

## NATO Chess 2013 Round 3 Highlights

Jan Cheung, 23 March 2014

Most errors are made when the chess player doesn't assess the situation well. According to Steinitz elements of chess, a consolidating move such as centralization should be played when one side has a structural advantage. An enterprising move such as a pawn offer should only be played when a temporary advantage is at stake. In this article some positions about round 3 of the NATO Championship 2013 are shown. As a hint to solve an exercise, first try to find out which side has a structural or temporary advantage. Then, according to Steinitz elements of chess, some category of moves should be played. Don't try to solve the questions with a computer. Good luck!

### Position 1.



Position after 10..Qd8-b6. Choose between A) 11.Qd2 B) 11.Rb1 C) 11.0-0

### Position 2.



Position after 13...Ng4-h6. Choose between 14.b4 and 14.O-O

### Position 3.



Position after 15...Qh4xe4. White to play.

### Position 4.



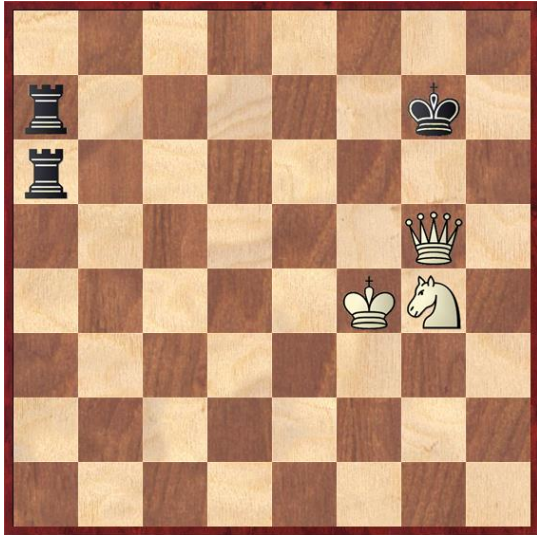
Position after 14.Nh5-g3. Black to play.

#### Position 5.



Position after 62...Rg7-a7. White to move.

#### Position 6.



Position after 65...Kg7-f8. Assess the position.

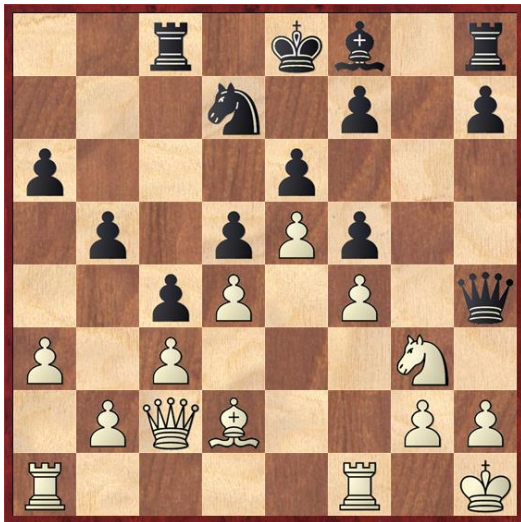
- a) White wins
- b) It is a draw

### Position 7.



Position after 67...g4-g3. White to move. You have 30 seconds thinking time.

### Position 8.



Position after 18...Qd8-h4. Choose between A) 19.Nxf5 and B) 19.a4.

### Position 9.



Position after 24...Nd7-f6. White to play.

### Solutions

Position 1 is the game De waard – Onley (3.10)

First of all, ask yourself which side has advantage. Second question is, what kind of advantage.



White has structural advantage: more space, a passed pawn. The computer move 11.0-0!? does not fit in this category. It is a strong move (11...Qxb2 fails to 12.Na4 Qa3 13.Bc1 Qb4 14.Bd2 Qa3 15.Nxe5 threatening 16.Rf3), but it requires a lot of calculating time. In a practical game 11.0-0 will not be a first choice. Two moves – 11.Qd2 and 11.Rb1 – remains. A rule of thumb at developing your pieces, you should play the multifunctional move first. Where should the white queen be put in both cases? Answer: at Qd2. What about Ra1? We don't know yet which square is best for this piece. Sometimes white can castle long. Then this piece should not be played early in the game. Sometimes it should be put at d1, supporting the passed pawn. We don't know yet. What we do know, is that Qd2 is an active square for the queen. It is a developing move, it prevents h7-h6, it supports a possible long castling, it defends pawn b2.

Conclusion: 11.Rb1 is worst solution. 11.0-0 is not a practical decision (mixing up consolidating moves with moves in category temporary advantage), 11.Qd2 is best.

Position 2 is the same game De waard – Onley (3.10).

Comparing with position 1, in position 2 white still has structural advantage, but time is running fast. If black succeeds transferring the knight at h6 to d6, it has created adequate counterplay. Perhaps that was the reason why in the game white thought he should open the position with 14.b4. Before you play this move, make yourself clear that a pawn move is irreversible. Look at grand master games and wonder why they only play a pawn move after all their pieces are put on active squares. If you have seen that white has not yet put his king at safety, you will not consider such a candidate move. Besides, the knight at h6 is still not yet at d6. After 14.b4 – the move played in the game – white has difficulties to bring his king to safety after 14...cxb4 15.Na4 Qd8 16.c5 f5. The position is doubled edged. White has passed pawns, but his king is not safe, the rook at h1 is not yet in the game and the white center is going to collapse. The position is not clear, but the position can be played more easily with black than with white.

This analysis reduces to one candidate move, 14.0-0. White wants to complete his development, before preparing b2-b4, and in the mean time accepting black's counterplay Nf7-d6 and f7-f5. An example: 14...Nf7 15.a3 Nd6 16.Bd3 f5 17.Kh1 Bd7 18.Be3 f4 19.Bf2 with slightly better chances for white, due to his structural advantage.

Conclusion: 14.0-0 is best.

Position 3 is the game Cheung – Prevot (3.13)

The player with the white pieces thought that he had a better position. "I have structural advantage (better center, better pawn structure) and I must consolidate my position by completing my development", he thought. In the game 16.Qxe4 Bxe4 17.Bd2 a5 18.f3 Bd3 19.Rfc1 Bxc4 20.Rxc4 Nd5 was played, resulting in a better position for white. Was there a better option? It is remarkable that position 3 also occurred in an old game Spielmann – Pirc, Rogaska Slatina 1931! Look back at the

position after blacks 15th move. The white queen can invade blacks position while keeping the queens at the board with 16.Qg3! This move wins a tempo. Black has to defend square c7 and white is threatening f2-f3 and e3-e4 trapping blacks bishop. After 16..Rfc8 white still have time to play f2-f3. First of all, blacks Qe4-c2 attacking Bc4 has to be defended. This could be done by 17.Ra3! Now f2-f3 and e3-e4 cannot be stopped and white should win the game easily.

Conclusion: 16.Qxe4 gives white only a better position in the end game. 16.Qg3! creates more damage in blacks camp.

Position 4 is the game Waruga – Papista (3.17).

The bishop at e3 and the knight at g3 are put at unlucky squares. With 14...g5! black wins at least a pawn.

Position 5 is the game Voroblievas – Ranario (3.25)

The rook at a7 is undefended. With 63.Qb1+ Kh6 (63...Kg8 and 63...Kh8 will be answered with 64.Qb8+, 63...Kg7 will be answered with 64.Qg1+) 64.Qh1+ Kg7 65.Qg1+ white will pick up the undefended rook. In the game white played 63.Ng4. After 63...R3xa6 the game resulted in a draw position. See position 6.

Position 6 is the same game Voroblievas – Ranario (3.25).

A general rule of thumb is that 3 pieces are needed in order to give mate: one to give mate, one to support the piece to give mate, and one to prevent the enemy king to escape. White has 3 pieces, the queen, the knight and the king. In order to give mate, the white king has to reach the 6th row. This can be achieved by putting the knight at the sixth row, shielding the king to reach the 6th row. Alas, this method does not work. At the moment the white king reaches the 6th row black will make use of the pin at the 6th row. An example. 66.Ne5 Rd6 67.Kf5 Rda6 68.Qd8+ Kg7 69.Qc8 Ra4 70.Ke6 R4a6+ 71.Nc6 Rb6. Now white cannot improve his position because 72.Qe8 will be replied with 72...Rc7. A move like 72.Kd5 does not improve whites position. Black can reply with 72...Rab7 73.Kd6 Kg6.

Conclusion: it is a drawn position.

Position 7 is the game Ergonen – Rosseel (3.30). Time to calculate. Here is the game continuation. 68.Kd5 g2 69.Qf2 g1Q! 70.Qxg1 stalemate. Are there more possibilities? Yes. It is 68.Qd4. This move however, requires calculating until the very end. In time trouble, it could be overseen. 68...g2 69.Qg1 Kg3 70.Kd5 h3 71.Ke4 h2. In this position, white will pick up pawn g2 and win the game: 72.Qe3+ Kh4 73.Qf2+ Kh3 74.Qf3+ Kh4 75.Qxg2.

Position 8 is the game Tremblay – Demjen (3.31).

White has a structural advantage (better pawn structure, safer king position). A move in this category – consolidating position - should be played. A move like 19.Nxf5 doesn't belong in this category. Besides, 19.Nxf5 is not a good move. In general, you don't want to play such a move when white still has a piece such as Ra1 to be brought into the game. So, unless 19.Nxf5 wins immediately, white should make a move consolidating his position. The funny thing is that Ra1 is at an active file. With 19.a4! white can invade black's queen side without any trouble.

Position 9 is the same game Tremblay – Demjen (3.31).

Look at the white pieces. White is still a piece down, but he has temporary activity. Only the bishop at d2 is not active. Imagine it is put on g5, then white will keep strong pressure against black position. First, white has to decide where to put his queen. It should support a possible Bg5. 25.Qh4 is the right candidate move to look at. This move is possible because 25...Ne4 fails to 26.Rxe4 dxe4 27.Bg5. After 25.Qh4 black has to prevent Bd2-g5 with 25...h6. With 26.Qg3! white threatens to invade black's camp. Only 26...Rd6 will challenge white. After 27.Bf4 Nh5 28.Qh3 Nxf4 29.Rxf4 Bg7 30.Qf3 white can still fight. An example. 30...Rf8 31.fxe6 Rxf4 32.Qxf4 Rxe6 33.Qb8+ Kd7 34.Qb7+ Ke8 35.Qa8+ Kf7 36.Qxd5 Qd6 37.Qf5+ Ke7 38.Rd1.

In the game white played the lesser move 25.Qf3. Now black should block the e file with 25...Ne4 solving all his problems.