

Michael Goeller vs. Pat Mazzillo

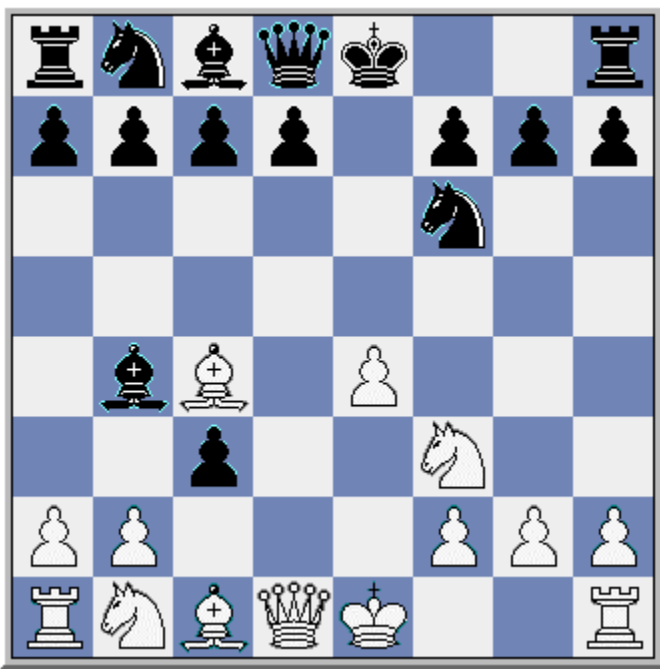
Bishop's Opening, Urusov Gambit [C24]

Round 3, January 27, 2005

2005 Kenilworth Chess Club Championship, Kenilworth, NJ USA

Annotated by Michael Goeller

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nf6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nf3 Bb4+ 5.c3 dxc3



Position after 5...dxc3

6.bxc3

There are two alternatives:

a) 6.0-0!? leads to positions reminiscent of the Danish Gambit after 6...cxb2! 7.Bxb2 0-0! but I thought that sacrificing two pawns in the opening was a bit risky, especially since my analysis is far from conclusive here: 8.e5 Ne4! and things are far from clear.

b) 6.Nxc3?! Nxe4 (6...0-0 7.e5 Ne4 8.0-0 Nxc3 9.bxc3 Be7 (9...Bxc3?! 10.Ng5 Muller and Voigt) 10.Qc2 Nc6 11.Bf4 Nuenchert-Hobusch, Halle 1979) 7.0-0 (7.Bxf7+ Kxf7 8.Qd5+ Kf8 9.Qxe4 Qe7 10.Qxe7+ Bxe7 11.Nd5 Na6) 7...Bxc3! (7...Nxc3?! 8.bxc3 Be7 9.Ng5 d5 10.Qxd5 Qxd5 11.Bxd5 0-0 12.Re1 Muller and Voigt) 8.bxc3 (8.Qd5 Qe7!) 8...0-0 9.Re1 Nf6! (9...Nxc3 10.Qc2) 10.Bg5 d6 Muller and Voigt.

6...Bc5!

I started to suspect some home preparation here, especially since I recommend this move on my website.

7.e5

And here I considered 7.0-0!? when Black has a number of replies:

a) 7...Nxe4!? 8.Bxf7+ Kxf7 9.Qd5+ Kf8 10.Qxe4 and White has compensation for the pawn.

b) 7...d6 8.Ng5! (or 8.e5!? dxe5! (8...Ng4?! 9.Bg5!) 9.Qxd8+ Kxd8 10.Nxe5) 8...0-0 9.e5 is pleasant for White.

c) 7...d5! 8.exd5 0-0 9.Bg5 when it is probably about equal, but White's results from this position are quite good.

7...d5!

Not 7...Ne4? 8.Qd5+-

8.exf6 dxc4 9.Qxd8+?!

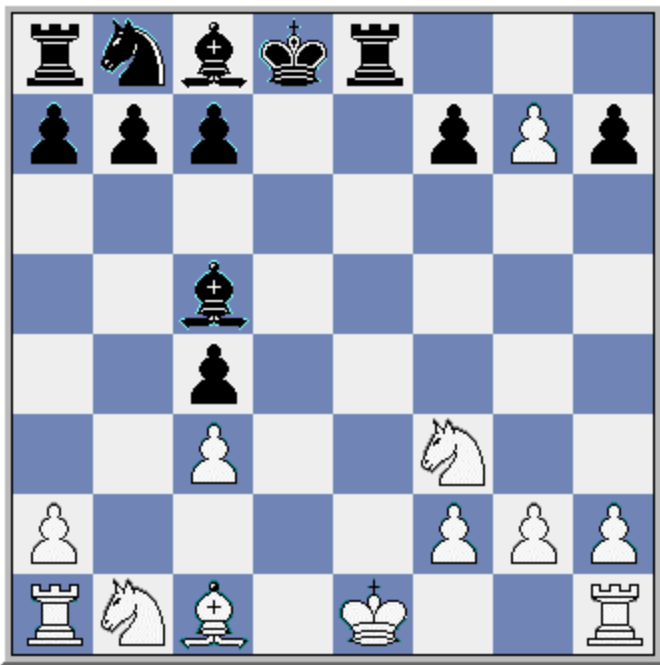
This is one of those cases where I foolishly followed the book without doing some closer investigation on my own. Soon after joining the Kenilworth club, I picked up a book by Eric Schiller titled "White to Play 1. e4 and Win" from Mike Wojcio. Mike had offered it as a prize in a tournament he organized and then won it himself, so he was probably happy to sell it to me -- and I now know why! As is typical of work by Eric Schiller, its analysis is quite flawed on close examination. I had wanted the book because I saw that it covered the Urusov Gambit. And once I got it home I played quickly through the first game he offers, in which this position occurs and White chooses 9. Qxd8+?! I had planned on returning to the game later for a closer analysis, but never got around to it. So I was foolishly impressed by Schiller's suggestions and by the fact that White won the game. I wish I had simply trusted my previous analysis, which leads to some interesting play after one of two superior choices:

a) 9.fxc7!? Qxd1+ 10.Kxd1 Rg8 11.Bh6 gives White a better position than in the game

b) 9.Qe2+! Be6 10.fxc7 Rg8 11.Ng5! (Schiller recommends the foolish 11.Bg5?! when Black then plays 11...Qd3!) 11...Qd5 12.Nxe6 fxe6 13.Bh6 is complicated.

9...Kxd8 10.fxc7 Re8+!?

This move is standard, but possibly not best. Simply 10...Rg8 11.Bh6 a5! (11...Be7 12.Nbd2 a5 13.0-0-0 = or 12.0-0?! a5 13.Nbd2 Ra6 14.Bf4 Be6= 1/2-1/2 in Masternak-Vanroy, Denmark 1999) 12.Nbd2 (12.0-0 Ra6 13.Bg5+ Ke8 14.Re1+ Re6 15.Nbd2 Rxc7 16.Nxc4=) 12...Ra6 13.Bg5+ Ke8 14.Nxc4 Be6! 15.Ne3 Rxc7 = and Black's two Bishops should give him the easier game.



Position after 10...Re8+

11.Kf1?!

This is an absolute lemon, though recommended by Schiller. In the game Schiller gives, Reyes-Pergericht, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990, White played the equally inferior 11.Be3!? Bxe3 12.fxe3 when Black should have tried 12...Rxe3+! (Pergericht actually played 12...Rg8 13.Nbd2 Rxc7 14.O-O! Be6 15.Nd4 Nd7 which favored White slightly) 13.Kf2 Re8 14.Ng5!? Rg8 15.Nxf7+ Ke7 16.Ne5 Rxc7 17.Re1 suggesting that White is better here, but that's just not the case after 17...Be6 18.Nxc4 Nd7 and Black may have a slight long-term edge.

Best, as I indicate on my website, is 11.Kd1 Rg8 12.Bh6 a5! 13.Ne5!? Ra6 14.Re1 Be6 15.Nd2 Bd5 though I rather favor Black here. That's why I was willing to believe that Schiller's suggestion of 11.Kf1?! might have been worth a try. Another case of someone getting "Schillered," to coin a phrase!

11...f6!?

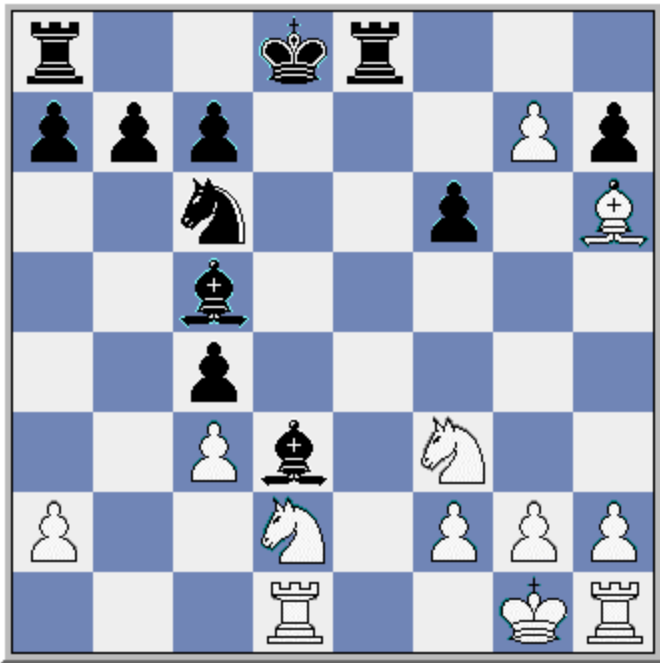
With the idea perhaps of Ke7-f7 to win the g-pawn. But this does have the disadvantage of blocking the typical ways of recovering the g-pawn with Be7-f6 or 11....Rg8 12.Bh6 a5! and Ra6 attacking the Bishop. Schiller offers the dubious sample line (my notes are added): 11...Bf5! 12.g3?! (12.Bh6 Bd3+ 13.Kg1 Nc6 14.Nbd2 is similar to the game but Black has not wasted a tempo on f6) 12...Be4!? (12...Ke7!) 13.Nbd2?! (13.Bg5+ is roughly equal) 13...Bc6?! 14.Kg2 b5?! 15.a4! Nd7? 16.axb5 Bxb5 17.Ne4± but this is pure fantasy.

12.Bh6! Bf5 13.Nbd2 Bd3+ 14.Kg1 Nc6

I was seriously worried about getting blown off the board here, let alone not winning this game. White has to be careful, especially about back-rank stuff. But he always has that g-pawn on the 7th rank as a trump!

15.Rd1!?

Probably this move should rate a dubious "?!" since Black has a good response. But I wanted most of all to offer Black a situation where he would have many options but none very appealing at first glance. As Yermolinsky advises in my now-favorite book "The Road to Chess Improvement": "What the defender...has to do is to create a situation where his opponent is suddenly faced with a number of equally promising options. The pressure shifts to the attacker.... This effect is multiplied as he naturally senses the critical moment and realizes that he has to do his best right now or the advantage may slip away." As Yermo adds, "chances are he will make a mistake...."



Position after 15.Rd1!?

15...Bc2?

An understandable mistake: Black thinks he gains a tempo, but he actually loses time. Now White wins the c-pawn with no problem and likely has a slight edge! Best was 15...Ke7!
16.Re1+ Kf7 17.h4 Kg6 18.Be3 (18.g8Q+ Rxc8 19.Be3 Ba3! 20.h5+ Kf7 21.Rh4 b5! looks pretty much won for Black) 18...Bxe3 19.h5+ Kxc7 20.Rxe3 b5 21.Rh4 Rxe3 22.fxe3 Re8 with advantage. I was also hoping he might fall for 15...Be2? 16.Re1 Kd7 17.g8Q winning a piece for White or 15...b5?! 16.Ne4! and suddenly White has the initiative.

16.Re1! Kd7

White's pawn at g7 makes it impossible for Black to protect the c-pawn now: 16...Rxe1+? 17.Nxe1 wins a piece or 16...Bd3? 17.Rxe8+ queens the pawn.

17.Nxc4 Rad8?! 18.Ne3! +=

Now White is consolidating his extra pawn and has a clear edge.

18...Bxe3 19.fxe3!?

Probably better was 19.Rxe3! seeking to eliminate a defender of the 8th rank after 19...Rxe3 20.fxe3 but I feared my own weak 8th rank in some lines and thought it safer to keep the Rook on for now!

19...Ne7?!

Much better was 19...Ke7! 20.Kf2 Kf7 21.Rc1 Be4 22.Rhd1 Kg6! 23.Bf4 Kxc7 24.Bxc7 and though White remains up a pawn, at least Black has eliminated the dangerous g-pawn.

20.g4!?

Fritz likes the idea of getting more piece activity with 20.Nd4! Be4! 21.Kf2 c5 22.Rd1! Kc8 23.Nb5! But I was obsessed with queening my g-pawn!

20...Ng8 21.g5! Be4 22.Kf2 Nxh6?

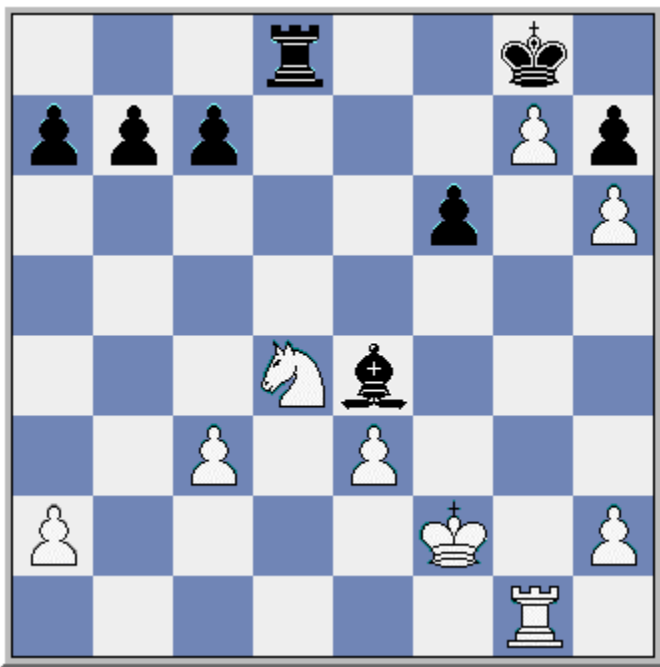
This just seems wrong: Black exchanges off the Bishop, which is serving the function of a mere pawn, and replaces it with a pawn, so that White now has a supported passed pawn on the seventh! That's a bad idea. Better 22...f5! trying to lock my Bishop out of the game permanently.

23.gxh6 Ke7 24.Rd1 Kf7 25.Rxd8 Rxd8 26.Rg1 Kg8

I'm not so sure that the King makes such a good blockader of the pawn since a single check by the knight will either force a Queen or even deliver checkmate if something is in the way at f7.

27.Nd4

White has a winning game.



Position after 27.Nd4

27...c6!?

I saw that Black has to be careful about giving White the d-file: 27...c5?! 28.Ne6! Rd2+ 29.Kg3! Rxa2?? (29...b6 30.Nf4! Rd6 31.Nh5!) 30.Rd1! (Fritz spots the less complicated 30.Nf4! Rd2 31.Nh5!+-) 30...Rg2+ 31.Kf4 Bc6 32.Rd8+ Kf7 33.Nxc5+- and Rf8+ can't be stopped.

But 27...Rd5! with the idea of Rh5 28.Rg4 f5! 29.Rg5 (29.Rf4 Rd6) 29...c5 (29...Rd6 30.Rh5 Rf6 31.Kg3 c5 32.Nb3 b6 33.Kf4) 30.c4! Re5 31.Ne2!? Re6 32.Rh5 Rg6 33.Ng3 looked sort of complicated.

28.Rg4!?

Fritz rightly prefers 28.Kg3 Bd5 29.Rf1 Kf7 30.a3+-

28...Bd5?

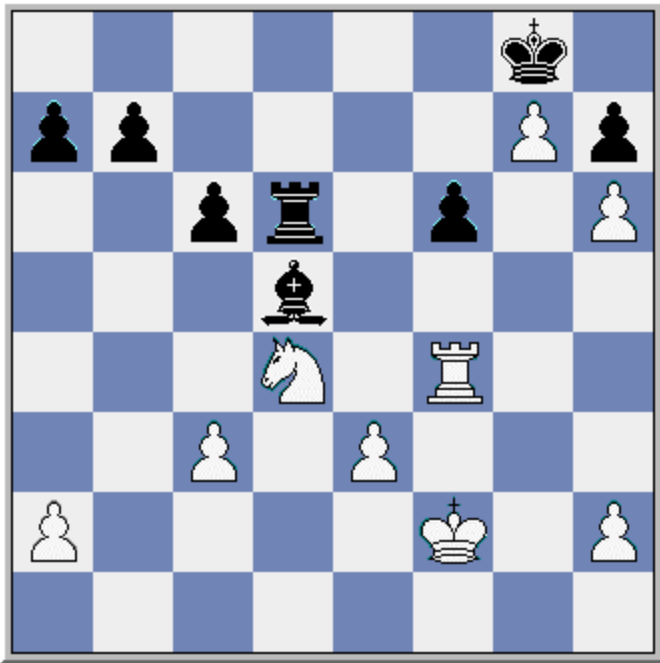
Better 28...f5! 29.Rg5 Rd6 30.Rh5 Rg6 31.Nf3!? and it is much more complicated.

29.Rf4?!

I missed it the first time: best is 29.c4!! Bxc4 30.Nf5 Be6 31.Ne7+ Kf7 32.g8Q+ Rxc8 33.Rxc8 Kxe7 34.Rg7+- -- but fortunately I get another chance at it!

29...Rd6?!

Better 29...c5! 30.Nb3 Bxb3 31.axb3 Kf7 32.e4 Kg6 33.Rg4+ Kf7 34.Ke3±



Position after 29...Rd6

30.c4! Bxc4

Or 30...Bf7 31.Nf5! Re6 32.Rd4! Be8 33.Rd8 Kf7 34.Rxe8!+-

31.Nf5 Rd2+ 32.Ke1 Rd7

Or 32...Re2+ 33.Kd1+-

33.Rxc4 and he kindly resigned, with both of our flags close to falling. White will inevitably get his wish of queening that g-pawn.

1-0