All,

This game has several lessons to learn.

1. Never be complacent with an opponent, whatever his grade.

2. Understanding a player's mentality and playing at his weaknesses is always beneficial for your own game.

3. Being ultra "positional" against a tactician will usually put them into a position, with which they aren't very comfortable, enabling one the best opportunity to score a victory.

My captain in the Leamington league, affectionately named Captain Slouch, wrote up this result as “parking the bus”, but I consider it an excellent demonstration of how to outwit an opponent psychologically, even before moves have been played on the board.

I have written some extensive notes lately on the psychology within match play and all of the three points above permitted me to rack up an easy result against a dangerous opponent, who I am mortified to admit, I did not give sufficient enough respect the last time I played him.

this was now my third game verses him, and my first easy win against him in the first encounter, placed me in a poor frame of mind when I came across him on the second occasion.

For, what I poorly did was to play with such a conviction that my talent and understanding of chess would beat him whatever I played. An arrogant, disrespectful approach to the game. I apologised profusely afterwards for that, and the apathetic way in which I lost. As it were, I allowed tactics, a mixed unbalanced position and permitted my opponent's strengths to come to the forefront.

So three vital things to not do, and with this strictly in mind, my third encounter proved equally as comfortable as the first game we played.

Do not mis-interpret this. I write this up, as an illustration of how psychology can aid one immensely in the game, even before games are played, and the settling of a game plan, an opening setup can be so effective to aid you in winning a game.

Enjoy.

[Event "L&DC League Matches 2013-2014"]

[Site "Leamington Spa, ENG"]

[Date "2013.11.12"]

[Round "3.1"]

[White "Ross, Chris"]

[Black "Aldridge, Dan"]

[Result "1-0"]

[ECO "D21"]

[WhiteElo "2237"]

[BlackElo "2175"]

[Annotator "Chris Ross"]

[PlyCount "77"]

[EventDate "2013.11.12"]

[WhiteTeam "Daventry A"]

[BlackTeam "Leamington A"]

{D11: Slav Defence}  
1. d4 d5   
2. Nf3 Nf6   
3. g3  
{The first initial indication that white is steering the game into an ultra-positional, quiet, uneventful scene. In that respect, ticking all of the three major criteria, which led to a horrible loss last time. Tactics are not likely soon, and long-term, deeply thought-out positional strategy was required. Several objectives already accomplished with a single opening choice. A perfect example of excellent chess psychology.}

3...  Bf5  
{An active development square, but one not chosen by the theoreticians, and one needs to ask oneself why this is. Simply put, the bishop is vulnerable and has very little to do on the B1-H7 diagonal.

In fact, the bishop is only a target when white strives for his only pawn-break in the position, that being E2-E4.

In that sense, the light-squared bishop requires a flight square, and H6 ought to be played as soon as possible.}

4. Bg2 e6   
5. c4 c6   
6. O-O Bd6   
7. Nbd2 Nbd7  
8. b3

{Simple and best. 8. Qb3 does not result in much. Black can allow Qb6 and the doubling of the white B-pawns if white pushes on with c4-c5. There is not really a future in that despite white having a tiny advantage, but it is not a winning pull.}  
8...O-O   
9. Bb2 Ne4

{After which, black's position starts to become very critical. The black pawn structure is seriously compromised and weaknesses must be created.  
The only way in which the bishop on F5 can be justified, is by treating black’s setup as a reversed London. White's break now of E4 is looming at some point in the near future. Black does not want this to be achieved so easily, and opts to blockade the square. However, this proves far too ambitious, as black misses the last opportunity to give the light-squared bishop a flight path. White's next is simple, strong and very effective.}

10. Nh4 Ndf6

11. Nxf5 exf5

12. cxd5 Nxd2

{This exchange only aids white in his development. The maintenance of the outpost on E4 is his single piece of counter play. By this exchange, black's position is now on the verge of being positionally lost.}

13. Qxd2 Nxd5  
14. e3 Re8   
15. Qd3 g6

{Black chose this way to defend the weak pawn, but after white's startling follow-up, blacks position is completely hopeless. Black told me in the post-mortem, that he was considering obscure moves like 16. Bh3 if the black queen was to defend the pawn on F5 with 15... Qd7. Needless to say, I was not considering such ideas, but was planning to start a "minority attack" on the queen-side. Again, a marked difference in the appreciation of a position!}

16. Bxd5  
{After which, black is just simply lost. It could be even argued that it is now already resignable for black. His light squares are all too weak, his king-side attack is miles away, especially with the third rank blocked (there is no Re6 and Rg6 or Rh6 ideas), and the black queen is not able to defend all the weaknesses.}

16... cxd5   
17. Qb5

{Winning a clear pawn and giving white an outside passed queen-side pawn. There is nothing for black  now. A few final tricks for white to resolve, but that is easily done.}

17... Bc7   
18. Qxb7 Bb6   
19. Qa6

{The white queen finds the quickest way back into position and retreats for defensive duties, having snatched a pawn.}

19... f4   
{Sacrificing a second pawn to open up the e-file, but a few simple rerouting of the white minor pieces   
resolves that quickly enough.}

20. exf4 Re4  
21. Qd3 Qe7   
22. Rad1 Re8   
23. a3

{Technique alone will win this. The simple avoidance of any major tactics, and the game will win itself. Here white prevents any annoying Ba5 ideas and begins to advance his queen-side majority.}

23... Re2   
24. Bc1   
{The bishop is retreated to come back and block up the E-file, which is proving a source of counterplay for black. It appears to be a bit of a pawn on e3, but there is a future plan to resolve that.}  
24... Re4   
25. Qc3 Qe6   
26. Be3 Rc8   
27. Qd2 Qf6   
28. Kg2   
{Being ultra careful to the end. The king steps off the a7-g1 diagonal and there are ambitions now down the H-file.}  
28... Re7   
29. Rc1 Rec7   
30. Rxc7 Rxc7   
31. a4   
{Again, the majority is pushed, this time with the idea of squeezing up on the black dark-squared bishop, which has very little scope.}  
31... a6   
32. Qb4 Kg7   
33. f5

{Ironically, white now opens up diagonals toward the black king. More importantly though, is that the e5 square is going to become vacant for the white dark-squared bishop.}

33... g5   
34. h4

{Again, amusingly, white finds a pawn break that frees up the f4 square for the 'dark-squared bishop. Captures on h4 now would not result in a re-capture, but with an immediate bf4 idea.

Naturally, if this was not possible, 33. Bxg5 would win a third pawn, but I thought it more fitting with the text-move.}

34... g4   
35. Bf4 a5   
{Black should resign here, but he struggles on for a few more moves.}  
36. Qb5 Qxd4  
37. Bxc7 Bxc7   
38. Qe2 h5   
39. Rd1 1-0

{a perfectly played game, simply from the psychological point of view.}

Opening references

A.  
11. Nxe4 Bxe4 12. f3 Bg6 13. e4 dxe4 14. Nxg6 hxg6 15. fxe4

e5 16. d5 b5 17. Kh1 Qb6 18. dxc6 Rfd8 19. cxb5 Qxb5 20. Qc2 Rac8 21. Rac1 Ng4 22. Qc3 Bb4 23. Qf3 Nf6 24. Rfd1 Rxd1+ 25. Qxd1 Rxc6 Dambrauskas,V (2307)-Matras,A (2279)/Frydek Mistek CZE 2005/1/2-1/2 (56)})

B.  
12... cxd5 13. Rc1 Qa5 14. Nxe4 fxe4

15. Bc3 Qb5 16. Bh3 Ne8 17. Bb2 f5 18. f3 Nc7 19. fxe4 dxe4 20. Qc2 g6 21. Qc4+ Qd5 22. Rc2 Rf7 23. Rfc1 Rd8 24. Qxd5 Nxd5 25. Rc8 Rfd7 26. Kf2 Bc7 27. Rxd8+

Rxd8

Ali,K-Salehian,S/Dubai 2004/CBM 101 ext/0-1 (51)

C.  
12... cxd5 13. e3 Rc8 14. Rc1 Qa5 15. Nxe4 Nxe4 16. a3 Rxc1 17. Qxc1 Nd2 18. Bc3 Qa6 19. Qxd2 Qxa3 20. Bxd5

Rc8 21. Ra1

1-0 Nguyen Sy Hung-Phan Quang Trung/Dong Thap 2000/EXT 2004})

D.  
12... cxd5 13. Nf3 f4 14. Ne5 fxg3 15. hxg3 Qe7 16. Rc1 Qe6 17. e3 Rad8 18. Qd3 a6 19. Rc2 Qf5 20. Rfc1 h5 21. Qf1 g5 22. Qe1 g4 23. Qa5 h4 24. gxh4 Qh5 25. Ba3 Bxa3 26.

Qxa3 Qxh4 27. Qe7

Moseng,G (2124)-Langmyhr,T (1905)/Oslo NOR 2012/1-0 (83)}