All,

I recently participated in the Peter Price memorial tournament, which was a

B.C.A. congress in Chesterfield.

I won the Ted Williams Shield on tie-break ahead of Graham Lilley and Tyson

Mordue, who also finished with 4/5.

This game, played in round 4 on the Sunday morning allowed me to lead the

tournament by half a point and thereby gain the upper hand in the tie-break

system, allowing me to offer an easy draw in the last round to clinch the

shield.

Having gone out for a celebratory birthday drink in Sheffield the evening

before, I was undoubtedly feeling a bit rough to start with, but as the

complications arose and I had to begin to play ambitiously, the hangover and

cobwebs were soon blown away with the exciting finish!

I find this very instructive in the “momentum” and “initiative” element of

chess. Just see how white sets himself up for the first 17 moves, and after

having poised his pieces and completed development (move 17 being a queen

move to connect the rooks), white’s every move thereafter is full of

intension and aggression, containing lots of suppressed energy. Another 18

moves later, the vigorous activity and relentless thrusting proves dividend

in the most emphatic of ways.

So, the moral is to maintain the momentum, keep the initiative and don’t

allow it to slip away from you once you have it!

This was black’s failure in this game, once he had challenged the centre

with 13… f6, he simply did not take the opportunity to further his position

and retain the momentum that he had gathered.

Enjoy…

[Event "B.C.A. International Autumn Congress"]

[Site "Chesterfield, ENG"]

[Date "2009.11.15"]

[Round "4.2"]

[White "Ross, Chris"]

[Black "Burnell, Stephen"]

[Result "1-0"]

[ECO "B12"]

[WhiteElo "2205"]

[BlackElo "1952"]

[Annotator "Chris Ross"]

[PlyCount "71"]

[EventDate "2009.11.15"]

{B12: Caro-Kann: Advance Variation}

1. e4 c6

2. d4 d5

3. e5 Bf5

4. Nf3 e6

5. Be2 c5

6. c3 Nd7

7. O-O Ne7

8. a3

{I find it highly amusing that many players call this system the "Short

defence", since Nigel Short has adopted this variation successfully on many

occasions. I don't know of any other opening as white though that is

referred to as a "defence"!

Here, I take a slower approach to the black setup, with the intension of

expanding on the queen-side and gaining space. The top GM's nowadays prefer

the more aggressive drive through the centre with a fast c2-c4, but I am yet

to study those variations in depth, but I am becoming increasingly unhappy

with the seemingly comfortable "French-like" setups that black is frequently

obtaining with this approach. This may be my final game in this system until

it has been revitalised!}

8... Nc6

9. b4 cxd4

10. cxd4 Rc8

{This threw me somewhat. I have never seen such a rapid development of the

rook and it seemingly stops my natural queen knight's development.

C2 has also become a rather sensitive square and my queen's bishop now seems

destined for B2, which isn't such a comfortable square for it, or as natural

as e3.

But looking even deeper, hasn't black just got a French setup now where the

light-squared bishop is out of the pawn chain?

Is that indeed advantageous in the French, as the bishop could be exposed

out in the field? And if black is to force f7-f6 to open up such lines, does

the dark-squared bishop want to sit on e3? Indeed, if white is obliged to

capture with exf6, the bishop blocks up the E file and white may want to

play down it. The bishop on b2 controls the e5 outpost then and makes life

that bit more difficult for black to free his game.

A complex conflict of interests are happening and white's pieces are poised,

but are their long-term ambitions correct, if black does not cooperate?

See below for opening references.}

11. Bb2 Be7

12. Nc3 O-O

13. Na4

{A provocative move and one that must be natural for white to apply if he is

to seek any advantage on the queen-side.

White is wanting to play across the board, but the ambitions on the black

king are somewhat thwarted by the presence of the bishop on f5, which white

is going to attempt to demonstrate how it is an active-looking, but

ineffectual piece.

Black has now completed development and a plan must be sought. How should

black now proceed and what is his ultimate aim? This is where a strategy,

thought and objectivity must play a big role. Time has to be consumed and

decisions made.}

13... f6

{Played by black in an attempt to play actively and counter-aggressively. In

principal this is perfectly acceptable, but having made that decision, a

player has to follow-through in that regard. Returning to passivity after

such a move is no longer an option. This should be kept in mind for the

remainder of the game.

Other plans for black were available.

13... Ncxe5 is an illusionary win of a pawn.

14. dxe5 Bc2 15. Qd4 Bxa4 16. Qxa7 embarrasses the bishop on a4, pressures

the black queen-side, gives white a potential and long-term passed A pawn

and frees up the d4 square for his knight. 16... Nb6 doesn’t trap the queen,

as 17. Bd4 hits the defender and frees all the tactics.

13... Bg4 with the strict intension of swapping off the light-squared bishop

for the better knight, to attempt to make the white light-squared bishop a

"bad bishop" is another positional way to play this. d4 could then become

difficult to defend.

13.. Nb6 with an eye on the c4 square, with Bg4/Be4 and Bxf3 and Nc4 is also

an idea.

13... a5 is also not such a silly suggestion. After 14. b5 Na7, white has

to defend against Bc2 and black can reroute the knight via c8 and b6 and the

c4 outpost is a sensitive square for white. In that variation, white no

longer has the c5 outpost, putting the question to the knight on a4.

All perfectly viable options, but the line chosen by black is committal and

no having embarked on such a plan, black has to be consistent.}

14. exf6 Bxf6

{14... gxf6 isn't an option due to 15. Nh4 Be4 16. f3 embarrassing the

bishop.}

15. Rc1 Re8?!

{This was about the time when I started to realise that black wasn't going

to push the boat out too far to risk the position.

Black has to play extremely actively here and should strive to get in e6-e5

at all costs to blast the position open, but dislodge the knight on a4

somehow and allow a capture on c5, to force an unfavourable bxc5 recapture,

compromising the white pawn chain.

One variation I had contemplated was 15... a6 [to play b7-b5 to force Nc5]

16. Bd3 Bg4 17. h3 Bxf3 18. Qxf3 Bxd4 19. Qh5 which looks strong, but I'm

unsure to how critical it is for black.

The other big disadvantage for black is the loose nature of his d5 pawn.

Depending on how adventurous black is, he could sack it immediately with

15... e5!? 16. dxe5 Ndxe5 17. Nxe5 Nxe5 18. Rxc8 Qxc8 19. Qxd5+ Be6, but

that is a complete mess and I'll let you figure out all the crazy

variations. I'm sure there are zwischenzugs amongst all of that, but I was

just going to muddle my way through them if black had gone in for them!

15... Kh8 as a prelude to the central thrust is also interesting.

The text-move hints at the plan, but he never actually enacts it.

This is where my point of consistency raises it's head again. If you are

going to lash out with f7-f6, then a further break with e6-e5 has to be the

follow-up, whether it be a pawn sack or not. Consistency is the only way to

go and yes, complications arise, but you just have to accept that and may

the best man, or calculator, win!}

16. Re1 Qe7?

{I see absolutely no point of this move and it doesn't aid black very much

at all, apart from put his queen vis-à-vis the white rook on e1, which is a

positional, if not major tactical inaccuracy. I can't call this move the

losing move for black, but it certainly contributes to black's problems for

the rest of the game.

Black has no choice now but to lash out, whether he's dropping a pawn on d5

or not. 16... e5 is the only possible move to generate some counter play and

action.

Since 13... f6 by black, he hasn't played any other move in the last 3 that

has made white make a forcing or decisive step in his own plan. After all,

every action forces a reaction, right?}

17. Qd2

{A subtle move, with the entire intension of playing Bd3 and forcing off

white's poor light-squared bishop. Now, the struggle for the e5 outpost can

really be seen.

yes, white develops and connects his rooks, but the most important point is

that the queen can no longer be pinned to the knight on f3.

16. Bd3 Bg4 is very awkward for white and the e6-e5 break is looking strong

for black.

17. Qd2 is also another shot at the black queen-side. The queen controls the

a5 square, which is an important flight-square for the night on c6, once it

has been hit by b4-b5. If the black knight can not go to a5 and then c4,

then where else is it going?}

17... Be4

{This is only an illusionary tactical ploy. Black wishes to exchange on f3

and then play Bg5 to win the exchange on c1.

Firstly, white can even consider giving up the exchange on c1, as the

control of the dark-squares would be hugely advantageous for him.

The recapture on f3 with the light-squared bishop would also open up tactics

with Bxd5, since the e6 pawn is pinned [a constant draw-back to 16... Qe7?].

However, the point is that whenever black captures with Bxf3, white will

simply recapture with the G pawn, as the shattered pawns mean absolutely

nothing in this position. Indeed, white is wanting a pawn on f4 as soon as

possible, and Bg5 is always met with f3-f4. Having the bishop pair, the open

G file to attack down and the e6 being a permanent backward weakness, white

would be very much in control.

17... a6 18. Bd3 Bxd3 19. Qxd3 was the only way to play, but then white will

plonk his knight on e5, play f2-f4 and have a dominating position.}

18. b5

{White now starts to exert his domination, and the driving back of the black

pieces commences. Tactics begin to flow, but the white positional advantages

will slowly accumulate and the tactics will sort themselves out.}

18... Ncb8

19. Qa5!

{Occupying the square where the black knight wanted to go. The white queen

steps away from the tactics down the c1-h6 diagonal and exerts tremendous

pressure on the dark-squares in the black queen-side, gaining tempo on the

a7 pawn in the process. C7 is a possible penetration square now too if black

is not extremely careful.}

19... a6

{Defending the pawn, but now holes are starting to appear in the black camp,

on b6, and c5. Can black hold them together successfully...}

20. bxa6 Nxa6

{20... Rxc1 21. Rxc1 bxa6 22. Nb6 should see white penetrate onto the 7th

rank via c7 with a rook and then the queen.}

21. Nd2

{rerouting the knight and forcing a pawn to f4. I also wanted the

light-squared bishop to enter into the fray on the king-side. The safer

option was 21. Nc3 where perhaps 21... Nab8 22. Nxe4 dxe4 is black's best

try.}

21... Bg6

22. f4

{Aggressively played, but I was attempting to take my own council by playing

actively having started in that vein on move 18. Notice that each of my

moves from move 18. has forced black into a decision or a retreat?

yes, f4 exposes the white king, but it stops any Bg5 counter-attacks and

clamps down on the e5 outpost. the other way to play was 22. Rxc8 Rxc8 23.

Bf3 Nc7 but I wasn't convinced if that was active enough.}

22... Ra8

{Once again, black is seeking one-move tactics.

Positionally, the rook doesn’t belong on a8, as what can it actually do on

the A-file? Not much, since the a3 pawn is actually well positioned and is

securely defended.

Naturally, the threat is Nac5 winning the knight on a4, but this is easily

refuted.

22... Rxc1 23. Rxc1 Qd6 24. g3 was my envisaged continuation, where white

has got a very pleasant pull.}

23. Qb5

{stepping out of the tactic and allowing the queen off a dangerous square.

Naturally, I would love to play 23. Nb6 but annoyingly 23.. Qd8 pins the

knight on b6 and the white queen is undefended. So, the white queen steps

sideward, apparently threatens a pawn, but facilitates Nb6ideas.}

23... Reb8

{Again, black is playing too passively. Blocking up the rooks in this manner

is something black really doesn't really desire. Taking the b7 pawn by white

would put the queen on a dangerous square and the bishop on b2 would become

very loose indeed after any Qxb7 and Reb8 ideas. No, white isn't taking that

pawn any time soon, so there is no need to defend it.

Black needs to get that knight on a6 back to c6. He should be playing here

23... Nab8 hitting the knight on a4. 24. Bg4 Ra6 25. f5 [25. Qxb7 Qd6 26. f5

exf5 27. Rxe8+ Bxe8 isn't so great for white] was the best way to play. The

pawn on f4 is loose, so unpinning with qd6 at some point has to be a plan.

Forget about b7, it isn't important, even if you drop the pawn at some

point, the open file will give activity for the black rooks.}

24. Bg4

{More energetic play by white. Black has no rest-bite. The bishop is

activated and the pressure down the E file is going to become intolerable.

Note how black's 16th move is persistently coming back to haunt him. That's

another reason why he should have dealt with that inaccuracy before now and

thrown in Qd6 to alleviate that problem.}

24... Nf8

25. Nb6

{The threats and forcing moves continue. tactics now begin to flow with

equal` rapidity.

Black's cramped rooks and vulnerable black queen are difficult for him to

deal with.

Black's time was becoming a very critical point now. He had less than 15

minutes left to save his position, which is nearly impossible to do

considering the pressure he's been under for the past 10 moves or so.}

25... Nc7

{25... Ra7 26. Nc8! is a neat win of material.}

26. Qb3 Ra6

27. f5

{Onwards and upwards, keep the momentum flowing.

27. Be2 or 27 a4 are all perfectly acceptable alternatives, but the power is

with the white forces at the moment, so there must be no relenting.}

27... Bf7

{The other line I considered was 27... Bg5 28. Re2 Bxf5 29. Bxf5 Bxd2

30. Rxd2 Qd6 31. Bxh7+ Nxh7 32. Na4 and the material is equal but the black

forces are scattered far afield and the white rooks control the important

files.}

28. fxe6 Nfxe6

29. Nxd5!?

{A mysterious misjudgement of the position. I was very conscious of the time

element now and wanted to give black as many complications as possible. This

evidently cheeky pawn grab is playable, but only just! White should refine

his play by 29. Bxe6! Nxe6 30. Nxd5 which is clearly winning. Note that

29... Bxe6 30. Rxc7 Qxc7 31. Rxe6 defends the knight on b6 and is clearly

winning too. 30... Qf7 31. Re2 is a clear demonstration of white's material

plus.}

29... Nxd5

30. Qxd5 Rd8?

{Again, the illusionary tactics phase black. White has walked into a

discovered attack on the white queen, so he should try and exploit it.

Possible is 30... Nxd4 31. Rxe7 Bxd5 32. Rd7 where black has to play

extremely accurately to maintain the material balance. It's possible, but I

was banking with black's limited time, he would go astray in the tactical

Melée!

32... Ra5 33. Rf1 [threat Rxf6] 33... h5 34. Bd1 and black needs resources!}

31. Qe4 Qd6

{The pawn is untouchable. The pin down the E-file ensures that. How black

must be regretting his 16th move!}

32. Nf3 Nxd4

{Desperate, but what else could black do? The pawn can't be allowed to stand

and rule. White will simply reroute his pieces and push the pawn down

black's throat. But black's forgotten about his back-rank!}

33. Nxd4 Bxd4+?

{Losing outright, as black drops a piece.

33... Ra4 keeps the fight going but white can safeguard the bishop with Red1

and cling to the material, as the back-ranker is still affective.}

34. Qxd4 Qxd4+

35. Bxd4 Ra4

{The point is that 35... Rxd4 36. Rc8+ exploits the back rank and black must

lose a piece by interposing the bishop from f7. A nice little exploitation

of positional gain to win tactically.}

36. Bb6

{Maintaining the extra piece and forcing black's immediate resignation.}

36... 1-0

Opening references:

A.

10... Be7 11. Nbd2 O-O 12. Bb2 Nb6 13.

Rc1 a5 14. b5 Na7 15. a4 Rc8 16. Qb3 Bb4 17. Rxc8 Naxc8 18. Rc1 Ne7 19. Ba3

Bxa3 20. Qxa3 Nbc8 21. Bd3 Bxd3 22. Qxd3 Nb6 23. Qb3 Qd7 24. Rc5 Rc8 25. Qc2

Mokry,K (2520)-Meduna,E (2450)/Czechia 1994/TD/1/2-1/2

B.

10... Be7 11. Nbd2 Rc8 12. Bb2 O-O 13. Rc1 Nb6 14. 14. Qb3 Qd7 15. Bd3

Bxd3 16. Qxd3 Na4 17. Qb3 b5 18. h3 a5 19. bxa5 Nxa5 20. Qa2 Nc4 21. Nxc4

bxc4

22. Bc3 Nxc3 23. Rxc3 h6 24. a4 Ra8 25. Ra1 Ra5 26. Qb1 Rxa4 27. Rc2 Rxa1

28.

Qxa1 Rb8

Stachowiak,K-Szablewski,M (2090)/Krynica 1998/EXT 2003/0-1 (43)

C.

10... a5 11. b5 Ne7 12. a4 Nb6 13. Be3

h6 14. Nbd2 Ng6 15. Qb3 Be7 16. Rfc1 Rc8 17. Nf1 O-O 18. Ng3 Bg4 19. h3 Bxf3

20. Bxf3 Nc4 21. Nf1 Bg5 22. Be2 Nb6 23. Rxc8 Nxc8 24. Qc3 Nf4 25. Bf3

Voelsgen,G (1456)-Wild,K (1249)/Willingen 2004/EXT 2005/1-0 (39)})

D.

10... Be7 11. Nbd2 Rc8 12. Bb2 O-O 13. Rc1 Nb6 14. Nb3 Bg5 15. Nxg5 Qxg5 16.

f4 Qg6 17. Nc5 Nd8 18. Rc3 f6 19. a4 Nc6 20. Rg3 Qf7 21. Bc3 Nc4 22. Nd3

Bxd3 23. Bxd3 Ne7 24. Qe1 Nf5 25. Rh3 Nce3 26. Rxe3

Nikolaidis,K (2245)-Angelis,M/Chania 1991/EXT 1997/1-0 (41)

Chris Ross

Monday 16th November 2009

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Chris Ross

braillechess...

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