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Inside Chess



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Vladimir Kramnik had been scheduled to begin a match in Bahrain in October against Deep Fritz, but world events caused the match to be postponed. It is now set for January. We now revisit the last match played by a world champion against the then-reigning computer king. After a fine victory in Game 1, Deep Blue struck back in Game 2 to even the score. Now Game 3...

1997 Rematch: Garry Kasparov versus Deep Blue Game 3

Game three was one of those strangely flawed game where the computer plays, well, like a computer. Deep Blue couldn't find a proper strategic plan and played some passive waiting moves trying to avoid damaging its position. Kasparov pursued his advantage in earnest but somehow it evaporated. After the scorching victories by the winners in games one and two, the third game did not reach the same heights.

White: Garry Kasparov Black: Deep Blue

1.d3



An amazing start by Kasparov! With the text he is willing to forfeit the advantage of the White pieces in order to avoid Deep Blue's opening library. Kasparov's preparation however pays dividends as he does emerge with a clear opening advantage.

1...e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.c4 Nf6 4.a3

The opening has now transposed into the familiar themes of the English Opening (1.c4).

4...d6

Deep Blue declines the invitation to open the game with 4...d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.g3 when the game has transposed into a reversed Dragon Sicilian Defense, a defense that Kasparov used as Black to good effect in his 1995 PCA Championship match against Anand.

5.Nc3 Be7?

A mistake that shows that Kasparov's mixture of opening moves has bamboozled the computer. In conjunction with the move ...d7-d6 and ...Ng8-f6 the Bishop is passively placed on the e7-square. The most sensible alternative was 5...g6 preparing to fianchetto the dark-squared Bishop.

6.g3 0-0 7.Bg2 Be6 8.0-0 Qd7?!



A fine move with the strategic intention of playing ...Be6-h3, trading White's well placed g2-Bishop. The problem is that it is played one move too early. Black should prepare the text with 8...h6 in order to prevent Kasparov's next move.

9.Ng5!

In the English Opening, the major strategic motif for White is to control the d5-square in order to make this square a useful outpost in the middlegame. In combination with the c4-pawn, c3-Knight and g2-Bishop, everything points to the d5-square. In his desire to control the d5-square, the f3-Knight does not play a useful role and is often routed towards this square by Nf3-e1-c2-e3-d5; or the f3-Knight trades itself for the f6-Knight by Nf3-d2-e4 in order to gain control over d5. With this move, White moves his f3-Knight with tempo linking together his overall strategic plan. Much to my surprise, Kasparov agonized for 37 minutes over this obvious decision. His main alternative was 9.Re1 Bh3 10.Bh1 in order to preserve his g2-Bishop. In this case Black has benefited by avoiding ...h7-h6.

9...Bf5 10.e4!

Again we see how Kasparov does his utmost to control the d5-square. What makes this move even more compelling is that it too comes with tempo. The only drawback is that it does give up control over the d4-square.

9...Bg4 11.f3 Bh5 12.Nh3?

A poorly timed retreat that allows Black right back into the game. I attribute this mistake to Kasparov's unfamiliarity with the English Opening. Normally, he doesn't play either side of this opening having prepared it only for this match. Catching the computer out of its opening library is great, doing it to yourself isn't so clever. With 12.Be3! preventing ...Nc6-d4 White would gain a fine advantage. How so? White is preparing for a Kingside pawn storm especially because Black's h5-Bishop presents a tempting target. Black's e5-pawn however tempers these ambitions. White would like to play 12.g4 Bg6 13.h4 h6 14.h5 and to follow this type of advance with f3-f4-f5. The moment that

f3-f4 gets played, Black will respond ...e5xf4 neutralizing White's initiative. Now the point of 12.Be3 becomes a bit more clear. If 12...Nd4(?) 13.Bxd4 exd4 14.Ne2 c5 (14...Nd5? 15.Nxh7 Ne3 16.Nxf8 Rxf8 17.Qd2 and White wins a pawn) now take a look at the resulting structure. Notice that White's f3 and g3-pawns are free and ready to storm up the board. Black's one area of counterplay is based on the queenside and the move ...b7-b5. With the precautionary move 15.a4 (15.Nf4 is also strong) b6 16.Nh3 a6 17.Nf2 White is ready to storm the Kingside.

All the above is an important nuance that allows Deep Blue to recover from his previous faults.

12...Nd4! 13.Nf2 h6

A precautionary move, as now Deep Blue's horizon saw that the moves h2-h4 and g3-g4 offers White a tactical opportunity.

14.Be3 c5!

A crucial response. The text makes all the difference in the position. Now, 15.Bxd4 cxd4! 16.Ne2 b5! and White no longer benefits from the trade on the d4-square.

15.b4 b6 16.Rb1 Kh8?



In my predictions of this match, published in *Inside Chess* magazine, I had explained that Kasparov could be sure his strategy is successful when the computer makes a "pass" move or in computer parlance a "null" move by playing ...Kg8-h8 for no visible reason. Deep Blue has hit a wall and doesn't know how to

continue. The text is designed to avoid making a move that may damage the computer's position and simply waits for White to create so that it can then respond.

17.Rb2?

This move too makes little sense. Perhaps Kasparov was hoping

that Deep Blue would now play 17...Kg8 when White's Rook may be better on the b2-square than the b1-square. If so, then once again, Garry fails to press the advantages of his position. White should be revving up his play on the Kingside. He needs to play f3-f4 to seize the initiative and he would also like to dislodge the f6-Knight so that the leap Nc3-d5 can be played. The move that puts both of these ideas into operation is 17.h3!, preparing Nf2-g4 when I much prefer White's position.

17...a6!

At last, Deep Blue realizes that it can't continue to sit and do nothing. The text has the clear aim of ...b6-b5 in mind, with play on the queenside. Needless to say this advance should have been played earlier.

18.bxc5?!

While the text may not be a mistake, it certainly doesn't inspire me. Opening up the queenside gives Black a clear strategic plan. While the plan of ...b6-b5 is certainly counterplay, this cure appears worse than the disease. Again, my choice is for 18.h3 b5 19.Ng4 with advantage to White. Kasparov had an entirely different strategic idea in mind.

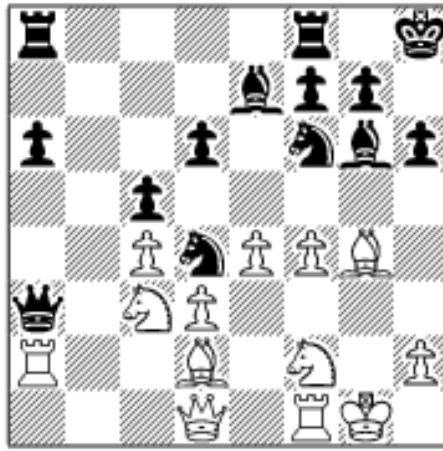
18...bxc5 19.Bh3 Qc7

Black can't play 19...Nxf3+ 20.Kh1 Qc7 21.g4 which will cost Black a piece.

20.Bg4 Bg6 21.f4 exf4 22.gxf4

At long last White has gotten in his strategic dream of f3-f4. However, the pawn trade on f4 has neutralized the effect of the pawn storm and Black is quick to get in his own queenside counterplay. While I felt that White had let his advantage slip, I still prefer his position.

22...Qa5 23.Bd2 Qxa3 24.Ra2?!



An easy move to second-guess. Most analysts had thought that Kasparov had sacrificed his a-pawn to seize the seventh with 24.Rb7 Bd8 in order to combine with White's Kingside initiative. Continuing this variation for a moment, 25.f5 Bh7 26.Qa1 Qxa1 27.Rxa1, leads to an unclear ending with plenty of compensation for White.

24...Qb3 25.f5 Qxd1 26.Bxd1 Bh7

An unpleasant decision that most humans would be loath to make. But after 26...Bh5 27.Bxh5 Nxb5 28.Nd5 Bg5 29.Bxg5 hxg5 30.Rfa1 White will win back the sacrificed pawn. The computer wants to keep his gains! While a disagreeable decision, I approve!

27.Nh3 Rfb8 28.Nf4 Bd8?!

Unnecessarily passive. Preference should have been given to 28...Nc6! a paradoxical retreat which makes a lot of sense. The Knight is terrific on the d4-square but it attacks a number of empty squares. With 28...Nc6 Black can reposition his Knight to the e5-square where it will be attacking White's structural base, his d3-pawn. If 28...Nc6! 29.Nfd5 Nxd5 30.Nxd5 Bg5; Black is activating his pieces and preparing ...f7-f6 in order to activate the h7-Bishop.

29.Nfd5 Nc6

Interestingly, the computer makes this retreat when it is no longer voluntary. White's threat of Bd2-f4 must be blocked.

30.Bf4 Ne5 31.Ba4 Nxd5 32.Nxd5 a5?



A bad move that makes Black's position even more passive. With 32...f6! 33.Rfa1 Bg8 34.Bb5 Bxd5! 35.exd5 a5!?! With a thoroughly blocked position. The difference is that although White has forced the move ...a6-a5 it has cost him time. By volunteering this move, Deep Blue does Garry a nice favor.

33.Bb5!

Now the Bishop takes up a valuable outpost preventing any counterplay down the b-file.

33...Ra7 34.Kg2 g5!?

This sparked another controversy. Deep Blue seems to be completely unconcerned about his h7-Bishop and seeks space. Now Kasparov gets a powerful grip over the position, but, can't drive his advantage home.

35.Bxe5+ dxe5 36.f6! Bg6 37.h4! gxh4 38.Kh3 Kg8 39.Kxh4 Kh7 40.Kg4 Bc7!



Well played. Deep Blue realizes that his h-pawn is vulnerable to the shift Rf1-h1 and Ra2-h2. The text prepares ...Bc7-d6-f8 protecting this vulnerable pawn. Garry now regains his pawn but cannot make further progress.

41.Nxc7 Rxc7 42.Rxa5 Rd8 43.Rf3 Kh8 44.Kh4 Kg8 45.Ra3 Kh8 46.Ra6 Kh7

47.Ra3 Kh8 48.Ra6 1/2-1/2

Draw was proposed by Garry Kasparov with his 48th move and quickly accepted by the Deep Blue team. The score remains equal after 3 games: 1½ - 1½.

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