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Introduction

Nowadays, many players hugely underestimate the importance of positional play. Certain writers promise the reader gigantic rating gains if the reader solves tens (or even hundreds) of tactical problems a day. Many players follow this advice for a while, and it certainly is a good idea to solve tactical problems. I have done the same thing for most of my chess career. Nevertheless, when I started getting constantly outplayed, I realized that tactical practice was not the only way to improve one's playing strength. The more I studied positional chess, the more I understood the importance of positional play.

I realized that in order to create positions where tactical motifs could be utilized, it is vital to understand positional ideas at least on the basic level. Yes, reading a book on tactics is often a more entertaining task than reading a book on positional chess, but if you want to excel at chess, you have to delve deeper into the chess realm, and appreciate not only visually pleasing combinations, but much more subtle positional ideas. As I soon learned, winning with an extremely subtle maneuver is often a lot more aesthetically pleasing than executing a smothered mate.

If I could pinpoint the most important time when my studies came into use, it would certainly be the World Youth Chess Championship in 2007. Being a “veteran” of this prestigious annual event, I understood that most opponents did not pay attention to positional chess. Therefore, when I was playing my games, I steered the game into positional tracks and every time my opponent would make a mistake that handed the advantage or the initiative over to me. I won game after game in the same fashion – systematically improving my position until my opponent would make a mistake. No matter how strong he was, he made a mistake every time. In the last round, my studies helped especially. I needed a win for first place, but was playing a very strong player from Russia. In a quiet Najdorf, my opponent made one tiny-looking inaccuracy. Immediately, my pieces poured into the weaknesses he had created, and he could not defend against the vicious onslaught.

However, it's impossible to learn positional chess only by reading. In order to improve, I started to write notes on my own games with the goal being to raise the level of my positional play. In a short while, the messy notes started to take shape. As my chess level progressed, I found a lot of mistakes to correct and a lot of analyses to redo, but after two years of work I finally finished the typed manuscript. Suddenly, my private notes turned into a more formal manuscript, which I showed to my chess friends and teachers. They liked it, and encouraged me to continue my work. After two years, I was ready to share it with other chess players!

This book is geared towards players aiming to improve their positional understanding, and towards advanced players who want to add to their arsenal of ideas. In other words, my goal is to equip you with enough positional motifs to help you

to move on to more complicated material. I'm sure that no matter how strong you are, you will find some helpful material in this book.

I feel that now is a great moment to talk about why I chose the chapters that I did in this book. First of all, why did I allocate so much space to paralysis? I think that paralysis in the middlegame is a concept that is of paramount importance. Knowing techniques to impede the development of your opponent's pieces is crucial. As we shall see in the chapter, there are many games where grandmasters masterfully neutralized the activity of the opponent's pieces, and thus quickly won the game. The reason I chose the subjects in the other chapters is because I felt that they simply were the most important when studying positional chess. For example, prophylaxis is another concept that tactical players tend to underestimate. As we shall see, the most innocuous-looking moves are often the precursor to a decisive combination.

Although there are many great books on positional chess, I think that this book is a bit different. First of all, I tried to pick games in which the players were approximately equal in strength. Secondly, besides showing classic games I picked games in which the players made mistakes, since in almost all of today's games up to grandmaster level, errors are unavoidable. When I was only beginning to play serious chess, I thought that books written by strong grandmasters were flawless. To me, grandmasters were like gods – everything they wrote was law, and nothing could be debated. To my utter surprise, I discovered that the appealing outer layer of text hid many mistakes, which sometimes changed the evaluations of every single line given.

Also, another illusion of flawlessness has come along in recent years – the illusion that the computer will solve all problems. Very often, even grandmasters will categorically accept computer analysis. It is this addiction that usually leads to something I call “Silicon Syndrome.” A prime example is the following: a computer-addictive master is playing a very important game. On every move, he asks himself, “*And what would Fritz do here?*” This constant questioning leads to big time trouble and, often, to big blunders. Therefore, in chess, the more verbosity there is in the annotations, the better! Summing up, in practical play, there will be no computer to assist you, so it is verbal annotations, phrased in human language, that you will be able to retain and apply in your own games.

IM Fred Reinfeld once said: “It seems to me that little effort is exerted as a rule (by most writers) to make the study of a book an interesting and pleasant occupation.” Apart from packing this book with a multitude of great positional ideas, I have tried to make it as enjoyable and readable as possible. After all, the purpose of reading a chess book is not only to learn from it, but to enjoy it as well!

Daniel Naroditsky,
December 2009

Chapter 1: Prophylaxis

This book starts with prophylaxis because I'm convinced that in order to master positional thinking, one needs to first master prophylactic thinking. Let me define what exactly I mean by prophylaxis.

Prophylaxis can mean stopping a possible plan or a future threat by the opponent. For instance, evacuating the king from a danger zone is an example of prophylaxis – the king might be subject to an attack, and removing the king completely nullifies the effectiveness of the attack.

Another example of prophylaxis is when you take away an important square from your opponent, thus rendering a certain plan or idea useless. The first person that touched upon the concept of prophylaxis was the Latvian-born Danish Maestro Aron Nimzowitsch. He formulated the idea itself and emphasized the importance of prophylactic thinking. Although today's definition of prophylactic thinking might differ from Nimzowitsch's, he certainly deserves full credit for "inventing" prophylactic thinking.

Another important point: prophylaxis is completely different than defense. In defense, you're almost always trying to parry threats that are already present, while prophylaxis is all about rooting out the source of problems. For example, if one side has a bishop that can potentially cause problems, trading the bishop for another piece or even giving up an exchange to eliminate it is an example of prophylaxis.

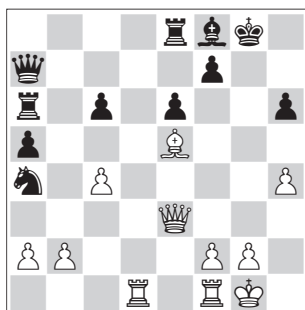
Often, when you're attacking, it's tempting to just throw all of your pieces at your opponent's king, instead of stopping any counterplay first.

Let's take a look at a position from one of the best attackers ever, to see how even the greatest can fall into this temptation.

□ Fischer

■ Donner

Varna Olympiad 1962



By sacrificing a piece, Fischer had obtained a very strong attack. However, it's not easy to find the best way to continue. Fischer, a brilliant attacker, here forgot to ask himself a question that you should ask yourself on **every** move:

“If it were Donner's move, what would he do?”

In this position, besides ...♔xe3, Donner also wants to play ...f5, when he will be simply a piece up since the queen on a7 not only defends the

whole diagonal, but also guards the second rank and threatens to go to f7. Fischer didn't ask himself this question, and played the obvious-looking:

1. ♖d1-d4?

If one didn't know Black's threat, this move would seem winning – White's rook will be deadly if it goes to g4. However, after Black's next move, the tables will be turned.

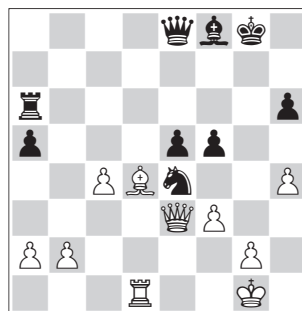
Instead, White could have played the instructive 1. ♖g3+ ♘h7 2.h5!. Now, 2...f5 is impossible because of 3. ♖g6 mate. Only after 2.h5 will White play ♖d4-g4, and his attack will probably be unstoppable. For instance, 2...♗e7 3. ♖d4 ♖g5 4. ♖g4 ♗xh5 5. ♖g7+, and White mates.

Things, however, aren't so simple. After a second look at the position, I discovered that Black has the strong 3...♘c5!, and it isn't entirely clear how White should proceed. In truth, White has very big practical chances after 4. ♖g4! f6 5. ♖f4, but with 5...♗g7 Black at least fights on.

1. ... f7-f5!

Oops! Now Black is up a piece for limited compensation. Obviously, Donner still needs to make a few accurate moves, but the result of the game is determined.

- 2. ♖f1-d1 ♘a4-c5
- 3. ♖d4-d8 ♗a7-f7
- 4. ♖d8xe8 ♗f7xe8
- 5. ♙e5-d4 ♘c5-e4
- 6. f2-f3 e6-e5!



And Black is winning, although he still has to be careful. Fischer threw in the towel after 15 more moves.

This example teaches us the importance of asking, “*What would my opponent do if it were his move?*” Although this question should be asked in all critical positions, it doesn't provide insurance against the opponent's ideas.

In the next example, Botvinnik, a great master of prophylaxis, shows how to successfully parry an unpleasant idea.

□ **Botvinnik**

■ **Keres**

Moscow 1952

Queen's Gambit Declined (QGD),
Carlsbad Variation (D35)

- 1. d2-d4 ♘g8-f6
- 2. c2-c4 e7-e6

- 3. ♘b1-c3 d7-d5
- 4. c4xd5 e6xd5
- 5. ♙c1-g5 ♙f8-e7
- 6. e2-e3 0-0
- 7. ♙f1-d3 ♘b8-d7
- 8. ♗d1-c2 ♖f8-e8

9. ♖g1-e2 ♜d7-f8
 10. 0-0 c7-c6
 11. ♜a1-b1 ♙e7-d6?!



An unnecessary waste of a tempo. The bishop was sitting perfectly on e7. Moreover, the plan f3-e4 is even stronger now, since White will be threatening e4-e5.

However, a closer look reveals that Black wants to play ...♜g6 followed by ...h6, and this threat is not easy to parry. Furthermore, 12...♙xh2+ is threatened, so White has to stop this plan in one move.

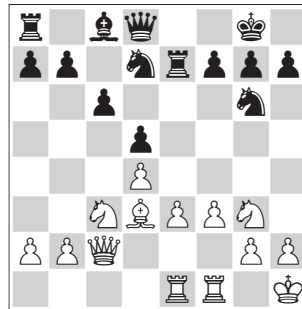
12. ♔g1-h1 ♜f8-g6
 13. f2-f3!

Botvinnik displays brilliant positional understanding – this move is a mix of deep prophylaxis and a tactical idea, which will soon be revealed. Now, 13...h6 is met by 14.♙xf6 ♗xf6 15.e4, and Black's position deteriorates quickly.

For example, 15...♗h4 16.g3 ♗h3 17.e5 ♙b8 18.f4, and now White's deadly pawn armada should decide the game.

It's interesting how one pawn move can destroy a whole plan. Keres finds nothing else but to move the bishop back to its original square.

13. ... ♙d6-e7
 14. ♜b1-e1 ♜f6-d7
 15. ♙g5xe7 ♜e8xe7
 16. ♜e2-g3



Black has a horrid position. His pieces are totally uncoordinated and White will soon play e3-e4, simply crushing Black.

16. ... ♜d7-f6
 17. ♗c2-f2 ♙c8-e6
 18. ♜g3-f5 ♙e6xf5
 19. ♙d3xf5 ♗d8-b6
 20. e3-e4

and after 17 moves of agony, Keres finally resigned.

The next game we will look at is similar to the previous one in many ways – Karpov, another legendary master of positional play, demolishes Timman's plans. It's interesting to note how Timman makes no big mistakes, and nevertheless gets outplayed.

Chapter 4: Positional Sacrifice

The positional sacrifice is one of the most important topics in the realm of positional chess. Time and again, you will encounter situations in which a positional sacrifice occurs. In this chapter, my goal is to discuss the meaning and correct timing of positional sacrifices. In order to make this topic easier to comprehend, the chapter is divided into three sections: ‘Positional sacrifice in the opening’, ‘Positional sacrifice in the middlegame’, and ‘Positional sacrifice in the endgame’.

The usual goal of the positional sacrifice is to either:

- A. Acquire a significant space advantage and simultaneously cramp your opponent’s pieces;**
- B. Create a position in which the opponent’s pieces and pawns will be inefficiently placed; or**
- C. Achieve dynamic compensation in various forms.**

Although there are sometimes other purposes for positional sacrifices, these are the three major ones. The main point here is that one shouldn’t be afraid of sacrificing a pawn or even a piece in order to achieve one or more of the three forms of compensation. A pawn is not always a huge amount of material, so often the investment is completely justified.

Moreover, utilizing the positional sacrifice is the **ONLY** way to maintain the initiative in most cases. One quickly realizes that in order to maintain the initiative, it’s vital to utilize some kind of unusual resource. A chess classic once said, *“You don’t win by good positions, but by good moves.”* In many of our examples here, the positional sacrifice will simply transform a static advantage into a dynamic one (or the other way around).

Positional Sacrifices in the Opening

Positional sacrifices in the opening occur not as often as in the middlegame. Frequently, one has to sacrifice a pawn in order to keep the initiative going. While looking at the following games, please note that many tactical sacrifices have a clear positional basis.

Our first example is one of the most instructive games ever played: Black incorporated a multitude of ideas – positional sacrifice, energetic play, and a formidable amount of over-the-board calculation.

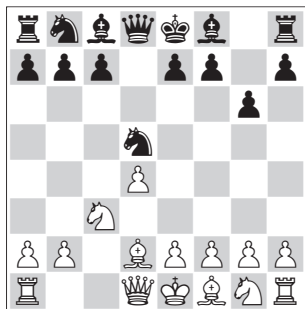
□ Kortchnoi

■ McShane

Igualda 2005

Grünfeld Indian Defense (D70)

1. d2-d4 ♘g8-f6
2. c2-c4 g7-g6
3. ♘b1-c3 d7-d5
4. c4xd5 ♘f6xd5
5. ♙c1-d2!?



This relatively rare move contains more poison than you would think. The main idea is that after e4 ...♘xc3, White can take back with the bishop, rendering ...c7-c5 completely harmless. The drawback of this move is its sluggishness and the resulting weakness of the d4 pawn.

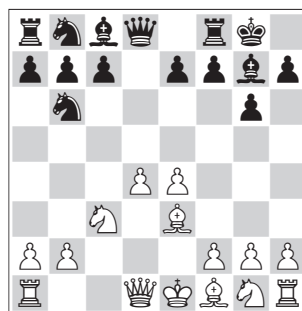
5. ... ♙f8-g7

Simple and correct. 5...♘b6 is worse because it allows White to develop his bishop to f4. The game Wang Yue-Morozevich, Wijk aan Zee 2009, continued 6.♙f4! ♙g7 7.e3 c5?! 8.dxc5 ♙xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♚xd1+ 10.♚xd1 with an advantage.

6. e2-e4 ♘d5-b6

After 6...♘xc3 7.♙xc3 c5 8.d5 e5 9.f4! White has a clear advantage.

7. ♙d2-e3 0-0



Now White is at an important crossroads. He has to choose between the aggressive move 8.f4 and the more restrained move 8.f3. Kortchnoi played:

8. f2-f4!?

After 8.f3 ♘c6 White has many options, but the best one seems to be: 9.d5 ♘e5 10.♙d4 c6 11.f4 ♙g4 12.♙e2 (12.♘f3 ♙xf3 13.gxf3 ♘xf3+! with a voracious initiative) 12...♘ec4! 13.♙xg7 ♙xe2 14.♘gxe2 ♚xg7 with equality.

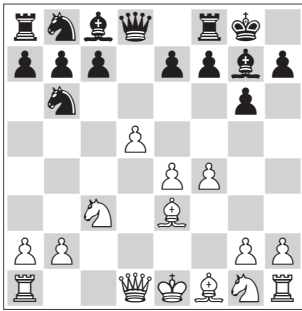
8. ... ♘b8-c6!

The only way to neutralize White's opening aggression. 8...f5 looks interesting, but after 9.♚b3+ ♚h8 10.e5 c6 11.♘f3 e6 12.♙e2 ♘d5 13.♘xd5 cxd5 14.0-0 White has a huge positional advantage because of the chronic weakness of Black's light-squared bishop and his huge lack of space.

9. d4-d5 ♘c6-b8?!

I'm reluctant to call this a mistake, but it's certainly very risky. The main move is 9...♘a5. Now, if White doesn't take immediate action, Black will play ...c6 and White's position will be at risk of completely collapsing. Therefore, White's only move is 10.♙d4. Now the correct move is 10...e5! (on 10...c6?,

11. ♖xg7 ♜xg7 12. b4! ♝ac4 13. ♙xc4 ♜xc4 14. ♖d4+ wins a piece) 11. ♙xe5 ♙xe5 12. fxe5 ♖h4+ 13. g3 ♖e7. The main problem with the text move is that Black delays his development, while White has already placed most of his pieces on aggressive positions. Obviously, White does have to be careful not to miss ...c7-c6.



10. ♙e3-d4?!

Returning the favor. The only way for White to exploit his advantage was by fighting for the initiative. In his *ChessBase* annotations, grandmaster Michal Krasenkow gives a thorough analysis after the correct move **10.a4!**. In a previous analysis of the game, I gave the variation 10. ♜f3?! ♙g4? 11. ♙d3 ♙xf3 12. ♖xf3 c6 13. 0-0 ♙xc3 14. bxc3 cxd5 15. ♜ab1 with a very dangerous initiative. However, Black isn't forced to give up his light-squared bishop. The significantly stronger 10...c6! leads to approximate equality after 11. dxc6 ♜xc6 12. ♙b5 ♙g4 13. 0-0 ♜d4! 14. ♙xd4 ♙xf3 15. ♖xf3 ♖xd4+. Thus, Krasenkow was absolutely correct.

The main idea of 10.a4 is to threaten the unpleasant a4-a5, horribly misplac-

ing Black's pieces. Therefore, Black has a dilemma: he can allow a4-a5, or try to make use of White's risky pawn play. Again, he has many options, but we'll examine his best option.

10...e5! It is absolutely crucial for Black to fight for the initiative. In the stem game of this variation, Gheorghiu-Ftacnik, Black achieved easy equality after 11. fxe5 ♙xe5 12. ♜f3 ♙g4! (Ftacnik even gives 12... ♙xc3+ 13. bxc3 ♜e8 14. ♖d4 f5! as better for Black) 13. ♖d2 ♙xf3 14. gxf3 c6! 15. a5 ♜c8 16. ♙c4?! (this move appears to waste a tempo. After Black's next move, White will find himself in a dangerous position. Better and safer is 16. ♙d4, with approximate equality) 16... ♜d6! 17. ♙b3 ♜d7 and Gheorghiu realized that he was in trouble. Ftacnik masterfully converted his advantage into a brilliant win.

White's best reply, however, is **11.a5!**, when his development advantage gives him a nagging initiative.

Therefore, the active 10.a4 would have lead to a position which was certainly better for White. I'm not sure what McShane intended to play in response to 10.a4.

10. ... ♙g7-h6!

The most ambitious and best option, although the line 10... ♙xd4 11. ♖xd4 c6 should also give Black equality.

11. ♖d1-f3 c7-c6 12. h2-h4?!

Kortchnoi decides to take drastic measures in order to refute McShane's play, but this is met by a stunning reply. Instead, it was still not too late to consolidate his pieces by means of the simple

12. ♖d1, after which the position would be about equal.

12. ... c6xd5
13. e4xd5



Now it's not clear how Black can stop the extremely unpleasant h4-h5. Let's try to reconstruct McShane's train of thought here:

"What a disaster! My opponent is threatening 14.h5, when I undoubtedly have no defense to the impending voracious attack. Of course, moves like 13...♖e8 do nothing. What about 13...♘c6? Oh, it also seems to fail after the intermediate 14.♙xb6. What else can I do? Since my opponent is moving his pawns and not developing many pieces, maybe there is some strike in the center. I only have my e-pawn, so the only moves seem to be 13...e6 and 13...e5. 13...e6 seems to be slow, so why not 13...e5, forcing White to make another move with his bishop and opening up the e-file and c8-h3 diagonal for my bishop?"

Once you understand the essence of the position, the following move comes as no big surprise:

13. ... e7-e5!!

This is simply one of the best moves I have ever seen played in the opening. Suddenly, White's weaknesses become exposed! Notice that this sacrifice is by all means positional: Black sacrifices a

pawn in order to finish his development with tempo and to expose White's hidden weaknesses. Kortchnoi, however, is not thrown off:

14. ♙d4xe5!

Instead, 14.fxe5? lost to 14...♘c6! 15.♙xb6 ♖xb6 16.dxc6 ♗xb2, and after 17.♖d1 ♙g4! White is mated (Krasenkow).

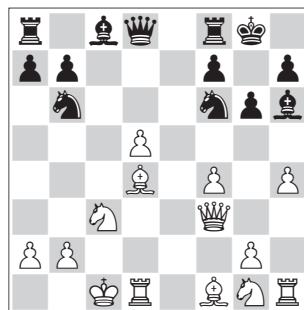
14. ... ♘b8-d7

Developing the knight and stopping 15.0-0-0, since after 15...♘xe5 the f-pawn will be pinned.

15. ♙e5-d4 ♘d7-f6

As a result of the sacrifice, all of Black's pieces work together harmoniously. Also, it becomes clear that the g4-square is irrevocably weakened (pawns don't move backwards!).

16. 0-0-0



Exploiting a nice tactical motif; 16...♙g4 fails to 17.♙xf6. Still, White's position is at risk of complete collapse. There are three main reasons for this:

- A. The position of White's king is very precarious. After a future ...♙f5, it may be in dire straits;
- B. The hole on g4 is a crucial factor in the assessment of the position. White

will constantly have to be on the lookout for ...♙g4;

C. White's pieces are still not fully developed. By the time he mobilizes them, Black will already be prepared to start a direct assault on the king. Kortchnoi perfectly understands this, and immediately starts taking emergency precautions.

16. ... ♖d8-d6

Blockading the d5 pawn and simultaneously coordinating his rooks. It's interesting to note that in good positions, it's very easy to make a move that achieves many aims at once. Kortchnoi, though probably shocked by the sudden course of events, still doesn't give in.

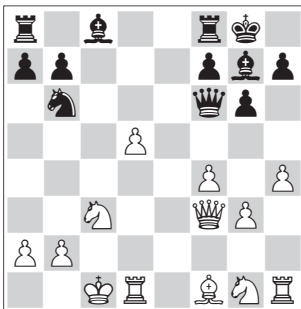
17. ♙d4xf6 ♗d6xf6!

Every move is played with great accuracy. Instead, the attractive 17...♙xf4+ 18.♖b1 ♗xf6 would have lead only to approximate equality after 19.♙d3 ♙e5 (19...♙f5 20.♘ge2 ♙xd3+ 21.♗xd3 ♙e5 22.♗xf6 ♙xf6 23.♘e4) 20.♗xf6 ♙xf6 and now:

A) 21.♘e4?! ♙g7 22.♘d6 ♘xd5 gives Black an edge;

B) 21.♘ge2! ♙g4 22.♘e4 ♙e5 23.♘f2 leads to approximate equality.

18. g2-g3 ♙h6-g7



As if building a killer battery (g7+f6) was not enough, Black also threatens the dangerous 19...h5 followed by 20...♙g4. Although White's position isn't critical yet, he has to play very carefully in order to survive.

Now, White has a very important dilemma. He can either stop 19...h5 by playing 19.h5 himself, or ignore the threat and play ♙h3 after Black plays ...h5. Kortchnoi plays:

19. ♗h1-h2?

A very strange move. I'm very surprised that Kortchnoi didn't choose the natural and correct 19.h5!. Taking the variation a bit further, Black's best bet is to obtain a quick counterattack after 19...♙d7 20.hxg6 hxg6 21.♙h3 ♙xh3 22.♗xh3 ♘c4!, when, despite *Deep Fritz 10's* evaluation of "clearly better for White," I'm pretty sure that most players would prefer to be Black here. Also good is 19...♗d6!? 20.♘ge2 ♗c5 21.♖b1 ♘c4 with a strong counterattack. Overall, White certainly wasn't better after 19.h5, but at least the position would have been double-edged and not clearly in Black's favor.

19. ... h7-h5

20. ♙f1-h3

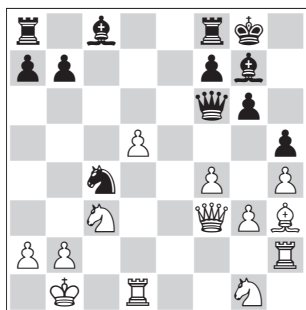
This is the only move, as 20.♙e2 ♙g4! (20...♙f5!?) 21.♗d3 ♙f5 22.♗d2 ♗ac8 23.♘f3 ♘xd5! 24.♗xd5 ♗xc3+ loses quickly.

20. ... ♖b6-c4

This was McShane's intention when playing 19...h5. Now, the pressure on b2 is very strong, and Black needs only a few moves in order to build up a decisive attack. However, White, in the little

time he has, builds a very strong defensive cocoon around his king, which proves to be surprisingly tough to crack.

21. ♔c1-b1



21. ... ♖f8-e8

When I came across this game, the first thing that came to my mind was the move 21...♗xb2!?, which, surprisingly, all of the commentators (McShane, Rowson, Krasenkow) fail to mention. Obviously, McShane's move was no worse, but 21...♗xb2 certainly deserves attention. It doesn't take long to see that both of White's options lead to a bad position:

A) 22.♗xb2?! ♖b6+ 23.♔c1 ♕xc3! 24.♖xc3 ♕xh3 is horrible for White, as 25.♖xh3 or 25.♗xh3 both fail to 25...♖ac8, winning the queen;

B) 22.♖xb2! is much better, although the position after 22...♕xh3 (not 22...♕g4!?, which was recommended in my previous analysis of the game, since the position after 23.♕xg4 hxg4 24.♖d3 ♖xc3 25.♖xc3 ♕xc3 26.♖xb7 is completely unclear) 23.♗xh3 ♖f5+ 24.♖c2 ♖ac8! 25.♖d3 ♖xh3 is without doubt excellent for Black. White's king is very weak, while his pawn structure is in ruins.

22. ♖f3-d3 ♖f6-a6

The ambitious 22...b5?! looks interesting, but gives White a chance to bail out with 23.d6 ♕xh3 24.♗xh3 ♖ad8 25.d7 ♖e3 26.♗d5! ♖xb2+ 27.♖xb2 ♖xd3 28.♖xd3 ♗xb2 29.♖d2 ♗c4 with a repetition of moves. McShane obviously wanted more than a draw.

23. ♕h3xc8

This is the only move, as playing 23.♕f1 fails to 23...♕f5, winning the queen.

23. ... ♖a8xc8

The intermezzo move 23...♖e3? failed to 24.♕xb7! ♖xb7 25.♖xc4 ♖xc3 26.♖e4 ♖xg3 27.♗f3, and it is White who has an edge.

24. ♖h2-e2

This should have lost quickly, but one can't recommend anything better. The only other viable move is 24.♗ge2, but Black wins quickly with 24...♖b6 and following 25...♖b4 White's position collapses like a house of cards.

24. ... ♖e8xe2

25. ♗g1xe2 ♖a6-b6

Now, b2 is weakened and the g7 bishop starts sinking its teeth into the c3 knight. White doesn't have time to consolidate because Black makes threats on every move!

26. b2-b3 ♗c4-a3+

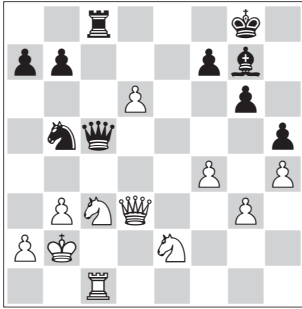
27. ♔b1-b2 ♗a3-b5

28. ♖d1-c1 ♖b6-c5

29. d5-d6!?

This is White's only chance, although he is already lost. Other moves lost to

simpler refutations, although I found the variation 29.♔b1 ♘a3+ (29...♘xc3+!?) 30.♔b2 ♚e8 31.d6 ♘b5 rather amusing.



McShane, who so far has played the game brilliantly, now misses an extremely simple winning tactic and plays:

29. ... ♘b5xc3?

It's amazing that McShane missed not one but two forced wins, which were not at all hard to calculate:

A) 29...♚a3+ 30.♔b1 ♘xc3+ 31.♚xc3 ♙xc3 32.♘xc3 ♚c5;

B) 29...♚e8 30.d7 ♚xe2+ 31.♚xe2 ♙xc3+ 32.♔c2 ♘a3+, mating in two moves. After McShane's lapse, Kortchnoi gets a chance to consolidate, and unfortunately, McShane will have to convert his advantage all over again.

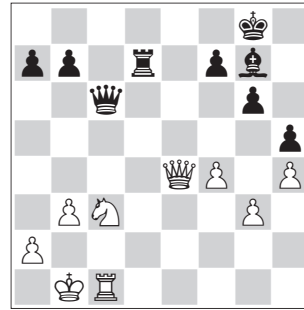
30. ♘e2xc3 ♚c8-d8

31. d6-d7 ♚c5-c6

Black still has a big advantage, but the game is prolonged for another 25 moves. This game was, in grandmaster Andy Soltis's words, "A Botched Brilliance."

32. ♔b2-b1 ♚d8xd7

33. ♚d3-e4



33. ... ♚d7-c7!

McShane isn't demoralized by his slip and again makes an exceptionally strong move. Krasenkow correctly mentions that instead, the tempting 33...♚d6 would have led to a perpetual after 34.♚d1 ♚f6 35.♚e8+ ♔h7 36.♚xd7 ♚xc3 37.♚d2 ♚a1+ 38.♔c2 ♚xa2+ 39.♔d1 ♚xb3+ 40.♔e2 ♚xg3 41.♚xf7. The endgame will be lost for White due to the chronic weakness of the f4-g3-h4 pawn structure.

34. ♚e4xc6 ♚c7xc6

35. ♘c3-d5 ♚c6xc1+

36. ♔b1xc1 ♙g7-d4!

Although Kortchnoi has defended against the attack, the ending is completely hopeless. Black will centralize his king, and the attack on both flanks will prove deadly for White.

Kortchnoi tries hard to find counter-chances, but in such positions, the tandem of King with long-range Bishop is practically always superior to the King + Knight tandem.

37. ♔c1-d2 ♔g8-f8

38. ♘d5-e3 ♔f8-e7

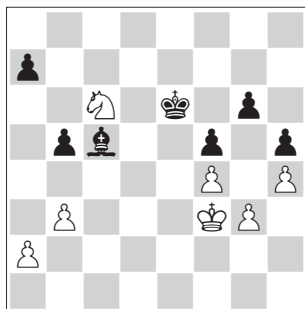
39. ♔d2-d3 ♙d4-c5

40. ♔d3-e4 ♔e7-f6

41. ♘e3-c4 ♔f6-e6

Black has centralized his king, and it becomes clear that White cannot defend both flanks at once.

42. ♖c4-a5 f7-f5+
 43. ♔e4-f3 b7-b5
 44. ♘a5-c6



44. ... ♔e6-d5!
 45. ♘c6-e5 ♔d5-d4
 46. ♘e5xg6 ♔d4-c3
 47. ♘g6-e5 a7-a5
 48. ♚f3-e2 ♙c5-b6
 49. ♘e5-c6 ♚c3-b2
 50. b3-b4 a5-a4
 51. ♚e2-d3 ♚b2xa2
 52. ♚d3-c2 ♚a2-a3
 53. ♘c6-e7 ♚a3xb4
 54. ♘e7xf5 a4-a3
 55. g3-g4 h5xg4
 56. h4-h5 g4-g3

White resigned.

Let's quickly summarize the most important points we have learned from this game:

- A. Usually, in dynamic openings such as the Grünfeld, making a lot of moves with one piece is not a good idea (McShane's ...♘c6 – ...♘b8 gave Kortchnoi a rather unpleasant initiative).
- B. When you are under an opening attack but your opponent has not yet developed most of his pieces, look for blows in the center that will open up files and diagonals for your pieces and disrupt the coordination of your opponent's.
- C. Whenever your opponent is hanging on the precipice, look for finishing blows. If you procrastinate with the decisive invasion, your opponent may often have time to consolidate his position (in this particular endgame, Black was still winning, but in other cases the defending side might manage to escape into a drawn or even better endgame).
- D. Usually, in knight vs. bishop endgames with pawns on both flanks, the knight has a very hard time since it cannot defend both flanks at the same time, while the bishop can attack them simultaneously.

In the next game, White produces an incredible piece sacrifice out of the blue, and the only thing he will seem to get is a space advantage!