



Intermediate Lecture – The greatest chess game ever!

by IM Robert Jamieson

When I was young and had some spare time to study chess I read chess books and have ended up with a house full of chess books. These days it is a lot easier as you just go onto the internet and type in something like "greatest chess games ever" and you instantly have access to some great chess without even the need for a board.

I tried this myself the other day and was presented with a list of 20 "greatest games". Here is the one which appealed to me the most.

**Georg Rotlewi
Akiba Rubinstein**

Lodz 1907

Queen's Gambit/Semi-Tarrasch Defence

- 1.d4 d5
- 2.Nf3 e6
- 3.e3 c5
- 4.c4 Nc6
- 5.Nc3 Nf6
- 6.dxc5?

This is a mistake. White should preserve the tension in the centre with 6.a3! and only capture on c5 when Black has moved his KB.

- 6...Bxc5
- 7.a3 a6
- 8.b4 Bd6
- 9.Bb2 O-O
- 10.Qd2?

A bad square for the Q. 10.Qc2 was better.

10... Qe7

A fine sacrifice of a pawn. If 11.cxd5 exd5 12.Nxd5? Nxd5 13.Qxd5 Rd8! and Black has a strong attack.

11.Bd3

Better was 11.cxd5 exd5 12.Be2.

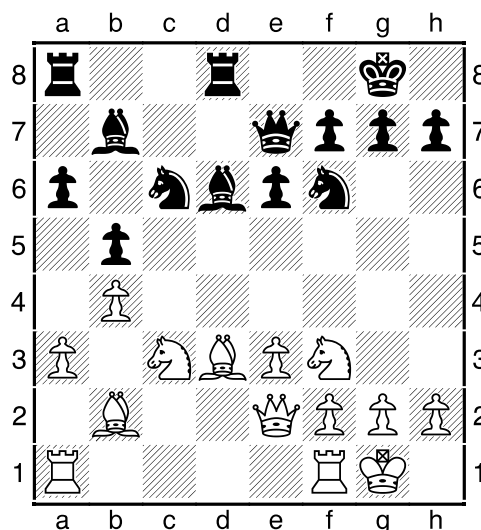
11...dxc4

12.Bxc4 b5

13.Bd3 Rd8

14.Qe2 Bb7

15.O-O



Now just look at the position. It's Black to move so Black has the same position as White plus an extra move (Rd8) and the move in hand. He is two tempi ahead! Clearly White has been outplayed in the opening.





15...Ne5

16.Nxe5 Bxe5

Threatening to win a pawn by 17...Bxh2+ 18.Kxh2 Qd6+. White's next move provides against this, but loosens the kingside defenses. 17.h3 was better.

17.f4 Bc7

18.e4

This looks OK but White has opened up his King and we shall soon see the consequences.

18...Rac8

19.e5 Bb6+

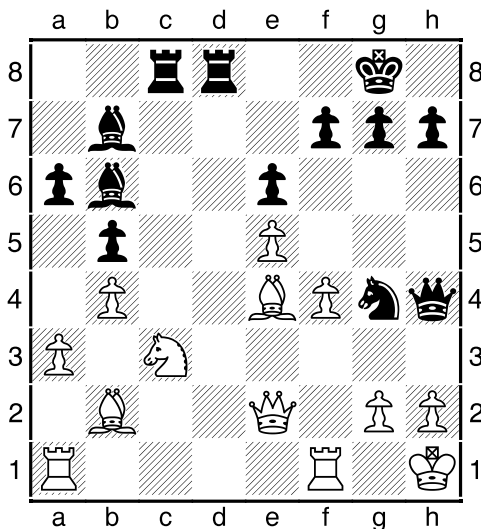
20.Kh1

Now just compare the relative merits of each side's pieces. All Black's men are on good squares whereas White's QR and QB aren't in the play. Now is the time to attack!

16...Ng4

21.Be4 Qh4

Or 21...Nxh2!



22.g3

The alternative 22.h3, parrying the mate, would lead to the following brilliant lines of play: 22...Rxc3! (an eliminating sacrifice, getting rid of the knight, which overprotects the bishop on e4) 23.Bxc3 (or 23.Qxg4 Rxh3+ 24.Qxh3 Qxh3+ 25.gxh3 Bxe4+ 26.Kh2 Rd2+ 27.Kg3 Rg2+ 28.Kh4 Bd8+ 29.Kh5 Bg6+ mate) 23...Bxe4+ 24.Qxg4 (if 24.Qxe4 Qg3 25.hxg4 Qh4+ mate) 24...Qxg4 25.hxg4 Rd3 with the double threat of 26...Rh3+ mate and 26...Rxc3, and Black wins. Beautiful as are these variations, the continuation in the text is still more splendid.

22. ... Rxc3!!

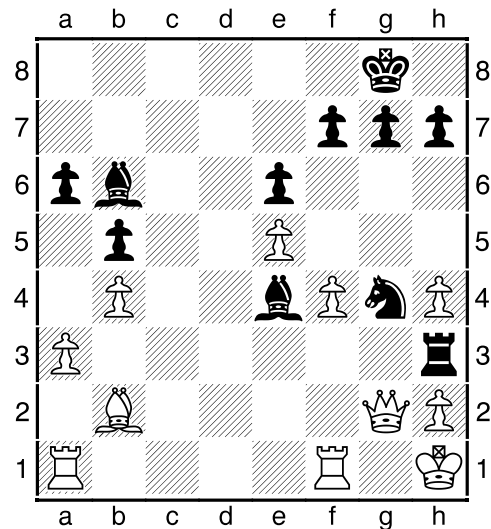
23.gxh4

If 23.Bxb7 Rxg3 24.Rac1 Rh3 25.Rc2 Re3 26.Qg2 Re1 27.Bc3 Red1 followed by Nxh2.

23. ... Rd2!!

24.Qxd2 Bxe4+

25.Qg2 Rh3!!!! 0-1



One of the prettiest moves ever played on the chessboard.

