

NATO Chess 2013 Round 2 Highlights

Jan Cheung, 20 January 2014

In this article, some positions about round 2 of the NATO Championship 2013 are shown. Try to solve the questions without a computer. Good luck!

Position 1.



Position after 33.a2-a3 What should black play?

Position 2.



Position after 21...Lxc8xg4. What should white play: A) 22.f3 B) 22.Rd2 C) 22.Be2?

Position 3.



Position after 9.0-0. Evaluate the following moves A) 9...Bg4 B) 9...Qa5 C) 9...Qc7.

Position 4.



Position after 10.Nb1-c3. What should black play?

Position 5.



Position after 17.g2-g4. What should black play?

Position 6.



Position after 22.Rab1. What should black play?

Position 7.



Position after 53.Kh3-g3. What should black play?

Position 8.



Position after 30...Kg7-g8. What should white play?

Position 9.



Position after 35.Qg3-e3. Black to move. You have 30 seconds.

Position 10.



Position after 35.Nh4-f3. What should black play?

Position 11.



Position after 32.h4-h5. Time to calculate! Is 32...Rxd2 possible? You have 30 seconds.

Solutions

Position 1 is the game Van Rijn – Hernandez (2.5). The white rook on d2 protects the knight on d7, but is unprotected. With 33...Nd5! Black could interrupt the defence of Nd7. The knight cannot move to a safe square because of Nxe3+ or Nf4+. In the actual game, black missed this chance played and eventually lost the game.

Position 2 is the game Wagenaar – Macaspac (2.9). Black has the bishop pair. What would happen when the bishops of the white squares are exchanged? White would then have a better knight versus a bad bishop. With option C) 22 Be2! Be6 23. Ne3! Threatening 24.Bg4 white would get the upper hand. Option B) 22.Rd2 is a slower version of option C) giving black some time for counterplay, for example: 22.Rd2 Red8 23.Ne3 Bh5 24.Be2 Rxd2 25.Qxd2 Bg6 26.Qc2 b4. Option A), 22.f3 was played in the game and is the worst option of the 3 choices. It has some disadvantages: 1) it restricts white's own bishop 2) it weakens square e3 3) it doesn't look for counterplay, enabling black to have much time for improving his position.

Position 3 is Vuitton – Pazeriene (2.15). In this typical Gruenfeld Indian position, black should make a complete plan how to develop the pieces. An important decision should be made where to put Bc8 and Nb8. In a typical Gruenfeld Indian, it should be Bg4 and Nc6, putting pressure at pawn d4. There is one difference: the white d pawn is still at d2, so putting pressure at d4 is not an optimal solution at this moment. In the game black played 9...Bg4. After 10.Rb1! black has difficulties to defend b7 and c5. One continuation is 10...Qa5, but after 11.Bc1!? black has nothing more than 11...Qc7 After 12.h3 black's best chance is to give up the bishop pair with 12...Bxf3 13.Qxf3 Nd7. White has the upper hand and it is difficult to find any counter chances for black. We have found one statement: Black should keep the bishop on c8 on the board. It could be put on b7. Then the knight on b8 should be put on d7, keeping the harmony of the black pieces. Then, where to put the black queen? If it is put on a5, then after an b7-b6 the black queen is out of play. So a better way is to put the queen on c7. Option B) 9...Qa5 is possible, but the question where to put the bishop of c8 is not answered. The white pawns and pieces on the queen side can be defended easily and after an b7-b6 the queen is out of play. 9...Qa5 After 10.Qb3! black has only one move: Nc6 Now a double edged position arises. White can develop its pieces more easily than black. After 11.h3 !? (restricting Bc8) black has 11...Qc7! tactically defending the pawn at c5 and threatening Na5. After 12.Qc2 Bd7 black has successfully solved the opening problems. So, 9...Qa5 can be played, but we have seen that the best square for the queen is c7. So, 9...Qc7 is more logical. After 10.Rc1 Nd7 black could continue counterplay with a7-a6 and b7-b5.

Conclusion: Worst solution: A) 9...Bg4?! 10.Rb1! and black has many problems to solve. B) 9... Qa5 possible, but not logical solution because the queen has to go back to c7 later. Furthermore, the question where to put Bc8 is not answered. C) 9...Qc7 is a logical move (best solution). A possible continuation: 10.Rb1 Nd7 creating easily counterplay after 11.Qe2 a6 12.d4 b5.

Position 4 is the game Rosenkilde – Kartal (2.18). Black has less space, but have you seen that the rook at a1 is undefended? 10.Nc3 was a bad move. After 10...b5! (as played in Helbig – Cheung,

NATO Chess 2004) black could regain space which supports c7-c5, solving his opening problems. In the actual game, black missed this chance. The game ended in a draw, however.

Position 5 is the game Demjen – Michalski (2.20). White pieces are not defending the king side. After 17...Bxg4! 18.hxg4 Qxg4+ 19.Kf1 (19.Kh1 Qh3+! 20.Kg1 g4) Qh3+ 20.Kg1 g4! (with the idea g4-g3) white could resign.

Position 6 is the game Onley – Akman (2.23) White kingside is weak, especially pawn h3. After 22...Rf3! White played 23.Qe2 How to continue? Bishop c3 is undefended. After 23...e4!! 24.Rbd1 e3! Whites position will collapse: 25.fxe3 Rxf1+ 26.Nxf1 Rf2 27.Qh5 Qf7. In the game black played 23...Bxg3. After 24.fxg3 Rxf1+ 25.Rxf1 Rxf1+ 26.Qxf1 white got a better pawn structure.

Position 7 is the same game Onley – Akman (2.23). After 53...Nf4 white has nothing more than perpetual check: 54.Qf5+ Kh6 55.Qf6+ Kh7! (threatening Nf4-e2) 56.Qf7+ In the game black blundered with 53...Qh4+?? After 54.Kg2 both black pieces are attacked and black resigned.

Position 8 is the game Graczyk – Ozturk (2.31). With 31.f5! whites attack will continue, since 31...gxf5 is not possible due to 32.Qxf6 white will keep the extra piece since 32...Rxe3 will be answered by 33.Qg5+. After 31.f5 Ne4 white can continue with 32.Bxe4 Rxe4 33.Bh6 R4e5 34.Re2 gxf5 35.gxf5 Kh8 36.Rg2. After 31.f5 Nd7 white can continue with 32.Bh6 Re5 33.fxg6 hxg6 34.Re2 f6 35.Bf4 (attacking a second weak spot in blacks position) R5e7 36.Qg3 Ne5 37.Bxe5 fxe5 38.Rf6. In the game white played 31.Qxf6. After 31...Rxe3 32.Rxe3 Rxe3 33.Rf3 Qe7 34.Qxe7 Rxe7 35.Kf2 white is a pawn up, but has technical difficulties to improve his position .

Position 9 is the game Kocur – Lord (2.35). Every time your adversary made a move, you should ask yourself: what is his plan? With 35.Qg3-e3 white is threatening a subtraction check Rf4xf7+ A defending move like 35...Qh6+ will prevent this. In the game black didn't see whites intention of 35.Qg3-e3 and played 35...h5, losing the queen after 36.Rxf7+ Kh6 37.Rh7+.

Position 10 is the game Csizmadia – Geerts (2.37). White king cannot defend two squares simultaneously. After 35.Nh4-f3 Black played 35... Rxc3+ 36.Kxc3 Qxh1. The game was not over yet. In the game white continued with 37.Rh2 Black played Qa1? (a very inactive place to put the queen), missing 38.Qb3 entering blacks position on the queen side.

Position 11 is the game Rosseel – Hale (2.41).

Yes, 32...Rxd2 is possible, if after 33.h6 you have seen the defending move 36... Rb5-b6.