

Chiu Yu Kuen (Hong Kong) vs Mai Thanh Minh (Vietnam)

Annotated by IGM Zhao GuoRong, translated by Felix Tan

This is one of the brilliant games from the 7th World Xiangqi Championships. Playing Red is Chiu Yu Kuen, the top player of Hong Kong. With his prowess in mid-game, Chiu has won many local and international tournaments. His opponent is the veteran Vietnamese master Mai Thanh Minh. The Vietnam team with Mai's presence has ever put a tremendous pressure on the China players in international championships.

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|----|------|------|----|------|------|
| 1. | C2=5 | H8+7 | 2. | H2+3 | R9=8 |
| 3. | R1=2 | H2+3 | 4. | P7+1 | P7+1 |
| 5. | R2+6 | C8=9 | 6. | R2=3 | C9-1 |

Both sides sail on charted waters, arriving at the typical Chariot Exchange Declined variation in the Screen Horse defence.

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| 7. | H8+7 | A4+5 | 8. | H7+6 | |
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Red opted for the safer course to bring out his left Horse. This line of play gives Red a relatively easier control of the battle development.

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| 8. | | C9=7 | 9. | R3=4 | R8+5 |
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A popular continuation, hitting at once at Red's Horse outpost. Both sides will then fight for domination of the riverbank. Other options here are R8+8 and E3+5.

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| 10. | C8+2 | E3+5 | 11. | C5=6 | P3+1 |
| 12. | P3+1 | R8-1 | | | |

Correct. R8=7 would cost Black a piece after E7+5 R7+1, C8-1.

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| 13. | P7+1 | E5+3 | 14. | C8=7 | H3+4 |
| 15. | R4+2 | | | | |

Black's H3+4 is a vigorous move to contest the control of the riverbank, employing the tactic of sacrifice and recapture. Red's R4+2 is a new variation appeared in the past two years. The older continuation is normally C6+3 P7+1, C6+3 C7=4, C7=3 R8=7, E7+5 C4+2, Red has slight edge.

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| 15. | | C2-1 | 16. | C6+3 | C2=6 |
| 17. | C6=2 | H7+8 | | | |

Two alternatives for Black are:

- (a) ... R1=4, H6+4 H7+8, P3+1 H8+7, E7+5 Red dictating the battle.
(b) ... P7+1, C2+1 R1=4, H6+7 P7+1, H3-1 Red has material advantage, but his pieces are not well deployed, Black can put up a fight.

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|-----|------|------|-----|------|------|
| 18. | P3+1 | H8-7 | 19. | P3+1 | C7+2 |
| 20. | H3+4 | R1=4 | 21. | H6+5 | H7+5 |
| 22. | H4+5 | E3-5 | 23. | R9=8 | R4+6 |

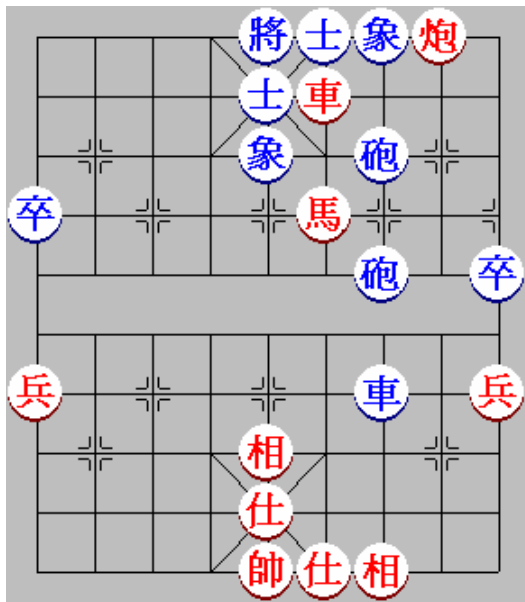
The situation is now calmer after a series of exchange, but Red 's arms combination is slightly better than Black.

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| 24. | E7+5 | R4=5 | 25. | H5+7 | A5-4 |
| 26. | R8+6 | C7-1 | 27. | H7-6 | R5-2 |
| 28. | R8=6 | C7-1 | 29. | A6+5 | C+=6 |
| 30. | H6+8 | P9+1 | 31. | R6=4 | C6=9 |

Cool-headed move. If A4+5, Red wins a Cannon handsomely with R4+1 A5+6 then H8+6.

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| 32. | R4+2 | R5-1 | 33. | H8-6 | C7+3 |
| 34. | H6+4 | C9=7 | 35. | C7=2 | A4+5 |
| 36. | C2+2 | R5+3 | 37. | C2+3 | R5=7 |

Mai Thanh Minh



Chiu Yu Kuen

As in the diagram, Black's Chariot move to threaten checkmate backfired! The correct reply is C--=6, then H4+2 R5=7, H2+3 C7+5, E5-3 R7=6, the position is about equal.

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| 38. | R4=5 | K5=4 | 39. | E3+1 | R7=1 |
| 40. | R5-1 | R1+3 | 41. | E5-7 | R1=3 |
| 42. | A5-6 | R3=4 | 43. | K5+1 | R4-6 |
| 44. | H4+2 | | | | |

A ruin position, and Black resigned.

Kon Island (Hong Kong) vs Lay Kan Hock (West Malaysia)

Annotated by IGM Xu Tian Hong, translated by Felix Tan

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|---------|------|---------|------|
| 1. C2=5 | H8+7 | 2. H2+3 | P7+1 |
| 3. R1=2 | R9=8 | 4. R2+6 | H2+3 |
| 5. P5+1 | A4+5 | 6. P5+1 | P3+1 |

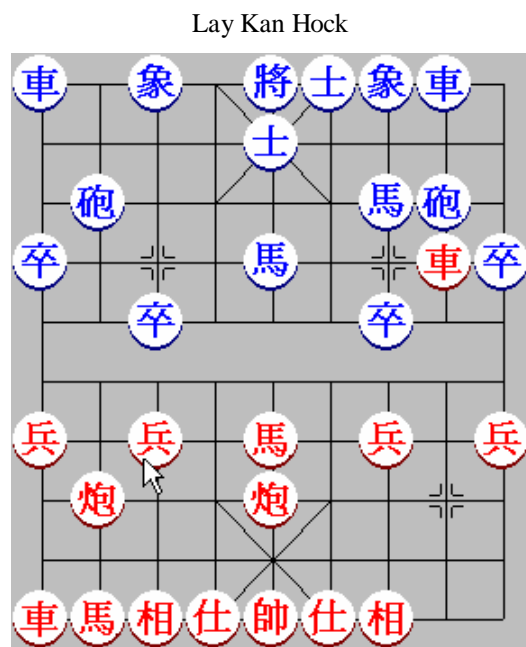
Red plays the Central Pawn attack against Black's Screen Horse defence. This opening had been an old time favourite, commonly known as the Scraper. However, as Red has yet to develop its left wing, attacking from the centre by brute force may not be effective.

7. P5+1 H3+5

If Red plays C8+4 instead (H8+7 will be answered by C2+1, R2-2 C8=9, equal) Black may reply with P1+1 followed with P1+3 chasing away the Cannon. Black can put up a good fight.

8. H3+5 (diagram)

As in the diagram, Black could consider H5+4, preventing Red to link the Horses with H8+7. If Red continues with H5+6, then C2+5! A6+5 R1=2, C8=6 (if H6+4, then H4+5, H4+3 K5=4, R2=6 C5=4, C8=6 H5+7, K5=6 K4+1, the game turns in Black's favour) C5+2, and Black seizes the initiative.



Kon Island

8. H5+6 9. H8+7 E3+5

A tardy move. Black should post his Cannon on that spot instead of the Elephant. After R9=8 R1=2, the tension in the centre will be relieved. To Red's continuation C8+4, C5+5 trading off the Cannons to Black's contentment.

10. R9+1 C8=9 11. R2+3 H7-8
12. R9=4 H6+4

The Horse has no scope, it is better to exchange it for Red's Cannon.

After C8=5 R1=4, Black's position would be more solid than the actual game.

13. H6+6 R1=4 14. H7+5 C2+2
15. C8=6 C2=4 16. H5+6 R4=2
17. H6+4 C9=6 18. H4-5

Now there is no way to stop the rampaging H5+6, Black has to concede the game.

Black lost in less than 20 moves, mainly because of his poor handling of the opening. The motto of this game: the importance of opening cannot be over emphasised.

(Translated by Felix Tan)

BGN World Xiangqi Challenge (Qualifier-Round 2)

Liu Dianzhong vs. Xu Tianhong (Red wins)

Commentary by Ge Weipu

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|---------|------|---------|------|
| 1. C2=5 | H8+7 | 2. H2+3 | R9=8 |
| 3. R1=2 | H2+3 | 4. H8+9 | P7+1 |
| 5. C8=7 | R1=2 | 6. R9=8 | C8+4 |
| 7. R8+6 | C2=1 | 8. R8=7 | R2+2 |
| 9. R7-2 | H3+2 | | |

It is more stable for Black to play E3+5.

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| 10. R7=8 | H2-4 | 11. R8=6 | ... |
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In previous actual competitions, Red can also play P9+1, then E7+5, R8+3, H4-2, R2+1. Red still has the initiative in hand.

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| 11. ... | H4+2 | 12. C7+7 | A4+5 |
| 13. R6=7 | C1+4 | 14. R2+1 | R2=4 |

Black plays Chariot sideward to take E-eye position. If he played C8=5 to take the enemy's central Pawn, Red would play C5+4, H7+5, R2+8, H5+4, H3+5, C1=5, R2-7. It leads to the situation that Red has the material advantage while Black has the initiative in his offensive. Both sides have scruples.

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| 15. P3+1 | P7+1 | 16. R2=8 | P7+1 |
| 17. R8+4 | P7+1 | 18. C5=8 | ... |

Red plays his Cannon to the 8th file to concentrate his force and attack at Black's right wing. It is a good move.

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| 18 ... | E7+5 | 19. R8=6 | R4=2 |
| 20. C7=9! | ... | | |

After sacrificing his Cannon, the power of Red 9th file Horse is brought into full play. It is important move for Red to make the assault.

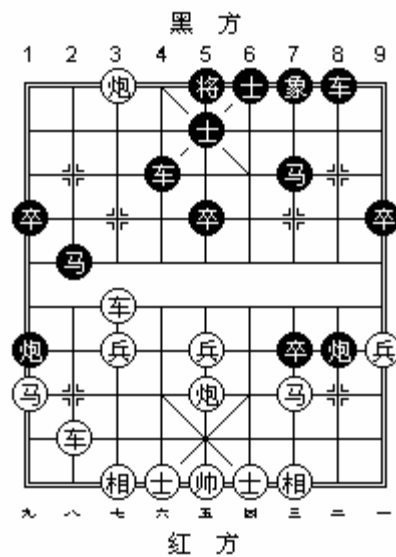
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| 20. ... | C1-6 | 21. R6+3! | C1=4 |
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It is better for Black to play R2-2 for strengthening his defense. If Red played H9+8, Black could play R2=4, then H8+7, H7+6. Black can still have some strength in his defense.

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| 22. H9+8 | R2=4 | 23. H8+7! | R4-1 |
| 24. C8+7 | C4+9 | 25. H7+6 | C8-5 |
| 26. R7+5 | A5-4 | 27. K5=6 | H7+6 |
| 28. C8=9 | H6+5 | | |

Black now finds it difficult in his defense. For example, if he played K5+1, Red would play C9-1, then K5-1, H6-4, C8=6, R7=6, K5+1, R6-1, K5-1, R6=4. Red is sure to win.

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| 29. R7-2 | K5+1 | 30. C9-1 | K5-1 |
| 31. H6-4 | C8=6 | 32. R7=5 | A4+5 |
| 33. C9=4 | H5+3 | 34. K6+1 | Red wins. |



BGN World Xiangqi Challenge (Finals - Game 1)

Xu Yingchuan Vs. Tao Hanming (Red wins)

Commentary by Kuo Liping

1. C2=5 H8+7 2. H2+3 P7+1

This is the first game played between the two Grand Masters in the finals of the BGN World Xiangqi Challenge. The Qualifier had a participation of 32 players. Through 4 rounds of a hard-fought battle, they finally entered into the finals. Now, only two moves were just played. However, from his move of P7+1, we can see that Black was well prepared for this game. By playing P7+1, it can prevent Red from taking the opening of "the Central Cannon and the 3rd file Pawn", or the opening of "edge Horse, 5th and 7th file Cannons", forcing the game lead to the opening as designed by him.

3. R1=2 R9=8 4. R2+6 H2+3 5. H8+7 P3+1 6. R9+1 C2+1

Now, the game has become the opening of "Central Cannon, File and Rank Chariots vs. Screen Horses". Black's C2+1 is a very popular variation nowadays. If he played A4+5, then R9=6, H7+6, P5+1, R7+1, R2=4, H6+7, H3+5, Red would have the initiative.

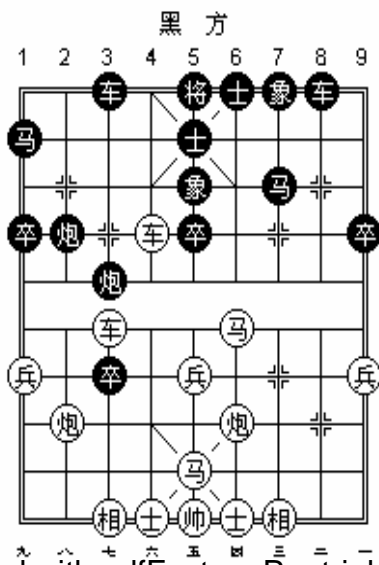
7. R2-2 E3+5 8. P7+1 C8+2 9. R9=6 A4+5 10. R6+7 R1=3

Red R1=3 is an innovation in the qualifier of the BGN Challenge. Here, some people used to play R6+5, Black would play C2-3, then R6=7, R1+2. After that, Black could move the Cannon to the 3rd file, putting more pressure on Red 7th file.

Black's R1=3 can be regarded as a new variation after he has summed up his experience in the competition. In the Qualifier, Black played R1=4, then Red R6=7, R4=3, R7+1, E5-3, P3+1. Red stood better. How is the move of Black's R1=3? It can be tested by the actual competition.

11. P3+1 P3+1

If Red played P7+1, Black could have enough time to adjust his battle formation by playing C8=3. After the exchange of Chariots, Black could gain the initiative as Red Elephant at the base is under menace. If Black played P7+1, then Red R2=3, H7+6, R6=8, Red stands better when Black's Cannon is under the fire.



12. P3+1 P3+1 13. H7-5 E5+7 14. R2=7 E7-5 15. H3+4 C8=3

From Red play of H3+4, we can see that Xu Yingchuan can take the whole situation into account. If he played R7-1, Black would play C8=3, then R6-2, H3-1, H3+4, Black can also play H7+6. If Red played R6=5, Black would play H6+4, after that Black can play H4-2.

16. R6-2 H3-1 17. C5=4 R3=4

At the situation as shown in the diagram: Red plays C5=4, showing his style of stable and safe play. However, when Red central Cannon was moved away, it gives Tao Hanming a chance of playing H7+8 to exchange Horse. Following are lines of this variation: if Black played H7+8, Red would play: (1) H4+2. Then R8+4, R7-1, R3=4, R7=6, R4+3, R6+3, R8=5, Black could have enough strength to combat. (2) H4+6, (If H5+3, Black C3=5, R7=5, H8+7, Black would have gained the initiative) C2+1, R7-1, C2=4, R6-1, H8+6, P5+1, R8+6, Black would be satisfied with the situation.

The move of R3=4 proves that Black tries to maintain a stable and safe play in the first game. Before the start of the first game, Tao Hanming had the priority in choosing the colour through the drawing of lots. However, he chose to play black in the first game, showing that he wanted to draw the first game. If so, he could have more space of development in the following games.

18. R6+3 A5-4 19. R7-1 H1+3 20. R7+1 R8+1

By playing R8+1, Black is ready to play Chariot sideward for rendering support to his right wing. If he changed to play R8+8, Red would play H5+6 (If Red C8-1, Black would play R8-7, and R8=4 in his next move. Red 8th file Cannon is in a poor position), C2=3, R7=8, C3+6, A6+5, After sacrificing his Elephant, Red stands better.

21. E3+5 R8=4 22. H5+3 A4+5

Black's A4+5 can be considered as the first soft move. The active play should be R4+7. Following that, if Red played A6+5 (or if E7+9, H3+4, the position is simplified after the Horses are exchanged), Black could play A4+5. The situation is acceptable to him.

23. A4+5 R4+7 24. E7+9 R4-6 25. C8=6 C3=6

After retreating his Chariot, Black's motivation is very clear that he is ready to play H3+4 for exchanging the Horse. Red's move C8=6 looks flat, it demonstrates Red skill in the game. In the subsequent moves, Red could play C4+1, and retreat his Horse to chase Black Chariot.

26. C4+3 H7+6 27. R7=8 C2+1

If he change to play C2-3, Red would play R8-1, then C2=4, H4-6, H6+4, R8+5, H3=2, Red has got the initiative as Black's pieces are under containment.

28. R8-1 R4-2 29. E9-7 P9=1

If he changed to play R4+5, Red would play R8=7, then C2=3, H4-6, Black would suffer from a material lose.

30. R9+1 R4=2 31. R8=7 C2=3 32. H4-6 R2+4 33. H3+4 P1+1

By playing his Horse, Red could have linked Horses.

34. P9=1 R2=1 35. R7+1 R1=2 36. E5-3 H3+1 37. R7=9 H1-3

Black intends to play C3-4 after H3-1 and then to drive his edge Horse out for adjusting

his battle formation. Therefore, it is quite necessary for Red to chase Black Horse by playing R7=9.

38. C6=5 C3=5 39. H6+5 P5+1 40. H4-6 R2=4

The time control for this tournament is 40 moves in the first 90 minutes, and then 10 moves for the next 15 minutes. If the time limit is exceeded, the offending side will lose the game. Now, as both sides had little time left in the first time-control period, they couldn't have enough time to calculate. If had enough time, Black could consider in playing H6+5, then, H6+5, H5-6, R9+5, R2-4, R9-2, H3+4, H5+4, K5=4, C5=6, H4-3. Both sides would have more rooms for maneuvering.

41. R9-1 H3+2 42. R9=8 H2+4 43. R8+6 A5-4

A5-4 is a variation designed by Black for achieving an incidental draw. However, it became a cat's paw for Red. The better play for Black is R4-4, then, R8=6, A5-4, C5+3, A4+5, C5=1, H6+5. The game will lead to an end game of "single Horse, Cannon and Pawn vs. double Horses and full guards", in which Black has more chance in making a draw.

44. C5=6 H6+5

Black has lost the chance of making a draw after playing H6+5. The correct move is R4=1, then, C5=6, A6+5, C6+2 (R8-5, H4+6, R8=4, P5+1, R4-1, P5+1, Sacrificing first but gaining later, Black can share an equal position with Red), R1=4, R8-5, P5+1. Black can easily make a draw.

45. H6+8 H4+2 46. H8+6 H2+4 47. A5+6 H5-4 48. R8-4 H4+5
49. R8=5 H5-7 50. R5=3 H7+6

By playing R5=3, Red can attack Black's two pieces, which was overlooked by Black.

51. K5+1 A6+5 52. R3-2 H6-5

Red finds it difficult to win the game though he has got the chance to win. He must play very accurately. The following moves in the end game fully displays Xu Yingchuan's skill in the end game. Red shouldn't avoid to play hastily R3=1, as Black could respond with H7+8, then P1+1, H8-7, After Black's exchange of Pawn with his Horse, the game quickly lead to a draw.

53. R3=2 H5+7 54. R2+1 H7-6 55. E7+5 H6-7 56. E5+3 H7+6
57. K5-1 H6-7 58. E3+1 H7+6

By playing Chariot, Red has put Black pawn under control. Red is now going to play his Elephant to expose his King, so as to put Black King under control, making preparations for his victory.

59. R2+2 H6+7 60. R2-2 H7-5 61. K5+1 H5-6 62. E3-5 A5+4
63. R2+1 A4+5

Step by step, Red has put the whole situation under his control.

64. K5-1 K5=4 65. E5-3 K4=5 66. A6+5 K5=4 67. A5+4 K4=5
 68. A6-5 K5=4 69. A5-4 K4=5 70. K5=6 K5=4

Black's pieces are under the containment of Red King, it is now ripe for Red to launch the final offensive.

71. R2=8 H6+8

If Black played K4=5, Red would play R8+5, then A5-4, R8-4, H6-8, R8=2, After Red has taken the Black Pawn, Red has secured a winning position.

72. R8+5 K4+1 73. R8-1 K4-1 74. R8=5 H8+9 75. R5=8 H9-8
 76. R8+1 K4+1 77. R8-3 K4=5 78. R8=6 H8-7 79. R6+1 H7+5

For the end game of "single Chariot vs. Horse, Pawn and double Elephants", Black could make a draw only when his Pawn is at the riverbank, and the Horse is at "high Elephant" position, as it can protect the promoted Pawn.

80. R6-2 P9+1 81. R6=5 H5+7 82. E1+3 H7-6
 83. R5=4 H6+8 84. R4=2 H8-6 85. K6=5 P9=8

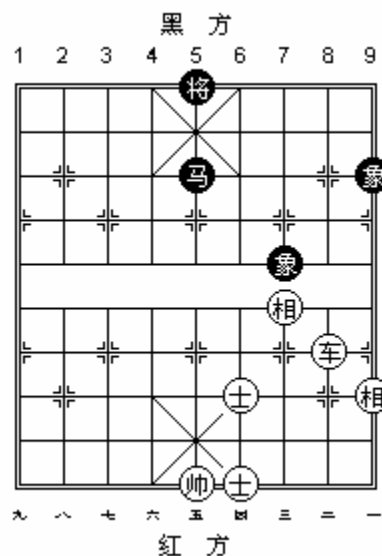
The central file takes a very important position at the end game. The attack side should strive to occupy the central file with his King or Chariot.

86. E3-1 P8+1 87. R2-2 H6+5 88. R2=5 H5-6

The diagram shows the only position that Black's Horse and double Elephants can make a draw vs. Red single Chariot. Now, Black finds it difficult to adjust the position, Red can win the game with the following moves:

89. E1+3 H6+8 90. E3+1 H8-6 91. R5+3 H6+7
 92. R5-1 H7-6 93. R5=4 H6+8 94. R4+1 H8+9
 95. R4=8 K5=4 96. R8=6 K4=5 97. R6+3

Red Wins. If Black plays E7+9, Red will play R6=1 to take Black Elephant.



"Liqunsha Cup" National Xiangqi Individual Championships
Xian, October 20th, 2001

Jin Bo (Locomotive) vs. Xu Yingchuan (Guangdong)

**Same Direction Cannon, Filed-Chariot and
Double-head Snake vs. Double ranked-Chariots**

1. C2=5 C8=5

In the previous championships, "screen Horses" has been the main variation in respond to the opening of central Cannon, and there is no exception in this championship. Recently, red opening of "edge Horse, 5th and 7th file Cannons, central Cannon, promoted Chariot" proves to be very successful, so more players begin to use "same direction Cannon, Sandwiched Horses". In this game, Xu Yingchuan unusually adopts the opening of "same direction Cannon", refraining from playing the conventional variation, attempting to take a surprised attack.

2. H2+3 H8+7 3. R1=2 R9+1 4. H8+7 R9=4
5. P3+1 H2+3

When confronting each other with Cannon, both sides usually deploy their Cannons in the central file. In the opening of "same direction Cannon", both sides plays the front Horse for strengthening their strength in the central area.

6. P7+1 R1+1

Now, the game leads to the opening of "same direction Cannon, filed Chariot, and double-head snake vs. double ranked-Chariots". It features that Black's movement is hindered by Red double-head snake, Red tries to move his right Chariot to the riverbank or to Black's Pawn's rank and advances step by step; while Black double Chariot can move flexibly and harass Red defense line with an attack when there is an opportunity.

7. E7+9 ...

The 7th-file Horse is a weak link of Red and often becomes the target under the attack of Black. Therefore, Red plays Elephant for throwing his Chariot into operation. Red can also play A6+5 or H3+4 to take the offensive first. Both variations may lead to a complicated battle.

7. ... P1+1

This variation is not often used in the actual competition. In answering to Red play of edge Elephant, Black is trying to "make a breakthrough on the edged file". Black can also play R4+5 for taking a counter attack, or R1=3 for making a breakthrough on the 3rd file. As there are too many examples in the actual competition, most of the players have already mastered the laws of offense and defense of this variation. So, it is quite natural for Mr.Xu not to use it.

8. R2+5

The play of Chariot to the riverbank is typical method for extending the battle formation of "double-head snake".

8. ... P1+1 9. P9+1 R1+4 10. H3+4 ...

Red drives Horse out, attempting for an attack. Another variation for Red which happened in the same round of the competition is A6=5, then C2=1; C8-1, R4=1; R9=6, C1+5; C8=9, C1=5; E3+5, RR=6; C9=7, Red forces an exchange of pieces by sacrificing his Elephant. Despite that Red has lost one Elephant, he still has the initiative as his two Chariots are occupying a better position and two Horses can move flexibly. If Red plays hastily with C8-1, then R4+6; R9=7, R1+2; H7+8, R4=5! E3+5, R1=5; A6+5, R5=2! Black would be in superior position after using one Chariot in exchanging of two pieces and Red double Elephants.

10. ... C2=1 11. R2=6 R4=2

Black plays Chariot sideward for pinning down Red Cannon and other pieces on Red left flank. If he changes to R4=6, Red will play H4+3 (If he erred in playing R6-1?, Black would play P3+1, Black would be in a superior position), Red is happy that Black has no follow-up measures.

12. R6+1 R1-2

Black retreats his Chariot for protecting Pawn. With this move, Black can also launch an attack.

13. R6-2 ...

Red vigilantly retreats his Chariot. If he changes to H4+6 or A6+5, Black can launch a counterattack with P3+1.

13. ... R1+1

Black forces Red Chariot move to the riverbank. By playing edged Chariot, Black can curb the attack of R4+6.

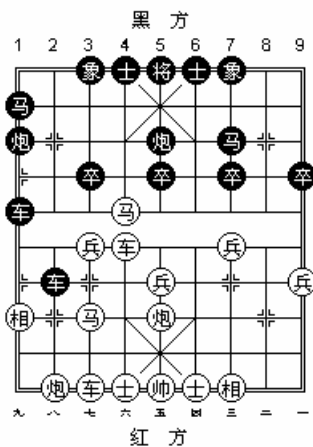
14. R9=7 ...

Red plays Horse sideward for protecting Horse, and extricating himself from Black's containment. If Red erred in playing H4+6? then R1=4, R6+1, C1+7, Black would have the material advantage.

14. R2+5

It is a correct move that Black moves his Chariot to the enemy's Pawn rank. If he erred in playing C1+5? then H4+6, H3+1, H6-8 (if H7+8, then R1=4! R6+1, R2+4, Black would be in a satisfactory position), R2=3, H8-9, R1+3, C8+7, Black is under twofold attack, and Red is in a superior position.

15. H4+6 H3-1 16. C8-2 ...



Since the 10th move of Red H3+4, both sides have been entangled in an unfamiliar position, and consumed much time. At the situation as shown in the diagram, as Master Jin couldn't find out a way for launching an offensive as he was short of time. He had to retreat his Cannon, hoping to simplify the situation. Since then, he had lost the initiative. In the following several rounds of competition, Red found out a hard move, that is P7+1, then R1=3, R6=8, R2=1, H6+4, R3=6, H4+3, R6=3, R8+4, C5-1, C8+2, R1-2, C8=7, E3+5, R8=9, R6=7, R7=8, Red has gained the initiative.

16. C1+5 17. C8=9 C1=5 18. E3+5 A6+5

After the exchange of pieces, Black has captured one of Red Elephants. With the play of Advisor, Black is ready to play C5=4, the initiative is now in the hands of Black.

19. H6+5 E3+5 20. C9+8 R1-3 21. R6=4 R2=3

After another round of exchanging pieces, both sides try attack the opponent's Horse with Chariot.

22. R4+2 ...

It is a blunder that Red drives his Chariot into Black Pawn forest, hoping to make a draw. As he has lost one Elephant and his Horse is in a poor position, Red is sure to lose. Red should play A6+5, if Black plays R1+6, then H7-6, R3=5, R4+2,

As Red can use Horse to protect the Elephant, he still has the chance to make a draw.

22. R1+6

Taking this opportunity, Black launches a fatal attack. Red can hardly escape from his defeat.

23. R4=3 H7-8 24. H7-9 R3=5 25. R7+1 R5+1

Black has secured a winning position after having taken another Red Elephant.

26. A6+5 P9+1 27. H9-7 ...

Red should change to P3=1 for keeping on fighting.

27. R1+2

Black drives Chariot for pinning down Red Horse, The victory is looming ahead.

28. P3+1 H8+9 29. R3=1 E5+7 30. R1-1 R5=2

In the follow-up move, Black can play R2+2 to take Red Horse. Red has to resign.

Games Appreciation

Wang Bin (Jiangsu) vs. Tao Hanming (Jilin) China Qiyuan, May 18th, 2002

Commentary by Wang Jialiang

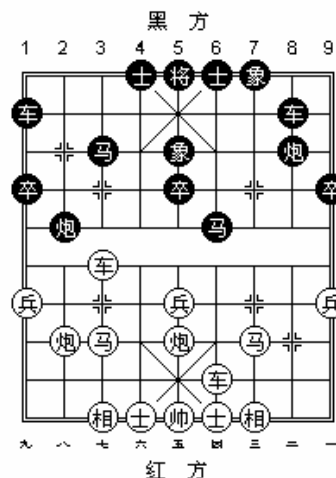
1. R2+6 H8+7 2. H2+3 R9=8 3. R1=2 P7+1

Grand Master Tao Hanming pushes 7th-file Pawn forward, hoping to avoid the familiar opening of his opponent. If he changes to H2+3, then H8+9, P7+1, C8=7, R1=2, R9=8, it will lead to the opening of "5th- and 7th-file Cannon vs. Screen Horses, 7th-file Pawn", a favorite opening of Master Wang Bin.

4. R2+6 H2+3 5. H8+7 P3+1 6. R9+1 C2+1
7. R2-2 E3+5 8. P3+1 ...

Red can also play P7+1, then C8+2, R9=6, A4+5. Following that, Red can play R6+5 or R6+7, to secure the initiative. It might be the player's favorite play or his tactical arrangement that he chooses P3+1 or P7+1.

8. ... P7+1 9. R2=3 H7+6 10. R9=4 C2+1
11. R4=2 R8+1 12. P7+1 P3+1 12 R3=7 R1+1
14. R2=4 ...



At the situation as shown in the diagram, Wang Bin has given up R7=4 as it will lead to a complicated variations, but chosen R2=4, a simple move. As it is known to all, Grand Master Tao is a thoroughgoing northeastern Chinese, so is his style of play showing the typical nature of a bold and unconstrained character of the people from that area. So, his play is positive, aggressive and provocative. He is ready to cope with the "disputed" positions. The variation taken by Wang Bin is directed against such a character of Mr. Tao. Through an exchange of large amount of pieces, the game will lead to a stable and balanced position, in which Red has secured the initiative, though with little superiority, while Black is forced into a defensive position. Thus, Tao can not display his strong points.

14. ... R1=6 15. H3+2 H6+8 16. R4+7 R8=6
17. R7=2 C8=9 18. H7+6 C2=4

Black has no alternative, otherwise he will lose the central Pawn.

19. C8+4 ...

Red drives his Cannon to cross the river for controlling the strategic position. Now, the situation looks calm, but Black is under great pressure. It takes a strong patience and

will that Black could wrest the initiative from his opponent when he is in an unfavorable position.

19. R6=7

Being not reconciled to playing defense, Grand Master Tao plays Chariot to chase Black Elephant, hoping to clear of the oppressive position. But his play is a bit hasty. The normal play now should be R6=2, then C8=1, R2+4, C1=2. As Red has the material advantage of one Pawn, it takes Black great patience if he wants to make a draw with Red.

20. H6+4 C4=5

Black has no alternative. If he changes to R7+8, Red would play H4+6 (If H4+5, E7+5, R2+3, C9+4, R2=5, A4+5, R5=7, C9+3, R7+2, A5-4, R7-3, R7-6, A4+5, C4=8, K5=4, C8-1! Red can hardly resist Black's offensive), R7-5 (If C9+4, C5+4, H3+5, C8=5, A6+5, H6+7, C4-3, R2=6, Red has gained the material advantage), R2=7, followed with C5=7 to attack Black's 3rd-file Horse, Black is in a losing position.

21. H4+2 R7=6 22. C5+3 P5+1 23. C8=1 A6+5

24. R2=7 K5=6 25. A6+5 R6+5 26. R7+2 R6=9

Black has to remove the Chariot from the strategic position and will lose the game immediately. Black is in a hard position as he has no strength to resist.

27. R7=4 C9=6 28. C1-2 C6-1 29. C1=4 R9=6

30. C4+1 E7+9 31. P9+1 E9-7 32. E3+5 ...

Red can also play R4=7, then A5+6, C4+3, K6+1, R7+1, Red is sure to win.

32. ... R6-1 33. H2+1 R6+1 34. H1-3 K6=5

35. R4+2 H3+4 36. R4=1 H4+5 37. C4=2 R6-4

38. C2+4 A5-6 39. H3+4 ...

Red launches the final assault. Red play is concise and well-knit.

39. ... E5+7 40. R1=3 E7-9 41. H4-3 E7+5

42. C2-2

Grand Master Tao has to resign as the following moves can not rescue him from the defeat.

Wang Bin (Jiangsu) vs. Xu Yingchuan (Guangdong)

Black wins

Guangzhou, 4th January, 2003

1. C2=5 H8+7 2. H2+3 R9=8 3. R1=2 H2+3

4. H8+9 P3+1

Black's P3+1 can open up a new way. If Black plays P7+1, Red would play C8=7, then R1=2, R9=8, it will lead to a popular opening of 5th and 7th file Cannons vs. Screen Horse.

5. R2+4 ...

It is a stable play that Red drives the Chariot to the River-bank. Red can also play P3+1, or C8=7 or C8=6, which will lead to complicated variations.

5. ... P7+1

It is an unexpected move! Usually Black can play C8=9 for exchanging Chariot or E3+5. In both occasions, Black has enough strength to resist.

6. ... H3+2 7. R9+1 ...

7. ... E3+5 8. R9=6 C8-1

Retreating his Cannon, Black can skillfully ward off Red attack of R4+5.

9. P9+1 ...

It is right time to play the Pawn. If Red plays R6+5, Black would play P3+1, Red couldn't play R6=8, As Black would play C8=2 to exchange the Chariot. Red would be in a passive position.

9. ... A4+5 10. P5+1 R1=4 11. R6+8 A5-4

12. P5+1 P5+1 13. R2+2 P3+1

Black sacrifices Pawn for a counter-attack, rendering Red a chance for launching an attack. The stable move for Black should be C2=3. Then, If Red plays R2=8, Black would play H2+3, H9+7, C3+4, C7+3, C8=3, Black would be in a satisfactory position.

14. C7+2 H2+4 15. C7+5 K5+1

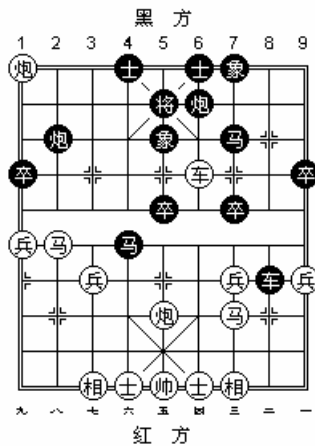
Black has no alternative but to play his King. If Black changes it to A4+5, Red would play C7=9, Black would be under the fire of Red attack.

16. C7=9 C8=6 17. R2=4 R8+6 18. H9+8 ...

At the situation as shown in the Diagram, it seems that the move of Red Horse is aggressive, but in reality it renders Black the opportunity to clear the way for Pawn's file and seizing the strategic position after successively capturing Black's two Pawns. The better move for Red is H3+5, if Black plays P5+1, Red would play H5+7, Black can hardly resist the joint attack of Red Chariot and Cannon, as his Chariot has no time to come for reinforcement.

18. ... R8=7 19. H8+9 R7=3 20. H3+5 P5+1

Red Horse is curbed on the central file, Red offensive has become a spent force.



- 21. C5+2 H4-5 22. H5-6 R3+3 23. C5=2 C6=9
- 24. C2+2 H5+4 25. R4=8 R3-9

Black has secured a stable position when he retreats Chariot to chase Red Cannon. Now, the situation will be developed toward the direction in favor of Black.

- 29. A5+4 K5-1

Black King has retreated to a safe position and the Cannon is ready for driving out. Red is doom to be defeated.

- 30. C6-2 C3-6

The better move is C3-8

- 31. H9+8 C3-2 32. C6=5 H6-5 33. H8-7 C3=5
- 34. H7-5 C5+3 35. E3+5 C5-1 36. H6+8 C9=5
- 37. R8=6 H7+6 38. C5+2 FC+4 39. H8+6

Under Black's precision attack, Red lost the game due to timeout. But as far as the game is concerned, Red is in a losing position.