Chess in the Fast Lane

Bill and Michael Adams
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Chess Career Record

Chess Career Record
‘Michael was still only seventeen and already he was a grandmaster and British champion.’

That was the concluding sentence of the book *Michael Adams; Development of a Grandmaster*, which described my son’s chess career from his first competitive game on his eighth birthday to the day in August 1989 when he became the youngest ever British champion. In the previous month Michael had gained the grandmaster title at a younger age than anyone previously apart from Bobby Fischer and Garry Kasparov.

It would have been easy to assume that from now on success in the chess world was inevitable. After all, Fischer and Kasparov had gone on to become undisputed champions of the world and Michael’s name was reported as if he was in a similar league. In fact reality was rather different.

Michael was a junior of some promise, who had failed to make much impact at World and European Junior championships. His July 1989 rating was 2505, generally acknowledged as nearly the lowest limit for a grandmaster (GM) and probably not high enough for him to be included among the world’s top two hundred players. Certainly there were at least eight other English players with higher ratings. Michael’s entire international experience was limited to one season of French league play, three open tournaments, in Australia, Greece and France respectively, several junior events and a ‘generation challenge’ match at the Cannes Chess Festival. All of his GM and international master (IM) norms had been achieved in England in events containing only the minimum number of foreigners to meet the legal requirements. In any case the GM title was becoming devalued as more and more players reached the necessary level and a dozen other English players had already acquired the title. Even his British championship success had been gained in a field lacking Short, Speelman and Nunn, the three strongest potential entrants, while it could hardly be claimed that he had dominated the field with only three wins coming from his first eight games. Michael was just one of a group of English players that included Hodgson, King, Kosten, Levitt, Suba, Watson and several others, who were challenging for a place in the national side for the World Team championships. He was the youngest of this group and therefore not surprisingly also the least experienced. On the international scene, there were many juniors from other countries who showed similar if
not more potential than Michael. These included Dreev, Gelfand, Ivanchuk, Kamsky, Lautier and Piket among others.

Nevertheless Michael's successes in the Summer of 1989 convinced everyone that there was no point in Michael continuing his half-hearted attempts at A-level studies and he decided that he was going to turn professional and earn his living by playing chess. This was a big decision as we felt that there were very few players outside the Soviet bloc making a good living from chess. Michael would have to reach and remain among the top thirty or so players in the world to be really successful in his chosen career, a very daunting target. But as Michael's achievements had frequently exceeded our most optimistic forecasts, it seemed a gamble worth taking at seventeen.

This book covers the progress that Michael made on the world chess scene in the next four and a half years. It was not all victories and champagne; there were many setbacks and disappointments. However at the end of that time he had developed to the point that he was a contender for the world chess championship, traditionally known as a 'candidate' Michael emphasised that this was thoroughly deserved by reaching this status twice within a matter of a month. This was possible as a breakaway championship had been established by the Professional Chess Association and was competing for recognition with the more traditional one organised by FIDE, the world chess body.

The format of this book is similar to its predecessor. The script, written by Bill, often relays information given by Michael, who also did the final editing. The fifty games are analysed by Michael in far more detail than in the previous book. While they may not have the same even spread, they have again been selected because of their quality and significance in his career development. Apart from the last chapter which ends at the Groningen PCA qualifier, each chapter covers a twelve-month period beginning in August 1989.

I hope that the reader enjoys this book and gains as much pleasure from reading it as I did from writing it. Who knows – one day there may even be a third book!?

_Bill Adams_

December 1995
Chapter One

The events of July and August 1989 ensured that nothing would ever be quite the same for Michael. While he continued to play in weekend tournaments and occasionally turned out for his school team, the fact that he was British champion and the world’s youngest grandmaster made him a far more interesting prospect for organisers. Consequently Michael increasingly found himself receiving attractive invitations to play in much stronger events – mainly on the Continent. This resulted in the opportunity to play a wider range of opponents than previously, broadening his horizons and increasing his knowledge of the game.

In case the reader is mystified that school matches are referred to, I should add that although his A-level studies had suffered a premature demise, Truro School were anxious to retain Michael’s name on their register for chess purposes. Thus he earned some interesting school reports, for example in Geography a comment was made on his large knowledge on time zones and climate in various European countries, which sadly was not part of the syllabus! As my son’s attendance record would have put him near the bottom of any class, there was not much else that teachers could comment on. Nevertheless it was good that he kept in touch with his school friends and it enabled him to enjoy some relaxation away from the chess scene.

His new chess status was presumably the reason for his selection to play against ex-world champion Vasily Smyslov in the curtain raiser to the 1989 Lloyds Bank Masters event. Michael had played Boris Spassky, another former world champion, in a speed game, where both players had been allowed seven minutes for all their moves, in similar circumstances five years earlier. Now he had the privilege of playing Smyslov. People’s expectations had now altered and whereas onlookers were surprised that Michael gave Spassky such a hard game, here some people were disappointed that the result was only a draw. Perhaps the truth of the matter, is that games played at press conferences are not of great relevance except for the way that they drag players out of bed at an early hour.

Michael began the main event the way that he had finished off the British championship just over a week previously by winning his first three rounds. His second round opponent was Gata Kamsky, who had defected with his father in New York a few months previously.
Game 1

G.Kamsky – M.Adams
London (Lloyds Bank) 1989
Caro-Kann Defence,
Advance Variation

A pretty impressive opponent to start the book with, though in this first encounter I actually enjoyed a rating advantage. Nonetheless my rival had already chalked up the Russian Under-18 title at a very tender age. As is often a wise idea when playing a strong young player who you don’t know much about, I selected something solid from my repertoire.

1 e4 c6
2 d4 d5
3 e5 \f5
4 \c3 \b6
5 g4

One of the interesting things about annotating older games, is the opening theory. Although this game was close to the cutting edge of theory at the time it was played, it now looks a little antiquated. But bear in mind that when the game was played the Short system 4 \f3 was but a twinkle in his eye and 5 \d3, probably now the main line, was not popular. The point of 5 \d3 is 5...\xd4 6 \f3 \g4 7 h3 \h5 (7...\xg2 8 \h2) 8 \e2 with good compensation.

5 ... \d7
6 \a4 \c7
7 \c5 e6

8 \d3
Perhaps better is 8 \xd7 \xd7 9 c3.

8 ... c5
9 dxc5 \b5
10 f4 \xc5

It is time to assess the results of the opening, and Black can be happy with an ideal French Defence type position in which the light-squared bishop is in no danger of being stuck behind the pawn chain and White has committed his kingside pawns earlier than he would have liked.

11 \f3 \e7
12 a4 \xd3

This move and Black’s next look a little careless. Maybe 12...\c4.

13 \xd3

More accurate was 13...h5 14 g5 g6 with play similar to the game. The text move allows White an extra possibility, namely to play 14...
with the idea of answering 14...h5 with 15 h3 keeping more flexibility in the kingside pawns. Probably he rejected this due to 15...hxg4 16 hgx4 f6 17 exf6 gxf6 18 We2 e5 19 fxe5 fxe5 but 20 Qg5 leads to a messy position.

14 We2 h5
15 g5

An unpleasant choice as now Black’s king will be safe on the kingside, but after 15 gxh5 gxh5 White has even more weaknesses. Following the move played the wide open spaces behind White’s kingside pawns would be enough to worry any football manager with the possible exception of Ossie Ardiles.

15 ... g6
16 c3 a6
17 Ae3 Axe3
18 Wxe3 0-0
19 0-0 Ac8

The kind of move that is played quickly but stereotypes do not necessarily apply in this position. More direct was 19...Ab8 with the idea of ...b7-b5. Another useful move here or at almost any stage during the next few moves is 19...Qg7.

20 Ad1 Af8

Bothering White with the possibility of a ...d4 sacrifice.

21 Wf2 Qa5

Giving White the d4 square is some kind of concession, 21...Ab8 was still probably correct.

22 Qd4 Qc4
23 Ac1 Wb6

24 b3
24 Ac2 Qc6 25 Wfc1 was another possible defence, when Black has no obvious way through. Gata has another idea in mind.

24 ... Qa5
25 b4 Qac6

I had intended to play 25...Qc4 26 a5 Wc7 here but became concerned that after 27 Bb3 it would be hard to target White’s weaknesses, since the apparently well placed horse on c4 gets in the way.

26 Bb3 d4

The ending after 26...Wxf2+ 27 Qxf2 does not offer Black much so I was forced to enter the tactics.

27 b5 axb5
28 axb5 Qa5
29 Qd2

The obvious alternative was to play 29 Qxd4 when Black has a choice between 29...Ab3 30 Ab3 Wxf2+ 31 Axf2 Axd3 32 Wfc2 Qd5 with a good ending or 29...Qd5 which looks even stronger. If then the desperate 30 f5 exf5 31 Axf5 gxf5 32 Wxf5 Qg6 wins.
29 ... \( \text{g7} \)

Not really the time to play this (see the note to move 19) but the natural 29...\( \text{xd7} \) allows the useful reply 30 \( \text{e4} \).

30 \( \text{c4} \)

Now 30 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{b3} \) 31 \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{c5} \) 32 \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) is strong or 30 \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{d5} \) 31 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xc2} \) 32 \( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{b4} \).

30 ... \( \text{f5} \)

31 \( \text{a1} \)

The exchange 31 \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) has the advantage of preventing the knight becoming entrenched in such a powerful position but Black maintains a clear edge due to his safer king position.

31 ... \( \text{e3} \)

32 \( \text{fc1} \) \( \text{c7} \)

33 \( \text{h1} \)

After this I have a forced win. However after the more accurate alternative 33 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{dc8} \) White is left virtually movebound. Unfortunately for White 33 \( \text{c5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 34 \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 35 \( \text{xa5} \) \( \text{wc3} \) wins.

33 ... \( \text{dc8} \)

34 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{D} \)

34 ... \( \text{wb5}! \)

Although White’s position was pretty rotten it is still slightly surprising that this move works. Black only picks up rook and pawn for the lady but, due to a much safer king and better piece co-ordination, White is helpless. The tactics should also work out for Black after 34...\( \text{c5} \) threatening 35...\( \text{xb5} \) (if 35 \( \text{we1} \) \( \text{xb5} \)) but the game continuation is a knockout blow.

35 \( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{xc1}+ \)

36 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{b3} \)

The hardest move to spot is the quiet continuation in the middle of the combination. Now ...\( \text{xc3} \) is the main threat.

37 \( \text{xd4} \)

This is hopeless but neither 37 \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{xc3} \) or 37 \( \text{wb2} \) \( \text{xc3} \) offered any hope. Perhaps 37 \( \text{f5} \) was the best last punt.

37 ... \( \text{xf1} \)

38 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{xd4} \)

39 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{d1}+ \)

40 \( \text{we4} \) \( \text{d2}+ \)

41 \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xh2}! \)

This is the final accurate move which ends any chance for Gata. Typically he struggles on to the bitter end.

42 \( \text{xb2} \) \( \text{xc2} \)

43 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{xe2} \)

44 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{g2}+ \)

45 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h4} \)

46 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{g3} \)

47 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{h3} \)

48 \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{gxf5}+ \)

White resigned
Game 2

In the fourth round Michael had to fight hard to hold the draw against Alexander Chernin when a pawn down in a rook and pawn ending. Then he made the headlines when he was beaten by Richard Tozer, who inflicted Michael's first defeat for 45 games. Michael had done his share of upsetting higher rated players at Lloyds Bank and it was no great surprise when he was on the receiving end, though it was a bit of a shock seeing it in headlines, which never even mentioned Richard Tozer! Although in some ways this was amusing, it reflected slightly increased expectations for Michael. Mind you, hardly anyone noticed when he lost again three rounds later to Mahmood Lodhi. Eventually he went on to score seven out of ten and finish among a bunch of players in tenth equal position.

When I look back at Michael's tournament record, I am amazed at the amount of chess he played at that time. Only two days after Lloyds Bank finished he started playing in the National Westminster Young Masters all-play-all event, where he had acquired his first GM norm just twelve months earlier. Now he was one of the three GMs ensuring that seven IMs had the opportunity of achieving GM norms for themselves. On this occasion Michael finished second equal behind Dibyendu Barua of India. In Michael's early career the player with the best record against him was Mark Hebden but the pendulum began to swing the other way in this tournament and Michael recorded a win against him in the first round. Another of Michael's wins was against David Bronstein, who had tied a match for the world championship twenty years before Michael was even born!

M.Adams – D.Bronstein
London (Nat West
Young Masters) 1989
French Defence,
Tarrasch Variation

When I was younger I read about David Bronstein and his various world championship tussles without ever really expecting to play him. Therefore I was quite pleased when I got an opportunity in this game. Ironically these days David is a regular visitor to English tournaments and you probably have more chance of playing him here than you do in Russia.

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 d2 c5
4 exd5 exd5
5 g3 c4

Less common and not so good as the normal 5...f6 or 5...c6,
but my illustrious opponent has always liked to go his own way in the opening.

6 b3

White must take immediate action on the queenside. Here 6...b5 7 a4 w e7+ 8 A e2 c3 9 f f1! is good for the first player.

6 cxb3
7 axb3 A b4
8 A e2 A c6
9 0-0 A ge7

Initially 9...A c3 looks tempting but in fact 10 A a4 A ge7 11 A a3 gives White the advantage.

10 A b2 f6

Played in order to prevent A e5 on the next move, but the weakening of light squares, and especially e6, is not insignificant. Better was the obvious 10...0-0. Perhaps this is an instance where in dull positions creative players can be their own worst enemies.

11 A e1

White needed to strike while the iron was hot with 11 c3 A d6 12 c4 0-0 13 c5 A c7 14 A c3 followed by an advance of the b-pawn, when Black would be under heavy pressure. I was not at my most alert after a long blitz session with some Yugoslavian guy I met in the King’s Head the night before. The text move looks pretty but there are too few weaknesses in Black’s camp for manoeuvring to be really effective.

11 ... 0-0
12 A d3 A d6
13 A e1 A f5
14 A f1 b6

This prevents a later A c5 and prepares an improvement of the queenside structure with ...a7-a5.

15 A g3

Also playable was 15 A e3, but after 15...A e4 there is no clear way to gain an edge.

15 ... A g6
16 A f3 a5

More to the point was consolidation with 16...Af7.

17 A h5!

A nasty move to meet. White’s knights are aiming for the f4 and
e6 squares. 17...\textbf{w}d7 18 \textbf{q}5f4 \textbf{q}f7 19 \textbf{g}4 f5 20 \textbf{f}3 (threatening \textbf{q}e5) 20...g5 21 \textbf{h}5 is an example of the kind of danger which Black can encounter. Perhaps a good defence would be 17...\textbf{f}7 18 \textbf{q}5f4 \textbf{e}8.

17 ... \textbf{b}4
18 \textbf{x}xb4 \textbf{axb}4

The other obvious possibility 18...\textbf{xb}4 was worthy of consideration, although after 19 c3 \textbf{d}6 20 \textbf{a}3 \textbf{e}8 21 g3 White has a slight edge due to the exposed d-pawn.

19 \textbf{xa}8 \textbf{xa}8
20 \textbf{c}1 \textbf{b}8

If 20...\textbf{c}8 21 \textbf{f}4 \textbf{xc}2 22 \textbf{d}2 leaves Black in a terrible tangle with all his pieces hanging.

21 \textbf{f}4 \textbf{f}7

Liquidating after 21...\textbf{xf}4 22 \textbf{xf}4 \textbf{xf}4 23 \textbf{xe}7 still leaves White with a nagging yank on account of the weak pawns. Nevertheless this was much the best continuation since after the text Black loses all activity and his three isolated pawns become the focus of attention.

22 g3 \textbf{b}7
23 \textbf{g}2

The idea of \textbf{f}4 is a dangerous threat which Bronstein could and should have tried to meet with 23...\textbf{g}6 or 23...\textbf{e}6. However it is clear that Black is going to be tortured for a long time without any chance of counterplay, which very few players can endure without lashing out.

23 ... \textbf{g}6
24 \textbf{f}4 \textbf{d}7
25 \textbf{e}2 \textbf{e}8
26 \textbf{xd}6 \textbf{xd}6
27 \textbf{b}5 \textbf{c}8
28 \textbf{f}4 \textbf{f}7
29 \textbf{g}4 \textbf{xc}2

The horrible looking 29...f5 had to be played, when after 30 \textbf{d}1 Black's various weaknesses should tell.

\begin{center}
\textbf{\textcolor{red}{30 \textbf{e}6}}
\end{center}

Winning as 30...\textbf{xe}6 31 \textbf{w}e8 is mate.

30 ... \textbf{d}8
31 \textbf{xb}6 \textbf{f}5
32 \textbf{d}1 \textbf{c}1
33 \textbf{b}8 \textbf{c}8

If 33...\textbf{xd}1+ 34 \textbf{g}2 \textbf{c}8 35 \textbf{w}c6 wins.

34 \textbf{g}2

Black is helpless since the weak pawns drop off one by one. If he continues 34...g5, then 35 \textbf{d}3 \textbf{xd}1 36 \textbf{w}c5 \textbf{xd}3 37 \textbf{xc}8 \textbf{xc}8 38 \textbf{xc}8+ \textbf{g}7 39 \textbf{w}f5 and White should win.

34 ... \textbf{e}8
35 \( \mathbb{W}b7 \) 36 \( \mathbb{A}f3 \) 37 \( \mathbb{W}xb4 \)

Black resigned

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**Game 3**

The other noteworthy occurrence was a final round draw against Will Watson which involved Michael playing one move before accepting his opponent’s swift offer of a draw. There was understandable criticism of this from some quarters, although one could understand Will Watson’s lack of ambition after seeing his chance of a GM norm disappear in the previous round, while it was a perfectly acceptable result for Michael when playing Black. The alternative of trying to win with Black against a player good enough to have represented England in the last Olympiad certainly seemed less wise as even a victory would not have enabled him to win the tournament.

Just eight days later Michael was in Ostend to make his first appearance in this popular annual open event. The tournament was won by Paul Van der Sterren, who became a world championship candidate within five years, and here made a record score of eight out of nine. After an inauspicious start in the form of a first round loss against an unrated player, Michael won six games in a row and finished with draws against Van der Sterren and Kirov to share second equal with Kirov, Wojtkiewicz, Keith Arkell and Angus Dunnington, one point behind the winner.

There had been some speculation during the British championships that there were still two undecided places in the England team for the World Team championships in Lucerne, and following his success at Plymouth, Michael was fortunate to be selected to play alongside Short, Speelman, Nunn, Chandler and Hodgson. He was placed at number five, ahead of Hodgson, and scored fifty per cent in his five games. I read that Michael gave a ‘rather lacklustre performance’, but feel that this was a little harsh in view of his limited experience and the additional pressure that accompanies team events. His only defeat, against the eccentric Ivanchuk, was not exactly a surprise as his Russian opponent was rated over 150 points above Michael, while his win against Garcia and draws with Black against Sosonko and Hug and with White against Damjanovic represented a solid start when representing his country at senior level for the first time. Perhaps expectations were too high and England’s bronze medal was felt by many to be a disappointment after finishing second to the USSR in previous international events. However the silver medals were always an excellent achievement ahead of many
powerful teams so the bronze was not a major setback. Once it had been England’s pleasure to confound the seedings. As new, young, strong players emerged to represent and strengthen opposing teams the boot was sometimes on the other foot. Also it should be pointed out how much England missed the fighting spirit of Tony Miles, who had contributed so much over the previous decade, but was unavailable to play for England at that time. After the event was over Michael and Julian celebrated their medals by tastefully draping a redundant ChessBase printout out of Michael’s hotel room window. An enduring memory of this event was Vasily Ivanchuk knocking on his door to return it to him at eight-thirty the following morning, his eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

Within a couple of days of returning Michael was representing ‘Young England’ along with David Norwood and Stuart Conquest against the three Polgar sisters in a double-round all-play-all speed challenge match (30 minutes per player per game), as part of the Barbican’s ‘Britain salutes Hungary’ festival. The result was a nine-all draw, with Michael scoring half of his side’s points, winning four games and losing just one to Judit while drawing one with Zsuzsa. Interestingly it was Zsuzsa with four points who was the sisters’ leading scorer with Judit scoring three. Michael and his team-mates felt that watching the film Sex, Lies and Videotape before the last two rounds did little to help their chances as the Polgars reduced a significant deficit.

More serious chess followed when Michael flew to Israel for the European Team championship. Before he did so there had been a considerable amount of negotiations behind the scenes as he had accepted an offer to play in an invitation Infolink European Speed championship in a strong field which included world champion Garry Kasparov. When the dates were first announced it would have been no problem to play in both events, but when the date of the Infolink event was brought forward, some pressure was put on Michael to choose one event or the other. Infolink had already provided Michael with a computer system to assist his chess preparation, while Brian Bailey, their managing director and an old boy of Truro School, had taken the trouble to travel there for a celebration to mark Michael’s GM and British titles. We knew that Brian was keen for Michael to play in his event and Michael was also enthusiastic. On the other hand, he did not want to turn down a chance of representing his country, although for various reasons Short, Speelman, Chandler and Mestel had already done so. Eventually a compromise was reached that Michael would go to Haifa and be available for seven of the nine rounds and then make his own way home before joining the speed event on the second day.
In the weakened England side, Michael suddenly found himself at number two ahead of Hodgson, King, Suba and Watson, players of infinitely greater experience. Now some critics described his one win, one draw and four defeats as ‘depressing’. I believe that too much was expected of Michael and that it would have been better for him to build up confidence on lower boards rather than losing to Wojtkiewicz, Hort, Judit Polgar and Belyavsky in successive games. The arrangement whereby Michael was only available for the first seven games proved to be unsatisfactory as Bob Wade, the team captain, felt under pressure to play Michael even after each loss as he was not going to be available for the final rounds. The tournament turned into something of a nightmare for Michael as Lautier escaped somewhat fortuitously with a draw. This initiated a series of disasters, the most embarrassing of which was when he was mated by Belyavsky after ‘activating’ his king in a double rook ending. It could be argued that there was a case for adjusting the board order, particularly in a six-board competition, and the idea of using Suba in a higher spot certainly seemed to make sense afterwards, though hindsight makes everything seem easy. On the other hand, it forced Michael to grow up pretty quickly in the intense and sometimes harsh world of professional chess, and reminded both of us that success was not automatic and had to be earned. The weakened England side, seeded fifth at the start, eventually finished in eighth place despite beating West Germany and Hungary, the second and fourth seeds.

Michael spent all day on Saturday travelling first by car from Haifa to Tel Aviv and then by plane to London, only to be turned away by an overzealous doorman at the Athenaeum Club in Pall Mall, the venue for the speed event. Apparently he thought that Michael had come to watch the chess and refused him admission with the news that the chess had finished for the day. My son was unable to convince him otherwise and it required a phone call from me to persuade the doorman that Michael was one of the players that the public were coming to watch the next day. Jon Speelman had already removed the main attraction, Kasparov, in the semi-final of the top half of the draw and Michael did his part for England by eliminating Hjartarson and then Timman with the black pieces to reach the final. These were quite amazing results for Michael, even allowing for the fact that it was rapidplay with each player allowed only 25 minutes for all their moves, particularly after the disappointments in Haifa. The final game was drawn with Michael unable to convert his advantage into a win, so a five-minute game decided the outcome. Speelman adapted rather better to the new time requirement, which was hardly surprising as Michael was his first opponent that day.
whereas Michael was facing his third, and the senior player managed a win in a fluctuating second game. I suppose that this should have been a disappointment, especially as Michael had lost a play-off in the James Capel Speed Challenge to Nigel Short in similar circumstances a year earlier, but nobody could begrudge Jon Speelman his success after his win against Kasparov. Afterwards the players watched a commentary on the game by the world champion, who frequently used the expression ‘second-class move’. However playing perfect five-minute chess for high prize funds is practically impossible.

Two days later Michael was off to Palma for a Grand Masters’ Association qualifier for the World Cup cycle. He began unbelievably well with four straight wins, including Miles and Psakhis among his victims. This ensured that he was up with the leading group for the remainder of the tournament, thus being ‘rewarded’ with plenty more experience of strong opponents such as Gelfand, Gurevich and Malaniuk, who all beat him. He finished with five and a half out of nine, a point off the World Cup qualifying mark, not that there was any sense of disappointment as qualification was something we had not even contemplated when the event began. In fact I was not even aware that it was a qualifier until it was all over! Michael’s successes in domestic chess competitions earlier in the year and largely dealt with in our earlier book ensured that he set yet another record in becoming the youngest ever winner of the Leigh Grand Prix, where points are totalled according to the results achieved in domestic competition and awards are made at the end of the year.

Further opportunities to gain experience were presented when he played in the Hastings Premier event. Although heavily outrated by opponents who had an average rating over 80 points in excess of Michael, he was not far behind the field with two wins, eight draws and four defeats in his first experience of a double round all-play-all (apart from the Polgar quickplay match). It seems comparatively easy to do well in an event where you are heavily outrated as there is so little expected of you and Michael scored fifty per cent against Speelman, Yusupov, Gulko, Chandler and Spraggett.

M.Adams – K.Spraggett
Hastings Premier 1989/90
Caro-Kann Defence,
Classical Variation

In my first encounter against this opponent in this double-round tournament I had lost a long complicated game on New Year’s Day, which I felt would have been better utilised as one of the four free days in the tournament. At least I now had the opportunity to try and even the score in our second game.
1 e4  c6
2 d4   d5
3 Qd2  dxe4
4 Qxe4  Qf6

Although I often play the Caro-Kann myself, I have never played the variation used by my opponent in this game. The system I use in response is probably the main reason why it is not popular at the highest level.

5 Qxf6+  gxf6
6 c3  Qf5

The point of White's sixth move is to prevent Black from developing his bishop to g4, as would occur after the 'natural' 6 Qf3.

7 Qf3  e6
8 g3  Qd7
9 Qg2  Qg7

It is not unusual for Black to aim for queenside castling in this variation because of the doubled f-pawns on the kingside, but experience has shown that the white fianchetto structure is difficult to attack, whereas Black's king can be vulnerable to a pawn storm. In view of this Spraggett chooses to castle on the other side. Although this approach is safer it leaves White with an enduring advantage.

10 0-0  0-0
11 Qh4  Qg6
12 a4

Taking the bishop on g6 immediately would be a mistake. The rectangle of pawns which Black would obtain after ...hxg6 followed by a later ...f6-f5 would keep his king very safe and ensure control of important light squares. In some circumstances it would be good for White to take the bishop but it is more likely that he will delay in the hope that Black will play ...f6-f5, when White's knight can regroup leaving the light-squared bishop impeded and ineffectual.

![Chess Diagram]

12 ...  a5

Black is understandably reluctant to allow the space encroaching a4-a5.

13 Qf4  Qb6

White is also slightly better after 13...Wb6 14 Wc1 (14 We2 Wa6 is less effective), when Black's queen can be chased away by Qe3 at some stage and White has the useful option of Qh6.

14 Wb3  Qd3

This move makes an awkward impression. 14...a6!, as suggested by Kevin Spraggett in his notes in Informator, appears to be an improvement when White has nothing better than 15 Rad1 Qd5 16 Qxg6 hxg6 17 Qc1 with a slight pull due to the two bishops.
15 \(\text{f}d1\) \(\text{c}4\)
16 \(\text{w}c2\) \(\text{d}5\)
17 \(\text{b}3\) \(\text{x}f4?\)

A very bad decision. Better was 17...\(\text{a}6\) (this may also have been better on move 15) but White has a clear advantage after 18 \(\text{c}1\) (not 18 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{e}2\) and ...\(\text{h}5\)) when it is not clear how Black can coordinate his forces as his bishop on \(a6\) is totally out of the game. After the text move, accurate play should enable White to win.

18 \(\text{b}xc4\) \(\text{gx}g2\)

The choice between this and 18...\(\text{g}6\) cannot have been easy as both look so grim. Maybe 19 \(\text{x}g6\) \(\text{hx}g6\) 20 \(\text{ab}1\) followed by piling up on the b-file would be the most convincing answer if Black were to choose the knight retreat.

19 \(\text{x}g2\)

The knight regroups to within a hop of d5 with gain of tempo, adding to Black’s problems

19... \(\text{wc}7\)
20 \(\text{ab}1\) \(\text{b}6\)
21 \(\text{d}5\) (D)

Given an exclamation mark by Spraggett in his notes, but his alternative suggestion of 21 \(\text{b}3\) followed by trebling on the b-file also looks pretty effective. White is in the enviable position of having two equally promising plans as Black is ill placed to withstand either long-term pressure or the immediate breakthrough played in the game.

21 \(\text{c}xd5\)
22 \(\text{c}xd5\) \(\text{ac}8\)

22...\(\text{ex}d5\) 23 \(\text{f}4\) is awful.

23 \(\text{dxe}6\) \(\text{fxe}6\)
24 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{fe}8\)
25 \(\text{w}b3\) \(\text{h}6\)

Black decides to jettison a pawn as 25...\(\text{f}7\) 26 \(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{xc}3\) 27 \(\text{xa}5\) is hopeless. However 25...\(\text{xc}3\) 26 \(\text{xc}3\) \(\text{xc}3\) 27 \(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{e}5\) was probably the best chance, although White still has excellent winning chances. A possible improvement on the last variation is 26 \(\text{xb}6\) when Black remains under very heavy pressure.

26 \(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{xc}3\)
27 \(\text{wc}3\)

Exchanging queens immediately is slightly better than 27 \(\text{wd}5\) \(\text{wc}6\) 28 \(\text{c}7+\) \(\text{xd}5+\) 29 \(\text{xd}5\), though White should still win.

27... \(\text{xc}3\)
28 \(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{c}4\)
29 \(\text{d}7\) \(\text{c}1+\) (D)

After Black’s intended 29...\(\text{xa}4\), White wins by 30 \(\text{c}7\) \(\text{f}8\) 31 \(\text{d}5\) \(\text{g}7\) 32 \(\text{e}7+\) \(\text{h}8\) 33 \(\text{f}5\) \(\text{g}8\) 34 \(\text{bb}7\) \(\text{g}4\) 35 \(\text{h}6\). My opponent resourcefully looks for some tricks.

30 \(\text{g}2\) \(\text{c}2\)
31 f3

Also good was 31 c7 e2 32xf6 e3 33 d8+ g7 34 e8+ g8 35 d6+ g7 36 df8 threatening f5 mate. I was probably rather nervous as points were not easily forthcoming in this tournament.

31 ... a2
32 c7 e2
33 b8+ f8
34 g4 f2
35 h4!

With this move the white king finds a safe haven for just long enough to crash through by e6 or d8. Less efficient was the immediate 35 e6 h5+! 36 xh5 xh2+ 37 g6 h6+ 38 f5 f2+ although it should still win after 39 f4.

35 ... g4+
36 h3 a4+
37 e6

Black resigned because after the spite checks 37 ... h2+ 38 g4 a4+ 39 h5 mate will be unavoidable.

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**Game 4**

The improvement in Michael’s play during the second half of the year was confirmed when the new FIDE ratings came out, which were to take effect from the start of 1990. Whereas the first six months had seen his FIDE rating decline by five points, the second half resulted in an increase of fifty points. This was mainly due to the increased opportunities that he had had of playing against much stronger opponents on far more occasions than ever before and of course the reasonable results that Michael had obtained against them.

By Michael’s standards, 1990 began very quietly. One weekend representing Clichy in the French league (two wins and a draw), three weekends playing in the Belgian league (three wins) and a disappointing Cannes open where he again lost in the first round and finished half a point behind the seven joint winners. Regrettably a poor start to a tournament was too regular an occurrence at this stage of his career. Theoretically the first round game should be a relatively easy for someone of Michael’s strength in an open event, as the draw is made in such a way that the stronger players play weaker opponents.
Michael was selected on board five for the four-way double-round tournament between the USSR, USA, the Nordic countries and England, held in Reykjavik and he achieved his best results for his country so far with a double success against Christiansen, a win and a draw against Mikhail Gurevich and a draw and defeat against Hjartarson. Michael’s score was the highest for England in the ten-player team (with one reserve) and helped the team to second place overall. Particularly sweet was a 6-4 success against the USSR, albeit without Kasparov and Karpov. With the exception of Murray Chandler, who was unwell, England had their strongest team with Michael playing below Julian Hodgson on this occasion.

M.Adamc - L.Christiansen
England-USA,
Reykjavik (Visa) 1990
Sicilian Defence,
Kan Variation

Although a number of English and American players are good friends, there is always an intense rivalry in matches between the two countries. The end of this competition was very close with both ourselves and the Americans within spitting distance of the Russians with a few games remaining. However in the dying moments both sides messed up to allow the Russians to win yet another team competition, as everyone else rued their missed opportunities.

1 e4            c5       
2 ♜f3            e6       
3 d4            cxd4      
4 ♜xd4            a6       
5 ♜d3            ♜f6      
6 0-0            d6       
7 c4            ♜e7       
8 ♜c3            0-0       
9 ♜e2

Black’s opening set-up in this game is not highly considered by theory as White is able to set up the Maroczy bind formation with little effort. However the last move was not the strongest continuation. Both 9 ♜e3 and 9 b3 were more accurate.

9 ...            ♛c6       
10 ♜xc6

A committal decision. 10 ♜e3 would have retained White’s options.

10 ...            bxc6       
11 f4            e5          

This is the most certain way to prevent White from ever playing e4-e5, but 11...♛d7 was a good alternative.

12 ♜h1            ♜d7 (D)       

After this I manage to put a big clamp on the position. 12...exf4 13 ♜xf4 ♜d7 gives Black nice dark-square control but the lead in development allows White to put some pressure on d6.

13 f5            a5          

Again a variety of other alternatives were available. 13...♛g5 is
positionally well founded but the bishop is useful to defend the pawn on d6 and cover the kingside. Also possible is 13...\textit{b}7 hoping to break with ...d6-d5 at a later stage.

14 \textit{e}3 \textit{a}4
15 \textit{h}f3!

A nice move. The rook is ready to swing into action against the black king but is also useful defensively along the third rank.

15 ...

Interesting was the immediate 15...\textit{w}a5 when White must respond to the threat of ...a4-a3.

16 \textit{f}2 \textit{c}5
17 \textit{c}2

An exchange of knight for lightsquared bishop would not trouble White, but this move keeps alive the annoying possibility of pinching the a4 pawn.

17 ...

18 \textit{d}1

Taking the pawn here was possible, but now that Black’s queen is not in contact with the kingside there is an opportunity to mount an attack on that side.

18 ...
19 \textit{g}3 \textit{f}4

The bishop has a choice of several squares in this complicated position. Bad is 19...\textit{h}4 20 \textit{x}g7+ \textit{x}g7 21 \textit{x}h4 with a rampant attack. 19...\textit{f}6 looks a little passive and 19...\textit{h}6 20 \textit{e}3 looks dangerous. Perhaps 19...\textit{f}6, allowing lateral defence if required, was best. One problem for Black is that after most moves the option to win a queenside pawn remains.

20 \textit{h}3 \textit{a}6

Not a pleasant move to play as the king looks more and more denuded, but White already has the makings of a powerful attack. This is a critical moment because White must try and find a way around the awkward bishop on f4. 21 \textit{f}6 \textit{g}6 22 \textit{e}3 \textit{c}6 leaves a very double-edged position but I was reluctant to play something so committal.

21 \textit{g}4 \textit{f}6

After 21...\textit{x}c4 22 \textit{g}3 the black bishop on f4 is trapped
22 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{h}8 \)
Not where the king wants to be but 22...\( \text{f}8 \) 23 \( \text{x}f6 \) was impossible.

23 \( \text{wh}5 \) \( \text{wc}7 \)
Interesting was the reply 23...\( h6 \) but 23...\( \text{a}7 \) 24 \( \text{xd}6 \) was not recommended.

24 \( b4! \)
As there is no instant win on the kingside, I take some time out to consolidate the queenside.

24 \( \text{axb}3 \)
25 \( \text{axb}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
If 25...\( \text{ab}8 \), 26 \( \text{e}2 \) causes some problems.

26 \( \text{wf}7 \) \( \text{ff}8 \)
If Black plays 26...\( \text{ac}8 \) (the threat was \( \text{xf}6 \)), then 27 \( \text{hd}3 \) and White picks off a pawn.

27 \( \text{we}7 \) \( d5 \)
28 \( \text{exd}5 \) \( \text{ae}8 \)
29 \( \text{wa}3 \) \( \text{b7} \) (\( D \))

Although White has won a pawn, Black has managed to manoeuvre the queen offside and now has an asset in the passed e-pawn. However the d-pawn is also strong and White is the first to get to the important e4 square.

30 \( d6 \) \( \text{wb}6 \)
31 \( \text{le}4 \) \( \text{le}3 \)
The immediate 31...\( \text{c}5 \) was not possible due to 32 \( \text{f}2 \).

32 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{wa}7 \)
33 \( \text{e}1 \)
A slightly odd move. 33 \( \text{b}2 \), trying to bring the queen to a more active post as quickly as possible, was better.

33 ... \( \text{d}4 \)

34 \( \text{wa}2 \)
The right idea but a move too late because Black now gets some chances. The rest of the game focuses on White’s battle to land his queen on the kingside with a decisive attack and Black trying to achieve enough activity to distract him.

34 ... \( \text{c}5 \)
35 \( \text{f}3 \) \( e4 \)
Tempting, particularly close to the time control, but 35...\( \text{c}8 \) appears more difficult to meet as 36 \( \text{xc}6 \) (36 \( g4 \) \( e4 \)) 36...\( \text{xf}5 \) 37 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{g}4 \) is not clear. The move actually played drives White’s bishop to an excellent post where it puts the black king in too much danger.

36 \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{d}3 \) (\( D \))
37 \( \text{g}6 \)
Of course not 37 \( \text{xe}8 \) \( \text{xe}8 \) when all the black pieces are well placed.

37 ... \( \text{h}6 \)
38 \( \text{d}2 \) \( c5 \)
39 \( \text{xe}6+ \) \( \text{g}8 \)
40 \( \text{h}7+ \)
A repetition to reach move 40.
Black is helpless against the plan of lumbering White’s queen to the h-file.

42 ...  
43 \(\texttt{We}2\)  
44 \(\texttt{fxg6}\)  
45 \(\texttt{Wg4}\)  
\(\texttt{e}3\)  

If Black plays 45...\(\texttt{c}8\), then 46 \(\texttt{h}8+\) frees the h4 square for the queen.

46 \(\texttt{Wh}3\)  
47 \(\texttt{f}xh6\)  
48 \(\texttt{Wd}7!\)  

A neat switch-back.  
Black resigned

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**Game 5**

Michael’s next tournament was the Oakham Junior International, which gave him another opportunity to make his mark on the world junior scene. Apart from his runner-up spot in the World Under-16 in 1987, Michael never managed to achieve his full potential in international individual junior events and, despite beginning with three straight wins, this event was no exception. Four draws against Norwood, Ulibin, Anand and Hraček, followed by a loss to Tiviakov meant that a last round win only enabled him to reach sixth equal position. It is interesting to note that a young Indian by the name of Anand recorded the same score.

Along with several other of the Oakham competitors, Michael then travelled on to Manchester for a competition designed to give other players the opportunity of GM title norms. However, with Anand scoring seven and a half out of nine and Michael just half a point less the rest of the field were left well behind.

The Watson, Farley and Williams all-play-all was a tough fourteen-player event with the difference between the top and bottom ratings only 120 points and Michael finding himself the second highest-rated player (though seedings are less relevant when the players are so closely grouped on the rating scale). He made a good start with wins against Tony Kosten and Jonathan Levitt but it was not maintained and Michael went for eight rounds without a win, slipping back to fifty per cent
in the process. However two good wins against Wolff and Frias and a
draw against Julian Hodgson ensured a degree of respectability in the
final result. Michael finished fifth equal in the event which was won by
Larsen with Wolff in second place.

M.Adams – P.Wolff
London (Watson, Farley
and Williams) 1990
Modern Defence

Around this time there was a brief
surge of all-play-alls in England,
mainly organised by Ray Keene,
and Patrick was often invited.
This was certainly a good move
for the spectators as Patrick tar-
geted his opponent’s king in a
rather vicious manner. However,
when he was under attack, as in
the following game, the home
players chalked up some revenge.

1 e4 d6

After his period working as
Anand’s second this move is
rarely seen in my opponent’s rep-
ertoire and he now prefers to whip
out various Sicilians.

2 d4 g6
3 Qc3 Qg7
4 Qe3 c6

Black tries to take advantage of
his move order which is signifi-
cant as he has delayed ...Qf6. This
is usual in these types of positions
but despite the caveman approach
from White and great finesse from
Black this is still a difficult system
for Black to meet. Maybe Black
should dispense with sublety and
follow simple rules like develop-
ing and controlling the centre.

5 Qd2 b5
6 h4

Here it looks tempting to play 6
f4, but after ...Qf6 White would
be struggling to maintain both
the e-pawn and his dark-squared
bishop. It was an interesting option
last turn though. The text forces
Black to either allow h4-h5, which
is not good as White gets a ready-
made attack, or to play 6...h5, when
White will post his knight on the
weakened g5 square with some
annoying pressure, or to play the
game move, which is less common
but in many ways more logical.

6 ...
7 Qf6

This is nearly always a good
move after Black has played ...Qf6,
but is rarely appropriate if Black
has not done so.

7 ... Qc7

Preventing any idea of e4-e5
from White, and on a wider scale
preparing queenside castling.

8 Qh6

This move makes going short
very undesirable for Black as an
automatic attack would await him.
It is the only critical move, attempt-
ing to take advantage of the fact
that 6...h5 was not played.

8 ...

There is no way to keep open the
option of castling on this side but
Black can be cheered by the way that the white queen has been forced offside. Black has refrained from playing ...b4 as it has no concrete purpose at the moment; the knight would simply regroup to e2 and the weakened b-pawn would make it too dangerous to castle long.

9 \( \text{\textbf{hx}} \text{\textbf{h6}} \) \( \text{\textbf{e6}} \)

The bishop could also have gone to b7, but then a white knight coming to g5 would be even more annoying.

10 \( \text{\textbf{h3}} \)

A common idea in this variation. The knight can move to either f4 or g5 from here, although in this position it is quite desirable for Black to swap his bishop for this knight even though this entails a loss of time. The other option was 10 \( \text{\textbf{ge}} \text{\textbf{2}} \) \( \text{\textbf{bd7}} \) 11 \( \text{\textbf{f4}} \) with a complicated position where I would prefer White.

11 \( \text{\textbf{xh}} \text{\textbf{3}} \) \( \text{\textbf{bd7}} \)

12 0-0-0 \( \text{\textbf{b6}} \)

Two sensible alternatives were 12...0-0-0 and 12...a6 possibly to be followed by ...c6-c5. However in these lines Black's king feels a little uncomfortable in the centre. White's major problem is getting the rook on h3 to co-ordinate with all of his other pieces. Ideally this should happen by swinging it across the third rank, but first the move f3-f4 has to be played, which is not so easy to achieve without dropping the e4 pawn or leaving White's queen embarrassingly out of play.

13 \( \text{\textbf{b1}} \)

A solid waiting move but more energetic play with 13 g4 was indicated.

13 ...

14 \( \text{\textbf{we3}} \)

It is natural to bring the queen back into play in the circumstances. If 14 a3, intending 14...e5 15 d5, Black can play the solid 14...a6 when there are no great follow-ups available.

14 ...

15 a3

Opening the centre is not a bad idea but White was struggling for a good way to get his forces combining effectively, so the reply 14...\( \text{\textbf{b8}} \) might have been better. The move played plans 15 d5 b4.

In a similar way to the last variation.

If Black decided on 10...\( \text{\textbf{bd7}} \) the game would probably develop
moves appear slow, Black is still not able to resolve his difficulties due to his weakened queenside.

15 ... d5

The last two moves are typical of Wolff’s all-action style but his king becomes more vulnerable as the game opens up. 15...a6 was a reasonable precaution, but not 15...\(\texttt{\#}\texttt{he8}\), when 16 d5 looks good.

16 dxe5

White must avoid exchanging pawns on d5, bringing the black steeds into the game.

16 ... \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xe5}\)
17 f4 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{e7}\)

The other retreat 17...\(\texttt{\#}\texttt{c7}\) would set Black up for 18 e5 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{fd7}\) 19 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xb5}\) cxb5 20 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xb5}\) and \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{d6+}\) with total carnage.

18 e5 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{fd7}\)

This looks more sensible than the continuation 18...\(\texttt{\#}\texttt{g4}\) 19 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{g3}\) h5 when the knight manœuvre \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{e2-d4}\) is strong.

19 a4

This is the right moment for action; White attempts to rip the queenside open. Extreme accuracy is now required from Black because all of the white pieces have the potential to participate in the attack, with the rook on the third rank now looking an asset rather than a liability.

19 ... a6?

A fairly normal reaction, but in fact Black cannot afford to be so blâsé with such a vulnerable king. This allows a forced win and a rather quick one at that. The alternative 19...\(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xa4}\) 20 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xa4}\) \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{b4}\) (20...\(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xa4}\) 21 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xa7}\) 21 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{d4}\) \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{a5}\) 22 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xb6+}\) axb6 23 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{f2}\) is very good for White but the critical lines start 19...b4 20 a5 bxc3 21 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xc3}\) and now:

a) 21...\(\texttt{\#}\texttt{b7}\) 22 axb6 axb6 23 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{a6+}\) \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{c7}\) (23...\(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xa6}\) 24 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xc6}\) \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{c8}\) 25 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xd5}\) 24 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xd5}\) \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{c5}\) 25 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xd8}\) \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{xd8}\) 26 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{e2}\) and White wins a pawn; or

b) 21...\(\texttt{\#}\texttt{c5}\) (the best) 22 axb6 axb6 23 \(\texttt{\#}\texttt{d2}\) and White maintains the initiative although Black has chances to defend.
20 a5 \(\text{a8}^{2}\) Of course if 20...\(\text{c4}\), then White wins with 21 \(\text{w}a7\). If Black had time to consolidate his position with ...\(\text{b}7\) he would be fine but the end is swift.

21 \(\text{xd}5!\) \(\text{cx}d5\)
22 \(\text{wa}7\) \(\text{c}c7\)

23 \(\text{Ac3}\) \(\text{b}8\)
24 g3

A nice touch. The threat of developing the light-squared bishop proves decisive because 24...f5 25 exf6 only delays the inevitable conclusion.

Black resigned

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**Game 6**

I have kept scrapbooks of Michael’s press clippings ever since he started playing competitively. This is not an easy exercise as chess results are often given several days after the games have been played and newspapers are inconsistent in their reporting so that good coverage of one round of an event may well be followed by totally ignoring the next round. Just imagine what the response would be if one day of a cricket test match was not reported or if the result of a critical football fixture was not given until a week after it had been played! This is a common occurrence in English chess reporting and presumably is a reflection of the general lack of interest in chess results.

One occasion when there was plenty of reporting was the aftermath of the British zonal, the qualifier for the next stage of the world championship. Murray Chandler won the event with Julian Hodgson, Mihai Suba and Michael finishing second equal. Only one of these three could join Murray at the interzonal. The problem was that no clear course of action had been laid down as to how to proceed in the case of a tie. The players could not agree whether there should be play-offs (favoured by Michael) or drawing of lots. So lots were drawn to decide how to continue and the latter course was taken. The players had to choose a number between one and eighty and then waited to see whose choice would be drawn out first in a Blackpool bingo hall. This was resolved in Michael’s favour when his number nine was the second ball drawn, enabling him to compete in the interzonal in Manila. When quizzed on his reasons for choosing the number nine, Michael revealed that it was the number of pints he had drunk the night before! Clearly such quotes are the way to raise the profile of chess in the media as Michael’s chess performance was not reported in anywhere near the same detail as the bingo. In fact he was solid with five wins against the bottom ranked five players and five draws against Chandler, Hodgson, Suba, King and Davies.
Playing in zonal tournaments is always very tough on account of the small number of qualification places available and the large plus score which is required to go through. It is also no secret that the British zonal is one of the most difficult in terms of playing strength. If I was to have a chance of going to the Manila interzonal, this was a game that I had to win.

1 e4 g6
2 d4 d6
3  c3  g7
4  e3  f6
5  d2  c6
6  h6  xh6

A topical line for this opening. Black avoids 6...0-0 in view of the kingside pawn storm that would follow.

7  xh6  a5
Of course 7... b6 is parried by 8 0-0-0.

8  d3  a6
This game is not a great advertisement for this move and Black's plan turns out not to be successful. Better was 8... bd7 or the critical 8...c5, after which White gained the advantage with 9  f3 cxd4 10  xd4  c6 11  b5  d7 12 0-0-0  b6 13  e3 in the recent game Hodgson-van Wely (Donner Memorial 1994). Finally, snatching the b-pawn with 8... b4 9  ge2  xb2 10 0-0 looks too dangerous.

9  ge2  b4
10 0-0  h5
Black can't do without this move as queenside castling is far too risky, but now the queen becomes misplaced, allowing White time to develop a rampant initiative.

11  d2  xd3
12  cxd3
This is the real problem with Black’s plan. The armada of pawns in the middle of the board gives White a pleasant space advantage and good chances to build an attack on either side of the board. The fact that no pawn exchanges have been made renders the black bishop ineffective.

12 ... 0-0
13 f4
Much stronger than 13  g3 when 13... h4 would be annoying in view of 14 f4  g4. This move also threatens f4-f5.

13 ...  h6
14 h3
After Black’s last accurate move the advance f4-f5 is prevented for
the immediate future, so I deny my opponent use of the g4 square and prepare \( \text{Af3} \) followed by \( \text{Af1} \). Now the sacrifice 14...\( \text{Dxh3} \) 15 \( \text{g}x\text{h3} \) \( \text{Wxh3} \) is easily parried by 16 \( \text{Af2} \).

14 e5

Black’s position is definitely no dreamboat but perhaps 14...\( \text{Dd7} \), 14...b6 or 14...b5 were better tries. White is much better prepared for the opening of lines.

15 \( \text{Aad1}! \)

Forcing an exchange.

15 ... \( \text{exf4} \)

Another tricky decision. The alternative 15...\( \text{Exd4} \) 16 \( \text{Dxh4} \) \( \text{Wg7} \) 17 \( \text{Df3} \) has the merit of keeping lines closed and not bringing the white rooks into action so soon, but White’s centre is ready to roll.

16 \( \text{Dxf4} \) \( \text{Wg7} \)

A logical looking try is 16...\( \text{Wh5} \), trying to exchange some pieces, but 17 \( \text{Dxh5} \) \( \text{Wxh5} \) (17...\( \text{Wxd2} \) 18 \( \text{Dxh5} \) \( \text{Wg5} \) 19 \( \text{Df6} \) and 20 \( \text{Ah6} \) wins a pawn) 18 \( \text{Wf4} \) d5 19 \( \text{Exd5} \) \( \text{cxd5} \) 20 g4 \( \text{Wxh3} \) 21 \( \text{Dxh4} \) f5 is very critical. This may be why my opponent rejected it, although objectively White would be unwise to enter these complications when he already possesses a clear edge; so perhaps 19 \( \text{Dde1} \) is the best way to keep up the pressure.

17 \( \text{Df3} \) g5

Lashing out with this move cannot be good as it is never possible to satisfactorily resolve the pin on the g-file, but the alternatives 17...\( \text{Dd7} \) 18 \( \text{Wf2} \) \( \text{Dxg5} \) and 18...\( \text{Wh8} \) preparing ...\( \text{Dg8} \), though more resilient, were depressingly passive.

18 \( \text{Dg3} \) h6

19 \( \text{Df1} \) \( \text{Dh8} \)

20 e5 \( \text{Dxe5} \)

After 20...\( \text{Wh7} \) 21 \( \text{Dh5} \) \( \text{Wg6} \) 22 \( \text{Df6} \) Black collapses even quicker.

21 \( \text{Dxe5} \) \( \text{Wh7} \)

22 d4 \( \text{Df5} \)

The bishop finally emerges just in time to prevent \( \text{Df4} \). With the next move White aims to maul his way through to Black’s king.

23 h4 \( \text{Aad8} \)

It is tempting to try and keep the kingside closed but 23...g4 24 \( \text{Dfd5} \) \( \text{De6} \) 25 \( \text{Df6} \) leaves Black suffering from claustrophobia. While it is logical to bring the rook into play after spending the first twenty-odd moves riding the pine, once lines are opened on the kingside the chances of survival are slim. Maybe 23...\( \text{Dg6} \) would have been a better way to defend.

24 \( \text{Dh5} \)

An accurate move, not falling for 24 hgx5 \( \text{Wxe5} \)!
24 ... \textit{g6} \\
25 \textit{hxg5} \textit{hxg5} \\
Not to be recommended was \textit{25...wxh5 26 Bxf5 \textit{dxg5} (26...hxg5} \\
27 \textit{g3 \textit{g4} 28 \textit{Bxd4 \textit{wd4+ 29} \textit{Bxd4 \textit{gxd4 30 \textit{e5h5}) 27 \textit{Bxf5} \textit{hxg5 28 Bg3.}}}} \\
26 \textit{Bf6} \\

\begin{center}
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\end{center}

26 ... \textit{Bh8} \\
Black chooses to give up a whole exchange rather than wait for the execution which would have been forthcoming. This may have been because he doesn't have many moves that don't lose something, for example \textit{26...Bc8 27 Bce4 \textit{Bxe4 28 \textit{Bxe4 \textit{Bxe4 29 \textit{Bxh6+ \textit{Bh7 30 \textit{f6+ or 26...Bg7 27 Bg2.}}}}} 27 Bg2}.

27 Bh4 \\
It was possible to take the rook, but \textit{27...Bg7 28 Bf4} would be embarrassing so there is no rush. \\
27 ... \textit{h5} \\
28 \textit{Bf4} \textit{Bh4} \\
29 \textit{Bxg8} \textit{Bxg8} \\
30 \textit{Bc3} \textit{Bh7} \\
The only chances to continue were \textit{30...Bc6} and \textit{30...Bd8} but in any case White's work is almost finished. \\
31 d5 \textit{Bc8} \\
32 \textit{Bh2} \textit{Bh6} \\
33 \textit{Be4} \\
That's about it. \textit{Black resigned}

\hline

\textbf{Game 7}

Ironically Michael's good fortune at bingo was not good news for his school as the interzonal was scheduled to be played at the same time as the final stages of \textit{The Times} schools' competition. Thus having helped Truro School to reach the last four, Michael was unable to play in the final matches.

From Blackpool, Michael travelled to Paris for the final week of games in the French league. Three wins and two draws meant that he completed the season with six wins and four draws, helping Clichy to finish in third place behind Lyons, who had built up a truly formidable side by offering attractive financial packages to players. Michael drew with Boris Spassky in the match between Clichy and Lyons.

When my son went off to Manila for the interzonal I did not believe that he really had a great chance of qualifying and merely thought that
it would be good experience for the future. Perhaps this was partly because of the fortuitous way that he had qualified and partly because of his still limited experience against the top players, but I can remember Stewart Reuben saying that anything could happen in the minor placings of a Swiss event and he was right, as Michael got within one win of becoming a candidate. This was quite a remarkable achievement as Michael was unwell for much of the tournament, often just getting up to play his games and then returning to bed. Michael has always said that this did not put him at any great disadvantage as he reckons that he has had many of his best results while not feeling one hundred per cent. It should also be pointed out that Michael benefited from sharing Will Watson as a second with Murray Chandler (Kavalek worked with Short) after some gentle persuasion from David Anderton. Will did a terrific job and managed to repair most of the deficiencies in Michael’s opening repertoire so that games were started on a fairly even basis.

Anyway, Michael began well with two wins against Rachels and Vaganian and a draw against Salov, but then lost against Lautier and Yudasin. Draws against Rechlis, Andrei Sokolov and Rogers followed before wins against Ye Ronquang and Lputian, interspersed with draws against Ftačnik and Ljubojević meant that a win in his final game against Nikolić would have seen him through to the candidates. Ironically Nigel Short was in the same position. It is history now that Short beat Mikhail Gurevich with Black and went on to win the candidates competition and challenge Kasparov, while Michael lost his game with White after a 62-move struggle in which Michael deviated from a repetition of moves as this would not have helped either player. It was somewhat ironic that the pre-game planning considered many Spanish (Ruy Lopez) variations, but not the Zaitsev that was actually played, as it leads to the move repetition that could have ended both players’ hopes. Probably it would have been better for Michael to have deviated very early on to avoid repetition altogether as Nikolić was always going to have more difficulty in reaching the time control than Michael.

Nevertheless, overall this tournament was most encouraging and further evidence that Michael really did have a future in chess. In some ways he was lucky to have a future of any sort as originally the intention had been to play the first half of the interzonal at Baguio, which suffered an earthquake that flattened hotels, schools and a university building just when the chess would have been taking place. Michael did experience the earthquake in Manila, but it was nowhere near as strong although very frightening. He was lucky enough to be in the hotel reception area rather than a room or the lift and had the benefit of Murray
Chandler's advice that according to his New Zealand education the best place to stay was under a door jamb. This excellent theory did not stop them both rushing outside! The hotel proved to be quite solid although a good deal of damage was done to neighbouring buildings. What with the earthquake, a car bomb that exploded shortly after he had left the area and the food poisoning that he had suffered, we were pleased to see him home in one piece. The bomb completed a miserable tournament for the top Filipino player, Torre, who had his car destroyed as well as failing to qualify.

Michael's next event was the British championship at Eastbourne. Before now, the British had always been the major tournament of the year for Michael, but after a twelve-month period including World and European Team championships, a GMA event, a Hastings Premier and the Manila interzonal, he could not be expected to have the same approach. Nevertheless, expectations were high and a final position of fourth equal was regarded by some as being disappointing. However, that overlooks the fact that Michael was the only player to remain undefeated and his results were equal to a 2600+ performance, which could have been even better but for a couple of inaccuracies, missing winning chances against Plaskett, the eventual champion, in the fourth round and King in the penultimate game.

M. Adams – W. Watson
British Championship, Eastbourne 1990
Sicilian Defence, Smith-Morra Gambit

This is not really a very good game and I don't have many plans to repeat this opening. However my only use of this opening resulted in me being invited to write a book on it by a certain publisher, so I decided to put this encounter in the collection. In reality I was only attempting to prevent my opponent from using his superior knowledge of the Dragon. William had recently been my second in Manila, so he had first-hand knowledge of how sad my openings were.

1 e4 c5
2 d4 cxd4
3 c3 dxc3

Will didn't contemplate 3... d6 for very long here. Like most players he probably has too little respect for this gambit to decline it.

4 e4 c6
5 f3 e6
6 c4 dge7
7 g5

Black's last move is not supposed to be the greatest way to combat the Morra but I certainly couldn't work out why. Perhaps 7 h4 is most in the spirit of the opening, though the immediate 7
\( \text{a}3 \) or 7 0-0 also come into consideration. The move played aims to soften up the a2-g8 diagonal.

7 ... \( f6 \)
8 \( \text{a}e3 \) \( g6 \)
9 0-0 \( \text{e}7 \)
10 \( \text{w}e2 \)

At first I had the feeling that White should be aiming for a swift advance of the f-pawn with 11 \( \text{ad}4 \), but having reached this position I was not that impressed with it. Instead, placing both rooks on promising files keeps some compensation, but by now I was thinking that at least you have an equal number of pawns in the Dragon!

12 \( \text{b}6 \)
Also possible was 12 \( \text{b}6 \). The text may be stronger since White has the option to take the light-squared bishop if convenient.

12 ... \( \text{b}8 \)
13 \( \text{ac}1 \) 0-0
14 \( \text{fd}1 \) \( f5? \)
More in the style of Dr Watson than Will Watson! 14...\( \text{h}8 \) allows no obvious breakthrough though White must be clearly better after 15 \( h4 \), which provokes a crisis where White’s better development should outweigh the pawn minus.

15 \( \text{exf}5 \) \( \text{xf}5 \)
16 \( \text{wd}3 \)

10 ... \( a6? \)
A hard move to explain because either 10...0-0 or 10...\( \text{wc}7 \) were better. Perhaps my opening choice was inspired after all?

11 \( \text{a}4 \)
Since 11...\( b5 \) is met by 12 \( \text{b}6 \), White gets to prevent easy development of the black queenside.

11 ... \( \text{wc}7 \)

16 ... \( \text{h}8 \)
After 16...\( d5 \) 17 \( \text{xf}5 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 18 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{a}5 \) the prosaic reply 19 \( \text{b}6 \) is probably strongest, and if 16...\( \text{xf}3 \) 17 \( \text{xf}3 \) \( d5 \) 18 \( \text{xd}5 \) and the roof caves in. The best try was 17...\( \text{ge}5 \) in the last variation, but White’s shattered kingside should not cause too many problems due to Black’s inactive pieces.

17 \( \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{xd}7 \)
18 \textit{\\text{Wxd7}} \textit{Wxd7} \\
19 \textit{Hxd7} \textit{a6} \\
20 \textit{Ad2} \\

The aim of the Smith-Morra Gambit is probably not to reach endings, but due to the bishop pair, better pawn structure and more active pieces White is very happy with this one.

20 \textit{...} \textit{b4} \\
21 \textit{He2} \\

There doesn’t seem to be much wrong with the more logical 21 \textit{H2d1} but the move played in the game works out well.

21 \textit{...} \textit{d6} \\

The only chance to save a pawn was 21\textit{...a5}, which was a better try.

22 \textit{a3} \textit{c5} \textit{(D)} \\
The alternatives lines 22\textit{...e7} \\
23 \textit{xax6} and 22\textit{...a5} 23 \textit{b4} \textit{c7} \\
24 \textit{xax6} also lose a pawn.

23 \textit{xax6} \textit{xe3} \\
24 \textit{xe3} \textit{bxa6} \\
25 \textit{xc6} \textit{b5} \\
26 \textit{b4} \textit{a5} \\
27 \textit{bxa5} \textit{xax5} \\
28 \textit{g3} \\

Finally securing the back rank. With an extra outside passed pawn and Black’s weak isolated one on e6, the position should be winning, but William certainly makes little effort to test my technique. 28...\textit{dxa8} or 28...\textit{h6} would both leave White with work to do.

28 \textit{...} \textit{dd5} \\
29 \textit{c8} \textit{g8} \\
30 \textit{b3} \textit{f7} \\

Black’s only possible move was 30...\textit{dxb5}.

31 \textit{b7+} \textit{d7} \\
32 \textit{e5+} \\
Black resigned

While Michael was in Manila the award for the ‘Player of the Year’ for the twelve-month period ending April 30th was made by the British Chess Federation and Michael was selected for this honour. His results in Manila confirmed that the promise shown in that period was beginning to be fulfilled. Despite my pessimism before the event, Michael showed that he could now often hold his own among players just outside the top ten. This was reflected in a further rise of 35 points on the July 1990 rating list taking him up to 2590, which meant that he had reached the world’s top forty players and established himself as the number four (after Short, Nunn and Speelman) in the English list – quite a jump in just twelve months.
Apart from the British championship, Michael's other regular annual tournament was the Lloyds Bank Masters. The 1990 event was his seventh successive appearance and provided one of his better results with five White wins (against Züger, Wells, Wojtkiewicz, Suba and Conquest) and a win and four draws with Black. This enabled Michael to share first place with Sturua (USSR) and Conquest, who not only won the event on tie-break but also achieved a GM norm with two rounds to spare.

Chapter Two

Game 8

M.Adams – M.Suba
London (Lloyds Bank) 1990
Sicilian Defence,
Najdorf Variation

Curiously, English players have to some extent benefited from the lack of tournaments in this country, in that fewer foreign players have moved here relative to many other European countries. Mihai was an exception to this rule, which was quite fortunate for me as during his brief stay in this country I managed to notch up a large plus score against him.

1 e4 c5
2 d4

As my encounters with Suba in the Scheveningen variation had not always resulted in good opening positions, I hoped to take him into a different line. After 2...d4, I would have played 3 e3.

2... a6
3 d3 d6

4 d4 cxd4
5 cxd4 e6
6 f4 d5

So by transposition we have reached a variation of the Najdorf, albeit one that bears a strong resemblance to a Scheveningen.

7 h3 \( \text{h}6 \)
8 b3

I was not keen to repeat my game against Wojtkiewicz from an earlier round where I played 8 a3, a continuation which can be found in game 25 (Adams-Renet). In an open tournament, preparation is less of a factor but I'm always happy to vary my openings.

8 \( \text{c}7 \)
9 a4!

Murray Chandler had used this move, I believe for the first time, in his third round game against Wojtkiewicz in this event. Instead of aiming for a kingside pawn storm with 9 g4, White prevents Black from playing the advance
...b7-b5 and completes his development.

9 ... b6
10 d3 c6

Possibly better is 10...b7 11 0-0 bd7 12 wg3 g6!?

11 0-0 b7
12 wg3

12 d7

In this position Black is already faced with difficult problems. Playing 12...g6 is dangerous due to the exposed position of the knight on f6 after 13 f5. Giving up the pawn with 12...e7 13 wxg7 g8 14 wh6 0-0-0 leads to a very unusual position with chances for both sides. Other moves fail to develop the kingside.

13 f5

It is very tempting to start immediate action against the king stuck in the centre but there is no real need to hurry as after 13 e3, completing White’s development, Black is still left with the problem of how to proceed with his own mobilisation.

13 ... de5
14 fxe6 fxe6
15 wh3 c8

This is forced since 15...wd7 16 e3 wins the b-pawn. Black’s position looks appalling at this point, but possession of the e5 square and the lack of targets in his position make it difficult for White to gain the advantage. White needs to act quickly as Black plans ...e7-f6 followed by castles.

16 e3 e7
17 e2

Another idea was 17 wh5+ g6 18 wh3 when the bishop is denied the excellent f6 square, but 18...df7 should allow Black to grovel to safety.

17 ... d8
18 d4 f6
19 h5+ ef7
20 g4 e7
21 d5 (D)

The play up to here has been quite logical, but I was left with the feeling that White should have achieved rather more. Probably this can be traced to the inaccuracy 13 f5. With Black gradually improving his position it makes sense for me to change the nature of the game with this knight thrust.

21 ... exd5
22 xc8 0-0

Of course not 22...dxe4 23 ae1 d5 (23...0-0 24 f5 g6 25 xe4 e5 g5 26 d5+) 24 c4 which is much too dangerous for Black.

23 f5!?
Also possible was 23 \texttt{Nae1} with variations similar to the last note except that Black has the reply 23...\texttt{Qg5}, which improves his position. The text move plans an interesting piece sacrifice. Although White only gets two pawns for his piece, the unsafe position of the black king and his inactive pieces provide further compensation. The fact that both players were running short of time meant that the sacrifice was justified in a practical sense.

\begin{align*}
23 \ldots & \texttt{g6} \\
24 \texttt{exd5} & \texttt{gxf5} \\
25 \texttt{Qxf5} & \texttt{Wc7} \\
26 \texttt{Nae1} & \texttt{Qb7}
\end{align*}

This was the move I was hoping for when I played 26 \texttt{Nae1}. It’s clear that Black has a better defence, and after the game analysis centred on 26...\texttt{Wh8} 27 \texttt{Qd4} \texttt{Qe5} (possibly 27...\texttt{Qg7} is better here) 28 \texttt{Qh6} \texttt{Qf7} 29 \texttt{c3}! Here the knight on d8 is paralysed as, if it moves, White’s knight penetrates on e6. The idea of playing quietly in this manner, suggested by Speelman, ensures White sufficient compensation but no more.

27 \texttt{Qd4}!

Now Black is in trouble.

\begin{align*}
27 \ldots & \texttt{Qe5}?
\end{align*}

Again not the best. Even though 27...\texttt{Qxd4} 28 \texttt{Qxd4} \texttt{Qe5} 29 \texttt{We6+} \texttt{Qf7} looks very dangerous, Black may still have drawing chances, for example 30 \texttt{Qf5} \texttt{Qc5} 31 \texttt{Qg5+} \texttt{Qg6} (31...\texttt{Qh8} 32 \texttt{Qxe5}) 32 \texttt{Qxg6+} \texttt{hxg6} 33 \texttt{Wxg6+} \texttt{Qg7} 34 \texttt{Qxg7} \texttt{Wxg7} 35 \texttt{Wxd6} when the four pawns are more than enough for a piece but Black has chances to save the game. Mihai also contemplated 27...\texttt{Qg7} 28 \texttt{Qe6} \texttt{Wxc2} in the post-mortem but this looks pretty rank.

28 \texttt{We6+} \texttt{Qg7} 
29 \texttt{Qxe5}

A simple but effective combination from which I emerge two pawns up.

\begin{align*}
29 \ldots & \texttt{Qxe5} \\
30 \texttt{Qe6+} & \texttt{Qg6} \\
31 \texttt{Qxc7} & \texttt{Qxf1+} \\
32 \texttt{Qxf1} & \texttt{Qc8} \\
33 \texttt{Qxb6} & \texttt{Qxb2}
\end{align*}
34 \textit{He}1?  
With both sides short of time, my technique becomes rather casual. 34 \textit{b}1 was better  
\[34 \ldots \textit{a}5\]  
\[35 \textit{c}4 \textit{d}d4+\]  
A good try but White has sufficient material to win fairly consummately here.  
\[36 \textit{cxd}4 \textit{xc}7\]  
\[37 \textit{xc}1 \textit{f}5\]  
\[38 \textit{b}6 \textit{c}8\]  
\[39 \textit{f}1+ \textit{g}6\]  
Black might as well have tried 39...\textit{e}4 40 \textit{f}7 \textit{c}5 41 \textit{xc}5 dxc5 42 \textit{exh}7 though White is still winning. The move actually played gives White complete control and the point is swiftly wrapped up in time for a good session in The Three Tuns pub.  
\[40 \textit{f}4 \textit{c}5\]  
\[41 \textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5\]  
\[42 \textit{f}2 \textit{h}5\]  
\[43 \textit{e}3 \textit{c}8\]  
\[44 \textit{d}4 \textit{b}8\]  
\[45 \textit{e}4 \textit{b}4\]  
\[46 \textit{e}6+ \textit{f}5\]  
\[47 \textit{xd}6 \textit{xa}4\]  
\[48 \textit{e}6 \textit{a}1\]  
\[49 \textit{e}2 \textit{a}4\]  
\[50 \textit{f}2+ \textit{g}6\]  
\[51 \textit{c}5 \textit{a}3\]  
\[52 \textit{d}6 \textit{b}1\]  
\[53 \textit{d}7\]  
Black resigned

\section*{Game 9}

Stuart Conquest would have won the event outright if Michael had not beaten him in the penultimate round. It was not the perfect way to treat a good friend, which Stuart had been to Michael, especially since they played together for Clichy in the French league, where Stuart’s mastery of the French language was a definite asset for Michael!

\begin{center}
\textbf{M.Adams – S.Conquest}  
\textit{London (Lloyds Bank) 1990}  
Sicilian Defence,  
Richter-Rauzer Attack
\end{center}

The night before this game I had enjoyed Adam Black’s excellent hospitality. Unfortunately because of setting off rather late and a poor understanding of bus routes around Peckham I ended up arriving over twenty minutes late for this game, having missed lunch.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ccc}
1 & e4 & c5  
2 & \textit{f}3 & d6  
3 & d4 & cxd4  
4 & \textit{xd}4 & \textit{f}6  
5 & \textit{c}3 & \textit{c}6  
6 & \textit{g}5 & \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Stuart has one of the widest opening repertoires of any English player, you never know what he’s going to wheel out with either colour. In this event he had already been successful on the white side of this variation against Speelman.
6 ... e6
7 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}d2}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}e7}}
8 0-0-0 0-0
9 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b3}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b6}}
10 f3 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}d8}}
11 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}e3}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}c7}}
12 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}f2}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}d7}}

This is more inspiring than the turgid 12...d5 13 exd5 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xd5}} 14 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xd5}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xd5}} 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xd5}} exd5, when White may be able to claim a nagging yank. Typically Stuart looks for a complicated game.

13 h4

Also possible was 13 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b5}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b8}}
14 h4 a6 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}5d4}}.

13 ... a6
14 h5 b5

15 g4

Here the move 15 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}g3}} looks impressive but after the response 15...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}h8}} (16 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}h6}} was a threat) it is not clear how White continues his attack. However, probably best was 15 f4 with the idea of denying the black knights use of the e5 square. After 15...b4 16 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}a4}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b8}} 17 g4 White has a good position, therefore perhaps Black should prefer 15...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}f6}}.

15 ... \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}ce5}}
16 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}g1}}

The more obvious continuation 16 g5 b4 17 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}a4}} (17 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b1}} a5 gives Black good play) 17...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b8}}, which was my original intention, leaves White’s knight on a4 stranded. The text move gives me the option of playing f3-f4.

16 ... \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b4}}
17 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}a4}}

Again 17 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b1}} a5 looked unappealing.

17 ... \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b8}}
18 f4 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}c4}}
19 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}a7}}

White takes the opportunity to misplace Black’s rook before playing the bishop to d4. I did consider 19 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xc4}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xc4}} 20 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b6}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xe4}} 21 g5 but if you believe in this you probably believe in Father Christmas as well.

19 ... \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}a8}}
20 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}d4}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b7}}?

Too slow. The time was right for Black to break out with 20...e5 21 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xc4}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xc4}} 22 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b6}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xb6}} 23 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xb6}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}e8}} when Black has a good game. In such a sharp position, this error has serious consequences.

21 g5

Natural and good, because the alternative 21 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xc4}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xc4}} 22 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}a5}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}b5}} 23 \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xb7}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xb7}} was not very tempting.

21 ... e5

The point of the sacrifice is that after 21...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textdollar}xe4}} 22 g6 hxg6 23 hxg6
\textit{\textbf{M.Adams – S.Conquest}}

\textbf{\textit{$\mathbf{\text{\texttimes g6 24 \textit{\texttimes g6 fxg6 25 \textit{\textw e2 \textd f8 26 \textw xc4 White’s active pieces give him a promising ending. Nonetheless, this looks a better chance than the game continuation.}}}$}}

22 $\text{fxe5 dxe5}$

23 $\text{g6}$

This detonates the black kingside but due to a paucity of white pieces in the vicinity, Black is able to organise some resistance. Naturally he avoids 23...$\text{exd4 24 $\text{wxf7+ wh8 25 h6.}$}}$

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

23 $\text{... $\text{d f6}$}$

24 $\text{gxf7+ wh8}$

The only chance because after 24...$\text{wxf7 25 $\text{d ac5}$} \text{Black is unable to meet the twin threats of $\text{xe4+}$ and $\text{xc4+}$ followed by $\text{e6+}$ forking the royal couple.}$

25 $\text{h6 g6}$

26 $\text{xc4 exd4}$

27 $\text{ad5 xe4}$

28 $\text{e6?}$

This needless over-elaboration was based on a miscalculation and it is only my opponent’s time pressure which allows me to net the full point. The best move was the obvious 28 $\text{xd4}$ with a winning advantage.

28 $\text{... wc4}$

29 $\text{xd8 xd8}$

30 $\text{xd4 wc7?}$

Although it turns out to be a blunder, this move sent me into a panic as I had only considered 30...$\text{wxf7 31 $\text{xe4}$ and 30...$\text{xe4}$ 31 $\text{wxf6+ xe6}$ 32 $\text{f8+w+ $\text{g8}$ 33 $\text{xf6+}$$.}$}

Black’s best chance was 30...$\text{wxc8}$ with an unclear position, e.g. 31 $\text{e1 f8}$ 32 $\text{dxe4 $\text{xe4}$ 33 $\text{xe4}$ $\text{g5+}$ 34 $\text{b1 $\text{h6}$ 35 $\text{xb4}$$.}$}

31 $\text{wh2}$

This tactical shot proves very successful in the game, but objectively the meek 31 $\text{e1}$ may have been more realistic. Obviously the queen is untouchable as 31...$\text{wh2}$ 32 $\text{xd8+ xd8}$ 33 $\text{f8+w+ $\text{g8}$ 34 $\text{g7}$ is checkmate.}$

31 $\text{... wc8}$

32 $\text{e1 xd4?}$

The simple and natural 32...$\text{f8}$ is good since my intended 33 $\text{w e5}$
allows 33...\texttt{\textbf{W}}xc2 mate. White has to settle for 33 \texttt{\textbf{N}}dxe4 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}xe4 34 \texttt{\textbf{W}}e5+ \texttt{\textbf{N}}f6 36 \texttt{\textbf{W}}xb4 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}g5+ 37 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}b1 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}h6 when Black is somewhat better.

33 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}xd4 \texttt{\textbf{W}}f8
34 e5 \texttt{\textbf{W}}xh6+

Black is already lost and allows a nice finish.

35 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}b1 \texttt{\textbf{W}}h4
36 \texttt{\textbf{Q}}xe4 \texttt{\textbf{W}}xe4
37 \texttt{\textbf{W}}xf6+

Black resigned

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**Game 10**

As Michael’s overseas chess diary was empty for the next couple of months, he decided to attempt to retain his Grand Prix title. Unfortunately for him, Julian Hodgson had built up a big lead and tried as he might Michael could make little impression on it. He won at Leicester but dropped half a point to Adam Collinson in the process, while Julian himself stopped Michael getting one hundred per cent scores at the Barbican and Hitchin as they fought out drawn games.

Michael was thrilled to be selected in the number four spot for England in the 1990 olympiad, played at Novi Sad in Yugoslavia. Two years earlier he had travelled to Thessalonika to watch the previous olympiad. Now he had the opportunity to play. However, Michael’s lack of experience was exposed and his results were disappointing, though Murray Chandler was able to utilise previous olympiad experience to achieve an unbeaten record over eleven games which averaged out at a 2708 rating. Michael managed a fifty per cent score from his eight games.

**S.Kindermann – M.Adams**

*England-Germany,*

*Novi Sad Olympiad 1990*

*Spanish Opening,*

*Closed Variation*

Most tournaments have high and low points but rarely have they been so pronounced as in this olympiad. After winning this game I felt pretty good, but the next game, where I blundered a rook in a slightly better position after an epic struggle against Kožul, sent me to the depths of despair and a prolonged spell on the bench.

1 e4 e5
2 \texttt{\textbf{N}}f3 \texttt{\textbf{C}}c6
3 \texttt{\textbf{N}}b5 a6
4 \texttt{\textbf{a}}4 \texttt{\textbf{C}}f6
5 0-0 \texttt{\textbf{C}}e7
6 \texttt{\textbf{a}}e1 b5
7 \texttt{\textbf{a}}b3 0-0
8 d3

Very few players are interested in allowing the Marshall Gambit these days, particularly because new ideas in various anti-Marshall
systems have made them quite venomous for White.

8 ... d6
9 c3 b7

This natural move is not the most accurate, but at the time of this game I was quite a recent convert to 1...e5. The bishop fulfills a useful purpose on c8 covering the f5 square which the white knight will gradually move towards. The recommended way to play is 9...a5 10 c2 c5 11 bd2 e8 and Black develops the bishop when it is most convenient for him.

10 bd2 a5
11 c2 c5
12 a3

The only way to take advantage of the early ...b7 is 12 f1 e8 13 d4 when White should obtain a slight edge.

12 ... e8
13 f1 f8
14 g3

The idea behind playing a2-a3 was to follow with b2-b4 at some point but here this doesn’t look too good as Black drops the knight back to c6 and plays ...a6-a5. A more interesting option was 14 g5 when the pin is irritating for Black, so 14...h6 15 h4 e7 may be the best response.

14 ... h6 (D)
15 h3

The move b2-b4 is a valid alternative on just about every turn. Although there is nothing really wrong with the text move, the plan it starts is too time-consuming to lead to any advantage. The tempting 15 f5 would be well met by 15...c4 followed by ...d6-d5 undermining the white pawn chain.

15 ... g6

Black quietly improves his position on the kingside. Ultimately Black wants to play ...d6-d5 but this move must be carefully prepared or White will benefit more from the opening of the game.

16 h2 d5

This is the right moment because the knight on h2 is slightly out of play. The immediate capture on d5 is not promising as when Black recaptures with the queen, White must parry the mate threat on g2.

17 g4

A exceptionally casual reaction which cedes Black a serious structural advantage. Here it was compulsory to play 17 b4 cxb4 18 axb4 c6 with a complicated middlegame. One possible continuation is 19 exd5 cxd5 20 d2 f6 with rough equality.

17 ... xg4
18 \( \text{wxg4} \) \( c4 \)
A fairly obvious but very effective move. The white centre is undermined and the queenside pawn structure disabled. If Black can achieve these two breakthroughs he normally stands very well in these kinds of system.

19 \( \text{dxc4} \)
Not a move that White could have wanted to play but, if not, ...\( \text{cxd3} \) followed by ...\( \text{Qb3} \) was an annoying possibility. The active-looking 19 \( \text{Qf5} \) goes less than nowhere after 19...\( \text{h7} \).

19 \( \text{bxc4} \)
Of course Black chooses this recapture. After 19...\( \text{dxc4} \) 20 \( \text{e3} \) White has nothing to complain about.

20 \( \text{exd5} \)
After 20 \( \text{Qd1} \) or most other moves, 20...d4 leaves Black with two powerful pawns.

20 \( \ldots \) \( \text{wxh5} \)
21 \( \text{e4} \)
A natural move but one that leads to an exchange of bishops which further denudes the weakened light squares. White’s problem is that without this exchange Black’s bishop is extremely powerful, i.e. 21 \( \text{Qe4} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) threatening ...f7-f5 or 21 \( \text{Qf5} \) h5 22 \( \text{Qg3} \) \( \text{Qb3} \) 23 \( \text{Qb1} \) \( \text{Qc5} \) when White doesn’t have a really good follow-up and Black takes control. White cannot win a pawn due to 24 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) 25 \( \text{Qf5} \) \( \text{Qf6} \).

21 \( \ldots \) \( \text{Qe6} \)
22 \( \text{Qh4} \)

Of course simply exchanging pieces leaves Black with a commanding endgame advantage and if 22 \( \text{Qf5} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 23 \( \text{Qc2} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) Black gradually gains control. The text move is actually quite tricky but by accurate play Black neutralises all counterplay, after which his positional advantages must tell.

22 \( \ldots \) \( \text{Qxe4} \)
But not 22...h5 23 \( \text{Qxb7} \) \( \text{Qxb7} \) 24 \( \text{Qe4} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 25 \( \text{Qg5} \) when White gains some activity.

23 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( g5 \)
A committal decision but in this case an excellent move. Black’s king has enough protection for the pawns to be pushed forward.

24 \( \text{Qh5} \)
Not 24 \( \text{Qxg5} \) \( hxg5 \) 25 \( \text{Qxg5}+ \) \( \text{Qg7} \) which leads nowhere.

24 \( \text{f5} \)
Half measures would be ineffective here. Black pushes everything forward.

25 \( \text{Qg3} \) \( f4 \)
This is the point. By placing all his pawns on dark squares, Black
severely restricts White’s bishop. Indeed it is hard to even develop it. The problem with this is that the knight settles on e4. It is less useful than it might appear there, partly since too few other pieces co-operate with it and partly because although it is impregnable, it is also short of strong posts to head for.

26 \textit{Q}e4 \textit{Q}b3  
27 \textit{Q}b1 \textit{Q}g7!

A crucial move. The alternatives would allow White to mount an attack by means of h4. A nightmare for Black would be 27...g7 28 h4 g4 29 \textit{Q}xf4 exf4 30 \textit{Q}f6+ \textit{Q}xf6 31 \textit{Q}xe8+ \textit{Q}xe8 32 \textit{Q}xe8+ when Black’s plans have gone horribly wrong.

28 h4 \textit{Q}g6  
29 \textit{Q}e2

A better try was 29 \textit{Q}g4 but Black’s position must be preferred. However it would have been difficult to choose between 29...\textit{Q}e7 or 29...gxh4. I think that 29...gxh4 30 \textit{Q}xh4 \textit{Q}ad8 is the most accurate.

29 ... \textit{Q}ac8  
30 hxg5 hxg5  
31 \textit{Q}d1

The position was becoming less and less appetising but this leads to a very swift conclusion. Some might say mercifully swift but after 31 \textit{Q}g4 (31 \textit{Q}d2 g4 is less testing) Black still has some work to do.

31 ... \textit{Q}cd8  
32 \textit{Q}d2

Black’s last move was based on the simple tactic 32 \textit{Q}xd8 \textit{Q}xd8 33 \textit{Q}xc4 \textit{Q}d1+ followed by mate, so White chooses to develop his bishop. It is perhaps an apt reflection on the game that he resigns three moves later.

32 \textit{Q}d3  
Decisive penetration.

33 \textit{Q}e1 \textit{Q}ed8  
34 f3 g4

35 \textit{Q}f1

A sign of my opponent’s bad form in this game – it is rare for someone to miss his last chance; 35 fxg4 \textit{Q}xd1 36 \textit{Q}xd1 \textit{Q}xd1 37 \textit{Q}xd1 \textit{Q}xe4 38 \textit{Q}d7+ \textit{Q}h8 39 \textit{Q}h4 leads to a position in which the extra piece will prove decisive, but the presence of queens combined with Black’s open king will mean that accuracy is required.

35 ... g3

Now White really is dead and buried and wisely decided to call it a day.

White resigned
Game 11

Although he did reasonably well with his five Blacks, it was his defeat with White against Kožul of Yugoslavia that was the big disappointment and meant that he lost his place for the last three games. Michael had played well during the game against a player who was having an exceptionally good olympiad and had reached a drawn endgame when he blundered. In the final three games England beat Sweden 3-1 but could only draw against Iceland and Cuba to finish level on points in second place with the USA, who received silver medals on tie break while the English players had to be content with bronze medals. Michael’s disappointment sent him looking for revenge against Kožul. This can be a very dangerous approach, although on this occasion it worked well and Michael registered three wins against this opponent in the next twelve months, although he would gladly have swapped any of them with the olympiad result.

His next tournament was at Groningen, where the annual tournament takes place over Christmas (although Christmas Day itself is a rest day). One drawback of playing in this event was not being available to play at Islington to make one final challenge for the 1990 Leigh Grand Prix in which he had to settle for third place. However Michael had not been invited to the Hastings Premier so he was grateful for the Groningen invitation. He enjoyed a successful tournament and despite losing to Gulkov in the final round, ended up winning the event after the four-way tie was broken on Sonnenborn-Berger points. Also on five and a half points were Khalifman, Piket and Rogers.

A.Khalifman – M.Adams
Groningen 1990
Bogo-Indian Defence

This game was played on Christmas Eve, a date on which I’ve only played chess in one place, the Dutch town of Groningen. Fortunately on this occasion I knew that I had John Fedorowicz to celebrate Christmas Day with, which may account for my decent performance in this game.

1 d4 2 e6 3 f3 b4

My opponent looked surprised by this but I was happy to settle for something solid.

4 d2 e7 5 g3 c6 6 c3 xC3 7 xC3 e4

The alternative 8 wC2 deserves more attention than it has received.
in the past, since after 8...\(\textsc{dxc}3\) 9 \(\textsc{wxc}3\) \(\textsc{wb}4\) 10 \(\textsc{wb}4\) \(\textsc{dxb}4\) 11 \(\textsc{d}d2\) White keeps an edge.

8 ... \(\text{d}6\)
9 \(\text{g}g2\)

More critical for this system is 9 d5 \(\textsc{dxc}3\) 10 \(\textsc{xc}3\) \(\textsc{b}8\) (10...\(\textsc{d}d8\)?) 11 dxe6 fxe6 12 \(\text{g}2\) 0-0 but recently black players have shown this position is less dangerous than previously thought. Normally if Black is allowed to push ...e6-e5 he should have good chances to equalise.

9 ... \(\textsc{dxc}3\)
10 \(\textsc{xc}3\) \(\text{e}5\)

With this move (10...0-0 11 d5 will transpose to the above) Black sets up his desired structure and White's only chance of an edge is to take advantage of Black's tardy development.

11 d5 \(\textsc{b}8\)
12 0-0

White could try the immediate advance 12 c5, making use of the tactic 12...dxc5 13 \(\textsc{dx}e5\), but after 12...0-0 it is hard to see a follow-up which does not transpose to the game.

12 ... 0-0
13 \(\textsc{d}d2\)

More sensible was 13 b4 (denying Black's knight the c5 square) 13...a5 14 a3 (14 \(\textsc{xa}3\)?) 14...\(\textsc{d}d7\) when White has a slight edge. White often tries to avoid playing e4 here but relying on the space advantage is also a logical strategy.

13 ... \(\text{a}5\)

14 c5
Necessary as Black was threatening to mobilise smoothly with ...\(\textsc{a}6\)-c5, ...\(\textsc{d}d7\), ...f7-f5 etc.

14 \(\textsc{a}6\)

15 cxd6
15 c6!? was worth considering. Probably my best reply would be 15...bxc6 16 \(\textsc{xc}6\) (16 dxc6 \(\textsc{c}5\) leaves Black good central control) 16...\(\textsc{d}d7\) 17 \(\textsc{c}3\) f5 or 17...\(\textsc{f}b8\) with an unclear position.

15 ... cxd6
16 \(\textsc{c}4\) \(\text{d}8\)
17 \(\text{a}3\)!

This is a bad mistake. White is caught day-dreaming after the disappointing results of his opening play. Now was the time for White to start thinking of bailing out. Khalifman avoided the continuation 17 \(\textsc{b}3\) \(\textsc{c}5\) 18 \(\textsc{b}6\) \(\textsc{a}4\) 19 \(\textsc{xd}8\) \(\textsc{xd}8\) 20 \(\textsc{a}3\) b5 21 \(\textsc{xa}5\) \(\textsc{xa}5\) (21...\(\textsc{xb}2\) 22 \(\textsc{b}1\)) 22 b3 on the grounds that it is only equal, but after the text move White is clearly worse.

17 ... \(\text{b}5\)!
Black has the very natural plan of expanding on the queenside, which turns out to be surprisingly strong. White struggles to find reasonable squares for his pieces.

18 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d7} \)

19 \( \text{f1} \)

During the game I felt that Khalifman might contemplate trying to arrange an exchange sacrifice on c6. This is certainly a desperate measure, but as everything flows so smoothly for Black in the game, one that might have been worth considering.

19 \( \text{b4} \)

20 \( \text{axb4} \) \( \text{axb4} \)

21 \( \text{cc1} \) \( \text{c5} \)

22 \( \text{e4} \)

The alternative 22 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{b3} \) does not help.

22 \( \ldots \) \( \text{f5} \)

23 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{b3} \)

I was unable to play 23...\( \text{wb6} \) on account of the reply 24 \( \text{f6} \)+, but after the text move the white pawn on b2 is doomed in the long run.

24 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{xe4} \)

25 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f5} \)

26 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{a5} \)

27 \( \text{h4} \)

This move does nothing to help White but it is hard to suggest a good alternative.

27 \( \ldots \) \( \text{b5} \)

28 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{a4} \)

Forcing the exchange of queens further reduces White’s hopes of counterplay.

29 \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{xb4} \)

30 \( \text{xb4} \) \( \text{fb8} \)

31 \( \text{xb8}+ \) \( \text{xb8} \)

32 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{c8} \)

This move wins but it was more thematic and impressive to play a good solid move such as 32...\( \text{f7} \), 32...g6 or 32...\( \text{b4} \).

33 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{g6} \)

34 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{c2} \)

35 \( \text{a1} \) \( \text{c5}! \)

Now Black’s knight returns to its best post to decide the game. White has no more than a few spite checks.

36 \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{xb2} \)
37 fxg6
It turns out that after 37 a8+ g7 38 a7+ f6 39 fxg6 (39 g4 gxf5 40 g5+ g6) 39...xg6 the b-pawn will be decisive.
37 hxg6

38 e6+ f8
39 a8+ e7

White lost on time, but there is no defence as after 40 a7+, the continuation 40...d8 41 f7 c2 42 xg6 e4 decides.

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Game 12

A Dutch chess commentator once controversially reported that Michael was a talented but rather lazy player. He could not understand why Michael spent so much of his free time in the bar while others were preparing for the next round with their portable computers. He was amazed to discover that Michael did not even have a chess set of any sort in his room. However, it has long been one of Michael’s beliefs that it is better to save your energies for a game rather than arrive at the board suffering from tiredness as a result of too much last-minute preparation. Perhaps this was occasionally taken to extremes but nobody could argue with his results at this tournament.

Michael reached another significant although unofficial chess landmark when the January 1991 rating list was issued. He had gained a further ten points enabling him to reach 2600, which was the mark that some chess observers claim separate the ‘super’ GMs from the ‘ordinary’ GMs. It placed him 31st equal on the world list, his best position so far. In English terms he was third equal with John Nunn, not far behind Jon Speelman with Nigel Short way out in front.

He did manage to get to Hastings for the weekend open event, winning it by virtue of five straight wins and a quick last round draw, which enabled him to return to London in order to catch the last train back to Cornwall on Sunday evening. Among his tournament victims were Stuart Conquest, John Emms and Mark Hebden. It might have been better to go for a win in the last round to register a maximum in the Leigh Grand Prix. However Michael judged that ensuring first place outright and sleeping in his own bed that night was good compensation.

It was only a short stay at home and he was back in Holland for the Wijk aan Zee event five days later. There was little rating difference among the fourteen players but strangely this resulted in an interesting tournament with a higher than usual percentage of decisive results. There were no fewer than five different leaders at various stages with England well represented in the final places. Michael finished second
equal behind John Nunn with eight points from his thirteen games. His wins were against Salov, Kožul, Hansen, Lautier and Van der Wiel. Both defeats were with the white pieces against Ivan Sokolov and Piket. His win against Kožul was the start of his compensation for the disappointment in the olympiad.

Wijk aan Zee must be unique in being such a small village and hosting such a well known annual chess event. It is sponsored by a steelworks. Michael’s other observations were that it can be very cold there having experienced ice on the sand on one late night stroll, while a more pleasurable experience was dining at The Horse Club, a restaurant where you can order a steak with no fear of ‘mad cow disease’

M.Adams – J.Van der Wiel
Wijk aan Zee 1991
Sicilian Defence,
Najdorf Variation

It is always good to pick a high number at the drawing of lots, as this means that you start with the white pieces and play one extra White during the tournament. In this case a convincing victory in the first round was set up by achieving a promising position from the opening.

1 e4 c5
2 ∇f3 d6
3 d4 cxd4
4 ∇xd4 ∇f6
5 ∇c3 a6
6 f4 e5
7 ∇f3 ∇bd7
8 a4 d5?!

The first few times this move was played against unprepared White players it achieved good results. However, it is now very rarely seen. Nigel Short deserves the credit for discovering the antidote and Willie Watson for persuading him to show it to me prior to this game. John was somewhat unlucky in that his attempt to find a sharp line to exploit my lack of theory hit on one I had looked at recently.

9 exd5 e4
10 ∇e5 ∇b4

The alternative 10...∇c5 is well answered by 11 ∇c4 with the idea of ∇e3.

11 ∇c4 ∇xe5
12 fxe5 wC7
13 0-0 wxc4

A previous game, King-Arna-son, had gone 13...∇g4 but then
14 \( \text{Qxe2} \) \( \text{Qxe2} \) 15 \( \text{Wxe2} \) \( \text{Wxe5} \) 16 \( \text{Qf4} \) would have been very good for White. The continuation John chooses in the game is probably a better try for Black, but it is clearly to White’s advantage in any case.

14 \( \text{exf6} \)  \( \text{gxf6} \)

The alternative 14...\( \text{g6} \) is well answered by 15 \( \text{Qe3} \), possibly followed by \( \text{We2} \).

15 \( \text{Axf6} \)  \( \text{xc3} \)
16 \( \text{bxc3} \)  \( \text{Wxc3} \)
17 \( \text{Qg5} \)

I considered the rather bizarre 17 \( \text{Hb1} \) here as after 17...\( \text{Wxf6} \) 18 \( \text{Qb2} \) \( \text{Wg6} \) 19 \( \text{Qxh8} \) \( \text{h3} \) 20 \( \text{We2} \) with \( \text{Qe5-g3} \) to follow is very strong. Unfortunately Black has a refutation in 18...\( \text{Qb6+} \) 19 \( \text{Qd4} \) \( \text{Qg4} \! \! \! \! \! \)

17 ... \( \text{Hg8} \)
18 \( \text{h4} \)  \( \text{Qg4} \)
19 \( \text{We1} \)  \( \text{Wd4+} \)
20 \( \text{Qh1} \)  \( \text{Wxd5} \)
21 \( \text{Hb1!} \) \( (D) \)

After a series of forcing moves it appears that Black is over the worst as he has developed his bishop and won a pawn, but my last move activates White’s final piece and draws attention to the fact that Black has still not solved the problem of his king. Here the opposite-coloured bishops favour the attacking side. Black cannot play 21...0-0-0 due to 22 \( \text{Wc3+} \) \( \text{Qb8} \)
23 \( \text{Wg3+} \) picking up the bishop.

21 ... \( \text{Hc8} \)?

Probably the decisive mistake. It was time for Black to sacrifice the exchange by 21...\( \text{Hxg5} \) 22 \( \text{hxg5} \) \( \text{Qe6} \! \! \! \! \! \) In compensation Black gets a chance to safeguard his king, manages to obtain a well-placed bishop and has possibilities to attack White’s isolated pawns. On the flip side White’s material edge gives him a clear advantage. Nevertheless Black would have had fighting chances.

22 \( \text{Hb4} \)  \( \text{Cc4} \)
23 \( \text{Hxc4} \)  \( \text{Wxc4} \)
24 \( \text{Wg3} \)

Now it is clear that White wins at least the exchange, after which the queen and rook will present insurmountable threats to the exposed black king.

24 ... \( \text{Wc8} \)
25 \( \text{Qd6} \! \! \! \! \! \)

The rook exerts more influence on the d-file. Also winning but not so easily is 25 \( \text{Wd6} \) \( \text{Hxg5} \) 26 \( \text{hxg5} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) when White is less well coordinated.

25 ... \( \text{Hxg5} \)
26 \( \text{hxg5} \)  \( \text{Wc5} \)

Despite being in time-trouble, John finds the toughest defence,
but it only delays the inevitable end.

27 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}f4} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}e6}
28 \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}d1}

28 \ldots \text{\textit{\textbf{h}}6?}
A mistake but \ldots 28 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}xc2} 29 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}d6} \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}c8} 30 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}e5} also leaves Black little hope.

29 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}f6} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}d7}
30 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}xh6}
Clearer than 30 \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}xd7} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}xd7} 31 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}xf7+} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}c6} 32 \text{\textit{\textbf{g}}xh6} \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}g5}.
30 \ldots \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}xc2}
31 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}h8+} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}e7}
32 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}e5+} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}d8}
33 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}b8+} \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}c8}
34 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}d6} \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}c6}
35 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}f8+} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}c7}
36 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}xf7} \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}xa4}
37 \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}c1+} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}b6}
38 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}f2+} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}a5}
39 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}d2+} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}b6}
40 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}e3+} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}a5}
41 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}c3+}

Either 41 \ldots \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}b5} or 41 \ldots \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}b6} is answered by 42 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}c5} mate and 41 \ldots \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}b4} drops the bishop to 42 \text{\textit{\textbf{W}}c7+} so ...

Black resigned

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**Game 13**

M.Adams – Y.Seirawan
Wijk aan Zee 1991
Caro-Kann Defence,
Panov-Botvinnik Attack

Although this game features interesting play in the early stages, both players appear to lose concentration or get tired in the later stages, leading to a fairly comical conclusion to the game. One possible excuse for this was that the six-hour playing session had only recently been introduced, but this game is definitely a hard one to explain.

1 \text{\textit{\textbf{e}}4} \text{\textit{\textbf{c}}6
2 \text{\textit{\textbf{d}}4} \text{\textit{\textbf{d}}5
3 \text{\textit{\textbf{exd}}5} \text{\textit{\textbf{cxd}}5
4 \text{\textit{\textbf{c}}4} \text{\textit{\textbf{f}}6
5 \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}c3} \text{\textit{\textbf{e}}6
6 \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}f3} \text{\textit{\textbf{e}}7
7 \text{\textit{\textbf{cx}}d5} \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}xd5
8 \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}d3} \text{\textit{\textbf{c}}6
9 \text{\textit{\textbf{0-0}}}
10 \text{\textit{\textbf{A}}e1}

Round about this time I had the impression that the Panov was the most dangerous response to the Caro-Kann, but in reality this was just a bit of personal preference. Black’s main problem is that
from this situation no foolproof route to equality has been found. This may explain why so many players prefer to play the line 6...\( \text{h4} \) these days. Yasser’s choice in this game is unusual although it leads to a fairly typical structure in which White’s game is easier to play.

10 ... \( \text{Cc5} \) 
11 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{b6} \) 
12 a3 \( \text{Cc3} \) 
13 \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{Cd5} \)

14 \( \text{Wd3} \)

Also worthy of consideration was 14 \( \text{c4} \) since 14...\( \text{Cxc3} \) 15 \( \text{xh7+ Chxh7} \) 16 \( \text{Wd3+} \) wins a pawn. Nonetheless the game continuation, targeting the black king, is well founded.

14 ... \( \text{ff6} \) 
15 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{g6} \) 
16 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{b7} \) 
17 \( \text{h6} \)

The immediate 17 \( \text{a2} \) allows 17...\( \text{Cd7} \) when the resulting exchange of minor pieces is favourable for Black. 18 \( \text{xg6} \) is a punt (18...\( \text{hxa6} \) 20 \( \text{Xe6} \) is good) but 18...\( \text{Cxg5} \) 19 \( \text{xf8 Wxf8} \) is better for Black.

17 ... \( \text{fe8} \) 
18 \( \text{Wh3} \) \( \text{wc8} \)

A more natural response to the threat of 19 \( \text{xf7 Wxf7} \) 20 \( \text{xe6} \) mate would have been 18...\( \text{f8} \) but 19 \( \text{g5} \) lands Black in an irritating pin.

19 \( \text{a2} \) \( \text{f8} \) 
20 \( \text{xe3} \)

White brings up the heavy mob to try and batter his way through. Not surprisingly Black was not tempted to pinch the a-pawn either now or on his previous move. The reply \( \text{g5} \) gives Black problems in both cases.

20 \( \text{g7} \)

Black cannot afford to swap on \( \text{h6} \) as the queen would occupy a very threatening position.

21 \( \text{a1e1} \) \( \text{c7} \) 
22 \( \text{w4} \) \( \text{xh6} \) 
23 \( \text{wh6} \) \( \text{w7?} \) (D)

Black must walk a tightrope in this position. The correct move was 23...\( \text{d6} \) as 24 \( \text{g6} \) \( \text{fxg6} \) 25 \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{d5} \) holds. White has a variety of other options of which 24 \( \text{g4} \) is the most aggressive possibility, with a complex situation.

24 \( \text{g6} \)

An impressive-looking sacrifice but my subsequent play shows it was not calculated completely correctly.

24 ... \( \text{hxg6} \)

Of course not 24...\( \text{fxg6} \) 25 \( \text{xe6} \) winning.
25 \texttt{Hh3}    \texttt{h5} \\
26 \texttt{Hxh5} \\

Although this move seems to win I certainly didn’t know how, so 26 \texttt{He5} \texttt{Wf8} 27 \texttt{Hxh5} with an extra pawn might have been a better practical choice.

26 ...    \texttt{gxh5} \\
27 \texttt{He5}     \texttt{f6} \\
28 \texttt{He3}    \texttt{h4} \\
29 \texttt{Wxh4}   \texttt{f7} \\

30 \texttt{Wh5+} \\

This position is actually rather tricky as can be evidenced from the fact that I manage to avoid a certain draw and a probable win to give my opponent the advantage. The perpetual check is not difficult to spot but the best move is 30 \texttt{d5!} Neither

a) 30...\texttt{Wxa3} 31 \texttt{dxe6+} \texttt{e7} 32 \texttt{Wh7+} \texttt{d6} 33 \texttt{Wd7+} \texttt{c5} 34 \texttt{Wd4+} \texttt{b5} 35 \texttt{c4+}; \\
b) 30...\texttt{Wb8} 31 \texttt{dxe6+}; nor \\
c) 30...\texttt{e5} 31 \texttt{d6+} offer Black any chances for survival.

It is best to give up the queen either by 30...\texttt{exd5} or 30...\texttt{xd5} but the extra pawn and Black’s exposed king in the resulting queen against double-rook ending should give a near-decisive advantage.

30 ...   \texttt{f8} \\
31 \texttt{Wb8+} \texttt{f7} \\
32 \texttt{xe6+} \\

I suppose this could be described as youthful enthusiasm or inexperienced foolishness. White had to take the draw here with 32 \texttt{Wh7+}. After the text only Black has winning chances.

32 ...    \texttt{Wxe6} \\
33 \texttt{Wh7+} \texttt{f8} \\
34 \texttt{xe6} \texttt{xe6} \\
35 \texttt{h4} \\

Although White has material equality with queen and three pawns for two rooks and a bishop the pawns are too far back to cause a real threat and as soon as Black co-ordinates they will be in real danger of being picked off. On my previous move 35 \texttt{f3}, preventing the bishop coming to the kingside, may have been better but 35...\texttt{e7} still leaves an uphill task.
35 ...  ëe4
36 ëh6+  ëf7
37 f3  ëb1
38 ëh5+

White’s queen has become inactive but repositioning it takes the pressure off the black king.

38 ...  ëg6
39 ëd5  ëh8

A good move which forces White to weaken the second rank.

40 g3  ëhe8
41 h5

There is no choice but to charge forward and hope for the best.

41 ...  ëd3
42 g4  ëg7
43 ëf2  ëe3

With the strong threat of ëe2 as any check on the seventh can be parried by ...ë8e7. So White is forced to allow the break-up of his pawn structure.

44 g5  ëe2+

If 44...fxg5 45 ëxg5+ ëh7 46 ëxe3 and suddenly the position is transformed.

45 ëg3  fxg5
46 ëxg5+  ëh7

47 ëf6  ë2e7
48 d5  ëg7+
49 ëf4

A rather dodgy position for the king but there was no alternative.

49 ...  ëee7
50 ëd4  ëgf7+

It is always tempting to give a check in positions such as this but the correct move was 50...ëe2, which should win as Black retains the option to give check on f7 with either rook. In particular after 51 d6 with the rook on e7.

51 ëg3  ëe2?

A serious blunder. Necessary was 51...ëf5 holding the position. White can continue with 52 c4 planning a4-a5 to break up the black queenside but objectively the position should still be a win for Black.

52 d6  ëxf3+
53 ëh4?

Seeing what I thought was a draw I headed straight for it without thinking. In fact I should have played 53 ëh2 when it is Black who is struggling to draw. If
53...\textit{\texttt{d}}7, 54 \textit{\texttt{w}}e4+ wins so Black must try 53...\textit{\texttt{e}}f7 54 d7 \textit{\texttt{h}}3f4
(54...\textit{\texttt{f}}2+ 55 \textit{\texttt{g}}1 \textit{\texttt{f}}1+ 56 \textit{\texttt{g}}2 is no perpetual after 56...\textit{\texttt{f}}1f3 57
\textit{\texttt{w}}e4+ \textit{\texttt{h}}3f5 58 \textit{\texttt{h}}2! 55 d8\textit{\texttt{w}} \textit{\texttt{a}}xd4
56 cxd4 \textit{\texttt{a}}xh5 when he has some slight drawing chances.

\begin{verbatim}
53 ... \textit{\texttt{e}}f7
54 \textit{\texttt{w}}e4+ \textit{\texttt{h}}7f5
55 \textit{\texttt{w}}xe2
Draw agreed
\end{verbatim}

This was the position I had envisaged when playing 53 \textit{\texttt{h}}4 and assumed that Black would settle
for perpetual check, overlooking that the response 55...\textit{\texttt{h}}6 wins
on the spot. This was definitely the best draw offer I have ever
made, and was completely innocent as I had still not seen this
possibility. Fortunately nor had Yasser.

\textbf{Game 14}

\begin{verbatim}
M.Adams – C.Hansen
Wijk aan Zee 1991
Sicilian Defence, Keres Attack
\end{verbatim}

Whilst opening preparation has never been my forte, this does not
always have to be a disadvantage. In this game I managed to refute
my opponent’s system over the board with a devastating rook sac.
The move was given as the third-best novelty in the appropriate
edition of \textit{\texttt{Informato\textit{\texttt{r}}}}} by a panel of judges.

\begin{verbatim}
1 e4 c5
2 \textit{\texttt{d}}f3 e6
3 d4 cxd4
4 \textit{\texttt{a}}xd4 \textit{\texttt{f}}6
5 \textit{\texttt{c}}3 d6
6 g4 a6
\end{verbatim}

This is one of the sharpest variations of the Keres Attack but, in
my opinion, it is a very difficult one to defend, particularly in prac-
tical play. In some ways Black gets an inferior version of the Najdorf.

\begin{verbatim}
7 g5 \textit{\texttt{d}}fd7
8 \textit{\texttt{e}}e3 b5
9 a3 \textit{\texttt{b}}6
10 h4 \textit{\texttt{b}}7
11 h5 \textit{\texttt{d}}d7
12 g6!
\end{verbatim}

This idea occurred to me over the board. Research after the game
revealed that it is both new and good. Since this game was played,
no-one has been eager to defend the black position so 12 g6 may be
a refutation.
After 12 g6, all the play has been forced up to this point. Here Black has the chance to grab the rook with 14...\textit{\texttt{e7}}, but it would not be wise because 15 \textit{\texttt{w4 c8}} (15...\texttt{c5} 16 \textit{\texttt{g5+ wins Black's queen, 15...\textit{\texttt{c7}} allows mate in two and 15...\textit{\texttt{b8}} runs into 16 \textit{\texttt{g5+}}! \texttt{f6} 17 \textit{\texttt{xe6+ d8}} 18 \textit{\texttt{e8+ c7}} 19 \texttt{e6 mate}) 16 \textit{\texttt{xe6+ d8}} 17 \textit{\texttt{e8+ c7}} 18 \texttt{c6+ b8} (18...\texttt{c6}, is answered by 19 \textit{\texttt{d5 threatening 20 b4 mate, when Black's best is 19...\texttt{xf1+ 20 xf1 xd5 21 exd5+ xd5 22 c7+! [not 22 0-0-0+ c6 23 xf8 xe8 with equality] 22...c6 [22...\texttt{xc7} 23 d1+ c6 24 e4+ and 23...\texttt{c4} 24 e6+ d5 25 g4+ both win] 23 xa8 xe8 with a very good game for White}) 19 \textit{\texttt{xf8}} 20 \textit{\texttt{xb6}} and White has regained the sacrificed material with a large advantage. Hence Curt makes a good decision to allow White to simply regain the sacrificed rook. However the exposed black monarch ensures a clear White advantage.

15 \textit{\texttt{f3+ f6}}

The alternative is 15...\texttt{ff6}, but after 16 \textit{\texttt{xh1 White has the unpleasant threat of h3. It is clear that the move played is preferable as it allows Black to defend the e-pawn with...\texttt{e8 or...c5}.}}

16 \textit{\texttt{xh1 e5??}}

Definitely a critical point in the game. After this move Black loses a pawn and this should mean defeat. However a good alternative is difficult to find. Black’s main problem is his unsafe king compared to White’s, which is about to castle into safety. Both 16...\texttt{c4} 17 \textit{\texttt{xc4 bxc4}} 18 0-0-0 and 16...\texttt{e8 17 0-0-0 defend the weak e6 pawn but do not provide a solution to the problem of king safety. However 16...\texttt{c8} 17 \textit{\texttt{h3 c5}} 18 b4 wins a pawn, so it is hard for Black to choose between the text, sacrificing material for some kind of counterplay, and a solid alternative maintaining material parity, but coming under a powerful attack.

17 \textit{\texttt{xe6}}

White is forced to take up the gauntlet as 17 0-0-0 \texttt{c4} allows Black to establish his knight on an ideal square.

17...\textit{\texttt{exe6}}

Not 17...\texttt{f3+ 18 xf3 xf3 19 g5+ winning nor 17...\textit{\texttt{c4}} 18
\( \text{\^{a}}c4 \text{bxc4 19} \text{\^{a}}g5+ \text{\^{c}}e8 20 \text{\^{c}}h7 \text{leaving White a pawn up with a} \text{good position. Also inadvisable was 17...\^{a}xe6 18} \text{\^{a}}x b6 \text{\^{c}}f3 + 19 \text{\^{c}}e2 \text{as the displacement of the white} \text{king is not important.} \)

18 \text{\^{a}}x b6 \text{d5} \\
19 \text{\^{c}}d4

The most obvious move and clearly better than 19 \text{\^{c}}c7 \text{d4}, but also possible was 19 \text{\^{c}}e3 \text{dxe4 20} \text{\^{c}}xe4. Now after 20...\text{\^{c}}g8, not 21 \text{\^{c}}f6+ \text{\^{w}}xf6 22 \text{\^{w}}xb7 \text{\^{c}}f3 + 23 \text{\^{c}}e2 \text{\^{c}}g1 + which gives Black good activity, but 21 \text{\^{c}}g2 \text{\^{c}}e7 with an advantage to White but no immediate breakthrough as the continuation 22 \text{\^{c}}g5 \text{\^{a}}xg5 23 \text{\^{a}}xb7 \text{\^{a}}d8 is not clear.} \\
19 \text{\^{c}}c6!

Of course after 19...\text{dxe4 20} \text{\^{w}}h5+ \text{\^{c}}g6 21 \text{\^{a}}h3 Black is terminated. \\
20 \text{\^{a}}h3 \text{\^{w}}e8 \\
21 0-0-0 \text{\^{c}}xd4 \\
22 \text{\^{a}}xd4 \text{\^{w}}e5 \\
23 \text{\^{a}}d3

I wanted to keep the option of using the rook along the third rank but it becomes awkwardly placed, therefore the move 23 \text{\^{a}}d1 is more accurate, covering the back rank. \\
23 ... \text{d4} \\
24 \text{\^{c}}d5 \text{\^{a}}xd5 \\
25 \text{exd5} \text{\^{a}}d6 (D) \\
26 \text{\^{a}}f3+?

Heading off on the wrong path due to a later miscalculation. The clearest win for White is the simple 26 \text{\^{a}}e6+ \text{\^{c}}e7 27 \text{\^{w}}h4+ \text{\^{w}}f6 28 \text{\^{w}}xf6+ \text{\^{w}}xf6 29 \text{\^{a}}xd4 when the two pawn advantage should be decisive. Apparently White doesn’t have a clear win without an exchange of queens.} \\
26 ... \text{\^{w}}e7 \\
27 \text{\^{a}}f5 \text{\^{w}}e2 \\
28 \text{\^{w}}g1 \text{\^{a}}e5

I had calculated this far when analysing 23 \text{\^{a}}d3 and had assumed 29 \text{\^{a}}g4 \text{\^{w}}e4 30 f3 \text{\^{w}}e2 31 f4 would win. However when I arrived at the position, I noticed 30...\text{\^{f}}f4 + 31 \text{\^{a}}b1 \text{\^{w}}e3. On closer inspection I discovered that White may no longer be winning. Frustration and my opponent’s time-trouble encouraged me to punt my next move. \\
29 f4 \text{\^{f}}f6 \\
30 \text{\^{a}}xf6 \text{\^{g}}xf6 \\
31 \text{\^{w}}g7+ \text{\^{e}}e8 \\
32 \text{\^{w}}g8+

It is necessary for the white queen to patrol the b1-h7 diagonal to keep the king safe from perpetual checks.} \\
32 ... \text{\^{w}}e7 \\
33 \text{\^{w}}h7+
33 ... $e8?

A bad time-trouble induced error. Black could have forced an immediate draw by the continuation 33...$f8 34 $b1 $e8 35 $e6 (or 35 $h6+ $f7 36 $f5 $g2 37 $h7+$f8 38 $h8+ $f7) 35...$xe6 36 dxe6 $e1+.

34 $b1 $d8?

Black had to try 34...d3 35 cxd3 (after 35 $h6+ $e7 36 $g7+ $e8 37 $g6+ $e7 38 d6+ $xd6 39 $xf6+ Black should be able to hang on by 39...$d5 or 39...$c7) 35...$b4 (35...$d1+ 36 $a2 $b4 37 $d7+ $f8 38 $d6+ and $xb4) but White can avoid perpetual by 36 $d7 $f8 (36...$d8 37 $a4) 37 axb4, when White has extra pawns and good winning chances. As it is, the game is over.

35 $e6

Very painful.

Black resigned

Game 15

There was just time to fit in a couple of weekend events at Exeter (five wins) and Blackpool (four wins and a defeat by John Emms in round 3) as well as a weekend in France representing Clichy (one win, one defeat and a draw) before playing in Dublin’s Telecom Eirann International, which was advertised as the first major chess tournament in Ireland for 34 years. Not only were there a host of strong English players present but also four Russian titled players. Although Michael went through unbeaten and scored five wins it was not enough to prevent Julian Hodgson winning the event, as Julian went one better with six wins. Their individual game was a hard-fought draw. Michael was always playing catch-up after another disappointing start when he drew his first round game with the Irishman, Philip Short. The English players were more successful than their footballing counterparts who could only manage a draw against the Republic at Wembley during the tournament.

On April 1st Michael was drawing with Kaidanov in the final round in Dublin and on the 3rd he made another draw – against Dolmatov in Buenos Aires! Looking back it was a ridiculously punishing schedule. Nevertheless it was rather a special tournament and one that Michael
was particularly privileged to take part in. The event was held to celebrate Najdorf's 81st birthday. Despite his advancing years, the old maestro still ran his own business and actually sponsored the event. Michael was to find out that apart from being a great chess player, Najdorf was a unique personality. When a player got up from his board, the great man would sometimes take his place so that he could consider the position from the same angle as the players. In the city he was an absolute legend and it seemed to Michael that whenever he walked to a restaurant with Najdorf, nearly every citizen would greet them.

As a confirmed carnivore Michael thoroughly enjoyed himself in the steak houses where huge portions were served. Apparently John Fedorowicz started the event convinced that he was a vegetarian but it did not last long! After his punishing travelling schedule it was not surprising that Michael made a slow start and his first win did not come until the fifth round. He then put together a run of four winning games.

B.Larsen - M.Adams
Buenos Aires 1991
English Opening,
Classical Variation

My memory of this game was that I played quite accurately but in reality this was not the case. As my opponent left without analysing after the game I did not realise what chances he had missed until I looked at the game for this book. In view of his missed opportunities I can see why he left the tournament hall so quickly.

1 c4  d5
2  c3  e5
3  g3

This is a very quiet way to play the system. Most people prefer to play 3 f3 to force Black to commit his queen's knight.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move</th>
<th>White Move</th>
<th>Black Move</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0-0</td>
<td>e4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>d4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here the possibility of 7 g5 is less effective than in positions where Black has played ...c6 instead of ...e8, so the white knight takes a less ambitious route. This position is well known with colours reversed and White having an extra tempo; in that case White gains an edge but here Black has comfortable equality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move</th>
<th>White Move</th>
<th>Black Move</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>c6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>c2</td>
<td>x3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>xc3</td>
<td>d5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Black plays very directly as the prospects for piece play are quite good, but this does leave me without many pawns in the centre. 9...e5 also looks like a reasonable move.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move</th>
<th>White Move</th>
<th>Black Move</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>cxd5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>e3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some ways this drives the queen where it wants to go. In a
recent game, Ljubojević-I.Sokolov, Groningen 1994, White played 11 d4 Wh5 12 f3 h3 13 g4 Wh4 14 De3 g6 15 d2 gaining the upper hand.

White wisely evades the 'Irish' pawn centre (trebled pawns) which would not be effective here.

15 ... Dxe4
16 Wc2

The double threat to the e-pawns means that Black will regain his pawn by force, so White sensibly hangs on to the more advanced of them.

16 ... Dxe2
17 We1

A modest move which accepts that White is worse. The other idea is 17 f5 but 17...Dd1 is a surprisingly effective reply: 18 Wd3 We2 19 Wxe2 Dxe2 20 e5 Dd3 leaves White with more material hanging and 18 Wb2 We2 19 d4 (19 e5 Dxe5 20 Dxe5 Wxe5 21 Dxa8 Wb1+ 22 Dg2 Dxe2) 19...Dxe4 20 Wxe2 Dxe2 leaves Black a sound pawn up.

17 ... Df3

The exchange of light-squared bishops leaves the king rather exposed and White's pawn structure now looks a bit ragged. Black's enterprising opening play has resulted in a clear edge.

18 d3 Dxe4
19 Dxe4 c5

A critical moment. Bent now loses a crucial pawn but the only decent way to prevent this is the move 20 c4 which leaves Black with a large advantage and a pleasant position to play because of the retarded d-pawn and the vulnerability of the white king. A strong continuation is 20...Dg4 21 h3
\(\text{\textcopyright e5, bringing the black knight to greener pastures and threatening ...\textit{\textcopyright f3+}.} \)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{20 \textit{\textcopyright f4}} \\
\text{21 d4}
\end{array}
\]

Giving up a pawn but if White retains material equality with 21 dxc4 \textit{\textcopyright g6}, his remaining queenside pawns are weak.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{21 \textit{\textcopyright x e4}}
\end{array}
\]

Based on the straightforward tactical variation 22 \textit{\textcopyright x e4} \textit{\textcopyright d5} 23 \textit{\textcopyright b e1} f5. My opponent's reply is the best chance, preventing ...\textit{\textcopyright d5} which would leave Black in complete control.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{22 \textit{\textcopyright e5}} \\
\text{f5}
\end{array}
\]

Not 22...\textit{\textcopyright g5} 23 \textit{\textcopyright f5}.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{23 \textit{\textcopyright e3}} \\
\text{\textit{\textcopyright dad8}}
\end{array}
\]

Forcing White to misplace the rook as Black is threatening both ...\textit{\textcopyright x e5} and ...\textit{\textcopyright d2+}.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{24 \textit{\textcopyright b2}} \\
\text{\textit{\textcopyright f6?}}
\end{array}
\]

A bad error which fortunately for me goes unpunished. 24...\textit{\textcopyright h6}, followed by transferring the queen to c6, was correct.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{25 h3}
\end{array}
\]

The obvious 25 \textit{\textcopyright x f6} \textit{\textcopyright x e3} 26 \textit{\textcopyright x d8} \textit{\textcopyright f3+} 27 \textit{\textcopyright h3} \textit{\textcopyright e6} looks very dangerous but after 28 \textit{\textcopyright h4} (or 28 \textit{\textcopyright g5} \textit{\textcopyright g4+} 29 \textit{\textcopyright g2} \textit{\textcopyright x g5} 30 \textit{\textcopyright a4} \textit{\textcopyright c1} and Black still has some advantage) 28...\textit{\textcopyright e4} (28...\textit{\textcopyright h6} 29 \textit{\textcopyright w e2}) 29 \textit{\textcopyright d8}, I don't see more than a draw for Black and nor as far as I can tell does \textit{\textcopyright Fritz}.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{25 \textit{\textcopyright d7}}
\end{array}
\]

Now everything is back on course for the moment. There is no real compensation for the pawn.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{26 \textit{\textcopyright e2}} \\
\text{\textit{\textcopyright f7}}
\end{array}
\]

The exchange of queens was a more sensible way to proceed. There is a definite air of sloppiness about my play in this part of the game, perhaps due to the fact that I had just won three in a row.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{27 \textit{\textcopyright f4}} \\
\text{\textit{\textcopyright e3}}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{28 \textit{\textcopyright x e3}} \\
\text{\textit{\textcopyright e8}}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{29 \textit{\textcopyright f3}} \\
\text{\textit{\textcopyright e4}}
\end{array}
\]

Fighting for control of the d5 square. Another way to do this was 29...\textit{\textcopyright f6} 30 \textit{\textcopyright e5} \textit{\textcopyright d5} but the bishop on e5 is just as well placed as the knight alongside it.
30 g4  \(\text{\textit{\_d5}}\)
Preventing \(\text{\texttt{\_e2}}\).
31 gxf5  \(\text{\textit{\_xf5}}\)
32 \(\text{\texttt{\_g3}}\)  \(\text{\textit{\_d5}}\)

The exchange of queens would be less good here because White’s king would become active in the ending, but by staying centralised Black remains in prime position.
33 a4  \(\text{\textit{\_f6}}\)

A bad error that gives Larsen a chance to complicate. Better was 33...h6, looking after king safety and meeting 34 \(\text{\texttt{\_b5}}\) with 34...\(\text{\texttt{\_e6}}\) or 34...\(\text{\texttt{\_e2+}}\). In this position White still has some fighting chances but accurate play should win. Now White is right back in the game.
34 a5

Giving up another pawn is essential, as on 34 \(\text{\texttt{\_e5}}\) the strong 34...\(\text{\texttt{\_e3}}\) was planned.
34 ...  \(\text{\texttt{\_bxa5}}\)

Taking with the queen deserved consideration: 34...\(\text{\texttt{\_xa5}}\) 35 \(\text{\texttt{\_e5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\_d5}}\) 36 \(\text{\texttt{\_xf6}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\_xf6}}\) 37 \(\text{\texttt{\_xf6}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\_e6+}}\) staying a pawn up.
35 \(\text{\texttt{\_e5}}\)

The check 35 \(\text{\texttt{\_b8+}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\_f7}}\) has no follow-up and by leaving the second rank White allows Black a threat of ...\(\text{\texttt{\_e2+}}\). Larsen’s move plans 35...\(\text{\texttt{\_e3}}\) 36 \(\text{\texttt{\_xd5 \_xd5}}\) 37 \(\text{\texttt{\_b7}}\) with counterplay along the seventh rank.
35 ...  \(\text{\texttt{\_d7}}\)
36 \(\text{\texttt{\_g3}}\)  \(\text{\texttt{\_c6}}\)

Of course not 36...\(\text{\texttt{\_xe5}}\) 37 \(\text{\texttt{\_b8+}}\). The text move deals with the threat of \(\text{\texttt{\_e2}}\) by introducing the option of ...\(\text{\texttt{\_g6+}}\).

37 \(\text{\texttt{\_h2}}\)  h6

There is no alternative to this due to the threat of \(\text{\texttt{\_f2}}\).
38 \(\text{\texttt{\_f5}}\)

Here White had two other good alternatives to the text move. He can play 38 \(\text{\texttt{\_f2}}\) anyway, as after 38...\(\text{\texttt{\_xe5}}\) 39 dxe5  \(\text{\texttt{\_d5}}\) 40  \(\text{\texttt{\_f8+}}\)  \(\text{\texttt{\_h7}}\) 41  \(\text{\texttt{\_f5+}}\) g6 42  \(\text{\texttt{\_f7+}}\)  \(\text{\texttt{\_xf7}}\) 43  \(\text{\texttt{\_xf7+}}\)  \(\text{\texttt{\_g8}}\) 44  \(\text{\texttt{\_e7}}\) there are drawing chances. However, most spectacular and best is 38 \(\text{\texttt{\_xg7}}\) when Black should play 38...\(\text{\texttt{\_d6+}}\) (recapturing with 38...\(\text{\texttt{\_xg7}}\) 39  \(\text{\texttt{\_g2+}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\_h8}}\) 40 \(\text{\texttt{\_g3}}\) wins for White).

Now White has three possibilities:

a) 39  \(\text{\texttt{\_g2}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\_e7}}\) 40 \(\text{\texttt{\_e5 \_xe5}}\) 41 dxe5  \(\text{\texttt{\_xe5}}\);

b) 39 \(\text{\texttt{\_e5 \_xe5}}\) 40 \(\text{\texttt{\_xe4 \_d3+}}\) 41 \(\text{\texttt{\_h1 \_xb2}}\) 42 \(\text{\texttt{\_g2+ \_f7}}\) 43 \(\text{\texttt{\_xb2}}\); or

c) 39 \(\text{\texttt{\_e5 \_xe5}}\) 40 dxe5 \(\text{\texttt{\_xe5+}}\) 41 \(\text{\texttt{\_g2}}\).

In all cases Black maintains some advantage but a draw is the most probable result.
38 ...  g6

This looks dangerous but there is a definite sting in the tail.
39 \textit{Ng2?}

The final error, finishing the game immediately. 39 \textit{Wf3} had to be played, when after the continuation 39...\textit{Qxe5} 40 dxe5 \textit{Wd5} 41 \textit{Hb8}+ \textit{Sh7} 42 \textit{Hxe8} \textit{Wd2}+ 43 \textit{Gg3} \textit{We1}+ 44 \textit{Wf2} a drawish ending results. 39 d5 is interesting but not quite sufficient. Although 39...\textit{gxh5} 40 dxc6 wins for White(!), Black can play 39...\textit{Wb6}! when White can try either 40 \textit{Hxb6} \textit{gxh5} 41 \textit{Hg6}+ \textit{Sh7} 42 \textit{Hg7}+ \textit{Sh8} 43 \textit{Hxd7}+ \textit{Hxe5} 44 d6 \textit{He8} 45 \textit{Hxa7} \textit{Hd5} or 40 \textit{Hg2} \textit{Hxe5} 41 \textit{Hxd7} \textit{Wf6} but both are to Black’s advantage.

39 \textit{He2}

The cross-pins come out in Black’s favour.

White resigned

---

**Game 16**

Michael’s winning sequence came to an end when he lost to Granda Zuniga and then he completed the tournament with three draws including one with Mikhail Tal. This was their second and final encounter as Tal died the following year. The first had been at Cannes and had been drawn in 22 moves. This one lasted a mere fourteen moves and was probably agreed as a draw beforehand. Michael is not absolutely sure if he did actually receive a phonecall at six in the morning suggesting a draw or whether he dreamt it, as it was not his custom to get up until a bit nearer to the games 5 p.m. start time. When Tal offered an early draw after playing a quiet opening he realised it had not been a figment of his imagination. Either way it was a great privilege to play such a great player and it is one that Michael treasures.

In May Michael drew with another ex-world champion, Boris Spassky, in the Clichy-Lyons French league match. Lyons went on to win their second successive French title with Clichy finishing runners-up. Michael contributed three wins and two draws in this final group of fixtures.

**M.Adams – M.Hebden**  
*French league 1990/91*  
Spanish Opening,  
Marshall Attack

The two teams involved in this match were actually vying for my services at the end of this particular season. As Clichy were able to match the offer of Auxerre this did not result in me actually moving clubs, but did lead to a substantial increase in my match fee.

It was certainly an experience that I would be happy to repeat.

1 \textit{e4}  
2 \textit{Qf3}  
3 \textit{Ab5}

1 \textit{e5}  
2 \textit{Ac6}  
3 \textit{a6}
4 \hfont{a}a4 \hfont{f}6
5 0-0 \hfont{e}7
6 \hfont{e}e1 b5
7 \hfont{b}b3 0-0
8 c3 d5
9 exd5 \hfont{xd}5
10 \hfont{xe}5 \hfont{xe}5
11 \hfont{xe}5 c6
12 d3

This is probably at least as dangerous as the alternative 12 d4.

12 \hfont{a}a7

This move is rarely played although it is not at all bad. In fact it is not mentioned in either the Nunn/Harding book on the Marshall or in the Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings. Black intends to make use of the open second rank to either take control of the e-file or to put pressure on the d-pawn.

13 \hfont{e}e1

A natural reaction but this does allow Black some play. The most accurate may be 13 \hfont{xd}5 cxd5 14 \hfont{d}2 with the idea of 14...d4 15 c4. However once White exchanges bishop for knight Black is ensured some compensation.

13 ... c5 \hfont{(D)}
14 a4

It was not possible to develop with 14 \hfont{d}2 as 14...\hfont{f}4 15 \hfont{f}3 \hfont{xd}3 regains material with a good game for Black.

14 ... b4

Played with the idea of keeping the white rook from entering the fray down the a-file but in fact more accurate was 14...\hfont{d}7 focusing on the weak d3 pawn. After 15 axb5 axb5, 16 \hfont{d}2 is still not playable due to 16...\hfont{f}4, thus 16 \hfont{a}3 is critical: 16...\hfont{w}b6 17 \hfont{xb}5 \hfont{xb}5 18 \hfont{xd}5 \hfont{xd}5 19 c4 wins, so the complications after 16...c4 17 dxc4 bxc4 (17...\hfont{xa}3 18 cxd5) 18 \hfont{xc}4 \hfont{xc}3 19 \hfont{c}2 are important, but these are good for White. Hence 16...b4 17 \hfont{b}5 (17 \hfont{c}4 doesn’t lead to anything clear after 17...bxc3 18 \hfont{e}5 cxb2 19 \hfont{xb}2 \hfont{c}7 and 17...\hfont{f}6 also looks quite playable) 17...bxc3 18 bxc3 is critical, when Black is fighting for equality.

15 d4

A strong move since Black is forced to release the tension as c3-c4, followed by d4-d5 cementing a solid passed pawn advantage, is threatened.

15 ... cxd4

Of course White would be happy with 15...bxc3 16 \hfont{xc}3 helping his development.

16 cxd4

If 16 \hfont{xd}4 \hfont{d}7 the open nature of the position helps Black with his superior development. After the move played White’s d-pawn
looks weak, but the situation is slightly deceptive as Black has to move the well placed knight on d5 to attack it.

16 ... \textit{d}d7
17 \textit{d}d2 \textit{b}7

Black opts for simple development, hoping to obtain long-term pressure for the pawn. The other option was to try and regain it immediately with 17...\textit{c}c7 18 \textit{f}3 \textit{f}6 19 \textit{e}3, but then White develops happily so his choice seems stronger.

18 \textit{f}3 \textit{d}6

Black consistently refuses to go after the isolated pawn but here it may have been stronger to have done so. 18...\textit{f}6 19 \textit{e}3 \textit{c}5 is a reasonable way to play, when 20 \textit{c}2 \textit{a}7 21 \textit{e}5 looks impressive but Black has a decent continuation in 21...\textit{c}7, followed by occupying d5 again.

19 \textit{g}5

White sends the bishop round the angles to try and exchange its opposite number.

19 ... \textit{f}6

Also interesting was 19...\textit{b}8.

20 \textit{h}4 \textit{h}8

This was the problem with the last move. Some loss of time is inevitable.

21 \textit{g}3 \textit{f}4
22 a5

There was no immediate impressive continuation but White can be content with this move. Black must contend with the possibility of either \textit{c}4, focusing on a6, or \textit{a}4, irritating the black rook. The black queenside pawns also become weaker than their white counterparts.

22 ... \textit{g}5

A move like this is obviously weakening but Black may have felt he was short of moves. Nonetheless I would have preferred 22...\textit{a}8.

23 \textit{h}3

It is sensible to prevent the possibility of ...\textit{g}5-g4 or ...\textit{xg}2 followed by ...\textit{g}5-g4.

23 \textit{d}5

It looks more logical to play 23...\textit{h}5, renewing the threat, but 24 \textit{x}f4 \textit{x}f4 25 \textit{e}6 is strong as 25...\textit{d}6 26 \textit{g}3 leaves Black in a lot of trouble. However 23...\textit{a}8 still looks more consistent.

24 \textit{d}3

There is no reason to fear 24...\textit{x}g3 25 \textit{fxg}3 as the doubled pawn would cover the important f4 square.

24 ... \textit{f}4

An admission that Black has lost the thread of the game but by now White is a pawn up with a good position.

25 \textit{x}f4 \textit{x}f4
26 d5

Now the pawn, which had earlier been a weakness, becomes a strength, although Black has little choice but to leave it on the board as 26...\textit{x}d5 27 \textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 28 \textit{x}a6 gives me another useful passed pawn.

26 ... \textit{c}7
27 ♗ad1 ♘xa5

Now Black establishes material equality but allows White to dominate the middle of the board, so 27...♗d6 was well worth considering as it is difficult for the white knight to reach the f5 and e6 squares.

28 d6

The black b-pawn is indefensible so there is no hurry to take it. White concentrates on shepherding the d-pawn.

31 ... ♙c6

The alternative was 31...a5 but after 32 d7 ♙c6 33 ♙d4 ♙xd7 34 ♙c6 White picks up material. The move played threatens ...♗b5 but now White can capture both black queenside pawns.

32 ♙xa6 ♙d7
33 ♙d4 ♙c5

It is essential to keep the knight from f5.

34 ♙xb3

Cleaner was the continuation 34 ♙xd7 ♙xd4 35 ♙f5 when Black has not much hope, but the two pawn margin in the game is also ample.

34 ... ♙b6
35 ♙d3 ♙e8
36 ♙xe8+ ♙xe8
37 ♙xd7 ♙xd7
38 ♙d2

It is not difficult to convert as Black’s pieces are tied to blocking the d-pawn.

38 ... ♙g6

There is no reason to refuse the exchange of queens.

39 ♙c4

39 ... ♙xd3
40 ♙xd3 ♙d8

The bishop would have been more active on c5, but here it frees the black rook.

41 ♙g4 ♙g7
42 ♙g2 ♙f7
43 ♙e3
Cutting off the black king and ending any lingering hopes.

43 ... \(\text{Bb7}\)
44 \(\text{Qf3}\) \(\text{Bb5}\)

Black resigned

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**Game 17**

A week later, after the French league matches, Michael was back on the Continent playing in an all-play-all category 13 event at Terrassa in Spain. Four Russians with 2600+ ratings headed the field and it was Michael’s fate to be drawn with Black against each one of them. These were not the circumstances that you would expect Michael to produce the best performance of his career, but that is what happened, with Michael going through undefeated and including Ivanchuk and Ehlvest among his four victories as he went through the tournament undefeated to finish on six and a half out of nine. Michael received a mid-tournament boost in the form of a flying visit from David Norwood and Peter Ariowitsch, whose flat in London was a frequent meeting spot for grandmasters discussing opening novelties over a few tequilas and was a base for Michael on occasions, notably during the English championship. After a night out in Barcelona David and Peter set off to contest the annual Benidorm tournament leaving Michael with a copy of Viz for preparation! Eventually he won the event on tie-break from Ehlvest, with Ivanchuk, then the world number two, a point further back. The other two Russians in the event were Romanishin and Epishin, the latter helping Michael’s cause by beating Ehlvest in the final round.

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**M. Adams – J. Pomes**

*Terrassa 1991*

French Defence,
Tarrasch Variation

My career has not by any means been full of powerful opening novelties or heavily analysed theoretical systems – in fact just the opposite! However, the next game does feature one of my better efforts. I not only managed to produce over twenty moves that I had analysed before but even achieved a probably winning position at the end of it.

1 \(\text{e4}\) \(\text{e6}\)
2 \(\text{d4}\) \(\text{d5}\)
3 \(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{c5}\)
4 \(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{Wxd5}\)
5 \(\text{Qgf3}\) \(\text{cxd4}\)
6 \(\text{Ac4}\) \(\text{Wd6}\)
7 0-0

White cannot regain the pawn immediately due to 7 \(\text{Qb3}\) \(\text{Wb4+}\) but the large lead in development...
means that Black would be ill-advised to hang onto it.

7 ... e6
8 d3 c6
9 bxd4 d4
10 xd4 a6
11 e1 c7
12 b3 d6
13 f5

This is the critical line. If White plays 12 h3, then the continuation 12...0-0 13 g5 h2+ 14 h1 f6 is fine for Black.

13 ... xh2+
14 h1 f8

It is now known that 14...0-0! is the most accurate way to play the position, with the idea of the important zwischenzug 15 xg7 d8 (15...xg7 16 d4 threatening h6+ is good for White), but this idea was not played until two years after the current game. I had seen my opponent play the text move in an earlier game and had a specific idea in mind.

15 g3 exf5

Jon Speelman once won an incredibly visual game against Psakhis with the sacrifice 15...xg3 16 xg3, but with good defence White’s material plus should be enough.

16 f4 c6+

If 16...b6, then 17 d6+xd6 18 xd6+ g8 19 e7 e6 20 xe6 is strong.

17 xh2 e6

All the moves are of a rather forcing nature as Black must deal with the threat of d8+.

18 d6+

Surprisingly, it is more dangerous for Black if the queens stay on the board. 18 d6+ xd6 19 xd6+ e8 leads to a roughly level ending.

18 e8

Of course not 18...g8 19 xe6, a recurring problem.

19 c4!

This is the important move. The direct 19 xe6 fxe6 20 xe6+ f7 21 e7+ g6 leaves Black’s king quite safe. By maintaining the powerful bishop on d6, White makes it impossible for Black to gain the necessary level of co-ordination to exploit his pawn advantage and White’s exposed king. Another more immediate problem is that after c4-c5 Black is threatened with a4 pinning the queen.

19 ... h5

Black aims for counterplay by opening up the h-file, where his rook is conveniently located. This is a natural decision but ultimately Black’s attack suffers from lack of
support. No better was 19...\(\text{\(d\)}\) 4 20 \(c\) 5 \(\text{\(d\)}\) xd6 (20...\(\text{\(d\)}\) xf2 21 \(\text{\(d\)}\) d4 \(\text{\(d\)}\) g4 + 22 \(\text{\(d\)}\) g1 ends Black’s fun and White’s is just beginning) 21 cxd6 (not 21 \(\text{\(d\)}\) xe6 \(\text{\(d\)}\) xc5) 21...\(\text{\(d\)}\) d7 22 \(\text{\(d\)}\) xe6 + fxe6 23 \(\text{\(d\)}\) h5 g6 (23...\(\text{\(d\)}\) xd6 24 \(\text{\(d\)}\) f7) 24 \(\text{\(d\)}\) g5 \(\text{\(d\)}\) ae8 25 \(\text{\(d\)}\) ac1 \(\text{\(d\)}\) f3 26 \(\text{\(d\)}\) fd1 \(\text{\(d\)}\) h5 + (26...\(\text{\(d\)}\) xf2 + 27 \(\text{\(d\)}\) h3 leaves Black defenceless) 27 \(\text{\(d\)}\) xh5 gxh5 28 \(\text{\(d\)}\) c7 + \(\text{\(d\)}\) d8 29 \(\text{\(d\)}\) xb7 with a winning ending.

20 \(c\) 5 \(h\) 4
21 \(f\) 3 (D)

This was the end of my pre-game preparation, with a very satisfactory result. After being on the wrong end of many dismal opening positions, it was nice to have turned the tables for once. The second quiet move from White puts his opponent in considerable difficulty. After the incorrect 21 \(\text{\(a\)}\) a4 White is in big trouble after 21...\(\text{\(h\)}\) xg3 + 22 \(\text{\(d\)}\) xg3 (or 22 \(\text{\(d\)}\) g1 \(\text{\(h\)}\) h1 mate) 22...f4 + 23 \(\text{\(d\)}\) xf4 \(\text{\(h\)}\) h4 + 24 \(\text{\(d\)}\) g3 \(\text{\(a\)}\) a4. However, the text move secures the white monarch and puts Black’s king under pressure which, because of its precarious position in the middle of the board, it is unable to resist.

21 ...
\(\text{\(d\)}\) d8

Black decides to delay capturing on g3 in order to tie White’s queen to the defence of the f-pawn. After 21...\(\text{\(h\)}\) xg3 + 22 \(\text{\(d\)}\) xg3 \(\text{\(d\)}\) d8 23 \(\text{\(d\)}\) d4 is possible. Unplayable was 21...b5 22 cxb6 \(\text{\(w\)}\) xb6 23 \(\text{\(a\)}\) a4 + .

22 \(\text{\(a\)}\) xe6 \(f\) xe6
23 \(\text{\(a\)}\) xe6 \(c\) c8
24 \(\text{\(w\)}\) b3

Black’s position has now clearly become desperate. The pawn has been regained and White’s last piece is coming into the game. The only chance is somewhat caused by the vulnerable placing of White’s monarch, but with care this can be avoided.

24 ...
\(\text{\(h\)}\) xg3 +
25 \(\text{\(d\)}\) xg3 \(\text{\(w\)}\) b5

The exchange of queens is not to Black’s advantage as the rook on a8 remains completely out of the game. However, it is hard to see a good move as 25...f4 + 26 \(\text{\(a\)}\) xf4 \(\text{\(d\)}\) h5 + 27 \(\text{\(d\)}\) f2 \(\text{\(w\)}\) xc5 + 28 \(\text{\(a\)}\) e3, 25...\(\text{\(d\)}\) h5 + 26 \(\text{\(d\)}\) f2 and 25...\(\text{\(d\)}\) d5 26 \(\text{\(a\)}\) ae1 f4 + 27 \(\text{\(a\)}\) xf4 all fail due to a lack of co-ordination amongst the black forces.

26 \(\text{\(a\)}\) ae1

26 \(\text{\(w\)}\) x b5 is obviously wrong as it allows the spectator rook on a8 some freedom.

26 \(\text{\(w\)}\) x b3
27 axb3 \(\text{\(d\)}\) d5
28 \(\text{\(g\)}\) g6 \(\text{\(g\)}\) g8

Of course it would be very desirable for Black to jettison a pawn
with 28...\textit{d}d7 29 \textit{ex}g7+ \textit{c}6, but
29 \textit{d}d1 is more to the point.

29 \textit{e}e5 \textit{f}6
30 \textit{e}e7 \textit{e}8

Or 30...\textit{d}d5 31 \textit{f}f7.
31 \textit{e}e5 a5
32 \textit{b}b6 Black resigned

\textbf{Game 18}

\textbf{V. Ivanchuk – M. Adams}
\textit{Terrassa 1991}
Spanish Opening,
Marshall Attack

Like most players I would shy away from naming any one game as my best, but this excellent win with Black against a very strong opponent would have a good claim. It was particularly nice to achieve virtual zugzwang with so much material remaining on the board.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
1 & \textit{e}4 \textit{e}5 \\
2 & \textit{d}f3 \textit{c}6 \\
3 & \textit{b}b5 \textit{a}6 \\
4 & \textit{a}4 \textit{f}6 \\
5 & 0-0 \textit{e}7 \\
6 & \textit{e}1 b5 \\
7 & \textit{b}3 0-0 \\
8 & c3 d5 \\
9 & exd5 \textit{d}xd5 \\
10 & \textit{d}xe5 \textit{d}xe5 \\
11 & \textit{xe}5 c6 \\
12 & d4 \textit{d}6 \\
13 & \textit{e}1 \textit{h}4 \\
14 & g3 \textit{h}3 \\
15 & \textit{e}3 \textit{g}4 \\
16 & \textit{d}3 \textit{a}e8 \\
17 & \textit{d}2 \textit{h}5!!
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

I was trying to play the Spassky system (which would have been achieved by 17...\textit{e}6 18 a4 \textit{h}5) but accidentally inverted the order of moves. I only realised this when I made my move because Vasily raised his eyebrows and sunk into thought. Strangely, after I played this move all the lights in the tournament hall went out! They were repaired fifteen minutes later but ‘Chukky’ continued thinking for about another fifty minutes before playing:

18 \textit{f}1

After 18 a4 \textit{f}5 (18...\textit{e}6 transposes to the Spassky variation but this attempts to take advantage of Black’s move order) 19 \textit{f}1 (not 19 \textit{d}1 \textit{xd}1 20 \textit{xf}5 \textit{xe}3 winning a piece) 19...\textit{h}3 20 \textit{d}1 (20 \textit{d}3 is just a draw) 20...\textit{f}5 21 \textit{e}2 c5 with a complex position.
18 ... Ke6
19 d1?! 
I do not like this move, after which Black should have very good compensation for his pawn. Normal is 19 a4.

19 ... f5
20 xg4 Wxg4
21 d2 g6
22 g2

A difficult choice. Not good was 22 c4 bxc4 23 Wxc4 h8, but also possible was 22 f3 Wh3 23 We2 f4 24 Wg2 Wd7 25 g4. One way for Black to continue here is 25...h5 26 h3 hxg4 27 hxg4 c5. Black has the easier game to play but the position is objectively unclear.

22 ... f4
23 f3 Wh5
24 g4 Wh4! (D)

I spent a lot of time looking at the tempting 24...Wf6 25 h3 Wh4, but White has a good defence in 26 Ae2 (26 Ae6 is also possible but much less clear) 26...Wh6 27 g1 when Black has no real way to proceed.

The text forces a rook move due to the threat of ...Wxg4+, whilst ideas of ...Wh6 and ...Wh3+ followed by ...Bxe3 are also worrying for White.

25 Ae2

Given a '?' by Gavrikov in his notes in Die Schachwoche, but I don't see an alternative. Gavrikov's 25 Ae4 Wf6 26 Ae1 Wg5 (26...Wh5 may be better but will probably come to the same thing) 27 Bd2 seems to be rather powerfully met by 27...Wxg4 28 fxg4 Wxg4+ 29 Kg3 Kh6.

25 ... Wxg4+

Also interesting in this position is 25...Kh6 followed by the plan outlined in the note to move 24. The text is more clear-cut though not necessarily better.

26 fxg4 f3+
27 Wh1

I had totally failed to notice this, looking only at 27 Wxf3 Wxf3 28 Wxf3 Wh3+ 29 Kg3 Wf6 or 29 Wf2 Wh2, both with very good chances for Black. The text move is definitely better than that, although White's king will never be completely safe.

27 ... fxe2
28 Wxe2 Wh8

Black must consolidate his own position before doing anything active.

29 Kg1 h6
30 Wg2 Af4
31 Ae1 Wg5
32 h3?!

Both players were running a little short of time at this point and
in particular the pace of Vasily’s moves had increased. 32 h3 was flicked out as another solid quick move, but in fact the loss of time is rather critical. 32 Ad1 had to be played.

32 \( \mathbb{W}g6! \)

Once seen, a very obvious move, but it took me a while to stumble on it. None of the more obvious attempts at infiltrating on the dark squares really accomplish anything but now that the queen controls the light squares the situation is very different. White’s reply is forced to prevent ...\( \mathbb{W}d3 \).

33 Ad1 \( \mathbb{A}b8 \)
34 Ad2 \( \mathbb{W}b1 \)
35 \( \mathbb{A}f2 \) \( \mathbb{G}g8! \) (D)

Exploiting the paralysed state of White’s pieces, and much stronger than 35...\( \mathbb{W}xa2 \) 36 \( \mathbb{A}g3 \).

36 b3

This loses by force, but the more solid 36 a3 is well answered by 36...\( \mathbb{A}h8 \) and if then 37 a4 \( \mathbb{G}g8 \) etc. All piece moves lose material immediately. The rest needs little comment as once the white rook leaves its defensive position the roof falls in.

36 ... \( \mathbb{A}f4 \)
37 \( \mathbb{A}e2 \) \( \mathbb{D}xc3 \)
38 \( \mathbb{A}e6 \) \( \mathbb{W}xa2 \)
39 \( \mathbb{A}xc6 \) \( \mathbb{W}xb3 \)
40 \( \mathbb{A}xa6 \) \( \mathbb{D}e2+ \)
41 \( \mathbb{A}h1 \) \( \mathbb{A}b8 \)

An amusing echo. Once again the possibility of ...\( \mathbb{A}f4 \) is tough to meet.

42 \( \mathbb{A}e1 \) \( \mathbb{W}d1 \)

White resigned

---

**Game 19**

Only one day after playing in Terrassa, Michael played Paul Littlewood, the 1981 British champion, in a three-game exhibition quickplay match in Sheffield before a weekend congress. Michael won the quickplay event convincingly and went on to share first place in the weekend event with Paul and John Nunn. It was a strong weekender with Michael defeating Malcolm Pein and Mark Hebden in rounds three and four.

Four weeks later he was back in Yorkshire at Leeds for the British rapidplay championships, played on two days over eleven rounds. Michael led for much of the tournament, including wins against David
Norwood, Jim Plaskett and John Nunn, until he met Polugayevsky in the penultimate round. Unfortunately Michael managed to blunder away what should have been an easily drawn bishop endgame. This meant that the Russian shared first place with Jon Speelman on 9 out of 11 with Michael and Jim Plaskett half a point behind.

The July 1991 rating list provided another landmark in Michael’s career. He was placed in the world’s top twenty for the first time with his new rating of 2615, which also placed him at number three on the English list.

After playing in ten successive BCF championships – the last six in the British championship itself – Michael and several other British GMs decided not to compete in 1991 when the absence of a sponsor meant that there was no appearance money for top players, while prize money was also drastically reduced. It was a hard decision to make as the BCF championships had provided Michael with many happy times since he started in the under-11; and had especially enjoyed the camaraderie with his fellow players. At the same time, given that he was a chess professional with a living to make, it was not a difficult decision to accept an invitation to play in the Biel Chess Festival. Apart from the financial implications, there was also the opportunity of further international chess experience. The Soviet players, in the form of Shirov, Bareev and Gavrikov, certainly took revenge for Michael’s fine results against their counterparts at Terrassa as they scored 5½ out of 6 against him. It was just as well there were only three of them and a score of 5 out of 8 against the rest of the field gave his final result almost an air of respectability.

M. Adams – J. Lautier
Biel 1991
French Defence,
Tarrasch Variation

My opponent in this game has the habit of screwing in his moves when in a powerful position, and this was an indirect factor in this game. Some rounds earlier Joel had defeated Larry Christiansen and finished his victory by screwing in the last few moves, which had not greatly pleased Larry. He immediately put a price of two beers on Joel’s head for this game and four more if I screwed in the winning move...

1 e4 e6

The French player rarely defends so patriotically these days.

2 d4 d5
3  d2 c5
4  e5  xd5
5  g3  x4
6  c4  d6
7  0-0  f6
8  b3  c6
9 \(\text{bxd4}\) \(\text{xd4}\)
10 \(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{d7}\)

More common is 10...\(\text{a6}\) here.
11 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{c7}\)
12 \(\text{e2}\) 0-0-0

Three alternatives involve developing the f8-bishop: 12...\(\text{d6}\)
13 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{xb}5\) (13...\(\text{xh}2+\) 14 \(\text{h}1\) and the black bishop is in trouble)
14 \(\text{xb}5+\) \(\text{e}7\) 15 \(\text{g}3\) and the bishop pair gives White a pleasant edge; 12...\(\text{c}5\) 13 \(\text{g}5\) when the kingside pawn structure will be shattered; and finally 12...\(\text{e}7\) or 12...\(\text{a}6\) 13 \(\text{g}5\) \(\text{e}7\), which are solid but slightly passive and lead to similar positions. The text move is popular but heading for the queenside is dangerous.

13 \(\text{a}4\)

A typical move in this position so that after \(\text{b}5\) White can recapture with the a-pawn, opening a file towards the black king. The sole way to prevent this is 13...\(\text{a}6\), but after 14 \(\text{b}4\) the pawn storm is very swift, as there is already a threat of 15 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{a}5\) 16 \(\text{b}6\), when the black king looks very Draughty.

13 ... \(\text{h}5\)

This is the idea of Black's play: he looks to mount a snap attack based on a combination of ...\(\text{c}5\) and ...\(\text{g}4\). This is not really successful in this position for an interesting reason; although the dark squares are well controlled by the attacking side, the difficulties in controlling any light squares mean that the attack is ultimately unsuccessful, so White holds the

strategic trumps. Another game of mine, against Djurhuus, went 13...\(\text{d}6\) 14 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{h}5\) 15 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{xb}5\) 16 axb5 \(\text{b}6\) 17 \(\text{a}4\) but this is definitely no kind of improvement for Black.

14 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{xb}5\)

There is little choice because
14...\(\text{b}8\) 15 \(\text{e}3\) \(\text{a}6\) 16 \(\text{a}7+\) \(\text{c}7\)
17 \(\text{a}5\) doesn't look very promising.

15 axb5 \(\text{g}4\)

The most direct move, which has the advantage of threatening mate in one. 15...\(\text{c}5\) has also been played and does give Black a few more options, but 16 \(\text{a}4\) \(\text{g}4\) 17 \(\text{g}3\) still looks good for White.

16 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{c}5\)
17 \(\text{g}2\)

Of course not 17 \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{xg}3\)+, but now Black's attack is largely defused as 17...\(\text{xf}2\) 18 \(\text{xf}2\) \(\text{xf}2\) 19 \(\text{xf}2\) leads nowhere and ...\(\text{h}5-\text{h}4\) is impossible due to the knight hanging. It was also possible to play 17 \(\text{a}4\) here, transposing to the line above. It all pretty much comes to the same thing.
Another possibility is 17...\&e5, which is probably also met by 18 \&a4.

18 \&a4

It was possible to play 18 h3 because although the consequences of 18...\&xf2 19 \&xf2 \&xf2 20 \&xf2 h4 are not completely clear, inserting 19 \&f4 is strong. Instead of 18...\&xf2 Black should play 18...\&e5 19 \&f4 \&d6. There is no real reason for White to get involved in complications when there is a useful consolidating move available and the threat of doubling on the a-file is so strong.

18 ... \&he8

It is difficult to find an active plan for Black. 18...e5 seems a logical move, but 19 h3 \&f6 20 \&e3 followed by \&fa1 focuses on the weak a-pawn, which cannot be adequately defended once the white rooks double on the a-file.

19 h3 \&f6

20 \&g5

The natural 20 \&e3 also looks good, but 20...h4 is surprisingly irritating. If 21 g4, then 21...\&d5 targets the f4 square. The text move is rather strong; White aims to connect his rooks before swapping bishops to remove the only defender of the a7 pawn. It also clamps down on the h-pawn.

20 ... \&d7

21 \&fa1

Not 21 b6, intending 21...\&xb6 22 \&b5, as 21...\&c6+ turns the tables.

22 \&xd5

Easily the best move of the game. It was tempting to just snap up the h5 pawn as 22 \&xh5 \&xf2 23 \&xf2 \&c5+ 24 \&e2 should be good for White, but the text move leads to a forced win due to a series of neat tactical points.

22 ... \&xd5

23 \&f4 e5

24 b4

The pin of the e-pawn causes Black all sorts of problems. If 24...\&b6 25 c4 \&dd8 26 \&e3 \&xe3 27 \&xe3 \&b6 (27...\&xc4 28 \&xa7 \&xb5 29 \&a8+ \&c7 30 \&c1+ \&d7 31 \&c5) 28 \&e2 followed by c4-c5.

24 \&d7

A reasonable attempt but I had already foreseen the refutation.

25 \&g5

It is very important to control the d8 square, as will be seen in a few moves.

25 ... \&b6

26 c4 \&d3

27 c5 \&xb5
28 \( \text{h2} \)
Now the pin works in White’s favour.

\[
\begin{align*}
28 \ldots & \text{c7} \\
29 \text{xa7} & \text{c8} \\
30 \text{a8+} & \text{b8} \\
\text{If 30...d7 31 xe8 xe8 32 d1 and Black perishes.} \\
31 \text{d1} \\
\text{Round about here I remembered Larry’s offer – though screwing in my moves is not really my style, six beers sounded promising. In any case Joel prevented me from making the decision by resigning as 31...e4 32 f4 is decisive.}
\end{align*}
\]

Hoping for the continuation 28 cxb6 \( \text{xg3+} \) 29 \( \text{f1 g1+} \), but this was a bit optimistic as the cheapo was rather telegraphed.
Chapter Three

The 1991 Lloyds Bank Masters coincided with the attempted political coup in Moscow to replace Gorbachov. At the chessboard Soviets and former Soviets were more secure, with Shirov winning on 8/10 and two more Latvians, Kengis and Shabalov, finishing half a point behind along with Michael, the highest placed western player. It was generally a frustrating tournament for my son. He recovered from defeat by Ernst in the fifth round to record two good victories against Timoschenko and McDonald in the following rounds, only to be frustrated by having to settle for draws against Shabalov and Murshed, which destroyed his hopes of first place. However, there was a major change in Michael’s opening repertoire as in his games against John Emms and Neil McDonald he chose to open with 1 d4 for the first time in major competition. This proved successful in both games thanks to the generosity of Julian Hodgson who, as well as providing Michael with accommodation during the tournament, taught him a new opening on the no.6 bus route they travelled along to reach the venue!

---

Game 20

M. Adams – J. Emms

London (Lloyds Bank) 1991

Queen’s Gambit,

Semi-Tarrasch Defence

In this last-round game both players needed to win in order to collect a decent prize. This normally leads to tough struggles which ultimately end in a draw, but in this game things went quite smoothly.

1 d4

Having just been introduced to the ‘Tromp’ I was eager to get it in wherever possible but John takes evasive action.

1 ... d5

The first of many moves in this game that I did not quite foresee.

2 c4

These days I often go 2 &g5 but I was hopeful that John wouldn’t know much about Queen’s Gambits either.

2 ... e6

3 &c3 &f6

4 cxd5 &xd5

I had received a crash course on the Queen’s Gambit Exchange from Jules but I wasn’t heart-broken when my opponent deviated. This line is unusual and conceding the centre must give White all the chances to gain an edge.
5 e4 \nx c3
6 bxc3 c5
7 \nf3 \nx d4
8 \nx d4 \xc6
9 \xd3

Probably not best. This move takes advantage of the indirectly defended pawn on d4 (9...\xd4 10 \xd4 \x8d4 11 \xb5+ is impossible) but White must lose time to defend the pawn later. The theoretical recommendation is 9 \xc4.

9 ...
10 \xb4+
11 \xd2+ 0-0
12 \xc2

This is the tempo referred to above but the game Yusupov-Van der Sterren, Amsterdam (Donner Memorial), 1994 showed the best continuation in this unusual position to be 12 \wc3. This may justify 9 \xd3 as Black is prevented from developing ...b7-b6 and ...\xb7 as he would like to.

12 ...

The ending will always be promising for White due to his centralised king and better pawn structure, so here 12...b6 is better. John was probably not very comfortable with White’s passed d-pawn but this is a fact of life in this variation.

13 \xa5 \xa5
14 \xd3

The bishop shuffles back but there was no better way to control the c4 square and prepare \xd2.

14 ...
15 \xd7 \xc8

16 \we5

After 16 \xc1 \xc1 17 \xc1 \xc8 Black is able to swap rooks and minimise his disadvantage. Now Black can only do this by ceding the c-file.

16 ...

The black bishop doesn’t really do much here. 16...\e8, followed by centralising the king, was the most solid continuation.

17 \xc1 \xc6

Swapping knights looks logical but Black’s bishop turns out to be rather ineffective. Centralising the king was still a reasonable plan, and another alternative was to play 17...f6 18 \xc4 \xc4+ 19 \xc4 \xf7, which weakens the e-pawn, though I don’t believe this to be too serious. Hence 18 \f3 is better but Black gains some breathing space.

18 \xc6 \xc6
19 \xb1

Exploiting the unfortunate placing of the bishop. Black is forced to retreat or \xb4 will win a pawn.
19 ... \text{c}c7  
20 \text{b}b4 \text{c}c6  
The bishop gets in the way here. More sensible was 20...\text{d}d7 but 21 a4 puts Black in a dilemma. Allowing a4-a5 is very unpleasant and 21...a5 22 \text{b}b6 is also not good.

21 \text{e}e3  
The more direct 21 \text{c}c1 \text{d}d7 22 \text{e}e3 \text{ad}8 23 \text{c}c5 would transpose to the next note.

21 ... \text{d}d8  
22 \text{c}c1 \text{cc}8  
Obviously not Black’s intention but 22...\text{cd}7 23 \text{c}c5 leaves him gasping for air.

23 \text{h}4  
Another option was 23 \text{bc}4, but this gain of space is very thematic.

23 ... \text{f}f8  
24 \text{g}4 \text{h}6  
More flexible was 24...\text{e}e7, but putting the pawn on a dark square is also quite logical.

25 \text{f}4  
White completes his wall of pawns. This move doesn’t exactly feel right but 25 \text{bc}4 \text{d}d7 26 \text{c}c7 \text{c}c6 27 \text{xc}8+ \text{xc}8 28 \text{b}b5 \text{d}d7 doesn’t really lead anywhere.

25 ... \text{b}5  
Good play. John grabs his chance for some activity since 26 \text{xb}5 \text{xb}5 27 \text{xc}8 \text{xc}8 28 \text{xb}5 \text{c}c3+ leaves White with too many weak pawns to hope for more than a draw.

26 \text{f}5  

26 ... \text{e}e8  
The critical line was 26...a5 27 \text{b}2 \text{b}4 28 \text{fxe}6 \text{fxe}6 but 29 \text{c}5 ends any illusions. Also winning is 29 \text{a}6 \text{b}7 30 \text{f}1+.

27 \text{bb}1  
White could not snatch a pawn immediately as 27 \text{xc}8 \text{xc}8 28 \text{xb}5 \text{b}8 pins and wins.

27 ... \text{a}6  
Sadly forced as 27...a5 28 \text{xc}8 \text{xc}8 29 \text{xb}5 \text{b}8 30 a4 is a pawn.

28 \text{e}5 \text{e}7  
The threat was f5-f6 paralysing Black’s king. Of course 28...\text{exf}5 29 \text{gxf}5, leaving White a dangerous armada of pawns in the centre, was not a viable option.
29  g5  hxg5
30  hxg5  exf5

This gives me the passed pawn I was looking for as f5-f6+ had to be prevented. If 30...f6 31 exf6+ gxf6 32 g6 and the g-pawn is close to touchdown.

31  xf5  d7

After 31...xc1 32 xcx1 White also gains control of the c-file.

32  xd7  xd7
33  e4

Not the most accurate move. White could have achieved a breakthrough immediately with 33 g6 f6 (33...fxg6 34 e4 is very similar to the game) 34 exf6 gxf6 35 xcx8 xcx8 36 f4 with a winning ending. Now John gets a chance to create problems which he fails to take.

33  h8

The only try was 33...g6 which, by fixing the kingside pawn structure, prevents any snap win. However, after 34 xcx8 xcx8 35 f1 e7 36 f6 White should still come through.

34 xcx8  xcx8
35  g6! (D)
35  ...  fxg6

Forced because 35...f6 36 exf6 gxf6 37 f5 e7 38 e1+ f8 39

xf6 xc6 + 40 xe6 is the end. Now the two connected passed pawns in the middle, ably supported by White’s king and rook, carry the day.

36  g1  c6
37  d5  b4

37...b6 would have presented more resistance. White wins by 38 f1 e7 39 c5 b8 (39...e6 40 e1) 40 g1 c8+ (40...f7 41 d5) 41 d5 f7 42 e6+.

38  f1

Now the rook invades, making the win simple.

38  ...  c2
39  e6+  e7
40  f7+  e8
41  d6  Black resigned

---

**Game 21**

Michael’s next tournament, after a break of nearly four weeks, was the Ostend open. By his standards this was a long lay-off, although it should be pointed out that it was during this time that *Development of a Grandmaster* was published, and he was involved in publicising it. He began the tournament well and reached 4/4 with this win.
M. Bosboom – M. Adams  
Ostend 1991  
Giuloco Piano

As usual in Ostend, I had prepared for this game with a few beers followed by a Jean-Claude van Damme film.

1 e4 e5  
2 \( \text{\textgreek{f}}3 \) \( \text{\textgreek{c}}6 \)  
3 \( \text{\textgreek{c}}4 \) \( \text{\textgreek{f}}6 \)  
4 d3 \( \text{\textgreek{c}}5 \)

This move probably gives better chances of equality than 4...\( \text{\textgreek{e}}7 \), as the continuation 5 0-0 0-0 6 \( \text{\textgreek{e}}1 \) d6 7 a4 gives White a slight pull.

5 0-0 d6  
6 c3 0-0  
7 h3

This move may not have been strictly necessary. More direct was 7 \( \text{\textgreek{b}}d2 \).

7 ... a6  
8 \( \text{\textgreek{b}}3 \) \( \text{\textgreek{a}}7 \)  
9 \( \text{\textgreek{bd}}2 \) \( \text{\textgreek{d}}7 \)

This move attempts to take advantage of White having committed himself with the early h2-h3. Normally this would not be possible as White would have substituted \( \text{\textgreek{c}}4 \) for h2-h3 and as a result would be able to counter this knight move with 10 d4.

10 \( \text{\textgreek{e}}1 \) \( \text{\textgreek{c}}5 \)

A rather casual reaction. Much better was 10...\( \text{\textgreek{h}}8 \), continuing the plan started last move. After 11 \( \text{\textgreek{f}}1 \) \( \text{\textgreek{c}}5 \) 12 \( \text{\textgreek{c}}2 \) f5 13 exf5 \( \text{\textgreek{xf}}5 \) 14 d4 \( \text{\textgreek{xc}}2 \) 15 \( \text{\textgreek{xc}}2 \) \( \text{\textgreek{d}}7 \).

Black has a comfortable position.

11 \( \text{\textgreek{c}}2 \)

After having reached this position I realised that both replies 11...f5 and 11...d5 look very dodgy and I began to regret not having thought about my last move for a little more time. I found relatively the best move although it is designed more to prevent activity from White than to create any for Black.

11 ... \( \text{\textgreek{e}}6 \)  
12 \( \text{\textgreek{f}}1 \) \( \text{\textgreek{d}}7 \)  
13 \( \text{\textgreek{e}}3 \) \( \text{\textgreek{h}}8 \)  
14 h4!?

The queen is a bit of a target here, but alternatives were thin on the ground as I was reluctant to weaken my control of d4.

15 \( \text{\textgreek{d}}5 \)

White’s next few moves show him to be in too much of a hurry to break through. More subtle play is required; one promising idea is 15 \( \text{\textgreek{f}}5 \).

15 ... \( \text{\textgreek{g}}6 \)  
16 \( \text{\textgreek{g}}5 \) \( \text{\textgreek{xg}}5 \)  
17 h\( \text{\textgreek{xg}}5 \) \( \text{\textgreek{ac}}8 \)  
18 d4
This sacrifice feels as though it should be the correct way to continue but Manuel never achieves sufficient compensation for the pawn. A simple developing move like 18 d2 looks sensible but 18...f6 19 gxf6 g4 is a dangerous reply, so it is hard to suggest an improvement.

18 exd4
19 cxd4

After 19 e5 f5 20 f4 xg5 21 e6 xc2 22 xc2 h4 23 xf8 d3 24 wd2 xe5 Black has more than enough compensation for the exchange.

19 ...
20 a4

This rook lift is the only way for White to keep his chances alive as 20 e5 f5 21 f4 xg5 22 e6 h4 still fails.

20 ...
21 g5

The only way to untangle the black queen, but the price is the break up of the kingside pawns.

21 gxf6 g4
22 wd2 gxf6

23 a3

Also possible was 23 e5 f5 24 f4 g4 25 xf5 xf5 26 exd6 cxd6 27 a3 but White still has insufficient compensation for the pawn.

23 ...
24 b4 a7
25 g3 e6
26 b2?

By this stage my opponent had run rather short of time so he was unable to give enough attention to the interesting possibility of 26 b5 e5 27 b6. The sacrifice of a second pawn wrecks Black’s pawn structure as 27...xd5 28 bxa7 and 27...c4 28 h6 are too dangerous. Also better than the text move was 26 f4.

26 ...
27 h6

After this move Black is clearly winning, but it is no longer possible to suggest good alternatives for White.

27 ...
28 xg8+ xg8
29 ♜f1

Of course 29 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 30 ♜xf6 ♜f8 wins a piece.

29 ♜g6

30 ♜f4 ♜g7
31 ♜e3

A time-trouble blunder as 31 g3 would have allowed White a chance to fight on, but the result is not really in any doubt. Now Black goes two pawns up for nothing.

31 ... ♜xe3
32 ♜xe3 ♜xg2
33 ♜g3 ♜xg3
34 fxg3 ♜g5
35 ♜f2 ♜g7
36 ♜d4 ♜h5

White lost on time, which was probably something of a relief to him in this position.

---

Game 22

However, in round five Michael suffered a reverse when he lost with White against Kuzmin. Normally you expect an easier task in the round following a defeat, but Michael had the misfortune to find himself paired with world no.10, Mikhail Gurevich.

M.Gurevich – M.Adams
Ostend 1991
Bird’s Opening

I have never been a great believer that the Dutch Defence is a particularly good opening. This has never been a matter of great importance to me as I rarely open 1 d4, but in the next game I got the opportunity to try the structure with colours reversed and a tempo less.

1 g3 d5
2 ♜g2 ♜f6
3 d3 g6

As both players had already dropped points in this tournament we were both very keen to win this particular game. My last move offers my opponent an opportunity to take the game into one of his favourite systems, albeit with colours reversed.

4 f4 ♜g7
5 ♜f3 0-0
6 0-0 c5
7 ♜e1 ♜c6
8 c3

Also possible here is the immediate 8 e4, which is the most direct way of attempting to exploit the
extra tempo. After 8...dxe4 9 dxe4 e5 10 fx e5 Qg4 11 Qc3 (11 Qg5!?)
11...Qx e5 12 Qd5 Qe6 there are chances for both sides.

8 ... b6
9 h3 wc7
10 Qa3 Qa6

A safety-conscious move, cutting out any possibility of e2-e4 or Qb5. Also possible was the simple 10...Qb7.

11 g4 e6!

The immediate 11...e5 12 fx e5 Qx e5 13 Qf4 Qxf3+ 14 Qxf3 allows White a slight initiative. The text move prevents f4-f5 to give Black time to complete his development before any opening of the position.

12 Qd2 Qad8
13 Qc1

In this game Mikhail has great problems finding the most suitable square for this rook. Possibly it was better to leave it where it is for the moment and play 13 Wh4 or regroup the offside knight with 13 Qc2.

13 ... We7
14 Wg3 (D)
14 ... Qd7

I had an interesting alternative here in 14...c4, with the idea 15 dxc4 Qe4 16 We1 Qc5+ 17 Wh2 Qxc4 with good chances. White’s best is to cut across this with 15 Qe5 Qc7 16 d4! (16 dxc4 Qxe5 17fxe5 Qd7) with an unclear position. However a rather curious double oversight occurred here as both players missed 14...Qe4, as pointed out by Jeroen Piket. If I had spotted it my opponent would have had to grovel with 15 dxe4 dxe4 16 Qe3 exf3 17 Qxf3 when Black is slightly more comfortable.

15 Qb1 e5

My opponent felt that it would have been more appropriate to reply 15...f5 here. The way that I play in the game is more direct and results in a pawn structure where the backward e-pawn is White’s Achilles’ heel. White is forced to exchange as 16 f5 e4 drives him backwards.

16 fxe5 Qdx e5
17 Qc2 Qxf3+
18 Qxf3 Qe5
19 Qg2 Qb7
20 Qf2 a5!

The best move as Black controls the b4 square in preparation for playing ...d5-d4.

21 Qbf1

The move 21 b4 looks very odd but although it is a radical decision, it does create some action on the queenside.
21 ... d4
22 c4

The alternative 22 cxd4 cxd4 isolates Black's d-pawn but allows play down the c-file. Another advantage to the move played is that it secures control of the d5 square.

22 ... axg2
23 wxe2 e6!

The rook heads for its best post on e6 from where it can menace the weak pawn on e2 as well as consolidating Black's position by covering the pawn on b6.

24 da3?

The decisive error; although it looks good at first sight, the plan of playing the knight to b5, with the hope of eventually continuing db5-c7-d5, is pie in the sky. Once on b5 it becomes movebound. The correct plan is to recycle the knight in the other direction by 24 de1, when the game remains approximately equal.

24 ... He6
25 db5 g5! (D)

Once this move has been played all is clear. The threat is simply dg6 and de5-f4, when the dark squares are completely dominated by Black. Curiously, the fact that nearly all White's pawns are on opposite-coloured squares to his bishop doesn't help him here. Perhaps White should have tried 26 df5 h6 27 h1f2.

26 wH2 h6

It is sensible to consolidate the kingside before taking action as White is powerless in any case.

27 Hg2 Hg6

Well-timed as White was ready to cause a problem by playing h2-h4, so there was not enough time for 27...Hc8.

28 wc7

White takes the only chance to activate the knight but there is a material cost. However there was no choice as ...Hc5 was in the air.

28 ...

Hxe2

Not a bad move as it does not spoil anything and picks up a pawn but, as my opponent pointed out after the game, much swifter would have been 28...Hh4! 29 wxe7 Hxe7 30 Hgf2 Hf5, since 31 e4 dxe3 32 Hxe3 Hg3 33 Hf2 Hf8 is decisive.

29 Hxe7

Snatching a pawn with 29 Hxb6 is dealt with by 29...Hxg2+ 30 Hxg2 Hf2+ 31 Hf2 Hxd3.

29 ...

He7

30 dd6 He6

31 df5 Hf7

32 a3

Gurevich takes desperate measures in an attempt to open up the
queenside; if 32 \( \text{g}f2 \) \( \text{e}5 \) snuffs out any hope.

\[
\begin{align*}
32 & \ldots \quad \text{a}4 \\
33 & \text{b}4 \quad \text{a}xb3 \\
34 & \text{e}b1 \quad \text{f}e8 \\
35 & \text{e}xb3 \quad \text{e}5 \\
36 & \text{a}4 \quad \text{f}4 \\
37 & \text{a}5 \quad \text{e}3+!
\end{align*}
\]

This final deft touch clinches victory as capturing the bishop is impossible due to the strength of passed e-pawn.

\[
\begin{align*}
38 & \text{f}1 \quad \text{f}4 \\
39 & \text{h}2 \quad \text{x}d2 \\
40 & \text{x}d2 \quad \text{b}xa5 \\
41 & \text{b}7 \quad \text{g}6
\end{align*}
\]

Also not bad is 41...\( \text{e}1+ \) 42 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{h}1 \) 43 \( \text{xf}7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \). The text is a little more controlled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>42 &amp; ( \text{a}2 ) &amp; ( \text{h}5 )</th>
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White gets mated after the continuation 43 \( \text{xa}5 \) \( \text{e}1+ \) 44 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 45 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{g}2+ \) 46 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}1+ \) 47 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{e}2+ \) 48 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) so White resigned.

---

**Game 23**

Successes against Kovalev and Mainka followed and Michael went into the last round alongside Tony Miles and Kuzmin on 7/8. Michael had the downfloat and the white pieces against Schmitt diel but could only draw despite being a clear pawn up in a rook and pawn ending. Unfortunately Michael’s technique let him down and Tony Miles, who defeated Kuzmin to win the tournament, showed him the winning variation afterwards. Michael finished in clear second place but a result that he would have settled for at the outset was somewhat spoilt by the final round draw. Ostend is about the only foreign tournament that Michael does not fly to. Instead he travels by jetfoil, which can be something of a double-edged manoeuvre as one sometimes has a long wait on the return journey. Fortunately the winds slackened sufficiently to allow the jetfoil to leave harbour on time on this occasion.

One week later he travelled to Perth in Scotland for a weekend Swiss. The journey from Truro and back was of the order of 1,600 miles and it was the presence of Aelred Horn in Perth that encouraged Michael to make such a trip. Aelred had been President of the Cornwall Chess Association and a great encouragement to Michael and many other
youngsters when he had retired to Cornwall just as my son was beginning his career, and when he moved to Scotland to live we did not think that Michael would meet Aelred again. The journey was justified as Michael won first prize with victories over McNab and Suba, and if he did not obtain a maximum, at least he ensured that his rivals did not either. Also he enjoyed his weekend with Aelred who managed to arrange two simultaneous displays for Michael to give during his brief stay.

Continuing on the Grand Prix trail, he did achieve 5/5 at Hitchin but failed to achieve another maximum at Westminster when he was foiled by Mark Hebden, who whipped out the King’s Gambit, which proved an effective choice in a morning round. Still Michael did repeat his victory against John Emms with 1 d4, which he was also successful with in round 5. At Wolverhampton he repeated his 4½/5 score, with Mihai Suba denying Michael on this occasion, and in the process ending Michael’s one hundred per cent score when opening with his queen’s pawn. It was not only the maximum that Suba denied him but also the first prize of four Goodyear tyres, which Suba claimed, despite their equal score, on the basis that Michael did not own a car; a somewhat dubious argument as Suba didn’t either, but Romanians often come off well in such negotiations.

It had been planned to hold the European Team championships in Yugoslavia and as usual Duncan Lawrie were to sponsor the English team. However, the event had to be cancelled because of the dangers caused by the outbreak of hostilities and instead the sponsors generously allowed the money to be used to set up an English championship, consisting of the top eight rated players in a knockout format. As someone who had consistently advocated the need for a national championship involving only the top players, I was delighted with this innovation, although an all-play-all would have been even better. The event generated a lot of publicity in the press but not the sort that was required. An unheated school room where the number of players often exceeded the number of spectators contrasted sharply with John Nunn’s most recent experience of playing in front of crowds of thousands in Belgrade. Michael’s personal preparation was sleeping on a floor at Peter Ariowitsch’s, with Dave Norwood as part-time second, and this may have been more in keeping with the conditions than all the other competitors, who lived in London, and may have helped to explain his fine result. However, Michael did not start too promisingly and was extremely fortunate to survive his first round match with Will Watson, eventually winning a play-off. In the semi-finals Michael played rather better to defeat Jon Speelman, while Nigel Short beat Julian Hodgson so that Michael had a
rare chance to play some games against England’s number one player. Before this event the pair had only played once at normal time rates, at the British championship at Swansea in 1987. At the time of writing, they have not played another competitive game (if you discount quick-plays). The four-game match was closely contested with Michael making a dream start by winning the first game.

M.Adams – N.Short

English championship,
London 1991
French Defence,
Tarrasch Variation

The English championship was held in St Paul’s School, where we normally played in a lecture hall. This was somewhat odd as the seating for over a hundred people was occupied by a maximum of about six people. For the round prior to this game we had been moved to the Geography classroom where I had performed rather better than I normally did at school. For this encounter we had transferred back to the original venue, which was notable for its Arctic conditions.

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 _WINDOWS a6
4 exd5 exd5
5 WINDOWS a6

The modern way to play this variation. Black accepts the most minimal of disadvantages in the form of the isolated d-pawn that he will acquire in a few moves.

6   b5+  d7
7  xd7+  bxd7
8 0-0  e7

9  x c5

An interesting possibility here is 9  e1 followed by f1, which was seen in one of the exhibition games between Kasparov and my opponent at the Savoy. The move actually played helps Black to develop, but does fix the pawn structure.

9 ...
10  d4  d7

Not 10...0-0 11  f5 when the black bishop would go and with it any chance of activity.

11  f3

It looks strong to play 11 f3 0-0 12  f5  d8 13  b3  c4 but Black’s king is well defended and White has to be careful not to lose co-ordination.

11 ...
12  f4  e8
13  e1

Once, in a game against Bareev, I tried 13  e5 but his strong reply 13...a4 14  c3  d6 forced the grovelling 15  g6 when White had no advantage.

13 ...

Another Bareev game, this time from Linares 1994 against Kar- pov, went 13...f8 14  e5 a4 15 c3 a6 when it is tough for White to find any advantage.
14  \textit{\text{Qe5}} \quad \textit{\text{Wd8}}

The thrust 14...\textit{\text{Wa4}} is not so logical here but is still more annoying for White to face.

15  \textit{\text{Qd3}}

The knight is forced to move due to the threat of \ldots\textit{\text{Qd6}}, but this is a nice post in any case.

19  \textit{\text{hxg3}} \quad \textit{\text{Wd7}}

The exchange of White’s bishop has eased Black’s position somewhat, but complete equality is still elusive on account of the weak pawn.

20  \textit{\text{Kad1}} \quad \textit{\text{Qcd8}}

It may well have been best to swap knights as well, abandoning any dreams of activity. As only one weakness is available for White to target, the outcome should be a draw but Black will still have to suffer. The move played prepares \ldots\textit{\text{Wc4}} so I move my queen over to cover the queenside.

25  \textit{\text{Wc2}}

Black has not really managed to get the activity he is looking for and this knight move should not completely solve his problems, but there is no obvious way to defend the b-pawn.

18  \textit{\text{Qg3}}

A very safe move maintaining a solid but small edge. 18 \textit{\text{Qe3}} (not 18 \textit{\text{Wxb7 Qc5}}! 19 \textit{\text{Qxc5 Qxf4}}) was critical as 18...\textit{\text{Qd6}} 19 \textit{\text{Wxb7 Wh4}} 20 \textit{\text{Qf3}} wins a safe pawn. Black may just defend with 18...\textit{\text{Wd7}} but his position is uninspiring; one option for White is to force the exchange of queens with 19 \textit{\text{Wb5}}.

18  \ldots \textit{\text{Kh8}}

25  \ldots \textit{\text{g5}}?

A pretty incredible move given the quiet play that has gone before. It can’t be justified for Black to push his pawns so recklessly when White has such a compact position, particularly when 25...\textit{\text{a6}},
preparing ...b7-b5, or 25...g6, answering 26 Qf4 with 26...Qf6, were quite satisfactory.

26 Qd4 g7
27 Qb4

This turns out well but very simple play was more accurate; after 27 Qc1 f5 28 Qe2 Black is left with a lot of weaknesses to contend with.

27 ... f5?

This loses. Unusually for him, Short misses a tactical chance; the only move was 27...Qxg3 28 fxg3 a5 29 Qf5 (or 29 Qd3 Qxd4+) 29...Qc5+ 30 Qh2 axb4 31 Qd2 Qf6 32 cxb4 Qc4 when White is better on account of his safer king but Black is not without chances.

28 Qd3

Now all the white pieces are perfectly co-ordinated. The offside knight will drop back to c2 leaving Black with too many weaknesses to avoid something dropping off.

28 Qh8

29 Qf3 a5
Perhaps 29...Qxd4 30 Qxd4 Qe6 31 Qe3 was worth a try, but a pawn looks certain to go soon.

30 Qbc2 Qf8
31 Qe3

The tactics fail against this so Black is lost.

31 ... Qxd4
If 31...f4, then 32 Qxd5 fxg3 33 Qxe4 gxf2+ 34 Qf1 Qc4+ 35 Qe2 Qxd5 36 Qe6 cleans up.

32 Qxd4 f4
33 Qxd5 Qc5

No better was 33...fxg3 34 Qxe4 Qe8 35 Qe7.

34 gxf4 Qe6
35 Qe4

A nice touch to finish the game; if Black now plays 35...Qxd4, then White wins with 36 Qxd4+ Qg8 37 Qe7+.

35 ... gxf4
36 Qe7

Black resigned
Black loses a piece.

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**Game 24**

Nigel hit back immediately to level the match and the final two games were drawn despite strenuous efforts by both players to force a win. Eventually the title was decided by quickplay tie-break, which Nigel won. However the 2-2 match score was a heartening result for Michael and certainly invaluable experience.

Islington started the day after the English championship finished with most of the players staggering on from the Duncan Lawrie prize-giving cum reception earlier in the day. As I have indicated earlier, the 1991 Leigh Grand Prix had been particularly closely contested with Mihai Suba, Keith Arkell, Mark Hebden, Peter Wells and Julian Hodgson among others showing as potential winners at various stages. Michael
settled it at Islington by defeating all six of his opponents, including Hebden, Wells and Suba in successive rounds. This result enabled him to set another record by becoming the first person to score the maximum 200 points in the history of the Grand Prix – quite remarkable in view of the amount of international competition that he had been involved in during 1991.

Michael received an invitation for the Hastings Premier on this occasion and finished in the middle of the field along with Jon Speelman on fifty per cent. However it was worrying that Bareev and Shirov again scored heavily with 3½/4 against Michael although some might say this was an improvement as they had taken all four in Biel! While some contended that Michael was still in too festive a mood, his poor results against these two players could have been more to do with the fact that he still did not treat them with the respect they deserved. Later he was to handle both players with much more care and scrape together some points against them. Still, Michael did manage a score of plus three against the other competitors, including wins against Speelman, Chandler and Hodgson, the other three home players.

M. Chandler – M. Adams
Hastings Premier 1991/92
Scotch Game

One of the curiosities of my games against Murray is that Black has a rather high score, especially at Hastings where Black has won all four of the games we have contested (the overall score was 2-2).

1 e4 e5
2 d4 d6
3 dxe5 dxe5
4 d3 c6
5 c4 e5
6 d4 c5
7 e2 f5
8 c4 d5

A slightly less common continuation than the pin with 8...d5. The idea of the text move is that as the black knight is often driven back anyway, it regroups immediately so that the bishop can be employed on a more active diagonal. The drawback is that it allows White easy development.

9 Qd2

Other options were 9 g3 or 9 Qc3.

9 ... Qb7
10 b3 0-0-0

Rather dubious really. More energetic was 10...a5 as 11 b2 a4 is a little uncomfortable. We considered 11 a4 in the post mortem but then 11...We6 with the idea of ...d4 b4 looks good.

11 b2 c5!

This is the start of a good plan. If Black continues normally with 11...d5 12 exh6 Wh6+ 13 xe2 cxd6 White has a comfortable edge. Although my plan looks risky it is
the only one that promises some activity.

12 0-0-0  d6
13 exd6

It is not clear that White needed to hurry over this exchange. Interesting was 13 h4 planning to swing the rook into play along the third rank, a recurring theme in this position.

13 ...  \textit{w}xd6

The point of Black’s play. The white king looks a little more vulnerable than Black’s as the c7 pawn provides useful cover at the moment. The solid option was the simple recapture 13...cxd6, but after 14 \textit{a}e1 White starts to take control.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

14 \textit{w}g4+

A tough decision as there were several alternatives. 14 \textit{b}b1 \textit{w}g6+ 15 \textit{a}a1 \textit{d}d6 is too dangerous for White and 14 \textit{e}e1 \textit{e}e7 leaves White short of development. However, 14 h4 was quite an interesting possibility, and perhaps the safest move was 14 \textit{f}f3 \textit{f}f4+ 15 \textit{w}e3 with a roughly equal ending after 15...\textit{w}xe3+ 16 fxe3 \textit{e}e8.

14 ...  \textit{b}b8
15 \textit{a}e2

White completes his development, leaving Black’s position looking a bit of a heap. But in this case appearances are a bit deceptive. The white monarch can be inconvenienced in the short-term, as although White’s pawn structure on the queenside would be ideal in an ending, with the queens on the open b1-h7 and c1-h6 diagonals looks somewhat vulnerable.

15 ...  \textit{h}5

The only move. If 15...\textit{w}h6, then 16 \textit{f}f3 \textit{c}8 17 \textit{w}h5 is desperate for Black but now this move is prepared and White lacks a really good square for the queen.

16 \textit{w}f5

The most obvious move since White lacks a good continuation after 16 \textit{w}h3 \textit{w}h6.

16 ...  \textit{w}h6 (D)

There is no time to snatch the g2 pawn or to protect the one on f7. The knight must be pinned immediately.

17 \textit{f}f3

This move in combination with the next is a little bit optimistic. There were two alternatives, one rather dull and one quite interesting, but both leading to about equal positions. Grabbing material with 17 \textit{w}xf7 \textit{d}d6 18 \textit{w}xg7 (18 \textit{a}xg7 \textit{w}h7) 18...\textit{w}xg7 19 \textit{a}xg7 \textit{h}h8 leads to an ending where
Black regains the pawns with equality or 17 f4 \( \text{d}6 \) 18 g3 \( \text{x}h1 \) 19 \( \text{x}h1 \) when although White is the whole exchange down he has plenty of compensation. Perhaps 19...\( \text{g}6 \) is the best way to defuse the situation, giving back one pawn with a balanced position.

17 ... \( \text{c}8 \)
18 \( \text{e}4 \)

Not a good move as the knight is controlling the a8 square. The simple 18 \( \text{c}2 \) planning 18...f5 19 \( \text{b}1 \) was much more logical.

18 ... f5
19 \( \text{e}3 \)

This was the idea but I have a very strong reply.

19 ... g5 (D)

After 20 \( \text{x}h8 \) \( \text{x}h8 \) the dark squares form a real ‘Daddy Diagonal’ White’s chances of survival would be minimal, for example 21 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{x}d1+ \) 22 \( \text{x}d1 \) g4 and the double threat wins material. The lost tempi with White’s queen have allowed Black to take over the initiative.

20 ... \( \text{d}6 \)
21 \( \text{f}6 \) g4
22 \( \text{e}2 \)

Murray was already running short of time. A better chance was 22 \( \text{x}h6 \) \( \text{x}h6 \) 23 \( \text{d}5 \), as though Black wins a pawn with 23...\( \text{d}5 \) 24 \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{b}7 \), the resulting simplification should give White some drawing chances.

22 ... \( \text{f}4 \)

Black makes use of White’s failure to swap queens. The situation is rapidly becoming critical.

23 f3 \( \text{e}8 \)
24 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{e}3 \)
25 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{f}4 \)
26 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{f}2 \)
27 g3 (D)

Making the classic mistake of thinking more about his clock than the board. The stronger 27...\( \text{e}3 \), leaving White completely paralysed, was a much more effective way to continue. Now White gets a chance for a breakout.

28 \( \text{x}e5 \) \( \text{x}e5 \)
29 \( \text{xe}5 \) gxf3
30 Hf1 We2
31 Hf4

It was probably no longer physically possible to make the time control but 31 Hfe1 Hg2 32 Hxf3 Hxd1+ 33 Hxd1 Hxa2 would have given White reasonable fighting chances if he had had more time.

31 ... f2

White lost on time, although in this position the result is no longer in doubt.

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Game 25

Fifty per cent was also Michael’s score in his next event, which was also a double round all-play-all. However, that was the only similarity between the two events as this one was played at thirty minutes per player in a five-star hotel in Monaco. During Michael’s career he has been fortunate to enjoy superb accommodation in many places but nowhere has ever surpassed the almost surreal surroundings in Monaco. It is certainly the only time that Michael has worked the curtains by remote control! The occasion was the first Melody Amber tournament. Melody’s father, Joop Van Oosterom, organised the event superbly, in celebration of his daughter’s birth some six months earlier and he created as nearly a chess player’s dream tournament as is possible.

Michael performed well in a very strong field headed by Karpov, Ivanchuk, the winner, and Anand, the runner-up. Many critics believe that Michael is an outstanding quickplay player but I do not believe that there is that much difference between his standard of play in normal and quickplay games. What is true is that he has had far more opportunities to play world-ranked players at the quicker rate. Other than acquiring Karpov’s autograph some ten years earlier this was the first time that he had met Karpov, so it was pleasing to achieve two draws. There is little doubt that he would not have had the opportunity to have played against such an illustrious field as this at normal rates. Michael was actually disappointed with his overall performance, particularly as he had scored two and a half points against Anand, Ivanchuk and Karpov. In the circumstances he felt that he should have scored more heavily than 8½/16 against the rest of the field, strong though it was. At this
stage of his career, he found it very difficult to maintain consistency in his results, especially in all-play-all events.

Michael only had a short journey to Cannes for his next event, an international quickplay team event with England, the USA, the Netherlands and France. Perhaps it was not quite quickplay at one hour per player, but it was faster than the normal rate. Neither Nigel Short nor Jon Speelman were available and Michael played on board two behind John Nunn. He achieved an outstanding result with five successive wins (two each against Jeroen Piket and Oliver Renet and one against Larry Christiansen) before agreeing a draw a pawn up in his last game to ensure that England won the overall event. It was not a good time for the host country as England were also beating them at football and rugby. Their team score in the chess was actually less than Michael’s individual score, although it should be pointed out that Lautier was missing from their ranks.

M. Adams – O. Renet
England-France,
Cannes Team Tournament 1992
Sicilian Defence,
Scheveningen Variation

This tournament featured the unusual time limit of one hour for all your moves. I approached this by playing fairly quickly, probably as one day earlier I had finished the Melody Amber tournament, which had all your moves in half an hour. I was on good form, so this approach worked well as I built up large clock leads without my positions falling apart. In this game a very straightforward plan saved me from having to think too much.

1 e4 c5
2 ∆c3

This move is designed to prevent the Najdorf variation, as the most common reply 2...∆c6 is not part of this system. In this game my opponent decides to stick to his original plan and I opt to transpose back to the mainstream.

2 ... d6
3 ∆ge2

This move is chosen to prevent 3...e5 as 4 ∆d5 immediately occupies d5 and 4 g3 also gives White a pleasant game. An interesting alternative here is 3 f4, as the move ...d7-d6 is committal against the Grand Prix Attack.

3 ... ∆f6
4 d4 cxd4
5 ∆xd4 a6
6 f4 e6

This is a very popular way for Scheveningen players to meet the f4 variation, but the resulting positions have brought White quite good results. Personally I am more reluctant to face 6...e5 or 6...g6.

7 ∆f3 ∆b6

Another fashionable choice. The idea is that, as in some lines with 6
$g_5$, White’s knight is driven out of the centre after 8 $b_3$ $c_7$. Although I have played 8 $b_3$ (as in game 8 against Suba) on this occasion I decided to try a different move which contains some poison.

8 $a_3$ $g_6$

Of course 8...$x_d4$ 9 $e_3$, trapping the queen in mid-board, was disastrous but the text move also leads Black into difficulties. The key continuation is 8...$c_6$ as 9 $b_3$ is not very logical given that White avoided it last turn. The only other option is 9 $x_c6$ $bxc6$ 10 $b_3$ which has been played a few times with some success, but objectively Black’s mass of central pawns should give him a comfortable position.

9 $e_2$ $g_7$

The natural follow-up but one that plays into White’s hands. The other alternative 9...$c_6$ is not so effective here since 10 $x_c6$ $x_c6$ (10...$bxc6$ 11 e5 leaves the dark squares looking vulnerable) 11 $e_3$ is to White’s advantage.

10 $e3$

This is the point, as 10...$x_b2$ 11 $d_2$ $b_6$ 12 $x_e6$ leaves Black unable to garner sufficient compensation for the queen, so Black is forced to retreat. However, his lack of development is such that a ready-made attack is available for White on the kingside.

10 ... $c_7$

11 0-0-0 0-0

Black can’t have been eager to castle so soon but the possibility of a piece sacrifice with $db5$ was irritating for Olivier.

12 $f_5$

Ideally I would have preferred to play 12 $g_4$, but the reply 12...e5 is annoying. 13 $f_5$ gxf5 14 gxf5 gives White good attacking chances but there is no real reason to give up material at this stage.

12 ... $c_6$

Exchanging pawns by 12...exf5 13 exf5 was not a good idea, as in the long-term the d5 point will fall into White’s hands.

13 $g_4$
White's game plays itself as the pawns start rolling.

13 ... $\text{xe8}$

Making room for the bishop on f8 and protecting e6, which would become vulnerable when Black's knight is forced from f6.

14 $g5$ $\text{d7}$
15 $f6$ $\text{f8}$
16 $h4$

The final kingside pawn moves forward and it now becomes clear that Black will be forced to allow the opening of lines on the kingside, which gives White a decisive attack.

16 ... $\text{dxe5}$
17 $\text{wh3}$ $b5$

Black's only chance is to create threats of his own on the queenside. He is slightly helped in this by the weakening a2-a3, but a quick glance at the board confirms that his attack will be miles too slow.

18 $h5$

This is logical but most exact was first 18 $\text{xc}6$, followed by this pawn push. A black knight on e5 is crucial to the defence but because 18 ...$\text{xc}6$ 19 $h5$ is not possible, Black must play 18 ...$\text{xc}6$ 19 $h5$, when the game is all but over. Fortunately for me, White is so much quicker that this inaccuracy is not enough to give Black much hope.

18 ... $b4$
19 $\text{xb4}$

This simple move is sufficient; in any case the two more complicated continuations 19 $\text{xc}6$ $\text{xc}3$ 20 $\text{xc}6$ $\text{dxe5}$ and 19 $\text{d}f1$ $\text{bxc}3$ 20 $\text{hxg}6$ $h6$ don't look any more efficient.

19 ... $\text{xb4}$

20 $\text{d}f1$

This move has the nasty idea of interrupting the defence along the second rank by 21 $\text{hxg}6$ $\text{fxg}6$ 22 $f7+$, so the reply is completely forced.

20 ... $h6$
21 $\text{f}3$

There are many good continuations but removing the knight on e5 seems to lead to a forced win. The immediate threat is 22 $\text{xe}5$ $\text{dxe}5$ 23 $\text{hxg}6$.

21 $\text{d}8$

Running short of time my opponent goes for a desperate counterattack but it is a few tempi short. 21 ...$\text{bc}6$ may have been the toughest continuation but after this my king is no longer in any danger.

22 $\text{xe}5$ $\text{dxe}5$
23 $\text{hxg6}$ $\text{fxg6}$
24 $f7+$ $\text{h}7$
The alternative 24...\(\text{h8}\) 25 \(\text{f6} \text{a5}\) 26 \(\text{b1} \text{xc2} \text{27 xg6 a3+} \text{28 c1}\) is similar to the game.

25 \(\text{h5}\)

Material is of little importance as the game will clearly be decided by a direct attack. If Black grabs the bishop the variations are similar: 25...\(\text{gxh5} \text{26 g6+ h8} \text{27 xh5 a5} \text{28 b1 xc2} \text{29 xh6}\). In all these sequences Black is essentially just a tempo short of success but in fact the margin is somewhat greater than it appears, as I only allowed these complications because I had calculated a forced win.

25 ... \(\text{a5}\)

Not taking the bishop doesn’t really change matters.

26 \(\text{xg6+ h8}\)
27 \(\text{b1 xc2}\)
28 \(\text{f3}\)

It was possible to take the knight here (this was also possible in some of the variations above) but material is irrelevant when White can deliver checkmate. In this position there is no good defence to 29 \(\text{f6+ g7} \text{30 xh6}\) mate.

28 ... \(\text{a3+}\)
29 \(\text{c1}\)

Black resigned

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**Game 26**

Perhaps the recent tournament in Monaco helped to explain Michael’s excellent result in Cannes. It is noticeable that Michael often performs especially well in the second of back-to-back events.

It was at this time that Michael moved to London. Living in Cornwall has many advantages but not if you are a professional chess player with many commitments overseas that involve flights from Heathrow and Gatwick. Apart from the travelling there was nobody in Cornwall to help him with his chess and the remainder of the England team live in London. Michael had enjoyed working with Jon Speelman and Julian Hodgson when preparing in the past and it would now be a lot easier to organise. It was a pretty lonely life in Cornwall during term-times when most of his school contemporaries were away at university.

Michael resumed normal rates of play at the Klooster tournament in Ter Apel and had five decisive results, defeating Van der Sterren,
Sosonko and Christiansen but losing to Vaganian, the tournament winner, and Epishin.

P Van der Sterren – M Adams
Ter Apel 1992
Benko Gambit

Although few top players use the Benko Gambit, I have enjoyed playing it, apart from a few very painful reverses. One problem is that once you are known to play the Benko, people tend to avoid it by 2 \( \Box f3 \) or hit you with some vicious preparation. However, in this game my opponent contents himself with a quiet system, hoping to simply cash in on his extra pawn.

1 \( d4 \) \( \Box f6 \)
2 \( c4 \) \( c5 \)
3 \( d5 \) \( b5 \)
4 \( cxb5 \) \( a6 \)
5 \( bxa6 \) \( g6 \)

It is considered premature to recapture with the bishop because White can adopt a favourable double fianchetto. Now, however, Black can sometimes profitably recapture with the knight.

6 \( \Box c3 \) \( \Box xa6 \)
7 \( \Box f3 \) \( d6 \)
8 \( g3 \) \( \Box g7 \)
9 \( \Box g2 \) \( 0-0 \)
10 0-0 \( \Box bd7 \)
11 \( \Box c2 \)

This line is very solid for White but it is hard for him to gain more than a minimal advantage. I believe that 7 \( e4 \) is the toughest line for Black to face if White decides to retain the gambit pawn.

11 ... \( \Box a5 \)
12 \( \Box d1 \)

It is also normal to play \( h2-h3 \) in this type of position to prevent the knight manoeuvre which I utilise in this game. Then the knight might regroup via e8 and c7 but this probably gives White better chances of achieving an edge.

12 ... \( \Box g4 \)
13 \( \Box d2 \) \( hfb8 \)

Although White has a potential discovered attack on the black queen, it is not dangerous as the white knight has nowhere useful to go.

14 \( b3 \) \( \Box b6 \)

Threatening ...c5-c4. Alternatives were 14...\( \Box ge5 \) or 14...\( \Box d8 \).

15 \( h3 \) \( \Box ge5 \)
16 \( \Box xe5 \)

A tricky alternative was 16 \( \Box e1 \) trying to embarrass the knight on e5. If then 16...\( c4 \) 17 \( b4 \) \( \Box xb4 \) 18 \( f4 \) leaves Black struggling to justify his position, so a better reply
to the knight retreat would be 16...\(\text{Qf6}\), and Black could also consider the ambitious move 16...f5. Another option was 16 \(\text{Aab1}\) immediately as if 16...\(\text{Afxf5}\) it would be good to recapture with the e-pawn, so as to push it to f4 to control the important e5 square and allow play down the e-file.

16 ... \(\text{Qxe5}\)

17 \(\text{Aab1}\)

Releasing the pin along the long diagonal and preparing to set up the a4, b3 structure which is considered to be the best for White in this kind of position.

17 \(\text{Axc8}\)

This is a very common idea. The bishop comes to f5 with the aim of encouraging White to respond e4, weakening some light squares (especially d3 and f3) and further impeding the fianchettoed bishop on g2.

18 a4

This is normally considered to be the best pawn structure for White on the queenside because pressure down the a-file is impossible, but the b3 pawn can still become a target.

18 ... \(\text{Af5}\)

19 e4 \(\text{Ad7}\)

20 \(\text{Axe3}\)

Both 20 f4 and 20 \(\text{Axc4}\) are powerfully answered by 20...c4.

20 ... \(\text{Wa5}\)

21 f4?

This move is rarely desirable in this system and here it is particularly poor as Black regains his pawn by force with a sizable advantage. The best was 21 \(\text{Axd2}\), inviting a repetition, which would be difficult for Black to decline as 21...\(\text{Axb5}\) is met by 22 \(\text{Axb5}\) and wins. If Black is determined to continue the game, 21...\(\text{Wa6}\) 22 \(\text{Axe1}\) (22 f4 \(\text{Axd3}\) 23 \(\text{Af1}\) c4) 22...f5 looks necessary but it would take a brave man to play it.

21 ... \(\text{Axc4}\)

This is the problem. The exchange of knights brings White’s pawn to c4, leaving the a-pawn doomed and the newly created c-pawn vulnerable.

22 bxc4 \(\text{Axc3}\)

23 \(\text{Axb8}\)

White sensibly eliminates as many pieces as possible.

23 ... \(\text{Axb8}\)

24 \(\text{Axb1}\) \(\text{Ab4}\)

Also strong was the continuation 24...\(\text{Axb1}\) 25 \(\text{Wxb1}\) \(\text{Wxa4}\) and White’s position is rather loose, giving excellent chances to get in round the back.

25 \(\text{Af1}\)
25 ... \textit{Wxa4?}

An understandable decision as I thought this would lead to the win of a pawn or the creation of a passed b-pawn, but my calculations were flawed. The correct move was 25...\textit{xa4} when the extra vulnerability of White’s king is important, giving Black a decisive advantage, e.g. 26 \textit{db7} \textit{a2} 27 \textit{wd3} \textit{xa4} 28 \textit{xe7} \textit{f6} 29 \textit{db7} \textit{c2} 30 \textit{we2} \textit{xe4} 31 \textit{wd1} \textit{a1} 32 \textit{we2} \textit{e1}.

\begin{align*}
26 & \textit{xa4} \textit{xa4} \\
27 & \textit{d3} \textit{b3} \\
28 & \textit{f2} \textit{a2} \\
29 & \textit{c1?}
\end{align*}

This loses. The hidden resource which I missed was 29 \textit{xb4} \textit{xb4} 30 \textit{c5} \textit{dxc5} 31 \textit{xc5} \textit{b3} 32 \textit{c4} when the pin halts the pawn dead in its tracks. In fact this variation might even be good for White, so safest is 29...\textit{xb4} with an almost certain draw in prospect.

\begin{align*}
29 & \ldots \textit{b2} \\
30 & \textit{c2} \textit{b1}
\end{align*}

Now the pawn falls and there are few difficulties for Black due to the activity of his pieces.

\begin{align*}
31 & \textit{d2} \textit{xd3} \\
32 & \textit{xd3} \textit{xc4} \\
33 & \textit{b3} \textit{b4}
\end{align*}

The exchange of rooks could have been avoided by 33 \textit{f3} but the white rook would then have had few prospects after 33...\textit{b4}. The bishop ending is winning for Black as the white king is unable to approach the b-pawn closer than the d-file.

\begin{align*}
34 & \textit{xb4} \textit{xb4} \\
35 & \textit{e2} \textit{b3} \\
36 & \textit{d3} \textit{f6} \\
37 & \textit{f5}
\end{align*}

White’s problem is that if the bishop opposes on c3 or d4, ...\textit{b3}-\textit{b2} wins on the spot. This means that Black has all the time in the world to bring his king to some suitable square such as \textit{a4} to support the b-pawn.

\begin{align*}
37 & \ldots \textit{f8} \\
38 & \textit{g4} \textit{e8} \\
39 & \textit{d2}
\end{align*}

White could have played 39 \textit{g5} \textit{e5} but it doesn’t greatly change the situation.
39 ... \textit{d7}  
40 \textit{a5} \textit{g5}  
It is not really clear what the point of this is but Black is obviously not in any kind of a hurry.  
41 \textit{d2} \textit{c7}  
42 \textit{e3} \textit{h6}  
Protecting the black pawn on \textit{g5} again so that if White tries e4-e5 it can be safely captured with the bishop.  
43 \textit{b2} \textit{b7}  
The alternative 43...\textit{b6} would have got the king to a better post quicker but positions like this don't come along often so it is best to enjoy them when you can.  
\textit{White resigned}

\underline{Game 27}

While not unique, it is comparatively rare for a player to go through a tournament at this level without a single draw. Looking at Michael's records I get the impression that at this stage of his career he obtained a far higher ratio of decisive results than other players. While extra defeats on his record do not look good, I feel sure that the lessons learned from these defeats will stand him in better stead than a lot of safe draws. One interesting feature of the Ter Apel event is that the last round is held in a nearby church which used to be a monastery. Though Michael is not a regular church-goer, the arrangement seems to suit him as he has won his last round game on both occasions that he has played the event, while showing rather average form in the other rounds played in the hotel alongside. An unusual momento of this tournament was a poster that Michael was given with his head superimposed on a monk's tunic!

Michael's junior career ended at Oakham where his record had progressively worsened. Certainly it was an extremely strong field, including Shirov, Kramnik and Tiviakov, but this cannot explain his 15th equal position with 5/9, two and a half points behind the winner, Alexei Shirov. It is just one of those strange things that Michael never did himself justice in junior events. Tiviakov, for the second time at Oakham, Akopian and Gdanski were the players to beat Michael.

He did finish level with Shirov in his next event, a category 17 event in Dortmund, but since they were eighth equal in a ten-player event, this was hardly a major triumph. However, receiving an invitation to play in such a strong event that included world champion Kasparov was a significant step forward, and it was the strongest event that he had played in at this stage. Michael's result was not all that bad; if you ignored his defeats against Kasparov and Ivanchuk, the co-winners, he
scored fifty per cent against the other seven players, who averaged just over 2640.

**M. Adams - V. Salov**  
*Dortmund 1992*  
Sicilian Defence,  
Sveshnikov Variation

My opponent in this game is fairly unique in the chess world in that, when annotating games for magazines, he is just as happy to commentate on his losses as his wins. Attentive readers of this book may have noticed that this is not an opinion that I share.

1 e4 c5  
2 Qf3 Qc6  
3 d4 cxd4  
4 Qxd4 Qf6  
5 Qc3 e5

Although Valery is best known for his impressive endgame technique his Black opening repertoire can be quite sharp; the Sveshnikov is not for the faint-hearted.

6 Qdb5 d6  
7 Qg5 a6  
8 Qa3 b5  
9 Qxf6 gxf6  
10 Qd5 Qg7  
11 c3 f5  
12 exf5

When I first annotated this game I said that this variation was unusual but deserved to be played more. It is good to know that even I get things right occasionally, because it could currently be considered the main line. In fact, John Fedorowicz first brought this line to my attention in a bar in Buenos Aires. White chooses to regroup the offside knight from a3 immediately, leading to a compact position with a safe king. The pawn on c3 is useful to negate the dark-squared bishop.

12 ... Qxf5  
13 Qc2 0-0  
14 Qce3 Qe6

The alternative 14...Qg6 is well answered by 15 h4! h6 16 h5 Qh7 17 Qd3 f5 18 g4.

15 g3

A very normal move which cannot be a mistake, but more enterprising would have been 15...f5 when White may be forced to put his bishop offside with 16 Qh3 to prevent 16...f4.

16 Qg2 Qb8  
17 0-0 Qxd5

The immediate 17...f5 may have been a better bet. After 18 Qxe7+
\!xe7 19 \!d5 \!d7 (19...\!xd5 20 \!xd5+ \!h8 is slightly better for White with no risk, and 19...\!f7 20 \!b4 \!b6 21 a4 is a little awkward for Black) 20 \!d2 leads to an unclear position. In recent times Black has also considered 17...a5 and 17...\!d7 here but the plan of an early advance of the f-pawn, giving options to play both ...e5-e4 and ...f5-f4, should not be underrated.

18 \!xd5!

This clamps down on the light squares and makes it hard for Black to find activity. The other recapture on d5 would be less effective here after the standard reply 18...f5.

18 ... \!h8
19 a4

An obvious move but if I had appreciated my opponent's plan I might have preferred 19 \!d3, which looks hard to meet.

19 ... \!h6!

Realising that too many pieces have been exchanged for standard counterplay with ...f7-f5-f4 to be effective, Black seeks to rid himself of the dormant bishop on g7.

20 axb5 axb5?

But this is a very bad blunder. Black had to take the opportunity to hoover the pieces with 20...\!xe3 21 fxe3 \!xd5 (21...axb5 22 \!a6 \!b6 23 \!a7 is unpleasant) 22 \!xd5 \!xb5 23 \!d2 a5 when White has slightly the more secure king but not much is happening.

21 \!c2

Of course White takes the opportunity to retain the knight and lock Black's pawn structure. There is now little chance for counterplay and the weak pawns on b5 and d6 secure a clear edge for White. It was also tempting to play 20 \!c2, but the difference is that Black can respond 20...bxa4, when he gets some chances to stir up trouble.

21 ... \!d7
22 \!a6 \!h3
23 \!e1

Rather less good would have been 23 \!g2 \!xg2 24 \!xg2 \!b7+.

23 ... \!g5
24 \!b4 \!d8

After this move White wins material by force but no good alternatives come to mind. If Black had the time to play ...\!b6 it would be difficult for White to achieve much, but the tempo can be put to good use.

25 \!e4! \!b6!

The only chance which sets some tricky cheapos. The more natural
25...a6 loses to 26 w5 f6 27 w6 f7 (27...g8 28 x6 x6 29 xf6+) 28 x6 x6 29 xh7.

26 d5

This is the most accurate way to proceed; 26 w5 looks tempting yet Black has surprising resources: 26...f5 27 x6 (27 xg3 xxf2+ 28 xf2 fxe4+ 29 g2 f2+ wins for Black and 27 c6 g4 is not very clear) 27...f4 28 x8 x8 29 xe4 with advantage to White but less control than in the game.

26 ... f5
27 x6 d8
28 d7

The attractive looking 28 w5 g4 29 w6 f6 30 w4 fxe4 31 a7 f5 32 d5 e6 surprisingly yields little for White but maybe I should have investigated 31 xg4 x6 32 a7 more closely. The actual continuation wins White a solid pawn and leads to a technically won game.

28 ... xd7
29 x6 e7
30 d7 g5
31 c2!

At first I was obsessed with 31 g2 xg2 32 xg2 but Black achieves some counter-chances by 32...f4. After the text move Black's f-pawn cannot move due to the veiled threat on h7.

31 e4?

Further resistance could only be achieved by means of 31...ae8 with the idea of 32 d6 w6. The most accurate reply is 32 f4.

32 d4+ w6
33 w7 w6
34 a1 b4

Other alternatives are equally hopeless since Black is threatened by both 35 a6 wc1+ 36 d1 and the threat actually executed in the game.

35 d4+ w6
36 aa7 xd4
37 cxd4
Black resigned

Game 28

Coming from England, Michael had always been amazed at the high level of interest in chess among the general public on the Continent, but the number of spectators at Dortmund surprised him as the organisers claimed daily crowds of 2,000. For the record this was Michael's first
over the board game with Kasparov following three simultaneous games several years earlier.

There was also keen interest in the 1992 olympiad in Manila. With the break-up of the Soviet Union and England’s outstanding record over the previous four olympiads, hopes were again very high. However Russia, even without Karpov and Yusupov, won easily, ahead of Uzbekistan, Armenia, Latvia, Georgia and Ukraine, all former Soviet Republics, as well as USA, Iceland and Croatia, with England in tenth place. If one excluded Russia, the competition was very close and only three points covered the next twenty teams. Without doubt tenth place was disappointing but even with the increased competition it was not a true reflection of the team’s capability. It was frustrating that not one of the English team was in good form, which is rare when there are six players to choose from. Julian Hodgson played as well as anybody but as second reserve his influence was not the same as a higher board achieving such results.

Michael played on board three, above John Nunn despite having been below him at Cannes. He was a more permanent member of the side than two years previously, playing 11 games with his three omissions following defeats against Veingold (Estonia), Arnason (Iceland) and Thipsay (India), all players he would normally expect to make a decent score against. Nevertheless, his five wins and three draws made it overall a more satisfactory olympiad individually than Novi Sad had been. His best success was against Alexey Dreev, which did at least enable England to draw their match against the gold medal winners. Unfortunately this was in the last round and this pairing prevented a more respectable placing being gained as might have been the case with a clear win against other opposition. Having commented on earthquakes, bombings and food poisoning on his previous visit to Manila, it is only fair to record the excellent parties that were organised to celebrate Filipino independence and other momentous occasions, and the superb standard of accommodation; the hotel also provided a swimming pool and tennis court for their guests.

Fate often plays a part during in a game of chess, as it does in a player’s career. At Palma, Michael had failed to qualify for the 1991-93 GMA World Cup cycle, which was later aborted. As some sort of consolation, those who had qualified were invited to a SWIFT Rapid Tournament in Brussels, where players were allowed 25 minutes for all their moves. When several declined their invitations reserves were brought in and Michael was one of these. He then went on to win the 32-player knockout event. It started out like an English championship for Michael.
First of all he beat John Nunn, winning with Black after a draw with White. I have already commented that Michael does not always begin well in tournaments and this was the case here. Michael’s comment on the win was that it was ‘extremely fortunate’. His opponent’s was that it was ‘the worst swindle ever perpetrated on him’. To this Michael retorts that, if this is the case then John has not got much to complain about. Such strokes of fortune can lead to a good result, perhaps because of the liberating effect of knowing that you could already have been eliminated. This was the case with Michael in Brussels, as he then achieved his first competitive success against Nigel Short after some near misses, holding on grimly with Black and then winning with White.

M. Adams – N. Short
Brussels 1992
Trompovsky (without ...\(\mathcal{f}6\))

After Nigel had failed to convert his advantage in the first game of this mini-match, in which he was two exchanges up with a clock lead, the psychological initiative in this mini-match had shifted my way. Perhaps this explains my opponent’s weak resistance in the following game.

1 d4 d5
2 \(\mathcal{g}5\)!?

It has to be said that this isn’t a particularly good move, but White does not stand worse after it and, more importantly, at this time limit it sends the game into confusion at a very early stage. The only chance for Black to take the initiative is 2...c5, but most players prefer a more solid approach.

2 ... c6
3 e3 h6
4 \(\mathcal{h}4\) \(\mathcal{w}b6\)
5 \(\mathcal{w}c1\) e5

6 c3

As 6 dxe5 \(\mathcal{w}b4\) would be embarrassing. Also playable here is 6 \(\mathcal{d}f3\). The move chosen leads to a kind of Caro-Kann reversed where Black should be close to equality.

6 ...

\(\mathcal{d}d7\)

If 6...exd4 7 cxd4 the game resembles a Queen’s Gambit where Black should not have many problems after 7...\(\mathcal{d}f5\), although in a recent speed game in the London Intel event Miles was successful against Kramnik from this position.

7 \(\mathcal{d}f3\) e4?!

In a five-minute tie-break game in the next round, Jonathan Speelman played the sounder move 7...\(\mathcal{d}d6\) against me. Short’s move asks a little too much of Black’s position.

8 \(\mathcal{fd}2\) f5
9 \(\mathcal{g}3\) \(\mathcal{gf}6\) (D)
10 c4?!

The alternative 10 \(\mathcal{e}2\) was better when White stands well.

10 ...

\(\mathcal{h}5\)
Although there is no reason for White to be concerned about the doubled pawns, the loss of dark-square control is important.

11  \( \text{Qc3} \)  \( \text{Qxg3} \)
12  \( \text{hxg3} \)  \( \text{Qf6} \)
13  \( \text{a3} \)  \( \text{Qe6} \)
14  \( \text{b4} \)  \( \text{Wd8} \)
15  \( \text{Qe2} \)  \( \text{Qe7} \)
16  \( \text{c5} \)

White plays very directly, aiming to cause problems with a queenside pawn rush. It is important to do this immediately as 16 0-0 would definitely castle into it. However, in general the doubled g-pawns provide good shelter for the white king.

16 ...  0-0
17  \( \text{Qb3} \)  \( \text{b6?} \)

A bad strategical error. Black should play to keep the queenside closed with 17...b5, though White may be slightly better after 18 a4 a6 19 Qa3.

18  \( \text{O-O} \)  \( \text{Qb8} \)
19  \( \text{Wc2} \)

This move connects the white rooks and awaits developments, but the immediate 19 b5 was also promising.

19  ...  \( \text{g5} \)

The situation on the queenside is too fluid for Black to get away with this move. Also inappropriate was 19...Qd7 20 b5, but reasonable moves were 19...Qf7 or 19...Qe8, though White has the better game in any event.

20  \( \text{b5!} \)  \( \text{bx}c5 \)
21  \( \text{dx}c5 \)  \( \text{Wc8} \)

Black avoids 21...cx\( b5 \) as 22 Qxb5 floats the white knights effortlessly to ideal posts.

22  \( \text{bxc6} \)  \( \text{Qf7} \)

Black tries to buy time at the cost of a pawn.

23  \( \text{Qd4} \)  \( \text{f4} \)

I expected this as 23...Qxc5 24 Qcb5 is clearly terrible. Nigel angles for 24 gxf4 gxf4 25 exf4 Qxc5 26 Qcb5 Qxb5 27 Qxb5 Wxc6 with some confusion, but White has a crushing reply.

24  \( \text{Qcb5} \)  \( \text{f3} \)

The only chance.

25  \( \text{gxf3} \)  \( \text{Wh3} \)
Threatening ♕f1-g2 when my king is totally safe. The rest of the game is a mopping-up operation which I managed fairly efficiently.  

26 ... exf3  
27 ♕xf3 ♖e4  
28 ♖xe4 dxe4  
29 ♗xe4 ♖xc5  
30 ♗c1 ♖b6  
31 ♖d6 ♖xd4  
32 exd4 ♖h5  
33 c7 ♖a8

In the quarter-finals he came up against Jon Speelman and after two hard fought drawn games, Michael won one of the five-minute games with a brilliant attack with the black pieces to go through to the semi-finals. As there were no other English players left and Michael was faced by Anand. I have commented on the limited opportunities that Michael had been given to play some players but this could not be said about the Indian who had been playing Michael frequently in many events since 1987 and winning consistently. However Michael managed to achieve his first ever success against Anand and won through to the final by 1½−½. The other finalist was Eric Lobron of Germany – definitely not the final anticipated when the event was initially arranged, as both players had come in as reserves! The player with the white pieces won the two games played in the final so the outcome had to be decided by two five-minute games which would decide who pocketed an extra $25,000! Michael was fortunate enough to win both quickplay games. Despite his disappointment in the final, Eric behaved very sportingly and is still a regular drinking partner when they meet up on the chess circuit.

Regrettably, this was the last chess event associated with Bessel Kok, who had played a leading role in the Grand Masters' Association, and SWIFT who had been responsible for the rich prizes and generous conditions given to the players. Michael was particularly appreciative of the open flight ticket that he received, especially as he arrived at Heathrow for his original flight without his passport. He still managed to arrive a day early and proceeded to spend it playing blitz friendlies with some of the other English players – rather ironic in view of the draw, but as it turned out good preparation.
Chapter Four

Michael’s world rating had changed very little in 1992. It had gone up five points in January but had come down by ten points in July. It is not unknown for developing players to hit a plateau and stay there for some time before making further progress. However, it was very frustrating for Michael because it meant that the invitations to top events were likely to be just as restricted. Where there was an invitation earmarked for an English player, first refusal was going to be given to Nigel Short, still clearly England’s number one, and if he was unable to accept, it was a case of hoping that it might come Michael’s way. Undoubtedly Michael’s best chance of receiving invitations to stronger events would be to improve his rating and world ranking. However, the natural way of doing this would be through playing against stronger opponents in higher category all-play-all events. Thus it was very much a chicken and egg situation.

Michael was unfortunate in that England was not playing host to strong events, so he did not have the same sort of opportunities as players like Miguel Illescas, Vasilios Kotronias, Joel Lautier and Jeroen Piket received from their respective countries. Organisers are always enthusiastic to see the home nation represented among even the strongest fields and Spain, Greece, France and The Netherlands were just four countries that ensured that their rising stars had plenty of opportunities at the highest level.

We did wonder if Michael would benefit from kind of sponsorship, especially as we had heard of the good fortune of Kamsky and Lautier. We thought that if a similar generous offer came along for Michael, possibly he could be more selective in choosing his events and spend some time working with a trainer who might improve some of his weaker areas, notably his knowledge of openings. However we did not pursue it with any great vigour and I am not convinced that it would have been of any great help, other than the obvious financial security that it would have given. Michael had always done his learning at the chessboard rather than through private study and always enjoys the social life connected with playing regularly in chess tournaments. I suppose that if he had been brought up in the rigorous regime of a Russian chess school rather than the blissful ignorance of his Cornish home, things might have been different. Perhaps that is why I feel that accusations of laziness that are made about Michael are rather unfair.
Michael was the highest rated player at the Lloyds Bank Masters and started well with 5/6. However, then came a defeat against Timoshchenko, which put him out of the running. The game was interesting because it was a repeat of their pairing at the tournament a year earlier when Michael had won. Michael’s annotations of that game had been published and a suggested improvement had been prepared by his opponent, who proceeded to win on this occasion and go on to share first place. Michael could only draw his three remaining games against English opponents James Howell, Jonathan Levitt and Chris Ward and finished on a disappointing 6½/10, with a consequent loss of rating points.

Ironically Lloyds Bank had still not finished with Michael, as one of their cashpoints chewed up his card despite his account being in credit. Thus Michael was forced to return to the tournament venue to borrow some money from Julian Hodgson, prior to leaving for Greece at six o’clock the following morning on the only available flight to reach his next tournament in Greece at Chalkidiki. This involved a connection at Vienna, during which his luggage went astray. It was hardly the best state of mind to commence a category 14 event. Perhaps my theory that Michael performed well in the second of back-to-back tournaments did not apply on this occasion. However, there were good reasons for this as he was worried about his luggage loss and to make matters worse he was expected to start his first round game ten minutes after arriving, despite previous assurances that he would be given a suitable time to recover from the journey. It was not surprising that he lost to Ulibin in the first round. Worse followed as another defeat, by Illescas this time, was intermingled with three draws, so Michael had now played nine games without a win. One of the draws was recorded in his first clash with the rising star, Kramnik.

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**Game 29**

**V.Kramnik – M.Adams**  
*Chalkidiki 1992*  
Benko Gambit

At the time of this game Vladimir Kramnik was not quite so well-known as he is now, although his results in the Manila Olympiad had alerted most of the world’s players that he was someone to watch out for. He certainly was the night before the free day when he and his brother consumed vodka like water. Rather mysteriously the day after this the plastic pool-side chairs were found in the pool. I quizzed Vlad as to whether he could give me any information
about this but he assured me with a broad smile that he knew nothing about it.

1 d4  d5
2 c4  c6
3 d5  b5
4 cxb5  a6
5 e3  axb5

The most thematic way to play the Benko is to continue with 5...g6 here, thus making it a genuine gambit. With the text Black aims to take advantage of some tactical points to regain the pawn.

6  xb5  a5+
7  c3  b7
8  ge2

This is the modern way to play the position and also in my opinion the strongest. White returns the material immediately, hoping to take advantage of his lead in development and the open lines which result. The alternative 8  d2  b6 is currently considered by theory to be quite good for Black.

8 ...  xd5
9 0-0  xc3
10  xc3  e6 (D)
11 e4

A critical move. White pushes in the middle directly. An earlier game of mine (against Shirov from Dortmund 1992) went 11 a4  c6 12 e4  e7 13  f4  d8 14  d3 0-0 15  d1  d4 16  e5  f6 17  d6  e7 with a balanced position. The idea of the text is to save time by omitting the move a4, which if achieved would prevent Black from castling in safety, as in the game Pinter-Adams, French league 1991, which went 11 e4  e7 12  f4  c6 13  d3  d4 14  e5  f6 15  xf6  gxf6 16 b4, when White had a nice edge although I won in the end. In the main game I tried to make use of the double role of the c3 knight, an idea that Shirov suggested to me in our analysis at Dortmund.

11 ...  xe4
12  xd7+

Otherwise White loses a pawn, but this helps Black to develop his forces. In the resulting position Black should be able to minimise any disadvantage if he plays accurately.

12 ...  xd7
13  xe4  a4

A precise move as the exchange of queens leads to a drawish ending.

14  f3

In Informator Kramnik suggests 14  d6+  e7 15  f3  xd6 16  xf7  c7 17  f4+  d6 18  xd6+  xd6 19  fd1+  c7 20  ac1 with compensation for the piece. The
alternative 14...\( \text{dx}d6 \) 15 \( \text{wx}d6 \) \( \text{wd}4 \) 16 \( \text{ff}4 \) he assesses as a slight edge for White, continuing the line with 16...\( \text{wx}d6 \) 17 \( \text{xd}6 \) \( \text{xa}6 \) 18 \( \text{fd}1 \) \( \text{f6} \) intending ...\( \text{ff}7 \), which leads to an unexciting position. Another option for White is 14 \( \text{we}2 \).

14 ... \( \text{de}5 \)

Simple development by 14...\( \text{e}7 \) 15 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 16 \( \text{b}2 \) would allow White to seize the initiative.

15 \( \text{ff}4 \)

The queen has no really promising square but inviting the Black knight forward doesn’t help. Vladimir gives the position after 15 \( \text{we}3 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 16 \( \text{we}2 \) as a slight advantage for White, but after 16...\( \text{wd}3 \) it looks about equal. The natural looking 15 \( \text{we}2 \) is strongly met by 15...\( \text{c}6 \).

15 ... \( \text{d}3 \)

16 \( \text{we}3 \) \( \text{d}8 \)

17 \( \text{c}3 \)

White starts to play rather optimistically. The more modest 17 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 18 \( \text{d}2 \) was indicated.

17 ... \( \text{c}6 \)

18 \( \text{g}3 \)

Preventing Black from developing his kingside.

18 ... \( \text{c}4 \)

19 \( \text{a}4 \)

I suggested 19 \( \text{b}1 \) followed by \( \text{b}2-\text{b}3 \) in the post-mortem, which is solid if a bit uninspiring. The text move is an excellent practical decision, as the passed a-pawn is well supported by the rook behind it and any attempts to blockade and/or take it would divert the black pieces from their powerful central posts.

19 ... \( \text{h}5 \)

The white queen is currently well placed, so I try to move it on and threaten ...\( \text{h}5-\text{h}4-\text{h}3 \) opening up the white king. In some circumstances the king’s rook can be developed laterally.

20 \( \text{h}3 \)

Also possible was 20 \( \text{h}4 \), but such drastic measures are not necessary yet. However, ignoring Black with 20 \( \text{a}5 \) \( \text{h}4 \) 21 \( \text{wh}3 \) (21 \( \text{wg}4 \) \( \text{h}3 \)) 21...\( \text{e}7 \) leaves the white queen unable to move without allowing the dangerous ...\( \text{h}4-\text{h}3 \).

20 ... \( \text{e}5 \)

This is the critical moment of the game. To make the most of my advantage here, I should have played 20...\( \text{d}6 \) 21 \( \text{wx}g7 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 22 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 23 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{dg}8 \) 24 \( \text{we}4 \) and now either 24...\( \text{f}5 \), as given by Kramnik, or the more direct move 24...\( \text{g}6 \). Both give Black more than enough for the pawn as White’s king is in great danger.
The move I actually played is positionally desirable, but with White’s a-pawn becoming stronger as it advances, piece play should be preferred to pawn play.

21 a5

White’s moves are not too difficult to spot, but the pawn is genuinely annoying for Black.

21 ... f5
22 a6 f4

Big Vlad was critical of this, pointing out the line 22...h4 23 \textit{W}g5 g6 24 a7 \textit{A}a8 when Black has things well under control and the white game is positionally bankrupt. However, it seems to me that 23 \textit{W}f3 is a substantial improvement because Black cannot evade the exchange of queens. A draw then seems the most likely result.

23 \textit{W}f3 \textit{W}xf3
24 gxf3 \textit{H}h6

This is the benefit of ...f5-f4. The king’s rook finally gets into the action to round up the a-pawn, but the position is gradually heading for a draw.

25 \textit{A}e4

The downside of ...f5-f4 was conceding this excellent square.

25 ... \textit{H}a8
26 a7 \textit{H}g6+

Shifting the white king to an inferior square because the f2 pawn is vulnerable in some variations.

27 \textit{A}h2 \textit{H}c6
28 \textit{A}d1 \textit{A}c5
29 \textit{A}xc5 \textit{H}xc5
30 \textit{A}g2 \textit{H}c7

Here a draw was agreed as 31 b3 \textit{H}axa7 32 \textit{H}xa7 \textit{H}xa7 33 bxc4 \textit{A}xc1 34 \textit{H}xc1 leads to mass liquidation and an equal ending.

**Game 30**

Although Michael’s early form was not good, there was considerable compensation to be gained from the pleasant location. Although the tourist season was virtually over, the weather was distinctly better than in England and there was a swimming pool outside Michael’s room with a poolside bar, where Ivan Sokolov and Michael regrouped successfully after their disappointing starts. Three wins, against Lautier, Stohl and Kotronias, and three draws in the second half enabled Michael to bring some respectability to his final position of fourth equal with Sokolov, behind Kramnik, Lautier and Illescas.
M. Adams – J. Lautier
Chalkidiki 1992
Sicilian Defence,
Grand Prix Attack

This game is rather unusual in that at one stage Joel squanders four tempi. Whilst this is not recommended unless your opponent is in zugzwang, I am in a poor position to criticize as I did the same thing myself once (although I did go on to win the game)!

1 e4 c5
2 8c3

If you are going to punt the Grand Prix Attack, it is better to play 2 f4, unless your opponent replies 2...d5. I was pretty sure that Lautier would.

2...
e6
3 f4 d5
4 8f3 8f6

This move is quite reasonable but the more common 4...dxe4 may be a better practical choice. White has a pleasant opening after 4...d4 5 8e2.

5 b5+ 8c6

I would have preferred 5...8d7 here as the continuation 6 8xd7+ 8bxd7 7 e5 8g3 looks fine for Black. White would play 7 d3 with a balanced position. My opponent obviously felt that the two bishops would give sufficient play to compensate for the doubled pawns, but I think White should be able to claim a slight edge.

6 d3 8e7
7 8xc6+

It was also possible to play 7 0-0 but Black can try to prevent any damage to his pawn structure with 7...8c7.

8...
bxc6
8 0-0 8a6

A dynamic decision, trying to open the game for the two bishops quickly; 8...0-0 was less ambitious.

9 e5 8d7
10 b3 c4

It was still possible to castle but Black plays consistently. However, White is just in time to counter this as the black king proves to be in more danger in the centre than it first appears.

11 dxc4 dxc4
12 8e1 8b6
13 8e4 0-0

Black had two other alternatives here, but the text is probably best. After 13...8d5 14 bxc4! 8xc4 15 8d6+ 8xd6 16 exd6 8xd6 17 8d4 Black’s position is wrecked. A better option was 13...8xd1 14 8xd1 cxb3 15 axb3 8e2 16 8d2 8xf3 17 gxrf3 8d5 18 8d1 with the
idea of c2-c4, when Black's weak queenside pawns are easier to target than White's on the kingside.

14 \( \text{\textbf{e3}} \text{ \textbf{d5}} \)

The threat was 15 \( \text{\textbf{c5}} \), denuding the dark squares.

15 \( \text{\textbf{wd2}} \text{ \textbf{dxe3}} \)

Alternatively 15...\( \text{\textbf{w}} \text{c7} \) was play-able. Then an interesting response would be 16 \( \text{\textbf{c5}} \text{ \textbf{xc5}} \) 17 \( \text{\textbf{xc5}} \text{ \textbf{wb6}} \) 18 \( \text{\textbf{xf2}} \) (18 \( \text{\textbf{wd4}} \text{ \textbf{fd8}} \)) 18...\( \text{\textbf{x}} \text{xf4} \) 19 \( \text{\textbf{d7}} \text{ \textbf{xf2+}} \) 20 \( \text{\textbf{xf2}} \text{ \textbf{fd8}} \) 21 \( \text{\textbf{c5}} \text{ \textbf{c8}} \) 22 \( \text{\textbf{d1}} \) when White will regain the pawn with a good position.

16 \( \text{\textbf{xe3}} \text{ \textbf{b6}} \)

17 \( \text{\textbf{ad1}} \text{ \textbf{fd8}} \)

18 \( \text{\textbf{d6}} \)

Although there doesn't seem to be too much wrong with Black's position, it proves extremely difficult to dislodge White's knight without creating a very dangerous passed d-pawn.

18...\( \text{\textbf{h}} \text{6} \) 19 \( \text{\textbf{xb6}} \text{ \textbf{axb6}} \) 20 \( \text{\textbf{xc4}} \) is surprisingly good for White, as my opponent pointed out after the game. The extra pawn is the biggest factor in the situation as it cannot be regained immediately by 20...\( \text{\textbf{xd6}} \) 21 \( \text{\textbf{exd6}} \text{ \textbf{xc4}} \) 22 \( \text{\textbf{e5}} \).

However, a better move is 18...\( \text{\textbf{d7}} \) when 19 \( \text{\textbf{xc4}} \text{ \textbf{xe3}} + \) 20 \( \text{\textbf{xe3}} \text{ \textbf{xc4}} \) is okay for Black.

19 \( \text{\textbf{axb3}} \text{ \textbf{h6}} \)

Joel continues to play a waiting game, but White has more useful waiting moves, as is radically demonstrated by the game continuation. If here 19...\( \text{\textbf{xe3}} + \) 20 \( \text{\textbf{xe3}} \text{ \textbf{d7}} \) 21 \( \text{\textbf{a1}} \) is now possible.

20 \( \text{\textbf{d2}} \text{ \textbf{c5}} \)

Still interesting was 20...\( \text{\textbf{d7}} \).

21 \( \text{\textbf{c1}} \text{ \textbf{b7}} \)

The start of an unusual manoeuvre to say the least, but this move is quite logical.

22 \( \text{\textbf{h1}} \text{ \textbf{c6}} \)

Irrelevant. 22...\( \text{\textbf{f8}} \), consolidating the kingside, was more to the point.

23 \( \text{\textbf{d3}} \)

This works out extremely well, but the more urgent 23 \( \text{\textbf{f5}} \) looks very strong. 23...\( \text{\textbf{xf5}} \) 24 \( \text{\textbf{xf5}} \text{ \textbf{c7}} \) 25 \( \text{\textbf{e6}} \) is dangerous or 23...\( \text{\textbf{xf3}} \) 24 \( \text{\textbf{xf3}} \text{ \textbf{xd6}} \) 25 \( \text{\textbf{xd6}} \text{ \textbf{c7}} \) with a big white advantage.

23...

\( \text{\textbf{b5}} \)

My opponent has by now completely lost the plot; 23...\( \text{\textbf{f8}} \) was required.

24 \( \text{\textbf{c4}} \text{ \textbf{a6}} \)

A definite sense of \textit{déjà vu}. 24...\( \text{\textbf{c6}} \), trying to get rid of the
bishop, was better. It is very vulnerable on a6.

25 f5 exf5

Now there is no defence, but 25...f8 was not very tempting.

26 ♘xf5

26 ... ♖e6

The other option was 26...f8
27 e6 ♗xd3 28 exf7+ ♘xf7 29 ♖xd3 ♗b7 30 ♗d7+ ♗g8 31 ♗e5, but then the black pieces are too offside to mount a defence.

27 ♗d6

The knight hops back; now Black is unable to defend the c-pawn.

27 ... ♗d7

If 27...♗xd6 28 ♖xd6 ♗e8 29 ♖d3 ♖xd6 30 exd6 and the passed pawn proves decisive.

28 ♖xc5 ♗b7

29 ♖f2 ♗ad8

The obvious 29...♗xf3 30 ♖xf3 ♗ad8 31 ♖d5 ♖xd6 31...f6 32 ♖f5!) 32 ♖d3 wins for White.

30 ♗d4 ♖xe5

31 ♖f7 ♗xf7

At first this seems to save Black as 32 ♖xg2 ♖e4+ 33 ♗g1 ♗g6+ picks up the knight, but there is a sting in the tail.

32 ♖xg2 ♖xf7

33 ♗c6

The second knight fork is conclusive.

33 ... ♖e6

34 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8

35 ♖f2+

A final accurate move as 35 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 36 ♖xd8 ♖e1+ is perpetual.

Now 35...f6 36 ♖xd8 ♖e4+ 37 ♗g2 and 35...♗e8 36 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 37 ♖e1 are fatal.

Black resigned

Game 31

Another opportunity to rub shoulders with some of the world chess elite came about when the format of the annual Tilburg event was changed from a double round-robin for eight players to a knock-out event for over one hundred competitors. Forty-seven winners of a preliminary round were joined by 17 seeded players in the next round with Michael just scraping into the seeded list at no.15. The event was played at normal rates over two games and faster time limits introduced on the third day to settle the tie-breaks. It was an extremely strong tournament, with only Kasparov missing among the top players.
In order to win any kind of chess event you need some luck, and Michael’s came in his first-round match with Alexander Belyavsky. After an awful performance with Black resulting in a loss in the first game, Michael decided to play into the main line Spanish in the next. This proved not to be a good decision as his opponent whipped out twenty-odd moves of theory and equalised comfortably. However, near the time control he missed the clear draw he needed and Michael gained the better ending and converted it in the quickplay finish (one hour was allowed to finish the game after the initial forty moves in two hours). Psychologically this was a bitter blow for Belyavsky and he missed a forced win in the first of the play-off games, which Michael eventually took two-nil to go through to the last 32. Despite the trauma of this match, Michael believes that it is an advantage to have the black pieces first in such mini-matches.

In his next match, with Kiril Georgiev, Michael again started with Black and was able to win the first game, but some abysmal opening play left him struggling to hold the draw in a long rook and pawn ending which he eventually achieved. Had the seedings worked out perfectly, Michael’s next opponent would have been Karpov, but he had been eliminated due to an illegal move in a quickplay tie-break in an earlier round. Sometimes such breaks come your way in a knockout event. Anyway Kovalev from Byelorussia was his next opponent and Michael started with a win as Black. He then showed good sense when holding a large advantage after only sixteen moves of the return game, by making a draw offer that his opponent could not reasonably decline. Thus he became the last surviving Englishman as Nigel Short had been eliminated by Ilya Smirin.

**A.Kovalev – M.Adams**

*Tilburg 1992*

Caro-Kann Defence

In a tournament of this nature, with each round consisting of a mini-match of two games, I feel that it is an advantage to draw Black in the first game. This means that a draw is a good result, a win a great one, and there is still some chance to take the match into overtime in the event of a loss. There is also a natural tendency for a player with White in the first game to overpress, which may help to explain the following game.

1. e4 c6  
2. d4 d5  
3. e5 f5  
4. dxe2 e6  
5. d3 g6  
6. h4 h5  

The Advance variation of the Caro-Kann Defence is the favourite choice of many top players but
the line my opponent uses here is not particularly critical.

7  $\text{d}5$  c5

The problem is that the white strategy is based on picking off the h5 pawn but, on account of the pressure against d4 and the need to defend the pawn on h4 afterwards, this idea does not really hit the mark. The *Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings* now recommends 8 dxc5 $\text{dxc5}$ 9 $\text{d}2$ $\text{c}6$ 10 $\text{b}3$

8 g5 e7!

Kovalev’s last move came as a real surprise, but extremely aggressive play is typical of my opponent. My immediate reaction was to play either 8...$\text{b}6$ or 8...$\text{a}5$+. A closer inspection revealed that 8...$\text{a}5+$ 9 $\text{d}2$ $\text{c}d4$ 10 0-0 allows a very sizable lead in development and after 8...$\text{b}6$ comes 9 c4 with complications where Black cannot be comfortable as he is so far behind in development. However, the simple bishop move I played in the game ensures an edge; in this case the most practical move is also objectively strongest.

9 $\text{x}e7$ $\text{x}e7$

Taking stock, it is clear that the bishop foray was unsuccessful as the dark-square bishop exchange means that White’s d4 outpost is going to crumble, and Black has developed his kingside with gain of time.

11 $\text{x}h5$ $\text{xb}2$

12 $\text{x}g6$

Another try is 12 $\text{d}2$, but after 12...$\text{xh}5$ 13 $\text{xh}5$ $\text{xh}5$ 14 $\text{b}1$

15 $\text{xb}2$ cxd4 16 cxd4 $\text{a}4$

Black is much better.

12 $\text{x}g6$

It was possible to play 12...$\text{x}a1$ but the response 13 $\text{b}3$ leads to a rather messy position, whereas the text move gives Black better circumstances in which to snaffle material.

13 h5!

My opponent proves resourceful in a difficult position. I had been happily considering 13 $\text{d}2$ $\text{xc}3$ and the speedy dismemberment of the white centre.

13 ... $\text{x}a1$

14 $\text{b}3$!

This is the really clever move. The obvious 14 h$x$g6 $\text{x}h1+$ 15 $\text{x}h1$ $\text{fxg}6$ leaves Black decisively ahead on material, but the text intends to win the black queen by
0-0 followed by a knight move. This plan looks slow, but Black’s development is also somewhat behind schedule.

14 ... \( \text{\textit{Qe7}} \)

The insipid line 14...\( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) 15 0-0 promises little here but 14...\( \text{\textit{Qf4}} \) was an interesting possibility. After 15 0-0 \( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \) 16 \( \text{\textit{Qd2}} \) \( \text{\textit{Wxf1}} + 17 \text{\textit{Qxf1}} \) 0-0-0 I prefer Black. However, 16 \( \text{\textit{Qa3}} \) may be an improvement.

15 0-0 \( \text{\textit{cxd4}} \)

16 \( \text{\textit{Wxb7}} \)

Playing to win the queen is no longer possible as 16 \( \text{\textit{Qe2}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qbc6}} \) 17 \( \text{\textit{Qd2}} \) \( \text{\textit{Wxf1}} + 18 \text{\textit{Qxf1 d3}} \) gains far too much material for it.

16 \( \text{\textit{dxc3}} \)

17 \( \text{\textit{Qa3}} \)

I was more frightened by my opponent taking the rook here as after 17 \( \text{\textit{Wxa8}} \) 0-0 18 \( \text{\textit{Qa3}} \) \( \text{\textit{Wxa2}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{Wxa7}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qbc6}} \) 20 \( \text{\textit{We3}} \) \( \text{\textit{Wxa3}} \) 21 h6 White has a dangerous looking attack, though 21...\( \text{\textit{Qa8}} \) 22 hxg7 \( \text{\textit{Qg6}} \) should win. In this variation Black also has the option to bail out with 20...\( \text{\textit{Wd2}} \), which is good but not winning, so it is not fair to be too critical of his actual choice. However, after the move in the game Black is winning as White is simply too much material down.

17 ... \( \text{\textit{Wb2}} \)

18 \( \text{\textit{Qb5}} \)

The normal continuation 18 \( \text{\textit{Wxa8}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qec6}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{Qb1}} \) fails to the tactic 19...\( \text{\textit{Wxb1 +}} \) 20 \( \text{\textit{Qxb1 c2}} \).

18 ... \( \text{\textit{0-0}} \)

19 \( \text{\textit{Wxe7}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qc6}} \)

Probably 19...\( \text{\textit{Wxb5}} \) 20 h6 gxh6 21 \( \text{\textit{Qh5}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) also wins, but I was happy to safeguard my king because I already possess an ample material advantage to notch up the point.

20 \( \text{\textit{Wg5}} \) \( \text{\textit{c2}} \)

21 h6 \( \text{\textit{Wxe5}} \)

Once the e-pawn disappears only extreme carelessness can deny Black victory.

22 \( \text{\textit{Wd2}} \) \( \text{\textit{g6}} \)

23 \( \text{\textit{Wxc2}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qac8}} \)

24 \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Wh8}} \)

Rather an odd square for the queen, but I felt it would be the
most certain way to collect the point.

25 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{d}d6}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{d}d4}}
26 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}d3}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{A}c6}}
27 f5

With my opponent very short of time this smacks of desperation.
The rest of the game requires little comment since my opponent
decides to continue until the time control.

27 \ldots \textit{\textsf{\textbf{e}xf5}}
28 h7+ \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}xh7}}
29 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{A}xf7}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}xf7}}
30 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}xd4}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{H}c4}}
31 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}d3}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}e6}}
32 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{Q}e2}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}e5}}
33 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{F}f2}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{G}g7}}
34 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}a3}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{A}f7}}
35 g3 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}e4}}
36 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{Q}f4}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{E}e3}}
37 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}a6}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{A}xg3+}}
38 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{R}h1}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{G}g8}}
39 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}c8+}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{F}f8}}
40 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}a6}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}h8+}}

\textbf{White resigned}

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### Game 32

In the quarter-finals Michael had White in the first game against another Russian, Evgeny Sveshnikov, and again started with a good win, following it with a solid draw. It was hard to believe that Michael was now through to the semi-finals, along with Kamsky, Gelfand and Smirin while Karpov, Ivanchuk, Shirov, Short and Timman had all been eliminated. Michael met Smirin in the semi-final, started with Black, made a short draw, and then overcame his opponent in a tense second game to go through to the final.

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\textbf{M. Adams – I. Smirin}

\textit{Tilburg 1992}

\textit{Sicilian Defence, Scheveningen Variation}

This game was played in the semi-final stages of the competition, where the stakes had already become quite high. After a comfortable draw in the first game I now had the opportunity to try and make good use of the white pieces.

1 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{e}e4}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{c}c5}}
2 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{Q}f3}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{d}d6}}
3 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{d}d4}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{c}xd4}}
4 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{Q}xd4}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{F}f6}}
5 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{Q}c3}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{a}a6}}

This was a surprise for me, as I had expected my opponent to continue with 5...\textit{\textsf{\textbf{Q}c6}} here. Smirin stays true to his style in playing aggressively with the black pieces although given his good record in quickplay tie-breakers in this event, he would probably not have been too unhappy with a draw.

6 f4 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{e}e6}}
7 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}f3}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}b6}}

An attempt to disrupt White's development; if 8 \textit{\textsf{\textbf{Q}b3}} \textit{\textsf{\textbf{W}c7}} the
knights is less actively placed (see game 8, Adams-Suba).
8 a3?!  

Of course 8...\textit{\underline{g}x}d4 9 \textit{\underline{c}}e3 would be embarrassing and the idea of a3 is revealed after 8...g6 9 \textit{\underline{c}}e2 \textit{\underline{g}}g7 10 \textit{\underline{c}}e3, as played in the stem game in this line, Nick de Firmian against Leonid Yudasin from the 1990 Manila interzonal and also in game 25 (Adams-Renet). Perhaps 8...\textit{\underline{c}}c6 is the most accurate.
9 \textit{\underline{d}}b3?!

Better was 9 \textit{\underline{c}}e2 with similar ideas to the above game, but I became worried about 9...\textit{\underline{c}}c5. However, 10 e5 looks like a good reply.

9 ... \textit{\underline{w}}c7 
10 g4 h6 
11 h4 h5 
12 g5 \textit{\underline{g}}g4

Normally in this variation Black has the retreat square d7 available for this knight but as a result of his eighth move he is forced to play it to g4, where it continually offers White opportunities to pinch a pawn. Black’s light square control after \textit{\underline{a}}xg4 hxg4 \textit{\underline{w}}xg4 generally gives fair compensation and I was of course not keen to grab it before completing my development.

13 \textit{\underline{d}}d2 b5 
14 0-0-0 \textit{\underline{b}}b7 
15 \textit{\underline{f}}b1

A move which is frequently condemned by John Nunn for being lazy, and in this instance the Doc would be right. Although 15 \textit{\underline{h}}3 \textit{\underline{c}}c8 16 \textit{\underline{a}}xg4 hxg4 17 \textit{\underline{w}}xg4 a5 does not appeal, 15 \textit{\underline{e}}e2, playing

as in the game with an extra tempo, might be a worthwhile improvement.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
15 ... \textit{\underline{c}}c8 \\
16 \textit{\underline{e}}e2 g6 \\
17 \textit{\underline{h}}e1 \textit{\underline{g}}g7 \\
18 \textit{\underline{w}}g3 \textit{\underline{b}}b6
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

A critical moment. After the game my opponent indicated the improvement 18...\textit{\underline{d}}c5, because 19 \textit{\underline{a}}xg4 hxg4 20 f5 \textit{\underline{d}}xe4 21 \textit{\underline{e}}xe4 \textit{\underline{e}}xe4 22 f6 \textit{\underline{f}}f8 is hopeless for White. Critical is 19 \textit{\underline{d}}xc5 dxc5 20 \textit{\underline{a}}xg4 hxg4 21 e5 \textit{\underline{f}}f3 22 \textit{\underline{d}}e4 with unclear play. The text move allows White the better chances, but accurate play by both sides is required as both kings start to come under heavy pressure.

19 \textit{\underline{a}}xg4 hxg4 
20 f5

Black now has to lose time moving the bishop since 20...\textit{\underline{c}}c4 21 f6 \textit{\underline{f}}f8 22 \textit{\underline{w}}xg4 leaves Black with insufficient material to continue the attack.

20 ... \textit{\underline{e}}e5 
21 \textit{\underline{w}}xg4 \textit{\underline{e}}e7
I was relieved to see this move, although it is probably best. The extremely tempting looking alternative 21...\(\text{c4}\) is tricky, but by displaying immense greed White keeps the upper hand. A possible continuation is 22 f{\text{f}}x{\text{g}}6 \text{\(\text{x}\)xb2} 23 \text{x}f7+ \text{\(\text{f}\)f8} (a difficult decision; 23...\(\text{e}\)e7 is also possible) 24 \text{\(\text{x}\)xb2} \text{\(\text{x}\)xc3}+ 25 \text{\(\text{b}\)b1} \text{\(\text{b}\)b2} 26 \text{\(\text{x}\)xb2} \text{w}x{\text{c}}2+ 27 \text{\(\text{a}\)a1} \text{\(\text{w}\)xb3} 28 \text{\(\text{e}\)e3} and Black's king looks the more vulnerable.

24 \text{\(\text{f}\)f4} \text{\(\text{x}\)xc3}!
The only chance or else Black is a pawn down for nothing. Now Black is serious material down but White's shattered queenside creates a lot of problems.

25 b\text{\(\text{c}\)c3} \text{\(\text{a}\)a4}
26 \text{\(\text{x}\)xe5} \text{dxe5}
27 \text{\(\text{d}\)d3} 0-0
This case of late castling is also the only move, and my response is also forced to counter the threat of ...\(\text{f}\)f4.

\begin{figure}[h]  
\centering  
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}  
\caption{Chess Board Diagram}  
\end{figure}

22 \text{\(\text{a}\)a5}
I played this rather quickly as I was very keen to get control of the c4 square, but not surprisingly the knight is misplaced on a5.

22 ... \text{\(\text{a}\)a8}

23 \text{fxg6}
My original intention here was 23 \text{\(\text{f}\)f4} but this fails to 23...\text{\(\text{x}\)xc3} 24 \text{\(\text{x}\)xd6} \text{\(\text{x}\)e1} 25 \text{\(\text{e}\)e7} \text{\(\text{x}\)h4} with a lot of material for the queen. Hence the pawn capture is necessary to allow White to go \text{\(\text{w}\)xe6} at the end of this variation.

23 ... \text{fxg6}

28 \text{\(\text{d}\)ed1} \text{\(\text{c}\)c5}
It seems odd to bring the knight back from its threatening post, but otherwise \text{\(\text{d}\)d7} will decide; and of course 28...\text{\(\text{f}\)f4} 29 \text{\(\text{d}\)d8}+ \text{\(\text{f}\)f7} 30 \text{\(\text{w}\)h3} \text{\(\text{d}\)d5} 31 \text{\(\text{e}\)e1} \text{\(\text{x}\)d5} \text{exd5} 32 \text{\(\text{e}\)e7} also loses.

29 \text{\(\text{d}\)d6}
At first sight 29 \text{\(\text{f}\)f3} looks tempting, but in fact after 29...\text{\(\text{c}\)c8} it is not easy for White, e.g. 30 \text{\(\text{f}\)f6} \text{\(\text{x}\)e4} 31 \text{\(\text{b}\)b3} \text{\(\text{a}\)a4} or 30 \text{\(\text{e}\)e3} \text{\(\text{a}\)a4}.

29 \text{\(\text{x}\)xe4}?
This incorrect capture proves to be the final mistake. The obvious
alternative 29...\( \text{\textit{Qxe4}} \) 30 \( \text{\textit{Qxe6+}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxe6}} \) 31 \( \text{\textit{Qxe6}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxc3+}} \) 32 \( \text{\textit{Kc1}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxd1}} \) 33 \( \text{\textit{Qxg6+}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qh7}} \) 34 \( \text{\textit{Qh6+}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qg7}} \) 35 \( \text{\textit{Qxd1}} \) leads to an ending where, despite the extra pawn, a draw looks the most likely result to me. The text allows White enough time to start an assault on the black monarch.

\[ \text{30 } \text{\textit{Qc6}} \quad \text{\textit{Wg7}} \quad (D) \]
\[ \text{31 } \text{\textit{Wg1!}} \quad \text{\textit{Qa4}} \]

A better try was 31...\( \text{\textit{Qxc6}} \) 32 \( \text{\textit{Qxc6}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qa4}} \).

\[ \text{32 } \text{\textit{Qd7}} \quad \text{\textit{Qxc3+}} \]
\[ \text{33 } \text{\textit{Qa1}} \quad \text{\textit{Qf7}} \]

Also hopeless was the continuation 33...\( \text{\textit{Qxd1}} \) 34 \( \text{\textit{Qxg7+}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxg7}} \) 35 \( \text{\textit{Qxe5}} \).

\[ \text{34 } \text{\textit{Qxf7}} \quad \text{\textit{Wxf7}} \]

\[ \text{35 } \text{\textit{Qd8+}} \quad \text{\textit{Qg7}} \]
\[ \text{36 } \text{\textit{Qxe5}} \quad \text{\textit{Qe2}} \]
\[ \text{37 } \text{\textit{Qe3}} \quad \text{\textit{Qf1+}} \]
\[ \text{38 } \text{\textit{Qb2}} \]

**Black resigned**

The threat of \( \text{\textit{Qa7+}} \) cannot be met effectively.

---

**Game 33**

Boris Gelfand had defeated Gata Kamsky in the other semi-final, although he had to play on the tie-break day for the second successive round to do so. Nevertheless he was an overwhelming favourite to win the event. He was the world no.6, rated 75 points higher than his opponent, and he had a good record against Michael, never having lost any of their previous encounters. However, they had never met in circumstances such as these, where nerves, fighting spirit, fear and the realisation that 50,000 guilders hung on one match, influenced the outcome nearly as much as chess ability. The final started with two cautious draws, which only served to increase the pressure on the players. On the third day, which was Gelfand’s ninth consecutive playing day (in a period where Michael had earned himself two free days), the first of the rapidplay games was drawn before Michael settled matters by winning with Black. Undoubtedly success in this tournament was the finest result of his chess career to this point. This was a far more significant result than the SWIFT event in Brussels. Apart from the fact that it was a much stronger entry, it was based on normal rates of play, with quick-play only introduced to split tie-breaks.
Michael was fortunate enough to receive another invitation, again as a reserve, to play against the world’s top players at the Immopar rapid-play event in Paris. However on this occasion he was eliminated in the first round by Anand, who went on to reach the final, where he was defeated by Kasparov. Nevertheless Michael was as close as he could have been to eliminating Anand and whereas fortune had aided him at Tilburg, it did him no favours here. Michael won the first game and only lost the second on time after reaching a theoretically drawn position of queen and knight against queen. In the final position Michael was virtually giving perpetual check and he only required a little more time to prove that it was a drawn ending. In the blitz play-off Michael first encountered the system whereby White has six minutes against his opponent’s five, but must win to go through to the next round. Michael lost the toss, failed to win with White, and was eliminated. He firmly believes that chess is ill-suited to these instant tie-breaks and is of the opinion that a tie should be decided by a decisive result at the chessboard, not a failure to win. Statistics have shown that six minutes against five is an unfair handicap, with Black enjoying a huge plus score. For this reason more recent events have deducted a minute from each player and used five minutes against four, which is more reasonable. However, the system used in Brussels, where there were pairs of five-minute games, is the best solution. Of course against Vishy any game at this speed is very tough.

Michael and the national team enjoyed an outstanding performance in the European Team championships at Debrecen in Hungary. Yet despite that there was an air of disappointment at the end of the event, as only the top two teams qualified for the World team championship. Michael was the third board, playing below Nigel Short and Jon Speelman, but as he sometimes went up a board when Short or Speelman had a rest day, he managed to go through the event with seven Whites in his eight games. He finished with the outstanding record of five wins and three draws. Even that was not good enough for a board prize, which Kramnik won with 6/7. John Nunn was the ‘victim’ of Michael’s seven Whites and must have set some sort of record by playing Black in all six of his games, but nevertheless his 50% score was a valuable team performance. There are obvious arguments that can be made against such colour distribution but if it results in the team being successful, it achieves the main objective.

The team earned the bronze medal, finishing above Armenia, Latvia, Iceland, Croatia and Georgia, who had all been ahead of England at the olympiad. All five members of the team contributed well, and Nigel
Short as well as Michael had a large plus score, but they still finished behind Russia and Ukraine, showing the enormity of the task. As Ukraine beat England in their individual match there could be little complaint, but it was a shame that there was a slight faltering during the latter rounds despite the final match 3½½ win against Armenia. Michael still rues the win that he missed against Dreev which would have given England a win against Russia. After being hit by a vicious novelty which Kasparov claimed to have given to Dreev, Michael managed to consolidate a slight edge after an hour’s thought on one move and gradually pushed home an endgame advantage. Alas, his technique, which has improved without being reliable, let him down again as he rejected the winning move that had been his original intention. To make matters worse the game was adjourned in a clearly drawn position so Michael missed his only game of the competition on the following day. Michael’s victims were Cvitan, Magem, Horvath, Van Wely and Minasian, who was the last man to win a unified Soviet championship.

M.Adams – O.Cvitan

European team championship,
Debrecen 1992
Sicilian Defence,
Scheveningen Variation

Starting this event with two wins had given me some confidence but getting my third successive white meant I was keen to carry on producing the goods. My opponent in this game is renowned as one of the premier blitz specialists in Europe and for his consistent adoption of this rather unfashionable line in the Keres Attack.

\[
\begin{align*}
1 & \text{e4} & \text{c5} \\
2 & \text{\textit{\&f3}} & \text{e6} \\
3 & \text{d4} & \text{cxd4} \\
4 & \text{\textit{\&xd4}} & \text{\textit{\&f6}} \\
5 & \text{\textit{\&c3}} & \text{d6} \\
6 & \text{g4} & \text{\textit{\&c6}} \\
7 & \text{g5} & \text{\textit{\&d7}} \\
8 & \text{\textit{\&e3}} & \text{\textit{\&e7}} \\
9 & \text{h4} & \text{0-0} \\
10 & \text{\textit{\&d2}} \\
\end{align*}
\]

I don’t think that there has ever been a firm conclusion as to whether this or 10 \textit{\&e2} is the most accurate continuation. Even John Nunn, who at this stage in the event still remembered what it was like to have the white pieces, wasn’t sure though he did admit his recommendation of 10 \textit{\&c4} in Beating the Sicilian 2 was duff. In typically scientific vein I mentally tossed a coin and continued 10 \textit{\&d2}.

\[
\begin{align*}
10 & \cdots & \text{\textit{\&de5}} \\
\end{align*}
\]

This plan was a new one for me and immediately left me wishing I had played 10 \textit{\&e2}.

\[
\begin{align*}
11 & \text{\textit{\&e2}} \\
\end{align*}
\]

White must maintain the dark squared bishop. Therefore it is wrong to play 11 0-0-0, which allows the reply 11...\textit{\&g4}.
11 \( \text{c}a5 \)

The idea of Black’s play targeting the c4 square seems quite interesting; the drawback is he is left behind in development.

12 b3

It was also possible to allow Black to carry out his threat, e.g. 12 0-0-0 \( \text{c}a4 \) 13 \( \text{c}x4 \) \( \text{c}x4 \) 14 \( \text{w}e2 \) \( \text{c}xe3 \) 15 \( \text{w}xe3 \) when White’s advanced pawns give him a small plus. The black monarch is going to come under heavy pressure whilst Black is a long way from threatening the white king. This unsubtle approach would probably be my choice if I had the position again. My move is a little too ambitious.

12 ...
13 0-0-0 \( \text{c}ac6 \)
14 \( \text{c}xd4 \) \( \text{c}c6 \)
15 \( \text{e}e3 \) \( \text{w}a5 \)
16 \( \text{b}b2 \)

I was not completely comfortable with my king being placed here but 16 \( \text{b}b1 \) \( \text{b}b4 \) is a bit annoying.

16 ...
\( \text{a}6 \) (D)

The tactics after 16...d5 17 \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{a}a3+ \) 18 \( \text{b}b1 \) \( \text{b}b4 \) 19 \( \text{dxc6} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 20 \( \text{w}d6 \) are good for White as the bishop can always drop back to c1 to prevent mate. Against other moves I could have played 17 \( \text{b}b5 \) when a queen exchange favours me.

17 \( \text{a}a4 \)

I didn’t fancy allowing 17...b5 when my dark squares look rather ropey.

17 ...
\( \text{w}e5+ \)

It is best to accept the sacrifice. After 17...\( \text{w}xd2 \) 18 \( \text{x}d2 \) b5 19 \( \text{b}b6 \) \( \text{xb8} \) 20 \( \text{xc8} \) \( \text{fxc8} \) 21 f4 the two bishops ensure an enduring advantage.

18 c3

Another idea was 18 \( \text{b}1 \) when White’s king may turn out safer than in the game.

18 ...
\( \text{w}xe4 \)
19 \( \text{b}b6 \)
\( \text{b}b8 \)
20 f4

It is well-known that it is normally difficult to trap the queen in the middle of the board and this position is no exception. The move played controls the square e5 and threatens \( \text{d}3 \) but Black is just in time to create a retreat square. The compensation for the pawn lies in the lead in development and the difficulties in mobilising the black forces.

20 ...
21 \( \text{d}d3 \)
\( \text{w}c6 \)
22 \( \text{w}c2 \)
\( \text{f}5 \)

Black is effectively forced to return the material directly after this
move because 22...h6 23 gxh6 and 22...g6 23 h5 are too dangerous. The move played forces the exchange of the powerful g5 pawn and lets Black activate his bishop.

23 gx{xf6} \text{xf6} \\
24 \text{xe}4

This finesse forces the queen to a less influential post as 24...d5 25 \text{xd}5 is not playable.

24 \text{...} \text{wc7} \\
25 \text{xe}h7+ \text{h8} \\
26 \text{g6} \text{f7}

The knight emerges in time to block the h-file.

27 \text{Ac}1

A rather passive move but both kings are rather unsafe in this situation and time spent shoring up the defences is far from wasted. Neither 27 f5 \text{e}5 nor 27 \text{dg}1 \text{h6} 28 \text{g5} d5 really hit the mark.

27 \text{...} \text{d5} \\
28 \text{wd}1 \text{h6} \\
29 \text{b1}

The more aggressive 29 f5 d4 30 \text{xd}4 \text{xd}4 31 \text{xd}4 e5 32 \text{e}3 \text{xf5} is okay for Black.

29 \text{...} \text{d}4

A tempting thrust but this attempt to break out leaves Black with the clearly worse position. Interesting was 29...\text{xd}8 when the continuation 30 f5 d4 31 \text{cxd}4 \text{xb6} 32 \text{h}5 \text{g}8 33 \text{cd}1 \text{f}8 is not sufficient for White. Other ideas are 30 \text{d}4 or 30 \text{xc}8.

30 \text{xd}4 \text{xd}4 \\
31 \text{xd}4 \text{xf}4 \\
32 \text{e}3 \text{g}4 \\
33 \text{g}3

The first pin, which enables White to leave the knight en prise, but there are more tactics to come.

33 \text{...} \text{e}5

The point is that after the continuation 34 \text{d}5 \text{d}6 35 \text{xf}4 \text{xf}4 36 \text{d}3 \text{xd}3+ 37 \text{xd}3 \text{f}2 an equal ending is reached, but a simple move is much better than the knight fork.

34 \text{xc}8 \text{xc}8 \\
35 \text{h}5

Securing the bishop and ensuring that Black's back rank will always be vulnerable.

35 \text{...} \text{h}6
This was played in view of the possibilities of h5-h6 and h4, but neither was a serious threat at this stage so 35...\&cf8 was better. Both players were a little short of time here.

36 \&he1 \&cf8
37 \&e2 a5

A good move when both players are slightly short of time. I decided to play very safely by exchanging queens but 38 \&ce1 looks the most natural move.

38 \w5 \&g4
39 \&c2 \w6

If 39...\&e8f6 40 \&e1.

40 \w6 \w xg6
41 \&xg6 \&d8

Despite the fact that an ending has been reached, Black still suffers from the badly placed king. The combination of the weak e-pawn and the possibility of back rank mates are worrying.

42 \&ce1 \&g8
43 \&e4 b6

Black’s king can come no further as 43...\&f8 44 \&xf4+ exf4 45 \&e4 nets a pawn, so waiting moves are the order of the day. Unfortunately White has many more available.

44 a4 (D)

Fixing the queenside pawn structure.

44 \&xe4

This move sheds material without generating any play. A better chance was 44...\&d8f8 45 \&c2 \&xe4 (or 45...\&f2+ 46 \&d3 and White’s

king ventures forward profitably)

46 \&xe4 \&f4.

45 \&xe4 \&d1+
46 \&c2 \&g1
47 \&f5 \&g2+
48 \&b1 \&h6

In the event of further checks White’s king hides on a3.

49 \&xe5 \&xf5
50 \&xf5 g6

This loses very easily because Black’s king is completely cut off from the kingside, but the continuation 50...\&h7 51 \&b5 \&h6 should also win for White.

51 hxg6 \&xg6
52 \&c2 \&d6
53 b4 axb4
54 cxb4 \&g7
55 \&b3 \&g6
56 \&f3 \&c6
57 \&c3 \&d6
58 \&c4 \&c6+
59 \&d4 \&d6+
60 \&e5 \&f6
61 \&d5 \&f7
62 \&c6

Black resigned
Game 34

A.Minasian – M.Adams

European team championship,
Debrecen 1992

Nimzowitsch-Larsen Attack

Before the last round we were not well placed, and in order to accomplish a decent finish a big win was necessary. Our team captain Michael Stean took his troops to the bar and, fuelled with Hungarian red wine, the team managed a massive 3½-½ result.

1 b3

This game was played in the last round which began at 10 a.m. instead of the usual afternoon start. This has never been greatly to my liking as it seems illogical to me that the most important game should begin so much earlier than all the others. Despite this I had managed to do some preparation and knew that it was not so unusual for my opponent to open in this manner. I had resolved to follow some half-remembered game Sadler-Lane, which I sat next to at Lloyds Bank Masters several years before.

1 ... e5
2 c2 b2 c6
3 e3 d6
4 b5

This move is not strategically correct, because White gives up the bishop pair very early without damaging Black’s pawn chain, but Minasian had played it before. It is probably in keeping with his style, as he is a sharp tactician.

4 ... d7
5 e2 e6
6 xc6 xc6
7 0-0 g5
8 f3

I remembered all this from the above mentioned game and also Gary’s next move 8...h5, but at the board it seemed to me that 9 c4 h4 10 e4 h3 11 g3 would be rather messy. Although the advanced h-pawn is uncomfortable for White, his increased central control is important. My move is more flexible as it is always possible to advance the h-pawn later. According to my computer Sadler-Lane continued 8...h5 9 f2 f6 10 c4 d5 11 xd5 xd5 12 bc3 b4 13 c1 0-0-0 14 a3 d5 and later Black crashed through on the kingside. You will notice certain echoes in this game.
This would also have been the answer to 9 e4. Black is fighting to keep good diagonals open for his bishops.

10  

Minasian’s next couple of moves show he has not woken up yet. White must take immediate action to avoid a disadvantage. Best is 10 f4 exf4 11 xf4 dxc4 12 bxc4 d6 13 xf6 xf6 (13...gx6 14 e2 g8 15 bc3) 14 c3 with an unclear position.

10...  

The last move was inexact but this is just careless. White loses material but the stronger 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 xd5 is also good for Black as the backward d-pawn comes under pressure.

11 ...  

The twin threats of ...xe3+ and ...xd2 are irresistible.

14 c1  

A typically inventive idea from Minasian. After more conventional play, for example 15 b3, White would just be two pawns down. Not possible was 15 d5 xd5 16 xd2 e3.

15 ...  

Neither 15...xb5 16 axb5 threatening a8, nor 15...xc1 16 a7+ b8 17 xc6+ bxc6 18 b3+ were very desirable for Black.

16 ed4  

In this case it is best for Black to grab all the material, although accurate calculation is required. 16...exd4 17 xd2 c5 18 f4 d7 was the alternative but I felt confident enough to trust my calculation here.

17 xc6+  

Of course 18 xc1 xc1 19 xc1 cxb5 would be a rather miserable way to succumb.

18 ...  

This looks very promising but there is a neat way to turn the tables. If 21 a2 b6 22 xb2 d7 and the extra material will tell in the end.

21 ...  

...  

The point. Now the exchange of queens is inevitable and the extra piece decides the game.
Game 35

His next tournament reverted to quickplay and was the amazing Oviedo open event where 464 humans and two computers competed over 11 rounds played at 45 minutes per player. The strength of the event can be gauged from the fact that over 60 grandmasters competed and Michael was only the 13th seed. Michael never really got going in the event, and it didn’t augur well when there was a ten-hour delay with his flight from Stansted Airport. In such a large field, it was difficult to come back from a third round defeat against a much lower rated Spaniard and he eventually finished 15th equal on 8/11, without ever really threatening the leaders. The winner was Gavrikov of Lithuania who scored 9½ points.

Michael had led the Leigh Grand Prix for much of the year, thanks mainly to his three maximum scores at Calderdale, Frome and Upminster in May. However, with 60 points available at Islington it would have been possible for him to be overtaken. Even until the last round this remained a possibility if Julian Hodgson could defeat Michael but unfortunately for Julian the unusual pairing system prevented them being drawn together and Michael went on to score another maximum, ensuring another success in the Leigh Grand Prix. It was certainly a shame for Julian that they didn’t meet, but all the players accepted that the pairings had been made correctly.

Michael returned to the top twenty in the January 1993 FIDE list when he recorded his highest rating to date. At 2630 he still remained in second place on the English list, 25 points behind Nigel Short. This improvement was particularly pleasing in view of the ‘plateauing’ in the previous year.
Michael did not compete at either Groningen or the Hastings Premier and began the new year by playing in the Hastings weekend open to start his 1993 Leigh Grand Prix campaign. He won the event but did not achieve a 100% score. As he was not feeling well he offered a draw to Zsopla Polgar early in their last-round game as his five successive wins had already ensured that he would win the event. However, his offer was turned down and although Michael did all he could to defeat her the eventual result was a draw. By the time Michael reached the station for his return journey to London the railway line was flooded and no trains were running from Hastings. I think it can safely be said that Michael was none too pleased about the afternoon’s outcome!

The famous Wijk aan Zee tournament in Holland changed from an all-play-all event to a complicated combination of knockout and Swiss in 1993. Despite his win in Tilburg, Michael was not fortunate enough to be seeded and was then unlucky enough to draw Julian Hodgson in the preliminary round. As the two of them are close friends and near neighbours it was not the draw that either would have wanted, but Julian was much happier with the outcome as he recorded his first ever success against Michael and won by 1½-½. Michael and the other seven preliminary round losers joined 16 other invited players in a Swiss which grew by the addition of other players as they were eliminated from the knockout event. In this new event, he enjoyed a fine victory over Jeroen Piket.

M.Adams – J.Piket
Wijk aan Zee 1993
Spanish Opening,
Delayed Steinitz Variation

My opponent and I had both suffered from the same problem in the knockout stage of this tournament, namely losing to Jules. However, as I had lost in the first round I had a few more games to adjust to the hurly-burly of the open, which may have given me the edge in this game.

1 e4 e5
2 d4 f3 dxc6
3 b5 a6

4 a4 d6

Although this variation is not supposed to be that promising for Black, it has caused me some problems from time to time. In fact the last time Jeroen played this variation against me in Wijk aan Zee, I was mated in about twenty moves, so I was optimistic that this game couldn’t be worse. Perhaps the line 5 xc6+ bxc6 6 d4 is the most unpleasant for Black to answer:

5 0-0 g4
6 h3 h5

If 6...h5 7 xc6+ bxc6 8 d3 gives White a slight edge.
7 c3 \( \text{w}^f 6 \)
8 d3 \( \text{a}^x f 3 \)
Black takes the opportunity to inflict doubled pawns before White can play \( \text{d}^b d 2 \).
9 \( \text{w}^x f 3 \) \( \text{w}^x f 3 \)
10 gxf3 \( \text{d}^e 7 \)

to bring the queenside into play before Black opens lines for his pieces.
12 ... \( \text{e} x f 4 \)
13 \( \text{d} x f 4 \)
The alternative was 13 \( \text{d} x f 7 \) when both 13...g5 and 13...\( \text{d}^e 5 \) merit attention. The move played is safer as I am able to complete development.
13 ... \( d 5 \)
14 \( \text{d} d 2 \) \( g 5 ! \)
The point of Black’s play. White does not have time to consolidate.

11 f4
I decided to play this immediately as otherwise Black would prevent it with 11...\( \text{d}^g 6 \), when the doubled pawns would remain for the foreseeable future.
11 ... 0-0-0
Black builds up a lead in development which balances White’s positional advantages.
12 \( \text{b} b 3 \)
This looks awkward for Black as it probes the light squares but I underestimated my opponent’s reply. 12 f5 g6 13 fxg6 fxg6 is unclear but 12 \( \text{f} x e 5 \) dxe5 13 \( \text{c}^c 2 \) should be a slight edge for White. I was worried by 13...g5, but after 14 \( \text{d} d 2 \), continuing development, the onus is on Black to prove equality. In general it is difficult

15 \( \text{e}^e 3 \)
If 15 \( \text{h}^h 2 \) d4 is surprisingly annoying. The dark squares turn out to be very weak.
15 ... \( \text{h}^h 6 \)
The push 15...d4 is tactically flawed here because 16 cxd4 \( \text{d} x d 4 \) 17 \( \text{d} x d 4 \) \( \text{d} x d 4 \) 18 \( \text{f} f 3 \) \( \text{x} d 3 \) 19 \( \text{e} e 5 \) and \( \text{d} x f 7 \) gives White the advantage.
16 d4 \( f 5 \)
This crucial move prevents a White advantage as there is no time to maintain the central pawn
mass and prevent ...f5-f4 trapping the bishop.

17 exf5

The other way to continue was 17 f3 dxe4 18 fxe4 f4 19 f2 g4 20 h4 f3 when the position is very unclear. I was happy to choose a solid continuation.

17 ... dxf5
18 hae1 g4

18...dxe3 19 fxe3 would improve the white pawn structure, ensuring him a slight edge despite the opposite-coloured bishops.

19 hxh6 h6
20 h2

The direct 20 c2 was more to the point, but the position is fairly quiet in any case.

20 ... ff6
21 hae2

21 ... ddf8?

Black cuts his own throat by entering a tactical maelstrom in which he ends up material down. Afterwards Jeroen pointed out the stronger 21...dce7, when 22 c2 leaves the game heading for a draw.

22 hxd5!

The obvious move but it required accurate calculation and the confidence not to trust my opponent’s calculations.

22 ... dxfd4

The idea behind his last move. Of course it was too late to back out now as he would simply be a pawn down.

23 cxd4 dxd4
24 hae1 hxf2+
25 h2

Now the black rook is pinned against its mate on f8, preventing a capture on d2, but all is not simple yet.

25 ... h8f5

Renewing the threat to the knight. If 26 hxf2, then 26...hxf2 27 d1 h3 + regains the material with interest.

26 h8e8+ h7d7
27 h4 e5 (D)

If here 27...dxd2 28 dxd4+ dxd4 29 hxf5 White stays a piece for two pawns up and after 29...gxh3 30 h3 h6 31 f2 there should be enough pawns left to avoid reaching rook and bishop against rook.

28 d1

Again the position of the black king is used for defence because 28...h3 + 29 hxf3 is also check.

28 ... d7c7
29 d1h1 d7f7

Disillusioned by the unsuccessful combination, and running short of time, my opponent doesn’t put up great resistance. 29...gxh3 30
30 \textit{\textbf{e}5} \textit{\textbf{b}6} \\
31 \textit{\textbf{h}4} \\
Keeping this pawn alive makes a draw much less likely. \\
31 \ldots \textit{\textbf{\textit{f}5}} \\
32 \textit{\textbf{e}4} \textit{\textbf{xb}2} \\
This leads to a quick conclusion as would 32...\textit{\textbf{\textit{g}x}2} 33 \textit{\textbf{x}f5}, but 32...\textit{\textbf{\textit{e}2}} 33 \textit{\textbf{x}f5} \textit{\textbf{x}f5} 34 \textit{\textbf{g}3} \textit{\textbf{f}2} 35 \textit{\textbf{x}e}2 \textit{\textbf{x}e}2 would have enabled Black to fight on. \\
33 \textit{\textbf{g}5} \textit{\textbf{h}4} \\
34 \textit{\textbf{e}6+} \\
Yes, Black’s rook was en prise, but I spotted a stronger move that forces mate in three. \\
\textbf{Black resigned}

---

**Game 36**

Following a seventh-round win against Viktor Korchnoi, Michael led the Swiss section but was then paired with Julian again! That game was drawn and Michael then had to play Valery Salov who was playing his first game in the Swiss but started with 5\frac{1}{2} out of 8! Michael lost that game and the two that followed against Eric Lobron and Vladimir Tukmakov to eventually finish 14th equal with Julian Hodgson and John Nunn.

His next event on foreign soil was an open event at Villeneuve in France. His last Continental open had been in Ostend in September 1991, and he had hoped that he would not have to play in the hurly-burly of such events again. However, as his diary was blank for the next couple of months and it would be a change from chasing Leigh Grand Prix points in England, he decided to take part. I think that he was anticipating a fairly comfortable event with possibly Joe Gallagher as his main rival. That was before a ‘coach-load of Russians’ arrived and changed the nature of things. Michael did win the event with seven wins and two draws but the strength of the event can be gauged from the fact that he never even got to play Joe Gallagher. I think it also made Michael realise how hard it is playing in such events and as I write it remains the last one that he has played in. The daily bus ride from
accommodation to venue, which took an hour, was not something that Michael is eager to repeat.

Instead he opted for the comparative home comforts of Blackpool where he obtained a five point maximum. Even closer to home for him was Golders Green where he obtained a couple of six point maximums in quickplay. To Michael the Grand Prix points were more important than the first prize. Several chess writers commented how good it was that one of England’s top players regularly played in weekend events, giving ‘ordinary’ players an opportunity to play against a top-ranked player. Julian Hodgson was the only other olympiad team player who did so on a regular basis.

Michael’s next big event was the Dublin zonal, where a good result would begin to fill some of the blank spaces in his diary. It was a different format from his only previous zonal three years earlier. Instead of the all-play-all of twelve invited representative players, there was a Swiss open event that literally anyone from Britain could enter. This is not an ideal format for such an important tournament with interzonal entry at stake but the British Chess Federation were unable to find the money for an all-play-all. Fortunately the Irish were able to step into the breach and nowhere could have surpassed their organisation and friendliness. Michael had enjoyed the open event two years previously and this tournament was even better. There were 57 entries, including GMs Adams, Speelman, Hodgson, Miles, King and McNab, as well as many other dangerous floaters.

All went well for the top two seeds and Michael and Jon Speelman duly qualified a point ahead of the field. Michael had the best possible start with four straight wins but he could not afford to relax, particularly as he played the strongest possible field, finishing with Tony Miles. Despite leading throughout, it would have been possible for Michael to fail to qualify if had lost the last-round encounter, but he obtained such a strong position that he was able to turn down a draw offer to ensure winning the tournament. Other GMs had a much rougher time with Miles losing to Rossiter and Kumaran, King to Webster and Rossiter, while Hodgson lost to Crouch. On the social side, Eamonn Keogh, the Irish Chess Union president, conducted events superbly. The outing to Glendalough on the free day with the liquid picnic and the ensuing football matches was rated as excellent by Michael. The only game that Michael lost in Ireland was playing for the GM five-a-side football team on the free day, where his reportedly tigerish tackling was not enough to stop the England side winning on the free day. According to Chris Duncan, Michael’s tackling made Vinny Jones look like an angel! Michael
was pleased to receive this compliment but Tony Miles, the GM goalkeeper, confirmed that tackling was not commonplace in their team and he believed their most influential defender to be a dog that wandered on to the pitch!

M. Adams – J. Levitt  
British zonal, Dublin 1993  
French Defence,  
Tarrasch Variation

Jon and I have already contested several games in this particular line, probably due to our lack of knowledge of anything else. Overall the opening positions I have achieved have not been great, but in this game my opponent’s attempts to do something different enabled me to obtain a larger advantage than usual.

1 e4 e6  
2 d4 d5  
3 Qd2 c5  
4 Qgf3

Not the most critical move but to me the line 4 exd5 wxd5 didn’t seem appropriate for this particular game.

4 ... cxd4  
5 Qxd4 Qf6

In a previous tussle my opponent had played 5...Qc6 here; the text looks more forcing.

6 exd5  
No good is 6 Qb5+ Qd7 7 e5 Qxb5 8 exf6 Qd7.

6 ... wxd5?!

More normal in this position would be 6...Qxd5, when White looks hard pushed to claim an edge. Although the position looks similar to a common ...wxd5 Tarrasch, here the time lost with the black queen is more serious and White builds up an early initiative.

7 Qb5 Qd8

A better idea was 7...Qa6 envisaging 8 Qc4 wxd1+ 9 Qxd1 Qc5 with an unclear ending in prospect, although after the reply 8 c4 White keeps some advantage. The two consecutive queen moves have given White a pleasant lead in development.

8 Qc4

A queen swap no longer helps Black as after 8...wxd1+ 9 Qxd1 the dark squares d6 and c7 are too weak.

8 ... Qd5  
9 Qe3 Qc7?!

After the game my opponent suggested the improvement 9...a6 10 Qxd5 exd5 11 Qd4, when White is slightly better but Black stays very solid.

10 Qd2 (D)

I contemplated 10 wxd8+ Qxd8 11 Qxc7 Qxc7 12 Qc4 f6 13 Qf4+ e5 14 Qg3 Qe6 15 f4 Qxc4 16 Qxc4 Qc6 for a while, but White has more play with the queens on.

10 ... Qxb5  
11 Qxb5+ Qd7  
12 Qxd7+ wxd7

Black also has development problems after 12...Qxd7 13 Qc3.
13 \textcolor{red}{\textit{wg4}}  \textcolor{blue}{\textit{c6}} \\
14 0-0-0 \textcolor{red}{\textit{wd4}}

There is little choice as 14...0-0-0 15 \textit{a5} wins material.

15 \textcolor{red}{\textit{we2}}  \textcolor{blue}{\textit{wa4}}

Avoiding 15...\textit{a3} which is well answered by the prosaic 16 c3.

16 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{b1}}  \textcolor{red}{\textit{e7}}
17 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{c3}}  0-0
18 \textcolor{red}{\textit{d7}}  \textcolor{blue}{\textit{b4}?}

Neither player had calculated this completely correctly, but it does allow White a forced win which I managed to stumble upon. White still has the better game after the solid 18...\textit{b6}.

19 \textcolor{red}{\textit{g4!}} (D)

Jon had obviously missed this reply and I now assumed that the game is over immediately, but Black has hidden resources.

19 ... \textcolor{blue}{\textit{g6}}

20 \textcolor{red}{\textit{wd4}}

A good option here was 20 \textit{exe7} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xa2+}} 21 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c1}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{fd8}} 22 b3 when White should win. My move is in fact more accurate but I chose it because of a miscalculation.

20 ... \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xa2+}}

21 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c1}}  f6
22 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xb4}}  \textcolor{red}{\textit{xb4}}

At this stage my analysis had run 23 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xb4}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{ad8}} (Black must prevent \textit{e7}) 24 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xd8}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xd8}} 25 \textcolor{red}{\textit{wa3}} and White emerges a piece up. It was only now that I noticed the variation 24...\textcolor{red}{\textit{a1+}} 25 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{d2}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{xd8+}} 26 \textcolor{red}{\textit{e2}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{wh1}} and White is probably slightly worse. After going into the tank for about half an hour I managed to find:

23 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{c3!}}

23 \textcolor{red}{\textit{a1+}}

Other moves don’t help either, 23...\textit{a5} 24 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{g4}} or 23...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{xc3}} 24
C.McNab – M.Adams

British Zonal, Dublin 1993

English Opening, Hedgehog Variation

Before this game I received a top tip from Daniel King: 'Spurs against Arsenal is on television before the game.' Tragically, and most unjustly, Arsenal won 1-0, costing me a fiver bet with Eamonn Keogh. However, this game went rather more smoothly...

1 \( \text{d}f3 \) \( \text{d}f6 \)
2 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \)

A bit unusual but 2...e6 3 \( \text{c}c3 \) is an annoying move order for me. Having played Colin several times before, his next few moves were not too hard to predict.

3 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \)
4 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{b}7 \)
5 \( \text{d}3 \)

Few players use this particular system. My opponent prepares e2-e4, which slightly weakens the d4 square. The idea is that the extra central control provided by the

pawns on d3 and e4 allows White to build up a kingside attack which compensates for the bad bishop on g2. Objectively this plan should not trouble Black, but accurate play is required. Another possibility for Black here is 5...\( g6 \), making use of the fact that White has given up the option of playing his d-pawn to d4.

5 ... \( e6 \)
6 \( e4 \) \( d6 \)
7 \( \text{c}3 \) \( e7 \)
8 0-0 0-0
9 \( b3 \) \( a6 \)

It seems natural to develop the knight at this stage, but the odd pawn structure means that the steed does not necessarily have to go to d7. In this position an exchange of dark-squared bishops is desirable for Black, so the king’s knight may wish to move to d7 to make way for ...\( f6 \), and in this case the queen’s knight will be developed to c6.

10 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{c}7 \)
11 \( \text{e}2 \)
If my opponent had chosen 11 \( \text{e}1 \), 11...\( \text{c}6 \) would have been the best reply, when a main line position with a tempo more for Black could have been reached after 12 d4.

11 ... \( \text{c}6 \\
12 \text{ad}1 \text{d}7 \\
13 \text{d}4

Black has already taken over the initiative and this move was necessary to prevent the dark squares being completely dominated by Black.

13 ... \( \text{f}6 \\
14 \text{dxc}5

White's opening has certainly not been a success but a better continuation was 14 d5 \( \text{d}4 \) 15 \( \text{x}4 \text{x}d4 \text{cxd}4 \) 16 \( \text{b}1 \) e5 with a complicated position. After the text move Black has far superior central control.

14 ... \( \text{bxc}5 \\
15 \text{d}2 \text{d}4 \\
16 \text{f}e1 \text{ad}8

It is logical to put a rook on the d-file, but 16...\( \text{fd}8 \) looks more sensible.

17 \( \text{e}2 \) (D)

17 ... \( \text{c}6! \\

A very good move. There are several tempting alternatives such as 17...\( \text{xf}3+ \) 18 \( \text{xf}3 \text{xb}2 \) 19 \( \text{xb}2 \) f5 20 \( \text{f}4 \text{e}5 \) 21 \( \text{g}2 \) or 17...e5 but Black already has a very clear structural advantage, which is increased by the exchange of bishops. In the long-term Black’s only weakness, the pawn on d6, is going to be covered when the d4 square is occupied, leaving options to play on both sides of the board.

18 \( \text{f}4 \\

It is not really clear where this knight is going. The problem is that in this quiet position White’s lack of counterplay makes things very unpleasant.

18 ... \( \text{de}5 \\

Trying to get rid of another defender of d4.

19 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \\
20 \text{e}2

White obviously decided that 19...\( \text{xe}5 \) 20 \( \text{d}3 \) was not dangerous last move, but was worried by 20 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 21 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{d}4 \) here. This does indeed look quite good although it would be a hard choice between that continuation and 20...\( \text{xe}5 \).

20 ... \( \text{xb}2 \\
21 \text{xb}2 \text{e}5

Planning \( \text{d}4 \). Now that two sets of pieces have been swapped, the bad situation of the bishop on g2 becomes clear. It really has no scope at all in this position.
22 a3

This is disastrous as it gives Black a ready-made target on the b-file. White had to play a waiting game with 22 h4 or 22 Rd2.

22 ... c8

The bishop comes to the much stronger spot on e6 and vaguely threatens ... g4, as neither allowing a bishop for knight swap nor playing f2-f3 are very desirable for White.

23 Cc3 e6
24 Cd5 Wb7
25 Wc3

White is already in dire straits. Hence 25 b4 might have been worth a try.

\[\text{Diagram:} \]

25 ... a5

Clamping down on the queenside. White needs to be able to transfer the knight to b5 to cover a frontal attack on the b-pawn but this is impossible to achieve.

26 Hb1 Hb8
27 h4

There is no longer any time for comfort moves like this one. 27 De3 or 27 Hb2 was more constructive.

27 ... d4

Not bad but perhaps 27...Wa7 followed by doubling rooks on the b-file was better.

28 He3

A tough choice but now was probably the time to cut his losses by 28 Wxa5 a8 29 Wd2 Hxa3 30 b4 cxb4 31 Hxb4 Wa7, when White has at least eliminated some queenside pawns.

28 ... Wa7
29 Hf2 Hb7
30 Wd2

Constructive defence was still much more to the point, i.e. 30 Hf3 Hfb8 31 Hd1 when Black has no instant breakthrough although the white position is creaking.

30 Hfb8

\[\text{Diagram:} \]

31 Cc3

This is based on the variations 31...Cxb3 32 Wxd6 and 31...Cxb3 32 Hxb3 Hxb3 33 Db5 but overlooks a simple kill.

31 ... Hxc4
32 bxc4 $axb1
33 $dxb1 $axb1
34 $e1

The rest is agony as Black has an extra pawn and an overwhelming position.

34 ...
35 $g5 $c7
36 $e3 a4
37 $g4 h6

38 $f3 $c2
39 $axb3

It was possible to continue with 39 $e2 but the result is no longer in doubt.

39 ... $axb3
40 $d1 $d4

White must give up a piece for the passed pawn.

White resigned

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**Game 38**

**M. Adams – M. Sadler**

*British zonal, Dublin 1993*

Sicilian Defence,

Najdorf Variation

I found the time to swiftly research a line against the Najdorf for this tournament, and in this game I got the dream variation. It was not until the Manila interzonal, where Patrick Wolff played 7...$c6 against me, reaching a position I knew nothing about and had never looked at, that I realised I should have looked at these lines a little more closely.

1 $e4 c5
2 $d3 d6
3 $d4 cxd4
4 $dxd4 $f6
5 $c3 a6
6 $c4 e6
7 $b3 b5

8 0-0 $b7
9 $e1 $bd7
10 $g5 $b6
11 a4 b4
12 $d5 exd5
13 exd5+ $e5 (D)

The first new move from my point of view, although after the game Matthew told me it has been punted previously. I have refrained from praising my earlier play as it has all been done before with Black trying 13...$d8. I can't remember exactly how White continued but Black got mated in about ten more moves, which seems to be about standard for this variation.

14 a5 $c5
15 $e3!

The immediate recapture of material 15 f4 0-0 0 16 $xe5 $xe5 17 $xe5 $d6 18 $f5 had been tried before and looks slightly better for White. My move is much stronger – Black is unable to avoid returning most of the booty in the
I had rejected this simply on the grounds that it looked so bad, but it does force White to find one road to victory. My analysis continued 16...\( \mathcal{Q} \)fd7 17 f4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)g6 (the best practical chance may have been 17...\( \mathcal{Q} \)xd5 18 fxe5 dxe5 19 f4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)c5 20 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xe5+ \( \mathcal{Q} \)e6 21 \( \mathcal{Q} \)h1 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xd4 22 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xd4 0-0 23 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xe6 fxe6 24 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xd7 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xf4 25 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xf4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xd7 26 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xb4 but the ending should be a win given accurate technique) 18 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f5 \( \mathcal{Q} \)e7 (not 18...\( \mathcal{Q} \)d8 19 \( \mathcal{Q} \)b6+) 19 \( \mathcal{Q} \)d4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)d8 20 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xe7 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xe7 21 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xd6 and Black is terminated.

17 f4 \( \mathcal{Q} \)xd5
18 fxe5 dxe5
19 \( \mathcal{Q} \)h5 f6

20 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f2!

This certainly wasn’t the most obvious position to play a quiet move, but in fact the most important aim from White’s point of view is to prevent g6 and Black’s king sidling away to safety. The tempting 20 \( \mathcal{Q} \)f5+ \( \mathcal{Q} \)e6 leaves White without a follow-up. The text move forces positive action by
Black as I was threatening to improve my position by 20 \( \text{Ad1} \) or go for instant carnage with 20 \( \text{Ag3} \). In reply neither 20...\( \text{Dd6} \) 21 \( \text{Wf7} \) nor 20...\( \text{Af4} \) 21 \( \text{Exe5}+ \) are playable.

20 ... \( \text{g6} \)
21 \( \text{Exe5}+ \)

This is the main point of the move \( \text{Af2} \). Black could now try 21...\( \text{fxe5} \) 22 \( \text{Exe5}+ \) \( \text{f7} \) 23 \( \text{Wxh8} \) \( \text{Wg4} \) 24 \( \text{Wxh7}+ \) \( \text{Ag7} \) 25 \( \text{Af1} \) but at best he can reach an ending two pawns down. Another alternative 21...\( \text{Dd6} \) gets mated after either 22 \( \text{Exd5}+ \) or the flashy 22 \( \text{Ag3} \) \( \text{gxh5} \) 23 \( \text{Ee6}++ \) \( \text{Cc5} \) 24 \( \text{Eb3}+ \) \( \text{Cc4} \) 25 \( \text{Ee4} \) mate.

21 ... \( \text{f7} \)
22 \( \text{Wf3} \) \( \text{Cc7} \)
23 \( \text{Wb3}+ \)

Of course 23 \( \text{Ab3}+ \) \( \text{g7} \), giving Black survival chances, was much weaker.

23 ... \( \text{g7} \)
24 \( \text{Af5}+ \) \( \text{gxzf5} \)
25 \( \text{Wg3}+ \) \( \text{Af7} \)
26 \( \text{Ab3}+ \) \( \text{Cd5} \)
27 \( \text{Exd5} \)

Black resigned

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**Game 39**

Michael was voted the British Chess Federation ‘Player of the Year’ for the year ending April 30th. In view of Nigel Short’s wonderful results in winning the right to challenge for the world chess championship it was rather surprising that Michael received 57 more votes. I imagine that it was a combination of Michael’s fine results at Brussels, Tilburg and Dublin and the unpopularity of Short’s decision not to play for the world title under the FIDE banner, that swung the result. In any event it was pleasing to be chosen by fellow chess players.

A fortnight after the zonal was completed, Michael was off to Seville for a category 15 event. He started badly, with half a point from his first three games, and never recovered, finishing on 3½/9. Sometimes in such events you completely fail to hit form and it was certainly a disaster for Michael, whose only success came when Rivas presented him with a piece. He suffered defeats against Karpov, Epishin and Khalifman, but his inability to beat lesser opponents such as IM Magem and IM Izeta was even more disappointing, as was the loss of rating points.
Fortunately there was an opportunity just over a week later to put matters right in a category 16 event at Munich and he did so. In 11 games his only defeat was suffered at the hands of Mikhail Gurevich and he beat Bareev, Yusupov and Hertneck. The win against Bareev was particularly pleasing in view of the four defeats his opponent had inflicted on Michael at Biel and Hastings, as were the draws against Gelfand and Shirov, world numbers five and seven respectively.

**M. Adams – A. Yusupov**  
**Munich 1993**  
Petroff Defence

Prior to this event my form had been very poor, and the first two rounds in this tournament had brought me little joy: in the first I repeatedly adjourned a miserable ending against Mickey Gurevich and grovelled a draw with my second consecutive Black against Hübner. Hence I was very keen to make something of my first White and remind myself how to win.

1  e4    e5  
2  ∆f3   ∆f6

Few top players use the Petroff Defence regularly, perhaps since White can make a draw against it at will, but when White goes for it exciting games often result.

3  ∆xe5  d6  
4  ∆f3   ∆xe4  
5  d4    d5  
6  ∆d3   ∆c6  
7  0-0   ∆e7  
8  c4    ∆b4  
9  ∆e2   ∆e6  
10 ∆c3   0-0  
11 ∆e3

This has been played many times before, but the latest instalment prior to this game was Short-Anand from the VSB tournament in Amsterdam. After the continuation 11... ∆f5 12 ∆e5 ∆f6 13 g4 ∆e6 14 f4 Nigel won a fine game. Possibly because of this my opponent opted for a different line.

11 ... f5  
12 a3  ∆xc3  
13 bxc3  ∆c6  
14 ∆b1

![Chess Diagram]

14 ... f4

This mistake has far-reaching consequences; opening the light-squared diagonal towards Black's king is very dangerous. Artur rejected 14... ∆b8 due to 15 cxd5 ∆xd5 16 ∆f4, but after 16... ∆d6 Black seems to be close to equality.

15 ∆c1  ∆b8
16 cxd5 \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \)
17 \( \text{\textit{e1}} \) \( \text{\textit{h8}} \)

An important moment. My last move threatened c3-c4 but an alternative way to prevent this is 17...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) with the idea of 18 c4 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \). This looks best as 18 \( \text{\textit{xf4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) 19 \( \text{\textit{xc7}} \) \( \text{\textit{xc7}} \) 20 \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) wins a pawn but allows Black certain compensation.

18 \( \text{\textit{d3}} \) \( \text{\textit{d7}} \)

Definitely better here was the reply 18...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \), since after 19 \( \text{\textit{xf4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) 20 \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf4}} \) Black looks okay. However, 19 \( \text{\textit{c2}} \) should give an edge.

19 \( \text{\textit{c4}} \)

Instigating favourable complications. My initial idea had been 19 \( \text{\textit{b5}} \), aiming to sacrifice the exchange, but the text is stronger.

19 ... \( \text{\textit{xf3}} \)
19 \( \text{\textit{xf3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \)

Not 20...\( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) 21 \( \text{\textit{h3}} \) h6 22 \( \text{\textit{b2}} \) \( \text{\textit{d6}} \) 23 \( \text{\textit{e6}} \).
21 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) \( \text{\textit{f5}} \)

Neither 21...\( \text{\textit{f5}} \) 22 \( \text{\textit{xd4}} \) nor 21...g6 22 \( \text{\textit{xe7}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe7}} \) 23 \( \text{\textit{b4}} \) are playable.

22 \( \text{\textit{b5}} \) (D)
22 ... \( \text{\textit{c5}} \)

The toughest defence as 22...g6 23 \( \text{\textit{xf5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf5}} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{xe7}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe7}} \) 25 \( \text{\textit{xe7}} \) \( \text{\textit{c8}} \) 26 \( \text{\textit{xe2}} \) wins.
23 \( \text{\textit{xf4}} \) \( \text{\textit{bd8}} \)

The other attempt 23...\( \text{\textit{d6}} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{d5}} \) \( \text{\textit{c7}} \) 25 \( \text{\textit{xd6}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd6}} \) 26 \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) \( \text{\textit{d8}} \) 27 \( \text{\textit{d4}} \) leaves White a sound pawn up.
24 \( \text{\textit{c2}} \) \( \text{\textit{b6}} \)
25 \( \text{\textit{g4}} \)

After the simple 25 \( \text{\textit{b1}} \) I would still have had a pleasant advantage, but there is no reason not to win material.

25 ... \( \text{\textit{de8}} \)
26 \( \text{\textit{d1}} \)

Of course not 26 gxf5 \( \text{\textit{f6}} \).
26 ... \( \text{\textit{d6}} \)
27 \( \text{\textit{d3}} \)

After the game my opponent said that he had been expecting 27 \( \text{\textit{xd6}} \) here which should win after 27...\( \text{\textit{c8}} \) 28 \( \text{\textit{d3}} \) \( \text{\textit{e1}} \) + 29 \( \text{\textit{g2}} \). At the time I thought that my move was clearer but this is probably not the case.

27 ... g5!

The only chance, setting the nice trap 28 \( \text{\textit{xd6}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd6}} \) 29 \( \text{\textit{xd6}} \) \( \text{\textit{e1}} \) + 30 \( \text{\textit{g2}} \) \( \text{\textit{g4}} \) + 31 \( \text{\textit{g3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xf2}} \) + 32 \( \text{\textit{xf2}} \) \( \text{\textit{e2}} \) mate.
28 \( \text{\textit{c3}} \) \( \text{\textit{d4}} \) (D)
29 \( \text{\textit{d4}} \) \( \text{\textit{g4}} \)
30 \( \text{\textit{h1}} \) \( \text{\textit{e1}} \)
31 \( \text{\textit{c1}} \) \( \text{\textit{f3}} \)
32 \( \text{\textit{g1}} \) \( \text{\textit{gxf4}} \)
33 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \!)

The preceding moves had been forced by both sides and this last
accurate move decides the game, despite the openness of White’s king. Here Black can only check it to safety, which would not have been the case after 33 \texttt{We4} \texttt{Gg8}+ 34 \texttt{Gf1} \texttt{Wh3}+ 35 \texttt{e2} f3+.

\begin{align*}
33 & \ldots \texttt{Gg8}+ \\
34 & \texttt{Gf1} \texttt{Wh1}+ \\
35 & \texttt{e2} \texttt{Gg1} \\
36 & \texttt{Gc3}+ \texttt{Gg8} \\
37 & \texttt{Ge8}+ \texttt{Gf7} \\
38 & \texttt{Ge4} \texttt{Whxh2} \\
39 & \texttt{Ha8} \texttt{Gg3} \\
40 & \texttt{Ha7}+ \texttt{Ge6} \\
41 & \texttt{d5}+ \\
\end{align*}

Black resigned

Mate follows after 41...\texttt{Gf5} 42 \texttt{Gf7}+.

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**Game 40**

\textbf{E.Bareev – M.Adams}  
\textit{Munich 1993}  
Benko Gambit

My results against Evgeny Bareev have not been very impressive, mainly on account of a general inability to come out of the opening with my position intact. In this game it seemed as though my usual fate would befall me, but I managed to dig in. As my opponent squandered more and more of his time whilst missing the decisive continuation, it gradually became clear that it might be my day after all.

\begin{align*}
1 & \texttt{d4} \texttt{Gf6} \\
2 & \texttt{c4} \texttt{c5} \\
3 & \texttt{d5} \texttt{b5} \\
4 & \texttt{cxb5} \texttt{a6} \\
5 & \texttt{f3} \\
\end{align*}

In recent times this move has become extremely irritating for Benko players. I find it most surprising that such a stupid looking move can be so strong.

\begin{align*}
5 & \ldots \texttt{g6} \\
\end{align*}

Having achieved reasonable positions with this in rapid games I decided to try it in a proper one, but I don’t think I will be trying it again. For the theoretically minded it seems that 5...\texttt{axb5} 6 \texttt{e4} \texttt{Wa5}+ 7 \texttt{d2} b4 8 \texttt{a3} d6 9 \texttt{c4} \texttt{d8} 10 a3 e6 is the best option, giving a reasonable position for Black.

\begin{align*}
6 & \texttt{e4} \texttt{d6} \\
7 & \texttt{a4} \texttt{Gg7} \\
8 & \texttt{a3} 0-0 \\
9 & \texttt{e2} \texttt{axb5} \\
\end{align*}

Another possibility here is 9...\texttt{e6} 10 \texttt{dxe6} \texttt{xe6} 11 \texttt{f4} d5, but I don’t really trust this for Black.
10 Qxb5 Qe8?!  
At the board I decided that opening the bishop’s diagonal was very important, but 10...Qa6 was probably a better move. The general problem for Black is that White has a much firmer grip on the b5 square than in most Benko positions.

11 Qbc3 Qc7
12 Qg5 Qba6
13 Qc4 Qb8
14 0-0 h6

The bishop is very annoying on g5, so I was reluctantly forced to weaken my kingside.

15 Qe3 Qd7
16 Qd3

Both players have proceeded fairly logically to this position but I quickly realised that White has a huge advantage. The only logical means of activity was to play 16...Qxb5 17 axb5 Qc7 18 Qa7, but of course White is much better so I decided to wait.

\[\]

Not a very clever move but even my best continuation 17...Qxb5 18 axb5 Qc7 19 Qa7 looks very grim.

18 e5! dxe5
19 fxe5 Qxe5
20 Qae1

This came as a relief to me. After 20 Qxh6 Qxh2+ 21 Qxh2 Qxh6 22 We3+ Qg7 23 We5+ Qf6 24 Qae1 Black is not long for this world.

20 ... Qb4
21 Qd2 Qxb5
22 Qxb5

Less clear is the continuation 22 axb5 Qd6.

22 Qxb5
23 axb5 Qd6
24 Qxh6 Qfd8

Much too hazardous is the reply 24...Qxh2+ 25 Qh1 with ideas of Qe6 and Qf3-h3.

\[\]

25 Qh1

This looks rather slow but is certainly not bad. White has good chances of success with the immediate 25 Qf4 Qxf4 26 Qxf4 (26 Qxf4 Qxf4 27 Qxe7+ Qxh6 28 Qxf4

16 ... Qh7
17 f4 f5
\( \text{\textgreek{x}d5} \) 26…\textgreek{e}5 27 \textgreek{h}4+ \textgreek{g}7 28 \textgreek{w}h6+ \textgreek{f}6 29 \textgreek{g}4 \textgreek{g}8 30 \textgreek{f}1. Less clear is 25 \textgreek{f}3 \textgreek{x}d5 26 \textgreek{h}3 (26 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{d}5 \textgreek{w}x\textgreek{d}5 27 \textgreek{w}x\textgreek{d}5 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{d}5 28 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{e}5 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{e}5 29 \textgreek{a}f4 \textgreek{e}1+ 30 \textgreek{f}2 \textgreek{e}5) 26…\textgreek{g}8! (but not 26…\textgreek{d}4+ 27 \textgreek{e}3+), when Black may be able to hang on.

25 … \textgreek{b}7!

Good defence, covering the second rank in typically sneaky style. White’s last move was aiming for 25…\textgreek{x}d5 26 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{d}5 \textgreek{w}x\textgreek{d}5 27 \textgreek{w}x\textgreek{d}5 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{d}5 28 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{e}5 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{e}5 29 \textgreek{f}4.

26 \textgreek{f}3 \textgreek{x}d5

27 \textgreek{h}3 \textgreek{g}8

28 \textgreek{a}g5

By now my opponent was down to about his last five minutes, whereas I still had about half an hour to survey my wreck of a position. I assumed his intention had been 28 \textgreek{h}e3 \textgreek{f}6 29 \textgreek{e}6 \textgreek{w}d7 30 \textgreek{x}f6 \textgreek{x}f6 31 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{d}5+ \textgreek{w}x\textgreek{d}5 32 \textgreek{e}8+ winning. In fact I have a surprising resource in 28…\textgreek{h}7 29 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{e}5 \textgreek{a}b6, when Black may be able to put up some resistance. The truth is that Bareev simply missed 30 \textgreek{x}f6.

28 … \textgreek{f}8

29 \textgreek{w}f2 \textgreek{a}8d7?

A really stupid move. After defending well I paid more attention to my opponent’s clock than my position. After 29…\textgreek{b}6 30 \textgreek{h}6+ \textgreek{e}8 Black’s king is relatively safe and the position is unclear, but now White is winning again.

30 \textgreek{w}h4 \textgreek{g}7

31 \textgreek{h}6?

A time-trouble error. After 31 \textgreek{w}h7 Black is totally tied up and powerless to prevent \textgreek{h}6.

31 … \textgreek{f}6

32 \textgreek{a}x\textgreek{g}7+ \textgreek{w}x\textgreek{g}7

33 \textgreek{b}3 \textgreek{f}6

34 \textgreek{h}e3 \textgreek{d}4

35 \textgreek{w}h3 \textgreek{g}4

Not 35…\textgreek{e}4 36 \textgreek{x}e4.

36 \textgreek{h}3 e5

37 \textgreek{w}g3 e4

38 \textgreek{h}3

Either here or on White’s next \textgreek{a}2 would have been very strong. Fortunately my opponent didn’t hit upon this plan until my king had scurried to safety.

38 … \textgreek{e}5

39 \textgreek{w}f4 \textgreek{b}xc4

40 \textgreek{b}xc4 \textgreek{g}8

After 40…\textgreek{x}c4 White has a pleasant choice between 41 \textgreek{a}2 and 41 \textgreek{e}4.

41 \textgreek{a}2 \textgreek{h}7

42 \textgreek{g}4?

Best would be 42 \textgreek{w}h4+ \textgreek{h}6 43 \textgreek{w}f6 \textgreek{g}7 leading to a repetition of moves. My opponent missed my
reply, after which the rook ending should still be a draw but only I have winning chances.

42 ... \(\text{Wh6}\)
43 \(\text{Wxh6+}\) \(\text{Kh6}\)
44 \(\text{gxf5}\) \(\text{gxf5}\)
45 \(\text{Hg1}\) \(e3\)
46 \(\text{Ha6+}\) \(\text{Wg7}\)
47 \(\text{He6}\) \(f4\)
48 \(\text{b6}\)

After 48 \(\text{He5}\) \(\text{Hg7}\) White is in trouble.

48 ... \(\text{Hxc4}\)
49 \(\text{Hc6}\) \(\text{He4} (D)\)
50 \(\text{Hc7+}\) ?

I don’t see any way to make progress after the continuation 50 \(\text{Hxc5}\) \(\text{Hxb6}\) 51 \(\text{Hh5+}\) \(\text{Hh6}\) 52 \(\text{Hxh6+}\) \(\text{Wxh6}\) 53 \(\text{Wg2}\).

50 \(\text{Hee7}\)

51 \(\text{Hxe7+}\) \(\text{Hxe7}\)
52 \(\text{Hb1}\) \(f3\)
53 \(\text{Wg1}\)

The point is 53 \(b7\) e2 54 \(b8\text{W}\) f2 and White is powerless.

53 ... \(\text{Wg7+}\)
54 \(\text{Wf1}\) \(\text{Wg2}\)

White resigned

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**Game 41**

All these ups and downs over the six-month period obviously cancelled each other out because when the July 1993 rating list was issued Michael remained at 2630. Although placed at 20th equal on the official FIDE list, he could not be counted among the world’s top twenty players since Kasparov and Short had not been listed as they had formed the Professional Chess Association (PCA) and were about to play their world championship match against the wishes of FIDE.

Meanwhile Michael was off to Las Palmas for another category 16 event. Again he had a terrible start losing with White to Khalifman and Morović and with Black to Topalov. Then there was a transformation and Michael achieved 5/6 to actually gain rating points from the event. There were wins against Christiansen, Azmaiparashvili, Georgiev and Rivas as well as draws against Anand and Yusupov.

The three all-play-alls at Seville, Munich and Las Palmas were good preparation for the Biel interzonal, but not a clear indicator of Michael’s chances. He was seeded 16th and only ten players were to qualify for the candidates matches. However, Michael had performed much
better than expected in the Manila interzonal and the Swiss format probably suited him. Certainly he had a clear idea of what he needed to do: to score four more wins than defeats and retain 'plus four' until the end of the event. This sounds simple enough, but in practical terms was not so easy; after four rounds he had made no progress, with two victories against the Swiss players Brunner and Hug cancelled out by defeats against Wolff and Ftačnik, which were caused by overpressing after making a calculated choice to go for the full point. Michael seemed to have forgotten the event was over 13 rounds, more of a marathon than a sprint. His doomed attempts to win with White were rather wild and not what was required at all. However, one of Michael’s strengths is the ability to put together a string of victories, often scoring as well with Black as with White. He displayed this well while beating Dvoirys, Dmitry Gurevich, Korchnoi and Kramnik in successive rounds to reach the key score, aided by the necessary ingredient of good fortune in the first of these successes. A rather bizarre decision resulted in Michael opening 1 b3 and obtaining an absolutely rotten position. Nearing the time control, Michael was almost in zugzwang in a knight and pawn ending with his only asset being a time advantage where is opponent had much less than a minute for his last two moves. Michael flashed out a pawn move to relieve the pressure. It would have lost immediately to an en passant capture but, incredibly, it confused Dvoirys, who played a simple exchange leaving a drawn position. With time to reflect, he realised his missed chance and pure frustration caused him to attempt unwise winning attempts. After Speelman and Chess Genius, Michael’s new computer programme, helped him with adjournment analysis, Michael eventually obtained the full point after over a hundred moves had been played. It was the real turning point in Michael’s tournament.

**M. Adams – V. Korchnoi**

*Biel interzonal 1993*

**French Defence, Tarrasch Variation**

After three wins in a row my confidence was high for this game, as I sensed that victory would give me excellent chances of qualification.

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 ♘d2 c5

4 ♗g3 c4

Although this move is common with the exchange of e-pawns inserted, I have never seen it before in this position. My reply seems to be the best attempt to take advantage of this but it doesn’t prove to be particularly convincing.

5 g3 ♗f6
6 e5

Instead 6 exd5 exd5 7 ♗g2 is possible but nothing special.
6 ... $f_d7
7 a4!?

I was reluctant to allow 7 $g_2 b5 as the tactics after 8 a4 b4 9 $xc4 dxc4 10 $g5 $b6 11 $xa8 $xa8 12 $f3 $d5 are good for Black. After quieter eighth moves for White Black can consolidate the queenside expansion by means of ...$b6.

7 ... $c6
8 $g2 $e7
9 0-0 $b6
10 $e1

This move consolidates, with a slight edge for White.

12 ... 0-0
13 $xb3 $d7
14 $b1 $c8
15 $a3

This bishop exchange is thematic as it was not possible to win a pawn by 15 $xb7 $b8 16 $a6 $xb1 17 $xb1 $b6, which is fine for Black.

15 ... $b8
16 $xe7

Interesting here is the possibility 16 $f1 but I wanted to leave the bishop defending my kingside to deter ...f7-f6.

16 ... $xe7
17 $b2 $a7

But not 17...b5 18 axb5 $a7 19 b6.

18 $a3 $c6

Now 18...b5 is powerfully met by 19 $eb1 with a nasty pin.

19 $eb1 $c7

10 a5?!

A better option was 10...$d7, because kicking back the knight with 11 a5 $c8 12 a6 b5 leaves the a6-pawn stranded, as indeed it would also have done on the previous move. The idea is that the black knight can use the a5 square in some positions, i.e. after 11 c3 $a5, when Black can annoy the a4 pawn by means of ...$c6 and ...$wd7.

11 b3 cxb3
12 c3!

20 $f1

Around this stage I lost the thread of the game. I wanted to
play 20 c4 (20 \textit{W}c5 is well met by 20...\textit{Q}ac8 followed by ...b7-b6) but
20...\textit{D}xc4 21 \textit{D}xc4 (21 \textit{W}c5 b6 22
\textit{D}xb6 \textit{D}xb6 23 \textit{D}xb6 c3) 21...\textit{D}xe4!
22 \textit{D}c1 b5 is a problem.
20 ... \textit{D}fd8
21 \textit{D}b3?

Based on a faulty premise. It was better to play either 21 \textit{D}d3 or 21 h4.
21 ... b6
22 \textit{D}bd2

Relatively best. My original intension had been 22 \textit{D}xa5 bxa5 23
\textit{D}xb8 \textit{D}xb8 24 \textit{D}xb8 \textit{W}xb8 25 \textit{W}xe7
\textit{D}xa4 26 \textit{D}g5 \textit{D}e8 27 \textit{D}d3 g6
when if White could hyperspace his queen to h6 he would be doing well, but as it is Black’s passed a-
pawn is the most relevant factor in the position.
22 ... h6
23 h4 \textit{D}g6

Whilst it is hard to criticise Black for losing time after my last two knight moves, it seems to me
that 23...\textit{D}e8 was better.
24 \textit{D}d3 \textit{D}f8
25 \textit{D}f1 \textit{D}e8
26 \textit{D}e3

By now I had glimpsed a plan involving the sacrifice of this
knights on h6. Despite having all the subtlety of a battering ram, this is
dangerous for Black. So perhaps he should try 26...f5 27 exf6 gxf6
when although there are many weak pawns, Black has a lot of
control over the central squares; 28 \textit{D}g4 \textit{W}g7 is fine for Black, so 28 c4 is the key test.

26 ... \textit{W}c6
27 \textit{D}a2 \textit{D}dce8
28 \textit{D}b3 \textit{W}c7
29 \textit{W}b2

Taking time off from my plan to
prevent ...b6-b5.
29 ... \textit{D}d8
30 \textit{D}g4 \textit{D}c8
31 \textit{W}d2 \textit{D}e7

32 \textit{D}xh6+

A key moment. When I played
this move I thought that it won on
the spot, but Viktor finds a re-
source worthy of his reputation as
a great defender. In fact, as 32 h5
\textit{D}f5 is a reasonable defence, the
only other option is 32 \textit{D}f6+ \textit{D}h8
(32...gxh6 33 exf6 is curtains) 33
\textit{D}xe8 \textit{D}xe8 with a slight advan-
tage for White.
32 ... \textit{gxh6}
33 \textit{W}xh6 \textit{D}f5
34 \textit{W}g5+ \textit{D}h8
35 g4 f6!

The move that I had missed, but White still has a slight advan-
tage.
36 exf6
Also worthy of consideration was 36 \( \text{Wxf6+ Wg7 37 Wxg7+ Dxg7} \) 38 h5 when the three pawns look preferable to a piece.

36 ... Dh7
37 Wd2 Dh5!

The alternative 37...Dxf6 38 gxf5 leaves White two pawns up.

38 gxh5 Hg8+
39 Df1 Hbf8
40 De5 Hxf6
41 Dg6+ Hgxg6

Although this move is successful in the game, 41...Dg7 looks objectively better; although after 42 De2 White has an edge.

42 hxg6 Wh2
43 Dxf5 Hxf5
44 c4?

This is a bad mistake; accurate calculation would have demonstrated that 44 Wh6 leads to a win since there is no perpetual check after 44...Wh1+ 45 Df2 Wh3+ (or 45...Df4+ 46 Df1 Dg4+ 47 f3) 46 Dd2 Dxf2+ 47 Dc1 Wf1+ 48 Df2 Wh2+ 49 Da3.

44 ... Wh1+

45 De2 Wh4
46 Hg3

If 46 We3, then 46...Df6 is dangerous.

46 ... Dg5
47 We3 Wh5+

It was better to play 47...Dg7 when Black is no longer worse; perhaps the safest reply is 48 Dxe5.

48 Df1 Dg7
49 cxd5 Df3

50 Dxf3 Hxf3
51 We5+ Wxe5
52 Dxe5 Dxd5
53 Hb2 Hf5?

Although not immediately obvious, Black’s best is 53...Df4 when 54 Dxb6 Da4 55 Hf6 Dg4 results in an easy draw.

54 Dxb6 Dxe5
55 Hb5 Dxe6
56 Da5 De4

This looks like the best chance, as the alternative plan of rushing the king to the queenside should also lose after 56...Df7 57 Hf8 De7 58 a5 Hd6 59 a6 Hc7 60 Dd8 Hb6 61 Hd6+ Da7 62 f3, when
White will shepherd home the f-pawn.

57 f3 \( \texttt{b} \)

After 57...\( \texttt{e} \)e3 58 \( \texttt{f} \)f2 d4 59 \( \texttt{a} \)a8 (59 \( \texttt{d} \)d5 \( \texttt{d} \)d3 60 \( \texttt{e} \)e2 \( \texttt{e} \)e3+ 61 \( \texttt{f} \)f2 \( \texttt{a} \)xf3 62 \( \texttt{x} \)xd4 \( \texttt{f} \)f5 looks like a draw to me) 59...\( \texttt{a} \)a3 60 a5 d3 61 a6 d2 (after waiting moves White plays a7, blockades the d-pawn with his king and advances the f-pawn) 62 \( \texttt{e} \)e2 \( \texttt{a} \)xf3 63 a7 White wins by a tempo. After the game continuation matters are even more clear-cut.

58 \( \texttt{a} \)a8 \( \texttt{f} \)f5
59 a5 \( \texttt{b} \)b7
60 \( \texttt{e} \)e2 \( \texttt{f} \)f4
61 a6 \( \texttt{f} \)f7
62 \( \texttt{b} \)b8

The sealed move, which makes things simple as the rook can come behind the a-pawn after a check.

62 ... \( \texttt{e} \)e7+
63 \( \texttt{f} \)f2 \( \texttt{e} \)e5
64 \( \texttt{b} \)b4

Here Black resigned because after the continuation 64...\( \texttt{a} \)a7 65 \( \texttt{a} \)a4 \( \texttt{a} \)d6 66 \( \texttt{e} \)e3 \( \texttt{c} \)c5 67 \( \texttt{d} \)d3 \( \texttt{b} \)b5 68 \( \texttt{a} \)a1, taking the a-pawn leads to a lost king and pawn ending, while otherwise the black king is forced back.

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**Game 42**

After the winning streak, the consolidation of five draws followed against Salov, Gelfand, Kamsky, Khalifman and Yudasin. All but one of these was a very short game, but this is common in interzonals once players reach the requisite mark. However, the game against Gelfand did not come into this category.

**B.Gelfand – M.Adams**

*Biel Interzonal 1993*

Nimzo-Indian Defence

Given our respective scores this game was rather hard-fought (an early draw would have left us both in prime position for qualification to the candidates). In some ways it is fortunate that this was not the case as this game really caught fire towards the end.

1 \( \texttt{d} \)d4 \( \texttt{g} \)g6
2 \( \texttt{c} \)c4 e6

It has normally been my strategy to avoid risky openings such as the Benko Gambit in interzonals, particularly given that on my
current score draws would be enough for me to qualify.

3  \( \text{\textit{c3}} \)  \( \text{\textit{b4}} \)
4  \( \text{\textit{e3}} \)  \( \text{\textit{b6}} \)
5  \( \text{\textit{d3}} \)  \( \text{\textit{b7}} \)
6  \( \text{\textit{f3}} \)  0-0
7  0-0  \( \text{\textit{xc3}} \)
8  \( \text{\textit{bxc3}} \)  \( \text{\textit{c5}} \)
9  \( \text{\textit{d2}} \)  \( \text{\textit{c6}} \)
10 \( \text{\textit{b3}} \)  a5!?

White's knight manoeuvre appears logical to facilitate the advance e4, so I decided to give it a probe. If 11 dx\( \text{\textit{c5}} \) a4 12 \( \text{\textit{d4}} \) bxc5 13 \( \text{\textit{b5}} \) \( \text{\textit{e5}} \) looks good for Black.

11  \( \text{\textit{a4}} \)  d6
12  f3  \( \text{\textit{c8}} \)
13  \( \text{\textit{a3}} \)

A funny looking move, but the logical 13 e4 fails to 13...cxd4 14 cxd4 \( \text{\textit{b4}} \) with strong counterplay against the weak pawn on c4.

13  ...

I looked at alternatives to closing the centre, but after e3-e4 possibilities of e4-e5 will be irritating for Black if he refrains from this move. Round about here I offered a draw, confident that my strategy of spending more time at the bar than at the board was the safest way to qualify, but my opponent wanted to play on.

14  d5  \( \text{\textit{e7}} \)
15  \( \text{\textit{d2}} \)  \( \text{\textit{e8}} \)
16  e4  \( \text{\textit{b8}} \)
17  \( \text{\textit{wc2}} \)  \( \text{\textit{c8}} \)
18  \( \text{\textit{ae1}} \)  \( \text{\textit{g6}} ? \)

This is a clear mistake. The critical variations occur after the advance 18...f5 19 exf5 \( \text{\textit{xf5}} \) 20 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) \( \text{\textit{wd7}} \) (20...\( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) 21 \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) ) 21 f4 and now

a) 21...\( \text{\textit{g6}} \) 22 fxe5 \( \text{\textit{xe5}} \) 23 \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) + \( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{xf5}} \) \( \text{\textit{wc7}} \) is unclear; or

b) 21...\( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) 22 \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) is also messy.

19  g3  \( \text{\textit{h3}} \)
20  \( \text{\textit{f2}} \)  \( \text{\textit{wc8}} \)
21  \( \text{\textit{c1}} \)  \( \text{\textit{b7}} (D) \)

Of course my intention here had been to play 21...f5, but after 22 exf5 \( \text{\textit{xf5}} \) 23 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \) White has a big advantage. This might still have been a better chance than the abject passivity which I suffered in the game.

22  \( \text{\textit{h1}} \)  \( \text{\textit{e7}} \)
23  \( \text{\textit{wb1}} \)  \( \text{\textit{wd8}} \)

It was possible to try and maintain the possibility of playing ...f7-f5 by going 23...\( \text{\textit{b7}} \) 24 f4 exf4 25 gxf4 \( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) , but White has alternatives to 24 f4.

24 \( \text{\textit{f1}} \)  \( \text{\textit{d7}} \)

The black position is now so cramped that I was fairly sure my opponent would turn down 25 \( \text{\textit{b2}} \)
\(\text{x}a4 \text{26 } \text{x}b6, \text{although it looks quite promising.}\

\text{25 } \text{c}2 \text{c}8 \\
\text{26 } \text{g}5 \\
\text{A visually tempting move but the simple } \text{26 } \text{e}3 \text{is also very good.}\

\text{26 } \ldots \text{ f}6 \\
\text{27 } \text{d}2 \text{f}7 \\
\text{28 } \text{e}3 \text{e}7 \\
\text{29 } \text{f}4? \\
\text{White opens the game without sufficient preparation. After the better } \text{29 } \text{f}5 \text{it is very hard to imagine how the black knight on e8 will ever emerge.}\

\text{29 } \ldots \text{ f}5 \\
\text{Absolutely the only chance but Black’s position here is much better than I had realised during the game. The weak queenside pawns crumble so that White must take quick action.}\

\text{30 } \text{f}xe5 \text{d}xe5 \\
\text{31 } \text{exf}5 \text{d}6 \\
\text{32 } \text{e}f1 \\
\text{Another option was } \text{32 } \text{g}4 \text{when I have a choice between either } \text{32 } \ldots \text{g}6 \text{33 } \text{e}f1 \text{gxf}5 \text{34 } \text{gxf}5 \text{h}8 \text{or } \text{32 } \ldots \text{a}6, \text{both of which look fairly unclear to me.}\

\text{32 } \ldots \text{ a}6 \\
\text{33 } \text{f}6 \\
\text{This looks surprising until you realise that } \text{33 } \text{d}3, \text{33 } \text{b}3, \text{and } \text{33 } \text{b}3 \text{are all met by } \text{33 } \ldots \text{xc}4.\

\text{33 } \ldots \text{ gxf6} \\
\text{34 } \text{g}4 \text{xc}4 \\
\text{An alternative here is } \text{34 } \ldots \text{xc}4 \text{35 } \text{h}6+ \text{g}7 \text{36 } \text{xf}7 \text{xf}7 \text{37 } \text{e}1 \text{xd}5+ \text{38 } \text{g}1 \text{but I think that the text offers better chances.}\

\text{35 } \text{c}1 \\
\text{An important line is } \text{35 } \text{h}6+ \text{g}7 \text{36 } \text{c}1 (36 \text{xf}7 \text{xd}5+ \text{37 } \text{e}4 \text{xd}2 \text{38 } \text{xd}5 \text{xb}1 \text{39 } \text{xb}1 \text{xd}5 \text{leads to a bad ending for White}) \text{36 } \text{a}3! \text{36 } \text{b}7 \text{37 } \text{e}4 \text{is fine for White}) \text{37 } \text{xa}3 \text{37 } \text{xf}7 \text{xd}5+ \text{38 } \text{e}4 \text{xb}1 \text{39 } \text{xd}5 \text{xd}5 \text{40 } \text{h}6+ \text{xf}7 \text{41 } \text{xb}1 \text{g}8 \text{is good for Black}) \text{37 } \text{ex}h6 \text{38 } \text{d}1 \text{with a messy position. After the move played White is actually lost, but it is difficult to be critical given the complexity of the upcoming variations.}\

\text{35 } \ldots \text{ h}8 \\
\text{The difference is that Black gains time to safeguard the rook.}\

\text{36 } \text{h}6 \text{g}7 \\
\text{37 } \text{xf}6 \text{xf}6 \\
\text{38 } \text{xf}6 (D) \\
\text{38 } \ldots \text{ b}7 \\
\text{Incredibly this doesn’t win, due to some bizarre tactics. The correct continuation was } \text{38 } \text{xd}5 \text{39 } \text{f}7 (39 \text{f}3 \text{xc}3 \text{40 } \text{xc}3 \text{40 } \text{b}3 \text{b}7 \text{41 } \text{xc}3 \text{d}4) \text{40 } \text{b}7+ \text{41 } \text{e}4 \text{d}1+ \text{42 } \text{g}2 \text{e}2+, \text{39}
\( \text{\textcopyright{f7+ \textit{xf7 40 \textit{xf7 \textit{xc3 41 \textit{xf7+ \textit{g8 42 \textit{wa1 \textit{wd5+ 43 \textit{g1 \textit{wxf3 or here 42 \textit{h6 \textit{wxa1+ \textit{xd5+ 43 \textit{g1 \textit{w4+ 44 \textit{h1 \textit{xb1 45 \textit{g7+ \textit{f8 46 \textit{d7+ \textit{e8) 39...\textit{xc3. At this point in the analysis (most of which was discovered at a wine party in Speelman's room by him, Seirawan, Tisdall and myself) Jon produced the corker 40 \textit{g5. When the laughter had died down someone tried 40...\textit{wa8+ 41 \textit{g1 \textit{xb1 42 \textit{f6 before realising it was not so easy. The attempt to improve with 41...\textit{e3 42 \textit{e4 \textit{xb1 (or 42...\textit{xe4 43 \textit{xe4) 43 \textit{xa8 \textit{xf7 44 \textit{xf7+ \textit{g7 45 \textit{xe5 leads to a probable draw. The simplest way to win was found the next day: 40...\textit{wd5+ 41 \textit{e4 \textit{xf7 (probably also good enough to win is 41...\textit{xf7 42 \textit{xd5 \textit{xb1 43 \textit{xf7+ \textit{g7) 42 \textit{xf7+ \textit{xf7 43 \textit{wd3 \textit{xe4 when there are far too many threats and material for the queen. Meanwhile, back at the board I was getting very excited – I had seen a forced win, or so I thought. 39 \textit{e4 \textit{xd5 40 \textit{f3 The other option 40 \textit{f7+ \textit{xf7 41 \textit{xf7 \textit{xc3 42 \textit{h7+ \textit{g8 wins simply. But now I was happily considering 40...\textit{xc3 41 \textit{xc3 \textit{wd1+ 42 \textit{g2 \textit{e2+ (attentive readers may notice a similarity to a variation in the last note). Then I noticed the difference 41 \textit{wd3 \textit{d7 42 \textit{f7+, but recovered in time to play: 40 ... \textit{d6 41 \textit{g1 \textit{xe4 I had intended 41...\textit{xc3 but 42 \textit{xa6 \textit{xa3 43 \textit{xe4 44 \textit{xe4 45 \textit{e1 was rather off-putting. By now I had realised that my opponent had been fortunate enough to survive. 42 \textit{xe4 \textit{f4 Neither 42...\textit{f6 43 \textit{d3 nor 42...\textit{xc3 43 \textit{xe5 \textit{d1+ 44 \textit{f1 \textit{e2+ 45 \textit{xe2 are promising. 43 \textit{f7+! \textit{xf7 44 \textit{xe5+ \textit{g8 Draw agreed as 45 \textit{xf4 \textit{d1+ 46 \textit{f2 \textit{c1+ 47 \textit{xe2 leads to an equal position.}
}

All of Michael's last five opponents joined him as a candidate, along with Van der Sterren, Lautier, Kramnik and Anand, who was the only player to qualify on 'plus three'. Thus Michael achieved the distinction of becoming the third English candidate after Nigel Short and Jon Speelman.}
Chapter Five

Michael's troubles playing against other English players continued at the Lloyds Bank Masters in 1993. Once again he was the highest rated player and once more he achieved a disappointing result. His two defeats came at the hands of Gary Lane and Peter Wells, who both outplayed Michael in the Spanish Opening. Perhaps it was difficult for Michael to focus all his energy on playing friends who he knew very well in this tournament. However such deep explanations are rather less important than the fact that his opponents were simply better on the day. A late surge did earn Michael the respectability of fifth equal position although it was not sufficient to avoid the loss of many rating points. Perhaps it was as well that his last round opponent was a younger Englishman, Matthew Sadler, who had to win for a GM norm, as this enabled Michael to collect the point when he overpressed. It turned out to be the last Lloyds Bank Masters that Michael was to take part in. Although the 1993 results may not have been all that he had wished for, the event gave Michael many wonderful opportunities and results in the ten tournaments since his first appearance in 1984.

A personally significant event occurred in the summer of 1993 when Michael appeared at the head of the BCF grading list with 260 points, five ahead of Nigel Short. It could be argued that this meant very little as Nigel rarely played in England whereas Michael was very active and generally successful. Certainly it created no international interest. However when you have spent your whole chess career in the shadow of someone, it is nice to emerge ahead for the first time.

Michael was the leading scorer at the Chalkidiki tournament in Greece but only came third. The reason for this strange outcome was that only four players were invited and they played each other twice with the final scores being Gelfand 4, Shirov and Adams 3½ and Kotronias 1.

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Game 43

M. Adams – V. Kotronias
Chalkidiki 1993
Spanish Opening,
Anti-Marshall Variation

One of the problems with playing in a nice venue like Chalkidiki is dragging yourself off the beach in the mood for a hard game. Maybe
my opponent didn’t quite manage it for this game.

1 e4 e5
2 d4 c6
3 c3 b6
4 a4 d6
5 0-0 e7
6 6e1 b5
7 6b3 d6
8 a4

Although Black had already made it clear that he is not interested in the Marshall Attack, I decided to deviate from the main lines in any case. Although theoretically 8 c3 gives White the best chance to gain a slight plus, I preferred to take the game into a line which I had (at least in theory) studied recently, instead of allowing Black the opportunity to dictate the choice of variation.

8 ... 8g4

This is why the move order is considered less critical than 8 c3 but the game remains complicated.

9 c3 0-0
10 d3 8a5
11 8a2

In these circumstances it seems more useful to drop the bishop back here instead of to c2.

11 b4

A theoretical suggestion here is 11...c5, but the move played is also sensible if followed up correctly.

12 8bd2 (D)

Of course 12 cxb4 8c6 13 8d2 8d4 would be awful for White.

12 ... 8b8

13 h3 8e6

This is inconsistent; Black had two superior options. The committal 13...8xf3 14 8xf3 b3 15 8b1 c5 leads to an interesting position. At first White seems to be in big trouble as it is hard to bring the bishop back into the game. However, matters are not so simple. Either the immediate 16 d4 or 16 8d2, targeting the b3 pawn, give White play. Therefore Black’s best choice is the flexible 13...8h5, keeping his options open. White would probably continue 14 8c4 8xc4 15 8xc4 a5 with approximate equality. After the text move I am able to take over the initiative.

14 8xe6 fxe6
15 d4 bxc3

Even worse would be 15...exd4 16 cxd4, when Black’s pawn structure is a shambles.

16 bxc3 8d7

Few players would be prepared to accept so many long-term weaknesses in their pawn structure. After the more sensible 16...exd4 17
cxd4 (17 Qxd4? Wd7 18 e5 dxe5 19 Qxe5 Qc6) Black is a little worse.
17 We2 Wc8

There was no opportunity to change his mind due to 17...exd4
18 Qxd4 Qc5 19 Qa3.
18 dxe5 dxe5
19 Qc4

There is not much finesse about this move but there are few good
alternatives for White. In this case allowing the exchange of bishop
for knight is not a problem as the white knight on c4 is so well posted.
19 ...
Qb3

The exchange 19...Qxc4 20 Wxc4
is not very desirable because the
white queen comes to a very aggressive square, hitting Black’s
weak pawns. Possible was 19...Qc6
although this move gives a rather
passive impression. Probably the
move played was best.
20 Ha2

Disastrous would have been 20
Qb1 Qd4, when Black picks up
material.
20 ...
Qxc1
21 Qxc1 Qc5

True to his style Kotronias tries
to stay active. Another way to play
was 21...Rf6, when White has a
pleasant advantage due to his su-
perior pawn structure.
22 Rd2 (D)

White targets Black’s insecure
knight on d7, which is tied to the
defence of e5.
22 ...
We8

Black tries to threaten the
pawn on a4.

23 a5

But unfortunately it only en-
courages this powerful response,
cutting down the options of the
knight. If 23 Kcd1 Qb6 24 Qxb6
Qxb6 25 Ad7? Rd6 White loses the
exchange. The text move keeps
control of the game.
23

F4

This is rather aimless move. Al-
though it makes an active impres-
sion it doesn’t really cause White
any problems and allows him to
pick off a pawn by force. The alter-
native 23...Qb5 keeps Black hang-
ing on.
24 Wd3

Unusually the queen and rook
combination is more effective than
doubling rooks, since it allows the
rook to cover the second rank and
particularly f2.
24 ...

F6
25 He1

Now the black pawn on e5 is
doubly attacked and there is no
good way to defend it or harass
the white e-pawn again.
25 ...

A4
26  \( \text{c}f5 \)  \( \text{h}8 \\
Black tees up for a cheapo but there are plenty of defenders if White plays carefully.
27  \( \text{e}e2 \)  \( \text{d}6 \\
This is very bad. Black’s only chances were based on this bishop pressurising \( f2 \). Now the game is ended simply, but after 27...\( w\)a1+ 28 \( \text{h}2 \) a good follow-up is not available.
28  \( \text{xd}6 \\
It is not really clear what Black’s idea would have been if White had simply retreated with 28 \( \text{f}3 \), but as he had miscalculated the tactics, this is the most impressive way to finish the game.
28  ...  \( \text{cx}d6 \\
29  \( \text{wx}d6 \)  \( \text{xe}4 \\
It was not too late to limit the damage to two pawns by means of 29...\( \text{e}8 \).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
30  \( \text{we}6+ \)  \( \text{h}8 \\
31  \( \text{xe}4 \)  \( \text{we}4 \\
32  \( \text{d}8 \\
This nice touch wins. If 32 \( \text{f}7+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) Black hangs on.
32  ...  \( \text{x}d8 \\
33  \( \text{f}7+ \\
\text{Black resigned} as a smothered mate was imminent after 33...\( \text{g}8 \\
34  \( \text{h}6+ \)  \( \text{h}8 \) 35  \( \text{g}8+ \) followed by \( \text{f}7 \) mate next move.

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**Game 44**

After the joint runners-up were split by tie-break in Shirov’s favour, the first two played two more games against each other as did the last two. Shirov beat Gelfand 1\( \frac{1}{2} \)-\( \frac{1}{2} \) and Michael won 2-0 against Kotronias, giving the final result as Gelfand first with 4\( \frac{1}{2} \) (as he had taken a 2-0 lead from the first two encounters into the final two games), Shirov second with 5 and Michael third with 5\( \frac{1}{2} \) points. I am tempted to say that it is all Greek to me – and probably to the reader as well! The event was also notable for Michael collecting four victories over Greece’s strongest player in one tournament. Poor Kotronias has been particularly unsuccessful at Chalkidiki on both occasions that Michael has played and has not done his high rating justice. Michael’s 5-0 career record against him is easily his best score against such a strong opponent.

His next tournament was far simpler to understand. It was a twelve player all-play-all category 14 event in Bulgaria, not quite as strong as
some Michael had played in recently. To win the event with 8/11 ahead of Ivan Sokolov, Georgiev, Smirin, Vyzmanavin and Nikolić, was a particularly pleasing result and probably his best all-play-all result at this time. It was also pleasing to see him go through unbeaten with five wins and six draws. Away from the board Michael’s reminiscences were more mixed. The food proved something of an acquired taste and he lost a stone in weight during the course of the event. The price of such food as was available and of drink was very cheap. When going into a bar and ordering the best bottle of wine, as was the custom for Ivan Sokolov and Michael, the most that they were charged was £1.50 although they did come unstuck one day when they were served a white wine with forty per cent sugar, which was not quite to their taste! The locals were amazed that Michael would swim in the outdoor hotel swimming pool in October before all his games. He did have his swimming trunks stolen from the washing line outside of his room, but if it was a fellow competitor trying to ruin Michael’s preparation it failed, as he had a spare pair. Although my son had made lots of journeys in foreign countries, he found that travelling in Bulgaria, particularly the internal flight on a Bulgarian airbus between Sofia and Burgas, was something of an adventure. On the return journey the airbus was delayed for four hours which meant that Michael missed his flight to London. He was told that the next direct flight was not for two days but fortunately it was possible to return via Brussels later that day to ensure that he reached London to do some scheduled commentary on the Kasparov-Short match.

M.Adams – A.Vyzmanavin

Burgas 1993

Caro-Kann Defence,
Classical Variation

I had actually sneaked off to bed early the evening before this game but Ivan Sokolov summoned me back to the bar to add the finishing touches to my preparation.

1 e4 c6
2 d4 d5
3 ³d2 dxe4
4 ³xe4 ²d7

My opponent chooses the most solid variation, which has also been part of my repertoire for quite a long time.

5 ³c4 ²gf6
6 ³g5 e6
7 ²e2 ²b6
8 ³b3 h6
9 ³f3 c5

I prefer to play 9...a5 here to gain space on the queenside before challenging in the centre.

10 c3 ²c7

This position is tricky as both sides hope the exchange of pawns in the centre will save them tempi. Black would not be well advised to play 10...cxd4 11 ³xd4 when White
can develop his pieces harmoniously and 10...d6 11 dxc5 xc5 12 e5 forces Black to lose time with the bishop. Therefore my opponent’s move, which prevents 11 dxc5 xc5 12 e5 with 12...xf2+ 13 xf2 xe5 14 xe5 g4+. My next move is the most obvious but 11 e3 also deserved consideration. This type of position was commonly reached in the 1994 Short-Gulko candidates match although they normally had the moves ...a7-a5 and a2-a3 inserted.

11 h3 d6

It is sometimes possible to embarrass the knights by 11...g5, but here 12 e5 is a good response.

12 dxc5 xc5
13 f4 d6
14 xd6 xd6
15 d1

Ideally White would have liked to castle long and play for a quick attack, but the queen’s control of the d-file makes this impossible so a more modest approach is called for.

15 ... c7
16 0-0 0-0
17 d4

The alternative was 17 e5 but 17...bd7 18 xf7 xf7 19 xe6 e5 and 19 xe6 b6 are not convincing. After the move played 17...d8 is not possible due to 18 we5 but 17...bd5 or 17...d7 were options.

17 ... a5
18 a3

There was a threat to advance the pawn to a3, crippling the queenside pawn structure. It was also possible to play 18 a4 but advancing the pawn two squares is less good as it would allow Black to play 18...bd5 without fearing 19 c4, on account of 19...b4 after which the knight would be impregnable.

18 ... a4
19 a2

A useful diagonal but 19 c2, keeping the pressure on a4, looks even stronger.

19 ... bd7
20 f4

The knight hops back into the game as 20...e5 fails to 21 d5.

20 ... c5
21 fd1 b6
22 e5!

A good decision. Attempts to attack the black king were too optimistic and the exchange of queens allows me to target the queenside pawns, particularly the one on b6.

22 ... xe5
23 xe5 a6
Not the ideal move but 23...\(\text{b7}^\text{b7}\) 24 \(\text{d6}\) gives immediate problems.

24 \(\text{h4}\)

A nice dual-purpose move. The back-rank mate is eliminated and possible play on the kingside is prepared.

24 ... \(\text{Hfc8}\)

Black makes way for his king to come into the game.

25 \(\text{d6}\) \(\text{b5}\)

Of course Black must have been reluctant to put this pawn where it blocks the bishop, but 25...\(\text{ab8}\) 26 \(\text{c6}\) \(\text{b7}\) 27 \(\text{d8}^+\) \(\text{xd8}\) 28 \(\text{xd8}^+\) \(\text{h7}\) 29 \(\text{b1}^+\) \(\text{g6}\) 30 \(\text{h5}\) wins. Perhaps 25...\(\text{cb8}\) was playable but Vyzmanavin is understandably reluctant to move the rook twice in a row.

26 \(\text{f3}\)

Otherwise one of the knights coming to e4 could be irritating.

26 ... \(\text{f8}\)

27 \(\text{g4}\) \(\text{c8}\)

28 \(\text{b6}\)

Black would have been condemned to passivity after the stronger 28 \(\text{d6d4}\). Now he gets a chance to break out.

28 ... \(\text{d8}\)

29 \(\text{d4}\)

Black is unable to take control of the d-file after this move.

29 ... \(\text{g5}\)

30 \(\text{hxg5}\) \(\text{hxg5}\)

31 \(\text{h3}\)

This move, hitting the g-pawn, looks logical but 31 \(\text{h5}\) may have been better.

31 ... \(\text{f6}\)

32 \(\text{c6}\) \(\text{d7}\)

Black had to try 32...\(\text{d6}\) 33 \(\text{xd6}\) \(\text{xd6}\) 34 \(\text{d4}\) \(\text{e7}\) 35 \(\text{f4}\) \(\text{d7}\) 36 \(\text{c6}\) \(\text{b7}\) 37 \(\text{c7}\) but despite the intricate rook manoeuvres White still has the upper hand.

33 \(\text{b4}\)

Now a pawn is won as the bishop is vulnerable on the a6 square.

33 ... \(\text{h7}\)

More logical was 33...\(\text{b7}\), but the extra pawn which is gained after 34 \(\text{xa6}\) \(\text{xa6}\) 35 \(\text{xa6}\) \(\text{xa6}\) 36 \(\text{xe6}\) should be decisive. The text move, putting the black rook
offside, leads to a fatal lack of co-
modation amongst Black's army.

34 \( \text{\texttt{f2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{b7}} \)
35 \( \text{\texttt{xb5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{b3}} \)

Giving White two passed pawns,
but 35...\( \text{\texttt{c8}} \) 36 \( \text{\texttt{g2}} \) leaves Black
movebound.

36 \( \text{\texttt{xb3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xb3}} \)
37 \( \text{\texttt{g2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c8}} \)
38 \( \text{\texttt{a4}} \)

The knight on b4 usefully sup-
pports the passed a-pawn.

38 ... \( \text{\texttt{e5}} \)
39 \( \text{\texttt{d1}} \) \( \text{\texttt{a8}} \)
40 \( \text{\texttt{a5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c7}} \) (D)
41 \( \text{\texttt{g3}} \)

The direct 41 \( \text{\texttt{e4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xe4}} \) 42 \( \text{\texttt{fxe4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c4}} \)
\( \text{\texttt{ac4}} \) could cause a little irritation;
White is in no hurry so it is safer
and more controlled to play a solid
move.

41 \( \text{\texttt{a7}} \)

The move Black wanted to play
was 41...\( \text{\texttt{xe7}} \) but 42 \( \text{\texttt{e4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xe4}} \) 43
\( \text{\texttt{fxe4}} \) threatens \( \text{\texttt{d5}} \).  

42 \( \text{\texttt{e4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xe4}} \)
43 \( \text{\texttt{fxe4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c4}} \)
44 \( \text{\texttt{a6}} \) \( \text{\texttt{xe4}} \)
45 \( \text{\texttt{b7}} \)

Now 45...\( \text{\texttt{a8}} \) 46 \( \text{\texttt{a7}} \) \( \text{\texttt{e2}} \) 47 \( \text{\texttt{c6}} \)
\( \text{\texttt{xb2}} \) 48 \( \text{\texttt{d8}} \) wins so Black re-
signed.

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**Game 45**

**M. Adams – Kir. Georgiev**  
*Burgas 1993*  
Trompowsky Attack

Since Julian Hodgson described
the 'Tromp' in graphic detail to
me on a no.6 bus I have been whip-
ing it out with some regularity. It
is particularly useful to me, as a
mainly 1 e4 player, when I want to
introduce an element of surprise.
In this game (against a Dragon
specialist) I was also glad to get
away from heavy theory as early
as possible.

1 \( \text{\texttt{d4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \)
2 \( \text{\texttt{g5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{e4}} \)
3 \( \text{\texttt{f4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c5}} \)
4 \( \text{\texttt{f3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \)

The sharpest possibility. It is
not easy for White to gain the ad-
vantage against this and Black
gets active play. As a Dragon spe-
cialist, Georgiev is happy to attack
on the dark squares and fianchetto
his king's bishop. Incidentally I
believe that the alternative 3...d5
does not ensure full equality.

4 \( \text{\texttt{f3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \)

In an earlier game against Kiril
he had played 4...\( \text{\texttt{a5}} \) + 5 \( \text{\texttt{c3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \) 6
\( \text{d2 cxd4 7 } \text{b3 } \text{d8 8 cxd4 but now missed the best 8...d5, after which I was able to play e2-e4 building a strong centre.} \)

5 d5

A very aggressive move, perhaps inspired by my good form in the tournament. 5 dxc5 is a good alternative as the Sicilian type position after 5...\text{a5+ 6 c3 } \text{xc5} 7 e4 looks promising for White.

5 ... d6

This is too passive. 5...\text{b6} was the critical test, when White would have had to give up a pawn by 6 c3 \text{xb2} 7 d2. There is compensation but Black has much better chances than in the game.

6 e4 g6

7 c3 g7

8 \text{d2} 0-0

Committing his king this early is rather dangerous when White is already well positioned to swap the fianchettoed bishop. It is worth noting that in some senses White is a tempo up as the black knight has taken three moves to reach f6 and White’s bishop only two to end up on f4. I would have preferred 8...a6, aiming to discourage White from castling queenside.

9 \text{h6 } \text{xh6}

The direct 9...a6 or 9...e6 would have been better; allowing the white queen to take up such an aggressive post is a mistake.

10 \text{xh6} e6

11 0-0-0 exd5

12 exd5 \text{e8}

13 \text{ge2!}

Stronger than the stereotyped 13 h4. White’s attack can then be defused by 13...\text{e7}, planning a queen swap. By transferring the knight to e4 White targets both the weak d6 pawn and the vulnerable f6 square.

13 a6

Now there is no time for 13...\text{e7} 14 g3 \text{e3+ 15 xe3 } \text{xe3} 16 \text{ge4 } \text{xe4} 17 \text{xe4} when the rook is trapped.

14 g3 b5

If 14...\text{bd7} 15 h4 increases the pressure.
15 ²ce4
The threat of ²f4 forces Black into drastic action, but there is also a case for h2-h4 as the possibility of play on the h-file should cause Black’s position to crumble.

15 ... ²xe4
16 ²xe4 f5
Of course not 16...²f5 17 ²g5 17 ²g5 ²e7?
A bad blunder but Black already faces considerable difficulties, i.e.
17...²c7 18 ²d3 ²g7 19 ²xg7+ ³xg7 20 ²h1 ²xel 21 ²xel h6 22 ²e8 or 17...²a7 18 h4.
18 ²xb5
That’s about it.

18 ... ²e3+
After 18...axb5 19 ²h1 is completely terminal.

19 ²b1 ²e7

20 ²e8
The threat of 21 ²h1 ²xel 22 ²f7+ is decisive.

20 ... ²e5
21 ²h1
Black resigned

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Game 46

After Garry Kasparov won the PCA world championship match against Nigel Short with four games to spare, various forms of chess entertainment were arranged for the remaining scheduled days and on one of them Michael, among others, had the privilege of playing Kasparov in a five-minute game at the Savoy Theatre. It must be a great thrill to play a world champion but to go one step further and actually win as Michael did on this occasion with his Trompovsky Attack made it doubly so. The world champion’s response was to take off his jacket and challenge Michael to two further games, both of which Kasparov won.

Another important success came for Michael in the form of another maximum at the Hammersmith rapidplay, which was also contested by Julian Hodgson, John Nunn and Stuart Conquest. It is easy to dismiss such results as insignificant, but someone took the trouble to calculate that his perfect score gave him a tournament grading of 281 on the BCF scale, equivalent to 3200 on the Elo system! Such results are rare indeed and it is not commonplace for Michael to defeat John Nunn, especially with the black pieces, though I suppose that after the Debrecen European
team event there was some pressure on Michael to show John that he knew what to do with black pieces!

J.Nunn - M.Adams
Hammersmith quickplay 1993
Sicilian Defence,
Scheveningen Variation

The first time I participated in a Hammersmith quickplay I was feeling quite pleased with myself as I had just won the Brussels SWIFT event. Unfortunately this proved an inappropriate warm-up as I only managed 4/6. This time I performed rather better.

1 e4 c5

At this time I was beginning to experiment with the Sicilian Defence and this game was without doubt my high point with the opening. After a key loss to Tiviakov with it in the early rounds of the Groningen qualifier it has been noticeably absent from my repertoire in recent times, though Joel Lautier has been using this particular variation with some success.

2 d3 e6
3 d4 cxd4
4 cxd4 c6
5 c3 c7
6 g3

A very common response in this position, but I am not sure that this move really suits Doc's style.

6 ...
7 g2 d6
8 0-0 f6
9 e1 b8

An odd-looking move, but the idea behind it is logical. If 9...e7 10 xc6 bxc6 11 e5 dxe5 12 xe5 leads to a variation in which Black has difficulties according to theory. The idea behind the move played is to continue 10 xc6 bxc6 11 e5 dxe5 12 xe5 d6 (12...x e5 13 f4 is good for White) when Black gains the tempo ...b8 by delaying the development of the dark-squared bishop. This leaves an approximately level position. As John was half a point behind going into this, the last, round he naturally chooses a more dynamic move.

10 a4 e7
11 b3

In nearly all Sicilian positions White is reluctant to move the knight from d4 but here my opponent was probably afraid of 11 e3 a5, although 12 e2 c4 13 c1 would allow the knight to be expelled by a later b2-b3.
11 ... b6
It would not be good to allow White to play a4-a5, cramping the queenside.

12 f4
White must start to look for play on the kingside now, but it is not clear how to achieve this. 12 g4 with the idea of g4-g5 would be natural but Black has not yet castled so 12...h6 would place White in something of a dilemma. Developing the bishop is possible but after 12 \( \text{\textit{\textsc{e}3}} \) Black has the option to delay castling again with 12...\( \text{\textit{\textsc{e}5}} \). So it is easy to see why he chose his move, but advancing the f-pawn too early is not always desirable.

12 ... 0-0
13 \( \text{\textit{\textsc{e}3}} \)
It was possible to play 13 g4 but the c1 bishop must be developed eventually.

13 ... \( \text{\textit{\textsc{a}5}} \)
Here 13...b5 was thematic but the continuation 14 axb5 axb5 15 \( \text{\textit{\textsc{e}2}} \) b4 16 \( \text{\textit{\textsc{b}5}} \) suggests that Black is not ready for this kind of activity yet.

14 \( \text{\textit{\textsc{d}2}} \)
A rather awkward way to defend c4, but unless White wants to retreat his bishop to c1 this looks inevitable. It was possible to swap knights but although this would cripple Black's queenside, there would be ample play down the semi-open b- and c-files by way of compensation.

14 ... \( \text{\textit{\textsc{d}7}} \)

Preparing ...\( \text{\textit{\textsc{f6}}}, \) putting further pressure on the white queenside, but there were good alternatives available. 14...\( \text{\textit{\textsc{d}8}} \) with the idea of ...d6-d5 looks particularly interesting.

15 \( \text{\textit{\textsc{h}5}} \)
White takes advantage of the knight moving away from defending the kingside. Another idea was the somewhat awkward-looking 15 \( \text{\textit{\textsc{e}2}} \), preventing Black's next move, which leaves the rook badly placed.

15 ... \( \text{\textit{\textsc{f6}} \) \) \( \text{\textit{\textsc{b}7}} \)
This move was not played earlier as the rook was useful in supporting possible ...b6-b5 thrusts. Here it is clear that this cannot be forced through directly as if 16...g6 17 \( \text{\textit{\textsc{e}2}} \) maintains the focus on b5.

17 g4
Starting action on the kingside but White's forces are not well situated for such an attack. On the other hand it is difficult to give White good advice as Black's
pieces are well placed to respond to any aggressive plan.

17 ... g6
18 Wh3 Kg7
19 g5 He8

Black takes precautions against the possibility of f4-f5.

20 Lf2

White decides against immediate action and drops the bishop back. His concern with 20 f5 would have been 20...De5.

20 Lc8

This move works out well and has the obvious idea of ...b6-b5, but switching plans with 20...De6 was a more accurate method, menacing ...Db4 and ...d5.

21 Wd3

Still the move ...b6-b5 is prevented. It is now clear that this breakthrough is crucial for Black.

21 ... Dc5

22 Wg3

An inaccurate move. 22 We2, maintaining contact with b5, was essential. Then 22...De6 23 Df3 would have given White a reasonable position, but now Black takes over the initiative.

22 ... Dc6

23 Df1

Another move which does not really address the demands of the position but after 23 Dd1 Db4 is a bit embarrassing. The move also has dreams of getting the knight to the dark squares on the kingside, but once it gets started Black’s play moves with surprising speed.

23 ... b5
24 axb5 axb5
25 Dd1 b4
26 Dae3 e5

This move is always nice for Black when there is no access to the d5 square for a white knight. In this case there is too little time for them to manouevre as the position opens up.

27 Df3

It was not possible to play this last move due to ...Dd4. Here White would like to deny Black’s pieces the e5 square but 27 f5 gxf5 28 exf5 Dxf5 29 Wf3 Dd4 was not an option.

27 ... exf4

28 Dxf4

Allowing an unpleasant pin but 28 Wxf4 Dd6 29 Wd2 Dcd4 is curtains.

28 ... b3

A good decision, particularly in a quickplay game. If 28...De5 29 Dde3 De6 30 Dg4 White loses the exchange but keeps decent practical chances. The text move makes
b4 available to the black knights and in the longer term sets up forks on d3.

**29 cxb3**

Losing, but 29 c3 gets in the way of his knight and 29 \( \text{c3 e6} \) 30 \( \text{e3 b4} \) could transpose to the game. The pawn on b3 cannot be ignored forever.

**29 ... \( \text{e5} \)**

**30 c3 \( \text{e6} \)**

**31 e3 \( \text{b4} \)**

**32 f1**

A better try was 32 \( \text{h4} \) but the reply 32...\( \text{cd3} \) is a safe way to take one exchange. It is probably also possible to try and snatch both.

**32 ... \( \text{d5} \)**

A final crippling blow as all of Black’s pieces coordinate perfectly. The rest of the game is pure agony for White.

**33 g2 \( \text{d4} \)**

**34 e2 \( \text{bd3} \)**

The Doc’s pieces, huddled on the kingside, make a sorry sight.

**35 d1 \( \text{xf4} \)**

**36 exf4 \( \text{xe4} \)**

*White resigned*

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### Game 47

It was never likely that he would be able to repeat his success at Tilburg, although one could still hope. That was not enough and Michael was eliminated in the third round by a rising sixteen-year-old Russian star, Morozevich. However the result needs to be put into context as the last sixteen competitors all originated from Eastern Europe. England’s other representatives lost in the second round with Tony Miles falling to Michael, Jon Speelman to Vaganian and Julian Hodgson to Yusupov.

**A.Miles – M.Adams**  
*Tilburg 1993*  
Wade Defence

The defence of my title in Tilburg got off to a flying start in the following game. Unfortunately it was not a true indicator of my form and, after scraping through this match, I had a disaster in the next round against Alexander Morozevich. It was somewhat ironic that in an event with over a hundred competitors I ended up playing one of the four players from England.

**1 d4 \( \text{d6} \)**

**2 f3 \( \text{g4} \)**

This defence became popular for a while as a way of avoiding theory. However so many games have now been played with it that it no longer really achieves this aim. In my experience it seems to either work brilliantly, as in this game, or if White plays well, fail dismally. At the time of writing it is currently banned from my repertoire
(except in quickplay games) on account of a couple of reverses, but I dare say it will creep back in again.

3 \textit{c4} \textit{\textguillemotleft d7}
4 \textit{\textguillemotright b3} \textit{\textguillemotright b8}
5 \textit{h3} \textit{\textguillemotleft xf3}
6 \textit{\textguillemotright xf3}

Although this move order looks extremely logical for White, in fact the time lost with the queen gives Black reasonable play. I don’t consider it to be one of the best ways to play against this line.

6 ... \textit{g6}
7 \textit{e3} \textit{\textguillemotleft g7}
8 \textit{\textguillemotleft c3}

This has been the most popular choice in this position, but the queen normally retreats sooner or later, so perhaps 8 \textit{\textguillemotright d1} immediately was good.

8 ... \textit{c5}
9 \textit{d5}

Several games have gone like this and, though the results have not all been bad for White, the position must be fine for Black. Tony suggested 9 \textit{\textguillemotright d1} after the game when 9...\textit{cxd4} 10 \textit{exd4} \textit{\textguillemotright b6} 11 \textit{\textguillemotleft e3} \textit{\textguillemotright xb2} 12 \textit{\textguillemotleft b5} a6 13 \textit{\textguillemotleft b1} \textit{\textguillemotright xa2} 14 \textit{\textguillemotright a1} forces a draw.

9 ... \textit{\textguillemotleft xc3+}
10 \textit{bxc3} \textit{\textguillemotleft gf6}

A natural move would have been 10...\textit{\textguillemotright a5} but the text is very successful in provoking:

11 \textit{g4?} \textit{\textguillemotright a5}
12 \textit{\textguillemotright d1}

Probably also not the best; 12 \textit{\textguillemotleft b2} \textit{\textguillemotleft e5} 13 \textit{\textguillemotright d1} \textit{\textguillemotleft e4} 14 \textit{\textguillemotright c2} doesn’t look so bad.

12 \textit{h5!}

This leaves Black with an ideal position because 13 \textit{g5} \textit{\textguillemotleft e4} forks the two pawns. The alternatives 12...\textit{\textguillemotleft e4} 13 \textit{\textguillemotleft b2} and 12...\textit{\textguillemotright xc3+} 13 \textit{\textguillemotleft d2} \textit{\textguillemotright a3} are playable but not as strong.

13 \textit{\textguillemotright xh5} \textit{\textguillemotleft xh5}
14 \textit{\textguillemotright b3} \textit{\textguillemotleft e4}
15 \textit{\textguillemotleft b2} \textit{\textguillemotright h4}

Preventing White’s h3-h4.
16 \textit{\textguillemotleft e2} \textit{\textguillemotright d8}

This is given as interesting by Ribli, but in reality it is simply
good, in a position in which time is not of the essence. Two tempi spent transferring the king to a safer spot are well used.

17 \textit{wc}2 \textit{d}c7
18 \textit{d}d3 \textit{d}ef6

Also promising was 18...f5, but my move leaves White facing a series of threats.

19 f4 \textit{bh}8
20 \textit{wg}2 \textit{wa}4

A brief respite but the threat of ...\textit{b}6 cannot be met successfully without sacrificing the h-pawn. Tony rightly avoids this.

21 \textit{c}c1 \textit{b}6

The white bishop is tied to the defence of the e-pawn, making \textit{b}5 impossible.

24 \textit{e}3 \textit{d}7

The immediate 24...\textit{b}8 is also rather strong as White lacks a constructive move.

25 \textit{b}5 \textit{c}8
26 \textit{f}1 \textit{b}8
27 c4

This defends the pawn on d5 again but another point proves to be vulnerable.

27 e5!

This opens up the game decisively.

28 fxe5

No better would have been 28 dxe6 \textit{xe}6 when another pawn drops off.

28 ... \textit{xe}4
29 \textit{d}2 \textit{f}5

If 29...\textit{xe}5 30 \textit{f}4 Black should be winning, but there is no obvious clear-cut continuation without giving up material, something I am always reluctant to do if there is a good alternative.

22 e4

Or 22 \textit{f}1 \textit{d}7 when the h-pawn falls.

22 ... \textit{xc}4
23 \textit{b}1

As castling on either wing is out of the question, the rook looks for activity along the b-file. However, the black position has no weaknesses which makes it very hard to mount a counter-attack.

23 ... \textit{b}6

27

28 fxe5

28 ...

29 \textit{xe}4

29 \textit{d}2 \textit{f}5
30 ¿xb6
The other option 30 exf6 ¿xe3
31 ¿xb6 could transpose, while 30
¿d3 ¿xc4+ wins for Black.
30 ...
¿xe3
31 exf6
The best chance was the con-
tinuation 31 ¿xb7+ ¿xb7 32 ¿xe3
¿xe5+, but with the initiative, an
extra pawn and the white king in
great danger the game will not last
long.
31 ...
¿f4
Now White loses even more
material.
32 ¿g4 ¿f2+
33 ¿e2 ¿xb6
34 ¿f1 ¿g3
35 ¿d7 ¿a3
White resigned

Game 48

Back at home Michael was so far clear of the other players that he was
assured of winning the 1993 Leigh Grand Prix before Islington, the last
event, was played. This was the third successive year that Michael had
managed to win the Grand Prix for domestic competitions, a remark-
able record, especially in view of the amount of chess that he was play-
ing overseas throughout the period.

It was just as well that he had clinched the Grand Prix as he was oth-
erwise engaged during Islington, namely participating in the Gronin-
gen PCA qualifier, which was to produce seven quarter-finalists to join
Nigel Short, the beaten challenger, in a knockout competition to provide
a fresh challenge to Garry Kasparov, the PCA world champion, in 1995.
I have already described in the previous chapter how Michael became a
FIDE candidate at Biel so I should explain that here were now two ver-
sions of the world championship, with Anatoly Karpov recognised as
FIDE world champion, having beaten Jan Timman after Kasparov and
Short played their match under the PCA label. Many people had not ex-
pected the PCA to run a qualifier for a further world championship
alongside the ‘official’ version and indeed there were considerable
doubts in some quarters up to a short time before the qualifier was due
to commence.

Eventually 54 of the world’s top players took part in Groningen, al-
though there were some notable absentees among players involved in
the FIDE cycle, such as Karpov, Timman, Gelfand, Salov, Yusupov and
Lautier. Some may have considered it a tricky decision for Michael to
make as he was involved in the FIDE candidates match against Gelfand
less than three weeks afterwards. However Michael did not have any
hesitation in deciding to double his options, as indeed did several other
chess players who appreciated the increased opportunities presented by the FIDE-PCA split.

This event was two rounds less than the interzonal but on the other hand there were to be three fewer qualifiers. The feeling was that plus three would probably be sufficient for qualification. However it must be remembered that it was never going to be easy to obtain such a score, when you consider that there were two dozen players at the Biel interzonal with a rating below 2545, which was the lowest at Groningen. It would have been far more difficult to recover from a bad start and Michael heaved a sigh of relief when he drew with Tukmakov after being a clear pawn down. However his opponent’s time-trouble helped Michael to equalise and there were some hopes of a win before the draw was finally agreed. After this early escape, Michael settled down and after four rounds he had reached plus two thanks to wins against Akopian and Georgiev.

Kir Georgiev – M Adams
Groningen (PCA qualifier) 1993
Caro-Kann Defence,
Classical Variation

In big tournaments such as interzonals it always helps if you get to use the openings you know well (or if you don’t know any very well, at least get the ones you know something about). I couldn’t believe my luck when I was able to use a prepared novelty in this game, as the shock value alone was considerable.

1 e4 c6
2 d4 d5
3 Qd2 dxe4
4 Qe4 d7

This has a reputation as one of the most solid openings but if White takes liberties, as we see in this game, Black’s position can pack a punch.

5 Qc4 Qg6
6 Qg5 e6
7 We2 Qb6
8 Qd3

The two bishop retreats, this move and 8 Qb3 (game 44), are often referred to as being equally strong which is a fair comment. My personal feeling is that I would generally prefer to face the move used in this game.

8 ... h6
9 Qf5f3 c5
10 dxcc5 Qxc5
11 Qd2

Since this tussle 11 Qd2 has been under a bit of a cloud. 11 Qe5 could be considered the main line now.

11 ... 0-0
12 0-0-0 Qa4!

A very unpleasant novelty to encounter over the board. Previously it had been thought that Black should try to break the contact between the white rook and
black queen on the d-file, but now any gain that White can make from this is too costly in terms of time. Quite how this move was discovered is rather unclear, but I can confirm that it was not my own invention. I was first shown it by Jon Speelman but I believe Will Watson and Julian Hodgson were instrumental in its discovery.

Black transfers a rook to the c-file an attack of almost decisive proportions is created.

14 ...  \( \texttt{\textit{xd7}} \)
15  \( \texttt{\textit{b3}} \)

It is still too dangerous to pinch a pawn. 15  \( \texttt{\textit{xh6}} \texttt{\textit{c6}} \) 16  \( \texttt{\textit{xe3}} \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) 17  \( \texttt{\textit{c3}} \texttt{\textit{xe3+}} \) 18  \( \texttt{\textit{fxe3}} \texttt{\textit{ac8}} \) leaves White too short of defenders.

15 ...  \( \texttt{\textit{ac8}} \)
16  \( \texttt{\textit{b1}} \)

Georgiev consistently refuses to grab material and hope for the best. This is again a correct decision as the position is not substantially different from the last move. However, Black’s lead in development and the aggressively placed knight on a4 now guarantee him a serious advantage.

16 ...  \( \texttt{\textit{c6}} \)
17  \( \texttt{\textit{c1}} \)

This allows the queen to cover c2 and also gives the b-pawn some protection. After 17  \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) 18  \( \texttt{\textit{c4}} \texttt{\textit{b5}} \) both ...  \( \texttt{\textit{d5}} \) and ...  \( \texttt{\textit{xb2}} \) are threatened.

17 ...  \( \texttt{\textit{d5}} \)

White has little time to do more than parry Black’s threats. Now a family fork is lined up.

18  \( \texttt{\textit{c4}} \texttt{\textit{fd8}} \)

A mistake. Time is of the essence here, so Black has to pursue the attack energetically to gain the maximum edge. Hence 18...b5 immediately was the most accurate way to proceed.

19  \( \texttt{\textit{a1}} \)

White, who had already fallen a long way behind on the clock, fails
to seize the chance. After 19 \( \text{Qe5 Wf8} \) 20 \( \text{Wb3} \) Black’s queen is driven to a less aggressive post, thus reducing the strength of the black attack. In some circumstances the white queen is free to transfer to the kingside.

19 ... \( \text{b5} \)

Now all is well again from my point of view. White position is not really defensible any more as all the black pieces can join in the assault.

20 \( \text{We4} \) \( \text{e7} \)

A good move. The bishop comes to an even more powerful diagonal.

\[ \]

21 \( \text{c3} \)

If 21 \( \text{Qd4} \), then 21...\( \text{Wa6} \) keeps White on the run with a threat of ...\( \text{Qac3} \).

21 ... \( \text{Wa6} \)

22 \( \text{Qe5} \)

Too many of White’s pieces are offside to mount any real defence. This at least makes an attempt to block the long diagonal.

22 ... \( \text{Qf6} \)

\[ \]

23 \( \text{Qg4} \)

A miscalculation by White. The only hope was 23 \( \text{f4} \), maintaining the barricade, when Black does best to reply with the quiet move 23...\( \text{Qd6} \), menacing a sacrifice on c3.

23 ... \( \text{Qaxc3} \)

This wins because White cannot exchange 24 \( \text{Qxf6} + \text{Qxf6} \) on account of the double attack on the queen.

24 \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{xc3} + \)

25 \( \text{Qb2} \)

 Forced as 25 \( \text{Qb1} \) \( \text{c4} \) leaves White only able to save one of the royal couple.

\[ \]

25 ... \( \text{c4} \)

26 \( \text{Wh3} \)

After this Black delivers checkmate but the more logical move 26 \( \text{We2} \) (other moves lose the \( \text{Qg4} \)) leads to disaster by 26...\( \text{Qxb2} + 27 \text{Qxb2} \text{Qd8} \) or 27...\( \text{Wa5} \).

26 ... \( \text{Qxb2} + \)

27 \( \text{Qxb2} \) \( \text{Qc2} + \)

Most moves win but this finishes in style.
28 \textit{xc2} \textit{xa2+} \hspace{1cm} \text{After 30 \textit{d2} \textit{b4+} either white king move would be met by ...\textit{c2} mate.}
29 \textit{d3} \textit{wc4+}

White resigned

\section*{Game 49}

There was a setback in round five when Michael lost his third successive game against Tiviakov, but this was cancelled out by a win in the next round against Romanishin.

\textbf{M.Adams – O.Romanishin}

\textit{Groningen (PCA qualifier) 1993}

Spanish Opening,
Closed Variation

The second game in this book to have been played on Christmas Eve, but this time my thoughts were not on presents or turkey (which is apparently not traditional in Groningen anyway). It was crucial to get a result in this game in order to take some points into the free day.

1 \textit{e4} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{e5}
2 \textit{\textit{f3}} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{c6}
3 \textit{\textit{b5}} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{a6}
4 \textit{\textit{a4}} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{\textit{f6}}
5 0-0 \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{\textit{e7}}
6 \textit{\textit{e1}} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{b5}
7 \textit{\textit{b3}} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{d6}
8 \textit{c3} \hspace{0.5cm} 0-0
9 h3

My favourite move in this position at that time was 9 d3, but Oleg is very predictable in the Lopez. He nearly always plays the same variation so I decided to risk the main line.

9 ... \textit{\textit{a5}}

\begin{center}
\textbf{10 \textit{\textit{c2}}} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{c5}
\textbf{11 d4} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{\textit{b7}}
\end{center}

\hspace{1cm} This variation is also a favourite of Mark Hebden’s. After 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 \textit{\textit{xe5}} \textit{wc7} Black gets compensation for the pawn. Another interesting idea for White is 12 d5 but I had a definite idea about which position I was aiming for.

\begin{center}
\textbf{12 \textit{\textit{bd2}}} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{cxd4}
\textbf{13 cxd4} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{exd4}
\textbf{14 \textit{\textit{xd4}}} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{\textit{e8}}
\textbf{15 \textit{\textit{f1}}} \hspace{0.5cm} \textit{\textit{f8}}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
This position is usually reached with the white pawn on h2, in the event that White plays d4 in two
\end{center}
moves rather than one. In that position 16 f3 is probably a good move, as Kasparov played against me in an exhibition game at the Savoy after his match with Short ended prematurely. However with the extra move h3 thrown in, this looks a little suspicious because the dark squares on the kingside would give the impression of Swiss cheese.

16 \( \text{Qg3} \) \( \text{Ac8} \)

This move came as a surprise. Romanishin usually likes to play 16...g6 here, when White continues 17 b3 \( \text{Qg7} \) 18 \( \text{Bb2} \) with a slight edge on account of the awkward knight on a5 and the isolated d-pawn.

17 \( \text{b3} \)

At the time I was unwilling to allow 17 \( \text{Qf4} \) \( \text{Qc4} \) 18 b3 \( \text{Qa3} \) 19 \( \text{Qd3} \), but on reflection I don't really see why. Black now breaks out as 17...g6 essentially loses a tempo on the previous line since ...\( \text{Ac8} \) is not a hugely useful move.

17 ... \( \text{d5} \)
18 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{Qe4} \)
19 \( \text{Qb2} \)

Taking the pawn was a possibility which required accurate calculation. Black has two options. The first is 19 \( \text{Qxe4} \) dxe4 20 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \) (if 20...\( \text{Qxe5} \), 21 \( \text{Qxh7+} \)) 21 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qc6} \) when either 22 \( \text{Qf4} \) \( \text{Qd5} \) or 22 \( \text{Qb2} \) \( \text{Qxe5} \) give equality. Alternatively he may try the more ambitious 19 \( \text{Qxe4} \) dxe4 20 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qb4} \), when Black's kingside looks a little short of defenders but it is hard to see how White can start an attack without giving up too much material. As Black has certain equality and can try for more, it is not surprising that I opted for something else, though the opening has worked out well for Black in any event.

19 \( \text{Qxe5} \)

It is possible for Oleg to grab the pawn as 20 f3 \( \text{Qg5} \) is unpleasant. Black also had to consider the alternative 19...\( \text{Qxg3} \) 20 fxg3 \( \text{Qc6} \) which is fine for him, but taking the pawn is more ambitious.

20 \( \text{Qdf5} \) \( \text{Qe6} \)
21 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{dxe4} \)
22 \( \text{Qg4} \) \( \text{Qg6} \)
23 \( \text{Qf4} \)

At first sight this position does not seem to be too promising for White, as he is a pawn down without the bishop pair, but in fact it is Black if anyone who should be exercising care, since White's pieces are now very well posted. White's bishop, for instance, is the best of the three on the board and Black
lacks co-ordination. The rook on g6 is useful to defend the kingside but when it is there it cannot control an open central file. Black’s extra pawn is vulnerable but in any case White is in no hurry to regain it as it impedes the bishop on b7. My opponent chooses to exchange queens here, which seems logical. 23...\text{c}2 24 \text{ad1} starts to leave Black’s back rank weak.

23 \ldots \text{wg5}
24 \text{wxg5} \text{hxg5}
25 \text{ad1} \text{e8}

This move is too optimistic. Black should now be looking to re-group his pieces to aim for a draw. 25...\text{g6} looks a reasonable way to do this, preventing \text{ad6} as occurs in the game. Not good would be 25...h5 26 h4 or 25...\text{c}2 26 \text{d}8.

26 \text{d6} \text{xd6}
27 \text{xd6} \text{ad5}

Black realises that he has misjudged the position and panics. 27...h5 was his intended move, but the continuation 28 \text{c}1 \text{d5} 29 \text{b6} leaves Black entangled. After the game we analysed 27...\text{g6} 28 \text{d}7 but here also Black struggles to equalise.

28 \text{xd5}

Oleg had forgotten about this, having concentrated on 28 \text{b6}.

28 \ldots \text{xd5}
29 \text{h5} \text{f6}

Giving up the g-pawn leaves the dark squares, particularly f6, much too weak, but after the text White gets to grab a pawn and keep all his advantages.

30 \text{xf6} \text{g6}

Of course 30...\text{gx} 31 \text{xf} + \text{f} 32 \text{c} 5 leaves White a pawn to the good.

31 \text{f4} \text{f7}

It looks logical to play 31...\text{b} 32 \text{c} 3 \text{c} 6 33 \text{d} 5. 32 \text{c} 1

Preventing the knight from coming back to c6.

32 \ldots \text{b} 7
33 \text{c} 6 \text{a} 8
34 \text{f} 1

Not a good move. The king is tactically badly located on a light square. It was more logical to try to seize territory on the kingside. 34 g4 would be a standard reaction but the careful 34 h4, maintaining flexibility, may be best.

34 \ldots \text{b} 4

An excellent decision. White’s pressure is going to be worth at least a pawn so, despite being in time-trouble, Oleg takes the decision to give one up immediately, gaining some activity as a result.

35 \text{b} 6 \text{c} 5
36 \text{xb} 4 \text{a} 5
37 Nh5

37 Nd4 is the kind of move I would have preferred to play, but 37...a4 38 b4 Qd3 39 Qxd3 exd3 40 a3 is tricky. It is still good for White but perhaps not winning. Here we see the problem of the king on f1 causing difficulties for White.

37 ... Qd3
38 Qd5 Qxd5?

This is a bad blunder in time shortage. 38...a4 is critical, when 39 Nb6 Qf8 40 Qd7 looks a good reply but 40...Qe8 holds for Black. Now the win is not far away.

39 Qxd5 a4
40 Qd8+ Qxd8
41 Qxd8

Although Black’s knight is well placed it is gradually dominated by a bishop, as is common in these types of endings.

41 ... axb3
42 axb3 Qf7
43 Kg5

Not very promising was 43 Qe2 Qc1+

43 ... Qe6
44 Qe2 Qd5
45 Qe3 (D)

Now the black knight can only retreat to e5 and b4. The other problem is that if Black’s king ventures over to b5, the white king enters decisively via c3 and d4. Alternatively, if Black sits still, the king comes to c3 and the b-pawn advances, so Black has to attempt to eliminate kingside pawns.

45 ... Qe5

46 Qd2 Qd3
47 Qc3

The good news for Black is that now the knight can harass White’s pawns from e1. This is not good immediately because White can set up an impregnable f2-g3-h4 structure. Hence Black’s following advance.

47 ... g5
48 g3

Of course White does not want to give Black a passed pawn after 48 Qxg5 Qxf2. The move played prevents ...Qe1 with tempo.

48 h5

This doesn’t really threaten anything but 48...h6 49 b4 Qc6 50 Qc4 Qe5+ 51 Qd4 is curtains.

49 f3!

This proves decisive as White wins another pawn on the kingside. 49 b4 should also win but is less efficient.

49 ... h4

If 49...Qe1, then 50 fxe4+ Qxe4 51 Qxg5 Qf3 52 b4 and Black is nowhere near stopping the b-pawn.
50 g4
This is always the correct response to ...h4, fixing pawns on dark squares.

50 ...  ©e5
If 50...©f4 51 ©xf4 gxf4 52 fxe4+  ©xe4 53  ©d2  ©f3 54 g5 and White wins.

51 fxe4+  ©xe4
52  ©xg5
My opponent resigned because 52...©xg4 53  ©xh4 wins for White on account of his two-pawn advantage. 52...©f3 could have been tried but 53  ©d8 ©f4 54 b4 wins easily enough.

Game 50

A draw with Black against Kramnik was followed by a win against Ivan Sokolov. Michael then managed to hold Anand, the leader, to a draw with Black. The Indian had already reached the safety of plus four and Michael reached that safe haven himself after defeating Gulko in the penultimate round.

M.Adams – B.Gulko
Groningen (PCA qualifier) 1993
French Defence,
Tarrasch Variation

In a crunch game like this it is difficult to assess how hard you should press for a win. I basically needed one point out of this and my last game. Encouraged by the fact that my opponent only needed half a point to qualify and hence would have been receptive to a draw offer if things went wrong, I decided to go for the full point in this game.

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3  ©d2 c5
4 exd5 ©xd5
5  ©gf3 cxd4
6  ©c4 ©d6
7 0-0  ©f6
8  ©b3 ©c6
9  ©bxd4 ©xd4
10  ©xd4 a6
11 c3

In such an important game, with a draw still allowing me a good chance of qualification, I didn’t want to go into the critical line 11  ©e1 ©c7 12  ©b3  ©d6 13  ©f5  ©xh2+ 14  ©h1 0-0 15  ©xg7  ©d8. A quiet game might seem to suit my opponent but in a sharp tactical game nerves play less of a factor.

11 ...  ©c7
12  ©b3  ©d6
13 h3 0-0
14  ©e1 b5
15  ©g5  ©b7!

The best response as 15...  ©e7 is a little passive, 15...©d7 16  ©xe6 wins and 15...©d5 16  ©xd5 leaves Black with a weak d-pawn.
16 c2

The problem for White is that after 16 xf6 gxf6 17 wg4+ wh8 18 wh4 xg8 19 wxf6+ xg7 the imminent counterattack after unpinning with ...e7 is very dangerous. It was also necessary to calculate several sacrifices on e6 after 16 xf6 gxf6:

a) 17 xe6 fx6 18 xe6 h2+ 19 wh1 wh8 when there is insufficient compensation for the piece;

b) 17 xe6 fx6 18 xe6 w7 19 xf8+ xf8 also falls short; and

c) 17 xe6 fx6 18 xe6 w7 (18 wd7 19 wg4+ wh8 20 xf8 xg4 21 xg4 xf8 22 ad1 leads to an endgame where I prefer the white position) 19 wg4+ wh8 20 xf8 xf8 21 ad1 with an unclear position.

In the game I spent less time calculating this than I should have done as it is undoubtedly the last chance to gain any advantage. The move played has the advantage of being quite safe.

16 ... d5

17 h5 g6
18 h4 h2+

It was also possible to continue with 18...xe8 but Gulko is eager to exchange pieces rapidly.
19 h1 f4
20 e4 ab8

A reasonable precaution; Black defends the bishop. Less good was 20...xg5 21 xg5 ad8 as the dark squares on the kingside are vulnerable.

21 ad1 xg5
22 xg5 b6?

This leaves the kingside undefended. After 22...w4 23 xf4 xf4 a draw is the most likely result.

23 xb7 xb7
24 f3

The simple threat of 24 wh6 is hard to meet.

24 ... d5
25 wh6 fd8
Not 25...we7 26 xxd5.
26 d4 we7
27 h4 f6
28 e5
Now 28 £g5 £f8 is nothing but the double threat of £c6 and £g4 reaps dividends.

28 ... £d6
29 £g4 £fd8

Of course not 29...£h5 30 £xh5 gxh5 31 £f6+.
30 £xf6+ £xf6
31 £xh7+ £f8
32 £h6+

Simplification by means of 32 £h8+ £xh8 33 £xh8+ £e7 34 £xd8 £xd8 35 £e2 should lead to a draw on account of Black’s active king and rook, but with the queens on the board Black’s king turns out to be in a surprisingly awkward position.

32 £g8

Better was 32...£g7 as White does not have the time to regroup his pieces as he would like.

33 £f4 £g7
34 £g5

Now the extra pawn has been consolidated as it is not safe for Black to invade the seventh rank and take the b-pawn, since White has too much time to mount an attack. Perhaps 34...£d7 would be a sensible precaution here to prevent £e7 but if White maintains a clear pawn advantage the position should be a technical win.

34 ... £d2
35 £e7 £f8? (D)

This is the decisive blunder. If 35...£d8 36 £e8+ £f8 37 £xe6 £xe8 38 £xe8+ £g7 39 £a8 with excellent winning chances. However, 35...£d2 36 £c5 £d2 would have presented a much tougher defence.

36 £xe6

Simple but effective. White picks up a cluster of pawns in the queen against double-rook ending which decide the game. If 36...£xe7 37 £xe7 and the two-pawn margin is enough.

36 ... fx6
37 £xe6+ £g7
38 £e5+

This finesse before taking the queen makes the g-pawn weak in future variations.

38 ... £g8
39 £xf8+ £xf8
40 £g5 £xg5

The passive 40...£d6 41 f3 leaves White with too much material.

41 £xg6+ £h8
42 £h6+ £g8
43 £xa6 £xb2

Black’s problem is that 43...£xg2 is answered by a queen fork, in this case 44 £a8+, followed by taking the black rook and reaching a winning ending.
44 a3 h7
45 wc6 f2c2
46 h4 c1+ (D)
47 h2 bc2

Black cannot play 47...b3 as after 48 wd7+, a fatal check, picking up a rook, will follow.

48 wxb5 xc3
49 a4 c4
50 wh5+ g7
51 wg5+ h7
52 a5

Black’s king is too open to prevent the gradual progress of the a-pawn.

52 ...
53 a6 c1c6
54 we3 c4
55 wd3+ g7
56 wg3+

Black resigned

Either 56...h8 57 a7 xa7 58 wb8+ or 56...h7 57 a7 xa7 58 wd3+ are winning.

In the last round Michael was relieved that Kamsky offered a draw after eight moves, so he was able to ensure finishing first equal with Anand, with the tie-break going in Michael’s favour. Thus he qualified for the final stages of the PCA cycle. Those who were not so fortunate included Dolmatov, Ehlvest, Piket, Shirov, Topalov, Bareev, Belyavsky (who had begun with four straight wins), Korchnoi, Smirin, Georgiev and Khalifman. It is when you look at such names that you realise how well Michael and his co-qualifiers, Anand, Kamsky, Kramnik, Tiviakov, Gulko and Romanishin had performed. My son joined Anand, Kamsky and Kramnik as qualifiers in both the FIDE and PCA world championship cycles.

One noteworthy observation is that Michael competed at the interzonal in Biel and Groningen without a second. There is no obvious conclusion to be drawn from the fact that he has been successful at two interzonals without a second, but failed to qualify when he had such help. Michael would have liked to have had a second on each occasion.
At Biel he was lucky that his only adjournment was followed by a free
day that gave him time to analyse and to enlist the help of Jon Speel-
man, who had paid out of his own pocket for his own second, Jon Tisdall.
In Groningen there were no adjournments as games were played to a
finish, but preparation was required and Michael was fortunate that
Julian Hodgson was also competing and they prepared for their games
together – that was after Julian’s wife, Lizette, dragged them out of the
bar. Excellent moral support was also provided by Ali Mortazavi, cover-
ing the event for Associated Press and the *British Chess Magazine*.

For further proof that Michael was continuing to progress in world
terms, the January 1994 FIDE Rating List placed him in twelfth posi-
tion with 2660 points, his highest figure yet. While it was true that the
omission of Kasparov and Short from the list elevated him a couple of
places, there was no doubt that Michael was now consolidated among
the world’s elite chess players. He had come a long way since August
1989 and with the benefit of hindsight it seemed rather silly that there
had been such hesitancy about turning professional. However what lay
ahead was going to be a lot tougher than anything that Michael had ex-
perienced in the past four and a half years. There were two sets of can-
didates matches to face up to, as well as the continual battle to elevate
his position further on the world ranking lists. Perhaps these struggles
will be described in another book but for the time being we will leave
Michael’s career at the stage of being the third English candidate of all
time and the first double-candidate.
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3½/5  2=

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6/6  1

### 03/93 Barbican quickplay
5½/6  1=

### 03/93 Blackpool
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### 04/93 Dublin zonal
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### 04/93 Golders Green quickplay
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### 04/93 Seville (category 15)
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### 06/93 King’s Head
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### 06/93 Las Palmas (category 16)
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### 07/93 Biel FIDE Interzonal
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### 08/93 Lloyds Bank Masters
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third round

### 12/93 Barbican quickplay
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## FIDE Ratings

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