

□ Weishaar, Luke

■ Burgess, Carter

Tennessee State Team Finals

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In the following game Luke Weishaar helps the Shanon Home School group win the High School State Team Championship. He won a 4 year scholarship to TN TECH at this event. Congratulations Luke! He has since pushed his rating up to near expert strength.

In the analysis of his win against Carter Burgess we can learn a couple of important lessons concerning opening preparation and the danger of blindly following chess principles.

**1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.f4** This is the popular Grand Prix Attack. As Luke demonstrates, White gets an aggressive position with little risk attached. Let's look at the possible plans for both sides. With f4 White declares his intention of keeping the center semi-closed (not planning d2-d4 any time soon). He will look for central control of the dark squares by playing Nf3 and Bb5 (to remove the Black dark square protector on c6). If Black responds with ...g6 then perhaps an eventual f4-f5 by White will pry open some attacking diagonals and files (c1-h6 and f1-f8). If Black responds with ...e7-e5 at some point, then after White's fxe5, the long diagonal and the f-file again work to Whites advantage. Black can try to dig in with ...d6 and ...e6 with the Bishop going to e7, but he will need to be comfortable defending. Black's last option is to counter in the center with the freeing move ...d5, which is what Carter tried in this game. It is very important to study this opening before venturing the Black side in a tournament game in order to create a position that fits your style of play. **e6**

The principle says, 'Counter a wing attack with a demonstration in the center'. So, ...e6 prepares to counter with the advance ...d5. **4.Nf3 d5 5.Bb5** This move is very good. It puts stress on the dark squares by removing the Black Knight's influence on e5 and d4. It also threatens to damage Blacks pawn structure on the queenside. **Qb6** A blunder tactically, and a mistake positionally. Even if this did not lose a pawn, it would be a mistake. Carter sees that his structure will be damaged after 6. Bxc6 and wants to keep that from happening by protecting the Knight on c6 but he overlooked a tactic. Black, by playing the plan of ...e6 followed by ...d5, MUST be willing to suffer structural damage in exchange for space or the Bishop Pair. So, he could consider 5...d4 which will allow his structure to be damaged, but will give him space after 6. Bxc6 bxc6 7. Ne2 Nf6 8. d3 OR he will need to try 5... dxe4 6. Bxc6 bxc6 7.Nxe4 where White has a space advantage, but the position is a bit more open for the potential of the Black Bishop pair. In any of these lines White's game is easier to play. Nevertheless, the move played by Carter is tactically bad and loses a pawn. **6.exd5 exd5 7.Nxd5** This is what Carter missed. The Bishop cannot be taken because Nc7 wins the Queen. Luke now has a winning position. It is of interest to see how he finishes off the game. **Qd8 8.Qe2+** A very good move, completely tangling up Blacks pieces. **Nge7** Not 8...Qe7 9. Bxc6 bxc6 10.Nc7 winning a Rook. **9.Nxe7** This move follows the principle that says 'When you are ahead material, exchange pieces'. The rest of the principle should say 'Unless it helps your opponent develop'. So, Nxe7 helps Black's development and therefore cannot be recommended (of course, White is still winning but has relieved Blacks position by helping him develop). Better to play in a manner that keeps Black restricted. For example:

[ 9.Bxc6+ bxc6 10.Nc3 Be6 11.Ng5 Bf5 12.d3 h6 13.Nge4 And White is much better. Black will have great difficulty finishing his development. ]

**9...Bxe7** With a glance at this position we can see that Blacks position is much relieved when compared to the previous note. It is important to understand that principles in chess are to be used ONLY as a guide for finding good moves, not axioms to be followed with little consideration. Exchanging pieces was not best for White. **10.Bxc6+ bxc6 11.Ne5 Qd6** This move does not take advantage of the gift of time that was offered to him by White's 9.Nxe7. Better was 11... 0-0!! 12. Nxc6? 13. Bh4 13. Kd1 Qd5 and Black has equalized. This variation underscores the danger of blindly following general principles. **12.Qd3** Luke is still following the principle to 'Simplify, Simplify, Simplify'. It is not good here at all. Black's Bishop pair and open files would make a one pawn

advantage very difficult to realize. He should not waste time trying to exchange. He should finish his development. e.g.

[ 12.0-0 0-0 13.d3 Be6 14.f5 Bd7 15.Nc4 Qf6 16.Be3 Rfe8 17.Qf2 ]

**12...Qc7** A sad retreat. Carter does not take advantage of his equalizing chances. We are taught to keep Queens on the board if behind in material. Carter follows that advise. However, calculation is still required to test for exceptions. Here Black could exchange Queens and still have good chances due to the activity of his two Bishops. For example:

[ 12...Qxd3 13.Nxd3 Bf5 14.Ne5 ( 14.Ke2 ?! c4 15.Ne1 0-0-0 And Black has a great position. ) 14...f6 15.Nxc6 Bd6 16.d3 a5 And the wayward Knight is in trouble. These moves are just given for example to demonstrate the power of the Bishop Pair as clutter begins to clear up. ]

**13.0-0 0-0 14.Qe4** The many movements of the White Queen reveals that the 'exchange when ahead' principle is not always best. **Bd6 15.d3 Bb7** Carter is not helping his case by placing the Bishop on such a poor square. When behind in material, active piece play must be sought. Better to play ... Be6 connecting Rooks and beginning piece play on the files and diagonals. For example:

[ 15...Be6 16.Nxc6 Rae8 17.Qf3 c4 18.dxc4 ? Bxc4 19.Rd1 Be2 ]

[ 15...Be6 16.Bd2 Rae8 17.Rae1 Bd5 Black's position is still bad, but he may get chances. ]

**16.Nc4** A good move by Luke. The Bishop on b7 will have to move away pretty soon. **Rae8 17.Qf3 Be7 18.Be3 Ba6 19.Rad1** I like this move. Luke is willing to allow some damage to his extra pawn in order to do away with Black's Bishop Pair and to open some lines for his pieces. **Bxc4 20.dxc4** White is considerably better. Black MUST find piece play to offset the really bad structure. **Bd6** When in a lost position, it is hard to find a good plan. Maybe better is 20...Qa5 For Example:

[ 20...Qa5 The plan is to weaken the dark squares, which might result in possibilities... 21.a3 Qb6 22.b3 Bf6 23.Rd7 ? Better is Rd3 Rxe3 24.Qxe3 Bd4 25.Rxd4 cxd4 26.Qf2 Re8 With some possibilities. ]

**21.Qf2 Rb8** Floundering. Better to try ...Re4 putting some stress on Whites structure. Remember, piece activity is everything when down material.

[ 21...Re4 22.Rxd6 Qxd6 23.Bxc5 Qd7 24.Bxf8 Kxf8 25.Qc5+ Kg8 26.b4 Qd4+ 27.Qxd4 Rxd4 28.Rf3 Rxc4 29.c3 c5 Technically White is much better, but there are drawing chances. Rook endings are hard to win, apt to draw. ]

**22.Rxd6** Ever alert for tactical possibilities, Luke wins another pawn. **Qxd6 23.Bxc5 Qg6 24.Bxf8 Rxb2** Black is lost, so he tries to eat up a few pawns for the piece. But there is no real chance of holding this against a player as strong as Luke. He had to recapture and face the torture of a long defence. **25.f5 Qg4 26.Bd6** Not to be too critical, but after we gain a winning position we should not let up the pressure. It is very dangerous to get into the habit of taking the easy way when ahead. A lot of big fish have gotten of the line because the fisherman eased up too quickly. Good fishermen know to keep the tension on the line or that fish will make a desperate splash and escape! We should try to find the best plan... not the easiest. Luke should crush his opponent with 26. f6 for example:

[ 26.f6 Kxf8 27.Qxa7 gxf6 28.Qa3+ ]

[ 26.f6 Rxa2 27.Bxg7 Qc8 28.Bh6 mate follows. ]

[ 26.f6 gxf6 27.Qxf6 Qg6 28.Qd8 h5 29.Ba3+ ]

[ 26.f6 g6 27.Qd2 Rb8 28.Be7 Qh5 29.Qd6 And a neat maneuver follows. Re8 30.Qd7 Ra8 31.Qxc6 Rb8 32.Bd6 Rd8 33.Re1 h6 34.Re8+ Rxe8 35.Qxe8+ Kh7 36.Qxf7+ Kh8 37.Qg7# ]

**26...Rxa2 27.Qe3 h6 28.Qd3 Ra4 29.Bf4** Nice move! ( blocking the Black Queen from c4) **a5 30.h3 Qh4 31.Qg3** Luke is clearly winning. If I could give one piece of advice, it would be to focus on destroying the opponent once you are winning. Find the best plan, not the easiest plan. Relaxing before the game is over has a way of coming back and haunting us as we get to the expert/master level. **31.Qe4** just takes all hope out of Blacks position, planning Qe8 and Qxf7. **Qxg3 32.Bxg3 Rxc4 33.Ra1 a4 34.Ra2 Kf8 35.Bf2 c5 36.g4** Black resigns **CONCLUSION:** When we are

material ahead, we should try to find the most efficient means of finishing off the opponent. This will improve our discipline at the board and help us improve as a chess player. If we are not careful, we could be lazy during the game, which often allows the opponent more chances than he deserves. See for instance moves 9, 11 and 12. Black was given chances because White was not as vigilant as he should have been after gaining the advantage. Thanks to Luke we have been able to study a very instructive game!

**1-0**