



COLUMNISTS

Inside Chess

Yasser Seirawan



Winning Chess Combinations

by Yasser Seirawan



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Yasser Annotates:

Portisch - Timman, Candidates Semifinals 1989

Lajos Portisch (2610) - Jan Timman (2610)

Candidates Match (5) 1989

Modern Defense [A41]

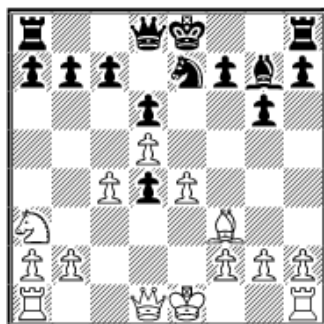
1.Nf3 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.c4 Bg4 5.Be2 Nc6 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 Bxf3 8.Bxf3 Nd4

I'm very familiar with this variation; I used to play it as Black and felt it to be a good equalizer.

9.Bxd4 exd4 10.Na3

A concession. The knight isn't well placed on the rim.

10...Ne7?!



Imprecise at best. I prefer the immediate 10...c5! Black could then prepare the maneuver ...Ng8-h6 and ...f7-f5. In all likelihood the queenside would become as blocked as the center, after which both players would conduct operations on the kingside. The knight is OK on e7, but clearly there are better outposts. With ...Ng8-e7, Black will be playing for ...g6-g5 and ...Ne7-g6. The opposite-colored bishops make the game a probable draw.

11.0-0 c6?

A lousy move that just loses a valuable tempo since the pawn will soon be pushed to c5. Better was 11...c5 or 11...0-0.

12.Rb1! 0-0 13.Nc2 c5

With the benefit of hindsight it's easy to suggest 13...Qb6, intending ...a7-a5, and, if possible, ...c6-c5, trying to exchange the pawns on the queenside. The key strategic aim in the position revolves around the exchange of White's b-pawn for the black d6-pawn. White plans to do this by b2-b4xc5, forcing ...dxc5.

The resulting position would allow White a central pawn roller with f2-f4 and e4-e5. Black can counter White's plan in two ways: play ...b7-b6 and trade b-pawns, or allow ...d6xc5 and hold up White's center pawns with ...g6-g5 and ...Ne7-g6. This second plan is quite risky and is a consideration only because of the tempo Black threw away on move eleven.

14.b4 Nc8?

Clearly, Jan doesn't know what he's doing. The text does nothing to prevent White from realizing his plans, after which the position will be winning for him. In Black's defense, the text move doesn't lose at once. If 15.bxc5 dxc5 16.Rxb7? Nd6, Black wins back his pawn.

15.Qd3 Qc7?

Black is drifting right into the rocks. Imperative is 15...b6 with an edge for White.

16.Be2 Re8? 17.bxc5 dxc5 18.f4!



Black has been outplayed. The position is nearly decisive. White threatens e4-e5, Be2-f3, and d4-d5. The position plays itself. Black's

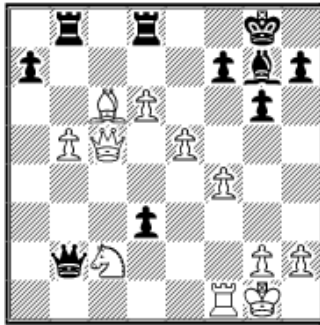


reactions are made in desperation.

18...b5 19.Rxb5 Nd6 20.e5 Nxb5 21.cxb5 Qa5

White has a winning position. The reflexive move in the position is 22.Qc4, cementing the upcoming victory. I was surprised by Portisch's next move – a completely unnecessary pawn sacrifice.

22.d6?! Qxa2 23.Qc4! Qb2 24.Bf3 Rab8 25.Bc6 Red8 26.Qxc5 d3



White has total positional domination. All that is left is to round up the little fella on d3. The simplest way to do this is 27.Nd4, intending Rf1-d1 and Qc5-c4. If the pawn goes to d2, then a Nd4-f3 lassos the pawn for sure. Once Black's d-pawn is removed, the a-pawn is next.

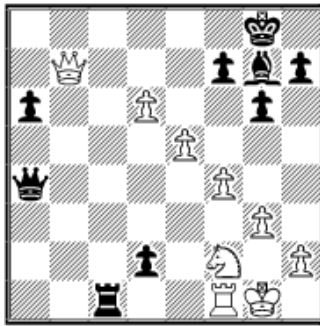
27.Nb4?

The knight goes the wrong way. This means the loss of several tempi, but who cares – White has everything under control.

27...d2 28.Nd3 Qb3! 29.Nf2 Qa4! 30.g3 a6!

Black's only chance is to try and support his d-pawn – even if that means giving back the exchange.

31.b6 Rdc8 32.b7 Rxc6 33.Qa7 Rxb7 34.Qxb7 Rc1



Now comes another inexplicable mistake.

35.Qf3??

More natural seems 35.Qd5! with the double threat of 36.Qxd2 and 36.d7. Forced is 35... Qa1 36.Qd3 (36.d7 is a draw by 36...Rxf1+ 37.Kg2 Rxf2+ 38.Kxf2 Qe1+ 39.Kg2 Qe2+ =) 36...Rxf1+ 37.Qxf1 Qd4 38.Qd1 Bf8 39.Kf1, intending to waltz over and grab the pawn, e.g., 39...Qc4+ 40.Kg2 Qd5+ 41.Qf3 Qd4 42.Nd1 a5 43.Qe3 Qd5+ 44.Kf2 a4 44.Ke2, winning. This analysis may be flawed and

Black might be able to draw the ending – but after White's text move, Black has winning chances!

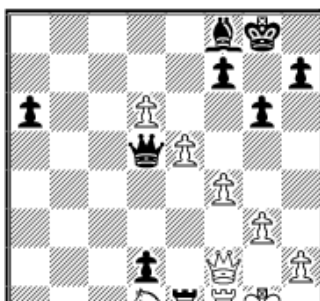
35...Qd4!

Suddenly the game is in doubt. White's d-pawn is blocked and currently stands on shaky ground, as it can be undermined by ...f7-f6. White should start thinking about drawing the game.

36.Kg2 Re1 37.Nd1

Perhaps White should sacrifice a piece by 37.Qa8+ Bf8 38.Qxa6 Rxf1 39.Kxf1 d1=Q+ 40.Nxd1, with practical chances. But in time trouble, it is difficult to make such a decision.

37...Bf8 38.Qf2 Qd5+ 39.Kg1



If 39.Qf3, then ...Qxf3+ wins for Black.

39.Rxf1+ 40.Kxf1 f6 41.exf6 Bxd6

White has made a disaster of his once-proud position. The position is an easy win for Black.

42.Qe3 Kf7 43.Ke2 Bc5 44.Qc3



White can choose his poison. After 44.Qxd2 Qe4+ 45.Kf1 (Upon 45.Ne3 Qxe3+, the king and pawn ending is an easy win.) 45...Qh1+ 46.Ke2 Qxh2+ 47.Kd3 Qxd2+, Black wins the

minor piece ending.

44...Qe4+ 45.Kf1 Qh1+ 46.Ke2 Qxh2+ 47.Kf3 Qh1+ 0-1

A horrible defeat that cost Lajos the match. Game 6, the one that won the match for Jan, almost seemed an afterthought.

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