

Ray Devenny: 2005 Master Class

Isolated Pawns

30th July 2005

(notes: Mark Newman)

The session started with Ray being asked questions from the audience.

1. How did you start in chess?

I started late I was 16 years old and had no interest in chess. However some of my friends at Coleraine Inst wanted to setup a chess club. The headmaster Dr Humphries explained that they needed ten signatories to start a club. I signed up - the next thing was that they expected me to turn up! I turned up and caught the bug. We were all roughly the same level - no one good to teach us. Joined the local club at Coleraine Mr McKane. Became the school champion and won the school v staff competition.

{ learnt from Ron Henderson that he had help start the Coleraine club - small world }

We missed out from having a strong player to coach us or to play against. Went onto Trinity College Dublin where shock, surprise I wasn't the strongest player.

What have been the most enjoyable moments in your chess career?

Winning the school championships. This was my first triumph. Psychologically it was good. It was a prestigious thing to win and my first achievement. Next has to be winning the Irish Championships in 1977.

What do you put this great achievement down to?

Luck! The best players are consistent all the time. They train and 'indoctrinate'. Most players are good from time to time. I had my fair share of luck. My highest rating was 2,200 - possibly a little low for the Irish Champion. In 76, 78 I was expecting a result. Hadn't planned to play in the 77 Irish had played in a Belfast tournament and done abysmally. Arthur Pinkerton called and asked if I was going to Cork, if I was would I look after a couple of youngsters who wanted to play and needed a lift and looking after - two of these were David Houston and Keith Allen. So changed mind to help out. Set off in my car and came back loaded with trophies! Did I study - yes independently on my own.

What is your favourite chess book?

My first book. Chess Traps, Pitfalls and Swindles by Fred Reinfeld. Not always the easiest to read but an enjoyable book. You learn more in one hour of play with a strong player than you do studying.

What are your views on the Ulster Chess Union and junior chess?

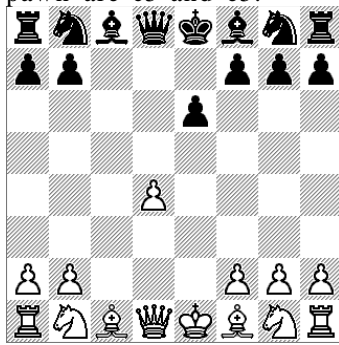
Good question. Worried with the general circumstances with the split from the Irish Chess Union. Chess not strong in Ulster. Teachers face difficulties from the pressures of work. You need the impetus to play chess and this in the past has come from enthusiastic chess teachers like Brian Thorpe. Teachers go for high profile sports - Rugby, football. You need a higher profile for chess. Publicity, sponsorship. TV and radio. Also intensive training sessions. The sad thing is that Girls chess in Ulster is non-existent.

Mark Newman gave a summary of last week's talk by Michael Waters.

Ray's Talk :

I wish to give credit to a good book by Alexander Barburin "Winning Pawn Structures". Not an easy book but an excellent study. We must know our own deficiencies. It is easy to take things literally. "isolated pawns are bad" as gospel - in squash was taught don't cross the ball across the court - then played a person who did and felt it most unfair. Alex's book corrects the assumption that isolated pawns are bad. Theme is the isolated queens pawn (IQP) is it a liability or an asset. "Here today gone tomorrow".

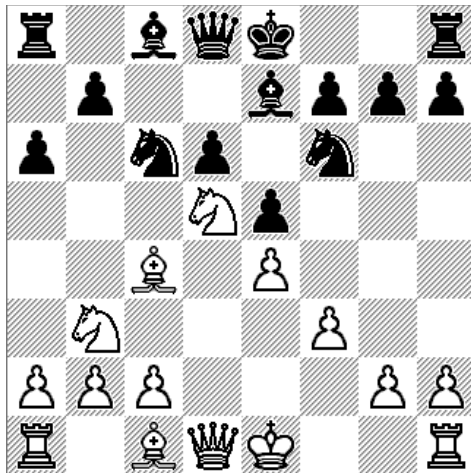
An isolated pawn on d4 - the c and e files are open. Key squares controlled by the pawn are c5 and e5.



Question do you as black or white allow a IQP to happen? The vital thing to consider is development. With a IQP it is easier to get development there is potential. A Grandmaster will judge this very finely. If you dont have better development do not allow a IQP. White perhaps can get away with it but black a move behind could quickly have problems. Two things to consider when analysing a IQP:

1. The theme is "development".
2. how easy can the IQP be attacked and defended.

Lets look in general terms first - players under 2000 tend to look a move ahead ad hoc thinking. Grand Masters having a broader perspective on positional themes, looking for patterns. As Micheal Waters said last week it is good to play different openings to get varied positional themes. Remember pawns dictate the play. We tend to think that pieces do this. But pawns cant move back and are 'fixed'. Many a game has been lost because good moves were played but were not relevant to the pawn structure. "The pawn structure dictates play".



Black playsNxd5

White plays exd5 - there has been a change in pawn structure. White needs to attack queen side with this change. Black can attack king side. White realised to late. Back was allowed f5.

"pawn structure dicatates play". Look for themes in the position.

Where does white put their pieces? Knights on c3 and f3. Bishops? - kings bishop where does depend on specific situation. On e2 can get in the way of the open file. On d3 it takes away protection from the IQP, however the threat of Bxh7+ can indirectly protect it. The c4 square is more preferred, the IQP is protected the bishop controls the d5 square preparing pawn to d5. If black pawn on c6 rather than e6 the diagonal a2- h8 is powerful. Where to put the queens bishop? Temptation to put it on e3 defending the IQP but passive and blocks the half open e file. The g5 square pins the knight and threatens it the knight which provides cover for the d5 square. On the f4 square can hit the queen.

Where to put the queen? Can go to e2. Can easily go anywhere depends on position.

What todo with the rooks?? One GM felt this was perhaps the most difficult question in any game - where to put the Rooks. Rooks on d1 and e1 if the kings rook goes to d1 you restrict the queens rook to c1. Or Rooks on c1 and e1. This may encourage exchanges down the c-file which would be a draw back white wishes to

keep from swapping. Rooks on e1 and f1 preparing for f4- f5 push. Most popular is rooks on d1 and e1.

For Black where do the pieces go?

Knight on f6. The king castled. Where to put the Kings bishop? The favourite is d6 (possibly not the best) good if black is attacking but blocks attack on IQP. On e7 it breaks the pin on the knight - keeps attack on the pawn. Sometimes in Nimzo / bogo you play Bb4 pings attacks the knight covering d5.

Where to put the queens knight? D7 or c6 there's give and take. You can attack the pawn or defend the d5 push. Nc6 attacks the pawn but doesnt stop d5 Also blocks the c file for the rook. Nd2 takes attack off the pawn but if can come out to Nb6 can gain time by attacking white bishop on c4 and covers the d5 square making it impregnable. That leaves the queens bishop? Choice you can finchetto on b7 or play d7. Bd7 you block the attack on IQP but it takes two moves to finchetto. Bd7 allows the queens rook to c8 but is vulnerable to whites Ne5 but supports the pawn on e6 (theme white can attack the two pawns e6, f7). Bb7 can swap for knight on f3 removing support from IQP also covers d5 and leaves c-file free but takes an extra move. If extended finchetto with b5 after a6 will leave c5 under whites control.

Where does black put the Queen? Very much depends on position.

The Rooks - Kings rook to e8 or d8 the latter attacks the pawn. The move Re8 perhaps more subtle defends e6 allows the king bishop back to f8 and defends the bishop if on e7. The kings rook seldom stays at home.

Where does the queens rook go? The squares c8 and d8 are good candidates. If Rc1 for white, black may look for exchange by Rc8 with swap of pieces black removes the pressure in the centre.

IQP can be obtained in many different openings :

Nimzo complex

Queens gambit accepted (Not a bad opening - Barburin plays it)

French Tarrash

Queens gambit Tarrash (anything with Tarrach in it - the theme c5 tends to lead to IQP)

Caro Cann (Panov Attack)

French exchange

The c3 Sicilian

Alexander Barburin likes to play queen pawn openings. Wise word on choice. Look for pawn formations that suit your style. I like blocked pawn formations. The Kings Indian and the French, solid base, I dislike open positions, too many choices leads to dithering between moves. What pawn formations do you like? Do you play well? - sometimes you may fancy an idea which doesn't suite your style in pawn positions. I always fancied the Dutch defence got attached to it. Got a good position after 10- 12 moves but then 5 moves latter everything seemed to go wrong. Decided not my style of pawn position.

The weaknesses of IQP

Look from blacks point of view playing against it. What should your plan of campaign be? Suggest four (3 1/2) point plan :

1. you want to simplify (exchange pieces) not all may be good but in general exchanging should be good. White uses the pawn to attack - the less pieces that less chance of getting an attack. Eases the pressure - a good policy against any attack.
2. stop the pawn. Do not let it move. Blockade it. Control d5.
3. attack it - keep white occupied then cant concentrate on mating you.
4. Destroy / capture the IQP. This doesnt always succeed but will pin down white into defending the pawn and may allow black once white has committed to its defence switching the attack to something else (typical theme - "diversion").

In the endgame the isolated pawn is not always a loss.

The 2 weakness rule of endings - endings with one weakness can be defended, endings with two weaknesses cannot. If only weakness is isolated pawn can defend. If playing against it look to create a second weakness - can concentrate on the weakness and use it to create a second.

As white what are the strengths of the IQP?

White needs to attack with it. There are recurring patterns. Whites strength can be his familiarity with these patterns. The armoury of weapons includes :

1. the push of d5 can be devastating to black. Gets rid of the weakness and opens up the position. Opening of positions favours the player with most development. The attack needs to be calculated. Barburin has chapter on d5 break. You can improve your calculations by being familiar with themes. Bishop on e7 can be attacked. Be careful if you can play d5 play it dont miss the opportunity.
2. The rook lift. It is common for white to move Re3 - then Rh3 (or possibly double the rooks).
3. Queen lift - similar to 2. Qd3, Qh3 attacking h7 - can prompt black to provide a weakness h6 of pawn structure for white to attack. If d4 is safe can play f4- f54.
4. The pawns on e6, f7 are a potential weakness



ie Nxf7 Kxf7, Qxe6+

If black plays pawn h6 red rag to a bull. Qh3 can even sacrifice the bishop. The pawn to g6 also weakens the pawn structure white could play h4 provide the d4 pawn was safe.

5. The rooks have more space.

Notes : Queen side play - Black a6, b5. White Knight on c5. Can switch from queen side to king side. If the d- pawn retakes on e5 this may not necessarily be good for white. Black may generate play on the now open d file or bxc3 black switches

attack to c4,c3. These last moves transform the pawn structure.

6. White can sacrifice the pawn for development.

These are the attacking weapons for white.

To summarise some key things :

The problems facing black are to protect d5. On the king side to not weaken the pawns with g6, h6. The choice between attacking the pawn and blockading it.

For white some questions - queen bishop where will it be placed, the rooks where ? when to exchange on d5. If black piece on d5. How to exchange, whether to play d5.

Before Ray went through some example games we had an excellent lunch provided by Drew Ferguson.

This first game is QIP from blacks point of view. Karpov is black and is an expert at the art of simplification, Korchnoi is white and an attacking player.

Korchnoi Karpov

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 1. c4 | e6 |
| 2. Nc3 | d5 |
| 3. d4 | Be7 |
| 4. Nf3 | Nf6 |
| 5. Bg5 | h6 |
| 6. Bh4 | O-O |
| 7. Rc1 | dx |
| 8 e3 | c5 |
| 9. Bxc4 | cx |
| 10. exd | |

To free blacks game

Question go for IQP or not ie Nxd4 (perhaps not best)
Now at the basic isolated queens pawn (IQP) position.

11. O-O Nc6

12. Bxe7 Nh5 black choose to simplyfy

13 Bb3 Nxe7 The choice of the black knight means d5 is covered.

 Nf5 Recommend d5 with equality or Re1 simple development

Covers d5

14. Ne5 simplyfing	Bd7	Black doesnt mind the Knight bishop swap -
15. Qe2 simplifyfication	Rc8	Black puts the rooks facing - a future swap and
16. Ne4		Forcing black to simplyfy - exactly what black wants!
	Nxe4	
17. Qxe4	Bc6	Another forced swap
18. Nxc6 fixed.	Rxc6	If white exchanges rooks take with the pawn and the IQP is
19. Rc3	Qd6	
20. g3 structure	Rd8	Some of the hardest decisions are to change the pawn
21. Rd1 attacking	Rb6	black is attacking the pawn and preventing white from
22. Qe1	Qd7	
23. Rcd3	Rd6	
24. Qd4	Qc6	offering swap
25. Qf4 pawn	Nd5	Karpov in typical style neutralises everything then attacks the
26. Qd2	Qb6	The pawn is going.

Heres an example from Botnovick - played the French and Dutch defences - it is one thing to know the moves it is another to know (understand) what works. "it doesnt work is hard to explain experience tells". Botnovick is white.

1. Nf3	d5	
2. c4	e6	
3. b3	Nf6	
4. Bb2	Be7	
5. e3	O- O	
6. Nc3	c5	
7. cxd	Nxd5	
8. NxN	exd	
9. d5	cxd	
10. Qxd4	Bf6	
11. Qd2	Nc6	
12. Be2	Be6	
13. O- O	BxB	
14. QxB		Is the black IQP strong or weak - pieces have been
exchanged and who has the development?		
	Qa5	
15. Rcd1	Rad8	
16. Rd2	Rd7	
17. Rfd1	Rfd8	
18. h3	h6	not much happening strengthen position
19. Ne5	NxN	More swapping
20. QxN		Strong central queen
	Q- c5	bring offside queen more into play
21..Bf3	b6	protect the queen
22. Qb2	Rc8	
23. Qe5	Rcd8	
24. Rd4	a5	
25. g4		switch of attack as black tide up defending the pawn
	Qc6	
26. g5		black cant go Qd6 as QxQ then e4
	hxg	recommend black Qc2 aiming for g6+ although white probably
still better		
27. Qxg	f6	still Qc2
28. Qg6	Bf7	
29. Qg3		White is better. Simplify and switch attack.

The theme of if you can move d5 do it. Alexander Barburin v Joe Ryan '96 Kilkenny

1. d4	d5	
2. c5	dx c	
3. Nf3	c5	
4. e3	cx d	
5. Bxc4		cant do dx e as Bxf7+
	Qc7	
6. Qb3		not a happy square for the queen (Barburin being
critical of own game)		
	e6	
7. exd	Nf6	
8. Nc3	a6	
9. Bg5	Be7	black is not attacking IQP. Be7 is not relevant to pawn
		structure there are more pressing matters than defending the knight - black could
		be happy with BxN splitting pawns - should prefer to put pressure on QP with Nc6
ie. 9.	Nc6	
		10. BxN Na5
		11. Qa4+ Bd7
		12. Be5 Qb6
		13. Qc2 NxB Better
		for black a Be7 is a deceptive natural move but not
		good
10. d5		Take the opportunity. If hadnt the next move black
		develops the knight with threats and things swing
		against white
	exd	
11. Bxd		Take with what? Wants to keep pieces on the board
this stops NxB		
	O-O	
12. O-O	Nc6	
13. Rfe1	Bf5	
14. Rac1	Na5	feels slightly better for white open files more
active.		
15. Qa4	Nc6	
16. BxNc6	bxB	
17. Nd4	Ng4	Counter play
18. NxBf5	Qxh2+	
19. Kf1	BxB	
20. QxN	Qh1+	
21. Ke2	Rae8+	
22. Kf3	RxR	
23. QxB	g6	
24. Qh6	QxQ	
25. NxQ+	Kg7	
26. RxR		

GM's tend to be self-critical - they need to analyse games quickly. Critical analysis gains insight into own games - they then publish this analysis so contemporaries can comment. Need a climate of this.

Alexander Barburin v Stephen Brady

1. d4	d5	
2. c4	dx c	
3. Nf3	Nf6	
4. e3	e6	
5. Bxc	c5	
6. Qe2	cx d	
7. exd	Nc6	hit pawn

8. Be3			Perhaps should have sacrificed for development.
		8. O-O	Nxd4
		9. Nxd4	Qxd4
		10. Nc3	
	Be7		
9. O-O	O-O		
10. Nc3		Nb4	covers d5. Stops queen from shifting
11. Ne5			since Knight has moved
	Bd7		
12. Rac1		Rc8	if black playedBc6 13. Nxc6 bxc6 fixes the
pawn (=)			
13. Bg5			the right square - as opposed to e3
	Bc6		
14. Nxf7		Rxf7	one of the themes hit the e6,f7 pawns
15. Bxe6	Bd7		
16. Bxf7+	Kxf7		
17. Re1			develop a big piece - no quick mates
			a3 would win b7 pawn
	Bf5		or Nc6 then d5
18. Bxf6		Bxf6	
19. Qb5		Nd3	double attack
20. Qxf5		Nxc1	
21. Rxc1		Kg8	
22. Rd1		Rc7	
23. Nd5		Rc4	
24. Qe6+	Black resigned		

Eugene O'Hare to John Strawbridge - "more brains than books!!"

Growth in chess publishing. Pre the 60's stronger players found it easier as theory wasn't so well published. Hard to get information. Now adays the every important game is published a wealth of theory. Strong players find it harder have to work - "even a rabbit has sharp teeth" - 30 years ago rabbits were rabbits.

Raymond Keene v Tony Miles

This game has a rook lift and a sacrifice '75 Hastings.

1. Nf3	Nf6		
2. c4	c5		
3. Nc3	Nc6		
4. e3	e6		
5. d4	d5		
6. cxd	Nxd5		
7. Bd3	cxg3		
8. exd	Be7		
9. O-O	O-O		
10. Re1	Nf6	This black move is unnecessarily defensive	
11. Ng5	Nb4	or	h6
		12. Be3	NB4
		13. Bb1	b6
		14. Qd2	Re8
		15. a3	Nc6
		16. Bxh6	gxh
		17. Qxh6	white will follow with Ne5 and Rc3
12. Bb1	b6		
13. Ne5	Bb7		
14. Re3	g6	Rook uplift - g6 forced as Rh3	
threatened also a3 followed		by Qd3	
15. Rg3	Rc8??	Ignoring kingside perhaps better	

			Nc6	
			16 Bh6	Qxd4	
			17. Qxd4	Nxd4	
			18. Bxf8		Bxf8
16. Bh6		Re8			
17. a3	Nc6				
18. Nxc6	hxc6				
19. Bxc6	fxg6				
20. Qb1		Ne5			
21. dxe5		Ne4			
22. NcN		Kh7			
23. Nf6+	BcN				
24. Qxc6+	Kh8				
25. Bg7+					