



### Intermediate Lecture – Euwe v. Keres, 1939

by Carl Gorka

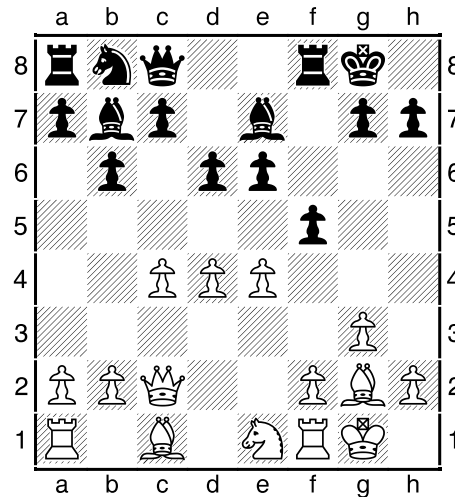
Euwe, Max

Keres, Paul

NED m 3940 Netherlands (9), 1940

The games of the best chess players in the World can teach us lots. I have a store of games from recently and not so recently that I have studied and have leaned from, as do most players. This is one of my favourites.

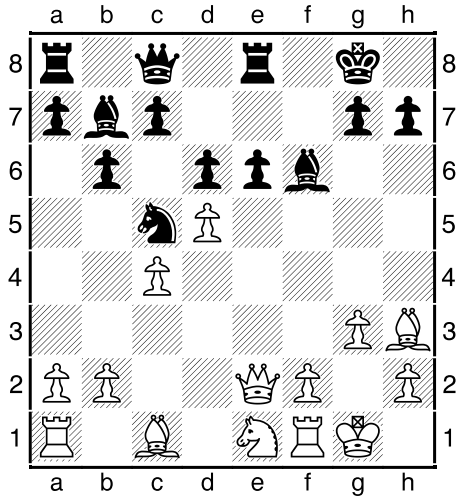
White was the 5th World Champion, Black was arguably the strongest in history never to become World Champion.



**1.d4** The opening of this game is characterised by a struggle for the square e4. White will seek to advance his e-pawn there, while Black will try to stop him. **1...Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6** The Queen's Indian Opening, popular since the 1930's. **4.g3 Bb7** [4...Ba6 is more popular now.] **5.Bg2 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nc3** Both sides have developed sensibly, and now comes the fight for e4. **7...Ne4** Black puts his own knight into e4, a manouver that happens a lot in this sort of opening. **8.Qc2 Nxc3 9.Qxc3** [9.bxc3 Is it worth doubling pawns to advance e4?] **9...d6** [9...c5 immediately attacking the centre is also possible. At some stage, Black will have to attack White's centre or he will just get squeezed.] **10.Qc2** Again aiming for e4 **10...f5** and again, preventing e4. **11.Ne1** offering an exchange of light squared bishops which will remove one of Black's defenders from guarding e4. **11...Qc8** [11...Bxg2 12.Nxg2 e5 was possible, but Black's bishop could get hemmed in here.] **12.e4**

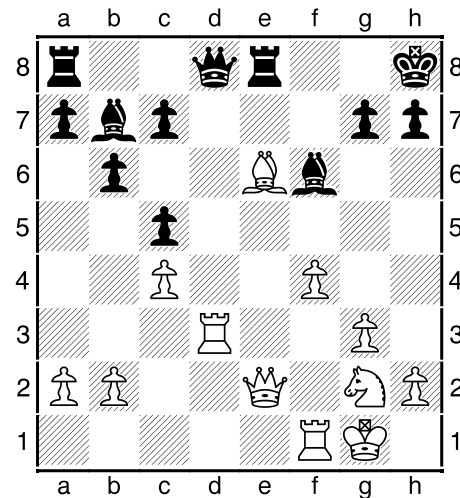
White has achieved his aim so you would think he has the better position, but this isn't the case. Black has made White struggle to create a big centre and sees white's centre as a target which he can attack. **12...Nd7 13.d5** White tries to block black's light squared bishop out of the game. The game now gets very tricky, with lots of threats and tactics. **13...fxe4 14.Qxe4** [14.Bxe4 Nf6 15.Bg5 was another option] **14...Nc5 15.Qe2 Bf6** Pinning the b2 pawn, thus preventing b4. Black has better development here, which easily compensates fro White's central space advantage. The question is, can white make anything out of black's weak e6 pawn? **16.Bh3** Pinning e6 and attacking it a third time. **16...Re8!**





Now Black threatens to just take on d5. **17.Be3** This covers white's queen from the threatened discovered attack, but also stops the the white queen from attacking e6. **17...Qd8** and as a consequence of white's last move, black is able to move his queen away from the pin exerted by white's Bh3. **18.Bxc5** Removing a defender of e6 so white is now ready to win that pawn, but **18...exd5!!** Instead of recapturing on c5, Black attacks White's queen **19.Be6+** [19.Be3 is safer 19...d4 20.Nc2 dxe3 21.Nxe3 Bd4 Black is a bit better, but it is still fairly even] **19...Kh8** **20.Rd1** [Moving the bishop to safety makes no difference as Black can win the other bishop thanks to a pin 20.Ba3 Qe7 21.cxd5 Bxd5] **20...dxc5** [20...bxc5; 20...dxc4] **21.Ng2** Not a good move, but white would certainly have wanted to get this knight into the game. [21.cxd5 at least keeps material even for the moment.] **21...d4** Now black has a passed, protected d-pawn, and his bishop on b7 has come to life. Apart from this, he is still a pawn ahead. **22.f4**

Seeing that he is in the worse position, Euwe tries to get something going on the kingside of the board. First he will play f5 to support his bishop, then bring queen knight and possibly pawns to attack Black's king. All good in theory, but Black also gets to do things. **22...d3!** Black sacrifices his great passed pawn to allow his other bishop to get into the game. For Keres, piece activity was of paramount importance. **23.Rxd3**

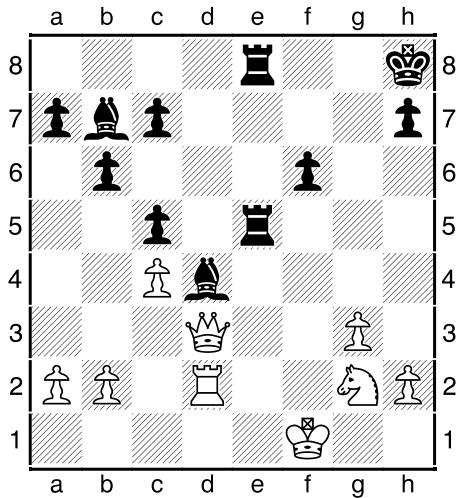


**23...Qxd3!!** This must have come as a complete shock to Euwe. Black sacrifices his queen to activate both his bishops and the rook on e8. Besides this he will win a rook and bishop for the queen. White's pieces, on the other hand, will become really bad. An amazing concept by Keres and I remember being deeply impressed with this when I first saw it. [23...Bd4+ 24.Kh1 Qf6 25.f5 Re7 also looks good for Black as white's king appears very uncomfortable.]



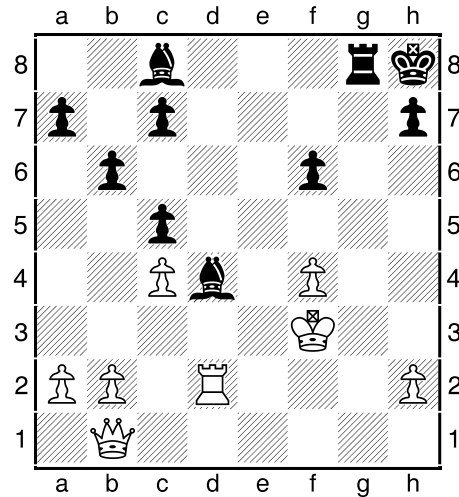


**24.Qxd3 Bd4+ 25.Rf2** [25.Kh1 Rxe6 26.b4 Re3 27.Qc2 Rae8 wins for Black, the threat of Re2 being too much.] **25...Rxe6** Besides winning material, Black activates his rooks. He will double on the e-file creating more threats. **26.Kf1 Rae8** Black doesn't bother winning material. His bishop on d4 is better than White's rook! **27.f5** White really has nothing to do so he tries to make something happen by opening Black's king a little bit. **27...Re5 28.f6 gxf6 29.Rd2**



[29.Rxf6? Bxg2+ 30.Kxg2 Re2+ A discovered attack on White's rook.] **29...Bc8** An amazing move. In the heat of the battle Black makes a quiet little retreat which threatens Bh3, a deadly pin. **30.Nf4** White manages to cover h3, but now e1 is

in danger. **30...Re3** Forcing White's queen back **31.Qb1 Rf3+ 32.Kg2 Rxf4** A fantastic finish to the game. After ignoring winning the exchange on f2, Black sacrifices the exchange to expose White's king. **33.gxf4 Rg8+! 34.Kf3**



[34.Kh1 Bb7+ 35.Rg2 Bxg2#; 34.Kf1 Rg1+ 35.Ke2 Rxb1 with a winning material advantage] **34...Bg4+** [Resignation wasn't premature, as white will have to give up his queen to avoid mate. 34...Bg4+ 35.Ke4 (35.Kg3 Bf5+; 35.Kg2 Bf5+) 35...Re8+ 36.Kd5 (36.Kd3 Bf5#) 36...Bf3+ 37.Qe4 Bxe4#] **0-1**

