

NATO Chess 2014 Round 2 Highlights

Jan Cheung, 07 March 2015

Tuesday was one of the two days where 2 games were played. You will think, "It's very early. I need some coffee. Let's play a quiet setup and see what happens.". The following game didn't follow that way.

Sypien, Mateusz 2246 – Aagaard, Gert 2053

B12 NATO – ch 25th (2.5) 09.09-2014

1.e4 c6

Black has ambitions to play a quiet game.

2.d4 d5 3.f3

This move although less played, should not be underestimated.

3...e5!?

This move changes the character of the game. For a long time, 3...dxe4 was thought to be black best move, because 4.fxex4 e5 and the pawn on e5 couldn't be taken because of Qd8-h4+. But things changed when it was discovered that white can play in gambit style with 5.Nf3 exd4 6.Bc4! and things are not clear for black.

Nowadays 3...e6 is a solid continuation for black. The disadvantage of this move is that it can lead to positions that resembles the French Defence where the bishop at c8 is locked behind the pawn chain.

4.dxe5 Bc5

It was also possible to play 4...Qb6 5.Nc3 Bc5 leading to the game continuation.

5.Nc3 Qb6

This is the point of 3...e5. Black has ambitions to refute whites third move, but his pieces are not fully developed, so things are not clear.



6.Na4 Qa5+

The other possibility is 6...Bf2+ 7.Ke2 Qd4 8.Qxd4 Bxd4

After 9.exd5 Bxe5 10.dxc6 Nxc6 white has won a pawn, but black has compensation in the form of better developed pieces.

7.c3 Bxg1 8.Rxg1 dxe4 9.Qd4

The other continuation is 9.Bf4 with the idea 9...Ne7 10.b4. After 10...Qd5 11.Qc2 white has more than good compensation for the pawn because of his better development, for example 11...exf3 12.Nc5! Prevents Qd5-e6 and prepares the threat Ra1-d1. 12...fxg2 13.Bxg2 Qd8 14.Be4 Now black is in trouble because his pieces are pushed back and white can win back material.

9...Ne7 10.Bg5

The position deserves a diagram. What should black play?



10...Nf5(?)

Black cannot make good use of the horizontal pin at g5. After 10...f6 white should play 11.Bf4 and black's position is vulnerable. After 10...f6 white should not play 11.exf6 because of 11...Qxg5 12.fxe7 Nd7! Now 13.Qxe4 will be answered by 13...b5!.

The best option is simultaneous develop and attack pawn e5 with 10...Nd7! To play that move, it is necessary to evaluate the position after 11.Bxe7 Kxe7 12.f4.



Analysisdiagram

for black, it is important to see that the d file is not dangerous: 12...Rd8 13.Qd6+ (13.0-0-0 Nf8! 14.Dxd8+ Dxd8 15.Rxd8 Kxd8 16.g3 f5 17.exf6 gxf6 18.g4 white has more active pieces, but black can defend) 13...Ke8 14.0-0-0 Nf8! 15.Dxd8+ Dxd8 16.Rxd8+ Kxd8 17.g3 f5 18.exf6 gxf6 19.g4 White has more active pieces, but black can defend.

11.Qxe4 h6 12.Bd2 Be6 13.f4

White fixes his material advantage, but it was not necessary. 13.0-0-0 Nd7 14.b3 Qxe5 15.Qxe5 Nxe5 Now white can make good use of the pin on the e file with 16.Nc5! 0-0-0 17.Re1 Rd5 18.Nxe6 fxe6 19.c4 Nd3+ 20.Bxd3 Rxd3 21.Rxe6 and white is a healthy pawn up.

13...Nd7 14.b3 Nc5 15.Qb4

15.Nxc5 Qxc5 16.Rh1 Rd8 and white has problems finding a shelter for his king.

15...Qxb4 16.cxb4 Ne4?

Black missed his chance. 16...Nxa4! 17.bxa4 0-0-0 and black has compensation because the white pieces are not coordinated.

17.Nc5 Nxd2 18.Kxd2

White is a pawn up and won later the game.

As usual, here are some exercises from games from round 2.

Position 1.



Position after 33...Re7-e8. White to move. Choose between a) 34.h5, b) 34.b4, c) 34.Bf2

Position 2.



Position after 38.Kc7xc6. Black to move. Choose between a) 38...Ke6, b) 38...g6, c) 38...g5.

Position 3.



Position after 52.Rh6-e6+. Black to move.

Position 4.



Position after 38...Rc1-d1. White to move.

Position 5.



Position after 24...Qc3-f6. White to move.

Position 8.



Position after 43.Rh1-g1. Choose between a) 43...Bf3 and b) 43...h5.

Position 9.



Position after 21.Ne2xg3. Black to move.

Position 10.



Position after 33...f5-f6. White to move.

Position 11.



Position after 32.Rf1-e1. Choose between a) 32...Qe6 and b) 32...f6.

Position 12.



Position after 22...Ra8-c8. White to move.

Position 13.



Position after 27.Kg1-g2. Black to move. Choose between a) 27...b5, b) 27...Rc4 and c) 27...Rc5.

Position 14.



Position after 23.Nf3-g5. Black to move. Choose between a) 23..axb3+, b) 23...Nf5 and c) 23...Rc8

Position 15.



Position after 30.a4xb5. Black to move.

Solutions

Position 1 is the game Helbig – Dusak (2.3).

If we look at the pawn structure, we see that black cannot open the position with normal force. Black can open the position by sacrificing a piece at e4 for 2 pawns if the white pieces are temporary displaced. Blacks best option is to sit and wait for whites action b3-b4. Before playing that pawn

move, white should put his pieces at the best squares. The bishop at g2 should protect pawn e4. The rook at d1 is protection square d3, The rook at b1 is preparing b3-b4. The white king is protecting the king side pawns, in case black decides to sacrifice at e4. We haven't talked about bishop e3. If black sacrifices at e4, then after Re8xe4, Be3 will be attacked. So white can improve his position by putting Be3 at the better square f2, where it keeps an eye at c5. Option c), 34. Bf2 is the best option. Here is an example of a continuation: 34...g5 Black tries to occupy f4 for his knight 35.h5 This move prevents any black counter play at the king side. 35...Ne6 36.Bf1 This move defends square d3. 36... Nf4 37.Rb2 Kg7 38.Rc1 Kf7 39.Rbc2 Kg7 40.Rc3 Covering the third rank, in case the a file opens. 40...Kf7 41.Rd1 Kg7 42.b4 axb4 43.axb4 Ra4 44.Rb1.

Option a), 34.h5 is not a good option yet, because it closes the king side and white doesn't know whether it needs it or not.

In the game, option b),34.b4 was played. This is an inaccurate move which enables black to activate his pieces with tempo. After 34...axb4 35.axb4 Nxe4+! 36.fxe4 Ra3 white will lose the pawn at e4 and the black pieces are more active than whites pieces, for example 37.Kf2 Bxe4 38.Bxe4 Rxe4 39.Bc1 Ra2+ 40.Kg3 Rxc4.

Position 2 is the game Sypien – Aagaard (2.5).

If black can exchange a pawn at the king side, it can increase his drawing chances. The a pawn can be used as distraction. With 38...g5! black can complicate the game. After 39.fxc5 hxc5 40.Rxa3 Ke6 41.Kg3 Bf5 42.Rxc5 Kxe5 we arrive at the following position.



Now, black should bring his king towards the h pawn. After 43.h4 f6 44.Rg8 Be4+ 45.Kc5 Bf3 46.Rg6 Bh5 white has to show technical skills to win this endgame.

In the game black choose to wait and lost the battle due the weakness of the black squares 38...g6 39.Kd5 h5 40.Rxa3 Kf8 41.Kd6 Kg7 42.Ke7 Be6 43.h4 Bf5 44.Ra6 Bd3 45.Tf6 Bc4



White has two methods of win in this position, A). Transforming into a won pawn endgame with 46.e6 or b) 46.f5, what was played in the game.

Position 3 is Wagenaar – Mestek (2.8).

Black and white have both passed pawns. The black king should support its own pawns, but also to defend against h5-h6. After 52...Kf5 the game should lead to a draw, for example: 53.Rc6 Kg4 54.Rf6 d3 55.Kd1 f3 56.h5 f2 57.h6 Kxb6 58.Rxf2 Rb1+ 59.Kd2 Rb2+ 60.Ke3.

In the game black played 52...Kf3. This move is weak because the black rook cannot stop the b and the h pawn at the same time. Now with 53.h5 white can win, for example: 53...d3 54.h6.

Position 4 is the game Koopmeiners – Karbowskiak (2.13).

White can support his d pawn as with some tactics: 39.Rc7+ Kb8 (39...Kd8 40.Bf6+ Ke8 41.Re7+ with a double attack) 40.Be5!



The promotion of the d pawn cannot be stopped, for example 40...Bf5 41.d7 c2 42.Bf4 Ka8 43.Rc8+ or 40...c2 41.d7 Ka8 42.Bf4.

In the game white played 39.d7+. After 39...Kc7 40.Be5+ Kc6! (This must be the move white may have overseen) the white pawn is stopped and the game soon ended in a draw.

Position 5 is the game Demjen –Michalski (2.14).

The question in this position is how to exchange at b4. White should exchange and activate his pieces at the most active way. Blacks 8th rank weakness can help to find the solution: 25.Rexb4! Now the threat is c3-c4.

Position 6 is the same game Demjen – Michalski (2.14).

A general rule of thumb in the end game is that the defending part can increase his drawing chances after exchanging pawns. After the game continuation 46...Re2? 47.Rb7 Rxe3 48.Rxb4 white has no pawn weaknesses and it is very hard to make progress with the e pawn because the white king is near the promotion square. Here is a position from the same game after some 20 moves later.



Position after 65...Ke6-f5.

The white pawns are defending invasion squares for black's king and shouldn't be moved. After 66.Kf3! white can still defend, for example: 66...Rb7 67.g4+Kg5 68.Ra3! Rf7+ 69.Kg3! In the game white played 66.g4+?, which enables black to activate his king after 66...Kf4 and black soon won.

Let's go back at position 6. After the correct move 42...Kg6 white has one pawn weakness at e3. The black pawn weakness at e6 can be defended by the king. Black has more chances to win than in the game continuation. After 43.Rb7 black can continue with 43...Kf5! Material is not important at the moment. This move prevents white king into action, which is worth a pawn. 48.Rxg7 b3 49.Rb7 Ke4 50.Rb7 Kd6 and black has good prospects to win this end game.

Position 7 is LeBlanc – Dekker (2.20).

In the game 21...Rd8 (option a) was played with a draw offer and the game was peacefully ended. On closer inspection, the position of Rd2 and Nf6 and a white piece at g5 are ingredients of a subtraction combination. The game can be complicated with 21...Nxg5 22.Bxg5 Nxe4! 23.Bxe7 (23.Qxe4 Bxg5 24.Qxc6 Qxc6 25.Bxc6 Bxd2 26.Bxe8 Bxh3 is fine for black) 23...Nxd2 24.Bg5.



It looks like black has problems with the knight at d2, but the position of Bg5 enables black a tactical possibility: 24...Bxh3! After 25.Qxd2 Bxg2 26.Kxg2 Re6 (prevents Bg5-f6) black has a rook and two healthy pawns for 2 minor pieces. The position is unclear, for example: 27.Nc3 (white tries to invade f6) 27...Qd6! 28.Qc2 (white cannot exchange queens because the pawns at the queen side are vulnerable) 28...f5

Conclusion: both answers are correct, but continuing play is better than a draw offer.

Position 8 is the game Onley – Deneyer (2.21).

An interesting ending. Black is a rook down, but the position is closed. If white can open a file, his extra rook will decide the game. The f file is the only file that white can open. So 43...h5 (option B) is not an accurate move because of 44.f3! After 44...Rxf3 (44..Bxf3 45.Rg3) 45.Re1 followed by 46.Rf2 the white rooks are activated.

After the correct move 43...Bf3 (option A) white can hardly make progress, for example: 44.a5 Rxh2 45.Rc2 (planning Rc2-c1) h5 46.Bg5 h4 47.Be7 Kd7 48.Bg5 Ke6.

Position 9 is the game Hater – Coulon (2.22).

Black is 2 pawns down. It looks like the battle is lost, but in fact the battle has just begun! Whites position has several weaknesses. 1).diagonal a7-g1, which results that a piece at g3 is not actually defended. 2. White as no pawns at the centre. If black has time, he can roll his 2 centre pawns forward, splitting whites army in 2 parts. With 21...Qc7! Black can start an attack. From c7, the queen can move to g3 or g7 depending on the circumstances.

After 21...Qc7 white has several methods to defend.

A) 22.Nd4 Here black can reply with 22...Ne5! Planning Ne5-g4. Here is a possible continuation. 23.Re2 Ng4 24.Rae1 Nxf2! 25.Rxf2 Qxg3 26.Rxe6 Qh2+ 27.Kf1 Qh1+ 28.Ke2 Nxf2 29.Kxf2 Rf8+ 30.Kg3 Ba7 with an unclear position.

B) 22.Nf1. Here black can reply with 22...Rxf3! Opening the g file Here is a possible continuation. 23.gxf3 Ne5 24.Qe2 Qg7+ 25.Kh1 Bd6 26.Nh2 Qh6 27.Qe3 Qh4 28.Qd4 Qxd4 29.cxd4 Nxd3 30.Rxe6 with an unclear position.

C) 22.Kf1. Here black can reply with 22...e5! Here is a possible continuation. 23.b4 Ba7 24.Bf5 e4 25.Nh4 Ne5 26.Qd2 Qc4+ 27.Qe2 Rh6 28.Nh5 Rh6 29.Qxc4 bxc4 30.g4 Bc8 with an unclear position.

D) 22.Kh1. Here black also reply with 22...e5! Here is a possible continuation. 23.Nh4



23... e4! Black ignores Nh4-g6+ and prepares Nd7-e5-g4. The position contains full of tactics. White has 3 methods of defend.

A) 24.Bxe4 Rxf2 25.Ng6+ Kxh7 26.Qd3 dxe4 27.Nxe4 Qc6 with a strong attack.

B) 24.Nxe4 dxe4 25.Ng6+ Kg7! Black prevents a possible Bxe4 with check. 26.Bxe4 Nf6 27.Bf3 Rh8! With a strong attack.

C) 24.Ng6+ This is white best choice. 24...Kg7! Here again, black prevents a possible Bxe4 with check. 25.Nxf8 Rxf8 26. Qd2 Kh8! Whites h7 is a good shield for blacks king. 27.Qh6 Bxf2

White has put his pieces at the best squares and is now ready to open the position. 45...Nd3 46.R1xd3 exd3 47.Qxd3 Qe7 48.Kf2 and white several targets to attack: pawn b6, pawn d6, and an invasion of the queen in blacks camp.

Position 11 is the game Papler – Patron (2.28).

Black has structural advantage: 1. He has one pawn more than white, 2. He possesses the d file, 3. Whites king side is weak. At the moment, the white queen is defending the weaknesses. With the practical move 32...Qe6 (option a)) 33.Qxe6 fxe6 black can go safely to an ending in which his pieces are all better than whites pieces. Option b), 32...f6 was played in the game. Although it is a good move according to the computer, it is generally not advised to play that move because it creates an unnecessary weakness in blacks camp which later proved to be fatal: 33.Qb8+ Kg7 34.Kg1. Now black should really play the multipurpose move 34...Nd6 instead of grabbing material with 34...Rxa2 which results that his pieces are temporary uncoordinated, which later enabled white to win the game by invading square g8 with his queen. What we can learn from this example is that when you are attacking the whole game, you should consider that there is a possibility of not deciding the game by still attacking, but by transposing into a better ending.

Position 12 is the game Lord – Csizmadia (2.31).

The white pieces are very active on the queen side. Obviously, white can improve his pieces by invading the b file. This strategic plan could already be executed, due to some tactics: 23.Rb7! Qa5 24.Rab1 Rb8 25.h3 Rxb7 26.Rxb7

Position 13 is the game Lambruschini – Ross (2.33).

Black is going to conquer the c file, but how to proceed? The answer is to improve his worst piece at the moment, before playing a pawn move. Black worst piece at the moment, is the black queen. Blacks best plan is to put her at the c file. So option a), 27...b5 is not an optimal move because it creates a black weakness at a6 without improving blacks pieces. Now we have a choice between 27...Rc4 (option b) and 27...Rc5 (option c). 27...Rc4 has two advantages. It attacks square d4 and pawn e4. Play can continue as follows: 28.Rc2 R8c7 29.Rac1 Qc8 and now black is ready for b7-b5-b4.

Position 14 is the game Tremblay – O’Byrne (2.34).

“The threat of the move is more dangerous than the execution of the move”, Aaron Nimzowitsch once said. Option a), 23...axb3+, the game continuation, carries the execution of the move and was not the strongest option because not all pieces are put on the best squares, the knight at e7 could first be played at f5 (option b). After Ne7-f5, black could think about putting another worst piece to an active square, for example Rg8-c8. After that move, a4xb3 is a possible continuation. For

example, 23...Nf5! 24.Nh7 Ke7 25.Nf6 Rgc8. Option c), 23...Rc8 is not a strong move because the rook is already active at a8 and square c8 could be reserved for Rg8.

Position 15 is the game Ghiacy – Chwieseni (2.37).

The queen at c3 is defending Ra1. With the distraction move 30...Bb4! black wins an exchange.