

NATO Chess 2013 Round 4 Highlights

Jan Cheung, 30 April 2014

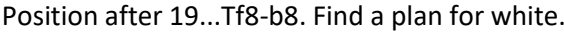
At Wednesday, round 4 and 5 were played. In round 4, many boards delivered fighting chess, delivering a lot of interesting positions.

Position 1.



Position after 25.Bg2-h3. Black to play.

Position 2.



Position after 31...Qc8-c6. White to play. Should white exchange queens?

Position 4.



Position after 47.Rc2-g2. Find a plan for black.

Position 5.



Position after 26.a3-a4. Black to move.

Position 6.



Position after 15.Rf1-d1. Black to move.

Position 7.



Position after 15.Qc4-g4. Choose between A) 15...0-0, B) 15...g6 and C) 15...g5

Position 8.



Position after 12.Nc3-e4. Choose between A) 12...Ned5, B) 12...Nf5 and C) 12...Ng6

Position 9.



Position after 18.Ne2-c3. Choose between A) 18...Nb6, B) 18...Nd6, C) 18...Kc7 and D) 18...Bg7

Position 10.



Position after 32.Ng2-e1. Black to move.

Position 11.



Position after 43.Kf4-g3. How should black proceed?

Position 12.



Position after 26.Kg1-g2. Black to move.

Position 13.



Position after 20.Re1-e2. Black to move.

Position 14.



Position after 32...Rd8xd4. Find a plan for white.

Position 15.



Position after 18...Bc8-d7. White to move.

Solutions

Position 1 is the game Drabke – Hansen (4.1). White has a structural advantage because 1) it has the bishop pair and 2) it has chances on the long run to open the position with his f pawn. For example,

white threatens Nf3-h2 and f2-f3. Black, the side fighting against structural advantage, should look for drastical ways to create counterplay before white can improve his position. One way to create havoc on white camp is to complicate the position with 25...c5!? After 26.Nh2 Qd6!? (26...bxc4 is not a good move because after 27.Qxc4 black has lost the battle for the white squares.) Now there is a lot of tension on the board, but this is practically the best way to confuse white. 27.bxc5 Bxc5! 28.Bxg4 bxc4! 29.Qxc4 hxg4 30.Nxg4 Ra8.



With a pawn offer, black has created some compensation because whites pieces lacks cooperation at the moment. Black threatens Re8-c8, Ra8-b8-b3, In the game, black created counterplay at the king side, but it was well defended: 25...Rf8 26.Kg2 f5? 27.exf5 Qxf5 28.Ng5



Here black has not adequate counterplay because of the weak white squares.

Position 2 is the game Van Run – Macaspac (4.4).

Whites knight at f2 is temporary misplaced. There is no time to put it on a good square, because blacks plan is to open the b file for action. With the b file open and with a misplaced knight at f2, black has one piece more to play. So in position 2, black has temporary advantage. White can delay blacks action by preventing b5 with 20.a4! and at the same time preparing b2-b4. Here is an example. 20..b6 21.b4 cxb4 22.Bxb4 Nd5



Now white has 2 possibilities. 23.Bd6 or 23.Bd2, both with an equal position. The latter option is the safest option because with 23.Bd6 black has the possibility 23...Rxd6!? 24.exd6 Ne3 with compensation for the exchange. In the game white played 20.Qa4, losing the battle at the queen side after 20...a6 21.b3 Bf8 22.Rec1 Nc8 23.Rab1 b5.

Position 3 is the same game Van Run – Macaspac (4.4)

Black activated his queen to a square. Whites queen is at a good square. A rule of thumb is that white shouldn't move her queen to a less active square, unless the the black queen could be driven away from the good square. Important is that the resulting position is more important than exchanging a good piece. In the game white played 32.Qe2? losing a lot of activity and the battle on the queen side. After 32.Qxc6! Rxc6 white can hold the queen side, for example 33.g3, and preparing an attack at the king side.

Position 4 is the same game Van Run – Macaspac (4.4).

Black has a structural advantage. The white queen is trapped and so black has much time to prepare an invasion at the queen side. Black shouldn't hurry. With each move, he should improve his pieces. For example: 47...Ra6 (defending g6) 48.Kh1 Qb1 49.Rg1 Nh5 50.Kh2 Qc2+ 51.Kh1 Qf2.

Position 5 is the game Wells – Pedersen (4.7)

With 26...Bg4+ black could win a piece, for example 27.Kg3 Bxc3 28.Bxg4 Bd2!

Position 6 is the same game Sycz – Wantiez (4.8).

Black has temporary advantage, due to the fact that whites pieces are unhappily placed. With 15...Ne5! White has a big problem. Bc4 is attacked and black threatens Bg4xe2! Followed by Ne5-f3+ winning back the piece. Now whites best move is 16.Bd5. After 16...Bxe2 17.Nxe2 Rxd5 18.Be3 black is a pawn up, but white has activated some of his pieces. In the game white played the lesser 16.Bb3. After 16...Bxe2 17.Nxe2 Nf3+ 18.Kg2 Nxd2 white still hasn't activated any piece and black threatens to win a second pawn at b2.

Position 7 is the game Rosenkilde – Mottais (4.9).

Pawn g7 is attacked. What to do? After a quiet move, white will castle and has structural advantage because of his active pieces. In the game black played the quiet move 15...0-0. Now white can play 16.0-0 threatening 17.Ne4 with an devastating attack. Option B), 15...g6, doesn't slow down whites attack. After 16.0-0 black is behind in development and has problems to find a safe place for his king. Option C), 15...g5!, wins some time back. After 16.Bg3 Ba6! 17.Bxa6 Nxa6 18.0-0 Bxc3 19.bxc3 Nc5



White has a better position, but black can still fight. For example: 20.c4 Ne7 21.Rfd1 Qc6 with the plan of exchanging queens.

Position 8 is the game Papista – Dekker (4.11).

White has a lead in development. The backward pawn at d4 is not weak at the moment because black has difficulties to find good squares for his pieces. Actually, black has too many knights at the board. It is best to divide the task of his knights (that is: covering more territory) instead of both looking at d5. So option A) 12...Ned5 – the move played at the game - is generally not a good move. Then there is the difference between option B) 12...Nf5 and C) 12...Ng6. 12...Ng6 is a development move. However, 12...Nf5 is more than a development move. It is also putting pressure at d4 and preventing Qd3-g3. So option C), 12...Nf5 is the best move.

Position 9 is the same game Papista – Dekker (4.11).

Things are very bad for black because his pieces are not developed and his king is in danger if white succeeds opening the position. A general rule of thumb is to move a bad piece. The knight at c8 should be moved. At b6 it is only defending, at d6 it is defending and the same time attacking the white queen after Nd6-f5. So 18...Nd6! is a strong move, complicating the position. The other options are only defending moves and are less strong than 18...Nd6.

Position 10 is the game Wagenaar – Vorublievas (4.23).

Despite a double pawn at the c file, black has structural advantage because A) his pieces are better placed than whites pieces and B) only black has attacking potential. A general rule of thumb is to improve his worst piece, the rook. With 32..Rb5! black will transfer his rook to h5 and white can resign, because 33.Qd1 is still answered by 33...Rh5! In the game black played the lesser 32...Qh3 (moving the queen to a less active square) 33.f3 Qxg3+ 34.Qg2 Qxg2+ 35.Kxg2 Black has a pawn up, but has lost a great deal of his attacking potential, so increasing whites drawing chances.

Position 11 is the same game Wagenaar – Vorublievas (4.23).

The game was drawn after repetition of moves from this position, but black can play better. A general rule of thumb is to move the worst piece, the black king. At the queen side, the black king could guard the double pawns. Pay attention to the fact that the white pieces cannot move and that the white king cannot invade the blacks king side. A possible continuation might be as follows.

43...Kf7 44.Kf2 Ke7 45.Kg3 Kd6 46.Kf2 Be6



Black cannot more improve his pieces, so the next move should be a pawn move. For example c6-c5, solving the double pawns.

Position 12 is the game Prevot – Pos (4.25).

White has a dangerous passed pawn, but whites last move was inaccurate. It gives black a unique chance to create counterplay: 26...Be6! 27.Bxe6 (27.Be4 f5) Nxc6! 28.Bxf7+ Kxf7.

Position 13 is the game Ross – Pazeriene (4.26).

Pawn d4 is weak. Pawn g4? Also weak! In the game black played 20...Bxg4! 21.hxg4 Qd7 22.Nh2 Nxd4 with an crushing attack. Now white best chance was 23.Qa4, trading queens. After 23...Qxa4 24.Nxa4 Nxe2+ 25.Bxe2 g5 black has a good position.

Position 14 is the game Morrison – Hernandez (4.31).

Unbelievable. The game ended in draw of repetition of moves from this position. Can white improve his position? Yes. There are a lot of options. A) The white king can invade the king side. B) A pawn move at the queen side. In time trouble, there is a rule of thumb. Play only with pieces. Do not play a pawn move, because pawns cannot be moved back. Here is an example. 33.Kg3 Rd2 34.Kh3 Kf8 (setting a trap with Rxb2) 35.Rh7 (seeing the trap) Kg8 36.Rhc7 a5 37.g3 threatening Kh3-h4.

Position 15 is the game Kocur – Tremblay (4.35).

White make use of the weak diagonal a2-g8: 19.Nxe5! winning at least a pawn. In the game black played the lesser continuation 19...dxe5 20.d6+ Kh7 21.dxc7 and white wins a lot of material.