

1 e4 e5
 2 Nf3 Nc6
 3 d4 exd4
 4 Bc4 Nf6
 5 O-O Bc5

We have transposed from the Scotch Game to the Max Lange Attack. Both players follow the main line for the next few moves.

6 e5 d5
 7 exf6 dxc4
 8 Re1+ Be6
 9 Ng5 Qd5
 10 Nc3 Qf5
 11 Nce4 O-O-O
 12 g4 Qe5
 13 Nxe6 fxe6
 14 Bg5

At this point there are two main lines for White; 14 fxg7 Rhg8 15 Bh6 d3, and the text. Both lead to complicated tactical positions with chances for both sides.

14 ... Bb6!?

The usual move for Black here is 14 ... g6 when play might continue 15 f7 Be7 16 f4 Qg7 17 Bxe7 Nxe7 18 Ng5 d3 (or 18 ... Rd6!?) 19 Nxe6 Qxf7 20 Nxd8 Rxd8 when Black has plenty of compensation for his small material deficit... but wouldn't it be even better if Black still had his king's bishop?... especially if it was on the g1-a7 diagonal? This is what inspired me to analyse the text-move which is largely ignored by theory.

15 fxg7

Harding and Botterill in 'The Italian Game' claim that 15 f4 d3+ 16 Kg2 is to White's advantage, but I was happy with Black's position after 16 ... Qxb2 17 fxg7 Qxg7 18 Bf6 Qg6 19 Bxh8 dxc2.

15 ... Qxg7
 16 Bf6!

The only previous example of this line that I could find was an obscure OTB game, Mills v Mabbs - Southampton 1972 which continued 16 Bxd8? Rxd8 17 Ng3? d3 18 cxd3 Ne5 19 Re4 Rf8 and Black soon won. My opponent's move is clearly an improvement on this, as it gives him the option of capturing the h8-rook, which would pull Black's remaining rook away from it's excellent post at d8 and leave it on the less useful h8 square.

16 ... Qf7!?

A difficult choice. g6 is the thematic square for the queen, but in this particular instance I chose the text instead so that the queen coordinates with the bishop in an attack on f2. I still have an open mind on which is the stronger of the two though.

17 Kg2?!

A small victory for Black in that White decides it is necessary to use up a tempo to break the potential pin of his f2 pawn.

In view of the strength of Black's next move, White should probably have played 17 Bxh8 to lessen the pressure on the d-file, although even then I still prefer Black's game as ... Ne5 and ... d3 are in the air after the bishop has been captured.

17 ... d3!

This is always a useful move for Black in the Max Lange. In this particular instance it prevents 18 Bxh8 Rxh8 19 Ng5 due to 19 ... Qxf2+

18 c3

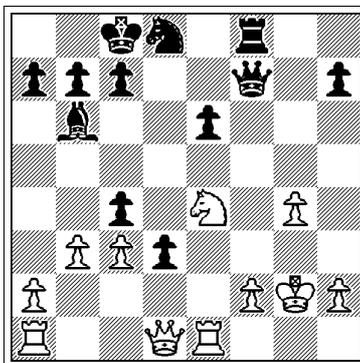
Thematic and probably best. 18 Bxh8 Rxh8 19 cxd3 Rd8 leaves Black on top as 20 Qf3 can be met by 20 ... Qxf3+ 21 Kxf3 Ne5+ with lots of play.

18 ... Rhf8
 19 Bxd8 Nxd8!

This move demonstrates a further point of 17 ... d3. Now that the d-pawn is protected on d3, the game has taken on a closed character which means that Black has time to regroup his knight.

20 b3

Correctly attacking the pawn chain at it's base.



(position after 20 b3)

20 ... e5?

Prior to this move Black had definite

advantage. In order to retain it, he should have played 20 ... Qf4! (threatening 21 ... Bxf2) 21 f3 h5 when White is in trouble eg:

- a) 22 g5 Nc6 (the knight belongs on e5 rather than f4) 23 bxc4 Ne5 and if 24 Rf1 then 24 ... Ng4! and wins
- b) 22 gxh5 Nc6 23 Ng3 (23 bxc4 Ne5 again) Be3 with ... Ne5 to follow

21 bxc4 Qxc4
 22 Qb3 Qc6

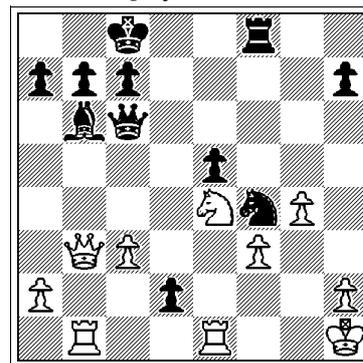
Threatening 23 ... Rxf2+ and thus gaining time to redeploy the knight.

23 f3 Ne6

The plan involving 23 ... Qh6 fails to 24 g5! Qg6 (24 ... Qh5 leaves ... Ne6 unplayable) 25 Qd5! Rf5 26 Qxd3 Rxd3 27 Kh1 and Black's attack is dead.

24 Rab1 Nf4+
 25 Kh1 d2!

The only available continuation of the attack involves the sacrifice of Black's main trump - his passed d-pawn. 25 ... Qh6 would still be unsuccessful. White would continue 26 Qb2 Qh3 27 Ng5 Qh4 28 Rxe5 and meet 28 ... Ng6 with 29 Rf5 Rxf5 30 gxf5 Qxg5 31 fxg6, and 28 ... h6 with 29 Ne4 Qh3 30 Ng3 Ne2 31 Rxe2 dxe2 32 Qxe2 and in both cases Black's play has fizzled out.



(position after 25 ... d2)

26 Rf1!?

26 Nxd2 would be answered by 26 ... Nd3 with the following possibilities:

- a) 27 Re4 Nf2+ 28 Kg2 Qh6! 29 Re2 Qh3+ 30 Kg1 Ne4+ 31 Qxb6 (the only move) 31 ... axb6 32 Rxe4 Rd8 and Black should win
- b) 27 Re2 Rxf3! 28 Ne4 (28 Qg8?? Rf8 discovered check, or 28 Nxf3?? Qxf3+ 29 Rg2 Nf2+ 30 Kg1 Nd1+!, or 28 Re4 Rf8! threatening

both 30 ... Nf2+ and 30 ... Nc5)
 28 ... Rf8! 29 Qc2 Nf2+ 30 Kg2
 Nxc4 with a vicious attack

c) 27 Rf1 Nf2+ 28 Rxf2 (not 28 Kg2?
 Nxc4) 28 ... Bxf2 29 Ne4 and, by
 returning the exchange at the
 appropriate moment, White has
 equalised, since 29 ... Rxf3? fails
 to 30 Qg8+

d) 27 Ne4 Nxe1 28 Rxe1 and, once
 again, the return of the material
 has secured White equality. In
 both this line and the previous
 one, Black would have been
 rueing his error at move 20

26 ... Nd3
 27 c4?

In order to justify 26 Rf1 it was
 imperative to play 27 Qd1. Black was
 then intending 27 ... Nf2+ leading to:

a) 28 Rxf2 Bxf2 29 Nxf2 Rxf3 30 Kg1
 e4! (so that 31 Qxd2 meets with
 31 ... e3) when Black has a
 decisive advantage because of
 the threat of 31 ... Qc5 (which can
 still be played even in reply to 31
 Qb3)

b) 28 Nxf2 Rxf3 29 Kg1 Be3! with an
 incredible position where Black
 has only two pawns for his rook,
 and no immediate threat.
 However, White is completely
 tied up, and cannot break out of
 the bind as he can't coordinate
 his pieces. To be honest I do not
 know who stands better here. If
 this position had arisen, Black
 might possibly have been
 regretting his 20th once more

27 ... Nc5!!

At first sight it looks crazy to swap off
 Black's best piece, but a deeper look
 shows that it is only the knight on e4
 that is holding White's kingside
 together.

28 Nxc5 Qxc5
 29 Qd3 Qd4
 30 Qxh7

Any swap of queens would favour
 Black, as his pawn on d2 could always
 be protected by his bishop.

30 .. Qxc4
 31 Qe7 Qf4
 32 Kg2

The final preparation for the advance
 of the h-pawn. Black must organise
 some counterplay without delay.

32 ... Rd8
 33 Qe6+ Kb8
 34 h4 a6!

Black cannot win with his queen and

bishop alone. His rook must assist
 and, therefore, back-rank mates must
 be prevented.

35 Qg6

35 h5 loses to 35 ... Qe3 (threatening
 to queen the pawn) 36 Rbd1 Qe2+ 37
 Kh1 Bf2 threatening 38 ... Bg3, 38 ...
 Qxf3+ and 38 ... Be1.

The text move aims to answer 35 ...
 Qe3 with 36 Qe4.

35 ... Qc4
 36 Rbd1

Necessary in view of the threat of
 36 ... Qe2+ followed by 37 ... d1=Q.

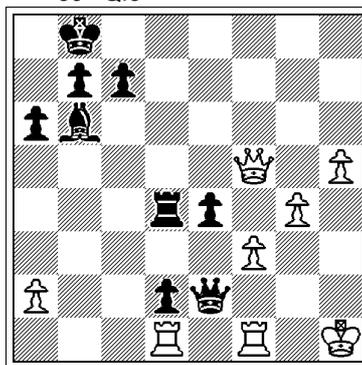
36 ... Qe2+
 37 Kh1

37 Kh3 loses mundanely to 37 ... Rd3
 38 Qf5 e4.

37 ... Rd4!
 38 h5 e4!

Smashing through White's defences.
 Now 39 f4 and 39 fxe4 lose
 immediately to 39 ... Rd3

39 Qf5



(position after 39 Qf5)

39 ... e3

Preparing a beautiful finale.

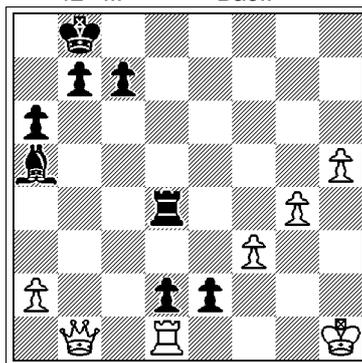
40 Rg1

Preventing 40 ... Qxf1 but

40 ... Qxd1!
 41 Rxd1 e2
 42 Qb1

At first sight it appears that Black has
 blown it, since 42 ... exd1=Q+ 43 Qxd1
 is winning for White! But there is a
 deadly quiet move available.

42 ... Ba5!!



(position after 42 ... Ba5)

43 ... e1=Q+ cannot be prevented.

43 Resigns