

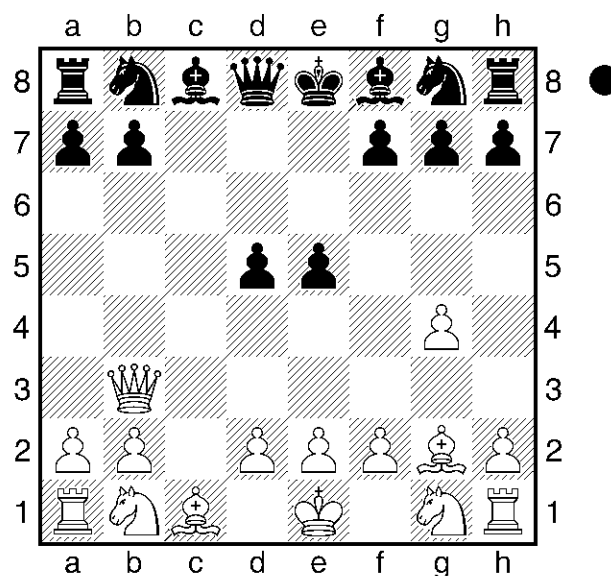
□ Grob,H
 ■ Blatti,W
 Switzerland
 [Andrew]

The difference between a professional player and the other 99.99% of chessplayers is not always appreciated. Funnily enough, the refusal to accept that one is not a professional can form a barrier to improvement. For the amateur it is completely useless to try to play like a Grandmaster, yet how often do we see this among our chess-playing friends. They keep up with the latest theory, assiduously study games from the latest GM tournaement (or they think they do) and fail to make a single step forward in their playing strength.

It all comes down to understanding one's limitations and what is possible. The subject of this column had no illusions as to his overall strength. He played chess to experiment, to enjoy and to create original effects. He is one of my chess heroes; IM Henri Grob. Grob lived between 1904 and 1974 and acheived notable chess success. He was twice Swiss national champion in 1939 and 1951. He defeated many Grandmasters with his unorthodox, tactically-based style of play. He was a creative chess author. Crucially, chess was not his whole life and this enabled him to enjoy the game to the full. In fact as a portrait painter, he was not only able to play Grandmasters, but to paint them as well! He became famous for playing correspondance games with newspaper readers, over three

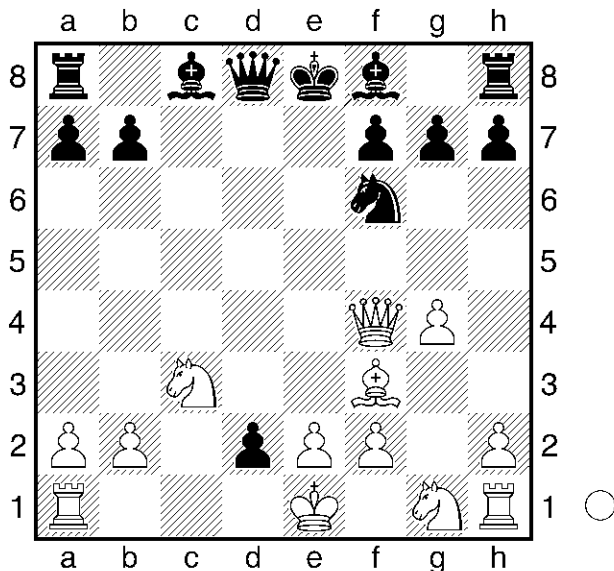
thousand in total. Overall, he is a remarkable chess figure, with not quite the recognition he deserves.

A00
 1947 Perhaps his opening repertoire had something to do with it, as he became particularly famous for his use of 1 g4 with White. At this stage I have to thank my kind friend Greg Delaney for sending me two of Grob's books. one of which is the groundbreaking 'Grob's Angriff' (1963). Even weak players have the audacity to scoff at 1 g4, which is why it can be so painful when one loses to such an opening. **1.g4 d5 2.Bg2 e5 3.c4 c6 4.cxd5 cxd5 5.Qb3!**



I don't have the capacity to cover the entire Grob in one article, but I assure you that 1 g4 is not easy to meet, especially as there is a tendency to overreact when confronted with nonsense like this. But please note the pressure on d5 and beyond at b7. These are the focal points for White's initial attack. **Ne7 6.Nc3 e4 7.d3 exd3 8.Bf4!?** The pawn at g4 hangs as bait, tempting Black at every stage. Meanwhile, Grob gets on with development. I suppose Nb5 is the main threat now. **Ng6 9.Bxd5!**

It takes an original mind to even SEE such a move. Isn't the Bishop on f4 en prise? **Nxf4 10.Qa4+ Nd7 11.Qxf4 Nf6 12.Bf3 d2+**



Black gets in on the act with a little zwischenzug of his own, but in reality he is just playing into Grob's hands. Grob was quite excellent in these obscure tactical situations. **13.Kf1! Qb6?** A risky adventure, although Black may be much worse already.

[13...Bd6 was much better, intending to castle, leading to the variation 14.Qxd2 Nxc4 15.Rd1 Bc7 16.Qxd8+ Bxd8 17.Kg2 Ne5 18.Be4 0-0 19.Nf3± I marginally prefer White here, but it is game on.]

14.Rd1 Qxb2 15.Qe3+! Be6

16.Rxd2 Qc1+ The Black Queen is getting into trouble. **17.Kg2 Bb4?** A clear misjudgement.

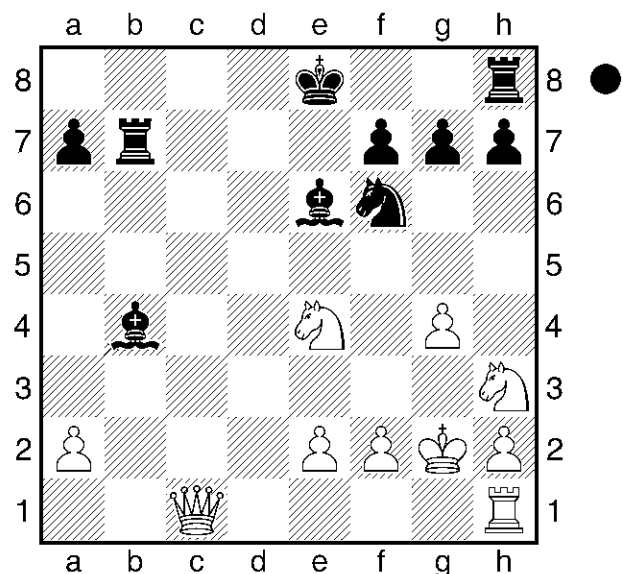
[Maybe 17...Qa3 was the best chance, but this position is unpleasant for Black. 18.Bxb7 Bc5 19.Qg3 0-0 20.Bxa8 Rxa8 21.g5 Nh5 22.Qf3 Rc8 23.Qxh5 Qxc3 24.Nf3±]

18.Rd8+ Rxd8 19.Qxc1 Rc8 20.Bxb7! Rc7

[I first thought 20...Rxc3 but then

comes 21.Qf4! Be7 22.Qb8+ Bd8 23.Qd6+-]

21.Nh3 Rxb7 22.Ne4!



Black is getting battered with tactical shots. **Nd5**

[If 22...Nxe4 23.Qc6+ Rd7 24.Qxe4 Bd2 25.e3 0-0 26.Nf4 is winning for White.]

23.Qc6+ Rd7 24.Nc5 The simple mission is to keep the Black King stuck in the middle so the Rook on h8 never gets into the game. **Ne7 25.Qa8+ Rd8 26.Qxa7 Bxc5 27.Qxc5 Bd5+ 28.f3 Rd7 29.Qb5 Bc6 30.Qb8+ Rd8 31.Qe5 f6 32.Qe6 Bd5 33.Qe3** This has been very well played by Grob. Black has never had any chance to draw breath. **Rd7**

[33...Kf7 34.Nf4 Rhe8 35.Qc3 Bxa2 36.Ra1 Bd5 37.Ra7]

34.Nf4 Bxa2 35.Ra1 Bd5 36.Nxd5 Rxd5 37.Qe6 Rf8

[37...Rd7 38.Ra8+ Rd8 39.Ra7]

38.Ra7 Rf7 39.Ra8+ There is an extremely strong creative element running through this game and I am convinced that was the driving force behind Grob's chess. He didn't want to be World Champion, but there are other ways of making a mark. This is

the approach I recommend to all my chess students. Whatever your level, it's important to have a style all your own. Slavishly following the Grandmaster arena and trying to copy what is there brings you nothing in the end. Of course this does not mean you should rush out and start playing 1 g4! 1-0

□ Grob,H

■ Schachclub Wadenswil

Switzerland

[Andrew]

A00

1960

The next game is another example where Black fails to get his King out of the middle. **1.g4 d5 2.Bg2 Bxg4**

[At this stage it's worth recommending 2...c6! I think this is a tough move for White to meet and hope for an advantage. It's probably best to play the position like Basman now with 3.h3! (because if White persists with Grob's original attack 3.c4 then as far as I can see dxc4! is good for Black. There's an obscure pawn sac with 4.b3?! but this is well met by c3! 5.Nxc3 Bxg4 ♖)]

3.c4 c6

[There are two interesting ways to sac the exchange for Black 3...dxc4 4.Bxb7 Nd7 5.Bxa8 Qxa8 6.f3

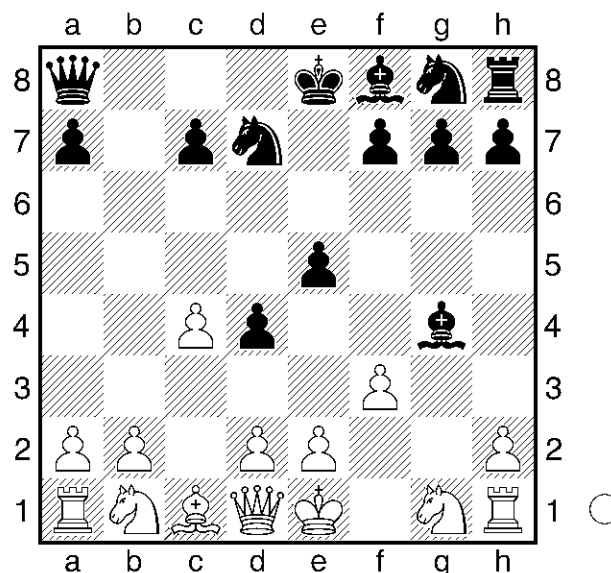
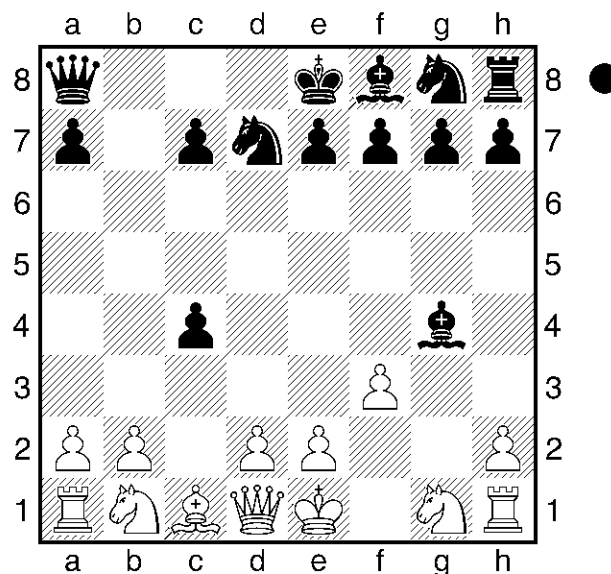
(Diagram)

leads to a position you wouldn't recommend to your mother in law for White, but he is the exchange up.]

[Meanwhile 3...d4!? 4.Bxb7 Nd7

5.Bxa8 Qxa8 6.f3 e5

is the Romford Gambit, when the



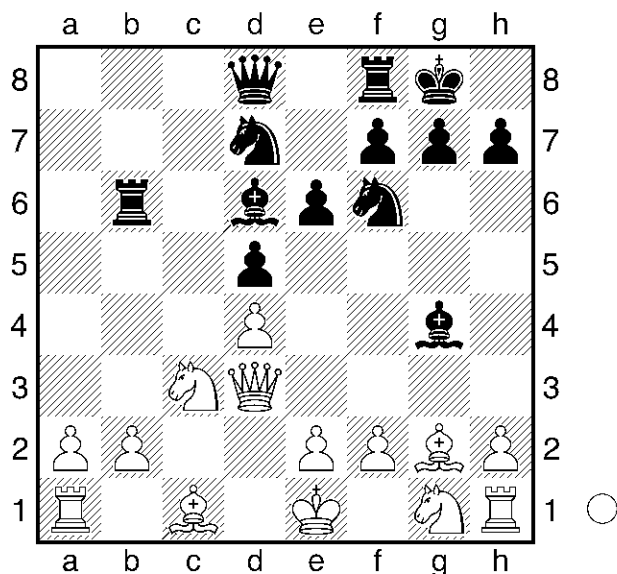
pawn on d4 is a thorn in White's side, but he is again Rook for Bishop ahead. Speculators might like to delve further.]

4.Qb3

[4.cxd5 cxd5 5.Qb3 is the other way for White, after which Black should start sacrificing to get developed: Nf6 6.Nc3 e6 7.Qxb7 Nbd7 8.d4 Rb8 9.Qxa7 Bd6 10.Qa6 Rb6 11.Qd3 0-0

(Diagram)

I find White's game uncomfortable here, despite the extra pawn.]



4...Qc7 5.cxd5 e5?! This was an exhibition game where Grob was obviously displaying his wares to adoring fans. Once again, the opponent or opponents in this case, gets lured into tactical mayhem, which is right up Grob's street.

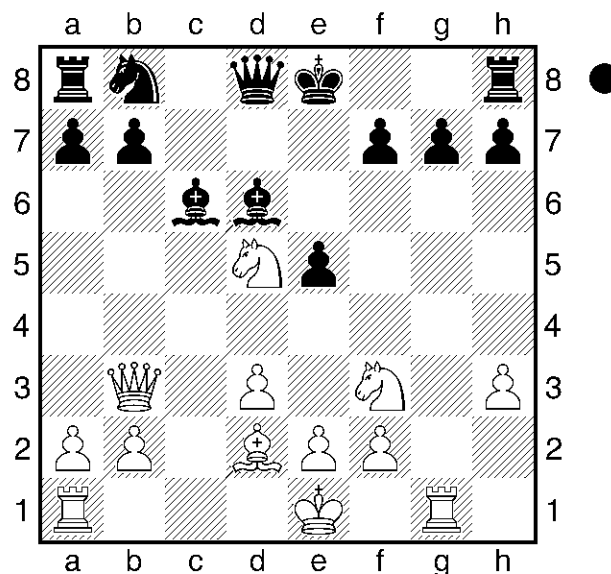
[I have seen people fall for 5...cxd5 6.Nc3 e6 7.Qa4+ Nc6 8.Qxg4]
6.Nc3 Nf6 7.d3 Bd6 8.h3 Bd7 9.Bg5 Nxd5 10.Bxd5 He gives up the fianchettoed Bishop, not exactly the first move that comes to mind, but it does keep Black ' on the hop'. **cxd5 11.Nxd5 Qa5+ 12.Bd2 Qd8 13.Nf3**
 [13.Qxb7 gives Black the initiative and that is something that Grob, in common with most strong players, was loathe to do. Bc6 14.Qb3 Bc5 15.e4 Bxd5 16.Qxd5 Qxd5 17.exd5 Na6 18.Nf3∞]
13...Bc6 14.Rg1!

(Diagram)

Development first, questions later.

Chess need not always be complicated. **Bf8 15.e4 Bxd5**

[15...f6 16.d4± opening the centre, looks very good for White.]



16.exd5 b6

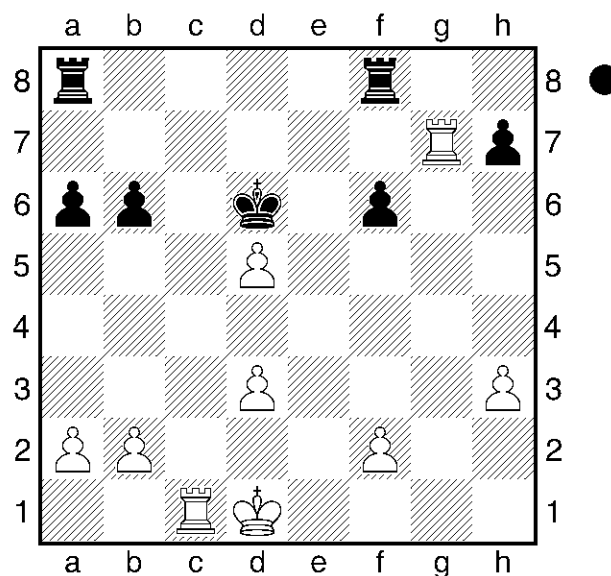
[16...Qe7 17.Rc1]

17.Nxe5 Qd6 18.Kd1! Followed by Rook to e1, thank you and goodnight!

f6 19.Qb5+ Nd7 20.Bb4! Qxe5

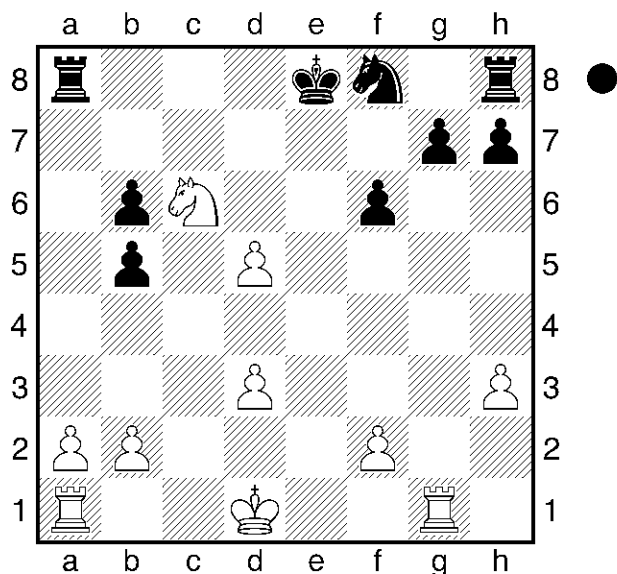
The pressure gets to the allies.

[20...a6 was more obdurate, but there are still two good continuations for White: 21.Bxd6 (21.Qxd7+ Qxd7 22.Nxd7 Kxd7 23.Bxf8 Rhxf8 24.Rxg7+ Kd6 25.Rc1±



The double Rook ending is very promising.) 21...axb5 22.Bxf8 Nxf8 23.Nc6±

An extra pawn, the g file and monster Knight should add up to an easy



win.]

21.Re1 Qxe1+ 22.Bxe1 Bd6 23.Rc1!

[23.Qc6 Ke7 would be less clear.]

23...Rd8 24.Rc6 Ke7 25.d4 Rhe8

26.Rxd6! resigns in view of 26...Kxd6

27 Bb4+ Kc7 28 Qc6+Kb8 29 Bd6

mate.

Well it didnt always go as smoothly for Grob. Occasionally his whacky ideas were punished, but I'm sure that he considered this a small price to pay for the enormous amount of fun involved in developing his own opening and his own arsenal of original methods.

1-0

A40

□ **Brechbuhler,B**

■ **Grob,H**

Switzerland

1954

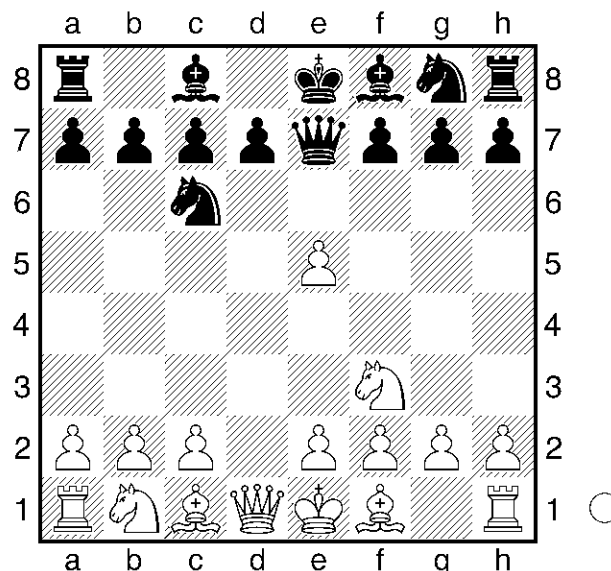
[,Andrew]

Grob made a second contribution to theoretical chess literature with his small ' Englund Gambit' book, published in 1968 by Schachverlag Grob, so it looks as though Grob might have been running his own printing press too!

1 d4 e5!? is of course, a lot more dubious than even 1 g4 and you play this at your own risk. **1.d4 e5!?**

2.dxe5 Nc6 3.Nf3 Qe7

[3...f6 4.exf6 Nxf6 gives some value for a pawn, but not much.]

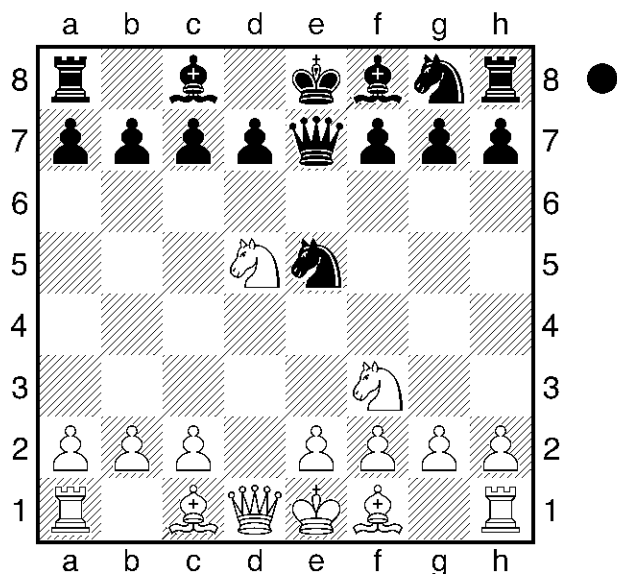


I cannot bring myself to like this move however many times I see it. 3...Qe7 is just plain ugly. This brings us to the realization that Grob played it precisely for that reason. **4.Bf4** This is the main line and I think it's a good move, although White has to sidestep a few traps.

[4.Nc3 Nxe5 5.Nd5

(Diagram)

is another one of those lines which is 'supposed' to be good for White but on which the last word has yet to be said. Nxf3+ 6.gxf3 Qd8 7.Bf4 d6 8.Qd2 Be6 9.e4 (9.0-0-0 c6 10.Bg5 f6 11.Qe3 Kf7 12.Nf4 Bxa2 13.Bh3 Qe8 14.Qa3 Bc4∞) 9...Ne7 10.Be3 Nxd5 11.exd5 Bd7 12.f4 Be7 13.0-0-0 Bf6 14.Re1 0-0 15.Bg2 Bf5 16.Re2 Qd7 17.b3 a5 18.Bd4 Bxd4 19.Qxd4 a4 20.Kb2

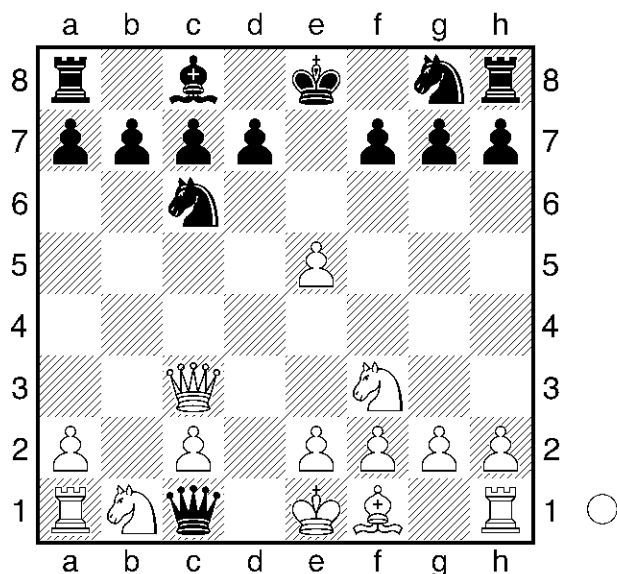


axb3 21.cxb3 Rfe8 22.Re3 Rxe3
23.fxe3 Qb5 24.Qc4 Qa5 25.Be4
Bxe4 26.Qxe4 Qd2+ 0-1 Thurnauer-
Grob Zurich 1950

I guess once this stuff starts getting
played in Category 20 tournaments
and they train the super-computers
on 1...e5 we will get to know the
truth.]

4...Qb4+ 5.Bd2 Qxb2 6.Nc3

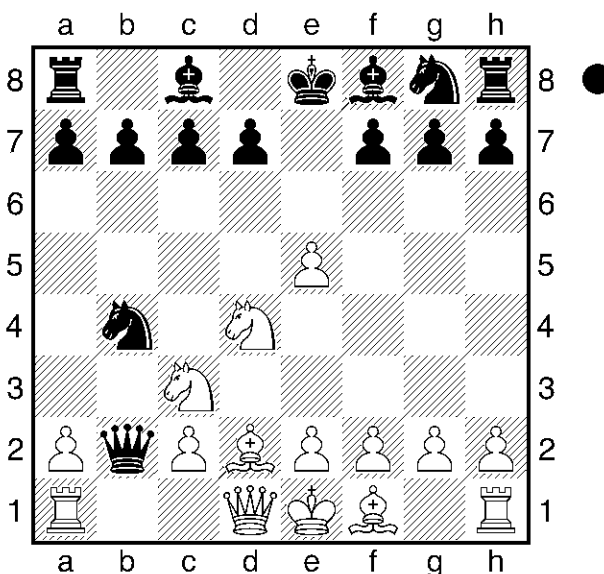
[Please not 6.Bc3 Bb4 7.Qd2 Bxc3
8.Qxc3 Qc1#



I have managed to pull off this trap
several times, so it must be just about
plausible.]

6...Bb4

[Internet bullet addicts like the
cheapo variation beginning with
6...Nb4? This is refuted by 7.Nd4!



**A) 7...a6 8.Rb1 Qa3 9.Rb3 Qa5
10.a3 Nd5 11.Ndb5!! (11.Ncb5
Qa4) 11...axb5 12.Nxd5+- ;**

**B) 7...c5 8.Rb1 Qa3 9.Ndb5 Qa5
10.a3+-]**

7.Rb1 Qa3 8.Rb3 Qa5 9.Qa1

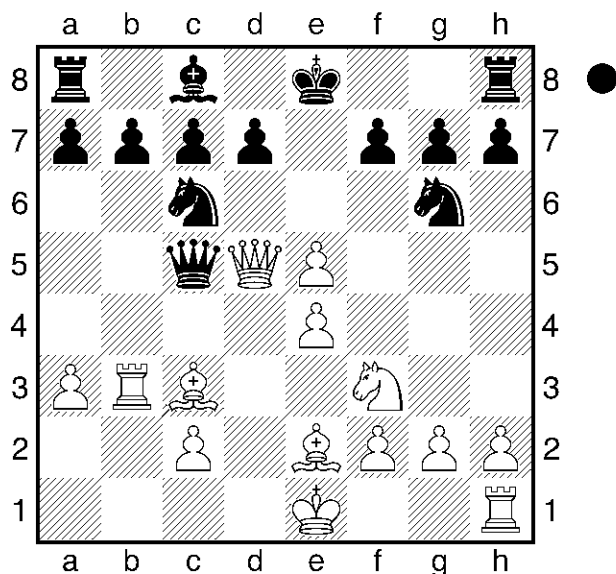
[I prefer 9.a3! not committing the
White Queen as yet. She may find a
superior central location. Bxc3
10.Bxc3 Qc5 11.e4 Nge7 12.Be2
Ng6 (12...0-0 13.0-0 Ng6 14.Qd5)
13.Qd5!±

(Diagram)

This variation seems to place Black's
whole idea into question.]

**9...Nge7 10.e4 0-0 11.Bd3 Ng6
12.a3 Bxc3 13.Bxc3 Qc5**

Fans of the Englund Gambit could feel
happy with this position. Black has not
yet been killed and he may be able to
round up the e5 pawn. White has been
jolted out of his comfort zone and is
making it up as he goes along. You
need self-belief to play this way with



Black and Grob had plenty of that.

14.g3 a6 15.Nd4 Ncxe5 There it goes. **16.Nf5**

[Black keeps his game alive with the command of small tactics: 16.Bb4 Qxd4]

16...Re8 17.0-0 d6 18.Bb4

[Brechtbuhler might have tried 18.Nxg7 Kxg7 19.Bd4 Qc6 20.f4 but Black's position is actually very sound: Bh3 21.Rf2 f6! 22.fxex5 fxe5]

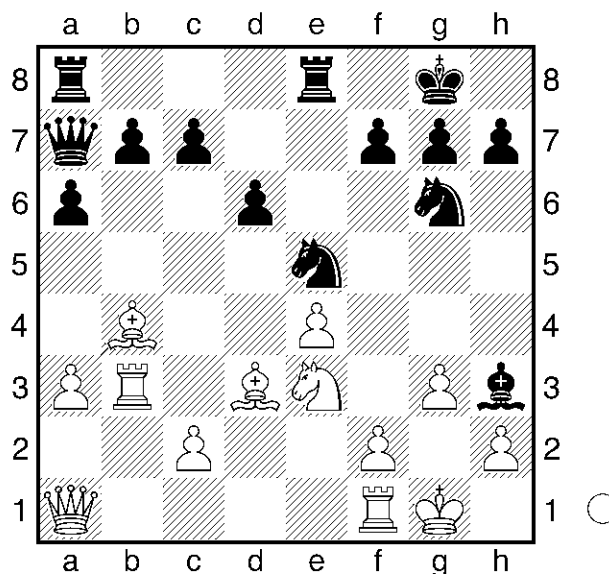
18...Qa7 19.Ne3 Bh3

(Diagram)

The reckoning. Grob penetrates the light squares around the White King and now the writing is on the wall.

20.Re1 Nf3+ 21.Kh1 b5 22.c4 Nge5 23.Qb1 Be6 24.Kg2 Nxd3

My main point this time is that you should think very carefully before trying to emulate the Grandmasters. You don't have the time, you don't have the talent and you probably don't have the energy, unless you are under 20 years old. But what you do have is discretion and experience and those are invaluable tools which can be used to



help you to get stronger at chess.

Know your limitations and play to your strengths. That's what Grob did!

0-1

BOB LONG

[Andrew]

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Further information may be obtained from Bob himself at the following address : bob@thinkerspressinc.com.

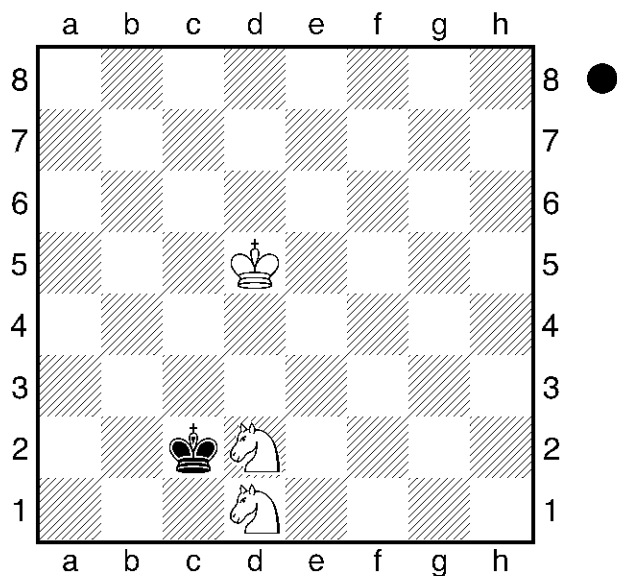
It is rare these days that one encounters a chess publication of this kind, so Bob is well worth checking out. He also runs his own chess business 'Gilbert and Lange'.

FACEBOOKPROOF

[Andrew]

MASSMANN Fairy Chess Review 1947

Here is a position which none of my



Facebook friends could solve. I have revealed the answer on my profile there if you are feeling lazy, although it's well worth having a go at this puzzle.

Black to play - helpmate in five(Black assists White to checkmate in five further moves)