



COLUMNISTS

Inside Chess

Yasser Seirawan



Winning Chess Combinations
by Yasser Seirawan



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Yasser Annotates:

Morovic - Seirawan, Novi Sad 1990

Ivan Morovic (2530) - Yasser Seirawan (2635)

Olympiad, Novi Sad (4) 1990

Pirc Defense [B08]

I first met Chilean GM Ivan Morovic at the World Junior Championship in Graz in 1978 and again at Skien in 1979. This talented player has never had the opportunities of his European colleagues, but he has a reputation as a tough man to beat.

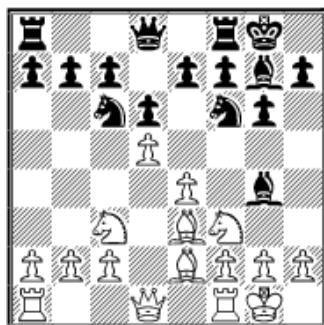
1.d4 d6 2.e4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Be2 0-0

It's a good idea to castle early in team events.

6.0-0

Now both team captains were happy.

6...Bg4 7.Be3 Nc6 8.d5!



It's an open secret that this line is a pain-in-the-neck for Black. White gains space along with the two bishops and has easy strategical play. A difficult time against GM Patrick Wolff in the 1990 N.Y. Open convinced me that White's treatment contains plenty of venom.

8...Bxf3 9.Bxf3 Ne5 10.Be2 c6 11.a4! a5!

Against Wolff I misplaced my queen with 11... Qa5?.

12.f4

A sensible move, but, since Black intends ...Ne5-d7 anyway, it may not be best.

12...Ned7 13.Bf3

White has gotten the position he wants. If he can force ...cxd5, exd5, Black's d6-pawn becomes a primary target. Active play for Black is difficult to find. One reason is that the knight on f6 does nothing.

13...Nb6! 14.Qe2

In terms of White's long-term plan to pressure the e7-pawn, this is an entirely acceptable move. It does give me some comfort to know that Qd1-e1-h4 isn't coming. White also correctly rejects 14.dxc6? bxc6 15.e5 Nfd5 16.Nxd5 Nxd5 17.Bxd5 exd5 18.Qxd5 (18.Bd4 e6 is equal) 18...dxe5, which is fine for Black.

14...Nfd7!

The point. Black liberates his bishop while intending to nibble away at White's center with moves like ...f7-f5 or ...e7-e6. White has posted his pieces well; Black's still have some scope for improvement.

15.Kh1

A waiting move that is a natural consequence of 12.f4.

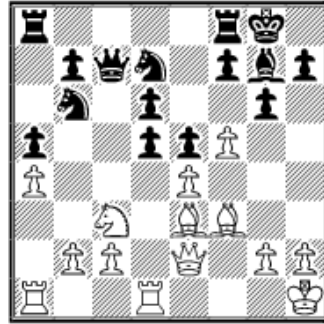
15...Qc7 16.Rfd1 e5?

Mistiming my break. I didn't like the idea of 16...e6; an exchange of e-pawns by ... exd5, exd5 is no major achievement. Grabbing a pawn by 16...Bxc3? 17.bxc3 exd5 18. exd5 Qxc3 19.Bd4 is suicidal. Such ideas as ...Bg7xc3 are valid, but only if the follow-up ...Nb6xa4 is possible. This is why White played 16.Rfd1 and not 16.Rad1. Black's best move now was ...Rae8, preparing ...e7-e5. In that case the position is equal.

17.f5!

"Only" moves are strong moves too! After 17.dxe6? fxe6 18.Qd3 d5, Black has an excellent game. Black's strategic threat of ...e5xf4, and ...Nd7-e5 cannot be allowed. However, White is threatening to squash Black flat with g2-g4, when Black has no play.

17...cxd5



18.Bxb6!?

Morovic plays a continuation that tears away at my king. As promising as his idea appears, it isn't best. White should steer clear of a sharp tactical battle and play for clear strategic waters by 18.Nxd5! Nxd5 19.Rxd5 Nf6 20. Rd2! gxf5 21.exf5 e4 22.Bg4 d5 23.Bd4 with an excellent position for White. I can't give Morovic a dubious mark for his move, who can fault him?

18...Qxb6

After 18...Nxb6? 19.Nxd5 Nxd5 20.Rxd5, Black's game is plainly miserable.

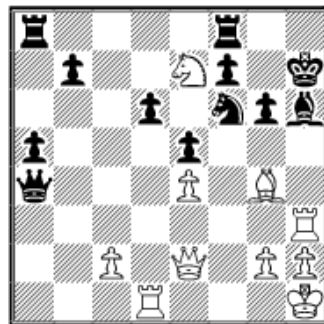
19.Nxd5 Qxb2

When playing this move, I felt like I was on a roller-coaster. The experience is exhilarating, if only because you feel you might die at any moment!

20.fxg6 hxg6 21.Rab1 Qa3 22.Bg4 Nf6 23.Rb3 Qxa4 24.Ne7+ Kh7

For the last few moves, everything for Black has been forced. The text is no exception. If 24...Kh8 25.Rh3+ Nh7 26.Bf5! Bf6 27.Nxg6+ fxg6 28.Rxh7+ Kxh7 29.Qh5+ Kg8 30. Qxg6+ Bg7 31.Be6+ is curtains for me. It was this variation that inspired Morovic to play 18.Bxb6 – he smelled blood!

25.Rh3+ Bh6



Surely Black can't survive, right? But how to finish him? Consider White's candidate moves. Which would you choose? I sweated out 26.Rxh6+, 26.Bf5, 26.Nf5, 26.Rf1, and 26. Rxd6.

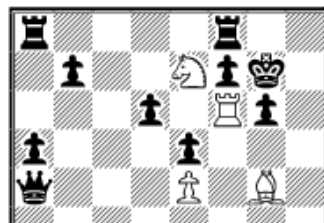
Space being at a premium, I rejected 26.Rxd6 Nxg4! 27.Qxg4 Rad8 28.Rxh6+ Kxh6 29.Nf5 + Kh7 30.Qh4+ Kg8 31.Rxd8 Qa1+ – surprise!

While 26.Bf5 Kg7 27.Rxh6 (27.Rg3 Bf4) 27... Kxh6 28.Qe3+ Kg7 29.Qg5 Nh7 30.Qg3 Qe8!

holds everything together.

A scary line was 26.Rf1 Kg7 27.Rxh6 Nxg4 28.Qxg4 Kxh6 29.Qh4+ Kg7 30.Qf6+ Kh7 31.Nf5 gxf5 32.Qxf5+ which looked bad for me, while 29.h3 (intending Rf1xf7) 29... Qc4 30.Rf6 Kg7 31.Rxg6+ is a take out.

Happily for me, 27...Nxg4 is not forced. After 26.Rf1 Kg7 27.Rxh6 Kxh6! 28.Rxf6 Kg7:



This position is far from clear. White has won two pieces for a rook, but Black does have a dangerous a-pawn: 29.Rf1 Qe8 30.Nd5 Qd8 and Black is still kicking.

In all of these lines, the white bishop on g4 is



an impotent spectator. Morovic chooses a line that brings the bishop into play.

26.Nf5 gxf5 27.Bxf5+ Kg7 28.Rxh6?

Continuing to chase an elusive win. With 28. Rg3+! Kh8 29.Rh3 Kg7 (29...Ng8? 30.Rxh6+ Nxh6 31.Qh5 wins.) 30.Rg3+, the game ends in a perpetual check.

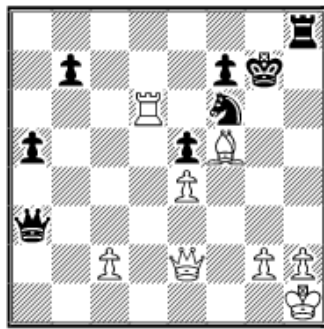
28...Rh8!

Of course the rook is taboo: 28...Kxh6 29.Qe3+ Kh5 (29...Kg7 30.Qg5) 30.g4+ Nxg4 31.Qh3+ Kg5 32.Qxg4+ Kf6 33.Qh4+ and mates next move.

29.Rxh8 Rxh8 30.Rxd6

White has won back his sacrificed material, but the situation has completely changed. Black's king is safe and he has the better minor pieces and a passed a-pawn. Now it is Black's turn to attack!

30...Qa3!



Suddenly White's king is in danger. If 31.Rd1 Qg3 32.Bh3 Qg6 33.Bf5 Qh5 34.g4 Qg5 is excellent for Black.

31.Rd3 Qe1+ 32.Rd1

White must avoid exchanging queens as Black's a-pawn is too dangerous. White's bishop remains a spectator.

32...Qg5 33.Kg1!? a4! 34.Qf3 b5

Intending ...b5-b4, ...a4-a3. White's queen is forced to blockade.

35.Qc3 Qf4

Falling prey to my old weakness of grabbing pawns. Morovic was more worried about 35...b4!? 36.Qxe5 (36.Qxb4 Qe3+ 37.Kh1 Qf4 38.h3 Nh5 is dangerous for White.) 36...Qe3+ 37.Kh1 a3, when Black's a-pawn is all set for a coronation.

36.h3!

Morovic reached for his g-pawn, but realized just in time that 36.g3? Nxe4 ends the game.

36...Nxe4 37.Bxe4 Qxe4 38.Qg3+!

The point. Black's king still lacks protection.

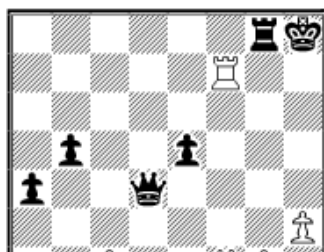
38...Kh7 39.Rf1!

Despite time trouble, both players continue to find the best moves.

39...Rg8!

Forcing what I believed to be a winning rook and pawn ending. In any case, Black has little choice. If 39...f5? 40.Qg5 Rg8 41.Qh5+ Kg7 42.Rxf5. Or 39...Rf8 40.Rf6 forces 40...Rg8 anyway.

40.Rxf7+ Kh8 41.Qf2 Qd4



Now I happily looked upon my a-pawn, anticipating its promotion. My favorite line was 42.Rb7? Rc8! 43.Rxb5 Rxc2 44.Qxd4 exd4, when one pawn will make a touchdown. My opponent, realizing his troubles, finds a fantastic defensive resource.



42.c3!! Qxf2+ 43.Kxf2! Ra8 44.Ke3 a3 45.
Rf1 a2 46.Ra1 Kg7 47.g4! Kf6 48.h4 Ra4 49.
Kf3 Kg6 50.Ke3!

A big mistake is 50.Kg3? Ra3 forcing White's
king to the passive second rank. Now 50...

Rxg4 51.Rxa2 is a trivial draw.

50...Kf6 51.Kf3 Ra3 52.Ke4! Ke6 53.h5!

To draw the game White has to trade his kingside pawns for Black's a-pawn.

53...Ra4+ 54.Kf3 Kf6 55.h6 Kg6 56.g5 Kxg5 57.h7 Rh4 58.Rxa2 Rxh7 59.Ke4 Rc7
½-½

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