

Correspondence Chess News

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A Little Bit of Nostalgia-Chess in War Time Britain 1943-45 By Mike J Donnelly

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Browsing through old chess magazines can be a very worthwhile experience. Not only are there likely to be interesting and educational games by great past masters but a real idea of what life was like at that particular time can sometimes be obtained.

Just a few weeks ago I managed to obtain a bound copy of "Chess" published in Sutton Coldfield close to Birmingham, England. This is just a few miles from where I now live. The set of magazines covered the period October 1943 to September 1945.

The first few pages indicated that any reader was likely to be in for a real treat since the editorial board comprised quite a few famous chess personalities. Of course I was well aware of the journalistic qualities of Baruch H. Wood, the manager and editor, since I have been a subscriber to "Chess" from 1967 to the present day. During this time I have contributed some games and opening articles and so met and spoke with "BH", as he was affectionately known, on numerous occasions. I was pleasantly surprised, however, to note on the front page of the first magazine that the Games Editor was none other than Vera Menchik, Women's World Champion, and arguably the strongest woman player in history until the rise of the Polgar sisters. In those days chess problem were very popular, even amongst players, and we find the legendary

C.S.Kipping as the Problem Editor. I am afraid I don't know too much about the Hon. Assistant Editors: J.Creevy, T.C.M.Olsen and J.Woodcock other than to speculate that one of them was the original owner of the book as it is signed quaintly "Mr Woodcock, Kidderminster". This town is also close to Sutton Coldfield making this a distinct possibility.

Since the bound volume covers part of World War 2 it was natural to expect that this would influence the content of even a chess magazine. I was, in fact, staggered at the impact of the war on chess.

In 1943 in the midst of the war there must have been a real sense of isolation in Britain as most of Europe had fallen under German control. This seems to have extended to thinking about the very worth of playing chess at all during such times. There are some long articles and numerous letters about the value of chess in war against a background of a marked and serious decline in organised chess by the British Chess Federation (BCF) and the regional and county organisers. This mostly arises from the not inconsiderable problem of not being able to collect any fees from players due to relocation or a general shortage of cash. It would also not have helped that so many players were lost during the war. Hence we find occurring frequently throughout the pages of "Chess" reports such as, and I quote, "We are greaved to hear of the death of Lionel West of Woodthorpe Nottingham killed in action out East" and later this tribute continues "extend our condolences to his parents, whose second sacrifice to Freedom this is, for Lionel's brother died in India some months ago." Often the fate of the person in question was unknown and all that could be said was, for instance in the case of airmen, phrases such as "hoped he

bailed out in time". The fate of Vera Menchik becomes more tragic since more details are known about her death. In a very poignant report it is states Vera, her mother and sister were killed by a "flying bomb" on Tuesday night June 27th 1944. The house in which they were sheltering in the basement was raised to the ground and by a sad irony the Anderson shelter in the garden remained intact, as also did a street shelter across the road. The affect of this on BH and the general chess public led to a whole series of articles featuring her chess career, best games and numerous letters of praise for a very long time afterwards. Since her death followed her husbands by just a few months a Memorial fund was set up for them both. The December issue reports the Menchik-Stevenson fund had reached £575 which must have been a huge amount of money for instance by a comparison with that raised by the Isle of Wight events described later in this article.

Occasionally matters are a little more optimistic when for example reports occur of well-known players such as Znosko-Borovski and Gunsberg being heard from again after "disappearing" for long periods of time.

The very mechanism of playing chess during World War 2 was surprisingly affected since there was also a serious shortage of chess sets. For example adverts offered cash for wooden chess sets. Also the cheap and cheerful manufacturers of the "Portland" sets (small portable sets) were otherwise occupied with "priority work" for the war effort so these became unavailable too.

Whilst chess events in Britain became sparse International events still occurred and are of course still reported upon in "Chess". The new focus of the chess world becomes

South America with all the master players staying on there following the 8th Olympiad in 1939. The achievements and games of Najdorf are especially followed. The war still influences players and events even in South America though as regards, for instance, the former Austrian and German Olympiad team member Eliskases. In the October 1943 issue of "Chess" he is described as the German Champion and an ardent Nazi. He became the joint Brazilian Champion later but his pre-eminent position in that country came under threat when Brazil entered the war on the side of the Allies. In Europe reporting of event becomes sporadic due to the breakdown in communications. Sometimes it is only known a game was played "sometime in 1943". It is managed to report Alekhine and Keres results and games, and the competition between them, which do appear quite often. Information could come from any source and for example the Vichy radio reports Alekhine being forced to enter a nursing home in Madrid. Occasionally game notes are supplied by Alekhine himself and that must have been quite an event for "Chess" readers. It is mentioned in the November 1944 issue that in considering his eightieth birthday celebration in 1946, the BCF President Mr Derbyshire, planned another tournament to match that of Nottingham 1936. Sadly it also implies that due to his unfortunate association with the Nazis (in a series of articles in 1941), Alekhine would likely not be invited. The same was said of Eliskases and also Bogoljubov and the latter was branded a "Nazi for many years". Later in the January 1945 issue of "Chess" Alekhine himself makes it clear that the series of articles were rewritten by the Nazis and that he was forced to play in Nazi tournaments due to

pressure from detaining his wife in Paris and from the threat to withdraw his ration card. BH now supported this view but the chess world, in particular the British chess world, does not seem to have listened to judge from later events.

More positively, though, we find chess thriving in some very unusual ways during the war. It became the done thing to drop in on the local chess club when armed forces personnel were stationed away from home and this included even when being situated in another country. In fact it becomes clear the extent to which the average person was drawn into the war as the majority of players names in the games section of the magazine now feature prefaces such as Sergeant, Private or Flying Officer. Forces Championships, such as that for the Army, and Inter-forces matches such as the RAF versus the Army became the big "grudge" matches of the wartime and all were taken very seriously by participants. In one Allied Forces Team we have Tartakover turning up in "disguise" as Lieut. Cartier. Perhaps even to evade pre-game preparation by his opponent! Chess events became one of the means to raise money to support the troops or the Red Cross. One series of tournaments on the Isle of Wight raised £4. This must appear a minute amount in today's money but must have been worth it to warrant the report.

In London efforts were made to keep playing matches even during the Blitz by following the very practical rule of if a match was interrupted by the air raid siren sounding then any unfinished games were declared drawn. In addition, numerous new people learned to play the game initially in order to whilst away the time as Air Raid Wardens, or when posted at Fire Stations or being in the

Home Guard. Chess games were played by people in the Forces even when injured and one mildly amusing report talks about one Naval officer playing top "bed" (rather than top board) whilst in hospital in Malta-typical British stiff upper lip mentality!

Despite the somewhat pessimistic frame of mind that existed in the early part of the war as regard chess it did turn out to be extremely useful to some people. One report repeats another in the Brighton Evening News in which a Dutch local chess champion claims he used chess logic to "work things out" and escape from the Germans. Sgt-Major W.E.Wasse of Alnwick, then recently repatriated following two years in Thorn in Poland, taught hundreds of his fellow prisoners to play chess. This allowed them to become engrossed enough to forget about their surrounding at least during the course of the games. One letter to BH goes as far as describing in great detail how to cobble together in adverse situations a makeshift double chess clock from a wristwatch and paper. BH also received a postcard passed on from the brother of Sergeant Victor Rush who was liberated after more than four years interment in St.Denis in France. The dozen or so numbers of "Chess" he had with him sustained him and his fellow prisoners during this time.

Throughout the war it is clear one form of chess survives and progresses, most particularly in the forces, but also generally and that is postal chess. Through "Chess" players could become members of the Postal Chess Club (PCC) that featured a League, Handicap and Knock-Out sections. In October 1943 a new section, the "Go-as-you-please" tournament was offered for players with limited time and who just wanted a "friendly competition". There was

no adjudication date and any number of opponents could be chosen with a time limit of four days per move and of course no prizes! Later, in August 1945, the first PCC Championship was concluded. Alfred Hirsch, a former Viennese player, won this. A strong over-the-board player he came to England in 1938 following the occupation of Austria by the Germans. By profession he was a jeweller and he resumed this profession and turned to postal chess after being invalided out of the Army. This picture of him pretty well captures the flavour of the times.



The only dark cloud for postal chess I can discern in the pages of this book was early in the war both America and Australia tried to restrict postal chess activities. This was due to the activities of the censors who viewed the codes used by players for moves as being possibly usable by the enemy for conveying secret information! Nevertheless postal play continued with a vengeance as can be seen later in this article. In addition, many forces players wrote to "Chess" to comment how much they enjoyed the game. So it seems as if the policy did not in the end have a great affect on the game.

One novel match that occurred in the midst of the war was when the British Correspondence Chess

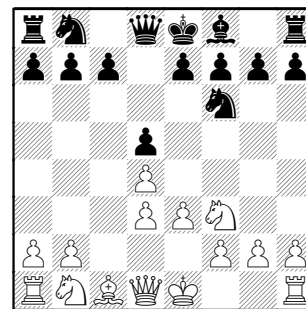
Association (BCCA) brought together a team from all parts to play an over-the-board match against the West of London club on 30th October 1943. At that time the London club must have been one of the strongest in England as members included Vera Menchik, Sir George Thomas and E.G. Seargent amongst others. However, the postal players headed by the famous blind player R.W. Bonham comfortably beat their illustrious opponents by 16.5: 7.5 points.

Here is the top board game:

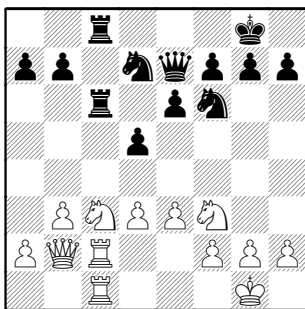
Bonham, R – Green, A [D04]

BCCA v West London Club, 1943
[R.W. Bonham/*M.J. Donnelly]

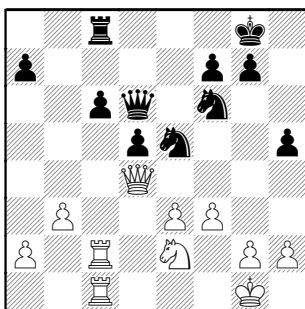
1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e3 ♗f5
4.♗d3 ♗xd3 [4...c6 5.♗xf5 exf5 gave black a good game due to his control of e4 as in Alekhine–Colle. * This is the game from San Remo 1930 which went 6.♞d3 ♞c8 7.0-0 c6 8.c4 dxc4 9.♞xc4 ♗d6 and black has easily equalised and is not subjected to sort of blitz attack that can occur in this opening. The idea seems to have been first played in the game Breyer–Rubinstein, Gotheburg 1920 and was quite popular just before the start of WW2, when Colle himself was active, as a means of blunting the famed Colle Opening. Euwe also selected this method against Colle at Amsterdam in 1928 and it also featured in some games from the Alekhine–Euwe 1935 match. Suprisingly today it is perhaps less well know and not so much played and hardly mentioned in opening books.] 5.cxd3



Strengthening the centre and opening the c–file (* or more precisely the queens bishop file as it was then called!). 5...e6 6.0-0 ♗bd7 7.♗c3 [* 7.b3 is a recent new idea from Annaberdiev that occurred in a game versus Erenburg (41 st WJun, Gos India 2002) so as to exchange the white queen bishop. However, after 7...b5 8.♗b2 ♗c7 9.♞c2 c5 black had easily equalised so maybe the old ways are still the best on occasion!] 7...c5 8.dxc5 *This idea is characteristic of this pawn formation and means white is now left with two good central pawns. Alternatively [8.e4 is a modern example of rapid pawn structure changes in the opening when Castillo–Gil, Merida Campeonato Es 1994 turned out well after 8...cxd4 9.♗xd4 dxc4 10.dxc4 ♗c7 (10...♗c5 looks a better move for black) 11.♞b3 0-0 12.♗d1 and white scored a quick win.] 8...♗xc5 9.b3 0-0 10.♗b2 ♞e7 11.♗c1 ♗ac8 12.♗c2 ♗a3 13.♞c1 ♗xb2 14.♞xb2 ♗c6 In view of what follows Rc7 would have been better. 15.♗fc1 ♗fc8



* This is the really bad mistake as the rook on c6 now lacks squares so black had to try e5 here. **16.♖d4** Now black must lose the exchange. If he moves the rook off the file then Nxd5 wins. **16...♗e5** [16...♗c5 17.b4 ♗5c7 18.♖db5 ♗c6 19.♖xa7 etc.; 16...♗6c7 17.♖db5 ♗c5 18.b4 etc.] **17.♖xc6 bxc6** **18.♗d2 ♗b4** **19.d4** Barring the black queen's entry to the kings side. **19...♖g6** **20.♗dc2 h5** **21.f3** Holding both e4 and g4 and thus restricting htc black knights. **21...♗d6** **22.♖e2 e5** **23.dxe5 ♖xe5** **24.♗d4**



Centralising the queen and at the same time performing three tasks: viz; defending d3, pinning the d-pawn and attacking the rook pawn.* This multi-tasking is a sure sign of a very good move and shows that white is not going to give his opponent the slightest chance of recovering from the opening. **24...♗c7** **25.e4** Taking advantage of the pin and at the

same time threatening f4 and e5. **25...g5** **26.exd5 ♖xd5** **27.♖c3 ♗d7** **28.♖xd5 cxd5** **29.♗c5 ♖h7** So as to be able to play his next without allowing Rc8+ followed by the exchange of queens. **30.♗d1 ♗b6** **31.♖h1** [Of course not 31.♗xd5 ♗xd5 32.♗xb6 ♗xd1+] **31...g4** **32.f4** [Or 32.♗xc5 ♗xc5 33.♗f5+] **32...♖g6** **33.♗xd5 ♗xd5** **34.♗xd5 ♗f6** **35.♗xh5+ 1-0**

Later on the otb players got their revenge when the BCCA lost narrowly to Middlesex 9: 11 in a match played on April 7 1945. To do this Middlesex produced a magnificent top 6 composed entirely of international players that included W.Winter, P.M.List, Dr.J.M.Aitkin, J.Mieses who celebrated his 80th birthday that month but was still a very formidable player, R.C.Griffith and G.Wood (brother of BH). Against these six and on top board BH was the only BCCA player to win. More than 50 years later the BCCA again ventured to enter a team of postal players in the very strong otb event the Four Nations Chess League in England. This has and still does feature many of the strongest IM and GMs not only in England but also in the world. However times have moved on and in the main the postal players struggled to hold the otb players but did manage to conjure up what was described as the biggest upset in 4 NCL history when they (perhaps better "we" because I played in that match!) defeated a team that out-rated us by typically 200 ELO points on every one of the eight boards.

In pure correspondence play during the war it is curious the same few counties as some 50-60 years later were prominent in competing for the title of English Counties Correspondence Champions. Amongst these is my own county Warwickshire, which has won this title several times.

However, back in 1943 this county finished just 7th but by only by a few points due to a record breaking point score from the winners Yorkshire.

The championship of individual Counties could be remarkably strong. In the 1945 Warwickshire championship, BH despite being the British Correspondence Champion, could only finish equal 3rd.

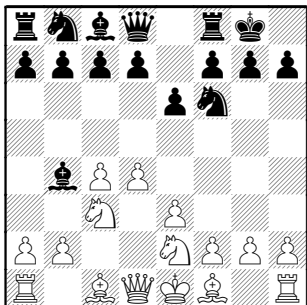
Here is a game from the 1943 Warwickshire Correspondence Championship. The player of the white pieces has come down in English chess folk-lore as a player of great determination. He certainly needed this characteristic in the following game but looking at his picture it is easy to see why he has this reputation:



Wallis,P – Hassell,S [E46]
Warwickshire Corr Ch, 1943
[M.J.Donnelly]

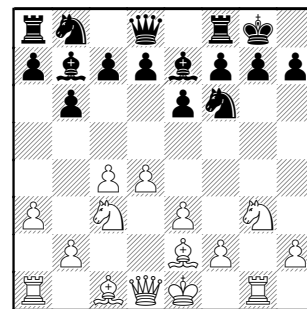
1.d4 ♖f6 **2.c4 e6** **3.♖c3 ♗b4** **4.e3 0-0** Nowadays, after several decades of experience, black players generally prefer the more flexible b6 immediately at this stage. The move gives the option of hitting c3 again with Ne4 or playing a rapid Ba6 attacking c4 whilst castling can wait for a

whilst yet. Although it must be said Spassky has favoured castling on the fourth move several times in the sixties to reach reasonable opening positions according to Taiminovs opening book on the Nimzo-indian. **5.♘ge2**

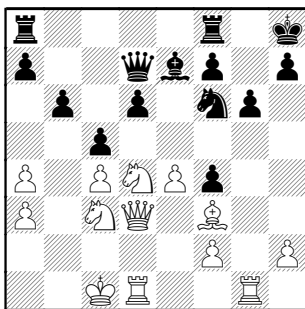


[This move, which has the idea of avoiding the formation of doubled c-pawn should black capture on c3, was played in some games in several important events just before and during the war. These included the Alekhine-Euwe 1937 match and major tournament such as Semmering-Baden, Stockholm Olympiad, and Zurich. By far the most popular move, however, seemed to be 5.♘d3 when a contemporary example went 5...d5 6.♘ge2 dxc4 7.♘xc4 e5 8.a3 exd4 9.axb4 dxc3 10.♖xd8 ♖xd8 11.bxc3 ♘e6 12.♘xe6 fxe6 13.♘d4 ♔f7 with a better ending for white as in Moses-Hooper, British Correspondence Ch 1943.] **5...b6** [5...♖e8 was often used as a means of preserving the black squared bishop for example 6.a3 ♘f8 7.e4 d6 (7...e5 8.dxe5 ♘g4 9.♘g3 ♖h4 10.♘e2 was Purdy-Crowl, Australia corr Ch, 1938 when after black too adventurous next white established a winning advantage by 10...d6 11.♘b5 ♘a6 12.exd6 cxd6 13.♖c2 d5 14.cxd5 ♘xh2 15.♘e3) 8.♘g5 ♘bd7 9.f4 e5 10.fxe5 dxe5 11.d5 ♘c7 Prins-Eliskases, Stockholm 1937.; 5...d6 falls in too readily with whites plan: 6.a3

♘xc3+ 7.♘xc3 e5 8.♘e2 ♖e7 9.0-0 ♘f5 10.f3 ♘c6 (10...♖e8 is a little better according to Pachman) 11.♘d5± Euwe-Yanovsky, Groningen 1946.] **6.a3 ♘e7** [6...♘xc3+ 7.♘xc3 d5 (7...♘b7 8.f3 ♘d5 was preferred by an emerging Tigran Petrosian in his game against Kalashian, Yerevan Ch 1946 8...♖e7 9.♘e2 exd5 10.cxd5 d6 11.f3 ♖e8 12.0-0 ♘bd7 13.e4 with advantage but strategically the game is almost over as this is an ideal position for Petrosian's style.) 8...d5 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.♘d3 ♖h4+ 11.g3 ♖h3 12.♖c2= Richter-Thelen, Prague 1945) 8.♘e2 ♘a6 9.b3 ♘bd7 10.♘b2 dxc4 11.bxc4 c5 12.0-0 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♖c8= Lisitsin-Bondarevsky, Moscow 1948.] **7.♘g3** [7.d5 ♘b7 8.g3 exd5 9.cxd5 c5 10.♘g2 d6 11.0-0 ♘a6 12.e4 ♖b8 13.♘b5 ♖d7 14.♘xa7 ♘xd5 15.exd5 ♖xa7 16.♘c3± Reshevsky-Belavenets, Leningrad-Moscow 1939.; 7.♘f4 ♘b7 8.♘e2 d6 9.♘f3 c6 10.0-0 d5 11.b3 ♘bd7 12.♘b2 ♖c8 13.♖c1 ♘d6= Eliskases-Lilienthal, Moscow 1936.] **7...♘b7 8.♘e2** [8.♘d3 is another way to offer the g-pawn but black declined in the game Stephenson-Crosby, Durham Ch 1959 but after 8...c5 9.d5 exd5 10.cxd5 d6 11.e4 ♘bd7 12.f4 a6 13.a4 ♖c7 white had a slightly superior form of the Benoni set-up as blacks bishop is less effectively stationed on e7 compared to g7.; Strong modern players are not inclined to make the sacrifice and prefer central action with 8.d5 d6 9.e4 c6 10.♘e2 ♖e8 11.0-0 ♘bd7= Sriram-Annageldyev, Asian Ch 2001 or ; 8.e4 d6 9.♘d3 ♘bd7 10.0-0 e5 (10...c5 looks a better option) 11.d5 g6 12.♘h6 ♖e8 13.h3± Vaysman-Lofty, Cairo Open 1998. It remains unclear which method, sacrificing or not, is best so it is probably a matter of taste which is selected.] **8...♘g2 9.♖g1 ♘b7**

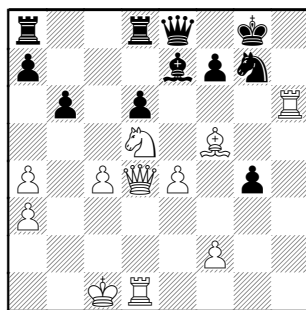


10.e4 d6 11.♘f4 This looks a little unnatural as the bishop can easily be hit by e5. Instead Bd3 threatening e5 might be an alternative. This indicates that maybe 8.Bd3 in the first place was strongest. **11...♘c6 12.♖d3** Instead white goes for rapid development in which the queen takes the place of the move Bd3 and early queens-side castling is set up. **12...e5 13.d5** [Instigating enormous complications since alternatives such as 13.dxe5 or ; 13.♘e3 promise nothing for white. To judge from the picture of Wallis one can imagine him gritting his teeth and getting stuck in here.] **13...exf4 14.dxc6 ♘xc6 15.♘f5 g6 16.0-0-0 ♔h8 17.♘d4 ♖d7** So far both players have moved correctly and neither side has given anything away. Now however this is a slight mistake from black. His pieces are a little stymied on c6 and d7 and hence better was Bb7 (retaining the option of c5) followed by activating the kings rook with Re8 and pressure on e4. **18.♘f3 ♘a4** This is presumably blacks justification for Qd7 which seems to lead to a forced weakening of whites castled position. **19.b3 c5 20.bxa4**



A brave decision and better than the natural $Nxa4$ as black would then get counterplay based on $b5$ —now he has none. **20...cxd4** **21.♖xd4 ♜fd8** **22.♗d5** [22.c5 looks strong but after 22...♞e6 23.exf6 ♜xf6 24.♗d3 ♜ac8 25.♗d5 ♞e5 white has to be careful in defence. Instead Wallis chooses a line that puts black under pressure.] **22...♜g7** **23.♗g4** [23.♜xf6 ♜xf6 24.c5 ♜xe5 25.♞xe5+ dxe5 26.♞xd7 ♞xd7 27.♗xa8 ♞d3 is only at best slightly better for white as his pawns are too weak to defend successfully.] **23...♞e8** **24.h4 h6** [24...h5 25.♗xh5 slows the attack by returning the pawn but white is still a shade better.] **25.♗xf4 ♜h7** [25...♞xa4 falls for 26.♗h5+ ♜h7 (26...gxf5 27.♗d7+) 27.♗xf6+ ♜xf6 28.♞xf6 ♞xa3+ 29.♞b2+] **26.h5 g5** Black begins to crack under the pressure. Here it may be possible to grab the a-pawn [26...♞xa4 27.hxg6+ fxg6 28.♗c6 (28.♞d3 d5 29.cxd5 ♗xa3+) 28...♞xa3+ 29.♜b1 ♞b3+ with at least a draw. Black is much better in both lines but due to the weakness of g6 and whites central passed pawns, which might generate counter-play, the position remains somewhat obscure. Having been on the wrong side of some aggressive play in the moves leading to this position black was probably psychologically ill-prepared for a counter attack.] **27.♗f5+ ♜g8**

28.♗d5 ♗xh5 [A fatal pawn grab. Stronger was to eliminate the d5 knight with 28...♗xd5 29.cxd5 (29.♞xd5 ♞xa4 30.♞g3) 29...♗f8 with about equal chances for both players.] **29.♞h1 ♗g7** **30.♞xh6 g4**



Black probably relied on the check on g5 to slow the attack but white has a brilliant finish in mind. **31.♞f6** Its mate whatever black now plays. **31...♗xf6** **32.♗xf6+ ♜f8** **33.♞h8+ ♜e7** **34.♗d5# 1-0**

The winner that year of the Warwickshire Postal Championship was W. Riston-Morry. Many years later as an organiser he was responsible for helping promote Tony Miles to a world class GM by instigating international tournaments in the Birmingham area to speed his early progress. Riston as he was known was no mean otb player as well, having represented England on occasion in team matches, but was rather a curious character. Back in July 1967 during my first-ever regional tournament he proudly announced that if anyone could beat him in a simultaneous exhibition he gave against the junior players partaking in the event he would buy him or her any book from the bookstall of BH. This was rather surprising since as I later learned Riston was second only to Scrooge when it came to financial matters. Of course when I beat him he rudely refused to buy me anything. It took BH some time

to convince him to do is duty and a rather traumatised youngster was eventually given a copy of the excellent book “The Art of the Middle Game” by Keres and Kotov which I still posses to this day. In no way as revenge for this incident here is Riston in action in the 1942-43 British Correspondence Chess Championship (honestly its the only postal game of his I can find in these pages!)

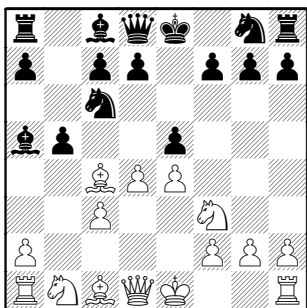
Morry, W – Wormald, R [C52]

BCCA Ch 1942–43., 1942

[V.Menchik/* M.J.Donnelly]

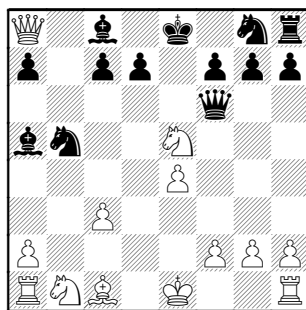
1.e4 e5 **2.♗f3 ♗c6** **3.♗c4 ♗c5** **4.b4 *** The Evans gambit which offers a wing pawn for some tempi and control of the centre combined with chances of a rapid attack against f7. Despite being all the rage last century and coming in and out of fashion a number of times since a definite answer as regards its total soundness has still not been reached. Apart from being played in the "Evergreen Game" Anderssen–Dufresne, Berlin 1852 it was also played by a galaxy of top players in the mid and late 1800s including Morphy and Zukertort. The opening was a favourite of Bobby Fisher in simultaneous play and in more recent years Conquest, Short, Morozevich and Sveshnikov are amongst class GMs to give it a try out. **4...♗xb4** [* The gambit can be declined of course with some variations given by William Winter in 1936 being 4...♗b6 5.b5 (5.♗b2 d6 6.a4 a6 7.b5 axb5 8.axb5 ♞xa1 9.♗xa1 ♗d4=) 5...♗a5 6.♗c5 ♗h6 7.d4 d6 8.♗xh6 dxc5 9.♗xg7 ♞g8 10.♗xf7+ ♜xf7 11.♗xc5 when black was thought better despite white having 4 pawns for the piece.] **5.c3 ♗a5** [* 5...♗d6 was favoured by Pillsbury but was generally regarded as unnatural.]

6.d4 b5



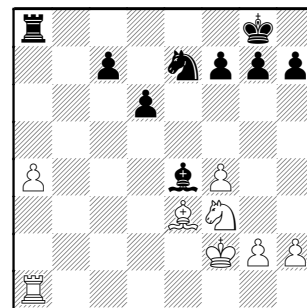
* Leading to an even more complex and obscure play in an opening that can generally lead to wild positions. [6...d6 is one of the most logical variations in this opening which is the so-called Lasker Defence. This has on occasion been deemed good enough to put the Evans Gambit at least temporarily out of fashion. 7.♖b3 ♗d7 8.dxc5 ♖b6 9.♖b5 (9.♖bd2 features in recent games such as 9...♖a5 10.♖b4 (and 10.♖c2 ♖xc4 11.♖xc4 ♖c5 Sveshnikov–Sharma, Dubai 2001) 10...♖xc4 11.♖xc4 ♖c5 12.♖b3 ♖c7 13.0-0 0-0 14.exd6 cxd6 15.♖a3 Short–Huebner, Dortmund 1997.) 9...a6 10.♖a4 ♖c5 11.c4 is the line suggested by Winter to keep the game open as white has regained his pawn without incurring problems. ; 6...exd4 7.0-0 ♖b6 the "old form of defence" (7...dxc3 the so-called Compromised Defence but after 8.♖b3 white has good attacking chances.) 8.cxd4 d6 9.♖c3 ♖a5 10.♖g5 f6 11.♖e3 ♖xc4 12.♖a4+ ♗d7 13.♖xc4 and white has good compensation for the pawn deficiency.] 7.♖xb5 [* 7.♖d5 exd4 8.♖b3 (8.♖xd4 ♗f6 9.0-0 ♖ge7 10.♖xb5 0-0 11.♖e3 a6 12.♖d4 ♖b6 (12...♖xd5 13.exd5 ♖xd4 14.♖xd4 ♗g6 15.♖d2 d6 16.♖e1= Power–Bailen Canales, UECC e-mail 1998.) 13.♖c2 is about level (although Harding in Megacorr3 gives white the

advantage here) as in Purdy–Goldstein, Australian corr ch, 1945) 8...♗f6 9.0-0 (9.e5 ♗g6 10.♖g5 ♖h6 11.e6 0-0 12.exf7+ ♖xf7 13.♖xf7 ♖xf7 14.0-0 dxc3 15.♖xc3 ♖d4 16.♖xf7+ ♗xf7 when white is losing as in Molina–Molinari, corr 1975.) 9...h6 10.cxd4 ♖ge7 11.e5 ♗f5 12.♖bd2 ♖xd5 13.♖xd5 0-0 14.♖a3 (14.♖xb5 is possibly better regaining the pawn) 14...b4+ Breyer–Schlechter, Baden 1914] 7...♖xd4 8.♖xe5 * Although this wins the exchange it puts the queen out of play for some time so perhaps a better choice would be [8.♖xd4 exd4 9.♖xd4 ♗f6 10.e5 ♗b6 11.♖d3 ♖c7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♖a3± Muzychuk–Zlatanova, 3 rd E/Wch Varna B 2002.] 8...♖xb5 9.♖d5 ♗f6 10.♖xa8

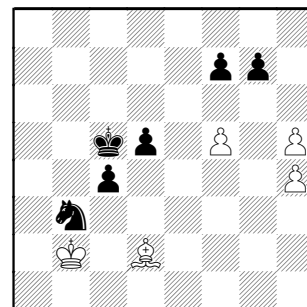


[* Many years later Riston was to try this position again and took on b5 instead, only this time, to lose the exchange as follows 10.♖xb5 ♖b6 11.♖f3 ♖c7 12.0-0 ♖a6 Riston Morry–Russel, corr 1984.] 10...♖e7 * Note that black has good compensation for the material since he is two pieces ahead in development and is hitting c3. 11.f4 ♗a6 * Black has two other strong looking options here again suggesting that grabbing the exchange is perhaps not white's best course of action. [11...d6 12.a4 ♖d4 threatening c2 and e5; 11...♗h4+ aiming to add a displaced white king to black's

advantages 12.g3 ♗h3 13.♖f2 0-0 threat Ba6.] 12.♖e3 0-0 * Threat Bb7 winning the queen forces white to liquidate into an ending a clear pawn down. 13.a4 ♖xc3 14.♖xc3 ♖xc3+ 15.♖f2 ♖xa1 16.♖xa1 d6 17.♖f3 ♖b7 18.♖xa7 ♖xa7 19.♖xa7 ♖a8 20.♖e3 ♖xe4



* white is just a pawn down as the passed a-pawn does not offer much compensation as a8 is so well controlled by black. 21.♖d2 ♖d5 22.g4 ♖f8 23.♖e2 ♖e8 24.♖d3 [* 24.♖d4 gives a little play due to pressure on g7 or f6.] 24...♖d7 25.h4 c5 26.♖c4 ♖xc4+ 27.♖xc4 ♖c6 28.♖d2 d5+ * Black has carefully nursed his extra pawn into a completely winning position and now has two passed pawns of his own. 29.♖d3 h5 30.gxh5 ♖f5 31.a5 c4+ 32.♖c2 ♖c5 33.♖b1 ♖d4+ 34.♖c3 ♖xa5 35.♖b7 ♖a3+ 36.♖b2 ♖b3+ 37.♖xb3 ♖xb3 38.f5



* Despite black's winning position white now proceeds to find some

amazing resources to make his opponents task as difficult as possible and produce a highly entertaining and educational ending to the game. 38...f6 [38...dxd2 39.f6 c3+ 40.c2 d4 (40...gxf6 41.h6 c4 42.h7 d4 43.h8 d3+ 44.d1 wins. (* but not 44.c1 d3+ 45.d1 c2+ wins for black.)) 41.fxg7 d6 42.h6 (42.cxc3? d8+) 42...c4 43.g8 d8 44.h7+] 39.g5 b4 [39...fxg5 40.f6 gxf6 41.h6 wins.; 39...d4 40.xf6 dxf5 41.xg7 d4 42.h6 d6 43.c3 etc] 40.xf6 [40.h6 c3+ (40...gxh6 41.xf6 d4 42.e7+) 41.b1 gxh6 42.xf6 d4 43.e7+ c4 44.f6 d3 45.a3 c2+ 46.a2 d2 47.f7 d1 48.f8 a1#] 40...gxf6 41.h6 c3+ 42.b1 d4 43.h7 d3 44.h8 c2+ 45.a2 c1 46.b8+ c3 47.xb3+ d2 48.h5 [48.e6 c3 threat Kc2 49.b1 (49.d5 c2 50.g2+ d2 51.e6+ d1+ 52.a3 c1+) 49...c2+ 50.a1 d1 51.e4 c3+ 52.b1 b3+ 53.a1 c2 54.g2+ d2 55.e4+ c1 56.e6+ c2 wins.] 48...c2+ 49.b2 e1 50.h6 c4+ 51.a3 d2 0-1

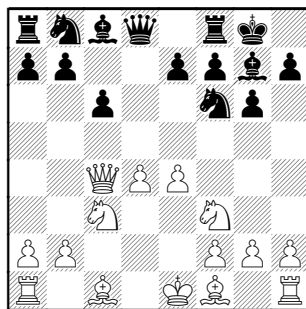
At that time BH was promoting postal chess not only through his magazine but also by example of his play. Here is a game in which he beats the 1944 British Correspondence Champion R.W. Bonham:

Wood,B – Bonham,R [D97]

BCCA Championship 1943–44., 1943

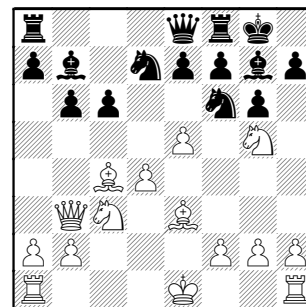
[B.H.Wood/*M.J.Donnelly]

1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.d3 d5 4.d3 g7 5.b3 dxc4 6.xc4 0-0 7.e4 c6

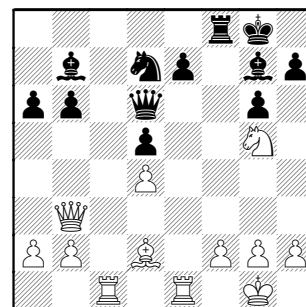


* The Boleslavsky variation which remains an option to this day but is currently under a slight cloud as black can be left with a weak queens-side if the pawns advance too much in that region of the board. In the 40s the Grunfeld was developing as an opening and some of the main options in this position were already in practice whilst others were being developed. For instance Alekhine against Euwe in the 1935 match selected 7...a6, 7...b6 was the famous game Szabo–Barcza, Makovetz 1939 which went [7...b6 8.e5 c6 9.exf6 xc4 10.fxg7 d8 11.xc4 and whites pieces proved more effective than the queen, whilst Smyslov was also starting to introduce 7...Bg4 in the mid to late 40s.] 8.e3 b6 [* Perhaps a too solid approach for this opening which normally relies on hitting d4 with pieces or the pawn breaks c5 or e5. Here 8...d4 has recently been recommended by Geller, based on the game Pietzsch–Hort, Keckemet 1966 which went 9.0-0 b5 10.e2 dxe3 11.xe3 d7 but surely the simple Bf4 is better when white threatens h3.] 9.b3 [* Aiming to concentrate peices against f7. 9.d1 is a possibility here supporting the centre. If black now tries Ng4, hitting the important e3 bishop, white again has Bf4 introducing tricky complications arising from the offer of the d–pawn.] 9...b7

10.c4 d7 11.d5 e8 [If 11...e6 white meant to play 12.dxf7 xf7 * and after 13.xe6 c7 14.xf7+ (Not 14.e5 d5 15.xf7+ xf7 16.d5 xd5 17.h4 when the "attack" is not really threatening much) 14...xf7 15.xf7+ xf7 white would have a small advantage and easier game to play due to better central control.] 12.e5



* Now black is in real trouble as he has not generated any of the normal central counter play characteristic of the Grunfeld Defence Opening. 12...d5 [If 12...d4 13.xf7+ xf7 14.e6 etc.] 13.xd5 [* 13.e6 immediately is also very strong.] 13...cxd5 14.e6 fxe6 15.dxe6 * Simply winning the exchange after which black does not have much chance—it was not often Bonham was outplayed in this manner. 15...f7 16.dxf8 xf8 17.0-0 e6 18.Eac1 a6 19.fel d6 20.d4 b8 21.d5 d6 22.d2



Black resigned as he has no good defence against 23. Qh3 or 23. Re6. For example [22.♔d2 ♕xd4 (22...e5 23.♖h3 h6 24.♖e6+ ♗xe6 25.♘e6 ♜f7 26.♘g7 ♔xg7 27.dxe5 winning easily.) 23.♖h3 ♜xf2 24.♖xh7+ ♔f8 25.♔c3 ♕xc3 26.♖h8#] 1-0

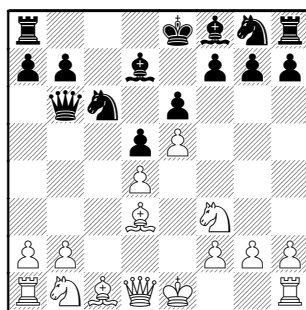
It took something special to beat Bonham at that time and another fine game resulted from the following clash in the 1943-44 BCCA Championship.

Bonham,R – White ,A [C02]

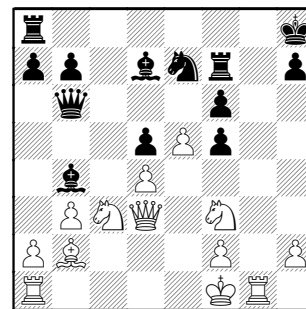
BCCA Ch 1943-44., 1943
[V.Menchik/* M.J.Donnelly]

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 [Nimzovich favoured 4.♖g4 cxd4 5.♗f3 ♗c6 (* 5...f5 is possibly the reason this line has fallen into disuse since black seems better now eg. 6.♖g3 ♗c6 7.♗d3 ♔d7 8.0-0 ♖c7 9.c3 0-0-0 Honfi-Portisch, Hungarian Ch 1964.) 6.♗d3 giving up a pawn for quick development and kings side attack eg. 6...♗g7 (6...♖c7 is best here) 7.0-0 ♗g6 8.♔e1 ♖c7 9.♖g3 ♔c5 10.h4 ♔f8 11.h5 ♗g7 12.h6 with advantage.] 4...♗c6 5.♗f3 ♖b6 6.♗d3? * Obviously the original annotator doesn't like this move as it is given a question mark. Although modern theory prefers 6. a3 here there is still, more than 50 years later, debate about the merits or otherwise of Bd3. 6...cxd4 [If first 6...♗d7 then 7.dxc5 ♕xc5 8.0-0 (or 8.Qe2) with a good game for white-* as in the classic game Nimzovitch-Salwe, Karlsbad 1911 which went. 8...f6 9.b4 ♔c7 10.♗f4 fxe5 11.♗xe5 and white controls the key squares c5, d4 and e5. Curiously back in 1968 I used exactly this idea, but from a 3.Nd2 versus the French variation, to win a brevity in one of my earliest postal games played in the Postal Chess League

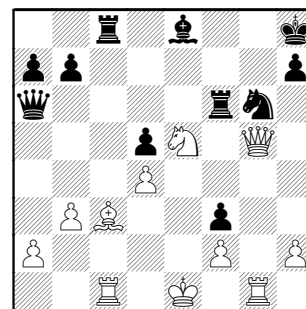
organised by "Chess"! 7.cxd4 ♕d7



[Not at once 7...♗xd4 8.♗xd4 ♗xd4 9.♗b5+ wins the queen.] 8.♔e2 [* An alternative is 8.0-0 but this pawn sacrifice may be an invention after the current game was completed. Pachman gives references from 1947 through to 1961 showing white gets good chances after 8...♗xd4 9.♗xd4 ♗xd4 10.♗c3 and now 10...a6 seems best but not (10...♖xe5 11.♔e1 ♖d6 12.♗b5 ♖b8 13.♖f3 ♔d6 14.♖xd5 ♔xh2+ 15.♔h1 ♔c6 16.♖g5±)] 8...♗ge7 9.b3 ♗f5 10.♗b2 ♗b4+ 11.♔f1 0-0 [Or 11...h5 preventing g4.; * 11...♔c7 is given by Psakhis as level in "The Complete French".] 12.g4 ♗h6 13.g5 [Or 13.♔g1 f6 14.exf6 ♖xf6 15.g5 ♖xf3 16.♗xf3 ♗f5 is quite satisfactory for black* Pachman gives this line in his book Semi-Open games published in English about 1970.] 13...♗f5 14.♗d3 [Had white not previously wasted a move with his KB, allowing black to develop Bd7 for nothing he would have had the option of playing here 14.♗c3 for if 14...♗cxd4 then 15.♗a4] 14...f6 15.gxf6 gxf6 16.♗xf5 exf5 17.♗c3 ♔f7 18.♔g1+ ♔h8 19.♖d3 [If 19.♗xd5 ♖b5+] 19...♗e7



* A strong move guarding f5, giving the option of defending with Ng6 and by allowing for Bb5 showing that it is white's king, and not black's, that is in danger. 20.exf6 ♖xf6 21.♗e3 ♔e8 22.♖g3 ♗g6 23.♔d1 [Still not 23.♗xd5 ♖b5+ 24.♗d3 ♖xd5 25.♗xb4 ♔b5+ 26.♗d3 (26.♔e1 ♖e6+ 27.♖e3 ♖d6) 26...f4] 23...f4 *The start of black's counter-attack which is carried out with great vigour. 24.♖g5 ♕xc3 25.♕xc3 ♔c8 26.♔c1 ♖a6+ 27.♔e1 f3



* Not only controlling e2 with mating threats but allowing black's pieces to flood into the heart of white's position via the f4 square. 28.♖e3 ♗f4 29.♔d2 [29.♖xf3 ♕h5 30.♖c3 ♗e2; 29.♗xf3 ♗d3+] 29...♗g2 30.♖d3 ♔b5 31.♖c2 ♔f4 Threat Rxd4+ 32.♖b1 ♔e4 33.a4 ♖h6+ 34.♔c2 ♔e2+ 35.♔d1 ♔d2+ 36.♗xd2 ♔e2# 0-1

It is perhaps not so well known that BH started life as a scientist holding a Master of Science degree. He was therefore very pleased to have as a PCC member one of the world's most famous chemists Sir Robert Robinson FRS who at the time was leading the British research team in the quest for a synthesis of penicillin. Of course what was not known at the time how complex a task this was and it relied on Fleming some years later to lead the way to utilise biosynthesis (fermentation) in producing this essential antibiotic. In lighter mode here is the game that allowed Robinson to win the deciding tie match after finishing first equal in the 1944 BCCA Odds Tournament (Robinson gave odds of move and f7 pawn).

Bains ,J – Robinson,S [C55]

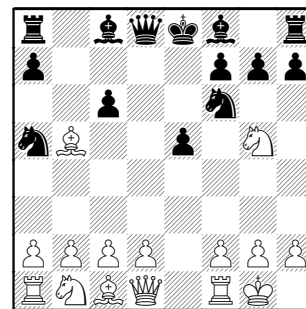
BCCA Odds Tournament, 1944
[M.J.Donnelly]

Black gives the odds of the f7 pawn. **1.e4 ♖c6** It is interesting to debate what is the best policy in playing against this sort of odds. One clear point is that with the f7 pawn gone and a white bishop on c4 then king-side castling will not be an option for black. It is difficult to envisage play where the diagonal e8–h5 might be weakened enough to matter in a consistent manner. Reference to Morphy's games, where this sort of odds was common, is not too helpful as he does not always play the same set up eg: [1...d6 2.d4 ♖f6 3.♗c4 ♖c6 4.♖c3 e5 5.d5 ♖e7 Medley–Morphy, London 1858.; 1...e6 2.d4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.c4 g6 5.♖c3 ♗g7 6.♗d3 ♖a6 Devinck–Morphy, Paris 1858– incidentally a game that shows some characteristic features of a Benoni set up about 100 years before it became popular.] **2.♖f3 e5 3.♗c4 ♖f6** Black follows the recipe of simple and rapid development

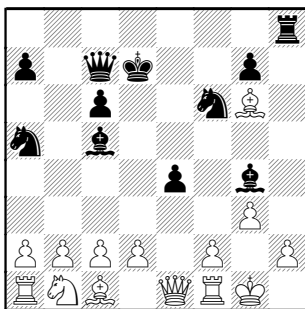
again a la Morphy. **4.0-0 d6 5.♗g5**

This is of course known theory for a normal game but here seems to achieve less as it is the square f7 and not the pawn that is now being attacked. Also white is starting to move pieces for the second time which in odds games is often a cardinal sin. It would seem best to open up the game as much as possible, via aiming for d4, so as to ultimately hope to expose the lack of full king protection from the f7 pawn not being present.

5...d5 6.exd5 ♖a5 [6...♗xd5 could be an option here inviting the so called Fried–Liver Attack where white follows by capturing on f7 and then playing Qf3+ to retain the king in the centre due to Ke6 being forced. In this odds game, although white does not even get a pawn for his knight, the fact remains that black does not have the option of playing f6 to bolster the e5 square when white plays for example Re1/d4. So all in all Na5 looks better.] **7.♗b5+** [7.d3 ♗d6 8.f4 (8.♖c3 straightforward development could be whites best plan here just keeping the extra pawn in the odds game and using the normal game Albin–Winawer, DSB-07 Kongress 1892 as a model. 8...a6 9.a3 b5 10.♗a2 ♖b7 11.♖ge4 ♖d7 12.♗g5) 8...♗xc4 9.dxc4 h6 10.♖xf7 ♖xf7 11.fxg5 as in the normal game Kolisch–Shumov, St Petersburg 1862 is another option but doesnt look feasible for white in the odds game as with no f7 pawn to capture white only gets 2 pawns for the piece.] **7...c6 8.dxc6 bxc6**



9.♗d3 This must be wrong for several reasons (a) it blocks development of white's queen side (b) it goes after another irrelevant pawn and one which opens up lines against his own king (c) white has other more active placements for the bishop. In the latter case examples include the following normal games but to be fair these ideas may not have been available to white so he would have had to work them out from first principles: [9.♗e2 The games I can trace with more relevant bishop moves were both played after the war and continued: 9...h6 10.♖f3 e4 11.♖e1 Quesada–Prins, Havana 1952.; 9.♗a4 h6 10.♖f3 ♗d6 11.b4 ♗xb4 12.♖xe5 Amadasun–Conrady, Bled Olympiad 2002.] **9...♗c5 10.♗xh7 ♗g4 11.♗g6** This is really Bg6+ as there is no f7 pawn. **11...♗d7 12.♖e1 ♖c7** Discreetly aiming for h2 **13.♖xf7** again actually just Nf7 but note the relative development for white and black at this point in the game. **13...e4 14.♖xh8** Far too greedy and missing the point of blacks line up. Here g3 was the only hope for white. **14...♖xh8 15.g3**



[15.♕f5+ can just be ignored leaving everything on for black after 15...♗d8] 15...♙g3+ 16.hxg3 ♕f3 so no way out of mate now for white 0-1

By September 1944 BH had expanded the ideas in the PCC to include the mystical “Sealed Tournament” in which players are handicapped and the games awarded points for content which were of course only published after the completion of the game. Junior chess is not forgotten with a Junior Knock-out competition and more generally there is now a best games competition. The other big event BH promoted in “Chess” was the Postal Chess League (PCL). This continued to flourish for many decades after the war. At that time the event was given impetus by the presentation of three fine trophies by Lord Brabozon, J.N. Derbyshire and J.J.Hanlon each famous character in their own right. These prizes were sumptuous indeed with, for example, the first division prize being a set of flawless ivory Staunton pieces in a glass display cabinet complete with silver plaque. In addition, each member of the winning team was presented with a medal. This was a gold medal for the first division, silver for the second and chrome for the third. This event proved immediately very popular and

most of the leading clubs and cities in England entered one or more teams.

Here is a prize winning game from this event and in lighter mode an interesting brevity:

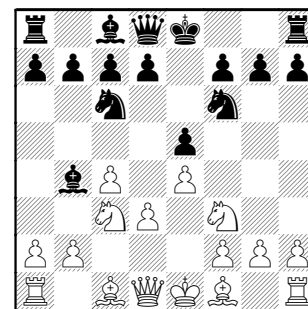
Ellison,L – Trevenen,v

[A22]

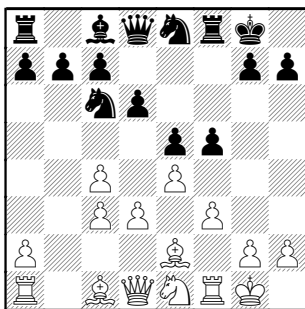
Postal Chess Club-league 1b., 1944

[V.Menchik/* M.J.Donnelly]

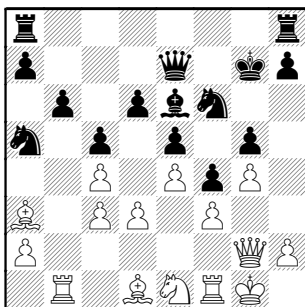
Notes are based on the very extensive ones by Vera Menchik for a game that was awarded a prize for best win with the black pieces. 1.c4 e5 2.♖c3 ♖f6 3.e4 White has undisputed control of d5 but the move is not really worth a serious try and it weakens the black squares.As long as black hinders d4 then the white kings bishop is reduced to a rather passive role.* Essentially correct but this view seems a matter of taste as the idea was a favourite of Nimzovitch and in recent years the move has become quite popular in correspondence games. In addition, it has been used as an anti-computer strategy by some strong players as detailed in the following note. 3...♗b4 Black could try 3...c5 here but to avoid symmetrical positions and a deadly dull game white must try for f4. [Instead 3...♕c5 is a good alternative for black.* There could then follow 4.d3 (4.g3 turned into a disaster in Van der Doel-Fritz SSS, Dutch Ch, Rotterdam 2000 after 4...0-0 5.♕g2 ♖c6 6.♗ge2 d6 7.d3 ♗g4 8.0-0 f5 9.♗a4 ♗xf2) 4...d6 5.♕e2 ♖c6 6.♗f3 ♗d4 7.♗xd4 ♗xd4 8.0-0 c6 9.♕e3 Polgar.J-Fritz 6, Frankfurt 1999.] 4.d3 ♖c6 5.♗f3



Better would be to try for f4 as before via g3, Bg2 and Nge2. * Opening fashion is shown here to change dramatically with time as nowadays this position after Nf3 is very common and has been played by the likes of Short and Adams and many other top GMs. 5...d6 6.♕e2 [6.g3 Nimzovitch-Spielmann, Bled 1931 6...0-0 7.♕g2 ♗d4 8.♗xd4 exd4 9.a3 ♕xc3+ 10.bxc3 dxc3 11.♗c2 and black simplified with 11...♗g4 12.♗xc3 ♗f6] 6...0-0 7.0-0 ♕xc3 A natural follow up to blacks third move and although it helps white achieve the d4 advance it is preferable to allowing Nd5. [* for example 7...h6 8.♗d5 a5 9.♗b1 ♕c5 10.a3 ♗d4 11.b4 axb4 12.axb4 ♗xf3+ 13.♕xf3 ♕d4 Thrower-Chum, British Major Open 1998.] 8.bxc3 ♗e8 [8...♗c7 Fine-Dake, Mexico City 1935 prevented d4 for the time being due to the pressure on e4.; * Or 8...♗c7 9.♗h4 ♗g6± Agrest-Huebner, Eu Tch Leon 2001.] 9.♗e1 [9.d4 f5 (9...♗e7 seems best with about equal chances) 10.dxe5 dxe5 (10...fxe4 11.♗d5+ ♗h8 12.♗g5 ♗e7 13.♗xe4 g6 14.e6±) 11.♗xd8 ♗xd8 12.exf5 e4 13.♗d4 ♕xf5 14.♗xf5 ♗xf5 15.♕c3±] 9...f5 10.f3

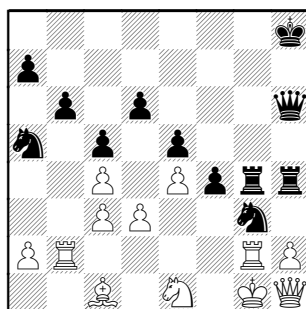


[10.cxf5 11.f3 was better. The text limits the KB even more.* The text does, however, lead to the sort of position one can encounter quite often in tournament play and leads to a very instructive game in demonstrating how to deal with a space advantage against a passive but solid defensive position.] 10...♞e7 11.g3 g5 12.♞d2 [12.f4 gxf4 13.gxf4 fxc4 14.dxc4 cxf4 15.♙xf4 ♞xc4 (* 15...♞xf4 16.♞xf4 ♞g5+ 17.♟g2 leads nowhere for black) 16.♙d3 ♞e7 17.♞h5 with a promising attack for his pawn.] 12...f4 13.g4 ♟f6 14.♙d1 Too passive better was to create a central diversion with d4. 14...♙e6 15.♞b1 b6 16.♙a3 ♟g7 17.♙b3 ♟a5 18.♙a4 [18.♞c2 c5 19.d4 ♞ac8 20.dxc5 dxc5 21.♞d1 would have been better.] 18...c5 19.♞g2 ♞h8 20.♙d1



20...h5 21.gxh5 [There is little choice now as after 21.h3 hxg4 22.hxg4 ♞h4 23.♞f2 ♞ah8 24.♟f1

♞h1+ 25.♟e2 ♟g8 26.♟d2 ♞h3 27.♙e2 ♞h7 wins] 21...♞xh5 22.♞f2 ♞g8 23.♞h1 ♟h8 24.♟f1 ♞h7 25.♙c1 ♞h6 26.♞bb2 ♞h4 27.♟g1 ♟h5 28.♞fc2 g4 * After positioning his pieces to press against whites weak points (the h2 pawn and the g-file) black now makes the breakthrough that overloads the defensive position. 29.fxg4 [29.♟f1 ♟g3+; 29.♟f2 ♞xh2+ 30.♞xh2 g3+] 29...♙xg4 30.♙xg4 ♞gxg4+ 31.♞g2 [* If 31.♟f2 then 31...♟g3 also wins.] 31...♟g3

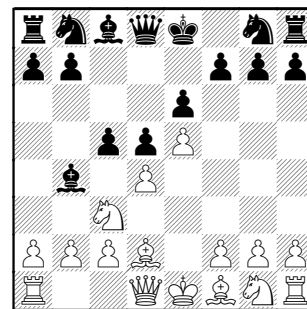


32.♞xg3 ♞xg3+ 33.♞g2 ♞h5 34.♞xg3 fxc3 35.♞f3 gxc3+ 36.♟h1 ♞xf3+ 37.♟xf3 ♞h3 38.♟xh2 ♞xd3 39.♙g5 ♟xc4 40.♟g2 ♟d2 0-1

E.C.Marriot – T.E.Arnold [C17]

Postal Chess Club., 1945
[M.J.Donnelly]

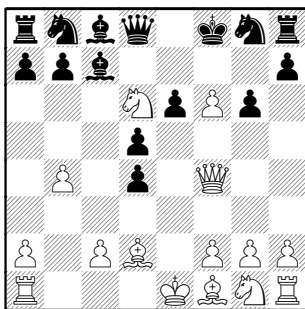
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.♙d2



A move originating from Bogoljubov but not popular with players or theorists until recently. 5...cxd4 [Playable but 5...♟e7 is more often favoured by strong players.] 6.♟b5 ♙c5 [After 6...♙e7 this retreat did not fare well in a recent game 7.♞g4 ♟f8 8.♟f3 ♟c6 9.♟bxd4 ♞b6 10.♟b3 f5 11.♞f4 ♟h6 12.♙d3 ♟f7 13.h4± Modiahki-Barua, Balaguer 1997.] 7.b4 [7.♞g4 is similar to the game continuation when Yates-Aguilare, Barcelona 1929 went 7...♟f8 slightly passive (in contrast 7...♟e7 illustrates a modern more dynamic black treatment 8.b4 a6 9.bxc5 axb5 10.♞xg7 ♞g8 11.♞xh7 ♞c7 12.♟f3 as in Al Sayed-Zhang Pengxiang, Yerevan 2000.) 8.b4 ♙c7 9.♟f3 ♟c6 10.a3 ♙d7 11.♟bxd4 ♟xd4 12.♞xd4 ♞c7 13.♙d3 f6 14.0-0 b5 15.♞ae1 fxe5 16.♟xc5 ♙f6 17.♞c5+ winning instantly.] 7...♙b6 [7...a6 8.bxc5 axb5 9.♞g4 ♟f8 10.♟f3 ♟c6 11.♙xb5 ♟gc7 12.0-0 ♙d7 13.♙d3± Bogoljubov-Thomas, British Empire Club Masters, London 1927.] 8.♞g4 g6 9.♟d6+ ♟f8 10.♞f4 f6 11.exf6 White must have seen the very pretty finish to allow blacks next. 11...♙c7

A Gambiteer's Apology By Michael Jensen

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[Loses in a starling manner. Black has better in 11...♖xf6 12.♗xc8 ♘c7 13.♗xd4 (13.♗h4 ♔f7) 13...♗c6 staying in the game due to the c8 knight being trapped.] 12.♗h6+ ♗xh6 13.♗xh6+ ♔g8 14.f7# 1-0

The war in Europe ended in May 1945 and in the months before that there is an increasing sense of optimism in "Chess". The British Chess Federation meets and considers revival of a National Chess Centre and readers debate on how the time control and the existence of adjudication can be modified to improve the game in a "post-war Britain". Reports begin to come in that chess events "boom" suddenly all over Europe and other parts of the world and there are lists repeatedly published of entrants for a "big" tournament in Blackpool the first for many years.

As to marking the end of the war in "Chess" I am unable to find even a comment upon this fact. The May issue simply states that- "We are again happy to be able to offer wooden and ivory chess sets"-a remarkable example of the lets just get on with it attitude characteristic of BH and Britain in general at that time and perhaps even a factor in winning the War.

Most gambiteers defend their pet openings fervently and it takes a lot of disappointments to change their repertoire. For example FM Mladen Zelic rarely plays anything but the Morra gambit. This author is not up to that standard. After seven articles advocating the Smith-Morra gambit I should have been ready to take advantage of my new insights but I have played the Morra only twice since the first article appeared in CCN. One reason is that few opponents have tried 1...c5 but the major reason is that I have preferred the open Sicilian.

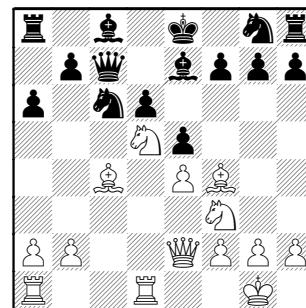
There are too many boring variations for Black to choose from to make 2. ♖f3 my only choice so the Morra is still in the armoury and let's begin with a brief return to Morra country. One of the advantages of writing theoretical articles in chess is that one learns something new about the subject, which in this author's case is predominantly openings, and sometimes you even get the chance to apply some of that knowledge:

**Jensen, M (1895) –
Knudsen, Jesper (1802)**
[B21]

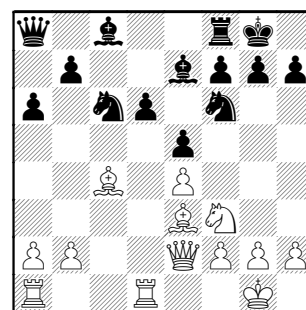
Odense Energy Cup Odense (2),
28.12.2002
[Jensen, M]

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 ♗c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.c3
Avoiding the Sveshnikov I suspected Black had in mind.
4...dxc3 5.♗xc3 d6 6.♗c4 e6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♗e2 a6 9.♗d1 ♗c7 10.♗f4 e5? As shown in the Morra series this is a serious mistake due to the

following zwischenzug.



11.♗d5 ♗b8 12.♗e3 Black is already in dire straits. 12...♗f6 13.♗b6 White now wins the exchange. 13...0-0? [Black might as well grab a pawn with 13...♗xc4 but White is still better after 14.♗xa8 ♗xa8 15.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 16.♗c4+ ♗e6 17.♗xc4± followed by ♗g5+.] 14.♗xa8 ♗xa8



15.♗g5!+ Another typical motif. White wants to control d5. 15...b5 16.♗xf6! gxf6 [16...♗xf6 17.♗d5 ♗b7 18.♗ac1+ with total domination.] 17.♗d5 ♗b7 18.♗h4 ♗d4 19.♗xd4! Game over. 19...exd4 20.♗f5 ♗d8 21.♗g4+ ♔h8 22.♗g7# 1-0

Not the most difficult game, but a good illustration of the dangers facing Black in the Morra. The second example is rather boring and I include it only to amplify the point I made previously: higher

rated opponents tend to decline the gambit.

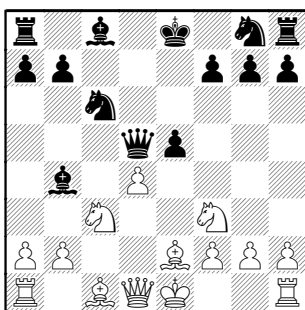
Jensen,M (1895) – Nielsen,J (2082) [B22]

Farum Frost Farum (3),

18.01.2003

[Jensen,M]

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3 d5 4.exd5
♖xd5 5.cxd4 ♘c6 6.♘f3 e5 [At
least I was spared the drab 6...c6]
7.♘c3 ♗b4 8.♗e2!?



A gambit Burgess attributes to Milner-Barry. [The main line is 8.♗d2] 8...♘xd4! The best riposte. I believe this move was recommended by Gallagher in "Beating the Anti-Sicilians". [8...c4 9.0-0! is dangerous for Black and the only Black option given by Burgess.; 8...cxd4 is also met by 9.0-0] 9.♖f1 [9.♗d2! is recommended by current theory.] 9...♗a5 10.♘xd4 White has to regain the material. 10...exd4 11.♗xd4 ♘f6 Black offered a draw and White accepted. [11...♘f6 12.♗b5+ ♖f8 13.♗e3= is completely even and both players didn't mind the prospect of a quiet day at the office after a not so quiet night on the town.] ½-½

Now it is time to take a look at the Open Sicilian. After 1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4, which is the main subject of this article. Black has an extra central pawn, a ready-

made minority attack on the queenside, and the semi-open c-file. White in return has more space and development. Without significant changes in the pawn-structure White must fear the endgame and is logically obliged to attack. This article is a personal account of how to get interesting attacking positions against the Open Sicilian. First I should make it clear that there are not any big theoretical novelties in this article but I hope that it will serve as an advertisement for the Fischer-Sozin-Velimirovic attack.

In 1996 I was participating in a 7 round summer tournament in Aarhus, Denmark. Before the last round I was half a point in the lead with 4½/6. At the time I played the Morra at every possible opportunity and had the White pieces in the last round. In an earlier round I had noticed that my opponent played a certain line in the Sicilian Dragon that was considered dubious. I did not like the open Sicilian, but how could I resist the temptation to destroy the Dragon? So I decided to enter terra incognito, booked up on a few lines from Beating the Sicilian 3 by John Nunn and Joe Gallagher (probably Gallagher revised this chapter from BTS 2) and felt confident to begin my apprenticeship as a Dragonslayer:

Jensen,M (1764) – Larsen,J (1674) [B76]

SK68 Summer Århus (7),

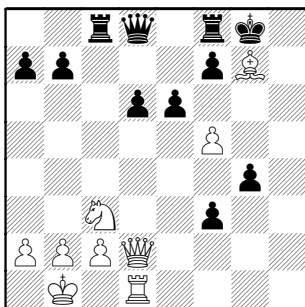
14.07.1996

[Jensen,M.]

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7
7.f3 0-0 8.♗d2 ♘c6 9.0-0-0 ♗d7
This is the variation I had seen in an earlier round that my opponent played. I "knew" from Beating the Sicilian 3 that is was bad. Unfortunately Nunn and Gallagher did not make a very good case of

exactly why this move is bad. Indeed I have myself played it later. Strangely, Golubev describes this variation as dubious but after 10.g4 only continues with 10...♘e5 even though he later examines the transposition with 7...♘c6, 8...♗d7, 9...♗c8, and 10...0-0. 10.g4! [Of course Black would like 10.♗c4 ; 10.h4 is met by 10...h5 then 11.♗c4 transposes to the Soltis variation, but if White wants to play like he would probably prefer 9.♗c4.] 10...♗c8 11.♖b1 Recommended in BTS 3 as a way of cutting down on Black's options. [Instead 11.h4 h5 12.♘d5! is recommended by both Sapi&Schneider and Golubev.] 11...h5! Clearly the best response but Black can also wait till White plays h4. [11...♘e5 is the only move examined in BTS 3.] 12.h4 ♘e5 Both sides have completed their setups. White still needs to find a place for ♗f1, but 13.♗e2 seemed to slow so I tried 13.♗g5 It is difficult to come up with a better alternative. The position is examined in some detail by Chris Ward's in his excellent book "Winning With the Sicilian Dragon 2", while Gufeld and Stetsko only give brief lines with 13.♗h6 and 13.gxh5. 13...hxg4 14.h5? [14.f4 was the consistent followup.] 14...♘xh5 15.♗h6? [15.f4 is now met by 15...♘f3 and Black is ready to take on c3.; Unfortunately 15.♗xh5? does not work. 15...gxh5 16.♘d5 f6-+; 15.♘d5 f6 16.f4 was the last chance to muddle the waters.] 15...gxf3 16.♗xh5 White is unstoppable now and throwing one bad sacrifice after another. [16.♗xg7 ♖xg7 17.♘f5+ ♗xf5 18.exf5 ♗h8 is just as bad.] 16...gxh5 17.♘f5? [Unfortunately 17.♗g5 is met by the riposte 17...♘g6] 17...♗xf5-+ Around here the pursuers agreed to a draw confident that I would lose this game and set up a four way tie for 1st place. 18.exf5 e6 [18...f6 wins.] 19.♗h3? [19.♗xg7 ♖xg7

20.♖e4 was a better idea.] **19...♖g4??** Now White holds the advantage. [19...♖c4! 20.♗f4 ♗b6+ is an easy win for Black.] **20.♙xg4?** Returning the favour. [White should have preferred the move-order 20.♙xg7! ♖xg7 21.♙xg4+–] **20...hxg4?** And once again the tide changes. [Black could still have won with 20...♙xc3] **21.♙xg7!+–**



Now Black is completely lost! Somewhat surprisingly White manages to avoid further mistakes from here on. **21...♖xg7 22.♗d4+ f6** [22...♗f6 23.♗xg4+ ♖h7 24.♗h1+ mates.; 22...c5 23.♗xg4+ ♖f6 24.♖d5# is also a nice mate.] **23.♗xg4+ ♖f7 24.fxe6+ ♖e7** [24...♖e8 25.♗g6+ ♖e7 26.♗h7+ ♖e8 27.♖d5 and mate follows.] **25.♖d5+ ♖e8 26.♗g6+ Black** resigned and the pursuers were left bamboozled as to what went wrong. 1-0

Whew, I guess sometimes luck follows the foolish. An old chess proverb states that the one who makes the second last mistake wins and it was certainly true in this game. Not an impressive start to my slayer career but that is another story.

Somehow I always feel more comfortable playing the Morra than the Open Sicilian. It is familiar territory and the prospect of playing against a new and

unexpected setup against 2. ♖f3 is always bothering me. Sometimes it only takes 4 or 5 moves to get out of book. The following example was particularly hurtful. It was played in a 4-man team competition. My team were outrated by 200-600 rating points on every board but with some luck could have won the match. Our second board had a draw by repetition but didn't see it and lost, the 3rd board won while the 4th board had a promising position in the Leningrad Dutch but played one bad move and lost. I was 1st board and so had to win to secure a tie. The only problem with that was that I was playing GM Curt Hansen:

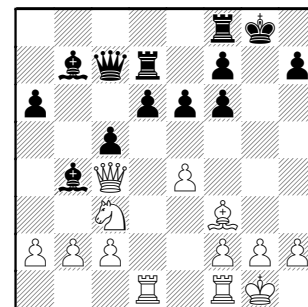
Jensen,M (1897) – Hansen,G (2600) [B49]

Knockout tournament Sønderød (3), 02.12.1997

[Jensen,M]

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 ♖c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♖xd4 ♗c7 That was it. Out of book against a Grandmaster, I was kicking myself for not playing the Morra. So what to do? I decided to go for a quiet setup and a playable position so as not to be caught in some forced losing line. **5.♖c3 e6** Transposing to the Taimanov variation, which is not on my Christmas Card list. **6.♙e2 a6 7.♙c3 ♖f6 8.0-0 ♙b4** My opponent played this quickly. I found out the next day that we have transposed into a theory line where 9.♖a4 is the most popular continuation, but how should I come up with such a move? Leaving e4 undefended? **9.♖xc6** [9.♖a4 ♖xe4? 10.♖xc6 ♗xc6 11.♖b6 ♗b8 12.♗d4± is nothing to fear for White.] **9...bxc6 10.♗d4 c5 11.♗c4** This line went out of fashion many years ago. **11...d6?!** [Inaccurate. Best is the immediate 11...♙b7] **12.♗ad1 ♙b7 13.♙f3 0-0** I began using up the clock here. I was concerned about the plan

♖f6–d7–c5xf3 ruining my pawn structure and after a big think I came up with a counterplan: **14.♙f4! ♗ad8 15.♙g5!** This was the idea. White wants to play ♙xf6 but 14.♙g5 would have been met by 14...♖d7 (or perhaps 14...♙xc3!? Δ ♖xc4) so White voluntarily loses a tempo to lure the rook to d8. **15...♗d7 16.♙xf6 gxf6**



17.e5!! I felt very good when I executed this move and the sensation of being on the verge of a huge upset began to spread. **17...d5?!** A rather risky winning attempt. [Black's best defence was 17...♙xf3! 18.exd6 ♗xd6 19.gxf3= but as Curt said after the game: "How can Black win this?" I took that as a big compliment.; 17...dxc5 18.♗g4+ ♖h8 19.♗h4 ♙xf3 20.♗xf6+ ♖g8 21.♗xf3↑ is clearly better for White who has the better structure and attacking chances.; 17...fxe5? 18.♙xb7 ♗xb7 19.♖e4→ gives White a big attack for the pawn.] **18.♗g4+ ♖h8 19.exf6 ♗g8 20.♗h4 ♗d8** [20...♙xc3 seems better; now the knight joins the attack.] **21.♖e2! c4** [21...♗g6? 22.♖f4 ♗xf6 23.♙c4!+–] **22.♖f4** [22.b3 is the computer's favorite, but no human would win such a pawn.] **22...e5 23.♖h3** [After the game my opponent preferred 23.♖h5!± White keeps the better position. But I wanted to play for the attack. I think this is typical of the difference between the amateur

and the grandmaster: After playing a flawless game and achieving a clear advantage the inaccuracies begin to slip in as the game progresses.] **23...g6** **24.g5** [White could also include 24.c3 but I didn't want to invade ...d5–d4. Still 24...c5 25.f6 looks better for White. 25...e4 26.h5 xxf6 27.xc4 xh4 28.xh4 b6 29.d2] **24...g8** **25.e4??** Oh no, I picked up the wrong piece. I was beginning to get into serious time-trouble which almost always signals the beginning of the end. [25.e4! c6 (25...dxe4? 26.xd7! exf3 27.xb7 xg2+ 28.h1 d2 29.d7 f4 (29...e4 30.h5!) 30.f1!+) 26.g3 and White is still in the game.] **25...xg5+** **26.h7** xg2+ **27.h1** xh7 **28.xh7+** xh7 **29.xg2** g6 **30.c3** c5 **31.g3** xf6 White resigned before losing on time. **0-1**

Quite a disappointing result but a good illustration of the difference between grandmasters and amateurs.

It is no coincidence that the Sveshnikov is the currently most popular choice among grandmasters. For an attacking player it is an especially annoying variation as Black defiantly accepts the ugly weakness on d5 to gain the initiative.

**Jensen, M (1827) –
Nordenbæk, J (2206) [B33]**
Odense Odense (6), 19.05.1997
[Jensen, M.]

1.e4 c5 2.f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.xd4 [4.c3 would with 100% certainty have been met by 4...d5] **4...f6 5.c3 c6 6.db5 d6 7.f4 e5 8.g5 a6 9.a3 b5 10.xf6 gxf6 11.d5 g7** One of the main lines of the Sveshnikov, which we have entered via the Four Knights move-order. **12.c3**

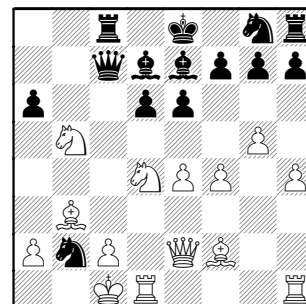
[I prefer 12.d3 but for some reason I just moved the pawn without thinking.] **12...f5! 13.d3** [13.exf5 xf5 would lead to another main line.] **13...e6 14.h5 0-0 15.exf5** I did not know any theory at this point so I played this very tempting move. **15...xd5 16.f6 e4 17.xd5?! [17.fxg7 c8 18.e2 c5 19.h6 g5= with equality is the line given in Krasenkov's book from 1996.] 17...exd3 18.0-0** Other moves are also bad. [18.fxg7 c8+ 19.f1 e5 as given by Krasenkov.; 18.xc6 c8+ 19.f1 xf6+] **18...xf6 19.xc6 b4!** a typical Sveshnikov resource. Black seizes the initiative. **20.cxb4** [White had to choose 20.b1] **20...xb2 21.c4** xb4 **22.ab1** c5 **23.xc5?** [23.a4 is not completely lost.] **23...dxc5 24.b3** fd8+ the rest is easy. **25.d1** d4 **26.d2** [26.c3 f4] **26...ad8** [26...c4 27.c3 c8 28.dcl h6+] **27.c3** [27.a3 d6] **27...a4 28.xc5** xa2 **29.b3?** b2 **30.d2** c2 **31.e4** d4 **0-1**

The real fun starts when Black castles kingside and White castles queenside as in the Yugoslav attack in the Dragon. The setup with e4, e2, and 0-0-0 is known as the Fischer-Sozin-Velimirovic attack depending on Black's choice of defence. First is an example with the classical Sicilian (and then it is called the Sozin if White castles kingside and Velimirovic if he castles queenside):

**Jensen, M (1641) –
Sørensen, L (1783) [B56]**
Odense Odense (2), 22.04.1996
[Jensen, M.]

1.e4 d6 2.c3 A little transposition trick giving Black some options, e.g. 2...e5 3.f4! with a King's gambit or 2...f6 3.d4

with a normal Pirc but there is also **2...c5 3.ge2 c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.xd4 f6** with a classical Sicilian. **6.f3?! A dubious choice** but I knew exactly zero theory on this position. [6.c4 is what I would play now.] **6...d7** [6...e5! 7.db5 (after 7.b3 Black need not enter the Najdorf with 7...a6.) 7...a6 8.a3 b5 is a bad Sveshnikov for White (what use is f3?).] **7.e3 a6** [White was inviting the Dragon with 7...g6 8.d2 g7 9.0-0-0 0-0] **8.c4** [8.d2 is the English attack against the Najdorf where d7 is an unusual move.] **8...e6 9.e2! e7 10.0-0-0 c7 11.g4** You won't find this position in the books but we have entered the Velimirovic attack. White has wasted a tempo on f3 while Black has played the passive d7. **11...e5?** [11...0-0 12.g5 xd4 13.xd4 e8 14.f4 is very good for White.; 11...b5 12.b3 b4 13.a4 changes nothing.] **12.b3 b5 13.g5** g8 It is apparent why the bishop is misplaced on d7 as the knight has no good square. [13...h5? drops a piece to 14.f4+] **14.f4** c4 **15.f2!?** [15.xc4 bxc4 gives Black counterplay on the b-file.; 15.f5 xc3 16.xe3 is also possible but I wanted to keep the bishop.] **15...c8 16.h4** xb2! The only chance.



17.xb5! The refutation. [17.xb2? xc3+ 18.b1∞] **17...axb5** [17...xb5 18.xb5

axb5 19. ♖xb5+ ♔f8 20. ♕xb2±
18. ♕xb2 ♖a5 19.f5 d5 [Upon
 19...c5 I planned 20.f6!?
 (20. ♕f3±) 20...gxf6 21. ♖h5!!
 With a promising attack, e.g.
 (21. ♕f5 ♕xf5 22.exf5∞) 21...exd4
 (21... ♖c3+ 22. ♕b1 d5 23. ♕e2±;
 21...d5 22. ♕xd5 ♖c3+ 23. ♕b1
 exd4 24. ♖xf7+ ♕d8 25. ♕b3!+–)
 22. ♖xf7+ ♕d8 23. ♕xd4
 (23. ♖g7±) 23... ♕g4 24.gxf6+–
 and the game will soon be over.]
20. ♕e1 ♕a3+? 21. ♕b1 ♖a6
22.exd5 ♕e7 23.dxe6 fxe6
24.fxe6 Any capture wins.
 [24. ♕xc6 ♕xc6 25. ♕xc6+–;
 24. ♕xc6 may be the simplest:
 24... ♕xc6 25. ♕xc6 with numerous
 threats.] **24... ♕c6 25. ♕xc6 ♖xc6**
26. ♖f1 ♖f8 27. ♖xf8+ ♕xf8
28. ♖f2+ ♕g8 29. ♖f7+ ♕h8
30.h5! ♖c5 31. ♖f4 Preventing
 ♖e5. [or 31.h6 ♖e5 32.hxg7+
 ♖xg7 33. ♖f6+–] **31... ♕g8? 32.h6**
♖f8 Allowing a nice little finish.
 [32...gxf6 33. ♖f7+ (33.gxf6 ♖h5
 34. ♖d3!) 33... ♕h8 34. ♖f6+ ♕g8
 35.gxf6 and mates.; 32... ♖f5
 33. ♖xf5 ♕xf5 34.e7+ and mate in
 three.] **33. ♖xf8+! ♕xf8 34. ♖d8#**
1-0

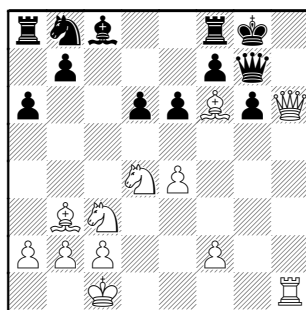
The Najdorf is more common (guess why!). I have had some of my most enjoyable games in this variation. It seems to me that the most bloodthirsty play the Dragon and the Najdorf is the choice of those who dare not enter the Dragon. Theoretically speaking the Najdorf is probably more sound than the Dragon and it can still give rise to some cracking games of which I would like to share four of mine:

Jensen,M (1895) – Nash,U (1800) [B86]

Team Tournament Indslev (1),
 16.02.1998
 [Jensen,M]

1.e4 c5 2.d4 Just a move-order
 trick to cut down on Black's

choices and keep him guessing as to whether or not the Morra will come next. **2...cxd4 3. ♕f3 d6**
4. ♕xd4 ♕f6 5. ♕c3 a6 6. ♕c4 The
 Fischer Attack. **6...e6 7. ♕b3 ♕e7**
 This line puts little pressure on
 White. **8. ♕e3 0-0 9. ♖e2 ♖c7?**
 This looks flexible, but Black
 should hurry with his counterplay,
 e.g. 9...b5 or 9... ♕bd7–c5. **10.g4**
 White only needs to castle
 queenside to complete his
 Velimirovic setup but decides to
 launch the pawn-storm
 immediately. **10...h6?** A serious
 mistake. When engaged in
 simultaneous attacks on opposite
 wings you don't want to move
 pawns in front of your king. I am
 sure ♕b8 would agree that there
 were higher priorities. **11.h4 ♖a5**
12.0-0-0 ♕h7 Directed against g5.
13.g5! So it's a pawn sacrifice – so
 what!? **13...hxg5 14.hxg5 ♕xg5**
 [14... ♕xg5 15. ♖h5 drops a piece
 and probably more.] **15. ♖xh7**
 Almost every move wins but this
 felt like the most interesting.
15... ♕xh7 [15... ♕xc3+ 16. ♖xc3
 (16.fxe3 ♕xh7 17. ♖h2+ ♕g8
 18. ♖h1 f6 19. ♕xe6 ♕f7 20. ♖xd6
 mates too.) 16... ♕xh7 17. ♕f5 f6
 18. ♖h3+ ♕g8 19. ♖h1+–]
16. ♖h5+ ♕g8 17. ♕xg5 g6 18. ♖h6
♖e5 19. ♖h1 ♖g7 20. ♕f6!



A nice geometrical finish to a not
 too difficult game. **1-0**

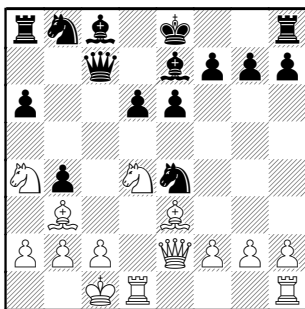
Of course it was a rapid game, but
 Black only made one lazy move

and one mistake before it was all
 over. The next game is one of my
 personal favourites. Especially the
 king move gives nice reminiscences:

Jensen,M (1918) – Grau,P (2005) [B86]

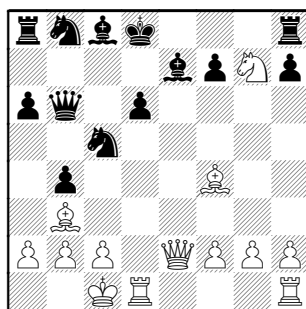
Danish 4th league Odense (1),
 25.10.2001
 [Jensen,M.]

I was playing this game as a
 reserve at 1st board for my club's
 2nd team playing in the 4th
 division and did not want to
 disappoint their expectations. **1.e4**
c5 2. ♕f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♕xd4
♕f6 5. ♕c3 a6 6. ♕c4! My
 favourite move which found new
 friends after the 1993 Kasparov–
 Short match. **6...e6 7. ♕b3** [7.0-0 is
 an interesting alternative if White
 wants to avoid the ♕bd7 lines.]
7... ♕e7 Again this quiet move.
 [Alternatives are 7...b5 and
 7... ♕bd7 while 7... ♕c6 transposes
 to the classical.] **8. ♕c3!?** White is
 aiming for a Velimirovic setup.
 The major alternatives are 8.g4
 and 8.f4. **8...b5** Recommended by
 Golubev. This position can also be
 reached via 7...b5 8. ♕c3 ♕e7.
9. ♖e2 This position is examined
 by Golubev via the move-order:
 7...b5 8. ♖e2 ♕e7 9. ♕c3 [9.f3 is
 also possible.] **9... ♖c7?!** [Golubev
 prefers 9...0-0 10.0-0-0 b4 11. ♕a4
 ♖a5 (11... ♕xe4 looks better here
 than in the game: 12. ♕b6 ♖xb6
 13. ♕xe6 ♕c5 14. ♕xc5 dxc5
 15. ♕xf8 ♕xf8 16. ♕xf7 ♕xf7
 17. ♖f3+ ♕f6 18. ♖xa8 ♖b7∞
 Stoica) 12.g4 (12. ♕b6 ♖xb6
 13. ♕xe6 ♖c6 Boiko–
 Gozman/corr 1992 14. ♕xf8
 ♕xf8∞; but not 12.c3) 12... ♕d7
 13. ♕b6 ♖xb6 14. ♕xe6 Rogers,I–
 Byrne/Philadelphia 1992. 14... ♖b5
 Golubev 15. ♖xb5 ♕xb5 16. ♕xf8
 ♕xg4∞] **10.0-0-0 b4** [10...0-0]
11. ♕a4 ♕xe4?



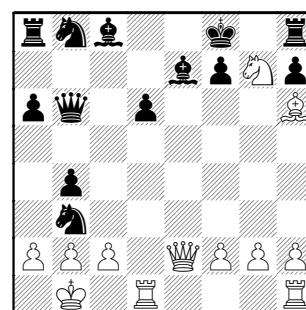
Sticking your hand into a bee's nest is usually a bad idea. [Correct was 11...0-0] There is no sacrifice on e6 and I start to get a bad feeling until I noticed another possibility. **12.♖b6!** This cost quite a bit of time but it looks very good and I found nothing good for Black. [12.♖f5 is very unclear and I saved ♖f5 for the next Najdorf game. 12...exf5 13.♖b6 ♖b7 14.f3 ♖f6! (14...♖c5? 15.♖xc5 dxc5 16.♖he1 and Black has certain problems.) 15.♖xa8 ♖xa8 16.♖he1 0-0 Black is over the worst.] **12...♗xb6** [Best was 12...♖b7 13.♖a4+ (13.♖xe6? ♗xb6 14.♖f5 ♗b5 15.♖xg7+ ♖f8 16.♖c4+) 13...♖f8 14.♖xa8 ♖xa8± Black does not have full compensation and the rook on h8 is some distance away from the party.; 12...♖a7 13.♖xc8 ♗xc8 14.♖xe6 fxe6 15.♖xa7 loses everything.] **13.♖xe6 ♖c5** Only move. [Black cannot enter the diagonal 13...♗c6?? 14.♖xg7+ ♖f8 15.♖d5+- loses lots of material.; 13...♗b7 is slightly better: 14.♖xg7+ (14.♖d5 fxe6 is unnecessarily complicated.) 14...♖f8 15.♖d5 ♖c6 16.♗h5 ♖f6 17.♖f5 ♖xf5 18.♗xf5+- White wins back the piece with interest.; 13...♗a5 loses to 14.♖xg7+ ♖f8 15.♗c4+- with decisive attack on f7.] **14.♖xg7+!** There is no time for 'positional' captures on c5. I spent some time here before finding White's 16th move. [14.♖xc5? dxc5 15.♗f3 (15.♖d5

♖a7; 15.♖xg7+ ♖xf7 16.♗f3+-) 15...0-0+ and White is just a piece down.; The clever 14.♖xc5?! is better but – I judged – still not sufficient: 14...dxc5 15.♖d8+ I was very tempted by this spectacular move. (15.♖xg7+ ♖f8 16.♗f3 ♖g5+ 17.♖b1 ♖a7; 15.♖a4+ ♖d7 16.♖xd7+ ♖xd7 17.♖xg7+ ♖d8 18.♖xd7+! ♖xd7 19.♖d1+∞) 15...♖xd8 16.♖c7+ ♖d7 17.♖xa8 ♗h6+ 18.♖b1∞ White is a piece down and ♖a8 is trapped but he still has a strong attack. In practical play I doubt anyone would play such a variation.] **14...♖f8** [Perhaps it would have been better to step into the line of fire with 14...♖d8! 15.♖f4



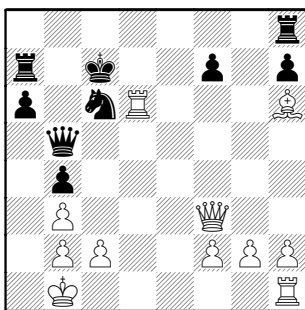
was my intended reply during the game. Fritz likes Black but try and defend the Black pieces and it is not an easy task. **a) 15.♖d5 ♖a7 16.♗h5∞** with the threat ♖xf7 followed by ♖xc5.; **b) 15.♖xf7** keeping the dangerous bishop. But Black is still in the game after 15...♖d7! **b1) 15...♖c6 16.♖d5! ♖c7 (b1) 16...♖d7 17.♖hd1+-) 17.♖hd1±; b2) 15...♖a7 16.♖d5 (b2) 16.♖he1∞ 16...♖c7 17.♖e1 ♗b5 (b2) 17...♖f6 18.♖xc5 ♖xc5 19.♖e6+ ♖xe6 20.♖xe6 ♖d7 21.♖xd6 ♖g5+ 22.♖b1 ♗b5 23.♖ed1+-) 18.♖xd6+ ♖xd6 19.♖g5+ ♖c7 20.♖xc7+ ♖d7 21.♖c4 ♗a5 22.♖c6!+- ; 16.♗h5 (b) 16.♖he1 ♖c6 17.♗h5∞; b) 16.♖e6+ ♖xe6 17.♖xe6∞) 16...♖c7 (b) 16...♖c6) 17.♖d5 ♖c6**

18.♖hd1 ♖ad8∞; 15...♖xb3+ 16.axb3 ♖d7 (16...♗b5 17.♗f3 ♖b7 (17...♗b7 18.♗g3 d5 19.♖he1 ♖c6 (19...♖d7 20.♖xe7) 20.♖xc6+ fxe6 21.♖xc6 ♖f8 22.♖g5! ♖xg5+ 23.♗xg5+ ♖c8 24.♖xd5+- The threat ♖c5 is very real.) 18.♗g3 ♖d7 (18...♗a5 19.♖b1 changes nothing.) 19.♖xd6 ♖f6 20.♖he1 and Black is in trouble, e.g.: F.eks.: 20...♖c8 21.♖c5 ♖xe5 22.♖xc5 ♗b6 23.♗h4+ f6 24.♖e6 ♖c6 25.♗xf6+ ♖c8 26.♗f7 and White wins.) 17.♖he1 ♖f8 18.♖f5 ♖xf5 (18...♗a5 19.♖xd6!+-) 19.♗c5 ♖d7 (19...♖c7 20.♗xf5 ♖d7 21.♗xf7∞) 20.♗xf5∞ is it hard to see how Black should defend, f.ex.: 20...f6 21.♗e6 ♗xf2? 22.♖xd6 ♖h6+ 23.♖b1 when the bishop moves Black is done for.] **15.♖h6** and people say you cannot learn anything about chess from playing "bughouse"! **15...♖xb3+** [We both saw that Black has to eliminate the bishop since 15...♖g5+? is met by: 16.♖b1+- ♖d7 (16...♖xh6 17.♗e8+ ♖xg7 18.♗xf7# is mate too.) 17.♖f5+ and Black is mate in 3.]



but... **16.♖b1!!** Black captures the dangerous bishop with check and White simply sidesteps. This is most certainly one of the nicest moves I have ever played. Despite being two pieces ahead Black is done for. The two exclamation marks are primarily for aesthetical value but it also brought me nice memories of another game where

♔b1-a1! won. [After 16.axb3 Black can play 16...♗g5+ 17.♗xg5 ♔xg7 I didn't calculate further than this, but White wins after 18.♖c7! d5 only move 19.♗xd5 ♖c6 (19...h6 20.♗d6) 20.♗h6+ ♖xh6+ 21.♗g5+-] Black is two pieces up but is done for. **16...♗e6** Amazingly this is Black's best move. [16...♔g8 17.♖xc7 and mate follows.; 16...♗a7 17.♔f5+ ♔e8 (17...♔g8 18.♖g4+ and mate follows next move.) 18.♔xd6+ is also night in Barcelona.] **17.♔xc6+ ♔e8 18.♔g7+ ♔d8 19.axb3** White won back his material and the rest is a massacre. **19...♖b5 20.♖f3 ♔c6 21.♔f5 ♗a7 22.♔xd6 ♗xd6 23.♗xd6+ ♔c7**



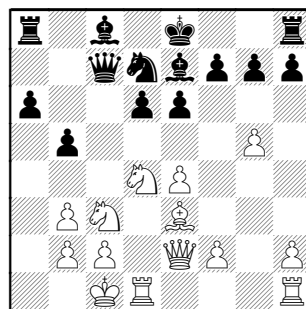
24.♖xf7+ One last sacrifice. [24.♗d5 is faster but less spectacular.] **24...♔xd6** [24...♔b8 25.♖f6 ♗c8 26.♗f4 ♔a8 27.♗hd1 and wins.] **25.♗d1+ ♔d4** [25...♔e5 allows mate in different ways: 26.♗g7+ (or the cute 26.♗f4+ ♔e4 27.f3#) 26...♔e4 27.♖f3#; 25...♔c5 26.♗c3+ ♔d4 27.♖xa7+ ♔c6 28.♖xd4 and mate in a few moves.] **26.♗xd4+** [26.♗xd4+ ♔c6 27.♖xa7 and White mates sooner or later.] **1-0**

A few weeks later our 1st team met their 1st team in the Danish 3rd league and I was eager to try the open Sicilian again:

Jensen, M (1918) – Jakobsen, M (2000) [B89]

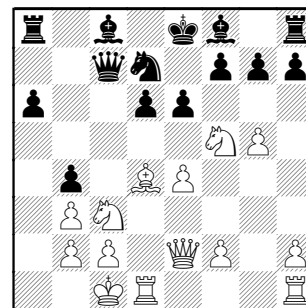
Danish 3rd league Odense (1),
04.11.2001
[Jensen, M.]

1.e4 c5 2.♔f3 No Smith–Morra this time either. **2...d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♔xd4 ♔f6 5.♔c3 a6 6.♗c4! e6 7.♗b3 ♖c7** A waiting move not declaring whether he wants to play the Sozin/Velimirovic (♔c6) or the Fischer (♔bd7). **8.♗e3 ♔c6** we have transposed to the Velimirovic attack. White plans ♖c2, 0-0-0 and g2–g4–g5. [8...♗e7 was seen in the previous game.] **9.♖e2 ♗e7 10.0-0-0 b5** Black has to get his counterplay rolling before he gets a calling card from Murder Inc. (the f- and g-pawns) [10...0-0 11.g4 is similar.] **11.g4** Here my opponent feinted that he would move his b-pawn. Obviously he had learnt of his club-mate's sad demise a few weeks earlier. **11...♔a5 12.g5 ♔xb3+ 13.axb3 ♔d7**



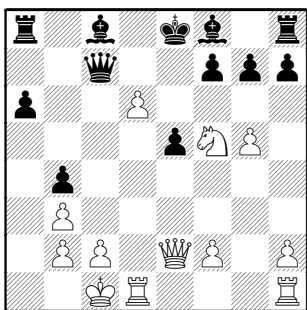
Black got rid of the dangerous bishop. I now got an interesting idea which cost me 30 minutes to calculate— or rather try to calculate, as the variations are impossible to oversee at the board. **14.♔f5!?** Suddenly Black finds a horse's head in his bed...Imagine my surprise when I returned home and found that: This was all theory, Velimirovic had played the sacrifice in 1965 and there were 80 games in my database with the

move. [A 'solid' alternative is 14.h4] Black's next move is so poor that it is unmentioned in any of my theory books and apparently a novelty. **14...♗f8?** What a wimp! [Black has to accept the gift: 14...exf5 15.♔d5 ♖d8 16.exf5 with the threat f5–f6. During my long think I found Black's best defence to be: 16...♗b7 17.f6 gxf6 18.♗he1! (18.gxf6 is better for Black.) 18...♗xd5 19.♗xd5 with a complicated position where I judged White has compensation and might win back the piece with ♗e5–f5. Indeed this is Velimirovic's original line.; 14...b4!? is also playable.] **15.♗d4!** This cost me another half hour. I still have a piece en prise, had not planned a response to ♗f8, and first listed the candidate moves as: ♗he1, ♔d5, f4, h4, and ♗f4. First after analyzing these and realising the threat ♔e5 did I stumble upon ♗d4. [15.♗f4 ♔e5 is not clear.] **15...b4**



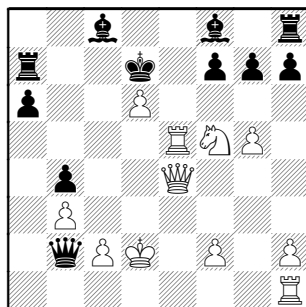
Now White plays ♔a4, whereupon I take on f5 was probably Black's chain of thought at this point, but White is not playing ball. **16.♔d5!!** The point. This time Black gets an offer he cannot refuse. [White had no intention of capturing on g7. 16.♗xg7?! ♗xg7 17.♔xg7+ ♔f8 doesn't look that nice for White.; But 16.♔xg7+?! ♗xg7 17.♗xg7 ♗g8 18.♔d5! cxd5 19.cxd5+ ♔e5 20.♗xe5 dxe5 was worth considering, but why give up the

knight for an extra pawn? 21.d6 ♖a5 22.♗c4 ♖a7 23.♗xh7 ♔f8∞; 16.♘a4 exf5 17.exf5+∞] **16...exd5 17.exd5+** [White could also consider giving up the knight to win another pawn. 17.♘g7+!? ♙xg7 18.♙xg7 ♖g8 19.exd5+ with the same position as after 16.♘g7+] **17...♘e5** [17...♘d8 did not enter my mind and loses material quickly: 18.♙xg7 ♖g8 19.♖he1! ♘e5 20.♙f6+ ♔e6 21.♗c4+–] **18.♙xe5 dxe5 19.d6**



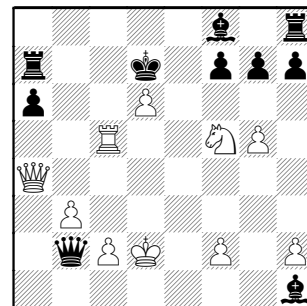
Around here I felt confident of winning. The d–pawn is going to cost Black some material. **19...♗a5** [19...♗c5!? from this square, the queen still guards c8. 20.♗c4 ♖a7 (20...♙xf5!? 21.♗xa8+ (21.♗xf5? ♙xd6) 21...♗c8 22.♗xc8+ (22.d7+ ♙xd7) 22...♙xc8 23.♖he1 f6 24.f4 ♘d7 (24...h6 25.fxe5 fxe5 26.♖xe5+ ♘d7 27.g6+–) 25.fxe5 fxe5 26.♖xe5± Black has the bishop pair, but White has kept the d–pawn and Black has trouble developing his pieces.) Now White gets a clear advantage: 21.♖d5 ♗b6 22.♗xe5+ (But not 22.♖xe5+? ♙e6 23.♖el ♘d8) 22...♙e6 23.♖hd1 Despite the extra piece, Black has problems:] **20.♗c4 ♖a7** [20...♖b8!? is clever: 21.♘b1 (21.♖d5 is then met by 21...♖b5!=) 21...♙b7 (21...♖b5 22.♖he1 ♖c5 23.f4 g6 24.♘e3 ♙e6 25.♘c4∞) 22.♗c4 ♖d8 23.♖he1 ♖d7 24.f4∞] **21.♖d5** [After 21.♘b1 Black consolidates with 21...♙c6] **21...♗a1+**

[21...♗xd5? was given as winning by some of the spectators 22.♗xd5 ♙xf5 23.♗xe5+ ♙e6 24.f4! (24.c4 bxc3 25.bxc3∞ is a bit peculiar.) 24...♘d8 25.f5 ♙d7 26.♖d1+– wins easily.; 21...♗b6 → 19...♗c5] **22.♘d2 ♗xb2 23.♖xe5+ ♘d7**



[23...♘d8? 24.♖e8+ ♘d7 25.♖c1! Alekhine's gun drives a hard bargain. (During the post-mortem we arrived at the drawing variation. 25.♖e7+? ♙xe7 26.♗xe7+ ♘c6 27.♗e4+ ♘d7=) 25...♗c3+ 26.♘d1 ♗a1+ 27.♘e2 ♗c3 28.♘f1 ♗h3+ 29.♘g1 ♙xd6 30.♘xd6 ♖xc8 31.♘xe8 and White wins.] **24.♖e5!**– [Of course I saw the draw with 24.♖e7+ which transposes to 23...♘d8 but I had promised to win.] **24...♙b7** The only move, but White should still win. White faces a tough decision: A) 25.♗xb4 preventing the check on c3 and threatening ♖c7 or B) the direct 25.♖c7 with the idea ♖xb7. The paradoxical is that move B) is the right one but the plan in A) is correct! **25.♗xb4?**⊕ What a way to destroy a marvellous game in time trouble – White was down to 1 minute. [25.♖c7+! ♘d8 26.♗xb4! wins. All I needed to do was interchange the moves. (I had stared myself blind on the variation: 26.♖xb7 ♗c3+ 27.♘d1 ♖xb7 28.♗xb7 ♗a1+ 29.♘e2 (29.♘d2 is a draw and was perhaps the safest way out.) 29...♗c5+ 30.♘e3 ♙xd6 which I thought would be difficult to win. 31.♗a8+! (31.♖d1 ♖e8

32.♗xb4 is also better for White.) 31...♙b8 32.♖d1+ ♔e7 (32...♘c7 33.♗xa6) 33.♗b7+ ♙c7 34.♗xb4+– White has a pawn and continued attack.) 26...♗c5 27.♗b6 and White wins a lot of material since 27...♙xh1 28.♗b8# is mate.] White now has numerous threats: ♖c7+, ♗b6, and ♗c4. **25...♙xh1**= The only move and it wins a rook. Possibly all the sacrifices had made me immune to the possibility that Black could simply capture the rook. Now White has no more than a draw. **26.♗a4+**



From here on the quality of the game drops markedly... **26...♘e6??** Black wants to win and hands White another chance [After 26...♘d8 27.♗a5+ neither side can avoid the draw. 27...♘d7=] **27.♘d4+??** and White returns the favour. This should serve as a warning against time trouble. [As one of my team mates pointed out during analysis after the game 27.♗c4+ wins. 27...♘d7 28.♗xf7+ it was that simple. 28...♘d8 29.♗xa7+– and White mates.] **27...♘xd6** [In the panic I only saw: 27...♗xd4+ 28.♗xd4 ♙xd6 with unclear complications.] **28.♖c6+??** Comments should be superfluous at this point. [I didn't even see 28.♗c4! which gives Black chances to step on thin ice. 28...♙e4! (28...g6? 29.f3 ♙xf3 30.♘xf3 ♖d7 31.♖d5+ ♔e7 32.♗e4+ wins.; 28...♙b7 29.♘f5+ ♘d7 30.♗xf7+ ♘d8

31.♖c7+ and White as least a draw.) 29.♔f5+ ♕d7 (29...♙xf5? 30.♙xf5 ♕d7 31.♙d5+ ♙d6 32.♖c5 and White is on the road again.) 30.♖a4+ (30.♖xf7+ ♕d8 31.♖xa7 ♙xc5 32.♖xc5 ♙xf5 leaves Black with an extra rook.) 30...♕d8 31.♖a5+ ♕e8 32.♙c8+ ♕d7 33.♙d8+ ♕e6 34.♔d4+ ♕e7 35.f3 is probably good enough to draw.] 28...♙xc6 29.♖xc6+ ♕e7 White's attack has gone into destinction. I made the last moves in 30 seconds, even winning a rook along the way but since I was two in the hole that was all I made that day. 30.♔f5+ ♕d8 31.♖b6+ ♙c7 32.♖b8+ ♕d7 33.♔e3 and Black won after 40 moves. 0-1

Unfortunately time-trouble addicts tend not to learn from their experiences and focus on the times it went well rather than on the failures. Indeed I have more than a few times made 15-20 moves in less than 5 minutes but more often the game is lost or the win converted to a draw when the clock starts to hurt.

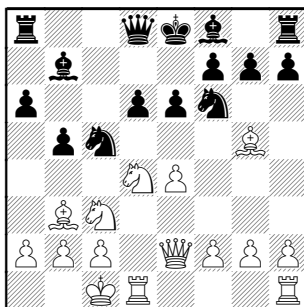
Finally, while writing this article I had the opportunity to play the following game:

Jensen,M (1974) – Busk,C (2126) [B90]

BSF Sensommer Brønshøj (2),
14.08.2003
[Jensen,M]

1.e4 c5 2.♔f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♔xd4 ♔f6 5.♔c3 a6 6.♙c4 b5 7.♙b3 ♙b7 [7...c6 would transpose to the main lines.] 8.♖e2 I didn't remember theory other than 7...♙b7 was supposed to be bad. [8.0-0 is more common, notice that ♔e4 is immune to capture (♖f3 would be a nice reply).; 8.♙e3 still keeps the option 0-0.] 8...♔bd7 9.♙g5 e6?! [Black had to challenge the bishop with 9...h6] 10.0-0-0 So White

has his favourite setup, except the bishop is at g5 instead of c3. 10...♔c5?



a mistake, but the situation is already critical. [10...♖a5 11.♔d5; 10...b4 11.♔d5 exd5 12.exd5+ ♙c7 13.♔f5 ♕f8 14.♙h1= gives plenty of compensation for the piece.] 11.e5! h6 [11...dxc5 12.♔xc6 ♔xb3+ 13.axb3 ♖c7 14.♔xf8 ♕xf8 15.♔d5↑ White has the initiative and the rook on h8 is less than happy.; 11...♔xb3+ 12.♔xb3 b4 13.♔d5 ♙xd5 14.♙xd5 ♙c7 15.exf6 gxf6 16.♙h4 exd5 17.♙xf6 ♙g8 18.♙e1 ♙a7 19.♔d4+ is another nice variation – if not completely forced.] 12.♙xe6!? I was not sure whether this or exf6 was more precise. [Fritz prefers 12.exf6! hxg5 (12...♔xb3+ 13.axb3 gxf6 14.♙h4 ♙e7±) 13.♙xc6 ♖xf6 14.♔d5+] 12...fxe6 [12...dxc5 13.♔f5 hxg5 14.♙xd8+ ♙xd8 15.♙b3 ♔xb3+ 16.axb3±] 13.exf6 ♕f7 [13...♖d7 14.b4 (or simply 14.♙e3) 14...hxg5 15.bxc5±] 14.♙h4! ♖a5 [14...g6 15.♙h1 e5 16.b4± (16.♔f5 ♔e6 17.♔e7 ♔f4 18.♖g4 ♙xe7 19.fxe7 ♖c8=) ; 14...g5? loses the exchange 15.♖h5+ ♕xf6 16.♙g5+ hxg5 17.♖xh8+ ♙g7 18.♖h3+] 15.♙h1 [15.fxg7 was also decisive: 15...♙xg7 16.♖h5+ ♕g8 17.♖g6 b4 18.♔xc6 ♔xc6 19.♖xe6+ ♕h7 20.♙xd6 bxc3 21.♖g6+ ♕g8 22.♙d7+] 15...b4 16.♔xe6! crashing through. 16...bxc3 17.fxg7 [17.♖c4! ?]

17...cxb2+? this is clearly bad but Black's choices were limited to lose or lose big. [17...♙xg7 18.♖g4+] 18.♕b1 ♙xg7 19.♔xc5! Black resigned as capture on c5 allows mate. 1-0

Even if you, like me, don't know a lot of theory in the open Sicilian the above games show it is still possible to play some exciting games. Correspondence play is not different in this respect: the Sveshnikov is still a dangerous weapon, the Paulsen boring, the Dragon slightly questionable but the above games in the Najdorf are too off-beat to be useful in correspondence play where computers these days punish dubious attacks with frightening regularity. It is not that I prefer to win with incorrect variations and speculative sacrifices, but isn't it more interesting to leave theory after 6-8 moves and face your opponent on equal terms, over-the-board, without computers, books or databases at your disposal?

In particular the setup I play with ♙c4, ♙e3, ♖e2 and 0-0-0 (I like to call this the Velimirovic setup) does not work against certain move-orders. If you have read the article you will know which ones. And then there is the problem with ♔bd7 lines. If you want a completely sound alternative against the Najdorf then I can recommend The Sicilian Sozin by Mikhail Golubev which is one of the best opening manuals available.

END OF PART TWO