

First Rank

Editor
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The Games of Jonathan Mason

AN APPRECIATION

by Roy Wagstaff

The first occasion on which I made the acquaintance of Jonathan Mason ("Jack" to the family and "Joe" at Lloyd's of London) was on the steam trains of the L.N.E.R. between Leytonstone and Liverpool Street. Introduced to me as a prospective father-in-law by John Hunnable, with whom I was playing skittles games on a cardboard pocket set, Mr. Mason made shrewd but witty comments on our efforts, whilst at the same time proceeding to demolish the Times Crossword before we arrived in the City.

This was during the 1939/45 war, and I learnt that Mr. Mason had previously been a member of the Leyton club, which played in the London League when matches were over 20 boards, and also a Champion and committee member of the Insurance Chess Club, which made him a Life member after his retirement. In the last pre-war season, when the Essex Championship was conducted on a knock-out basis, he had finished runner-up, losing the Final to F.N. Jameson.

Mr. Mason was elected to the Committee when Wanstead & Woodford commenced operations in 1943 and was one of the Club's first Vice-Presidents. He was mainly responsible for drafting the Club's rules, and it is a tribute to his work that they have stood the test of time, with few amendments, until the present day.

In spite of a damaged leg, which was a legacy of the 1914/18 trenches, Jonathan Mason was a man of wide and varied interests. Cycling, gardening, table tennis, billiards and classical music were some of the pursuits in which I knew he was interested. Kriegsspiel, which seems to be played little at the present time, was another sphere in which he excelled, and many lunch-times were utilised for this purpose at the Gambit Chess Rooms in Budge Row, where our threesome was completed by the Rev. Harry Pike who was the first W & W Treasurer.

Mr. Mason achieved one record, which hopefully will never be repeated. Lest I sound churlish I hasten to explain the circumstances. During the latter stages of the 1939/45 war, chess activity was revived for those able to take part, although the County Organisations did not function again until the 1945/6 season. Essex had a County Wartime Championship in 1944/5 and he reached the Final of the knock-out tournament in which he played Tom George of Ilford Club and "Ilford Recorder" fame. The first session of play was on Saturday 5th May 1945 and the game was adjourned. V.E. day on 8th May, 1945 intervened, this being a Tuesday but nobody bothered about Club night. The game was resumed and won by Mr. Mason on the following Sunday, it having been started in wartime and finished in peace.

Although only twice winner of the Wanstead & Woodford Club Championship Mr. Mason played on a high board in the Club first team in the Essex League, and was elected President in 1952, following the death of Mr. T.H. Acton. During the days when private transport was still a luxury, we were fortunate in being able to travel to away matches in the President's Jaguar. After his retirement from Lloyd's in 1955 at the age of 60, Mr. Mason spent many happy days supporting the Essex County Cricket Club, of which he took out a Life Membership, at its away matches up and down the country besides the home fixtures.

The happy family home at 36 Cambridge Park was an "open door" to my brother John, the Essex League team's erstwhile match captain, when he needed advice or opinion on adjournment or adjudication positions. Indeed Club members

were always made welcome and the hospitality of Mrs. Mason became a byword in the W & W Committee which held many meetings at No. 36.

Mr. Mason retired from active chess after the 1972/3 season at the age of 78 but continued to chair the A.G.M. until a few years before his death.

I will close this tribute with a story. Some of you will have heard it before, but it bears repetition. John Hunnabell told me, with many intermittent chuckles, of an early wartime visit one evening to 36 Cambridge Park. The alert had been sounded and an air raid was officially in progress although enemy activity was conspicuous by its absence. On his approach, John was hailed from the bathroom window by Mr. Mason's only son. When he entered the house, John was astonished to find his future wife and her sisters in the kitchen, Mrs. Mason placidly knitting or sewing in the lounge and the Master of the house knocking the balls about in the Billiard Room. Knowing that the cellar had been extensively reinforced to serve as a shelter, John expressed his surprise saying "I expected to find you all in the cellar and here you are scattered all over the house!" Whereupon his host replied jovially "First principle of Insurance my boy, spread the risk - spread the risk!"

R.A.W.

The Games - The Player

The games in this collection span a period of nearly 40 years throughout which my Grandfather retained a high degree of attacking skill. I have researched from his 19 scorebooks, the earliest commencing in December 1928, and a few loose scoresheets, but since he was known to have played a prodigious number of games for many seasons, I fear there are a number of scoresheets which have been lost.

The modern player will no doubt be critical of some of the opening play herein, but one must look at the games in the context of the opening theory known at the time. There have of course been tremendous advances in this field in recent times and the great increase in published material has brought such matters within the grasp of the ordinary club player. Mr. Mason played a wide variety of openings, usually, but by no means always, as white opening with the king's pawn. His black defences to the KP included the Ruy Lopez, French and Petroff's. Against the QP, often the Budapest Defence but sometimes a Nimzoindian.

Mr. Mason was an attacking player with a flair for combinations. His game was based on a fluid blend of what he termed "the three elements of chess" - Space, Time and Material. He considered the elements in roughly that order underlining this with the oft quoted phrase "Chess is a game of squares" - the material was subordinate to the squares controlled. With this approach one would naturally expect his games to feature many sacrifices and indeed they do; but he was at pains to stress that there are two types of sacrifice, active and passive. It was the latter type, where material when attacked is left to be taken while the player gets on with another plan, which is most prominently featured in his play, the very first game in this collection, played in 1932, being a very fine example. He would frequently not bother to defend attacked pawns, even when there was no immediate counter in sight, such offers being based on intuitive appreciation of the practical chances offered by use of the space created by removal of the material and importantly, the time lost by the opponent in making the capture.

A fair indication of Mr. Mason's concept of chess can be taken from the Masters that he held in particular regard - principally Alekhine and in more recent times, Tal and Fischer.

I.D.H.

1□ **A Cain**■ **J Mason**

Insurance Inter-Office Competition

06.10.1932

C50

White pins the KN and castles, whereas Black doesn't. This is one of the situations Mr Mason looked to exploit since the uncastled player can use the pinning bishop as a target in developing an attack on that wing, not having committed his own king.

In this instance a brilliant queen sacrifice is the prelude to an incisive attack.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.d3 Nf6 5.Bg5 d6 6.0-0 h6 7.Bh4 g5 8.Bg3 h5 9.Nxg5 h4 10.Nxf7



●

1**hxg3!!**

An amazing queen offer and, incidentally, a fine example of "passive" sacrifice.

[10...Qe7 11.Nxh8 hxg3 (11...Qh7 12.Bxe5 Nxe5 13.d4 Nxc4 14.dxc5 h3 15.g3±) 12.Bf7+ Kd8 13.hxg3 Qf8]

11.Nxd8 Bg4 12.Qd2

[White cannot opt out by giving back his queen: 12.Qxg4 gxf2+ 13.Kh1 Nxg4 14.h3 Nxd8+]

12...Nd4!

Despite having given up his queen, Black has time for yet another preparatory move.

13.h3

Other tries, to prevent ...Ne2+ fail:

[13.Nc3 Nf3+ 14.gxf3 Bxf3 15.h3 Rxh3+-]
[13.Re1 Nf3+ 14.gxf3 Bxf3+-]

13...Ne2+ 14.Kh1?

However, White did have a chance and misses it!

[14.Qxe2 Forced. Bxe2 15.Ne6 Bb6 16.Nc3 Bxf1 17.Kxf1 gxf2=]

14...Rxh3+! 15.gxh3 Bf3#**0-1****2**□ **R E James**■ **J Mason**

Insurance Inter-Office Competition

18.11.1935

C42

White seems to be making good progress in the centre when Black springs a surprise combination involving the passive offer of a rook.

The player of the White pieces here was once of the longest serving members of the Insurance Chess Club; for 36 years (1954-1990), its Treasurer.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Bc4 Nxe4 4.0-0 Bc5 5.Nxe5 d5 6.d4 Bb6 7.Bb3 0-0 8.c3 Nc6 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.Bc2 f5 11.f3? Nd6 12.Bf4 c5 13.Be5 Nc4 14.Qe1 Nxe5 15.Qxe5 cxd4 16.cxd4 Qh4!?

A passive offer of the queen's rook is the springboard for a sudden attack. In fact, a surer route to success lay in 16...Re8.

[16...Re8 17.Qf4 Re2 18.Na3 g5 19.Qc1 Bxd4+ 20.Kh1 Ba6+]

**2**

○

17.Qxd5+ Kh8 18.Qxa8 Bxd4+ 19.Kh1 Be5 20.f4 Bxf4 21.g3?

[Instead 21.h3 Qg3 22.Rxf4 Qxf4 23.Na3+- and it is White who is winning.]

21...Bxg3 22.Qg2

But White could be forgiven for thinking he had now batted down all hatches.

22...Bb7!

A pleasing finish.

0-1**3**□ **J Mason**■ **W M Varley**

SCCU Counties' Championship

03.12.1938

D53

Black, castling first, finds himself immediately under attack. He contributes to his own downfall by

unnecessary pawn moves in front of his king, but the closure is applied most effectively.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 c6 5.e3 Nbd7 6.Nf3 Be7 7.Rc1 dxc4

[Better is 7...0-0 ...waiting for Bd3 before exchanging on c4.]

8.Bxc4 Nd5 9.Bxe7 Qxe7 10.e4 Nxc3 11.Rxc3 Nf6 12.Qe2 0-0 13.h4

Mr Mason was always happy to see his opponent castle first; invariably it was the sign to attack!

13...g6?

The first in a series of unhappy pawn moves in front of the king which only assist White to break through. Seeking active counterplay in the centre was to be preferred.

[e.g. 13...e5 14.dxe5 (14.Nxe5 c5 15.f4 cxd4 16.Rd3 Be6 17.Bxe6 Qxe6=) 14...Ng4 15.h5 h6 16.0-0±]

14.Ne5 Nh5 15.Rf3 f6?

After this further indiscretion, White's attack moves smoothly into top gear.

[15...Qb4+ would be met by 16.Kf1]

[But 15...c5= would be a sound continuation.]

16.Nd3 Kh8 17.g4 Ng7 18.h5 g5 19.h6 Ne8 20.e5 f5



21.gxf5 Rxf5 22.Rxf5 exf5 23.e6 Nd6 24.Qe5+ Kg8 25.Bb3 b6 26.Nf4! Ne8 27.Ng6! 1-0

4

□ J Crane

■ J Mason

Insurance CC v London CC

13.01.1939

White springs a surprise combination giving up a rook for the attack. It seems to have enough to decide the issue, but Black with careful footwork turns the tables.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.d4 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.Nc3 Bg4 9.Nd5 Nxd4 10.Nxf6+ gxf6!?

No doubt to secure attacking chances with the open g-file.

11.Nxe5!? Nxb3

[Clearly not 11...Bxd1 12.Bxf7+ Kf8 13.Bh6#]

12.Nxg4 Nxa1 13.Nh6 Qd7 14.Qd5! c6 15.Qxf7+ Kd8 16.Bd2 Nxc2 17.Nf5 Re8 18.Ba5+ Kc8 19.Rc1



Bd8! 20.Nxd6+ Qxd6 21.Qxe8 Kb7 22.Qf7+ Be7 23.a3 Nd4 24.Qh5 Rg8

Black is not only out of the woods, still a piece ahead, but has fully moved over to attack.

25.Bb4 Qd7 26.Bc3 Bc5! 27.Bxd4

[If 27.Qxc5 Ne2+]

27...Bxd4 28.Rd1 c5 29.Qxc5

Taking advantage of the pin, White falls into Black's trap.

29...Bxf2+! 30.Kxf2 Qxd1 31.Qe7+ Kb8 32.Qxh7 Qd2+ 33.Kf3 Qxg2+ 34.Ke3 Rd8 35.b4 Qd2+ 36.Kf3 Rd3+ 37.Kg4 Qg5# 0-1

5

□ R C Harvey

■ J Mason

Essex Championship (1)

22.02.1939

Black picks up a pawn in the opening but, without a plan, his advantage counts for nothing.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.Nc3 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 0-0 8.Qb3 Nd7 9.Bd3 c5 10.0-0 cxd4 11.cxd4 Nc5

Taking advantage of the pin on the long diagonal.

12.Qc2 Bxd4 13.Nxd4 Qxd4 14.Bb2! Qxd3 15.Qxc5 Qd6

[If 15...Qxe4 16.Rfe1= recovers the pawn and establishes White's rook on the 7th rank.]

16.Qc3 f6 17.Rad1 Qc6 18.Qe3 Be6 19.a3 b5 20.f4 Bc4 21.Rf3 Rfd8 22.Rc1 Qe8

Unnecessarily cautious.

23.Qc3 Qf7

[23...Rac8+]



24.e5 Kg7 25.exf6+ exf6 26.f5 Rd6 27.h4 Rad8 28.fxg6 hxg6 29.Re1 Rc6 30.Rfe3 Rd7 31.Qb4 Rcd6 32.g4 Kh7 33.g5 f5?

The losing move, ruinously opening the a1-h8 diagonal for White's use.

[33...Rd1=]

34.Re8 Rd8 35.R8e7

There was no defence.

0-1

6

□ **Dr J W Crook**

■ **J Mason**

W&W v Ilford - Season-opening Friendly

07.10.44

Seizing on a slip, Black moves smoothly into an attack on the king in the course of which he completely consumes White's K-side.

The game was played at a fast pace, finishing inside two hours.

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.Bb5 Bb4 5.0-0 0-0 6.a3? Bxc3 7.dxc3 d6 8.Qd3 Ne7 9.Bg5 Ng6 10.Rad1 h6 11.Bc1 Be6 12.Rfe1 c6 13.Bc4 d5 14.exd5 cxd5 15.Qe3

White's difficulties deepen. Better chances were offered by 15 Qe2.

15...Qc7 16.Bb3 Ng4! 17.Qd2 e4 18.h3 exf3 19.hxg4 fxg2 20.f3

[20.Kxg2 Nh4+ ...followed by 21 ...Nf3.]

20...Nh4 21.Qf2 g5 22.Bxd5 Bxd5 23.Rxd5 Qc6 24.Rd3 f5! 25.Re7

[If 25.gxf5 Rxf5 26.f4 Raf8 27.Rg3 Kh7-+]

25...fxg4 26.Qd4

White is now reduced to desperate counter measures; material no longer matters.

26...Nf5 27.Qe5 Nxe7 28.Qxe7 gxf3

An extraordinary picture - the take-over of White's K-side is complete!



29.Be3 Rae8 30.Qb4 Rxe3!

It's curtains after 31 Rxe3 f2+.

0-1

7

□ **T H George**

■ **J Mason**

Essex Wartime Championship

05.05.1945

Game 5 was from the last Essex Championship before the war. This game is the Final game in a knockout event brought Mr Mason the title of Essex Wartime Champion, 1944-45. The game is notable for having begun in wartime and been completed in peacetime. In a complex strategical battle Mr Mason shows that in addition to being a fine attacking player he could also when required manoeuvre effectively in closed positions. The notes of both players are incorporated in the following text where indicated.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 Na5 9.Bc2 c5 10.d4 Qc7 11.d5

Preventing redevelopment of the knight via c6. Logically this move should be followed immediately by b3.

11...Bg4 12.Nbd2 0-0 13.Nf1 Nc4 14.b3 Nb6 15.Ng3 c4 16.h3

Giving Black the initiative. - JM

16...cxb3! 17.Bxb3

[After the text, White's suffers from a hole on c4 and the chronic long-term weakness of his c-pawn. A better choice lay in 17.axb3 Qxc3 18.hxg4 (or 18.Be3 Bxf3 19.Qxf3 Nbxg4 20.exd5 Qxc2 21.Nf5 Rfe8 22.Rec1 Qe4=) 18...Qxa1 19.Nf5 Ra7 20.Nxg7! Rc8 21.Nf5 Ne8 22.Qd2 Qc3 23.Nxe7+ Rxe7 24.Qg5+ Kf8 25.Qh4 f6=]

17...Bd7

[If 17...Qxc3 18.hxg4 Qxa1 19.Qd2 Nc4 (19...Rac8 20.Bb2!) 20.Qd3 Rac8 (or 20...Nb2 21.Qc2) 21.Ba3 Nb2 22.Qe2!± - THG]

18.Qd3 Rfc8 19.Bd2 Nc4 20.Rac1 Qb7

White realises that Black can hold onto the c4 square indefinitely, to his advantage. - JM

21.Bg5 h6 22.Bxf6 Bxf6 23.Nf1 Rc5 24.Ne3 Nb6 25.Rc2 Rac8 26.Rec1 a5 27.a3 a4 28.Ba2 Qc7



7

29.Nd2 Bg5! 30.Nf3 Qd8 31.Nxg5 Qxg5

Black has effectively extended operations to a second front.

32.Kh2 Rf8 33.Nf5

White cannot allow ...f5. - THG

33...Bxf5 34.exf5 g6 35.fxg6 fxg6 36.Re1

Here the game was adjourned and Black sealed his next move. By the time it was resumed the war was over - but not on this battle front!



8

36...Qf5

Simplest - often the best. - JM

37.Qxf5 Rxf5 38.f3 Kg7

[Not 38...Nxd5 39.Rd1+-]

39.Rd1 Rf4 40.Rb2

[40.Rd3 threatening g3 seems a better line. - JM]

40...Nc4 41.Bxc4 Rfxc4 42.Rd3 Kf6

[There is no clear win by 42...Rxc3 43.Rxc3 Rxc3 44.Rxb5 Rxa3 45.Rb6 Ra1 46.Rxd6 a3 47.Ra6=]

43.Rc2 Rd4!

Winning.

44.cxd4 Rxc2 45.Kg3 exd4 46.Rxd4 Rc4?

But this should throw it away!

[46...Rc3 retains the win.]

47.Re4?

White misses his last chance.

[47.Rxc4! bxc4 48.Kf4 and the ending is drawn. e.

g. c3 49.Ke3 Ke5 50.Kd3 c2 51.Kxc2 Kxd5

52.Kc3 g5 53.g3 h5 54.h4 gxh4 55.gxh4 Ke5

56.Kb4 d5 57.Kxa4 Kf4 58.Kb3 Ke3 59.Kc2 Ke2

60.Kc3 Ke3 61.Kc2 d4 62.Kd1 Kxf3 63.Kd2 Ke4

64.a4 Kd5 65.a5 Kc6 66.Kd3 Kb5 67.Kxd4 Kxa5

68.Ke5 Kb6 69.Kf5 Kc6 70.Kg5 Kd6 71.Kxh5 Ke7

72.Kg6 Kf8=]

47...Rxe4 48.fxe4 b4! 49.axb4 a3

0-1

8

□ R A Wagstaff

■ J Mason

W&W Club Ch.

E21

18.02.1951

In a fluctuating struggle, White is the first to establish an advantage, but fails to make the most of it and Black hits on the counter with an incisive attack.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Bd2 b6 5.Nf3

Bb7 6.g3 Bxc3 7.Bxc3 0-0 8.Bg2 d6 9.0-0

Nbd7 10.Qb3 Rb8 11.Rad1 d5 12.cxd5 Bxd5

13.Qc2 Ne4 14.Nd2 Nxc3 15.Qxc3 Bxg2

16.Kxg2 Nf6 17.Nf3

[17.e4± might have been a better try.]

17...Nd5 18.Qa3 f5 19.Rc1 Qe8 20.Ne5



9

Qb5 21.Nc6 Rbe8 22.Rc2 f4 23.Nxa7 Qd7

24.Nc6 fxg3 25.hxg3 Qf7 26.Ne5

[26.Qd3+-]

26...Qf5 27.Qd3 Qg5

[27...Ne3+! 28.Qxe3 Qxc2 29.Rc1 Qa4 30.Rxc7

Rc8 31.Re7±]

28.Qd2 Nf4+ 29.Kg1 Rf6 30.Nf3?

Removing this knight from its best square begins the collapse of White's position and the threats to his king build with alarming rapidity.

[White retains the advantage with 30.e3 Nd5

31.Rfc1 Ref8 32.Qe1 (32.Nd7 Rxf2+-) 32...Rh6 33.Qe2±]

30...Qg4 31.Nh4

[It was still not too late with 31.Ne5 Qh5 32.Qxf4 Rxf4 33.gxf4 Qf5±]

31...Ref8 32.e3 Nh3+ 33.Kg2 Rxf2+ 34.Rxf2 Rxf2+ 35.Qxf2 Nxf2 36.Rxf2 Qe4+ 37.Nf3 g5 38.Kg1 Qxe3 39.g4 h5 40.gxh5 g4 41.Ne5 g3 0-1

9

□ J Mason

■ J R Cheshire

SCCU Counties Championship

09.02.1952

C15

Black, having accepted a gambit pawn, unwisely accepts a second (11...Qxd4) and finds himself taken apart on the dark squares. Both players reach the same erroneous conclusion about White's 17 Na4, after which the game is soon decided in White's favour.

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Nge2

Throughout his career, Mr Mason met the Winawer variation in this way. The move involves a gambit.

4...dxe4 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.Nxc3 f5 7.f3 exf3

8.Qxf3 Nf6 9.Bd2 0-0 10.0-0-0 c6 11.h4

Wasting no time to commence the attack even at the cost of a second pawn. The factors which govern this offer are of a general nature - in capturing the pawn, Black opens up the d-file which can benefit only White with his great lead in development.

11...Qxd4 12.Bf4 Qb6 13.h5 Ng4 14.Rd2 Nd7

15.h6 g6 16.Qg3 e5



10

17.Na4 Qa5

Black falls in with the logic of the position implied by

White's move.

[However, after 17...exf4! 18.Nxb6 fxb3 19.Nxa8 the correct assessment of the position is Black is winning! e.g. Nde5 20.Nc7 f4 21.Be2 Ne3 22.Rg1 Bf5+-]

18.Qb3+ Kh8 19.Bg5 Nf2 20.Be7 Ne4 21.Rd1 Ndc5 22.Nxc5 Nxc5 23.Qe3 f4 24.Qxe5+ 1-0

10

□ A J Sherriff

■ J Mason

SCCU Counties Championship

10.04.1956

A52

This game comes from a league match against Leyton CC of which Mr Mason was a member before W&W days.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5

This was one of Mr Mason's favourite defences to d4 and he knew much about the devious traps in which White could fall.

3.dxe5 Ng4 4.Nf3 Bc5 5.e3 Nc6 6.b3 0-0

7.Bb2 Re8 8.Be2 Nxe5 9.Nbd2



11

Nxf2!

This must have come as a great shock to White.

Whatever plans he had for the rest of the game must be put aside, never to be taken up again.

10.Kxf2 Ng4+ 11.Kg3

Ugly, but as good as any.

[11.Kf1 Nxe3+++]

[11.Kg1 Nxe3 12.Qc1 Nc2+ 13.Kf1 Qe7 14.Bd3 Qe3 15.Ne4 Rxe4+-]

[11.Ke1 Nxe3 12.Qc1 Nxe2+ 13.Kf1 Qe7+-]

11...Nxe3 12.Qb1 d5 13.Bd3 Qd6+ 14.Kf2 Nxc4+ 15.Kf1 Nxd2+ 16.Nxd2 Qf4+ 17.Nf3 Qxf3+! 18.gxf3 Bh3# A "pure mate". 0-1

11

□ J Mason

■ R A Wagstaff

W&W Club Ch.

A42

30.04.1957

This game decided the Club Championship that year in Mr Mason's favour. In a Final pool of six players all-play-all, both had 3½/4: the winner would be Champion. After a careful mustering of forces, White initiates the break. Thereafter both players seem intent on coming forward, the issue being in the balance until late in the game.

1.d4 d6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 Nc6 5.Be3 e5 6.d5 Nce7 7.f3 f5 8.g3 Nf6 9.Bg2 0-0 10.Qd2 a6 11.a4 Bd7 12.Nh3 Qe8 13.b3 fxe4 14.Nxe4 Nf5 15.0-0 Nxe3 16.Qxe3 Qe7 17.Rae1 h6 18.Nhf2 Rae8 19.Nd3 Bf5 20.Qe2 Bd7 21.Qc2 Rf7 22.f4!

White having transferred his queen to c2 out of the firing line, now initiates the break.

22...Bf5

[22...exf4 23.Nxf4 is clearly in White's favour.]

23.fxe5 Nxe4 24.Bxe4 dxe5 25.b4 h5 26.Bxf5 gxf5 27.Nc5

The knight will reach e6 with great effect.

27...e4 28.Kg2 h4 29.Rf4 hxg3 30.hxg3 Be5

31.Rh4 Rg7 32.Rh3 Rh7 33.Reh1 Rxh3

34.Rxh3 a5 35.Qf2 Rf8 36.bxa5 Rf7 37.Ne6 c6

38.Qa7!

A surprising route to the king!



12

38...cxd5

[38...Qe8 to prevent the incursion along the back rank, allows 39.a6 forcing a passed pawn.]

39.Qa8+ Rf8 40.Nxf8 Qxf8 41.Qxb7 Qg7

42.Qxd5+ Kf8 43.Qd8+ Kf7 44.Qd7+ Kg8

45.Qxg7+ Kxg7 46.Rh5 Kg6 47.g4! e3 48.Kf1 1-0

12

□ J Mason

■ R Jessop

Essex League

A61

23.02.1966

Mr Mason retained his attacking skill to a late age as is shown by this League game played shortly after his 71st birthday.

Black's Q-side play nets him a pawn but White replies by sacrificing a piece for an attack on the king!

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 c5 3.d5 e6 4.c4 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nc3 g6 7.Bg5 Bg7 8.Qd2 0-0 9.Bh6 Re8 10.Bxg7 Kxg7 11.e3 Bd7 12.Bd3 Na6 13.Rd1 Rb8 14.a3 b5 15.Qe2 c4 16.Bc2 Nc5 17.0-0 Qb6 18.Nd4 a5 19.f3 b4 20.Ne4 Nxd5



13

21.Nf5+ gxf5 22.Rxd5 fxe4 23.f4

For the piece White has exposed the black king and counts on being able to close in before Black can bring his forces over from the Q-side.

In truth, White's attack should be insufficient, but the practical issues have to be answered over-the-board!

23...f5 24.Qh5 h6 25.g4 Nd3 26.gxf5 Rg8

27.Kh1 Be8

[If 27...Qxe3 28.Qg6+ Kf8 29.Qxd6+ wins quickly.]

28.f6+ Kh7?

[28...Kxf6 29.Qxh6+ (29.Qf5+ Ke7! 30.Qh7+ Bf7-+ and White has nothing.) 29...Ke7 30.Qh7+ Bf7 31.Rf5 Rbf8 32.Rxf7+ Rxf7 33.Qxg8 bxa3 34.bxa3 Qxe3 35.Qg5+ Rf6 36.Qg7+ Rf7 37.Qg5+ Rf6=]

29.f7 Bxf7 30.Qxf7+ Rg7 31.Qf5+ Kh8

32.Qxe4 Nxb2?

This grab, in time-trouble, seals Black's fate.

[32...Qc6 33.Bxd3 cxd3 34.Qxd3 bxa3 35.bxa3 Rb2 36.e4 Rgg2 37.Rh5 Kh7=]

33.Qe6 Qb7 34.Qxh6+ Rh7

[Or 34...Kg8 35.Bh7+! Kf7 (35...Rxh7 36.Rg1+ Rg7 37.Rxg7+ Qxg7 38.Qe6+ Qf7 39.Rg5+ Kf8 40.Qxd6++) 36.e4 Rd8 37.Rf5+ Ke8 38.Bg6+ Kd7 39.Qxg7+ Kc8 40.Rf7-+]

35.Bxh7 Qxd5+ 36.e4
 [36.Be4+ is also good!]
36...Qb7 37.Bf5+
1-0

13

□ J Mason

■ L S Halliday

W&W Club Ch.

D66

13.12.1966

Black seems to be making good headway with counterplay, but after picking up a pawn finds the price is too high as he falls foul to an elegant mating attack.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 e6 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Bg5 Nbd7 6.e3 Be7 7.Rc1 0-0 8.Bd3 h6 9.Bh4 dxc4 10.Bxc4 Nb6 11.Bd3 Nbd5 12.0-0 Nxc3 13.bxc3 Nd5 14.Bg3 Qa5 15.Qb3 f5 16.c4 f4!? 17.cxd5 fxg3 18.fxg3

[18.dxe6 gxh2+ 19.Nxh2 Black will recover the e6 pawn.]

18...exd5 19.Ne5 Rxf1+ 20.Rxf1 Bg5 21.Bb1 Qd2 22.Kh1

This further example of passive sacrifice is the prelude to an elegant attack on the black king.



14

22...Bxe3 23.Ng6

Black is suddenly threatened with mate in two!

23...Be6 24.Qxb7 Re8 25.Qe7! Rxe7 26.Rf8+ Kh7 27.Rh8#
1-0

14

□ J Mason

■ R A Wagstaff

W&W Club Ch.

B07

30.05.1967

Black swallows a proffered pawn but like so many before him finds there is a combination waiting round the corner.

1.e4 d6 2.f4 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.Bc4 Nf6 5.c3 0-0
 [If 5...Nxe4 6.Qa4+ Bd7 7.Bxf7+ Kxf7 8.Qxe4=]
6.d3 Nc6 7.Nbd2 e5 8.Nf1 a6 9.Ng3 Na5 10.Bb3 Nxb3 11.Qxb3 Nd7 12.f5 Nc5 13.Qd1 b5 14.0-0 Bb7 15.Be3 Nd7 16.Qd2 Nf6 17.Bh6 Ng4 18.Bxg7 Kxg7 19.h3 Nf6 20.Nh2 d5 21.Qg5 dxe4



15

22.fxg6! fxg6 23.Rxf6! Rxf6 24.Nh5+ Kh8

[Black must lose a piece. If 24...Kf7 25.Nxf6 Qxf6 26.Rf1+-]

25.Nxf6 exd3 26.Qxe5 Qd6 27.Qxd6 cxd6 28.Rd1 Kg7 29.Nfg4 Be4 30.Nf2 Bd5 31.b3 Rc8 32.Rxd3 Be6

...and WHITE WON on move 50.

1-0

15

□ A W Birks

■ J Mason

W&W Club Ch.

C84

21.01.1969

Apart from Mr Mason's Championship wins in 1949-50 and 1956-57 he recorded a number of near-misses. This campaign, during which he reached the age of 74, proved to be one of them as he finished equal second with his opponent in the present encounter, ½ point behind the Tournament winner, Roy Wagstaff. Here Black speculates on a K-side attack but this is snuffed out in its infancy. The game reaches an ending in Black's favour. White then seems to have forced a draw, but Black has other ideas.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Be7 7.d3 d6 8.Nc3 Na5 9.Bg5 Nxb3 10.axb3 h6 11.Bxf6 gxf6!?

Speculating on the attacking prospects for an open file to White's castled king. White must now take active counter measures before the attack develops.

12.Nh4 Rg8 13.Nf5 Bxf5 14.exf5 c6 15.Ne4 Kd7 16.d4 exd4 17.Qxd4 Kc7 18.c4 d5! 19.cxd5 Qxd5 20.Qxd5 cxd5

Both players have been successful! White has succeeded in preventing Black's attacking possibilities from blossoming, and Black, while not getting the play he envisaged, has transposed to an ending where is d-pawn, although isolated, holds important ground in the centre.



16

21.Rfc1+

The wrong rook.

21...Kb6 22.Nc3 Rgd8 23.Rd1 d4 24.Ne4 Ra7

25.Rd3 Rad7 26.Rad1 Rd5 27.g4 Rg8 28.f3

[Not 28.Rxd4 Rxg4+ 29.Kf1 Rxf5-+]

28...Rxf5 29.Kf2!

An artful drawing attempt!

29...Rxg4 30.Ng3 Rff4 31.Nh5 Rf5 32.Ng3 Rff4

33.Nh5

And here one might imagine a draw would be agreed, but such are Black's resources - extra pawns, dark square control, powerful passed pawn, weak White pawn structure - that he is now able to sacrifice the exchange and play for the win.



17

33...Bd6! 34.Nxf4 Rxf4 35.Kg2

The sealed move at the end of the first session.

35...Be5 36.h3 Rh4 37.Rc1 Rh5 38.Rg1

[38.Rc8 allowed a more active defence. e.g. Rg5+ 39.Kf2 Rg3 40.Rxd4 Rxh3 41.Rd2 Rh2+ 42.Ke1 Bg3+ 43.Kd1 Rh1+ 44.Kc2=]

38...Rg5+ 39.Kf2 Rxg1 40.Kxg1 Bf4 41.Kg2 Kc5 42.Kf2?

A pity after such a keen struggle that it should be decided by a slip.

[42.Rd1 was necessary. e.g. play might then proceed

Be3 43.Kf1 Kb4 44.Ke2 Kxb3 45.Ra1 Kxb2

46.Rxa6 b4 47.Rxf6 b3 48.Rxf7 Ka1 49.f4 Bxf4

(or 49...b2 50.Ra7+ Kb1 51.f5 Bg5 52.Kd1=)

50.Rxf4 b2 51.Rxd4 b1Q 52.Ra4+ Kb2 53.Rb4+

Kc1 54.Rxb1+ Kxb1 55.Kf3 Kc2 56.Kg4 Kd3

57.Kh5 Ke4 58.Kxh6 Kf4 59.h4 Kf5 60.h5 Kf6

61.Kh7 Kf7 62.h6 Kf8=]

42...Bc1

0-1