

NM Mark Kernighan vs. FM Steve Stoyko

Round 12, April 7, 2005

Queen's Gambit Declined, Lasker Variation [D53]

Kenilworth Chess Club Championship, Kenilworth NJ USA

Annotated by Michael Goeller, based on comments by the participants

1.d4 d5

I told Mark he would likely face the King's Indian again. Oh well. You can never know for sure what to expect from Steve.

2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Be7 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Bg5 h6

The Lasker Variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined, which Steve has studied and played for decades.

6.Bf4!?

More usual is 6.Bh4 0-0 7.e3 Ne4 8.Bxe7 Qxe7 followed by the exchange of Knights, which is the main line of the Lasker Variation, where the exchange of two minor pieces makes Black's defensive task easier. The Bishop retreat to f4 has been played -- including by Tarrasch and Larsen -- but it is much less usual and probably less challenging. The point of Bg5 is to put pressure on the e4 and d5 squares by attacking the Knight at f6, so most people retreat to h4 to keep up the pressure. Moving the Bishop to f4 also makes it more vulnerable to attacks by Nh5 or (after dxc4) Nd5, though it does have the advantage of securing control over the e5 square, which White should exploit by playing Ne5.



Position after 6.Bf4!?

6...0-0

The most common move. Black can also consider two more immediately active alternatives:

- a) 6...dxc4!? 7.e3 (7.Qa4+ c6 8.Qxc4 0-0 9.e3 Qb6 10.Qb3 Qxb3 11.axb3 Nbd7= Krajewski-Burmakin) 7...Nd5 8.Be5 f6 9.Bg3 Bb4!? 10.Qc2 b5 11.a4 c6

12.axb5 cxb5 13.e4 Nxc3 14.bxc3 Be7 15.Bxb8 Rxb8 16.Rxa7 Qb6 17.Ra1 0–0
18.Be2 Bb7= as in the earliest recorded game with this line, Tarrasch-
Halprin, Vienna 1898.

b) 6...c5!? 7.dxc5 Bxc5 8.e3 Nc6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.Bd3 0–0 as in Bent Larsen-
Daniel King, New York 1990, where Black gained activity in exchange for an
isolated d-pawn.

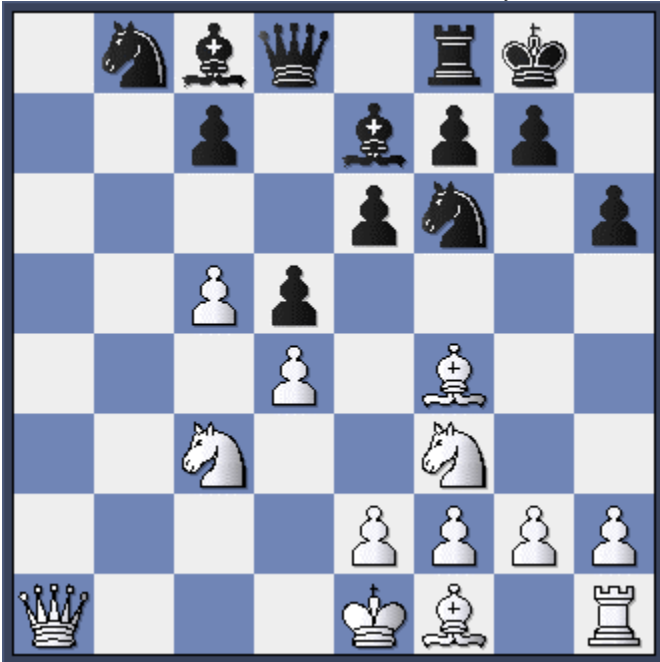
7.c5!?

An interesting idea, designed to rule out Black's typical counterplay by ...c5 or ...b6 and ...c5.
But the c-pawn can also now become a target.

7...b6!

Black can chase White's Bishop with 7...Nh5 8.Bd2 but there is no good follow-up on the
kingside.

8.b4 a5 9.a3 axb4 10.axb4 Rxa1 11.Qxa1 bxc5 12.bxc5



Position after 12.bxc5

12...Ba6!

Black risks sacrificing a pawn in order to make it impossible for White to castle or finish his
kingside development easily. Steve now thought that Black was practically winning, though
any computer program you ask thinks that White is much better.

13.Qa5

Steve thought best was to grab the e5 square with 13.Ne5 Nfd7 (13...Ne4!?) 14.Qa5 which
looks better than the game continuation, if still better for Black: 14...Nxe5 15.Bxe5 Qc8
16.Qxc7 (16.Bxc7?! Nc6 17.Qb6 Nxd4 or 16.e3? Bxf1 17.Rxf1 Nc6 18.Qxc7 Qa8 give Black a
strong attack) 16...Nc6! and Black is better. The critical issue always is that White is behind
in development and his king is in the center. Those are now things that White just cannot
repair.

13...Ne4!

Steve thought that giving up the c-pawn for activity was the best way to emphasize White's
lack of development. Black can also preserve the c-pawn by 13...c6 14.Bc7 Qc8 15.Bxb8
(15.Ne5!? Nfd7) 15...Qxb8 16.Qxa6? (16.Ne5 Bd8 17.Qa3 Qb7 18.g3!? Bc7 19.Bg2 Ra8 =+)
16...Qb4 17.Qd3 Ra8! 18.e3 Ne4 19.Nd2 Nxc3 20.f3 Ra2 with attack.

14.Bxc7

No better is 14.Nxe4 dxe4 15.Bxc7 Qd5! 16.Ne5 Qxd4 17.e3 Qb2 with a winning position for Black.

14...Qc8 15.Nxe4



Position after 15.Nxe4

15...Nc6!

An essential *zwischenzug* (or in-between move).

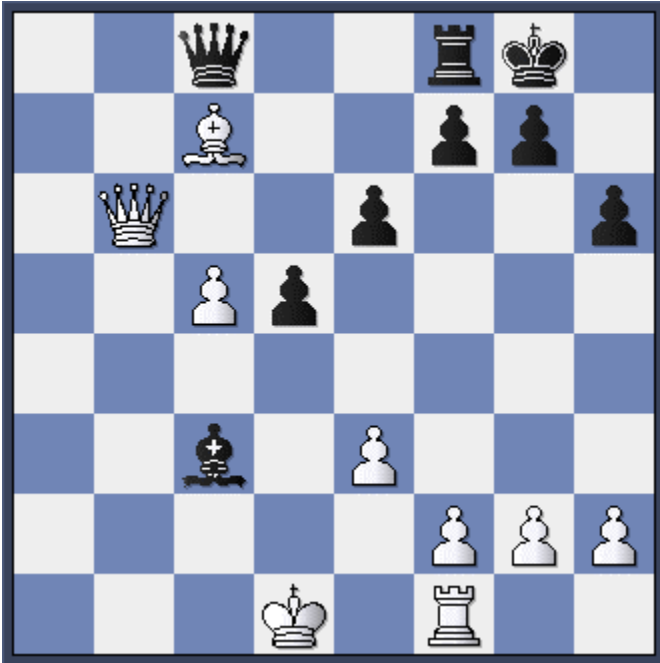
16.Nf6+?!

Giving back the pawn and making Black's task somewhat easier. Black gets excellent compensation if White tries to hold onto the pawn by 16.Qa4 dxe4! (or 16...Qxc7 17.Nc3 Qb7 18.e3 Bxf1 19.Kxf1 Ra8 with the initiative) 17.Qxc6 exf3 18.Qb6! (otherwise Bd8 wins the pinned Bishop at c7) 18...fxe2 19.Bxe2 Bxe2 20.Kxe2 Qa8!? (20...e5!? 21.dxe5? Qg4+--+ or 20...Qd7!? are also possible) and Black has a strong initiative for the pawn.

16...Bxf6 17.Qb6 Nxd4 18.Nxd4 Bxd4 19.e3

Mark considered 19.Kd2!? Qa8! which just emphasizes the desperate situation of his uncastled King.

19...Bc3+ 20.Kd1 Bxf1 21.Rxf1



Position after 21.Rxf1

21...e5!

Q: "What do you do when the King is in the center?"

A: "Attack!"

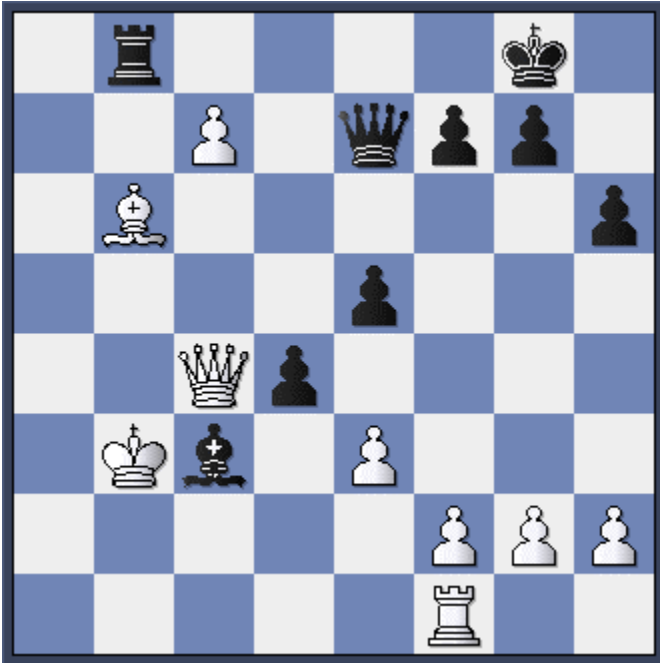
22.Kc2 d4 23.Kb3

Or 23.Kd3 Qf5+ 24.e4 Qf4

23...Qa8!?

This allows White to block the Queen with his c-pawn. Black infiltrates more quickly by keeping his Queen in the center by either 23...Qd7! 24.c6?! Qd5+! or 23...Qf5! 24.Kc4 (24.exd4? Qd3!!) 24...Qc2 (not 24...dxe3? 25.Kxc3 e2 26.Re1 Qxf2 27.Kd2 Ra8 28.Bxe5± but perhaps equally good are 24...Qg4!? or 24...Rc8!?) with a strong attack on White's wandering king.

24.c6 Qe8 25.Qb5 Qe6+ 26.Qc4 Qe7 27.Bb6 Rb8 28.c7



Position after 28.c7

28...Rxb6+!!

Several onlookers were not sure this was possible since they overlooked the critical following move. The defensive 28...Rc8 should also win according to Steve - as confirmed later by Fritz.

29.Kc2 d3+!! 30.Kc1?

Zeitnot. Time pressure. But there is no hope for White: 30.Kxd3 Qd7+ 31.Ke2 (31.Kxc3 Rc6) 31...Rc6++ wins the passed c-pawn, leaving Black a piece up with a continuing attack.

30...Qa3+ and mate next move.

0-1