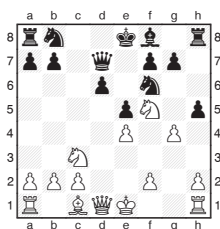


Michael Adams



Shirov still a master of tactics

Alexei Shirov remains in high demand at tournaments around the world due to his imaginative play. He recently won a short event in Argentina in his inimitable style.



A. Shirov - D. Valerga
Buenos Aires 2012

10.Bc1-g5

White normally settles for 10.g4xh5 here as 10.g4-g5 Nf6xe4 11.Nf5xg7+ Bf8xg7 12.Nc3xe4 d6-d5 gives Black good play, but Alexei has a clever idea in mind.

10... Nf6-h7

11.Bg5-h4

11.Bg5-d2 h5xg4 12.Qd1xg4 g7-g6 is alright for Black.

11... h5xg4

White's impressive

concept is that after

11...g7-g5, although his bishop is trapped, he gets considerable positional compensation. 12.Bh4-g3 h5-h4 13.Nc3-d5 Nb8-c6 14.Qd1-d2 0-0-0 15.0-0-0 Kc8-b8 16.f2-f3 h4xg3 17.h2xg3 leaves the extra material awkwardly placed against White's dominating knights.

12.Nc3-d5 Nb8-c6

13.h2-h3 g4-g3

Capturing the pawn looks very dangerous 13...g4xh3

14.Qd1-g4 g7-g6 15.Bh4-f6 g6xf5 16.Qg4xh3 Rh8-g8 17.Qh3xh7, but now White regains the pawn and his pieces dominate.

14.f2xg3 g7-g6

15.Nf5-e3

15.Bh4-f6 Rh8-g8 16.Qd1-g4 also looks tempting.

15... Bf8-e7

The dangers facing Black are shown by the line

15...Bf8-g7 16.Ne3-g4 f7-f5 17.e4xf5 g6xf5 18.Ng4-h6 Bg7xh6 19.Qd1-h5+.

16.Bh4xe7 Nc6xe7

17.Qd1-d2 Ne7xd5

18.Ne3xd5 0-0-0

Black has relieved the pressure a little and removed his King from the centre. However, the difference between the remaining minor pieces is rather stark.

19.0-0-0 f7-f5

20.Qd2-e3 Kc8-b8

21.Rd1-d3

Black's King is rarely comfortable on the queenside in Sicilian structures, and Shirov swiftly exploits this by swinging his rook along the third rank.

21... Rh8-f8

21...f5xe4 22.Rd3-a3 a7-a6 was a better try.

22.Rd3-a3 a7-a6

23.Nd5-b4 Qd7-c7

There is no good defence, as 23...f5xe4 24.Qe3-b6 wins on the spot. Shirov finishes with a flurry of tactics.

24.Ra3xa6 Qc7-c5

25.Qe3-b3 Rd8-c8

26.Ra6-a4 Kb8-c7

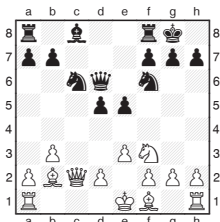
27.Nb4-a6+ b7xa6

28.Ra4-c4 Qc5xc4

29.Qb3xc4+ Kc7-d7

30.Qc4xa6

1-0



S. Slipak - D. Lemos
Buenos Aires 2012

11.Bf1-b5

It was an opportune moment to stake a presence in the centre with 11.d2-d4 e5-e4 12.Nf3-e5.

11...

12.Qc2-c1

13.Bb2xe5

14.Bb5-e2

White's position also looks very dangerous after

14.Bb5-f1 Rf8-c8 15.Be5-c3 Bd7-b5 16.Qc1-b1 Bb5xf1

17.Ke1xf1, but at least his King is nearer to safety.

14.a2-a3 Rf8-c8 15.Be5-c3 Bd7xb5 16.a3xb4 Nf6-e4

also leaves the monarch stranded.

14...

15.Be5-c3

It was better to give the exchange to dampen the initiative: 15.Qc1-b2 Nb4-c2+ 16.Ke1-f1 Nc2xa1 17.Qb2xa1.

15...

16.a2-a3

17.a3xb4

17.Ke1xe2 Qb6-a6+ wins.

17...

18.g2xf3

Totally destroying White's structure, which becomes a collection of weaknesses

with all his seven pawns isolated.

19.e3xd4

20.Ke1-d1

21.Rh1-g1

21.Rh1-e1 Qf5xf3+

22.Kd1-c2 Nf6-d5 would have left Black with the pleasant task of harvesting White's pawns. Now the game is over in short order.

21...

22.Kd1-e2

23.Ke2-d1

Instead of looking for a direct win, Black simply improves the position of his rook with gain of time, underlining White's hopeless position.

24.Rg1-e1

25.Kd1-c2

0-1

Nc6-b4

Bc8-d7

Qd6-b6

Rf8-c8

Bd7-b5

Bb5xe2

Be2xf3

d5-d4

Qb6-e6+

Qe6-f5

Nf6-d5

Rc8-e8+

Ra8-c8

Qf5xf3+

Rc8xc3+