All,

How about this for idyllic preparation for the Team World Cup on Monday?! Here I was on board 2 for Bedfordshire in the Semi-Finals of the Minor County Championships, playing Dominic Tunks, ECF grade of 194 (ELO 2202). Mating such a strong opponent on move 21 is something I certainly did not expect! This bodes well for Monday...

Enjoy!  
[Event "Minor County Championships 2012-2013"]

[Site "Oxford, ENG"]

[Date "2013.06.08"]

[Round "2.2"]

[White "Ross, Chris"]

[Black "Tunks, Dominic"]

[Result "1-0"]

[ECO "D22"]

[WhiteElo "2247"]

[BlackElo "2202"]

[Annotator "Chris Ross"]

[PlyCount "41"]

[EventDate "2013.06.08"]

[WhiteTeam "Bedfordshire"]

[BlackTeam "Hampshire"]

{D22: Queen's Gambit Accepted: Alekhine defence, Alatortsev variation}  
1. d4 Nf6

2. Nf3 d5   
3. c4 dxc4

4. e3 Bg4

{A slightly off-beat line of the QDA, perfectly acceptable, if somewhat dangerous. There is a well-known sharp line here with 5. Bxc4 e6 6. Qb3 Nd7 when black sacrifices a pawn for piece development and a shattering of the white pawn structure. Although I am not convinced by this pawn sacrifice, I often take the view that white can build up slowly enough through the centre and gain a small, but pulling advantage, in the middle-game.}   
5. Bxc4 e6

6. Nc3 a6

{Played in the true Alekhine spirit. Black wishes to avoid Qb3 ideas (with the response b7-b5 possible). Nb5 is also cut out, but it does waste a move (Pr3!)}  
7. h3   
{As black has wasted a move, white can do likewise. However, the purpose of this move is not to push a pawn to Pr3, but to facilitate g2-g4 unpinning the knight at an opportune moment.}  
7... Bh5

8. O-O Nc6

{Curiously, this line is not often seen. Ed Player (ECF 214 - ELO 2233) played it against me earlier this season and got a horrible position and struggled to salvage a draw against me.  
The concept behind the move is to aid black in freeing his position with the thrust e6-e5. This is a natural and logical plan, since e5-e4 would be a plan. Any dxe5 captures would allow Nxe5, when the knight on f3 would be under tremendous pressure. The counter of e6-e5, although valid in many ways, does have a very subtle flaw, which has been seen in some lines of the Slav defence. Here, I imitate the same concept, but into a different opening.}   
9. Qe2   
{The only logical square for the lady. Heading to b3 is not so attractive, when black has the move b7-b5 or Na5 at his disposal. The queen steps off d1, to allow a rook to reach it quickly. More important though, is that the thrust, e3-e4 is coming in with a very rapid rate. This is the absolute defect of the Queen’s Gambit Accepted, since black has released pressure on the centre. E3-e4, obtaining a strong centre, has to be the positionally correct plan.}  
9... Bd6

{Aggressively played and a move that Ed Player also chose against me. Again, the purpose behind the move is sound enough; black wishes to force through e6-e5 and with the bishop’s protection on e5, captures on e5 by the c6-knight, will not leave it vulnerable if white were to unpin with g2-g4.}  
10. Rd1 Qe7   
{I would like to state this as the losing positional move for black, But it is possible that that is a bit judgmental. However, I think after this, his task is incredibly difficult. White has achieved all of his objectives and is fully prepared now for the central counter-strike. The queen move only acerbates black’s difficulties. The move e6-e5 is still prevented though with the queen on d8, as captures on e5 would open up the D-file and the bishop on d6 would be pinned. Again, this was the  purpose of the 10th move by white, but the main reason is that the d4 square is now protected and if anything untoward occurs down it, the white queen would be well poised on the E-file to exploit any opportune tactics. As it is, white’s position is now tremendous.}   
11. e4 e5

{And black has achieved his strategic plan. However, it had to be considered a lot deeper than that and his 10th move comes back to haunt him. A careful check of the immediate tactics here, but the positional plan still remains here. You may wish to spend some time at this point, as the flourish is the key to the game. I had used about 4 minutes on the clock to this point, a 5-minute think and then another 5 minutes completed my whole usage of the clock in the game.}  
12. Bg5!  
{Simple and extremely strong. Black could probably happily resign here. There is little left as material has to fall at some point. The pinned knight on f6 is a tactical liability. Nd5 now for white is just too strong to avoid. }

12. g4 was even a consideration. It is not such a stupid move, as it unpins and allows g4-g5 and Nd5 ideas. The unpinning of the knight on f3 also protects d4, but I quickly rejected that, as I realised that d4 did not matter in the slightest. The swift completion of development was crucial and now black just collapses through the centre.}

12...  Nxd4

{There was no other move. Nd5 is coming in for white. The black queen can’t retreat to the D-file, due to g4 unpinning and then captures on e5 with the d6 bishop being pinned. Retreating to f8 is miserable and allows g2-g4 and then captures on e5, with a future f2-f4, gaining time on the bishop on e5 and permitting f4-f5 entombing the unfortunate bishop on g6. All simple and very logical.  
12... exd4 is no better, since 13. Nd5 is still possible. 13... Qxe4 is not playable as 15. Nxf6+ is with check and the black queen drops off.}  
13. Rxd4   
{And bang goes black’s hopes. Black should resign now, since there is nothing else for him to do.}  
13... exd4

14. Nd5 Bxf3

{14... Qd8 only allows me to win a second minor piece for the rook with 15. E5 and all combinations work for me. The knight on f6 is still pinned and the queen on e2 permits all kinds of discoveries along the E-file.}  
15. Qxf3 Qf8

{Black may have wished to give up his queen here with 15... Qe5 16. Bf4 Qe6 17. Nxc7+ Bxc7 18. Bxe6 Bxf4 19. Bb3 Bc7 20. e5 Bxe5 21. Re1 as occurred in Hefty Hilardo,J (2297)-Malo Guillen,J (2216), Spain 2004, but the win is trivial for white.}

16. Nxf6+ gxf6

17. Bxf6 Rg8

{There is absolutely nothing for black here. He cannot castle, his pieces are entirely uncoordinated and the black king is stranded in the middle of the board. 17... Be7 18. Bxh8 Qxh8 19. Qxf7+ Kd8 20. Qd5+ Kc8 21. Qe6+ Kd8 was no fun with the white rook arriving quickly to d1 and mate happening on the light-squares somehow.}  
18. e5 Bc5

{I can’t explain why black is playing on in this position, as the white queen now just crashes through all of the light-squares. 18... Bxe5 19. Re1 Kd7 20. Qf5+ Kc6 21. Rxe5 is also very simple.}

19. Qxb7 Kd7

20. Qd5+

{20. Bd5 is the materialistic approach, but I was simply blitzing out the moves here, not caring about how long things were taking. This is simply won and black’s demise is more than guaranteed.}  
20... Ke8   
{Fortunately, black did not make me play on with 20... Bd6, when I had a number of options. I think I would have simply taken on d6, but I am certain there are better variations around. As it is, a swift conclusion occurred.}   
21. Qc6# 1-0