



## COLUMNISTS

## Inside Chess

Yasser Seirawan



## CHESS THEATRE

Play through and download  
the games from  
[ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) in the  
[DGT Game Viewer](#).



## Inside Chess, 1988/5

Speelman - Seirawan, St. John 1988, Game Three

Speelman, Jonathan (2625) – Seirawan, Yasser (2595)

Candidates Match, Saint John (3), 1988

English Opening [A17]

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 O-O 5.a3 Bxc3 6.Qxc3 b6 7.g3 Bb7 8.  
Bg2 d5 9.cxd5 exd5!?



[FEN "r1q1rk1/pbp2ppp/1p3n2/3p4/8/  
P1Q2NP1/1P1PPBP/R1B1K2R w KQ - 0 10"]

A powerful novelty. More common is 9...Nxd5 10.Qc2 c5, when White retains a small edge because of his two bishops. With the text, I'm steering for a straight hanging-pawns position. In such a position, I'd have several trumps: White is lagging in development, his queen on c3 is misplaced, and Black's play in the center is very quick. These features lead me to believe that this whole treatment by White is innocuous and that the position is already equal.

10.O-O Re8 (:41) 11.Re1?! (:40)

A tempo-wasting error. Best was 11.e3 followed by fianchettoing the c1-bishop. The text enables me to bring my knight to c6 – a luxury when playing with the hanging pawns.

11...c5 12.d4 Ne4 13.Qc2 Nc6!

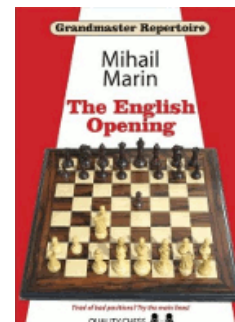
Alarm bells should be going on in Jonathan's mind after this move. Now, among other things, ...c5-c4 and ...Nc6-a5 become serious considerations. I'm beginning to assume the initiative.

14.dxc5 (:57) bxc5 (:59) 15.b3?!



[FEN "r2qr1k1/pb3ppp/2n5/2pp4/4n3/"]

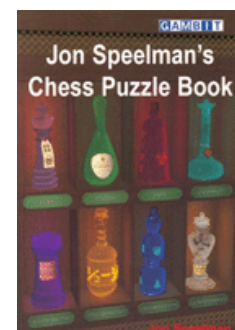
Purchases from our [shop](#) help  
keep [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) freely  
accessible:



*The English Opening, Vol. 1*  
by Mihail Marin



*Jon Speelman's  
Best Games*  
by Jon Speelman



*Jon Speelman's  
Chess Puzzle Book*  
by Jon Speelman

A bit too nonchalant. Best was 15.Bd2 followed by a quick Rad1.

### 15...Qb6!

Immediately eyeing the new target. The position becomes critical for White.

### 16.e3 Rab8! 17.Rab1 (1:07) Ba8? (1:09)

Completely wrong. The diagonal a8-h1 is no longer the most useful for the bishop.

Normal and correct was 17...a5!. The dual purpose of this move would be to prepare a possible sacrifice involving ...a5-a4, and, more importantly, to prepare the bishop's new diagonal – a6-f1!.

### 18.Bd2 a5 19.Red1!

Correcting his eleventh move. Jonathan also prepares Bd2-e1.

### 19...d4! 20.Rde1!

Very well played. My hanging pawns have been provoked forward. Once exchanges begin, the game will peter out to a draw. The move 20.Rde1 prepares those exchanges.

### 20...Nxd2 21.Qxd2? (1:28)



[FEN "br2r1k1/5ppp/1qn5/p1p5/3p4/PP2PNP1/3Q1PBP/1R2R1K1 b - - 0 21"]

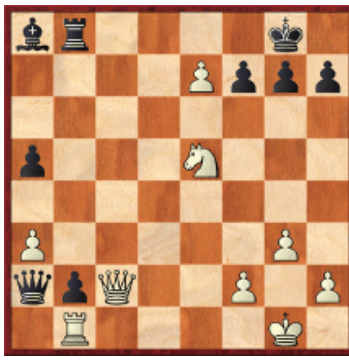
Sharp and bad. White should've compromised his pawn structure with 21. Nxd2 dxe3 22.Rxe3!? Rxe3 23.fxe3 Ne5 24.Bxa8 Rxa8 25.Nc4. If I capture on c4, the major piece ending holds little prospects of victory, as the pawn structures of both players have been compromised. Or if 25...Nf3+, then 26. Kh1, followed by Qg2, looks better for White.

Then I looked a little more. After 21.Nxd2 dxe3, I began to wonder if White had to play 22.fxe3 to stop ...Nd4. But, the text move was played and, alas, I suddenly saw what appeared to be a great opportunity.

### 21...a4? (1:28)

Looks great, but 21...a4 is a blunder. The correct line was 21...c4!, taking away the possibility of a later dxc5 by White. After 21...c4!, the game might continue 22.Nxd4? Nxd4 23.exd4 Rxe1+ 24.Rxe1 Bxg2 25.Kxg2 cxb3, when my protected passed pawn on b3 makes the win easy.

So 22.exd4 is forced. Then, after 22...Rxe1+ 23.Rxe1 cxb3, my passed b-pawn is much farther advanced than White's d-pawn. Still the variations are quite complicated. But I must be better, right? Let's take a look: 24.d5 b2 25. Rb1 Ne7 26.Ne5! Qb3 27.d6 Qa2 28.Qc2 Bxg2 29.dxe7 Ba8



[FEN "br4k1/4Ppp/8/p3N3/8/  
P5P1/qPQ2P1P/1R4K1 w - - 0 30"]

Though I'm still uncertain about this analysis, variations like these made my head swim. Is it any wonder I chose the natural looking 21...a4?

**22.exd4 Rxe1+ 23.Qxe1? (1:44)**

We both suffered the same temporary blindness. White is not at all worse after playing the simple 23.Rxe1 axb3 24.Qe3 with the double threat 25.Qe8+ and 25.dxc5.

No sooner does Jonathan leap out of the fire than he jumps back in – and just when I was beginning to wonder what I had in the position.

**23...axb3 (1:33) 24.d5 Nd4 25.Nxd4 cxd4**



[FEN "br4k1/5ppp/1q6/3P4/3p4/  
Pp4P1/5PBP/1R2Q1K1 w - - 0 26"]

**26.Qe7? (1:47)**

A bad mistake in a bad position. Until this move, I'd been alternating between kicking myself for having buried the bishop on a8 and analyzing whether I had time to resurrect it with ...Bb7-a6.

Later, it dawned on both players that 26.Qb4 may actually save the game for White: 26...Qxb4 27.axb4 Rxb4 28.d6 Bxg2 29.d7! Rb8 30.Rxb3 Rd8 31.Kxg2, with a likely draw. Amazing! So, in spite of all of the earlier errors, it's this move that should cost White the point.

**26...h6! (1:46) 27.d6 Bxg2 28.Kxg2 Qc6+ 29.Kh3 Rb7!**

Stopping White dead in his tracks, while preparing to push my own passers. White is forced to enter the ensuing complications and, consequently, remove his blockading rook.

**30.Rc1! (1:53) Qf3! (1:53) 31.Rc7 Rb8! 32.d7**



[FEN "1r4k1/2RPQpp1/7p/8/3p4/Pp3qPK/5P1P/8 b - - 0 32"]

### 32...Kh7

A beautiful move. It prevents all of White's checks and forces the rook on c7 to retreat, losing a tempo. If now 33.d8=Q Rxd8 34.Qxd8 b2 35.Qb8, there comes ...Qf5+ and ...b1=Q!.

The game is now won. But time pressure is now upon me.

### 33.Rc1 b2 34.Re1?

A mistake in a lost position. Better was 34.Rf1.

### 34...Qd5?? (1:57)

An incredibly stupid move for time pressure. The first thing one looks for when in zeitnot is checks! Obviously, I should repeat the position for a few moves. The most prosaic win is 34...Qf5+ 35.Kg2 Qd5+ 36.Kh3 (36.f3? b1=Q wins) 36...d3 37.Qe8 d2 (this is why 34.Re1 was bad) 38.Rd1 Rxe8 39.dxe8=Q b1=Q and wins.

So why didn't I play it? Well, I don't know.

### 35.Qe8

Something now happened to me that is impossible to explain – I literally stopped thinking. Instead, I began to respond to the pressures of the clock. Here, too, taking along a few repetitions with 35...Qh5+ would have been helpful.

But the win is still clear enough. 35...Qb5, forcing 36.Qe7, followed by ...Qf5+ and ...Qd5+ wins as before. So what did I do? I uncorked another howler.

### 35...Qd6??

Tossing away the win.

36.Rb1 Qb6

A draw could be had with 36...Qe6+, but I had stopped thinking.

37.Qxf7 Qd8? 38.Qf5+ Kh8 39.Qe6 d3 40.Rxb2 1-0

And I watched my flag fall.

I am at a loss to describe my thoughts. Something akin to numbness or shock. I could not believe what I had done.

---

Comment on this month's column via our [Contact Page](#)! Pertinent responses will be posted below daily.

---

  
[TOP OF PAGE](#)  
[HOME](#)  
[COLUMNS](#)  
[LINKS](#)  
[ARCHIVES](#)  
[ABOUT THE  
CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)  
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)  
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

© 2010 BrainGamz, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of BrainGamz, Inc.