All,

Here is a very intriguing game. One in which a king-side attack is born from

a queen-side move!

My attacking skills are certainly becoming more and more refined as I

concentrate on tackling positions with longer-term compensation worth, for

material sacrificed for the attack. This moves away from the "hacking" art

of attack which all of you know, I do not have much respect for.

So, enjoy a very interesting encounter, which took place in the first league

match of the Cambridgeshire County matches. I took top board, and had

prepared diligently for IM Richard Tozer, who didn't turn out in the end.

However, that opening preparation must have sharpened me up, as I came

across a strong Hungarian instead, who proved more than a challenge.

I have not been on the white side of a Benoni for some time now, a couple of

years, which can be evidently seen in my opening.

Enjoy...

[Event "CCCA League Matches 2011-2012"]

[Site "Cambridge, ENG"]

[Date "2010.10.19"]

[Round "1.1"]

[White "Ross, Chris"]

[Black "Sirokmany, Gabor"]

[Result "1-0"]

[ECO "A70"]

[WhiteElo "2237"]

[BlackElo "2149"]

[Annotator "Chris Ross"]

[PlyCount "103"]

[EventDate "2010.10.19"]

[WhiteTeam "New England A"]

[BlackTeam "Cambridge A"]

{A70: Modern Benoni}

1. d4 Nf6

2. Nf3 e6

3. c4 c5

4. d5 exd5

5. cxd5 d6

6. Nc3 g6

7. e4 a6

8. a4 Bg7

{The main point of 7... a6 for black is to allow a future Bg4 pin. The black

dark-squared bishop has a very poor future and should be exchanged as soon

as possible. Black is seemingly making routine moves without considering the

future placement of his pieces. This may be a lapse in theoretical knowledge

or a simple reliance on his opponent not appreciating the deeper positional

elements of the opening. Fortunately, I have had some experience with the

white pieces in the Benoni and cut out the light-squared bishop's natural

square.}

9. h3 O-O

10. Bd3 Re8

11. O-O Qc7

{And we have reached a fairly standard variation of the Benoni. The queen is

perfectly OK on c7, although I think black should have developed his queen's

knight before the lady. Black should consider maybe b7-b6 and putting the

light-squared bishop on b7 or try and force a future b6-b5 with ideas of

Rb8, with Nbd7 having been played. Or, to attempt to get f7-f5 in, with the

light-squared bishop on c8.

There are lots of plans for black, but white is well placed to meet them

all.

With the black queen on c7, I think this limits black's options somewhat.

More flexible would have then been 11... Nbd7.

White has now a choice, in how to develop his pieces.

White's worse piece is naturally the knight on f3, which is frequently

routed via d2 into the c4 outpost, to hit that backward D-pawn.

12. Nd2 is certainly a plan here, but I simply felt that it was a little too

slow in this situation.

Development is crucial, of course, and bringing the knight back would slow

development down.

I'm always slightly wary of freeing up the F-pawn too early too, as 2-f4

does want to be played, to push for that natural e4-e5 thrust. Again, having

played h2-h3, the dark-squares are rather vulnerable, which means this

central thrusting needs to be played and planned for carefully. In that

sense, where does my own dark-squared bishop belong.

Now, the black queen sitting on c7, and I'm guessing that black needs to

play Ra8-Rb8 to break with b7-b5, the bishop now has an optimal square,

targeting that D-pawn and supporting a future e4-e5.}

12. Bf4c4

{This has apparently been played before, but I also have reservations about

it. Sure, it gains space on the queen-side, and I would have played Nd2 to

secure the c4 outpost if given the chance. So, I'm guessing that it is just

about forced, but it does give me the lovely central d4 square from which

operations can be sprung.

Naturally, I have to take every care on the queen-side and ensure that I am

not overrun on that flank.}

13. Bc2 Nbd7

14. Re1 Rb8

{White has played consistently, lining up his pieces, developing nicely and

preparing for that future e4-e5 thrust.

Black has also been playing rather automatically. This queen's rook has now

landed on b8, opening up all kinds of possibilities for tactics with the

bishop on f4.

I can not allow black to expand on the queen-side without hindrance, of

course.}

15. a5 b5

16. axb6 Rxb6

{Black has made a break, but at the cost of weakening his pawn-structure.

A6, c4 and d6 are all targets now, but black has utterly changed the

dynamics of the game.

The Benoni is a tactical creature in many ways and can be played in a

positional manner. In this particular case, black has gone now away from

that scene and brought the game into a tactical fray. I didn't fully

appreciate this at this stage, but certainly did after the next two moves!

Black has opened up the B-file and has now a target, b2 and the dark-squares

are now beginning to look an area for counter play.}

17. Ra2

{Not that soft a move. The rook steps off that long a1-h8diagonal and

prepares Qa1 and the targeting of that isolated a6 pawn.

17. Na4 was an option, but I didn't feel that it was putting the knight in

an area I wanted. The e4 pawn needs protection until I am able to push it.

In that regard, the d5 pawn also needs support. The central knight should

not be placed on the rim if it is not destined there. After all, this may

just as well force the black rook to b4, where c4 is well defended and the

knight on a4 could become weak and the A-file is blocked against the attack

on the isolated a6 pawn.}

17... Nh5

18. Be3

{Here the wonders of extensive databases continue to amaze me. Perhaps

unsurprisingly, the position has been played before, and none other than the

Great Bronstein has played it as white.

He, as can be seen in the opening references at the bottom, was more

cautious with the tactical possibilities inherent in the position.

My idea here was to hit the rook on b6 and gain more protection of the d4

square. Again, mostly in positional mode.

I really would have liked to drop the bishop back to h2 and keep the

pressure on the d6 pawn, but I felt that the d4 square was more important.

Also, after Nf3-Nd4, and a future f2-f4, the bishop would be blocked in on

h2. Sure it supports, e4-e5, but I re-considered and planned to place the

bishop on d4, also supporting the e4-e5 thrust.

All very clear and very logical.

Now, some time needs to be taken in this position.

How does black continue, what is his long term plan, how can he seek

counter-play?

A very difficult position to find an effective plan.}

18... Rxb2!?

{Woh! Where did that come from?!

One of those moments where your opponent bangs out a move with confidence

and is a complete shock.

And now here is another good trick to be learnt about clock management. Up

to now, I had played relatively quickly, having played the first 13 moves in

a matter of 4 minutes. At this stage, I had used about 15 minutes, but here,

I allowed the initial shock, doubt, insecurity drain away. It takes over 5

minutes but once the rush of adrenaline has soaked away, cool calculated

deliberation can kick in.

Right, what is the tactical justification for this.

19. Rxb2 Bxc3 and white is winning a pawn as both rooks on b2 and e1 are

forked. Black has won a pawn and has two passed pawns suddenly on the

queen-side, one being rather advanced on c4.

Good justification, you would think, and I can fully accept why my opponent

followed this line of thinking. Naturally, he must have conceived this

tactical flourish well in advance or seen it before in some other game (see

below in the opening references for examples).

OK, the tactical justification is there. But what about the positional

element?

The absolute critical feature is the exchange of the dark-squared bishop. If

this line is followed, black would have to give up his dark-squared bishop,

which is a strong bishop and a decisive defender of the black king.

Joining the two elements together then, the tactical disadvantage of the

white queen-side status, and the weakened state of the dark-squares and the

less-defended black king, there can only be one conclusion.

White must accept the variation and begin a king-side attack on the

dark-squares!

So, a move on the queen-side gives birth to a king-side attack. Remarkable!}

19. Rxb2 Bxc3

20. Bd4

{Starting that king-side attack and obtaining the dark-squares forthwith.

With this very predominant bishop, black is almost cut in two. 20. Rb1 is

possible, but I saw no reason in delaying the occupation of the dark-squares

and the direct demonstration of my king-side ambitions.}

20... Bxe1

21. Nxe1

{Slightly annoying, as I am having to "undevelop" a piece, but as stated

earlier, this knight was intended for d2 and c4, and to facilitate f2-f4 and

e4-e5. That is still a potential plan but more importantly, I can not allow

my queen to be put in a potential pin along the E-file.

21. Qxe1 f5 22. Ng5 Nc5 looked absolutely fine for black and I saw no way in

which to continue with an advantage. With the knight recapture on e1, the

knight on h5 is left vulnerable if black tries to thrust out with f7-f5.}

21... Nc5

{Black seems to be gathering momentum and indeed, my e4 pawn is left

horribly weak. I didn't mind the material loss, as the dark-squares and the

king-side attack is my focus, naturally.

How to get my queen into the attack though.

Well, so far, I have obtained the dark-squared bishop, which was defending

the black king. It's time now to rid myself of the other major black-king

defender, and that's the knight on h5.}

22. g4

{Aggressively played, but there is only one way forward, and that is onwards

and upwards!}

22... Nf4

{My opponent was surprisingly still playing for tactical gains and the win

of a 2nd pawn, which I admire greatly!

22... Ng7 is passive and does not look likely, but is highly possibly the

best defence. If the knight can scuttle back into e8, it may well be able to

hold things up. But black was after me, believing in his tactical play to

hold me up, and the win of material.}

23. Qf3

{Initiative. The momentum must be kept up and forget the material involved.

Heading onto the dark-squares and the black king is the only way forwards.

Black has tactics, but white just has to live with those.}

23... Nxd5

{Winning a 2nd pawn. This also clears the way for Nc5-Ne6, which would

defend the king-side more than I would like. This can not be allowed.}

24. exd5 Rxe1+

25. Kh2

{Again, critical is that the positional elements are taken into

consideration. Sure, tactics have to be taken care of, but the white king

does not belong on a light square.

Indeed, 25. Kg2 runs into difficulties when a light-squared or even black

queen, eventually lands on b7 and if d5 is captured, I do not want any pins,

or a stray check. No, the king has to hide on h2 and checks on f3 taken care

of when appropriate.}

25... Nd7

{Black rushes back to prevent Qf6 and a total penetration. The black knight

is black's only salvation. It's exchange will mean black's immediate

demise.}

26. Ba4

{Threatening that knight's demise, as stated, but also activating my only

light-squared bishop. Surprisingly, I even have Be8 ideas in the offing now

too. Also of importance is that the white rook is given the c2 square in

case of any annoying c4-c3 thrusts, and the 2nd rank is protected,

especially f2, against any Re2 ideas by black.

The white pieces are now coordinating with one another excellently, despite

being two pawns down!}

26... Ne5

{Played automatically, to block the long diagonal, but allowing another

twist in the tactical battle.

26... f5 27. gxf5 Ne5 28. Bxe5 Rxe5

[28... dxe5 29. fxg6 e4+ 30.Qg3 Qxg3+ 31. Kxg3]

29. fxg6 hxg6

Is messy but clearly better for white.}

27. Qf6 Re4?

{Black's losing plan. Again, perfectly understandable, at there are tactics

along the 4th rank with the two white bishops. If the bishop on d4 wanders

away, then c4-c3 hits the rook on b2 and the bishop on a4 is left hanging.

Very complicated was the tactical mess of 27... Bxg4 28. Bxe5 Rxe5 29. hxg4

c3 and I was not sure to what was going on there. I felt as though I should

be better, but I didn't fully figure things out. Presumably the bishop lands

on c6 and I have to gang around the C-pawn to win it, with a queen retreat

etc. The game will go on and black would have chances, but the bishop should

prove to be superior over the pawns amassed.}

28. Bb6

{The point of the centralisation of the bishop. The bishop not only controls

the dark-squares on the king-side, but also on the queen-side. The tactics

are now all with white, as the black queen has nowhere to go.}

28... Qb7

{28... Nd7 29. Bxc7 Nxf6 30. Rb8 wins the bishop on c8, as the bishop on a4

controls the e8 square, preventing the rook's retreat.}

29. Qd8+

{Wanting to drive the king to a more vulnerable square and have the tactic

available, which shortly appears. Sure, 29. Qxd6 Nf3+ 30. Kg3 Qe7 31. Qxe7

Rxe7 32. Kxf3 crossed my mind, but I didn't feel as though it was as

convincing and psychologically devastating as the game continuation.}

29... Kg7

30. Qxd6 Nd3

{I can't find any tactical defence here for black now. The previous

variations shows that a check on f3 does not achieve anything.

Black has to be very careful now of Bd8 tactics with checks on f6 with a

clear mating net.

It looks all very scary for both sides and the white rook on b2 seems very

precarious. All is under control though, due to that lonely old black king

on g7, a lovely vulnerable square.

Also possible was30... Nf3+ 31. Kg3 Ng5 32. Bd4+ Rxd4 33. Qe5+ Kh6 34. Rxb7

Rd3+ 35. f3 Nxf3 36. Qf4+ Ng5+ 37. Kg2 and white will mop up the pinned

black pieces.}

31. Bd4+

{Winning the black queen. Black is gathering a lot of material for the lady,

but his pieces are not coordinated and can not defend each other. Again

though, it's the dark-squares which prove his downfall.}

31... Rxd4

32. Rxb7 Bxb7

33. Qb6

{The point to the variation. White must win a piece back. The rest is simple

technique.}

33... Rxd5

34. Qxb7 Rd6

{Either player could have played slightly better moves in the next stage,

but we were both in a time scramble now, with my opponent down to seconds to

make move 36. I'm amazed he reached the time control actually!}

35. Kg3

{35. Qc7 Re6}

35... Rf6

{35... h5 36. Qc7 Rf6 37. Bc2}

36. Qc7

{36. Qd5 Nf4 37. Qxc4 h6}

36... h6

{36... Rxf2 37. Qxc4 Rf3+ 38. Kg2 Ne1+ 39. Kg1}

37. Qxc4

{And the time control reached successfully for both players. Perfect play

has not been achieved in the last few moves, but it does not really matter,

as white has a bishop, which will prove fatal for black in the end. Taking

things slow now and not trying to mate black is the key. Simple, slow

positional sense and technique has to prevail now.}

37... Rf3+

{Naturally, whilst I am taking things slowly, black is going to try his

utmost to throw in tactical resources to salvage the position. I have to be

constantly careful of knight forks. This means I am losing my F-pawn, which

is a shame, but f7 can not survive for all that much longer.}

38. Kg2 Rxf2+

39. Kg1 Rf4

40. Qc3+

{Again, accuracy is required. Exchanges and offering black the opportunity

to form a "fortress" should not be permitted. It is essential to maintain my

light-squared bishop and limit the movement of the black knight as much as

possible.}

40. Kh7

{40... Kg8 41. Bb3 Nf2 42. Bd5}

41. Bb3

{Certainly not 41. Qxd3 Rxa4 42. Qd6 a5 and black can hope, slim as it is,

but he can hope as the white king can't enter into the attack easily.}

41... Nf2

{The black knight has very few squares to go to. I simply must restrict it's

manoeuvrability as much as possible. I can not allow captures on h3 and then

retreats to g5. Controlling of the e4 square is also essential.}

42. Qe3 Rf6

43. Kg2

{Again, being subtle.

White has to almost force a Zugzwang position. I want to protect h3, but am

asking black to what he plans to do with his pawn formation

My pieces are now ideally placed, no checks are on. How is black to

proceed?}

43... g5

{Thankfully making my life all that much easier in the final stage of the

game. Black had obviously given up hope now. More resistant was 43... Kg7

but the winning plan is the same by white. It all depends if I wish to force

h3-h4 and g4-g5 first. Presumably, I will have to play Qd4 to protect g4 and

pin the rook on f6.

I need to keep my G-pawn, at all costs, as the H-pawn is the wrong coloured

rook's pawn, which is a very, very important feature not to forget.}

44. Qxf2

{Rubbing the salt in the wound even more. Since the black pawn has advance

to g5, f7-f5 can not be achieved. IN that regard, the ending has to be won

for me. Sure, I could win the black knight, but I saw no reason in messing

around with queen verses rook for another 25 moves or so. I just wanted to

kill things off there and then and put the game to bed.

44. Bc2+ Kg8 45. Bf5 cuts out the defence to the black knight but he can

take on h3 and a grind has to ensue, where I have to eventually win the

A-pawn and there is work to be done. NO, just give the queen back and be a

piece up and the ending is simple enough.}

44... Rxf2+

45. Kxf2 Kg6

46. Kf3 Kf6

{The whole point of entering into this is that f7-f5 can not be forced.

46... f5 47. Bc2 pins the F-pawn. A detail, but one that is essential to the

winning plan.}

47. Ke4 h5

{47... a5 48. Kd4 finding another waiting move.}

48. Bc4 a5

49. Bb3 Kg6

{49... h4 50. Kd5 Ke7 51. Ke5 f6+ 52. Kf5}

50. Ke5 f6+

{50... h4 51. Bc2+ Kg7 52. Kf5}

51. Ke6 hxg4

52. hxg4 1-0

Opening references:

A.

18. Bc1 Nc5 19. Qe2 Bd7 20.Qxc4 Bb5 21.Nxb5 axb5 22.Qb4 Nf6 23.Be3 Rbb8

24.Bd4 Ncxe4 25.Bd3 Nxd5 26.Qb3 Bxd4 27.Nxd4 Ndf6 28.Bxb5 Qc5 29.Ra4 Re5 30.

Rc4 Nd2

0-1 Bronstein,D (2465)-Moskalenko,V (2505)/Wijkaan Zee 1992/CBM 028}

B.

18. Bh2 Rxb2 19. e5 Rxa2 20. exd6 Rxe1+ 21. Nxe1 Qa5

0-1 Kolev,A (2017)-Janev,E (2461)/Plovdiv BUL 2010}

C.

20... Bxb2 21.Bxb2 Ne5 22.Nxe5 dxe5 23.d6 Qd8 24. Ba4 Bd7

25. Qa1 Bxa4 26. Qxa4 Nf4 27.Bc3 Re6 28.d7 Re7 29. Qxc4 Qxd7 30.Qxa6 Re6 31.

Qa8+ Qe8 32.Qa1 Qe7 33.Kh2 g5 34.Re3 h5 35. g3

Anka,E (2427)-Farkas,T/Hungary 2003/EXT 2005/1/2-1/2 (38)})

Chris Ross

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