Wow! GM Maurice Ashley’s Drawback concept strikes again. In week five in the USCL again I faced another opponent who is about 200 rating points higher than me. Beating GM Gulko was a dream come true, but then I am must be living the dream with my win against IM Dmitry Schneider (2520)! Checkout my game with Dmitry; <http://www.uschessleague.com/games/schneidersimpson10.htm>

I am playing with the black pieces and the opening is classified as the Sicilian Dragon, specifically the Chinese Dragon variation. The signature move of the variation is 10...Rb8. Black's plan is well known in that the intent of Rb8 is to push the b-pawn and white's general plan is to attack black's Kingside, typically with the h-pawn.

White played 11.g4 and from what I know of the history of these positions, timing is everything.

The side that breaks through first usually wins. I concluded the drawback to g4 was that it directly weakened the f-pawn, but more importantly it was too slow. Well the next couple of moves would determine the middle game fight.

11….b5

Black now has the initiative and the pressure is on white to find the drawback in 11…b5.

I concluded that the drawback to b5 was the pawn itself. Could white prove to be better if the pawn was captured? But the drawback to capturing the pawn would be that black’s forces would come together nicely along the b-file and the a1-h8 diagonal.

What is now very interesting is that the concept of the drawback inherent in each move extends to greater considerations within the position.

12.Nxc6 Bxc6

The exchange of knights appears to be consistent with 11.g4, in that my knight on c6 no longer exists and thus, the natural Ne5, hitting the weak f-pawn doesn't exist for me. Also this knight usually is required to counter the potential of white’s Bishops, specifically the light squared Bishop.

However, one of the drawbacks to the exchange of knight is that my light squared Bishop was forced to a better square. Also, White must now find a good square for the Bishop on c4. But whichever square the Bishop moves to a drawback can most certainly be found.

13.Bd5

And the drawback is that after 13...b4 the knight must move back to either b1 or e2 and white's position just comes undone.

13..... b4

14.Ne2 Bxd5

15.exd5 Qa4

16.Kb1 Rb5

The resultant position is very difficult to play for white. Almost all of the black pieces are coordinating against the white King.

17.c4 bxc3

18.Nxc3 Rb4

Moving the rook to b4 in order to add influence to the d4 square, a square which the knight was just influencing, provides possible tactics.

19.Bh6

I thought for a long time at this point because I really wanted to play Ne4. I found myself indulged in that old method of "if then statements" and with very little clarity at the end.

In fact I believe white would simply be better after Nxe4 accepting the sacrifice.

So, what’s the drawback to 19.Bh6 and the answer is again timing! I can simply attack the b-pawn more times than white can defend it.

19.....Rfb8

20.Bxg7 Qa3

21.Ka1 Rxb2

22.Qc1 Kxg7

The rest of the game centered on exploiting white's weaknesses without getting into trouble.

23.Rd4

The drawback is that the rook is not protected and thus I can use it to regroup.

23.....Qc5

24.Rd3 Qf2

25.h4 Rc2

26.Qa3 Nd7

27.Nd4 Qe2

The drawback of the knight moving to e4 was that it allowed my Queen to improve its position to e2. The e2 square was once controlled by the knight at c3.

28. h5? Rxa2+

29.Qxa2 Qxd3

30.h6+ Kg8

31.Rc1

No need to grab pawns. Black is up two pawns with lots of good pressure.

31... Qd4+

32.Nc3 Nc5

33.Rc2 Rb6

34Rb2 Qxc3

0-1