

Andrew Martin

Play the Barry Attack



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About the Author

Andrew Martin is a FIDE Senior Trainer and International Master. He teaches in several schools, is an experienced chess writer and has produced numerous chess DVDs.

Also by the Author:

Starting Out: The Sicilian Dragon

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First Steps; The King's Indian Defence

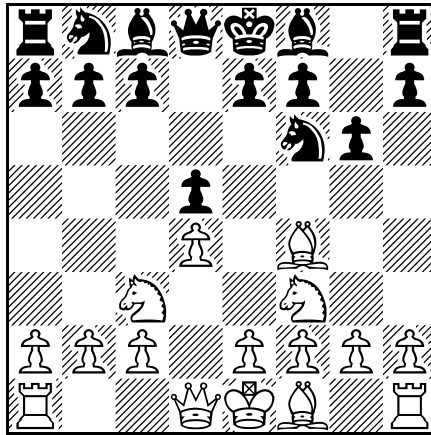
Play the Budapest Gambit

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Introduction

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f3 g6 3 ♞c3 d5 4 ♙f4



The Barry Attack was named after an offhand remark by George Hodgson, the late father of GM Julian Hodgson:

“Just give him some Barry!”

In other words, tell him what he wants to hear to get rid of him. Thus, in the chess world, Barry is slang for a bluff, BS, or rubbish. Make of that what you will.

Queen's pawn systems are incredibly popular with players of all strengths, shapes, sexes and sizes. They usually offer solidity and a variety of set plans which are easy to learn. Some even provide the opportunity of direct attack, as does the Barry.

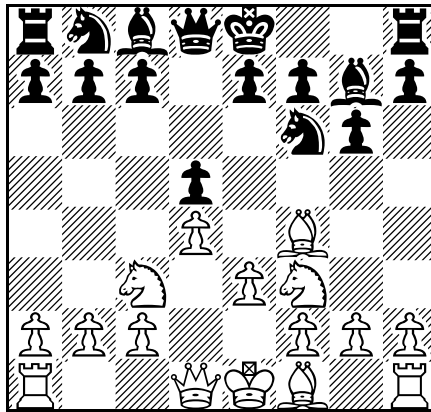
Game 1
M.Carlsen-A.Salem
Internet (blitz) 2017

1 d4 ♘f6 **2** ♗f3 **g6** **3** ♘c3 **d5** **4** ♙f4

Not quite a London System and not quite a Veresov. Something in between. Does the position of the knight on c3 hinder or help the White cause? Back in the 1980s I remember that everyone had a hard time accepting that this idea could give Black problems, but the results were fantastic for White.

In this brief introduction, we will note that even Magnus Carlsen has been tempted to play this unusual opening.

4...♙g7 **5 e3**



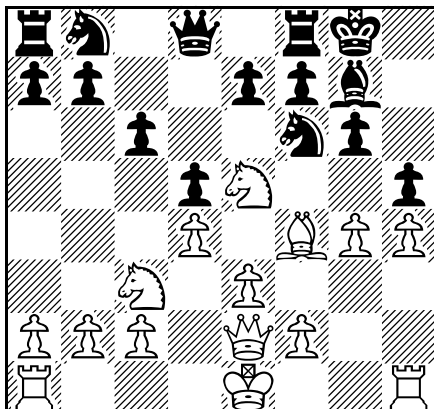
We can call this the main line move, although 5 ♘b5 is catching up and may well surpass 5 e3 as White's best try before very long. There are other ideas too, such as 5 ♗d2 and 5 h3, so there is plenty of choice for White already.

5...0-0 **6** ♙e2 **♙g4** **7** ♘e5 **♙xe2** **8** ♚xe2 **c6**

Black has chosen a solid and rather unambitious approach. This is a blitz game, and he is playing Magnus, but we will learn that an aggressive attitude is important if Black wants to counter the Barry successfully.

9 h4! **h5** **10 g4**

Play the Barry Attack



This is a throwback to the 1980s, where there was a queue of black players around the block waiting to be mated by White's crude kingside pawn advance.

10...♘bd7 11 f3 e6 12 0-0-0 ♚e7 13 ♖dg1

Even though White has set up what looks like an ideal attacking platform, it is still not so easy to break through.

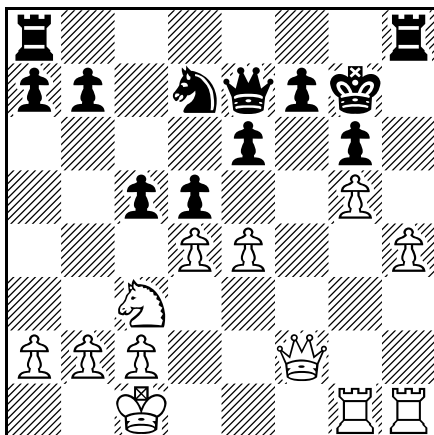
13...hxg4 14 fxg4 ♘xe5 15 ♙xe5 ♘d7

15...♘e4 was an alternative try, but tough decisions are having to be made at speed: 16 ♘xe4 ♙xe5 17 dxex5 dxex4 18 g5 ♙g7 19 ♚g2 ♚c5!. This would be the point, intending 20 ♚xe4 ♚d5, but 20 ♚g3! ♖ad8 21 h5 seems more dangerous, when the white attack persists.

16 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 17 g5 ♖h8 18 e4 c5

Salem's first lively move of the game.

19 ♚f2!



Carlsen finds a way to keep the pressure on.

19...dxe4 20 ♖xe4 cxd4 21 ♗xd4+ e5 22 ♜e3 ♜ac8 23 ♙b1 ♜c4 24 ♜e2 ♜b4 25 ♜e1 ♜c6 26 a3 ♜e7

26...♜c4 would not persuade White to exchange queens and after 27 ♜g2 a6 28 ♜h2 ♖c5 29 ♖xc5 ♜xc5 30 ♜e4 he maintains the advantage.

27 h5! ♜cc8 28 h6+ ♙h7 29 ♜hf1 ♜hf8 30 ♜b5 ♜c7 31 ♜d1

Threatening ♜xd7.

31...♖c5 32 ♖f6+ ♙h8 33 ♖d5 a6 34 ♜b6 1-0

If the Barry can be called an attack, then the blueprint for success is contained within this game. Quick development followed by a kingside pawn storm would appear to be the way.

Naturally, we are going to find that life is not that simple. Gone are the days when the kingside attack automatically crashes through.

Move Order Questions

Queen's pawn systems often overlap and can transpose into one another. It's worthwhile looking at the different move orders White can use to get to the Barry Attack, or not.

The traditional move order goes 1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♖f3 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 ♟f4. In this move order, after 3...♟g7 White must be prepared to play a Pirc and after 3...c5 we have a surprise waiting in store for Black which you will find in the final chapter.

Instead, 1 d4 ♖f6 (or 1...d5) 2 ♟f4 is the Accelerated London System, which is extremely popular at this moment in time. If Black plays 2...g6, you may easily transpose back into the Barry. Note that the move order 1 d4 d5 2 ♟f4 ♖f6 3 ♖c3 g6 is most uncommon, as Black has better options than 3...g6.

The London System proper begins 1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♖f3 g6 3 ♟f4. After 3...♟g7 White can choose whether he goes into a Barry or not with 4 ♖c3 and a Pirc can result from this move order as well. Meanwhile 4 e3 leads into quieter waters.

Finally, 1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♖c3 d5 3 ♟f4 is the Jobava London System, where the difference is that White has left the knight at home on g1 and has opened up the option of playing f2-f3 and then either e2-e4 or g2-g4 as the position demands. With this move order, it is rare for Black to play 3...g6 and rarer still for White to then play 4 ♖f3, going into a Barry. Any of 4 f3, 4 ♜d2 or 4 ♖b5 would be more common.

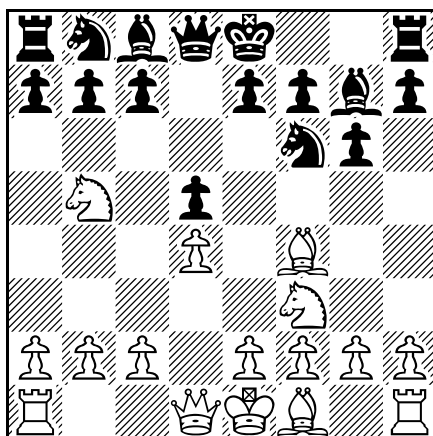
My conclusion is that if White has his heart set on a Barry and he knows that Black plays 2...g6 or similar, the best way is to use the traditional move order with 2 ♖f3 and 3 ♖c3. The threat of 4 e4 forces Black to think about whether he should play 3...d5 or not.



Andrew Martin
Surrey, November 2022

Chapter Three

The Modern 5 b5

1 d4  f6 2  f3 g6 3  c3 d5 4  f4  g7 5  b5



Many strong players, some even from the elite, are playing 5  b5 now, admittedly mostly in blitz events, so there must be something to it apart from the obvious, crude threat to c7. The main positional idea is to force 5... a6, which puts the black knight on a poor circuit. It will cost Black time to get the knight back into the game and White intends to use that time constructively to build up an advantage by more or less playing normal developing moves.

This is the modern main line of the Barry and Black must be careful. Having said that, I think I can show that there are various routes to an equal game. This should not deter White, as getting to a complex, unclear middlegame is surely the intention.

I'm going to divide the chapter up into two sections, where in the first section White plays with an early h2-h3 and in the second section White delays or even omits this move,

preferring to save the tempo for something else.

To begin the chapter, let us see what White is playing for after 5 ♖b5.

Game 52
R.Irizanin-V.Matta
Arandjelovac 2022

1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♗f3 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 ♙f4 ♙g7 5 ♖b5 ♖a6

The extraordinary 5...0-0?! has been played in this position. It may be good for bullet or rapid chess if you like sacrificing, but it is hard to believe. White should capture on c7: 6 ♙xc7! (6 ♗xc7 ♖h5! is the trick and White should avoid this position) 6...♞d7 7 e3 ♗c6 8 ♙g3 when White is a pawn up, as far as I can see. Black can fish in troubled waters with 8...♗e4 and maybe this is not so bad, but a pawn is a pawn.

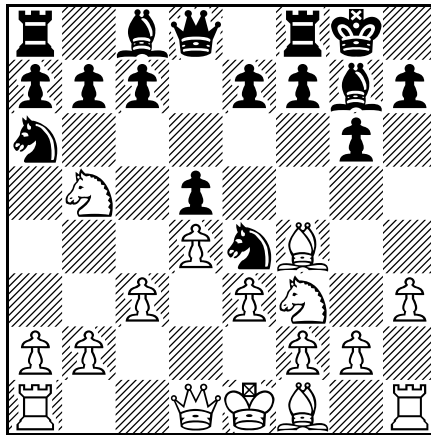
6 h3

Often White prefers 6 e3, delaying or even omitting h2-h3 altogether.

6...0-0 7 e3 ♗e4

Opening fire with the bishop on g7 and preparing ...c7-c5. 7...♗e4 is an active choice.

8 c3



White shuts down the long diagonal.

8...c5

8...c6 is often preferred, as we will see later, when both players will have a knight on the edge. Then 9 ♖a3 ♞b6 10 ♞b3 leads to a position which I think is OK for Black, but where White has won the majority of games. We must discuss this later.

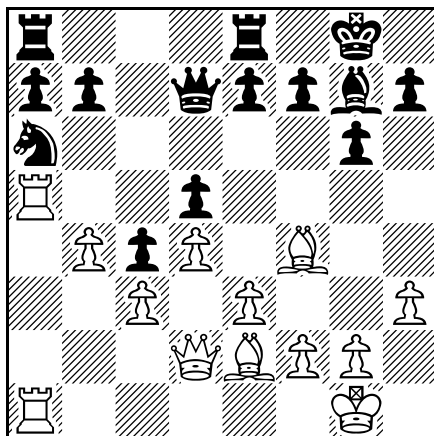
9 ♙e2 ♞b6 10 0-0 c4 11 a4 ♙d7 12 ♗d2 ♗xd2 13 ♞xd2 ♙xb5 14 axb5 ♞xb5 15 b3!

I don't think either player has done anything particularly wrong yet, but Black still has the problematic knight on a6 and although White is a pawn down, he has very active

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pieces and may well regain the pawn right away.

15 b4 ♖fe8 16 ♖a5 ♔d7 17 ♖fa1 is another way to go for White, which also looks pretty good.

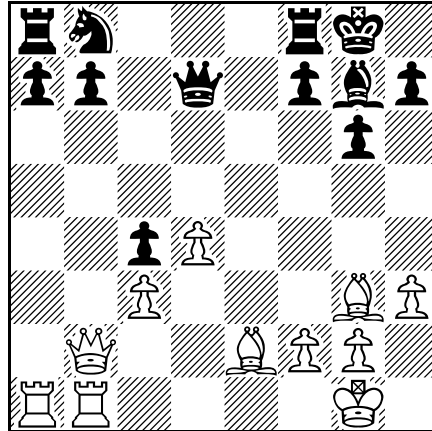


Black is under pressure and faces the idea of ♔d1-a4. In one game Black elected to return the extra pawn, perhaps the only correct way to play on: 17...♞c7 18 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 19 ♖xa7 ♞b5 20 ♖a5 ♔c6 21 ♔d1 b6 22 ♖a2 ♞d6 23 ♔xd6 ♔xd6 24 ♔f3 e6 25 ♖a7 h5 26 h4 ♔f6 27 g3. With a normal time control, the game should surely end in a draw. That it did not is indicative of superior blitzing technique as White went on to win in M.Bluebaum-M.Szpar, Internet (blitz) 2021.

15...♔d7

15...e5 is recommended to me by every engine I possess, presumably to eventually get the knight back into the game on c5. Let's take a pawn! After 16 dxe5 (Black has some compensation following 16 ♔xe5 ♔xe5 17 dxe5 ♔c6 18 bxc4 dxc4 19 ♖fd1 ♞c5 20 ♔xc4 a5) 16...♖fd8 17 ♖fb1 ♔c6 18 bxc4 dxc4 19 ♔a2 White holds the advantage.

16 bxc4 dxc4 17 ♔b2! e5 18 ♔g3 exd4 19 exd4 ♞b8 20 ♖fb1



White has managed to create a strong queenside attack.

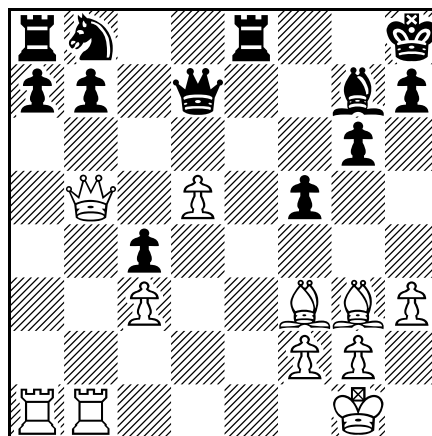
20...♖e8

I'm assuming one of the ideas was 20...b6 21 ♔g4! f5 22 ♕f3 ♘c6 23 ♚b5 ♜ac8 24 ♕d5+ ♔h8 25 ♕f4 ♜fe8 26 ♜a4! and Black is stuck for good moves.

21 ♕g4!

Provoking ...f7-f5, weakening the black kingside.

21...f5 22 ♕f3 ♘c6 23 ♚b5! ♔h8 24 d5 ♘b8



25 ♚xc4

The safe way. Yet after playing so well, White could top it off with 25 ♚xb7! ♜e1+ (after 25...♚xb7 26 ♜xb7 a5 27 d6 ♘a6 28 ♜xg7! ♔xg7 29 d7 Black is done for)

26 ♜xe1! ♚xb7 27 ♜e8+ ♕f8 28 ♜xf8+ ♔g7 29 ♜e8 ♘d7 30 ♜e7+ ♔h6 31 h4 and there is no escape for the black king.

25...♘a6

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The knight is leading a miserable life.

26 d6 ♖ac8 27 ♗d5 ♘c5 28 ♙a7 ♕xc3 29 ♖c1 ♗g7 30 d7

Missing another combinative finish with 30 ♖xb7! ♗xb7 (or 30...♘xb7 31 d7) 31 ♗xb7 ♘xb7 32 d7.

30...♘xd7 31 ♖xb7

This way wins, of course.

31...♖e7 32 ♕d6 ♖ee8 33 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 34 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 35 ♕e5+ ♖xe5 36 ♗xd7 ♖e1+ 37 ♔h2 ♖xf3 38 ♗d4+

Or just 38 ♗f7! ♖xh3+ 39 gxh3 h5 40 ♗xg6.

38...♔g8 39 ♗d5+ ♔g7 40 ♗xf3 ♖e4

There is no fortress here.

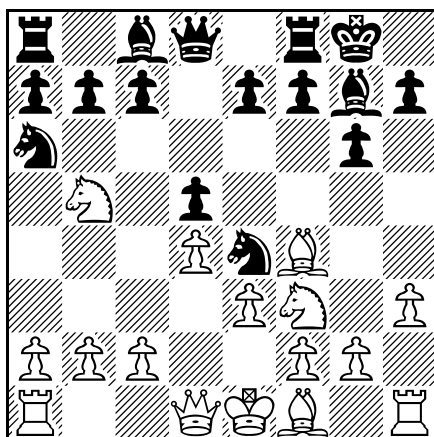
41 g3 h5 42 ♖c3+ ♔h7 43 ♖c7+ ♔h6 44 h4 1-0

We will see quite a few similar games in this chapter. Black never really got his act together, mainly thanks to the awkward knight on c6 preventing a normal development plan. This is a peculiar variation.

At the time of writing, Black's counter to 5 ♘b5 in the coming game is all the rage.

Game 53 H.Niemann-D.Dubov Internet (blitz) 2022

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♕f4 g6 4 e3 ♕g7 5 ♘b5 ♘a6 6 ♘f3 0-0 7 h3 ♘e4!



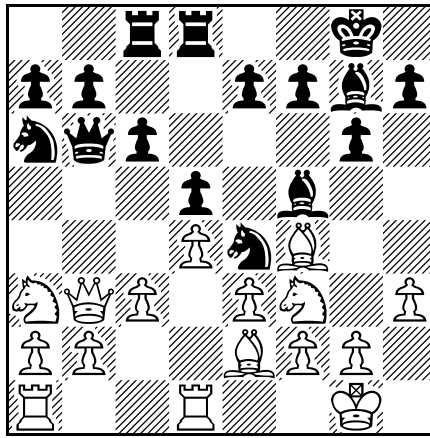
I think this is a steady equalizer. The main idea is to prepare ...c7-c6, when ♘b5-c3 will result in doubled pawns for White. Other obvious benefits include a good outpost for the knight on e4 and an uncovering of the bishop on g7.

8 c3

8 ♖d2 has been mentioned by Le Quang Liem as an attempt to frustrate Black, but there is no real advantage for White after 8...♗xd2 9 ♜xd2 c6 10 ♖c3 ♖b8 (it would be unwise to allow ♕xa6, but there is also 10...♗c7 11 ♕e2 f6 12 e4 e5 13 dxe5 fxe5 14 ♕g5, as in A.Shimanov-A.Bodnaruk, St. Petersburg 2021, when 14...♜d6! is already looking very comfortable for Black) 11 0-0-0 ♜a5 12 ♖b1 ♖d7 13 e4 dxe4 14 ♖xe4 ♜xd2 15 ♜xd2 ♖f6 16 ♖xf6+ ♕xf6 and the position is level, Le Quang Liem-P.Svidler, Saint Louis (blitz) 2021.

Instead, 8 ♕d3 is natural enough, but runs into 8...c6 9 ♖c3 (9 ♖a3? ♜a5+! 10 ♖d2 ♖ac5! is a tactical idea worth noting) 9...♗xc3 10 bxc3 ♜a5 when Black is in good shape. Likewise, 8 ♕e2 c6 is similar.

8...c6 9 ♖a3 ♜a5 10 ♕e2 ♕f5 11 ♜b3 ♜b6 12 0-0 ♜fd8 13 ♜fd1 ♜ac8



Black has successfully mobilized his army.

14 ♖h4 ♕e6 15 ♖f3 ♕f5

Offering a repetition. 15...♗c7, getting the offside knight back into the game, is also satisfactory: 16 ♖b1 ♖e8 17 ♖bd2 ♖8d6 18 ♖g5 ♖xg5 19 ♕xg5 f6 20 ♕f4 ♕f7 21 ♕h2 c5 22 ♕f3 cxd4 23 exd4 ♜c6 was M.Annaberdiev-M.Linsenmeyer, Riga 2018. White won in the end, but this probably had more to do with his higher rating than the actual current state of the position, which is OK for Black.

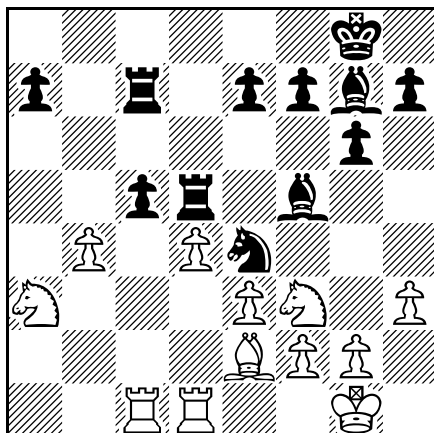
16 ♜ac1

To his credit, White keeps the game going.

16...♗c7 17 c4 ♜xb3 18 axb3 c5!? 19 ♕xc7 ♜xc7 20 cxd5 ♜xd5?! 21 b4!

Dubov has played optimistically and sharply, but after 21 b4 he will not get the reward, he desires.

21...b6 22 bxc5 bxc5 23 b4



The second wave arrives.

23...c4 24 ♕xc4 ♖dd7 25 g4 ♕e6 26 ♕xe6 fxe6 27 ♘c4

Black is toiling, a pawn down. He does not save the game.

27...♗b7 28 ♖a5 ♗b8 29 ♘c6 ♗b6 30 ♘d2 ♘d6 31 ♘b3 ♘e4 32 ♘c5 ♘xc5 33 ♗xc5 a6 34 ♗dc1 h6 35 h4 ♔f7 36 g5 hxg5 37 hxg5 ♗d5 38 f4 ♕f8 39 e4 ♗d6 40 e5 ♗d7 41 ♔f2 ♗db7 42 ♗1c4 ♕e8 43 ♕e2 ♔f7 44 ♕d3 ♕e8 45 ♕c3 ♗d7 46 ♖a5 ♔f7 47 ♗c6 ♗b5 48 ♗4c5 ♗b8 49 ♗xa6 ♕g7 50 ♘c6 ♗h8 51 b5 ♗b7 52 ♖a5 ♗d7 53 b6 ♗h1 54 b7 ♗b1 55 ♗a7 ♗d5 56 ♗xd5 exd5 57 ♘c6 ♕e6 58 b8 ♗xb8 59 ♗xe7+ ♔f5 60 ♘xb8 ♕e4 61 ♗xg7 1-0

Despite the result of this game, 7...♘e4! is a good move, delaying ...c7-c6 until a better moment. It just seems to lead to a comfortable early middlegame position for Black.

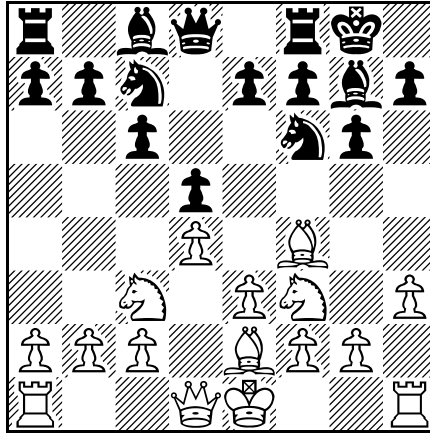
More blitz now follows, but also an interesting game when we are trying to understand this variation.

Game 54
L.Moroni-D.Dvirnyy
 Italian Blitz Championship, Chianciano Terme 2018

1 d4 d5 2 ♕f4 ♘f6 3 e3 g6 4 ♘c3 ♕g7 5 ♘b5 ♖a6 6 ♕e2 0-0 7 ♘f3

White just settles for quiet development, delaying h2-h3 and lets Black attack his advanced knight.

7...c6 8 ♘c3 ♘c7 9 h3



I anticipate that this will be a very common sequence if you start playing 5 ♖b5. Black has begun the process of getting his knight back from the dead. Moreover, now that ...♙g4 has been prevented, he must find a good square for the bishop on c8.

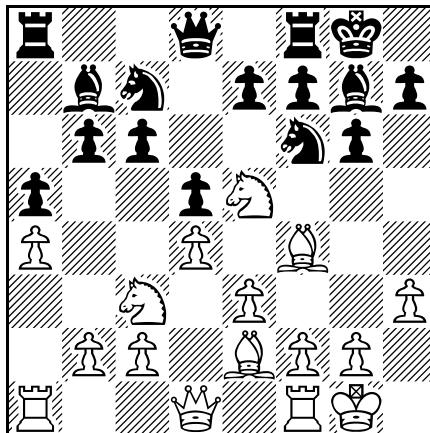
9...b6!?

We will examine 9...♘ce8 10 0-0 ♘d6 next.

10 a4

How does White take it from here? The central break e3-e4 is some way off and so White looks for an initiative on the queenside. I suppose White could also continue in a non-committal way with 10 0-0 ♙b7 11 ♙h2, which cannot be too bad.

10...a5 11 0-0 ♙b7 12 ♘e5



This position has cropped up a few times with good results for White, who has more freedom of movement for his pieces.

12...♘ce8

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The knight heads for the influential square, d6.

12...♞d7! is a good alternative, intending to exchange off White's well-placed knight: 13 ♙g3!? (I am not sure I see too much for White after 13 ♜xd7 ♚xd7 14 ♜e1 ♞e6 15 ♙h2 c5) 13...♞xe5 14 dxe5 (I would prefer 14 ♙xe5 with a slight edge after 14...♙xe5 15 dxe5 c5 16 ♚e1 ♚d7 17 f4 d4 18 ♜d1) 14...c5 15 f4 was D.Anton Guijarro-A.Shimanov, Internet (blitz) 2021, and now 15...d4! gives Black a nice position.

There is also 12...♞fe8!?, perhaps planning ...f7-f6. This is also an acceptable idea: 13 ♙h2 ♞d6 14 ♞b1!? ♜e8 15 ♞d2 f6 16 ♞ef3 e5 17 c4 ♞a6 18 cxd5 cxd5 19 ♚b3 ♞b4 and Black is well placed, H.Melkumyan-N.Meskovs, Internet (blitz) 2018.

These examples tend to suggest that Black is OK overall, with several good defensive methods.

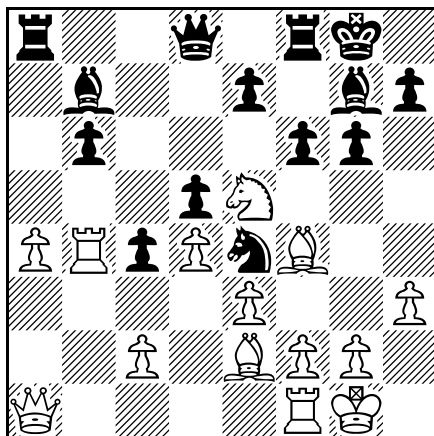
13 ♜b1 ♞d6 14 b4! axb4 15 ♜xb4

White has logically pursued his quest of queenside space. Does he have anything in this unusual position? Maybe not, but the game is set up to be decisive and not stodgy in any way.

15...c5 16 ♜b3

Opening the queenside with 16 dxc5 bxc5 17 ♜b3 would have been logical.

16...c4 17 ♜b4 ♞fe4 18 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 19 ♚a1 f6



If you put your knight on e5, make sure that you keep an eye on ...f7-f6.

20 ♞f3 ♙c6 21 ♚b2 ♜a6?

Why not 21...♙xa4 22 ♜xb6 ♙xc2?

22 ♜xc4

Clearly missed.

22...♙xa4 23 ♜b4 b5 24 ♙xb5 ♙xb5 25 ♜xb5 ♜c6 26 ♚b3 e6 27 ♜a1 g5 28 ♙h2 ♚e8 29 ♜b6

White has mystified his opponent enough to claim an advantage. As this is blitz, I will keep the remaining comments to a minimum.

29...♚c8 30 ♜b8 ♚d7

30...♖a6! was indicated.

31 ♖b7 ♗e8 32 ♖aa7 ♕h6 33 ♖b8 ♗g6 34 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 35 ♕b8 ♖c3 36 ♗b6 ♗e8 37 ♗b7
 ♗g6 38 ♗d7 ♖xc2 39 ♗xe6+ ♖h8 40 ♘g5 fxg5 41 ♕e5+ ♕g7 42 ♕xg7+ ♗xg7 43 ♖a8+ 1-0

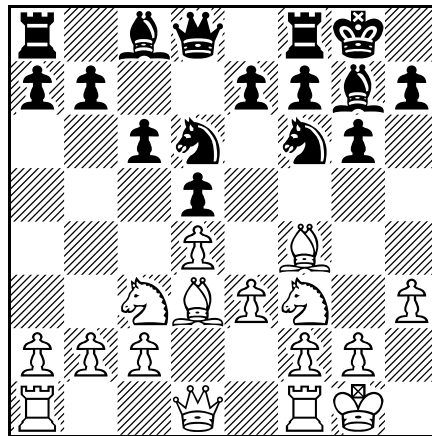
Game 55

M.Perez Gormaz-R.Diaz Villagran
 Chihuahua City 2022

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♕f4 ♕g7 5 ♘b5 ♖a6 6 e3 c6 7 ♘c3 ♘c7 8 h3 0-0 9 ♕d3 ♘ce8

This is straightforward play by Black. The knight is coming to d6.

10 0-0 ♘d6



Let's pause. White is slightly ahead in development, but is no closer to opening up the position so that it means something. All the pieces are on the board and the middlegame is bound to be complex, but I see no real reason why Black is worse.

11 ♕e5!?

This type of early middlegame move makes the Barry Attack almost completely different from the normal London System and perhaps gives a clue why so many top players are using the line in 2022. New and complex positions are reached early on, which while they might not be objectively better for White, offer plenty of opportunity for Black to go wrong.

11 a4 has been played frequently, an attempt to claim some queenside space. Here 11...♘fe4! (a rejoinder in the centre seems appropriate; also possible is 11...a5, just blocking and I am not sure what White gains from these mutual pawn advances: for example, 12 ♘e2 b6 – or 12...♕f5 13 b3 ♕xd3 14 ♗xd3 ♘de4 15 c4 ♖e8 16 ♖ac1 e6 17 ♕h2 ♘d7 18 ♖fd1 ♗e7, Le Quang Liem-R.Sadhwani, Kolkata (blitz) 2021, and the position is perfectly respectable for Black – 13 c3 c5 14 b4 was S.Bharath-G.Sankalp, Dhaka 2022, and now 14...axb4 15 cxb4 ♘fe4 is looking nice for Black) 12 ♘d2 ♘xc3 13 bxc3 was K.Akshat-K.Bhakti, Budapest

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2022. I can now recommend 13...f6! 14 c4 e5 15 ♖h2 ♗f7 16 cxd5 cxd5 17 ♖b1 b6 when Black is certainly not worse.

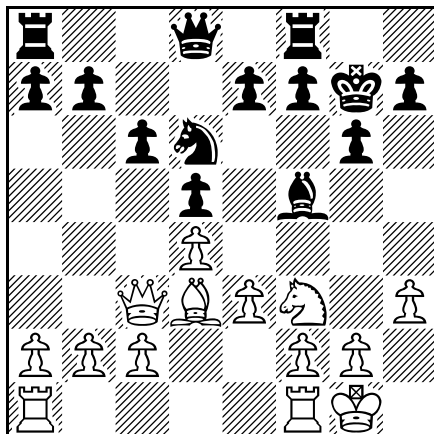
11...♗fe4

Diaz Villagran is not intimidated by the thought of exchanging off his dark-squared bishop and aims for equalizing simplification.

12 ♖xg7 ♗xc3 13 ♖e1

13 bxc3 ♖xg7 14 ♖e2 ♖a5 does not offer White anything at all.

13...♖xg7 14 ♖xc3 ♖f5



Black is happy to continue playing sensibly. Already, the game looks like it is heading for a draw.

15 ♖fe1 a5 16 a4 ♖g8 17 ♗d2 ♖d7 18 e4

A critical moment. If White cannot get anything over the next few moves, he will never get anything at all.

18...dxe4 19 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 20 ♖xe4 e6 21 ♖ad1 ♖fd8

The position is dead level.

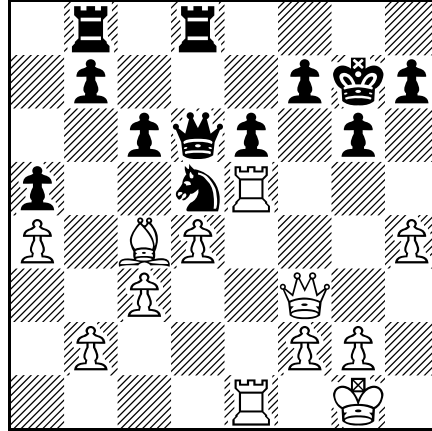
22 ♖d3 ♗e8 23 ♖c4 ♖d6 24 ♖f3 ♗c7 25 c3 ♖ab8 26 ♖e5 ♗d5

Black can certainly consider 26...b5.

27 ♖de1 ♖g7!?

I quite like the manoeuvre 27...♖f8 28 h4 ♖h6 29 g3 ♖d2, which maintains equality. Here 30 ♖5e2 ♖h6 31 ♖e5 ♖d2 is just one way the game may fizzle out.

28 h4!



White finds the right moment to press.

28...h5 29 ♖1e4

I am surprised White did not play 29 ♗xd5 cxd5 30 g4! when Black is passive.

29...♗d7 30 ♖e1 ♗h8

Black is now safe again.

31 ♗g3 ♗e7 32 ♗d3 ♗h6 33 ♗b1 ♗f6 34 ♖1e4 b6 35 ♗d3 ♗d8 36 ♗c4 ♗d6 37 g3 ♗d7 38 ♖e1 ♗h8 39 ♗a6 ♗b8 40 ♗e2 ♗d8 41 ♗f3 ♗f6 42 ♗g5 ♗h7 43 ♗ge5 ♗f6 44 ♗g5 ♗h7 45 ♗ge5 ♗f6 46 ♗g5 ½-½

It seems that White can only count on the minutest of advantages in this line.

Game 56

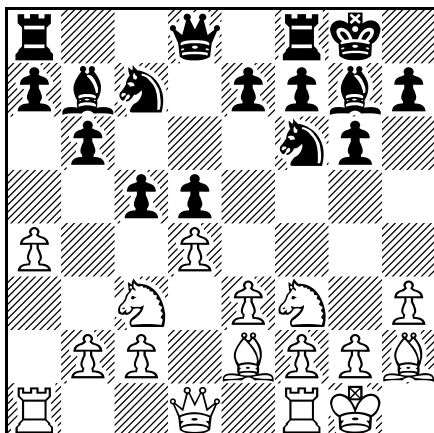
L.Aronian-M.Vachier-Lagrave

FIDE World Cup, Tbilisi (blitz) 2017

1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♗f3 g6 3 ♗f4 ♗g7 4 ♗c3 d5 5 ♗b5 ♗a6 6 e3 0-0 7 h3 c6 8 ♗c3 ♗c7 9 ♗e2 b6 10 0-0

An unpretentious opening by Aronian has led to a position where he could say that he has neutralized any deep preparation that Vachier-Lagrave might have done. We enter a balanced middlegame where I think that White has the more comfortable position, but no real concrete advantage.

10...♗b7 11 ♗h2 c5 12 a4



Black is covering the e4-square and so with a central pawn advance off the table, the action must start somewhere. Aronian probes the queenside.

12...a5

Allowing White to play a4-a5 might put Black under some pressure.

13 d5 e5 d7 14 dxd7

If White is looking for improvements, he should start with 14 f4!?

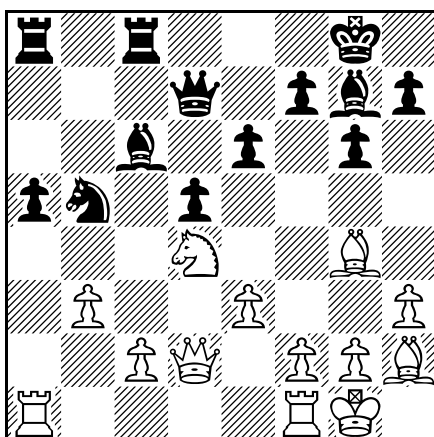
14...xd7 15 g4 e6 16 d2

Gentle play by Aronian continues to keep the game in the balance.

16...c6 17 b3 f8 18 e2 cxd4 19 dxd4 b5

19...b7 20 f1d1 seems rather level too, but not dull.

20 axb5 bxb5



21 c3?!

21 a2 dxd4 22 exd4 a4 leads to a liquidation which heralds a draw after 23 bxa4 xa4

24 ♖xa4 ♙xa4 25 c3 ♖c6 26 ♖c1.

21...♗xd4?!

Black is content to keep the game level. Either 21...♗d6 or 21...♙b7 were better suited to play for the win.

22 exd4 a4 23 b4

23 ♖a3 ♙f8 24 b4 ♙b5 25 ♖fa1 seems a reasonable way of lining up the white pieces.

23...♙b5 24 ♖fc1 a3 25 ♙e2 ♖c6?!

Imprecise, as it lets White improve the lot of the bishop on h2, which is currently sitting on an unimportant diagonal.

Instead, 25...♙xe2 26 ♖xe2 ♙h6 is starting to look better for Black, whose pieces seem more influential.

26 ♙xb5 ♖xb5 27 ♙d6! ♖c6 28 ♙c5

White is now quite safe and can continue the fight on equal terms.

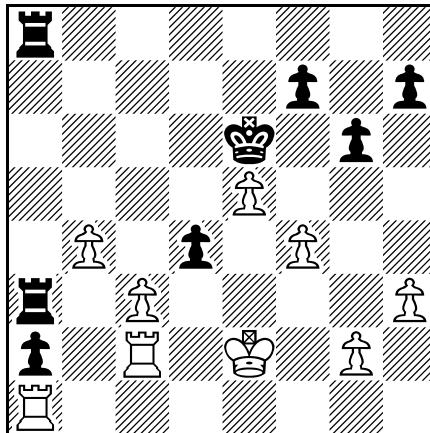
28...♖ca6 29 ♖a2 ♖c4 30 ♖e2 ♖xe2 31 ♖xe2 a2 32 ♖a1 ♖a3 33 ♖c2?!

33 b5! would have given Black some problems.

33...♙f8 34 ♙f1 e5

34...f6 was rather safer.

35 ♙xf8 ♙xf8 36 dxe5 ♙e7 37 ♙e2 ♙e6 38 f4 d4!



A nice pawn sacrifice to activate the king.

39 cxd4 ♙d5?

After 39...♙f5! White has two extra pawns, but is tied down. It is unlikely that he would be able to win.

40 ♖d2 ♙c4?

40...♙e4! is correct and if 41 d5 ♙xf4 42 d6 ♙xe5 43 b5 f5 44 d7 ♖d8 45 b6 ♖b3! steers the game to a drawn position.

41 d5! ♙xb4 42 d6 ♙b3 43 ♙f3 ♙c3 44 ♖f2 h5 45 ♙g3 ♙d4+ 46 ♙h4 ♙d5 47 ♙g5?!

The pawn on f4 has remained, giving the white pawn chain a solid appearance, which

Play the Barry Attack

cannot be disturbed, but the position after 47 ♔g5 is surprisingly difficult to win. Instead, 47 d7! was very strong, with 47...♖d8 48 ♜fxa2 ♜xa2 49 ♜xa2 ♜xd7 50 ♜d2+ losing for Black.

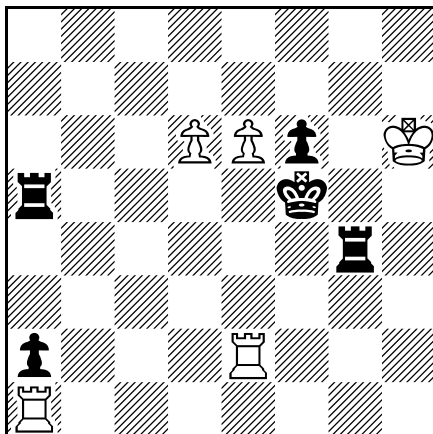
47...♙e6 48 g4 hxg4 49 hxg4 ♜3a5

49...f6+ is not good enough due to 50 exf6 ♜3a5+ 51 f5+ gxf5 52 ♜e2+!

50 ♜e2 f6+ 51 ♙xg6 ♜g8+ 52 ♙h6 ♜xg4 53 f5+

If 53 ♜axa2 ♜xa2 54 ♜xa2 fxe5 55 fxe5 ♙xe5.

53...♙xf5 54 e6



54...♜a8?

54...♜aa4! was the only chance now and good enough to draw: 55 ♜f1+ (and not 55 e7?? ♜g6+ 56 ♙h5 ♜g5+ 57 ♙h6 ♜h4 mate) 55...♜af4 56 ♜xf4+ ♜xf4 57 ♜xa2 (or 57 e7 a1♙) 57...♙xe6 with equality. At the highest level, fine margins decide.

55 ♜f1+! ♜f4 56 ♜xf4+ ♙xf4 57 ♜xa2 ♜xa2 58 e7

A pawn will queen and there is no fortress to be erected.

58...♜d2 59 e8♙ ♜xd6 60 ♙e7 ♜d4 61 ♙xf6+ ♙e3 62 ♙g5 ♜d5+ 63 ♙g4 ♜d4+ 64 ♙g3 ♜d3 65 ♙e5+ ♙d2+ 66 ♙f2

Note how the queen and king are a knight's move away from the enemy rook. This means progress.

66...♙c2 67 ♙c5+ ♜c3 68 ♙f5+ ♙b2 69 ♙e2 ♜c2+ 70 ♙d3 ♜c3+ 71 ♙d2 ♜b3 72 ♙e5+ ♙b1 73 ♙d4 ♜h3 74 ♙b6+ ♙a1 75 ♙f6+ ♙a2 76 ♙e6+ ♜b3 77 ♙c2 ♙a1 78 ♙a6+ 1-0

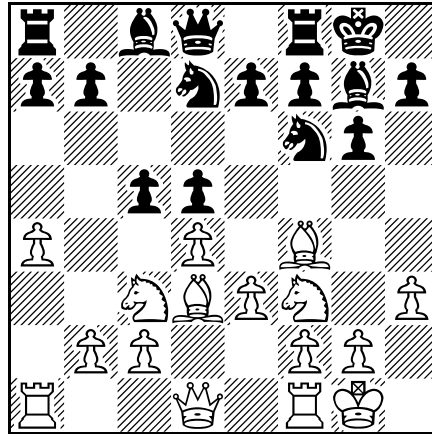
Game 57
M.Hebden-A.Madan
Liverpool 2007

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♙f4 c6

Although the game we are about to see features 4...c6, preventing 5 ♘b5, a transposition to the Barry can occur after 4...♙g7 5 ♘b5 ♘a6 6 e3 0-0 7 h3 c6 8 ♘c3 ♘b8 9 ♙d3 ♘bd7 10 0-0 c5.

5 h3 ♙g7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♙d3 ♘bd7 8 0-0 c5

Black is trying to make the bishop on d3 a target for his advancing queenside pawns.
9 a4!



Hebden puts a stop to the queenside ambitions.

9 ♖e1 a6 10 a4 is another way to do it, but one questions the value of ♖e1, as White is never able to find the right moment for e3-e4: 10...b6 11 ♘b1!? (11 e4 leads to simplification in the centre and easy play for Black with 11...dxe4 12 ♘xe4 cxd4 13 ♘xd4 ♙b7!) 11...c4 12 ♙f1 ♙b7 13 ♘c3 ♘e4 14 ♘xe4 dxe4 15 ♘e5 ♘xe5 16 dxe5 ♙d5 17 b3 cxb3 18 cxb3 e6 19 ♗d4 was J.Pribyl-V.Kupreichik, Schwaebisch Gmuend 2002. Now 19...♗b8! to be followed by ...♗d8 was indicated.

9...b6 10 a5

10 ♗b1!? is interesting here, with b2-b4 in mind.

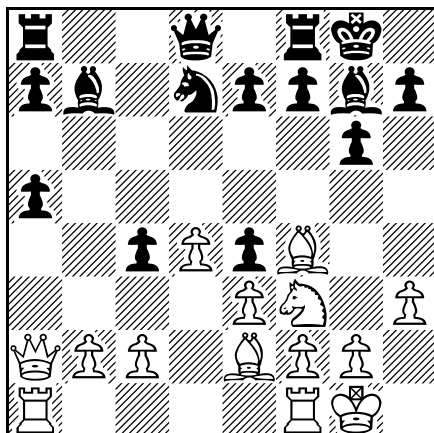
10...bxa5

Black does not like 10...♙b7 11 a6 ♙c6 (or 11...♙c8 12 ♙b5!) 12 ♙b5, although he should be OK after 12...♗c8 13 ♙xc6 ♗xc6 14 ♘e5 ♗e6 15 ♗f3 ♗ad8.

11 ♗b1 ♙b7 12 ♗a2 c4

The more flexible 12...a6 will be seen in Game 102 later on.

13 ♙e2 ♘e4 14 ♘xe4 dxe4



15 ♖e5

I am a bit surprised that White did not play 15 ♖d2, which looks like it preserves a considerable edge after 15...e5 (if 15...♖b6 16 ♗xa5) 16 dxe5 ♘xe5 (or 16...♙xe5 17 ♙xe5 ♘xe5 18 ♗xa5) 17 ♗fd1! ♗e7 18 ♘xc4 ♗ac8 19 c3.

15...♘xe5 16 dxe5 c3 17 ♗fd1 cxb2! 18 ♗xb2 ♗c7

This way around, Black should be holding the game.

19 ♗b5 a6 20 ♗xa5 ♗xc2 21 ♙g4 ♙c8 22 ♗ac1 ♗b3 23 ♗b1 ♗c2 24 ♗dc1 ♗d3 25 ♙d1 ♙e6 26 ♙c2 ♗d5 27 ♗a4 ♗ac8 28 ♙xe4 ♗xc1+ 29 ♗xc1 ♗b5 30 ♗d4

Hebden is an absolute expert at keeping the game going, working with even the slightest edge. Black is not worse here, but my impression is that he was certainly feeling under pressure.

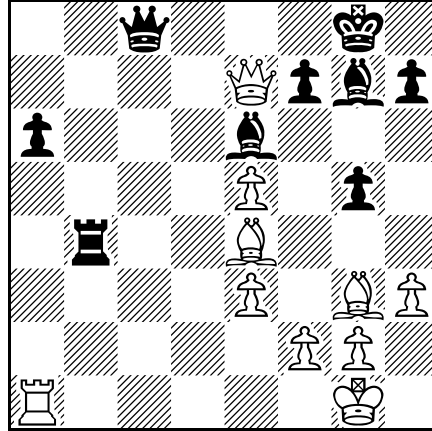
30...♗b8

30...a5 31 ♗b1 ♙b3!/? intending ...a5-a4 was interesting. It is then arguable whether White has more than a draw after 32 ♙d3 ♗b7 33 ♙e4 ♗b5.

31 ♗b1 ♗e8 32 ♗a1!

White is now clearly better.

32...♗c8 33 ♗a7 g5 34 ♙g3 ♗b4 35 ♗xe7!



An excellent move.

35...♖xe4 36 ♖d1 h6

36...♗f8 37 ♗d8 ♜xd8 38 ♜xd8 h6 will not lead to a fortress, as White has 39 h4!, transposing to the game.

37 ♗d8+ ♜xd8 38 ♜xd8+ ♗f8 39 h4 ♖c4 40 hxg5 ♖c8 41 ♗f6 ♗g7 42 ♗f4 ♖c4 43 e4 h5 44 g6! fxg6 45 ♗h4 a5 46 ♗f6 ♗f8 47 ♗d8 ♗g7

Instead, 47...a4 48 ♗g5! is a killer, and if 48...♗f7 49 e6, 48...♖h7 49 ♗f6 or 48...♗g7 49 ♗f6! ♗f7 50 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 51 ♗f6+ ♖g8 52 e6.

48 ♗g5 ♖xe4 49 ♗xg6 ♖e1+ 50 ♖h2 ♗f7 51 ♗g3 h4 52 ♗xh4 ♖xe5 53 ♗f6 1-0

There now follows a most unusual game where a world-leading expert on the Barry loses to his own favourite opening, albeit for a good cause, the game taking place in the ECF's Charity Blitz Marathon back in early April.

Game 58

M.Armstrong-M.Hebden

Internet (blitz) 2022

1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♗f3 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 ♗f4 ♗g7 5 ♗b5 ♖a6 6 e3 0-0 7 h3 c5

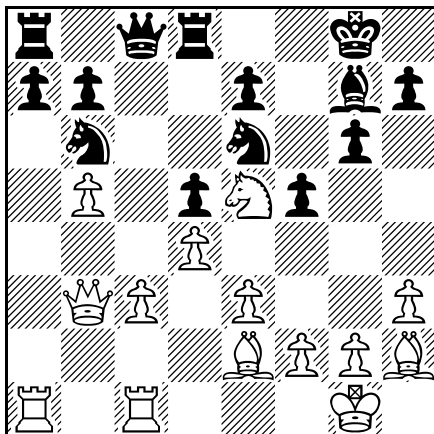
A move on the flank deserves a counterblow in the centre.

8 c3 ♗d7 9 a4 c4 10 ♗e5 ♗xb5 11 axb5 ♗c7 12 ♗a4

12 b3 had been previously preferred, but after 12...♗xb5! 13 bxc4 ♗xc3 14 ♗b3 ♗ce4! 15 f3 (15 ♗xb7 ♗b6! is the tactical idea, and if 16 ♖b1 ♗a5+ 17 ♗b4 ♗a2 18 ♗b2 ♗a5+ and a possible draw by repetition) 15...dxc4! 16 ♗xc4 (16 ♗xb7 ♗d6 17 ♗c6 ♖c8 leaves White way behind in development) 16...♗d6 17 ♗d3 e6, R.Sadhwani-S.Lobanov, Internet (blitz) 2020, Black has a fine position, given that 18 0-0 is met by 18...♗d5!.

Play the Barry Attack

12...♘d7 13 b3 ♘b6 14 ♖b4 cxb3 15 ♗xb3 ♘e6 16 ♙h2 ♗c8 17 ♙e2 ♖d8 18 0-0 f5 19 ♖fc1



White has played logically and holds an edge. The plan is c3-c4 and so Hebden acts against it.

19...♙xe5 20 ♙xe5 ♘c4 21 ♙xc4 ♗xc4 22 ♗xc4 dxc4 23 ♖a4!

There are some issues for Black in this position.

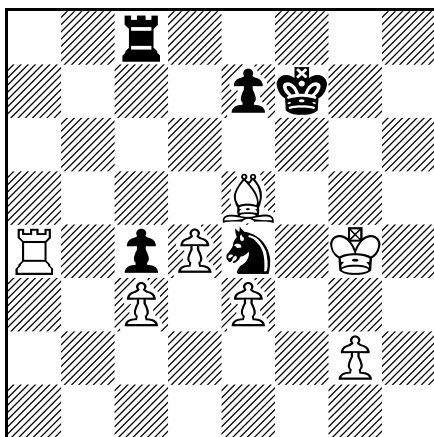
23...♖dc8

23...a5 is met simply by 24 bxa6 ♖xa6 25 ♖xc4.

24 ♖ca1 a6 25 bxa6 bxa6 26 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 27 ♖xa6 ♙f7 28 ♖a4 g5 29 f3 h5 30 ♙f2 g4

The old warrior fights on, with drawing chances whilst White has no passed pawn.

31 hxg4 fxg4 32 fxg4 hxg4 33 ♙g3 ♘g5 34 ♙xg4 ♘e4



Is the outpost worth the pawn? Probably not.

35 d5 ♖g8+ 36 ♙f3 ♘d2+ 37 ♙f2 ♘e4+ 38 ♙g1 ♘d2 39 ♙d4 ♖g5 40 ♖a5 ♙g6 41 ♖a6+ ♙f7

Avoiding 41...♙f5 42 ♖e6 ♜f3+ 43 ♙f2 ♜xd4 44 cxd4!, which leaves Black lost.

42 d6 e5?

42...exd6 43 ♖xd6 ♗g6 was relatively best, according to my machine. Presumably Black can fight after 44 ♖xg6 ♙xg6 45 ♙f2 ♙f5.

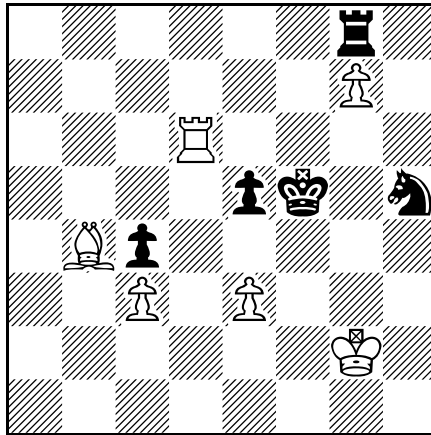
43 ♙c5

43 ♖a7+ ♙e6 44 d7 ♗g8 45 ♙b6 would have been faster.

43...♙e6 44 ♙b4 ♜e4 45 ♖a7 ♗g8 46 ♖e7+ ♙d5 47 d7 ♖d8 48 g4!?

No time by the look of it or he would have played 48 ♙a5!.

48...♜f6 49 g5 ♜xd7 50 g6 ♜f6 51 g7 ♗g8 52 ♙g2 ♜h5 53 ♖d7+ ♙e6 54 ♖d6+ ♙f5



Hebden has fought his way back into the game.

55 ♖c6 ♖xg7+ 56 ♙f2 ♜f6 57 ♖xc4 ♜e4+ 58 ♙e2 ♗g2+ 59 ♙e1 ♖b2 60 ♖c8 ♜g3 61 ♙d1 ♙e4 62 ♙c1 ♖e2 63 ♖e8 ♜f5 64 ♙d1 ♖xe3 65 ♙c5 ♖xc3 66 ♙b6 ♖b3 67 ♙c7 ♙d3 68 ♖xe5 1-0

According to the database, White won on time when Black had mate in one on the board. Make of that what you will. To me, it says that there are far too many speed games being entered into modern day databases, with a resulting serious decline in standards. Back at the game, you could say that White played extremely well for the first 45 moves or so.

One of the main attractions of 5 ♘b5 is that it leads to a whole set of middlegame positions that are young in nature and not that well explored by comparison to the usual London System. With a board full of pieces, the possibility exists to outplay any opponent. Yet it is tough for White to claim any real advantage. He must settle for getting to the complex middlegame that he requires.