



## C O L U M N I S T S

*Let's Take A  
Look...*

Nigel Davies



by Bruce Alberston

We invite you to submit games to be considered by Nigel in this column. For all games submitted, please provide the following information: (1) Names of both players; (2) Ratings of both players; (3) When and where the game was played; (4) The time control used in the game; and (5) Any other information you think would be helpful for us to know. Please submit the games (in PGN or CBV format if possible) to: [nigeldavies@chesscafe.com](mailto:nigeldavies@chesscafe.com). Who knows, perhaps you will see the game in an upcoming column, as Nigel says to you, "Let's take a look..."

## Beating Up the Old Geezers

We've all played against them – the old guy with the pipe whose chess games are less fun than watching paint dry. Everything is protected and they never miss a chance to exchange off a piece.

As I move steadily towards my 50s, I wonder if that will be my fate as well. The irony is that I may still believe I'm playing interesting chess, though this interest may not extend beyond the London system, rook and pawn endgames, plus the collected games of Amos Burn. Fun? Who needs it? The name of the game is longevity, with gambits, curry, alcohol and women being strictly off the agenda. Christmas dinner should be two sausages and a walk round the park.

It can be different of course. I remember a great old guy at Southport Chess Club named Dan Southcott. He played in a forthright attacking style (right into his late 70s), could build up a fair pace with his two walking sticks, and drank eight pints at lunchtime. He had the constitution of an ox and thoroughly enjoyed life. But what if one has to play against the other type?

Once again, it's Frank Marshall to the rescue. In his notes to his game against Burn in Paris 1900, he explained that one must strike before the pipe is lit. Here are his pipe related notes:

*Britisher Amos Burn was a very conservative player and liked to settle down for a long session of close, defensive chess. He loved to smoke his pipe while he studied the board.*

*As I made my second move, Burn began hunting through his pockets for his pipe and tobacco.*

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7**

*Not much thought needed on these moves, but Burn had his pipe out and was looking for a pipe cleaner.*

**5.e3 O-O 6.Nf3 b6 7.Bd3 Bb7 8.cxd5 exd5**

*He began filling up his pipe. I speeded up my moves.*

**9.Bxf6 Bxf6 10.h4**

*Made him think on that one – and he still didn't have the pipe going.*

**10...g6 11.h5 Re8 12.hxg6 hxg6**

*Now he was looking for matches.*

**13.Qc2 Bg7 14.Bxg6 fxg6**

*He struck a match, appeared nervous. The match burned his fingers and went out.*

**15.Qxg6 Nd7**

*Another match was on its way.*

**16.Ng5 Qf6**

*He was puffing away and lighting up at last. No time left.*

**17.Rh8+ 1-0**

*Poor Burn. I think I swindled him out of that one. If he could only have got that pipe going, it might have been a different story. He took it good-naturedly and we shook hands. Then his pipe went out.*

This month's game was sent to me by Mikkel Andreassen, who sent me the following letter and asks a number of questions in his notes to the game:

*Greetings from Denmark! The following game was played in a local tournament in Copenhagen. The time control was 2 hours for 40 moves and ½ hour (incl. extra time) for the rest of the game. The opening was not too interesting, as my opponent (a veteran whom I assume uses the moves 3 h3 and 5 a3 simply to get out of the books) played somewhat passively. The queens' came off by move 14 and this is where (in particular) I want your opinion. I believe I had a tiny edge, but I simply could not find a decent plan (strategy), and little by*

*little whatever advantage I had began to disappear into thin air. Finally, my older opponent (nearly twice my age - I am 32) seemed happy enough to exchange all minor pieces, and what was left was a not too interesting rook endgame. So, if you could have a look at the position after the opening, and perhaps comment or highlight key features of the position (pawn structure, placement of minor pieces, plans for both White and Black and so on), I would appreciate it very much.*

It's true that there were technical mistakes by Black, but the main issue was in not sizing up the opponent and figuring out the kind of game to play. Old geezers don't like tension, and there wasn't much of it to be seen in this game.

I understand if the reader doesn't want to play through the entire thrilling 104 moves, though to do so might drive home the point that this could happen to you. Old geezers may not run too fast, but they might well know what to do if they catch you:

*Altgeezzer,AN (1811) - Andreassen,M (1715)*  
Denmark 2006  
Queen's Pawn Game [D01]

**1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 h3**

A somewhat passive approach, preparing a retreat for the dark-square bishop before it even arrives on f4. In the game, it doesn't even make it that far.

**3...c5 4 c3 d5**

This is not a mistake, but I would be tempted to stop White from putting his bishop on f4 with 4...Qc7.

**5 a3**

5 Bf4 would at least justify playing 3 h3, though Black could simply exchange the bishop off with 5...Bd6.

**5...Nc6 6 Nbd2 Be7 7 e3 0-0 8 Bd3 Qc7 9 0-0 e5**



Technically speaking this is an excellent move, taking space in the middle. But from a psychological standpoint, there was a case for keeping the tension and avoiding the exchange of pieces.

**10 dxe5 Nxe5 11 Nxe5 Qxe5 12 Nf3 Qh5  
13 Nh2**

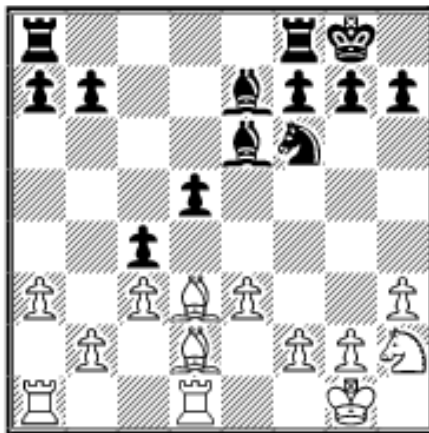
One can almost sense the knight's disappointment that he doesn't have a different owner. It must have been a great relief to him to get exchanged on move 24, though the rooks don't get off so lightly.

**13...Qxd1 14.Rxd1 Be6**

*This felt like a natural developing move. At this point, I felt I had an edge or at least equalized White's somewhat passive opening play. But I had difficulties in formulating a plan. I was quite obsessed with "proving" the inferior position of White's dark-squared bishop, and this was the reason for 15...c4. However it later comes to pass that White's knight makes excellent use of the d4-square. So what should the plan be at this stage?*

Answer: You are playing just fine, apart from the psychological mistake of exchanging queens against an old geezer. You should have bullied him by threatening excitement. From a technical point of view, you are right in thinking that you need to avoid 15...c4, and instead you should organise a gradual advance of your queenside pawns, while restricting your opponent's freeing moves (c3-c4 or e3-e4).

**15.Bd2 c4?**



Giving him the d4-square for his knight, after which, White is certainly no worse and might even be better. 15...Rfd8 makes more sense to me, and 15...Ne4 looks pretty good too.

**16 Bc2 b5 17 Nf3 Rfb8 18 Nd4 Rb6**

*Maybe it was better to protect c6 by 18...Bd7?*

Answer: Yes, that's probably a bit better, but you've already done plenty of damage with 15...c4, plus your total lack of cunning.

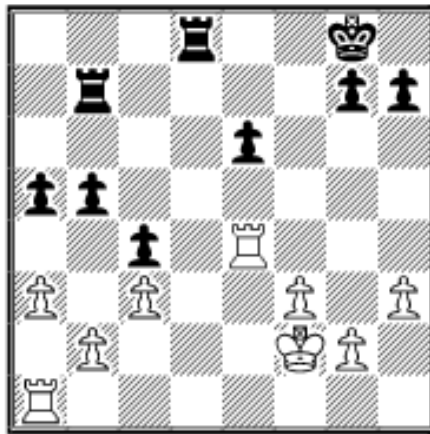
**19 Be1 a5 20 f3**

Making room for his bishop to get out, while protecting e4. White is better now.

**20...Bd6 21 Bf2 Rb7 22 Re1**

22 Bh4 looks like a more effective preparation for e3-e4; White would threaten 23 e4 dxe4 24 Bxf6 gxf6 25 Bxe4.

**22...Bc5 23 e4 dxe4 24 Nxe6 Bxf2+ 25 Kxf2 fxe6 26 Bxe4 Nxe4+ 27 Rxe4 Rd8?**



Giving White a pawn for nothing. Why not protect it with 27...Ra6 28 Rae1 Kf7?

**28 Rxe6 Rd2+ 29 Re2 Rbd7 30 Rae1 Kf7 31 Rxd2 Rxd2+ 32 Re2 Rd3 33 Ke1 Kf6 34 Rd2 Re3+ 35 Kf2 Re5 36 Rd4 g5 37 h4 gxh4 38 Rxh4 h5 39 Rd4 Kg6 40 Rd6+ Kg7 41 Ra6**

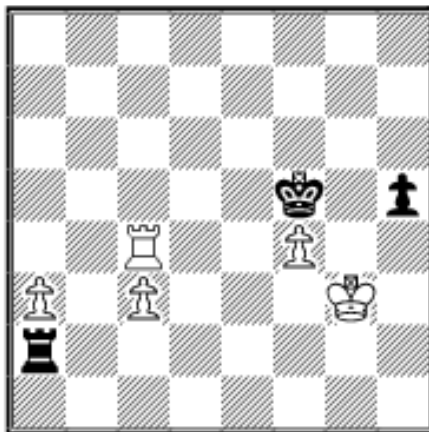
kingside.

White is playing it pretty well, in an old-geezzerish kind of way, fixing Black's queenside pawns before proceeding on the

**41...a4 42 Rd6 Kf7 43 f4 Rf5 44 Kf3 Ke7 45 Rb6**

White misses a chance to drive Black's rook back with 45 Ke4!, the point being that 45...Rxf4+ 46 Kxf4 Kxd6 47 Kg5 is a winning pawn endgame. Solidity isn't everything.

**45...Rd5 46 Ke4 Rd2 47 Rxb5 Rxb2 48 Kf3 Rd2 49 Kg3 Kf6 50 Rb4 Kf5 51 Rxa4 Rxb2 52 Rxc4 Ra2**



With two extra pawns, it looks as if White must be winning, but he has considerable technical problems in this position. The problem is that if the kingside pawns are exchanged and Black's king is far enough over to the queenside, the extra a- and c-pawns will not be enough for White to win.

**53 a4 Kg6 54 Kf3 Ra1 55 Rc6+ Kg7 56 Rc4 Kf6 57 Kg3 Kg6 58 Kh3 Kf5 59 Kh4 Rh1+ 60 Kg3 Rg1+ 61 Kf2 Ra1 62 Rc5+ Kxf4 63 Rxh5 Ke4 64 Ke2 Ra2+ 65 Kd1 Kd3 66 Rh3+ Kc4 67 Kc1 Kb3 68 Kd1 Kxa4 69 Rh8 Kb5 70 Rc8 Kb6 71 Kc1 Kb7 72 Rd8 Kc6 73 Rd2 Ra4 74 Kb2 Kc5 75 Kb3 Ra1 76 Rh2 Rb1+ 77 Kc2 Ra1 78 Kb2 Ra4 79 Kb3 Ra1 80 Rh5+ Kc6 81 Kc4 Ra4+ 82 Kd3 Ra1 83 Kd4 Rd1+ 84 Kc4 Rc1**

This position should be drawn, but Black must know the correct way to do it. He should keep his rook on a square like g1, which keeps the option of both horizontal and vertical checks.

**85 Rh6+ Kd7 86 Kb4 Rb1+ 87 Kc5 Rc1 88 Rh7+ Ke6 89 c4 Rc2 90 Rh4 Kd7 91 Rh6 Rc1 92 Rd6+ Kc7 93 Rh6 Kd7 94 Ra6 Kc7 95 Ra7+ Kb8 96 Rh7 Kc8 97 Kb5 Rb1+ 98 Kc6 Kd8 99 c5 Rc1 100 Ra7 Rc2 101 Ra8+ Ke7 102 Rh8 Rc1 103 Rh2 Rc3 104 Rd2 1-0**

*And play continued for another 10 moves or so before I realised I had lost a theoretical drawn position.*

Well, let that be a lesson to you. As a general rule of thumb, a young opponent means good tactics and bad endgames, an old geezer will have good endgames but be weak in tactics. So you've got to liven things up a bit early on.

### Recommended Reading

*Marshall's Best Games of Chess* by Frank James Marshall (Dover, 1942)

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