

Richard Shorman

Chess

Capablanca's crystal clear position play makes chess look easy . . . until you probe behind the individual moves and see what deep, artistic planning was involved.

White: Aron Nimzovitch

Black: Jose Capablanca

St. Petersburg, 1914.

Four Knights' Defense

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 P-K4 | P-K4 | 22 KR-Q1(s) | KR-N1!(t) |
| 2 N-KB3 | N-QB3 | 23 Q-K3(u) | R-N5!(v) |
| 3 N-B3 | N-B3 | 24 Q-N5 | B-Q5ch |
| 4 B-N5 | P-Q3(a) | 25 K-R1 | R/1-N1(w) |
| 5 P-Q4 | B-Q2 | 26 RxB(x) | QxR |
| 6 BxN | BxB | 27 R-Q1 | Q-B5 |
| 7 Q-Q3(b) | PxP | 28 P-R4 | RxNP |
| 8 NxP | P-KN3(c) | 29 Q-Q2 | Q-B4 |
| 9 NxB(d) | PxN | 30 R-K1 | Q-KR4(y) |
| 10 Q-R6 | Q-Q2 | 31 R-R1 | QxPch |
| 11 Q-N7 | R-B1 | 32 K-N1 | Q-R4 |
| 12 QxRP | B-N2(e) | 33 P-R5 | R-R1 |
| 13 0-0(f) | 0-0(g) | 34 P-R6 | Q-B4ch |
| 14 Q-R6(h) | KR-K1(i) | 35 K-R1 | Q-B5 |
| 15 Q-Q3(j) | Q-K3!(k) | 36 P-R7 | Q-B4 |
| 16 P-B3(l) | N-Q2(m) | 37 P-K5 | QxKP |
| 17 B-Q2(n) | N-K4 | 38 R-R4 | Q-R4ch |
| 18 Q-K2 | N-B5(o) | 39 K-N1 | Q-B4ch |
| 19 QR-N1 | R-R1(p) | 40 K-R2 | P-Q4!(z) |
| 20 P-QR4(q) | NxB | 41 R-R4 | RxP |
| 21 QxN | Q-B5!(r) | 42 Resigns | |

(a) Preferring strategic simplicity to the complex variations stemming from 4 . . . B-N5 (Panov).

(b) White's maneuver begun on move six works out well for him only if he castles long (Panov).

(c) A novel idea, brought out on the spur of the moment, with the intention of putting White on his own resources (Capablanca). Safer would have been 8 . . . B-K2 (Burn).

(d) More consistent is 9 B-N5 B-N2 10 0-0-0 (Panov).

(e) No critic would have ventured to characterize a position such as this as favorable to Black had it not been for the grand and convincing tale which this particular example unfolds (Euwe).

(f) White is now a pawn ahead, with a perfectly safe game, and it is surprising that he should have lost (Burn).

(g) Black is a pawn behind, but all his forces are now deployed and ready for maneuvering (Capablanca).

(h) White decides on defensive measures. It is remarkable how the gain of a pawn is apt to make a player over-cautious, almost as possessions frequently do in real life (Euwe).

(i) Attacks the KP, immobilizing White's knight and compelling a defensive move (Znosko-Borovsky).

(j) This makes the sixth move with the queen (Capablanca).

(k) Attacking the KP once more and preparing the important maneuver, N-Q2-K4-B5 (Euwe).

(l) Black's first attack is at an end. The rook's move liberated the queen, the queen moved to make room for the knight, and the knight will retreat temporarily to open the way for the bishop (Znosko-Borovsky).

(m) Preparatory to a strong knight and bishop attack on the queen side. By correct play White should probably defend himself and win with his extra pawn, but the best line is hard to find (Burn).

(n) Better drawing chances are offered by 17 B-B4, in order to answer 17 . . . N-K4 with 18 BxN (Panov).

(o) Quite suddenly Black's attack has broken out in full force. White cannot play 19 P-QN3 because of 19 . . . B-Q5ch! 20 K-R1 NxB 21 QxN Q-K4 22 P-B4 BxN (Euwe).

(p) The real attack begins. If White now plays 20 P-QN3, then 20 . . . NxB 21 QxN R-R6, and the QRP must go (Capablanca).

(q) Probably intending P-QN3 to follow (Burn).

(r) Hitting the nail on the head. White is tied up, he can no longer play P-QN3, his QRP is doomed, and his QNP also stands a poor chance (Euwe).

(s) Now White is willing to part with his extra pawn by 22 . . . BxN 23 QxB QxQ 24 PxQ RxRP in hopes of squeezing a draw out of the resultant rook ending (Panov).

(t) Decisive. The immediate threat is 23 . . . RxNP and 24 . . . BxN (Panov).

(u) Comparatively best is 23 Q-Q3 Q-B4ch 24 K-R1 R-N5 25 N-K2, returning the pawn but freeing the knight (Panov).

(v) Threatening 24 . . . B-Q5 (Znosko-Borovsky).

(w) White's game now collapses like a house of cards. He is threatened with the loss of a piece by 26 . . . BxN (Euwe).

(x) Forced in view of the threat to his knight (Panov) Black is now the exchange ahead and will soon regain his pawn. The rest is simply a matter of time (Capablanca).

(y) Black wins the KRP outright, since 31 Q-B2 fails against 31 . . . RxP! 32 QxR QxPch 33 K-N1 QxRch (Panov).

(z) Shattering White's last illusion: 40 . . . RxRP? 41 N-K4! Q-N3 42 Q-R6 (Panov). The apparently simple moves in this game are in reality of a very complicated nature, and they all obey a preconceived plan (Capablanca).

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