

NBCC BEST GAME OF 2020

Since 2013, FM Richard Bauer has been the sponsor and judge of the annual NBCC Best Game contest. The club is most thankful for the excellent job that Mr. Bauer continues to do with his analysis of the games and the awarding of prizes to the winners with his own funds. He is simply the best!

This game was played as part of an innovative online match between the Fairfield County Chess Club and the New Britain Chess Club. We started out incredibly strong. In the first round as White on all boards, we were winning on all boards at one point. Fairfield staged a massive comeback, minimizing their losses in that round and punishing us on "their serve."

The biggest star for New Britain was USCF NM Derek Meredith, who won both of his games on board three. Derek does the best job of opening preparation I have seen and has several GM scalps to show for it. My strategy against him has evolved to this: Survive the opening and take him on later.

This game is a stunning example of the triumph of great opening preparation. At one point, Derek had used just one of his 25 minutes, while his opponent had used 24 of his 25!

Double Rook Sacrifice

Date "2020.05.24"

White "NM Derek Meredith"

Black "NM Ryan Young"

Time Control "G25 D5"

Annotator "FM Rick Bauer"

Opening: French Defense: "Two Knights Variation"[ECO "C00"]

- 1. e4 e6** The French Defense. Derek has a hate-hate relationship with this defense!
- 2. Nf3!?** This "beginner move" has been played by the likes of Ivanchuk and Carlsen, which surprised me because it is often played by those that aren't really paying attention to their opponent's move. 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. Nf3 would transpose to the game.
- 2... d5**
- 3. Nc3** The Two Knights is rarely played against the French Defense. That makes it dangerous!
- 3... Nf6** Black wants to continue playing a traditional French rather than "taking advantage" of his opponent's move order with 3... d4 4. Ne2 c5, which also equalizes.
- 4. e5 Nfd7**
- 5. d4 c5**
- 6. Bg5!?** A very provocative move.
- 6... Qb6** The queen adds pressure to both b2 and d4. White gains a temporary development advantage in the French, but Black's rock-solid structure generally allows him to catch up later. 6... f6?! 7. exf6 Nxf6 (7... gxf6 8. Bf4 cxd4 9. Nxd4 e5 10. Qh5+) (6... Be7?! 7. Bxe7 Qxe7 8. Nb5 O-O 9. Nc7 Nxe5 10. Nxa8

Nxf3+ 11. Qxf3 {Perunovic, Milos - Sedlak, Nikola, 1-0, SRB-ch, 2011, <https://lichess.org/zC0liWJe> } { proved good for White. } (6... Qa5!? {is the best alternative to the main move.})

7. **dx5 Bxc5** Now Black is threatening both f2 and b2.

8. **Qd2 Bxf2+?!** The B sac deflects White's queen from covering c3, so that Qxb2 becomes a strong double attack. As clever as this tactic is, it falls into an opening trap that Derek has undoubtedly prepared. Everyone in our club has fallen victim to his treacherous opening preparation. 8... Nc6! 9. O-O-O Bxf2 (9... Qa5!? \$15) 10. Na4 Qa5 11. Qxf2 Qxa4 12. Rd3)

9. **Qxf2 Qxb2**



"He who takes the b-pawn sleeps in the street." Martin Garcia. Some of the most critical lines in chess theory rely on this move to hold the balance, but Derek's favorite move may well be Qxb2/b7 for his opponent!

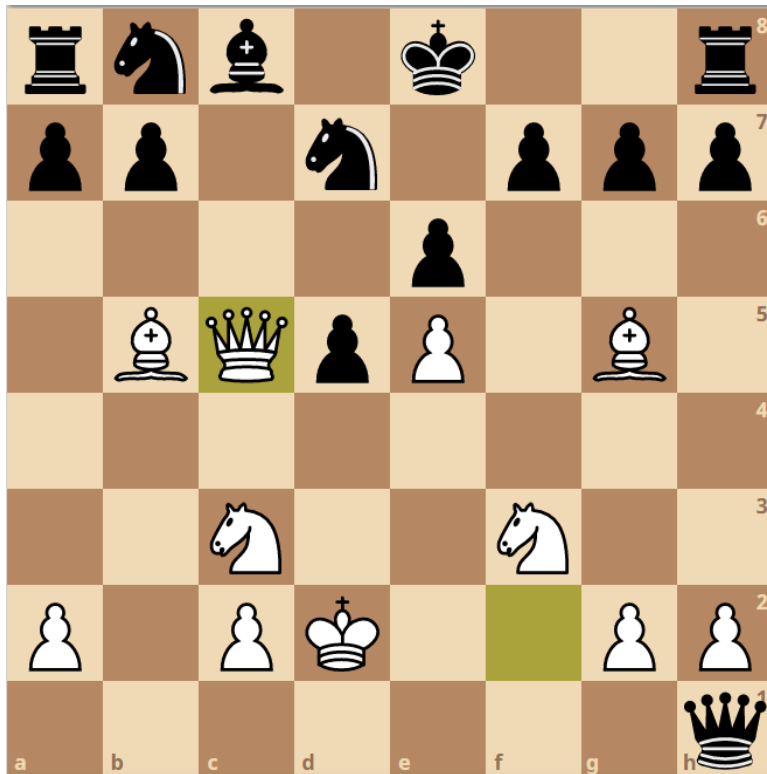
10. **Kd2!** 10. Rc1 is the move Stockfish would play when Qxc3+ 11. Bd2 Qc5 is =+

10... **Qxa1**

11. **Bb5!!** White sacrifices both rooks and now stands better! Derek has used no time (less than a minute), so this reeks of home cooking. This game is a beautiful victory of development over materialism.

11... **Qxh1** Black has used 10 of his 25 minutes. 11... Qb2 doesn't stop 12. Qc5+-

12. **Qc5!**



A rude shock! Two rooks up, but the mate threat on e7 will cost Black his queen.

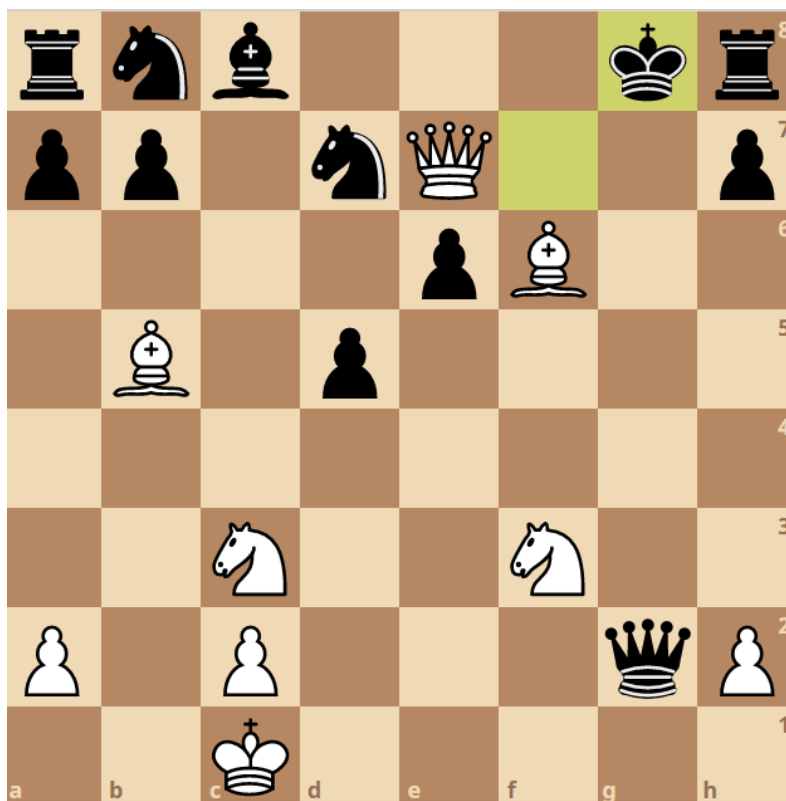
12... Qxg2+

13. Kc1 f6?? Black must sac the Q on g5 to avoid mate, when White would still have a huge advantage: 13... Nc6 14. Bxc6 Qxg5+ 15. Nxc6 bxc6 16. Qxc6 Rb8 is better for White (2.5-0.5) but Black is still alive. Rohl Montes, Juan Armando - Uribe, Mauricio, 1-0, Medellin La Raza, 2003

14. exf6 gxf6 Played with just 7 minutes left on his clock. The king cannot escape: 14... Kf7 15. Qe7+ Kg6 16. Nh4+ Kxg5 17. fxc7+

15. Bxf6 Kf7 Black is down to one minute. White has used only one minute.

16. Qe7+ Kg8 16...Kg6 17. Qg7+



Derek misses the mate here, but he does wind up winning all of Black's pieces and the game. Can you find it (Mate in 5)?

17. Qxe6+ 17. Ne5! Qg5+ (17... Nxe5 18. Qe8#) 18. Bxg5 Nxe5 19. Bf6 1-0

17... Kf8

18. Qe7+ Kg8

19. Ng5 19. Ne5! {is even stronger since Black cannot sacrifice the Q and} 19... Qg5+ {still the best! 19... Nxe5 20. Qe8#} 20. Bxg5 Nxe5 21. Bh6 Nd3+ 22. Bxd3 d4 23. Qf8#)

19... Qxg5+ Black has finally found a way to avert mate by sacrificing his queen! Now, material is close to even, but Black's shaky king and undeveloped forces make the win easy. None of Black's necessary sacrifices can stem the tide.

20. Bxg5 h6

21. Be3 21. Nxd5! {Opening the c4-g8 diagonal!} 21... Rh7 (21... hxc5 22. Nf6+ Nxf6 23. Bc4+)

21... Nc6

22. Qe6+ Kf8

23. Bxh6+ Rxh6

24. Qxh6+ Kf7

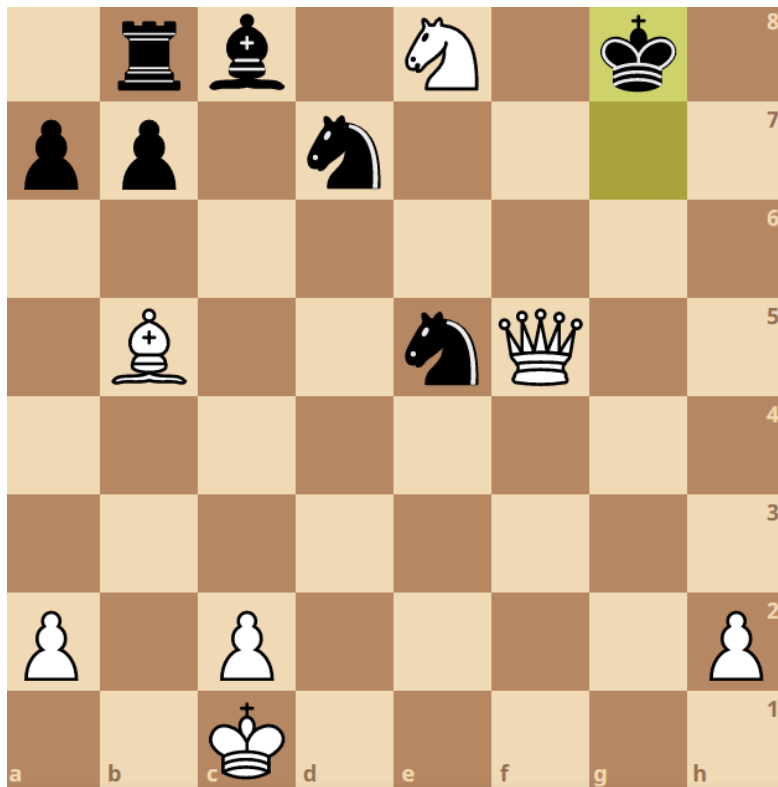
25. Qh5+ Kf8

26. Nxd5 Nce5 26... Nde5 27. Qh8+ Kf7 28. Qf6+ Kg8 29. Nc7 Rb8 30. Ne8

27. Qf5+ Kg7

28. Nc7 Rb8

29. Ne8+ Kg8



White to play and win a piece.

30. Nf6+ Nxf6

31. Qxe5 The double attack on f6 and b8 wins more material.

31... Ra8

32. Qxf6 Bh3 32... a6 33. Bc4+ Kh7 34. Bd3+ Kg8 35. Bg6.

33. Bc4+Kh7

34. Qh4+ Kg7

35. Qxh3 Rf8

36. Qd7+ Kg6

37. Bd3+ With the loss of his last piece in sight, Black finally resigned.

1-0. 37... Kf6 38. Qd6+ Kf7 39. Bc4+ Ke8 40. Qb8+ Ke7 41. Qc7+ Kf6 42. Qd6+ Kg7 43. Qe7+, and Black loses the rook.