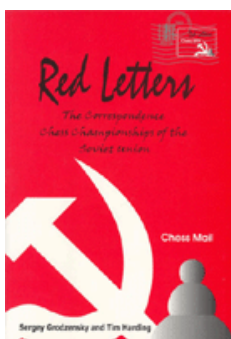




COLUMNISTS

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John Littlewood, The Man Who Lived Tactics

British chess suffered a big loss when FIDE Master John Eric Littlewood died on 16 September 2009, aged seventy-eight.

When I originally decided on the title for this article I intended to write “the man who loved tactics”, but found I had typed “lived” instead. On reconsideration, I decided no correction was necessary. The uniqueness of the man we have lost, his special quality, is better defined by “lived”.



John Eric Littlewood

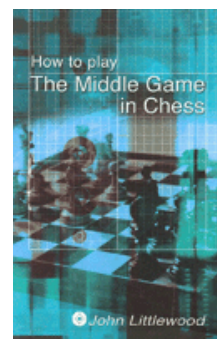
Source: [Liverpool Chess International](#)

John Littlewood was a modern languages teacher, having got a degree from Sheffield University. As other writers have remarked, John was somewhat unlucky at starting his chess high-level career relatively late in life (in his twenties), at a time when British chess was at a low ebb and opportunities were far fewer than they are now. He achieved the British Master title at a time when the standard for earning it was very strict (based chiefly on ratings) and, being an amateur, his opportunities for travelling to tournaments abroad were mostly limited to school holidays. His highest placing in the British Championship was third (in 1962 and 1969) but in one year a loss to Frank Parr in the last round cost him a tie with Penrose for first. John's weaknesses, at least in his early years, were perhaps over-optimism and a dislike of draws. At the 1962 Varna Olympiad he managed to avoid draws altogether: six wins and seven losses!

As his *British Chess Magazine* obituary, by John Saunders, says, “In the modern era John would undoubtedly have gone on to the IM or even GM title.” He played in five Hastings premiers, defeating one of the world's strongest players, Svetozar Gligoric, in the 1961-2 tournament. He played in numerous British Championships, including this year's event, and also played on the English team in two FIDE Olympiads, in 1962 and 1972. He also won the British Senior title in 2006 and 2008. John Littlewood's brother Norman was also a strong player and his son Paul became British Champion in 1981 and an international master.

In addition to this, John Littlewood also played correspondence chess with some success, although it did not really suit his aggressive style because the almost infinite time available for analysis meant that unsound combinations, in theory at least, could be “found out”. Yet correspondence play also gives great scope for soundly-based attacks when a player holds the initiative, and can perhaps dare to attempt things that might be too risky against the clock. In such positions Littlewood could produce really creative achievements as the game with Tomasevic,

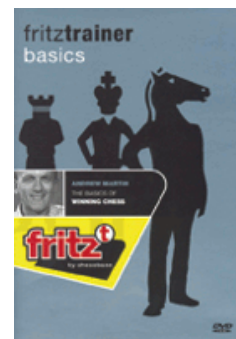
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*How to Play the
Middle Game in Chess*
by John Littlewood



Chess Tactics
by Paul Littlewood



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below, shows.

Moreover, John also wrote on the game, including [*How to Play the Middle Game in Chess*](#) (London: Collins 1974) and *Chess Coaching* (Swindon: Crowood 1991), and translated books from German, such as Pachman's *Complete Chess Strategy* for Batsford. In recent years, he regularly annotated games in the English Chess Federation's newsletter.

As I was from the south of England and John from the North, we seldom met, except at a few BCF Congresses and a couple of Manchester opens, and we never met in any competition.

John Littlewood – Mikhail Botvinnik

Hastings 1961-2

Dragon Sicilian [B75]

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Be3 Bg7 7 f3 a6

Instead of 7...0-0; Botvinnik had played this unusual plan in a few other games.

8 Bc4 b5 9 Bb3 Bb7 10 Qd2 Nbd7



11 0-0-0

11 Bh6!? and 11 a4 have also been tried.

11...Nc5 12 Kb1 Nxb3 13 cxb3 0-0 14 Bh6

White must act on the kingside because if 14 b4 a5!

14...Bxh6 15 Qxh6 b4!

One point of White's thirteenth move is seen in the line 15...e5? 16 Nc2!, to gain control of d5.



16 e5?

Although this brave attack leads to some exciting variations, it is apparently the losing move. After the game, Flohr said White could have

drawn by 16 Nd5 Bxd5 17 exd5 Nxd5 18 Nf5 gxf5 19 Rxd5 e6 20 Rxd6 Qxd6 21 Qg5+ but Littlewood would not have been happy with a short draw. Anyway, 17...Qd7 (instead of 17...Nxd5) is to Black's advantage said Botvinnik.

The move that would pose more difficult problems for Black was 16 Nce2, indicating 16...e5! 17 Nc2 a5 18 Ne3 a4 with an unclear position.

16...Nd7!

White would stand better after 16...bxc3? 17 exf6 exf6 18 bxc3 or 16...dxe5? 17 Nf5 gxf5 18 Rxd8 Raxd8 19 Ne2.

17 h4

If 17 Ne4 Bxe4+! 18 fxe4 Nxe5.

Littlewood had originally intended 17 exd6? but saw the refutation 17...e5 just in time. Actually, Botvinnik calculated that even 17...bxc3 is just playable, e.g., 18 Nf5 gxf5 (or first 18...c2+ as given by Botvinnik, soon transposing) 19 Qg5+ Kh8 20 dxe7 c2+ when:

a) 21 Ka1 cxd1Q+ 22 Rxd1 Qe8 23 Rxd7 Qxd7 24 Qf6+ is a drawing line given in Golombek's March 1962 *BCM* notes, but apart from 17...e5 there are several improvements for Black, e.g., 22...Qa5 (to refute Rxd7 by ...Qe1+); similarly 22...Qb6 suffices.

b) 21 Kxc2 Qc7+ 22 Kb1 Rg8 (Botvinnik) 23 Qxf5 Bc6 and Black should win in the end.

17...bxc3

BCM said this must be played at once but actually 17...dxe5 18 h5 bxc3 transposes.

18 h5 dxe5!



18...c2+ 19 Nxc2 g5 20 Qxg5+ Kh8 21 exd6 would be far from clear said Botvinnik.

19 hxg6

If instead

a) 19 bxc3 exd4 20 Rxd4 (or 20 hxg6 Nf6 21 Rxd4 Qa5) 20...Qa5 (Botvinnik), e.g. 21 Rxd7 Qf5+ 22 Kb2 when Black cannot take the Rook but has 22...Rab8 (or even 22...g5). Also 20...g5 and 20...Qc8 seem to defend,

b) 19 Ne6 c2+ or 19...fxe6 20 hxg6 c2.

19...Nf6 20 bxc3

Nothing works. If 20 Nf5 c2+! 21 Kxc2 Qc8+ or 20 gxh7+ Kh8 and there is no continuation. 20 Nc2 prolongs the agony but against a world champion, what is the point?

20...exd4 21 gxh7+ Kh8 22 Rxd4 Qa5 23 Qe3 Nd5 24 Qd2 Nxc3+ 25 Ka1 Rad8 26 Rc1 Qxa2+ 27 Qxa2 Nxa2 28 Rxd8 Rxd8 0-1

Arthur Bisguier - John Littlewood

Hastings 1961-2

Queen's Gambit, Chigorin Defence [D07]

1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 c4 Bg4 4 cxd5 Bxf3 5 gxf3 Qxd5 6 e3 e5 7 Nc3 Bb4 8 Bd2 Bxc3

Chigorin would have been proud of the way Black trusts in his knights.

9 bxc3 exd4 10 cxd4 Nf6 11 Rb1 0-0 12 Be2

12 Rb5 might be considered here, but not 12 Rxb7? Nxd4.

12...Rfe8 13 0-0?

This just encourages the attack; White should have tried to develop some play and left.



13...Rad8 14 a4 Rd6 15 e4 Qh5 16 d5 Nd4

Black already has a winning attack and White's next move was probably just desperation.

17 Rxb7? Nxe4! 18 Bf4 Rg6+ 19 Bg3 Nc3 20 Qd3 Ncxe2+ 21 Kh1 Qh3 22 Rfb1 Rxb3 23 fxg3 Nxb3+ 0-1

White resigned as mate is forced.

John Littlewood – Nigel Povah

British Championship, Morecambe 1975

Modern Benoni, Four Pawns Attack [A66]

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e6 4 Nc3 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 e4 g6 7 f4 Bg7 8 e5!?

The Mikenas Gambit; 8 Bb5+ is the more usual continuation.

8...Nfd7 9 Ne4!? dxe5 10 Nd6+ Ke7

Not 10...Kf8 11 Nf3 exf4 12 Bxf4 followed by Bc4 and Ne5.

11 Nxc8+ Qxc8 12 Nf3

Not 12 d6+ Kf8 13 Nf3 e4 14 Ng5 h6 15 Nxe4 (or 15 Nxf7 Kxf7 16 Bc4+ Kf8 17 f5 Bd4!) 15...Qe8 16 Qe2 Nc6 17 Kf2 Bd4+ and Black obtained the better game in Partos-Holm, Skopje 1972.



12...Re8!?

Povah varied from the present game the next year with 12...e4!? 13 Ng5 Nb6 14 d6+ (14 Be3? Rd8! 15 Rc1 Rxd5 16 Qc2 f5!) 14...Kf8 15 a4 h6 16 a5 hxg5 17 axb6 a6 18 Qd5 and now with 18...Qc6 he got roughly an equal game at least (Kooiman-Povah, London 1976). IM John Watson suggested 18...Qd7 instead as 19 fxg5 Nc6 20 Bb5 Bd4 gives Black the advantage. 18...gxf4 has also been played successfully.

13 fxe5

The stem game went 13 Bc4 Kf8 14 0-0 Nb6 15 Bb5 Rd8 16 fxe5 (16 Nxe5 Rxd5) 16...Rxd5= V. Mikenas-A. Suetin, 30th USSR ch, Erevan 1962.

13...Nxe5 14 Bb5 Nbd7 15 0-0 a6?



This is the losing move.

Black should play 15...Kf8 16 Nxe5 Rxe5 17 Bf4 a6!? (17...Rf5 is perhaps less good although it succeeded in E. Curtin-E. Lobron, European Under-20 ch., 1979-80) 18 Be2 Re8 19 d6 b5 20 a4 c4 21 Bf3 Qc5+ 22 Kh1 Rad8 23 axb5 axb5 24 b4 Qd4 25 Qxd4 Bxd4 26 Bh6+ Kg8 27 Rad1 Be3 28 Bxe3 Rxe3 29 Bc6 Re6 30 Bxb5 ½-½, E. Brondum-Nunn, Ostend 1975.

16 Nxe5 Bxe5 17 d6+ Kf8 18 Qd5 Bd4+ 19 Kh1 Nf6 20 Bh6+ Kg8 21 Rxf6 Bxf6 22 d7 axb5 23 dxc8Q Raxc8 24 Qxb7 Bxb2 25 Rf1 1-0

Littlewood thought the following “one of my best correspondence games ever”. It was certainly interesting, but as so often with games of this era, Rybka-3 finds a tactical flaw.

J. Augustin - John E. Littlewood

Czechoslovakia v. Great Britain 1965-7, board 1

Sicilian Defence, Accelerated Dragon [B35]

Notes based on those by Littlewood in *Correspondence Chess 19* (Nov. 1967), p. 207.

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6

Littlewood was not afraid of 5 c4, and he was keen to try out a line where Black left his d-pawn unmoved; he had already played this OTB against Owen Hindle in the British Championship.

5 Nc3 Bg7 6 Be3 Nf6 7 Bc4 0–0 8 Bb3 Qc7 9 f3 a6 10 Qd2 b5



11 0–0–0 Bb7 12 Nxc6

Hindle had played the thematic 12 h4 and that game continued 12...Rfc8 13 h5 Na5 14 hxg6 Nxb3+ 15 Nxb3 fxg6! 16 Bd4 b4 17 Na4 a5!?, with complex play and chances for both sides, a draw eventually resulting. Augustin tried out a move which radically changed the course of the game and set interesting problems.

12...dxc6!

A difficult decision but the correct one despite its apparent faults: relinquishing c5 and blocking the b7-bishop.

13 g4

If 13 Bc5 Rfe8! 14 g4 Rad8 15 Qf2 Nd7 etc.

13...a5 14 a3 b4!

Again a far-from-obvious move explicable only in terms of my next move. The tempting 14...a4 is bad because of 15 Ba2 b4 16 axb4 a3 17 Bd4!, leaving White in complete control. Nor has Black time for slow manoeuvres, for White must not be allowed to consolidate.

15 Na4

Not 15 axb4? axb4 16 Na4 c5 17 Bxc5 Qxc5.

15...c5!

Without this, my previous move would have been positional madness. I am willing to sacrifice a P to open lines and to misplace White's pieces somewhat. What follows is difficult to annotate, but the main theme is an attack on White's K at all costs.

16 Nxc5

(Rybka-3 thinks that 16 Bxc5 gives White some advantage here, as he can recapture on a3 with the B, and so it prefers 15...bxa3 16 bxa3 Rad8.)

16...bxa3 17 bxa3 Bc6 18 a4 Rad8 19 Qf2 Nxg4! 20 fxg4 Qe5

The air has cleared a little and concrete threats start to emerge, starting with mate in one!



21 Nd3

Rybka-3 disagrees with Littlewood's analysis here. He thought 21 Bd5 was a better defense, with 21...e6?! 22 Bd4 Qg5+ 23 Be3 Qe5 giving a draw by repetition — but White could instead play 23 Qd2. Anyway, Littlewood intended to play for a win by 21...Bxd5 22 exd5 Qb2+ 23 Kd2 Rxd5+ 24 Nd3 (24 Ke2 Qxc2+! 25 Rd2 Rxd2+ 26 Bxd2 Rd8 27 Rd1 Bd4) 24...Bc3+ 25 Ke2 Qxc2+ 26 Kf3 Qxa4 with three pawns and an attack for the piece, although his notes admitted “there may be better”. Indeed, his line seems unnecessarily complicated. Rybka-3 reckons Black wins by 21...Qb2+ 22 Kd2 e6, regaining the piece with a strong attack against the king in the center.

21...Rxd3! 22 cxd3

Not 22 Rxd3 Qa1+ 23 Kd2 Qxh1 when White has too many weak pawns.

22...Qa1+ 23 Kd2 Qb2+!?

The second surprise. White expected 23...Qc3+ 24 Ke2 Qxb3 25 Rd2 with some prospects of defense, but now 24 Ke1 Qxb3.

24 Bc2 Bxa4 25 Rc1 Rc8 26 Kd1 Rxc2



27 Qxc2?!

The mystery about the end of this game is why both players overlooked that after 27 Rxc2 Qb1+ White need not go in for 28 Bc1 Bh6! (“and White has no move” - Littlewood) but can play simply 28 Ke2 Qxc2+ 29 Kf3 Qxd3 30 Qd2 when Black, with two bishops for a rook, should not lose but has no obvious way to play for a win either.

After White gives up his queen, Black's a-pawn and central pressure suffice for a comfortable win.

27...Bxc2+ 28 Rxc2 Qb1+! 29 Bc1 Qb3! 30 Re1 a4 31 Ree2 Qxd3+ 32 Ke1 Bc3+ 33 Kf2 Qh3 34 Bf4 Bd4+ 35 Ke1 Qf3! 0-1

An even more fantastic (in the literal sense) tactical struggle occurred in a 1964 inter-county correspondence game, which I have annotated in one of

my books, *64 Great Chess Games*. Here I give just the bare score and leave you to enjoy trying to work out the variations.

Maurice Jago – John Littlewood

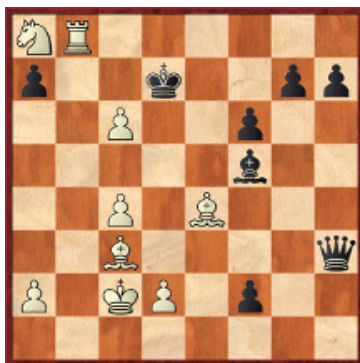
C&DCCC Sinclair Trophy corr UK, 1964

Parnu Gambit [C33]

**1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nc3 Qh4+ 4 Ke2 d5 5 Nxd5 Bg4+ 6 Nf3 Nc6 7 Nxc7
+ Kd8 8 Nxa8 Nd4+ 9 Kd3 Qf6 10 c3 Qa6+ 11 c4 Bc5 12 b4 Nf6 13
bxc5 Nxe4**



**14 Qe1 Re8 15 Qxe4 Rxe4 16 Kxe4 Nxf3 17 gxf3 Qc6+ 18 Kd3 Qxf3+
19 Kc2 Qxh1 20 Bb2 f6 21 Bd3 Qxh2 22 Bc3 f3 23 Rb1 f2 24 Rxb7
Qh3 25 Rb8+ Kd7 26 Be4 Bf5 27 c6+**



**27...Kd6 28 Bb4+ Ke5 29 Re8+ Kf4 30 d3 f1Q 31 Bd2+ Kg4 32 Bxf5+
Kxf5 33 Rd8 Qhh1 34 c7 Qb1+ 35 Kc3 Qa1+ 36s Kb4 Qb7+ 37 Kc5
Qe5+ 38 Rd5 Qxa8 39 Rxe5+ Kxe5 40 d4+ Ke6 41 d5+ Kd7 42 Bf4 h5
43 Kd4 g5 44 Bh2 Qb7 0-1**

Almost as exciting, and certainly more sound, was the following game. When I was briefly games editor of the BCCA magazine *Correspondence Chess* in 1975, I asked a few leading players to contribute annotations, and John was one of those who kindly obliged. I do not give here any detailed analysis of the complications (for that, you must wait for my history of British CC, due out next year), but prefer to include the verbal comments that are illustrative of the Littlewood mind-set.

John Littlewood – M. Radovan Tomasevic (Yugoslavia)

CC Olympiad VII Final, 1972

Sicilian Defence [B31]

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 g6 4 0-0 Bg7 5 Re1 e5 6 c3 Nge7 7 d4!? exd4

7...cxd4 was played in the OTB game Littlewood-Blackstock, British Ch 1971.

8 e5! a6! 9 Bxc6 dxc6!

Black reveals his plan: he is quite willing to give back the pawn, so long

as he obtains the two-bishop endgame. I will have none of this, however, as my sole chance lies in a middle-game attack which has an air of desperation about it!?

10 cxd4 cxd4 11 Nbd2! 0-0 12 Ne4 h6

Otherwise 13 Bg5 is most unpleasant.

13 Nf6+ Kh8



14 Re4!?

The logical follow-up to my previous play, but I was well aware that I was neglecting the centre and staking everything on a K-side attack which I could not at the time see through to the end. Such early commitments are typical of my style and perhaps account for all those horrible games I lose!

14...c5 15 Rh4 Nf5 16 Rh3 Bxf6

I fully expected 16...Ne3 17 fxe3 Bxh3 with great complications, but it is understandable that Black does not want such an unclear situation.

17 exf6 Qxf6 18 g4 Ng7 19 Bxh6 Kg8 20 Ng5!



Both of us had certainly seen this far six or seven moves ago, but our assessments differed. I was hoping for a rapid attack on his king, whereas Black was banking on his strong central position. Even now, I don't know which of us was right.

20...Qc6

The threat was 21 Nh7 and Black did not relish 20...Re8 21 Rf3 Qd6 22 Rxf7 Ne6 (or 22...Re7 23 Qf3!) 23 Ne4 Qc6 24 Qf3 etc.

21 f3!!

Practically forced, but also the key to the following tactics. This was the most difficult part of the game for me, as it looks as though Black can simply drive away the knight by ...f6. I had literally spent hours over my

last few moves and was still not convinced that I could win.



21...f6?

A mistake, but who can blame Black for failing to see the point of my play? He probably examined the obvious 21...Re8 and rejected it on account of 22 Qd2! Re3! 23 Bxg7 Kxg7 24 Rh7+ Kf6 25 Rxf7+ Kxg5 26 h4+! followed by mate in three. However, in this line 24...Kg8! would still keep Black alive, e.g. 25 Qf2 Qf6! 26 Qh4 Be6 27 Qh6 d3!, anticipating the threat of Rf1 and Ne4. Who knows? perhaps this line would have justified Black's whole approach to the game. After this error, my "combination" works like clockwork.

22 Bxg7! Kxg7 23 Qe1!

The main point is seen in the line 23...Qd6! 24 Rh7+ Kg8 25 Qh4 fxg5 26 Qh6! Qf6 27 Re1!! giving a win in all variations. Littlewood commented: "It is extremely difficult to see such lines so far ahead in any other than correspondence chess, but I nevertheless cherish this piece of calculation."

23...Re8 24 Rh7+ Kg8 25 Rh8+ Kxh8 26 Qh4+ Kg7 27 Qh7+ Kf8 28 Qf7 1-0

My opponent was kind enough to allow the mate!

In the same event, John won a game that revealed the darker side of his style.

John Littlewood – A. den Ouden (Netherlands)

CC Olympiad VII Final, 1972

Ruy Lopez [C72]

(Notes by Tim Harding)

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 d6 5 0-0 Bd7 6 d4 b5 7 Bb3 Nxd4 8 Nxd4 exd4 9 c3 d3 10 Qxd3 Nf6 11 Qg3 Nh5 12 Qe3 Be7 13 e5 0-0 14 Qe2 g6 15 Bh6 Ng7 16 Nd2 Bc6 17 Rad1 dxe5 18 Nc4 Bd6 19 Nxe5 Qe7 20 Rfe1 Rae8 21 f4 Bxe5 22 fxe5 Rd8 23 e6 fxe6



Littlewood has completely outplayed his opponent up to this point. Now did 24 Rxd8 seem too simple to John? After 24...Rxd8 White has 25

Bxg7 Kxg7 26 Qe5+ Kh6 27 Re3. Maybe he thought Black can defend by 24...Qxd8 25 Bxe6+ Kh8 26 Qe5 Qf6 27 Qxf6 Rxf6 28 Bb3 (threatening Re7) 28...Nf5 but Rybka-3 thinks White can then force decisive win of material by 29 Bf4.

24 Bxg7!? Rxd1 25 Qxd1 Qg5!

Littlewood probably overlooked this; he would be on top after 25...Kxg7 26 Qd4+ Qf6 27 Rxe6.

26 Re2?!

Luck is on Littlewood's side and he gets away with this but it should probably lose. Presumably he avoided 26 Bxe6+ Kg7 27 Qd4+ Kh6 28 g3 or 26 g3 Kxg7 27 Rxe6 Rf6 28 Re7+ Kh6 because a draw is the likely result.

26...Kxg7 27 Qd4+ Rf6

27...Kh6!? could play for a win at some risk.

28 h4 Qf5 29 Kh2



29...Kf7??

This is a total blunder, whereas after 29...Bd5 and White will have to try to draw a rook endgame a pawn down after 30 Bxd5 Qxd5 31 Qxd5 exd5 32 Re7+ Rf7 33 Re6 a5.

30 Bxe6+ Rxe6 31 Rf2+- Be4 32 Rxf5+ gxf5 33 Qd7+ Re7 34 Qc8 a5 35 Qh8 Ke6 36 Kg3 a4 37 Kf4 Kd7 38 Qd4+ Ke8 39 c4 c6 40 Qh8+ Kd7 41 Qb8 bxc4 42 Qb7+ Ke6 43 Qc8+ 1-0

John's final ICCF rating was 2467 but he did not play international correspondence chess in the years since title qualifications became based on rating, otherwise he might have earned the IM title. On the other hand, computers would have aided his opponents as they tend to assist defenders more than attackers in correspondence play.

Although John was a Yorkshireman he ended up in Skelmersdale, Lancashire, and so played much chess for that county. Mike Conroy's recent book *A History of Lancashire Chess from 1871 to 2009* also includes several Littlewood games and facts about his career. (This 470-page A4-format book, including many photographs, is only available from the Lancashire Chess Association, price ten pounds plus postage and voluntary donation. For details, email Bill O'Rourke: worchess@ntl.com).

To conclude, here is a game from that book against one of the leading Lancashire players of my generation. It was played in the last round of a FIDE-rated all-play-all. Horner and Littlewood shared the lead and each needed a win to win the event.

John Littlewood – Jeff Horner

Chorley, 1977
French Defence [C16]
Notes by Tim Harding

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 b6 5 Qg4 Bf8

Horner prefers to keep the position closed against Littlewood but White builds a strong initiative.

6 a4 Ba6 7 Nb5 Qd7 8 Nh3 Ne7 9 Bd3 Bb7 10 0-0 a6 11 Na3 c5



12 c3 Nbc6 13 Be3 c4 14 Be2 Na5 15 Nb1

This knight can accomplish no more on the queenside.

15...h6 16 Nd2 Nf5 17 Nf4 g6

Preventing Nh5 but provoking the storm.

18 Nxg6! h5

Not 18...fxg6 19 Qxg6+ Qf7 20 Bxf5 exf5 21 Qxb6 and if 21...Nc6 22 e6.



19 Qg5?!

Littlewood prepares to sacrifice his queen but was this necessary or sound? Simply 19 Nxf8 hxg4 20 Nxd7 Kxd7 21 Bxf5 exf5 22 f3 wins a pawn and starts to open the position.

19...Bh6 20 Nxh8 Bxg5 21 Bxg5 Nc6!?

Black wants to castle queenside, but 21...Kf8 was possibly better. Now the chances are balanced.

22 Rae1 Nce7 23 Bd1 Ng6 24 Nxg6 fxg6 25 h3 Qh7 26 g4 Nh6 27 Kg2 Kd7 28 f4 Bc6 29 Bf3 Rh8 30 Rh1 Bxa4 31 Ra1



31...Bc2?

Perhaps due to time trouble. Black had to play 31...b5 or 31...Bb5 to keep the queenside closed and he could even stand better.

**32 Rxa6 Kc6 33 Nxc4 hxg4 34 hxg4 Qg7 35 Na5+ Kb5 36 Be2+ Ka4
37 Ra1# 1-0**

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