HI all,

Here is my 2nd game from Middlesbrough that proved to be a great success.

Mike Surtees has been on the English scene for many years now and his

"Revolutionary openings theory" ideas have caused some interesting

discussions within the chess community. However, it has not proven that

popular and I would venture that his ECF grade of 193 is principally due to

his natural talent at chess, rather than his opening concepts. His tactical

ability is excellent and I surmise he is able to win many messy games

because of this capability.

However, I am not convinced of this somewhat radical approach to chess

theory.

You can read a lot of his ideology at the following link:

<http://www.shop-hop.com/chessrot/>

It's an approach to tackling the chess opening theory, but I don't' consider

it a solution to being out-theoried by your opponent.

This is the 2nd time I have played Surtees. The first time I came across

him, I didn't know anything about "ROT" and still managed to outplay him.

Facing him the 2nd time and understanding more about "Rot", I considered the

best way in which to take this strong opponent out.

If your opponent plays unorthodoxly, you should refrain from attempting to

blast him off the board. Considered contemplation has made me realise that

slow, methodical build-up and the objective of keeping everything

positional, will ultimately prove that the extended pawn-chain to be

vulnerable.

It goes deeper, of course, but as a general principal, I thought this was a

good approach.

So, I settle down to take the "ROT" on...

[Event "Middlesbrough Congress 2010"]

[Site "Middlesbrough, ENG"]

[Date "2010.07.18"]

[Round "4"]

[White "Surtees, Mike"]

[Black "Ross, Chris"]

[Result "0-1"]

[ECO "B48"]

[WhiteElo "2122"]

[BlackElo "2205"]

[PlyCount "74"]

[EventDate "2010.07.18"]

{B22: C3 Sicilian}

1. e4 c5

2. c3 d5

3. f3

{I won't attempt to justify this move. I suggest you go to the website above

and click on the illustrative games link and read Surtees' thoughts on this

central supporting move.}

3... Nc6

{I considered the "French" structure best against this system. With the

white pawns standing on light-coloured squares, I thought it prudent to wait

to see where my very own light-squared bishop belonged. Just wait and see

how provident this turns out to be.

A few examples of this opening can be seen at the bottom of the game.}

4. Bb5 Nf6

5. d3 e6

{I thought about adopting a King's Indian attack type of position by playing

5... e5. That is with the white light-squared bishop being out of the pawn

chain on b5, instead of g2. However, I wanted to stick to my French-style

setup. Especially so, if white were to chop on c6, as then the central pawn

flexibility would not be as fluid as I would like.

In these types of setups, there is little concern for tempi. Positional

validity and correct placement is essential. So, as white soon demonstrates,

pawn pushing and pawn-positioning, even if it involves time-wasting moves,

don't become detrimental immediately.}

6. Qe2

{White is not induced into pushing his E-pawn and entering into a French

setup. This reluctance is not that surprising, as I considered white to want

to wait until the black king had decided on it's castling preferences,

before committing to any blockading manoeuvres.

Similarities to KI Attack features are apparent in the position, but white's

pawns are not advanced enough to form a transposition. Specifically so, the

f-pawn is not advanced enough and the white C-pawn should be at home. Also,

that very important light-squared bishop - what about it's fate and how

important are the light-squares?

6. e5 Nd7 7. f4 Qh4+ 8. g3 Qd8 was tempting, but I didn't really think it

was going to help the black cause all that much, despite the position being

very level. I am, naturally, attempting to win, not draw!}

6... Be7

7. c4

{Starting to put the question to black. The central tension is increased,

but yet again, a pawn has been moved onto a light-square. The importance of

the light squares are becoming more evident.

With this one single pawn move, the black game-plan begins to show itself

even more.

Yes, it is the light-squares that are the key to the game. But which

squares?

OK, thinking centrally, it is the e4 square that needs pressure on it. Where

else to put pressure on that square? Well, there's no better than d5...or

even f5! Yes, f5 is going to be a key and crucial controlling square for

black.

With that in mind, black needs to consider where his own light-squared

bishop belongs.

Well, if in doubt, fianchetto it!

Yes, fianchettoing the bishop will now mean that pressure is exerted onto

the central e4 square, allowing f7-f5 to come in, as then, the f5 pawn would

not block the light-squared bishop, if it remained on the c8-h3 diagonal.

Good, the long-term piece play for black is becoming clearer.

So, with all of that in mind, black can not allow white to capture on c6 and

shatter the pawn structure. That must be dealt with immediately.}

7... Qc7

{7... Bd7 would prevent the shattering of the pawns, but may well result in

the exchange of the light-squared bishops, which I don't want, of course.

Also, that bishop is destined for a better square.}

8. f4

{True to "ROT" concepts, white gets on with his pawn pushing and pawn

controlling.

White should decide to whether he wants to take on that French setup and

thrust out with e4-e5 or, sit tight and develop some pieces!}

8... O-O

9. Bxc6

{The outpost on d4 was beckoning for the black knight. So, white wastes no

time in chopping it. However, this gives black those all-important bishops,

without any structural deficiencies as compensation. Black is now well en

route to gathering an advantage in this game.}

9... Qxc6

10. Nc3

{A very provocative move.

OK, we need to keep in mind our earlier contemplations of the black

game-plan. How to reinforce those and keep white from consolidating his

position.}

10... d4

{Yes, releasing the tension in the centre, but more importantly,

facilitating another strand of the plan. The white knight is driven towards

the king-side, but any attacking intensions by white are soon quashed.}

11. Nd1

{A retreat, but it may have aggressive intensions if it is permitted to come

to f2 and maybe g4, or h3 and g5.

However, the driving away of the knight is not to hasten it's journey, but

to allow...}

11... b5!

{Now the black plan is becoming more obvious. The light-squared bishop is

destined to pressurise down the long diagonal and exert pressure on the

central e4 square. White wont' be able to advance on the king-side now

without running the risk of being mated with the queen-bishop battery.

Also, lines are opened on the queen-side for any future invasion plans.

Again, it is another fitting attribute to black's long-term game-plan that

this feature is neatly exploited to deliver the coup de grace at the end of

the game, in another 24 moves!}

12. b3

{White chooses to keep his pawn chain together. Taking on b5 is an option,

but then black would have a d3 pawn to target along the a6-f1 diagonal.

Although not a critical weakness, black may have future c5-c4 tactics.

Blockading with b2-b3 after the capture on b5, would allow the black A-pawn

to launch down the board and a weakness on b3 would then be created.

All long-term prospects, but targets would be created for black to menace.}

12... bxc4

{Black has no intension of playing on the queen-side and is intent on

concentrating his forces through the centre. As stated, the B-file is only

opened as a future line of penetration. Currently, there is very little

significance in that open file - a provision for later. In that regard,

12... a6 does not comply with the black strategy.}

13. bxc4 Nd7

{The black knight has no future on the king-side. The white pawns prevent

any meaningful usage of the knight over there.

Another point is that the black F-pawn is free to move upwards to f5, where

it wants to go to control e4.

Another long-term feature is the knight's future. If allowed, where should

that black knight head for?

Well, I thought c3 was a nice square for it! So, Nb6/Na4/NC3 is a possible

journey.}

14. Nf3 Bb7

15. O-O Rae8

{Centralisation. The rook is needed for central control and the bishop on e7

needs protection. F7-f5 is not possible, as white would chop this and leave

the bishop on e7 hanging. The black forces are now just about poised.}

16. Rb1?

{Another demonstration that long-term considerations have to be taken into

account when playing obvious moves. The rook steps onto an open file, which

we all learn, is an important positional feature. That in itself is

perfectly correct, but the rook has absolutely nothing at all to do down the

open B file. IN fact, the B-file is completely irrelevant to the struggle

that is going on in the centre.

What struggle, I hear you say?

Well, the black forces have gathered there, so it is obvious that the black

game-plan is through there. Otherwise, black would be simply wasting time

switching back to the queen-side.

Also, take into account, white should be paying attention to black's

objectives. It is obvious that a central thrust is imminent. Why put a rook

on an open file, that has no bearing on the piece concentration.

Also, what penetration squares does the rook have? The black bishop pair

ensure that the white rook can not enter into the black camp and cause any

damage.

In that regard, in all of those essential senses, thee placement of the rook

has to be questioned.}

16... f5

{The central thrust planned for with the last few moves. The long diagonal

is pressurised and the e4 square targeted. White can no longer have any

king-side attacking intensions. The struggle is in the centre.}

17. Nf2 Bd6

{More probing by black. The tempi lost if white pushes on with e4-e5 is

irrelevant, as the long diagonal, h1-a8 would be opened and the e4 square

would be controlled forever.

17... Rf6 would appear to be more aggressive, but I saw no use to

air-lifting the rook if an attack had no prospects, which I don't' think it

has, with the white minor pieces defending the white king adequately

enough.}

18. Bd2 Ba8

{Black is in control here and there is no reason to rush. The bishop on b7

is a tactical liability and should not be left vulnerable to Rxb7 swindles.

In any case, before any "opening" thrusts by black, piece security has to be

assured. Slow play is fine, as after all, what is white doing in the

mean-time?}

19. Rbe1

{Finally comprehending that the rook on the B-file is completely

superfluous. White has now lost a whole tempo in positioning his queen's

rook accurately.

There are tactics too. White is threatening to take on f5 and maybe exchange

the queen on e8 for two rooks. Although in certain circumstances this is

fine, I felt that the white rooks could cause some damage down the open

E-file. So, a "re-arrangement" of my pieces was in order.}

19... Qc8

{Defending the rook on e8 but preparing to re-arrange the queen-bishops

batteries. Batteries can be reversed equally as well with the queen behind

as well as in front.

19... Rb8 20. e5 Be7 21. Rb1 seemed too slow for me and went against my

principals of making the B-file an irrelevant element to the game.}

20. Qd1 Bc6

{Preparing to defend the rook on e8 with the bishop and making the a8 square

available for the black queen. Or, the queen could tickle the white pawns on

a6 if need be and the bishop on c6 controls the a4 square. This may allow

Nb6/Na4 ideas. Also, the white queen is prevented from slinking it's way

around the edge of the board. Qa6 and Ba4 ideas could be on for black now.

Basically, all the black pieces are working so harmoniously, it is a

pleasure to be in charge of them...}

21. Bc1

{Another demonstration that white is short of ideas. The 2nd rank is cleared

as a2 could be a target. Also, the bishop may have to flee if attacked.

Black needs a little more probing and things will be set for the break.}

21... Qb8

{Putting the question to the f4 pawn. White has to be careful, as black may

well be able to snaffle this pawn and run away quickly with the black queen

and leave him a pawn down for nothing.

Big, big decision now for white.}

22. g3?

{Yeah, another weakness along the h1-a8 diagonal! A result if nothing else.

White had to swallow his pride now and attempt to block things up in the

centre and ask black to come around the flank.

22. e5 Be7 23. Qe2 h6 and black will play Kh7, Rg8 and lash out with g7-g5

and eventually, open up more lines against the white king and ultimately,

the long diagonal. This will take time, but was white's best chance to

survive.

Now the weakness had been created, I set about opening lines.}

22... e5!

{Now is the time for opening things up. All the black pieces are poised and

the bishops have to be given open diagonals to apply their massive power.

Material means little now, just open files and diagonals. Can the white king

survive?}

23. exf5 exf4

{Forcing complications. Again, material does not matter here, but open lines

do. The more exchanges, the better for the black bishops. Which king is the

safer though?}

24. g4

{White's only chance to close things up and hope to stem the black flood of

infiltrating pieces. Lines must be blocked up and the diagonals squeezed

shut.

Naturally, this can not be allowed.

Now, my King's Gambit days came back to haunt me here and the Fischer

Defence in those crazy days of playing that questionable opening. Lines,

files, diagonals...things must be opened up...}

24... g6!

{Again, a forcing move. White is given no rest to consolidate his position.

The pawn chain is hit, and files opened. With black having the bishop pair,

it is the white king that is more likely to face the onslaught of

long-ranging piece attacks. The black king is perfectly safe for the

time-being.}

25. Ne4

{White straddles his only decent outpost. 25. fxg6 hxg6 26. g5 made things

very messy. The H-file could become important then and after Kg7 and Rh8 or

simply the occupation of the E5 square, anything could be possible. I was

counting on the bishop pair though to do their jobs effectively!}

25... gxf5

26. Nxd6?

{White's losing move, both tactically and positionally.

White's one sole plus in the whole position is the e4 square and the

outposted knight there. Exchanging this for a blocked-in bishop is a crime.

White had a reason, as will come apparent in a minute, but it is soon

floored.

26. gxf5 Rxf5 27. Nh4 Bxe4 28. dxe4 Rg5+ 29. Kh1 gave white a glimmer of

hope.}

26... Qxd6

27. G5

{The point to white's combination. He hopes to block up the G-file and then

have available Bxf4 and hope to exploit all the black weaknesses on the

king-side, especially the pawn on f5. If white is permitted to carry on with

this plan, then white would have opposite coloured bishops and good drawing

chances. That, of course, can't be allowed...}

27... Re3!

{The point. Black blocks up the dark-squared bishop and ensures that his

advantage is maintained. Black can not be prevented now from penetrating via

the f3 square, whether it be by his lovely light-squared bishop, a knight,

or an unmolested rook on e3. White's fate is now sealed.}

28. Bxe3

{As good as resigning. White had resigned himself to the loss now and was

playing quickly to reach the time control, as he only had a few minutes

left.

28. Rf2 Rfe8 29. Bd2 R8e6 would allow black to swing his rook across to the

king-side along the 3rd rank. Note how the rooks have entry squares on

parallel rows on the 3rd and 6th ranks!}

28... fxe3

{Neater as the pawn-formation is straightened out.

28... dxe3 29. h3 Ne5 30. Nxe5 Qxe5 31. Qh5 is not as clean as the

text-move.}

29. Nh4

{Attempting to generate some activity on the black weak F-pawn. Just look

now how the bishop slices the white king up and the e3 pawn covers the f2

flight square. An attractive entombment of the white king.

29. Re2 Ne5 would only force white back with 30. Ree1 showing how miserable

his position truly is.}

29... f4

30. Rf3

{Again desperation. White sat for several minutes now, leaving him

incredibly short of time, but he could not find a single way in which he

could improve his position. This last futile attempt is easily rebuffed.

It's important not to rush in these circumstances. I had plenty of time on

the clock and enough experience to find the cleanest way to put away this

stubborn opponent.

30. a3 was the only waiting move I could see for white, when black would

have a decade and more to improve his position and decide when he wished to

deliver the final blow.}

30... Ne5

31. Ref1

{Another variation I was considering was 31. Qe2 Qe6 32. Qg2 Nxd3 33. Rb1

where the black phalanx of pawns will soon march through.}

31... Qe7

{Neatly illustrating the other weakness in the white camp. Black can even

take time out to steal the g5 pawn and force a favourable exchange of

pieces. This is possible, naturally, due to the restrictive positioning of

the white king. If that king could only hide on h1, then all would be fine

for him...}

32. Qe2 Qxg5+

33. Qg2 Nxf3+

{Going the simple route. I saw no reason prolonging the white agony. The

tactics have to work for me and that initial positional factor that I had

calculated on move 11 will reap me that well-deserved reward. 24 moves

later, it proves dividend.

33... Qxg2+ 34. Kxg2 Kh8 will also suffice, but doesn't demonstrate my final

point I wanted to illustrate.}

34. Nxf3 Qxg2+

35. Kxg2

{And now white is completely tied down, with the knight on f3 pinned.

So, with my light-squared bishop being the monster it is, we turn our

attention back to move 11, when I played

11... b5. I played it then to give the light-squared bishop a square on b7

to pressurise the long diagonal. However, it was also to open up a file for

later penetration. It's immediate occupation was not important or even

relevant, as the action was taking place through the centre. White,

incorrectly, played the apparently-strong positional move of placing a rook

on the open file, although it lacked any worth.

Now, the fruits of my labour and 11th move come back to aid me deliver the

last blow to white. Poor old white, he can't do a single thing about it

either!}

35... Rb8

36. Kh3 Bxf3

37. Rxf3 e2

{And the pawn promotes. A lovely demonstration of playing it cool against an

unorthodox opening system.}

38. 0-1

Opening references:

A.

3... e6 4. d3 Nc6 5. g3 e5 6. Nd2 Be6 7. h4 f5 8. Nh3 Be7 9. Nf2 Nf6 10. Bh3

Qd7 11. Bxf5 Bxf5 12. exf5

Qxf5 13. g4 Qe6 14. Qe2 O-O-O 15. Nf1 Rhe8 16. Bd2 Bd6 17. O-O-O Qf7 18. Bg5

Surtees,M (2142)-Pert,R (2424)/Douglas IOM 2005/0-1 (44)

B.

3... e5 4. Qb3 Nf6 5. exd5 Qxd5 6. Bc4 Qd7 7. a4 Nc6 8. a5 a6 9. d3 Bd6 10.

Be3 O-O 11. Nd2 Qc7

12. Qa3 Nd4 13. Kd1 Be6 14. Bg5 Bxc4 15. Nxc4 Ne6 16. Bxf6 gxf6 17. Ne2 Rfd8

18. Kc2

Surtees,M (2177)-Wheldon,P (2111)/Blackpool 2007/1-0 (36)

C.

5... e5 6. Ne2 Be7 7. O-O O-O 8. Bxc6 bxc6 9. c4 Be6 10. b3 Nd7

11. Ng3 Re8 12. Nc3 Nb6 13. Qc2 g6 14. f4 exf4 15. Bxf4 h5 16. exd5 cxd5 17.

Nb5 h4 18. Ne2 Bf5 19. Rad1 Rf8 20. Bh6 Qd7 21. Bxf8 Bxf8 22. Qc1 d4 23. Qf4

a6 24. Na3 Kg7 25. Nc2 Bd6 26. Qf2 Qc7 27. h3 Rh8 28. Nf4 Nd7 29. Kh1 Ne5

30. Qd2 Qd7 31. Rf2 Bb8 32. b4 cxb4 33. Qxb4 Nc6 34. Qc5 g5 35. Nd5

Surtees,M (2142)-Therrien,A (2294)/Douglas IOM 2005/1/2-1/2 (63)

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