All,

Here is the game that clinched me the British Championship qualification place for 2013, which I have now deferred until 2014. An instructive way on how you can push for the victory by seeing where the deep-lying weak squares are for your opponent. In this interesting game, black strives to exchange pieces in an attempt to draw the game. The exchanges though, only aid white in his ultimate objective of allowing a successful king-penetration to snaffle up all of black’s pawns.   
Enjoy.

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[Round "5"]

[White "Ross, Chris"]

[Black "Clancy, Martin"]

[Result "1-0"]

[ECO "A46"]

[Annotator "Chris Ross"]

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{B31: Sicilian: Rossolimo Attack}   
1. e4 c5

2. Nf3 Nc6

3. Bb5 g6

4. Bxc6   
{The trusty Rossolimo, which I have been using for some years now. The main principle of the opening is to shatter the black pawn structure and render black with a “bad bishop”. White will put his pawns on the light-squares to control them and put the question to the c8 bishop, which has very few prospects. The ultimate aim of the opening is to head for a “good knight vs. bad bishop” ending, where black has a structural weakness in his pawn chain, which will leave a weakness at some point. If white can target that weakness in the end-game, he has a definite plus.}  
4... dxc6  
5. d3 Bg7   
6. h3   
{Essential to limit the scope of the black light-squared bishop. The h2 square is also vacated for the re-routing of the king’s knight, heading for g4 and facilitating a central thrust f2-f4.}  
6... Qc7   
{A curious move and one that I don’t entirely believe. Black is striving to obtain some control of the dark-squares, but c7 is not a useful operational square for the queen. Since d4 is a natural square of operation for black, he should be protecting the square rather quickly with e7-e5. After this move, the e7 square becomes vacant for the lady, where she does the job of securing e5 and c5, allowing a natural Nf6 development move. The knight can then manoeuvre itself via d7, to f8 to e6 and eventually, land itself on d4. A laborious, but common plan in this opening.}  
7. O-O Nf6   
8. Nc3 O-O   
9. Be3 b6   
{White has now achieved his end-game weakness. The black c6 pawn is a permanent weakness. Attacking that pawn will lead to a collapse of the black pawn structure. If the black queen was stood on e7 instead of c7, this pawn push to b6 may not have been necessary. As it is, white now has a target to aim for.}  
10. Qd2 e5   
{After which, black has a decisive weakness on d6. D6 is the deep penetration square, from where white can win the end-game. Naturally, there are a lot of pieces on the board and that objective is a long-term prospect, but is a clear and defined plan for white. In that regard, the end-game has to be entirely avoided by black. Here comes the contradiction in black’s thought process, for his perception is that exchanges will only ease his defensive difficulties, where in reality, exchanges only compound him, as the d6 square can not be successfully protected. In many respects now, it is a waiting game by white, who needs to build up slowly and sensibly and permit black to force his own downfall by the seeking of exchanges to ease his cramped position.}  
11. Bh6   
{By the exchange of dark-squared bishops, white rids himself of his only weak minor piece. The dark squares are weakened, since white is controlling the light-squares with his pawns, thereby restricting the effectiveness of the black light-squared bishop. Also, when white leavers open the position with f2-f4, the “Dragon” bishop will not be as effective on the long diagonal. F6 will become a point of entry and the d6 objective square cannot be defended by a bishop. White’s play is all logical, and extremely effective.}  
11...Be6   
{This only allows white to gain time on the black pieces. See below for opening references. White has already obtained a sizable advantage and this only increases the pressure on the black camp.}

12. Bxg7 Kxg7  
13. Ng5   
{Gaining time on the bishop on e6 and permitting the pawn-break, f2-f4. In this regard, black has not got time for Nh5 ideas holding up the pawn-break. Black is now struggling to find an adequate defence.}  
13... Rae8

14. f4 exf4

{Black could not permit f4-f5 and a complete squash on the king-side. Black could not sincerely hope to survive such a pawn-storm with half of the minor pieces having been exchanged.}  
15. Rxf4 Ng8

{A retrograde move, but surprisingly, white had the annoying tactic Rxf6 on offer with a follow-up of Nxh7+. Good positional play often leads to simple, effective tactics, without having to seek for them in Ernest. Black’s text-move is aimed, in his ultimate search, for further exchanges.}  
16. Raf1 h6

{Black weakens himself to force further exchanges, which only help white. Black had to contend with ideas of Rh4 and a possible king-side attack, although that is not white’s principle intension, of course. White is, naturally, aiming for the end-game with the d6 square as the penetration point. A short consideration about the retreat to f3 and possible sacrifices on g5 if black were to play g6-g5, but these were shortly rejected as tactical tricks. Combinations are not white’s path to victory here. Time can only be wasted on the clock by attempting to calculate such pointless tactics. Simple, logical, effective strategical play, will always bare fruit in such positions. Such is the strength of excellent positional play.}  
17. Nxe6+ Rxe6   
18. Qf2   
{Once again, following simple positional strategy of tripling on the half-open file. Black cannot develop his king’s night and black is becoming extremely cramped. TO alleviate is difficulties, he seeks exchanges, which is in white’s interest.}  
18... Qd7

{With the possibility of Qd4 and the exchange of queens. Although this is desirable for white, it must be on his terms. Therefore, white can delay the exchange and offer it on more favourable circumstances to himself. IN the meantime, he can improve the position of his minor piece and secure up his pawn structure, leaving no weaknesses and no targets.}

19. Ne2 Qe7

20. b3 Rf6

{At which point, it appeared as though that black was beginning to equalise. Black is now forcing an exchange of rooks and there is no obvious play for white to advance his advantage.  
All of the plusses are in white’s court here and it would be easy enough to exchange a few pieces and agree a comfortable draw. It is white’s aim though, to exchange pieces and penetrate onto the vulnerable d6 square. With which piece does white want to penetrate, is the key to this position. If black is wishing to exchange rooks, then logically then, he would want to trade queens, an error in judgement, but consistent with his play. The white knight does little on d6, so it only remains for the king to walk its merry way to that penetrating point. With the pawn structure as it stands, there is no easy way for the white king to wander its way into d6, as e4 and e5 is the natural route. Contemplating Reti’s description of the king-ability to travel distances by the shortest routes of diagonals, it strikes to the player that the long diagonal, h2-b8 is the road, which the white king has to travel to get to d6. Going via h2 loses a vital tempo in many respect, and because of that, white’s next move is justified both positionally and tactically. A move that keeps the pressure on black and prepares everything for the end-game. Here lies the sheer difference in a “hack” where a player plays a drastic move to force tactics, and where a player creates a weakness, not for tactical reasons, but for long-term positional purposes. Therein lies the difference between the tactical attacking player, and the long-term positional, successful player.}  
21. g4!  
{Allowing Kg2 and Kg3 and the march along the h2-b8 diagonal. In the meantime, white can route his knight via g3 to f5, or h5, or white can play h3-h4 and g4-g5, to secure up the f6 square and have play down the open H-file. More critically though, this move prevents black from forcing his own break, f7-f5 and freeing up his position. If black achieves this, he could potentially claim equality. Black now has a very tough position and needs to dig in and wait for white to exert more pressure.}  
21...  Qe5

{Which is not recommended, as this only encourages exchanges. However, white accurately perceived that black was still seeking exchanges, which is in white’s best interest.}  
22. Kg2 Rxf4

23. Nxf4 Re8

24. a4   
{Demonstrating beautifully how dominating the white position is. White can play a4-a5 at an opportune moment to force weaknesses on the queen-side and the white pawn structure is completely solidified. Qb2 is never going to be that big a problem for white. In the meantime, black has to find moves to secure up his position.}  
24... Nf6

25. Qg3   
{Making black’s defence even more difficult. The white queen protects the g5 square, which permits a future h3-h4 and g4-g5, forcing the black knight to a poor defensive square. There are tactics if the black rook moves away from the protection of the black queen with Nh5+. Black is now almost in zugzwang.}  
25... Qg5

{Wishing to hold up h3-h4 and g4-g5. This can be eventually forced with Ne2/Ng1/Nf3, but there is no need to rush. White can secure his position and wait for black to run out of patience, which he duly does.}  
26. Rf2 h5?  
{Plunging black into a losing position. White’s last was to secure up the 2nd rank and ensure that c2 would never become a weakness. Sneaky Qd2’s by black would not be problematic. White has a simple plan now of either Ne2/Ng1/Nf3, or the stunning Kf3 with h3-h4 to follow.  
26... Re5 was the move I expected, when I intended 27. Kf3! Re8 28. h4 and white’s pressure continues.}

27. gxh5   
{As simple as that. White is more than eager for the exchange of queens, as the d6 square is now doomed. Black’s pawn structure is compromised now on the queen-side and on the king-side. The technique is simple enough to convert this from here.}  
27... Qxg3+

28. Kxg3 g5

{Recapturing on h5 with the knight or the pawn allows an exchange of knights and/or a weakness of a h5 pawn, which can be attacked immediately with Kh4. Black cannot defend f7 and h5 simultaneously with the black king, as Rf5 will soon round the stray H-pawn up. The simple comparison of the pawn structure here will show why white is winning this position. White’s pawn chain and structure is solid, with no weaknesses, whereas black’s is broken, backward (c6) and isolated (f7 and h5). Basic principals, but fatal.}

29. Ne2 Nxh5+

{And now, the white king’s march to d6 begins. That ultimate objective, which white has been aiming for ever since black created the weaknesses on the queen-side on move 9 and 10.}  
30. Kg4 Nf6+

31. Kxg5 Rxe4

{Black is still attempting to find tactics to resolve his difficulties. Although you have to admire the fighting spirit, objectively, it is only delaying the inevitable. As long as white does not become involved with the tactical complications, his decisive positional plan has to lead to victory. Naturally, taking on e4 only drops a pawn and leads to nothing for white. White can ignore the black attempt at tactics and continue with his positional plan of getting his king into the penetration square of d6. In the meantime, black has to resolve the loose nature of his knight on f6, which is a tactical liability.}

32. Kf5

{Simple and strong.}  
32... Re6

{The black knight on f6 needs protection, as a check on g2 will force the black king away from the protection of f6.}  
33. Nf4 Rd6

34. Ke5   
{Once again, ignoring the tactics and achieving the objective of entering into the penetration square. Black has a last tactic, which white has to deal with, but this is easily deflected.}  
34... Rd4

35. Rg2+

{The same move on 36 is possible here, but I saw no point in delaying the check. The black king is forced to a poor square in any case, whether it be on the back-rank or on the off-side H-file.}

35... Kf8

{35... Kh7 36. Kxf6 Rxf4+ 37. Ke7 leaves the black king off-side and the mop-up of the black pawns on the queen-side is simple.}

36. Ne6+

{Changing the pawn structure and blocking up the 6th rank, ensuring that the black rook cannot defend horizontally. Black could happily resign here.}  
36... fxe6

37. Kxf6 Rh4

38. Rg3

{Being extremely simple. White could penetrate immediately on d6 and allow the H-pawn to fall, but I saw no point in this. The win is guaranteed, so simple, easy moves to play, with seconds only used on the clock is best. Not only simple, but entirely demoralising for the opponent.}

38... Rh6+

39. Ke5 Kf7

40. Kd6 Kf6

{A final touch. The white king has now achieved the game-objective of penetrating into d6 and mopping up the weak black pawns. The black king may have sneaky ideas of running into e5 and down onto the queen-side. So, the forcing of it to the G-file and to an off-side position is necessary. After which, the resignation from black came quickly, giving me the 2013 British Championship qualification place.}

41. Rf3+1-0

Opening references  
  
A.  
11... Nh5 12. Nh2 Be6 13. Bxg7 Kxg7 14. Ne2 Rad8 15. f4 exf4 16. Nxf4 Nxf4

17. Rxf4 f6 18. Raf1 Qe5 19. b3 g5 20. R4f2 Rf7 21. Qe2 b5 22. Ng4 Bxg4 23. Qxg4 c4 24. Rf5 Qd4+ 25. Kh1 cxd3 26. cxd3 Re8  
Mikkelsen,N (2425)-Stojanovski,S (2214)/Borup DEN 2012/1-0})   
  
B.  
11... Nh5 12. Rfe1 f6 13. Ne2 Rd8 14. Rad1 a5 15. Qe3 Be6 16. a3 Rd6 17. Bxg7 Nxg7 18. c3 Rad8 19. b4 cxb4 20. cxb4 axb4 21. axb4 Bc4 22. Nc1 Ne6 23. Rd2 Bb5 24. h4 Kg7 25. g3 R8d7 26.

Kg2

Bromann,T (2360)-Skembris,S (2443)/Kavala 2003/CBM 095 ext/0-1 (51)

C.  
12. b3 Rad8 13. Bxg7 Kxg7 14. Qe3 Qd6 15. Ne2 Nh5 16. Nh2 Bc8 17. f4

Nxf4 18. Nxf4 exf4 19. Qxf4 Qxf4 20. Rxf4 f5 21. exf5 Bxf5 22. Re1 Rfe8 23. Rxe8 Rxe8 24. Kf2 h6 25. Nf1 Bc8 26. Ne3 g5

Katzameyer,M (2026)-Ankerst,M (2095)/Bayern 2005/EXT 2007/1-0 (74)