All,

Many of you have heard about my performance in the Lichtenbergersommer

tournament in Berlin last week, where I achieved 7/9, gathering in 2nd place

with some very strong grandmasters from Russia, Croatia and Germany itself.

The joint winners with 7.5/9 had amongst them GM Robert Rabiega, who beat me

wonderfully well in round 3.

I won again in round 4 and lost a stupid game in round 5, falling foul to

some dirty tactics by my weaker opponent, who was in a clearly lost

position.

Anyway, this left me with 3/5 and the anger and determination to fight my

way back. Four consecutive victories thereafter gave me the aforementioned

7/9.

Here is my round 6 game, where my purposiveness is palpable.

[Event "Lichtenberger Sommer 2010"]

[Site "Berlin, GER"]

[Date "2010.08.12"]

[Round "6"]

[White "Ross, Chris"]

[Black "Kötz, Andreas"]

[Result "1-0"]

[ECO "B30"]

[WhiteElo "2207"]

[BlackElo "2039"]

[Annotator "Chris Ross"]

[PlyCount "43"]

[EventDate "2010.08.12"]

{B30: Sicilian: Rossolimo}

1. e4 c5

2. Nf3 Nc6

3. Bb5 e6

4. O-O Nge7

5. Re1 a6

6. Bf1 d5

7. exd5 Nxd5

8. d4 Nf6

{The 3rd time this knight has moved. Black is obviously wishing to enter

into a IQP position, where he has already played a7-a6, which could be a

useful move for him. He is affectively a tempo up on the main IQP lines.

Although this is probably perfectly playable for white, I wanted to take a

slightly different angle. This is why 9. c3 didn't come into my

calculations.}

9. Be3 Ng4

{And the knight moves for a fourth time!

Black is intent on snaffling the bishop pair. In itself, this is fine, but

is it any justification in the tempi loss? Probably not, despite this

position appearing in the databases.

OK, lets take into account a couple of things. First the rook on e1 has been

placed there and the white 7th move of exd5 has been played to open up

tactics down the central file. Placing the bishop on e3 was not the

desirable thing to do, but white wanted to recapture on d4 with a minor

piece and have a queen-side majority with the better development.

Now black is wanting to snatch the bishop pair on e3 and weaken the

dark-squares that bit more. For that reason alone the unthinkable variation

10. dxc5 Qxd1 11. Rxd1 Nxe3 12. fxe3 Bxc5 didn't even come into

consideration.}

10. Bg5

{Now the fun begins. If black can waste four tempi with the knight, moving

the bishop for a 2nd time is a quid pro quo. The E-file is reopened and the

white pieces begin menacing the black forces.

10. d5 did come to mind and this interesting game came to my attention

afterwards:

10. d5 Nxe3 11. Rxe3 Be7 12. Nc3 Nb4 13. dxe6 Bxe6 14. Qe2 O-O 15. Rd1

Qc8 16. a3 Nc6 17. Nd5 Bxd5 18. Rxd5 Qc7 19. Ng5 h6 20. Qh5 Bf6

1/2-1/2 Maximov,D (2497)-Kryvoruchko,Y (2627)/Poltava UKR 2008.

Note how some of the ideas displayed in this GM game appear with my play!}

10... f6

{Black now has to enter into this variation, as any retreat with the knight

on g4 would be admitting a great deal. Interposing with the bishop allows

the exchange on e7 and if a knight recapture ensures the c5 pawn's loss and

a queen recapture would allow a dangerous d4-d5 thrust. Black could move the

queen away and maybe hunt down the b2 pawn, but this is an insignificant

pawn and white would still crash through the desirable d4-d5 thrust.

Nb1-d2/Nc4 ideas then would be too strong.

No, black must continue and harass the dark-squared bishop.}

11. d5!

{Material matters little here in this position now. Tempi, development and

open lines matter. The black pieces are so uncoordinated, little matters but

the opening up of lines against the king. The knight on g4 is the only piece

that could cause white any damage, but even that loosely-positioned piece is

vulnerable to tactics. The other developed piece, on c6, is now attacked.

Pawn-structure becomes a critical factor now.}

11... Nb4

{The two developed pieces of black's are knights to knight's fives!

There must be some poetic justice in this but obviously, black is attempting

to win the pawn on d5. All of this is perfectly nice, but has white

over-extended his play?

11... fxg5 12. dxc6 Qxd1 13. Rxd1 bxc6 would win black a pawn, but his pawn

structure is shattered and the white knights will find perfectly acceptable

outposts on a variety of squares through the board. The doubled pawns make

the material superiority completely irrelevant.

11... Ne7 12. Bc1 Qxd5 13. Bd3 was a fall-back plan if I had bottled my

other alternative to as I played in the actual game. However, with black

going greedy, things became very interesting now. Coolness had to take over

here and I had to refrain from reacting instinctively...}

12. Nc3!

{Development!

The one sole annoying feature about the white position is that the pawn on

d5 is pinned down to the queen on d1. This development move unpins the pawn

and poses a huge question to black now.

Retreating the attacked bishop was strong in my intensions and I figured12.

Bd2 Nxd5 13. h3 Nh6 14. Bxh6 gxh6 would give me more than enough

compensation for the pawn sacrificed, but I wanted more. My blood-lust was

up and I was still fuming from the day before...}

12... Be7

{Black had played pretty quickly up to this point, but now settled down for

a long deep think, as he obviously realised that he was in a spot of

trouble. If white can coolly develop, then something had to be fundamentally

wrong with his game plan so far. I hadn't calculated multi-deep variations

in the position, as I saw that the knight on b4 had literally nowhere to go.

I was happy for it to retreat to c6 and chop it, as any recapture on d1 now

with the exchange of queens would develop my queen's rook that bit faster.

The pawn loss would be soon regained.

I vaguely calculated that 12... fxg5 13. a3 Be7 14. axb4 cxb4 15. Bb5+ axb5

16. Rxa8 bxc3 was probably black's best chance to survive, but I didn't give

it too much hope for him.

With the text-move though, more calculation is needed.}

13. Bf4

{A Calm retreat that threatens much. Black is now tactically forced into the

win of a pawn.

White is threatening to simply play a2-a3 winning the black knight on b4. If

black castles, then a possible d5-d6 could trap the bishop on e7. Or, white

can simply take on e6 with dxe6 and claim a small advantage. However, it is

the knight on b4 that needs an immediate flight square. If not c6, a6-a5 is

a silly retreat possibility. Then, why not the capture on d5, with the

E-file having been plugged up?}

13... Nxd5

{Black has to be very careful with any capture son d5 with the pawn, as if

white is able to get in Bd6, the rook on e1 will win the bishop on e7.

13.. exd5 14. a3 d4 15. axb4 dxc3 16. Bd6 wins the bishop.}

14. Nxd5 exd5

{Annoyingly for black, he can't rid himself of the queens. 14... Qxd5 15.

Qxd5 exd5 16. Bd6 is that pin on the bishop again!}

15. h3 Nh6

16. Bxh6 gxh6

17. Qe2

{The point to white's play. The pin down the E-file has been an essential

element to his plan so far. The temporary blockading of the bishop on f1 is

not an important feature as black has been denied castling opportunities and

the way for the queen's rook has been made available. Black has won a pawn

and has the bishop pair, but at a great cost. If the king can hide on h8, he

could well give up that pawn on h6 and hope that his bishops hold everything

together and that he gets the chance of a king-side attack.}

17... Kf7

{Wanting to get the king away from the pin and make a desperate attempt to

coordinate his pieces.

17... Rg8 18. Qe3 Qd6 19. c4 will open up more lines.

[19. Qxh6 Bf5 is probably also OK, but it gives black a chance to regroup

his pieces and develop his queen-side pieces.]}

18. Nh4

{Bringing the knight into the fight now. Yes, it is on the rim, but that

matters little, as it is headed for the f5 square. More importantly though,

the queen has been given access to h5 and the rooks access to the 3rd-rank,

specifically g3 to hound the black monarch. The light-squares though are the

natural target. All the white pieces are working perfectly harmoniously with

one another.

I thought about the cute 18. Rad1 d4 19. Nxd4 cxd4 20. Qc4+ Kg7 21. Rxd4 Qf8

but couldn't find a convincing follow-up. Naturally, 22. Qc7 seems to do the

trick, but I didn't see that at the time.}

18... Qd6?

{After which, I saw no salvation for black.

The tactics are soon going to ruin black as his pieces are already too

uncoordinated. I thought that this idea of the queen development was to put

a bishop on e6 and attempt to hold things that way. Even then, I saw Qh5+

and Rxe6 tactics, or Bc4 ideas with the rook on d1. No, the other option for

black was 18... f5 19. Qh5+ Kg7 20. Nxf5+ Bxf5 21. Qxf5 Rf8 and the impetus

of the white attack has somewhat gone, despite the black king being wide

open. He can hide himself on h8 and white would have to reconsider his

options.

This just proves that 18. Rad1 was the better move.}

19. Rad1

{Bringing the final piece into the fight. I could see no saving moves now

for black as all the tactics are working for white with so much fire coming

through the centre of the board.}

19... Qe5

{Another desperate attempt to fend off the inevitable. If black could only

exchange queens, the fire-power against his own king would be that much

reduced. So, naturally, the queen exchange is not on. Plus, the knight on h4

is loose after fxe5 moves by black (reuniting his pawns - not an option.)

19... Qc7 20. Rxd5 Rg8 21. Qh5+ Kg7 and he can grovel on for a bit longer.}

20. Qf3

{Best. The d5 pawn is now targeted and the black king goes down in a blaze

of glory. Or is it the king, or the queen?!}

20.... Qg5

{NO better was 20... Qc7 21. Qxd5+ Kg7 22. Re3 using that g3 square outlined

above to finish off the black king.}

21. Rxd5

{Hunting down the queen, not the king now!

The knight is not important of course. Everything collapses now. Bc4 with

devastating discoveries are on the cards. There are other nice variations,

but you can amuse yourself in finding them all.}

21... Qxh4

22. Re4

{Winning the black queen. Naturally, the computer out-does me by finding

22. Rde5 but there you go. Have fun figuring out all the nice variations

with that gem!}

22... 1-0

Chris Ross  
August 2010