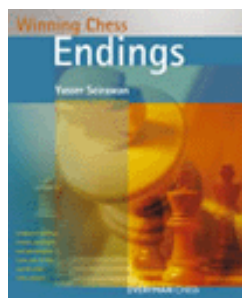


Inside Chess

Yasser Seirawan



Winning Chess Endings
by Yasser Seirawan

Yasser Annotates:

Short - Gelfand, Brussels cm (5) 1991

Nigel Short-Boris Gelfand

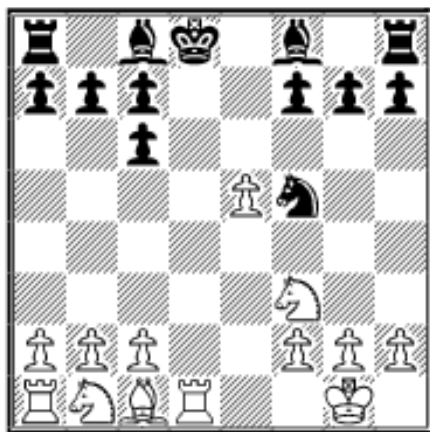
Brussels cm (5) 1991

Ruy Lopez Berlin Defense [C67]

1.e4 e5

A surprise. Gelfand falls back on his second line of defense. Trailing by a point, it would seem that the Sicilian is better for a comeback.

2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.O-O Nxe4 5.d4 Nd6 6.Bxc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 Nf5 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 9.Rd1+



For some reason many GMs have Black's position as a part of their repertoire. Why? It's bad. White's better structure, lead in development, and kingside play make White an easy choice.

9...Ke8 10.Nc3 Be6 11.h3

A prelude to kingside action with g2-g4. Another good plan for White is to fianchetto the bishop with 11.b3 and

Bc1-b2 before working on the kingside.

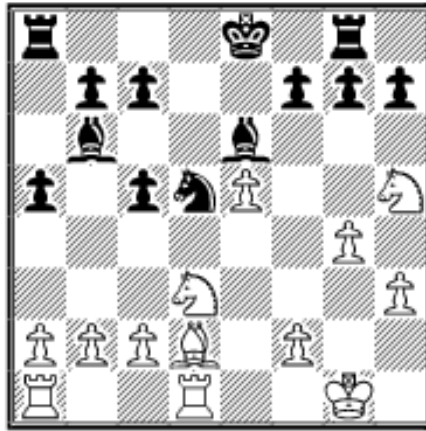
11...Bb4 12.Bd2 a5 13.Ne2 Bc5 14.Nf4 Bd5 15.Ne1 Bb6 16.g4 Ne7 17.Bc3

The position is remarkably deceptive. Black's bishops are impressively placed, yet it is White who has all the play. Given that nothing happens on the queenside, White will make serious inroads on the kingside.

17...Be6 18.Nh5!

White, with a spatial advantage, wants to keep as many pieces on the board as possible. Black threatened ...Ne7-d5, forcing exchanges.

18...Rg8 19.Nd3 Nd5 20.Bd2 c5!



A principled counter-reaction. Once again, White's kingside initiative is easy to spot, Kg1-g2, Rd1-e1, f2-f4. Black is reluctant to weaken his dark squares by 20...g6 because of 21.Ng3, intending Ng3-e4 and Bd2-g5 with a powerful grip. The text is a natural way to change the theater of operations to the queenside. The drawback is that Black blocks his bishops.

21.Ndf4!

Side-stepping Black's threat of ...c5-c4 and ...Bb6-d4. If 21.c4!?, then 21...Nb4 22.Bxb4 cxb5 23.c5 Ba7 24.b3 gives rise to an unusual position. Since trades are unavoidable, White agrees on his own terms. He doesn't want to alter Black's queenside pawn structure.

21...Nb4

Black is probing for queenside weaknesses.

22.c3 Nc6 23.Re1 a4?!

This seems too slow, better was 23...Rd8 24.Nxe6 fxe6 25.Bg5 Rd3 with a measure of counter-play.

24.Re4!

A particularly effective *building* move. White hits the a4-pawn, reinforces the center, and paves the way for Ra1-e1. Black has to counter quickly.

24...c4!

Opening the bishop's diagonal and threatening a4-a3.

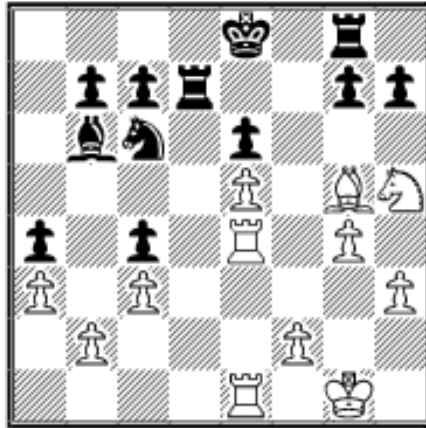
25.a3! Rd8!

The point of Black's play. Without this move, Black's position is hopeless, White's bishop makes a compelling target.

26.Nxe6 fxe6?

After this Black's queenside and kingside are targets for White's pieces. Black had to continue his strategy begun with 20...c5 by 26...Rxd2 27. Nxe7+ Kf8 28.Nf5 Rxf2 29.Kh1 Rxb2 30.Nf6 Rh8!? 31.Rd1! White pieces are poised for a decisive attack, but Black has a measure of activity. After the text Black falls into a passive position.

27.Bg5 Rd7 28.Rae1



White's position is dominating: the queenside has been shut down, whereas White has a lot of opportunities on the kingside. The game is strategically won.

28...Na5 29.R1e2?! Rf8 30.Kg2! h6?!

Black's position is lost, but this last allows a small combination to wrap things up. 30...c6 and ...Bb6-d8 had to be tried.

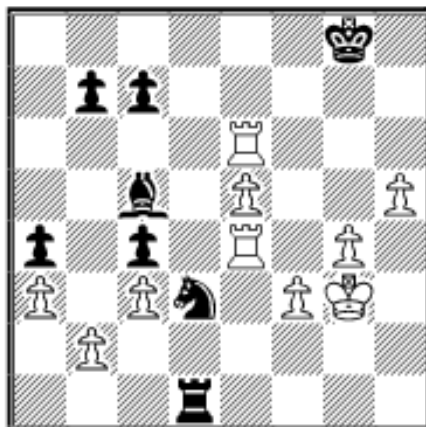
31.Nxe7+!

Tearing away Black's kingside blockaders. White's pawns will march triumphantly up the board. Black's minors play no role.

31...Rxe7 32.Bxe7 Rg7!? 33.Bxf8 Kxf8 34.h4 Bc5 35.Kg3 Rd7 36.h5 Rd3+ 37.f3 Rd1 38.Rf4+

Not entirely necessary. Continuing the roll by 38.g5! Kg8! 39.Rh4 Be7 40.f4 Nb3 41.Rhh2 Nc5 42.h6 is easier.

38...Kg8 39.Rf6 Nb3 40.Rxe6 Nc1 41.Re4 Nd3



42.Kh4!

This clinches it. White's king not only springs to safety, but aids in a mating attack.

42...Nxb2

Black has fewer chances after 42...Rf1 43.Rg6+! Kh7 44.Rf6! Be7 45.g5 Bxf6 and now 46.exf6 or 46.gxf6 wins easily.

43.Kg5 Rd8 44.Rg6+ Kh8 45.Rf6 Bxa3!

Black's only chance is his a-pawn, but White's four (!) connected passed pawns are too much.

46.Rf7 Nd1 47.Rd4

Forcing an exchange of rooks cements the victory. Black's cornered king will soon be hunted down.

47...Rxd4

Otherwise 47...Rg8+ 48.Kh6! Bf8+ (48...Bc1+ 49.f4 Rxc4 50.Rd8+ Rg8 51. Rh7 mate) 49.Rxf8 Rxf8 50.Rxd1 wins.

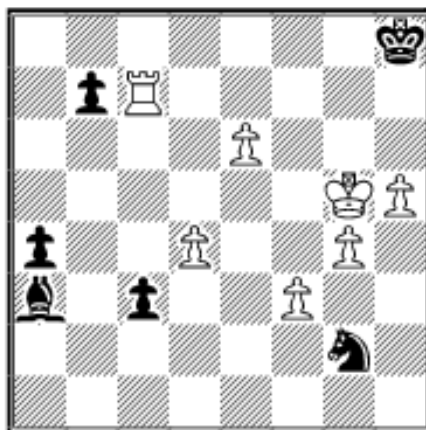
48.cxd4 Ne3 49.Rd7

Setting up Kg5-g6 and Rd7-d8 mate.

49...Ng2 50.e6

There was a trick after 50.Kf6 Nf4 51.h6 c3 52.g5 c2 53.g6 Be7+!

50...c3 51.Rxc7



Surely, Dr. Minev, this is a new record! How often has one side had five connected passers and the other side three? White is, of course, winning.

51...b5 52.Rxc3 Be7+ 53.Kg6 Nf4+ 54.Kf7 Nd5

Black's defense has been stellar, he's avoided mate and blockaded the more dangerous enemy pawns, while gaining his own passers on the queenside. It's still not enough, a complicating factor is time trouble. Both players were down to a few minutes before time control.

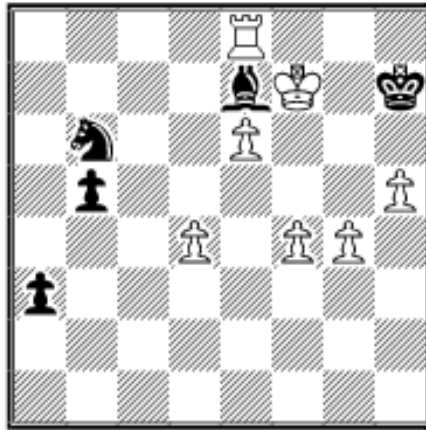
55.Rc8+

Also easy was 50.g5! Bxg5 (50...Nxc3 51.g6 Bf6 52.e7) 51.Rc5 a3 52.Rxb5 a2 53.Ra5, winning.

55...Kh7 56.Ra8?

Wasting a move. Best was 56.f4 a3 57.g5 or 56.f4 Nxf4 57.Kxe7 and wins. Both players were now visibly agitated by the rising flags.

56...a3 57.f4! Nb6 58.Re8??



Nigel was stunned to realize that Black's 57...Nb6 introduced the possibility of ...Nb6-a4, allowing the a-pawn to run home. He therefore lashed out with 58.Re8, completely forgetting that f3-f4 introduces g4-g5 and mate! After 58.g5! Nxa8 59.g6+ Kh6 60.g7 Black would have to give up.

58...Nc4??

Played without a second thought!

After 58...a2! a draw is secured! White has nothing better than 59.Rg8 a1Q 60.Rg7+ with a perpetual. If 58...a2 59.g5? Bxg5 60.fxg5 a1Q 61.g6+ Kh6 62.Rh8+ Kg5 63.g7 Qf1+, a draw is likely after 64.Ke8 Qh5+ 65.Kd8 Qd5+ 66.Kc7 Qc4+ 67.Kb7 Qd5+ etc. After this *Zeitnot* mistake victory is reassured for White.

59.Kxe7 b4 60.g5 Kg7 61.f5 1-0

A dramatic game that was instrumental in deciding the match! Nigel deserved this victory. He played well and was in control throughout. The errors at the end marred an otherwise impressive victory.

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