

VanMeter, Lester (2189) - Tate, Emory [B82]

North Central Open (5), 11.1979

This game versus Emory Tate was played last Thanksgiving at the North Central Open in Milwaukee. I finished with 5½ (+4=3-0) and finished in a tie for second with Alan Kornfeld. Clear first was Dr. Eugene Martinovsky with whom I drew in the last round. The good Doctor's finishing score was 6-1.

1.e2-e4 359 c7-c5 359

2.♘g1-f3 359 ♘b8-c6 359

I prepared myself for facing a Lasker set-up, knowing my opponent's predilection for sharp lines.

3.d2-d4 359 c5xd4 359

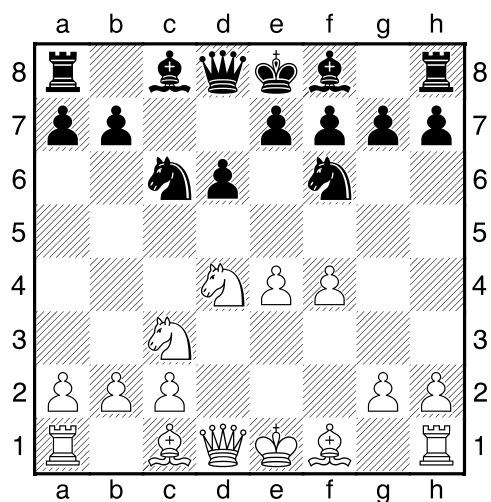
4.♘f3xd4 359 ♘g8-f6 359

5.♘b1-c3 359 d7-d6 359

6.f2-f4 400 ----

A slight hesitation, as I knew that my opponent would not be surprised by this move. I have played in this manner ever since I lost a game to Richard Noel (I was black.) in a similar opening.

I was wondering what my opponent would play here since he, along with many others, had followed closely my 3rd round game, and its post-mortem.



VanMeter-G. Knutson in the 3rd round had continued 6...♙b6?! 7.♙e3!? ♙xb2?! 8.♘db5!? [these moves get all of the adornments because they are not in any of my books, and when I spent a week analysing this game and all of the possibilities last year I never could quite decide upon what was best play.] 8. ... ♙g4? 9.♙b1!+- [I'm sure of these last two, however] 9. ... ♙xb1+ 10.♙xb1 ♙c8 11.f5 d5 12.h3 d4 13.♘xd4 ♘xd4 14.♙xd4 e5 15.♙xe5 ♙d6

16.♙xd6 ♙xc3 17.♙xb7 1-0 (17) Western Open 1978. I can give the whole game because it is so short.

6. ---- e7-e6 359

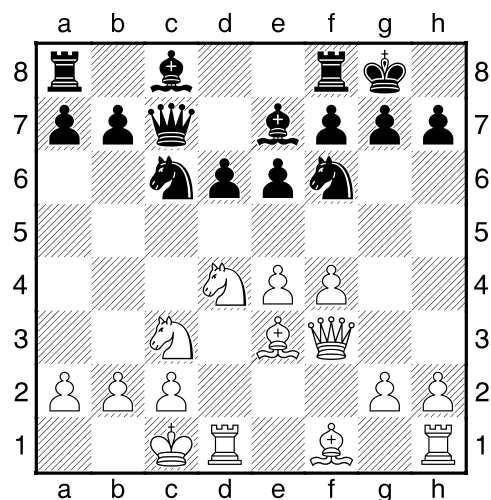
7.♙c1-e3 401 ♙f8-e7 400

8.♙d1-f3 401 0-0 401

It's not wise to castle so early in this position.

Recommended is the paradoxical 8. - e5.

9.0-0-0 403 ♙d8-c7 402



10.g2-g4 407 ----

There was a game, Tal-Larsen, where Tal played 10. ♘db5 and went on to win.

I knew of this game, but I didn't know it!

I went for the straight-forward push of the g-pawn, because if black takes time to prevent the ♘db5 idea with ... a6, then we will transpose to positions that I am familiar with.

10. ---- a7-a6 403

Since he played this reactionary move, do I need to tell you what the critical line is?

Oh well, look at 10. ... Nxe4 11. Rxd4 and see if you can set up a pawn snatch at g4 after you play ...e5.

It's certainly worth looking at, but I'll keep my variations to myself.

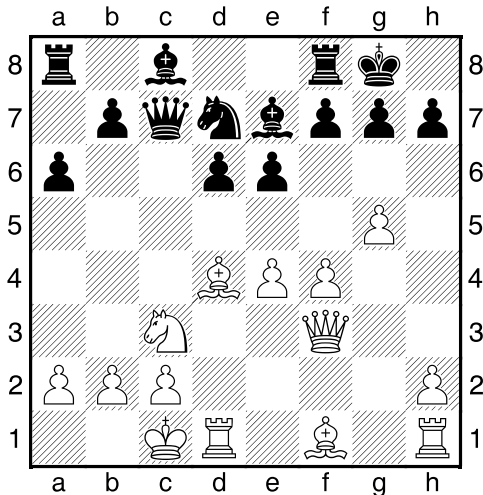
11.g4-g5 407 ♘c6xd4 403

From the Archive: My Longest Think

12. ♖e3xd4 409 ----

It is possible that 12. ♖x d4 to inhibit ... d5 was better. I recall now that I never took against Noel because of this idea, but when I was looking at this from the white side, I really liked the ♖ biting at g7.

12. ---- ♘f6-d7 403



13. ♖f3-h5!? 413 ----

Go get 'em cowboy!!

It is this type of move that often nails black when he castles too soon. The ♖ is always ready to go to h6 if tickled by g6. If white dallies with this incursion then black will often play ... g6 to prevent it, and it is more difficult for white to organize play down the h-file.

Another reason for the move is that it guards g5 in preparation for the push f4-f5. Of course, the downside is that it weakens the f4 square it no longer guards.

Perhaps the 'correct' move here is 12. ♖g1, but by playing in this manner, I get to set a personal record!

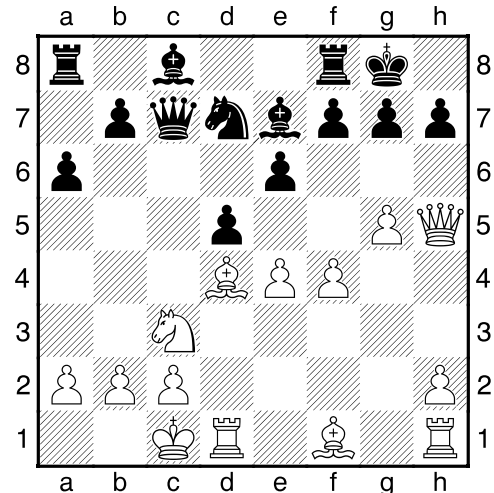
13. ---- d6-d5! 405

A standard way to meet a flank attack is to counter in the center. A well-known chess fable, but it is often true. Here this thrust is thematic as it strikes at the weaknesses in white's position.

Do you enjoy articles from the past? Again, I challenge the readers to look critically at my commentary from 40 years ago.

Send any feed back to me at indyfinchess@gmail.com.

I intend to write a modern review of these last two archival articles soon.



14. f4-f5! 514 ----

I could just pass by this move and maybe you wouldn't notice that I spent 61(!) minutes on it. That's a personal record. I was there the whole time, too – I wasn't out to lunch.

I analysed many candidate moves here. They were, not necessarily in order:

14. e4xd5

14. e4-e5

14. f4-f5

14. ♖d1-d3

14. ♖f1-d3

14. ♖f1-e2

14. ♖d4xg7

14. ♖d4-e3

14. ♖h1-g1

14. ♖h5-f3

14. ♖h5-g4

14. ♖h5-h3

14. ♖c1-b1

[LVM note: 40 years later the {SM} says maybe you should have looked at 14. ♖h5-h4]

That's a lot of moves, and, of course, some were looked at deeper than others.

No wonder it took a while to play! I had concentrated upon the first six listed, again not necessarily in that order.

My major goal was to get rid of his ♖e6, because then I would have possibilities for a ♖ sacrifice!

Visualize the following: Black's queen getting to g5; white simply attacks it with ♖g1; Black takes my ♖h5; I get a mating attack with ♖xg7+. Ok, it is hard to make that work, but it is the starting point for some ideas. I am looking to mate the black king.

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This type of idea would flow with black playing ... e6xd5 and my Qe2 as that would guard my K and allow a protected Kg1 move.

With e4-e5 I was always trying to set-up an attack along the h-file. A sample line might be: 14. e5 Qc5 15. Bd3 Qxd4 16. Bh3 h6! but since there is no mate here this is just good for black.

You, of course, noticed that another reason to get rid of the Ke6 is to gain access to the d5 square for the Bc3. Whether or not it captures on d5 or just moves there is a big idea in the Sicilian. White's push of f4-f5 in many Sicilian lines is totally designed to attack the e6 point and answer any e6xf5 with a Bc3-d5 invasion. Because black fears this B on d5 so much, white's real goal is to further push f5-f6 creating havoc on the dark squares around the king.

One of the major reasons why I still played f4-f5 was that it was my main idea. If it is not going to work then my whole game plan has been suspect and I will be losing anyway. This is one point to the chess fable, "Always play with a plan, even if it's bad."

Clearly you are not going to be playing deliberately with a bad plan, but it is possible that you may not be sure if it is actually good. What you do wish to be doing is playing with a consistent idea (plan) in mind. When you begin to vacillate between ideas, or playing from move-to-move, then it is easy to get into trouble.

Many players will begin a good plan, only to abandon it(!) because suddenly they think it isn't good or won't succeed for spurious or extraneous reasons... Such as, my opponent is so high-rated this can't be good, I'm getting low on time, or I'll have to give up material... That is why the statement "even if it is bad" is there, to give you heart to soldier on.

Capablanca, said it differently, "If you see a move (or idea) that you feel is good, then you MUST play it! Why? Because either it is good, or your opponent will show you the error of your judgement and you will learn a valuable lesson for the future."

The point is that I thought my main idea was correct, and I was not going to give up on it as I had not seen its failings. I was going to give it all I had to make it work. Most players are quick to blame their losses on

just one move, rather than their entire plan of campaign.

Why then did I look at all of these other moves than f4-f5? I was trying to find something 'bad' about his chosen continuation that I would be able to exploit. Additionally, I wished to understand the strong points to what he was trying to do.

Of course, there was still a lot to be figured out about this f4-f5 push. Specifically, this was dealing with what I was giving up by playing f4-f5. I knew what my ideas were, to push on to f6, etc. and what about the square I was really weakening (g5). How was that affected?

During the game, I wasn't totally convinced, but later analysis did confirm my intuition and conclusions: I was calculating 14. ... Wf4+ 15. Qb1 and the two possible captures on g5; If 15. ... Wxg5 I was planning 16. Wh3 while on 15. ... Qxg5 16. Kg1 was the course.

Let's look a little deeper:

We'll first look at the W capture 14...Wf4+ 15.Qb1 Wxg5 16.Wh3:

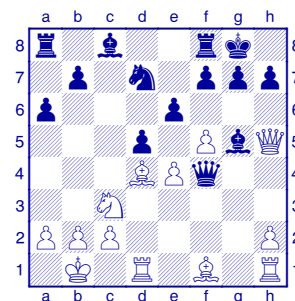
The threat of 17. Kg1 and then Kxg7+ and the weakness of the Ke6 will lead to white getting a pawn up endgame with a central passer.

I do feel that this is lack's best course of action in this position because:

- It's been his general idea to get into f4 with his W
- He doesn't get mated
- He's got a lot more time on the clock than I do

However, I feel that this ending is won for white and I can play endings pretty quickly at times.

Now 15...Qxg5 is a bit trickier



16.Kg1 and now

[a] 16. ... h6 17.Bg4 Wc7 18.Bxg5!+- hxg5 19.Qxg7 Qxg7 20.Wxg5+ Qh7 21.f6 Bxf6 22.Qd3

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♖xh2 23.exd5+ ♘e4 24.♙xe4+ f5 25.♚e7+ ♔g8
 26.♞h1 ♚xh1+ 27.♙xh1
 [b] 16...♙f6 17.♞g4! ♚c7 18.♙xf6 ♘xf6 19.♞xg7+
 ♔xg7 (19...♔h8 20.♚h4 ♞g8 21.♞xg8+ ♘xg8
 22.exd5 ♚e7) 20.♚g5+ ♔h8 21.♚xf6+ ♔g8
 22.♞d2

He didn't play either of these variations because:

- He believed me
- He saw it all
- He wasn't looking deeply enough into the position

I strongly suspect the latter as in the previous three rounds my opponent had displayed overconfidence and superficiality in his thinking and demeanor. (A win over Bill Ralph, a draw with 2125 [that he should have won], and a win over a master!) Not to mention that while I was thinking he spent the time walking about watching other games and telling one and all he was taking VanMeter down, too.

I guess I just set another record here too: My longest note ever! I hope that it has given something for you to think about...

14. ---- d5xe4? 413

I never expected this move.

My first thought was, "All of that thinking, and he just plays this after 8 minutes?!? How can he allow f5-f6?"

He had to do something about f6, take on g5, or prepare ♙f8... (Preparing ♙f8 had been my plan in a similar position vs Noel, but it hadn't worked out so well. The text was a very pleasant surprise as it forces me to play a good move!

The last time I had spent a record time thinking over a move (47 minutes) was in a training game vs Michael Carey. In that game I was sacrificing a piece, and he immediately blundered also...

But I will say, that in contrast to Emory, Michael was at the board the entire time thinking about the game, and how I was just dead lost in every variation. He hadn't anticipated the piece sac, and that threw off his equilibrium.

Emory clearly missed my 16th move.

15.f5-f6 519 ♙e7-b4 420

At least he started to look a little worried after my 15th

move. Right after the game he stated that he should have stuck his ♚ into f4 at some point to clog things up, but not to take on g5. He was extremely afraid of opening the g-file.

The idea will not work, however, as I will simply play my ♙f1 somewhere and after I place a ♞f1 his position will not stand for very long.

16.♙c3xe4! 523 ----

This move smashes all resistance.

The ♘ is not hanging because if 16. ... ♚f4+ and 17. ... ♚xe4 then 18. ♙d3! with devastating effect [see the mate on h7] and this is what most players [including Emory] had missed from afar.

16. ---- ♚c7-a5 424

17.♔c1-b1 527 ----

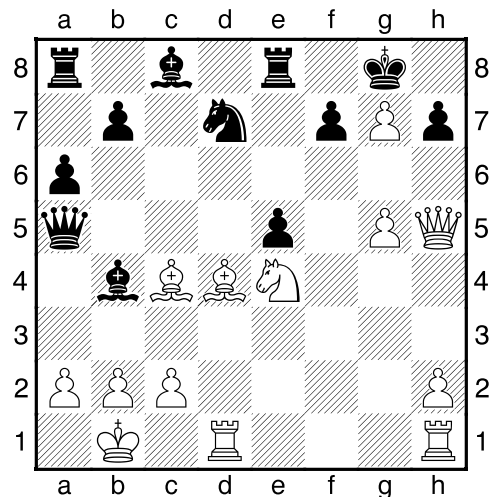
Safety first! His king is not going anywhere, anyway. Plus, I was savoring my position (as were many of the spectators!).

17. ---- e6-e5 425

Desperation. He negates the value of ♙d3, but he does pay a price... Preventing ♙d3 is to allow my 19th move.

18.f6xg7 528 ♞f8-e8 426

19.♙f1-c4! 530



After attacking g7 & h7 the whole game, it turns out that f7 cannot be defended! On 19. ... ♞e7 20 ♞hf1 or 20. g6 lead to mate. I saw the former, he the latter. Either way it is the same result...

1-0

In the notation record I show you the clock times. The control for move 50 would have come at 600.