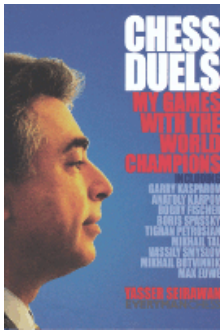




COLUMNISTS

Inside Chess

Yasser Seirawan



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Inside Chess, 1988/5

Seirawan - Speelman, St. John 1988, Game Four

In a short match of six games, down by two points, you start to get desperate. Strangely enough though, I still felt good about my chances. Certainly things had gone wrong. Lightning had struck twice already. Now it would be his turn. John Donaldson and I had done some deep preparation on a topical line in the Queen's Gambit Accepted, and I came to Game Four with a confident gait.

Seirawan, Yasser (2595) – Speelman, Jonathan (2625)

Candidates Match, Saint John (4), 1988

Queen's Gambit Accepted [D20]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 Nf6 4.e5 Nd5 5.Bxc4 Nb6 6.Bb3 Nc6 7.Nf3 Bg4 8.
Bxf7+ Kxf7 9.Ng5+ Ke8 10.Qxg4 Qxd4 11.Qe2 Qxe5 12.Be3 Nd5 13.Nf3
Qf5 14.O-O Rd8 15.Nc3 e6 16.Rfe1 Be7 17.Bd2 Nxc3



[FEN "3rk2r/ppp1b1pp/2n1p3/5q2/8/
2n2N2/PP1BQPPP/R3R1K1 w - - 0 18"]

Alburt played 18.Bxc3 against Gulko at the U.S. Open, 1986. I now planned to follow suit. In that game White won after Black missed a nice *zwischenzug*.

But while contemplating my intended recapture, I had a horrible sinking feeling that things were not so kosher. After 18.Bxc3 Kf7 19.Qc4 Bf6 20.Re3 Rd5, I just couldn't bring myself to believe that Black is worse.

So I searched for something else. Unfortunately, I found it – a real error in calculation. Yet another howler.

18.bxc3?? Rd6!

Black is now prepared to run to the queenside with ...Kd7-c8.

19.Rab1 (1:09) b6 (:58) 20.Rb5 Qd3

All goes well, according to the plan I formulated on move eighteen. Too bad my plan leads to a loss! At the last minute, I saw that 21.Qxd3 Rxd3 22.Rxe6 Kd7 23.Rxc6 Kxc6 24.Ne5+ picks up Black's rook on d3, but loses the one on b5.

Though the ending is worse for me, I have no choice.

21.Qxd3 Rxd3

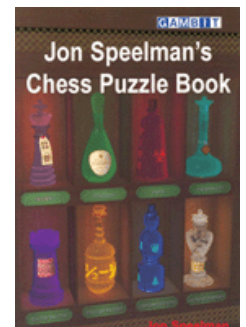
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Jonathan now offered a draw.



[FEN "4k2r/p1p1b1pp/1pn1p3/1R6/8/2Pr1N2/P2B1PPP/4R1K1 w - - 0 22"]

22.Rxe6 Kd7 23.Re3 Rxe3 24.Bxe3 Bf6 25.c4 Na5 26.Nd2 c5! 27.Rb1!

Forced. My rook must defend the horror on c4. Bad would be 27.Bxc5? because of 27...Kc6! and a subsequent ...Nxc4, when Black regains his pawn with interest.

27...Kc6

This allows me to escape most of my problems. I was far more concerned about 27...Re8, reserving the option of ...Nc6-d4. In this line, Black would keep a comfortable advantage.

28.Kf1 Re8 29.Ke2 Nb7

I was beginning to like what was going on.

30.g4 Nd6 31.Rc1 Bd4 32.Kd3 Bxe3 33.fxe3

So, I now have a passed pawn. Things continue to look good.

33...a6 34.a4 Nf7!



[FEN "4r3/5npp/ppk5/2p5/P1P3P1/3KP3/3N3P/2R5 w - - 0 35"]

That stops all the fun. The game is now a stone-cold draw.

35.Nf3 Rd8+ 36.Ke2 Re8 37.h3 Re7 38.Kd3 Rd7+ 39.Ke2 Re7 40.Rc2 Nd6 41.Kd3 Re8 42.Ng5

Hoping to provoke some weaknesses. A real blunder would be 42.Rf2, allowing 42...Nxc4! 43.Kxc4 Rxe3, threatening ...b5+, and Black wins.

42...h6 43.Nf3 Re7 44.Nd2



[FEN "8/4r1p1/ppkn3p/2p5/P1P3P1/
3KP2P/2RN4/8 b - - 0 44"]

The try 44.Nh4 wasn't so tempting after all. Jonathan could simply pass with 44...Re6, forcing my rook to remain in defense of the c-pawn because of the threat ...Nxc4.

44...Rd7 45.Ke2 Re7 46.Rc1

Hoping to activate my rook with Rf1. Jonathan correctly decides he's foxed around long enough and forces a straight rook ending.

46...Ne4! 47.Nxe4 Rxe4 48.Kd3 Re7 49.h4 Rd7+ 50.Ke4 Re7+ 51.Kd3 Rd7 + 52.Ke4 Re7+ 53.Kf4 Rf7+ 54.Ke4 Re7+ 1/2-1/2

In this game, I could do no more than recover from my eighteenth move.

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