

1 e4 e6  
2 d4

This tournament honoured the memory of John Kellner, who was one of Australia's finest ever correspondence chess players. He reached the final of the 6th World Championship, and recorded a very creditable 6th place with 8½ points from 15 games including 2 wins with 2 b3! against the French.

2 ... d5  
3 Nd2 Nf6

John Kellner also favoured the French Defence as black. It was he who pioneered the idea of 3 ... Be7 in this position. He played this move against both 3 Nd2 and 3 Nc3 in the 6th World Championship Final. Many books incorrectly credit the Russian over-the-board Grandmaster, Oleg Romanishin with the introduction of this move.

4 e5 Nfd7  
5 f4 c5  
6 c3 Nc6  
7 Ndf3 Qb6  
8 g3

This move can lead to very complicated tactical play. An alternative is 8 h4 which was popular at the time due to it's successful adoption by Israel's ex-Russian over-the-board Grandmaster Lev Psakhis. I reached this position twice in this tournament, choosing 8 h4 against Roger Chapman of New Zealand, and 8 g3 in the current game.

8 ... cxd4  
9 cxd4 Bb4+  
10 Kf2 g5

Black plays one of the sharpest lines available in this opening - a direct attempt to expose the uncastled white king to immediate attack.

11 Be3 f6  
12 Bh3

I believe that this is White's best method of dealing with Black's sharp play. Both of White's bishops are developed onto good squares to improve the co-ordination of White's forces. White's plan is simple ; defend stubbornly against his opponent's attack, and when this task is successfully completed, exploit the weaknesses that are inherent in Black's position (lack of space, weak pawn at e6, and weak white squares

on the kingside).

12 ... fxe5  
13 fxe5 O-O  
14 Ke2

White breaks the pin on the f-file. Weaker is 14 Bxe6+? Kh8 when Black threatens 15 ... Ndx5, and 15 Bxd5 g4 is in Black's favour. No better is 14 Bg4?! (directed against the plan ... h5 and then ... g4) 14 ... Bc5!! when Emms v Kosten, British over-the-board Championship 1985 continued 15 Bxe6+ Kh8 16 dxc5 Qxb2+ 17 Bd2 g4 18 Bxd5 Ndx5 and Black won in 32 moves.

After the text move, White threatens 15 Nxc5

14 ... Be7  
15 b3!

A subtle move which does more than just save the b-pawn. 15 Bxe6+ would have been an error as 15 ... Kh8 would threaten 16 ... Ndx5 as well as 16 ... Qxb2+, and a further 16 Bxd5?? would lose to 16 ... Qb5+. However after 15 b3, White will be able to play 16 Bxe6+ Kh8 17 Bxd5 and meet 17 ... Qb5+ by 18 Bc4.

15 ... Ndb8

Necessary to defend the pawn at e6. Now Black intends to play 16 ... h5 threatening 17 ... g4.

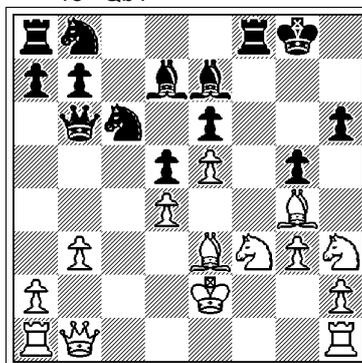
16 Bg4!

Not only preventing 16 ... h5, but also vacating the h3 square for the knight.

16 ... Bd7  
17 Nh3 h6

This move was forced to save the pawn at g5, but it weakens his white squares still further.

18 Qb1



(position after 18 Qb1)

18 ... Be8

My opponent criticised this move after the game and suggested 18 ...

Kg7 19 Bh5 Be8 as an improvement. However after 20 Bxe8 Rxe8 White would have the amazing 21 Nh4!! gxh4 22 Nf4 with the following variations :

a) 22 ... Kh8 23 Qg6 Rf8 24 Qxh6+ Kg8 25 Qg6+ Kh8 26 Qh5+ Kg8 27 gxh4 and mates

b) 22 ... Bg5 23 Qg6+ Kf8 24 gxh4 and :

i. 24 ... Bxf4 25 Qf6+ Kg8 26 Rg1+ Bg5 27 Rxg5+! and mate in 4 more moves at most

ii. 24 ... Bxh4 25 Qxh6+ Ke7 26 Nxd5+! exd5 27 Qd6+ Kf7 28 Raf1+ and mates

iii. 24 ... Nxd4+ 25 Kd1 and Black cannot prevent 26 hxg5 with a decisive attack

c) 22 ... Qb5+ 23 Kd1 Bg5 (23 ... Kh8 still loses to 24 Qg6 Rf8 25 Qxh6+ etc) 24 Qg6+ Kf8 25 gxh4 with :

i. 25 ... Bxf4 26 Qf6+ Kg8 27 Rg1+ Bg5 28 Bxg5 and mates

ii. 25 ... Nxd4 26 hxg5 and wins eg 26 ... Nbc6 27 Qf6+ Kg8 28 gxh6 etc

iii. 25 ... Bxh4! 26 Qxh6+ Ke7 27 Qxh4+ and White is a pawn up and has an attack

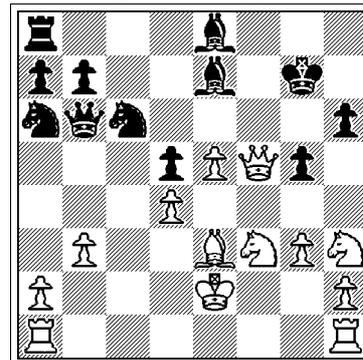
19 Bxe6+ Kg7

20 Bf5!

Closing both the f-file and the h7-b1 diagonal. Black is almost certainly lost now, as he is a clear pawn down and counterplay by 20 ... g4 21 Bxg4 Bg6 fails to 21 Qc1 forcing him onto the defensive again.

With all logical methods doomed to failure, Black tries to keep the fire alight by throwing more wood on ...

20 ... Rxf5  
21 Qxf5 Na6



(position after 21 ... Na6)

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22 Nhxg5!

... but it is White who is able to produce the best sacrifice!

22 ... hxg5  
23 Nxx5 Qb5+

Other moves are no better eg 23 ... Bh5+ 24 g4 Bg6 25 Ne6+ Kh7 26 Qf4 with similar play to the game continuation, or 23 ... Nxd4+ 24 Bxd4 Qxd4 25 Qh7+ Kf8 26 Qh8 mate.

24 Ke1 Bg6  
25 Ne6+ Kh7  
26 Qh3+

26 Qf4 is equally good, but the text move is more in keeping with the thread of the game, as now a third (!) white piece has occupied the h3 square. First a bishop, then a knight, now the queen. Perhaps 8 g3 is better than 8 h4 after all!

26 ... Kg8  
27 Qh6 Kf7

Although Black's last few moves have all been forced, he still manages to set a pretty trap. Now 28 Ng5+ Bxxg5 29 Rf1+ seems to win, as any king move allows White to take one bishop with check, and then the other. However 29 ... Qxf1 +! turns the tables completely.

28 Rf1+

But this move really does win as 28 ... Kxe6 runs into 29 Qh3+ (that square again!) and mate next move.

28 ... Ke8  
29 Qxxg6+ Kd7  
30 Qg4 Rc8  
31 Kf2

The discovered check is less of a priority than king safety.

31 ... Nab4  
32 a4 Qb6

32 ... Qa5 33 Nc5+ Kc7 34 Qd7+ and mate next move.

33 Bf4

The cage around Black's king becomes more secure.

33 ... Resigns