Hi all,

Here is a nice little game, which demonstrates neatly how to play

aggressively, but keep in mind a set positional plan at the same time. This

is yet another win on my long-going rich run of form. Unfortunately, this

loss by my opponent meant an 8-0 wipe-out for his team!

Enjoy...

[Event "Woodhouse Cup 2010-2011"]

[Site "York, ENG"]

[Date "2010.11.27"]

[Round "3.2"]

[White "Ross, Chris"]

[Black "Carpenter, James"]

[Result "1-0"]

[ECO "B30"]

[WhiteElo "2223"]

[BlackElo "2070"]

[PlyCount "99"]

{C04: French Tarrasch}

1. e4 e6

2. d4 d5

3. Nd2 Nc6

{This move pops up from time to time and is not such a stupid continuation.

The first time I saw this in the Sheffield league, I couldn't believe what

my opponent was doing. I then played 4. c3 and asked myself what on earth

that knight was going to do on c6. My opponent promptly replied 4.. e5! and

I struggled to draw the game!}

4. Ngf3

{The most accurate. E6-e5 breaks are now prevented which would simply

equalise for black.}

4... Nf6

5. e5 Nd7

6. Nb3

{Two moves are fashionable here.

6. Bb5 is the current trend as 6. Bd3 is the move black wants, to provoke an

Nb4 manoeuvre, which would allow a future break with c7-c5. If black can get

that in, he should be doing OK.

Hence the text move. The queen's knight, which often takes time to get to

the king-side for the attack, is maintained on the queen-side to keep an eye

on the c5 break. White's development is fluid and smooth, whereas black's is

cramped up.}

6... a5

7. a4

{Maintaining the knight on b3 and also obtaining the b5 square, which could

become important if black thrusts out with c7-c5.}

7... Be7

8. Bb5

{Occupying that b5 outpost. Also, black's natural break-out, e6-e5 has a

defender (knight on c6) under pressure. So, Bxc6 has to be calculated if

black wants to break-out centrally.

The natural 8. Bd3 runs into Nb4 ideas, so there is no point to the bishop's

development there.}

8... Na7

{radical, but black wants to break out with c7-c5 and pressure the centre.

White can't really give up the bishop that easily, especially for such a

poorly placed knight on a7.}

9. Bd3

{Now Nb4 is not an option, the bishop retreats to it's natural attacking

square.}

9... c5

{Black breaks with his natural flank attack. However, squares have been

weakened, especially that b5 square.

Although this break exchanges pieces, which eases the pressure on the black

position, his position is still not easy to play. White's development is

fluent and smooth without hindrance.}

10. dxc5 Nxc5

11. Nxc5 Bxc5

12. O-O Nc6

{Black can not castle. Castling walks into Greek gifts on h7 with a swift

and sudden kill.

So, black attempts to bring his poorly placed knight back into the fray.}

13. c3

{Guarding the central d4 square and preventing any Nb4 ideas, snaffling the

light-squared bishop on d3. The white bishop pair must be maintained to

attack on the black king-side. If black can castle without being hacked up,

then, he is doing fine.}

13... Bd7

{Attempting development and placing the bishop on the best diagonal h1-a8.

Logical enough, but the problem of his king still has to be solved. Here is

an example of how black has previously dealt with this position, although

white did not attack in the paciest of manners:

13... Be7 14. Qc2 h6 15. Re1 Bd7 16. Bf4 Rc8 17. Qe2

Kf8 18. h3 g6 19. Qe3 Kg7 20. g4 Qf8 21. Bg3 Bc5 22. Qf4 f5 23. exf6+ Qxf6

24.

Qxf6+ Kxf6 25. Ne5 Rh7 26. Bh4+ g5 27. Nxc6 gxh4 28. Bxh7

Linares,J-Gigerl,E/Graz 1981/EXT 1999/0-1 (52)}

14. Re1

{Defending the E-pawn and preparing to air-lift the rook into the attack via

e3 and g3. This also releases the knight from defensive duties and readies

it for the attack.}

14... Ne7

15. Ng5!

{Right, the pressure now mounts. Black can not be allowed to play Ng6 and

then O-O and sow up the king-side. White has to get aggressive and start

attacking the undeveloped black pieces. White is well on the road to good

development and the queen's bishop on c1 has no obvious square at the

current moment. So, a path for the white queen is cleared and the white

pieces start to gather on the king-side.}

15... h6

{Black is forced into a weakness. If white is permitted to play Qh5, there

are nasty tactics on all of the light-squares. Hence, black must react and

create a hole.}

16. Nh3

{A knight to the rim, I hear you call?!

Well, yes, but that knight is headed for h5, where it will pressure g7 and

allows Qg4 and Re3/Rg3 and mate on g7 is coming!}

16... d4!?

{A very spirited attempt by black and probably his best before he is slowly

squished.

Black wishes to open up his own bishops and maybe have some king-side

ambitions of his own.

If black can take on c3 and then play Bc6, then his own two bishops are

blazing down the board and if Qd5 comes in, there are mating ideas all over

the place.

White has to be very careful now and a plan of action has to be carefully

planned.

Think long about this position.}

17. Qg4!

{Controlled aggression. A theme we will revisit in this game on a few

occasions.

White has a lead in development and that lead must be maintained. The

knight's slightly awkward positioning on h3 has to be justified and the

queen's entry into the position and king-side probing is the only logical

response.

Pawn structure in this particular position has little meaning as the

position is becoming very tactical and open lines and ranks are of vital

importance.

Black now has several pawns that are potentially weak, but white has to

tread carefully, as counter-play can not be allowed.}

17... dxc3

{White was threatening to take this pawn, due to the queen's protection.. Is

white's advantage so big now?}

18. Be4!

{Centralisation!

Black's best plan and development now is to control the long diagonal h1-a8

diagonal. In that respect, the developing Bc6 for black and Qd5 ideas become

very annoying.

OK, take that further.

18. Qxg7 Rg8 puts the rook on a very nice file and then once the queen has

ran away, black will play Bc6 and suddenly, g2 is becoming very weak indeed.

So, no, g7 is a tasty pawn, but has to be captured at the right moment.

The bishop on d3 was loose and the white rooks are now poised to gather in

the centre and control the two middle C and D files.

18. bxc3 Bc6 19. Bc2 h5 is still better for white but not so clear.}

18... g6

{Again, black feels it necessary to force a weakness. The position is very

complicated and tactics are abundant. However, with my lead in development,

I felt confident that black could not find the right paths.

Here are some ideas:

18... Bd4 19. Rb1 Bxe5 20. bxc3 Bxc3 [20... Bxa4 21. Bxb7 Bc2 22. Rb2 Bxc3

23. Rxc2 Bxe1 24. Bxa8 Qxa8 25. Nf4 with complications, whereas in this line

25. Qxg7 is not very good due to 25... Rg8 26. Rc8+ Qxc8 27. Qxh6 Bb4]

Black also decides not to take the pawn.

18... cxb2 19. Bxb2 gives white yet more development advantages. The pawn

disadvantage means little in such an open and tactical position.}

19. bxc3

{Now black has created two weaknesses in the black king-side, white can

afford the time to recapture his pawn disadvantage. However, the pawn on c3

is of little worth and white can give that up without any qualms. However,

in the mean time, it does a very good job of controlling the d4 square,

stopping that dark-squared bishop of black's from being centralised.}

19... Bc6

20. Bxc6+

{Since black has played g7-g6 and blocked up the light squares, this

exchange favours white. Hence the bishop's centralisation. It's the

dark-squares that now matter.}

20... Nxc6

21. Nf4

{The knight is re-developed. There are some very big nasties now on e6 and

g6, which black has to defend.}

21... Qc7

22. Nd3

{So, the knight does not have h5 any more for an outpost...so, it finds it's

best square, pressuring the dark-squares, which we have mentioned already

and that all-important c5 square now.}

22... Be7

{22... Ba7 allows 23. Ba3 and the dark-squares are black's fatal downfall.}

23. Qc4

{here, white begins the demonstration of the effectiveness of switching

from one side of the board to the other. Black has blocked up the black

king-side for now, but there are weaknesses there that need exploiting.

However, with the black king not yet committed, it is important to

concentrate now positionally on the queen-side, with the idea of a swift,

controlled, aggressive strike on the king-side.

With these lovely open files on the B and D files, the open 4th rank for the

white queen and rooks...the white pieces can slip from side-to-side and make

the best use of the open space.

Currently, white is focussing on the c5 square...which is a particular

weakness in the black camp.}

23... Rc8

24. Rb1 Kf8

{Black has had enough of his king safety and "castles artificially".

White's domination of the whole board is impressive and black is now

struggling for a constructive plan. Slightly better was 24... Nd8 25. Qb5+

Qd7 and white has to decide on how to proceed.}

25. Be3 Kg7

{Again, black is intent on fleeing with his king. Better was the retreat

25... Nd8 26. Qb5}

26. Qb5 Rb8

27. Bb6 Qc8

{White has now successfully driven black backwards onto his back rank and to

defend a miserable pawn on b7.

Now, how to increase the pressure. If allowed, black will wriggle. The white

knight now needs to be brought to bear on the position.}

28. Nb2?!

{A clumsy way to bring the knight around to d6. Positionally, well intended,

but poorly executed. This is an artificial move and one that does not look

right in the first place. I thought I had time, but I simply don't.

28. Nc5 was my instinctive move, but I wasn't sure what would happen if

black exchanged this. I knew I would have a nice bishop on d6, but was that

a winning advantage? Probably not, but a good advantage, it would be.

28. Bxa5 Nxa5 29. Qxa5 Rd8 was a slower and less secure route.}

28... Bd8

29. Bc5 Be7

30. Bxe7

{White's clamp on the position is slightly slipping. Exchanges do not favour

him and he has to be careful now on how to proceed. Repeating the position

back to b6 and d8 was not ideal.

30. Nc4 Bxc5 31. Qxc5 Ne7 looked too loose.}

30... Nxe7

31. Qxa5

{ A cheeky pawn steal, but now tactics were abundant in the time scramble.

We were now struggling to reach move 42. Accuracy was not the order of the

day now. Who could bluff who in the time scramble.}

31... Ra8

32. Qb5 Nd5

{Annoyingly, black has a lot of counter-play with his knight. There are many

weak squares for the knight to land on and the white queen-side pawns are

very weak.

Time to consider that controlled aggression again. Defend on the queen-side,

but attack on the king-side...}

33. Rbc1 Qc7

34. c4

{That knight on b2 has a use after all!

It does not have the range of forks that the black knight has, but it's

suitably defending the weak white pawns for now...}

34... Nf4

{Now it's black with the aggressive intentions!

That can not be allowed!

Flash attacks or even mating ideas for black can not be permitted in the

slightest.

No, "controlled aggression" by white. Be proactive in the approach and keep

black on his toes...}

35. Re4!

{Eviction of the knight is essential. However, the rook is air-lifted into

the attack. To prevent an attack, you must attack yourself! So, I don't hang

around. I kick the knight away and target the black king...}

35... Nd5

{35... g5 36. Qb3 does not solve the black problems.}

36. Qb3

{The queen is rerouted to the king-side for that king-side attack. Before,

it was the 4th rank that was useful for the queen to swing backwards and

forths. Now, it is the 3rd rank.}

36... Rhc8

37. Qf3

{Targeting the black king-side. F6 is becoming a very sensitive square for

the white queen to penetrate onto.}

37... Qe7

38. Rd1 Nb6

39. Qb3

{Again, demonstrating the agility of the white queen. Swinging from

defensive duties on the queen-side, to attacking intensions on the

king-side. The a4 pawn is defended and the black kniggh is kicked from it's

perch.}

39... Nd7

{Spot the threat.

A big long, deep think is now needed. I banged out my next move with such

confidence, and in such a time-scramble, it must have been a very, very

scary move for my opponent to cope with.

White can now demonstrate unequivocally that he has a very strong advantage,

if not winning position.

How to exploit it...}

40. h4!

{Bang!!

What a horrible surprise to face when you are threatening a fork in a time

scramble!

The utter ignoring of a threat is sometimes the most powerful psychological

weapon you can throw at an opponent.

Tactically, the fork is actually not threatened, as my opponent soon finds

out.

So, if it is a threat not to be taken seriously, then get on with your own

plan.

"controlled aggression" is the game plan here and that black king-side is a

target. Black has successfully blocked it up. So, now it's time to open up

some lines.

The back-rank must be cleared as black will have tactics on it at all times.

The other point to the rook air-lift on move 35 to to e4! h2-h4 is now

facilitated!

Not an easy move to deal with when you have less than a minute for the

remaining 3 moves to the time control.

Naturally, the computer wants to grab the pawn on b7:

40. Qxb7 Rcb8 41. Qxd7

[41. Rxd7 Rxb7 42. Rxe7 Rxe7]

41... Qxd7 42. Rxd7 Rxb2 43. h3

which is probably still winning, but does not have the surprise and shock

value of the text-move.}

40... Nc5

41. Qb4

{Easily refuting the tactic. The white queen pins the knight and prepares to

re-route to the king-side via d2 and hit the f6 and h6 squares. The whole

white strategy is so fluid, it plays itself.}

41... Qe8

{Desperately trying to win the pawn on a4. No better was 41... Rc7 42. Rf4

Nxa4 43. Qxe7 Rxe7}

42. Red4 Nxa4

{And the time control has been reached.

Black has won his pawn back, but at a cost. White has the king-side attack,

the D-file, lots of targets and very active pieces, whereas the black three

major pieces are all on the back rank.}

43. h5

{That controlled aggression again. White forces open lines against the black

king.

Stealing on b7 is not an option, even if it was tactically justified, which

it isn't.

43. Qxb7 is easily answered by 43... Rcb8.

NO, break open that black king whilst putting pressure on the queen-side is

the plan.}

43... g5

{Black desperately attempts to blockade the position. He can not allow his

king to become exposed with open lines against it.

So, he blockades.

There is only one answer to that then, right?}

44. f4

{Open it must come!

White has to prise open lines at all costs. Surprisingly, it is the white

king, who is the safest on h1. The black king has no safe place to hide

itself. Lines must be opened now.}

44... Nxb2

45. Qxb2 Qe7

{With the intention of recapturing on g5 with the queen and keeping things

in the balance.

However, white's recapture on b2 has led to some very neat tactical

possibilities now. White has a killer plan now.}

46. f5!

{After which, there is little hope for black.

The tactics along the long diagonal are just too great.}

46 ... Qc7

{Taking and opening up lines is very scary.

46... exf5 47. e6 must be good, although 47. Rd7 Qa3 48. Qxb7 Rf8 has to be

pretty terminal too.}

47. fxe6

{Open lines. White needs open lines, not blockading ideas with f5-f6+. No,

open lines and that black king nice and exposed.}

47... Qxe5

48. exf7

{Trying to keep it as simple as possible. Open up lines, open it all up. 48.

Qxb7 Qxe6 49. Qb3 Rc6 gave hope to black.}

48... Rf8

{White was simply threatening to promote the pawn and open up the 7th rank

for the rooks to penetrate and create mating nets. The end is now nigh.}

49. Qc2

{Unpinning the rook on d4 and threatening to penetrate on g6 with

devastating effect. Of course, the computer wants to take on b7 and cling on

for ages with a boring long grind with 49. Qxb7 Qe3+

50. Kh2 Qe5+ 51. Kh1 but where is the fun in that. It shows all the way

through this that the computer has wanted to steal that lonely insignificant

pawn on b7 all game, and it has absolute no importance at all in the

grand-scheme of things. Mate, the black king is the target, not a pawn grab

on b7.}

49... Qf6

{Black finally crumbles under the tremendous pressure he has been under for

the whole of the game and especially since move 31.

49... Ra6 is a difficult defense to find.

White would then play 50 Re4 and the game goes on, but with the black king

so horribly exposed, it is doubtful that his defence will hold out much

longer.}

50. Rd6

{And with 50... Qxf7 51. Rd7 coming in, black had had enough.}

50... 1-0

Chris Ross

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