

Ted Mann vs. Mark Kernighan

Round 2

2005 Kenilworth Chess Club Championship, Kenilworth, NJ USA

January 20, 2005

Ted tries hard to sac all of his pieces, beginning with both of his Rooks. But in the end he accidentally drops a Knight and resigns -- overlooking a chance to sacrifice his Bishop and likely draw! A fascinating game that made Mark go down to his last seconds on the clock in order to win.

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 Qxd5 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 Bg4 6.Be2 e6 7.Bf4!? cxd4 8.Bxb8?!

Better is 8.Qxd4= seeking an equal game.



Position after 8.Bxb8?!

8...Rxb8

Mark says he spent a lot of time calculating the interesting alternative idea, 8...d3!? 9.Bxa7! dxe2 10.Qxd5 Nxd5 11.Be3 Bxf3 12.gxf3= but was not satisfied with the result.

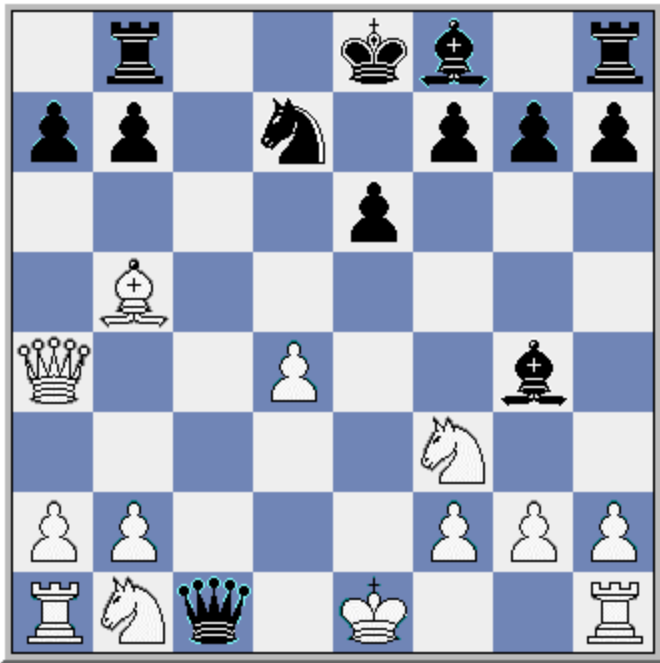
9.Qa4+ Nd7 10.cxd4

Perhaps 10.Qxd4 Bxf3 11.Bxf3 Qb5!? but Black looks better.

10...Qc6! 11.Bb5!?

Or 11.Qxc6 bxc6 12.b3 Bb4+

11...Qc1+



Position after 11...Qc1+

12.Ke2

White goes "all in" as they say in poker. But there really is no hope in 12.Qd1 Bb4+ 13.Nc3 Qxb2 14.Bxd7+ Ke7! with a winning advantage for Black.

12...Qxh1 13.Bxd7+ Ke7!

The "safer looking" 13...Kd8? 14.Be8! gives White a strong attack and at least a draw: 14...e5 15.Qa5+! b6 16.Qd5+ Kxe8 17.Qxe5+ Kd7 18.Qxb8 =.

14.d5!

The best way to make Black nervous.

14...Bxf3+

Better 14...Qxg2 -+

15.Kxf3 Qc1!?

Better and safer was 15...Rd8 with the edge.

16.Nc3!?

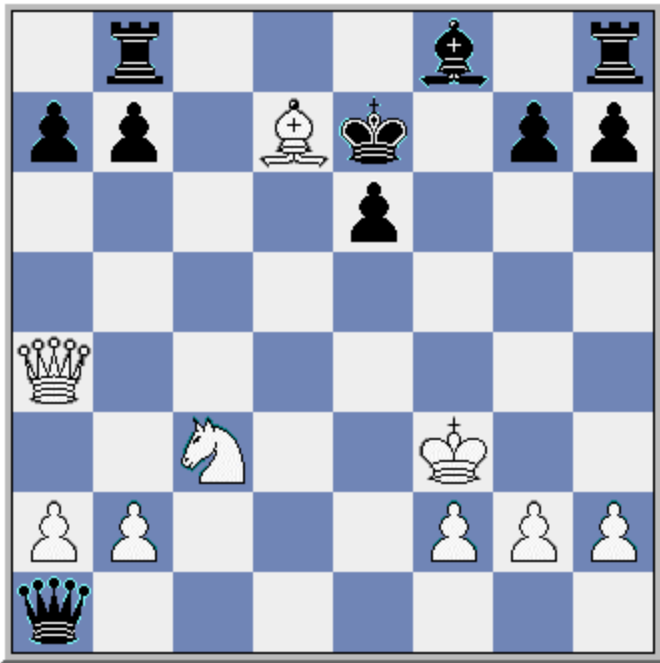
Why not push the limits! An alternate try, though, was 16.d6+!? Kxd6 17.Be8 with unclear complications. But how often do you get to do the double-rook sac?

16...Qxa1 17.dxe6

Again, the alternative was 17.d6+!? but Black seems to escape after 17...Kxd6 18.Qd4+ Ke7 19.Ne4 Qc1! 20.Qd6+ Kd8 21.Qxb8+ Kxd7 22.Qxb7+ Qc7-+

17...fxe6?!

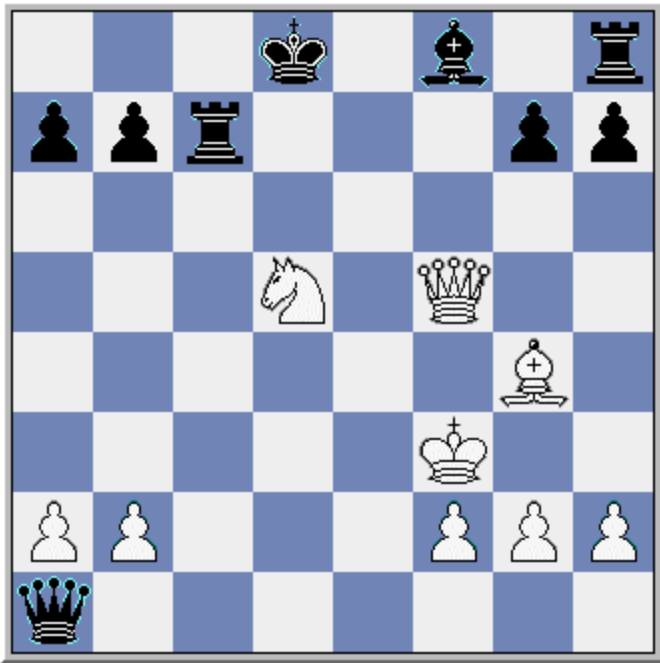
This could have made Black's life much harder. Best was 17...Qxb2!!



Position after 17....fxe6? White to play and draw???

18.b3?? and resigns without playing on, since the Knight is hanging.

But wait! After the game, though, Mark pointed out that White probably had a fascinating shot that might have drawn! In fact, Mark thought it even had a chance to win since he would have had to find some very tough moves in extreme time pressure while Ted would have had a considerable amount of time remaining. I looked at some lines with Fritz and it is quite hairy after **18.Bxe6!! Rd8!!** (this is the only way, according to Fritz, to try for the win still since 18...Kxe6? 19.Qg4+! forces a perpetual) **19.Qe4!?** (19.Qh4+ Kxe6 20.Qxd8 Qxb2 21.Qd5+ Kf6 and Fritz thinks Black can escape the checks, though it sure is tough to know for sure) **19...Rd6!! 20.Nd5+ Ke8!!** (20...Kd8?? 21.Qh4+ Ke8 22.Nc7#) **21.Bg4+** (21.Qa4+ Rc6!) **21...Kd8 22.Qc2!** (22.Qc4 Rc6) **22...Rc6! 23.Qf5 Rc7!** and only thus does Black escape the checks says Fritz! But who would willingly enter into this scary line?!



Possible position if White finds the Bishop sac!

And now only thus does Black win: **24.Nxc7 Qd1+!! 25.Kg3 Qd6+!! 26.f4 Kxc7-+**

I doubt that Mark could have found half of that with his flag about to fall...

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