(G4;A) S: Reuben Fine E: De Groot T = 8 minutes November 30, 1938

It has been a Caro-Kann or a Queen's Gambit Accepted. Obviously Black has had to defend himself against an attack along the diagonal with ...P-KN3. White has to play for the attack; otherwise he has nothing. Must he go for KB7? Or not? Black has few threats. QxNP is probably impossible Or is it?

Let's try

1.N-K4 -- take it away.

1.Q-Q2 -- then Black exchanges on my QB3 and plays 2...N-K5, so that won't work.

1.NxN -- not satisfactory.

1.KR-K1 for instance: 1...QxNP; 2.BxN/5, NxB; 3.BxB, NxB; 4.R-N1, QxRP; 5.N-Q5, Q-Q3 -- there's nothing there. Maybe another way;

1.KR-K1, QxNP; 2.BxN/5, NxB -- 2...BxB is no good -- 3.NxN, BxB; 4.R-N1, Q-R7 -- or 4...Q-Q7? No, then 5.N-K7ch -- and then ...Q-Q7. White has nothing.

1.KR-K1, QxNP and now something else: also unsatisfactory. (Short Pause)

But what about

1.BxN/5? If 1...BxB, the exchange is lost; if 1...NxB, he loses a piece, so Black must play 1...PxB. Then maybe 2.KR-K1 or even better 2.Q-B3 or 2.N-N4. Yes,

1.BxN/5 is the best move.

Reuben Fine — record of his thinking

Adriaan de Groot’s experiment, Position A | 30 November 1938 | 8 minutes | G4; A

The position arose from a Caro-Kann Defence or a Queen’s Gambit Accepted. Black apparently had to defend against an attack along the diagonal with ...g6. White must play for an attack; otherwise he has nothing. Must he aim at f7? Or not? Black has few threats. ...Qxb2 is probably impossible. Or is it possible after all?

Let’s try.

1.Ne4 — discard it.

1.Qd2 — then Black exchanges on my c3-square and plays 2...Ne4, so that does not work.

1.Nxd5 — unsatisfactory.

For example, 1.Rfe1: 1...Qxb2 2.Bxd5 Nxd5 3.Bxe7 Nxe7 4.Rb1 Qxa3 5.Nd5 Qd6 — there is nothing there. Maybe another way?

1.Rfe1 Qxb2 2.Bxd5 Nxd5 (2...Bxd5 is not good) 3.Nxd5 Bxd5[1] 4.Rb1 Qa2 — or 4...Qd2? No, then 5.Ne7+ (sic), followed by ...Qd2. White has nothing.

1.Rfe1 Qxb2, and now something else? That is also unsatisfactory. (Short pause.)

But what about 1.Bxd5? After 1...Bxd5 Black loses the exchange; after 1...Nxd5 he loses a piece. So Black has to play 1...exd5. Then perhaps 2.Rfe1, or even better 2.Qf3 or 2.Ng4. Yes,

1.Bxd5 is the best move.

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[1] At this point the archival typescript reads “BxB”, although according to the given variation a bishop captures a knight. The subsequent move 5.Ne7+ is also impossible in the position concerned. This problematic passage is retained and flagged rather than replaced with a conjectured variation.

Source: English archival typescript of de Groot’s experiment (30 November 1938).