

## NATO Chess 2015 Round 7 Highlights

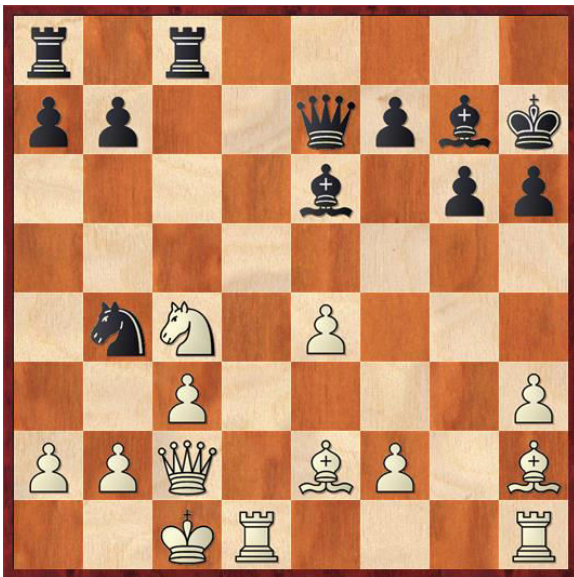
Jan Cheung, 11 August 2016

The last round again! I got the impression that many players liked this edition of the NATO Chess Championship. Here are some facts.

- There were a lot of participants since the last anniversary championship in 2009.
- The polo shirt that every player received, was many times worn by many players during the tournament.
- The bike tour which I organized at the Sunday, got another edition at the Friday afternoon.
- A lot of interesting positions arose during the games.

Here are the exercises of the last round.

### Position 1.



Position after 19...Nc6-b4. White to move. Choose between A) 20.cxb4 and B) 20.Qb3.

Position 2.



Position after 14...Ne4-d6. White to move. Is 15.Bxd5 possible?

Position 3.



Position after 23...Re8-d8. White to move.

Position 4.



Position after 18...Nd4-f5. White to move.

Position 5.



Position after 25...Qc7-b8. White to move.

Position 6.



Position after 18...Qd8-d7. White to move. Choose between A) 19.Rfd1 and B) 19.a5.

Position 7.



Position after 30..Ra8-a7. White to move. Choose between A) 31.fxe4 and B) 31.Bh3.

### Position 8.



Position after 25.Be3xf4. Black to move.

### Position 9.



Position after 13...Qd8-b8. White to move.

Position 10.



Position after 34.Rb1-c1. Black to move.

Position 11.



Position after 20.Rf4-e4. Black to move. Choose between A) 21...Bxe4 and B) other move.

Position 12.



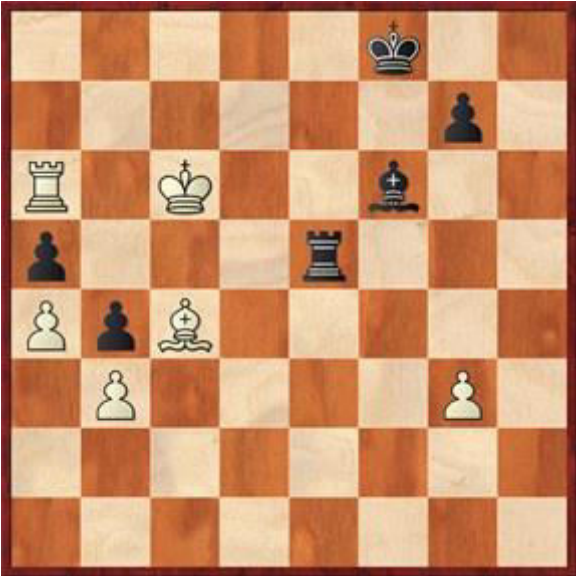
Position after 32.c3xd4. Black to move.

Position 13.



Position after 28...Bb6-a7. White to move.

Position 14.



Position after 58...Re7-e5. White to move.

Position 15.



Position after 32...Rf1-g1. White to move.



## Solutions

**Position 1 is the game Pedersen - Wantiez (7.2).**

White has one pawn more, but is facing a king side attack. The knight at b4 attacks pawn a2 and queen c2 simultaneously. The critical move is 20.bxc4. After

**20.bxc4 Bxc4 21.Bxc4**



Black can win the piece back with

**21...b5.**

Less accurate is 21...Qxb4 22.b3 b5 as white could defend himself with 23.Bd6! Qa5 24.Rd5.

**22.Bd6 Qb7 23.Bc5 bxc4**



The threat is a7-a5.

**24.Rd5 a5**

White has one defence, reducing the number of attackers.

**25.b5! Qxb5 26.Bd4 Qb8 27.Bxg7 Kxg7 28.Qc3+ Kg8 29.Rd7**



with counter play.

In the game white played

**20.Qb3.**



At first sight, it looks that the queen side is adequately defended, but whites threat Qb3xb4 could be defended by

**20...a5!**

Renewing the threat b7-b5. White is in big trouble as he has not the option of Rd1-d5 in the variation of 20.cxb4. We must conclude that 20.Qb3 is an inaccurate move. The position is difficult to defend:

- **21.a4** to prevent b7-b5 will be answered with **21...Ra6!** With threat Ra6-c6.
- **21.Bd6** will be answered with **21...Qh4** with many threats.

**Position 2 is the game Bieluszewski - Helbig (7.3).**

Time for some calculation work. After

**15.Bxd5 cxd5 16.Nxd5 Re8**



The planned move 17.Nc7? will be refuted by the tempo winning move 17...Bf5! Followed by Ra8-c8. This means that 15.Bxd5 is not playable.

**Position 3 is the game Karbowski - Ludden (7.4).**

In this position calculation work is required. White can win material, but what about the weak first rank? After

**24.Ne7+ Kg7 28.Rxd8 Rc1+ 26.Bf1 Bh3**

We arrive at the following position.



Important to note is that the combination is not ended yet!

**27.Rg8+ Kh6 28.Nf5+! Kh5 29.g4+!**

Distracting the bishop at h3 and winning the game.

**Position 4 is the game Onley - Graczyk (7.5).**

Blacks threats are Rd8xd1 and Nf5xg3. White ignored the first one and hopes to get some compensation after

**19.exf5! Rxd1 20.Raxd1 gxf5 21.Rxf5**



Let us have a look at this position. White has a strong square at d6 for the knight. Furthermore, pawn f7 is weak because it can be attacked three times. Note that the black rook has no open files. The conclusion is that white has compensation. The game continued with

21...Qe6 22.Nd6 Rd8 23.Rdf1 Rd7



In this position, white decided to move the knight to f6 with **24.Ne4?** and lost the game after **24...Qc4**. Better is **24.c4**, not releasing the tension, with compensation.

**Position 5 is the game Keough - Pietruszewski (7.8).**

Whites king position is weak: pawn f2, diagonal a1-h1. He could pick up the pawn at e6. The disadvantage is that he will lose the initiative. According to the thumb rules of Steinitz Elements of Chess, this is not advisable. The following moves are not recommended:

- **26.Rxe6?** The move played in the game. **26...Ne4!** After **27.f4?** black exploited another weakness in whites king position with **27...b5**. The threat is Qb8-a7+ and black won the game.
- **26.Bxe6?** **Rxc1 27.Qxc1 Ne4 28.Re2 Qd6** or **28.f4 Qd6**. In both variations black had taken over the initiative and white has to play careful.

We can conclude that white has no time to pick up the pawn at e6, so it is sensible to prevent blacks threat Nf6-e4. This could be done with the following variations, all leading to the same position. White controls the position, not giving black any kind of counter play, and has a better position due to blacks weak pawn e6.

- **26.Bxf6 Rxf6 27.Rxc8+ Qxc8 28.Qd6**
- **26.Rxc8 Qxc8 27.Bxf6 Rxf6 28.Qd6**

**Position 6 is the game Picart - Hansen (7.9).**

White has one rook not in play, Rf1. Bringing this piece to its natural square d1, is a sound move because black cannot take at a4. After

**19.Rfd1 Nxa4?** White wins material with the double attack **20.Nxd5** with threats Nd5-f6+ and Nd5xe7 followed by Bg3-d6. After 19.Rfd1 black has problems to defend pawn d5 as 19...a5 will be answered with 20.Qa6. Black best chance is **20...d4 21.a5 Na4. After 21.Nxa4 Qxa4 22.exd5 Rfe8 23.d5** white controls the position.

**19.a5**, the move played in the game was replied with **19...Na4**. Whites best chance is now **20.Qb5 Qxb5 21.Nxb5 c4 22.Ra1 Nxb2 23.Nxa7** leading to a complicated ending for both sides.

Conclusion: The development move 19.Rfd1 is preferred above 19.a5.

### **Position 7 is the game Gooris - Fichtner (7.10).**

Blacks king side is exposed. After

**31.fxe4**

black has two ways to defend.

- **31...dxe4 32.Rg1! Rb7 33.Rxb7 Qxb7 34.Bd6 Bg6 35.Bf1 Bf6 36.d5** and white gets a passed pawn.
- **31...fxe4 32.Rg1! Bg6 33.c4!** with initiative.

The move played in the game, **31.Bh3**, is an inaccurate move as it allows black to trade an attacking piece with **31...Bh5!** After **32.fxe4 Bf3+ 33.Bg2** (less accurate is 33.Kg1 Bxe4) **33...Bxg2+ 34.Kxg2 fxe4** with chances for both sides.

### **Position 8 is the game HC Andersen - Pos (7.15).**

White has a passed pawn at d6, but it is not dangerous yet because it is well blocked by the bishop at d7. To keep the passed pawn blocked, black can trade the white squared bishop at e4 with

**25...Bc3! 26.Rec1**

The only move. 26.Re2? fails after 26...Bg4 27.Bf3 Bd4+ winning material after 28.Be3 Rf8.

**26...Rxe4 27.Rxc3 Rce8**

In this ending with bishops of different colours, black can hold because white has no invasion squares for his pieces.

### **Position 9 is the game Cheung - Rosenkilde (7.16).**

Black has firm control over the centre squares d5 and d4. For white, it is important to increase the influence over these squares by trading the defenders of these squares with

**14.Nfe5! Bxg2 15.Kxg2**

After

**15...Nxc5 16.Bxc5 Bxc5 17.Qf3**

White has better chances because black has left with a weak bishop. In the game white missed this chance and soon got a passive position.

**Position 10 is the game Christen - Marquardt (7.20).**

Black is a pawn up, but the knight at d1 is in danger of being trapped by Kg1-f1-e2. To prevent this threat, black played

**34...Rd3?**

by attacking pawn e3. This move however, has the disadvantage that the rook at d3 becomes vulnerable. After

**35.Ne5 Rd5 36.Nc4 Rd3 37.Ne5 Rd5**

the game ended in a threefold repetition. There is a better move than 34...Rd3. To prevent Nc4-e5, the preparation move

**34...f6!**

should be played. After

**35.Kf1 Rd3 37.Ke2**

the knight can escape with

**37...Nc3+.**

**Position 11 is the game Kruit - JM Nielsen (7.22).**

The rook at e4 is attacked, but black can better not to take it because it enables white to put a knight at e4, where it controls the squares d6 and f6. At the moment, the black king at e8 could be brought to a safer place, square g7, so a sensible move is

**20...Kf8.**

White has problems to defend pawn d4. It is possible to sacrifice the pawn in return for controlling the centre:

**21.Re1!? Rxd4 22.Nc2 Rd8 23.Qe2 Qc5 24.Reb1**

With pressure at pawn b6. White has some compensation for the pawn.

**Position 12 is the game Tocco - Oblak (7.23).**

White is a pawn up and has a passed pawn at d5, but the rook at d6 seems to be vulnerable. Black can contest the rook with

**32...Te8!**

With threat Bg7-f8. White can defend against this threat by attacking pawn c4 with

**33.Rc1.**

After

**33...Bf8**

White can defend the rook at d6 by distracting the black queen.

**33.a4 Qxa4 35.Rd5**

In the resulting position material is level and both side have chances to win, for example:

**35...Qc6 36.Re5 Rxe5 37.dxe5 Qe6**

With plans to play b6-b5.

**Position 13 is the game Slaidins - Almonti (7.28).**

White should play **29.c4** to contest square c4 and to activate the bishop at b2. Note that this move is possible because the pieces have adequately protected square d4, so that black cannot put a piece at this square. If given the possibility, white can move pawn c4 to c5 to restrict the activity of the black bishop and to contest square d6.

**Position 14 is the game Dusak - Jakovlevs (7.31).**

Endgame with bishops of different colours tends to be drawish. The addition of a rook sometimes changes this evaluation. With a rook, activity of the pieces becomes important. Compare the position with and without rooks. Without rooks, it will be a dead draw. With rooks, we see that the black king is vulnerable. After the forced moves

**59.Ra8+ Ke7 60.Ra7+ Kf8 61.Kd6**





black has no playable moves anymore. To avoid mate (61...Rg5 62.Ra8#) or loss of a piece (61...g6 62.Rf7+) black has to give up pawn a5.

**Position 15 is the game Echavarrria Hidalgo - Demjen (7.32).**

White is one pawn up, but all the white pieces are passive. The black pieces are on active squares and if white does not do anything, blacks active pieces will decide the game. White should try to improve the position of the pieces, whenever possible. The queen at a2 is the least active piece. It can be put at a more active square b3 to contest the black queen. After

**33.Qb3!**

White is planning to play Qb3-a4 challenging to exchange queens. Whites defensive task has become easier, for example:

**33...Rb8 34.Qa4 Qb7 35.b4 Nb6 36.Qb3**

In the game white played

**33.b4?**

This move weakens square c4. After

**33...Rff1 34.Qb3 Nb6**

black got too much activity which decided the game.