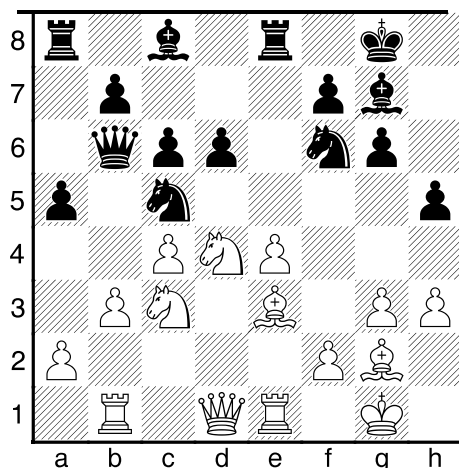


ECF Academy 2020 – Gormally’s Corner, January

Queen Traps

(1) Bates, Richard A (2342) - Gormally, Daniel W (2497) [E69]

Hastings Masters (8.10), 04.01.2020



When you are younger you are often taught "be careful not to bring out your Queen too early." Playing chess teaches you to be wary of generalisations. In fact the Queen can often be quite safe in the middle of the board, and surprisingly difficult to encircle. But in the recent Hastings chess congress, I fell into a well-known opening trap.]

15...Qb4? [Attacking his Knight, but straying too far into enemy territory. This position has originated from a g3 Kings Indian, and is actually quite analogous with similar games, except that the move ... h5 has been thrown in. Strangely enough many players have fell into the same trap in this opening, although I believe I am the highest rated player to have done so (bragging rights.)]

[If I had been thinking in a calmer way I would have probably realized that the Queen move will only bring troubles, and just developed with 15...Bd7 instead, when Black should be absolutely fine.]

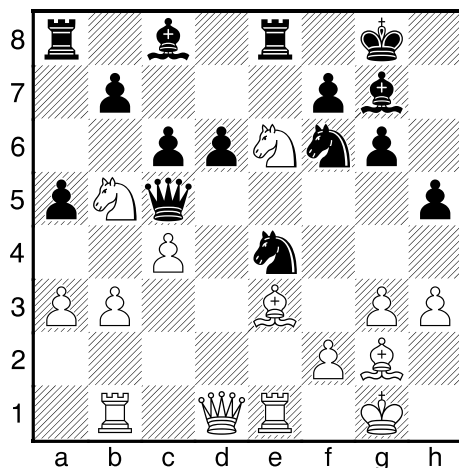
16.Ncb5! [Very powerful, sealing the trap. White intends to play a3 or Nc2.]

[Incidentally 16.Na4?! is a vastly inferior way of trying to reach the same objective. 16...Nxa4 17.Nc2 Qc3 18.Bd4 Nxe4! 19.Bxc3 Naxc3 with a very unclear position; Black has good compensation for the Queen.]

16...Ncxe4 [A practical decision. I realized that the alternatives were just too easy for White to handle. When we have a bad position, it's important to put as many hurdles in our opponents path as possible!]

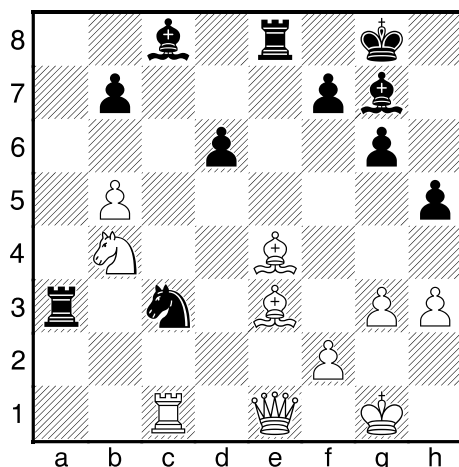
[16...cxb5 17.Nxb5 White again has the same threats. He is threatening to play a3, or Bd2, both of which will trap the Black Queen. 17...Nfxe4 18.a3 Qxb5 Black is forced to give up the Queen. (18...Nc3 19.axb4 Nxd1 20.Rbx1 and Black's position is a wreck. The pawn on d6 is weak, and there is also a threat of Nc7, forking the two Rooks. Not to mention the Knight on c5 is attacked! Black would probably be hopelessly lost.) 19.cxb5 Nc3 20.Qxd6 Nxb1 21.Rxb1 I considered, but this doesn't give enough compensation for the Queen.]

17.Nc2? [The ruthless 17.a3! would have won the game on the spot, for example 17...Qc5 18.Ne6!



This was the follow-up that Bates had missed, or underestimated. It's a typical idea when the Bishop is lined up against the Queen like this. The Knight jumps away and does some damage while Black has to work out a way to deal with the threat against his Queen. 18...Qf5 19.Nxg7 Kxg7 20.Nc7! and Black will simply be an exchange down.]

17...Qxe1+ 18.Qxe1 cxb5 19.cxb5 a4 20.bxa4 Rxa4 21.a3 Nd5 22.Nb4 Ndc3 23.Rc1 Rxa3 24.Bxe4 [



24...Nxe4? [Over the last few moves I have been outplaying my opponent, but this is a serious error, allowing him to break free of the bind.]

[24...Rxe4! Was what I had planned previously, except in Hastings I was in terrible form, and kept changing my mind about everything. (a typical sign of bad form is indecisiveness.) The main benefit of this move is that it prevents White gaining the counterplay that he did, during the game. 25.Nd5

a) 25.Nc2 Ra2 with mounting pressure.;

b) The tricky 25.Qd2!? can be considered. 25...Rxb4 (it is also possible to ignore the Knight on b4 and simply play 25...Bf5!) 26.Qxd6 Bf8? (26...Ne2+ 27.Kh2 Nxc1 28.Qxb4) 27.Qd8! and White is winning!;

25...Nxd5 26.Rxc8+ Kh7 is not good for White, as Black will break through on the Kingside with ... Nxe3, but it's not clear that he has anything better.]

25.Nd5! [Now the game is unclear again, because the Knight is very active here, although it eventually ended in a draw after further mistakes.]

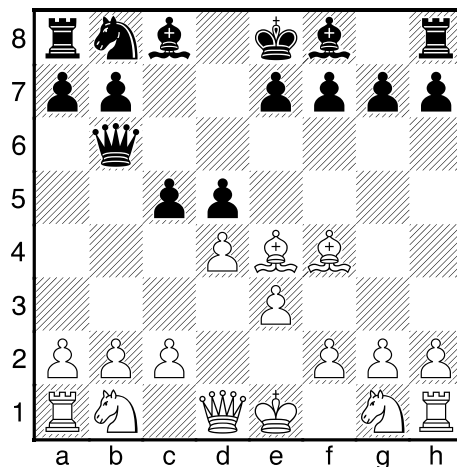
½-½

(2) Nakamura,Hikaru (2767) - Hawkins,Jonathan J (2546) [A45]

London Classic rapid op 6th London (5), 06.12.2014

[We also need to be careful when grabbing material with our Queen, that the majesty doesn't get into trouble. A typical situation is when the Queen has grabbed a Rook on a1. It can easily become encircled. In a recent game between Hikaru Nakamura and two-times British chess champion Jonathan Hawkins, Black got into trouble in just such a scenario.]

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 Ne4 3.Bf4 d5 4.e3 c5 5.Bd3 Qb6!? 6.Bxe4! [

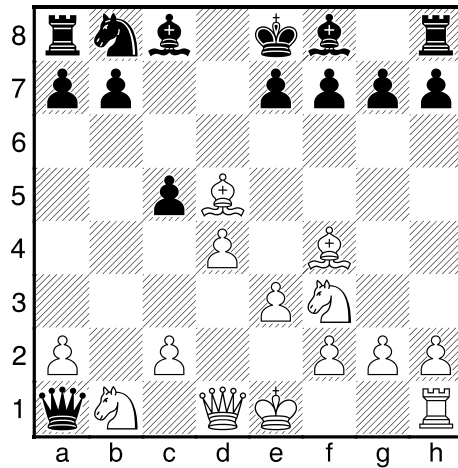


[I had actually had this variation once as White, in a game that started at the unearthly time of 8.30 in the morning. I played the meek 6.b3? and quickly got into trouble. The aggressive Nakamura has no such desire to lose the initiative.]

6...Qxb2 [Without this Black's Queen sally doesn't make much sense. "When we say A, we should say B."]

[6...dxe4 7.Nc3 cxd4 8.Qxd4 Qxd4 9.exd4 Bf5 10.Nge2 is perhaps a safer way to handle the position, when White enjoys a slight edge in the endgame. He will try and play Ng3 and attack the pawn on e4.]

7.Bxd5! Qxa1 8.Nf3



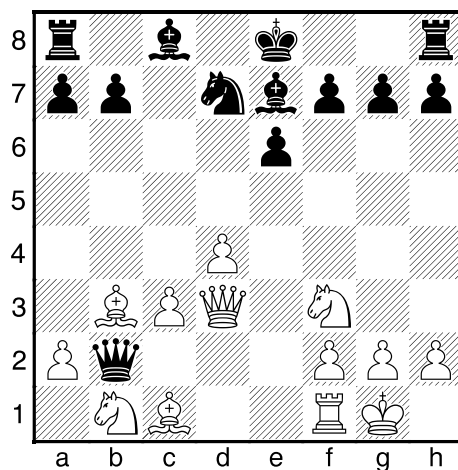
White has got a tremendous advantage in development for the exchange. What's more, his pieces are very active, and Black also needs some time to extricate his Queen from a1.]

8...e6 9.Bb3 Nd7 [9...Nc6 10.0-0 Be7 11.Qd3 Nb4 12.Qd2! and Black is faced with the same problems as in the game, as White is threatening Na3! for example.]

10.0-0 cxd4 11.exd4 Bb4 12.Qd3! Qb2 [It is already becoming difficult to save the Queen.]

[12...a5 13.Bd2 Qb2 14.Nc3 Bxc3 falls into a little trick 15.Bc1! Qb1 16.Ba3]

13.c3 Be7 14.Bc1!



White drives the Queen back to the terrible square on a1, where it has no future.]

14...Qa1 15.Qc2 [The trap is shut. Next move White will play Nbd2, so Black resigned.]

1-0

Development

(3) Carlsen,M..... (2872) - Kovalev,V..... (2660) [D55]

Tata Steel Masters Wijk (10), 22.01.2020

In my experience of dealing with junior players, the most important factor in getting them to improve, is development. A common mistake that they make in the opening phase is to move the same piece over and over again. They focus on maybe one or two pieces at most, and neglect the development of most of their army. In this section I want to show a couple of illustrative games to show what can go wrong if we neglect the development of our pieces.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Be7 5.Bg5 0-0 6.e3 h6 7.Bf4 [A slightly unusual choice but Carlsen is famous for steering away from sharp opening theory as soon as possible. He likes to get a position from where he can just outplay his opponents without having to rely too much on memorization. This move can be questioned, as White breaks the rule about not moving the same piece more than once in the opening (unless we have a good reason for it.) Carlsen's justification is probably because he's provoked the move ... h6, which can potentially be a weakness in Black's position later on, if White should gain an attack on the Kingside.]

7...c5 8.dxc5 Bxc5 9.a3 Nc6 10.Qc2 Nh5 [Playing the world champion Magnus Carlsen is a nerve-wracking prospect at the best of times, and Kovalev was using up huge amounts of time in the opening. With the benefit of hindsight we can view this as a slight mistake, because Black moves the same piece again. He gains the two Bishops, but for the time being the position is quite closed, so this doesn't really work out in his favour.]

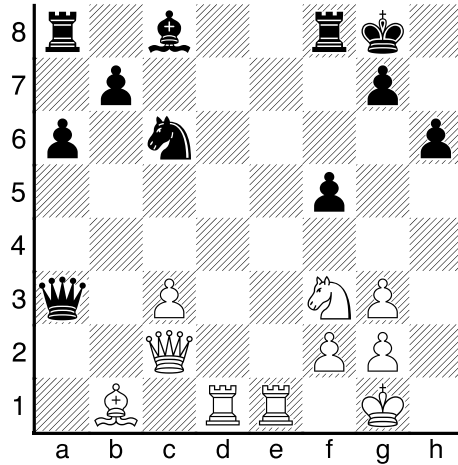
[10...Qe7 11.Rd1 Rd8 Was a more solid choice. Later on Black can complete his development with the moves ... b6 and Bb7.]

11.Bg3 dxc4 12.Bxc4 Be7 13.Ba2 a6 14.Rd1 Qa5 15.Bb1 f5 [This move was heavily criticised at the time, as it further weakens the Black Kingside.]

[Nevertheless Black already has a difficult task, as after 15...g6 16.Bh4!? (Trying to exchange a useful defensive unit) White already has the makings of a dangerous attack on the Kingside. 16...Bxh4 17.Nxh4 and there is a potential threat of White sacrificing the Knight on g6, taking advantage of the Bishop and Queen battery on the b1-h7 diagonal.]

16.0-0 Nxc3 17.hxc3 Bf6 18.e4! [Sometimes this can be even stronger delayed, than when played on move one.]

18...Bxc3 19.bxc3 Qxa3 20.exf5 exf5 21.Rfe1

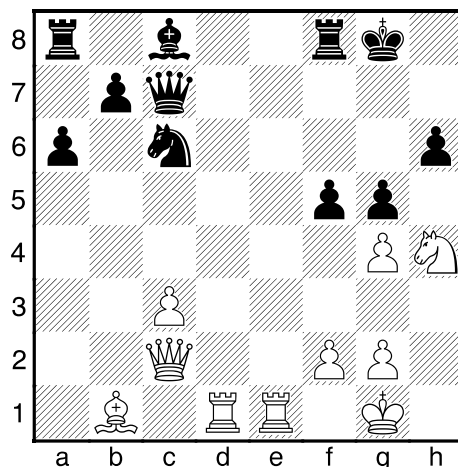


Why does White have an advantage here? One of the main reasons is his lead in development. His Rooks are placed on the central open files, very good places for them. The Queen+Bishop battery can potentially be very dangerous on the b1–h7 diagonal. Also on the negative side for Black his Kingside is very exposed, and he has many weaknesses over there. The only advantage for Black is that he has an extra pawn, but this is of little comfort as he is unable to develop his Bishop from c8 and therefore complete his development. All this leads to long-term advantages for White that is beyond mere "compensation", and in fact the computer assesses White's position as already winning.

21...Qa5 22.g4 Qc7 [Black has now made four moves with his Queen, and has still not developed his Queenside. If it was possible to materially measure a lead in development then we could probably say that White's lead in development is worth as much as three pawns, if not more.]

23.Nh4 [Simple chess. White threatens to capture on f5, beating a path to the Black King.]

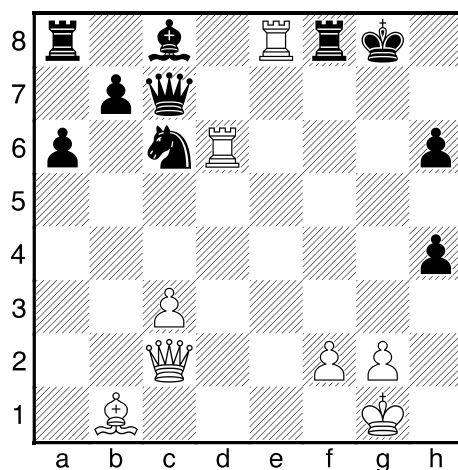
23...g5



This might look like desperation, but Black's position was fairly dire anyway. Weakening pawn moves are only really weakening if there is something to weaken!]

24.Nxf5 [A prosaic continuation. As so often in positions with a large advantage, there is more than one way to win.]

[After the game Magnus mentioned the variation 24.Ng6 Rf6 25.Re8+ Kg7 26.Nh8 Which he felt might also be winning. Players of this calibre find it easy to see these kind of fantasy variations.; There is another beautiful variation here in 24.gxf5 gxh4 25.f6 Rxf6 26.Re8+ Rf8 27.Rd6!!



Where White overwhelms the Black King with power moves. 27...Rxe8 (27...Qxd6 28.Qh7#) 28.Qg6+ Kf8 29.Qxh6+ Qg7 30.Rf6+ Kg8 31.Ba2+ Re6 32.Bxe6+ Bxe6 33.Rg6 Qxg6 34.Qxg6+ followed by taking on e6, with a decisive material advantage.]

24...Bxf5 25.gxf5 Rf6 26.Re6 Raf8 27.Rxf6 Rxf6 28.Ba2+ Kf8 [materially Black is still not doing too badly, but White has traded his lead in development for another advantage; a lead in activity, which proves decisive against an exposed Black king.]

29.Qd3 Ne5 30.Qe4 Rd6 31.Qb4! Ke7 32.f6+! Kd7 33.Re1 Rxf6 34.Qd4+ [White wins a piece, and the rest is a technical exercise.]

34...Qd6 35.Qxe5 Qxe5 36.Rxe5 Rc6 37.Re3

1-0

(4) Basman,Michael J - Stean,Michael F [B50]

Christmas Congress 1973/74-49 Premier Hastings (1), 27.12.1973

[The following game had a great deal of influence on me when I was younger in terms of understanding the importance of development. I saw it in a book and it really brought it home to me the risks of grabbing pawns at the cost of neglecting your development.]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Be2 [3.c3 Nf6 4.Be2 Nc6 is another way to transpose into the line we see in the game. (4...Nxe4?? 5.Qa4+! picking up the Knight, is the idea behind White's trappy last move.)]

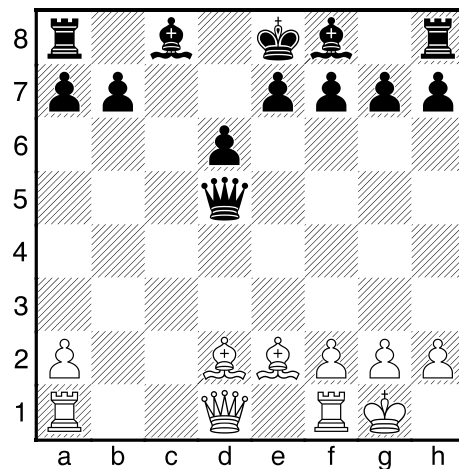
3...Nc6 4.c3 Nf6 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 Nxe4 7.d5 Qa5+ [Pretty much forced.]

[7...Nb8 8.Qa4+ wins for White.]

8.Nc3 Nxc3 9.bxc3 Ne5 10.Nxe5 Qxc3+ [Picking up another pawn is the most combative way to handle the position.]

[10...dxe5 11.0-0 g6 is a more solid way to play for Black, although this doesn't assure him of a completely easy life either. He is still two moves away from castling, and White can exploit this factor. 12.Rb1! a6 (12...Bg7 13.Bb5+ is White's idea, when Black will be forced to give up his castling rights. 13...Bd7? 14.Bxd7+ Kxd7 15.Rxb7+--)) 13.Be3 b5 14.c4! When White had a dangerous initiative and went on to win in Karpov,A (2715) -Kveinys,V Riga 1988]

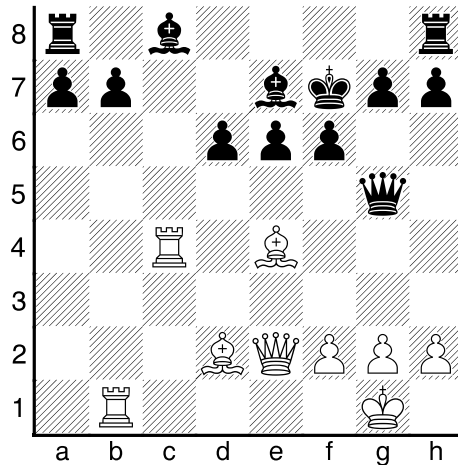
11.Bd2 Qxe5 12.0-0 Qxd5 [



It's time to take stock again. Yes, Black is three pawns up, but White's huge lead in development fully compensates for this. It's also going to take Black at least three moves to get his King to safety. The key now to such positions as White is to keep playing aggressively, to threaten the Black Queen, and try to also place our Rooks on open files, where they are most useful.]

13.Rb1 [A good starting point.]

13...e6 [Black has a choice here. Another game saw Black defend with 13...f6 giving his King a hidey-hole on f7. 14.Re1 Kf7 15.Bf3! Qxa2 Black is now (four pawns!) up, but we can't win the game with pawns alone. Checkmate is more important! 16.Bc3 e6 17.Re4 Qd5 18.Qe2 Be7? Under pressure, Black errs. (18...Qf5! Would pose White a much tougher question. 19.Bg4 Qd5 20.Bf3 repeats, and it's up for White to find something stronger. Objectively his lead in development compensates for the pawns, but if Black defends correctly, then he should also be ok.) 19.Rc4! Now the Rook threatens to penetrate to c7, putting unbearable pressure on Black's position. 19...Qf5 20.Be4 Qg5 21.Bd2!



And the Black Queen was getting trapped. 21...Qxd2 (21...Qe5 22.f4!) 22.Qxd2 d5 23.Bxd5 Rd8 24.Rc7 Rxd5 25.Qb4 Rd7 26.Rxd7 Bxd7 27.Qxb7 When White had a large lead in development and went on to win in Kengis,E (2545)-Kettner,J (2225) Baden-Baden 1990]

14.Bb5+! [If we get the chance to leave our opponent's King stranded in the centre, we should almost always take it.]

14...Bd7 15.Bxd7+ Kxd7 16.Qa4+ Kd8 17.Rb5! [The move of an instinctive attacking player. It's important to keep the pressure up on Black. White is now winning as Black is effectively only playing with his Queen.]

17...Qc6 18.Rc1 Qa6 [18...Qd7 19.Ba5+ b6 20.Bxb6+ also wins for White as next move White will play Rc7.]

19.Ra5 Qd3 20.Be3 d5 21.Rxa7 Rxa7 22.Qxa7 Ba3 23.Qb8+ Ke7 24.Bg5+ f6 25.Qxb7+ Kd6 26.Qc7#

1-0

(5) Gormally,Daniel (2488) - Granda Zuniga,Julio E (2674) [D24]

Douglas PokerStars op Douglas (2), 05.10.2014

[Recalling games like the Basman one I was able to exploit my lead in development to defeat a highly-rated grandmaster at the Isle of man tournament in 2014.]

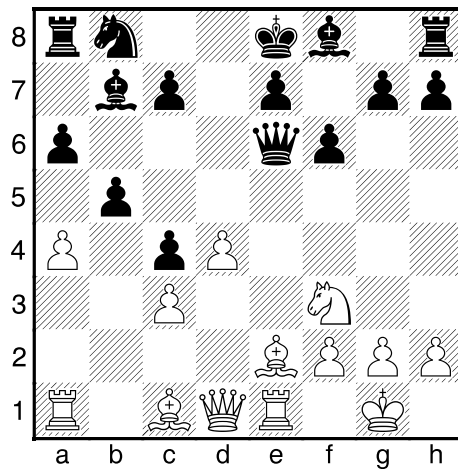
1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 a6 5.e4 b5 6.e5 Nd5 7.a4 Nxc3 [7...e6 8.axb5 Nb6 is a more solid way for Black to play when he has easy development for his dark-squared Bishop (Which will be played to e7 or b4.)]

8.bxc3 Bb7 [I always felt this line was a bad one for Black, because the following move by White leaves his pawn structure in disarray.]

9.e6! f6 [9...fxe6 is also possible, when White will eventually play his Knight to e5 or g5, when he will gain a strong initiative against the Black King. In general Black's position looks very ugly even though he's two pawns up. 10.Ng5 Qd5 11.Be2 Qxg2 12.Rf1 with serious compensation for the pawns.]

10.Be2 Qd5 [Black wins the annoying pawn on e6, but the downside is he loses time with his Queen.]

11.0-0 Qxe6 12.Re1



I had seen this given in Glenn Flear's book on the Queens gambit accepted and he gave it as unclear. This was enough for me. I love positions where I'm down material but have the initiative.]

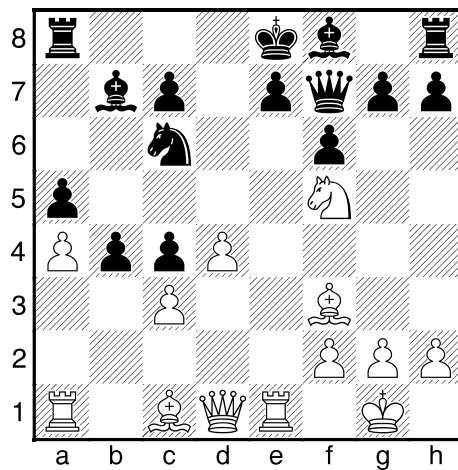
12...Qf7 [12...Qd7 13.Nh4 g6 14.Bg4 f5 15.Bf3 also gives White a solid initiative. This whole line just looks too scary for Black.]

13.Nh4 b4 14.Nf5 a5? [When Black is already so far behind in development making another pawn move feels too indulgent.]

[14...Nc6 15.Ne3 bxc3 16.Bxc4 Qg6 17.Qb3 Rb8 18.Qxc3 is no bed of roses for Black either, but might have been preferable to the game.]

15.Bf3!? [I had already seen the winning idea but I sensed that my opponent had not seen it at all, so decided to wait for a better opportunity to play it.]

15...Nc6



White to play and win.

[15...Bxf3 16.Qxf3 Ra7 17.d5 looks fairly hopeless for Black anyway. White has too many threats, for example d6, or just playing Nd4–e6, with total domination. 17...g6 18.Nd4 Bg7 19.Nb5+–]

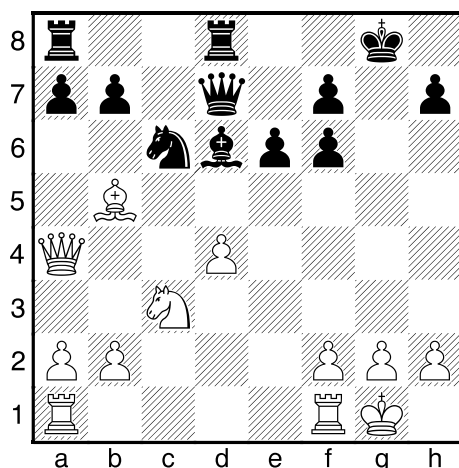
16.Nh6! [White's lead in development proves decisive. Both ... gxh6 Bh5! and ... Qg6 Bh5! are hopeless for White, so my opponent resigned. Incidentally if I had played the same idea on move 15, then he would have played 15... Qd5 16. Bf3 ... Qxf3 17. gxf3 ... gxh6, when the open g-file and White's ruptured pawn structure would have given him some reason to play on. Which is why I played the Bishop to f3 to prevent Qd5.]

1–0

Pawn Breaks

(6) Gormally,D..... (2508) - Shaw,P..... (2052)

Harrogate 4NCL congress (5), 18.01.2020



Pawn breaks- the d5 break. "Pawns are the soul of chess" said the great 18th century player Philidor. That statement has passed the test of time. Not only do modern players need to understand the unique demands of different pawn structures, but we can also use pawns in a dynamic sense to change the character of the position. A typical break in the centre that White can often utilise is often the move d5, which can create havoc in the Black position. After the following game, my opponent expressed his regret that he allowed me just such an opportunity.]

16.d5!? [The main advantage of this move is that it breaks up his pawn structure, and therefore makes his King much more vulnerable. The pawn clump that Black has with the pawns on f7, f6 and e6 aren't actually a weakness because at the moment they protect each other. (A common misconception amateur players have is that doubled pawns are a weakness.) This move breaks up his pawns, and makes it much easier to get at the Black King.]

16...exd5 17.Qh4 [I was terrified that the Queen would be cut out of the game on a4 therefore I settled for this move.]

[The other main alternative was 17.Rad1 threatening to take on d5, but then Black plays 17...d4! 18.Ne4 Be7 although here White has serious play after 19.Ng3 as the light-squares on the Black Kingside are terribly weak, so perhaps I should have played this anyway.; 17.Nxd5? Bxh2+ gives up my advantages too easily.]

17...Qf5 18.Rad1 Qg5 [18...d4? 19.Bd3 Should definitely be avoided.]

19.Qh3 [A practical decision. I wanted to keep the Queens on. Part of my reasoning was that it would take me at least three hours to get back home from the venue, and I wasn't playing for a large prize as it was clear I was out of the running for first place, so I didn't want the game to go on for a very long time. Plus, I was hungry]

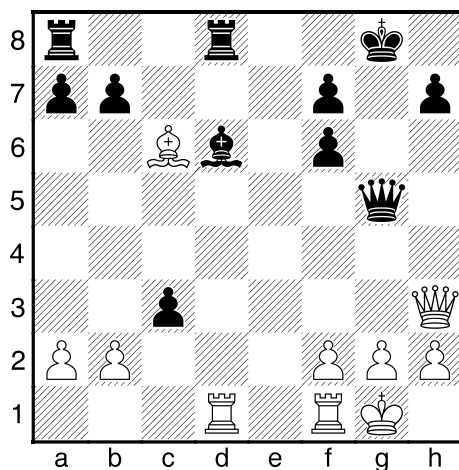
[Perhaps Magnus Carlsen would have played 19.Qxg5+ fxg5 20.Rxd5 Be7 21.Rfd1 and ground his opponent down with impeccable technique, but this endgame definitely has a lot of drawing tendencies.]

19...d4! [Definitely the right move, leaving the position on a knife edge.]

20.Bxc6 [more or less forced.]

[20.Ne4 Qxb5 21.Nxd6 is shut down by 21...Qd5! 22.Nf5 Kh8 when White is just grovelling a pawn down.; The wild hacking line 20.f4 Qc5 21.Ne4 Qxb5 22.Qh6 Qf5! is also insufficient for White.]

20...dxc3 [



I felt it was very dangerous for Black to allow the position with opposite coloured Bishops, because White has obvious attacking chances, but objectively this is fine.]

[In the post mortem we both agreed that 20...bxc6 was a safer practical choice. 21.Ne2 (21.Ne4 Qg6 and it's hard to see what White should play) 21...c5 22.f4 Qg6 23.Rd3 Qe4 leads to a bit of a mess, but one in which Black is by no means worse. 24.Rdf3!? Kh8 (24...Qxe2 25.Qh6!) 25.Ng3÷]

21.Be4 [I played this almost instantly because it looked so natural, but later on when checking this game with the engine it threw up a couple of attractive looking options.]

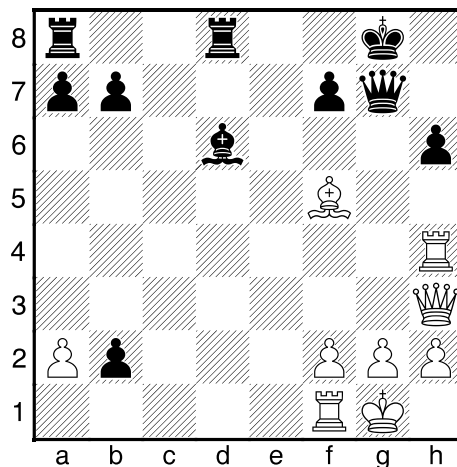
[21.Bxb7!? is tricky, although it probably just leads to complete equality with best play. 21...Rab8 (21...Bxh2+! is the start of the engine line which leads to equality but it would be tough to find all these moves over the board. 22.Kxh2 Rxd1 23.Rxd1 c2 24.Rf1! The only move, because White needs f4!

24...Rd8 25.f4! Qb5! 26.Qg3+ Kf8 (26...Kh8 27.Qc3!) 27.Qa3+ Kg7 28.Qg3+=) 22.bxc3 Rxb7 23.Rxd6! is White's idea. 23...Rxd6 24.Qc8+±; 21.Bd7!! is nice, although again not easy to see over the board. The main idea is to gain the time to eliminate Black's dangerous pawn on c3, which would then give White a free hand on the Kingside. 21...Be5 (21...c2 22.Rc1 and strangely Black has no good way to defend c2 as the Bishop on d7 controls the c8 square. 22...Qd2 23.Bf5) 22.bxc3 Kg7 23.Rb1 And White is better. Bd7!! seems to me to be a good example of one of those engine moves that look strange, but somehow just work!]

21...cxb2 22.Rd5 [I think we both thought White was doing very well here perhaps even winning, but with careful play Black should be doing ok because the pawn on b2 is a serious source of counterplay.]

22...Qg7 [The comp wants to shed pawns with 22...f5 23.Rxf5 Qg7 24.Rh5 Be5 although here White retains a dangerous initiative after 25.Qf5]

23.Rh5 h6 24.Rh4 f5 25.Bxf5 [



25...Be5?? [Just losing concentration at the end of a tough tournament.]

[25...Be7! 26.Rxh6 (26.Rg4 Bg5 27.f4 is not so clear, because I'm opening up the White King. 27...Rd5! for example, could get awkward. 28.Bb1 (28.fxc5? Rxf5 utilising the pawn on b2, is the idea.) 28...f5! 29.Rg3? Qd4+ 30.Kh1 Qxf4 works out for Black.) 26...Rd2 was ok for Black.]

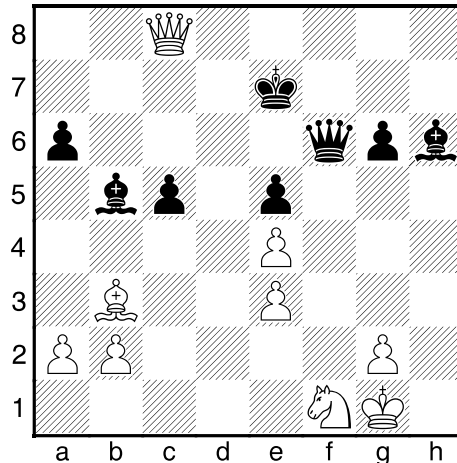
26.Rg4 [Black is losing the Queen, so my opponent resigned.]

1-0

Alireza Firouzja

(7) Firouzja,A... (2750) - Carlsen,M... (2887)

Moscow Blitz World Championship Abu Dhabi (19), 30.12.2019



Fabulous chess beasts (and where to find them) part 1. The Ferocious Firouzja. 16 year old Alireza Firouzja is leading the vanguard of young players who are beginning to make serious inroads to the world elite of chess. He recently came to public prominence with seriously impressive performances at the world rapid and blitz championships in Moscow, as well as his early display at Wijk Aan Zee, where he was the early leader. Firouzja is originally from Iran but recently expressed his intention to leave that federation. This is partly because Iran has a controversial policy of not allowing it's players to compete against Israeli players, as the Iranian government doesn't recognise Israel as a country. This obviously causes problems for the Iranian players themselves, as it's not ideal to not turn up and then default a round in the tournament. Firouzja won his national championships at the age of 12, a remarkable achievement in itself and brought comparisons with Bobby Fischer, who also won his national championships at a young age. Firouzja's normal chess habitat is playing online blitz and he can generally be found playing on sites like Lichess. Wherever he plays he's one of the highest rated players, and gone are the days when to get good at chess you had to study the classical games of the old masters. Now you can just play thousands of games of online blitz and get good that way. If you get the chance to play people like Magnus Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura on a daily basis, then it's a obviously excellent experience. His battle with Carlsen continued at the recent world blitz championships, when in the latter stages of the tournament it turned into a nervy battle.]

37.Qxc5+ [Carlsen became visibly upset at this point as he had been clearly better earlier and after overlooking this move, is in serious trouble. This caused controversy later. After the game Alireza made a complaint, claiming that Carlsen tried to put him off. In reality this is unlikely to be something that Carlsen did deliberately; more likely he was caught up in the emotion of the moment.]

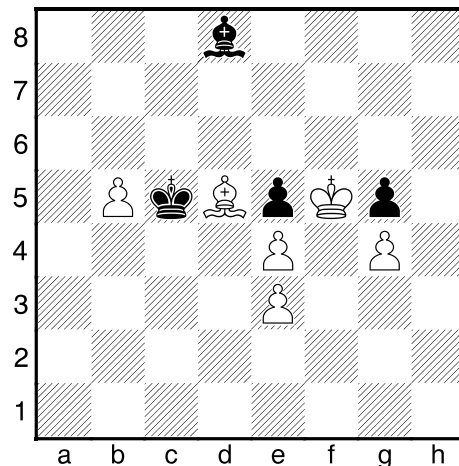
37...Qd6 38.Qxd6+ Kxd6 39.Bf7 Bxf1 40.Kxf1 g5 41.Ke2 Bf8 42.Kf3 Ke7 43.Bc4 a5 44.Ke2 Kd6 45.Bd5 Be7 [Black is two pawns down but retains serious drawing chances due to the drawing tendencies of opposite coloured Bishops. Another way to defend was with 45...Ke7!? trying to defend the g5 pawn with the King, the danger is eventually White should be able to create a passed pawn on the Queenside. However the correct plan seems to be to put the Bishop on c5, so this move fits in well with that. 46.a3 Kf6 47.g3 Bc5 48.Kd3 Ke7 49.g4 what else? 49...Kd6 50.Kc4 Bxe3 51.b4 axb4 52.axb4 and

this is a draw.]

46.Kf3 Bd8 47.Kg4 Be7 48.Kf5 Bd8 49.g4 Be7 50.a3! [Black cannot prevent b4 now, as Kc5 hangs the e-pawn, and after ... a4 White will eventually take that pawn with the Bishop.]

50...Bd8 [50...Kc5 51.Kxe5+-; 50...a4 51.Bc4 Kc5 52.Bd3 Kd6 53.Bc2+-]

51.b4+- axb4 52.axb4 Be7 53.b5 Bd8 54.Kg6 Kc5 55.Kf5 [



55...Kxb5 [55...Kd6 and White can just pass with the Bishop, forcing Zugzwang. 56.Bb3 Pretty much any Bishop move will do. 56...Kc5 57.Kxe5 Kxb5 58.Kd6 and the White King is dominating so he's winning.]

56.Kxe5 Kc5 57.Ke6 Ba5 58.e5 Bd2 59.e4 Bc3 60.Kf5 Kb6 61.e6 Kc7 62.Kg6 Kd8 63.Kxg5 Ke7 64.Kh5 Bd2 65.g5 Bf4 66.Kg4 Bd2 [White now lost on time in a winning position, which meant that Carlsen won on material, despite not having any pawns left. For anyone unclear about the rule, in theory at least White could allow a self-mate from the Bishop.]

0-1

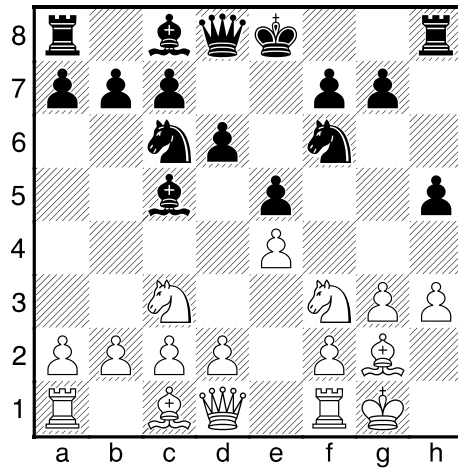
(8) Ismagambetov,A... (2484) - Firouzja,A... (2703) [C47]

Moscow Rapid World Championship Abu Dhabi (2), 27.12.2019

[When watching Firouzja's games, it quickly becomes clear that he's a very aggressive and ambitious player. Another thing that stands out is his stylish play with his Knights. He'll often make bold and risky Knight moves to try and create attacking chances, as was demonstrated in the following game from an early stage in the world rapid.]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.g3 Bc5 5.Bg2 d6 6.0-0 h5! [Already making his intentions clear. Black wants to open the h-file, even at the cost of a pawn, to get at the White King.]

7.d3 [7.h3



7...h4 8.g4 does not stop the attack, because of 8...Nxg4! 9.hxg4 h3 10.Bh1 h2+ 11.Kg2 Bxg4 with a winning attack.]

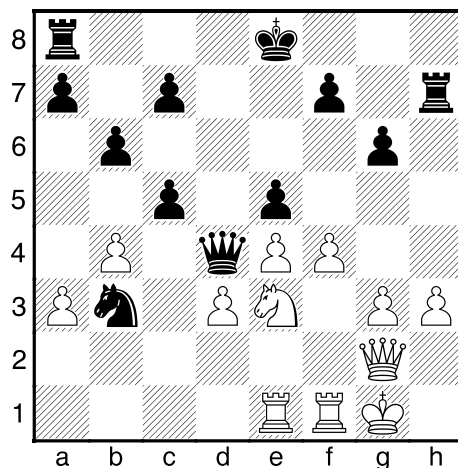
7...h4 8.Nxh4 Bg4 9.Bf3 Bxf3 10.Qxf3 Nd4 11.Qg2 [11.Qd1 Qd7 12.Kg2 0–0–0 and Black has the makings of a strong attack. One threat is to play ... Rh5, which would then plan ... g5 and also just doubling on the h-file with the Rooks.]

11...Nxc2 12.Rb1 Ng4!? [there was nothing wrong with the natural 12...Qd7 but once again Firouzja should be applauded for his ambition.]

13.h3 Nh6 14.Na4 Nb4 15.Nxc5 dxc5 16.Bxh6 Rxh6 17.Nf5 Rh7 18.a3 Nc6 19.Rbc1 g6 20.Ne3 b6 21.b4 Nd4 22.f4 Nb3 [Once again he cannot resist playing with his Knights!]

[In this case though, Black should have probably settled for the straightforward 22...exf4 23.gxf4 Qh4,]

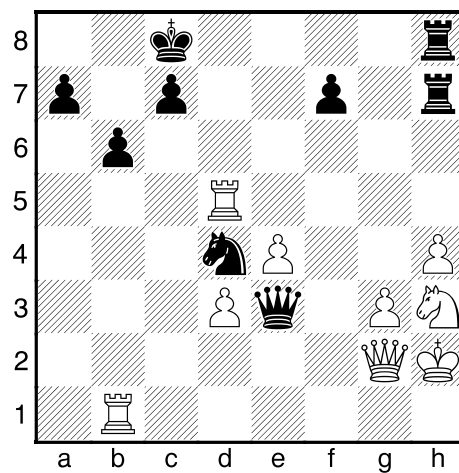
23.Rce1 Qd4 [



24.Kh2? [24.Qc2! Is the sort of tricky move that it's easy to miss at rapid.]

24...0-0-0 [Now Black is back on top again.]

25.Ng4 exf4 26.Rxf4 g5 27.Rf5 Rdh8 28.Nf2 cxb4 29.axb4 Qxb4 30.Rb1 Qc3 31.Rxg5 Nd4 32.h4 Qd2 33.Rd5 Qe3 34.Nh3?



under extreme pressure White cracks]

34...Nf3+ 35.Kh1 Nxh4! [winning another pawn and the game. Note the crucial role the Knights have played in this victory!]

36.Qf2 [36.gxh4 Rxh4-+]

36...Qxf2 [36...Nf5! 37.Qxf5+ Kb7 is even stronger]

37.Nxf2 Nf5+ 38.Kg1 Nxf3 [Black was several pawns up and went on to win easily a few moves later.]

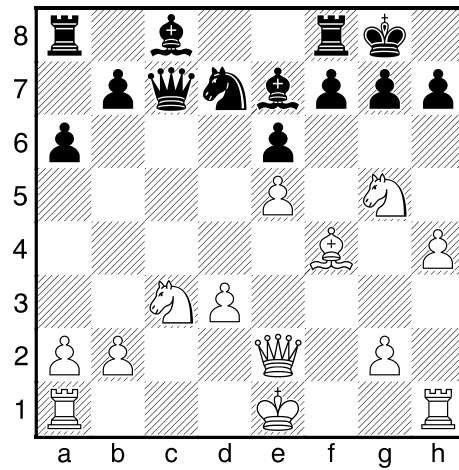
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Exercises

Question 1

(10) Gormally, Daniel (2476) - Emms, John M (2586) [B82]

BCF-ch 86th Scarborough (4), 04.08.1999



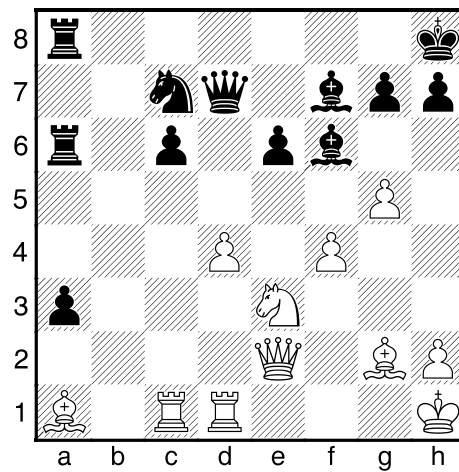
What do you think about the move 15...b5

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Question 2

(11) Dubov, Daniil (2691) - Cheparinov, Ivan (2718) [E04]

Abu Dhabi op 25th Abu Dhabi (9), 15.08.2018

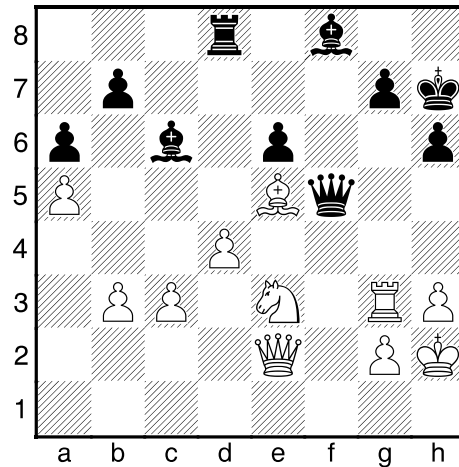


31...Be7 [Exercise After ... Be7, White had a dilemma. How can he rustle up some play?]

Question 3

(13) Goryachkina,A... (2578) - Ju,W... (2584)

Women's world championships Abu Dhabi (12), 22.01.2020



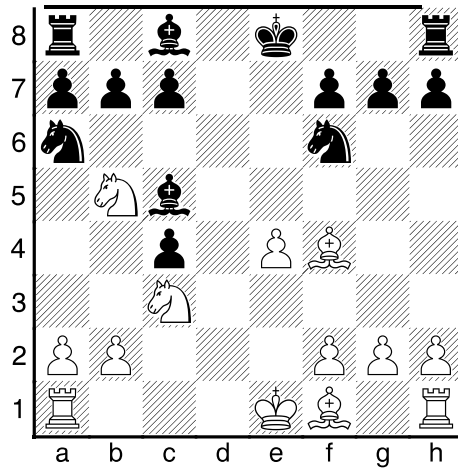
40...Qf7 [This is a critical position from round 12 of the women's world championships, and White had to win this game to keep her hopes alive. By now you should be familiar with the right idea for White.]

Question 4

(15) Duda,J.... (2758) - Firouzja,A.... (2723) [D20]

Tata Steel Masters Abu Dhabi (2), 12.01.2020

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5 4.Nf3 exd4 5.Qxd4 Qxd4 6.Nxd4 Bc5 7.Nb5 Na6 8.Bf4 Nf6 9.N1c3 [Attack with Firouzja! Given Firouzja's propensity for play with his Knights, what tricky move do you think he played as Black here?]

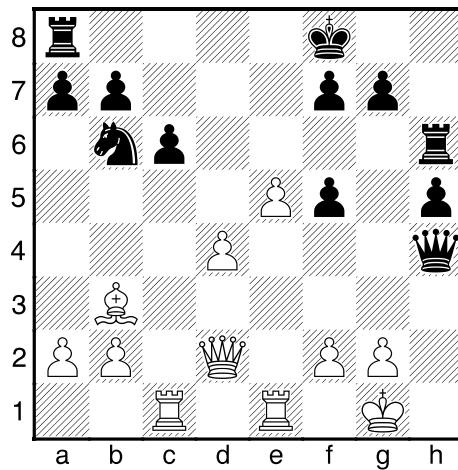


Question 5

(17) Firouzja,A.... (2723) - Artemiev,V.... (2731) [B12]

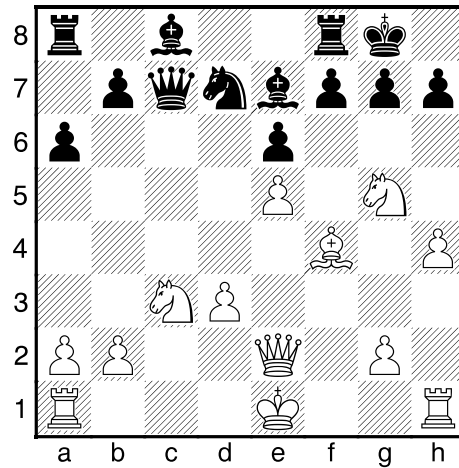
Tata Steel Masters Abu Dhabi (3), 13.01.2020

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.h4 h5 5.c4 e6 6.Nc3 Ne7 7.Nge2 Nd7 8.Ng3 Bg6 9.Bg5 Qb6 10.Rc1 dxc4 11.Bxc4 Nf5 12.0-0 Be7 13.Nxf5 Bxf5 14.Bxe7 Kxe7 15.Qd2 Qd8 16.Nd1 Nb6 17.Ne3 Kf8 18.Nxf5 exf5 19.Bb3 Qxh4 20.Rfe1 Rh6 [Attack with Firouzja! In this position playing White, Firouzja needs to find a way to open up the Black King's position. Can you find it?]



Solutions

1)

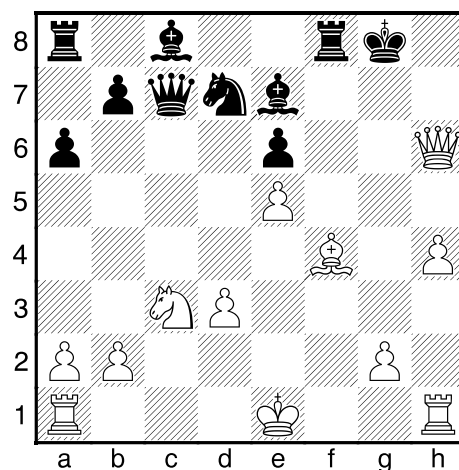


15...b5! [Practically inviting Qe4, but things aren't so simple.]

[In the game, John played 15...h6? and quickly got into trouble; 16.Qe4! This opportunistic move creates a strong attack. 16...Bxg5

a) 16...hxg5 17.hxg5 g6 18.Qe3 and next move the Queen will go to h3, with a terrible attack.;

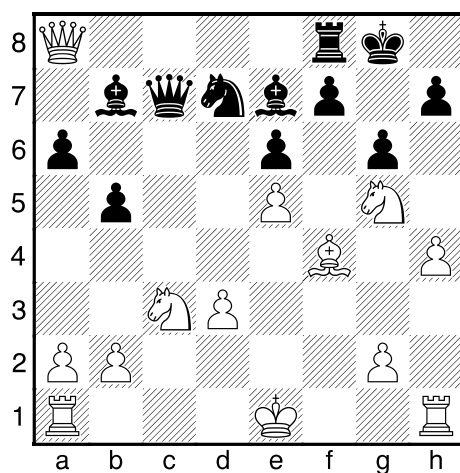
b) 16...g6 17.Nxe6! was what I think he missed, where White wins material. 17...fxe6 (17...Qb6 18.Nxf8 with a decisive material advantage. 18...Qxb2 19.0-0 White is winning.) 18.Qxg6+ Kh8 19.Qxh6+ Kg8



20.Rh3! The Rook lift is a typical idea in attacking positions, as this piece is very strong along the third rank. Black will be mated after 20...Rxf4 (20...Kf7 21.Qh5+ and the Black King will not escape. 21...Kg8 22.Rg3+ Bg5 23.Rxg5#) 21.Rg3+ Kf7 22.Qg6+ Kf8 23.Qg8#;

17.hxg5 Nc5 18.Qe3 hxg5 19.Qh3! f5 20.exf6 Nxd3+ 21.Qxd3]

16.Qe4 g6 17.Qxa8 Bb7 [

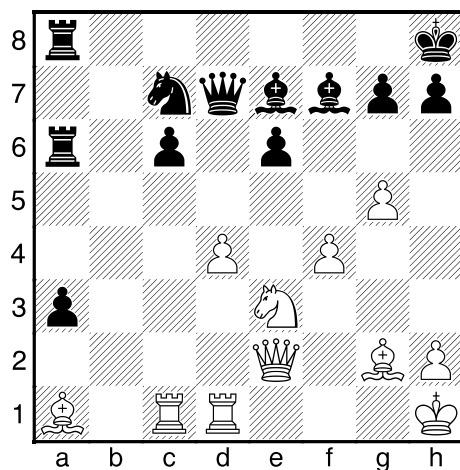


and Black is very well placed, taking advantage of the idea that the Queen can get into trouble when it takes the Rook on a8. (Losing material is less important than preventing checkmate!)]

18.Qa7? [18.Qxf8+ Kxf8 and materially speaking, White isn't doing too badly as he has two Rooks for the Queen, but his position is riddled with weaknesses, so Black stands better.]

18...Bc5--+

2)



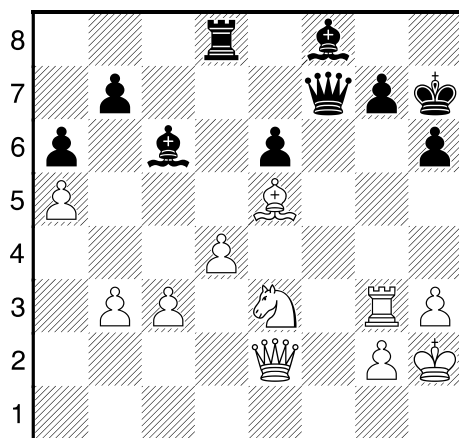
In this position White struck with the freeing move

32.d5! [White's difficulties in this position can be shown in the line 32.Nc4?! Nd5 when Black has a bind on the position and the Bishop on a1 resembles a large pawn, who's only role seems to be to prevent the Black pawn on a3 from eventually Queening. 33.Ne5 Qe8μ]

32...exd5 33.Nc4 [Where suddenly his position leaps into life. The huge contrast between the position we had before, is now the Bishop on b2 is playing. Although the position is still unclear Black later went wrong in the complications and Dubov was able to win.]

1-0

3)



41.d5! [Would send Black's position into disarray.]

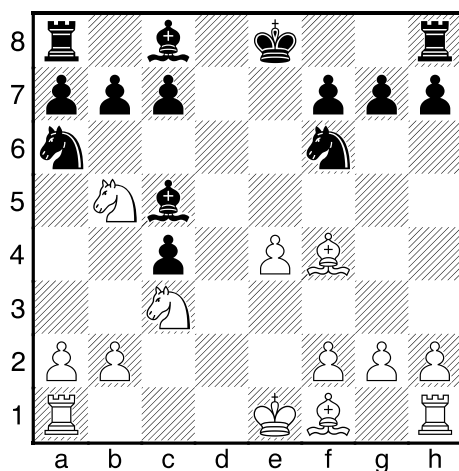
[In the game 41.Qd3+ was played, and White was also winning, because her initiative was too strong. 41...g6 42.Rg4 (42.d5! is again strong. 42...exd5 43.Ng4 Be7 44.Rf3! this is one of the ideas behind d5!, the Bishop on c6 is cut out of the game. 44...Qe6 45.Qf1!; 42.Ng4) 42...Bg7 43.Bxg7 Kxg7 44.Nc4 Bb5 45.Qg3 Bxc4 46.bxc4 Rd7 47.Re4 White has a technically winning position, with an extra pawn and the Black King is also exposed, and the game did not last much longer.]

41...exd5 [41...Bxd5 42.Qd3+ g6 43.c4! is another tactical win for White.]

42.Qd3+ Kg8 43.Ng4 [Nxh6 is coming, when White will have a raging attack.]

1-0

4)



9...Ng4!? [Was Firouzja's solution to the demands of the position. Often in the opening it's a good idea to pose questions to our opponents. Make them think. That's exactly what this move achieves.]

[9...c6 was a reasonable alternative. 10.Nd6+ Bxd6 11.Bxd6 Be6]

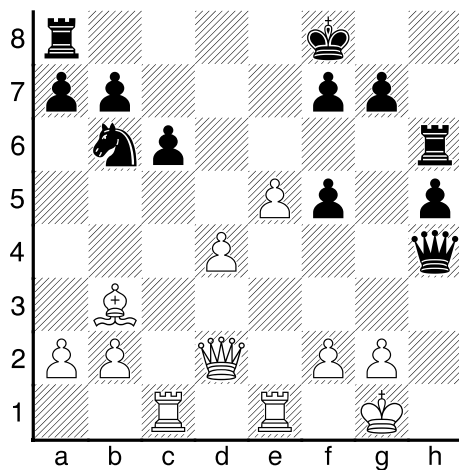
10.Bg3 [10.f3 c6! (10...Nf2 11.Na4! would have put the question back to Black. 11...Nxh1 12.Nxc5 Nxc5 13.Nxc7+ Ke7 14.Nxa8±) 11.Bxc4 Nf2 12.Rf1 cxb5 13.Bxb5+ Bd7 14.Rxf2 is also unclear.]

10...0-0 11.Bxc4 c6 12.Nd6 b5 13.Bb3 Nxf2! 14.Rf1 [14.Bxf2 Bxd6 is the tactical idea.]

14...Nd3+ 15.Kd2 Nxb2 [The Knight has done some damage, and in this messy position Black has good chances for the win. The game ended later in a draw.]

½-½

5)



Alireza struck with]

21.e6! fxe6 22.Bxe6 [A sequence that Black just didn't want to see, as it completely opens up his King which is now exposed on f8.]

22...Re8 23.Bxf5 Rxe1+ 24.Rxe1 Qd8 25.Qd3 [White now has a large advantage due to the weakness on the light squares, and he went on to win.]

1-0