
dwv16 vs. Sciurus 1-0: a blunder decides the pawn endgame

Posted by Sciurus - 2007/05/18 16:39

After reading that analyzing your own games may be the most important thing one can do to improve, I spend a long time staring at one of my latest losses: a correspondence chess game against dwv16 here at SquirrelChess.com.

Here is the game score:

1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.g3 c5 4.Bg2 Nf6 5.a3 Nc6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.d3 Be7 8.e3 O-O 9.Nf3 d4 10.Ne2 Be6 11.O-O Qd7 12.Nf4 b5 13.Nxe6 Qxe6 14.Re1 dxe3 15.Bxe3 Rad8 16.Qc2 Qd5 17.Rac1 Qxd3 18.Qxd3 Rxd3 19.Bxc5 Rd7 20.Bxe7 Nxe7 21.b4 Nf5 22.Rc5 Nd6 23.Nd2 a6 24.Kf1 Nb7 25.Rc2 h6 26.Ne4 Nd8 27.Nxf6+ gxf6 28.Rce2 Ne6 29.h4 f5 30.Bh3 Nd4 31.Re8 Nc2 32.Rxf8+ Kxf8 33.Bxf5 Rd2 34.Bxc2 Rxc2 35.Re2 Rxe2 36.Kxe2 Ke7 37.Ke3 Ke6 38.g4 f6 39.Kf4 Kf7 40.Kf5 Kg7 41.g5 hxg5 42.hxg5 Kf7 43.gxf6 Kf8 44.Ke6 Ke8 45.f7+ Kf8 46.f3

1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.g3 c5 4.Bg2 Nf6 5.a3 Nc6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.d3 Be7 8.e3 O-O 9.Nf3 d4 10.Ne2 Be6 11.O-O Qd7 12.Nf4 b5 13.Nxe6 Qxe6 14.Re1 dxe3 15.Bxe3 Rad8 16.Qc2 Qd5 17.Rac1 Qxd3 18.Qxd3 Rxd3 19.Bxc5 Rd7 20.Bxe7 Nxe7 21.b4 Nf5 22.Rc5 Nd6 23.Nd2 a6 24.Kf1 Nb7 25.Rc2 h6 26.Ne4 Nd8 27.Nxf6+ gxf6 28.Rce2 Ne6 29.h4 f5 30.Bh3 Nd4 31.Re8 Nc2 32.Rxf8+ Kxf8 33.Bxf5 Rd2 34.Bxc2 Rxc2 35.Re2 Rxe2 36.Kxe2 Ke7 37.Ke3 Ke6 38.g4 f6 39.Kf4 Kf7 40.Kf5 Kg7 41.g5 hxg5 42.hxg5 Kf7 43.gxf6 Kf8 44.Ke6 Ke8 45.f7+ Kf8 46.f3 1-0

And the postmortem analysis by the losing side:

1.c4 e6

The English opening. One of the nice things defending with the Tarrasch against 1. d4 is that it is supposed to work against 1. c4, too.

2.Nc3 d5 3.g3

Very uncommon and in fact a mistake (unprotected c-pawn). More common are 3. d4 or 3. cxd5 here.

3. ... c5

This is the third move of the Tarrasch Defense. Too bad that chess is more than just playing some moves out of memory. If I would have analyzed the position, it may have occurred to me that the white c-pawn is undefended. Better moves than the text would have been to capture the pawn with ... dxc4 or to aggressively advance the d-pawn with ... d4 to force the knight to retreat.

4.Bg2 Nf6

White does not seem to realize that his c-pawn is unprotected and both sides continue with their flawed plans.

5.a3

I don't see the purpose of this move.

5. ... Nc6

And the last chance to exploit the weak c-pawns went by unused.

6.cxd5 exd5 7.d3 Be7

"Complicated...." was my thought during the game and decided to simply develop the B to enable castling.

8.e3

I think White would have been better off developing the dark-squared bishop, maybe with Bg5. After the text e3, the B is locked in.

8. ... O-O 9.Nf3 d4

I spend a lot of time thinking about this move because I was afraid to overextend my pawns which I did several times

before. This time, however, I believe it was a good move which also forces the white N to retreat.

10.Ne2

Good choice because from his new position at e2 the knight puts additional pressure on the tip of Black's pawn chain.

10. ... Be6

At this point I had no idea what to do in this position and decided to develop the light-squared bishop. In hindsight I would consider g4 a more effective position for the bishop. An alternative may be ... Re8 to have the rook on the half-open file with the white king on, although White will probably castle soon. I tried several computer engines; all of them suggest ... dxe3. This choice will damage White's pawn structure and I can see now that it has potential to create some weak spots in the defense around the white king.

11.O-O Qd7

As an afterthought I think that I played much too passively here, giving White time to improve his position. Interestingly, the Sike engine suggests to move the Q to b6. I rather like this suggestion because it develops the Q to a position where it both points towards the center where sooner or later a pawn exchange is bound to happen and controls the b-file. Getting the Q out of the way also makes use of the rooks later on easier.

12.Nf4 b5

Starting an attack on the queenside seems to be a really bad idea in hindsight because White does not have a real weakness there (at least I see none). The way to go is to exploit the space advantage Black has in the center. Decent moves should be to avoid the exchange White threatens on e6 by moving the B to g4 or f5 or to loosen up White's pawns with ... dxe3.

13.Nxe6

Good move: White exchanges pieces to lower the pressure and secures the B pair (I read the latter is good

13. ... Qxe6 14.Re1

Threatens to win a pawn by a discovered attack on the queen.

14. ... dxe3 15.Bxe3

And now Black is in trouble; the pawn on c5 is in danger!

15. ... Rad8 16.Qc2 Qd5 17.Rac1 Qxd3 18.Qxd3 Rxd3 19.Bxc5 Rd7 20.Bxe7 Nxe7

The dust settles, the material is still equal.

21.b4 Nf5

Attempting to get the knight into play - in the current position it is useless and binds the rook for its defense.

22.Rc5 Forking pawn and knight.

22. ... Nd6 23.Nd2 a6 24.Kf1 Nb7 25.Rc2 h6 26.Ne4 Nd8?

Better exchange Ns on e4, the test move allows White to mess up Black's pawn structure.

27.Nxf6+ gxf6 28.Rce2 Doubled rooks are nearly always good.

28. ... Ne6 29.h4 f5 30.Bh3 Nd4

Black has trouble defending the doubled pawn.

31.Re8 Nc2 32.Rxf8+ Kxf8 33.Bxf5

And White is finally one pawn ahead and Black loses a tempo to save the rook and knight.

33. ... Rd2 34.Bxc2 Rxc2 35.Re2

Offering a rook exchange. I am never sure when it is appropriate to exchange pieces but accept here.

35. ... Rxe2 36.Kxe2 Ke7 37.Ke3 Ke6 38.g4 f6 39.Kf4 Kf7 40.Kf5 Kg7 41.g5 hxg5 42.hxg5 Kf7??

Definitely a mistake, a big one spelling defeat :(Why did I not play ... fxc5? White will win this game. I am wondering if Black would have had a chance after ... fxc5 here.

43.gxf6 Kf8 44.Ke6 Ke8 45.f7+ Kf8 46.f3 1-0

Post edited by: Sciurus, at: 2007/05/18 16:49

Re:dwv16 vs. Sciurus 1-0: a blunder decides the pawn endgame

Posted by dwv16 - 2007/05/19 06:14

2.Nc3 d5 3.g3

Very uncommon and in fact a mistake (unprotected c-pawn).

If 3...dxc4 then

4. Qa4+ Maybe not best move play, but playable. In fact there are legitimate lines where white doesn't even go after the pawn at this point, still having both center pawns while black does not.

Re:dwv16 vs. Sciurus 1-0: a blunder decides the pawn endgame

Posted by dwv16 - 2007/05/19 06:22

"Definitely a mistake, a big one spelling defeat Why did I not play ... fxc5? White will win this game. I am wondering if Black would have had a chance after ... fxc5 here."

I will also attempt a full analysis, but after fxc5 and Kxc5 the extra move available to my f pawn would probably have allowed me to either regain the opposition, or force you to have to spend time capturing it while I went to the Q-side and ate those pawns before promoting.

Re:dwv16 vs. Sciurus 1-0: a blunder decides the pawn endgame

Posted by Sciurus - 2007/05/19 09:09

You are right, of course. I overlooked the possibility of 3. ... dxc4 4. Qa4+ winning the pawn back.

1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.g3 d4

However, I still think that Black is better off after 3. ... d4 forcing the knight to retreat (see diagram). Firstly, the knight has a good post at c3 and none of the squares he can move to after Black plays 3. ... d4 look that attractive to me. Secondly, Black's pawn on d4 will complicate Black's development. In some annotated game collection I read that a pawn placed there interrupts the communication between White's pieces on the queen- and king-side.