

NATO Chess 2013 Round 7 Highlights

Jan Cheung, 29 July 2014

After a long week, the last round of the tournament had arrived. For some players, this is a good opportunity to end a game into a peaceful draw. For some players, who still have enough energy for the last round, this is a good opportunity to play another game to test their decision making skills. Gladly there are a lot of interesting positions.

Position 1.



Position after 13.Qd1-b3 Black to move.

Position 2.



Position after 19.Qb3-e6. Choose between A) 19...Rxb2 and B) 19...Qb6+

Position 3.



Position after 22.Qc4-e6. Choose between A) 22...Bc8 B) 22...Qxb2 C) 22...c5

Position 4.



Position after 17...c6-c5. White to play.

Position 5.



Position after 38...Ke8-f8. White to play.

Position 6.



Position after 13.Nf3xd4. Black to play.

Position 7.



Position after 33.Ke7-f6. Find a plan for white.

Position 8.



Position after 23.Rh1-h4. Black to play.

Position 9.



Position after 29...Bg4-e6. White to play.

Position 10.



Position after 31.Qg6-e6. Black to play.

Position 11.



Position after 32..Kf8-g8. White to play.

Position 12.



Position after 17.Be4-c2. Black to move.

Position 13.



Position after 15.Bf1-e2. Black to move.

Position 14.



Position after 40.Rf5-e5. The last move of the time control. Black to move. You have 5 seconds.

Position 15.



Position after 16.Ba3-b4. Black to move. Choose between A) 16...Nxb4, B) 16...Bxb4, C) 16...Rfd8

Solutions

Position 1 is the game Pedersen – Van Rijn (7.3)

Due to the backward pawn at the c file, white has a good position, but white's last move 13.Qd1-b3 is an error. The bishop at d3 is undefended. With 13...c5! black would have solved his problem with the backward pawn. Now black has two threats: 1) If white exchange a pawn at c5, black can exchange at c5 with a piece and 2) Bb7xf3 crippling white's king position. White's best try is 14.Bxf6 Bxf6 15.Be4. In the game both players hadn't seen the pawn break c6-c5. The game continued as follows. 13...a5 14.h3 g5 (14...c5 is still possible) 15.Bg3 Nd5 (15...c5 is still possible) 16.Nxd5 exd5 and white got a structural advantage due to black's backward c pawn.

Position 2 is the game Aagaard – Alaslar (7.6).

Look at the white rook at d1, eyeing the black queen at d8. In the game black must have thought that 19...Rxb2 is not possible due to the subtraction move 20.Nc4. However, the combination is not ended. Black can continue with 20...Bxc4! After 21.Qxc4 Qb6+ white is in trouble. So option A) is playable. Let's look at option B) 19...Qb6+ which was played in the game. White continued with 20.Kh1.



Now black has a problem. How to defend pawn e5? 20...Bc8 (20...Qxb2 will be answered with 21.Nxe5 Bc8 22.Qd6) 21.Qc4 Ba6 (21...Qxb2? 22.Rdb1) 22.Qe6 and we have reached position 3.

Position 3 is the same game Aagaard – Alaslar (7.6)

The game ended with a three folded repetition 22...Bc8 23.Qc4 Be6 (option A). Looking at the activity of blacks pieces shows that black position has more to offer. For example, 22...c5 (option C). This is the first candidate move black has to consider because white has nothing more than 23.Qxb6 Rxb6.



Now white has a problem how to defend pawn b2. A move like 24.Ra2 does not solve this problem because of 24...Rd8! with threat g6-g5. Whites only option is the counterattack move 24.Bf1!. After 24...Bxf1 25.Rxf1 Rxb2 26.exf5 gxf5 24.Nc4 Re2!



Black keeps a firm grip on white's position. So option C) is very strong. How about 22...Qxb2 (option B)? Normally, this does not look like a good move because it allows white to destroy the black centre with 23.Nxe5. After 23...Qxc3 24.Nef3!



White has got much activity (Ra1-c1, e4-e5) from a bad position.

Conclusion: option C, 22...c5 is best, followed by option A, 22...Bc8. Option B, 22...Qxb2 is worst.

Position 4 is the game Macaspac – Fichtner (7.7).

Pawn d4 is attacked. Because of the pin at the diagonal g7-c3, the only option is to defend. There are only 2 candidate moves, 18.Ne2 or 18.Be5. 18.Ne2 which was played in the game, puts the knight at a weak square and it blocks Re1. After 18...c4 19.bxc4 Nxc4 black has taken the initiative. The other candidate move 18.Be5 is a lot more active. However, the combination is not ended yet and white should keep calculate whether it keeps the initiative after 18...Bxb3 19.Rxb3 Nxb3 20.Qxb3 cxd4



After 21.Lxg7 Kxg7 22.Ne2! d3 23.Qc3+ Kg8 24.Ned4 the pawn at d3 will be lost.



White has better chances due to the weaknesses h6,g5 at the king side.

Position 5 is the game Waruga – Tucker (7.18).

White has one piece, Bf2, that is not yet active. Important to note is that in this position, every tempo counts. Black has counter chances against the white king with Bc6-e4, but it is whites move. With 39.b4! the bishop at f2 is brought into the game. The game continued as follows. 39...Be4. 40.Qa4? (The Queen should be put on a multifunctional square. In this case, it is b3! From there the queen could counterattack with Qb3-h3 if needed. After 40.Qb3! Bd2 41.Be1 Bxe1 42.Rxe1 the position is unclear.) Now with 40...Bf4! Black could take over the initiative.

Position 6 is the same game Michalski – Leveillee (7.20)

The question here is where black should put his pieces. Black has less space. In generally it is then a good idea to trade off one piece. With 13...Ne5! White cannot prevent an exchange. If 14.Nb3, then black will play Qd3!. If 14.Bc3, then 14...Na4! In the game, black played the lesser move 13...e5. After Nf5 black has lost the battle on the squares d5 and f5.

Position 7 is the game De Waard – Bublys (7.21)

Steinitz elements of chess points out that white has structural advantage due to his active king and the weak pawns at a6 and b5. The black king is cut off from the queen side, so the first impression for white is to move the king to the queen side to attack the pawn at a6. However, black has counter chances with his rook attacking the white king side pawns. So the first thing white has to do is to control the position. That means, he should nullify any chances of a black counterattack before he will decisively attack the pawn at a6. Black can counter attack by opening the position with e6-e5 or followed by Rd2 or Rd5-f5 attacking the king side pawns. One method for white is to reduce the number of pawns at the king side with 34.g4! Here is an example how the game can continue. 34...h5 35.h3 Rd8 36.Rc6 hxg4 37.hxg4 Rh8 38.Rxa6 Rh4 39.Kxb5 Rxg4 40.b4 Rg2 41.a4 Rxf2 42.Ra8 Rf5+ 43.Kc4 and the pawns at the queen side cannot be stopped.

In the game white played carelessly 34.Kc5? After 34...Rd5+ 35.Kc6 Rf5 36.f3 g4! 37.e4 gxf3! 38.gxf3 Rxf3 white has lost control of the position and the game ended in a draw after 39.d5 exd5 40.exd5 Rf2.

Position 8 is the same game Akman – Oltean (7.26).

White has more space and white can improve his position to set up a dangerous king attack. White has structural advantage and if black doesn't take drastic counter measures than whites attack will become too powerful. With 23...b5!? 24.Rxa8 Rxa8 25.cxb5 Rb8 black has some compensation for the exchange.

In the game black thought that white has a problem with his first rank: 16...Bxb4 (option B) 17.cxb4
Now white has solved his problem with the pawns at the queen side. 17...Nxb4 Black thinks winning a
pawn because of the weakness of the first rank 18.Qxb4 Qc1+ Is it mate? 19.Rd1 No! White keeps his

extra piece and won the game. Option A, 16...Nxb4 is generally not a good move. The knight at a6 is placed on a good square where it controls c5. Trading it at b4 only solves white problems.