

## NATO Chess 2015 Round 5 Highlights

*Jan Cheung, 8 July 2016*

The afternoon program after round 4 must have exited many players and visitors. For them, a round trip along the canals on boat was programmed. For me as a local inhabitant, it was an unusual sight to travel. During the short trip, there were little raindrops falling on the window, but eventually I must say that it was an interesting sight to see the living on the canal houses and canal boats. It looks so relaxing, in the middle of a busy city.



The boat trip lasted an hour and people were free at the rest of the day. I got many questions what to visit. "Which way to Madame Tussaud?" "Which way to visit the Dutch Chess Championship?" "Which way to the Hard Rock Cafe?" OK folks, there is too much choice in so little time! For those of you, who would like to visit the Rijksmuseum during the tournament, but who finally didn't have time, I have included a picture of the Night Watch for you. This huge painting is so famous, that even the president of the USA had made a visit in 2014. So maybe you will come back later...



I hope you have enjoyed the afternoon break. For me as the only local participant of the tournament, it was not a special day because I have nearly seen everything of this city, so I made a long stroll and I ended up in the indoor food market Foodhallen and the city centre library, which was still opened at night.

Here are the exercises of round 5.

### Position 1.



Position after 15.a2-a4. Black to move. Choose between A) 15...Qa5 and B) 15...b5.

### Position 2.



Position after 39.Qf1-f3. Black to move.

### Position 3.



Position after 20...Rf8-e8. White to move.

Position 4.



Position after 37.Qc7-c8. Black to move.

Position 5.



Position after 33...e6-e5. White to move.

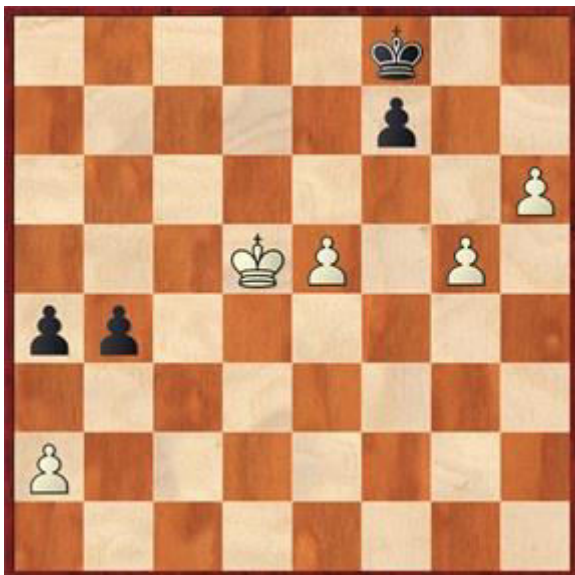


### Position 6.



Position after 42.Kd2-c3. Black to move. Choose between A) 42...b4+, B) 42...Kd6, C) 42...Bd7 and D) 42...Bb7.

### Position 7.



Position after 42...a5-a4

White to move. You have 10 seconds. Choose between A) 43.h7, B) 43.Kc4 and C) 43.e6.

### Position 8.



Position after 16...Bc8-a6. White to move. Choose between A) 17.Bc2, B) 17.a4 and C) 17.Bxa6.

### Position 9.



Position after 14.Qf3-e4. Black to move.

### Position 10.



Position after 25.Kf1-e2. Black to move.

### Position 11.



Position after 22...Ra6-b6. White to move. Choose between A) 23.Rd2 and B) 23.Qd8+

### Position 12.



Position after 19.c6xd7. Black to move.

### Position 13.



Position after 41.Qf1-a1. Black to move. Choose between A) 41...Qxb3, B) 41...Ne6, C) 41...Ng6 and D) 41...Nd7.



### Position 14.



Position after 16...Bd6-c7. White to move.

### Position 15.



Position after 19.Nc3-e4. Black to move. Choose between A) 19...Bxb2, B) 19...Rxc2 and C) 19...Ke7.

### Solutions

Position 1 is the game Drabke - Michalski (5.3).

White has more space but black has a position with no weaknesses. The question is whether black can improve his position. He could direct his pieces at the queen side. According to Steinitz Elements of Chess, in general he should first put the pieces to optimal squares before playing a pawn move. A good square for the black queen is a5, where it will not be attacked by white pieces. Then the black rook at f8 could be directed to square d8. This means that **15...Qa5** is a sensible development move. After **16.Ne5 Rfd8** the position is equal. Black is planning to play Bd7-f5, controlling the centre with pieces.

In the game black played a different move, 15...b5 trying to find counter play at the queen side. This move has the disadvantage that it weakens square c6. After **15...b5?** white attacked square c6 and defend square c4 simultaneously with **16.Ne5!** Black was unable to find a defence against Ne5-c6 and lost the game fast.

**Position 2 is the game Nill – Sycz (5.5).**

Due to the pin along the diagonal e5-h2, black is able to set up problems for white. After **39...Qe5!**



white has problems to find a move without losing material:

- **40.Qa8+ Kh7 41.Qf3 f6** White is put in zugzwang.



**42.Bh1 Be8 43.Bg2 g6** (Black is not in a hurry. Grabbing the pawn at a4 immediately only results in a draw position: 43...Bxa4? 44.Qh5+ Nh6 45.Qxe5 fxe5 46.Be4+ g6 47.gxh4) **44.c5 Qxc5 45.gxh4 Qe5+ 46.Ng3 Bxa4 47.h5 Be8 48.hxg6+ Bxg6** with a winning bishop end game for black.

- **40.Bf1 Ne3 41.Kg1 Nxf1 42.Kxf1 hxg3 43.Qxg3 Qxg3 44.Nxg3 Bd3+ 45.Kf2 Bxc4 46.Ne4 Bb3 47.Nc3 f6** Black is a pawn up leaving white with no counter chances.
- **40.Qg4** The best defence. The white queen defends pawn c4 and has possibilities to give a check along the 8<sup>th</sup> rank. **40...hxg3+ 41.Nxg3 Ne3 42.Qc8+ Kh7 43.Qd8 Nxg2 44.Kxg2 Qb2+ 45.Kg1 Qc1+ 46.Kg2 Qxc4 47.Qxb6 Qxa4** In this end game, white is a pawn down, but due to the fact that the pawns are on one side of the board, black has to work hard to convert the material advantage to a full point.

### Position 3 is the game Hansen – Karbowiak (5.9).

The pawn structures look symmetrical, so at first sight it looks that the game is heading to a draw. On closer inspection, it seems that black has a weak square c6, which can be occupied by the knight at d4. This stronghold at c6 alone, does not give white a decisive advantage. Black has a second weakness, the defender of the knight at c5, pawn d6 can be attacked. This weakness of Nc5 is only temporary, so we can speak that white has a temporary advantage. If he doesn't do anything with this, the advantage will be vaporized. After

### 21.e5!

black has a serious problem with Nc5.

- **21...dxe5** fails: **22.fxe5 Nfd7 23.Ra8** winning a rook.
- **21...Nh5** also fails: **22.Ra8 Qd7 23.Bc6** also winning a rook.

- **21...Nfd7** is the best defence, but after **22.Nc6** black's pawn at e7 gets weak and black cannot prevent losing material: **22...Qb6 23.Ra7 Nb8 24.Bxc5 dxc5 25.Nxe7+ Kf8 26.Rb7** and pawn c5 also gets lost, or **22...Qc7 23.Ra7 Qc8 24.d4 Ne6 25.Nxe7+.**

**Position 4 is the game Gooris – Marquardt (5.10).**

White's pieces are all on active squares. The black pieces are passive. If black does nothing than waiting, white can strengthen the attack at pawn f7. Black should find a way to activate his pieces while keeping the defence of his king position. The most important attacking piece is the white queen. Black can start to drive this piece off the 8th rank, beginning with

**36...Qd6!**



Black threat is Rb7-b8, neutralizing white's activity along the 8<sup>th</sup> rank. White can prevent this with

**37.Qa8 Kg7**

Black must find a way to activate the knight at d8. If it could be put at c6, his position will be saved. White has two ways to continue the attack at the king side, but in both of them, black can hold:

- **38.g5 Qc7 39.Qa4 Ra7 40.Qd1 Nc6**
- **38.h5 Qc7 39.Qa4 Qe7**

In the game black played **36...Ra7**. After **37.Rf3 Kg7?** (37...Qd6! with the idea to exchange queens with Qd6-c7 was necessary) **38.Nd7 Qe7 39.Nf6**





black got an uncomfortable position. Whites plan is to put the queen at e5 and playing h4-h5-h6 or g4-g5.

**Position 5 is the game MM Nielsen – Fichtner (5.19).**

The black pawns at the queen side are put at squares of the same colour of the white bishop, which is a sign for white to attack them. After the game played in the game, **34.fxe5+?** black was on time to defend them with **34...Nxe5** and the game resulted in a draw. With **34.Bf3! b6** (or 34...exf4 35.Bxb7 fxg3 36.hxg3 and white is a pawn up) **35.fxe5+ Nxe5 36.Be2! b5 37.a4!** black cannot avoid loss of a pawn.

**Position 6 is the game Oltean – Petat (5.21).**

Black is a pawn up, but he cannot make use of it because his bishop is not active. Look at the pawn structure. It looks like a fortress. If black does not move his pawns, the white king cannot invade blacks position. On closer inspection, blacks fortress is only at one point weak. Whites threat is Be2-h5xg6. Unhappy to say, that was exactly what happened in the game. Black did not identify the threat and played **42...Kd6?** After **43.Bh5! Ne7 44.Bxe7+** the game was over. The other alternatives, **42...Bd7, 42...Bb7** and **42...b4+** lead to a draw.

**Position 7 is the game Meiers – Pos (5.35).**

White has a passed pawn. Blacks only chance is to create a passed pawn at the queen side. White has more material, and the passed pawn means having structural advantage. You have little time, so what do you do? The best way is to play it safe. Just nullify blacks chances and don't think about winning the game! Just think about improving your position. After

**43.Kc4 b3 44.axb3 a3 45.Kc3**

Black's passed pawn is stopped. White has solved a weakness in the position. The white king will pick up the black pawn at the queen side and the game is over.

Do not bother about finding a nice move order like

**43.h7 Kg7 44.g6 fxe6 45.e6**

which wins the game in style. Thinking about those moves costs time, and playing that with little time is risky.

In the game white played

**43.e6??**

and found out that after

**43.fxe6+ 44.Kxe6 b3**

white was lost:

- **45.axb3.**

Perhaps white had the following variation in mind: 45...axb3 46.Kf6 b2 47.h7 b1Q 48.h8Q#, but this variation has a lot of holes. Instead of 46...b2?, black can better play 46...Kg8 and the result is draw because white cannot deliver mate after 47.g6 b2 48.h7+ Kh8 49.g7+ Kxh7 50.Kf7 b1Q 51.g8Q+ Kh6. Note that the black queen protects square g6, preventing white to give mate from this square. Furthermore, instead of 45...axb3 black has a better move:

**45...a3!**

After promotion at square a1 the queen will protect square h8. Easy to oversee at time trouble.

- **45.g6 bxa2!**

Here the same story, that at square a1 the queen will protect square h8.

- **46.h7 Kg7**

And the passed pawn at the queen side decides the game.

Conclusion:

- 43.Kc4 is a practical move which wins the game.
- 43.h7 is a move that wins the game in style, but it is not a practical move.
- 43.e6 is a move that wants to win the game in style, but actually it loses the game.

**Position 8 is the game Morrison – Demjen (5.36).**

The question in this position is what to do with white's beautiful bishop at d3. A first fight a trade against black's less active bishop at a6 seems unattractive. After putting it at c2 with

**17.Bc2?**

white realized that at this square, the bishop has become less active than the bishop at a6! This means that a bishop trade is unavoidable. As white, we would like a good exchange for parting the bishop, so a good move is

**17.Bxa6 Rxa6 18.a4**

in which the rook at a6 has no functional meaning. Playable, but less accurate is

**17.a4 Bxd3 18.Nxd3**

because the knight at d3 is less active than at square e5.

**Position 9 is the game Echavarria Hidalgo - Crapulli (5.39).**

Square f3 could become weak if black trades or black distracts the defenders of this square. After

**14...Bxh4!**

white is forced to capture back with the pawn because 15.Qxh4? loses material after 15...Ne5! So white's only option is

**15.gxh4**

After

**15...Qd7!**



black controls the position. Whites position is weak at the light squares and blacks plan is to play Nc6-b4 or f7-f5 to enforce his position.

**Position 10 is the same game Echavarria Hidalgo - Crapulli (5.39).**

Black has two ways to win the pawn at b2.

1. **25...Rc2 26.Kd3 Bxb2 27.Kxc2 Bxa1** by entering a bishop end game, or
2. **25...Bxb2 26.Bxb2 Rc2+ 27.Ke3 Rxb2** by entering a rook end game.

The question is which way it provides most chances for black. Let's analyze each of them.

1. In the game the bishop endgame was tested. After **25...Rc2 26.Kd3 Bxb2 27.Kxc2 Bxa1 28.Be3**



white targets the pawn formation a7-b6. Because whites king is closer in the centre than blacks king, white got good chances to win back the pawn and the game ended in a draw:

**28...Kg8 29.Kb3 Kf7 30.Kb4 Bb2 31.a4 Ke6 32.Kb5 Ba3 33.Ka6 Kd5 34.Kxa7 Bc5 ½-½**

2. After the continuation

**25...Bxb2 26.Bxb2 Rc2+ 27.Ke3 Rxb2**

white has time to activate his rook with

**28.Rd1!**





Important to note is that whites king is much more active than blacks king and as a result, a check like **28...Rb3+** can be defended with **29.Rd3!** After **29...Rxd3+ 30.Kxd3 Kg8 31.Kc4 Kf7 32.Kb5 Ke6 33.Ka6 Kd6 34.Kxa7** white has won back the pawn and the resulting ending is equal. For black, his best chance at the 28<sup>th</sup> move is to activate the king.

**28...h6 29.Rd7**

In this rook ending white has good chances to fight for a draw because both the rook and the king are active, while black has only an active rook.

**29...a6 30.a4 Kh7**

30...Rb4 could be defended with 31.Rd4.

**31.Rd6 Ra2 32.Rxb6 Rxa4 33.h4**



If white knows how to play this ending, he has good chances to make a draw. However, it is not a draw yet and black has all the time to prepare an action while white is doomed to sit and wait.

### Conclusion:

In the bishop ending, white can draw easily. In the rook ending, white also has drawing chances, but black has a lot of play while white has to defend accurately. This means that **25...Bxb2** is preferred above **25...Rc2+**.

### Position 11 is the game De Cat – Allmann (5.42).

White has structural advantage:

- Better pawn structure
- Open d file

Also note that white's knight is stronger than the combination of black's bishop with crippled pawn formation at the queen side.

We can conclude that white has all the time of the world to improve his position. According to Steinitz Elements of Chess, white should first put his pieces at the optimal squares before taking any action. Looking at the pieces, we see that the rook at d1 and the knight at f1 could be put at better squares. First, white has to decide how to defend pawn b2. This means that 23.Rd2 is a candidate move. Then there is another rule of Steinitz Elements of Chess. The side who has structural advantage, benefits after a queen trade. The reason is that the main functionality of the queen is used to cover the weaknesses in our own position. We compare the following 2 moves.

- After **23.Rd2** white has to reckon with the following continuations.
  - **23...Bf4.**  
After  
**24.Re2 Rb8 25.g3 Bc1 26.Qb1 Bh6 27.Qc2**



white has consolidated his position. Both the white queen as the black queen are doing defensive work.

- **23...Rb8 24.g3 Qc8!?**



The queen is heading to e6, where it will target pawn a2. After

**23.a3**

black can continue with

**23...Bc7**

covering square d8. The game is very complex as white has to reckon with the activity of the black queen.

- With

**23.Qd8+,**

the move that was played in the game, white has to compute less than with 23.Rd2. After

**23.Qd8+ Qxd8 24.Rxd8 Kg7 25.Rd2 Bf4 26.Rc2**



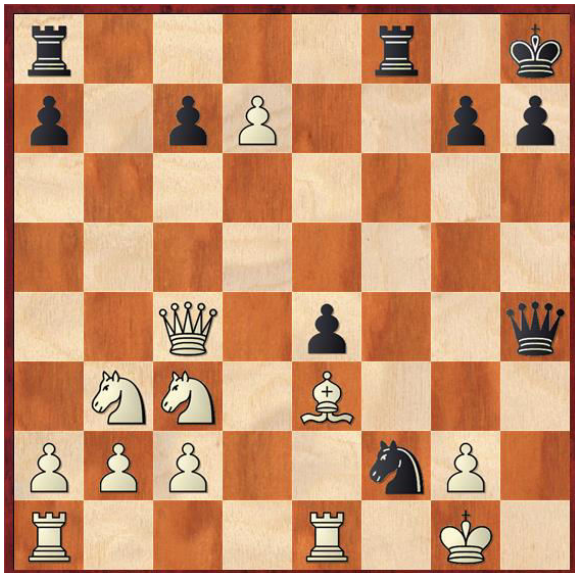
White has consolidated his position and has bright plans in the future as the white king can enter the game and the pawns at the king side can start rolling forward to restrict the activity of the black bishop.

### Conclusion:

23.Qd8+ is a move in style of the Steinitz Elements: exchanging queens if you have structural advantage, to increase your structural advantage.

### Position 12 is the game Slaidins - Tremblay (5.44).

Note that pawn f2 is attacked three times and it has been defended only one time. The only problem is that black has sacrificed two pieces, so he has to react quickly, otherwise the material difference will decide the game. The move played in the game, **19...Nxe3?**, wins back a piece, but it is too slow as **20.Qxe4** defended all threats against the king. Another move, **19...Rxf2?** is too slow as **20.Qxc7** defends square h2 and it threatens promotion. Correct is **19...Nxf2!** as it threatens Qh1#.



White has two ways to defend.

- **20.Bxf2 Qxf2+ 21.Kh1 Qh4+ 22.Kg1 Qf2+** with perpetual check.
- **20.Kf1 Nd3+ 21.Kg1**

The only move, as 21.Ke2 loses: 21...Rf2+ 22.Kd1 ( or 22.Bxf2 Qxf2+ 23.Kd1 Qxe1#) Nxb2+ winning the queen.

**21...Nf2**

with repetition of moves.

### Position 13 is the game Fielding - Murray (5.47).



Whites passed pawn at a4 cannot be stopped, so black should find counter play as soon as possible. After **41...Ne6** or **41...Ng6** black is threatening Nf4 so white has no other choice than accepting black giving perpetual check: **42.Qxf6 Qd1+ 43.Kf2 Qd2+.**

If black wants to play for a win, then he should play **41...Nd7!?** The knight is heading to e5. This move however, also gives white chances because of the passed a pawn. Here are some heart breaking continuations.

- **42.a5 Ne5 43.Qf1 Qxb3 44.f4 gxf4 45.a6**
- **42.f4!? gxf4 43.a5 ( or 43.Qf1 Qxb3 44.Qxf4 Qxa4 45.Qd2 Qb4! 46.Qh6 Qe1+) 43...Ne5 44.Qf1 Qxb3 45.a6**

Both variations lead to the same position.



There is plenty of play in this unclear position after **45...Qa2**, **45...Nf3+** or **45...f3**.

Finally, it is important to remember that having the initiative is more important than gaining material. The move played in the game, **41...Qxb3**, loses a tempo and the game after **42.a5**. After **42...Qxf3 43.a6 Qxh3 44.a7 Qxg4+ 45.Kf2 Qxe4 46.Ne3** the knight enters the game and black soon runs out of checks: **46...Qf4+ 47.Ke2 Qh2+ 48.Kd3 Qd6+ 49.Kc2 Qh2+ 50.Kb3**. The alternative move **42...Nd7** is also insufficient after **43.a6 Nb6 44.a7 Na8 45.f4 Qxh3 46.Qd1**.

### Conclusion:

**41...Qxb3** loses, **41...Ne6** and **41...Ng6** both will lead to a quick draw and **41...Nd7** continues the game, but both sides are playing a risky continuation.

**Position 14 is the game Jimenez - Buchholtz (5.51).**

The knight at b7 can get a nice stronghold at c5 if white is able to exchange the black bishop at c7. This can be realized with

**17.Bg3!**

Black cannot avoid a bishop trade without giving up square d6, so after

**17...Bxg3 18.hxg3**

white has possession of square c5 for his knight. The chances are equal.

**Position 15 is the game Chwieseni - Einarsson (5.52).**

Whites threat is Ne4-d6+. Does black have to move his king or the rook at c8? In the game black ignored this threat and saw that white is weak at the centre squares. After

**19...Bxb2! 20.Nd6+ Ke7 21.Nxc8+ Rxc8**



whites position has a lot of weaknesses:

- Isolated pawns at the queen side. Pawn c2 is difficult to defend.
- Square c3.
- Square d5, which is a stronghold for blacks knight.
- The white rooks have no open lines yet and are not effective against the black knight and bishop.

In this position black has many moves to improve his position while white is reduced to sit and wait. For example:

- **22.Rfe1 a5 23.Kf1 Bf6 24.Ne5 Rxc2 25.Re2 Rc5!**

Black does not exchange the rook because the black rook is more active than the white rook at e2.

**26.Nd3 Rd5 27.g3 a4 28.Rc2 Rd7 29.Rcc1 Nd5 30.Nc5 Ra7.**

- **22.Nd4 a5 23.f4 Nd5 24.Nf5+ Kf6 25.Nd6 Rxc2 26.Ne4+ Ke7 27.Rf2 Rxf2 28.Kxf2 Nc3 29.Rd2 Nxa2 30.Rd2 Nc3!**

Let us go back to blacks 19<sup>th</sup> move and look at the alternatives.

- After **19...Ke7 20.Rd6** white gets a lot of activity at the d file, which is a sign that blacks 19<sup>th</sup> move is not a solution. Black has difficulties to defend his position, for example: **20...Na4 21.Rfd1 Nxb2 22.Rd7+ Ke8 23.R1d6 Rxc3 24.h3.**
- After **19...Rxc2** white gets more activity than with **19...Bxb2**, for example: **20.Nxf6+ gxf6 21.Rd6 Nd5 22.Rxa6 0-0 23.Rb1 Rfc8 24.Kf1.** Black has a better position, but white can defend this position.

### **Conclusion:**

After 19...Bxb2 white is left without counter chances.