

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – July 2012

Chairman's Chatter

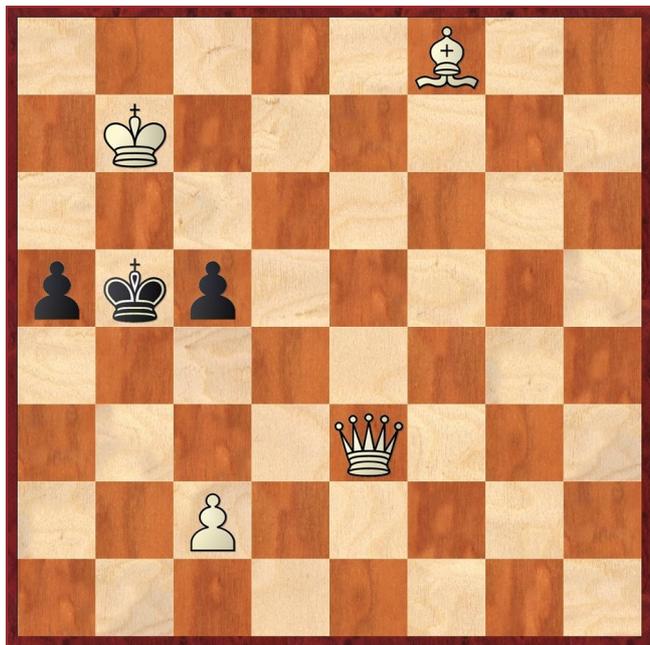
According to the calendar, summer is here but the weather is doing nothing to entice you out of doors in the evening. The club continues to meet and can take a more relaxed and social attitude than during the formal playing season so I hope you will be able to drop in and maybe sharpen your skills in readiness for next year!

Paul Hanks

Diary Dates

Masterclasses are continuing throughout July but hopefully leaving some time for casual games later in the evening.

Puzzle Problem



Last Month's solution - *W Speckmann*

Position : 1q3Q2/kq6/8/8/4Q3/2Q5/K7/8

1 Qce3+ Ka8 2 Qea3# [1 ... Ka6 2 Qa4#; 1 ... Qb6 2 Qfa3#]

Website to Watch

The Dortmund Sparkassen chess tournament takes place over the period 13th-22nd July with Kramnik, Caruana and Karjakin heading a field of 10. It can be followed on www.sparkassen-chess-meeting.de. Please contact Chris Ross if you need a translation from German.

North Shields hosts the British Championship during the fortnight from 22nd July. No-one of the entry list seems to be a local player and it is not obvious there will be live on-line games. I hope this situation

improves on <http://britishchesschampionships.co.uk/> as the event approaches.

Window on the Web

There's an obvious lack of chess on British television. It's the same in Sweden, which led to the creation of internet-based *World Chess News* on www.chesstv.eu in 2004. This is a weekly video magazine programme which by 2008 was viewed by over 15,000 people a day and reaches 800,000 Swedish homes. Thankfully, there's an English language version.

Each episode lasts around 20 minutes. There is an *Opening School* every week with two presenters demonstrating play in whichever opening they have decided to feature. English episode 381 contains the last of 7 lessons on the Slav Defence. There are also short items on the recent World Championship match, the On-line Blitz Grand Prix and other international tournaments and championships. Each week there's a puzzle against the clock and an item on chess history which usually discusses the career of a famous player of the past.

The young team of presenters are Swedish siblings and do a reasonable job. The archive of English editions begins at number 247. An introductory video suggests the Swedish versions carry English subtitles but this is not so.

This site is something different and worth a visit.

If anyone has a favourite chess website they'd like to see featured here please let me know.

Ron Jones

Match of the Month

Here is a game from a recent 4NCL weekend. It is an excellent demonstration of how patience is absolutely critical to converting a superior position and that one needs to accumulate small advantages over a lengthy period before any significant winning possibility is discernible. Black is an experienced FIDE Master - taking out such a strong opponent is not easy.

Chris Ross (2226) v **David J James** (2153)
Pandora's Box v South Wales Dragons
4NCL Hinckley, 05.05.2012

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 Bb5+ Nd7 4 0-0 Ngf6 5 Re1

The most solid approach to this anti-Sicilian system. It's a logical move, centralising the rook. Similar ideas can be seen in the Ruy Lopez. The other main alternative is 5 d4 but this often leads to the sacrifice of the e4 pawn. Although White gains a lot of time for his development, I am not convinced about the lines.

5 ... a6 6 Bxd7+ Bxd7 7 d4 cxd4 8 Qxd4

The correct way to recapture. Rapid development is White's objective which explains why the light-squared bishop has been exchanged. White permits Black to head into a Najdorf-type of position but with several lost tempi. Black is going to find it difficult to develop his dark-squared bishop effectively. The best option would be to fianchetto the bishop but the recapture on d4 with the queen discourages Black from doing this. Black has to contend with the potential opening thrust e4-e5 at some point too.

8 ... **e5**

Black makes the radical decision to fix the pawn structure in the centre. This allows him to complete development but gives him a backward d pawn. If the future central break d6-d5 is possible, his bishop pair will certainly come to life.

9 **Qd3**

Since I have exchanged my light-squared bishop, it is essential to control those squares. The e4 pawn needs protection and the c4 square is also maintained. This is an important point, as will soon become apparent.

9 ... **h6**

A logical move but it loses more time which White wisely uses to complete his own positional deployment. The text move aims to control the g5 square i.e. stopping Bg5 ideas. This development and the capture Bxf6 is a common theme in Sicilian structures of this type as the control of the d5 square is critical. Black cannot be permitted to break out with d6-d5 which would achieve equality without difficulty.

10 **Nc3**

Preferring rapid piece development to the Maróczy Bind c2-c4. Although the bind is an acceptable way to continue (see opening references below), I prefer to use pieces to control d5. I feel Black can hit the bind with a fast b7-b5 unless I am willing to play a2-a4. This is a reasonable plan but my grand scheme was to use the c4 square for something else.

10 ... **Be7**

11 **Nd2**

The point. The king's knight no longer stands on its most effective square. The e5 pawn prevents it ever getting any real play. Nh4 is a possible route into f5 but that is fraught with danger because the f5 outpost is not as secure as it appears. A d6-d5 break may leave the knight on f5 vulnerable to tactics.

Hence, the knight heads for the d5 outpost. Yes, that very important square which must be controlled. The tempi invested in re-routing are not damaging to White since Black has already wasted time (h7-h6) and is not yet developed completely.

Moving the knight in front of the queen's bishop appears wrong but the future of the white queen's bishop is not yet determined. Indeed, has the bishop got any good squares? Not at all. There is currently no future on the c1-h6 diagonal and developing it (say to e3) is a futile plan. I do have a plan for it but at the

moment, it is not visible. Pieces do not have to be developed to squares where they have few prospects.

The black d6 pawn is a target. First, control the outpost (d5) and thereafter, I can target the backward d6 pawn with the help of white queen's bishop.

11 ... **Be6**

Trying to break with d6-d5. This is the pivot of Black's plan at the moment. This break, as mentioned, is the lever to equality.

12 **Nc4**

Coming around as planned to the d5 outpost via the accessible c4 square. Notice that there is another route for the knight via f1 so controlling the c4 square with b7-b5 would not have done Black any good, especially when hitting the b5 pawn later would make the queenside pawns vulnerable.

There is also a tactical point to the knight on c4 - the e5 pawn is pressurised. A small, but important, feature as it delays d6-d5 for one more move.

12 ... **Qc7**

Protecting the e5 pawn and attacking the knight on c4, which has to move for a fourth time but tempi well invested as the positional plan has been achieved.

13 **Ne3** **Qc6**

A curious move and one that I still don't fully understand. Clearly Black is striving for the d6-d5 thrust but the queen seemed misplaced here. White has to be wary of d6-d5, e4xd5 and e5-e4 tactics, which could make things very unclear.

With the king's knight sitting on e3 instead of the dark-squared bishop, completing development is not so easy. As mentioned before, there is a plan for the bishop which need not be initiated immediately. First, the outpost needs to be secured. Control of d5 has been established, now comes its occupation.

14 **Ncd5**

Occupation achieved. The queen's knight is the one that has to be used, as it facilitates the Maróczy Bind plan of c2-c4. Also, Black could play of b7-b5-b4 undermining a supporting piece of the d5 outpost. Moreover, the white queenside needs to advance at some stage.

14 ... **Bxd5**

The white knight cannot stand unmolested on d5. The bishop on e7 is loose and Black is unable to castle with that liability. By returning the light-squared bishop to me, Black has relinquished a big asset. Any worries about the bishop pair no longer concern White.

15 **exd5**

We see now how the pawn structure has been reformed. This recapture gives White a queenside majority, which can be pushed through at some stage. The d6 pawn is permanently backward and a long-term target. Exchanging a knight on d5 for Black's on f6 is possible but I did not want to free Black's cramped position by offering exchanges. In any case, the knight on e3 stands well, protecting d5, allowing c2-c4 and controlling f5 (which is important, as Black's

only plan now is to thrust centrally with his own pawn majority). The longer I can restrain that, the more time I have for my own advance. With the knight on f6, Black needs more time to get in f7-f5.

15 ... Qd7
16 a4

It is essential to limit Black's queenside by contesting b5. The immediate reason is to prevent Qd7-b5 ideas while White may want to get in tactics with Nc4/Nb6.

The Maróczy Bind 16 c4 may be undermined by 16 ... b7-b5 but pushing my a pawn has made Black's advance impossible tactically due to the loose nature of the rook on a8.

Let us consider further. The d6 pawn is the target for the white dark-squared bishop which is destined for a3 to attack it. There, without the text move, the bishop would sit uncomfortably in front of the a pawn and the Maróczy Bind is best delayed until properly prepared.

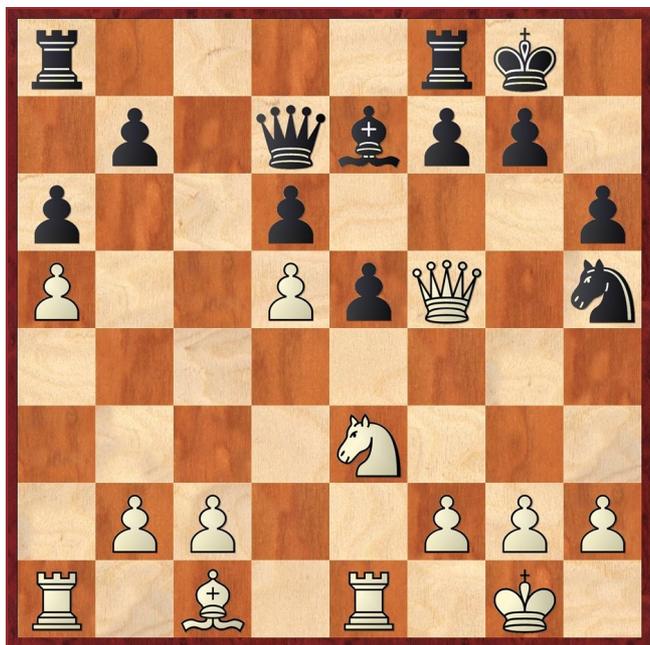
16 ... 0-0
17 a5

Clamping down forever on the black queenside. The pawn formation is becoming very clear-cut.

17 ... Nh5

Black strives for f7-f5 starting to push his own pawn majority. The black knight seeks an outpost on f4. An active plan but Black may have been well advised to follow the waiting game with 17 ... Rfe8 18 c4.

18 Qf5



A big decision. White intends to remove any attacking potential Black may have. The occupation of f5 holds up Black's advance and the white queen was going to be hit by Nf4 in any case. This is a positional approach to the game. A more aggressive, but less convincing, plan was 18 Nf5 Bg5 19 Qh3 Rad8 20 Nxf6+ Bxf6 21 Qxh5 Bxc1 22 Raxc1 Qb5 or even 19 ... Nf6 as an alternative. Although attractive, this did not fall into my game objectives. The queen

seemed misplaced and the queenside advance is not happening as I wished. Unless there is a decisive kingside attack, I felt it was an unproductive approach.

18 ... Qxf5
19 Nxf5 Rfe8
20 c4

The Maróczy Bind achieved eventually! Here considerations of g2-g3 to control the f4 square and even g2-g4, putting a pawn on a light square crossed my mind. I was reluctant to advance on the kingside though, as this was Black's side of play and I did not want to make any unnecessary pawn moves, helping Black in his own plan of action. In any case, how is Black to proceed?

20 ... Bf8
21 b3

It is important to go slowly. b4 is my long-term plan, exploiting the queenside majority and eventually a passed pawn. The c4 pawn needs support though and the dark-squared bishop must find a home on a3 to target that d6 square.

Obscure as it may seem, the rook lift Ra1-Ra4-Rb4 to hit the b7 pawn is not such a stupid plan as it first appears. Slow, methodical chess - attacks are unlikely since the queens are off the board.

21 ... Kh7

Black has to force g7-g6 and f7-f5 to gain any play at all. This brings the king away from the centre though, which is not that useful for the endgame.

22 Ba3 Rad8
23 Rad1

Completing development of sorts. The rook is not best placed on the a1-h8 diagonal, especially so if Black is going to fianchetto his Dragon bishop. The d5 pawn is also supported, allowing for a future b3-b4 and c4-c5 thrust. The d3 square is also controlled, preventing any penetration knight hops from h5 into f4 and then into d3. Simple logical chess.

23 ... g6
24 Ng3

Effectively forcing an exchange of knights. The white knight has no real future in this game as there is no obvious outpost. Bringing it around to b6 was an option but it would take too long and I was not convinced of its ultimate value over on the queenside.

24 ... Nxf3

24 ... Nf4 25 Ne2 practically forces the exchange but this is preferable on e2 instead of the opening up of the h file.

25 hxg3

Here, a lot of additional positional factors have to be taken into account. The doubling of the g pawns is actually a big advantage for White, as the black kingside pawn majority advance can be held up a lot more effectively than if the pawn was on h2. See later

how the pawn structure evolves and how the g3 pawn is used to hold up the advance. With doubled g pawns, it is easier for White to defend against the advancing black pawns as the rooks can assist in hindering their forward motion. Hitting doubled pawns with advancing pawns is not as easy as it would be with a normal pawn formation.

What is not immediately obvious, however, is a hidden square, innocuous in its appearance but deadly in its value. The square being h3!

This became apparent to me when I considered the pawn formation on the kingside. Once Black advances through the centre, I will want to hold him up somehow. Positionally, I want my pawns on light squares where they are not vulnerable to the dark-squared bishop. In that sense, the former h2 pawn should sit on h3 but with the exchange, it must advance to g4. This opens up the third rank. Rooks not only have an influence vertically but also horizontally. In that regard, the h3 square is very effective as a fulcrum for a rook, which not only controls the h file but also the third rank, holding up the black pawn formation.

All of this long-term positional play gathered together so beautifully in the game continuation.

25 ... **f5**
26 **Kf1**

Bringing the king to the centre for the endgame (it is destined for the d4 square!) and eventually, to the queenside to support the pawn majority. In addition, the king gets out of the way to allow the rook to head for that ever important h3 square.

26 ... **g5**

Black advances his own pawn majority, which is perfectly understandable. The black king needs to get off the h file too.

27 **Ke2** **e4**
28 **Rh1** **Kg6**

Played with a draw offer! Black genuinely believed that he had achieved equality here and that the position was tenable. White is certainly better; he has a lot of almost subliminal pluses but they are there, however difficult they are to comprehend and exploit. Such features as the better bishop, pawns on light-squares, the queenside pawn majority, more space (d5 pawn), a backward d6 pawn to target, more room for the rooks (the all-important h3 square and half-open h file) and of critical importance, the ability to hold up the black pawn majority while being able to conduct his own advance.

For these reasons, White is able to play on confidently, spend a lot of time manoeuvring, probing and testing the strength of Black's defences. White only needs to find a chink in the armour and Black's position will soon fall apart.

The 40 move time control is looming. Once reached, White can spend time to reassess his decision.

29 **Bb2**

Making the bishop more of a force but White wishes to exchange this bishop. As it is, the weak d6 pawn can be attacked by the dark-squared bishop and be equally defended by its black counterpart, effectively neutralising that advantage. Removing one advantage (dark-squared bishop vs. pawns on light squares) does not rid White of the advantage that the d6 pawn is still backward.

29 ... **Rd7**

Black begins a long series of shuffling along the first and second ranks, demonstrating clearly that he has no active plan. The draw offer also illustrated that Black does not consider his position in any way advantageous. White can probe and as the time controls approaches, Black becomes nervous.

30 **Rh3** **Rc8**

Another approach was 30 ... Bg7 31 Bxg7 Rxd7 32 Ke3 when the white king steps into d4. The black rook may have ideas of Rc5 and hitting the slightly weak a5 pawn. That option can be snuffed out immediately and the bishop centralised with greater effect. Another possibility for Black at some point is also b7-b6 and after a5xb6, trying to bring a rook to the b file and to round up the b6 pawn. Again, that option is prevented.

31 **Bd4** **Rf7**

The point is that following 31 ... Bg7 32 Ke3, an exchange of bishops will allow the king to reach d4, protecting the c4 pawn and thereafter, any Rc5 moves only entail a loss of time as b3-b4 hits the rook and protects a5.

32 **Rdh1** **Rh7**
33 **Rh5**

A temporary move. White was playing quickly to reach the time control. Although this limits Black's options, the devious intent was to implant the thought into Black's mind that the thrust h6-h5 should be kept in mind as an option for the future. The occupation on the h5 square demonstrates to Black that I am worried by the pawn advance. Am I though?

33 ... **Re8**
34 **Ke3** **Rc8**
35 **Kd2**

Just before the time control is not the time to make big decisions. The plan 35 g4 fxd4 36 Kxe4 Re7+ 37 Kd3 Rce8 was possible but I did not have the time to calculate it thoroughly. Ultimately though, the king is heading for the queenside and is not needed to hold up the black pawns - the white rooks will be able to do that easily enough.

35 ... **Re8**
36 **R5h3**

Coming back to where the rook belongs. Again, this is a time-saving plan. Looking for tactics on g5 did not seem productive. 36 Be3 Rhe7 seemed to resolve all of Black's troubles on the g5 square.

36 ... **Rc8**
37 **Kc3**

The white king can reach d4 equally well from c3 as from e3. The queenside white pawn advance is also looming. Not yet though, as the pawn on c4 is loose and needs to be protected.

37 ... **Rf7**
38 **Re1**

Bringing the rook back to where it belongs. The rook is needed to hold up the black pawn majority. There is no real future on the h file but it was put there to keep Black mindful of the potential. All little probing moves, but all very effective in the greater scheme of things.

38 ... **Re8**
39 **Rhh1**

Another time-control move. The rook is best placed on h3 but there is no reason to make unnecessary decisions at the moment. There is also a lure here, which Black is duly accepts.

39 ... **f4**

And Black advances, hoping to gain more space. All this does though is weaken his position even further, especially the e4 pawn. If a break is desired, 39 ... h5 has to be preferred. There is a way to deal with that as can be seen later, by an exchange, a rook swinging from e1 to h1 and penetrating to h8 with devastating effect. More of that later though.

40 **g4**

White has achieved his g3-g4 move more easily than should have been possible. The g4 pawn holds up the black pawns and allows the h3 square to become more important for the white rook. Another advantage now secured.

40 ... **Rh7**
41 **Rh3**

With the time control reached, I begin to put my pieces back on the squares where they belong.

41 ... **Rc7**

Black must maintain the pressure on the c4 pawn, as allowing b3-b4 without the threat of a swift doubling on the c file will make it easy for White to continue with his plan.

42 **Re2** **Rh7**
43 **Re1**

Toying with Black. The second time control of 60 moves has to be kept in mind and a few swift repetitive moves can save valuable time on the clock. By now, we were in our fifth hour of play.

43 ... **Rc7**
44 **Kc2**

Triangulating to zugzwang Black. The plan was to play Kc2-d2-c3 and overload the black rooks. Of course, the rook on e8 is needed to protect the weak e4 pawn but the other cannot keep an eye on both the c and h files. The purpose of the manoeuvre is to displace the rook to h7 so that Black would need two moves to get the rooks to the c file.

44 ... **Rh7**

Black has no good way to continue. Either 44 ... Ree7 or 44 ... Rcc8 takes away the option of attacking the c4 pawn by doubling on the c file. My intention was 44 ... Rcc8 45 Kd2 Rc7 46 Kc3 and we have made a successful triangle when 46 ... Rcc8 allows 47 b4 without Black being able to double on the c file. A small point, but important.

45 **b4**

The queenside advance now begins. With Black having stepped off the c file voluntarily, this advance can be played without the fancy king dance. The next stage is now under way. Black lashes out on the kingside aiming to advance his own pawn majority.

45 ... **h5**
46 **Reh1**

Putting the question to Black. I was in two minds here on how to deal with this plan. I realised that 46 gxh5+ Rxh5 47 Rxh5 Kxh5 48 Rh1+ Kg6 49 Rh8 must be advantageous to me as the rook has successfully penetrated. I felt though that my queenside would be more difficult to advance and my king needed to be in close attendance with the pawns instead of keeping an eye on the black centre. In that regard, I wanted both of my rooks on the board to control the Black advance. Tactics here allowed me to deal with the h pawn thrust. The double attack down the h file forces Black to make a blockading move which not only puts another pawn on a dark square, but prevents Black from pushing his pawns. Captures on h5 allow future g5-g4 and g4-g3/f4-f3 breaks.

46 ... **h4**
47 **Re1**

The rook returns to pressurise the weak e4 pawn and to prevent e4-e3 ideas. With this rook on e1 and the excellent rook on h3, all is covered neatly. White can concentrate on the queenside advance.

47 ... **Rc7**
48 **Kb3** **Rd7**

Black is running out of ideas. He wishes to attack the d5 pawn in the event of me pushing with c4-c5. I thought it necessary to perform another triangle king dance, to force the black rook onto the ideal (for me) square. Before commencing, I played a swift rook move to gain time on the clock.

49 **Re2** **Rdd8**

A curious move and one that I did not fully expect. I was expecting 49 ... Rc7, when I would return to e1 and perform that king triangle around a3, a4 and back to b3. In theory, this is probably still best but I do not think it matters much, as the approach I take is good enough.

50 **Rc3**

Toying with Black even further. The rook does not really belong on c3 but it is a clear sign that White is the one with the options. A potential c4-c5 is going to cause Black some concern as c5-c6 will create a passed pawn by force. Another ploy was to attack the e4 pawn with 50 Rh1 despite it being contrary to my game plan.

50 ... Bg7

Again, a surprising decision by Black. I understand his desire to ease his cramped position and this exchange certainly gives the black king more scope for manoeuvring, especially on the long diagonal. White's very clever 54th move did not occur to Black and indeed, it is incredibly difficult to conceive the idea in such a position. Black should just wait and ask White to how he will break.

51 Bxg7 Kxg7
52 Rh3

The rook returns to its rightful square and the d4 square has become vacant for the white king. Once it reaches on such a central square, the push c4-c5 is almost impossible to prevent and the e4 pawn is very loose. The position has become critical for Black and he must stop the white king's entry by occupying the centre with his own monarch.

52 ... Kf6
53 Kc3 Ke5

Black has successfully centralised his king and prevented the white king's domination. This is all fine in itself but there is a deeper dimension. I have outlined the advantages of the white position - the rooks powerful positioning and the vulnerable nature of the black pawn majority. A neat tactical flourish exploits the carefully structured play and a very satisfying way to top off all the key ideas White has put into practice.

To understand the concept, you have to consider the objective of the white king is to head for d4 which has been successfully cut off by the black king. Keep in mind too the vulnerable nature of the e4 pawn. Now, combine the two ideas.

54 Rd3!

What a sickening move to have to face! The rook's domination of the third rank bears fruit by jumping into d4 and winning the e4 pawn. The rook cannot be captured due to the pin and the d4 square will become White's for his king. An incredibly difficult concept to visualise and one that Black clearly did not see when he forced the bishop exchange.

54 ... Rf8

This position must have been very depressing for Black to play. His illusions have been shattered and defeat is just about guaranteed. Converting this into a material advantage is only a matter of technique.

54 ... Kf6 allows 55 Rd1 and the white king will step into d4 as the black king's return to e5 only allows 56 Rd4 or 56 Rde1.

55 Rd4 e3

Desperation. Black tries anything to muddy the waters. A calm approach is all that is needed in this endgame to secure the victory.

56 Kd3

Ensuring a rook penetration on e4. The e3 pawn is still pinned and is not running away. Black's pawn majority is collapsing.

56 ... Rd7

I was actually expecting 56 ... h3 57 gxh3 Rh8 58 Re4+ Kf6 59 fxe3 Rxh3 60 Kd4 which is clearly winning for White.

57 Re4+ Kf6
58 fxe3 Kg7
59 exf4 gxf4
60 Re7+

The endgame is much easier with one pair of rooks off the board. After the material gain, the rest needs simple technique. The only other issue to resolve is the potential passed black h pawn.

60 ... Rxe7
61 Rxe7+ Kg6

Thankfully, we had reached the second control so I had time to figure out the following lines : 61 ... Kh6 62 Ke2 [62 Rxb7 is not advisable as the pawn is deadly bait and will cause White grave problems with 62 ... h3 63 gxh3 f3] 62 ... Rc8 63 Re4 which is an easy win for White with rook endgame technique.

62 Ke2

Accuracy must be maintained. Snatching pawns immediately is not necessary. Cutting out any counterplay by Black is crucial. As above, 62 Rxb7 ruins all of White's wonderful work and gives the point away to Black.

62 ... Rb8

As good as throwing in the towel. Alternatives were 62 ... Rc8 63 Re4 or 62 ... Rc8 63 Rxb7 Rxc4 64 Rb6 Kg5 both of which are clearly winning for White.

63 Kf3 b6
64 Kxf4

Winning a second pawn, with the third, h4, to follow shortly. The rest of the game needs no comments, as it is easily won.

64 bxa5 65 bxa5 Rc8 66 Re6+ Kf7 67 Rxd6 Rxc4+ 68 Kg5 Rc5 69 Rxa6 Rxd5+ 70 Kxh4 Kg7 71 g3 Kh7 72 g5 Kg7 73 Kh5 Rd3 74 Ra7+ Kg8 75 g4 Rd5 76 a6 Rd6 77 g6 1-0

Opening references:

A 10 c4 Rc8 11 a4 Qc7 12 b3 b5 13 axb5 axb5 14 Na3 bxc4 15 Nxc4 Be6 16 Be3 Bxc4 17 bxc4 Be7 18 Ra7 Qxc4 19 Qa3 Qe6 20 Qa4+ Kf8 21 Rb1 g6 22 Rbb7 Re8 23 h3 Kg7 24 Nd2 Rhf8 **A Dgebuadze** (2544) v **M Paragua** (2469); Trignac 2002 0-1 (42)

B 11 ... b5 12 a4 b4 13 Nd1 Qc7 14 Ne3 0-0 15 b3 Be6 16 Bb2 Qc6 17 Rad1 Rfd8 18 Qf1 Rac8 19 f4 Ng4 20 f5 Nxe3 21 Rxe3 Qb6 22 Qf2 Bg5 23 Re2 Qxf2+ 24 Rxf2 Rxc2 25 Ba1 Rxd2 26 Rdx2 **Z Plenkovic** (2388) v **M Cebalo** (2500); Zagreb 2010 0-1 (32)

Chris Ross