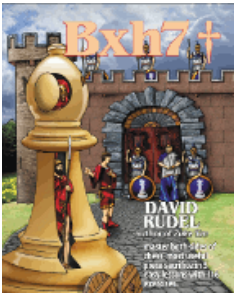




COLUMNISTS

Middlegame Motifs

Nigel Davies



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The Greek Bishop Sacrifice

One of the best known sacrificial themes is the 'Greek Bishop' sacrifice on h7 or h2. For this reason there is a dearth of examples in modern chess, at least at grandmaster level, but as one moves down the rating scale an ever increasing number of players can get caught by it. For this reason it is an essential theme to master.

The aim of this bishop sacrifice is to break open the opposing king position whilst gaining time to follow in with other pieces. When enough preconditions are met (for example, if there are relatively few defenders) it can be immediately decisive, in more complex examples it can lead to less clear positions in which there are attacking chances for the sacrificed material. Sometimes it will not work at all, so sound calculation is required when embarking on this sacrifice.

There are several openings which feature this sacrifice, perhaps the most notable one being the French Defence when Black castles kingside prematurely. A white pawn on e5 can keep Black's knights out of the f6-square, which will deprive him of his main defensive possibility. The attack can be even stronger should White play h2-h4 to support a knight following in to g5.

Another opening which often features this theme is the Colle System, an opening popularised by the Belgian master Edgar Colle. The apparently quiet development with e2-e3 and Bf1-d3 frequently foreshadowed an explosive attack against Black's castled kingside, a classic example being the following game:

Colle, Edgar – O'Hanlon, John

Nice (9), 1930

Colle System [D05]

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.e3

Colle's unpretentious opening system which came to bear his name. It features an unusually large number of Greek Bishop sacrifices on h7 and indeed one of the exercises is also a Colle.

3...c5 4.c3 e6 5.Bd3 Bd6 6.Nbd2 Nbd7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Re1 Re8

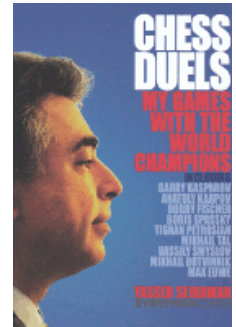
Black wants to expand in the center with ...e6-e5, so White needs to play e3-e4 himself before this happens. Black could also try the immediate 8...e5 after which White should play 9.e4.

9.e4 dxe4

White was threatening e4-e5, forking the knight on f6 and bishop on d6.

10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.Bxe4 cxd4

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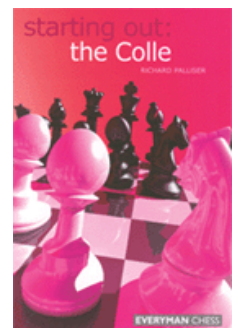
Chess Duels

by Yasser Seirawan



Zuke Em

by David Rudel



Starting Out: The Colle

by Richard Palliser



[FEN "r1bqr1k1/pp1n1ppp/3bp3/8/3pB3/2P2N2/PP3PPP/R1BQR1K1 w - - 0 12"]

Either missing or underestimating White's reply, so Black should have played something else.

11...e5 loses a pawn after 12.dxe5 Nxe5 13.Nxe5 Bxe5 14.Qxd8 Rxd8 15.Be3 Bd6 16.Rad1, threatening 17.Bxc5 amongst other things.

But maybe Black would have done better to play 11...h6 when his kingside looks secure and he's probably not much worse.

12.Bxh7+

A bolt from the blue. The set up White has for this sacrifice seems far from optimal; for example, he would like to have a cramping pawn on e5 that covers the f6-square. Nonetheless, it seems to offer White at least equal play with many ways for Black to go wrong.

12...Kxh7 13.Ng5+ Kg6

Another and perhaps superior possibility was 13...Kg8 when 14.Qh5 Qf6 (14...Ne5 15.Rxe5 Bxe5 16.Qxf7+ Kh8 17.Qh5+ Kg8 18.b3 decisively threatens Bc1-a3 and Qh7+; whilst 14...Bxh2+ 15.Kh1! Qf6 would give White ongoing attacking chances after 16.Qh7+ Kf8 17.Ne4 Qg6 18.Qh8+ Ke7 19.Qxh2 etc.) 15.Qh7+ Kf8 16.Ne4 Qe5 17.cxd4 Qxh2+ 18.Qxh2 Bxh2+ 19.Kxh2 Nf6 the endgame looks about equal. Of course none of this is easy to find over the board and the fact that Black has a defence in no way detracts from Colle's conception.

14.h4 Rh8



[FEN "r1bq3r/pp1n1pp1/3bp1k1/6N1/3p3P/2P5/PP3PP1/R1BQR1K1 w - - 0 15"]

This loses to Colle's brilliant reply. Black's best chance was 14...f5, but then 15.h5+ Kf6 16.Qxd4+ Be5 17.Qh4! leaves Black without a good defence; for example, 17...Qa5 18.h6 Rh8 19.b4 Qc7 20.f4 etc.

15.Rxe6+!! Nf6

After 15...fxe6, there follows 16.Qd3+ Kf6 17.Qf3+ Bf4 18.Qxf4+ Ke7 19.Qf7+ Kd6 20.Qxe6+ Kc7 21.Bf4+ followed by mate.

16.h5+ Kh6 17.Rxd6 Qa5 18.Nxf7+ Kh7 19.Ng5+ Kg8 20.Qb3+ 1-0

This next game is a rare example of the Greek Bishop sacrifice in relatively recent grandmaster chess. Yasser Seirawan probably allowed it with a heavy heart after seeing no other way to meet White's powerful 10.c5!. Yet the outcome is by no means a foregone conclusion and this time it is the defence that triumphs:

Quinteros, Miguel – Seirawan, Yasser

Biel ((izt), 1985

Bogo-Indian [E11]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Bb4+ 4.Bd2 c5

An interesting speciality of Victor Korchnoi, which accepts a weakening of Black's pawn structure in the hope of getting some dark-square control.

5.Bxb4 cxb4 6.Nbd2 0-0 7.e4 d6 8.Bd3 Qc7?!

A much simpler and safer way to play it was via 8...e5 when 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.Nxe5 would be bad for White after 10...Re8 11.f4 Qd4 12.Qe2 Qxb2.

9.0-0 Nbd7?

And this is a clear mistake after which lightning strikes on the kingside. 9...e5 was still the right move.

10.c5! dxc5

It's too late for 10...e5, because White can play 11.cxd6 Qxd6 12.Nc4 hitting both Black's queen and the e5-pawn. Meanwhile, White is threatening cxd6 followed by e4-e5.

11.e5 Nd5



[FEN "r1b2rk1/ppqn1ppp/4p3/2pnP3/1p1P4/3B1N2/PP1N1PPP/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 12"]

12.Bxh7+! Kxh7 13.Ng5+ Kg6

After 13...Kg8, White can play 14.Qh5 N7f6 15.exf6 Nxf6 16.Qh4, recovering the piece whilst keeping dangerous threats against Black's king position.

14.Qg4?!

A typical move for a Greek Bishop sacrifice attack, but maybe not the best in this particular position. 14.Qc2+ f5 (14...Kxg5 gets into a mating net after 15.Qh7!; for example, 15...cxd4 16.f4+ Nxf4 17.Ne4+ Kg4 18.Nf2+ Kg5 19.h4#) 15.exf6+ Kxf6 16.Qh7 Qf4 17.Nde4+ Ke7 18.Qxg7+ Rf7 19.Nxf7 Qxf7 20.Qg5+ and White is clearly better because he has recovered the material and has ongoing pressure against Black's king.

14...f5

There is an interesting alternative in 14...N7f6, but it still looks good for

White after 15.Qh4 (15.exf6 is well met by 15...Qf4!) 15...Bd7 16.Ndf3 Bc6 17.exf6 Rh8 18.Qe4+ Kxf6 19.g3 stopping 19...Qf4 and thus keeping White's attacking chances.

15.Qg3 f4 16.Qh3?

Missing the right way. After 16.Qg4 N7f6 17.exf6 Nxf6 18.Nxe6+ Nxg4 19.Nxc7 Rb8 20.dxc5, White is just a pawn up in the endgame whereas now he should be struggling.

16...N7f6

And not 16...Kxg5? because of 17.Qh7! with a mating net.

17.Nde4 cxd4?!



[FEN "r1b2r2/ppq3p1/4pnk1/3nP1N1/1p1pNp2/7Q/PP3PPP/R4RK1 w - - 0 18"]

[It seems that 17...Qe7 was a better defence; for example, 18.exf6 gxf6 19.Nf3 e5! 20.Nh4+ Kg7 21.Qb3 f5 22.Nxc5 (22.Qxd5 fxe4 is just good for Black) 22...Rd8 23.Qh3 exd4 24.Nxf5+ Bxf5 25.Qxf5 Qxc5 26.Qg5+ is a draw by perpetual check and nothing more.

18.exf6 Nxf6 19.Nxf6 gxf6 20.Nxe6 Bxe6 21.Qxe6 Qe5 22.Qg4+

22.Qb3 Rfd8 23.Qxb4 d3 would see Black take the initiative.

22...Qg5 23.Qf3 Rad8 24.Rad1 Qf5 25.Rd3

25.Qxb7 d3 26.Rd2 wasn't out of the question here either.

25...Rd5



[FEN "5r2/pp6/5pk1/3r1q2/1p1p1p2/3R1Q2/PP3PPP/5RK1 w - - 0 26"]

26.Rfd1?!

26.Qe2 is better intending 27.Qd2 and 28.Rfd1. With the need to protect his d- and f-pawns I don't see Black winning this.

26...Re8 27.h4?!

This looks like a new weakness. Just 27.h3 would have been better.

27...Re4 28.R3d2 a5 29.Rd3 Qe6 30.Qh3?

It seems that time trouble might have been taking its toll. The endgame is very bad for White.

30...Qxh3 31.gxh3

31.Rxh3 Re2 is also very good for Black.

31...Re2 32.h5+ Kxh5 33.R1d2 f3! 34.Rxd4 Rg5+ 0-1

Exercises (solutions next month)



[FEN "r2r2k1/ppqbbppp/4pn2/4N1B1/8/3B4/PPP1QPPP/3R1RK1 w - - 0 16"]

Here's another position from Colle's practice. What did White do in this position?



[FEN "r4rk1/3bnppp/1p2p3/p2pP3/Pn1P4/B1qB1N2/2P2PPP/RQR3K1 w - - 0 16"]

White to play appears to have his pieces on the wrong side of the board for any kingside action, but nonetheless manages to pull it off. How exactly did he do this?

Solutions to last month's exercises

Csom, Istvan – Ribli, Zoltan
Hungarian Ch Budapest, 1969



[FEN "r3r1k1/3q1pbp/p2P2p1/lp6/2p5/2P2Q2/P4PPP/3RRNK1 w - - 0 25"]

This position arose in the 1969 Hungarian Championship. How did White to play use his passed pawn to secure victory?

25.Re7! Qf5 After 25...Rxe7, there follows 26.dxe7 Qe8 27.Qxa8! Qxa8 28.Rd8+ etc. **26.d7 1-0** After 26...Red8 27.Qxa8 Rxa8 28.Re8+, White wins easily.

Ortueta Esteban, Martin – Sanz Aguado, Jose
Madrid, 1934



[FEN "8/pR4pk/lb2p3/2p3p1/N1p5/7P/PP1r2P1/6K1 b - - 0 31"]

This position provides a graphic illustration of the strength of passed pawns. How did Black pull off a spectacular win?

31...Rxb2!! 32.Nxb2 c3 33.Rxb6! After 33.Nd3, Black wins with 33...c4+ 34.Kf1 cxd3 35.Ke1 c2 36.Kd2 Be3+ etc. **33...c4!!** 33...axb6 34.Nd3 stops the c-pawn. **34.Rb4 a5! 35.Nxc4** Or 35.Rxc4 cxb2, when the pawn queens. **35...c2 0-1**

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