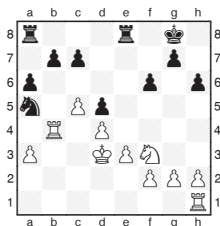


Michael Adams



Arkell lights up Blackpool

The Blackpool weekender built to a fascinating finale as Keith Arkell ground down the previous year's winner to take the title.



K. Arkell - J. Hawkins
Blackpool, 2012

23.g2-g4

With a grip on the queenside, Keith gains space on the other side of the board.

- 23...** Re8-e6
24.Rh1-b1 Ra8-b8
25.Nf3-g1 Re6-e7
 After 25...b7-b5 26.c5xb6 c7xb6 27.Ng1-e2 Black's 'd' pawn feels the squeeze.
26.Ng1-e2 c7-c6
27.Ne2-g3 Na5-c4
28.Ng3-f5 Re7-d7
29.Rb4-b3 Kg8-f7
30.h2-h4 b7-b5
31.c5xb6 Rd7-b7
32.Kd3-c3

It's not easy to break through after 32.h4-h5 Rb7xb6 33.Rb3xb6 Rb8xb6 34.Rb1xb6 Nc4xb6 35.Kd3-c3 a6-a5 so Arkell opens some more lines.

- 32...** Kf7-f8
33.e3-e4 Rb7xb6
34.Rb3xb6 Nc4xb6
35.Kc3-d3 d5xe4+
36.Kd3xe4 Rb8-e8+
37.Ke4-f3 Re8-b8
38.Nf5-d6

Now was the correct moment to fix the kingside with 38.h4-h5 Nb6-d7

- 39.Rb1-c1.
38... Nb6-d7
39.Rb1-e1 Nd7-b6
 39...c6-c5 was a better try.
40.Re1-c1 Kf8-e7
41.Nd6-f5+ Ke7-d7
42.Nf5xg7 Nb6-d5
43.Kf3-e4

The tension and time shortage affects the play. Better was 43.a3-a4.

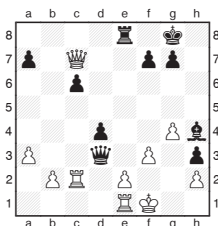
- 43...** Rb8-b3
 Both players missed that the rook can still move along the back rank and turn the tables after 43...Rb8-g8
 White has to be careful.

- 44.Ke4-f5** Rb3-d3
 44...Rb3xa3 45.Kf5-g6 is no better.
45.Kf5-g6 Rd3xd4
46.Rc1-g1 c6-c5
47.Ng7-f5 Rd4-d3
 47...Nd5-e7+ 48.Kg6xf6 is decisive.
48.Kg6xh6 c5-c4
49.Kh6-g7 c4-c3
50.h4-h5 Nd5-f4
51.Nf5-e3

The passed pawn should have been pushed immediately: 51.h5-h6.

- 51...** Nf4-h3
 There was a miracle save with 51...Kd7-e6. Suddenly Black's small army co-ordinates perfectly.
52.h5-h6 Rd3-d7+
53.Kg7-g8 Rd7-d8+ is an immediate draw.
52.Rg1-e1 Nh3xf2
53.h5-h6 Kd7-c7
54.h6-h7 Rd3-d7+
55.Kg7-g6 Rd7-d8
56.Ne3-d5+ 1-0

The following weekend, en route to another tournament victory, Keith found the most spectacular way I have ever seen to simplify to a better ending.



K. Arkell - J. Holland
e2e4.org.uk
High Wycombe, 2012

29.Qc7-d8

This dazzling double deflection is the only move as Black wins after 29.Qc7xc6 Qd3-e3, the other capture allows mate: 29.Rc2xc6 Qd3xf3+ 30.e2xf3 Re8xe1.

- 29...** Re8xd8
30.e2xd3 Bh4xe1
31.Kf1xe1 Rd8-e8+
32.Rc2-e2 Re8xe2+
 Black had to keep the rooks with 32...Re8-b8.

33.Ke1xe2 f7-f5
 As his most advanced pawn is a goner, Black has to look for tricks on the queenside, 33...c6-c5 34.Ke2-f2 a7-a5 35.b2-b3 Kg8-f8 36.a3-a4 Kf8-e7 37.Kf2-g3 Ke7-d6 38.Kg3xh3 c5-c4 39.b3xc4 Kd6-c5 40.Kh3-g2 Kc5-b4 41.c4-c5 Kb4xc5 42.h2-h4 Kc5-b4 43.h4-h5 Kb4xa4 44.g4-g5 leaves him just too slow.

- 34.f3-f4** f5xg4
35.Ke2-f2 c6-c5
36.b2-b3 a7-a5
37.a3-a4 Kg8-f7
38.Kf2-g3 Kf7-e6
39.Kg3xg4 Ke6-d5
40.Kg4-f3 40.Kg4xh3 is good enough, but Keith carefully triangulates before grabbing the pawn.
40... Kd5-d6
41.Kf3-g3 Kd6-d5
42.Kg3-g4 Kd5-d6
43.Kg4xh3 c5-c4
44.b3xc4 Kd6-c5
45.Kh3-g4 Kc5-b4
46.c4-c5 Kb4xc5
47.f4-f5 Kc5-b4
48.h2-h4 Kb4-c3
49.h4-h5 Kc3xd3
50.h5-h6 g7xh6
51.f5-f6 Kd3-c2
52.f6-f7 d4-d3
53.f7-f8Q d3-d2
54.Qf8-c5+ Kc2-d3
55.Qc5-d5+ Kd3-c2
56.Qd5-c4+ Kc2-b1
57.Qc4-d3+ Kb1-c1
58.Qd3-c3+ 1-0