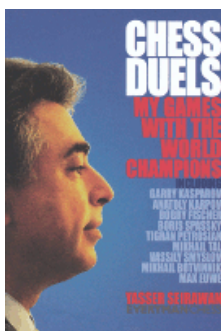




COLUMNISTS

Inside Chess

Yasser Seirawan



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Inside Chess, 1988/5

Speelman - Seirawan, St. John 1988, Game Five

Neither my mood nor my frame of mind was prepared for this game. After considerable discussion, John Donaldson and I decided we wanted a game as strategically involved as possible. Our choice? The too-ugly-for-words Dutch Stonewall.

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

Candidates Match, Saint John (5), 1988

Dutch Stonewall [A80]

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 c6 3.c4 e6 4.e3 f5

By using this order of moves, Black denies White the possibility of a kingside fianchetto.

5.Be2 Nf6 6.O-O Bd6 7.b3 Qe7 8.Bb2 Nbd7 9.Ne5!



[FEN "r1b1k2r/pp1nq1pp/2pbpn2/3pNp2/2PP4/1P2P3/PB2BPPP/RN1Q1RK1 b kq - 0 9"]

An excellent move. I had been more concerned about 9.Qc1 intending Ba3. Then 9...a5! meets 10.Ba3 with ...Bb4.

With 9.Ne5, White intends Nd2 and f4, setting up a nearly symmetrical position in which Black has virtually no winning chances. I felt I had to do something radical to unbalance the position.

9...O-O 10.Nd2 g5?! 11.f4! gxf4 12.exf4 Ne4 13.Nxe4 fxe4

Also dubious. The thought of 13...dxe4, allowing White to undermine me with 14.g4, wasn't attractive either.

14.Qd2

The position is much better for White. He can play on both sides of the board, or watch Black open the position against himself. In the meantime, Black also has to worry about his hidebound cleric on e8!

Given my rotten position, I can take pride in only one thing: I found a very nice restructuring plan, one that not only brings life into the position, but also provokes Jonathan into taking risks.

14...Nf6 15.c5! Bc7 16.b4 Bd7 17.a4 Ne8!!

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[FEN "r3nrk1/ppbbq2p/2p1p3/2PpN3/PP1PpP2/8/1B1QB1PP/R4RK1 w - - 0 18"]

A beautiful move. The knight is all wrong on the f6-square. Why? It does absolutely nothing. Worse yet, it stands to be "tempoed." What I mean is this: Since I must eventually get rid of White's knight on e5, I'll have to move my knight anyway after White recaptures on e5 with a pawn. Having already moved it, I now plan to deploy the knight to g7, where it will threaten to hop into f5. This means that I can provoke White into playing g4, compromising his king.

18.Ra3 (:54) Ng7 (1:11) 19.Rh3 Be8!?

Another interesting possibility was 19...a5!?, which I rejected because of 20. Nxd7 Qxd7 21.b5, and my a-pawn is an eventual goner. Jonathan, however, was worried about that.

20.Bc3 Bg6?!

A strange move that does nothing to deter White's plans. Two better alternatives were 20...h5!? and 20...Rd8.

21.g4

Forced, yet strong!

21...Bxe5?

Though a logical followup to my last move, this capture would be much better if prefaced by 21...Rd8, inhibiting White's recapture dxe5 because of the freeing break ...d5-d4. But I had an idea!

22.dxe5 h5



[FEN "r4rk1/pp2q1n1/2p1p1b1/2PpP2p/PP2pPP1/2B4R/3QB2P/5RK1 w - h6 0 23"]

23.f5!

Pow! You betchya – a real haymaker. Clearly, I had underestimated the strength of this sacrifice.

On the other hand, the sacrifice is forced. White mustn't sit idly by and watch the f5-square fall into enemy hands!

23...exf5

In spite of the fact that I lose in four more moves, please note that I have three connected passed center pawns. My provocation has paid off!

24.gxh5

When I was a Pawn in Hungary
I sat on the lawn in a dungaree
The queen took the king
Through a Polynomial Ring
And I was left in a quandary
Attila von Neumann



[FEN "r4rk1/pp2q1n1/2p3b1/2PpPp1P/PP2p3/2B4R/3QB2P/5RK1 b - - 0 24"]

Okay, why not? Let's give my last howler of the match a diagram. Yes, I am lost, so it shouldn't matter – but it does! The win is not easy to find. Before reading on, ask yourself this: how does one break 24...Bh7?

White has two choices: 25.e6 and 25.Rg3. Bad is 25.e6. I just eat it with ...Nxe6, and if 26.Rg3+ (26.Qh6 allows ...d4 -+) then 26...Kf7 27.Qh6 Ke8 and the king runs. No problem.

So White must try 25.Rg3 Kh8 and only now 26.e6, which forces 26...Rf6. Are you still happy with White's game? How do you proceed now? Isn't Black just threatening ...Nxe6 and ...Rf8? Back in my room I couldn't believe that I hadn't put Jonathan to this test.

Yet, sadly, White has a win here – a nice one, too! How? By playing 27.Rg6!! The major variations go as follows: 27...Bxg6 (too horrible for words is 27...Rxb6+ 28.hxg6 Bxg6 29.Qh6+ Bh7 30.Rxf5. Yuk.) 28.Qh6+ Kg8 29.hxg6 Nxe6 30.Rxf5 d4 (or 30...Raf8 31.Qh7+) 31.Bc4 dxc3 32.Rxf6 Qxf6 33.Bxe6 + Qxe6 34.Qh7+ Kf8 35.g7+ and wins.

A nice win. Not that difficult, but not exactly simple either. Instead, I uncork an abomination that destroys my position on the spot:

24...e3??

Blindness again. My motivation for making this move is to bring my bishop to the wonderful square e4. Unfortunately, reality intrudes.

25.Qxe3

Of course! If 25.Qxe3, then 25...f4, and I have excellent chances of obtaining counterplay. My idea behind 24...e3 was to continue with 25...f4. Only now did I notice that 26.Rxf4 is indeed possible, as ...Qg5+ doesn't pick up the rook on f4. White then plays 27.Rg4, and his queen is protected by the rook on h3.

Oh, God! One horror after another. The game is now totally finished.

25...f4 26.Rxf4 Be4 27.e6

I would've resigned after 27.Rf6.

27...Nf5 28.Rxf5 Rxf5 29.Qh6 Rg5+



[FEN "r5k1/pp2q3/2p1P2Q/2Pp2rP/PP2b3/2B4R/4B2P/6K1 w - - 0 30"]

After this last move, a strange thing suddenly happened. Jonathan went into a deep think for more than five minutes. I couldn't believe that he could miss 30. Kf1 Qf8+, and White is suddenly lost! Believing either move won, Jonathan just picked the clearest. Sigh.

30.Rg3! Rxd3+ 31.hxd3 Qh7 32.Qf6 Re8 33.Be5 Re7 34.Qg5+ Kf8 35.Bd6 1-0

I found this an altogether difficult match to understand. It would be inaccurate to say Jonathan was "lucky." I believe a player creates his own luck. Jonathan certainly played many excellent moves and his victory is most deserved. I wish him all the best in his future matches.

People, I shall return! Wait a minute – I said that about the U.S. Championship in a previous issue. I better start moving forward.

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