



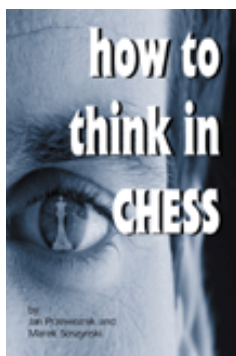
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COLUMNISTS

Opening Lanes

Gary Lane



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Opening Lanes is based in large part on readers' questions. Do you have a question about a particular opening line? Baffled by a branch of the Benoni or Budapest? Submit your questions (with you full name and country of residence please) and perhaps Gary will reply in his next **Chess Cafe** column...

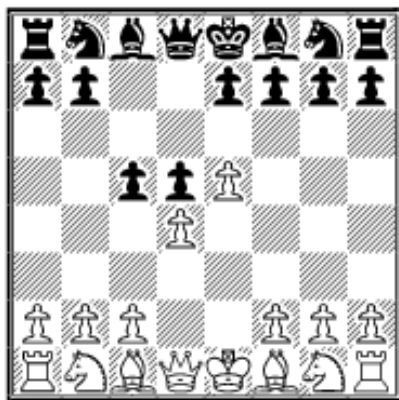
Yes, I have a question for Gary!

In Search of Santa

I always find it difficult in Christmas quizzes to name all of Santa's reindeer. I start off with Dancer and Prancer but Rudolph was never one of the gang and apart from Dasher that is about it. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that along with a lot of people I fail to remember the main line King's Indian and lack of memory is probably the reason why chess players are always looking to learn shortcuts in the openings. **Lloyd Hughes** from **Scotland** is typical in that he is keen to learn a new line but naturally is not prepared to spend the next month studying every day. He writes, "I am a massive Caro-Kann fan and have played it for years but have recently had problems against the advance. Which is better, the 3...c5 push or 3...Bf5?"

The lines with 3...Bf5 are difficult to learn because 4 Nc3 intending 5 g4 is extremely complicated while 4 h4 is also respectable. And there's also 4 Nf3 e6 5 Be2, which is known as the Short Attack or by some heartless Caro-Kann players as the Short Defence! Therefore, 3...c5 is a great way of avoiding having to learn a large chunk of theory from the books. Let's see how 3...c5 performs at the international level:

Alexy Gubajdullin-Alexei Kornev, Open Vladimir 2004
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5!?



Black wishes to undermine the pawn center, which is a well-known line that has been refined in recent years. I can understand why Lloyd is attracted to the move because it avoids the main lines and consequently saves time studying. The standard move is 3...Bf5 but then Black has to know what to do against White's various replies such as: 4 h4, 4 Nc3, 4 Bd3 and 4 Nf3 e6 5 Be2. **4 dxc5** White accepts the pawn

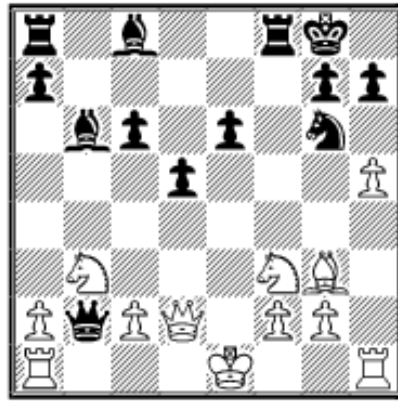
offer, which is the critical test. The careful response with 4 c3 to support the pawn chain is met by 4...Nc6 5 Nf3. It is wrong to treat the position like an Advance French Defence, which normally arises upon 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 Nc6 5 Nf3. This is because the crucial difference is that unlike the French the light-squared bishop is not locked behind the pawns 5...Bg4! 6 Be2 e6 7 0-0 Bxf3 8 Bxf3 cxd4 9 cxd4 Qb6 (this is another difference compared to the Advance French because Black has managed to weaken the defence of the d4-pawn. Black reveals his plan because White must now lose a pawn by force) 10 Be3 Qxb2 11 Nd2 Qb6 12 Rb1 Qc7 13 g4?! Nge7 14 Bg2 h5 15 gxh5 Nf5 gave Black the initiative, S.Winge-T.Engqvist, Malmo 2004. **4...Nc6 5 Bf4 e6 6 Nd2 Nge7** This is the correct approach; to increase development while at the same time making sure that he can take the pawn back. Instead 6...Bxc5 allows White to seize a slight initiative upon 7 Nb3 Bb6 and now 8 Qg4! which exploits the fact that the dark-squared bishop is absent from the kingside to target the g7-pawn: 8...g6 9 h4 (perhaps 9 Nf3!? h5 10 Qg3 is worth considering) 9...h5 10 Qg3 a5 11 0-0-0 a4 12 Nd2 led to roughly equal chances in V.Bologan-S.Conquest, German Team Championship 1997. **7 Ngf3 Ng6 8 Bg3 Bxc5**



Black takes the opportunity to restore the material balance. **9 h4!?** An enterprising idea – to oust the g6-knight if given the chance by h4-h5. There is some debate on the best way for White to continue: 9 Bd3 f6 (Black follows the standard idea of quickly attacking the advanced e-pawn) 10 exf6 Qxf6 11 0-0 Bb6 (11...0-0 12 c4 Bb6 13 Rc1 Nce7?! (I prefer the direct 13...Nf4 to maintain equal opportunities) 14 Qb3

Kh8 15 Rfe1 (15 Bd6 Nf4 16 Rfe1 gives White the initiative) 15...Ba5 16 Qa3 Bxd2 17 Nxd2 Nf5 18 Bxf5 Qxf5 19 cxd5 Qxd5 20 Ne4 b6 21 Nd6 when White has superior pieces and the long-term target is the e6-pawn, S.Conquest-A.Dunnington, Scarborough 1999.) 12 Bxg6+ (12 c4 0-0 13 Qb1 might be worth a look) 12...hxg6 13 c4 Rh5 (or 13...0-0 14 b4 Nxb4? 15 Bd6 and White wins material) 14 Rb1 Kf7 15 b4 a6 16 a4 a5 17 b5 Nb4 18 c5 Ba7 19 Qe2 with the advantage, A.Fedorov-A.Morozevich, Samara 1998. Or 9 Nb3 Bb6 10 Bd3 0-0 leads to a level position, S.Erenburg-M.Okkes, Hoogeveen 2004. **9...f6** Kornev correctly responds to the advance of the h-pawn because now the king's

knight is poised to capture on e5. **10 Nb3 Bb6 11 Bb5** The pin on the knight protects the e5-pawn and activates another piece. However, White can try another course of action: **11 exf6 Qxf6 12 h5 Nge7 13 c3** with equal chances. **11...0-0 12 exf6 Qxf6 13 Qd2** Gubajdullin is eager to castle queenside but the problem is that his b-pawn is under attack. Or **13 c3 Nf4 14 0-0 Bd7** is better for Black because the pawn on h4 is a weakness. **13...Qxb2** Why not? Black has castled to make sure his king is safe and it is not obvious how the black queen can be trapped. Therefore, it is up to White to prove that he can make progress. **14 Bxc6 bxc6 15 h5**



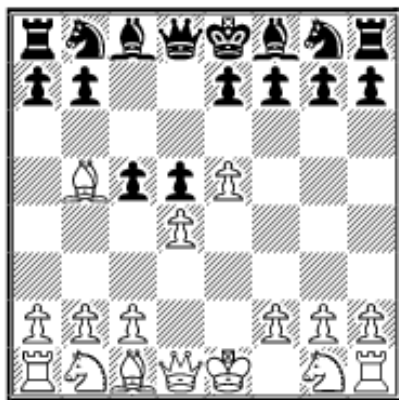
15...Ne7 Black can really go for it with **15...Rxf3! 16 gxf3** and now **16...Ne5** which threatens the f3-pawn and leaves the white king looking vulnerable. **16 Be5 Qa3 17 h6 g6 18 c4 Qa4** Or **18...Ba6** to bring another piece into the action is a good idea. **19 Rh4 dxc4 20 Rf4** White is determined to try and strip away Black's defences in the hunt for checkmate. A more measured reply is **20 Bd6** when **20...Rf7 21 Nc5** gives

White decent compensation for the material. **20...Rxf4 21 Qxf4 Nd5** The knight covers the vital f6-square and leaves White with an unpromising attack. **22 Qg4** The queen pins the c-pawn but now Black can start attacking. **22...Qb4+ 23 Nbd2 c3 24 Ne4 c2+** Actually, **24...Qb2 25 Rd1 Ba5** looks horrible for White! **25 Nfd2 Qa3 26 Nb3 Bd7** It makes sense, after all the complications, to get the rest of the pieces into play. **27 Rc1 Qxa2 28 Qg3 Rf8 29 Ba1 Rf4** Black is eager to knock the knight off the e4-square because it defends the weak f2-pawn. **30 Nbd2 Qa4 31 Qd3 Rh4 32 Nf6+** Or **32 Qxc2 Rh1+ 33 Nf1 Qb4+ 34 Bc3 Nxc3 35 Nxc3 Ba5** gives White a winning advantage. **32...Nxf6 33 Bxf6 Rh1+ 34 Nf1 Bxf2+** This wins but **34...Qf4** is also a killer move! **35 Kxf2 Qf4+ 0-1**

At the Olympiad there was a good example of how **3...c5** can confuse White into deviating from the standard path:

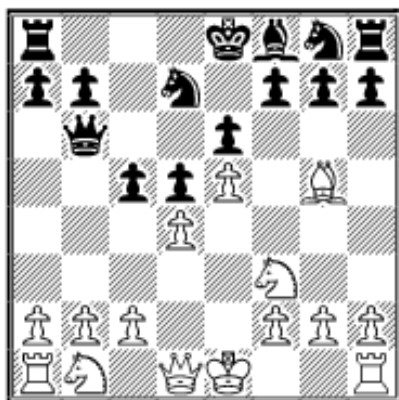
Bobby Miller-Jaime Cuartas, Calvià Olympiad 2004

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 Bb5+!?



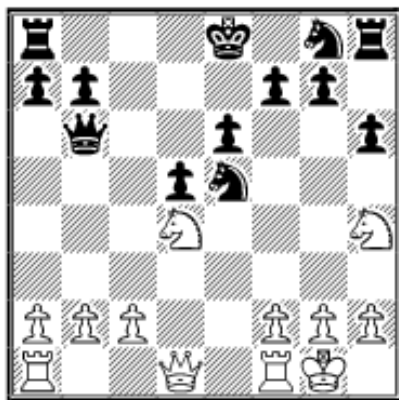
This has been played occasionally but poses few problems for Black, who is happy to trade light-squared bishops because he can then play ...e6 without limiting the scope of his pieces. The great thing about the Olympiad is that it allows for games like this, where the amateur player Miller from Bermuda is up against the top Columbian international. This can sometimes mean a sensational upset, but not always! **4...Bd7** Black

can also block with 4...Nc6. For example: 5 c3 Qb6 (it looks sensible to immediately question White on what to do with the light-squared bishop) 6 Bxc6+ bxc6 7 dxc5 Qxc5 8 Qa4 e6 9 Be3 Qb5 10 Qxb5 cxb5 11 Nf3 led to an equal ending, V.Diez Machin-A.Granero Roca, Alicante 2000. **5 Bxd7+ Nxd7 6 Nf3** I think it is a good idea to preserve the pawn chain with 6 c3 when 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 e6 8 Nf3 Bb4+ 9 Bd2 Bxd2+ 10 Qxd2 Ne7 11 0-0 0-0 12 Nc3 Nc6 leads to a level position, R.Riggs-A.Lloyd, Belconnen 2003. **6...e6 7 Bg5?!** This is a flawed, but understandable reaction because Miller is keen to make his prestigious opponent have problems in the opening. A patient approach is required in this position: 7 c3 Qb6 8 0-0 with a similar position to the French Defence. However, it must slightly favour Black because White no longer has a potentially aggressive bishop on d3 while Black's normally passive bishop on c8 has been successfully exchanged. **7...Qb6!**



The queen usually comes to b6 to put pressure on the d4-pawn, but now it has extra significance because it targets the b2-pawn. **8 0-0** The problem with 8 b3 is that White will lose a pawn upon 8...cxd4 9 Qxd4 Qxd4 10 Nxd4 Nxe5 with a winning ending. You also have to be brave to retreat the bishop back to its original square with 8 Bc1 and admit the mistake. When 8...cxd4 9 0-0 (9 Qxd4 Qxd4 10 Nxd4 Nxe5 wins)

9...Ne7 is good for Black. **8...cxd4 9 Nbd2** Of course 9 Qxd4 Qxd4 10 Nxd4 Nxe5 leaves Black a pawn up for nothing. **9...h6 10 Bh4 Be7** Also: 10...Qxb2 11 Rb1 Qxa2 12 Rxb7 Qa4 looks good for Black, but he has no desire to give White a whisper of a chance to complicate matters. **11 Nb3?! It** is important if your opponent is rated about 500 points higher than you not to make it too easy for him. Therefore, I prefer 11 Bxe7 Nxe7 12 Nb3 intending to play Re1 to protect the e5-pawn and then Nxd4. **11...Bxh4 12 Nxh4 Nxe5 13 Nxd4**



It is time to count the pawns and Black has an extra one, which is bad news for White. **13...Nf6** A sign of a strong player, who having achieved his goal of winning material, now wants to catch up on development. Instead **13...Qxb2** is met by **14 Rb1 Qxa2 15 Qe2 Nc6 16 Nxc6 bxc6 17 Qe5!** with easily enough compensation because of Black's lack of harmony amongst his pieces.

14 Re1 Nc6 15 Nxc6 In a five minute game **15 Nxe6** might seem appealing but after **15...fxe6 16 Rxe6+ Kd7** Black has plenty of time to think about his extra piece! **15...bxc6 16 Re3 Ne4 17 b3 0-0** The king is whisked to safety and there is no sign of any counterplay by White. **18 Qd3 f5 19 Rae1 Nxf2!** A clever tactical combination brings the game to a rapid conclusion. **20 Kxf2 f4** The pinned rook must leave the board and White is completely lost. **21 Nf3 fxe3+ 22 Rxe3 e5 0-1**

Christian Montano from the **USA** has a problem with his library: "I'm looking for an opening reference book. I've been a recreational player for about ten years, but want to step it up a notch. I find myself playing blitz chess on the Internet and have been using the Queen's Gambit 97% of the time, because it usually leaves the center imbalanced. I would really like to expand my opening repertoire, but there are many reference books on the market. Any advice would be appreciated."

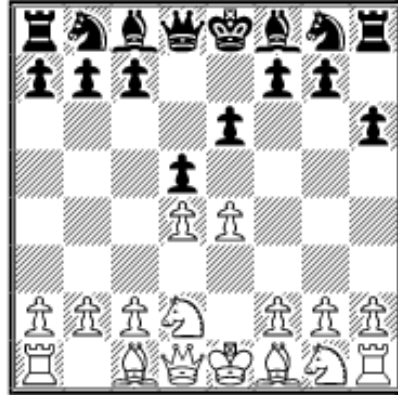
It is difficult to recommend books because players prefer certain authors and their style of writing. However, I will try to help. I was coaching at the recent World Junior Championships where I noticed that the top juniors were usually carrying around a couple of opening reference books. The first was *Nunn's Chess Openings*, which covers all the openings in some detail and tends to give extra significance to the main lines. It is especially useful for looking up what has been played in the past and comparing it to your game to learn the standard continuations. I would recommend this for the serious player. The other popular book was the latest edition of *Modern Chess Openings*. This has a different approach in that the emphasis is in explaining the origins of the openings and some brief details about the basic plans. I think it is useful to have more words if you are new to the competitive world of tournament chess. It is also possible to buy a repertoire book on the Queen's Gambit which would give various attacking lines and hints on how to react to Black's different defences. It is also useful to use the *ChessCafe* book reviews as a guide.

I am pleased to announce that readers of this column can take a hint and have asked to see my game against former world title challenger Nigel Short who is currently rated 2687. **Harley Cahen** from **Maryland** wrote, "I noticed it while checking all of Short's recent results spurred by your presentation of his marvellous game against Prasad." And **Jaap Beetstra** from the **Netherlands** adds, "I'm rated about 1750 and I like to play the French as Black. The Tarrasch has always been a bit of a headache,

though. Recently I tried 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 Nc6 and did OK. But a 2000+ player at my club told me it's not really very good. What does official theory say? Should I follow Short's example and play 3...h6 instead?"

Gary Lane-Nigel Short, Calvià Olympiad 2004

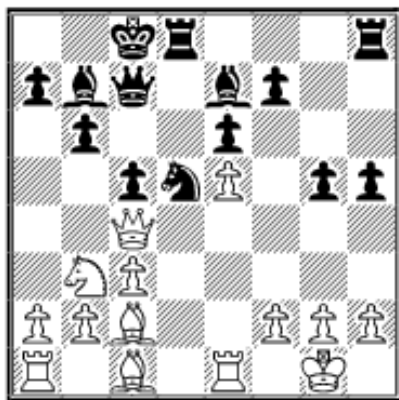
1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 h6!?



I was surprised by this unusual move but Short probably wanted to avoid any preparation and get me out of standard theory as early as possible. Well, it certainly worked, but I was not particularly worried because advancing the h-pawn can hardly be critical.

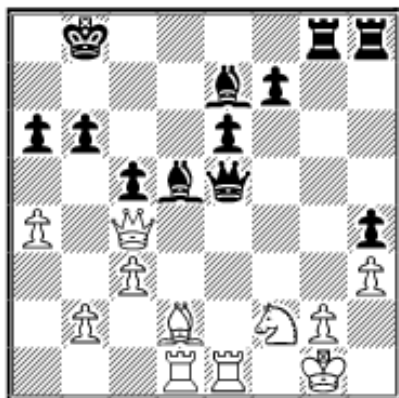
Perhaps he should have tried Jaap's suggestion 3...Nc6 which has a certain amount of surprise value and

Nigel has had success with it in the past. For instance: 4 Ngf3 Nf6 5 e5 Nd7 6 Be2 f6 7 exf6 Qxf6 8 Nf1 e5 (8...Bd6 9 Ne3 0-0 10 0-0 Qg6 11 c4 Nf6 12 g3 Bd7 13 b3 Rae8 14 Bb2 Ne4 15 Ne5 Nxe5 16 dxe5 Bc5 17 Bh5? Nxf2! 18 Rxf2 Qe4 19 Ng4 (or 19 Bc1 Rxf2 20 Kxf2 Rf8+ 21 Bf3 dxc4 22 Kg2 Rxf3! 23 Qxf3 Qxe5 winning) 19...Rxf2 20 Nxf2 Rf8 0-1 R.Garbarino-N.Short, Copenhagen 1982) 9 dxe5 (9 Ne3 is also possible) 9...Ndxe5 10 Qxd5 Be6 11 Qb5?! (11 Qe4 is safer) 11...0-0-0 (Black already has a lead in development and a strong initiative) 12 N1d2 a6 13 Qa4 Nxf3+ 14 Bxf3 Rd4! 15 c4 Qe5+ 16 Kf1 Bb4 0-1 B.Kharchenko-D.Fingerov, Mariupol 2003. **4 c3** I decided to wait and see what Black planned to do before developing my pieces and the pawn move is always useful in such positions. Also possible: 4 Ngf3 is a safe reply: 4...Nf6 5 e5 Nfd7 6 Bd3 c5 7 c3 Be7 (or 7...b6 8 Qe2 a5 Black is keen to trade light-squares pieces 9 0-0 Ba6 10 c4 Nc6 11 cxd5 Bxd3 12 Qxd3 Nb4 13 Qe4 Nxd5 with equal chances, A.Purtov-V.Shtyrenkov, Alushta 2004) 8 0-0 b6 9 Re1 a5 10 c4 (10 Qa4 might be worth considering) 10...Bb7 led to roughly equal chances, F.De la Paz-I.Zugic, Havana 2004. **4...c5 5 Ngf3** I was happy to develop my pieces although 5 exd5 was the main alternative. **5...Nf6 6 exd5 Nxd5** The knight capture is perfectly fine and often happens in these types of positions. The one thing worth noting is how someone like Short maintains the tension in the position, knowing that if I get the chance for a clear draw I am likely to head for it. Therefore, he is under pressure to perform. **7 Nb3 Nd7 8 Bd3 Qc7 9 Bc2** I was later asked why I played this and someone pondered the deep strategic significance of the bishop retreat. The honest answer is that I was afraid of 9...c4 which would fork my pieces. **9...b6 10 0-0 Bb7 11 Re1 Be7 12 Ne5 Nxe5 13 dxe5 0-0-0** If 13...0-0 then 14 Qg4 gives White a promising attack. **14 Qg4 h5 15 Qc4 g5**



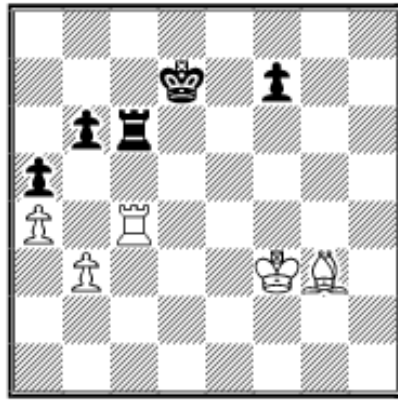
At first sight this looks scary for White but a closer inspection indicates that it is difficult for Black to get his pieces involved. **16 a4 a6 17 Bd2 Kb8 18 Rad1** I was keen to centralize my pieces although my knight on b3 is still a concern because it is not doing much so the long-term plan is to bring it back into the action. **18...g4 19 Nc1 Rdg8 20 Be4 h4** The pawn is taboo because 20...Qxe5 allows 21 Bxd5 Bxd5 22

Bf4! Bxc4 23 Bxe5+ Kc8 24 Bxh8 winning. **21 Nd3 g3 22 h3 gxf2+ 23 Nxf2** I was fairly happy here because I aim to play Nf2-g4 to close the g-file and blunt Black's attack which leads to roughly equal chances. Anyway he wouldn't take the pawn would he? **23...Qxe5?** If you are going to take a hot pawn in the centre when there are lots of combinations available make sure it is totally accurate. Short thought he had everything covered but had missed a crucial line. **24 Bxd5 Bxd5**



25 Qxd5!! A few spectators looked shocked when I seemed to give away the queen. However, I have recently written a couple of puzzle books so I was confident that I had latched onto the right idea. Not 25 Bf4?? which fails to 25..Rxc2+ 26 Kh1 Rxf2+ 27 Rxd5 Qxf4 and White is lost. **25...Qxd5 26 Bf4+ Bd6** I think Short had missed this entire idea and now is obliged to enter a poor ending where two pieces against a rook

favours me. For example: 26...Kc8 27 Rxd5 exd5 28 Rxe7 which might seem obvious now, but wasn't at move 23. **27 Bxd6+ Kc8 28 Rxd5 exd5 29 Re7** The ending is good for me because the black king is vulnerable and I have chances to create a mating net. **29...Rh6 30 Bf4 Rhg6 31 g4 hxg3 32 Ng4!** The knight hops into the action and thwarts the brief flurry of activity. **32...R8g7 33 Kg2 d4 34 cxd4 cxd4 35 Be5 d3 36 Rc7+** I quickly saw 36 Bxg7 being met by 36...Rxc7 and went for the safe option. **36...Kd8 37 Rc3 Rxc4** This is desperate but 37...Rg8 38 Bf6+ Ke8 (38...Kd7 39 Ne5+ wins) 39 Rxd3 and the threat of mate leaves Black's position in ruins. **38 Rxd3+ Ke7 39 hxg4 Rxc4 40 Rd4 Rg5 41 Bf4 Rg6 42 Bxg3 a5 43 b3 Rc6 44 Rc4 Kd7 45 Kf3**



I have seen this game in the Olympiad bulletin and it gets very confusing around here because the people inputting the game into the computer assumed I had written the moves down wrong. They couldn't understand why I had not exchanged rooks and the reason is that it leads to a draw! For instance: 45 Rxc6 Kxc6 46 Kf3 b5 47 Ke4 bxa4 48 bxa4 Kb7 and that is it. The king can hide in the corner and the opposite-coloured

bishop means that I cannot force the king out of the corner to advance my a-pawn. **45...Rf6+ 46 Bf4 Rc6 47 Ke4 Re6+ 48 Kd5** I like to think that even I can win a piece up, but Short is not one to give up easily. **48...Rf6 49 Be5 Rf3 50 Rc7+ Kd8 51 Rc3 Rxc3 52 Bxc3 Kd7 53 Be5 f5 54 Bf4 1-0**

After this game Nigel declined to play in the last round.

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