

White: Metropolitan Club
Black: Royal Automobile Club

1. P-K4 P-K4
2. N-KB3 N-QB3
3. B-N5 P-QR3
4. BxN

The exchange variation of the Ruy Lopez, a favourite of Bobby Fischer so maybe an appropriate choice for a US team!

- 4 QPxB
5. 0-0 B-Q3

If Black wants to pursue the aggressive plan of castling queen's side, the more popular way is 6...Q-Q3 7.P-Q4 PxP 8.NxP B-Q2 as recently played by Magnus Carlsen! So

6. P-Q4 PxP
7. QxP P-B3
8. P-QN3 Q-K2
9. B-K3 B-Q2
10. QN-Q2 P-QB4
11. Q-N2 0-0-0
12. KR-K1

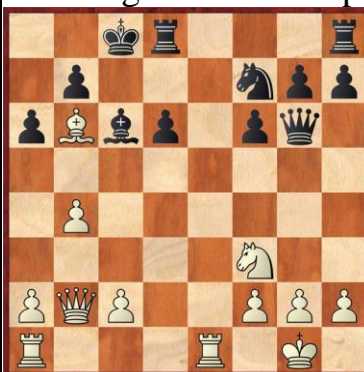


With each side having castled on opposite sides, the stage is set for each to attack the opponent's king. So it would be in keeping for Black to play P-KR4 now.

Instead, the RAC follows a plan which leads us into a difficult position.

- 12 N-R3
13. N-B4 N-B2
14. NxBch PxN
15. P-QN4

Pursuing the thematic plan of opening



lines on the queen's side to attack the Black king.

15. QxKP
16. BxP Q-N3?

Very dangerous! The Black queen is needed on QB3 to help fend off White's attack.

17. B-N6 B-B3

So far White has played very well, but now the Metropolitan misses a chance for a decisive advantage. Can you see how?

18. R-K3?

This isn't it! Black is relying on the fact that after 18.BxR BxN 19. Q-B3ch B-B3 Black is threatening mate by QxNP, so after 20.P-B3 Black can play RxB

winning bishop and knight for rook, with a slight advantage. But White could have played 18.N-R4! defending KN2 and attacking black's queen. Now after 18....Q-N5 19.BxR QxN White can retreat



his bishop to N6 because Black is no longer threatening checkmate, so White is the exchange (rook for knight) up with a won game.

18. QR-K1
 19. Q-B3 K-N1
 20. N-K1 P-B4?

Having got back on even terms, the RAC now makes another mistake, losing at least a pawn! Did we just miss White's next move? 20....RxR 21.BxR R-K1 would have left us in fine shape.

21. R-N3 Q-R4
 22. P-QR4 P-B5
 23. RxP KR-N1
 24. P-N5 RxR
 25. QxR PxP
 26. PxP BxP?

In a difficult position the RAC makes what should have been the losing move! The reason is difficult to see, but we should have reconciled ourselves to the loss of a pawn by 26...QxNP 27.QxN QxB 28.QxBP. Admittedly that would have left us struggling for a draw, but now White has a beautiful win.

27. N-Q3 Q-KB4
 28. Q-B3 B-B3
 29. N-N4 Q-QN4
 30. B-R7ch?

What a pity for the Metropolitan! They miss a lovely combination starting with 30.NxBch. If 30....QxN White wins prosaically with 31. Q-QR5 K-B1 32.Q-KB5ch K-N1 33.QxN. But can you spot the win for white after 30....PxN?

White can now play 31.R-R8ch!! KxR (or 31...K-N2 32.RxR winning easily) 32.Q-R3ch K-N1 33.Q-R7ch K-B1 34.Q-B7 mate!

30. K-B2
 31. NxB PxN
 32. Q-N7

Having missed a win, White starts to go astray. 32. Q-B6 was better to attack Black's knight while stopping his next move

32. Q-KB4
 33. R-N1 P-B4
 34. B-N6ch K-Q2

The Black king is surprisingly secure in the centre

35. B-R5 P-B6
 36. P-N4?!

Forcing Black's reply which results in queens being exchanged. This is probably to Black's advantage because, in the endgame which results, black's king is more active, his knight can go to K4 or N4 to protect the KBP and he has possible threats of mating the White king.

36. Q-N3
 37. QxQ PxQ
 38. R-N7ch K-K3
 39. B-B3 R-QR1
 40. P-KR3 N-N4
 41. P-KR4 N-R6ch
 42. K-R2 NxP
 43. P-N5 N-Q8



....and in this position, facing the loss of the bishop to stop Black queening his f-pawn, the Metropolitan Club resigned. A titanic struggle, in which the RAC was lucky to survive between moves 18 and 30. Having exchanged queens, Black's king was surprisingly well placed in the centre and the Black knight created too many threats for White to handle.