Hi all,

Here's a game with a very interesting twist. I believe it was Capablanca who

once said that one advantage in chess sometimes needs to be switched for

another advantage. I'm paraphrasing, of course, but essentially, the point

is well made.

In this round 8 game from the 4NCL, I adopt that very policy in the most

remarkable of ways on move 7. Who would have thought that 15 moves later, my

opponent would resign, materially equal and no attack visible. A simple

accumulation of positional gains from a switch of strategic objectives.

A very unusual opening and a very interesting 7th move by black, which will

require some explanation.

Enjoy!

[Event "4NCL/DIV3/BCA VS LFL"]

[Site "Daventry, ENG"]

[Date "2010.03.28"]

[Round "8.2"]

[White "Foster, James"]

[Black "Ross, Chris"]

[Result "0-1"]

[ECO "A13"]

[WhiteElo "2089"]

[BlackElo "2205"]

[PlyCount "44"]

[EventDate "2010.03.28"]

[WhiteTeam "Sambuca Sharks"]

[BlackTeam "Braille Chess Association"]

{A13: English Opening}

1. c4 e6

2. Nc3 d5

3. e4

{I'm astounded to find this opening in the database, but there it is, in all

it's glory. Needless to say that black scores very heavily with it!

Black has several options here, pushing onto d4 being a perfectly acceptable

choice. But why blockade and then have to waste yet another tempo by pushing

e6-e5? No, take the game to white and ask him to prove his obscure opening.}

3... dxe4

4. Nxe4 c5

{Ditching white with a backward "D" pawn, the whole focus of my game now.

Black has immediately equalised and could even claim that he is better, due

to the nature of the white backward central pawn.}

5. Nf3 Nc6

{White must not be allowed to play d4. If white gets this in, he could claim

that he's better! He would have a queen-side majority and the black e6 pawn

lumbers black with a problem of developing his queen's bishop.}

6. d3

{I started getting a sense of white playing a strange reversed Sicilian

Nadjorf setup. A bit creepy but I started thinking at this point about my

strategy. I had played all of my moves automatically so far and after my

next, it was time to dig in and ponder.}

6... Nf6

7. Be3

{OK, crunch time.

Now I sat for over 20 minutes and thought deeply and long about black's

strategy and game plan.

Naturally, tactics have to become involved as well, but the long-term game

plan has to be established.

So, have a good, long think. Take your time on this position and examine

every element. It's important.

OK, my move coming up and the explanation for it thereafter.}

7... Nxe4!

{Let me quote myself from move 4:

"Ditching white with a backward "D" pawn, the whole focus of my game now".

What happened to that then?!

This is where my little friend Capablanca was muttering away in my

subconscious and my unease of studying the position on move 6 came back to

tickle my misapprehension.

Was the backward "D" pawn all that important after all? Was it indeed on a

weak square on d3? White had plenty of defenders of the pawn and with the

bishop sitting on e2, white could defend and cling on and hope for the best.

Excogitate the other positional factors. The knight on e4 is standing on a

very good square and if the white pawn on d3 was to occupy that square, is

it any stronger there than on d3? No, it's actually weaker as black can

attack it that much better and white can't defend it no easier than as if it

were on d3. Indeed, black is going to fienchetto his queen's bishop, which

will be directly hitting the e4 square.

Now tactics. Black had to be wary of Nxc5 tactics. I wasn't so worried about

this as I was convinced that Qa5+ tactics must give me something. So, I

dismissed that idea immediately. However, white is threatening to play d3-d4

and release all the pressure. That can't be allowed. Ng4 for black

snaffling the bishop is probably fine, but white can allow an Fxe3 capture

supporting his centre after 8. d4.

Back to positional considerations. Consider the central squares. Black has a

clamp on d4 with his pawn on c5 and knight on c6. Yes, Nimzovich would roll

about in his grave with delight at the nature of the blockading square in

front of the backward D pawn. That's all fine, but where's the use in

blockading the pawn if you are wanting to attack it?

And think about the pawns on c4 and e4. They have the Maroczy Bind, but with

the black pawn being on e6, their effectiveness is limited.

I have therefore, in many ways, a slightly better version of the Exchange

variation of the King's Indian Defence, where the black C and E pawns have

been interchanged.

In that regard, the black bishops can be brought to better use and put on

better diagonals and those two little pawns on c4 and e4 will become the

whole target of my positional game.

The final move of the game is so, so, ever-so fitting to this remarkable

switch in positional play!}

8. dxe4 Qxd1+

{Of course I want the queens off. The rook has no affective squares down the

"D" file and I'm going to exchange it off in any case. In the mean time,

white has to contend with the threat of Nb4/Nxa2/Nc2+/Nxe3 concepts.}

9. Rxd1 b6

10. Be2 Bb7

11. a3

{A PR3 move, which gives him yet more weaknesses in his pawn chain, but I

was willing to play Nb4 to force such a breech in the pawn barrier. Even if

this meant a loss of tempi by retreating immediately back to c6.}

11... Be7

12. O-O Bf6

{Demonstrating that tempi in the position is irrelevant and that strategic

gains are the meal of the day. White doesn't want to push e4-e5, as this

would weaken the E pawn and ensure that the knight on f3 can't move easily,

as it would be bound to defend the e5 pawn.

However, my control of that all-important d4 outpost has yet another piece

on it. So, white may well do best to push the bishop away. However, I did

even think about Bd8/Bc7 ideas to hit the pawn on e5, which looked very

tasty indeed.}

13. Rd2 Rd8

14. Rfd1

{Taking on d8 doesn't solve his problems. I would recapture with the king

and then shuffle it to c8 and then continue with the plan.}

14... Ke7

{Quietly going about my job. Rushing anything here isn't necessary. The

rooks have to come off at some point.}

15. Bf4

{White gets a glimmer of hope, but it's soon snuffed out.

White's desperately hoping for e4-e5 tactics, which would win the blocked up

bishop on f6. No counter-play though, no counter-play, remember that...

15. Bd3 Rd7 16. Bf4 e5 put up more resistance.}

15... Bd4

{And onto that outpost I now land.

15... Nd4 16. Nxd4 Bxd4 17. Bc7 looked awkward, as white would then have Be5

tactics. I didn't want any of that rubbish, and avoided it like the plague.}

16. Nxd4

{White had to get bold now and play for tactics, go for broke, as it were.

16. e5 would give him Bg5+ tactics, which black would have to deal with by

either h6 or f6.

either way, the question would remain to whether Rd7, Rhd8 and either Bxf2

or Bxb2 tactics were on the cards as the knight on f3 would not be able to

support e5 and the rook on d2 and would eventually become overloaded.}

16... Nxd4

{Now look at that knight on the outpost. White thought he was ridding

himself off it, but I soon disillusioned him of that dream.}

17. Bf3 f6

{And everything is now perfectly set. I can play e6-e5 at any time,

rendering that bishop on f3 and utterly useless piece of wood. The white

pawns are now far, far too weak and the white position is hopeless. No

wonder he resigned a few moves later.}

18. Be3

{18. b4 Ba6 doesn't help his cause...}

18... Nb3

{The final insult. The b3 square is white's final undoing. How these PR3

moves come back to haunt folk...)

19. Rd3 Na5

{Demonstrating with minor-piece manoeuvrability that the white pawns are

simply too weak and the white back-rank is vulnerable. Not everything can be

defended successfully.}

20. Rxd8 Rxd8

21. Rc1 Nb3

{Back we go to deliver the coup de grace. Poor old white...}

22. Re1 Nd2

{Illustrating the defencelessness of the white pawns. Both c4 and e4 are hit

and can't be defended. If white were to capture the knight on d2, then the

black rook enters onto the 7th rank and mops up the queen-side pawns. The

bishop on f3 is useless and the white back-rank vulnerable to flash

back-rankers.

White had had enough and threw in the towel.

A beautifully fitting end to attack the two pawns that I deliberately

strategically placed on move 7!}

23. 0-1

Opening references:

A.

6. Qc2 Nb4 7. Qb3 a5 8. a4 b6 9. Be2 Bb7 10. Nc3 Nd3+ 11. Kf1 Nf6

12. Qb5+ Ke7 13. Bxd3 Qxd3+ 14. Ne2 Bxf3 15. gxf3 Qxf3 16. Ng3 Ne4 17. Nxe4

Qxh1+ 18. Ke2 Qxe4+ 19. Kd1 Rd8 20. Qxb6 Qh1+

Anderson,G (1484)-Kwiatek,J (1854)/Winnipeg 2006/EXT 2007/0-1 (37)})

B.

7. Be2 Be7 8. O-O O-O 9. Be3 b6 10. Qa4 Bb7 11. Rad1 e5

12. Nxf6+ Bxf6 13. Rfe1 Qc7 14. a3 Be7 15. Bd2 a5 16. Bc3 Rad8 17. Bf1 f6

18.

h3 Ba8 19. Qb3 Kh8 20. Qa4 Rd7 21. Nh4 g6 22. Nf3 Qb7 23. Nh2 Nd8

Rigo,J (2385)-Farago,I (2495)/Wuerzburg 1991/EXT 1997/0-1 (32)}

C.

7. Be2 Be7 8. O-O O-O 9. Bf4 Qb6 10. Qb3 Qxb3 11. axb3 Rd8 12. h3 b6 13. Bc7

Rd7 14. Bxb6 Nxe4 15. dxe4 Rb8 16. Ba5

Bf6 17. e5 Nxe5 18. Nxe5 Bxe5 19. Rad1 Rxb3 20. Rxd7 Bxd7 21. Rd1 Be8

Flachet,T (2060)-Delorme,A (2252)/Nantes 2004/EXT 2006/0-1 (32)}

D.

7. Ng3 Be7 8. a3 O-O 9. Be2 b6 10. O-O Bb7 11. Rb1 Qc7 12. Be3 Rfd8 13. Qc1

Rd7 14. Ng5

Nd4 15. Bd1 a5 16. N5e4 Rad8 17. Nxf6+ Bxf6 18. Bg5 Bxg5 19. Qxg5 h6 20. Qg4

Qe5 21. b4 axb4

Nisic,M-Cosma,E (2360)/Pula 2000/CBM 078 ext/0-1 (54)}

Chris Ross  
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