

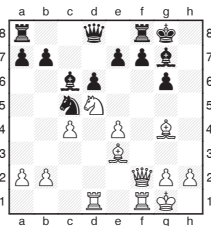
Michael Adams



A cavalier of the chessboard

As a teenager I was impressed by the way Bent Larsen, who died recently, outclassed the field at the Watson Farley Williams tournament in London in 1989 despite being long past his prime.

Larsen was the consummate tournament player, winning the strongest events in the Sixties and Seventies. Popular with his colleagues, who admired his great fighting spirit and principled individualistic approach to the game, he always created problems for opponents with his immense positional understanding and great endgame play aided by his considerable stamina.



Larsen, B - Petrosian, T
Santa Monica 1966

Here Bent plays very imaginatively and aggressively to whip up an attack, which is too much for the master of defence.

20.e4-e5

Winning the queen is a Pyrrhic victory after 20.Be3xc5 d6xc5 21.Nd5-f6+ Bg7xf6 22.Rd1xd8 Ra8xd8.

**20...
21.Qf2-h4
22.Rd1xd5**

**Bg7xe5
Bc6xd5
Nc5-e6**

White is better after 22...e7-e6 23.Qh4xd8 Rf8xd8 24.Rd5xe5 d6xe5 25.Be3xc5 f7-f5 26.Bg4-d1 but this might have been a clever practical decision.

23.Rf1-f3 Be5-f6

It was better to create a flight path for the Black king with 23...f7-f5 then 24.Rf3-h3 and Black must try either 24...Ne6-g7 25.Bg4-f3 Kg8-f7 26.Rd5-b5 b7-b6 27.Bf3xa8 Qd8xa8, which is a bit better for White, or 24...Kg8-f7 25.Bg4xf5 g6xf5 26.Qh4-h5+ Kf7-f6 27.g2-g4 Ne6-g7 28.Be3-g5+ Kf6-e6 29.Qh5-g6+ Be5-f6 30.g4xf5+ Ke6-d7 31.Bg5xf6 Rf8xf6 32.Qg6xg7 with a small advantage. Petrosian hadn't yet seen Larsen's brilliant idea.

**24.Qh4-h6 Bf6-g7
25.Qh6xg6**

Larsen would have this devastating queen sacrifice planned several moves ago.

25... Ne6-f4

Not 25...Ne6-c7 26.Qg6xg7+ Kg8xg7 27.Rd5-g5+ Kg7-h6 28.Rf3-h3 mate, if 25...f7xg6 26.Bg4xe6+ Kg8-h7 27.Rf3-h3+ Bg7-h6 28.Be3xh6 Rf8-f5 29.Rd5xf5 g6xf5 30.Be6-f7 Qd8-b6+ 31.Kg1-h1 and the threat of Bh6-f8 mate is decisive.

**26.Rf3xf4 f7xg6
27.Bg4-e6+ Rf8-f7**

After 27...Kg8-h7 28.Rf4-h4+ Bg7-h6 29.Be3xh6 g6-g5 30.Rd5xg5 Qd8-b6+ 31.c4-c5 Black's king is helpless.

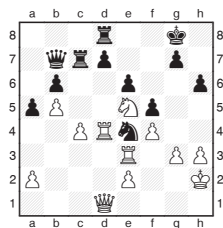
28.Rf4xf7 Kg8-h8

28...Bg7-e5 29.Be3-g5 keeping the option of the discovered check is good enough.

29.Rd5-g5
Swinging the rook over finishes the game off,

Black's two major pieces remain completely passive.

**29... b7-b5
30.Rg5-g3
1-0**



Larsen, B - Najdorf, M
Buenos Aires 1983

29.Re3xe4

By removing Black's knight White achieves complete positional domination.

**29... f5xe4
30.Rd4-d6 Rd8-c8
31.Qd1-d4 a5-a4
32.h3-h4 Qb7-a7**

Najdorf doesn't want to sit around whilst his opponent improves his position and tries to activate his queen at all costs.

**33.Qd4xe4 Qa7-a5
34.Ne5xd7 Qa5-e1**

If 34...Rc7xc4 35.Nd7-f6+ g7xf6 36.Qe4-g6+ Kg8-f8 37.Rd6-d7 leads to mate.

35.Nd7xb6

Now with three pawns for the exchange the material balance is tilted back in White's favour.

**35... Qe1-f2+
36.Kh2-h3 Rc8-f8
37.Nb6-d7 Rf8-f5
38.Qe4xe6+ Kg8-h8
39.Qe6-e8+**

Avoiding the last trick: 39.Qe6xf5 Qf2-f1+ allows Black to escape with a draw.

**39... Kh8-h7
40.Qe8-e4 Qf2-f1+
40...Kh7-h8 41.b5-b6 wins.**

**41.Kh3-g4 g7-g6
42.Qe4-e7+
1-0**