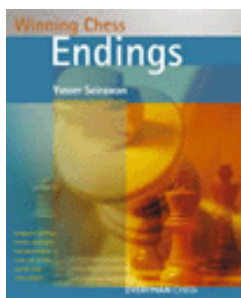


Inside Chess

Yasser Seirawan



Winning Chess Endings
by Yasser Seirawan

Yasser Annotates:

Topalov - Seirawan, Biel (1) 1993

Veselin Topalov-Yasser Seirawan

Biel (1) 1993

English [A25]

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.e3 d6 6.Rb1

It's nice to play against such moves. For years I've been playing this myself with an intended b2-b4-b5, and wins. I used to play this idea so regularly that Anatoly Lein was once moved to complain, "Rb1, b4, b5 and they call him a genius!"

6...f5 7.d3 Nf6 8.Nge2 O-O 9.O-O Ne7!



In order to take the sting out of b2-b4-b5. Black entertains two ideas, ...g6-g5 and ...Ne7-g6 or ...c7-c6 and ...d6-d5.

10.f4

In order to stop Black's first idea.

10...c6 11.b3!?

My first victory! If White commits to Ra1-b1 and fails to play b2-b4 then he

just loses a tempo.

11...Be6 12.h3 Qc7?!

I was attracted to this move because I envisioned a variation with ...h7-h5-h4 when White has put his king on g2. Nevertheless, it was better to play 12...Qd7 in order to stop e2-e4.

13.e4

We have now reached a fairly standard position in the English. White's strategy is to limit the role of the e7-knight.

13...h5!?

Considerably sharpening the game. White has to react quickly, else ...h5-h4 will give the initiative to Black. In the post-mortem, Topalov suggested 13...Rad8! 14.Be3 b6 as being better for Black.

14.Be3 h4 15.c5 Nh5



Cracking the whip against the g3-pawn. The game continuation is forced.

16.cxd6 Qxd6 17.d4

Certainly not 17.fxe5? Bxe5 18.gxh4? f4 wins.

17...exd4 18.e5 Qd7 19.Bxd4 Nxg3

A pleasing follow-through on my plan.

20.Nxg3 hxg3 21.Bc5!

Fighting back. Clearly White can't allow ...g6-g5 and ...Ne7-g6.

21...Qxd1?

Giving up the advantage. Better was 21...Rfd8! 22.Qf3 Nd5 23.Qxg3 Nxc3 24.Qxc3 Bf8 when Black has a small advantage. I thought the endgame promised a clear advantage because of the pawn structure.

22.Rbxd1 Kf7 23.Rd3 Rfd8 24.Rxg3 Bf8?!

This allows White to favorably reposition his knight. Better was 24...Rd2 25.Rf2 (25.Bxe7? Kxe7 26.Rxg6 Kf7 27.Rg3 Bf8 is good for Black) 25...Rxf2 26.Kxf2 Rd8! with a rough balance.

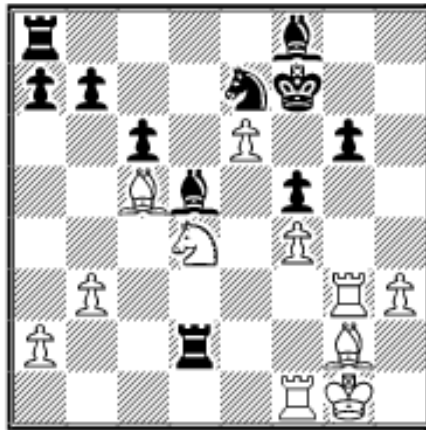
25.Ne2!

Well-played. White is planning the journey Ne2-d4-f3-g5 with killing effect.

25...Rd2!

Embarking on a carefully calculated exchange sacrifice.

26.Nd4 Bd5 27.e6+



Topalov didn't have a lot of faith in this pawn push, but he has to go forward, else the pawn formation will give me the advantage.

27...Bxe6

Topalov suggested 27...Kf6 28.Bd6 Rxd4 29.Be5+ Kxe6 30.Bxd4 Bxg2 31.Kxg2 Kf7 as equal.

28.Nf3 Rad8

Avoiding 28...Re2?? 29.Ng5+ Kg8 30.Bf3 wins.

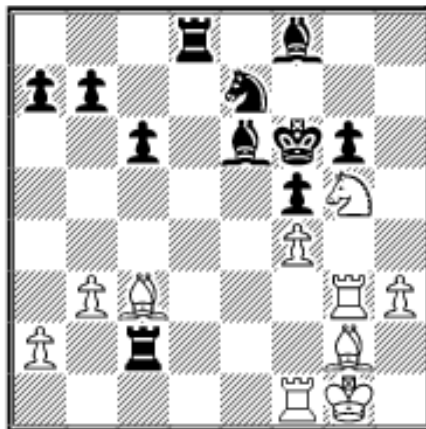
29.Ng5+

Also, 29.Nxd2 Rxd2 30.Rf2 Rd1+ 31.Rf1 Rd2 is equal.

29...Kf6 30.Bb4 Rc2

If 30.Re1 Rd1 31.Re3 Rxe1+ 32.Rxe1 Bg8 is good for Black.

31.Bc3+?



Misjudging the resulting ending. White should play 31.Nh7+! Kf7 32.Ng5+ and grab the perpetual check.

31...Rxc3 32.Rxc3 Bg8!

The game has shifted dramatically. Black has a pawn for the exchange, but more importantly it is White's pawns that are weak. The bishops will soon take over.

33.Rc2 Nd5 34.Bxd5

In view of ...Bf8-d6, this exchange is unavoidable.

34...Rxd5 35.Re2 Bc5+ 36.Kh2 Rd4 37.Kg3

In mutual time trouble, White now offered a draw. Too late!

37...Bd5 38.Nh7+ Kg7 39.Ng5 Kf6 40.Nh7+ Kg7 41.Ng5 Rd3+ 42.Kh4 Kh6

Better was 42...a5! when White quickly runs out of moves.

43.b4 Be3 44.a4 a6! 45.Rb2 Bd4 46.Re2 Bf6

Now it's game over. White's king and knight can't move. If the Re2 leaves the second rank, e.g., 47.Re8 Bg2 wins. If 47.Rff2 Rd4 48.Kg3 Rxb4 wins.

47.Rfe1 Rf3 0-1



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