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# 4 Opening Misses

## Poor Opening Choices

Sometimes opening ideas are prepared and played which simply don't promise any chance for an opening advantage. Usually all it takes is a single game to recognize the mistake and scrap the idea altogether. If you are going to expend the time and energy to develop new opening moves, at least do it in a position in which you have a reasonable chance to obtain an advantage.

### Game 23: In Search of Proper Technique James Rizzitano 1800 – Joel Benjamin 2027 *National Jr High School Ch, Waltham 1976* B09 Pirc Defence, Austrian Attack

White plays an innocuous sideline in the Austrian Attack and is rewarded when Black plays a weakening pawn move which exposes his king to attack. After obtaining a material advantage, White only staggers to victory due to a lack of proper technique.

#### 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♗c3 g6 4 f4

This is the Austrian Attack. White takes advantage of Black's lack of a pawn presence in the middle of the board to create a big centre. The play often revolves around whether the central pawns strengthen White's attack or become a target for Black's pieces.

#### 4...♙g7 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♙d3 ♘c6 7 0-0 ♙g4 8 ♙e3?!

A dubious attempt to maintain the central tension. The main line beginning with 8 e5 dxe5 9 dxe5 ♘d5 10 h3 ♘xc3 11 bxc3 ♙f5 12 ♙e3 is the best chance to obtain an opening advantage. White should avoid the Austrian Attack unless he is willing to play into the main line.

#### 8...e5 9 dxe5

Another idea is to blunt the range of Black's fianchettoed bishop by playing 9 fxe5 dxe5 10 d5 ♘d4 11 ♙e2 with equal chances.

#### 9...dxe5 10 f5!?

More aggressive than 10 h3 exf4 (stronger than 10...♙xf3?! 11 ♖xf3 ♘d4 12 ♗f2 ♘d7 13 f5 with a slight edge in Mineev-Anagnastopoulos, Sofia 1967) 11 ♙xf4 ♘h5!?! (sharper than 11...♙e6 with equal chances according to Parma, although White can try 12 ♙b5!?) 12 ♙e3 ♙xf3 13 ♖xf3 ♘e5 14 ♗f2 c6, when Black has a solid position because of the strong knight outpost on the e5-square.

#### 10...gxf5

10...♘d4!?! is also possible, with equality. The idea behind the game continuation is to take advantage of the line-up of white pieces along the e-file.

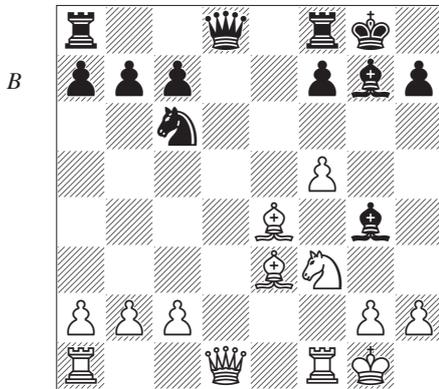
#### 11 exf5 e4! 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe4

Stronger than 12...♙xf5?! 13 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 14 ♘h4 ♖xh4 15 ♖xf5 ♙d4 16 ♙xd4 ♖xd4+ 17 ♘h1, when White has a slight edge because of the exposed black king.

#### 13 ♙xe4 (D)

#### 13...♖e7

After the game Joel preferred 13...♖e8!?!; for example, 14 ♖d3 ♖d8 15 ♖c4 ♘d4 (15...♙xf5 16 ♙xf5 ♖xe3+ 17 ♘h1 is very good for White because of Black's weakened kingside pawn-structure) 16 ♙xd4 ♖xe4 17 c3 ♙xf3 18 ♖xf3 ♙xd4+ (White recovers the piece advantageously after 18...c5? 19 f6! cxd4 20 ♖g3) 19



cx d4 ♖xd4+ 20 ♗xd4 ♜xd4 with an equal end-game.

#### 14 ♖d3 ♜ad8 15 ♙g5

Also possible is 15 f6!? ♙xf6 16 ♙xh7+ ♙h8 17 ♗e4 with a slight edge for White, Glatt-Hradeczky, Hungarian Team Ch 1991.

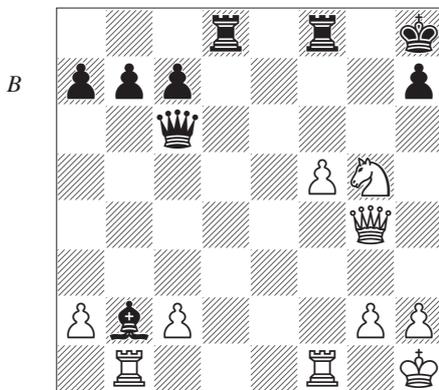
#### 15...f6?

This move is the decisive error. Black must play 15...♗c5+ 16 ♗e3 (16 ♙e3 ♗b4 is fine for Black) 16...♗xe3+ 17 ♙xe3 ♜fe8 18 ♘g5 (or 18 ♙xc6 ♜xe3 19 ♙xb7 ♙xf5 20 ♜ae1 ♜xe1 21 ♘xe1 with equal chances) 18...♙xb2 (18...h6 19 ♘e6! fxe6 20 f6 gives White a slight edge) 19 ♜ab1 ♙d4 20 ♙xd4 ♘xd4 21 ♜xb7 h6 (21...♙e2!? 22 ♜f4 ♙a6 23 ♜xa7 ♘e2+ 24 ♙f2 ♘xf4 25 ♜xa6 with compensation for the exchange) 22 ♙f3 ♙xf5 with an equal end-game.

#### 16 ♗c4+ ♙h8 17 ♙xc6 fxe5

White also secures a strong initiative after 17...♙xf3 18 ♜ae1.

18 ♗xg4 ♗c5+ 19 ♙h1 ♗xc6 20 ♘xg5 ♙xb2 21 ♜ab1 (D)



#### 21...♙f6

Black's queen is overloaded after 21...♗xc2 22 ♗h3! (retaining control of the critical h3-c8 diagonal) 22...♜d7 23 f6 and now:

1) 23...♜d5 24 ♘f7+! ♙g8 (24...♜xf7 25 ♗c8+ mates) 25 ♜xb2 ♗xb2 26 ♗g3+ mates.

2) 23...♜dd8 24 ♜xb2 ♜xf6 25 ♜g1 and White has an extra piece.

#### 22 ♘e6 ♜g8 23 ♘xd8 ♙xd8 24 ♗f3

White has a decisive advantage although his technique could use some improvement.

24...♗xc2 25 ♜xb7 ♗xa2 26 ♜b8 ♗f7 27 ♜d1 ♙f6 28 ♜xg8+ ♗xg8 29 ♗b7 ♙e5 30 ♗xa7 ♗e8 31 ♜b1 ♙g7 32 ♗e3 ♗e7 33 ♜e1 ♙f6 34 g4?

This terrible move exposes the white king and needlessly prolongs the game. White can initiate a mating attack by playing 34 ♗h6+ ♙xf5 35 ♜f1+ ♙e4 36 ♗c6+ ♙e3 37 ♗f3+ ♙d4 38 ♜d1+ ♙c4 39 ♗d5+.

#### 34...♗d6 35 ♗h6+ ♙e7 36 ♗xh7+?

White misses 36 ♗g7+, which wins immediately.

36...♙d8 37 ♗g8+ ♙d7 38 ♗f7+ ♙d8 39 ♗e6 ♗d3 40 ♗g8+ ♙d7 41 ♗e6+ ♙d8 42 ♗xe5 ♗f3+ 43 ♙g1 ♗xg4+ 44 ♗g3 ♗d4+ 45 ♗e3 ♗g4+ 46 ♙f2 ♗xf5+ 47 ♙e2 ♗h5+ 48 ♙f1 ♗f5+ 49 ♙g1 ♗g6+ 50 ♗g3 ♗b6+ 51 ♙h1 ♗c6+ 52 ♗g2 1-0

### Game Lessons:

1) If you want to fight for an advantage in the early stages of an established opening, stick to the main lines. Despite the positive result, the dubious idea 8 ♙e3?! was deservedly shelved after this game.

2) This variation does not promise anything for White because Black can easily equalize by continuing 10...♘d4 instead of the sharper 10...gxf5. Black could have maintained the balance by heading for an equal endgame beginning with 15...♗c5+ – the game continuation 15...f6? allowed White to take advantage of the a2-g8 diagonal and generate a strong kingside attack.

3) Proper technique is a must to be able to finish off your opponent – don't let up. White was only able to win this game, despite several inaccuracies, because he had a wide margin for error.