

NATO Chess 2015 Round 4 Highlights

Jan Cheung, 8 June 2016

Wednesday only featured one round, round 4. One game was not played because the one of the players arrived more than a half hour late at the board and the game was forfeited. Compared with round 3, less excited games were played. Nevertheless, there were adequate interesting positions. Here are the exercises of round 4.

Position 1.



Position after 27.Bxg5 Black to move.

Choose between A) 27...b5, B) 27...f5, C) 27...Rc4

Position 2.



Position after 30.Nc3-a4. Black to move. Choose between A) 30...Nb7 and B) 30...Kc7.

Position 3.



Position after 22...Rd8-e8. White to move. Choose between A) 23.Ne2, B) 23.a4 and C) 23.Nb5.

Position 4.



Position after 24.g3-g4. Black to move.

Position 5.



Position after 33.fxe6. Black to move.

Position 6.



Position after 11...Ne4-f6. White to move. Choose between A) 12.Nf3, B) 12.d5 and C) Other move.

Position 7.



Position after 20...Bf6. Choose between A)21.Qc2 and B)21.d6.

Position 8.



Position after 22...Nc6xd4. White to move.

Position 9.



Position after 16...f6-f5. White to play. Choose between A) 17.Ng3 and B) 17.Ned2.

Position 10.



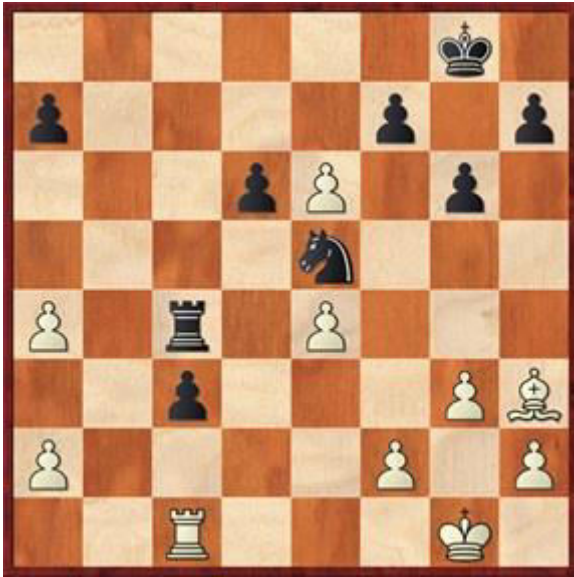
Position after 25.Re3-e1. Black to move.

Position 11.



Position after 48...c6-c5. (Position 11) Black played this move and offered a draw. White to move. You have 10 seconds left on your clock. Choose between A) Accept draw and B) Continue playing.

Position 12.



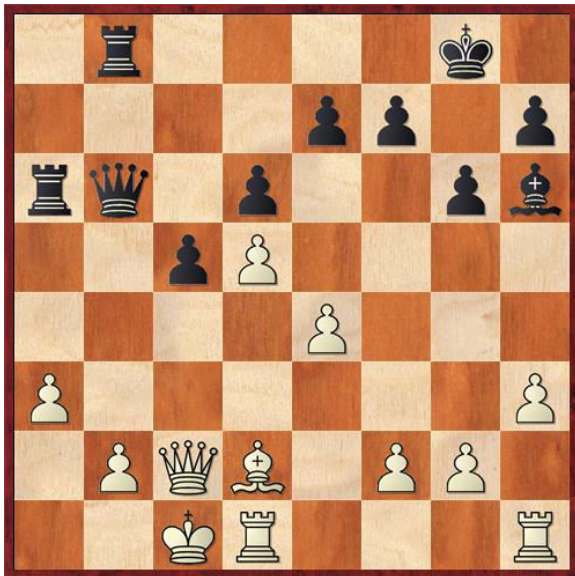
Position after 27.d5xe6. Black to move. Choose between A) 27...Kf8, B) 27...Nc6 and C) 27...f6.

Position 13.



Position after 30...Kg8-g7. White to move.

Position 14.



Position after 22.Bc3-d2. Black to move.

Position 15.

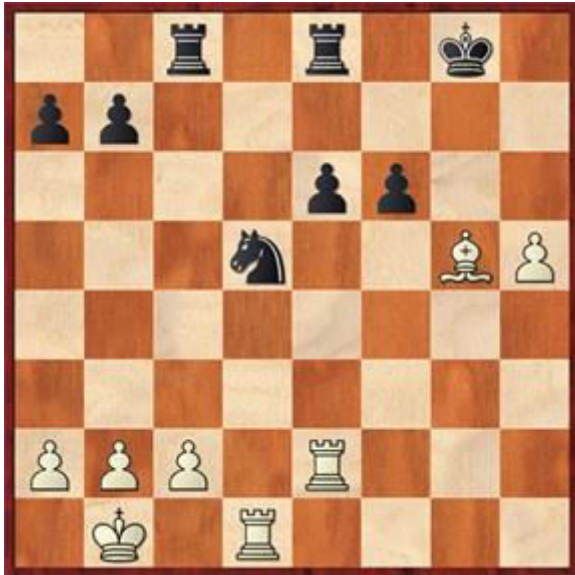


Position after 26...Nc6xe5. Choose between A) 27.Rxe5, B) 27.dxe5 and C) fxe5.

Solutions

Position 1 is the game Onley - HC Andersen (4.4).

Black's knight at d5 performs an important task. It restricts white's activity at the d file. The knight can be driven away if white is able to push c2-c4. If there are no rooks at the board, then the knight will dominate the bishop due to the fact that the pawn at e5 is put at a square of the same colour as the range of the bishop. White has plans to put the rooks at the g and the f file. Black can relieve this pressure if he can play f7-f6 or f7-f5. At the moment he can play this move. After **27...f5** (27...f6 gives the same result) white can reduce the complexity of the position with **28.gxf6 ep gxf6**



29.c4 Rxc4 30.Rxd5 fxe5 31.Rxg5 Kh7 with an equal ending. Black's knight has long term prospects on account of the light squares. If he is not satisfied with the ending after 27...b5, he can wait, but this also gives white attacking chances. For example:

- **27...b5** This "überdeckung" move of Nimzowitsch strengthens the position of the knight. **28.Rf2 Rf8 29.Rg1 Kh7 30.Bd2 Rc7** with both sides waiting.
- **27...Rc4** the move played in the game. **28.Rg2** Now black should play **28...Kh7** with both sides waiting instead of the played move 28...Re4 which can be refuted with 29.h6

Conclusion: If black is satisfied with a draw he can play 27...f5. If he wants to continue play then he should play 27...b5 or 27...Rc4. 27...b5 is a fundamental positional move, where 27...Rc4 is more a tactical move.

Position 2 is the game Marquardt – Pietruszewski (4.6).

White threat is Na4-c5+. The defending move should also recon with f4xe5 followed by d3-d4 occupying the centre. In the game black played **30...Kc7**. This move gives white too many tempos to improve the position after **31.Nc5 Bc8 32.fxe5 Bxe5 33.d4 Bh8 34.Bg5!** After **34...Kd8** white has the opportunity to play **35.e5** to improve the position by attacking pawn c6. For example, **35...Nb7 36.Na4 Na5 37.Nf4** with total domination.

Better was **30...Nb7!** At d6 this knight has no functionality. At b7 this piece defends square c5. The difference with 30...Kc7 becomes clear now. After **31.fxe5 Bxe5 32.d4** black now has the defending move **32...Bc7!** which is a better square for the bishop than f6, g7 or h8.

Position 3 is the game Fichtner – Papista (4.7).

The white position has weaknesses at squares f3 and f4. Defending them only gives black the opportunity to keep the initiative. For instance, **23.Ne2** defends square f4, but at square e2, the knight does not live in harmony with the rook at e1. It gives black to open the position with **23...e5!**

Does black have weaknesses? The answer is yes: pawns a7 and d6. After **23.Nb5!** both pawns are attacked.



Black has several responses.

- **26...Kb8 23.Qa3** attacking a7 and d6. Black is in trouble. **24...a6** is not possible due to **25.Nxc7!**
- **26...a6** also gives white the initiative after **24.Nxd6+ cxd6 25.Bxd6 Rg8 26.Qc3+Kd8 27.Qb4 b5 28.Qa5+ Kc8 29.Qb6**. White is winning. The threat are **Re1-e3** and **Qb6-a7**.
- **23...Qd7** The best option. Now taking on a7 gives black the initiative:
 - **24.Nxa7+ Kb8 25.Qa3 Rf3 26.Rd3 Ref8 27.c4 Rxd3 28.Qxd3 Nf4 29.Nxf4 Rxf4 30. Nb5 Rxf2 31.Qe3 Rf6**. In This half open position the bishop is stronger than the knight.
 - **24.c4 a6** (or **24...Kb8 25.Qa3 a5 26.Nc3**) **25.Nc3 e5 26. Qd3 exd4 27.Qxd4 Rxe1 28.Rxe1 Ne5 29.Bxe5 dxe5 30.Qxe5 Rxf2 31.a3** and white can still fight.

In the game white played **23.a4**. After **23...Nf4 24.Bxf4 Qxf4** black kept the initiative.

Position 4 is the game Tommasini – Tucker (4.12).

One of the main strategies in the Steinitz Elements of Chess is to move the worst piece to a better square. Note the colour of square b6. The pawn at b6 is put at a harmonious square with the black bishop. It even restricts the activity of the white bishop. After **24...Bb5** the black bishop is suddenly active at the diagonal a2-c4, for instance **25.e4 Bc4 26.Rd2 h6** with an equal position.

In the game black played **24...b5?** Now the white bishop is more active than black's counterpart and white won later the game

Position 5 is the game Kersic – Farrell (4.13).

Material is equal. White has a passed pawn, supported by the queen. The pawn is blocked by the black queen, which indicates that white's queen is more active than black's queen. Because a queen is an expensive piece to stop a passed pawn, black should try to involve the king into the game. This could be achieved by **33...c5**, which plans Kb7-c6. This move also has the benefit that it takes away a center square (d4) from white. After **33...c5** white cannot make progress without support from the white king, for example: **34.Qe5 Kc6 35.g5 h6 36.gxh6** (or 36.g6 Qc7) **36...gxh6** with an equal position.

In the game black played **33...Kc7?**, but with this move black is not able to bring the king closer to the passed pawn. After **34.Qe5+ Kc8 35.g5** both black's king and queen are not active while white could continue to improve his position, for example:

- **35...h6 36.gxh6 gxh6 37.h4** White has an extra piece, the king. **37...h5 38.b4 Kb7 39.b3.**
- **35...Qc7 36.Qf5 Qe7 37.Qxh7** winning material.
- **35...Kb7 36.c3 Kc8 37.h4** planning h4-h5-h6 to weaken square f6.

Position 6 is the game Cheung – Picart (4.14).

Look at the knight at e3, standing on an unusual square. It was put there to make black's freeing move e6-e5 unattractive, by eyeing square d5. The other knight at d2 is not active. It prevents white to defend square d4. If it is put at square f3, then black has the option to strengthen his stake hold at square e4 with Ne4, enabling f7-f5. If white plays d4-d5, then black can put a knight at d4. This means that square c3 is the best square for the knight at d2: **12.Nb1!** was played in this position. After **12...e5 13.dxe5 Nxe5 14.Nc3 c6 15.Qc2** white got a comfortable position.

Position 7 is the game Lazar – Kedzierski (4.15).

Black has a solid position. In this position, 21.d6 is a critical move that should be analyzed thoroughly if white wants to play for a win. The question is whether the passed pawn at d6 is strong or weak.

After **21.d6!? Qb6 22.Bxf6 gxf6** (22...Nxf6 does not relieve white's possession of square e5 and it can be answered with 23.Qd3) black has square e5 under control. The only weakness in his position is pawn b7 and the fact that a lot of white pieces are concentrating at the king side. The question is whether white has time to weaken black's king position before black gets an opportunity to strengthen the king side. **23.Re3!**



A multifunctional move. Covering the weak spot at b3, defending the passed pawn at d6 and swinging to the king side under favorable circumstances. After **23...e5** the black knight will head to square e6 via f8 and the position is not clear. For example, **24.Nh4 Nf8 25.Red3 f5 26.Nxf5 gxf5 27.Qxf5 Ng6 28.h4 Re6 29.Rg3 Rxd6 30.Rxd6 Qxd6 31.h5** with chances for both sides.

In the game white took no risks and played **21.Qc2**. After **21...Bxb2 22.Qxb2 exd5 23.Rxe8+ Rxe8 25.Rxd5 Nf6** the position was equal.

Conclusion: both moves 21.Qc2 and 21.d6 are playable. If you like playing no risks, then 21.Qc2 is your best choice. If you like to play for a win, then 21.d6 is your best choice.

Position 8 is the game Karbowiak – Mottais (4.16).

After **23.Qb2!** many pieces are attacked and the game was ended after **23...Nxf3+ 24.Rxf3 Qg4 25.Qxb7+!**

Position 9 is the game Rosseel – MM Nielsen (4.29).

In the game white played **17.Ned2?** Due to the bishop at c6, the rook at g8 and the undefended queen at c2, tactics at pawn g2 is possible. After **17...Rxg2+! 18.Kxg2 Bxf3+** white lost the queen and the game.

The right continuation is **17.Ng3**, protecting pawn g2.

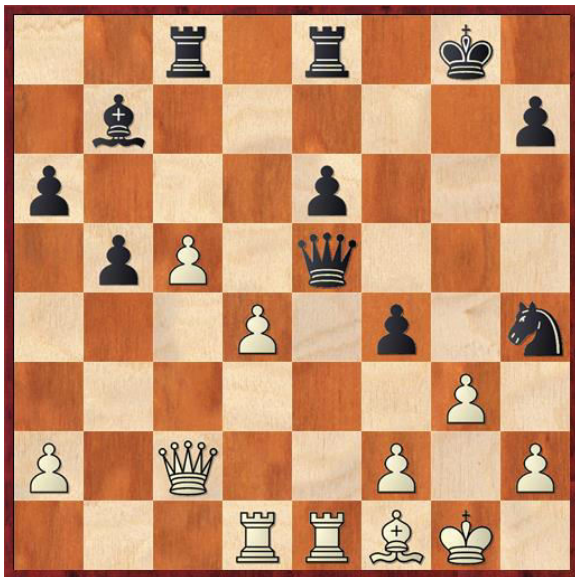
Position 10 is the game Giedraitis – Hernandez (4.32).

There are many pieces that can target pawn g2: bishop b7, queen g7 and pawn f4. This makes **25...c5!** possible. After **26.bxc5**



Black can pick up pawn g2 with **26...Nxe5 27.Rxe5 Bxg2 28.Bxg2 f3 29.Kf1 Qxg2+**. After **30.Ke1** the position is unclear.

In the game black played **26...Nh4?**, but this move could be refuted with **27.g3! Qxe5**



28.Bg2! and white is a piece up.

Position 11 is the game Jakovlevs – Patron (4.33).

Black can only defend pawn c5 if the king is at square b6 or c6. Black also has not adequate moves left. He cannot play f7-f6 because it enables white to create a passed pawn with e5xf6, g7xf6 and h2-h4. So he only has 2 moves left, a6-a5 and g7-g6. If he can play a6-a5 white will not be able to win pawn c5. So white has to prevent this move with **49.a5+!** It is clear that 49...Kxa5 will lose the game after 50.Kxc5, so black has to continue with **49...Kc6**. Black now has only one move left, g7-g6. White

has two moves left, h2-h3 and h3-h4. So after **50.h3! g6 51.h4** black has been put in zugzwang. The pawn at c5 is lost and white will win the game.

In the game white missed 50.h3 and accepted the draw.

Position 12 is the game Ross – Felix (4.34).

The black king at square g8 is vulnerable because f7xe6 is not possible due to the double attack Bxe6+ attacking the king at g8 and the rook at c4. White's threat is e6-e7 with promotion. The rook at c4 and the knight at e5 both performs a task. Only the black king doesn't have a task. So a useful move in the position is **27...Kf8**, activating the king and stopping the pawn at e6.

In the game black played **27...f6?** This move is not possible due to **28.e7 Kf7 29.Be6+!** and white won the game.

The move **27...Nc6** stops the pawn at e6, but is not logical because black still have to move his king to reduce its vulnerability along the diagonal c4-g8.

Position 13 is the game Demjen - Leveillee (4.36).

White has a knight and two pawns for a rook. More important is the fact that blacks king side is weak. Square h6 is an ideal invasion square for the white queen. After **31.Ng4!** black can only stop the threat Qc1-h6+ with **31...Rd2**, but now the 8th rank is weak and white can bring his queen side pawns closer to the promotion square with **32.c6 bxc6**



33.b6!

Black can stop the passed pawn by giving two rooks for the queen, but the resulting end game is lost for black:

33...Rad3 34.b7 Rd1+ 35.Qxd1 Rxd1 36.Rxd1 Qb5 37.Rd7 h5 38.Ne3

White will win this end game because the threat e5-e6 is difficult to defend.

In the game white played 31.Qg5. This move is inaccurate because black can defend with 31...Qd2.

Position 14 is the game Middaugh - Windey (4.48).

Whites kings position is vulnerable. Pawn b2 is attacked twice and it is defended twice. It cannot be defended by the bishop due to the pin along the diagonal c1-h6. The white queen defends this pawn. If it can be lured... After **22...Ra4!** with threat Ra4-c4 white will lose material. Note that Kc1-b1 is not possible on account of Ra4xa3.

Position 15 is the game Smit - Chwieseni (4.49).

It is important to look at the resulting position. If we keep the rooks at the board, which side is better? The answer is white because the white rook is more active than blacks counterpart. The white rook supports the attack while the black rook is passive. The game continuation, an exchange of the rooks with **27.Rxe5** only favors black. After **27...Rxe5 28.fxe5 Qe7 29.Qf4 Kg7**



black has set up a defensive position in which white has difficulties to make progress.

If we keep the rooks at the board with **27.dxe5**, black has got a majority of pawns at the queen side. After **27...Qb6+ 28.Qf2**



28...d4! 29.cxd4 Rd8 with threat Rd8xd4 black has taken over the initiative.

With the right continuation 27.fxe5! white has kept the rooks at the board and has prevented black from counter play. After 27...Qe7 28.Qf4 Kg7 29.Re3



White has reduced any counter play from black and he is planning to set up an attack at the king side.