

Richard Shorman

Chess

Pitfalls in the opening abound, and few are the players who have never triggered a "book trap." In the first round of the U. S. Open, Gilbert Temme (rated class B at 1683) required only five minutes to finish the game. His opponent, USCF expert Stewart Schwartz (2116), suffered for nearly an hour, independently working out the losing moves.

White: Gilbert Temme.

Black: Stewart Schwartz.

U. S. Open, Ventura, 1971.

Caro-Kann Defense

1 P-K4	P-QB3	8 BxPch!(g)	KxB(h)
2 P-Q4	P-Q4	9 QxQ	PxPch
3 P-KB3(a)	PxP(b)	10 K-K2!	PxR-Q(i)
4 PxP(c)	P-K4(d)	11 N-N5ch	K-N3
5 N-KB3	PxP(e)	12 Q-K8ch	K-R3(j)
6 B-QB4!	B-N5ch(f)	13 N-K6ch	Resigns(k)
7 P-B3	PxP		

(a) The "fantasy variation," introduced in London, 1899, by Maroczy and subsequently adopted by Teichmann, Tartakover, Torre and Spielmann. Smyslov's patronage during the 40's and 50's kept the line from disappearing completely, but good Black defenses finally forced its retirement at the grandmaster level. Apart from allowing White his choice of a prepared opening, 3 P-KB3 has the advantage of provoking sharp tactics that can easily boomerang against Black if he tries to seize the initiative prematurely. Strategically, however, White's KBP stands in the way of normal development while structurally damaging the king-side pawns.

(b) Thinking only of how to get his QB into the game (3 . . . P-K3 blocks the bishop's exit as does 3 . . . N-B3 4 P-K5 N-3-Q2), Black misses the point entirely. He should exploit the minus side of 3 P-KB3 with 3 . . . P-K3!, supporting the QP prior to attacking White's weakened KN1-QR7 diagonal by P-QB4 and Q-N3. Then with 4 N-B3 White either transposes back into the main line or yields Black a satisfactory variation of the French Defense after 4 . . . N-B3 5 P-K5 N-3-Q2 6 P-B4 P-QB4. Reserving the QB for a more "active" square merely makes its absence at K3 felt later on, e.g., 4 N-B3 N-B3 5 B-KN5 P-KR3 6 B-R4 Q-N3! 7 P-QR3 (so that 7 . . . QxNP loses to 8 N-R4) P-QB4! and White is under pressure whether or not he trades pawns in the center (Smyslov — Botvinnik, Moscow, 1958).

The theoretically best continuation runs 4 B-K3 N-B3 (better than 4 . . . Q-N3 because of 5 N-Q2 QxNP 6 N-N3 or 5 . . . N-Q2 6 B-Q3 P-QB4 7 P-B3 P-B5 8 B-QB2 QxNP 9 N-K2 Q-R6 10 0-0 N-N3, as in Smyslov — Makagonov, 1944 USSR Championship, and now 11 P-B4!) 5 N-B3 Q-N3 6 R-N1 (Euwe dismisses 6 Q-Q2 QxNP 7 R-N1 Q-R6 with a plus for Black.) P-QB4! (Vasily Panov, "Kurs debyutov," Moscow, 1968, pg. 189).

(c) White can gamble a pawn for some time and space by 4 B-K3 N-B3 5 N-Q2 PxP (Of course 5 . . . B-B4 is good, too, but the order of moves here has been shifted to fit the note conveniently.) 6 KNxP P-K3 7 N-B4, and now annotator Hans Kmoch improves on Black's 7 . . . N-Q4? 8 B-Q2 B-K2 9 B-Q3 B-R5ch? 10 P-N3 B-B3(?) 11 Q-K2 P-QR4 12 P-QR3 0-0 13 P-KR4! (Smyslov — Gereben, Moscow vs. Budapest, 1949) with 7 . . . QN-Q2 to further Black's development and bring a piece to bear on K4 ("Chess Review," May 1949, pg. 137).

(d) Still no place to post the bishop, so he presses for pawn parity in the center and gives White time to play 5 N-KB3 (5 PxP Q-R4ch), perhaps intending 5 . . . B-KN5 in reply.

(e) On second thought, the dangers of 5 . . . B-KN5 become all too clear after 6 B-QB4 (threatening 7 BxPch and 8 N-K5ch) N-Q2 7 0-0 KN-B3 8 P-B3 B-K2 (or 8 . . . P-QN4 9 B-K2! Q-N3 10 K-R1) 9 Q-N3 0-0 10 BxPch! (Limbos — Van Seters, Brussels, 1956), and if 10 . . . RxB, then 11 NxP!

But Black has 5 . . . B-K3! for his bishop despite outward appearances: 6 PxP (6 NxP? Q-R5ch) QxQch 7 KxQ N-Q2, with full compensation for the pawn. White therefore plays 6 P-B3 (superior to the older 6 N-B3 B-QN5 cited by I. A. Horowitz in "Chess Openings: Theory and Practice" and Isaac Boleslawski in "Caro-Kann bis Sizilianisch"), which justifies his third move, according to Panov, even though the end result is active equality, e.g., 6 . . . N-B3 7 B-Q3 QN-Q2 8 Q-K2 B-Q3 9 QN-Q2 Q-K2 10 0-0 (Kasparyan — Kholmov, Semi-Finals, 1949 USSR Championship) 0-0-0 (M.C.O. 10, pg. 143, note "j").

(f) Looks like the least of evils and turns out to be the worst of them. Tartakover — Prezepiorka, Budapest, 1929, is the usual standard for comparison: 6 . . . B-K3 (6 . . . N-B3 7 N-N5) 7 BxB PxP 8 0-0 B-K2 9 NxP Q-Q2 10 Q-R5ch K-Q1 11 B-K3.

(g) Naturally, 8 QxQch KxQ 9 PxP also leaves plenty to worry about, but the text move sets a double snare.

(h) Calculating ahead, Black spies a gilt-edge opportunity to ransom his queen, generate a new one and escape rich with booty in the bargain. Only 8 . . . K-K2 offers survival chances, however.

(i) Now, instead of resigning, as Black might have expected, White lowers the boom.

(j) On 12 . . . K-B3, mate follows 13 R-B1ch.

(k) There is no arguing 13 . . . P-N4 14 BxPmate. All of this, through White's 12th move, is duly recorded in M.C.O. And for those who believe that lightning never strikes the same spot twice, this entire game, including the mate, was played in New York, 1935, between Messrs. Black and Bigelow (Irving Chernev, "The 1000 Best Short Games of Chess," New York, 1955, pg. 110).