

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – March 2013

Chairman's Chatter

I hope we are all trying to improve our standard of play. Recently, I decided to refresh my game in an attempt to regain my better form of yesteryear. The main article this month is the first in a short series that records some of these efforts. Maybe, you will find sharing the research both enjoyable and instructive.

In the October newsletter, I featured an old win of mine against Marcus Misson. As it happened, Marcus read the article and felt obliged to reverse the situation when we met over the board in November. The annotated game here may confirm the definition of madness i.e. keep repeating the same thing and expecting a different outcome...

Paul Hanks

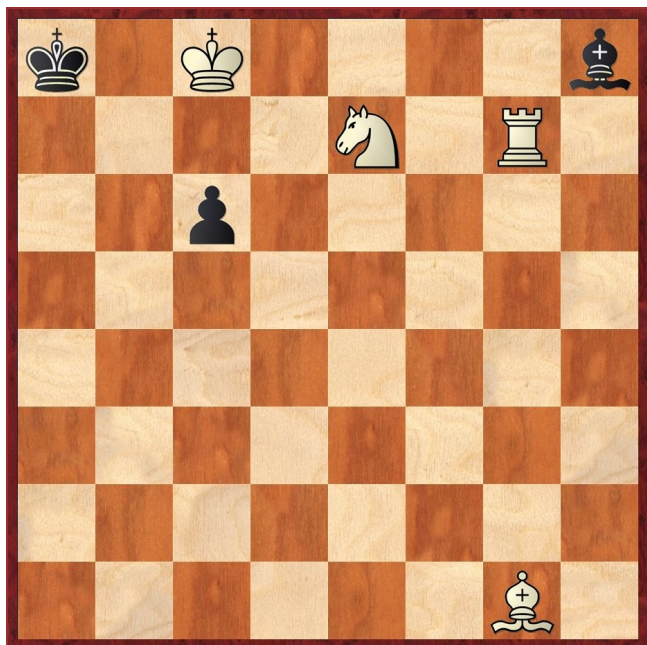
Diary Dates

Please remember that the Lancaster Club holds its AGM on 20th March when our venue will not be available.

Here is advance notice that the end-of-season Jamboree will be held at Godmanchester on Thursday 16th May.

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2



Last Month's solution

Position : 2R5/kp6/B7/3K4/8/1N6/8/2R5 (Agapov)

1 R1c6 b5 2 Nd4 b4 3 Nb5# [1 ... b6 2 Bb5 Kb7 3 R6c7#; 1 ... bxa6 2 Nc5 a5 3 Ra6#; 1 ... bxc6+ 2 Kxc6 Kxa6 3 Ra8#]

Website to Watch

The Candidates Tournament to decide who plays Anand for the world title in November takes place at The IET, 2 Savoy Place, London from 15th March to 1st April including four rest days. Tickets to visit the venue are £25 for games starting at 2pm though the website (www.worldchess.com/candidates) warns that this does not guarantee seated viewing. There are assurances (but no evidence) that live games will be broadcast.

Window on the Web

www.ideachess.com is a site containing material intended to improve your chess.

Some of the features can be accessed without registration but registration is free and once a user has registered there are no restrictions.

The Home page has several links: *Play* offers the chance to challenge the site's computer, with different levels of difficulty to choose from. *Checkmate* gives access to mating puzzles to solve with a choice of mates in 1, 2, 3 or 4 moves. The *Tactics* feature presents you with tactical positions to solve, without giving any clue as to the theme of the tactic. There are 3 levels of difficulty: easy, moderate and difficult. Clicking on *Endgame* allows you to play endgame positions against the computer, with a choice of pawnless piece endings or pawn endings with K+P v K, K+P v K+P and K+R+P v K+R. In the pawn endings section there are links to *Wikibooks* pages explaining the theory involved in, for example, the Lucena position. *FEN* takes you to a page with a chessboard and a box in which the FEN code of any position can be entered. The position then appears on the board and you can play it out against the computer. *Forum* links to a comments page where users can share their thoughts and questions. This doesn't seem to be particularly popular. The section *General Chess Discussion* has no posts. There is a comprehensive *FAQ* section.

Ron Jones

Result Round-up

Cambridgeshire County Chess Leagues

Cambridge	2½	New England A	2½
A Stewart	1	F Bowers	0
R McCorry	½	P Turp	½
R Daughman	0	S Caraway	1
S Pride	½	P Hanks	½
A Norman	½	M Dunkley	½

Warboys A	1½	New England A	3½
R Mann	0	F Bowers	1
J Beck	1	P Turp	0
B Duff	0	S Caraway	1
M Misson	0	P Hanks	1
C Watkins	½	M Dunkley	½

Postponed : **New England B v Warboys B**

New England B	4	Buckden A	0
R Jones	1	D E Fault	0
P Spencer	1	D E Fault	0
D Lane	1	D E Fault	0
S Walker	1	D E Fault	0

Peterborough C	1	New England B	3
A Summers	0	R Jones	1
S Cawley	0	P Spencer	1
P Silman	0	D Lane	1
N Fisher	1	J Parker	0

Spalding	2	New England B	2
T Nottingham	1	R Jones	0
J Smith	0	P Spencer	1
F Robinson	0	D Lane	1
A Coats	1	J Parker	0

Fenland Plate

3rd April : **New England B v Peterborough**

Team 550 Competition

Postponed : **Warboys N v New England 2**

New England 1	3	Godmanchester	1
M Dunkley	1	J Wright	0
P Spencer	1	A Rankine	0
J Parker	1	J Bygrave	0
J Sadler	0	M English	1

New England 2	2	Warboys N	2
S Caraway	0	R Mann	1
R Jones	1	B Duff	0
D Lane	0	M Onyons	1
S Walker	1	K Harbour	0

Club Championship

Round 1			
White		Black	
S Caraway	1	0	P O'Gorman

Round 2			
J Parker (0)	0	1	D Lane (0)
I Garrett (0)	0	1	P Spencer (0)
S Caraway (1)	0d	1d	R Jones (½)
S Walker (½)	1	0	J Sadler (0)
M Dunkley (1)	½	½	C Russell (1)

P O'Gorman (0)	0	1	P Hanks (1)
N Wedley (1)	0	1	F Bowers (1)
J Sadler (Rd 1)	0	1	P Turp (1)

Round 3			
F Bowers (2)			P Turp (2)
R Jones (1½)			P Hanks (2)
C Russell (1½)			S Walker (1½)
D Lane (1)			M Dunkley (1½)
P Spencer (1)			S Caraway (1)
J Sadler (0)			N Wedley (1)
I Garrett (0)			J Parker (0)
H Currie (0)			P O'Gorman (0)
Match night : 13th March. Deadline : 31st March. Next draw : 1st April			

New England Club Ladder

White		Black	
P Spencer	0	1	F Bowers
I Garrett	0	1	S Walker
I Garrett	0	1	N Wedley

Position	Change		Player	Record <small>13/02/13</small>
	Month	Overall		
1	-	+13	F Bowers	1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1,1
2	-	+2	P Spencer	1,1,1,1,1,0
3	-	+7	P Hanks	½,½,1,1,1
4	+1	+3	N Wedley	0,0,0,0,1,1,0,1,1
5	-1	+4	D Lane	0,1
6	-	+2	S Caraway	1,½,0,0,1,1
7	-	+6	S Walker	1,0,0,0,1
8	-	-7	J Parker	0,1,0,0,0,0
9	-	+3	I Garrett	0,1,0,1,0,0,0,0,0,0
10	+1	+5	J Sadler	0,0,0
11	-1	-9	H Currie	0,0
12	+2	+4	P O'Gorman	0,0
13	-1	-8	P Turp	1
14	-1	-11	R Jones	
15	-	-9	M Tarabad	
16	-	-5	S Wozniak	½

New England Grand Prix

Player	Champ	Ladder	League	Cup	Team 550	Total
F Bowers	2	10	3	1		16
S Caraway	1	3½	4	1½	2½	12½
P Spencer	1	5	5	0	1½	12½
P Hanks	2	4	4	1	½	11½
D Lane	1	1	5	½	3½	11
P Turp	2	1	4	1	2	10
S Walker	1½	2	3		2	8½
M Dunkley	1½	-	4	½	2½	8½
J Parker	0	1	3		3	7
R Jones	½		3	0	2	5½
N Wedley	1	4				5
S Wozniak	-	½			2	2½
I Garrett	0	2			0	2
C Russell	1½	-			½	2
H Currie	0	0				0
J Sadler	0	0			0	0
P O'Gorman	0	0				0
M Tarabad	-					0

Serious Study

Memory is a funny thing. Sometimes a trivial detail from a long-lost event floats effortlessly to the surface. Then again, you can lose your train of thought from a few seconds ago. Now, where was I?

Ah yes. I was reading "Visy Anand : Life and Games" by the world champion and John Nunn. Anand was annotating his game in which he played Black against Lautier at Biel in 1997 when suddenly, it all seemed so familiar. I was recalling a famous game between Fischer and Tal in 1959 which appeared in the former's classic work "My 60 Memorable Games". It impressed me greatly as a schoolboy and as the tactics in the opening seemed suitable for our level of chess, I had made a particular study of the game. [For those of you who wish to feign mock surprise, I did go to school and it was considerably after 1959!]

Let's see what Visy and I found so interesting.

1	e4	c5
2	Nf3	d6
3	d4	cx d4
4	Nxd4	Nf6
5	Nc3	a6

The Najdorf Variation of the Sicilian Defence. So many games start this way that it will be known to all club players and therefore worthy of study as it should occur often if only through pure mimicry.

6 Bc4

Fischer popularised this move and his name is attached to it alongside Sozin though the latter preferred the move order 1 e5 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 d6 6 Bc4. The text move places the bishop on its natural square but after 5 ... a6, it is exposed to b7-b5 and thereafter, b5-b4 comes with tempo allowing Nf6xe4. Of course, all this neglects development so that the immediate 6 ... b5 7 Bb3 b4 8 Na4 Nxe4 fails to 9 Qf3 regaining the invested material with sufficient interest to keep even Des happy.

6 ... e6

"Probably best. White's bishop is made to bite on granite" - Fischer. The tension in the position comes from whether White can exploit the attacking potential of the a2-g8 diagonal before Black's queenside advance undermines White's centre. After Black's last move, White will have to inject life into his strategy with f2-f4-f5 while Black needs piece development to solidify his defences.

7 Bb3

This is a major branching point and White could enter the Velimirovic Attack - a subject we shall have to leave for a future article. With the flexible move played, White tries to keep control of timing. He will now get advance warning of the queenside advance without having to react immediately. But is it a move wasted unless forced into it? A good point to note for future reference but for the sake of brevity, we shall bypass it for now.

The position will evolve with the following considerations :

- b7-b5 opens the a8-h1 diagonal for tactics by White as noted earlier but it is not a dead tempo as it releases a square for Bc8-b7. Note though that the latter move weakens e6
- Black can exchange the white-squared bishop by Nb8-d7-c5 but e6 is screened temporarily which becomes vulnerable to a piece sacrifice and combined with b7-b5 will leave c6 undefended
- if the a6 pawn continues to prevent Nd4-b5, b5-b4 will leave the advanced pawn without support
- White's f pawn advance will helpfully open the f file for a rook after 0-0 and add to White's attack. Furthermore, if Black replies to f4-f5 with e6-e5, the d6 becomes either backward and potentially weak or part of a strong centre if White's e4 pawn can be removed.

The following game demonstrates what happens if Black tries the most aggressive variation.

R J Fischer v M Tal
Candidates Tournament 1959

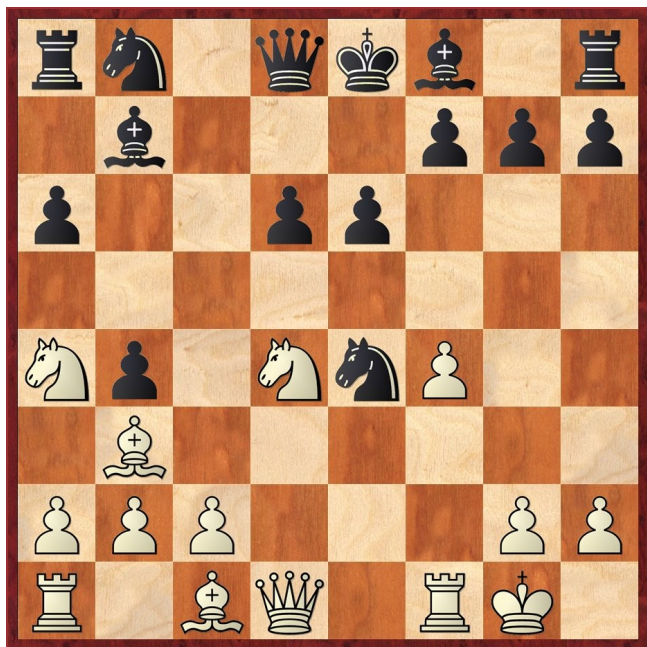
1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bc4 e6 7 Bb3

7 ... b5
8 f4 b4

8 ... Be7 is the modern approach (Mamedyarov v Gelfand, Kazan 2011).

9 Na4 Nxe4
10 0-0 g6

10 ... Bb7 was given by Fischer as "correct" without further comment.



What fired my youthful imagination was the possibility of 11 f5 e5 12 Ne6 which may come as a surprise to anyone slavishly following the world champion's recommendation without personal research.

In all cases, Black faces a difficult defence which will cause him to expend considerable time. Here are a few examples :

- 12 ... Qa5 13 Qh5 d5 14 f6 gxf6 (14 ... g6 15 Qxe5) 15 Ng5 Nxc5 (15 ... fxc5 16 Qxf7+ Kd8 17 Qxb7) 16 Bxc5 Nd7 17 Bxf6 Rg8 18 Rae1
- 12 ... fxe6 13 Qh5+
 - A) 13 ... g6 14 fxg6 Kd7 15 g7 Bxc7 16 Rf7+
 - B) 13 ... Ke7 14 fxe6 g6 (14 ... Qe8 15 Qf7+ Qxf7 16 Rxf7+ Ke8 17 Rxb7) 15 Qf3 Qc7 (15 ... Qe8 16 Bg5+ Nxc5 17 Qf6#) 16 Be3
 - C) 13 ... Kd7 14 Be3 Nf6 (14 ... Kc6 15 fxe6) 15 Bxe6+ Kc6 16 Qh4 d5 17 Rfd1 d4 18 c3

11 f5 gxf5

If 11 ... exf5 12 Bd5 Ra7 13 Nxf5 Bxf5 14 Qd4 forking the rooks.

You may think that there is a parallel variation to the analysis above i.e. 11 ... e5 12 Ne6 :

- 12 ... Qa5 13 fxg6 hxg6 14 Nxf8 Rxf8 15 Bh6
- 12 ... fxe6
 - A) 13 fxe6 looked overwhelming e.g. 13 ... Bb7 14 Rf7 Bc6 15 Be3 with wild complications and other continuations

permit Qf3. Sadly, Black has various defences 13 ... Ra7 14 Qf3 d5 though 14 ... Nc5? 15 Nxc5 Qb6 (15 ... dxc5 16 Ba4+ with a clever interference motif because Black cannot interpose on d7 without allowing Qf7# 16 ... Ke7 17 Qf7+ Kd6 18 Rd1#) 16 Be3 when Black is in trouble.

B) 13 fxg6 adds the threat of Qh5 but White doesn't get the chance 13 ... hxg6 14 Qf3 Qh4.

In fact, the simple 12 fxg6 hxg6 (12 ... fxg6 13 Bf7+ Ke7 14 Bd5 Ra7 15 Rf7+) 13 Bxf7+ Kd7 14 Bxc6 (or 14 Qg4+ or 14 Bd5 etc.) exd4 15 Qxd4 is more than adequate.

12 Nxf5 Rg8

Again 12 ... exf5 13 Qd5 Ra7 14 Qd4.

13 Bd5 Ra7

13 ... exd5 14 Qxd5 Bxf5 15 Rxf5 Ra7 16 Qxe4+ Re7 17 Qxb4 Re2 18 Bg5 (Fritz prefers 18 Rf2 Rxf2 19 Qe1+) 18 ... Rxc5 19 Rxc5 Qxc5 20 Qxb8+ and wins - Fischer.

14 Bxe4

14 Be3 follows analysis by Kevitz that Fischer gives as an improvement 14 ... Nc5 15 Qh5 Rg6 16 Rae1 with a massive attack. This complex variation has numerous alternatives at every turn - an exercise for the reader!

14 ... exf5
15 Bxf5 Re7
16 Bxc8 Qxc8
17 Bf4

was Fischer's game continuation which Fritz evaluates as roughly level. He later recommended Fritz's favourite 17 c3 but not 17 Qxd6? Rxc2+ 18 Kxc2 Re2+ 19 Kf3 Bxd6 20 Kxe2 Qxc2+.

17 ... Qc6

with threats to g2 and a4.

I was pleased with my discovery of 12 Ne6 after Fischer's 10 ... Bb7. It is endorsed by Fritz as the best continuation giving White a small advantage even with best play and due to White's practical chances in such a sharp position, it is obviously dangerous for Black to accept the e4 pawn prematurely even though there are counter-attacking opportunities.

Anand was following a similar philosophy when he prepared the variation for his repertoire. What is very interesting is that his comments come from Black's perspective.

J Lautier v V Anand
Biel 1997

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bc4 e6 7 Bb3 b5

8 0-0 b4
9 Na4 Bd7

9 ... Nxe4 10 f4 transposes in Fischer v Tal. The text move looks an artificial way to develop but it does

have some logic when judged by the positional considerations listed previously. It covers the b5 square enabling a6-a5 to guard b5-b4, it allows Nb8-c6 even after b7-b5 and maintains the protection of e6.

10 f4 Nc6
11 Be3

In his annotations, Anand remarks 11 f5 is the sharpest try and 11 ... e5 (11 ... Nxd4 12 Qxd4 e5 13 Qxb4 d5 14 Qe1 favours White - Anand) 12 Ne6. Here we go again!

- 12 ... fxe6 13 fxe6 Bc8 14 Bg5 Be7 (14 ... h5 and Anand questions whether White has sufficient compensation.) 15 Bxf6 Bxf6 16 Rxf6 Qxf6 (No points for 16 ... gxf6 17 Qh5+ Ke7 18 Qf7#) 17 Qxd6 Nd4 18 Nb6 and Black has trouble with his queenside pieces
 - A) 18 ... Bxe6 19 Nxa8 Ne2+ 20 Kh1 Ng3+ 21 hxg3 Qh6+ 22 Kg1 Qe3+ with perpetual check
 - B) 18 ... Ne2+ 19 Kh1 Ng3+ 20 hxg3 Qh6+ 21 Kg1 Qe3+ 22 Kf1 Rf8+ 23 Qxf8+ Kxf8 24 e7+ Ke8 (24 ... Kxe7 25 Nd5+) 25 Ba4+ Bd7 26 Bxd7+ Kf7 27 Nxa8 Kxe7 28 Rd1 Qxg3 when White has problems avoiding checks
- 12 ... Bxe6 13 fxe6 fxe6 14 Bxe6 with many of the disadvantages of 12 ... fxe6 without the material plus.
- 12 ... Qa5 13 Nxf8 Rxf8 14 Qxd6 Nxe4 15 Qd3 Nf6 16 Be3 e4 17 Qd2 White has pressure against the uncastled king unless 17 ... 0-0-0 18 Nb6+ Kb8 19 Nc4 Qb5 (19 ... Qd5 20 Bf4+ Ka7 21 Qf2+) 20 Qd6+ Kb7 21 a3 and the black king remains under attack.

11 ... Rb8

The final variation on the theme is 11 ... Be7 12 f5 e5 13 Ne6 fxe6 (13 ... Qa5 14 Bb6 Qb5 15 Nc7+) 14 fxe6 Bc8 15 Bb6 but even 12 ... Nxd4 13 Qxd4 e5 14 Qxb4 is satisfactory for White.

12 c3 Be7
13 e5

"In my preparations, I had already come to the conclusion that the text move is dubious because sacrificing the exchange gives Black a big advantage. Fritz is not convinced because it finds a very convoluted way for White to keep the extra exchange but I took one look and decided that Black must be better. The main problem for White, besides his poorly placed a4 knight, is his kingside. Without his e and f pawns, his king is quite vulnerable and every one of Black's minor pieces is well positioned to join the attack. White's Sozin bishop on b3 is totally misplaced in this situation since it cannot defend the kingside." - Anand. I only wish more books gave summaries of this quality.

13 ... dxe5 14 fxe5 Nxe5 15 Bf4 Ng6 16 Bxb8 Qxb8 17 cxb4 Bxb4

and Black went on to win.

As with all things in chess, nothing is sacrosanct. Fischer espoused f4-f5 and condemned the attempt e4-e5. Nevertheless, the latter continuation appeared in several games of the Short v Kasparov world championship match in 1993 in which Gary initially used the less ambitious 7 ... Nbd7 before reverting to 7 ... b5. Studying annotated versions of these hard-fought games would add some critical options for both sides.

In order to add some local flavour to the article, I include the following game from 2004 together with contemporary analysis. At the time, I had forgotten much of the detail behind the plan f2-f4-f5 and opted for a safer alternative in 9 Qd1-f3. As it happens, I stumbled on what is today a major body of theory that has appeared repeatedly in top class games. In fact, if Black had defended with 13 ... Ne8, the game would have transposed into topical main lines.

Recently, Giri commented "One would expect the f4-f5 plan to be more threatening than this somehow amateurish-looking approach. Yet, while the idea of f4 seems to be too slow, the somewhat bold Qf3-g3, on the contrary, is very challenging. ...To show that 9 f4 is inferior, I would have to write a huge opening survey ... so just believe me and all the other top players" - *New in Chess* magazine.

P Hanks v M Misson

Perkins A v Warboys, 13.10.2004

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bc4

The last time I played this variation was in the 70's when my style was much more aggressive. Obviously, my blood was hot when I played this.

6 ... e6
7 Bb3 Be7
8 0-0

But not too hot! I actually have a book on this line (in Spanish!) but could remember very little except that neither side was indulging in the sharpest variations arising from 7 ... b5. In fact, chess databases have many games that vary from the text with 7 ... Nbd7. Previously, I would have tried 8 f4 or as the book would say P4A. From the game position, White has tried 8 g4 with some success (de Firmian v Gavrikov, Tunis Interzonal 1985).

8 ... 0-0
9 Qf3

This is not mentioned by the book! It only gives the alternatives 9 f4, Kh1, Be3 and Bg5. The main point of 9 Qf3 is to deter offensive operations by Black e.g. 9 ... b5 10 e5.

9 ... Qc7
10 Qg3

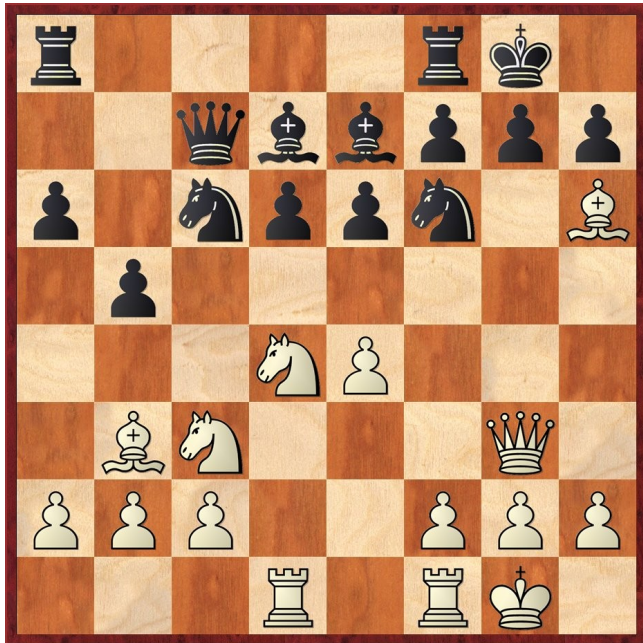
White has the latent threat of Bh6 and frees the f pawn for an attacking advance. Another advantage is the prevention of ... d5.

10 ... Nc6
11 Be3 Bd7

12 Rad1 b5

Finally, Black makes the move but is now unable to follow up with Bb7. I contemplated 13 Ndx b5 14 Nxb5 Q any 15 Nxd6 but after 15 ... Bxd6 16 Qxd6 (Rxd6 Nxe4), it will take a long time to mobilise the queenside pawns.

13 Bh6



This may be risky but any eventual minus must be set against the attacking chances. I looked in hope at 13 ... Nh5 14 Qg4 e5 15 Nf5 Bxf5 16 exf5 g6 17 fxg6 hxg6 18 Qxg6+-. If 15 ... Bf6 16 Nd5 (16 Rxd6? Qxd6) Qd8 17 Qxh5 gxh6 18 Qxh6 Bh8 19 Rd3 with the variation 16 ... Bxf5 17 exf5 Qd8 18 Nxf6+ Qxf6 19 Bg5. Alternatively, 14 ... Nxd4 15 Qxh5 Nxb3 16 Qg4 Bf6 17 e5 dxe5 18 Ne4 Qd8 19 Rxd7.

This position is similar to Morozevich v Kasparov, Astana 2001 when due to a slightly different move order, White had an extra tempo from playing Bc1-h6 directly and had advanced f2-f4. Gary played Ne8 and went on to win.

13 ... Nh5

Fortunately, attacking optimism makes for exciting chess. Only now did I notice 14 Qg4 Nxd4 15 Qxh5 Nxb3 16 Qg4 Bf6 17 e5 is met by Bxe5 and although the initiative will continue with 18 f4 Bf6 19 Ne4, it did not seem convincing. (Fritz even finds further variations worthy of attention 18 ... f5 and 18 ... Qc5+.) Neither is the exchange sacrifice 15 Rxd4 e5 16 Qxh5 exd4 17 Nd5. I crossed my fingers...

14 Qg4 Nxd4
15 Qxh5 Bf6

Hmm, I had not really thought of this variation. It is one tempo different from previous lines. White does not have to justify a piece sacrifice and the queen on h5 is possibly more powerful than on g4.

16 e5

I had to keep up the momentum with active play.

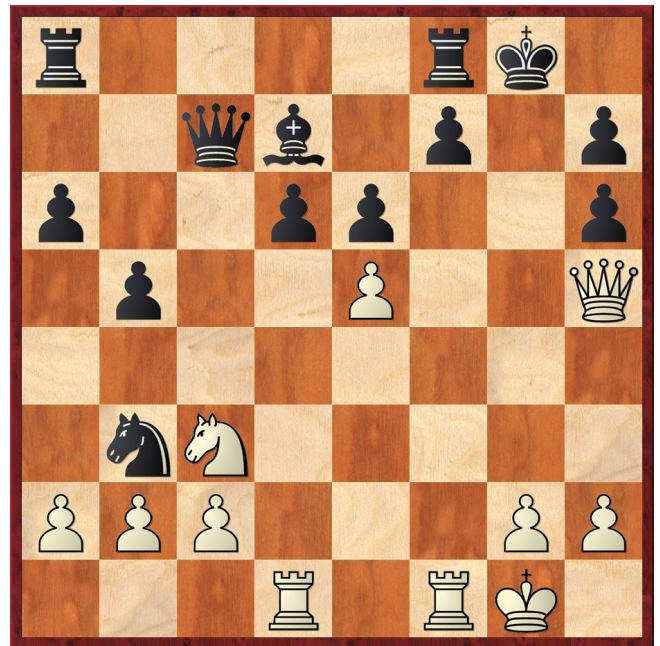
16 ... Bxe5

Paradoxically, 16 ... dxe5 is possibly stronger here.

17 f4 Nxb3

Black has a confusing array of options and finally goes astray. Either 17 ... g6 or gxh6 would have dampened the assault.

18 fxe5 gxh6



19 Ne4

Played after deep thought. I could not see a definitive outcome and wavered between this move (which superficially allows some defence by 19 ... Qb6+ 20 Kh1 Qe3 though there are no squares on the kingside for the black queen after 21 Rde1) and 19 Rd3 Qc5+ 20 Kh1 Qxe5 21 Qxe5 dxe5 22 Rxd7 (which is patently inferior for White). The move played preserved the e5 pawn and kept up the pressure with threats to gain interest on the piece invested so far.

19 ... Bc6
20 Nf6+ Kg7
21 Rd3 Nc5

Against 21 ... Rh8, I planned 22 exd6 Qa7+ 23 Kh1 and White threatens 24 Rg3+ Kf8 25 Qxh6#. White breaks through after 21 ... Kh8 22 Qxh6 Be4 23 Rg3 Rg8 24 Nxh7 (e.g. 24 ... Bxh7 25 Qf6+; 24 ... Rxg3 25 Nf6+)

22 Rg3+ Kh8
23 Qxh6 1-0