

1 e4 e6

A minor concession already. I had played Stefan Sergiew before and he had played 1 ... e5. However, I had won that game using the Ruy Lopez and so this time he varies on move one. It is always heartening when an opponent opts for his second-string defence.

2 d4 d5
3 Nd2 Nf6
4 e5 Nfd7
5 f4 c5
6 c3 Nc6
7 Ndf3 cxd4
8 cxd4 Qb6
9 g3 Bb4+
10 Kf2 f5

More popular at the time was 10 ... g5 which strikes immediately at White's centre (eg 11 fxg5 Ndx5). It was in that line that I scored my first ever win against an International Master, beating Ragnar Wikman of Finland in the John Kellner Memorial Tournament.

That game had been widely published, and Stefan would almost certainly have been aware of it. Perhaps it was because of that game that he chose the text move which has a reputation for being solid but unambitious.

11 Kg2 Nf8
12 Bd3

By utilising the trick 12 ... Nxd4? 13 Nxd4 Qxd4 14 Bb5+ White completes his development.

12 ... Bd7
13 Ne2 Rc8
14 a3 Be7
15 b4 a6
16 Be3 Na7
17 Qb3 Bb5
18 Rhc1 Bxd3

From this point, Black embarks upon a plan of mass exchanges in the hope of easing his slightly cramped position.

19 Qxd3 Rxc1
20 Nxc1 a5
21 Rb1 axb4
22 axb4 Qb5
23 Ra1 Qxd3
24 Nxd3 Nc8

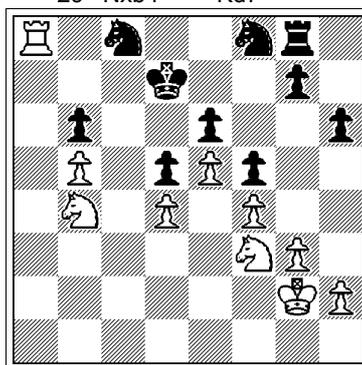
The drawback to Black's plan is that all of his active pieces have been traded off and his remaining units

are undeveloped.

25 Bd2 b6
26 b5 h6
27 Bb4!

White's turn to force an exchange. He trades off the bishop that was hemmed in by his own pawns, but more importantly he gains control of the b4 square which will be the key to unlocking Black's position.

27 ... Rg8
28 Ra8 Bxb4
29 Nxb4 Kd7



(position after 29 ... Kd7)

30 Ne1!!

The beginning of a very strong plan.

White envisages a position with his knights on a6 and c6 and his rook on either b7 or c7. Black's pieces have too little activity for him to be able to stop White from bringing such a position about.

30 ... Kc7

Failing to understand White's intentions. This move actually helps the attack along.

31 Na6+ Kd8
32 Rb8 g5
33 fxg5 Rxc5
34 Nd3 Ng6
35 Ndb4

Using the square that White 'won' on move 27.

Black's position is now beyond hope, indeed, I don't believe that it is unrealistic to say that White had a won game as early as move 30.

35 ... Nge7
36 Rb7

The pieces are now in position and material gains are assured.

36 ... Rg4
37 Nc7 h5

37 ... Rg6 would be answered by 38 Nd3 with 39 Nf4 to follow.

38 Nxe6+ Ke8
39 Nf4 h4
40 Nc6 hxg3
41 hxg3 Resigns

42 Nxe7 Nxe7 43 Rxb6 is threatened and 41 ... Nxc6 loses neatly after 42 bxc6 Kd8 (the rook can't move because d5 would fall, and the knight must stay put to hold b6) 43 Ne6+ Ke8 44 Rb8 Ke7 45 Rxc8 Kxe6 46 Re8+ Kf7 47 c7.