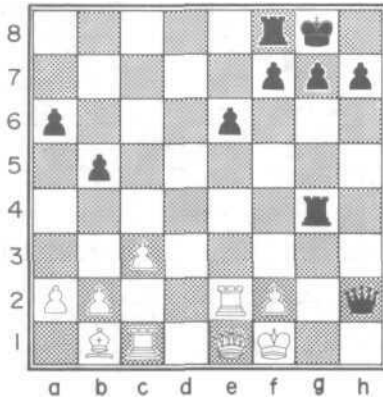


White puts up little fight to prevent Black from equalizing in the centre. Black now aims for ... d5 without allowing White to play e5.



Black's knight forks the white king and queen. If it is taken, Black attacks the exposed king.

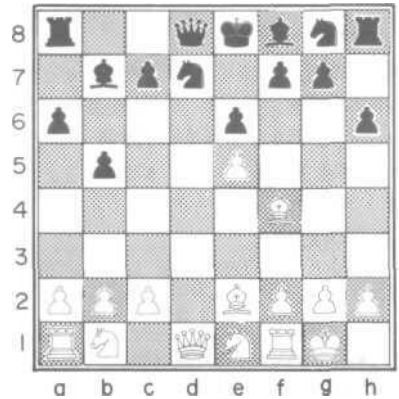
- | | | |
|----|------|-------|
| 21 | gxf3 | Rg5+ |
| 22 | Ng4 | Bxf3 |
| 23 | h3 | Bxg4 |
| 24 | hxg4 | Rxg4+ |
| 25 | Kf1 | Qh2 |



White resigns

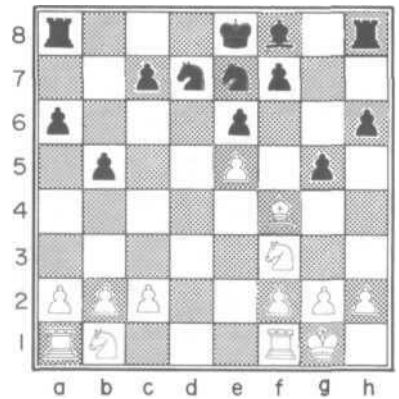
P. Vargas-M. Basman, Surrey
Open, April 1980

- | | | |
|---|------|------|
| 1 | d4 | b5 |
| 2 | e4 | a6 |
| 3 | Nf3 | e6 |
| 4 | Be2? | Bb7 |
| 5 | e5 | d6 |
| 6 | 0-0 | Nd7 |
| 7 | Bf4 | h6 |
| 8 | Ne1 | dxе5 |
| 9 | dxе5 | |



White now finds he cannot hold his advanced e-pawn. Black surrounds it in various ways.

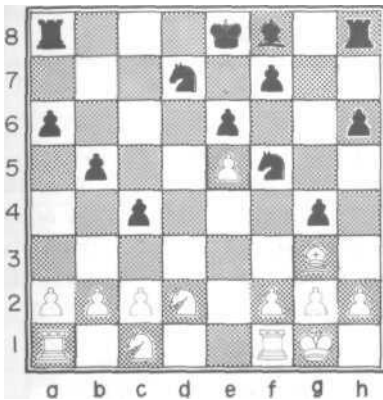
- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 9 | ... | Ne7 |
| 10 | Bf3 | Qb8 |
| 11 | Bxb7 | Qxb7 |
| 12 | Qf3 | Qxf3 |
| 13 | Nxf3 | g5 |



White's minor pieces, especially his knights, now put up a pitiful

show against Black's advancing pawns.

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 14 Bg3 | g4 |
| 15 Ne1 | Nf5 |
| 16 Nd3 | c5 |
| 17 Nd2 | c4 |
| 18 Nc1 | |

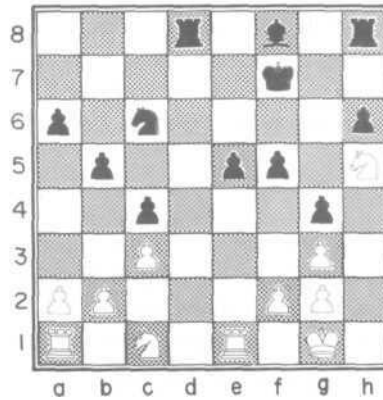


White's knights have now gone back to base several times, and Black's picks off his first material gain.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 18 ... | Nxg3 |
| 19 hxg3 | Nxe5 |
| 20 Ne4 | f5 |
| 21 Nf6+ | |

Courage!

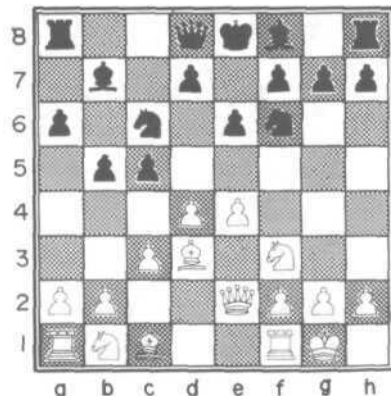
- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 21 ... | Kf7 |
| 22 Nh5 | Rd8 |
| 23 Re1 | Nc6 |
| 24 c3 | e5 |



White resigns, with one knight buried at c1, the other awaiting collection at h5 (by ... Kg6).

P. Sowray-M. Basman, Exeter, 1980

- | | |
|-------|------------|
| 1 e4 | e6 |
| 2 d4 | a6 |
| 3 Nf3 | b5 |
| 4 Bd3 | c5 |
| 5 c3 | Bb7 |
| 6 0-0 | Nf6 |
| 7 Qe2 | Nc6 |

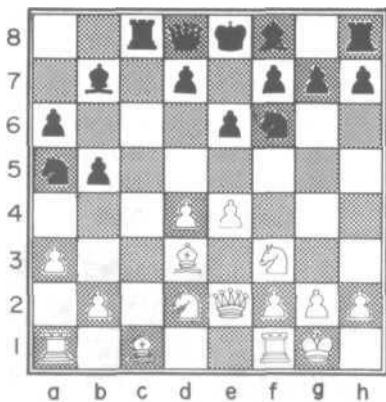


One of the main positions. Black entices 8 d5 Ne7 9 d6 but instead White chooses a quieter line, discussed on St. George tape 3.

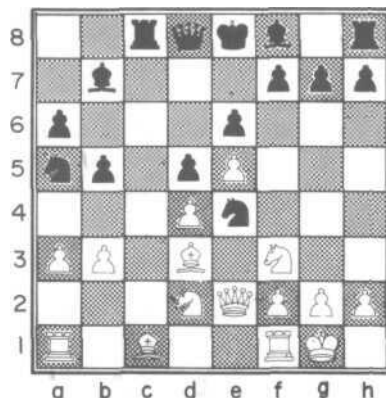
8 a3

The purpose of this is to protect the bishop at d3 by preventing ... Nb4. It also plans space gaining with 9 b4. However, Black is able to use the weakness at b3 to start a queenside counter-action.

8 ...	cx d4
9 cxd4	Na5!
10 Nbd2	Rc8



11 b3	d5
12 e5	Ne4!



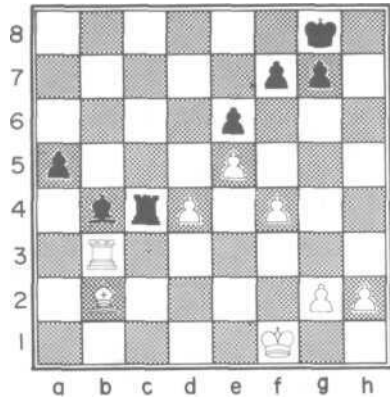
Black gets an active move in, instead of the retreat ... Nd7. He is still playing off one attack against the other, as after 13 Nxe4 dxe4 14 Bxe4 Bxe4 15 Qxe4 Black regains his pawn with ... Nxb3.

13 Bb2	Be7
14 Rac1	0-0
15 Bb1!	Qb6
16 Nxe4	dxe4
17 Rxc8	Rxc8
18 Nd2!	

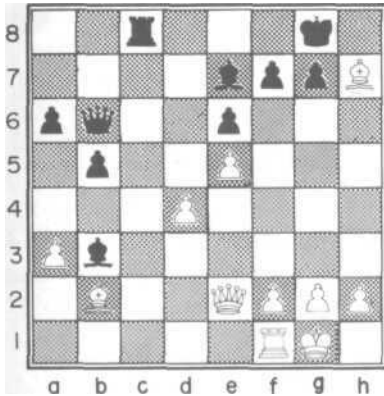


White's 15th move Bb1 was crafty. Instead of having his bishop at d3, under attack by the black pawn coming to e4, he is able to delay recapture and bring his knight to d2, where it holds the b-pawn. It looks like Black will lose a pawn after all.

18 ... **Bd5**
 19 **Bxe4** **Nxb3**
 20 **Nxb3** **Bxb3**
 21 **Bxh7+**



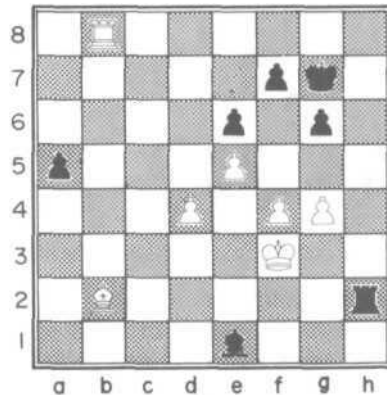
Black cannot now force his a-pawn past the sixth rank, and his king is far from the scene of action ... if it was on d5 of course. ... White's king, on the other hand, threatens to come to d3.



29 ... **g6**
 30 **Ke2** **Rc2+**
 31 **Kf3** **Be1**
 32 **g4** **Rxh2**
 33 **Rb8+** **Kg7**

White wins a pawn, but no more than equalizes as he is left with a poor bishop and no control of the c-file.

21 ... **Kxh7**
 22 **Qd3+** **Kg8**
 23 **Qxb3** **Rc4**
 24 **f4** **Qc6**
 25 **Qf3!** **Qxf3**
 26 **Rxf3** **a5**
 27 **Rb3!** **b4**
 28 **axb4** **Bxb4**
 29 **Kf1!**



Black seems to have regained his pawn and has a passed a-pawn as well. But now the bishop at b2, stifled so long, bursts into blazing energy.

34 d5!

Ensuring a protected passed pawn, as 34 ... exd5? 35 e6+ f6 36 e7 wins for White.

34 ... Bb4

35 d6!

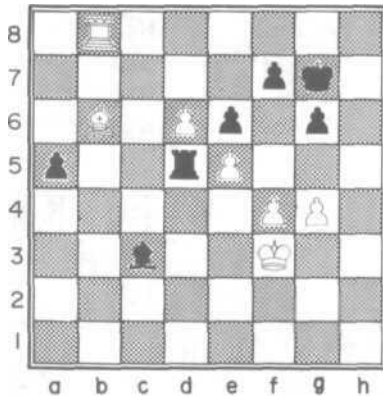
Of course Black cannot take the bishop at b2, as 36 d7 queens.

35 ... Rd2

36 Bc1 Rd5

37 Be3 Bc3

38 Bb6!



Even grimmer threats loom, besides the queening of the d-pawn - the mate by Bd8 - f6 and Rh8. IS IT CURTAINS?

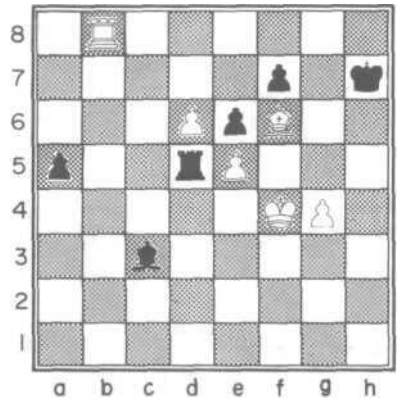
38 ... g5!

Breath for the king.

39 Bd8 gxf4

40 Bf6+ Kh7

41 Kxf4

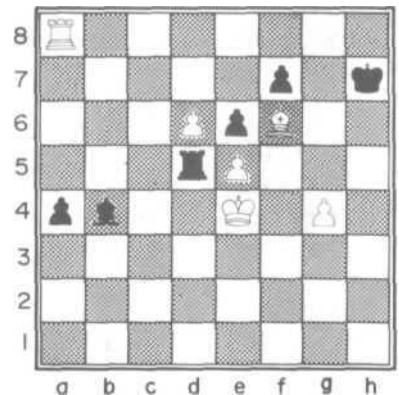


White threatens to move in with 42 Kg5 and Rh8 mate, so Black must drive the king back.

41 ... Bd2+

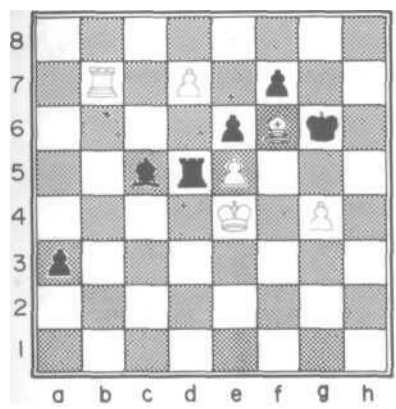
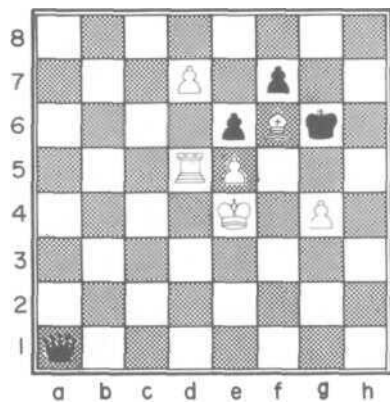
42 Ke4 a4

43 Ra8 Bb4!?



Pragmatic decision. In a 15 minute allegro finish, Black prepares to jettison his bishop after 44 Rxa4 Bxd6 45 exd6 Rxd6 and let White try and win *that* ending.

- 44 Ra7 Kg6
- 45 d7 Bc5!
- 46 Rb7 a3



Curses and damnation! Black escapes after all. If White queens by 47 d8 = Q Rxd8 48 Bxd8 he cannot stop Black doing the same after ... a2.

- 47 Rb5! a2
- 48 Rxc5 a1=Q
- 49 Rxd5

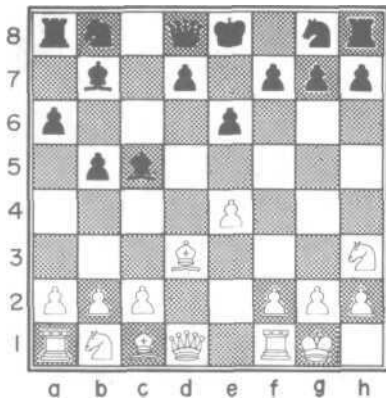
A peculiar time to agree a draw, but Black must take perpetual check as otherwise he cannot prevent White queening his d-pawn.

J. H. Hodgson (not Julian)-
M. Basman, Ilford, 1980

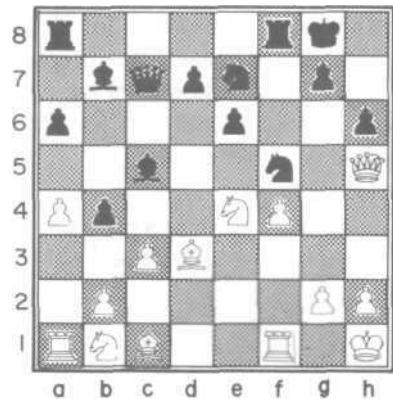
- 1 e4 e6
- 2 d4 a6
- 3 Bd3 b5
- 4 Nh3

In general off beat moves do not work well against the St. George, which is a very harmonious system of development. This game is an example.

- 4 ... Bb7
- 5 0-0 c5
- 6 dxc5 Bxc5



7 Qe2 Nc6
 8 c3 Qc7
 9 Kh1 Nge7
 10 f4 O-O
 11 Qh5

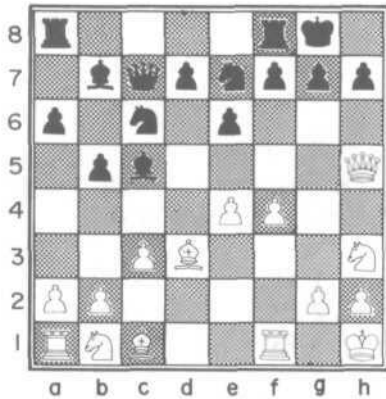


Black doesn't bother to retain the two bishops. His other pieces have more than enough activity.

16 Nxc5 Qxc5

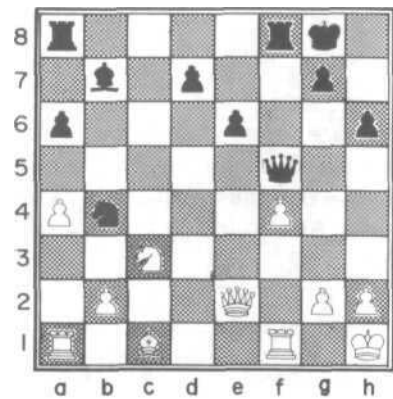
Threat ... Ng3+ winning White's queen.

17 Qe2 Nd5
 18 cxb4 Nxb4
 19 Bxf5 Qxf5
 20 Nc3



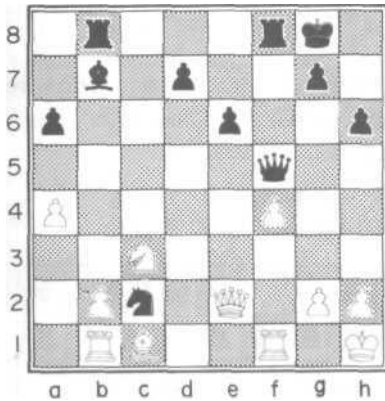
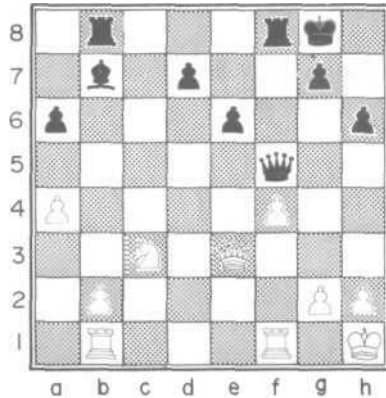
Now White starts up a totally unjustified attack. (He should bring out some of his queenside first!)

11 ... f5!
 12 a4 b4
 13 exf5 Nxf5
 14 Ng5 h6
 15 Ne4 Nce7



Almost a model position for Black in this opening. The St. George bishop has undisputed sway at b7, the queen is active at f5, the black knight has found an outpost at b4. White's c1 bishop is hopelessly locked in by its own pawn at f4.

20 ... Nc2
 21 Rb1 Rab8!



23 ... Bc6
 24 Qe2 Rb4

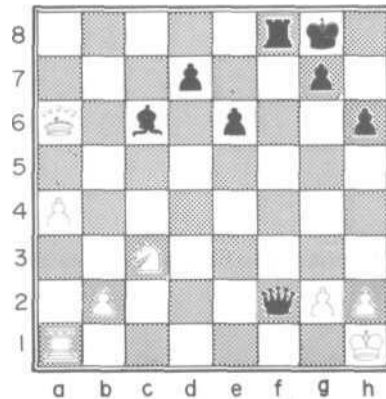
White's position now rapidly collapses.

25 Qxa6 Rxf4
 26 Rxf4 Qxf4
 27 Ra1 Qf2

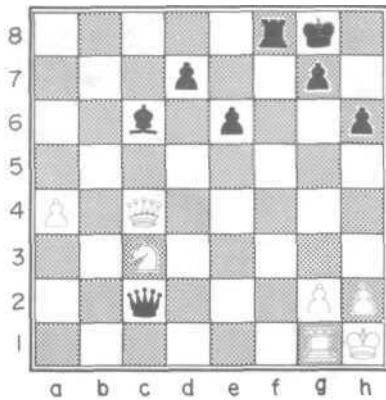
21 ... Rab8 is incredibly subtle, even though I say so myself. Black sees that White is desperate to free himself by Be3, so puts his rook on the line weakened by the absence of the bishop from c1 — the b-file.

22 Be3 Nxe3
 23 Qxe3

White rids himself of one liability - the dark squared bishop. But the remaining knight is no match for the long range black bishop.



28 Rg1 Qxb2
 29 Qc4 Qc2!

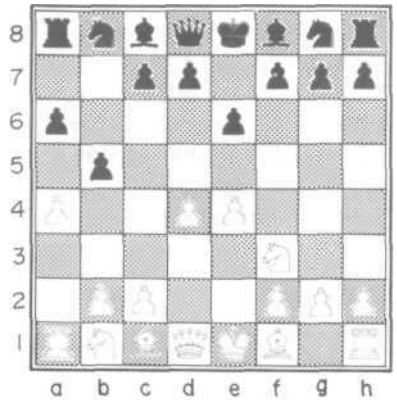


White is cruelly paralysed, because Black simply threatens 30 ... Rf3! (31 gxf3 Bxf3 +) winning the pinned knight at c3.

30 Qb4 **Qxg2+**
White
resigns

C. Crouch-M. Basman, Charlton, 1980

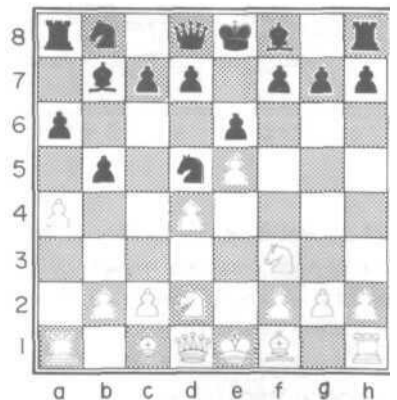
1 e4 **e6**
2 d4 **a6**
3 Nf3 **b5**
4 a4



4 ... **Bb7**

Black decides to exchange his wing pawn for nebulous central play. 4 ... b4 is safer.

5 Nbd2 **Nf6**
6 e5 **Nd5**

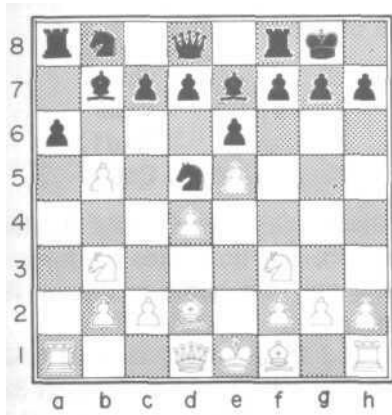


Now White wins the b-pawn.

7 axb5

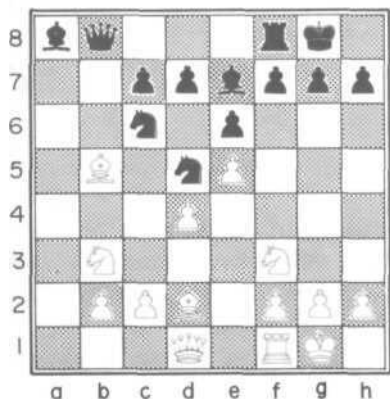
Black does not recapture because he wants White to spend a move playing Bd3 before he does so. Instead he develops his kingside.

7 ... **Be7**
 8 **Nb3** **O-O**
 9 **Bd2**



Now White is ready to play 10 Na5, so he has managed to do without developing his king's bishop so far.

9 ... **axb5**
 10 **Rxa8** **Bxa8**
 11 **Bxb5** **Nc6**
 12 **O-O** **Qb8**

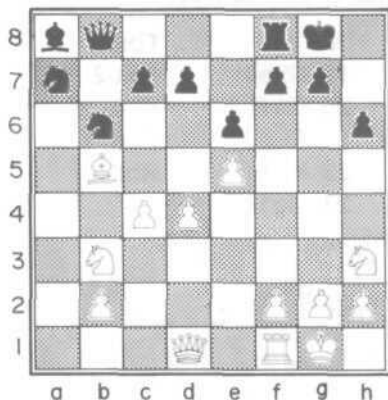


Black's long range positional plan is to open the centre with ... f6, but first he activates his queenside pieces. His queen has a pinning effect against the undefended white b-pawn.

13 **c4**

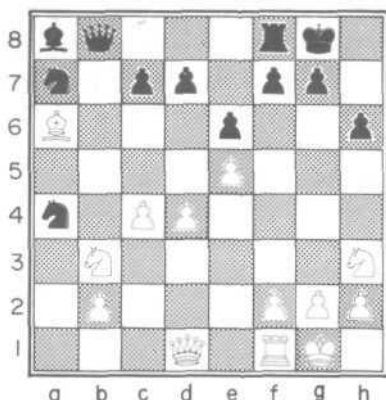
13 Be2 was possibly more solid, now White's bishop is cut off and his knight at b3 becomes loose.

13 ... **Nb6**
 14 **Bg5** **Bxg5**
 15 **Nxg5** **h6**
 16 **Nh3** **Na7!**



The bishop now looks very miserable.

17 **Ba6** **Na4**

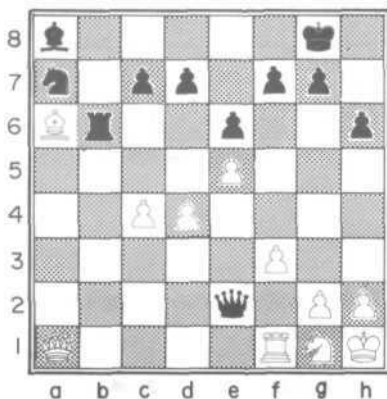


This ensures recovery of material, as besides the b2 pawn, 18 ... Qb6 is threatened.

18 Nd2!

White begins to make up for his earlier dissolute play.

18 ...	Qxb2
19 Qxa4	Qxd2
20 Qa1!	Qe2
21 f3	Rb8
22 KM!	Rb6
23 Ng1!	



White's accurate defence has enabled him to escape from a tricky position. Black's pieces lined up on the a-file are just as much a target as the offside bishop.

23 ...	Qd3
24 Rd1	Rxa6
25 Qxa6	Qxd1
26 Qxa7	Bc6

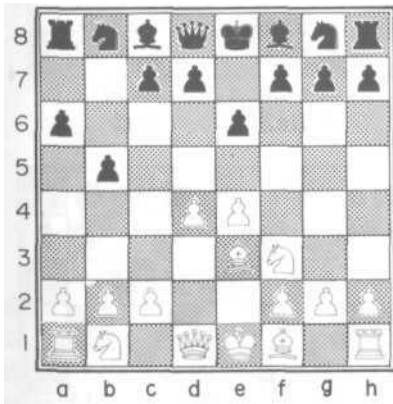
Black still has the edge in this position, but he makes no further gains and the game is drawn 19 moves later.

27 h3 Qd2 28 Qc5 Qe3 29 Kh2 Ba4 30 Kh1 Bb3 31 Qxc7 Qc3 32 c5 Ba4 33 Qd6 Bc6 34 Qb8+ Kh7 35 Qb1+ g6 36 Qd1 Bb5 37 f4 Bc6 38 f5 gxf5 39 Qh5 Kg7 40 Qh4 Qd2 41 Nf3 Qd1+ 42 Kh2 Bxf3 43 gxf3 Qe2+ 44 Kg1 Qxf3 45 Qf6+. Drawn.

6

Main Line with White Be3

An interesting formation arises when White plays his bishop to e3 at an early stage, to prevent Black from freeing his game with ... c5. For example, after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 Nf3 b5 4 Be3.

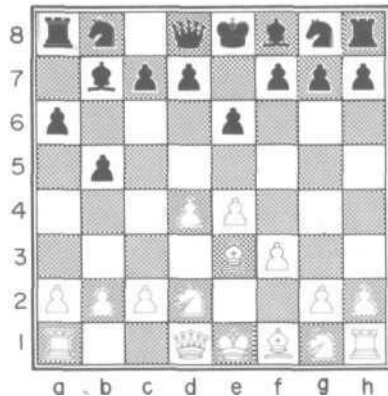


In that case Black must either play ... c5 more slowly (after ... d6) or can make a pseudo gambit with 4 ... c5 immediately. If White accepts the gambit by 5 dxc5 Qc7 6 b4 he may run into difficulties with a

backward c-pawn after 6 ... d6 7 cxd6 Bxd6 8 a3 Nbd7. There are several types of formation that White can adopt involving Be3, and one of the most promising is where he avoids Nf3, but plays first Be3 and Nd2. Later he may play f3 to give his king pawn further support.

We can see an example of this:

1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 Be3 b5 4 Nd2 Bb7 5 f3.



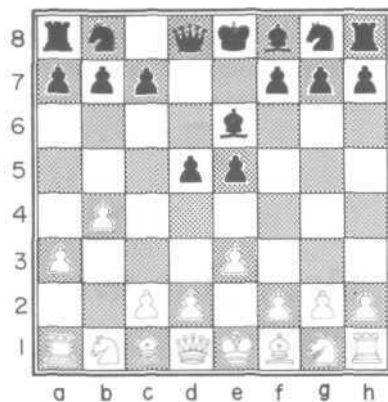
We can see what White is playing at here; he has given the pawn support, and now if Black answers 5 ... c5 White will snap it off and guard the pawn with Nb3 rather than the weakening move b4. There is an example of this type of position in the game Basman-Perkins in this section.

Besides Nd2, White can also play his queen to d2, likewise planning to hold his c-pawn, this time by 4 Qd2 Bb7 5 f3 c5 Qc7 6 Qf2!

Possibly Black can sidestep the problems of these lines by aiming to play ...f5 after White's f3, reasoning that White's hampered development on the kingside will not allow him to take advantage of this move. A game Sellos-Basman (published in *Chess*, Feb. 1982) went 1 d4 b5 2 e4 Bb7 3 f3 a6 4 Be3 e6 5 Nd2 f5 6 exf5 exf5 7 Bd3 Qf6 (a vital move to hold the kingside together) and Black won an exciting game.

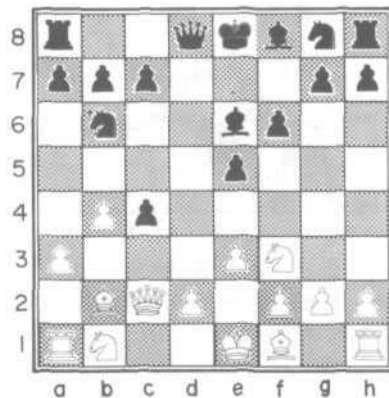
M. Basman-A. Perkins, Manchester, 1980 (June)

1	b4	e5
2	a3	d5
3	e3	Be6



Black follows the prescription of World Champion Petrosian in his match with Spassky and sets up a sort of Samisch formation to blunt the bishop at b2. His bishop at e6 also tries to prevent the expansion of White's game by c4.

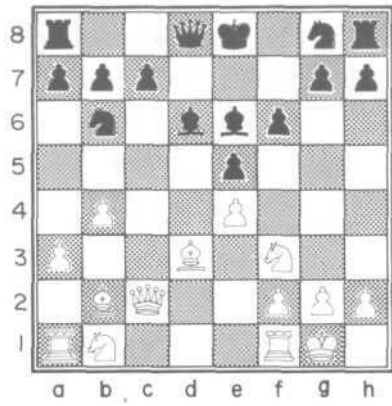
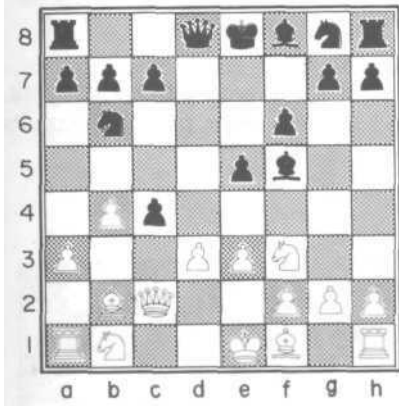
4	Bb2	Nd7
5	Nf3	f6
5	c4!?	dx c4
7	Qc2	Nb6



8 d3!

Making it into a full pawn sacrifice. If Black accepts, White will have compensation along the white diagonals and the central d- and c-files.

8 ... Bf5



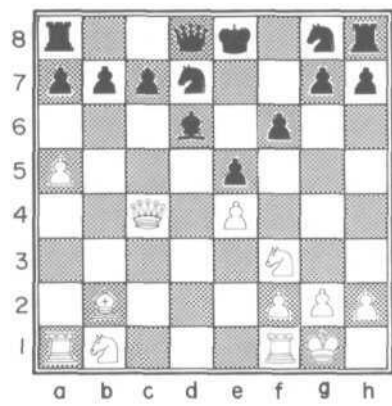
12 a4!

Another pawn is offered to fan the attack. White intends to drive the knight from b6 and then attack the weakened white squares with Bc4.

12 ... Bxb4
 13 a5 Nd7
 14 Bc4 Bxc4
 15 Qxc4 Bd6

A clever answer. When White plays 9 e4 he will block the white diagonal b1-h7, and thus lose part of his compensation. He gains a tempo though, to bring his rooks into action.

9 e4 cxd3
 10 Bxd3 Be6
 11 0-0 Bd6

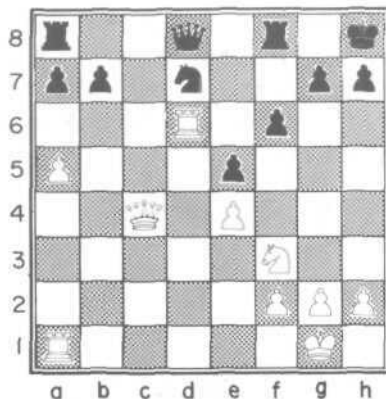


Black erects the barricades once more. His pretty pyramid stretching from c7-e5-g7 has the effect of shutting the files.

16 Rd1 **Nh6**
17 Nc3 **Nf7**
18 Nb5 **O-O**

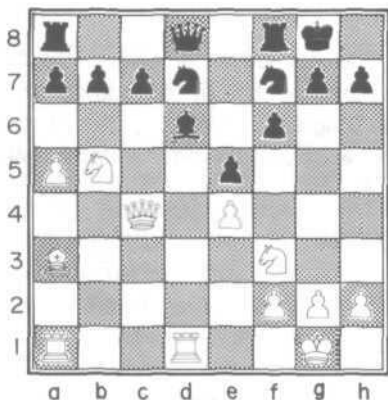
If 18 ... a6, then 19 Rxd6!?

19 Ba3 **Kh8**



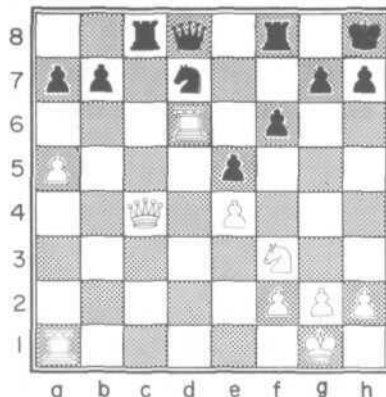
White has won one pawn back, and for the other pawn he counts the d-file hold.

22 ... **Rc8**



Black's knight manoeuvre ... Nh6-f7 has enabled him to castle, but meanwhile White has been putting pressure on the pyramid's exposed link at d6.

20 Bxd6 **cxd6**
21 Nxd6 **Nxd6**
22 Rxd6



It looks like White's queen can retract to any old place as long as it attacks the knights at d7, but in fact this is not the case as 23 Qd3 Rc7 24 Rd1 Rf7 sees Black threatening to disentangle by ... Qe7 and Nf8.

Here White's knight at f3, limited by the black pawns at f6 and e5, plays a non participatory role.

23 Qd5

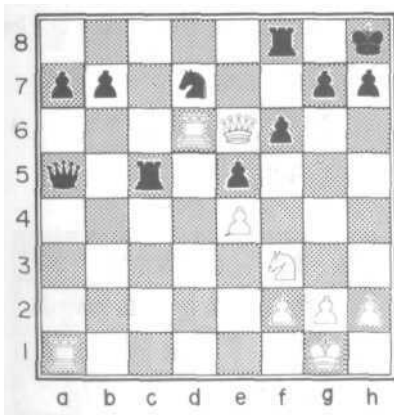
White brings his queen to prevent Black's ... Rf7. 23 Qe6 would be a blunder because of 23 ... Nc5! (watch these hidden freeing twists).

23 ... Rf5

24 Qe6

Now Black can simplify by 24 ... Rc6 25 Rxc6 bxc6 26 Qxc6 Qc8 but White still keeps his grip with 27 Rc1! Instead Black plays

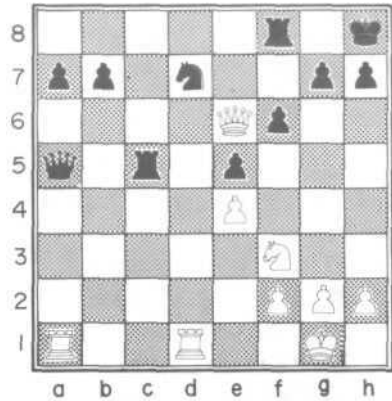
24 .. Qxa5



Looks good for Black. If 25 Qxd7 Qxa1 + or 25 Rxa5 Rc1 + .

BUT WHAT HAS BLACK OVER-LOOKED?

25 Rdd1



The winning move.

Black must part with a piece.

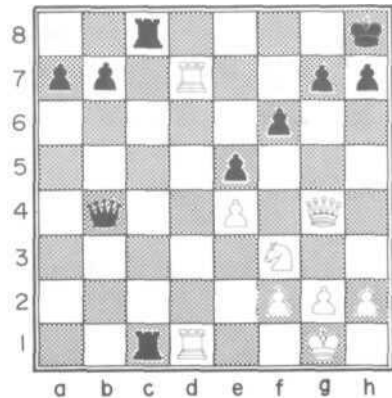
25 ... Qb4

26 Rxd7 Rfc8

27 Rad1 Rc1

28 Qg4

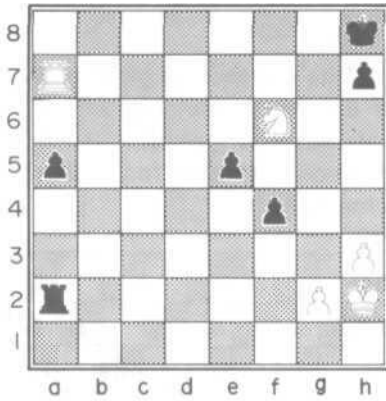
White's attack persists because he still has something left of his d-file/seventh rank play. Here the threat of mate at g7 forces Black to come to heel.



28 ... Rxd1 +
 29 Rxd1 Qc4
 30 h3 a5
 31 Rd7

Back again. This time the mate threat forces a queen exchange.

31 ... Qc1 +
 32 Kh2 Of4+
 33 Qxf4 exf4
 34 Rxb7 g5
 35 Ra7 Rc2
 36 e5! fxe5
 37 Nxc5 Rxf2
 38 Ne4 Ra2
 39 Nf6 Black resigns

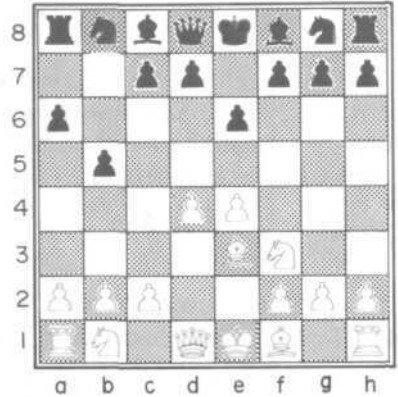


Mate is unavoidable.

N. Littlewood-M. Basman,
Nottingham, 1981

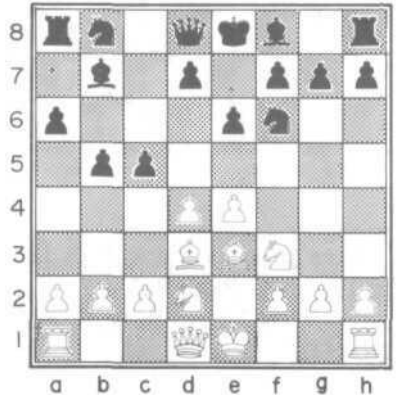
1 e4 e6
 2 d4 a6

3 Nf3 b5
 4 Be3



When White plays an early Be3 it shows his intention to prevent Black's ... c5 move. Depending on the configuration, Black may still be able to achieve this advance.

4 ... Bb7
 5 Nbd2 Nf6
 6 Bd3 c5

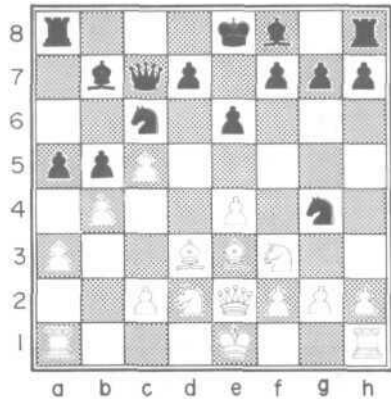


This advance involves an at least temporary pawn sacrifice.

7 dxc5 Qc7
8 b4

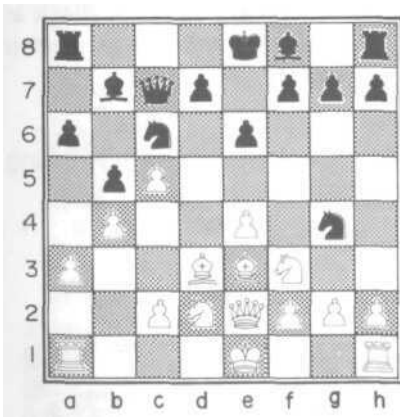
White would like to defend his c-pawn with 8 Nb3, but Black has tied this piece to defend the other advanced pawn at e4.

8 ... Nc6
9 a3 Ng4
10 Qe2



Causing a splittance of White's queenside pawns. If White tries to hold them intact with 11 c3 he is beaten by 11 ... axb4 12 cxb4 Nxb4! Or if 11 Rb1 axb4 12 axb4 Black has an incredible response 12 ... Nxe3 13 Qxe3(?) Nxb4 14 Rxb4 Bxc5! picking up the rook.

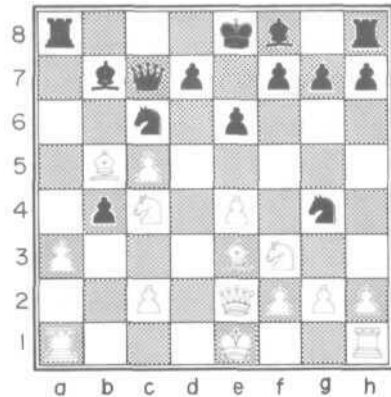
12 Bxb5 axb4
13 Nc4



White seems to have maintained everything, and will answer 10 ... Nxe3 with 11 Qxe3.

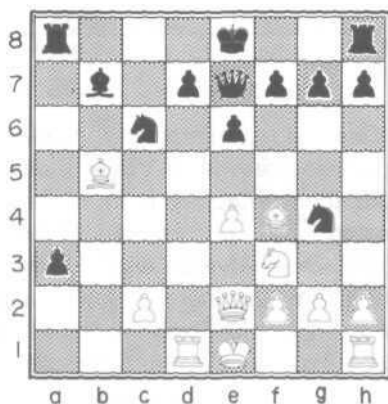
But the eruptions continue on the queenside.

10 ... a5!



White sells his pawns and pawn structure for piece activity against the black king.

13 ...	Be7
14 Nd6+	Bxd6
15 cxd6	Qxd6
16 Rd1	Qe7
17 Bf4	bxa3



White achieves his object of preventing Black from castling, but now the passed a-pawn is a dangerous decoy.

18 Bd6	Qf6
19 0-0	a2
20 e5	Qf4
21 g3	Qh6
22 Qd3	

22 h4 should have been played here.

22 ...	Qh3!
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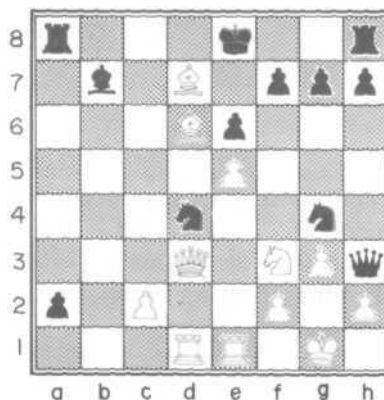


An incredible situation. Both sides face mating dangers. Black at d7, White at h2 and in a concealed manner at g2.

23 Rfe1	Nd4
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Black swings in with his mating attack.

24 Bxd7+

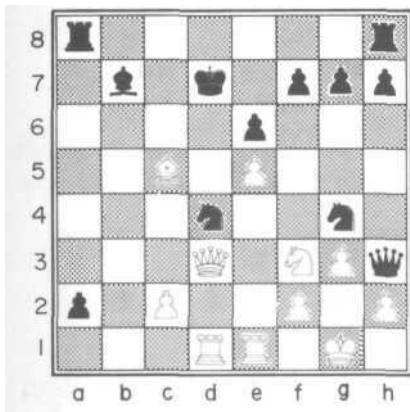
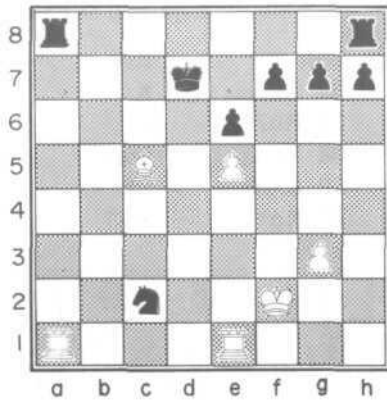


And White swings back, dangerously exposing the black king.

24 ... Kxd7

Of course White cannot play 25 Qxd4 Bxf3 26 Bb4 dis ch because of ... Bd5!

25 Bc5!

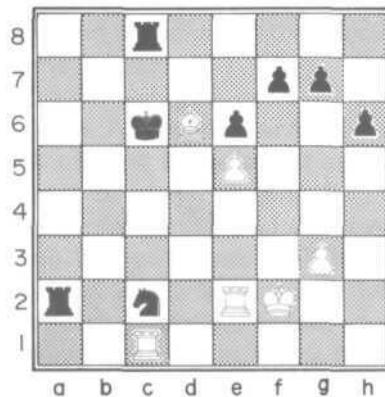


Everything comes off and we're left with the boring bits. Remarkably Black has come away with two extra pawns, but his knight may not get out.

31 Rad1+ Kc6
32 Re2 Ra2
33 Bd6 Rc8
34 Rh1 h6
35 Rc1

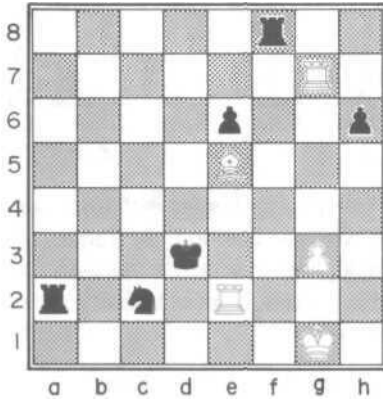
In this complex position Black does not locate the complex win (if there is one) by 25 ... Nxh2 26 Qxd4+ Bd5 27 Re3 a1=Q 28 Rxa1 Rxa1+ 29 Qxa1 Ra8 30 Qd4 Nxf3+ 31 Rxf3 Qh5 with White under pressure on the 'St. George' diagonal.

25 ... Bxf3
26 Qxf3 Qxh2+
27 Kf1 Qxf2+
28 Qxf2 Nxf2
29 Kxf2 a1=Q
30 Rxa1 Nxc2



Black's knight is getting crucified.

35 ...	Kb5
36 Rb1+	Kc4
37 Rb7	f6
38 Rxc7	fxe5
39 Bxe5	Rf8 +
40 Kg1	Kd3



Now the pawns have diminished so drastically, Black stakes all on his chance of weaving a mating net. But White is alive to the dangers.

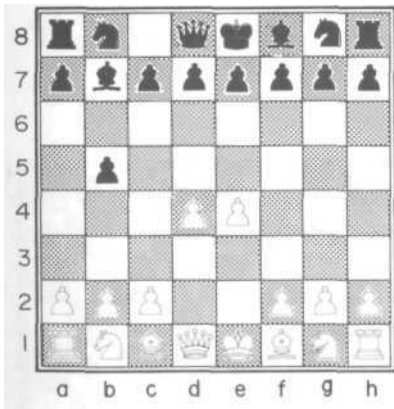
41 Rg2	Ra5
42 Bf4	Nd4
43 Rd2+	Ke4
44 Kg2	h5
45 Re7	e5
46 Rd1	Kf5
47 Rh7	Ra2+
48 Kh3	Nf3!
49 Rxh5+	Ke4
50 Rxe5!+	Nxe5
51 Re1 +	

Draw

7

Polish and French Formations

Polish Defence formations arise after the moves 1 d4 b5 2 e4 Bb7.



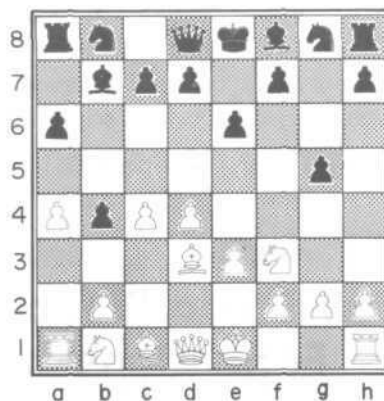
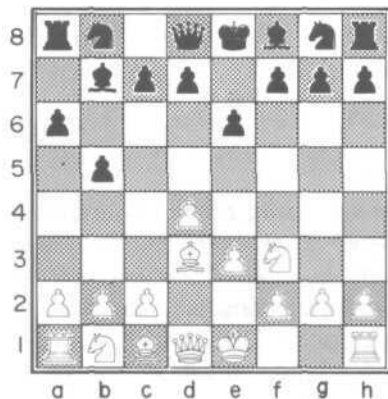
The chief differences between this move order and that of the St. George occur when Black tries to do without the supporting move ... a6. Then there are lines where White immediately captures at b5 in return for the loss of the e4 pawn, (discussed in earlier St. George

material) and other continuations where Black consistently delays ... a6 but puts pressure on e4. These variations are examined on the cassette 'Polish Defence'. In this section are added a couple of games, one versus N. Dickenson where Black tries unsuccessfully to undermine White's e5 pawn with ... d6, and another game versus Alain Defize, which shows the queen's fianchetto coupled with ... g5 and f5 expanding thematically on the kingside.

The St. George is not a universal antidote. For example after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 a6 3 a4 Black is best advised to go into a French with 3 ... d5 (though the gambit suggested by N. Camp 3 ... b5 4 axb5 Bb7 is possible too!) Similarly, after 2 d3 then, as White has declined to take up his options in the centre, Black should do so with ... d5 and ... c5.

A. Defize-M. Basman, Liege, 1981

- | | |
|-------|------------|
| 1 d4 | b5 |
| 2 Nf3 | Bb7 |
| 3 e3 | a6 |
| 4 Bd3 | e6 |



As White has held back a little in the opening, Black feels this advance is justified.

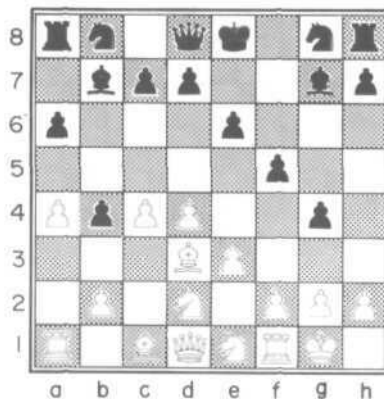
- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 7 0-0 | Bg7 |
| 8 Nbd2 | g4 |
| 9 Ne1 | f5 |

Many players feel that quite sound developments will eventually expose Black's ambitious formation. The present game shows that Black can play actively in these situations too.

- | | |
|------|-----------|
| 5 a4 | b4 |
| 6 c4 | |

White creates space on the queenside, and prepares for a massive pawn centre with a later e4,

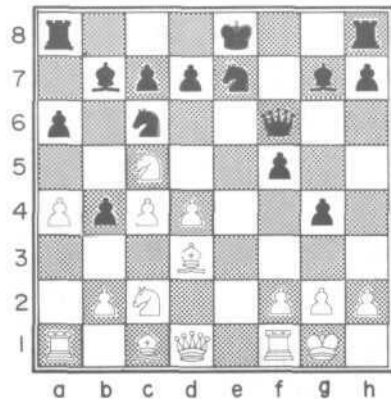
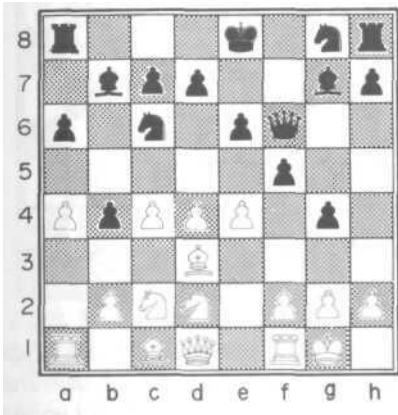
- | | |
|-------|-----------|
| 6 ... | g5 |
|-------|-----------|



Everything looks very loose, but Black is banking on White being

unable to play e4 (opening the centre) without losing his own d-pawn.

10 Nc2 **Nc6**
11 e4 **Qf6!**



It looks as though White has made progress, but the bishop calmly retreats, leaving the d-pawn loose.

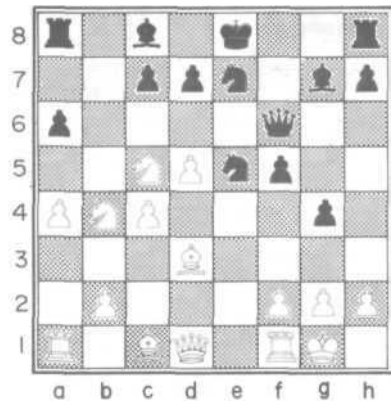
14 ... **Bc8!**
15 d5 **Ne5**
16 Nxb4

The crisis: Black's powerful queen is needed to hold the kingside together, and should not be shut in by an immediate 11 ... Nge7. The queen, of course, does not fear the move 12 e5 since that would open the line of the bishop at b7.

12 exf5 **exf5**

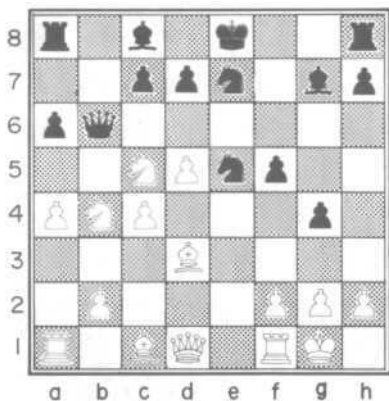
White opens, but without having access to e4 by a piece, he really cannot bring his pieces into the attack.

13 Nb3 **Nge7**
14 Nc5



White, finding he is losing all over the board, desperately grabs at passing material.

16 ... **Qb6!**



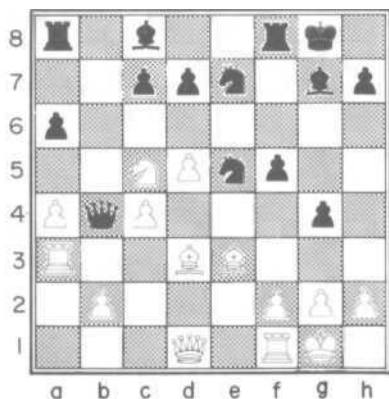
A cruel switch to the queenside which unexpectedly wins a whole piece. White cannot defend both his knights.

17 Be3

White tries an attempt to trap the black queen.

17 ... Qxb4

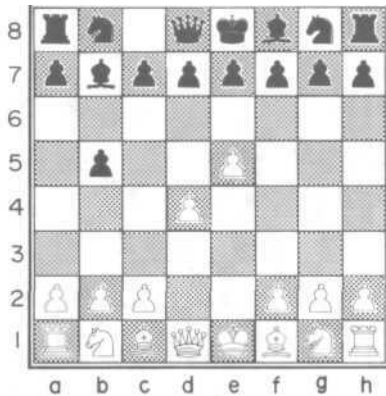
18 Ra3 0-0



White resigns as there is no way to trap the black queen and he remains a piece down.

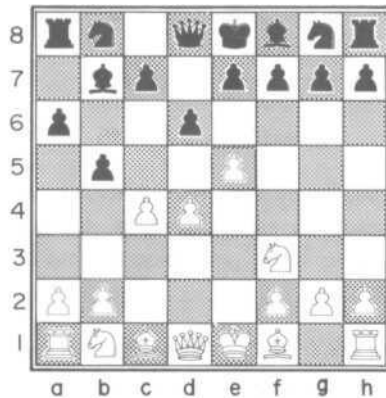
N. Dickenson-M. Basman,
Islington, 1981

- 1 d4 **b5**
- 2 e4 **Bb7**
- 3 e5



The new vogue. White rids himself of worries about the defence of his pawn at e4 and hopes his pawn at e5 will put the black king under heavy pressure.

- 3 ... a6
- 4 Nf3 d6
- 5 c4!

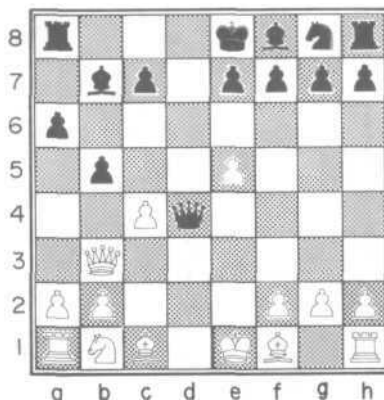


A good reply to Black's 4 ... d6 (4 ... e6 is safer) as White now hopes to take advantage of the opening of the a4-e8 diagonal leading to Black's king.

Possibly 5 ... c6 6 a4 b4 is right here.

5 ... dxe5

6 Nxe5 Nd7



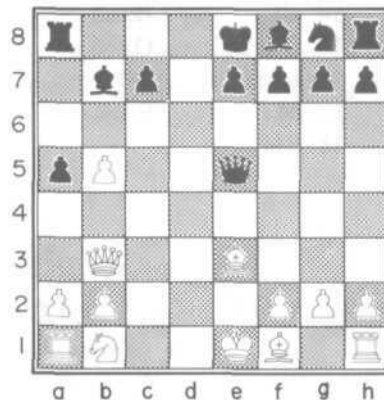
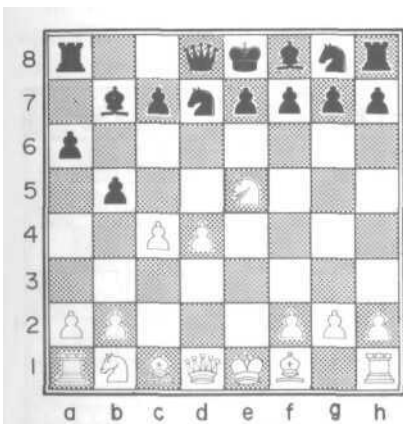
Black tries to eliminate the white king pawn, which is holding up his kingside development (... Nf6).

9 Be3

10 cxb5

Qxe5

a5!



Putting the question to the knight. After 7 cxb5 Nxe5 8 bxa6! Nf3+ 9 gxf3 Bxa6 White could win a pawn and Black's compensation is problematic, despite all White's pawn islands.

7 Qb3! Nxe5

8 dxe5 Qd4!

11 b6!

12 bxc7

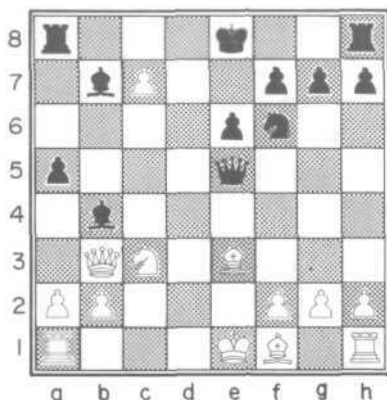
13 Nc3

e6!

Bb4 +

Nf6

An unattractive looking move but Black must close the diagonal leading to his king at all costs.

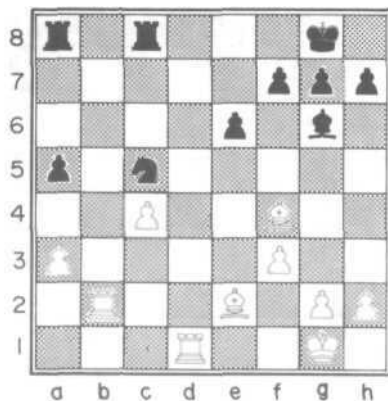


Black can now safely regain his pawn with ... Ne8 though the alternative 18 ... e5!? is also attractive. However, it is insufficient after 19 Bxe5 Re8 20 f4 Ng4 21 Kd2.

- | | |
|--------|------|
| 18 ... | Ne8 |
| 19 Rb1 | Be4 |
| 20 Rb2 | Nxc7 |
| 21 f3 | Bg6 |
| 22 Be2 | Na6 |
| 23 0-0 | Nc5 |
| 24 Rd1 | |

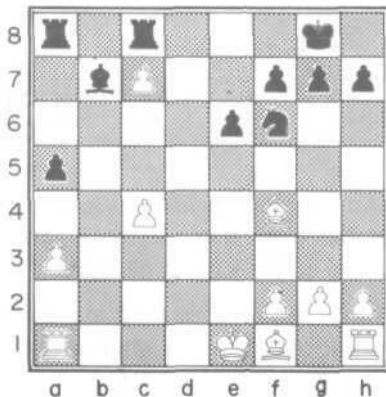
Black has improved his development and hopes to be able to pick up the pawn at c7 after he has castled.

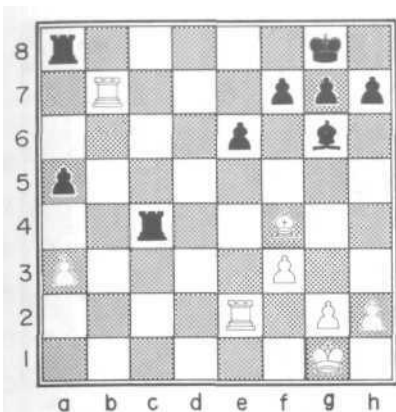
- | | |
|---------|-------|
| 14 a3 | Bxc3+ |
| 15 Qxc3 | Qxc3+ |
| 16 bxc3 | 0-0 |
| 17 c4 | Rfc8 |
| 18 Bf4 | |



White has had to use up moves developing his pieces, and now Black by rapid tactical play takes off the c-pawn.

- | | |
|---------|-------|
| 24 ... | Na4! |
| 25 Rb7 | Nc3 |
| 26 Rd2 | Nxe2+ |
| 27 Rxe2 | Rxc4 |



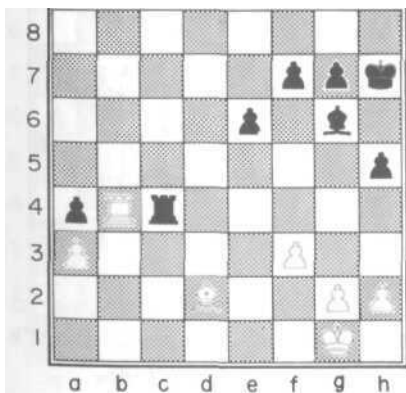


In a position with bishops or opposite colours, a win is usually only possible if rooks are kept on. White manages now to exchange both pairs.

- 28 Reb2 h5
- 29 Bd2! Kh7
- 30 Rb8 Rxb8
- 31 Rxb8 a4
- 32 Rb4

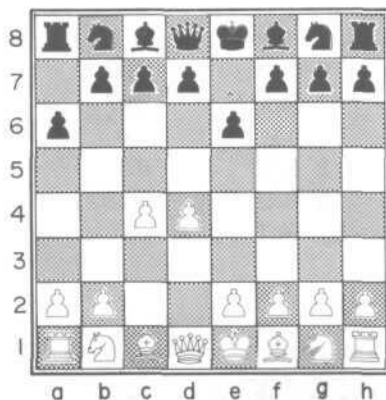
Drawn

Because Black cannot save his a-pawn and avoid the exchange of rooks at the same time.



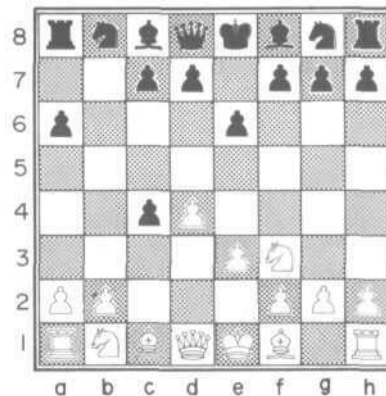
C. Baker-M. Basman, Evening Standard, London, July 1980

- 1 c4 e6
- 2 d4 a6



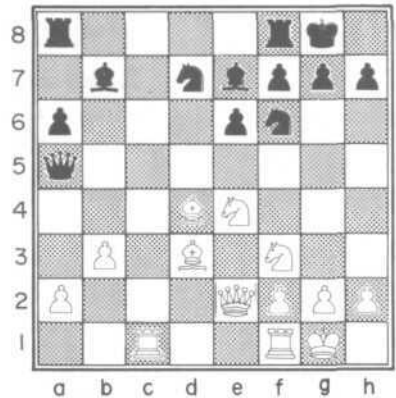
Not a common order of moves, as usually 2 ... b6 (the English Defence) is preferred. Here if White plays 3 e3 Black can either gambit by ... b5 or play 3 ... b6 or 3 ... f5.

- 3 Nf3 b5
- 4 e3 bxc4

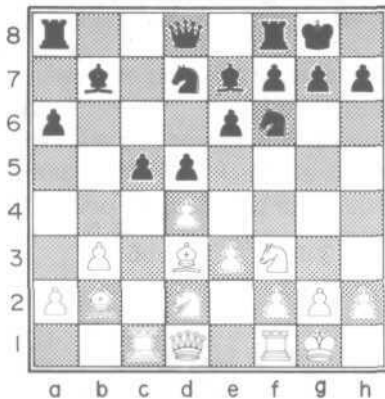


This game now transposes into the theme "If White allows his c-pawn to be exchanged for Black's b-pawn, Black then fills up the centre with pawns."

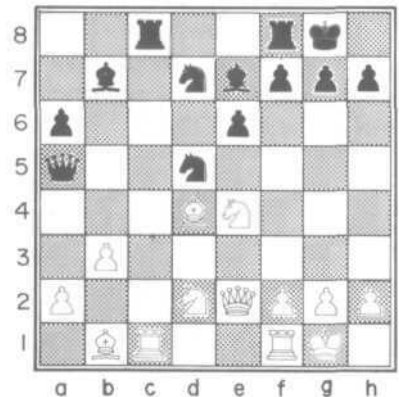
5 Bxc4	Nf6
6 0-0	Bb7
7 Nbd2	Be7
8 b3	0-0
9 Bb2	d5
10 Bd3	Nbd7
11 Rc1	c5



Black is now unwilling to swap pieces with 15 ... Nxe4 16 Bxe4 Bxe4 17 Qxe4 Nf6 18 Qb7 Nd5 and instead plays for complications.



15 ...	Nd5
16 Bb1	Rac8
17 Nfd2!	

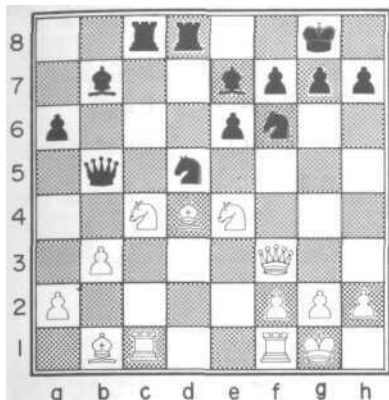


Black must have equalized.

12 Qe2	cxd4(?)
13 Bxd4	Qa5
14 e4	dxex
15 Nxe4	

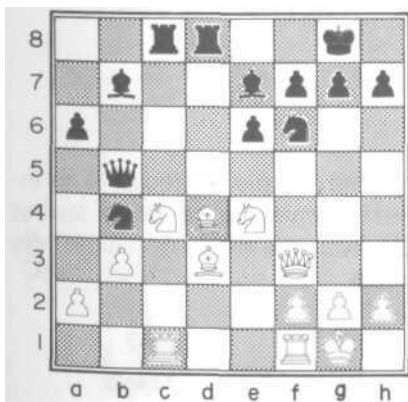
The knight at d2 threatens to come into c4 and probe Black's weak squares at b6 and d6.

17 ... **N7f6**
 18 **Nc4** **Qb5**
 19 **Qf3!** **Rfd8**



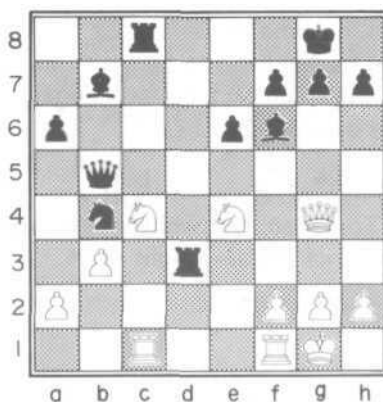
Despite his active pieces Black is in trouble. Here 19 a4! Qe8 would enable White to break up the black kingside as the bishop at b7 is undefended. White chooses another way to take advantage of the exposed black queen, but in doing so exposes his own pieces.

20 **Bd3** **Nb4!**



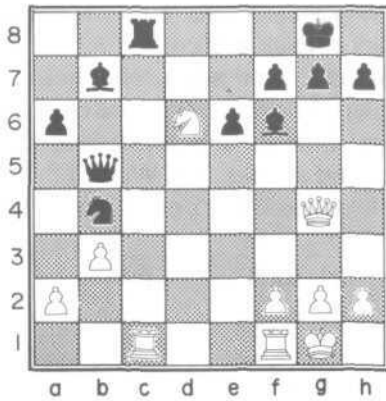
A glance at the diagram shows the complex tactical nature of the position, with nearly all pieces in action. There are pins and counterpins, attacks and latent and discovered attacks, and White's threat to break up Black's castled position.

21 **Bxf6** **Rxd3!**
 22 **Qg4** **Bxf6**



Black hopes he is out of it as now 22 Nxf6+ Kh8 just flails at empty air. But instead White plunges his knight into the forking square at d6.

23 **Ncd6!** **Rxd6**
 24 **Nxd6**



White still wants more than the exchange at c8. If now 25 ... Qd7
 26 Nxc8 Bxc8 27 Qc7 Qxc7
 28 Rxc7 Black's bishop at c8 is lost.

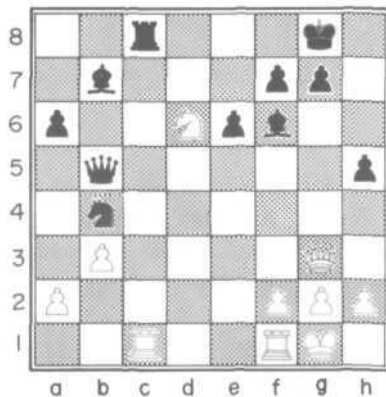
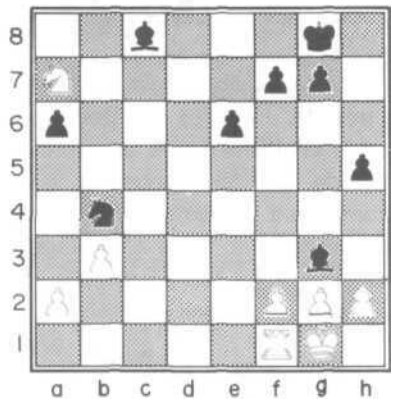
- 25 ... Be5
- 26 Nxb5 Bxg3
- 27 Rxc8+! Bxc8
- 28 Na7!

Black has had no choice but to return some material, but it looks like he will need to part with more, as the knight at b4 is left hanging in the event of 24 ... Qd7.

24 ... h5!

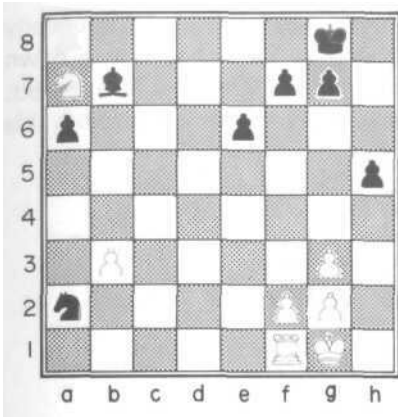
To deflect the white queen from its attack on the knight at b4.

25 Qg3!



White has the last laugh in an incredible combinative flurry lasting 10 moves. He will be the exchange ahead.

- 28 ... Bb7
- 29 hxg3 Nxa2

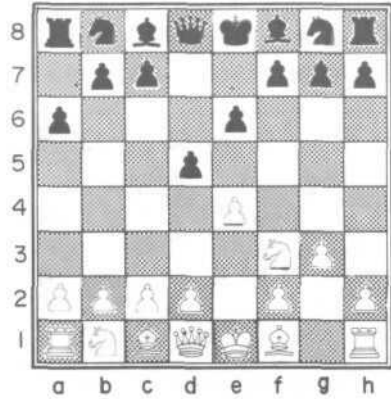


If Black is to hold this ending, despite the active white rook, he needs to exchange off the queen-side pawns and then anchor a piece at d5. The tactical situation allows him to do this.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 30 Rd1 | Bd5 |
| 31 Rb1 | Nc3! |
| 32 Ra1 | Bxb3 |
| 33 Rxa6 | Ne2 + |
| 34 Kh2 | Nd4 |
| 35 Nc6 | Nf5 |
- Game shortly drawn.**

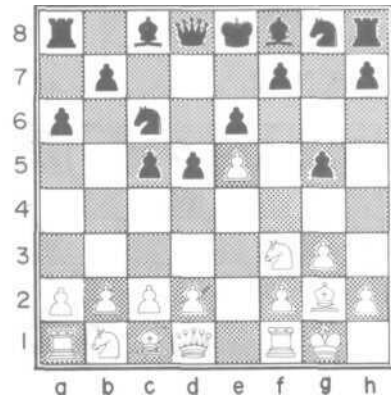
P. Walker-M. Basman, Charlton Open, 1980

- | | |
|-------|-----------|
| 1 e4 | e6 |
| 2 Nf3 | a6 |
| 3 g3 | d5 |



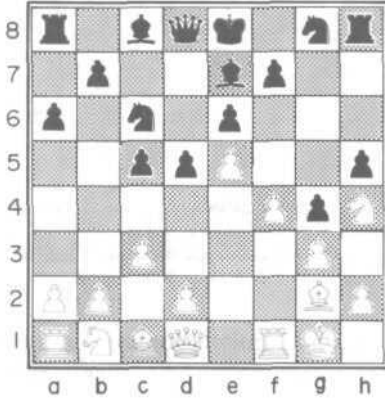
Against quiet formations the black queen fianchetto is less effective as White can defend his e-pawn with a later d3. So a simple central thrust is preferable.

- | | |
|-------|------------|
| 4 e5 | c5 |
| 5 Bg2 | Nc6 |
| 6 0-0 | g5! |



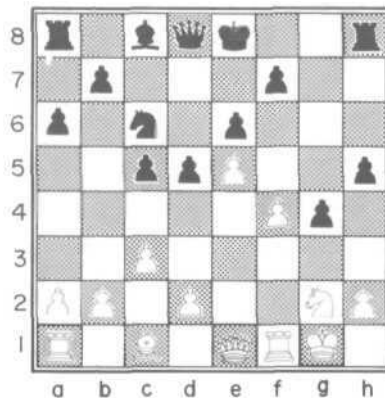
White has allowed his e-pawn to be surrounded and this thrust puts him in difficulties.

7 c3 **g4**
 8 Nh4 **h5**
 9 f4 **Be7**



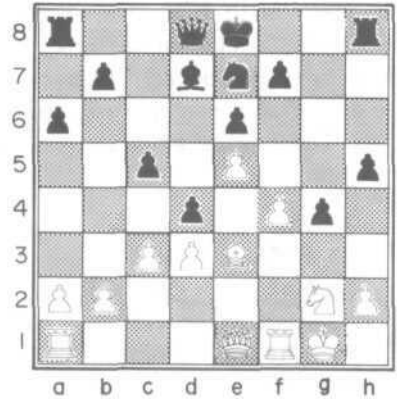
White has managed to reinforce his e-pawn but now his king's position is in danger.

10 Na3 **Bxh4**
 11 gxh4 Nh6
 12 Nc2 **Nf5**
 13 Ne3 **Nxh4**
 14 Qe1 **Nxg2**
 15 Nxg2



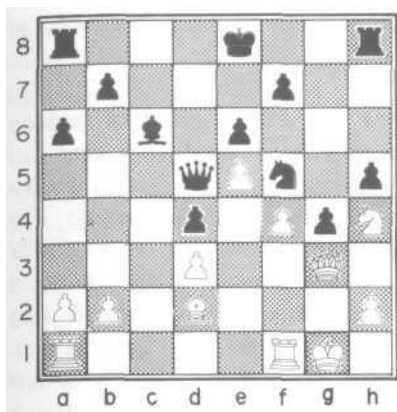
Positionally the game is already decided as Black has won a pawn and White's king is still exposed. Black now needs to activate his bishop.

15 ... **Bd7**
 16 d3 **Ne7**
 17 Be3 **d4!**



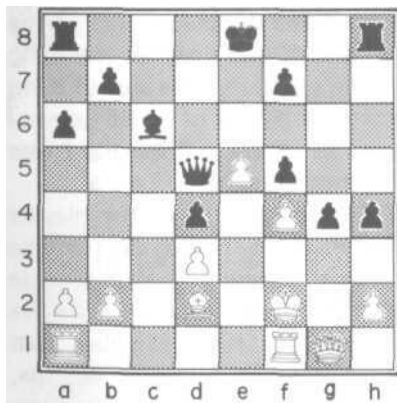
Black parts with a pawn to open a blistering attack down the long diagonal.

18 cxd4 **Bc6**
 19 Nh4 **Qd5**
 20 Qg3 cxd4
 21 Bd2 **Nf5!**



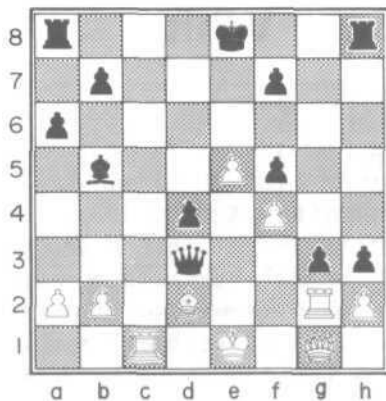
The doubled pawns Black obtains are irrelevant as long as he breaks the blockade at h4.

22 Nxf5 exf5
 23 Kf2 h4
 24 Qg1



Now it's a simple mopping up operation. The white squares are still letting White down, and the St. George bishop triumphs after all.

24 ... Qf3 +
 25 Ke1 Qxd3
 26 Rc1 Bb5
 27 Rf2 g3
 28 Rg2 h3
White resigns



White must lose his rook or be mated at e2.

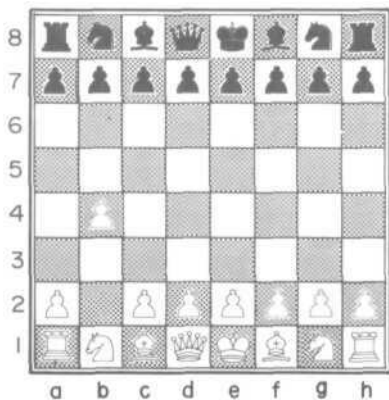
8

Sicilian Close Formations as White

If you play the St. George as White (1 b4 or 1 e3 or 1 a3) you must be prepared for a diversity of Close Formations. For example, if you go 1 e3 or 1 a3, then as likely as not the enemy will reply 1 ... g6 to stop your queen's fianchetto. Therefore, I play 1 b4 to ensure that this will not happen.

However, even after 1 b4. Black is unlikely to go into regular St. George positions with pawns at e5 and d5. He is more prone to a conservative stance, placing his pawns at e5 and d6 and then fianchettoing the king's bishop. This sort of thing occurred in 12 out of the 16 games I played as White in 1980 and I was not happy about it.

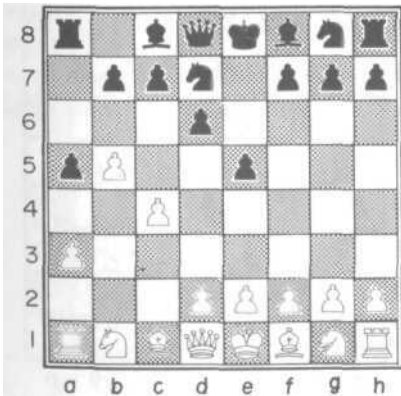
This section then is for players who want to make use of the 'universal' aspect of the St. George opening. I append several games showing the type of play that results. I choose two main set ups, the one involving a double fianchetto (g3 and Bg2) and the other the quieter development of the king's bishop at e2. The trouble with the first line is that it takes a long time to set up — first you are undertaking slow moves on the queenside



(a3/b4/Bb2) and then you are doing the same on the kingside (g3/Bg2/e3/Ne2/d3/Nd2). The second formation takes less time, but you may be left without any middle game play — as occurred in the game Basman-Kinlay. There White was unable to play d4, because the answer ... e4 would give Black too much space on the king's wing; and he was, furthermore, uneasy because of Black's eventual threat ... e4 w Nd4 c5. Another example of this problem can be seen in the game G. Welling-Lesman, from the Monster Book.

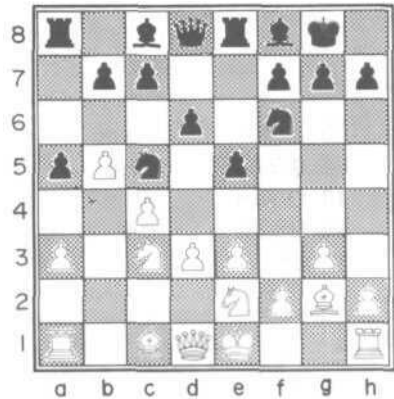
M. Basman-A. Hall, Surrey Open, 1980

- | | |
|------|-----------|
| 1 b4 | e5 |
| 2 a3 | a5 |
| 5 b5 | d6 |
| 4 c4 | Nd7 |



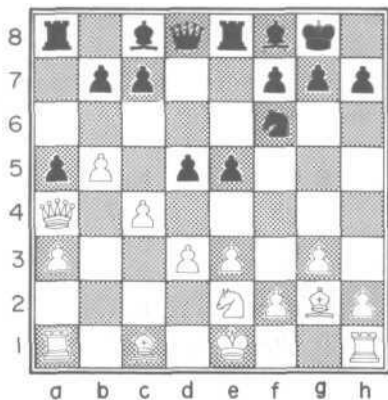
It is clear that White will not obtain much on the central black diagonal, so must transfer attention to the other side.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 5 Nc3 | Ngf6 |
| 6 g3 | Be7 |
| 7 Bg2 | 0-0 |
| 8 d3 | Re8 |
| 9 e3 | Bf8 |
| 10 Nge2 | Nc5 |



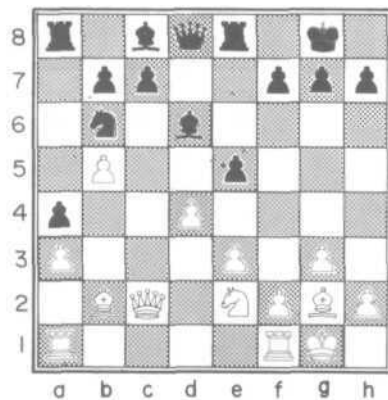
Black has a passive game with pieces locked in on the dark squares. White would like to drive the knight away from c5 with d4, but fears it would then move into e4.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 11 Na4! | Nxa4 |
| 12 Qxa4 | d5 |



Black is tempted by White's lag in development (uncastled king) to open the position. It all proves a mirage.

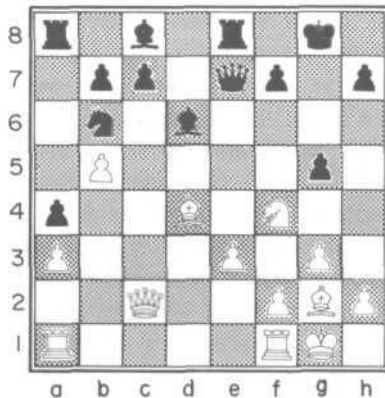
- | | |
|---------|------|
| 13 cxd5 | Nxd5 |
| 14 0-0 | Nb6 |
| 15 Qc2 | a4 |
| 16 Bb2 | Bd6 |
| 17 d4 | |



Black has mismanaged his central control, otherwise he would at least

have been able to answer ... e4 to White's thrust of the d-pawn.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 17 ... | exd4 |
| 18 Bxd4 | Qe7 |
| 19 Nf4 | g5? |



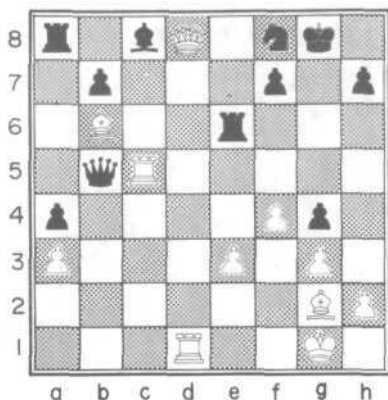
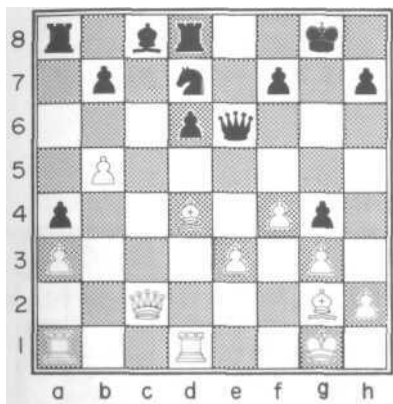
An unbelievably bad move. Black exposes his king with no justification.

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 20 Nh5 | Nd7 |
| 21 Ng7 | Rd8 |
| 22 Nf5 | Qe6 |
| 23 f4! | |



This move either opens the f-file or prevents Black from placing a piece at e5, blocking the line of White's queen's bishop.

- 23 ... g4
 24 Nxd6 cxd6
 25 Rfd1



Black now loses more quickly than he otherwise would have done, due to his exposed king.

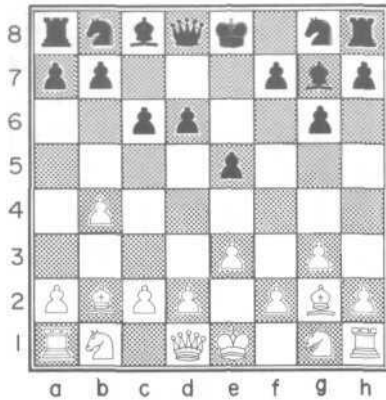
- 31 ... Qe8
 32 Rg5+ Kh8
 33 Bd4+ Resigns

Rather than immediately striving to attack the black king, White concentrates on mobilizing all his pieces. Here his rook will prove troublesome, threatening to invade along the weakened central files.

- 25 ... Nf8
 26 Bb6 Re8
 27 Qc7 Qf6
 28 Rac1 Qb2
 29 Qxd6 Re6
 30 Qd8 Qxb5
 31 Rc5

M. Basman-P. Wells, Evening Standard Open, 1980

- 1 b4 e5
 2 Bb2 d6
 3 e3 g6
 4 g3 Bg7
 5 Bg2 c6



Black bluntly exchanges White's bishop before even developing the queenside. The position resembles a Close Sicilian in reverse.

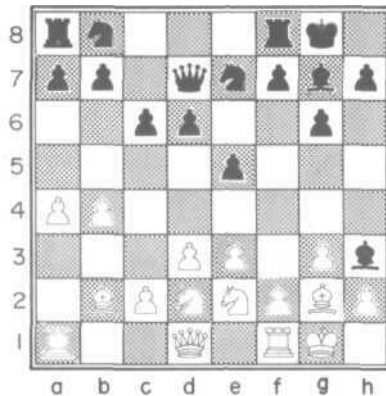
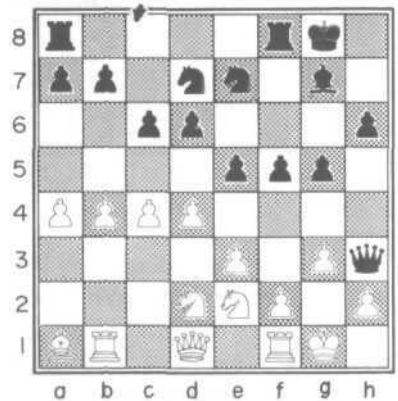
11 Bxh3?!

Better was 11 c4.

11 ...	Qxh3
12 c4	h6
13 Rb1	Nd7
14 Ba1	f5
15 d4	g5

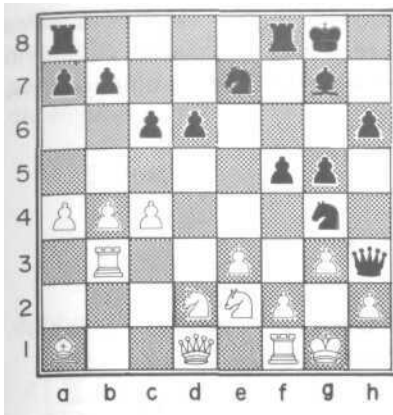
A subtle move, as Black is preparing to disrupt White's pawns with ... a5. White decides to answer this with b5.

6 a4	Ne7
7 Ne2	Be6
8 d3	0-0
9 Nd2	Qd7
10 0-0	Bh3



Black starts a menacing pawn avalanche on the kingside. His queen is ready to help at any rate!

16 dxe5	Nxe5
17 Rb3	Ng4

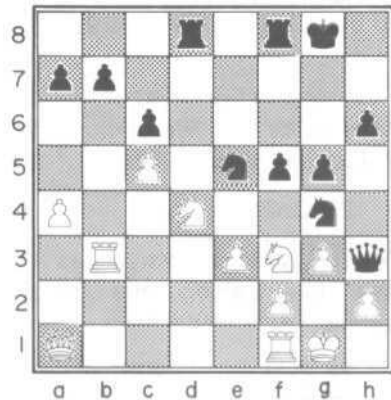


White seems suicidally inclined in this game, or perhaps he thinks he is luring Black's pieces away from the centre.

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| 18 | Nf3 | Bxa1 |
| 19 | Qxa1 | Ng6 |
| 20 | Ned4 | |

Black should now have destroyed White's game with 20 ... c5! driving the knight from d4 and preparing ... Ne5 and mate. He delays once more with this:

- | | | |
|----|------|-------|
| 20 | ... | N6e5 |
| 21 | c5! | dx c5 |
| 22 | bxc5 | Rad8 |

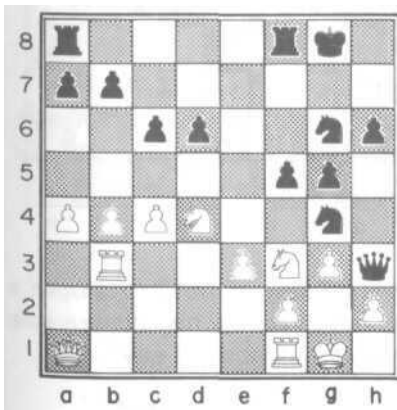


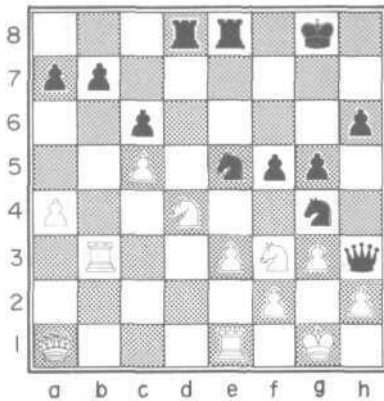
White's game still looks terminal with threats of 23 ... Rxd4 24 exd4 Nxf3 + 25 Rxf3 Qxh2 mate to cope with. He finds a defence, however.

23 Re1!

Now ... Rxd4 24 exd4 Nxf3 + 25 Rxf3 Qxh2 + gets Black nowhere as the f2 pawn is miraculously defended.

23 ... **Rfe8!**





At this point, with both sides short of time, the players could find nothing better than to agree a draw.

M. Basman-R. Hardy, Cambridge,
4 May 1980

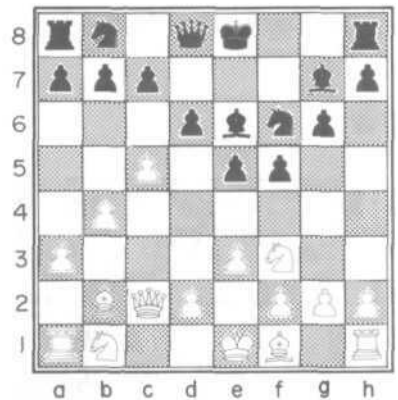
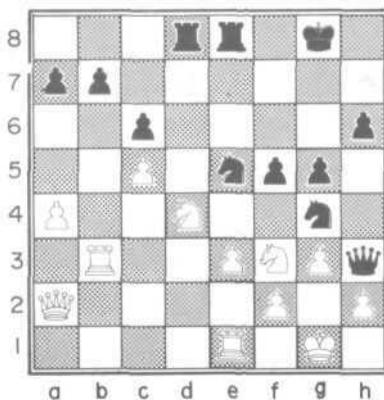
This renews the threat of ... Rxd4 as the white king would no longer be able to escape via e2.

24 Qa2!

White starts to embarrass the black king along the distant diagonal.

24 ... Kh8
25 Qb2 Kg8
26 Qa2

1 b4 e5
2 a3 g6
3 Bb2 Bg7
4 Nf3 d6
5 c4 f5
6 e3 Nf6
7 Qc2 Be6
8 c5

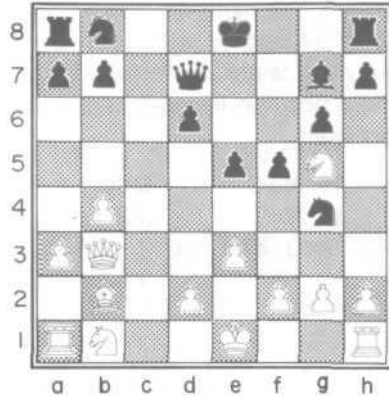


White plays c5 not just to open a file, but to ensure his knight a safe outpost later at d4, if needed.

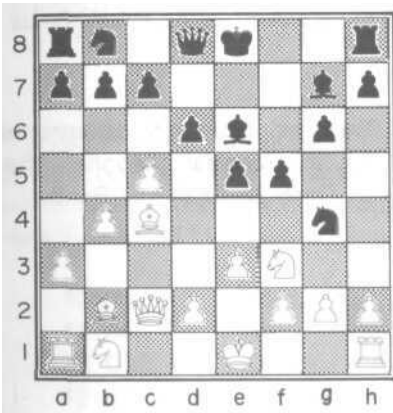
8 ... Ng4

Black intends to wander his knight back to f7, guarding the d6 pawn, but is running behind in development.

9 Bc4!



Probably the simple 13 Nc3 is better than this attempt to deny Black castling rights. Now Black made a recovery.



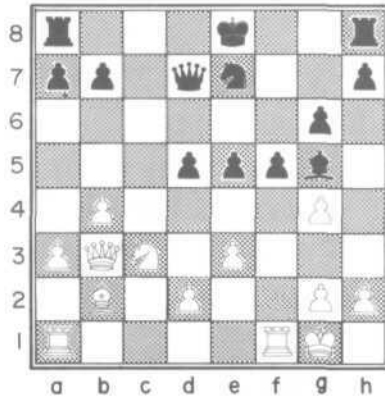
13 ... **Bf6!**
14 f3 **Bxg5?**

13 ... Nxe3 looks better here.

15 fxc4 **Nc6**
16 Nc3 **Ne7**
17 0-0 **d5**

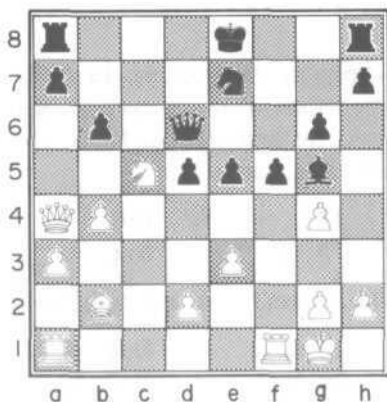
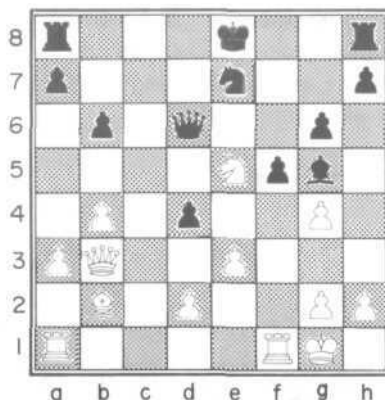
White begins to bid for the a2-g8 diagonal, especially as he sees Black may be prevented from castling.
9 ... d5 leaves the e-pawn weak.

9 ... **Qe7**
10 cxd6 **cxd6**
11 Bxe6 **Qxe6**
12 Ng5 **Qd7**
13 Qb3



Black has been able to block the queen's diagonal at b3, and is now ready to castle. Unfortunately, his whole position is too loose to support itself.

16 Na4! Qd6
 17 Nc5 b6
 18 Qa4+



Black resigns, due to catastrophe along the central diagonal after 21 ... Qxe5 22 Bxd4 and Bxh8.

Black must now at last move his king, as he cannot oppose queens without leaving the e-pawn en prise.

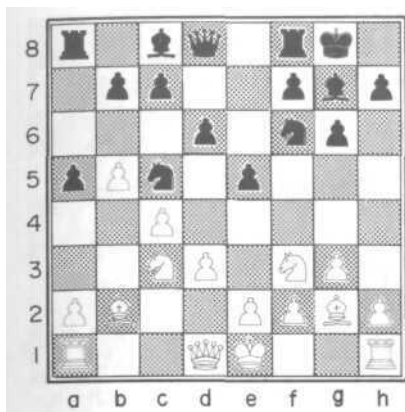
18 ... Kf7
 19 Nd7 d4
 20 Qb3+ Ke8?

20 ... Nd5 would be more resilient.

21 Nxe5

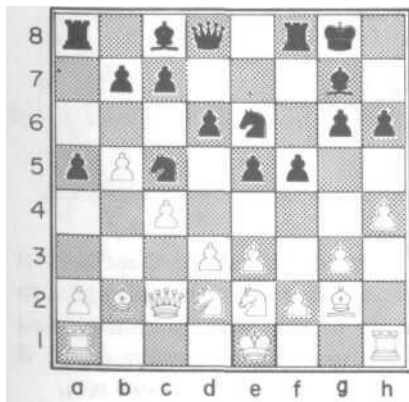
M. Basman-R. A. Lee, Exeter, 12 April 1980

1 b4	a5
2 b5	e5
3 Bb2	d6
4 g3	Nf6
5 Bg2	g6
6 c4	Nbd7
7 Nc3	Bg7
8 d3	0-0
9 Nf3	Nc5



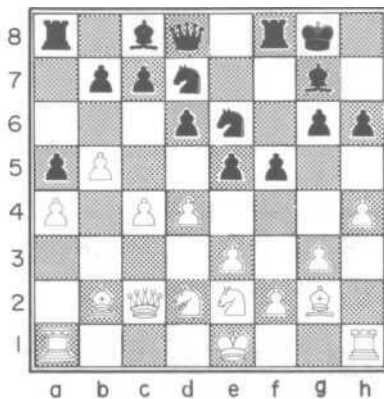
Though White has good central control on the white squares, he lags in development slightly, and is here threatened by ... e4.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 10 Nd2! | Nfd7 |
| 11 h4! | h6 |
| 12 Qc2 | Ne6 |
| 13 e3 | Ndc5 |
| 14 Ne2 | f5 |



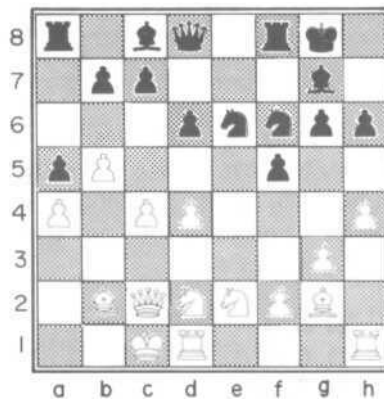
The game has taken a somewhat original turn, with White holding his king in the middle until the pawn positions have come to grips.

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 15 a4 | Nd7 |
| 16 d4! | |



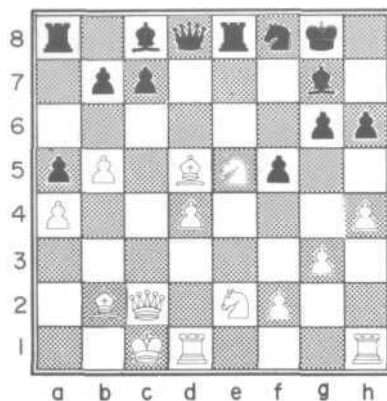
Black's knights now lose ground in the centre and White takes the initiative.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 16 ... | exd4 |
| 17 exd4 | Nf6 |
| 18 0-0-0 | |



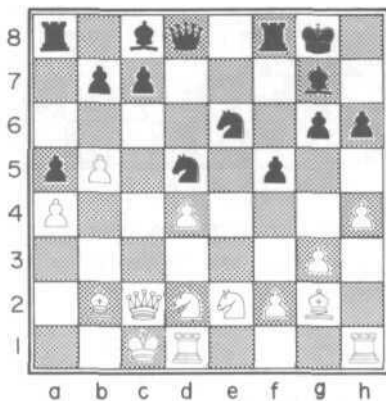
Though White's pawns are advanced in front of the king, castling queenside is justified here as Black has poor development and cannot easily open the files on that wing.

18 ... d5
19 cxd5 Nxd5



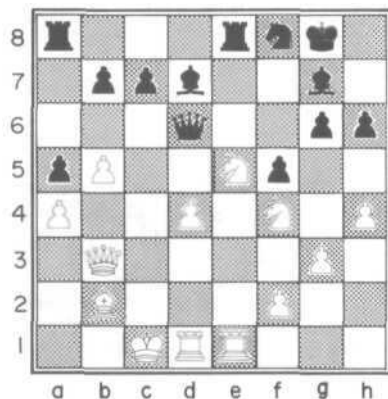
Parts with a marvellous bishop, but now the blockade at d5 is destroyed.

22 ... Qxd5
23 Nf4 Qd6
24 Rhe1 Bd7
25 Qb3+



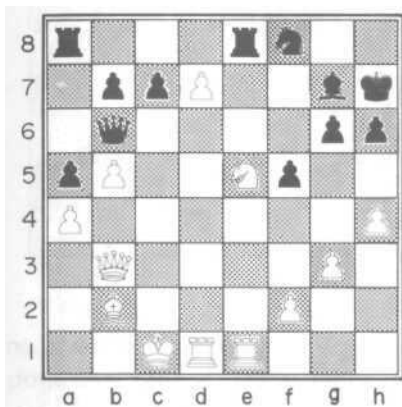
Apparently White's decision is strange, to allow Black a blocking knight at d5, but he is relying on his superior development to put Black out of the centre.

20 Nc4 Re8
21 Ne5 Nf8
22 Bxd5+



White can check on this diagonal despite not having a white square bishop to help with its control, due to his well placed knight at f4. if now 25 ... Kh7 26 Ba3 will win.

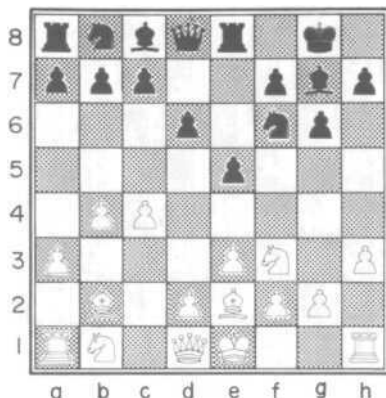
25 ... **Be6**
 26 **Nxe6** **Qxe6**
 27 **d5** **Qb6**
 28 **d6+** **Kh7**
 29 **d7** **Black**
 resigns.



The push through the centre reduces Black to pulp. However, his position is not that bad. It's just that after 29 ... Red8 30 h5 g5 31 f4 g4 32 Qc2 he hasn't any good moves.

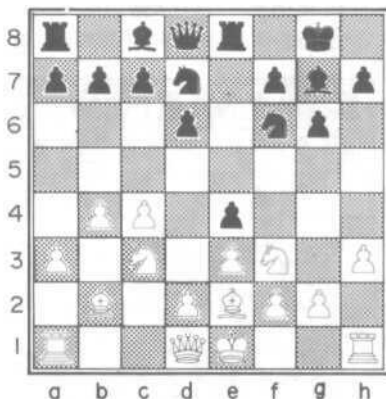
M. Basman-J. Kinlay, Manor Tyres, Bristol, 1980

1 **b4** **e5**
 2 **a3** **Nf6**
 3 **e3** **d6**
 4 **Nf3** **g6**
 5 **h3** **Bg7**
 6 **Bb2** **O-O**
 7 **c4** **Re8**



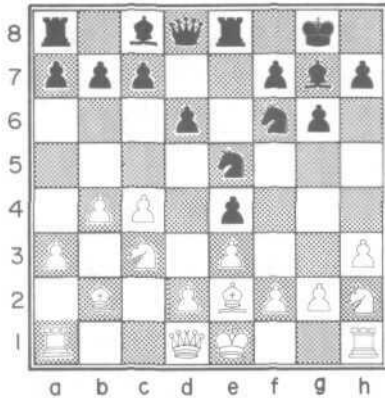
Unfortunately the bishop at b2 has little to bite on, and d4 by White is always answered by ... e4!

8 **Nc3** **Nbd7**
 9 **Be2** **e4**



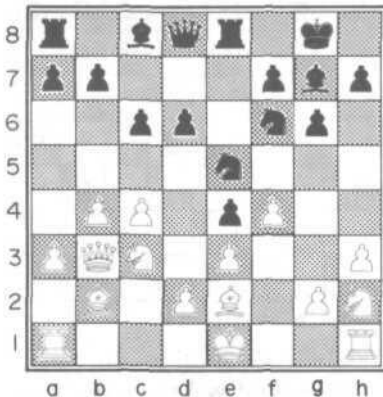
White has another problem in that his knight will not have a very secure outpost at d4, due to an eventual ... c5! by Black. So he chooses another spot, which is not too successful either.

10 **Nh2** **Ne5!**



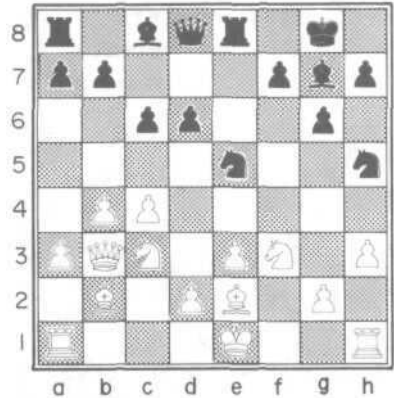
Against 11 Ng4 now, Kinlay demonstrated the idea 11 ... Nfxg4 12 hxg4 Bxg4! 13 Bxg4 Nd3+ 14 Kf1 Nxb2 15 Qb1 f5 with a good position for Black.

11 Qb3 **c6**
12 f4



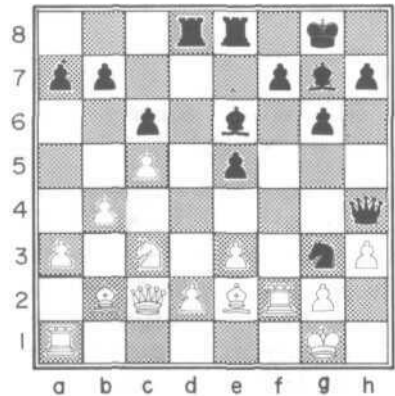
As White's plan of Ng4 doesn't work, and he is faced with threats of ... Be6 and ... b5, he tries another way of obtaining counterplay. This doesn't work either.

12 ... **exf3**
13 Nxf3 **Nh5**



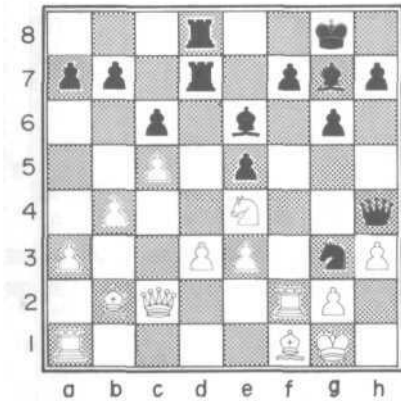
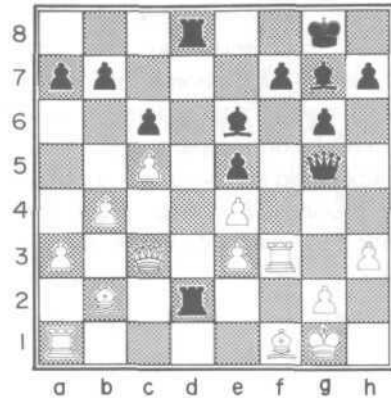
Simply threatening to come in on g3. White's king has no safe spot, so chooses the lesser evil.

14 0-0 **Ng3**
15 Rf2 **Be6!**
16 Nxe5 **dxe5!**
17 Qc2 **Qh4**
18 c5 **Rad8**



It is by now very hard to hold White's game together. Probably Black's most serious threat is to play ... Bf5-d3, exchange bishops and then double rooks on the open d-file.

- 19 Bf1 Rd7
 20 d3 Red8
 21 Ne4



By now Black was becoming frustrated by not having crashed White's defences, though he had reduced him to a state of moderate paralysis. His next move is based on a mating hallucination.

- 24 ... R8d3??
 25 Qxd3! Rxd3
 26 Bxd3

White starts to make concessions to keep Black off his back. He accepts doubled e-pawns rather than lose a pawn on the d-file.

- 21 ... Nxe4
 22 dxe4 Qg5
 23 Rf3 Rd2
 24 Qc3



Here Black destroyed his score sheet in disgust at the disappearance of a beautiful position. With two rooks against a queen, White is on equal terms, though Black could still have caused trouble by playing 26 ... Bb3! here threatening to invade along the queen file by 27 ... Qd8.

26 ... **Qd8**
 27 **Rd1!**

Now 27 ... Bc4 is answered by 28 Be2! and 27 ... Bb3 by Bc2!

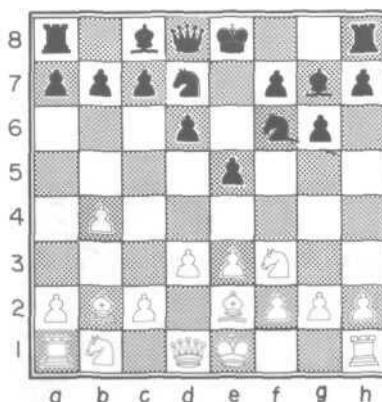
27 ... **Qh4**
 28 **Bc3** **Bb3**
 29 **Rd2** **Bh6**
 30 **Bf1** **Qxe4**
 31 **Rd8+** **Kg7**
 32 **Bd3**



Black here resigned. Prematurely.

M. Basman—McNab, Ilford, 24
 May 1980

1 **b4** **Nf6**
 2 **e3** **g6**
 3 **Bb2** **Bg7**
 4 **Nf3** **d6**
 5 **Be2** **e5**
 6 **d3** **Nbd7**



A very normal Close Sicilian set up by Black. But soon things change.

7 **a4** **0-0**
 8 **Nbd2** **Nd5**

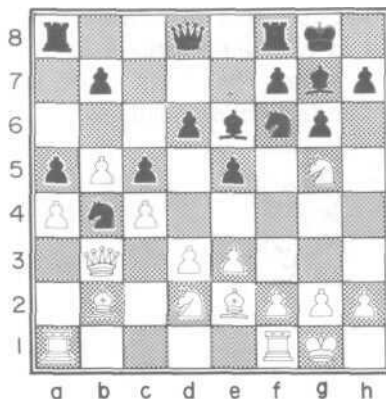


Black tries to strike against White's weak queenside pawns. This reacts against him, however, as he eventually loses time.

9 c3 a5
10 Qb3! N7f6
11 b5

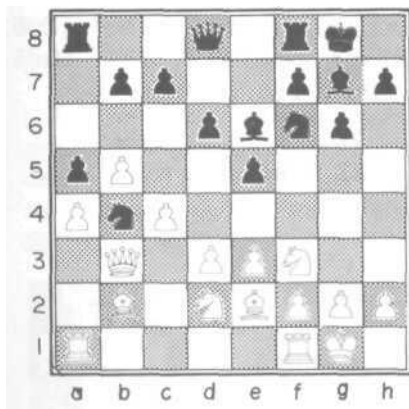
(Now Black cannot play ... Nc5 as his knight is on the wrong square.)

11 ... Be6
12 c4 Nb4
13 0-0



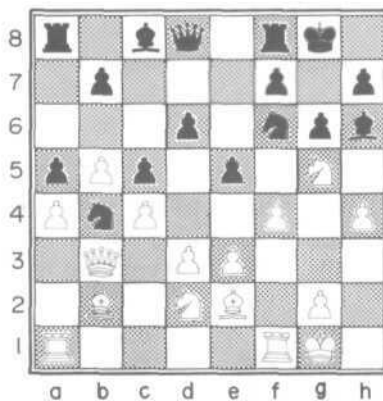
White begins to play his trumps - the long central white diagonal, the square e4, and the possibility of opening the f-file and the diagonal of his bishop at b2 by f4!

14 ... Bg4
15 f3 Bh6
16 h4 Bc8
17 f4!



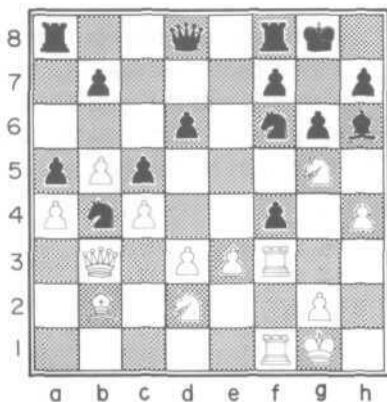
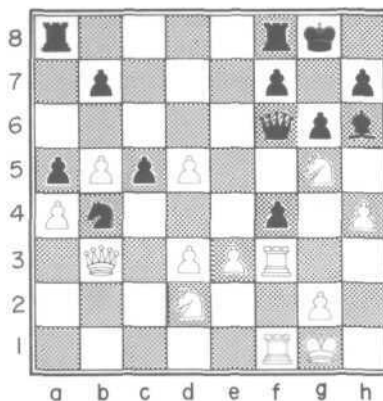
A strong black knight slightly off-side at b4.

13 ... c5
14 Ng5



Black's game is already critical due to his over-activity in the last few moves. His knight on f6 is in danger from two directions.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 17 ... | Bg4 |
| 18 Bf3! | Bxf3 |
| 19 Rxf3 | exf4 |
| 20 Raf1 | |

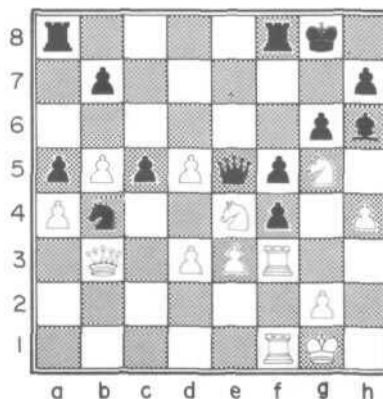


White has cleared the way for his knight to come to e4. Black must try for ... f5 himself, to cover f6, and thus 22...Bxg5? 23 Ne4 Qe5 24 hxg5 Nxd5? 25 Qxd5 Qxd5 26 Nf6+ is not recommended.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 22 ... | Qe5! |
| 23 Nde4 | f5! |

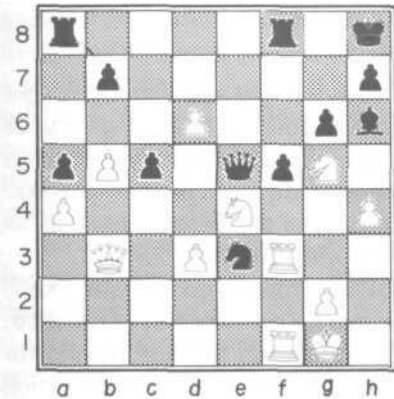
White has mobilized with lightning speed, exploiting the pin along the f-file. Black now wriggles hard.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 20 ... | d5! |
| 21 Bxf6! | Qxf6 |
| 22 cxd5 | |



The crisis: Black can still escape if he can drive White's attacking knight from e4. White resorts to tactics to keep up the impetus.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 24 d6+ | Kh8 |
| 25 Rxf4! | Nd5 |
| 26 R4f3 | Nxe3 |

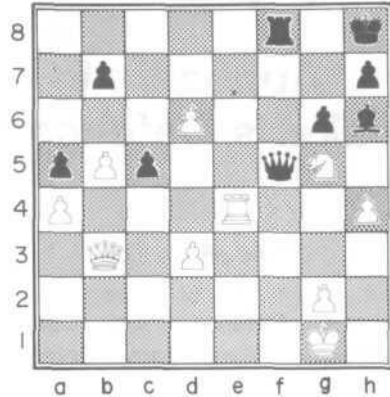


The pins, counterpins and forks are beginning to bewilder, but this sacrifice is O.K. for Black as long as he follows up 27 Rxe3 Bxg5! 28 hxg5 fxe4.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 27 Rxe3 | fxe4? |
|----------------|--------------|

Now the white knight becomes dangerous.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 28 Rxf8+ | Rxf8 |
| 29 Rxe4 | Qf5 |



- 30 Qe6!**

The decisive move. If Black allows the exchange of queens, the white d-pawn will win the ending.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 30 ... | Qf2+ |
| 31 Kh2 | Bg7 |
| 32 d7 | Bd4 |
| 33 Nf3! | Rxf3 |
| 34 d8=Q+ | Kg7 |
| 35 Qee7+ | Kh6 |
| 36 Qg5+ | Resigns |

Appendix I

Baker's Defence*

"1 e4 a6 2 d4 b5

Baker's Defense, St George Defense, 'Birmingham Defense'

1 ... a6 as a defense to 1 e4 is still very unusual. It astonished the chess world when Tony Miles not only dared to play it against World Champion Karpov in January, 1980, but he won the game (see 5-1 and 7-5, MOB Vol 1). That struck a resounding blow for popular acceptance of unusual openings.

However, we had already seen that Michael Basman had been successfully practicing the same idea (proceeding a6 with e6) in 1979 (1-1, MOB 1), and then, in our May, 1980, issue (6-1) we gave the game Steinitz-Baker, the same opening in 1868! It started 1 e4 a6 2 d4 b5 3 Nf3 Bb7 4 Bd3 e6 5 Nc3 c5 6 dxc5 Bxc5 7 a4 b4 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 0-0 Nge7 (0-1, 33). Black's play bears an amazing resemblance to that of Basman and Miles.

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Now, it might seem strange to get excited about an 1868 simultaneous exhibition, but I was truly excited on receiving the score of another Baker win, played at the same time as his game with Steinitz!

Thanks for this go to Frank Skoff, former USCF President, of Chicago. We are already grateful to him for other fine pieces of research which have appeared in earlier MOB's. He found the game score, together with an explanation of the circumstances under which it was played, in an issue of *Deutsche Schachzeitung* (No 23, December 1868).

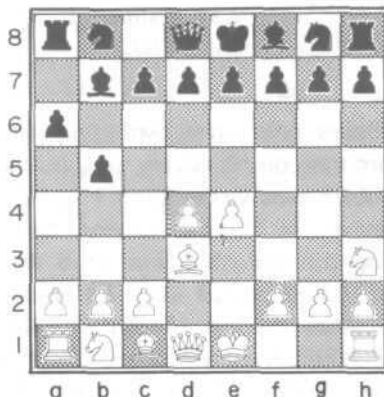
On Dec. 11, 1868, at the St James Club in London, Steinitz played an extraordinary sort of 'match' against Blackburne. Blackburne, whose 27th birthday had been celebrated just the day before, had already been playing blindfold chess for seven years. It had been a blindfold exhibition by Louis Paulsen which had inspired his enthusiasm for chess, and from then on Blackburne probably played

more blindfold exhibitions than anyone else has done.

On this occasion, he and Steinitz played just one game against each other, but at the same time they were playing five games (all, including their own game, without sight of the board) against the same group of five 'amateurs'. So each of them was playing a six-board blindfold simultaneous — but it wasn't too easy for the amateurs either, each of whom was playing simultaneously against two great masters!

The competition was a success for Blackburne. He and Steinitz drew their game, but in the other five he had three wins, one loss and one draw, while Steinitz had only a win, two draws, and two losses.

By now you will have guessed that both Blackburne and Steinitz lost to Baker -- and his 1 ... a6!



This odd-looking move isn't pointless. It entices Black to play the erroneous 4 .. f5? 5 exf5 Bxg2 6 Qh5+ g6 7 fxg6 Bg7 8 gh+ Kf8 9 Ng5 winning (9 ... Qe8 10 hxg8Q+ Rxg8 11 Nh7+ + or 9 ... Nh6 10 Rg1 Bb7 11 Rg4 or 11 Ne6+ dxe7 12 Rxg7). Baker shows good sense in continuing with what is *now* accepted as thematic development despite his not having been able to study books by the yet unborn Tartakower, Sokolsky, and Nimzowitsch.

White: **Blackburne** Black: **J. Baker**
Blindfold Simultaneous, London, 1868

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 1 e4 | a6 |
| 2 d4 | b5 |
| 3 Bd3 | Bb7 |
| 4 Nh3!? | |

- | | |
|-------|----|
| 4... | e6 |
| 5 0-0 | c5 |
| 6 c3 | d5 |

At this point, where we might prefer 6 ... Nf6, the opening becomes less interesting than that of Steinitz-Baker, but it's understandable if he felt that a more standard, French Defense-type of

development was justified by the knight placement on h3.

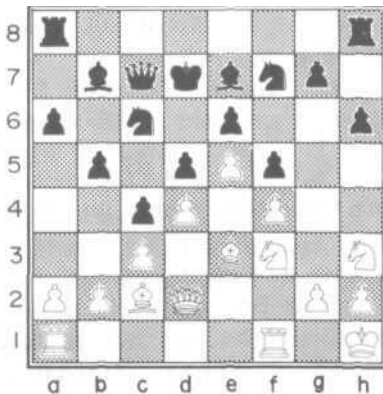
7 e5 f5

Baker gets away with this, and from then on plays very well, but no doubt it was worse than 7 ... Nc6. Maybe Blackburne, playing blindfold, thought that 7...f5 8 exf5 Nxf6 9 Re1 Bc8 was harder to calculate than 8 f4 (but 10 Ng5 11 Qe2), or that 8 ... Qxf6 was satisfactory, but Black's development isn't good enough to allow opening up of the game at this stage.

8 f4 Nh6
 9 Nd2 Nf7
 10 Nf3 h6
 11 Qe1 Nc6
 12 Be3 c4

Closing the queenside prior to concentrating on the kingside attack.

13 Bc2 Be7
 14 Kh1 Kd7
 15 Qd2 Qc7



16 Nf2 Rag8
 17 g3 Qd8
 18 a4 g5
 19 axb5 axb5
 20 Rg1 g4
 21 Ne1 h5
 22 Kg2 h4
 23 Kf1 hxg3
 24 hxg3 Rh2
 25 Ke2 Qb6
 26 Kdl b4
 27 Ng2 b3
 28 Kc1

Maybe this was a blunder due to playing blindfold, or maybe it was an excuse to get it over with. White's game was very bad.

28 ... bxc2
 29 Qxc2 Kc7
 30 Kd2 Na5

0-1

Frank Skoff conjectured that perhaps no one has ever matched Baker's feat of simultaneously defeating two masters of the category of Blackburne and Steinitz. Of course, his opening wasn't taken seriously. He wasn't a professional player, and this was a blindfold exhibition, even if it was a sort of a match between the two stars. Under ordinary circumstances it would be ridiculous to even consider naming an opening after someone because he used it in a simultaneous exhibition. This could be an exception. Baker's success

with 1 e4 a6 2 d4 b5 is in a class by itself, and his handling of the opening, especially against Steinitz, conforms with modern practice. All I know about Baker is that his first name was John, and that he was an official of the British Chess Association. We'll hope that more of his games will be located.

Here is a recent example of this opening, played in June of this year. Notes are by Gerard Welling.

White: P. Kok Black: **G. Welling**
Holland, 1981

1 d4	e6
2 Nf3	b5
3 e4	a6
4 Bd3	c5
5 c3	Bb7
6 0-0	Nf6
7 Qe2	Nc6
8 a4	

Earlier this year we drew a close game after 8 d5 Ne7 9 dxe6 (Ed. **Note:** After 8 d5 Ne7, White could get in serious trouble with something such as 9 d6 Ng6 10 e5 Ng4 11 Bxg6 [11 h3 Bxf3] hxg6 12 h3 Bxf3 13 gxf3 Nh6 [Qh4 14 fxg4 Qxh3 15 f4 Qh1 + 16 Kf2 Rh2+ 17 Kg3 is only good for perpetual check], then Nf5 and/or Qh4).

8 ...	cx d4
9 axb5	

9 Nxd1? (9 cxd4 Nb4 10 axb5 Nxd3.)

9 ...	axb5
10 Rxa8	Qxa8
11 Bxb5	

11 cxd4 Nb4, 11 Nxd4 Nxd4
12 cxd4 Bxe4, 11 e5 Nd5= +.

11 ...	Na7!
--------	-------------

A very strong move: not good was 11 ... dxc3 12 Nxc3 and then e5, the move played initiates a powerful attack on the white squares.

12 Nxd4	
---------	--

One variation I calculated was 12 e5 Bxf3 13 gxf3 Nxb5 14 exf6 gxf6 15 Qxb5 Rg8+ 16 KM Qxf3 + + .

12 ...	Bxe4
13 Bg5!	

Not so good is 13 Nd2 Bxg2 and Nxe6 does not work.

13 ...	Bc5!
--------	-------------

Another powerful one. 13 ... Be7 14 f3 does not give anything concrete, nor 13 ... Bxg2 because White then has the dangerous sacrifice 14 Nxe6 (threat Nxe7 or Nc7 +) fxe6 15 Qxe6 + Be7 (Kd8 16 Qd7+ +) 16 Bxf6 gxf6 17 Bxd7+ followed by Re1.

13 ... Bc5 plans something like 14 f3 Bxb1 15 Rxb1 Bxd4 + 16 cxd4 Nxb5, but 17 Bxf6 is not clear, 14 ... Nxb5 15 Qxb5 Bxd4 + 16 cxd4 Bc6 may be a better try for an advantageous endgame — your opinion?

14 Bxf6 gxf6
15 Nxe6?

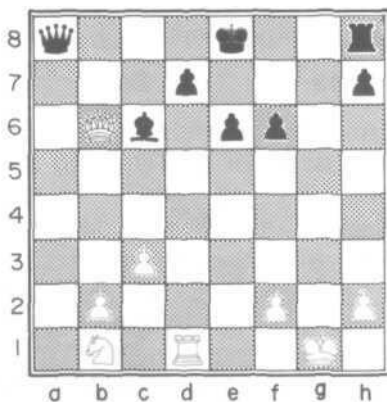
I hoped for that one - - it's a positional trap. No good either was 15 Nd2 Bxg2 16 Nxe6 Bxf1 after 17 Bxd7+ Kxd7 18 Nxc5+ Kc6 19 Nxf1 Kxc5, or 17 ... Ke7 18 Nxf1 fxe6 19 Qxe6+ Kd8 winning.

15 ... fxe6
16 Qh5+ Kd8
17 Qxc5 Nxb5
18 Qxb5 Bxg2

The climax of Black's white squared strategy.

19 Rd1 Bc6
20 Qb6+ Ke8

Behind the central fortress.



21 Qd4

Black had the nasty threat of a beautiful win by 21 ... Qa4 22 Qb8+ (22 Rd4 Rg8+ 23 Kf1 Bb5+ 24 Ke1 Rg1 + winning) Kf7

23 Rxd7+ Bxd7 24 Qxh8 Qd1+ 25 Kg2 Bc6+ 26 Kg3 Qg1 + 27 Kh3 (Kf4 Qg5++) Qg2+ 28 Kh4 Qg5+ 29 Kh3 Bg2++! Well, that is what I planned during the game; now I see that instead of the nice mate in 6 at move 24 Black would have a simple mate in 3 by 24 ... Qg4+ 25 Kf1 Bb5+ 26 Ke1 Qe2++. A pity.

21 ... Rg8+
22 Kf1 Qb8!

Attacking h2 and b2, the queen has exerted heavy pressure from a back rank post all the game through, and she will not leave it!

23 f4

23 Nd2 Qxh2 24 Nc4 Rg1 + 25 Ke2 Qh5+ wins.

23 ... Rg4
24 Ke2 Rxf4

0-1

Although that game by Welling transposed from the Polish Defense I believe that it deserves to be included in any future book on 1 e4 a6."

BAKER'S DEFENCE???

"In the 3/10 BCM, Hartston calls it the "Only Defence" (tongue in cheek, of course), saying that

'Reprinted with permission from *Myers Openings Bulletin*, Volume 1, Number 6.

Karpov's openings are "so well worked out" that this "might be considered the only defence to Karpov's 1 e4". Others in Great Britain, such as Barden and *Chess*, have started to call it the Birmingham Defence because Miles, who defeated Karpov with it, is from Birmingham, in England.

I find it hard to go along with that because I believe that in the interest of consistency place names should be given to openings either because the initial use of an opening was by different players in a particular tournament or place, or because the original analysis and practice of it was by a group of players, and it isn't possible to fairly honour only one.

Michael Basman is selling cassettes which teach the play of this defence. He calls it "St. George's Opening", another indirect tribute to Miles for having slain the Russian dragon, Karpov. I grant Basman the right to name the defence in respect to his having used the system more than anyone else (although his preference has been to precede ... a6 and/or... b5 with ... e6), and he is generous to not attach his own name to it. Yet while admiring the poetic inspiration of the name, for a couple of reasons I disagree with it (unless, perhaps, the Champion Dragon was an earlier one than Karpov?). The first reason, which a slight rewording could easi-

ly answer, is that traditionally the word "Opening" implies a specific action by White, while "Defence" would be used for one by Black. More seriously, there might be some confusion because there is already fairly common usage of the name "St. George's Attack" to describe White's attack against king's fianchettoes by h2-h4-h5, especially in the Sicilian Defence, Dragon variation.

The naming of openings may be a relatively minor matter for many, just as giving names to symphonies or paintings isn't important for those who don't care about music or art, but for those who do, it is useful to call something "La Mer" or "The Mona Lisa" so that they will know what you are talking about. Naming openings has the same purpose, with the added importance that chess players look them up in the indices of magazines and books more frequently than fans of music and art look for the names of their favourites. True, recently there is an international tendency to ignore the openings' names, classifying them by codes of letters and numbers, or indexing them by simply listing their moves. Doing that makes sense but so does the maintenance of chess tradition. "King's Indian" or "Ruy Lopez" have clear meanings for anyone who has studied chess at all. It would make for a tedious conversation if recitations of moves had

to be substituted for those words. I don't think that the naming of openings is about to be abandoned.

As well as the purpose of utility, there is the matter of naming openings in order to honour those who first played them. Unfortunately, such naming has often been done by people who either didn't care who first played them or by players who were honouring themselves.

From the standpoint of invention, we now know that there is very little justification for giving the names of Ruy Lopez, Philidor, Alekhine, and Nimzovich to openings which bear their names. Nevertheless, it wouldn't be practical to change the names of those openings now, and some misnaming doesn't change the fact that there are a lot of variations which have the names of people who really do deserve credit for them.

I don't think that I'm alone in believing that it's worth the trouble to keep trying to find the earliest examples of particular openings; I have respect for innovators whose names have been replaced by those of copiers. Of course, an originator might merit less distinction than a follower who practiced the opening with greater frequency, understanding and success, but that doesn't mean that the originator's contribution should be ignored or forgotten.

Precedent should be a prime consideration when naming an opening or an apparently new variation. I wish it were possible to postpone the naming for at least a year, first doing research to find out if it had already been played. The informality of the naming procedure makes that impractical. The best that I can hope is that publications such as this one can exert some influence through the presentation of historical facts.

At the end of Vol. 1, No. 5 I said that the books, meaning books on openings, were silent regarding 1 e4 a6 and I believe that to be correct. It isn't surprising, however, that it has been played in the past. Hartston, in the 3/80 British Chess Magazine mentioned Rubinstein-Gunsberg, St. Petersburg 1914: 1 d4 a6 2 e4 d5 3 ed Qxd5 4 Nc3 Qa5 5 Nf3 c6. That deferred Center Counter was time-wasting and not at all satisfactory for Black; it's not relevant to the systems employed by Miles against Karpov and by Basman against Grunfeld. It's one more example of how one move (1 ... a6) does not an opening make.

An Englishman defeated the World Champion with a strange opening. Another Englishman also played it, winning against another World Champion, a very long time ago. Here is that game:

White: **Steinitz** Black: **J. Baker**
London, 1868

1 e4 **a6**
2 d4 **b5**
3 Nf3 **Bb7**
4 Bd3

Up to this point, it's identical to Karpov-Miles. Black's next half a dozen moves conform to Basman's preferences.

4 ... **e6**
5 Nc3 c5
6 **dx**c5 **Bxc5**
7 a4 **b4**
8 Ne2 **Nc6**
9 0-0 **Nge7**
10 Ng3 **Qc7**
11 Qe2 **h5**
12 Be3 **Bd6**
13 Rfe1 **f6**
14 Nd2 **h4**
15 Ngf1 **Na5**
16 Nb3 **g5**
17 Bd4 **e5**

Black's handling of his attack was remarkable; to this point I wouldn't criticize much except 15 ... Na5. Not having kept pressure on e5 and d4 made him decide to close the h2-b8 diagonal with 17 ... e5 (not wanting 17 ... Kf7 18 e5). It turns out well, but blockading with 17 ... Be5 might be preferable.

18 Be3 **Ng6**
19 Nxa5 **Qxa5**
20 Nd2 **Nf4**

21 Bxf4 **gxf4**
22 Nc4 **Qc5**
23 Nxd6+ **Qxd6**
24 Rad1 **Qe7**
25 h3 **Qg7**
26 Bc4 **Rc8**
27 Rd2

This is a blunder, although L. Backmann's suggestion 27 Bd5 would also lose to 27 ... Rxc2! 28 Qxc2 f3 29 g3 hxg3 etc. After 27 f3 Rg8 28 Rd2 Qg3 White would still have troubles.

27 ... **f3**
28 Qxf3 Rxc4
29 Qf5 **Rg8**
30 f3 **Rd4**
31 Rde2 **Ke7**
32 Rf2 **Qg3**
33 Qh7+ **Rg7**

White resigns

That game, found by the indefatigable Frank Skoff, is from Ludwig Bachmann's *Schachmeister Steinitz*, Vol. 1 (1910). It was played on December 11, 1868 at the St. James Club in London.

Steinitz played without sight of the board. Because of the apparently informal circumstances of the game, and the obscurity of Baker (I have not found out anything about him yet), it would be premature to suggest that the defence in question be given Baker's name, but there are these things to be considered.

1. The high category of the loser, Steinitz.

2. The fact that Baker's play of the opening, right into the middle game, agrees with recent handling of this defence, and could have been played by Baker or someone else.
3. The game having been played as long ago as 1868 means that there have been a lot of years since then in which the defence So my conclusion is that naming the defence should await further research — or let Basman call it St. George's Defence because Englishmen use it to defeat World Champions — every century or so!

Appendix II

Owen's Defence

Rehabilitating 1 ... b6

...is not particularly easy. Here is Tony Miles getting the worst of it in a game where he plays the system a move in hand (because White started off with the Colle system).

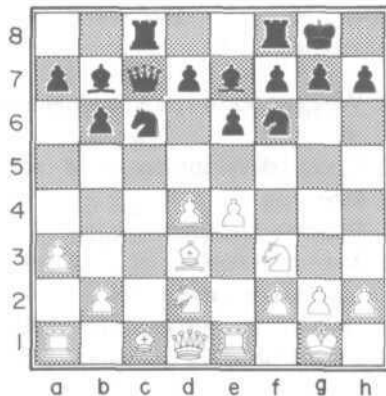
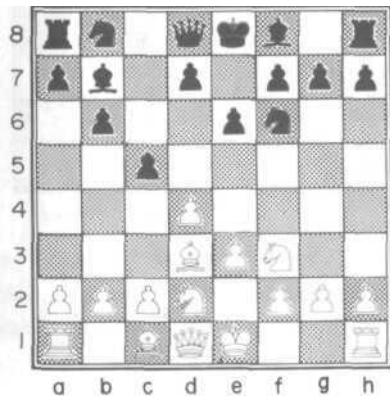
M. Franklin-A. Miles

1	d4	Nf6
2	Nf3	e6
3	e3	b6
4	Nbd2	Bb7
5	Bd3	c5

6	c3	Be7
7	e4	Nc6
8	a3	cxd4
9	cxd4	

By exchanging at d4 Black ensures his knight a post at d5 if White should play e5.

9 ...	Qc7
10 0-0	Rc8
11 Re1	0-0



Black's massing on the c-file is not particularly dangerous as his entry points are controlled by the white bishops. The difference between this position and an Open Sicilian is the white pawn at d4 rather than c2 -- a considerable advantage to White.

In the first place the pawn at d4 prevents occupation of the squares e5 and c5 by black pieces. In the second place, there is no white pawn at c2 to put pressure on, and thirdly Black's queen is not particularly happy on the open file as she can be driven away later by a white rook.

A further problem is Black's lack of sensible pawn breaks or advances. Without these Black must follow a waiting policy, whilst White gradually mobilizes with Nf1-g3, b4, Bb2, Qe2, etc.

Black's ... d5 can always be answered by e5. The position is well known from the French defence as being unsatisfactory for Black as White enjoys the following advantages.

1. Well supported pawns at d4 and e5.
2. Good development and safe king.
3. Space advantage.
4. Neutralization of Black's pressure on the c-file.
5. Lack of an outpost for Black's knight on the queenside; b4 is

denied, and Na5-c4 is prevented by b3.

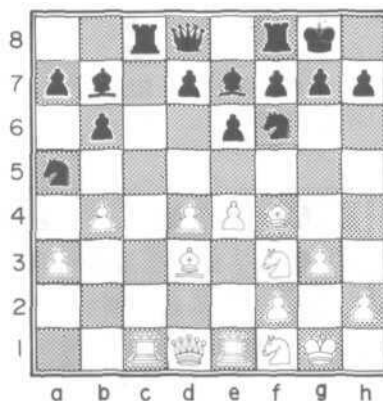
6. Good bishop at d3, striking at Black's kingside.
7. Difficulties for Black in undermining White's centre after ... d5, e5 Nd7 and later ... f6, because the pawn at e6 is not defended by the black queen's bishop.

Back to the game.

12 Nf1 Nh5

A rather piteous attempt to encourage a weakening of the long white diagonal.

13 g3 Nf6
14 Bf4 Qd8
15 Rc1 Na5
16 b4



The second black knight's attempt to find work further afield than the third rank grinds to a quick halt.

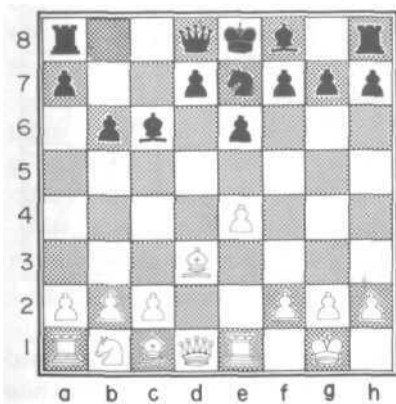
16 ...	Rxc1
17 Bxc1	Nc6
18 Bb1	d5

And White won in 49 moves more, though Miles would not supply any more of them. Presumably after 19 e5 if Black plays ... Ne4 (threatening ... Nc3) White can answer 20 Qd3 followed by Nd2, prising away the knight.

On a merrier note, here are a couple of Miles's quickies with ... b6 systems.

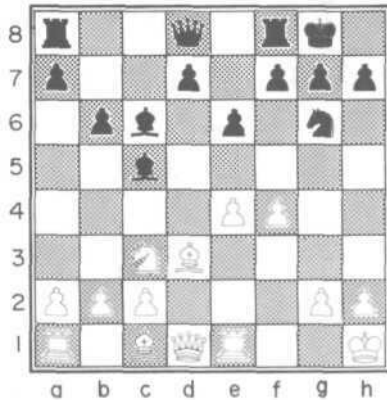
Ripley-Miles, Birmingham, 1975

1 d4	e6
2 e4	b6
3 Nf3	Bb7
4 Bd3	c5
5 0-0?	Ne7
6 Re1	cxd4
7 Nxd4	Nbc6
8 Nxc6	Bxc6



White has allowed the position to become an Open Sicilian, by failing to support his centre with c3. Black's counter chances are much greater.

9 Nc3	Ng6
10 f4	Bc5+
11 Kh1	0-0



Now White commits hara kiri on the central diagonals.

12 e5	Qh4!
13 Be4	Bf2!
14 Rf1	Bg3
15 h3	Nxf4

White resigns

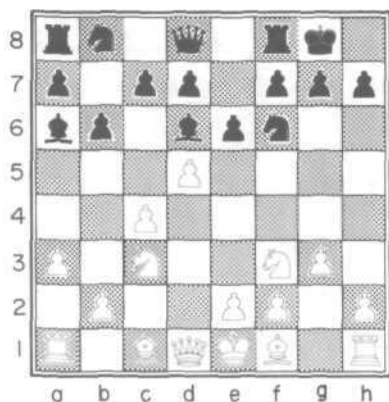
The f-pawn has just gone and the e-pawn looks like it will be next.

Goodman-Miles, Islington, 1974

- | | |
|-------|-----|
| 1 d4 | b6 |
| 2 c4 | Bb7 |
| 3 Nc3 | e6 |
| 4 a3 | Nf6 |
| 5 d5 | Bd6 |
| 6 Nf3 | |

In a similar position Karpov played 6 Bg5 here.

- | | |
|-------|-------------|
| 6 ... | 0-0 |
| 7 g3 | Ba6! |

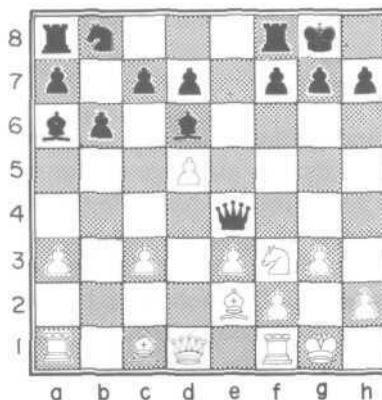


Black starts to annoy. If White defends with 8 b3 Black may think of 8 ... exd5 9 Nxd5 Nxd5 10 Qxd5 Qf6 11 Rb1 Nc6.

8 e3

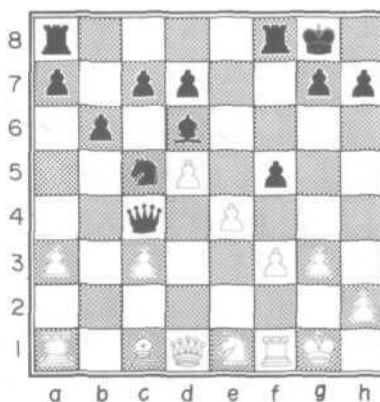
Now White is not sure which way his king's bishop is going.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 8 ... | Qe7! |
| 9 Be2 | exd5 |
| 10 cxd5 | Ne4! |
| 11 0-0 | Nxc3 |
| 12 bxc4 | Qe4! |



White's split queenside pawn structure gives Black many potential outposts for his pieces.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 13 Bxa6 | Nxa6 |
| 14 Ne1 | Nc5 |
| 15 f3 | Qc4 |
| 16 e4 | f5! |



Black's pieces are nicely positioned at c4, c5 and d6 in front of the white

pawns, and now Black opens up the position for his remaining pieces - the rooks.

17 exf5 **Rxf5**
18 Qc2 **Re5!**
White
resigns

Black does not even bother to snap up the stray pawn at d5, but simply intends to invade down the e-file to e2.

A marvellously sharp attack by Miles and the three games taken together show how crucial pawn structure is in determining the course of battle.

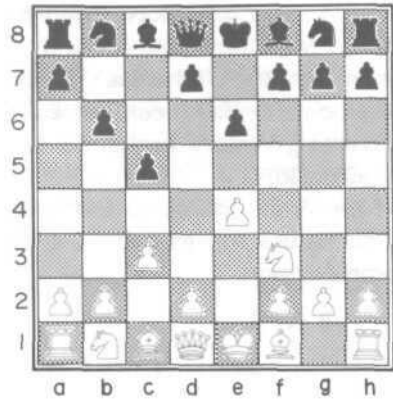
However, to find a solution to our theoretical problem of Black's counterplay in the lines where White defends his centre with c3, we turn first to the game Formanek-lan Wells, Benedictine International 1981.

In this game Black plays ... b6 but delays the move .. Nf6, instead shoring up his e5 square with moves such as ... d6, ... Nd7, ... Qc7.

Later he finds a counter attacking plan for Black in the moves ... g7-g5 and ... 0-0-0, in all gaining a convincing victory.

The game begins as a Sicilian, where White tries the c3 line.

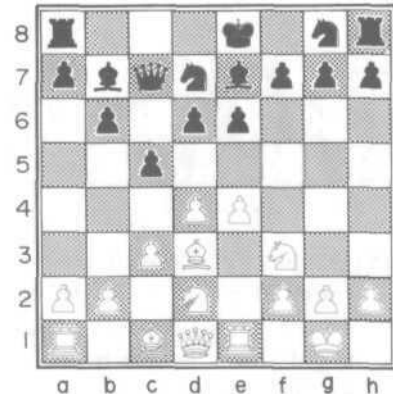
1 e4 c5
 2 Nf3 e6
 3 c3 b6



4 d4 Bb7
 5 Bd3 d6

Black's idea is to bring his knight to d7 where it is less exposed and does not interfere with the bishop's diagonal.

6 0-0 Nd7
 7 Re1 Be7
 8 Nbd2 Qc7



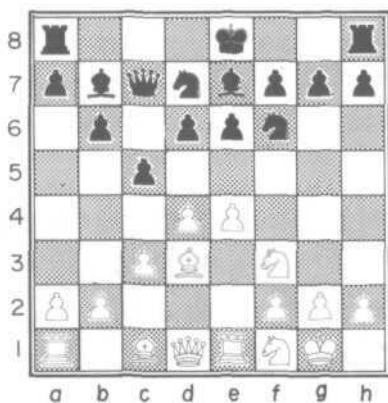
So far self explanatory. White has castled and mobilized behind his pawn centre, whereas Black's development has been aimed at preventing White's further advance by e5 or d5.

Now White has come to the end of his natural moves and must take some decision.

9 Nf1

One wonders how Black might have continued in the event of White's 9 e5, to shut the knight in at g8. Possibly Black would have chosen 9 ... dxe5 10 dxe5 g5 undermining the knight's defence of the e5 pawn.

9 ... Ngf6



At last Black develops it. Here the sequence 10 e5 Nd5 11 c4 Nb4 12 Bb1 only allows Black to transfer the knight to c6, where it usefully attacks the white e-pawn.

10 Qe2

White continues a waiting policy. Which way will the black king go? Both the queenside and the kingside look dangerous havens.

10 ... h6!?

Defensive or aggressive? Is Black simply guarding the g5 square, or does he intend a pawn advance on the kingside?

11 h3

This doesn't look right, as it only encourages the advance ... g5, ... g4 by Black.

11 ... 0-0-0

At last the waiting is over. Black hoists his petard and nails his colours to the mast. It's going to be a slugfest between kingside and queenside attacks.

12 e5!?

White's natural plan looks to be the advance b4/a4/a5 and Ba6, all as in the Sicilian Dragon variation. Black's counter play on the other wing looks comparatively slow.

Possibly in that event Black should endeavour to block the queenside before trying his kingside attack. A likely sequence would be 12 b4 c4!? 13 Bc2 (13 Bxc4 Nxe4) Rde8 (this is to safeguard the bishop at e7 in event of a later ... d5) 14 a4 a6. Now a5 is blocked by ... b5 and

... b5 is blocked by a5, so instead White attacks the black c-pawn.

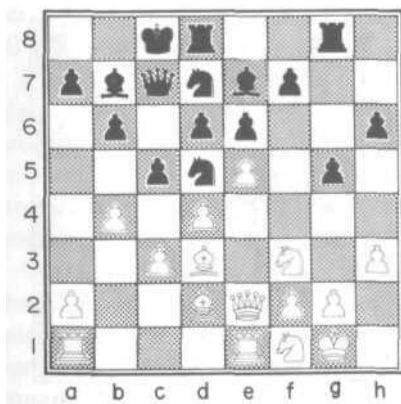
14 Nfd2d5! After which, if White plays 15 exd5 exd5 he finds the bishop at e7 is untakable.

Still there need be no reason perhaps, to take such immediate and dubious defensive measures.

What if Black should prosecute his own counter attack by 12 b4 g5 13 a4 Rhg8! 14 a5 g4 15 hxg4 Rxc4 16 axb6 axb6 17 Ba6 Rdg8 18 Ng3 h5 when Black has as dangerous an attack as White. This analysis seems to show that White's 11 h3 was one luxury too many, allowing Black to castle and open the g-file for his rooks.

Back to the game, after White's 12 e5.

12 ...	Nd5
13 Bd2	g5
14 b4	Rhg8



White's problem is that he would like to play bxc5 and open the b-file, but Black does not oblige by recapturing ... bxc5 but takes back with the d-pawn. Hence White first eliminates Black's d-pawn, which, however, enhances the scope of Black's pieces.

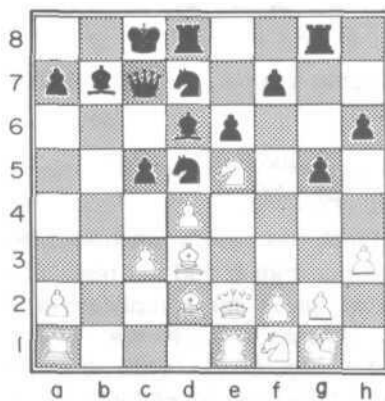
15 exd6	Bxd6
16 bxc5	bxc5

White's 17 Rab1 g4 18 hxg4 Rxc4 19 Ba6 Nd7b6 is not immediately decisive as Black has still blocked the b-file and after 20 a4 Rdg8 counterattacks.

Therefore, White returns to his central plan, but overlooks tactical threats against his g2.

17 Ne5

Perhaps White thought this move would keep the g-file closed by preventing ... g4.



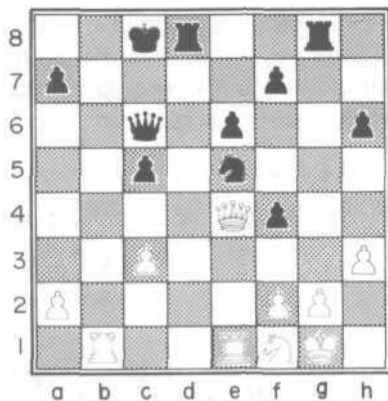
17 ... Nf4!

Decisively opening the g-file.
White has to lose a pawn.

18 Bxf4 gx4
19 Be4

19 f3 also loses a pawn due to
19 ... Bxe5 20 dxe5 Nxe5 21 Qxe5
Rxd3.

19 ... Bxe5
20 dxe5 Nxe5
21 Rab1 Bxe4
22 Qxe4 Qc6!



Same theme. If 23 Qxc6+ Qxg2
mate.

23 Qxc6+ Nxc6
24 Rb5

Black has won a pawn with the
superior ending and the rest of the
game, given for completeness, is
not relevant to our theme.

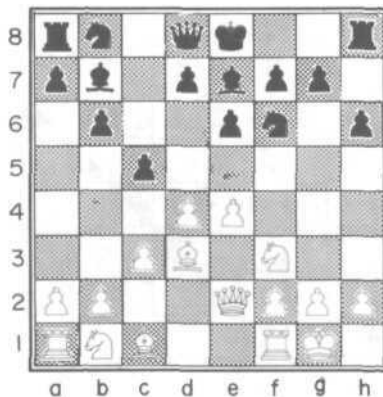
24 ... Rg5 25 Nh2 Rd3 26 h4 Rf5
27 Rc1 Kc7 28 Nf3 a6 29 Rb3 Rfd5

30 Kh2 65 31 Rcb1 e4 32 Ng1 Nd8
33 Nh3 Rf5 34 Ra3 e3 35 Rxa6 Nc6
36 Ra4 e2 37 Re1 f3 38 Ng1 Rd1 39
Nxf3 Rxf3 40 Rxe2 Rxc3 41 Rf4
Rd7 42 Rf6 h5 43 Rh6 Rd5 44 Rf6
Ne5 45 f3 Rcd3 46 Rf5 Kd6
47 Rf6+ Ke7 48 Rf5 Ke6 49 Rxh5
Kf6 50 Rh6+ Ng6 51 Rh7 Rd2
52 Re4 R5d4 53 Rxd4 cxd4
54 Kg3 d3 55 h5 Nf8 56 Rh6+
Ke7 57 Ra6 Rxd2+! 0-1

Another more orthodox attempt
to play 1 ... b6 occurred at the Ex-
eter tournament, March 1982.

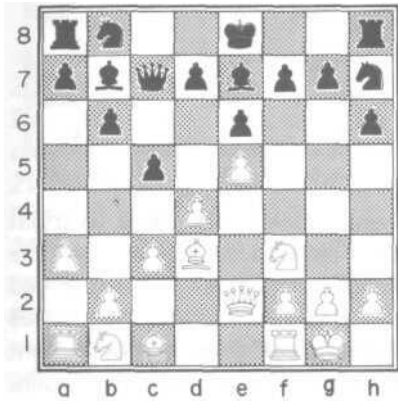
M. L. Hebden-M. Basman

1 e4 b6
2 d4 Bb7
3 Bd3 e6
4 Nf3 Nf6
5 Qe2 c5
6 c3 Be7
7 0-0 h6



The coup de resistance. The square h7 is to be reserved for the black knight.

8 a3 **Qc7**
 9 e5 **Nh7**



White decides now to force the knight into the corner as if he delays and plays say b4 or Nbd2, then after an eventual e5 the black knight will be able to go to d5 after all. Of course, in this position if 9 ... Nd5?? 10 c4 wins a piece.

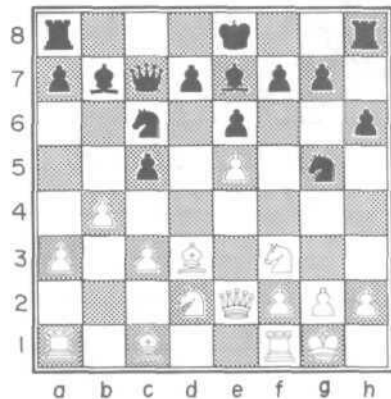
Black's knight at h7 is not out of play, as it can come to g5 and put pressure on f3. Because White has castled he cannot plan h4 here, to limit the knight at h7, because of the answer ... g5.

We must assume (act of faith) that the exchange 10 Bxh7 here, misplacing the black rook, does not compensate for the loss of the white square bishop.

10 dxc5 bxc5

White plans to utilize the c4 square for a knight.

11 Nbd2 Nc6
12 b4 Ng5



An awkward moment for White who cannot exchange the knight on g5 without opening the h-file. Meanwhile the pressure on the e5 pawn mounts.

13 Rb1!

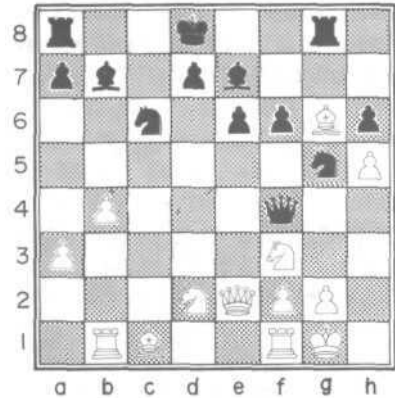
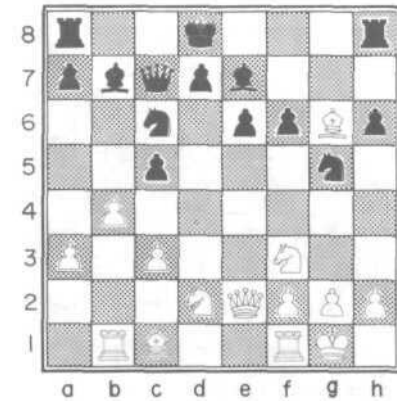
Prevents Black castling queenside in view of the rapid attack along the b-file after Ba6.

13 ... f5!?

White must accept this challenge, since if he leaves the pawn at f5, it will control the e4 square and block

the diagonal of the bishop at d3 and Black would then be able to castle on the kingside.

14 exf6 **gxf6**
15 Bg6+ **Kd8**

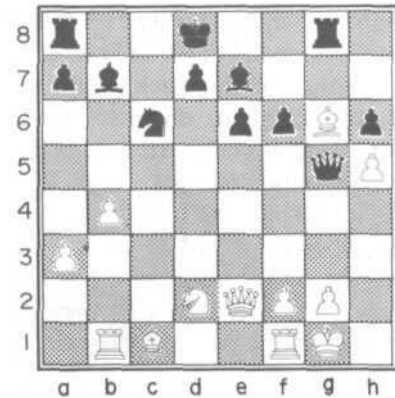


Now Black's task force (without rooks) aims to do White over. The immediate threat is ... Qg4 followed by ... Nh3+ or ... Nd4. Discoveries against Black's queen by knight moves from d2 do not affect much.

19 Nxd2 **Qxg5**

Black's king is now (ultimately) badly placed in the centre, and all depends on whether he can mount an attack along the g-file (with bishop at b7 and rook at g8). White therefore takes steps to block the g-file.

16 h4! **Rg8!**
17 h5!



Mission accomplished. But we have other ways of making you squeak.

17 ... **cxb4**
18 cxb4 **Qf4!?**

The threat is now 20 ... Nd4 and in Qxg2 mate. Against this 20 Nf3 is hopeless because of 20 ... Nd4 21 Nxd2 Nxe2+ and Black wins a

piece. A much better try is 20 Ne4! with the variation 20 ... Nd4 21 Qd3! Qd5 22 Bb2! f5 23 Qxd4 Qxd4 24 Bxd4 Bxe4 35 Rbc1 when White has the advantage due to his well placed bishop at d4, and queenside majority.

However, Black does not need to lurch in immediately with 20 ... Nd4. He can first play 20 ... Qd5 when White's choice of moves is less favourable if 21 Bb2 f5 22 Nf6 Nd4! or if 21 Rd1 Nd4 22 Qd3 f5 23 Qxd4 Qxd4 24 Rxd4 Bxe4. In this position nothing has changed from the last main variation except that White now has an ungainly rook instead of a bishop at d4 which gives Black the advantage as he can quickly bring his own bishop at e7 to life with ... Bf6.

Returning to the game (last diagram) we are about to see an imperfect finish.

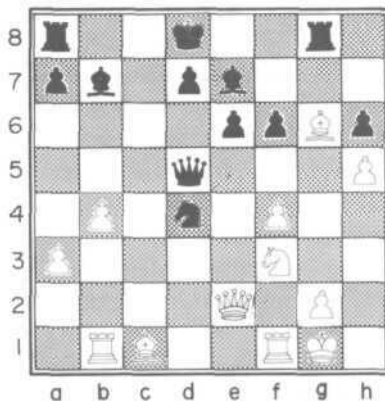
20 f4?

This move should now have been zapped by 20 ... Nd4! 21 Qd3 Qg4! (I missed this) when White cannot play 22 Qxd4 because of ... Qxg2 mate. Meanwhile Black's threats - among others -- are ... Ne2+ ... Rxg6 and ... Qh5 mate, and 22 Re1 is easily met by ... f5 threat... Bh4.

It doesn't help White to play 21 fxg5 after 20 ... Nd4, because after 21 ... Nxe2+ 22 Kf2 Nxc1 23 gxh6 Nd3+ (among others)

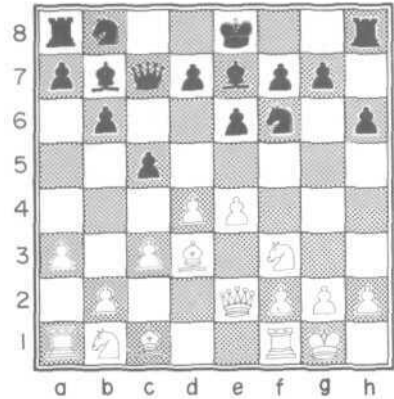
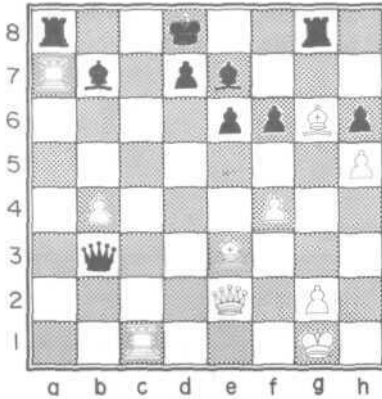
24 Bxd3 Rxg2+ 25 Ke3 f5 26 Nf3 Bf8 puts Black on top.

20 ...	Qd5
21 Nf3	Nd4



Now this move has little effect as White's queen at e2 guards the g2 pawn. The black queen even gets into considerable difficulties in mid-board, and behind her the black king will now have little chance against the white major pieces.

22 Nxd4	Qxd4 +
23 Be3	Qc3
24 Rfcl	Qxa3
25 Ra1	Qb3
26 Rxa7	



Demolition. A pretty point is
26 ... Rxa7 27 Bb6 mate.

26 ... Qxb4
27 Rxa8a+ Bxa8
28 Qa6

White is threatening several mates in this position. Black didn't bother to count them. 1-0.

Nevertheless, a theoretical success for Black, and now we must return to an early position and decide on the play if White withholds the move e5, and continues in less committed but still ambitious manner with queenside expansion with b4.

1 e4 b6 2 d4 Bb7 3 Bd3 e6 4 Nf3 c5
5 c3 Nf6 6 Qe2 Be7 7 0-0 h6 8 a3
Qc7.

Though this position can be reached by many move orders, and White's moves Nbd2, Qe2 and 0-0 may or may not be present, or present only partially, we shall look at this as the stem position.

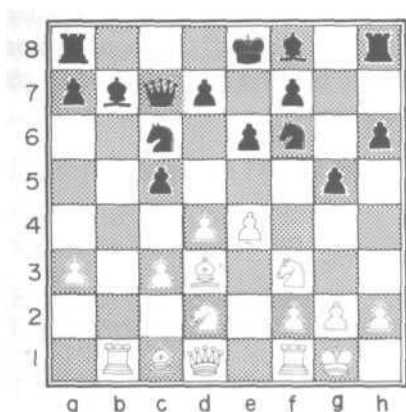
Now Black is prepared to answer e5 with ... Nh7 but what if White holds back? Has Black any meaningful play after w Nbd2 and b4?

We shall consider first Black's defensive objectives in this position.

1. He must be able to neutralize White's e5; we have discussed this.
2. He must be able to neutralize the positional threat of White's d5, which either opens up the king file, or gains a space advantage and blots out the bishop at b7. If the pawn is left at d5 White can follow up with c4. Black has taken steps against the move, being ready

to answer it by ... exd5 w exd5
Bxd5 w Re1 Be6.

3. He must neutralize White's b4 when the threat of playing bxc5 bxc5, Nbd2 and Rb1 makes Black's bishop at b7 uncomfortable as well as dissuading Black from castling queenside. For example, in a game Grunfeld-Basman, Ramat Hasharon 1981, this position was reached:



Here Black played 1 ... g4? and after 2 Ne5! Black could not win a pawn at e5 because his bishop at b7 was hanging. It may well be in Black's interest to avoid the opening of the b-file after White's b4, but not by making the capture ... cxb4 cxb4, because this would only open the c-file and expose Black's queen directly to Rc1.

4. Black must consider the positioning of his king which is

unlikely to be happy on the kingside, or on the queen's. On the other hand if he retains his king in the centre, then he loses the ability to connect rooks, which certainly hampers his queenside play.

5. Black has to fight against a white two-abreast pawn centre with little prospect of its demolition as White is able to defend it very easily. Black is unlikely to be able to obtain a favourable central pawn structure with moves like ... d5 and ... e5, as White being in the centre first, always has first choice about the transformation of the pawn structure in the event of a black challenge.
6. Black must consider that he is suffering from a space disadvantage, and this will be accentuated if White manages to play b4.
7. Black has delayed the development of his queen's knight as he is at present unsure whether to place it on d7 (following the Well's manoeuvre ... d6) or on the more exposed square ... c6.

All these considerations concern Black's passive defensive possibilities - we have not yet mentioned how Black should obtain counterplay in this position. He certainly cannot try ... cxd4 as White will be sooner able to control

the c-file, so his most likely plan is ... g5. This move, however, will not actually open a file against White's king unless White obliges by h3.

Continuing from the previous diagram but one, White plays 9 b4 and now the Wells' manoeuvre 9 ... d6 looks very appropriate. If this move is played after White's b4 then Black can strong point c5, and recapture with the d-pawn in the event of dxc5, thus keeping the b-line closed. The queen file would then be opened up, a file where Black is likely to be far stronger than the b- or c-files.

After 10 Nbd2 Nbd7 11 Bb2 g5 12 c4!? g4 13 Ne1 cxd4 14 Bxd4 Rg8 15 Nc2 Ne5 White has a good space advantage on the queenside, counter balanced by Black's plus on the king's wing and his strong knight at e5.

It is not clear whether the black knight belongs on c6 or d7; on c6, for example, it would have prevented White expanding with c4 by surveying the d4 square. Black can also try castling kingside after ... d6 and ... Nd7 if he does not wish to play the space gaining ... g5 manoeuvre.

Further Reading and Listening

St. George Opening

4-tape set (300 minutes) and booklet containing 1979 games and original theoretical material. This tape was first released January 1980 and re-recorded mid-1981.

Polish Defence (1 d4 b5)

C90 cassette. Companion tape to the above, recorded 1981.

English Defence by Raymond Keene (1 e4 b6)

C65 cassette released in 1977.

English Defence for the 80's (Hardy)

Double C90 cassette and booklet, updates and expands Keene's original version. Released 1981.

All these tapes are available from Audio Chess, 7 Billockly Close, Chessington, Surrey, KT92ED.

Audio Chess now comprises a range of over 70 cassettes on all possible chess subjects. The advantage of tape study is, (a) you can look at the chess board all the time whilst

listening to the instructions, (b) you usually have less material to wade through on a tape, (c) the spoken word leaves a deeper impression. A full catalogue of tapes is available on request with S.A.E.

Myers Openings Bulletin

If you found the material in Appendix 1 interesting then this is a whole magazine devoted to weird and wonderful openings both old and new. This is published by Hugh Myers, 1506 1/2 Harrison, Davenport, Iowa 52803, USA.

The magazine is reprinted in England and distributed by Audio Chess, so write to the Audio Chess address for subscription terms, unless you like paying in dollars, when you can write direct to Hugh.

Finally:- The Monster Book of Audio Chess (*published 1981, reprinted 1982*)

Devotes a whole chapter to the St. George's Opening, containing many examples of games by Audio Chess users at the club and national level. Obtainable from Audio Chess.

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