

**Bird,H.**  
 **Steinitz,W.**  
 London England  
*[Hicks,E]*

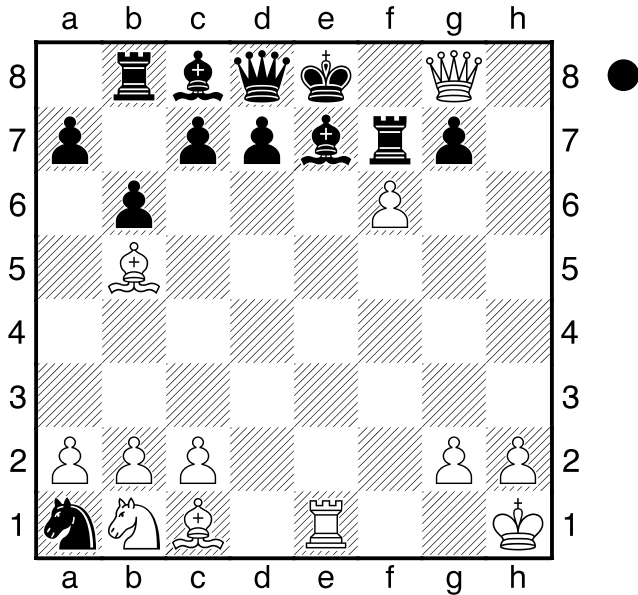
**C65**  
**2550**  
**2750**  
 1866

**1.e4** Opening with a center pawn, controlling key squares and letting out the bishop and queen. **e5** Develops, controls the center, and prevents white from playing d4 and obtaining a pawn center. **2.Nf3** Develops a piece, controls two center squares and attack a pawn. When you develop with threats you limit your opponent's playable moves. For example if white had played 2.Nc3, black would have a bunch of playable moves that white would need to be prepared for. By playing Nf3, black's playable possibilities are down to just a few. (Nc6, Nf6, d6). **Nc6** The best way to defend the pawn. Defends, develops, and controls two key center squares. **3.Bb5** The defining move of the Ruy Lopez. White develops and controls the center by pressuring a piece that controls the center. **Nf6** Usually this move comes later in the Ruy Lopez, but it is completely playable now. **4.d4** This move is so sharp it drifts the game into unclear territory. **exd4** Now the game is wide open. **5.e5 Ne4 6.Nxd4** A centralized knight is powerful if it cannot be chased away by pawns. **Be7** Passive. That bishop is aching to be on c5 where he attacks the center and bites down on Alfred the pawn. **7.0-0** Castle often castle early...all the masters know. If black would follow this advice, this game wouldn't be so darn short! **Nxd4** You should only trade when it helps you. This move hurts black by helping white's already strong development (read commentary after white's next move). Black would have been wise to castle instead. **8.Qxd4** Bringing the queen out early is usually not a great idea. But in this case, white did it while recapturing, meaning he centralized the queen with TEMPO. Also this queen has been DEVELOPED WITH THREATS, she is attacking the e5 knight. Black will have to take time to defend the knight, giving white an even bigger edge in development. **Nc5 9.f4!?**

This move is dubious because it opens the king. Black will have tactics along the open diagonal which both the queen and the king sit on. 9.f4 is not without merit. It strengthens the center and threatens to pawn storm down the center. It is a dangerous move for both sides. **b6** Preparing a tactical cheap shot. The knight will move, and then the bishop will be threatening to PIN and win the queen. **10.f5!?** Ignoring black's threats. 10.f5 is an ultra sharp move which threatens serious pawn advances. Answering an attack with an attack is an extremely sharp double edged sword. White must not be careful to lose his advantage to a tactical miscalculation. **Nb3!?** A pretty move that FORKS and threatens to PIN and win at the same time. **11.Qe4** White cannot take the knight because of Bc5 PINNING the queen. **Nxa1** Taking his prize. But now look at black's horrendous development. Now look at white's awesome development! Now look at black's uncastled king. This position is loaded with tactical wins for white. Whenever you have a big lead in position, you should find tactical tricks to either checkmate the king or win material. **12.f6!** Threatening to open up the king's position like a can of sardines. White is going to have a FISH buffet! **Bc5+** At least black is able to defend with TEMPO. But he is so many moves behind it does not matter much. **13.Kh1 Rb8** Defending his rook. Black would be advised to give back the rook and protect his king with moves like castling. **14.e6!** A brilliant move that takes advantage of the PINNED black d pawn. Black cannot capture with the d pawn. And if he takes with the f-pawn, click on the variation to the right to see what happens. **Rg8?** Leading to a forced mate in 3 if white plays right. Still, after all these bomb shells, black's best defense is to castle! [ 14...fxe6 15.Qxe6+ Be7 16.fxg7 Rf8 17.Rxf8# ] **15.Qxh7?** Here white missed a simple mate in 2. Click on the variation to the right to check it out. [ 15.exd7+!! Kf8 16.Qe8+ Qxe8 17.dxe8Q# ] **15...Rf8 16.exf7+** Stripping away the protection around the king, and at the same time opening files aiming at the king's vulnerable neck. **Rxf7 17.Re1+**

The open file is a real cherry when you can take it with check and man is this check a cherry!

**Be7** The only move that does not result in immediate checkmate. **18.Qg8+** Diagram



Finding the fancy mate in 2. **Rf8** **19.f7#**

A beautiful finish. It is wild that in this game a world champion (Steinitz) missed a mate in 2. It shows the difference in playing strength back in those days...and even the best players make mistakes.

**1-0**