

1 e4 e6  
 2 d4 d5  
 3 Nd2 Nf6  
 4 e5 Nfd7  
 5 f4 c5  
 6 c3 Nc6  
 7 Ndf3 Qb6  
 8 g3 f6?!

Usual is 8 ... cxd4 9 cxd4 Bb4+. The text is a rare variation leading to a piece for two pawns sacrifice on Black's part, and one that has a dubious reputation!

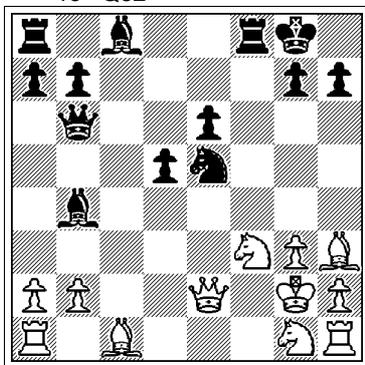
9 Bh3 cxd4  
 10 cxd4 fxе5  
 11 fxе5 Bb4+  
 12 Kf1 O-O  
 13 Kg2

The complications after 13 Bxe6+ Kh8 14 Kg2 Ndxе5! favour Black.

13 ... Ndxе5!?

Black is gambling that his central pawns will be sufficient compensation for his knight. This sacrifice is virtually forced, as otherwise his position would be completely passive.

14 dxе5 Nxe5  
 15 Qe2



(position after 15 Qe2)

15 ... Nc4

Black's other try is 15 ... Nxf3 16 Nxf3 e5, but after 17 Bxc8 Raxc8 18 Nxe5 Qe6 19 Bf4 Rf5 20 Rac1 Re8 (20 ... Rcf8 fares no better after 21 Qe3 g5 22 Ng4 Qg6 23 Be5 h5 24 Nf6+ when White will finish with a rook for a bishop and pawn) 21 Qb5! his choice is between:

- a) 21 ... Bd6 22 Nf3 Bxf4 23 gxf4 Rxf4 24 Rhf1 Ref8 25 Nd2 and White will defend successfully whilst maintaining his material advantage
- b) 21 ... Rxe5 22 Bxe5 Qxe5 23 Rhf1 (but not 23 Qxb4? Qe2+ 24 Kh3

Qe6+ when Black has a perpetual check) and White is material to the good in an ending

16 b3 Bc3  
 17 Rb1 Bf6!

Previously, in this position, the move 17 ... e5? had been played, but with accurate play White can refute this after 18 Qd3 Be1 19 Bxc8 e4 (19 ... Raxc8 20 bxc4 Qf2+ 21 Kh3 leaves Black in a hopeless position) 20 Qxd5+ Kh8 21 Qxe4 Qf2+ 22 Kh3 Qf1+ 23 Kg4 Nd6 24 Qxe1 Qd3 25 Bf4 Raxc8 26 Bxd6 Qf5+ 27 Kh4 and he is three pieces up, and his exposed king is not in danger.

18 Qd3?!

The correct answer to Black's opening novelty is 18 Ng5! This threatens 19 Qc2 and impels Black to give up his good bishop for the knight.

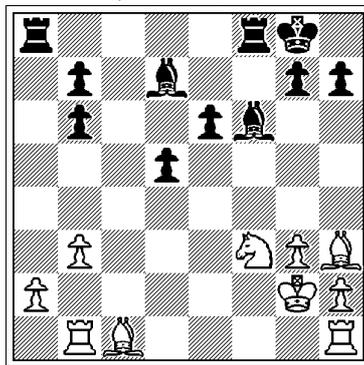
18 ... Ne5

After 18 ... Nd6, White would continue his development with 19 Ne2 Ne4 20 Be3 when 20 ... Qa5 is well answered by 21 Nd2

19 Nxe5 Bxe5  
 20 Nf3 Bd7  
 21 Qe3

Black does not have quite enough compensation for his material deficit, and White chooses to enter an ending rather than risking the complications of 21 Be3 Rxf3! 22 Kxf3 d4.

21 ... Bf6  
 22 Qxb6 axb6



(position after 22 ... axb6)

23 Rf1?

A very poor decision, which lets Black back into the game. White reasons that neither side can create a passed pawn on the a- and b-files at present, and that the same will be true even if he gives up his a-pawn.

It is true that after 23 a4? b5!, Black's

rook would get through to the seventh rank and hamper White's development, but after the simple 23 a3, Black has nothing better than 23 ... Rfc8 when White can respond 24 Rf1 and will complete his development satisfactorily whilst keeping the additional pawn.

23 ... Rxa2+  
 24 Rf2 Rxf2+

Better than 24 ... Rfa8 25 Be3 Rxf2+ 26 Bxf2 Ra2 27 Rc1, when White also has designs on getting a rook to the seventh rank.

25 Kxf2 Rc8  
 26 Bf4 Rc2+  
 27 Kg1 h6

To prevent White from putting further pressure on e6 by moving his knight to g5.

28 Rc1

When making his 23rd move, White failed to appreciate how resilient Black's position had the potential to be, and assumed that, because he would be a piece to two pawns up (Black's b-pawns can only realistically count as a single), the game would win itself.

What he did not take into account was that if Black should be able to control the central squares with his d- and e-pawns, White's king would be unable to get into the game, and so Black might be able to hold the draw. With the text move, he enters the minor piece ending, albeit with a heavy heart, but after the alternative of 28 Re1, Black can muddy the waters with 28 ... Rc3..

28 ... Rxc1+  
 29 Bxc1 Kf7  
 30 Ba3 Bc3  
 31 Bd6 Kf6  
 32 Bc7 b5  
 33 Bd8+ Kf7  
 34 Bb6 Kf6  
 35 Kf2 Bc6

White has been unable to prevent Black from reaching a position where he can take control of the centre with his pawns. He now realises that there is no win after 36 Bd4+ Bxd4+ 37 Nxd4 Bd7 38 b4 g6 39 Bf1 e5, even though the b5-pawn falls. He therefore makes a correct decision to offer a swap of knight for bishop, based on the principle that Black will

not then be able to retain pawns on e5 and d5.

36 Nd4! Bxd4+  
37 Bxd4+ e5  
38 Bc5 d4

To prevent White from walking his king to b4 and winning the b5-pawn. This is the concession that White had pinned his hopes of a win on when he made his 36th move.

39 Bg4!

After 39 Bg2 Bxg2 40 Kxg2 h5 41 Kf3 Kf5, Black easily holds the draw.

The text threatens 40 Bf3 when White would win after:

- a) 40 ... Bxf3 41 Kxf3 Kf5 42 g4+ Kg5 43 Bf8 g6 44 Bg7  
b) 40 ... Kf5 41 Bxc6 bxc6 42 Bf8 Kf6 43 Kf3 etc  
39 ... Bd5  
40 b4 g6

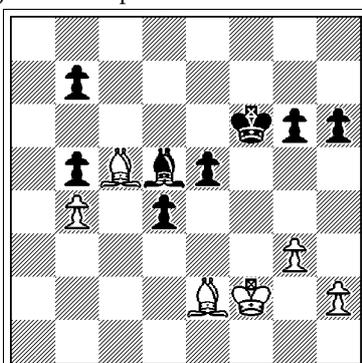
The method by which Black hopes to achieve a draw is to make his kingside pawns safe, to oscillate his bishop between c6 and d5, and to ensure that, when White opposes bishops, he can always safely respond by moving his pawn to e4 or by playing his king to e6 so that, after the exchange of bishops, his king will get to d5.

The purpose of the text is to transfer his pawns from g7 and h6 to g6 and h5, so that, if White ever plays his bishop to g2, Black could move his king to e6 (or f5) after exchanging the bishops, without having to worry about losing a pawn to Bf8.

If now 41 Bf3 then 41 ... Ke6 is fine for Black.

41 Be2!!

Although the analysis is very complicated, this move forces a win against all replies as we shall see.



(position after 41 Be2)

41 ... Bc6

41 ... Bc4 loses instructively as well. Play continues 42 Bf3 h5 (or else White would clamp Black down with

43 g4) 43 Be4, and lines that demonstrate White's winning strategy are:

a) 43 ... g5 44 h4 gxh4 45 gxh4 Bf7 46 Kf3 Bc4 47 Bxb7 Ke6 (intending 48 ... Bd5+) 48 Ke4 and wins after:

i. 48 ... Bb3 49 Bc6 Bc4 50 Be8 Be2 51 Bf8 and a pawn falls

ii. 48 ... Bf1 49 Bc8+ Kf6 50 Bd7 Bg2+ 51 Kd3 Bf1+ 52 Kd2 Kf7 53 Bc6 and the threat of 54 Bf3 Kg6 55 Bd6 does the job

b) 43 ... Be6 44 Bxb7 Kf5 45 Kf3 with:

i. 45 ... Bc4 46 Be4+ Kf6 47 h4 Bf1 48 Kf2 Bc4 49 Bd6 Bf7 (or 49 ... Ke6 50 Bc7 Kf6 51 Bxe5+ with a won ending) 50 Bc6 Bc4 51 Kf3 (intending 52 Ke4) 51 ... Bd3 52 Be4 Bc4 53 Bxe5+ with a won ending

ii. 45 ... Kf6 46 Bc6 Bc4 47 Ke4 Bf1 48 Be8 Bg2+ 49 Kd3 Bf1+ 50 Kd2 (note how Black's bishop cannot get to d3, from where it would defend both b5 and g6, or to e2, from where it would defend both b5 and h5) 50 ... Bc4 51 h4 Bf1 52 Bd6 and the threat of 53 Bxe5+ reaching a won ending cannot be met.

We have seen from these variations that Black cannot hold his game if he has weaknesses on the h5-e8 diagonal and also on the b5-square. We will see from the game continuation that he also cannot save himself if he allows White to clamp his kingside by playing his pawn to g4.

His remaining try is to give up his b5-pawn while continuing with the plan begun on his last move with 41 ... h5. But after 42 Bxb5 Kf5 43 Ke2, White has a winning strategy which Black is unable to oppose. He will restrict his opponent's king, and then pick off the central pawns.

Play might continue 43 ... Kf6 44 Be8 Bc4+ 45 Kd2 Bd5 46 b5 Bf3 47 Bd7 Bg2 48 b6! (now Black's bishop is tied to its current diagonal to a large extent, in view of the possibility of White playing his bishop to c6 should it leave) 48 ... Be4 49 Bd6 Bg2 50 Kd3 Bf1+ 51 Kc2 Bg2 (of course not 51 ... e4 52 Bc6!) 52 Kb3 Bd5+ 53 Kb4 Bf3 54 Bc8 Bd5 55 Bc7! Be4 56 Bd8+ Kg7 57 Bg5 Kf7 58 Kc5 etc.

If Black had played his pawn to b5 at

an early stage to prevent White from making room for his king to penetrate, White would have reverted to the strategy that was successful in the 41 ... Bc4 lines above.

And so, with the text move losing as well, it transpires that White has managed to hold on to enough of his advantage to win after all.

42 g4!

And wins! 42 ... h5 is prevented and 43 Bf8 is threatened. If now 42 ... g5 then 43 Bf3 with a simple win.

42 ... Kf7  
43 h4!

The final nail in Black's coffin, it is zugzwang.

43 ... Bd7

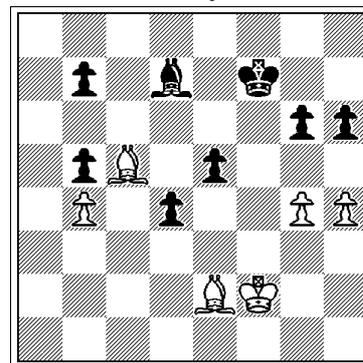
No better were:

a) 43 ... g5 44 h5 Ke8 (he must continue to cover f8) 45 Bf1 Kf7 46 Bg2 etc

b) 43 ... Kg7 44 Bd6 e4 (or 44 ... Kf6 45 Bf8) 45 Be5+

c) 43 ... Ke8 44 Bd6 e4 45 Bf4

all of which are easy wins for White.



(position after 43 ... Bd7)

44 Bf3 Bc6

The exchange of bishops is hopeless for Black, but after moves such as 44 ... Bc8 or 44 ... Be6, White would win with 45 Bd6 Kf6 46 Bf8. The point of 44 Bf3 was to prevent Black from moving his pawn to e4, rather than to attack the b7-pawn.

45 Bxc6 bxc6  
46 Kf3

The rest is simple.

46 ... Kf6  
47 Ke4 Ke6  
48 Bf8 h5  
49 gxh5 gxh5  
50 Bc5

Zugzwang again!

50 ... d3  
51 Kxd3 Resigns