Beating the Polish with the Hungarian

by Philip Best

□ **P.N.Best (160)**
■ **A.Niedzwiedski (164)**
Norfolk v Cambridgeshire
Hungarian Defence

1 e4

It was a pleasent Sunday morning, and I was just settling down to make it less so by doing some work, when suddenly the front door-bell rang. It was Steve Foister. He had come to pick up Ian Gooding to drive him all the way to Norwich for a game of chess in the EACU. I opened the door to be greeted by the question "Fancy a game of chess? - we are still two players short."

1…e5

Steve had been trying to persuade people to play in this match at his engagement party two nights previously. In fact, he had succeeded in persuading David Boyle to come out of his fifth, or maybe sixth, retirement from chess. I, however, had been far too sensible to agree!

2 ♘f3

But now, in the heat of the midday sun, my mind temporarily went blank, and I heard myself utter the words "yeah, alright then - can I have a couple of minutes to grab some lunch?"

2…♘c6

Those of you who are keen followers of Dragon will know that the type of breakfast cereal you eat can play a vital role in how well you play chess, so I therefore had an important quick decision to make. I decided to eat a slice of toast and make some sandwiches. Unfortunately, in my haste, I managed to leave the sandwiches in the kitchen when I left, but perhaps this was my subconscious telling me that sandwiches are not a winning formula!

3 ♗c4

What Steve had failed to tell me was that we now had to fit five people into his car, which to be honest is not really big enough for four. Not only this, but we spent the entire journey listening to a recording of David's show on "Cambridge University Radio."

3…♗e7

If you are wondering why you have never heard of CUR, it's because it only broadcasts to Churchill, Fitz and New Hall. Some might say that this is a good thing. David's show, he told us, is one of the most popular, fetching an audience of about fifteen people, and consists of "Heavy Metal" music interspersed by those familiar Mancunian tones.

4 c3

We eventually arrived for the match fifteen minutes late, because Steve's car with five people in it was not capable of going very fast. The match had already started, and I noticed that my opponent had made a very strange move.

4…h6?

To punish a move like this, I decided that I should play the game in the most aggressive way possible.

5 ♕b3!? ♗f6?!

Black drops the f7 pawn, and surely white should finish the game very quickly now. A more interesting, and certainly better defence was 5…Na5! 6 Bxf7+ Kf8 7 Qd5 c6 8 Qxe5 Kxf7 It turns out that there are no forced wins, and the best White can do is 9 Qf4+ Nf6 10 Ne5+ Kg8 11 b4 and Black's knight is trapped. If White had played 9 Qf5+?! instead, Black could defend this with 11…d6!. But now after 11…d6?! 12 Ng6 Nc4 13 Nxh8 Kxh8 ±. Better is 11…Bd6 12 bxa5 Qe8 13 d4 Bxe5 14 Qxe5 Qxe5 15 dxe5 Nxe4 and Black has good drawing chances.

6 ♗×f7+ ♔f8 7 ♗g6 ♕e7 8 ♘a3?!

As I remember, the point of this move is to play Nb5 and then d4, or to play Nc4–e3–f5, but both of these are far too slow. Much better is 8 d4! exd4 9 cxd4 Nxd4 10 Nxd4 Bxd4 11 O–O, to be followed by Be3 and f4, when White has a good attack.

8…d6 9 d3 ♘d8 10 O–O ♗e6 11 ♕c2 ♕d7

Suddenly the White bishop on g6 begins to look trapped, and it is the White pieces that are on the retreat.

12 ♘e1 ♘e7 13 ♗h5 g6 14 ♗e2 g5 15 ♗h5

I didn't like the look of Ng6–f4. With one knight out of the game on a3, and my pieces now badly organised, I didn't know whether I could repel a Black attack.

15…♔g7 16 ♗e3 ♘g6 17 ♗×g6 ♔×g6 18 d4

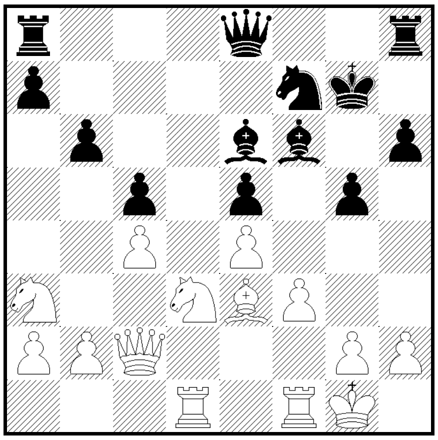
Time to break out, whilst the Black king is exposed.

18…♔g7 19 ♘d3 ♘f7 20 f3

The plan of d5 is probably a bit too subtle!

20…♕e8 21 ♖ad1 b6 22 d×e5 d×e5 23 c4 c5

At last, the knight on a3 spots a good square, and heads straight for it.



24 ♘b5 ♕e7 25 b3 ♘d8

A certain symmetry sends Black's knight on a similar journey.

26 ♘c3 ♘c6 27 ♘d5 ♗×d5

After all that effort! Who'd want to be a knight?

28 e×d5 ♘d4 29 ♗×d4 c×d4

Black's best chances have to lie in a pawn asymmetry. If 29…exd4, White would control the open file, eg 30 Rde1 Qd7 31 Ne5 (△ Qg6) Bxe5 32 Rxe5 Rhe8 33 Rfe1 Rxe5 34 Rxe5 Re8 35 Qe4 +–

30 ♖fe1 ♖he8 31 ♖e4

Nf2–e4 here is a good plan, but I decided to just pile up on the e–pawn.

31…♕d6 32 ♖de1 ♖e7 33 ♕d2

Intending Nb4–c6, after which the e-pawn could not be saved.

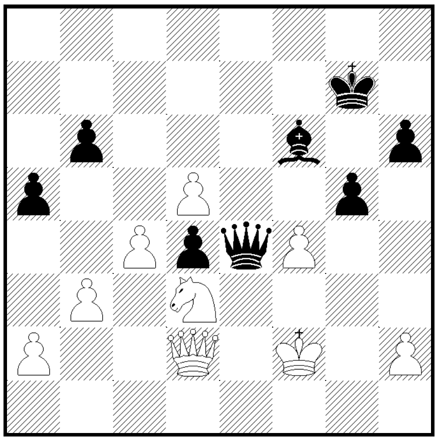
33…a5 34 g3 ♖ae8

Having travelled all this way, and had such a good postion after move 6, I was not about to accept that there was no way through – even if that meant taking some risks!

35 f4?! e×f4 36 ♖×e7+ ♖×e7 37 ♖×e7+ ♕×e7 38 g×f4

Risky, but I don't see what else I can really do.

38…♕e4! 39 ♔f2



There were very few moves that White could have made. This move did at least threaten Qe2, attempting to swop the queens off. The move that I expected (and dreaded) in reply was 39…g4! This leaves White with very big problems. For example if 40 Qe2? Bh4+ 41 Kf1 Qh1 mate (oops!) Another try is 40 Ne1 Bh4+ 41 Kf1 Qh1+ 42 Ke2 Qxh2+ 43 Kd3 Qxd2+ 44 Kxd2 Bxe1+ 45 Kxe1 h5 and Black's pawns are unstoppable. A further possibility is 40 d6 Qh1 41 Ne5 Qxh2+ 42 Ke1 Qxd2+ 43 Kxd2 Bxe5 44 fxe5 Kf7 and again those Black pawns are just too powerful. White could perhaps try 40 Ne5 Bxe5 41 fxe5 Qxe5, and with best play can hold this for a draw, but has to be very careful about the Black pawns. I was still playing for a win, and intended to reply with 40 Kg1. The idea behing this is to play Nf2 next and kick the Black queen away, but 40…Bh4 stops this (41 Nf2 Qe3! –+).

White still has some winning chances by playing on the other side of the board (eg a3), and leaving the king–side until some defending is actually necessary. Overall though, I'd say I was fairly pleased when my opponent played:

39…g×f4?! 40 ♘×f4 ♔f7

If 40…Bg5 41 Ne6! Qxe6 42 Qxg5+ hxg5 43 dxe6 Kf6 44 Kf3 Kxe6 45 Ke4 and White must win. This demonstrates another point behind my move 39 Kf2, because with the king on g1 instead of f2, this continuation would have been much more difficult to win.

41 ♘e2 h5 42 ♘g3

I'm beginning to get out of the positional squeeze now.

42…♕g6 43 ♕e2 h4 44 ♕e6+ ♔f8 45 ♘e4! ♔g7

Now I can swop offto a pawn ending which ought to be easy.

46 ♕×f6+ ♕×f6 47 ♘×f6 ♔×f6 48 ♔e2 ♔e5 49 ♔d3 b5

That doesn't mean that I don't have to be careful though!

50 c×b5 ♔×d5 51 b6 ♔c6 52 ♔×d4 ♔×b6 53 h3 ♔c6 54 ♔e4 ♔c5 55 a3 1–0

A result not matched by the team, as the other four car members only managed half–a–point between them, and even that was through the generosity of Ian's opponent, agreeing a draw when Ian only had ten seconds left on his clock.

But then they hadn't had a slice of toast for lunch, so what do you expect?!