

POSITIONAL EVALUATION

In this lesson, we present the evaluation of the position, the most important element of chess strategy. The evaluation of the positional factors gives us a correct and complete picture of the positions at hand. In addition, the information given by this evaluation helps us to find the objectives for which to fight, what we have to do in the given position and what the opponent's intentions could be.

The positional evaluation includes many factors that we will discuss in deep and to the point in the future lessons. Though, some short explanations are given from now.

The criteria for positional evaluation in modern chess:

1. MATERIAL

First of all, we have to check if the material on the board of the 2 players is equal or not.

If one of the players has a material advantage (more than a pawn), there is no point to go further with our *positional* evaluation. We should evaluate if the material imbalance is enough compensated by a king-attack, a pawn about to queen, a strong initiative etc. See also the criteria of evaluation of positions with material equivalence (PME).

2. THREATS & TACTICAL RESOURCES

After every opponent's move, we have to think what he is threatening to do. The opponent's threats can be of tactical or strategical nature. At this stage of evaluation, we are interested in **the tactical threats our opponent has**.

Before entering deeply in details of strategical considerations, we also have to make sure that we have discovered all the **tactical resources of the position**. A tactical resource means even an intermediary check that the opponent (or us) can give at the next move or in the future, spoiling all our plans.

3. KING'S SAFETY

We need to evaluate how safe is the most important piece on the board... the own king, and, then, the opponent king. If the king's were in big danger, we already had to know this after the second step of our evaluation.

At this stage, we will consider the pawn structure in front of the king and we will compare the forces which defend the king with the forces that are threatening or can arrive immediately in attack against the king.

If the position of the king is already stabilized, the evaluation of the pawn structure in front of him can play an important role for even future plans or actions if some weaknesses are determined.

4. THE CENTRE

At this stage of evaluation, we will focus on the centre of the board and will evaluate 2 distinct elements: the control over the centre and the type of centre.

4.1. The control over the centre

The centre is defined as the first four most central squares on the board. By a better control over the centre, we gain important squares for our pieces (which have influence on both flanks) and, in the same time, obstruct the opponent's pieces. Moreover, an attack on flank would have minimal success chances if the centre was not previously secured.

The evaluation will be made by checking what squares are controlled by a player, what squares are controlled by the other player and what squares are controlled by both players (or by none of them). On the squares controlled by both players a tense fight is usually given. The result of this evaluation will return a score as: 2-2 (the centre is equally controlled), 2.5-1.5, 3-1, 3.5-0.5 or 4-0.

4.2. The type of the centre

There are more types of centers (we are talking about the structure of the pawns in the centre), every of them with distinct and specific strategies. At this stage of evaluation, it is essential to know what type of centre our position belongs to.

The centre begins to take shape sooner or later, from the opening stage, in function of the opening system, and then, at some critical moments during the game, the pawn structure in the centre will probably change.

For now, we will briefly enounce the 5 types of centers:

- a) *Closed centre* – the entire centre is blocked by chains of pawns of the 2 players and the opponent chains block each other.
- b) *Open centre* – there are 2 completely open files in the extended centre (for example, when both c- and d- files are open, even if there are pawns on the e-file)
- c) *Static centre* – there are 2 half-open files or only 1 open file in the extended centre and the pawns forms chains, but without blocking each other.
- d) *Mobile centre* – when a player has a mobile pawn formation in the centre or in the extended centre, while the other player has no pawns to counter it (rarely met).
- e) *Dynamic centre* – this is the most often met type of centre. It is characterized by a still undefined pawn structure in the centre and it can derive in any other type.

5. PIECES VALUE

After the first four criteria of evaluation, we can go deeper into the position details and evaluate the value of pieces and pawns. Both 5th and 6th criteria of assessment are, in fact, a complex of more factors.

The order of the next 2 lists of factors is not accidental, although it doesn't mean that we should take their importance as a rule. (Rules don't work in chess!)

- 5.1. **Better development** – this factor is only for the early stage of the game (opening and early middlegame), when more developed pieces can offer chances for active actions while the opponent pieces are still undeveloped and not ready to defend. However, this is a short-term advantage that one can lose if immediate employment do not or cannot offer other long-lasting advantages.
- 5.2. **Piece out of play** – An opponent piece that cannot enter the battle (because it's limited by the own or opponent pieces and pawns) is a very important advantage. That piece can become a target due to its immobility or a piece down in the fire of the battle. There are situations when even more pieces are out of play, or out of the important battle field, without being able to arrive at time to defend the position on the other side of the board.
- 5.3. **Local force superiority** – Pieces work in a team and a larger team succeeds against a weaker and smaller one. A force superiority in one of the flanks (given that the centre is secured) or right in the centre will create the premises for a strong attack on that side. Another characteristic a team of chess pieces should have to succeed is the collaboration between its members – see next factor.
- 5.4. **The collaboration between pieces** – in their enterprise to fight for or defend important objectives, the collaboration between pieces is essential. The re-arrangement of pieces for getting a better collaboration and better roles for each piece is one of the sophisticated techniques of the positional play.
- 5.5. **Rooks on open files** – the controlling of an open file (when the opponent cannot neutralize) is another important factor which raises the qualitative value of a weighty piece. We also have to analyze if there are entrance points for our rook in the enemy's camp or if an outpost on this file exists (outpost = an advanced square defended by one of our own pawns).
- 5.6. **Bishops on important diagonals** – the power (and its qualitative value) of the bishop on a long diagonal increases when there are attacking objectives in the opponent's camp.
- 5.7. **Knights on important foreposts** – a knight on a defended and secured square (where the opponent pawns cannot attack it, or by an attack, they would create

big weaknesses) is another important asset. We have to evaluate the importance of the objectives/squares that the knight attacks or defends from that forepost.

- 5.8. **Bishop-pair** – the very well known pair of bishops against other 2 minor pieces (bishop + knight or knight + knight) is a very dangerous weapon in open or semi-open positions, especially when the opponent has no well defended positions for his knight/s in the centre.
- 5.9. **Safe and active queen** – the weightiest piece on the board can have problems during the middlegame in finding a secure position against the opponent threats. In exchange, if our queen can get an active position, while the opponent queen remains passive, we will have a short-term but important plus.
- 5.10. **Piece value comparison** – a good and objective picture of the quality of our pieces and of the opponent pieces will be given by a comparison of the both camp's pieces one by one. How good is our queen compared with the opponent queen, how are our rooks compared with the opponent rooks, how are our knights compared with the opponent knights, how is our dark-square bishop compared with the opponent dark-square bishop, and how is our light-square bishop compared with the opponent light-square bishop.

For this comparison, we will take into account the squares that these pieces control and the importance of their role within the group.

6. PAWNS VALUE

- 6.1. **Space advantage** – when our pawns advance more than the opponent's pawns, they create a protected space behind them that our pieces can use to move easier and to take better positions. In the same time, the less advanced opponent pawns limit the mobility of their own pieces. The advantage of space is the most important advantage in chess! The most common is the space advantage in the centre of the board, but the local space advantage (on one of the flanks) is also significant, especially when the centre is closed.
- 6.2. **Weak pawns** – The pawns which cannot be defended by other pawns can become an easy target for the opponent's army (especially on open files). The pieces which defend the weak pawns will be tied up in defense, while the attacking pieces can change their positions anytime. This way, a weak pawn can be a serious problem and a very grave one when it is backward or close to the centre.

The isolated pawn is a special case of weakness, but this pawn also offers some advantages. We will discuss this case of "weak" pawn when we treat the typical pawn structures.

- 6.3. **Superior pawn structure** – There are pawn structures that are better for a player even if there are no evident weaknesses in the structure or both sides' structures have comparable weaknesses. Here, we include the pawn islands, inflexible structures and other pawn formations that are inferior (or superior). Being a long-term advantage, the recognition of better structures is very important.
- 6.4. **Dynamic pawn structure** – The dynamism of the pawn structure is a very important asset in modern chess. Today's grandmasters tend to play opening systems that lead more and more to dynamic centers and structures, more reach in ideas, less drawish and where the continuation is less predictable.
- 6.5. **Mobile pawn majority** – If both players have one extra pawn on a different side and the pawns are not doubled, the pawns form pawn-majorities (also called "pawn-phalanxes"). Such a pawn phalanx is a good advantage if the pawns are mobile, can advance, and can be sustained by their own pieces. The pawn advance will gain space, chase away the opponent pieces and threat to create an advanced free pawn.
- 6.6. **Free pawn** – if a free pawn is advanced on the second half of the board and if it is well sustained by its pieces, the free pawn *can* constitute a real force and an important advantage. Though, we have to evaluate how strong can be the blockade the opponent will build and if the free pawn can be enough defended against the attacks.

Which positional factors are the most important?

After the evaluation, we have another difficult task to accomplish, maybe the hardest of all: to determine which of the positional factors is/are the most important in our exact, particular position. In fact, it is about to determine the **essence** of the position.

If the positional evaluation can be made almost mathematically, picking the most important factor makes the difference between the level of the players and their styles of play.

"Chess is a generalized exchange". Sometimes, in order to get some advantage, we have to renounce at some others or even to admit some weaknesses. Understanding the essence of the position will make us to take correct decisions.

...will continue

The Piece Value

In the beginning of our training, we want to present the piece value. Most of players know just a simple list of values: pawn = 1p, bishop=knight = 3.5p, rook = 5p, queen = 9p. This is ALMOST correct, but it's not complete at all.

The value of pieces is NOT the same during the chess game. During opening and middlegame, we have a set of values and, during the endgame, we have another set.

This is because during the endgame, the ROOK, the BISHOP and the PAWN change their values. All the above 3 pieces increase in value, especially the pawn. The bishop, because of his better mobility, starts to be better in the endgame than the knight.

Piece	Opening + Middlegame	Endgame
Bishop	better than 3 pawns	relative equal with 3 pawns
Knight	equal with 3 pawns	weaker than 3 pawns
Rook	better than 5 pawns	relative equal with 5 pawns

The pieces have different purposes on the chess board.

The pieces with long ray of action are excellent attackers (all, except the knight) and the piece with the short ray of action (the knight) is an excellent defender. Larsen said: "Give me a knight on f8 and I will defend any position" – of course, it's a bit exaggerated, but not too much though.

When you are starting an attack, you could get a first picture of the success chances if you compare the number of pieces with long ray of action with the number of pieces with short ray of action.

Two pieces with long ray of action collaborate better than a piece with long ray of action and a knight. For example, the queen + bishop are relative better than the queen + knight. Of course, there are exceptions (for example when the queen and knight are directly attacking the king – but, again, this is only an exception).

Now, we are giving the table with the RELATIVE VALUE OF PIECES during the opening-middlegame and endgames. We are interested in these evaluations when the material of the 2 players is different, of course. So, we are comparing a piece or a group of pieces with another group of pieces and/or pawns.

Notation: **p** = pawn, **B** = bishop, **N** = knight, **R** = rook, **Q** = queen, “<” = weaker, “>” = stronger, “≈” = relative equal

Piece	Opening + Middlegame	Endgame
ROOK	≈ B + 2p ≈ N + 2p	≈ B + 1p > N + 1p ≈ N + 2p
ROOK + 1 PAWN	< B + N	≈ B + N
ROOK + 2 PAWNS	≈ B + N	> B + N
QUEEN	< 3 minor pieces ≈ R + B + 1p ≈ R + N + 2p < 2 R > B + N + 3p ≈ 2 B + 3p	≈ 3 minor pieces ≈ R + B (+ 1p) ≈ R + N + 1p < 2 R ≈ B + N + 3p < 2 B + 3p
QUEEN + 1 PAWN	≈ 2 R ≈ 2 N + B < 2 B + N	= 2 R > 2 N + B = 2 B + N
2 ROOKS	≈ 3 minor pieces ≈ 2 B + 3p > N + B + 3p	≈ 3 minor pieces ≈ 2 B + 3p ≈ N + B + 3p
2 ROOKS + KNIGHT	≈ R + 2 B + 1p The presence of a rook, together with the 2 bishops, increases the value of bishops – see the “play coordinating piece”	≈ R + 2 B + 1p
2 ROOKS + 1 PAWN	< R + N + B because of their force of attacking the opponent king	≈ R + N + B
2 ROOKS + 2 PAWNS	≈ R + N + B < R + 2 B	> R + N + B ≈ R + 2 B

In no case, these evaluations of relative value of pieces are absolute! Very important is the QUALITY of pieces which makes the above evaluations relative.

There is a set of criteria for evaluation of positions with material equivalence (the material on the board is different for the 2 players).

We will refer further to these positions calling them **PME**.

On next lessons, we will deal in detail with the criteria of evaluation of PME.

Criteria of Evaluation of PME

PME = Positions with Material Equivalence are the positions where the material on the board of the 2 players is relative equal, but not the same.

For example, one of the players has 2 rooks and 1 pawn against 1 rook, a knight and a bishop (along with other pieces and pawns on the board which are the same). Or: a knight for 3 pawns, or a queen for 3 minor pieces etc.

In the lesson “The Piece Value” we indicated the relative value of the pieces during opening/middlegame and endgame. As that lesson was about the quantitative evaluation, now we will deal with the QUALITATIVE evaluation of these positions.

There are 4 criteria of evaluation of the PME:

1. The position of the kings.

When we have a PME, we have to start with this criterion which has a decisive role. To evaluate the grade of safety for both kings we will analyze the pawn structure which protects the kings and the attacking possibilities/resources of the players.

2. The quality of minor pieces

a) The grade of coordination between the minor pieces

b) The existence of outposts for these pieces

We are talking here about the minor pieces (knights and bishops) only.

We will analyze the position on the board of the minor pieces and if their position is protected against the attacks of the opponent.

- ➔ The bishops should be active on long diagonals;
- ➔ The knights should have secure bases for active operations.

3. The existence and quality of the “play coordinating piece”

A very important criterion is the existence of an active major piece (rook or queen) for the side with weaker but more pieces (or pawns). This major piece will coordinate the play of the minor pieces and its absence can completely change the evaluation of the position.

So, be careful with the exchange of the last major piece! An equilibrate position can become a bad position if this major piece doesn't exist.

The roles of the play coordinating piece are:

- Defends its minor pieces;
- Prevents the penetration of the enemy's pieces in its camp;
- Constitutes a decisive factor for attacks against the enemy's king or for entering the enemy's camp.

Note: in very simple endgames (with very few pieces), the play coordinating piece can be even the king itself (if the king can get an active position).

4. The existence of mobile pawn majorities and the possibility of creating free pawns

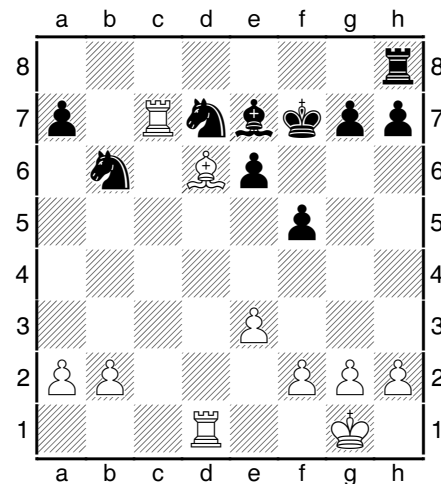
It's obvious that in an endgame with material equivalence, the first player who will create a free and protected pawn will have the advantage. The free pawn will force the enemy pieces to occupy defensive positions, and therefore, giving the player who possesses the free pawn the possibility to enter with his pieces in the enemy's camp.

EXAMPLE

We will give now a very instructive example from the game played between Kramnik and Topalov, for the World Chess Champion title, disputed in Elista, October 2006.

Please setup the position from the right on your real chess board and follow our evaluation and comments as this example is part of our theoretical lesson.

White: Kg1, Rd1, Rc7, Bd6, pawns:a2,b2,e3,f2,g2,h2
Black: Kf7, Rh8, Be7, Nb6, Nd7, pawns:a7,e6,f5,g7,h7



Black is to move. Move 26th

It is a “PEM” where Black has 2 knights and a rook against 2 rooks and a pawn. It is an endgame position, so the material of the 2 players is equivalent.

Now, let's assess the position according to the criteria of evaluation of PEM:

1) King's positions.

White has a good defensive pawn structure on the kingside, without weaknesses (the position of the pawns is intact). White would need a window, though, to avoid tactics of mate on the 1st rank. White has NO defensive pieces for his king.

Black's king is not in danger against the white 2 rooks. The pawn structure near the black king has no weaknesses that White can exploit with the existing material. Black has pieces to defend his king (the knights are excellent defenders).

2) The quality of the minor pieces.

As the bishops will be changed very soon, we will only evaluate the position of the knights.

Black has outposts for his knights (b6, f6) and on the central squares (d5, e4). These outposts, or defended bases for active operations, are very important and good for Black.

3) The existence and quality of the play coordinating piece.

Black has the play coordinating piece, the Rh8. Without that rook, and only with the knights against one white rook, Black's position would have been worse.

The black rook will protect now the a7-pawn, so its quality value will be very small.

4) The pawn majorities and possibility to create a free pawn.

White has a pawn majority on the queenside (2 pawns against 1 pawn) and has the possibility to create a free pawn, but not in a very short time.

So, according to PME criteria, we have done the assessment which is almost complete. In addition, we have to answer to one more important question: which player has the **initiative**? It is clear that because of the white rook on the 7th rank and because Black pieces have defensive roles, it is only White who can have the initiative at this moment.

Let's now follow the game:

26...Ra8

Black was able exchange the rooks which seemed to be a logical reaction if we compare the very active white rook from c7 with the passive position of the black rook on a8:

26...Rc8 27.Rxa7?? (27.Rxc8 is correct) is not working because of: 27...Bxd6 28.Rxd6 Rc1+

However, such an exchange would leave Black without his play coordinating piece and we saw that this is very important for the player with weaker pieces.

Now, Black's TO DO list is:

1. keep the last major piece (the rook) with almost any cost;
2. play a7-a5 to free up his rook;
3. improve the position of the knights using the outposts on the centre.

27.Rb7 Ke8 28.Bxe7 Kxe7 29.Rc1

White brings his second rook in a better position. However, the best practical chance in our games would be to start promoting the pawn majority, maybe with 29.b2-b4. After the text move, the advancing of white pawns on the queenside will become harder and, so, after the 4th criterion of evaluation, White's chances will decrease.

29...a5!

The consequences of this move are:

- Black's support for the b6-square (an outpost for the black knights) will disappear
- White's pawns advance on the queenside is hampered

- The black rook is free to move

30.Rc6 Nd5 Black manages to defend his position against the 2 white rooks.

31.h4

This move shows us that Kramnik remained without a good plan and, little by little, he starts to weaken his king's position.

31...h6 32.a4 g5! the beginning of the fight for the INITIATIVE.

Black gains space on the kingside and opens up a file for his play coordinating piece toward the white king. Also, after the advance of the pawns, the black knights will gain more outposts on the kingside and closer to the white king.

33.hxg5 hxg5 34.Kf1 g4 Already, Black has real threats: g4-g3

35.Ke2 N5f6

Black plans to chase away the white rook from d7 with the maneuver Nf6-e8-d6. Then, the second black knight will be free.

36.b3 Ne8 37.f3?

White weakens more the position of his king. Black has 3 pieces that can go now for the white king without protection. [37.Rc1 Nd6 38.Rbc7 Ne4]

37...g3

Now, White will have problems to defend his g2-pawn against Ra8-h8-h2 and Ne5-g6-h4

38.Rc1 Nef6 39.f4?

White wants to take the black g3-pawn by Ke2-f3-xg3 and weakens his king's position even more. Also, black knights get an excellent outpost on e4. So, let's do the evaluation of this PEM again:

1. White's king position is weaken and Black has the resources to start an attack
2. Black knights collaborate very well and have excellent bases for active operations
3. Black kept his play coordinating piece which can enter now White's position due to the available open files (including h-file)
4. White's pawn majority is still far from being dangerous.

39...Kd6 40.Kf3 Nd5 41.Kxg3?

Now, the material is in White's advantage if you look at the table with the relative value of the pieces. However, it is clear that Black has now the initiative and will end the game in his favor by a direct attack toward the white king.

41...Nc5 42.Rg7 [42.Rb5 Ne4+ 43.Kf3 Rg8 44.Rxa5 Rg3+ 45.Ke2 Rxe3+ 46.Kf1 Rxb3] 42...Rb8 43.Ra7 Rg8+ 44.Kf3 Ne4 45.Ra6+ Ke7 46.Rxa5 Rg3+ 47.Ke2 Rxe3+ 48.Kf1 Rxb3 49.Ra7+ Kf6 50.Ra8 Nxf4 51.Ra1 Rb2

and, finally, the black play coordinating piece arrives on the second rank, but for only 1 more move.

52.a5 Rf2+ and Kramnik resigned. [White is mated: 53.Kg1 Rxc2+ 54.Kf1 (54.Kh1 Ng3#) 54...Rf2+ 55.Ke1 Nd3+ 56.Kd1 Nc3#] **0-1**

Conclusion:

White didn't find the correct plan of play after the 26th move and started to play wrong, weakening his king's position and leaving undefended important squares on the centre that black knights used for active operations against the white king - see 1st and 2nd criteria of evaluation.

White's correct plan, if he wanted to play for a win, was to put in motion his pawn majority on the queenside. White didn't do that, so black knights were free and able to leave the queenside - see the 4th criterion.

Black played formidably: 26...Ra8, placing his rook in a passive position, even if he could exchange the most active white piece, the rook from c7, with 26....Rc8. We must mention that White was not able though to obtain too much from this, and after regrouping his knights and after a7-a5, Black was able to re-activate his rook. - see the 3rd criterion of evaluation.

...this lesson will be followed by the lesson about INITIATIVE.

THINK LIKE A STRONG PLAYER

Part I

Immediately after every of your opponent's move you should answer to the following 2 questions:

1) What are your opponent's **THREATS**?

A threat can be: a mate attack or other threats against the king, gaining material, gaining a very good position for a piece, gaining the control of an important square, line or diagonal, or other tactical or strategic advantages that the opponent can gain at the next move.

Then, you should evaluate which of the threats are real. Not all threats are REAL and in this concern many chess players usually make mistakes. For example: if your opponent is threatening to gain the bishop-pair, you should evaluate whether this is really negative for you in the *concrete, exact* position you have on the board. Only real threats should be taken into consideration.

2) What are the **CONSEQUENCES** of your opponent's last move?

Almost every move has a good effect and a collateral effect which may be negative (chess moves have pluses and minuses). For example: by moving the bishop from c8 to f5, Black is gaining the control over the b1-h7 diagonal, BUT, at the same time, he is losing the protection of the b7-pawn.

Also, you should always evaluate the consequences of your own moves before playing them.

The consequences of the moves have usually a geometrical nature and they can be: opening a file or a diagonal, blocking a piece with another, weakening a square or a pawn structure, a piece left without defense, and many others that you will soon learn to notice very clearly. All our annotated games at ICS include questions and answers about the consequences of the moves in all important moments, showing you again and again how to evaluate them and also how important this evaluation is in practice.

A strong chess player should be used to evaluate these consequences in a matter of few seconds or even in fractions of a second. It is something you should train your mind to do in order for it to realize these evaluations automatically, after a while, without you even being conscious about it. It will be a very big step forward in your chess improvement and we will insist on this during the 1 year course.

Most of the moves consequences should be kept somewhere in your mind for future uses. *For example*, if at the 23rd move, your opponent weakened his king's protection by

playing his knight away from f6, you can use this later when you decide to go for an attack with Qh5, at the 30th move.

The habit of evaluating the consequences of a move and their recording somewhere in your mind will help you a lot even in developing your calculation power (and also in avoiding overlooks and blunders!). All elements, such as occupied squares, an open diagonal, an overloaded piece, a weak square somewhere, a pinned pawn, are very important during the game of chess and your mind's ability to use them will bring you satisfaction in practical games. In the case of complicated positions (and simpler positions too), your head won't be spinning anymore, instead the position's resources will reveal themselves in front of your eyes sooner and simpler.

So, you will be taught how to evaluate the consequences of chess moves along with all our annotated games, but first you need to know some important elements:

- a) The most important consequences are given by the pawn moves because they cannot move backwards. The pawns defend 2 squares (or 1 square in case of the marginal ones) and the move of a pawn will leave 2 undefended (or even weak) squares but it will defend other 2. Also the pawns can block pieces behind and can fix the structure in the centre for a long time. The pawn moves open files, ranks and diagonals for a long term, so, in conclusion: any pawn move must be very well evaluated.
- b) All moves have one common and very important consequence: Time. This is why all moves should bring you closer to your objective (see "to do list"), they can be useful to you and irritating to your opponent. *For example*, even a move which improves the position of one of your pieces may be bad, because that move might "eat" from the time allocated to a plan, which is more important than the actual move.
- c) Of course, a very important consequence is given by the side where you castle the king. Castling on a different side from your opponent may change completely the character of the future play. Taking this into consideration as well as point b), it might be good to delay the castle in *some* situations.
- d) When playing a piece, some squares on the board become defended or attacked, but other squares become unprotected. This is source of many blunders or overlooks during practical chess you can avoid or take benefit from.

TO DO list

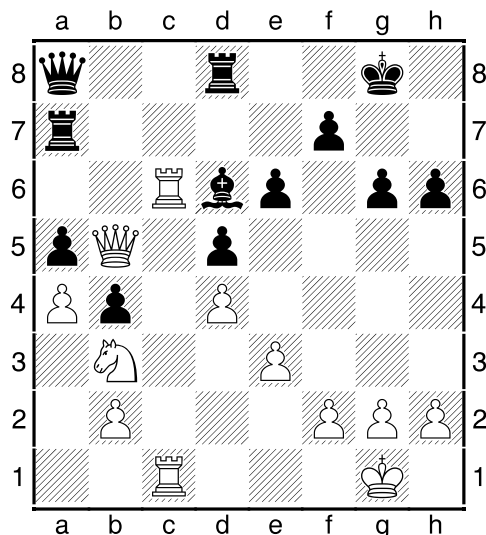
Once every 3-10 moves (this varies a lot according to the position's characteristics), in the key-positions, you should make a "TO DO" list. In this list, you should add all you want to realize in the given position.

Therefore you can add: finishing the development, the occupation of an open file/diagonal, creating weaknesses in the opponent's position, improving the position of your pieces (one of the most important things to be taken into consideration) and so on.

While the first 2 questions (about threats and consequences) should be answered to after every of your opponent's move, the "TO DO" list should be created at some given moments, when the characteristics of the position changed or when some of your "to do" tasks became "done" jobs.

An excellent explanation on what this list is about is given by the following example:

EXAMPLE OF CREATING THE TO DO LIST:



In this position, White's advantage is clear. White conquered the c-file, with an outpost on c5, and Black has a complex of weak squares (a5, b5, c5, c6) immobilizing his pieces in passive defense. Even if White is so strong on the queenside, there is no possibility for him to improve the position or to force a win.

However, for an expert eye, the structure in front of the black king is weak too and White (the former World Chess Champion, Petrosian) will use this weakness to win the game by a direct attack on king. In order to attack the king with major pieces, White needs open files, so he needs to advance the pawns on that side.

Advancing the pawns on the kingside would weaken the white king's position too, complicating the position with an unclear outcome. So, Petrosian is making up his "TO DO" list:

- 1) Put the king on safe, by bringing him to the queenside (a maneuver which is possible due to the total control of the only open file on the board);
- 2) The advance of the kingside pawns in order to destroy the black king's protections – this is possible because the black pawns are weak and White will be able to force exchanges on that side;
- 3) Bringing the major pieces on the best positions, ready for the decisive transition on the kingside at the right moment ... and, the final attack.

If you are interested, the game continued: 28. g3 Kg7 29. Kf1 Kg8 30. h4 h5 31. R1c2 Kh7 32. Ke1 Kg8 33. Kd1 Kh7 34. Kc1 Kg8 35. Kb1 Kh7 36. Qe2 Qb7 37. Rc1 Kg7 38. Qb5 Qa8 39. f4 Kh7 40. Qe2 Qb7 41. g4 hxg4 42. Qxg4 Qe7 43. h5 Qf6 44. Ka2 Kg7 45. hxg6 Qxg6 46. Qh4 Be7 47. Qf2 Kf8 48. Nd2 1-0

The "TO DO list" is another very important element that will help chess players think in an organized manner, make plans of play, and be consistent in their realization. We will insist on this "TO DO list" during our 1 year course and the annotations, questions and answers of the instructive games will be also focused on how and when to create this list.

If you want to improve your chess, you need to start building and using this TO DO list in every game from now on. It won't be easy to find the right elements to add on this list, but our training will help you. At the same time as your chess knowledge becomes better and wider, you become a better player. However, an unorganized thinking is the worst thing that may happen to a player, so endeavor to organize your mind starting with this moment and you won't find yourself saying "I'm stuck and I don't know why I am not improving?!"

CONSEQUENCES and TO DO LIST

The Consequences of the moves and the "TO DO" list are very strongly connected. **You will see that identifying the consequences of your opponent's moves can extend your TO DO list with new elements such as: a new weaken square could offer to one of your pieces a good outpost, etc.**

Making decisions in chess

How can I find the best move in a position? This is a question that every chess player would like to answer to. Playing the best move in all positions would turn someone invincible. Of course such a thing is impossible and not even a computer is going to meet perfection in chess anytime soon. So, is it a waste of time to look for the best move in every position? My answer is firmly NO. Certainly you will not find the best move every time, but looking for the best move involves a peculiar process that will help you better understand the position. Understanding the peculiarities of the position, will always help you play “acceptable” moves even if it won’t always be the best moves. The more frequently you will find and use the best moves, the higher your chess level will be.

This lesson will teach you an original, but effective method on how to improve your chess thinking. At first sight things could seem complicated, but I promise that all that you need in order to understand my method is patience. You don’t have to be a chess expert to understand the following algorithm of making decisions in chess, just think logically. Let’s start!

1. What’s the objective of a chess move?

According to our method, every chess move has a quite simple goal. ***By every move we are trying to accumulate a certain advantage or to reduce a certain advantage already accumulated by our opponent.*** The higher the advantage cumulated, the better the move.

Is there anything illogical till now? I don’t think so.

But what about the so-called “waiting move”? My answer is: forget about it! You will make no progress by waiting for the opponent to mistake. Such a play style could sometimes help you, but it will negatively affect you in time.

A player’s attitude during the game is essential in chess.

Someone who always tries to create problems to his opponent can be a successful player even if his chess knowledge is limited. Instead, someone who waits for the opponent’s mistakes and makes “waiting moves” has no chance to substantially improve his chess skills or game.

So, keep in mind: **BY EVERY MOVE YOU MUST LOOK FOR SOMETHING!** And that “something” is normally a certain advantage in your position.

2. Which are the advantages in chess?

OK, we agreed that it is worth trying to reach an advantage by every move, but which are the advantages in chess? First chess player who classified the advantages in chess was Wilhelm Steinitz who claimed there are nine advantages: lead in development, mobility of the pieces, seizure of the center, position of the enemy king, weak squares in the opponent’s position,

superior pawn formation, pawn majority on the queen-side, open files and the advantage of the two bishops. Nowadays the opinions partly changed and the pawn majority on the queen-side and the two bishops are not considered anymore to be general positional advantages.

The classification of the advantages in chess that I am proposing to you is somehow different, but I think it fits better with a modern thinking. Look around you and will see the value of any product depends on two things: **quantity and quality**. Why would chess be different?

There are two main categories of advantages in chess: quantitative advantage and qualitative advantage. Consciously or not, we always try to reach one of them. All we expect from you is to do it consciously and logically.

3. The quantitative advantages in chess

The quantitative advantages are **the material advantage** and **the local superiority of the forces**.

The importance of the material advantage is well-known and it's not my intention to describe to you the importance of a knight or a pawn up.

The superiority of the forces has a huge importance too. A chess game usually consists of more local battles. It is always convenient to fight in those local battles by having a superiority of the forces in that area. But if you wish to have a local superiority of the forces, you must create it because nobody will do it for you.

Creating a local superiority of the forces is directly correlated with finding the best plan of play. How? Very simple. When you look for a plan of play you must always ask yourself *"Where would it be better to challenge my opponent for a local battle?"* The logical answer is something like that: *"The battle must be on the queen-side (or in the center or on the king-side) because I have (or I can create) there a superiority of the forces".*

One more sample. Let's imagine that, while analyzing the position you discovered your opponent's pieces are gathered on a side and can hardly be transferred on the opposite side. You immediately start thinking to challenge your opponent to a battle on his weak side. What's the next step in your logical thinking process? Of course you will start thinking how to bring more pieces there in order to create a local superiority of the forces.

So, do you understand how the quantitative advantage of the superiority of the forces and making the plan of play are directly correlated? I'm confident you do.

4. The qualitative advantages in chess

For a spectator who doesn't know the rules of chess, any qualitative advantage is imperceptible. A qualitative advantage is the result of the dynamics of the pieces during the chess game. To correctly understand what qualitative advantage is, you must consider the chess pieces as beings.

First I am going to mention the five qualitative advantages and then, we will deal with each and every of them.

- a. King's safety
- b. The qualitative value of the pieces
- c. The qualitative value of the pawn structure
- d. Space advantage
- e. Seizure of initiative

4.a. King's safety

There is nothing more important in chess than king's safety. A moment is enough to forget about it for the effect to be fatal.

When you decide the plan of play you must always be careful to have your king well protected. Moreover, you must try to put in danger the position of the opponent king.

4.b. The qualitative value of the pieces

Since the first steps in chess, every chess player has learnt that every piece has a "quantitative" value: a knight = a bishop ~3 points, a rook ~ 4 ½ -5 points, a queen ~ 9 points
Let's take a look at the diagram no 1.

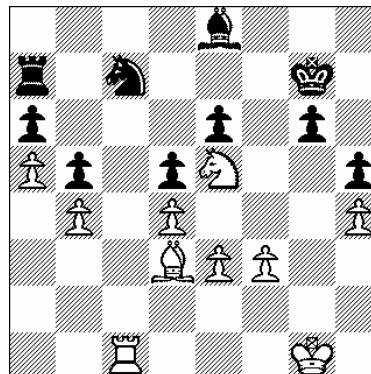


Diagram 1
1.?

You don't have to be a chess expert to see there is a difference between the pieces of the two sides. For instance look at the two knights. While the white knight has a dominant position in the center, from where it can quickly arrive anywhere on the chessboard, the black knight has a passive position and can make only one move to a8. Therefore it's clear that we can't even compare the two knights.

The same qualitative difference is visible when we compare the bishops and the rooks. White's bishop and rook has a higher freedom of move than their black opponents. They occupy open line and put pressure over weak points in the opponent's position.

In the position in the diagram no 1 these qualitative advantages can be immediately converted into quantitative advantages by playing 1.Kf2 followed by 2.Rg1. A superiority of forces is thus

created on the king-side and Black's passive pieces can't intervene in time to defend the g6-pawn.

As a rule, the qualitative value of a piece depends on 4 characteristics:

1. The mobility of the piece
2. The positioning of the piece
3. The role played by the piece
4. The stability of the piece

Let's see what each of the terms mentioned above means.

Mobility of a piece represents its capacity to move over a big number of squares and to move quickly (namely in few moves) anywhere on the chessboard.

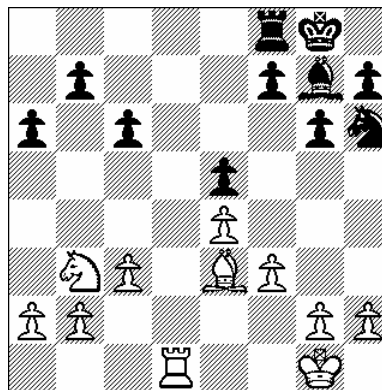


Diagram 2

In the diagram no 2 we can see how the mobility of a piece can be restrained by both own and opponent pieces. For instance the mobility of Nh6 is restrained by the white pawns which control the square g4 and f5 and the black pieces which occupy the squares f7 and g8.

Comparing the two bishops we observe that the white bishop has a superior mobility to his black opponent. The latter has only two possibilities of move and it needs many moves to arrive to the central area of the board.

Also, White's rook has a better mobility than Black's rook.

White has more possibilities to transform his huge qualitative advantage into a quantitative advantage, for instance 1.Rd7 Rb8 2.Na5

Positioning of a piece is a very important characteristic too.

Usually a knight placed on the center of the board controls more squares than a knight placed on the edge of the board, while the linear pieces (the queen, the rooks and the bishops) have a better positioning when occupying an open line.

However a linear piece is also very strong in the center, as you can see in the diagram no 3.

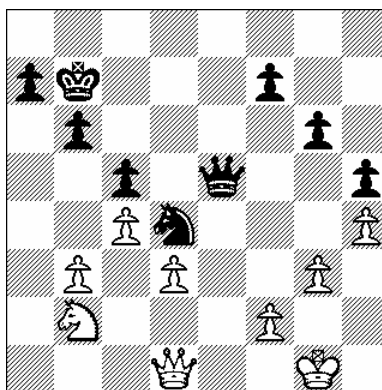


Diagram 3
1...?

A better positioning of a piece increases its qualitative value.

In the diagram no 3 the qualitative advantage is transformed into a quantitative advantage by 1...Qe2. After the exchange of the queens, Black wins by force the pawn b3 due to the awful position of Nb2.

It's important to note that the linear pieces usually have their mobility restrained by the own pawns placed on their lines of action. This could be observed in all the 3 analyzed samples.

The role played by a piece has a great importance. On a scale sorted from the worst to the best, there are four main situations:

1. A piece out of play. It is the worst situation and it occurs when a piece is far away from a local battlefield and it is unable to quickly arrive there.

2. A piece that plays a defensive role, namely a piece whose main task is to protect a certain objective.

3. A piece that plays an offensive role, namely a piece that attacks an objective in the opponent's field.

4. A piece that simultaneously plays an offensive role and one or more defensive roles. It is the best case, better than the 3rd one. While defending an objective, a piece can have a supplementary role as it indirectly helps another piece by freeing it from its defensive task.

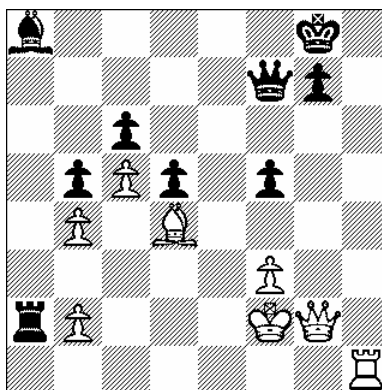


Diagram 4
1.?

In the diagram no 4 we can notice a clear difference in White's favor from the role of the pieces perspective. The battlefield is on the king-side and thus Ra2 and mainly Ba8 are out of play. White's pieces play offensive roles and 1.Qh2 immediately decides the game. We must remark the double role played by Bd4 which helps the attack on the king-side and simultaneously protects the pawn b2, therefore preventing a black counter-attack on the queen-side.

Stability of a piece becomes an important feature when that piece occupies an important square. If the piece has no stability on the square where it is positioned, the opponent can easily remove it, thus decreasing its qualitative value. On the contrary, when a piece is well placed and has stability (that is, when the opponent can't remove it from there in good conditions), its qualitative value increases.

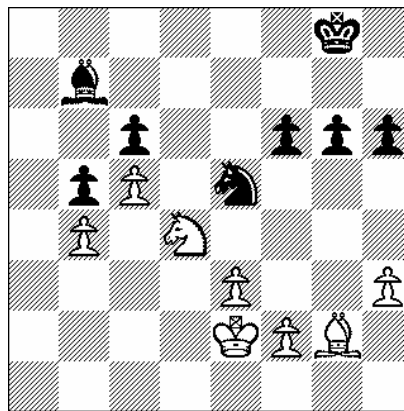


Diagram 5
1.?

In the diagram no 5 the two knights have an equal positioning on the center of the board. Still, White's knight has a superior qualitative value because it has a better stability, while Black's knight can be removed from its central position by 1.f4.

I hope you understand how important the qualitative value of the pieces is. Therefore, during a chess game, we must consequently try two things:

- 1. Improving the qualitative value of our pieces** (by increasing their mobility and placing them on good squares where they are stable and play offensive roles)
- 2. Reducing the qualitative value of the opponent pieces** (by restraining their mobility, not allowing them to occupy strong and stable positions and forcing them to play defensive roles or, if possible, getting them out of play)

4.c. The qualitative value of the pawn structure

Like the other pieces, the pawns have their qualitative value too. You must not treat the pawn as an individual entity, the pawns act together like a unit. When referring to the qualitative value of the pawns, we talk about the qualitative value of the pawn structure. Indeed, the qualitative value of the pawn structure is influenced by the presence of the doubled pawns or isolated pawns or

more isles of pawns, but your goal is to have a strong pawn formation and not strong individual pawns.

There are dozens of books on the market that treat the qualitative value of the pawns, either analyzing general aspects or focusing on particular pawn structure. It's certain we can't deal with such a large subject in two phrases. All I expect from you after this lesson is that you consider the pawns what they are, namely a unit.

If you see the pawn structure like a unit, you will notice that its qualitative value is influenced by the same four characteristics mentioned above: **mobility, positioning, role and stability**. In this case by a good positioning we understand both a healthy pawn structure as well as a pawn structure that ensures a good control of the center.

4.d. Space advantage

By space advantage we understand that one of the two players better controls a certain area of the chessboard. Normally the space advantage is obtained by advancing the pawns on that area. Why is the space advantage important? Simply because the space advantage indirectly influences the qualitative value of the pieces.

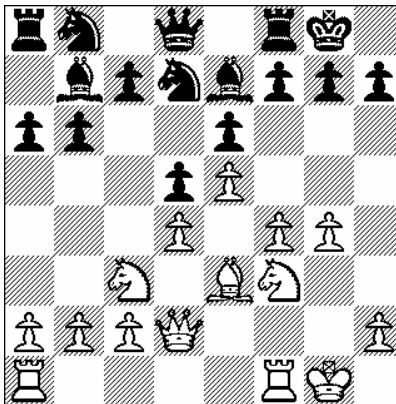


Diagram 6
1.?

In the diagram no 6 White has a space advantage on the king-side and can still increase it by f4-f5. The qualitative value of White's pieces is better because they have a great mobility on the king-side, while Black's pieces were forced to occupy passive position due to the lack of space. White can create a superiority of forces on the king-side (i.e. the local area where he has a space advantage) by Nc3-e2-g3-h5 (or Nc3-e2-f4 after f4-f5 is played), Rf1-f2, Ra1-f1.

So, **the main trait of the space advantage is its influence over the qualitative value of the pieces.**

The space has a small influence over the qualitative value of the pieces when the material on the board is reduced (after more exchanges of pieces).

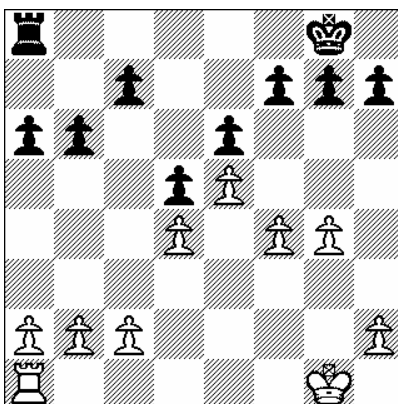


Diagram 7
1.?

Compare the diagram no 7 with the diagram no 6. White has the same space advantage on the king-side, but it is useless now. Without pieces, there is no benefic influence of the space advantage over the qualitative value of the pieces.

We will study more deeply this special advantage in a special chapter.

4.e. Seizure of initiative

The seizure of initiative, that is the possibility to create immediate threats, is very important too. The opponent being under pressure, he must first parry the threats and only after deal with improving his position. Therefore his alternatives are reduced.

The importance of the seizure of the initiative is illustrated in the following sample.

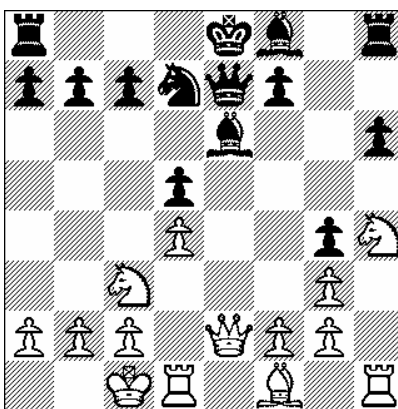


Diagram 8
1.? Em.Lasker-Marshall, St.Petersburg 1914

In the diagram no 8 Black needs only a tempo to solve the opening problems by castling queen-side. But it is White's turn to move and the former world champion immediately seizes the initiative by playing **1.Qb5!**

The pawns b7 and d5 are simultaneously attacked; therefore Marshall set a cunning trap **1...0-0-0**
We must note that **1...Qb4** loses in view of **2.Nxd5!**

2.Qa5! Of course not **2.Nxd5?? Bxd5 3.Qxd5 Qg5! 4.Qxg5 hxd5** and Black wins. Now the new threat **Qxa7** forces Blacks to weaken its position because after **2...Kb8 3.Nb5** would be decisive. **2...a6 3.Bxa6! bxa6 4.Qxa6+ Kb8 5.Rd3** with a decisive attack and an eventual win for White.

You could see how Black's alternatives were limited because White, move by move, created new strong threats and obliged Black to parry them.

5. Making the plan of play & choosing the best move

If you understand the subjects analyzed above, making a correct plan of play and choosing the best move in a position will be easier. All you need is to order in your way of thinking.

Looking for the best plan of play means searching for the best way to improve your position. It involves looking for the possibilities to achieve one of the advantages mentioned above or trying to annihilate these advantages if they belong to the opponent.

Here are some questions you must answer to in order to find potential best plans and moves.

Is my king safe? How could I enforce its defense?

Is my opponent's king safe? How could I benefit from its weakened position?

Is my opponent threatening to achieve a material advantage?

Can I achieve a material advantage by force?

Where could I create a superiority of forces in order to challenge a local battle? How about my opponent?

How could I increase the qualitative value of my pieces and pawn structure?

How could I reduce the qualitative value of the opponent pieces and pawn structure?

Where could I achieve/increase a space advantage? How about my opponent?

How could I use the space advantage I have in order to increase the qualitative value of my pieces and create a local superiority of forces?

What pieces must I exchange in order to reduce the importance of the space advantage my opponent has?

Could I create immediate threats or seize a long-term initiative? How about my opponent?

By answering such questions you will be able to find the most interesting ideas (plans of play) that can improve your position and also some candidate moves in the spirit of the plans you found. Then, all you need is to compare the candidate moves by calculating concrete lines and assessing the resulting positions. Evrika, the best move is found!

CHES TACTICS

In this introductory lesson, we will discuss about:

- the importance of tactics and the initial instruction for the student's progress
- the chess board and the importance of board visualization
- the forms of interaction between pieces
- basic information about the importance of interactions

The game of chess is known to consist of 2 different parts: strategy and tactics, which are, of course, strongly inter-connected. Some moves can be considered strategical moves (based on rules, principles, plans etc.) and others - tactical moves (which require a precise calculation of variations).

The percentage between these 2 kinds of moves is considered to be around 65%-35% in favor of strategy. Of course, this ratio varies a lot in every game, according to the opening system, methods of attack and defense and the players' style.

The player's tactical force depends in a large measure on the initial instruction.

This initial instruction plays a very important role to mould the player's mind for high performance in chess.

There is a huge difference between the calculation force of a young grandmaster of 16 years old and a club player with more than 30 years of practice. Where does this difference come from? It is 1% talent and 99% work, GOOD work that the young player has done and that advantages him! Instead, the bad habits in the calculation process the experimented club player has, keep him stuck at the same level for a long time.

We will begin the instruction with the basic elements (presented in this lesson) as they are of greatest importance for your initial training. Then, we will pass on to more and more complex elements. We will work in order to develop and improve your "calculation power", "tactical vision", "maximal thinking" and many other elements, all part of Tactics.

The chess game is played with pieces on a chess board. Even if it looks simplistic, these 2 elements (BOARD and PIECES) should be known very well by every player who aspires to a high performance in chess.

The "good" thing is that most players (even the "good tactical players") do not know even the chess board, not to take into consideration more complex elements as pieces interaction. This is the good thing for us, but a bad one for them.

Our student has to start his training in the "tactics" area with these 2 elements.

1) The Chess Board

Our student is advised to learn the chess board so well that he should be able to “see” it in his mind. He should be able to quickly answer, without looking at the board, to some questions such as:

- How can a knight from c4 arrive at f6 through d3?
- Say all the routes for a knight to go from d6 to f4 in the minimal number of moves.
- Which are the squares where an h4-bishop can attack a queen on d6?
- Name the diagonals that intersect in c5, f4, h2.
- Name the color of the squares where the b1-h7 diagonal intersects the 4th rank.
- and so on.

At the end of the training, the student should be able to (re-)play a game only by following/telling the moves (1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 etc.) without looking at the board.

In addition, after looking at a position for about 2-3 minutes, the student should be able to solve it in his mind.

This kind of training, so-called “board visualization”, should be taken seriously by any chess player, no matter his value. It is strongly recommended by strong tacticians like Kotov, Tal, and great chess teachers as Averbach, Shamkovich, Sveshnikov or Pavlov. Without a good mental picture of the chess board, the player will face serious problems when the position on the board becomes more complicated. Also he will probably become tired when the game lasts for more than 30 moves.

This training will help the player see correctly more moves in advance, clearly see the resulting positions with his “mind’s eye”, observe much easier hidden resources, avoid “blunders” and, finally, improve his calculation power.

From the second month of our school training, we will provide a specific program with exercises and methods especially meant to train this capability. The training will last until the end of our course, but its final objective will be great for your chess game. The training will be separated in 2 levels of difficulty.

2) The Chess Pieces

If the chess board can and should be learnt in a shorter period of time, the pieces, with their interactions, roles, cooperation, methods of play constitute a very large and important part of the chess theory.

After our lesson on the quantitative value of pieces, you should already know their correct value during the opening-middlegame and, also, during the endgame. The aforementioned lesson also showed you the relative value of the pieces when the material on the board of the 2 players is not symmetric.

Interaction between pieces

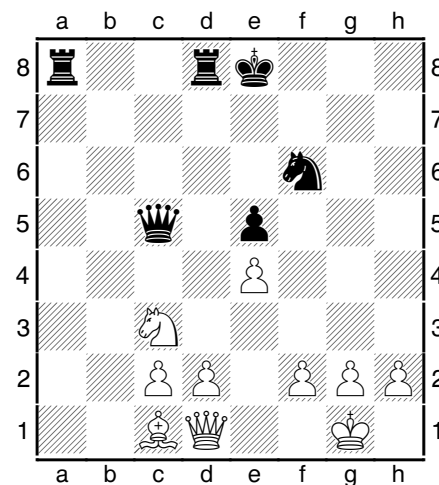
Another aspect, many players do not know is the forms of interaction between pieces. If you ask somebody about this (even most of your local chess teachers), the answer will be: “1.attack and 2.defense”. This is correct in a percentage of 40% and not more!

The interaction between pieces has 5 different forms:

1. **sustainment** (between allied pieces)
2. **protection** (between allied pieces)
3. **limitation** (between allied pieces)
4. **attack** (between opponent pieces)
5. **obstruction** (between opponent pieces)

We will refer to the position from the right, to exemplify these forms. We use a single name: “piece”, for both pieces and pawns.

W: Kg1, Qd1, Bc1, Nc3; c2, d2, e4, f2, g2, h2
B: Kg8, Qc5, Ra8, Rd8, Nf6; e5



1. Sustainment = a piece defends or sustains another allied piece.

Ex a) the white queen defends the c1-bishop and the c2- and d2- pawns;

Ex b) the c3-knight defends the e4-pawn and the d1-queen;

Ex c) the d2-pawn defends the c3-knight.

2. Protection = a piece protects another allied piece by interposing.

Ex a) the white f2-, g2- and h2- pawns protect the white king (the f2-pawn protects the king from the attack of the black queen on the a7-g1 diagonal);

Ex b) the d1-queen is protected against the attack of the d8-rook by the d2-pawn;

Ex c) the e4-pawn protects the g2-pawn on the a8-h1 diagonal... and so on.

3. Limitation = a piece restricts the ray of action of another allied piece.

Ex a) the white pieces limit the queen's possible moves to only 6 squares.

Ex b) the black king limits the movement of the d8-rook, so this cannot move on e8, f8, g8, or h8.

Ex c) the d2-pawn limits the mobility of the c1-bishop.

Ex d) the black e5-pawn limits the mobility of the black queen on the 5th rank to only 3 squares.

4. Attack = a piece attacks an opponent piece.

Ex a) the black d8-rook attacks the d2-pawn

Ex b) the f6-knight attacks the e4-pawn

Ex c) no white piece attacks a black piece

5. Obstruction = a piece limits the movement of an opponent piece.

Ex a) the a8-rook hinders white c1-bishop to go on a3

Ex b) the c5-queen pins the f2-pawn which cannot advance

Ex c) the e4-pawn blocks the black e5-pawn which cannot advance, and vice-versa

Ex d) the d8-rook bothers white d2-pawn to exert his right of defense for the c3-knight (because of the unprotected white queen on d1) – so, if Black is to move, he can take a knight by Qc5xc3

Ex e) the d1-queen limits the mobility of the black knight (by controlling the g4- and h5-squares)

All these interactions between pieces change at every new move on the chess board. The **consequences (CQS)** of the moves and their recording in our minds for an immediate or later usage in the game are essential for our “tactical thinking” (see the set of exercises about the CQS of the moves).

Explanations and tips about the forms of piece interactions

The attack

The attack is a very well known form of interaction, so we won't insist upon it. However, you should know that the attack can take more forms (simple attack, double attack, triple attack, discovered check, double strike and so on). For less trained students in the field of tactics, we highly recommend a book with tactical exercises (combinations) in order to learn and exercise these forms of attack.

The defense (sustainment)

As before we mentioned the attack, we will talk now about the defense, which is the contrary form of interaction. This is also very well known, but associated especially with the sustainment (“My opponent has attacked my knight with the queen. I will defend my knight”). However, the defense can take more forms and at least one of them is underestimated.

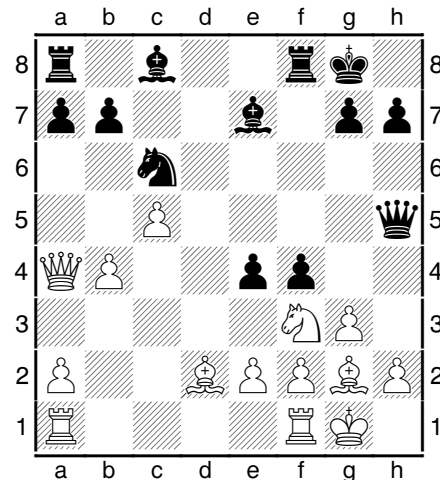
Without taking into account actions against the attacking piece (as capture or pinning), there are 4 forms of defense against an attack:

1. the attacked piece moves away
2. the attacked piece is sustained (defended) - *sustainment*
3. an allied piece protects the attacked piece by interposing - *protection*
4. the counter-attack: an opponent piece is attacked at the next move

Even if some of you might consider this fragment too basic, it's not at all like that! During a chess game, the player's mind has to be prepared to take all the possibilities into account in a fraction of a second.

In the position you see at right, the white knight is attacked and a "normal" movement away will leave the white king in danger.

The candidate moves that White should take into consideration in this position must include the counter-attack move: 1.b5! This move is nothing more than a simple defensive action.



1.?

The protection

The pieces of the same army can protect each other by interposing. Of course, the best protection is offered by the pawns which are of the lowest value. A protection assured by pieces (not pawns) is not the best because this form of defense reduces the qualitative value of the pieces.

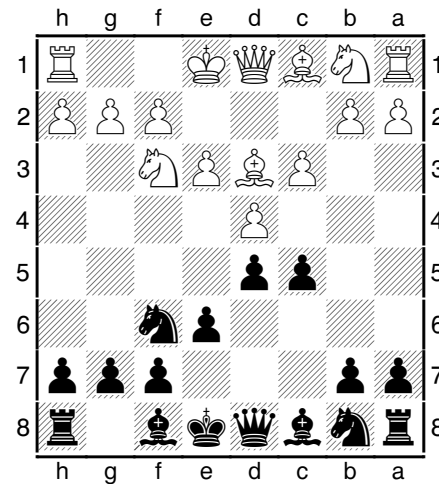
The king is the only piece which cannot be sustained (defended) against an attack (check) and this is why the king's protection (usually assured by the pawns) is very important. After castling, the king enters a zone where the own pawns are less important in the fight for the centre and space, so they are usually intact, in their initial position. Who said chess is not extremely logical?!

In the king's case, the pawns can also limit the monarch's moves. Therefore, when there are open files and major pieces are threatening to enter the back-rank, the king's pawns should move (h2-h3 / h7-h6 or g2-g3 / g7-g6) to create a "window" for the king.

The limitation

In this position (given in the first set of exercises for the consequences of the moves), we were asked which is the better move for Black: 1...Nbd7 or 1...Nc6.

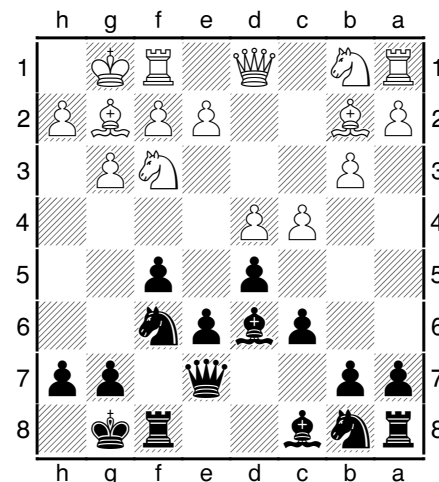
Even if you don't know the best plan for Black in this opening system, you should opt for 1...Nc6 for the simple reason that the knight doesn't block (see "limitation") the diagonal of the c8-bishop. Later on, by continuing the game, you will realize that a good plan is Qd8-c7 and e6-e5 fighting for the centre and initiative. You will realize then that the knight would be better on c6, than on d7 because your light-square bishop will be free.



While between allied pieces, the sustainment and protection are good types of interaction, the limitation is a bad one.

We have to observe that the limitation made by a piece is usually temporary (assuming that piece can move). However, the limitation of the pieces by the own pawns has usually a long-term effect. The pawns cannot move back and forth like the pieces, but their movement implies important consequences that cannot be redressed. Also, the pawns can be blocked by the opponent pieces and pawns. The most popular result is the "bad" bishop which is limited by the own pawns blocked on the same color as the bishop.

Almost every opening system has specific problems regarding the limitation of the pieces. Especially Black has to solve problems in the opening that include centre, space, king's safety, prevention of weaknesses. As a result, a piece or more will be left suffering, blocked by the own pieces or pawns. After the player solved the most important problems and the majority of pieces are well placed, the player (as already mentioned, usually Black) will try to solve the problems those limited pieces have, a step called "the second opening".



A good example is "Stonewall", where Black successfully secured the e4-square and also got some chances to attack on the kingside. However, as you can see on the diagram from the right, the c8-bishop is strongly limited by the own pawns. Black cannot hope for success without developing his queenside bishop and rook, so a second phase of development is

needed. Black will plan to develop his bishop via c8-d7-e8-h5, or even better on b7 after moving b7-b6, and c6-c5.

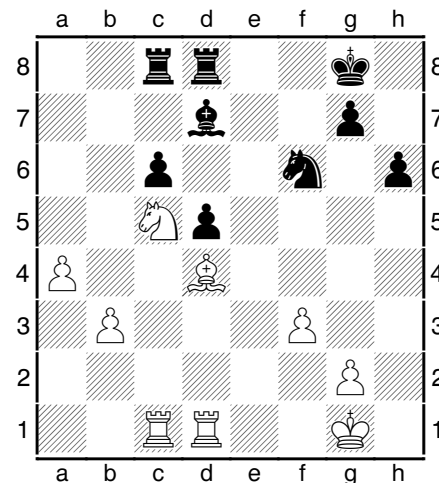
The obstruction

Obstruction of the opponent pieces is a form of interaction between pieces like attack and defense. Almost everyone uses it at a low value and only intuitively most of the times. The simplest usage of obstruction is often used in defense, when, for example, one hampers an opponent piece to come in a decisive attacking position.

The obstruction is realized by the own pieces which attack or control some important squares where the opponent pieces can move. In this way, we avoid the activation of opponent pieces, we try to get them out of play or, at least, we block their good collaboration. In its high level of usage, obstruction is known as “prophylaxis”.

An important form of obstruction is the blockade: by blocking one or more opponent pawns, the enemy pieces will be limited (the 3rd form of interaction) by their own pawns.

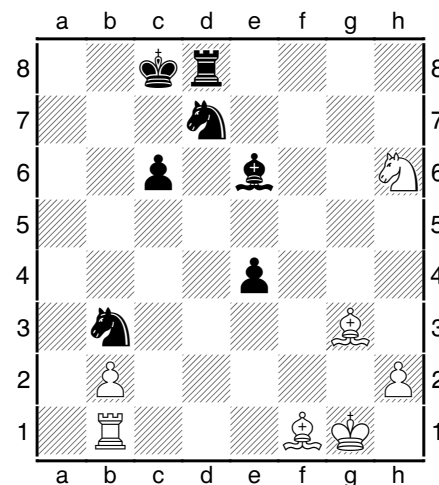
In the position from the right, White’s minor pieces obstruct the opponent pawns to advance by a strong blockade. In the meantime, white a- and b- pawns are free to advance. The black pawns limit the mobility of the bishop, rooks and even the knight. The black knight’s and bishop’s moves are also restricted by the white f3-pawn.



The pieces with long ray of action (Queen, Rook and Bishop) are excellent for obstructing the opponent pieces. The Queen and the Rook are anyway strong, major pieces, so let’s look at the power of bishops by comparing it with the knights one.

The white g3-bishop obstructs the opponent king’s moves and mate can follow with the other bishop on a6.

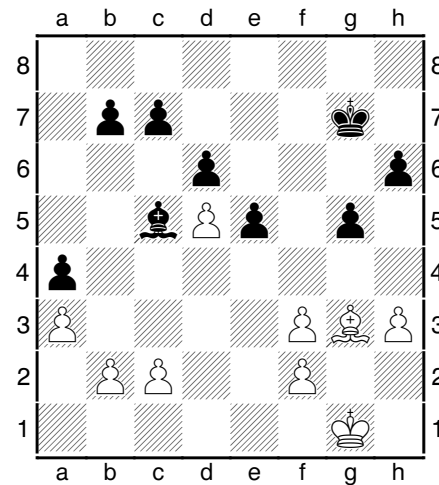
The black e6-bishop cuts the white knight at the edge of the board, appropriating all the escaping squares.



In this position, White's bishop is restricted by the black pawns. It is as Black would have a piece up and it can use it by attacking on the queenside.

The pawns and, therefore, the pawn-moves are of first importance in the play for obstruction because of their small value against the big value of a piece. Also, pawns play a very important role in limiting the activity of the own pieces (the 3rd form of interaction).

These are only some basic examples for the importance of this interaction form between pieces, which is not enough known and used by chess players.



Modern strong grandmasters include the obstruction of opponent pieces (together with the opponent's plans and threats) as priority in their technique of play. The obstruction of opponent's pieces is sometimes preferable (or should be treated with priority) to the activation of the own pieces. If some commercial books talk about "secret methods of play", "secrets of soviet chess" and other kind of "secrets", this play technique can be categorized as such a secret, if you want to. Of course, the real secret lies only in the comprehension of position and this can be trained by theory study and games, deep analysis and practice – this is the real "secret".

Mastering the technique of obstruction is one of our goals at ICS. You should know now about the existence of this strategy in its simplest form - hampering the opponent pieces from getting active positions.

INTRODUCTION

The method of study of our International Chess School will be different from what you can read in a strategy book. Of course we will refer all the time to some classical strategic factors like space, outposts, “better” minor piece etc., different methods to assess the position or how to play typical middle game positions, but one of our goals is to create a very good organized, creative and pragmatic thinking as the modern chess requires. Our school's lessons are focused on middlegames and increase **the positional understanding** of the student and teach him **how to think**, preparing him for any practical situation.

Let's define briefly some specific features of the method:

1. SELF-QUESTIONING

In the sample lesson “Making decisions in chess” we already mentioned some examples of questions that can be used especially when the opponent is to move. In fact, this technique should become a **deep habit** for the modern chess player. By answering such questions you will be able to find interesting ideas and the specific features of each position (which will build the foundation of the position assessment and the plans of play) that could improve your position and the candidate moves in the spirit of the ideas (the plans of play) you found. During the lessons you will take note of many strategic factors that can lead to an advantage in the chess game.

How to distinguish real threats from illusory threats will be an important part of the training because it is statistically proved that HERE is a big difference between grandmasters and the other players. At this point if you realize which the enemy threats are, you can enclose the opponent's plans in your own plans of play.

2. TO DO LIST

With each new move, the situation on the board will change. All the information we are receiving during our thinking process or random (from the opponent moves) should be stored somewhere and we call that mental place “to do list”. As we will accustom to select the important peculiarities, on our “to do list” will appear priorities (deeply connected with the move order). Imagine that the plan in a chess game is like a mobile puzzle and the player should fit all the pieces in order to find the path to follow. For example the answer at the question: “Is my king safely?” doesn't lead automatically to a response (in terms of a move) but that answer should be kept in this “to do list” as a requirement of the position.

These first two features, accurately used, will lead to an easier assessment of the position.

3. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CHESS MOVES

The chess game is a transformational process and the moves are the vectors that change the board picture. As Botvinnik stated “Chess is a generalized exchange”, any achievement can be made only giving something in exchange. Before and after each move we have to realize the results involved and, through the analytical effort, we should choose the line where the difference between what we are gaining and what we are offering instead is higher.

In terms of tactics, in a dynamic position where sacrifices are involved we will focus on the **relative value of the pieces and how to take stock of each forces report.**

4. DEVELOPING INTUITION AND IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT PLAN

Intuition represents immediately finding and understanding the essence of the position and automatically seeing the move in your mind’s eye. As the World Champion, Vladimir Kramnik, says “Intuition depends on knowledge; the more you accumulate, the better your intuition becomes. You may like some position, and dislike others, some position you have faith in, whereas others you do not trust at all - this is what constitutes intuitive judgment.”

That is why so important to use every second spent over the board (at trainings or real games) to create your own mind-located database.

Our lessons are meant to develop your intuition by the means of carefully selected and annotated games in the spirit of a practical tournament player.

Strategy foundation is represented by the plan of play which means a consciously method to achieve a hidden purpose. What all the plans had in common is the attainment of positional advantages.

The plan in the chess game is like compasses which must be installed accordingly to the fight conditions, so the sum of the results founded out on the previous step can lead to a new plan if the initial conditions had been changed.

**Drazic, Sinisa****Anand, Viswanathan**

Corsica Masters 4th (3.2)

D00**2508****2762**

05.11.2000

We will analyze this game from black's point of view as we are playing the game now not as an after game analysis. I didn't choose a much known theoretical opening line, because our aim is to develop a healthy and efficient thinking in all the stages of the game.

1.d4

Should I do self-questioning myself already as Black in this position? Yes is the answer, because we receive information after each move, and we must centralize all the information in our "to do list".

With 1.d4 White starts a solid and closed game where the play is based mostly on maneuvering play with the pieces and the critical central square is e4.

I will note on my "to do list" that I should fight for e4 square and that I have to play active against a calm and solid opponent.

d5 2.Bg5

White has a modern approach, the so-called Trompowsky Attack which demonstrates the uninhibited nature of development in contemporary chess. White develops the queen's bishop, a move which neglects one of the classical principles of the openings that states "develop knights before bishops especially before queen's bishop".

Important questions:

1. Which is the point of this premature emergence of Bc1?

White takes control over h4-d8 diagonal and limit in many ways black's development on the king side. White's waits for Nf6 followed by Bxf6 creating a pair of double pawns. The resulting position has a closed character favoring White's pair of knights.

Delaying Ng1-f3 allows white's to move the f pawn later on if it's the case.

2. Does this move have a drawback?

Yes, the bishops already work from the initial position and they defend the pawns from the knight's files. So b2 pawn can be the subject of a tempo gain (We can attack it by preparing

Qd8-b6 - note this on "to do list").

3. Could I create immediate threats? (A strong player starts all the time the reckoning variations with a tempo-move)

Yes, h7-h6 attacks Bg5 (early developed bishops can be subjects of a pawn attack).

Does it worth it?

Yes, White will be forced to take a decision: to give -up the control over h4-d8 diagonal or c1-h6 diagonal.

h6 3.Bh4

A small victory for Black.

Does this move have a drawback?

Bh4 remains unprotected and it controls only 5 squares comparing to Bg5 which controls 8 squares (the relative value of a piece is often given by the number of the squares controlled). The unprotected position of the bishop can be exploited?

Usually we do this by the mean of a double attack. At this point the ability to foresee future positions and to determine the geometrical reasons plays an important role. If d4 pawn will disappear, Qb4 can create that double-attack (note this on "to do list" next to Qd8-b6 idea).

Can I go right away for c7-c6 and Qb6 in the detriment of a quick development?

Yes, the key-square e4 square is controlled, c7-c6 consolidates our central pawn d5 (Nb8-c6 is unsuitable with the pawn structure) and because the game started with d4 black's are searching for the ideal position in detriment of a quick development.

c6 4.e3

[4.Nf3 Another logical move that protects Bh4 and develops a piece. Qb6 On the next moves black's will illustrate a typical and efficient set-up for this opening and the specific pawn-structure. 5.b3 The result of 2. Bg5, white must create a weak dark square complex; b2-c3-a3 which Bh4 can not protect. Bf5 Developing the bishop in front of the pawns chain and exerting pressure on c2.

6.e3 Nd7 Flexible preparing Ngf6 and e7-e5(opening the path for the dark-square bishop).

7.Bd3 Bxd3 8.Qxd3 e6 9.c4 Ne7 10.c5

Qa5+ 11.Nc3

Which is white's threat?

To chase black's most important piece Qa5

with 12. b3-b4 possible because b7 pawn is weak.

How can this threat be repelled?

Ra8-b8 is a passive move which can be met by Bh4-g3.

b7-b6 is an active approach that challenges white's pawns chain.

b6 12.b4 Qxb4 13.0-0 Nf5 14.Rfc1 bxc5 15.Rab1 c4 16.Qc2 Qa5 17.Rb7 Qa6 18.Rcb1 Bd6 19.e4 Nxh4 20.Nxh4 Rb8 21.Rxb8+ Bxb8 22.exd5 cxd5

White's fireworks are finished, and it started a desperate attack. 23.Ng6 fxg6 24.Qxg6+ Kd8 25.Qxg7 Re8 26.Qxh6 Qa5 27.Qg5+ Kc8 28.Qg6 Rf8 29.Rd1 Qb6 30.Ne2 e5 31.Qh5 Qf6 32.Rf1 Rh8 0-1 Anand-Karpov, Laussane 1998]

Which is the aim of White last move?

White's last move give black's following information:

-White wants to play Bd3, followed by Nge2,0-0, and perhaps f2-f4 followed by a rook lift Rf1-f3 if black's are preparing 0-0

-The attack against short castle is relieved by the push h7-h6

Does this move have a drawback?

Bh4 is still unprotected, so we must remember from our "to do list" that after Qb6 the d4 pawn is pinned on fourth rank.

4...Qb6

Tempo.

5.b3

The alternative was 5.Qc1.

The move from the text leads to a pawn structure commitment on white squares which will limit white's queen and light-square bishop activity.

How black should react?

Remembering that d4 is pinned on the 4-th rank, that White intends to develop Bd3 and Nge2 the answer will come easy. This is a circumstantial reason and Black should us' it right away.

e5!?

Beside tactical reason e7-e5 fights for the center, after this move Black will occupy 2 squares from the center, white one and one square will be neutral.

6.Nf3

Forced. Bd3 has no sense because of e5-e4

and Nf3 clarifies the pawnstructure in the center.

e4□ 7.Nfd2

The character of the position is changed now. Which are the specific features of this pawn structure?

Accordingly to the pawns orientation Black should attack on the king-side and white on the queen-side. Another reason is the setup of the pieces with long rays of action which are also directed to the king-side.

Which are the weak points in white camp?

f2 (the bottom of the pawn chain), g2 and h2.

Which is the piece that defends the weak points? How can Black trade Bh4?

Black can try Ng8-e7-f5 (g6) to trade the bishop, but the knight is more effective in a closed position like this one. The other idea is to trade the dark square bishops. In this case Black will keep the light-squared bishop which is not a "bad bishop" even if is placed on the same colour as the majority of the black pawns, because Black will attack on the king side and Bc8 will have both defensive and offensive tasks.

Be7!? 8.Bg3

Now, thanks to an active play, Black is able to develop Ng8-f6 that was limited by 2.Bg5.

Black has on "to do list" the following tasks:

1. Develop as quickly as possible.
2. Trade the dark-square bishops, in order to create weak pawns on White's king-side (h2 and f2).
3. Bring the queen into the game on d8-h4 diagonal.

Be6 9.Be2 Nf6 10.0-0

White could have delayed the castle with:

[10.c4 0-0 11.Nc3 Qa5

But the long castle is not a valid option, when White has weaknesses on dark squares and Black can blow-up the center with c6-c5.]

10...0-0 11.c4 Qd8 12.Nc3 Bd6

Black has replaced his queen and now it offers the dark-square bishops exchange. **13.Bxd6**

White chooses to keep the pawns in front of the king on the initial position. If:

[13.Rb1 Bxg3 14.hxg3

Which are the changes?

After 14.h:g3 the g2 pawn is covered, but

White has a rigid pawn structure on the king-side (the opponent can easily create a plan of play because White will not be able to move the pawns on the king-side). The white queen must protect g4 which is a passive position. The only freeing move is f2-f3 which lead to a long-term weakness on e3, so Black should have on his "to do list" to calculate a reply for f2-f3.

What should Black do about this new pawn structure? How Black can continue his attack on the king-side?

Remember that a wing attack succeed only when the center is stabilized.

Creating a local superiority of the forces on the king side where Black space advantage is assured by the e4 pawn.

Opening a file on the enemy king with h6-h5-h4 and bringing Rf8 into play.

Black should attack f2 and h2 pawns using g4 as a forepost for Nf6 and the flexible black queen.

Nbd7 15.b4 Qe7 16.cxd5 Bxd5 17.Qc2 Rfe8 18.Rfc1 Rac8 19.Qa4 a6 20.Qa5 Qe6 21.Nb3 Qf5 22.Rb2 h5 23.Nd2 Re6 24.a4 Qg5 25.Bc4 Qh6 26.Rbc2 Bxc4 27.Nxc4 h4 28.gxh4 Qxh4

With better prospects for black.]

13...Qxd6 14.Rb1 Nbd7 15.a4

Which are white's threats?

White's are threatening to increase the space advantage on the queen side and started the attack with a4 (instead of b3-b4) in order to avoid black's counterplay based on d:c4.

Does this move have a drawback?

It leaves b3 pawn behind and b4 square uncontrolled.

How Black should continue?

Black has the space advantage having the possibility to move especially the queen along the sixth rank. A well-known method to create piece superiority is to attract the majority of opponent's pieces on the queen side and using your flexibility to challenge the enemy king. Black should play a7-a5 which in the first place stops b3, a4 on light squares and leads to a favorable pawn structure in case of b3-b4. Then bring Rf8 into play luring both white's rooks on the queen-side and launch a decisive attack

against f2 and h2 pawns.

a5 16.c5

A serious mistake. We already know that Black needed a stabilized center in order to give a wing attack, and White makes this task easier. Is b3-b4 possible after 16....Qe7?

No, because of a:b4 and the rook will be pinned on b4 after b7-b6.

How can black achieve the initiative?

With a quick b7-b6 opening the file against backward pawn b3.

Qe7 17.Rb2 Rfb8 18.Qb1 b6 19.cxb6 Rxb6 20.Rc1 Rab8 21.Bf1

A quiet move but which are the ideas behind it? White set free e2 square for Nc3 in order to double the rooks on the "c"-file.

White's are ready to play g2-g3 to protect the pawn from h2 if it's the case.

Ne2 can defend white's king position (it has no other aim) from f4 or g3.

Can Black stop this?

Yes, h6-h5-h4 controls g3 and open-up the "h"-file if white's trying g2-g3.

h5!? 22.Ne2 h4 23.Rbc2 Qd6

Forced, but good. The queen remains centralized and plays both active and defensive role.

24.Nf4

Should black allow N:e6?

No, when you have the space advantage you should keep as many pieces as possible on the board. Nf4 will be subject of a tempo win and as we stated before: "bad bishops" (Bd7) defends good pawns.

Bf5 25.Rc5 g5 26.Ne2

White's are threatening to increase pressure upon c6 with Qb1-c2 , what to do?

Setting free d7 for the bishop and finding new routes for Nd7 is the most simple solution.

Nf8 27.Qc2 Bd7

Again a move with two goals: defends c6 and liberate "f" file for the queen to attack the weakness f2.

28.Rxa5?!

White's failed to see black's threats against h2 and f2 (it is also an optical illusion Qc2 can not support f2 because of the lack of space). If

[28.h3 Ra8 29.f3 exf3 30.gxf3 Ne6 31.Qf5 Nh5 32.R5c2 Qe7 33.Qd3 Ng3]

28...Ng4 29.g3 Qf6 30.Nxe4

A desperate attempt, but Black should pay attention to the changes in the position! **dxe4**

31.Nc3

Now the 5-th rank is open, White has two pawns for a piece, threatening to grab another on e4.

On the other hand b3 is hanging and Black can reach the second rank.

How Black should react?

Playing active, and realize that white's king position is still worse. Seizing the initiative is most important thing.

hxg3 32.hxg3 Qh6

And not the passive:

[32...Bf5 33.Bc4 Qg6 34.Kg2 and white is back in the game!]

33.Bg2 Rxb3 34.Nxe4 Rb2 35.Rxg5+ Ng6 36.Qc5

How the solution can be founded?

Black is attacking with 3 pieces (Qh6, Rb2, Ng4) and we need only 2 pieces to give mate.

Qh2 can be played anytime so Bg2 is already challenged once. The answer is clear now: f2 is pinned and black's can connect queen and rook on the second rank!

[36.Qd3 R8b3 With the same end.]

36...Qh2+ 37.Kf1 Nxe3+

Crowning Black strategy.

Conclusions:

White's modern opening faced a logical approach and an easy to remember set-up.

Using a pro-active thinking Black was able to guess white's plans of play.

The key was self-questioning about the enemy threats and drawbacks during all the game and create a "to do list".

We talked about a lot of strategical factors as : the center controll, "bad bishop" issue, how to deal with different pawn structures, building an attack against the opponents king.

0-1

□ Jussupow
 ■ Rozentalis
 Elista RUS

E14

01.10.1998

E14: Queen's Indian: Classical Variation (4 e3)

Welcome, to our second annotated game!
 Our next chess trip will be again on a "semi-closed game", (which starts with 1.d4). As we remember, in this case, the key square is e4. The difference between 1...d5 (which leads to a "closed game") and a "semi-closed" lays in the fact that Black will delay the immediate fight for the center in exchange for pieces development, but using as a safety net the control over "e4". Black will add information about the opponent's setup in order to undermine the white center later with the appropriate pawn move (c5, d5, e5 or even f5).

1.d4 Nf6

Should I think after just one move?

Yes! This restless state of the mind and continuous self-questioning are enlightening the peculiarities of the position.

If I'm home-prepared for my opponent opening then I should play c4, controlling another square from the center (d5). Otherwise I suggest 2.Nf3 to be used.

Why? One of the openings principles states that "opening moves must follow the smallest commitment".

In the first place each pawn move involves a commitment (the pawn loses the ability to control certain squares) and in the second place because you're avoiding this way the Nimzo-Indian 2.c4,e6 3.Nc3,Bb4 or some marginal openings like: Budapest Gambit 2.c4, e5. Of course we will choose later between c2-c4 (which controls central square d5) and c2-c3 (which consolidates d4).

2.Nf3 e6

Do I have some new information about the position?

1. Black will develop Bf8 on f8-a3 diagonal (a pawn structure e6-f7-g6-h7 creates a lot of weak dark-squares even with the bishop on g7).

2. Bc8 will emerge to b7 (or a6) because is limited by Black's pawns on c8-h3 diagonal.
 3. Probably Black will undermine White's center with c7-c5.

4. Nb8 will be developed on d7 from where it has more flexibility than from c6 or a6.

How can White use the information? What can be comprised on White to do list?

Usually the games that start with d4 assures White the space advantage (mainly because of a better control over the center). The simplest way to preserve the space advantage is to avoid minor pieces trades.

As a conclusion to black bishops plan of development White should note on his "to do list" to develop the bishops on different diagonals to avoid exchanges. To put pressure on Black king-side the ideal squares for the bishops are d3 and respective b2.

Which is the threat behind Black's move c7-c5? To undermine White's center and like in Sicilian Defence to trade c5 for d4 in order to each a position with central pawn majority (pawns e & d versus white pawn e). White can consolidate the center with e2-e3.

Another important idea noticed by the grandmaster in this position is "to limit the black light-squared bishop activity" (Bb7 will be very active on b7).

Remember "limitation of one of the opponent pieces activity" is one of the main strategically means, especially when you have the space advantage.

3.e3 b6 4.Bd3 Bb7 5.0-0 c5

Another critical moment. Black threatens White's center as we assumed. The center control is balanced (d5, e4 controlled by Black d4, e5 by White).

How should White continue: b2-b3 to develop the bishop on the ideal square b2 or to play c2-c4 followed by Nc3 to control the important squares d5 & e4 dominated by Black?

We must fight for the center especially because in a semi-closed game the development advantage decrease in importance (we don't have open files or diagonals to create early threats). Beside 6. b3 can be met by 6...c: d4 and White will be facing a difficult task: to block

a1-h8 diagonal with 7.e:d4 or to give up center control with 7.N:d4.

6.c4

One of 6.c4 consequences is that White can prepare d4-d5 to limit Bb7 and Black can no longer develop Nb8-c6 because of the same threat.

Be7 7.Nc3

White followed a natural development and his main trump is the pawn phalanx c4, d4 which controls central squares d5 & e5 and limits Bb7 and Nb8 by threatening d5.

cx d4

If Black will finish the minor pieces development with:

[7...Nc6

then White will accept the invitation

8.d5 exd5 9.cxd5 Nb4 10.e4 Nxd3

Black lost 3 moves to trade a bishop which moved only once. 11.Qxd3 d6 12.Bf4 0-0
Q: How can white preserve the bishop on f4 to keep the threat e4-e5 possible?

A: h3 for the retreat Bf4-h2 in case of Nh5. 13.h3

How can we assess this position and which important ideas we must keep on our "to do list" as parts of a plan of play?

White has a better control over the center (2 squares are occupied by White and 2 are neutral) which means that white has more space (especially on the king-side) and a superior pieces mobility.

The pawn structure shows a king-side pawn majority for White and a long-term weakness on d6 for Black (already stressed by Bf4) which favors White's pair of knights despite Black's pair of bishops.

White will try to attack in the center with e4-e5 (supported by f2-f4) and on the king-side and Black will try to gain space on the queen side.

We keep for our "to do list":

1. To block Black attack on the queen side (with a2-a4 which permit the rook lift Ra1-a3 with an active rook on the 3-rd rank.
2. To prepare f2-f4 and e4-e5 gaining space

and trying to create a free supported pawn.

3. To create a pieces superiority on the king-side due to a better rooks and queen mobility

4. Fore posts for white knights: c4 and f5.]

8.exd4 d6N

[Other variations:

8...0-0 9.d5 d6

(9...exd5 10.cxd5 Nxd5 doesn't work

because of 11.Nxd5 Bxd5 12.Bxh7+ Kxh7

13.Qxd5

With advantage because:

-d7, f7 are weak and Black has 3 islands of pawns and white only 2

-Black king is exposed

-White queen is extremely active)

10.dxe6 fxe6 11.Nd4 Qc8 and now 12.Re1 (not

12.Qe2

Which neglects "the smallest commitment

principle" (the queens position will be determined last on planned move sequence).

e5 13.Bf5 Nbd7 14.Be6+ Kh8 15.Nf5 Qe8

16.Ng3 Nc5 17.Bh3 Qc6 18.Be3 Rae8

19.Bxc5 Qxc5 20.Rac1 Ba6 21.Nce4 Nxe4

22.Nxe4 Qc6 23.Qe3

Vidmar, M-Spielmann, R/New York, NY USA 1927/(33))

12...e5 13.Nf5 Qd8 14.Re3

Creating a king-side forces superiority after Re3-g3.]

[8...d5 9.cxd5 Nxd5

Leads to a typical IQP (isolated queen pawn position) where Black will miss his defender Nf6.]

Which are the purposes of this move?

Prevents intrusion on e5 and prepares Nb8-d7.

Drawbacks: it weakens e6, give-up the fight for the critical square e4 and Black king remain in the middle for another move.

Can White use those consequences?

9.d5

White wins space, attack e6, limits Bb7 and use the exposed position of Ke8 in the next variation: 9....exd5 10.cxd5, Nxd5 11. Bb5+ winning a piece.

e5

Which are the consequences of black last move?

Black established the pawn structure (creating a king-side pawn majority, admitted the closed position of Bb7. Black plan is simple : to castle followed by a Nf6 move which prepares f7-f5, try to use c5 as a forepost for Nb8 and improvement of Bb7 and Qd8 positions.

Is this plan unbeatable? Black position has drawbacks? Where should white attack?

-It is obvious that White has a lead in development, has for the moment space advantage, better bishops but all these are short term advantages that should be used right away.

-The balance in the center is assured by the e5 pawn so an important part of the plan will be to trade central pawn e5 for a lateral pawn f4.

-White's pieces are directed to the king side (White controls b1-h7, c1-h6 and d1-h5) and only Nf6 defends black king position after the short castle.

-Knowing that Black wants to castle then try to push f5 White should create immediate threats on the king-side attacking h7 and g7.

-Using the space advantage in order to activate Rf1.

-To use e4 as an operational base for white knights.

10.Ng5 Nbd7 11.f4 Rc8

White managed to keep the initiative by two intelligent moves. Black delayed castle trying to reach some counterplay on the queen-side. What should be next on "to do list"?

1. Stabilize the queen-side, especially against possible breakthrough b5
2. Activate Bc1 and Ra1, as quickly as possible, in order to create an overwhelming pieces majority on the king side.

The plan will be: b2-b3, a2-a4 (controlling b5), Ra1-a2-f2 and Bc1-b2.

12.b3 a6 13.a4 0-0 14.Ra2

[14.Bf5 Qc7±]

14...h6

It's this a dangerous threat?

At this moment White should make the

difference between an illusory threat and a real threat. Let's suppose that Black can move twice and Black will take the knight, White will gain a tempo by f:g5 followed by Qh5, Rh3-f3 with decisive threats along "h" file. So it's the moment to bring fresh forces into the battle!

15.Raf2

[15.Nf3 Qc7±]

15...exf4

[15...hxc5 16.fxc5 Ne8 17.Qh5± g6 18.Qh6 e4

Forced to control f3 with Ne5.

19.Nxe4 Ne5 20.Bb2 b5 21.axb5 axb5

22.Bxe5 dxe5 23.Rf3

Followed by Rh3 with a crushing attack.]

White achieved his main goal : to force the exchange f:e5 which assures White control over the center and activates rooks battery from f-file.

16.Nh3 Ne5

[16...g5?!

As we already noticed White can give his knight in order to open the files in front of the black king.

17.Nxf4 gxf4 18.Bxf4 Ne5 19.Bf5 Rb8

20.Bxh6 Re8 21.Bb1± Followed by Qc2 and mate threat on h7.]

All white pieces are focused on the king side.

The square h7 is weak because of the pawn push h7-h6, but also because Bb7 is completely out of play leaving light-squares without defense. How can White exploit this?

Creating the bishop+queen battery along b1-h7 diagonal, followed by the elimination (or deflection) of Nf6.

17.Bb1 f3 18.gxf3 Re8

Black guessed White plan so it's the time to switch the attack along g-file and a1-d4 diagonal.

19.Rg2 Kh8 20.f4 Ned7

Please compare this position with the one after 14...h6. Which are the differences?

Pawns e5 and g2 are missing.

The g-file is opened in White favor.

Pawn f7 is weak.

Conclusion: Nh3 can jump back to g5 because it's protected again by f4. The idea behind this tactics is to open up the a1-h8 diagonal playing

Ne4 at the proper moment.

21.Ng5 Kg8

[21...hxg5 22.fxg5 b5 23.gxf6 Nxf6
24.Qd3+-]

22.Kh1 Bf8

[22...hxg5 23.fxg5 Nh7 24.Bxh7+ Kxh7
25.Qh5+ Kg8 26.Qxf7+ Kh8 27.Rg3+-]

23.Bb2 Re7

[23...hxg5 24.fxg5]

24.Nge4± Crowning White strategy. Following a good plan in accordance with the requirements of the position, self-questioning, refreshing "to do list" after each move, making priorities helped White to calculate just few forced variations. **Re8 25.Rfg1**

[25.Nxf6+ Nxf6 26.Qd4 Nh5±]

25...Rc7

[⊠25...Qe7!?±]

26.Qd4 Kh8?

[⊠26...b5 27.axb5 a5+-]

27.Nxd6!! a decisive sacrifice that breaks all resistance. .

[27.Nxd6 Nc5 28.Ncb5 axb5 29.Qxf6 Qxf6
30.Bxf6+-]

[27.Nxd6 Bxd6 28.Rxg7 Be5 29.fxe5 Rxe5
30.Qh4+-

Conclusions:

From the first moves White tried and succeeded to include opponent's plan in his plan.

White controlled the center all the game and after 9.d5 the key-square e4 couldn't be controlled by Black.

White used very skillfully the development advantage which was a difficult task in a position without obvious weaknesses.

White cut Black's counter plays with f7-f5 and b6-b5 and created pieces superiority on the king-side.]

1-0

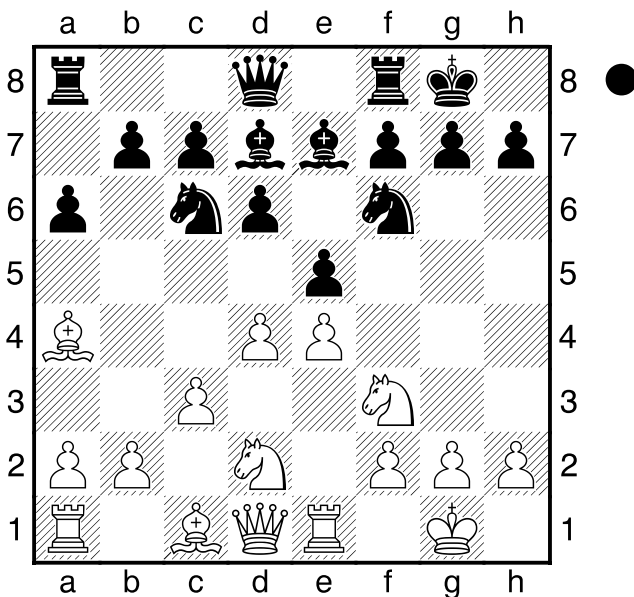
 **Znosko Borovsky, Eugene**
 **Alekhine, Alexander**
 Paris (4)

C87

1933

In this game, Znosko Borovsky played with White for a draw against Alekhine. White's strategy was to make exchanges, to liquidate the tension in the centre in hope to get a "dry" endgame. It is well known the power of Alekhine in complicate positions, but in this game we will see his second strength: the positional understanding and an excellent creation of the "TO DO LIST".

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6
5.0-0 d6 6.c3 Bd7 7.Re1 Be7 8.d4 0-0
9.Nbd2 Diagram



Until here, the players developed their pieces using an old Ruy Lopez scheme. Now, Black could continue the normal development with 9... Re8, but Alekhine wants now to apply an interesting plan.

Be8!?

Black's idea is to strengthen the centre with Nf6-d7 and f7-f6, after which to activate his light-square bishop on e8-h5. This is not necessary the best plan in this position, but Alekhine creates something, changes the normal course

of the game and, so, makes a challenge to his opponent.

10.Bxc6

White's next set of moves are in accordance with his strategy to fight for a draw. He liquidates the central tension and exchanges pieces.

Bxc6 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.Nxe5 Bxe4

The piece is indirectly protected by the White's back rank weakness.

13.Nxe4

[13.Qb3 was better.]

13...Qxd1!

[13...Nxe4? was a mistake because of: 14.Nd7!]

14.Nxf6+ White wants to trade more pieces.

[14.Rxd1 was not in White's strategy to fight for a draw, because after: Nxe4 even if the pawn structure is symmetrical, Black still has enough material to prove his superiority of strength.

One can notice how the psychological factor plays a very important role during the chess fight.]

14...gxf6!

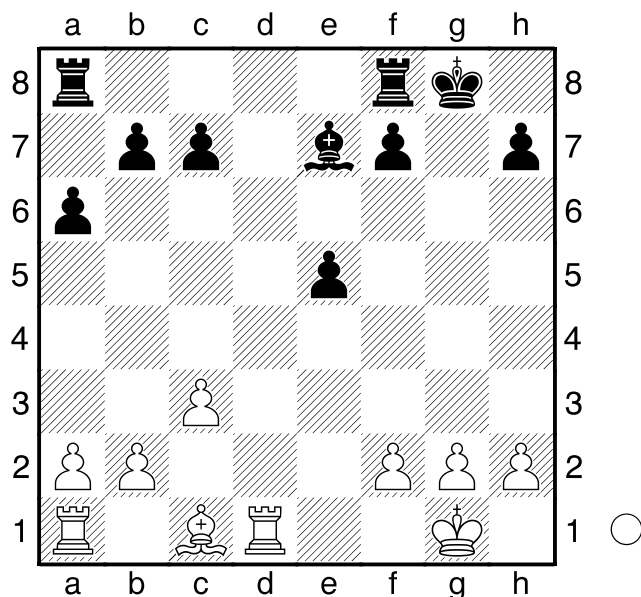
A decisive moment. Black doesn't play the "normal" Bxf6, then Bxe5 with a symmetrical pawn structure. The few material on the board wouldn't give him any real chance for a win.

15.Rxd1 fxe5

(Diagram)

A key position.

Both players have the same number of pawns on both flanks, but Black is able to create a free pawn on the e-file because of his pawn phalanx (f- and e-pawns against the white f-pawn). Also, Black can use the half-open g-file and the h-pawn for an attack.



Now, let's see how Alekhine made his "TO DO LIST" according to his annotations to the game:

1. trading one pair of rooks (2 rooks would give White more chances to draw);
2. bringing the king at e6 and bishop on d6 to avoid the white rook to enter d7;
3. using the rook on g-file and the advance of the h-pawn, to open the h-file;
4. after the step 3, White's king and bishop will need to take defensive positions to defend h1 and h2 squares against the black rook;
5. advancing the a- and b- pawns to open one more open file on the queenside;
6. because the white king and bishop will be on the kingside, White won't be able to stop the black rook to enter in his camp on the queenside.

Even if Black has a small advantage, this endgame is very hard to win. However, Black made a plan of play and White played only trusting that this endgame should be a draw and didn't pay attention to prevent Black's ideas.

16.Bh6

White should not force his opponent to realize his plan. Exchanging a pair of rook is only in Black's favor.

Rfd8 17.Kf1 f5

Black starts the advance of his pawn phalanx and makes free the king's way to e6.

18.Rxd8+ Rxd8

As always, the first question one need to answer after the opponent's move is: "Does my opponent threaten something?"

Here, the answer is "Yes: f5-f4, blocking the white bishop's out".

19.g3

against the aforementioned threat.

Kf7 20.Be3 h5

according to his "TO DO LIST". Black wants to open the h-file and, also, to get rid of the weak h-pawn.

21.Ke2 Ke6 22.Rd1 Rg8!

Black needs his rook to win the game. The open d-file is useless for White as long as he has no entrance points in the opponent's camp.

23.f3

[White cannot block the advance of black h-pawn with: 23.h4 because of: Rg4 with the strong threat f5-f4. One can notice one of the employments of an half-open file: the rook-lift (Rg8-g4).]

23...h4 24.Bf2 hxd3 25.hxd3 Rh8

and Black realized a good part from his TO DO list without a strong resistance from White.

26.Bg1 Bd6 27.Kf1

and, now, White needs to defend the entrance points from the h-file and be prepared against the advance of black pawn-phalanx (after 28... e4, White will respond with 29.fxe4 fxe4 30. Kg2).

Rg8 28.Bf2 b5

Black starts the 5th element from his "TO DO" list: the advance of the queenside pawns. If White doesn't react, Black will play: c7-c5-c4, a6-a5, and, then, b5-b4. The result of this plan will be an open file for the black rook and dangerous pawns due to their advanced position.

29.b3 a5

After last White's move, Black can realize his plan quicker by advancing the a-pawn.

30.Kg2 a4 31.Rd2

[31.b4 Rc8 with the threat c7-c5 after which White's c- and a- pawns become easy targets. 32.Bc5 Ra8 with idea Ra6-c6.]

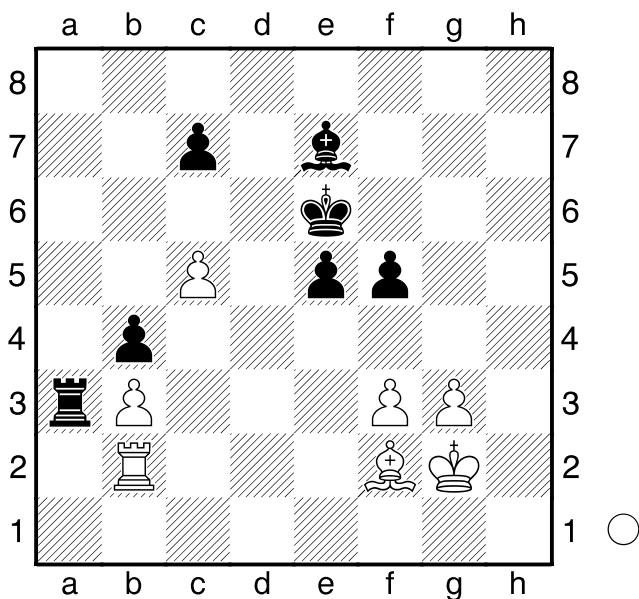
31...axb3 32.axb3 Ra8

crowning Black's strategy. Now, the black rook cannot be stopped to enter the first or second rank. Then, attacking the white pawns with the rook, Black will force the white rook to occupy a defensive position. The black king will be then free to go on the queenside and together with the rook to gain a white pawn. White's king cannot participate to this fight. This is the position Black wanted from the start.

33.c4 Ra3! 34.c5

[34.cxb5 Rxb3 and White cannot defend the b5-pawn.]

34...Be7 35.Rb2 b4! Diagram



A typical technique of shearing off an opponent pawn. Now, White won't be able to create a pawn-chain where defending the base would be enough. Now, there are 2 weak pawns. Black pawns look the same you may say, but only Black is in attack.

36.g4

White is trying to get some counter-chances by creating a free pawn which can be dangerous without the bishops on the board.

f4

and, now, White cannot support his pawn. Both white king and bishop are passive.

37.Kf1 Ra1+ 38.Ke2 Rc1

with the idea of Rc3 attacking 2 white pawns at the same time.

39.Ra2 Rc3 40.Ra7 Kd7 41.Rb7 Rxb3

Black is a pawn up now and still keeps a more active position.

42.Rb8 Rb2+ 43.Kf1 b3 44.Kg1 Kc6 45.Kf1 Kd5

[45...Bxc5 46.Bxc5 Kxc5 47.g5 would offer White some chances for a draw.]

46.Rb7 e4 47.fxe4+ Kxe4 48.Rxc7 Kf3 49.Rxe7 Rxf2+ 50.Ke1 b2 51.Rb7 Rc2 52.c6! setting up a threat. Kg3

[no: 52...Rc1+? 53.Kd2 b1Q 54.Rxb1 Rxb1? 55.c7 and White wins.]

53.c7 f3 54.Kd1 Rxc7 55.Rxb2 f2

Conclusion:

White's strategy was to make simplifications in order to draw against a stronger opponent, Alekhine. Black started an active plan (see 9... Be8) which forced White to make the exchanges in the center in not the best moment. By a small finesse (14...gxf6), Alekhine changed the pawn structure giving him a small, but long-term advantage: a pawn phalanx (black f- and e-pawns against the white f-pawn) and a half-open file which could be used.

Black made his "TO DO" list based on more sub-plans with the final objectives: an entrance for his rook in the white camp, a passive position for the white king and a mobile pawn-phalanx on the centre.

0-1

□ **Capablanca,Jose-Raul**

■ **Fonaroff,Mark**

New York casual

18.06.1918

[Petre Nad]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0-0 d6

The old Steinitz variation of Ruy Lopez. By studying World Champions games we try to see what each champion has brought to the art of the game, but also the development of some openings during through the years.

Which are the consequences of d7-d6? How white which has a lead in development to use this move?

The move d7-d6 delays the Bf8 emergence and the castle and makes possible the pin on a4-e8 diagonal. White has already 3 developed pieces (Nf3, Bb5 and Rf1), Black only 2 (Nf6, Nc6), so 4.Bc5 or 4.Be7 looks natural (following the principle of the opening: TIME, that states the balance in development).

White must use the pin of Nc6 and put pressure on e5 (in order to force the pawns trade exd5).

5.d4 Bd7 6.Nc3 And not 6.d5 which leads to a close center where the development advantage can not be used.

Be7

Now if 7.Bxc6, Bxc6 8.dxe5, dxe5 9.Nxe5, bxe4 with an equal position so White create this threat defending e4.

Remember that in this central pawn structure White wants to force e:d4 in order to achieve a central superiority and Black should avoid it.

7.Re1 exd4 8.Nxd4

White already obtained an advantage due to his better control of the center,space advantage and to the qualitative value of his pieces.

Moreover, Black's e7-bishop has a very small qualitative value and Black needs to improve it. Black will make some exchanges now to free up his position (the exchange of the pieces is the main strategy of the player with lesser space). However, Black will only succeed to exchange pieces of the same qualitative value, so White will keep his advantage further.

C66

Nxd4 9.Qxd4 Bxb5 10.Nxb5 The pawn c7 is attacked once and defended once so it can be subject of a tempo move. Keep that on "to do list"!

0-0

After these exchanges, White improved the qualitative value of his queen too. We will see how Capablanca knows to use the advantage of the qualitative value of pieces to win the game, even if Black has no weaknesses in his position.

11.Qc3

A very strong move. The queen is placed (typical mean to use the space advantage) on the third rank where she has a better mobility, being able to arrive on both flanks. Moreover, the d4-square is made free for the knight to go on f5 - all these with tempo by attacking the c7-pawn.

c6

Consequences?

Black will try to push d6-d5, but d6 will be weak until then.

White has a superior qualitative value of his pieces , but this is a short term-advantage, so White must create threats on next moves in order to keep the initiative (d6 and g7 will be the targets).

12.Nd4 Nd7 13.Nf5

Capa is fulfilling his plan started with 11.Nc3. In some Queens Indian lines White sacrifices a pawn to reach f5 with a knight. In addition with an active queen, the knight is extremely powerful because it exerts pressure on d6,e7,g7, h6 and it's very difficult to be chased by Black (g6 is causing more weaknesses).

Bf6

Black has finally succeeded to improve the positioning of his bishop (and his qualitative value too), but White is able now to create a majority of forces on the kingside. Furthermore, due to his reduced mobility, the black queen is not able to participate very well in the fight on the kingside.

14.Qg3 Ne5

[14...Be5 15.f4 Bf6 16.Be3 Bxb2 17.Rad1
The pawn d6 will fall, White has active rooks
and black pieces don't cooperate at all.]

15.Bf4 Qc7 16.Rad1

White brings his last force in the battlefield. It's interesting now to compare the qualitative value of pieces of the 2 players. As we'll see in a few moves, White transforms his qualitative advantage into a quantitative advantage.

How "to do list" can help us here?

-d6,e7,g7,h6 are vulnerable points in Black camp because of Nf5

-Bf4 exerts "X-rays" on Qc7 exposed on h2-b8 diagonal

-Bf6 as we noticed already is "the defender", if we can trade "the defender" the attack will go on.

Rad8 17.Rxd6

The beginning of a splendid combination. White wants to trade Rd1 for Ne5 and pawn d6, in order to gain the chance to trade Bf6 and use the pin of Rd6.

Advice: if you can not calculate the variations through the end (especially intermediate moves Qa5 or Rd1 based on the unprotected position of Re1) try to find a safe line according with "to do list". For example:

[17.h4 Prepares Bg5 to trade the bishops and h4-h5 to avoid Ng6 which blocks the g-file. g6
18.h5 Rfe8 19.Bg5 Bxg5 20.Qxg5
With a strong attack.]

17...Rxd6 18.Bxe5 Rd1 if 18...Bxe5 19.Qxe5 with double attack on d6 and g7

[Better was: 18...Qa5 19.Bc3 Bxc3 20.bxc3 Rg6 21.Ne7+ Kh8 22.Nxg6+ hxg6 23.Qd6
And White has a lot to work despite his pawn up.]

19.Rxd1 Bxe5

White has now material advantage, but the weakness of the last rank attracts his attention. What if White can deflect Rf8 & Qc7 from protecting d8.....?

20.Nh6+ Kh8 21.Qxe5

The final strike and the correct move order. If

[21.Nxf7+?? Qxf7]

21...Qxe5 22.Nxf7+ [22.Nxf7+ Rxf7 23.Rd8+

with mate.]

[22.Nxf7+ Kg8 23.Nxe5+-

Conclusions:

Capablanca used to play simple and effective chess. He was a master of the endgame (we will analyze some of his masterpieces) but, as we noticed from this game, he knew how to take the initiative right from the beginning.

The important features of the games where:

- clarifying the central pawn structure (forcing exd4)
- how to use the space advantage
- how to create qualitative superior pieces (Nf5>Nd7, Qg3>Qc7, Rd1>Rd8)
- two weaknesses principle
- N+Q couple in attack

] **1-0**

 **Marshall, Frank James**
 **Capablanca, Jose Raul**
 USA m New York (23)

D34

1909

José Raúl Capablanca was born in Cuba in 1888 and learned to play chess at 4 years old by watching his father playing. It is said that he never read chess books or studied openings. Becoming the World Champion despite this is an evidence for his extraordinary natural talent. He was an almost unbeatable player - no other master lost so few games in his career. He did not lose a single game from 1916 to 1924, and the chess world named it a "chess machine". This game is from his debut, when he was 20 years old, and was considered only a "boy". In 1909 he played a match against a much more experimented player, Marshall. The final result of losses and wins was: +8 -1 in Capa's favor and the games demonstrated a very big difference of understanding between him and his opponent, one of the strongest in the World at that time.

In the end of the match, Capablanca said: "I can safely say that no player ever performed such a feat!"

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5

This is Tarrasch Defence. Black agrees to enter a position with an isolani pawn on d5, in exchange getting active positions for his pieces.

4.cxd5 exd5 5.Nf3 Nc6 6.g3 Be6?!

In this system, Black can develop the bishop on e6, but also on g4. However, the kingside pieces have only one good square for development: the knight on f6 and the bishop on e7.

An opening principle advises to play first the moves which make the smallest engagement. Thus, you can decide later where to place a piece with 2 or more possible emplacements (in our case, the light-square bishop). Black should play Nf6, Be7, 0-0, even Re8, and then, he could choose later between Be6 or Bg4. This way, White will have to consider both developments of the Bc8 which can cause him

an inconvenience.

However, because Black has the half-open e-file and a rook on e8 is restricted by a bishop on e6, it could be better to decide for Bg4.

7.Bg2 Be7 8.0-0 Nf6 9.Bg5?!

Until now, White developed his pieces in the normal positions, applying the fianchetto developing scheme with a good reputation against the Tarrasch Defense. White's g2 bishop creates pressure against the weak d5-pawn after the blockading maneuver Nf3-d4 (of course, after d4xc5). Also, the pawn formation h2, g3, f2 defends very well the white king against the typical attacks on kingside of the player with the isolani pawn.

With the last move, White is completing his development, but not in the right direction. Before moving a "normal" developing move, White should do his "TO DO" list as the game has just entered the 'middlegame' stage, where one should NOT move without a plan.

The assessment of the pawn structure (isolani pawn on d5) tells White what to do:

1. the d5-pawn has to be blocked first by: Nf3-d4.
2. the blockading square is the strongest square in the centre for White and, therefore, important to be well defended: Be3 and at least a major piece on the d-file.
3. exchange minor pieces if possible, especially the dark-square bishops.
4. increase pressure on d5 forcing black pieces to stay in defensive.

After this correct "TO DO LIST" in positions with an isolani pawn, White has first to assure a strong blockade of the d5-pawn. We will see all the strategies when dealing with typical pawn structures.

[According with the "TO DO" list, the best continuation for White would be:

9.dxc5 Bxc5 10.Na4!

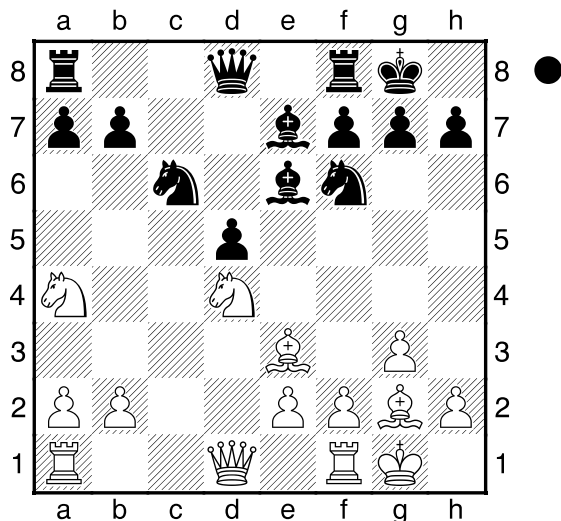
chasing away the black knight from the active position

Be7 11.Be3

the best position for the c1-bishop: it blocks the e-file where Black will put pressure on with

Re8, defends the key-square d4 and gets a position from where the bishop "looks" at both sides (remember this!)

0-0 12.Nd4 Diagram



and white pieces occupied good positions.

Let's look a bit to the move Nf6-g4 now. Many players wouldn't like to place the bishop in such a position where the opponent's knight can attack easily. This is often correct, but now we have an instructive example for our question:

"Is Nf6-g4 a REAL threat?". In our case, the answer is "NO". Black knight won't do anything on g4, after the simple reply Be3-f4. The knight should even come back to protect the d5-pawn and the centre and so Black is only losing 2 tempi.

Moreover, after Ng4 White can play 13.Nxc6 bxc6 14.Bd4 followed by Rc1 with a good position against the black pawn structure c6+d5 due to the strong blockade on dark-squares.]

9...Ne4

Capablanca knew about the games played before by another player who used with success this "liberating" move. It is interesting that in a position with an isolani pawn, Black is provoking the exchange of the dark-square bishops. It is

well known that Black should keep this bishop on the board.

10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.Ne5?

Provoking complications on the centre without any reason or strategical justification.

[much better was: 11.Rc1 defending the c3-knight with a piece, in order to keep unchanged the position of the pawns. The game could continue: Nxc3 12.Rxc3 c4 13.Ne5 0-0 with a small advantage for White.]

11...Nxd4

[11...Nxc3 12.bxc3 Nxe5 13.dxe5 leads to an unclear game.]

12.Nxe4 dxe4 13.e3

[13.Bxe4? Rd8 (13...Bh3 is also good) 14.Qe1 Bh3 wins]

13...Nf3+

Black gives back the pawn on e4 by trading his knight as he has no good place for it.

14.Nxf3

[After 14.Bxf3 exf3 15.Qa4+ Black has to move his king: Kf8 (15...Bd7 is not good if Black is not satisfied with a draw: 16.Nxd7 Qxd7 17.Qe4+ Qe7 18.Qxf3=) 16.Rfd1 g6 17.Nxf3 Kg7 with a better game for Black due to his bishop against knight on a position with pawns on both flanks. Also, Black can create a free pawn on the queenside.]

14...exf3 15.Qxf3 0-0! 16.Rfc1

[White cannot take on b7: 16.Qxb7 Qxb7 17.Bxb7 because after Rab8 18.Bg2 Rxb2 the endgame is better for Black because of the free c-pawn and the active rook on the second rank.

After: 19.Rfc1 c4 20.Bf1 Rc8 21.Rc3 Black can advance by bringing his king on the queenside (b4), attack the blockading square c3 and the white a-pawn, while the b2-rook prevents white king to come in defense.]

[However, White could fight for the initiative by: 16.e4 with idea Qe3 and f2-f4, using his pawn-phalanx on e- and f- files. At Rfd8 , White should respond with: 17.Rfd1 and not leave the d-file in Black's control.]

16...Rab8 17.Qe4

Which are White's threats?

Answer: Bh3, using the undefended position of the Qe7, and simplify the position with another exchange.

Black's bishop is better because he "sees" both flanks, has a protected position on e6 and participates to the future plans on the queenside. White bishop, even if on the long diagonal, will soon remain without any scope.

Qc7 18.Rc3 b5!

The beginning of active actions on the queenside. Black has pawn majority on the queenside, an advantage considered very important in old times. Now, modern masters are much more vigilant and it is proved that a careful defense is enough to stop the pawn phalanx on the queenside.

19.a3

[19.b3! was much better. After: c4 20.bxc4 bxc4 the black c4-pawn is strongly blocked by White. Now, with the queens on the board, the Black's king manœuvre given in a previous variation doesn't work. It is hard, or even impossible, to give Black any real plan to advance.]

19...c4! 20.Bf3?

Surrendering the d-file is a grave and decisive mistake.

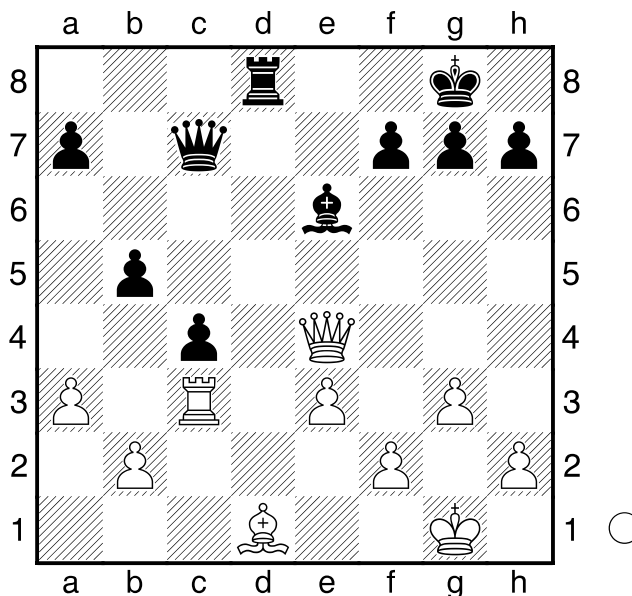
[20.b3?! doesn't work now. because of: Qa5 (taking advantage from the undefended position of the white rook) 21.b4 Qb6 and, now, the black c4-pawn is also defended by another pawn, a very important plus because the black pieces will be free, while White will always have to keep at least one piece in defensive.]

[

However, White had to concentrate on the d-file now and connect his rooks: 20.Rd1 Rfd8 21.Rcc1! with more chances to save the game.]

20...Rfd8 21.Rd1 Rxd1+ 22.Bxd1 Rd8

Diagram



Now, to the black pawn majority on the queenside, Black added another important strategic advantage: the control over the d-file. It is rather rare nowadays to obtain so easy the control over an important file out of nothing. It is important now to learn HOW this advantage can be used to win the game; and Capablanca will show us.

Black's "TO DO" list is simple:

- h7-h6 or g7-g6 to make a "window" for the king against back rank threats;
- Rd1 or Rd2 to enter White's camp with the rook;
- exchange the queens;
- advance the pawns on the queenside (a7-a5, b5-b4).

23.Bf3 g6

Black chose g6 (instead of h6) for 2 reasons:

- it is a tempo-move, Black threatening 24..Bd5 25.Qg4 h5 winning the f3-bishop;
- it gains another supported square for the

bishop on f5, and White cannot play now 24. Rc2 because of Bf5.

24.Qc6 Qe5! with the threat Rd2

[24...Qxc6 25.Bxc6 a6 was also possible, but Black wants to exchange the queens (one of his "TO DO" list objectives) in a more favorable moment.]

25.Qe4 Qxe4 26.Bxe4

Another instructive example for our set of questions.

Does White threaten something?

The answer is Yes: Bc2 (covering the d1-square) and, then, Rf1-e1 defending the d2-square. This threat is very real because White could end one of the Black's advantages.

Rd1+!

Black's move assures the activity of the rook, and, now, he only needs to advance the queenside pawns.

27.Kg2 a5 28.Rc2 b4 29.axb4 axb4 30.Bf3
Black achieved his goals and his position is technically won. Black has 2 dangerous advanced pawns with the support of their pieces, while white pieces are not active and the king is far from the battle scene.

Rb1 Diagram

(Diagram)

31.Be2

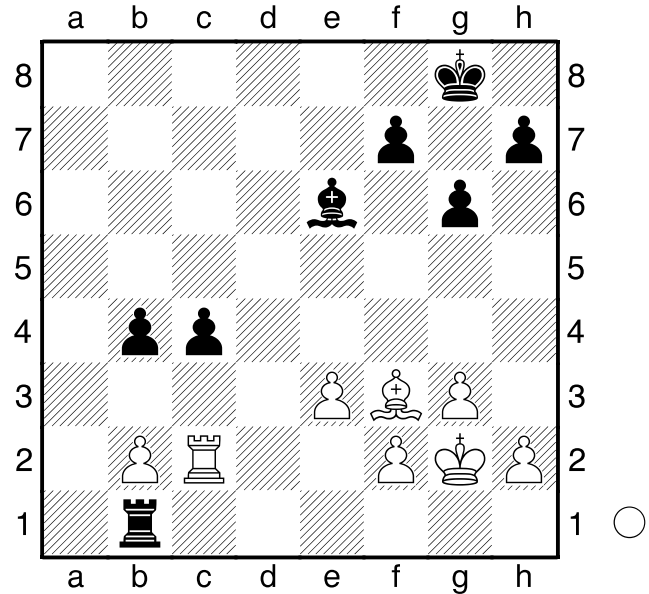
[After 31.Rd2 Black's simplest way to win were: b3 with the threat Rc1-c2 32.Bd1 forced, and now, Black will take benefit of the white rook's overload (defends b2 and Bd1): Rc1 33.Kf3 c3 34.bxc3 b2 winning the piece.]

31...b3!

with the same idea as in the previous variation. Black advances the b3-pawn with the threat Rb1-c1-c2.

32.Rd2

[32.Rc3 doesn't help because of: Rxb2



33.Bxc4 Rc2!-+]

32...Rc1 33.Bd1 c3 34.bxc3 b2 35.Rxb2

[35.Bc2 Rxc2-+]

35...Rxd1-+ 36.Rc2 Bf5 37.Rb2 Rc1 38.Rb3 Be4+ 39.Kh3 Rc2 40.f4 h5 Black sets a matting net against the opponent king. **41.g4 hxg4+ 42.Kxg4 Rxh2 43.Rb4 f5+ 44.Kg3**

[44.Kg5 Kg7]

44...Re2 45.Rc4 Rxe3+ 46.Kh4 Kg7

47.Rc7+ Kf6 48.Rd7 Bg2 49.Rd6+ Kg7

Conclusion:

Black won by using the advantage of the queenside pawn majority, but he was greatly helped by his opponent who conceded the d-file, a much more important advantage in that position.

In fact, White didn't defend well against the promotion of black pawns (see a2-a3 instead of the correct b2-b3). White also didn't use his pawn-phalanx on e- and f- files. During the middlegame stage, the central pawns are usually more important than the flank majorities. The importance of the marginal pawns is very high during the ENDGAME stage (when the material is few and kings are safe).

0-1



Alekhine,A
Capablanca,J H

Buenos Aires

1927

The 13th World Championship had two of the geniuses in chess history as protagonists: Alexander Alekhine and Jose Raul Capablanca, the precursor of positional play and endgame comprehension. The motivation for studying positional play and the chess legacy left by Capablanca is easily understandable. As a matter of fact, it is a desideratum we wish our students to share throughout our attempt at a systematic display of positional play enigmas and of a way not only to develop a healthy thinking based on shaping up an ability to evaluate and estimate efficiently different chess structures and positions, but also to acquire some intuition and sense of position. In order to improve chess performances, the contribution offered by the Classics' games is an indisputable source for progress. For that matter, let us not forget that two of the ex-world champions (M. Botvinnik and A. Karpov) confess having formed their play style by studying the great Capablanca's games. Fortunately, the 20th game in the match for the World title takes place while having another brilliant chess player Alexander Alekhine, the game's quality being highly increased even nowadays.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5

The classic structure of the Queen's Gambit played in this game gives us the chance to clearly see and catch the main features of the opening, middle-game and endgame, noticing in detail the moment of transition from one stage to the other, which is a very important aspect in chess learning and understanding. One of the targets set forth for analysis is represented by the particularities of the chess game after the queens' exchange (it is a known fact that beginner chess players have a certain "fear of draw" and reticence towards the queens' exchange, precisely because of the impossibility of estimating correctly and efficiently the complex endings that come up after this exchange, the premise of the lack of attack from the part of queen's offensive force being decisive. After the 3Δd5 move, Black already imposes a certain route on the future structure

to be played. What does actually happen after advancing d5? Will Black's entire plan be revealed to the White after blocking the centre and biting into the so-called structure of the Queen's Gambit? In the openings, where after the white pawn advances to d4, the black blocks his way by subsequently replying with d5, the Black's game plan aims to develop the pieces quickly, castle after bringing out the dark-square bishop on the f8-a3 diagonal (usually on e7) and possibly open the light-square diagonals, after Black's exchange to c4 and White's exchange to d5. The big problem with this particular black structure is the bishop's development from c8 in the future so as not to be left with a piece "out of play" and implicitly with an undeveloped queen-side.

4.Bg5

There are other ways of dealing with the position but White would rather have the dark-square bishop tie down the knight on f6, at the same time putting pressure on the pawn on d5. Indeed, the bishop ties down the knight on f6 but exposes himself in the future to an exchange with his opponent on f8, whose placement will be, under these circumstances on e7. If the bishop had remained on c1, White could have used the more modern plan that starts with e2-e3 and is based on a lot more compact strategy of White and a probable positioning of pieces: Bd3, Qe2, b3, Bb2 and Nf3. Nevertheless, the classical array in Queen's Gambit and the bishop's going away from c1 frees the square for the a1-rook in the future.

Be7 5.e3

White's move goes on according to the plan and aims at a better protection for the pawn on c4, also sustaining the pawn on d4. In the opening, making the most of one's own options while playing down the opponent's options is the best strategy in order to gain advantage. The White is not in a hurry to develop the knight to f3 as there is an option to develop it on e2 now.

0-0

Black sets about the fight for gaining a very

important tempo. What is Black's plan concretely and why isn't he in a hurry to develop queen-side? The idea is very logical: Black wants to exchange on c4 but first he wants to force White into moving the bishop from f1 in order to lose a tempo. After castling, the idea of diminishing the offensive potential of White comes up, by means of the knight's going away from f6 and bringing about the dark-square bishops' exchange.

6.Nf3

By this move, White agrees to engage in the fight for tempo. So, calling for "to do list" is highly important. In practice this fact is translated by White's wish to challenge Black to modify his queen-side pawn structure by playing b6 or c6, or to agree to lose a tempo and capture on c4. Thus, even from the opening, White has confronted Black with some difficulties that require an immediate and concrete approach.

Nbd7

The fight for tempo continues. In this way, a further possible attack on the pawn on d4 is prepared by playing c5 or e5. Thus, the knight on b8 improves his qualitative status, sustaining the knight on f6 and c5- and e5- squares.

7.Rc1

How should White react in an efficient way? Is c7-c5 a real threat for breaking the play? Obviously yes, so White may, without any fear, keep the king in the centre and try to counteract any offensive action from the opponent's part. Very important in chess is the mode and the speed of reaction to the opponent's maneuvers.

c6

This is a typical move in Queen's Gambit. By this Black guards and sustains the knight's showing up from f6 to d5 after the exchange on c4, also preparing a possible offensive alternative on the queen-side by b7-b5.

8.Bd3

Practically, the battle for tempo was carried on up to the very end. Once Black played c7-c6, the break on the queen-side by the typical reply

c7-c5 would be achieved in two moves so White can take over the b1-h7 diagonal, balancing the loss of tempo by the further capture on c4. How should White have reacted in this stage of the opening where the qualitative status of his pieces is continually changing? Practically, by bringing the bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal, White compels Black to concretely evaluate the possibility of defense and the chance to diminish the dynamic potential of White's pieces.

dx c4

After the exchange on c4, Black wishes to make some useful exchanges and give some airing to his play after the Nd5 reply, then improving the bishop's status on c8 by e6-e5.

9.Bxc4 Nd5 10.Bxe7

[White is compelled to accept the exchange. 10.Ne4 is not working because of: f6 11.Bh4 g5 12.Bg3 f5 13.Nc3 f4 and White loses a piece.]

10...Qxe7 11.Ne4

What must White effectively do to try not to simplify the position excessively, turning it into a dry one? White mustn't exchange the minor pieces and implicitly the knight on e4, because the dynamic advantage and the white knights' status are superior to the black knights. We can actually talk about the concept of "superfluous" pieces: for a better understanding of the term we present the black knights' situation (they both aim at square d5, one of them occupies it and the other one may get to f6 or b6, still eyeing square d5). A higher status and a different placement for the knights would have been better. That is why White would rather exchange the queens and keep the minor pieces.

N5f6 12.Ng3

The consequences of White's move are obvious, he consents to engage in a complex endgame of minor pieces precisely because of the fact that his pieces are more dynamically placed and after the queens' exchange he will be able to bring in his rooks on c- and d- files.

Qb4+ 13.Qd2 Qxd2+ 14.Kxd2

What plan must White implement and which were the reasons why he engaged in this complex endgame of minor pieces? Having space advantage, White wants to place his rooks on c- and d- files, the king on e2 and then to advance e3-e4. The main minus looked for by White in the opposite side is the impossibility of making the bishop on c8 active without weakening or altering the pawn structure.

Rd8

Bringing the rook on the same file with the opposing king has a perfect logic, thus creating the threat of thematic breakings: e5 or c5.

15.Bd3

White is protecting his king by interposing a piece on the d-file.

Let's evaluate the correctness of the bishop's withdrawal to d3 and what was White's reason behind this decision.

By this maneuver, White changes the status and position of the light-square bishop by placing it on the typical diagonal in this structure: b1-h7, he guards the c5-square from eventual breaking c6-c5 and restricts the knight's jump to e4 in the future. Now, not even the reply b7-b6 is possible because the c6-pawn is left unprotected. For Black, the problem of developing the bishop from c8 becomes very pressing.

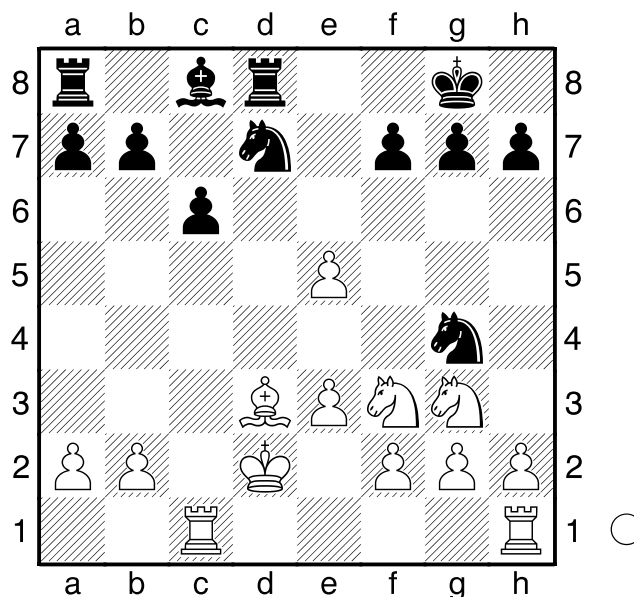
e5

This is the only dynamic and correct response. Black must free his c8-bishop and he takes advantage of the d- file opening.

16.dxe5

Having dynamic superiority on the king-side by the placement of the two knights, White fairly avoids exchanging a knight pair.

[16.Nxe5 Nxe5 17.dxe5 Ng4 and Black recovers his pawn, centralizes his knight and after the knight's going away from d7, the c8-bishop can efficiently develop.]

16...Ng4 Diagram

What can White do in this position? Can he keep on fighting for blocking the bishop on c8? It is a decisive moment since driving away from the dangerous d-file by normally answering with Ke2 leads only to a draw after the exchanges on e5 and the further development of the bishop from c8.

17.e6!

White exposes himself on the d-file but has his defense resource Rc3 in order to defend the d3-bishop.

Nde5

[after 17...fxe6 Black has a long-term weakness: the e-pawn]

18.Nxe5 Nxe5 19.exf7+

What are the consequences of White's staying put in the centre with his king? Are his pieces cooperating sufficiently well?

After the exchange on f7 White is left with a majority of four against two pawns on the kingside and this fact can be an advantage, especially after exchanging one knight-pair. Once the knight on f3 is exchanged, the pawn on f2 can be set on move and the black knight's freedom will be restrained.

Kxf7 20.Rc3

By bringing the rook on the third rank, White exposes himself to the attack of the b7 pawn, but this one is practically forced to defend the bishop on d3.

Is it time to bring on a plan of escaping from the dangerous pin on the d-file?

White must destabilize Black's most active and central piece and change its qualitative status.

b5

How should White react?

The important thing for White is not to try to prevent the b4 advance, but to destabilize the knight on e5.

21.f4!

[21.a3 a5 and after the exchange on b4, the a8-rook would substantially increase its status using the open a-file.]

[21.b4 a5!]

[21.Ke2 b4 22.Bc4+ Nxc4 23.Rxc4 Ba6 catching the white rook]

21...b4 22.fxe5 bxc3+ 23.Kxc3

What should White do in order to improve the status of his pieces?

White threatens Ng3-e4-d6, maintaining not only an excellent dynamic of the piece, but also two pawns for the exchange. By making the g3-knight active, White takes over the free pawn's transformation square, visibly hindering the black rook's activity on the d-file.

Ke6

What are the consequences of Black's move?

It is a known fact that in the endgame a fundamental rule is that of centralizing the kings, which in this way become a force eventually supporting their own pieces. The black king actually takes part in the attack threatening to capture the e5-pawn.

[23...Re8 24.Bc4+ Kg6 25.Kd4 c5+ 26.Kxc5 Rxe5+ 27.Kd4 and White keeps 2 pawns for the exchange.

In the game, Capablanca tries to play dynamically to take the initiative.]

24.Ne2!

What is White's plan and why is he sacrificing the e5-pawn?

The roles have switched now: Alekhine is trying to open the lines towards the opponent king and makes his knight active on d4, also attacking the c6-pawn. Moreover, the knight on d4 will have a secure outpost.

Kxe5 25.Nd4

Once the pieces have been centralized, White forces Black to defend the c6-pawn with the bishop, thus narrowing its possibilities of becoming active. The strong d4-knight limits the activity of the black rook on the open d-file.

Bb7 26.Bxh7

White keeps the material balance and now has the possibility of advancing the kingside pawn-majority and creating a free pawn.

c5

Black advanced his c-pawn, but this may become an easy target for White.

27.Nf3+ Kf6 28.Bd3

Black threatened g7-g6 and Kg7 capturing the bishop.

Re8

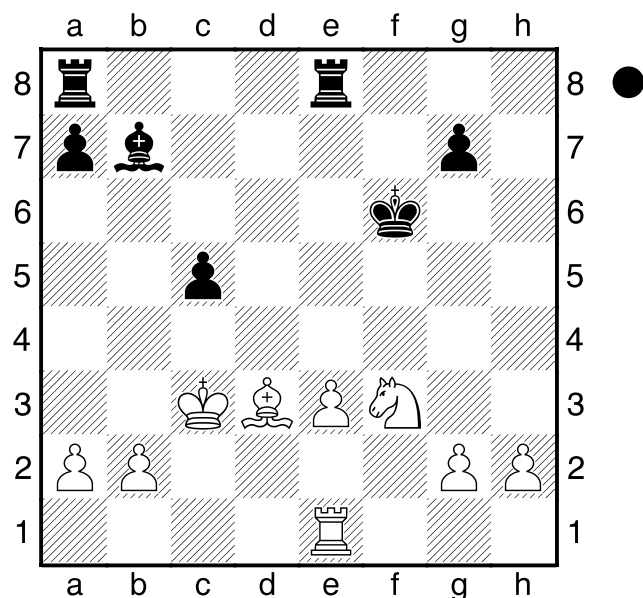
The consequences of Black's move are translated by his wish to place his rooks harmoniously and to put pressure in the centre, on e- and d- files. Now the a8-rook can be brought into the centre where his status as a piece not taking part in the battle will be improved.

29.Re1

White threatens to set his e-pawn on move. After this gets to e5 with check, the black king will find itself in a dangerous situation. Moreover, the central white pawn will restrict the dynamics of the black rooks.

What is Black's correct approach to the position's requirements?

Diagram

**Bxf3**

Capablanca doesn't want a pawn on e5 placed on the colour opposed to his bishop which is practically un-attackable. After exchanging on f3, the white's pawn structure changes, the black rooks being able to attack the h2-pawn.

30.gxf3 Rh8 31.Re2

What are the consequences of White's move? What plan should White take on?

White is facing a forced situation. Although the rook on the second rank cannot put the heat on the black king's position and attack the weak c5- and g7- pawns as he is bound to defend the h2-pawn, advancing the e3-pawn becomes White's main objective with the purpose of restricting the black rooks' dynamics and the maneuver space of the opposing king.

Rh4

The Black's plan is simple: Capablanca sets a barrier for the king on the fourth rank, thus protecting the c5 pawn and he implicitly threatens with doubling on the h file and capturing the h2 pawn.

32.Be4

The consequences of White's move are not that

evident on a first glance. White seems to willingly give up his h2-pawn, but by bringing the bishop to a central position, this protects the f3-pawn, makes room for the white king to get to c5 via c4 and allows the rook's entering the d-file.

Rd8

[At 32...Rah8 there would have followed 33.Rd2 with the idea Rd6+ and Ra6 and the a7 pawn is lost. The fight for restricting the dynamic potential of the opponent's pieces is the main quality of these two chess geniuses.]

33.a4

White wants to advance the a-pawn and to clear the second rank in view of freeing his pieces of defending the pawns.

g5

In his turn Capablanca wants to prevent any advance of the white pawns, blocking the white pawn on f3. At the same time he wants to destabilize the bishop's position from e4 by g5-g4.

34.a5

[34.b3 would have been better, the pawns being much easier to be defended on their own bishop's colour. At a5, the pawn may become vulnerable.]

34...g4 35.fxg4 Rxc4

Black exchanged another pair of pawns, thus disrupting the bishop's strong position in the centre. By exchanging the pawns, Black has also opened more lines for his rooks, indirectly protecting the c5 pawn as well, because now the 4th rank is protected by the rook.

36.Bd3 Ra4

What is Black's plan in this position?

He has isolated White's pawns and tries to attack and capture them. The presence of the white king on c3 and of the bishop on d3 makes it hard because the white's pawns b2, e3 and h2 are now difficult to attack especially after "isolating" the rook on a5, during which White

can activate his rook.

37.Rf2+ Ke7 38.a6

For Black, a white defended pawn at a6 may become very annoying given that the rook may attack the backward a7-pawn.

Rf8

Black tries to diminish the dynamic potential of White using the exchange tactic, trying to exchange the most dangerous piece, the one that can attack the a7 pawn. We know that White should keep the last major piece ("the coordinator of play") on the board.

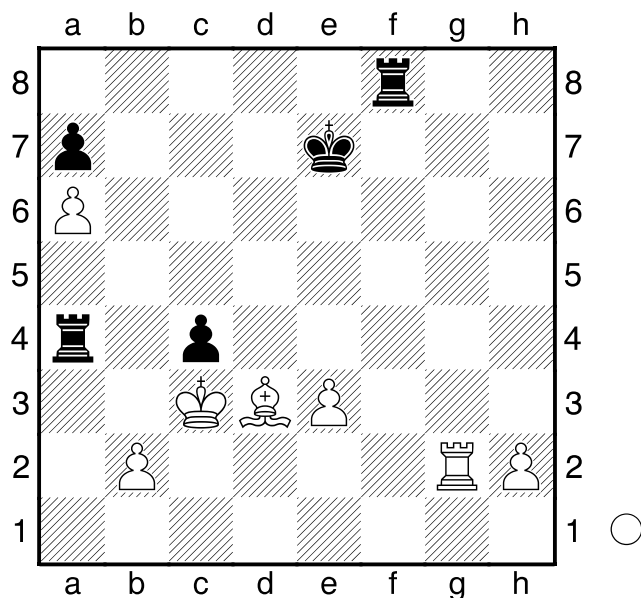
39.Rg2

White threatens to attack the a7-pawn or even the c5-pawn.

c4?

[Being short of time, Capablanca makes a mistake: the correct move would have been 39...Kf7 in order to protect the white rook's moving in.]

Diagram



40.Bxc4? Alekhine makes a mistake and blows away his last chance to play the endgame to victory.

[The correct continuation would have been:

40.Rg7+ Kf6 41.Rg6+ Kf7 (41...Ke7 42.Bxc4) 42.Rg4 taking advantage of the unfortunate position of the rook on a4 which is undefended.]

40...Rc8 41.b3 Rxa6

Now the position is a draw because there isn't enough material on the board for either one of the sides to win.

42.e4 Ra1!

What is Black's plan?

This is a very important move that brings the rook back in the game and aims at attacking White's weakness, namely the h2-pawn.

43.Kd4 Rh8 draw

Capablanca, one of the geniuses in dealing with the endgame, managed to gradually diminish and annihilate, by means of the exchange strategy, White's attempts at improving the position and status of his own pieces. The queens' exchange doesn't lead to a position that lacks tactical resources, on the contrary, if this exchange allows you to gain a tempo don't hesitate to enter a favorable endgame. The lack of space can lead to a choked position. In this case, by pawn's thematic sacrifice, Black managed to make his bishop on c8 active. Don't forget that to this pawn sacrifice, Alekhine reacted with a counter-sacrifice, meant to increase the dynamic potential of his own pieces.

½-½

 **Djukic, Nikola**
 **Topalov, Veselin**
 EuroTeams 2007 (3.8)

B90
2528
2769
 30.10.2007

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e5 7.Nb3 Be6 8.f3

Topalov is one of the most tenacious fighters of our era with an excellent "home" preparation for the opening systems that he uses. This opening systems is not an exception, Topalov using it with both colors.

h5

A very practical move, cutting any White's active play on the kingside, while he prepares an attack on the queenside.

9.Qd2 Nbd7 10.0-0-0 Qc7

The move order in Sicilian is very important. Black keeps his dark-square bishop on initial square, keeping the possibility of activating it on h6 (after g7-g6).

11.Kb1 b5 12.Nd5

White is forced to this move, otherwise after b5-b4 and Nc3-e2, White's position will become extremely cramped. The following exchange will bring White the temporary advantage of the bishop-pair, but the closed character of the position makes this less powerful. In addition, the backward d6-pawn will be no more vulnerable as the open d-file will be closed:

Bxd5 13.exd5 Diagram

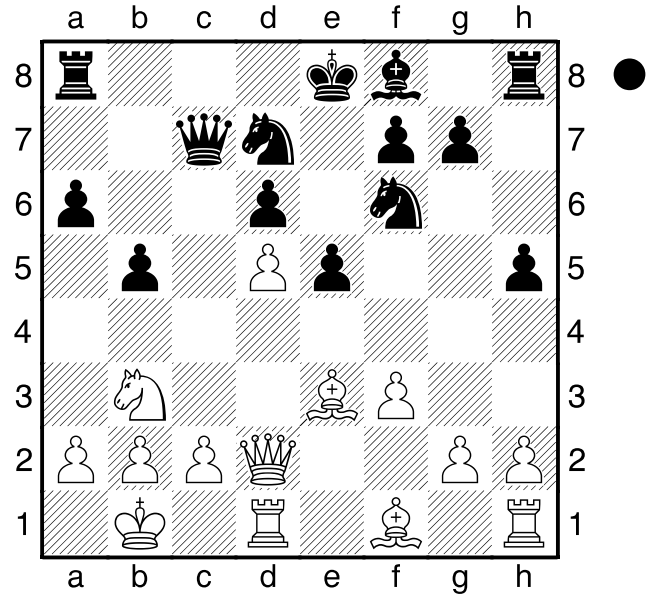
(Diagram)

Nb6

Forcing White to renounce at his bishop pair due to the weakness of d5-pawn.

14.Bxb6 Qxb6

We can say that the opening was a total success for Black. He has excellent prospects for getting an attack on the queenside which in connection with the opposite color bishops (the black dark-square bishop will become active using the h6-c1 diagonal) will be very powerful.



15.Qa5

Trying to reduce the attacking potential.

Nd7 16.c4

White has to increase the scope of his bishop.

bxc4 17.Bxc4 g6 18.Qxb6 Nxb6 19.Na5 Bh6

The position is about equal but, from practical point of view, Black has an easier game with a simple plan to follow: to attack on the queenside using the open b- and c- files.

20.Rd3 Kd7 21.Rb3 Nxc4 22.Nxc4

In open positions, the cooperation rook + bishop is better than rook + knight.

Rab8

Black exchanges the best white piece.

23.Rxb8 Rxb8 24.Kc2 f5

Topalov starts to advance his pawn majority (e- and f- pawns against the f-pawn), creating a free pawn on the e-file and also separating the white d5-pawn from the rest of the pieces.

25.a3 Rc8 26.Kb3 Rc5 27.Rd1 Kc7 28.Rd3?!]

[White had to play 28.Kc3 with idea b2-b4.]

28...e4!

Usually, the advance of the free pawn should be done only when all the pieces can support it, otherwise, the pawn can be lost as it's too far in the opponent's camp. In this case, however, the black e-pawn is merely a tactical element, producing disorganization in White's camp.

**29.fxe4 fxe4 30.Rd1 e3 31.Kc3 Bg7+
32.Kb3 Rxd5 33.Re1**

[33.Rxd5 e2 and Black's queen the pawn.]

33...Rb5+ 34.Kc2 d5

Using this intermediary check, Black attacks the b2-pawn, entering a favorable tactical complication.

35.Rxe3 Bd4 36.Re7+ Kd8 37.Re6 Kd7

Now White has 2 pieces under attack.

38.Rd6+ Kc7 39.b4 g5

Topalov plays to bring his opponent into zugzwang, yet, White has no useful moves.

40.h3 h4 41.Kd2 Ba1

White is losing now one of his 2 pieces. Djukic resigns.

A perfect game by one of the strongest players in the World that makes us think that it's more enjoyable to play against a computer (a very strong one) than against such a human player. The smallest nuances from the opening stage are perfectly known (even from the home preparation) and extensively used to bring a better middlegame, then a better endgame and, finally, the full point. We could see a strong grandmaster that lost with the white pieces without making any evident mistake ...without counting 1.e4.

0-1

□ Ivanchuk,Vassily

■ Bacrot,Etienne

EuroTeams 2007 (5.2)

D15

2787

2695

01.11.2007

A game between the second high rated player in the world (Ivanchuk) and a prodigious child who came very quickly in the chess elite (Bacrot).

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 a6

This move is played in many GM's encounters, providing Black a solid structure but also good chances for an active play.

5.c5 Nbd7

When White advances his c-pawn on c5, Black's best plan is to counter-attack in the centre with e7-e5. For this, Black arranges his pieces with Nd7, Bg7 (after g7-g6), Qc7 and, then, Nf6-g4.

6.Bf4 Nh5 7.Bd2 Nhf6

White won a tempo after this sequence, but the dark-square bishop doesn't have any active role on d2 for the moment.

8.Qc2

Defends the c5-pawn, clears the d1-square for the rook and sustains the advance e2-e4.

g6 9.g3

This move was seen in only one game before.

[The central break 9.e4 gives White more space for his pieces.]

[9.h3 Bg7 10.Bf4 0-0 11.e3 Ne8 12.Be2 Nc7 13.0-0 e5 14.dxe5 Ne6 15.b4 a5 16.b5 Ndxc5∞ Topalov,V (2757)-Shirov,A (2713)/Monte Carlo 2005]

9...e5 10.dxe5 Ng4 11.e6?!

White gives the pawn back, trying to create weaknesses in Black's structure.

However, as the events will show, Black's pieces will become extremely active.

[11.Bg2 Ngxe5 12.0-0

with a solid position for White.

It is dangerous: Nxf3+ 13.exf3 Nxc5

14.Rfe1+ Ne6 15.f4

and White has a large compensation for the

pawn.]

11...Nxc5

[After: 11...fxe6 , Black will have problems with the e6-pawn, like you can see after the moves:

12.Na4 Ngf6 13.Ng5 Qe7 14.Bh3]

12.exf7+ Kxf7 13.e4

Ivanchuk reacts promptly trying to open the lines toward the black king, but in the same time, he is also exposing his own.

[13.Bg2 Bf5 14.Qd1 d4

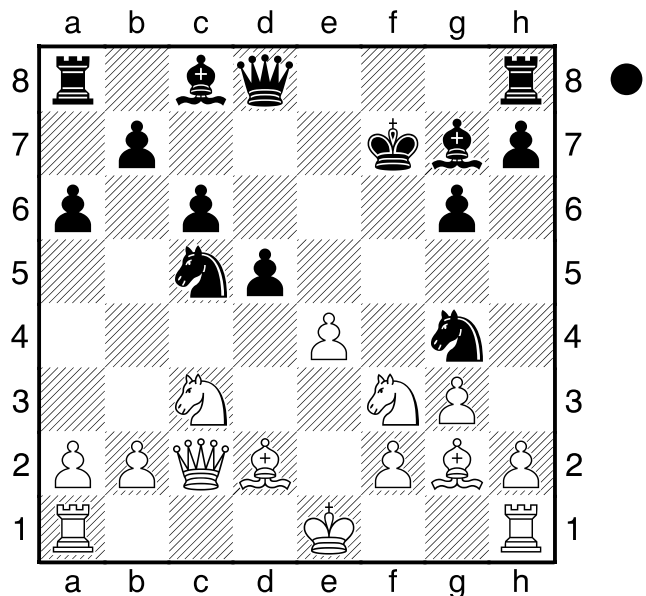
and Black has a better control of the board.]

13...Bg7

When defending, completing the development is of first importance. Also, the white king is now unsafe on the open e-file.

14.Bg2 Diagram

[14.Ng5+ Kg8 15.h3 (15.Bg2 h6 16.Nh3 Ne5 and Black has many threats due to the weaknesses from d3 and f3.) 15...Nf6 followed by h7-h6, Kh7 and Re8]



14...Bxc3!!

Black renounces at his dark-square bishop, h8-rook and safety of his king! Black's sacrifice is based on concrete calculation - his knights,

bishop and queen are ready to create serious threats against the white king.

15.Bxc3 dxe4

White has to accept the exchange sacrifice and his next moves are also forced.

16.Bxh8 Nd3+ 17.Kf1 exf3 18.Bxf3 Ngxf2

For this position aimed Bacrot when he played 14...Bxc3. Both kings are in very unsafe positions, White has an exchange for a pawn and the bishop-pair. However, Black has the initiative (which is very important in this kind of positions) because his pieces create more real threats.

19.Qb3+ Ke7

Incredible: Black is attacking with his king in the centre and no pawn shield.

20.Bg7

White retreats his bishop also defending the f8-square against a future Ra8-f8.

Bh3+ 21.Bg2 Qd7

Black threatens Ne4 and Qf5, forcing the exchange of light-square bishops.

22.Bxh3

Now, Black attacks with 3 pieces against unprotected white king.

[22.Rg1 Ne4+]

22...Qxh3+ 23.Kg1 Qf5!

with the strong threat Qf3.

24.Qxb7+?

A check which doesn't resolve anything.

[White had to play:

24.Re1+ Nxe1 and, now, White has the b4-square.

(24...Kd6?! 25.Re3! Nc5 26.Qc3 Nxh1 27.Be5+ Kd7 28.Rf3 and White gets a strong attack.)

25.Qxb7+ Kd6 26.Qb4+ Kd5 27.Qd4+ Ke6 28.Qc4+ Kd7 29.Qd4+ Kc7 30.Qxf2 Qe4 31.Qf4+ Qxf4 32.gxf4 Nd3 33.h4 Re8 and Black wins a pawn which however might be not enough to win the full point.]

24...Kd6 25.Qb6 Qf3 and the mate is inevitable.

26.Qd4+ Kc7 27.Be5+ Kc8

Now the checks are finished and White resigns.

White entered complication very early in the game, at the 11th move. He hoped that his pawn advance (e5-e6) will weaken the Black's pawn structure (which it actually did), but the young grandmaster got excellent positions for his pieces in the stage of development. Then, Bacrot was very alert at that moment and found an astonishing combination winning against the second rated player in the World; a game where tactics and precise calculation were in the first place.

0-1

 **Karjakin, Sergey**
 **Shirov, Alexei**
 EuroTeams 2007 (2.2)

B33
2694
2739
 29.10.2007

The young Ukrainian player, Karjakin, is already in top thirty, one of prodigious GM in the world.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5

Shirov is choosing a risky opening system with Karjakin, who is famous for his opening preparation. Lasker Svesnikov is a very dynamic opening system where Black is hoping to get a rapid attack on the kingside, appealing in many occasion to a pawn sacrifice.

6.Ndb5 d6 7.Bg5 a6 8.Na3 b5 9.Nd5 Be7 10.Bxf6 Bxf6 11.c3 0-0 12.Nc2 Rb8

Shirov had played before this position with both colors. The idea of Black's move is to prevent a2-a4 due to the weakness of b2-pawn.

13.h4

White's pawn is defended indirectly by Qh5, this retort being a typical theme in Svesnikov system.

Be7 14.g3

With this move, White is increasing his possibilities of activating the f1-bishop, also making possible White's queen depart, now that h4-pawn is defended.

[14.Nce3]

14...Be6 15.a3

An interesting move, played this year by Alekseev against Khalifman, preventing b5-b4 and making possible Nce3 in the future.

a5?!

Probably the move that lost the game. Even if the advancing of the queenside pawns is one of the Black's plans in the Svesnikov system, this should have been prepared first by Qd7.

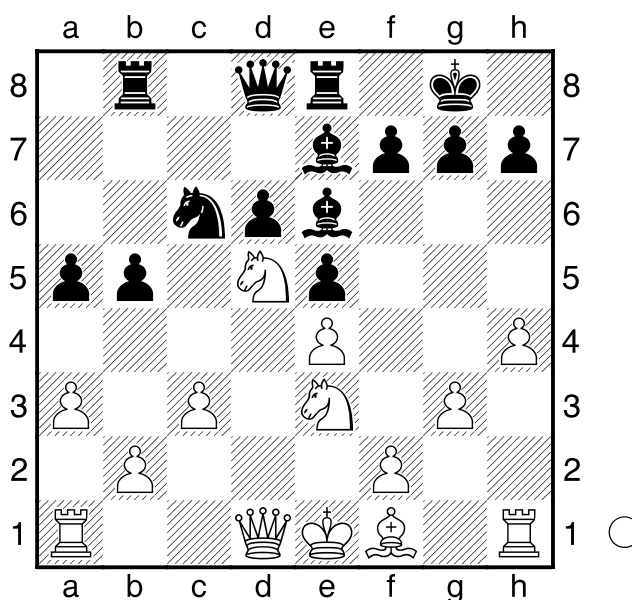
Shirov's aggressive style will be punished by an exact play now.

16.Nce3 Re8 Diagram

[Re8 was meant to defend the e7-bishop in

view of the following variation:

16...b4 17.axb4 axb4 18.Ra6± and White is threatening to win the d6-pawn.]



Shirov had to take a hard and unpleasant decision. It is well known that in this opening system Black usually tries to break on kingside with f5, so his rook should stay normally on the f8-square.

17.a4!

Using the consequences of the Black's last 2 moves, the weakening of the b5-square and the emplacement of the e8-rook on the a4-e8 diagonal, Karjakin starts an attack on light-squares on the queenside.

b4

[17...bxa4 18.Qxa4 Bd7 19.Bb5 Qc8 20.Nf5 looks bad for Black]

18.Bb5

In Svesnikov systems, White has the advantage if he manages to dominate the light squares.

Bd7 19.0-0 bxc3 20.bxc3 Bf8 21.Qd3

A simple move, creating the bond between rooks, preparing to seize the b-file and bringing the queen in attack on the queenside.

Na7 22.Bxd7 Qxd7 23.Qa6

White exploits the weaknesses and disorganized placement of Black's pieces.

Nc6 24.Rab1

White dominates the queenside. White's knights are emplaced ideally and the b-file will be under his control. Black didn't succeed to create any counterplay on the kingside.

Red8 25.Rb6 Rxb6 26.Nxb6 Qa7 27.Qxa7 Nxa7 28.Nbc4

White efficiently used the exchange strategy to get an endgame with a huge positional advantage. The a5-pawn is under attack, the rook will invade Black's camp and the d5-square is an excellent base for the white knights.

Rc8 29.Rb1 Rc5

Black defended the weak a5-pawn, but left the back rank unprotected.

30.Rb8 g6 31.Ra8 Nc6 32.Nb6

and Black resigned, not waiting for the variation: 32...Ne7 33.Nd7 Rc8 34.Rxc8 Nxc8 35.Nc4 and the a5 pawn is lost, then White's king march decides the game.

Karjakin exploited the smallest inaccuracy in Black's play when he started pushing the pawns (15...a6-a5) a bit too early without some preparatory moves (15...Qd7). A direct attack on light-squares on the queenside caught Black unprepared and with his pieces disorganized. Then, White entered the Black's camp with the major pieces, forcing exchanges and entering a technically won endgame.

1-0

 **Lenic, Luka**
 **Jakovenko, Dmitry**
 EuroTeams 2007 (4.1)

A32
2531
2710
 31.10.2007

A new star appeared in the last two years on top chess level. The Russian player, Jakovenko, have progressed enormous, achieving an impressive rating of over 2700.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c5

Jakovenko is a player who always fights for the full point.

4.Nc3

White avoids entering Benoni structure and prefers to play a normal line from English Defense.

cx d4 5.Nxd4 Bb4

Black's setup is very dynamic, with a quick development of pieces and ideas to fight for the central squares with d7-d5.

6.Ndb5 d5 7.Bf4 0-0 8.cxd5

[8.Nc7 Nh5 9.Nxa8 Nxf4 10.e3 Bxc3+ 11.bxc3 Ng6∞

The game remains complex and very risky for White who can lose his a8-knight also.]

8...exd5 9.a3 Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 Nc6

Black has already equalized and can hope for even more due to the opponent king's position in the centre.

11.e3 a6

Black forces White to take a decision about the position of his knight and to weaken the defenses of the c3-pawn.

12.Nd6 Qa5 13.Qb3 Nh5

Black wants to eliminate White's knight from d6 which controls the c8- and e8-squares in order to occupy the respective files with the rooks as soon as possible and then to start active operations while the white king is still in the centre.

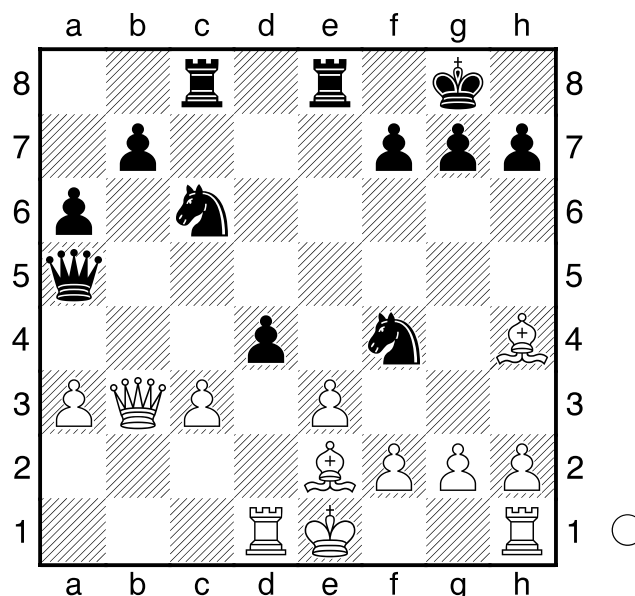
14.Bg3 Rd8 15.Nxc8 Raxc8

Black is threatening d5-d4 now.

16.Bh4 Re8 17.Rd1 d4

A very logical pawn thrust, opening the lines toward the uncastled king.

18.Be2 Nf4! Diagram



All or nothing. Jakovenko opts for the decisive attack sacrificing the knight to open the file for the rook.

19.exf4 dxc3

all black pieces are perfectly arranged. Black is threatening c2+ now.

20.Qc2 Qxa3

By taking intuitive and logical decision, Black managed to obtain decisive advantage. He has three free connected pawns now and menaces 21...Nb4 to free the c-pawn.

21.0-0 Nb4 22.Qf5 c2 23.Rc1 Qc3

White's bishops have no scope in this position. Black controls the entire the board.

24.Bh5

White is lost but prefers to create some threats on the kingside before resigning. However, Black has no problems in defending his king.

g6 25.Qg4 Nd3
winning material.

26.Rxc2 Qxc2 27.Bf6 Re1
and White can't escape from mate.
An impressive game by the apparent simplicity
of Black's decisions.
0-1

□ **Mamedyarov,S**
 ■ **Gurevich,M**
 ETCC Crete GRE (1)

D36
2752
2627
 28.10.2007

No surprise in Crete, Greece, at the first round of European Team Championships.
 After the first round the majority of favorites won their duels.

1.d4

The members of national teams are very experimented players, many of them of over 2600 rating. However, the emotional pressure when playing in and for a team is bigger than playing individual competitions.

Mamedyarov proved one more time that he is an outstanding player, winning in great style against the veteran GM Gurevich. Actually this game was one of the main encounters of the first round.

d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.Bg5

A classic opening system, but also very modern, used with success by Vishy Anand in Mexico in the World Championship.

Be7

Black refuses to enter the modern theoretical duel and sets up the classical system.

6.e3

The Azeri grandmaster is playing this classic Queen's Gambit with great accuracy, having a lot of experience in this type of structures.

Nbd7 7.Qc2 0-0 8.cxd5

Exchanging first on d5, White avoids losing a tempo by moving the bishop twice.

exd5 9.Bd3 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8

The classical disposal since Murphy first played it and then used by Capablanca, Lasker, Alekhine, and also by almost nowadays player. Black tries to create a local force superiority on the kingside and eventually to respond to a White's attack on the queenside (by b2-b4-b5) with a piece attack against the white king.

11.Rae1

In most of the games in this opening system, White sets up the minority attack with the b-pawn advance (starting with Rab1), but Mamedyarov chooses to play in the centre and kingside.

Be6

[Here, more common was another continuation, trying to exchange some minor pieces in order to loosen White's attacking potential:

11...Ne4 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.Bxe4 dxe4 14.Nd2 f5 15.f3 exf3 16.Nxf3
 but White is better developed and has superior dynamic.]

12.Ne5

Preparing f2-f4.

N6d7

Black's strategy is simple: he wants to trade pieces and enter a simpler position with good chances for a draw.

13.Bxe7 Rxe7 14.f4

White has to play actively trying to get the initiative in the time Black re-arranges his pieces.

f6 15.Nf3 Nb6 16.f5

The centre is static and White has a good control over it, so he can think at a wing attack. By this move, White creates a local space advantage on the kingside and prepares to open the lines by g2-g4-g5.

Bf7 17.g4 h6

Black has to stop White's pawns advance, but creates weak squares around his king. It is important to notice that White also weakened his pawn structure on the kingside, but his superiority of forces and space for maneuvers on that side makes these weaknesses un-utilizable by the opponent. In the same time, look for example at the black knight from f8 which is obstructed by White's pawns.

18.h4

In other games in this position, White tried the knight's maneuver Nf3-h4-g2-f4 with the idea to attack the weak squares from Black's camp e6 and g6.

Instead of this long and dubious plan, Mamedyarov starts immediately the pawn avalanche and preserves the knight on f3 which has the very important role to sustain the centre.

Qd6 19.Qg2 Rae8 20.e4!?

One of those moves of the middlegame which require a deep evaluation.

Mamedyarov's choice is very interesting because his attack on flank may become very risky if Black succeeds to counterattack and open the centre. Instead of following the general principles, he is the one who opens up the centre.

With a strong confidence in one's own possibilities, the chess player should evaluate the position concretely and exploit all his trumps. Here, by e3-e4, White brings his c3-knight in the centre, with 2 purposes: 1. to help in the attack against the black king and 2. to block the e-file using the strong e4-square.

dxex 21.Nxe4 Qd8 22.g5 fxxg5 23.hxxg5 hxxg5 24.Qxxg5 Nh7

Even if White has no real advantage, from psychological point of view, Mamedyarov is leading the game: he is in attack, has more space and excellent positions for his knights on e4 and e5.

25.Qh4 Nd7 Diagram
[25...Bd5 26.Ne5±]

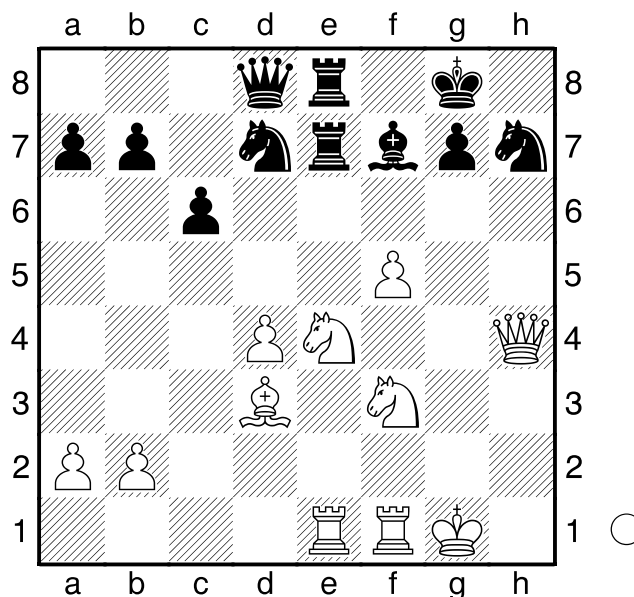
(Diagram)

26.Kf2!

A beautiful and simple move clearing the way for the rooks toward the g- and h- files.

Ndf6 27.Nxxf6+ Nxxf6 28.Rh1

The Azeri grandmaster didn't let his opponent any time to play freely. Black was all the time



under pressure, had to solve problems and all these will bring the human player, even a strong grandmaster like Gurevich, to fatigue and finally to a blunder that lose the game.

Kf8 29.Qh8+ Bg8 30.Rhg1

We can see now the importance of the white knight which was kept on f3 to sustain the centre. Black cannot initiate any counterplay even if White's position is weakened too. Almost all black pieces are tied up in defense and White has a lot of tactical threats. For example: Bc4 with idea Bxxg8 and f5-f6 after Nf6xxg8.

Qd6

Black fails to resist the strong pressure and cedes the point for courageous GM from Azerbaijan.

31.Re6

White rook cannot be taken and is threatening Rxxf6. Black resigns.

1-0

□ **Mamedyarov, Shakhriyar**
 ■ **Svidler, Peter**

EuroTeams 2007 (5.1)

D43
2752
2732
 01.11.2007

Mamedyarov, the former under twenty world chess champion has had an incredible ascension and is now in the Top 5 with a huge rating. He is a very powerful player who scored 9 points out of 9 in the last European Rapid Chess Championship.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.Bg5 h6

Svidler is an adherent of Grunfeld Defense against 1.d4, but due to his great chess experience he is capable of playing any opening system in function of his opponent and tournament circumstances.

6.Bxf6

[After: 6.Bh4 g5 7.Bg3 dxc4 8.e4 b5 the position is very complex with good chances for Black. From this position, Anand scored his first victory at the World Chess Championship in Mexico, playing against Aronian.]

6...Qxf6 7.Qb3

[The main line is: 7.e3 preparing the castle.]

7...dxc4 8.Qxc4 Nd7 9.g3

Now the structure is similar with the Catalan system, the main difference being the absence of the c1-bishop and f6-knight.

e5 10.0-0-0

White castles long, where his king is not very safe and also an attack on the other side against the black king is almost impossible because of the structure of fianchetto (f2, g3, h2). White's idea is a quick development.

Be7 11.Ne4 Qf5 12.Qc2 0-0

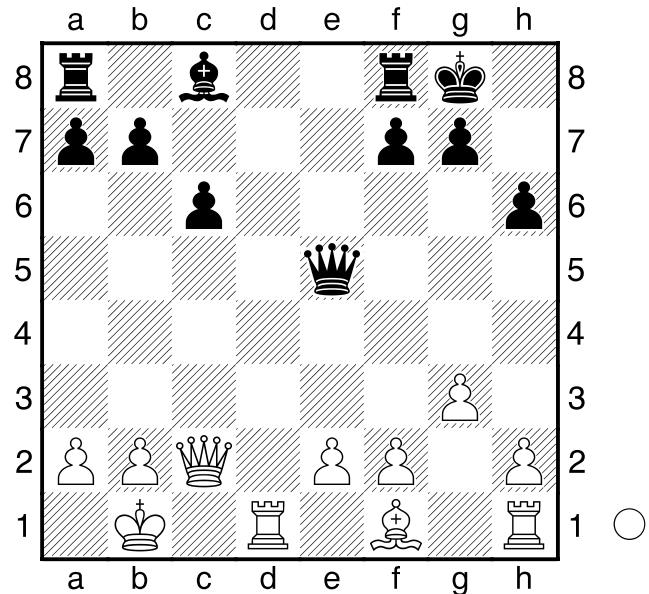
Black still has to find a way to develop his queenside.

13.Kb1 Nf6

Only this move is somehow new. In the game

Kortschnoj - Dreev, Black played 13...exd4 and the game was a draw.

14.Nxf6+ Bxf6 15.dxe5 Bxe5 16.Nxe5 Qxe5
 Diagram



Black had the bishop-pair for a couple of moves, but usually when the opponent has a better control over the centre and/or a better development, this advantage cannot be hold. Now, the position is level. No player has weaknesses and the material on the board is seriously reduced. The strategic elements of this position are the kings castled opposite, the open d-file and the pawn majorities (Black has 3 pawns against 2 on the queenside, White has 2 pawns against one in the centre: the e- and f-pawn phalanx).

Let's see where Mamedyarov played wrong giving the full point to the Russian player.

17.f4?!

White puts his pawn phalanx in motion with tempo, but this was not the first priority.

[Better was:

17.e4 Bg4 18.Be2 Bxe2 19.Qxe2
 and White preserves the d-file.]

17...Qh5!

A very clever move.

The white pawn phalanx can be a good asset

only if White controls or at least doesn't cede the d-file.

However, White cannot avoid exchanges on this file which would lead to a draw due to the reduced material on the board.

Svidler realizes that his young opponent wants the full point and therefore he (Mamedyarov) will probably play after a risky plan, keeping the rooks on the board, so ceding the d-file. By Qh5 and Bg4, Black takes the control over the d1-square.

18.e4 Bg4 19.Re1

As predicted. White gives up the control of d-file with too much confidence in his pawn phalanx.
[19.Rd2 would have been safer.]

19...Rad8 20.Be2

[20.h3 Qa5 21.Qc3 Qxc3 22.bxc3 Bf3
23.Rg1 (23.Rh2 Bxe4+ 24.Rxe4 Rd1+)
23...Rd2]

20...Rd4

Now, Black plays simple and logical moves. The rooks will be doubled on the d-file and, moreover, the d4-rook will put pressure on all the board. With a total control over the only open file, the advance of black pawn majority on the queenside will be decisive.

21.Bxg4 Qxg4 22.e5?!

Mamedyarov is still very confident in his chances or too proud to recognize his mistake.
[22.Rd1 Rfd8 23.Rxd4 Rxd4 24.Re1
is still good for Black, but with smaller chances to win.]

22...Rfd8

Now, the d-file is lost forever for White.

23.Re2 g6

A prophylactic move, against the f4-f5 advance.

24.Rc1 Rd3 25.a3

White has no good moves. a2-a3 was almost a must, otherwise, he always has to be careful at the back rank threats. However, this move weakens the position of the king and b7-b5-b4 will open the lines quicker. Of course, a strong

player like Mamedyarov knew that his position is already lost.

Qe6 26.Qc4 R8d5

Black keeps the queens on the board to keep the attacking potential against the white king.

27.Ka1 a5

Preparing b7-b5-b4.

28.Qc2 h5!

Svidler intends b7-b5, but this is still impossible because of Qxc6. Therefore, he plays a prophylactic move on the kingside and gives the move to White who has no good move again (zugzwang!).

29.Rf1 b5 30.Ref2 Qf5

Black has a very solid position so he has no reason to permit any counter-play.

31.Re1

[31.Qxc6 Rd1+ 32.Rxd1 Rxd1+ 33.Ka2
Qb1+ 34.Kb3 Rd3+]

31...c5 32.e6

A desperate sacrifice, but useless.

fxe6 33.Rfe2 Rd6

Defending the e6-pawn and clearing the d5-square for the queen.

34.Qc1 Qd5 35.Re5 Qb3

White resigned as Rd3-d1 will follow.

We cannot say that the 5th player in the World doesn't know the importance of open file. Mamedyarov's decisions were probably dictated by the tournament's circumstances where his team would have few to lose and much to gain in case of a victory against Russia. The game is very instructive for the manner in which Svidler played accurately, took the control of the d-file and exploit it until the end, putting White in zugzwang for several times.

0-1

□ **Morozevich, Alexander**

■ **Akopian, Vladimir**

EuroTeams 2007 (2.1)

E36

2755

2713

29.10.2007

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2

It's known that Morozevich's games are full of great positional nuances but also madly tactics and chaos on the board. Watching his games makes you feel the beauty of totally unexpected maneuvers.

d5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.Qxc3 c5

A very tricky variation of Nimzowitsch Defense, where Black is sacrificing a pawn to keep White's kingside undeveloped. But this sort of positions suits perfectly Morozevich's style.

7.dxc5 d4 8.Qg3 0-0 9.Bh6

This move was first played in 2006 between Gelfand and Ponomarev. White wants to put Black's pieces in awkward positions, hampering their dynamic and cooperation.

Ne8

[9...Nh5 10.Qg4]

10.h4

More aggressive than 10.e3 which was played in the before mentioned game. White activates the rook in the most economical way, without developing the minor pieces.

Nd7 11.h5

White is threatening the simple Bxg7 followed by h5-h6.

Qc7 12.Rh3

Like in romantic chess period, when the developing principles were not so important.

f5 13.Qxc7 Nxc7 14.Bg5

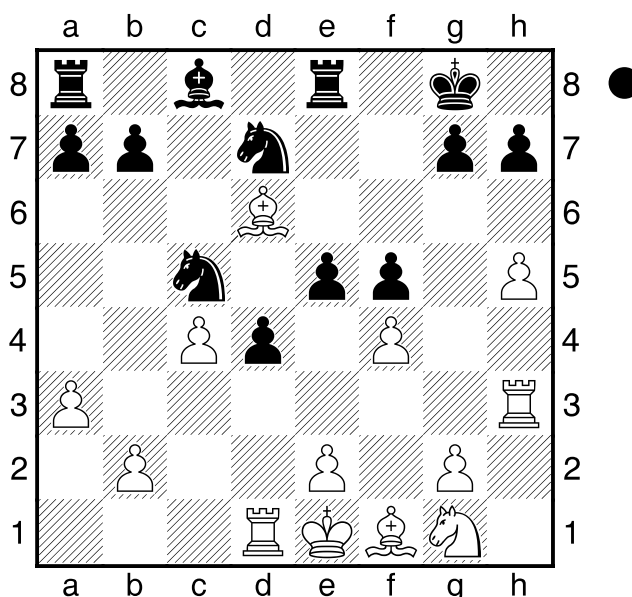
With a rook on h3, 2 minor pieces undeveloped, and a pawn on h5, the position looks like an amateur duel. However, White has an advantage. First of all, he has the bishop-pair. Secondly, even if the c5-pawn cannot be hold too much on the board, this pawn takes Black some time to capture and hampers his play for

now.

e5 15.Be7 Re8 16.Bd6

A very interesting position for a bishop, but also very valuable for White. The bishop controls the dark-squares and defends the extra pawn. Now, White prepares to develop his kingside.

Ne6 17.Rd1 Nexc5 18.f4 Diagram



Again, White's pawns look like in a game between 2 amateurs. However, this thrust is forced in order to destroy Black's central pawns.

exf4 19.Nf3

Now, When Morozevich could choose between 2 black pawns, he goes for the development.

d3 20.h6

A good intermediary move weakening the dark squares in Black's camp as White's dark-square bishop has no rival.

g6 21.Ng5

Protecting the e6-square and clearing the third rank for the rook.

Ne4 22.Bxf4 dxe2 23.Bxe2

Finally, at the 23rd move!, the white bishop comes into play.

Nxg5 24.Bxg5

The game looks now like chess again, where White has a healthy plus due to his bishop-pair, pawn majority on the queenside and control over the dark-squares on the kingside.

Nc5 25.Re3 Ne4

The black knight looks strong on e4, but in fact, will only bring Black new problems. The knight has no a secure position there because of Bf3 and because it has no squares where to retreat.

26.Bf3 Kf7 27.Bh4 Be6 28.Rd4

Defending c4-pawn and menacing to capture on e4.

[28.Bxe4 fxe4 29.Rxe4 Bf5 30.Rxe8 Rxe8+ 31.Kf1 Re4 is not convincing for White.]

28...Rac8 29.b3 a5

[29...Nc5 30.Kf2 followed by b4 is also good for White.]

30.Bxe4 fxe4 31.a4!

An incredible positional move! White puts his pawns on the opponent bishop's color and also leaves a "hole" on b4 that makes difficult for his majority to advance. In the same time, White also fixed black pawns on dark-squares where his bishop can attack them. The difference is that White has a better control of the board, his pieces are more active, and can easier create threats, so his pieces should manage to unblock the queenside pawns.

[31.Rdxe4 a4]

31...Bf5 32.Rd5 b6

Now black queenside pawns are fixed on the dark-squares where white pieces (superior on dark-squares) can capture them.

33.Rd6 Rb8 34.Kd2 Rb7 35.Kc3

The white king has a safe position, defending the base of the white pawns, and also ready to support his pawns to advance after the pieces capture the black pawns on dark-squares. White is winning.

Re6

A mistake, Black is not resisting pressure and leaves White the control of the back rank.

36.Rd8 g5 37.Bxg5 Rg6 38.Rg3 e3 39.Rd5 Be6 40.Rf3+

and the mate is close. Black resigned.

A very interesting game, but please never put the pawns in Morozevich's style: e2, f4, g2, h5, never let your kingside minor pieces undeveloped bringing the rook into play this way, never attack with only 2 pieces (Qg3, Bh6), never let your king more than 20 moves in the centre... I know you understand the joke.

1-0

□ **Morozevich,Alexander**
 ■ **Beliaevsky,Alexander G**

EuroTeams 2007 (4.1)

E32
2755
2646
 31.10.2007

When Morozevich is in good shape, his games are very probable to be analyzed and published in chess magazines, often changing chess theory in openings and not only. Morozevich, like Polugaevsky in the past, is a player with a huge imagination and a very unpredictable style that produce some of the most interesting chess games in our days.

Beliaevsky is a top GM with huge experience, a very strong opponent for any player in this world.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 0-0

Black is choosing a more solid disposal avoiding the dangerous lines with 4...c5.

[4...c5 5.dxc5 Na6]

5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.Qxc3 b6

In the classical style Black fights to control the e4-square, while puts his pawns on dark-squares to minimize the power of white bishops.

7.Bg5 Bb7 8.e3 d6 9.Ne2

In order to gain some advantage from the opening, White has to fight for the key-squares in the centre. Even if his aims won't be actually reached, the threats make Black to solve concrete problems and therefore his options of developing are smaller.

Here, White plans to play Qc2 and Nc3 threatening e3-e4.

Nbd7 10.Qc2 c5

Black continues to place his pawns on dark-squares and hopes for d4-d5 after which his knights are stronger than white bishops and his light-square bishop will get the status of "good" bishop (after e6-e5).

11.Rd1

However, White keeps the tension in the centre and targets the weakness on d6.

Qc7

Black defends the d6-square and un-pin the f6-knight.

12.Nc3 cxd4

[In the game Ivan Sokolov - Ponomarev, played in January 2005, Black played: 12...a6 and after: 13.d5 exd5 14.cxd5 b5 he obtained a good play.]

13.Rxd4

An interesting but logic reaction: White keeps the d-file opened to pressure on d6-pawn, defends the e4-square, and brings the rook on the fourth rank with the possibility to transfer it on the kingside.

a6 14.Be2!?

In Morozevich's style! He continues the development of pieces without care about the g2-pawn. In fact, Black is forced to accept the sacrifice, otherwise White will castle, play Rfd1 with an excellent position.

In chess, the time is very important. Often, we need to lose something in order to accomplish our plans quickly.

h6

An intermediary move before to take the g2-pawn.

[Directly: 14...Bxg2 is not good because of: 15.Rg1 Bb7 16.Bh6]

15.Bh4 Bxg2

Black accepts the 'gift' which change the character of the position from a strategical one into a more dynamic one, with many tactical issues.

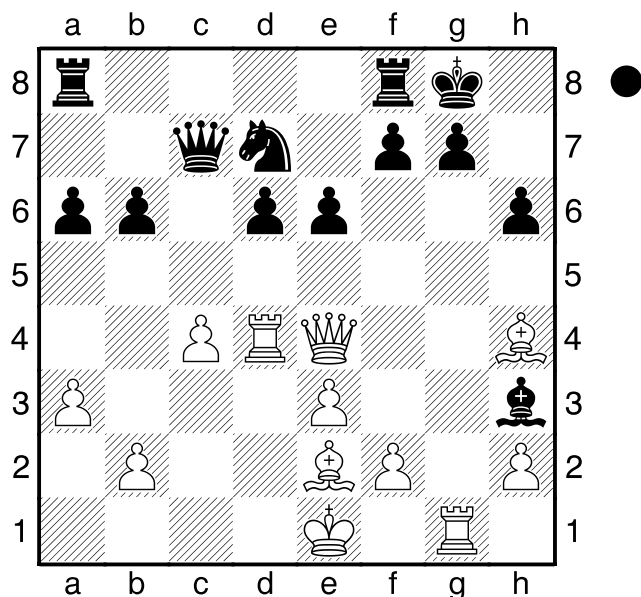
16.Rg1 Bh3

Beliaevsky changes the diagonal of his bishop, bringing it in defense as White attacks with almost all his pieces.

17.Ne4

exchanging one of the pieces that didn't take part to the attack with one of the defenders of black king's position.

Nxe4 18.Qxe4 Diagram



Statistically, White's attack should succeed: he attacks with all his pieces and, moreover, all of them are of long-ray of action.

In addition, Morozevich likes this kind of positions and, certainly, the psychological duel between the 2 grandmasters is in his favor.

Bf5

A mistake. Black left the g2-square uncontrolled and now White can double his major pieces on this file.

[18...Ne5 was better. 19.Bf6 Ng6 20.Qf3 with great complications.]

19.Qg2 Bg6 20.Be7

White regains his pawn (or gains the exchanges), keeping the attack and the bishop-pair advantage. In just a couple of moves, White gained the battle.

d5 21.Bxf8 Nxf8

Black better gave up the exchange with the idea to try to open the lines and counter-attack in the centre against the uncastled white king.

After some gain of material, many players are satisfied with the result and go back in defense hoping that their quantitative plus is enough for victory. However, it is important not to give the opponent (who has nothing to lose now) the possibility of taking up the initiative.

Morozevich continues his attack:

22.h4 Qe5 23.Qg3

without queens on the board, Black wouldn't have any chance for counter-play and subsequently any chance to save the game.

Qf6 24.h5 Bf5 25.Qc7

Black succeeded to defend the kingside, but left the queenside undefended, so White changes his plans attacking the black pawns and rook. The game is already won.

b5 26.Qc6 Rd8 27.cxd5 Kh7 28.Qxa6 Qe5 29.d6

With a free pawn on sixth rank, White has a decisive advantage.

Qh2 30.Rf1 e5 31.Rb4 Rc8

Having nothing to lose, Beliavsky is still playing trying everything possible.

32.Qxb5 Rc1+ 33.Kd2 Rc2+ 34.Kd1 Nd7 35.Bd3 Nf8

and Black resigns as Bxf5+ would follow.
1-0

 **Rodshtein, Maxim**
 **Jakovenko, Dmitry**
 EuroTeams 2007 (6.1)

D30
2615
2710
 03.11.2007

Again, a game played by Jakovenko, one of the strongest player in the World, player with a great confidence in his powers.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Bg5 h6

The most aggressive move nowadays which forces White to take a clear decision about his dark square bishop.

5.Bxf6

White adopts a more positional path for the game.

Qxf6 6.Nbd2

Now, it becomes clear that White doesn't fight for an advantage in the opening and just wants to get a solid position.

[6.Nc3 c6 7.e3 Nd7 8.Bd3 dxc4 9.Bxc4 g6 10.0-0 Bg7 is the main line of this system.]

6...dxc4

Having the bishop pair, Black quickly opens the lines to give more freedom to his forces.

7.e3 c5

A natural decision, Black is weakening the d4-pawn, making more visible the absence of the white dark square bishop.

8.Bxc4

[Opening the position even more with: 8.dxc5 was surely not in White's mind. Also, he has to lose a tempo to defend the b2-pawn.]

8...cxd4 9.exd4 Bb4

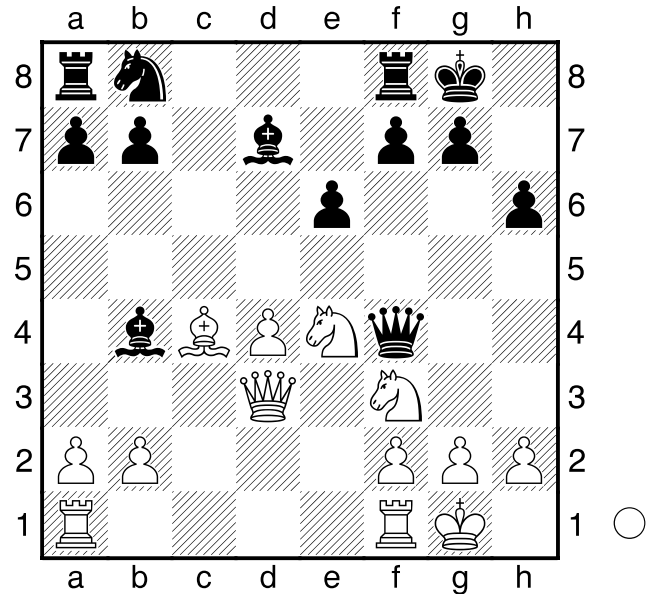
Already Black solved his opening problems and has a target, the isolated white pawn on d4. White's idea is to use the e5-square as an outpost for his knight/s and to initiate an attack on the kingside.

10.0-0 0-0 11.Ne4 Qf4

Black doesn't have a knight on f6 to protect his

king, but using the absence of white dark-square bishop, Jakovenko uses his queen in defense also impeding White to obtain a harmonious piece play.

12.Qd3 Bd7! Diagram



By normal means, Black is improving the status of his pieces, with the idea to complete his development with Bc6 and Nd7-f6.

It is very important for the chess player to see his final goal which is, of course, to win the game. For example, here, Jakovenko places his bishop on c6, a very active position, but not at all safe. White can play Nf3-e5 exchanging that bishop and subsequently eliminating Black's bishop-pair.

However, the exchanges (especially of the white e5-knight) are favorable to Black because the fewer pieces on the board, the weaker is the isolated d4-pawn. A strong player must learn that many times one has to "drop" something in order to win something.

13.g3?

A very risky move that White decides to play, chasing the black queen from that annoying position, but weakening the long diagonal a8-h1. It is clear that White lost the psychological duel - just think at his opening moves intending a solid approach...and, now, he needs to take such

risky decisions.

[13.Ne5 Bc6 14.Nxc6 Nxc6
and White has no chance to hold the game
against a perfect player like Jakovenko.]

13...Qf5 14.Qe3

With such "long" and "threatening" moves,
White is perhaps about to despair.

Bc6 15.Bd3 Nd7

Jakovenko evaluates if there is any real threat
and continues his development.

16.a3 Be7 17.Rac1 Qd5

A safe and active position for the black queen
which defends his king indirectly putting
pressure on White's weaknesses.

18.Rfe1 Rac8

A simple developing move, but very precise.
Black interdicts Bd3-c4 as you can see in the
next variation.

19.h4

It is hard to believe that a grandmaster like
Rodshtein thinks that his attack can succeed.
White has nothing on the kingside and by this
move, he only weakens his position even more.
However, what else to do?

[19.Bc4? Qxe4 20.Qxe4 Bxe4 21.Rxe4 b5]

19...Rfd8

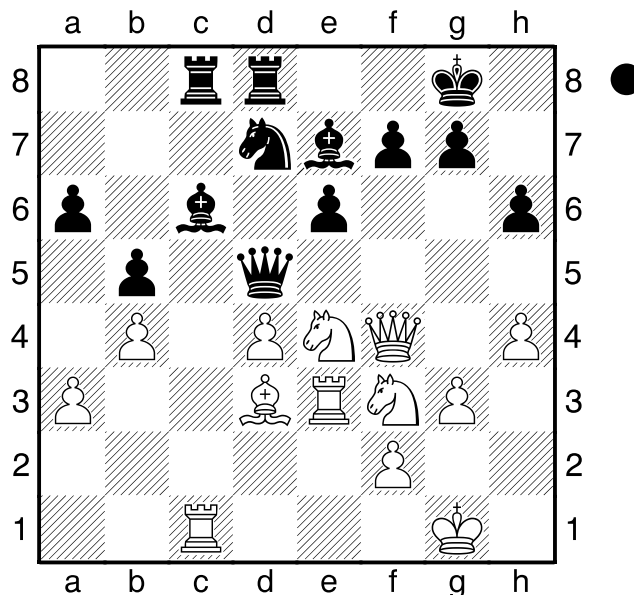
Black completed his development, his pieces
are centralized and put a strong pressure
against White's position. The next step is to
make some exchanges entering a better
endgame due to his better pawn structure.

20.b4 a6 21.Qf4 b5

Black leaves the c5-square weak, but protects
his queen (against Bc4) which is the most active
piece in this position. This way, the weaknesses
from White's position are put in light.

22.Re3 Diagram

White's weak and hesitant play brought him to
disaster. His pieces are forced to defend each
other with a total lack of harmony and scope.



It is instructive to replay Black's moves until
here and observe how logical and natural they
are.

Ba8!

What could be more natural than grabbing the
control of c-file (and maybe the first rank too)
after the strange sortie of one of the white
rooks?

23.Rxc8 Rxc8 24.Ne5

[White had to block the c-file with
24.Nc5

Here, the white knight is merely out of play
than on a strong square. After
Nf6

Black has many threats against the white
"pack".]

24...Nxe5 25.Qxe5 f5

Black gets a technically won endgame. All
White's pawns are weak, on the same color with
the e7-bishop and also seriously threatened on
the first rank and long diagonal.

26.Qxd5 Rc1+ 27.Bf1 Bxd5 28.Nd2

[28.Nc5 Bxc5 29.dxc5 Bc4]

28...f4

White is almost in zugzwang, so Black can play
practically anything. Jakovenko, attacks now the

white pawns which are hopeless on dark-squares.

29.Rd3 h5

Quietly blocking the white pawns on dark-squares.

30.gxf4 Bxh4 31.Nb3 Re1 32.Re3

White is totally demoralized and loses a piece. He resigns before 33...Rxe3 and 34...Bxb3

White started the game very reserved probably dreaming to a draw. In just some moves, his position with an isolani on d4 became unsatisfactory and he started to take risky decisions (g2-g3 and h2-h4) in order to avoid a slow defeat against a very strong and precise player.

Taking logical and normal decisions, Jakovenko won in great style, just improving move by move his position and the status of his pieces.

0-1

 **Shirov,Alexei**
 **Kozul,Zdenko**
 EuroTeams 2007 (3.6)

B67
2739
2609
 30.10.2007

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Bg5 e6

The former European champion made many victims in this Sicilian system, being one of the promoter of Black's superiority.

7.Qd2 a6 8.0-0-0 Bd7

It's well known that in this system, Black attacks on the queenside, so he prepares b7-b5 defending the c6-knight.

9.f4 b5 10.Bxf6 gxf6

In this opening system, White gives his dark square bishop in order to destroy Black's pawn structure.

11.Kb1

[White can choose to advance the f-pawn right away, weakening Black's king position:

11.Nxc6 Bxc6 12.f5 Qb6 13.fxe6 fxe6 14.Qf4 with complications.

For example, Black can sacrifice a pawn in order to open the dark-square main diagonal: h5 15.Qxf6 Qe3+ 16.Kb1 Rh6∞]

11...b4

Driving away the c3-knight, Black weakens indirectly White's control over the e4-pawn, one of the key squares in Sicilian.

12.Nce2 Qb6 13.Qe1 Rc8

Black's plan is to quickly attack on the queenside, leaving the king in the centre relying on the pawn shield in front of the king and on his bishop-pair ready to defend all the squares.

14.Nxc6 Bxc6 15.Nd4 Bb7 16.f5

Provoking e6-e5, creating a backward pawn on d6, and a possible counterplay on a2-g8 diagonal.

e5 17.Nf3

Unfortunately for White, his knight is not so well placed on f3, much better was on g3 with idea

Nh5, so 15.Nd4 does not give White any advantage.

Rg8 18.Qh4 Ke7

Black's king position in this system is on the centre, so the king defends the pawns which protect him. It is like the king in the corner: Kg8 defends the f7, g7, and h7 pawns. Now, the white queen's attack on the queenside is very economically stopped by the king himself.

19.Rg1

[19.Qxh7 Bxe4+]

19...h5!

Black prepares to develop his bishop on h6 and the white queen cannot take the h5-pawn because after Bxe4, Black activates his light-square bishop and creates a strong pawn majority in the centre, very dangerous connected with the bishop-pair.

20.Bd3 Bh6

Development move with tempo because of the threat Be3 and Rxd2.

21.g3

A forced move which blocks the queen out of play on the kingside. White has no success on the queenside, while Black starts to push the pawns against the white king. Black has the initiative.

a5 22.Rg2

While Black attacks, White is forced to play quiet moves in order to free his queen. The idea is to play Rg2-e2, defending the e4-pawn and the e3-square, then Qxh5.

[22.Qxh5 is not good because of: Be3 23.Rg2 Rh8 24.Qg4 Rcg8]

22...a4 23.Re2 b3

A typical thrust forcing the opening of the lines.

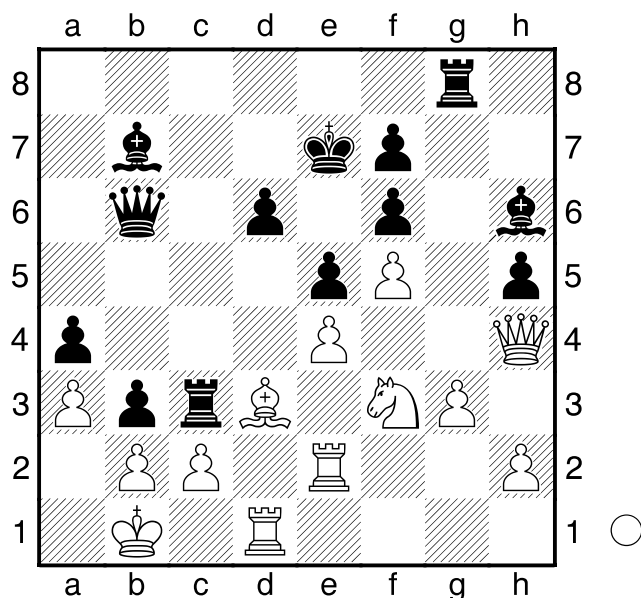
24.a3 Rc3 Diagram

[Much clearer was:

24...bxc2+ 25.Rxc2 (25.Bxc2 Rb8-+)

25...Rxc2 26.Bxc2 Rb8

with terrible threats on the b-file.]



Black is choosing the hard way to gain advantage, delaying to take on c2. In attack, opening the lines toward the opponent's king is of first importance, but Kozul cannot stop to play the 'artistic' move Rc3.

25.Qxh5 Rb8 26.Qxh6 bxc2+ 27.Rxc2 Ba6 28.Qd2

White's queen is back but she must be sacrificed to stop Black's attack.

Rxd3 29.Qxd3 Bxd3 30.Rxd3

Instead of finishing his attack winning the game with the direct 24...bxc2, Kozul got a position with material equivalence (PME): queen against rook, knight and a pawn. Let's see the criteria of evaluation a PME:

1. Position of the kings: both kings have an unsafe position, but White's king is more exposed;
 2. The quality of minor pieces: the white knight is far to get a good position on d5.
 3. White has 2 rooks (so "play coordinating piece"), with some chances to enter Black's camp in the future using the c7-square.
 4. White has a free pawn on the h-file, while Black can free the e4-pawn after the exchange d6-d5, e4xd5.
- So, Black is better because of the very poor position of the white knight on f3.

Let's see how Kozul turns this into a full point.

Qa6 31.Rdc3 Kf8 32.Nd2

The knight wants to come on d5 by Nd2-c4-e3, but Black avoids that putting pressure against the e4-pawn.

Kg7?!

[32...Qe2 directly was much better.

It seems both players played inaccurately this sequence maybe because of the time pressure.]

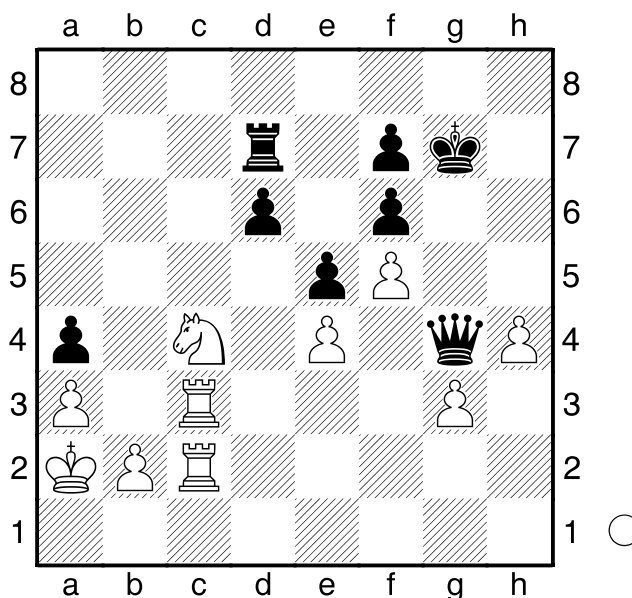
33.h4?!

[33.Nc4 was a better try for White. Qc6 34.Nd2]

33...Qe2 34.Ka2 Rd8 35.Rc4 Qd3

The black queen does a wonderful job obstructing white pieces with the final aim to interdict the coming of the white knight to a good place.

36.R4c3 Qe2 37.Rc4 Qd1 38.R4c3 Rd7 39.Nc4 Qg4! Diagram



The same preventive task, the white knight is not let to come on e3 using the weakness of the e4-pawn. In the same time, Black prepares d6-d5.

40.Nd2 d5!

White didn't succeed to bring his free pawn to a threatening position, the knight is still bad, while Black realized his plan and got a free pawn. Black's position is won.

41.exd5 Rxd5 42.Nc4 Rd4 43.Ne3

Too late, the outpost on d5 does not exist anymore.

Qe4

The black queen move freely while white pieces has to defend one another because they (especially the knight) do not have safe places on the board.

44.g4 Qh1 45.g5

[45.h5 e4 followed by Rd3 also wins]

45...Qxh4 46.g6 Rd7 47.Rg2 Qh1 48.Rcc2 fxc6 49.Rxg6+ Kf7 50.Rc8 Qb7

The power of the queen is clear: she defends the seventh rank, attacks on b2, supports the advancing of the e-pawn and harasses the movement of white pieces. The rest of the game does not need further comments:

51.Rc3 Rd2 52.Nc4 Qd5 53.Kb1 Qe4+**54.Ka2 Qd5 55.Rg1 Rd3 56.Rgc1 e4**

Finally Black's free pawn is marching!

57.Kb1 Qd4 58.R3c2 Rd1 59.Rc3 Rxc1+**60.Kxc1 Qg1+ 61.Kc2 Qf2+ 62.Kb1 Ke7****63.Ne3 Kd6 64.b3 Qe1+ 65.Kc2 Qe2+****66.Kb1 Qe1+ 67.Kc2 Qa1 68.bxa4 Qa2+****69.Kc1 Ke5**

Black will bring White's pieces in zugzwang, using the cooperation Q+K with the objective to free the e4-pawn's way to queen.

70.Nc2 Qd5 71.Ne3 Qa8 72.a5 Kd4 73.Kb2**Qxa5 74.Nc2+ Ke5 75.Ne3 Qb5+ 76.Rb3****Qe2+ 77.Kb1 Qa6 78.Kb2 Kf4 79.Rc3 Qb5+****80.Kc2 Qa4+ 81.Kb2 Qd4 82.Nc4 Qd7****83.Ne3 Qd2+ 84.Nc2 Qd7 85.Ne3 Qb7+****86.Ka2 Qb5 87.Ka1 Kf3 88.Nd5+ Ke2****89.Nxf6 e3 90.Ng4 Kd2 91.Rc8 e2 92.Rd8+****Kc3 93.Rc8+ Kb3 94.Rc1 Qa5**

A beautiful technique displayed by Kozul,

playing a practical difficult endgame.

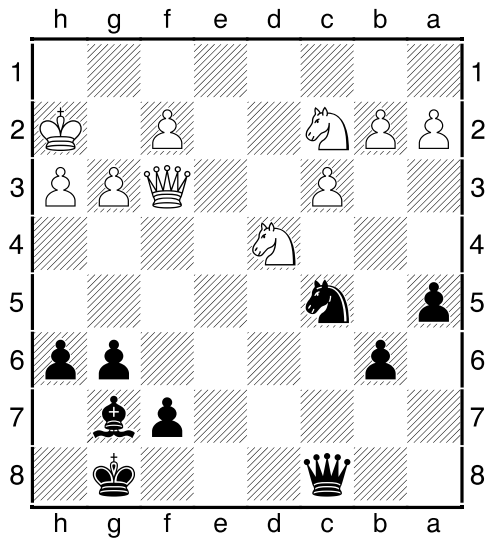
0-1

Test 01

Setup the following positions on your chess board and think no more than the given time for each. You should not move pieces at all.

Then, write down your answers on some notebook. We will publish the solutions into your account at the end of the week. Our solutions will give you clear explanations and how should you think at every of the positions above.

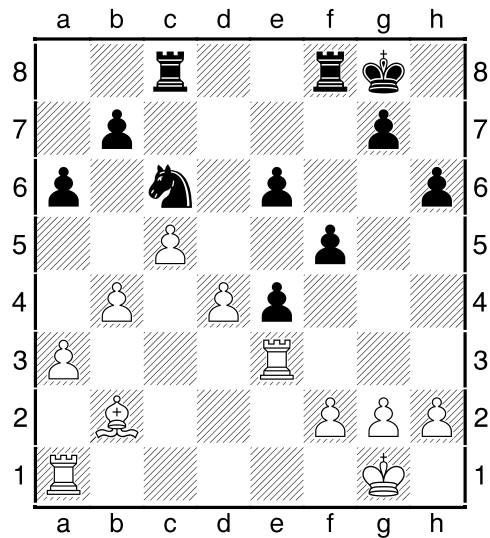
Problem 1



Thinking time: 7 minutes. Black is to move.

- What would you move?
- Give concrete variations.

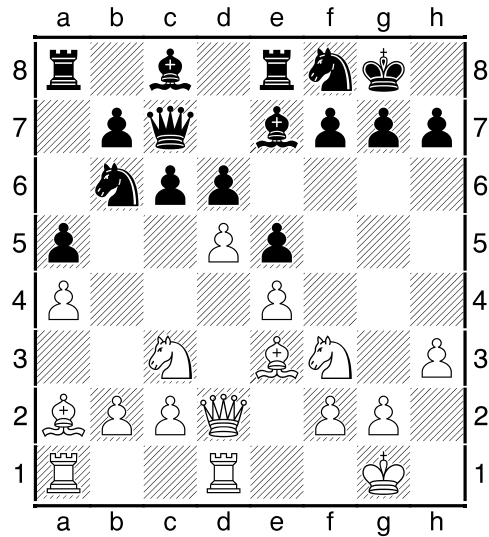
Problem 2



Thinking time: 12 minutes. White is to move.

- Which is main Black's threat?
- How should White continue?
- Give concrete variations and evaluate.

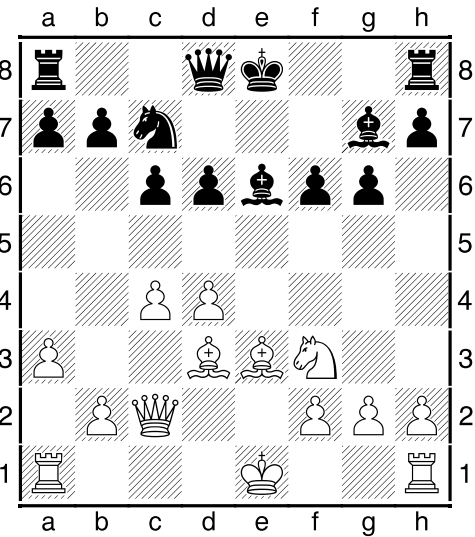
Problem 3



Thinking time: 10 minutes. White is to move.

- How should White continue?
- Give concrete variations

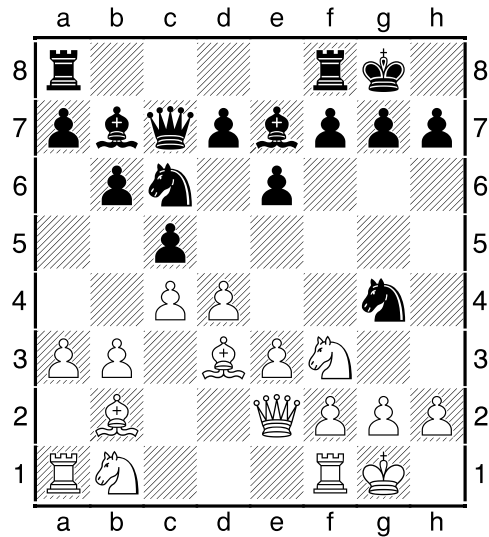
Problem 4



Thinking time: 10 minutes. White is to move.

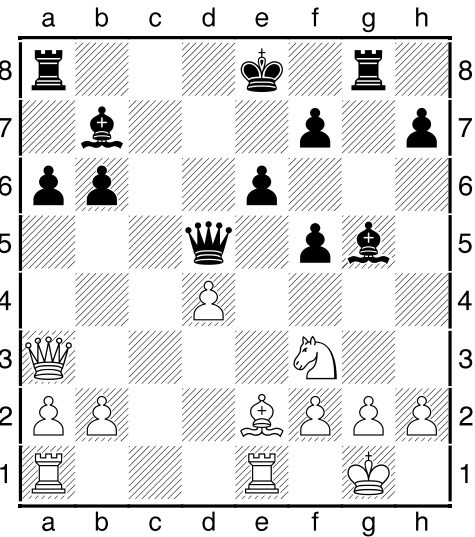
- Evaluate the position and give a plan of play for White.
- What would you move?

Problem 5



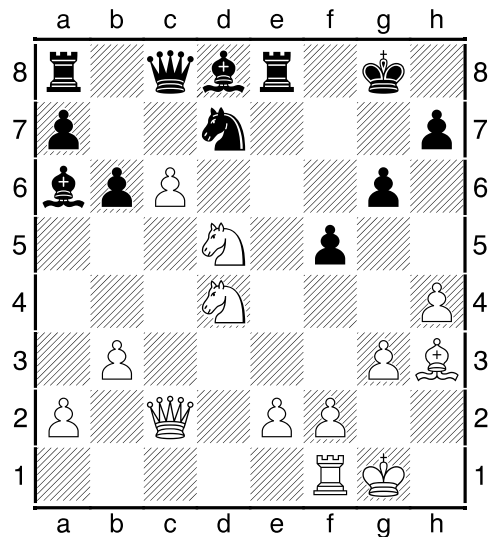
Thinking time: 12 minutes. White is to move.
How would you continue with White?

Problem 6



Thinking time: 12 minutes. White is to move.
a) Evaluate the position
b) What would you play with White?

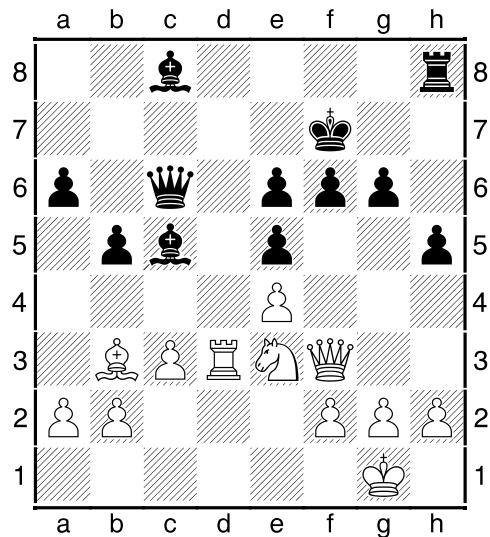
Problem 7



Thinking time: 10 minutes. White is to move.

- How would you continue with White?
- Give concrete variations.

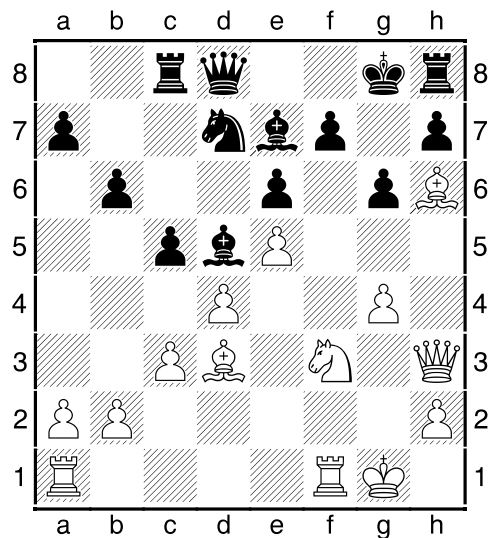
Problem 8



Thinking time: 10 minutes. White is to move.

- How would you continue with White?
- Give variations.

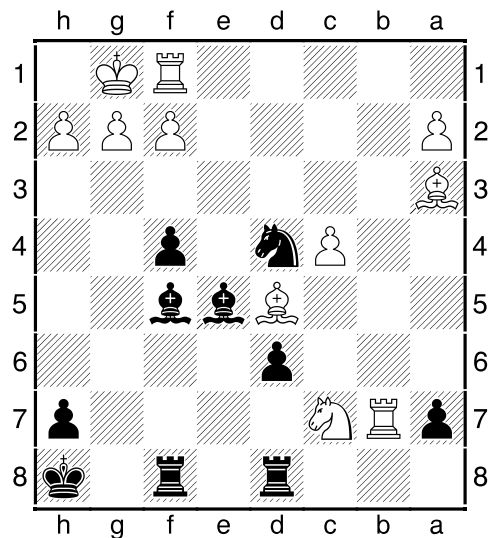
Problem 9



Thinking time: 20 minutes. White is to move.

- Find a way to continue with White. Explain your idea.
- Give concrete variations.

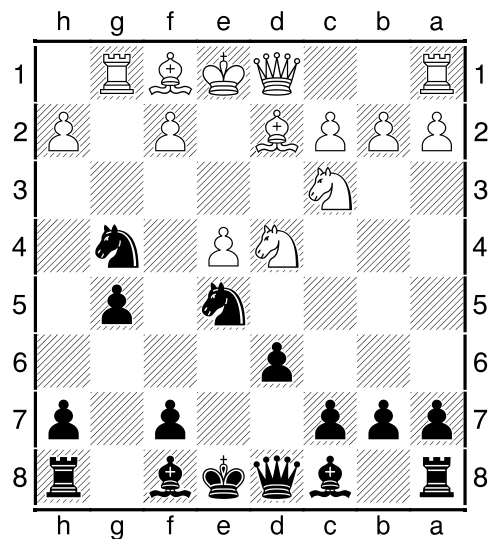
Problem 10



Thinking time: 15 minutes. Black is to move.

- Find a way to continue with Black. Explain.
- Give concrete variations

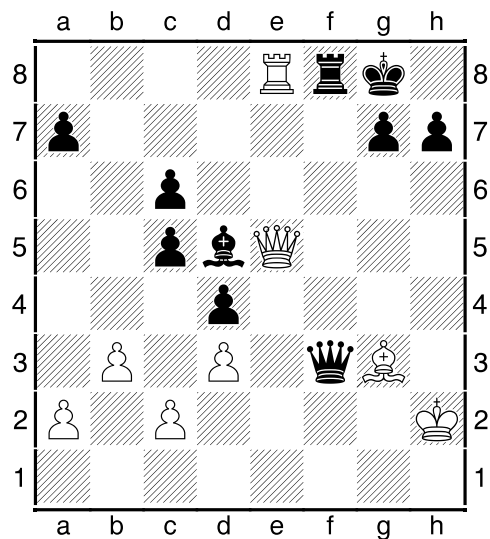
Problem 11



Thinking time: 30 minutes. Black is to move.

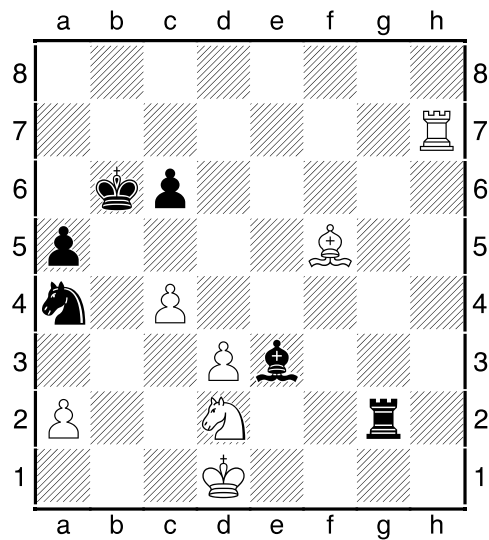
- Find a way to continue with Black
- Give concrete variations.

Problem 12



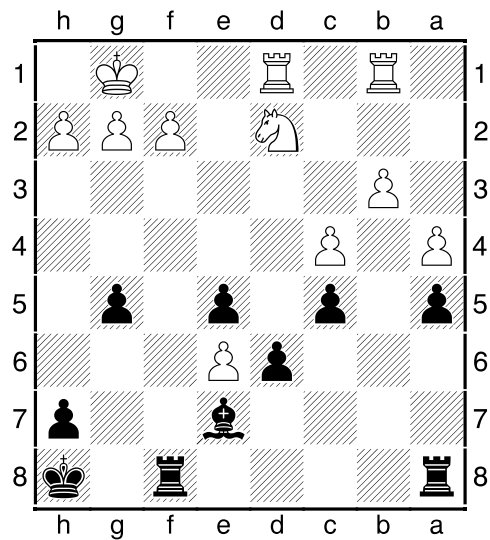
Thinking time: 7 minutes. White is to move.
How should White continue?

Problem 13



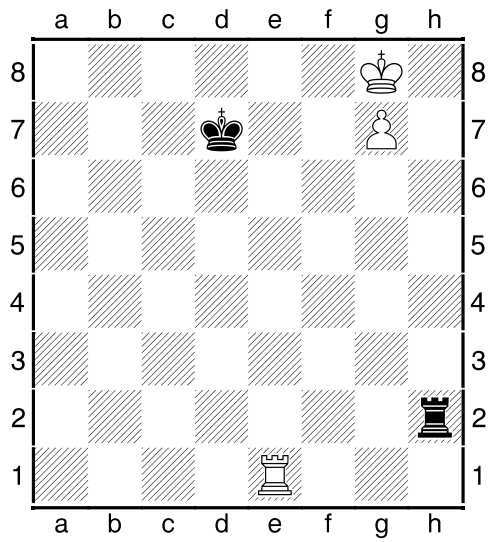
Thinking time: 7 minutes. White is to move.
How should White continue? Give concrete variations.

Problem 14



Thinking time: 13 minutes. Black is to move.
a) Evaluate the position.
b) How should Black continue?

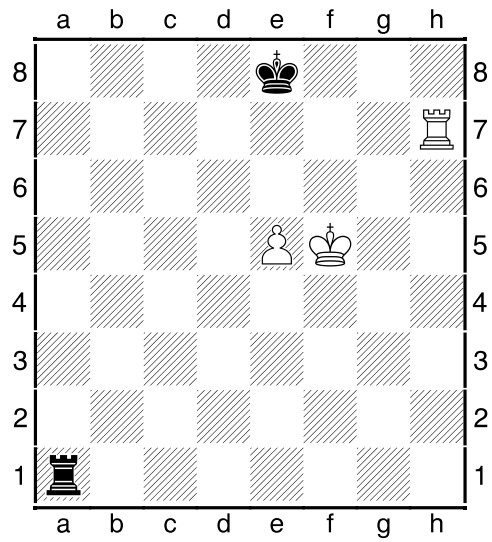
Problem 15



Thinking time: 2 minutes. White is to move.

- a) Can White win?
- b) Tell a move for White.

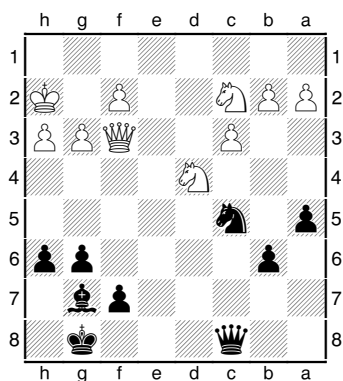
Problem 16



Thinking time: 5 minutes. Black is to move.

- a) How would you continue with Black?
- b) Can Black draw?

Problem 1



Thinking time: 7 minutes. Black is to move.

- What would you move?
- Give concrete variations

Problem of 7 points.

Your score:

White is a pawn up, with majority on the queenside. However, with **1...Na4**, Black has the chance to re-establish the material equality. This move is not very hard to see, but a knight-move on the edge of the table can be sometimes overlooked.

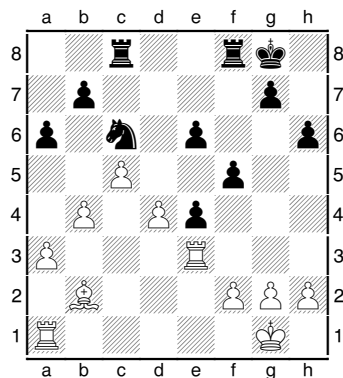
However, how can White continue? After loosing the b2-pawn, his queenside pawn structure becomes weak and the pressure of fianchettoed bishop on g7 can give White's big troubles. The game continued with **2.Ne3!** Nxb2 3.Nd5 and, now, the excellent quality of white knights on the centre at least compensates the damaged pawn structure on the queenside.

So, Black cannot be stopped to win a pawn, but any material gain takes time (see Nc5-a4-b2 and the black knight has not the best position there). Meanwhile, White improved his knight position a lot (Nc2 came on the centre of the board) – a first importance element is White's TO DO list.

Conclusion and score:

- Black re-establishes the material equality with 1...Na4 (4 points)
- "Chess is generalized exchange", a "closed system" meaning that *if you win something, you loose something*. White took advantage from Black's lost tempos and improved the quality of his knight with Nc2-e3-d5. (3 points)

Problem 2



Thinking time: 12 minutes.

White is to move.

- Which is main Black's threat?
- How should White continue?
- Give concrete variations and evaluate.

Score:

- Nc7-e7-d5 (4 points)
- 1.f3 followed by 2.Rxe6 (4 points)
- If you correctly evaluated the resulted position after 4 moves (2 points)

Problem of 10 points

Your score:

About pieces:

- This is an endgame with bishop against the knight. The bishop + rook collaboration is bigger than knight + rook collaboration. Also, the bishop is stronger than the knight in endgames with pawns on both sides.
- However, if the knight can occupy a *defended operational base*, the knight becomes very strong. So, we have to find if the black knight can occupy an operational base... and, yes, this is on d5. The knight will block the white d-pawn, the knight cannot be attacked by any white piece and pawn and will exert a strong pressure on both sides (the quality of a central square).

About pawn structure:

- Black has doubled pawns, so White should have a pawn majority which is a good plus in endgames. So, we notice that White has a plus on the queenside-centre with 4 pawns against 2 pawns!
- However, White's pawns on the queenside are arranged on dark-squares as the bishop, limiting a lot his ray of action.

From the above basic evaluation of the pluses and minuses of this position, we can give the solution:

- Black's threat is to play Nc6-e7-d5, placing the knight on the operational base.
- White should destroy any blockade on its pawns, in order to free his bishop and to be able to advance his pawn majority. Which is the black pawn who defends the d5-square? The e6-pawn. How can White attack this pawn? With his rook from e3, so the move is **1.f3!** with the idea to open the e-file.
- The game continued normally with: **1...exf3 2.Rxe6!** and the operational base from d5 is semi-destroyed. **2...Rcd8 3.Rd1** forced **3...Rd5** to block the white pawn (after 3...Kf7, White can play 4.d5) **4.gxf3**

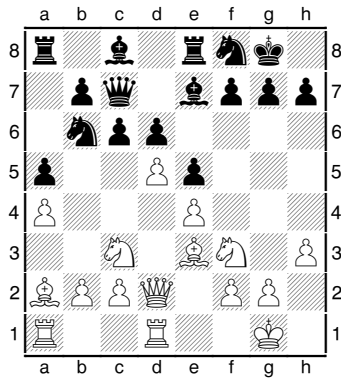
Now, White has an advantage because his pawn majority and the control over the e-file.

White's TO DO list now is:

- bring the king on c4
- dislocate the c6-knight by a3-a4 and b4-b5

White succeeded to realize both elements from his TO DO list and won the game easily.

Problem 3



Thinking time: 10 minutes.

White is to move.

- a) How should White continue?
- b) Give concrete variations

Problem of 5 points

Your score:

The opening ended very badly for Black, with lack of space, undeveloped pieces and, moreover, his pieces do no co-operate.

White has all the pieces in their best positions and it seems he cannot improve more his position. It is time to take a decision for how to win the game.

When you have an excellent position that you cannot improve more, you should choose between:

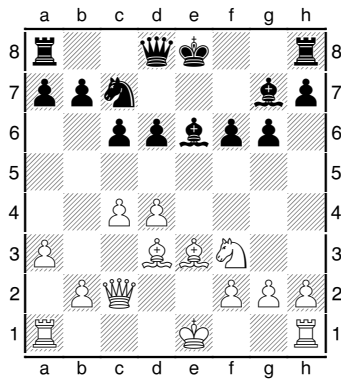
- a) entering a technically won endgame or*
- b) attack on the enemy king.*

By a small combination, White can choose the first option: 1.Nxe5 dxe5 2.d6 Bxd6 3.Qxd6 Qxd6 4.Rxd6. All was forced until this moment and it is clear that White has a clear edge because of the total control over the d-file and bishop-pair.

Score:

- a) 1.Nxe5 (4 points)
- b) 1.Nxe5 dxe5 2.d6 Bxd6 3.Qxd6 Qxd6 4.Rxd6 +/- (clear advantage to White) (1 point)

Problem 4



Thinking time: 10 minutes.

White is to move.

- Evaluate the position and give a plan of play for White.
- What would you move?

Problem of 5 points

Your score:

White is clearly better because of the Black's weak pawn structure on the kingside. The normal black pawn formation should be f7, g6, h7.

The consequences of the pawn placed on f6, instead of f7 are:

- weakness on e6 – and being on an open file, this weakness will give Black big troubles;
- weakness on g6 – where the Black pawn is defended, but the advance h2-h4-h5 and the 2 white pieces targeting there gives Black another big problem.

Moreover, White has a big space advantage and the only Black's option to challenge White's centre is d6-d5, with unclear consequences.

White's strongest plan is to attack immediately the black kingside with h2-h4-h5 creating threats when the black king is still on the centre and his pieces can hardly take good defensive positions. White will castle long in order to bring the last piece into play and to conquer the h-file (after h2-h4-h5).

Solution:

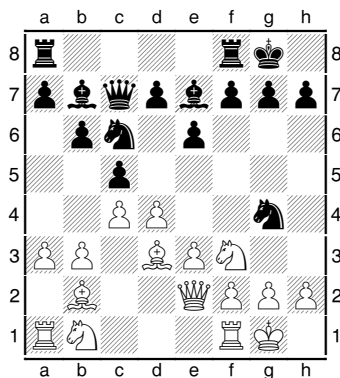
- the plan: h2-h4-h5 and 0-0-0 (5 points)
- the move: h2-h4 (1 point)

Bad solution:

This problem was given with 2 reasons, the second being to see how much you were for the piece sacrifice on g6, which is (totally) unsound. Many times during our games, we start calculating a sacrifice with the strong wish to make it work, but this only leads to lose important minutes on the chess clock and tire our minds without any point.

Advise: when you have a big strategic plus, don't complicate the game with unclear variations that you cannot calculate until the end.

Problem 5



Thinking time: 12 minutes.
White is to move. How would you continue with White?

Problem of 5 points

Your score:

The position is about equal, but the black knight looks strange on g4 and White may be tempted to chase it away with 1.h3

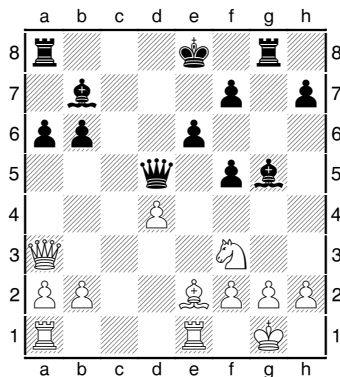
However, the first thing a player should do immediately after the opponents has played is to look after the threats.

So, what does Black threat here?

The position of the knight on g4, the black queen on c7, and, possible, bishop on b7 should tell us to look very carefully on the kingside. ...and, yes, Black is threatening: 1...Nxd4, followed by 2...Bxf3 with double attack on queen and mate on h2.

If you saw the Black's threat 1...Nxd4, you won the full score: 5 points. So, any move, as 1.Nbd2, 1.d5 and others which doesn't allow 1...Nxd4, receives 5 points.

Problem 6



Thinking time: 12 minutes.
White is to move.
a) Evaluate the position
b) What would you play with White?

Problem of 7 points

Your score:

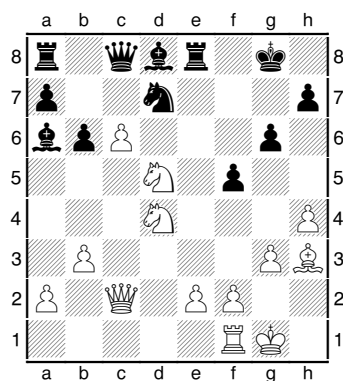
One of our clients sent us his solution and it is 100% correct and excellent explained:

“Black has a big edge in this position. He has the two Bishops in an open position. He also has the Open g file and g2 in particular looks vulnerable. d4 could also prove to be a weakness especially in an ending. Black's king is in the centre but appears to be safe. I am struggling to find a plan for white but it must hinge around trying to dislodge Black's Queen, which is very powerful. (3 points)

1 Qb3 Qb3 2 ab3 a5 and White is still worse but he has removed the queens and will have to take his chance in the endgame.” (4 points)

In the game, Black played 2...b5 and won the endgame at the move 72.

Problem 7



Thinking time: 10 minutes.

White is to move.

- How would you continue?
- Give concrete variations.

Problem of 7 points

Your score:

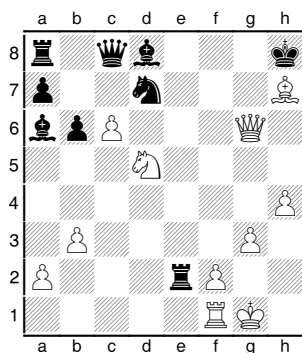
A complicated position, with White having a rook down, but a strong initiative. However, Black is not lost yet and the game will be finally won by the player with a stronger calculation power and stronger nerves.

In the evaluation of this position, the first importance element is the black's king safety, and then the presence of the threatening white pawn on c6.

The black king's pawn structure is extremely weak, if not inexistent and the black pieces cannot defend well their king.

If White plays calmly now, taking the piece with 1.cxd7, after 1...Qd7 2.Bg2 (forced) Rac8, Black's advantage is incontestable.

White's only chance to continue his attack is to sacrifice one more piece with: **1.Nxf5! gxf5** (forced) **2.Bxf5 Rxe2** (forced, otherwise 3.cxd7, forking black pieces, wins) **3.Bxh7+ Kh8 4.Qg6**



After this forced line that White should calculate without problems until this moment, he has 3 pieces in attack and no Black piece exist in defense. The most important is the White's control over the light squares and this is why White sacrificed his knight on f5: to bring the bishop into attack.

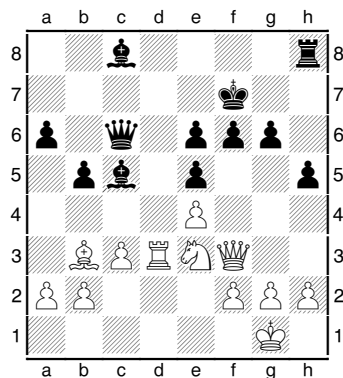
So, by calculating the variations, we should arrive until here and with the "mind's eye" to see that the resulted position is good for us.

The game continued: 4...Nf6 5.Nxf6 Bxf6 6.Qxf6+ Kxh7 7.Rd1 and White won

Score:

- 1.Nxf5 = 5 points
- The forced variation until move 4 = 2 points

Problem 8



Thinking time: 10 minutes.

White is to move.

- How would you continue?
- Give variations.

Problem of 6 points

Your score:

This is a simple position if you do the correct evaluation first.

Pieces:

Black has the bishop pair and its power in the endgame could give Black the full point. Also, the white knight has not any operational base.

White's rook is on the open d-file, but without any entrance or outpost. So, this doesn't give White a long-term advantage.

However, White pieces are all together in attack and the Black's king position is weak (the king is the only one to defend the f6 and g6 pawns and he is also placed on 2 dangerous lines: the f-file and a2-g8 diagonal).

Such elements must make us to think carefully at some way to destroy the king's defense, usually by combinational motifs.

White's move is **1.Nd5** attacking on f6. The white knight cannot be captured because of Bxd5+ winning the queen. (4 points).

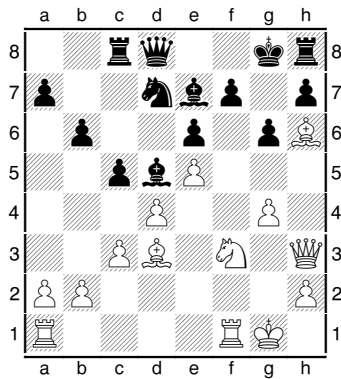
Black can move only:

a) 1...Be7, but now Black is loosing his long-term strategic advantage: the bishop-pair: 2.Nxe7 Kxe7. Now the position looks better for White.

b) 1...f5?!, trying to keep the advantage, is not good because of 2.exf5 gxf5 3.Qg3! and White has a winning position

(the 2 variations = 2 points)

Problem 9



Thinking time: 20 minutes.
White is to move.

- Find a way to continue with White. Explain your idea.
- Give concrete variations.

Problem of 10 points

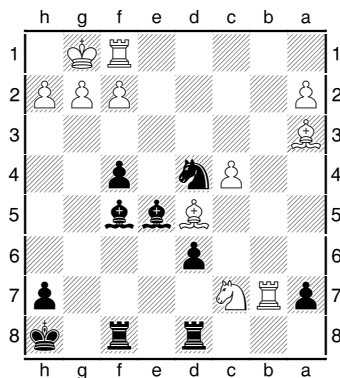
Your score:

A position where White is in attack and for the moment Black is a rook down (the piece out of play from h8).

How can we take advantage from this? First of all, the exchanges should favor White. Also a direct confrontation between pieces is in White's favor because he has more resources. So, White decided to open up the position using a double pawn sacrifice: 1.c4! (7 points).

1.c4! Bb7 [1...Bxf3 2.Qxf3 is also good for White]
2.d5! exd5 3.e6! fxe6 4.g5! Rc6 5.Rae1! bringing the extra rook into attack. If you saw all the moves until here, you have other 3 points. Now, Black is lost. White opened the f-file where he will threat a mate on f8, cleared the e5-square with the threat of playing: Qg3-e5-g7 and managed to force black pieces to occupy catastrophic positions.

Problem 10



Thinking time: 15 minutes. Black is to move.

- Find a way to continue with Black. Explain.
- Give concrete variations

Problem of 6 points

Your score:

Black is a pawn down, the a7- and d6- pawns are in danger, his king has not a secure position and White's rook entered the 7th rank.

However, his chance hangs in complicating the game with **1...f3** which creates some threats against the white king. (4 points)

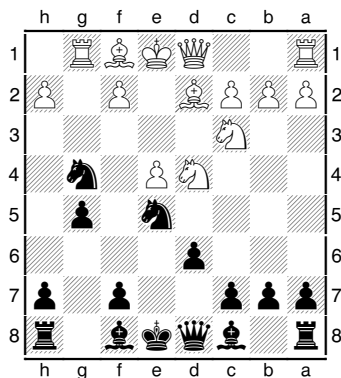
One cannot calculate all the variations in 15 minutes, but this is not required when your chance stays in only one move.

Variations:

- if White doesn't look at the kingside at all and plays 2.Rxa7, Black can continue: 2...Ne2+! 3.Kh1 fxe2 4.Bxe2 Nf4 with counter-chances
- 2.g3 is wrong because of 2...Nh3 3.Rb1? Ne2+ 4.Kh1 Bg2#
- In the game, White has played 2.Re1 Ne2+ 3.Kh1 fxe2 4.Bxe2 Nf4 5.Nd5 Nd3! 6.Rxe5!? Nxe5 7.f4 Rb8! 8.Ne3 Nd3 with complications, but good chances for Black
- an interesting variation is 2.Nb5 Rg8! 3.Bxe8 Ne2+ 4.Kh1 fxe2 5.Kxe2 Be4+ 6.f3 Nf4+ 7.Kf2 Bxb7 and Black is winning.

You have 2 points in case you saw that White defends his king's position without too much problem.

Problem 11



Thinking time: 30 minutes.

Black is to move.

- Find a way to continue.
- Give concrete variations.

Problem of 8 points

Your score:

A position from the opening, where White sacrificed a pawn for initiative. Unfortunately for White, he made a small mistake and now Black can remain with the pawn and a good position. But let's see how.

First of all, it is clear that we have to start answering to the question of what does White threaten, especially in such positions. So... White is threatening to play h2-h3 or Be2, chasing the black knight, then to capture the g5-pawn, then to play f2-f4 chasing away the second black knight.

White is also intending to castle long, so even Qd1-e2 followed by 0-0-0 is a threat as the black king will have no chance in the centre.

What Black has to do:

a) First of all, Black has to sustain the position of the knight on e5. That knight is the only defender, taking care of the c4- and f3- squares (where the white bishop and queen would love to come) and defends f7 and g4. The black knight is protected by the g5-pawn against f2-f4, pawn which is protected by the position of the knight on g4.

b) Black has to find a place for his king. The kingside looks really unsafe because of the mess on the g-file, the centre won't be comfortable place for the king in such an open position, so the queenside is the only good choice. So, Black has to move the queen and the bishop, in order to castle.

But where to move these pieces? The queen on f6 looks ugly because after 1...Qf6 2.Qe2, White is threatening f2-f3 and the g4-knight and g5-pawn are hanging.

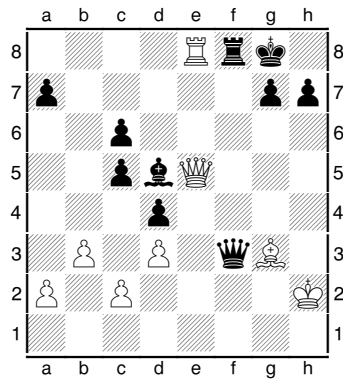
So, we have to move the queen, but where? On b6! It looks excellent there, but we have to move the c-pawn and losing a tempo with such a passive move doesn't look too good for most of the chess players.

However, looking better at the position, we notice that Black will win his tempo back, by attacking the d4-knight when moving Qb6.

Of course, c7-c5 is not good, because it weakens the d5-square too much and the queen will be restricted on b6 with the pawn on c5.

	Black has the direction where to look now: c7-c6 which also defends the important d5-square. Is c7-c6 a good move? Of course, we have to calculate the variation (as played in the game): 1...c6 2.h3 Qb6! (of course, the weakness of the f2-square is helping Black) 3.hxg4 Qxd4 4.Qe2 (4.Bxg5 Qxd1 followed by 5...Nf3 wins for Black) and, now, it's all over. Black managed to get out his queen, the g5-pawn is protected, White doesn't threat anything, and the centre is well protected. Black's TO DO list now is Bc8-e6, followed by 0-0-0, queen back to b6 and a5 (after Be3), f7-f6 and Rg8-g7-d7. His extra pawn will decide the game. Score: a) 1...c6!! = 6 points b) The variation until 3...Qxd4 and White cannot take on g5 = 2 points

Problem 12



Thinking time: 7 minutes. White is to move. How should White continue?

Problem of 5 points

Your score:

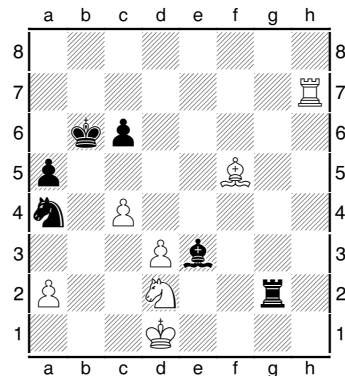
White was completely lost and Black blundered in time crisis. Now, White can fight for the draw by entering an opposite-colored-bishop endgame:

- a) **1.Rxf8** Qxf8 2.Qb8! as in the game, and White managed to draw
 b) 1...Kxf8 would give Black better chances. 2.Qf4+ Ke7 3.Qe5+ Kf7 4.Qf4+ Qxf4 5.Bxf4 Ke6 still keeping good chances to win.

Score:

If you saw 1.Rxf8 and 2.Qb8 after Qxf8, you have 5 points.

Problem 13



Thinking time: 7 minutes. White is to move. How should White continue? Give concrete variations.

Problem of 5 points

Your score:

White is a pawn up, but the position of the king is seriously threatened even if it's an endgame. After the white knight will leave his position, Black can mate with Na4-c3+, Kd1-e1 and Rg1#.

So, White has to play actively and use the fact that all black pieces are hanging.

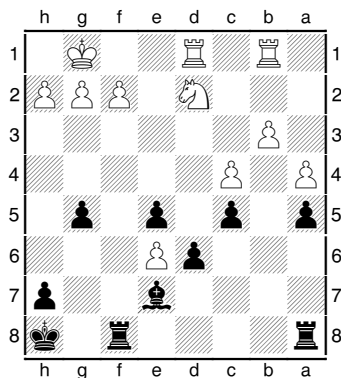
35.c5+! Kxc5 [35...Bxc5 36.Nc4+ Kb5 37.Rb7+ Ka6 38.Bc8!÷] **36.d4+!!** this is the best chance for White and now the game is extremely complicated. It's almost impossible to calculate all the variations, but such moves as 1.c5, followed by 2.d4 with the idea to take advantage of the hanging pieces and knight-fork can be given by our tactical intuition. [36.Ne4+ Kb6 37.Bc8 Nc5=+] **36...Kb5** [36...Kxd4 37.Rh4+ Ke5 38.Nc4+ Kf6 39.Nxe3 Nc3+ 40.Kc1 Nxa2+=; 36...Bxd4 37.Nb3+ Kc4 38.Be6+ Kd3 39.Bf5+ Kc4=; 36...Kb4 37.Rb7+ Kc3 38.Rb3+ Kxd4 39.Nf3+ Kc5 40.Rxe3 Rxa2 +/=] **37.Bd3+ Kb4 38.Rb7+ Kc3 39.Rb3+ Kxd4 40.Nf3+ Kc5 41.Bf1 Rf2 42.Be2 Bd4 43.Ke1** very unclear

Solution:

If you saw 35.c5+, you have 3 points.

If you saw 36.d4+, you have other 2 points.

Problem 14



Thinking time: 13 minutes.

Black is to move.

- Evaluate the position.
- How should Black continue?

Problem of 9 points

Your score:

The white extra pawn from e6 is as already won by Black with the king maneuver: Kh8-g7-f6-xe6. Or Rf6-xe6.

The black bishop is blocked by his own pawns and has no any chance to get out from his passive position.

Both players have one weakness on open files that cannot be repaired: Black on d6, White on b3. Both players can arrange their rooks to defend actively these weaknesses: White – rook on d3, Black rook on b6. The “bad” black bishop has an important role (but the only role) to defend the weakness on d6.

However, Black has a second weakness: the a5-pawn; and 2 pawn weaknesses in an endgame are rather fatal.

White’s knight is the piece which can make the difference between the 2 players’ positions. The knight is able to come on excellent positions as: Ne4-c3-d5 or -b5. If White manages to play undisturbed, Black has not any chance to draw this endgame by only defensive measures.

So, Black has to look for a way to draw and this way is really unique here. In this moment, Black can try to close the d-file, thus eliminating the weakness from d6 with the maneuver: 1...Rf8-f4-d4

Score:

- you saw the “bad” bishop for Black = 1 point
- you saw the 2 weaknesses (from b3 and d6) = 1 point
- you saw the weakness from a5 = 2 points
- Black is worse, so he should fight for draw = 1 point
- You saw 1...Rf4 = 4 points

Problem 15 = White can win by building a “bridge” with 1.Re4, the rook will help the white king to escape from checks – see **Lucena** position.

Problem 16 = Black can draw by cutting the White’s king on the rank by 1...Ra6 and forcing him to advance the pawn. After that, White’s king will have no place to hide from checks from behind. – see **Philidor** position.

 **Sofronie,Iulian**
 **Petre,Nad Titus**
 Eforie Nord (9)

A36
2450
2300
 27.06.2003

GAME FOR YOUR INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS

In this training game we have to deal with an interesting form of English Opening. You'll play Black and try to use self-questioning, consequences and to create "to do list" when is required in order to find the plans of play.

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.e4

Which are the consequences (threats and drawbacks) of 3.e4?

c5 4.g3 Nc6 5.Bg2 e6 6.d3 Nge7

The central pawn structure is stabilized.

Where should attack White and where should attack Black? Please explain this by taking account of the pawn structure and the pieces deployment!

7.h4

If White continued with 7.Nge2, 8.0-0, 9.f4, 10.g4, how would Black react?

Extract consequences and draw a plan for Black!

h5

Is h4-h5 a real threat? Explain!

Suggest other candidate moves for Black instead of 7...h5!

8.Bg5 a6 9.Qd2 Rb8 10.Nge2 d6 11.0-0

Analyze the consequences of 11.0-0 and try to write down some useful ideas.

b5 12.Rac1 b4

Tell the consequences of 12...b4. Make a comparative assessment of the deployment of pieces after the move! **13.Nd1 f6 14.Be3 e5 15.f3 Be6 16.Nf2 Qd7 17.Kh1 Nd4 18.Ng1 b3**

Try to figure out the threats and the consequences after 18...b3! Give a variation after 19.a3.

19.Bxd4 cxd4 20.a3 g5

Is this move tactically safe? Try to calculate variations.

Which is the goal of the move?

21.hxg5 fxg5 22.Ngh3 g4 23.Ng5 Bh6

Black's play was directed against the white king

and 23...h4 was meant to be played.

Was it better or not? Explain!

24.f4 Bxg5 25.fxg5 Ng6

Evaluate the results of Black's operations on the king-side. Assess the strong points and the weak points for each side!

26.Kg1

Black's threat was 26....h4. Did White solve the issue with 26.Kg1?

0-0 27.c5 dxc5 28.Rxc5 Rbc8 29.Rfc1

Rxc5 30.Rxc5

Evaluate the position and write the "TO DO list" for Black!

Rc8 31.Qc1 Qd8 32.Rc6 Ne7 33.Rc5 Kg7

34.Bf1 Kg6 35.Be2 Qd6 36.Rxc8 Nxc8

37.Nd1 Nb6 38.Nf2 Na4 39.Bd1 Qc5

40.Qd2 Nb6 41.Nh1 Nd7 42.Kf1 Nf8 43.Nf2

Nh7 44.Kg2 Nxg5 45.Nh1 Nf3 46.Qf2 Qc1

47.Bxf3 gxf3+ 48.Qxf3 Qxb2+ 49.Nf2 Qxa3

50.g4

[50.g4 h4 51.g5 Qe7]

0-1

□ **Sofronie,Iulian**
 ■ **Petre,Nad Titus**

Eforie Nord (9)

[solutions]

A36
2450
2300
 27.06.2003

White was the Romanian Chess Champion at the time, known as an attacking player, so 1.c4 instead of his usual 1.e4 was a surprise.

1. c4 leads to English Opening, a wing opening where as a direct consequence of the first move the key square became d4. The play in the English tends to be positional involving long maneuvers for both sides.

1.c4 g6 2.Nc3 Bg7 3.e4

A move with deep consequences in the game:

- White pushed a pawn in the center but the key square d4 will remain unprotected (3points)
- Another important consequence is that White's light-square bishop will be hampered by his own pawns from now on (c4 limits the bishop on f1-a6 diagonal, e4 on h1-a8 diagonal). (3points)

White could avoid these concessions by a transposition move 3.d4 which results in a King's Indian.

c5

Only this way! Black takes control over d4 without to limit Bg7 (as e7-e5 does). Black already has a TO DO LIST:

- Use d4 as an operational base in the center and h8-a1 diagonal for a potential attack on the queen side
- limits Bf1 activity
- consider White's plan with f2-f4-f5 and include it in his plan.

4.g3 Nc6 5.Bg2 e6 6.d3 Nge7

Both sides chose flexible setups. Black has a small plus due to his active Bg7 and due to d4 forepost. The central pawn structure will be closed soon (the only possible breakthroughs, on the centre, d7-d5 for Black and d3-d4 for White don't work).

In this typical central pawn structure, the play will take place mostly on the wings and, due to massive pawn chains, the main plans are based on pawn breakthroughs on the wings and the

time factor is very important (who manages to open up a line first will have the advantage). Black can use a plan based on b7-b5-b4 (bxc4) or f7-f5.

White's plan is more predictable and is based on the pawn breakthroughs on the king-side f2-f4-f5.

[6...d6 7.Nge2 a6 8.0-0 Nge7 9.f4 Rb8 10.g4 f5 11.exf5 exf5 12.g5 b5 13.Rb1 Be6 14.Nd5 Bxd5 15.cxd5]

7.h4

White's aggressive nature comes to the light. Noticing that f5 is controlled 3 times, White is trying to gain space on the h file. Anyway let's follow the main line in this position:

[7.Nge2 d6 8.0-0 a6 9.f4 Rb8 10.g4

White gained space on the king side and threatens f4-f5. A passive approach doesn't belong here! Black should react with f7-f5 (10 points)and after:

f5 11.exf5 exf5 12.g5 0-0

Black has a small advantage in a symmetrical position (the differences are that White played g2-g3-g4-g5=3 moves and Black played a7-a6 and Ra8-b8= 2 moves) due to b7-b5 possibility (4 points for the compared analysis of pieces deployment). TO DO LIST:

- bring Bc8 to e6 (2points) in order to put pressure on c4
- force White after b7-b5 (2points) to play b2-b3 opening the h8-a1 diagonal or bxc4 which leads to a better pawn structure for Black
- pay attention to the "e" file and to the weak squares on it: e2, e3 for White and e6, e7 for Black (2points).]

7...h5

A psychological move. Black wants to cut White's counterplay and the future events (especially White's rushed castle) showed that 7...h5 was a good decision.

h4-h5 is not such a dangerous threat, because White is behind in development (2 points) and after:

[7...0-0 (3 points)

7...d5 (2 points) or 7...Nd4 (2 points) are also playable.

8.h5

In a position where the center is not stable,
Black can reply with a strong breakthrough in
the centre:

d5 (4 points).]

8.Bg5

Use the immediate consequence of 7...h5 , but
the next move 9.Qd2 has no point , because
Bg5-h6 to trade Bg7 is no longer possible.

[8.Nge2 a6 9.0-0 Rb8 10.a4 b6 11.Rb1
0-0 12.Be3 Nd4 13.b4 d6 14.Bg5 Re8
15.Nxd4 cxd4 16.Ne2 Bb7∞]

8...a6 9.Qd2 Rb8 10.Nge2 d6 11.0-0

Which are the consequences of White's castle?

-White's king side pawn structure is already
weakened (2 points)

-Bg5 is exposed and Black will gain a tempo
with f7-f6 (2 points)

-After Bg5xe7 Black will have the pair of bishops
and will open the game with one of the typical
breakthroughs: b7-b5, d7-d5 or f7-f5 (2points)

TO DO LIST:

-Gain space on the queen side with b7-b5 in
order to restrict White's pieces activity (2 points)

-Control (or even occupy) the key-square d4 in
order to prevent White's counterplay in the
center (2 points)

-If the center is stabilized launch an attack on
the king side (2 points).

b5 12.Rac1

White didn't saw Black's plan. The best practical
chance was to open up the lines on the queen
side (or in the center) to reach some pieces
activity.

b4 Diagram

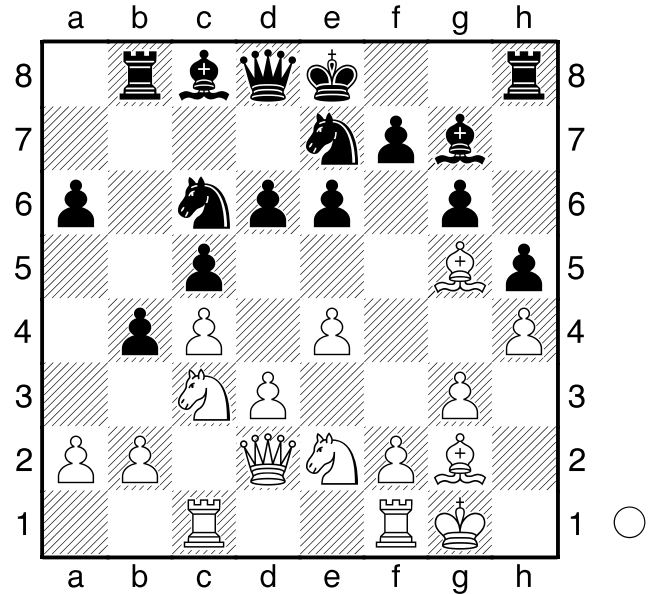
(Diagram)

Consequences:

-Nc3 will be sent to a very passive position on
d1 (1 point)

-Bg5 will be chased and sent to e3 from where it
also hampers Nd1 (1 point)

-White will no longer be able to control d5,
which allows e6-e5 to activate Bc8 (1 point)



-Black's pawn structure is more flexible because
of possible breakthrough: b4-b3, d6-d5, g6-g5
(2 points)

Compared analysis of pieces deployment:

Qd8=Qd2 (1 point)

Rb8>Rc1 due to b4-b3 possibility (1 point)

Rh8>Rf1 due to g6-g5 which will open a file on
the king side (1 point)

Bg7=Bg5 (1 point)

Bc8>Bg2 because, after e6-e5, the c8-h3
diagonal will be open (1 point)

Nc6>Nd1 after Be3, Nd1 is completely blocked
and Nc6 has e5, d4, a5 (even b4) under control
(1 point)

Ne7>=Ne2 also because of better flexibility
through c6-d4

13.Nd1 f6 14.Be3 e5 15.f3 Be6

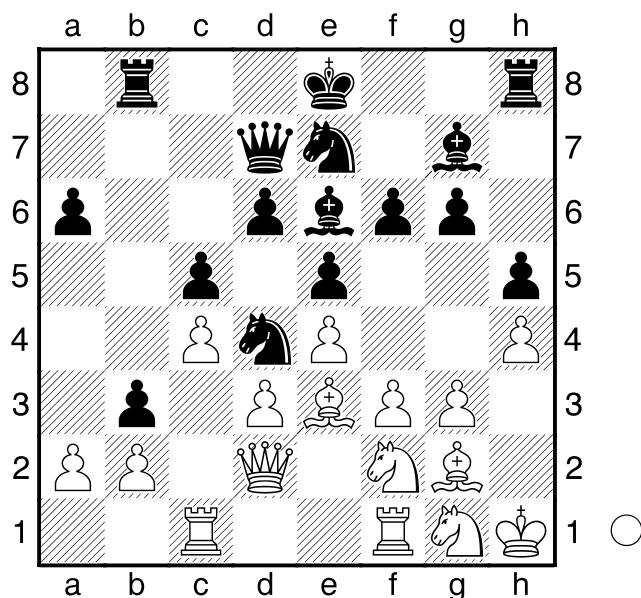
The position looks symmetrical due to the
pawns structure, but Black has some important
advantages:

-better placed pieces (as we analyzed above)

-The possibility to open up a file and activate
rooks (by b4-b3 and g6-g5)

16.Nf2 Qd7 17.Kh1 Nd4

White intended to play Bg2-h3 in order to trade
the light squares bishops so Black improves his
knight position and puts pressure on f3
(exploiting the consequence of Nd1-f2).

18.Ng1 b3 Diagram**Consequences:**

- First of all is a "tempo move" (Black threatens to take on a2) and I warmly suggest you to start calculate the candidate moves which begins with a "tempo-move" (1point).
- The pawn can not be taken because of the fork Nd4xb3 (1 point).
- The pawn b2 will be fixed on a weak square (1 point)
- b3 is at two moves from promotion, which can be the reason for future tactics in the endgame (2 points)
- One of the best White's pieces is Be3 and Black threatens to trade it with Nd4-c2, followed by Bg7-h6 and Ne7-c6-d4 (3 points).

19.Bxd4

[19.a3 Nc2 20.Bh3 Nxe3 21.Bxe6 Qxe6 22.Qxe3 Bh6 23.f4 0-0 (2 points)

Black is better because of b2 weaknesses and due to powerful dark square bishop. (2 extra points for the assesment)]

19...cxd4 20.a3 g5

The goal of the move is to open-up a file on the king side and to activate Rh8 (3 points). Only the white queen can not give an attack so the pawn sacrifice is safe.(2points).

21.hxg5

[21.Bh3 gxh4 22.gxh4 Bh6]
[21.hxg5 fxg5 22.Qxg5 Kf7! (10 points)
Threatening Bh6, Ng6 and Rbg8 and not
(22...Bh6 23.Qf6 Rh7 24.Bh3 Bxh3
25.Ngxh3 Bxc1 26.Rxc1 (3 points))]

21...fxg5 22.Ngh3

[22.Qxg5 Kf7 23.Bh3 Bh6 24.Bxe6+ Qxe6
25.Nfh3 Rbg8 26.Qh4 Ng6 27.Ng5+ Bxg5
28.Qxg5 h4 29.g4 Nf4 30.Qf5+ Qxf5
31.exf5 Nxd3-+]

22...g4 23.Ng5 Bh6

[Indeed 23...h4 was better due to the multiple threats (hxg3,h4-h3) and due to the exposed position of white king.(5 points)
24.gxh4 Rxh4+ (24...g3 25.Bh3 Rxh4
26.Kg2 Bxh3+ 27.Nfxh3 Bh6) 25.Kg1 Bh6
26.fxg4 Ng6-+ (5 points)]

Black wanted to play strategic using his superior pieces Qd7>Qd2, Be6>Bg2, Ne7>Ne2.

Advice: When you are in advantage, do not complicate the position unless you are SURE you can calculate the variations perfectly. The best practical chance of the player with inferior position is to enter complications.

24.f4 Bxg5 25.fxg5 Ng6 26.Kg1 0-0

[With 26...h4 27.Nd1
(27.gxh4 Qh7-+ (3 points) threatening Qxh4,
followed by Qh2.)
27...hxg3 28.Rf6 Rg8 29.c5 Nf4-+
(3 points) White is facing the terrible threat
Qd7-h7.]

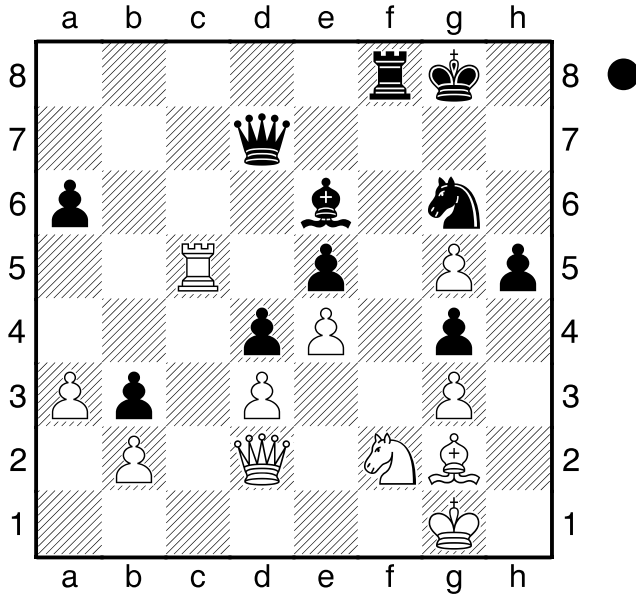
27.c5 dxc5 28.Rxc5 Rbc8 29.Rfc1 Rxc5 30.Rxc5 Diagram

(Diagram)

-Black has a better and "healthier" pawn structure. (2 points)

-Be6, and Ng6 are clearly superior to white's minor pieces which are hampered on their own camp. (2 points)

-Due to b2, g5 weaknesses (the principle of two



weaknesses) Black is winning if he manages to trade the rooks and the queen (2 points).

TO DO LIST

-Exchange the major pieces along the "c"-file (1 point).

-If White avoids the Queen trade, take control on "c"-file by Nd7 (a4) and Qc5 (2 points).

-Grab the g5 pawn which can be attacked twice with Kg6 and Nh7 (2 points).

-Use c2 square to penetrate White's position (1 point).

Rc8 31.Qc1 Qd8 32.Rc6 Ne7

Using the pin along "c"-file.

33.Rc5 Kg7 34.Bf1 Kg6 35.Be2 Qd6

36.Rxc8 Nxc8 37.Nd1 Nb6 38.Nf2 Na4

39.Bd1 Qc5 40.Qd2 Nb6 41.Nh1 Nd7

42.Kf1 Nf8 43.Nf2 Nh7 44.Kg2 Nxc5

Black plan is fulfilled. The game is over.

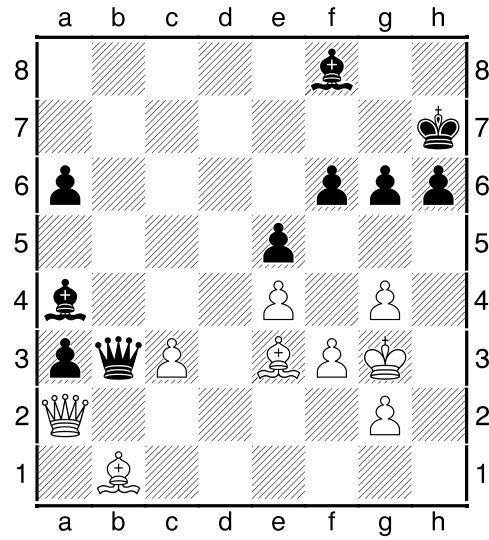
45.Nh1 Nf3 46.Qf2 Qc1 47.Bxf3 gxf3+

48.Qxf3 Qxb2+ 49.Nf2 Qxa3 50.g4

[50.g4 h4 51.g5 Qe7]

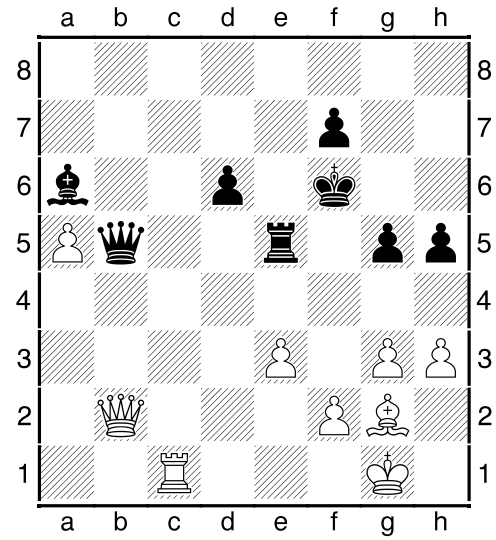
0-1

Problem 1



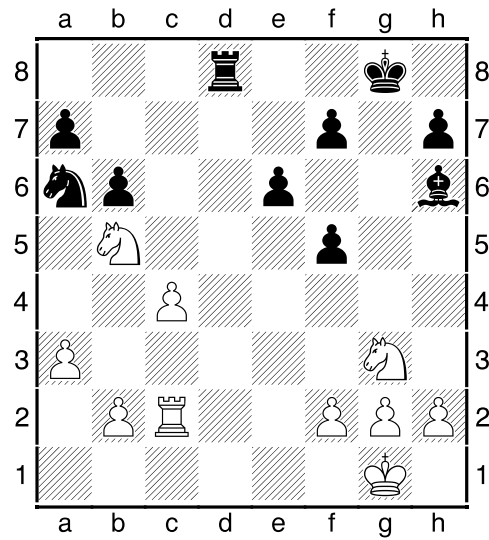
Black is to move.
Evaluate and give the “TO DO” list.

Problem 2



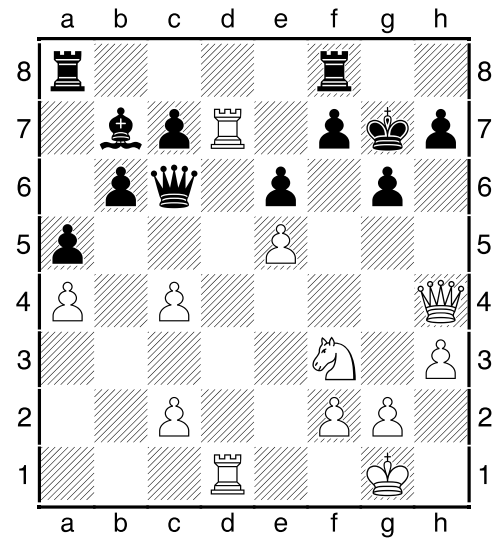
White is to move.
Evaluate and give the “TO DO” list.

Problem 3



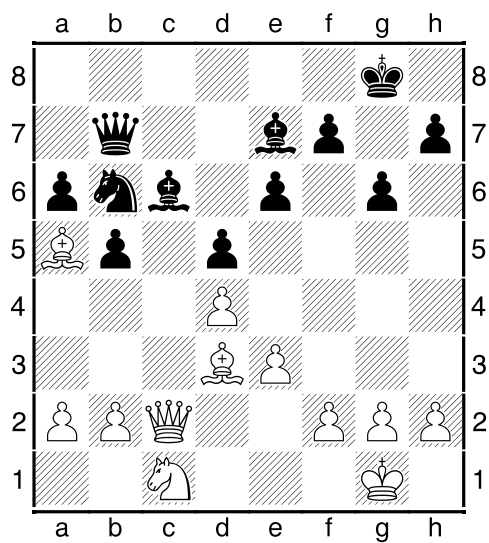
White is to move.
Evaluate and give the “TO DO” list.

Problem 4

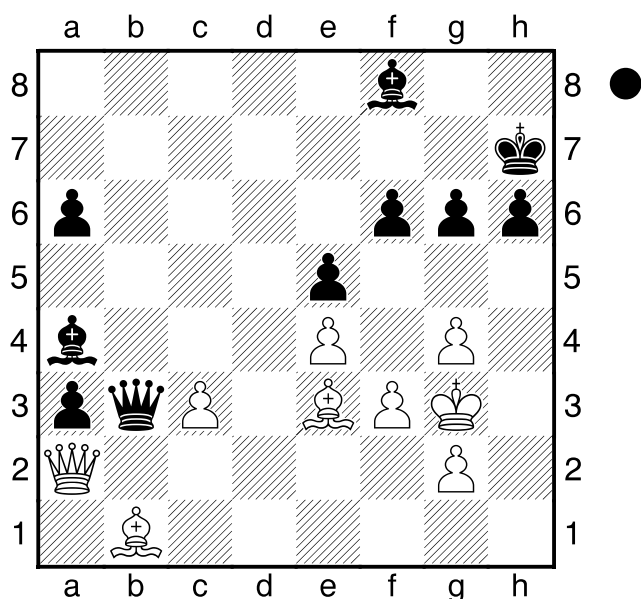


White is to move.
Evaluate and give the “TO DO” list.

Problem 5



White is to move. (Black's last move was Nd7-b6)
Evaluate and give the "TO DO" list.



In order to create the TO DO LIST we first have to evaluate the position.

Black has a large advantage due to the free pawns from the "a" file. To promote one of the two doubled pawns is not an easy task because both sides have pair of bishops which add a supplementary balance to the position. Both kings are exposed (when the queens are still on the board).

TO DO LIST:

- advance a6-a5
- trade the queens
- build a "ladder" with pawns and bishop in order to clear the path to promotion Bc2, a5-a4, Bc2-b3 and the second "stair" a3-a2, Bf8-a3-c1, a4-a3, Bc1-a2
- because White has a free pawn on c3, Black's king should control it (square rule)
- avoid neither interferences nor other moves which leads to a lack of cooperation if the queens are still on the board and the king can be the subject of a direct attack.

The game continued:

47...Kg7?

Black missed White's next queen move (the piece with the longest rays of action) which creates counterplay and played an important

psychological factor in the game.

After:

[47...Be7 controlling the entrance squares from the Black's camp. 48.Bc1 Kg7 49.Qxb3 Bxb3 50.Bd3 a2 51.Bb2 a5 52.Kf2 Ba3 53.Ba1 Kf7 54.Ke2 Bc1 55.Ba6 a4 56.Kd3 a3 57.Bc4+ Bxc4+ 58.Kxc4 Bb2 or]

[47...a5 48.Bc1 Qxa2 49.Bxa2 Bc5 50.Bd5 Bc2 51.f4 a4 52.Kf3 Bd1+ 53.Kg3 Bb3 54.Kf3 a2 55.Bb2 Ba3 56.Ba1 exf4 57.Kxf4 Bc1+ 58.Kf3 Kg7 following the square rule 59.Ke2 Bxd5 60.exd5 a3 61.Kd3 Bb2 Black is winning]

48.Qd2! threatening Bxh6+, Qd8 and Ba2 g5

[48...Qxb1 49.Bxh6+ Kg8 50.Qd5+ Kh8 51.Bxf8 Qc1=]

49.Ba2 Qb7 50.Qd3 Be8 with idea Bf7

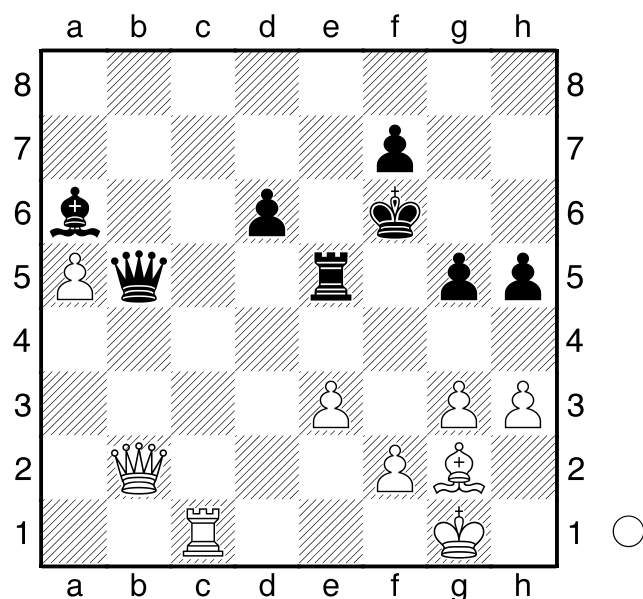
[50...Bb3?? 51.Qb1+-]

51.Qd5 Qxd5 52.exd5 a5 53.c4 Bb4 54.c5 Kf8 55.Kf2 Bb5 56.c6 Ke7 57.Ba7 Kd8 58.Bb6+ Kc8? 59.Ke3 a4?? 60.Ke4 Be2 61.Kf5 e4 62.Ke6 exf3 63.d6 Bxd6 64.Kxd6 Kb8 65.Be6 Bc4 66.c7+ Kb7 67.c8Q+ 1-0

(Diagram)

White is a pawn up and we will consider this when we create TO DO LIST:

- trade the queens and the bishop from a6 which stops the free pawn
- threatening to promote the pawn will force the black rook to take a passive position on a6
- approach the king in order to create piece superiority on the queenside
- avoid massive pawn trades or a Black's free pawn on the kingside
- if it's the case, give up the a6 pawn reaching a won pawn-endgame.



39.Qxb5 Rxb5

[39...Bxb5 40.Bb7! and the a-pawn is free to advance]

40.Ra1 Rc5 41.Bf1 Rc6

[41...Bb7 42.a6 Ba8 43.Bg2+-]

42.Bxa6 Rxa6 43.Kf1 Ke5 44.Ke2 f5

Black is threatening by f5-f4 to trade two pairs of pawns or to create pawn weaknesses on g3 and e3, so white must remember TO DO LIST!

45.f4+ gxf4 46.gxf4+

White stabilized the pawn structure on the king side (trading just one pawn) and the base of the pawn chain e3 can be defended with Ra3.

Kd5

[46...Ke4 47.Rd1 Rxa5 48.Rd4#]

47.Kd3 h4 48.Ra3! Kc5 49.Kc3 Kd5

[49...Kb5 50.Kd4! Kb4 51.Ra1+- Rxa5 52.Rxa5 Kxa5 53.Kd5 and White wins (53.e4 is also good)]

50.Kb4 Ra8 51.a6 Ke4 52.Kb5 d5

[52...Kf3 53.Kb6 Kg2 54.a7]

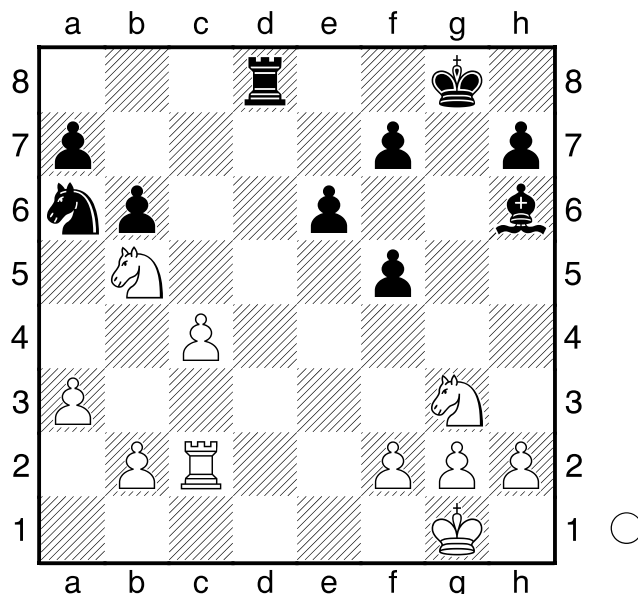
53.Kb6 d4 54.exd4 Kxf4 55.a7 Ke4 56.Kb7 Rxa7+ 57.Rxa7 f4 58.Kc6

[58.Kc6 Kxd4 59.Rh7 Ke3 60.Rxh4 f3 61.Rh8 f2 62.Rf8+-]

1-0

Minasian, Artashes
Dreev, Alexey
URS-ch58 Moscow
[solution]

2510
2610
1991



White has a small edge due to:

- queen side pawn majority (where White can create a free pawn)
- better pawn structure (no obvious weaknesses, while Black has a7 and f7)
- Nb5>Na6.

TO DO LIST:

- restrict black pieces activity with b2-b4 (Na6) and g2-g3, f2-f4 (Bh6)
- ...and, at the same time, fixing black weak pawns on f7, e6, f5
- keep Black's rook passive on the 7th rank to protect a7
- improve knights' positions, trying to reach the ideal foreposts d6 and e5

23.b4!

RESTRICT FIRST, GRAB LATER

[23.Nxa7 Nc5

Suddenly, all Black's pieces became very active; the counterplay is based on the first rank weakness: Rd8-d1, Nc5-d3 and Bh6-c1.]

23...Rd1+ 24.Nf1 Rd7 25.g3

Followed by f2-f4 restricting Bh6 for good.

Kf8

[25...f4 26.g4!

Followed by f2-f3 and Kg1-f2 and Bh6 is out of play either.]

26.f4 Ke7 27.Rd2! Rb7

[27...Rxd2 28.Nxd2 e5 29.Nxa7 Kd7
30.Nb3 exf4 31.b5 Nc7 32.c5 bxc5
33.Nxc5+ Kd6 34.b6!]

28.Ne3 Bg7 29.Kf2 Nc7 30.Nd6 Rb8

31.Nxf7! a5

[31...Kxf7 32.Rd7+]

32.b5

Fixing the weakness on b6 and avoiding pawn trades (as in the previous example, the player in advantage should avoid pawn trades in the endgame).

Nxb5 33.cxb5 Kxf7 34.Rd7+ Kf6 35.Nc4

Bf8 36.Ne5 Bc5+ 37.Kf3

1-0

□ **Short, Nigel D**

2660

■ **Timman, Jan H**

2630

Tilburg

1991

[solution]

(Diagram)

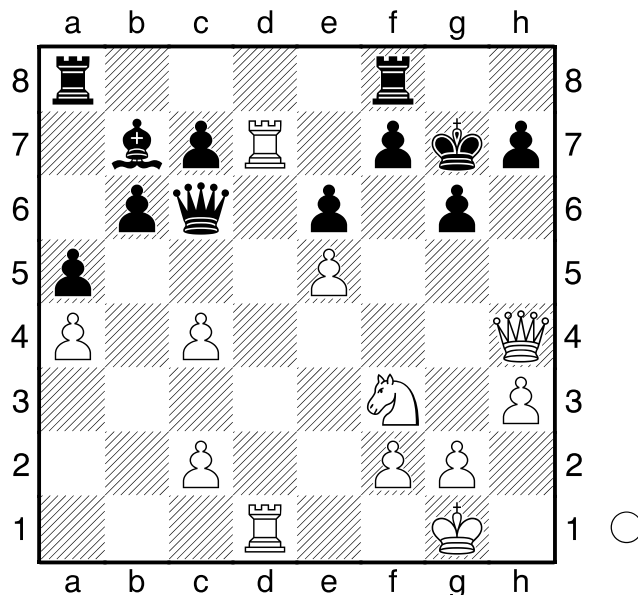
White has just exchanged the dark-square bishops creating a weak square complex around the black king. White is also dominating "d" file and the 7-th rank but for a win, TO DO LIST is necessary:

- emerge with Rd1 on the 4-th rank defending c4 and e4 (releasing the queen from defending it and avoiding queen-trade) which also creates a piece superiority on the king side
- force Black to push the h7 pawn, leaving g6 weak
- defend g2 in order to bring Nf3 in attack
- threat to double the rooks on the seventh rank

28.R1d4 Rae8 29.Qf6+

According to our TO DO LIST, even better was

:



[29.Qg5

Threatening Rd4-h4 and keeping the queen flexible (Qg5-f6 or Qg5-h6)

h6 30.Qf6+ Kg8 31.Nh4

The threat is f2-f3 (defending g2) followed by Nxg6.

h5 32.f3 Qc5 33.Nxg6+-]

29...Kg8 30.h4 h5

Forced. White managed to determine new weaknesses on the king side.

A brilliant idea occurred to create piece superiority: White brings the monarch into the battle!

31.Kh2 Rc8

[31...Bc8 32.Re7 Bb7 33.Kg3 Rxe7
34.Qxe7 Kg7 35.Kf4 Qxa4 36.Ng5 Qc6
37.Qf6+ Kg8 38.Nxf7 Kh7 39.Ke3 Qe8
40.Ng5+ Kg8 41.Rd8+-]

32.Kg3 Rce8 33.Kf4 Bc8 34.Kg5

[34.Kg5 Bxd7 35.Kh6]

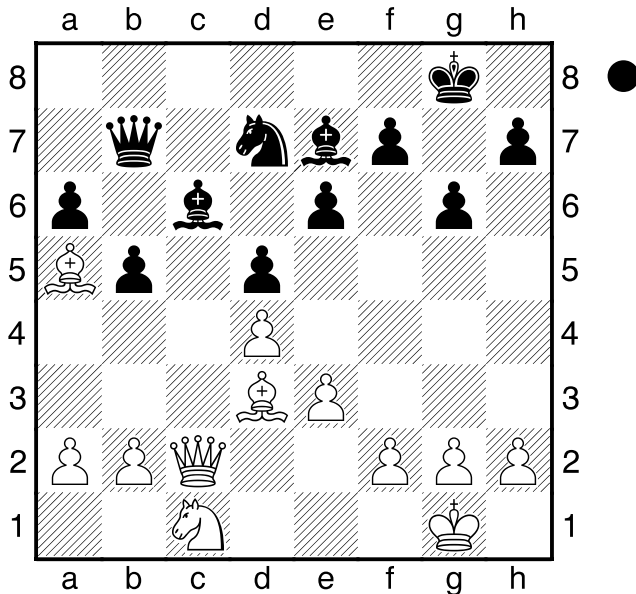
1-0

□ Petre,N
 ■ Zhadko,V

Deva

[solution]

1998



21...Nb6

Which are the CQS of Black's last move?

Black is threatening Nb6-c4 and b5-b4 to trap the Ba5. Is this a real threat? The answer is no, because a6 and b4 will be weak and the bishop can escape after b5-b4 and Qb7-b5 on c7 or d8 (depending where the black dark-square bishop will be).

TO DO LIST:

- push b2-b3 to stop Nb6-c4
- allure Black to push b5-b4 in order to make the queen side pawns, a6 and b4, vulnerable
- prepare Nc1-d3 to take under control the dark squares b4 and c5
- trade the dark square bishops
- besides a6 and c-file, White must create a new weakness in Black's camp

The game continued:

22.b3 Nc8 23.Bf1 Bd6

[23...b4 24.Nd3]

24.Nd3 Ne7 25.Bb4 Bxb4 26.Nxb4 a5

27.Nxc6 Qxc6 28.Qxc6 Nxc6 29.Bxb5 Nb4

30.a3 Nc2

White is trapping the knight and preparing a second weakness on the king side:

31.Bd3 Nxa3 32.h4 f6 33.g4 e5 34.f3 Kf7 35.g5 Ke6 36.gxf6 Kxf6 37.Kf2 exd4 38.exd4 Ke6 39.Ke3 Kd6 40.Kf4 h6 41.Kg4!

[41.Bxg6? Nb5 42.Ke3 Ke7 43.Bd3 Nc7 44.Bf5 Nb5 45.Kd3 Nd6 46.Bh7 Kf7 47.Ke3 Nb5 48.Bd3 Nc7 49.f4 Ne8 50.Bb5 Nd6 51.Bd7 Ke7 52.Bh3 Kf6 53.Kf3 h5=]
41...Ke6 42.f4 Kf6 43.h5 gxh5+ 44.Kxh5 Kg7 45.f5 a4 46.bxa4 Nc4 47.Bf1+- 1-0

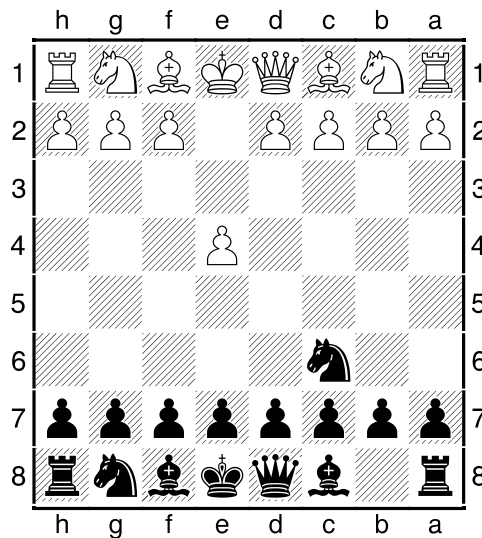
Consequences of the moves

Examples/Exercises

You already should know what the consequences of a move are (see theory “Think like a strong player”). Together with evaluating the opponent’s threats (and assessment if those threats are real or no) and with the “TO DO” list, the consequences (CQS) of a move are an element extremely important for complete and healthy chess thinking.

The theory is not enough without well annotated examples, so below are some instructive positions we are proposed for analysis. Good chess study means a lot of work FROM YOU, so please print this file and try first to solve on your own these positions. Then, when our solutions will come, they will be much more instructive and easier to understand.

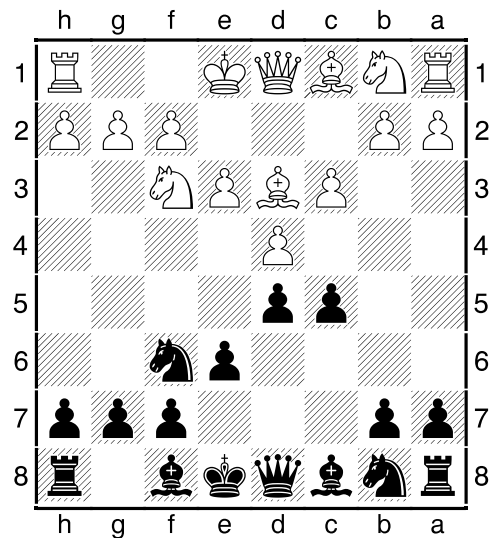
Problem 1



Which are CQS of the move 2.c4?
Which are CQS of the move 2.Bc4?

Is any of them good?

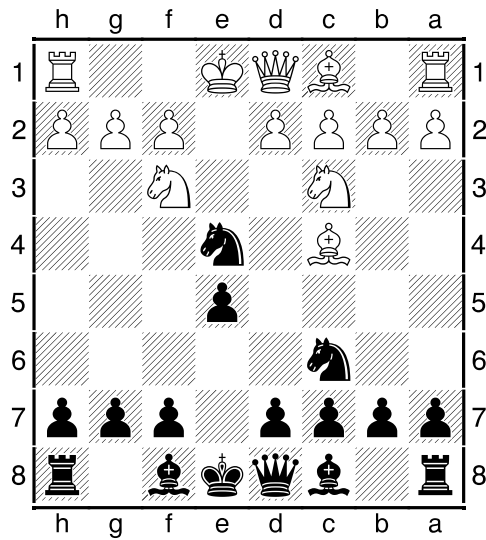
Problem 2



Which are CQS of the move 1...Nbd7?
Which are CQS of the move 1...Nc6?

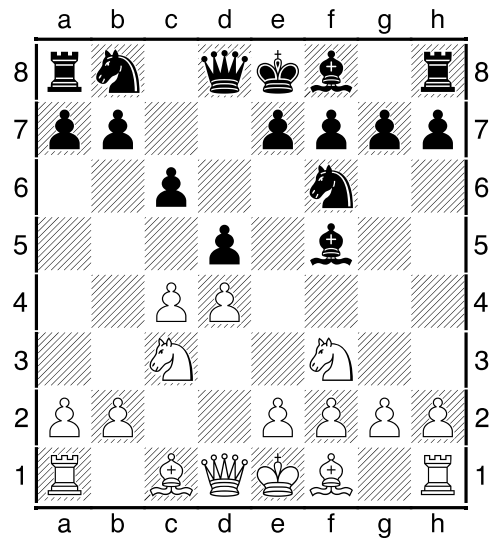
Which of these 2 moves do you prefer?

Problem 3



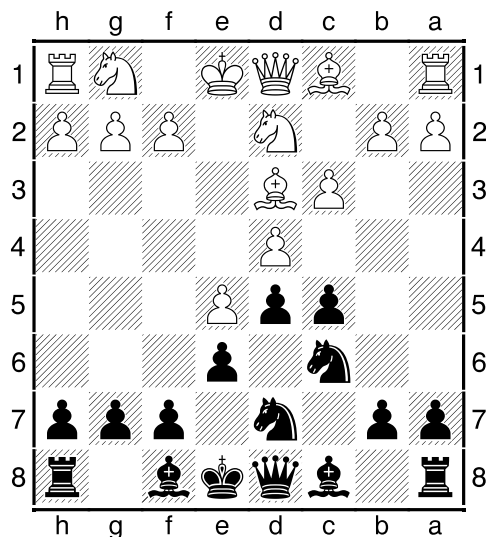
White is to move.
Which are CQS of 1.Nxe4?
Which are CQS of 1.Bxf7+
Compare the 2 moves giving variations.

Problem 4



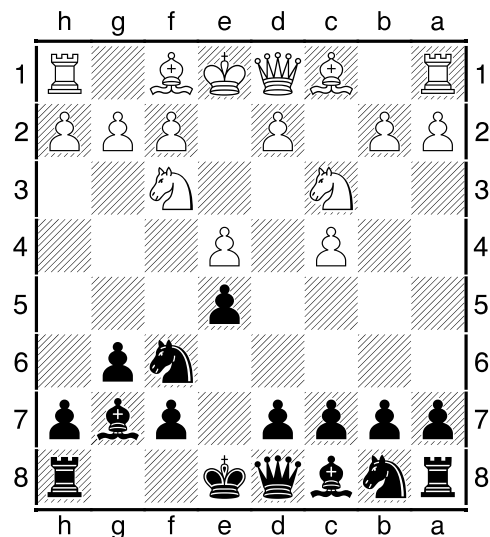
Black's last move was Bc8-f5.
Which are the CQS of this move?
Find the best way to continue with White.

Problem 5



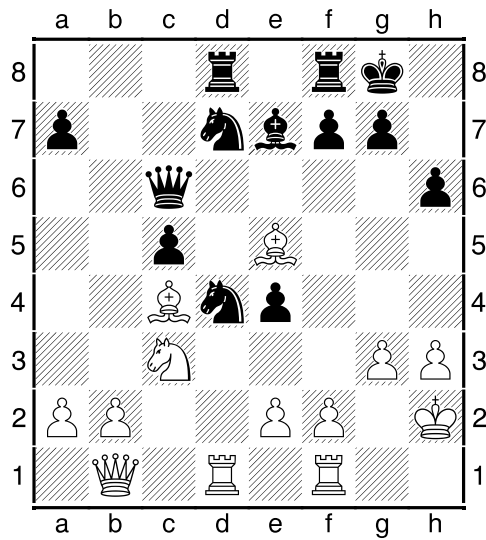
Evaluate the CQS of 7.Ngf3 and 7.Ne2.
What would you choose? Explain your choice.

Problem 6



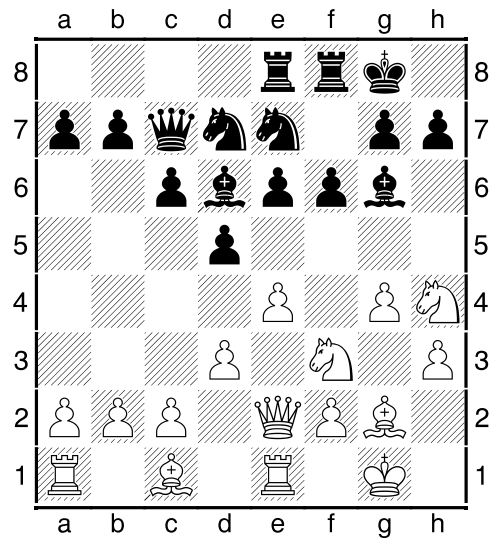
Black's last move was 1...e7-e5. He wanted to save a tempo without the support of d7-d6. Which are the consequences of his move? Give variations

Problem 7



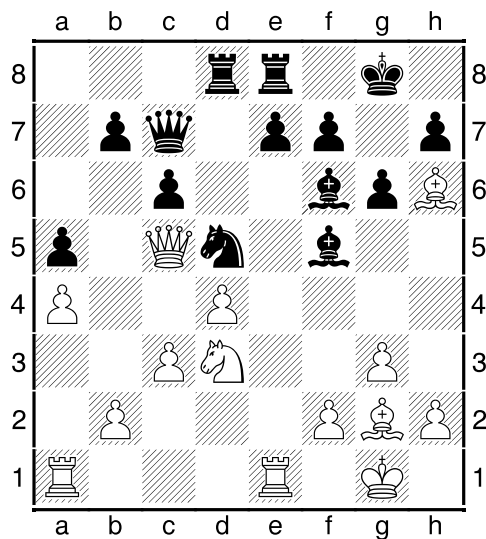
Black's last move was 1...Nf6-d7
Evaluate Black's move CQS and use them to find the best way to gain a pawn.

Problem 8



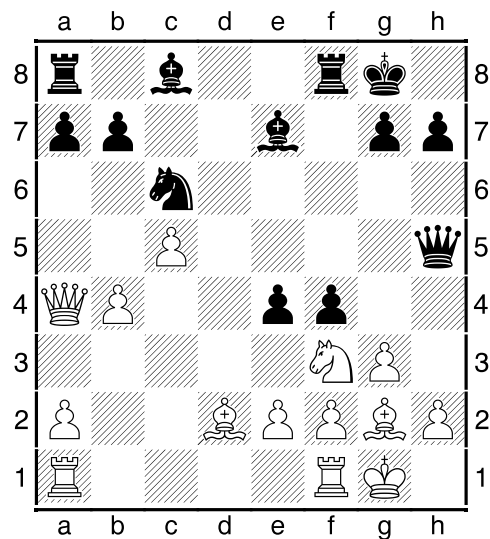
Black's last move was 1...f7-f6.
Evaluate Black's move CQS, write TO DO LIST for White and give concrete variations!

Problem 9



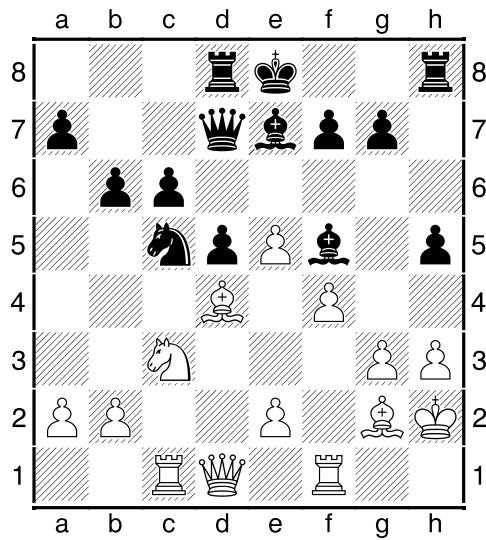
Black's last move was 1...Be6-f5.
Evaluate Black's move CQS and find the best way to continue!

Problem 10



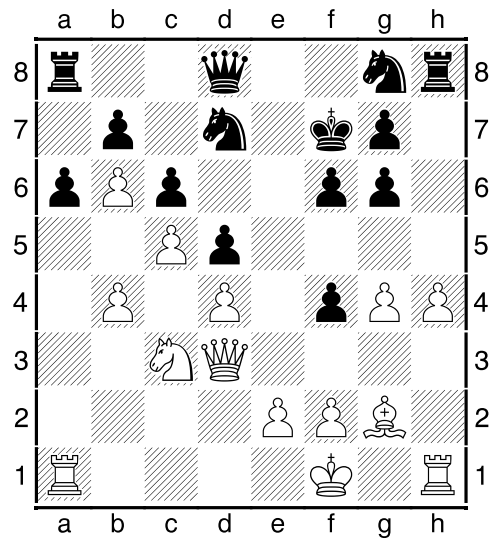
Black's last move was 1...e5-e4
Evaluate Black's move CQS and find the best way to get out of the pressure!

Problem 11



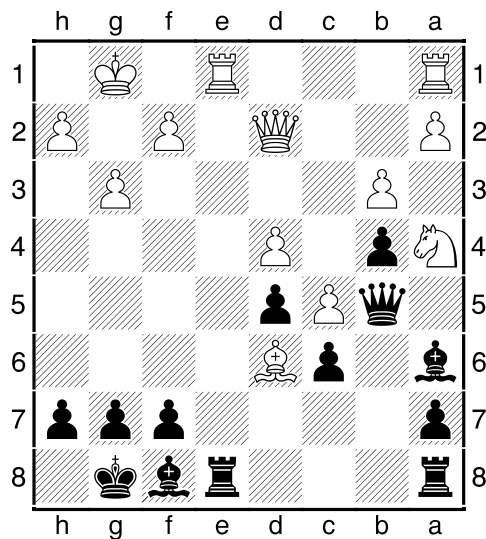
Black's last move was 1...b7-b6.
Evaluate Black's move CQS and find the best way to continue!

Problem 12



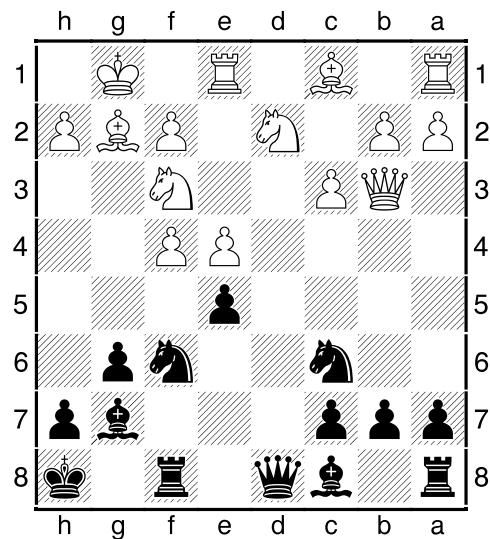
Black's last move was 1...Ne7-g8.
Evaluate the CQS of this move and find how White can exploit them.

Problem 13



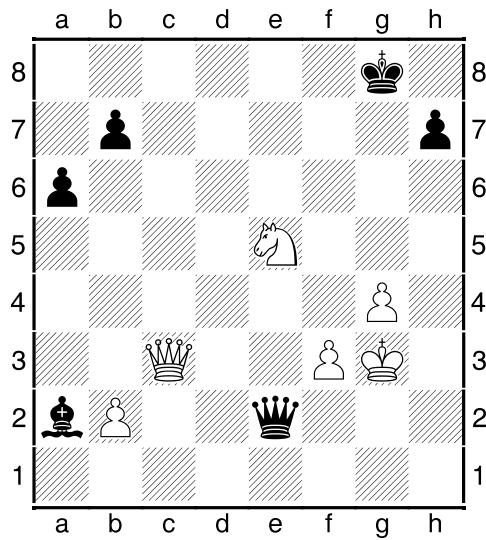
White's last move was 1.Be5-d6.
Evaluate White's move CQS and give concrete variations for Black.

Problem 14



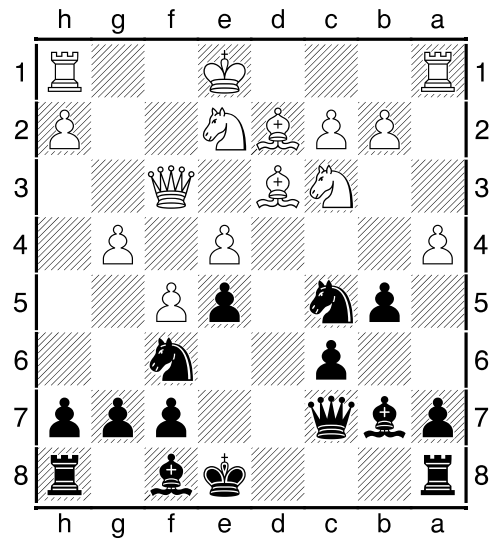
White's last move was: 1.g3xf4
Evaluate White's move CQS and find the best way to continue for Black.

Problem 15



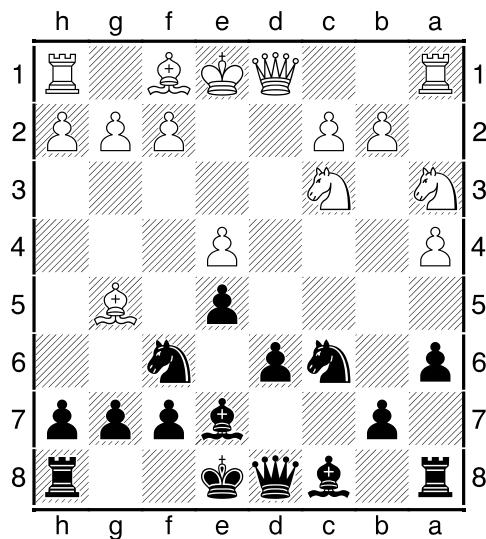
Black's last move was 1...Bxa2.
Evaluate Black's move CQS.
What should White do next?

Problem 16



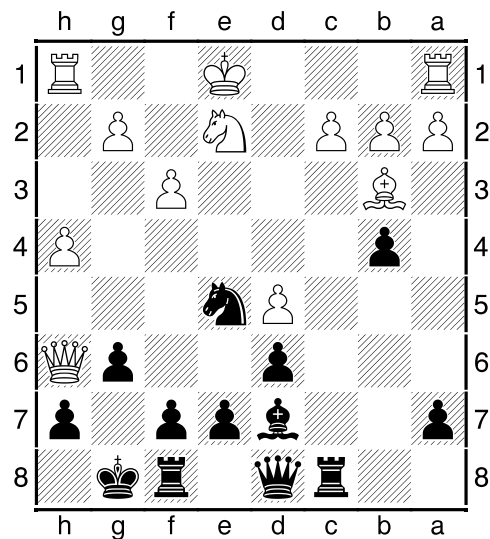
White's last move was 1.a2-a4.
1.g5 was better. Can you tell why by using
CQS and variations for both moves?

Problem 17



Evaluate the CQS of 1...Nf6xe4. Give
variations.
Discover other candidate-moves for Black.

Problem 18



Evaluate 16....a5 17.h5 consequences and
establish if 16...a5 is playable!

Problem 1*[solution]***1.e4 Nc6 2.Nf3**

[2.c4

CQS:

- blocks the f1-bishop's diagonal
- interdicts d7-d5 as Black wanted for the next move
- it's a second pawn move in the opening which doesn't really fight for the centre and c2-c3 is no more possible (while Black can still play c7-c6 to control the d5-square)

Black will take now the control over the d4-square: e5 3.Nf3 Bc5]

[2.Bc4

CQS:

- develops a piece from the kingside
- interdicts d7-d5 as Black wanted for the next move

- tells about the position of the bishop

Black will use the last consequence of White's move to gain a tempo: e6! 3.Nf3 d5 4.exd5 exd5

None of the White's moves is good.]

Problem 2*[solution]*

(Diagram)

5...Nc6

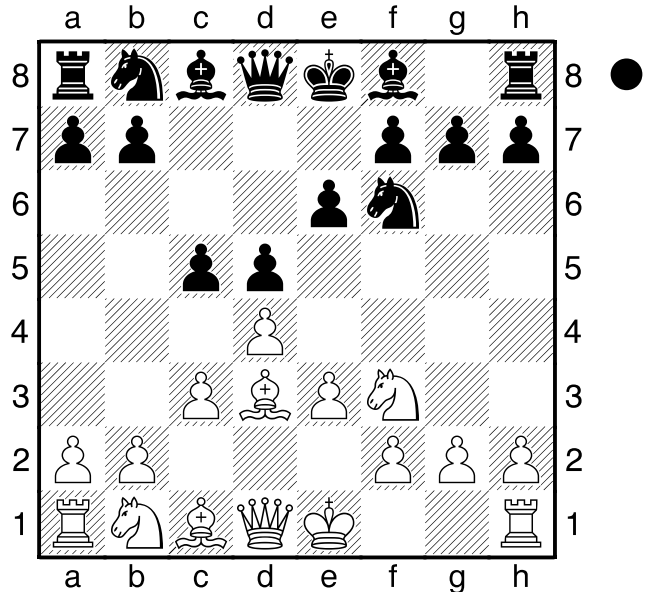
CQS of Nc6:

- develops the knight
- fights for the central square e5
- after c5xd4, c3xd4, Black can play Nc6-b4 which can be unpleasant for White in some variations of the Colle System

[5...Nbd7

CQS of 5...Nbd7

- develops the knight
- fights for the central square e5
- blocks the c8-bishop
- blocks the d-file, limiting Black's queen mobility.



Better is Nc6 because it doesn't block the c8-bishop's diagonal.

Black's plan is to play Qc7 and e6-e5 which will open the light-square bishop.

]

Problem 3*[solution]*

(Diagram)

In order to see the CQS of each move, we have to calculate some moves more until Black is getting his piece back.

5.Nxe4

[5.Bxf7+?

This move which wants to destroy the Black's king protection and right of castle is no good.

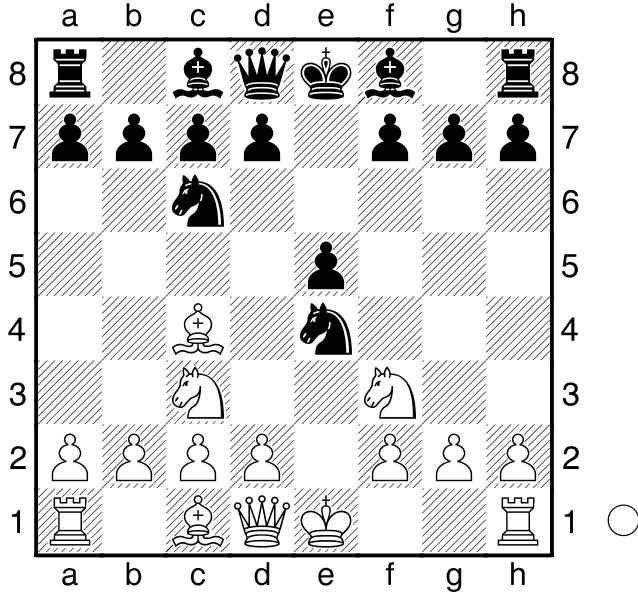
Let's see why:

Kxf7 6.Nxe4 d5

CQS:

- Black has the central control (e5 + d5 pawns)
- Black has the bishop-pair and both bishops are active

It seems that the control over the centre is



more important sometimes that the right of castle.

The game continued:

7.Neg5+ Kg8 8.d4 h6 9.Nh3 Bxh3 10.gxh3 e4 and Black has the advantage.]

5...d5 6.Bd3 dxe4 7.Bxe4

CQS:

- The position is balanced and still unclear
- Black has no more opening problems as both his bishops have free diagonals

Problem 4

[solution]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 Bf5

CQS:

- develops the bishop on h7-b1 diagonal
- developing the queenside, Black is losing a tempo from developing the kingside (e7-e6)
- the b7-pawn is no more protected (and White can use this by playing Qb3)
- after e7-e6, the light-square bishop cannot go back to defend the light-squares from the queenside

Evaluating these consequences, White should start immediately to attack the new created weaknesses by:

5.cxd5 cxd5 6.Qb3

and Black cannot defend in a reasonable way. For example:

Qb6

[6...b6? 7.e4! opening the light-square bishop with tempo dxe4 8.Ne5 attacking f7 and c6 e6 9.Bb5+ Nfd7 10.g4 Bg6 11.h4 threatening h4-h5]
[6...Qd7 7.Ne5]

7.Nxd5

[7.Qxb6 axb6 is also good]

7...Nxd5 8.Qxd5 and White is a pawn up.

Problem 5

[solution]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7

5.Bd3 c5 6.c3 Nc6 7.Ne2

[7.Ngf3

CSQ:

- With this natural development move, White controls, besides d4, the important squares e5 and g5
- White's main ideas are to restrict Bc8 activity and to use the space advantage for an attack on the king side
- Nd2-f3 is no longer possible, but White is prepared to sacrifice a pawn on d4 and replace Nf3 with Nd2
- Otherwise Nd2 will be developed on b3 with tempo after dxc5

Qb6 (7...Be7 8.0-0 a5 9.Re1 cxd4

10.cxd4 Qb6) 8.0-0 cxd4 9.cxd4 Nxd4

10.Nxd4 Qxd4 11.Nf3 Qb6

We deal with a static pawn structure in the center, when a wing attack is possible and Black's king has trouble to castle.]

[

7.Ne2

CSQ:

- White defends d4 (which will be the base of the pawn chain)
- Let the square f3 empty for a future Nd2-f3
- The "f" pawn has the possibility to advance

D13

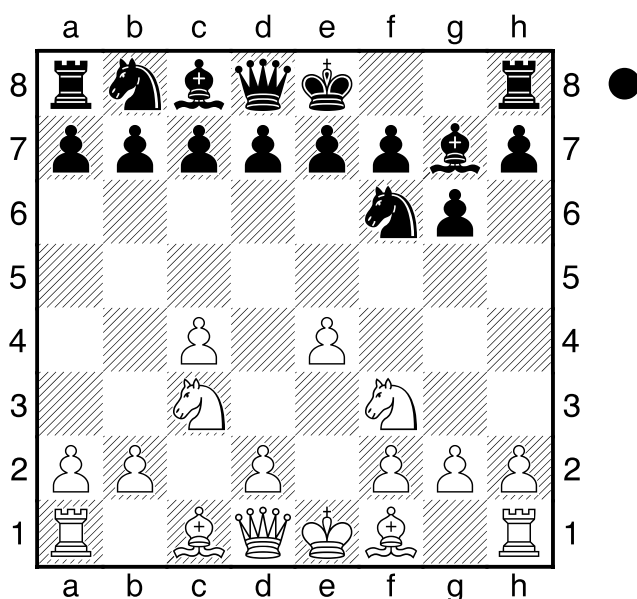
- The pawn e5 will be vulnerable and Black can attack it with the typical breakthrough f7-f6.

cx d4 (7...f6!?) 8.cxd4 Qb6 9.Nf3 Bb4+ 10.Kf1

White will castle by hand: g2-g3, Kf1-g2 and try to preserve his space advantage and to restrict the mobility of Black's minor pieces. Black will undermine the center with f7-f6 and the battle will take place along the e- and f-files.]

Problem 6

[solution]



4...e5

With his last move Black took d4 under control and wanted to save a tempo (d7-d6) hoping for the line :

[4...e5 5.d4 exd4 6.Nxd4 0-0 7.Be2 Re8 8.f3 c6 9.0-0 d5

Where Black (after the central temathical blow d5) has serious counterplay on h8-a1 and a7-g1 diagonals.]

5.Nxe5 Nxe4

[5...Qe7 6.d4 d6 7.Nf3 Nxe4 8.Nd5]

6.Nxe4 Bxe5 7.d4 Bg7 8.Bg5

CSQ:

- The pawn sacrifice was unsound because

Black lost too much time to get it back

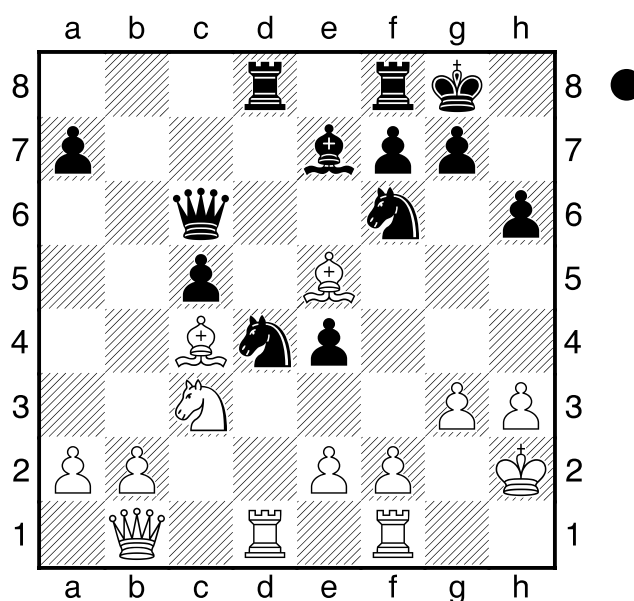
- Black missed that after: 5...Qe7 6.d4 d6 7.Nf3 Ne4 the black queen will be exposed to 8.Nd5

- White will have a powerful phalanx d4, c4 and Black will have lack of space

- Black trades his "defender" Nf6 for Nc3 which leads to a weak kingside after f7-f6

Problem 7

[solution]



22...Nd7

White was threatening to gain a pawn by Nxf6 and Nxe4. With the text move, Black tries to keep the central pawn e4 alive with the following CQS:

- gives up the control over d5
- interferes the knight between Rd8 and Nd4 which loses a pawn
- Be7 will be vulnerable from d5 and besides the pawn loss, Black will be forced to trade two pairs of minor pieces which leads to a "bishop versus knight" position (with pawns on both wings).

The game continued:

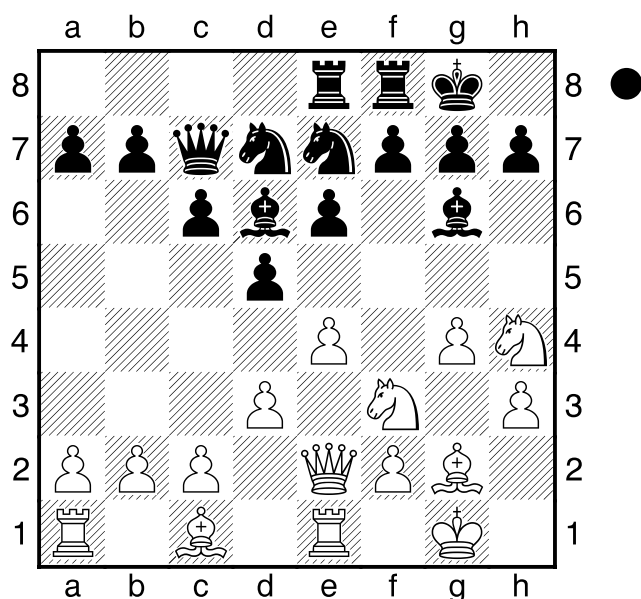
23.Nd5!

using immediately the new weakness from Black's camp.

Rfe8 24.Bxd4 cxd4 25.Nxe7+ Rxe7
 26.Rxd4 Rde8 27.Rfd1 Nf6 28.b4 Qc7
 29.Qc1 Qb8 30.Qe3 h5 31.b5 h4 32.Qg5
 hxc3+ 33.Qxg3 Re5 34.Kh1 Kf8 35.a4 Qb6
 36.Qa3+ Kg8 37.Qd6 Qa5 38.Rg1 Rh5
 39.Kh2 Qc3 40.e3 Rh6 41.Qc7 Kh8 42.Qxf7
 Rg8 43.Rxe4 Qd2 44.Rf4 Qd6 45.Rg3
 1-0

Problem 8

[solution]



13...f6

The text move is not necessary bad, but its CQS are very important for the rest of the game:

- the point e6 remains unprotected (which make cxd5 unplayable after 14.exd5)
- Ne7 will be overloaded with the defenses of d5 and g6 (another weakened square by the text move)
- Black will be exposed on the e-file to a queen for two rooks exchange in the variation 14.exd5 exd5 15.Nxg6 Nxg6 16.Qxe8

TO DO LIST:

- use the e6 weakness
- trade Bg6 in order to gain the pair of bishops and to brake the pawn structure in front of the black king

- launch an attack on the king side especially on the light squares (weakened after f7-f6)

14.exd5 Nxd5

[14...exd5 15.Nxg6 Nxg6 16.Qxe8 Rxe8 17.Rxe8+∞ White has two rooks for the queen and controls the "e" file.]

15.Nxg6 hxc3 16.d4 Bf4 17.c4 N5b6
 18.Nh4 Bxc1 19.Raxc1 Kh7 20.Qd2 Rf7
 21.f4 Rfe7 22.Qf2 Nf8 23.Be4 White is still using the CQS of the move f7-f6! f5 24.Bb1 Nbd7 25.d5 exd5 26.Rxe7 Rxe7 27.gxf5 Nf6 28.fxc6+ Kg8 29.Nf5 Re8 30.c5 Re6 31.Nd4 Re8 32.b4 Ne6 33.Nxe6 Rxe6 34.Bf5 Re7 35.Kh1 Qd8 36.Re1 Qe8 37.Rxe7 Qxe7 38.Kg1 Kf8 39.Kf1 Ne4 40.Qe3 Qf6 41.Bxe4 dxe4 42.Qxe4 Qa1+ 43.Kg2 Qxa2+ 44.Kg3 Qb3+ 45.Kh4 Qb2 46.Kg4 Qa1 47.Kg5 a5 48.bxa5 Qg1+ 49.Kh5 Qxc5+ 50.Qe5 Qb5 51.Kg5 Qb3 52.Qb8+ Ke7 53.Qc7+ Ke8 54.Qf7+ Qxf7 55.gxf7+ Kxf7 56.Kf5 Ke7 57.Ke5 g6 58.f5 gxf5 59.Kxf5 Kd6 60.h4
 1-0

Problem 9

[solution]

(Diagram)

34...Bf5

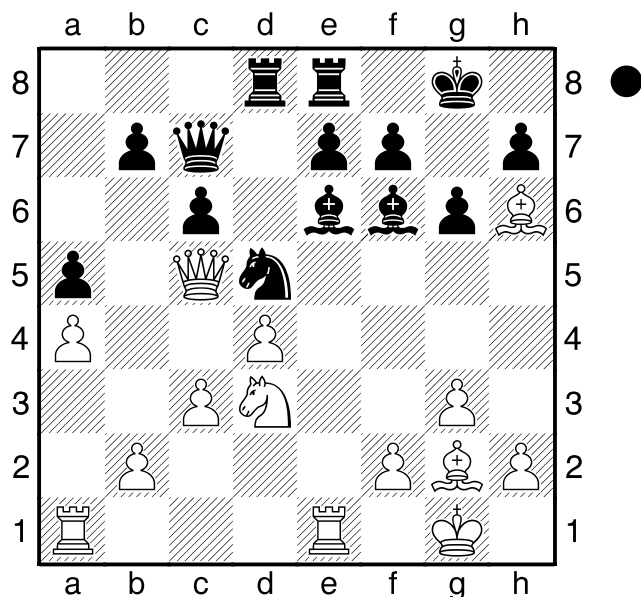
CQS:

- Black's last move didn't consider the dangerous white queen on the 5-th rank. After 34...b6 35. Qa3 Black was OK!
- The bishop move leaves Nd5 without one of the defenders (c6 is pinned)
- Nd5 is restricted even in the middle of the board and has just one square to go: b6
- The pawn a5 is exposed and Qc7 is exposed on the h2-b8 diagonal.

35.Nf4!

White exploits the CQS right away! The white knight attacks Nd5, while Nd5xf4 is no good.

Nb6



[35...Nxf4 36.Bxf4 Qc8 37.Qxa5±]
36.Qxa5 e5 37.dxe5 Rxe5 38.Rxe5 Bxe5
39.Re1 f6 40.h4 Bd6 41.Bf1 Kf7 42.Qxb6
Qxb6 43.Bc4+ Be6 44.Rxe6 Bxf4 45.Rxc6+
Ke7 46.Rxb6 Bxh6 47.Rxb7+ Rd7 48.Rxd7+
Kxd7 49.Bg8 Bc1 50.Bxh7 Bxb2 51.Bxg6
Bxc3 52.Bf5+ Ke7 53.Kg2 Kf7 54.Kf3 Kg7
55.g4
1-0

Problem 10

[solution]

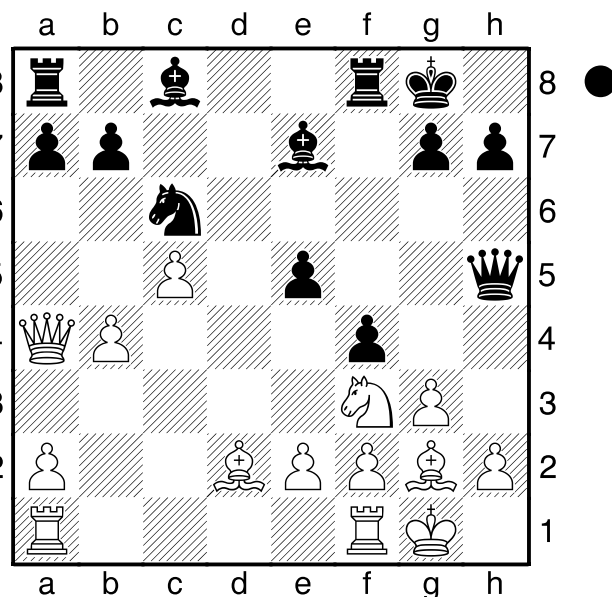
(Diagram)

14...e4

CQS:

- Black attacked the most important defender of White's castle
- White's queen seems outside the play
- If Nf3 moves, then the correspondent black knight from c6 can jump to d4 or e5
- At first sight, White cannot counter attack one of the Black's minor pieces because exf3 is a tempo move

[14...e4 15.Ne1 Nd4 16.gxf4 Rf6
 With a terrible attack.]



15.b5!

If you realized that Nf3 can not move and after 15... exf3 16. Bxf3 gains the tempo back it's all right.

exf3 16.Bxf3 Bg4 17.Bxg4 Qxg4 18.bxc6
Qxe2 19.cxb7 Rab8 20.Rae1 Qxd2 21.Rxe7
f3 22.c6 Qd6 23.Qe4
1-0

Problem 11

[solution]

(Diagram)

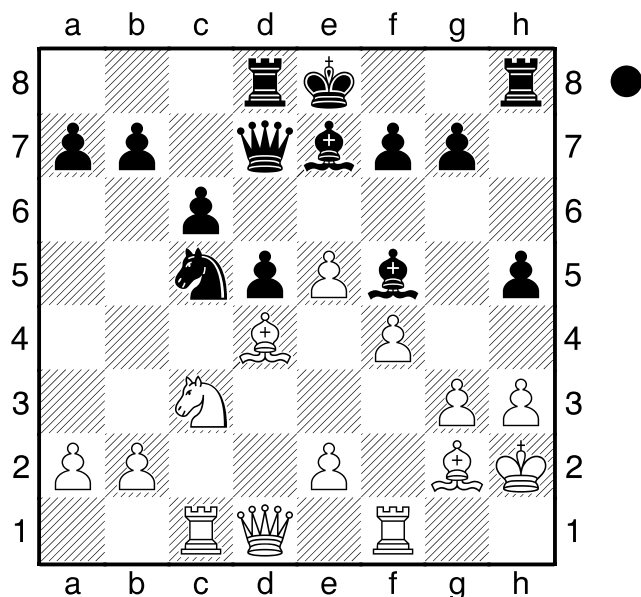
16...b6

White has a better control over the central squares and the space advantage. Black compensates this by a good control over e4 and some pressure on the white king (with the price of a weakness on h5).

CQS of b7-b6:

- allowing bxc5 Black loses the control over e4
- c6 will be weak because is exposed on the c-file, h1-a8 and a4-e8 diagonals
- after e2-e4, White gains complete control over the center and h5 will be vulnerable on d1-h5 diagonal.

[16...Ne4 17.Bxa7 Ra8 18.Bb6 Nxc3



19.Rxc3 Rxa2=]

The game continued:

17.Bxc5 Bxc5 18.e4!

Exploiting the CQS of b7-b6, White opens the diagonal of his bishop to attack on c6.

dx e4 19.Qa4 b5 20.Qb3 0-0 21.Nxe4 Bxe4 22.Bxe4 Bb6 23.Rfd1 Qe7 24.Rxc6 winning the pawn weakened by b6! **Rxd1 25.Qxd1 Qb4 26.Qe2 Rd8 27.Rc2 Qd4 28.h4 g6 29.Bg2 Qd7 30.Bc6 Qd4 31.e6 fxe6 32.Qxe6+ Kg7 33.Qe7+ Kh6 34.Re2 Qg1+ 35.Kh3 Qc5 36.Qg5+ Qxg5 37.hxg5+ Kg7 38.Re7+ Kg8 39.Re6 Kf7 40.Rf6+ Kg7 41.Be4 Bd4 42.Rxg6+ Kf7 43.Rc6 Bxb2 44.f5 Be5 45.Rc5 Bd6 46.Rxb5 Rb8 47.Bd5+ Kg7 48.Ra5 Kh8 49.Rxa7 h4 50.g6 1-0**

Problem 12

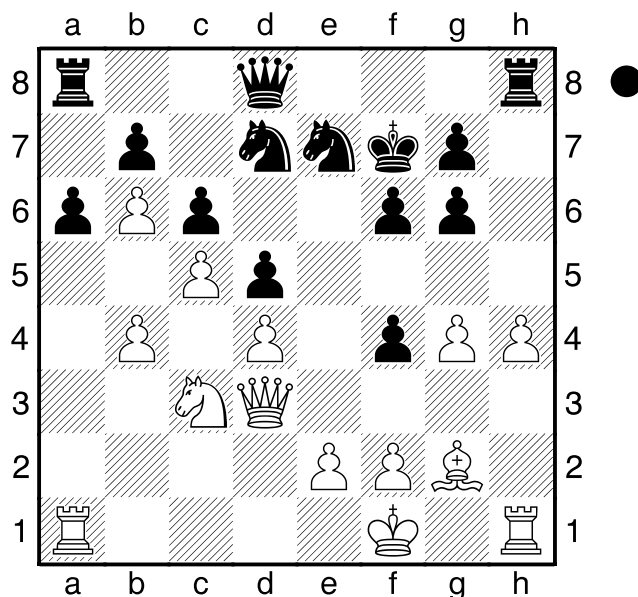
[solution]

(Diagram)

19...Ng8

Black wanted to improve the knight's position forgetting that Ne7 had defensive tasks.

As CQS:



- The d5-pawn becomes vulnerable, in addition with the exposed king from f7
- Allowing Nxd5 Black helped White to clear the path to promote his central pawns

20.Nxd5 cxd5 21.Bxd5+ Kf8 22.Bxb7 Rb8 23.Qxa6 Nh6 24.Bf3 f5 25.g5 Ng4 26.b7 Nxc5 27.dxc5 Qd4 28.Qd6+ Qxd6 29.cxd6 Ne5 30.Bd5 Ke8 31.Be6 Nf7 32.Ra8 1-0

Problem 13

[solution]

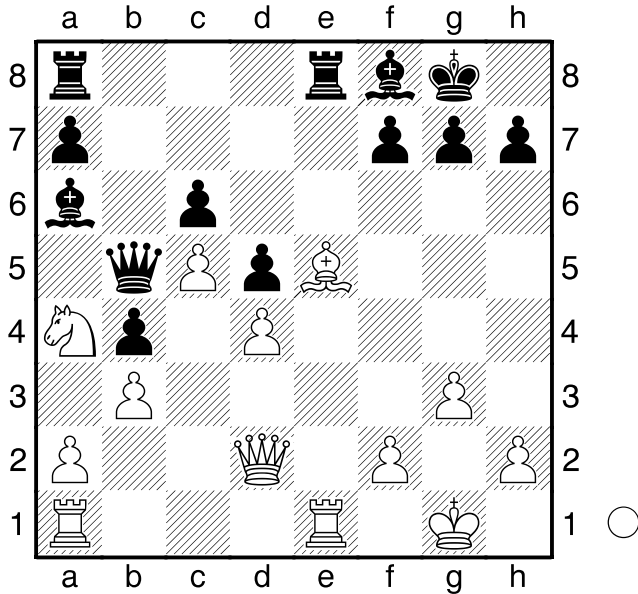
(Diagram)

23.Bd6

White has a complex of weak light squares after the trade of Bg2, but Qb5 and Ba6 are offside the play for the moment.

CQS of Bd6:

- The rooks trade will be possible along the e-file because of the first rank weakness (f1)
- White hoped for 23...Bxd6 which creates a strong passed pawn on d6 but Be5 was more active than his opponent from f8
- Allowing trades, White permits to the black queen to enter into the game
- Ba6 will be superior to the isolated knight from



a4 (the only minor pieces on the board)

[Better was:

23.Kg2 Be7 24.Nb2 f6 25.Bd6 Bf8
26.Re3=]

23...Rxe1+ 24.Rxe1 Re8! 25.Kg2

[Forced was 25.Nb2 to control the important square d3 in order to restrict Black's queen.]

25...Rxe1 26.Qxe1 Qd3 27.Qe5 Qd1 28.Kh3 Bc8+ 29.Kg2 Ba6 30.Kh3 Qf3 31.Qe8 Bf1+ 32.Kh4 Qf6+ 33.Kg4 h5+ 34.Kxh5 Qf5+ 35.Kh4 g5+ 36.Kh5 Qg6+ 37.Kg4 f5+ 38.Kf3 Qxe8 39.Be5 g4+ 40.Ke3 Bh6+ 0-1

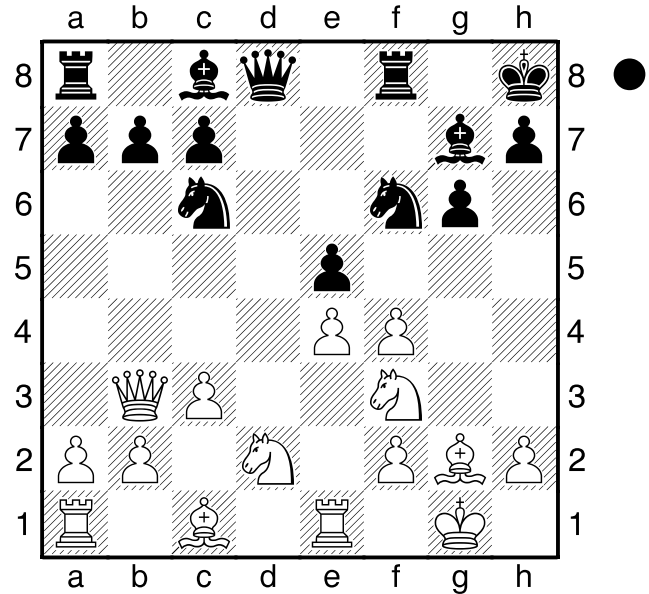
Problem 14

[solution]

(Diagram)

CQS of White's last move (12.g3xf4):

- White no longer controls f4 and h4 with a pawn which makes weak these squares
- The king side will be weak due the absence of the "g" pawn
- Bg2 the "defender" of the castle will be vulnerable to a knight attack from f4
- Black will have free hand along the "f" file



12...Nh5!

using immediately the CQS of White's last move

13.f5 Nf4 14.Nf1 Nxg2 15.Kxg2 gxf5 16.exf5 Bxf5 17.Bg5 Qd7 18.Ng1 Be6 19.Qb5 Bd5+ 20.f3 Rxf3 21.Nxf3 Qg4+ 0-1

Problem 15

[solution]

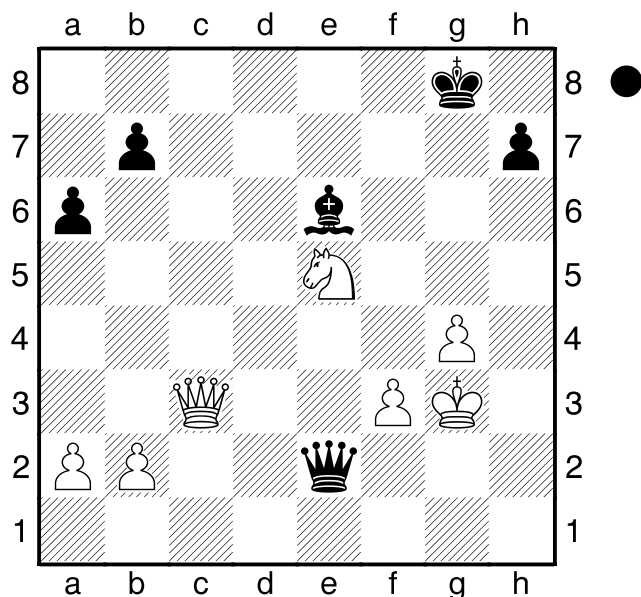
(Diagram)

48...Bxa2

The couple Q+N is extremely dangerous in attack (especially when the enemy king is exposed). If White can play Qf7, the mate will follow, so the CQS of Bxa2 are:

- Black's bishop will loose the control over f7 after 49.b3
- After 49.b3, both Black's pieces will be out of play trying to grab the b3 pawn, offering White the precious time to threaten Qf7

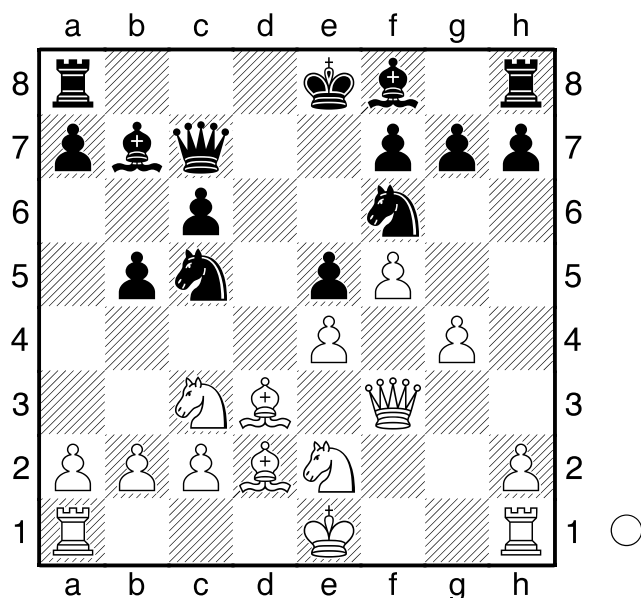
49.b3 Qd1 50.Qc4+ Kh8 51.Qc8+ Kg7 52.Qxb7+ Kh8 53.Nf7+ Kg7 54.Ng5+ Kg6 55.Qxh7+



[55.Qxh7+ Kxg5 56.Qg7#]
1-0

Problem 16

[solution]



12.a4

White played 12.a4 to disorganize Black's pawns from the queenside, to gain the control over c4 and to prepare Nc3-d1-f2. However, White didn't feel the danger around the important central pawn e4 which now is

attacked twice and defended three times CQS:

- After 12...b4, the e4-pawn will be defended twice and attacked twice, but the Bb7 can also enter the fight after c6-c5
- Qf3 and Rh1 are both undefended and exposed to a direct attack along the diagonal a8-h1

[12.g5

After this move, White gains more space on the queenside and, moreover, Black will loose the pressure on e4.

Nfd7]

The game continued:

12...b4 13.Nd1 Nfxe4

[Better was 13...Ncxe4 to prepare c6-c5.]

14.Bxe4 Nxe4 15.Qxe4 c5 16.Qc4 Bxh1 17.Bxb4 Be7 18.Ne3 0-0 19.0-0 Bf3 20.Nd5 Qb7 21.f6 Bxd5 22.Qxd5 Qxd5 23.Rxd5 gxf6 24.Bxc5 Rfd8 25.Rxd8+ Bxd8 26.b4 h5 27.h3 hxg4 28.hxg4 Kg7 29.Ng3 Bb6 30.Be7 Kg6 31.c4 Bf2 32.Nf5 Kg5 33.Nd6 Kxg4 34.c5 Kf3 35.c6 e4 36.c7 Bd4 37.Nb5 Be5 38.Bd6 e3 39.Bxe5 fxe5 40.Nd6 Kf2 0-1

Problem 17

[solution]

(Diagram)

The forced line:

9...Nxe4 10.Nxe4

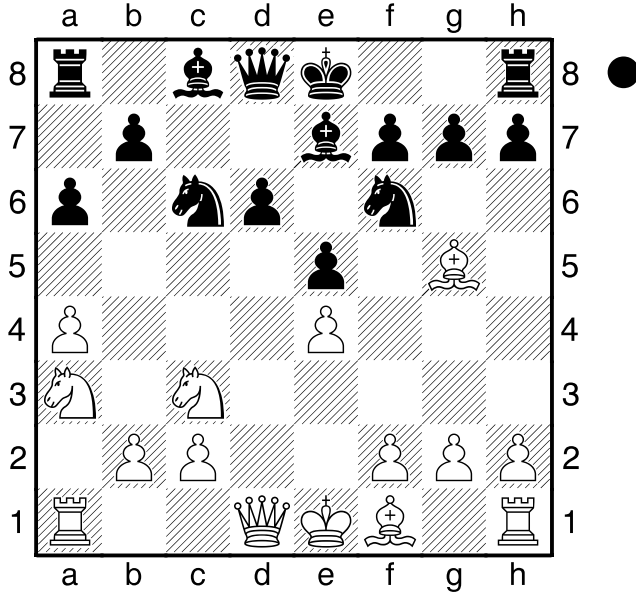
[10.Bxe7 Nxc3 11.Bxd8 Nxd1 12.Rxd1 Kxd8 13.Rxd6+ Ke7

Black has the upper hand due to the backward pawn from c2.]

10...Bxg5 11.Nxd6+ Ke7

involves the following CQS:

- Black gained the advantage of the bishop-pair
- Black traded the important e4 pawn for the pawn d6 (e5 will be the only central pawn)
- The black rooks will enter quickly into the



game

- White needs two more moves to castle

The game continued:

**12.Nac4 Be6 13.Qf3 Nd4 14.Qxb7+ Qd7
15.Qxd7+ Kxd7 16.Bd3 Be7 17.Be4 Bxd6
18.Nxd6 Kxd6 19.Rd1 Rae8 20.c3 Bb3
21.Rd2 Kc5
0-1**

Problem 18

[solution]

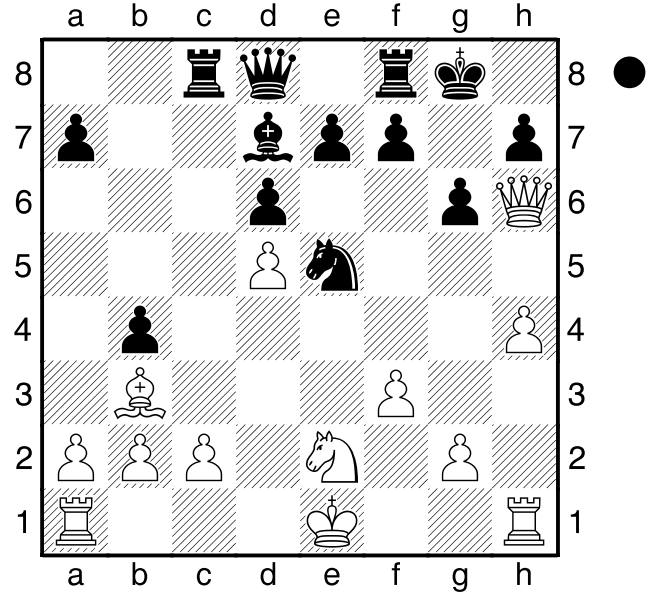
(Diagram)

Black's pieces are cooperating well and Bb3 is restricted, so a7-a5-a4 idea is natural.

White didn't finish development (Ke1 is still in the middle) but he threatens to connect Rh1 and Qh6 along the "h" file by h4-h5.

The consequences after 16....a5 17 h5, g5 (forced) 18 Qxg5 Kh8 are:

- Kh8 is safe on the corner because White's dark square bishop is missing
- Qg5 is exposed to a double attack (g2) along "g" file
- White should spare a move to save Bb3 from a5-a4
- Rc8 (attacking c2) and Rg8 (attacking g2) are



superior to Rh1 and Ra1

**16...a5 17.h5 g5 18.Qxg5+ Kh8 19.c3 Rg8
20.Qe3 Rxc2 21.Bc2 bxc3 22.b3 Bb5
23.Nd4 Rd2 24.Rg1 Qb6
0-1**

3. KING'S SAFETY

We continue our lesson about the positional evaluation with “king’s safety” because this point of the assessment is often the most important.

After you followed the commented games and you are familiarized with some typical means involved in the attacks against the king, it’s time to see how to deal with different king’s pawn structures.

When you assess the king’s safety, the main features to be followed are:

1. The pawn structure in front of the king

- a sound pawn formation around the king will assist defense while weak pawns and weak squares near the king will greatly assist the attacker.
- the possibilities to destroy the opponent’s pawn shield by pawn breakthroughs or pieces attack

2. The superiority in the center usually offers a better mobility for the pieces and creates the possibility for more pieces to arrive quickly around the enemy king. In addition, as we know, a wing attack can not succeed if the situation in the center is not stable.

3. Open files and half-open files are also important and are often the basis for attacks on the castled King as the rooks are very strong in attack.

4. The local superiority of the forces

- The side with better mobility will generally find easier to attack the king. They will generally find easier to bring over more pieces than the defender.
- An advantage in space on the side of the board, where your opponent’s king is, may allow you to bring more pieces to attack than the defender does, and increases the probability of a successful attack.

The attack against the castle constitutes a fundamental chapter of the “Theory of the middlegame”. We can consider that the opening is finished when the kings have castled. Starting with this moment, the player tries to create weaknesses in opponent’s camp, assuring the best mobility possible to his own pieces.

In order to attack the enemy castle, 2 basic conditions must be fulfilled:

1. The king must have one or more weaknesses

- *Long term and irreversible:* as the advance of one or more protecting pawns of the castle (f , g and h)

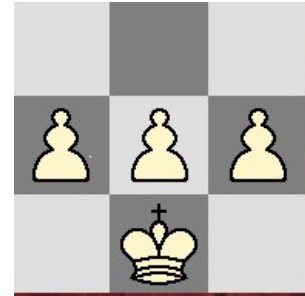
- *Short term and defensible*: as the deflection or disappearing of the pieces defending the castle (usually the king's knight, Be7, Nd7 or Qd8 for the Black's castle)

2. The attack must be based on the above weaknesses, and for that it must

- To exist open lines (files, ranks or diagonals)
- Those lines to be controlled by long range pieces (queen, rooks or bishops)
- To create a local superiority of the forces.

In this lesson, we will discuss the most solid formation which is when **all pawns in front of the King are on their initial squares**.

If there is no possibility to make the opponent to weaken his own structure by moving the pawns, the attack against such a protected king involves a sacrifice of a piece in order to destroy the pawn shield. In this lesson, we will see these typical sacrifices.

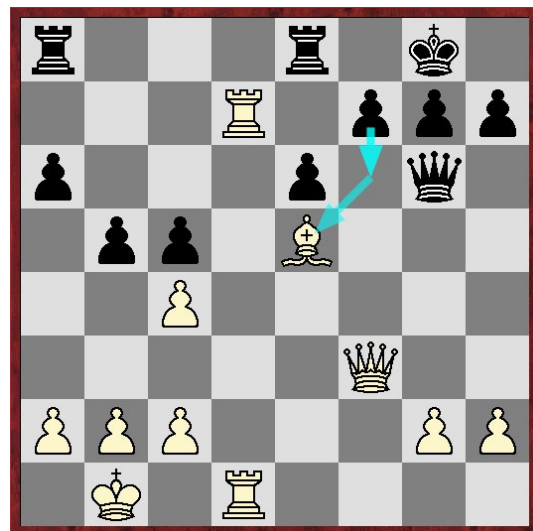


First, we have to know that beside advantages, there are also some drawbacks to have the king castled:

- The King sitting in a corner may have fewer defenders;
- The same pawns that provide protection to the King also restrict its mobility;
- Back-rank mates. Many games end in mate because a King has no escape from an opposing queen or rook check on the back rank.

For example: (Anderssen-Wywill)

26. Qxa8 and Black resigned in view of
26....Rxa8 27.Rd8 Rxd8 28.Rxd8 mate.



A. The sacrifice on h7

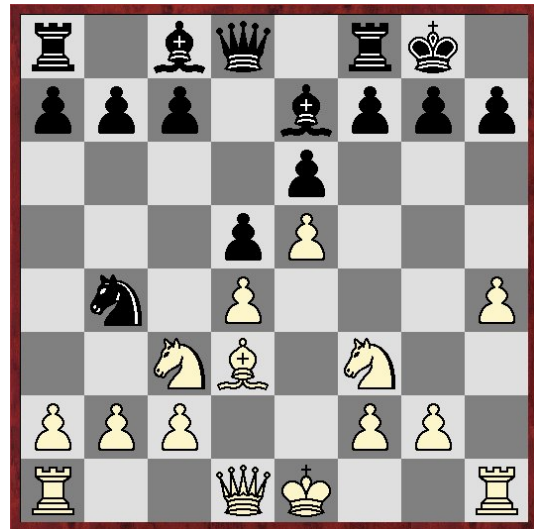
Goetz - Clerc
Paris, 1892

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 Be7 5. Bxf6 Bxf6 6. Nf3 0-0 7. Bd3 Nc6?! 8. e5 Be7 9. h4 Nb4

White is to move.

The important features of the position are:

- the absence of the castle “defender” Nf6
- Kg8 is obstructed by the black pieces Rf8 and Be7
- the possibility of Rh1 to become active along the “h” file, or g-file through Rh1-h3-g3
- White’s control over the long diagonals b1-h7 and c1-h6 after Qd1-d2
- the White’s pawn on e5 which limits Black’s mobility and controls the f6-square.



10. Bxh7+!

White destroys the protection of the black king. By this sacrifice, White is losing one of the attacking pieces but he still remains with force superiority on the kingside.

This typical sacrifice works usually when White has a pawn on e5.

10...Kxh7 11. Ng5+ Kh6

[11...Kg6 12. Ne2 followed by Ne2-f4., 11...Kg8 12. Qh5 with mate]

12. Qd2 Qd7

[12...Bxg5 13. hxcg5+ Kg6 14. Ne2 Rh8 15. Nf4+ Kf5 16. Nh3 and Black can not save the knight due to Qd2-d3 threat.

12...Qe8 13. a3 Na6 14. Nxe6+ Kh7 15. Nxf8+ Bxf8 16. Qd3+ besides the exposed position of the black king, White has a rook and three pawns for two bishops.]

13. a3 Nc6 14. Qd3 g6 15. h5 Bxg5 16. hxcg6+ Kg7 17. Rh7+ Kg8 18. g7

[18. Qh3 leads to mate after 18...fxg6 19. Rh8+ Kf7 20. Qf3+ Bf4 21. Qxf4+ Ke7 22. Qxf8#]

18...f5 19. exf6 1-0

**Janowski - Chajes [D66]
New York 1916**

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 Nbd7 6.Nc3 c6 7.Bd3 dxc4 8.Bxc4 b5 9.Bd3 a6 10.0-0 c5 11.Rc1 Bb7 12.Qe2 0-0 13.Rfd1 Qb6 14.Ne5

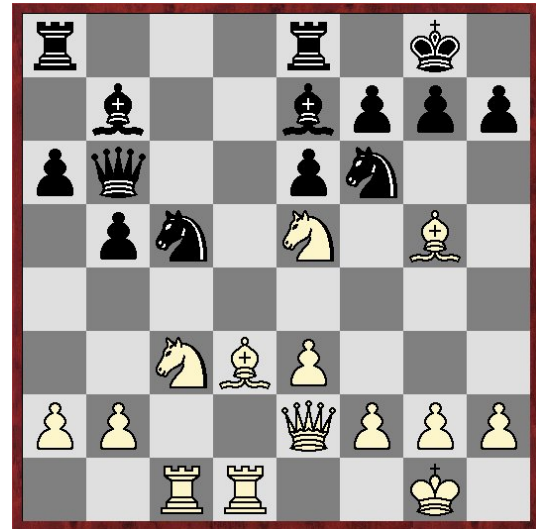
White has already a better position due to his superior qualitative pieces. The immediate threats are 15.Nxd7 Nxd7 16.Bxe7 and if 14....Nxe5 15.dxe5 Nd5 16.Nxd5 and 17.Bxe7.

14...Rfe8 15.dxc5 Nxc5

White is to move.

The important features of the position are:

- the possibility to eliminate Nf6
- around the Black's king, the f7- and h7-pawns are not defended by other pieces
- the ideal position of Ne5
- the "c" and "d" files are dominated by the white rooks
- Qb6 is out of play and can not participate to the king's defense



16.Bxf6 Bxf6 Black doesn't have time to eliminate the dangerous bishop from d3:
[16...Nxd3 17.Bxg7 Nxc1 18.Qh5 Kxg7 19.Qg4+ Kf8 (19...Kh8 20.Nxf7#) 20.Nd7#]

17.Bxh7+ Kxh7 18.Qh5+ Kg8 19.Qxf7+ (now we can see a drawback of the rook being on e8 instead of f8 – which left a weak point near the black king) **19...Kh7**

The final mistake, Black could have resisted longer after:

19...Kh8 20.Qh5+ Kg8 21.b4 deflecting Nc5. White is using the "d" file in order to penetrate on the 7-th rank. 21...Bxe5 (21...Na4 22.Qf7+ Kh7 23.Rd7 Kh8 (23...Bxe5 24.Qh5+ Kg8 25.Qxe5+-) 24.Ng6+ Kh7 25.Qxf6) 22.Qxe5 Qc6 23.Qg5

The black knight is trapped again due to the threats along the 7-th rank. 23...Nd7 24.Ne2+-]

20.Nd7 Nxd7 21.Rxd7

Black is lost in view of the threats Qxf6 and Rxb7.

21...Bc6 22.Ne4 Bxb2 23.Ng5+ Kh6 24.g4 g6 25.h4 Rh8 26.Qh7+ 1-0

In the first example we saw the mixed action of the bishop sacrifice on h7 and the Rh1. The following diagram shows us a more subtle case where White destroys the pawns shield despite the presence of a defender knight on f8.

Keres,Paul - Fine,Reuben
Ostende, 1937

Black is to move

[The best defense was: 23...h6 24.e6 hxc5
25.exf7+ Kxf7 26.Re7+ Kg6 (26...Kg8
27.Qxg5 Qc3 28.Bxd5+ Bxd5 29.Qxd5+ Kh8
30.Qh5+ Kg8 31.Qf7+ Kh8 32.R7e3 and
White keeps winning chances.) 27.Qd4 Qc3
28.Bc2+ Kh5=]

23....Nf8?! a natural move, but which fails to
White's next combination.

The important features of the position are:

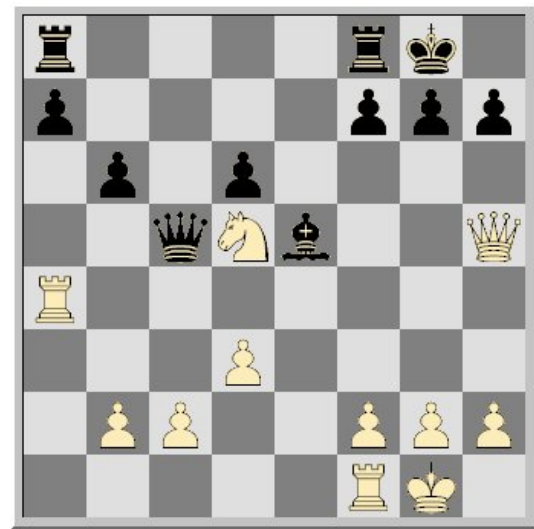
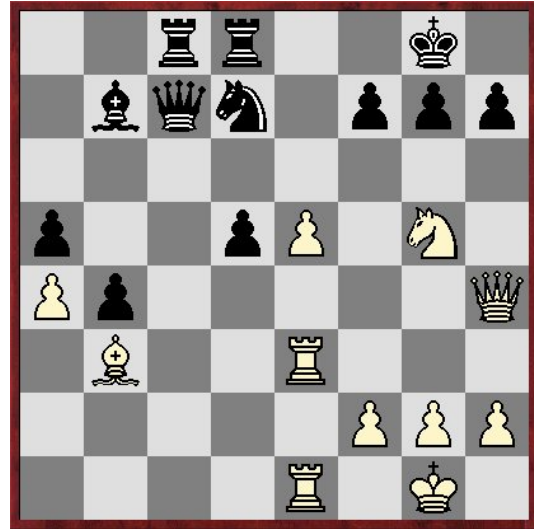
- the presence of two weak points around the Black's king: f7 and h7
- the presence of Re3 on the third rank
- White's rooks domination along the "e" file and the possibility to penetrate on 7-th rank
- White's superiority of forces in attack (3 attackers against 1 defender)

24.Nxh7 Nxh7 25.Rh3 it's useful to observe the hopeless of one defender (the knight)
against 2 attackers (White's major pieces)
25...Qc1 a desperate attempt to reach counterplay, but the black king can not be saved.

26.Qxh7+ Kf8 27.Rhe3 d4 28.Qh8+ Ke7 29.Qxg7 Rf8 30.Qf6+ Ke8 31.e6 1-0

Another typical sacrifice on h7 is **the queen sacrifice** in order to open the h-file toward the black king.

In this position, White mates in 3 moves:
1.Ne7+ Kh8 2.Qxh7+ Kxh7 and **3.Rh4#**



B. The double bishop sacrifice on h7 and g7

Lasker, Emanuel - Bauer, Johann
Amsterdam, 1889

1.f4 d5 2.e3 Nf6 3.b3 e6 4.Bb2 Be7 5.Bd3 b6 6.Nf3 Bb7 7.Nc3 Nbd7 8.0-0 0-0 9.Ne2 c5 [Of course Black should trade the dangerous Bd3 and use the pair of bishops' advantage with 9....Nc5.]

10.Ng3 Qc7 11.Ne5 Nxe5 12.Bxe5 Qc6 13.Qe2 a6

The specific features of the position are:

- the local superiority of White's pieces on the king side (5 attacking pieces: Ng3, Bd3, Be5, Qe2, Rf1 and only 3 defending pieces Nf6 pawns g7 & h7) and after the sacrifices, White will still have 2 pieces in order to mate.
- the possibility of a rook lift Rf1-f3-g3(h3)
- Qc6 is out of play

14.Nh5 exchanging one of the defenders weakening the defense of the h7-pawn and clearing the 3rd rank for the rook-lift.

Black is to move.

14.... Nxh5

[14...Ne8 15.Bxg7 Nxg7 16.Qg4+/-;
14...d4 15.Bxf6 Bxf6 16.Qg4 Kh8 17.Rf3+/-
followed by Rh3 (g3) with a strong attack;
14...c4 15.Nxf6+ Bxf6 16.Bxh7+ Kxh7
17.Qh5+ Kg8 18.Bxf6+- followed by the
same idea Rf1-f3-g3.]

15.**Bxh7+!** 15...Kxh7 16.Qxh5+ Kg8

17.**Bxg7**

After this second bishop sacrifice, the pawn shield in front of the black king is destroyed.

17...Kxg7 18.Qg4+ Kh7 19.Rf3 e5

To avoid the mate, Black must sacrifice the queen.

20.Rh3+ Qh6 21.Rxh6+ Kxh6 22.Qd7 Bf6 23.Qxb7 Kg7 24.Rf1 Rab8 25.Qd7 Rfd8
26.Qg4+ Kf8 27.fxe5 Bg7 28.e6 Rb7 29.Qg6 f6 30.Rxf6+ Bxf6 31.Qxf6+ Ke8 32.Qh8+
Ke7 33.Qg7+ Kxe6 34.Qxb7 Rd6 35.Qxa6 d4 36.exd4 cxd4 37.h4 d3 38.Qxd3 1-0

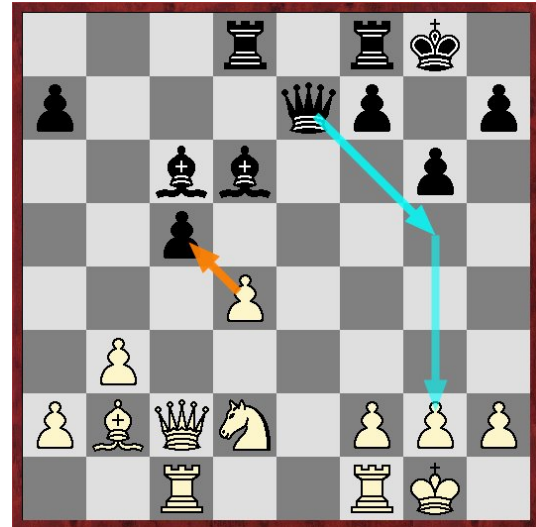


**Nimzowitsch, Aaron - Tarrasch, Siegbert
St Petersburg, 1914**

Black is to move.

As in the previous example, the main features are:

- Black is attacking with 4 pieces Qe7, Bc6, Bd6, Rd8 and White is defending only with the pawns g2 and h2
- The presence of another rook-lift possibility Rd8-d5-h5
- Qc2 is far from the white monarch and, if the queen leaves the c2 square, Bb2 and Nd2 will remain unprotected



19.... Bxh2+ 20.Kxh2 Qh4+ 21.Kg1 Bxg2

This bishop saved by miracle in the middle of White's pieces will give the decisive blow eleven moves later.

22.f3

[22.Kxg2 Qg4+ 23.Kh2 Rd5 24.Qxc5 Rh5+ As in the previous game, the mate can be avoided just by sacrificing the queen and, after that, Black can use a double attack to exploit the exposed position of the king and the unprotected minor pieces from the second rank: 25.Qxh5 Qxh5+ 26.Kg2 Qg5+]

22...Rfe8 with a double threat 23....Re2 and 23....Qg3.

23.Ne4 Qh1+ 24.Kf2 Bxf1 25.d5 f5 26.Qc3 Qg2+ 27.Ke3 Rxe4+ 28.fxe4 f4+ 29.Kxf4 Rf8+ 30.Ke5 Qh2+ 31.Ke6 Re8+ 32.Kd7 Bb5# 0-1

C. Sacrifices on g7

The g7 square is statistically less vulnerable than the square h7, but when White manages to create local piece superiority, the tactics are impressive.

**Spielmann, Rudolf - Gruenfeld, Ernst
Karlsbad, 1929**

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 dxc4 4.e4 c5 5.Nf3 cxd4 6.Nxd4 a6 7.Bxc4 Bd7 8.0-0 Nc6 9.Nf3 Qc7 10.Qe2 Bd6 11.Rd1 Nge7 12.Be3 Ne5 13.Nxe5 Bxe5 14.g3 Bxc3 15.bxc3 Ng6 16.Bb3 0-0 17.Bd4 b5

[After 17...e5 18.Bb6 Qxb6 19.Rxd7+/- White has the upper hand due to active positions of Rd3, Bb3 and Qe2.

To do list:

-attack the weaknesses b7 and f7

-obstruct the activity of Ng6 with h2-h4-h5

-when it is the moment, launch a mixed attack from the 7th rank and the “g” file against the black king.]

18.Qe3 Bc6 19.h4 Qb7

Black didn't feel the danger, 19....h5 or 19....h6 were necessary.

20.h5 Ne7

White is to move.

The features of the position:

-White is attacking with 3 pieces Qe3, Bd4, pawn h5 and Black's only defenders are the pawns

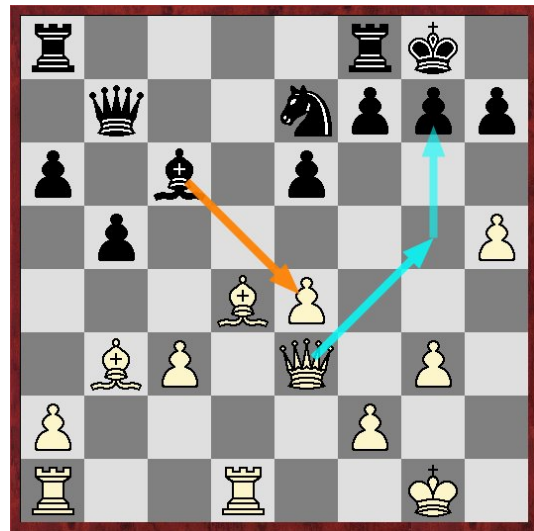
- the absence of Black's dark square bishop creates a weak-square complex after g7 is eliminated

21.Bxg7

Stronger than: 21.Qg5 f6 22.Bxe6+ Kh8 23.h6 Ng6+-

21...Kxg7 22.Qg5+ Ng6

[22...Kh8 23.Qf6+ Kg8 24.h6+- with mate on g7] 23.h6+ 1-0



Stein, Leonid - Portisch, Lajos
Stockholm Interzonal, 1962

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Bd3 Nf6 6.0-0 Qc7 7.Nd2 Nc6 8.Nxc6 bxc6 9.f4 Bc5+ 10.Kh1 d6 11.Nf3 e5

[Wrong is 11...0-0 allowing the typical h7 sacrifice. 12.e5 Nd5 13.Bxh7+ Kxh7 14.Ng5+ Kg8 (14...Kg6 15.c4 Ne7 16.Qg4 f5 17.Qg3+-) 15.Qh5 Rd8 16.c4+/- White has a strong initiative due to Black's exposed king and knight.]

12.fxe5 dxe5 13.Nh4 0-0 14.Nf5 Be6 15.Qe2 a5 16.Bc4 Kh8 17.Bg5 Nd7 18.Rad1 Nb6

With his last move, Black ignored the danger announced by White's king side pieces superiority (4 attacking pieces: Qe2, Rf1, Bg5, Nf5 against the pawn g7 which defends the black King). **Typical for the attacks on g7 is the exploit of dark squares around the black castle**, favored here by the Bc5's out of play position.

19.Nxg7 and now Black is completely hopeless in defending the dark-squares on the kingside.

20...Bxc4

[19...Nxc4 20.Bf6 Kg8 21.Nxe6 fxe6 22.Qg4+ Kf7 23.Bxe5+-;
19...Kxg7 20.Bf6+ Kg6 21.Bxe6 h5 22.Qd2+-]

20.Bf6 Be7

[20...Bxe2 21.Nf5+ Kg8 22.Nh6# showing that two minor pieces are enough for mate.]

21.Qf3 Black is helpless against the threat Nh5+. **1-0**



D. Sacrifices on f7

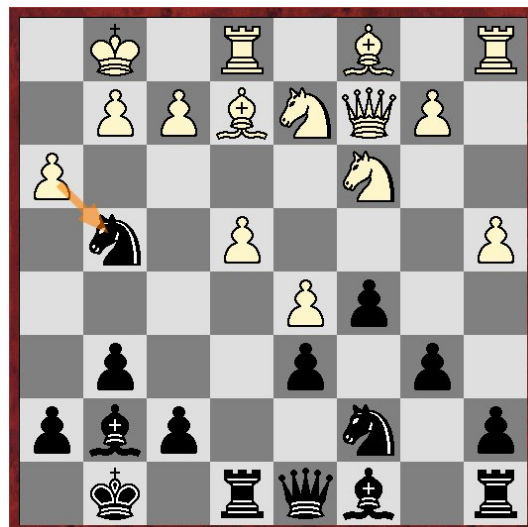
Sacrifices on f7 arises more often than we believe during the games and follows rules less precise than in the previous cases.

Gurgenidze, Bukhuti - Tal, Mihail
URS-ch24 Moscow , 1957

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.e4 Bg7 8.Be2 0-0 9.0-0 Re8 10.Nd2 Na6 11.Re1 Nc7 12.a4 b6 13.Qc2

Give up the control over the g4 square and the CSQ will be exploited right away by Black which has on "to do list" the activation of Bg7, Nf6 and the breakthrough f7-f5.

13...Ng4! 14.h3?!



In this example, Black has succeeded to provoke White to weaken his structure. The next sacrifice is instructive for the sacrifice on f2.

Typical features are:

- the white king remained without defenders after Nf3-d2
- with Nxf2 Black drives the white king in the center
- almost all the dark squares are weak in White's camp (h2, h4, g3, f4, f2, e3, d4)

14...Nxf2 15.Kxf2 Qh4+ 16.Kf1

[16.g3? Bd4+ 17.Kf3 Qh5+ 18.Kg2 Bxh3+ 19.Kh2 Bg4+ 20.Kg2 Qh3#]

16...Bd4 17.Nd1

Now the white king is hampered by his own pieces and by the powerful Bd4. Only g2 is defending the king so the pawn must be eliminated.....

17...Qxh3 18.Bf3 [18.gxh3 Bxh3#] 18...Qh2 19.Ne3 f5

Black continues to bring his forces in attack due to the space advantage on the king side.

20.Ndc4 fxe4 21.Bxe4 Ba6 22.Bf3 Re5 23.Ra3 Rae8 24.Bd2 Nxd5 using the pin of Nd3. **25.Bxd5+ Rxd5 26.Ke2 Bxe3 27.Rxe3 Bxc4+**

[White resigned in view of 27...Bxc4+ and Qc2 is overloaded with the defense of c4 and d2 squares. 28.Qxc4 Qxg2+ 29.Kd1 Qxd2#] **0-1**

Vitolinsh,Alvis - Seredenko,Vladimir
Talsi, 1979

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0
Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Re8
10.d4 Bf8 11.Bg5 Bb7 12.Nbd2 Nb8 13.dxe5
dxe5

White is to move.

Here is difficult to foresee the pieces superiority created by White on the center and the king side.

The main idea is to drive the Black king out from his refuge and to win precious tempos by bringing new forces to attack the Black's king. The attack is favored by White's lead in development and passive position of Bb7 and Bf8 which gives White free hand on diagonals.



14.Bxf7+ Kxf7 15.Qb3+ Re6

[Or 15...Kg6 16.Nh4+ Kxg5 17.Ndf3+ Kh6 18.Nf5+ Kg6 19.N3h4+ Kg5 20.Qf7+-]

16.Nxe5+

[Another winning variation could be 16.Be3 with a double threat: Nf3-g5 attacking twice the pinned piece and Be3-c5. 16...Qe7 (16...h6 17.Nxe5+ Ke7 18.Bc5+) 17.Ng5+ Ke8 18.Nxe6 Bc8 19.Nc5+- White has a big advantage.]

16...Ke7 17.Ng4 Kf7 18.Nf3 Qc8 19.Bh4 h6 20.Nxf6 gxf6 21.Nd4 Nc6
[21...c5 22.Nxe6 Qxe6 23.Qd1 followed by Qd1-h5 and Re1-e3-g3.]

22.f4 Nxd4 23.cxd4 Kg7 24.f5 Rb6 25.Re3 Be7 26.Rg3+ Kh8 27.Qf7 Qf8 28.Qh5 Rd8
[Or 28...Bb4 29.Rg6 Bd2 30.Rd1 Be3+ 31.Kh1+/- and Black can not support Be3 on c1-h6 diagonal after Qf3 or Re1.]

29.Rg6 Kh7 30.Bf2

Black resigned because of Be3 threat. **1-0**

E. Typical sacrifices on f6.

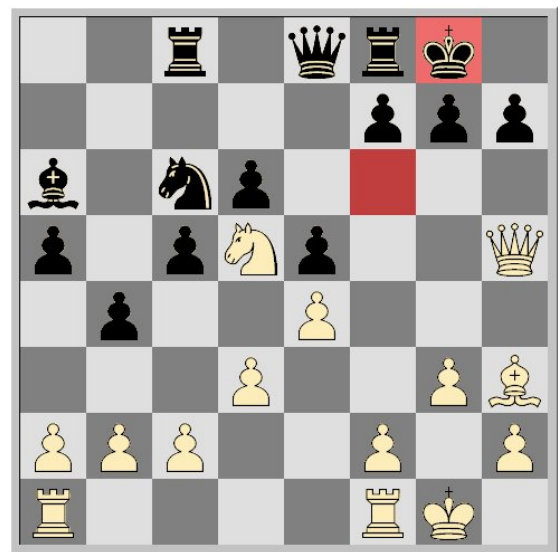
When Black has no control over the f6-square, there are some typical piece sacrifices on that point.

The knight arriving on f6 checks the black king and attacks the h7-square. The capturing of the knight destroys the protection of the king.

In this position, White checkmates with:

1.Nf6+ gxf6 2.Bf5.

Again, we see that White has a clear superiority of forces (3 attacking pieces against only the black pawn shield).



Another typical sacrifice is the exchange sacrifice (rook for a minor piece) against the main defender of the opponent king: the knight.

In our example, White both destroys the pawn protection in front of the black king and eliminates the defender of h7-square:

1. Rxf6 gxf6 2.Qg4+ Kh8 3.Qf5 1-0



In this lesson we showed the main attacking ways against the short-castled king with an untouched pawn structure. Because there are no weaknesses in front of the king, the attacker usually sacrifices a piece to break the protection of the opponent pawn-shield. Because the attacker gives a piece, he must ensure that he has enough forces to continue the attack, so creating a local (kingside) force superiority is a must before starting the attack by sacrifice.

In the next lessons, we will deal with the altered pawn structures in front of the kings.

KING'S SAFETY –II-

We continue the chapter dedicated to the king's safety with the study of strategies and tactics on position with modified pawn structures on the king side, when the opponents have castled on the same side. There are 3 possible situations related to the advancing of one of the 3 pawns in front of the castle (f, g, or h).

A. The first two examples shows the frequent case after **h2-h3 or **h7-h6**** and deserve to be remembered as model games for how to use the weakness of g6 (g3) square.

EX 1) Barcza – Tibor, Budapest ,1938

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Bc5 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d3 h6 5.Be3 Bb6

After 5...Bxe3 6.fxe3, in exchange for the damaged pawn structure, White controls the squares d4 and f4 and has the half-open f-file to make f7 vulnerable.

6.Nge2 d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.Bxb6 axb6 9.f4 exf4

Black, which is behind in development should avoid opening up the line (especially such a pawn trade e5 for f4). Better was 9....Nc6.

10.Nxf4 Nc6 11.Ncd5

Challenging the defender, White starts the final assault by creating pieces superiority on the king side.

11...Nh7

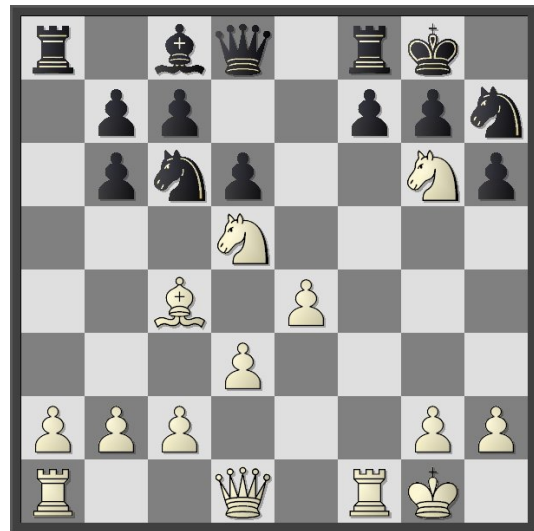
The main features of the position are:

- the pin of the pawn f7
- the weakness of g6 square created by the earlier push h7-h6

12.Ng6

Black cannot take the knight because of 12...fxg6? 13.Ne7++ Kh8 14.Nxg6.

By this move, White chases away another defender of the castle: the f8-rook.



12...Re8 13.Rxf7 Kxf7 14.Qh5

The sacrifice led to a typical drive out of the Black king.

Notice that two batteries (Qh5+Ng6 and Bc4+Nd5) are aiming the Black's monarch. If 14....Nf6 15.Nxf6+ Kxf6 16. Rf1+ Bf5 17.Qf5 mate.

14...Be6 15.Nge7+ Kf8 16.Rf1+ Nf6 17.Rxf6+ gxh6 18.Qxh6+ Kf7 19.Qxf6# 1-0

EX 2) Van Van der Wiel,J - Van Wely,L, Hilversum, 2006

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Bd3 Bc5 6.Nb3 Be7 7.Qg4 g6 8.Qe2 d6 9.Be3 Nf6 10.N1d2 Nc6 11.Nc4 Nd7 12.a4 d5 13.exd5 exd5

The typical position of IQP (isolated queen pawn) arose. Black compensates the long-term weakness from d5 with a better position in the center and a better pieces mobility.

14.Ncd2 0-0 15.Nf3 Re8 16.0-0 Bd6 17.Bg5 f6 18.Be3 Nde5

One of the typical plans for the side which has the IQP consists in a pieces attack on the king side favored by the central superiority. Based on the domination along b8-h2 diagonal, Black starts to build an attack.

To do list:

- force White to push h2-h3 or g2-g3 in order to create weak squares in front of the castle
- use c8-h3,b8-h2 and a7-g1 diagonals -obstruct White's queen and deflecting the defender Nf3

19.h3 Bc7 20.Nfd4 Nb4

The IQP holder must avoid trades and use the lack of coordination in White's camp.

21.Bf4 Qd6 22.Bg3 Bd7 23.Qd2 Nbxg3 24.cxd3 Bb6

Stressing the h2-h3 CQS:

- the square g3 became weaker and the pawn f2 can be pined
- the g2 pawn can be overloaded to defend h3 and f3 especially due to the geometrical reason Qd2 and Kg1 at the proximity of Ne5

25.Rfc1

The features of the position:

- "X-rays threats along a7-g1 diagonal
- the presence of Bg3 unprotected due to the pin of f2
- the unhappy setup Qd2, Kg1 at the hand of Ne5-f3.

Black is to move



25...Bxh3 26.gxh3

The acceptance of the sacrifice destroys the pawn shield in front of the White king, but otherwise Black would have remained a pawn up.

26...Nf3+ 27.Kg2 Qxg3+ 28.Kxg3 Nxd2 29.Nc5

[29.Nxd2 Bxd4 30.Rc2 Re2-/+ with a terrible domination of Bd4 and Re2 along the second rank.]

29...Rac8 30.b4 a5 31.Nb5 axb4 32.Nd7 Rxc1 33.Rxc1

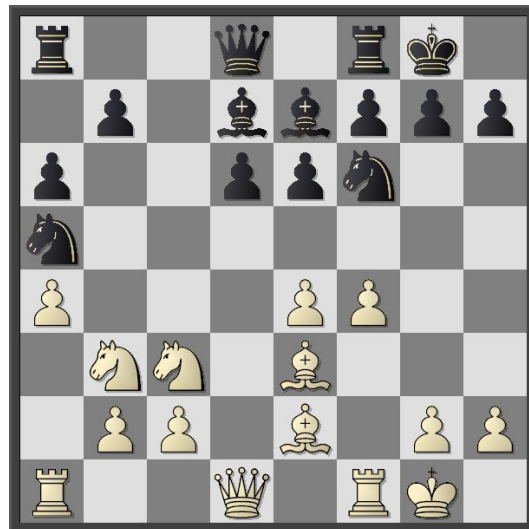
Probably White run out of time, although Black's advantage is obvious. **0-1**

EX 3) The third example shows another drawback of this pawn structure: the “anchorage sacrifice” on f6 using the overloading of g7 pawn which must protect f6 and h6 as well.

Dolmatov,S - Anikaev,Y
Frunze, 1979

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e6 6.Be2 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.f4 Nc6 9.Be3
Bd7 10.Nb3 a6 11.a4 Na5

Which are the CQS of Black's last move?
Black hopes to trade Nb3 and to reach central pawn superiority, but leaves the control over the square e5. White jumps in and deflects the defender of the castle Nf6.



12.e5! Ne8 13.Nxa5 Qxa5 14.Qd2 Kh8 15.Bd4 dxe5 16.fxe5 Bc6 17.Qe3 Nc7 18.Bd3
Nd5 19.Qh3

White starts the final assault. The methods are the same: by successive threats White tries to destroy Black's pawn structure from the king side.

19...h6 20.Rf6!

Besides that Rf6 is untouchable, White is threatening 21.Rxh6 gxh6 22.Qxh6 Kg8 23.Qh7 mate.

20...Kg8 21.Rxh6 gxh6 22.Qxh6 f5 23.exf6 Rxf6 24.Bh7+ Kf7

[24...Kh8 25.Bg6+ Kg8 26.Qh7+ Kf8 27.Qh8#]

25.Qh5+

The bishop from d4 has a dominant position, the black king is exposed especially to an attack on light squares, so White must close the mate net.

[White continued with : 25.Bxf6 Bxf6 26.Rf1 Qc5+ 27.Kh1 Qf8 28.Bg6+ Ke7 29.Qh7+ Qg7 30.Qxg7+ Bxg7 31.Rf7+ Kd6 32.Rxg7 and eventually won the game.]

25...Kf8 26.Bg6 Rxc6 27.Qxc6 Bc5 28.Rf1+ Ke7 29.Rf7+ Kd8
[29...Kd6 30.Ne4#]

30.Qg5+ Kc8 31.Qg8+ Qd8 32.Qxd8+ Kxd8 33.Bxc5

White is winning due to the "h" free pawn and superior qualitative pieces.



B. Destroying the pawn shield or use the weak square complex after g2-g3 or g7-g6

EX 1) Flohr,S - Pitschak,R, Blin, 1930

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.Nbd2 c5 4.e3 b6 5.Bd3 Bb7 6.0-0 Be7 7.c4 0-0 8.b3 d5 9.Qc2
A poor choice for White; Black will win a tempo threatening Nc6-b4 and takes the initiative.

9...Nc6 10.a3 cxd4 11.cxd5? Qxd5 12.exd4 Nxd4 13.Qb1 Rfd8 14.Ne1
How can Black exploit the local pieces superiority on the king side?

Creating threats with every move and provoke White to push the pawns. You'll notice that after each pawn moves new "holes" appears in White's camp.

14...Qh5 15.Bb2 Bd6 16.g3

The features of the typical sacrifice are:

- Black attacks with 4 pieces (Qh5, Bb7, Bd6, Nf6) and White's king has only the pawn shield.
- the white king has no escape after g2-g3 which weakened the long diagonal a8-h1
- White's pieces lack of coordination and can not defend the squares from the "h" file [16.h3 Qe5 17.g3 Qd5-+]

16...Ng4 17.h4 Qxh4
 [17...Qxh4 18.gxh4 Bh2#] **0-1**



EX 2) Hitselberger, J. - Houser, T., correspondence game



White is to move

The position arises from the Roy Lopez. White has a pawn majority on the king side but Black has the lead in development and threatens to penetrate White's camp on the "d" file with c5-c4, Nf6-d7-c5 (e5)-d3 breaking White's pieces coordination. White must act quickly in order to use the favorable circumstances.

15.e5 Nd5 16.Ne4 c4 17.Bc2 Qc7 18.Neg5

Starting to soften up the Black kingside pawn structure.

18... g6 19.Qe4!

White's queen movement is instructive (it's pretty difficult to reach g4 or h4 without moving the Nf3). White is using the temporary weakness of light squares from the king side and start to create local pieces superiority.

19... Nd8 [diagram]

Black defends e6 and f7, but White is aiming for h7.

20.Qh4

Weakening one more time the pawn shield.

20... h5 21.Qg3 Bxg5

Trying to defend against the sacrifices on g6 or f7. After this trade, Black is left without the usual defensive duo of the knight on f6 and the bishop on e7 and the dark squares around the black king will be accessible for White.

22.Qxg5 Ne6 23.Qh6 Rfe8 24.Bg5

The g6 pawn cannot be taken yet because the Black queen protects the 7th rank

24... Qc5

The main features:

- the black queen is overloaded due to the threat Bg5-f6 followed by mate. It cannot simultaneously protect against the Bxg6 sacrifice and the threatened mate on g7.
- Bb7 can not participate in defense
- if White waits another move black can defend g6 with Ne6-f8

White to move



25.Bxg6!

Of course, now that the Black queen has vacated the seventh rank, White crushes the black pawns from the king side. Actually is the only way to rich advantage because the local superiority can not be used without open lines.

25... fxg6 26.Qxg6+ Kf8

[26 ... Ng7 27 Bf6 Qc7 28 Ng5 +-]

27.Qh6+

The key here is to prevent Black defenders, especially the queen, from coming to the aid of their king.

27... Kg8 28.Bf6 Qc7

[28 ... Nxf6 29 exf6 Bxf3 30 Rxe6 Qc7 31 f7+! +-]

29.Qh8+ Kf7 30.Qxh5+

Gathering up the third pawn to gain full material compensation for the sacrificed piece and clearing the way for the “h” pawn. White eventually won the game.

C. Positions where the “f” pawn is pushed creating weaknesses on a7-g1 (a2-g8) diagonal

The KID (King’s Indian Defense) is the opening where these pawn structures arise often. Sometimes White pushes f2-f3 in order to support the key pawn e4 and Black can use the a7-g1 diagonal and the square g3 which became vulnerable after f2-f3.

Piket, Jeroen - Kasparov, Garry
Tilburg, 1989



Black to move

20...g3!

The only move which can continue Black's dark-squared initiative. Take note: now the Bf2 and the pawn h2 caught up in the game. Seizing the initiative, or pursuing strategic goals are more important than material. Black sacrifices Ra8 (or just the exchange) in order to be able to occupy the squares g3 and h2.

21.Nxa8?!

[21.hxg3 - according to many annotators this was the best reply for White. We will also look into this variation: 21...fxg3 22.Bxg3 with the price of a pawn Black creates room for his pieces on dark squares.

To do list:

- take control over the dark squares by Bh6-f4, Nf6-h5-g3, Qd8-h4
- use the "g" file if necessary by Rf7-g7

22...Bh6! 23.Nxa8 Nh5 24.Bf2 Bxc1

the Bh6 is no more of use, since Black is now trying for a white-squared initiative.

25.Qxc1 Ngf4 26.Bc4 Rg7 27.Kh2 Qg5 28.Qd2 Qh6-/+

Black's superiority on "g" and "h" files is overwhelming.]

21...Nh5!?

It is useful to point out here, that Black has noticeably strengthened his position on the kingside, whilst White has taken off the passive rook on a8 by the maneuver Nc3-b5-c7-a8.

[21...gxf2+ 22.Rxf2 Qxa8~~]

22.Kh1

With the idea of Bf2-g1.

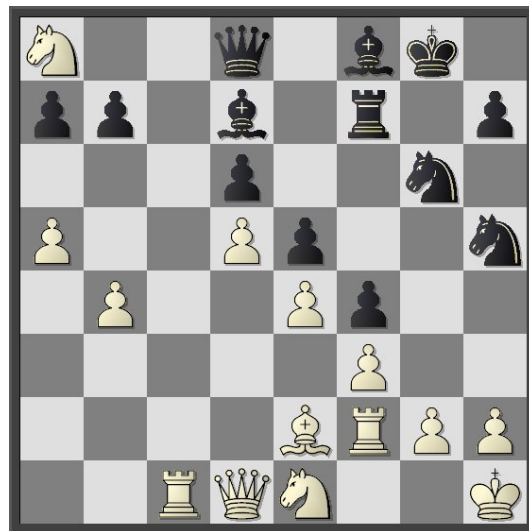
[22.Bxa7 Qh4 23.h3 Bxh3 - another typical sacrifice to destroy White's pawn shield in KID. 24.gxh3 Qxh3 Black has managed to conquer the squares g3, h2. 25.Rf2 gxf2+ 26.Kxf2 Nh4! 27.Nd3 Qg3+ 28.Kf1 Ng2-/+]]

22...gxf2 23.Rxf2

The positional features are:

- the white king is lonely in the corner
- the dark squares from the king side and from a7-g1 diagonal are weak due to the absence of Bf2
- White cannot afford to open the "h" file or to permit a black pawn on g3

Black is to move



23...Ng3+!

[better than 23...Qh4 24.Kg1]

24.Kg1

[24.hxg3 fxg3-+]

After the Bf2 was traded, the dark squares along a7-g1 diagonal became very weak. With the plan a7-a6 followed by Qa8-a7, Black uses this right away.

24...Qxa8!

[24...Nxe2+ 25.Rxe2 Qxa8=/+]

25.Bc4

[25.hxg3? fxg3 26.Rf1 Nf4 27.Nd3 Qd8-+; 25.a6 Nxe2+ 26.Rxe2 bxa6-/+]

25...a6! 26.Qd3?!

A little better was 26.Nd3 Qa7!;

26.hxg3 fxg3 27.Ra2 Qd8 Followed by Nf4 and Qh4 with a strong attack.

26...Qa7! 27.b5 axb5 28.Bxb5 Nh1 0-1

Of course this complicated fight was based on a deep positional understanding and precise reckoning of the variations.

KING'S SAFETY Final Theory

On our way to evaluate the position, a very important element to be considered is the safety of the king. We hope you have studied the given annotated games and the other theoretical lessons with examples. Now, it's time to conclude, add some extra observations and give the final theory that will help you to make a faster and better assessment about how safe is the king and how can be attacked/defended.

First, we need to remember that here we do not discuss typical pawn structures (as King's Indian Attack or Defense, positions with isolani pawns, English attack, Keres attack and other systems), but we consider general aspects and discuss positions that arise often in practice. We will discuss the typical attacks on kings in more detail when we treat the typical pawn structures, in the future of ICS course. In addition, we do not consider kings castled on different sides as this is a different chapter of our course and the essence of such positions is usually based on: "who starts the attack quicker, wins".

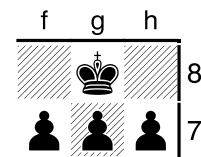
The most frequent case is when the kings are castled on the same side and this is what we are interested at this moment (king's safety as a criterion of positional evaluation). When you need to evaluate a position from strategical point of view and to decide about a move, the kings are usually castled on the same wing.

For clearer explanations, we refer the attacker as being White and the defender as being Black. Of course, the roles are simply reversed when Black attacks white king's position.

PAWN STRUCTURES IN FRONT OF THE KING

1. Pawn structure: f7, g7, h7

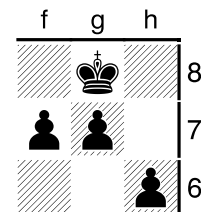
This is the best pawn structure in front of the king. The only drawback is that the black king has no escape against a mate on the back rank. This is why Black plays later h7-h6 or g7-g6.



2. Pawn structure f7, g7, h6

The drawbacks of the pawn structure after h7-h6 is played are:

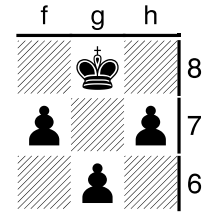
- g6-square is weaker and White can exploit this usually when has the control over the a2-g8 diagonal (pinning f7)
- the g7-pawn is overloaded by defending both the h6-pawn and the f6-square
- White can exploit the fact that Black cannot advance anymore g7-g6 without weakening the h6-pawn. For example, a knight on f5 cannot be chased away by g7-g6 (as h6 will be hanging).



3. Pawn structure f7, g6, h7

The drawbacks of this pawn structure are:

- the weak squares f6 and h6
- White can control the g5-square as h7-h6 is rarely possible or good.
- if Black has no bishop on g7, White threatens mates as Qh6 and Ng5 with mate on h7, or mate on g7 or h8 with Bishop and Queen on the long diagonal
- the g6-pawn (even if it looks well defended) can become a target for White attacks: h2-h4-h5 opening the h-file and, then, by a piece sacrifice on g6, White can destroy black king's protection

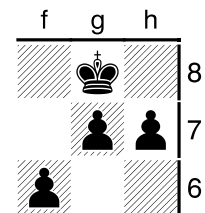


However, if Black has the g7-bishop and knight on f6, this structure is quite solid when the kings are castled on the same side. In this situation, White rarely achieves something by h2-h4-h5.

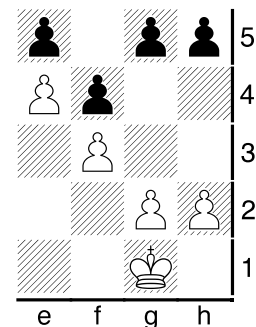
4. Pawn structure f6(f5), g7, h7

The drawbacks of moving the f-pawn are:

- the e6- and g6- squares are weak
- the a2-g8 diagonal is weak
- the pawn on f6 occupies the position where the black knight usually stays



The positions where the f-pawn is pushed are not so common for Black. We meet this pawn structure more often at White against King's Indian Defense (closed centre), where White advances the f-pawn not to allow f4-f3 and to defend the g2-pawn by a rook on the second rank.



CENTRAL PAWNS and CONTROL

The success of a wing attack (here on the kingside) is tightly connected with the central situation. There are 3 major cases:

1. **The centre is closed** (the centre is occupied by chain of pawns which block each other). The attacks on wings are usually the only possible strategy, so almost surely one of the players will attack on the kingside.

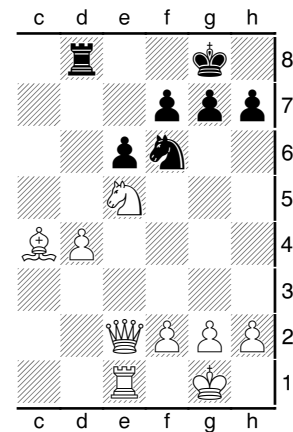
2. **The centre is under tension** (when the fight for the centre was not decided yet or even has not started). In this situation, a wing attack rarely can be successful and many times can lead to losing the game. The centre must be assured and well controlled before starting an attack.
3. **The centre is stable**, when players have control over about half of the centre each and the pawn-advances are less possible (or predictable). In these situations, the re-arrangement of pieces for an attack against the opponent king can lose the control over the centre and, therefore, they must be very well analyzed beforehand.

THE CENTRAL E-PAWN

The emplacement of the e-pawns, for both White and Black, has a major importance in assessing the king's safety. There are more typical situations that we discuss here:

1. Black: pawn on e6, White: no pawn on the e-file

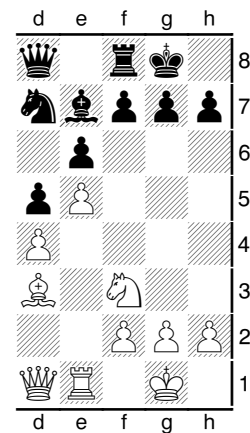
- White controls the e-file and the e5-outpost
- White usually can secure the position of a knight on e5
- White puts pressure on the f7- and e6- pawns threatening a sacrifice on f7
- White's light-square bishop is good on both a2-g8 and b1-h7 diagonals
- The black rook should stay on f8 defending the f7-pawn, in many situations.
- White can use the half-open e-file for a rook lift: Re1-e3-g3



This kind of situation on the e-file is very often met and it is typical of the Isolated Pawn, and not only.

2. Black: pawn on e6, White: pawn on e5

- the e5-pawn confers White a local space advantage
- of course, the black knight is no more on f6 defending the king, and especially the h7-square is weak now.
- White controls the f6-square which can be important in the case of the typical sacrifice: 1.Bxh7+ Kxh7 2.Ng5+ Kg6 (and, now, the black king cannot escape on e7 through f6)
- the b1-h7 diagonal is usually controlled by White where he can exert a strong pressure
- after the defensive move g7-g6 (often necessary), the f6-square becomes weak for Black



- In some situations, White can plan a sacrifice on f6 (Nf3-h2-g4-f6+) and after g7xf6, e5xf6, White can attack on the g-file
- the rook lift Re1-e3-g3(h3) is possible

Black can play f7-f5 with one of the 2 CQS:

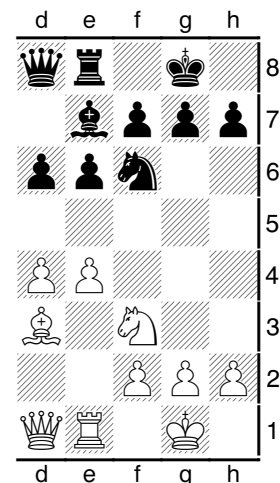
1. If White takes on f6, Black retakes with the knight bringing it back in defense and opens the f-file for his rook; or
2. If White doesn't take on f5, Black blocks White's actions on the kingside.

This advance (f7-f5) must be well calculated as after e5xf6, the e6- and e5- squares might become a problem for Black

3. Black: pawn on e6, White: pawn on e4

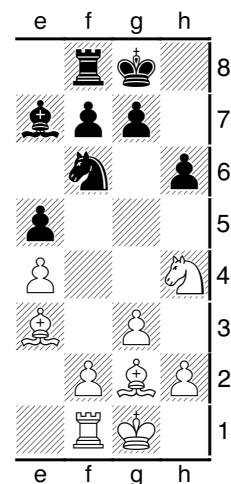
In this situation, White usually tries to find the best moment to advance the e4-pawn on e5 and start the attack. By advancing the pawn, Black usually gains a strong outpost on d5 for his f6-knight, so this advance requires a good evaluation of the success chances of an attack.

Also, the position of the pawns e4 against e6 is typical for Scheveningen structure of Sicilian.



4. Black: pawn on e5, White: pawn on e4

- White has no local space advantage
- White can use the f5-square for his knight (Nf3-h4-f5 or Nc3-e2-g3-f5) especially when Black pushed already h7-h6 because g7-g6 to chase the knight away is no more possible (the h6-pawn will be hanging). As a note: White can provoke h7-h6 by Bg5 before to start the knight's maneuver
- Sometimes, White can advance f2-f4 with the threat f4-f5 (and, then, even g2-g4-g5) and opening the f-file for the rook. As a note: sometimes, the rook can be better to wait some moves before "activation" on another file, if the advance of the f-pawn might work.



PIECES IN ATTACK

In this chapter, we present the attacking pieces and their most common ways to come in attack against the opponent king.

1. The queen

Of course, the queen is the most important piece in attack during the middlegame.

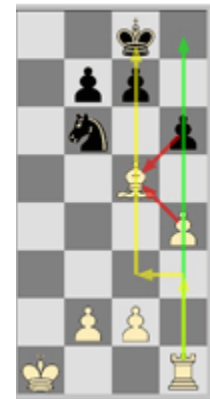
The best attacking positions for the queen are the kingside squares (any of them where she can be safe – not attacked by opponent pieces).

Other common squares for attack are d3 and b3 usually supported by a bishop on the b1-h7 or a2-g8 diagonals (creating the well-known queen + bishop “battery”). An advantage would be to have the 3rd rank clear, to be able to transfer the queen on a more active square on the kingside.

2. The kingside rook

If White has not castled yet, he can use this rook directly from h1 in 3 interesting ways:

- h2-h4 supporting the g5-square and any exchange there would open the h-file for the rook (after h4xg5)
- h2-h4 with the idea Rh1-h3-g3, and
- g2-g4 with idea Rh1-g1 and g4-g5 chasing away the f6-knight with attack on the g-file and followed possible by a knight sacrifice on f6 or h2-h4-h5 and g5-g6 destroying black king's protection.

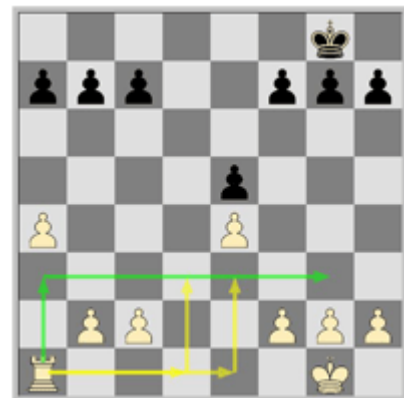


After the castle is done, White can use the rook in attack by the rook-lift Rf1-e1-e3-g3(h3) or, if the f-pawn is pushed on f4, Rf1-f3-g3(h3).

By advancing the f-pawn (f2-f4 and even f4-f5xe6), White also intends to add his rook in attack by attacking on f6 (exchange sacrifices are seriously threaten: Rf1xNf6) and f7.

3. The queenside rook

Usually neglected, the queenside rook can be very powerful in attack and rook lifts as Ra1-d1(c1)-d3(c3)-g3(h3) gives a very strong plus to the White's attack.



Beside rook-lifts, an important role of the queenside rook is to assure the control and pressure on one of the central files.

While Black will be busy with defensive tasks on the kingside, this rook can exert a lot of pressure and give Black extra problems on the central files.

4. The light-square bishop

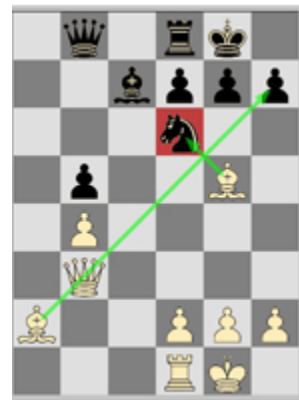
The light-square bishop is one of the main attacking pieces. It usually attacks black king's position using the a2-g8 or b1-h7 diagonals. In other fewer cases, the bishop who was beforehand fianchettoed can come on attack on h3 targeting e6.

The bishop collaborates very well with the queen to attack on h7 or f7 or with a knight on g5 attacking on e6, f7, or h7.

5. The dark-square bishop

In most cases, this bishop attacks indirectly the black king by attacking his best defender, Nf6, from g5.

In the diagram from above, we can see the collaboration between white pieces in attack (1.Bxf6 and 2.Qh7#).



When Black defends his king by playing g7-g6 or when Black developed his kingside using the fianchetto structure, this bishop comes in attack on the dark-squares or to exchange the opponent dark-square bishop which may end with a total control of these squares in White's favor.

Another position for the bishop in attack is on b2 when the long diagonal is open.

6. The queenside knight

The queenside knight comes in attack on 2 common routes: Nb1-d2-f1-g3(e3)-f5(h5!) or Nb1-c3-e2-g3. When it is possible, usually after the advance e4-e5 or when Black has no a good control over the centre, the knight can jump in attack using directly the central squares.



7. The kingside knight

Beside the typical attack Nf3-g5, the kingside knight can also attack from f5 (Nf3-h4-f5 or Nf3-d4-f5, Ng1-e2-g3-f5), a very strong square for the knight when the black pawn is not on e6.

Other interesting routes for the knights are:

- Ng1-f3, pawn h2-h3, Nf3-h2-**g4** exchanging the f6-knight or with threats like Nf6+
- Ng1-e2-g3(f4)-**h5** attacking on g7!

HOW TO DEFEND

While the safety of the king is a very important element to be considered during the chess game, it's important to know that an over-defensive strategy of the king is far from good. A superiority of forces with defensive tasks results in a minority of forces which fight for initiative. So, we will end the king's safety presentation by giving ways of defending the king, directly or indirectly.

1. Usually, positions when Black has the pawn structure f7, g7, h7 (or h6), with knight on f6 are not easy to be broken as long as Black conducts an active strategy on the centre.
2. **The fianchetto structure (f7, g6, h7, Bg7) and Nf6** is also usually enough as long as Black can react in the centre.
3. **The light-square bishop** is a very strong defender when arrives on the kingside by Bc8-f5 or Bc8-g4-(h5). The bishop will neutralize the white light-square bishop or will pin the f3-knight. In the end of its journey, the bishop can go on g6 defending the light-squares around the king and blocking any access toward g7. However, moving the bishop on the kingside may create other problems on the queenside's light-squares.

Not in few cases, Black defends his kingside in the last moment (when the position already looks hopeless) by defending the kingside (especially h7) by moves like: Ba6-d3 or Bb7-e4.

Also, the bishop on the c8-h3 diagonal impedes White's possible rook lifts to h3-square.



4. **The dark-square bishop** often defends the Nf6 against Bg5, not permitting the messing of pawn structures after Bg5xf6, g7xf6.

Also, when White is able to provoke the advancing of g7-g6 the dark-squares in Black's camp should have their defender, the bishop.



Of course, the dark-square bishop plays a very important role in systems based on fianchetto on the kingside when Black tries to protect it from exchanges with the White's bishop.

A common way to avoid the exchange of the bishop is to play h7-h6 and Kh7 on time, immediately after White's Be3 intending Qd2 and Bh6. Of course, the weakening of pawn structure with h7-h6 is not recommended when White castled on the other side.

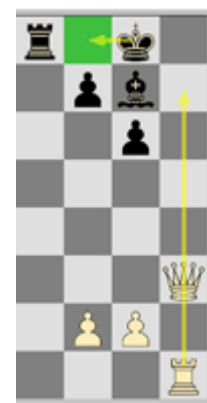
Another method to avoid the exchange of the fianchettoed bishop is to play Rf8-somewhere and after Be3(g5)-h6 to respond with the retreat Bg7-h8.



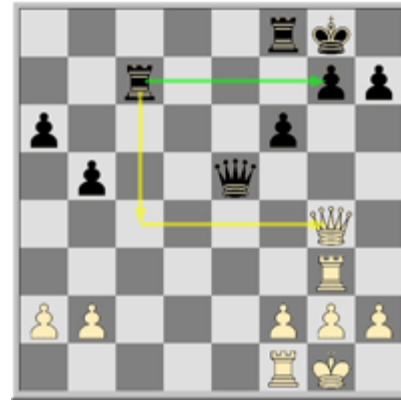
5. **The kingside rook** can be a very important defender for the f7-pawn that White can attack by means of Ng5 or Ne5, Qh5, B on a2-g8 diagonal or by opening the f-file. Also, the rook on f8 can support the advance of the f7-pawn on f5 in some cases.

However, the rook is not always good on f8 because it also restricts the mobility of the king which can find a safe place on f8.

In other cases, the f8-square can be better used by a knight. For example, if White attacks the knight on f6 with e4-e5, Black can still defend the kingside with Nf6-d7-f8.



6. **The queenside rook** can defend the king's position by 2 methods:
- defending the 7th rank (usually from a7 or c7), especially when the f7-pawn is pushed forward
 - controlling an advanced rank (4th or 5th ranks) if this is open and obstructing the play of the white pieces



7. **The queen** is a bad defender especially when White attacks with more pieces. However, the queen can end the attack if she finds a way to exchange the opponent queen.

Another method of defending by using the queen is an indirect one: when White has his pieces attacking on the kingside, the black queen can find ways to enter the opponent's unprotected camp. Usually such an entrance ends badly for the attacking player which left the minor pieces undefended and uncoordinated behind.



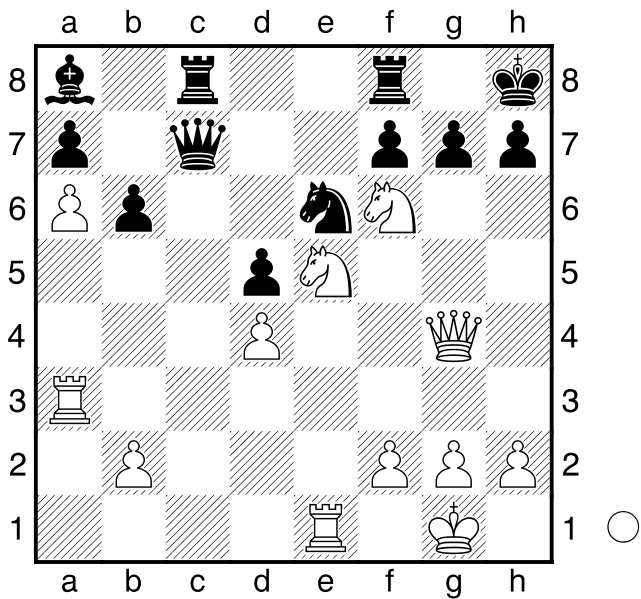
8. **The queenside knight** can be used in defense with success as we know that the knights are excellent defenders. For example, the knight can stay on d7 defending the f6 knight or come right on the kingside via: Nd7-f8-g6(e6) or Nc6-e7.

However, in many cases, Black can use the queenside knight in active actions on the queenside (as the black queen), creating unpleasant problems to the unprotected white camp.

Together with the comments on the given annotated games and the other 2 theoretical lessons, you should have all the information necessary to assess the safety of the king during the middlegame. More information you can gather by studying the typical strategies of attack and defense on typical positions (that we'll discuss further on our course) and specific of the openings you are playing.

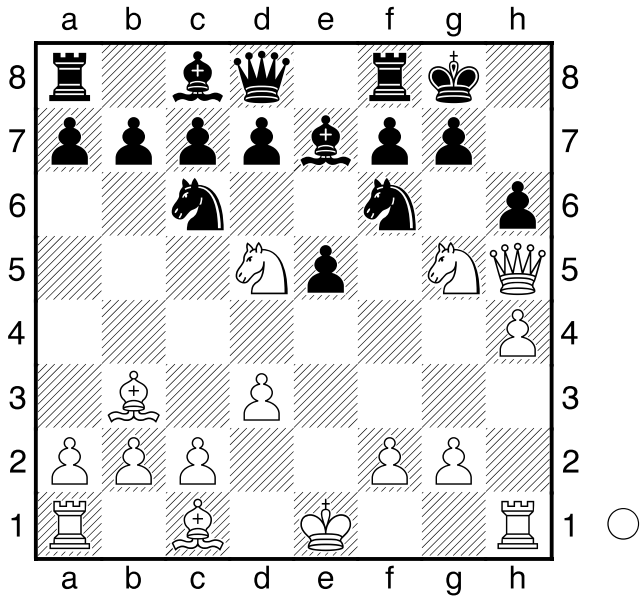
END

Exercise 1



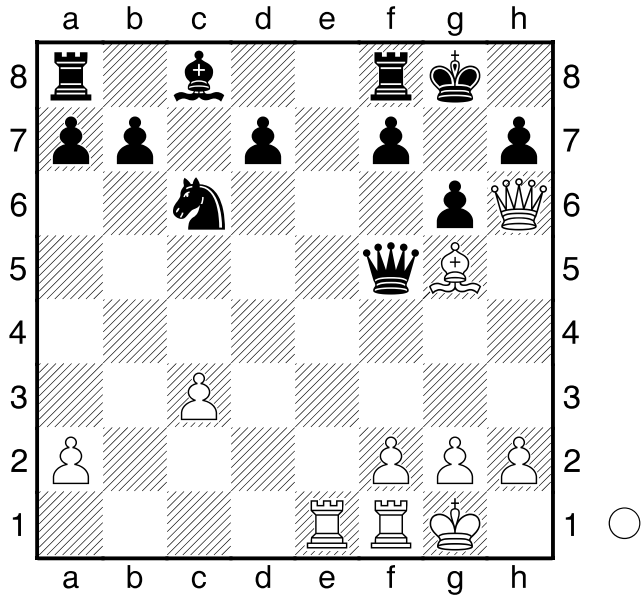
The black king is trapped in the corner and only the pawns are in the White's pieces way. How can White open up the lines and mate?

Exercise 2



White is to move. How can you exploit the local pieces superiority, the "X rays" type pressure along the a2-g8 diagonal and the possibility to open the "h" file?

Exercise 3

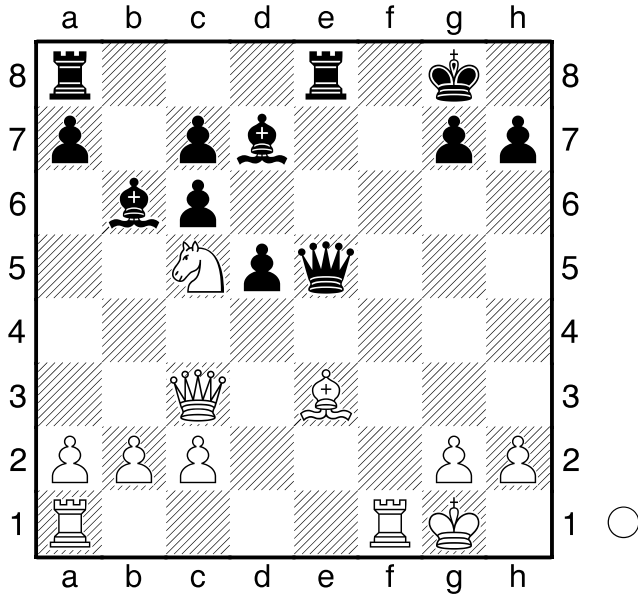


White is to move. How can be used the lead in development and the dark weak squares around the Black king?

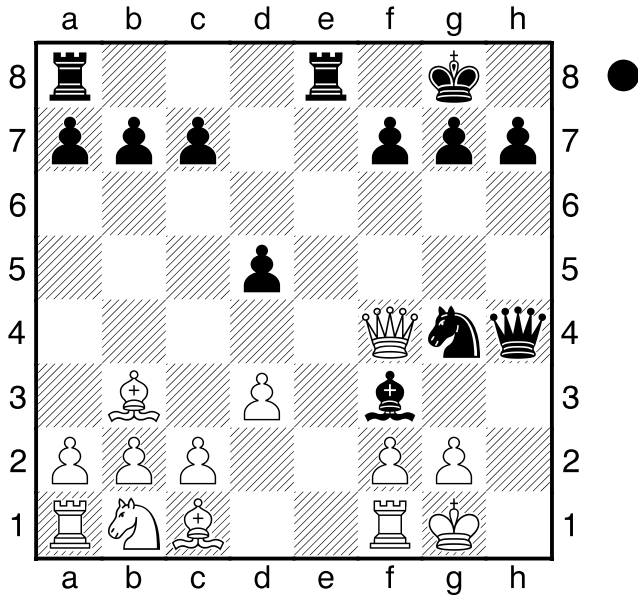
Exercise 4

(Diagram)

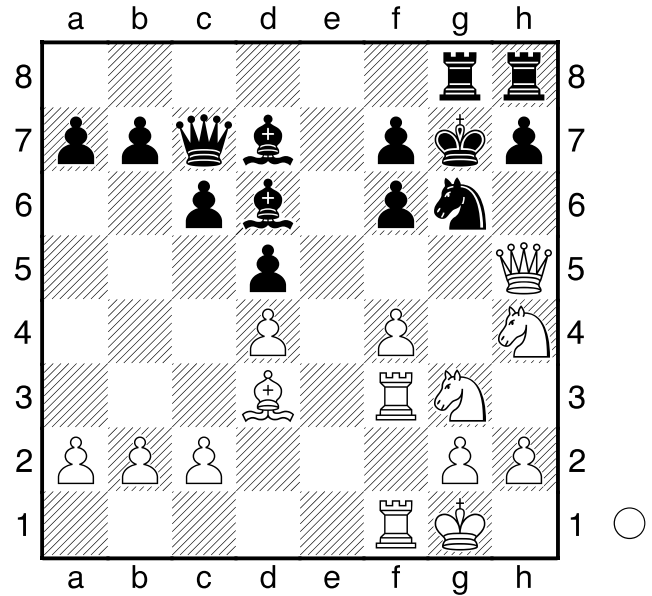
White to move. Due to the absence of the f7-pawn, the black king is vulnerable. Can you exploit that?



Exercise 5



Exercise 6



White to move.

Black's pawn structure is damaged on the kingside and White has an overwhelming pieces superiority.

Find a way to use that!

Exercise 7

(Diagram)

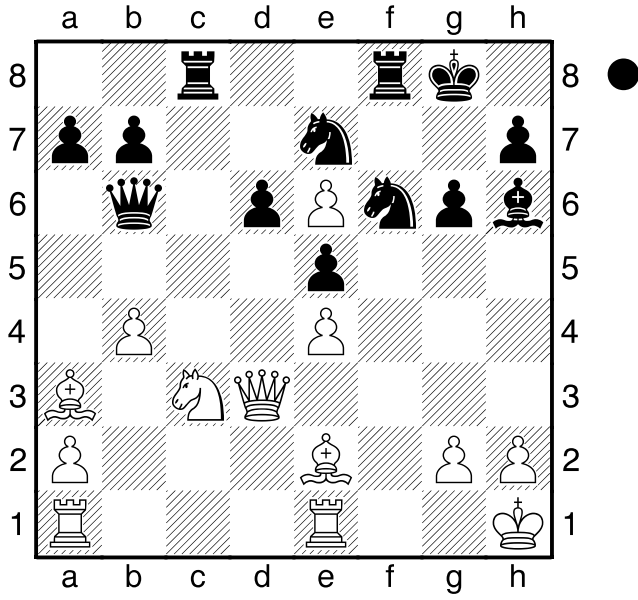
Black is to move.

The white king is temporary exposed in the corner. Can you find a way to use this?

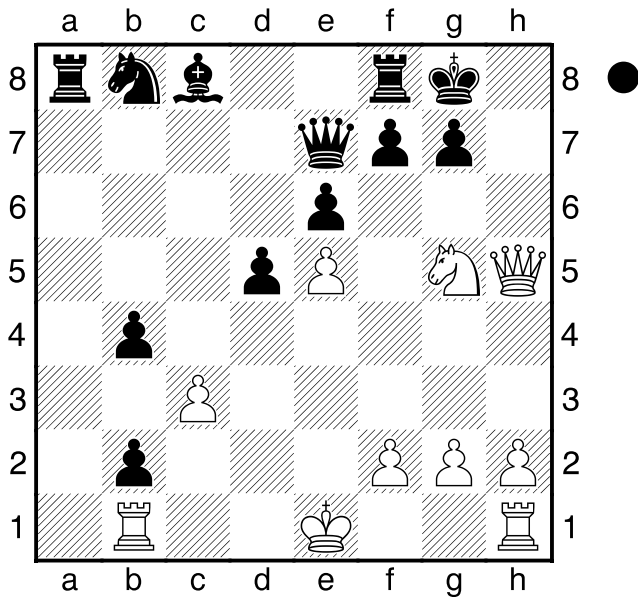
Black is to move.

Black has a certain pieces superiority, the h2-pawn is missing, but White is threatening to grab the bishop from f3.

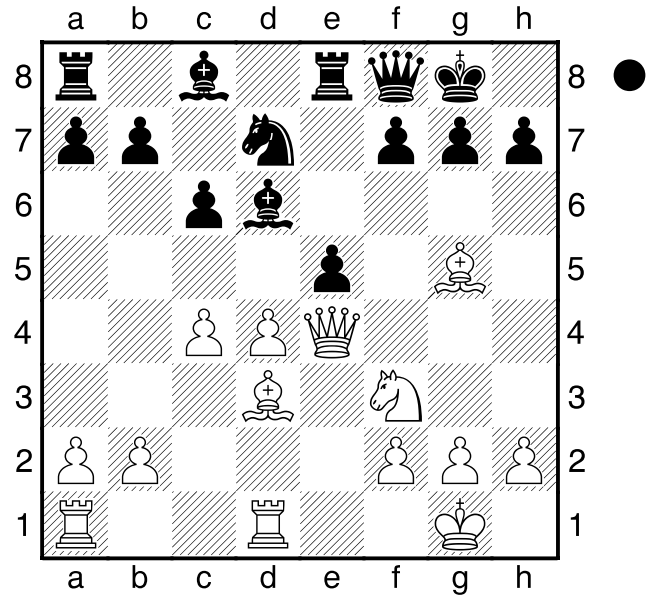
Find the solution and explain it.



Exercise 8



Exercise 9



Black is to move.

White's last move was Bd3 threatening mate.

Try to figure out the best defense!

Exercise 10

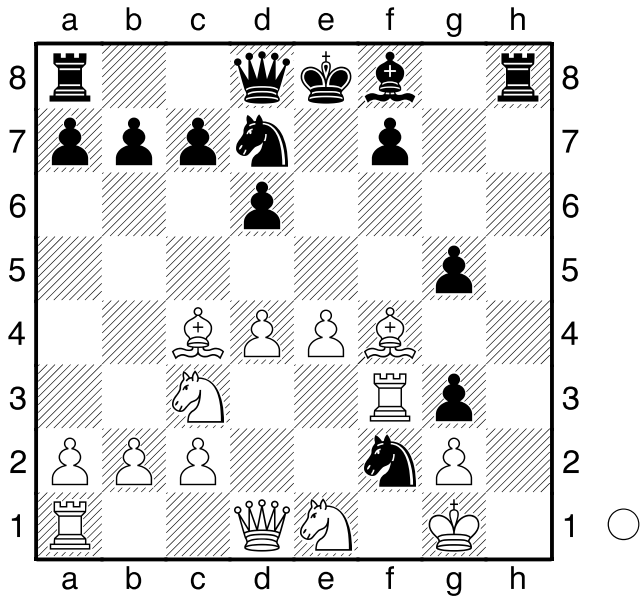
(Diagram)

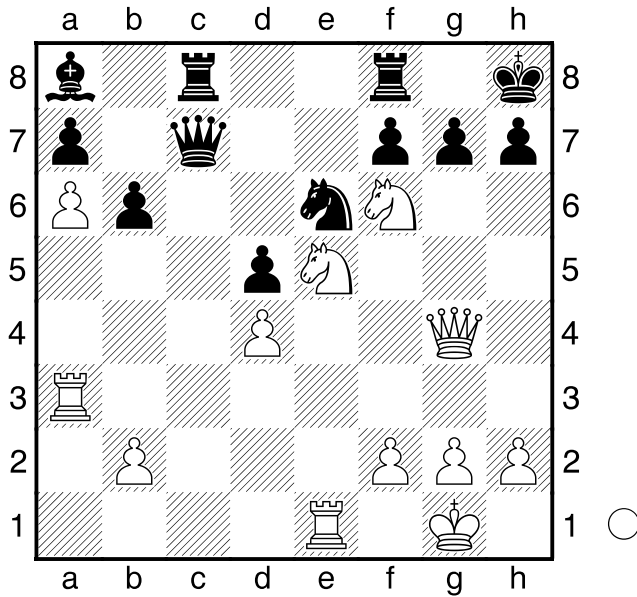
Black's attack seems to be decisive.

Try to find the best candidate moves for White and the solution!

Black is to move.

White is threatening mate. Do you have some defensive resources?





White attacks with 4 pieces the black king. The next sacrifice will destroy the defense:

1.Qxe6!

[1.Qg6 is also good Ng5 (1...fxg6 2.Nxg6+ hxg6 3.Rh3# ; 1...hxg6 2.Rh3#) 2.Qxg5+-]

1...fxe6

[1...Qc1 2.Nxf7+ Rxf7 3.Rc3! Rxc3 4.Qe8+ Rf8 5.Qxf8#]

2.Ng6+ hxc6 3.Rh3#

1-0

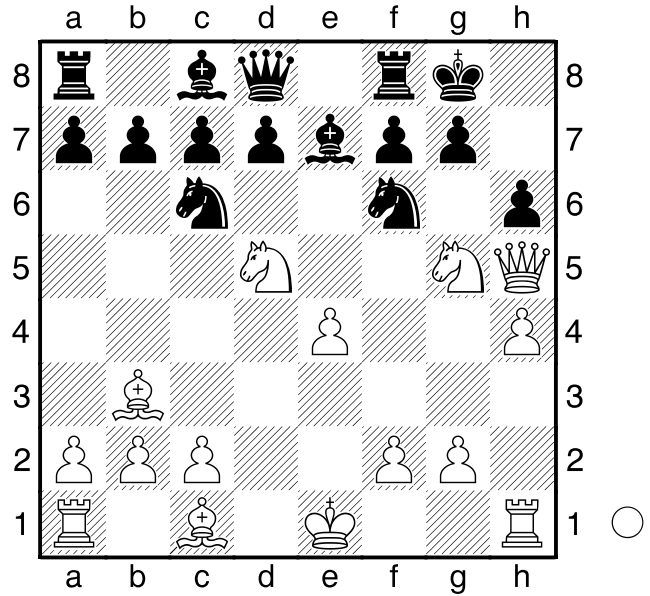
exercise 2

(Diagram)

White has a strong attack and has pressure on f7. Moreover, Black is even not developed. However, the human player has to be calm and calculate the safest way for winning the game:

1.Nxf6+

[Here is the "trap" where somebody who doesn't calculate all the candidate moves of the opponent could fall:
the nice move 1.Qg6?! doesn't work as Black can defend with: Kh8! (of course, not: 1...fxg6?? 2.Nxe7+ Kh8 3.Nxg6#) 2.Nxf7+



(2.Nf4→ Ne5 3.Bxf7 Bc5 ; 2.Nxf6 fxg6-+)
2...Rxf7 3.Qxf7 Bb4+ 4.c3 Ne5 5.Qxf6 gxf6
6.cxb4-+]

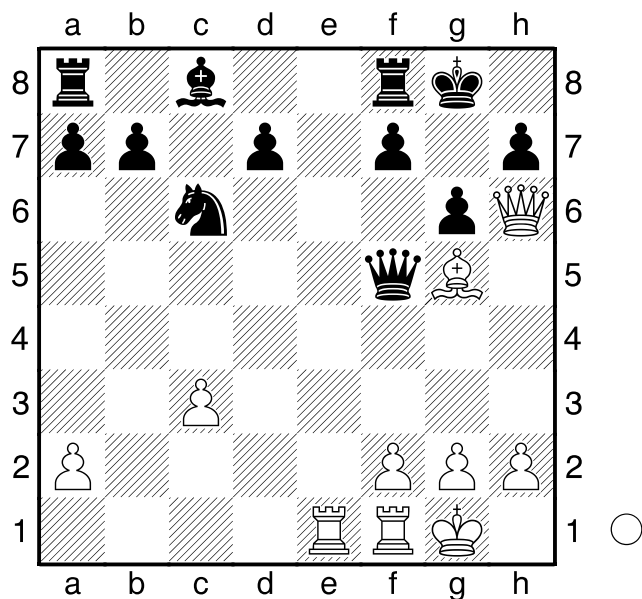
1...Bxf6 2.Bxf7+ Rxf7 3.Qxf7+ Kh8 4.Qg6
Bxg5 5.hxc6 Ne5 6.Qh5+-
1-0

exercise 3

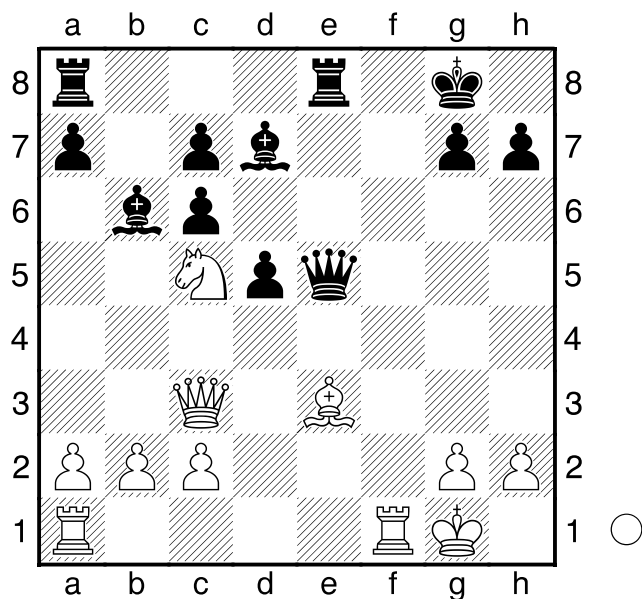
(Diagram)

Black's pawn structure is weakened by the pawn on g6 and absence of the dark-square bishop. Moreover, the queenside is not developed and the rook or bishop cannot defend the king in any way.

1.Qxf8+ Kxf8 2.Bh6+ Kg8 3.Re8#
1-0

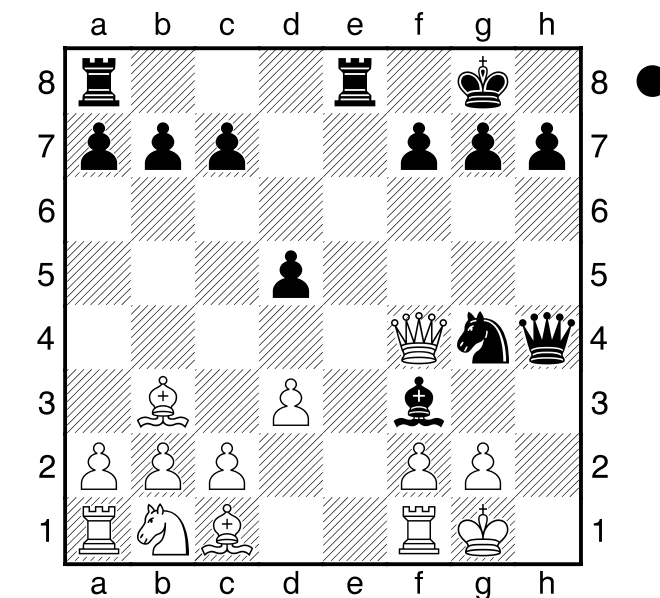


exercise 4



2.Nxd7+ Kg8 3.Nxe5+-
1-0

exercise 5



Black is a piece down, but 4 of his pieces attack against a weak White's defense.

1...Re1! threatening the f2-square.

2.gxf3

[2.Rxe1 Qxf2+ 3.Kh1 Qxe1#]

[2.Qxf3 Qh2#]

[2.Nd2 Qxf2+ 3.Kh1 Qxg2#]

[2.Be3 Qh1+ 3.Kxh1 Rxf1#]

2...Qxf2+ 3.Kh1 Rxf1#

1-0

exercise 6

(Diagram)

The absence of the f6-knight (the best defender of the king) can have serious consequences even if the king seems to be safe. Here, the white rook can enter through the f-file to draw one of the black pieces to a mined square.

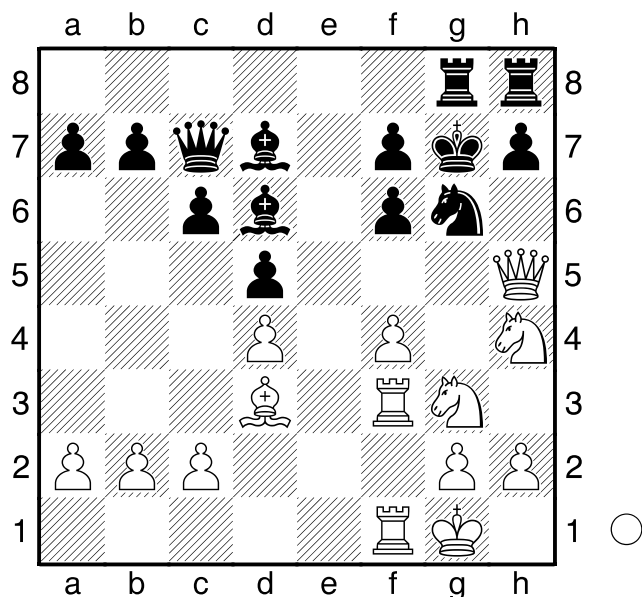
1.Rf8+! Kxf8

[1...Rxf8 2.Qxe5]

Black's king seems enough protected, but after a closer look we can notice that the black defending pieces effectively suffocate him. Therefore, White draws the black king out into a mate net.

1.Qh6+! Kxh6 2.Nhf5+

[2.Ngf5+ Bxf5 (2...Kh5 3.g4+ Kxg4 4.Rg3+ Kh5 5.Be2#) 3.Nxf5+ Kh5 4.Rh3+ Kg4



5.Ne3#]
2...Bxf5 3.Nxf5+ Kh5 4.Rh3+ Nh4
 [4...Kg4 5.Nh6# (5.Ne3#)]
5.Rxh4+ Kg6 6.Rh6# Conclusion: a
 suffocating defense doesn't help.
1-0

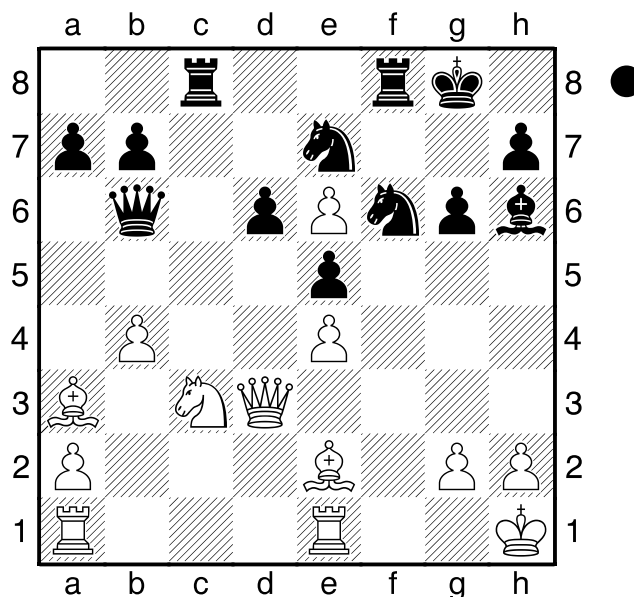
exercise 7

(Diagram)

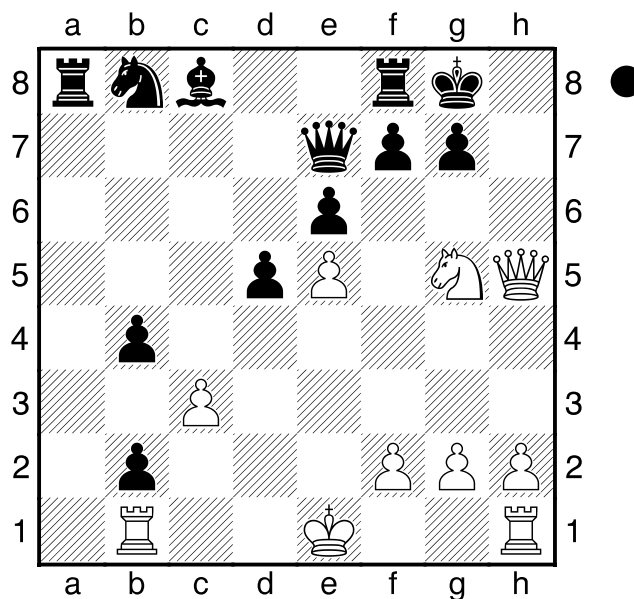
White's king is unprotected, while a lot of Black pieces are orientated toward him. However, it seems that there is no entrance. Usually, something must exist in these situations and the player should be very careful at every moment (move) during the practical game in order to not lose the occasion.

In exercises, the student knows that something should exist. During the game, the player should always look with a fresh eye to the position and find such simple combinations.

1...Rxc3 2.Qxc3 Nxe4 3.Qb3 Nf2+ 4.Kg1
Nh3+ 5.Kh1 Qg1+ 6.Rxg1 Nf2#
0-1



exercise 8



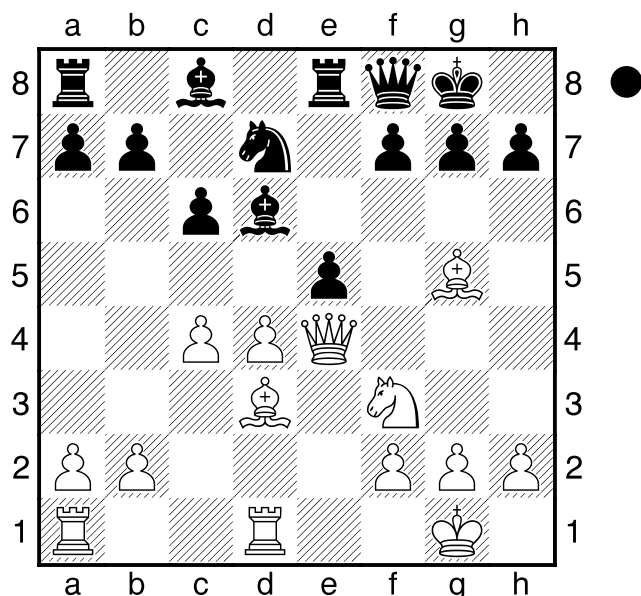
The black king can be saved by only a move: the queen sacrifice. After this, the white king will be in an improper position that the advanced black pawns can exploit.

This exercise is instructive if you will need to calculate this situation in a practical game with more moves in advance and to foresee this defensive queen sacrifice.

1...Qxg5 2.Qxg5 bxc3 3.Qe3

[3.O-O Ba6 4.Rfe1 Nc6+- followed by Bd3 and/or d5-d4]
 [3.Kd1 Nc6 4.Kc2 Ra3 5.Rxb2 Nd4+ 6.Kb1 cxb2 7.Kxb2 Rb3+ 8.Kc1 Ba6+-]
3...c2 4.Rxb2 Ra1+ 5.Kd2 Rxh1 6.Rxc2 Ba6-+ 0-1

exercise 9



In absence of the knight on f6, the f-pawn is a very good defense of the king's position. More than protecting the b1-h7 diagonal, the f7-f5 advance creates space for the black pieces.

1...f5! 2.Qh4

[2.Qxf5?? Nf6 and the white queen is trapped.]

2...e4 3.c5 exd3

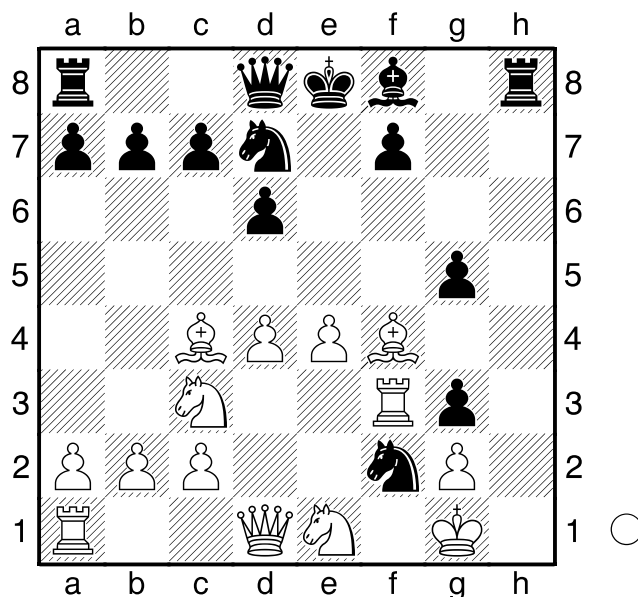
[3...Bc7 4.Bc4+ Kh8 5.Nd2±]

4.cxd6 Qxd6 5.Rxd3 Re4 6.Qh5 h6

1/2-1/2

exercise 10

Black threatens mate on h1 and the white queen. However, 2 pieces which also looks too



artificially placed cannot win against harmoniously developed pieces.

White wins easily in 2 ways:

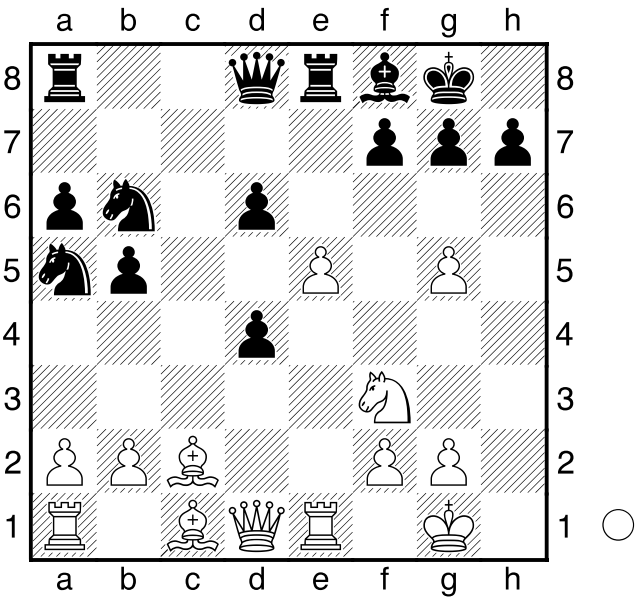
1.Bxg3

[1.Bxf7+ Kxf7 2.Bxg3+ Kg8 3.Rxf2+-]

1...Nxd1 2.Bxf7+ Ke7 3.Nd5#

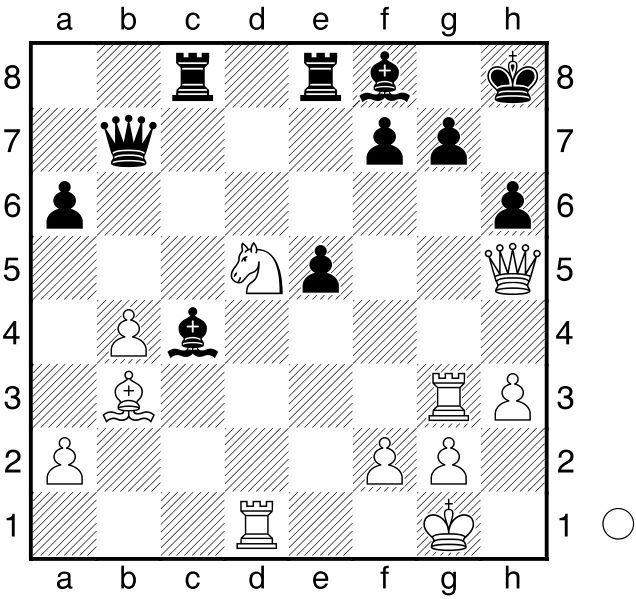
1-0

Exercise 1



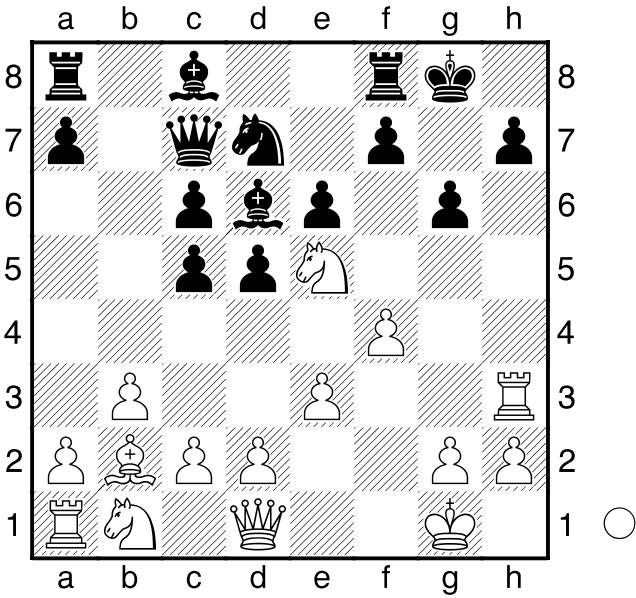
White is to move.
Black last move was 19....Bf8 as a reply to 19. e5 which opened the b1-h7 diagonal. Does the g5 pawn change the picture? Give variations.

Exercise 2



White has already a pieces superiority on the king side, the Black's king is isolated in the corner and his pawn structure is damaged. How can White exploit that?

Exercise 3

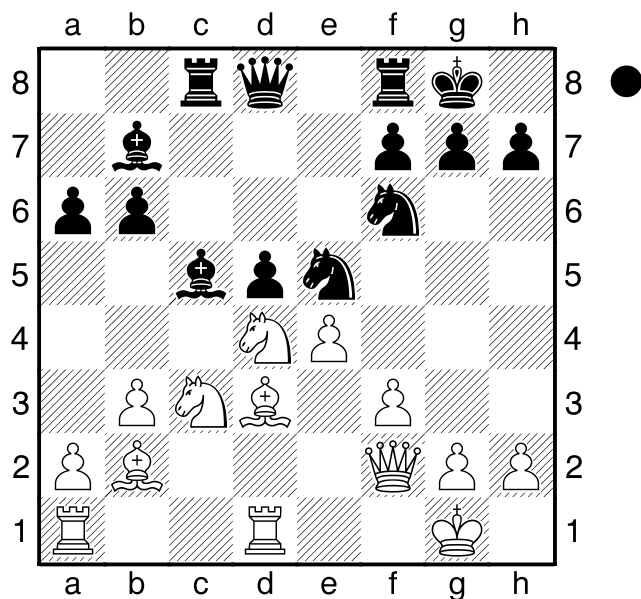


White is to move.
How can be used the long diagonal a1-h8 in addition with the local pieces superiority?

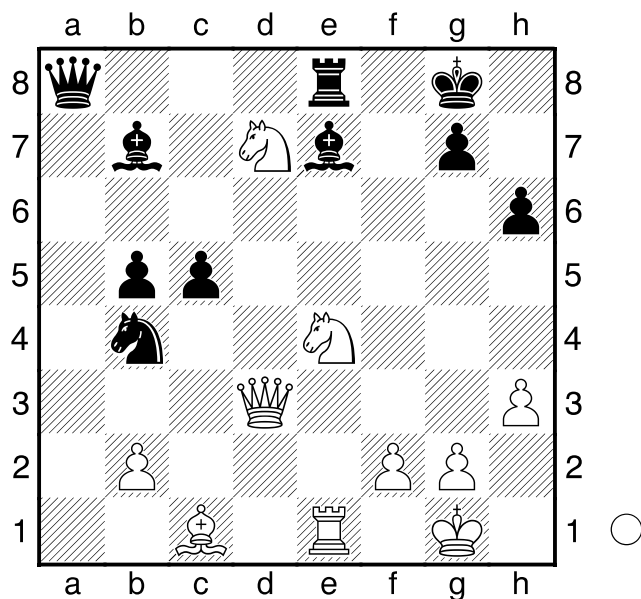
Exercise 4

(Diagram)

Black is to move.
In this pawn structure (f3, g2, h2) Black can use the a7-g1 diagonal to attack. Can you see the solution?



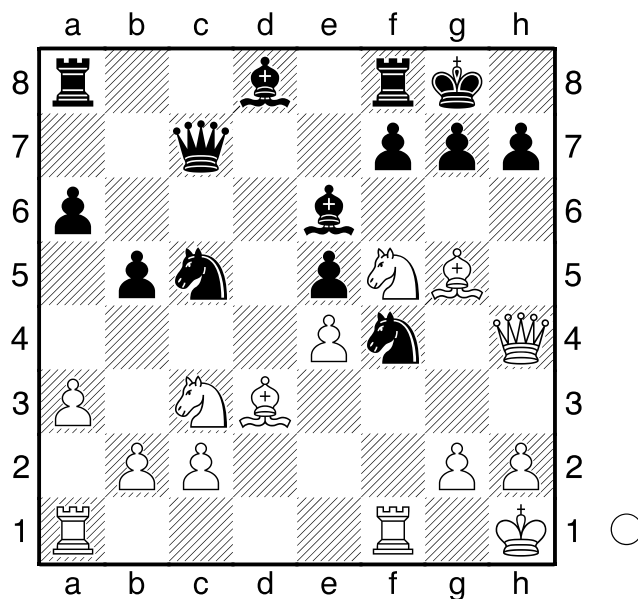
Exercise 5



The pawn from f7 is missing and the g6 square is terrible weak. Can White exploit this?

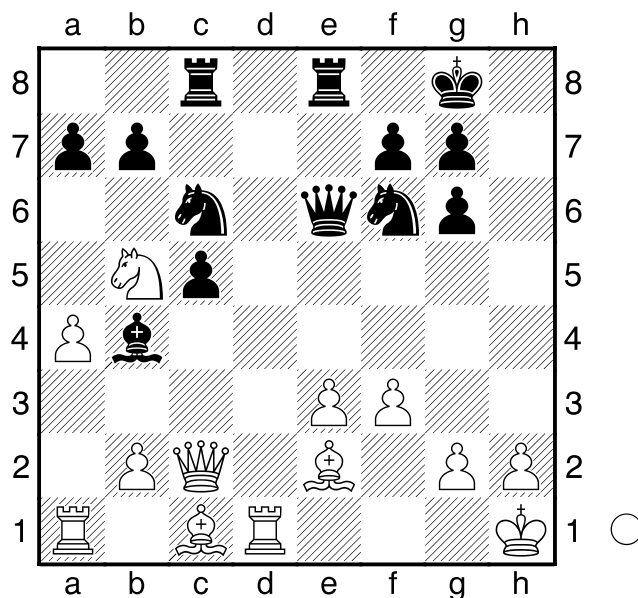
Exercise 6

White is to move.



We have a middlegame position arising from Sicilian Defense. White must act quickly because Bd3 is threatened and the kingside piece superiority is just a temporary advantage.

Exercise 7

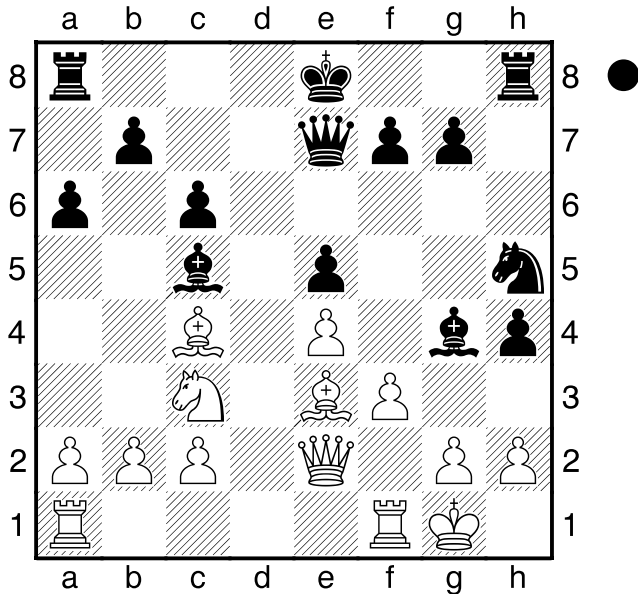


White is to move.

Can you notice some drawbacks in Black's king position?

Find the solution and the best reply for Black!

Exercise 8



Black is to move.

White has the weak pawn structure f3,g2,h2 in front of the king and, in addition, Black has a piece superiority and the chance to open the 'h' file. Find the solution!

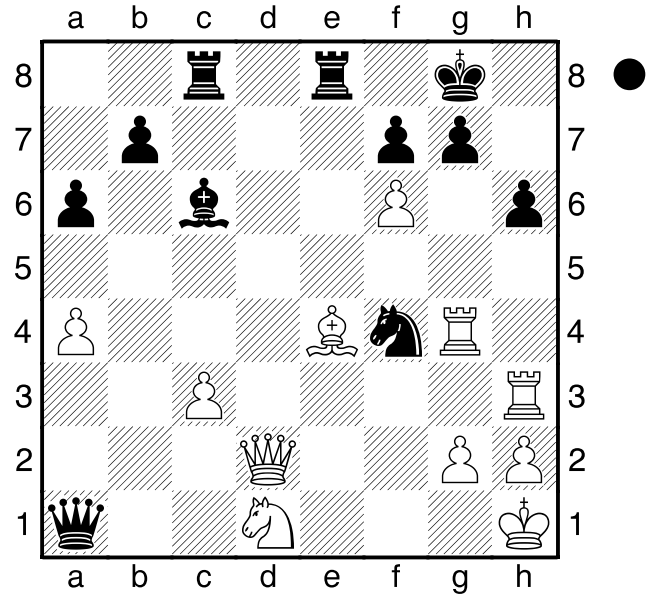
Exercise 9

(Diagram)

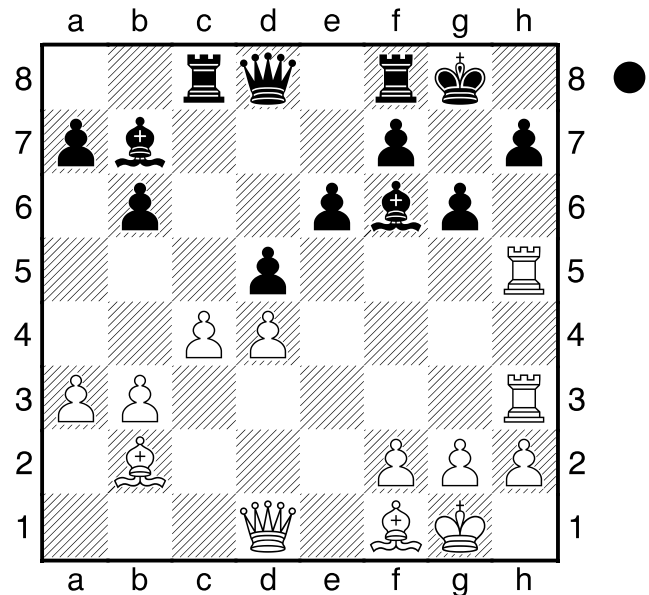
Black is to move.

White's last move was f5-f6, which seems dangerous enough.

Strategically speaking, White's position is very bad due to the weaknesses from the queen side, the first rank weakness and the lack of coordination between his pieces. How can Black go on?



Exercise 10



Black is to move.

Kg8 is exposed to a terrible attack along the "h" file. You must assess the real threats and find a way to react!

Let's remember the fragment regarding the **Centre** as a criterion of the exhaustive positional evaluation given in the Month 1 of ICS.

4. THE CENTRE

At this stage of evaluation, we will focus on the centre of the board and will evaluate 2 distinct elements: the control over the centre and the type of centre.

4.1. The control over the centre

The centre is defined as the first four most central squares on the board. By a better control over the centre, we gain important squares for our pieces (which have influence on both flanks) and, in the same time, obstruct the opponent's pieces. Moreover, an attack on flank would have minimal success chances if the centre was not previously secured.

The evaluation will be made by checking what squares are controlled by a player, what squares are controlled by the other player and what squares are controlled by both players (or by none of them). On the squares controlled by both players a tense fight is usually given. The result of this evaluation will return a score as: 2-2 (the centre is equally controlled), 2.5-1.5, 3-1, 3.5-0.5 or 4-0.

4.2. The type of the centre

There are more types of centers (we are talking about the structure of the pawns in the centre), every of them with distinct and specific strategies. At this stage of evaluation, it is essential to know what type of centre our position belongs to.

The centre begins to take shape sooner or later, from the opening stage, in function of the opening system, and then, at some critical moments during the game, the pawn structure in the centre will probably change.

For now, we will briefly enounce the 5 types of centers:

- a) *Closed centre* – the entire centre is blocked by chains of pawns of the 2 players and the opponent chains block each other.
- b) *Open centre* – there are 2 completely open files in the extended centre (for example, when both c- and d- files are open, even if there are pawns on the e-file)
- c) *Static centre* – there are 2 half-open files or only 1 open file in the extended centre and the pawns forms chains, but without blocking each other.
- d) *Mobile centre* – when a player has a mobile pawn formation in the centre or in the extended centre, while the other player has no pawns to counter it (rarely met).
- e) *Dynamic centre* – this is the most often met type of centre. It is characterized by a still undefined pawn structure in the centre and it can derive in any other type.

CLOSED CENTER

As you already know in positions with pawn chains on the central squares the game has a closed character and the action will take place on the wings.

Each side will try to attack where it has pieces superiority, the chance of a breakthrough and where the attack seems more promising. Usually when we have to deal with castle on opposite wings is indicated to attack where the enemy king is.

THE ACTIVE SIDE (the side which has the space advantage) will attack against the weaker side of the opponent, in order to create pieces superiority, no matter where his own king is. ONLY BY STARTING WITH A PAWN ATTACK (meant to open up the lines for the pieces) the active side has chances to succeed.

THE DEFENDING SIDE should prepare a counterplay based on a central pawn breakthrough or on the opposite wing. BUT BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE, THE DEFENDER must create as many obstacles as possible in front of the advancing pawns of the enemy.

At the same time, positions with closed center are a proper field for the use of strategical methods as:

- using an open file
- create local pieces superiority
- penetrate through the open file in enemy camp
- improving worst placed piece position
- creating outposts for the pieces
- the use of weak squares complex
- creating a free supported pawn

The study material covers the main opening from which the closed center arises.

It is indicated when you look over the games:

- to follow the games in accordance with the principles stated above
- to write down the main ideas
- make analogies with your own openings
- observe the move transpositions
- observe the pieces setup for each opening

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.d3 d5 5.Nbd2 c5 6.e4 Nc6 7.0-0 d4 8.a4 e5

In closed positions, the TIME factor (in terms of tempos) decreases in importance so you can spend more moves to reach the ideal position for each piece.

In this game, you can observe how White keeps all his pieces active.

9.Nc4 Bg4 10.Qe1 Bxf3 11.Bxf3 0-0 12.Bg2 Ne8 13.f4

In this game, White is the first to start the attack on the king side, after he created real obstacles on the queen side.

Nd6 14.b3 Qe7 15.Qf2 b6 16.f5 f6 17.h4 Nxc4 18.bxc4 g5 19.hxg5 fxg5 20.Bf3 Bf6 21.Kg2 Rf7 22.Rh1 Rg7 23.Bg4 a5 24.Rh6 Nb8 25.Bd2 Nd7 26.Rah1 Nf8 27.Qe1 Rd8 28.R1h5 Rd6 29.Qc1 Nd7 30.Kh3 Nf8 31.Be2 Nd7 32.g4 Kh8 33.Rxf6 Nxf6 34.Bxg5 Qf8 35.Bxf6 Qxf6 36.g5 Qf7 37.Qe1 Qd7 38.Qh4 Kg8 39.Qg3 h6 40.Qxe5 Rxc5 41.Rxc5 hxc5 42.Bh5 Rh6 43.Kg4 Kh7 44.Qd5 Qxd5 45.cxd5 b5 46.e5 bxa4 47.d6 a3 48.Bf7 Kg7 49.d7 Rh8 50.Be8 1-0

	Ruzele,Darius	E99
	Mollov,Elin	2515
	closed center "b"& "h" files open	2375
		1997

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.Ne1 Nd7 10.Be3 f5 11.f3 f4 12.Bf2 g5 13.a4 a5 14.Nd3 b6 15.Be1 Nf6 16.Nf2

A wise setup from White's part which makes the breakthrough g5-g4 difficult for Black and doesn't allow pieces superiority for the enemy. White will take advantage from Black's lack of coordination and skillfully will penetrate along the "b" file.

h5 17.h3 Rf7 18.b4 Bf8 19.bxa5 bxa5 20.Na2 c5 21.Nc1 Ng6 22.Kh2 Rg7 23.Rh1 g4 24.fxg4 hxg4 25.hxg4 Rh7+ 26.Kg1 Rxh1+ 27.Kxh1 Ra7 28.Ra3 Bh6 29.Nh3 Nh7 30.Nd3 Nh4 31.Rb3 Bd7 32.Qb1 Ra8

33.Rb7 Nf8 34.Qb6 Qf6 35.Bxh4 Qxh4
36.Qxd6 Bxa4 37.g5 Bg7 38.Ndf2 Be8
39.Bg4 a4 40.Qc7 Bh8 41.Rb8 Rxb8
42.Qxb8 Bf7 43.d6 a3 44.d7 a2 45.Qa8
1-0

 **Jussupow,Artur** **E99**
 **Kasparov,Garry** **2665**
closed center "f" & "h" files open **2785**
1996

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3
0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.Ne1
Nd7 10.Be3 f5 11.f3 f4 12.Bf2 g5 13.a4 a5
14.Nd3 b6

With his last two moves Black set some
obstacles in White's way. At his turn White's
kept the breakthrough b2-b4 in his back hand.
Follow how Kasparov is using the "improvement
of the worst placed piece" technique.

15.b4 axb4 16.Nxb4 Nf6 17.Ra3 Bd7
18.Nb5 Kh8 19.Be1 Rg8 20.g4 fxg3
21.hxg3 g4 22.Kg2 gxf3+ 23.Bxf3 Bh6
24.Rh1 Bg5 25.Nd3 Ng6 26.Nf2 Qc8 27.Kf1
Rf8 28.Kg2 Rg8 29.Kf1 Rg7 30.Ke2 Rf7
31.Bd2 Bxd2
 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

 **Astrom,Robert** **E97**
 **Degerman,Lars** **2425**
closed center "c" file open **2500**
1996

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.Nc3 0-0 5.e4
d6 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.b4 Nh5
10.Re1 f5 11.Ng5 Nf6 12.f3 c6 13.Be3 Bh6
14.h4 cxd5 15.cxd5 f4 16.Bf2

Black's attack is blockated thanks to the active
Ng5 and White will soon be able to penetrate
along the "c" file.

Bxg5 17.hxg5 Ne8 18.Rc1 Bd7 19.Bb5
Bxb5 20.Nxb5 Nc8 21.Qa4 Rf7 22.Rc2
Qxg5 23.Rec1 Ne7 24.Nc7 Nxc7 25.Rxc7
Qf6 26.Rxb7 Raf8 27.Rcc7 g5 28.Qxa7 Re8
29.Qa4 Rd8 30.Bb6 Rdf8 31.Qd7 g4
32.Qe6
1-0

 **Kortschnoj,Viktor** **E70**
 **Padevsky,Nikola** **2670**
closed center "c" file open **2480**
1974

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 e5 5.d5
Nf6 6.Bd3 0-0 7.Nge2 Nh5 8.0-0 Nd7 9.Be3
a6 10.Rc1 Qe7 11.Bb1 Kh8 12.b4 f5 13.f3
f4 14.Bf2 g5 15.c5 Nhf6 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.g4
h5 18.h3 Rf7 19.Qd3 Ne8 20.Rc2 Bf6
21.Rfc1 Qd8 22.Kg2 hxg4 23.hxg4 Rh7
24.Na4 Kg8 25.Qc3
 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

 **Pomes Marcet,Juan** **E70**
 **Delchev,Aleksander** **2420**
free supported pawn on the "d" file **2510**
1996

In this game, White's pawn assault doesn't
succeed to create pawn weaknesses in Black's
camp but managed to a long term advantage: a
free supported pawn on d5.

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e4 d6
5.Bd3 0-0 6.Nge2 Nc6 7.0-0 Nd7 8.Be3 e5
9.d5 Nd4 10.Rc1 a5 11.Bb1 Nxe2+ 12.Qxe2
Nc5 13.Bc2 Qe7 14.a3 f5 15.f3 f4 16.Bf2
g5 17.b4 Na6 18.b5 Nc5 19.Bxc5 dxc5
20.b6 cxb6 21.Rfd1 Bf6 22.Rb1 Ra6 23.d6
Qg7 24.Ba4 Be6 25.d7 g4 26.Kh1 Kh8
27.Bb5 Raa8 28.Rd6 gxf3 29.gxf3 Bh3
30.Rg1 Qe7 31.Rdd1 Rg8 32.Nd5 Qf7
33.Nxb6 Rxcg1+ 34.Rxcg1 Rg8 35.Rxcg8+
Qxcg8 36.Na4 Bd8 37.Qb2 Qe6 38.Qd2 Qe7
39.Nc3 Qg7 40.Na4 Qe7 41.Nc3
 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

 **Seirawan,Yasser** **E80**
 **Zuckerman,Bernard** **2560**
closed center "a" file open **2490**
1985

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3
e5 6.d5 Nh5 7.Be3 f5 8.Qd2 Qh4+ 9.Bf2
Qe7 10.Nge2 0-0 11.0-0-0 a6 12.Kb1 Nd7
13.Nc1 Ndf6 14.h3 f4 15.b4 Ng3 16.Rg1

Nxf1 17.Rgxf1 a5 18.a3 axb4 19.axb4 b6
 20.Nb3 Ba6 21.Qd3 Nh5 22.Bg1 Bf6 23.Rf2
 Bh4 24.Ra2 Bb7 25.c5 bxc5 26.bxc5 Rxa2
 27.Nxa2 Ra8 28.Nb4 Qe8 29.c6 Bc8 30.Kb2
 Qe7 31.Na1 Qg5 32.Qd2 Qg3 33.Nac2 Nf6
 34.Nd3 g5 35.Nce1 Nh5 36.Nf2 Rb8+ 37.Kc1
 Ra8 38.Qb2 Nf6 39.Kd2 g4 40.hxg4 Bg5
 41.Ra1 Rxa1 42.Qxa1 Bxg4 43.Qa8+ Kg7
 44.Qa7 Bxf3 45.Qxc7+ Kg6 46.gxf3 Qxg1
 47.Ned3 Bh4 48.Qb6 Bxf2 49.Nxf2 Ne8
 50.c7 Nxc7 51.Qxd6+ Kh5 52.Qxe5+ Kg6
 53.Ng4 Qg2+ 54.Ke1 Qg1+ 55.Ke2 Qg2+
 56.Nf2
1-0

 **Timoshenko, Georgy**
 **Kruppa, Yuri**
 semi-open files "b", "c", "e" & "f"

C11
2510
2520
 1997

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4
 c5 6.Nf3 Qb6 7.Na4 Qc6 8.c3 b6 9.a3 c4
 10.b4 cxb3 11.Qxb3 Ba6**

As in the previous game starting with French
 Defense, follow Black's play on the light
 squares.

**12.Bxa6 Nxa6 13.Nb2 Be7 14.Bd2 0-0
 15.0-0 Nc7 16.a4 Nb8 17.Nd1 Qd7 18.Ne3
 Nc6 19.Qc2 f5 20.exf6 Bxf6 21.Ng4 Ne8
 22.Bc1 Be7 23.Nfe5 Qc8 24.Nxc6 Qxc6
 25.Ne5 Qc8 26.Ba3 Bxa3 27.Rxa3 Nd6
 28.Raa1 Qc7 29.Rf3 Rac8 30.Qd3 Qe7
 31.Re1 Qb7 32.Rff1 Rc7 33.Qh3 Qc8
 34.Rf3 Ne4 35.Rc1 Nd2 36.Rd3 Ne4 37.Rf3
 Qe8 38.Ra1 Qe7 39.Ra2 Rfc8 40.Rc2 Qf6
 41.g4 Qf8 42.Kg2 Qf6 43.Qh5 g6 44.Qh3
 Qf8 45.Kh1 Rxc3 46.Rfxc3 Rxc3 47.Rxc3
 Nf2+ 48.Kg2 Nxh3 49.Kxh3 g5 50.Rc7 gxf4
 51.Rxa7 f3 52.Rf7 Qh6+ 53.Kg3 Qe3
 54.Rxf3 Qxd4 55.Nd7 Qg1+ 56.Kh3 Kg7
 57.g5 Qd4 58.Rf6 Qe3+ 59.Kg4 Qe4+
 60.Kg3 d4 61.h4 Qd5 62.Nf8 Qe5+ 63.Rf4
 d3
0-1**



Anglada Lobarte, Jose Andres
Psakhis, Lev

king side pieces superiority

C02
2215
2590
 1996

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3
 Bd7 6.a3 c4 7.h4 Na5 8.Nbd2 Bc6 9.g3
 Qd7 10.Bh3 Ba4**

White is preparing a pawn assault on the king
 side and Black will do the same on the queen
 side. Bc6 behind the light squares pawn chain
 tend to be "bad" in front of the pawns suddenly
 became strong.

**11.Qe2 Bc2 12.Qe3 h6 13.0-0 Ne7 14.Ne1
 Bh7 15.f4 h5 16.Nef3 Nf5 17.Qf2 Nh6
 18.Ng5 Bd3 19.Re1 Ng4 20.Qf3 Bf5 21.Bf1
 0-0-0 22.Nh3 f6**

White's king safety allows Black to switch the
 attack on the king side , in additon with better
 placed pieces and a lead in development.

**23.Qd1 g5 24.hxg5 fxe5 25.fxe5 h4
 26.gxh4 Qh7 27.Nf3 Nb3 28.Bf4 Nxa1
 29.Qxa1 Be4 30.Nd2 Bf5 31.Bg3 Be7
 32.Qd1 Rdg8 33.Qf3 Nh6 34.Bg2 Bg4
 35.Qe3 Nf5 36.Qf4 Bxh3 37.Bxh3 Bxg5
0-1**



Ye Jiangchuan
Zhang Zhong

semi-open files "b", "c", & "h"

C06
2540
2425
 1996

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.c3
 c5 6.Bd3 b6 7.Nh3 Ba6 8.Bxa6 Nxa6 9.0-0
 Nc7 10.Nf4 Be7 11.Qg4 g6 12.Nf3 h5
 13.Qg3 c4 14.a4 Nb8 15.b3 cxb3 16.Nd2
 Nc6 17.Nxb3 Rc8 18.Qh3 Kf8 19.g4 Kg8
 20.gxh5 Bg5 21.Qd3 Bxf4 22.Bxf4 Rxh5
 23.Rac1 Ne7** After the pawns breakthroughs,
 black kept the healthier pawn structure,
 dominates the light squares and it has a typical
 position with "good knight" versus "bad bishop".
**24.c4 dxc4 25.Rxc4 Ncd5 26.Bg3 Rxc4
 27.Qxc4 Nf5 28.Qc1 Kg7 29.Re1 Qa8
 30.Qc2 Rh8 31.Rc1 Nde7 32.Qd3 Rc8
 33.Rxc8 Qxc8 34.Bf4 Qc6 35.Bg5 Nd5
 36.a5 Qc3 37.Qxc3 Nxc3 38.axb6 axb6
 39.Kf1 Kf8 40.Bd2 Nd5 41.Ke2 Ke7 42.Kd3**

Kd7 43.Bg5 Kc6 44.Nd2 b5 45.Ne4 b4
46.Bc1 Nb6 47.Bd2 b3 48.Kc3 Nd5+
49.Kxb3 Nxd4+ 50.Kc4 Nf3 51.Bc3 Nxc3
52.Nxc3 Nxe5+ 53.Kd4 Ng4 54.f3 Nxh2
55.Ke5 Nxf3+ 56.Kf6 g5 57.Kxf7 Kd6
58.Kf6 g4 59.Ne4+ Kd5 60.Ng3 Nd2 61.Ne2
Ne4+ 62.Kg6 g3 63.Kh5 Kc4 64.Nf4 e5
65.Ng2 Kd3 66.Kg4 Ke2 67.Nh4 Kf2
0-1

 **Kasparov,Garry**
 **Ivanchuk,Vassily**
queen side pieces superiority

C16
2795
2740
1995

In this game the winning strategy contained:
-the smallest commitment principle (delay the
castle as long as the king is safe in the center)
-a good management of the defensive tasks
-a local pieces superiority on the queen side
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 b6 5.a3
Bf8 6.Nf3 Ne7 7.h4 h6 8.h5 a5 9.Bb5+ c6
10.Ba4 Nd7 11.Ne2 b5 12.Bb3 c5 13.c3
Nc6 14.0-0 Qc7 15.Re1 c4 16.Bc2 Nb6
17.Bf4 Be7 18.Bg3 Rb8 19.Nh2 Qd8
20.Ng4 b4 21.axb4 axb4 22.cxb4 Nxb4
23.Bb1 Bd7 24.b3 Ra8 25.Rxa8 Qxa8
26.bxc4 Nxc4 27.Nc1 Ba4 28.Qe2 Qa7
29.Ne3 Qxd4 30.Nxc4 dxc4 31.Qf1 0-0
0-1

 **Bischoff,Klaus**
 **Piket,Jeroen**
closed center "c" file open

E67
2505
2500
1989

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 0-0 5.g3
d6 6.Bg2 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e3 Re8 9.b3 c6
10.h3 e4 11.Nd2 d5 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.a4 Nf8
14.Ba3 Ne6 15.Kh2 a6 16.Qe2 h5 17.Rfc1
Bd7 18.a5 Rc8 19.Bb4 h4 20.g4 Rc6 21.Kg1
Qc7 22.Qd1 Rc8 23.Ne2 Qd8 24.Rxc6 Rxc6
25.Nb1 Ng5 26.Nbc3 Qc8 27.Rc1 Nf3+
28.Kf1 Bh6 29.Na4 Rxc1 30.Qxc1 Qxc1+
31.Nxc1 Nxd4 32.Nc5 Bb5+ 33.Kg1 Nc6
34.Bc3 d4 35.Bd2 Nxa5 36.Bxa5 dxe3

37.Na2 b6 38.Bxb6 Nd5 39.Ba5 exf2+
40.Kh1 f1Q+ 41.Bxf1 Bxf1
0-1

 **Nikolic,Predrag** **E61**
 **Kochyev,Alexander** **2330**
closed center "b" file open **2535**
1980

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nc3
d6 6.e3 e5 7.Nge2 c6 8.b3 Re8 9.Ba3 e4
10.Qd2 h5 11.h3 a5 12.0-0-0 a4 13.b4 Nbd7
14.Qc2 Nb6 15.Nb1 d5 16.c5 Nc4 17.Nec3
b6 18.Bf1 Ba6 19.Bb2 bxc5 20.bxc5 Nxb2
21.Qxb2 Bxf1 22.Rdxf1 Qa5 23.Qd2 a3
24.Nd1 Qa6 25.Qc2 Reb8 26.Nd2 Rb4
27.Nb3 Rab8 28.Nc3 Nh7 29.Qe2 Rc4
30.Kd2 Ng5 31.Rc1 Nf3+ 32.Kd1 Bf6 33.Rc2
Rbb4 34.Kc1 Bd8 35.Kb1 Ba5 36.Ka1 f5
37.h4 Qa7 38.Rb1 Bd8 39.Qd1 Bf6 40.Ne2
Kh7 41.Rbc1 Rxc2 42.Rxc2 Rc4 43.Rc1 Qa4
44.Kb1 Kh6 45.Ng1 Nxg1 46.Qxg1 f4
47.Qe1 f3 48.Rc2 Qb5 49.Qc1 Rxc2
50.Qxc2 g5 51.hxg5+ Bxg5 52.Qd2 h4
53.gxh4 Bxh4 54.Kc2 Qf1 55.Qa5 Qd3+
0-1

 **Christiansen,Larry Mark** **D94**
 **Rohde,Michael A** **2575**
closed center "c" file open **2550**
1987

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e3 g6 5.Nf3
Bg7 6.Bd3 0-0 7.0-0 Bg4 8.h3 Bxf3 9.Qxf3
e6 10.Rd1 Nbd7 11.b3 Re8 12.Bf1 e5
13.cxd5 e4 14.Qe2 Nxd5 15.Nxd5 cxd5
16.Qb5 Nb6 17.Ba3 a6 18.Qa5 Nc8 19.Qxd8
Rxd8 20.Rac1 Bf8 21.Bxf8 Kxf8 22.Rc7 Nd6
23.Rc5 Nf5 24.Rdc1 Ke7 25.Be2 Kd6 26.g4
Ng7 27.f3 Ne6 28.R5c2 f5 29.f4 Rd7 30.Kf2
Rc7 31.Rxc7 Nxc7 32.Ke1 Ne6 33.Kd2 Rf8
34.Rg1 Ke7 35.h4 Kf6 36.a4 Rc8 37.Rh1
Ng7 38.g5+ Kf7 39.h5 Ne6 40.hxg6+ hxg6
41.Rh7+ Ng7 42.b4 Rd8 43.Bd1 Kg8 44.Rh1
Ne6 45.Bb3 Kg7 46.Kc3 Nc7 47.Rh2 Rd6
48.Kb2 Rc6 49.Rh1 Rb6 50.Rc1 Rc6 51.Rb1
Rb6 52.Kc3 Kf7 53.Ba2 Rc6+ 54.Kd2 b5

55.axb5 axb5 56.Rh1 Ke7 57.Rh8 Kd7
 58.Bb3 Rd6 59.Rg8 Re6 60.Rg7+ Kd6
 61.Rh7 Re7 62.Rh6 Re6 63.Bd1 Kd7 64.Be2
 Kd8 65.Bf1 Kd7 66.Ke1 Kc6 67.Kf2 Ne8
 68.Rh7 Nc7 69.Bh3 Kd6 70.Rh6 Ke7 71.Kg3
 Ne8 72.Rh7+ Kd8 73.Bf1 Nc7 74.Rf7 Rc6
 75.Rf8+ Ke7 76.Rc8 Kd7 77.Rb8 Rc3 78.Kf2
 Rc2+ 79.Be2 Ke7 80.Rb6 Rb2 81.Rxg6
 Rxb4 82.Rg7+ Kd6 83.Rf7 Rb2 84.g6 Ne8
 85.Rxf5 Rc2 86.Rf8 Ng7

1-0

 **Lputian,Smbat G**
 **Anastasian,Ashot**
 closed center "c" file open

D45
2610
2470
 1993

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e3 e6 5.Nf3
 Nbd7 6.Qc2 Bd6 7.b3 0-0 8.Be2 e5 9.cxd5
 cxd5 10.Nb5 Bb4+ 11.Bd2 Bxd2+ 12.Nxd2
 e4 13.0-0 a6 14.Nc3 Nb6 15.a4 Be6 16.a5
 Nc8 17.b4 Ne7 18.Nb3 Nf5 19.Rfb1 Nh4
 20.Nc5 Nd7 21.Qd1 Qg5 22.g3 Nf6 23.b5
 Bh3 24.bxa6 bxa6 25.Rb6 Qf5 26.Rxf6 gxf6
 27.Rb1 Kh8 28.Rb6 Rg8 29.Nb7 Rac8
 30.Nc5 Bg4 31.Bxg4 Rxg4 32.Qf1 Nf3+
 33.Kh1 Rcg8 34.Ne2 Nd2 35.Qg2 Nc4
 36.Rb7 Qf3 37.Qxf3 exf3 38.Nf4 Nxa5
 39.Rxf7 Nc4 40.h3 R4g7 41.Rxf6 a5
 42.Nxd5 Ra8 43.Na4 Rb7 44.Rxf3 Nb2
 45.Nc5 Rg7 46.e4 a4 47.Ra3 Nc4 48.Ra2
 a3 49.Nb4 Rb8 50.Nca6 Rgb7 51.Nxb8 Rxb4
 52.Nc6 Rb2 53.Ra1 a2 54.Kg2 Ne3+ 55.Kf3
 Nc2 56.Rxa2 Rxa2 57.d5 Ra4 58.Kf4 Kg7
 59.d6 Nb4 60.Nxb4 Rxb4 61.Kf5 Kf7 62.e5
 Rb3 63.e6+ Ke8
 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

 **Straeter,Timo**
 **Timman,Jan H**
 closed center "c" file open

D03
2310
2635
 1994

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Bg5 Bg7 4.Nbd2 d5
 5.e3 Nbd7 6.b4 0-0 7.Be2 Re8 8.0-0 e5
 9.b5 e4 10.Ne1 Nf8 11.c4 c6 12.Nc2 cxb5
 13.cxb5 Ne6 14.Bh4 Bf8 15.f4 exf3 16.Rxf3

Be7 17.Bxf6 Bxf6 18.Qf1 Bg5 19.Rxf7 Nxd4
 20.exd4 Bxd2 21.Bd3 Be6 22.Rf2 Bc3
 23.Rd1 Qd6 24.Rf6 Rf8 25.Bxg6 Qe7
 26.Rxf8+ Rxf8 27.Qd3 Ba5 28.Bh5 Bf5
 29.Qg3+ Kh8 30.Ne3 Be4 31.Bg4 Bc7
 32.Qh3 Qg5 33.Rf1 Bf4 34.Nd1 Qg7 35.Nf2
 Qxd4 36.Qa3 Bh6 37.Bf3 Bxf3 38.gxf3 Rg8+
 39.Kh1 Be3 40.Nd1 Bd2 41.Qb2 Qxb2
 42.Nxb2 Rc8 43.Nd3 Rc3 44.Ne5 Bf4
 45.Ng4 d4 46.Re1 d3 47.Re8+ Kg7 48.Rd8
 d2 49.Kg2 Rc1 50.Nf2 Be3 51.Rd3 Bxf2
 52.Rxd2 Bb6 53.Rd7+ Kg6 54.Rxb7 Rc2+
 55.Kg3 Rxa2 56.Rd7 Rb2 57.Rd6+ Kf7
 58.Rd7+ Kg8 59.Rd5 Rc2 60.Rd1 Rc5
 61.Rb1 Rg5+ 62.Kf4 Rh5

0-1

 **Volkov,Sergey**
 **Eingorn,Vereslav S**
 semi-open files "b","e" & "f"

A40
2480
2595
 1997

1.d4

Follow in this game how Black attacks on the king side (where he can creates a pieces superiority) despite Black's king position.

e6 2.c4 Bb4+ 3.Nc3 c5 4.d5 Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 d6 6.e4 e5 7.Bd3 Ne7 8.Ne2 Ng6 9.a4 Nd7 10.Be3 h6 11.g3 Nf6 12.h3 0-0 13.Qd2 Nh7 14.h4 f5 15.exf5

Despite White's resistance Black opened the 'f' file which in addition with the pawn weaknesses from the queen side will jeopardize White's king position.

Bxf5 16.Bxf5 Rxf5 17.h5 Nh8 18.g4 Rf3 19.0-0-0 Nf7 20.Ng1 Rf6 21.Nh3 Qd7 22.g5 hxg5 23.Qc2 Rf8 24.Ng1 Nh6 25.Ne2 Ng4 26.Rdg1 Nxf2 27.Bxf2 Rxf2 28.h6 Qf5 29.Qxf5 R8xf5 30.Kd2 Nf6 31.a5 R2f3 32.Rb1 Ne4+ 33.Kc2 Rf7 34.a6 b6 35.hxg7 Kxg7 36.Rh2 Rf1 37.Rxf1 Rxf1 38.Kd3 Nf6 39.Kd2 Ra1 40.Kc2 Ra2+ 41.Kb1 Rd2 42.Rg2 Ne4 43.Kc1 Kg6 44.Rf2 g4 45.Nf4+ exf4 46.Rxf4 Re2 47.Rxg4+ Kf6 48.Rh4 Kg6 49.Rh8 Ra2 50.Re8 Kf5 51.Rf8+ Ke5 52.Rf7 Rxa6 53.Kc2 Ra2+ 54.Kb3 Rd2 55.Re7+ Kf4 56.Rxa7 Rd3 57.Rf7+ Ke3
0-1

Conquest,Stuart Bacrot,Etienne closed center "a" file open	C86 2540 2500 1997	Bologan,Viktor Romanishin,Oleg M king side pieces superiority	C96 2600 2555 1996
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Qe2 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.Rd1 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7 12.d5 Bd7 13.Nbd2 Nh5 14.Nf1 g6 15.g3 Nc4 16.h4 Ng7 17.b3 Nb6 18.Bh6 c4 19.b4 a5 20.a3 Ra6 21.h5 axb4 22.axb4 Rfa8 23.Rxa6 Rxa6 24.hxg6 hxg6 25.Kg2 Qa7 26.Bc1 Ra2 27.Ne3 f5 28.Rh1 f4 29.gxf4 exf4 30.Nd1 g5 31.Nd4 Bf6 32.Rh6 Be5 33.Nf5 Bxf5 34.exf5 Nxd5 35.Qf3 Nf6 36.Be4 Nxe4 37.Qxe4 Qa8 38.Qxa8+ Rxa8 39.f6 Nf5 40.Rg6+ Kf7 41.Rxg5 Kxf6 0-1	C86 2600 2555 1997	1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Bb7 12.d5 Nc4 13.b3 Nb6 14.a4 Qc7 15.Na3 b4 16.a5 Nbx5 17.exd5 bxa3 18.c4 Qxa5 19.Rxa3 Qc7 20.Ng5 Rae8 21.Qd3 g6 22.Qe2 Qd8 23.Bd2 Nxd5 24.Nxh7 Kxh7 25.cxd5 Kg7 26.b4 cxb4 27.Bxb4 Qb6 28.Rg3 Qb5 29.Qh5 Rh8 30.Rxg6+ fxg6 31.Qxg6+ Kf8 32.Qf5+ Kg8 33.Re3 Rh6 34.Rg3+ Kh8 35.Bd2 1-0	B07 2500 2510 1996
Tiviakov,Sergei Iuldachev,Saidali semi-open files "b"& "c"	C86 2600 2555 1997	Nisipeanu,Liviu Dieter Kempinski,Robert queen side pawn-tension	B07 2500 2510 1996
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.Qe2 Be7 6.c3 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.0-0 0-0 9.Rd1 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7 12.d5 Bd7 13.Nbd2 Nh5 14.Nf1 g6 15.Bh6 Rfe8 16.b3 Nb7 17.h3 Bf8 18.Qd2 Bxh6 19.Qxh6 f6 20.Qe3 Nd8 21.Ng3 Nf4 22.Ne2 g5 23.Ng3 Nf7 24.Nf5 c4 25.Kh2 cxb3 26.Bxb3 Bxf5 27.exf5 Rac8 28.Nd2 Nh6 29.g3 Nxf5 30.Qe4 Qd7 31.gxf4 Rxc3 32.fxg5 Nd4 33.Qg4 f5 34.Qh5 Re7 35.Rac1 Qc7 36.Rxc3 Qxc3 37.Qh6 Nxb3 38.g6 hxg6 39.Rg1 Rg7 40.Rxg6 Rxg6 41.Qxg6+ Kh8 42.Qh5+ Kg7 43.Qg5+ Kh8 44.Nxb3 Qc2 45.Qd2 Qe4 46.Qh6+ Kg8 47.Qxd6 Qf4+ 48.Kg1 1-0	C86 2600 2555 1997	1.e4 c5 2.c3 d6 3.d4 Nf6 4.Bd3 e5 5.Nf3 Qc7 6.h3 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Be3 a6 9.a4 b6 10.Nbd2 Bb7 11.d5 Ne8 12.b4 Nd7 White is threatening a5. Black must stop White's attack on the queen side and attack on the king side. A common mistake is to be tempted to attack on the wrong side, when you have temporary pieces superiority. Unfortunately for Black White's pawn structure restricts a future development of the initiative. 13.a5 b5 14.c4 bxc4 15.Nxc4 f5 16.bxc5 fxe4 17.Bxe4 Nxc5 18.Bxc5 Qxc5 19.Nb6 Rd8 20.Qb1 Nf6 21.Rc1 Qb5 22.Rc7 Nxe4 23.Qxe4 Rf4 24.Qe3 Bxd5 25.Nxd5 Qxd5 26.Rxe7 Rdf8 27.Rb1 Qxa5 28.Rbb7 R8f7 29.Rxf7 Rxf7 30.Qb3 d5 31.Rb8+ Rf8 32.Rxf8+ Kxf8 33.Qb8+ Kf7 34.Qxe5 1-0	B07 2500 2510 1996

 **Christiansen, Larry Mark**
 **Anastasian, Ashot**
 closed center king's safety

E41
2555
2550
 1996

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 Bxc3+
 5.bxc3 c5 6.Bd3 Nc6 7.Ne2 d6 8.0-0 e5
 9.e4 0-0 10.f3 b6 11.d5 Ne7 12.Ng3 Ng6
 13.Nf5 Nf4 14.Bc2 g6 15.Nh6+ Kg7 16.g3
 Kxh6 17.gxf4 Kg7 18.fxe5 dxe5 19.f4 exf4
 20.Bxf4 Bh3 21.Bg5 Bxf1 22.e5 Nxd5
 23.Bxd8 Bxc4 24.Bh4 Rae8 25.Qg4 b5
 26.Re1 Bxa2 27.Qd7 Re6 28.Qxa7 Bc4
 29.Qxc5 Nxc3 30.Bf5 Ra6 31.Bc8 Ra2
1-0

 **Sveshnikov, Evgeny**
 **Basagic, Zlatko**
 closed center "g" file open

B07
2565
2360
 1996

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d6 3.d4 Nf6 4.f3 Nbd7 5.Be3
 Qc7 6.Qd2 b6 7.Nh3 e5 8.d5 g6 9.a4 a6
 10.c4 Bg7 11.Nc3 0-0 12.Be2 Nh5 13.g4
 Nf4 14.Nxf4 exf4 15.Bxf4 Ne5 16.Bh6 Qe7
 17.h4 Bxh6 18.Qxh6 f5 19.gxf5 gxf5 20.f4
 Ng4 21.Bxg4 fxe4 22.0-0-0 b5 23.axb5 axb5
 24.cxb5 Kh8 25.f5 Bd7 26.Qf4 Rab8
 27.Rhg1 Bxb5 28.Rxg4 Be8 29.Rdg1 Qa7
 30.R4g2 c4 31.Qxd6 Qe3+ 32.Kb1 Qd3+
 33.Rc2 Bg6 34.Qe5+ Kg8 35.Rd1
1-0

 **Aleksandrov, Aleksey**
 **Orlov, Vassily**
 free supported pawn on the "d" file

E29
2535
2405
 1996

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 c5 5.Bd3
 Nc6 6.a3 Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 d6 8.Ne2 e5 9.0-0
 0-0 10.e4 h6 11.d5 Na5 12.Ng3 Re8 13.h3
 Nh7 14.f4 b6 15.Ra2 Rb8 16.Raf2 Rb7
 17.Qh5 Ree7 18.fxe5 dxe5 19.Be2 f6 20.Bg4
 Nxc4 21.Bxc8 Qxc8 22.Nf5 Re8 23.Bxh6
 gxh6 24.Nxh6+ Kg7 25.Rxf6 Nxf6 26.Nf5+
 Qxf5 27.Qxf5 Nh7 28.Qg4+ Kh8 29.Qh5 Rg8
 30.Rf7 Rxf7 31.Qxf7 Rf8 32.Qxa7 Rf6

33.Qa6 Nd6 34.Qxb6 Nxe4 35.Qb8+ Rf8
 36.Qxe5+ Nhf6 37.c4 Re8 38.Qf4 Ra8 39.d6
 Rd8 40.a4 Rxd6 41.a5 Kg7 42.Qf5 Rd1+
 43.Kh2 Rh1+ 44.Kxh1 Ng3+ 45.Kg1 Nxf5
 46.a6 Nd7 47.Kf2 Nd6 48.a7 Nb6 49.Ke3
 Kf6 50.h4 Ndc8 51.g4 Nxa7 52.Ke4 Nc6
0-1

 **Hjartarson, Johann**
 **Rausis, Igors**
 closed center "a" file open

C49
2565
2495
 1996

After a tense struggle, often a major pieces
 endgame arises. So the preparation for the
 endgame starts with the occupation of the open
 file. **1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5**
Bb4 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 Bxc3 7.bxc3 d6 8.Bg5
Ne7 9.Nh4 Ng6 10.Nxg6 fxe6 11.Bc4+ Kh8
12.f3 Qe7 13.Rb1 b6 14.d4 Be6 15.Qd3 h6
16.Bd2 c5 17.Bxe6 Qxe6 18.a4 Rac8 19.d5
Qe8 20.Qa6 Rc7 21.a5 Qa4 22.Qb5 Qxa5
23.Qxa5 bxa5 24.Rb5 Nd7 25.c4 a4 26.Ba5
Nb6 27.Ra1 Rb7 28.Rxa4 Rfb8 29.Bxb6
axb6 30.Kf2 g5 31.Ra6 Kg8 32.Ke3 Kf7
33.Kd2 Ke7 34.Kc3 Kd7 35.Kb3 Kc7
36.Ka4 Rf8 37.Rb3 g4 38.Kb5 h5 39.Rba3
h4 40.Ra8 Rf7 41.fxe6 Rf1 42.Rg8 Rb1+
43.Ka6 Rb8 44.Rxg7+ Kd8 45.Ka7 Rc8
46.Kb7 b5 47.Rb3
1-0

 **Piket, Jeroen**
 **Timman, Jan H**
 closed center "f" file open (11)

A08
2570
2620
 1996

1.Nf3 c5 2.g3 Nc6 3.Bg2 Nf6 4.0-0 e5 5.d3
d5 6.Na3 Be7 7.e4 d4 8.Nc4 Qc7 9.a4 Be6
10.Ne1 Nd7 11.f4 f6 If your king is safe
 enough then trade the bishop placed on the
 same color as your pawns. Don't forget to bring
 the Queen on that color (in this case on the light
 squares) in order to take the bishops tasks.
12.Bh3 Bxh3 13.Qh5+ g6 14.Qxh3 Nb6
15.fxe5 fxe5

The positions are very balanced in the presence of a closed center. Often the major pieces have just one open file to activate. Who manages to occupy the open file will have the advantage.

16.Qe6 Nxc4 17.Qxc4 0-0-0 18.Bh6 Rdg8 19.Rf7 Nd8 20.Rg7 Rxg7 21.Bxg7 Re8 22.Nf3 Bd6 23.Bh6 Qf7 24.Nd2 Qxc4 25.Nxc4 Kd7 26.Rf1 Ne6 27.h4 Bc7 28.h5 Ke7 29.Kg2 b6 30.hxg6 hxg6 31.Bd2 a6 32.b4 Rb8 33.Rh1 b5 34.Rh7+ Kf6 35.axb5 axb5 36.Nb2 Ra8 37.Nd1 Ra2 38.Nf2 g5 39.Ng4+ Kg6 40.Re7 Rxc2 41.Rxe6+ Kg7 42.Re7+ Kf8 43.Rxc7 Rxd2+ 44.Kh3 1-0

 **Mirumian,Vigen** **B10**
 **Anastasian,Ashot** **2415**
 closed center "b" file open (5) **2520**
1995

1.e4 c6 2.d3 d5 3.Nd2 e5 4.Ngf3 Bd6 5.Qe2 d4 6.Nc4 Be6 7.Nxd6+ Qxd6 8.c3 c5 9.Ng5 Nc6 10.f4 Nf6 11.f5 Bd7 12.c4 a6 13.Nh3 b5 14.Nf2 h6 15.b3 bxc4 16.bxc4 Rb8 17.g4 Ng8 18.h4 Nge7 19.Qd2 Kd8 20.Be2 Kc7 21.0-0 g6 22.Ba3 h5 23.g5 Rhg8 24.f6 Nc8 25.Rfb1 N8a7

When a single open file is present on the board, who dominates that file will succeed.

26.Bd1 a5 27.Bc1 Rb6 28.Rxb6 Kxb6 29.Rb1+ Ka6 30.a3 Rb8 31.Rxb8 Qxb8 32.Qb2 Qe8 33.Kg2 Nb8 34.Bd2 Bc6 35.Be1 Nd7 36.Kg3 Nc8 37.Bd2 Nd6 38.Be1 Nb6 39.Qd2 Nb7 40.Qb2 Ba4 41.Bf3 Nd8 42.Qd2 Nc6 43.Qb2 Nd7 44.Bd2 Nf8 45.Bd1 Nd8 46.Bxa4 Qxa4 47.Qb8 Nfe6 48.Qxe5 Nb7 49.Qxe6+ fxe6 50.f7 Qxa3 51.f8Q a4 52.Qe8 Qb3 53.Bc1 Ka7 54.Qxg6 Qb1 55.Qe8 Qxc1 56.Qxa4+ Kb6 57.Qd7 Qe3+ 58.Kg2 Qf4 59.Qxe6+ Kc7 60.Qe7+ Kc6 61.g6 1-0

 **Seirawan,Yasser** **B23**
 **Anand,Viswanathan** **2585**
 closed center defense **2715**
1994

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 e6 3.Nge2 a6 4.g3 b5 5.Bg2 Bb7 6.a3 Nc6 7.0-0 d6 8.f4 Nf6 9.h3 Be7 10.d3 0-0 11.Be3 d5 12.Bf2 d4 13.Nb1 e5 14.Nd2 Nd7 15.Nf3 Bd6 16.f5 c4 17.g4 a5 18.Bh4 Be7 19.Bxe7 Qxe7

After the dark squares bishops trade Black can defend easily his king because:

-it has more room

-a bishop sacrifice on h6 is no longer possible.

20.g5 f6 21.g6 h6 22.Ng3 Nc5 23.Nh2 Rfc8 24.Nh5 Ba6 25.Rf3 Kf8 26.Ng4 Ke8 27.Rg3 Kd7 28.Ngxf6+ gxf6 29.g7 Kc7 30.Rg6 Nd7 31.Qd2 Bb7 32.Qxh6 Rg8 33.Kh2 Nd8 34.Rg1 Nf7 35.Qd2 Bc6 36.Bf1 b4 37.axb4 axb4 38.Ng3 c3 39.bxc3 dxc3 40.Qd1 Ra2 41.Rg2 Nd6 42.Nh5 Nb5 43.Rh6 Nd4 44.Rh8 Raa8 45.Rxg8 Rxg8 46.Qa1 Kb6 47.Qa2 b3 48.cxb3 Qf7 49.b4 Qxa2 50.Rxa2 c2 51.Rxc2 Nxc2 52.d4 Ne3 53.Bd3 exd4 54.Kg3 Ne5 0-1

 **Strikovic,Aleksa** **B20**
 **Suba,Mihai** **2495**
 closed center king's safety (9) **2525**
1994

1.e4

King's safety plays an important role also in positions with "closed center". Often the position assessment depends on the kings positions.

c5 2.d3 Nc6 3.g3 d5 4.Nd2 e5 5.Bg2 Nge7 6.Ngf3 d4 7.Nc4 f6 8.a4 Be6 9.0-0 Qd7 10.Nfd2 0-0-0 11.f4 exf4 12.gxf4 Bg4 13.Nf3 Ng6 14.Qe1 h5 15.a5 h4 16.a6 b6 17.e5 Re8 18.Nfd2 h3 19.Bh1 f5 20.Nf3 Be7 21.c3 Kb8 22.Qd1 Nh4 23.Qb3 Nxf3+ 24.Rxf3 Bxf3 25.Bxf3 Bd8 26.Nd6 Qxd6 27.exd6 Re1+ 0-1

	Kagan,Issay	B30
	Rogers,Ian	2380
	closed center "f"& "a" files open (2)	2550
		1992

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 e6 4.0-0 Nge7
 5.Re1 a6 6.Bf1 d5 7.d3 b5 8.Nbd2 d4 9.g3
 e5 10.Nh4 g6 11.f4 Bg7 12.Bg2 f6 13.Rf1
 Be6 14.Ndf3 0-0 15.fxe5 Nxe5 16.Nxe5
 fxe5 17.a4 Qd7 18.axb5 axb5 19.Rxf8+
 Rxf8 20.Bd2 Nc6

Both sides controls one open file each, the
 assessment is given here by the space
 advantage and the possibility of a direct king
 attack.

21.Bf1 c4 22.Nf3 h6 23.Be2 g5 24.Kg2
 Kh8 25.Ng1 g4 26.Qe1 h5 27.h4 Qb7
 28.Bc1 Ne7 29.Qa5 Bf5 30.Qe1 Bxe4+
 31.dxe4 Qxe4+ 32.Kh2 Nd5 33.Bg5 Ne3
 34.Bxe3 dxe3 35.Nh3 gxh3 36.Kxh3 Rf2
 37.Qd1
 0-1

Jussupow, Artur **D18**
2660

Kramnik, Vladimir **2715**
1995
 e4 versus c6 "d" file open

THE OPEN CENTER is determined by the positions where one or two central files are open and the piece play is very important. The struggle takes place around central files and squares. Both players must play accurate and they should avoid any kind of weaknesses.

THE ACTIVE SIDE must take the lead in development and then by skillful piece maneuvers to create weaknesses into the enemy camp. Once the weaknesses (pawns, weak squares, unprotected pieces, king vulnerability) are created, a piece pressure must follow in order to tie down the opponent's forces in defense. Just after that a pawn assault has good chances to succeed.

THE DEFENDING SIDE must protect the weak points to reject the enemy pieces from the attacked wing and if possible to eliminate the weaknesses. Also, the defending side can decrease the pressure by exchanging pieces.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 dxc4
5.a4 Bf5 6.e3 Bd3 7.Bxd3 cxd3 8.Qxd3 e6
9.0-0 Be7 10.e4 0-0 11.Bg5 Nbd7 12.Rad1
h6 13.Bc1 Re8 14.Qe2 Qa5 15.Nd2 Qh5
16.f3 e5 17.Nb3 exd4 18.Nxd4 Bc5

The "d" file is open so the critical squares are along it:

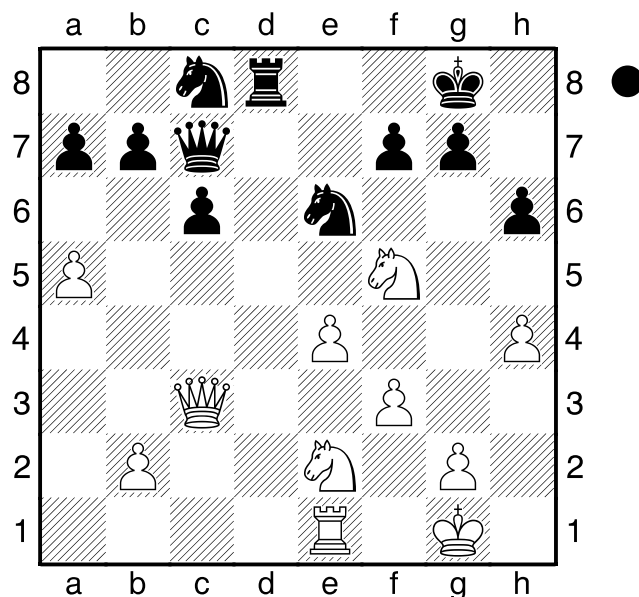
-d2, d3, d4 can be vulnerable for White

-d6 and d7 for Black

The presence of the white f3-pawn is a serious drawback, weakening a7-g1 diagonal and the f4 square (which can be an ideal outpost for a black knight attacking g2).

On the other hand, White should try to use the c5- and f5- squares as foreposts for the knights.

19.Be3 Nf8 20.Rfe1 Rad8 21.Qf2 N6d7
22.Nf5 Bxe3 23.Qxe3 Nb6 24.Rxd8 Rxd8
25.a5 Nc8 26.Qc5 Qg5 27.h4 Qf4 28.Qb4
Qc7 29.Ne2 Ne6 30.Qc3 Diagram
Nd6 31.Neg3 Nxf5 32.Nxf5 Qf4 33.Qb4 g6
34.Ne3 Qg3 35.Rf1 Nf4 36.Qe7 Ne6
37.Qxb7 Rd3 38.Qxa7 Nf4 39.Qb8+ Kh7



40.Qa7 Ne2+
0-1

Kasparov, Garry **D18**
2805

Anand, Viswanathan **2710**
1993
 e4 versus c5 "d" file open

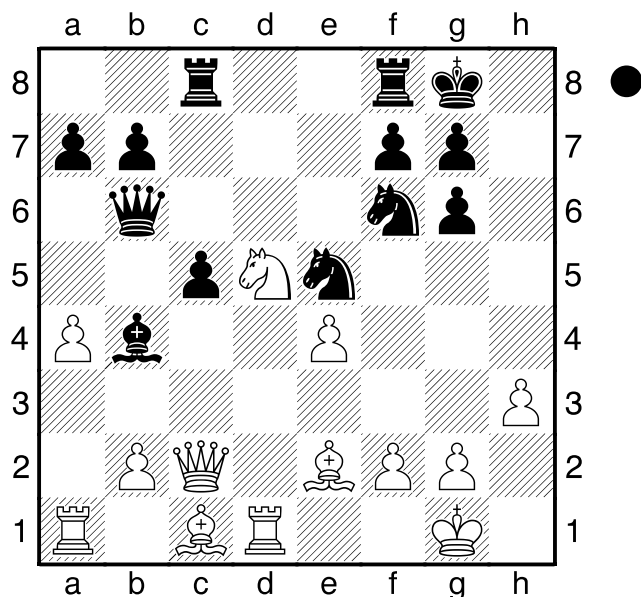
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.a4
Bf5 6.e3 e6 7.Bxc4 Bb4 8.0-0 Nbd7 9.Nh4
Bg6 10.h3 0-0 11.Nxg6 hxg6 12.Qc2 Rc8
13.Rd1 Qb6 14.e4

Now a "dynamic center" is present on the board, but after c6-c5 and the open of the "d" file an "open center" will appear.

c5 15.d5 Ne5 16.Be2 exd5 17.Nxd5
Diagram

(Diagram)

Nxd5 18.Rxd5 Nc6 19.Bc4 Nd4 20.Qd3
Rcd8 21.Be3 Rxd5 22.Bxd5 Rd8 23.Qc4
Rd7 24.Rc1 Qf6 25.Rd1 Ne6 26.Qb3 a5
27.Rd3 Nf4 28.e5 Qf5 29.Bxf4 Qxf4 30.e6
Rd8 31.e7 Re8 32.Rf3 Qc1+ 33.Kh2 Rxe7
34.Bxf7+ Kh7 35.Bxg6+ Kh6 36.Qd5 Qg5
37.Bf5 g6 38.h4 Qf6 39.Bd3 Qe5+ 40.Qxe5
Rxe5 41.Rf6 c4 42.Bxc4 Be7 43.Rb6 Bc5
44.Rf6 Re4 45.Bd3 Rg4 46.Kh3 Be7 47.Re6



Rxh4+ 48.Kg3 Rd4 49.Rxg6+ Kh5 50.Bf5
Bd6+ 51.Kf3 Bc5 52.g4+ Kh4 53.Rh6+ Kg5
54.Rg6+ Kh4 55.Be4 Rd6 56.Rg7 Rf6+
57.Bf5 Rb6 58.Rh7+ Kg5 59.Rh5+ Kf6
60.Bd3 Bd4 61.g5+ Kg7 62.Rh7+ Kf8
63.Bc4 Rxb2 64.Rf7+ Ke8 65.g6
1-0

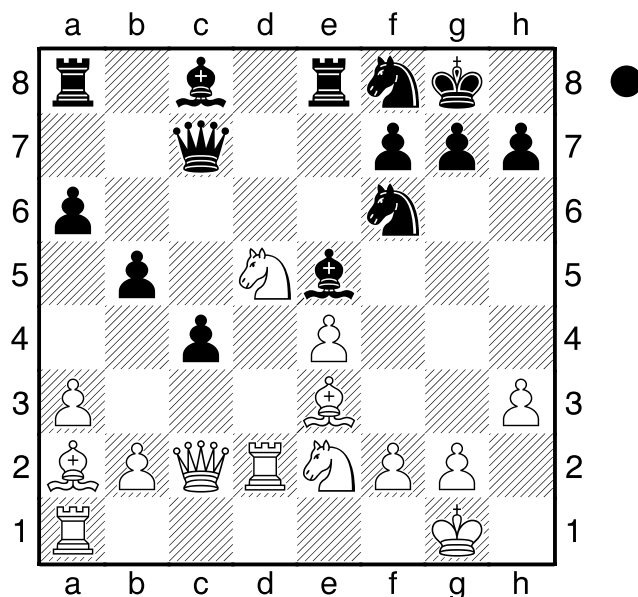
□ Kamsky, Gata
■ Anand, Viswanathan
e4 versus c6 "d" file open

D46
2595
2650
1991

Specific features of the game:

- both players tried to create a forepost along the "d" file (d5 for White, d3 for Black)
- as in the previous game, Black managed to create some weak squares on the king side, due to passive position of Qc2
- the long and complex endgame was balanced, but eventually the decisive move came along the critical "d" file.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.e3
Nbd7 6.Qc2 Bd6 7.Be2 0-0 8.0-0 dxc4
9.Bxc4 a6 10.e4 e5 11.Rd1 Qc7 12.h3
exd4 13.Nxd4 Re8 14.a3 Be5 15.Be3 Nf8
16.Rd2 b5 17.Ba2 c5 18.Nde2 c4 19.Nd5
Diagram



Nxd5 20.exd5 Ng6 21.Rad1 Nh4 22.Nd4
Qd7 23.Bb1 g6 24.Qe4 Bf6 25.Qf4 Qxd5
26.f3 Qe5 27.Be4 Nf5 28.Qxe5 Rxe5 29.Bf2
Rxe4 30.fxe4 Nxd4 31.Bxd4 Bg5 32.Re2
Be6 33.Bc5 h5 34.Rd6 Bf4 35.Rd1 Kh7
36.Kf2 Rc8 37.Bb4 g5 38.Kf3 Bc7 39.g4
Kg6 40.Bc3 Bf4 41.Ree1 Bc7 42.Rg1 Rg8
43.Rg2 hxc4+ 44.hxc4 a5 45.Ke2 Rb8
46.Kf3 b4 47.axb4 axb4 48.Bd4 Bf4 49.Be3
Be5 50.Bd4 Bxd4 51.Rxd4 b3 52.Rdd2 Kf6
53.Ke3 Ke5 54.Rgf2 Rb5 55.Rf1 Rc5
56.Rc1 Rc8 57.Ra1 c3 58.Ra5+ Kf6
59.Rf2+ Kg6 60.bxc3 Rxc3+ 61.Kd4 Rc4+
62.Ke3 Rb4 63.Rb2 Bxc4 64.Rd5 Be6
65.Rc5 Rb8 66.Ra5 Rh8 67.Rg2 Rh3+
68.Kd4 g4 69.Rb5 Rf3 70.Rb8 Kg7 71.Rb5
Kf6 72.Rb8 Ke7 73.Rb7+ Kd6 74.Rb6+ Ke7
75.Rb5 Rf1 76.Rg5 Kd6 77.Rb5 Rc1
78.Rb6+ Kc7 79.Rb5 Kc6 80.Rg5 Kb6
81.Rh2 Rc8 82.Kd3 Ra8 83.Kc3 Rc8+
84.Kd3 Rc1 85.Kd4 Rc4+ 86.Kd3 Rb4
87.Rb2 Kc6 88.Re5 Rb8 89.Rg5 Kd6
90.Ke3 Rc8 91.Rd2+ Ke7 92.Rb5 Kf6
93.Rf2+ Kg6 94.Kf4 Rc3 95.Rb6 Kf6
96.Rb5 Ke7 97.Rd2 Rf3+ 98.Ke5 g3
99.Rb7+ Kf8 100.Rd8+ Kg7 101.Rbb8
1-0

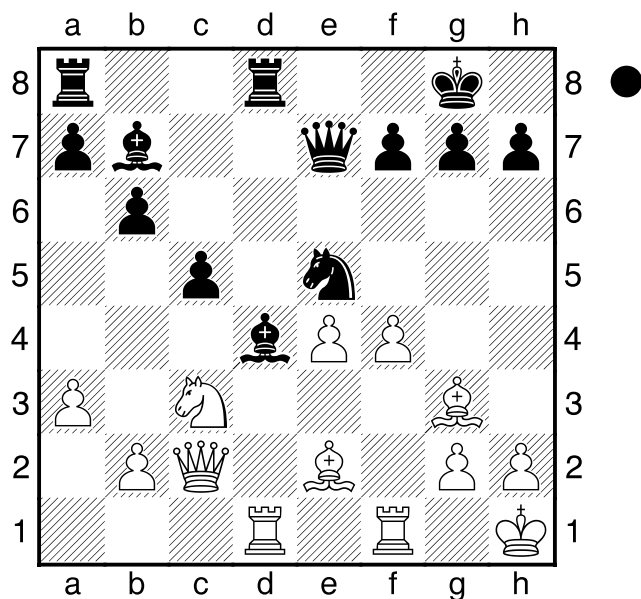
 **Petursson,Margeir**
 **Olafsson,Helgi**
 e4 versus c5 "d" file open

E46
2570
2500
 1996

Specific features of the game:

- when one of the sides has a king side majority, the emergence of the "e" pawn is consistent and during this game helped White to take control over the free file.
- as you can see the main battle will take place around the "d" file

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 0-0
 5.Nge2 d5 6.a3 Be7 7.Nf4 c6 8.Bd3 Nbd7
 9.cxd5 Nxd5 10.e4 Nxf4 11.Bxf4 e5
 12.dxe5 Qc7 13.Bg3 Nxe5 14.Be2 Bc5
 15.0-0 Qe7 16.Na4 Rd8 17.Qc2 Bd4
 18.Rad1 b6 19.Nc3 Bb7 20.Kh1 c5 21.f4
 Diagram



Ng6 22.e5 Nh4 23.Bxh4 Qxh4 24.Bc4
 Bxc3 25.bxc3 Rxd1 26.Qxd1 Rd8 27.Qe2
 h5 28.e6 Qg4 29.e7 Re8 30.Qxg4 hxc4
 31.Re1 Bc6 32.f5 b5 33.Bb3 a5 34.Kg1 b4
 35.cxb4 cxb4 36.axb4 axb4 37.Kf2 Bd7
 38.Kg3 Bc6 39.Kxg4 Ra8 40.Rd1
 1-0

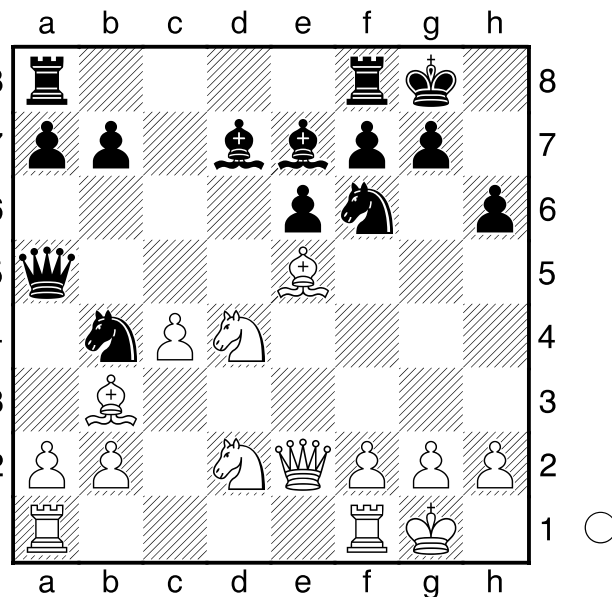
 **Anand,Viswanathan**
 **Karpov,Anatoly**
 c4 versus e6 "d" file open rapid

B17
2710
2725
 1993

Specific features:

- Black who had the king side pawn majority managed to create threats and weaknesses in White's camp
- again the side with king side pawn majority and who managed to conquer first a square on the "d" file succeeded

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7
 5.Ng5 Ngf6 6.Bc4 e6 7.Qe2 Nb6 8.Bb3 h6
 9.N5f3 c5 10.Bf4 Nbd5 11.Be5 Qa5+
 12.Nd2 cxd4 13.Ngf3 Be7 14.Nxd4 0-0
 15.0-0 Bd7 16.c4 Nb4 Diagram



17.N4f3 Nc6 18.Bc3 Qf5 19.a3 Rfd8
 20.Rfd1 Be8 21.Nf1 Ne4 22.Be1 Ng5
 23.Nxg5 Qxg5 24.Bc3 Bf6 25.Bxf6 Qxf6
 26.Ng3 Nd4 27.Qe3 Bc6 28.Ne2 Qg5
 29.Qxg5 Nxe2+ 30.Kf1 hxc4 31.Rxd8+
 Rxd8 32.Kxe2 Bxg2 33.Rg1 Bc6 34.Rxg5
 Rd4 35.Rg3 Kf8 36.h3 Rh4 37.Ba2 e5
 38.b3 Bd7 39.Bb1 Rxh3 40.Rxh3 Bxh3
 41.c5 Bd7 42.b4 Ke7 43.Bc2 f5 44.a4 a6
 45.Kd3 g5 46.Kc4 Be6+ 47.Kc3 Kf6 48.b5
 axb5 49.axb5 Bd5 50.Ba4 Ke7 51.Bc2 Ke6
 52.c6 bxc6 53.b6 Kd6 54.Bxf5 c5 55.Kd3
 Kc6 56.Bh7 Kxb6 57.Bf5 Kc7 58.Bh7 Kc6

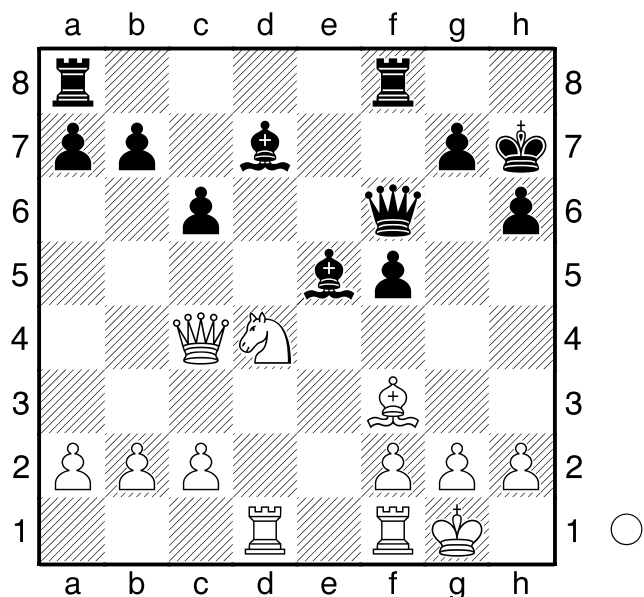
59.Ke3 Kb5 60.Kd2 Kb4 61.Bf5 Kb3
62.Kc1 Kc3 63.Bc2 Bc4 64.Bf5 Bd3 65.Bc8
Kd4 66.Bb7 c4 67.Kd2 c3+ 68.Kd1 e4
0-1

□ Romanishin, Oleg M
■ Beliavsky, Alexander G
"d" and "e" files open

C12
2615
2635
1993

When both central files are open the side with a long term advantage (pair of bishops as in this case, a better pawn structure) has better chances. Watch how Black attacked despite the open character of the position.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Bd3 dxe4
5.Bxe4 Nf6 6.Bg5 Nbd7 7.Nge2 h6 8.Bxf6
Nxf6 9.Bf3 0-0 10.0-0 c6 11.Ne4 Nxe4
12.Bxe4 Bd6 13.Qd3 f5 14.Bf3 e5 15.dxe5
Bxe5 16.Qc4+ Kh7 17.Rad1 Qf6 18.Nd4
Bd7 Diagram



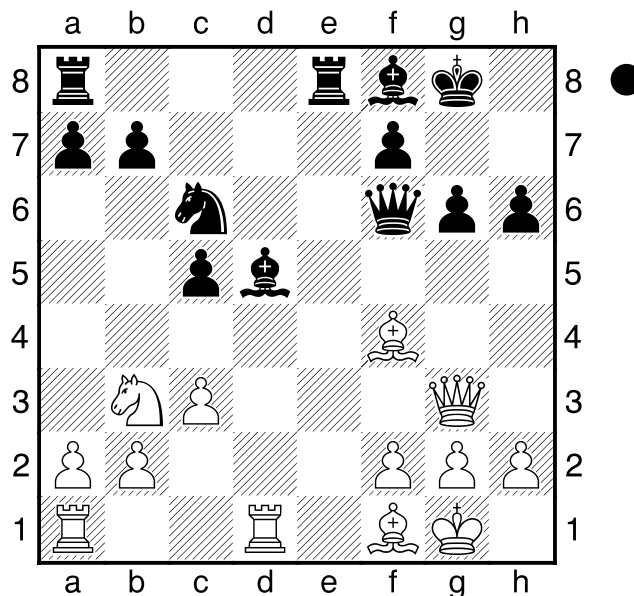
19.c3 Rae8 20.Qa4 a6 21.Nb3 Bc8 22.Qb4
Re7 23.Na5 g5 24.g3 g4 25.Bg2 f4 26.Rfe1
c5 27.Qc4 Kg7 28.Nb3 b6 29.Kh1 h5
30.Nd2 f3 31.Bf1 h4 32.Re4 hxc3 33.fxc3
Kh8 34.Bd3 f2 35.Rxc4 Bxc4 36.Qxc4 Qh6
37.Nf1 Rg7 38.Qe4 Bxc3 39.Nxc3 Rxc3

40.Qe5+ Rg7 41.Rf1 Qh4 42.Be2 Qh3
0-1

□ Karpov, Anatoly
■ Topalov, Veselin
"d" and "e" files open

A43
2740
2640
1994

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 Nxd5
5.Nxd5 exd5 6.Qxd5 Be7 7.e4 0-0 8.Be2
d6 9.0-0 Nc6 10.c3 Be6 11.Qh5 h6 12.Rd1
Re8 13.Bf4 Bf8 14.Nd2 g6 15.Qf3 d5
16.Qg3 Qe7 17.exd5 Bxd5 18.Bf1 Qf6
19.Nb3 Diagram



Rad8 20.Rd2 Be6 21.Bc7 Rxd2 22.Nxd2
Bf5 23.Nc4 Re4 24.Ne3 Bc8 25.Rd1 Re8
26.h3 Qg5 27.Qf3 Kg7 28.Bf4 Qe7 29.Nd5
Qe4 30.Nf6 Kxf6 31.Be5+ Kxe5 32.Qxe4+
Kxe4 33.Re1+ Kf5 34.Rxe8 Be6 35.Rxf8
Bxa2 36.Rc8 Δc7
1-0

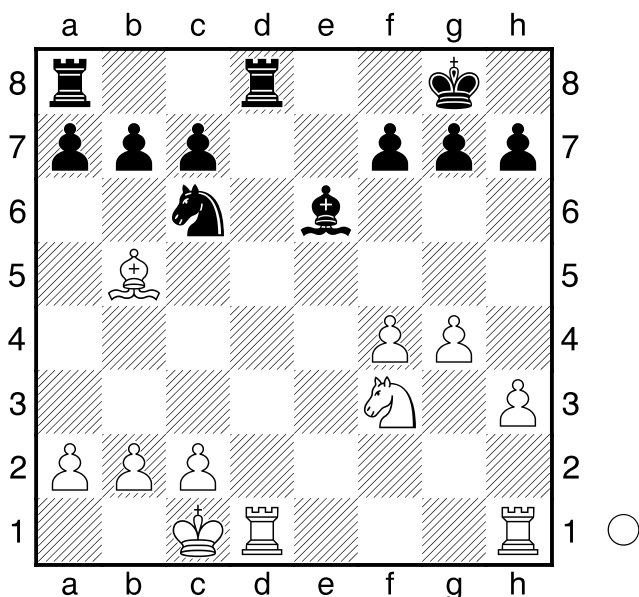
□ Milov, Vadim
■ Miles, Anthony J
"d" and "e" files open

B00
2570
2600
1995

Specific features:

-White took the lead in development thanks to a wise exchanges policy
 -the development advantage was transformed into a long term advantage (double isolated pawns on the "c" file)

1.e4 Nc6 2.d4 e5 3.dxe5 Nxe5 4.f4 Nc6
 5.Bc4 Bb4+ 6.Bd2 Qh4+ 7.g3 Qe7 8.Qe2
 Bxd2+ 9.Nxd2 d6 10.0-0-0 Nf6 11.Ngf3 0-0
 12.h3 d5 13.exd5 Qxe2 14.Bxe2 Nxd5
 15.Nc4 Nb6 16.g4 Nxc4 17.Bxc4 Be6
 18.Bb5 Rfd8 Diagram



19.Bxc6 bxc6 20.Nd4 Bd5 21.Rhe1 Re8
 22.b3 Kf8 23.Kb2 Rad8 24.Kc3 g6 25.a4
 h6 26.f5 g5 27.Rxe8+ Rxe8 28.Rd3 Re1
 29.Kb4 h5 30.gxh5 Kg7 31.Kc5 Be4 32.Rc3
 Kh6 33.Nxc6 Bxf5 34.Nxa7 Be4 35.Nb5 f5
 36.Nxc7 Kxh5 37.Ne6 f4 38.Nd4 Rf1 39.b4
 f3 40.Re3 f2 41.Re2 Ba8 42.Nf5 Kg6
 43.Nd6 Rd1 44.Rxf2 Rd5+ 45.Kb6 Rxd6+
 46.Ka7 Be4 47.b5 Rd7+ 48.Kb6
 1/2-1/2

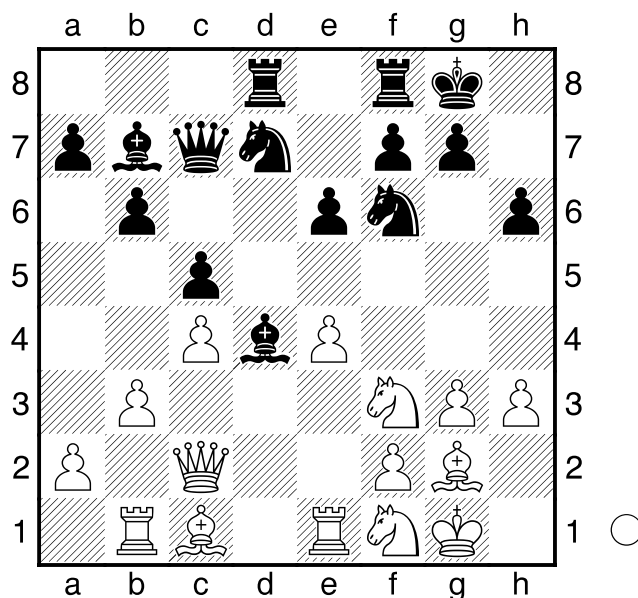
□ Olafsson, Fridrik
 ■ Karpov, Anatoly
 e4 versus e5 open "d" file

A05
 2560
 2690
 1977

Features to follow:

-the battle took place on the central file "d"
 -Black managed to occupy the weak square d4
 -after that Black transformed this advantage into a long term advantage (the pair of bishops)
 -then Black exploited the dark squares.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 b6 3.Bg2 Bb7 4.0-0 e6
 5.d3 d5 6.Nbd2 Nbd7 7.c3 Be7 8.Qc2 0-0
 9.e4 c5 10.Re1 Qc7 11.c4 dxe4 12.dxe4
 Rad8 13.h3 Bd6 14.b3 Be5 15.Rb1 h6
 16.Nf1 Bd4 Diagram



17.Bf4 e5 18.Bc1 Nb8 19.Nh4 Nc6 20.a3
 a6 21.Nf5 b5 22.Bd2 b4 23.axb4 Nxb4
 24.Bxb4 cxb4 25.N1e3 Bc3 26.Red1 a5
 27.Nd5 Bxd5 28.exd5 Kh8 29.Rd3 a4 30.d6
 Qc5 31.Rxc3 bxc3 32.Qxc3 axb3 33.Rxb3
 Rb8 34.Qe3 Qxc4 35.Rd3 Rfd8 36.Ne7 e4
 37.Rd4 Qe6 38.Qf4 Rb6 39.Nf5 g5 40.Qc1
 Qxf5
 0-1

□ Kasparov, Garry
 ■ Ivanchuk, Vassily
 "c" and "d" files open

A31
 2780
 2720
 1992

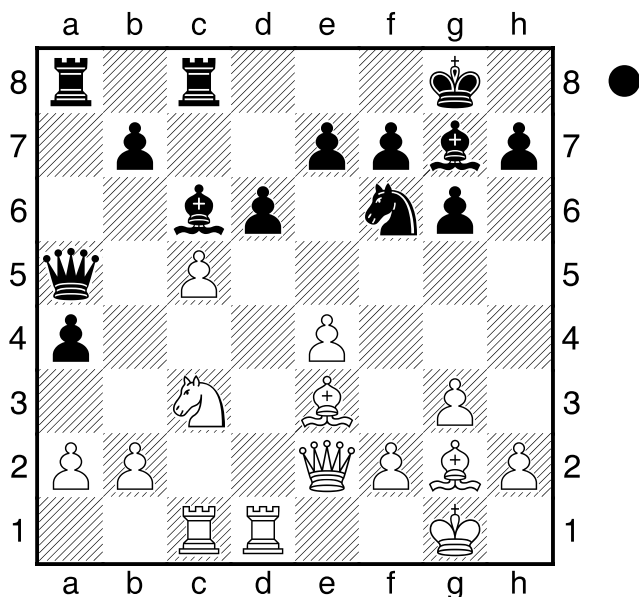
Specific features:

-White had the space advantage and a flexible pawn structure
 -after the rooks development White opened up

the "c" and "d" files and installed a knight on the central fore post d5

-This qualitative superior pieces advantage was transformed to a long term advantage (the pair of bishops in an open position).

1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.g3 d6 5.Bg2 g6 6.d4 cxd4 7.Nxd4 Bd7 8.e4 Bg7 9.Nxc6 Bxc6 10.Be3 0-0 11.0-0 a5 12.Rc1 a4 13.Qe2 Qa5 14.Rfd1 Rfc8 15.c5 Diagram



Ne8 16.cxd6 Nxd6 17.Nd5 Bxd5 18.Rxd5 Rxc1+ 19.Bxc1 Qc7 20.Bf4 Qc4 21.Qxc4 Nxc4 22.b3 axb3 23.axb3 Na5 24.b4 Nc6 25.b5 Nd4 26.Bf1 h5 27.Kg2 Nc2 28.Bd2 e6 29.Rc5 Nd4 30.Be3 b6 31.Rc7 Ra1 32.Rc8+ Kh7 33.Rc7 Kg8 34.Rc4 Rd1 35.Rc8+ Kh7 36.Rd8 Be5 37.h3 Kg7 38.Bc4 Kf6 39.Rd7 g5 40.Be2 Nxe2 41.Rxd1 Nc3 42.Rd8 Nxe4 43.Bxb6 Nc3 44.Rg8 Nxb5 45.Bd8+ 1-0

□ Hodgson, Julian M

■ Cramling, Pia

"c" and "e" files open

A45
2580
2520
1995

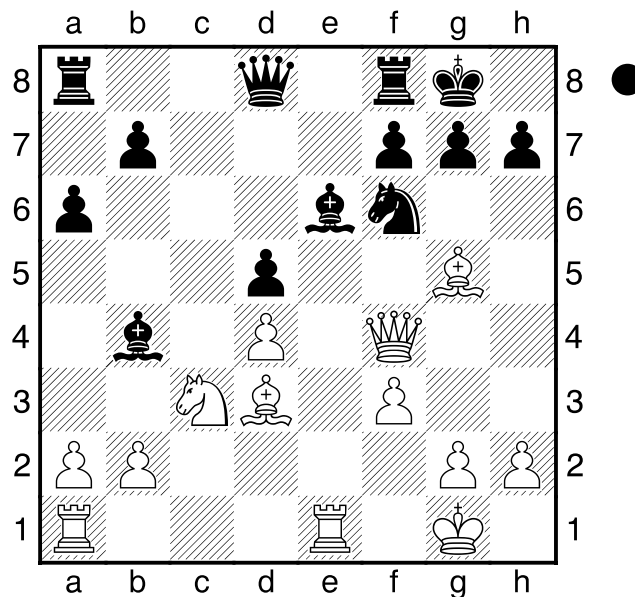
attack possibility for the active side until the opponent is preoccupied to penetrate along the "c" file.

Specific features:

-despite the symmetrical pawn structure White had more room for his pieces (especially the bishops were better developed)

-with the help of the queen White creates threats against the black monarch and managed to create pawn and square weaknesses in black's camp.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 Ne4 3.Bf4 c5 4.f3 Qa5+ 5.c3 Nf6 6.Nd2 cxd4 7.Nb3 Qb6 8.cxd4 d5 9.e3 Nc6 10.Ne2 e6 11.Nc3 a6 12.Bd3 Be7 13.Bg5 Qd8 14.0-0 e5 15.Re1 exd4 16.Nxd4 Nxd4 17.exd4 0-0 18.Qe2 Bb4 19.Qe3 Be6 20.Qf4 Diagram



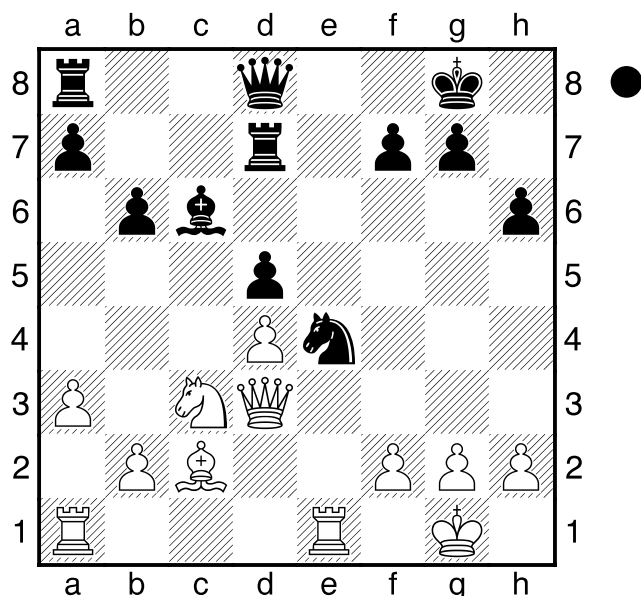
Be7 21.Qh4 h6 22.Bxh6 Nd7 23.Qh5 Nf6 24.Qg5 Ne8 25.Qe3 Bf6 26.Bf4 Qb6 27.Be5 Bxe5 28.Qxe5 Qxb2 29.Na4 Qa3 30.Nc5 Nf6 31.Nxe6 Rae8 32.Bf5 fxe6 33.Bxe6+ Kh8 34.Re3 Qb2 35.Rae1 Nh7 36.Qh5 g6 37.Qxd5 Nf6 38.Qe5 Kg7 1-0

In this peculiar case with the "c" and "e" files open, the side that controls the 'e' file tends to have the advantage. The reason lays in a king

 Portisch,Lajos
 Nikolic,Predrag
 "c" and "e" files open

E12
2635
2575
 1985

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.a3 d5 5.cxd5
 exd5 6.Nc3 Be7 7.Bf4 0-0 8.e3 c5 9.Ne5
 Bb7 10.Bd3 Nc6 11.0-0 cxd4 12.Nxc6 Bxc6
 13.exd4 Bd6 14.Bg5 h6 15.Bh4 Re8 16.Bc2
 Be7 17.Re1 Ne4 18.Bxe7 Rxe7 19.Qe2 Rd7
 20.Qd3 Diagram



g6 21.Bb3 Kg7 22.Rac1 Rc8 23.f3 Nd6
 24.Qe3 Nc4 25.Bxc4 dxc4 26.Rcd1 Qg5
 27.Qxg5 hxg5 28.d5 Bb7 29.Re5 Rc5
 30.Rxg5 f5 31.h4 Kf6 32.d6 Re5 33.Kf2
 Re6 34.Ne2 Rdxd6 35.Nf4 Rxd1 36.Rxg6+
 Kf7 37.Rxe6 Rd4 38.Rh6 Rxf4 39.Kg3 Rd4
 40.Rh7+ Kg6 41.Rxb7 Rd2 42.Rxa7 Rxb2
 43.Rc7 b5 44.Rc6+ Kg7 45.Rc5 Kg6
 46.Rc6+ Kg7 47.Rc5 Kg6 48.h5+ Kxh5
 49.Rxf5+ Kg6 50.Rc5 Kf6 51.a4 bxa4
 52.Rxc4 a3 53.Ra4 Ra2 54.Ra5 Kg6 55.f4
 Kf6 56.Ra6+ Ke7 57.Kf3 Kf7 58.g4 Ke7
 59.g5
 1-0

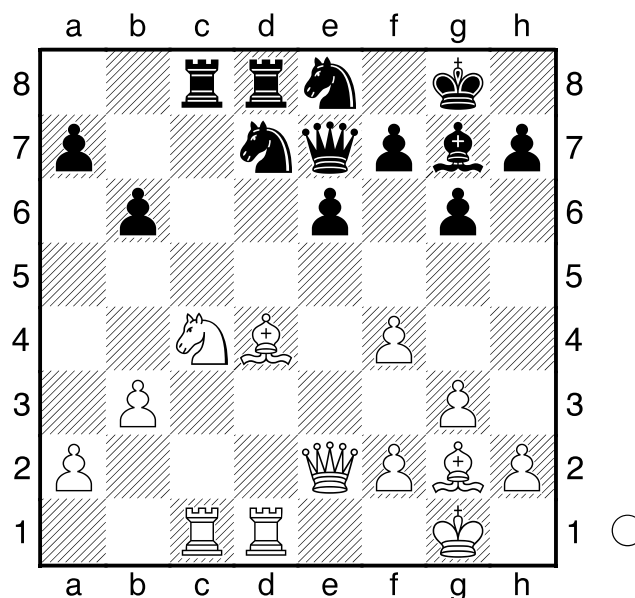
 Ribli,Zoltan
 Smyslov,Vassily
 "c" and "d" files open

A07
2600
2610
 1984

Specific features of the game:

- Black gives up the pair of bishops early when the center was almost closed
- by the help of the central breakthrough White was able to open up the central file, threatening to enter on the important square d6
- the battle took place around the "c" and "d" files
- the endgame was favorable to white thanks to the pair of bishops.

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Bg4 3.Bg2 c6 4.b3 Nd7
 5.Bb2 Ngf6 6.0-0 g6 7.d4 Bg7 8.Nbd2 0-0
 9.Re1 Re8 10.c4 Bxf3 11.exf3 c5 12.f4 e6
 13.Rc1 b6 14.Nf1 Rc8 15.Ne3 cxd4
 16.Bxd4 dxc4 17.Nxc4 Qe7 18.Qe2 Red8
 19.Red1 Ne8 Diagram



20.Be3 Nb8 21.h3 Nd6 22.Nxd6 Rxc1
 23.Rxc1 Qxd6 24.Qc4 Bf6 25.Bf3 Qe7
 26.a4 Nd7 27.b4 e5 28.Rd1 exf4 29.gxf4
 Nf8 30.Rxd8 Qxd8 31.Bd5 Qd7 32.a5 bxa5
 33.bxa5 Ne6 34.Bxe6 fxe6 35.a6 Be7
 36.Qd4
 1-0

□ Quinteros, Miguel Angel

■ Timman, Jan H

"c" and "d" files open

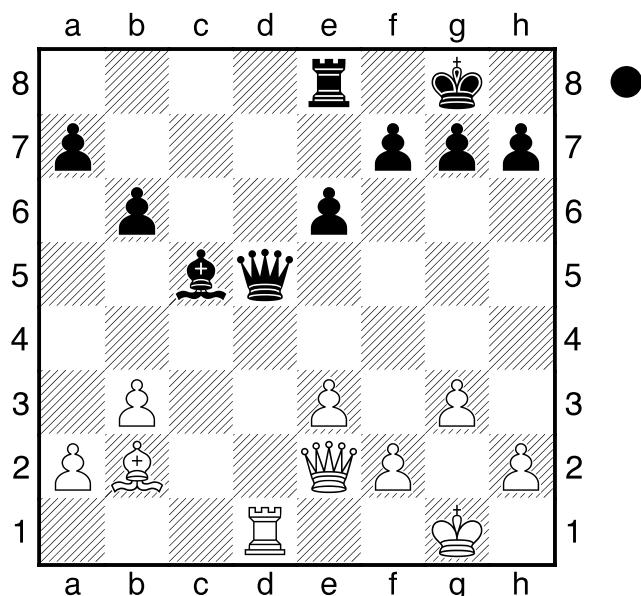
A14

2515

2600

1980

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 Bb7 4.Bg2 e6 5.0-0
Be7 6.d3 d5 7.b3 0-0 8.Bb2 c5 9.e3 Nc6
10.Qe2 Re8 11.Rd1 Rc8 12.Nc3 Rc7 13.d4
cxd4 14.Nxd4 Nxd4 15.Rxd4 Bc5 16.Rdd1
Rd7 17.cxd5 Nxd5 18.Nxd5 Bxd5 19.Bxd5
Rxd5 20.Rxd5 Qxd5 21.Rd1 Diagram



Qe4 22.Rd7 Qb1+ 23.Kg2 Qxa2 24.Qf3
Rf8 25.Be5 Qc2 26.Qg4 Qg6 27.Qxg6 hxd6
28.Rxa7 Rd8 29.Rb7 Rd2 30.Bd4 Bxd4
31.exd4 Rxd4 32.Rb8+ Kh7 33.Rxb6 g5
34.Kf3 Kg6 35.Ke2 g4 36.Rc6 Kf5 37.Rc7
f6 38.Rxg7 Rb4 39.h4 gxh3 40.Rh7 Rxb3
½-½

□ Adams, Michael

■ Kasparov, Garry

"c" and "d" files open

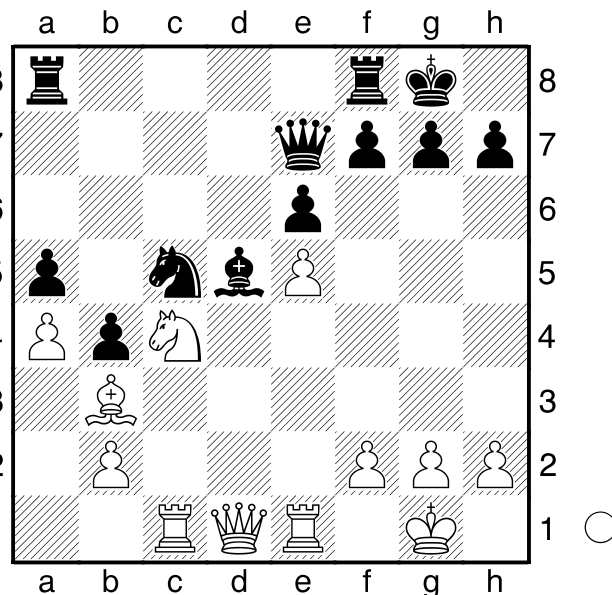
B50

2655

2805

1995

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d3 e6 5.Bb3
Nc6 6.c3 d5 7.e5 Nd7 8.d4 Be7 9.0-0 b5
10.Re1 Bb7 11.Nbd2 a5 12.a4 b4 13.c4
dxc4 14.Nxc4 cxd4 15.Bg5 0-0 16.Bxe7
Qxe7 17.Nxd4 Nc5 18.Nxc6 Bxc6 19.Rc1
Bd5 Diagram



20.Ba2 Qg5 21.Ne3 Bxa2 22.Rxc5 Rfc8
23.Rb5 Qd8 24.Qf3 Qd2 25.Rd1 Qxb2
26.h3 Rf8 27.Rd7 Rac8 28.Ng4 Bd5 29.Qg3
Qc1+ 30.Kh2 Bc6 31.Ra7 Bxb5 32.axb5
Kh8 33.b6 Qc5 34.Qf4 Qxb6 35.Rxf7 Rxf7
36.Qxf7 b3 37.Nf6 Qc7 38.Qxe6 gxf6
39.Qxf6+ Qg7 40.Qe6 Rg8 41.g3 b2
0-1

□ Granda Zuniga, Julio E

■ Mecking, Henrique

"c" and "d" files open

E09

2620

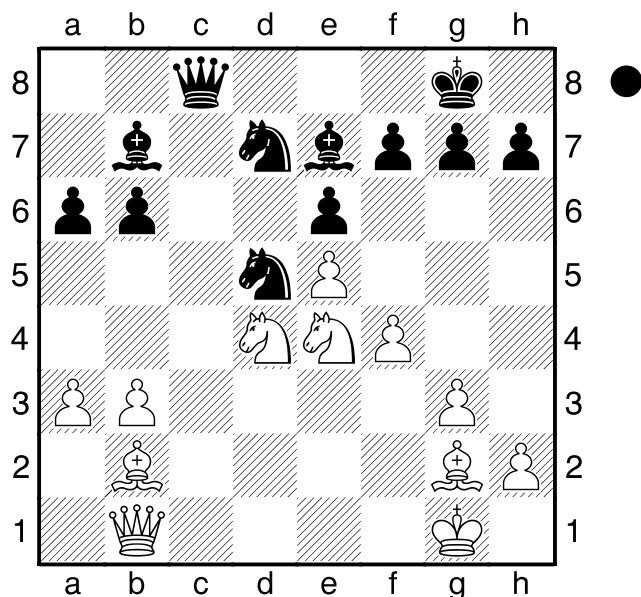
2575

1995

1.d4 Nf6 2.g3 e6 3.Bg2 d5 4.Nf3 Be7 5.c4
c6 6.Nbd2 0-0 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.b3 b6 9.Bb2
Bb7 10.Qc2 c5 11.Rac1 Rc8 12.Qb1 Rc7
13.cxd5 Bxd5 14.dxc5 Bxc5 15.e4 Bb7
16.e5 Nd5 17.Ne4 Be7 18.Nd4 a6 19.Rxc7
Qxc7 20.Rc1 Qb8 21.f4 Rc8 22.Rxc8+
Qxc8 23.a3 Diagram

(Diagram)

Ne3 24.Bf3 Nc5 25.Qc1 Nxe4 26.Qxe3 Nc5
27.b4 Bxf3 28.Nxf3 Na4 29.Bd4 g6 30.Nd2
Qc2 31.Nf1 b5 32.Qd2 Qc7 33.Ne3 Nb6
34.Bxb6 Qxb6 35.Kf2 h5 36.Qc3 Qb7
37.Qc1 Bd8 38.Qd1 Bb6 39.Qf3 Qc8
40.Kg2 Kg7 41.Nf1 Qc2+ 42.Kh3 Qf5+



43.Kg2 Qc2+ 44.Kh3 Bd4 45.Kh4 Qf5
0-1

□ Hodgson, Julian M
■ Goldin, Alexander
"d" and "e" files open

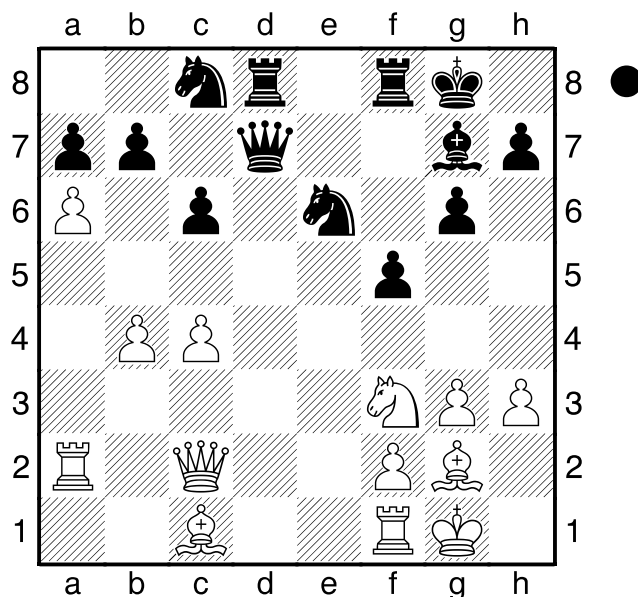
A07
2545
2595
1992

In this game White forced the opponent to push the queen side pawns and then skillfully exploited the weaknesses. Again the pair of bishops played an important role.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 d5 3.Bg2 c6 4.d3 Bg4
5.Nbd2 Nbd7 6.h3 Bxf3 7.Nxf3 g6 8.0-0
Bg7 9.Qe1 0-0 10.e4 dxe4 11.dxe4 Nc5
12.e5 Nd5 13.b4 Ne6 14.c4 Nb6 15.Qe4
Qd7 16.a4 f5 17.exf6 exf6 18.Qc2 f5
19.Ra2 Rad8 20.a5 Nc8 21.a6 Diagram

(Diagram)

b6 22.Bb2 c5 23.Ne5 Qd2 24.Qb1 Qd6
25.Nc6 Rd7 26.Bd5 Kh8 27.Re1 Nc7
28.bxc5 bxc5 29.Bg2 Ne6 30.Qa1 Nb6
31.Be5 Bxe5 32.Rxe5 Ng7 33.Bd5 Nxd5
34.cxd5 Qf6 35.Qc1 Qd6 36.Rb2 f4 37.g4
Ne8 38.Rb7 Nf6 39.Qxf4
1-0



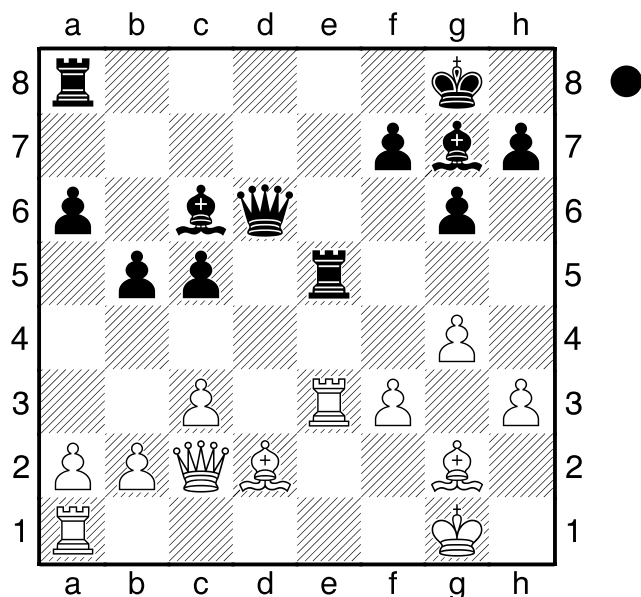
□ Lein, Anatoly
■ Seirawan, Yasser
"d" and "e" files open

B06
2520
2510
1980

1.e4 g6 2.d4 d6 3.Nc3 a6 4.g3 b5 5.Bg2
Bb7 6.Nge2 Nd7 7.0-0 Bg7 8.Nd5 c6 9.Ne3
Ngf6 10.h3 0-0 11.c3 e5 12.dxe5 Nxe5
13.Qc2 Re8 14.Bd2 Ned7 15.Rfe1 c5 16.f3
d5 17.Nxd5 Nxd5 18.exd5 Bxd5 19.Nf4
Ne5 20.Re3 Bc6 21.Nd3 Qd6 22.Nxe5 Rxe5
23.g4 Diagram

(Diagram)

Rd5 24.Re2 Rd8 25.Be3 Rd3 26.Rae1 c4
27.a3 Qg3 28.Bf2 Qb8 29.Bh4 f6 30.Rf1 g5
31.Be1 Qf4 32.Re6 Rc8 33.Qf2 Bf8 34.Qg3
Kf7 35.Qxf4 gxf4 36.Re2 Rcd8 37.Bf2 Bxf3
38.Bxf3 Rxf3 39.Kg2 Rdd3 40.Kh1 Bd6
41.Rc2 Ke6
0-1



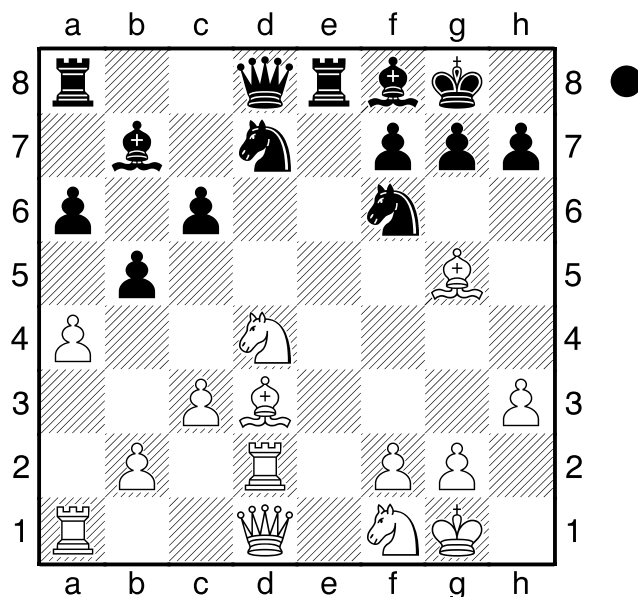
Anand,Viswanathan
Belavsky,Alexander G
 "d" and "e" files open

C95
2670
2620
 1992

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6
 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3
 Nb8 10.d4 Nbd7 11.Nbd2 Bb7 12.Bc2 Re8
 13.a4 Bf8 14.Bd3 c6 15.Nf1 d5 16.Bg5
 dxe4 17.Rxe4 Be7 18.Re2 exd4 19.Nxd4
 Bf8 20.Rd2 Diagram

(Diagram)

Qc7 21.Bf5 c5 22.Nf3 Ne5 23.Nxe5 Rxe5
 24.Ne3 Qc6 25.axb5 axb5 26.Rxa8 Bxa8
 27.Bxf6 Qxf6 28.Rd8 g6 29.Rxa8 gxf5
 30.Qd7 h5 31.Nd5 Qh6 32.g3 Re1+ 33.Kh2
 h4 34.Ne7+ Kh8 35.Nxf5 hxg3+ 36.Nxg3
 Kg8 37.Qxb5 Qd6 38.Qc4
 1-0



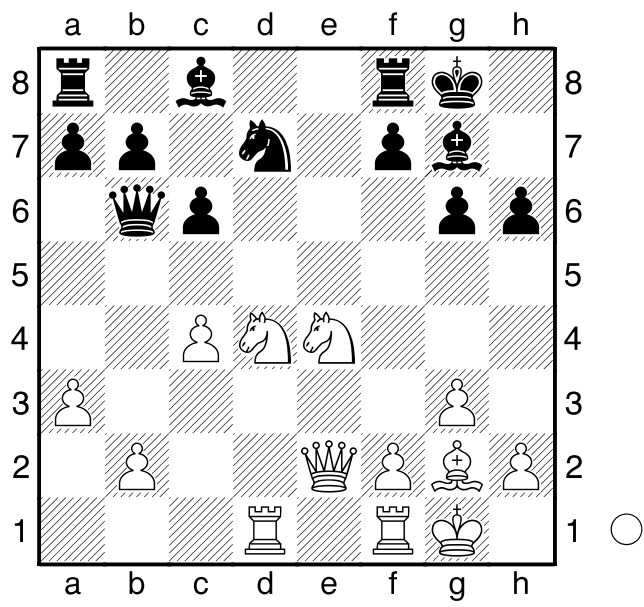
Nikolic,Predrag
Kramnik,Vladimir
 "d" and "e" files open

D43
2645
2775
 1996

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.Bg5
 h6 6.Bxf6 Qxf6 7.e3 Nd7 8.a3 g6 9.e4
 dxe4 10.Nxe4 Qf4 11.Qe2 Bg7 12.g3 Qc7
 13.Bg2 0-0 14.0-0 e5 15.Rad1 exd4
 16.Nxd4 Qb6 Diagram

(Diagram)

17.Qd2 Nc5 18.b4 Nxe4 19.Bxe4 Bh3
 20.Rfe1 Rad8 21.c5 Qc7 22.Qe3 Qd7
 23.Nxc6 Qxd1 24.Nxd8 Rxd8 25.Bxb7 Qc2
 26.Bg2 Bxg2 27.Kxg2 Rd2 28.Qf4 Bd4
 29.Rf1 Kg7 30.h4 h5 31.Qf3 Rd3 32.Qf4
 Qb3 33.Re1 Qxa3 34.c6 Qxb4 35.Re4 Qc5
 36.c7 Bf6 37.Rc4 Qd5+ 38.Kh2 Rd1 39.f3
 Be5 40.c8Q Bxf4 41.Rxf4 Qd2+
 0-1



□ **Damljanovic, Branko**
 ■ **Marjanovic, Slavoljub**
 c3,d4 versus c4,d5 "e" file open (8)

A08
2550
2445
 1993

STATIC CENTER

In the positions characterized by a blocked pawn structure in the center and the presence of one open or half-open file the fight will take place around the center of the board. Usually each opponent occupies one central square (due to the pawn pairs d4-d5 or e4-e5), so who manages to control (or to occupy) the other 2 squares will have the upper hand.

THE ACTIVE SIDE will try to centralize the pieces (in order to control maximum number of squares), then to start a wing attack:

- against the enemy king by a piece attack supported by the pawns (by transposition, positions with closed center or mobile center can arise)
- on the queen side by a pawn attack (even a minority attack) in order to open up a file and to penetrate into the enemy's camp.

THE DEFENDING SIDE must fight for the central squares and to chase opponent's pieces out. We must stress here that a wing attack can take place to compensate opponent's superiority in the center (due to the stable position in the static center).

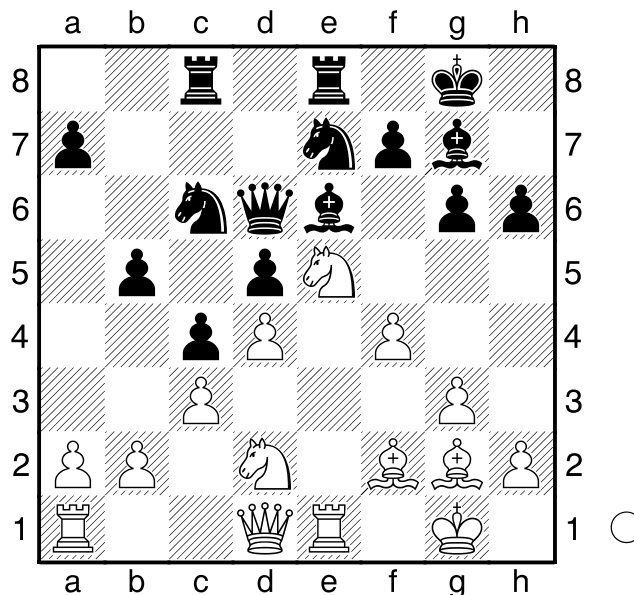
1.Nf3 c5 2.g3 Nc6 3.Bg2 g6 4.0-0 Bg7
5.c3 d5 6.d3 e6 7.Nbd2 Nge7 8.e4 b6
9.Re1 h6 10.exd5 exd5 11.Nb3 0-0 12.Be3
Be6 13.d4 c4 14.Nbd2 Rc8 15.Ne5 b5
16.f4 Re8 17.Bf2 Qd6 Diagram

(Diagram)

We have a typical position for the "static center". White already installed Ne5 and started a king side pawn advance by f2-f4.

In this time, Black prepares a pawn attack with b5-b4 and will try to enter along the "b" file. If White manages to maintain the knight on e5, he will have a better game.

18.Qf3 Kh7 19.g4 f5 20.h3 b4 21.Re2



bxc3 22.bxc3 Nxe5 23.dxe5 Qd7 24.gxf5
Nxf5 25.Ree1 d4 26.Ne4 d3 27.Rab1 Rb8
28.Nc5 Qe7 29.Qc6 Bg8 30.Ne4 Qa3
31.Rxb8 Rxb8 32.Qc7 Qf8 33.Nf6+ Kh8
34.Nxg8 Qxg8 35.Qc6 Kh7 36.Bd5 Rc8
37.Bxg8+ 1-0

□ **Short, Nigel D**
 ■ **Torre, Eugenio**
 e4 versus e5 "e" file open

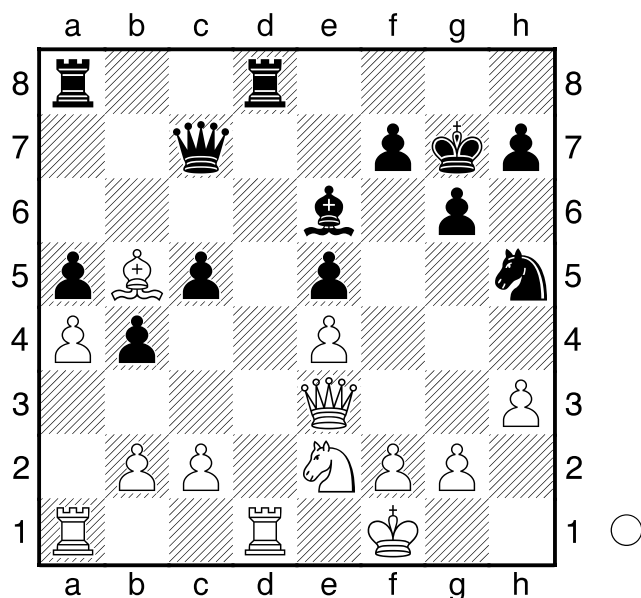
B08
2575
2535
 1985

Specific features of the game:

- a well known pawn structure aroused in this game: e4 versus e5
- White tried to use the outpost d5 but Black controlled very well the "d" file and started a pawn attack on the queen side
- as you can see, both players used long positional maneuvers in order to control the key squares from the "d" file and also from adjacent files
- the position was balanced until the endgame where White exploited the weak squares from Black's camp.

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.h3
0-0 6.Be3 c6 7.Qd2 b5 8.Bd3 Nbd7 9.Bh6

e5 10.Bxg7 Kxg7 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.a4 b4
13.Ne2 c5 14.Qe3 Qc7 15.Nd2 a5 16.0-0
Nh5 17.Rfd1 Nb6 18.Nc4 Be6 19.Nxb6
Qxb6 20.Bb5 Rfd8 21.Kf1 Qc7 Diagram



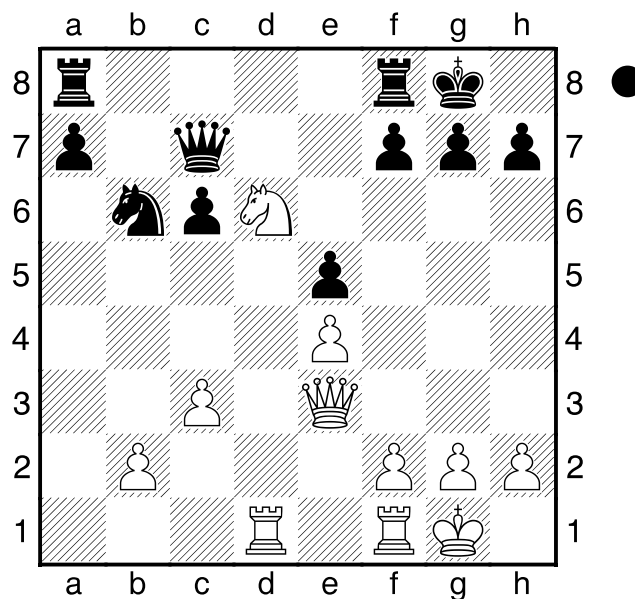
22.h4 Rd6 23.g3 Rad8 24.Ke1 c4 25.Ng1
Nf6 26.f3 b3 27.Rxd6 Rxd6 28.Rc1 Qd8
29.cxb3 Rd3 30.Qf2 Rxb3 31.Bxc4 Bxc4
32.Rxc4 Qb8 33.Rc2 Qb4+ 34.Qd2 Qxa4
35.Kf1 Nd7 36.Kg2 Nf8 37.Ne2 Ne6 38.Qc1
Qb4 39.Nc3 Qd4 40.Re2 Qd3 41.Rf2 Qc4
42.h5 g5 43.Qh1 h6 44.Qh3 Nd4 45.Qd7
Qe6 46.Qc7 Nb5 47.Qxa5 Nxc3 48.bxc3
Qd6 49.Rc2 Qb8 50.c4 Rb1 51.Qc3 Qd6
52.Rb2 Rd1 53.c5 Qd4 54.Qxd4 exd4
55.Kh3 Rc1 56.Rd2 Rc4 57.Kg4 Kf6 58.f4
gxf4 59.gxf4 Ke6 60.Rd1 f5+ 61.exf5+ Kf6
62.c6 Rxc6 63.Rxd4 Rc1 64.Rd6+ Kf7
65.Rxh6 Rg1+ 66.Kf3 Rf1+ 67.Kg3 Rg1+
68.Kf2 Rh1 69.Kg2 Rh4 70.Kg3 Rh1 71.f6
Ke6 72.f7+ Kxf7 73.Kg4 Rg1+ 74.Kf5 Rh1
75.Rh7+ Kg8 76.Rd7 Ra1 77.Ke6 Ra6+
78.Rd6 Ra1 79.f5 Re1+ 80.Kf6 Rf1 81.Rd8+
Kh7 82.Ke6 Kg7 83.h6+ Kxh6 84.f6 Re1+
85.Kf7 Kh7 86.Rd2 Rh1 87.Kf8
1-0

□ Savon,Vladimir A
■ Lutikov,Anatoly S
e4 versus e5 "d" file open

B12
2545
2500
1976

White proved a deep understanding of how these positions must be played:
-by pushing the "a" pawn, White restricted Black's pieces activity and after axb6 created two isolated pawns on a7 and c6
-then White installed the knight on f5 via d6
-by the help of a mate threat Qe3-Qg5-g7 White forced Black to push f7-f6 and finally the attack on light squares proved to be decisive.

1.e4 d6 2.d4 c6 3.Nc3 Qc7 4.a4 e5 5.Nf3
Bg4 6.Be2 Nf6 7.0-0 Be7 8.Be3 0-0 9.Nd2
Bxe2 10.Qxe2 Na6 11.a5 Nb4 12.dxe5
dxe5 13.Nc4 Nd7 14.Na4 Na6 15.c3 Nac5
16.Nxc5 Bxc5 17.Rad1 Bxe3 18.Qxe3 b5
19.axb6 Nxb6 20.Nd6 Diagram



Rfd8 21.Nf5 f6 22.Qc5 Kf7 23.g3 g6
24.Ne3 Rac8 25.b4 Qe7 26.Qa5 Rc7
27.Rxd8 Qxd8 28.c4 Rd7 29.c5 Nc8
30.Qa2+ Kg7 31.Qe6 Qc7 32.Ng4 Rf7
33.Rd1 h5 34.Nxf6 Rxf6 35.Rd7+ Kh6
36.Qe8 Qb8 37.h4 Nb6 38.Qxb8 Nxd7
39.Qh8#
1-0

 **Shirov,Alexei**
 **Karpov,Anatoly**
 d4,e3 versus c6,d5

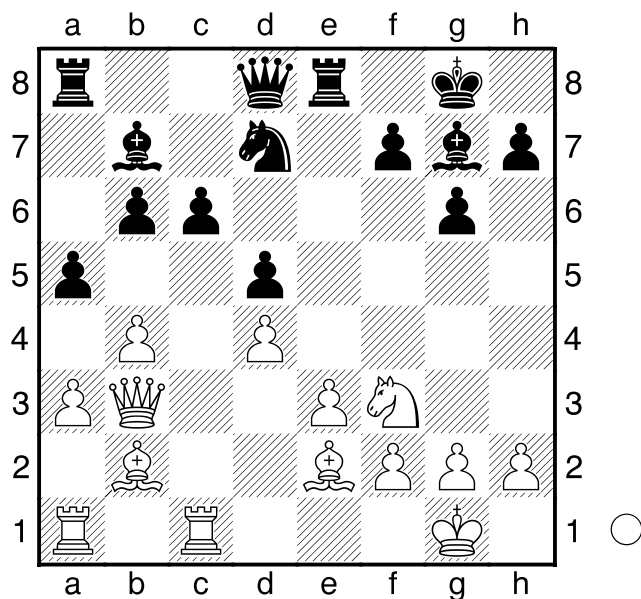
E12
2710
2780
 1995

Usually in the "Karlsbad pawn structure" White tries to conquer the center with f2-f3 and e3-e4 or launch a minority attack with b4-b5, but in this game White didn't showed any interest for the central square.

During this time Black deflected the b4 pawn in order to realize the ideal breakthrough c6-c5 followed by c5-c4 which gave a long term advantage (a free supported pawn).

Then a positional play started each side trying to improve the worst placed pieces.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.a3 Bb7 5.Nc3
 d5 6.cxd5 Nxd5 7.e3 g6 8.Nxd5 exd5 9.b4
 Bg7 10.Bb2 c6 11.Be2 0-0 12.0-0 Nd7
 13.Qb3 Re8 14.Rfc1 a5 Diagram



15.bxa5 Rxa5 16.a4 c5 17.Bb5 c4 18.Qc2
 Re6 19.Bc3 Ra7 20.Rcb1 Nb8 21.Ra2 Nc6
 22.Rab2 Na5 23.Ne5 Qc7 24.Rf1 Bc8 25.f4
 f6 26.e4 fxe5 27.exd5 exd4 28.Bxa5 bxa5
 29.dxe6 Bxe6 30.Qe4 Qd6 31.Re2 Bf7
 32.f5 d3 33.fxg6 hxg6 34.Ree1 d2 35.Rd1
 Qd4+ 36.Qxd4 Bxd4+ 37.Kh1 c3 38.Bd3
 Re7 39.Rb1 Ba2
 0-1

 **Kudrin,Sergey**
 **Alburt,Lev O**
 d4 versus d5 "e" file open

B04
2545
2525
 1988

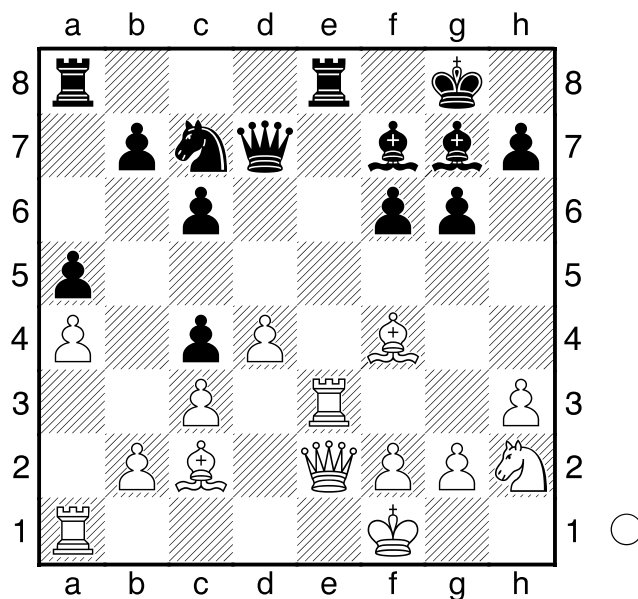
Specific features:

-as always in positions with "static center" the balance was evident

-Black was first to install a knight on the forepost c4 and then after the trade dxc4 and the next knight came on d5

-Black queen side pawn majority was also important in the endgame.

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.Nf3 g6 5.Bc4
 Nb6 6.Bb3 Bg7 7.a4 c6 8.exd6 exd6 9.Bg5
 f6 10.Bf4 Qe7+ 11.Kd2 d5 12.Re1 Be6
 13.Ke2 Kf7 14.Kf1 Qd7 15.Nbd2 a5 16.Re3
 Na6 17.h3 Rhe8 18.Qe2 Kg8 19.c3 Bf7
 20.Bc2 Nc7 21.Nh2 Nc4 22.Nxc4 dxc4
 Diagram



23.Re1 Nd5 24.Rxe8+ Rxe8 25.Qf3 Rxe1+
 26.Kxe1 Qe6+ 27.Kd1 g5 28.Bg3 Bg6
 29.Qg4 Kf7 30.Nf3 b5 31.Nd2 Bf8 32.axb5
 cxb5 33.Bb8 a4 34.Qxe6+ Kxe6 35.Bxg6
 hxg6 36.Kc2 a3 37.bxa3 Bxa3 38.Ne4 Be7
 39.Nd2 Bd8 40.Nb1 Ba5 41.g4 b4 42.Bg3
 b3+ 43.Kb2 Kd7 44.h4 gxh4 45.Bxh4 Kc6
 46.f3 Bc7 47.Na3 g5 48.Bxg5 fxg5 49.Nxc4
 Nf4 50.Kxb3 Nd3 51.Nd2 Ne1 52.c4 Bf4

53.Kc3 Kd6 54.Ne4+ Ke7 55.c5 Ke6 56.Kc4
Nxf3 57.d5+ Ke5 58.Nc3 Nd2+ 59.Kb5 Kd4
60.Kb4 Nc4 61.d6 Bd2
0-1

□ Suba,Mihai
■ Jansa,Vlastimil
e5 versus e6 "d" file open

A41
2500
2500
1993

Important features:

- a dynamic center became a static center
- as in the previous games the obstruction of enemy forces activity played an important role and led to the advantage of superior qualitative pieces
- in the endgame the presence of the advanced pawns creates the reasons for promotion tactics.

1.d4 d6 2.Nf3 Bg4 3.e4 Nf6 4.h3 Bh5
5.Nc3 e6 6.Qe2 a6 7.g4 Bg6 8.Bg5 Be7
9.Bxf6 Bxf6 10.h4 h6 11.0-0-0 Nd7 12.e5
dxe5 13.Nxe5 Bxe5 14.dxe5 Qe7 15.f4
0-0-0 16.h5 Bh7 17.Bg2 Nb6 18.Qf2 Kb8
19.a3 Rxd1+ 20.Rxd1 Rd8 21.Rxd8+ Qxd8
22.b3 Qe7 23.Kb2 Nd7 24.Qd4 Nb6 25.a4
Qd7 26.Qe3 a5 27.Nb5 Nc8 28.Qc5 Qd8
29.Bf3 Qd7 30.Nd4 Qd8 31.Kc1 Na7
32.Bxb7 Kxb7 33.Qxa7+ Kxa7 34.Nc6+ Kb6
35.Nxd8 Bg8 36.g5 c6 37.g6 fxe6 38.hxe6
Kc5 39.Kd2 h5 40.Ke3 h4 41.Kf3 Kd5
42.c4+ Kc5 43.Kg4
1-0

□ Romanishin,Oleg M
■ Lutikov,Anatoly S
e4 versus e5 open "d" file

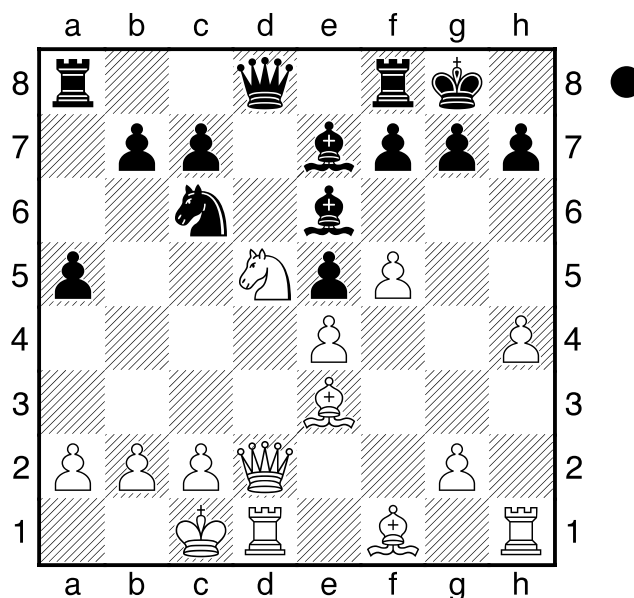
C41
2560
2515
1979

Important features:

- the fight was around the "d" file and especially the key squares d4 and d5
- White installed Nd5 a small advantage transformed soon into the pair of bishops advantage

-from the endgame, the "clearing policy" which opened the lines for White's bishops and rook must be remembered.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 exd4 4.Qxd4 Ne7
5.Be3 Nbc6 6.Qd2 Ng6 7.Nc3 Be7 8.0-0-0
0-0 9.h4 Nge5 10.Nd5 a5 11.Nxe5 dxe5
12.f4 Be6 13.f5 Diagram



Bxd5 14.Qxd5 Nb4 15.Qxd8 Rfxd8
16.Rxd8+ Rxd8 17.a3 Nc6 18.c3 Nb8
19.Kc2 Nd7 20.Be2 Kf8 21.g4 Bc5 22.Bc1
a4 23.g5 Bd6 24.h5 Nc5 25.g6 h6 26.f6
Nxe4 27.fxe7+ Kxe7 28.gxf7 Kxf7 29.Rh4
Ng3 30.Bf3 b5 31.Bc6 Rb8 32.Rh3 Nf5
33.Bd7 Ng7 34.Bxe6 Rh8 35.Be3 Nxe5
36.Bxb5 Kg7 37.Bxa4 c5 38.Bc6 Rc8
39.Rxh5 Rxc6 40.Rh4 c4 41.Kd1 Kf7
42.Ke2 Ke7 43.Kf3 Rc8 44.Ke4 Bc5
1-0

□ Karpov,Anatoly
■ Jussupov,Artur
Karlsbad d4,e3 versus c6,d5

D36
2750
2610
1989

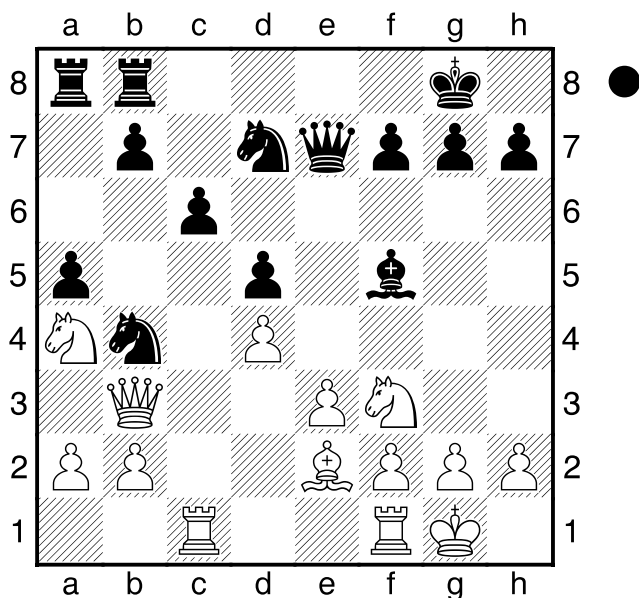
The key squares in "Karlsbad pawn structure" are e4, e5, c4 and c5.

If White wants to attack in the center and on the king side he should try to install a knight on e5 and for a queen side attack a knight on c5.

In the mirror Black must e4 to search counterplay on the king side and c4 when White launch a minority attack (b2-b4,a2-a4, b4-b5) in order to create a blockade with b7-b5 followed by Nb6(d6)-c4.

In this game White managed to put the knight on c5 and controlled the center. Black tried to became active on the queen side (which is quite unusual) but didn't manage to create serious weaknesses in White's camp. Again pieces centralization proved to be superior.

1.c4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Be7 4.Nf3 Nf6
5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 c6 7.Qc2 Na6 8.e3 Nb4
9.Qd1 Bf5 10.Rc1 a5 11.Be2 0-0 12.0-0
Nd7 13.Bxe7 Qxe7 14.Qb3 Rfb8 15.Na4
Diagram



Na6 16.Bxa6 Rxa6 17.Nc5 Rb6 18.Qc3
Rb5 19.Rfe1 h6 20.b3 Be4 21.Nd2 Bg6
22.Nf1 Nxc5 23.dxc5 b6 24.cxb6 R8xb6
25.Nd2 Qa3 26.Nf3 c5 27.Qd2 Be4 28.Ne5
Re6 29.Nd3 g5 30.Rc3 d4 31.exd4 cxd4
32.Rc8+ Kg7 33.Nf4 gxf4 34.Qxd4+ Rbe5
35.Rxe4 Qd6 36.Qa1 Kh7 37.Rxe5 Rxe5
38.h3 f3 39.Qb1+ Kg7 40.Rc4 Qe6 41.Rg4+
Kf8 42.Qd3 h5 43.Qd8+ Qe8 44.Qd6+ Qe7
45.Qb8+ Qe8 46.Qd6+ Qe7 47.Qh6+ Ke8
48.Rg8+ Kd7 49.Qd2+ Kc7 50.Qf4 fxg2
51.Rg7 Kb6 52.Rxf7 Qg5 53.Rf6+ Kb7

54.Qf3+ Ka7 55.Rf7+ Kb6 56.Rb7+ Kc5
57.Rc7+ Kb4 58.Qf8+
1-0

□ Kasparov, Garry

■ Andersson, Ulf

Karlsbad d4,e3 versus c6,d5

D36

2750

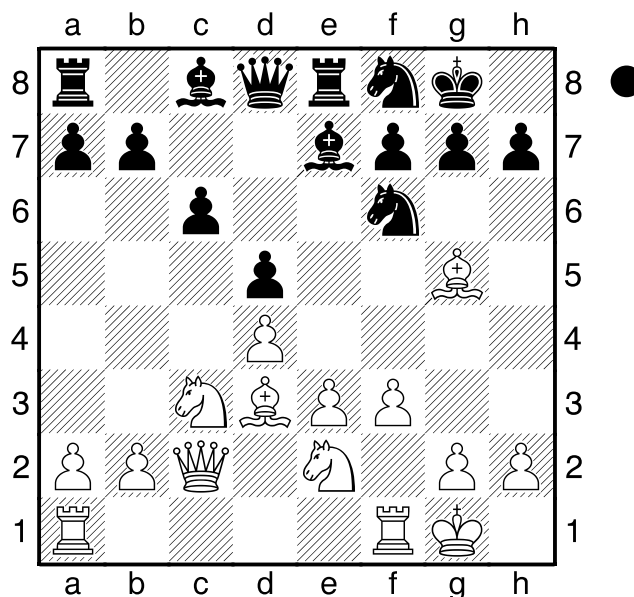
2605

1988

In this game you can follow how a static center became a mobile center with the help of a central pawn breakthrough.

The game is an excellent example for the Botvinnik plan(f2-f3 followed by e3-e4) which leads to White's control over the center. Because Black's king side was well protected, White used his superior mobility to attack the weak pawns from the queen side.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5
5.Bg5 c6 6.Qc2 Be7 7.e3 Nbd7 8.Bd3 0-0
9.Nge2 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8 11.f3 Diagram



Be6 12.Rae1 Rc8 13.Kh1 N6d7 14.Bxe7
Rxe7 15.Nf4 Rc7 16.Qf2 Nf6 17.e4 dxe4
18.fxe4 Rcd7 19.d5 cxd5 20.Bb5 Rc7
21.exd5 Bd7 22.Be2 Rc8 23.Qxa7 b6
24.Qa6 Ne4 25.d6 Nxd6 26.Nfd5 Re5
27.Qxb6 Nf5 28.Qxd8 Rxd8 29.Bd3 Rxe1
30.Rxe1 Ng6 31.a4 Nd4 32.a5 Kf8 33.Bxg6

**hxg6 34.Rd1 Ne6 35.Nb6 Bc6 36.Rxd8+
Nxd8 37.b4 Ne6 38.b5
1-0**

□ **Huzman,Alexander**
 ■ **Zvjaginsev,Vadim**
 d4,e3 versus c7,d5

D38
2575
2545
 1994

1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 Bb4
 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 h6 7.Bxf6 Qxf6 8.Qa4+
 Nc6 9.e3 0-0 10.Be2 Be6 11.0-0 a6 12.Rfd1
 Rfd8 13.Ne5 Bxc3 14.Nxc6 Bd7 15.Qb3
 Bxc6 16.Qxc3 Qd6 17.Rdc1 Rdc8 18.Qc5
 Bd7 19.b4 Qxc5 20.bxc5 Kf8 21.Rab1 Bc6
 22.Kf1 g5 23.Bd3 Ke7 24.Bf5 Rf8 25.f3
 Rad8 26.Kf2 Kf6 27.Bd3 Kg7 28.h4 f6
 29.Rh1 Rh8 30.Bf5 Rhf8 31.Rhd1 Rfe8
 32.Rh1 Re7 33.Rb3 Ree8 34.g4 Re7 35.Rh2
 Rde8 36.Rh1 Rd8 37.Rbb1 Rde8 38.Rbe1
 Rd8 39.hxg5 fxg5 40.f4 gxf4 41.exf4 Rde8
 42.Re5 Rxe5 43.fxe5 Re7 44.Kg3 Be8
 45.Kf4 Rf7 46.e6 Re7 47.Ke5 Bc6 48.g5
 hxg5 49.Rh6 Kf8 50.Kf6
1-0

□ **Karpov,Anatoly**
 ■ **Hjartarson,Johann**
 d4,e3 versus c4,d5

D38
2730
2550
 1991

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Bb4
 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 Nbd7 7.e3 c5 8.Bd3 c4
 9.Bf5 Qa5 10.Qc2 0-0 11.0-0 Re8 12.Bh4
 g6 13.Bh3 Bxc3 14.bxc3 Ne4 15.Rfc1 f6
 16.Nd2 g5 17.Bg3 Nb6 18.Bxc8 Raxc8
 19.Nf1 Na4 20.f3 Nxg3 21.hxg3 b5 22.g4
 Rc6 23.Kf2 Rce6 24.a3 a6 25.Qd2 Kh8
 26.Rc2 Qc7 27.Re1 h5 28.gxh5 f5 29.Rcc1
 Qf7 30.Ng3 f4 31.exf4 gxf4 32.Ne2 Qf6
 33.Nxf4 Qh4+ 34.g3 Qh2+ 35.Ng2 Rxe1
 36.Rxe1 Rxe1 37.Qxe1 Nb2 38.Qe8+ Kh7
 39.f4 Nd3+ 40.Kf3 Qh1 41.Qe7+ Kh8 42.h6
 Qd1+ 43.Qe2 Qh1 44.Kg4 Qd1 45.Qxd1
 Nf2+ 46.Kg5 Nxd1 47.f5 Nxc3 48.f6
1-0

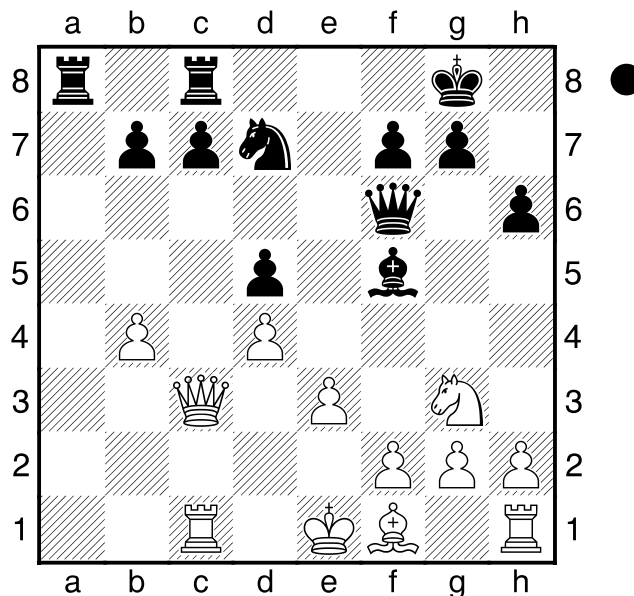
□ **Beliaevsky,Alexander G**
 ■ **Portisch,Lajos**
 Karlsbad d4,e3 versus c6,d5

E35
2655
2635
 1988

Important features:

- the opening of the "a" file
- deflection of the Black queen on the queen side
- obstruction of Black's light square bishop activity
- space advantage (major pieces flexibility along the first ranks

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 d5
 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 h6 7.Bxf6 Qxf6 8.a3
 Bxc3+ 9.Qxc3 0-0 10.e3 Bf5 11.Ne2 Rc8
 12.Rc1 Nd7 13.b4 a5 14.Ng3 axb4 15.axb4**
 Diagram



**Bg6 16.Be2 Qe7 17.0-0 Nf6 18.Ra1 h5
 19.Rfc1 Rxa1 20.Rxa1 h4 21.Nf1 h3 22.g3
 Ne4 23.Qb3 Qf6 24.f4 Qe6 25.g4 Nf6
 26.Qd1 Bh7 27.f5 Qe7 28.Bd3 Re8 29.Qf3
 Qxb4 30.Qxh3 Qc3 31.Rd1 Ne4 32.Qg2 c6
 33.Bxe4 Rxe4 34.Rd2 Qb4 35.Rf2 Qd6
 36.g5 Qd7 37.Qf3 Qd8 38.Rg2 Qe8 39.Kf2
 b5 40.Ng3 Rh4 41.Kg1 Kh8 42.Ra2 Qb8
 43.g6 fxg6 44.f6 Kg8 45.fxg7 Kxg7 46.Rf2
 Qd8 47.Qf7+ Kh6 48.Rf6 b4 49.Nf5+ Kg5
 50.Rd6 Rg4+ 51.Kf2 Qh8 52.h4+ Kh5
 53.Rd8 Rf4+ 54.exf4 Qxd8 55.Qxh7+ Kg4**

56.Qxg6+ Kxf4 57.Ng3
1-0

□ Karpov, Anatoly

■ Polgar, Judit

Karlsbad d4,e3 versus c6,d5

E35

2780

2630

1995

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5
5.Bg5 Bb4 6.Qc2 h6 7.Bxf6 Qxf6 8.e3 0-0
9.a3 Bxc3+ 10.Qxc3 c6 11.Nf3 Bf5 12.Be2
Nd7 13.0-0 Rfe8 14.b4 a6 15.a4 Re6
16.Rfc1 g5 17.b5 g4 18.Nd2 c5 19.dxc5
Qxc3 20.Rxc3 d4 21.Rcc1 d3 22.Bd1 axb5
23.e4 Bxe4 24.Bxg4 f5 25.Bd1 Bd5 26.f3
bxa4 27.Ra3 Ne5 28.Kf2 f4 29.Rb1 Rae8
30.Rxa4 Bc6 31.Rxf4 Ng6 32.Rg4 h5 33.Rg5
Kg7 34.Ne4 Rf8 35.Ke3 Kh6 36.Rg3 Rfe8
37.Rb4 Re5 38.Rd4 Nh4 39.Rd6+ Kh7
40.Kxd3 Bxe4+ 41.fxe4 Rxe4 42.Bxh5 R8e5
43.Bf7

1-0

□ Ionov, Sergey

■ Beliavsky, Alexander G

Karlsbad d4,e3 versus c6,d5

D35

2510

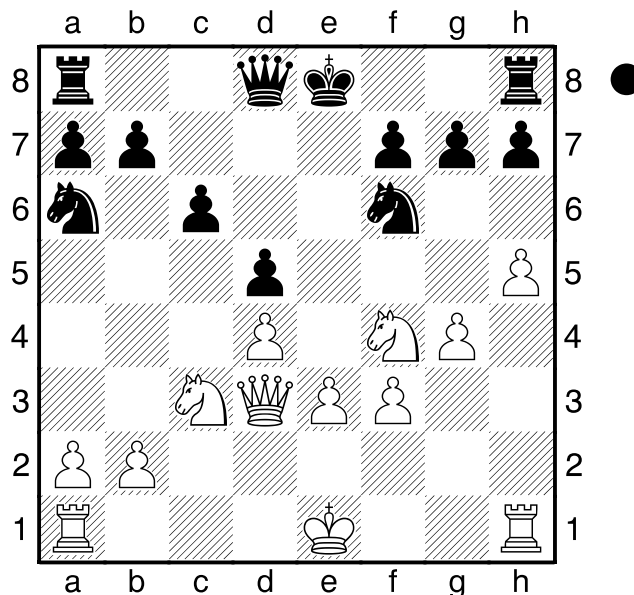
2655

1991

1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4 Be7 4.cxd5 exd5
5.Bf4 c6 6.e3 Nf6 7.Bd3 Bg4 8.f3 Bh5
9.g4 Bg6 10.h4 Bd6 11.Nge2 Bxd3
12.Qxd3 Na6 13.h5 Bxf4 14.Nxf4 Diagram

(Diagram)

Qe7 15.0-0-0 0-0-0 16.Kb1 Nc7 17.g5 Nd7
18.g6 hxg6 19.hxg6 Rxh1 20.Rxh1 Re8
21.Nd1 fxc6 22.Qxg6 Rf8 23.Rg1 Rf7
24.Qg4 Qf6 25.Rg3 Ne8 26.Nd3 Nd6
27.Ne5 Re7 28.Rh3 Kc7 29.Nxd7 Rxd7
30.Rh5 Re7 31.Qg3 Kb6 32.Re5 Rf7 33.f4
Nc4 34.Rh5 Re7 35.b3 Nxe3 36.Nxe3 Rxe3
37.Qxe3 Qg6+ 38.Kb2 Qxh5 39.Ka3 Qf5
40.Kb2 Qe4 41.Qc3 Kc7 42.Qa5+ Kc8
43.Qd2 Kd7 44.Qf2 Ke6 45.Kc3 a5 46.Qg3
Kf7 47.f5 b5 48.Qc7+ Qe7 49.Qc8 Qe3+
50.Kc2 Qe4+ 51.Kc1 b4 52.Qc7+ Qe7



53.Qc8 Qd6 54.Kd1 Kf6 55.Qg8 Qe7
56.Qc8 Qd6 57.Qg8 Qd7 58.Qf8+ Qf7
59.Qd6+ Kxf5 60.Qxc6 Qh5+ 61.Kc2 Qe2+
62.Kc1 Qe3+ 63.Kc2 Qxd4 64.Qd7+ Kf4
65.Qc7+ Kf3 66.Qxa5 g5
0-1

□ Kasparov, Garry

■ Short, Nigel D

Karlsbad d4,e3 versus c6,d5

D35

2805

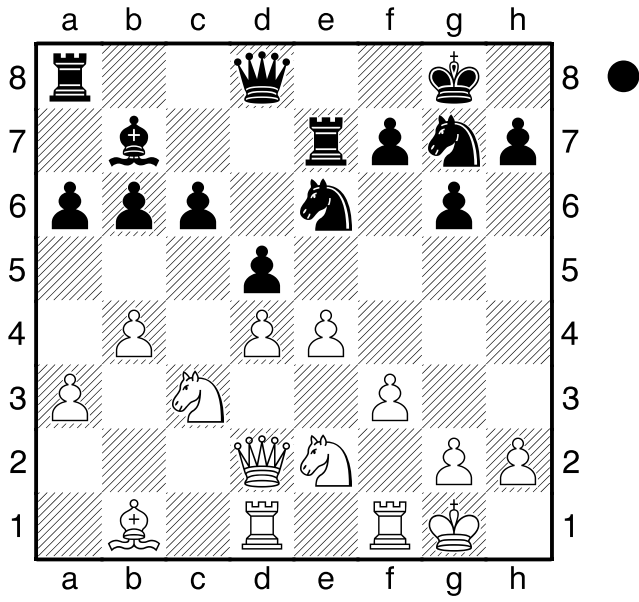
2655

1993

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5
5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 0-0 7.Bd3 Nbd7 8.Nge2
Re8 9.0-0 Nf8 10.b4 a6 11.a3 c6 12.Qc2
g6 13.f3 Ne6 14.Bh4 Nh5 15.Bxe7 Rxe7
16.Qd2 b6 17.Rad1 Bb7 18.Bb1 Nhg7
19.e4 Diagram

(Diagram)

Rc8 20.Ba2 Rd7 21.Nf4 Nxf4 22.Qxf4 Ne6
23.Qe5 Re7 24.Qg3 Qc7 25.Qh4 Ng7
26.Rc1 Qd8 27.Rfd1 Rcc7 28.Na4 dxe4
29.fxe4 Qe8 30.Nc3 Rcd7 31.Qf2 Ne6 32.e5
c5 33.bxc5 bxc5 34.d5 Nd4 35.Ne4 Qd8
36.Nf6+ Kg7 37.Nxd7 Rxd7 38.Rxc5 Ne6
39.Rcc1
1-0



MOBILE CENTER

We define the positions with "mobile center", the positions where one of the opponents has a pawn avalanche in the middle of the board (usually a phalanx which allows the advance of each of the two pawns) and the other side has a wing majority.

The fight is very sharp and takes place mostly on the central squares. The time factor and the initiative play an important role and often a single tempo decides the result of the battle. Long maneuvers which characterize the game on positions with "closed center" simply don't belong here.

THE ACTIVE SIDE will try to push the central pawns as far as possible in front, in order to restrict enemy pieces activity and then even to create a decisive free pawn, or to obstruct at maximum the opponent's pieces and finalize with a wing attack.

THE DEFENDING SIDE has a single correct choice: TO BLOCKADE enemy's central pawn phalanx, undermining and destroy it. A wing attack has very small chances to succeed.

The "mobile center" can be a good weapon for tactical players who like to use the initiative and the smallest mistake from the opponent's part.

The study material covers the main opening from which the mobile center arises.
When you look over the games it is indicated:
-to follow the games in accordance with the principles stated above
-observe the typical ideas and threats that bring the initiative
-to write down the main ideas
-make analogies with your own openings
-observe the pieces setup for each opening

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 c5 7.Nf3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Nc6 9.Bd3 Bb4+ 10.Bd2 Bxd2+ 11.Qxd2 0-0 12.Bc2 Qa5 13.Qxa5 Nxa5 14.Bd3 Bd7

15.Kd2 Rfc8 16.Ne5 Ba4 17.Rhc1 Nc6 18.Nxc6 Rxc6 19.Rcb1 Rc7 20.Rb4 Bc6 21.Ke3 Rd8 22.Rc1 Rcc8 23.h4 Kf8 24.g4 h6 25.f4 b5

Even in a complex endgame the active side uses the same strategy: restrict Black's pieces activity,create a free pawn, use the space advantage and launch a wing attack when the opponent is no longer able to defend.

26.f5 Be8 27.Rbb1 a6 28.e5 Ke7 29.g5 hxg5 30.hxg5 exf5 31.Bxf5 Bd7 32.Bxd7 Kxd7 33.Ke4 Rh8 34.Rxc8 Rxc8 35.g6 fxg6 36.Rg1 Rc6 37.Kd5 b4 38.Rf1 Rc2 39.e6+ Ke7 40.Rf7+ Ke8 41.Kd6 1-0

Specific features of the game:

-due to the space advantage White was able to break the coordination of Black's pieces
-the typical breakthrough d4-d5 can lead to a dangerous free pawn or to a 7-Th rank penetration (as it happens here).

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 c5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Bb4+ 9.Bd2 Bxd2+ 10.Qxd2 0-0 11.Be2 b6 12.0-0 Bb7 13.Qe3 Nc6 14.Rfd1 Rc8 15.Rac1 Qd6 16.Bd3 Rfd8 17.Bb1 Na5 18.Qd3 Qf4 19.Rxc8 Rxc8 20.d5 Nc4 21.dxe6 fxe6 22.Qd7 Qf7 23.h4 Qxd7 24.Rxd7 Ba8 25.Rxa7 Nd6 26.Ng5 e5 27.Rd7 Ne8 28.Bd3 Nf6 29.Bc4+ Kf8 30.Ne6+ Ke8 31.Rc7 1-0

 **Kortschnoj,Viktor**
 **Franco Ocampos,Zenon**
 d4,e4 versus e6

D41
2615
2495
 1991

Specific features of the game:

-thanks to Black's careless play White took the lead in development
 - White dominated the only open file on the board: the "c" file and when Black's pieces were disorganized launched the decisive attack creating a dangerous free pawn.

1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 Nf6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5
 5.d4 e6 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Nc6
 9.Be2 Bb4+ 10.Bd2 Qa5 11.Rb1 Bxd2+
 12.Qxd2 Qxd2+ 13.Kxd2 Ke7 14.Rhc1 Rd8
 15.Ke3 Na5 16.Ne5 f6 17.Rc7+ Kf8 18.Nd3
 Rd7 19.Rbc1 Nc6 20.Rxd7 Bxd7 21.Nc5
 Bc8 22.Bb5 Nd8 23.f4 a6 24.Nd7+ Bxd7
 25.Bxd7 Ke7 26.Bc8 b5 27.Rc7+ Kf8 28.e5
 fxe5 29.fxe5 Rb8 30.d5 exd5 31.e6 Ke8
 32.e7 Nf7 33.Bb7
 1-0

 **Van Wely,Loek**
 **Hansen,Curt**
 d4,e4 versus e6

D41
2560
2610
 1993

Specific features of the game:

-White used the space advantage (especially for a better queen mobility)
 -White avoided trades as much as possible
 -when Black's pieces were disorganized launched the decisive attack creating a dangerous free pawn

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 c5
 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 cxd4
 8.cxd4 Bb4+ 9.Bd2 Bxd2+ 10.Qxd2 0-0
 11.Bc4 b6 12.0-0 Bb7 13.Rfe1 Nd7
 14.Rad1 Rc8 15.Bb3 Re8 16.Qf4 Qf6
 17.Qd6 Red8 18.Qa3 a5 19.Ba4 Qf4 20.Qe7
 Qc7 21.d5 Qc5 22.d6 b5 23.Ng5 Ne5
 24.Bb3 Rd7 25.Nxe6 Qc3 26.Qg5 fxe6
 27.Bxe6+ Nf7 28.Qxb5 Bc6 29.Qb3 Qxb3

30.axb3 Kf8 31.e5 Re8 32.Bxd7 Bxd7
 33.Rd5 Nd8 34.Rxa5 Nc6 35.Rc5 Kf7 36.f4
 g6 37.g4 Nd4 38.Re4 Nf3+ 39.Kg2 Bxg4
 40.Kg3 Nd2 41.Rc7+ Ke6 42.Rd4 Nxb3
 43.Rd3
 1-0

 **Lautier,Joel**
 **Kamsky,Gata**
 d4,e4 versus e7

D85
2625
2695
 1994

Specific features of the game:

-Black played carefully and was able to control the pushes e4-e5 and especially d4-d5
 -white failed to break black's pieces coordination
 -As the endgame approached Black's queen side majority tend to play a more important role.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5
 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Nf3 0-0 8.Be2 c5
 9.Rb1 b6 10.0-0 Qc7 11.Be3 Bb7 12.Bd3
 Nd7 13.Qd2 Rad8 14.Bg5 Qd6 15.Rbd1
 cxd4 16.cxd4 Rc8 17.Qe2 h6 18.Be3 Qa3
 19.h4 e6 20.Nd2 Nf6 21.Nc4 Qe7 22.f3 Rc7
 23.g4 Rd8 24.Qf2 Ba6 25.Ne5 Bxd3
 26.Rxd3 Nd7 27.Nxd7 Qxd7 28.Rfd1 Qa4
 29.R1d2 Rcd7 30.d5 exd5 31.exd5 Rd6
 32.Qf1 Qa5 33.Qd1 Bc3 34.Bf4 R6d7
 35.Rc2 Rxd5 36.Rxd5 Rxd5 37.Qe2 Kh7
 38.Kg2 Be5 39.Qe4 Bxf4 40.Qxf4 Kg7
 41.Kh3 g5 42.Qe4 Qb5 43.hxg5 hxg5 44.a4
 Qd7 45.Rc7 Qd6 46.Qc2 Rd2
 0-1

 **Petursson,Margeir**
 **Kamsky,Gata**
 d4,e4 versus e7

D85
2590
2345
 1989

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5
 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Nf3 c5 8.Rb1 0-0
 9.Be2 cxd4 10.cxd4 Qa5+ 11.Qd2 Qxd2+
 12.Bxd2 e6 13.Rc1 b6 14.Bd3 Bb7 15.Rc7
 Ba6 16.Ke2 Rd8 17.Bxa6 Nxa6 18.Rc4 b5

19.Rc6 Nb8 20.Rc5 a6 21.Ba5 Nd7 22.Rc6 Rdb8 23.Kd3 b4 24.Nd2 Bf6 25.f4 Kf8 26.g4 Be7 27.g5 Ke8 28.Nb3 Bd8 29.Rhc1 Rb5 30.Rc8 Rbb8 31.Rxb8 Rxb8 32.Rc6 Bxa5 33.Nxa5 Nb6 34.Rc7 Na4 35.Ra7 Rb6 36.Nc4 b3 37.axb3 Rxb3+ 38.Kd2 Rb4 39.Nd6+ Kf8 40.Kd3 Rb3+ 41.Kc4 Rf3 42.Rxf7+ Kg8 43.Rb7 Rf2 44.Ne8 Nb2+ 45.Kc5 Nd3+ 46.Kd6 Nxf4 47.Ke7 Nd5+ 48.Kxe6 Rf8 49.Kxd5 Rxe8 50.Ra7 Rd8+ 51.Kc4 Rc8+ 52.Kd3
1-0

 **Lputian,Smbat G**
 **Dvoiryys,Semen I**
d4,e4 versus e7

D87
2540
2440
1988

Specific features of the game:

- Despite the principles White tried a king side attack
- White failed to break black's pieces coordination
- Black reacted with a central counterplay and with accurate moves was able to repel White's attack

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Bc4 c5 8.Ne2 Nc6 9.Be3 cxd4 10.cxd4 Qa5+ 11.Kf1 Bd7 12.h4 Rc8 13.Rc1 0-0 14.h5 e6 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.Qd3 b5 17.Bb3 Nb4 18.Qd2 Rxc1+ 19.Nxc1 Nc6 20.Qd3 b4 21.Ne2 Rd8 22.Bh6 Bxd4 23.Qh3 Bf6 24.Be3 Bc8 25.Nf4 Ne7 26.Kg1 Qe5 27.Qh7+ Kf8 28.Rh3 Qxe4 29.Ba4 Bd7 30.Nh5 Be5 31.Bh6+ Ke8 32.Ng7+ Bxg7 33.Bxd7+ Kxd7 34.Qxg7 Qe1+ 35.Kh2 Qxf2 36.Bg5 Kc6 37.Rf3 Qc5 38.Be3 Qh5+ 39.Rh3 Qf5 40.Rf3 Qd5 41.Qxf7 Rh8+ 42.Kg1 Qd1+ 43.Rf1 Qd6 44.Rc1+ Kb7 45.Bc5 Qh2+ 46.Kf1 Rh7 47.Qf3+ Nd5 48.a3 Qf4 49.Qxf4 Nxf4 50.Rb1 Nd3 51.Bg1 a5 52.Ke2 Rd7 53.Be3 Kc6 54.axb4 Nxb4 55.Rc1+ Kb7 56.Rc4 e5 57.Rg4 Rg7 58.Rg5 Nc6 59.Kd3 Kc7 60.Bc5 Kd7 61.Ke4 Ke6 62.Rg3 Nd8 63.Rb3 Rc7 64.Bb6 Rc4+ 65.Kd3 Ra4

66.Rc3 Nf7 67.Rc6+ Kf5 68.g4+ Rxb4
69.Bxa5 Rg3+ 70.Ke2 g5 71.Bb4 g4 72.Be7 Ng5 73.Rf6+ Ke4 74.Kf2 Rb3 75.Rg6 Nh3+ 76.Kf1 Rb1+
0-1

 **Anastasian,Ashot** **D91**
 **Epishin,Vladimir** **2490**
d4,e4 versus e6 **2550**
1990

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.Nc3 d5 5.Bg5 Ne4 6.Bf4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 dxc4 8.Qa4+ Nd7 9.e3 0-0 10.Qxc4 c5 11.Qa4 Nb6 12.Qa3 Be6 13.Be2 cxd4 14.cxd4 Bc4 15.Bxc4 Nxc4 16.Qb4 Qd5 17.0-0 e6 18.Rab1 b6 19.Rfe1 Rac8 20.e4 Qb7 21.h4 Rfe8 22.Rbc1 b5 23.a4 a6 24.axb5 Qxb5 25.Qc3 h6 26.Rb1 Qd7 27.Qb3 Red8 28.Rec1 Nd6 29.Qe3 Rxc1+ 30.Rxc1 Nb5 31.Bxh6 Nxd4 32.Bxg7 Kxg7 33.h5 Nxf3+ 34.Qxf3 Qd2 35.Ra1 Rc8 36.Ra3 Qc1+ 37.Kh2 Rh8 38.Rxa6 Rxh5+ 39.Kg3 Qh1 40.Qf4 Rh2 41.Qf3 Rh5 42.Qf4 g5 43.Qg4 Rh6 44.Ra5 e5 45.Ra8 Ftacnik,L
½-½

 **Wells,Peter K** **D85**
 **Kindermann,Stefan** **2410**
d4,e4 versus e7 **2515**
1989

Specific features of the game:

- White took early the lead in development due to the space advantage and that Black loosed time to grab the a2 pawn
- White managed to create a huge central superiority thanks to the advanced pawn phalanx d5, e5 and played fine until the move 22
- The right plan was to create the free pawn on the "d" file and to create more weaknesses around the Black king before the direct attack.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Nf3 c5 8.Rb1 0-0 9.Be2 cxd4 10.cxd4 Qa5+ 11.Bd2 Qxa2

12.0-0 Nd7 13.Bb4 Nb6 14.h3 Bd7 15.Ra1
 Qe6 16.Bd3 Be8 17.Re1 Qd7 18.Ra5 Qd8
 19.Qb3 Bc6 20.d5 Bd7 21.e5 Re8 22.e6
 fxe6 23.dxe6 Bc6 24.Bxg6 hxg6 25.Rg5
 Rf8 26.Rxg6 Rf6 27.Rxg7+ Kxg7 28.Bc3
 Nd5 29.Bxf6+ Nxf6 30.Ne5 Qg8 31.Re3 Kf8
 32.Rg3 Qh7 33.Rg6 Rd8 34.Qg3 Be4
 35.Rg5 a5 36.Nf7 Rd1+ 37.Kh2 Ne8
 38.Rxa5 Qg6 39.Rg5 Qh7 40.Qf4 Nf6
 41.Qb8+ Ne8 42.Rg4 Rh1+ 43.Kg3 Bf5
 44.Rh4 Qg6+ 45.Kf4 Bxe6 46.Ne5 Qf6+
 47.Kg3 Qg7+ 48.Kf3 Bf5 49.Rf4 e6 50.g4
 Rxh3+ 51.Ke2 Qc7 52.Qxc7 Nxc7 53.gxf5
 Nd5 54.Rd4 Nc3+ 55.Kd2 exf5 56.f3 Nb5
 57.Rd8+ Ke7 58.Rd7+ Ke6 59.Rxb7 Rh2+
 60.Ke3 Nd6 61.Ra7 Kxe5 62.Ra5+ Ke6
 63.Ra6 Rh4
 0-1

 **Stone,Raymond**
 **Ivanchuk,Vassily**
 d4,e4 versus e6

D85
2415
2535
 1988

Specific features of the game:

- Black controlled c7 against a 7-th rank penetration
- Black managed to advance the queen side pawn in order to control the important square c4 and to isolate White's pawn "a"
- by calculating all the time the dangerous breakthrough d4-d5, Black was able to setup the blockade on d6.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Nf3 Bg7
 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 c5 8.Be3
 0-0 9.Qd2 Qa5 10.Rc1 cxd4 11.cxd4
 Qxd2+ 12.Nxd2 e6 13.Nb3 b6 14.Bd3 Ba6
 15.Ke2 Bxd3+ 16.Kxd3 Na6 17.a3 Rfd8
 18.Rc4 Bf8 19.a4 Rab8 20.Ke2 f6 21.Ra1
 Bd6 22.h3 Kf7 23.a5 b5 24.Rc3 Ke8
 25.Rd1 Nb4 26.Nc5 Rdc8 27.d5 exd5
 28.exd5 a6 29.Ne4 Rxc3 30.Nxc3 f5 31.Bb6
 Rc8 32.Nb1 Rc2+ 33.Kf3 Bc5 34.Rd2 Rc1
 35.Na3 Kd7
 0-1



Karpov,Anatoly

E14
2740
2605
 1994

 **Morovic Fernandez,Ivan**

Hanging pawns c4,d4 versus b6,e6

The positions with "hanging pawns" follow the same principles:

THE ACTIVE SIDE will try to create a free dangerous central pawn, to avoid pieces trades and to break the coordination between opponent's pieces.

THE DEFENDING SIDE has more space (than in the d4, e4 phalanx case) and tries to undermine the enemy central phalanx or to force an unfavorable push c4-c5 or d4-d5 in order to use the weak squares around the central enemy pawns.

The key feature of this game was the use of the squares along h1-a8 diagonal. Watch the knights' maneuvers and the minute preparation of d4-d5.

1.c4 Nf6 2.d4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.e3 Be7
 5.Nbd2 0-0 6.b3 c5 7.Bb2 Nc6 8.Bd3 cxd4
 9.exd4 b6 10.0-0 Bb7 11.Qe2 Re8 12.Rac1
 Bf8 13.Rfd1 dxc4 14.bxc4 g6 15.Nf1 Bg7
 16.Ne3 Rc8 17.Bc2 Qe7 18.Bc3 Red8
 19.Rb1 Rd7 20.Bd3 Nh5 21.Qb2 Nf4 22.Bf1
 Nb8 23.Ne1 Rcd8 24.a4 Nc6 25.g3 Nh5
 26.N1c2 Nf6 27.Bg2 Nb8 28.d5 exd5
 29.cxd5 Nh5 30.Nd4 Na6 31.a5 Nc5 32.Qc2
 Nf6 33.Nc6 Bxc6 34.dxc6 Rxd1+ 35.Rxd1
 Rxd1+ 36.Qxd1 Nfe4 37.Nd5 Qe8 38.Bxg7
 Kxg7 39.Qd4+
 1-0



Rechlis,Gad

E53
2510
2585
 1993

 **Psakhis,Lev**

Hanging pawns c4,d4 versus b6,e6

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 0-0 5.Bd3
 d5 6.a3 Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 dxc4 8.Bxc4 c5 9.Nf3
 Qc7 10.Be2 b6 11.Bb2 Bb7 12.c4 Nbd7
 13.0-0 Rac8 14.Rc1 Rfd8 15.Nd2 cxd4
 16.exd4 Qf4 17.Bf3 Bxf3 18.Nxf3 Rc7

19.Re1 Rdc8 20.Qb3 h6 21.a4 Ne4 22.Qd3 Nd6 23.Nd2 Qf5 24.Qb3 Qa5 25.Red1 Qa6 26.d5 e5 27.Qh3 Qxa4 28.Ba3 Nxc4 29.d6 Nxd6 30.Ra1 Qc6 31.Bxd6 Qxd6 32.Ne4 Qe6 33.Qxe6 fxe6 34.Nd6 Ra8 35.Nb5 Rb7 36.Nd6 Rbb8 37.Nb5 Rb7 38.Nd6 Rc7 39.Nb5 Rc5 40.Nxa7 Nf6 41.h3 Nd5 42.Ra3 Kf7 43.Rb1 Ke8 44.Re1 Kd7 45.Rxe5 Ra5 46.Rxa5 bxa5 47.Nb5 a4 48.Na3 Rb8 49.Re1 Rb3 50.Ra1 Nc3 51.Kf1 Kc6 52.Ke1 Kc5 53.Nc2 Rb1+ 54.Rxb1 Nxb1 55.Kd1 Kc4 56.Kc1 Nc3 57.h4 Kd3 58.f3 Ne2+ 59.Kb2 Nf4 60.g3 Ne2

0-1

 **Gelfand,Boris**
 **Karpov,Anatoly**

Hanging pawns c4,d4 versus b6,e6

E54
2685
2740
1994

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e6 6.Nf3 Bb4 7.Bd3 dxc4 8.Bxc4 0-0 9.0-0 b6 10.Bg5 Bb7 11.Re1 Bxc3 12.bxc3 Nbd7 13.Bd3 Qc7 14.Rc1 Qd6 15.Bh4 Rfc8 16.Bg3 Qa3 17.c4 Nf8 18.Ne5 Ng6 19.Re3 Qf8 20.f4 Qd8 21.Bb1 Ne7 22.Bh4 Ng6 23.Bg5 b5 24.Bxg6 hxg6 25.Rh3 Rc7 26.d5 exd5 27.c5 Bc8 28.Rb3 Qe8 29.Qd4 Bf5 30.Re3 Qf8 31.Bxf6 gxf6 32.Nf3 Be4 33.Nd2 f5 34.Rec3 a5 35.c6 Qb4 36.Nb3 Qd6 37.Qf2 b4 38.Rc5 a4 39.Nd4 Bd3 40.Qd2 Bc4 41.Qxb4 Qxf4 42.Qc3 Re8 43.Rd1 Re3 44.Qc1 Qe4 45.Qa1 Rc8 46.Ra5 Ra3 47.Qb1 Qe3+ 48.Kh1 Rxa2 49.Nf3 Bb3 50.Qc1 f4 51.Re1 Rc2 52.Qa1 Qb6

0-1

 **De Firmian,Nick E**
 **Alburt,Lev O**

Hanging pawns c4,d4 versus b6,e6

B05
2520
2570
1983

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.Nf3 Bg4 5.Be2 e6 6.0-0 a6 7.c4 Nb6 8.exd6 cxd6 9.Nbd2 Nc6 10.b3 d5 11.Bb2 Be7 12.a3 dxc4 13.bxc4 0-0 14.Rc1 Qc7 15.Qb3 Rfd8 16.Qe3 Rd7 17.Rfd1 Qd8 18.h3 Bh5 19.Ba1

Bg6 20.Ne4 Bxa3 21.Nf6+ Qxf6 22.Qxa3 Qe7 23.Qc3 Qb4 24.Qe3 Rad8 25.Ne5 Nxe5 26.Qxe5 Qf8 27.h4 h5 28.Qa5 Nc8 29.Bxh5 Bxh5 30.Qxh5 Ne7 31.Qg4 b5 32.d5 exd5 33.cxb5 axb5 34.Bd4 f6 35.Bb6 f5 36.Qe2 Qf6 37.Bxd8 Rxd8 38.Rc7 Ng6 39.Qxb5 Nxh4 40.Rd7 Rxd7 41.Qxd7 Kh7 42.Qxd5 Ng6 43.g3 Ne7 44.Qh1+ Kg6 45.Qf3 Ng8 46.Kg2 Nh6 47.Qd5 Qb2 48.Rd2 Qa1 49.Qe6+ Kh7 50.Rd8 Qa3 51.Qc8 Kg6 52.Rh8 Qd6 53.Qe8+ Nf7 54.Rh4 Kf6 55.Ra4 Qd5+ 56.Kh2 Kg6 57.Ra6+ Kh7 58.Qc6 Qxc6 59.Rxc6 Ne5 60.Re6 Ng4+ 61.Kg2 Kg8 62.f3 Kf7 63.Ra6 Nf6 64.Kf2 g5 65.Ke3 Nh5 66.Ra7+ Kg6 67.Ra6+ Kf7 68.f4 gxf4+ 69.gxf4 Kg7 70.Rb6 Kh7 71.Rb1 Kg6 72.Rh1 Nf6 73.Kd4 Nd7 74.Kd5 Nf6+ 75.Ke5 Nd7+ 76.Ke6 Nf8+ 77.Ke7

1-0

 **Jussupow,Artur**
 **Beliaevsky,Alexander G**

Hanging pawns c4,d4 versus b6,e6

D31
2660
2650
1995

The important feature of the game:

-as in the IQP typical position the active side can launch a king attack if the defenders are deflected.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e3 e6 5.b3 c5 6.Bb2 cxd4 7.exd4 Bb4 8.a3 Bxc3+ 9.Bxc3 dxc4 10.bxc4 Ne4 11.Rc1 Nxc3 12.Rxc3 Qa5 13.Qd2 0-0 14.Nf3 Rd8 15.Bd3 Nd7 16.0-0 b6 17.Re1 Bb7 18.Ne5 h6 19.Qc2 Rac8 20.Bh7+ Kf8 21.Nxf7 Nf6 22.Nxd8 Rxd8 23.Re5 Qa6 24.d5 exd5 25.h3 dxc4 26.Rg3 b5 27.Bf5 Bd5 28.Qc3 Qd6 29.Bg6 a6 30.Rge3 Bf7 31.Bxf7 Kxf7 32.Re1 Rd7 33.a4 Qc6 34.axb5 axb5 35.Qb4 Nd5 36.Rf5+ Kg8 37.Rf8+ Kh7 38.Qb1+ g6 39.Ree8 Nf6 40.Rc8 Qa6 41.Qe1 Qd6 42.Qc3 Qf4 43.Qa1
1-0

DYNAMIC CENTER

A position with an unclear setup of the central pawns arises often and is very difficult to be assessed because all types of center can proceed from the "dynamic center". The difficult part lays in the fact that for each possible position the correct strategic plan must be anticipated. This requires from both players to observe with attention the events in the battle for the center and to follow pre-established goals.

THE ACTIVE SIDE will fight mostly to clarify the position in the center. Usually, the active side manages to take the center control by an energetic advance of the pawns over the demarcation line. A flank attack can start just after the position in the center is clarified. Until then, the pawn advances must be handled very carefully and the active side must be prepared every minute against a central counterplay.

THE DEFENDING SIDE

Must keep the tension regarding the center. By skillful maneuvers, the defending side should mislead the active side to an unfounded wing attack. When the opponent starts the attack he must react with a central counterplay.

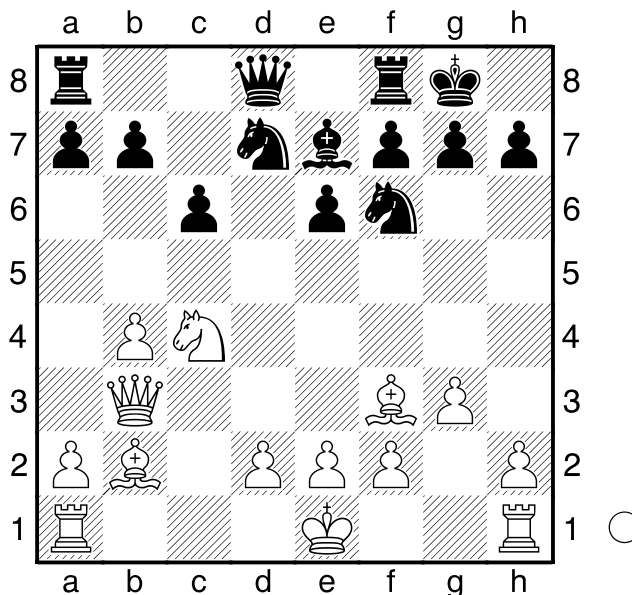
TO BE REMEMBERED: in positions with "dynamic center" the flank attacks can work, so each side must start active operations on the wings.

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Bg4 3.Bg2 Nd7 4.c4 dxc4
5.Na3 c6 6.Nxc4 Ngf6 7.b4 e6 8.Qb3 Bxf3
9.Bxf3 Be7 10.Bb2 0-0 Diagram

(Diagram)

Important features:

- As you can notice, here, in a position with "dynamic center", each side can advance the central pawns
- On the queenside, White can attack with b4-b5



in order to lengthen Bg2 diagonal and Black can try to open up the "a" file
 -White must try to use the strong d6-square and the active bishop from b2
 -The side who manages to control the center will have the upper hand

11.a3 Nd5 12.0-0 Rc8 13.Rac1 a6 14.e4
N5f6 15.d4 Re8 16.Rfd1 Bf8 17.Rc2 Qc7
18.Bg2 Qb8 19.Bc1 h6 20.h3 Red8 21.Bf4
Qa7 22.Rcd2 Re8 23.Be3 Qb8 24.Bf4 Qa7
25.Qb2 b6 26.Qb3 a5 27.Rc2 axb4 28.axb4
Qa6 29.Rb1 b5 30.Na5 Nb6 31.Rbc1 Nc4
32.Nxc4 bxc4 33.Qxc4 Qxc4 34.Rxc4 Ra8
35.Bc7 Be7 36.e5 Nd5 37.Bd6 Bxd6
38.exd6 Rad8 39.Bxd5 cxd5 40.Rc6 f6
41.b5 Rd7 42.b6 Kh7 43.Rb1 Rb8 44.Rc7
Rxd6 45.b7 Rdd8 46.Rb6 e5 47.Kf1 exd4
48.Ke2 Kg6 49.Kd2 Kf5 50.Rbc6 Ke4
51.Rxg7 f5 52.Rxh6 Re8 53.Rh4+ Ke5
54.Kd3 Re6 55.Rd7 Rc6 56.f4+ Ke6
57.Rdh7 Rc3+ 58.Kxd4 Rc4+ 59.Kd3 Kd6
60.R4h6+ Kc5 61.Rc7+ Kb5 62.Rxc4 dxc4+
63.Kc3 Rxb7 64.Rf6 Ka4 65.Kxc4 Rb4+
66.Kd5 Rb3 67.g4
1-0

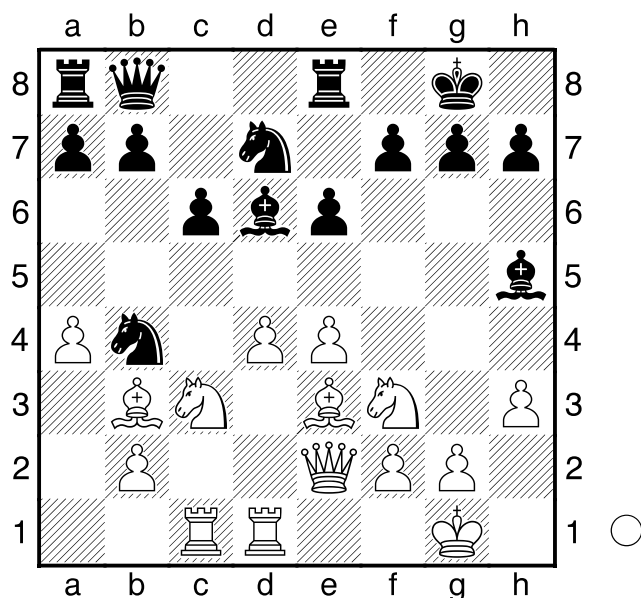
 **Beliavsky, Alexander G**
 **Vasiukov, Evgeni**
 e4,d4 versus c6,e6

D16
2595
2560
 1979

Specific features of the game:

- right from the beginning, White took the space advantage in the center (e4, d4 versus c6, e6)
- by advancing the kingside pawns, White increased the space advantage (assuring major pieces mobility along the first two ranks) and restricted Black's pieces activity
- the win was concluded by a kingside piece superiority.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 dxc4
 5.a4 Na6 6.e3 Bg4 7.Bxc4 e6 8.0-0 Nb4
 9.h3 Bh5 10.Qe2 Bd6 11.Rd1 Qc7 12.e4
 Nd7 13.Be3 0-0 14.Rac1 Rfe8 15.Bb3 Qb8
 Diagram



16.g4 Bg6 17.Nh4 Nf8 18.Ng2 f6 19.f4 a5
 20.Rf1 Bc7 21.f5 Bf7 22.Nf4 Qc8 23.Kh1
 Qd7 24.Rcd1 Rad8 25.Rg1 Kh8 26.Qg2
 Qe7 27.g5 fxg5 28.Nxe6 h6 29.Nxc7 Bxb3
 30.Nxe8 Bxd1 31.Nxg7 Bb3 32.Nh5 Nc2
 33.Qd2 Qf7 34.Bxg5 hxg5 35.Qxg5 Rxd4
 36.Qh6+
 1-0

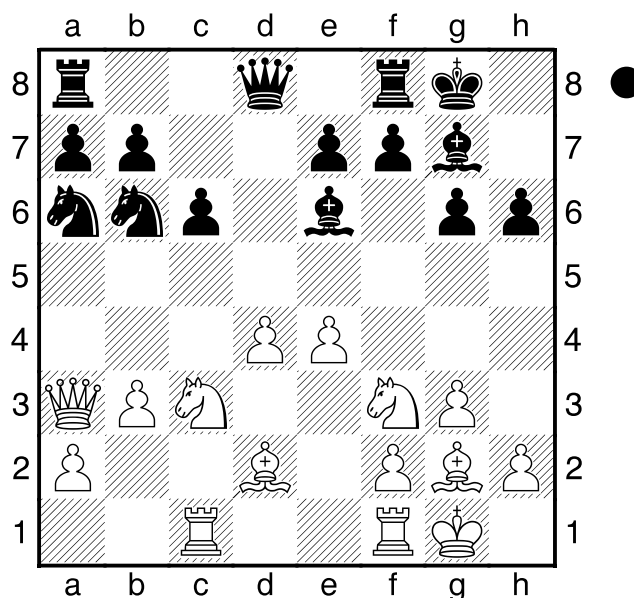
 **Romanishin, Oleg M**
 **Kochyev, Alexander**
 d4,e4 versus e7 (transposed to d6)

D73
2555
2475
 1989

In this game White keeps the control over the center, and restricts Black's minor pieces activity.

Black was forced to trade the queens and White was able to use the pawn weakness from d6. The battle took place on the "c" and "d" files and White was the first to penetrate Black position along the "e" file.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Bg7 4.g3 0-0
 5.Bg2 c6 6.Nc3 d5 7.Qb3 Qa5 8.0-0 dxc4
 9.Qxc4 Be6 10.Qd3 Na6 11.Ng5 Bd7
 12.Bd2 Qd8 13.Rad1 h6 14.Nf3 Bf5 15.Qc4
 Nd5 16.Qb3 Ndb4 17.Rc1 Be6 18.Qa3 Nd5
 19.e4 Nb6 20.b3 Diagram



Bg4 21.Be3 Bxf3 22.Bxf3 Qd6 23.Qxd6
 exd6 24.Rfd1 Rad8 25.d5 c5 26.Nb5 Nc8
 27.Bg4 f5 28.exf5 gxf5 29.Bh3 Rd7 30.Bf4
 Kh7 31.a3 Nb8 32.Re1 a6 33.Nc3 Rdf7
 34.Re6 Nd7 35.Bxd6 Nxd6 36.Rxd6 Ne5
 37.Ne2 Nd3 38.Rd1 Nb2 39.Rc1 Nd3
 40.Rc2 f4 41.Be6 Be5 42.Bxf7 Bxd6
 43.Be6 fxf3 44.Nxg3 Ne1 45.Rc3 Nf3+
 46.Kg2 Nh4+ 47.Kf1 b6 48.Re3 Kg6 49.Bd7

Bxg3 50.hxg3 Nf3 51.Be8+ Kg5 52.d6 1-0

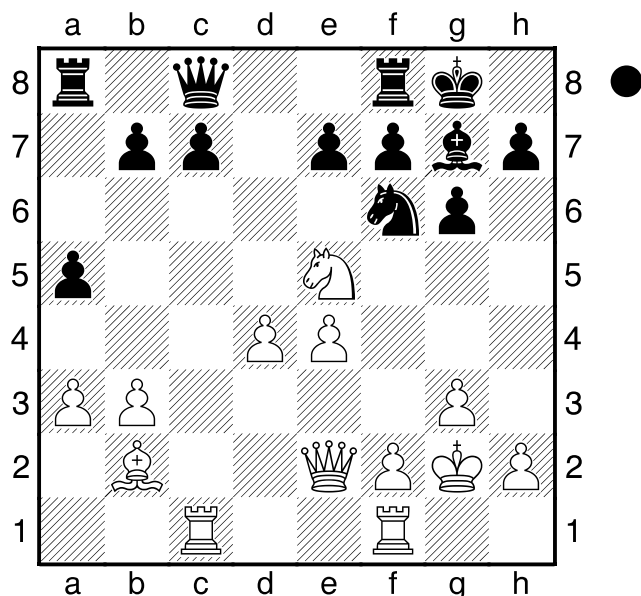
□ **Miles,Anthony J**
 ■ **Schmid,Lothar**
 d4,e4 versus c7,e7

D77
2220
2530
 1980

The same recipe:

- White controlled the center and restricted Black's pieces activity
- Black seek the counterplay first on the queenside and, then, on the king side
- because the central files were dominated by White, Black's actions left weak squares behind the advanced pawns
- finally, White penetrates Black's position along "e" and "d" files

1.g3 d5 2.Nf3 g6 3.c4 Nf6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.d4 0-0 6.0-0 dxc4 7.Na3 Nc6 8.Nxc4 Be6 9.b3 Bd5 10.Bb2 a5 11.Rc1 Qc8 12.Ne3 Be4 13.Ne5 Bxg2 14.Kxg2 Nb4 15.a3 Nbd5 16.Nxd5 Nxd5 17.e4 Nf6 18.Qe2 Diagram



e6 19.Rfd1 Qd8 20.a4 c6 21.Ba3 Re8 22.Qf3 Qc7 23.Nc4 Red8 24.Bc5 Ra6 25.h3 Ne8 26.Qe3 b6 27.Ba3 Qb7 28.Kh2 Raa8 29.Rd3 h5 30.Rcd1 Kh7 31.Qf3 f5 32.exf5 exf5 33.Re3 Rac8 34.Rde1 Qb8 35.Re7

Rc7 36.Rxc7 Nxc7 37.Qxc6 Nd5 38.Re6 f4 39.Ne5 fxc3+ 40.fxc3 h4 41.Rxg6 Qc7 42.Rh6+ Bxh6 43.Qg6+ Kh8 44.Qxh6+ Kg8 45.Qg5+ 1-0

□ **Krasenkow,Michal**
 ■ **Balashov,Yuri S**
 c4,d5 versus d6,e5

A55
2505
2535
 1989

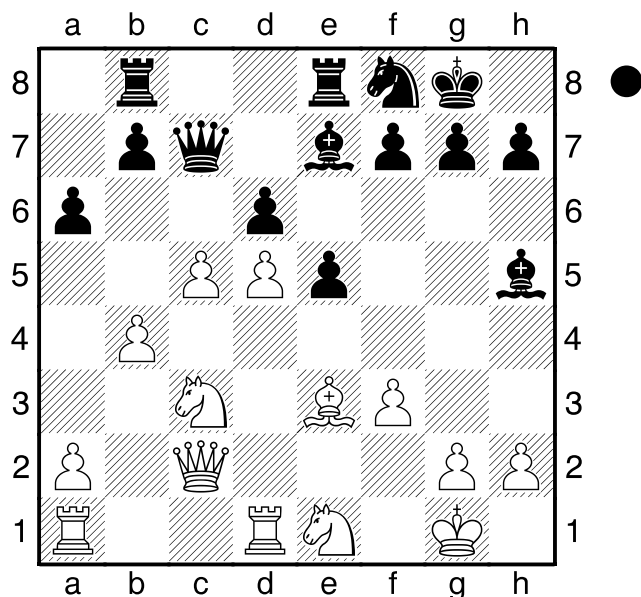
Important features:

- a typical pawn structure (c4, d5 versus d6, e5) for Sicilian defense and KID arises after the opening; main ideas are c4-c5 for White and f7-f5 followed by a king side attack for Black
- White had the space advantage and qualitative superior pieces
- by the help of the breakthrough c4-c5, White managed to create a free supported pawn on d5 which tied Black's pieces in defense and allowed a queenside attack on "c" and "b" files
- Black didn't have time and chances to create counterplay on the kingside.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 Nbd7 4.e4 e5 5.Nf3 Be7 6.Be2 c6 7.0-0 0-0 8.Qc2 a6 9.Rd1 Qc7 10.d5 Rb8 11.Ne1 Re8 12.Be3 Nf8 13.b4 cxd5 14.exd5 Ng4 15.Bxg4 Bxg4 16.f3 Bh5 17.c5 Diagram

(Diagram)

Bg6 18.Qd2 Qd7 19.Nd3 Rbc8 20.cxd6 Bxd6 21.Nc5 Qe7 22.N3e4 Bxe4 23.fxe4 Rc7 24.Rac1 Rec8 25.a3 Nd7 26.Nxb7 Nf6 27.Rxc7 Rxc7 28.Nxd6 Qxd6 29.Bc5 Qd7 30.Qb2 Qe8 31.h3 Nd7 32.Rc1 Qb8 33.Qe2 Qc8 34.Kh2 a5 35.Qg4 axb4 36.axb4 g6 37.Qh4 h5 38.d6 Rb7 39.Qe7 Qf8 40.Qxf8+ Kxf8 41.Be3 Rxb4 42.Rc7 Nf6 43.Bc5 Rb8 44.d7+ Kg7 45.Be7 Nxd7 46.Rxd7 Rb6 47.Rd6 1-0



Landenbergue, Claude
 Adams, Michael
 c4,d5 versus d6,e5 rapid

B03
2450
2640
 1994

In this game Black was able to realize his main idea f7-f5 in order to take the space advantage on the king side.

White stopped Black's expansion with f2-f4 aiming to create the same strong free pawn on d5. White didn't have time for the queenside attack with a2-a3 and b2-b4.

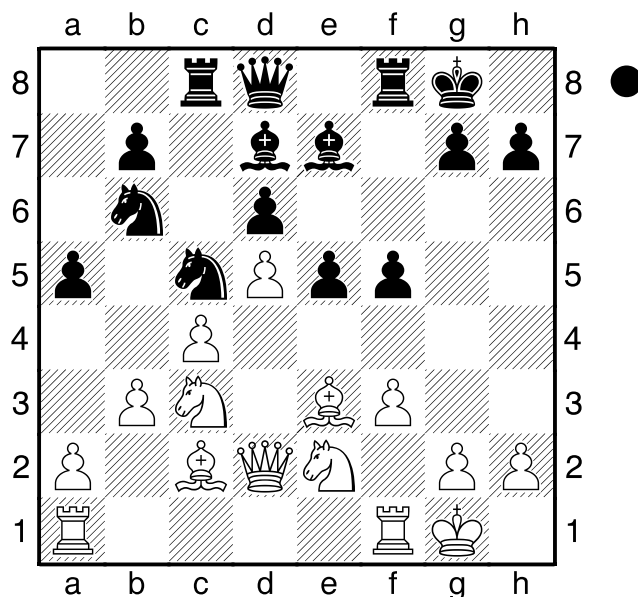
After the "e" file was opened, the main targets were e6 for White and e3 for Black.

In the endgame, the pawn structure favors White due to the possibility to create a free pawn far from the Black's king.

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 Nb6
 5.exd6 cxd6 6.d5 e5 7.Nc3 Be7 8.Bd3 0-0
 9.Nge2 Na6 10.b3 f5 11.0-0 Bd7 12.f3 Rc8
 13.Be3 Nc5 14.Bc2 a5 15.Qd2 Diagram

(Diagram)

Bf6 16.Rae1 Qc7 17.Kh1 Rce8 18.f4 Nc8
 19.fxe5 Bxe5 20.Nd4 f4 21.Bg1 b6 22.Nf3



Qd8 23.Ne4 Nxe4 24.Bxe4 Bf5 25.Qd3 Ne7
 26.Nd4 Bxd4 27.Qxd4 Bxe4 28.Qxe4 Nf5
 29.Qf3 Rxe1 30.Rxe1 Nh4 31.Qh3 f3
 32.gxf3 Nxf3 33.Rf1 Nxg1 34.Qe6+ Kh8
 35.Rxf8+ Qxf8 36.Kxg1 g6
 ½-½

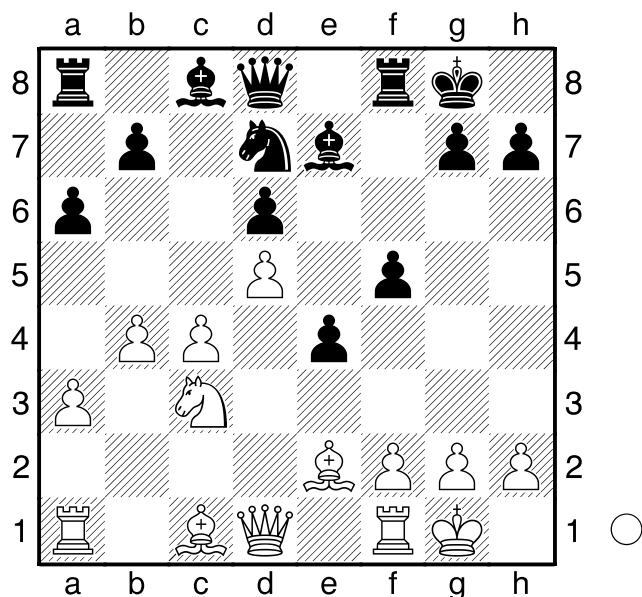
Adla, Diego Gustavo
 Kharlov, Andrei
 c4,d5 versus d6,e5

B33
2435
2515
 1991

Important features:

- same pawn structure as in the previous game
- White fails to push c4-c5, after b2-b4 the pawn c4 can become a target for Black's pieces
- after the opening of the "e" file, White was misled to attack on the kingside
- White failed because Black had the kingside pawn majority and enough pieces to protect the king
- Black followed the right plan based on the control over the "e" file and eventually damaged White's pawn structure by b7-b5.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6
 5.Nc3 e5 6.Ndb5 d6 7.Nd5 Nxd5 8.exd5
 Nb8 9.c4 Be7 10.Be2 a6 11.Nc3 f5 12.0-0
 0-0 13.a3 Nd7 14.b4 e4 Diagram



15.Kh1 Bf6 16.Qc2 Be5 17.f4 exf3 18.Rxf3
Nf6 19.Bg5 Qe8 20.Raf1 Ng4 21.Rh3 Qg6
22.Bf4 Bxf4 23.Rxf4 Qg5 24.Rff3 Bd7
25.Bd3 h6 26.Nd1 Ne5 27.Rhg3 Qe7 28.Rf4
g5 29.Bf1 Rac8 30.Qd2 Kh8 31.Rd4 b5
32.Rc3 bxc4 33.Ne3 Bb5 34.Nxc4 Nxc4
35.Bxc4 Rfe8 36.h3 Qe1+ 37.Qxe1 Rxe1+
38.Kh2 Re4 39.Rxe4 fxe4
0-1

□ Tal, Mihail
■ Tshkovsky, Vitaly
c4, d5 versus d6, e5

B33
2615
2560
1979

Specific features of the game:

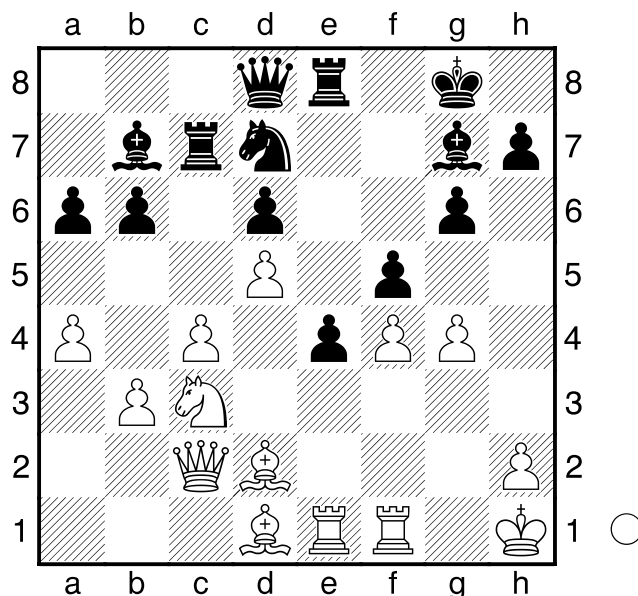
-same pawn structure as in the previous 2 games

-White played again f2-f4 to block the Black's pawn phalanx e5-d5 and pushed only b2-b3 to protect the critical pawn c4

-Black's idea to push e5-e4 is strategically wrong because creates 4 islands of pawn in Black's camp, allows White to block the 'e' pawn and to counter-attack with g2-g4 or h2-h3 followed by g2-g4

-if Black can support e5 with minor pieces (in order to avoid dxe5), then he must avoid e5-e4

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 e5 6.Ndb5 d6 7.Nd5 Nxd5 8.exd5
Nb8 9.c4 a6 10.Nc3 Be7 11.Be2 0-0 12.0-0
f5 13.f4 Bf6 14.Qc2 Nd7 15.Kh1 g6 16.g3
Re8 17.Bd2 b6 18.Rae1 Bg7 19.b3 Ra7
20.a4 Rc7 21.Bd1 Bb7 22.g4 e4 Diagram



23.gxf5 gxf5 24.Be3 Nc5 25.Rg1 Nd3
26.Ref1 Qh4 27.Rg3 Kh8 28.Bxb6 Rf7
29.Be3 Rf6 30.Qg2 Rg6 31.Rxg6 hxd6
32.Qxg6 Rg8 33.Rg1 Nxf4 34.Qg5 Qxg5
35.Rxg5 Bxc3 36.Rxg8+ Kxg8 37.Bxf4 Be5
38.Bxe5 dxe5 39.Kg2 Kg7 40.Bc2 Kg6
41.Kf2 Kg5 42.Ke3
1-0

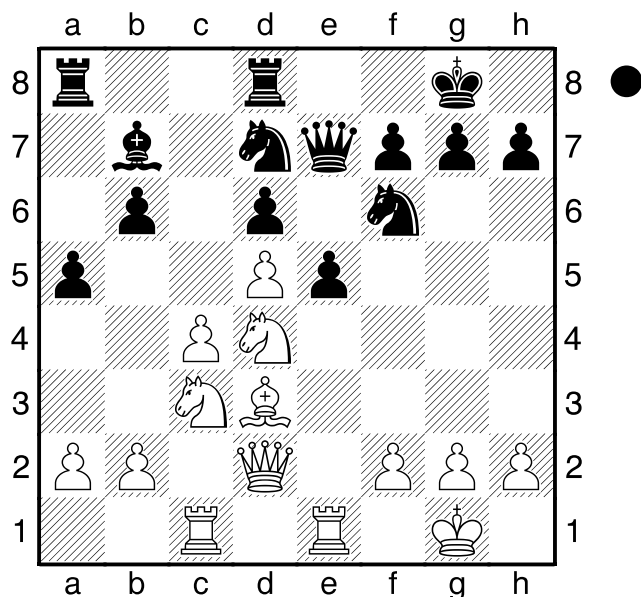
□ Petrosian, Tigran V
■ Rashkovsky, Nukhim N
c4, d5 versus d6, e5

E11
2605
2515
1982

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Bb4+ 4.Bd2 a5
5.Nc3 b6 6.e3 Bb7 7.Bd3 d6 8.Qc2 Nbd7
9.e4 e5 10.0-0 0-0 11.Nd5 Bxd2 12.Qxd2
c6 13.Nc3 Qe7 14.Rfe1 Rfd8 15.Rac1 Nf8
16.d5 cxd5 17.exd5 N8d7 18.Nd4 Diagram

(Diagram)

Qf8 19.Ndb5 Nc5 20.Bc2 Ba6 21.b3 Ne8
22.f4 Nd7 23.Bf5 Bxb5 24.Nxb5 Nef6



25.Qf2 g6 26.Bh3 h5 27.Rcd1 a4 28.fxe5
dxe5 29.d6 axb3 30.axb3 Qh6 31.Nc7 Ra3
32.Bxd7 Nxd7 33.Qb2 Ra7 34.b4 Qf4
35.Qc1 Qxc1 36.Rxc1 Ra2 37.c5 bxc5
38.bxc5 Nxc5 39.Rxc5 Rxd6 40.Nd5 Re6
41.Rc7
1-0

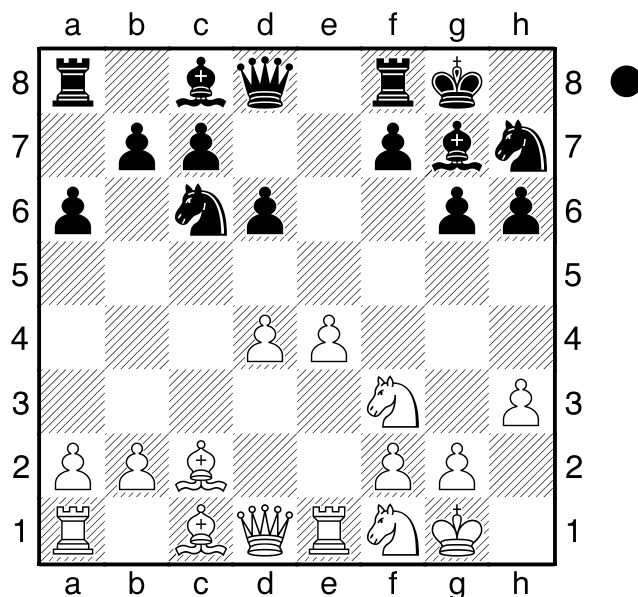
□ Ivanchuk,Vassily
■ Bologan,Viktor
d4,e4 versus d6,f7

B07
2720
2585
1992

Important features:

- the typical small center arises in this game e4, d4 versus e5, d6
- White tries to force Black to trade exd5 leading to the powerful phalanx e4, d4, while Black hopes for dxe4 leading to a position with "open center"
- after 11...exd4 White had the space advantage and focused to control the center
- the conclusion came after White managed to restrict Bb7 activity with d4-d5 opening the road to e6 for Nf3-d4-e6.

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Bd3 e5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3
g6 6.0-0 Bg7 7.h3 0-0 8.Re1 a6 9.Bc2 h6
10.Nbd2 Nh7 11.Nf1 exd4 12.cxd4 Diagram



Ng5 13.N1h2 Nxf3+ 14.Nxf3 Nb4 15.Bb3
c5 16.Be3 b6 17.a3 Nc6 18.Bd5 Bb7 19.b4
cxb4 20.axb4 Qd7 21.Qd2 Kh7 22.Bxc6
Qxc6 23.d5 Qd7 24.Bd4 f5 25.Bxg7 Qxg7
26.Nd4 Qf6 27.Ra3 fxe4 28.Ne6 Rf7
29.Rxe4 g5 30.Rf3 Qg6 31.Rxf7+ Qxf7
32.Nxg5+ hxg5 33.Qxg5
1-0

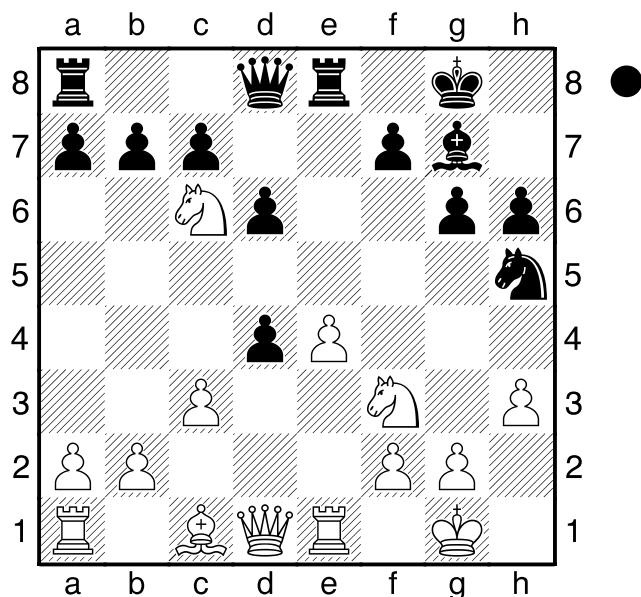
□ Popovic,Petar
■ Lau,Ralf
d4,e4 versus d6,f7

B07
2575
2510
1996

1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Bd3 Bg7 5.0-0
0-0 6.c3 Nc6 7.Re1 e5 8.h3 Re8 9.Nbd2
Nh5 10.Nb3 h6 11.Bb5 Bd7 12.Bxc6 Bxc6
13.Na5 exd4 14.Nxc6 Diagram

(Diagram)

bxc6 15.cxd4 Nf6 16.Qc2 Re6 17.Bd2 Rb8
18.b3 c5 19.Rac1 Qe8 20.e5 Nd7 21.Ba5
Rc8 22.exd6 cxd6 23.Qc4 Nf8 24.Bd2
Rxe1+ 25.Rxe1 Qd7 26.dxc5 Rxc5 27.Qd3
Qc6 28.Be3 Rc3 29.Nd4 Qc8 30.Qe4 a6
31.Rd1 Nd7 32.Nf3 Bf8 33.Qh4 g5 34.Qe4
Nc5 35.Qd5 Ne6 36.Nd4 Nxd4 37.Qxd4
Rc2 38.a4 Qb7 39.Qf6 Qe7 40.Qf5 Rb2
41.Qd3 Qb7 42.Rb1 Rxb1+ 43.Qxb1 d5



44.Qd3 Qc6 45.Qd4 f6 46.g4 Bd6 47.Qb6
Qxb6 48.Bxb6 Kf7 49.Kf1 Ke6 50.Ke2 Kd7
51.Kd3 Kc6 52.Bd8 Be5 53.Be7 Kb6 54.Bf8
Ka5 55.f3 Ba1 56.Kc2 Be5 57.Bxh6 Bd6
58.Bg7 Be5 59.Bf8 Kb6 60.Kd3 Kc6
61.Bb4 Bc7 62.Be1 Be5 63.Bf2 Kd6 64.b4
Kc6 65.h4 gxh4 66.Bxh4 Ba1 67.f4
1-0

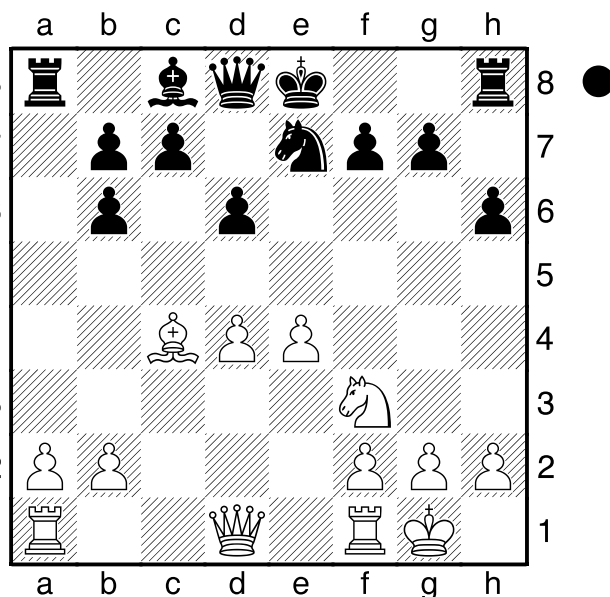
□ Timman, Jan H
■ Nunn, John DM
d4,e4 versus d6,f7

C50
2640
2600
1985

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.Nc3 Nf6
5.d3 d6 6.Bg5 h6 7.Bxf6 Qxf6 8.Nd5 Qd8
9.c3 Ne7 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 Bb6 12.Nxb6
axb6 13.0-0 Diagram

(Diagram)

d5 14.exd5 Nxd5 15.Re1+ Be6 16.Bxd5
Qxd5 17.Re5 Qd6 18.d5 0-0-0 19.Qa4 Bxd5
20.Rd1 c6 21.Rexd5 cxd5 22.Nd4 Kb8
23.Nb5 Qc6 24.Qf4+ Ka8 25.Qa4+ Kb8
26.h3 g5 27.Qa7+ Kc8 28.Nd4 Qc7 29.Qa3
Kb8 30.Nb5 Qc6 31.Qg3+ Ka8 32.Qa3+
Kb8 33.Qa7+ Kc8 34.Nd4 Qc7 35.Qa3
½-½



□ Dolmatov, Sergey
■ Agdestein, Simen
d4,e4 versus d6,f7

C55
2630
2610
1993

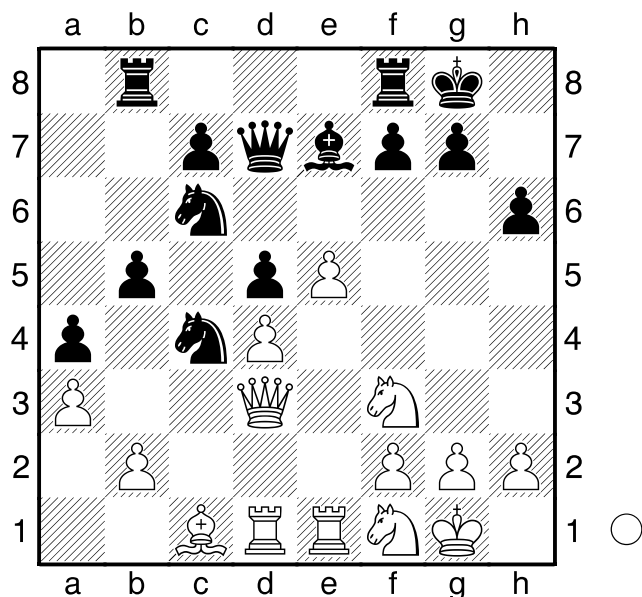
The dynamic center was transformed into a "static center", where White tried unsuccessfully a kingside attack.

Black was able to open up first a file on the queenside, then kept a better control over the central squares and a "good knight" versus a "bad bishop".

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d3 Be7
5.0-0 0-0 6.c3 d6 7.Bb3 Be6 8.Nbd2 Bxb3
9.Qxb3 Rb8 10.Re1 Nd7 11.Nc4 h6 12.d4
Bf6 13.Be3 exd4 14.cxd4 Nb6 15.Ncd2 d5
16.e5 Be7 17.a3 Qd7 18.Qd3 a5 19.Rad1
a4 20.Nf1 Nc4 21.Bc1 b5 Diagram

(Diagram)

22.Ng3 b4 23.Nd2 Nxd2 24.Qxd2 bxa3
25.bxa3 Rb3 26.f4 Bh4 27.Re3 Bxg3
28.Rxg3 Rxg3 29.hxg3 Rb8 30.Qc2 Rb3
31.f5 Rxg3 32.Qf2 Rg4 33.Be3 Na5 34.Qf3
h5 35.Rf1 Nc4 36.Qh3 Qb5 37.e6 fxe6
38.fxe6 Qe8 39.Bf2 Nd2 40.Re1 Ne4



41.Rc1 Qxe6 42.Qxh5 Nxf2 43.Kxf2 Qf6+ 0-1

□ Miles, Anthony J
 ■ Belavsky, Alexander G
 d4,e4 versus d6,f7

C86
 2595
 2595
 1992

In this game a tense struggle took place (usual for Ruy Lopez) in the centre and on the queenside.

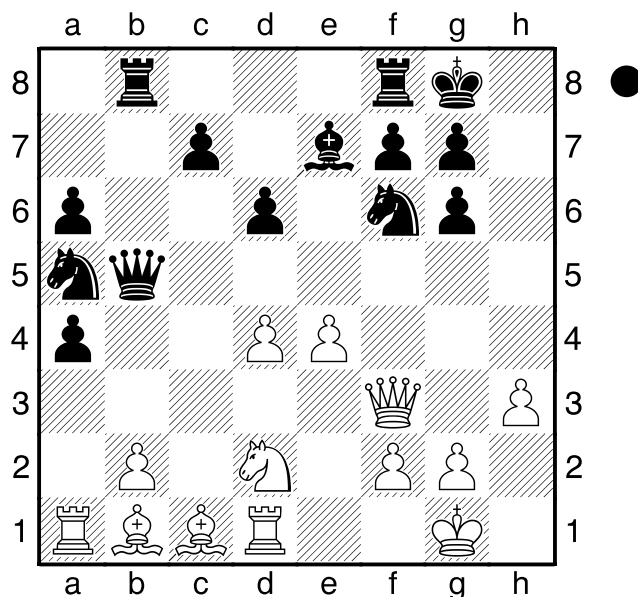
White had the control over the center and Black wasn't capable to create attacking objectives or weaknesses on the queenside.

Black's queen isolation on the "h" file was the decisive factor, White gained important tempos and created a free pawn on the "d" file.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Qe2 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.d4 Bg4 10.Rd1 Qe8 11.h3 Bh5 12.a4 Bg6 13.Nbd2 exd4 14.cxd4 Na5 15.Ba2 bxa4 16.Nh4 Qb5 17.Qf3 Rab8 18.Nxg6 hxg6 19.Bb1 Diagram

(Diagram)

Nd7 20.Qa3 Nb6 21.Bd3 Qh5 22.Re1 c5 23.Be2 Qh4 24.Qc3 Nc6 25.Nf3 Qh8



26.dxc5 dxc5 27.Bf4 Rb7 28.Rad1 c4 29.Bd6 Rc8 30.e5 Qh6 31.Nd4 Bxd6 32.exd6 Ne5 33.Bf3 Nxf3+ 34.Qxf3 Rd7 35.Nc6 Kh7 36.Ne5 a3 37.Nxd7 Nxd7 38.Qb7 Rd8 39.Qc7 Qg5 40.bxa3 c3 41.Qxc3 1-0

□ Kortschnoj, Viktor
 ■ Gheorghiu, Florin
 d4,e4 versus d6,f7

E80
 2670
 2530
 1971

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 a6 6.Be3 c6 7.c5 b5 8.cxd6 exd6 9.a4 Bb7 10.Nh3 0-0 11.Be2 Nbd7 12.0-0 Re8 13.Qd2 Diagram

(Diagram)

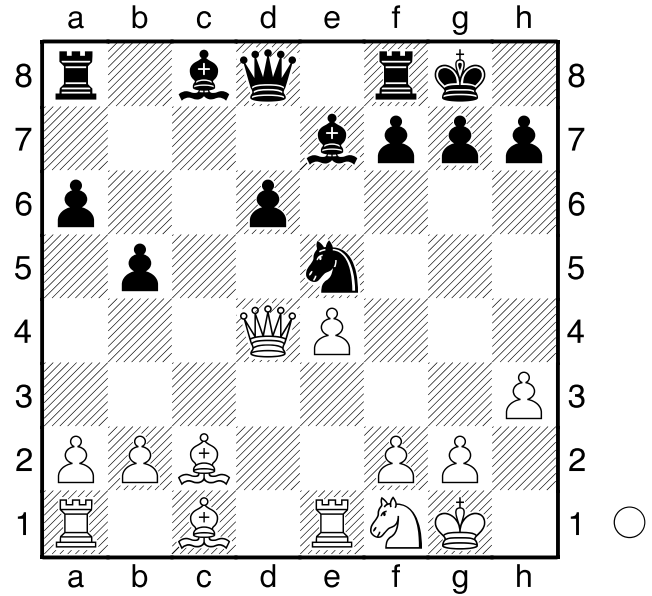
b4 14.Nd1 a5 15.Nhf2 c5 16.d5 Ba6 17.Bxa6 Rxa6 18.Bg5 Nb6 19.Ng4 h5 20.Nh6+ Bxh6 21.Bxh6 Nh7 22.Qd3 c4 23.Qd2 f5 24.exf5 gxf5 25.Ne3 Qf6 26.Bf4 Nf8 27.Rae1 Raa8 28.h4 Ng6 29.Bg5 Qf7 30.Qd4 Rxe3 31.Bxe3 Rb8 32.Bg5 Nxd5 33.Qxc4 f4 34.Rc1 Ne3 35.Qxf7+ Kxf7 36.Rfe1 Re8 37.Rc7+ Kg8 38.Rd7 Re6 39.Re2 Kf8 40.g3 Ne5 41.Rd8+ Kf7 1-0

C96
2600
2510
1992

- White was focused to grab the weak d6 pawn and used the push f2-f4 to deflect Black's important bishop from e5
- Black was able to create counterplay on the kingside, especially on the weak dark squares h4, g3, f2
- the attack was strong enough to compensate the loss of the d6 pawn

(Diagram)

17.Qd1 Bf6 18.Ng3 Nc6 19.Bb3 Be6
20.Rb1 Be5 21.f4 Qh4 22.Ne2 Bd4+
23.Nxd4 Nxd4 24.Be3 Nxb3 25.axb3 Rfe8
26.f5 Bc8 27.Qxd6 Bb7 28.Bf2 Qg5 29.Qd3
Qf4 30.Bg3 Bxe4 31.Bxf4 Bxd3 32.Rxe8+



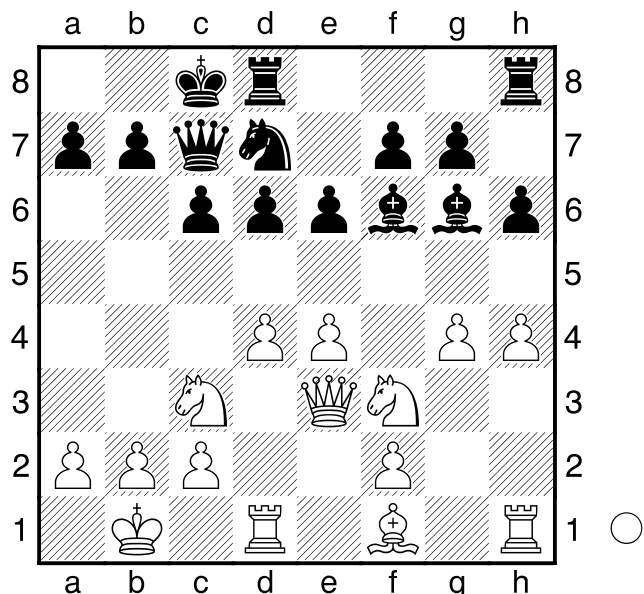
	Cvitan,Ognjen	A41
	Speelman,Jonathan S	2515
	d4,e4 versus d6,e6	2605
		1990

This game showed us a modern approach from Black's point of view (in the Modern Defense) which avoids central clarification.

White gives up the pair of bishops early, taking the lead in development. White failed to open up the lines (in open positions the lead in development can be transformed into long-term advantages or even material advantage) and Black was able to choose the convenient breakthrough c6-c5 (trading a lateral pawn for a central pawn).

After the queens trade, Black had a central pawn majority and two powerful bishops.

1.d4 d6 2.Nf3 Bg4 3.e4 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.h3 Bh5 6.Qe2 c6 7.g4 Bg6 8.Bg5 Be7 9.Bxf6 Bxf6 10.0-0-0 Nd7 11.Kb1 Qc7 12.h4 h6 13.Qe3 0-0-0 Diagram

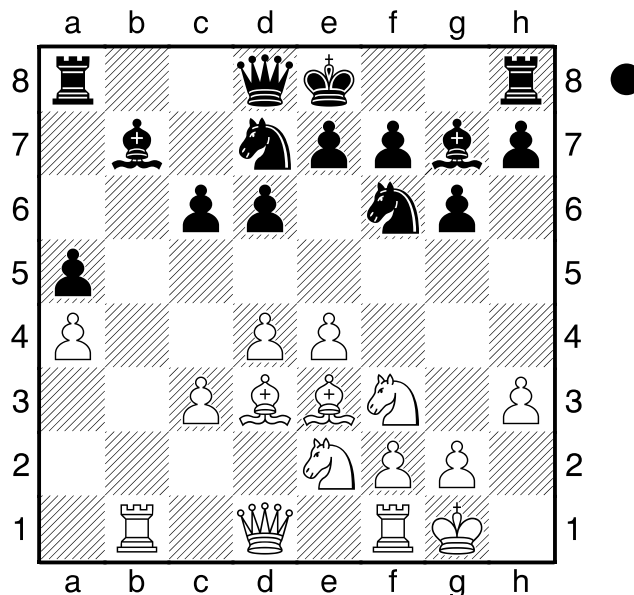


14.h5 Bh7 15.g5 hxg5 16.Nxg5 Bg8 17.f4 Kb8 18.Be2 a6 19.a3 c5 20.dxc5 Qxc5 21.Qxc5 Nxc5 22.Rh3 e5 23.Nd5 exf4 24.Nxf6 gxf6 25.Nf3 Bh7 26.Rh4 Ne6 27.Bd3 Kc7 28.Nh2 Kd7 29.Ng4 Ke7 30.Nh6 d5 31.Nf5+ Kf8 32.Kc1 dxe4 33.Bxe4 Rxd1+ 34.Kxd1 Nc5 35.Bf3 Bxf5 36.Rxf4 Bd7 37.Rxf6 Be6 38.Rf4 b6 39.Be2 a5 40.b4 axb4 41.axb4 Nd7 42.Rh4 Ke7 43.Kd2 Kf6 44.Rh1 Ke5 45.Ra1 Nf6 46.Ra6 Ne4+ 47.Kc1 Nc3 48.Bf3 Kf4 49.Bc6 b5 50.Kb2 Na4+ 51.Ka3 Bc4 52.Ra7 Rxh5 53.Bxb5 Bxb5 54.Rxf7+ Ke4 0-1

□ Dvoirys, Semen I
 ■ Minasian, Artashes
 d4,e4 versus d6,e7

B06
 2590
 2535
 1993

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c6 4.Nf3 d6 5.h3 Nd7 6.Be3 b5 7.Bd3 a6 8.0-0 Bb7 9.a4 b4 10.Ne2 a5 11.c3 bxc3 12.bxc3 Ngf6 13.Rb1 Diagram Qc7 14.e5 Nd5 15.exd6 exd6 16.Bg5 0-0



17.Bh4 N7b6 18.Bg3 Ba6 19.Bxa6 Rxa6 20.c4 Nb4 21.c5 Nc8 22.Nf4 Qd8 23.Nd3 dxc5 24.Nxc5 Ra7 25.Nd3 Nxd3 26.Qxd3 Rd7 27.Qc4 Bxd4 28.Nxd4 Rxd4 29.Qxc6 Ne7 30.Qc5 Nf5 31.Bc7 Qa8 32.Qb5 Qe4 33.Rfe1 Qc2 34.Be5 Re4 35.Qxa5 Qxa4 36.Qb6 Re8 37.f4 Rxe1+ 38.Rxe1 Re6 39.Qd8+ Qe8 40.Rd1 Qf8 41.Qc7 Re8 42.g4 Qa3 43.Bc3 Ne3 44.Qc6 Qa8 45.Qxa8 Rxa8 46.Rd7 Rc8 47.Bf6 Nc4 48.Kf2 Re8 49.Rd4 Na5 50.Kf3 Nc6 51.Rd7 Re6 52.g5 Kf8 53.Rc7 Ne7 54.Bxe7+ Rxe7 55.Rc1 Ra7 56.h4 Kg7 57.Kg4 h5+ 58.Kg3 Ra3+ 59.Kg2 Re3 60.Rc5 Kf8 61.Ra5 Re4 62.Kg3 Ke7 63.f5 Rg4+ 64.Kh3 Rd4 65.Kg3 Rd3+ 66.Kf4 gxf5 67.Kxf5 Rf3+ 68.Ke5 Kf8 69.Ra4 Kg7 70.Rb4

½-½

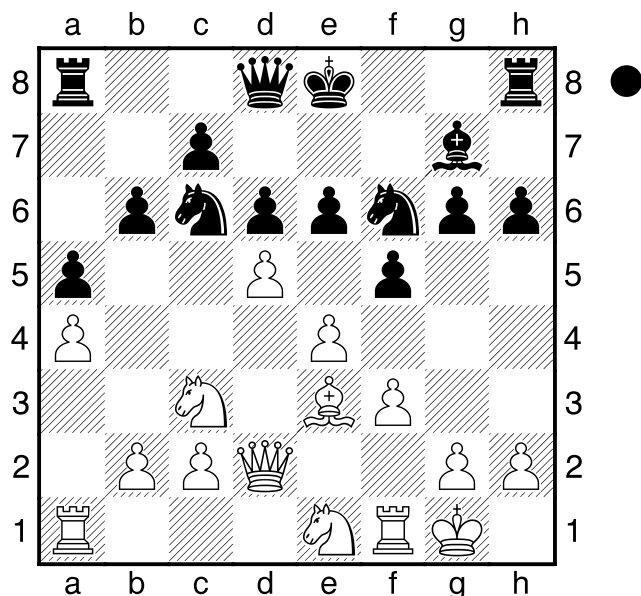
□ Karpov, Anatoly
 ■ Spassky, Boris V
 d4,e4 versus d6,e6

B06
 2700
 2610
 1982

This game is a perfect example for an unprepared wing attack. White had a better control over the center (d4, e4 versus d6, e6), when Black tried a kingside attack. This was immediately refuted by a

central blow d4-d5.

1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Nf3 Nd7
5.Be2 e6 6.0-0 Ne7 7.Bg5 h6 8.Be3 b6
9.a4 a5 10.Qd2 Bb7 11.Ne1 f5 12.f3 Nf6
13.Bb5+ Bc6 14.Bxc6+ Nxc6 15.d5 Diagram



exd5 16.Nxd5 Ne7 17.c4 Kf7 18.Nd3 Qd7
19.Nxf6 Bxf6 20.Bxh6 Nc6 21.Rae1 Rae8
22.Bg5 Bd4+ 23.Be3 Qe6 24.Bxd4 Nxd4
25.Nf4 Qxc4 26.Rc1 Qxa4 27.Rxc7+ Re7
28.Rxe7+ Kxe7 29.Nxg6+
1-0

□ Bareev, Evgeny
■ Goldin, Alexander
d4,e4 versus d6,e7

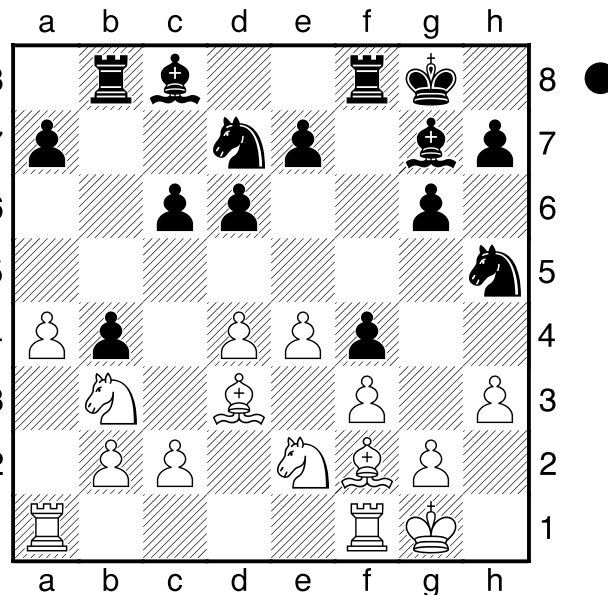
B07
2555
2500
1988

Specific features:

- White had a healthier pawn structure and a strong center e4 + d4
- Black's attempts for counterplay were hampered by the passive positions of the minor pieces
- White took the weak c6 pawn as a target and by a good coordination (the pieces are defending each other) managed to win.

1.d4 d6 2.e4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Bf4 Bg7
5.Qd2 c6 6.h3 b5 7.Bd3 Nh5 8.Be3 Nd7

9.Nf3 Qa5 10.0-0 0-0 11.Ne2 Qxd2 12.Nxd2
f5 13.f3 f4 14.Bf2 Rb8 15.a4 b4 16.Nb3
Diagram



Nb6 17.Be1 Na8 18.Na5 Bd7 19.c3 bxc3
20.Bxc3 Nb6 21.Rfc1 Rfc8 22.b3 c5
23.dxc5 dxc5 24.Bxg7 Kxg7 25.Rc3 Be8
26.Rac1 Rd8 27.Ba6 Rd6 28.Nb7 Rd2
29.Nxc5 Bf7 30.R3c2 Rbd8 31.Kf2 Na8
32.Ke1 Rxc2 33.Rxc2 Nc7 34.Bc4 Bxc4
35.Rxc4 e5 36.b4 Kf6 37.Nc3 Na8 38.a5
Ng7 39.b5 Ne8 40.Nd5+ Kf7 41.Nd3 Ke6
42.Rc6+ Nd6 43.Nc5+ Kf7 44.b6
1-0

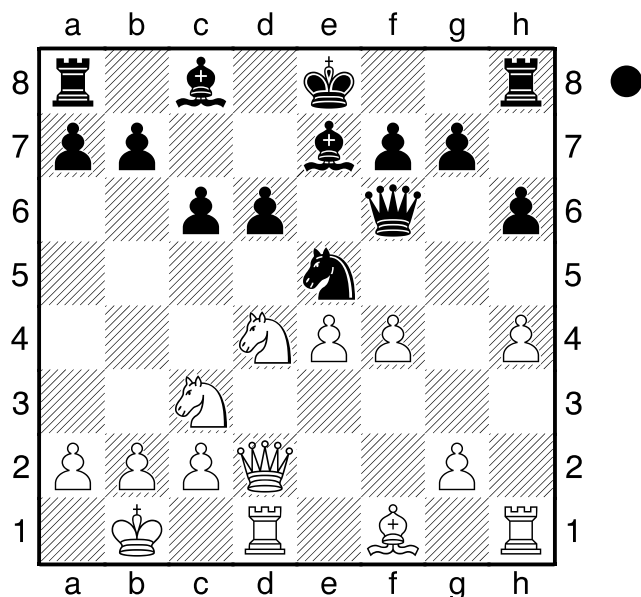
□ Hodgson, Julian M
■ Polgar, Zsuzsa
e4 versus d6

A46
2535
2520
1989

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 e6 3.e4 h6 4.Bxf6 Qxf6
5.Nf3 d6 6.Nc3 c6 7.Qd2 e5 8.0-0-0 Be7
9.Kb1 Nd7 10.h4 exd4 11.Nxd4 Ne5 12.f4
Diagram

(Diagram)

Ng4 13.h5 Bd8 14.Ndb5 cxb5 15.Bxb5+
Bd7 16.Bxd7+ Kxd7 17.Qe2 Qxf4 18.Rhf1
Qg5 19.Rf5 Qh4 20.Qb5+ Kc8 21.Rxf7 Be7



22.Nd5
1-0

□ Hort,Vlastimil
■ Polgar,Judit
e4 versus d6

B07
2535
2630
1994

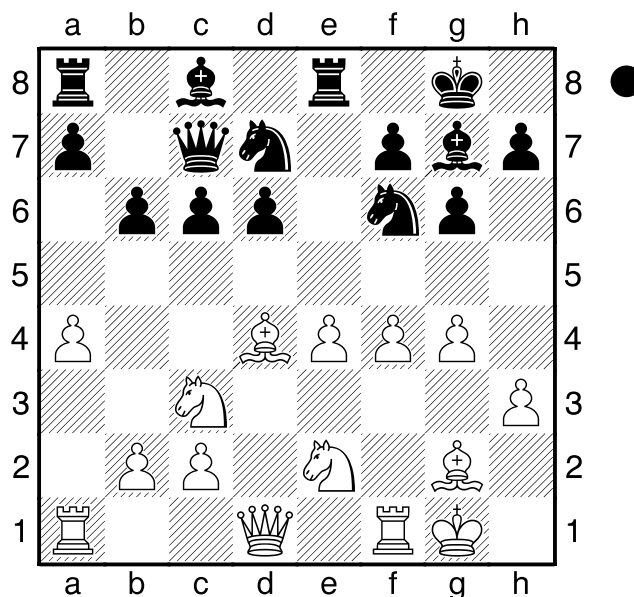
Important features:

- White took advantage from the stable position in the center and launched a kingside attack
- Black reacted well with a pawn breakthrough in the center, but White managed to create a better pawn structure (on different color than his own bishop) and by a wise exchange-policy left Black with a bad bishop.

1.d4 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.e4 d6
5.Nc3 0-0 6.Nge2 Nbd7 7.0-0 c6 8.a4 Qc7
9.h3 e5 10.Be3 Re8 11.f4 exd4 12.Bxd4 b6
13.g4 Diagram

(Diagram)

Ba6 14.Rf2 Rad8 15.g5 Nh5 16.Bxg7 Nxg7
17.Ng3 Bb7 18.h4 a6 19.Qd2 b5 20.axb5
axb5 21.Re1 Qb6 22.Nd1 d5 23.Ne3 dxe4
24.Ng4 e3 25.Rxe3 Rxe3 26.Qxe3 Qxe3



27.Nxe3 f5 28.Rd2 Ne6 29.Ne2 Kf7 30.Kf2
Ke7 31.b4 Rb8 32.c3 Nb6 33.h5 Nc8 34.c4
bxc4 35.hxg6 hxg6 36.Nxc4 c5 37.Ne5
Bxg2 38.Kxg2 Ke8 39.bxc5 Nxc5 40.Nxg6
Ne4 41.Ra2 Ncd6 42.Ne5 Nf7 43.Nf3 Kf8
44.Ned4 Nfd6 45.Ne5 Kg8 46.Kh3 Rc8
47.Kh4 Nc3 48.Ra7 Ncb5 49.Nxb5 Nxb5
50.Rd7 Nc3 51.Kh5 Ne2 52.Kh6 Nxf4
53.Rg7+ Kf8 54.Nd7+ Ke8 55.Nf6+ Kd8
56.Rd7#
1-0

□ Torre,Eugenio
■ Karpov,Anatoly
c4,e4 versus d6,e6

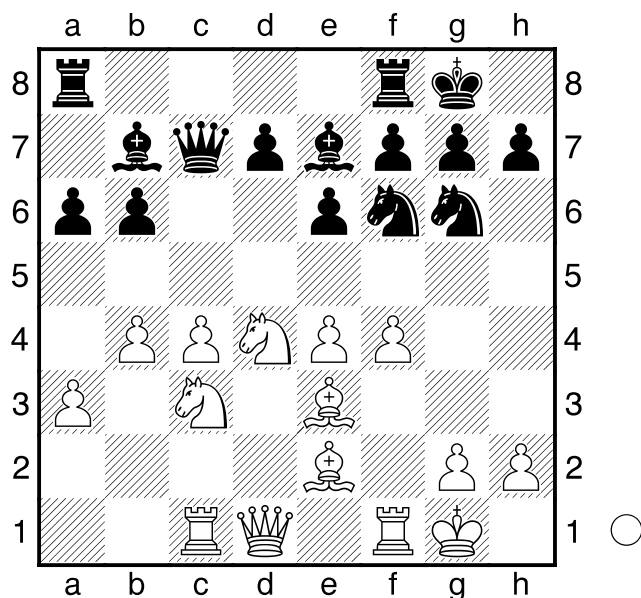
B41
2550
2690
1977

The "hedgehog" pawn structure is one of the most complicated types of dynamic center: White has a solid advanced pawn structure against a flexible Black's pawn structure. The statistics show us that it is indicated for White to attack on the queenside where is easier to create a piece superiority. Black has 3 main breakthroughs at his disposal: b6-b5, d6-d5, f7-f5 threatening White's impressive center.

In this game, White was misled to a kingside

attack and Black reacted in the center and especially on the dark squares, threatening White's exposed king.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6
5.c4 Qc7 6.a3 Nf6 7.Nc3 Nc6 8.Be3 Be7
9.Rc1 Ne5 10.Be2 Ng6 11.0-0 b6 12.f4 0-0
13.b4 Bb7 Diagram

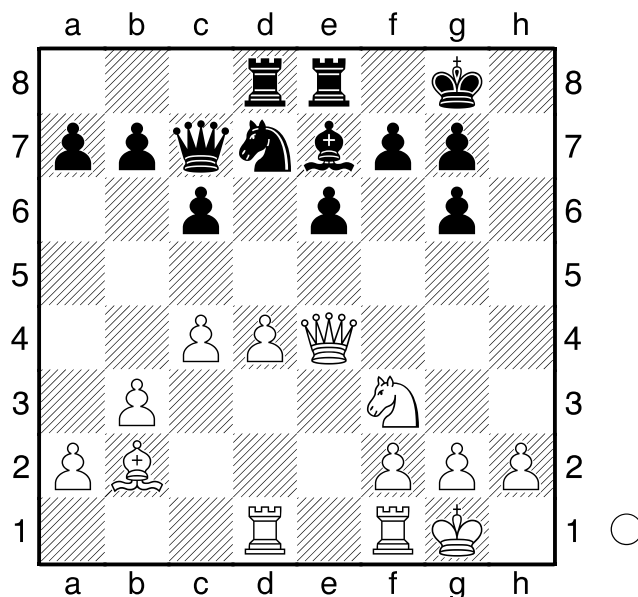


14.Bd3 Rac8 15.Nb3 d6 16.Qe2 Rfe8
17.h3 Nd7 18.Qf2 Ba8 19.Rc2 Qb8 20.Rfc1
Bh4 21.g3 Bd8 22.Nd2 Bf6 23.h4 h6 24.h5
Ngf8 25.g4 Nh7 26.e5 dxe5 27.g5 exf4
28.Bxf4 Be5 29.g6 fxg6 30.hxg6 Bxf4
31.gxh7+ Kh8 32.Rf1 Rf8 33.Be4 Ne5
34.Qg2 Nxc4
0-1

□ Spassky, Boris V
■ Karpov, Anatoly
c4,d4 versus c6,e6

B18
2650
2700
1974

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5
5.Ng3 Bg6 6.Nf3 Nd7 7.Bd3 e6 8.0-0 Ngf6
9.c4 Bd6 10.b3 0-0 11.Bb2 Qc7 12.Bxg6
hxg6 13.Qe2 Rfe8 14.Ne4 Nxe4 15.Qxe4
Be7 16.Rad1 Rad8 Diagram
17.Rfe1 Qa5 18.a3 Qf5 19.Qe2 g5 20.h3
g4 21.hxg4 Qxg4 22.d5 cxd5 23.cxd5 e5
24.d6 Bf6 25.Nd2 Qxe2 26.Rxe2 Rc8



27.Ne4 Bd8 28.g4 f6 29.Kg2 Kf7 30.Rc1
Bb6 31.Rec2 Rxc2 32.Rxc2 Ke6 33.a4 a5
34.Ba3 Rb8 35.Rc4 Bd4 36.f4 g6 37.Ng3
exf4 38.Rxd4 fxg3 39.Kxg3 Rc8 40.Rd3 g5
41.Bb2 b6 42.Bd4 Rc6 43.Bc3 Rc5 44.Kg2
Rc8 45.Kg3 Ne5 46.Bxe5 fxe5 47.b4 e4
48.Rd4 Ke5 49.Rd1 axb4 50.Rb1 Rc3+
51.Kf2 Rd3 52.d7 Rxd7 53.Rxb4 Rd6
54.Ke3 Rd3+ 55.Ke2 Ra3
0-1

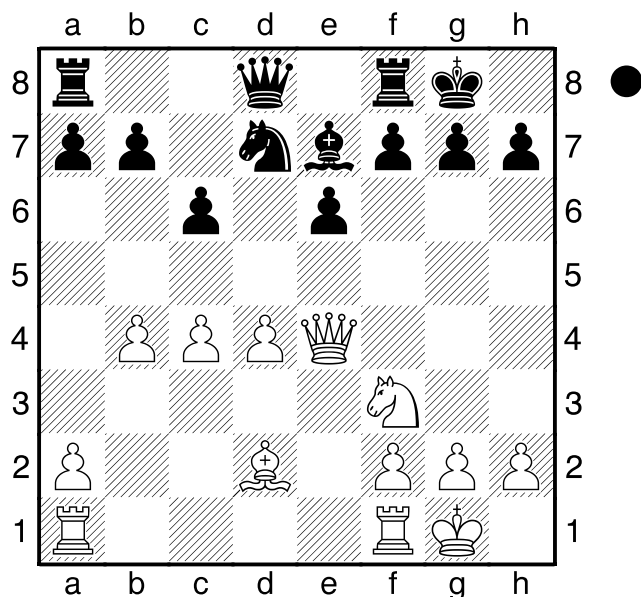
□ Seirawan, Yasser
■ Kortschnoj, Viktor
c4,d4 versus c6,e6

D12
2595
2605
1993

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bd7
5.Nf3 Bc6 6.Bd3 Nd7 7.Qe2 Ngf6 8.0-0
Bxe4 9.Bxe4 Nxe4 10.Qxe4 c6 11.c4 Be7
12.Bd2 0-0 13.b4 Diagram

(Diagram)

Nf6 14.Qe2 Re8 15.a4 Nd7 16.c5 Nf6
17.b5 Nd5 18.bxc6 bxc6 19.Qa6 Qc8
20.Qxc8 Rexc8 21.Rfb1 f6 22.Rb7 Bd8
23.Re1 Rc7 24.Rxc7 Nxc7 25.Bf4 Kf7
26.Rb1 Ke8 27.Nd2 Nd5 28.Bd6 Ba5
29.Nc4 Bb4 30.a5 Rd8 31.a6 Bc3 32.Rb7



Bxd4 33.Rxa7 f5 34.Rb7
1-0

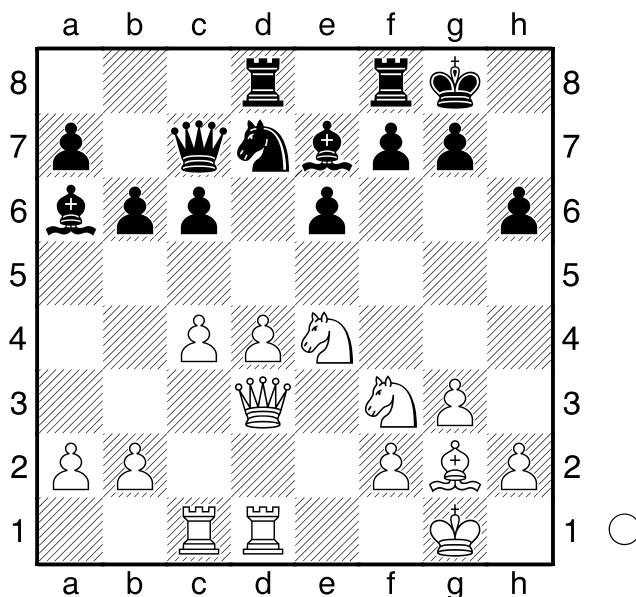
□ **Lobron, Eric**
■ **Kramnik, Vladimir**
c4,d4 versus c6,e6

D43
2575
2715
1995

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bxf6 Qxf6 7.e4 dxe4 8.Nxe4 Bb4+ 9.Ke2 Qf4 10.Qd3 Be7 11.g3 Qc7 12.Bg2 0-0 13.Rhd1 Nd7 14.Kf1 b6 15.Rac1 Ba6 16.Kg1 Rad8 Diagram

(Diagram)

17.Qc2 Nf6 18.Ne5 Bb7 19.Qa4 a5 20.Nxf6+ Bxf6 21.Qb3 c5 22.Bxb7 Qxb7 23.Qe3 Qc7 24.f4 cxd4 25.Rxd4 Rxd4 26.Qxd4 Rd8 27.Qe3 Qd6 28.Re1 a4 29.Kf2 Qb4 30.Re2 Bxe5 31.fxe5 Qxc4 32.Qxb6 Rd3 33.Qb7 g6 34.Kg2 Qxa2 35.Kh3 Qd5 36.Qa7 Qd4 37.Qe7 h5 38.Rc2 Qg4+ 39.Kg2 Qf3+ 40.Kh3 Qf5+ 41.Kg2 Rxg3+ 42.Kxg3 Qxc2 43.Qd8+ Kh7 44.Qf6 Qf5 0-1



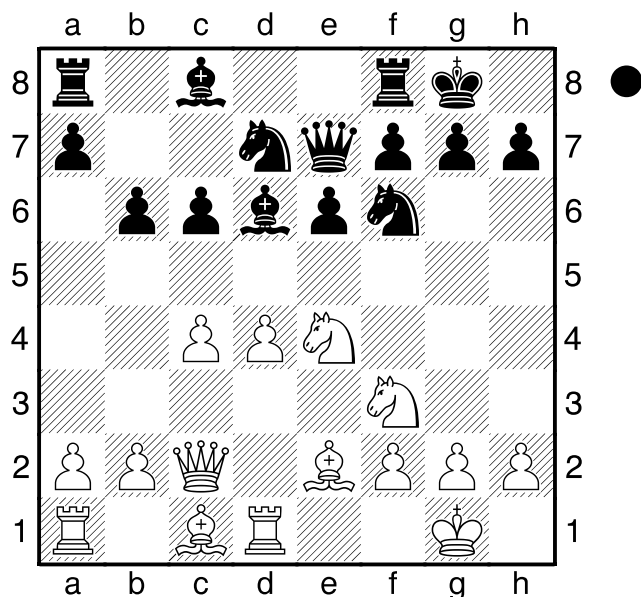
□ **Epishin, Vladimir**
■ **Chekhov, Valery A**
c4,d4 versus c6,e6

D45
2620
2550
1992

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e3 e6 5.Nf3 Nbd7 6.Qc2 Bd6 7.Be2 0-0 8.0-0 Qe7 9.Rd1 b6 10.e4 dxe4 11.Nxe4 Diagram

(Diagram)

Nxe4 12.Qxe4 Bb7 13.Bf4 Nf6 14.Bxd6 Qxd6 15.Qe3 Rfd8 16.c5 Qe7 17.Rac1 bxc5 18.Rxc5 Rd5 19.Rdc1 Rad8 20.Qa3 Rxc5 21.Rxc5 Qc7 22.Ra5 a6 23.Bxa6 Qf4 24.g3 Qc1+ 25.Kg2 Bxa6 26.Rxa6 h6 27.Ra8 Rxa8 28.Qxa8+ Kh7 29.Qb7 Ne4 30.Qb3 g5 31.h3 c5 32.Qb7 1-0



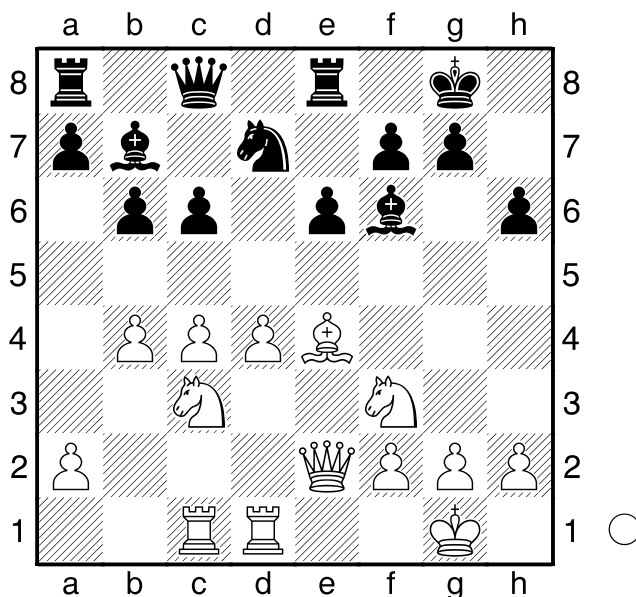
Hjartarson, Johann
 Renet, Olivier
 c4,d4 versus c6,e6

D55
2625
2535
 1993

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Be7
 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bxf6 Bxf6 7.e3 0-0 8.Rc1 c6
 9.Bd3 Nd7 10.0-0 b6 11.e4 dxe4 12.Bxe4
 Bb7 13.Qe2 Re8 14.Rfd1 Qb8 15.b4 Qc8
 Diagram

(Diagram)

16.c5 bxc5 17.dxc5 a5 18.a3 axb4 19.axb4
 Ba6 20.b5 Bxc3 21.bxa6 Bf6 22.Rd6 Nb8
 23.Bd3 Nxa6 24.Qe4 Nb8 25.Qh7+ Kf8
 26.Nd4 Ra4 27.Bc4 Bxd4 28.Rxd4 Rd8
 29.Qh8+ Ke7 30.Qxg7 Rxd4 31.Qxd4 Nd7
 32.Qd6+ Ke8 33.h3 Qb8 34.Qxc6 Qf4
 35.Rd1 Rxc4 36.Qc8+ Ke7 37.Rxd7+ Kf6
 38.Qh8+ Kg5 39.Qg7+ Kh4 40.g3+ Kxh3
 41.Rd1 Rc1 42.Rf1 Qd2 43.Qe5 Qd1
 0-1



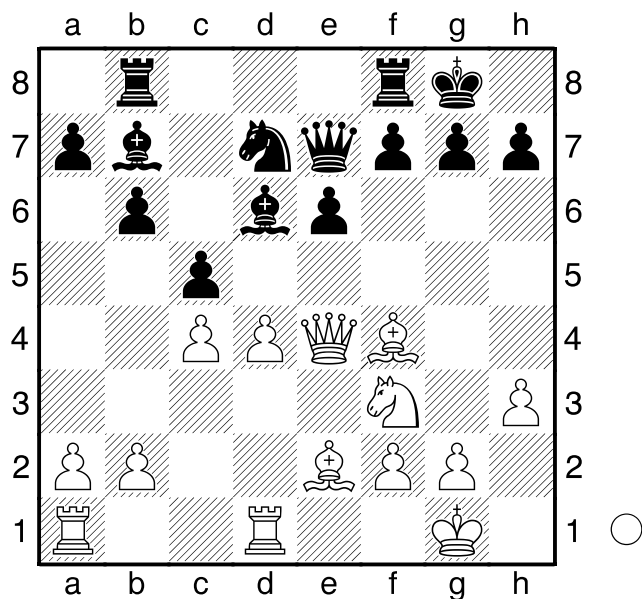
Tukmakov, Vladimir B
 Oll, Lembit
 c4,d4 versus c6,e6

D45
2565
2615
 1994

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.e3
 Nbd7 6.Qc2 Bd6 7.Be2 0-0 8.0-0 Qe7 9.h3
 b6 10.e4 Nxe4 11.Nxe4 dxe4 12.Qxe4 Bb7
 13.Bf4 Rab8 14.Rfd1 c5 Diagram

(Diagram)

15.Bxd6 Qxd6 16.Qe3 Rbd8 17.Rd2 Bxf3
 18.Bxf3 Ne5 19.b3 cxd4 20.Qe2 Nxf3+
 21.Qxf3 e5 22.g4 g6 23.g5 f6 24.gxf6 Rxf6
 25.Qg2 Rf5 26.Re1 Qf6 27.Kf1 Rf8 28.Ree2
 Kh8 29.Rd3 Rf4 30.Rdd2 Qf5 31.Qg3 Kg8
 32.Kg1 h5 33.Re1 h4 34.Qg2 e4 35.Rde2
 d3 36.Rd2 Rf3 37.Qg4 Qxg4+ 38.hxg4 R8f4
 0-1



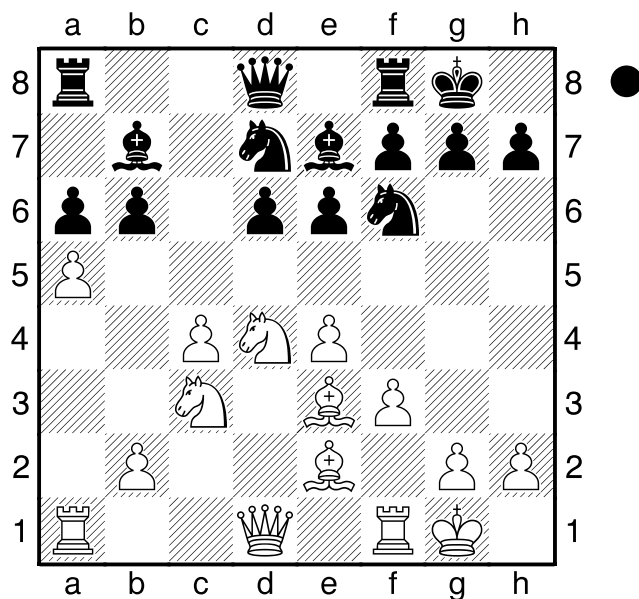
□ Gelfand, Boris
 ■ Smirin, Ilia
 c4,e4 versus d6,e6

A31
2505
2510
 1988

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.Nf3 cxd4 4.Nxd4 b6
 5.Nc3 Bb7 6.f3 d6 7.e4 Nbd7 8.Be2 e6
 9.0-0 Be7 10.Be3 0-0 11.a4 a6 12.a5
 Diagram

(Diagram)

bxa5 13.Nb3 Rb8 14.Nxa5 Ba8 15.Qd2
 Qc7 16.Rfc1 Rfc8 17.Na4 Nc5 18.b4 Nxa4
 19.Rxa4 Qd7 20.Rca1 Rd8 21.Bf1 Qc7
 22.Nb3 Bb7 23.Qf2 Nd7 24.Na5 Ba8
 25.Ba7 Rbc8 26.Bd4 Rb8 27.Ba7 Rbc8
 28.Nb3 Bb7 29.Bd4 Rb8 30.Qg3 g6 31.b5
 e5 32.Ba7 Ra8 33.Qf2 axb5 34.cxb5 d5
 35.Rc1 Qd6 36.Na5 Rxa7 37.Qxa7 Ba8
 38.Nc6 Bxc6 39.Rxc6 Qc5+ 40.Kh1
 1-0



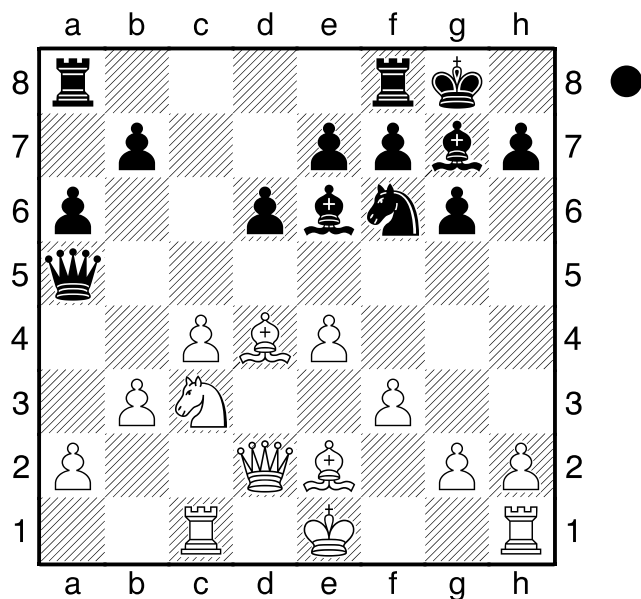
□ Lautier, Joel
 ■ Topalov, Veselin
 c4,e4 versus d6,e7

B38
2645
2645
 1994

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 c5 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.d4 cxd4
 5.Nxd4 g6 6.e4 d6 7.f3 Bg7 8.Be3 0-0
 9.Qd2 Nxd4 10.Bxd4 Be6 11.Be2 Qa5
 12.Rc1 a6 13.b3 Diagram

(Diagram)

Rfc8 14.Qb2 Nh5 15.Bxg7 Kxg7 16.0-0
 Qe5 17.Rfd1 b5 18.cxb5 axb5 19.Qd2
 Rab8 20.Nxb5 Rxc1 21.Rxc1 Rxb5 22.f4
 Nxf4 23.Bxb5 Qg5 24.Kh1 Qxb5 25.Qxf4
 Qe2 26.Ra1 Bd7 27.Qf3 Qb2 28.Rf1 f6
 29.Qf2 Qe5 30.Qc2 Bb5 31.Rd1 Ba6
 32.Qc6 Be2 33.Re1 Bb5 34.Qd5 Qc3
 35.Rd1 Qc2 36.h3 Ba6 37.a4 Bb7 38.Qd3
 Qc5 39.Qd4 Qc2 40.Qd3 Qc5 41.b4
 1-0



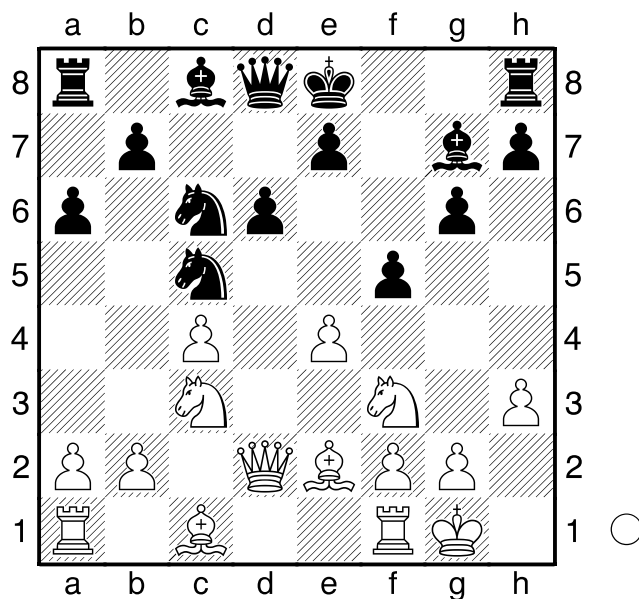
□ Soffer, Ram
 ■ Psakhis, Lev
 c4,e4 versus d6,e7

B53
2530
2610
 1996

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Qxd4 a6
 5.c4 Nc6 6.Qd2 g6 7.h3 Bg7 8.Bd3 Nf6
 9.0-0 Nd7 10.Nc3 Nc5 11.Be2 f5 Diagram

(Diagram)

12.exf5 Bxf5 13.Qd1 0-0 14.Be3 Rc8
 15.Nd4 Bd7 16.Qd2 Nxd4 17.Bxd4 Bxd4
 18.Qxd4 Ne6 19.Qe3 Nf4 20.Rfe1 Rc5
 21.Bf1 Re5 22.Qd4 Ref5 23.Qe3 e5
 24.Rad1 Bc6 25.Ne4 Qe7 26.Nxd6 Rg5
 27.g3 Nxh3+ 28.Bxh3 Rf3 29.Nc8 Qf6
 30.Qe2 Rgxg3+ 31.fxg3 Rxg3+ 32.Kh2 Rf3
 33.Qxe5 Qh4 34.Rd8+ Qxd8 35.Be6+
 1-0



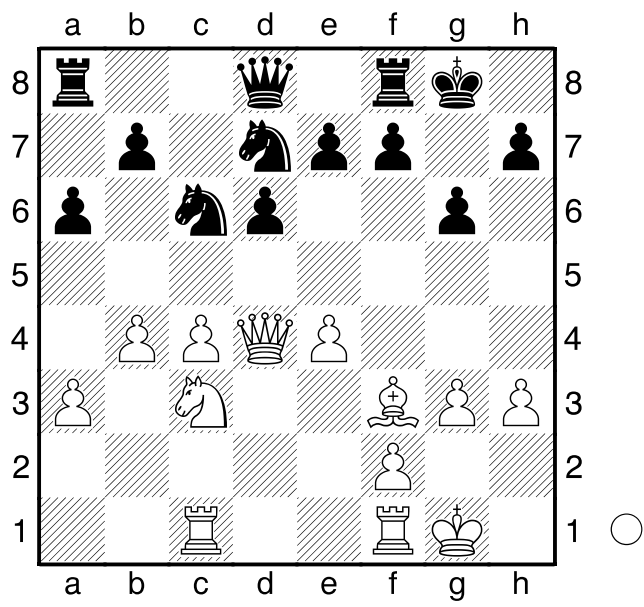
□ Hulak, Krunoslav
 ■ Kozul, Zdenko
 c4,e4 versus d6,e7

E62
2530
2575
 1994

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0
 5.Nc3 d6 6.Nf3 c6 7.0-0 Qa5 8.e4 Bg4
 9.h3 Bxf3 10.Bxf3 Nfd7 11.Be3 a6 12.a3
 c5 13.b4 Qd8 14.Rc1 cxd4 15.Bxd4 Bxd4
 16.Qxd4 Nc6 Diagram

(Diagram)

17.Qd2 a5 18.Nd5 axb4 19.axb4 e6 20.Ne3
 Qb6 21.Rb1 Nce5 22.Bg2 Ra3 23.Rfd1 Rd3
 24.Qe2 Rxd1+ 25.Qxd1 Rc8 26.Qb3 h5
 27.Kh2 h4 28.gxh4 Qd8 29.f4 Nc6 30.Qd1
 Qxh4 31.Qxd6 Nf6 32.b5 Rd8 33.Qc7 Rd7
 34.Qc8+ Nd8 35.Rf1 Rd2 36.Kg1 Qg3
 37.Rf3 Qe1+ 38.Bf1 Nxe4 39.Ng2 Qa1
 40.Qc7 Qd4+ 41.Kh2 Rd1
 0-1



Board Visualization

Training the capability of seeing the chess board in your mind as being just before your eyes has a great influence for your entire future chess development.

Although positional thinking is very important, precise analysis is just as important. During the games, the chess player will be faced with many situations when a concrete calculation of variation is required. In these kind of positions, when you need to calculate many variations, the capability of seeing the resulting positions in your mind is of the first importance and this can be improved a lot by the so-called “board visualization” training. Moreover, the well-known “blunders” during your games will be drastically diminished.

We start our training by 2 short tests with the objective to get your current level as beginner, intermediate or advanced. As even the great tactician, the former World Chess Champion, Mihail Tal stated, training the board visualization should be made by every chess player, no matter their level.

The next 2 following tests should be made without looking at all at the chess board!
So, read the questions, write down your answers and, then, check the correct solutions.

TEST A)

1. Which is the color of the f6-square?
2. Which is the color of the b4-square?
3. How a bishop from f5 can arrive on d6?
4. Tell all the shortest routes to move a knight from e4 to h8.

Now, you can check the solutions at the next page. If you answered 100% correctly, you are intermediate or advanced as the TEST B) will tell.

Solutions to test A)

1. dark (black)
2. dark (black)
3. it cannot
4. 1: Ne4-d6-f7-h8; 2:Ne4-g5-f7-h8

If you have not answered 100% correctly to these questions, you are at the beginner level.

If you have answered correctly to the Test A), please take the second test.

TEST B)

1.

White: Kh1, Qe4, Nf8, pawns: b2, e5, g2, h2

Black: Kh8, Qe3, Bc1, pawns: a4, b4, g7, h6

White is to move. What would you move?

2.

Initial position. After the moves: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Qe2 Ngf6, recommend the best move for White.

3.

White: Kg1, Qa3, Rd1, Bg5, Ne2, pawns: a2, b3, c4, f2, g2, h2

Black: Kg8, Qg6, Rf8, Bb7, Ne5, pawns: a7, b6, c7, f7, g7, h7

White is to move. How should White play?

4.

White: Kg1, Bg2, Ne4

Black: Ke3, Qb2

Black is to move. Can he win? How?

Solutions are given below.

Solutions to Test B)

1. 1.Qh7#
2. 1.Nd6#
3. 1.Qxf8+ Kxf8 2.Rd8#
4. Black cannot win because his king has no entrance in the corner to help the queen.
White will move only the king in the corner.

If you have not answered correctly to all the fourth exercises above, you are at intermediary level and you should start our “board visualization” training.

If you have answered 100% correctly to all the above questions, you have a good board visualization capability and you may continue improving your skills by specific advanced exercises. Our recommendations for you:

- Take a book with tactical exercises. Look at the diagram of a position for some seconds/minutes until you memorize it. Then, solve the combination with all the candidate moves / replies of your opponent.
- Read games without looking at the board.
- Play training games with some friend of you. If he is weaker than you, he should play at the board, telling you the moves and you should not look at the board (but write down the moves you two are telling)

Board visualization exercises

First of all, you should know without problems the notation of the moves. This is not an objective of our course and you can easily find a guide for this.

Then, you should know that the board visualization training is very important for you and the training consists in solving exercises, most of them without looking at the board.

The capability to see the board in your mind, the piece routes and, later, to be able to solve simple positions only reading the arrangement of pieces takes a lot of time. The good news is that the training is not hard and takes only some few minutes per week. The process cannot be hurried up too much as your mind has to get used with this.

The training will consists in 3-4 days of training per week and a “board visualization” training session should last for only 3-10 minutes. So, we will give between 12 and 16 sessions every month.

Answer to the given exercises, writing down your complete answers. At the end of the training sessions, check your answers by looking at the board.

Do not try to solve the given exercises in less than a month as the effect is not bigger. Again: your mind needs time to “see” the chess board, piece movement and tactical cooperation between pieces.

Month 1

Day 1)

With the real board in front of you, arrange the pieces in the initial position and look at the normal developing squares for the pieces (but without moving them):

- c3 and f3 squares are for the white knights
- c6 and f6 squares are for the black knights
- e2, d3, c4, b5 squares are for the White's light-square bishop. The same, observe the squares for normal development of the other bishops
- g2, b2, g7, b7 squares are for the fianchetto developments of the bishops
- g1 is the square where the White's king arrives after the short castle. The same, observe the squares for the long castle and, as well, for the black king. Then, look at the squares where the rooks arrive after the fourth possible castles.
- Look at the fourth central squares (e4, d4, e5, d5)

Now, take the pieces out of the board and try to do the same thing (to see the normal development squares) looking only at the empty board.

Now, the last stage of training of the first day: without looking at the chess board, tell all the squares from above (the normal development squares for the knights, bishops, bishops on fianchetto, kings and rooks after the castle is done).

Day 2)

The same as in Day 1)

Day 3)

The same as in the first day, but without looking at the board:

- tell the squares where the (4) knights develop normally
- tell the squares where the (4) bishops can develop normally
- tell the 4 squares of fianchetto development for the bishops
- tell the squares of kings and rooks after the castle is done

Day 4)

With the real board in front of you, look at all the squares controlled by:

- a knight developed on c3 (put only this knight on the board)
- a knight developed on f3 (--“--)
- a knight developed on c6 (--“--)
- a knight developed on f6 (--“--)

Then, without looking at the board, try to tell all the squares controlled by those 4 knights.

Day 5)

With the real board in front of you, look at all the squares controlled by:

- the f1-bishop developed on e2 (put only this bishop on the board)
- the f1-bishop developed on d3, c4, b5
- the f8-bishop developed on e7, d6, c5, b4
- the other 2 bishops as above

Without seeing the board, tell all the squares controlled by those 4 bishops developed as explained (1, 2, 3, or 4 squares developed away from their initial position)

Day 6)

Without looking at the board, tell all the squares controlled by:

- a bishop on g2
- a bishop on g7
- a bishop on e5
- a bishop on b7
- a bishop on d2
- a bishop on c5

Day 7)

Without looking at the board, tell all the squares controlled by:

- a bishop on b2
- a bishop on b7
- a bishop on a5
- a bishop on h4
- a bishop on d4
- a bishop on f4

Day 8)

Without looking at the board, tell all the squares controlled by:

- a knight on c3
- a knight on e2
- a knight on f6
- a knight on d4

Day 9)

Without looking at the board, tell all the squares controlled by:

- a knight on c6
- a knight on f3
- a knight on b2
- a knight on c5
- a knight on h7

Day 10)

Without looking at the board, tell all the squares controlled by:

- a knight on c5 and a bishop on g3
- a knight on f4 and a bishop on h8

- a knight on d7 and a bishop on d2
- 2 knights on e4 and d4

Day 11)

Without looking at the board, tell:

- how a white rook from c1 can attack a knight on f6 (2 squares)
- how a black rook from h8 can attack a white knight on g2
- how a white rook from g5 can defend a white knight on h6
- how a black rook from c6 can defend a black bishop on g7
- how a white rook from f1 can check a black king on g8
- how a black rook from e5 can defend a black queen on c4

Day 12)

Without looking at the board, tell:

- Example: how a white queen from c5 can attack a black rook on g7 without being captured? Answer: c3, d4, e5, f8. The squares controlled by the black rook are not good, as for example c7.
- How a white queen from c1 can attack a black rook on g7 (without being captured. This condition applies to all the next questions)
- How a white queen from d4 can attack a black rook on e8
- How a black queen from c3 can attack a white rook on f1
- How the white queen from the initial position can attack the black rook on a8, and, then, h8.

Day 13)

Without looking at the board, tell:

- how a white queen from d1 can attack a black bishop on g7 without being captured (This condition applies to all the next questions)
- how a white queen from d4 can attack a black bishop on b7
- how a black queen from c7 can attack a white bishop on g2
- how a white queen from d3 can attack a black bishop on h6
- how a white queen from b1 can attack a black bishop on f3
- how a black queen from g6 can attack a white bishop on b5

The exercises will continue in the next month of training.

THE ATTACK AGAINST THE KING

- The king remained in the centre -

Corresponding to an **opening rule**, making the castle in the first moves is useful for the king because he abandons the central files, which doesn't offer him a good safety. Another important advantage of the castle is bringing the rook (with whom the castle is done) into play.

In this game we will see what happens if this principle is not obeyed, which means that the king remains too much time in the center. Generally, **when we start a king attack, we have to apply the following principles:**

1. The opening of the files and diagonals in order to increase the *qualitative value* of the attacking pieces (*by increasing their mobility*);
2. Bringing more pieces into attack, in order to create a *quantitative superiority*;
3. Permanently creating of imminent threats, in order not to let the opponent to organize his defense.
4. Maintaining the opposite king in the center as much as possible
5. Using the fact that the opposite rooks do not take part into play.

We will see next and excellent example of attacking the king remained in the center, resulted in a game from the Romanian Team Championship. It is interesting to be mentioned that the game was published in a prestigious international publication, but due to an error, the winner was mentioned as the loser, and the loser was mentioned to be the winner. As me and Vadim Chernov were team mates and we were playing at adjacent tables, I can guarantee that he is the real winner.

Chernov Vadim – Cioara Andrei

Romanian Team Championship, 1998

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5

The Caro-Kan opening system is considered to be one of the most solid systems for Black, even if often it is just a short step between the solidity and passivity. The fact that, during the time, great champions like Capablanca, Botvinnik or Karpov included it in their opening repertoire, say a lot about its viability.

3.Nc3

One of the trendy systems, through which White tries to obtain an advantage since the opening stage, is 3.e5 after which Black plays either 3...Bf5, or the pretentious move 3...c5 which leads to a very complicated game.

3...g6

This is an opening system which combines the idea of the Caro-Kan Defense with those from Pirc Defense. In Romania this system is very popular, probably also because it was used regularly and with great success by Victor Ciocaltea, one of the greatest players in the Romanian chess history. This opening system is also known as Gurgendze System, after the name of the

Georgian player who used it with success in the 60's. Objectively speaking, the safest defending system for Black is the classic one: 3...dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.h4! to gain space on the kingside 6...h6 7.h5 Bh7 8.Nf3 Nd7 9.Bd3 Bxd3 10.Qxd3 Qc7 or 10...e6

4.e5

If White wants to avoid blocking the center and he prefers the open positions, then he can play the variation 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.h3 (against Bg4).

4...h5

A pawn move which may seem to be against the classical opening principles, but it has its logic. The Black's main rule is to use the f5- and g4- squares for the knight on g8 (Ng8-h6-f5) and the bishop on c8. Through the move 4...h5, Black obtains the control over the g4-square, and the position of the knight on f5 is strengthened because White cannot send away that knight with g2-g4. An alternative is 4...Bg7 5.f4 h5 like in the game Fischer-Petrosian, USSR vs. Rest of World, Belgrad 1970. Playing 4...h5 instead of 4...Bg7, Black keeps the option to develop the f8-bishop on e7, after he has realized his plan with ...Bg4 and ...Nh6-f5. From e7, the bishop is able to sustain better the fight for the center with ...c5, but also the pawn advance h5-h4, useful in some situations.

5.Nge2!?

A new, very interesting idea! White plans to play immediately Ne2-f4 and e5-e6 in order to destroy the Black's solid defense fortress.

5...Bg4

Black tries to obstruct White's plan, or at least to force him to weaken his position. A possible alternative is 5...Nh6 6.Nf4 Bf5, but now it follows a thematic sacrifice. The *kamikaze* pawn is sacrificed in order to destroy the opponent's pawn structure. 7.e6! Bxe6 8.Nxe6 fxe6 9.Bd3 Nf5 10.Ne2 Kd7 11.Nf4 Qe8 12.Qe2 Qf7 13.c3=∞ and White gained compensation for the sacrificed pawn. Petr-Nun, 2003

6.f3 Bd7 7.Nf4 e6

Black has parried the White's threat e5-e6, but the price is high: delaying the development and blocking the light-squares bishop.

8.Be3

Having in mind the castle queenside, White develops first the bishop on that side.

8...Nh6 9.Bd3

In order to answer to the move ...Nf5 with Bxf5. In general, exchanging the bishop for the knight must not be done without justification, but in this case White has good reasons to take such an exchange into consideration:

1. The knight on f5 would be the Black's most active piece;
2. The exchange on f5 would weaken the black pawn structure;
3. Black has "bad bishop" on d7, so leading the game to a knight vs. bad bishop position is a good plan. For reaching such a position, White has to exchange the dark-squares bishops and his light-squares bishop for a knight.

9...c5?!

In spite of the development disadvantage, Black provokes himself the opening of the position, which is an unprincipled thing. As a rule, the side with development disadvantage has to avoid opening the position and provoking the fight because it is very likely for him to fight in conditions of *numerical inferiority*. But here Black doesn't have too many options, because it is hard for him to complete his development because the lack of space. Preferable would have been 9...Nf5 even if Black would have exposed himself to the above mentioned exchange. After 10.Bxf5 Black plays 10...exf5! with the idea Be6, Nd7, Qc7, 0-0-0 with solid position.

10.dxc5 Qc7?!

Attacking simultaneously the c5 and e5 pawn, Black gets back the temporary sacrificed pawn. However, this thing cost him other valuable tempi, in conditions in which he was anyway behind with the development. Better was 10...Nc6

11.Qd2 Qxe5

Black has recuperated the sacrificed pawn, but now the white rooks are able to use the central d- and e- files in order to attack the opponent's king. It is interesting that in this game White did not make big efforts to open the game in the center, his opponent being the one who took care about this aspect.

12.0-0-0!

Ignoring the Black's threat (the double attack), White completes the development being prepared for the decisive attack. Comparing the two armies, it is like one of them has all his weapons straightened for the assault, while the opponent's fighters are still sleeping.

12...d4?

Black falls directly into the trap! It should have been played 12...Nc6 with the idea 0-0-0. Even so, White's position is still preferable.

13.Bxd4 Qxd4

QUIZ



Find the best move for White

14.Nxe6!!

A real thunderbolt! Now the black king is going to fall under the target of the white pieces.

14...Qb4

The knight on e6 cannot be taken because Black loses the queen: 14...fxe6 15.Bxg6+ +-; and to 14...Bxe6 follows: 15.Bb5+ +-

15.Nc7+ Kd8

QUIZ



Find the best way to continue the attack

16.Bb5!

Sure, White can play also 16.Nxa8, but the move in the game is more esthetical and stronger at the same time. The knight on c7 cannot be captured because of the double attack Nd5, so White exploits this situation by creating a new threat by opening the d-file and attacking the bishop on d7.

16...Ng8

Black defends himself desperately, threatening to capture the queen with ...Bh6.

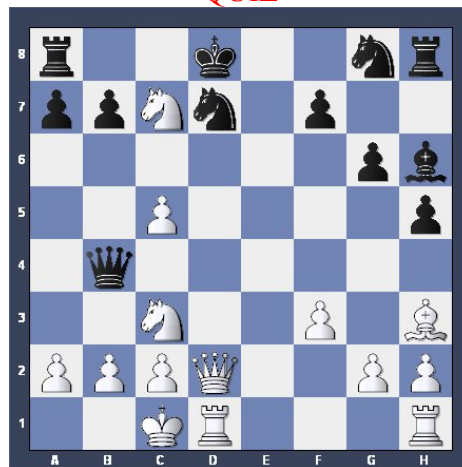
16...Nf5 17.Bxd7 Bh6 18.Bxf5+ Bxd2+ 19.Rxd2+ would have led to a variation similar to the one in the game, but with a knight up for White.

17.Bxd7!

17.Kb1 was also possible, but the move in the game is spectacular and efficient at the same time.

17...Bh6 18.Bh3+ Bxd2+

QUIZ



Find the winning way if Black plays 18...Nd7 instead of the move in the game

Answer: 19.Qxh6!! Nxh6 20.Rxd7+ Kc8 21.Rd4+! +-

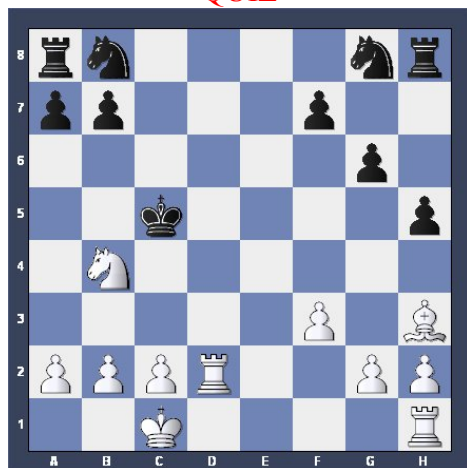
19.Rxd2+ Kxc7

After 19...Ke7 Black also loses the queen because of the double attack with the knight on d5

20.Nd5+ Kc6 21.Nxb4+ Kxc5

After an excellent lead attack, White is a pawn up and has a very active position. Black's only piece which is not on its initial square is the king! But as such a game deserves a spectacular end, White continued his attack.

QUIZ

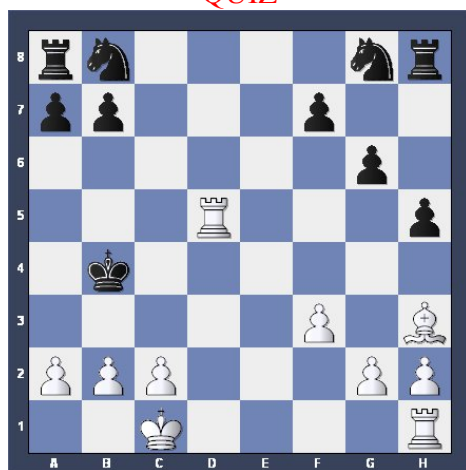


Find the best continuation for White

22.Rd5+! Kxb4

After 22...Kb6 it follows 23.Rd8! and de Rh1–e1–e8 and Black loses at least a piece

QUIZ



White moves and checkmates in 4 moves

23.a3+?!

Unfortunately, White misses the most elegant finalization of an excellent played game. The easiest was 23.c3+! Kc4 (23...Ka4 24.b3+ Ka3 25.Ra5#) 24.Rhd1 Nc6 25.R1d3 followed by mate next move.

However, after 23.a3+ **Black resigned**. A possible end could have been 23...Ka4 (23...Kc4 24.Rhd1 Nc6 25.b3+ Kc3 26.R1d3#) 24.Re1 (or 24.Rd8 followed by Rh1–e1–e8) 24...Nf6 (24...b5 25.Re8! followed by Rd8) 25.b3+ Kxa3 26.Ra5+ Kb4 27.Ree5! and the black king cannot escape from checkmate .

CONCLUSIONS

The above analyzed game shows clearly the danger to which a player is exposed (even an International Master like Andrei Cioara), when he neglects the opening principles by remaining behind with the development and keeping the king in the center. White has exploited promptly the Black's careless play, using all the 5 fighting methods (indicated at the beginning of the lesson) when the opposite king remains in the center.

1–0

THE ATTACK AGAINST THE KING

- The king remained in the centre -

II

As we have said in the introduction of the game Chernov-Cioara (the previous game), the postponement of the castle may have fatal consequences. In general, if the opponent manages to maintain the king in the center and to open the central files for using the rooks into the attack, the saving chances are very little. To refresh your memory, I would like to remind you the attacking principles in the case of an un-castled king.

1. The opening of the files and diagonals in order to increase the qualitative value of the attacking pieces (by increasing their mobility);
2. Bringing more pieces into attack, in order to create a quantitative superiority;
3. Permanently creating of imminent threats, in order not to let the opponent to organize his defense.
4. Maintaining the opposite king in the center as much as possible
5. Using the fact that the opposite rooks do not take part into play.

It follows an eloquent example of using these principles.

Lehmann,H - Mueller,P

FRG vs Switzerland, 1950

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4!?

The Evans Gambit is the most aggressive way of fighting against the Italian Defense. This gambit entered the practice of the grandmasters since the beginning of the 19th century, during the matches McDonnell-DeLabourdonnais, in which both players, the best players in the world at that time, used it for many times with White. Later Staunton, Morphy, Anderssen, Steinitz, Zukertort, Chigorin and many other well-known players of the 19th century included it as a main weapon in their opening repertoire. Once with the improvement of the defending technique, the Evans Gambit has disappeared step by step from the games of the 20th century. In the 90's, Gary Kasparov has amazed the chess world when he reintroduced this romantic gambit in the biggest tournaments, obtaining two clear victories against Anand and Piket. Having such a support, we shouldn't wonder that the Evans Gambit has returned in the grandmaster's games, among which Morozevich, Short, Jobava, Sveshnikov are great fans of this opening. As in any other gambit, the main target for White is to obtain a development advantage for the sacrificed pawn.

4...Bxb4

Declining the gambit with 4...Bb6 is also possible, in this case White opting for the offensive on the queenside with 5.b5 and 5.a4, both moves leading to dynamic positions, but less sharp than those resulted after accepting the sacrifice.

5.c3!

This is the main idea of the sacrifice of the b-pawn. By his last move, White gains a tempo that he may use both for supporting the advance in the center d2-d4 and for creating a battery Qb3+Bc4, attacking the f7-pawn.

5...Ba5

The other bishop retreats are also possible. Here are some main lines, without entering too deep in the theory of the Evans Gambit:

- 5...Bc5 6.d4 exd4 7.0-0! d6 8.cxd4 Bb6;
- 5...Bd6 6.d4 Nf6;
- 5...Be7 6.d4 Na5.

In all these variations, White has a clear compensation for the sacrificed pawn because of the development advantage, because of the better mobility of the pieces, and the better position in the center, but practically it is impossible to decide if these qualitative advantages are more or less valuable than the quantitative disadvantage of a pawn. The practice has proved that there is a balance between the two sides.

6.d4

At 6.Qb3 Black is able to defend either with 6...Qe7 and 7...Nf6, or with 6...Qf6 and 7...Nge7

6...exd4

Another popular variation is the one introduced in the practice by the second World Champion, Emanuel Lasker, which is still played at a high level: 6...d6 7.Qb3 Qd7 8.dxe5 Bb6! with the idea Na5, in order to win the White's pair of bishops.

7.0-0

White is two pawns down and a third pawn is threatened, but he managed to develop the kingside and to make the castle. Due to the development advantage, Black has to perform a very careful play, to avoid a quick disaster.

7...Bb6?!

The best continuation for Black is 7...Nge7! 8.cxd4 (8.Ng5 d5 9.exd5 Ne5 followed by 0-0 and Black solves with success the opening problems.) 8...d5! 9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Qb3 Be6 11.Ba3 Qd7! with the idea 0-0-0 and Black completes successfully the development.

8.cxd4

Now, the White's compensation for the sacrificed pawn is much more evident. The central pawn phalanx, the superior mobility of the pieces and the development advantage compensate enough the sacrificed material.

8...d6 9.Nc3 Nf6

A move which gives the possibility to open the play in the center. The alternatives are: 9...Bg4 10.Bb5 Kf8 (10...Bxf3 11.gxf3+/-) 11.Be3=/?; 9...Na5 10.Bg5 or 10.Bd3

10.e5!

White forces the opening of the lines, in order to take advantage from the central position of the black king.

10...dxe5

QUIZ



Find the best continuation for White



11.Ba3!

Maintaining the king in the center as much as possible is one of the attacking principles against an un-castled king. Through his last move, White interdicts Black to make the castle kingside, in this way gaining time for bringing the major pieces into the attack. This position was known even since the 19th century and it can be found in several games of the legendary Paul Morphy, the best player in the years 1850.

11...Na5?!

Black tries to exchange the dangerous bishop on c4, but this costs him two decisive tempi. Probably the best chances for defense could have offered the following variation: 11...Bxd4 with the idea 12.Qb3 Qd7 even if in this case the Black's position is very dangerous. After 11...Nxd4 12.Re1 or 12.Nxe5 White has strong attack; Not even the attempt to quickly develop the queenside is able to give a solution, for instance: 11...Bg4 12.Qb3 Qd7 13.Nxe5! Nxe5 14.dxe5 Ng8 15.Rad1!! spreads any hope for the Black king to run on the queenside. 15...Bxd1 16.Rxd1 Qf5 17.Ne4!! Nh6 (17...Qxe4 18.Bxf7#) 18.Qa4+ 1-0 Karczewski-Fluder, corr. 1990]

12.Nxe5 Nxc4

QUIZ



Find the best move for White

13.Qa4+!

Because the knight occupies an excellent position on e5, better is for White to take the knight on c4 with the queen, activating this piece too and allowing the rooks to enter the game.

13...Bd7

After 13...c6 White obtains clear advantage, playing 14.Nxc4 because now the d6-square is weakened (Worse is 14.Nxc6? bxc6 15.Qxc6+ Qd7 16.Rfe1+ Kd8 17.Be7+ Qxe7 18.Rxe7 Kxe7 19.Qxa8 Rd8 and Black has not a worse position with three pieces against the queen) 14...Bc7 15.d5!! Opens new lines for the attack. 15...Nxd5 16.Rad1 with very strong attack.

14.Qxc4 Be6

QUIZ



Find the best move for White

15.d5!!

Opening the central files is very important when attacking an un-castled king. By opening the central files, the attacker emphasizes the superior qualitative value of his rooks, which will use those files, compared to the defender's rooks, which are out of play.

15...Bxd5 16.Qa4+!

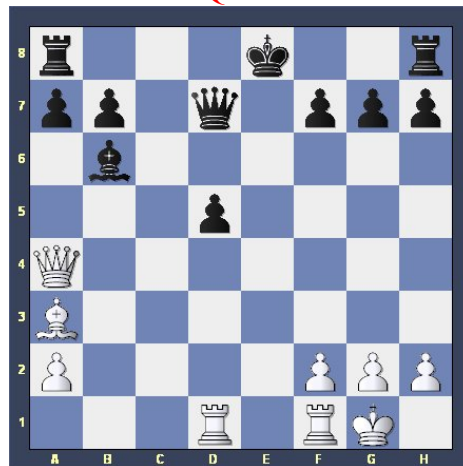
Wins a tempo for bringing the rooks in the attack.

16...c6 17.Rad1!

White's position is dominating. He is threatening 18.Nxc6, 18.Nc4 or 18.Rfe1, all with decisive advantage for White.

17...Nd7 18.Nxd7 Qxd7 19.Nxd5 cxd5

QUIZ



Find the fastest way to win the game

20.Rxd5

Black resigned because at 20...Qxa4, follows 21.Re1+ with checkmate in two moves.

1-0

CONCLUSIONS

A short, but very instructive game. Black has chosen a quite passive variation, allowing White to obtain a very good compensation for the sacrificed pawn. After the move 11.Ba3!, the black king was forced to remain in the center and White fully used this aspect, by quickly opening the central files (see 15.d5!!) and creating very strong, immediate threats. With his rooks as observers, Black did not succeed in equilibrating the balance attack-defense, so the final combination has stamped the White's strategic success.

THE ATTACK AGAINST THE KING WITH CASTLES ON THE SAME SIDE (I)

In case when both players have made the castle on the same wing, realizing the attack against the kings is more difficult. To start an attack, some premises should be fulfilled in order to justify the attack. This aspect is valid in general for starting all the attacks, what differs from case to case are the necessary premises.

In case with castles on the same side, for starting the attack against the opposite king, it is necessary for the attacker to have an advantage obtained either after realizing an own strategic plan or as a result of the opponent's wrong play. Generally, the advantages that justify starting an attack against the opposite king, in case with castles on the same side, are:

1. A local superiority of forces resulted either from the development advantage or from realizing a strategic plan of creating this local superiority of forces (using, for example, the space advantage)
2. The superiority in the center usually offers a better freedom for the pieces and creates the possibility for more pieces to arrive more quickly at the conflict zone.
3. Weaknesses of the pawn structure around the castle. Advancing, exchanging or losing the pawns of the castle usually leads to weakening the castle. This aspect is important especially when the opponent is able to bring pieces in that zone.

In general, even when the premises exist, the attacker doesn't have an easy task. He has to pass the dam built from the opposite pawns and other pieces that protect the king. The attacker will try to force the retreat or the exchange of the defending pieces and he will try to push away or to weaken the castle pawns. Here are some methods used for weakening the king's protection:

1. Destroying of the pawn structure from the castle by a piece sacrifice.
2. Forcing the castle pawn to move, in order to create weaknesses.
3. Opening and occupying some files and diagonals for attack.
4. Attacking the opposite king from lateral (for example by entering the 7th and 8th rank) and from the center.
5. The pawn assault. This method is used more frequently when the center is blocked, otherwise the opponent may take benefit from the weaknesses created by advancing the pawns from our own castle.

In the following game, we will see how the above mentioned principles should be applied.

Ragozin,V - Veresov,G
Moscow, 1945

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be2

The classical line of the Sicilian Dragon is less popular nowadays, but it was for many decades the main line in the Dragon. Introduced in the 30es by the Russian master Rauzer the Rauzer system (also known under the improper name of "Yugoslavian system") based on the set up f3, Be3, Qd2, 0-0-0 developed later in the 50es due to the Soviet players Bogoliubov, Krogius,

Estrin, Geller and Polugaevsky. Only then the Yugoslavian grandmasters started to play that line, therefore the name "Yugoslavian system" is completely illogical.

The difference between the two systems is huge. In the classical line, White makes the castle kingside and tries to obtain space advantage on the own castle's side, the play usually having a positional character. In the Rauzer-System, White makes the castle queenside, Black makes the castle kingside, resulting very dynamic positions in which White attacks on the kingside (advancing the h-pawn, sometimes sustained by the g-pawn), while Black attacks on the queenside.

6...Bg7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Be3 Nc6

It could seem strange that this line was in fashion at the end of XIXth century while the Dragon born few decades later. This paradox is a consequence of a transposition. Bird, Lasker or Tarasch also met this position, but through another moves order: 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Be2 0-0 8.0-0 d6, namely what we call now "The Accelerate Dragon". Ragozin had a good experience in the Dragon, playing this opening both as White and Black.

9.Nb3

This typical retreat in the Classical Dragon has two reasons: avoiding the trades in a position in which White has a space advantage, but especially avoiding the freeing breakthrough in the center d6-d5.

9...Be6 10.f4

White's main idea is to grow the space advantage on the king-side, preparing an attack over the black monarch. Black's counter-play is usually developed on the queen-side and in the center, where Black is waiting for a favorable moment to play d6-d5 or e7-e5.

10...Qc8

This move introduced by Tartakower is Black's main option. It is more frequently played than its alternatives 10...Na5 (with the idea Bc4), 10...Rc8 or 10...a5. From c8 black queen oversees the both queen-side and king-side.

11.Qe1

With the idea Qh4, but also freeing the square d1 for Ra1. Also possible are 11.Kh1 and 11.h3. Here Ragozin's game above mentioned deviated. His opponent Gavril Veresov, a classic of the Dragon and a strong correspondence chess player later, adopted the line.

11...Ng4?

For Black is better to organize a counter play on the queenside with 11...a5 with the idea ...a4. In the game Ragozin – Arnlind, played 10 years later in the final of the Correspondence World Championship (won by Ragozin) the game continued with 12.Rd1 (12.a4 weakens the b4-square, giving Black the possibility to obtain equality with 12...Nb4 13.Nd4 Bc4=) 12...Bg4 Black has no suitable position for his bishop, therefore this change is normal. (<12...a4 13.Nd4 a3 14.b3.) 13.h3 Bxe2 14.Qxe2 a4 15.Nd4 Nxd4 16.Bxd4 Qc6= and even though White retains a space advantage in the center, we can say that Black solved the opening problems, not an easy thing against a theoretician like Ragozin.;

An interesting alternative is 11...Nb4!? putting pressure on the c2-pawn and preparing Bc4.

12.Bxg4! Bxg4

QUIZ



Find the best continuation for White

13.f5!

Through this move, Black is forced to weaken his own pawn structure around the castle, otherwise he loses the bishop on g4 after h3-Bh5, g4. Weakening the king's protection and the possibility for White to create quickly a superiority of forces on the kingside create the premises for an attack against the black king.

13...gxf5 14.h3! f4

The only move. After 14...Bxh3?! 15.gxh3 fxe4 16.Qg3 f5 (16...Qe6±) 17.Nxe4!+- White obtained decisive advantage in the game Lubensky-Gorenstein, UKR ch 1947; If Black retreats the bishop 14...Bh5, then it follows 15.exf5 threatening the strong move g4, which forces Black to play 15...f6, after which the position is full of weaknesses.

15.Rxf4 Bh5 16.Nd5

As a result of the Black's mistake from the 11th move, White obtained a threatening attack position on the kingside. Excepting the knight on b3, the other pieces can quickly move on the kingside to create a superiority of forces (Qh4, Raf1). Black's weakened position and the White's superiority in the center are additional arguments for the White's success.

16...Qd7

Winning a pawn with 16...Bxb2 costs Black two tempi, aspect which in case of a king attack is usually fatal. After 17.Qh4! Bg6 (17...Bxa1 18.Qxh5 Bg7 19.Rh4 f5 20.Nd4! Rf7 21.Qxh7+ Kf8 22.Bh6 Ke8 23.Bxg7+-) 18.Raf1 Be5 19.Nd4, the White's attack cannot be stopped, the superiority of forces being too big.

17.Qh4

The white queen occupies an attacking position, allowing the rook on a1 to come into the game.

17...Bg6 18.Raf1

The white superiority of forces on the kingside rises after each move.

18...Rac8 19.c3!

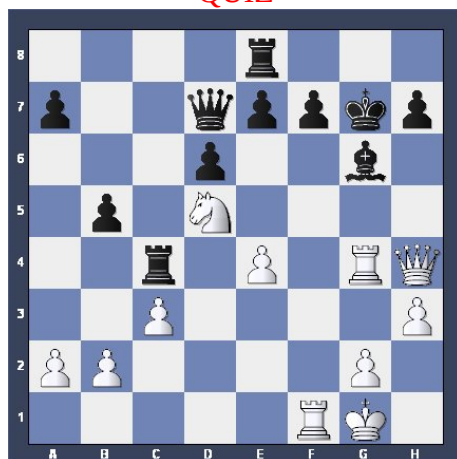
The only white piece that still doesn't take part in the attack is the knight on b3. Through his last move, White prepares the transfer of the knight on the kingside, via d4.

19...Rfe8 20.Rg4 b5 21.Nd4 Nxd4 22.Bxd4

Black cannot avoid now the exchange of the bishop on g7, which weakens more the protection of his king.

22...Rc4 23.Bxg7 Kxg7

QUIZ



How can White destroy the black king's protection?

24.Rxg6+!!

Eliminating the main defender of the black king decides the result of the game rapidly.

24...fxg6 25.Rf7+!!

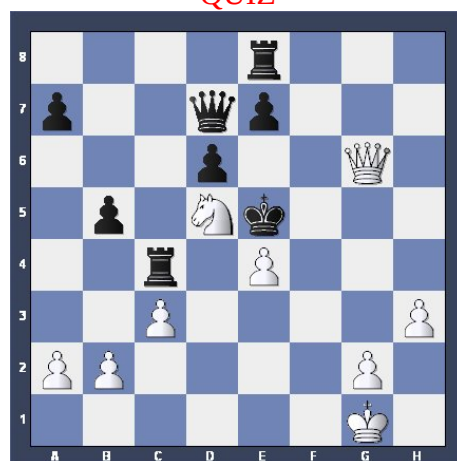
The second rook is sacrificed to estrange the king from the h7-pawn.

25...Kxf7 26.Qxh7+ Ke6

26...Kf8 27.Nf4!+-

27.Qxg6+ Ke5

QUIZ



Find the winning way for White.

28.Qg7+! Kxe4 29.Nf6+! exf6 30.Qxd7

White has recuperated the sacrificed material and he is going to take the Black's weak pawn.
The result of the game is decided.

30...Re5 31.Qxd6 Kf5 32.Qd7+ Kg6 33.Qxa7 Re2 34.Qa3 Rf4 35.Qd6

Black decided to put end to his misery.

1-0

CONCLUSIONS

The game is a very instructive example of the way in which the attacking premises appear and how the attack should be done, in case the castles are on the same side. As a consequence of the Black's 11th move, White provoked the weakening of the black king's position, obtaining in this way the first premises for starting the attack. Then it followed a rapid mobilization of the pieces on the kingside in order to create superiority. Remarkable is the fact that all the pieces have answered "Present!" at the call for the attack. The last phase of the attack consisted of a total destruction of the opposite king's protection, which got under the fire of the queen and the knight. To avoid checkmate, Black lost important material.

THE EXPLOITATION OF THE WEAK SQUARES AROUND THE CASTLE

We were saying in the introduction of the game Ragozin-Veresov that one of the attacking premises is the weaknesses of the squares around the castle. The next game illustrates the way in which the pawn structure weaknesses may be used.

Baumstark,G - Levitina,I

Medellin ol (Women) Medellin, 1974

1.e4 Nf6

The Alekhine Defense is one of the most controversial openings. Black deliberately gives up the center for White, at the same time losing several tempi by moving more times with the same piece in order to attack the White's center. This strategy may seem at least doubtful, but until now there hadn't been found a clear overturn, White usually gaining just a little advantage in the opening phase.

2.e5 Nd5 3.d4

White is able to bring his four pawns in the center with 3.c4 Nb6 4.d4 d6 5.f4 but after 5...dxe5 6.fxe5 Nc6 7.Be3 Bf5 or even 6...c5 White has problems in defending his own pawn center.

3...d6 4.Nf3 g6

The main variations are 4...Bg4 and 4...dxe5.

5.Bc4

The most aggressive variation against this system. The alternatives are 5.c4, 5.Be2 and 5.Ng5!?

5...Nb6

Possible is also 5...c6

6.Bb3 d5?!

The main continuation is 6...Bg7 with the idea 0-0, keeping the possibility to undermine the white pawn center. With the move in the game, Black restricts the activity of the bishop on b3, but at the same time it allows White to keep the strong central chain d4-e5 which limits the activity of the bishop on g7.

7.a4

White tries to occupy space on the queenside, this is why Black is forced to make his next move.

7...a5

It seems that nothing has been changed, but there are some aspects that could be in White's favor in the future. One of the moves through which Black can undermine the center is c7-c5. By interposing the moves 7.a4 and 7...a5, White obtains control over the b5-square, in case Black plays c7-c5.

8.Nc3 Bg7 9.0-0 0-0 10.Re1

White has no reasons to play 10.h3 in order to obstruct the move Bg4, because the exchange of the light-squares bishop for the knight on f3 doesn't improve Black's position.

10...Bg4

Black decides to exchange the bishop for the knight because he has no possibility to place it in a favorable position. In order to undermine the center with c7-c5, Black is forced to play e7-e6, so he chose to exchange the bishop, in order not to get it blocked.

11.h3 Bxf3 12.Qxf3

White has achieved a superior position in the opening stage, with space advantage on the kingside due to the central pawn chain d4-e5. Black's main problem is the lack of counter play, any opening of the position increasing the force of the white pair of bishops.

12...e6

Through this move, Black shows his intentions to undermine the center with c5, but this will cost him the chronic weakening of the dark squares on the kingside. So far Black has no reasons to worry because the bishop on g7 defends those squares, but this bishop may be exchanged in the future.

QUIZ



Indicate the best move for White

13.Qg3!

White prepares the development with tempo of the bishop on g5, to exploit the weakness of the dark squares on the kingside and to exchange the dark-squares bishop.

13...c5?!

Eager to free herself as quickly as possible, the soviet grandmaster starts to undermine the center, skipping the preparation of this move with 13...Na6, 13...N8d7 or 13...N6d7. As White has a clear development advantage, opening the position is very risky for Black.

14.Bg5!

The white bishop is developed with tempo and takes the weak f6-square in his collimator.

14...Qe8

After 14...Qd7 15.dxc5 Nc8 16.Rad1 Qc6 17.Nxd5! exd5 18.Bxd5 Qxc5 19.Bxb7 White obtained decisive advantage in the game Haag-Kavalek, 1967

15.dxc5 Nc8 16.Rad1 Na6

Black threatens to take back the sacrificed pawn and at the same time prepares the move ...Ne7 with the ideas ...Nf5 and ...Rc8. The continuation 16...Qc6 would have led to the game Haag-Kavalek mentioned above.

QUIZ



Find the best continuation for White

17.Qh4!

Interdicts the move ...Ne7 and strengthens the control upon the weak black squares on the kingside.

17...Nxc5

QUIZ



Find the best continuation for White

18.Bxd5!!

A sacrifice which blows the entire defensive structure built by Black. Destroying the central pawn chain will allow the knight on c3 to join the other white attacking forces on the kingside in their fight for the f6-square.

18...exd5 19.Nxd5 Ne6

After 19...Qxa4 20.Rd4 Qc6 21.Nf6+ Bxf6 22.Bxf6 h5 23.Qg5! the weakness of the dark squares decides the game, for instance: 23...Kh7 24.Rh4 followed by Rxh5+!

20.Nf6+!

Now Black is forced to give away his defender of dark squares, which weakens irremediably his position.

20...Bxf6 21.exf6

The dark squares on the kingside are now under White's domination. The threat is Qh6 followed by the elimination of the defender of the g7-square with Rxe6.

21...Kh8?

More resistance would have offered 21...h5, even if after 22.Bh6 White remains with material advantage and attack.

22.Qh6

The queen occupies one of the weak squares around the castle, with decisive effect.

22...Rg8

QUIZ



Find the best move for White

23.Re4!

And due to the threat 24.Qxh7 Kxh7 25.Rh4≠ Black resigned. Possible was also 24.Rd4 cu with the same idea.

1–0

CONCLUSIONS

Weakening the squares around the castle may have fatal consequences if the opponent has the possibility to occupy those squares with his pieces, threatening in this way the king in his proximity. In case when those squares are defended by a piece, as in the case of the fianchetto bishop, exchanging the defending piece emphasizes more the weakness of the squares.

THE OPENING OF THE ATTACKING LINES

One of the most important things when we are attacking is the speed of the attack. In chess, the speed means reaching a target in as little number of moves as possible. The quicker is the attack, the better are the chances to win, because the opponent cannot intervene in time. In order to increase the attacking speed, one of the most used methods is the opening with tempo of some attacking lines, which are used by the linear pieces (the queen, the rooks, the bishops) to attack the king.

The following game is an instructive example of using this method. Even if the game contains some mistakes, we hope you will be indulgent with Andra Sasaeac, the ex-student of Marius Ceteras, who was only 12 when she played the game. You will be also able to read her annotations made after the game was played.

Because we have mentioned about analyzing the own games, we would like to say some words regarding the importance of this training method. The identification of the own mistakes and correcting them is the quickest way for a chess player to progress. In order to identify the own mistakes, it is imperative that for the player to analyze by his own, without a chess software, every game he plays and this should be done no later than some days after the game was played. Only after the analysis is done, it has to be verified, preferable by an instructor that should identify the thinking mistakes of the player, or at least using a computer. Of course, using a computer has its disadvantages. In general, chess software can identify only the tactical mistakes, but it is unable to discover and to indicate the real causes that have led to those mistakes or to other “position-understanding” mistakes. Unfortunately, there are no computers that could say to you: “The main cause of your defeat was the lack of knowledge of the principles when playing positions with castles on opposite sides!” or “The best plan for Black would have been to occupy space on the kingside and to create a local superiority of forces”. In this way, using the computer to verify your own analysis should be the ultimate solution. In case you do not have an instructor, an acceptable solution may be a much stronger player than you, who should verify your analysis and annotations. Even if that payer won’t be able to offer you the pieces of advice an experienced instructor can give, at least he will identify most of your mistakes, both tactical and positional.

Sasaeac,A - Valceanu,M

Apulum Cup Alba Iulia, 2000

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4

The Scottish Opening is a serious alternative for the Spanish (Ruy Lopez) and Italian Defense. White quickly opens the position in the center, aiming a rapid mobilization of the pieces. Even if some variations resulted from this opening are harder to be understood, it is more recommendable for the beginners than Ruy Lopez, which usually leads to a great strategic complexity.

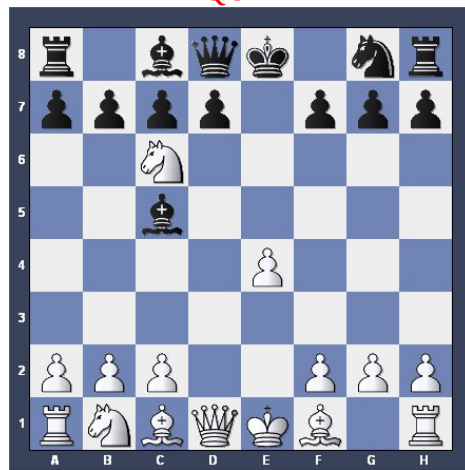
3...exd4 4.Nxd4 Bc5

An inaccuracy that is very often met among the beginners is 4...Nxd4 5.Qxd4, starting from the premise that attracting the queen in the center is in Black’s favor. This aspect is not valid in this case, because Black is not able to develop a piece with tempo (attacking the queen), on the contrary, the queen’s central position obstructs the Black’s development. The attempt to win a

tempo by all means with 5...c5? is even a mistake, because it leads to the irremediable weakening of the d5-square blocks the dark-squares bishop.

5.Nxc6

QUIZ



Find the best continuation for Black

5...Qf6!

The best move! By making this intermediary move, which threatens checkmate on f2, Black obtains the possibility to play dxc6. Directly 5...dxc6 is worse because of 6.Qxd8+ and Black has not enough compensation for the weaker pawn structure.

6.Qf3!?

An interesting alternative for the main variation is 6.Qd2 dxc6 7.Nc3 with a balanced play, with chances for both sides.

6...Qxc6?!

“Until here I knew the theory. I knew the variation 6...Qxf3 7.gxf3 bxc6 8.Bf4 etc. After 6...Qxc6 I knew only that I have to play 7.Bd3 with good position for White” (Andra)
The move in the game is not the best because Black has difficulties to complete his development.

7.Bd3

Possible is also 7.Nc3, obstructing 7...d6.

7...b6?!

A less inspired plan. The battery Bb7+Qc6 has no sense, as long as the h1-a8 diagonal is closed.

8.0–0 Bb7 9.Qg3

“This is a doubtful move because White won’t take on g7 in order not to open files for Black’s attack on the kingside. It was better 9.Nc3 with the idea 10.Be3 Bxe3 11.Qxe3 followed by f4, to occupy space on the kingside.” (Andra)

While the first part of Andra’s annotation is correct, conquering space on the kingside is overestimated. The space advantage on the kingside is not very useful for White if Black makes the castle queenside.

9...0–0–0 10.Nc3

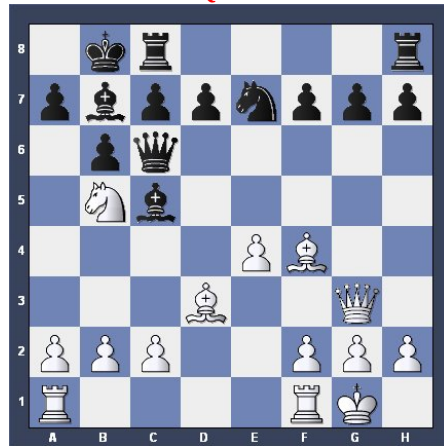
“At 10.Qxg7 Black would have played 10...Ne7 11.Qxf7 Rdf8 with enough compensation for the sacrificed material.” (Andra)

10...Ne7

“It was better 10...a6 to avoid Nb5. But after 11.a3 with the idea b4, Nd5, c4 White is better. (Andra)”

11.Nb5 Kb8 12.Bf4 Rc8

QUIZ



How can White accelerate the attack?

13.b4!

“Black is forced to take on b4” (Andra)

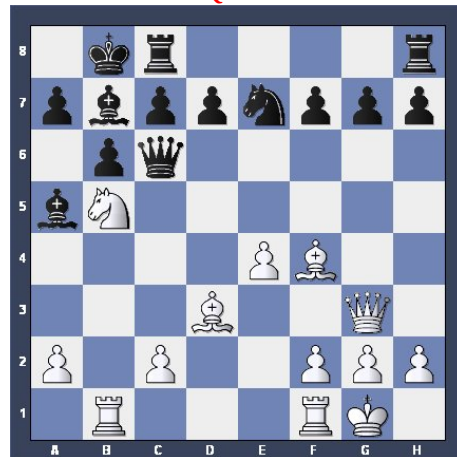
A courageous and justified pawn sacrifice. White opens with tempo the b-file for his rooks.

13...Bxb4 14.Rab1 Bc5

“A little better was 14...Ba5, but White is anyway better.” (Andra)

An improper commentary. Of course, the student has the duty to go further with his analysis and to indicate what she had prepared against the move 14...Ba5 and to mention what has she discovered at the “post-mortem” analysis after this move.

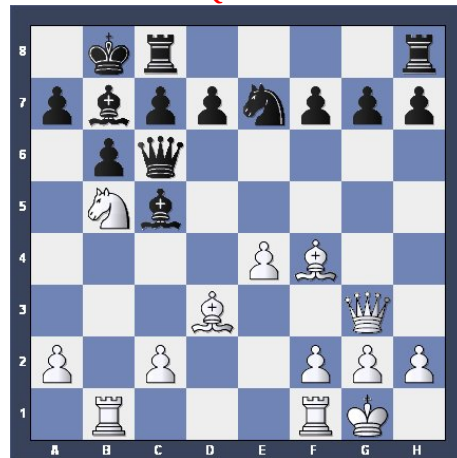
QUIZ



Find the best move for White after 14...Ba5

Answer: 15.Nd6! cxd6 (15...Rcf8 16.Nxb7 Kxb7 17.Qxg7 now capturing this pawn is not dangerous anymore; White may play if needed Bg3 to protect the g-file) 16.Bxd6+ Ka8 17.Bxe7 with a little better position for White.

QUIZ



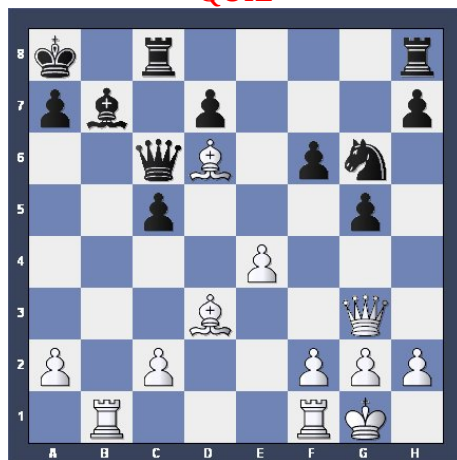
How does White continue the attack?

15.Nxc7! g5

“At 15...Rxc7 I had the intermediary move 16.Bb5!” (Andra)

16.Be5 f6 17.Na6+ Ka8 18.Nxc5 bxc5 19.Bd6 Ng6

QUIZ



How should White continue?

20.Rb5?

A imprudent move which wastes all the accumulated advantage. It was better 20.c4 with the idea Rb5 or 20.f3 c4 21.Be2, in both cases with a clear superiority for White.

20...c4!

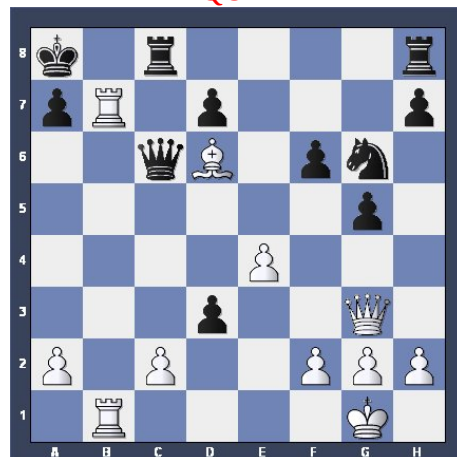
Black, an experienced candidate of master, doesn't miss the opportunity to obtain counter play. In fact White saw this move, but he had a calculation error in the following variation.

21.Rfb1 .

The second rook has just arrived. Is it enough for obtaining the win?

21...cxd3 22.Rxb7

QUIZ



How can Black save the game?

22...dxc2??

"It would have been better 22...Qxb7! 23.Rxb7 dxc2 24.Rxa7+ Kxa7 25.Qa3+ Kb6 26.Qb4+ Ka7 27.Qa5+ Kb7 28.Qb5+ Ka7 29.Bc5+ Rxc5 30.Qxc5+ Kb7 31.Qxc2+- " (Andra)

A nice variation, but both players have missed the move 26...Ka6!! and Black saves the game, for example 27.Qa4+ Kb6 and White has no more than perpetual check.

23.Rxa7+!

The opening of the a-file decides the game.

23...Kxa7 24.Qe3+!

Black resigned because he cannot avoid the checkmate.

1-0

CONCLUSIONS

A nice achievement for a 12-year-old girl. The opening of the lines for attack, through 13.b4 has played a determinant role, White obtaining clear advantage by increasing his attacking speed. In spite of some tactical inaccuracies, the game is very instructive and emphasizes the importance of the speed during the attacking process.

USING THE ROOKS IN THE ATTACK

When one of the sides launches an attack against the opposite king, he has in mind the creation of a quantitative and qualitative superiority, meant to assure the success. This is why the usage of the rooks in the attack has a remarkable importance, considering their action force. In the majority of cases, if the attacker succeeds in mobilizing the rooks in the help of the minor pieces, the created superiority has a decisive character. For bringing the rooks into the attack, there are two main methods:

1. Opening the files on the side where the opposite king is and using them by the rooks.
2. Using the open ranks for a quick transfer of the rooks to the war zone.

In the following game we will see how White uses with magnificence both methods. But before starting to present the game, let us say some words about the two players. I don't think Efim Geller needs a presentation, being one of the strongest players in the 60's, all the time in the Top 10 in that period. His contribution to the development of the opening theory was also remarkable, especially in the Sicilian Defense and King's Indian Defense. Bela Soos is a less known name to the chess players, and surprisingly, he is not known in Romania, even if he was one of the greatest Romanian players in the 60's and 70's. This happened due to the communist censor, which imposed that his name should be pulled out from all the chess books, after Soos had leaved the country and settled in Germany. We made this presentation because we thing Bela Soos deserves all our respect for his contribution to the development of the Romanian chess. The game was played at Varna Olympiad, 1962, in a moment when Geller had 8 points out of 8 games played!

Soos,B - Geller,E
Varna ol (Men) 1962

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7

The King's Indian Defense is nowadays one of the most popular openings, because it leads to very complex positions, with chances for both players, in which Black is able to fight for the initiative. It was developed starting from the 50's, especially due to the effort of the soviet and Yugoslav theoreticians. The presence of this opening in the repertoire of players like Tal, Fischer or Kasparov may be a certificate of quality. In spite of these positive aspects, we recommend for players with rating < 2000 to choose some less complex opening systems, according to their capacity to understand the positional game. Many players, especially those who don't have a trainer, chose the openings by improper criteria. The fact that Kasparov plays this system with success doesn't mean that the opening itself is superior to other opening systems. In fact, in its complexity, Kasparov has the possibility to use his superior qualities in understanding the position. On the contrary, a low- or medium-rated player, who doesn't know the strategic elements very well, will play such an opening badly, because he is totally surpassed by its complexity.

4.e4 d6 5.f4

White has obtained an impressive position in the center, but at the same time, he is less developed. We shouldn't forget that any pawn move in the opening means one less piece

developed, so it is good to find a balance between the pawn moves, useful for occupying the center, and the development moves of the pieces.

5...c5

Black starts the undermining operations of the white pawn center.

6.d5 0-0 7.Nf3 a6

It is better directly 7...e6 to weaken the white pawn center. Interposing the moves...a7-a6 and a2-a4 may be in some cases favorable for White, because Black is deprived of the possibility to make the maneuver Nb8-a6-c7, useful in some situations to sustain the counter play on the queenside with b7-b5.

8.a4 e6 9.Be2 exd5 10.exd5

In the latest period White prefers 10.cxd5 in order to maintain a mobile pawn center and to threaten a pierce in the center with e4-e5. Because of his development advantage, Black is able to create a pressure on the e4-pawn, but the practice proved that White can solve this problem by tactical means, for example: 10...Re8 11.Nd2 Ng4 12.Nc4 Bxc3+ 13.bxc3 Rxe4 14.0-0 and White has compensation for the sacrificed pawn because of the chronic weakness of the black squares around the black castle.

10...a5

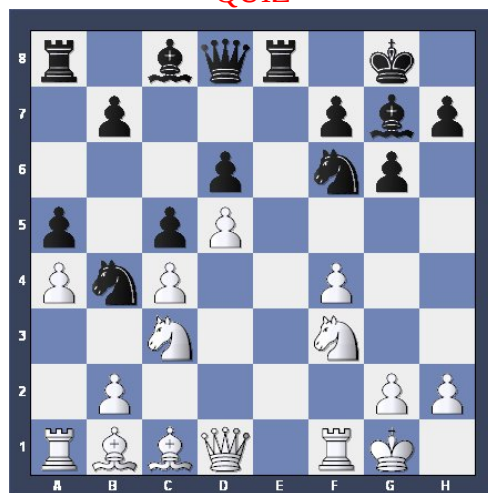
As Bela Soos himself declared to us, this move has surprised him, being a novelty at that time. Black's plan is to play Nb8-a6-b4, Bc8-f5 and Rf8-e8. There is also an important disadvantage of this move. Usually the black play is based on the counter play on the queenside, through the advance b7-b5. After the move 10...a5, the position on the queenside is blocked and Black cannot hope more than to activate his knight on b4, from where he is able to hamper the white pieces. In the absence of a strong black counter play on the queenside, White has more freedom for action on the kingside.

11.0-0 Na6 12.Bd3

Placing the bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal, White avoids the total control of this diagonal by Black, through Na6-b4 and Bc8-f5.

12...Nb4 13.Bb1 Re8

QUIZ



Find the best move for White

14.f5!

A positional pawn sacrifice, whose consequences are not far away to be calculated. It is evident that White obtains compensation because: 1.The black pawn structure is weakened. 2.The qualitative value of the rook on f1 is increased once the f-file is opened. 3.The qualitative value of the bishop on c1 is also increased, once the c1-h6 diagonal is opened. 4.In the absence of a bishop on f5, the knight on b4 alone cannot create problems for White, existing the risk to remain out of play if the battlefield will be on the kingside.

14...gxf5 15.Nh4!?

A logical continuation of the pawn sacrifice, but not the best one. Better is here 15.Bg5.

15...Ne4?!

Black misses a good defending possibility 15...Nfxd5!! 16.Nxf5 Bxf5 17.Bxf5 Nxc3 18.Bxh7+ (18.bxc3?! Qh4↑) 18...Kxh7 (18...Kh8? 19.Qh5 Ne2+ 20.Kh1 Re5 21.Bf5+ Kg8 22.Qh7+ Kf8 23.Bh6! Bxh6 24.Bg6!!+-) 19.Qh5+ Kg8 20.Qxf7+ Kh7 and White has no more than perpetual check.

16.Nxe4 fxe4

After 16...Qxh4 White enters a favorable endgame through 17.Bg5! Qg4 18.Qxg4 fxg4 19.Nxd6 Bd4+ (19...Rf8 20.Be7+-) 20.Kh1 Re2 21.Nxc8 Rxc8 22.Bf5± The pair of bishops and the free d-pawn offers White a clear advantage

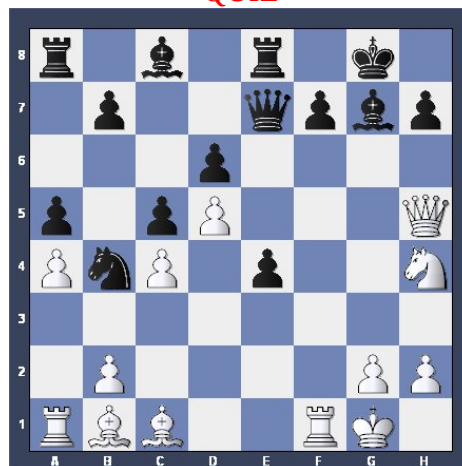
17.Qh5

The presence of the queen in the attack is very important.

17...Qe7?

Being under pressure, Black doesn't find the best defense 17...Re5! 18.Qxf7+ Kh8 19.Bf4 (19.Nf5 Bxf5 20.Rxf5 Qh4=+) 19...Re7 (19...Re8 20.Qh5±) 20.Qh5 Qe8 21.Qe2 Ra6 22.Ra3+/- White's position is preferable, but Black would have had more chances to defend than in the game.

QUIZ



Find the best way for White to continue the attack

18.Ra3!!

White transfers the second rook on the kingside, using the open 3rd rank. As we said in the beginning of the game, this maneuver is one of the typical methods of bringing the rook in the attack in order to create a local superiority. Black is now on the edge of the cliff, because all the white pieces take part in the attack, while Ra8 and Nb4 are out of game.

18...f5?

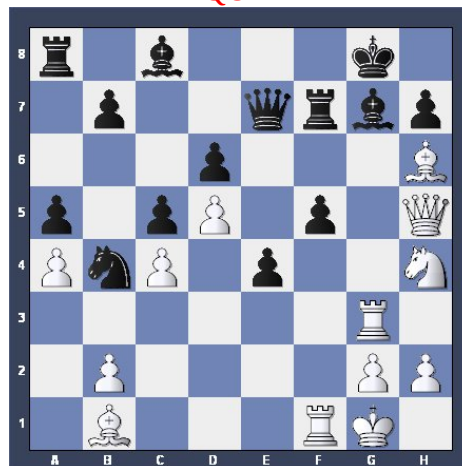
The pawn sacrifice 18...Nd3 19.Bxd3 exd3 20.Rxd3 can help Black to prolong his agony and it is logical: the knight on b4, which couldn't take part to the defense, is exchanged for the bishop on b1, a potential attacker. After 18...Qf8 19.Rg3! Re5 20.Nf5+- Black's position collapses in few moves. A little better is 18...Be5 19.Kh1 (19.Nf5 Bxf5 20.Qxf5 Nd3 21.Bxd3 exd3 22.Rxd3±) 19...Nd3 20.Bxd3 exd3 21.Rxd3± Even if White has clear advantage, Black can still resist.

19.Rg3!

Now both rooks are straightened to the black king.

19...Rf8 20.Bh6 Rf7

QUIZ



Find the best move for White

21.Rxf5!

Wins also 21.Nxf5 Bxf5 22.Rxf5 Raf8 23.Bxg7 Rxg7 24.Rxf8+ Qxf8 25.Bxe4, but the move in the game is more decisive.

21...Bxf5 22.Nxf5 Qe5 23.Bxg7

Black resigned because he has to sacrifice the queen in order to avoid the checkmate.

1-0

CONCLUSIONS

The analyzed game proves how important is to use the rook in case of attacking the king. If the usage of the open files for the attack may be already familiar to you, you have to retain also the other typical maneuver in such positions: the rook transfer on the battlefield using an open rank. In this game, the decisive move was 18.Ra3!!

THE ATTACK AGAINST THE KING WITH CASTLES ON THE SAME SIDE (II) THE PAWN ASSAULT

It is known that the pawn assault against the opposite castle is a typical procedure in positions with castles on different sides. In case when both players have made the castle on the same side, this procedure is also used, but it requires some additional premises. This happens because in this case the pawn assault against the castle is realized with the own castle's pawns, depriving the king of their protection.

In general, the pawn assault may be realized also when the castles are on the same side, in case when the center is blocked or if the attacker has a strong pawn center that protects the own king of an eventual counter attack.

Before starting the game, we would like to remind you the objectives of a pawn assault:

1. To obtain space advantage on the side where we want to attack, in order to increase the mobility of the own pieces on that side and to create a local superiority of forces

2. To estrange the opposite pieces from that zone by attacking them with our pawns. In this case, the defending pieces of the castle are sent away, weakening in this way the protection of the opposite king.

3. To provoke pawn exchanges in order to open some attacking lines for our pieces. The pawn exchanges lead of course also to the weakening of the protection of the opposite king.

Now let's start the illustrative game, played in the World Youth Championship under 10. The player with white pieces had become world vice champion in that edition.

Jianu,V - Le Tien Dung

World Youth Championship <10 Szeged (6), 1994

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3

The Queen's Gambit is one of the most often used openings in all the levels. Generally, the game is balanced and the fight is rather strategic.

5...c6 6.Qc2 Be7 7.Bd3

White has chosen a less used order of moves. Usually it is developed first the knight on g1 because if Black takes on c4, White plays Bf1xc4 by a single move, without losing a tempo with Bd3. Of course, Black is not forced to take immediately on c4, but he can wait until the bishop is developed on d3.

7...0-0 8.Nge2

I think White has muddled the variations, but this is admissible for a ten-year-old boy. Normally White has to play either 8.Nf3 entering the main variations, or 8.cxd5 exd5 and only now 9.Nge2, entering a typical position of the Exchange variation of the Queen's Gambit. The move in the game has the disadvantage that it diminishes the control over the e5-square. This aspect has a great importance because Black's main problem in this variation is the development of the bad bishop on c8, one of the maneuvers which improves his qualitative value is to advance the e6-pawn, which reduces his mobility.

8...dxc4

Interpolating the move 8...h6 may be useful because it eliminates the battery attack Qc2+Bd3 over the h7-pawn, for instance: exemplu 9.Bh4 dxc4 10.Bxc4 e5! with equal position.

9.Bxc4 b5?!

Better would have been 9...e5, solving immediately the problem of the bishop on c8, or 9...h6 10.Bh4 e5.

10.Bd3 b4?

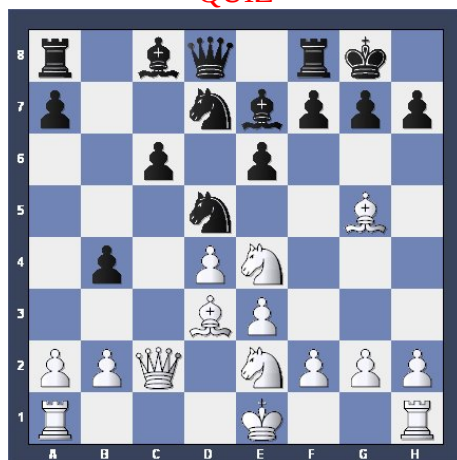
Once again, the move 10...h6 was necessary to get free from the attack over the h7-pawn.

11.Ne4!

Suddenly Black has major problems. There are two threats: 12.Qxc6 and 12.Nxf6 Nxf6 13.Bxf6 Bxf6 14.Bxh7. Now you can see why it was better for Black to play ...h6 at one of the previous moves.

11...Nd5

QUIZ



Is it good for White to play 12.Qxc6?

12.Bxe7?

White shouldn't have feared to capture the c6-pawn. If after 12.Qxc6 Black answers 12...Bxg5 it follows 13.Qxa8. It is possible that White was afraid of the move 13...Qb6 which threatens to catch the queen, but after 14.Nxg5 g6 (Weaker is 14...Bb7 15.Bxh7+ Kh8 16.Qxf8+ Nxf8 17.Bd3 and White has two rooks and two pawns for the queen, which is a decisive advantage) 15.0-0 Bb7 16.Qxf8+ Nxf8 17.Ne4 With two rooks and a pawn for the queen, White's position is clearly superior.

12...Nxe7 13.0-0 h6 14.f4!?

Taking profit from his development advantage and from the fact that Black has a bad bishop on the queenside, White starts the offensive on the kingside. The move 14.f4 has here a double role, both to impede the liberating move e6-e5 and to gain space for maneuvering the rooks.

14...Nb6

Black's main problem is, as we said before, the bad bishop on c8. The best for Black would have been 14...a5 with the idea Bc8-a6, exchanging the bad bishop for the one in d3, which may be useful for White in his attack. Even in this case, White's position is preferable due to the better pawn structure and to the superior position of the pieces.

15.Rf3! Nbd5 16.Raf1

The white rooks strengthen the offensive gadget.

16...Nf5 17.Qd2

Capturing the c6-pawn was even now possible, but White prefers not to set free the bishop on c8, which would have occupied in this case the h1-a8 diagonal, focusing his attention on the kingside.

17...Qb6 18.Nc5 Rd8 19.g4!

White advances the g-pawn too, sending away the knight on f5 and preparing the opening of the files on the kingside. White's plan is totally justified because his rooks are already in the attack zone, while the black rooks are far from the kingside. A mistake would have been 19.e4? because of 19...Nxd4!! 20.Nxd4 Qxc5 and Black has advantage.

19...Nfe7 20.Rg3!

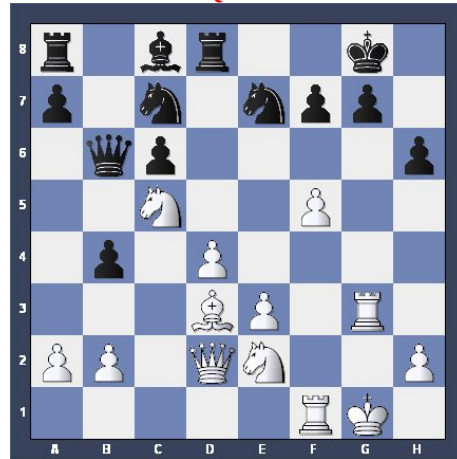
White uses the space advantage (created by advancing the pawns) to place his pieces on optimal positions for the attack. No matter which file will be opened on the kingside, White is prepared to use it.

20...Nc7 21.f5

This move is principled correct, but here it involves a pawn sacrifice. White could have prepared this pierce by playing 21.Qc2.

21...exf5 22.gxf5

QUIZ



Find the best move for Black

22...Nxf5! 23.Bxf5 Qxc5!

It is likely that White missed this move when he played 21.f5. Now Black gets rid of the first attack. In fact the main achievement for Black is not that he won a pawn, but he gained the possibility to bring the queen in the defense.

24.e4!

White is not impressed and continues the attack. In fact the consequences of the pawn assault on the kingside are not bad for White at all. The rooks occupy threatening position on the open files and the black king has only the protection of the castle pawns. Through the last move, the c1-h6 diagonal is opened, White bringing in this way the queen into the attack. The threat is 25.Qxh6.

24...Bxf5

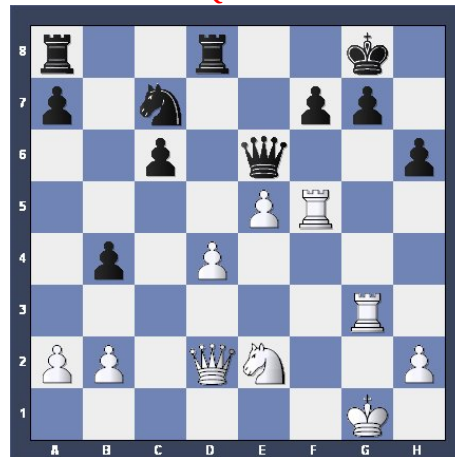
The best defense would have been 24...Qd6 in order to answer at 25.e5? with 25...Qxe5!! and Black manages to defend the position: 26.Bh7+ Kf8 27.Rgf3 Be6 28.Bg6 Kg8. However White can play better 25.Qe3, getting out of the pin and maintaining a very strong attack upon the black castle.

25.Rxf5!

25.Qxh6 seems to be winning because it threatens checkmate on g7 and capturing the queen, but Black has an excellent defending resource: 25...Bg6!! After 26.Qxg6! fxg6 27.dxc5 the endgame is better for White, but the move in the game is better.

25...Qd6 26.e5! Qe6

QUIZ



Find the best move for White

27.Rf6!

The black queen is sent away from the defense, leaving the king alone against the White's major pieces.

27...Qxa2

After 27...Qc4 28.b3 Qd5 29.Qxh6 or 27...Qd5 28.Qxh6 White wins in the same way as in the game.

28.Qxh6 Ne8?

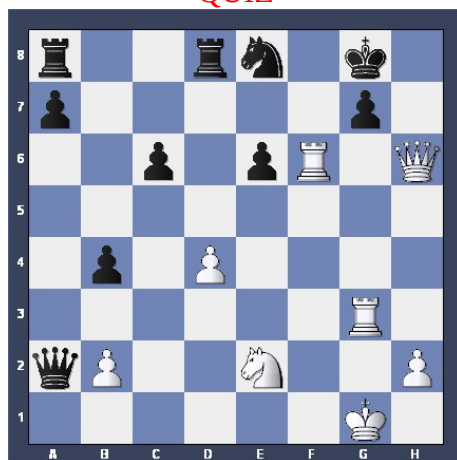
More resistance would have offered 28...Qb1+! 29.Rf1 Qh7! Even if White has a clearly better position both after 30.Qxh7+ Kxh7 31.Rxf7± and 30.Qxc6±

29.e6!

Destroys completely the black king's protection.

29...fxe6

QUIZ



Find the quickest way to win for White

30.Qh8+!! Kxh8 31.Rf8+ Kh7 32.Rh3+ Kg6 33.Nf4+ Kg5 34.Rg3+

And Black resigned because of the mate on h8 at the next move.

1-0

CONCLUSIONS

In spite of a hesitant play in the opening stage, the game is a very instructive example of using the pawn assault in case of castles on the same side. As a consequence of the successful pawn assault, White obtained a clear superiority of forces on the kingside, opening at the same time the files for the major pieces. The beautiful final combination is the wreath of the White's strategic plan.

DRIVING OUT OF THE KING

Probably one of the most spectacular methods of attacking the king is the driving out in the middle of the board. Once the king is expelled in the middle of the board, he gets under the attack of the opposite pieces and usually the checkmates are very spectacular. The main characteristic of such positions (in which the king is driven out) is the fact that the king loses in most of the cases the support of his own pieces, in this way being easier to get attacked by the opponent's pieces. Let's notice also that in this kind of attack, after the king is extracted in the center, the pawns play a very important offensive role because of their approaching to the opposite king. To illustrate this procedure we would like to start with a fragment from a beautiful game (see the diagram below). The first moves of the game were: 1.e4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d5 3.exd5 Nxd5 4.Bc4 Nb6 5.Bb3 Nc6 6.Nf3 e5 7.d3 Bg4 8.h3 Bh5 Nothing announced the following storm.

Imbaud - Strumilo

1922



1.Nxe5!! A queen sacrifice which reminds of the well-known Legal's sacrifice, but now the aim is to extract the king from his shelter.

1...Bxd1 2.Bxf7+ Ke7 3.Bg5+ Kd6

QUIZ



White to move.

Find the best way to continue the attack

4.Ne4+!!

The black monarch is forced to approach more and more to the white army, breaking in this way the connection with his own fighters. Winning back the queen with 4.Bxd8 doesn't help White, which enters a worse position after 4...Nxd8!

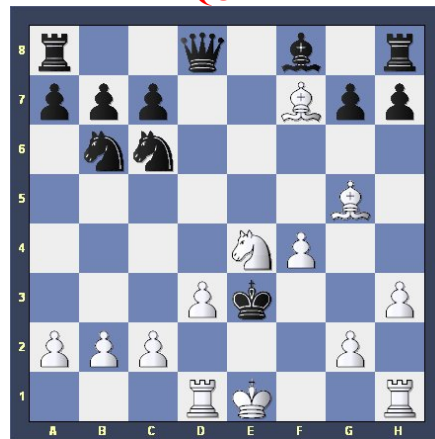
4...Kxe5 5.f4+! Kd4 6.Rxd1!!

White has a queen down, but he threatens to deliver checkmate through 7.Ke2 followed by 8.c3. Without profiting by the support of his own pieces and without having any possibility to retreat, the black king tries to sneak through the traps set by White.

6...Ke3

It doesn't save the game 6...Qxg5 White gaining advantage after 7.c3+! A very important intermediary move, which attracts more the king in the lion's mouth 7...Ke3 8.fxg5 Kf4 9.0-0+ Ke5 10.Rde1! and Black doesn't have satisfactory defenses against the threats 11.d4+ and 11.Nc5+ being forced to suffer material loss in order to escape from the attack: 6...Nd5 7.c3+ Ke3 8.Bxd5

QUIZ



White to move.

How should he continue the attack?

7.0-0!

Threatening both 8.Rfe1+ Kd4 9.c3 ≠ and 8.Rf3+ Ke2 9.Nc3 ≠

7...Nd4

After 7...Bb4 follows 8.c3 Nd4 (*Very spectacular checkmates result after 8...Qxg5 9.Rf3+ Ke2 10.Rd2+ Ke1 11.Rf1#; 8...Qxd3 9.Rde1+ Qe2 10.Rf3+ Kxe4 11.Rxe2+ Kf5 12.g4#) 9.Rfe1+ Ne2+ 10.Kf1 Qxd3 11.Nf2!! (or 11.Rxd3+ Kxd3 12.Nf2+ Kc2 13.Rxe2++-) 11...Qxd1 12.f5#*

8.Rde1+

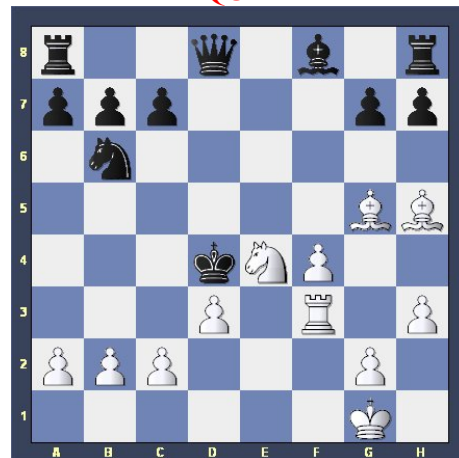
Another beautiful end could be 8.Rfe1+ Ne2+ 9.Rxe2+ Kxe2 10.Nc3+ Ke3 11.d4!! Qxd4 (11...Qxg5 12.Rd3+ Kxf4 13.Rf3#) 12.f5+ Qf4 13.Rd3#

8...Ne2+ 9.Rxe2+ Kxe2

9...Kd4 10.Rf3! and Black cannot obstruct the checkmate with the c-pawn

10.Bh5+! Ke3 11.Rf3+ Kd4

QUIZ



Find the winning move for White

12.Bf7!!

A beautiful move, which stops the run of the black king, which is unable to move on d5. Now the checkmate cannot be avoided. **1-0**

Skatchkov - Krovelschikov

2001

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6

The Philidor Defense is quite passive and Black has to play very carefully from the very first moves to avoid a catastrophe in the opening stage.

3.d4 Nd7 4.Bc4!

The most active continuation.

4...h6?

This move, through which Black tries to protect the g5-square against Nf3-g5 is a typical mistake in this position. Another typical mistake is 4...Be7? 5.dxe5 Nxe5 (Weaker is 5...dxe5? 6.Qd5! and Black has to sacrifice a piece in order to avoid the checkmate on f7) 6.Nxe5 dxe5 7.Qh5 and White wins a pawn due to the double attack on e5 and f7. The right move is 4...c6 with the idea 5.0-0 Be7 followed by ...Ngf6 and ...0-0.

5.dxe5! dxe5

After 5...Nxe5?! follows 6.Nxe5 dxe5 7.Bxf7+!

6.Bxf7+!

A classical sacrifice through which the black king is expelled in the center.

6...Kxf7 7.Nxe5+! Kf6

The only move. Other continuations lead to an immediate collapse of the black position.

QUIZ:



Indicate the winning variations for White after
7...Ke8, 7...Ke7 and 7...Ke6

7...Ke8? 8.Qh5+ Ke7 9.Qf7+ Kd6 10.Nc4+ Kc5 11.Qd5+ Kb4 12.c3+ Ka4 13.b3#;
 7...Ke6 8.Qd5+ Kf6 9.Qf7+ Kxe5 10.Bf4+ Kxe4 11.Nc3+ Kd4 12.Qd5#;
 7...Ke7 8.Ng6+-

8.Nc3!! The best way to continue the attack. Weaker is 8.Qd4? c5!! 9.Nxd7+ Ke7 and Black is able to defend. Surprising is the fact that this wrong way is chosen even by high-rated players, the last example being the game Aleksandra Kosteniuk - Almira Skripchenko, 2004, we have to admit, at a rapid tournament

8...Bb4

Other moves are losing too: 8...Kxe5 9.Qd5+ Kf6 10.Qf5+ Ke7 11.Nd5+ Kd6 12.Bf4+ Kc6 13.Qe6+ Bd6 14.Nb4+ Kb5 (14...Kb6 15.Bxd6 cxd6 16.Qxd6+ Ka5 17.Nd5+-) 15.a4+ Ka5 16.Bd2 Qg5 (16...Nb6 17.Qe5+ Bxe5 18.Nd3+ Ka6 19.Nc5#; 16...Bxb4 17.Bxb4+ Kxb4 18.c3+ Kc5 19.b4#) 17.Nc6+ Kb6 18.Qb3+ Kxc6 19.Bxg5 Bb4+ (19...hgx5 20.Qb5#) 20.Qxb4 hxg5 21.Qc3+ 1-0 Herbrechtsmaier - Schmidt H., 1993; 8...Ne7 9.Qd4! Ke6 (9...c5 10.Qd6#) 10.f4 1-0 Formanek - Metz, 1967; 8...Bc5 9.Qf3+ Kxe5 10.Qf5+ Kd6 11.Bf4+ Ke7 (11...Kc6 12.Qe6+ Bd6 13.Qd5+ Kb6 14.Qb5#) 12.Nd5+ Ke8 13.Nxc7+ with decisive advantage; 8...c5 9.Qf3+! (or 9.Nd5+ Kxe5 10.Bf4+ Ke6 11.Nc7+-) 9...Kxe5 10.Qf5+ Kd6 11.Bf4+ Ne5 (11...Kc6 12.Qe6+ Bd6 13.Qxd6#; 11...Ke7 12.Nd5+ Ke8 13.Qg6#) 12.0-0-0 +! +-

9.Qd4!

Threatens a devastating check.

9...Bxc3+

It is not good 9...c5 because of 10.Qd6#

10.bxc3 Ke6

A better resistance could have provided the variation: 10...Qe8 11.Nxd7+ Kg6 12.Ne5+ Kh7

QUIZ



White moves and checkmates in 4 moves.

11.Qd5+ Kf6 12.Qf7+! Kxe5 13.Bf4+! Kxe4 14.f3#
1-0

The black king is checkmated in the center of the board by a simple pawn. A game which proves how important is to know the opening traps. Sometimes, an apparently minor mistake may have fatal consequences.

CONCLUSIONS

Driving out the king in the center is a very efficient method. Once attracted in the center, the king gets under the fire of the opposite pieces. The main characteristic in such positions is the fact that the king loses the support of his own forces and it is more likely to be checkmated. Sometimes the opposite king is well hidden, like a turtle, so it is necessary to sacrifice more pieces in order to expel him from his shell. After the king is extracted to the central lines, the pawns play a very important offensive role, because of their approaching to the king.

5. PIECES VALUE

After the first four criteria of evaluation, we can go deeper into the position details and evaluate the value of pieces and pawns. Both 5th and 6th criteria of assessment are, in fact, a complex of more factors.

The order of the next 2 lists of factors is not accidental, although it doesn't mean that we should take their importance as a rule. (Rules don't work in chess!)

1. **Better development** – this factor is only for the early stage of the game (opening and early middlegame), when more developed pieces can offer chances for active actions while the opponent pieces are still undeveloped and not ready to defend. However, this is a short-term advantage that one can lose if immediate employment do not or cannot offer other long-lasting advantages.
2. **Piece out of play** – An opponent piece that cannot enter the battle (because it's limited by the own or opponent pieces and pawns) is a very important advantage. That piece can become a target due to its immobility or a piece down in the fire of the battle. There are situations when even more pieces are out of play, or out of the important battle field, without being able to arrive at time to defend the position on the other side of the board.
3. **Local force superiority** – Pieces work in a team and a larger team succeeds against a weaker and smaller one. A force superiority in one of the flanks (given that the centre is secured) or right in the centre will create the premises for a strong attack on that side. Another characteristic a team of chess pieces should have to succeed is the collaboration between its members – see next factor.
4. **The collaboration between pieces** – in their enterprise to fight for or defend important objectives, the collaboration between pieces is essential. The re-arrangement of pieces for getting a better collaboration and better roles for each piece is one of the sophisticated techniques of the positional play.
5. **Rooks on open files** – the controlling of an open file (when the opponent cannot neutralize) is another important factor which raises the qualitative value of a weighty piece. We also have to analyze if there are entrance points for our rook in the enemy's camp or if an outpost on this file exists (outpost = an advanced square defended by one of our own pawns).
6. **Bishops on important diagonals** – the power (and its qualitative value) of the bishop on a long diagonal increases when there are attacking objectives in the opponent's camp.
7. **Knights on important foreposts** – a knight on a defended and secured square (where the opponent pawns cannot attack it, or by an attack, they would create big

weaknesses) is another important asset. We have to evaluate the importance of the objectives/squares that the knight attacks or defends from that forepost.

8. **Bishop-pair** – the very well known pair of bishops against other 2 minor pieces (bishop + knight or knight + knight) is a very dangerous weapon in open or semi-open positions, especially when the opponent has no well defended positions for his knight/s in the centre.
9. **Safe and active queen** – the weightiest piece on the board can have problems during the middlegame in finding a secure position against the opponent threats. In exchange, if our queen can get an active position, while the opponent queen remains passive, we will have a short-term but important plus.
10. **Piece value comparison** – a good and objective picture of the quality of our pieces and of the opponent pieces will be given by a comparison of the both camp's pieces one by one. How good is our queen compared with the opponent queen, how are our rooks compared with the opponent rooks, how are our knights compared with the opponent knights, how is our dark-square bishop compared with the opponent dark-square bishop, and how is our light-square bishop compared with the opponent light-square bishop.

For this comparison, we will take into account the squares that these pieces control and the importance of their role within the group.

5.1. Lead in development

The development of pieces by means of their entrance in the battle is one of the first factors that players take into consideration, right from the opening stage of the game. The more pieces into play, the more attacking possibilities we have.

T1: The lead in development is a short-term advantage and keeping the initiative by playing forcing moves (which contains real threats) is necessary in order to gain other consistent and long-term advantages. The player behind in development has fewer options, fewer candidate moves and, therefore, he can harder find proper defensive moves against attacks.

T2: When the centre is not closed and one of the players has a significant lead in development, our senses must stay very sharp. Any tempo and move has a very big importance for the result of the game.

T3: Very often, the lead in development means that the opponent's king is still in the centre and the game can be concluded with an attack against the un-castled king. The possibility of opening the centre in such situations is of first importance.

Actions to take when we are better developed:

First of all, the development of forces must continue in a smart way. Only 1 or 2 more developed pieces cannot acquire much advantage, so we need to develop more pieces and eventually castle to put the own king on safe and bring the rooks into play.

In the same time, we have to be careful if the continuation of normal development of both sides will not diminish the advantage. Choosing the right moment for moving the developed pieces in attack is the most important thing that the active side has to think at.

Active operations for the active side:

A1: Choose a move order of development which creates the most unpleasant problems for the development of the opponent.

A2: When we have more pieces developed, we usually have or can get the control over the centre. This way, we can OPEN THE CENTRE by advancing the pawns (well supported by our pieces) and challenging the opponent's pawn-centre (worse supported because of undeveloped pieces). This action is very favorable when the opponent king is still un-castled.

A3: Create local force superiority, if possible, especially where the opponent's king is. While the defending side is trying to finish the development, the active side can bring and arrange his pieces for a future operation against the weakest opponent's side.

A4: Create long-term advantages. This means especially weakening the opponent's pawn structure by maneuvers that the opponent cannot refute easily with his fewer developed pieces. You have to choose objectives that the opponent cannot defend by a simple development move.

What to do when you are worse developed

If the better developed player has more choices at his disposal, the worse developed player has usually only one chance: **to continue the development (CD)**. This is not at all easy because a lot of threats are on the air and you need to ignore many of them (below you will see an example, where a player should have better ceded a pawn).

It is very interesting how the human psychology influences a lot the game in this situation. When a player has a big lead in development, he sees himself already winning in a few moves by a king attack or so. When the player behind in development gives less attention to details (as pawn weaknesses for example) and continues to bring the undeveloped pieces into play, the active player feels even threatened. By fearing of losing the advantage, the active side might even make bad moves, too aggressive (leaving his own position undefended), even unfounded sacrifices.

One other way to get well from a position where the opponent has a big lead in development is to **close the centre (CC)** or, at least, eliminate the central tension. This is nevertheless possible in more rare situations.

Causes for the lead in development

One of the 2 players of the game cannot move however two pieces in his turn (ply), so the question is how one of the players can be better developed than his opponent. There are some common causes for one of the players to remain behind in development which we discuss next:

1. As a result of a pawn (or much more rarely piece) sacrifice

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.d4 Bg4 4.f3 Bf5 5.c4

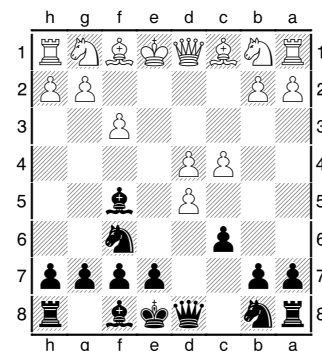
White defends his pawn on d5, inviting Black to the next pawn sacrifice:

5...c6

(diagram)

Black has 2 pieces developed and he now also gets the b8-knight into play, while White played only pawn-moves.

6.dxc6 Nxc6 7.Be3 e5!



Position after 5...c6

(diagram)

Black is better developed, but he is a pawn down. A calm play with 7...e6 is at least not sufficient. (See T1 & A2)

Black opens the diagonal for the dark-square bishop and challenges White's centre.

8.Bd3?!

Black's tough play also creates a strong psychological impact and White doesn't take the proper decision.

After 8.dxe5, Black continues with Qa5+ 9.Nc3 Qxe5 10.Kf2 Bc5 11.Bxc5 Qxc5+ with decisive attack.

However, 8.d5 eliminating the central tension was better (CC), but Black still keeps the initiative after 8... Nb4 9.Na3 Qa5 10.Kf2 Bc5

8...Bb4+

Black develops his bishop with tempo.

9.Nc3 will not be possible because of 9...Bxd3 10.Qxd3 exd4

9.Kf2 exd4 10.Bf4 Bxd3 11.Qxd3 0-0

(diagram)

The intense fight in the centre was ended with the clear Black's victory: he gained the pawn back, ended the development of all pieces, and got a strong free pawn on d4, while White is still undeveloped and with a horrible position.

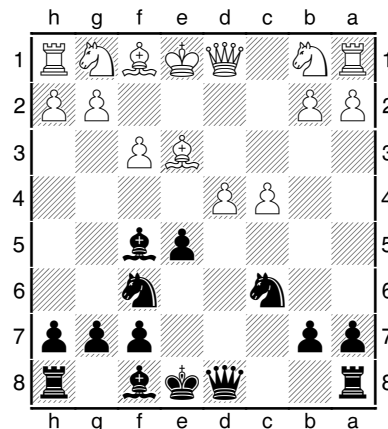
However, Black's task is not finished. He needs to continue his play in force and find a way to benefit of his advantages.

12.Ne2 Re8

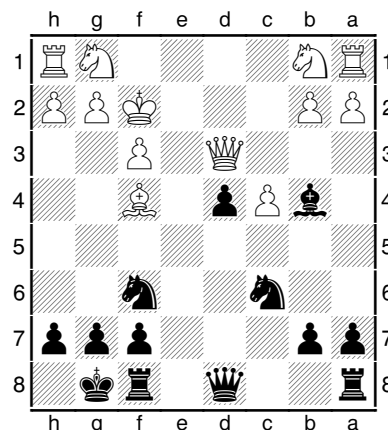
Black continues the development, bringing the rook into play on an open file.

13.a3 Bc5 14.Re1 a5 15.b3?

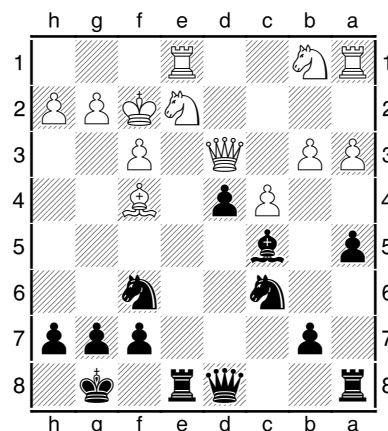
White is far away from understanding the essence of the position. Black is able to start active operations against the White's king and the latter tried to avoid a5-a4 which would create a hole in White's structure at b3.



Position after 7...e5!



Position after 11...0-0



position after 15.b3

Of course, White should have played 15.Nd2, finishing the development (CD). However, after 15... Nh5, Black has a clear advantage.

Now, the game ended quickly:

15...Nh5! 16.Bc1 Qh4+ 17.Kf1 Qxh2 18.Nd2 Nf4! 19.Nxf4 Qh1+ 20.Kf2 Qxe1# 0–1

The following game is very instructive for the theme at hand: White sacrifices a pawn for the lead in development. Black refutes the sacrifice by the best strategy at his disposal: continuing the development (CD).

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.Nf3 Nbd7 5.g4

This is a pawn sacrifice that was employed with success by Shirov against the Philidor Defense.

5...Nxc3 6.Rg1

(diagram)

By using the rook on the just opened g-file, White obstructs the development of the Black's kingside (Bf8 has to defend the g7-pawn now). This is not an easy position for Black who has to find a new way of developing the pieces. Moreover, the position is not blocked, so the black king cannot have a long life in the centre.

6...exd4!

Black defends the knight on g4 by attacking the c3-knight and clears the e5-square for the cramped knight from d7.

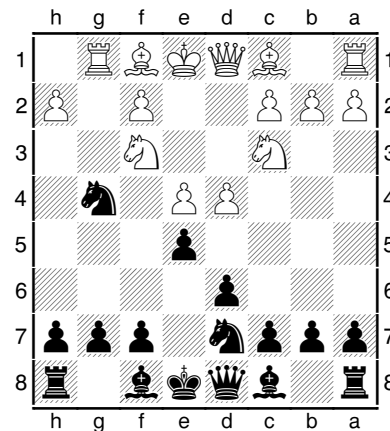
7.Nxd4 Nde5

By this move, Black improves a lot the position of his d7-knight and opens the diagonal for the c8-bishop which is now able to help in the game. So, the last 2 moves were developing moves for Black (CC).

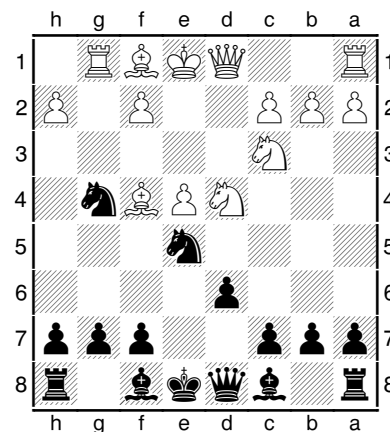
8.Bf4

(diagram)

Better was 8.h3 c5 forced 9.Nf3 (9.Bb5+ Bd7; 9.hxg4 cxd4 10.Nd5 is unclear) 9...Nxf3+ 10.Qxf3 Ne5 with a complicated game.



Position after 6.Rg1



Position after 8.Bf4

White continues his development and intends to castle long after which Black is in serious trouble. Black must have a “TO DO” list at this moment for how to develop his forces. Being threatened on the g-file, Black has to make a plan for how to castle long as quickly as possible.

8...g5!

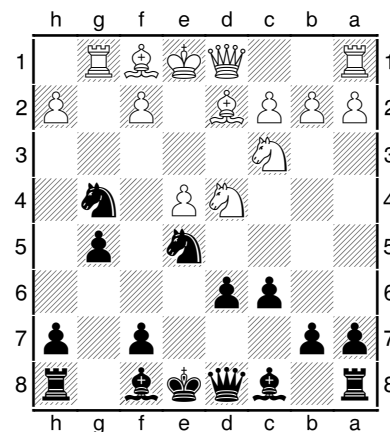
An anti-play move. Black doesn't develop by this move, but chases away a white piece to a bad position, while the g5-pawn will secure the position of a knight on e5 (against f2-f4). In addition, Black solved the problem of developing the f8-bishop which might come on g7 now.

9.Bd2 c6!!

This is a well known (we hope) position which was part of the tough initial test of our school. The move is harder to be seen because it looks so calm in such a complicated position. However, the tempo Black lost is regained by Qb6 attacking the undefended white knight.

It is easy to see this move if you make the “TO DO” list for Black with the final objective to get the king secured (isn't this easy?!). For this reason, Black has to develop quickly his queen and c8-bishop.

10.h3 Qb6 11.hxg4 Qxd4 12.Qe2 Rg8 13.0-0-0 Qb6 14.Be3 Qa5 15.f3 Be6 16.a3 0-0-0 17.Rg3 f6 18.Qd2 Rg7 and everything is okay for Black now who is a pawn up and also has a better arrangement of pieces and pawns.



Position after 9...c6

2. One of the players is more interested to reach some other objectives

1.Nf3 d5 2.b3 Nf6 3.Bb2 c6 4.c4 Bg4 5.h3 Bxf3 6.gxf3 d4

(diagram at next page)

After only 6 moves, White has to think carefully on how to develop and the opening theory doesn't help

him to take a decision.

If White develops “normally” with d2-d3, Nd2, Bg2 or so, Black will dominate the centre and White will remain with passive pieces.

7.Qc2?!

This is a very interesting plan, but which is against the principle of a quick development. White wants to get his pieces into play with a role for further actions. After d2-d3, the white queen would have been left out of play behind her pawns, so White decided to activate her by Qd1-c2-f5, taking into account the absence of the Black’s light-square bishop.

For this objective (and also, taking into account that the centre cannot be opened by Black), White agrees to lose important tempos and to remain behind in development.

7...e5 8.h4

Another important move for White’s plan, securing safe squares for the queen on the kingside.

7...Na6 9.Qf5 Bd6 10.h5

White continues consistently with his strategy to play on the light-squares on the kingside.

In the meantime, we can notice that only the b2-bishop is somehow developed, but yet restricted by the black pawn chain.

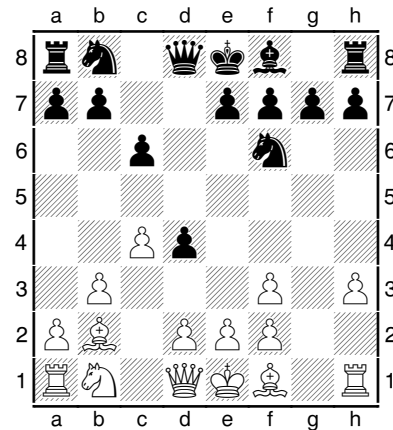
10...Nc5 +/-

Black is already developed and has a better control over the centre. He has the upper hand and can continue now with g7-g6 and open the game as White is still not ready for a fight (see Nb1, Ra1, Bb2 and Bf1).

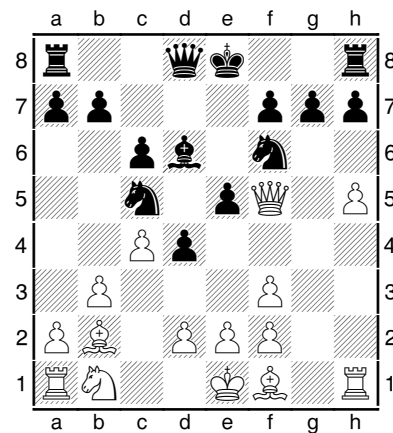
This was maybe a less convincing example about the result of delaying the development. However, if you think that Black got a slightly better position in only ten moves, you have the proof of the dubious White’s strategy.

This kind of situation is very often met in practice, much more than quick wins below 20 moves.

You will see examples in the next illustrative games of our course.



Position after 6...d4



Position after 10...Nc5

In this example (see diagram), White wanted to gain space "advantage" in the centre, but he remained behind in development and with the king in the centre.

In fact, White's position is practically lost. There are 4 games in our database and Black won them all in just a couple of moves. However, what would you do if this kind of position arises in one of your games? The first and most important thing White should do is to CLOSE THE CENTRE (CC):

16.d6!

Now, White has one big problem less.

16...Bg5

After 16...Bh4+ 17.g3 Bg5 18.Qd4 White is okay.

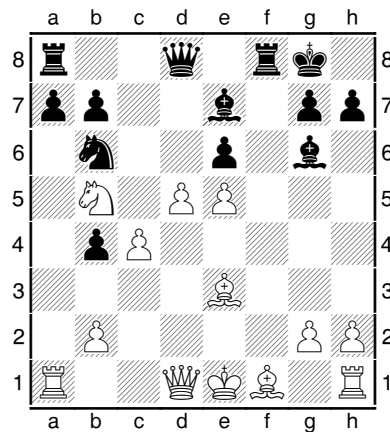
The other big problem White must solve IMMEDIATELY is the king's position and the rook connection (CD). One couldn't even think how could resist in this position with the king in the centre. So, White must block the f-file to can castle short:

17.Bf2!

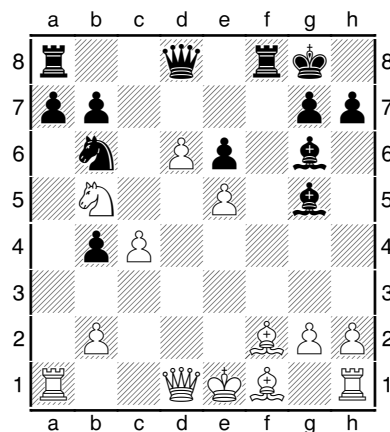
(diagram)

Now, White has to do only just 2 moves more (Bf1-e2 and 0-0) and would get a better position (due to his space advantage and protected free advanced pawn on d6). Black is **forced** now to take very aggressive measures against White's development plan. Will White resist? As the following variations show, White can resist against almost all Black's attacking ways (Black draws in the main line by perpetual check). In a practical game, it is impossible to calculate all the possible variations, so what we have to retain from this example is the following:

When you are behind in development, don't do anything else than try to finish it (CD). The advantage in development is a very terrific advantage but a volatile (temporary) one, and the task of the player in advantage is to try to keep it with ALL costs. These 'costs' can end in your favor because in a practical game, it is very hard to find



Initial position for this example.
White is to move.



Position after 17.Bf2

the correct way between all the possible continuations.

17...Rxf2

Black sacrifices an exchange for keeping the White's king in the centre. So, because of his plan to castle, White forced Black to risk in a die-or-live action.

After 17...Be3 18.Bxe3 Qh4+ 19.g3 Qe4 20.Nc7 Qxh1 21.Bf4 without the black dark-square bishop, White's game is much simpler now; and after 17...Rf4 18.Be2 Nxc4 19.Bxc4 Rxc4 20.0–0 White seems to be OK too; 17...Rc8 18.b3; 17...Rf5 18.Be2 Rxe5 19.0–0 and White seems to be Ok again.

18.Kxf2 Be3+ [18...Qf8+ 19.Qf3] 19.Kxe3 Qg5+ 20.Kf2 Rf8+ 21.Ke1! Qh4+ 22.g3 Qe4+ 23.Qe2 Qxh1 24.Nd4 Nxc4 25.Qxc4 Qe4+ 26.Kd2 Rf2+ 27.Be2 Rxe2+ 28.Qxe2 Qxd4+ 29.Ke1 Qg1+ 30.Qf1 Qxh2 31.Rxa7 Qxg3+ 32.Kd2 Qg5+ 33.Kd1 Qg4+ = by perpetual check.

3. One of the players is busy to defend (or fight for) some key-squares

3.1.By the player's own accord

The Sicilian Defense (Open systems) is a very interesting example when Black plays a lot of pawn moves (c5, c5xd4, e6, d6, a6, b5) in order to protect the central squares (c5, d5, e5, f5) and b5. In all this time, White develops a lot of his pieces and we could say that White has a lead in development (by considering the number of developed pieces). However, as we know, this is one of the best openings that Black has at his disposal against 1.e4 and White's advantage cannot be materialized.

Another example is the Queen's Gambit Accepted when after: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 e6 4.e3 a6 5.Bxc4 c5 6.0–0, Black is okay and he played only pawn-moves.

The examples of sound openings when one of the players plays a lot of pawn-moves can continue on many pages. However, the old rule that advice against too many pawn moves in the opening is correct in most of the cases.

3.2. Forced by the opponent

In the following example, Black forces White to make defensive moves in order to protect his central pawns.

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.a3 Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 c5
6.f3 Nc6 7.e4 d6 8.Ne2 b6 9.Ng3 0-0 10.d5 Na5
11.Qc2**

(diagram)

White is behind in development (he would need 2 moves to castle), but has more space in the centre which looks closed enough for not worrying about the situation.

However, Black finds a way to create threats which will keep White busy (T1):

11...Nd7!

Black threatens Ne5 and Ba6 gaining the c4-pawn which force White to weaken his structure.

12.f4 Ba6 13.Qa2 Qf6! 14.Bd2 Rfe8

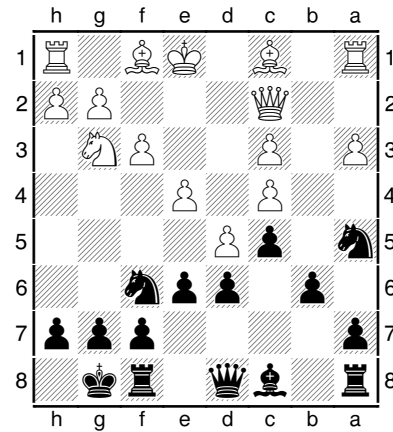
By creating threats at every move, Black improved the status of his pieces, brought his rook on the same file with the opponent king, while White didn't have time for his development.

15.Be2 (diagram) exd5 (T3)

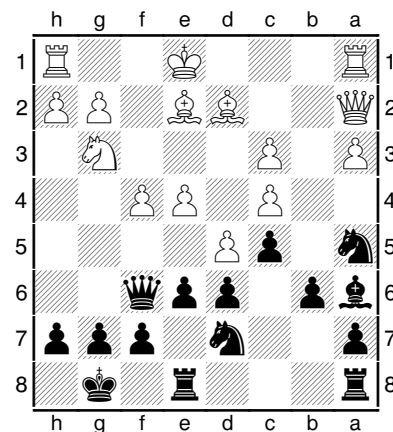
Now, Black is ready to open up the position in the centre and gaining another advantage: the white king in the centre will be an easy target for further actions.

The game continued:

**16.cxd5 Bxe2 17.Kxe2 Qg6 18.Kf3 Nf6 19.Rae1 h5
20.h4 Re7 21.c4 Rae8 22.Qc2 b5 23.cxb5 c4
24.Bxa5 Qg4+ 25.Kf2 Qxf4+ 26.Kg1 Qxg3 27.Rh3
Qg4 28.Qxc4 Rxe4 29.Rxe4 Rxe4 30.Qb3 Re2
31.Rg3 Qd4+ 32.Kh2 Qxh4+ 33.Kg1 Qd4+
34.Kh2 h4 0-1**



Position after 11.Qc2



Position after 15.Be2

4. By mistake or un-proper thinking

Of course, one of the frequent cases of remaining behind in development is some mistake.

We are not interested to study mistakes now, but it is very useful to see an example of how **a mistake can be provoked by the opponent**.

1.c4 c5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e3 Nxc3 6.bxc3 g6 7.Bb5+ Bd7 8.Qb3

(diagram)

The White's seventh move had the role to provoke an unpleasant move for Black. Both Bd7 and Nd7 could not be considered developing moves for Black because this is not where he wants his pieces (which block the d-file).

However, the move 8.Qb3 has a threat behind: Bb5-c4 with double threat on f7- and b7- pawns. Black saw White's threat, but continues his development and invites White to a second move with the bishop:

8...Bg7!

Black played this move instantly, not working too much on the position, using an intuitive evaluation that the b7-pawn is worth less than the development. White was happy:

9.Bc4?

White plays the bishop for the second time in the opening and places him on another "mined" square. Black will gain another tempo by threatening Nc6-a5 gaining the bishop-pair.

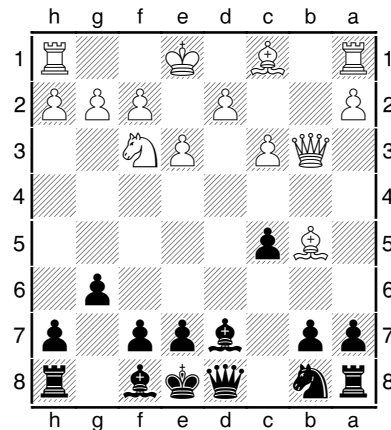
9...0-0! 10.d4

At this moment (only!), White spent many minutes to calculate the consequences of capturing the b7-pawn. He didn't like 10.Qb7 Nc6, followed by Rb8 and threats against the white queen and bishop.

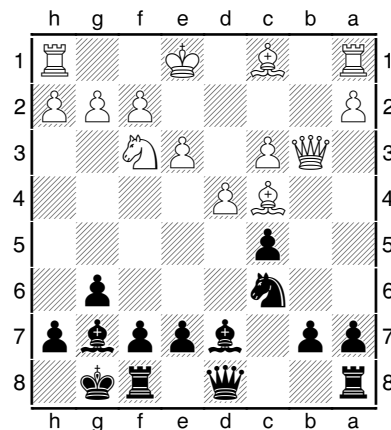
10...Nc6

(diagram)

Black continues to get his forces into play. Very important is to observe that White's pieces are badly placed, as a result of White's bad strategy.



Position after 8.Qb3



Position after 10...Nc6

11.Be2

White is now forced to make the third move with the same piece in the opening. It is clear that White's attraction for gaining a pawn in the opening was a grave mistake. White finally didn't take the pawn, but lost important tempi. It is Black's turn now to take the initiative immediately (see T1) by opening the centre and using the fact that white king is still on the centre.

11...cxd4 12.cxd4 e5

(diagram)

Black opens up the centre immediately. Usually, such moves (e7-e5) and the next are rather unique for keeping the advantage of lead in development and gaining/keeping the initiative. Any tempo and move matters as in a pawn ending (see T2)!

13.dxe5

After 13.d5 (CC), Black would have played 13...e4! gaining material.

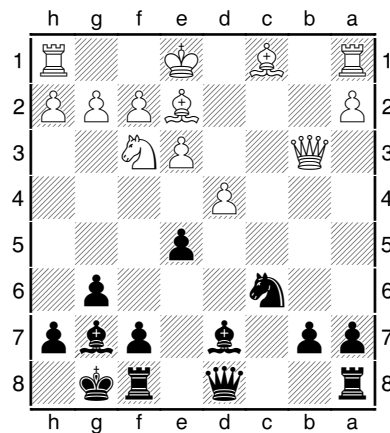
However, White should have been very careful (see T2) as his king is in the centre and he is behind in development. Here, White should apply the only working strategy in these situations (see CD) and give a pawn with: 13.0-0 exd4 14.exd4 Nxd4 15.Nxd4 Bxd4 16.Bb2 Bxb2 17.Qxb2. In this endgame, Black should win, but the technique necessary to promote the queen majority is much harder and complicated than to attack a king in the centre.

13...Nxe5 14.Nd4

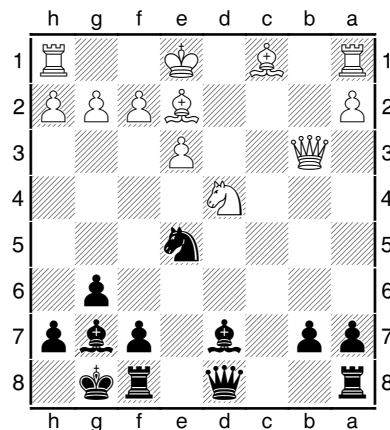
White takes the pawn back, keeping the e-file closed. The knight on d4 looks very solid and after 0-0, White would have no problems. Another unique move is necessary for Black to keep the initiative. White's arrangement of pieces has to be challenged right now until he has no resources to defend.

(diagram)

Try to find the best move for Black!



Position after 12...e5



Position 14.Nd4

14...Nc6!

A hard to see move as the piece goes back, but yet easy to find if Black makes his “TO DO” list and thinks how to remove the white knight, open the diagonal for the bishop and eventually open the e-file toward the white king.

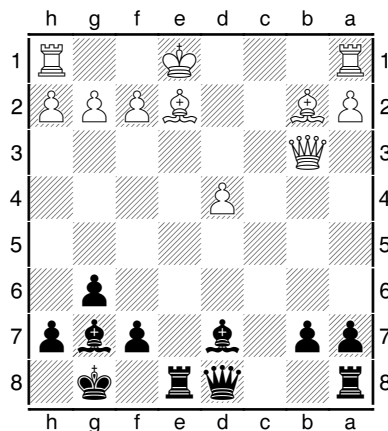
15.Bb2 Nxd4 16.exd4 Re8

(diagram)

Now, the lead in development was transformed into a much more dangerous advantage: the opponent king is trapped in the centre.

Black won easily:

17.Kf1 Qe7 18.Qd1 Rac8 19.Bd3 Bc6 20.Qd2
Bd5 21.f3 Qh4! 22.Qf2 Qf4 23.Re1 Rxe1+
24.Qxe1 Bxd4 25.Qb4 Qe3! 26.Qxd4 Rc1+ 0–1



Position after 16...Re8

Nowadays, the opening theory is well known by most of the players and we very rarely meet situations when a player is allowed by his opponent to get a large lead in development. During Alekhine’s time, when the opening theory was much less developed and known, much more games ended shortly by spectacular attacks as a result of this advantage. We will see some of them in the instructive games that will follow.

You must know that strong players develop their pieces as quickly as possible. Fast development is the basis of the opening play.

The “TO DO” list in the opening stage should concentrate on developing the pieces as quickly as possible and in the best positions for a future strategy for the middlegame (that the opening theory helps us to know).

We will continue with instructive games

 **Alekhine**
 **Marshall**
 New York

1927

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Ne4?!

Black moves the knight for the second time in the opening without a serious reason. This loss of tempo will give White the advantage of lead in development.

4.Nfd2!?

We can see now the difference between these 2 moves. While Black didn't get any advantage by his last move, with 4.Nfd2, White fights with success for the central e4-square.

Bb4 5.Qc2

[5.a3? would be a mistake because of: Qf6]

5...d5 6.Nc3 f5

Black consolidates the knight on e4, but White has the f2-f3 move at his disposal as a consequence of the move Nfd2!

7.Ndxe4 fxe4 8.Bf4

White develops the dark-square bishop on an active position, before e2-e3.

0-0 9.e3 c6 10.Be2 Nd7 11.a3 Be7 12.0-0

At this moment, White is completely developed, while Black still needs 3-4 moves to develop the light-square bishop. This position looks like a Stonewall, but the characteristics of the position are in White's favor because Black does not have any threat or counter-play on the kingside.

Bg5 Diagram

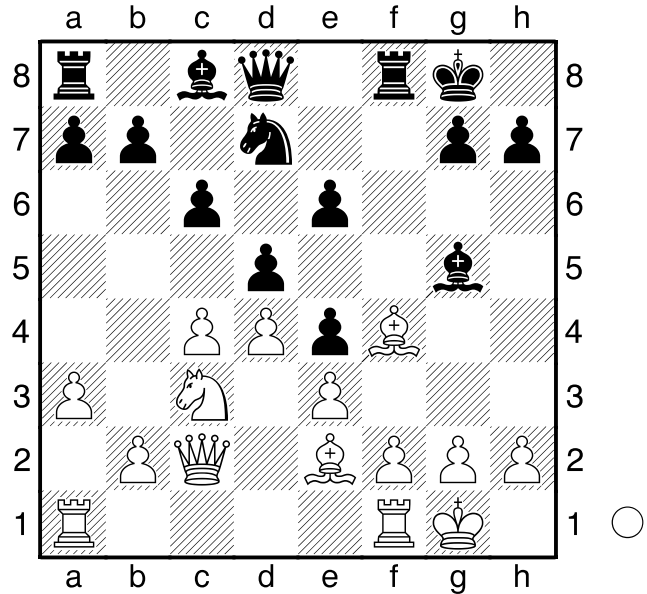
(Diagram)

Black continues in a wrong way: he starts active operations while he's behind in development.

13.f3!

The normal reaction. Because he is completely developed, White challenges the centre immediately. This kind of actions don't even need to be precisely calculated.

Bxf4



[13...exf3 14.Rxf3 Bxf4 15.exf4 and Black remains with a serious weakness on e6.]

14.exf4 Rxf4 15.fxe4 Rxf1+ 16.Rxf1

Black lost another tempo as a consequence of this exchange: the black f8-rook made a move more than the white rook from f1.

e5

Black could not develop his c8-bishop without this move. However, the centre will be in White's hands now who has 2 more pieces prepared for the fight.

17.Qd2!

White puts his pieces in the best and most active positions, creating the local force superiority.

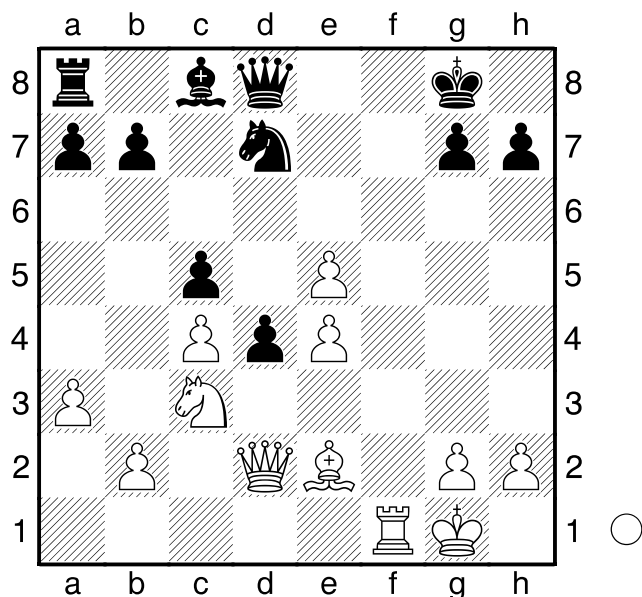
c5

[17...exd4 18.Qxd4 dxe4 19.c5 opening the diagonal for the bishop at c4 and White will attack with all his forces the black kingside, while Black's pieces are all cramped.]

[17...dxe4 18.Nxe4 exd4 19.Qxd4 Qe7 20.c5 again, with strong attack for White.]

18.dxe5 d4 Diagram

Black closes the centre, but this cannot help him now as White takes the initiative on the



kingside:

19.Qf4!

As we said in our theoretical lesson, "the lead in development is a short-term advantage and keeping the initiative by playing forcing moves (which contains real threats) is necessary in order to gain other consistent and long-term advantages"; and "our senses must stay very sharp, any tempo and move has a very big importance for the result of the game".

[after a "normal" move like: 19.Nd5
Black is okay: Nxe5]

19...dxc3 20.Qf7+ Kh8 21.bxc3!

Threatening e5-e6 and Black has no any satisfactory move.

[it is not good directly: 21.e6 Nf6 22.e7 Qg8
23.Rxf6 Bg4 24.Bxg4 gxf6]

21...Qg8

[21...b6 22.e6 Nf6 23.Rxf6 Qg8 24.e7 Ba6
25.Qxg8+ Kxg8 26.Rd6 Re8 27.Rd7
and White wins the endgame]

22.Qe7!

again the only move for White. When leading in development, such winning moves usually exist and the players have to find them. A precise play is necessary.

[22.e6 is far from being an alternative. Black is okay after: Ne5 23.Qc7 Ng6 24.e7 Be6 25.Bh5 Bxc4 26.Bxg6 Bxf1 27.e8Q Rxe8 28.Bxe8 Qxe8 29.Kxf1 Qb5+ with perpetual check]

22...h6

[White wins as well after: 22...b6 23.e6 Nf6 24.e5 Ba6 25.exf6 gxf6 26.Qxf6+ Qg7 27.Qxg7+ Kxg7 28.Bh5 Bxc4 29.e7 Bb5 30.Rd1]

23.Bh5 a5

[23...Kh7 24.e6 Ne5 25.Rf8+-]

24.e6 g6

[24...Nf6 25.Bf7+-]

25.exd7 Bxd7 26.Rf7 and Black resigned as he has no defense against Qf6+

Conclusion:

Black played wrong the opening (see 3...Nf6-e4) and lost some tempos that White exploited by opening the centre when the opponent was not ready for the battle (Ra8 and Bc8 were still out of play).

However, even if White had the initiative, he had to play some very precise moves to transform his short-term advantage into victory.

1-0

B06

□ **Gliksman**

■ **Popovici**

Wroclaw

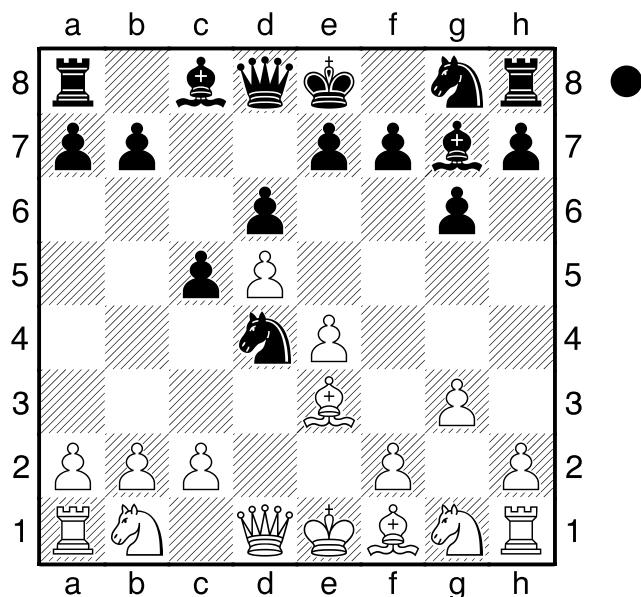
1979

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.g3 Nc6 5.d5 Nd4 6.Be3 c5 7.Nb1? Diagram

(Diagram)

White wants to trap or chase away the black knight from d4 by c2-c3. However, the loss of 2 tempi proves to be much more dangerous than the black knight:

Qb6!



and now White has to retreat his bishop and loses other tempi:

8.Bc1

[8.Qc1 Nxc2+ 9.Qxc2 Qxb2]

8...Bh6!

Black has the lead in development and, therefore, starts to play in force to seize the initiative.

9.c3? this is the decisive mistake. White is completely undeveloped and plays now a pawn-move.

[a developing move like: 9.Nd2 would have been much better.]

9...Bg4!

Another move which, like in the previous game, usually exists! Without this move, Black couldn't keep the initiative.

10.Qa4+

[10.Qxg4 Bxc1]

10...Kf8 11.Nd2 Qa5 and White resigned as Black wins the queen or checkmate with Nc2!

Conclusion:

In the opening, the players must develop their

pieces quickly. Moves which doesn't follow a logical development but aim for other objectives (usually material gain) should be analyzed with much care. Such moves (as 7.Nb1) usually cannot obtain anything even if they may look safe at first sight.

0-1

□ Tatai
■ Karpov
Las Palmas

A34

1977

1.c4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.g3 g6 6.Bg2 Bg7 7.Qa4+ Nc6 8.Ng5 e6 9.Nge4 Nb6 10.Qb5 c4 11.Na4?! 0-0 12.Nxb6 axb6 13.Qxc4

The last 7 moves, White played only with the queen and the knights (which were already developed). He succeeded to win a pawn and to double the black pawns on the b-file. Instead, Black developed his pieces and he can now start active operations.

e5 Black threatens to develop his bishop with tempo on e6, to play Nd4 and threaten the c2-square, to conquer the centre with f7-f5 and to win the pawn back with manoeuvres like Nd4-b3 or Be6xa2.

14.Qc2

[Karpov considered better: 14.Nc3 Be6 15.Qe4 Nd4 but Black still has the initiative.]
[Another variation which proves the Black's advantage is: 14.d3 Be6 15.Bg5 Bxc4 16.Bxd8 Rfxd8 17.dxc4 f5 18.Nc3 e4 and White cannot defend against Nc5-a5 or Nb4]

14...Nd4 15.Qb1

[15.Qd1 Be6 with the threat: Be6-b3!]

15...f5 16.Nc3

Black clearly leads in development. However, this is not enough for White to go home. At this moment, Black has to decide where to create a local force superiority as both the queenside

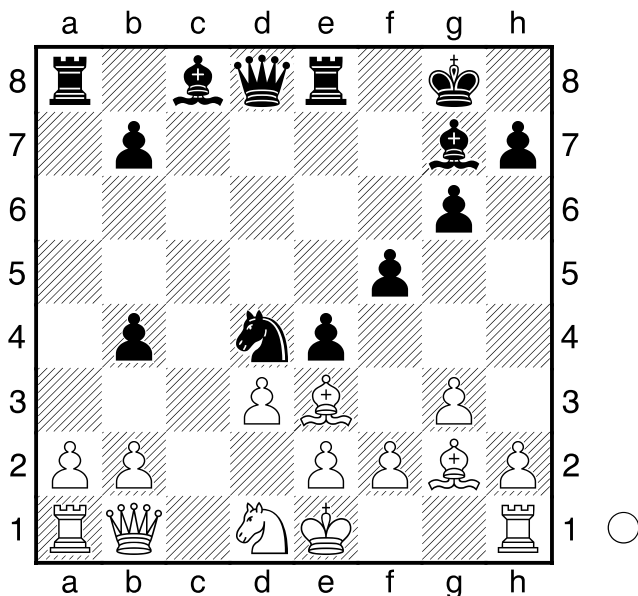
and kingside looks vulnerable. Karpov decided for the queenside and his "TO DO" list should look like this:

- close the white bishop on g2 with e5-e4,
- play b6-b5-b4 and even b4-b3 to chase away the white knight, get more space and more threats against the white queenside

e4

[Black could also choose to attack on the kingside with: 16...Be6 17.0-0 f4 18.Bxb7 Ra7 19.Be4 Qg5 with good chances. However, the safest way is better.]

17.d3?! b5 18.Be3 b4 19.Nd1 Re8 Diagram



At this moment, Karpov, the master of obstructing the opponent's pieces and play, was surely happy. Qb1, Ra1, Nd1, Bg2 are all strongly limited.

You can observe the technique: Black developed completely and then chose to play the most unpleasant moves for his opponent. By only threatening the c2- and a2- squares and the white queen, he gained other tempi and the time necessary for advancing the b-pawn on the queenside.

20.dxe4 fxe4 21.Bxd4

[The pawn on e4 is secure indirectly: 21.Bxe4 Rxe4 22.Qxe4 Bf5 23.Qxb7 Nc2+ 24.Kf1

Bh3+ 25.Kg1 Nxa1-+]

21...Qxd4 22.a3

[the calm development doesn't help anymore: 22.0-0 Qd2 23.Bxe4 Bh3 24.Bg2 Bxg2 25.Kxg2 Rxe2 26.Qc1 Qd5+ 27.Kg1 Bd4 with clear advantage for Black]

22...Bg4

Black develops and, in the meantime, makes White's castle impossible due to the attack on e2.

23.Qc2 Qd3!

As usually in this kind of positions with lead in development, a tactical strike (or even more) can transform the pressure and the initiative into a more concrete advantage. Now, Black opens up the centre toward the white unprotected king.

24.exd3

[24.Qxd3 exd3 25.e3 Red8! 26.f3 Be6-+]

24...exd3+ 25.Kd2

[25.Ne3 dxc2 26.Kd2 Bxb2! 27.Nxg4 Rac8 28.Bd5+ Kg7 29.axb4 Bc3+ 30.Kxc2 Bxa1+ 31.Kd3 Bc3+]

25...Re2+! 26.Kxd3 Rd8+ 27.Kc4 Rxc2+

28.Kxb4

[28.Kb3 Rcd2 29.f3 Be6-+]

28...Rcd2 29.f3 Bf8+ 30.Ka5 Bd7

and White resigned

0-1

□ **Vasiukov**

■ **Modr**

Praga

B81

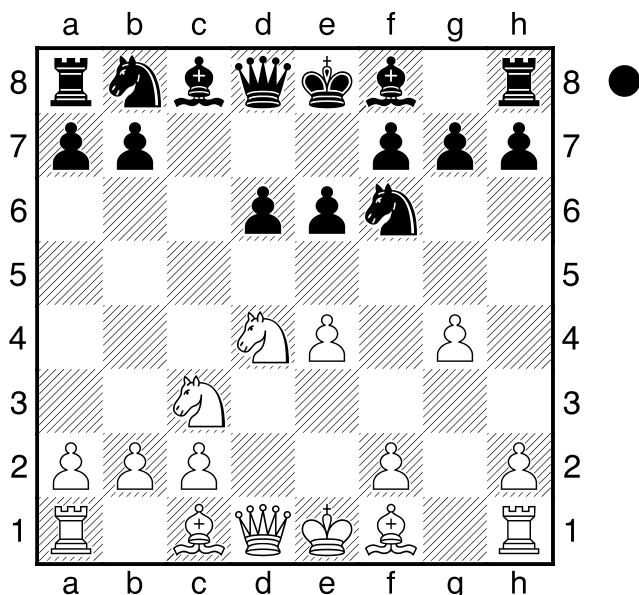
1979

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.Nc3 d6 4.d4 cxd4

5.Nxd4 Black played only pawn-moves until now and this is not all, as a7-a6 and b7-b5 are intended. However, the Sicilian Opening has a very good reputation. Modern chess, the investigation of opening theory and the very good defense (especially active defense) seem to challenge the old principles (like "don't play more than 2-3 pawn-moves in the opening") but this is for an airy eye.

The old principles are still good, but they interact now with the concrete variations of opening theory which is developed by much more players who play in much more tournaments and, why not to say, they check their analysis and games with the chess engines.

Nf6 6.g4! Diagram



Tell me an old principle which could recommend this very strong attack against the Scheveningen: the "Keres attack".

Returning to our theme "lead in development", this move can be still considered good not only from practical point of view but:

- g2-g4 creates local space advantage on the kingside
- g2-g4 fights indirectly for the centre by chasing away the black-knight
- after g4-g5, White will have Qd1-h5 at his disposal, a very dangerous move for Black
- White threatens g5-g6 destroying black pawn structure in the centre and kingside
- opens the g-file for the rook which will be able to attack the black kingside
- opens a new diagonal for the f1-bishop which can be usefull on g2 or h3 from where it attacks on e6

All these reasons make from g2-g4 a good opening move and a very strong "anti-play"

move.

a6 7.g5 Nfd7 8.Be3 b5

[Nevertheless 8...Nc6 looks a bit more safer.]

9.a3 Another pawn-move which is worth to be explained.

Pawn moves like: a6, h6, a3, h3 are usually not recommended in the opening, their role being only a defensive one. However, if the opponent's plans or development moves can be seriously hampered by these moves, they are worth to be considered.

Nb6?

The knight heads for the key-square c4 which can confer Black some counter-play... but not now! Black is not prepared to get some benefit from this square yet. Moreover, Black weakens his control over the centre.

10.Rg1

[10.Qh5 was even better]

10...Bb7 11.Qg4 N8d7 12.0-0-0

White is now completely developed. The f1-bishop has the role to exchange the black knight after his arrival in c4 (as in many Sicilian variations). Moreover, White has already serious threats to destroy the black pawn structure by g5-g6.

Black had to play g7-g6 now.

Rc8?

Black's counter-play on the c-file is far from being dangerous. This rook-move doesn't defend against the threats White has.

13.g6!

White lead in development, the black king is in the centre, so White opens up the position immediately.

hxg6 14.Nxe6 fxe6 15.Qxg6+ Ke7 16.Bg5+ Nf6 17.e5 Kd7

[17...Qe8 18.exf6+ Kd7 19.f7+-]

[17...dxe5 18.Rxd8 Rxd8 19.Bg2+-]

18.exf6 gxf6 19.Bxf6 Be7 20.Bxh8 Qxh8

21.Rg3 and Black resigned

This game proves how easily can White destroys Black's Sicilian setup if he doesn't follow the recommended lines. Black plays a lot of pawn-moves in the opening and the defense must be very wise.

1-0

 **Spasski**
 **Bronstein**
 Leningrad

C36

1960

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 d5 4.exd5 Bd6 5.Nc3 Ne7 6.d4 0-0 7.Bd3 Nd7 8.0-0 h6?!

Diagram

In the previous game, we commented that this kind of moves (a6, h6, a3, h3) are not recommended in the opening. If by h7-h6, Black could restrict the development of the white dark-square bishop, this move still could be considered as a candidate move. However, as the game will prove, this loss of tempo will lead to Black's defeat.

[Black should have played: 8...Nf6 9.Ne5 Nxd5 10.Nxd5 Nxd5 11.Qh5 g6 12.Qh6 Qf6=]

9.Ne4!

White finds a way to seize the initiative. He threats now c2-c4 and defending the pawn on d5 to gain the control over the centre.

Nxd5 10.c4 Ne3 11.Bxe3 fxe3 12.c5 Be7 13.Bc2

White forced the events until now and he got a position with a local force superiority on the kingside and the centre. White has all his forces ready for fight and attack the black king.

Re8

[After 13...Nf6 14.Qd3 Re8 (to make room for the king on f8) 15.Rae1 White regains the pawn and keeps the attack.]

14.Qd3 e2

[By his last move, Black tries to destroy the cooperatio between white pieces.

However, the continuation of development was much better: 14...Nf8 15.Qxe3 Be6 Like we said in our theoretical lesson, the player behind in development should hurry up to finish his development. Other strategies (even intermediary moves like here) are rarely good.]

15.Nd6?!

[Spasski played this move to complicate the game, given the time crisis of Black. Now, he succeeded to make Black to play wrong.

Better was: 15.Rf2 Nf8 16.Bb3 with advantage for White]

15...Nf8?

[Black should have played: 15...exf1Q+ 16.Rxf1 Bxd6 17.Qh7+ Kf8 18.cxd6 cxd6 19.Qh8+ Ke7 20.Re1+ Ne5 21.Qxg7 Be6 22.dxe5 with an unclear game]

16.Nxf7 exf1Q+ 17.Rxf1 Bf5

[17...Kxf7 18.Ne5+ Kg8 19.Qh7+ Nxh7 20.Bb3+ with mate]

[17...Qd5 18.Bb3 Qxf7 19.Bxf7+ Kxf7 20.Qc4+ Kg6 21.Qg8+-]

18.Qxf5 Qd7 19.Qf4 Bf6 20.N3e5 Qe7 21.Bb3 Bxe5 22.Nxe5+ Kh7 23.Qe4+ and Black resigned.

Black's mistake was the move 8...h6 after which White seized the initiative.

1-0

A31

 **Pomar**
 **Gheorghiu**
 Torremolinos

1973

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nf3 c5 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 b6

Black prefers to develop his queenside first, leaving the safety of his king on a second plan. In chess, in general and in opening in particular, the move order is very important.

5.Nc3

White is preparing to occupy the centre by advancing the e2 pawn.

Bb7 6.f3

White is heading for a solid centre, preparing to free the light square bishop, while the opponent bishop from b7 will be blocked by the white pawns.

a6

Waste of time. Black is weakening his queenside and, in the same time, is letting the centre and the kingside undeveloped.

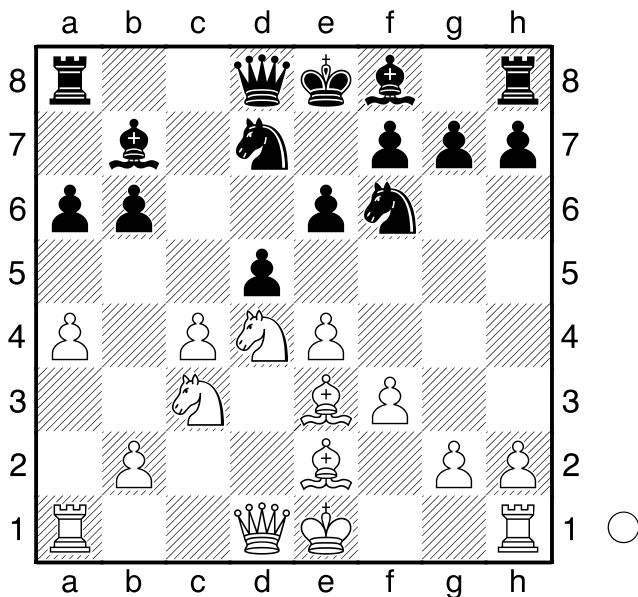
7.e4 d6

Better was to allow the development of the dark bishop by playing either e6 or g6.

8.Be2 e6 9.Be3 Nbd7

Better was again the simple 9...Be7 allowing black king to leave the centre as soon as possible.

10.a4 d5? Diagram



Breaking the centre too early will cause difficulties for Black due to his future exposed king position. After this advance, the e-file will be open and White can start an attack towards black king.

11.exd5 exd5 12.0-0 dxc4

Black's strategy is very risky with the king in the centre and without any escape square in case of a direct attack.

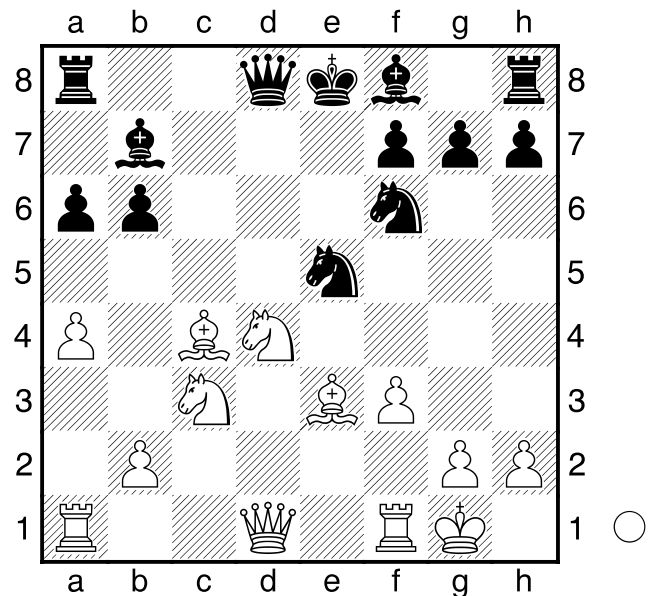
Black should have continued his development with Bc5.

13.Bxc4

The quality of white pieces is clearly better.

Practically, with this final exchange on c4, Black made a favor to his opponent by activating his light-square bishop.

Ne5 Diagram



14.Re1!

The active move after which White seizes the initiative! White is attacking on the free file, bringing another piece in battle and increasing the superiority of developed and active forces.

Qc7

A positional mistake. The weakness of black king is now obvious and White's attack is gaining in force.

[14...Nxc4 15.Bg5+ Be7 16.Nf5 0-0
17.Nxe7+ Kh8 18.Bxf6 gxf6 19.Ncd5±]

15.Rc1

White is bringing another and the last force in attack. The cooperation between white pieces is beautiful, each piece having its own role.

Qxc4 16.Ncb5

The simple 16.Bf4 was even better, regaining the piece and freeing the e1 rook.

Qd3 17.Nc7+ Kd8 18.Nxa8?

White is too hasty and wants to regain the material rapidly. In such type of positions when the opponent king has no pawns to defend him is better to put in value the heavy pieces to increase the pressure. Better was first 18.Nf5.

[18.Nf5 Rb8 19.Bxb6±]

18...Bxa8 19.Nf5 Nfd7 20.f4 Qxf5?

A decisive mistake, black should change the queens to minimize the dynamic potential of his opponent.

[20...Qxd1 21.Rexd1 Nc6 22.Bxb6+ Kc8 is yet unclear]

21.Bxb6+

The final blow, now the white rook can seize the seventh rank.

Ke7 22.Rc7 Be4 23.Rxe4

Black cannot defend his king in the centre attacked by White's major pieces. Black's rook and bishop will remain undeveloped.

Qxe4 24.fxe5 Ke6 25.Qxd7+ Kxe5 26.Qe8+ Conclusion:

Black lost this game because he started active operations in the centre (d6-d5) when he was behind in development.

In fact, Black played wrong the opening and White's f2-f3 and e4 creating a very strong centre made psychological unpleasant to Black who didn't like to play a passive Hedgehog structure (this is the name of Black's structure which we will analyze too). So, White's logical play made Black to play aggressively, but much too early.

1-0

 **Kasparov**

 **Salov**

Barcelona

A34

1989

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 b6 3.Nc3 c5 4.e4 d6 5.d4**cx d4 6.Nxd4 Bb7 7.Qe2 Nbd7 8.g3 Rc8**

Black is behind with the development of the king side, and also his king will stay another couple of moves in the centre, creating the premises of a future White's attack. Black's idea was to create a counter-play on the queenside fast.

One of the basic principles in chess is that the safety of the own king creates the possibility to play dynamically, attacking the opponent's camp. Contrary, when the king is unsafe, you have to play more passively being condemned to a prolonged defense.

9.Bg2 a6

Much more accurate was g7-g6 preparing the fianchetto of the dark square bishop.

10.0-0 Qc7

Black is trying to play actively putting pressure on the free file.

On c7, the queen can be attacked more easily by the c3 knight.

11.b3 e6 12.Nd5! Diagram

(Diagram)

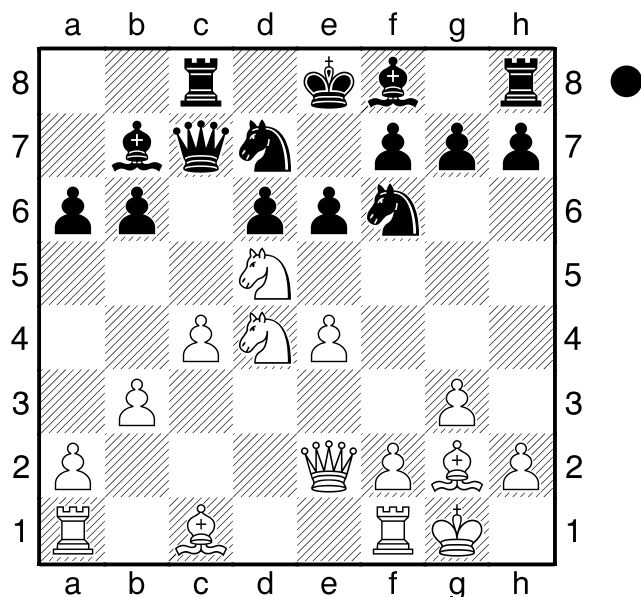
This typical piece sacrifice is possible due to the White's leading in development. The idea is simple: after the opening of the e-file, White will occupy it with his heavy pieces not allowing in the same time the development of the dark-square bishop and implicit the h8-rook. So, in this case, White could attack the black king with majority of forces.

Qb8

[12...exd5 13.exd5+ Kd8 14.Re1♖ and Black cannot develop his kingside.]

13.Rd1 g6

Black is fearing of White's attack and finally



decides to develop his kingside preparing the castle. But playing both e6 and g6, the dark squares and the d6 pawn become weak on a long term.

14.Bg5

[14.Ba3 exd5 15.exd5+ Kd8 16.Nc6+ Bxc6 17.dxc6±]

14...Bg7

[14...exd5 15.exd5+ Kd8 (15...Be7 16.Re1 0-0 17.Nc6 Bxc6 18.dxc6 Ne5 19.f4 Nxc6 20.Bxc6 Rxc6 21.Qxe7±) 16.Nc6+ Bxc6 17.dxc6 Nc5 18.Bxf6+-]

15.Bxf6

White is winning a pawn or exchange the dark-square bishops letting Black with a complex of weak dark-squares.

Nxf6

[15...Bxf6 16.Nxf6+ Nxf6 17.e5 dxe5 18.Bxb7 Qxb7 19.Qxe5 Ke7 20.Nxe6 fxe6 21.Rd6+-]

16.Nxb6

White is a pawn up now and Black doesn't have compensation for it.

Rd8 17.e5

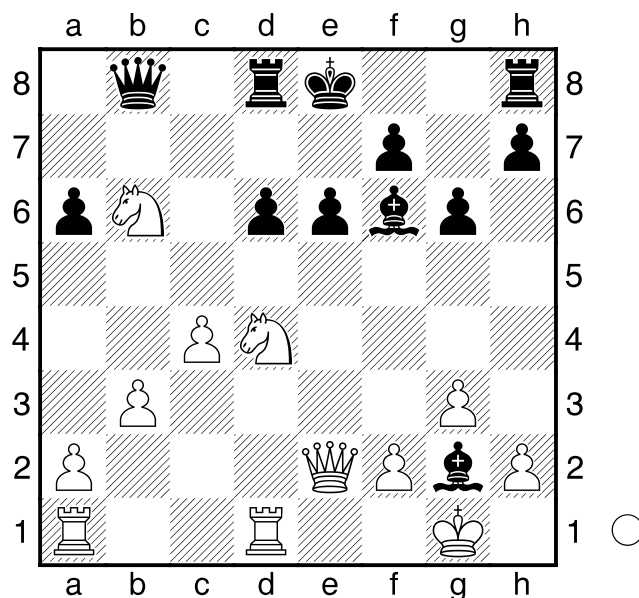
Black's king is still in the centre, so opening the

lines is the most logical reaction.

Bxg2

[17...dxe5 18.Nc6 Bxc6 19.Bxc6+ Ke7 20.c5±]

18.exf6 Bxf6 Diagram



19.Nxe6

Being caught with his king in the centre and with his heavy pieces out of play, Black lacks of defending resources.

fxe6 20.Qxe6+ Be7 21.c5 Bb7

[21...dxc5 22.Rxd8+ Qxd8 23.Kxg2+-]

22.Re1 Qc7 23.c6! Bxc6 24.Rac1

The threat Rxc6 can't be stopped.

Rd7 25.Nxd7 Qxd7 26.Qc4

[26.Qf6 Rf8 27.Rxe7+ Qxe7 28.Qxe7+ Kxe7 29.Rxc6+-]

26...Bb7 27.Qc7 Rf8 28.Qb8+ Kf7 29.Rc7 Rxb8 30.Rxd7 and Black resigns

Conclusion:

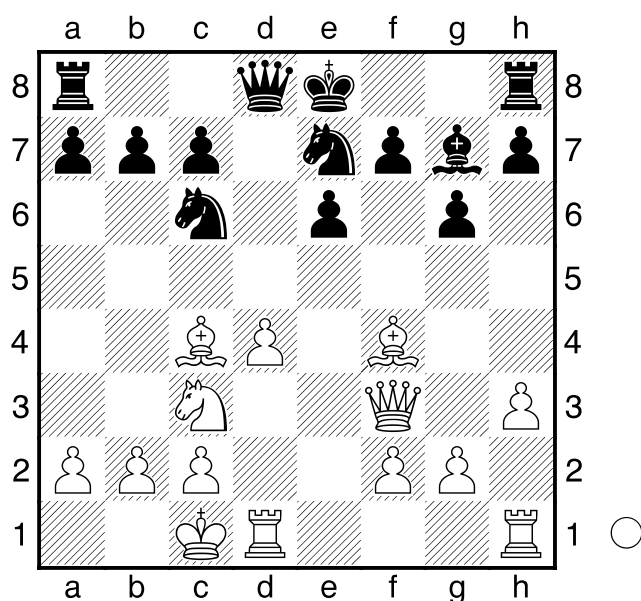
Black wanted to get activity on the queenside and left the kingside's development behind. White took advantage of the fact that the black king was still in the centre and by means of a strong and indirectly undefended knight on d5,

managed to create threats on Black's camp. When Black was almost ready with the development, White proved the superiority of his pieces (Nd5 was attacking both on f6 and d6) and got material advantage while still kept the attack.

1-0

 **Ravinski**
 **Bebciuk**
 Moscova

1964



In this position, we can say that White is 4 tempi up in development: he has the castle done, the queen developed, a rook on a central file and he is also to move.

The following move is extremely normal in this situation, especially that the black king is still in the center.

1.d5 exd5 2.Nxd5

[2.Bxd5 was also very strong Qc8 3.Bxc6+ bxc6 4.Rhe1 Kf8 5.Bg5+-]

2...Nxd5 3.Rhe1+ Kf8 4.Rxd5 Qf6 5.Qa3+ Kg8 6.Bg5 Qxf2 7.Rf1
1-0

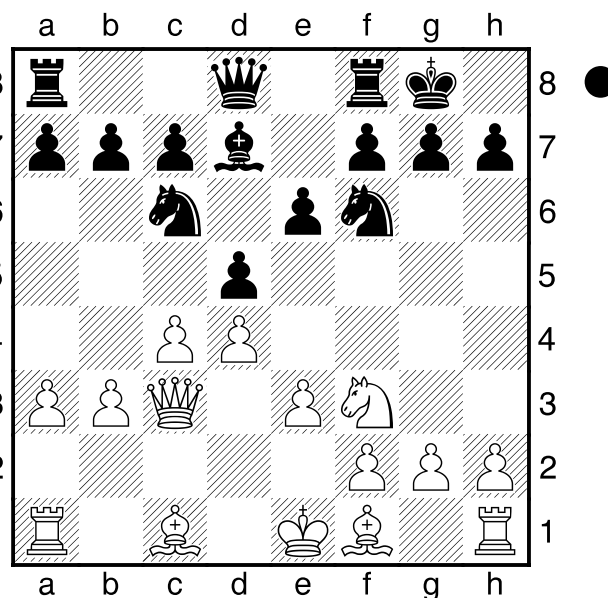
 **Kotov**
 **Botvinnik**
 URSS(11ch)

E33

1939

Important instructive game. Pay attention to it and to our comments!

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 Nc6 5.Nf3 d5 6.e3 0-0 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.Qxc3 Bd7 9.b3?! Diagram



White's "TO DO" list was clear: b2-b3, Bd3, Bb2, 0-0. However, the move order is very important too.

Playing b2-b3, White made 2 very small mistakes:

- White told Black that he intends to play Bb2 - and as we already know: when it is possible, try to play those moves first which tell the less to the opponent.
- Black is already developed and ready to start active operations, so White shouldn't make a pawn-move which doesn't bring anything now, but he should have played Bd3, making 0-0 possible at any time.

These 2 small mistakes made the difference. Let's see how:

a5!

If we were not clear until now, we want to stress again and will use this game as an example. Black leads in development; it's true: with the price of the bishop-pair.

During the opening, the lead in development is an advantage that is worth to be considered at least part of the ESSENCE of the position! However, this is a short-term advantage and, therefore, it should be immediately "played". But how?

Many examples showed you strong attacks against the opponent's king still remained in the centre and many of those examples ended nicely with a deadly piece sacrifice. But the king was the TARGET for those attacks (because remaining behind in development usually means that the king is still in the centre).

However, not in rare occasions, the opponent king cannot be the target. In this case, the player leading in development should analyze the opponent's position and find another target. This could be a bad placed piece, a pawn, or an entire side where another advantage can be reached: the local force superiority.

- The target should be easily attackable so that our pieces to get there rapidly, faster than the opponent can do that.
- The target should be important enough for the opponent
- Attacking the target should create unpleasant threats to the opponent and, especially, make him to lose more time (tempi) trying to defend it

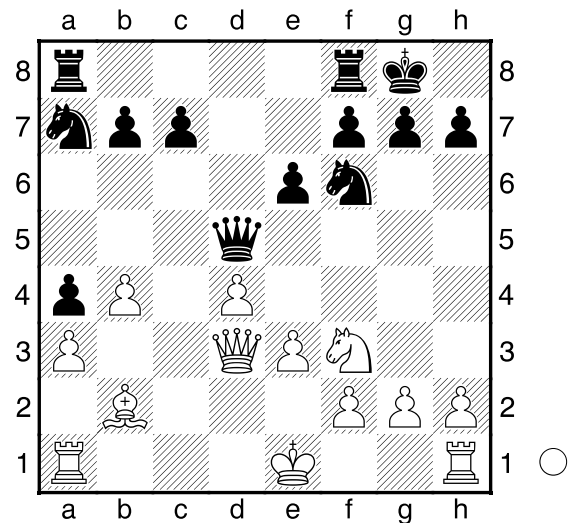
In this position, Black started active operations immediately. Instead of a "club player move", kind of Qe7, Re8, h6, or so, Black found a target in White's camp and started to attack it right away. The target here is the White's pawn structure just weakened by White's last move b2-b3. Black's objective is not the king or material gain, but a better position from strategical point of view!

10.Bd3 a4 11.Nd2?!

White moves the second time in the opening with the same piece as a reaction to Black's action a7-a5-a4. So, Black's plan is proved to be

at least justified.

[Another variation which shows the justification of Black's action on the queenside is after the more logical: 11.b4 Now, Black gets another LONG-TERM advantage after: dxc4 12.Qxc4 Na7! and, now, we are able to understand the essence of Black's plan: he will exchange the light-square bishops and will remain with a knight against the White's dark-square bishop. That bishop is limited by its own pawns arranged on dark-squares. 13.Bb2 Bb5 14.Qc2 Bxd3 15.Qxd3 Qd5 Diagram



and White's pawns are badly arranged: the dark-square bishop is blocked, while the light-squares are weak and easily to be exploited by the black knights. This is a long-term advantage that a player like Botvinnik could exploit.]

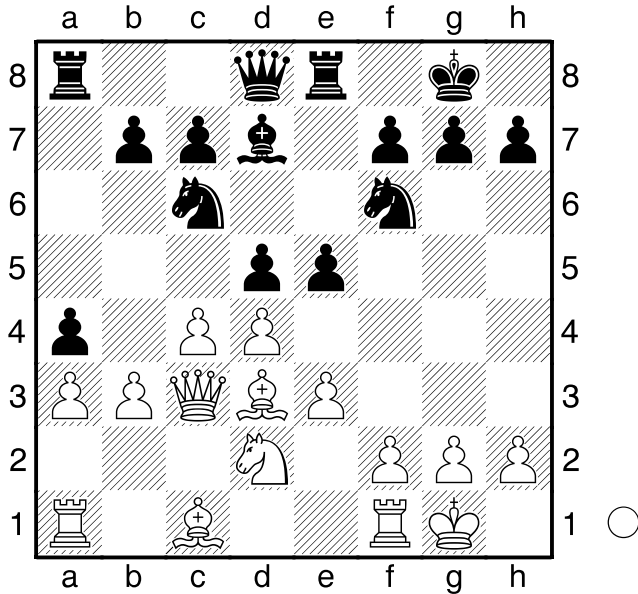
11...Re8

as a CQS of the white knight's retreat (leaving control over the e5-square), Black prepares the break-through in the centre (e6-e5).

12.0-0 e5! Diagram

(Diagram)

The exclamation mark is for the following reason: White has the bishop-pair and, nevertheless, Black opens up the position in the centre. Here we can already (and again)



discuss about the ESSENCE of the position (remember the lesson about the positional evaluation and its final phrases).

The White's bishop-pair is here less important that the dynamic of black pieces which are all ready for play, while White is not ready for the pressure in the centre. White lost an important tempo by playing Nf3-d2 and, also, limited the c1-bishop ray of action.

After challenging the centre with e6-e5, the black knights will gain good foreposts on the e-file, while the white bishops cannot find secure positions on time.

13.dxe5

[13.Bb2 exd4 14.exd4 axb3 15.Qxb3 Na5 16.Qc2 dxc4 17.Nxc4 Bb5 with a better position for Black due to the White's isolated pawn on d5.]

13...Nxe5 14.Bb2

[14.Bc2 axb3 15.Bxb3 Ne4 16.Nxe4 dxe4 Black has space advantage, a strong knight on e5, control over d3, better pawn structure.]

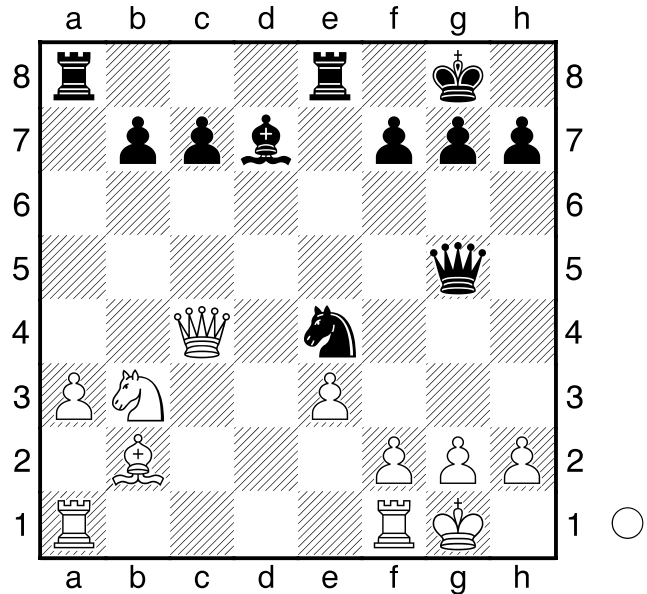
14...axb3 15.Nxb3?!

[White's knight on b3 will have lesser control over the centre now.

A bit better was: 15.Qxb3 with the possible continuation: Ba4 16.Qc3 Nxd3 17.Qxd3

dxc4 18.Qxd8 Raxd8 19.Nxc4 Ne4 with a better endgame for Black due to the free pawn on the c-file.]

15...Ne4 16.Qc2 Nxc4 17.Bxc4 dxc4 18.Qxc4 Qg5! Diagram



White was now completely developed, BUT as another consequence of the lead in development Black had, Botvinnik manages now to create local force superiority on the kingside along with real threats as Bh3 and Bb5.

White is forced to weaken his pawn-structure now:

19.f4 Qg6 20.Rfd1 Nd6

Finally, we can conclude the result of Botvinnik's play until now:

He got a slightly lead in development from the opening and White made an almost insignificant error by playing his development moves in a wrong order (b2-b3 instead of Bd3). Black attacked the weakness immediately (a5-a4) which forced White to de-centralize his knight and lose another tempo. At that very moment, Black challenged the centre. Even if White had the bishop-pair, Black had better placed pieces due to his lead in development. Normally, the central tension ended in Black's favor because he was better prepared. Now, Black has big

pluses:

- Better pawn structure (White's a3- and e3-pawns are weak)
- Black has a very strong and useful outpost in the centre: the e4-square
- Black has attacking chances on the kingside and his attack is strengthened by the presence of opposite colored bishops

Now, Black won without problems:

21.Qd3

[21.Qxc7? Bc6 22.Rd2 Nc4 23.Rf2 Qd3+-]

21...Bf5 22.Qc3 Be4 23.Rd2 Bc6 24.Qd3
Nf5 25.Be5 f6 26.Bxc7 Rxe3 27.Qc4+ Kh8
28.Bb6 Ree8 29.Qf1 h5 30.Nd4 Nxd4
31.Bxd4 Re4 32.Re1 Rxe1 33.Qxe1 Rxa3
34.Kh1 Ra8 35.Re2 Kh7 36.h3 Re8 37.Qf2
Qxg2+ 38.Qxg2 Rxe2
0-1

□ Banghiev
■ Turiscev
URSS

D66

1969

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7
5.Nf3 0-0 6.e3 Nbd7 7.Bd3 c6 8.Rc1 a6
9.0-0 Re8 10.Qe2 dxc4 11.Bxc4 b5 12.Bd3
c5 13.Rfd1 Diagram

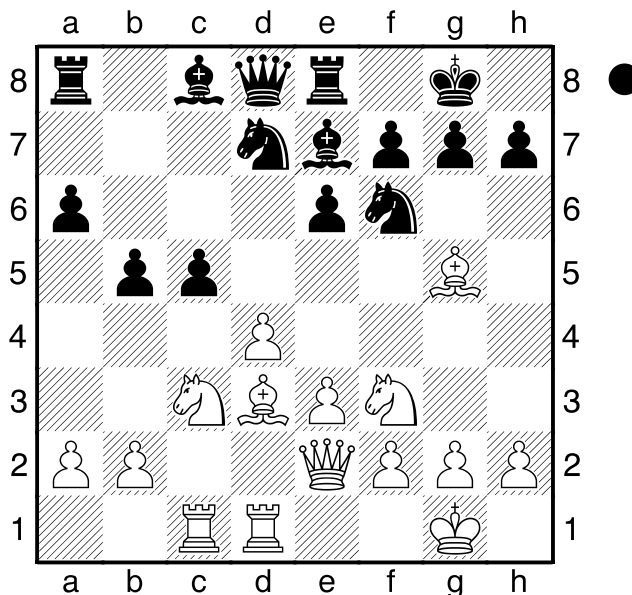
(Diagram)

White leads in development, his rooks are on the central files and threatens to play e3-e4-e5 or e3-e4 and d4-d5 with strong attack.

What should Black do when he is behind in development?

Qb6?!

Black took the wrong decision and, now, White starts active operations. Many of the White's moves are made possible by some not enough defended squares from Black's camp: h7, c5, Ra8. In fact, all these hanging pieces are a result of Black's bad development.



[The good decision was to close the centre (eliminate the central tension) for the moment with:

13...c4 14.Bc2 and, then, to finish his development: Bb7]

14.Bxf6 Nxf6 15.dxc5 Bxc5 16.Ne4 Be7

[16...Nxe4 is not good because of: 17.Bxe4 Ra7 18.Qc2 with double attack on c5 and h7]

17.Ne5

White threatens Nxf6+, followed by Bxh7+ and Qh5+-xf7

h6 18.Bb1

Before starting the final attack, White rearranges his pieces in the best positions.

Nxe4 19.Qf3 f5 20.Bxe4 Ra7 21.Qh5 Rf8
22.Rxc8 Rxc8 23.Qf7+ Kh8 24.Ng6+ Kh7
25.Nxe7 Rd8 26.Bd3 Qc7 27.Qxe6 Qxe7
28.Qxe7 Rxd3 29.Qxg7+ Kxg7 30.Rxd3

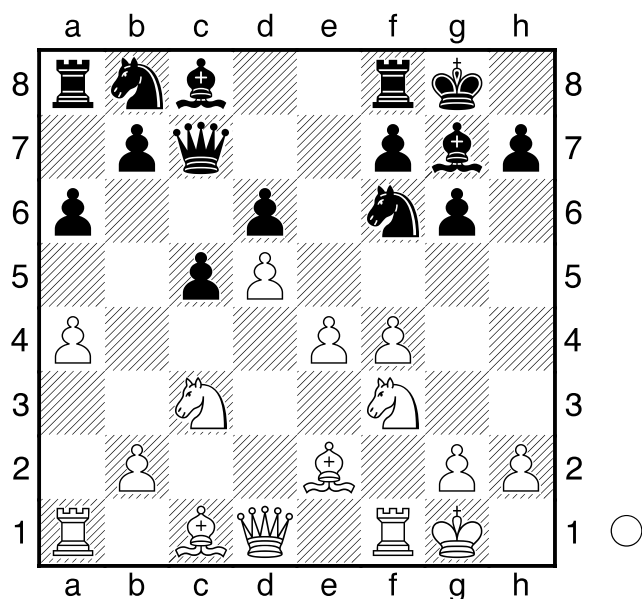
Conclusion:

Black lost the chance to close the centre, being behind in development. White's lead in development was easily transformed into a strong attack against Black's position and king, mainly because the black pieces were not ready for a direct fight. Moreover, a lot of pieces/squares were hanging in Black's camp.

1-0

 **Kasparov**
 **Cuijpers**
 Dortmund

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5 4.d5 exd5
 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.f4 Bg7 8.Bb5+ Nfd7
 9.a4 0-0 10.Nf3 a6 11.Be2 Nf6 12.0-0 Qc7
 Diagram



Black played badly the opening and his queenside is completely undeveloped. White takes benefit immediately of his lead in development advantage and advance his pawns in order to create threats and to open the lines toward the Black's camp:

13.e5! Ne8

[13...dxe5 14.fxe5 Ng4 15.d6±]

14.e6 fxe6 15.Bc4!

This was the idea of White's action in the centre (e4-e5-e6). Now, White's pieces are able to enter Black's camp.

Qe7 16.dxe6 Nc7 17.f5

White wants to destroy the Black's pawn-defense and, in the same time, opens the

diagonal for the c1-bishop.

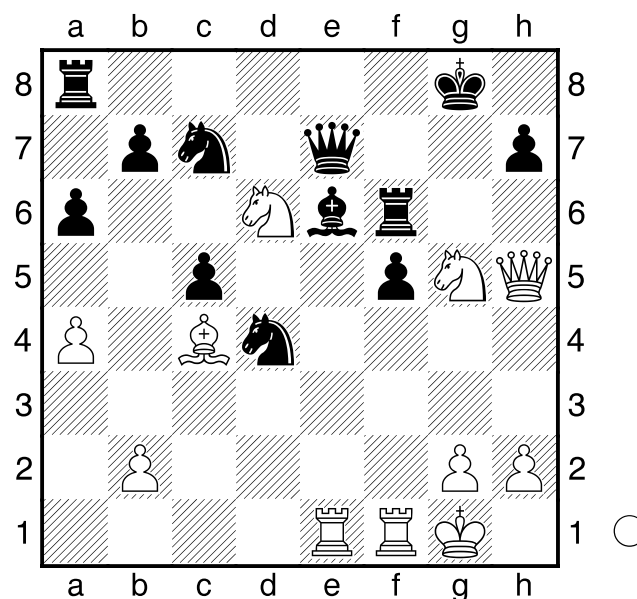
Nc6

[17...Rxf5 18.Bg5 Bf6 19.Bxf6 Rxf6 20.Ne4 Rf4 21.Nfg5 Rxf1+ 22.Qxf1+-]

A67

1980

18.Bg5 Bf6 19.Ne4 Bxg5 20.Nfxg5 gxf5
21.Nxd6 Nd4 22.Qh5 Bxe6 23.Rae1 Rf6
 Diagram



Black finished his development... if we can say so, but all his pieces play defensive roles. As usually when the defense is overloaded, a tactical strike can blow up the defense.

24.Nxf5! Nxf5 25.Nxe6 Nxe6 26.Rxe6 Rxe6
27.Qxf5 Re8 28.Re1

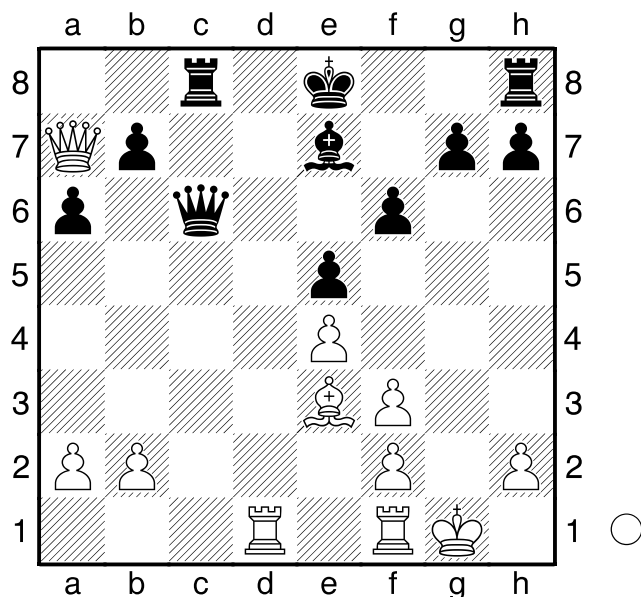
1-0

 **Portish**
 **Hubner**
 Montreal

1979

(Diagram)

In this position, Black needs only 1 move to finish his development (after 0-0). However, White will use the exchange as a technique to force the events. White will trade one pair of rooks and will remain practically with



a rook up into play.

1.Rc1! Qd7 2.Rxc8+ Qxc8 3.Rc1 Qd7
4.Qa8+ Bd8 5.Rc8 Kf7 6.Bb6 Bxb6 7.Rxh8
Kg6 8.Qe8+ Qxe8 9.Rxe8 and Black
 resigned.
1-0

□ Neagos,Raul
 ■ Bannink,Bernard
 Open Oberwat (6)

A29

2280
 2004

As in the previous game, here White used the exchange technique to get an important advantage right from the opening:

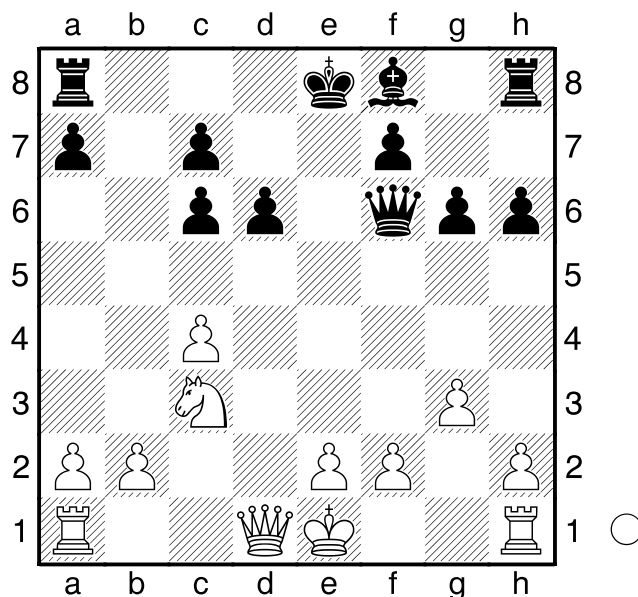
1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 d6
5.Nf3 g6 6.d4 exd4 7.Nxd4 Bd7 8.Bg5 h6?
 [Black should have played 8...Bg7 to develop his pieces.]

Now, White will trade 3 pieces:

9.Nxc6 Bxc6 10.Bxc6+ bxc6 11.Bxf6 Qxf6
 Diagram

(Diagram)

White exchanged all 3 pieces Black developed



until now, but he remained with the knight developed on c3 and the attacking-move:

12.Qa4 Kd7 forced **13.0-0** with big advantage to White who can attack the black king in the centre.
+-

□ Keres
 ■ Botvinnik
 URSS

1941

(Diagram)

Another instructive game for the technique of exchange with the objective to get lead in development.

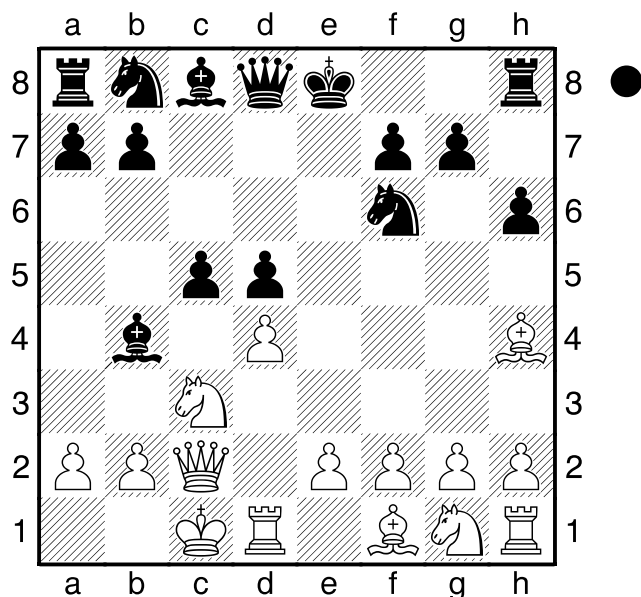
In this game, White developed quickly his queenside with the hope to get the initiative by attacking on d5.

Black will exchange the most important piece for White: the knight which attack on d5 and sustains e2-e4 (White's threat):

1...Bxc3! 2.Qxc3 g5!

Another excellent move which chases away a developed white piece to a passive position.

3.Bg3 cxd4



Another exchange which draws a white piece to a "minned" square. Black will get one more tempo by developing the knight with attack. Moreover, Black opens the c-file and Ra8 will be developed probably with another tempo.

4.Qxd4 Nc6 5.Qa4 Bf5

Black developed all his minor pieces and has real threats against the white king.

6.e3 Rc8 7.Bd3 Qd7 8.Kb1 Bxd3+ 9.Rxd3 Qf5 10.e4 Nxe4 11.Ka1 0-0 12.Rd1 b5 13.Qxb5 Nd4 14.Qd3 Nc2+ 15.Kb1 Nb4

Conclusion:

Black made a very profitable trade: the very important Nc3 was exchanged by a less important piece for that position. In fact, a "key"-piece for White's plans was taken off. For the same objective, the lead in development, Black made a self-weakening move, but drove away the white bishop. In the end, a third tempo was gained and the position of white king brought a quick victory to Black.

0-1

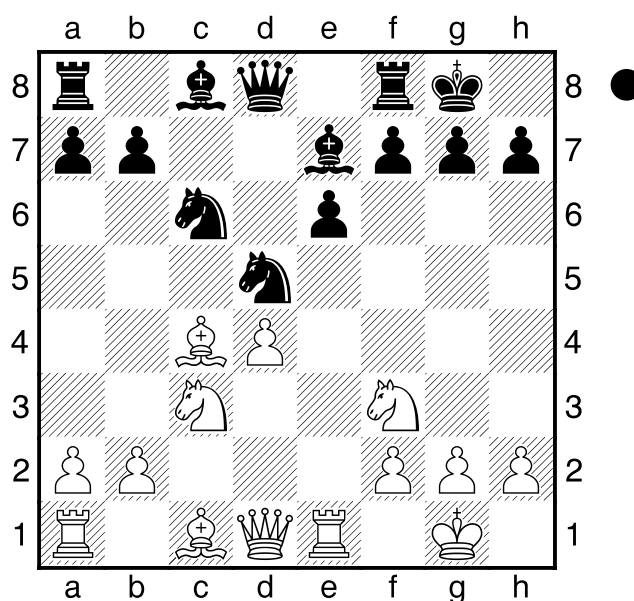
□ Botvinnik
■ Alekhine
Amsterdam

D41

1938

Study the following game on your own and try to learn as much as possible from it.
The diagrams indicate the key-moments of the game.

1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 c5
5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e3 Nc6 7.Bc4 cxd4 8.exd4
Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.Re1 Diagram



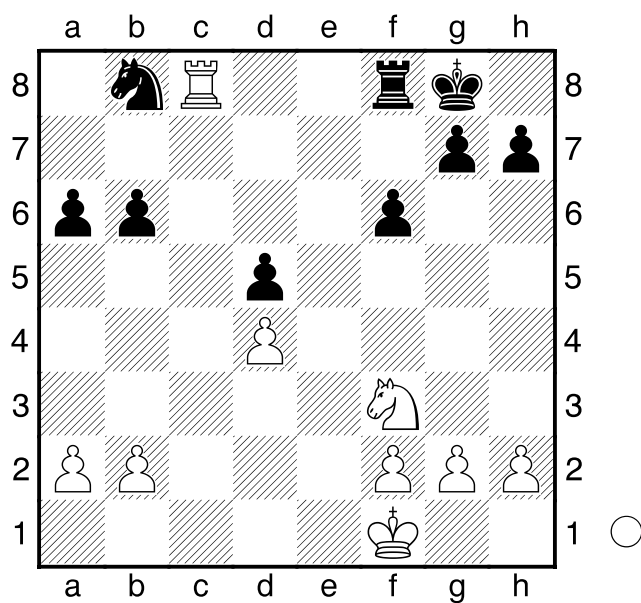
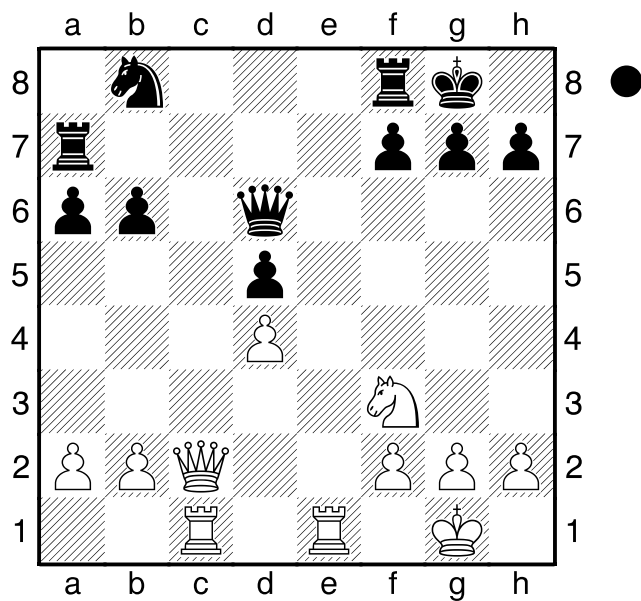
b6 11.Nxd5 exd5 12.Bb5 Bd7 13.Qa4 Nb8
14.Bf4 Bxb5 15.Qxb5 a6 16.Qa4 Bd6
17.Bxd6 Qxd6 18.Rac1 Ra7 19.Qc2
Diagram

(Diagram)

Re7 20.Rxe7 Qxe7 21.Qc7 Qxc7 22.Rxc7
f6 23.Kf1 Rf7 24.Rc8+ Rf8 Diagram

(Diagram)

25.Rc3 g5 26.Ne1 h5 27.h4 Nd7 28.Rc7
Rf7 29.Nf3 g4 30.Ne1 f5 31.Nd3 f4 32.f3
gxf3 33.gxf3 a5 34.a4 Kf8 35.Rc6 Ke7
36.Kf2 Rf8 37.b3 Kd8 38.Ke2 Nb8 39.Rg6
Kc7 40.Ne5 Na6 41.Rg7+ Kc8 42.Nc6 Rf6
43.Ne7+ Kb8 44.Nxd5 Rd6 45.Rg5 Nb4



46.Nxb4 axb4 47.Rxh5 Rc6 48.Rb5 Kc7

49.Rxb4 Rh6 50.Rb5 Rxh4 51.Kd3

We will provide the comments of this game which will be very instructive if you first studied the game on your own.

1-0

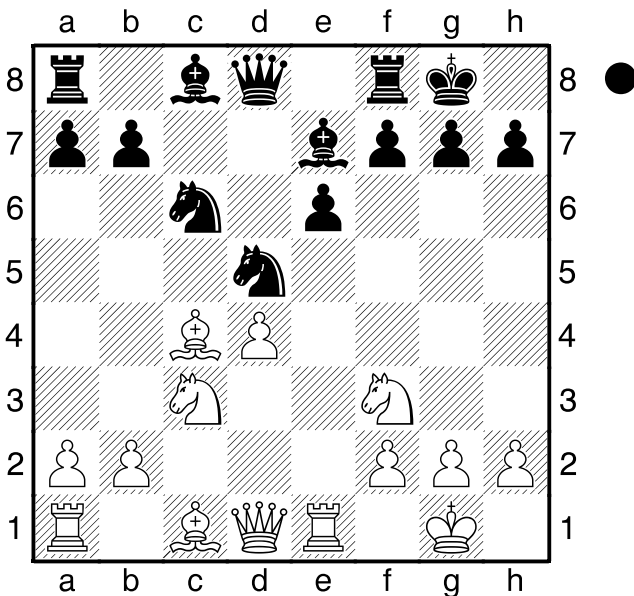
 **Botvinnik**
 **Alekhine**
 Amsterdam

1938

This game is instructive for both "lead in development" and "piece out of play", therefore it is given at the border of these 2 lessons.

In hope you studied this game on your own first (as recommended in the previous lesson), we will see why and how Botvinnik outplayed Alekhine, as the latter admitted after the game:

1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 c5
5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e3 Nc6 7.Bc4 cxd4 8.exd4
Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.Re1 Diagram



Botvinnik was the first who liked to play with an isolated pawn in the centre. White's weakness is compensated by the piece activity in the centre and attacking possibilities on the kingside (Nf3-e5, Bc4-a2-b1 [after a2-a3], Qd3). More about that when we'll study the isolated pawn.

b6?

As the game will show, this is a mistake. Black's intention was to develop his bishop on b7, strengthening the blockade on d5 (one of the elements in Black's TO DO list) and to finish the development with Ra8-c8, Qc7-b8 and Rfd8.

[Black's idea to play b7-b6 was better after the exchange of the knights on c3:
 10...Nxc3 11.bxc3 b6]

Now, an unexpected move followed:

11.Nxd5! exd5

and the pawn structure looks symmetrical which is not a good thing for someone wanting to win the game. However, the "small" difference between the pawns of the 2 players makes the difference: the consequence of the pawn placed on b6 is a weakness of the c6-square, which can be exploited by White right now:

12.Bb5 Bd7?

Black put his bishop on d7 with a normal purpose: to have control on both wings. However, this was the mistake which made Black to lose the game. The weakness of the light squares on the queenside is much more evident after the d7-bishop will be exchanged by White.

You should remember this: USUALLY a weakness becomes more and more evident as the opponent pieces (possible attackers and defenders of that weakness) are exchanged.

[Even if more passive: 12...Bb7 was better. White's b5-bishop will be chased away on time with a7-a6 and Black will be able to defend his position.

The game could continue: 13.Bf4 Rc8 14.Qa4 a6 15.Bd3 and White is the one to play for a win, but Black can defend successfully by exchanges and entering a symmetrical and drawish endgame.]

13.Qa4 Nb8 unfortunately for Alekhine this was forced

[13...Rc8 is bad in view of: 14.Bf4 with the threat Rc1 and Black cannot hold the a7-pawn and c-file.

If the bishop was on b7 (defending the weaknesses on the queenside), a7-a6 was possible because Bb5xa6 is bad because of Rc8-a8.]

14.Bf4 Bxb5 15.Qxb5

So, because of his mistakes in the opening, Black remained undeveloped. Even if the position of the pawns is symmetrical, the king castled and 2 pairs of minor pieces were

exchanged, White has the upper hand because of better pieces. The main difference is made by the black knight on b8 which is and will remain out of play.

a6 16.Qa4

White plays against the Black's problem: Nb8, keeping an eye on c6.

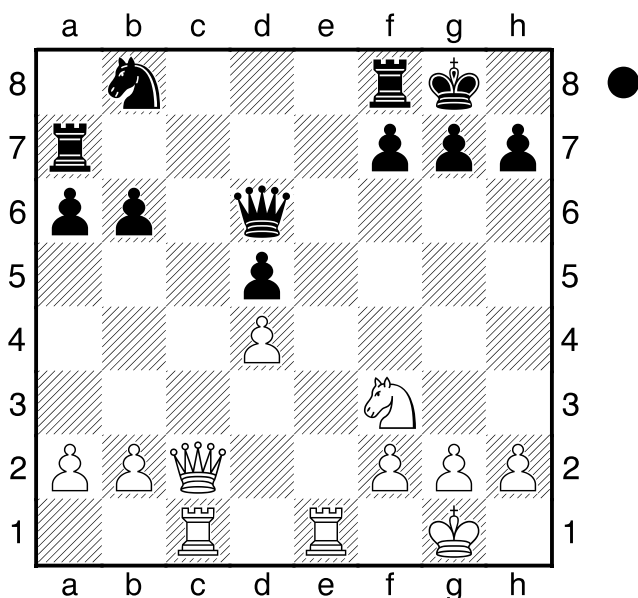
Bd6

[after 16...Nd7 17.Rac1 White's control over the entire c-file and Black's queenside weakened pawns make the game won for White.]

17.Bxd6 Qxd6 18.Rac1 Ra7

[Black's knight on b8 has an important role nevertheless: to defend the critical c6-square. After 18...Nd7 19.Rc6 Black has no hope.]

19.Qc2! Diagram



This is a key-moment of the game because White cannot improve more the status of his pieces or to provoke more weaknesses in Black's position. So, what to do? As we already said in one of our lessons of the first month, it is the moment to head for:

- a king attack OR
- a technically won endgame

As a king attack is not possible, White plans the exchanging of the queens.

Re7

[after 19...f6 20.Qf5 White exchange the queens too.]

20.Rxe7 Qxe7 21.Qc7 Qxc7 22.Rxc7

So, let's resume: Black made 2 mistakes in the opening: he weakened the c6-square by playing b7-b6 and let White to trade the light-squares bishops. As a consequence, White gained a target for attacks on the queenside (c6-square) and managed to restrict Black's b8-knight activity until the endgame. In addition with a rook on the 7th rank, this endgame is better for White.

Like someone said: "Chess is not correct if such positions cannot be won". Unfortunately, more and more nowadays non-professional players are afraid of such positions. Let's follow Botvinnik's technique against one of the masters of the endgame:

f6!

Black obstructs the mobility of the white knight and also makes room for the rook to come on f7 and free his knight.

23.Kf1

[White must play accurately or he can lose the advantage, as for example after:

23.Rb7 Rc8 24.Kf1 b5 Black is okay]

23...Rf7 24.Rc8+ Rf8 Diagram

(Diagram)

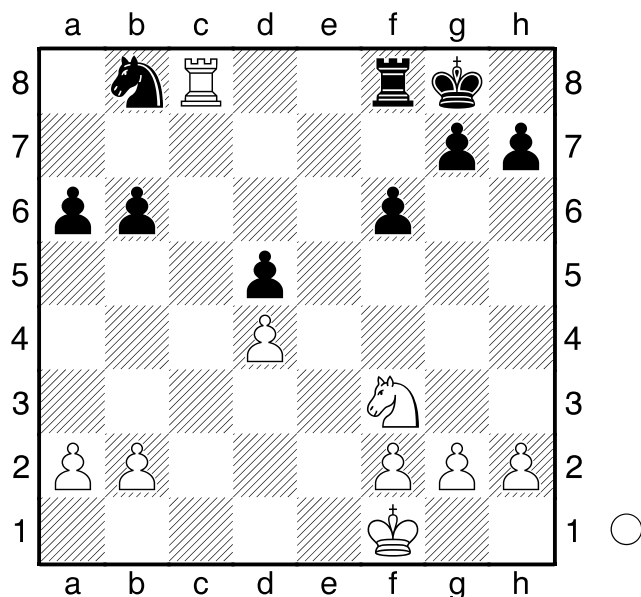
25.Rc3!

Very strong! White keeps the control over the important c-file. The rook can anytime go back in the Black's camp on c6 or c7 if Alekhine tries to reorganize the disposition of his pieces.

g5

Black has nothing to do than to try to get rid of the 7th rank's pawns.

[Black cannot activate his pieces in any way:
25...Nd7 26.Rc7 Rf7 27.Rc6 with threats



against the b6 and d5 pawns (Rc6-d6).]
 [25...Kf7 26.Rc7+ Kg8 (26...Kg6 27.Nh4+)
 27.Rb7 now, White is tempo up than in the
 previous variation (his king is already on f1).]

26.Ne1

The knight is going to more active positions.

h5 27.h4!

Botvinnik creates new weaknesses in Black's position. The pawns advanced too far from their pieces support are a serious problem in the endgame.

Nd7

[After both:

27...Kf7 28.hxg5 fxg5 29.Nf3 or]

[27...gxh4 28.Nf3

White gets good positions for his knight]

28.Rc7 Rf7

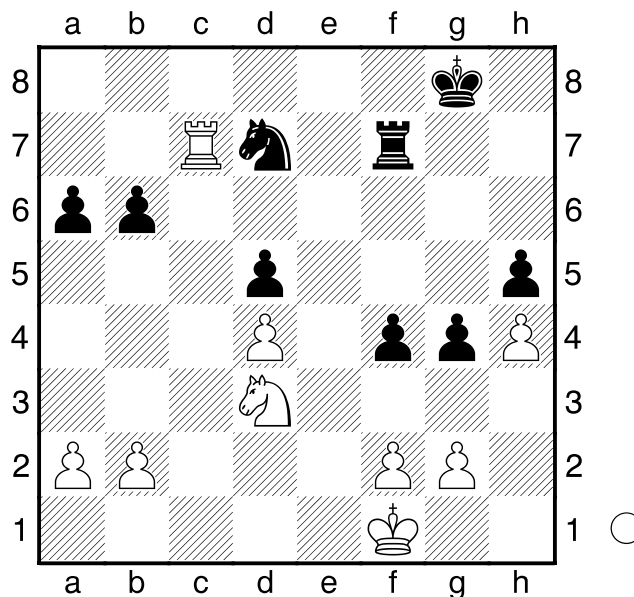
The Black knight has no role in this game. Even now, on d7, the knight is strongly obstructed by the white d4 pawn and limited by his own pawns. Try to imagine that knight on almost any other square on the board and you'll see that the position could drastically change.

29.Nf3

provoking black pawns to advance and this way creating weaknesses and good squares for the

knight.

g4 30.Ne1 f5 31.Nd3 f4 Diagram



Black had to prevent White's knight from coming on f4. However, now, his f4-pawn is too far from its camp and, therefore, is a new target for White's pieces. What to do? Fix the weakness!

32.f3! gxf3 33.gxf3 a5 34.a4

A clear superiority of White's pieces in this endgame. The black knight has no target or an easy route for activating his status, while the white knight attacks the f4-pawn and threatens to come on e5.

Kf8 35.Rc6 Ke7 36.Kf2 Rf8 37.b3 Kd8 38.Ke2 Nb8 39.Rg6

White keeps his rook in the Black's camp, near of the weaknesses and, very important, not letting the black knight to enter the game through c6.

Kc7 40.Ne5

The black knight is kept passive.

Na6 41.Rg7+ Kc8 42.Nc6 Rf6 43.Ne7+ Kb8 44.Nxd5 Rd6 45.Rg5 Nb4 46.Nxb4 axb4

Finally, the black knight escaped from his misery, but too late: the game is lost!

47.Rxh5 Rc6 48.Rb5 Kc7 49.Rxb4 Rh6
50.Rb5 Rxh4 51.Kd3

A very instructive example of "piece out of play"
which is worth to be replayed!

1-0

Piece out of Play / Obstruction

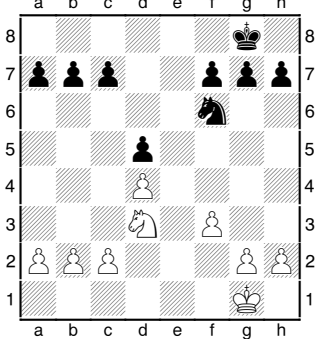
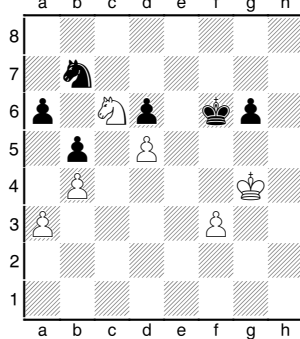
“Very often in a game a master only plays to cut off, so to speak, one of the pieces from the scene of actual conflict. Often a Bishop or a Knight is completely out of action. In such cases we might say that from that moment the game is won, because for all practical purposes there will be one more piece on one side than on the other.” - Jose Raul Capablanca

When we are assessing a position, one of the very important criteria to take into consideration is the **QUALITY** of pieces of the 2 camps.

At the border between quality and quantity (hypothetically speaking) is when one (or more) of the pieces on the board is obstructed by the opponent or limited by the own other pieces so that it cannot efficiently participate to the battle.

Beside that the out of play piece cannot take part to the battle on other area of the board, sometimes it even disturbs the normal movement of other pieces from his own camp because of its restricted mobility.

First of all, we have to make the difference between different levels of obstruction. In function of the level of limitation, there can be a piece which is limited in movement (see diagram 1) or a piece which is really out of play (see diagram 2).

 Diagram 1	In this position (diagram 1), the black knight is obstructed by the white f3-pawn, but we cannot call it “out of play” since the knight can still enter the game.	 Diagram 2	In this position (diagram 2), the black knight IS out of play. The knight is limited by the own pawn from d6 and obstructed by White’s b4-pawn and c6-knight

How a piece can become out of play:

- From the Opening as a common drawback of the system (as some opening variation of King’s Indian Defense, Ruy Lopez, Benoni, French and so on)
- When the superiority in the centre is overwhelming (see game Szabo – Manea)
- When that piece plays a very important defensive role (defends a piece, square, or is pinned)
- When its movement is limited by the own pieces and/or pawns.
- When its movement is obstructed by the opponent pieces and/or pawns
- When the piece has no objective, even if it is not blocked.

What to do when an opponent piece is out of play

The following actions should not free the opponent out-of-play piece.

A1) Play on the other side of the board

Because the opponent cannot move the piece from where it is blocked, the active side can attack on the other wing with superiority of forces. This is usually the most efficient method.

A2) Play against the out-of-play piece

If the out-of-play piece is strongly limited in its movements, a good strategy could be to play even exactly on that area of the board where the blocked piece is. This way, that piece becomes a fixed target, easy to be attacked and even captured. Moreover, the immobilized piece will hamper the movement of the other pieces from its own camp.

A3) Exchange the active pieces

When there are many pieces on the board, one piece that cannot participate to the battle might pass unobserved. But when there are only a few pieces on the board, an out of play piece is a very important problem.

A4) Very quick operations

Often, an opponent piece can be out of play for only some few moves. In this case, very quick operations on the other side of the board should be seriously considered (see game Alekhine – Saemish)

Some examples of different pieces out of play

KNIGHT

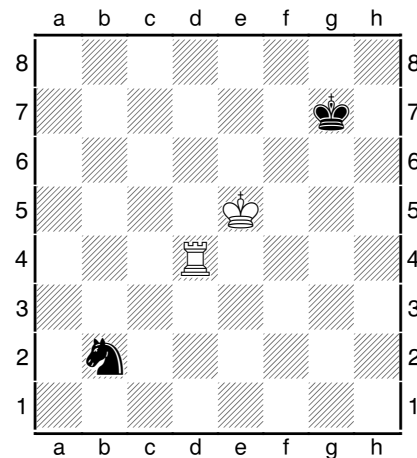
In endgames, the knight can be easily obstructed by bishops or rooks.

In this rook versus knight endgame, White wins easily by capturing the black knight which is strongly obstructed by the d4-rook:

1. Kd5 Kf6 2.Kc6!

Not 2.Kc5 because of 2...Ke5 and White has to release the black knight.

2...Ke5 3.Kc5 and Black has to move (zugzwang): **3...Kf5 4.Kb4 Ke5 5.Rd2**



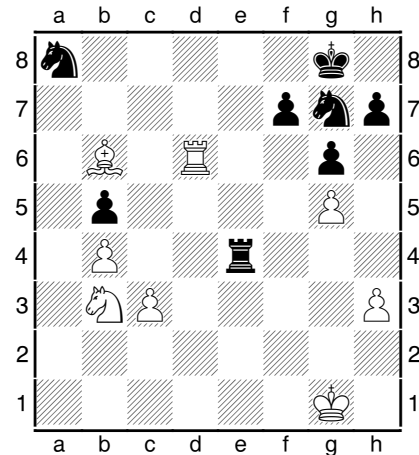
White is to move

In the game, Tal – Vogt, Riga 1981, Black arrived with his knight on a8 after some tactical complications.

White played now **1.Bd8!** obstructing the knight.

After **1...Ne6**, White starts to exchange the pieces: **2.Nc5! Re3 3.Nxe6 Rxe6 4.Rxe6 fxe6**.

Now, the only remained pieces are the white bishop and the obstructed black knight on a8. Black resigned some few moves later as the pawn endgame is won by White.

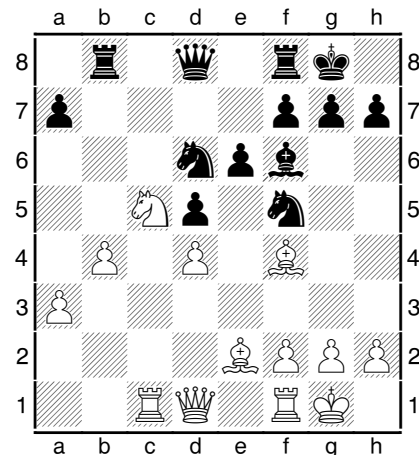


White is to move

This position is from the game Karpov – Bagirov, Riga, 1970.

Annotating his game, Karpov wrote: Neutralizing an opponent minor piece is one of the most efficient procedures of modern strategy.

White played **1.Be5** and after **1...Bxe5** (forced) **2.dxe5 Nb7**, Karpov retreated his knight: **3.Nb3!** and, the black knight was left out of play on b7.



White is to move

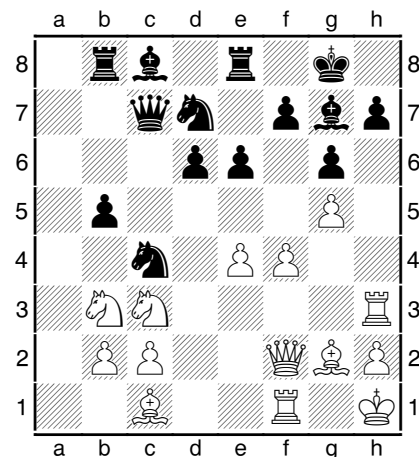
BISHOP

In the game, Sokolov – Ribli, 1985, White started an action meant to restrict the mobility of the black g7-bishop.

1.f5!

This move has a drawback however: Black gets the important e5-square for his knights.

The game went: **1...Nce5 2.Qh4 Nf8 3.f6 Bh8**, and, later, White won proving that the out of play h8-bishop counts more than anything else. You can see the whole game in the games file, part II.

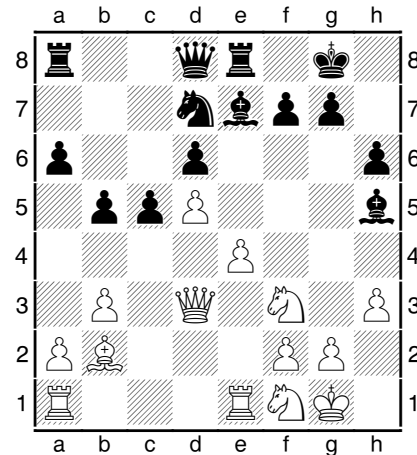


White is to move

In the game Capablanca – Bogoljubow, London 1922, the h5-bishop looks as any other normal piece in a chess game.

However, after the very interesting move:

1. N3d2, the bishop remains without an objective. Capablanca used the position of the bishop and played later f2-f4, g2-g4, and f4-f5 making the bishop to retreat on h7. Then, opening the queenside, White was as being a piece up, enough to win the game.

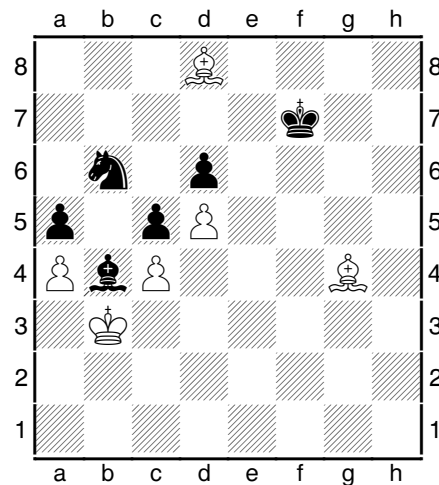


White is to move

Black seems to be lost here (see diagram), however, he finds a very interesting way to draw:

1...Ke8!! 2.Bxb6 Ke7.

Now, the White's dark-square bishop is obstructed by Black and White cannot win. (A sacrifice of the bishop on d6 wouldn't be enough as the opposite colored bishop endgame is draw: Black will keep the king on d6 and will move only the bishop)



Black is to move

ROOK

In this position, White has a pawn for an exchange, but the black rook is blocked on a7. White eliminates the extra pieces, leaving on the board only his knight with the black rook:

1.Bxe6 Kxe6 2.b4

White intends to block the black rook with a2-a4-a5 now

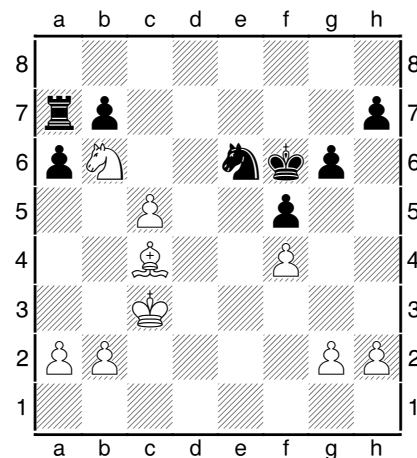
2...a5 3.b5 a4 4.a3 h6 5.h4 Ra5 6.Kb4 Ra7 7.g3 g5

7...Kf7 8.Nc8 Ra8 9.Nd6+;

7...Kf6 8.Nd5+ Kf7 9.Nc7;

7...h5 8.Kc3 Ra5 9.Kc4 Ra7 10.Kb4

8.hxg5 hxg5 9.fxg5 and White won



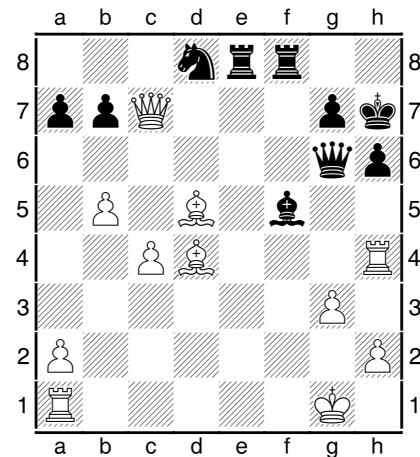
White is to move

The position is from the game Aronson – Tal, played in the USSR championship in 1957.

White is a pawn up and his position looks pretty good. However, there is one problem in his position and Black will exploit it immediately: only one rook defends the first rank and this can be blocked:

1...Bb1!!

By this move, Black puts the a1-rook out of play for a time in which the game will be decided. The a1-rook is now blocked by the bishop, so out of play. As the other rook is also not defending the first rank, Black can start now a strong attack against the white king.



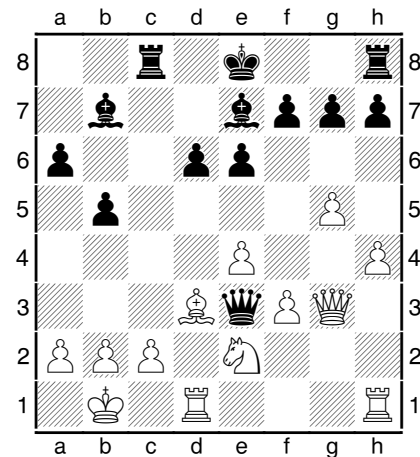
Black is to move

QUEEN

In this position, the black queen entered “too much into the game”, but too far from the other black pieces. White succeeds to block the queen immediately by a very strong move:

1.Nd4!!

The knight cannot be taken because of the discovered check on b5. Now, the black queen is lost as White will play Rhe1 at the next move or after the sequence 1...0-0 2.c3

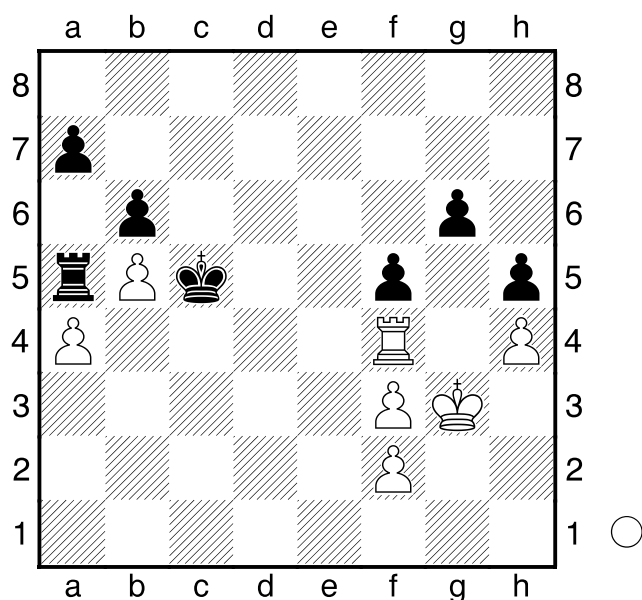


White is to move

10 advises to avoid remaining with a piece out of play:

1. In the opening, develop your pieces quickly.
2. Assure that the development squares for your pieces are secure.
3. Develop your 2 flanks harmoniously (do not let a flank undeveloped too much behind the other).
4. In closed or semi-closed positions (where the centre is blocked by pawns), assure that your pieces can go easily from a flank to another (the central squares behind the blocked central pawns should offer this mobility).
5. Make sure your pieces have space for maneuvers.

6. Before starting to move your pieces to a flank (against some target), make sure that the success of your actions is not a chimera.
7. Don't put the knights on the edge if this doesn't bring you something special.
8. Try to put your bishops and queen in positions from where they can "see" both flanks (for example: in general, a bishop on d3 is better than a bishop on b5)
9. Be careful at the consequences of your moves: when moving a piece or pawn try to avoid blocking others.
10. Try to place your pieces in positions where they have clear objectives and liberty of movement.



An interesting position where the black rook looks out of play being blocked by the white pawns at the edge. However, the out of play piece is not the black rook, but the white rook! There is no any square for this rook on the 4th rank and he defends the a4-pawn, a weakness in this endgame.

White has no useful moves:

41.Kg2 a6

The black rook escapes, while the white one remains trapped, limited by his own pawns and obstructed by the black pawns and king.

42.bxa6 Rxa6 43.Kg3 Ra8 44.Kg2 Rd8 45.a5

just a desperate move.

[Black wins in any case: 45.Kg3 Rd1 46.Kg2 Rb1 47.Kg3 Rb4 48.Rxb4 Kxb4 49.Kf4 Kxa4 50.Kg5 b5 51.Kxg6 b4 52.Kxh5 b3 53.Kh6 b2 54.h5 b1Q and Black wins]

45...b5

and White resigned as he cannot stop the advance of the black pawn.

0-1

Nisipeanu,LD

Adams,Mi

MTel Sofia BUL (8)

C96

2693

2734

18.05.2007

In the very complicated Ruy Lopez opening, Black sometimes tries to create counter-chances on the queenside. Of course, for this reason, he creates a local force superiority on that flank.

By clever maneuvers, White even attracts Black to attack there and, then, puts obstacles and obstructs black pieces.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Nd7 12.Kh1

A useful move for White which prepares an attack on the kingside. Also, White wants to see Black's plans for the future.

Re8 13.d5

Blocking the centre after Black lost a move with Re8 (with the idea to put pressure on e4).

Nb6

Black's 2 flanks are connected by only 2 lines (7th and 8th rank), and, therefore, they cannot be left in the centre. Black has to be very careful which piece should be brought in the queenside and which on the kingside.

14.b3! Diagram

(Diagram)

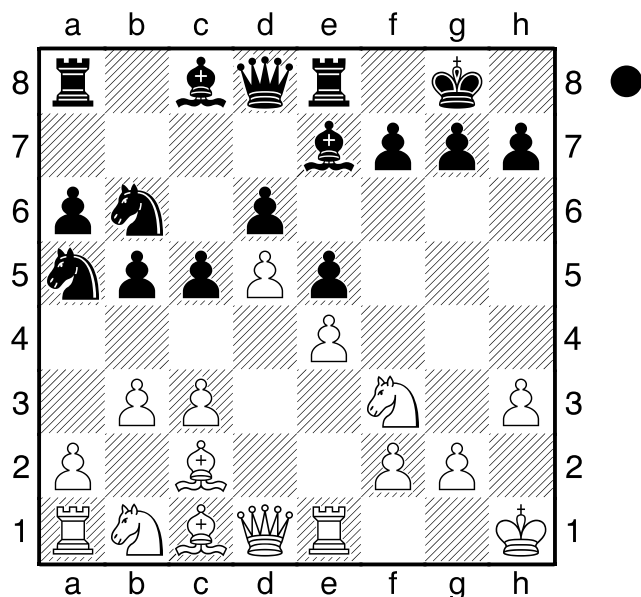
White takes the c4-square, obstructing the black knights.

Bd7

the bishop develops on the centre, with control on both flanks. However, the bishop limits the mobility of the b6-knight.

15.Be3 Qc7 16.g4

White starts active operations on the kingside, in the same time preventing the counter-play with f7-f5.



c4

Black has to advance the pawns in order to achieve something on the queenside. We know that in the positions with closed centre, the strategy of attacking on a flank begins with the advance of the pawns in order to open the lines.

17.b4 Nb7

Black's knights are now blocked on the queenside. All that matters in this position is which side can arrive first in attack. Black's counterplay is based on a6-a5, opening the a-file and Nb6-a4 or c4-c3 and Nb6-c4. However, the b7-knight is on a clear unfortunate position, rather limiting the activity of the other black pieces.

18.Nbd2 a5 19.a3 Ra6

Black wants to open the a-file with maximum efficiency, so he wants to double the rooks first.

20.Nf1 Rea8 21.Bc1 Nd8

Making room for the queen to come on a7 and bringing the knight closer to his king.

22.Ne3 axb4 23.cxb4 f6 24.Nf5 Bc8

Black makes room for the other knight to come in defense via d7-f8.

25.Rg1 Nf7 26.h4 Bd8 27.Rg3 Kh8 28.g5

g6 29.Ne3 fxg5 30.hxg5 Kg8 31.Kg2
White prepares the entrance on the h-file.

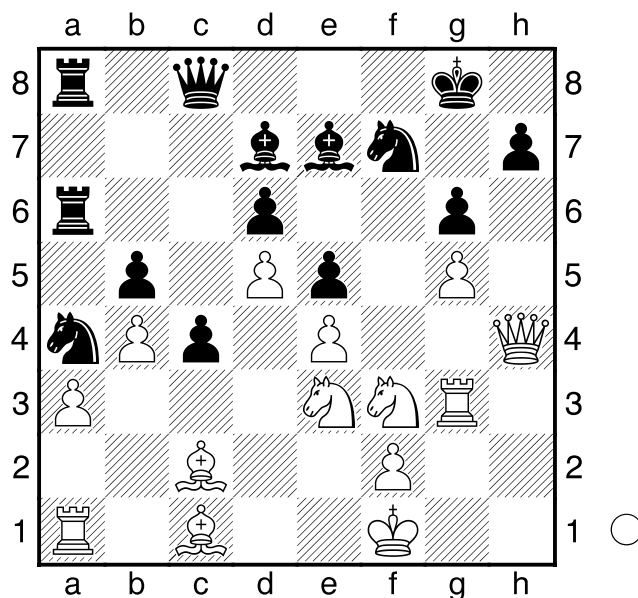
Na4 32.Qe1 Bd7 33.Qh1 Qc8 34.Qh2 Nc3

Finally, one of the black knights entered White's camp, but with no sustaining from other pieces. Is it "out of play"? Partially, yes. White managed to get more space on the kingside than his opponent on the other side and, moreover, all his piece, excepting the a1-rook "see" on the kingside.

35.Kf1

Defends the e2-square against the manoeuvre Nc3-e2-f4 which would have been destabilized White's play.

Be7 36.Bb2 Na4 37.Bc1 Bf8 38.Qh4 Be7
39.Qh2 Bf8 40.Qh4 Be7 Diagram



A move repetition to go over the time control of the 40th move.

41.Nf5

White brings another force in attack, creating a local force superiority.

Qf8

[41...gxf5 is not good because of: 42.Qh5 with the threats g5-g6 and Rg3-h3.]

42.Nh2

White rearrange his pieces for the best cooperation.

h6 43.Ng4 hxc5

[43...gxf5 44.exf5 Bxc5 45.Bxc5 hxc5
46.Nf6+ Kg7 47.Nxd7]

**44.Bxc5 Nxc5 45.Ngh6+ Kh7 46.Nf7+ Kg8
47.N7h6+ Kh7 48.Nf7+ Kg8 49.Nxc5 Bxc5
50.Rxc5 Be8 51.Kg2 R8a7 52.Rh1 Qf6
53.Nh6+ Black resigned**

Conclusion: In a position with closed centre, the 2 players usually attack on different sides and concentrate their forces there. The side with small space in the centre (in this game, Black had to maneuver behind the d6-pawn, so using only 2 ranks) is in danger to get his pieces out of play.

In fact, the "play" is dictated by the area of the board where the operations of one of the player become successful. So, before starting to move your pieces on a side (when the centre is closed), make sure that you can put real problems to your opponent first, or your pieces will be out of play.

In this game, you could saw something instructive even in Black's strategy: Adams put his bishops in the centre (d7 and d8), seeing both flanks.

1-0

□ **Manea,A**
■ **Baratosi,D**
Tusnad (6)

B47

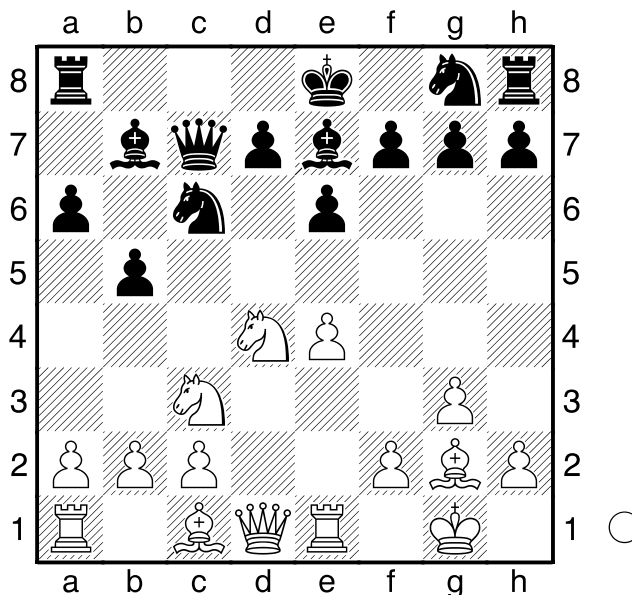
2001

This game is also instructive for the "lead in development".

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.Nc3 a6 4.g3 Nc6 5.d4
cxd4 6.Nxd4 Qc7 7.Bg2 b5?!**

Black develops his queenside too early. Better was to follow the theory by playing: 7...Nf6 or 7...d6.

8.0-0 Bb7 9.Re1 Be7 Diagram



10.Nxc6!

White is very careful to the particularities of the position and do not play "normal" moves like Be3 or so. He makes an unusual exchange for this stage of the game, but with a very good reason: to obstruct the g8-knight (in connection with the next move).

dxcc6 11.e5 the idea of the previous exchange.

Rd8 12.Qg4 g6 13.Bg5

As the dark-squares became weak, White wants to exchange their defender (see the comments of the game Botvinnik-Alekhine from this month).

h5 14.Qf4 Bxc5 15.Qxc5 Qe7

[The knight is obstructed on g8 by the e5-pawn, by the defensive role that he must play for the g8-square. However, Black have no time to develop him now: 15...Ne7 16.Ne4 Nd5 17.Nd6+ Kf8 18.Nxb7]

16.Qf4 Kf8 17.Rad1

Exchanging the only black active piece and getting the control over the d-file.

Kg7 18.Rxd8 Qxd8 19.Rd1 Qe7 20.h4

White has time to block any Black's counter-play, based here on g6-g5 (and, maybe, h5-h4).

**f5 21.Rd6 Qe8 22.Qg5 Rh7 23.Ne2 Kf7
24.Nf4 Rg7 25.b4! Qe7 26.Nxe6**

Conclusion: Black didn't develop the flanks harmoniously with care for the centre and was punished by White immediately. Once again, we want to stress: the chess player should develop an eagle eye for such situations and react immediately when the opponent permits.

1-0

□ **Alekhine**
■ **Saemisch**
Berlin

1923

A very interesting game where both players played blindfold.

Almost unnoticed and without being forced, Black put or left his pieces out of play. Let's see how Alekhine exploited this.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Be2 e6 4.0-0 d6 5.d4 cxd4 6.Nxd4 Nf6 7.Bf3 Ne5 8.c4 Nxf3+ 9.Qxf3 Be7 10.Nc3 0-0 11.b3 Nd7

Little by little, Black puts his pieces out of play: Nd7, Qc7, Rd8. All this wouldn't be so bad but, in the meantime, White starts an active operation on the kingside.

12.Bb2 Bf6 13.Rad1 a6 14.Qg3 Qc7 15.Kh1 Rd8 16.f4 b6 Diagram

(Diagram)

The bishop at f6 is the only guardian of the kingside, the rest of the pieces are practically out of play. White now opens the f-file destroying the pawns at e6 and f7.

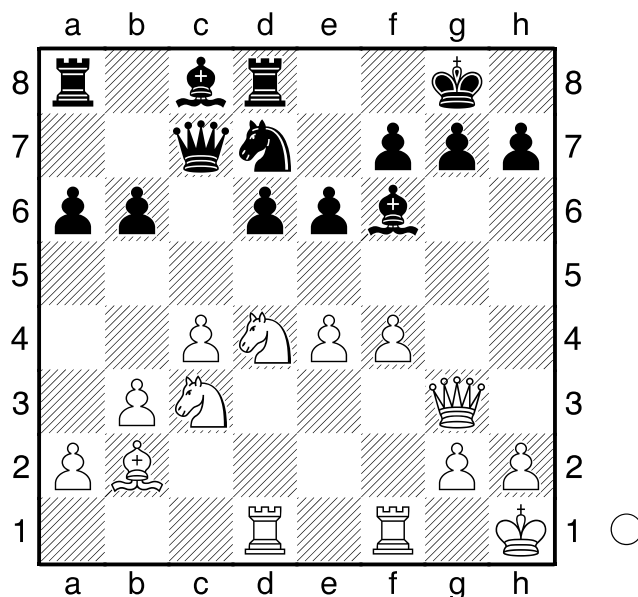
17.f5 Be5

Black counters by threatening the White queen. Once it moves, the knight will move to f6 and the kingside will be defended. But Alekhine wastes no time defending the queen.

18.fxe6!! Bxg3

[18...fxe6 19.Nxe6+-]

19.exf7+ Kh8 20.Nd5 Here Black resigned,



because there was no defense. **1-0**

[20.Nd5 Qb8 (20...Qc5 21.Ne6 Be5 22.Bxe5 dxe5 23.Nxc5 bxc5 24.Nb6+-) 21.Nc6+-]

1-0

□ **Fischer**
■ **Spassky**
Sveti Stefan (9)

1992

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Bxc6 dxc6

Fischer played the Exchange Variation of Ruy Lopez from time to time. The idea of White is to renounce at the bishop pair in exchange of another advantage in the endgame will follow: White gets pawn majority on the centre (the e- and f- pawn phalanx) against the no good doubled pawns on the c-file for Black.

5.0-0 f6 6.d4 exd4 7.Nxd4 c5 8.Nb3 Qxd1 9.Rxd1

This is the typical position of the beginning of the Ruy Lopez Exchange Variation that White considers when takes on c6.

Bg4 10.f3 Be6 11.Nc3 Bd6 12.Be3 b6 13.a4

By the previous move (Be3), this and next moves, White forces Black to make defensive moves on the queenside and doesn't let him to

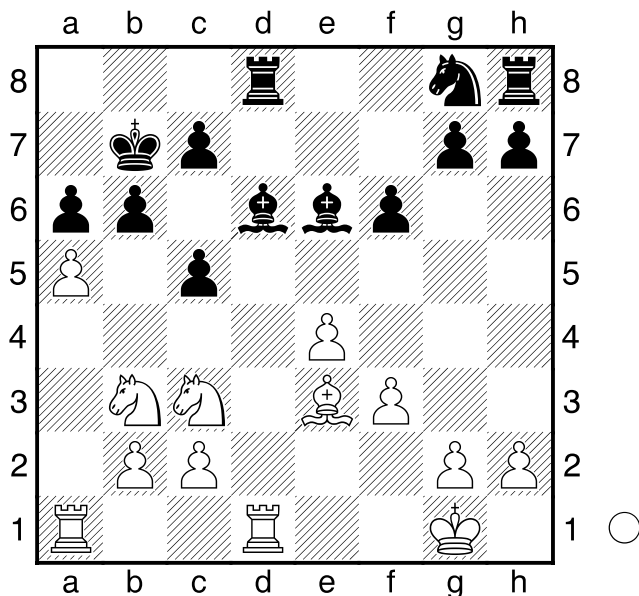
complete the development. This way, Black will have a rook and a knight out of play.

0-0-0 14.a5

It is interesting to remember from the lesson about the king's safety. We gave the knight the role of the best defender which staying on f6 can discourage many attacks.

Here, after playing the long castle, the black king is not safe for the same reason: there is no knight in his defense. If the black g8-knight was on c6, the things would have been totally different.

Kb7 Diagram



Is White's attack stopped? Find a way to continue in force, keeping the initiative that White clearly has at this moment.

15.e5!

White's superiority of forces on the queenside permits a nice combination. In fact, White attacks with all his pieces and 2 pawns, White Black is 2 pieces out of play.

Be7

Forced.

Black cannot take the pawn:

[15...fxe5 16.axb6 cxb6 17.Ne4 Bxb3

(17...Be7 18.Nbxc5+ bxc5 19.Rxd8 Bxd8 20.Nxc5+-) 18.cxb3 Kc6 (18...Be7 19.Rxd8 Bxd8 20.Nd6+ Ka7 21.Nf7+-) 19.Rxa6 Be7 20.Rxd8 Bxd8 21.Nxc5±] [15...Bxb3 16.exd6 Bxc2 17.Rdc1 Bf5 18.dxc7±]

16.Rxd8 Bxd8 17.Ne4

Exploiting the possibility of a fork at c5, White continues to make Black problems on the queenside where Black defends with less than half of his quantitative potential.

Kc6

[For Black was better to finish his development with the first occasion (which is only now):

17...Bxb3 giving back the bishop-pair but doubling White's pawns and eliminating the (real) threat of Nb3xc5+ 18.cxb3 Ne7 finally developing the knight 19.exf6 gxf6 and, now, 20.Nxf6 is not good in view of: Nf5]

18.axb6 cxb6

[18...Bxb3 19.b7! Kxb7 20.Nxc5+-]

19.Nbxc5 Bc8

[19...bxc5 20.Rxa6+ Kb7 21.Nxc5+]

20.Nxa6 fxe5 21.Nb4+ and Black resigned. 1-0

□ Smyslov

■ Botvinnik

World Championship (11)

1958

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Nf3 Bg7

5.Qb3

One of the main systems against the Grunfeld Defense.

dx4 6.Qxc4 0-0 7.e4 Bg4

Black's strategy is to challenge the White's centre, especially pressing on the d4-pawn. If this pawn is made to advance or exchanged, Black will get strong squares for his knights on e5 and c5 and a strong bishop on g7.

The bishop-move on g4 has the role to exchange one of the defenders of the d4-pawn and to clear the c8-square for a rook, preceded by the push c7-c5.

8.Be3 Nfd7 9.Rd1

White concentrates his forces to defend this key-square (pawn) at d4. Here we can notice one of the consequences of the move Qd1-b3: White cleared the d1-square for the rook.

Nb6 10.Qb3 Nc6 11.d5

Finally, White moved his d4-pawn forward. The triumph of Black's strategy doesn't mean the win of the game. In chess, everything is in a balance: you win something, you give something. Instead, White gained more space and the d4-square for his pieces.

Ne5 12.Be2 Nxf3+ 13.gxf3 Bh5

Black puts his bishop as an obstacle to the White's pawn-advance h2-h4-h5. However, the black bishop will be out of play on h5. Let's see how White exploited this.

[After 13...Bd7 14.h4 h5 15.Rg1 with attack for White]

14.h4 Qd7 15.a4

White has a strong control over the centre so, there is no reason for not playing on the flanks. By a4-a5, White threatens to put a second black piece out of play.

a5

White's threat was very real, so Black had to stop a4-a5, but made a weakness on b5 that White can use.

16.Nb5 Nc8 17.Bd4

A very normal move, but still instructive. White's strategy of play against the piece out of play is to exchange the active pieces of the opponent. By every exchange, the discrepancy between active forces of the 2 players is increased.

Nd6

[Better was: 17...Bxd4 18.Nxd4 Nb6 keeping the white queen or other white piece

in defense of the a4-pawn.]

18.Bxg7 Kxg7 19.Nd4

A clear difference between the 2 knights: White has the knight on an advanced position, threatening the black king (later, by Nf5), while the black knight is strongly obstructed by white pieces and bishop right on the middle of the board.

It is interesting to notice the importance of apparently passive Be2. That bishop obstructs 2 black pieces!

Kg8 20.Rg1 Qh3 21.Qe3

White's queen heads over to attack Black's weak dark squares.

c5?

a serious mistake after which Black's camp will be easily penetrable due a lot of weaknesses, especially on dark-squares.

[Better was: 21...Qxh4 22.e5 Ne8 and White has to fight for the win.]

22.dxc6 bxc6 23.Qg5 c5

[23...Kh8 24.Qxe7+-]

24.Nc6 and Black resigned as the piece out of play from h5 is now threatened to be took off.

1-0

A43

□ Neagos,Raul

■ Breuer

Internationales Open Oberwat (2)

07.2004

1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.f4 Bg7 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Nc3 0-0 6.Bd3 c5 7.d5 Bg4

White's attack on this system is very strong. White plays 0-0, Qd1-e1-h4 followed by e4-e5 or f4-f5 and, later, Ng5. In fact, the white knight from f3 is a very important piece for this attack, and, therefore, Black exchange it.

8.0-0 Nbd7 9.h3 Bxf3 10.Qxf3 Ne8

White has a big superiority in the centre and good prospects for an attack against the black king. Black should play dynamically, trying to

challenge the strong White's centre before being too late. The knight maneuver has as objective opening the diagonal for the g7-bishop, clearing the f-file for f7-f5 if necessary to block White's attack and, also, a maneuver to bring the knight on the queenside on c7.

11.Bd2 a6 12.a4 Qb6

Here, Black seems to lack in ideas of continuing his counter-play on the queenside and is trying artificially to get the initiative. Black threatens Qxb2 and c5+, however the queen-move in front of the b-pawn (the soul of any counter-play for Black) cannot be good.

13.a5 Qa7

Black puts his queen out of play.

14.Kh1 Nc7 15.h4 b5 16.axb6 Qxb6 17.Na4

White's knight on the queenside doesn't look good. White plays on the kingside and suddenly plays a knight on the other edge of the board. But how can Black progress on that side if not playing Nd7-b6? So, White is only winning one tempo by this move.

Qb7 18.h5 Nb5 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.c3 Nb6

Exactly what White expected.

21.Nxb6 Qxb6

Black's queen is on the queenside on the 6th rank, so she would need 2 tempi to come in defensive. And the b5-knight is strongly obstructed by the c3-pawn. It is time for the decisive attack on the side of the board:

22.f5 Bf6

Black cannot defend with a bishop against 4 white pieces. Black tries to make room for the king on g7 and bring the rook on h8.

23.fxg6 fxg6 24.Qg4 Kg7 25.Bh6+!

The shortest way to victory. Only computers need more time to see such an obvious move. Black's king is attracted on a worse square and the h-file is closed too.

Kxh6 26.e5 Bg5 27.Qe6 Rg8 28.Rf7 Bh4

29.Qg4 followed by mate. Black resigned.
1-0

A43

□ **Neagos,Raul**

■ **Vajda,Albert**

2478

Sah Activ – Helvetansa II rapid

13.11.2006

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 c5 3.d5 b5

An interesting variation where Black hopes for a very active play from the opening. However, a strategic approach to this variation gives White a better position.

4.Bg5!

The exclamation mark is for the how strong is this variation for White, not for my move.

Qb6 5.Bxf6 Qxf6 6.c3 e5 7.e4 a6

Where is Black's problem in this position? He has the bishop-pair and space advantage on the queenside. A closer look will reveal serious problems in Black's position. His advanced pawns on the queenside are not an asset, but a disadvantage that White can and SHOULD use immediately:

8.a4!

The white light-square bishop is indeed a "bad bishop" using the definition that he is on the same color as the own blocked pawns in the centre. But, this bishop, together with the a-pawn and the a1-rook create threats against black pawns, so we can call this bishop not a "bad" or "good" one, but an active bishop with a good target. Here we can notice that a bishop (or a rook) even un-moved yet can be a good and very active piece during the opening stage.

Once again, we want to stress that the normal moves can bring nothing sometimes. Moves like 0-0, Be2, Nd2, Qc2 and, then, "let's play" bring nothing. You should try to put problems to your opponent at every move.

bx a4

[8...b4 is not better because of: 9.cxb4 cxb4 10.Qc2 Bb7 (10...Qd8 11.Nxe5+-) 11.Qc7

and black bishop is trapped at his home.]

9.Qxa4?! not the best move. The pawn could wait.

[9.Nbd2! was much stronger. The knight would have brought more to White's attack, as for example:

d6 (9...Be7 10.Nc4 with more threats that Black cannot parry) 10.Qxa4+ Bd7 (10...Nd7 11.Qc6 Rb8 12.Bxa6) 11.Qb3 Bc8 12.Bb5+]

9...Be7 10.Nbd2 0-0 11.Nc4 d6

White made only 1 "normal" move (Qd1xa4) after a strong move (a2-a4) in a good variation and Black succeeded to castle and to defend his big weaknesses on the queenside.

However, White still has the upper hand and this is because of the out of play black queen.

12.Nb6 Ra7 13.Nxc8 Rxc8

White exchanged the defender of the weak light squares on the queenside and, also, the "good" black bishop.

14.Be2

Now, that the weaknesses are created, the White's advantage is a long-term one (weak pawn on a6, strong square on c4, weak light-squares), he can compete his development.

Nd7 15.0-0 Nb6 16.Qc2 Qf4

Black knows very well that the position cannot be hold with such weaknesses on the queenside and the most important piece out play.

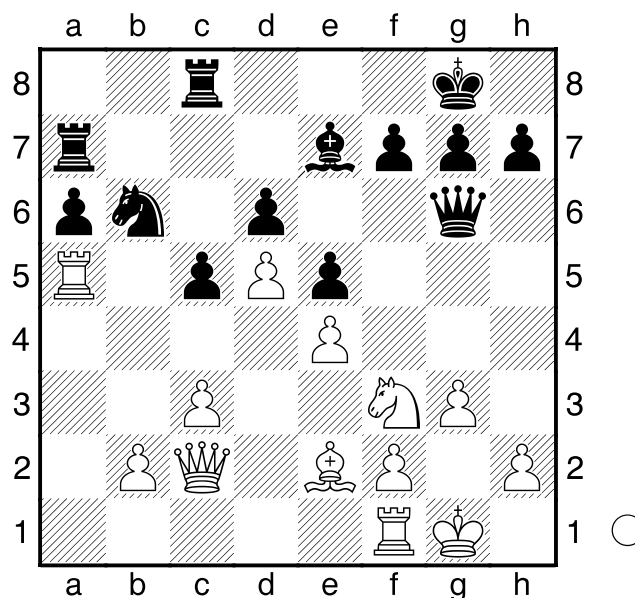
Therefore, he tries to give a role to his queen: attacking on e4 will tie the white queen in defense, so:

17.g3 Qh6 18.Ra5

with the intention to double the rooks on the a-file. The a6-pawn doesn't go anywhere now.

[18.Rxa6 Rxa6 19.Bxa6 Ra8 20.Bb5 was more clear. However, White wanted to win the a6-pawn and, in the same time, to keep the control over the a-file and subsequently the queenside.]

18...Qg6 Diagram



Black plays very well, trying to give a role to his queen again. Now, he also threatens to take on d5.

19.Rfa1!

The d5-pawn made his duty. White leaves that pawn in exchange of entering the opponent's camp where he misses a piece: the queen.

Nxd5 20.Rxa6 Rxa6 21.Rxa6

White is threatening now to take on e5 and the queen cannot leave without losing the d5-knight.

Nf6 forced 22.Ra7 Kf8 forced 23.Nd2

White defends the e4-pawn and prepares to bring the queen in attack by Qa4 or Qb3. The black queen remains out of play.

h5

Black tries to create a play on the kingside in order to give his queen some scope.

24.Qb3 Ne8

[24...Nxe4 is not possible because of 25.Qb7]

25.Bb5 Rb8 26.Qa4 Qg5 27.Nf1

[27.Nc4 with the same idea Ne3 would have been even stronger]

27...g6 28.Ne3

[White missed the simple: 28.h4 Qc1
29.Rxe7 Rxb5 (29...Kxe7 30.Qa7+ Kf6
31.Qxb8) 30.Rxe8+-]

28...Nf6 29.h4

[29.Rxe7+- ΔRxb5 30.Qa7]

**29...Qh6 30.Rxe7 Rxb5 31.Qa7 Qg7 32.Nc4
Nxe4 33.Rd7 Qf6 34.Qa8+ Kg7 35.Qxe4
1-0**

□ Szabo,Gergely-Andras-Gyul
■ Manea,A
Tusnad – (9)

**C47
2524**

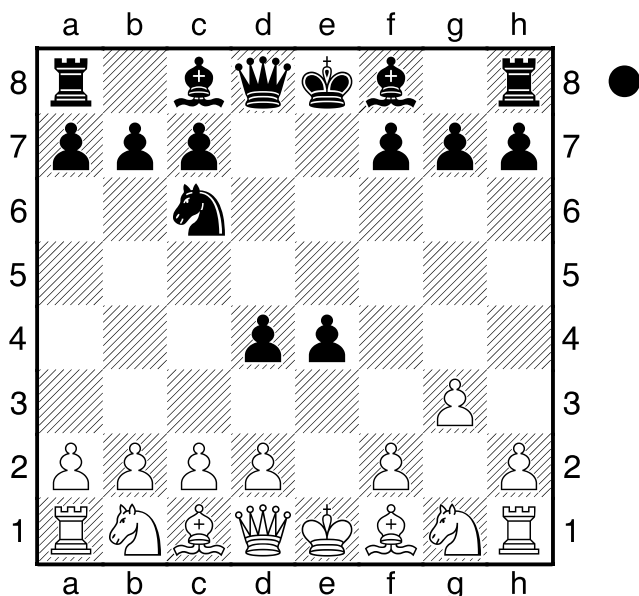
2001

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.g3 Nxe4!?

A crazy variation! The idea of Black's play is to send back the white knights and to get a strong centre.

5.Nxe4 d5 6.Nc3 d4 7.Nb1 e4 8.Ng1

Diagram



Practically, Black has gained space and White is with all his pieces totally out of play. There are very rare occasions to see White completely undeveloped at the 8th move.

d3

Black is a piece down but all his minor pieces will come easily into play wherever they want.

9.c3 Bc5 10.Qh5 Qe7 11.Bh3

White tries to eliminate from Black's active pieces.

g6 12.Qh6 f5

The wall of Black pawns will restrict the mobility of all white pieces.

The comments are useless. The picture tells a lot. Now, Black's plan is to finish his development and, then, concentrate his forces against the white king. The extra piece White has won't help him at all, giving the fact that the 2 white flanks are connected by only one square (d1), so practically Black can get piece superiority on any part of the board.

13.b4 Bb6 14.Bb2 Be6 15.Na3 Rf8

16.0-0-0 Bxa2 17.Rf1 0-0-0 18.Bg2 a5

Black opens now the position on the queenside where he will be able to attack with all his forces, while White defends with only a knight and a bishop. All White's other pieces are out of play.

19.b5 Ne5

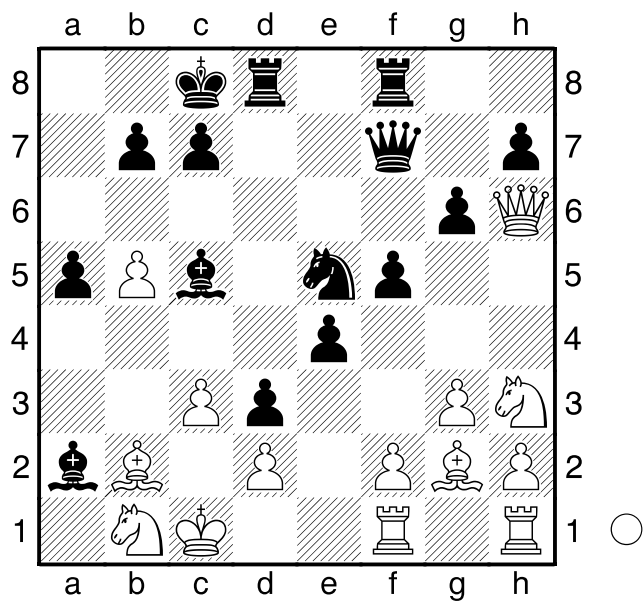
[19...Nd4 20.cxd4 Rxd4+-]

20.Nh3 Bc5 21.Nb1 Qf7 Diagram

(Diagram)

White resigned because there is no good way to stop Qf7-b3-c2 with mate.

0-1



Kasparov, Garry **E92**

Chiburdanidze, Maia **2595**
2400
 Baku (11) 12.04.1980

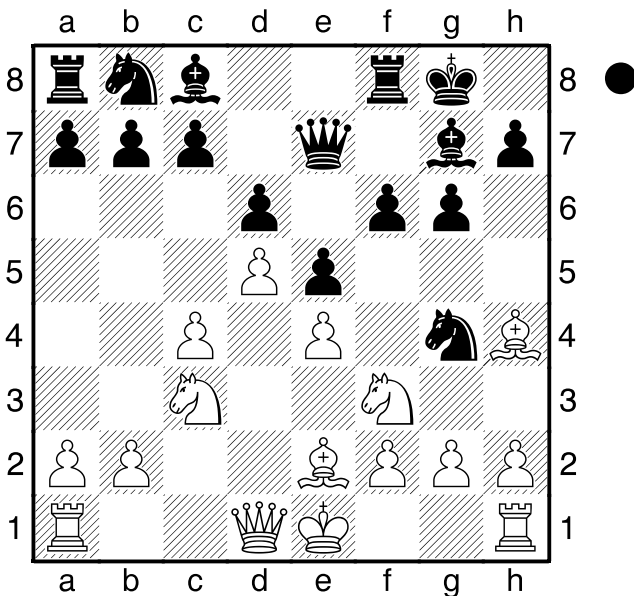
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.Be3 Qe7 8.d5

Now, White threatens to play c4-c5, a typical pawn attack on the queenside in a position with closed centre of the King's Indian Defense. This threat makes Black to play the next move:

Ng4 9.Bg5

Kasparov moves the bishop on the kingside disorganizing Black's play here.

f6 10.Bh4 Diagram



This is a very instructive position for understanding the concept of piece out of play. The white bishop on h4 looks out of play and, indeed, this bishop has no future on the kingside, being strongly blocked by the Black's pawn structure f6+e5.

The question is: Can now Black opens the play on the other side of the board and leave the white bishop without an objective on the other side? The answer is not in Black's favor as because of the pawn structure, the only player who can attack on the queenside is White (White has space advantage there and by b2-b4, c4-c5, Nf3-d2-c4, he can take the initiative on that side).

In this typical structure of the King's Indian

Defense, Black's only chance is an attack on the kingside which, of course, has to start with the pawn-move f5. So, the white bishop from h4 has a very good role of restricting Black's play on the kingside. The conclusion becomes now clear: the white bishop is not out of play, but, in fact, he puts real obstacles in front of Black's plans.

h5 11.h3 Nh6 12.Nd2

The white knight was obstructed on the f3-square, so White rearranges his piece to get better positions. The re-arrangement of pieces is tightly connected with a plan of play which is very instructive for our subject.

The black h6-knight has not a very good position and even if he can move on f7 and is on the kingside (where Black wants or wanted to start active operations), this knight creates problems to Black as his other pieces are hindered by the presence of this knight which cannot move freely.

Therefore, White is going to open the position exactly on the side where the problematic black knight is. In just some moves, we will see better the idea of White's plan.

c5 13.Nf1

White didn't take en-passant on c6, so his intentions become clear now: White will react on the kingside.

Nf7 14.g4 hxg4

[Closing the kingside with: 14...g5 15.Bg3 h4 16.Bh2

would have led to a longer game, but as the only theater of the battle is on the queenside, the game could be won only by White.]

15.Bxg4

Of course, White takes on g4, exchanging a piece which doesn't have a very nice future on this structure and, in the same time, freeing the queen's way to the kingside.

g5 16.Bxc8 Rxc8 17.Ne3

White makes a positional piece sacrifice (rarely seen) considering that Black has no time to get all his pieces into play in time.

[After the safer 17.Bg3 White keeps a very good position too.]

17...gxh4 18.Nf5

It is instructive to see in how many moves can the b8-knight come in defense (as Nb8-d7-f8 doesn't really defend something).

Qd8

[18...Qf8 19.Qg4 Rc7 20.Rg1 Ng5 21.Nxh4 followed simply by Nf5 and h3-h4 wins]

19.Qg4 Ng5 20.Nxh4 Rc7 21.Nf5 a6 22.h4 Nh7

The b8-knight and a8-rook are clearly out of play. However, the h7-knight, even if close to his king, it is clearly on an unfortunate position. The knight doesn't help in defense, but rather limits the movement of his own pieces.

23.Rg1 Qf8 24.Ke2 Ra7 25.a4 b6 26.Qh5 Kh8 27.Rg6 Rd7 28.Rag1 Rab7 29.Qg4

White increases the pressure systematically and has no reasons to hurry. All black pieces are cramped in defensive positions. It is interesting to note that both black knights do not have any role in this game.

The game doesn't need further commentaries. White wins easily by pushing the h-pawn.

Rbc7 30.Rg2 Rb7 31.Kf1 Ra7 32.Kg1 Rf7 33.Ne2 Qc8 34.f4 b5 35.axb5 axb5 36.cxb5 Rab7 37.h5 Nf8 38.Qh3 Nxg6 39.hxg6+ Kg8 40.gxf7+ Kf8

Conclusion:

In this game, White used a piece (the dark-square bishop) to obstruct Black's plans on the kingside. Because Black couldn't play freely on the kingside, his pieces got agglomerated and, especially, the knight got a cramped position, rather obstructing the other pieces from his own camp than helping with something.

White opened the game on the same side where the unfortunate black knight was, and, by a positional piece sacrifice, he succeeded to open the files toward the black king. The game is instructive for the active side's action of attacking on the same side of the "out-of-play"

piece.

1-0

E14

□ **Furman,Semen**
 ■ **Polugaevsky,Lev**
 URS-ch37 Moscow (1)

06.09.1969

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Bb4+ 4.Nbd2 0-0 5.e3 b6 6.Bd3 Bb7 7.0-0 d5 8.a3 Be7 9.b4 c5 10.bxc5 bxc5 11.Rb1 Ba6

Black loosens the control over the c6-square, where the b8-knight should be developed.

[11...Qc8 would have been better.]

12.Ne5

White is immediately taking the control over the weakened square.

cx d4 13.ex d4 Nfd??!

[Here, Black really should have thought to his knight's development square and play: 13...Qc8]

14.Ndf3 Nxe5 15.Nxe5 Bf6 16.Qc2

White's queen gets on the c-file with tempo, with the same purpose against the development of the b8-knight.

h6

[If 16...Bxe5 17.dxe5 Bxc4 18.Bxh7+ Kh8 19.Re1

with idea Re3-h3 and White gets a strong attack on the kingside]

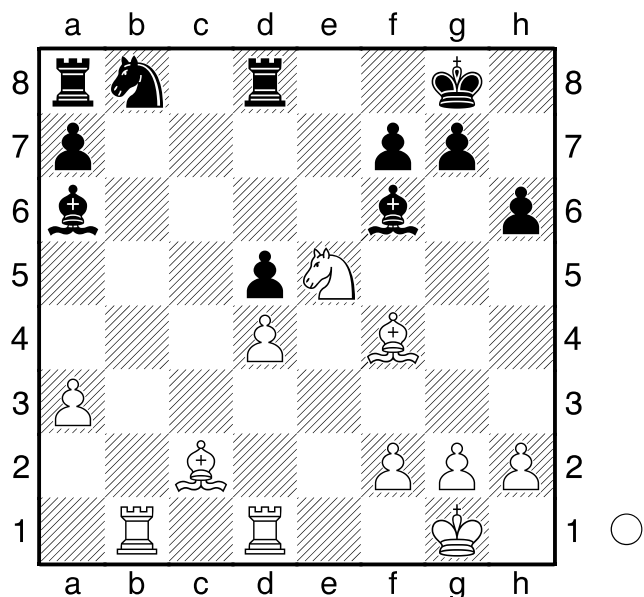
17.Rd1 Qc8 18.cxd5 Qxc2

[18...Bxd3 19.Qxd3 exd5 20.Bf4±]

19.Bxc2 exd5 20.Bf4 Rd8 Diagram

(Diagram)

Black wants to develop his b8-knight on d7, but with the next move White interdicts that. The black knight and the a8-rook will be out of play now.



21.Ba4! Be7 22.Rb3 g5 23.Bg3 f6

Black tries everything to dislocate the white pieces which obstruct the development of his queenside. However, this is too late.

24.Ng6! Bd6 25.Bxd6 Rxd6 26.Ne7+ Kf7
[26...Kh7 27.Rh3 and White wins after Bc2+]

27.Nf5 Re6 28.Rc1!+-

The main objective of White's moves remains the obstruction of the b8-knight.

h5 29.h3 h4 30.Rc7+ Kf8
[30...Kg6 31.Rf3!+-]

31.Re3!

The exchange of the active black pieces leads quickly to the victory. Black remains with a bishop against 3 white pieces!

Rxe3 32.Nxe3 Bd3 33.Rc8+ Kf7 34.Nxd5
and Black resigned.

Conclusion:

In this game, Black neglected to protect the development square for his b8-knight. White took the control over this square immediately (Nf3-e5 and, later, Qc2), then opened the game to exchange pieces and got a position where he was practically a knight and a rook up.

1-0

□ Winter, William

■ Capablanca, Jose Raul

Hastings Victory Congress (5)

C49

1919

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Bb4 5.0-0 0-0 6.Bxc6 dxc6 7.d3 Bd6 8.Bg5

A "normal" developing move for White, but which doesn't give him anything. The development of pieces should be done with a plan in mind, but the bishop on g5 doesn't have connection with anything. White could try to play especially in the centre, planning the advance d3-d4, so moves like Be3, Qe2, Rd1, h3 would have had more sense.

Moreover, as the game will prove, this bishop will become strongly obstructed by the black pawns.

h6 9.Bh4 c5

If Black wants to restrict the white bishop on g3 (after g7-g5), he also wants to make sure that White won't be able to free up the bishop by the simple move d3-d4.

10.Nd5 g5 11.Nxf6+ Qxf6 12.Bg3 Bg4!
Diagram

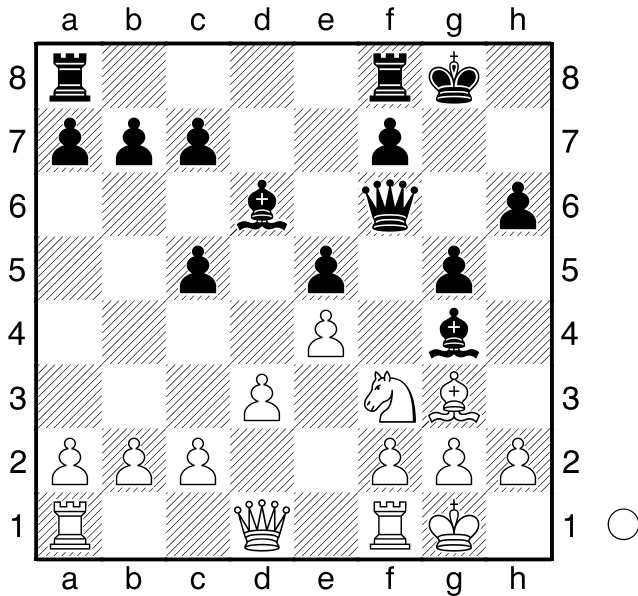
(Diagram)

A winning move. Black intends to exchange 2 white pieces and double the white pawns on the f-file. In the resulting endgame, Capablanca will win because of the out-of-play Bg3 of his opponent.

13.h3 Bxf3 14.Qxf3

[If White doesn't want to exchange the queens and take back with the pawn: 14.gxf3, Black will block the white bishop forever with h5 followed by h5-h4.]

14...Qxf3 15.gxf3 f6



There is material equality on the board, but the g3-bishop is blocked on the kingside. So, the plan is very simple for Black: to open the game on the queenside, where he will be practically a piece up.

16.Kg2 a5 17.a4 Kf7 18.Rh1 Ke6 19.h4 Rfb8

Black concentrates his forces on the queenside. On the other side, the white bishop is blocked without chance for escape and good for nothing.

20.hxg5 hxg5 21.b3 c6 22.Ra2 b5 23.Rha1 c4

Opening the game on the queenside. Black is a bishop up!

24.axb5 cxb3 25.cxb3 Rxb5 26.Ra4 Rxb3 27.d4 Rb5 28.Rc4 Rb4 29.Rxc6 Rxd4

White resigned. The black a-pawn cannot be stopped to queen.

0-1

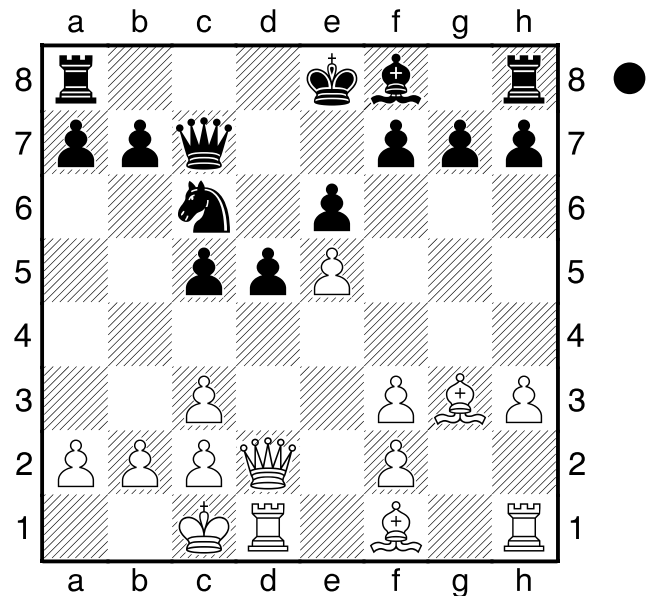
□ Yates, Frederick
 ■ Capablanca, Jose Raul
 Moscow

B29

1925

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.Nc3 Nxc3 4.dxc3 d5 5.Nf3 c5 6.Bf4 Nc6 7.Qd2 Bg4 8.0-0 e6

9.h3 Bxf3 10.gxf3 Qc7 11.Bg3 Diagram



White has the bishop-pair, but small chances to open the position so that his bishops to be able to prove their superiority. In fact, Black has a better pawn structure in the centre and controls more squares.

More than that, Capablanca finds a way to get one more advantage from this position:

c4!

A very strong move. Usually the pawns are better when they stay together on the same rank, controlling more squares. The consequences of a pawn-move are very acute as some squares become weak and the pawn cannot go back as the pieces.

In this position, Black weakened the d4-square, but this cannot be used by White in any way as he has no knights remained.

By playing c5-c4, Capablanca opened the diagonal for his f8-bishop increasing his qualitative value, and, more important, he obstructed the play of the f1-bishop. If White could eventually play Bf1-b5 and trade pieces, now his piece is damned.

In fact, now, both white bishops are strongly obstructed by the black pawns. This position is very instructive for the thematic "pair of bishops" - here, they don't have power at all. White should try to open the position as in the game,

but he fails:

12.f4 g6 13.Kb1 h5

After g7-g6 (against f4-f5) and h7-h5 (against h3-h4-h5), Black closed the position on the kingside and the white bishops will remain obstructed. And, of course, White cannot open the position on the queenside where his king hopes for safety.

14.Bh4 Be7

Even if the black bishop was much stronger than the white one, the latter could hinder Black's play from f6. So, Black prefers to exchange the dark-square bishops to get a free play without problems. Of course, the other white bishop's small quality is enough for Black to fight for a win.

15.Bg5

White takes a practical decision. He sacrifices a pawn for getting an open position and possible counter-chances.

[After the logical 15.Bxe7 Nxe7

No player wants to play against Capablanca a position where the superiority of the black knight against the white bishop is evident.]

15...Bxg5 16.fxg5 Nxe5 17.Qe3 0-0 18.Be2 Nc6 19.f4 Ne7 20.Rhg1 Nf5 21.Qf2 Rfe8 22.Rge1 b5

Black starts to attack on the queenside. The white bishop does not find any place or objective on this board.

23.Bf1 a5 24.Re5 b4 25.Qe1 Reb8 26.Ka1 Rb6 27.Qd2 Rab8 28.Rb1 Nd6

The superiority of the black knight is evident: the knight blocked White's attack on the kingside and, now, he is moving freely to the other side to support his other pieces in attack.

In all this time, the white bishop could not do anything, being strongly obstructed by the black pawn chains arranged on the same color with him.

29.Bg2 Nb5 30.cxb4 c3 31.bxc3 Nxc3 32.Rb3 axb4 33.a3 Ra6 34.Re3 Rba8 35.Rexc3 bxc3 36.Qc1 Qc5 37.Ka2 Qc4

38.Ka1 Qxb3 White resigned. 0-1

□ Miles,Anthony J
■ Hernandez,Roman
Biel (2)

A71
2555
2435
1977

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nc3 g6 7.e4 Bg7 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.Bg3 Nh5

Black wants to take the white dark-square bishop in order to increase the power of his own bishop. However, the course of the game proved that this idea is wrong.

11.Bb5+ Kf8 12.e5!?

White sacrifices a pawn with the idea to block the black bishop on g7 (after Black will take d6xe5) and to free his d5-pawn.

Nxg3 13.fxg3!

It's unusual to take with the f-pawn, but White wants to have his rook targeting directly the black king.

dxex5

[13...g4 14.Nh4 Bxe5 15.0-0 is not at all better for Black.]

14.0-0 a6 15.Bd3 b5 16.Nd2

The pawn sacrifice from the 12th move was good because White can block the e5-pawn, restricting the activity of the g7-bishop.

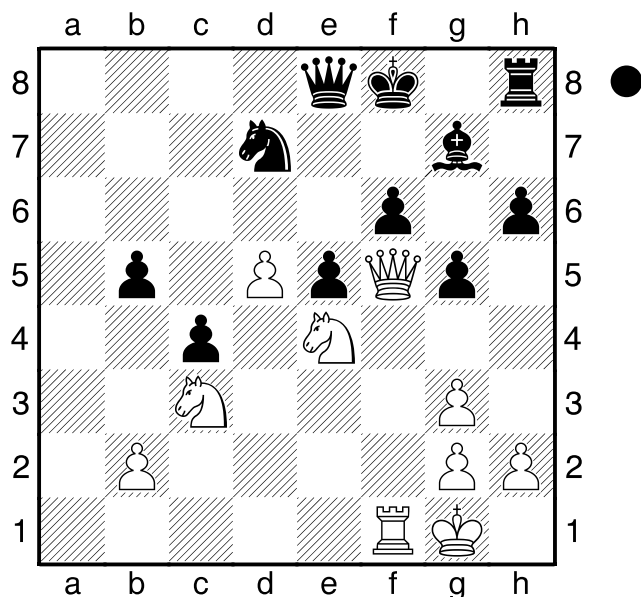
c4 17.Qh5 f6

The g7-bishop, the only Black's developed piece, is now completely blocked.

18.Bc2 Bd7 19.a4 Be8 20.Bg6 Nd7 21.axb5 Bxg6 22.Qxg6 axb5 23.Rxa8 Qxa8 24.Nde4 Qe8 25.Qf5 Diagram

(Diagram)

White is still a pawn down, but he obstructed all black pieces. The g7-bishop is blocked by his



pawns, the knight has to defend the f6-square, the queen has to defend the d7-knight and the rook is still on the corner.

Qd8 26.Kh1 Kg8

[26...b4 27.Nb5 Kg8 28.Nbd6 and White has lot of threats.]

27.Nxb5 Nf8 28.Nbd6 h5 29.Nxc4 h4

[29...Qxd5 30.Nxf6+ Bxf6 31.Qxf6 and the checkmate is close.]

30.g4

Now, White can win in many ways. Black resigned after some inutile moves:

h3 31.Ne3 hxg2+ 32.Kxg2 Qb6 33.Nxf6+ Bxf6 34.Qxf6 Qxf6 35.Rxf6 Rh7 36.Rf5 Rb7 37.Rxg5+ Kf7 38.Nc4 Rb4 39.Nxe5+ Ke8 40.Rg8 Rxb2+ 41.Kg3 Rd2 42.Ng6 Kf7 43.Rxf8+ Kxg6 44.Rf5 Rd3+ 45.Kf4 Rd4+ 46.Kf3 Rd3+ 47.Ke4 Rh3 48.d6 1-0

□ Sokolov, Andrei

■ Ribli, Zoltan

Candidates Tournament (14)

B85

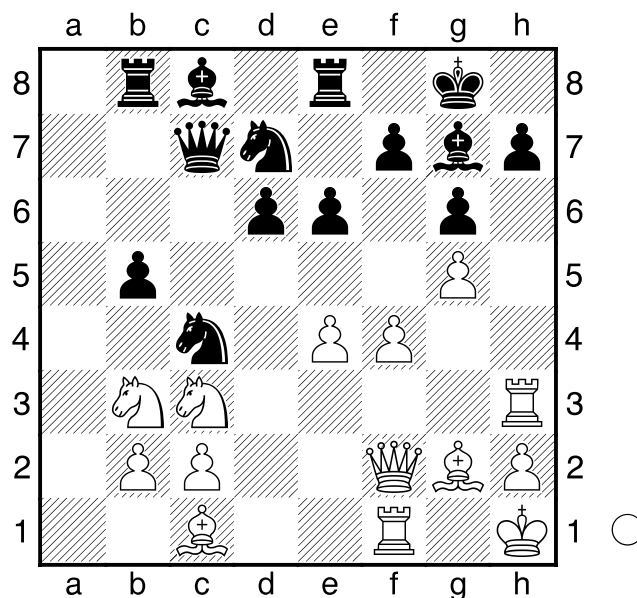
2555

2605

1985

This game is given without annotations as the key-position is explained in the theory-file.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.f4 Qc7 7.Be2 e6 8.0-0 Be7 9.Kh1 0-0 10.a4 Nc6 11.Be3 Re8 12.Bf3 Rb8 13.Qd2 Bd7 14.Nb3 b6 15.g4 Bc8 16.g5 Nd7 17.Bg2 Na5 18.Qf2 Bf8 19.Rad1 Nc4 20.Bc1 b5 21.axb5 axb5 22.Rd3 g6 23.Rh3 Bg7 Diagram



24.f5 Nce5 25.Qh4 Nf8 26.f6 Bh8 27.Nd4 b4 28.Nd1 Ba6 29.Re1 Rec8 30.Ne3 h5 31.Nf3 Nfd7 32.Nd2 Kf8 33.Ndf1 b3 34.Ng3 Ke8 35.Nxh5 gxh5 36.Qxh5 Ng6 37.Nf5 Bxf6 38.gxf6 exf5 39.exf5+ Nge5 40.Qh8+ Nf8 41.Qxf8+ 1-0

5.3. Local Force Superiority

The first and most important criterion to evaluate the success of an attack on some area of the board is to determine the number of attacking pieces and the number of defending pieces.

If for example, White attacks the black king with 3 pieces and Black defends with 2 pieces, the attack might have good chances. Without the intention to confuse you: in the same time, Black can have 3 pieces ready to counter-attack on the queenside, defended by 2 white pieces. Here, the harmony between pieces (the attacking group) and the importance of the weakness pieces attack have a very important role.

Everyone should know that a piece usually can do no harm when attacking alone. For a successful active operation on the kingside or queenside, **the player should create a superiority of forces** on that area of the board.

However, notice that the bishops can attack even from the other side of the board (example: 2 bishops on b2 and d3 can “see” the kingside).

The rooks usually attack from a long distance using open files, but they can attack from the other side as well (a white rook which entered the opponent’s camp on a7, for example, can “see” the black kingside).

The queen is a special case, of course. In order to use her full power, the queen should be used close to the area of attack, as the knights. For example: if White attacks on the kingside and his queen is on c2, the queen will be no stronger than a bishop; if the queen is on h5, the queen acts and moves as both a bishop and rook together.

Situations for building local force superiority

The type of the centre has a very big influence for the premises and success of creating a superiority of forces on one of the flanks.

When the centre is open or dynamic, the players should usually keep their pieces centralized or targeting important central squares as from there they can move easily from a flank to another. However, when the centre is closed or semi-closed, so secured, the players usually bring their pieces on one of the flanks.

1. Closed Center

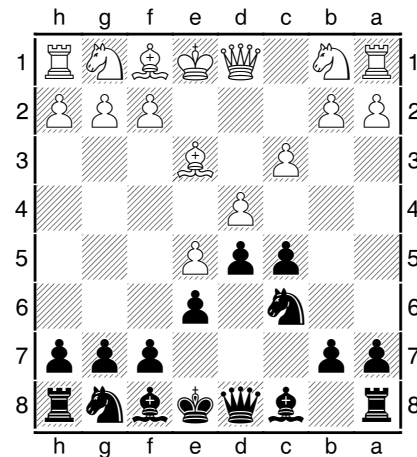
When the center is closed, building local force superiority on one of the flanks is almost a requirement of the position. However, almost all the time, the agglomeration of pieces should be preceded by advancing the pawns on that side, in order to create space for maneuvers and open files for rooks.

In the situation of the closed centre, the player who is able to open the position, bring more pieces, creating real threats first, gets the initiative.

This position is from a theoretical line of the French Defense. Here, Black already pushed the c-pawn and, now, he brings his pieces to get the initiative on the queenside:

5... Qb6 6.Qd2 Bd7 7.Nf3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Rc8 9.Nc3 Na5 10.Rc1 Bb4 11.Bd3 Nc4 with good play for Black.

In this example, you could see that Black's only interest was on the queenside. He continuously developed the pieces on the same area of the board, which is a very good strategy (when this is possible) in positions with closed centre.



Black is to move

2. Static center

When the centre is semi-closed, the attacks on flanks have good chances for success, but the consequences of moving the pieces on one of the wings have to be seriously calculated beforehand as the counter-attack on the other side can be very dangerous.

So, while the attacks in positions with closed centre should run in any circumstances as fast as possible, when the centre is semi-closed (static), some weaknesses should be created on opponent's camp before moving the pieces on that side. This way, creating a superiority of forces on that side should bring the initiative as the second player has to do defend the problematic square/s of his position, not being able to create a counter-attack on the other side.

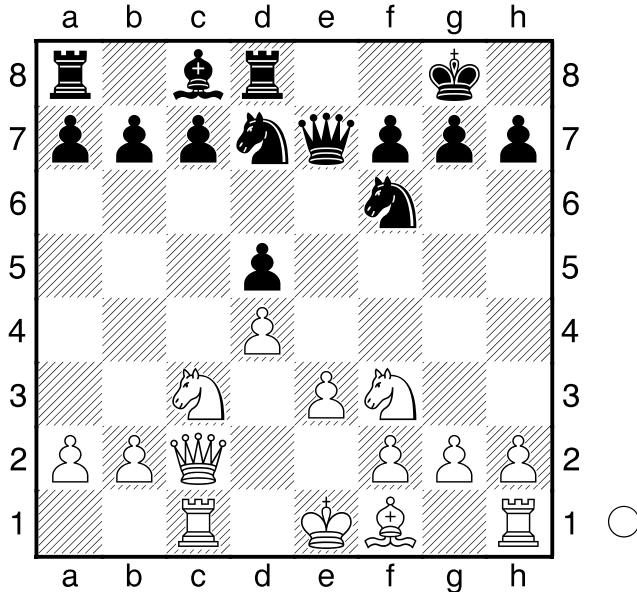
If there are no weaknesses or easy targets in opponent's camp, the attack can fail while the counter-attack will run easier on the other side of the board. In the lesson "piece out of play", we saw examples of how bad bringing the pieces on one of the flanks can end if the attack runs slowly (the pieces can become even out of play).

Also, when the pieces are not supported by advancing the pawns (like in the closed centre), some neat maneuvers are usually required to arrange the pieces for a good collaboration. This aspect is very important and it will be studied in the next lesson.

 **Andruet**
 **Spassky**
 Germany

1988

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Bb4+ 4.Bd2 Bxd2+ 5.Qxd2 d5 6.Nc3 0-0 7.e3 Qe7 8.Rc1 Rd8 9.Qc2 Nbd7 10.cxd5 exd5 Diagram



After this exchange, the centre gets a static profile and players can do their plans for the future.

White's pressure on the c-file (mainly against the c7-pawn) will make Black to play c7-c6. Then, known as minority attack, White will attack on the queenside by b2-b4-b5xc6 creating a backward weak pawn in Black's camp and creating local space advantage.

Because of the half-open e-file and because of the existence of the outpost on e4 (a square controlled by a pawn on a half-open file), Black has a better control on the kingside. In fact, in this pawn structure, called Carlsbad (we will study it later in our course), Black's best counter-play against White's actions from the queenside is to attack the white king (which will castle short).

As the black king is castled on the same side, Black attacks using mainly his pieces (without pushing the pawns like in the closed centre). This way, this game and almost all the games part of this Carlsbad pawn-structure are a very good example for the local force superiority.

11.Bd3 Nf8

Already, Black shows his plans. The knight comes on the kingside with the final aim to remove the defender of the white king: Nf8-g6-h4xf3.

12.Ne2

White doesn't play firmly. He should have finished his development first with 0-0, then, prepare b2-b4-b5 to create immediate threats on the queenside. The loss of tempo with a maneuver which doesn't add too much to the defensive of the king tilts the balance in Black's favor.

c6 13.0-0 Ng6 14.Ng3 Re8

Black re-arranges his rook on the normal position after the exchange on d5. Before going into active actions, players should bring their pieces in the best positions for maximum efficiency.

15.Qc5

White tries to exchange the queens after which the Black's attack on the kingside would be no more dangerous. In the same time, White prepares the advance b2-b4.

The drawback of this move is less evident: while the black queen will have the same power on d8 (targeting the kingside's squares g5 and h4, after Ne4 and Nh4), the white queen loses the control over the centre and kingside. Later, White will retreat his queen back.

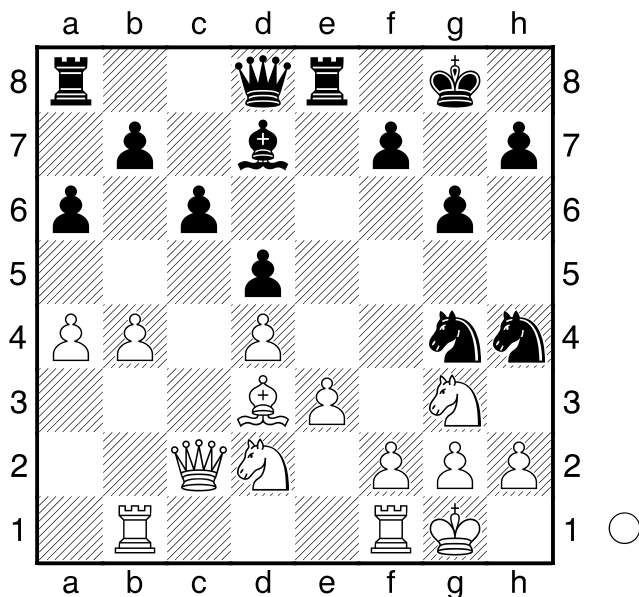
Qd8 16.Nd2

White prefers his knight ready for the queenside attack or control over the e4-square. The bad consequence of this move is that the white king is now much more vulnerable.

Nh4

The black knight has a very good position on the edge of the board. The knight attack on g2 and prevents the white knight's return on f3. Starting with this move, Black will bring his pieces in attack on the kingside, creating a local force superiority that White clearly underestimated.

17.b4 a6 18.a4 Bd7 19.Rb1 Ng4 20.Qc2 g6! Diagram



Black makes all the preventing moves needed to assure that White's play on the queenside will face bigger obstacles (a7-a6, Bd7) and, now, he takes under control the f5-square that White could use for exchanges on the kingside.

21.b5 axb5 22.axb5 h5 23.bxc6 bxc6 24.Rfe1

White defends the e3-square against the Black's threats of sacrificing a piece on e3 followed by a dangerous attack (see next variations).

The CSQ of this move is the weakening of the f2-square, a point that will help Black in his attack.

[24.h3 Nxe3 25.fxe3 Rxe3 26.Ne2 Bxh3
A) 27.Nf4 Nxg2 28.Nxg2 (28.Nxh3 Rxh3 29.Kxg2 Qh4) 28...Bxg2 29.Kxg2 Qg5+ 30.Kh2 Qg3+ 31.Kh1 Qh4+ 32.Kg2 Qg4+ 33.Kh1 Rh3# ;
B) 27.gxh3 Rxh3]

24...Qf6

Black brings his queen in attack with tempo. Now, Black attacks the white kingside with 5 pieces which is defended by 4 pieces (if we count the white queen too). Moreover, the

harmony between the attacking pieces is evident: the black knights attack all the squares in front of the white king, while the bishop, queen and rook are also "available".

25.Ndf1 Ra3 26.Re2 c5!

Threatening 27...c4 or cxd4, Black forces White to the next trade which free the e5-square for the black knight.

27.dxc5 Ne5

In fact, the last Black's move had a hidden purpose. Black re-arranges his pieces for the final attack. The attack against the d3-bishop is not the only Black's threat...

28.Bb5 Qf3!

Now, Black checkmates in 4 moves.

29.gxf3 Nexf3+ 30.Kh1 Bh3

Conclusion:

In middlegames with static centre, creating a superiority of forces on one of the flanks is a good strategy and a start for seizing the initiative of the game.

In the same time, the player has to be very careful to the counter-play of his opponent on the other side of the board. In this game, Spassky made some preventive moves (12...c6, 15...Qd8, 17...a6, 18...Bd7, 20...g6) which put obstacles in front of White's plans.

An attack only with pieces on one of the flanks must be very well thought as the defending pawns (especially if there are no weaknesses in the pawn structure) are very hard to be broken. So, the attacker has to re-arrange his pieces sometimes for assuring a good collaboration. For example, Spassky played: c6-c5 with idea Ng4-e5 to target the f3-square.

0-1

□ **Niculescu,Cristian**
 ■ **Neagos,Raul**

B07
2194

Memorialul Revolutiei (3)

16.12.2006

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5

This system is a very solid defense against 1.e4.

Black has to be prepared to play an equilibrate endgame after 4.dxe5 followed by 5.Qxd8, where White has a small advantage due to the exposed black king on d8. However, Black can hold the position and then turn the situation in his favor if he has a better endgame technique.

4.dxe5

[White can also choose to play with the queens on the board. A possible continuation is:

4.Nf3 Nbd7 5.Bc4 Be7 6.O-O O-O 7.Re1 c6 8.a4 b6 9.b3 a6 10.Bb2 Bb7 with idea Qc7, b7-b5 and pressure against White's centre.]

4...dxe5 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8 6.Bg5 Be6 7.O-O-O+ Nbd7 8.Nf3 h6 9.Bxf6+ gxf6 10.Nd5 Kc8

Black has to be well prepared for the opening problems, no matter the opening system. The same situation here: the last Black's move and all his moves were very well studied before the game.

Black has the bishop-pair now, but with a serious damage of the pawn structure on the kingside. If White manages to block the black pawns on the f-file and use the f5-square (with Nf3-h4, Nd5-e3, and then Nf4), the position will become very hard for Black. So, Black has to play very actively and try to give more force to his bishop-pair by advancing the pawns on the queenside, creating threats against the white king.

11.Be2 c6 12.Ne3

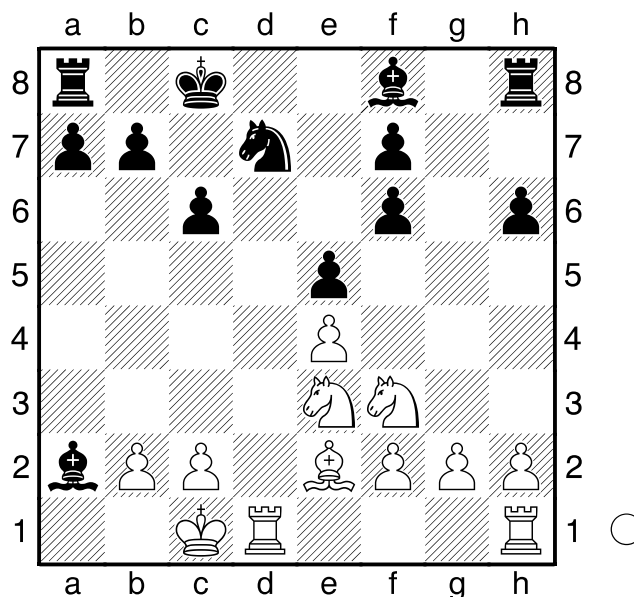
White took a normal decision as his knight targets the f5-square.

If White plays Nd5-c3, Black will have fewer problems with the f5-square and his pawns will advance much quicker on the queenside (b7-b5-b4).

Bxa2! Diagram

(Diagram)

The move which wins the game. Black takes a poisoned pawn. Usually, the



chess players don't even look at those pawns which cannot be captured because the bishop will be blocked after b2-b3 and captured by white pieces easily.

However, in this position, Black will bring his pieces on the queenside with maximum speed, creating a force superiority.

13.b3 Ba3+ 14.Kd2 Nc5

Already all the black minor pieces are on the queenside, creating serious threats. Now, the e4-pawn is threatened, while after Nc5-e4-c3, Black defends his bishop and, then, can play a7-a5-a4 to free him up.

15.Bd3 Rd8

Renewing the threat Nc5-e4, and bringing the last force on the queenside. Black needs 3 more moves (tempi) to get his bishop free: a7-a5-a4.

16.Ke2 Bb2

Black defends the a1-square against Rd1-a1 (see next variation).

17.Nf5

[Trying to capture the 2 bishops for a rook doesn't work because the d3-bishop will be hanging in the end:

17.Ra1 Bxa1 18.Rxa1 Bxb3 19.cxb3 Nxd3 This tactical resource which, of course, had to be seen before 12...Bxa2, is possible due to

the big number of black pieces on the queen's battlefield.]

17...a5

White remains with no chance to attack and capture the a2-bishop, so he started to play on the other side, trying to get counter-chances by Nf5-h6-f7 and the advance of the h-pawn. However, the superiority of black pieces on the queenside is already "winning". The white king and bishop d3 are seriously disturbed by Black's pressure. Moreover, Black has a pawn majority on the queenside which has the full support for creating a dangerous free pawn.

18.Nxh6 a4 19.Nxf7

[After 19.bxa4 Nxa4
Black gets all the advantages, while the White's counter-play on the kingside is stopped (the f7-pawn is defended).]

19...Rd7

White is now a pawn up, so Black's 12...Bxa2 didn't go only after material gain, but after this very strong initiative on the queenside.

20.Bc4

[White has no chance to save the game:
20.Nh6 axb3 21.cxb3 Bxb3 22.Rd2 Bc3]

20...b5 21.Nd6+

[21.Rxd7 Kxd7 22.Bd3 (22.Rd1+ Kc7)
22...axb3 23.cxb3 Bxb3 with 2 free pawn on the queenside, Black wins easily.]

21...Kc7 22.Nxb5+ cxb5 23.Bxb5 Rxd1 24.Rxd1 axb3 25.cxb3 Bxb3

Black is a piece up; White could resign. The game needs no further comments:

**26.Rh1 Nxe4 27.Ke3 Nd6 28.Rb1 Ra2
29.Be2 Bc2 30.Rh1 Bc3 31.g4 Ra3 32.Bf1
Bb4+ 33.Ke2 Bd3+** and White resigned as he is mated at the next move.

Conclusion:

In this game, Black took a poisoned pawn, but managed to protect and then freed up his bishop by creating a big superiority of forces on

the queenside. This game comes to prove that tactics should work when this superiority exists (however, without concrete and precise calculation, no action can work just that).

You could also see how easily White entered Black's camp on the other side. The black pieces were very busy on the queenside and a single white knight was able to do some damage. This shows how dangerous can be a counter-attack, hitting an undefended area of the board.

Black's superiority of forces on the queenside had not as a single reason the capture of a pawn, but a more high aim, the total control of that side: Black had a pawn majority on the queenside, his bishop-pair, sustained by the a-rook, created serious problems to White and, in the end, the white king was check-mated.

0-1

Collaboration between pieces

When we are speaking about the best place for a piece, we think not only at the best place for each piece individually, but also at a square from where:

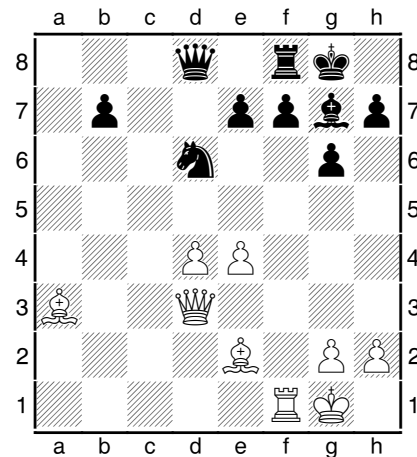
- the piece **does not limit the mobility of other pieces** of its own camp
- **together with other pieces target important/key squares/areas** on the board, creating problems to the opponent.

Position 1

This position also appears in the lesson about “calculation in chess” from this month of training and is an excellent example for this lesson’s theme too.

White has the pair of bishops, a good half open file for his rook, a good position for the queen and a mobile pawn centre. This sounds really good, but all these pieces do not work together; their places are good only individually and not create a good team.

Instead, Black will concentrate his pieces to target the white centre, especially the d4-pawn.



Black is to move

After **1...Qa5**, Black already threatens to gain a second pawn by Nxe4 or Bxd4.

2.Bc1 Rd8 (and e4-e5 is not good because of Nd6-f5)

Now, all Black’s pieces have very *efficient* positions: they defend everything and together put a real strong pressure on White’s pawns. Very strong weapons in chess as the bishop-pair and mobile pawn centre are made inoffensive by the strong collaboration between black pieces.

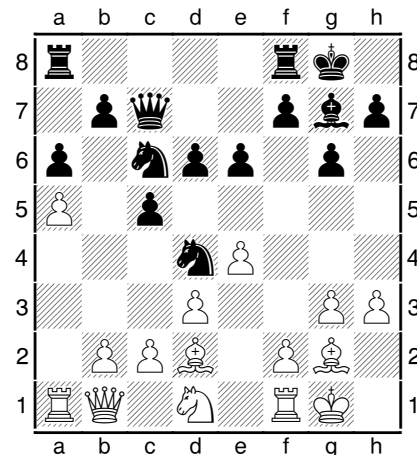
Position 2

In this position, arisen in the game Hort – Fischer, 1970, Black plays on the queenside. However, without restructuring his pieces, it is hard for him to obtain the initiative.

Fischer finds a way to improve the position of the c6-knight: **1...c4! 2.dxc4 Ne5**

Now, the black knight will occupy the much better square on e5 and, in the same time, he opened the c-file for the major pieces.

With the 2 knights on c4 and d4, the bishop on g7 and the open c-file, the piece collaboration is perfect and offers Black a strong initiative.



Black is to move

Position 3

White's last move was 18.f2-f3 against threats as g5-g4 and f4-f3. Also, the second file is now open in the eventuality White needs to protect the h2-square.

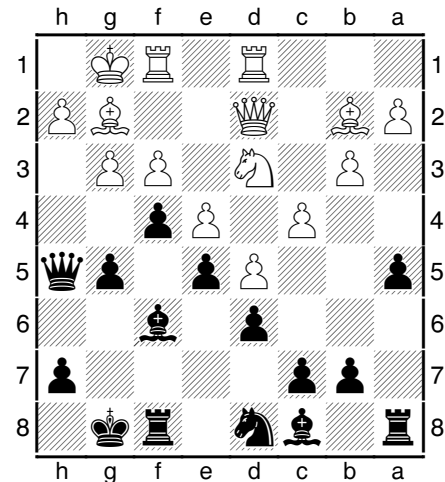
Black's attack on the kingside has no chances to succeed with only a target (the h2-square). Using the consequences of White's last move (the drawback of weakening the dark-square diagonal g1-a7), Black finds a very interesting plan to bring his "bad" bishop from f6 on the weakened diagonal and to participate to the attack on the kingside. With such an improvement of the position, Black's attack will become real strong.

So, what Black has TO DO? He needs to move the c7-pawn and the d8-knight in order to play Bf6-d8-b6. In the same time, he doesn't need to concern about opening the position on the queenside as here is White's only chance of counterplay, so he will even fight to open the position there.

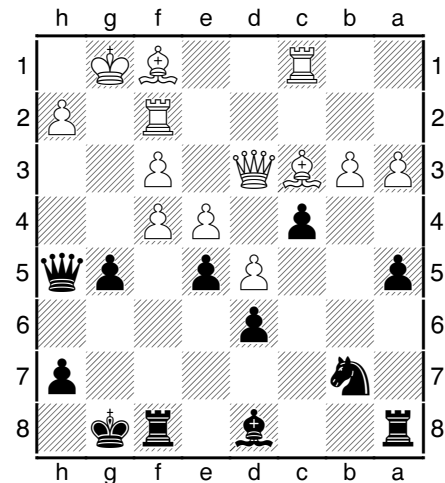
The game went:

18...c5 19.Bc3 b6 20.a3 Ba6 21.Rc1 Nb7 22.Rf2 b5 23.cxb5 Bxb5 24.Bf1 Bd8 25.gxf4 Bxd3 26.Qxd3 c4 (see diagram 2)

and now the black bishop comes in force on the very good position from b6, or White will be a pawn down after 27.Qe3



Black is to move

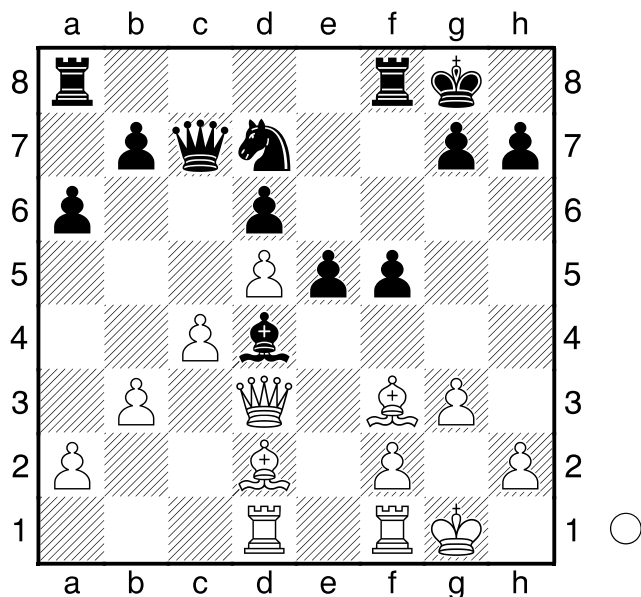


Position after 26...c4

In this example, we saw a strong technique: the player determines which is his worst piece and plans to improve its position. Black's worst piece was the f6-bishop which was blocked behind his own pawns. By a hidden maneuver which took into consideration that White wants the opening of the queenside, Black succeeded to make from his bad bishop the most dangerous piece on the board.

We will analyze the collaboration between pieces in much more detail when we study the complex endgames (starting with the 6th month of our course). During the endgame, the collaboration between pieces is a factor of first importance and we will be able to see very nice maneuvers and ideas which are instructive for the middlegame too.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nc6
5.Nc3 Qc7 6.g3 a6 7.Bg2 Nf6 8.0-0 Nxd4
9.Qxd4 Bc5 10.Bf4 d6 11.Qd3 Nd7 12.Na4
e5 13.Bd2 Bd4 14.Nc3 Nb6 15.Rad1 Bg4
16.Bf3 Be6 17.b3 Nd7 18.Nd5 Bxd5
19.exd5 0-0 20.c4 f5 Diagram



Black plans an attack on the kingside. From this moment on, we will see how he brings all his pieces in attack with the maximum possible speed (...20 moves!).

21.Be2 a5 22.Kg2 Qd8 23.f3 Qf6 24.Qb1
b6 25.a3 Ra7!

A typical manoeuvre. Black intends to bring his rook on the other side on g7 or h7, after the advance of those pawns.

26.Bd3 Qf7 27.Bc1 Qh5 28.Bb2 Bc5
29.Qc2 f4 30.g4 Qh4 31.Bf5 Rf6 32.Kh1
Nf8

Black has no a large space for maneuvers, so he has to keep the harmony between his pieces with 2 objectives in his mind:

- to bring all the pieces in attack without blocking one of them out of play
- to create threats or pressure in this time, not giving White time for counter-play.

33.Rd2 h5!

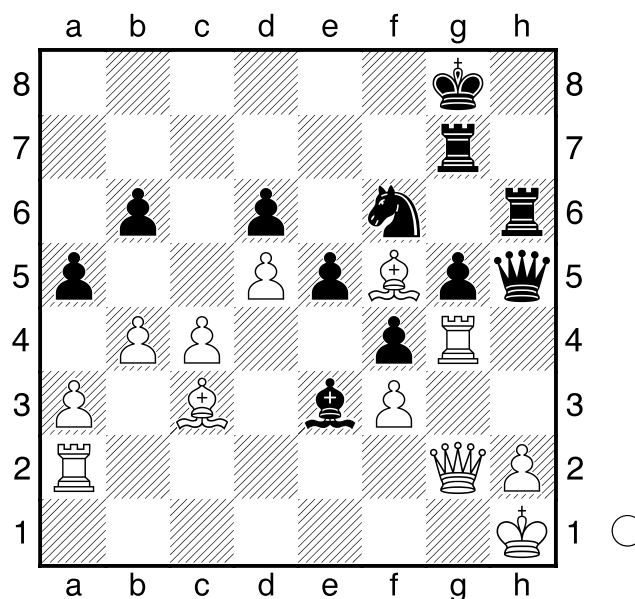
A very clever idea. Black clears the 7th rank in order to make possible the arrival of the second rook in attack.

34.Rg2 hxc4 35.Rxc4 Qh5 36.Be4 g6
37.Qg2 Rg7 38.Ra1 g5 39.Ra2 Nd7!

Black prepares to bring the knight on f6 after Rf6-h6, but he has to be careful to the move order.

[After 39...Rh6 White can obstruct the movement of black knight with: 40.Bf5]

40.b4 Be3 41.Bc3 Rh6 42.Bf5 Nf6 Diagram



In more than 20 moves, Black succeeded to bring all his forces on the kingside.

43.bxa5 Nxg4 44.fxg4 Qe8 45.a4 bxa5
46.Rb2 Qxa4 47.Rb8+ Kf7 48.Bc2 Qxc4
49.Bxa5 Qa6 50.Bc3 Rg8 51.Rxg8 Kxg8
52.Bf5 Qc4 53.Be1 Kg7 54.h3 Qc1 55.Qe2
f3
0-1

□ Kotov,Alexander

■ Geller,Efim P

URS-ch17 Moscow

E68

1949

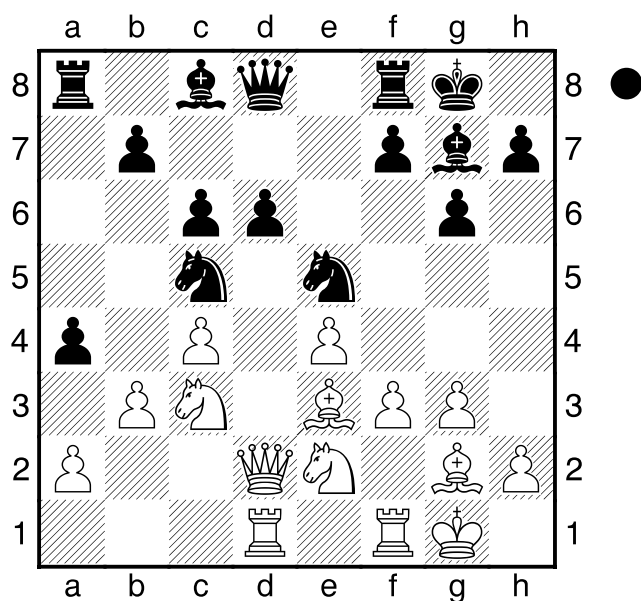
In this game we will see one of the greatest players of the past, Efim Geller, making a brilliant positional sacrifice.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 exd4 9.Nxd4 Nc5 10.f3 Nfd7 11.Be3 c6 12.Qd2 a5 13.Rad1 Ne5 14.b3 a4 15.Nde2

White threatens to capture the c5-knight now, but surprise!

[Better was 15.f4]

Diagram



15...axb3!!

Black sacrifices the c5-knight for the initiative. In exchange for the knight, Black will get 2 free pawns on the queenside and, very important, an excellent collaboration between his pieces.

16.Bxc5 Nxc4 17.Qc1 bxa2 18.Nxa2 Qa5 19.Qxc4 Be6 20.Qc1 dxc5

White's moves were almost forced until now. As a result of the sacrifice, Black got 2 free pawns on the queenside, very well sustained by all his pieces.

21.Nac3 b5 22.Nb1?!

[White should have played:

22.e5! Bxe5 23.f4

in order to activate his pieces and disrupt a bit the harmony between black pieces.]

22...b4 23.Nf4 Bb3 24.Rd6 c4 25.Rxc6 c3
Black threatens Bb3-a4-b5 and then b4-b3 and c3-c2, so White's next move is almost forced:

26.Nd5 Bxd5 27.exd5 Qxd5 28.f4 Qd4+ 29.Kh1 Ra2 30.Bf3 Rb2 31.f5 Be5 32.Qe1 Rd8 33.Be4 Kg7

Black provokes the next move after which the g6-pawn will be no more in trouble.

34.f6+ Kg8 35.Ra6 h5 36.Ra5 h4 37.Bxg6 Rxh2+ 38.Kxh2 Bxg3+ 39.Qxg3 hxg3+ 40.Kh3 fxg6 0-1

Quality of Rooks

Open Files and Methods of Play

Until now, we have studied the quality of pieces regardless their “name”. The lessons “better development”, “piece out of play”, “local force superiority”, and “the collaboration between pieces” were all about the quality and play of pieces in general. Now, it is time to study specific strategies for every of the 4 different pieces (rooks, queen, and minor pieces) and we start with the rook.

The rook comes into play later than minor pieces, usually, after the castle is done, and after a longer preparation. Being a strong piece capable of fighting from a long distance with influence far in opponent’s camp, the rook-play is very important.

Qualities of the rook

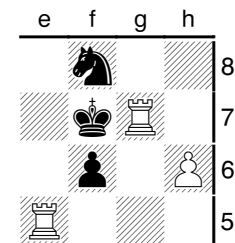
1. The rooks control the same number of squares no matter their place.

First of all, you should know that the rook is the only piece which controls the same number of square no matter where it is placed on the board. So, a rook on the corner can have the same value as a rook in the centre.

2. The rook is very powerful in attack.

The rook is able to cut off all the escaping squares of a king making him as being on the edge of the board.

This is why bringing the rooks in attacks against the king is often decisive. The rooks can be brought in attack by opening the files or by “rook-lifts” (bringing the rook in front of the own pawns).

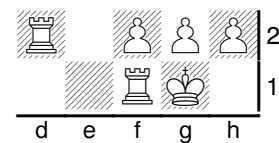


3. The rook is a play coordinating piece.

In most of the cases, the rooks are placed behind the theatre of battle supporting the own minor pieces and pawns in their actions. Besides supporting their pieces, the rooks create pressure far in the opponent’s camp.

4. The rook is an important defender of the king.

The rooks play a rather important role for the king’s safety. Their main role is to defend the first (back) rank against the opponent’s heavy pieces. There are even rare cases when an unprotected back rank cannot be exploited by the opponent’s major pieces.



Also, the rooks can defend the second (seventh) rank.

In the position from the right, you can see that the d2-rook is capable to defend the g2-pawn after moving the f-pawn forward. Also, besides defending the first rank, the f1-rook defends another vulnerable point near the king: f2.

5. The quality of the rook is strongly connected with the own pawn formation

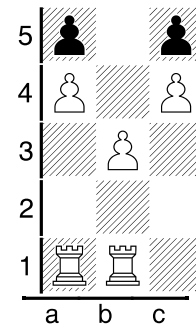
As the bishops, the quality of the rooks is strongly influenced by the own pawns’ arrangement. There are more cases:

5.1. Rook behind blocked pawns

The rook behind a blocked pawn from its own camp has a diminished value as it cannot operate on that file.

In this diagram, the a1-rook is blocked by the a4-pawn which is also blocked by the black a5-pawn.

However, even worse it is the situation on the b-file where the rook is also blocked and, in addition, the b3-pawn is weak, backward and needs permanent protection from the rook.



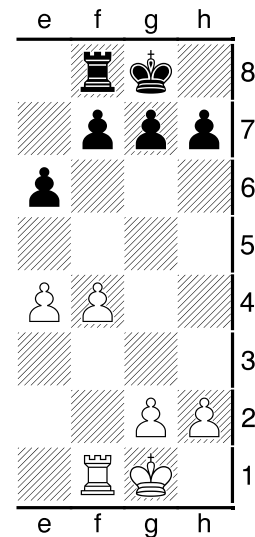
5.2. Rook behind mobile pawns

If the rook is behind mobile pawns, the quality value of the rook increases a lot.

For example, in our diagram, the f1-rook “sees” up to the fifth rank (by tactical means, we can consider the power of the rook transmitted through the e4 and f4 pawns one rank further).

White threatens to play f4-f5 and, then, possible f5-f6 or f5xe6, opening the file for the rook which will be able to enter attack against Black’s position.

Moreover, the advanced white pawns allow the rook-lift: Rf1-f3-g3 (h3, or anywhere else on the third rank).



5.3. Rook on a half-open file

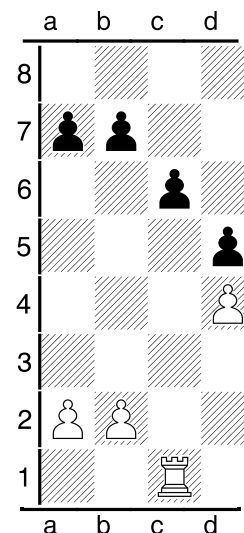
Here, the white rook is on a half-open file: White has no pawn on the c-file, while Black does have a pawn on the c-file.

The quality of the rooks on half-open files is very high.

The rook has a target on the c-file: the c6-pawn. If that black pawn looks well protected to you, think that after b2-b4, a2-a4, and b4-b5-xc6, White creates there a weakness and good target.

Also, the rook can “lift” on more advanced ranks. In our diagram, White can play Rc1-c3-b3(a3) attacking Black pawns.

Also, White has more space on the queenside because of the squares he controls along the c-file.



We will see later the importance of the outpost, which in our diagram is on c5.

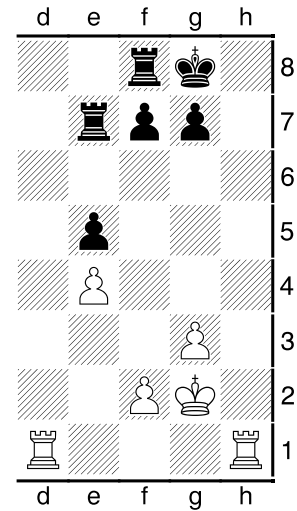
5.4. Rook on an open file

a) The disadvantage of an open file is that the enemy rooks can often neutralize it by exchanges. In this diagram, if Black can play Rf8-d8 or Re7-d7, the power of the d1-rook will be diminished.

In this case, nevertheless, there is a resource: *the outpost*! White can use the d5-square (or Black can use the d4-square), for getting an advantage (see “outpost”, later in this lesson).

b) If a rook on an open file cannot be neutralized, his value is very high and it is a clear strategical plus. *The value of the rooks on open files is higher in the centre.* For example: a rook on the d-file is much stronger than a rook on an edge file.

Also, it is important to see if there are free squares to make possible the entrance in the opponent's camp and estimate the damages/problems that the rook can do there.



Rooks on the 7th rank

A very important aim of the rook is to penetrate into the opponent's camp, on the 7th rank. Why on the 7th rank:

- It is less protected than the back rank (so it is more practical to aim for it).
- Usually, on the 7th rank, there are more opponent pawns and/or critical squares which will be attacked making the opponent to defend.
- The rook can cut the opponent king's way out from the back rank which is very important in endgames.

Below are several cases and techniques when the rook entered the 7th rank in the endgame.

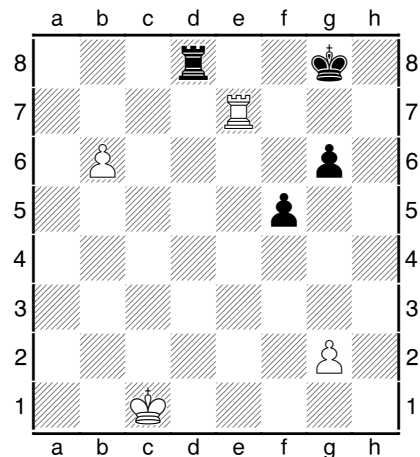
Opponent king cut off on the 8th rank

The white rook cut off the black king on the back rank. This usage of the rook on the 7th rank during endgames is very strong.

In this example, White wins by a technique which should be remembered:

White advances the pawn on b7, and, then, plays Re7-c7-c8 assuring the victory.

Black is to move, but he cannot defend. For example: 1...Kf8 2.Rc7 Rb8 3.b7 followed by 4.Rc8+



Black is to move

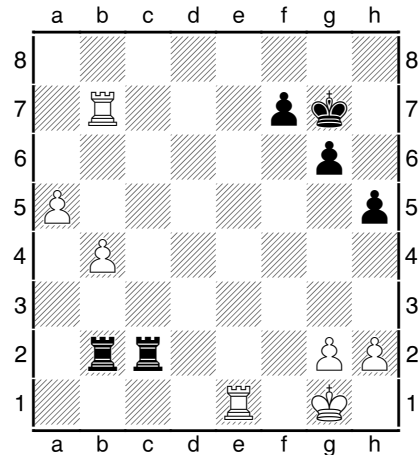
2 rooks on the 7th rank – case I

In this position, the black rooks are on the 2nd rank and White's material advantage and free pawns on the queenside are useless.

2 rooks can make a draw by eternal check against the opponent king blocked on the back rank.

However, in this position, Black has an advanced pawn on h5 that will be used to defend one of the rooks while the other can checkmate:

1...Rxb2+ 2.Kh1 [2.Kf1 Rbf2#] 2...Rxb2+ 3.Kg1 Rbg2+ 4.Kf1 Now, Black will bring the pawn to defend the g2-rook: **4...h4 5.a6 h3 6.a7 Rh1#**



Black is to move

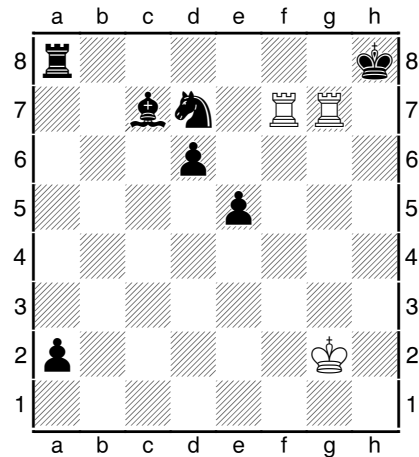
2 rooks on the 7th rank – case II

With 2 rooks on the 7th rank, White can win a tempo by threatening mate with a rook cutting off the opponent king on the back rank and the other checking on the 8th rank.

In this position, White wins:

1.Rh7+ Kg8 2.Rfg7+ Kf8

First of all, the king was forced to move away from the corner. By threatening mate, White wins tempi: **3.Rxd7 Kg8 [3...a1Q?? 4.Rh8#] 4.Rdg7+ Kf8 5.Rxc7 Kg8 6.Rcg7+ Kf8 7.Ra7**



White is to move

Rook + knight perpetual check

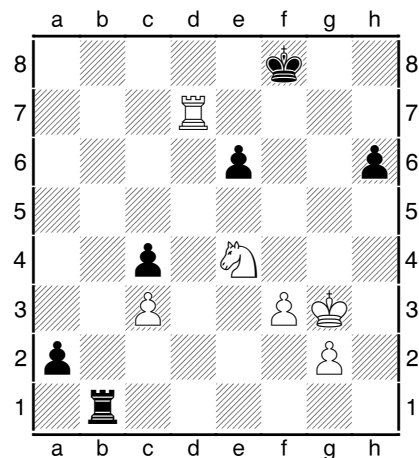
A rook on the 7th rank together with a knight can draw by perpetual check.

In this position, Black can queen at next move and White's only chance is the draw by setting up the position for knight + rook:

1.Nf6!

This is the position from where the knight and rook cooperate perfectly and can draw. For example:

1...a1Q 2.Nh7+ Kg8 3.Nf6+ Kf8 [3...Kh8?? 4.Rh7#] 4.Nh7+ Ke8 5.Nf6+



White is to move

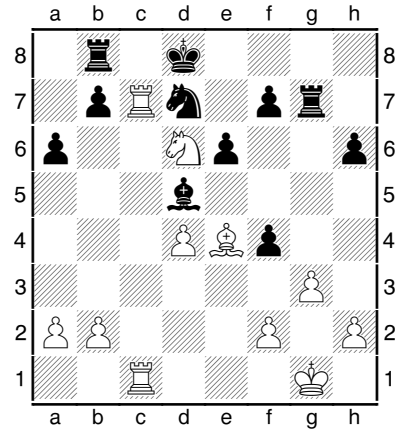
An advanced rook can be in danger

The rook is a weighty piece and sometimes can be in danger in opponent's camp.

When going so far with the rook, we have to be sure that the rook can be retreated back along the file.

In this position with Black to move, a minor piece cuts down the defense and the retreat of the advanced white rook from c7.

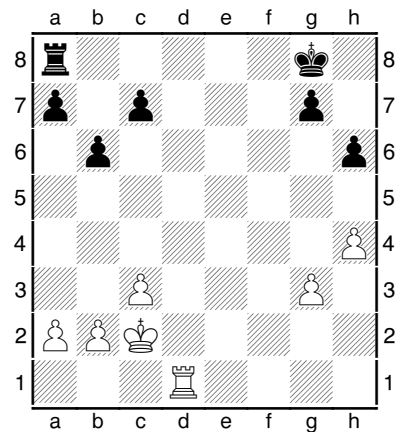
After **1...Bc6**, White loses the exchange.



Rook on 7th rank – an advantage in endgames

A rook on the seventh rank is of great importance in endgames, being a decisive factor in many situations. Therefore, in the late middlegame, exchanges which permit the entrance of the rook into the opponent's camp are an important strategic aim.

In this position with White to move, after 1.Rd7, the rook threatens the black queenside pawns, cuts the black king on the 8th rank, while the white king can move up to c6, bringing victory.



Opening files and getting their control

The files can be opened after exchanges which involve the pawns.

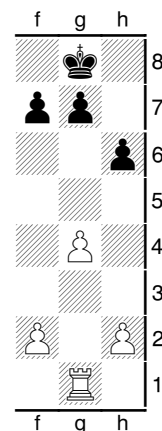
There are some typical methods of opening the files and getting their control which are important to be known:

A method to open the file is by **advancing the pawns** forward, forcing at least an exchange with the opponent pawns.

If the opponent's structure is damaged (one of the pawns is advanced), the opening of a file takes much less time and efforts.

The pawn which must be pushed to open the file is the pawn from the adjacent file with the opponent's advanced pawn.

Here, White can open the g-file playing g4-g5. Another think he should do is to prevent Black from playing h6-h5. White can eventually play h2-h4-h5 to block the black h-pawn on h6.

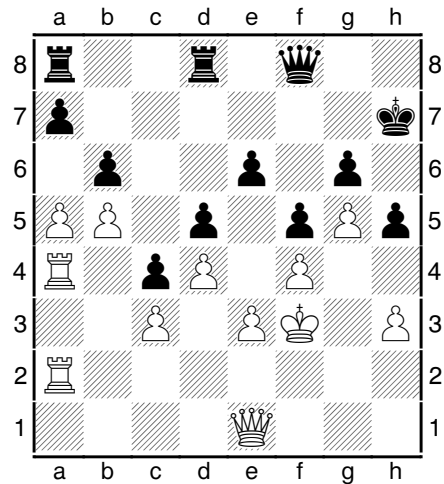


Before the exchange which leads to opening a file, double the rooks and eventually even bring the queen too on that file. This way the opponent might be forced to cede the file before the exchange. These maneuvers are possible if you have local space advantage.

In this position, White has space for maneuvers and before the exchange on b6, he brings the queen behind the rooks:

1.Qa1!

Now, Black is forced to cede the a-file as the rook on a8 will be attacked 3 times after the exchange.

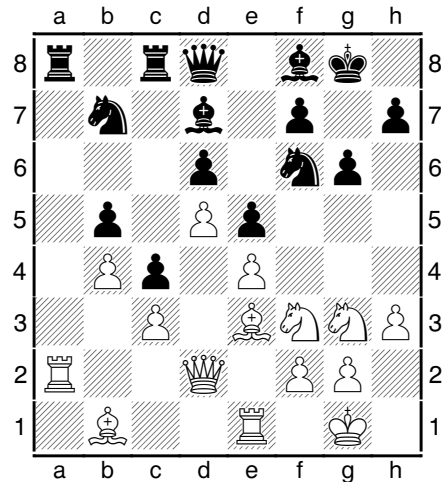


White is to move

When the file is already open, you can temporarily block the file with a piece restricting opponent pieces. With the space gained, you can make maneuvers, preparing doubling the rooks on that file. When you are ready, release the blockade and get the control over the file.

In this position, Karpov played:

1.Ba7! blocking the a-file temporarily. His next moves were Bb1-c2 and Re1-a1 succeeding to double the rooks.



White is to move

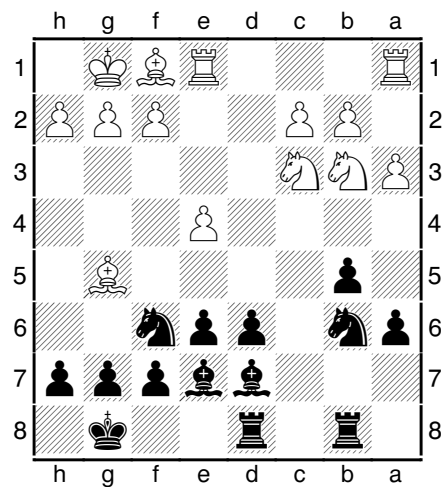
Another way to open the files is to trade pieces defended by the pawns.

Here is a very instructive example.

White has the open d-file, while Black has the open c-file. White has an **obstacle** on the c-file against the possible attack of black rooks, which is the c3-knight.

By **1...Na4**, Black forces an exchange with 2 good results:

- removes the obstacle from the c-file
- after the exchange 2.Nxa4 bxa4, Black opens one more file on the queenside (the b-file).



Black is to move

By using the outpost, a rook advance along the open file on a protected square, making room for the other rook (or queen) to come behind. See next chapter.

The Outpost

The outpost is a square on a half-open file or on an open file which is protected by a pawn and can be used by the own pieces.

The d5-square is an **outpost on a half-open file**. The d6-pawn is a *protected obstacle* which White cannot attack with pieces, but White has another advantage: White can place a knight on d5 making a lot of pressure in the centre and both flanks. Also, the knight attacks the defender of the d6-pawn, the c7-pawn.

After **1.Nd5**, the move **1...c6** is not good because it weakens the d6-pawn, so Black has to defend with strong nerves and lets the strong white knight in the center.

Notice the following aspect: if the white pawn on the e-file had been situated on e3, White wouldn't have reached anything by **1.Nd5**, because of **1...c6 2.Nc3 d5!**. Only the presence of the e4-pawn paralyzes the d6-pawn. In conclusion, the outpost is defined as a square on the (half-)open file which is supported by a pawn.

However, in many situations, the opponent is able to exchange the piece which comes on the outpost.

If White plays **1.Nd5**, after **Nf6xd5**, White does not obtain any advantage by **2.e4xd5** as Black neutralizes the new open e-file with **2...Rae8**.

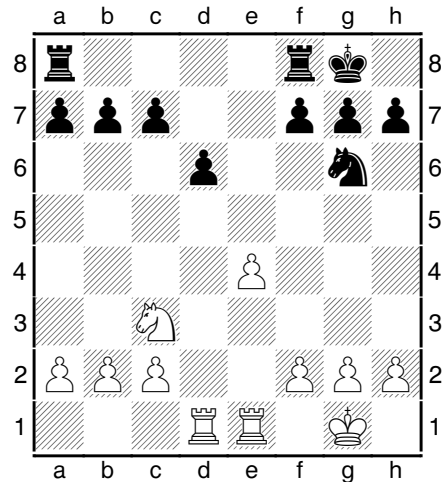
So, the exploit of the d5-square has to be made with care in order to open a file that the opponent cannot neutralize too easy.

White's TO DO list in this position is to put the knight on d5 after he is able to capture back with the c-pawn. So, White needs to play c2-c4 first:

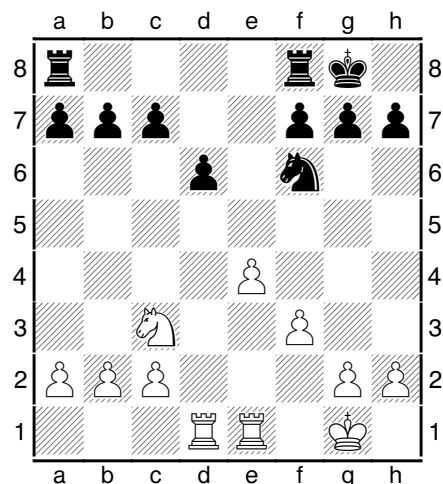
1.Ne2!

clearing the c-pawn's way to advance

1...Rfe8 2.Nf4



White is to move
The d5-outpost is *not* controlled
by Black (knight on g6)



White is to move
The d5-outpost is controlled
by Black (knight on f6)

White brings his knight on d5 by using another route
2...Rad8 3.c4 h6 4.Nd5

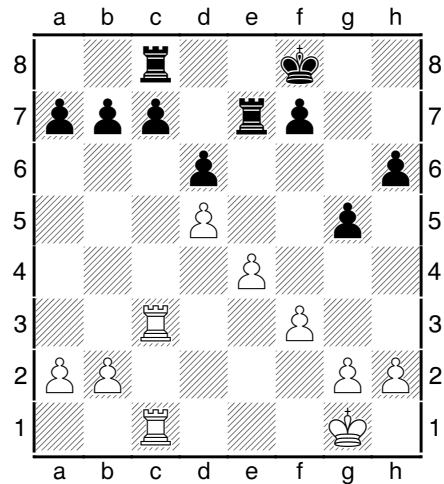
The knight arrived on d5, being supported by the c-pawn too.

4...Nxd5 5.cxd5!

And, now, White has the half-open c-file for his rooks that Black cannot neutralize. Here, the c7-pawn is weak and Black cannot advance it because of the white d5-pawn.

The outpost was replaced by an advanced pawn which confers White the advantage! In the same time, the exchange of the rooks was avoided.

5...Re7 6.Rc1 Kf8 7.Re3 g5 8.Rec3 Rc8



Here, the c5-square is an **outpost on an open file**.

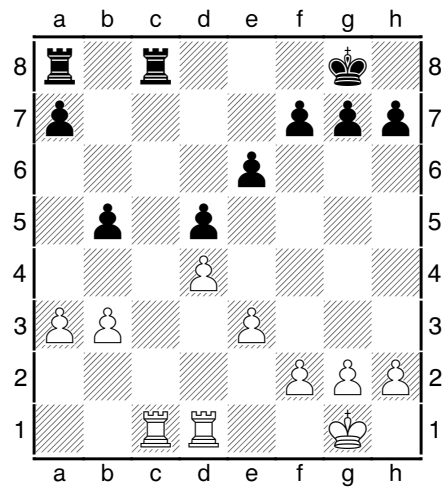
The c-file is open, but both White and Black have a rook on it, so it looks impossible for one of the sides to take advantage from it.

But, White can use his outpost for a typical maneuver and get an advantage:

1.Rc5!

Now, White threatens to double the rooks by Rd1-c1 getting the control over the c-file and, then, play Rc7 getting a won endgame position.

By exchanging on c5: **1...Rxc5 2.dxc5**, White gets another important advantage: the free pawn on c5.



White is to move

As it is not so helpful to occupy an outpost on a half-open file with other piece other than a knight, the outpost on open files are good for supporting both rooks and knights.

Strong rooks on ranks

The rook is usually used to act along the files. If the rook enters the 7th or back rank, into the opponent's camp, the rook acts with devastating effect along the rank too.

The rook is less used to act along central or semi-central **ranks** (3rd, 4th, 5th, or 6th rank), much more less than it could.

Instead, a strong player will watch any opportunity to get his pieces active and this includes using the rooks along advanced ranks when possible.

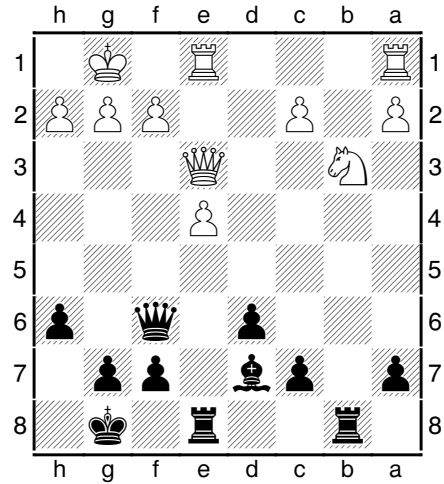
In this position is from the game Trifunovic – Pachman, 1947, Black has the open e- and b- files for his rooks. He took the initiative by activating the heavy pieces on ranks:

- The b8-rook comes on the fourth rank threatening the e4-pawn and after Rb4-a4, the a2-pawn.
- The e8-rook comes on the fifth rank which is completely clear and ready to be used.

Note that Black is not threatened on the back rank, so he is not in danger to leave it undefended.

The game went:

1...Rb4 2.f3 Ra4 3.c3 Re5 with idea **Be6**, and Black has a better game because of his active rooks which are able to attack the weak white pawns from the queenside.



Black is to move

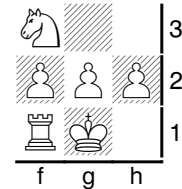
Knights and Operation Bases

The knight is a minor piece with specific qualities and limitations which we should enounce them now.

1. The knight is an excellent defender

The knight placed on f3 (or f6) near the king castled short is one of the most common position for the knight. Besides having control over 2 central squares, the knight does an excellent task to protect the king's flank.

The knight also does a good defensive duty for the king from more other positions as f1 or g3 for the short castle or c1, c3, and b3 for the long castle.



2. The knight in closed positions.

The knight can jump over the pawns, a quality which makes the knight to be stronger than the bishop or even rooks in closed positions. In fact, in closed positions, the pawns are less flexible, so the knight can find easier un-attackable positions.

3. The knight is a slow piece.

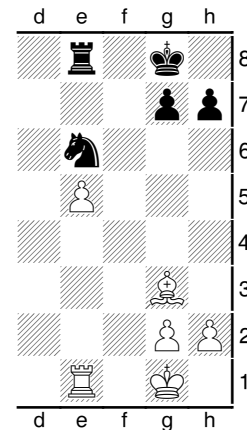
The knight has influence only around the area where is placed, so much care should be given when moving the knight. The strongest position of the knight is on the centre or close to the centre. As this is always true, in some positions, when the knight can NOT come in the centre or this is well protected, the knight can do a lot even from the edge of the board if there are some critical points they attack or protect. *I personally think that the particularities of the position cannot change the old chess knight into a “modern” knight which likes on the edge of the board as stated in some contemporary books.*

4. The knight is the best piece to block enemy pawns.

Free or isolani opponent pawns are best blocked by the knight. From the blockading square, the knight has influence in the area of the pawn where usually the players concentrate their forces and actions.

5. The knights are excellent in tactics.

Because of their movement type, the knight completes the movement of all other pieces with long ray of action. Intrusions into opponent's camp and knight forks trick even very strong players.



6. In endgames, the knight is often under the bishop

In most of the endgames where are pawns on both sides, the knights are usually weaker than the bishops which can “see” both flanks at once.

However, in simple endings with pawns only on one side of the board or when the pawns are blocked, the knight can be better.

Operation bases for knights

After we saw the qualities and limitations of the knight, it becomes clear that the knight is stronger in the centre of the board. As the centre is in attention of both players, the knight preferably should be protected by other pieces (preferably pawns too) and to be on a square that the opponent cannot easily attack with the pawns.

We will call this square: Operation Base.

If the knight can occupy a good operation base, try to eliminate the opponent pieces which can trade your strong knight.

Look below at the diagram A. Black wins from this position very easily because of the very good square for his knight in the centre, after c6-c5 and Ne6-d4. The white bishop is trapped behind his pawns and cannot take part to the battle. That's very easy to understand, but how to get such a position – this is the question.

Look now at the diagram B, which is a position from the same game with many moves before position from the diagram A. We will see how Black got that excellent position for the knight.

Here, the d4-square cannot be attacked anymore by white pawns, so Black prepares to bring a knight there which White won't be able to exchange. Black trades one of the white knights: **1...Bxc4 2.dxc4** and, then, exchanges another piece that can control the d4-square: **2...Bc5**. Now, even if White will trade a knight, Black will remain with the second knight ready to occupy the d4-square.

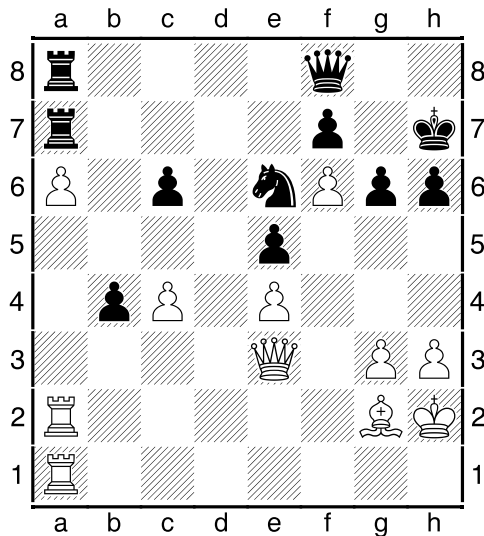


Diagram A.

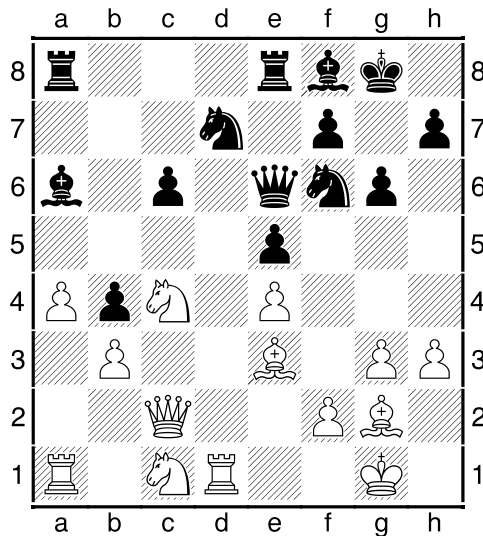


Diagram B.

The importance of an operation base for the knight is strongly connected with the importance of the squares that knight attacks from there.

Example 1

In this position from the game Petrosian – Bronstein, 1956, White has a solid position for the knight on d5 and a better development. Black's pawns e5, f5, g6, h5 are much too "pushed" given the position of his pieces which are not well placed and not completely developed.

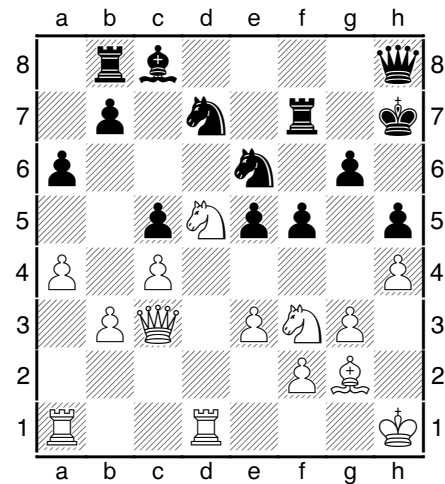
White can attack this black pawn structure straight away with **1.e4!!**

White cedes the central d4-square to Black, but the importance of that base for the knight is much below what White gets instead: the e4-square for his knight.

White threatens with Re1 and e4xf5, so Black is forced to take: **1...fxe4 2.Nd2**

It is too dangerous to take the f2-pawn now as the open f-file will be easily taken under control by the white rooks.

Now, the white knight will get the operation base from e4 which counts much more than Black's d4 one. All white pieces are active and can help the knights and the knights can help the pieces, while the black knight on d4 will work with nobody.



White is to move

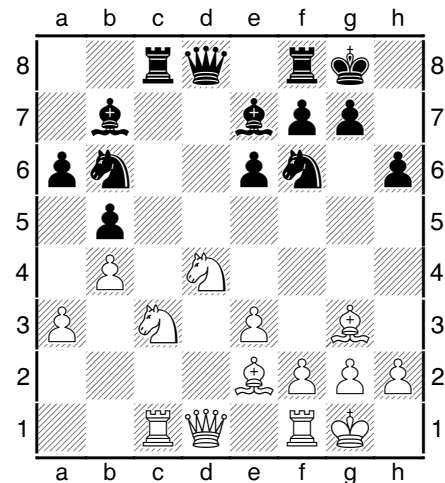
Example 2

This position from the game Capablanca – Alekhine appears in many books. The pawn structure is symmetrical, but Black has an advantage due to his bishop from b7 better than the white bishop from e2. Also, Black is closer to install a knight or rook on the excellent c4-square. Ok, now, look at white pieces and name which have the best position.

... (think 5-10 minutes)

In this symmetrical position, the conquer and usage of squares like c4 and d5 for Black or c5 and d4 for White is of the greatest importance and Black is some steps in front.

Surprisingly, in this position, White should have played his best looking piece on the edge: Nd4-b3-a5. The white knight has nothing to do in the center as it doesn't attack any critical square, but, from a5, the knight attacks the strong b7-bishop and defends the c4-square exchanging any black knight will come there.



White is to move

Example 3

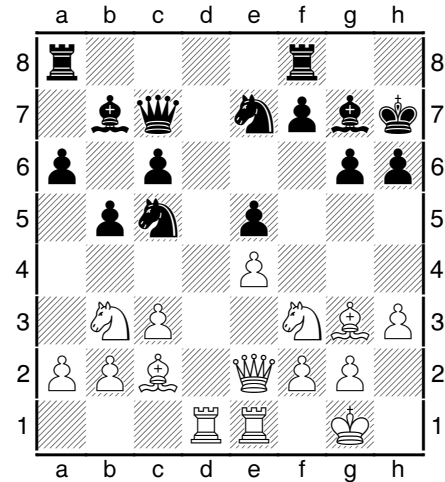
Position from the game Klundt – Ponomariov, 1999. White's last move was 1.Nb3 to exchange the black knight from c5.

1...Na4!

Black avoids the exchange, letting the c2-bishop blocked and the b3-knight without perspectives. Instead, the black knight attacks the white queenside pawns giving trouble to White.

2.Bb1 c5 3.Rd2 c4 4.Nc1 Rad8

The black knight has a secure position on a4 and attacks an important point in this position, the b2-pawn. Moreover, the knight can come anytime back to c5 now. Black got a better position.



Black is to move

Knight maneuvers

In this position from the game Anand-Kamski, 1995, the black knight from f5 is stronger than the f3-knight which is limited by the black e5- and g5-pawns. White finds a maneuver to exchange these 2 knights, also getting a good control over the f5-square:

1.N3h2

White threatens 2.Qh5, followed by Nh2-g4 with attack.

1...Qf6 2.Ng4 Qg7 3.Nge3 Nxe3 4.Nxe3

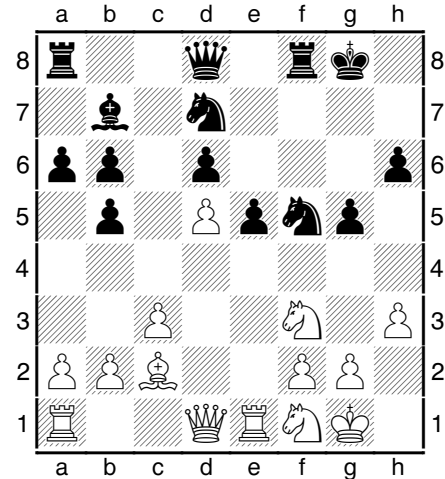
The knights were exchanged after Nf3-h2-g4-e3 and White's position became better: the c2-bishop controls more squares and the d1-queen has the free d1-h5 diagonal.

Is the e3-square an operation base for the white knight?

It is: the knight is well protected, cannot be attacked by the black pawns and attacks/controls important squares: f5, g4 and d5.

The game continued:

4...Rf4 5.a4! Raf8 6.axb5 a5 7.Rf1 Bc8 8.g3 R4f7 9.b4 and White is better



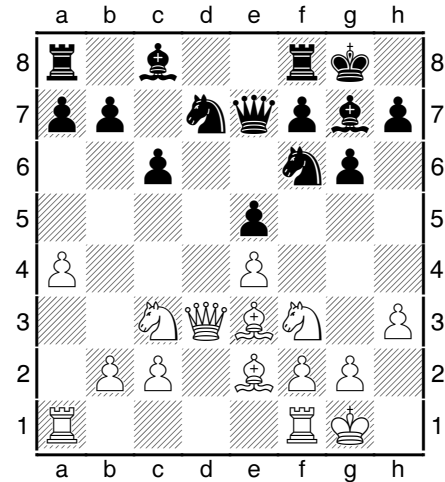
White is to move

Position from the game Parker – Nijboer, 2006.

In this kind of positions where the e4 and e5 pawns are blocked, there is a typical maneuver for the f3 (or f6) knight: Nf3-h4-f5 (or Nf6-h5-f4). Here Black played **1...Nh5** intending Nh5-f4.

After **2.a5 Nf4**, if the knight is exchanged with Be3xf4, Black gets another strong square in the centre: e5. Moreover, the g7-bishop's diagonal will be opened.

This maneuver is stronger when the h-pawn is already pushed on h3 (or h6) as the knight cannot be chased away with g2-g3 (or g7-g6).



Black is to move

Conclusion

The knight is an excellent defender of the king, capable of tricky moves which can surprise anybody in complicated positions and, in the same time, it is a piece suitable for long maneuvers.

The knight becomes very strong when finds an operation base - a safe square, well protected and from where it can exert pressure against important squares.

Bishops, Diagonals Unlike Bishops, Bishop Pair

The bishop is a long-ray of action piece but with a clear limitation: it is the only piece which cannot move on all the squares of the board.

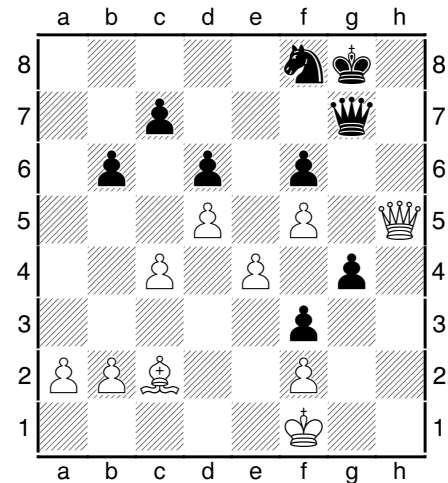
The knights are good in defense; **the bishops are usually better in attack**. In this position, from the game Alekhine – Johner, 1934, the white bishop seems blocked by the own pawns.

However, White can open a diagonal for his bishop after which the attack against the black king will be deadly:

1.e5! dxe5 [1...fxe5 2.f6 Qxf6 3.Qxg4+ followed by Be4 doesn't save Black]

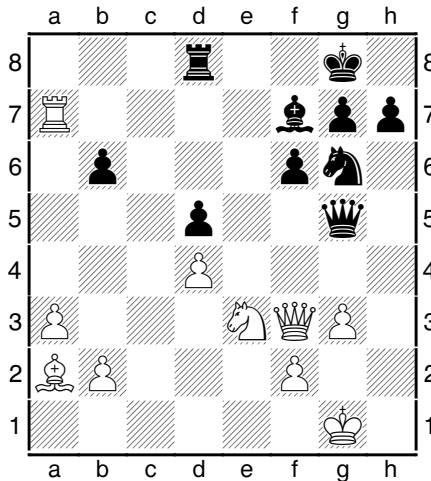
2.d6 c5 Black tries in vain to close the white bishop's way in. [After 2...cxd6, White plays 3.c5 followed by Bb3]

3.Be4 Qd7 4.Qh6 and Black resigned

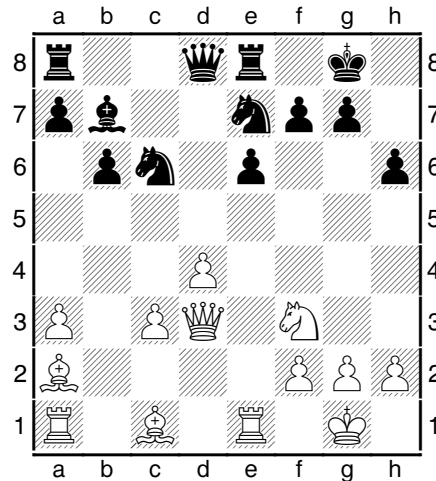


White is to move

Below are 2 examples of opening the diagonals for the bishop from Tal's practice:



White is to move.



White is to move

White wins with **1.Nd5!** opening the diagonal for the a2-bishop, **1...Bxd5 2.Ra8** This position is remarkable as the pinned piece is a bishop too.

White opens the diagonal for the a2-bishop sacrificing a rook: **1.Rxe6!! fxe6 2.Bxe6+ Kf8** [2...Kh8? 3.Ng5!! hxe5 4.Qh3#] **3.Qh7!** [in the game White played 3.Nh4 not so strong] with the threat 4.Bxh6!

Good/Bad Bishop

Who didn't hear about the good and bad bishop? Anyway: **the bad bishop is obstructed by its own immobile pawns (usually behind the pawns, not in their front)**, while the good bishop can move easily around its own pawns.

In the game Averbach – Furman, 1960, Black made a decisive mistake by playing **1...Ba3?**

With the isolani pawn blocked on d5, Black should have kept his dark-square bishop (the good one) on the board. After the exchange, a complex of weak squares appeared and White got an excellent position after:

2.Rxc6 bxc6 3.Bxa3 Qxa3 4.Rd4

We can see White exploiting the weak squares and the black light-square bishop on an unfortunate position, obstructed by the own immobile d5-pawn.

4...Qa5 5.Ra4 Qb6 6.Qf1 Ra8 7.Qd3

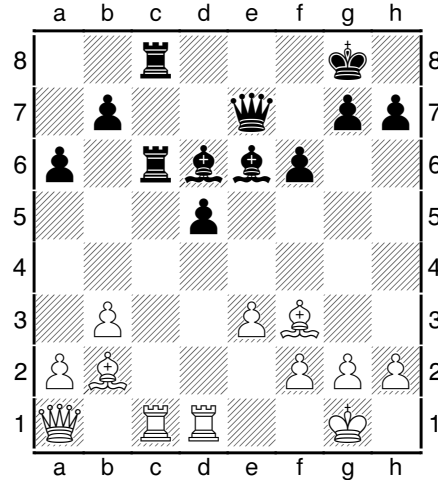
The difference of quality between the 2 bishops, the weak dark-squares d6, c5, and a5 offered White an easy game and victory.

However, to determine that a bishop is really a “bad” one is often not so easy.

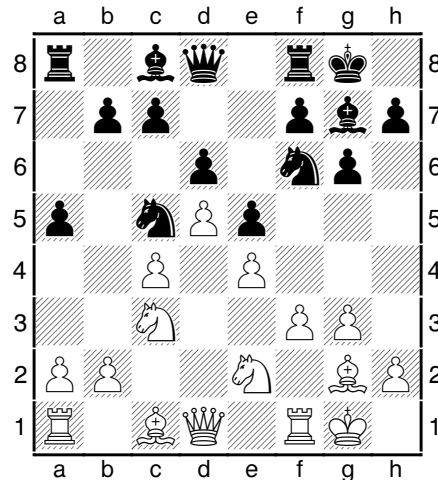
We have chosen an interesting position to see which bishops are bad and which are good.

The g2-bishop looks really bad as it has a long white pawn-chain in front of it. Even if we cannot say that the g2-bishop is a good one, we cannot say that it's a bad one either. White's strategy is to play a2-a3 and b2-b4 with some preparation first, then, c4-c5 and later f3-f4 and so on. It is very probable that the centre won't be closed forever and the g2-bishop will sustain the e4 and d5 points in the struggle will come. Later, after some exchanges in the centre, it is even possible for the h1-a8 diagonal to become open

- The white dark-square bishop is a good bishop. It can come on e3 seeing both flanks and also defending the dark-squares behind the advanced white pawns in the centre.
- The black g7-bishop is like the white g2-bishop. It is blocked, but Black might play f7-f5 and after the removal of the e4-pawn, the bishop can get a strong diagonal.
- The black c8-bishop is not blocked by its own pawns, but it has no safe square to develop on. The bishop defends though the light-squares from Black's camp in eventuality of f7-f5 which at least would weaken the e6-square.



Black is to move



White is to move

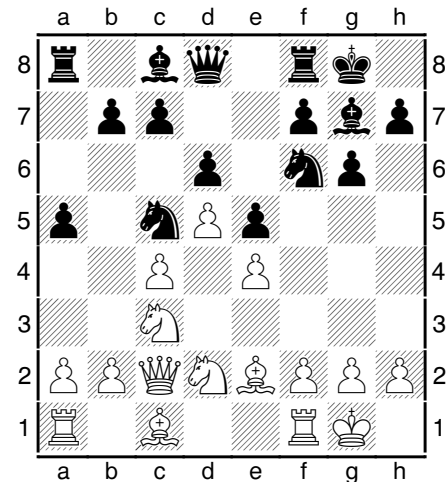
This is a theoretical position, which was very often met in practice during '50s.

The King's Indian Defense players are usually very proud by their fianchettoed bishop on g7 and, in many variations, the opening of that bishop means a triumph in the opening.

However, it is clear that the black dark-squares bishop is a bad one and the practice proved that the opening of that bishop is much-much harder than the exchange of that bishop with the white good bishop.

So, here, Black has **1...Bh6!** and White cannot avoid the exchange (Nd2 has to move).

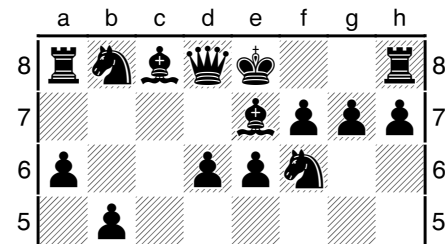
Black aims now to make other exchanges and to enter an endgame with good against bad bishop.



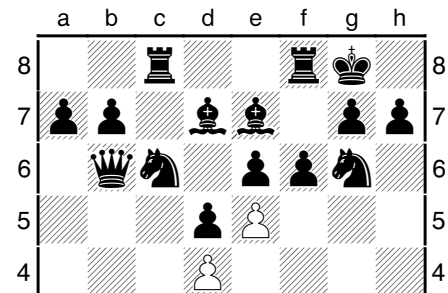
Black is to move

During the opening or early middlegame, it is not entirely correct to declare that a bishop is bad and to take decisions based only on this assessment. There are many cases when the bishop has other important tasks or can be activated later in the game.

For example, the dark-square bishop from Sicilian Scheveningen and other systems has the very important role to defend the d6-pawn which is on an open file for White, so a very vulnerable target without the e7-bishop.



Or, in the French Defense, the very bad bishop of light-squares plays often an important role of sustaining the e6-pawn which permits Black to attack the centre with f7-f6, also opening the f-file and getting some chances for an attack on the kingside. If the bishop wouldn't be on d7, after the exchange e5xf6, the e6-pawn will become an easy target for the white major pieces.



However, the player should keep in mind all the time that the "bad" bishop can be a serious problem in an endgame, and to prepare the exchange or activation of the bad bishop until it's not too late.

Pawn-play for the bishops

The pawn moves are very important for the entire game, of course, but the bishops are the most affected pieces.

The pawns can block the bishops, but also can help them to get excellent diagonals.

In this example, Black will play the next moves only with the pawns, opening and supporting the squares from the long diagonal a8-h1:

1...c5

First of all, Black opens the diagonal for the bishop, secure the d4-square and keep his intentions hidden until White castles.

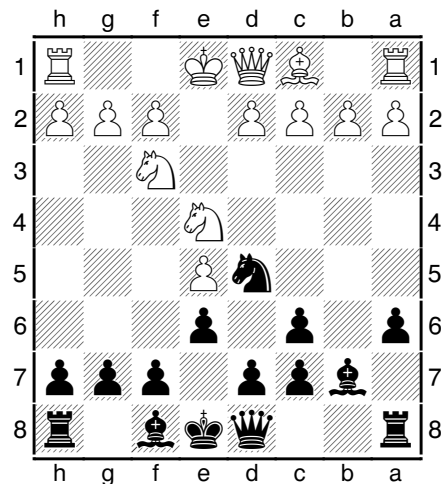
2.0-0

Now, the Black kingside pawns will run toward the white king:

2...f5! 3.Ng3 g5!

The advancing of black pawns is easy as they gain tempi attacking the white knights.

4.d3 g4 5.Nd2 h5 6.Nc4 h4 7.Ne2 h3 8.g3 Nb6 with an excellent position for Black.



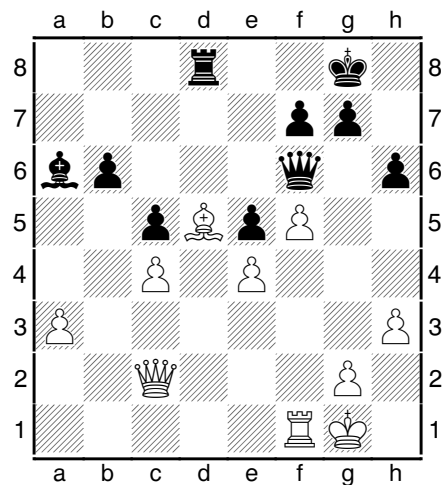
Black is to move

Bad bishop in front of the pawns

This position is from the game Botvinnik – Kan, 1939. If we look at the blocked white pawns in the centre, the White's bishop can be considered bad, but, of course, it's not so.

The white bishop is not blocked behind his pawns, but in their front, sees both flanks, it is well defended and an exchange of bishops on d5 will offer White a free, supported and advanced pawn after e4xd5.

The game went: **1...Bc8 [1...b5 2.cxb5 Bxb5 3.Rb1] 2.Qa4 Bd7 3.Qa7 Be8 4.Rb1 Rd6 5.a4 Kh7 6.a5 bxa5 7.Qxa5 Ra6 8.Qxc5** and White is a pawn up and has a winning position.

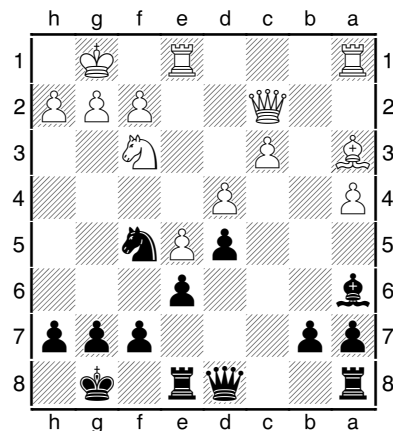


Black is to move

The good bishop often has defensive tasks too.

The good bishops are often very important pieces not only because they are active, not being blocked by the pawns, but also because they defend the squares adjacent to the pawn chains.

In this position, both players lost their good bishops and we can easily see that the dark-squares for Black and light-squares for White are weak.



IMPORTANT CONCLUSION:

If there are *immobile* pawns which restrict a bishop in its movement, then, that bishop is bad. In endgames, a bad bishop often means a considerable advantage for the opponent.

However, in openings and early middlegames, a bad bishop can defend important squares which might be more important. The player has to assess very well which element is more important and to determine the right moment for getting rid of that bishop or for activating it on other side of the board.

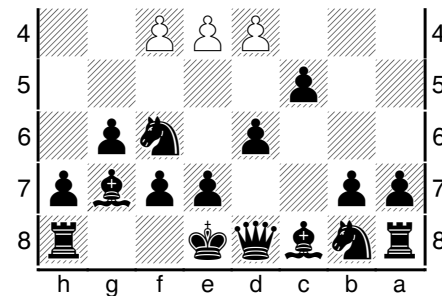
A good bishop or a bishop which is not bad is in many situations stronger than the knight because of its long ray of action and because of its better employment in attack.

Common bishop positions and maneuvers

1. A very common position for the bishop is on fianchetto. **A fianchettoed bishop usually determines the character of the game.** It is very interesting that any other piece cannot influence the game so much as this kind of bishop (with the exceptions of the kings). If the opponent doesn't fianchetto his bishop on the same diagonal too, this bishop has a strong influence from a very safe position.

Besides attacking deeply on the other side, the fianchettoed bishop attacks the centre from the distance and determines a specific strategy of fighting for the centre with pieces and undermining semi-central pawn moves.

In this position, Black undermines the white centre with the semi-central c5-pawn, sustained tactically and strategically by the fianchettoed bishop from g7.



When Black castles short and fianchettoes his bishop on g7, the game is often a series of attacks and counterattacks (see Dragon, Pirc, King's Indian).

When White castles short and fianchettoes his bishop on g2, the game is more quiet and strategical and White often attacks on the queenside (see Reti, Catalan, and Sicilians with fianchetto).

2. Bishop on d2, e3 or e2, d3 for White (e7, d6 or d7, e6 for Black) are usually on good positions. The bishops are able to see both flanks. Speaking in general, it is preferable to have the bishops placed on these central squares when they are not obstructed by other pieces or when they do not obstruct the major pieces on central files.

3. Bishops on c4 or f4 for White (c5 or f5 for Black) are usually on aggressive positions. However, the bishops are easier to be exchanged in these positions (Nc6-a5 x c4, Nf6-h5 x f4, Bc8-e6 x c4, or Bf8-d6 x f4) or attacked by pawns (b7-b5 or g7-g5).

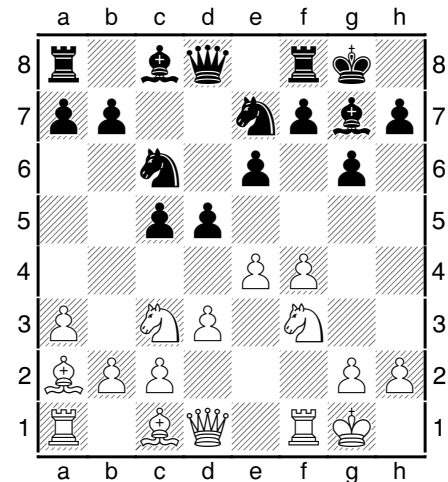
4. Bishops on b5 or g5 for White (b4 or g4 for Black) are usually fighting indirectly for the centre (pinning or threatening to exchange the opponent knights).

Or the white bishop on g5 threatening to exchange the defender of the Black's king position, the f6-knight, can have an attacking role.

The shortcoming of a bishop on such positions is that they don't see the other flank.

5. In many opening systems, Black develops his bishop on a6.

In this position of Closed Sicilian, Black played **1...b6** and after **2.Qe1**, **Ba6** with an excellent position for the bishop which fights indirectly for the centre pinning the d3-pawn and also sustaining the pawn-thrust c5-c4 in the future.

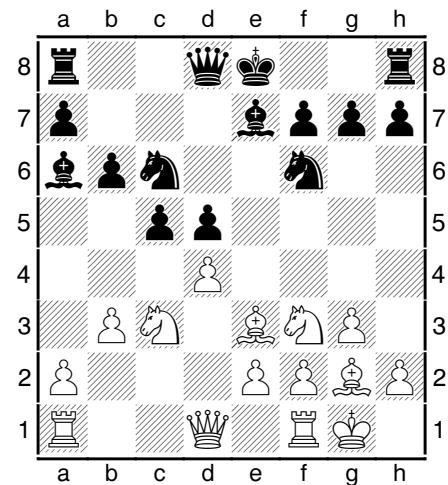


There are no rare situations when a bishop from a good diagonal changes his place when his targets move away from its scope.

In this position from the game, Novikov – Kujovic, 2004, Black played normally **1...Rc8** and after **2.Rc1 0-0**, the white bishop has less to do on the long diagonal than on h3, so: **3.Bh3!**

In fact, without a good target on, the long diagonal can lose from its importance.

The g2-bishop can be better on a shorter diagonal: Bg2-h3, Bg2-f1 or, sometimes, Bg2-e4 transferring on the b1-h7 diagonal.



Black is to move.

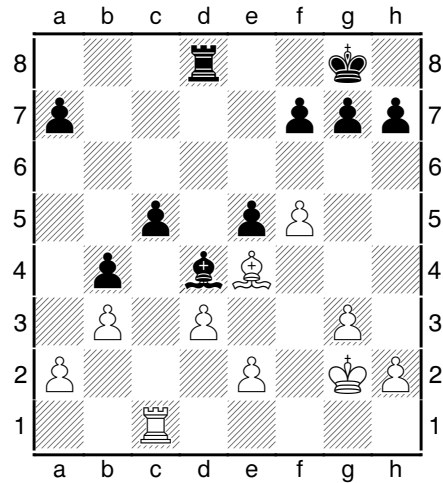
Unlike Bishops

Unlike bishops or bishops of opposite colors are well known to lead to drawish endgames. 2 or even 3 pawns up cannot bring victory in some endings when the only remained pieces are the 2 unlike bishops (see endings manuals for this issue). However, when other pieces still exist on the board, the 2 unlike bishops are far from assuring that the game will be a draw.

In the game Reti – Romanovsky, 1925, a position with unlike bishops and a pair of rooks appeared. Here, White has an advantage because his bishop has a safe position on e4, while the black bishop can be chased away with e2-e3 and it is blocked by his own c5- and e5- pawns outside of the game.

White played: 28.Rc4 Kf8 29.Kf3 Rc8 30.e3 Bc3 31.a4 getting rid of the weak pawn Ke7 32.Bd5 Rc7 33.Rh4 h6 34.Ke4 Kf6 35.Rh5 Rd7 36.g4 with clear advantage.

If we eliminate the rooks from the initial position, the resulting ending is a clear draw. However, with the rooks on the board, the difference between the qualities of the bishops gives White the winning prospects.



White is to move

If in endgames the presence of unlike bishops tends to a draw even in situations with one or more pawns less, during middlegames, the opposite colored bishops make the game more dangerous. In fact, it is having a piece more on a half of the board. The most critical situation is when the bishop(s) are active in attacks against the king.

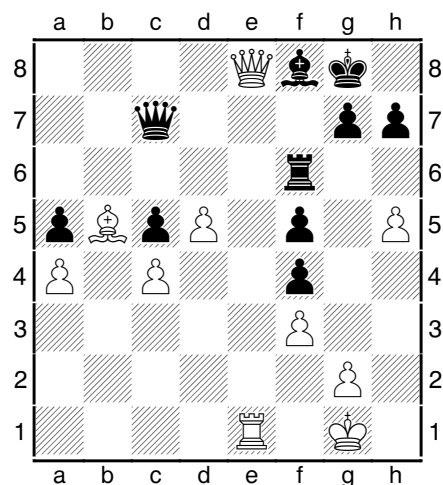
A position from the game Areshchenko – Efimenko, 2005, where White is in attack.

It is very instructive to observe that Black defends with all his pieces and the normal pawn wall in front of the king. The activation of the white bishop will end the game easily as White will attack using the light-squares which makes as being a piece up:

1.Bd7! Qd6

1...Qb6 2.Be6+ Kh8 3.Bf7! nice using of light squares, isn't it? 3...Qd6 4.Rb1 wins

2. Re6 Qc7 3.Rxf6 gxf6 4.Be6+ Kg7 5.h6+
Black resigns



White is to move

Conclusion:

When you get a position with bishops of opposite colors, try to activate your bishop in attack against the opponent's king as fast as possible.

5.8. Bishop Pair

When a player misses one of the bishops and the other has both bishops on the board, the latter is called to have the bishop pair.

If the position is not very closed (in closed positions the bishops are usually restricted in their mobility), with strong points for the enemy knights, the bishop pair is proved to be stronger. Below are 2 very important factors which should be considered:

1. Open Position

The bishops are long-ray of action pieces, so they act with more power in open positions. So, when you have the bishop pair, advance the pawns to open the position.

Besides opening the lines, advancing the pawns forward usually leads to weakening your own position. However, one of the advantages of the bishop pair is that they are able to defend/control very well all the weaknesses created behind the pawns.

2. Safe position for the opponent knight

When the opponent knight finds a well protected square in the centre or closed to the centre, the bishop pair becomes no stronger.

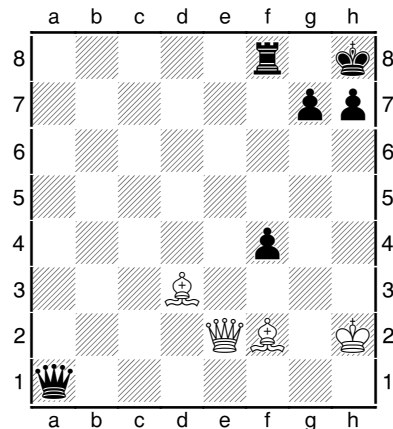
Therefore, when you have the bishop pair, one of the most important tasks to consolidate your advantage is to make sure that the opponent knights won't be able to get secure positions in the centre. Again, this can be done by advancing the pawns to demolish any sustainment in the centre.

Advantages of the bishop pair

1. The first advantage of the bishop pair is that the limitation of one bishop (a bishop can control only half of the squares) is nullified by the presence of the other.

2. The attack with 2 bishops against the king is very strong. One of the bishops creates threats forcing some weaknesses in the opponent's position that the other bishop will be able to exploit.

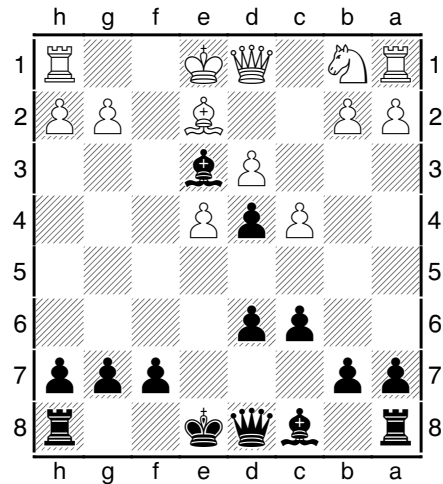
In this position, White plays **1.Qe4** forcing Black to defend on light squares, but weakening the dark-squares: **1...g6**, when **2.Bd4+** wins.



Of course, from this position, Black can win easily in many ways. Yet it is very illustrative for how the 2 bishops work together in attack.

White has no defense for the dark-squares, only the g-pawn (after 1...Qh4+, White has 2.g3). Black's attack on dark-squares will be helped by the second bishop which comes to eliminate the last defense: **1...Bh3!!**

2.Kf1 other moves loses the rook **Qh4** **3.Qe1 Qf6+** - game over.

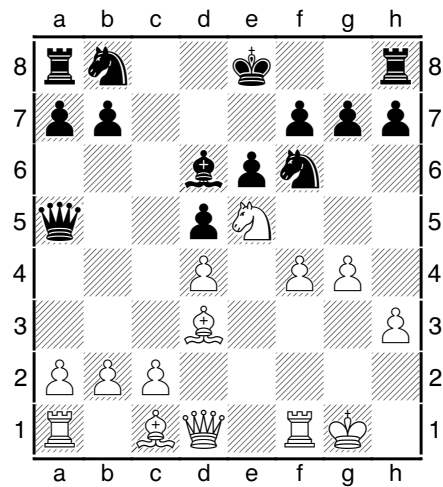


Black is to move

3. Advancing the pawns creates a large space for the pieces, but it also weakens the own position. Well, when having the bishop pair, this disadvantage is usually not important as the bishops protect very well a large space behind the pawns.

In this position, White's king is castled kingside and he nevertheless advances the pawns on the same side. This can be very dangerous especially that Black can castle queenside and counterattack on the king flank.

However, because of the bishop-pair, White's strategy is completely justified. He gains space for his bishops, demolishes the safe positions of the black knights, while the bishops defend all the squares behind the advanced pawns.



Black is to move

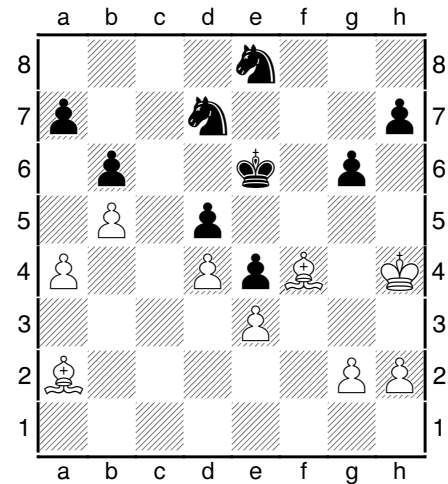
4. The bishop pair can be exchanged easily at a favorable moment. Because the 2 bishops are long ray of action pieces with lower value and complement each other, they are able to see the opponent pieces on any square and make an exchange when this might bring some other advantage.

In the following position from the game Botvinnik – Furman, 1961, the centre is closed. It is a very instructive position where we can see that sometimes a closed centre doesn't restrict only the mobility of the bishops but of the knights too.

Here, White's bishop pair is still stronger than the knights which cannot enter or attack White's camp.

Black played **1...Nd6** and White gave up his bishop pair in this moment by **2.Bxd6** as the resulting ending seems easier to be won: the white king will enter the Black's kingside, helped by the pawns if needed, while the a2-bishop will keep the black king busy to defend d5.

Speaking about the quality of the pieces, the white bishop has a good value as it attacks the d5-pawn, so it has an attacking role while a black piece will have a defending task. White can play later Ba2-b3 to improve its position in view of a possible Bb3-d1-g4 maneuver.



Black is to move

So, we said that the bishop pair is a very strong weapon in open positions.

Here is an example (from the match Tal – Botvinnik, 1961), when Black has the bishop pair but it is White who opens up the positions with:

1.c4!

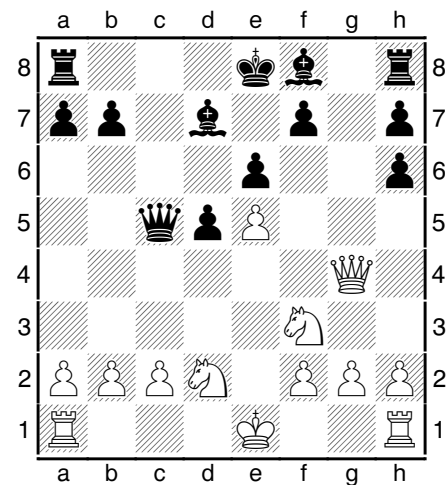
Why not 1.c3 followed by Nb3-d4 with a solid point for the knight in the centre, one may ask.

It is not that this idea is wrong, but White opens the c-file because Black will castle long (of course, Black cannot castle short or stay in the centre).

It is interesting to see some moves more:

1...0-0-0 2.0-0 Kb8 3.Rfd1 Qb6 4.Qh4!

Another nice move from Tal who restrict the mobility of the f8-bishop. 4...Bc5 is not good in view of 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Nb3.



White is to move

A position where the black bishop pair has no value as it is not active and the *essence* of the position is not this imbalance of minor pieces, but the kings castled on different sides.

The Queen

The piece with the greatest mobility, the queen, is very strong during middlegame and endgame as an attacking piece.

In this position from the game Bogoljubow – Mieses, 1925, we can see how powerful the queen in attack is.

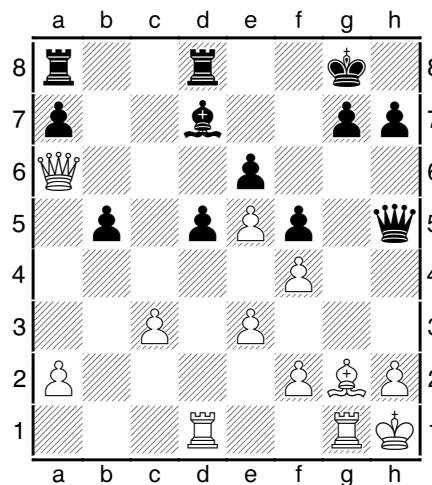
The white queen is on the queenside, but she is able to enter attack after 2 piece sacrifice to open her way toward the opponent king:

1.Bxd5! exd5 2.Rxg7 Kxg7 3.Qf6+

The white queen used his power as both a bishop and rook together, taking all the escaping squares from the black king.

3...Kg8 4.Rg1+ Qg4 4.Rxg4 fxc4

Now, the white queen is alone against 2 rooks and a bishop, but with the queen sustainment, the e- and f-pawns will advance easily. Black is lost.



White is to move

In the game Karpov – Kamsky, 1992, the White's queen is transferred to the queenside where Black cannot oppose a good defense. Black's queenside is weak and the white queen will be able to enter there with serious threats:

1.Rf2!

Because of the black bishop on b2, Black is forced to exchange the rooks on f2:

1...Rxf2 2.Qxf2 Ba3 3.Qc2!

Now, Black has no satisfactory defense as the following variations prove:

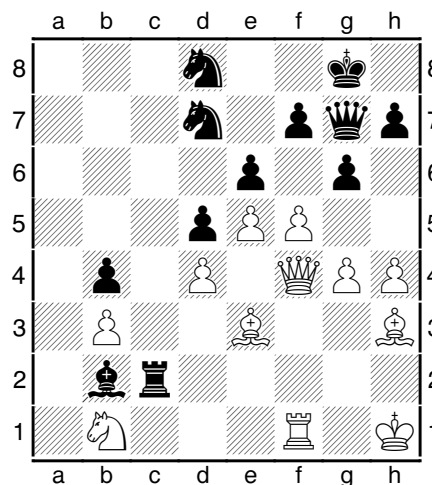
a) 43...Qf8 44.Qc7 Qe8 45.Bg5 f6 46.Bxf6 Nxf6

47.exf6 Qf8 (47...Nf7 48.fxe6 Qxe6 49.Qb8+)

48.Qe7 exf5 49.Bg2 fxg4 50.Bxd5+ Nf7 51.Nd2+-;

b) 43...Nb8 44.f6 Qf8 45.Nd2+- ; c) 43...gxf5 44.Qc8+-

d) 43...Nxe5 as in the game 44.dxe5 Qxe5 45.Qc8 with large advantage to White.



White is to move

As seen in this example, **the queen has a strong power when attacking a weakened area in the opponent's camp** even if she is alone.

However, the queen's power decreases a lot when there are no weaknesses or when the opponent pawns are on their initial position.

In this position, from the game Ilyin Zhenevsky-Larsen, 1925, Black didn't like the normal exchange of the queens on d2, after which White plays c2-c4 with a superior pawn structure and long-term pressure.

Instead, Black took the decision to give the queen for a pawn, a bishop and a rook which means a position with material equivalence (remember PME from the first month).

13... Qxa2 14.Ra1 Qxb2 15.Rfb1 Qxb1+ 16.Rxb1
After this series of forced moves, the material of the 2 players is equivalent even if White has the queen and Black doesn't.

However with 7 pawns on the board, the queen is restricted. Black has to play carefully with the following TO DO list in mind:

- It is known that more pieces on attack are better, even if their value is smaller, so: create an attack on the queenside by bringing more pieces there (with Nf6-e8-c7, Rc8-b8 with idea b7-b5 and so on)
- Consolidate the centre with Rf8-d8
- Do not let White to create weaknesses on the kingside.

16...Rfd8 17.c4 Ne8 18.f4 a6 19.Kh1?! (diagram)
White prepares an attack on the queenside. As this idea is not bad, it is too slow however. To give power to his queen, he should create some ruptures in Black's pawn position and some space that the queen could use: 19.Nxc6! bxc6 20.e5

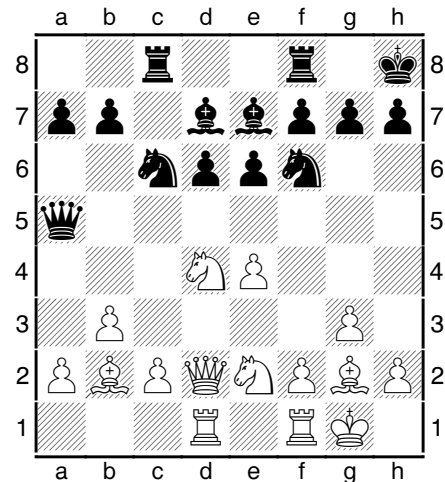
19...Nc7 20.Qe3 Rb8 21.Rd1 Nb4 22.Qc3 a5 23.Ra1 b6 (diagram)

It is clear that White failed to create something. His queen has no power behind its own pawns and, in the same time, Black created premises for an attack on the queenside: good operation bases for the knights (b4 and c5 – in view of Nc7-a6-c5) and local force superiority.

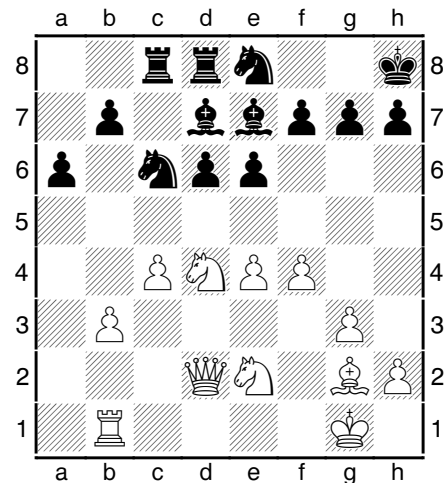
As the mistakes come easily in hard positions, White played the wrong: **24.Qe3** after which he lost an exchange:

24...e5 25.Nf5 Bxf5 26.exf5 Nc2 27.Qc3 Nxa1

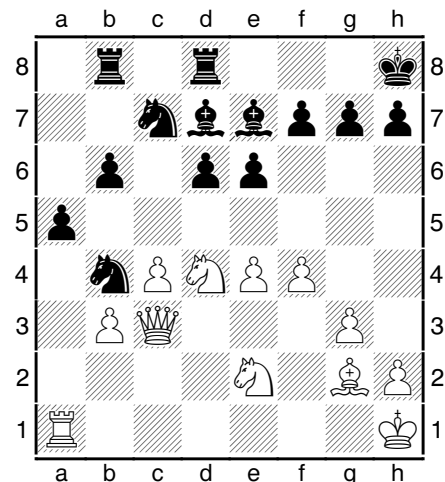
Black won easily now. For curious student, below is the rest of the game: 28.Qxa1 Bf6 29.Qg1 d5 30.cxd5 Nxd5 31.fxe5 Bxe5 32.g4 f6 33.h4 b5 34.Nd4 Ne3 35.Qxe3 Rxd4 36.Bf3 a4 37.h5 a3 38.Qe2 Rbd8 0-1



Black is to move



Position before 19.Kh1?!



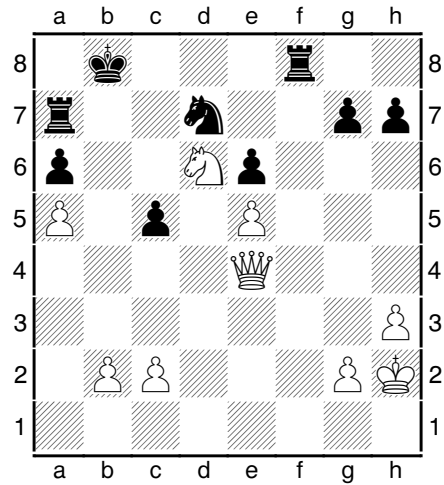
Position after 23...b6

If we are speaking about queen against other pieces in material equivalence, the most often case is of the queen against 2 rooks.

2 rooks are usually stronger than the queen especially in endgames. 2 rooks can win even against a queen and free pawn.

In the position from the right, we can see that a very active queen can win though against 2 un-coordinated rooks (White also has a very strong knight on d6, but the position without knights would be also won for White).

30...g6 31.b4 Rc7 32.b5 axb5 33.Nxb5 Rb7 34.c4 1-0 (White created the free pawn on the a-file which give extra power to the queen).



Black is to move

It is very interesting that computers play much better with the queen than the human player. The tactical complications with the queens on the board are perfectly calculated, while long maneuvers and logic of play in the endgames favors the human.

This is a position from the game Fritz X3D against Kasparov in 2003.

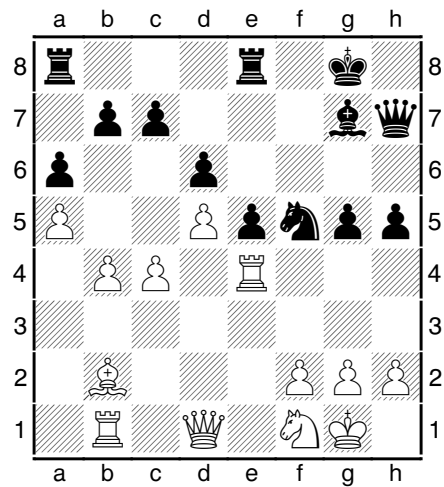
Even if we are by no means fans of computers, we will follow Fritz's queen play:

1.Qd3 The queen is transferred to a better position, in the centre and on the free 3rd rank.

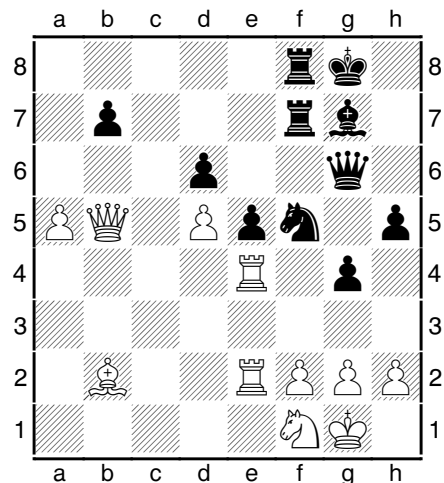
1...Rf8 2.Rbe1 Rf7 3.R1e2 g4 4.Qb3

It is interesting that the top players from that time considered 4.c5 better here. So do the chess engines today, but this is not our theme of discussion. The white queen is transferred on the queenside supporting both c4-c5 and b4-b5.

4...Raf8 5.c5 Qg6 6.cxd6 cxd6 7.b5 axb5 8.Qxb5 (diagram) The queen is bad in defense (in case she cannot exchange or threaten the exchange of the opponent's attacking queen). However, the queen does an excellent task in counterattacking the unprotected area of the player committed in attack.
8...Bh6 9.Qb6 Kh7 10.Qb4 and the strongest



White is to move



human player make a mistake playing **10...Rg7** (10...Rc8 is good and Black stays a bit better). Now, the computer's queen helps it for the simple 11.Rxe5 after which Black has no chances anymore.

Chased Queen

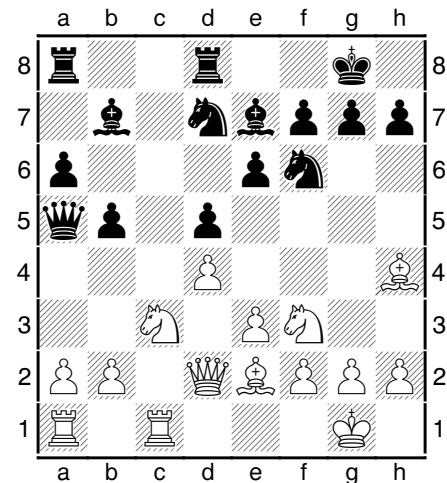
Because of her big quantitative value, the queen, **can be a target for attacks and traps**. The attacks with the queen have to be well calculated and put in balance with the danger to which the queen is exposed.

In this diagram, the black queen has an exposed position and she is not defended.

White can exploit the position of the black queen by a simple tactical possibility which is not rarely met:

1.Nxd5! Qxd2 2.Nxe7+ Kf8 3.Nxd2 Rxe7
and White remained with a pawn up.

4.Rc7 +-

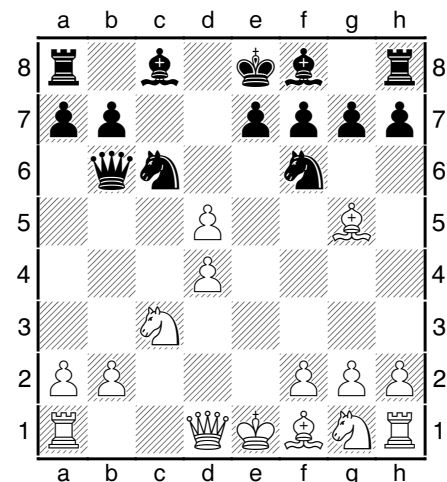


White is to move

In this position from the game Botvinnik – Spielmann, 1935, Black should have taken back on d5 with the knight and after 1...Nxd5 2.Nxd5 Qa5+ 3.Nc3 Qxg5 4.Nf4 Qf4, the position is level.

Instead, Black adventured with his queen into the opponent's camp and lost quickly:

1...Qxb2 2.Rc1 Nb4 3.Na4 Qxa2 4.Bc4 Bg4 5.Nf3 Bxf3 6.gxf3 and Black resigned.
The queen is trapped (6...Qa3 7.Rc3).



Black is to move

Unsafe Queen

During the middlegame, an unsafe position of the queen can be exploited by the opponent to get strategic advantages by tactical means.

This position arose in the game Alekhine – Podgorny, 1943. White has some lead in development, but also an isolated pawn on d5. Without a correct continuation, White's weakness can give him serious difficulties in the future. White will exploit the positions of the black king and queen:

1.a3! A move which apparently doesn't create any threat and permits Black to finish his development. We will soon see the idea of White's move.

1...Nf6 2.d5! exd5 3.axb4!

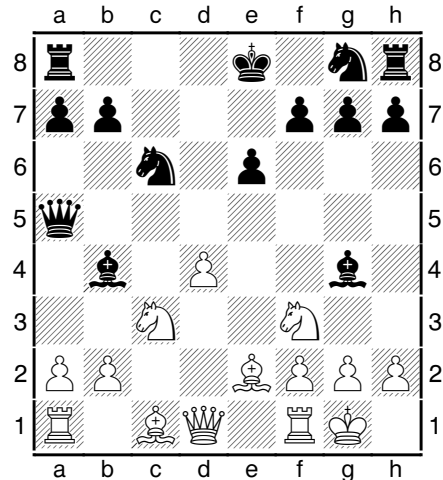
White draws the black queen out of play with the price of an exchange

3...Qxa1 4.Nd2!

White gains tempi and forces the exchange of the bishops on e2 by threatening Nb3.

4...Bxe2 5.Qxe2+ Ne7 6.Re1 0-0 7.Nb3! White forces the exchange of the queens on a6 to can capture the e7-knight with the rook (7.Qxe7?? Rfe8)

7...Qa6 8.Qxa6 bxa6 9.Rxe7 and Alekhine got an excellent endgame which he won without problem.



White is to move

In this position from the game Karpov – Jussupow, 1989, White used the unsafe position of the black queen:

1.dxe5 dxe5 2.Nb5!

A typical method when the rook is on the same file with the opponent rook. The piece is gained back after the double attack against the queen and a piece.

2...cxb5 3.cxb5 Nc5

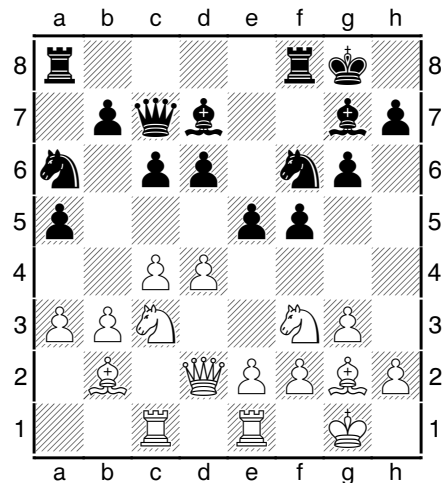
Here, Black still keeps the piece but only for some moves more:

4.Bxe5 Qb6 5.Bxf6 Bxf6 6.Qd5+ Ne6 7.Qxd7

Rad8 8.Rc6! with excellent play for White.

If you are curious, below is the rest of the game:

22.Rc6! Rxd7 [22...bxc6 23.Qxe6+ Kh8 24.Ne5 Rde8 25.Qxc6±; 22...Qxc6 23.bxc6 Rxd7 24.cxd7 Nc5 25.Rd1 Nxb3 26.Ne5 Rd8 27.Bxb7 Bxe5 28.Bd5+ Kf8 29.Bxb3±] 23.Rxb6 Nc5 24.b4 axb4 25.axb4 Ne4 26.e3 Kf7 27.h4 Rb8 28.Rc1 Ke7 29.Nd4 Kf7 30.Bxe4 fxe4 31.Ne6 Bd8 32.Ng5+ Bxg5 33.hxg5 Re8



White is to move

34.Rc4 Kg7 35.Kg2 Rf7 36.Rd6 h6 37.gxh6+ Kxh6 38.b6 Re5 39.Rc7 Rf8 40.Rxb7 Ref5 41.Rd2 Rb5 42.Rd4 1-0

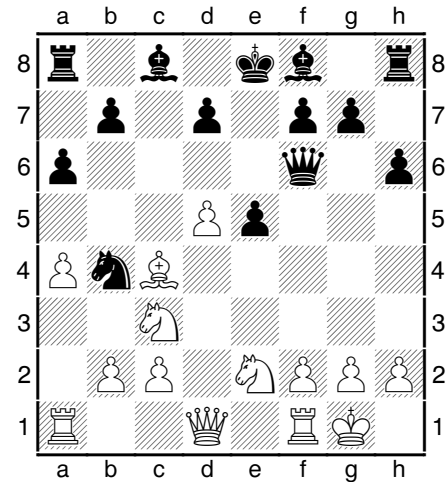
Active queen

An active queen can sometimes save the game from the most difficult problems.

Here, Black is almost in a desperate situation: he is about 3-4 moves behind in development and White threatens to open the game by f2-f4 with strong attack.

However, the queen saves Black from this situation: **1...Qg6!**

Black threatens to take on c2 exchanging the queens or messing the collaboration between the white pieces. The queen also controls the important e4-square paralyzing the movements of the c3-knight.



Black is to move

We extracted an example from the game Deep Junior - Kasparov, 2003, where the world chess champion at that time played an excellently queen-move and plan. Black brings his queen into play, while the White's one is put away for some moves:

1...Qf6!!

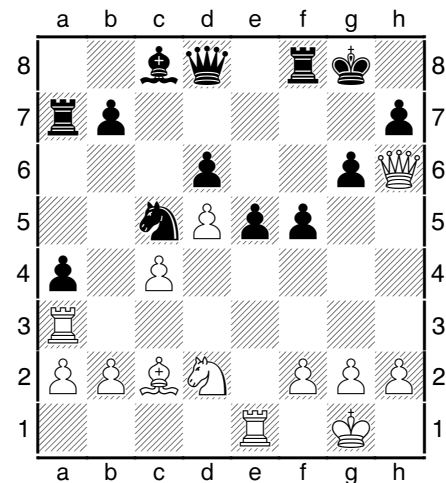
The queen will exploit the weakness of the dark-squares from White's camp.

2.b4 axb3 3.Ra7 axb2 4.Rc1 e4 5.Rxc2

In this moment, Kasparov played 5...Qa1+ with a draw some moves later.

In case of 5...f4!, Black gets a strong attack due to his active pieces while the white queen is blocked on h6.

For example: 6.Nf1 e3 7.f3 Qd4 and the black queen with the e3-pawn beat white remained pieces.



Black is to move

Remember

- The queen is very strong in attack and a piece which call for tactics. The tactical possibilities of the queen are countless. In fact, the queen is much more used in tactical operations than in strategic ones.
- The queen needs attacking objectives to exert her full power. The queen is strong when attacking a weakened area in the opponent's camp.
- The queen is less good in defense, but she does an excellent job to counterattack on the other area of the board, even alone.
- The queen supports very well the free pawns in their advance. It is interesting that the queen is the only piece which can support alone a free pawn to queen against of an opponent piece of the same rank.
- Later in the game, when the queen cannot be attacked so easily, her favorite place is on the centre of the board and preferably defended by a pawn.

Piece Comparison

A good and objective picture of the quality of our pieces and of the opponent pieces will be given by a comparison of the both camp's pieces, one by one. How good is our queen compared with the opponent queen, how are our rooks compared with the opponent rooks, how are our knights compared with the opponent knights, how is our dark-square bishop compared with the opponent dark-square bishop, and how is our light-square bishop compared with the opponent light-square bishop.

The position we will discuss now is from the game Karpov – Hamdouchi, 2005.

We compare the quality of the pieces.

Qd2 > Qd8 (more freedom, the target on d6, good control over the dark-squares while the pawns are on light squares)

Rd1 > Re8 (open file, target on d6)

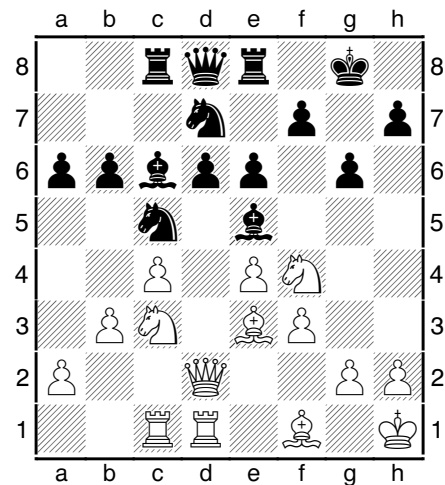
Rc1 < Rc8 (Black: open file, active on operations to undermine the white centre by d6-d5 or b6-b5)

Nc3 ~ Nd5 (the black knight is more active, the white knight is more secure and controls important squares)

Nf4 ~ Nd7 (both knights are without clear perspectives)

Be3 ~ Be5 (both bishops are good, defend and attack important squares)

Bf1 < Bc6 (the white bishop is a “bad” one).



White is to move

In just a few words, the position of the pawns is a typical Hedgehog structure (we'll learn more in our course), with more space for White but more dynamic for Black.

After these comparisons of pieces and pawns, the position seems level.

What can White do? Do you have some ideas for White?

In this kind of position, both players have to arrange their pieces in the best possible positions and be ready all the time to attack or counter-attack. An imprudent operation or a late decision can be fatal, but until then, the positions of the pieces must be continuously improved.

Which is the worst white piece?

Because it is a closed position with the white pawns arranged on light-squares, the f1-bishop is a bad one and it seems that it doesn't defend any important square on the board. But this is not true. Black's ideas for counter-play in this position are tightly connected with the pawn thrusts b6-b5 or d6-d5 to demolish White's pawns. So, we have just discovered that the bishop has an important role to support the c4-pawn and to control the b5-square.

Moreover, White has no possibility to exchange of to improve the position of this piece.

Which is another bad white piece?

Can White improve the position of one of his pieces?

After we made the piece comparison, we already should know that the f4-knight is not on a very good position. The rest of the white pieces are better placed than this knight.

The question is: is there on this board a better position for the knight? Can White exchange his knight with a better black piece?

After the piece comparison, it is clear that the c5-knight is better than the f4-knight, so let's see the result of the exchange: 1.Nf4-d3 which forces Black to trade the knight: 1...Nc5xd3 2.Bxd3. However, the c5-square is free now and the d7-knight is ready to take this position right now: 2...Nd7-c5! and it seems that White didn't realize anything with this exchange. In fact, he exchanged the f4-knight with the black d7-knight, 2 pieces with about the same value. Moreover, *the exchanges are not in favor of the player with more space.*

So, back to our question: is there on this board a better position for the f4-knight?

We should search a better position for the knight without thinking how it can actually reach there. Just look at the board and think where you would place this knight if you are allowed to (of course, not exaggerating).

Where do you want the f4-knight? Maybe a position from where the knight attacks one of the best placed black pieces and from where it collaborates with his other pieces.

This is on g4! The maneuver to reach on g4 is Nf4-h3-f2-g4.

White cannot commit in any active operations for now. He still has to improve the position of his pieces as much as possible, so he takes the worst piece and conducts it to a much better place.

Now, it only remains to check if Black can interdict this maneuver somehow or if he has some tactical possibilities until the knight arrives on g4. The answer: it's okay, the maneuver cannot be interdicted by Black (without creating weaknesses) and *the maneuver reaches an important goal*: the strong e5-bishop will be disturbed and the d6-square will remain without defense.

So, Karpov found the plan and went directly to realize it:

1.Nh3!!

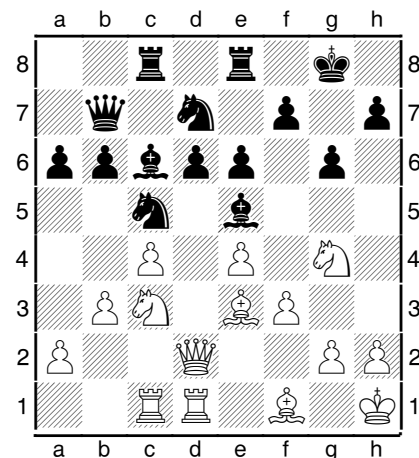
The game continued:

1...Qc7 2.Nf2 Qb7

It is instructive to note that Black improved the position of his queen too. Now, the queen has a much safer position from where she supports the both critical thrusts b6-b5 and d6-d5.

3.Ng4

I hope you all agree that this is a much better



Position after 3.Ng4

position for White. Black improved his position too, but the white knight does much more damage to Black than the black queen does to White.

The dark-squares in Black's position are about to be seriously weakened. White also gets the bishop-pair and the possibility to advance his pawns on the queenside without worries.

The game continued: **3...b5 4.Nxe5 dxe5 5.b4 Na4 6.Nxa4 bxa4 7.b5** and Black resigned soon.

In conclusion, when you have a strategical position and the time permits, improve the position of your pieces.

Step 1) Analyze the positions and the roles of your pieces.

Step 2) Try to find which of your pieces can get better positions and where.

Step 3) Determine which of your pieces is worst placed or which of your pieces can bring you some advantage from another position. As said already in our course, often it is more advantageous to disturb your opponent's play than to create an ideal position for you.

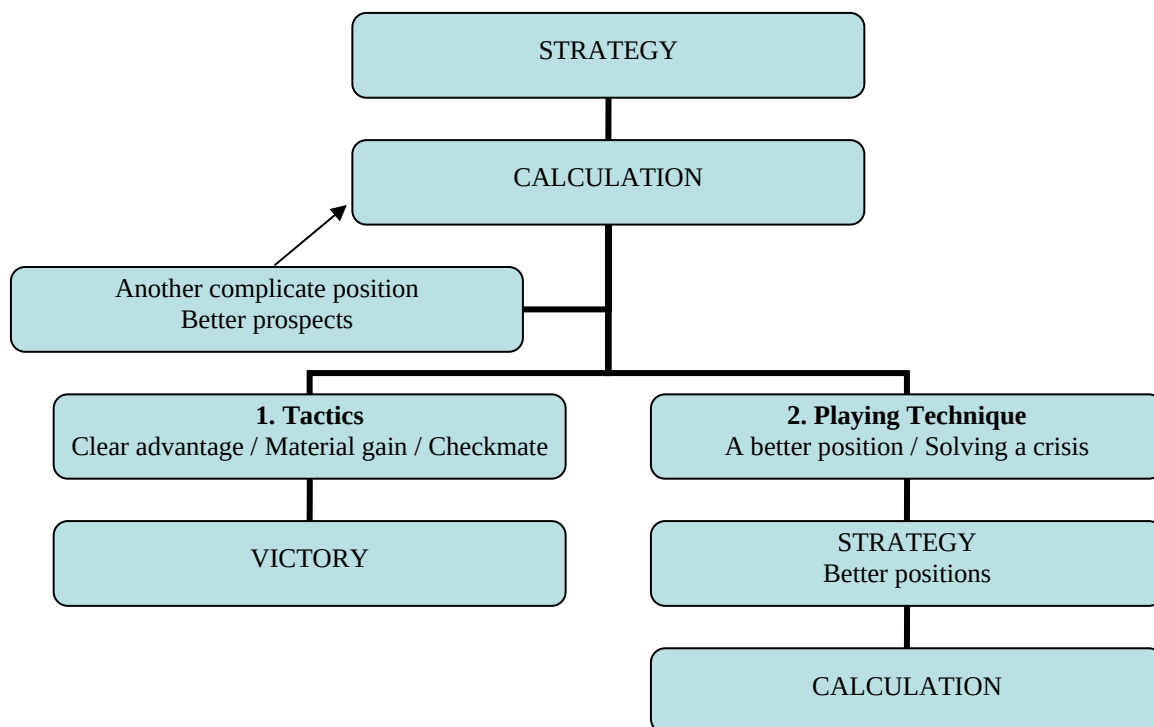
Step 4) Determine the best route or the best move order to accomplish your plan while, in the same time, assure that your opponent cannot stop it.

Calculation in Chess

We need to start with an important observation:

Calculation is totally different from the so-called tactical combinations or tactical commitments, generally known as “tactics”. Tactics are only a subordinate of calculation. The confusion between these 2 terms (calculation and tactics) has a bad influence especially on the student’s preparation. Whether by confusion or by forgetting about this difference, most students tend to think that solving “combinations” is enough for their training, which is far from true.

In fact, calculation is a very important TOOL that the chess player has to use at almost every move of a game. Therefore, in his training program, the chess student has to include specific preparation to improve his ability to calculate quickly and accurately. In the end of this file, you will find methods for improving your calculation ability.



In this diagram, we present the collaboration between strategy, calculation, tactics and technique of play. The calculation is a subordinate of strategy and a tool for the player to reach his goals. When they work, tactics (1 – in our diagram) give the player a clear-cut advantage but the concluding of the game this way is a more rare usage of the calculation. Instead, at almost every turn, the player needs to find and calculate the moves and their consequences (2 – playing technique) in order to get better positions (reach his strategic goals).

The strategy is of first importance. Even from the very first move, the players choose their moves aiming for some strategical goals as the occupation of the centre, active and secure positions for their pieces, safe position for the king, good pawn structure and so on. Try to imagine that you have to calculate everything without the help of strategy and you'll realize that you have to rediscover everything in chess.

Also, the strategy makes tactics to work! Take a book of combinations (tactical exercises) and observe that in almost any diagram, the side called to play and win has in fact a very good position from strategical viewpoint. It is ridiculous to assume that we can win games only by tactical means; in order to make possible nice combinations, our pieces have to be on active positions and some weaknesses to be present in the opponent's camp – so, strategy is on the first plan and helps the player with information which substitute the need of calculation.

A good example in this regard is the World Chess Champion, Mikhail Tal, very well known for his brilliant combinations. In fact, Tal had a very good positional feeling and a great intuition. His games are full of brilliant moves and ideas, but to be frank, many of his tactics are contestable. You should know that the great tactician had in fact a great positional understanding and the great amount of tactical possibilities from his games was a result of his strategic play.

You may wonder why we are talking about strategy in a lesson under the “tactics” section. The answer is: **The calculation is a tool that the chess player uses at almost every move to reach his goals in the given position.**

The correct evaluation of the initial position is extremely important for the decision-making process. No less important is the correct evaluation of the resulting positions after the continuations the player takes into consideration. Many errors are done during the calculation process because players are too optimistic (and, in some cases, too pessimistic) about their position and available resources. A correct and realistic goal at the end of the calculated variations should take into account the initial evaluation.

White sacrificed a pawn to reach this position.

The evaluation was made with some moves before and the factors which contributed for choosing this line were:

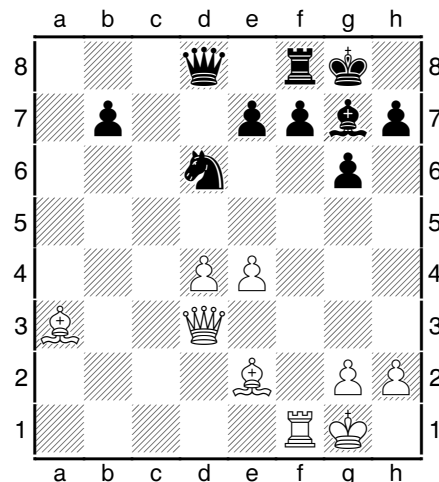
White has the bishop-pair, a half-open file for the rook, a mobile pawn centre, and an active and secure position for the queen in the centre.

Everything seemed so good, but after **1....Qa5** (threatening Bxd4 and Nxe4) **2.Bc1 Rd8**

(making pressure on d4) **3.Be3 b5** (getting the c4-square for the knight), White realized that he has nothing for the pawn.

The calculation up to this position was perfect, but the evaluation of the result was wrong.

Black has no weaknesses, and has very active and secure positions for his minor pieces, a good target on d4 and... a free pawn on the b-file.



Black is to move

Playing technique

The calculation plays an important role for a normal game. After every opponent's move, the player should try to foresee opponent's plans and threats, and, of course, analysis is needed to check if the threats are real and to find ways to prevent them. Then, the player has to decide about a move and even if the next move seems normal as part of player's "TO DO" list, the position has to be analyzed again checking if the move has no drawbacks, see its consequences or, if there are more moves in the "TO DO" list, decide about the move order. All these require a smaller or bigger amount of calculation.

The chess game is rarely won by spectacular moves. A normal chess game is won by the player who plays more logical moves, does fewer mistakes and prevents the opponent's counterplay. This is called "playing technique" and it is a combination between understanding the position's requirements, a good evaluation and a quick and precise calculation subordinated to the strategic ideas and objectives.

Complicate positions

Before talking about the calculation in complicate positions, we need to introduce 3 important terms:

Candidate moves = these are the moves you consider for you or for your opponent as replies to your moves. Of course, nobody takes into consideration all legal moves on the chess board, so the candidate moves are only the moves that seem good for you after a quick analyzing of the position.

Analysis tree = When you consider the candidate moves for you and, then, for every of them you look ahead for the candidate moves of your opponent and, then, the moves for you... all these moves form a "tree" of analysis. Different lines of this tree are called "branches". In the analysis process, you should evaluate the position at the end of every of those branches and subsequently decide if the first move of the tree is good or no.

In complicate positions, we often have to examine a large number of different branches and more moves ahead. **In order to do well in complicate positions, we should find first all the candidate moves for us (or for our opponent).** So, do not plunge straight into analyzing the first move which comes into your head, but try to find all the good possibilities in the initial position.

Step 1) Determine all the important squares in the initial position. You can use some squares for your pieces and other squares are controlled by the opponent that he can use to improve the status of his pieces. In complicate positions, a calm move that improve the status of one piece can be extremely strong. Don't neglect the usage of these squares in your calculation.

Step 1a) Determine all the pieces which are not defended (or weak defended) on the board. At the end of a long variation, a piece which can be captured after a double attack with check changes the final evaluation. You should have all these “weaknesses” gathered in your mind before starting to calculate.

Step 2) Determine the candidate moves and inspect them trying to determine quickly which the critical lines are and which are easier to be solved. Try to figure out without analyzing too far ahead which lines are essential and are worth to be calculated precisely.

Step 2a) Try to discover hidden resources in the position. It is not worth to calculate long variations if you miss some important improvements for you or for your opponent.

Step 3) The order of analyzing the candidate moves is very important. Start your calculation with the forcing moves (exchanges, piece captures, checks, attacks and double attacks). Then, check the simple lines and let the branches which require more calculation at the end. This way you avoid calculating for a long time something which may be refuted in a much simpler way. Also, while going through the simpler branches, you might find very interesting new ideas/moves which will help you to improve the critical line/s of the analysis tree.

Recommendations:

1. Consequences of your opponent’s last move

After every of your opponent’s move, you should quickly inspect the consequences of his move (both drawbacks and advantages). This technique will help you a lot in your calculation too. Some moves/possibilities that were not good before, could work now. Some interposing, new closed or opened lines can change a lot the situation on the board. Also, in time, you will get used to do the same (instantly and subconsciously) with the moves you calculate ahead. This way, mistakes like “ah, I didn’t see that after Ne7, the queen from c7 doesn’t defend anymore the g7-square” will become fewer and fewer.

2. Remember your calculated lines from a move to another

Try to carry out from a move to another some of already calculated lines. During a practical game, it’s no time to assess the position after every move and redo the entire analysis tree. So, the thoughts you had with a move before should be carried out, of course, taking into account the changes (consequences) of the previous moves.

3. When to enter complications and when to avoid them

By complications we understand positions which are (very) hard to be calculated precisely in a practical game.

When you have a better position from strategic viewpoint, avoid complications! Try to find a more peaceful continuation which keeps your advantage and doesn't change the thread of the game. Of course, this doesn't mean that you shouldn't look for continuations that you can calculate up to the end and favors you.

When you are stand badly and feel that a strong defense is not enough to hold the game, then, entering complications and setting traps are things you should even look for.

4. Don't think that your opponent won't find the best defense

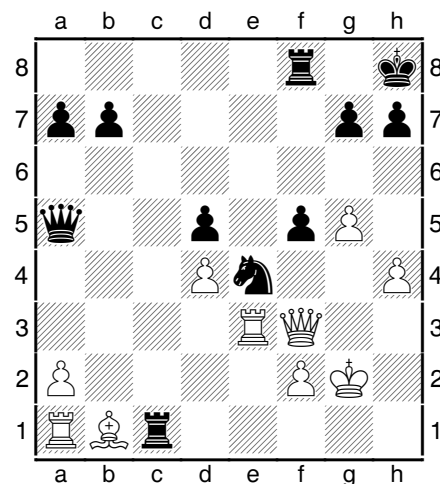
A grave mistake is to think that your opponent won't find the best defense. Especially when playing against weaker opponents, many chess players make the mistake to underestimate their opponent's chances to find the best defense. Surprisingly, the defensive moves are often easier to be found out than the simple logical moves.

5. Don't forget the weaknesses

In this position, White is completely lost. His a1-rook and b1-bishop cannot play, he is a pawn down and black pieces dominate the board. However, Black made a grave mistake and lost the game instantly: **30...Nd2?? 31.Qxf5! 1-0.**

You should not forget a second about the weaknesses of your position (and of your opponent's position too). If Black had in mind that his back-rank is weak (the king has no escaping window and only one rook defends it), he surely could avoid such a mistake.

Again: Always keep in mind the strategic and, especially, tactical weaknesses of the position.



Black is to move

6. Fresh eye

The course of the game has a great impact on the player's psychology which influences his thinking a lot. Very simple moves and ideas can be overlooked easily and, therefore, when there is a difficult position on the board, the player should try to look at the position for some seconds/minutes with a "fresh eye". This means that you should try to forget for a short time about anything you have calculated before, forget about your opponent and the game until this moment. Try then to imagine that the position is a puzzle/exercise you are doing at home or try to think that your chess idol (Tal, Fischer, Karpov...) is playing your position. Try to find hidden ideas in your position.

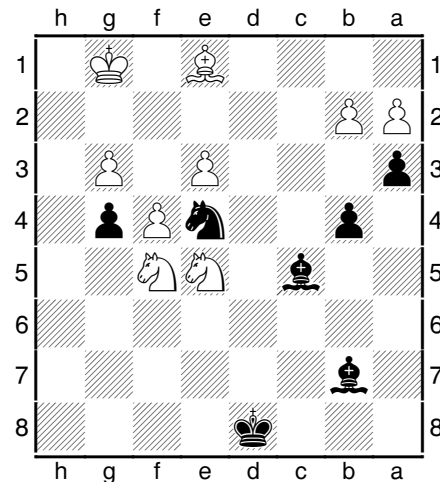
You will be amazed how many new ideas or good moves can come to you this way during a whole game.

This is a position after a game where White outplayed Black. The latter is near to resign as he is 2 pawns down. Black's last move was 48...a4-a3 to which White quickly defended the pawn with **49.Nd3**.

If this position (after Ne5-d3) was published in a tactical book under the section dangerous pawns, anyone could see that Black wins by 49...b4-b3 queening one of the pawns.

Black didn't see this move because he was seriously influenced by the last events of the game where all his tries were systematically refuted by White.

If Black would have tried to use the "fresh eye" in this desperate position, he could win the game.



White is to move

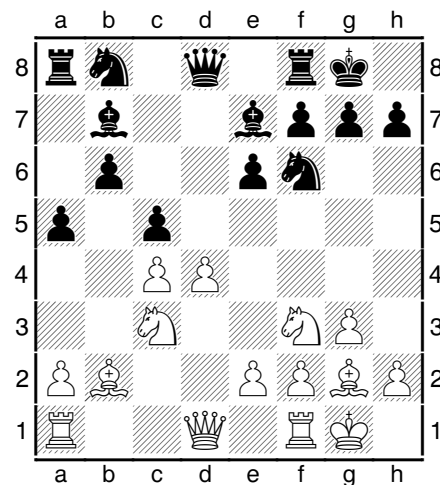
7. Make use of tactical resources to improve your position

Very often, gaining a strategical advantage is not possible without the use of some tactical resources. After you improve your position and status of your pieces more and more, you might need a tactical strike in order to destroy opponent's defense.

In our example, White better development and strategical advantage (the control of the centre) is clear. However, in order to get some long term advantage, White has to make use of simple tactics:

1.d5! (creating a free pawn). The pawn is defended indirectly: **1...exd5 2.Nh4** (or 2.Ne5) and using the pin on the long diagonal, White regains his pawn and creates a mobile pawn phalanx in the centre (d- and e- pawns), with of course, the free d-pawn.

This is a quite simple example of how tactics (here the pin) are used for strategical objectives.



White is to move

8. Time

The chess clock and our mind's limits play a very important role in our decision-making process. A precise calculation during the whole game and especially when the positions get very complicated is practically impossible. This is why we need to be pragmatic and to make some concessions, but well driven.

So, below are some recommendations for the practical game (not for your training at home!):

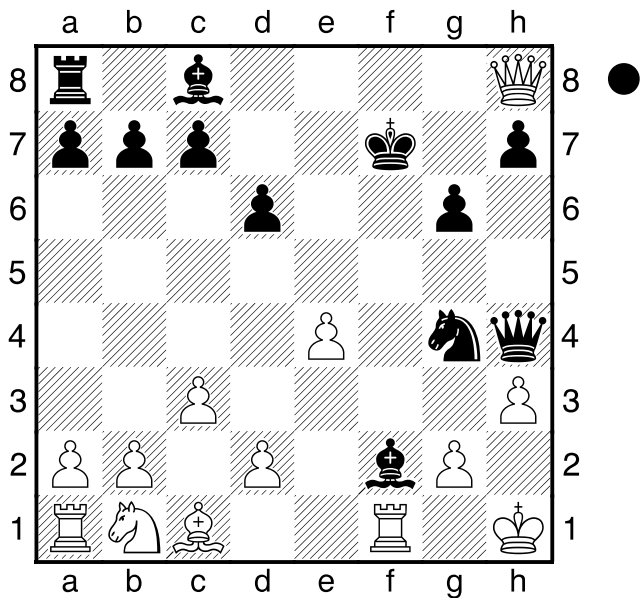
1. Don't enter tactics if you can play an equally good continuation without risks. Many players lost their advantage or did really big mistakes by a wrong calculation, so save your time and preserve the course of the game by playing natural moves of which you can calculate the consequences.
2. Trust your intuition. Check if the move dictated by your intuition is good, but don't try to find reasons to dismiss that move.
3. 5 minutes of thinking per move in no complicate middlegame positions is plenty. Using more than 5 (maximum 10) minutes to think at a move usually don't bring any improvement. Moreover, spending more time leads to fatigue and to a disorganized thinking. In extremely complicate positions, 20 minutes should be enough to get the best you can from it.
4. Check if the last move of your opponent changed the character of the position and if did not, play consistently with your plans.
5. If 2 or more moves seem equally good to you (we assume that you can not find a significant difference between them), choose the move which make your opponent to think more or the move which doesn't reveal your next plans or, otherwise, choose at random as probably there is no real difference between them.
6. If you don't find a satisfactory continuation within 5-10 minutes of thinking, there are 2 common situations:
 - a. You did a wrong evaluation of the initial position (you thought you are better but, in fact, your position is worse). Then, try to make a correct evaluation and take the appropriate decisions for a worse position.
 - b. You are tired by previous situations you had to solve, so use the "fresh eye" technique to help you. If no good move comes to your mind, just play the less bad continuation without hoping for a miracle. Maybe your position is not all that bad and you can redress the game later.
7. Apportion your time with care and think that the position you have in front of you is not be the hardest of your whole game. Keep your time and nerves ready for the rest of the game. Even if your opponent will get a small advantage at some moment, this will be hard to be exploited. Trust in possibilities that will appear later in the game; you will be amazed how often the advantage will be back to you.
8. Also, don't play too fast! If you have the bad habit to play too quickly, then write down the move you are intending to play on your scoresheet, and, then, check again the position and your move for about 1-3 minutes.

Specific training to improve your calculation

As said in the first part of this file, the student of chess has to develop his calculation force and thus prepare for the practical games.

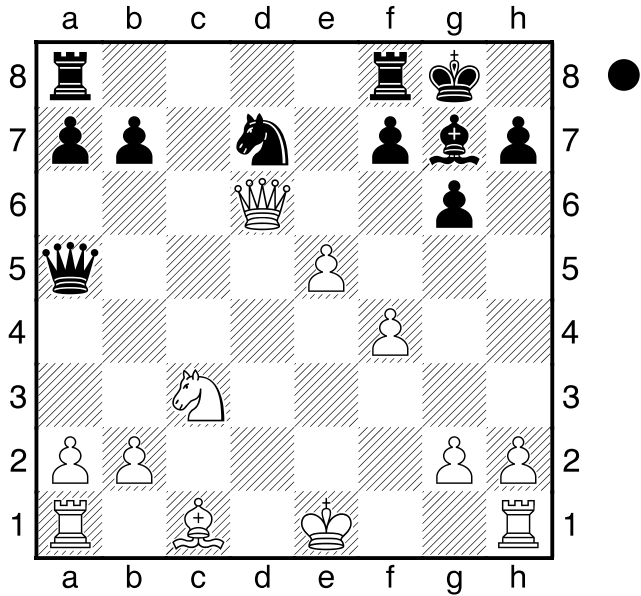
1. Start your chess training with 20-30 minutes of solving simple/average tactical exercises (combinations). This has more beneficial effects:
 - You improve your chess tactical vision and get new tactical ideas
 - You get your mind ready for the rest of your chess training day.
 - You get confidence in your own powers
2. Choose games or complicate positions, analyze them and then compare your analysis with the annotator's one. If possible, find a partner and prepare one for the other the positions and games for analysis – this way you don't see the solutions/analysis and also you will have a concurrent atmosphere that should motivate you.
3. Analyze your games and try to find better candidate moves for you and for your opponent. Never analyze with the computer before trying to figure out on your own about better/best continuations.
4. Don't trust in others' analysis when studying annotated games. Try to find better candidate moves and continuations if possible. Be critical all the time, as in practical situations more continuations can be good or even better than the one played by the grandmaster during his game.
5. Play training games. Playing is very important for improving your calculation. You can play at the chess club, against a partner of study, on Internet or even against your computer.
6. When studying your openings, work on the variations, moving the pieces on the board and analyze different continuations which seem good / interesting to you. This has 2 beneficial effects:
 - You improve your calculation ability in situations closely related to the positions you will play
 - It will help you a lot to memorize your opening systems
7. Collect 20-50 games from your database, of the same ECO code (the same opening variation), without annotations, between strong players. You can choose any opening variation you want, yet trying to find interesting ones (for example: B80). Play quicker through these games (5-10 minutes per game) without analyzing them. This way, we will observe similarities, typical plans, attacks, piece maneuvers and pawn's play for that position. This should widen your chess knowledge with new ideas which will help your playing technique.

Exercise 1



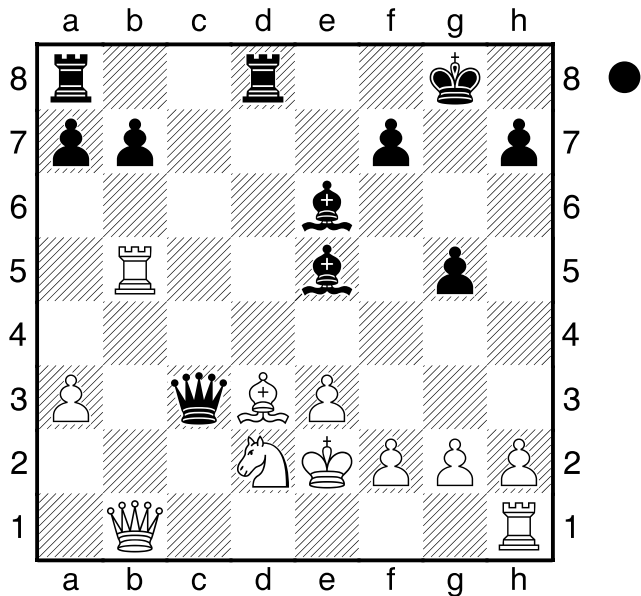
Black is to move. Find a way to exploit the poor development of white pieces.

Exercise 2



Black is to move.
Who is better developed? Is White's pawn phalanx f4+e5 strong?
Find the best move for Black.

Exercise 3

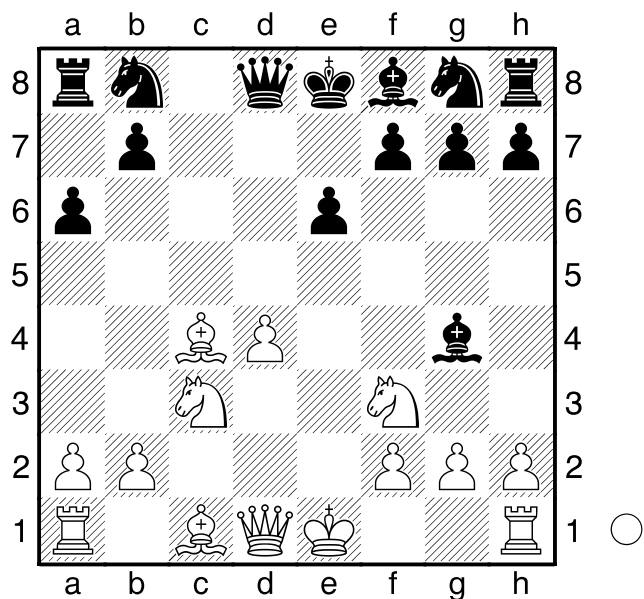


Black is to move
Is the white king unsafe on e2?
Which is/are the drawbacks of White's position and what does he threaten to do?
Find the best move for Black.

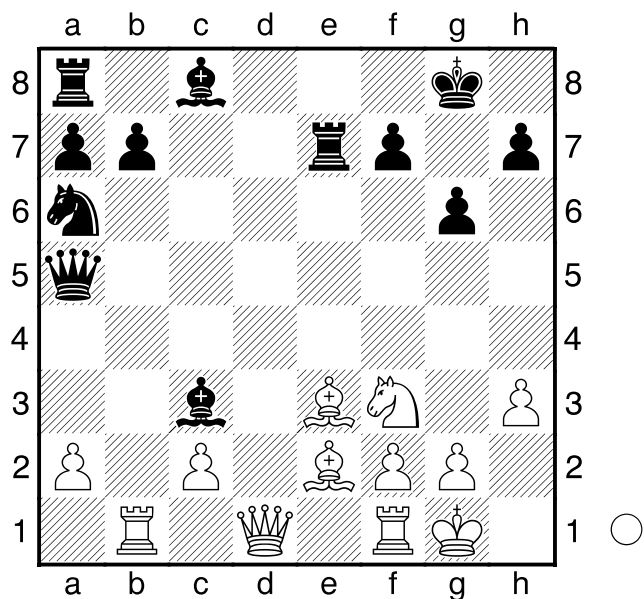
Exercise 4

(Diagram)

White is to move.
Choose the best move for White and find the candidate moves for Black.



Exercise 5

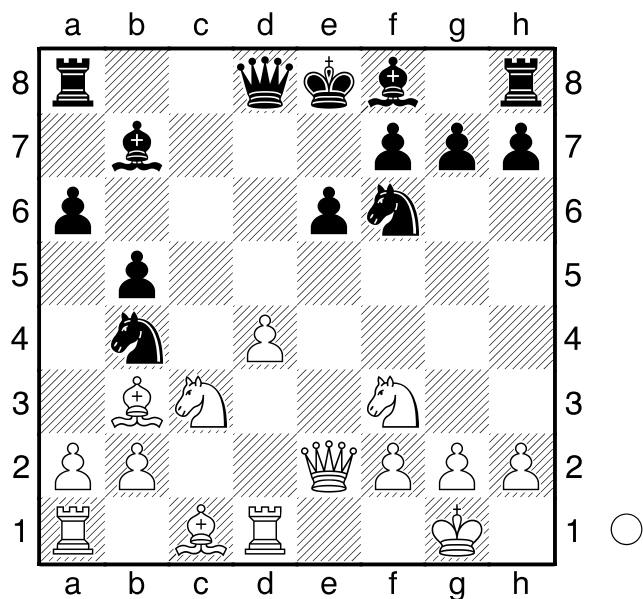


White is to move. Find the best continuation.

Exercise 6

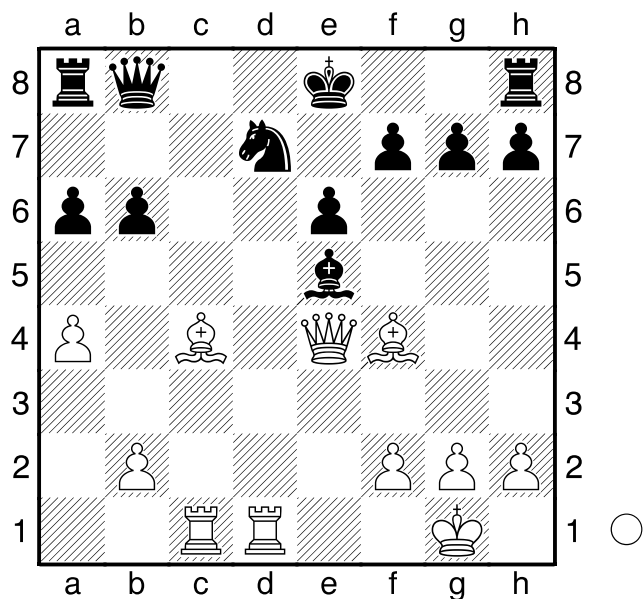
White is to move.

We know that opening the centre with 1.d4-d5 should be good, but this square is strongly



defended by Black. How should White continue? Give variations.

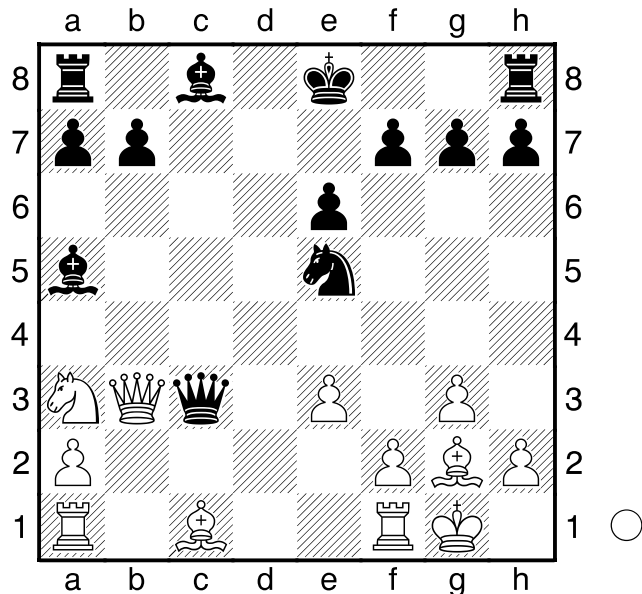
Exercise 7



White is to move.

Find the best move for White.

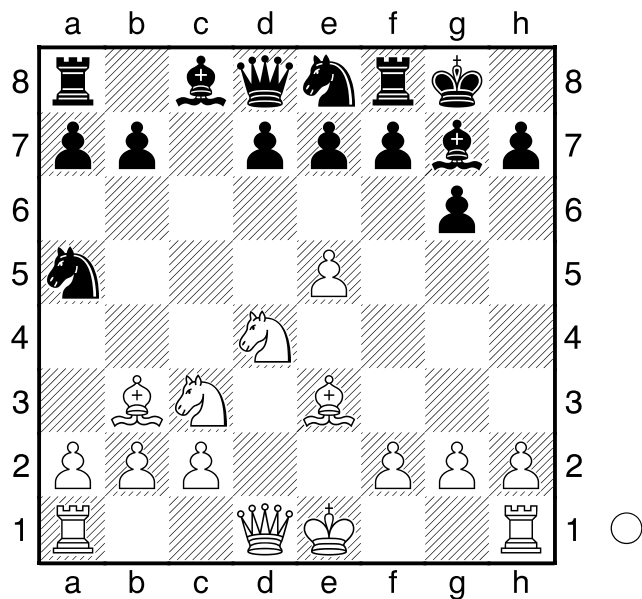
Exercise 8



White is move.

Black is behind in development. Can White exploit his short-term advantage?

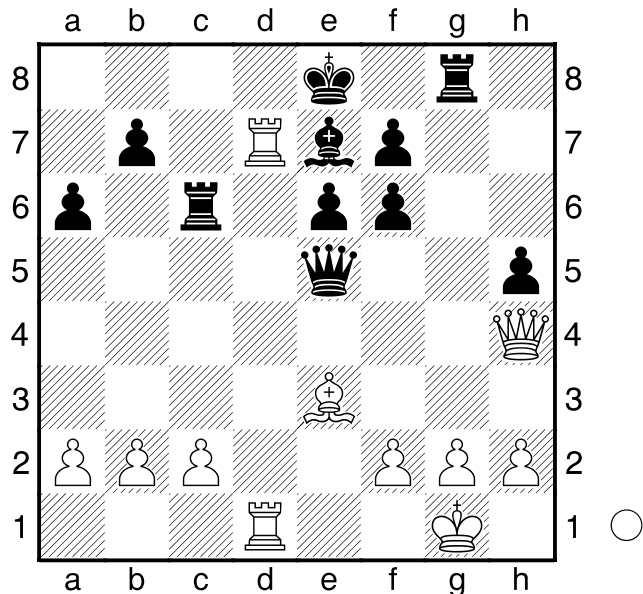
Exercise 9



White is to move.

What does Black threaten to do next? Find the best continuation for White.

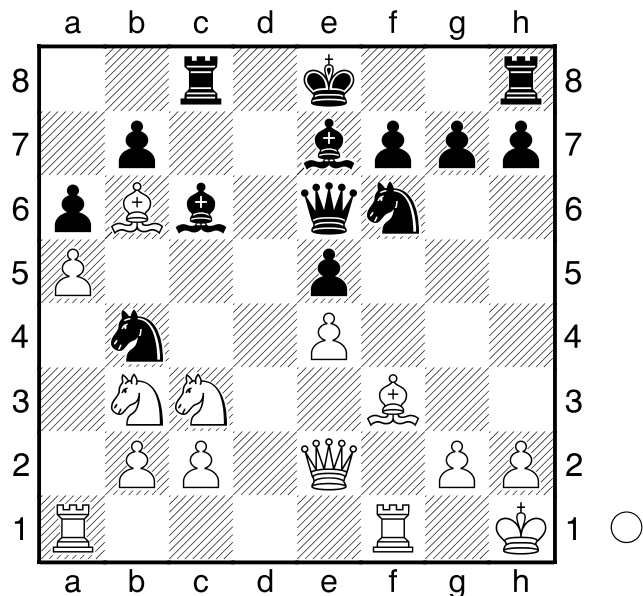
Exercise 10



White is to move

Find the best way to exploit the d-file.

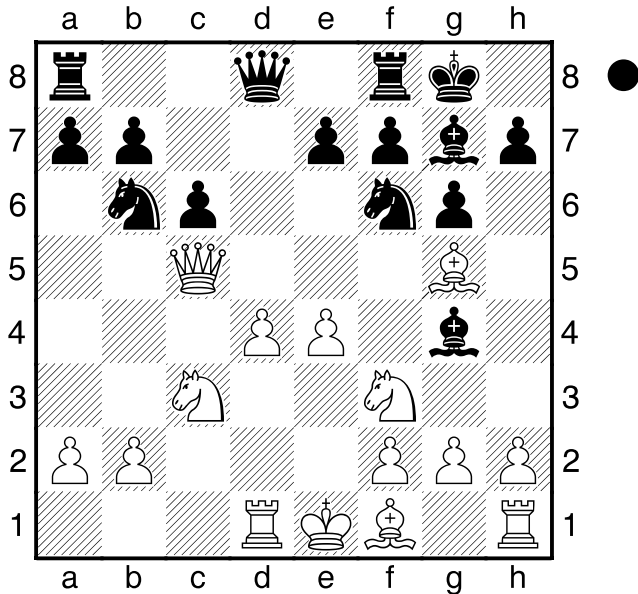
Exercise 11



White is to move.

What does Black threaten to play next? Find the best move for White.

Exercise 12



Black is to move.

What does White intend to play at the next move?

How can Black use that white king is still in the centre?

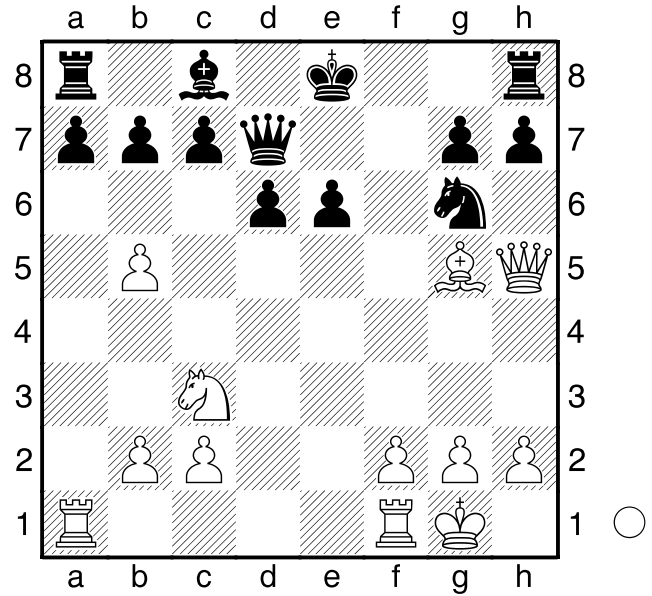
Exercise 13

(Diagram)

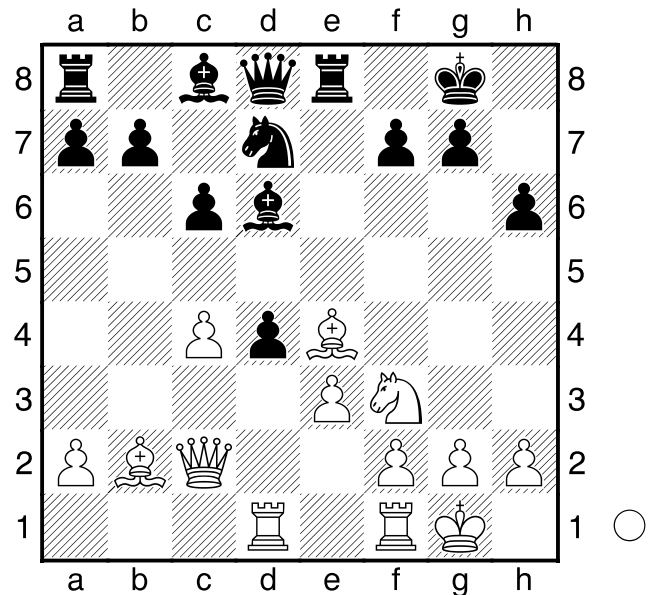
White is to move.

Black is a pawn up and after 0-0, his position will have no problems.

Can White force opening the centre? Give variations and evaluate.



Exercise 14

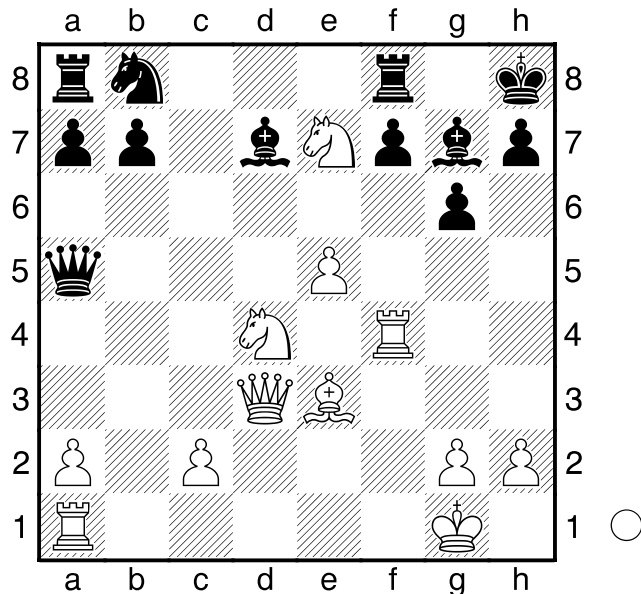


White is to move.

It is clear that White has to retake on d4. Find the best way to make this capture.

Give variations and evaluate.

Exercise 15



White is to move.

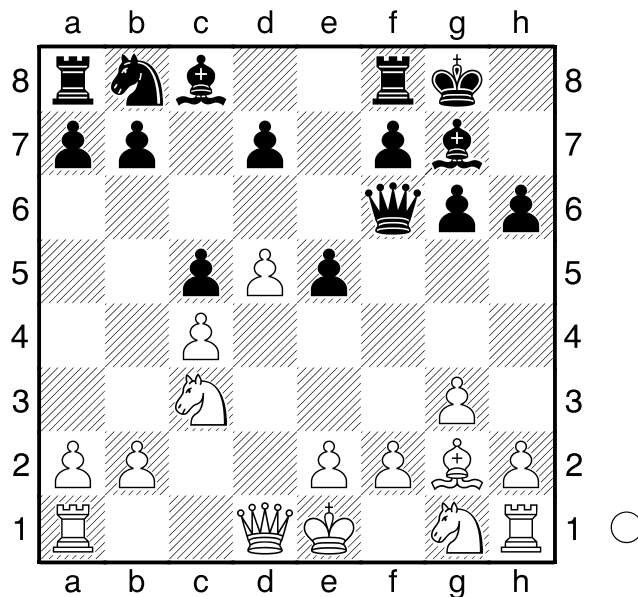
Find the best continuation, find the candidate moves for Black, find all the possible lines and evaluate.

Exercise 16

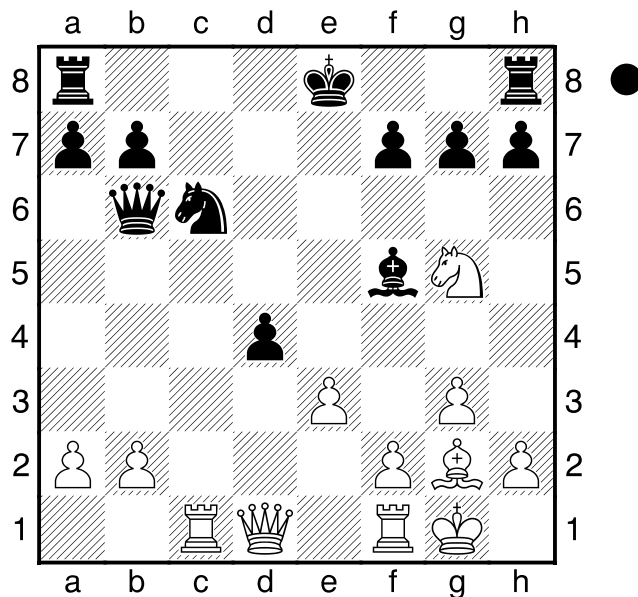
(Diagram)

White is to move.

Black is behind in development. Analyze the position for 5 minutes and use your intuition to find the best White's continuation and plan.



Exercise 17



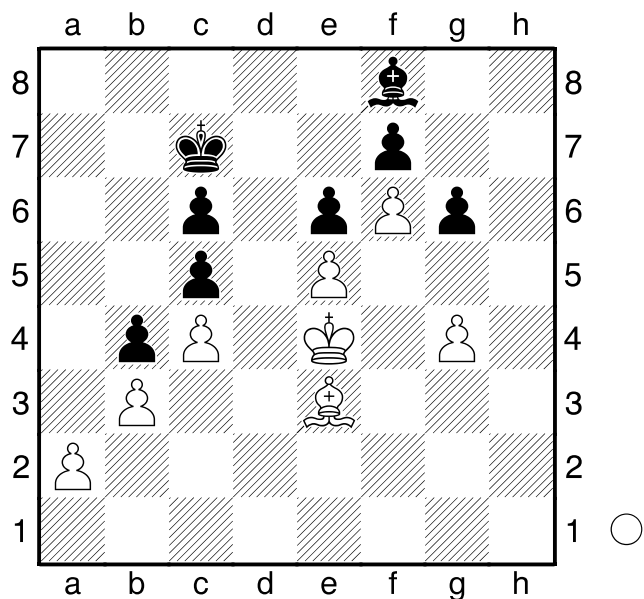
Black is to move

White's last move was 1.e2-e3. Find the best defense for Black.

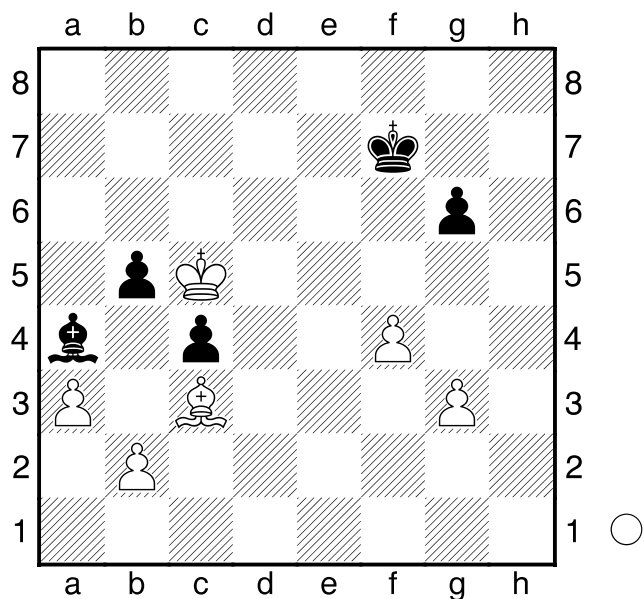
Exercise 18

White is to move.

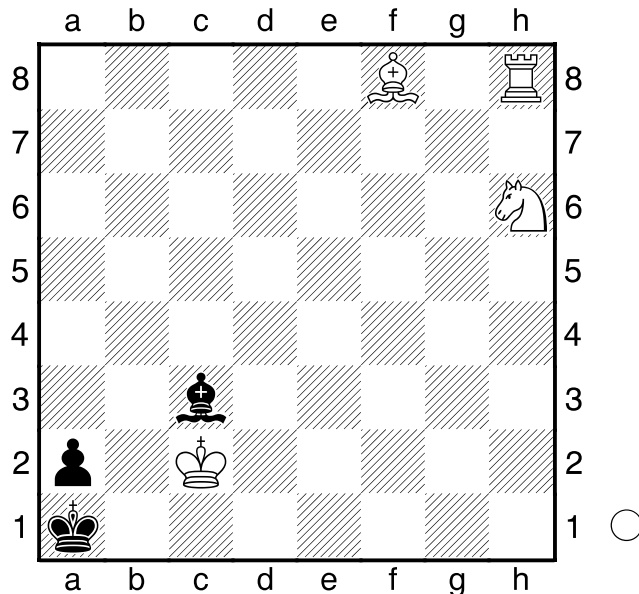
Can White win? How?



Exercise 19

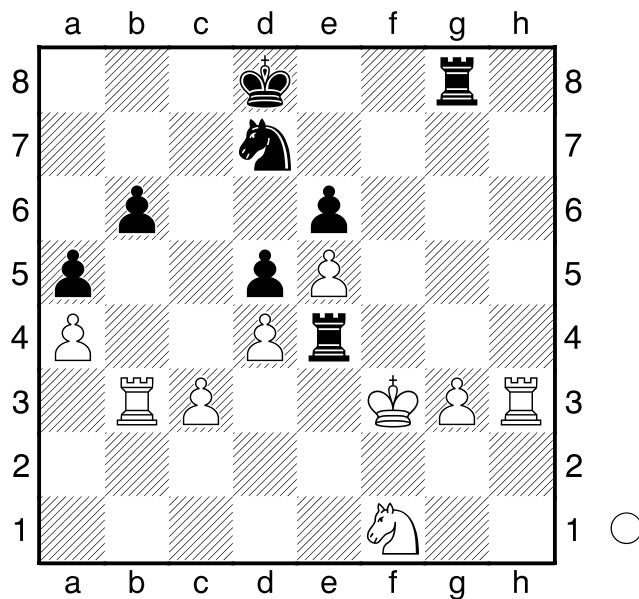


Exercise 20



This is a study. White moves and delivers mate in 3 moves.
Find the solution.

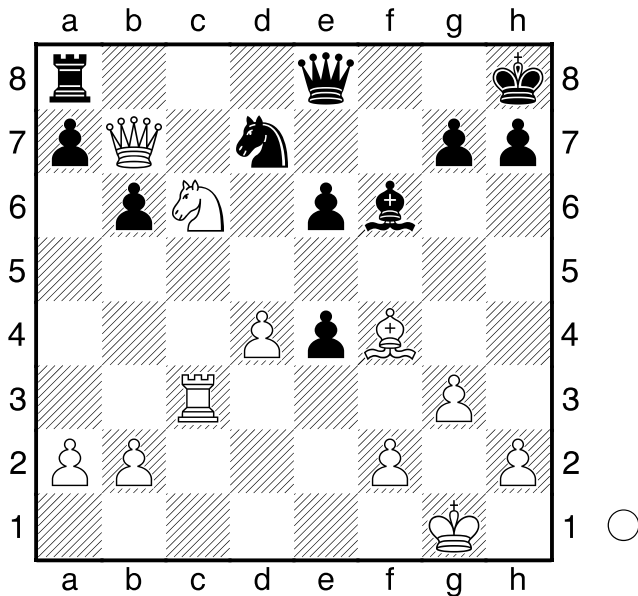
Exercise 21



White is to move.
Endgames with opposite colored bishops are in many cases draw even when the number of pawns is not the same.
However, here White can win. How?

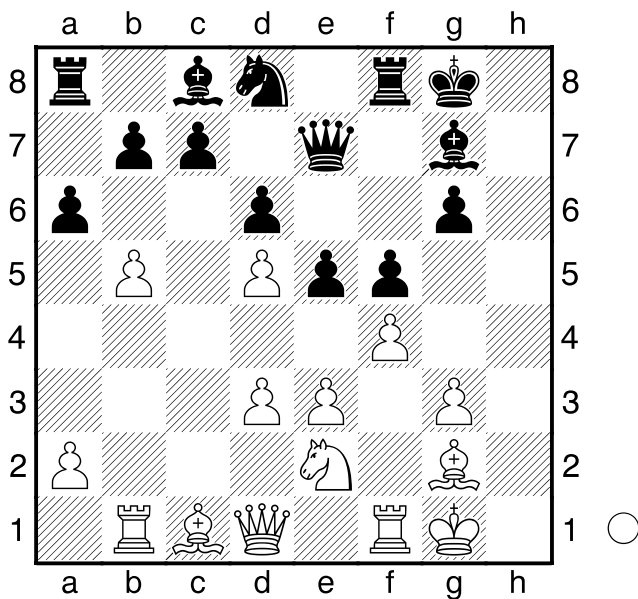
White is to move.
Find the best continuation for White and evaluate.

Exercise 22



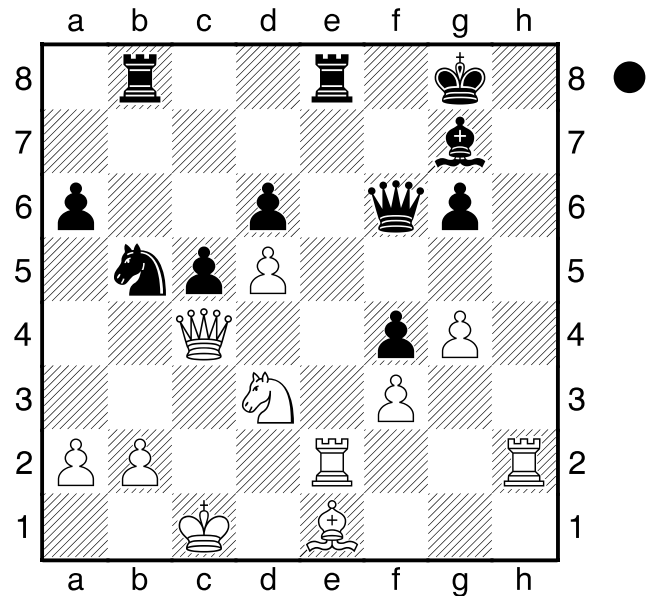
White is to move.
Find the drawback in Black's position and
White's next move.

Exercise 23



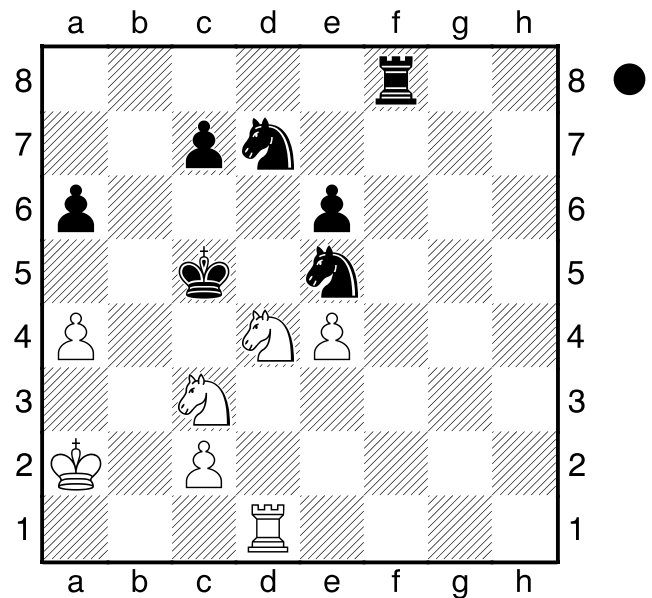
White is to move.
Find the best move for White and explain the
reason of your choice.

Exercise 24



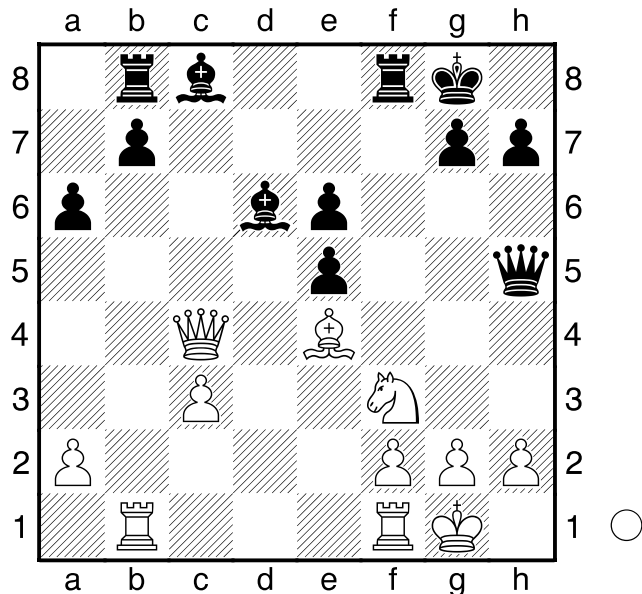
Black is to move.
Find the best continuation for Black.

Exercise 25



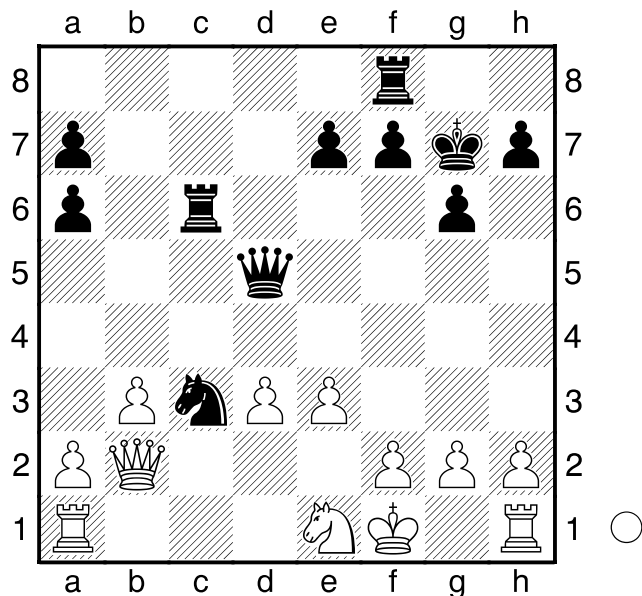
Black is to move.
Find a way for Black to get an advantage.

Exercise 26



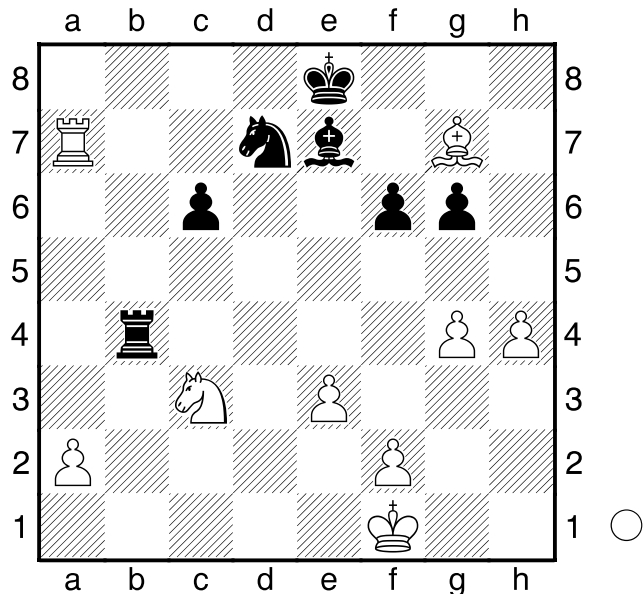
White is to move.
Find the best continuation.

Exercise 27



White is to move.
Evaluate the position and find the best continuation and plan for White.

Exercise 28

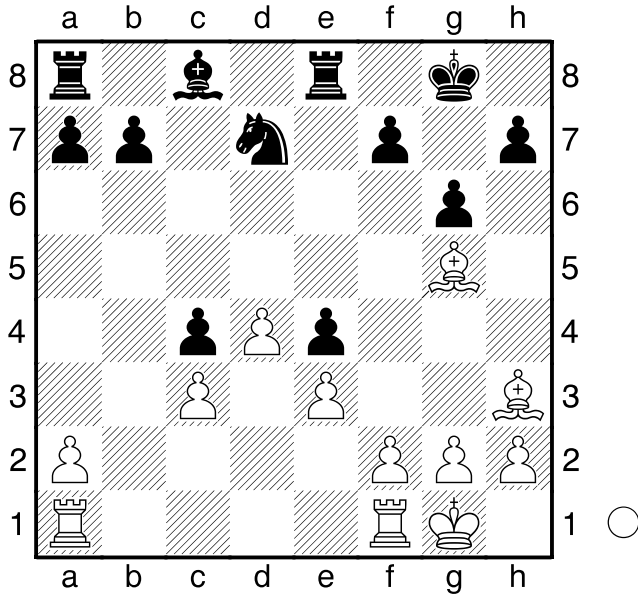


White is to move.
The rook is the most active black piece. Find a way for White to put the black rook out of play.
Hint: a piece can be also out of play if that piece has to defend important squares.

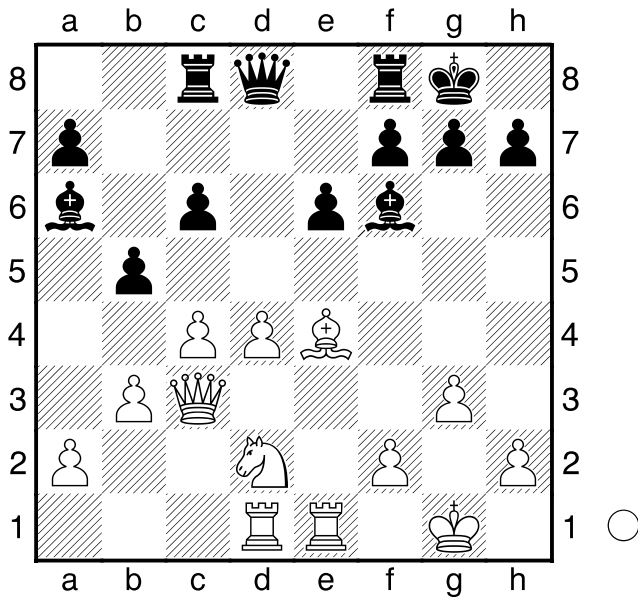
Exercise 29

(Diagram)

White is to move.
The black bishop is limited in this game by his own pawns from c4 and e4.
So, is the exchange of the light-squares in White's favor? Find the best move for White.



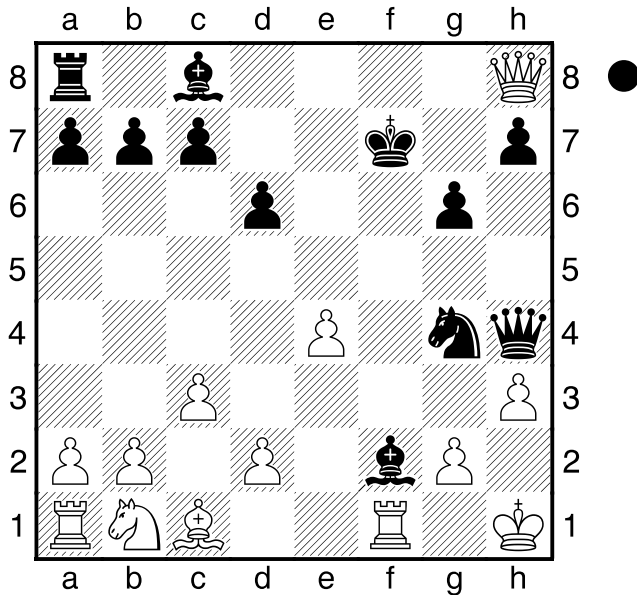
Exercise 30



White is to move.
Find the best continuation for White.

Exercise 1

1



Black is to move. Find a way to exploit the poor development of white pieces.

Solution:

Black has a clear superiority of forces on the kingside.

By the next move, he brings one more force in attack and also removes the white queen from the kingside.

1...Bf5 2.Qxa8 Qxh3+

[Also possible is: 2...Qg3 3.hxg4 Qh4#]

3.gxh3 Bxe4#

Exercise 2

(Diagram)

Black is to move.

Who is better developed? Is White's pawn phalanx f4+e5 strong?

Find the best move for Black.

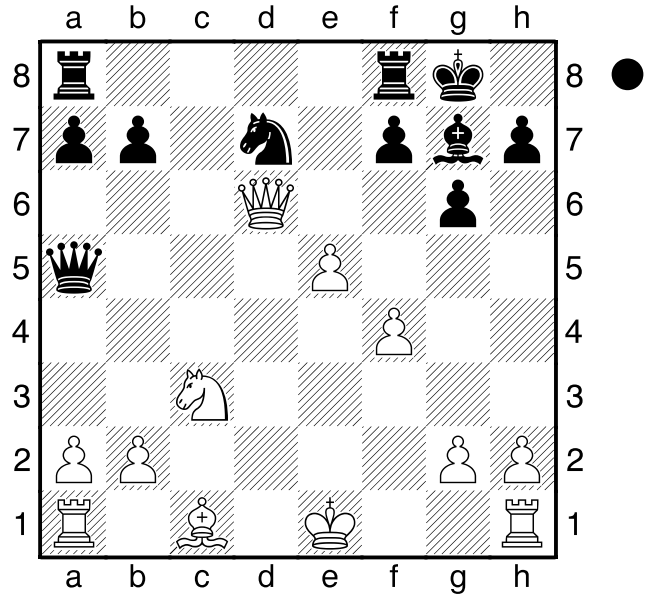
Solution:

White is behind in development and his advanced pawns are weak as they are not supported by the pieces.

Black should find a forced way to get advantage from his lead in development.

1...Nxe5 2.fxe5 Bxe5 3.Qd3 Rad8 4.Qf3 Bd4

After these forced moves, the white king is



trapped in the centre.

[4...Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 Rfe8+ is also winning for Black]

5.g3

White tries to find a safe square for his king and makes room on g2.

[5.Kf1 Rfe8 followed by Qa6 or Bxc3 and Qb5 with winning attack for Black.]

5...Rfe8+ 6.Kf1 Bxc3 7.bxc3 Qb5+ 8.Kf2 Rd3 9.Qf6 Re2+

White resigned.

Exercise 3

(Diagram)

Black is to move

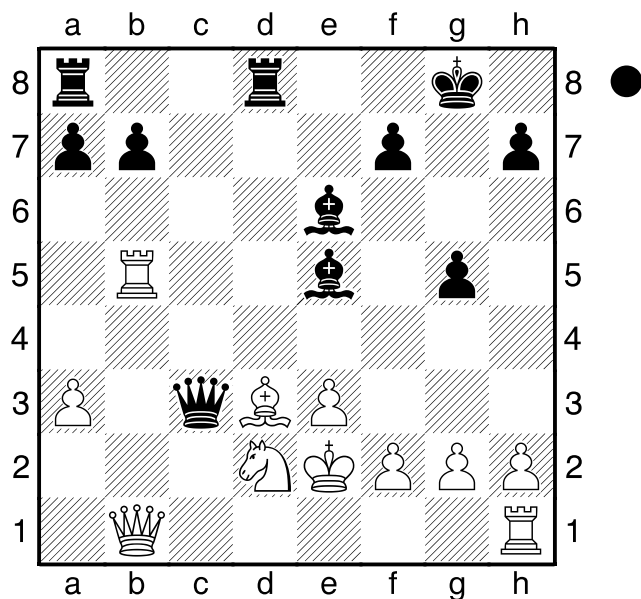
Is the white king unsafe on e2?

Which is/are the drawbacks of White's position and what does he threaten to do?

Find the best move for Black.

Solution:

The position of the king on e2 is not very secure, but the f2- and e3- pawns assure a good protection though. White threatens to finish his development bringing the h1-rook into play, so



Black has to create immediate threats:

1...Bf5 2.e4?!

White doesn't find the best reply.

[Of course, not: 2.Bxf5? Rxd2+ 3.Kf3 Qc6+ 4.Be4 Qf6+]

[However, White had bigger chances to save the game with:

2.Ne4! Bxe4 3.Bxe4 Rd2+ 4.Kf3 f5 5.Bxf5 Qc6+ 6.e4 Qc4 7.Re1 Bd4 with big complications.]

2...Bf4!

The dark-squares from White's camp were weakened by the imprecise White's reply (e3-e4).

Now, Black's attack is strong and easy.

3.Rd1

[3.Nf3 Be6 4.Rd1 Bc4 5.Rb4 Rxd3 6.Rxd3 Re8]

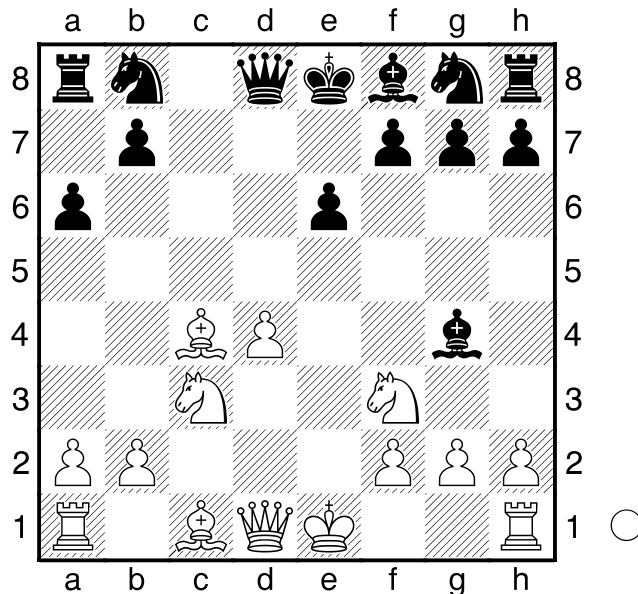
3...Be6 4.g3 Ba2 5.Rb3

[5.Qc2 Qxc2 6.Bxc2 Bxd2 7.Rxd2 Bc4+]

5...Qxb3 6.Nxb3 Bxb1

and Black is material up.

Exercise 4



White is to move.

Choose the best move for White and find the candidate moves for Black.

Solution:

White leads in development and has to open the centre:

1.d5!

[1.0-0 is not the best because it's too slow. Black will do much more for his defense by developing the knight:

Nf6 and for example:

2.d5 b5 3.Bb3 b4 and, here, White doesn't have the e4-square for the knight.]

1...Nf6! Continuing the development with almost any cost is the best reply for Black (the player behind in development). Other moves would bring him to disaster:

[1...e5 (as in the game) 2.d6!? Bh5 (2...b5 3.Bxf7+ Kxf7 4.Nxe5+) 3.Nxe5 Bg6 4.Qd5 Nf6 5.Qxf7+ Bxf7 6.Bxf7#]

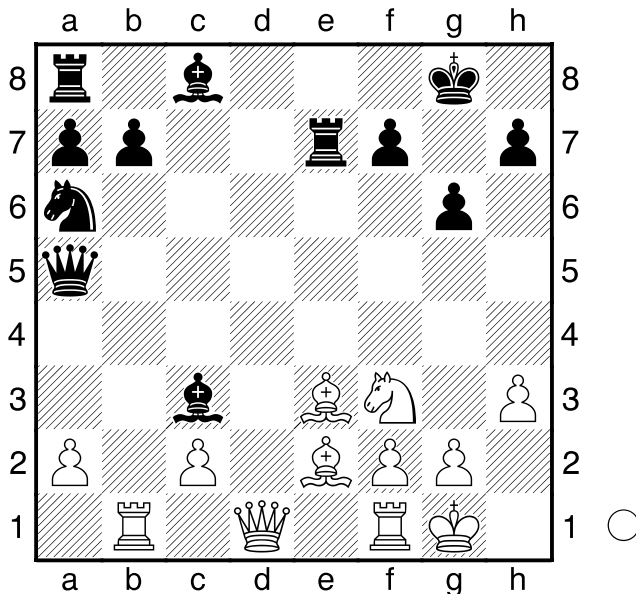
[1...b5 2.Bb3 b4 3.Ne4]

[1...exd5 2.Nxd5 followed by 0-0 and Re1+]

2.Qe2 Bd6! 3.0-0 e5

White is much better but he still has to fight for a win.

Exercise 5



White is to move. Find the best continuation.

Solution:

Black is behind in development and his back rank is poorly defended which makes possible a simple combination for White:

1.Bb6! Qa4

[1...axb6 2.Qd8+ Kg7 3.Qxe7]

2.Bb5 Qe4 3.Qd8+ Kg7 4.Rfe1! Bxe1

5.Bd4+ f6 6.Rxe1+-

Exercise 6

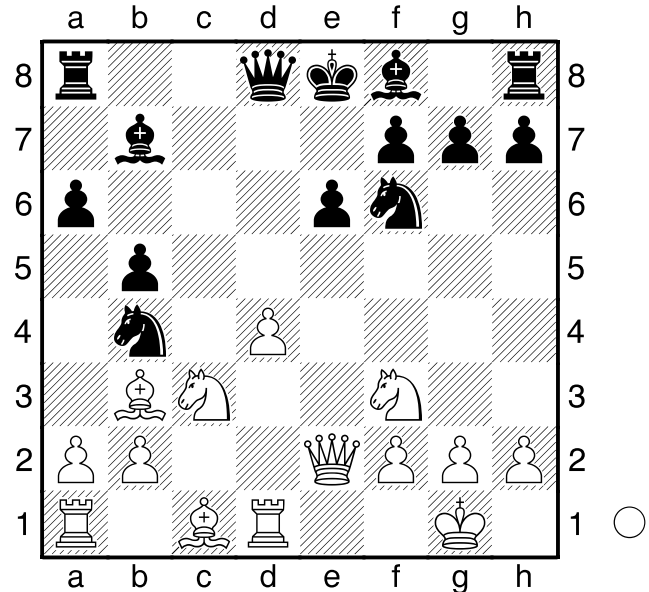
(Diagram)

White is to move.

We know that opening the centre with 1.d4-d5 should be good, but this square is strongly defended by Black. How should White continue? Give variations.

Solution:

Indeed, Black controls the d5-square, but he is behind in development and with the king in the centre. White has to exploit this situation by creating strong threats. Otherwise, Black will



continue his development and block the d4-pawn.

1.d5!

By this typical advance of the isolani pawn, White is able to use his major pieces in the centre. The d4-pawn would have only limited the power of the d1-rook.

[A quiet play permits Black to block the pawn:
1.Bg5 Nbd5]

1...Nbx d5 2.Bg5 Be7

Black developed all his minor pieces and he is now ready to castle. How to continue with White?

White's advantage is that he is already castled and his major pieces are active, so White will start a series of exchanges to eliminate the equivalent pieces:

3.Bxf6 gxf6

[3...Bxf6? 4.Nxd5 and White wins a piece]

4.Nxd5 Bxd5 5.Bxd5 exd5 6.Nd4

Now, all white pieces are much superior to the black ones and the threats continue to come (Nc6, Nf5, Re1)

Kf8

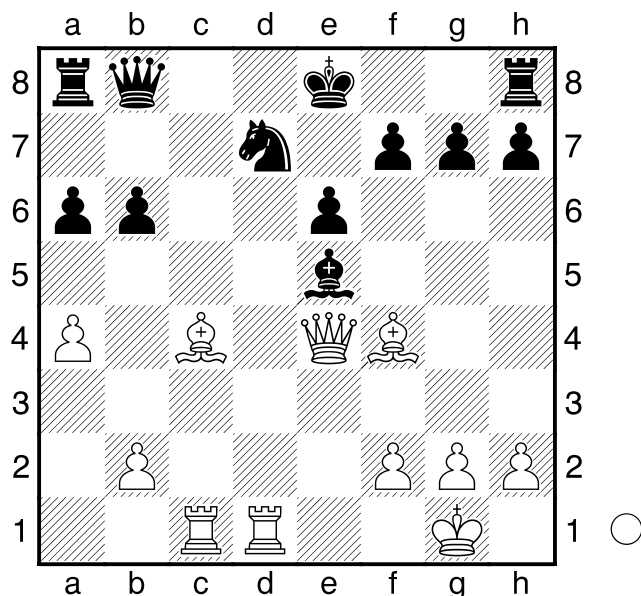
[6...Qd7 7.Qf3 Kf8 8.Nf5 Rd8 9.Rd3+-]

7.Nf5 h5 8.Rxd5 Qxd5 9.Qxe7+ Kg8

10.Qxf6

White threatens Ne7+ and Qg7#. Black resigned.

Exercise 7



White is to move.

Find the best move for White.

Solution:

Black didn't castle yet, but his pawns seem to protect the king well enough. However, White finds a way to destroy the wall of black pawns with the rook:

1.Rxd7 Bxf4 2.Rxf7! Bxh2+ 3.Kf1 Qc8 4.Re1 Be5 5.Bxe6 Qxe6 6.Rf5+-

Exercise 8

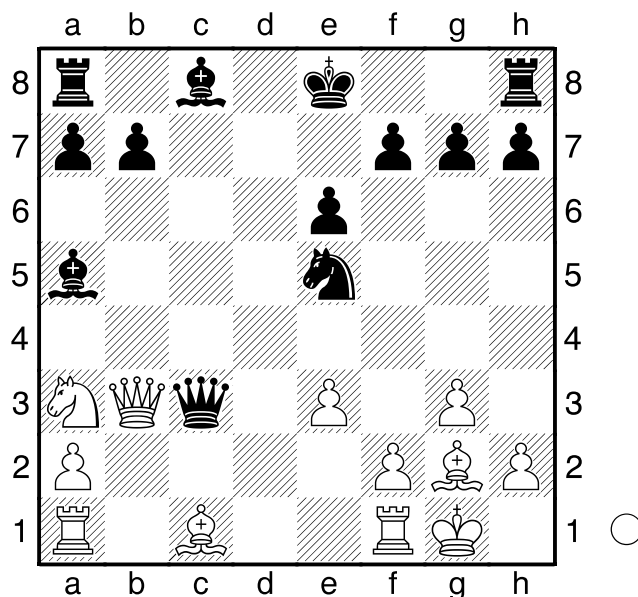
(Diagram)

White is move.

Black is behind in development. Can White exploit his short-term advantage?

Solution:

White can exploit his lead in development even without queens on the board.



White brings his knight in attack, clears the a3-square for the bishop and prepares to take back on b3 with tempo.

1.Nb5! Qxb3

[1...Qxa1 2.Bb2]

2.axb3 Bb6 3.Ba3!

The black king is now trapped in the centre.

a6

[3...Kd8 doesn't help Black too much: 4.Rfd1+ Bd7 5.Nd6 and White wins]

4.Nd6+ Kd7 5.Rfd1 Kc7 6.Nb5+!

and Black resigned

Exercise 9

(Diagram)

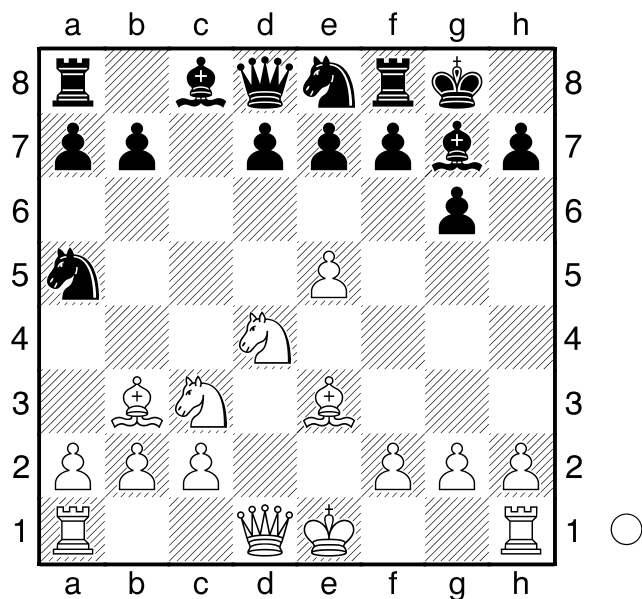
White is to move.

What does Black threaten to do next? Find the best continuation for White.

Solution:

Black has many threats: Bxe5, Nxb3, Nc6 or d7-d6 with equality.

However, White (Robert Fisher) prepared a nice combination exploiting the position of the unprotected queen from d8:



1.Bxf7+! Kxf7 2.Ne6 dxe6

[2...Kxe6 3.Qd5+ Kf5 4.g4+ Kxg4 5.Rg1+ with mate]

3.Qxd8 Nc6 4.Qd2 Bxe5 5.0-0 and White won easily.

Exercise 10

(Diagram)

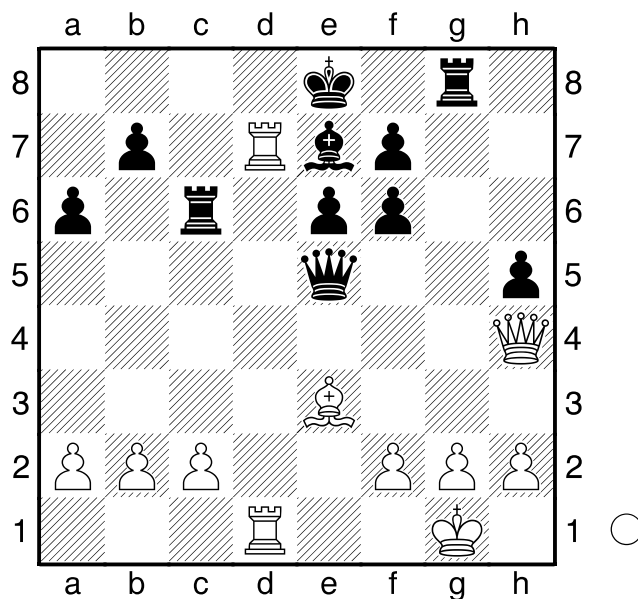
White is to move

Find the best way to exploit the d-file.

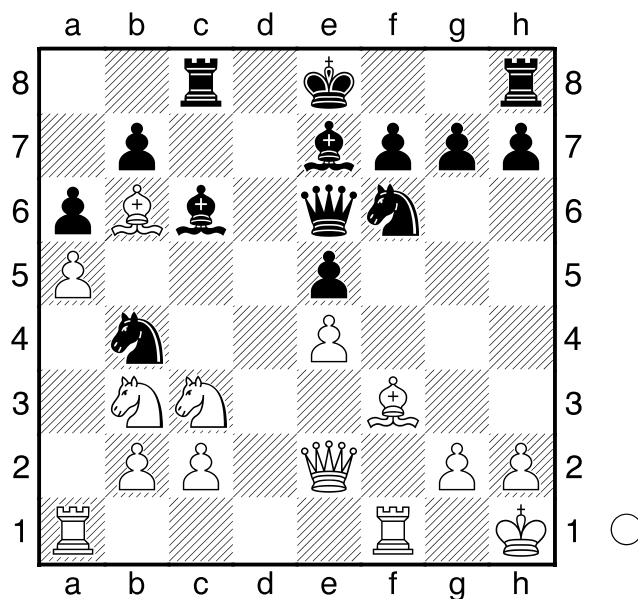
Solution:

Without the e7-bishop, Black would be mated by the white rooks, so:

1.Qb4 and Black resigned.



Exercise 11



White is to move.

What does Black threaten to play next?

Find the best move for White.

Solution:

Black intends to complete his development by playing 0-0.

White will use the unsafe positions of black queen and b4-knight forcing the following

events:

1.Nc5! Bxc5

Black is forced to renounce at his dark-square bishop.

[1...Qd6 2.Rad1 Qb8 3.Rd2 0-0 4.Qc4 and Black loses the knight.]

2.Bxc5 Bb5 3.Qf2!

This is the idea of White's first move (Nc5): he protects the bishop on the a3-f8 diagonal which interdicts the Black's castle.

[3.Nxb5 was not good because of: Rxc5 4.Nc3 0-0 and Black is better]

3...Bxf1

[3...Nc6 4.Nxb5 axb5 5.a6! opening more lines for the white pieces. bxa6 6.Rxa6+-]

4.Bxb4 Bc4 5.b3 Bb5 6.Nxb5 axb5

White succeeded to fix the black king in the centre. The rest is simple:

7.Be2 Nxe4

[7...Qc6 8.Qg3 with double attack on e5 and g7.]

8.Bxb5+ Kd8 9.Qa7 Qd5

[9...Kc7 10.a6]

10.Qb6+ Rc7 11.a6!

The opponent king is in the centre, so White opens all the lines.

bxa6 12.Qb8+ Rc8 13.Qa7 Rc7

[13...axb5 14.Qe7#]

14.Ba5

and Black resigned soon.

Exercise 12

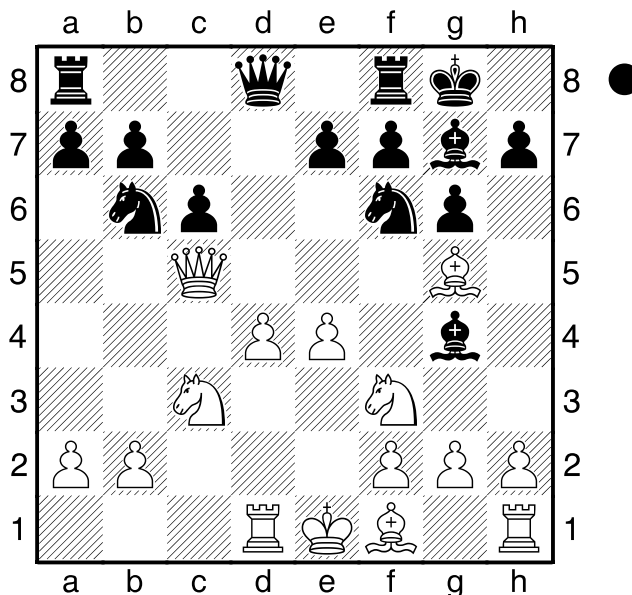
(Diagram)

Black is to move.

What does White intend to play at the next move?

How can Black use that white king is still in the centre?

Solution:



White has a good pawn centre and he intends to play Bd3 and 0-0.

However, the geometry of the white queen on c5 and white bishop on g5 should bring us on finding the solution:

1...Na4! 2.Qa3

[2.Nxa4 White cannot defend all his pieces now: Nxe4 3.Qxe7

(3.Qb4 Bxf3 4.Bxe7 Bxd1 5.Bxd8 Raxd8 and White didn't solve his problems; Black keeps a strong attack. For example:

6.Nc3 Rxd4 7.Qe7 Nxc3 8.bxc3 Rdd8 9.Bc4 Bxc3+ 10.Kf1 Rd4+-) 3...Qa5+ 4.b4 Qxa4 5.Qxe4 Rfe8]

2...Nxc3 3.bxc3 Nxe4 4.Bxe7 Qb6

After 4 moves, White didn't make any progress in his development. Moreover, Black succeeded to open the e-file.

[4...Qd5! is also good because of the possibility Qd5-e6.]

5.Bc4

[5.Bxf8 Bxf8 6.Qb3 (6.Qc1 Nxc3) 6...Qxb3 7.axb3 Re8 and Black wins]

5...Nxc3 6.Bc5

[6.Qxc3 Rfe8 7.Qa3 Bxf3 8.gxf3 Qd8]

6...Rfe8+ 7.Kf1 Be6!!

A very nice move, but the only one which leads to advantage.

8.Bxb6

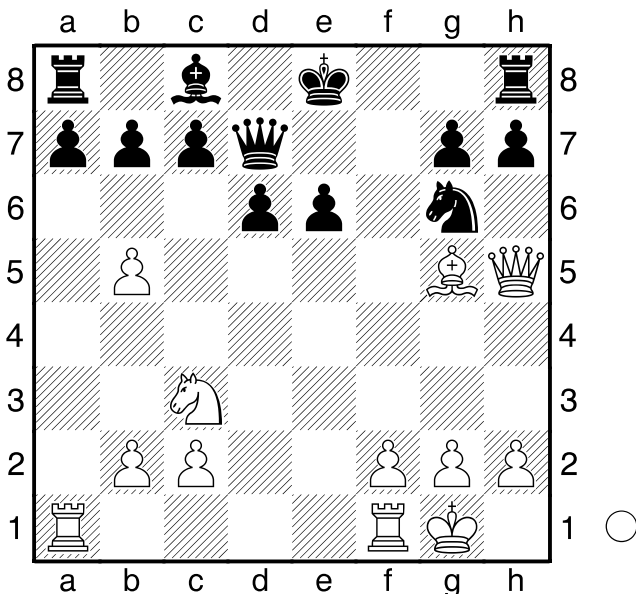
[8.Bxe6 Qb5+ 9.Kg1 Ne2+ 10.Kf1 Ng3+
11.Kg1 Qf1+ 12.Rxf1 Ne2#]
[8.Bd3 Nb5 9.Qa4 (9.Qb2? Qxc5)
9...Qd8+]

**8...Bxc4+ 9.Kg1 Ne2+ 10.Kf1 Nxd4+ 11.Kg1
Ne2+ 12.Kf1 Nc3+ 13.Kg1 axb6 14.Qb4
Ra4 15.Qxb6 Nxd1**

For the queen, Black has a rook and 2 bishops
and also positional advantage.
Black won.

If you ask if you need to calculate so much in
order to decide for the first move 1...Na4, the
answer is No.

Of course, you need to be sure that at least you
get your piece back after 2.Nxa4. But in the
main line, where White plays 2.Qa3, it is enough
just to sense that you are better because of the
high dynamic of your pieces which fight against
the under-developed White's camp.

Exercise 13

White is to move.

Black is a pawn up and after 0-0, his position
will have no problems.

Can White force opening the centre? Give
variations and evaluate.

Solution:

First of all, you shouldn't be at all upset if you
didn't find the solution to this position.

It is a very hard problem, but with a very
instructive solution from many points of view.

White is a pawn down and will have problems
against the black pawn centre (also, White won't
be able to find any operation base for his knight
in the centre). So, he has to look for strange
continuations.

The black king is for one move still in the centre
and is behind in development. The only
possibility to open the centre is to play Nc3-d5,
but Black can simply castle (he is not forced to
take the knight).

So, first:

1.b6!? cxb6 2.Nd5

Black is now forced to take the knight:

exd5 3.Rfe1+ Kf8 4.Ra3

This is the position White had to evaluate when
he played 1.b6.

He attacks with the 3 major pieces and a bishop,
while Black defends with the queen, 2 minor
pieces and the pawns. The black rooks are out
of play, the back rank is weak, the bishops are
of opposite colors and there are open lines
toward to black king.

It is far from easy to calculate all Black's good
replies and the result of all the complications,
but by only calculating the quantity of attacking
and defending pieces, White was in right to
choose this line.

Ne5

[Another possibility for Black is:

4...Kg8 5.Rae3

(5.Rf3 Qc6 6.Re7 Be6 7.Rxe6 Qxc2 8.g3
with complications.)

5...Ne5 6.Rxe5 dxe5 7.Rxe5 Kf8 8.Bh6
gxh6 9.Qxh6+ Kf7 10.Qf4+ Kg8 11.Rg5+
Qg7 12.Rxg7+ Kxg7 13.Qe5+ and draw by
perpetual check.]

The knight defends the black king very well, but
White will sacrifice even more material:

5.Rxe5! dxe5 6.Rf3+ Kg8 7.Bh6!

with the threat Rf3-g3.

Qe7

[7...gxh6? 8.Rg3+ Qg4! (8...Kf8?! 9.Qxe5 and White wins) 9.Rxg4+ Bxg4 10.Qxg4+ Kf7 11.Qf5+ Kg7 12.Qxe5+ Kg6 13.Qd6+ Kg7 14.Qe7+ Kg6 15.Qxb7±]

8.Bxg7 Kxg7 9.Rg3+ Kf8 10.Rf3+ Kg7 11.Rg3+

and draw by move repetition.

Conclusion: The evaluation of the position is of first importance when we need to decide about our future play. Here, White had little chance with a calm play (Black was a pawn up and had a strong pawn centre). By playing aggressively, White increases his chances to save the game and got a draw by perpetual check. The attacks against the king don't always finish by a win or a loss. In many situations, the attack can end with this kind of draw, especially if the player who launched the attack was in a worse position.

Exercise 14

(Diagram)

White is to move.

It is clear that White has to retake on d4. Find the best way to make this capture.

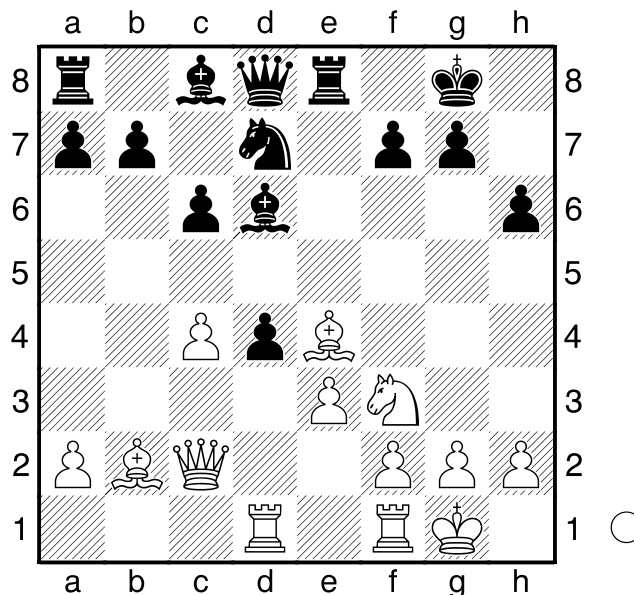
Give variations and evaluate.

Solution:

Black is behind in development and the position of his pieces is awkward and don't offer a good protection for the king. So, White's plan is to create a local force superiority on the kingside. White gives an intermediary check in order to clear the 4th rank for the rook.

1.Bh7+ Kh8 2.Rxd4 Bc5

[Black cannot defend the h4-square against the arrival of white rook: 2...Be7? 3.Ne5]
[2...Nf6? 3.c5 Nxh7 4.Rxd6 followed By Rxh6]



[Better was: 2...Bc7 3.Rfd1 Qe7 4.Re4 Qf8 5.Ba3! c5 6.Bb2 Rxe4 7.Bxe4 with advantage for White, but the game could still continue for many moves.]

3.Rf4

White is trying to provoke f7-f6 which would weaken the light-squares from Black's camp.

Qe7

[3...f6 4.Bg6 Re7 5.Rd1±]

[3...Rf8 4.Rd1±]

4.Re4 Qf8 5.Rh4 f6

Black needs to play f7-f6 to defend the h6-pawn, weakening the light-squares.

[5...Re6 6.Bf5 Rd6 7.Ng5+-]

6.Bg6 Re7 7.Rh5

with idea Nh4. The white rook walks freely in the centre of the board during the middlegame - a consequence of Black's poorly placed pieces.

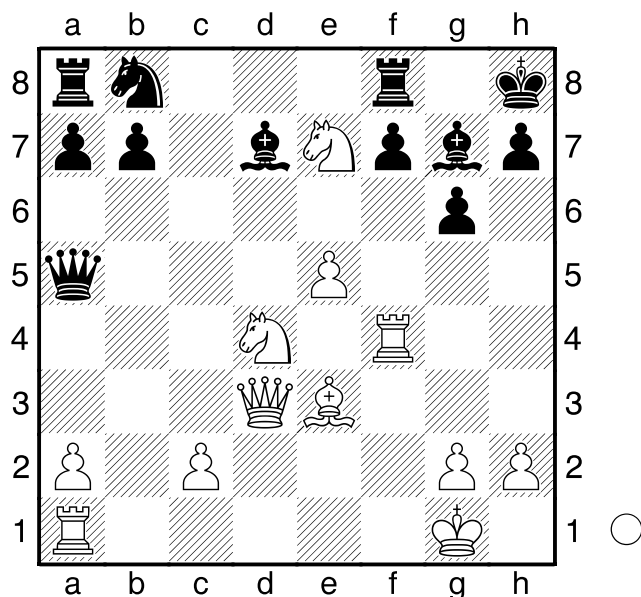
Bd6 8.Rd1 Be5 9.Ba3 c5 10.Nh4

White threatens Be4 or Bh7 with idea Ng6+ and Black has no defense, so he resigned.

Exercise 15

White is to move.

Find the best continuation, find the candidate



moves for Black, find all the possible lines and evaluate.

Solution:

Black is not completely developed, so White opens up the position:

1.e6! Qd8

[1...fxe6 2.Rh4 Rf6 3.Nxg6+ Kg8 4.Ne7+ Kf7 5.Qxh7+-]

[1...Bxe6 2.Nxe6 fxe6 3.Rh4 Rf5 4.Nxg6+ Kg8 5.Ne7+ Kh8 6.Bd4+-]

[1...Be8 2.Raf1 f5 3.g4±]

[A bit better was: 1...Qe5 but after: 2.Rb1! Bxe6 3.Nxe6 Qxe6 4.Rxb7 Nc6 5.Nxc6 Qxc6 6.Rxf7 Rxf7 7.Rxf7 White is a pawn up and has a dominant position.]

2.Raf1 Qxe7 3.Rxf7 Rxf7 4.Rxf7 Qe8

[4...Qb4 5.c3 Qa4 6.Qf1 and White wins]

5.Nf5 gxf5

[5...Bxe6 6.Rxg7 Bxf5 7.Qc3]

[5...Qxe6 6.Rxg7 gxf5 7.Rg5 Nc6 8.Bd4+ Ne5 9.Qg3 Re8 10.Bxe5+ Qxe5 11.Rg8+ Rxg8 12.Qxe5+ Rg7 13.Qb8+ Rg8 14.Qxb7 with an easy endgame for White]

6.Bd4

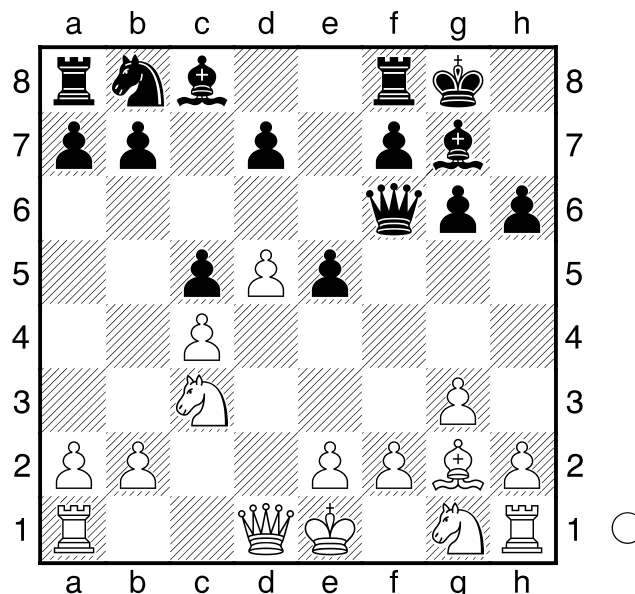
White eliminates the only defender of the black king's position.

Qxe6

[6...Qxf7 7.exf7 Nc6 8.Bxg7+ Kxg7 9.Qxd7 Rf8 10.Qxb7]

7.Rf8+ Qg8 8.Rxg8+ Kxg8 9.Qg3 Kf7
10.Qxg7+
Black resigned.

Exercise 16



White is to move.

Black is behind in development. Analyze the position for 5 minutes and use your intuition to find the best White's continuation and plan.

Solution:

Black developed his kingside but let the queenside completely undeveloped. White will separate the Black's camp in two sides and start an attack on the kingside:

1.d6!?

The "nail" pawn on d6 cannot have a long life, but, in the meanwhile, White will use the space conferred by that pawn to place his pieces in attack. Without this move, the game could go in a "logic" manner: Black plays d7-d6 with a normal closed centre.

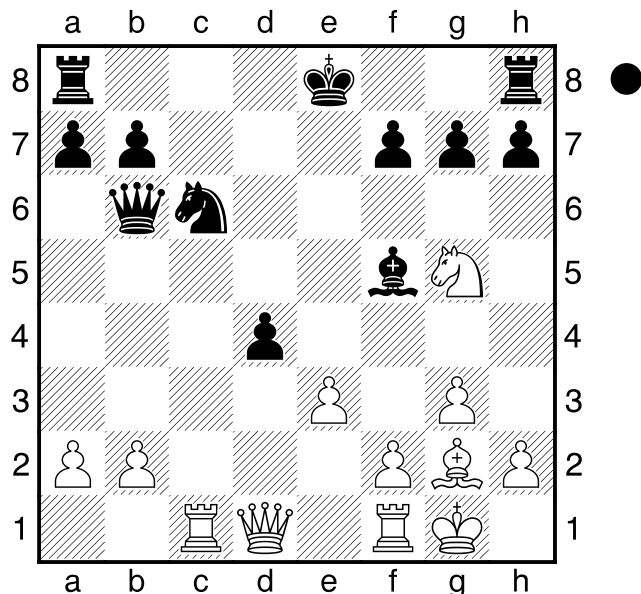
Instead, White had an interesting idea, changing the normal course of the game, in the spirit of players who like to find "something" in any position which could lead to a fight.

The game went:

Nc6 2.e3 b6 3.Bd5 Kh8 4.Ne4 Qd8 5.h4

f5 6.Ng5 Bb7 7.g4 e4 8.Ne2 Bxb2 9.Nf4
 with great complications that a stronger tactician prefers.
 If in the 5 given minutes, you chose other move than 1.d6, it means you probably prefer a more quiet, strategic play.

Exercise 17



Black is to move

White's last move was 1.e2-e3. Find the best defense for Black.

Solution:

Black has not castled yet and White is trying to open up the position.

The pawn is worth much less than the exposed position of the king. Don't forget: when you are behind in development, the best action/plan is to complete it as fast as possible.

1...0-0!

[In the game, Black thought that White has nothing to do and took the pawn:

1...dxe3 but it was not so:

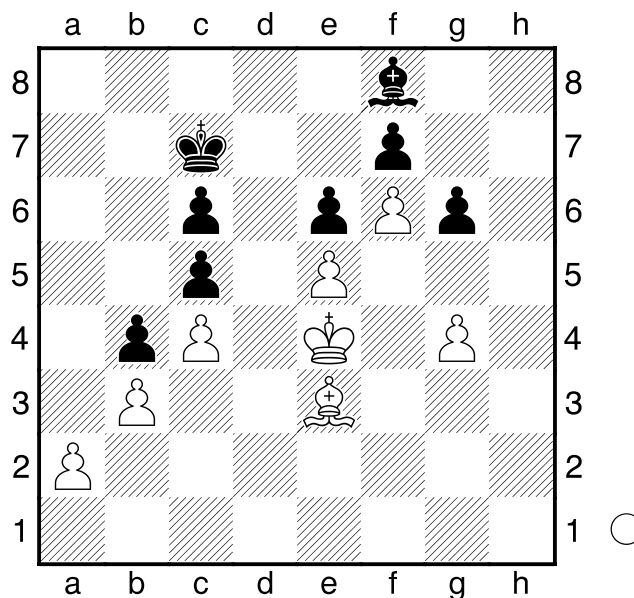
2.Rxc6! bxc6 3.Qd6 and White's attack is decisive.]

2.Bxc6 bxc6 3.Qxd4 Qxd4 4.exd4

okay, Black is a pawn down, but White needs a very good endgame technique to win:

f6 5.Nf3 Be4 6.Nd2 Bd5±

Exercise 18



White is to move.

Can White win? How?

Solution:

The black bishop is blocked on f8, but there are only 2 ways for the white pieces to enter Black's camp: through g5-h6 or through a3-a4. However, both these entrances are secured by Black.

White's plan to win consists in 2 phases:

a) bring the king on g5, bishop on c1 and play a2-a4 (which will force Black to take e.p. on a3 - see variation)

b) play g4-g5 to restrict the black bishop, bring the king on a4 and bishop on a5.

1.Kf3 Kd7 2.Kg3 Kc8 3.Kh4 Kd7 4.Kg5 Kc8 5.Bc1 Kc7 6.a4

The first phase of the plan.

bxa3

[Black is forced to take e.p. on a3, otherwise: 6...Kb7 7.Be3 Kb6 8.a5+! Kxa5 9.Bxc5!]

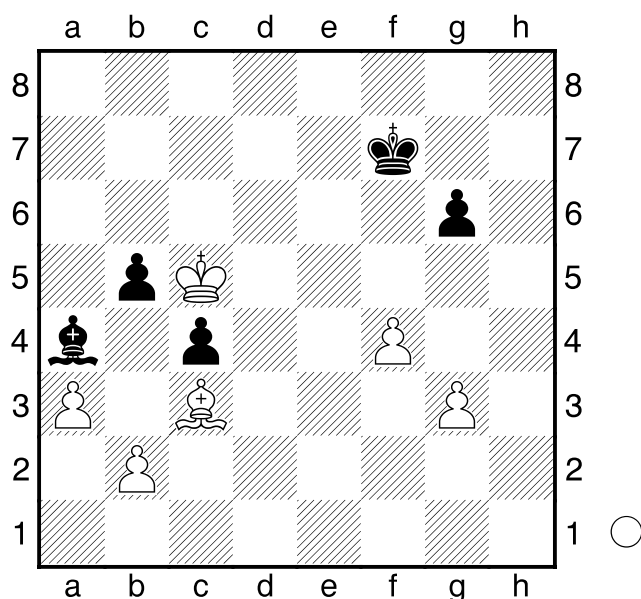
This is why the white king has to stay on g5. If Black doesn't take, the a-pawn, this will advance, making the black king to go on the

edge, the bishop will be sacrificed on c5, while the white king will enter Black's camp and helping one of the kingside pawns to queen.
 Bxc5 10.Kh6 Bd4 (10...Bf8+ 11.Kh7 Kb6 12.Kg8 Bh6 13.Kxf7) 11.Kg7 Bxe5 12.Kxf7]

7.Bxa3 Kd7 8.Bb2 Kc7 9.Bc3 Kb6 10.Kf4 Ka6 11.g5

and Black resigned as he has nothing to do against Kf4-...-a4, Ba5-d8-e7.

Exercise 19



White is to move.

Endgames with opposite colored bishops are in many cases draw even when the number of pawns is not the same.

However, here White can win. How?

Solution:

The endgames with opposite color bishops are very often a draw as the pawns can be strongly blocked by the opponent bishop and king. However, 2 free pawns which are at a bigger distance can win.

In this position, White has 2 pawns against 1 pawn on the kingside, so he can create a free pawn, but which is not enough to win. White needs to create another free pawn on the queenside, which is possible after:

1.b3!! cxb3

[1...Bxb3 2.Kxb5 and White wins because of the free a-pawn.]

2.Bb2

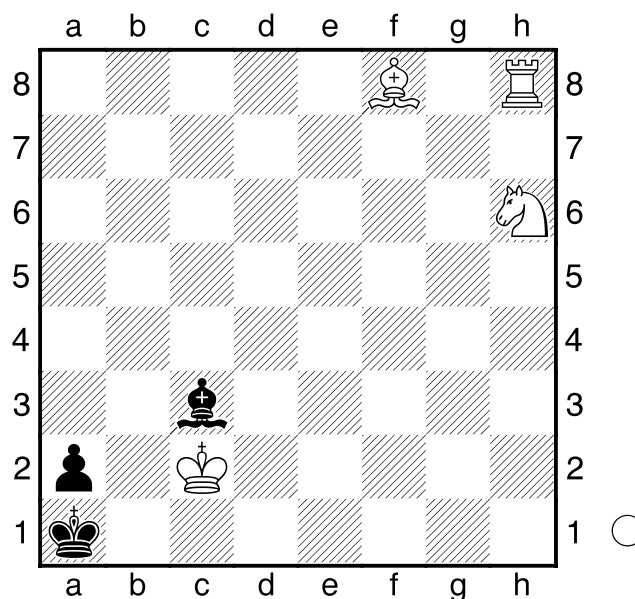
This is the idea of White's previous move.

Practically, the black bishop is out of play on a4 and Black has to sacrifice his b5-pawn in order to free the bishop.

Ke6 3.g4 b4 4.axb4 Be8 5.b5

and Black resigned.

Exercise 20



This is a study. White moves and delivers mate in 3 moves.

Find the solution.

Solution:

1.Nf5! Bxh8

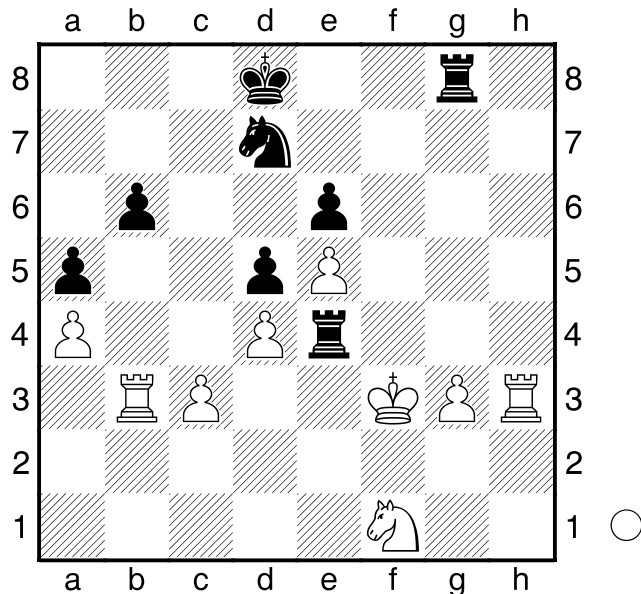
[1...Bd4 2.Rh1+ Bg1 3.Rxg1#]

2.Ng7!!

This is the idea of this study: now, the black bishop is limited and has only one possible move:

Bxg7 3.Bxg7#

Exercise 21



White is to move.

Find the best continuation for White and evaluate.

Solution:

1.Ne3!

White blocks the black rook on e4. Black cannot free his rook and from there the rook doesn't cooperate with the rest of his pieces, so even on the centre, the rook is out of play.

White has to keep his knight on e3, but the rooks are much more important now than the knight.

The game went:

Kc7

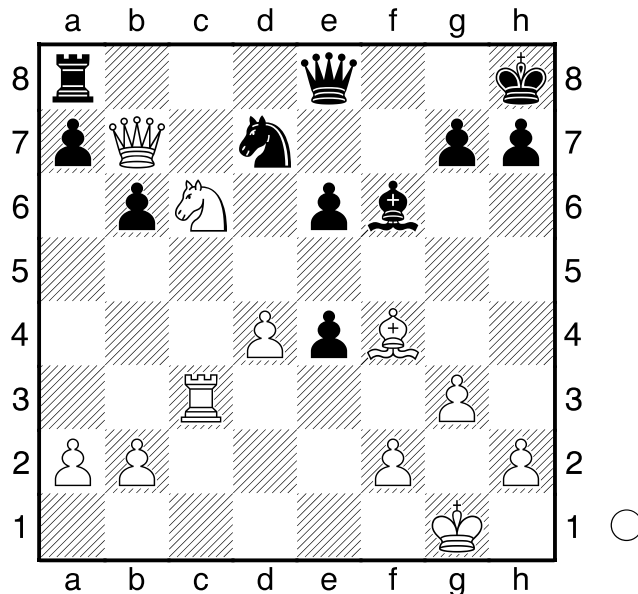
[1...Rf8+ 2.Ke2]

2.Ke2 Rg5 3.Kd2 Rg7 4.Rb1 Nf8 5.Rf1 Nh7 6.Kd3 Ng5 7.Rh6 Kc6 8.Rff6 Kd7 9.Rhg6!

White trades the active black pieces.

Rxg6 10.Rxg6 Nf3 11.Rf6 Ng5 12.Rf8 Kc6 13.Ke2 Nh3 14.Rc8+ Kd7 15.Rh8 Ng5 16.Rh5 Nf7 17.Rh7 Ke8 18.Kd3 Ng5 19.Rb7 and White wins.

Exercise 22



White is to move.

Find the drawback in Black's position and White's next move.

Solution:

White can build a "bridge" on the opponent's back rank by:

1.Nb8!

and, the a8-rook is blocked and without defense.

[Better than: 1.Bb8?! Bxd4 2.Qxa8 Bxc3 3.bxc3]

Exercise 23

(Diagram)

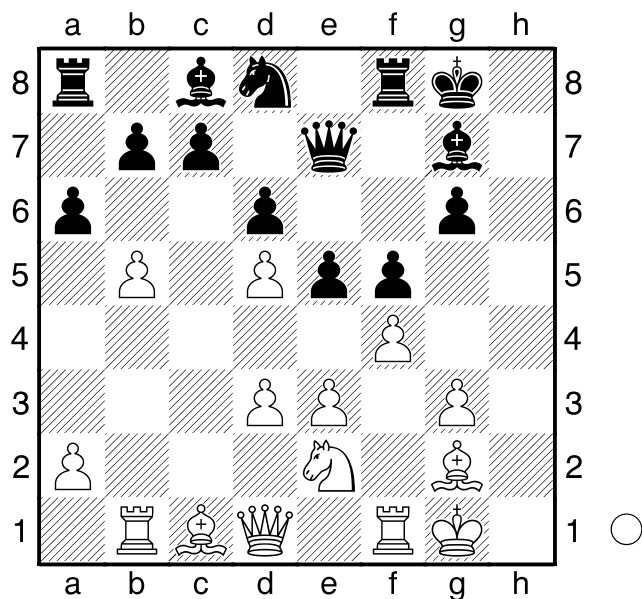
White is to move.

Find the best move for White and explain the reason of your choice.

Solution:

Black pieces are cramped on the queenside. He tried to free himself by playing a7-a6.

In order to keep the black pieces limited, White plays:

**16.b6! cxb6**

[Black is in danger after:

16...c5 17.dxc6 Nxc6 18.Qa4 Bd7 19.Bd5+ Kh7 (19...Be6 20.Bxc6) 20.Kg2]

17.Rxb6

the black pawns are blocked, hampering the movement of pieces.

Exercise 24

(Diagram)

Black is to move.

Find the best continuation for Black.

Solution:

Both players have one rook on the open e-file. Black gets the control of the file by attacking the position of the e2-rook, forcing it to make the exchange on e8:

32...Qd4!

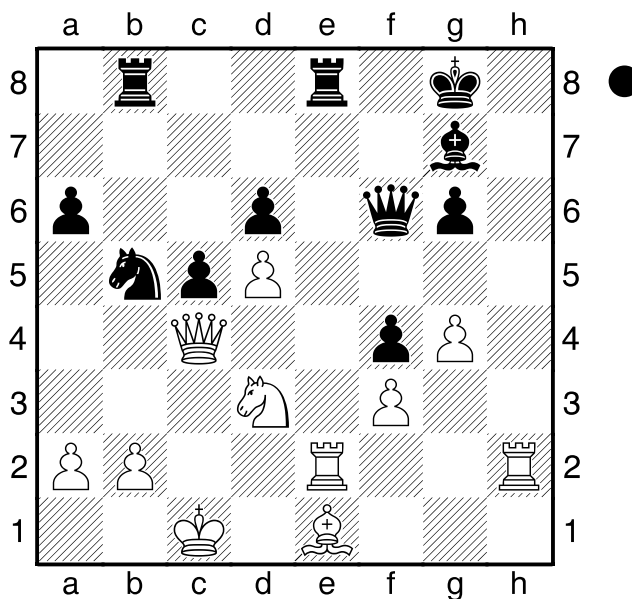
now, White is forced to take on d4:

33.Qxd4 Nxd4 34.Rxe8+ Rxe8

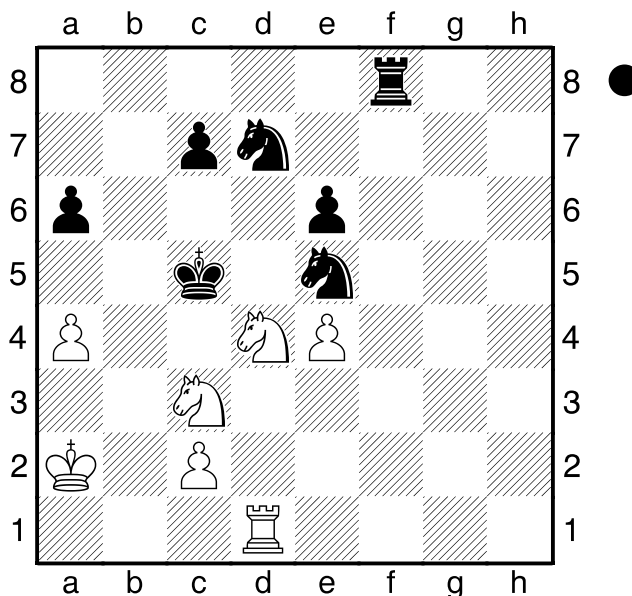
and Black wins. For example:

35.Bc3

[35.Rf2?? c4]

**35...Re3 36.Bxd4**

[36.Nxf4 Be5]

36...Bxd4 37.Kc2 Rxf3**Exercise 25**

Black is to move.

Find a way for Black to get an advantage.

Solution:

37...Kc4!

Black forces White to retreat his knight in a

passive position.

38.Nb1

[38.Nce2 Rf2 followed by Nc5]

[38.Kb2 c5 39.Nde2 Kb4]

38...Nc5 39.Nb3 Nxb3 40.cxb3+ Kb4

41.Rd4+ Kc5

All black pieces have superior positions. The white king and knight are trapped in the corner and Black succeeds to keep them there.

42.Rd1

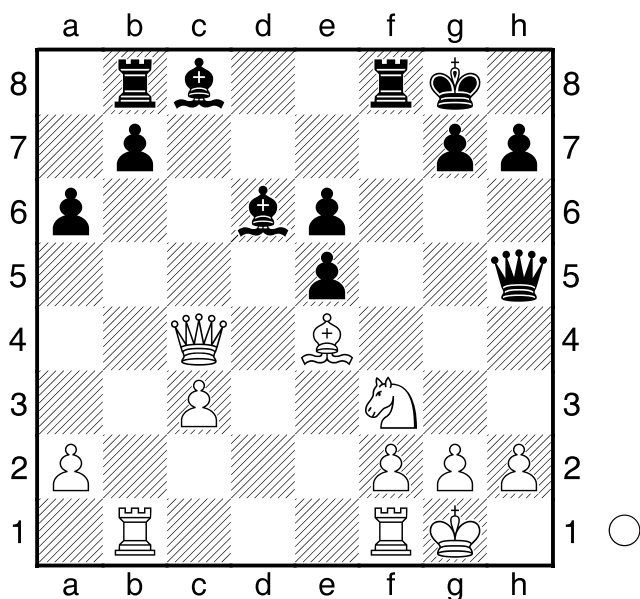
[42.Rd2 Rf3]

42...Rf2+ 43.Ka3 Rc2

Black is also threatening a6-a5, Ne5-c6-b4 and Ra2#

In endgames, the limitation and activity of pieces is very important!

Exercise 26



White is to move.

Find the best continuation.

Solution:

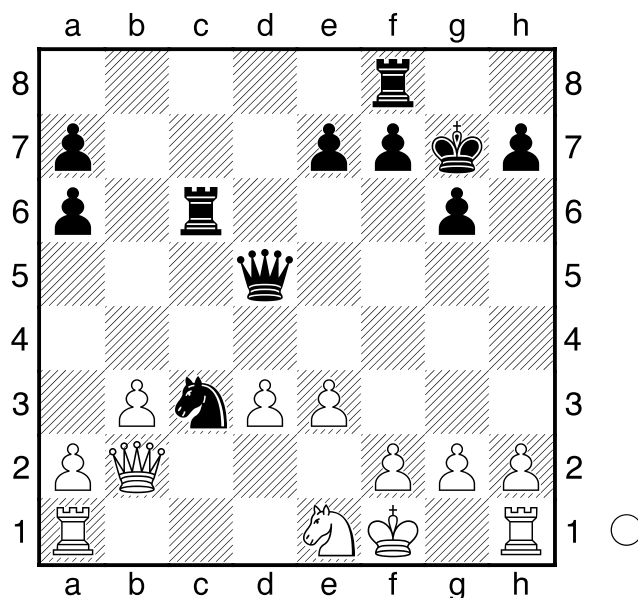
White uses the rook lift to block the black queenside and to chase away the defender of the c7-square:

22.Rb6 Be7

[22...Ba3 23.Qc7 Ra8 24.Rb3 Rf7
25.Qxe5±]

**23.Qc7 Bd8 24.Qxb8 Bxb6 25.Bxb7 Bxb7
26.Qxb7 Bc5 27.Qc6±**

Exercise 27



White is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best continuation and plan for White.

Solution:

White is a pawn up, but his pieces are restricted: the h1-rook is blocked in the corner and the e1-knight has to defend the c2- and d3-squares.

White has to find a way to activate his pieces. A very interesting idea is to bring the h1-rook on e3 by h2-h4, Rh1-h3, e3-e4 and Rh3-e3. This way, White will have an active rook with both an attacking and defensive role:

20.h4! h5

[Black shouldn't allow h4-h5 or his position can become even worse.

20...Rfc8 21.h5 Qg5 (21...gxh5 22.Rh4 followed by Rc4) 22.h6+ Kg8 23.Rh3

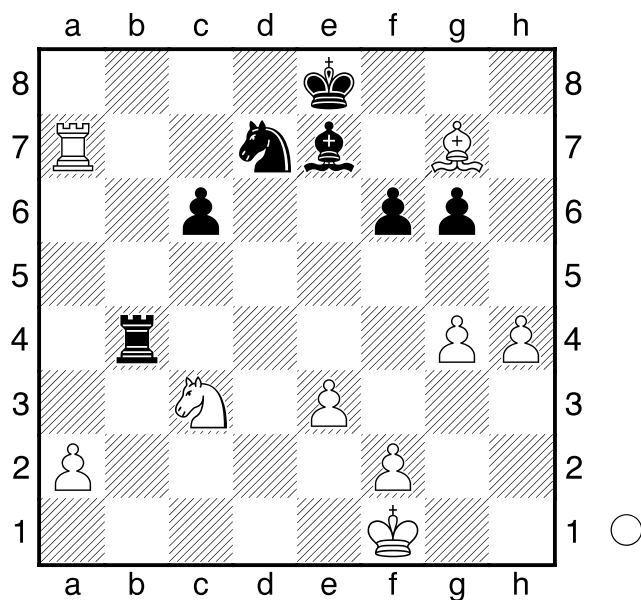
and, now that the c3-knight is pinned by the mate on g7, White can play Ra1-c1-c2.]

21.Rh3 Rfc8 22.e4 Qd7 23.Re3 with idea

Nf3 and d3-d4.

When Black will retreat the knight with the threat Rc2, White will be ready to defend the second rank with Re3-e2.

Exercise 28



White is to move.

The rook is the most active black piece. Find a way for White to put the black rook out of play. Hint: a piece can be also out of play if that piece has to defend important squares.

Solution:

White will create a free pawn on the h-file which will keep the black rook busy:

32.h5! Rxc3 33.h6 Rh4 34.a4
and White wins.

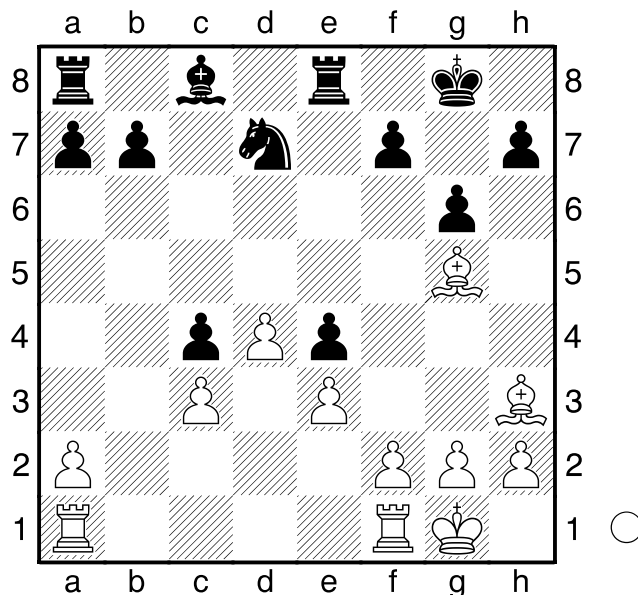
Exercise 29

(Diagram)

White is to move.

The black bishop is limited in this game by his own pawns from c4 and e4.

So, is the exchange of the light-squares in White's favor? Find the best move for White.



Solution:

This is a typical position when the knight is stronger than the bishop. The black knight has a very good operation base on d5. It is a secure square (White hardly can attacks the knight on that square), it is on the centre and attacks the c3-pawn.

White should avoid to enter an endgame with a bad bishop against a strong knight, so:

17.Bg4!

[A careless play would lead White to difficulties:

17.a4 Nb6 18.Bxc8 Rexc8 19.Rfb1 Rc7 20.Bf4 Rd7

followed by Nd5 and Black is better]

17...Nb6

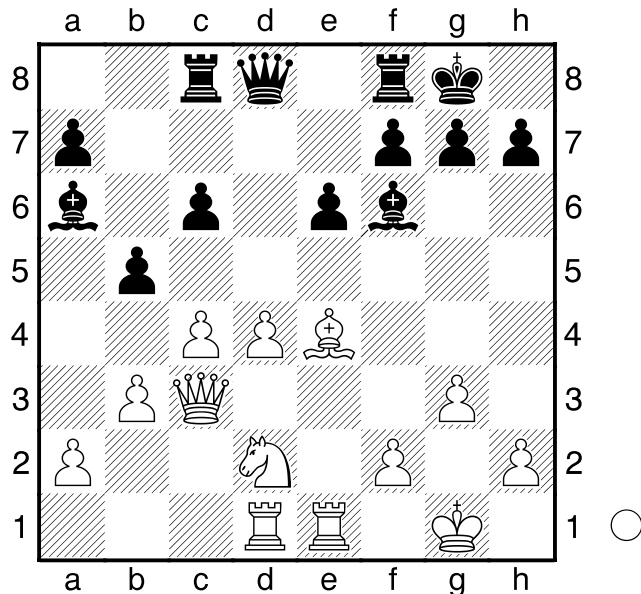
[17...b5 18.a4 bxa4 19.Bd1 Nb6 20.Bxa4 Nxa4 21.Rxa4±]

18.Be2

The bishop takes a more passive position, but only temporarily. White will play f2-f3 opening the long diagonal for the bishop.

Be6 19.Rab1 Rec8 20.f3 Nd5 21.Rfc1 exf3 22.Bxf3 and White is clearly better.

Exercise 30



White is to move.

Find the best continuation for White.

Solution:

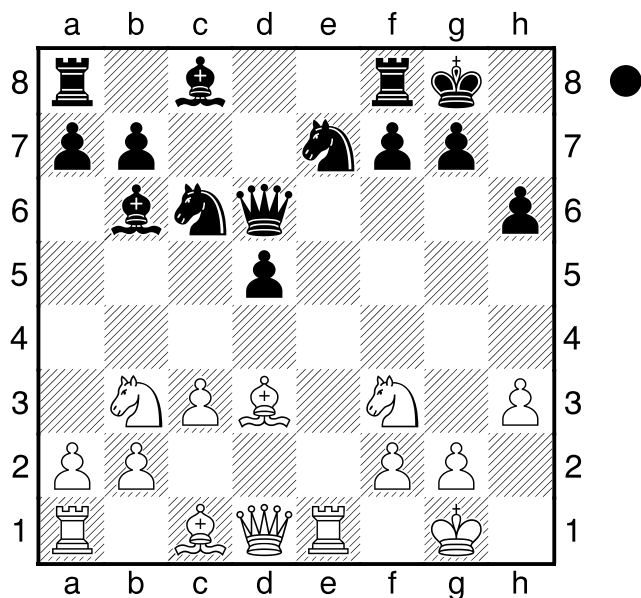
19.c5!

A very simple move which blocks the black light-square bishop and the c6-pawn which is now a weakness. Also, White gets the d6-square.

By playing c4-c5, White creates a big "hole" on d5, but this is not a problem as Black doesn't have knights (the knight is the main piece to go on such squares) and White protects the square with his bishop. White will play Nf3-e5 probably forcing the exchange Bf6xe5, d4xe5 after which he will have the strong outpost on d6 and the better bishop.

Exercise 1

1

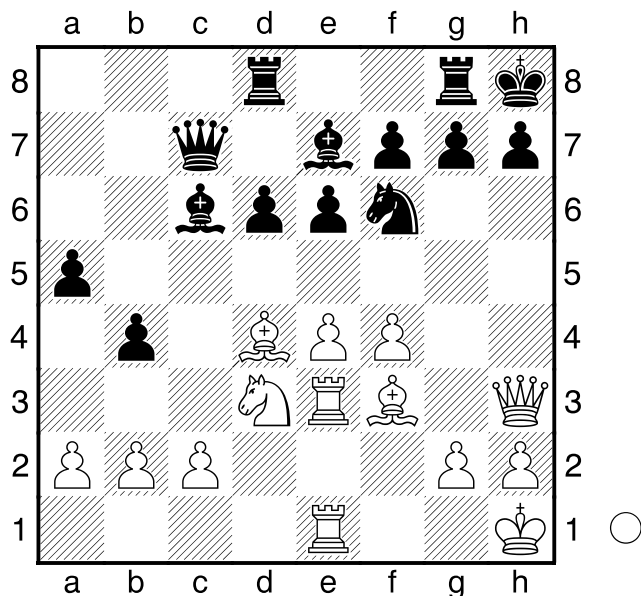


Black is to move.

Does White or Black have any piece superiority on some of the flanks?

What would you play with Black?

Exercise 2

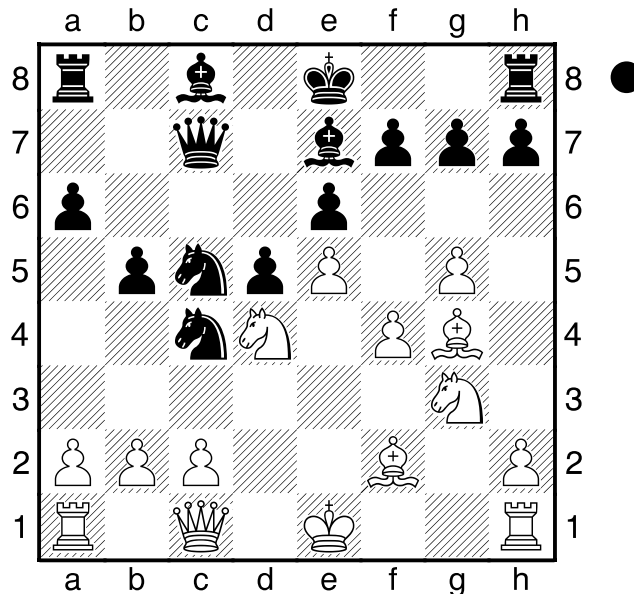


White is to move.

Does White have any piece superiority in this position? Where?

How would you continue? Give variations and evaluate.

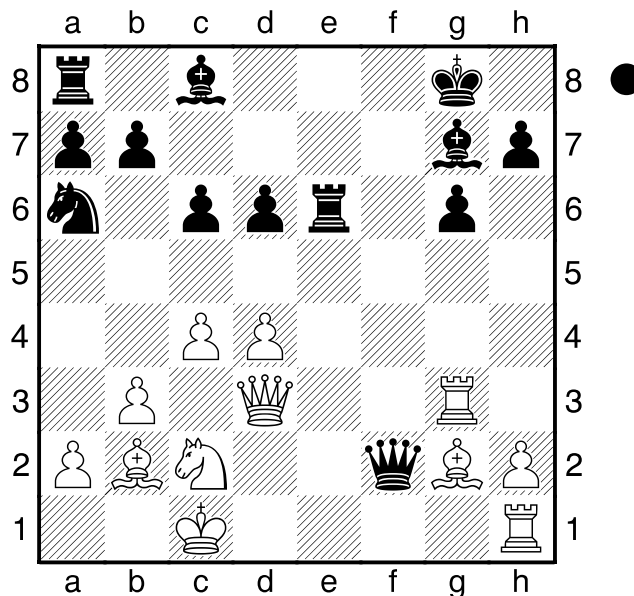
Exercise 3



Black is to move.

Find the best continuation and evaluate.

Exercise 4

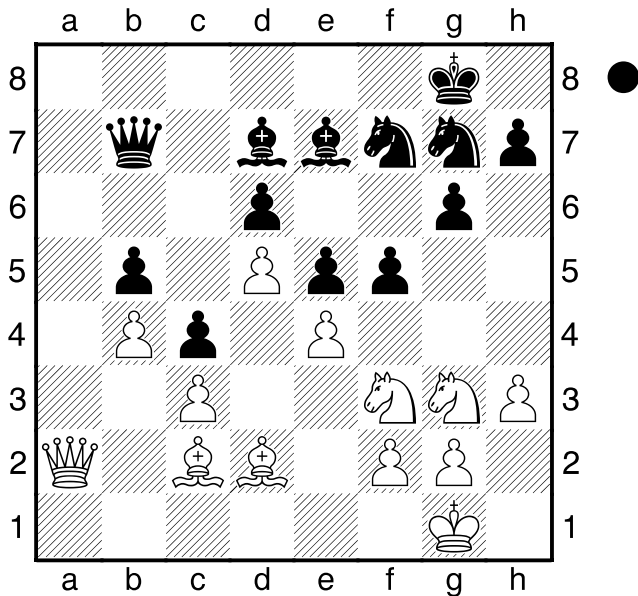


Black is to move.

How many pieces can Black bring to attack on the queenside? How many pieces defend the white king?

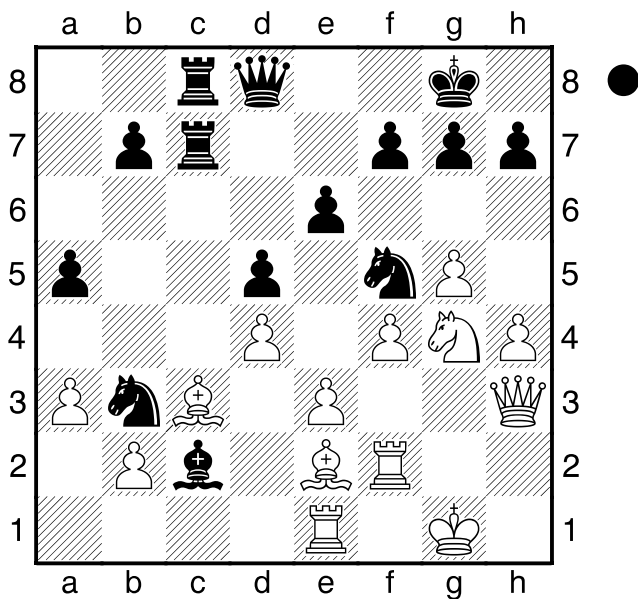
How would you continue with Black?

Exercise 5



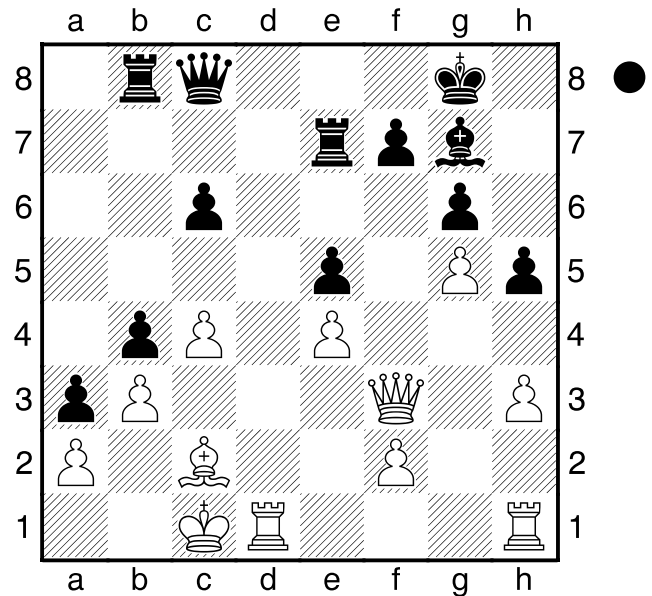
Black is to move.
Find a plan of play and a rearrangement for black pieces.

Exercise 6



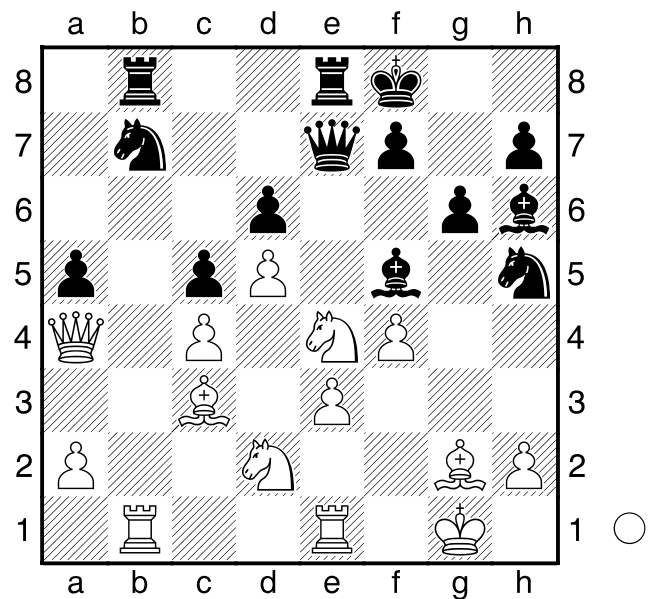
Black is to move.
Make the TO DO list for Black (and find the first move).

Exercise 7



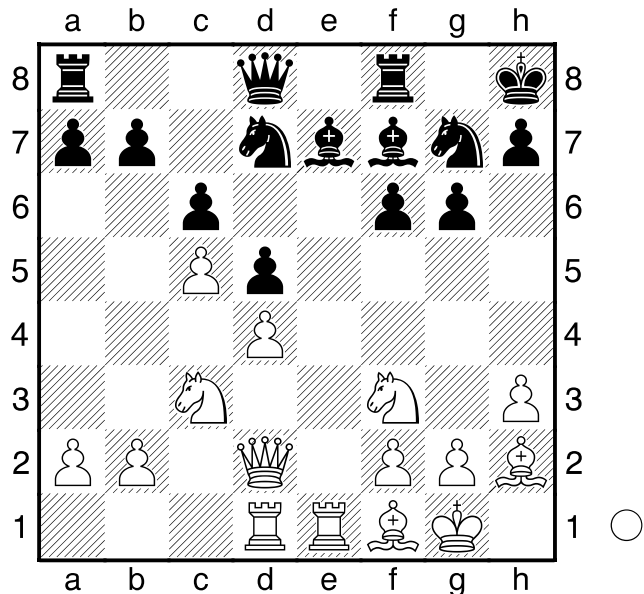
Black is to move.
Evaluate the position and give the TO DO list for Black.

Exercise 8



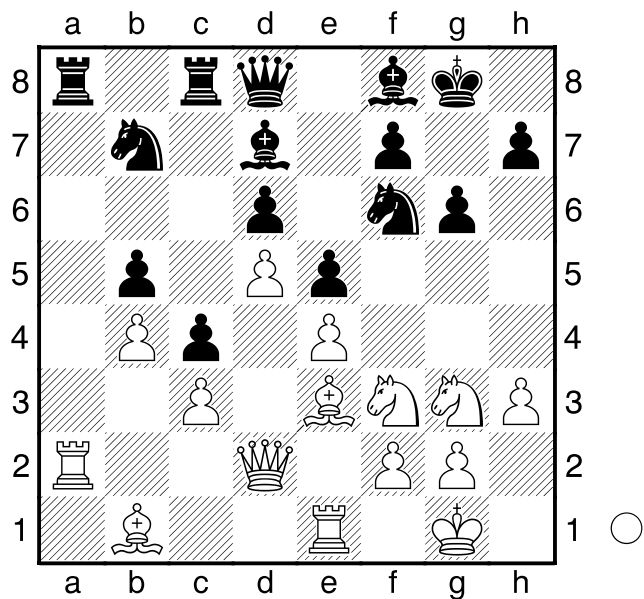
White is to move.
Find the best move for White.

Exercise 9



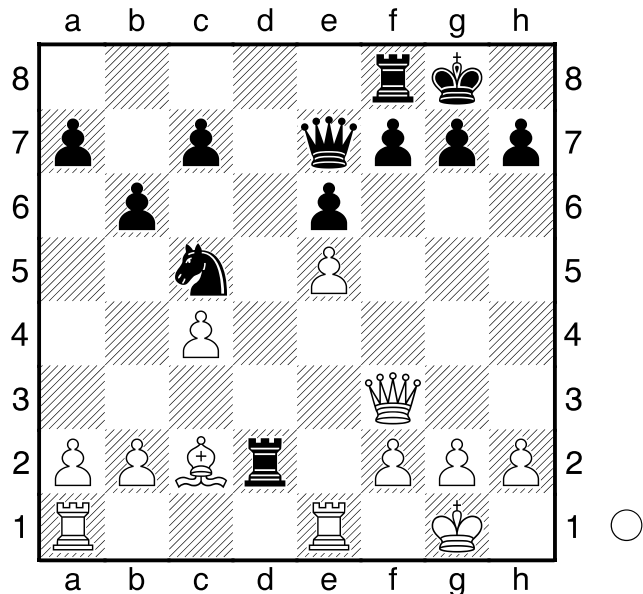
White is to move.
Where should White play in this position? Find the best move.

Exercise 10



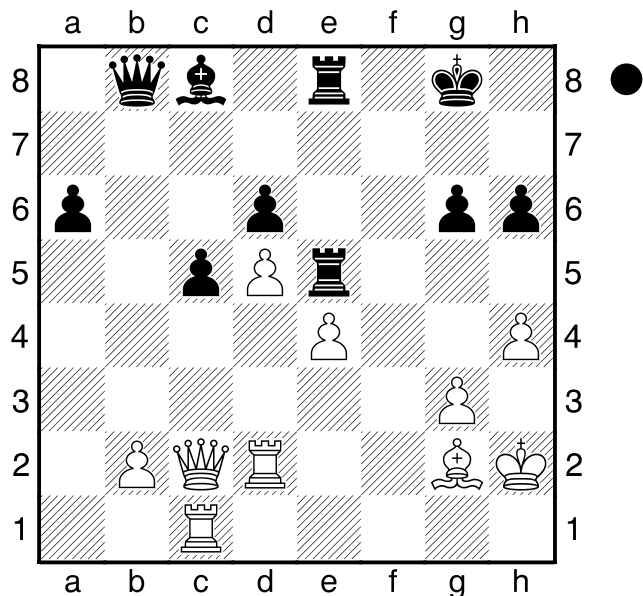
White is to move.
Can White benefit of the open a-file? How?

Exercise 11



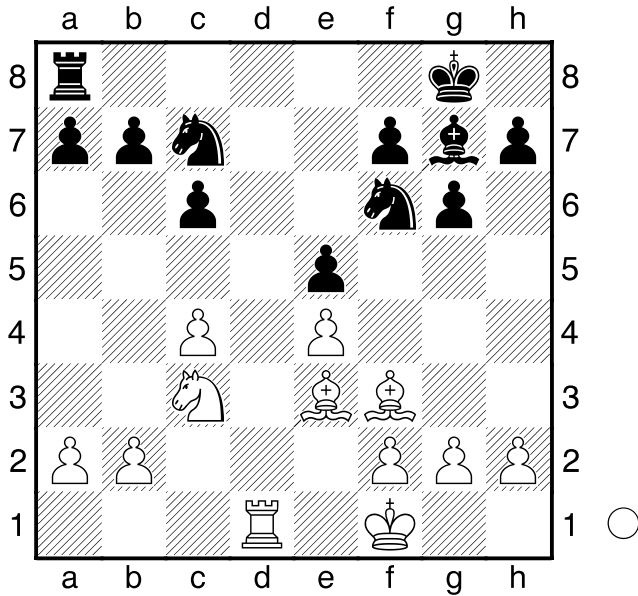
White is to move.
What would you play?

Exercise 12



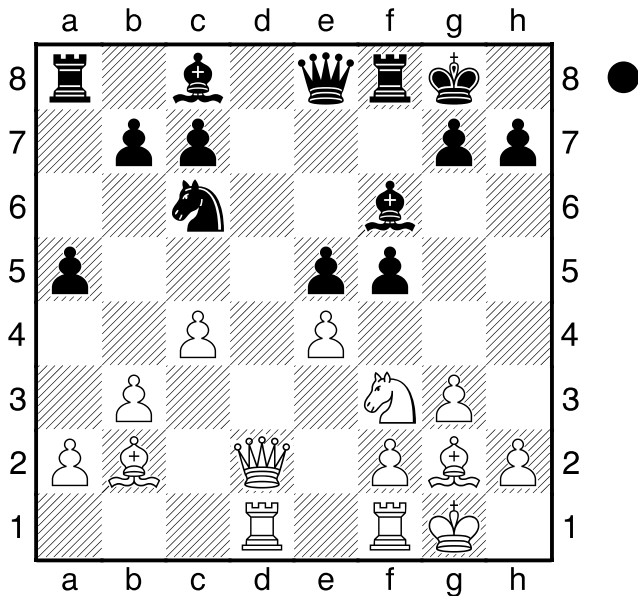
Black is to move.
Evaluate the position and find the best continuation.

Exercise 13



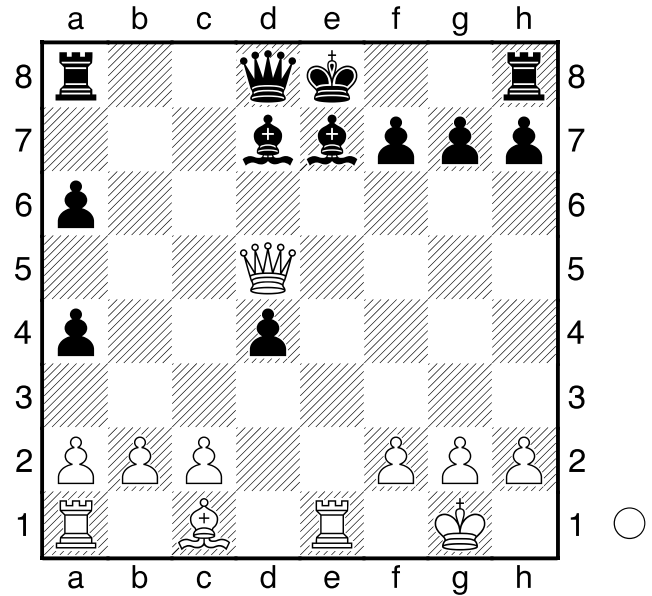
White is to move.
Find the best continuation.

Exercise 14



Black is to move.
Evaluate the position and find the best move for Black.

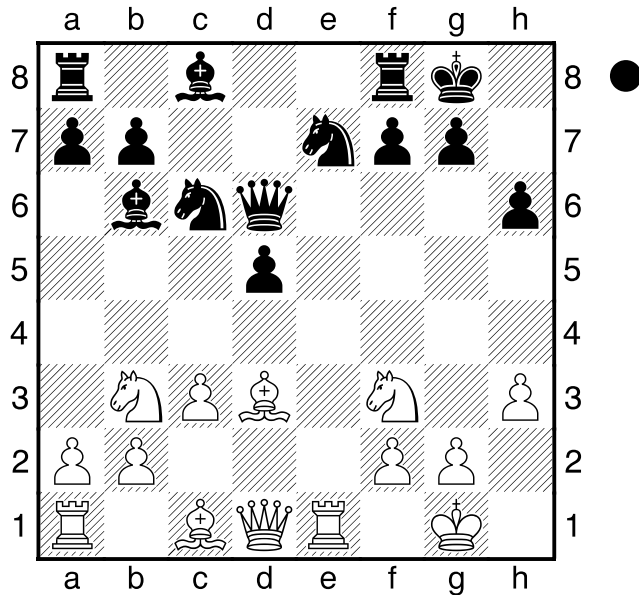
Exercise 15



White is to move.
Find the best continuation for White, give variations and evaluate.

Exercise 1

1



Black is to move.

Does White or Black have any piece superiority on some of the flanks?

What would you play with Black?

Solution:

Black has 3 pieces attacking the White's kingside. Even if not there, the bishops and queen are pieces with long-ray of action and should be counted.

White's kingside is defended only by the f3-knight and the position of the king is weakened by the advanced h-pawn.

12...Bxh3! 13.gxh3 Qg3+ 14.Kh1 Bxf2

Black sacrificed a bishop for 2 pawns and he attacks now with the queen, a bishop and can bring the e7-knight in attack. White's pieces do not cooperate well in defense.

15.Bf1

[15.Rf1 Qxh3+ 16.Nh2 Bg3 17.Qe2 Bxh2+]

15...Nf5! with idea Nh4 and mate threat on g1

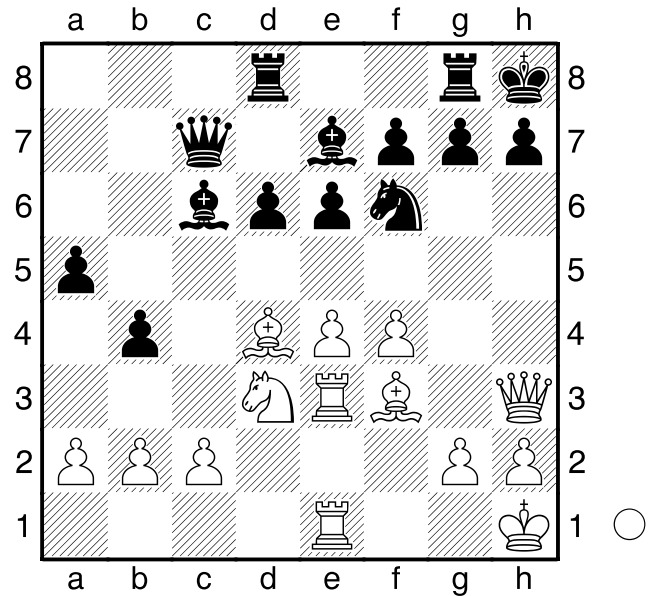
16.Bg2 Qd6 with idea Ng3+

Exercise 2

White is to move.

Does White have any piece superiority in this position? Where?

How would you continue? Give variations and



evaluate.

Solution:

White has all his forces in good positions in the centre and their places cannot be improved anymore.

So, White should open or clarify the position of the pawns in the centre by:

22.e5 dxe5

[22...Nd7 23.Bh5!

attacking the weakest point in Black's camp.

A) 23...Rdf8 24.Bg6! fxg6 (24...h6 25.exd6 Bxd6 26.Qxh6#) 25.Qxh7+ Kxh7 26.Rh3+ Bh4 27.Rxh4# ;

B) 23...Rgf8 24.Rg3 d5 25.f5 with the threat Qg4]

23.Nxe5 Be8 24.c3

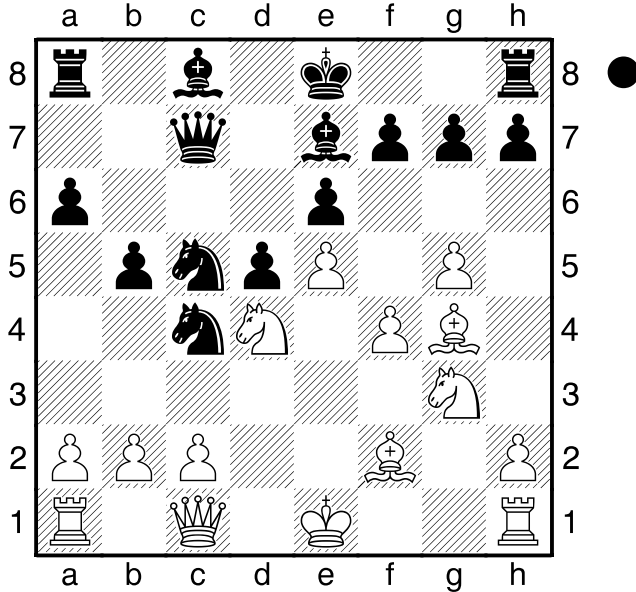
White has more space, better placed pieces and threatens to open the e-file for his rooks with f4-f5.

Exercise 3

(Diagram)

Black is to move.

Find the best continuation and evaluate.



Solution:

Black has more pieces on the queenside (2 knights, the dark-square bishop and the queen).

He has to find a way to force the weakening of white pawn structure. So:

16...Na4! 17.b3

[17.Rb1 Nxb2 18.Rxb2 Ba3]

and, now, the bishop can enter opponent's camp:

17...Ba3 18.Qd1 Nc3 19.Qd3 Bb2

Exercise 4

(Diagram)

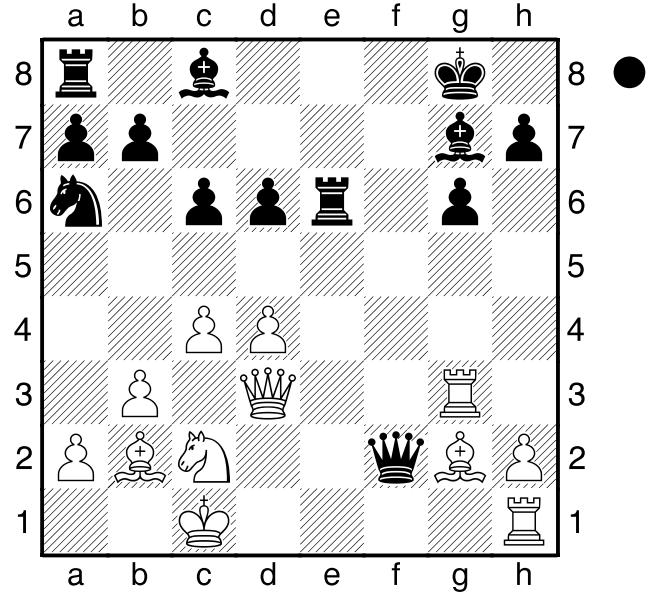
Black is to move.

How many pieces can Black bring to attack on the queenside? How many pieces defend the white king?

How would you continue with Black?

Solution:

In any case we cannot say that Black has a force superiority in his next attack against the white king.



However, White's king position is weakened, the diagonals h6-c1 and h7-b1 are weak too, and white pieces lack coordination.

Black wins by force:

28...Nb4 29.Nxb4 Bh6+ 30.Kb1

[30.Kd1 Qxb2 with the threat Qc1#]

30...Re1+ 31.Rxe1 Qxe1+ 32.Kc2 Bf5

The question "how many pieces can Black bring in attack" was meant to help you for this move.

The bishop is in fact unprotected on f5 because of the pin on the g-file. This is the second Black's move which removes the defenders of the white king (the first was 28...Nb4).

33.Qxf5

[33.Be4 Bxe4+-]

33...Qd2+ 34.Kb1 Qd1+ 35.Bc1 Qxc1#

Exercise 5

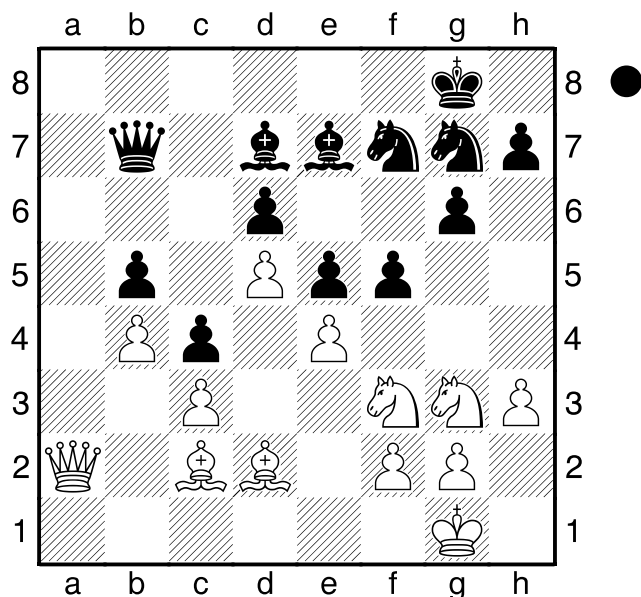
(Diagram)

Black is to move.

Find a plan of play and a rearrangement for black pieces.

Solution:

Black can get a very good position with an attack on the kingside. First he has to rearrange his pieces:



1. the dark-square bishop will come on b6 (first, Black will play f5-f4 to avoid Bd2-e3) with an excellent diagonal and also protecting the a7-square against the white queen.
2. the g7-knight will come on f6 to support g6-g5-g4 and to keep a white piece busy defending the e4-pawn
3. the queen will come on c8 supporting the action on the kingside and defending the a6- and a8- squares against the white queen.

30...f4 31.Nf1 Bd8 32.Bd1 Bb6 33.Be1 Ne8 34.N1h2 Nf6 35.Nd2 Qc8

Black has his pieces in their best positions and is now ready for advancing the pawns on the kingside (the centre is closed, so the attacks on flanks should start with the pawns).

White didn't want to wait calmly Black's attack and played:

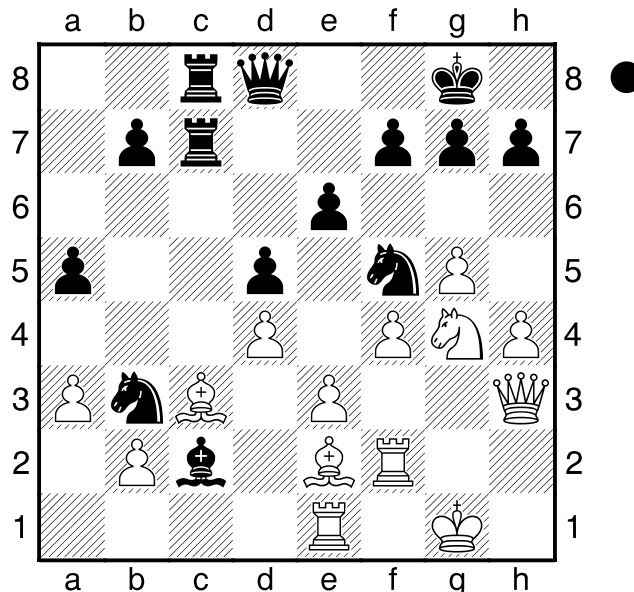
36.Ng4

[36.Qc2 g5 37.Be2 h5 38.Qa2 g4 39.hxg4 hxg4 40.Kh1 Ng5 41.Bd1 Kg7]

36...Nxg4 37.Bxg4 Bxg4 38.hxg4 Qxg4 39.Qa6 Qe2 40.Nf3 Bd8 41.Qxb5 g5 42.Qd7 h5 43.b5 g4 44.b6 gxf3 45.b7 Qxe1+ 46.Kh2 Qxf2 47.Qh3 Qg3+

0-1 Mekhitarian,K (2425)-Bruzon,L (2648)/Ayamonte ESP 2006

Exercise 6



Black is to move.

Make the TO DO list for Black (and find the first move).

Solution:

First of all, we have to see that White threatens to play h5-h6xg7 and Nf6 ...which is a very real threat.

So, in his TO DO list, Black has to parry this plan.

Also, Black's major pieces are ready for a strong counter-play using the c-file, but this is blocked by the c3-bishop - so a second element of the TO DO list is to eliminate that bishop by exchange or even by a sacrifice. The elimination of the c3-bishop will also free the out-of-play knight from b3.

The next knight-maneuver answers both requests:

27...Nd6! 28.Bf3 with idea to exchange the knight on e4

[White can try to attack ignoring Black's threats and sacrificing the exchange:

28.h5 Ne4 29.h6 (29.Rh2 Nxc3 30.bxc3 Rxc3 31.h6 g6 32.Nf6+ Kh8) 29...Nxf2 30.Kxf2 f5 31.gxf6 gxf6 32.Qh4 Rf7 33.Rg1 Kh8 and Black defends without problems]

28...Be4! 29.h5 Bxf3 30.Rxf3 Ne4 31.h6 Rxc3

Black has to not forget that his knight has 2 roles on e4 and the first is to protect against white knight's arrival on f6.

[Too dangerous is:

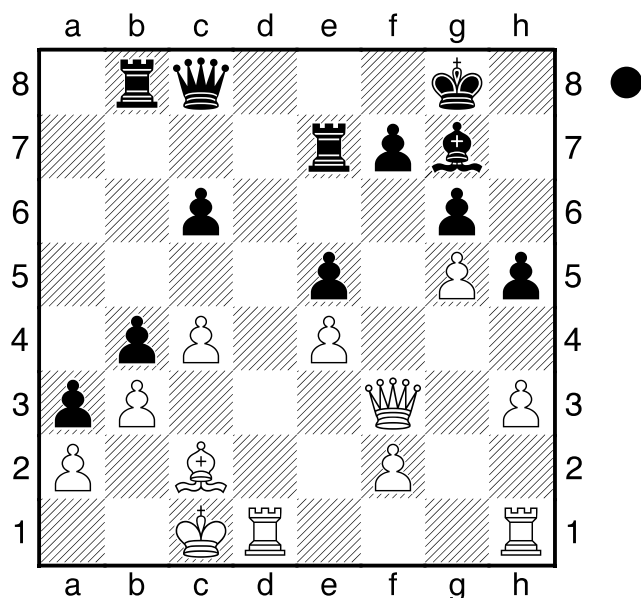
31...Nxc3?! 32.bxc3 Rxc3 (32...g6)
33.hxg7 Nd2 34.Nf6+ and White wins.]

32.bxc3 Nbd2

By eliminating the c3-bishop, Black freed up his knight which was out-of-play until now. The black knights will regain the exchange and Black successfully opened the queenside without material loss.

33.Rg3 Nxc3 34.Qxc3 Ne4 35.Qh3 Rxc3

Exercise 7



Black is to move.

Evaluate the position and give the TO DO list for Black.

Solution:

A semi-closed position with bishops of opposite colors and an open file.

Both bishops are blocked by their own pawns and the open file seems to bring no success to any of the players (the rooks will be simply

exchanged).

However, the position of a single pawn makes a huge difference: Black has his pawn on c6, not on c5. Let's see why this is so good for Black:

- the normal outpost for White on the d-file, the d5-square, is controlled by Black (otherwise, White could play Rd1-d5);
- the black bishop can come on the outpost for Black by using the free c5-square: Bg7-f8-c5-d4.

So, Black's TO DO list is:

- bring the bishop on d4
- avoid the exchanges of the rooks (Black wants forces to attack, not a drawish endgame with unlike bishops)
- open the d-file or other file for the black rooks at the best moment.

1...Re6 2.Rd3 Bf8 3.Rhd1 Bc5 4.Qe2 Bd4 5.Kb1 c5

The position of the bishop is now strengthened to avoid complications that White could provoke by sacrificing a rook on d4.

The black bishop is in front of his pawns, while the white bishop is behind his blocked pawns.

6.Rf3 Qd8 7.h4 Qe7 8.Rg1 Rf8 9.Bd3 Kh7 10.Rfg3 Rd6 11.R1g2 f6!

Black decided to open the f-file for his rooks. The difference of quality between the 2 bishops is decisive. In fact, Black is as having a piece more.

12.gxf6 Rxf6 13.Rg5 Qf7 14.Bc2 Rf4 15.Rh2 Rdf6 16.Rgg2 Bxf2 and Black won easily.

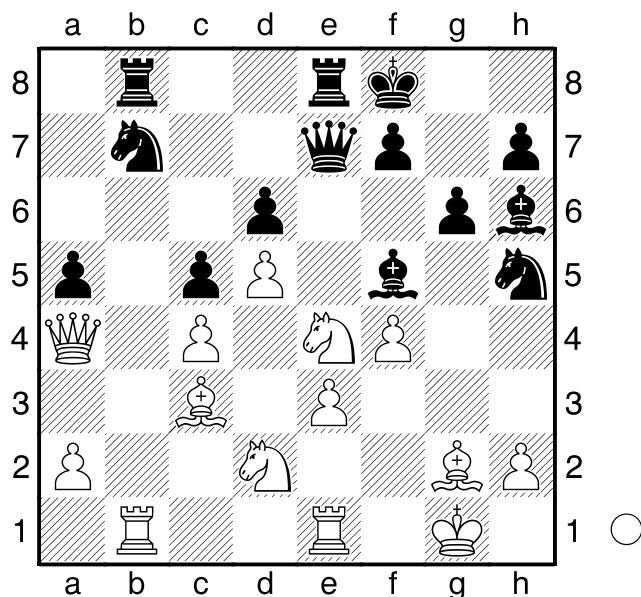
(0-1 Vilner,Y-Romanovsky,P/Moscow 1924/URS-ch)

Exercise 8

(Diagram)

White is to move.

Find the best move for White.



Solution:

A complicated position, with all the pieces and 7 pawns on the board.

The weak points in the Black's position are the a5-pawn, the b7-knight, the d6-pawn and the f6-square. On the other hand, Black creates a strong pressure on the e4-square and keeps the white pieces busy with its defense.

25.Rb6!

White finds a way to improve the position of his pieces creating problems to Black.

Besides leaving the b1-square, the white rook attacks the d6-pawn and prepares Qb3 (the queen comes behind the rook!). After doubling his major pieces on the open file, White will threat Nxd6.

Black will be forced to move his rook from b8 and to defend his knight with Bc8, thus weakening the pressure against e4. In the end, White's minor pieces will become free.

Rbd8 26.Qb3 Bc8

White has obtained a lot from the open b-file: the black pieces are now busy to defend the b7-knight and d6-pawn. White will improve now the position of his minor pieces:

27.Nf1 Rd7?

[27...f5 28.Nf2! with idea Ng3 and e3-e4]

28.Nfg3 Nxc3 29.hxc3 Bg7 30.Qb2!

White exploits the weakness of the f6-square.

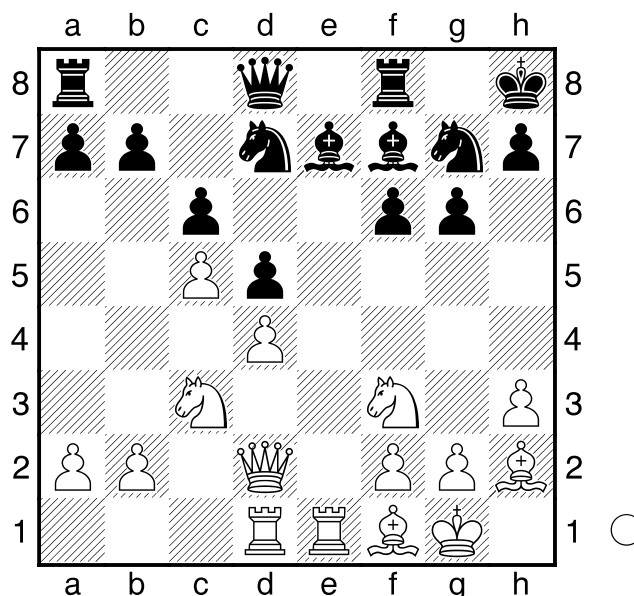
f5

[30...Bxc3 31.Qxc3 Qd8 32.Reb1+-]

31.Bxg7+ Qxg7 32.Nf6

1-0 Portisch,L - Petrosian,T/Santa Monica 1966

Exercise 9



White is to move.

Where should White play in this position? Find the best move.

Solution:

White has space advantage on the queenside and also his both bishops are orientated on that side.

The centre is semi-closed and White has a good control over the centre, so:

18.b4!

with the intention b4-b5xc6 and Rb1.

b5

Black tries to close the queenside, but White is still able to open the a-file. It is now instructive to follow White's play to get the control of this file.

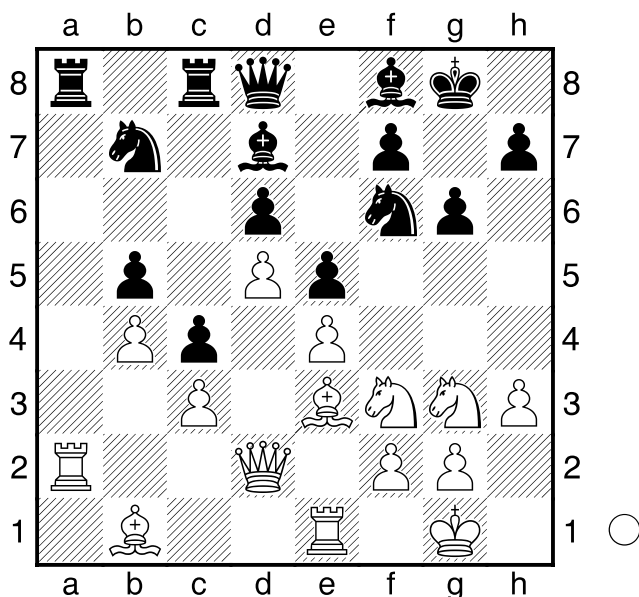
19.a4!

[19.cxb6 Nxb6 is not at all clear]

19...a6 20.axb5 axb5 21.Ra1 Re8 22.Ra2
Qc8 23.Rea1 Qb7 24.Qb2 Ne6 25.Ra3 Nc7
26.Ra5 Rxa5 27.Rxa5 Na6 28.Qa3 Nab8
29.Ra7 Qc8 30.Nxb5 cxb5 31.Bxb5 Kg7
32.Bxb8 Nxb8 33.Bxe8 Qxe8 34.b5 Bf8
35.Qe3 Qc8 36.Qf4

1-0 Yudovich,M-Klaman,K/Leningrad 1947/URS-
ch

Exercise 10



White is to move.

Can White benefit of the open a-file? How?

Solution:

Black threatens 24...Rxa2 25.Bxa2 Ra8 26.Ra1
Ra6 followed by Qa8 with simplifications.

In this position, White's winning plan is to attack
on the queenside and, of course, any exchange
of major pieces, especially of the queens, is not
wanted.

24.Ba7!

White not only avoids the exchanges, but he
also gets the time and space to double his rooks
behind the blockading piece on a7. When White
is ready, he can retreat the bishop from a7 with
attack on a8, forcing Black to cede the open a-
file. This idea made Black to bring his f6-knight

which defended the king on c7 to protect the
rook:

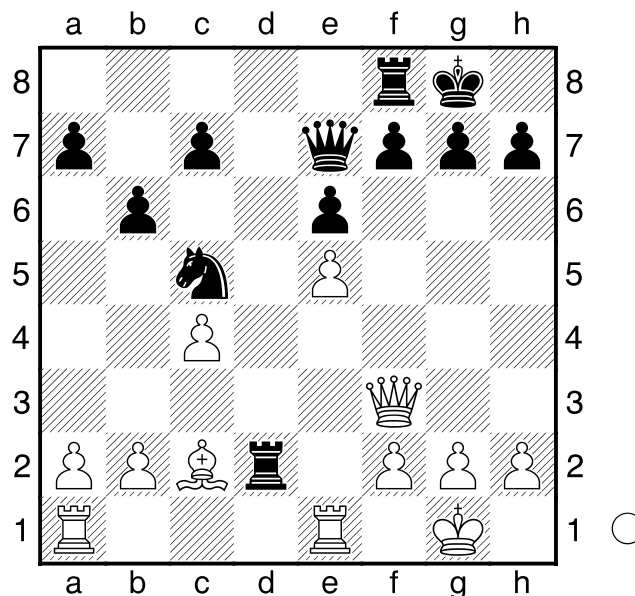
Ne8 25.Bc2 Nc7 26.Rea1 Qe7 27.Bb1

The opening of the a-file wouldn't bring White
nothing now, but Black has to stay alert and with
the knight on c7. White continues now to play
on the kingside:

**Be8 28.Ne2 Nd8 29.Nh2 Bg7 30.f4 f6
31.f5 g5 32.Bc2 Bf7 33.Ng3 Nb7 34.Bd1
h6 35.Bh5 Qe8 36.Qd1 Nd8 37.Ra3 Kf8
38.R1a2 Kg8 39.Ng4 Kf8 40.Ne3 Kg8
41.Bxf7+ Nxf7 42.Qh5 Nd8 43.Qg6 Kf8
44.Nh5**

1-0 Karpov,A (2700)-Unzicker,W (2535)/Nice
1974

Exercise 11



White is to move.

What would you play?

Solution:

18.Re2

This move is almost forced or otherwise Black
gets the control over the d-file.

Now, any attempt to get an advantage from the
open file is refuted:

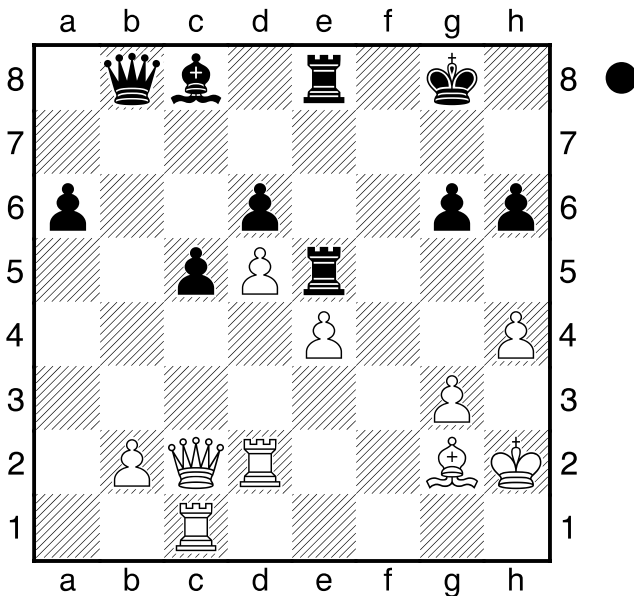
Rfd8

[18...Qd7 19.b4 Na6 20.a3 Qd4 21.Rb1 followed by Rxd2, Qe4 and Rd1]

19.b4 Na6 20.Rxd2 Rxd2 21.Qa8+ Rd8

[21...Qd8 22.Qxd8+ Rxd8 23.a3 Rd2 24.Rd1!]

22.Qe4 g6 23.a3 Qd7 24.g3 followed by Rd1

Exercise 12

Black is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best continuation.

Solution:

In this position, the open f-file is of first importance - which is very normal if you think that there are 6 major pieces and 2 minor pieces on a board with only one open file.

Now, the question is: which of the 2 players can get the control over this file? It is very interesting that even if Black is to move and can play Rf8 right now, White is the one who can get the control of the file. White has his pieces very well arranged: a rook can come on f2, the other on f1 and the queen protects the f2-square while Black cannot move his e5-rook on f5.

Moreover, there is a square on the f-file which is weak and critical for Black: the f6-square: if a white rook arrives on f6, 3 pawns and the black

king will be in danger.

So, after this evaluation, it seems that Black is in big trouble and has to look for a way to protect the vulnerable squares on the f-file: f6 and f7.

31...Bd7!

Black makes room for the queen to come on d8 to protect the f6-square.

In addition, the bishop can come on b5, not allowing White to double his rooks on the f-file.

[In the game, Black made a careless move and lost quickly:

31...Rf8 32.Rf2 Qb7 33.Rcf1 Ree8

34.Rf6+-

Game: Karpov,A (2674)-Istratescu,A (2617)/ Bucharest 2005, 1-0]

32.Rf2

[If White tries to use the f1-square now:

32.Rf1 Qd8 33.Rf4 (33.Rdf2 Bb5) 33...g5 34.hxg5 hxg5 35.Rf1 Bb5∞]

32...Qd8

Black defends the f6-square and threatens to play Bb5. Also, Black has the possibility to play g6-g5 attacking a white rook on f4. So, in fact, White has no good squares for his rooks on the f-file.

33.Qd2

[33.Rcf1 Bb5]

33...g5 34.hxg5 Rxcg5 with chances for both sides.

Exercise 13

(Diagram)

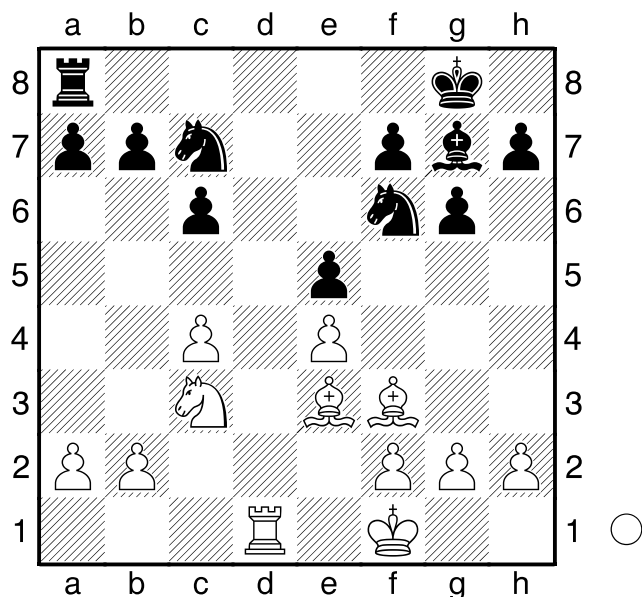
White is to move.

Find the best continuation.

Solution:

White has the bishop-pair and also wants to enter the 7th rank.

So, his logical reaction is to advance the pawns



and to chase away the black knights:

15.g4 h6 16.h4 Ne6 17.Kg2

with the idea Kg2-g3 and g4-g5. With the king on g3, White can defend the pawn after Nf6-h7 with Kg4.

[In the game, White played directly:

17.g5 hxg5 18.hxg5 Nh7 19.Rd7 Nhxg5 20.Bg4

Karpov,A (2692)-Seminara,J (2326)/Buenos Aires 2001]

Exercise 14

(Diagram)

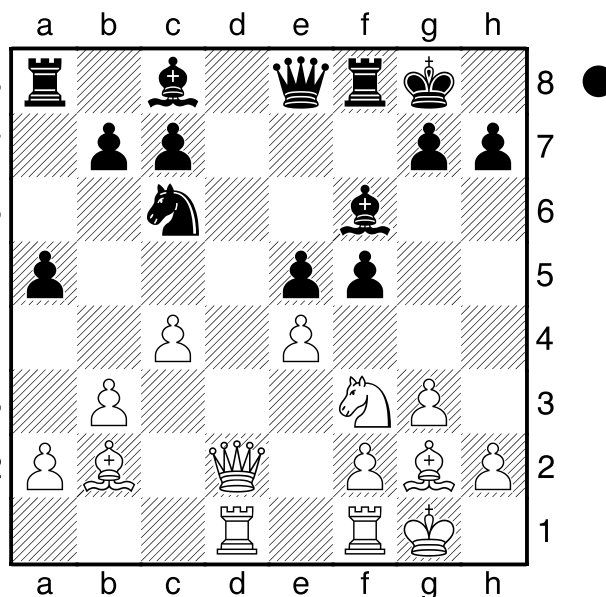
Black is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best move for Black.

Solution:

Black's position is not bad, but White creates a strong pressure in the centre.

Moreover, Black is not completely developed, so he needs to find a way to get the a8-rook into play as quickly as possible (after Rf1-e1, White will be ready for active operations and a rook more into play will be decisive).



15...a4!

The only way to give an active role to the a8-rook is to open the file where he is now placed. The c8-bishop will be excellently placed if the rook won't stay blocked behind.

[Black's try to develop his rook on d8 doesn't look to good:

15...Be6 16.exf5 Bxf5 (16...Rd8 17.Qc2) 17.Qd5+ Kh8 18.Qb5]

16.Rfe1 axb3 17.axb3 Ra2

Exercise 15

(Diagram)

White is to move.

Find the best continuation for White, give variations and evaluate.

Solution:

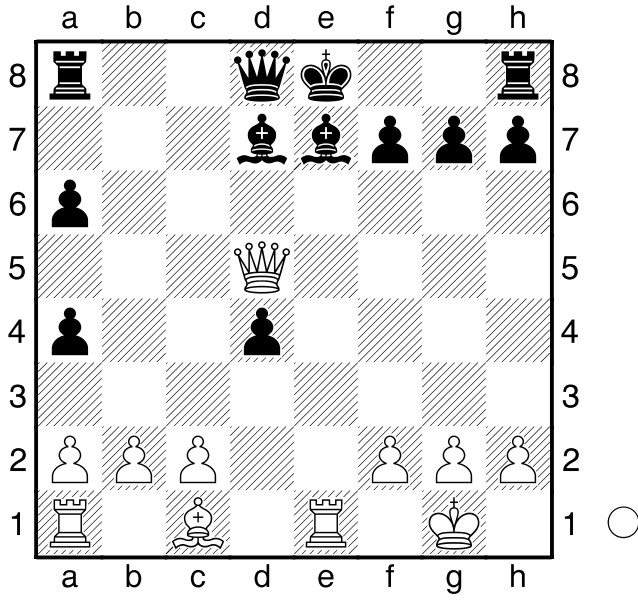
16.Rxe7+! Kxe7

[16...Qxe7 17.Qxa8+ Qd8 18.Qxa6]

17.Bg5+ f6 18.Re1+ Kf8 19.Bf4

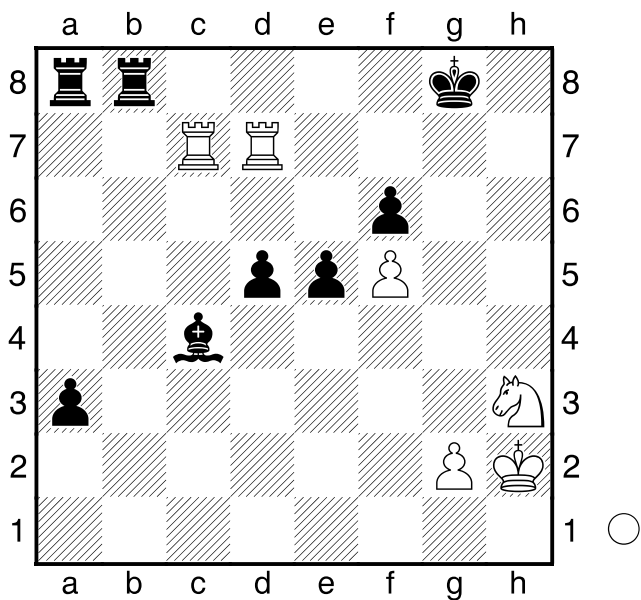
Black is a rook up, but both his rooks are inactive. White has a winning attack.

g5 20.Bd6+ Kg7 21.Re7+ Kh6



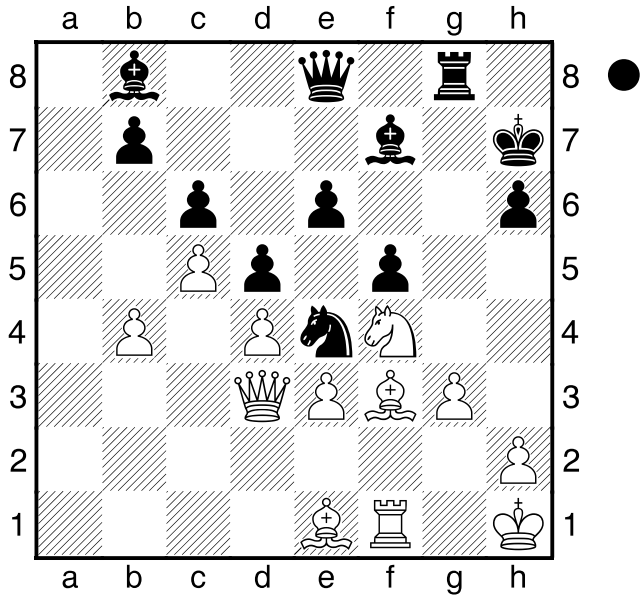
[21...Qxe7 22.Bxe7 Bb5 23.Qxd4+-]
22.h4 Qg8 23.Qxd4 Bf5 24.g4 Bxg4
 [24...gxh4 25.Qxf6+ Bg6 26.Bf4#]
25.Qxg4±

Exercise 1



White is to move.
Find the best continuation for White.

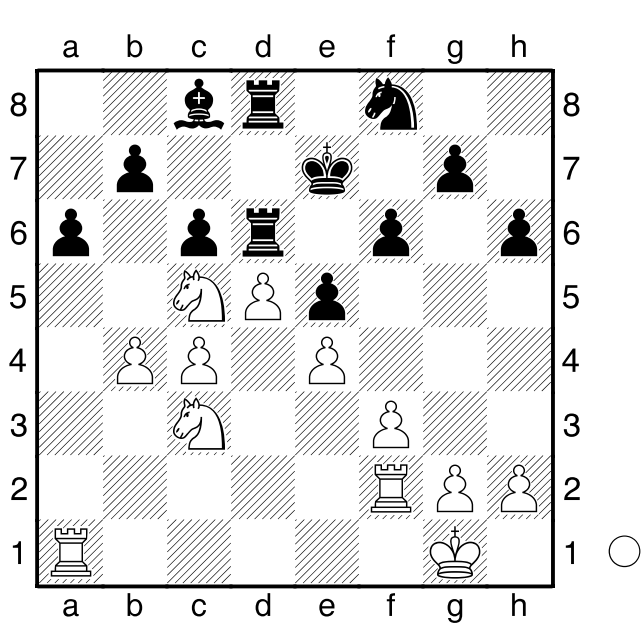
Exercise 2



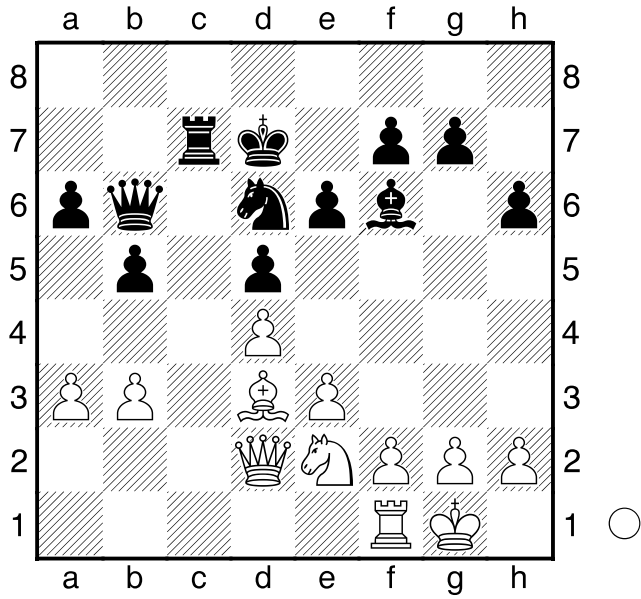
Black is to move. Find the best continuation.

Exercise 3

White is to move.
His position is much better. Find a way to improve the position even more.

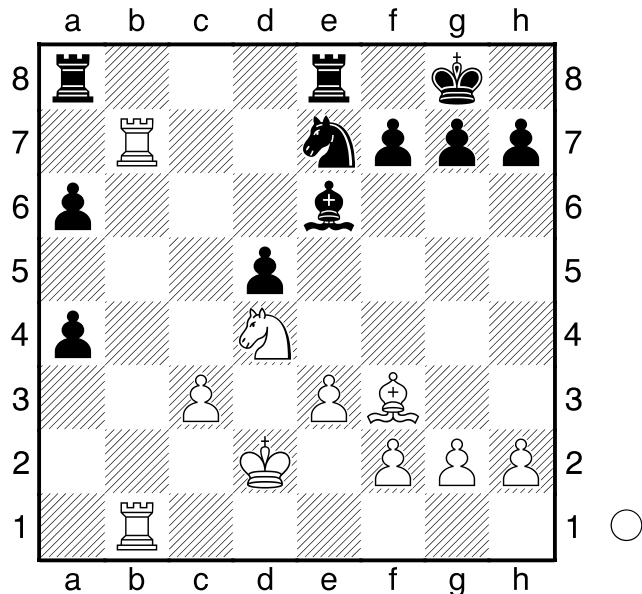


Exercise 4



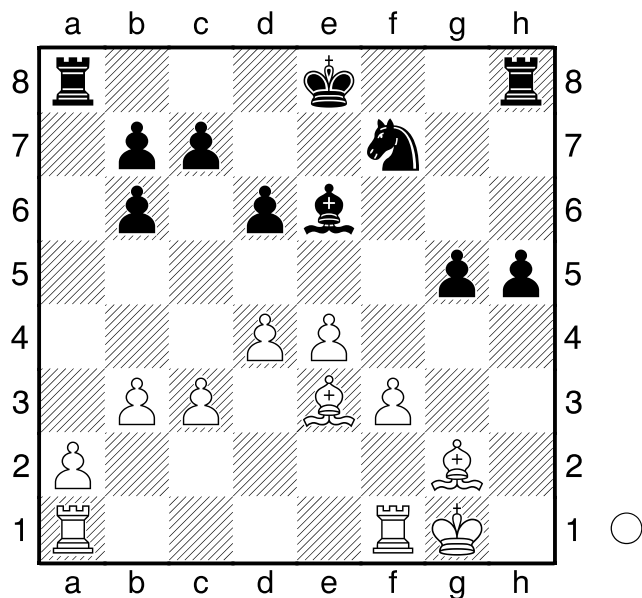
White is to move.
Find a way to improve the position of white pieces. Where do you want them? How can you do that?

Exercise 5



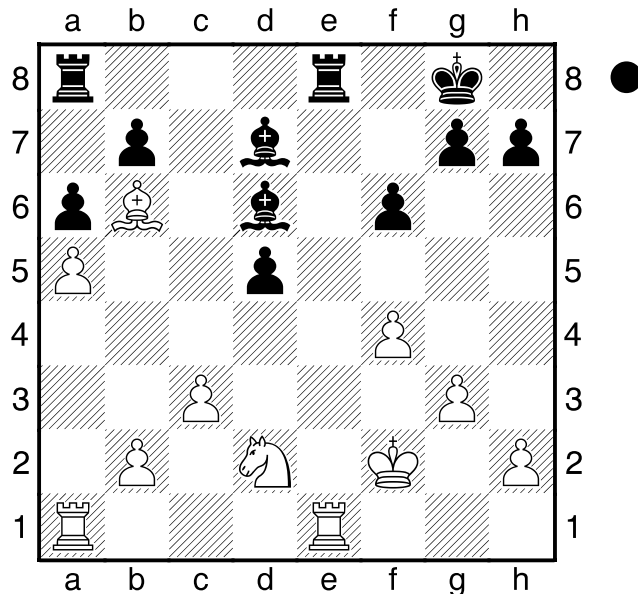
White is to move. Find the best continuation.

Exercise 6



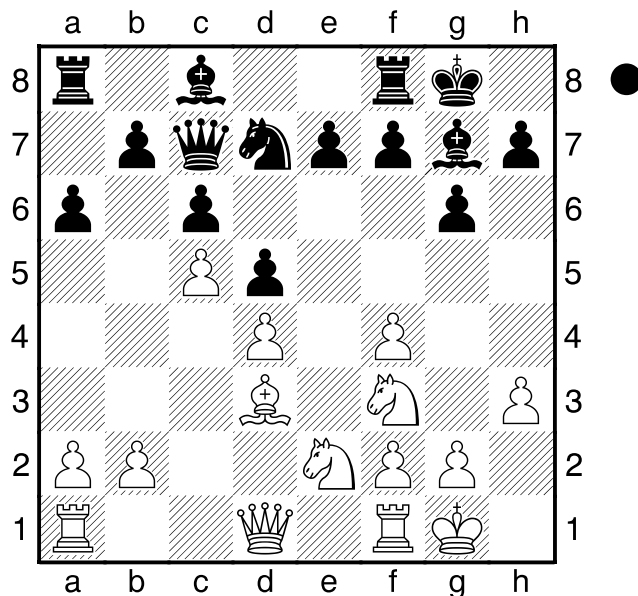
White is to move.
Find the best continuation.

Exercise 7



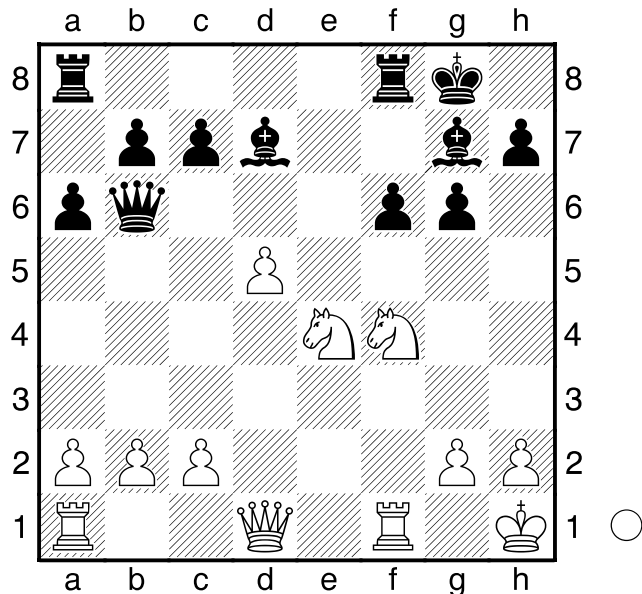
Black is to move.
Find the best continuation for Black.

Exercise 8



Black is to move.
Find the best continuation and explain the idea of your choice.

Exercise 9



White is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best move for White. Then, find the best reply for Black to your move. Evaluate the result.

Exercise 10

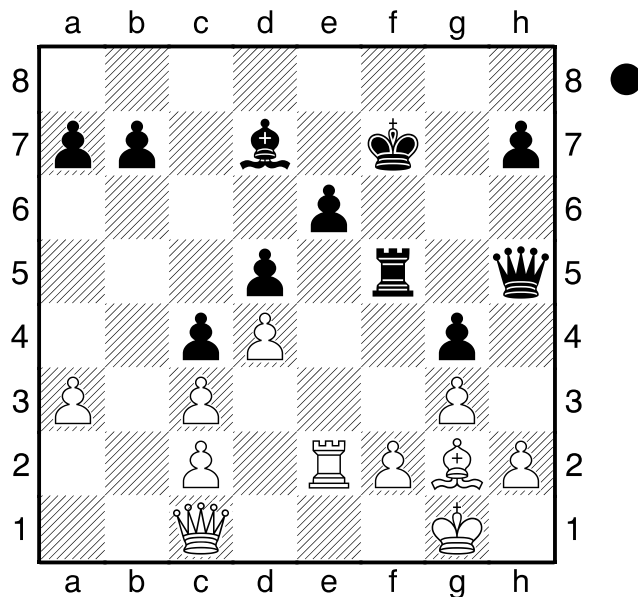
(Diagram)

Black is to move.

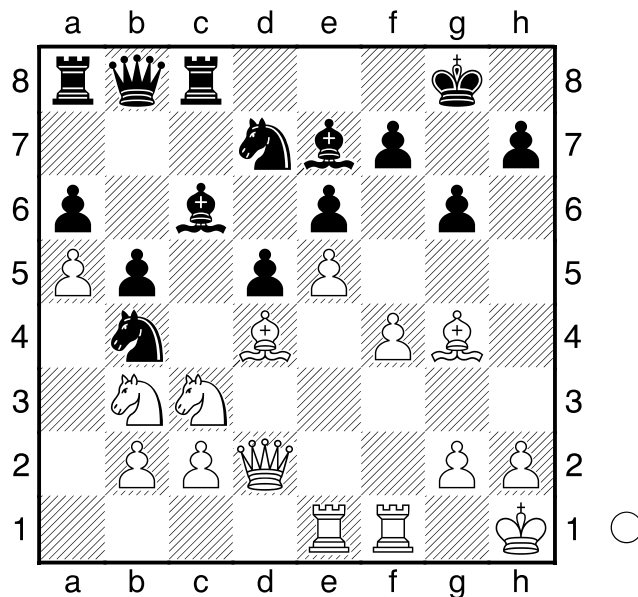
Make the position's assessment. Which of the 2 bishops on the board is stronger/better and why?

Give a plan of play for Black.

[To avoid quick mistakes, ideas like mating on h2 are not good: **31...Rf6 32.Re5**]



Exercise 11



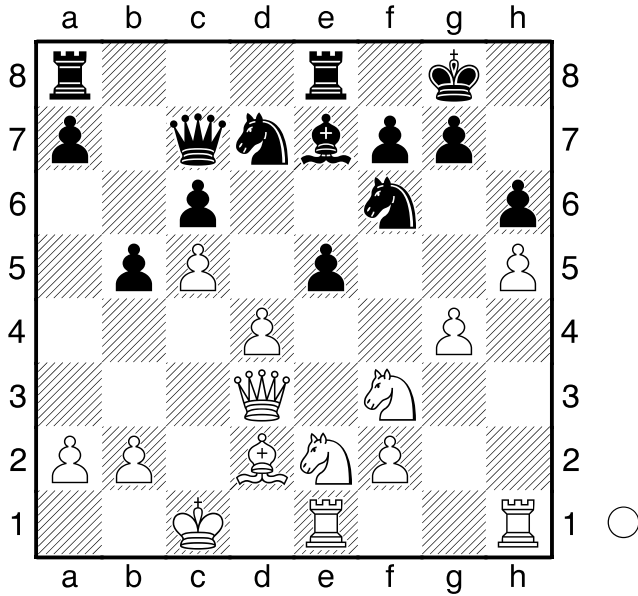
White is to move.

Find the best continuation.

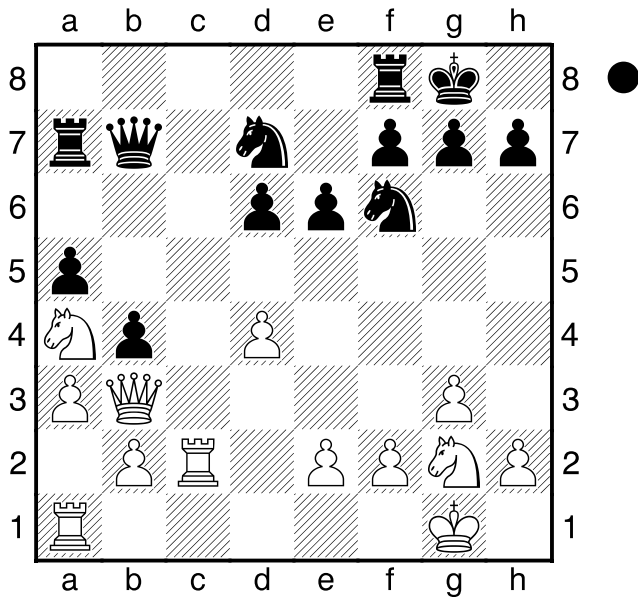
Exercise 12

White is to move.

Find the best continuation.



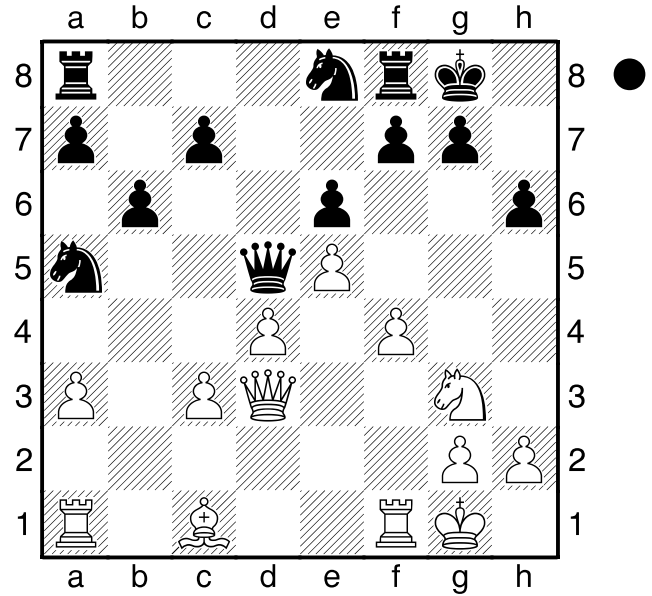
Exercise 13



Black is to move.
Find the best continuation.

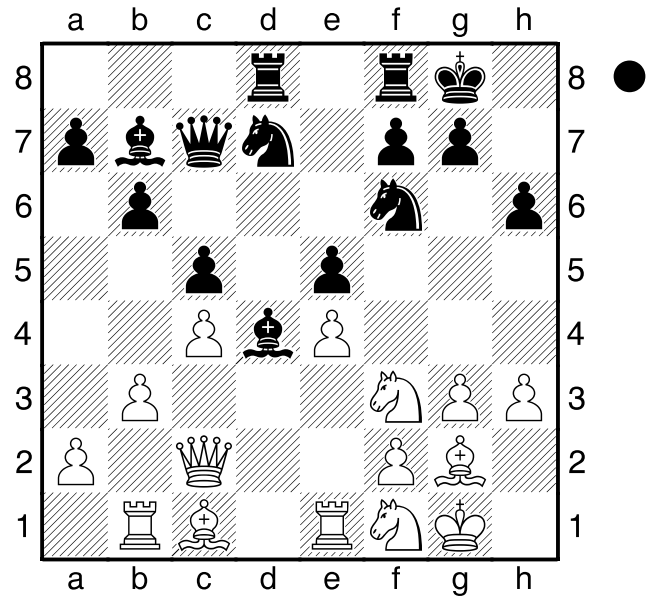
Exercise 14

Black is to move.
Compare the quality of the pieces of the 2
camps.



How can White improve the quality of his pieces
and how can Black stop that?

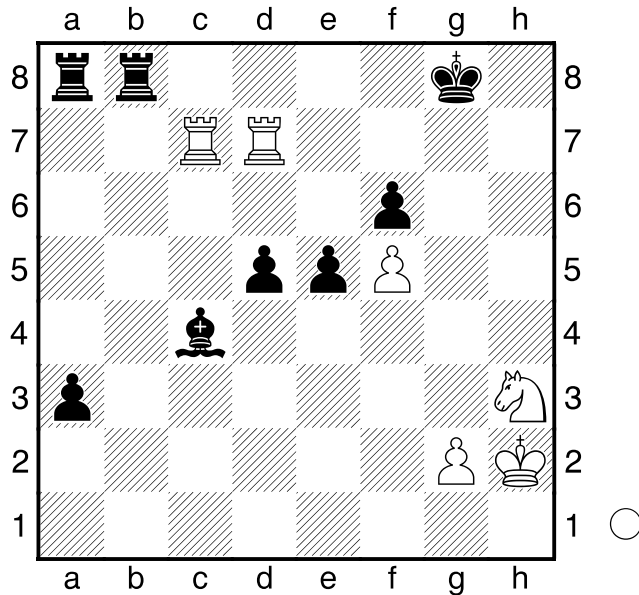
Exercise 15



Black is to move.
How can Black improve the position of his
pieces?

Exercise 1

1



White is to move.

Find the best continuation for White.

Solution:

The 2 white rooks on the 7th rank are helped by the knight or by the f5-pawn and so White wins:

1.Rg7+ Kh8 2.Rh7+ Kg8 3.Rcg7+ Kf8 4.Ng5 Rb6

[4...a2 5.Ne6+ Ke8 6.Rg8#]

[4...fxg5 5.f6 d4 6.Rh8+ Bg8 7.Rhxg8#]

5.Ne6+ Rxe6 6.fxe6 d4

[6...Re8 7.e7+ Rxe7 8.Rxe7 a2 9.Ra7 d4 10.Ra8#]

7.e7+ Ke8 8.Rh8+ Kd7 9.e8Q+

Exercise 2

(Diagram)

Black is to move. Find the best continuation.

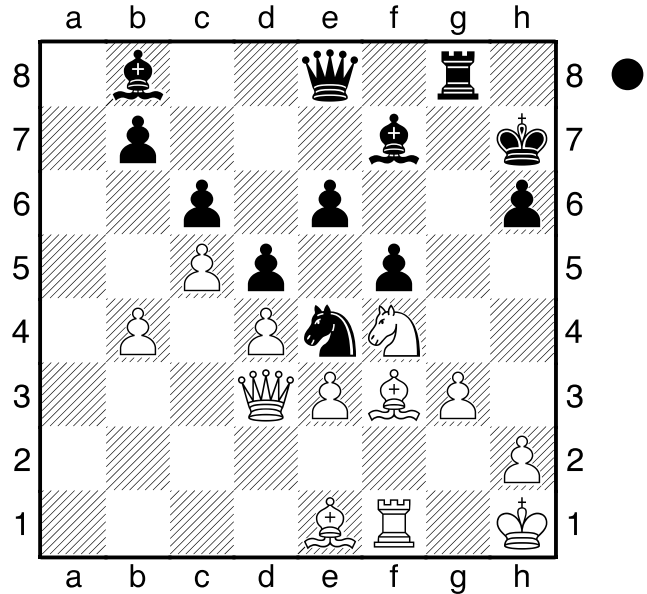
Solution:

Here, both players have a good bishop, a bad bishop and a strong knight.

By the following exchanges, Black will remain with his (good) knight against the white bad bishop:

1...Bxf4! 2.exf4

The good bishop was exchanged with the white knight, but now another excellent trade is



possible:

Bh5 3.Qa3

[White cannot avoid the exchange of the bishops:

3.Bxe4 dxe4 4.Qe3 Bf3+ 5.Kg1 h5]
[3.Bg2 Qa8 4.Qc2 Qa6]

3...Bxf3+ 4.Rxf3

Black remained with an excellent knight that White cannot exchange or chase away. Black needs now to create a weakness in White's camp that the knight to attack - and that weakness can be made after h6-h5-h4xg3.

Rg7

[Directly 4...h5 , followed by Qg6 and h4 was very good for Black.]

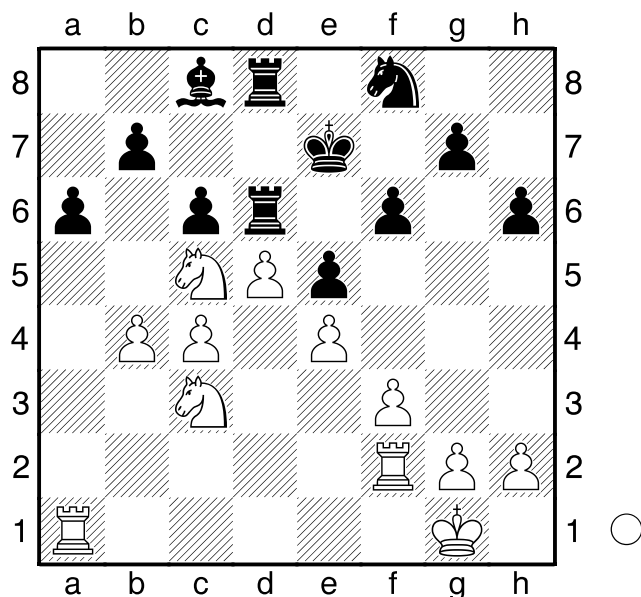
The game went:

5.Kg2 Qd8 6.Kf1 Qf6 7.Rd3 h5 8.h4 Rg8 9.Rd1 Qg7 10.Qf3 Kh6 11.Kg2 Ra8 12.Rd3 Ra2+ 13.Kf1 Ra1 14.Qg2 Qg4+- Bronstein,D-Botvinnik,M/Moscow 1951

Exercise 3

White is to move.

His position is much better. Find a way to



improve the position even more.

Solution:

A position which we all would love to get in some of our own games, but White still needs some technique in order to win:

1.Nb3!

The knight looked strong on c5, but Black defended without problems the squares attacked by the white knight. So, he clears the c5-square for the pawn and goes for a better operation base: d6.

Kf7 2.c5 R6d7 3.Na5

[3.d6? Ne6 4.Rd2 (4.Na4 Kg8 5.Nb6 Rf7) 4...g5 followed by Kg6, h6-h5, Rg7 and White is far from winning.]

3...Rc7

[3...cxd5 4.exd5 Rxd5 5.Nxd5 Rxd5 6.Nc4+-]

4.Rd1 h5 5.Rfd2 Rcd7 6.Na4 Ke8 7.Nb6 Rc7 8.Nac4 Bd7 9.Nd6+ Ke7 10.Nb5

[10.Nxb7 Rxb7 11.dxc6 would have been even stronger]

10...Rcc8

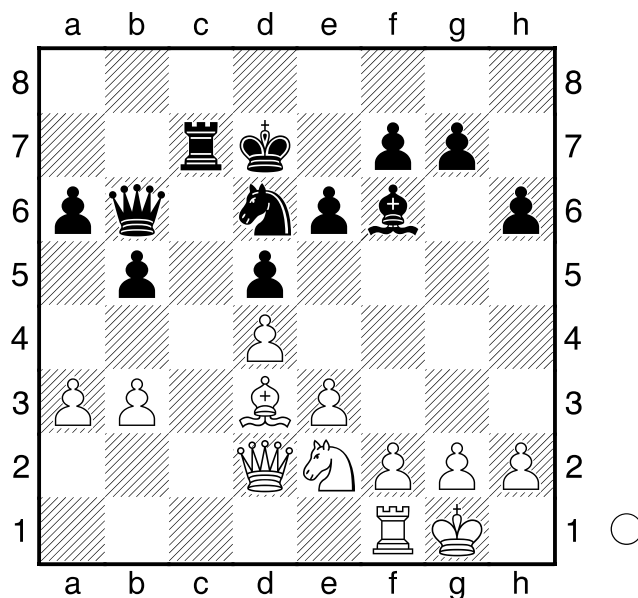
[10...axb5 11.d6+-]

11.Nxc8+ Rxc8 12.Nd6 Rb8 13.Nc4 g5 14.Nb6 Be8 15.d6+ Kd8 16.d7 Bf7 17.Rd6 Bb3 18.R1d2 Nh7 19.Nc8 h4 20.Na7

1-0 Romanovsky,P-Smorodsky,A/Moscow 1924/URS-ch

[20.Na7 Ba4 (20...Ra8 21.Rxc6 bxc6 22.Nxc6+ Kc7 23.d8Q+-) 21.Re6+-]

Exercise 4



White is to move.

Find a way to improve the position of white pieces. Where do you want them? How can you do that?

Solution:

We have a static centre, almost a symmetrical pawn structure, where White is a bit better because of his pawn on b3 which defends the c4-square (the black knight cannot occupy the outpost).

White doesn't want to come with the rook on the c-file with an early exchange of major pieces that would lead to a drawish endgame. White's outpost on the c-file is c5 and this can be occupied by the knight. Therefore, the knight should come on d3 at least threatening to go on c5.

29.Bb1! Be7 30.Nf4 Kc8 31.Qe2!?

another re-arrangement of white pieces. The queen is heading to g4 threatening Qxg7 and Nxd5.

[In case of: 31.Nd3 , White obtains only a draw after:

Ne4 32.Qb2 Qc6 33.Rc1 Qd6 34.Rxc7+=
Alekhine]

31...g6

[Better was 31...Qa5 32.Qg4 Kb7
with complications]

32.Nd3 Ne4?! 33.b4± Rc3

[Black is losing too much time to redirect his knight to the outpost on c4:
33...Nd6 34.Nc5 Nc4 35.e4!
opening the center and White is better because of the safety of the kings. The opposite color bishops and the black king on an airy positions gives White good attacking prospects.]

34.Qb2! Qc7?

[34...Rc7 35.Nc5 Nd6 (35...Nxc5 36.dxc5 Qc6 37.Qh8+ ; 35...Bxc5 36.dxc5 and Qh8 wins a pawn) 36.a4± →Alekhine]

35.Nc5 with the threat Bxe4 Bxc5 36.dxc5 Qe5 37.f4! Qg7 38.Bxe4 dxe4 39.Kf2?!⊕

[⊕39.Rf2 g5 40.Rc2+-]

39...Qf6 40.g3 g5 41.Rc1

1-0 Alekhine,A-Capablanca,J/Buenos Aires 1927

Exercise 5

(Diagram)

White is to move. Find the best continuation.

Solution:

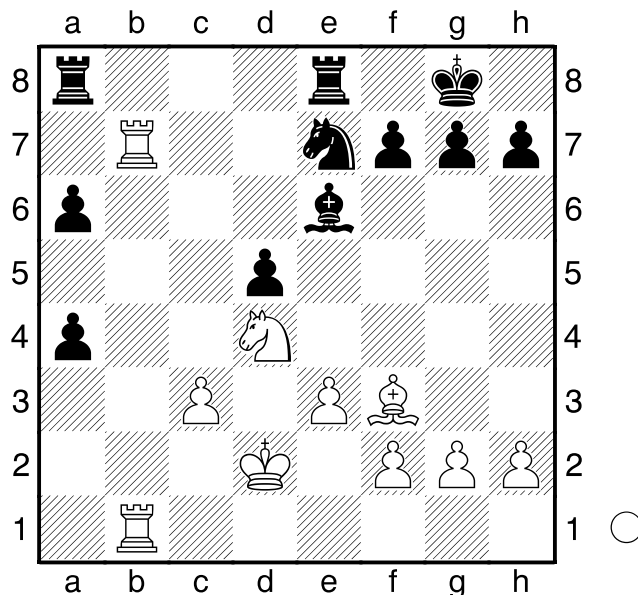
White has total control over the b-file, has an excellent knight on d4, the king is close to the centre, ready for the endgame. The worst white piece is the bishop on f3, so:

24.Bd1!

The bishop arrives on the queenside, participating to the attack with his other pieces.

Kf8

[24...a3 25.Ba4 a2 26.Ra1 Rab8 27.Ra7 Rb2+ 28.Bc2± and White wins both black a-pawns.]



25.Bxa4 Red8 26.R1b6 Bc8 27.Rc7
and Black cannot move any piece now!

g6 28.f3 h5 29.g3 Bh3 30.Rbb7 Bc8
31.Rxe7 Bxb7 32.Rxb7+-
1-0 Alekhine,A-Johner,H/Bern 1932

Exercise 6

(Diagram)

White is to move.

Find the best continuation.

Solution:

White has the bishop-pair, so he should advance the pawns in order to open the diagonals and to create a free pawn:

23.f4 gxf4

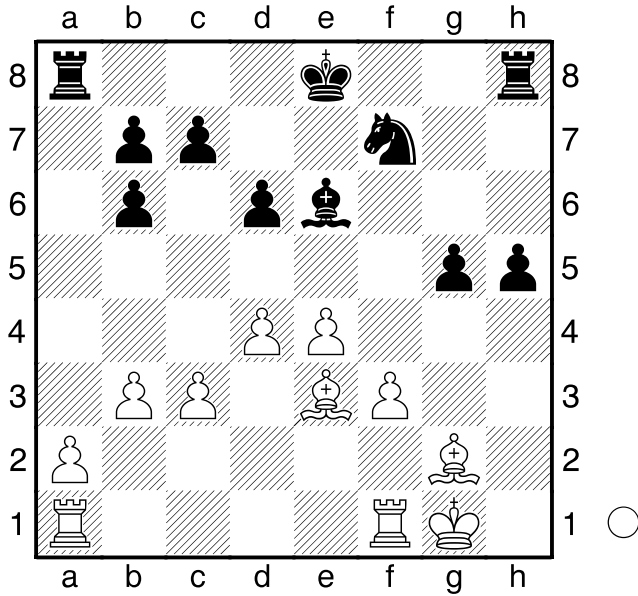
[23...h4 24.f5 Bd7 25.e5!

and Black cannot take the pawn because of:

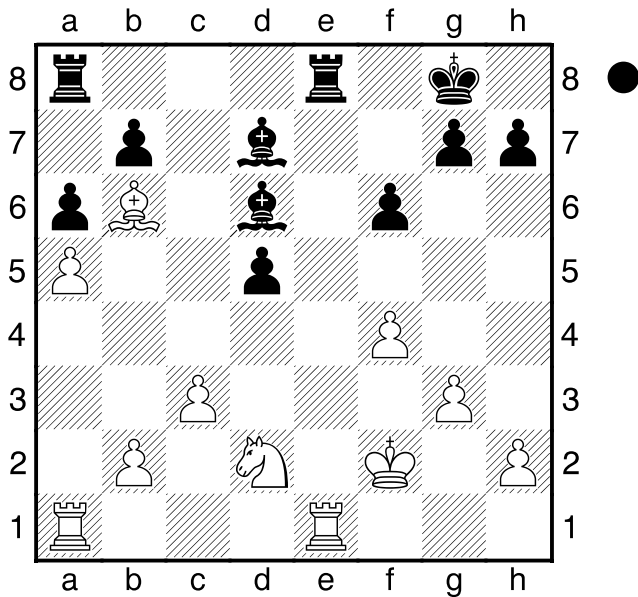
dxe5 26.dxe5 Nxe5 27.Bd4]

[23...g4 24.d5 Bc8 25.e5]

24.Bxf4± with idea c3-c4 and/or e4-e5.



Exercise 7



Black is to move.
Find the best continuation for Black.

Solution:

Black has the bishop-pair, so he should advance the pawns:

1...g5!

[In the game, Black played:

1...Kf7?! 2.Nf1 h5 3.Rxe8 Rxe8 4.Rd1 Bc6

5.Ne3 g5

This comes too late. White's knight has a good operation base on e3.

6.fxg5 fxg5 7.c4±]

2.Be3

[2.fxg5 fxg5

and Black's bishop-pair has an increased activity on the kingside.

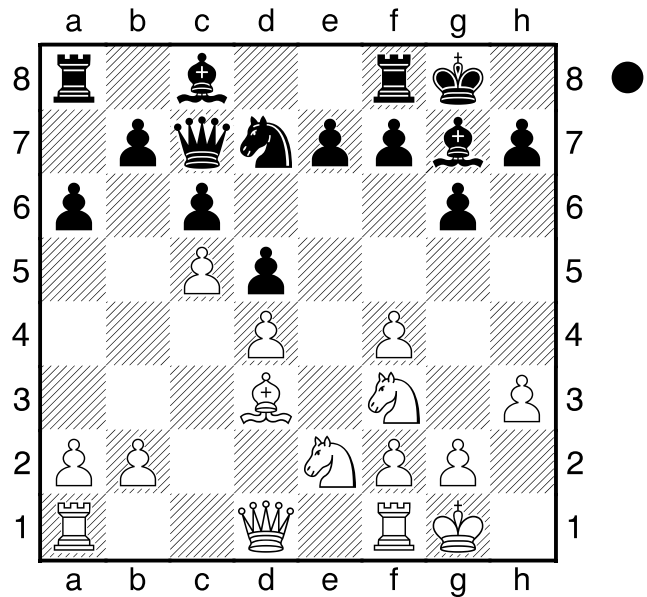
As a plan, Black can play h7-h5-h4 opening the position even more with threats against the white king and pawns.]

2...h6

and now Black has the time to improve the position of his pieces (Bf5, Rac8).

The e3-square is occupied by the bishop and the Nd2-f1-e3 maneuver is no longer possible.

Exercise 8



Black is to move.

Find the best continuation and explain the idea of your choice.

Solution:

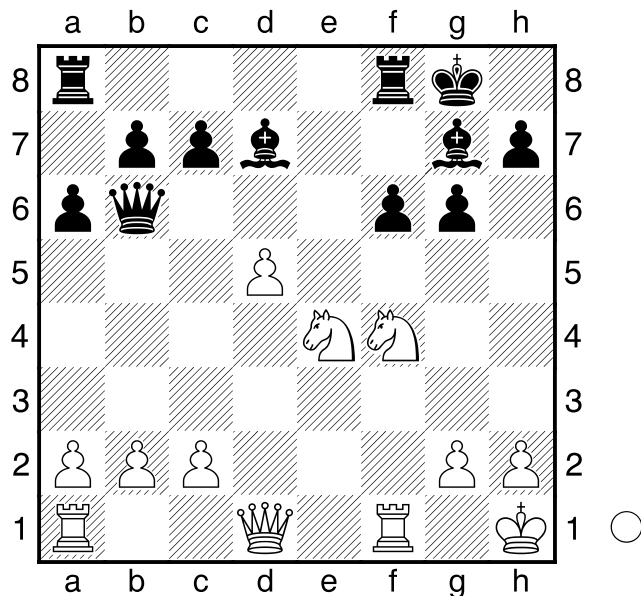
Black has the bishop-pair, so he should open up the position:

12...b6! 13.cxb6

[13.b4 a5 14.a3 axb4 15.cxb6 (15.axb4

Rxa1 16.Qxa1 bxc5 17.bxc5 Nxc5)
15...Qxb6 16.axb4 Rxa1 17.Qxa1 Qxb4]
13...Qxb6 14.Rc1 c5! 15.b3 Bb7
 and Black has a better dynamic
 Krasenkow,M (2573)-Rustemov,A (2607)/
 Panormo 2001

Exercise 9



White is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best move for White. Then, find the best reply for Black to your move. Evaluate the result.

Solution:

The position is open and Black has the bishop-pair, which for the moment is inactive though. The 2 white knights are in the centre, but their positions are not safe, especially that of the e4-knight which can be chased away with f6-f5. In conclusion, White has to play a strong move to take benefit of the temporary position of his knights now.

1.d6!

White creates a strong pawn on d6 and clears the d5-square for his knight and queen.

In this game, Black chose his moves to remain with the bishop-pair and, finally, lost. In fact, one of the advantages of the bishop pair is that can be traded easily and this is what Black

should have done by Bc6 or, in some variations, by Bf5.

c6

[Black has many other possible replies:

a) 1...Bc6 2.Nd5 Qxb2 3.Ne7+ Kh8 4.Nxc6 bxc6 5.dxc7 Qb6 6.Qd6 Rfc8 7.Nxf6 Qxc7=]

[b) 1...f5 2.Qd5+ Kh8 3.Ng5 cxd6 4.Rae1 Bf6 5.Nf7+ Kg7 6.Nxd6 Bc6 7.Ne6+ Kh8 8.Qb3=]

[c) 1...Rae8 2.Nd5 Qxb2 3.Rb1 Qe5 4.Re1 cxd6 5.Rxb7 Bb5 6.a4 Bxa4 7.Nexf6+ Bxf6 8.Rxe5 Bxe5=]

[d) 1...cxd6 is not good because of: 2.Qd5+ Kh8 3.Nxd6 Bc6 4.Nf7+ Rxf7 5.Qxf7 Qxb2 6.Ne6 f5 7.Rab1 Qf6 8.Qxg7+ Qxg7 9.Nxg7 Kxg7 10.Kg1±]

2.Nd3

Now, the white knights can get good operation bases on the queenside, supporting their free pawn.

[2.Qe2!?=]

2...f5

[It was not too late for Black to give his light-square bishop for one of the white knights:

2...Rad8! 3.Qf3 (3.Nec5? Bc8 and the d6-pawn is lost.) 3...Bf5=]

3.Nec5 Rad8 4.c4

White is threatening Na4 followed by c4-c5.

Bd4?

[After the text move, the black queen will be out of play. Black had to protect the b7-pawn and keep the d4-square free for the queen:

4...Bc8! 5.Na4 Qd4 6.c5 f4
 and Black has his bishop-pair again active.]

5.Na4 Qa7 6.c5±

Black played unconvincingly, lost time for nothing and now the position is clearly in White's favor:

- White has a free supported pawn
- good operation bases for his knights (d3, b6)
- all black pieces are passive.

The game went:

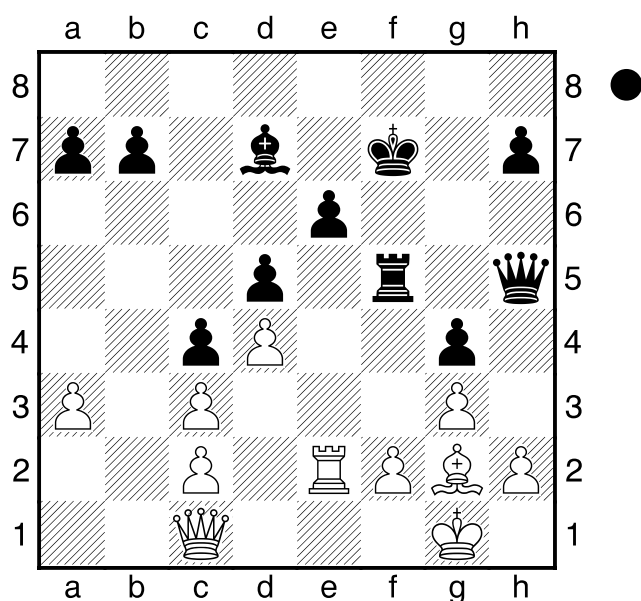
**b5 7.Qb3+ Kh8 8.Qb4 Bg7 9.Nb6 Be6
10.Rae1 Rfe8 11.b3 a5 12.Qh4 Bc3?
[12...Qf7 13.Ne5 Bxe5 14.Rxe5±]
13.Rxe6**

1-0 Vidmar,M-Spielmann,R/Karlsbad 1911

Conclusion:

Black lost the game because he wanted to keep his bishop-pair without a concrete evaluation of opponent's possibilities.

Exercise 10



Black is to move.

Make the position's assessment. Which of the 2 bishops on the board is stronger/better and why?

Give a plan of play for Black.

Solution:

The centre is closed, the pawn structure on the queenside would favor Black in an endgame (the black king can come on a4 and attack the weaknesses) and black major pieces are more active.

The black bishop is bad because it's blocked behind his pawns.... but not so bad however.

The bishop has 2 diagonals that he can use: e8-a4 and h7-b1. Black is able to bring his bishop on e4, in front of his pawns.

White's bishop is not bad because White's

pawns are not blocked on the bishop's color... but the bishop is strongly obstructed by the black pawns (remember the lesson about the piece out of play).

Remember now: when there are blocked pawn chains, it is not enough to determine if the bishop is good or bad, but you also have to determine if the bishop is obstructed or not by the opponent pawns!

Black's plan here is very interesting and reminds us about the game Petrosian - Unzicker game studied in the first month of our course:

Black will bring his king on the queenside, where he is safe (the white pawn structure doesn't permit White any break there). The next step is to open the h-file by h7-h5-h4-xg3, and, then to activate the "bad" bishop by Be8-g6-e4. After the exchange of the bishops and with the major pieces active on the h-file, White's king will be in real danger.

Now, we present the game without anymore comments as White could not do anything to deviate Black from this plan:

31...Ke7 32.Qb1 Bc6 33.Qe1 Qg6 34.h3?
White helps Black in his plans...

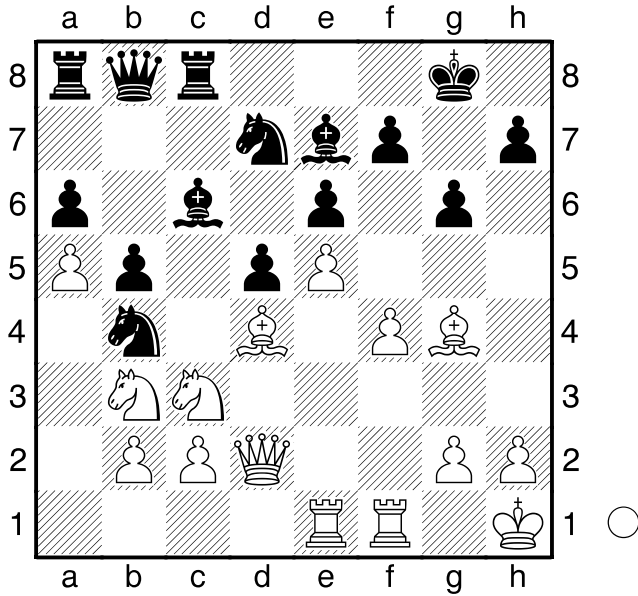
**h5 35.hxg4 hxg4 36.Re3 Kd6 37.Kf1 b6
38.Kg1 Bd7 39.Qe2 Kc7 40.Qd1 Rf6
41.Re2 Kb7 42.Qc1 Ka6 43.Qb2 Qh6
44.Qb1 Qf8 45.Qc1 Rf5 46.Qb2 Qf6 47.Qb1
Be8 48.Qe1 Bf7 49.Qb1 Qe7 50.Qb2 Qd6
51.Re1 Rh5 52.Re2 Bg6 53.Re1 Rh8
54.Re5 Qd7 55.Kf1 Bf5 56.Re1 Qh7 57.Re2
Qh6 58.Re3 Rh7 59.Re5 Rf7 60.Re2 Be4!
61.Bxe4 dxe4 62.Ke1 Qh1+ 63.Kd2 e3+
0-1 Ljubojevic,L (2615)-Beliavsky,A (2600)/
Tilburg 1984**

Exercise 11

White is to move.

Find the best continuation.

Solution:



The position of the black king is weakened by the advanced g-pawn and by the absence of the f6-knight.

Black can bring only 2 pieces to defend the king: the d7-knight and the e7-bishop.

So, White opens the lines for his major pieces, especially freeing the queen's way to come in attack:

20.f5! gxf5

[20...exf5 21.e6+-]

21.Bxf5 Nf8

[21...exf5 22.e6+-]

22.Qh6 Ng6

[22...exf5 23.e6 f6 24.Rxf5 Nxc2 25.Rg5+ Ng6 26.Rxg6+ hxc6 27.Qxg6+ Kh8 28.Bxf6+ Bxf6 29.Qxf6+ Kg8 30.Re5+-]

23.Bxg6 hxg6

[23...fxg6 24.Qh3 Bd7 25.Rf7! Kxf7 26.Qxh7+ Ke8 27.Qg8+ Bf8 28.Rf1 Kd8 29.Qxf8+ Kc7 (29...Be8 30.Bb6+ Kd7 31.Rf7+ Bxf7 32.Qxf7+ Kc6 33.Nd4#) 30.Qd6+ Kb7 31.Qb6#]

24.Re3 Bf8 25.Qh4 Bg7 26.Rh3 Be8

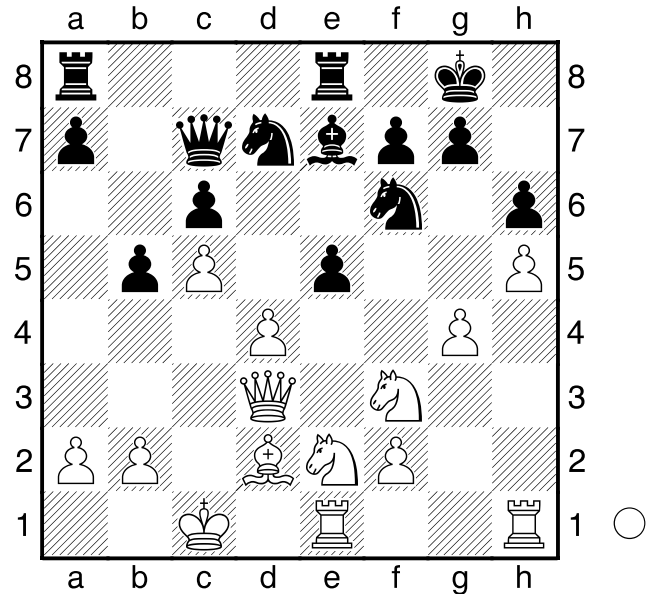
27.Qh7+ Kf8 28.Qxg6 f6

[28...Bxe5 29.Qxe6+-]

29.Rxf6+

1-0 Karpov,A (2630)-Cobo Arteaga,E (2420)/Skopje 1972

Exercise 12



White is to move.

Find the best continuation.

Solution:

Of course, Black is threatening e5-e4 and besides the tactical fork, the white queen will be blocked on the queenside.

So, White advances his queen in attack, on a secure position, supporting g4-g5 and also attacking the central key-square e5:

20.Qf5! exd4 21.g5 hxg5 22.Bxg5 Nh7 23.Bf4 Qc8 24.Nexd4 Nxc5 25.Qc2 Bf8 26.Reg1 Re4 27.Be5 f6 28.h6 fxe5 29.hxc7 Be7 30.Nxe5 Bd6 31.f4 Bxe5 32.fxe5

1-0 Anand,V (2792)-Maciejka,B (2585)/Baden Baden GER 2006

Exercise 13

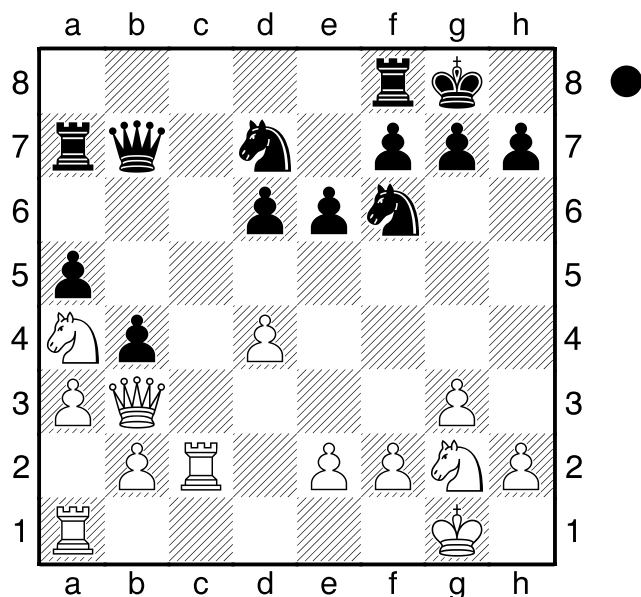
(Diagram)

Black is to move.

Find the best continuation.

Solution:

Black is improving his position by placing his queen to a central safe square:

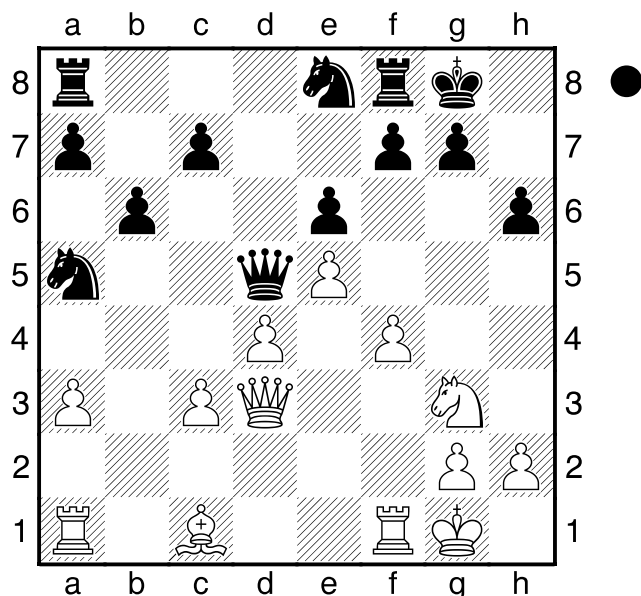


21...Qe4! 22.Rd1

and now he improves the status of his rook by threatening the position of White's queen:

Rb7

Exercise 14



Black is to move.

Compare the quality of the pieces of the 2 camps.

How can White improve the quality of his pieces and how can Black stop that?

Solution:

Qd5 > Qd3: more central, supports Nc4 blocking white pawns

Ra8 = Ra1

Rf8 < Rf1: the white rook is behind an advanced pawn, has more space and supports f4-f5

Ne8 < Ng3: the black knight has no moves, while the white knight can come on e4 or participate to an attack on the kingside

Na5 > Bc1: the black knight will come on a good operation base on c4 (or even b3), while the white bishop is a "bad" one. However, after f4-f5, the position of the bishop will be improved.

So, White intends to play f4-f5 to increase the quality of his pieces and to gain more space on the kingside.

Black's move is:

16...f5!

If White doesn't take on f6 e.p., the quality of f1-rook, knight and especially the bishop will be decreased a lot.

17.exf6 Nxf6

Let's see what changes this exchange brought:

Nf6 > Ng3: the black knight is closer to the centre and 'sees' 2 important squares: e4 and d5

Rf8 = Rf1

So, Black's move f7-f5 improved the position of 2 black pieces.

The game went:

18.Bd2 Nc4 19.Rae1 c5 20.Bc1 cxd4

21.cxd4 Rad8 22.Rd1 b5

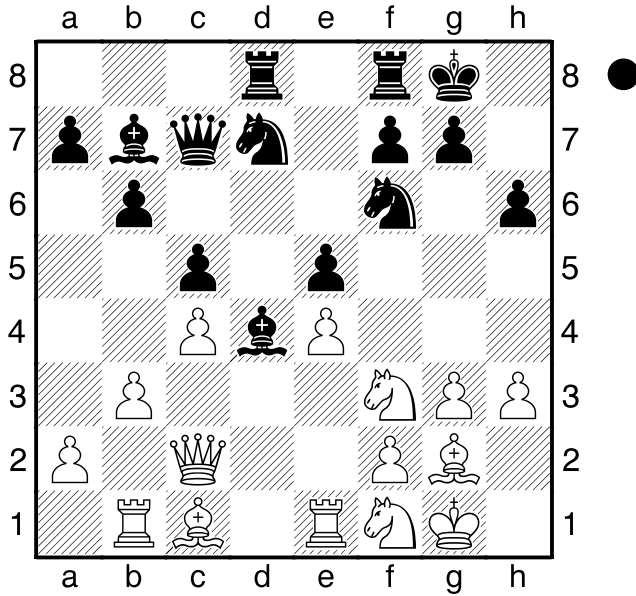
Flear, G (2457)-Karpov, A (2682)/Aix En Provence 2004

Exercise 15

(Diagram)

Black is to move.

How can Black improve the position of his pieces?



Solution:

First of all, we should see which of the black pieces is worst placed and then check which can get a better square.

The bishops are in good and active positions, the f6-knight makes pressure on e4, the d8-rook is on the open file, the other rook and the queen cannot get better positions for now.

It remains the d7-knight which doesn't have any role and, moreover, obstructs the activity of the rook.

So, the knight should change his place:

18...Nb8!

the knight comes on c6 with prospects on both b4 and d4.

19.Nh4 Nc6 20.a3 a6 21.Nf5 b5↑ 22.Bd2 b4 23.axb4

[23.a4 Ne8 with idea Nd6 24.N1e3 Bxe3 25.Bxe3 Nd4↑]

23...Nxb4 24.Bxb4 cxb4∞

Olafsson,F (2560)-Karpov,A (2690)/Tilburg 1977

The Mistake in Chess

Errare humanum est!

The mistake is an important attribute of the chess game, generally speaking, no less important than a brilliant combinational idea or a profound strategic plan. In fact, the mistake creates the favorable conditions for opponent's "hidden" resources. The game of chess will last as long as the mistakes.

There are two kinds of mistakes: of First Grade and of Second Grade.
The First Grade Mistakes are the elementary mistakes as blunders, oversights and so on.

The Second Grade Mistakes are not noted by every chess player and they can take many different forms. This kind of mistakes can be revealed even many years after the game was played. Just think at the continuous change of the opening theory when the evaluation of a variation might change after every game at top-level.
While the elementary mistakes are clear bad moves, the Second Grade Mistakes are part of the beauty of chess, a game where separation in white and black is not possible. Although subject to error, experiments in different opening system, explorations for new plans, for different ways to win or draw a game made and still make chess more and more beautiful, rich, and complex.

We will now investigate the source of the First Grade Mistakes which are tightly connected with the player's thinking process and psychology. Understanding the reasons for mistakes is the first step we need to do to eliminate them from our play.

1. Impulsive thinking

Impulsivity in thinking or impatience is a widespread habit, characterized by lack of a unitary strategical thinking or by a "move-by-move" play.
This bad habit is characteristic especially to the un-experimented players who cannot hold down their temperamental behavior during the game, especially when they think the victory is coming. Because they want to finish the game quicker, their understanding of the position becomes unclear and their tenacity starts to diminish during longer struggles than expected.

The impulsive play can have its source not only in the player's temperament but also in his/her knowledge about the position on the board. If the player doesn't understand the position they are playing, then they move guided only by the impulse, taking imprudent decisions. This leads to lack of harmony in thinking.

More or less fortunate, every player will lose his impulsive thinking in time. Unhappy experiences will make the most impulsive player to become more and more wise and cautious with his play. The correction of this behavior might not work in the case of

“coffee chess” play when the players of this type go for easy games, simple speculations, and they do not work to really improve their chess.

Close to the impulsive thinking, there is a great quality that few chess players have: flexibility. If the impulsive player takes radical decisions without a good and logical fundament, a player with a flexible thinking has the capacity to quickly change a plan of play, to adapt to the new situations on the chess board, and to take unbiased decisions. This latter player doesn’t take “blind” decisions, but he is able to react quickly in the spirit of position.

There is a series of cases, especially in very complicated position, when it is hard to say that a player took impulsive decisions or listened his intuition – the only that could work in that particular position.

Advise:

Of course, blitz games are the worst thing the players with an impulsive thinking can do. In classic chess, after you have decided about your move, you don’t play it yet. First, write it down on the scoresheet and then inspect the position again for 1-2 minutes.

2. Under-estimating opponent’s threats

Probably any player “knows” that he usually creates more threats than his opponent... Of course, this is not so. The threats created by the opponent (including strategical ideas, not only the simple tactical threats) are often not observed in time. The student must start to learn to find and evaluate the threats created by the opponent. After every opponent’s move, the first question should be “which are the threats of his move?” and, of course, “which are the consequences of his move?” (see first month lessons) – without these questions, the progress is not possible.

Many players have a good “tactical vision” and conduct very well complicated games but, all of a sudden during the game, they do grave mistakes. How many of you are not part of this category? These mistakes are nothing else than a poor evaluation of opponent’s threats. We cannot insist enough about the following method of thinking: after every of your opponent’s moves, a good player has to answer to: 1. which are his threats (then, evaluate which are real and which are not) and 2. which are the consequences of his move? All these refer not only to tactical motifs but also to strategical ones.

Advise: for the players who face big problems to see opponent’s threats or his candidate moves (see “calculation in chess” – Month 3), they should perform a special home-training from time to time:

- a) when you solve harder tactical exercises, you should turn the board and try to find the best moves for the opponent too;
- b) when you rehearse your opening repertoire, do this by looking at the board from the other side (from time to time);

c) find a partner of training (of the about same value with you) and play particular complicated positions with both sides (a game with the white pieces, then a game with the black pieces and so).

Note: A training game may not start always from the initial position. You can set positions characteristic of your opening systems, complicate positions or even endgames.

3. Losing the thread of the game, inflexible thinking

Nowadays, chess becomes more and more dynamic. Strong players prefer opening systems with a dynamic pawn structure where the normal course of the game can be easily changed. Also, the defense is more and more solid and often combined with dangerous counterplay easily changing the roles of attacker and defender. Minimal positional advantages rarely can be transformed in a victory and players have to evaluate their chances very realistically.

Therefore, concrete thinking, objectiveness in evaluation, sense of danger, and the ability to quickly change from a type of position to another become not qualities but requirements of the modern chess master.

The mistakes generated by this can be corrected only in time, by a solid program of study where the critical analysis of our own games plays a vital role.

4. Deficiencies in calculation

This thematic is very important and it was discussed in the lesson “calculation in chess” (Month 3).

However, we will add some extra observations in connection with the “mistake” generated by wrong calculation of variation:

4.1. A big source of errors is given by the **remanent mental picture** from a preceding position. Our recommendation was to try to carry out from a move to another some of already calculated lines. During a practical game, it’s no time to assess the position after every move and redo the entire analysis tree. So, the thoughts you had with a move before should be carried out, of course, taking into account the changes (consequences) of the previous moves. As this should work in most of the cases, there are situations when a move can change everything you calculated before that move. So, a remanent mental picture (either you want it or not) can harm your calculation process.

4.2. In contrast with the remanent mental picture, another source of errors is the **anticipated position**. When the player think too much only around an anticipated position (one or more moves ahead), he may forget that the current position on the board is different and that it could hide other resources or possibilities for the opponent. In this case, the attention can be altered.

4.3. Unfixing the intermediary positions in mind when calculating ahead is another source of errors and it is often incorrectly associated with a weak capability to see in advance. Many players think that they are not able to correctly see the positions after some more moves ahead. In fact, at least half of them have another problem: *impulsive thinking*.

Many students do the following psychological mistake: they try to prove their selves that they are able to calculate quickly. However, this ability will develop only in time and not over-night. So, the student is advised to keep a strict discipline when calculating branchy lines ahead.

Advise:

To improve your calculation ability, your home-training should include special sessions when you should try to imitate the conditions from practical games. Analyze complicate positions (not only simple tactical exercises - combinations) without moving the pieces and try to determine all the essential candidate moves and lines as precisely and quickly as you can. See also “calculation in chess”.

5. Playing after patterns

Learning chess strategy and the positional methods is a requirement for anyone who wants to progress. There is an enormous volume of knowledge (as plans in typical positions, opening theory, endgame theory and so on) that can greatly help the chess player during his games.

However, playing after these general patterns without a deep analysis and without calculation of variations in the concrete position, the player has no chance to improve! The chess player has to learn to think, analyze and to calculate if he wants to achieve good performance. Otherwise, the player’s thinking remains mechanical and without inner enthusiasm. Even a move that strictly follows “general rules” can be a mistake.

Advise:

A vast chess culture is not enough to bring you at the top of your possibilities. You need to harmoniously combine your knowledge with the concrete analysis and calculation of variations. Any move after patterns that you do not understand should be avoided. While you may try to find analogies (if you possess a high volume of knowledge), you should pay attention to the particularities of your position.

6. Concentration and exhaustion

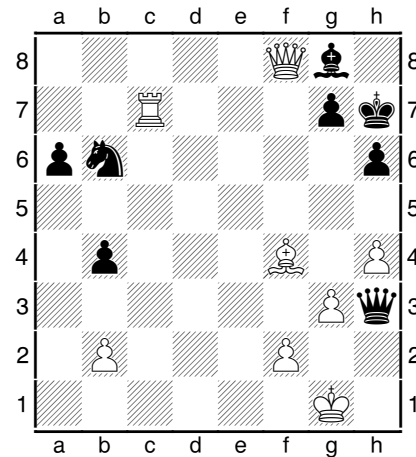
A game of chess usually requires an exceptional accuracy from the first to the last move. It is said that many good moves are necessary to win a game, but only a bad move is enough to lose it.

Among all the qualities of a chess player, the attention has a huge importance. The mistakes are generated by a weakness in concentration at a given moment.

For example, in this position between one of our trainers (!) against a weak chess amateur, White is clearly winning. Instead of resigning the game, the amateur went to the bar, came back with a good coffee and indifferently played:

1...Nd7 defending the mate from g7. Of course, this position can be won in many ways (2.Qd6, 2.Qxb4, 2.Qe7 etc.) but White quickly played the virtuous: **2.Bxh6** with the idea: 2...gxh6 3.Qe7+ or 2...Kxh6 3.Qxg8.

However, after 2...Nxf8, the game was over ...in Black's favor who enjoyed his coffee even more.



Black is to move

The reason of this mistake is clear: the master clearly outplayed the amateur and, in his mind, the game was over and his mind took a break.

Such blunders are not rare even in decisive games between the strongest players in the World. Even the former chess champion Tigran Petrosian, well known for his high accuracy, forgot his queen in a game against Bronstein.

The errors are usually not the result of negligence. The blunders or other type of grave mistakes are the result of a high degree of tension to which the human mind reacts making use of an important defensive function: resting. Overtraining and fatigue are the two most important factors which lead to this result.

The chess player has to be in a good physical condition (“Mens sana in corpore sano”) and, in addition, should try to discover and fight against his own weaknesses in thinking and behavior during the practical games.

Overtraining can do a lot of harm to the chess player as to in any other sport. It may be identified as it can result in:

- some indifference about the result of the game;
- loss of interest about the progress and development;
- loss of originality during the game.

The overtraining can be installed because of a too intense home-training, because of too many games (even blitz games) or even during a single but long game. In the latter case, during the chess game, the player should be careful with the time spent at every move. Read “calculation in chess” (Month 3).

In the first case, of home-preparation, every individual should know his own limits and the training should be planned such way to increase the knowledge while also to create a joy and desire for future real chess confrontation. The continuous preparation is a requirement for success, but everything should be done in reasonable limits.

Space advantage

Let's remember about the interaction between pieces (together with the pawns). We have 3 forms of interactions between the own pieces: sustainment, protection, and limitation and 2 forms of interaction between opponent pieces: attack and obstruction.

The limitation in the own opponent's camp is, of course, a form of bad interaction between pieces and the most "limitative" piece because of its low mobility is the pawn. *The obstruction* against opponent pieces is best made by the pawn too, because of its low quantitative value. No opponent piece from the knight to the queen like to come in the ray of action of a pawn. Also, the opponent pawns blocked by your pawns subsequently limit the mobility of their own pieces.

As a logical consequence of the above 2 forms of interactions, it means that the pawn has a very big influence on the freedom of our own and of our opponent's pieces.

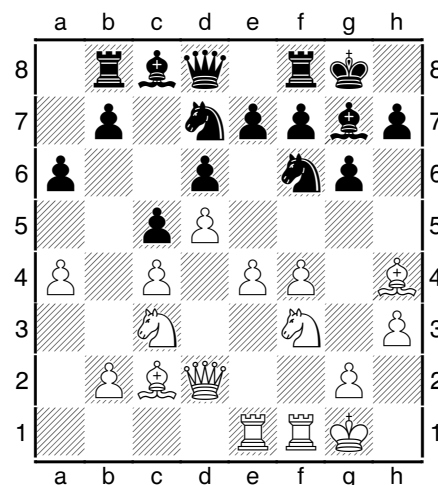
Between the 2 camps, we can imagine a demarcation line between the 4th and 5th ranks of the board. Any pawn securely advanced at the border of the camp or over the demarcation line creates **space**.

- Space for the own pieces because they are not limited any more by the presence of that pawn
- And lack of space for the opponent pieces because they are obstructed by the advanced pawn and limited by their own pawns blocked behind.

In the example position, White has more space because of his d5-, e4-, and f4-pawns. The white pieces are clearly more mobile than the black ones. White can bring his pieces almost anywhere he wants, while black pieces have a very limited choice of movement.

It is also very important to notice the limitation that the d6-pawn does to its own camp: the 2 black sides communicate only through 2 ranks (using the transitory d7- and d8-squares). Because of the pawn on d5, White can easily move a piece from a flank to another using 4 lines.

In our position, after 1.e4-e5, White gets even more space (the e4-square will be free for the knight, the b1-h7 diagonal will be free for the bishop, and the e1-rook will start to be dangerous on the e-file). In the meantime, the black knight will be chased away on a very passive position.



White is to move

The most important advantage in chess is the space advantage. Also, the space created by the pawns is usually a long-term advantage.

Gaining Space

1. As a consequence of the chosen opening

There are a lot of openings when Black consciously cedes the centre, permitting White to get place his pawns here. The idea of these openings (King's Indian Defense, Benoni, Pirc etc.) is to challenge this centre with the pieces and different kind of pawn-thrusts. This way, even if White has more space, Black has a target and therefore gets some active play.

There are also openings when Black cedes the centre and also renounces to any active play. The idea is to get a solid pawn formation, trade pieces and enter a drawish or solid endgame.

Morozevich - Yandemirov, 1998

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 (by renouncing at the e5-pawn, Black cedes the centre) 4.Nxd4 d6 5.Nc3 Nf6 6.Be2 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Be3 Bd7 (diagram)

Here, White has more space and better control over the centre because of his e4-pawn against the black d6-pawn. Black played passively but hopes in his solid pawn structure which can be perfectly defendable in an endgame.

9.Nb3!

White avoids exchanges to let Black pieces agglomerated. Because of the good control over the centre and increased mobility, White will start to get more space on the kingside by f2-f3 and g2-g4-g5.

9...Re8 10.f3 Be6 11.Qe1 Ne5 12.Rd1 c6

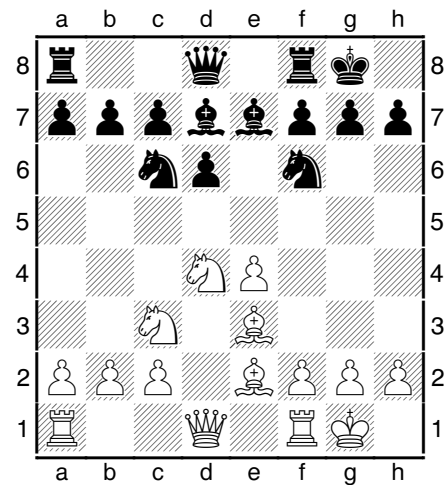
Black cannot trade pieces, so he has to liberate his pieces by other method: the challenge of the white central e4-pawn, by d6-d5.

13.Nd4 Bd7 14.g4 (diagram)

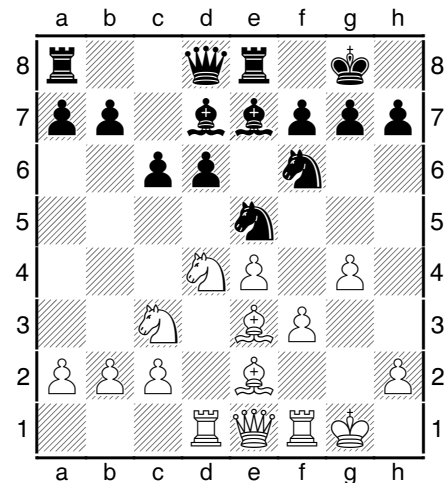
White's g-pawn (the spear-point) gets space for White on the kingside and also fights indirectly for the centre - attacking the f6-knight.

White has a big advantage because of his space, control over the centre and attacking possibilities on the kingside.

The game went: 14...d5?! 15.g5 Nxe4 16.fxe4 c5 17.Nf5 d4 18.Qg3 Nc6 19.Nh6+ 1-0



White to move



Black to move

2. By advancing the flank pawns

In the 8th game of the previous annotated games, we discussed in detail the usage of the “spear point” (the advance of the g-pawn) for getting local space advantage.

In the game Alekhine – Breyer, 1914, the position from the right resulted after the first 10 moves. The centre is closed with more space for White.

Characteristic to his style of play, Alekhine starts a pawn avalanche to get more space on the flanks too (here, on the kingside):

10.g4 Nf8 11.h4 Qd7 12.Bb5 c6 13.Be2 Bd8 14.g5 Ng8 15.0–0–0 Bb6 16.Bxb6

Here, better would have been: 16.Bc4 with the threat dxc6 and Rxd6.

If Black responds with 16...f6, the light-square bishop will be extremely strong after Bf1-h3

16...axb6 17.Qe3 Qc7 (diagram) 18.f4?!

White has a very large advantage of space on the kingside. However, the advanced pawns left the squares behind unprotected.

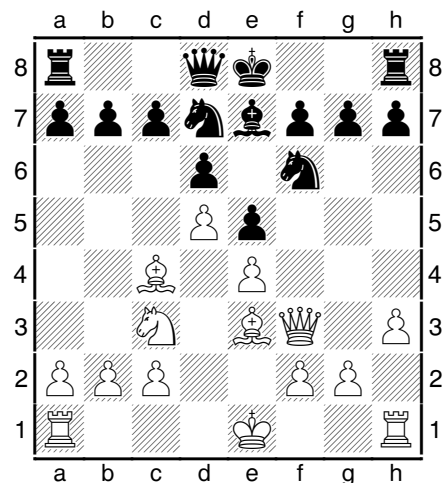
Here, better would have been 18.h5! to prevent the black knight to arrive on f4. Alekhine was however less interested in preventing opponent's counter-play and considered the advancing of his pawn mass more important than an active knight on f4.

18...Ng6 19.f5 Nf4

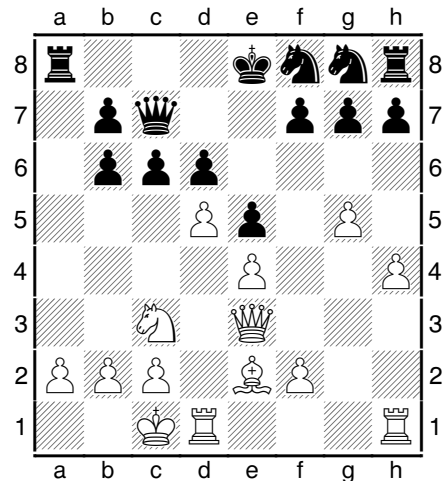
The knight takes a good square behind the white pawns – here we see the drawback of advancing the pawns: they conquer space, but leave the squares behind unprotected.

However, White is still better and managed to win.

The game went: 20.h5 h6 21.f6 gxf6 22.g6 Kf8 23.gxf7 Ne7 24.Bg4 cxd5 25.exd5 f5 26.Bf3 Qc5 27.Qe1 Kxf7 28.Rh4 Ke8 29.Kb1 b5 30.Rxf4 exf4 31.Qe6 Kd8 32.Nxb5 Qxb5 33.Qxd6+ Qd7 34.Qf6 Rh7 35.d6 Ke8 36.Re1 Ra6 37.Qg6+ Rf7 38.Bd5 Rxd6 39.Qxf7+ Kd8 40.Qf8+ Qe8 41.Qxe8+ Kxe8 42.Bxb7 Kf7 43.a4 Nd5 44.Bxd5+ Rxd5 45.b4 f3 46.a5 Rd4 47.c3 f2 48.Rf1 Rd2 49.a6 Ke6 50.b5 f4 51.Rxf2 Rxf2 52.a7 Rf1+ 53.Kb2 1–0



White to move



White to move

3. By advancing the central pawns

The position from the right resulted in the game Alekhine – Bogoljubow, 1921.

Here, White gets advantage of space in the centre by the very strong move:

12.e4!

White threatens d4-d5 creating a free pawn which forces Black to renounce at his central e5-pawn:

12...exd4 13.Nxd4

As a consequence, White remained with the central e4-pawn and, moreover, with the so-called “pawn-phalanx” formed by the e- and f- pawns.

Next, Alekhine will put in motion his f-pawn to create even more space, while he will be very careful to the control of the open d- file:

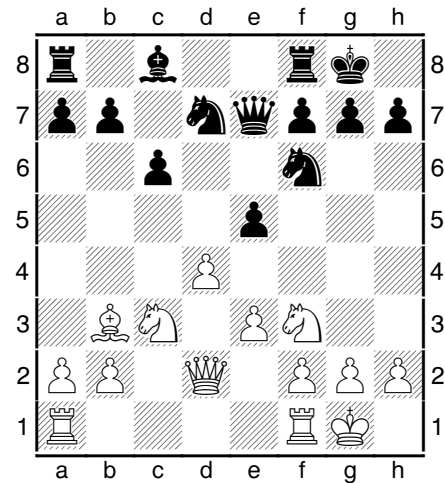
13...Nc5 14.Bc2 Rd8 15.Rad1 Bg4 16.f3 Ne6 17.Qf2 Nxd4 18.Rxd4 Be6 19.Rfd1 b6 20.h3 c5 21.R4d2 Rxd2 22.Qxd2 c4 23.f4 g6 24.Qd4 (diagram)

After 12 moves from the pawn move 12.e4, White has a dominant position. Black pieces are strongly obstructed by the white pawns.

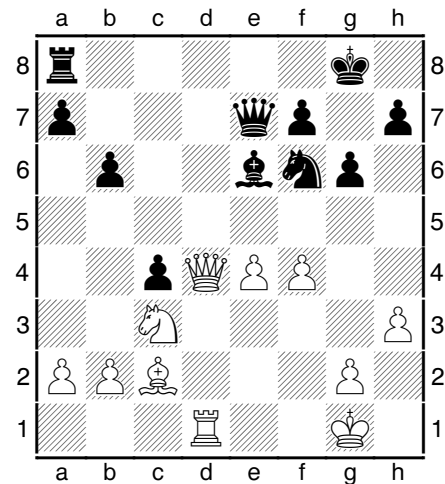
24...Rc8 25.g4!

Now, White wins. Black has nothing to do against the threats g4-g5 and f4-f5.

The game went: 25...Bxg4 26.hxg4 Nxd4 27.Kg2 h5 28.Nd5 Qh4 29.Rh1 Qd8 30.Bd1 1–0



White is to move



Position after 24.Qd4

The drawback of the advanced pawns

There are not only advantages on having the pawns advanced. By moving the pawns forward, we expose the own camp as this won't have the *protection* and *sustainment* of the pawns anymore (see the forms of interaction). We should be very careful at any pawn advance as the weaknesses are irreparable.

Example from the game Gligoric – Smyslov, Kiev, 1959.

White has 3 pawns advanced in the centre (d4, e4, f4). However, we need to be pragmatic and not to assess the position in White's favor only because the pawns would confer him more space.

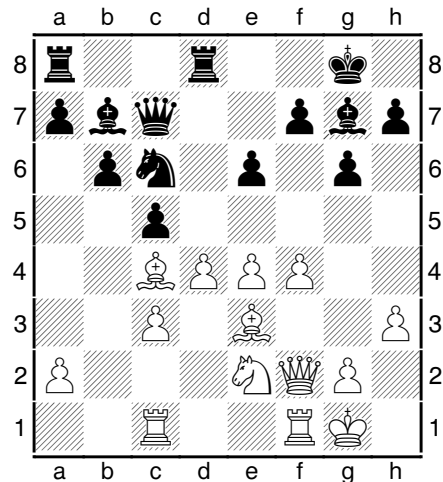
- Which of the white pieces has more freedom because of this space?

- Which of the black piece is restricted by the white pawns?

At these questions, one cannot find something concrete for White. Moreover, Black creates pressure against White's centre with the pieces and can take the initiative by:

1...Na5 2.Bd3 f5! (challenging the centre) 3.e5 c4! blocking the c-pawn and creating a breach on d5.

4.Bc2 Nc6 with idea Ne7-d5 and Black is better.



Black is to move

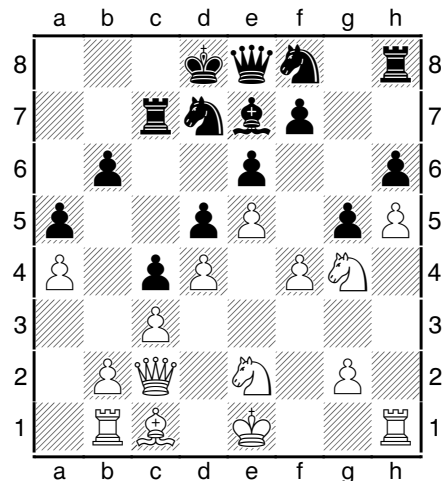
The right moment to launch the attack

In this position from the game Ljubojevic - Portisch, 1983, White has a clear space advantage in the centre and kingside, so he should attack there, opening the game by f4-f5.

However, the moment of launching the attack is very important. In fact, White doesn't benefit from his advantage in space if he doesn't use it...

More space means you can maneuver your pieces easier and bring them in more active positions than your opponent.

White had to play 1.0-0 and 2.Ng3 and only then f4-f5.



White is to move

In the game, White played directly **1.f5** and Black counter-attacked on the same side, challenging white pawns: **1...f6!** after which the game becomes complicated with chances for both players. In the end, the game was a draw.

TO DO when you have space advantage:

1. Because you can maneuver your pieces easier, while the opponent ones are cramped, retain more pieces (avoid unnecessary exchanges).
2. Be careful at your opponent's possibilities to challenge your pawns and release his pieces. Very often the dynamic of the pieces which come back to life from a cramped position is very dangerous.
3. Prepare and go for active operations on that side (centre or one of the wings) where you have more space. Because of this space, you should be able to bring more pieces and maneuver them easier than your opponent. Thus you create a stronger force on that side of the board.
4. Launch the attack immediately your pieces are prepared.

Remember:

We know well that the main characteristic which determines the qualitative value is the mobility of the piece. Usually the space advantage leads to the increment of the attacker's pieces' mobility on that side and this means qualitative advantage. Moreover, the space advantage offers the possibility to bring on that side a bigger number of forces on that side, which means quantitative advantage.

Therefore, **the most important advantage in chess is the space advantage.**

Note:

Typical positions when Black deliberately lets White to get more space as Hedgehog or some King's Indian systems will be discussed in detail later in our course.

Weak Pawns

It is obvious that a pawn defended by a pawn is stronger than a pawn defended by a piece. In fact, the lower the value of the defender of a square/pawn is, the stronger this square/pawn is. So, **a pawn which is not and cannot be defended by a pawn is weak**. If this pawn needs to be defended by the pieces, the qualitative value of the pieces is decreased to a defensive role.

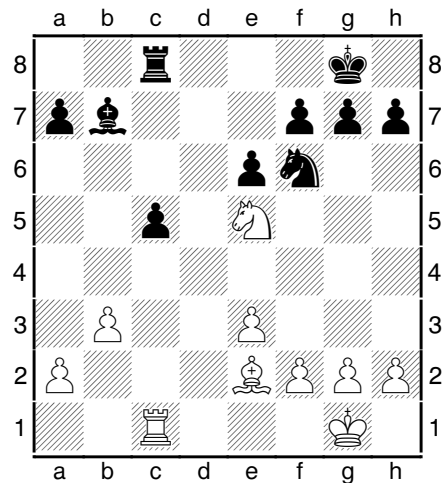
The typical weak pawns

1. The isolated pawn = a pawn separated by the other pawns; there are no pawns on the adjacent files.

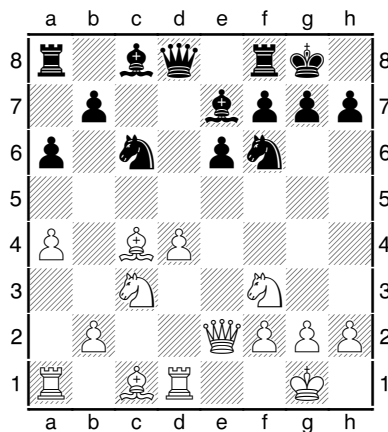
In this position, the black c5-pawn is isolated as there are no black pawns on the b- and d- files. The black pieces need to defend this pawn and you can see that there is a clear difference of value between the black rook (defensive role) and the white rook (attacking role).

The weakness of the isolated pawns is bigger when the material on the board is simplified and kings can take part to the battle.

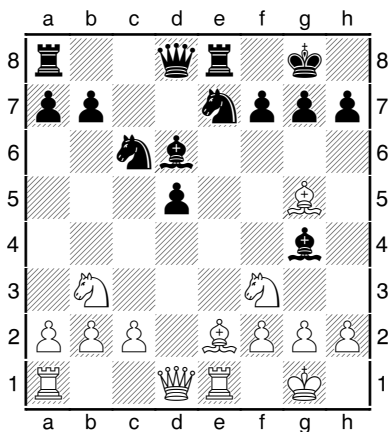
For example, in this position, White can trade the bishops and, then, bring the king to c4 or even b5-a6 attacking the other black isolated pawn on a6.



The most common situation of isolated pawn is when the pawn is on the centre, case that will be studied in detail in the 7th Month of our course. Examples of central isolani:



White's isolated pawn on d4 is the most common type of isolani.



Typical isolani pawns in the centre can be met even for Black.

Until we study the isolated pawn in detail, we give some advices though when you play with or against an isolated pawn (isolani).

Player with the isolated pawn:

- Avoid unnecessary simplifications and avoid the exchange of the bishop of opposite color with the isolani;
- The advance of the isolani is one of the main objectives; this action should be planned and executed very early before the opponent has time to organize a blockade;
- The isolated pawn creates some more space which should be used for organizing an attack; the knights should occupy the outposts sustained by the isolani;
- Defend the pawn in most economical way;
- Advance the pawn which can destroy the blockading pawn of the opponent (for White's d4 isolated pawn, the advance of the "f" pawn will attack the e6-pawn and will open the lines for attack – see the diagram).



Player against the isolated pawn:

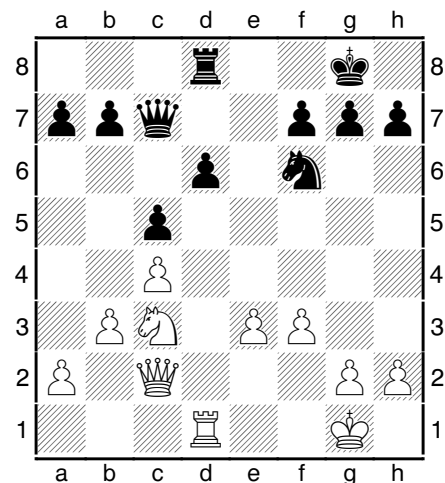
- Block the pawn as soon as possible; the blockade should be done posting a piece (the knight is best) in front of the isolani. Simply preventing the advance without a piece in front of the pawn is usually not enough;
- Endeavor to exchange pieces reducing the attacking potential of the player with the isolated pawn;
- Besides blocking the pawn, should organize the pieces to put pressure on the isolated pawn, tying up the opponent pieces in defense.

2. The backward pawn = a pawn remained behind the pawns from the adjacent files.

In this example, the black d6-pawn is not an isolated pawn, but a backward pawn: the pawn cannot be defended by the c5-pawn.

It is very important that the d6-pawn cannot advance as White controls the d5-square. In the same time, the white e3-pawn is not backward as it can advance easily on e4.

In this position, the c4-pawn is a strong pawn, because it blocks the d6-pawn's advance.

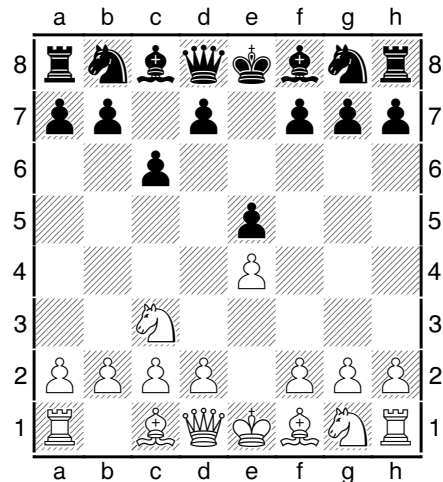


The backward pawns are usually the result of a mistake in the opening stage.

After the moves **1.e4 e5 2.Nc3**, Black played very wrong **2...c6?** trying to get a strong centre by d7-d5.

However, Black forgot that he left the d7-pawn backward and this can be exploited immediately by White (especially that Nb8-c6 is also not possible):
3.d4! exd4 4.Qxd4

Now, White is winning as the black d6-pawn is backward on an open file and cannot advance on d5. After White's moves: Bf4, Nf3, 0-0-0, Black will even lose the pawn.



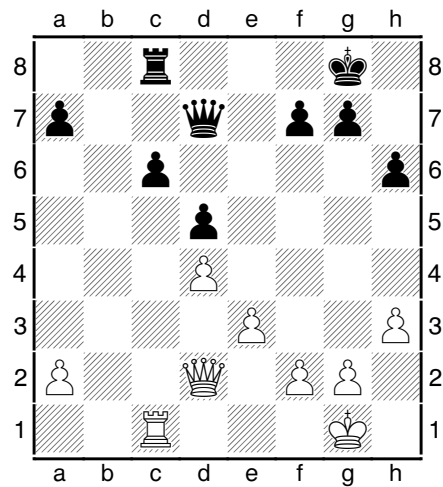
White is to move

During endgames or when the material on the board is simplified, the backward pawns are serious weaknesses. Chances for counterplay are seriously reduced and therefore the weakness of the pawn becomes the most important strategical factor.

In this example, black pieces have to defend the backward c6-pawn. The difference of liberty of movement between the pieces of the 2 camps is decisive for the result of the game.

White can move freely and attack the c6-pawn whenever he wants, while Black has to defend the pawn when White attacks it.

Also, the backward c6-pawn limits the mobility of its own pieces and White has more space on the queenside.



White is to move

Therefore, White can improve the position of his pieces, taking the control of the b-file (1.Qb4 is good), advance the a-pawn up to a6 creating an outpost on b7 and then bring the rook there. In all this time, the white king is free to come closer to the centre preparing for the pawn ending. Black has to keep his king in safe as because of their better mobility, the white pieces can anytime launch an attack against him.

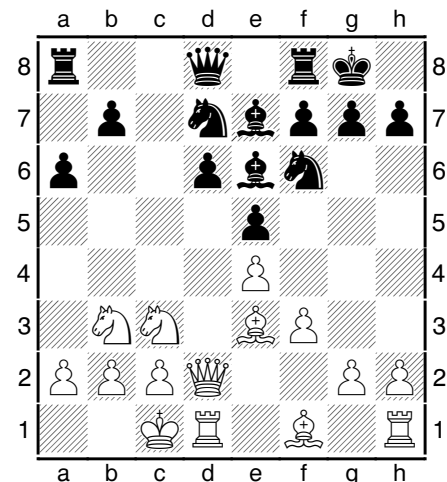
One of the main disadvantages of the backward pawn is that the opponent has more space that he can use to bring easier his forces in attack (creating a local force superiority on the side of the backward pawn) – as you could see in this example. This is however not always so: in the next example, White has no space advantage in the centre (as the white e4-pawn is opposed by the black e5-pawn).

As with the isolani pawn, the backward pawn is not always a weakness.

In this position you can see a typical Sicilian Najdorf position, where the d6-pawn is backward on an open central file but White cannot exploit this.

Black defends the pawn in a very economical way (only with the e7-bishop), while White's minor pieces cannot attack it (a6-pawn defends the b5-square). The black d6-pawn has a very important role sustaining the e5-pawn (and the c5-square) and keeping the d-file closed. In addition, Black always threatens to play d6-d5.

Also, White cannot use the square in front of the backward pawn: 11.Nd5 because after 11...Nxd5 12.exd5 (forced) Bf5, the d-file is closed and Black's weakness disappeared. Moreover, now, the Black's e- and f- pawns have an increased mobility and Black is better.



White to move

In conclusion: the backward pawn is not always a real weakness and such a pawn can have important roles. For the player with the backward pawn, it is important:

- to be able to defend it with minimum of forces (good examples are the Sicilian systems – we saw one in the above diagram – when the opponent minor pieces cannot attack the pawn directly)
- to be able to exchange the opponent pieces which arrive on the blockading square so that in the end of exchanges, the opponent to be forced to retake with a pawn blocking the open file toward the backward pawn;
- to use the squares defended by the backward pawn or to prepare the advance of this pawn.

(3.) Another pawn weakness is sometimes considered the structure of *doubled pawns*. Yet true in some situations, these pawns are not always a real weakness and sometimes they can be even very strong. Therefore, this subject will be discussed in detail in the next lesson (superiority of the pawn structure).

Exploiting the weak pawns

A weak pawn should be first blocked, fixed in place by using the pawns to control its advance and blockaded with the pieces. Only when the weakness is securely fixed, the player should organize the attack.

Usually, the square in front of the weak pawn is weak too, so a strong square for the opponent. The best piece to use this square and also blocking the weak pawn is the

knight. This is because the knight (a piece with a short ray of action) increases a lot when it finds a secure square in the centre. On the other hand, the bishops can have a good position even at the edge or corner of the board.

The importance of using the rook to attack the weak pawn is very high because the rook not only attacks the pawn but also controls the square in front of the pawn, hindering its advance. In addition, by tactical means, the rook exerts pressure even behind the weak pawn. Therefore, an open file toward the weak pawn increases a lot the importance of that weakness.



By attacking the weakness, the second player will be forced to occupy passive positions with his pieces. In the same time, the attacking player should *improve the position of his pieces at maximum* and, then, *there are 2 possibilities to win the game (besides tactical measures if these are possible):*

- *exchange the pieces, entering a winning endgame due to the weak pawn;*
- *use the bigger liberty of his pieces to launch an attack against the opponent king.*

Some special situations of weak pawns

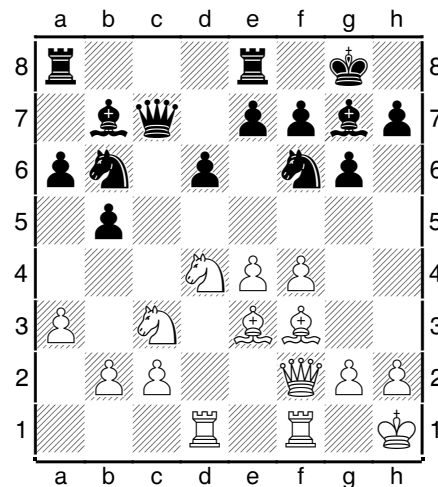
It should be clear by now what are the weak pawns. However, their weakness can be compensated by the dynamism of pieces, especially when the pawns are not in the centre or are not in the ray of action of the opponent pieces.

In this position, Black played: **15...Na4!** forcing the following exchange: **16.Nxa4 bxa4**.

It is now instructive to evaluate the weaknesses of the pawns on the queenside. Black has doubled and isolated pawns on the a-file which are clearly weak pawns. However, White cannot exploit (now!) these weaknesses.

On the other hand, even if the white pawns are on their initial position (when usually they cannot be called weak), the white b2- and c2-pawns are targets for the black pieces.

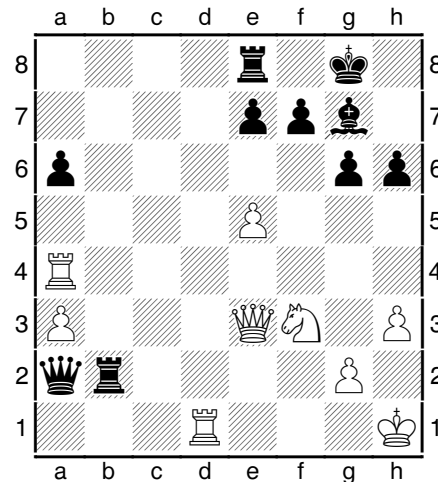
After some moves: 15... Na4 16.Nxa4 bxa4 17.e5 dxe5 18.fxe5 Bxf3 19.Nxf3 Ng4 20.Qe2 Nxe3 21.Qxe3 Qxc2 22.Rd2 Qc4 23.Rfd1 Rab8 24.h3 h6 25.Rd4 Qa2 26.Rxa4 Rxb2, we reach the position from the second diagram.



Black is to move

This winning position for Black is a consequence of the action started by 15...Na4. The open b- and c-files offered him the possibility to get the initiative on the queenside, attacking, capturing the white pawns and entering the second rank with the major pieces.

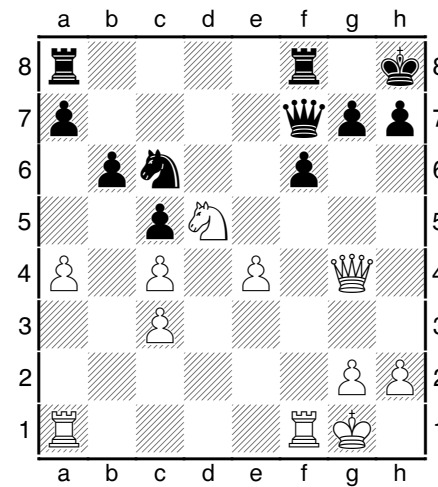
I think it is important to remember that the pawn weaknesses are usually long term factors and such interesting decisions of accepting or even provoking the weakening of the own structure should be very well evaluated. If the opponent succeeds to block your active play, during the endgame, such weaknesses lead to disaster.



Position after 26...Rxb2

In this position from the game Lilienthal – Smyslov, 1947, White has a very weak pawn structure with double pawns on the c-file and an isolani pawn in the centre (e4).

However, the c3-pawn defends the important square d4 and the c4-pawn defends the d5-square where the knight has a dominant position. The exchange of the knights on d5 (Nc6-e7xd5) is not an option because it would completely repair White's pawn structure and a free pawn will appear on d5 after c4xd5.



White is to move

White played **1.a5!** with the idea to destroy the good structure of black pawns on the queenside after b6xa5. After that, even with a pawn up on the queenside, the black pawns will be more vulnerable. Instead, Black played **1...Nxa5** which is a mistake because it loses the control over the e5-square making possible the advance of the e4-pawn. After **2.e5**, White transformed the weak e4-pawn into a strong free pawn.

The game went: 2...f5 3.Qe2 Rae8 4.Rae1 Re6 5.Nf4 Rfe8 6.Nxe6 and Black resigned some moves later.

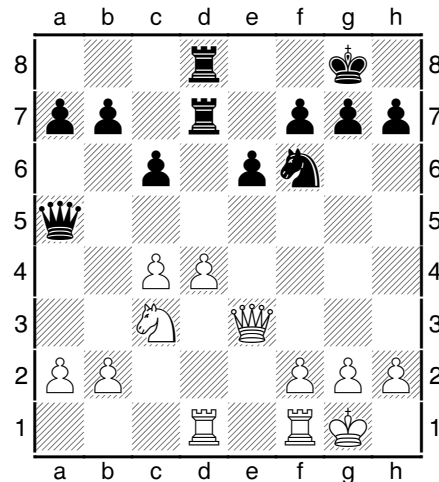
So, besides considering which pawns are weak, it is very important to evaluate the importance of the squares the pawns controls, in tight connection with the position of the pieces and dynamic of play. In the previous example, White's position would be much worse if the c4-pawn is on b2.

The problematic pawn from this position is d4. It is the pawn that confers White more space, but with so few pieces on the board, this doesn't bring anything (the black pieces have enough liberty of movement).

In the same time, the d4-pawn cannot be defended by other white pawn and cannot advance as the d5-square is strongly defended by the black pieces.

Even if the pawn is not isolated or backward, the d4-pawn is a weakness and Black's play is concentrated toward it.

In this particular position, Black can obtain a weakening of White's structure after 1...Qb4! 2.b3 b5! with the idea to create an isolated or backward pawn on d4 (after c4xb5 or c4-c5).



Black is to move

In the end of this lesson, we want to remind you that the pawn moves are irreversible and therefore must be well evaluated. After any pawn move, some squares/pawns become stronger and other become weaker and these changes are often long-term advantages or disadvantages. Evaluate the CQS (consequences) of your and your opponent's moves all the time you move a pawn!

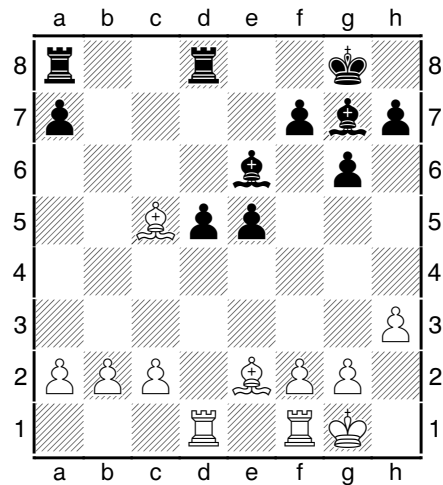
This example proves the importance of this evaluation.

The black pawns are strong because they are on the rank controlling all the squares in front of them. Here, Black should not advance any of these pawns until the moment White won't be able to block them in good conditions.

White has a pawn majority on the queenside and now he wants to put it in motion with the next move: **1.b4**.

However, this move creates "holes" on c3 and c4 and lets the c2-pawn backward. Black exploits this immediately by **1...Bf8!** eliminating the "obstacle" from the c-file.

After **2.Bxf8 Kxf8 3.Rb1 Rac8 4.Rb2 Rc3**, Black succeeded to block the backward pawn on c2, the white rooks will be forced to stay in passive positions... and, Black managed to win the endgame.



White is to move

The next lesson will be about better pawn structures; pawn islands, double pawns.

Weak / Strong Squares

During our entire course and in any chess material you meet the terms “weak square” or “strong square” and any appearance of such square is discussed. However, we cannot go further without a lesson dedicated to this subject.

First of all, we need to say what a weak square (or a strong square for the opponent) is. The definition given by the former World Champion, Dr. Euwe, makes this clear:

A square in the own position (or near the own camp) is weak if there is some possibility for the opponent to control and eventually occupy it sooner or later during the game.

The squares controlled by the pawns are stronger because usually the opponent pieces cannot occupy them without material loss. So, the majority of weak/strong squares are created after the pawn moves.

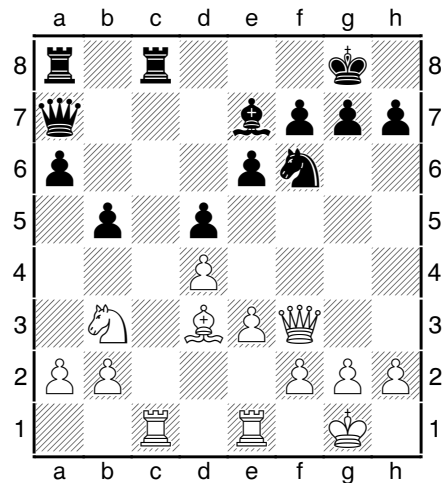
In the initial position, there are no weak squares. The pawns have not moved yet and any square can be controlled by 2 pawns (or by one pawn in the case of marginal files). The squares’ strength begins to change with every pawn move.

The weaknesses of the squares caused by the pawn moves are long-term disadvantages as pawns cannot go back as the pieces → so much care when you move the pawns.

However, I want to draw your attention that not any square which cannot be defended anymore by a pawn is weak.

I once asked a beginner which are the weak squares in Black’s camp, in a position similar to this one.

Besides naming the a5-, c5- and c6- squares, he said that the d6-square is weak too. It is true that the d6-square cannot be defended by any black pawn, but this doesn’t automatically make it a weak square. White cannot use the d6-square. The d-file is not open, Black is the only one who has the dark-square bishop, White has no pawns on e5 or c5 to control that square ... so there is no reason to call d6 a weak square – it is nothing clear how White can use it.



The weak/strong squares appear in almost any game and are very important in the evaluation of a position because the pieces use them to get active and safe positions closer to the enemy’s camp.

Now, we will study 3 very instructive positions from grandmasters’ practice.

Position 1

In this position resulted in the game Botvinnik – Keres, 1948, Black has a better pawn structure. In fact, there is no weak square in Black's camp, while White has an evident weakness on b3 which brings one more weakness: on c4 (because the white b-pawn cannot protect c4).

In this example, we also can see that **trying to get rid of a weakness usually creates another weakness**: after b2-b3 and a4xb3, the a3-pawn will become weak.

In this position, Keres makes a grave strategic error: **16...b5?**

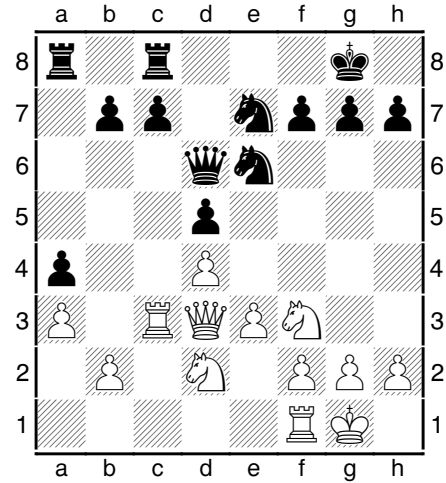
After this move, Black creates 2 weak squares on his own camp: c5 and c6.

Probably, this wrong move was made with the idea b5-b4 or to bring a knight on the strong c4-square. However, now, the rapport of weak/strong squares on the queenside is in White's favor who will be able to exploit the strong squares he has and, in the same time, to keep black pieces away from using the weak squares from White's camp.

It is also important to notice that White can use easier the strong squares c5- and c6- because of the open c-file.

17.Qc2! a double purpose move: White prevents the maneuver Ne7-c6-a5 and also clears the d3-square for the maneuver Nf3-e1-d3.

The whole game is very instructive so we present it with full annotations in the attached games.



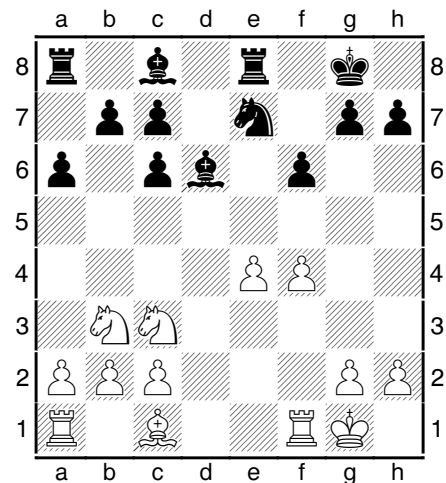
Black to move

Position 2

The position is taken from the game Lasker – Capablanca, 1914 and resulted after the exchange variation of the Ruy Lopez opening.

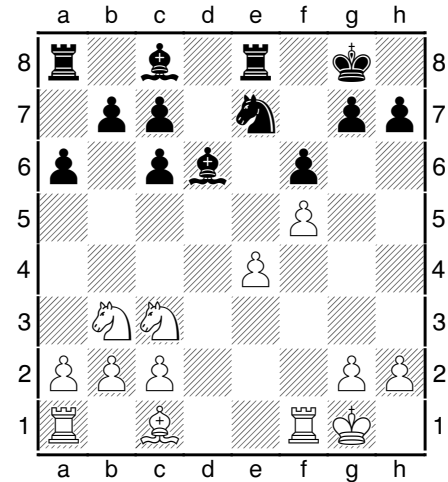
The main characteristic of the position is the balance between the Black's bishop-pair and White's better pawn structure (the pawn majority formed by the e- and f- pawns against the black double c-pawns which normally cannot create a free pawn).

Here, White played a very strange move at the first sight: **12.f5!** which weakens the white pawns. A new weak square appeared on e5 and also, the e4-pawn becomes much more immobile than before.



White is to move

It is very interesting that the definition given by Dr. Euwe (presented at the beginning of this lesson) tells us that the e5-square is not a very strong square for Black. Which black piece can control or occupy it? The d6-bishop will be traded at the next move with Bc1-f4 and the e7-knight can hardly arrive and stay safe on e5 (White can eventually trade it). In exchange of the weakness from e5, White got a very strong square for his knight on e6. It is hard for Black to keep his bishop on c8 or d7 forever keeping an eye on the weak e6-square. Black needs to develop this bishop somewhere and to make the bond between rooks, so the e6-square will be available for one of the white knights.



Position after 12.f5!!

It is instructive to observe that the f4-f5 move also had a very strong limitative effect against the black pieces. The c8-bishop, the e7-knight and subsequently the e8-rook were obstructed by this strong move.

12...b6 (12...g6 doesn't free up Black's play because of 13.g4)

13.Bf4 Bb7? (The bishop is okay on b7, but Black shouldn't allow the exchange of the bishops on d6, after which the d6-pawn will be another weakness in his structure. Black had to play 13...Bxf4 followed by c6-c5 to delay the coming of a white knight on e6.)

14.Bxd6 cxd6 15.Nd4 and White has an excellent position. The knight will come on e6 and the rooks will pressure against the black weakness from d6.

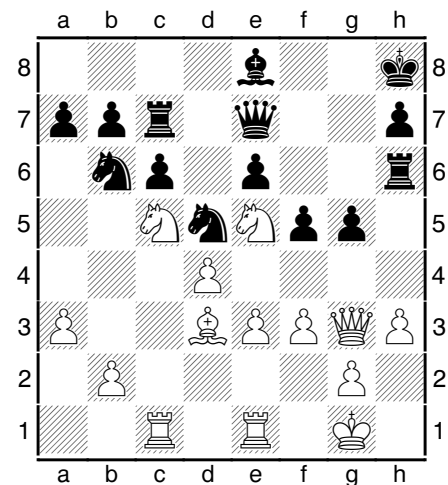
Position 3

In general, the best piece to occupy a strong square, especially if this is on the centre, is the knight.

In this position from the game Janowsky – Kupchik, White got excellent positions for his knights on e5 and c5. The e5-square is the main weakness in Black's camp. The c5-square can be practically defended by b7-b6, but this advance of the b-pawn would weaken the c6-pawn, so the c5-square is still a strong square for White.

In this position, White needs to open the game to increase the cooperation between his pieces, while Black should choose between 2 plans: to trade the white knights or to create a strong square for him too, on e3, by f5-f4.

1.e4! f4 2.Qf2 Ne3



White is to move

Black has chosen the second plan. Better was:
2....Nf6 with idea Nfd7 to trade the white knights.
(diagram)

3.Rxe3!

This sacrifice of the exchange is typical in the fight for strong squares. White eliminates the black knight and makes his e5-knight un-attackable.

3...fxe3 4.Qxe3 Nc8

4...Nd7 doesn't work because of 5.Ncxd7 Bxd7
6.Qxg5 and White wins the second pawn for the exchange.

5.Ng4!

The white knight is moved from a strong square to another one, on f6, where it will be protected by the e-pawn (after e4-e5).

5...Rg6 6.e5 Rg7 7.Bc4

Attacking the weak pawn from e6.

7...Bf7 8.Nf6 Nb6 [8...b6 9.Na6 Rb7 10.Bd3]

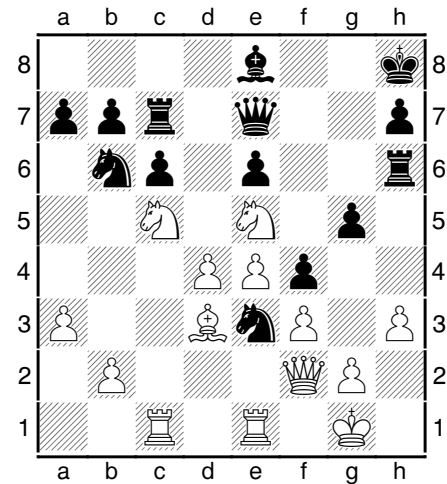
9.Nce4

Sustains the other knight on f6 and takes the d6-square under visage.

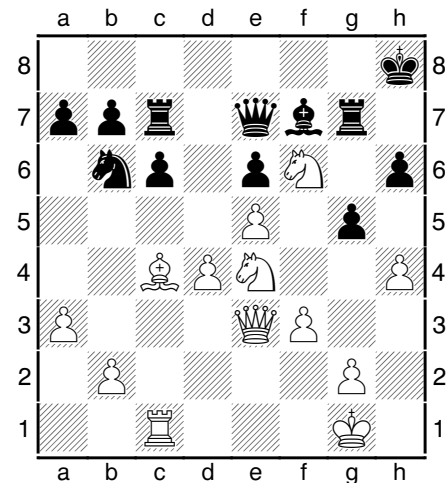
9...h6 10.h4 [diagram]

With dominant position for his pieces, White opens the play against the black king. White won easily:

10...Nd5 11.Qd2 Rg6 12.hxg5 Qf8 [12...hxg5
13.Kf2] 13.f4 Ne7 14.g4 hxg5 15.fxg5 1-0



Position after 2...Ne3



Position after 10.h4

Important to remember

- Weak and strong squares appear easily in the chess game after the pawn moves – so, much care to the consequences of moving the pawns.
- Using the definition of Dr. Euwe, we can also get a good picture of the importance of the weakness: how easily is for us or for the opponent to use that square? (Remember the e5-square from the second example.)
- Also, the weak/strong squares do not have the same value. Usually, the most important squares are: the central squares, the squares around the king/s, and the squares from open or half-open files.

- Many times, moving a pawn doesn't only create a weakness in our own camp, but also a strong square for us inside or close to the opponent's camp. The importance of the 2 squares should be seriously analyzed.
- A strong square is usually a square that cannot be protected anymore by the opponent pawns, but not necessary! If the opponent moves the pawn taking the strong squares from us, but creates other weaknesses, then that square can be still considered strong. (Remember the c5-square from the third example).
- The existence of a weak square in opponent's camp can be a good reason for exchanging pieces and enter an endgame when the weakness can be exploited easier (even by the king).
- There are situations when a strong square can be well controlled only by pieces. However, the strongest squares in opponent's camp are those where the pieces are sustained by our pawns.

Complex of weak squares

There are no rare situations when more squares of the same color are weak. The complexes of weak squares usually appear in positions with chains of pawns. Here, usually, the "good" bishops for both sides do a respectable job of defending the squares complementary to the pawns.

This position from the game Nimzowitsch – Capablanca, 1927, is an illustrative example for the theme at hand.

There are more pawn chains; White has his pawns arranged on dark-squares and Black on light-squares. The (good) bishops are missing and both White and Black have more complexes of weak squares.

However, White cannot exploit the weak dark-squares from Black's camp as his e5 and g5 pawns block any entrance of the white pieces.

We will see now how Capablanca exploits the complex of weak light-squares from White's camp:

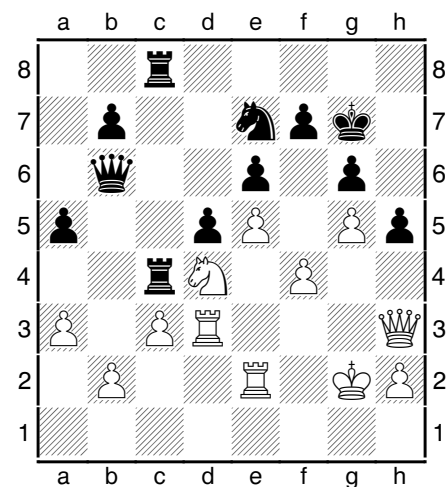
30...Nf5!

Black exchanges the strong white knight and, moreover, gets access toward the e4-square.

31.Nxf5+ gxf5 32.Qf3

32.Qxh5 leads to a quick defeat after 32...Rh8

33.Qf3 Rh4



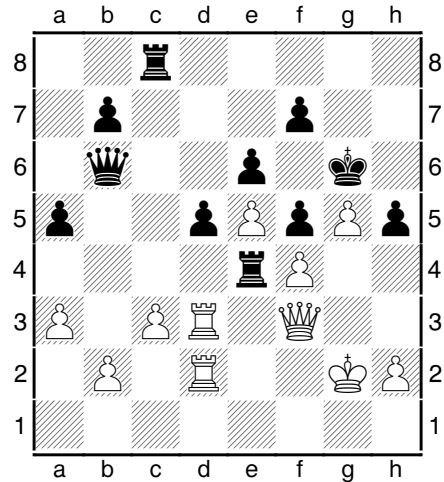
Black is to move

32...Kg6 33.Red2 Re4!

The black rook occupies a strong square. Here, the rook cannot be exchanged by White because after f5xe4, Black will get a free pawn which is enough to assure the winning of the game.

Next, Black improves the position of his pieces using the weak squares from White's camp and, then, he will break the position using the advance of the b-pawn:

34.Rd4 Rc4 35.Qf2 Qb5 36.Kg3 Rcx d4 37.cxd4 Qc4 38.Kg2 b5! 39.Kg1 b4 40.axb4 axb4 41.Kg2 Qc1 42.Kg3 Qh1 43.Rd3 Re1 44.Rf3 Rd1 45.b3 Rc1 46.Re3 Rf1 0-1



Position after 33...Re4

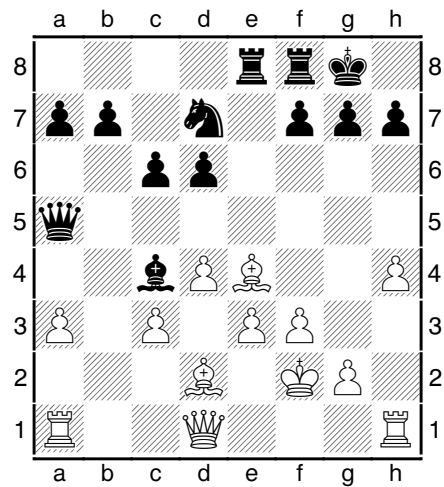
The control over a complex of weak squares is very important and leads to a domination usually not only on the controlled squares but also on the opposite color squares.

In this position from the game Benko – Averbakh, 1949, Black gets the control over the light-squares sacrificing the exchange:

16....Rxe4! 17.fxe4 Nf6 18.Be1 Nxe4+

The knight is placed on a strong light-square, but from where it controls the dark-squares.

19.Kg1 Re8 20.Rh3 h5 21.Rf3 Qa6 22.Rf4 Be2 23.Qc2 d5 24.Ra2 Bc4 25.Ra1 b6 with a dominant position.



Black is to move

The fight for controlling the squares of a certain color is given even from the opening. There are many opening systems from King's Indian, Nimzowitsch Defense, Queen's Indian, Grunfeld Defense, Caro-Kann, French Defense and many others where the players concentrate their efforts for getting the control over the dark- OR light- squares.

The next lesson will be about the strong/weak pawns.

Superiority of the pawn structure

Double Pawns

We need to make an observation about the title of this lesson. “Pawn structure” usually is a term that refers to the typical pawn formations resulted from the most important opening systems (so, we have pawn structures like Hedgehog, King’s Indian, Carlsbad, Dragon etc.). These pawn structures will be studied in detail within 4 months of our course (7-10).

In the previous lessons, we have studied about weak squares, weak pawns and complexes of weak squares. Now, we will identify and study other strategic issues that make a pawn structure inferior to the opponent’s one: double pawns, pawn islands, and inflexible pawn structure.

Double pawns

The **Disadvantages** of formations with doubled pawns:

- weaknesses of the pawns and squares around them;
- reduced mobility;
- difficulty or even incapacity to create a free pawn;
- small defensive value in case they protect the king.

The formations with double pawns also confer some **Advantages**:

- the open file adjacent to the doubled pawns;
- control of 2 squares on the adjacent files;
- slow down the opponent pawn majority to create a free pawn.

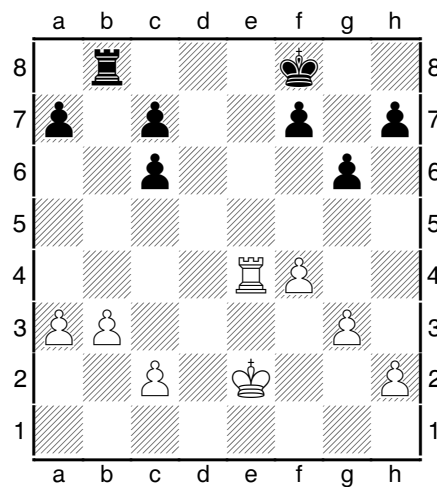
D: The weaknesses – the isolated double pawns are especially weak.

In this position, Black has a pair of isolated double pawns and also an isolated pawn on the a-file. While White’s pawn on the queenside can defend each other, this is not the case with the black pawns. White can win a pawn by:

1.Ra4 Ra8 (or 1...Rb7) **2.Ra6.**

It is interesting to note that even after White wins one of the pawns, Black still remains with 2 weak pawns on a7 and c7. So the elimination of one of the isolated double pawns does not solve the problem of weaknesses.

The squares around the isolated pawns are weak too. In this example, White could use the a6-square because it was weak. Also, the c5- and c6- squares are weak too.



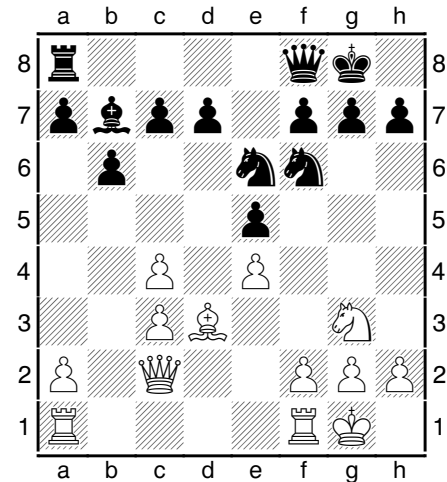
White is to move

We draw an important conclusion: not only the double pawns are weak, but the squares where they are placed and the squares around them are also weak.

In this position from the game Lombard – Kortschnoj, 1978, Black even sacrificed material (an exchange for a pawn) to destroy White's pawn structure.

White has isolated doubled pawns on the c-file which is not open, but the real problem here is the weakness of squares on the queenside that Black can exploit:

14...Nf4 15.f3 Qc5+ 16.Kh1 Ba6 17.Rfe1 Nxd3 18.Qxd3 Bxc4 19.Qd2 Be6 20.Nf5 Bxf5 21.exf5 d6 and Black equalized from material point of view and has a winning position: the white rooks are powerless without open files and there are weaknesses in White's camp that black strong queen and knight can exploit. Moreover, Black can create more weaknesses by advancing h7-h5-h4.



Black is to move

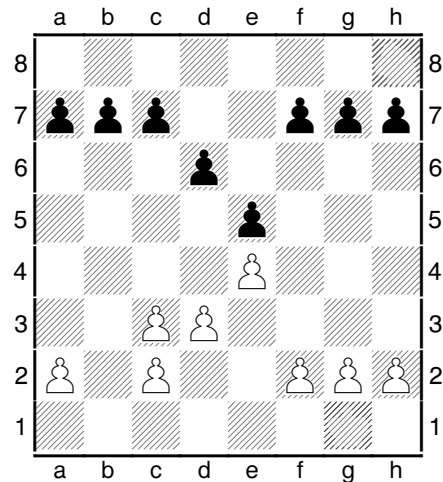
The game went: 22.Rab1 a5 23.c4 Re8 24.Qb2 h5 25.Qb5 Qd4 26.Qc6 Re7 27.h3 h4 28.c5 Qxc5 29.Qa4 Qf2 30.Rf1 Qg3 31.Rb3 Qg5 32.Re1 Nh5 33.Qg4 Ng3+ 34.Kh2 Qf6 35.f4 e4 36.Qg5 Qxg5 37.fxg5 Nxf5 0-1

D: Reduced mobility

To understand better the problem of mobility of double pawns we present a position without pieces on the board.

If white pawns were not doubled (the c3-pawn being on b2), White's active plan could be: d3-d4-d5, followed by c2-c4-c5 and if Black wants to stop the c-pawn by b7-b6, White has b2-b4 at hand, supporting c5.

With the pawns doubled on the c-file, this plan does not work because Black can simply play b7-b6 and stop the c-pawn's advance. Also, Black can use the c5-square as a strong outpost his knights.



In this diagram, the white pawns already advanced on d5 and c4. In this advanced formation, the double pawns are vulnerable and Black can start the attack by:

1...c7-c6!, followed by **2...c6xd5 3.c4xd5**

By this typical attack, the doubled pawns are “repaired” (the c4-pawn will be on d5), but with no happy end for White.

The other c-pawn remains backward on an open file and all the squares on the c-file are weak.

We can draw a conclusion: the doubled pawns become weaker as they advance.

So, when your opponent has doubled pawns similar to our first diagram:

1. Attract his pawns to advance (this is not an easy task however)
2. Attack the opponent pawn formation with your own pawns (not fearing about repairing the doubled pawns) – this attack will bring serious weaknesses in opponent’s camp – again, a deficiency of the doubled pawns is the weakness of the squares around them, which usually is not solved after one of the pawns disappeared.

D: Incapacity to create a free pawn

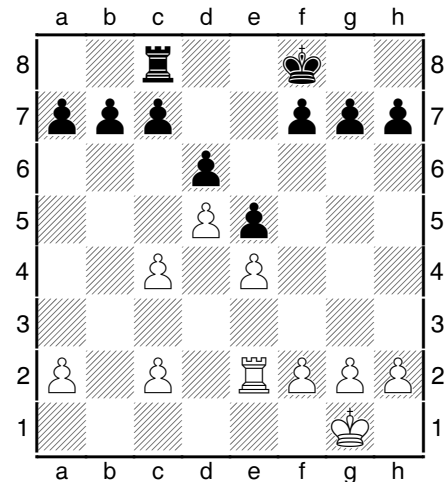
Another serious problem of the doubled pawns is their incapacity to create a free pawn.

In this position, the pawns are separated in 2 majorities, but the black pawns have no possibility to pass over the white smaller pawn formation.

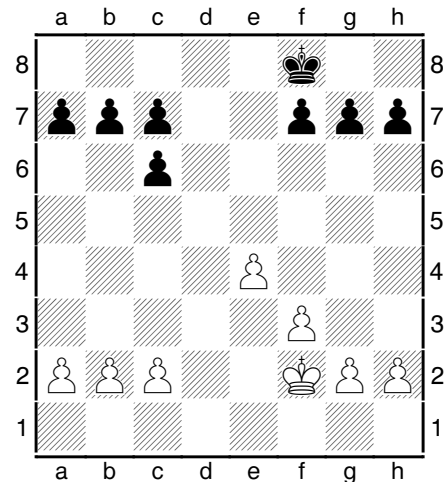
- It could be instructive for you to play only with the queenside pawns and verify this theory.

On the other hand, white e- and f- pawns (or the entire kingside majority) have no problems to create a free pawn.

The endgame is lost for Black.



Black to move



The doubled pawns are usually a serious problem in the endgame. The weakness of the pawns and the issue of creating a free pawn are essential in this stage of the game.

The formations with doubled pawns can be however very well compensated during the middlegame by the activity of pieces.

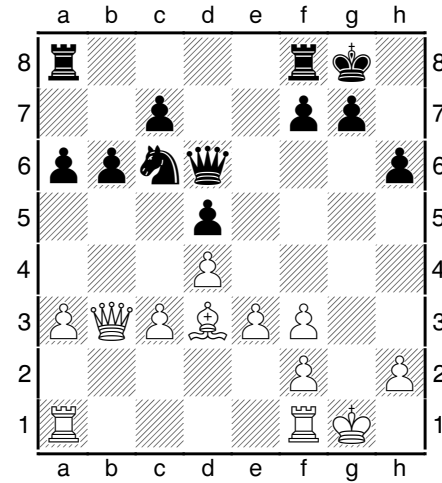
A: Adjacent open file

In this position from the game Smyslov – Anatoshin, 1963, White has doubled pawns in front of his king. Usually, the king's protection suffers when the pawns are doubled.

However, here, Black is unable to organize an attack on the kingside and it is White who will attack there using the advantage of the open g-file:

17.Kh1! Na5 18.Qa2 c5 19.Rg1 cxd4 20.cxd4 Rfc8 21.Rg3 Rc3 22.Rag1 with a strong attack.

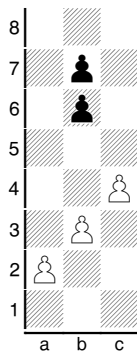
The game went: 22...g5 23.Qe2 Nb3 24.Bb1 Nc1 25.Qd1 Qxa3 26.f4 Qb2 27.Qh5 Rc6 28.fxg5 Qxb1 29.gxh6+ Kh8 30.Qxf7 Qh7 31.Rg7 1–0



White is to move

A: Double pawns against a pawn majority

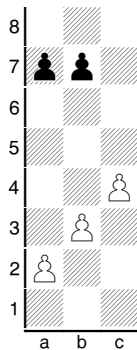
On the side where one player has a pawn-majority, the double pawns are even very good in retaining the advance of this majority. Moreover, in this case, there is no open file toward the double pawns and therefore their weakness is less important.



For example, in this structure, White has a pawn majority on the queenside. Black has double pawns which can hold White's majority very well.

In order to create a free pawn on this side, White needs to play: 1.b3-b4, 2.c4-c5 b6xc5, 3.b4xc5 and you can see that White pawns are dispersed and he needs to sacrifice a pawn to free the other:

4.a2-a4, 5.a4-a5, and 6.a5-a6 b7xa6, and finally 7.c5-c6.



If Black pawns are on their initial positions, White can advance his majority much quicker and create a free pawn in only 4 moves and without a pawn sacrifice:

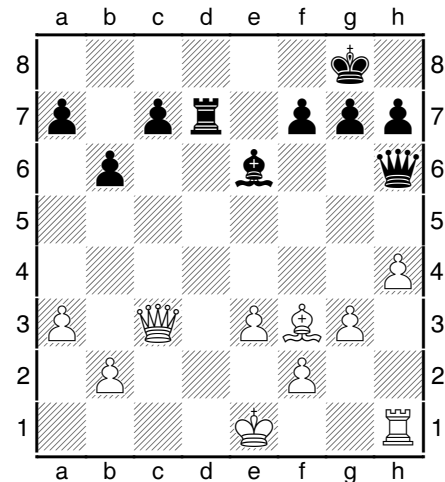
1.b3-b4, 2.c4-c5, 3.b4-b5, and 5.c5-c6

The conclusion is very simple: On the side where the opponent has a pawn majority, you can have no worries about doubling your pawns. Double pawns on this side complicate the task of the player with the majority.

This position is from the game Rogozenko – Morozevich 2000 and is very instructive for this subject.

White has a pawn majority on the kingside, Black on the queenside. With the reduced material on the board, the players' plans are around creating a free pawn.

Here, Black played a formidable move: **1...Qf6!** exchanging White's active piece. After **2.Qxf6 gxf6**, Black's double pawns on the kingside complicate White's task to create a free pawn on that side, while the Black's mobile majority will advance quickly on the queenside.



Black is to move

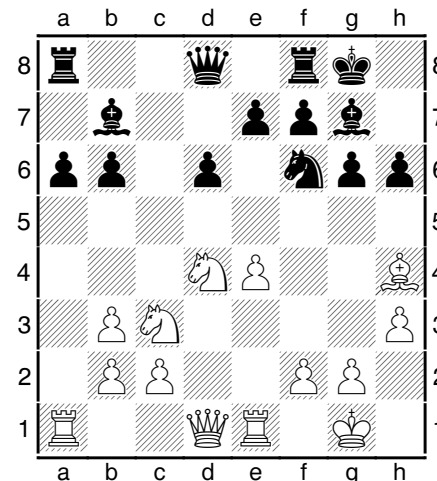
The game went:

21...Qf6 22.Qxf6 gxf6 23.h5 h6 24.Rh4 c5 25.Be2 Bb3 26.Rf4 Kg7 27.g4 Rd6 28.Re4 Kf8 29.Rf4 a5 30.Re4 Rd8 31.Rf4 Ke7 32.Re4+ Kd6 33.Bd1 Be6 34.Be2 f5 35.gxf5 Bxf5 36.Rf4 Ke5 37.Rf3 b5 38.e4 Be6 39.Rc3 c4 40.f3 Kf4 41.Rc2 Rd4 42.Bd1 b4 43.axb4 axb4 44.Be2 Ke3 45.Rc1 Rd2 46.Bxc4 Rh2 47.Bf1 Rh1 48.Rc2 Bh3 0–1

A: Double pawns sometimes are very useful for controlling key-squares

In the game Ye Jiangchuan – Fedorov, Black “succeeded” to take the bishop-pair after the maneuver Nc6-a5xb3 taking the white light-square bishop.

In this typical Sicilian structure, White has usually no interest on the queenside – this being the flank where Black attacks using his open c-file. Now, we can see that White double pawns on the b-file do a respectable job in defending the key-squares c3 and c4 and Black's chances for some initiative here are seriously diminished.



White is to move

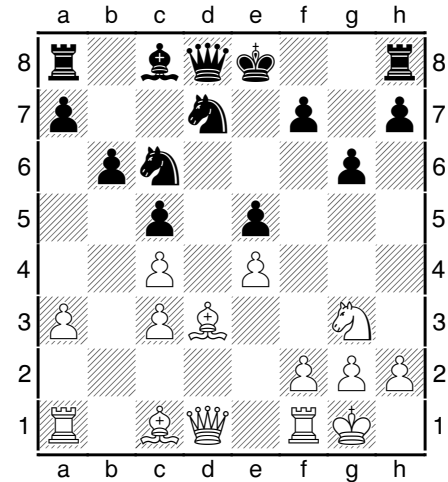
Moreover, as a consequence of the capture a2xb3, the a-file became open for White and Black has to watch his a-pawn.

After **1.Nd5**, White forces the opening of the e-file and after **1...Nxd5 2.exd5 Re8 3.c4**, he exerts a strong pressure in the centre while the queenside is protected by the double pawns.

The game went: (15.Nd5 Nxd5 16.exd5 Re8 17.c4) Qd7 18.Qd3 Kh7 19.Rad1 e6 20.dxe6 fxe6 21.Nf3 Bxf3 22.Qxf3 Bxb2 23.Bg3 Ba3 24.Re4 Qe7 25.Bxd6 Bxd6 26.Rxd6 Qxd6 27.Qf7+ Kh8 28.Qf6+ Kh7 29.Qf7+ Kh8 30.Rh4 Qf8 31.Qxg6 Qg7 32.Rxh6+ Kg8 33.Qh5 Qa1+ 34.Kh2 Kf8 35.Qh4 Rad8 36.Rh8+ Kf7 37.Qf4+ Kg6 38.Qh6+ 1–0

In this position from the game Geller – Lipnitsky, 1951, White has isolated doubled pawns on the c-file. In this case, the white c3-pawn does an excellent job to defend the d4-square where otherwise Black could install a knight. White's position is better because he can exploit the weakness of the d5-square by bringing his knight via Ng3-f1-e3-d5.

13.Qe2 White protects the c4-pawn and Black has no enough resource to attack this weakness. Now, it's time to bring the knight on d5:
11...Qe7 14.Rd1 Bb7 15.Nf1 0-0-0 16.Ne3 Na5 17.Nd5 with clear advantage for White.



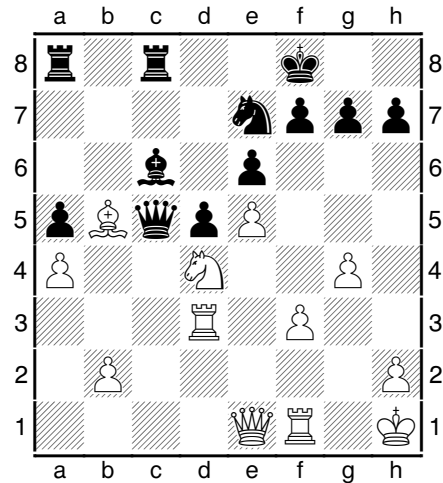
White is to move

Double pawns are sometimes not double....

Position from the game Almasi – Picket, 2000. Here, Black took on b5:

1...Bxb5. The worry that White will have double pawns on the b-file after **2.a4xb5** has no point.

In fact, there is a huge difference: here, White's b5-pawn is practically a free pawn, while the b2-pawn has the role to stop the black a-pawn. In fact, White succeeded to transform his blocked pawn majority on the queenside into a free pawn. Moreover, the white pawn on b5 protects the important c6-square obstructing the black knight.



Black is to move

The superiority of the pawn structure will continue with the lesson about inflexibly/dynamism of the pawn structure.

Superiority of the pawn structure

Inflexible / Dynamism

Inflexible pawn structure

The inflexibility of the pawn structure is an issue that is not described in any chess book (as far as we know), however it's by no means less important than many other subjects.

First of all, we need to make 2 observations about this new concept:

- It is not about a single pawn, but about more pawns (Q-side pawns, central pawns or K-side pawns) as a structure.
- It is not about firmly blocked pawns, but about pawns which somehow are able to advance.

Now, we try to give a definition:

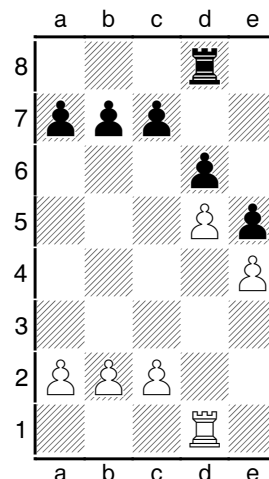
A pawn structure is inflexible when any attempt to change its configuration creates weak squares, weak pawns or leads to another big disadvantage.

So, as a conclusion: we have a pawn configuration which leads to weaknesses when we move a pawn. This means that this pawn structure might be a long-term weakness or might obstruct the own pieces.

In this position (of course, other pieces can be on the board), the black Q-side pawn structure is inflexible.

If Black plays:

- a) 1...c7-c6, after the exchange 2.d5xc6 and 3.c2-c4, the black d6-pawn will be backward on an open file.
- b) 1...b7-b6, the c6-square will become weak and by c4-c5, sustained by a pawn on b4, White opens the c-file toward this weakness.
- c) moving the a-pawn will weaken the b6-square and White can exploit it by playing c4-c5xd6 – after c7xd6, the b6-square will be a new weakness on the queenside.



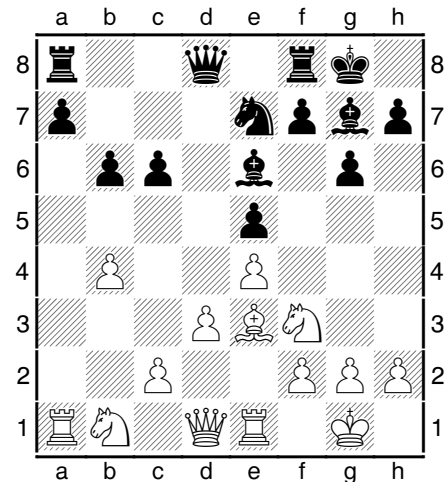
Of course, the pawn structure from this diagram is not a new one and there are some opening variations where Black plays the move c7-c6, but this is only an exception (like to any theory in chess). In the same time, Black can have compensation on the other side (kingside). This is an example where the black pawn structure is theoretically inflexible because any pawn move will create weaknesses (long-term weaknesses) that White can exploit.

Now, let's see an example from practice, where the black Q-side pawns are inflexible because any pawn move will create serious weaknesses or even lose a pawn.

In this position from the game Glek – Lemmers, 1995, White has a better pawn structure because of the inflexibility of black queenside pawns.

After **12.Qc1 Qd6 13.Ra4 Kh8 14.Nc3**, White has his forces already concentrated against the black formation. The example is more instructive as we can also observe that White's pawn formation in the centre is flexible and Glek uses this to open more lines, get more space and come closer to Black's camp:

14...Nc8 15.h3 Bd7 16.Rd1 Qe7 17.d4!
with a dominant position in the centre and queenside.



White is to move

The game went: 17...c5 18.Nd5 Qd8 19.dxe5 Bxa4 20.Bg5 Qd7 21.Bf6 Qc6 22.Qa1 Bxf6 23.exf6 Nd6 24.Ne5 Qb7 25.Qxa4 Nxe4 26.b5 Ng5 27.Qh4 Ne6 28.Ne7 Qc7 29.Rd7 Qxe5 30.Nxg6+ 1–0

A half-open file on the queenside can make the opponent's pawn structure inflexible.

For example, in many cases from Open Sicilians, Black's open c-file makes the white queenside pawns an inflexible structure.

In this position from the game Frolov – Ibragimov, 2001, Black controls the e-file and has a better control over the centre.

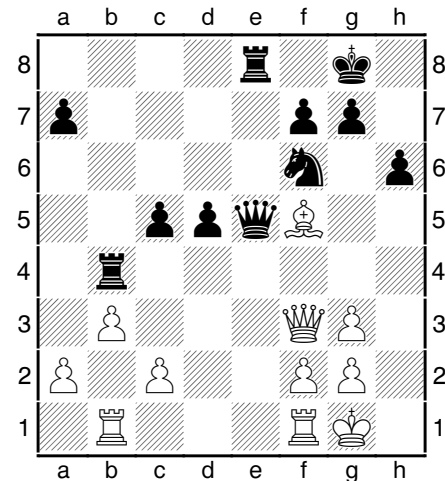
However, White can control all the entrances (eventually by Bd3) and hold the position. The main problem in White's position is the inflexibility of his queenside pawns. The white pawns have no chance to counter black strong c5- and d5- pawns.

For example:

a) 1.c4? dxc4 winning a pawn, and also d5-d4 with a free pawn

b) 1.c3 Rb6 2.b4 c4! and the c3-pawn is a major problem.

c) 1.a3 (as in the game) Rd4 2.Rbd1 Ne4 3.Rxd4 cxd4 with a dominant position (control of the centre, weak square on c3 on an open file, excellent knight on e4).



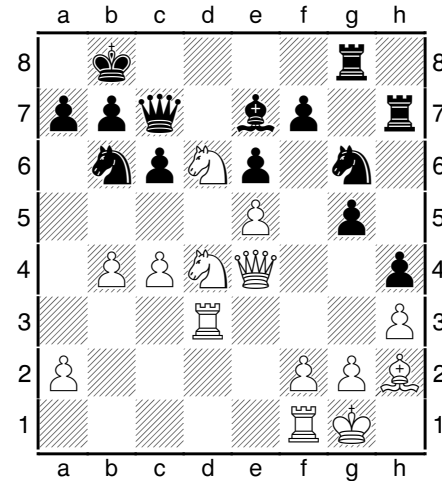
White is to move

An inflexible structure on the side of the attack leads to serious problems.

Let's have a look at this position, resulted after 23 moves in the game Vasiesiu – Grunberg M., 2001.

Here, Black's main problem is the inflexibility of his kingside pawns. Black should attack on that side, but any pawn advance is impossible. On the other hand, White's queenside pawns are all available for different thrusts.

The difference of pawn mobility makes the difference here. Practically Black cannot initiate any counterplay on the kingside and, moreover, his pieces are obstructed by this inflexible structure.



Black is to move

The attempt to put the pawns in motion was however the only practical chance for Black, but White refuted it by tactical means:

23...f5 24.exf6! Bxd6 25.Nxc6+ Ka8 26.Rxd6 bxc6 27.Rxc6 +-

The game went:

27...Qb7 28.Rd1 Nf4 29.b5 Rf7 30.Bxf4 gxf4 31.c5 Nd7 32.Rc8+ Rxc8 33.c6 1-0

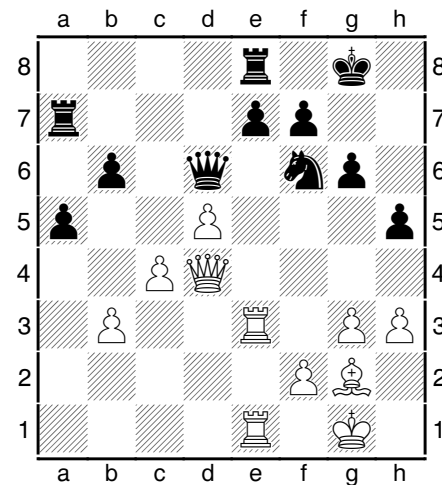
An inflexible structure can grip any prospect for an active plan.

In this position from the game Urban – Kempinski, 2005, the players agreed for a draw.

It is clear that White has an advantage because of his space advantage, bishop against knight with pawns on both sides, and a good half-open file ("e").

White didn't continue to fight for a win because of his inflexible pawn structure.

Here, the white queenside pawns do not restrict the pieces nor they are a weakness, but impede him to play for a win. We can easily see that any advance of the white pawns (after the necessary preparation) would lead to weaknesses in his position... after which the grandmaster Kempinski would probably want the point only for him.



White is to move

An inflexible structure in the centre limits the mobility of the own pieces.

In the following position we will see that a straight attack against a central pawn can tight opponent pieces on unfavorable positions and immobilize the pawn structure.

In the game Spassky – Larsen, 1968, the position at the move 13th seems about equal.

However, Black will immobilize the white central e4-pawn with:

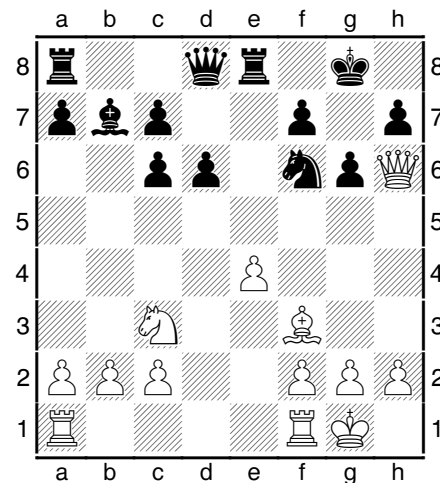
13...Re5!

Now, the e4-pawn is blocked by the black pieces and the f-pawn is blocked by the white bishop. By concentrating all his forces in attack against the target from e4, Black succeeds to keep White busy in defense of his inflexible centre.

After

14.Rae1 c5 15.Re3 Qe7 16.Rfe1 Re8,

White pawn phalanx formed by the e- and f-pawns is immobilized and the white pieces are tied up in defense.



Black is to move

In conclusion, we can consider the inflexibility of the pawn structure like a latent weakness of the pawns. It is like the obstruction of pieces, applied here to a group of pawns.

You can identify such structures by looking at the pawns from the 2 flanks and the centre and check if the pawns can move without creating weaknesses. If such a structure exists in your opponent's camp, the whole structure can be a good target for attacks. Analyze if you should plan an attack immediately during the middlegame or if this structure can bring you better chances in an endgame.

In the next chapter, we will see dynamic pawn structures – group of pawns which can move freely changing their configuration and, subsequently, the character of the game.

Dynamic pawn structure

More and more, nowadays grandmasters tend to avoid structures that limit their play within rigid pawn structures where the plans of play are fewer and too well-known. A dynamic structure permits to change the character of the game offering a more complex play with more possibilities and, therefore, more chances to prove the superiority of one of the players.

We present some examples from which you can understand the benefits of a dynamic pawn structure.

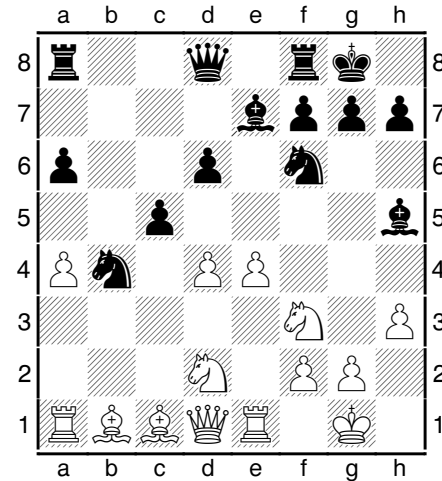
Restriction of opponent pieces

Anand-Grischuk, Mexico, 2007, was actually the game that mostly decided the future World Champion. In this critical position, White has more space, but is still far from winning.

18.g4! Bg6 19.d5!

After just two pawn-moves, the assessment is different. White gained even more space, got an excellent outpost on c4 for one of his knights and 2 black pieces were restricted (the b4-knight and g6-bishop).

Also, White prepares a pawn avalanche on the kingside, attacking the black pieces and preparing the rook lift Ra1-a3-g3.



White to move

19...Nd7 20.Nc4 Rb8 21.Bf4 Nb6

the only way to defend the d6-pawn, trying to diminish White's pressure.

22.Nxb6 Rxb6 23. Nd2 - heading for c4-square, the strategic outpost that provides White better chances. Black lacks of an active plan.

23...Bg5 24.Bxg5 Qxg5 25.Nc4 Rbb8 26.Qd2!

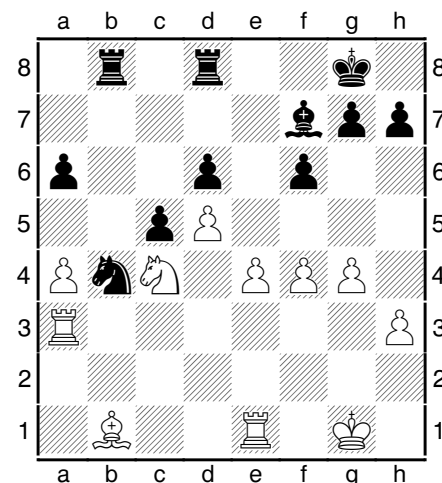
The b4-knight is trapped on the queenside, so White exchanges the black queen with the idea to free his kingside pawns and start an attack on this side where he has superiority of forces.

26...Qxd2 27.Nxd2 f6

Black has to free a square to retreat his bishop, but now is weakening the e6-square.

28.Nc4 Rfd8 29.f4 Bf7 30.Ra3 (diagram)

With clear advantage for White due to his dynamic structure which also hinders opponent pieces. Now, White will improve his position step by step and attack on the king side.



Position after 30.Ra3

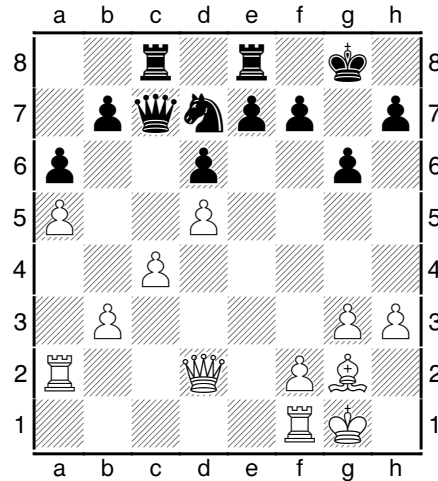
The game continued: 30...g5 31.h4 gxf4 32.Rf3 Be8 33.Rxf4 Kg7 34.h5 Bxa4 35.h6+ Kxh6 36.Rxf6+ Kg7 37.g5 Rf8 38.Rxd6 Bc2 39.Ne5 Rf4 40.Rf6 Rh4 41.d6 Bxb1 42.Rxb1 Rxe4 43.Rxf7 Kg8 44.Re7 Rd8 45.Rd1 c4 46.d7 Rf4 47. Rf1 Rff8 48.Rxf8 Kxf8 49.Rxh7 c3 50.Ng6 1-0

The pawns against the opponent king / playing on both flanks

The position is selected from Manea- Spulber, 2000. White has a clear space advantage and managed to create a weak pawn on b7, on the same color with the g2-bishop. He can attack also the backward e7-pawn on the open e-file. In this sort of position, the pawns have double role: they hinder opponent pieces and also, at the proper moment, can be used to open the files, creating entrances for own forces.

21.h4!

With a complete domination on the all board and with weak dark squares on the kingside, there are good premises for a king attack. Black has no counterplay, so White does not risk anything trying to open the h-file.



White is to move

21...Nf6 22.Bf3 Preparing Kg2 and Rh1

Black's pawn structure in the centre and kingside is inflexible: if he advances the e-pawn, after d5xe6, his pawns will be seriously damaged (3 pawn islands and backward pawns).

22...Qd7 23.Kg2 Qf5 24.Qd4 h5 25.Re2 Rc7 26.Rfe1

White places his pieces on the best positions and preserves his options of a breakthrough on both flanks.

26...Ng4 A pseudo-active move which fails because of the weakness of black pawns. Black wanted to take the control of the f3-square, but nothing is forced for White so he just improves his position step by step.

27.Bxg4 hxg4 28.Re3 f6

The final mistake, after which the black pawn structure is permanently damaged. Black wanted to get a counterplay on the h-file, but this is illusory.

29.R1e2 Kf7 30.f3! gxf3+ 31.Rxf3 Qh5 32.Re6

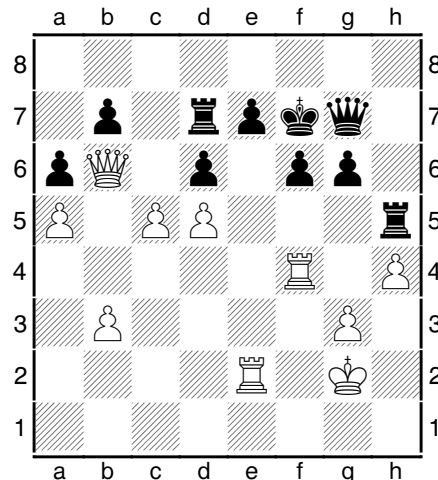
And White has a decisive advantage already. He will create a free pawn on the queen side now.

The game continued:

32...Qh8 33.Qf2 Qg7 34.Rf4 Rh8 35.Re2 Rh5

36.Qb6 Rd7 37.c5! (diagram)

The dynamic white pawn structure on the queenside decides.



Position after 37.c5

37...g5 38.Rg4 f5 39.c6 fxg4 40.cxd7 1-0

More breaking possibilities

A more dynamic pawn structure offers more possibilities for a breakthrough.

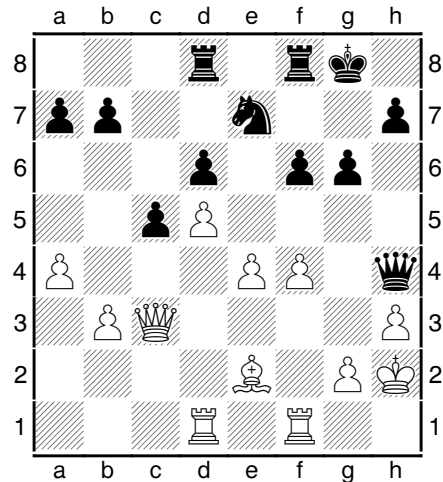
Our position is from the game Manea - Muntoiu, 2000. White has space advantage and a good control over the centre.

In addition, here we have another example where you can observe the inflexibility of the pawn structure – of Black on both flanks – and its consequence: Black is deprived of any counterplay.

So, White has clear superiority but needs to make a breach on black camp and activate his rooks. e4-e5 is a thematic pawn thrust in this kind of structure, but White's dynamic structure permits him to open the files on the queenside as well:

1.b4! Due to the powerful centre and the possibility of playing g3 harassing Black's queen, White can attack freely the unprotected black queenside +/-

The game went: 1...b6 2.bxc5 bxc5 Qh6 4.Rb1 Nc8 5.Rb7 Rf7 6.Rxf7 Kxf7 7.Rb1 Qf8 8.Rb7+ Kg8 9.Bg4 1-0



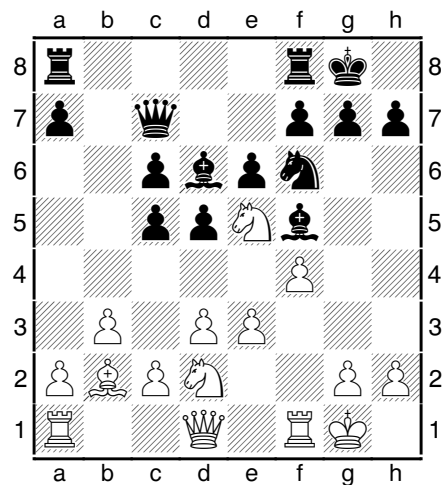
White to move

A stronger player should seek dynamic positions against weaker opponents

In this position, White adopted a kind of Dutch Defense with reversed colors where he practically has no advantage. But both players have different pawn thrusts at their disposal and better calculation and positional evaluation make the difference.

Black played **1...Qb6?** placing his queen on the same diagonal with the white king and threatening c5-c4. It seems to be a logic move, but in fact it's just a loss of tempo and a decentralization of the queen.

The many possibilities that White had were hard to be calculated by the weaker player with the black pieces. In addition, the next white move seems very dangerous as discovers the a7-g1 diagonal:



Black is to move

2.e3-e4!

This central thrust is very normal in this structure and the only danger (queen on b6) is in fact not a real one. After e3-e4, White suddenly obtains a large advantage as 2...Bg6 is just wrong because of Nxf6 and e4-e5.

You are invited to analyze all the variations after e3-e4 – a good tactical training.

Conclusion:

A more dynamic pawn structure increases the options during the game, offers more possibilities to improve the status of the pieces, and it is an asset for the endgame.

However...

The 2 issues of this lesson are maybe harder to be understood, digested, and applied during your game. As a general advise in such cases: play your chess, forget about “theories” that you don’t perfectly understand and remember about them only when you don’t know what to do – in this case, they might help you.

The next lesson is about “pawn phalanxes”

Free pawn. Pawn Majority. Blockade

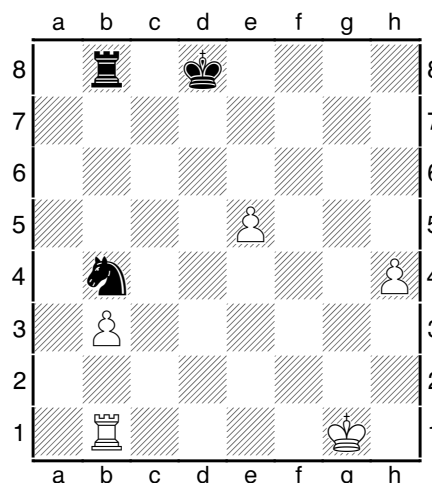
The pawn, the weakest piece on the board, has the special ability to convert into the strongest piece once it reaches the 8th rank (“queening”). However, the pawn is obstructed in its way by 3 opponent pawns (1 on the same file and 2 on the adjacent files – exception the marginal pawns). In this chapter, we will study the special case of the pawn which is not obstructed by opponent pawns (all those 3 pawns are missing): **the free pawn**.

The following diagram does not represent a position, but 3 distinct situations of the free pawn.

a) The white b3-pawn is free. However, during middlegame, such a pawn is merely a weakness than a strong pawn. The weakness consists in its backward position on an open file. In addition, here, the pawn is strongly blocked and it limits the activity of own pieces.

b) The white e5-pawn is free and passed (the pawn is on the second half of the board). Another important aspect regarding this pawn is that the pawn is on the centre and the black king is close to the pawn and queening square, thus the threat of queening is reduced.

c) The white h4-pawn is a free distant pawn. During endgames, the free pawns are more dangerous on marginal files, so forcing opponent pieces to take unpleasant position on the edge.



Not a real position
3 cases of free pawn

The force and usage of the free pawn

A free pawn (not the first case of the backward pawn) is an element of great importance. The existence of a free pawn can bring an important advantage and there are 2 cases of employment of the free pawn:

1. The threat of queening

Queening a pawn brings a huge material difference and, in most of the cases, the end of the game. It's almost like the checkmate, so the advance of a free pawn and the threat of queening has a great importance. Therefore, **the advance of the free pawn must be sustained by ALL pieces**.

In this position (from the game Spassky – Petrosian, 1969), the white free pawn is already on the most advanced position, on the 7th rank. Black has 2 free pawns which are not dangerous here as they are far from the queening squares.

The white pawn is sustained by all white pieces, a condition and a guarantee for the success.

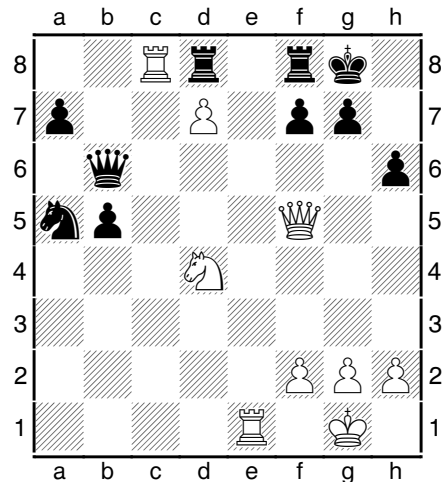
Black is to move, but he cannot save the game. It is instructive to go through variations and observe the large involvement of tactics.

a) 27...Qxd4 28.Rxd8 Rxd8 29.Re8++

b) 27...g6 28.Rxd8 Qxd8 29.Qxb5+-;

c) 27...b4 28.Re8 Qxd4 29.Rxf8+ Rxf8 30.Rxf8+ Kxf8 31.Qc5+!!+-;

d) or, as in the game: 27...Nb7 28.Nc6 Nd6 29.Nxd8!! Nxf5 30.Nc6 1-0



Black is to move

Later in this lesson, we will see how White managed to create this free pawn.

“The principle of 2 weaknesses”

Important resources are needed to hold a free pawn. Another problem, such a weakness, in the same camp which fights against the free pawn could be fatal.

In this position from the game Ravinsky – Smyslov, 1944, Black has a free pawn on the c-file which is not blocked by White. In addition, the f2-square can be attacked by Black who therefore has 2 targets:

25...c4!

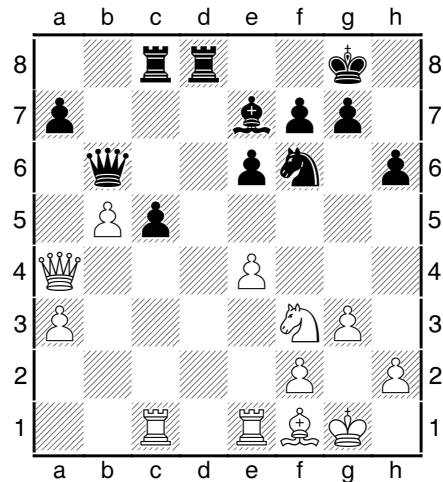
The free pawn advances opening the lines for black pieces; Black will exert a strong pressure on the a7-g1 diagonal.

26.h3

White loses important time protecting against the threat Ng4. The free pawn is protected indirectly:

a) 26.Bxc4 Ng4 27.Rf1 Rd3!;

b) 26.Rxc4 Ng4 27.Re2 Rxc4 28.Qxc4 Bc5 29.Qc2 Qxb5



Black is to move

26...c3

The pawn continues his march and new tactical possibilities are set up, in connection with the control over the d2-square.

27.Qb3 Bc5 28.Rc2 Rd2!

Black's free pawn makes possible beautiful tactical strikes. Now and in the future, the pawn is used as a tactical element and even sacrificed for the attack against the white king.

The game continued: 29.Rxd2 cxd2 30.Re2 Bxf2+ 31.Kg2 [31.Rxf2 Nxe4] 31...Rc3! 32.Qd1 Be3 33.Nxd2 Qd4 34.Qe1 Nxe4 35.Nxe4 Qxe4+ 36.Kh2 Qd4 37.Rg2 Rc1 38.Qe2 Qa1 39.Qxe3 Rxf1 40.g4 Re1 41.Re2 0–1

The queen and the free pawn

The queen is the worst piece to block a free pawn because she can be easily attacked by lower valued pieces. Also, the queen would lose from her attacking potential.

On the other hand, the queen is excellent in sustaining the pawn because she can both defend the pawn and sustain its advance. The queen, alone with the pawn, can help this advance against an opponent queen – this is not the case with the rook, knight or king. Moreover, the presence of the queens on the board keeps away the opponent king to come to block the free pawn or to control the queening square.

So, when you have a free pawn, you can trade lot of pieces (especially the minor ones which can easily block your pawn) if you can keep the queens on board.

White's advantage in this position (from the game Zagoriansky – Kan) is clear because of his free pawn and pair of bishops in open position.

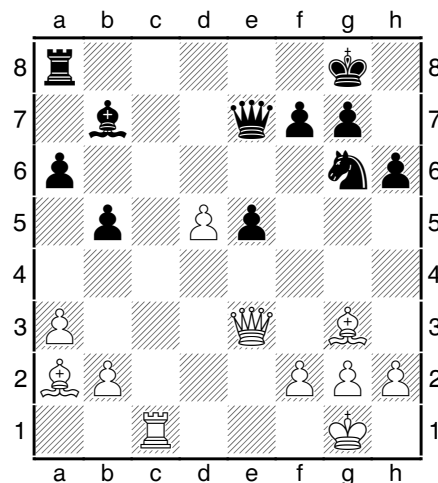
By **1.Qb6!** White is threatening **2.Rc7**, so he forces the trade of the rooks:

1...Rc8 2.Rxc8 Bxc8 and after 3.d6

White has a winning position.

From now on, Black defended very well, but White finally won and without emotions.

The game continued: 31.d6 Qd7 32.h4 Kf8 33.Qc5 Bb7 34.h5 Nf4 35.Qxe5 Ne6 36.Qc3 Nd8 37.Qc7 Bc6 38.Bd5 Ke8 39.Bxc6 Nxc6 40.Qb6 f6 41.Qxa6 Nd8 42.Qb6 Ne6 43.Qb8+ Kf7 44.Qa8 g6 45.hxg6+ Kxg6 46.Qg8+ Ng7 47.Qd5 Ne6 48.f3 h5 49.Be1 Ng5 50.Bc3 Nf7 51.Bb4 Ne5 52.Bc5 Kg7 53.f4 Ng4 54.f5 Ne5 55.Qe6 Qc6 56.Qe7+ Nf7 57.d7 Qd5 58.Qf8+ Kh7 59.Qxf7+ Qxf7 60.d8Q 1–0



White is to move

2. Retaining or deflecting opponent pieces

2.1. Using the pawn to retain opponent pieces, launch an attack on the other side

During the middlegame, when there are many pieces on the board, the pawn can be easily blocked by the opponent pieces (we will see the “blockade” later in our lesson).

However, the free pawn remains a key strategic element of the position, no matter what. By the threat of queening, the opponent pieces will be tied up with its blockade and, so, an attack might be possible on other part of the board where opponent pieces are in minority.

In this position from the game Nimzowitsch – Von Gottschall, 1925, the white free pawn on d5 is strongly blocked by the black pieces. Here, the black dark-square bishop is used as a first blockader and the d7-knight as a “reserve”. Also, the white pawn restricts the ray of action of the b7-bishop. White uses the position of the pawn which hinders black pieces to launch an attack against the black king:

17.Bb1 Re8 18.Qd3 Nf8 19.Rxe8 Qxe8 20.Nh4

The knight is brought to f5, an ideal square with pressure both against black kingside and d6-square.

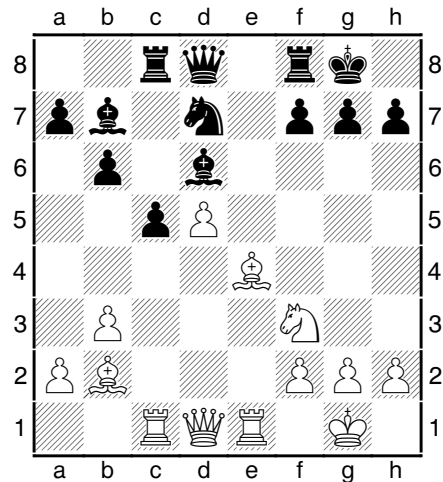
20...f6 21.Nf5 Rd8

[Better was: 21...Qd7, but White keeps the initiative after

22.Rd1 Re8 23.Nxd6 Qxd6 24.Bc3 defending the e1-square and preparing h2-h4-h5-h6]

22.Bxf6 Bxh2+ [22...gxf6 23.Nxd6 Rxd6 24.Qg3+ Kf7 25.Qxd6] 23.Kxh2 gxf6

24.Qg3+ with a big advantage for White.



White is to move

2.2. The sacrifice of the free pawn

If the free pawn is not blocked, its sacrifice is another tactical possibility during the middlegame. To understand better why this sacrifice might work, think at the following:

- The existence of a free pawn usually implies that there are open files and pieces are not hindered by the existence of pawns, so a direct fight between pieces is given – and tactics are at their home;
- After the pawn advances, the square where the pawn was will be cleared up becoming the new key-square of the position. The opponent concentrated his forces on the square in front of the free pawn;
- By capturing the sacrificed pawn, the opponent makes practically a forced move with the consequence of losing at least a tempo.

This is why a free pawn should be firmly blocked by placing a piece on the advancing square. Nimzowitsch was the first to say that only defending that square is not enough.

The sacrifice of the free pawn can be met even in endgames.

In this example from the game Gligoric – Sanchez, 1952, the white free passed and protected pawn from d5 will be sacrificed to disorganize Black's play. In the gained time, the white rooks will enter Black's camp.

49.d6!

[49.Rb2 is not enough because after 49...Rbe7, a rook should return: 50.Re1]

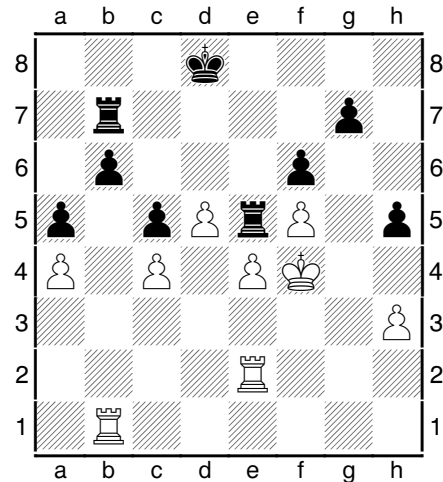
49...Kd7 50.Reb2 Kc6

[50...Kxd6 51.Rxb6+ Rxb6 52.Rxb6+ Kc7 53.Rb5 and White wins]

51.d7! Kxd7

[51...Rxd7 52.Rxb6+ Kc7 53.Rb7+ Kd8 54.Rxd7+ Kxd7 55.Rb7+ Kc6 56.Rxg7 Re8 57.Rf7 and White wins]

52.Rxb6 Rc7 53.Rd1+ Ke8 54.Rd5 1–0



White is to move

Creation of the free pawn

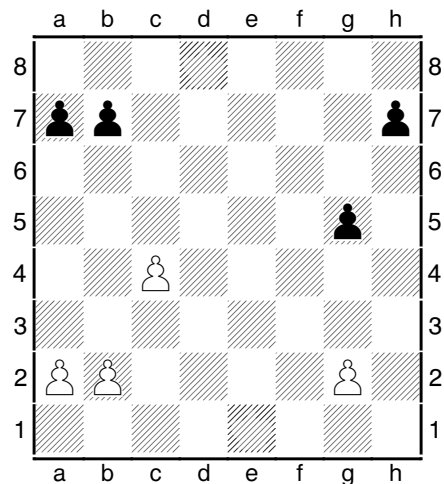
Pawn majorities

The most usual method of creating a free pawn is the pawn majority. From the opening or later, during the middlegame, by pawn moves or captures, the symmetry of structure is altered and majorities of pawns can appear on flanks or centre.

In this diagram, White has a pawn majority on the queenside of 3 against 2 pawns, while Black has a pawn majority on the kingside of 2 against 1 pawn.

The most important goal of a pawn majority is the creation of a free pawn. For this purpose, the pawns advance starting with the pawn with no opponent pawn on its file ("candidate" pawn).

Here, White already advanced the pawn on c4 and he should continue with: 1.b2-b4, 2.c4-c5 (not 2.b4-b5 because of 2...b7-b6!) 3.b4-b5 and 4.c5-c6.



On the kingside, with White to move, the black pawns will be stopped by 1.g2-g4. Black will need the support of pieces to play h7-h5 and getting the g-pawn free.

We will be back on this subject at a later time in our course when we study the pawn structures and phalanxes.

The exchange

In the same game Spassky – Petrosian, 1969, given as the first example in our lesson, we can see another way to create a free pawn.

Black took a pawn on d5 (by e6xd5) and it is White's turn now to retake the pawn, but how?

16.Bxd5!

After 16.exd5 Na5, the white bishop is forced to retreat and won't be able to sustain his pawn (remember: the free pawn should be sustained by all pieces!).

Choosing the right moment for changing the character of the position is very important in chess.

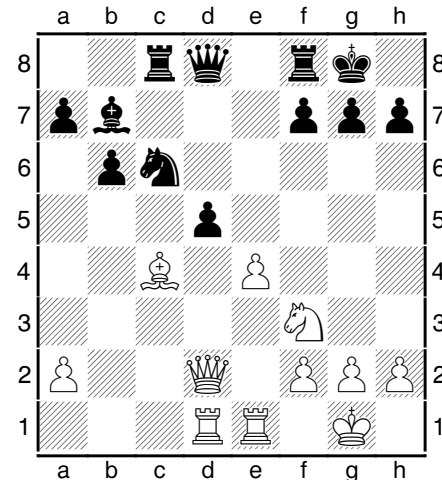
In this particular position, the white bishop on d5 is too dominant so Black will be sooner or later forced to make the exchange Bb7xd5. The remaining material (with all white pieces able to sustain the pawn and queens on the board) is enough and a guarantee for success.

16....Na5 17.Qf4 Qc7 18.Qf5 Bxd5 19.exd5 Qc2 20.Qf4!

White keeps the queens on the board.

Up to our previous position, the game went:

20...Qxa2 21.d6 Rcd8 22.d7 Qc4 23.Qf5 h6 24.Rc1 Qa6 25.Rc7 b5 26.Nd4 Qb6 27.Rc8



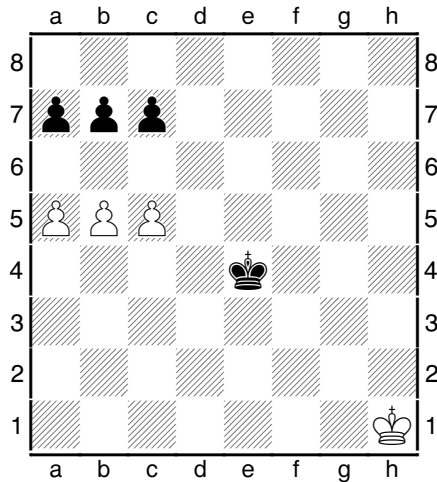
White is to move

Tactics

A pawn can pass over the opponent pawns if these are pinned or the advance of the pawn creates other threats that the opponent is forced to parry.

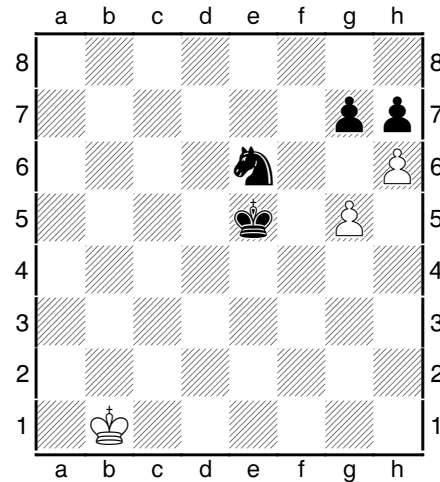
As said, queening a pawn is almost like the checkmate, so splendid combinations to create a free pawn can be also seen.

One might think that a group of pawns cannot create a free pawn against an equal number of opponent pawns. However, there are typical tricks which are worth to be remembered:



3 against 3 pawns. White is to move

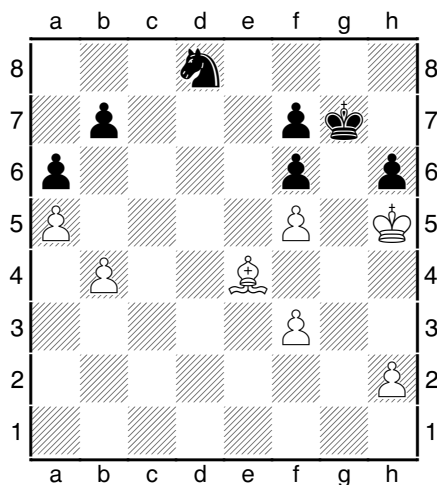
**1.b6! 1...axb6 [1...cxb6 2.a6! bxa6 3.c6]
2.c6! 2...bxc6 [2...bxa5 3.cxb7] 3.a6 +-**



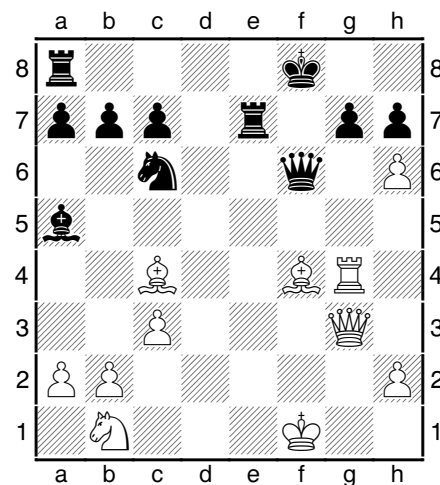
2 against 2 pawns. White is to move

1.g6! hxg6 [1...gxh6 2.gxh7] 2.h7 +-

Many times, pieces are sacrificed in order to create a free pawn which cannot be stopped to queening. We present just 2 combinations where White to move creates a free pawn by sacrificing a piece:



1.b5! axb5 2.Bxb7! Nxb7 3.a6 +-



**1.Rg6! Qxg6 2.Qxg6 hxg6 3.h7 Re1+
4.Kxe1 Ke7 5.Bg8! +-**

The capture

A very normal way to create a free pawn is to capture the opponent pawn/s in front of the “candidate”.

In our example, from the game Flohr – Romanovsky, 1935, White will free his a-pawn by capturing the black a7-pawn. In exchange, White renounces at his central d4-pawn.

Let’s see the consequences of this trade:

24.a5 Na8 25.Rb7! Rxd4 26.Nc5

White has no reason to hurry; the a7-pawn is as lost. The knight comes on an excellent square also blocking the black free pawn.

26...e5 27.Be3 Rdd8 28.Rxa7 Nc7 29.h3 Nb5 30.Rb7 Nd6 31.Rb2 Nb5 (diagram)

It is now clear that White’s strategy triumphed. Both players have a free pawn, but the black one is firmly blocked on a backward position – therefore it doesn’t represent any real threat.

On the other hand, White has a distant pawn which as we said is a plus during the endgame. For now, a black piece will have to stay “en garde” to watch the promotion square of this pawn. Also, by the existence of the distant pawn, White assured a clearly better endgame that he went for and then won convincingly.

The game continued:

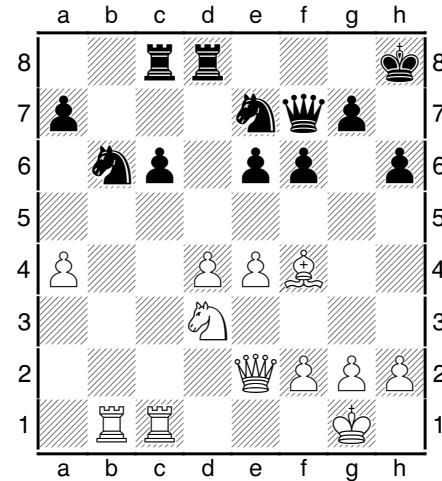
32.Rd2 f5 33.f3 fxe4 34.fxe4 Ng6 35.Qg4 Kh7 36.Rf2

Qe7 37.Rcf1 Rf8 38.Qe6 Qxe6 39.Nxe6 Rxf2 40.Rxf2 Re8

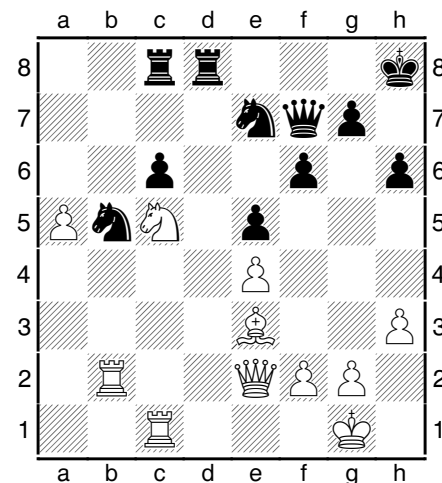
41.Nc5 Ra8 42.a6 Kg8 43.Ra2 Nf8 44.Bf2 Kf7 45.Bg3 Ng6 46.Rd2 Ra7 47.Rd7+ Rxd7 48.Nxd7 Ke6 49.Nc5+ Kd6 50.Bf2 Nc7 51.g3 Na8 52.Kg2 Ne7 53.Kf3 g6 54.Nd3 Nc8 55.Bc5+ Ke6 56.Nb2 Nd6 57.Bxd6 Kxd6 58.Nc4+ Kc5 59.Nxe5 Kb6 60.Nxg6 Kxa6 61.e5 Kb7 62.Ke4 Kc7 63.Kf5 Kd7 64.e6+ Ke8 65.Ne5 c5 66.Nd7 c4 67.Nf6+ Kf8 68.Nd5 Kg7 69.Ke4 1–0

Blockade

The free pawn is by definition not obstructed in its way by opponent pawns. However, the blockade of the free pawn can be done with the pieces. The blockade should be done by placing a piece in front of the pawn. The simple control of the advancing squares of the pawn is in most of the cases not enough. As already seen, the free pawn can advance even sacrificing itself, opening the lines for the own pieces at the proper moment.



White is to move



Position after 31...Nb5

The blockade of the pawn should be done as early as possible. Every square that the pawn advances further brings an important difference of space between the 2 camps.

The blockading square is however like a strong square because a piece placed there will be protected by the pawn itself. So, consequently, even if forced, blocking a free pawn is in most of the cases a good maneuver, especially, when the pawn is on the centre.

The best piece to block the pawn is the knight (especially when the pawn is on the centre) because, there, the knight finds his safe place. The bishop is also not bad to block a free pawn. The rooks or queen are bad to block a pawn because they can be attacked by minor pieces and they are losing from their attacking potential.

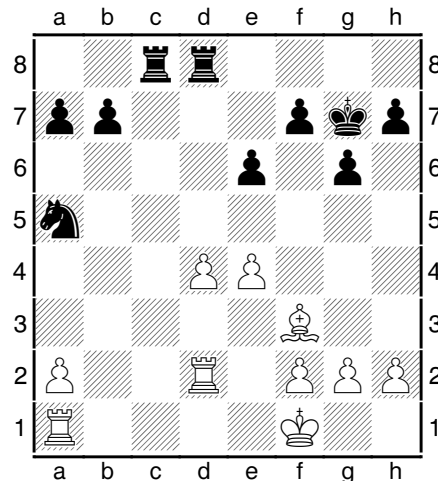
A successful blockade might be even an advantage!

In this position from the game Eliskases – Flohr, 1937, we have an endgame where:

- White has a bishop against a knight with pawns on both sides;
- Black has the control over the c-file;
- White has a central pawn majority while Black has the queenside majority which might be a plus.

So, Black has an advantage, but how to continue? By the next maneuver, Black consolidates his advantage and in the resulted endgame, White will have no chance:

1...e5! The best practical choice. White has to advance his pawn now:



Black is to move

2.d5 and we can see a free, passed and protected pawn on d5, but good for nothing in view of the strong blockade that Black will oppose:

2...Nc4! The knight is heading to the d6-square where White has no possibility to attack. Also, the white bishop is hopeless because his central pawns are on the same color.

The game continued: **3.Re2 Nd6 4.Rb1 Rc4** Black is doubling his rooks on the c-file. The knight firmly blocks the white free pawn, defends the b7-pawn and attacks the e4-pawn... so, an excellent operational base for the knight.

Black won easily: 24.g3 Rdc8 25.Bg2 Rc1+ 26.Rxc1 Rxc1+ 27.Re1 Rxe1+ 28.Kxe1 f5 29.f3 fxe4 30.fxe4 b5 31.Kd2 a5 32.Kd3 Kf6 33.Bf3 Ke7 34.h4 h6 35.Bd1 Kd8 36.a4 bxa4 37.Bxa4 Kc7 38.Bc2 Kb6 39.Kc3 Kb5 40.Kb3 Kc5 41.Ka4 Nc4 42.Bb3 Nd2 43.Bc2 Nf1 44.Kxa5 Nxb3 45.Ka4 Nh5 46.Kb3 Kd4 47.Kb4 Nf6 48.d6 g5 49.hxg5 hxg5 50.Kb5 g4 51.Bd1 g3 52.Bf3 Ke3 53.Bh1 Kf2 54.Kc6 g2 55.Bxg2 Kxg2 56.d7 Nxd7 57.Kxd7 Kf3 0–1

Elimination of blockade

The position is from the game Nimzowitsch – Saemisch, 1923. White's free pawn is blocked on d5. White's first aim is to destroy Black's blockade on d6:

17.Nd3! White attacks the key-square in front of his free pawn.

17...a6 18.a4!

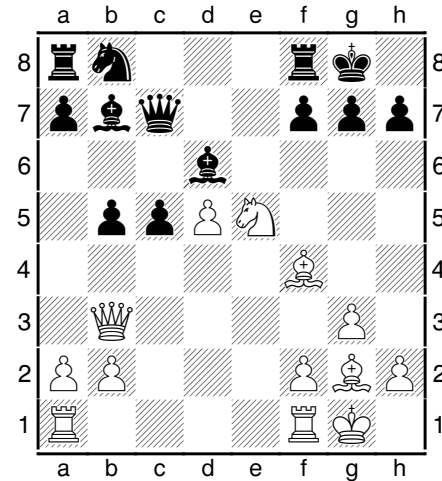
The idea behind this move is to create some breaches on Black's queenside. White needs more space or new open lines in order to bring more forces against the bishop on d6.

18...c4 19.Qa3!

Finally, by a nice move, White attacks the d6-bishop once more and destroys the blockade.

19...Bxf4 [19...Bxa3 is not good because of: 20.Bxc7 cxd3 21.Rxa3]

20.Nxf4 and the pawn advances on d6.



White is to move

In the end of the lesson, we give a game with “some” free pawns in action. Enjoy!

Serper, Grigory (2575) - Nikolaidis, Ioannis (2440)

St Petersburg op St Petersburg, 1993 [annotations by Serper]

1.c4 g6 2.e4 Bg7 3.d4 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Nge2 Nbd7 6.Ng3 c6 7.Be2 a6 8.Be3 h5 9.f3! b5 10.c5 [10.a3?! bxc4! 11.Bxc4 d5!∞] **10...dxc5 11.dxc5 Qc7 12.0-0 h4 13.Nh1 Nh5 Δ ♔e5 14.Qd2 e5 15.Nf2 Nf8?! Δ ♜e6-d4; [15...Nf4 16.Nd3 Bh6 17.a4±] 16.a4 b4 17.Nd5! cxd5 18.exd5 Δ ♜e4-d6; Δ c6, ♝ac1, d6 18...f5 19.d6! Qc6** [19...Qd7 20.c6! Qxc6 21.Rfc1 Δ ♜c7+-] **20.Bb5!! axb5 21.axb5 Qxb5** [21...Qb7? 22.c6 Qb8 (22...Qxb5 23.d7+!+-) 23.b6!+-] **22.Rxa8 Qc6** [23.Rfa1 f4 24.R1a7! Nd7 [24...fxe3? 25.Qd5!! exf2+ 26.Kxf2 Qxd5 27.Rxc8#] **25.Rxc8+! Qxc8 26.Qd5 fxe3** [26...Nh6 27.Qe6+ Kf8 28.Ne4 Qe8 (28...fxe3 29.Ng5 Qe8 30.Ra8) 29.Qxe8+! Nxe8 (29...Kxe8 30.Ra8+ Kf7 31.Ng5#) 30.Rxd7 fxe3 31.c6+-] **27.Qe6+ Kf8 28.Rxd7 exf2+ 29.Kf1 Qe8** [29...Qa6+ 30.Kxf2 Qe2+! 31.Kxe2 Nf4+ 32.Kf1 Nxe6 33.c6 Kg8 34.Re7!+-; 29...Ng3+ 30.hxg3 Qxd7 31.Qxd7 hxg3 32.Qe7+ Kg8 33.Qe8+ Kh7 (33...Bf8 34.Qxg6+ Bg7 35.Qxg3+-) 34.d7+-] **30.Rf7+!!** [30.Qxe8+ Kxe8 31.Re7+ Kd8? (31...Kf8! 32.c6 Ng3+!! 33.Kxf2 (33.hxg3 hxg3 34.Ke2 Rh1+-) 33...Nf5+-) 32.c6 Kc8? 33.Ra7 Kb8 34.d7! Kxa7 35.c7+-] **30...Qxf7 31.Qc8+ Qe8 32.d7 Kf7 33.dxe8Q+ Rxe8 34.Qb7+ Re7 35.c6!+- e4** [36.c7 [36.fxe4?? Rxb7 37.cxb7 Be5+-] **36...e3 37.Qd5+ Kf6 38.Qd6+ Kf7** [38...Re6 39.Qxe6+] **39.Qd5+⊕ Kf6 40.Qd6+ Kf7 41.Qxe7+ Kxe7 42.c8Q Bh6** [42...Bd4 43.Qc4+-] **43.Qc5+ Ke8** [43...Kf7 44.Qc4+ Δ ♚h4] **44.Qb5+ Kd8 45.Qb6+ Kd7 46.Qxg6 e2+ 47.Kxf2 Be3+ 48.Ke1** [48.Ke1 Nf4 49.Qf7+ Kd8 50.g3+-] **1-0**

□ Boleslavsky, Isaak

■ Fine, Reuben

USA-URS radio m (2)

1945

WEAK PAWNS

In this game we speak about the weak pawns in general. We will see a pawn structure that contains several types of weak pawns or pawn groups. Even if Black manages to keep the material balance until the end, the pawn structure will cost him the point.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 d6 5.c4

This move was introduced by Duras and it is an alternative to the main moves 5.c3, 5.d4 and 5.0-0, in the Spanish Opening, Steinitz variation. The text move has the concrete idea to block Black's moves b7-b5 and d6-d5, by which usually he gets counter play in this opening.

Bd7 6.Nc3

[Also possible is: 6.d4 exd4 7.Nxd4 Nxd4 8.Bxd7+ Qxd7 9.Qxd4

and White has a slightly better position due to the space advantage and the better mobility of the pieces.]

6...g6?!

[Probably it was better for Black to continue the normal development of the pieces:

6...Nf6 7.d4 Nxd4 8.Nxd4 exd4 9.Bxd7+ Qxd7 10.Qxd4 Be7 11.0-0 0-0 12.Re1 Rfe8

as Fine recommended in his analysis.

Probably during the game, he didn't like this variation because of the passivity of the dark-squares bishop, but the bishop can be retreated on f8, being a good defender. In compensation, Black gets counter play on the e-file, pressing on the e4-pawn. We can fairly appreciate the position as equal.]

7.d4

White hurries with this thrust in the center before Black manages to play Bg7, when the move d2-d4 will be harder to be realized.

exd4

In view of the development of the bishop on g7, this is the best move, opening the main diagonal.

In addition, Black shouldn't let White to conquer more space with 8.d4-d5.

[A mistake would be:

7...Nxd4 8.Nxd4 exd4 9.Qxd4 Nf6 (9...f6 is almost forced here, but White has a better position because Black has real problems with the development of the pieces.) 10.Bg5 Bg7 (10...Be7 11.Nd5+-) 11.e5 dxe5 12.Qxe5+ Qe7 13.Bxd7+ Kxd7 14.0-0-0+ Ke8 15.Qxe7+ Kxe7 16.Nd5+-]

8.Nxd4 Bg7 9.Nxc6 bxc6

It is good for Black to keep the light-squares bishop on the board. Black has a simple plan: to move c6-c5 (at the right moment) and to exert pressure on the e4-pawn by bringing the light-squares bishop on the main diagonal.

10.0-0 Ne7?!

Black wants to keep the main diagonal open for his g7-bishop, but places his knight on a position without any future.

[10...Nf6 was better, with pressure on the e4-pawn (with Re8 and Bc6). Then, the black knight could go on d7 or g4 heading for e5-square.]

11.c5! Diagram

(Diagram)

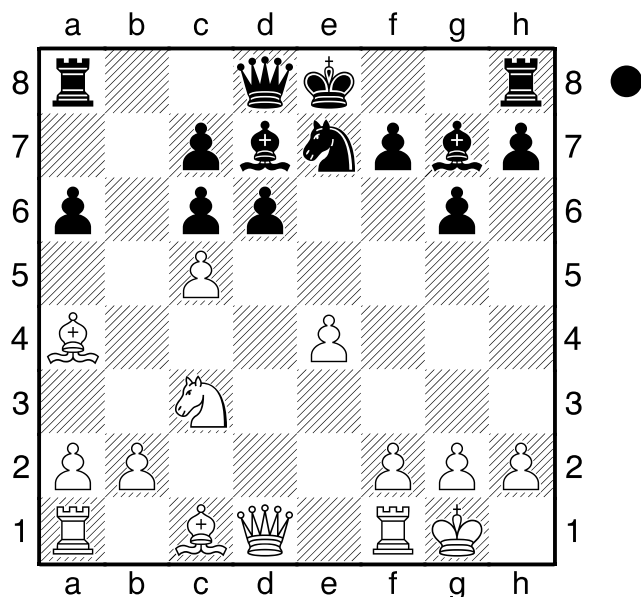
White fixes the black pawns complex, not allowing the counter play with c6-c5, as we explained above. In this way, the black pawns on the queenside will be very weak. Also, the light-square bishop has the important a2-g8 diagonal free.

Nc8

[Black has no better moves:

11...dxc5 12.Be3 c4 13.Qe2 recapturing the pawn with advantage.]

[11...d5 12.exd5 cxd5 13.Nxd5 Nxd5 14.Qxd5 Bxa4 15.Qe4+ Kf8 16.Qxa4 with big advantage for White.]



12.Be3 0-0 13.Qd2

This move develops the queen and makes the connection between the rooks, preparing to bring them into the game. The queen is well placed on d2 because White may have ideas related to the move Be3-h6, exchanging the dark-squares bishops, after which Black gets a complex of weak dark squares on the kingside.

Qe7 14.Rad1 pinning the d6-pawn.

Be8

Black wants to unpin the d6-pawn, planning the move dxc5, but the text move is too passive. Black places the second minor piece on the back rank, limiting the mobility of the rooks.

[14...Rd8 in order to defend the light-squares bishop, with the same idea to take on c5 wouldn't have been better, because of: 15.Bg5 f6 (15...Bf6 16.Bxf6 Qxf6 17.f4

White intends f4-f5 to exploit the weakness of the dark squares complex on the kingside.) and Black is choked. The game may continue with: 16.Bf4 f5 17.Nd5+-]

[

Black's best plan would have been occupying the open files with Rb8 and Re8, trying to obtain counter chances: 14...Rb8 15.Rfe1 Re8]

15.f4

The position is hard for Black. Two minor pieces are on the back rank, without perspectives to improve their position too much. For the moment, both pieces have defensive roles: the knight defends the d6-pawn, while the bishop on e8 defends the c6-pawn. The rook on f8 is totally immobilized, especially "thanks" to the bishop on e8.

Black has a difficult position and he has to take immediate measures in order to avoid a defeat on the spot:

f5!?

It looks like a desperate move, but White was threatening very dangerous 16.f5! with very good attacking perspectives, considering the lack of cooperation between the black pieces. 15...f6 might be playable, but it condemns Black to pure passivity.

[If 15...Bxc3 16.bxc3 Qxe4 17.Bc2 Qe7 (17...Qd5 18.Qf2 Qxa2 19.f5) 18.f5 and White is going to get a decisive attack.]

16.exf5 gxf5?!

Black deliberately destroys his pawn structure! In this view, better would have been 16...Rxf5, but anyway his position doesn't improve very much.

17.Rfe1 dxc5

Through this move, Black frees the knight on d8, who finally is able to come into the game. Black has triple pawns on the c-file which are worth less than one single good pawn.

18.Qf2 Nd6 19.Bxc5

Just look at the black pawns... they all are weak pawns; no black pawn can defend another black pawn!

White's plan now is to exchange pieces entering an ending where the pawn weaknesses are much more evident. Boleslavsky will manage to exploit these weaknesses in a brilliant way.

Qd8 20.Bd4 Bxd4 21.Qxd4 Qf6

Black king's position is discovered and White threatens to attack with Re3-g3, so Black

decides to exchange the queens. Of course this can be only in White's advantage. Although the endgame is theoretically lost, it offers some chances to fight for a draw if White plays careless.

22.Bb3+! a very exact move

[To exchange the queens immediately would not have been the best solution:

22.Qxf6 Rxf6 23.Re7 Rf7 24.Bb3 Kf8!]

22...Kh8 23.Qxf6+ Rxf6 24.Re7 Rc8

25.Rde1 Bg6

Reuben Fine, one of the best endgames experts in his time, considers that the best drawing chances offers the ending with rook + bishop vs. rook + bishop.

[On the contrary, if Black opts for exchanging the bishops:

25...Bf7 26.Bxf7 Rxf7 27.Rxf7 Nxf7 28.Re7 Kg7 29.Na4

Black remains bottled up, and White wins easily, because of the better pawn structure.]

26.R1e6

White continues his plan to exchange the pieces.

Rxe6 27.Bxe6 Re8

[After 27...Rb8 28.Rxc7 Rxb2 29.Rxc6 Ne4 30.Nxe4 fxe4 31.f5 White should win.]

28.Rxe8+ Bxe8 29.Na4!

Fixing the queenside pawns. Even if Black managed to maintain the material balance, the very bad pawn structure leads him to the defeat.

Kg7 30.Nc5 a5 31.Kf2 Bf7 32.Bxf7!

[White pays attention and doesn't let the victory to escape through his fingers. Black set up a trap: to exchange his knight for the white bishop, which offers him better chances. For example, if now White plays:

32.a3? Ne4+ 33.Nxe4 Bxe6

and the bishop is stronger than the knight in positions with pawns on both sides, which could compensate to some extent the bad pawn structure and Black increases his

drawing chances considerably.]

32...Kxf7 33.b3 h5

An old chess proverb goes like this: "When you are desperate, push a pawn!". Of course this doesn't change the situation now.

34.Ke2 Ke7 35.Ke3 Nb5 36.Nb7 c5

[Or 36...Nc3 37.Kd4 Nxa2 38.Ke5 c5 39.Nxa5 Nc3 40.Kxf5+-]

37.Nxa5

One of the weak pawns couldn't be defended anymore and has fallen. With a pawn up and a free pawn on the a-file White wins without emotions.

Kd6 38.Nc4+ Kd5 39.Kd3 Nd6 40.Nxd6!

This move is enough for the victory.

cx d6 41.a3 Black resigned in view of 41...Kc6 42.b4! destroying the dangerous phalanx 42...Kb5 43.bxc5 Kxc5 44.a4 Kc6 45.Kd4+- and while the black king has to watch the a-pawn, the white king captures the weak pawns on the kingside and wins.

In this game, Black's main weakness was the pawn structure, which came as a consequence of some inaccuracies like 10ΔNe7?! or 16Δgxf5. Black got four pawn islands, while White only two. In order to defend the weaknesses, Black was reduced to a total passivity, which allowed White to obtain positional superiority, which led to the exchange of the pieces, as White desired. In the endgame, Black couldn't defend the a-pawn and thanks to his free pawn, White won.

1-0

□ Petrosian, Tigran V

■ Botvinnik, Mikhail

World Championship 25th (5)

01.04.1963

PAWN ISLANDS

Speaking about pawn weaknesses, Capablanca has introduced the concept of "pawn islands". As the name suggests, one of the player has pawn islands when his pawn structure is not compact, but it is divided in several parts. The more pawn islands are on the table, the weaker is the pawn structure, respectively the position.

1.c4 g6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 d5

Black's main idea in Grunfeld Defense is to attack White's d4-pawn. Black opens the d-file to attack the pawn with queen or rooks, play Bg7, the undermining pawn moves c7-c5 and even e7-e5, Nc6, and Bg4 which attacks a defender of the pawn (Nf3). In fact, all black pieces (the f6-knight is usually exchanged after 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3) are participating to create pressure on that pawn, the key-square of Grunfeld Defense.

4.Nf3 Bg7 5.e3

White has chosen a more quiet variation. Before occupying the center with e2-e4, he wants to put the king in safety and to avoid Black's attacking moves c7-c5 or e7-e5.

[5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 c5 leads to the main lines of the Grunfeld Defense. White has the "perfect centre" and Black has the "perfect attack" against White's centre.]

5...0-0 6.Be2 dxc4 7.Bxc4 c5 8.d5

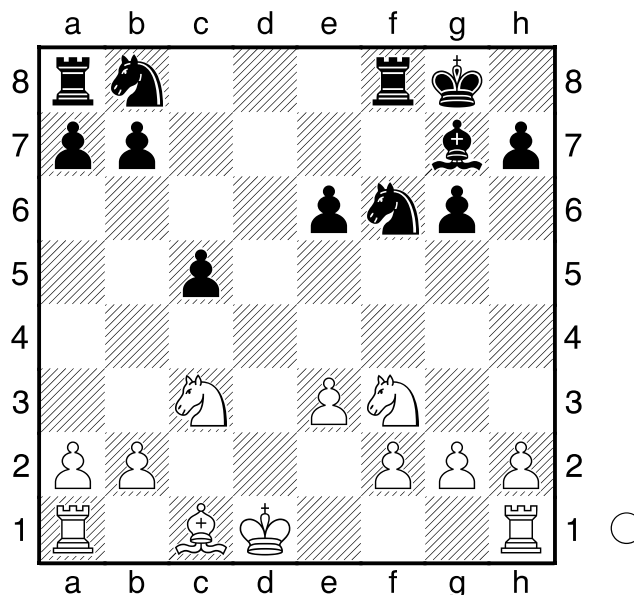
[If White takes the pawn: 8.dxc5, then Qxd1+ 9.Nxd1 Nbd7 10.b4 a5 and Black gets the pawn back with a better position.]

8...e6?!

In his attempt to destroy White's center, Black deliberately accepts a weakness on e6.

[Better would have been 8...a6, with the idea b5 and Bb7, acquiring more space on the queenside and pressing on the white center.]

9.dxe6 Qxd1+ 10.Kxd1 Bxe6 11.Bxe6 fxe6
Diagram



It has resulted a position with a better pawn structure for White: he has only 2 pawn islands (a-b, e-h) while Black has 3 (a-c, e, g-h). The black pawns can hardly defend one each other and the weak e6-pawn will lead Black in this game to defeat.

Petrosian has declared that before the game, when he was preparing for the game with his trainer, they have analyzed this position by coincidence. He was considering that White has decisive advantage here: "I cannot guarantee 100 percents, but there are very good chances to win the game!" Further he proved a very exact play and materialized his positional advantage.

12.Ke2 clears the d-file for the rooks.
Nc6 13.Rd1 Rad8

It is not clear why Botvinnik was so confident in his chances. It is obvious that the more pieces are exchanged, the better are the chances for White who has the better pawn structure.

14.Rxd8 Rxd8 15.Ng5!

Attacking the e6-pawn and transferring the knight to the active e4-square, which is

inaccessible to the opponent's pawns and bishop (operation base).

The weakness of a pawn is not only that it can be harder defended (requires a piece in a defensive position), but even more important is the fact that the opponent can use the squares in front of that pawn as safe bases for his pieces.

Re8 16.Nge4 Nxe4 17.Nxe4 b6 18.Rb1

Petrosian considers here that even the position may seem equal, the weaknesses in front of the e6-pawn grants White a significant advantage. (Somebody should teach the chess engines about "pawn islands"... Or, better NO)

Nb4!?

Through the maneuver Nc6-b4-d5-f6, Black wants to send away the annoying white knight from e4.

19.Bd2! Nd5

[It is a mistake: 19...Nxa2 because of: 20.Ra1 Nb4 21.Bxb4 cxb4 22.Rxa7 Bxb2 23.Rb7±]

20.a4

White fixes the black queenside pawns.

Rc8

[In case of 20...Nf6 it could follow: 21.Nxf6+ Bxf6 22.Bc3 Bxc3 23.bxc3 Rd8 24.a5 bxa5 25.Rb5

with good winning chances for White. (after capturing the a5-pawn, Black will have 4 pawn islands)]

21.b3 Bf8 22.Rc1

This move comes against the tactical threat 22...c4 23.Rc1 cxb3 24.Rxc8 b2 25.Rc1 bxc1Q 26.Bxc1 and White has only a draw.

Be7?!

[The text move is a mistake, but after: 22...Rc7 23.Ng5 Re7 24.e4 Nf6 25.Bc3 e5 26.f4

White is also better.]

23.b4!

This is why 22...Be7 was a mistake. This pawn

move comes just in time, as long as the rook stands undefended on the c-file.

White threatens b4xc5 creating new weaknesses in Black's camp (after b6xc5, Black will have 4 pawn islands: the a6- and c4- pawns will be weak and White can attack them easily). It is also important to notice that the white king can come in an active position in just 2 moves: Ke2-d1-c4, a very important asset during endgames.

c4

This move is almost forced. Now, Black will have another weakness, the c4-pawn, which is cut off from the rest of the black pawns and it is not enough sustained by the pieces.

[23...Rc7 24.bxc5 bxc5 25.Kd3± with the idea a4-a5 and Rd3-c4.]

[23...Kf7 24.bxc5 bxc5 25.Kd3 Nb6 26.a5 c4+ 27.Kc2 Nd5 28.Rb1±]

24.b5 Kf7 Diagram

[If 24...Ba3 25.Rc2 c3 26.Bxc3 Bb4 27.Kd2 (27.Kd3? Bxc3 28.Nxc3 Nb4+) 27...Rc4 28.Bxb4 (28.Kd3? Rxe4) 28...Rxe4 29.Bd6 Rxa4 30.f3!

and after e3-e4, the rook enters the 7th rank and White is considerably better.]

(Diagram)

25.Bc3

The c4-pawn has practically become isolated, and White's bishop blockades it.

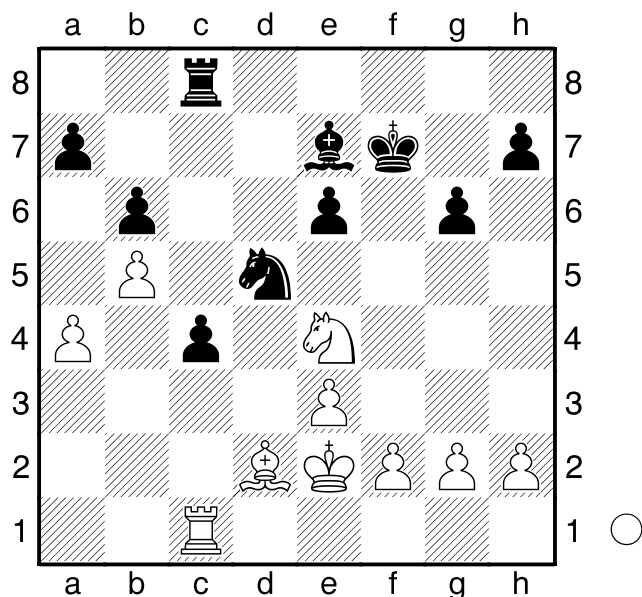
Ba3 26.Rc2

The treat is now 27.Nd2 and 28.Be5, capturing the c-pawn.

Nxc3+ 27.Rxc3

Because the c4-pawn is isolated from the rest of the pawns, the black pawn structure consists now of four islands! Petrosian proves further a high technique.

Bb4 28.Rc2 Ke7 29.Nd2!



White increases the pressure upon the isolated pawn and forces it to advance.

c3

[29...Bxd2 30.Kxd2 Kd6 31.Kc3 Kc5 32.Rd2+- followed by Rd4]

30.Ne4 Ba5 31.Kd3 Rd8+ 32.Kc4 Rd1 33.Nxc3

One of the islands has sunk!

Rh1

[Better would have been for Black to take the knight, which is obviously better than the bishop:

33...Bxc3 34.Kxc3 Rh1 35.h3 but White should win anyway.]

34.Ne4!

White gives a pawn, but activates all his 3 pieces.

Rxh2 35.Kd4 Kd7

[Black has to impede the white rook to enter the 7th rank:

35...Rxg2 36.Rc7+ with the idea 37.Rxh7 and 38.Ke5 +-]

36.g3 Bb4 37.Ke5

As we were saying in a previous commentary, the squares in front of the e6-pawn can be

exploited by the opponent. Now the white king is able to perform a decisive march in the opposite camp.

Rh5+

[37...Be7 38.Rd2+ and the e6-pawn falls]

38.Kf6 Be7+ 39.Kg7 e5 40.Rc6 Rh1 41.Kf7 Ra1 42.Re6! Bd8

[42...Bc5 43.Rxe5 Rxa4 44.Nxc5+ bxc5 45.Rxc5+-]

[42...Bb4 43.Nf6+ Kc8 44.Rxe5 Rxa4 45.Re4 followed by 46.Nd5 +-]

43.Rd6+ Kc8

[43...Kc7 44.Ke8]

44.Ke8 Bc7 45.Rc6 Rd1

[45...Rxa4 46.Ng5 Kb7 47.Ne6 Bb8

48.Nd8+ Ka8 49.Rc8 followed by 50.Nc6 +-]

46.Ng5 Rd8+ 47.Kf7 Rd7+ 48.Kg8

Black resigned.

We have seen the more islands a pawn structure has, the weaker it is.

Black allowed a weak pawn on e6, convinced that it is irrelevant. But Petrosian proved that the pawn islands are a long-term advantage. Very important were the squares in front of the e6-pawn (e4 and e5), where White was able to place a safe knight and, in the endgame, to enter decisively Black's camp with the king.

1-0

 **Euwe,Max**
 **Alekhine,Alexander**
 Amsterdam m2 (8) 1926

THE PAWN MAJORITY

In many cases, even in an early stage of the game, the pawn exchanges may lead to asymmetrical groups of pawn. For example, on the kingside there are 3 white pawns against 4 black pawns, while on the queenside there are 3 white pawns against 2 black pawns. Such pawn structures determine the strategic plans of both players which usually try to advance their majorities thus creating free pawns or local space advantage.

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.b4 g6 4.e3 a5 5.b5!

White gains more space on the queenside and, subsequently, hinders Black's normal piece development (Nc6).

c5 a normal move, defending the d4-pawn.

[Of course not: 5...dxe3 6.fxe3 and 7.d4, with a dominating position.]

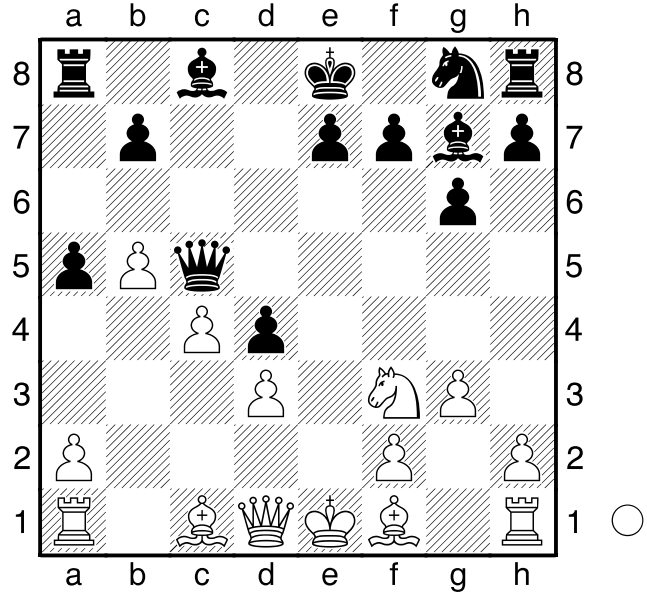
6.exd4 Bg7 7.d3 cxd4

White has now a pawn majority on the queenside: a-c pawns against a-b pawns. The advanced b5- and c4- pawns left a "hole" on c5 that Black can use to BLOCK the white pawns (with b7-b6, Nd7-c5). When a pawn majority can be strongly blocked and, moreover, the blockading piece is a knight, the pawns' value decreases a lot. In fact, the power of the knight in blockade is rather considerable. The pawns are strongest when they are on the same rank, so White's aim is to make the advance c4-c5.

On the kingside, Black has a pawn majority e-h pawns against f-h pawns. In general, a pawn majority on the kingside is more valuable when it contains more pawns because 2 or 3 pawns are needed to assure the protection of the king.

8.g3 Nd7 9.Nbd2 Nc5 10.Nb3 Qb6 11.Nxc5 Qxc5 Diagram

The queen is the worst piece in the role to block the opponent pawns. Just for the moment, the queen occupies a central positions on c5.



12.Bg2 Nh6 13.0-0 0-0 14.a4!

By the coming Ba3, White manages to unblock his pawn majority.

Re8 15.Re1 Bf5 16.Ba3 Qc7 17.c5

The power of 2 advanced pawns on the same rank is more important than the bishop's open diagonal. In fact, by tactical means, White's bishop is not blocked (White always threat to play c5-c6) and the bishop collaborates very well with his pawns.

Rad8 18.Ng5

White's knight gets closer to the pawns through the maneuver Ng5-e4.

Bf6 19.Ne4 Bg7 20.Qd2 Ng4

20...Ra8 is stifling for Black, so Alekhine decides to sacrifice the a5-pawn and tries to get some counter play on the kingside.

21.b6 Qc8 22.c6!

A typical combination: one of the pawn is sacrificed to free the other pawn's way.

bxc6 23.Qxa5

Now, White has 2 free pawns which easily decide the game.

Ne5 24.Qd2 Qa6 25.a5 Nxd3 26.Nc5

[26.Bf1?? Nxe1 27.Bxa6 Nf3+
The weak squares around the king should be
well supervised...]

26...Nxc5 27.Bxc5 Qb5

[Black would have better chances with: 27...d3
, but White is winning after a correct play:
28.Rac1 Qb7 29.Bb4 Rc8 30.Rc4 e5
31.Rec1 e4 32.g4±]

28.Bxe7 Rc8 29.Bf1 Qb3

[29...d3 30.Rab1 Qa6 (30...Qd5 31.a6)
31.b7 Rb8 32.Bd6]

30.Ra3 Qd5 31.b7 Rb8 32.a6 Black resigned
soon.

White created a pawn majority on the queenside
even from the opening stage. Black was not
prepared to create a strong blockade on c5 and
White obtained a mobile advanced majority and,
finally, an advanced pawn well sustained by the
pieces.

1-0

FREE PAWN

In this game you will see the strength of the free pawn in the centre, well sustained by its pieces.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Nf3 b6?! 8.Bb5+

Black's move is too passive and not in the spirit of this opening or opening's principles, in general. Characteristic for Grunfeld Defense was 7...c7-c5, quickly attacking the center or 7...0-0 followed by c7-c5 at the next move.

8.Bb5+

The 16-year-old boy Kasparov, future world champion, evidences the Black's deficient strategy. Black has no better continuation than the one in the game.

c6

[8...Bd7 9.Bc4 and the previous move b7-b6 becomes just a unjustified weakness because the bishop wasn't developed on b7.]

[8...Nd7 9.Bc6 Rb8 10.Qa4 Bb7 11.Bf4 Bxc6 12.Qxc6±]

9.Bc4 0-0

[After playing b7-b6, changing back to the typical plans is forbidden:

9...c5?? 10.Bd5 and White wins a rook.]

10.0-0 Ba6 11.Bxa6 Nxa6 12.Qa4

The queen is activated on a perfect square, where she is safe and sustains White's future actions on the queenside and centre.

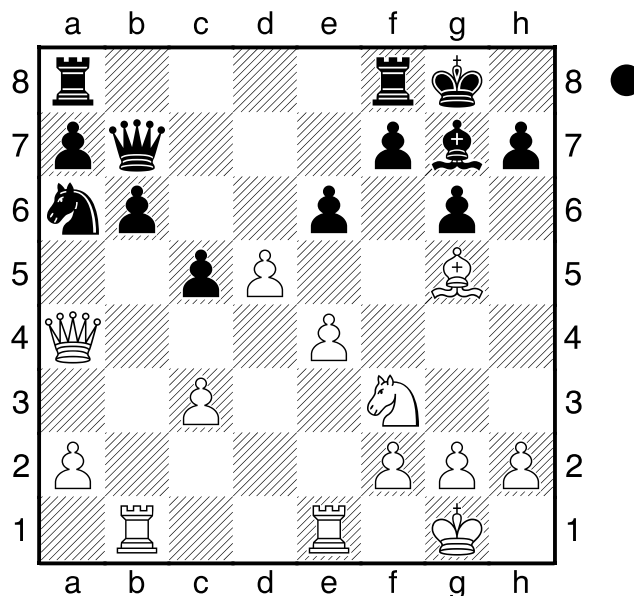
Qc8 13.Bg5 Qb7 14.Rfe1

For the 3rd time in a row, White develops creating threats (Qa4 on a6 and c6, Bg5 on e7, Re1 with the threat Bxe7).

e6 15.Rab1 c5

Suffering from lack of space, Black undermines the center. But he does on the 15th move what he should have done on the 7th and White is completely prepared now to sustain his centre or even...

16.d5! Diagram



to create a free pawn.

White sacrifices the c3-pawn for getting his d-pawn free. It is very important that Black cannot block this pawn on any square in good conditions and all white pieces are prepared to sustain the pawn's advance.

Bxc3 17.Red1 exd5 18.exd5 Bg7

[Black cannot activate his knight:

18...Nc7 19.Qc4 Bg7 20.Qxc5!±]

[18...Nb4 19.Qb3 Bg7 20.a3 and back: Na6]

19.d6 f6 20.d7!!

In connection with a free pawn, many things can happen. Here, the pawn plays 2 roles:

1. it keeps the black rooks busy with the defense of the queening square.
2. it splits the Black's flanks in 2 (see the black queen which cannot protect the kingside).

fxg5 21.Qc4+ Kh8 22.Nxg5 Bf6 forced

[22...h6 23.Nf7+ Rxf7 24.Qxf7+-]

[22...Bd4 23.Rxd4 cxd4 24.Qxd4+ Kg8 25.Ne6 Rf7 and the free pawn plays its role: 26.d8Q+-]

23.Ne6 Nc7

[23...Rg8 24.Qf4 Bc3 25.Rb3 Bg7

26.Nxg7+-]

24.Nxf8

White gets back some of the sacrificed material, and, more important, reduces from the defenders of the queening square.

Rxf8 25.Rd6 Be7 26.d8Q! Bxd8

[Or 26...Rxd8 27.Rxd8+ Bxd8 28.Qf7 Qd5
29.Qxd5 Nxd5 30.Rd1]

27.Qc3+ Kg8 28.Rd7 Bf6 29.Qc4+ Kh8

30.Qf4± Qa6?? 31.Qh6 Black resigned.

1-0

STRONG SQUARE

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.c4

White avoids playing the Pirc Defense (3.Nc3) and opts for known systems, the Romanian player being an expert of the King's Indian with both White and Black. We can notice that the grandmasters play the same openings with both colors, being important both the psychological factor in choosing the variations and the self-confidence some of the players possess.

d6 4.Nc3 Nc6

Because Black hasn't developed his knight on f6, he tries to keep open the diagonal of the dark-squares bishop, creating pressure on the d4-square, avoiding the standard development with 4...Nf6.

5.Be3

The move order is very important. 5.d4-d5 prematurely opens the a1-h8 diagonal, while 5.Nf3 allows opponent to increase the pressure on d4 with 5...Bg4, with pleasant play for Black.

e5 6.d5

After the situation in the center has been clarified, the suitable plans for both sides are the following:
White attacks on the queenside, where he has more space, having in mind the thematic thrust c4-c5, which leads to opening the c-file. Further, the white pieces may invade this file, combined with several maneuvers meant to create some weaknesses on the a- and b-files, but also outposts for the white pieces. Moreover, the d6-pawn gets weakened, becoming a target for White.

Black's plan is very dynamic, based on sacrifices and tactics, the main target being the white king. The move f7-f5 is typical for his attack: it undermines the e4-pawn, threatening to place (after the exchange on e4) a knight on d4 via f5, or to move f5-f4 (after White has moved f2-f3) and to start the attack with the g- and h-pawns, sustained by the minor and major pieces.

Both players have prepared also some defending plans: White is able to play g2-g4, creating a wall, while Black has prepared the move a5, in order to stop the move b2-b4 which sustains the move c4-c5. These plans have both advantages and disadvantages and the players must adjust them considering the concrete conditions on the board.

Nce7

This reply justifies Black's strategy: he tries to move his pieces on the kingside, planning to attack there. From e7, the knight is able to come on g6 or f5, controlling the f4 and d4 squares.

7.Qd2

White performs an aggressive play, preparing 0-0-0. Other interesting variation is 7.c5 f5 8.Bb5+ Kf8 with complicate position, but interesting would be 8.cxd6 cxd6 followed by 9.Nb5 f4 10.Rc1, with dangerous attack on the queenside (it has become more evident the role of the knight on c3, who can sustain the offensive actions on the queenside with maximum effect.).

A courageous but risky move would have been 7.g4, because it somehow weakens the structure on the kingside.

f5

Black is consequent with his plan, threatening also f5-f4, capturing the bishop.

You may notice that the order of moves has helped Black to save a tempo because the move f7-f5 is realized directly, without the preparing move Nf6-h5 or Nf6-d7, as in many other variations of King's Indian.

8.f3

This move protects the e4-pawn and clears the f2-square for the bishop, in view of supervising the important g1-a7 diagonal, especially the key squares c5 and b6.

Nf6 9.Bd3

White protects the e4-pawn once more, preparing to develop the knight on g1. White has preferred to develop the bishop first,

otherwise this bishop is likely to remain out of play.

a6?!

Black should have abstained from any move that could create weaknesses on the queenside. The actions on the queenside are legitimate only if they are based on concrete variations. A general view and the skill of foreseeing the possible structure that can occur after some moves are the keys of success in the modern chess. Behind Black's move a little trick is hidden: after White's castle queenside, Black plans to sacrifice a pawn with b5, which would lead to opening the lines towards the white king.

10.h3

White doesn't hurry with the castle and tries to limit Black's activity on the kingside, threatening 11.g4. White's text move has a disadvantage: it weakens the dark squares on the kingside, but forces Black to take a decision. White plans to castle queenside only after he is sure that the fianchetto bishop on g7 is blocked, this is why White is inclined to weaken the kingside, but to close the bishop on g7, in view of 0-0-0.

f4 11.Bf2 0-0 12.Nge2 g5

Black starts the attack, clearing the g6-square for the knight on e7. The rapidity in chess is very important.

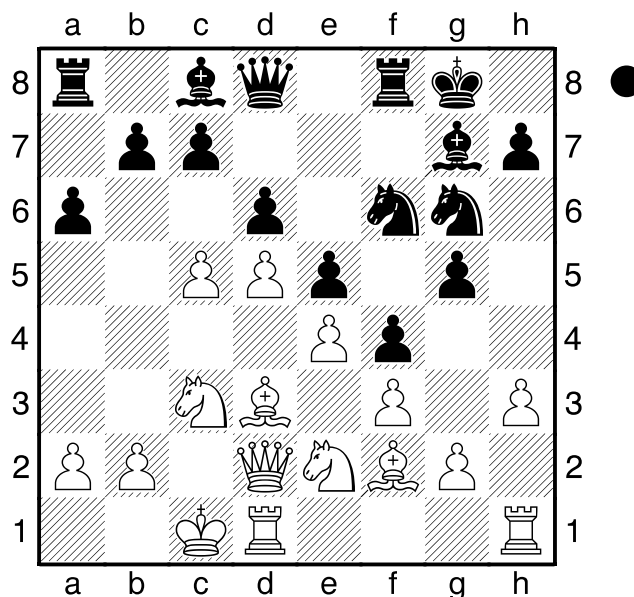
13.0-0-0 Ng6

It is interesting that in the positions with castles on opposite wings, the normal plan is to attack the king. However, in this position, none of the players have enough space to attack the opponent king and better attack on the side where has more space.

14.c5! Diagram

(Diagram)

White makes the first step in his attempt to attack on the queenside. White's idea is to occupy the c-file and to create an attacking objective, considering that the d6-pawn will



become weaker. The weak squares on the g1-a7 diagonal will become strong squares for the white pieces and also launching ramps for them in order to break Black's position.

Bd7

Black tries to protect the a4-square from a possible penetration of the knight from c3 in his way to conquer the weak b6-square. However, it would have been better to keep clear the d7-square for the knight, who would have been able to protect b6.

15.Kb1

White puts the king in safety and clears the c-file for the rooks. However, White should have thought of bringing the queen on b3, via c2, considering the concrete conditions on the board. From b3, the queen is threatening to take on b7, but also the move c5-c6.

Qe7

As the tension is unpleasant for Black, with the text move he forces White to take a decision regarding the c5-pawn.

16.cxd6 cxd6 17.Nc1

White brings his pieces on the queenside using the transit c1-square which will be used later by the major pieces, occupying the c-file.

Rfc8?!

A normal move, but better was here b5, stopping the attack on the queenside, and if 18. Nb3 then 18...b4 and 19...a5.

18.Nb3 Qd8

Black protects the d8-a5 diagonal, especially the a5- and b6-squares.

19.a4!

White stops in time the move ...b5, because of 20.axb5 axb5 21.Na2 (21.Nxb5?! Rcb8!) with the idea 22.Rc1 and White has a dominant position, his knights being ideal placed, controlling all the important squares. Black must be very attentive now, because he has delayed his attack on the kingside.

Bf8?!

This move is somehow useless. In this situation, Black should continue his attacking actions on the kingside, in order not to give up the initiative.

20.a5!

White fixes black queenside pawns and creates the long-term weakness on b6. As the centre is closed, this square has a good value even it is a marginal one. We will be able to see how White pieces use the strong b6-square for entering Black's camp.

Be7

Black tries to bring his dark-squares bishop on d8 protecting the d8-a5 diagonal

21.Rc1 Be8

Black stays in expectative and maneuvers his pieces, waiting for White to take major decisions. At the same time, Black clears the d7-squares for one of his pieces.

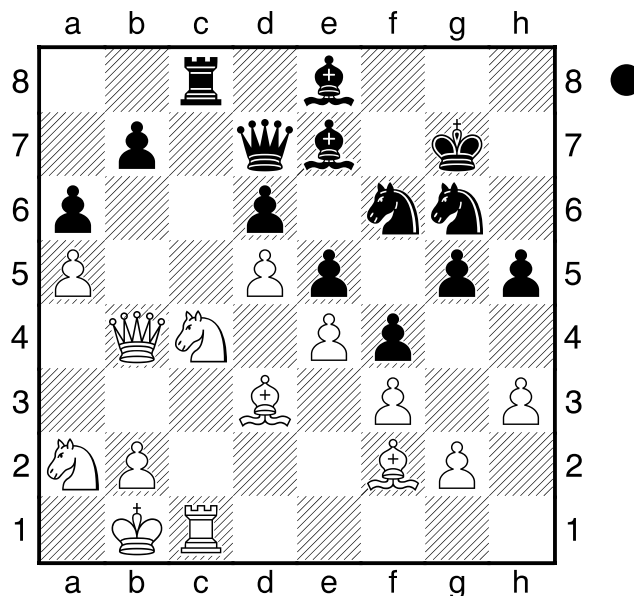
22.Na2 Qd7 23.Qb4

White starts to occupy active positions and clears a square for the knight, in his way to b6, via d2 and c4.

Kg7

This move is absolutely useless: the position of

the king is under no circumstances better on g7 than on g8, so Black wastes one more tempo, instead of playing actively on the kingside (23...h5 or even 23...Nh4!?).

24.Rhd1 h5 25.Nd2 Rxc1+ 26.Rxc1 Rc8 27.Nc4 Diagram

Having more space, White avoids the exchanges and creates the threat of penetrating the b6-weakness with tempo.

g4 28.hxg4 hxg4 29.Nc3 Rc7 30.Bb6 Rc8 31.Ba7

White continues to annoy Black with the threat Nb6. Many times in a chess game there are some psychological moments that must be fructified. In a better position, White is able to hide his plan for several moves, trying to confuse Black with the threat of threefold repetition. Interesting is also 31.Bc2 with the idea Ba4, trying to take benefits from the strange position of the black queen.

Rc7 32.Bb6 Rc8 33.Bf2 Rc7 34.b3 Bf8 35.Bb6 Rc8 36.Ba7 Qe7 37.Nb6

Using once again the b6-square, White forces Black to leave the c-file, introducing another minor piece into the game.

Rd8 38.Nca4

Another white minor piece is going towards b6, clearing the c-file for the rook

Nh4 39.Nc8

White used the b6-square to enter Black's camp and now he starts to attack the weak d6-pawn.

Qd7 40.Nab6

Black's position is going to be destroyed. The b6-square is hosting now White's 3rd minor piece. In fact controlling and occupying this strong square represent the key of success in White's determination to find a breakthrough in Black's position.

Qf7 41.Bb8

White is threatening the d6-pawn and also Rc7.

gxf3 42.gxf3 Kg8 43.Bc7 Rxc8 44.Nxc8 Nxf3 45.Bxd6 Bh6 46.Ne7+

Now that he managed to break the position, White focuses his attention towards the opposite king.

Kh7 47.Nf5 Bg5 48.Rh1+ Kg6

The black king is forced to... get out and fight.

49.Qc3 Ng4 50.Be2 Nfh2 51.Bxg4 Nxg4 52.Qh3 Nf6 53.Ne7+

Black resigns, because of 53...Kg7 54.Qh8#

The game presents in a very clear manner the importance of understanding the aspect of "strong" and "weak" squares, including them in the general strategy of a game.

The move 9...a6, corroborated with the exchange on d6, has led to an irreversible weakening of the b6-square, which became a launching ramp for the white minor pieces.

1-0

□ Hosszu, Elemer
 ■ Ceteras, Marius
 Freedom Cup Groningen

1987

LOCAL SPACE ADVANTAGE

When this game took place, I was only 14, so you can imagine that I was overwhelmed with emotions because I was facing the most impressive player of my region. My level of play was around 1800 rating and I obtained a norm of "candidate of master".

The main strategic element of this game is gaining and using the local space advantage. I have to declare that at the time this game was played, I had only vague knowledge about the great importance of this strategic element. Another discussed subject is the importance of building a solid opening repertoire. Interesting is also how to treat the tensioned situations in the center. You will find analyzed two crucial moments in the game.

Fortunately, I kept the annotations I made after the game, so during this game you will be able to see how I was thinking at the age of 14. I will try to be an objective critic of those annotations. In order to make a difference between the present annotation and those made immediately after the game, I will write (1987) at their end.

1.d4 g6

As you will soon notice, my theoretical pieces of knowledge were very poor. I was more an autodidact. Hardly can I say that I had an opening repertoire. In fact, I chose to play some opening systems based on games which impressed me, but when the game deviated from that model games, I was put on an unknown field.

2.e4

"White avoids the continuation 2.c4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 e5 5.Nge2 Nd7 6.Be3 Nh6 7.f3 f5 8.Qd2 Nf7 with good play for Black, like in the game Bobotsov-Ghizdavu" (1987)

Well, this was all my theoretical knowledge about this opening 1...g6. It might be incredible, but this is the sad truth. It is obvious that a 14-

year-old boy or even a grown-up with a level under 1800, without a competent guide cannot build a complete opening repertoire by his own. For such a thing is required a vast chess culture. One needs to know basically all the openings, in order to be able to choose those system which fit better his own style. Moreover, he needs a high understanding of the subtleties in the opening stage, which is very complex if we think of the big number of pieces in this phase. While the tactical elements or the endgames may be studied individually, building an opening repertoire and studying the strategic elements (almost all) require a competent guide.

Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Be2

"More active would have been 5.Bc4" (1987)

It is more and more obvious my naivety from that period. The move 5.Be2 is not passive and leads to the main system against the Pirc Defense, the so-called classic system. White's plan is to castle quickly, followed by an active play in the center and on the queenside.

On the contrary, the move which 18 years ago I considered to be normal, 5.Bc4, is not that dangerous for Black. After 5..Nc6! Black prepares an immediate action in the center through ...e5 and ...Bg4 in order to force Black to give up the phalanx e4-d4. If White plays d4-d5, the position of the bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal is useless, and if he plays dxe5, the resulting position is equal.

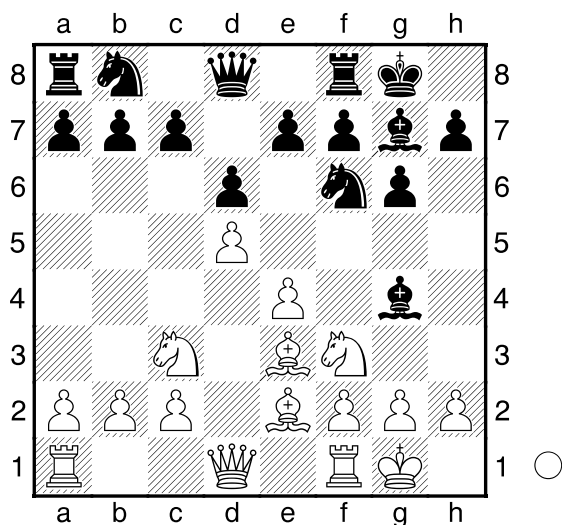
The position of the bishop in e2 is more useful because it helps White to maintain the superiority in the center.

0-0 6.0-0 Nbd7

[Better is here 6...Bg4 with the idea mentioned above, to exert pressure on White's center with ...Nc6 and ...e5. The game may continue with:
 7.Be3 Nc6 8.d5 Nb8 Diagram

(Diagram)

This surprising knight maneuver is not a waste



of time. Even if he has wasted two tempi, Black succeeded in dislocating the center e4-d4, which was the main objective. The new white pawn structure is less dangerous because he has lost the control over the e5- and c5-squares. What's more, the bishop on g7 is more active and Black has also an undermining of the center with ...c6. Black's plan is to exchange the bishop on g4 for the knight on f3, letting White with a light-squares bishop which is limited by the own central pawns, and then to play ...c6, ...Qc7, ...a5, ...Na6, ...Nfd7.

The move in the game (6...Nbd7) is disadvantageous as it cannot help too much to creating a pressure in the center.]

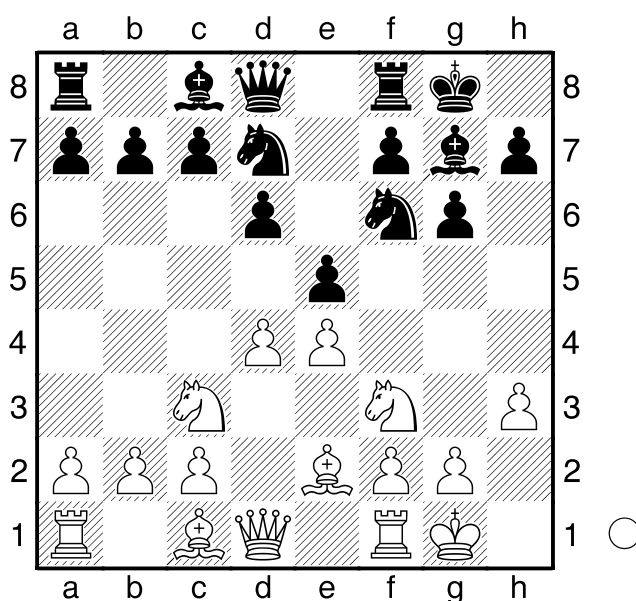
7.h3

White plans to develop the bishop on e3, so he prepares against Ng4.

The disadvantage of this move is that it weakens to some extent the dark-squares on the kingside, especially the f4-square, which can be a target after black plays ..e5 and ...Nf6-h5.

A serious alternative is 7.e5 dxe5 (7...Ne8 8.Bf4 +/- Botvinnik-Simagin, 1955) 8.dxe5 Ng4 9.e6! White sacrifices a pawn in order to destroy the black pawn structure and to delay the development (the "kamikaze pawn").

e5 Diagram



Through Black's last move, the position in the center is tensioned. The two armies are interacting one with each other directly. What should White do?

- To eliminate the tension in the center through 8.dxe5
- To block the center through 8.d5
- To maintain the tension playing 8.Be3 or 8.Re1.

8.d5?!

White chooses the worst solution, blocking the center. If we think that Black's position is "overcrowded" and that White has a good mobility, the best solution would have been maintaining the tension in the center, which would have limited Black's possibilities. Now the tension in the center doesn't exist anymore and Black has free hands to proceed easier.

[Eliminating the tension in the center through 8.dxe5 leads to a rather equal play, after dxe5 9.Be3 b6! 10.Bc4 Bb7 11.Nd2 Qe7 12.Qe2 Nc5= Nunn - Plachetka, 1991]

[

Best would have been

8.Be3 Re8 and only now 9.d5

Usually, in positions with blocked center, the pawn structure determines to a great extent the further plans and directions of the game. The structure d5-e4 against d6-e5 provides

White a space advantage on the queenside, one of his plans being to advance the c-pawn until c5. Black has better perspectives on the kingside and his main plan is to conquer more space with f7-f5. Considering this ideas, it is clear that the rook's position is better on f8 than on e8, where now has no perspectives. Thus, compared to the position in the game, Black would have lost two tempi because of the necessity to return with the rook on f8.]

8...Nc5!

Black's plan is still related to the advance f7-f5, but this intermediary move forces White to make some concessions because of the pressure on the e4-pawn.

9.Bg5

"After 9.Nd2 Ne8 followed by f5, Black has good play" (1987)

Interesting is also 9...Bh6, to activate the bad bishop.

h6

Forces White to give away his dark-squares bishop, after which the weakness of the dark squares on the kingside will be more emphasized. (see the annotations after 7.h3)

10.Bxf6 Bxf6 11.b4 Nd7 12.Qd2?!

A move without pretensions. Black was anyway forced to move back the bishop on g7, while the d2-square is not the most adequate for the white queen. As we have already said, the central pawn structure should have determined White to as quickly as possible the action on the queenside, through Na4, c2-c4-c5, the queen being able to be developed on b3 to sustain the actions on that side.

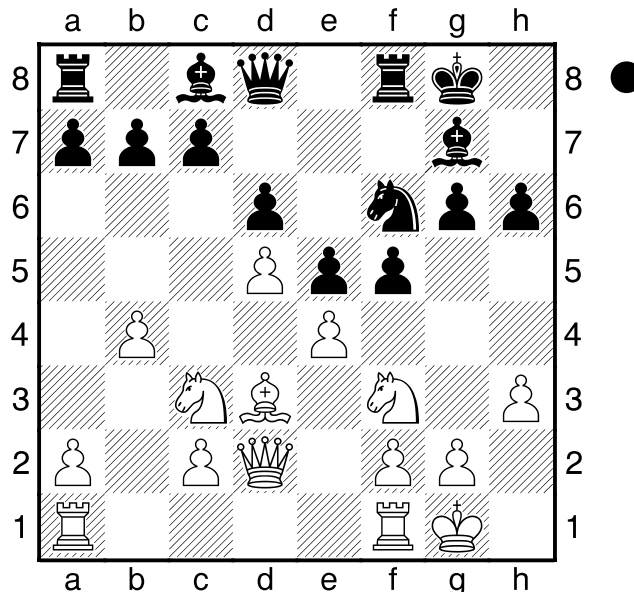
Bg7 13.Nd1

"? Better would have been 13.Na4 followed by c2-c4-c5" (1987)

f5!

Black conquers space on the kingside. In that period I poorly understood the importance of the space advantage, but I knew this thematic plan in the King's Indian structures.

14.Bd3 Nf6 15.Nc3 Diagram



Again a tensioned position. What should Black do?

- a) to eliminate the tension in the center (fxe4)
- b) block the center through ...f4
- c) to maintain the tension, without playing fxe4 or f4

f4!

"? Better would have been 15...Nh5" (1987)

Today I would make this move without hesitation, although I have to admit that 15...Nh5 which I was taking into consideration 18 years ago would offer here a better play for Black too. What I didn't understand at the age of 14 is that after 15...f4, the space advantage on the kingside may be decisive.

Why is so important the space advantage and how does it manifest? We know well that the main characteristic which determines the qualitative value is the mobility of the piece. Usually the space advantage leads to the increment of the attacker's pieces' mobility on that side and this means qualitative advantage. Moreover, the space advantage offers the possibility to bring on that side a bigger number of forces on that side, which means quantitative advantage.

Returning to the position in the game, it is clear that Black will dominate the fight on the kingside from now on, being able to increase the space advantage by playing g5, h5, g4. All what he has to do is to use in a proper way the space advantage in order to create a superiority of forces on the kingside.

16.Rfe1

White prepares the "flight" of the king from the kingside, where Black is about to launch the pawn avalanche.

g5 17.Kf1 Nh7?!

Even if I have correctly intuited that Black should play ...g4 sustained by ...h5, the chosen way is not the best. Without being absolutely a mistake, Black proves by his maneuvers that he has poor pieces of knowledge in such kind of positions.

One of the typical maneuvers in such a position is 17...Rf7! followed by ...Bf8, ...Rg7, ...h5, ...g4. This maneuver emphasizes the Black's space advantage, which permits a good maneuverability of the pieces. Bringing the rook behind the pawns is very useful, while the bishop on f8 may have a defensive role against White's plan (c2-c4-c5).

18.Ng1 h5 19.f3 g4

Black succeeded in realizing his plan (the increase of the space advantage on the kingside) and now he has clear advantage.

20.hxg4 hxg4 21.Ke2 Rf6!

A good move. Black uses the space advantage to improve the position of the rook, which is going to move on h6 or g6.

22.Kd1 Rh6 23.Kc1 Rh2 24.Kb2 Ng5

"Black obtained pressure on the kingside, but he should have attacked on the queenside" (1987) I have only to congratulate myself because I had a general perspective of the play and I wasn't focused only on the side I was attacking : Indeed, for Black is hard to win the game only on the kingside, but White will be forced to bring his pieces to defend that side, neglecting the queenside. Considering the fact that White has

weaknesses on the queenside, Black plans now to open there a front. Please retain this strategy: one of the side creates pressure on one side, this forces the opponent to bring the pieces for the defense and after this, the attacker suddenly moves the attack on the other side, where the opponent has few pieces.

25.Re2 Bf8

"With the idea ...c5" (1987)

26.Rf1 Bd7 27.g3

"Even if White was in time crisis, he complicates the game. Preferable is here 27.a3 or 27.Nd1" (1987)

Now White's decision seems to me to be more logical. Having concentrated all the forces in the center and on the kingside, White is finally able to fight on that side, especially because Black hasn't initiate the offensive on the queenside yet.

Rxe2 28.Bxe2

[28.Ncxe2! gxf3 29.Nxf3 Nxf3 30.Rxf3 Bg4 31.Rf1 Bg7 32.gxf4 exf4+ 33.c3 Bxe2 34.Bxe2 Qg5 35.Qxf4 Qxf4 36.Rxf4 Be5 It is an equal position, the pawn up has no importance because of the presence of the opposite square bishops.]

28...fxg3 29.fxg4 Bh6

The bad bishop comes into play.

30.Qe1 c5!

"Complicates the play, considering the opponent's time crisis" (1987)

A very good move, which shows the weaknesses on the queenside. After a long journey, the white king is in danger again. The queen entering the position will be decisive.

31.bxc5 Qa5 32.Rf6 Qb4+ 33.Kc1?

[33.Ka1 Bg7 34.Rxd6 Be8-+]

33...Nxe4+ 34.Rxh6 Qa3+ 35.Kd1 Nxc3+ 36.Kd2 Ne4+ 37.Kd1 Nf2+ 38.Kd2 Qb4+ 39.c3 Qf4+

This was a very instructive and interesting game, even if some mistakes have been made. Black

treated better the tensioned positions and used very well the space advantage on the kingside. Even if it seemed that Black's initiative was dead, opening a new front on the queenside has animated the fight and the time crisis was fatal for White in the resulting position.

0-1

 **Grunberg, Sergiu**
 **Ceteras, Marius**
 Romania

2000

SPACE ADVANTAGE

During the game, Black improves his position step by step, by gaining more and more space.

1.f4

This is a quite rare move and a surprise for me, because my opponent usually played 1.Nf3. Though, from a psychological point of view, White's choice is not bad, Sergiu Grunberg being the best specialist (for Black) of the Dutch Defense, Leningrad system (1.d4 f5). This aspect determined me to take my head in the hands and to find something different from 1...d5, which I use against 1.f4, otherwise we would have played the Leningrad system with inverted colors.

b6

I have to remark an aspect which I consider very important from the player's psychology point of view. There are players who feel good only in positions that have been studied very strongly at home. Others need to have the initiative, in order to play at their best, while others prefer the safe positions. Personally, I feel very well in positions which are not very familiar to my opponent, even if the position is a new one for me either. The fact that I play with my opponent, and not with his chess books, offers me more stability during the game and an enhanced confidence in my own forces. This is how I explain my tendency to abandon as quickly as possible the stamped roads of the theory. Initially I wanted to play 1...c5, but I considered that this move is not that different from 1...d5. After 5 minutes of thinking, it came to my mind the idea of being the first who places his bishop on the h1-a8 diagonal, in this way making inoffensive a position similar to Leningrad System (g3, Bg2, Nf3, 0-0). I was attracted immediately of this move, so I had only to verify the consequences of the natural White's move 2.e4. In this case, I considered that I can attain an acceptable position (Bb7, e6, g6, Bg7, Ne7, 0-0, d6, Nd7, f5) so I moved the b-pawn, satisfied that the game will follow a

convenient way.

2.Nf3

Not necessary a mistake, I consider this move without pretensions. If White wants to obtain something in the opening phase, then he is morally obliged to play 2.e4. But in the context this game was played, the National Team Championship, my opponent drew almost all the games, which explains the choice he made.

Bb7 3.e3

This is an inaccurate move, because White will have problems with the development of the c1-bishop. Better would have been 3.b3 f5!? 4. Bb2, with equal position.

White plans to play 4.b3 and 5.Bb2.
How would you delay this plan?

g6!

I think it is the first time when I manage to solve the opening problems from the 3rd move, considering also that my opponent was International Master. Now it is obvious that only White has problems with the development of the dark-squares bishop on c1: the c1-h6 diagonal is "overcrowded", while the a1-h8 diagonal is in Black's hands.

4.Be2 Bg7

The black bishops are controlling the two main diagonals, which confers a small development advantage.

5.0-0

White ended the development on the kingside, but the real problems are on the other side of the board and the solutions are not easy to be found.

f5

Black controls the e4-square and gains space on the kingside.

6.c3

Because of the lack of constructive ideas, White tries to arrange his pawns in a "stonewall" position (f4, e3, d4). But Black hasn't played yet

d7-d5 and preserved the possibility to prepare the central blow with d7-d6 and e7-e5. In this conditions, this structure seems to be a "paper wall".

Nf6 7.d4

This decision was taken even since the previous move. It's consequences are : the weakness of the e4-square and a lack of mobility of the White's central pawn structure.

0-0 8.Bd2 Qe8

Black doesn't hurry, because the White's central pawn structure is totally immobile. I didn't play directly 8...d6 in order to avoid 9.Qb3+ and Ng5. When your opponent has no counter play, don't hurry! Prepare to start the attack under the best circumstances!! This is what Black will try to do further...

9.Be1

Finally the bishop reached a position from which he controls 4 squares. The fact that the 4 squares have no importance is another problem...

e6

In order to avoid a possible check on b3 (after d7-d6).

10.Bh4

This is an ideal position for the dark-squares bishop, if we think of his situation after 6.c3. The price (arranging all the pawns on dark squares) is too high.

d6

Prepares e7-e5.

11.Bxf6

Finally, White got rid of his burden. Better would have been 11.Nbd2, staying in expectative.

Bxf6 12.Na3

White plans to play Nc4, to control the e5-square. But the effect is exactly the opposite: without wanting to offer my opponent even such a minuscule satisfaction, I had to postpone the central blow e6-e5, and to realize it later ...in

better conditions!

Nc6!

The first reason of this move is to be able to answer to 13.Nc4 with 13...b5, without permitting 14.Na5. The second reason will be seen soon.

13.Qd2

White has no better moves, so he assures the connection between the rooks.

a6

Controls the b5-square and restricts the mobility of Na3 and Be2. At the same time, this move prepares b6-b5, gaining space advantage on the queenside either.

14.Rad1

White wants to be as prepared as possible for the upcoming e6-e5.

Kg7

I have to admit that I was curious what will White play next, because his last moves didn't disturb me too much and I could not see any useful moves for him.

15.Nc2

The knight comes back from an unsuccessful mission on the queenside and tries to support the fight in the center.

Nd8!

This was the second reason of 12...Nc6. Please understand me, if I had revealed it then, what would I have had to say now? Leaving the jokes, Black improves the knight's position to sustain better the blow e6-e5, and namely on f7, from where he is able to support a possible action on the kingside either.

16.b3?!

It is hard to recommend another move, but personally I would have preferred here even 16. Kh1, because 16.b3 weakens the pawn structure, and increases the qualitative value of the bishop on f6.

Nf7

The knight reached the desired position, so the fight is likely to begin.

17.c4

The natural consequence of the White's previous move. The move in the text offers Black the possibility of an active play on the queenside either.

c5

Opens the main diagonal for the f6-bishop.

18.Nfe1

White plans 19.Bf3.

e5

Black's idea, evident as early as the 6th move, if not earlier, is finally realized in best conditions.

19.Bf3

A generous exchange offer, but considering that Black cannot benefit immediately of the weak e4-square...

e4!

I preferred to reject. Black, by this move, increases his space advantage and the white bishop becomes an obstacle for the own pieces. The exchange on f3 would ease the defending mission, because White would have more space for maneuvers.

20.Be2 b5

It is the time for Black to increase the space advantage on the queenside.

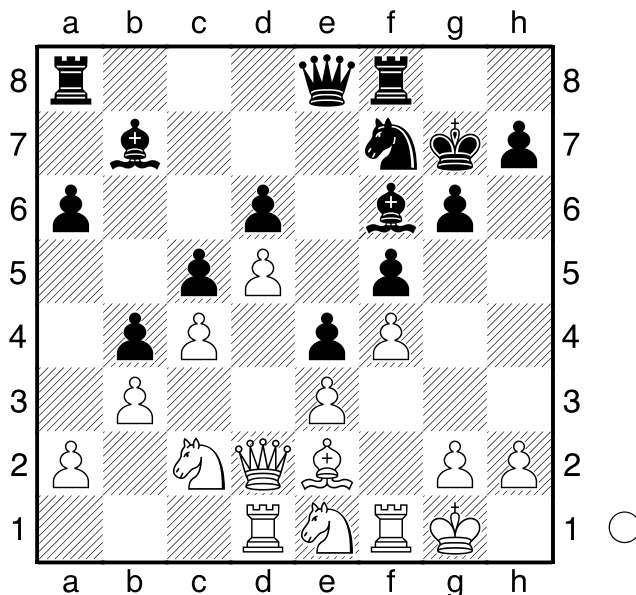
21.d5

White decides to block the center, but due to his lack of perspectives on both sides, this move won't help him too much. A little bit better would have been 21.a3.

b4 Diagram

(Diagram)

A great position! The seven white pieces find



themselves in a ridiculous situation:

- the knight on e1 has no moves;
- the knight on c2 has only the possibility to move on a1;
- the bishop on e2 is able to move eventually around his axis of symmetry ;;
- the rook on f1 can move only on f2;
- the rook on d1 can move only on b1 and c1;
- the queen resembles his ancestor from the game Strandj, which was able to move only on square in diagonal;
- the most mobile piece is the king, who has the possibility to move on h1 and f2.

I was so pleased with the position I reached, that I wasn't interested in the victory anymore. My single preoccupation was to find an aesthetic ending.

There are some years since I played this game, and I am still influenced of the beauty of this position. Hardly can I help to print this diagram, or to give it to a photo studio, to make from it a poster which I should stick on my room's wall, to see it every time I wake up! Paranoia? Madness? None of them! It is about my love towards the beauty of this game. Starting from now, my next moves should be judged considering the euphoria by which I was overwhelmed.

22.a4

Of course White shouldn't have permitted Black to play a6-a5-a4.

Bc8

Surely, the best way to use the advantage is to play 22...bxa3 (en passant) and to bring the major pieces on the queenside and to blow the position with a6-a5-a4. I saw all these, but my heart didn't let me to choose such a variation. In order to complete my work, I conceived the following plan: some offensive actions on the kingside and, at the right moment, to give the final hit on the queenside, with a sacrifice on a4.

23.g3

In order to create some more space for his pieces.

Bd7

The bishop takes as a target the a4-pawn.

24.Rb1

Trying to avoid a possible sacrifice on a4.

a5 25.Bd1 h6 26.Ng2 g5?!

A mistake! Because of my rush, I missed a very nice plan: to play Rg8, Kg7-f8-e7-d8-c7, Qe7, Rg7, Rag8 with attack. From now on, I made great efforts to preserve the advantage left.

27.h4

White shouldn't permit Black to play g4, followed by h6-h5-h4.

Rg8

The rook is placed on the main attack file.

28.Kf2

Makes free the first rank for the rooks.

Kf8

The king looks for a safer place, considering the imminent fight on the kingside.

29.hxg5

White opens a file, hoping that this will facilitate some exchanges.

hxg5 30.Bh5

Otherwise the bishop is blocked after g5-g4.

Qe7

Avoids the pin and threatens Nh6 or Nd8 and g4.

31.Bxf7

White decides to exchange the bishop for the knight, who feels very well in close positions.

Kxf7

Compared to 31...Qxf7, this move assures the connection between the rooks.

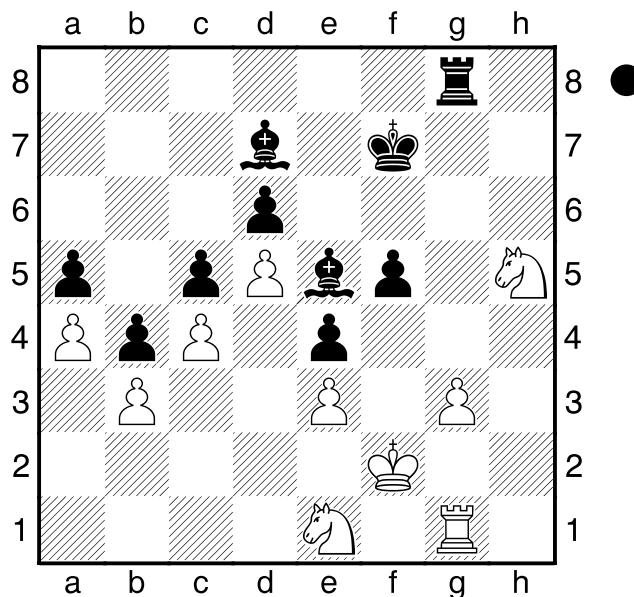
32.Rh1 Rh8 33.fxg5

The Black's pressure diminished considerably and White plans to place the knight in a better position.

Be5 34.g6+ Kxg6 35.Nf4+ Kf7 36.Rbg1 Rag8 37.Qd1 Qg5 38.Rxh8 Bxh8 39.Ne1

White plans to bring the second knight in the kingside, to build there a strong fortress, but forgets about the queenside. Better would have been 39.Qh5 to exchange the queens.

Be5 40.Qh5+ Qxh5 41.Nxh5 Diagram



Bxa4!

The dream came true! Without this possibility, Black's chances to win the game were almost

inexistent.

42.bxa4 b3 43.Nf4 Rh8

In order to distract the pieces from the queenside.

44.Neg2 Rb8

The aim was achieved, so the rook moves to the queenside, sustaining the free pawn.

45.Rb1 b2

Just one more step to the happiness.

46.Ne1?

[The only chance was:

46.Nh4 Rb4 47.Nxf5 Rxa4 48.Nxd6+ Bxd6

49.Rxb2 Rb4

and Black has better chances because of the a-pawn.]

46...Rb4 47.Nfd3 exd3 48.Nxd3 Rxa4

49.Nxe5+ dxe5 50.Rxb2 Rxc4

50...Rb4 is also good, because limits the white rook, but I considered that 2 free pawns are better than one.

51.Rb6 a4 52.Ra6 e4??

[A terrifying mistake. After 52...Rb4 53.Ke2

e4 54.Kd2 Rb2+ 55.Kc3 Rb3+ 56.Kc4

Rxe3 57.Rxa4 Rxg3 58.Kxc5 Rd3 59.Ra6

e3 60.Re6 f4 61.Re4 Kf6 62.Kc4 Rd1

63.Rxf4+ Ke5 64.Rf8 Rd4+ 65.Kc3 Rxd5

Black wins]

53.g4!

Very efficient! The white king becomes very active and grants the draw.

After some moves, we agree to a draw.

It was a long game, but very interesting.

You saw some key moves in the opening, how Black gained space advantage in the middlegame stage, some possible plans when you have space advantage, and a tumultuous rook endgame. In your games, try to gain space by every move, and moreover, to limit the opponent pieces! It is the basic rule in chess.



Ceteras, Marius

Pasarelu, Dan

Romanian Team Championship

2001

THE SPACE ADVANTAGE- THE SPEAR POINT

We have already spoken about the importance of the space advantage in previous games. We were saying that the space advantage offers the premises of creating a local superiority both because the own pieces are able to occupy the free space and because the opposite pieces are far off. The space also influences the qualitative value of the pieces. The pieces of the player, who has space advantage, have a better mobility and therefore a higher qualitative value, while the opposite pieces are forced to move in a restricted place, having consequently a reduced mobility and qualitative value.

It shouldn't wonder us that, understanding the great importance of the space advantage, the grandmasters try to occupy space since the first moves, not only in the center, but also on the wings.

In this game we will analyze the so called "spear point" method, which means using the g-pawn to obtain space. Usually, when one of the players wants to conquer space on a side, he advances the pawns in group, helping each other. The "spear point" method is special case, in which the g-pawn is advanced quickly on g5, without being helped by the pawns on the adjacent files. This advance may seem strange, but it has strategic justifications. Here are some of them:

1. If Black has developed the knight on f6 (the most natural developing move), the presence of the pawn on g5 forces the knight to leave his position.
2. Sending away the knight on f6 means diminishing the black control over the d5-square.
3. White obtains more maneuvering space on the kingside in only two moves, while advancing the f-g-h pawns in group would request more moves.

4. The g5-pawn will be able to receive the support of the f- and h-pawns, having only the role of "road opener", forerunner of the army (this is why it is called "spear point").

At the origins of this procedure there are two players who have drastically improved the chess game by their original ideas: Aleksandr Alekhine and Paul Keres. When Alekhine played against Euwe, in the match for the world champion title in 1935, the variation 1.e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Nge2 dxe4 5.a3 Be7 6.Nxe4 Nc6 7.g4!?, the spectators remained speechless, not understanding Alekhines' move. Even if further even Alekhine has doubted his move (which in this case wasn't solid enough, Black having the opportunity to organize a quick counter-attack in the center by 7...Δe5!), his new idea give birth to many controversies.

In 1943, at the Salzburg tournament, Keres introduced the move 6.g4! in the Scheveningen variation from the Sicilian Defense: 1.e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e6, winning in a convincing way against Bogoljubow. From that moment, the quick advance of the g-pawn wasn't considered a strange move anymore, but what's more, the variation 6.g4 was called "the Keres Attack"

In the modern chess, this advance of the g-pawn was introduced in many openings, for example in the Slave Defense: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.e3 Nbd7 6.g4!? or even in the "quiet" English Opening 1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 e6 3. Nf3 Bb4 4.g4!?. The temptation of advancing the g-pawn has gone so far that some players have tried to experiment the gambit 1.d4 Nf6 2. g4?!

Let's return to our game to see the g-pawn in action!

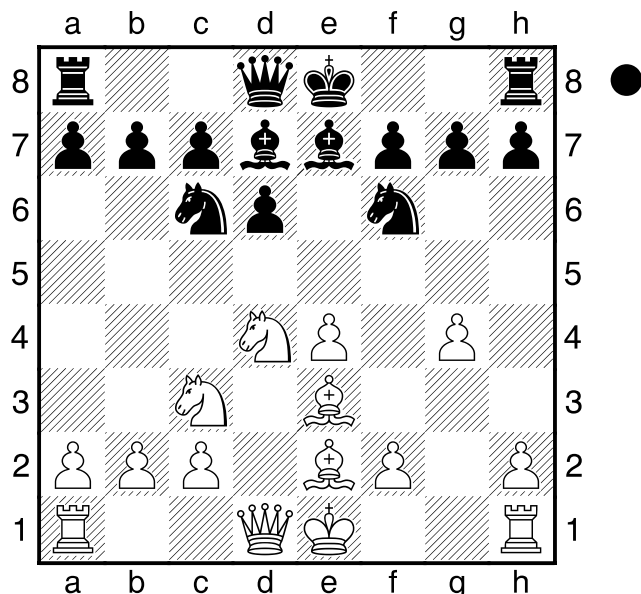
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 d6?!

Black has chosen a passive variation, after which the opening resembles the Philidor Defense rather than Scottish Defense. Better is 4...Bc5, 4...Nf6 or even 4...Qh4!?

5.Nc3 Nf6 6.Be2 Bd7 7.Be3 Be7

The position of the black pieces is quite passive, and saying that the bishops have been developed is already too much. Better we say that the bishops have left the last rank.

8.g4 Diagram



The g-pawn threatens to send the knight in a more passive position and conquers more space on the kingside. Black has two options: either to obstruct the move g4-g5, playing h7-h6, or to allow White to perform this move, occupying space on the kingside.

If Black plays 8...h6, White's strategy is easy and efficient. White plays h3, defending the g4-pawn, and then Qd2 or 0-0-0. Black faces a very difficult situation because if he makes the castle kingside, the weakness h7-h6 at the castle is decisive. White forces the quick opening of the g-file by playing g4-g5 (this is why the move h7-h6 has severe consequences for Black!), and using the open file by the white rooks has to be decisive.

On the other side, remaining with the king in the center is not a solution, as well as the castle queenside is not easy to be realized. This is why Black allowed the move g4-g5.

Nxd4

This exchange is justified by the Black's lack of

space. It is known that usually the player who has less space has to exchange the opponent's active pieces.

9.Qxd4 c5

Even if the move in the text solves radically the problem of defending the g7-pawn (White was threatening 10.g5 followed by 11.Qxg7), for long term this move weakens irreversibly the d5-square. Even if we consider only this aspect and White's strategy is justified.

10.Qd1 Bc6 11.Bf3

Protects the e4-pawn and parries an eventual black attempt to free with d6-d5.

b5?

After this mistake, Black's position becomes critical because White accomplishes his plan with advancing the g5-pawn. Black should have tried 11...Qb6!, forcing White to play 12.Rb1 and White cannot make the castle queenside anymore. In this case, White's position would have been better too, because having superiority in the center he can organize a pawn assault on the kingside even if he makes the castle kingside.

12.g5 Nd7 13.Rg1!

White could defend the pawn also with 13.h4 or 13.Qd2, but the move in the game has also a hidden objective. The rook on g1 targets the g3-square, from where he will be able to perform actions also on the 3rd rank.

Rb8 14.Nd5

The knight occupies the weak d5-square.

0-0 15.Qd2 Re8 16.0-0-0

The opening stage has been completed, so we can assess the consequences of the white plan started with the move 8.g4. White has obtained space advantage on the kingside and control over the d5-square, which are the main objectives when using the "spear point" method. The position of the black pieces is passive, and White has advantage if he attacks with pawn avalanches on the kingside, because he has a good position in the center, which supports a

wing attack.

Bf8 17.Rg3!

The white rook occupies an ideal position from he can participate both to an attack on the kingside and to an eventual defensive action on the queenside. Activating the rook on an open rank is as important as occupying an open file, even if the less experienced players neglect this aspect.

Ne5 18.Be2 Bxd5

[18...Nc4 19.Bxc4 bxc4 20.Nf6+ gxf6 21.gxf6+ Kh8 22.Rdg1+-]

19.Qxd5 Qa5

Black relied on this move when he gave away the pair of bishops.

20.Bd2

An elegant solution of the defensive problems. White plans to transfer the bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal to support a king attack, but it frees at the same time the 3rd rank for an eventual transfer of the rook on the queenside.

Qb6

After 20...b4 it deserves attention 21.Ra3!? Qc7 22.Ra6 and the presence of the white rook on a6 nullifies the Black's perspectives to attack on the queenside.

21.Bc3 b4

It seems that White's previous move was a waste of time, but the things are not like that. In fact White wanted to provoke the move b5-b4 to undertake the control upon the c4-square.

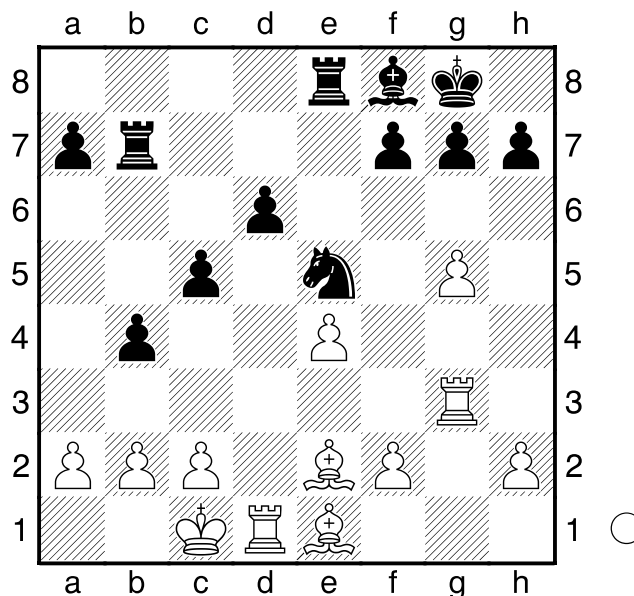
22.Be1

The advance of the black pawns on the queenside has been stopped. White threatens now f2-f4 followed by Be2-c4.

Qb7

Understanding that he has no chances to succeed on the queenside, Black exchanges the queens, otherwise White could have used his queen for the attack on the kingside.

23.Qxb7 Rxb7 Diagram



The situation has been calmed down, but Black's position is hopeless from a strategic point of view. White has the pair of bishops, space advantage on the kingside and controls the d5-square, while Black has an inactive bishop on f8, the d6-pawn is weak and the position of the knight on e5 is unstable. White's plan is to advance the f- and h-pawns to help the g5-pawn, increasing in this way the space advantage, and to activate the bishop on e2 on the a2-g8 diagonal.

24.Bd2

The advance of the f4-pawn has to be done carefully, otherwise Black gets counter play by attacking the e4-pawn: 24.f4?! Ng6. This is why White plans to play first Rd1-e1 and only then f4.

Rb6 25.Re1 a5

Black's space advantage on the queenside doesn't matter here, because Black cannot use it in order to obtain a useful local superiority of forces. Of course Black may play ...Nc6 and ...Reb8, but this grouping wouldn't be disturbing for White because he has a very solid position on the queenside, the pair of bishops and the rook on g3 being able in any moment for a fight.

26.f4 Nc6 27.Bc4

On the contrary, White's space advantage on the kingside can rapidly become a dangerous attack if White manages to play h2-h4-h5 and g5-g6.

g6 28.f5

Threatening f5-f6 after which the bishop on f8 is out of play. Black is forced in this way to open the position, which is favorable for the player with the pair of bishops.

gxf5 29.exf5 Rxe1+ 30.Bxe1 d5

Black manages now to free the bad bishop on f8, but White's pair of bishops gets a better mobility.

31.Bxd5 Nd4

Threatening simultaneously 32...Ne2+ and 32...Nxf5

32.Re3 Nxf5 33.Rf3 Nd6 34.Bg3

The pair of bishops dominates the entire board, and the white rook has a far better mobility compared to the black rook, exerting also pressure on the f7-pawn. The game is decided.

Be7 35.h4 Kg7 36.Be5+

The force of the 2 bishops is extraordinary when they succeed to occupy two central squares.

Kf8 37.c4

Strengthens the position of the bishop on d5 and blocks the black pawn on c5.

Ke8 38.Kc2 Kd8 39.Kb3

White has no reasons to hurry to capture the f7-pawn. The white king goes to a4-square, threatening to enter on the queenside after the knight on d6 is estranged.

Ra6 40.Ka4 Nc8

Black doesn't defend the f7-pawn anymore, but his position was anyway lost. At 40...Ke8 is possible 41.Bg3 with the idea Bf2.

41.Rxf7 h6 42.Rg7 hxg5 43.hxg5

Black resigned.

Without being a solution in all the positions, the "spear point" method may be useful in many cases to occupy space on the kingside and in the fight against the d5-square. It starts a pawn assault on the kingside, but at the same time it disturbs the normal development of the black pieces. Usually this method can be applied when Black cannot organize a counter attack in the center, and the two moves used to advance the pawn until g5 doesn't influence in a negative way the development of the white pieces.

1-0

Pawn Playing Techniques

Because Month 5 lessons are about the pawns, this lesson is about the most common tactics where the pawns play the main role.

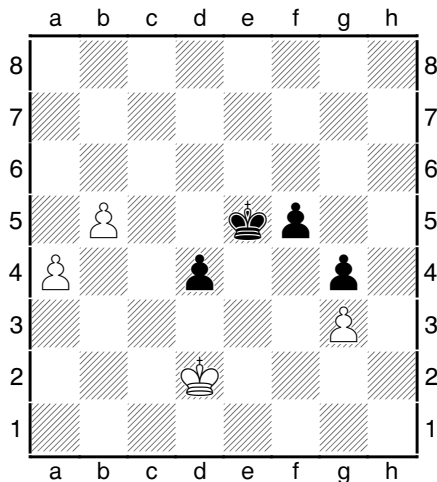
In the first part we will see positions where the pawns are free or close to the queening square, situation often met in the end stage of the game.

In the second part we will see 4 examples for the most frequent tactical pawn techniques during the middlegame.

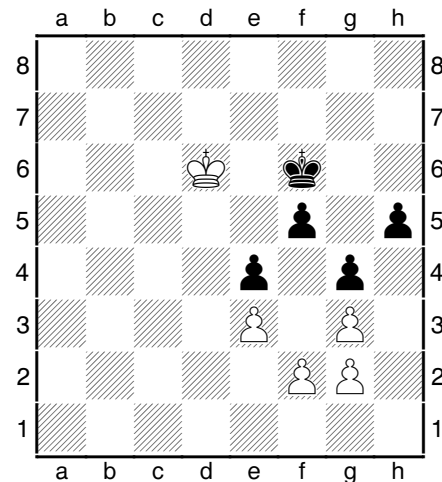
1. Pawns close to the queening square

They are very beautiful, but it is somehow strange that very often they pass unobserved. Therefore, this lesson includes 20 tactical exercises meant to cover the most important patterns. The pawn close to the queening square is by its means a motif for combinations because of the high change of the quantitative value of the pieces on the board.

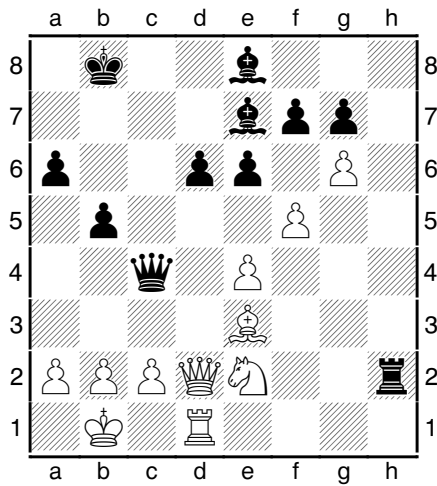
How to solve these exercises: The next 20 tactical exercises are not hard. Set up every position on your real board (for advanced players, solving directly from the diagram is possible) and use as much time as you need in order to solve the exercise. Compare with the solutions after you solved them all. Solutions are given at the page 5 so pay attention not to see that page before.



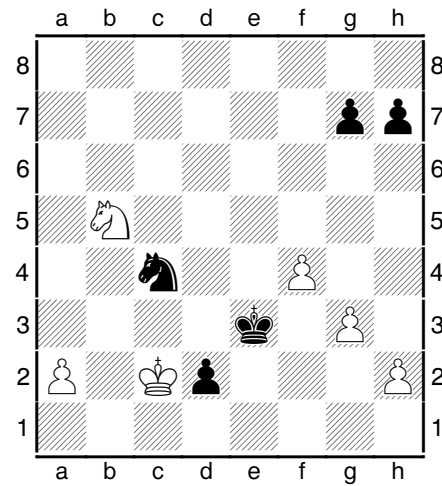
1. Black is to move



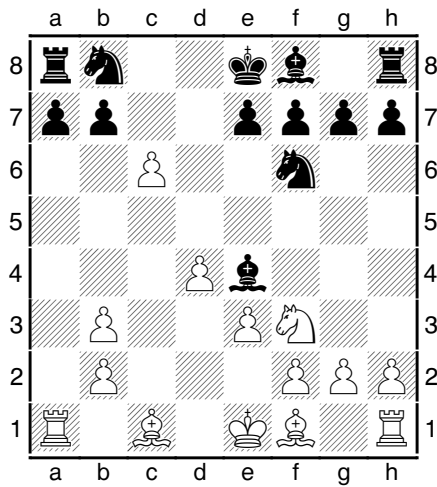
2. Black is to move



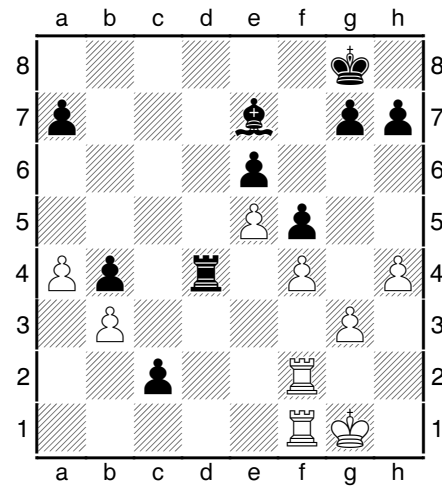
3) White is to move



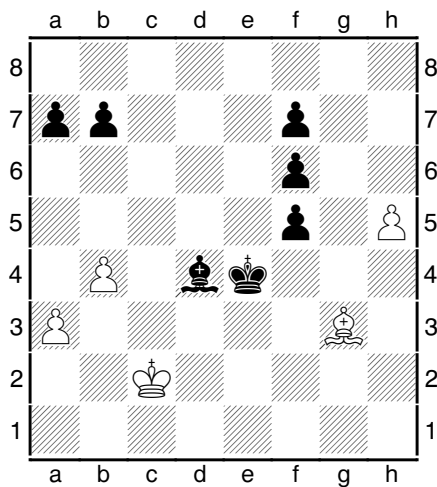
4) Black is to move



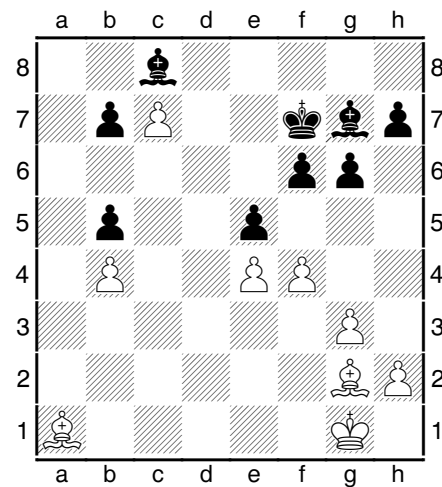
5) White is to move



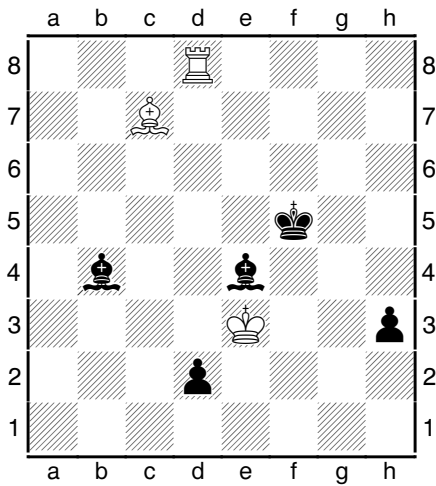
6) Black is to move



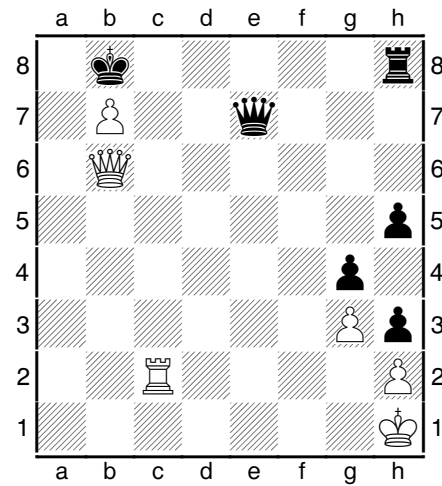
7) White is to move



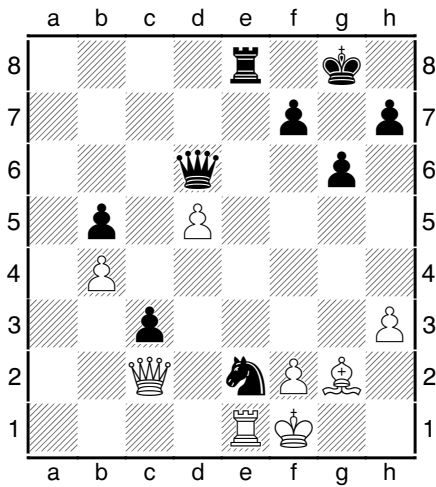
8) White is to move



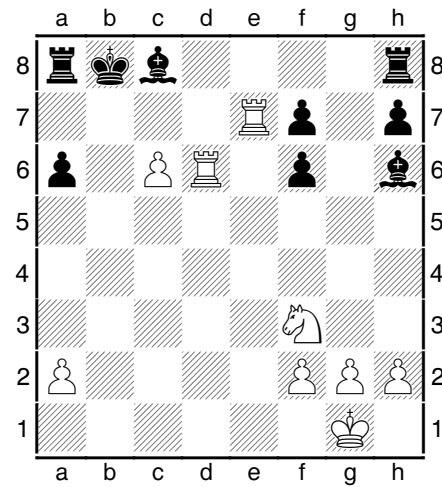
9) Black is to move



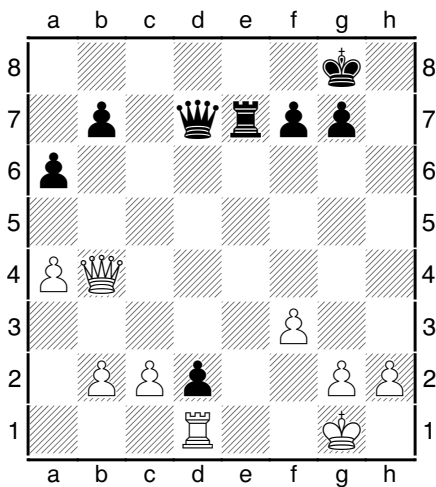
10) White is to move



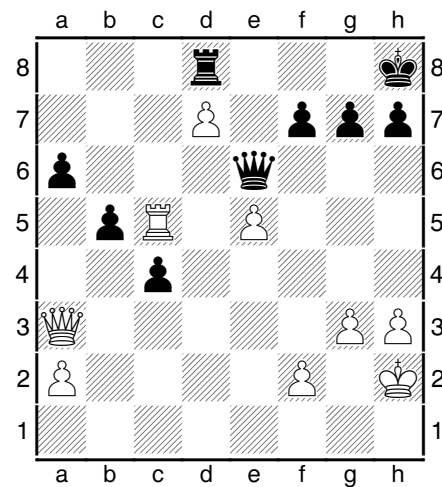
11) Black is to move



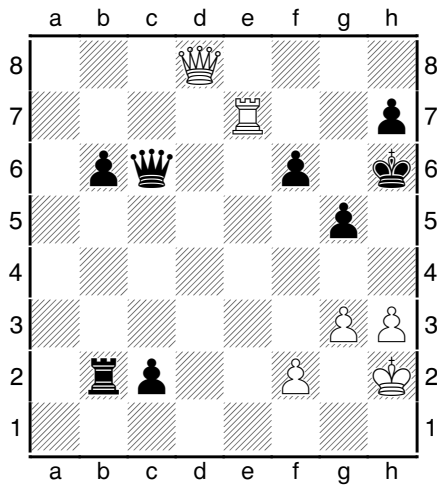
12) White is to move



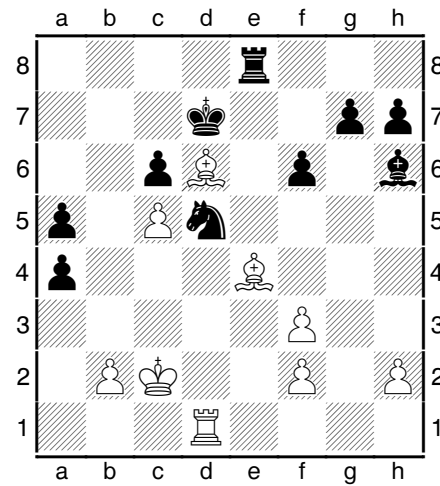
13) Black is to move



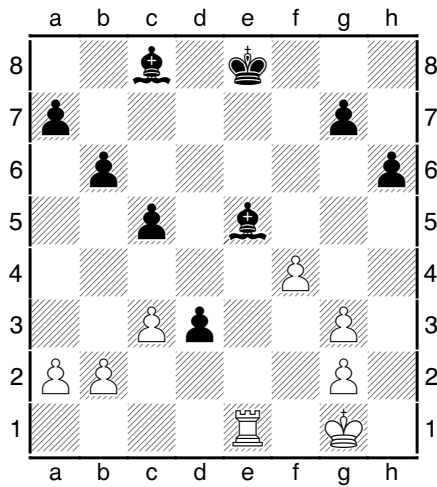
14) White is to move



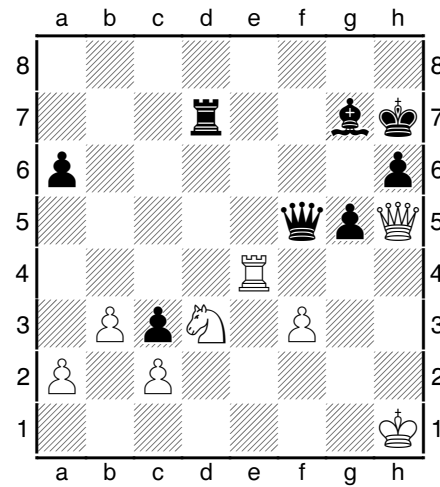
15) Black is to move



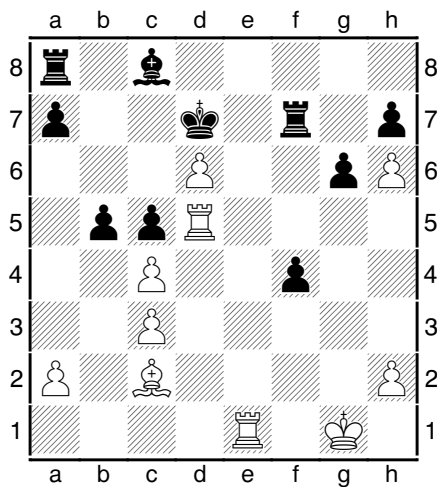
16) White is to move



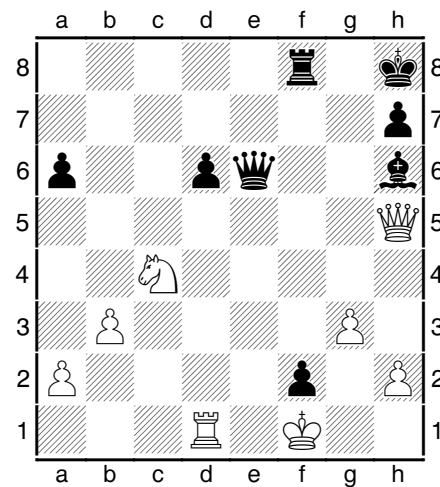
17) Black is to move



18) Black is to move



19) White is to move



20**) Black is to move

Solutions to exercises

- 1) **1...f4! 2.gxf4+ [2.b6 Kd6] 2...Kd6 3.a5 g3 4.a6 Kc7 5.Ke2 d3+**
- 2) **1...f4!! [1...h4 2.gxh4 f4 3.g3] 2.Kd5 [2.gxf4 h4; 2.exf4 h4 3.gxh4 g3 4.fxg3 e3] 2...h4 3.Kxe4 [3.gxh4 g3 4.fxg3 fxe3] 3...f3! [3...h3?? 4.gxh3 gxh3 5.Kf3] 4.gxf3 h3**
- 3) **1.f6 Rxe2 [1...gxf6 2.g7 Rg2] 2.fxg7 Rxd2 3.Bxd2 Qe2 4.Kc1**
- 4) **1...Na3+ [1...Ke2 2.Nd4+] 2.Nxa3 Ke2**
- 5) **1.Rxa7 [1.c7 Nc6+] 1...Rxa7 2.c7**
- 6) **1...Rc4 [1...Bc5 2.Rxc2 Rc4+ 3.Rcf2] 2.bxc4 [2.Rc1 Bc5 3.bxc4 b3] 2...Bc5 3.Kg2 Bxf2 4.Kxf2 b3**
- 7) **1.Bf4 [1.h6 f4 2.h7 f5] 1...Kxf4 2.h6**
- 8) **1.Bh3 Bxh3 [1...f5 2.fxe5±] 2.f5**
- 9) **1...Bd6 2.Rxd6 [2.Bxd6 d1Q; 2.Kxd2 Bxc7] 2...h2**
- 10) **1.Rc8+ Rxc8 2.Qa7+ Kxa7 3.bxc8N+ Kb7 4.Nxe7**
- 11) **1...Ng3+ 2.fxg3 Qf6+ 3.Qf2 Rxe1+ 4.Kxe1 Qxf2+ 5.Kxf2 c2**
- 12) **1.Rd8 Rxd8 2.c7+ Kb7 3.cxd8Q+**
- 13) **1...Re1+ 2.Rxe1 Qd4+ 3.Kf1 [3.Qxd4 dxe1Q#] 3...Qxb4**
- 14) **1.Rc8 Rxc8 [1...Qxd7 2.Qf8+ Rxf8 3.Rxf8#] 2.Qe7 Qxe7 3.dxc8Q+**
- 15) **1...Qh1+ 2.Kxh1 c1Q+ 3.Kg2 Qc6+ 4.Kg1 [4.Kf1 Qh1#] 4...Rb1+**
- 16) **1.Bf5+ Kd8 2.Rxd5 cxd5 3.c6**
- 17) **1...d2 2.Rxe5+?! [2.Rd1 Bf6 3.Rxd2 h5µ] 2...Be6!! 3.Rxe6+ Kd7**
- 18) **1...Rxd3 2.cxd3 Qxe4 [2...c2 3.Rc4 Qxd3 4.Qf7] 3.fxe4 c2**
- 19) **1.Bxg6 hxg6 2.Re7+ Rxe7 3.dxe7+ Kxe7 4.Rd8 Kxd8 5.h7**
- 20) **1...Bg5!! [1...Qe4? 2.Qd5; 1...Re8 2.Kxf2; 1...Rf5 2.Qg4 d5 3.Nd6] 2.Nxd6 [2.Qxg5 Qh3+ 3.Ke2 f1Q+] 2...Bd2!!**

2. The most frequent tactical pawn techniques in the middlegame

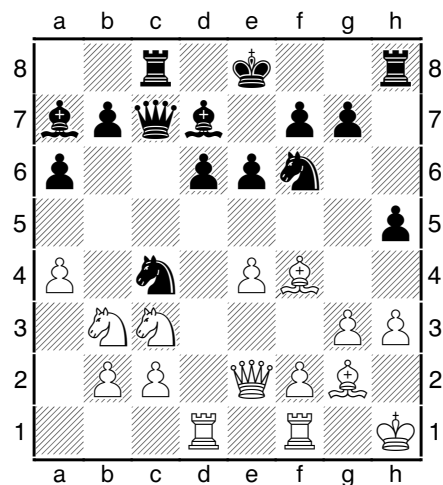
2.1. The fork

In this position from the game Florescu – Dumitrache, 1998, Black tries to get the initiative on both sides, but his king is still on e8. White needs to open up the center, but the e5-square is strongly covered by the black pieces.

White uses a very common technique: a piece sacrifice followed by a pawn fork recapturing the piece:

1.Bxd6! forcing **1...Nxd6**. Now, the e4 pawn can advance, gaining the piece back and also opening the center: **2.e5**

After **2...Nf5 3.exf6 gxf6 4.Nd5** White has a strong attack.



White is to move

2.2. Pawn capturing diagonally opening the lines

Game: Florescu – Vajda, 1998.

In this position it looks like the pawn structure in the centre is blocked by the couple of e4 against e5 pawns.

However, the pawn can move diagonally if it captures a piece. By a very simple technique, White forces the opening of the e-file:

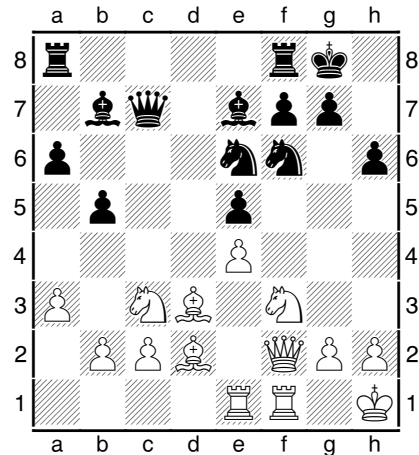
1.Nd5! which forces Black to make the capture

1...Nxd5.

Now, White gets a winning attack after:

2.exd5 Nc5 (2...Bxd5 3.Nxe5) 3.Qg3 Nd3 4.Bxh6

Bf6 5.cxd3 Bxd5 6.Nh4



White is to move

2.3. Pawn attacks in the center against side attacks

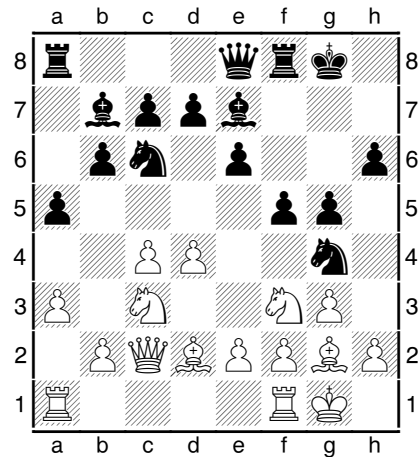
In the game Foisor – Bischoff, 1983, Black started an attack on the kingside (now threatening Qh5 and Nxd4). However, he forgot about the center where White (counter-)attacks immediately by:

1.d5! Nce5?

Black had to defend the b7-bishop by 1...Nd8, but anyway White was clearly better after 2.Nd4

2.Nxe5 Nxe5 3.d6! White wins a piece

Double attack against Bb7 and Be7. After 3...Bxg2 4.dxe7 follows.



White is to move

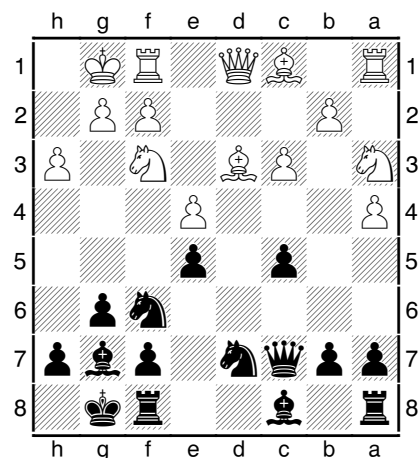
2.4. Sacrificing a pawn to clear a square

In the game Dus Chotimirsky - Capablanca, 1925, White is threatening to play Na3-c4 with a good position and a long-term pressure.

Capablanca doesn't wait and improves the position of his pieces by: **11...c4!** clearing the c5-square for his knight. After **12.Nxc4 Nc5 13.Qe2 Nxd3 14.Qxd3** Black gets an excellent piece dynamic after **14...Be6** with the idea Rfd8.

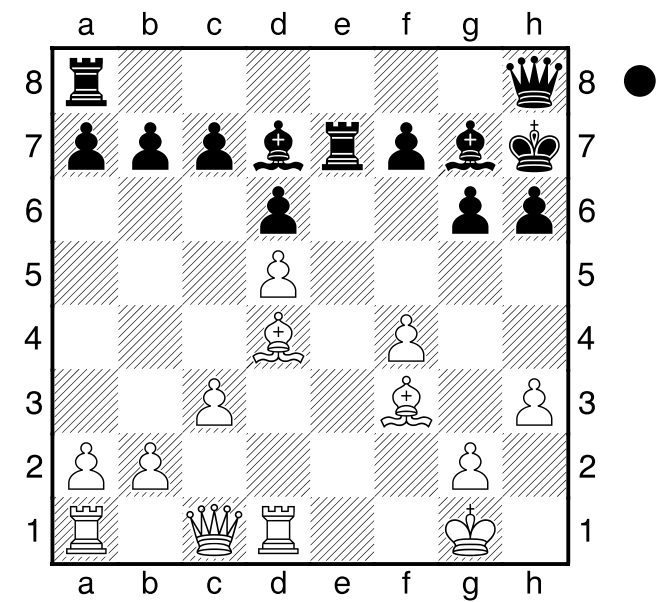
15.Nce5 is not good because of **15...Nh5** and

16...Bc4.



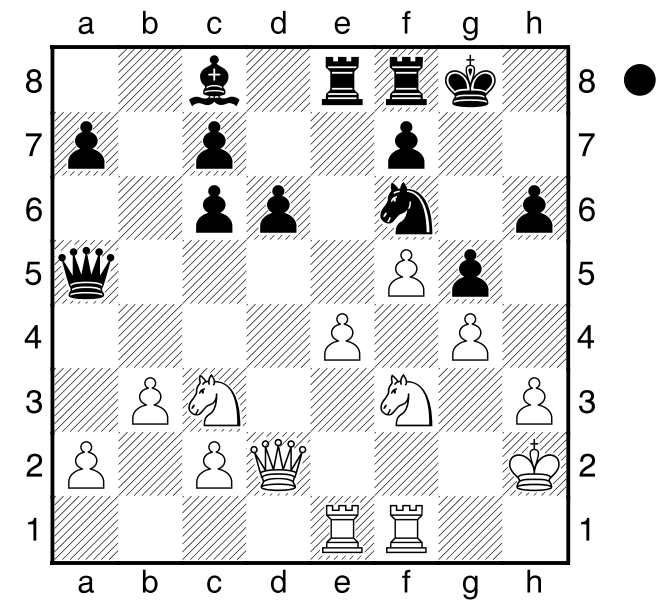
Black is to move

Exercise 1



Black is to move.
Which are the most important strategic elements of the position?
How should Black continue?

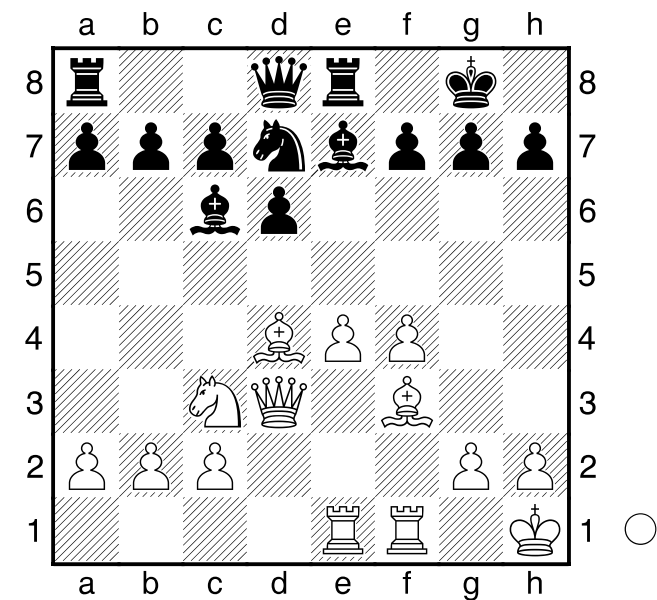
Exercise 2



Black is to move.
White advanced his pawns on the kingside trying to get more space on that side.
What should be White's plan to continue his attack? (Give White's TO DO list)

How should Black play? (Give Black's TO DO list)

Exercise 3

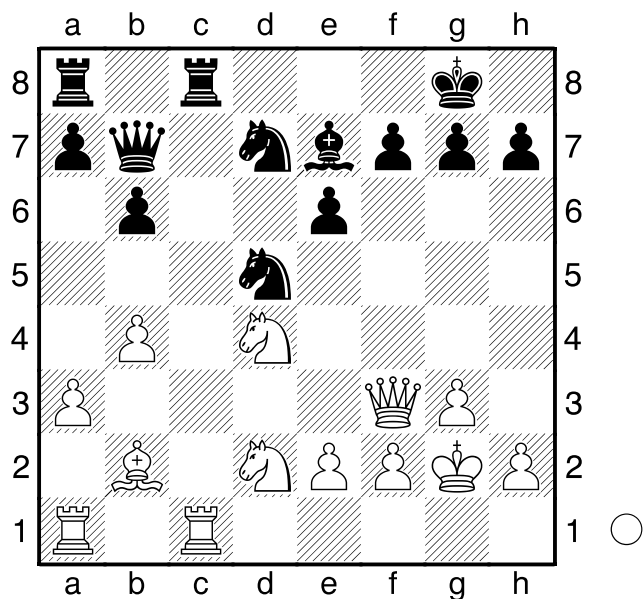


White is to move.
White has space advantage on the centre and his pieces are ideally placed. However, he is still far from Black's camp which has only 2 pieces on the sixth rank.
How should White continue?

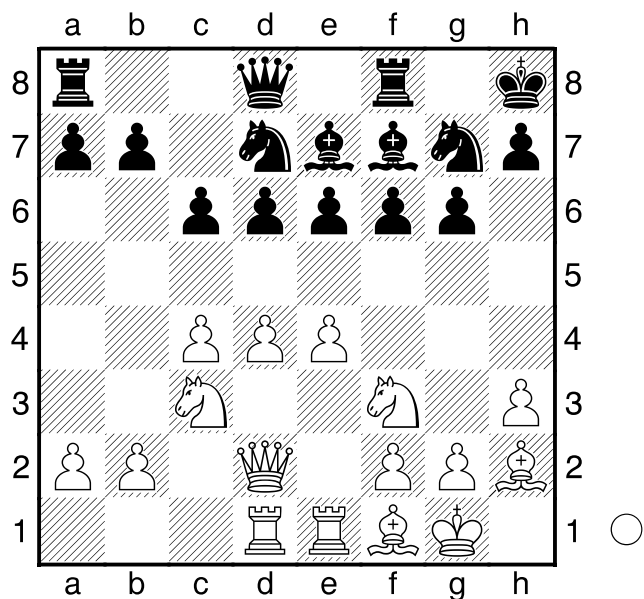
Exercise 4

(Diagram)

White is to move.
The pawn structure is almost symmetrical. Is White able to create "something" to get a promising position? Find a plan for White, the moves and their consequences.



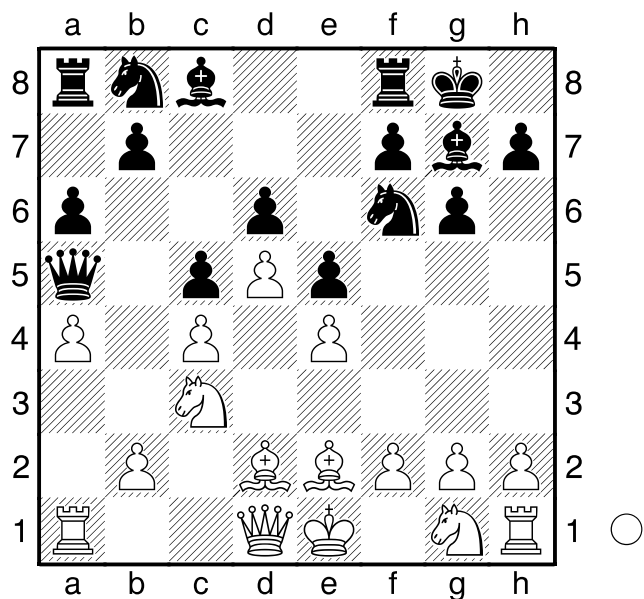
Exercise 5



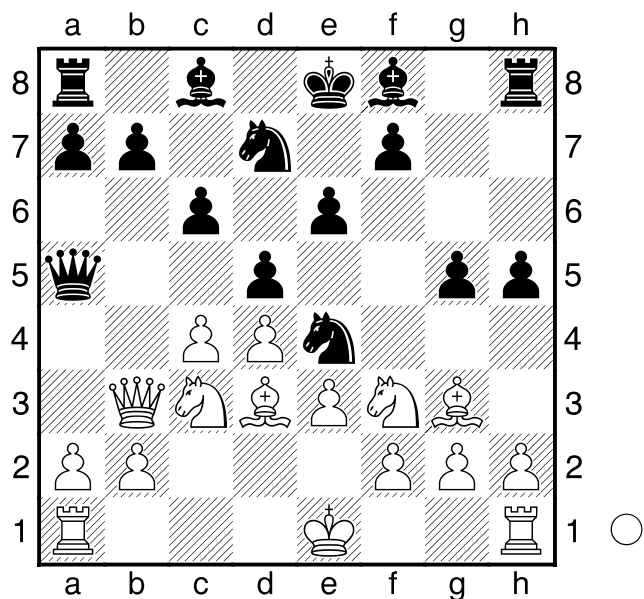
White is to move.
White's space advantage is obvious. How should he continue?

Exercise 6

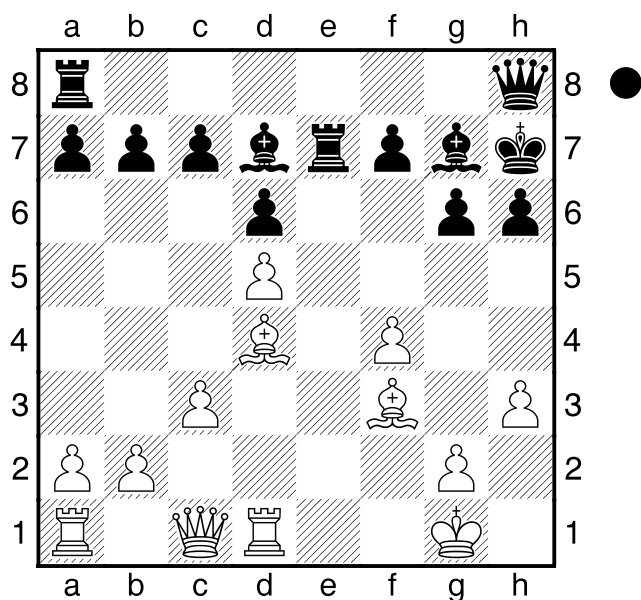
White is to move.
What would you play?



Exercise 7



White is to move.
Evaluate the position and find the best continuation for White.



Black is to move.

Which are the most important strategical elements of the position?

How should Black continue?

SOLUTION:

White has more space due to his advanced pawns on d5 and f4. The black queen is temporarily out-of-play on h8 and the activity of the fianchettoed bishop on the long diagonal h8-a1 is reduced by the white c3- and f4- pawns. Black's asset is the possibility to take the control over the e-file.

At a closer look, you should have remarked the weakness of the white kingside pawns. This formation is inflexible (any pawn cannot advance) and Black's control over the e-file make hard for White to sustain his pawns.

So, after this complete evaluation, Black TO DO list is to exchange pieces (because the lack of space), to take the control over the e-file and to put pressure on White's kingside pawn structure. Concretely: 1. Bxd4, 2.Rae8, 3.Qf6. The last move also re-activates the queen.

1...Bxd4+!

[In the game Polovodin - Razuvaev, 1979, Black played:

1...Rae8?

and, now, White avoids the exchange of

bishops with:

2.Bf2

In the resulted position, the black rooks are not able to use the e-file, the queen remains out-of-play on h8 and no black piece can attack the white kingside pawns.]

2.Rxd4

[After 2.cxd4 Qf6

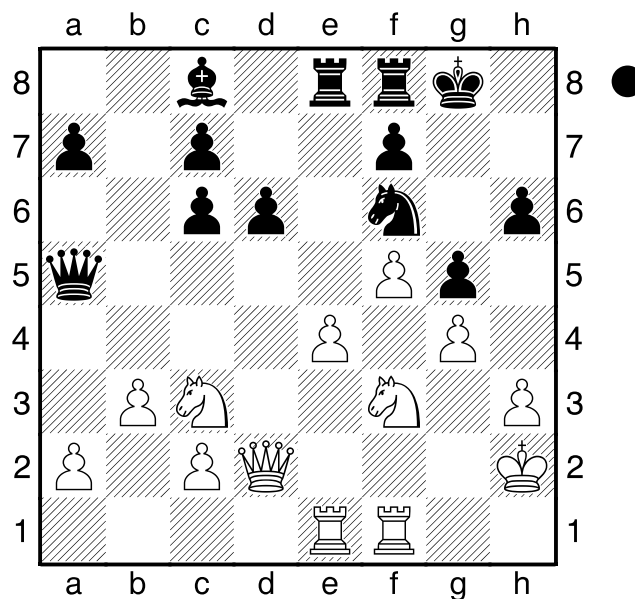
White has to defend his f4- and d4- pawns and therefore won't be able to oppose resistance on the e-file.]

2...Rae8 3.Qd2 Qf6

White remains with his space advantage, but the black pieces have good position and doesn't suffer of inactivity behind their pawns.

Moreover, the white f4-pawn has to be defended by a white major piece, while the d5-pawn limits the activity of his bishop.

Solution 2



Black is to move.

White advanced his pawns on the kingside trying to get more space on that side.

What should be White's plan to continue his attack? (Give White's TO DO list)

How should Black play? (Give Black's TO DO list)

SOLUTION:

White has local space advantage on the kingside. This is why White should play on this side. The only possibility to get some real attack is to open the position (advancing a pawn). How?

The advance of the central pawn e4-e5 is dangerous because White has no protection for his king and, moreover, Black might bring his bishop on the long diagonal a8-h1. In addition, such an attack with the pawns on the same side with the own king cannot work with an unsecured centre.

So, by elimination, White's only chance to benefit of his space advantage on the kingside is to open the h-file. In conclusion, White's TO DO is: h3-h4, Kg3, Rh1, Qh2 and h4xg5.

Is White's plan a real threat for Black? The answer is clearly yes as the black king is not enough protected. As there is no active plan for Black, he must defend.

In a position with smaller space, a good strategy is to exchange pieces. This way, the lack of space is less sensed as the pieces won't limit each other. So, Black's TO DO list should consider defensive measures and to exchange pieces: Nf6-d7-e5, Kg7 and Rh8. Also f7-f6 to protect the g5- and e5-squares.

21...Nd7!

[In the game Spraggett - Nascimento, 1994, Black continued with:

21...Kh8?! and after 22.Kg3 Nh7 23.Rh1 f6 24.h4

White's advantage is clear. Black's knight on h7 is out of play and moreover obstructs the own rooks to fight for the h-file.]

22.h4 f6!

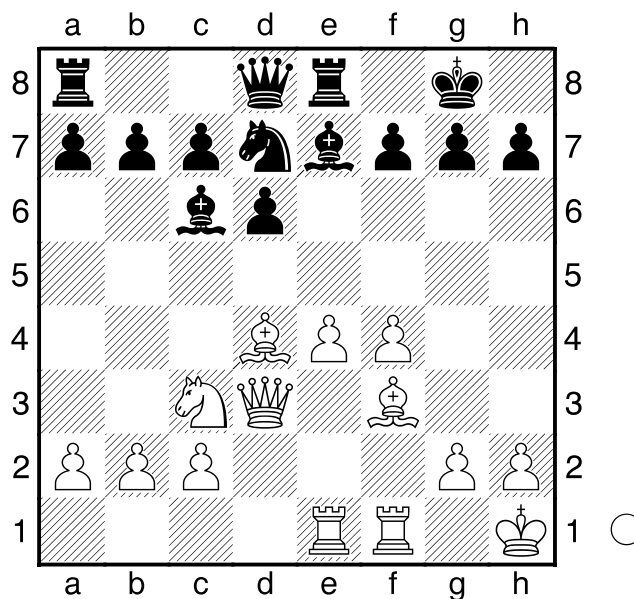
[Black should keep the position closed thus restricting white pieces only to the h-file.

After: 22...gxh4 23.g5! White opens more lines on the kingside, where he has superiority.

]

23.hxg5 hxg5 24.Kg3 Ne5 25.Rh1 Nxf3 26.Kxf3 Kg7

and Black has no any problem! White's pawns are blocked, the h-file will not be controlled by White (Black can play Rh8 anytime), so White has no entrance. Even if Black's space on the kingside is limited, his pieces (the rooks and king) are doing just fine. Compare this position with the one where a black knight is on h7 and you'll see that the knight harms the defensive. Moreover, Black is better on the centre because the strong control over the e5-square and pressure against the white e4-pawn. Now, Black's TO DO list will be an active one: c6-c5, Bb7, Qe5, or Qe5, a7-a5, Ba6, c6-c5-c4, Rb8-b4 and so on with a better endgame due to the "immobility" of White's pawn structure on the centre and queenside.

Solution 3

White is to move.

White has space advantage on the centre and his pieces are ideally placed. However, he is still far from Black's camp which has only 2 pieces on the sixth rank.

How should White continue?

SOLUTION:

So, White has almost an ideal position and, in this very moment, the black pieces are concentrated on a very small place. Therefore, you should think to a way to open up the position.

You also should not forget to see what Black is threatening to do and this is the first question. Black's threat here is Be7-f6. Of course, the threat is not only when your king is mated but also strategical threats. Black has no weaknesses in his position and by exchanges he is threatening to reduce White's space advantage. So Be7-f6 is a real threat.

So, it becomes clear what White should move: e4-e5 to open up the position and to interdict Be7-f6. After you have in mind what you should play, you should also check the possible responses of your opponent. As we'll see in the next variation, after 15.e5, Black has the response 15...Nc5! provoking other exchanges which we don't want.

So, back to thinking.... we want e4-e5, but we don't want Nd7-e5. Also, we don't want Be7-f6. So, is there any move to solve all these? In this position, the response is "yes":

15.b4!

The "lance-point"! By this typical pawn-move, White gains more space on the queenside too. Black's bishop-position on c6 is threatened by b4-b5 which forces the reply b7-b6. As a consequence of his move, White gained the control over the c5-square (now Nd7-c5 is no more possible) with tempo. Another consequence of the next Black's forced move (b7-b6) is the weakening of the c6-square which White will exploit to improve the position of his queen.

[The move: 15.g4 with the idea to gain more space on the kingside and start an attack against the black king is not so good. Black has a "perfect" pawn structure in front of his king and already his knight is retreated on d7, so White will gain no tempo by the "lance-point" on the kingside.

After: Bf6 Black is okay and White's king

position is exposed without concrete compensation.]

[15.e5 is too early as after: dxe5 16.fxe5 Nc5 Black frees his pieces and forces unwanted exchanges: 17.Bxc5 Qxd3 18.cxd3 Bxc5 19.Bxc6 bxc6 and White has problems in defending his central pawns. Black has a better endgame because of his active bishop in a position with pawns on both sides.]

15...a6 16.a4! b6 17.Qc4 Bb7 18.e5 Bxf3 19.Rxf3

The continuation of the game (Markovic - Abramovic, 1991) is very instructive. Black didn't make any mistake and still lost strongly pressured by White's space advantage on the board. The grandmaster with black pieces didn't find any escape and lost quickly.

Nf8 20.Rd1 Qd7 21.f5 dxe5 22.Bxe5 Bd6 23.Bxd6 cxd6 24.Nd5 Qb7 25.f6 Rac8 26.Qg4 Ng6 27.c4 Re5 28.fxc7 Kxc7 and Black resigned.

This game shows us how strong is the advantage in space.

Solution 4

(Diagram)

White is to move.

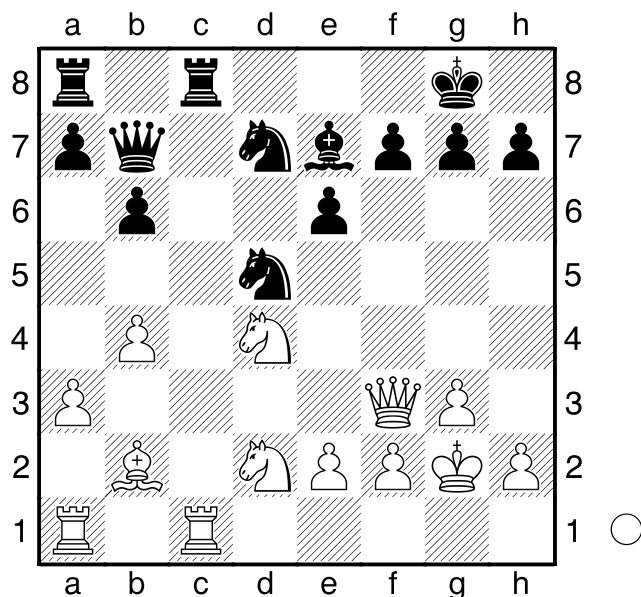
The pawn structure is almost symmetrical. Is White able to create "something" to get a promising position? Find a plan for White, the moves and their consequences.

SOLUTION:

This position is from the game Botvinnik - Donner, 1963.

First of all, here, Black has a very real threat: 19...Ne5 20.Qe4 f5 followed by Nf4++.

So, White has to defend against this threat and also to find a way to "advance":



19.e4!

By this move, White closes the dangerous a8-h1 diagonal and also gets more space in the centre. The black knight is chased away from the centre to a more passive position.

N5f6

[19...Ne5 is not good because the knight will hang on e5 after:
20.Qe2 Nf6 21.Nxe6]

The effects of the gained space are clear: the quality of the pieces of the 2 camps was changed; the black minor pieces have a limited activity.

How can White exploit his small advantage now? Black's position seems very solid however.

20.b5!!

White starts active operations at the right moment.

The plus of this move is obvious: the control over the c6-square and consequently the creation of an operational base for the white knight.

The bad consequence of this move is the loss of the control over the c5-square which is closer to the centre and, therefore, theoretically more important.

As said in our course: in order to gain

something, you need to give something. Here, White cedes an important square (c5) in order to gain the c6-square. Why? The answer is the better maneuverability of white pieces due to his space advantage.

a6

[20...Ne5 is not good because of:
21.Qe2 and after f2-f4, the black knight will be driven back.]

21.Nc6 Bf8

Black wants to keep the c5-square for the knight - a good illustration of lack of space and superfluous pieces (Black has only one good square for 2 pieces).

It is now clear that White created that "something". He has a big space advantage, a good operational base for the knight on c6 and superior pieces.

The rest of the game is also instructive:

22.a4 axb5 23.axb5 Rxa1 24.Rxa1 Ra8 25.Rd1 Ne8 26.Nc4 Nc5 27.e5 Rc8 28.Ra1 Rc7 29.Ra7 Qxa7 30.Nxa7 Rxa7 31.Nxb6 and Black resigned.

Solution 5

(Diagram)

White is to move.

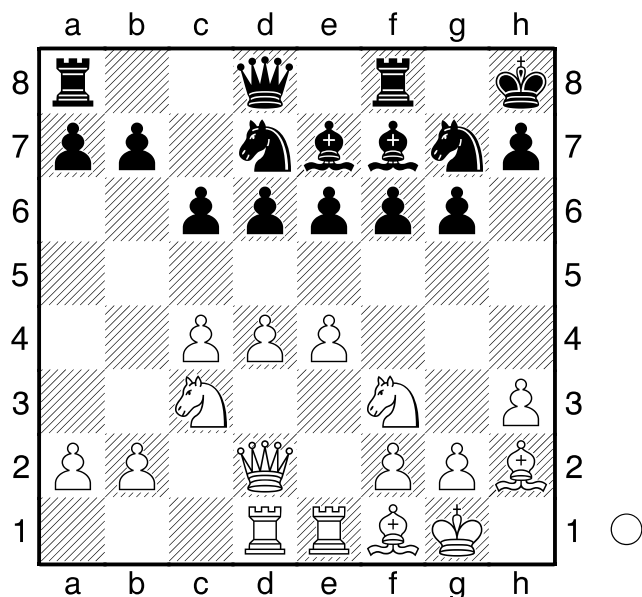
White's space advantage is obvious. How should he continue?

SOLUTION:

This position is from the game Yudovich - Klamann, 1947.

There are opening systems from King's Indian Defense, Pirc, Grunfeld, etc., where Black lets White to conquer space in the centre. Then, Black's strategy in these systems is to attack the formed centre with his pieces and semi-central pawns (c- or f-).

In our position, White's space advantage is not contested by Black. His only aim in the opening was to put the king in safe, develop the pieces,



and wait... This opening strategy cannot work. White pieces are ideally placed, with the major pieces concentrated on the central files. It is time for a central pawn thrust to open up the position. Yet, exact calculation of such an advance is a must.

16.c5! d5

[Black cannot accept the sacrifice because after:

16...dxc5 17.d5!

White's major pieces will create serious threats against the black pieces from the 7th rank.

Qc8 (17...cxd5 18.exd5 exd5 19.Nxd5 Bxd5 20.Qxd5+-) 18.dxc6 Nb6 19.e5 f5 20.cxb7 Qxb7 21.Nb5±]

17.exd5 exd5

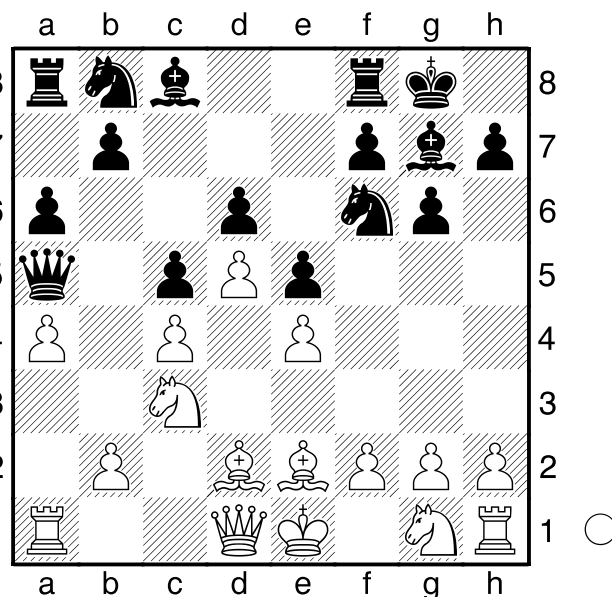
and this is a position you should know already (Exercise 9 from the set 2 of the Month 04).

18.b4!±

Solution 6

(Diagram)

White is to move.
What would you play?



SOLUTION:

(game Averbakh - Panno, 1954)

The centre is closed and secure, so both players have to play on the wings. White's queenside is weakened by the advanced pawn on a4 and, moreover, he has superiority of forces on the kingside.

So, White has to start by advancing the pawns and to create local space advantage on the kingside. The only question is which pawn to advance first?

10.g4!

White threatens to play h2-h4-h5 and/or g4-g5.

[10.h4 is not good because, Black can try to stop White's pawns by: h5!]

10...Ne8 11.h4 f5!?

The center is closed and the queenside is almost impossible to be broken. So, Black has to create space for his pieces on the same side of the board - if not for attack, at least for defensive maneuvers.

12.h5

[12.gxf5 gxf5 13.h5 was also good.]

12...f4

Trying to close as many lines as possible. Black

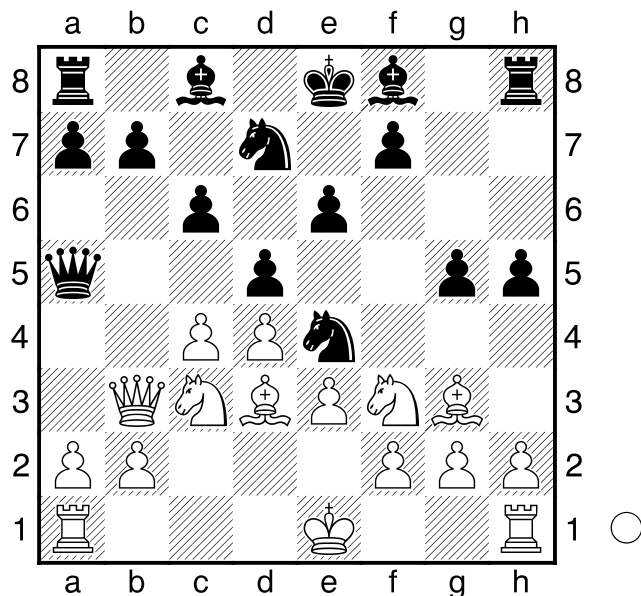
is also under developed so opening the position is not in his favor. However, White has enough space on the g- and h- files to carry on his attack:

13.g5 Rf7 14.Bg4 Qd8 15.Bxc8 Qxc8 16.Nf3

with idea Ke2, Rh4 and Qh1 or Qe2, 0-0-0 and Rh4.

White develops a strong attack and Black has no counterplay.

Solution 7



White is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best continuation for White.

SOLUTION:

(game Flohr - Pirc, 1935)

Black advanced his kingside pawns... however this is only a premature attack of the pawns. We cannot say that Black gets a healthy local space advantage on this side, while he has no pieces behind the pawns. In fact, Black is underdeveloped and the centre is not secured.

White will exchange Black's developed pieces:

10.cxd5 exd5 11.Bxe4! dxe4 12.Ne5

forcing another exchange because of the threat Nc4.

Nxe5 13.Bxe5

By exchanging all black developed pieces, White remained with a considerable plus in development which will be exploited by starting active operations in the centre.

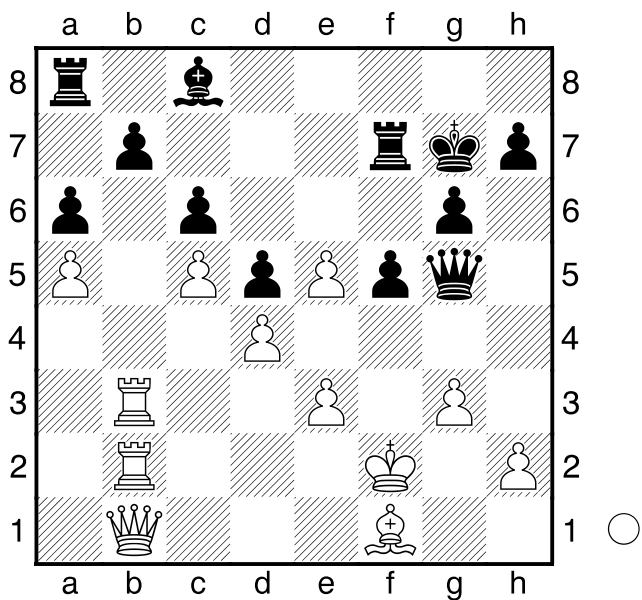
Rh6 14.h4! g4 15.0-0 f5 16.d5!

White gets a strong attack.

Black's bishop-pair cannot compensate all the weaknesses from the kingside and the position of the king in the center.

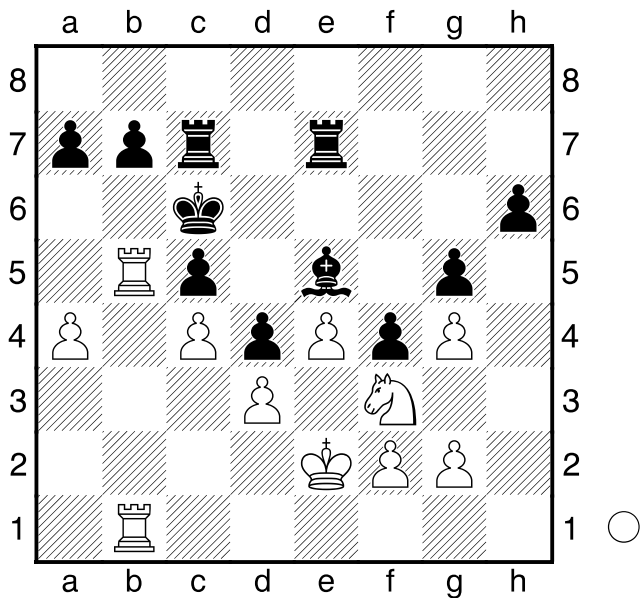
[16.Rfd1]

Exercise 1



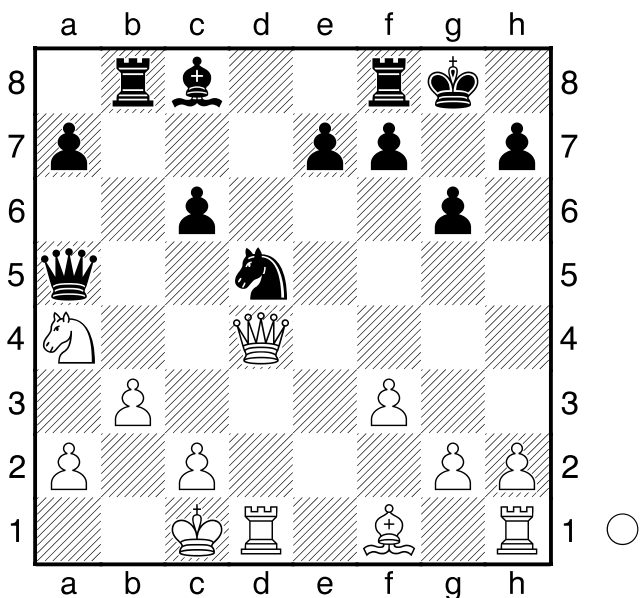
White is to move.
Black defends the weak pawn on b7. How should White continue?

Exercise 2



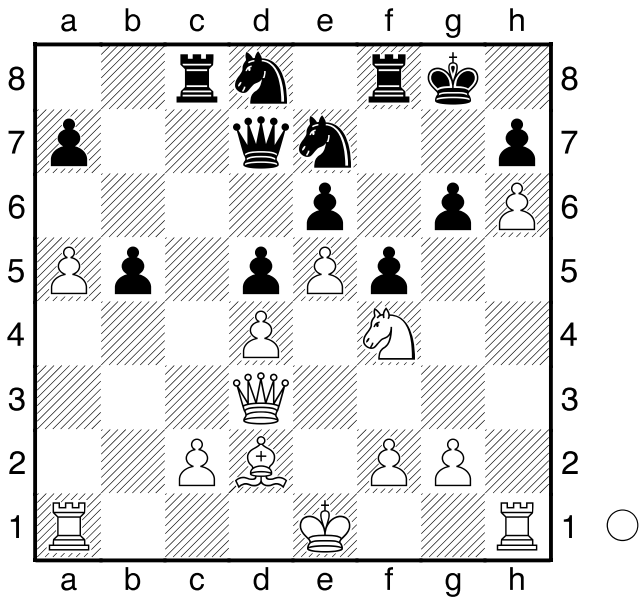
White is to move.
Which are White's advantages? How should White continue?

Exercise 3



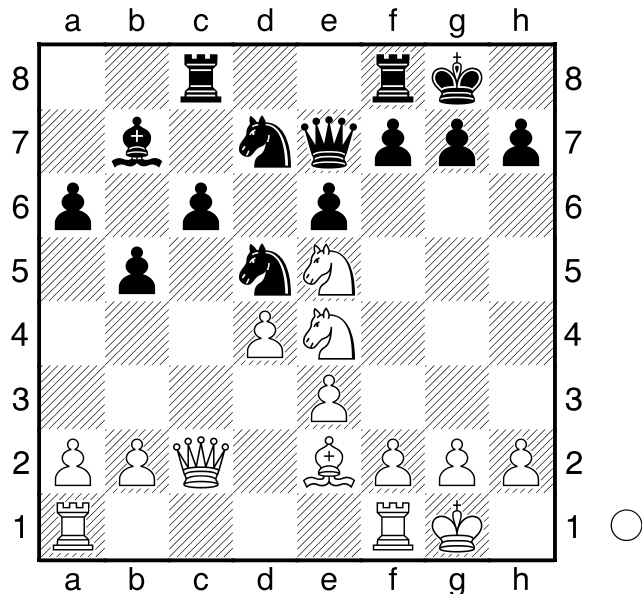
White is to move.
Find the best continuation.

Exercise 4



White is to move.
Can White create a weak black pawn?

Exercise 5



White is to move.

Who is better? Why?

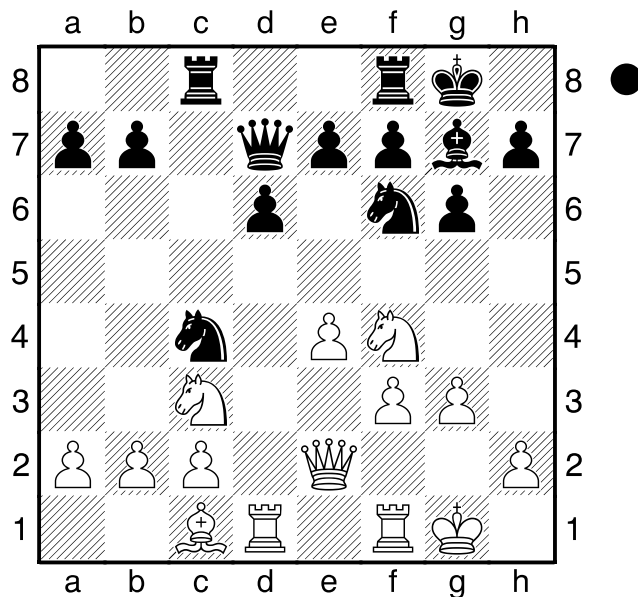
Indicate the first move/s for White and a plan of play.

Exercise 6

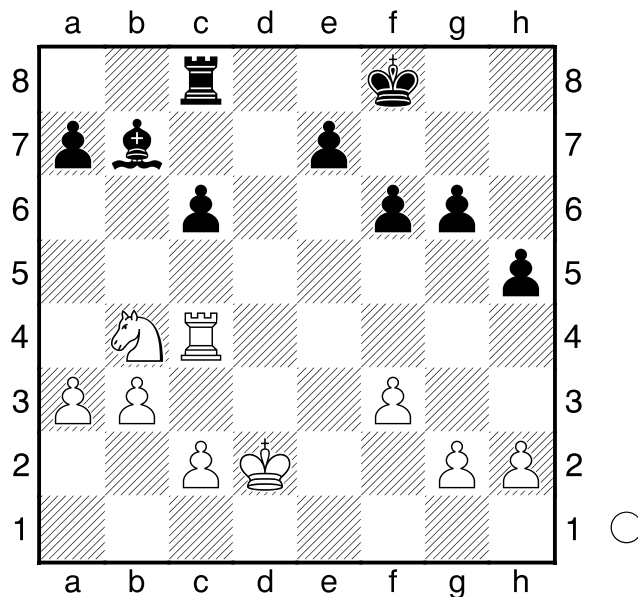
(Diagram)

Black is to move.

Find a plan of play for Black. Find the best move, improving the position of your pieces.

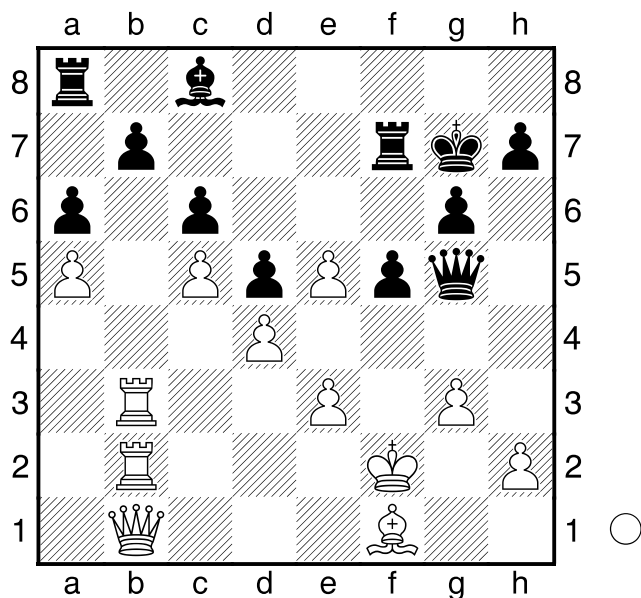


Exercise 7



White is to move.

Find a plan for White and his first move.



White is to move.

Black defends the weak pawn on b7. How should White continue?

Solution:

In many cases, a strong pressure or a concentration of pieces against a point from opponent's camp (here: b7) offers excellent premises for a tactical strike.

The attacking player must pay attention in order not to miss this chance - often only once during the game...

1.Rxb7!

White sacrifices a rook for a bishop and pawn, but enters Black's camp and eventually wins more pawns.

Bxb7 2.Rxb7 Qd8

[2...Raf8 3.Bxa6 Kg8 4.Rxf7 Rxf7 5.Bb7 and Black cannot stop the free a-pawn to queen.]

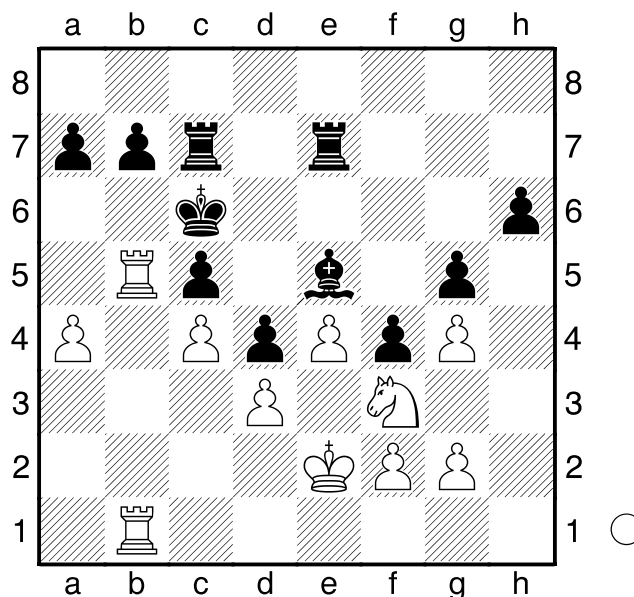
3.Rxf7+ Kxf7 4.Qb7+ Kg8 5.Qxc6

and White also captures the a6- or d5- pawn. With material advantage, more free pawns, and active pieces, White wins.

Solution 2

White is to move.

Which are White's advantages? How should



White continue?

Solution:

White has an advantage because of:

1. Black has a backward pawn on h6;
2. The b7-pawn can be considered a weakness as it cannot advance on b6 because of a4-a5 and White opens the a- and b- files in his favor;
3. White has the advantage of a knight against a "bad" bishop in a closed position;
4. White has more active pieces.

All these advantages do not assure the full point however. As you can see, in the game, White missed the best continuation and obtained only half a point.

A sure way to victory was:

29.Rxc5+!

[The game Sokolsky - Plater, 1947 continued:

29.a5 Rcd7 30.Rh1 Rd6 31.Rhb1 Rdd7 32.Nd2 Bd6 33.a6 b6

and the position became closed and White didn't succeed to win.]

29...Kxc5 30.Rb5+ Kd6 31.Rd5+ Kc6

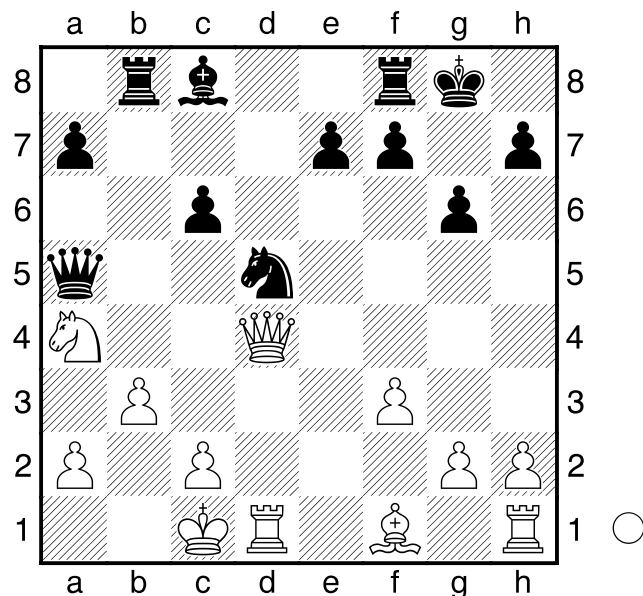
[31...Ke6 32.Rxe5+ Kf6 33.Rf5+ Kg6 34.Nxd4]

32.Nxe5+ Kb6 33.Rb5+ Ka6 34.Nf3

So, White obtains 2 free pawns for an exchange. Moreover, the black rooks remain passive in

front of White's pawn formation, while the white knight can choose between more excellent operational bases in the centre.

Solution 3



White is to move.
Find the best continuation.

Solution:

Black has a damaged pawn structure. The a7- and c6- pawns are isolated and are a serious problem during an endgame. On the other hand, Black's queenside structure can be an advantage during the middlegame due to the open b-file against the white king's position.

Therefore, White should seek simplification:

16.Qc5! Qxc5

[Black has to trade the queens, otherwise he loses material. For example:

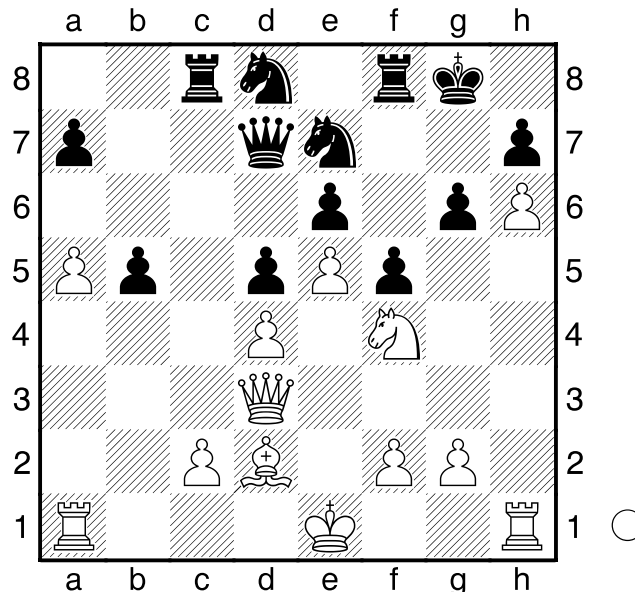
16...Qc7? 17.Rxd5]

17.Nxc5

Now, White's king on the queenside is not in danger, but even on a good position. The king can quickly come in attack against the weak black pawns.

(Suetin - Vasiukov, 1955)

Solution 4



White is to move.
Can White create a weak black pawn?

Solution:

20.a6!

The "shearing" technique. Now, Black cannot defend the b-pawn with another pawn, even if he has the a-pawn on the board. The game went:

Rc4 21.c3 Qc6 22.0-0 Nf7 23.Rfb1 Rb8 24.Rb3 Kf8 25.Qb1±

(Vescovi - Schneider, 2003)

Solution 5

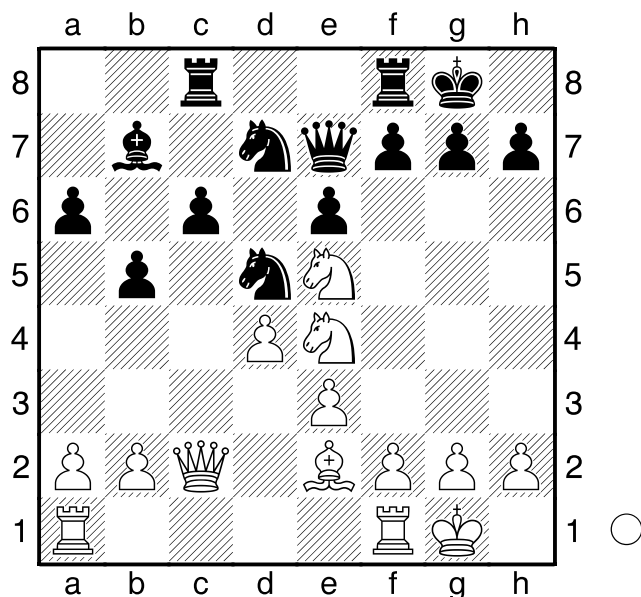
(Diagram)

White is to move.
Who is better? Why?
Indicate the first move/s for White and a plan of play.

Solution:

White is better because of the black weak pawn on c6.

White is able to firmly block Black's weakness



after:

15.Nxd7 Qxd7 16.Nc5

Now, White's plan is very simple:

1. Increase the pressure against the c6-pawn, in order to keep the opponent pieces in passive positions.
2. After the pressure reaches the maximum point, start an attack on the other side too. Black's pieces will be tied up in defense of the queenside weakness, while the White's pieces can easily maneuver using the b1-h7 diagonal, c5- and e5- squares, and, ultimately, the pawn-advance h2-h4-h5.

Solution 6

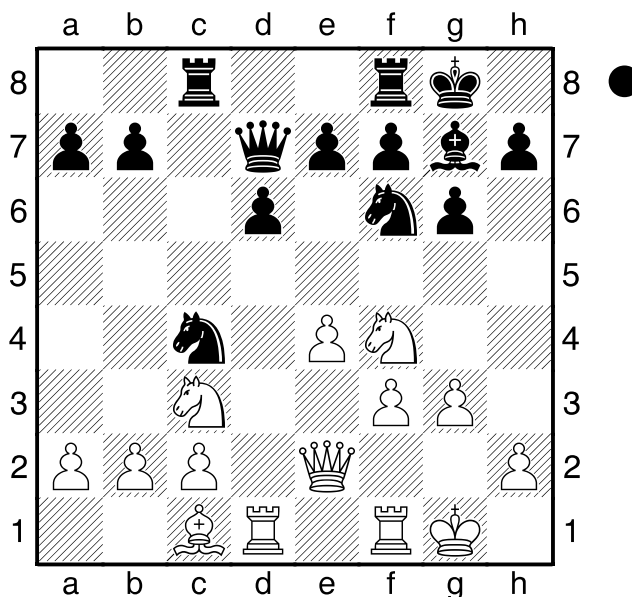
(Diagram)

Black is to move.

Find a plan of play for Black. Find the best move, improving the position of your pieces.

Solution:

After the opening stage, Black obtained at least an equal position, typical of Dragon system. Because of the open c-file and fianchettoed g7-bishop, Black should play actively on the queenside, while keeping the central structure



(e7- and d6- pawns) as a shield.

Black's first objective is to create weaknesses in White's queenside structure. This can be done by advancing the b-pawn on b4 which drives away the c3-knight. Then, the combined attack exerted by Black's g7-bishop and c4-knight against the b2-pawn will force White to play b2-b3. After this move, the white c2-pawn and c3-square will become weak and targets for Black's pieces.

So, Black prepares b7-b5 and, in the same time, opens the very important diagonal h8-a1:

17...Ne8!

Now, b7-b5 is possible, the g7-bishop is active and the knight is heading to a more active position on the queenside: b5.

[17...b5? is not good because of: 18.b3 and the b5-pawn is hanging.]

[17...a6 is too passive. For example: 18.b3 Ne5 19.Nfd5 Nxd5 20.Nxd5 Rc6 21.f4 Ng4 22.e5]

18.Qd3 b5 19.Rde1

[White cannot stop Black's b-pawn. In case of: 19.a3 a5

Black plays b5-b4 and the exchange a3xb4, a5xb4, opening the a-file, is only in Black's favor.]

19...b4 20.Nd1

As a result of Black's active play, White is forced to defend from passive positions.

a5 21.Kh1 Ne5 22.Qe2 Nc7

Black threatens Qa4 or Nb5-d4, so White is forced to weaken his structure:

23.b3 Nb5

In just 7 moves, the position was changed dramatically. White has a very weak pawn on c2 (backward on an open file) and a complex of weak squares on the queenside that black pieces can easily use.

The game continued:

24.Bb2 Rc5 25.Nd3 Nxd3 26.Qxd3

[26.cxd3 Nd4 27.Bxd4 Bxd4 28.Ne3 Rfc8 29.Nc4 Qc6 30.f4 e6 followed by d6-d5]

26...Bxb2 27.Nxb2 Rc3 28.Qd1 Na3 29.Re2 Qc7 30.Rff2 Rc8

and Black won the c2-pawn and, then, the full point.

(Lehmann - Smyslov, 1967)

Solution 7

(Diagram)

White is to move.

Find a plan for White and his first move.

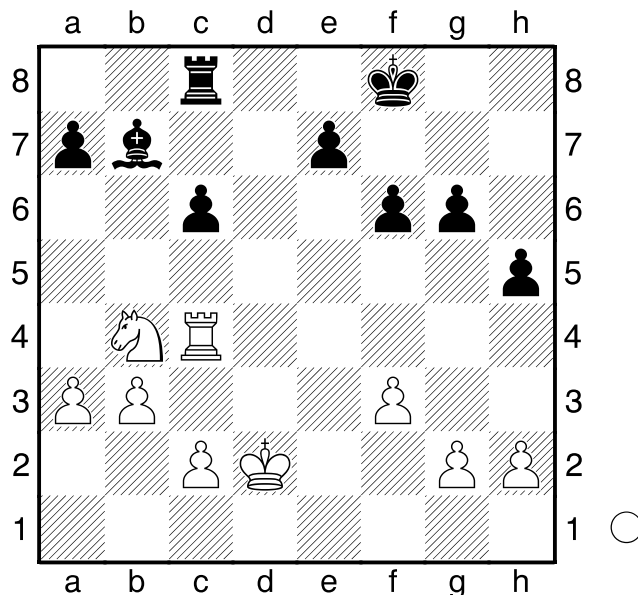
Solution:

This position is from the same game with the previous exercise. White has a clear advantage due to the weak black pawns on the queenside. The best plan for White begins with:

29.a4!

By advancing the a-pawn, White creates new problems for Black on the queenside.

After a4-a5, Black will have to advance his a-pawn on a6 where it will be easier attacked by the white pieces. Also, after Black's a7-a6, the square a6 will not be available anymore for the b7-bishop.

**e5**

[29...a5 is not good because White wins the a5-pawn after:

30.Nd3 e5 31.Rc5 Ra8 32.Kc3 Ke7 33.Nb2 followed by Nc4]

30.a5 a6

Forced, otherwise, after a5-a6, the black bishop will be chased in the corner with no chance to be activated. Now, the a6-square is occupied so Black's bishop is also restricted.

The b6-square became weak and the white king has a route to the Black's queenside: c3-b4-c5-b6.

The game continued:

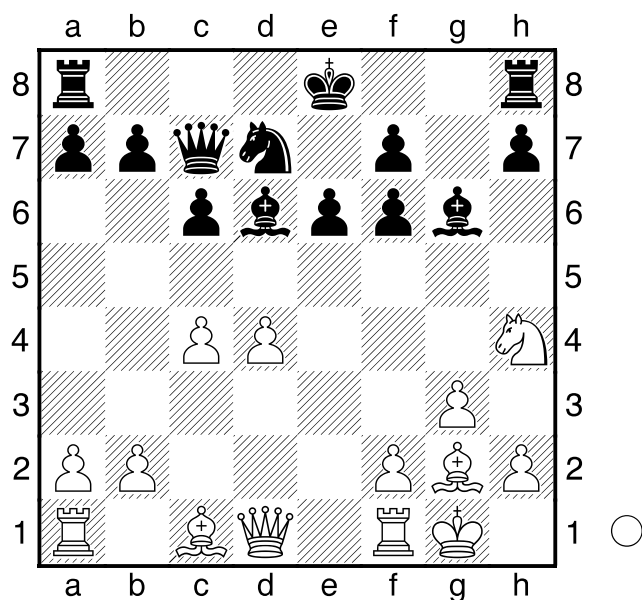
31.Nd3 Ke7 32.Rb4 Rc7 33.Nc5 Bc8 34.Rb8 Kd6 35.b4 Kd5 36.Kd3 g5 37.c4+ Kd6 38.Ra8 g4 39.Nxa6 Bf5+ 40.Ke3 Rb7 41.Rf8 Be6 42.Rxf6

and Black resigned.

(Suetin - Vasiukov, 1955)

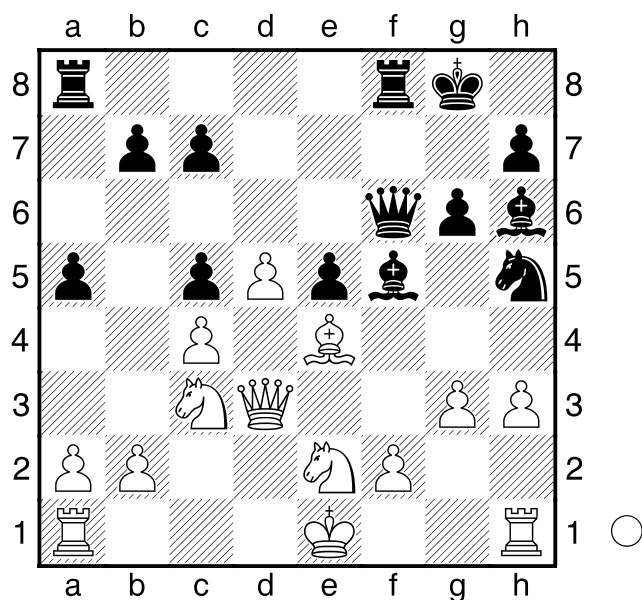
Q1

1



White is to move.
Is 1.c4-c5 a good move?

Q2

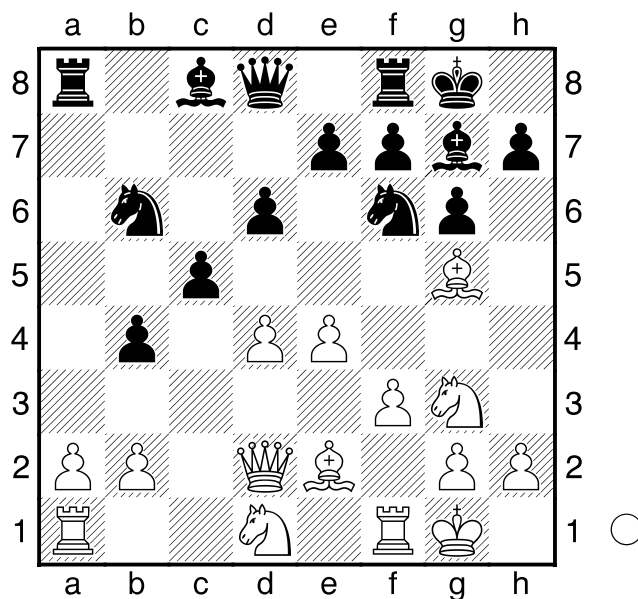


Which are the CQS of 1.g3-g4? Is it a good move?

Q3

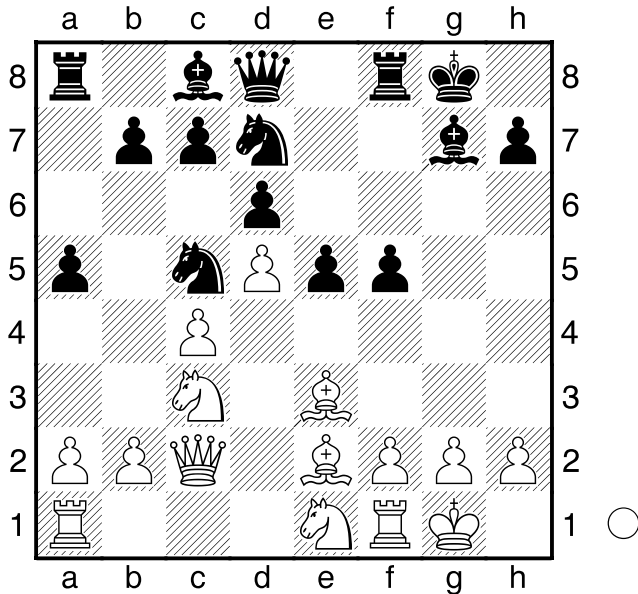
White is to move.
Is 1.c4-c5 a good move here?

Q4



White is to move.
Black has a good piece dynamic and has just begun the attack against White's central pawns. How should White continue in order to defend his position?

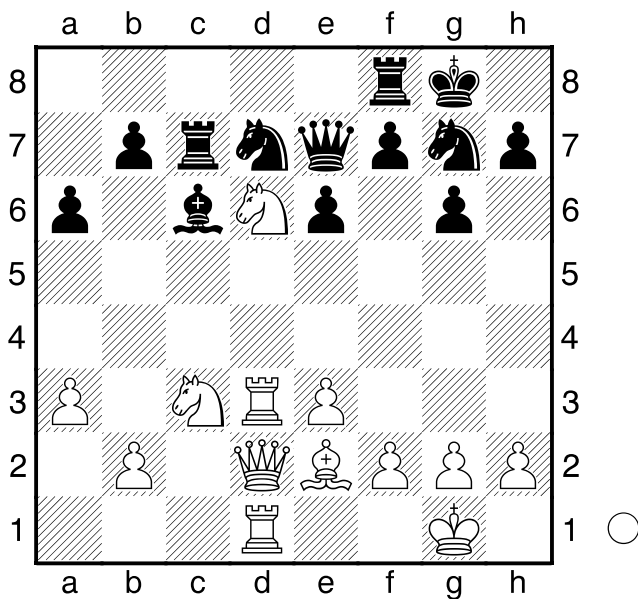
Exercise 1



White is to move.

How can White obtain a strong square in the centre?

Exercise 2

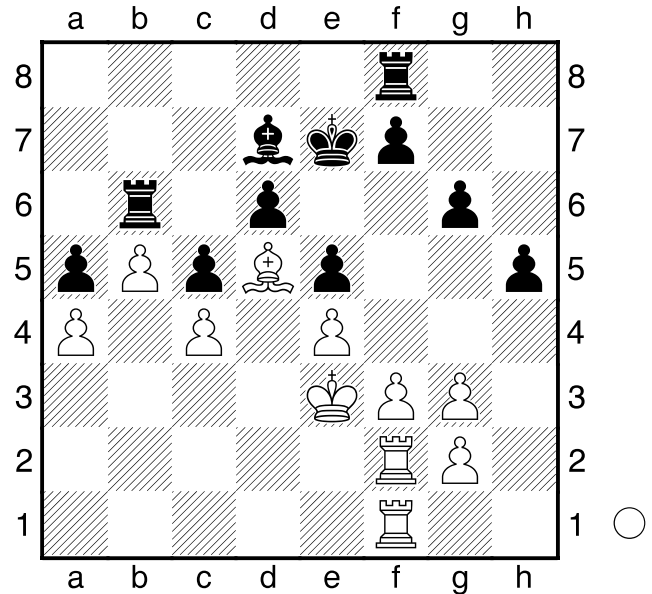


White is to move.

a) Which are the weak squares in Black's camp?

b) Can White obtain the control over one more square?

Exercise 3



White is to move.

How can White create a weakness in Black's camp?

Exercise 4

(Diagram)

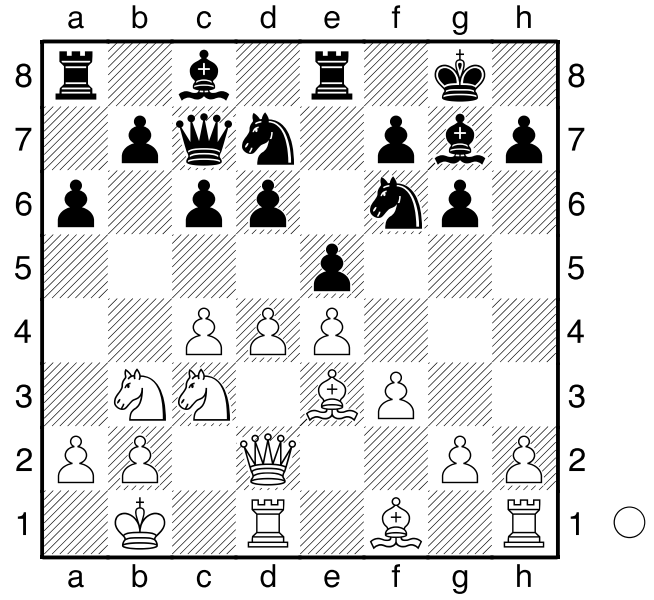
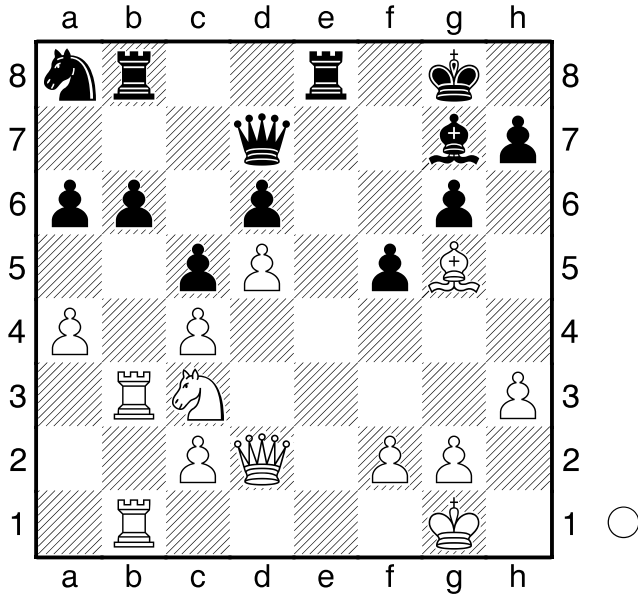
White is to move.

The GM Joel Lautier said "Black's position... bear a strong resemblance to some women portraits by Picasso."

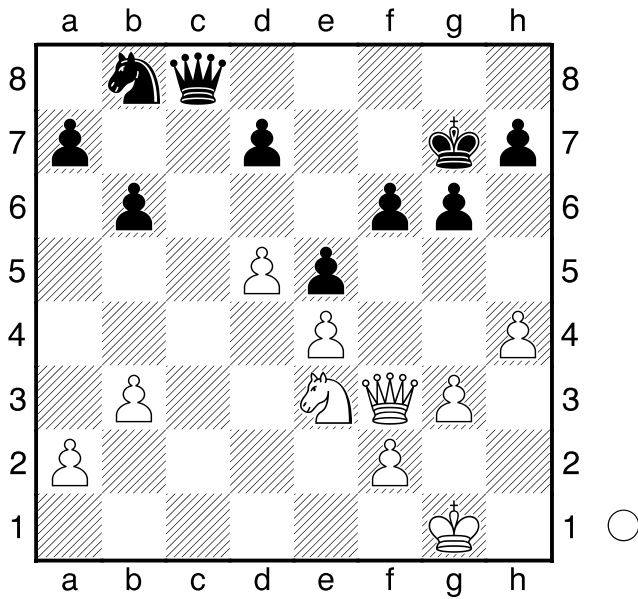
- Which are the weaknesses of Black's position?

Can White use them?

- Can White create new weaknesses?



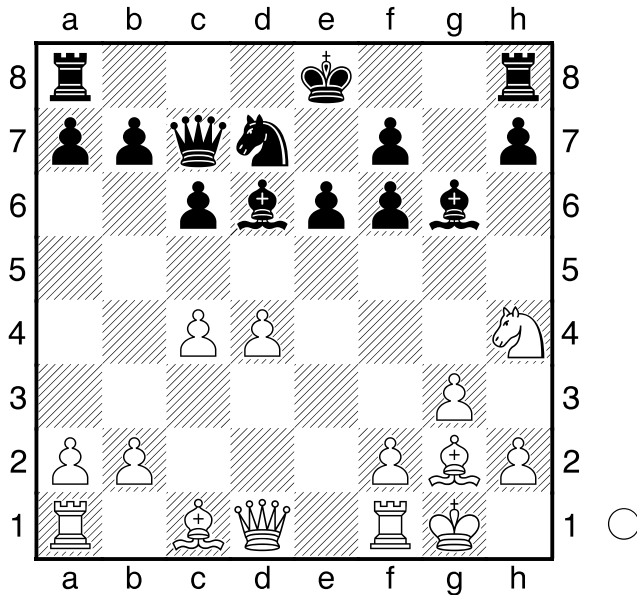
Exercise 5



White is to move.
Find a way to create a strong square for your knight on the kingside.

Exercise 6

White is to move.
Find the best continuation for White.



White is to move.

Is 1.c4-c5 a good move?

A: As a CQS of c4-c5, the d5-square becomes weak. However, White gains important tempi, the black queen and bishop will be uncomfortable and, moreover, Black hardly can occupy the d5-square.

Here, we have an example where dynamic of pieces is more important than the simply existence of a strong square.

12.c5 Be7 13.b4 0-0 14.Bf4±

Q2 – sol

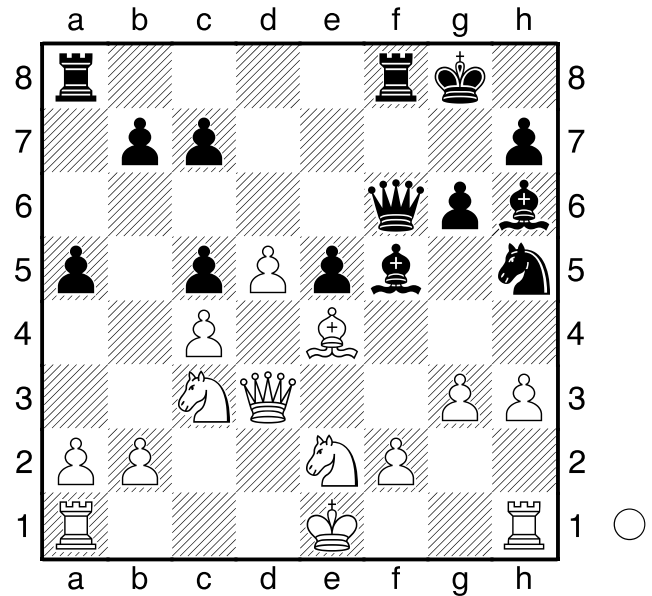
(Diagram)

Which are the CQS of 1.g3-g4? Is it a good move?

Solution:

- This move forces the trade of light-squares bishops on e4, so White will occupy the strong e4-square with his knight.
- This move weakens the f4-square and, in general, the dark-squares on White's kingside.

So, in fact, we have to evaluate which of the 2 squares (e4 for White and f4 for Black) is more important. After the forced variation:



16.g4 Nf4 17.Nxf4 Bxe4 18.Nxe4 Qxf4 19.0-0±

We can see better the consequences of White's g3-g4 move.

White's e4-square is an excellent operational base for the knight in the centre. Black remained with a "bad" bishop due to his blocked pawns on the centre and, consequently, he cannot initiate an attack using the weak dark-squares from White's kingside.

White is better.

Q3 – sol

(Diagram)

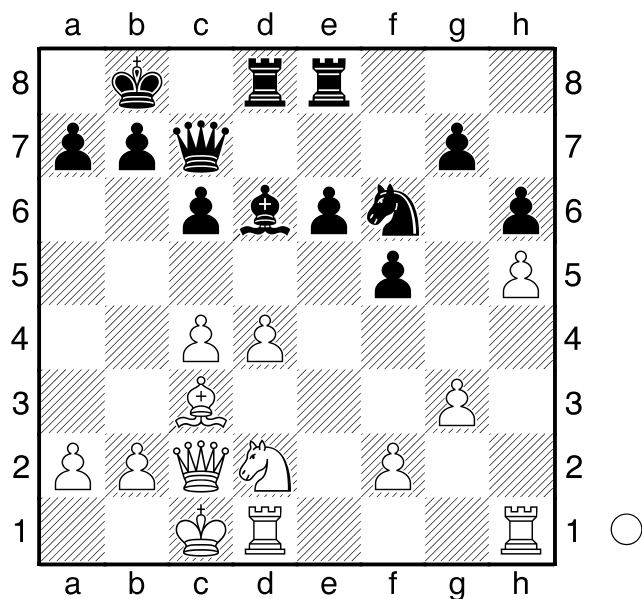
White is to move.

Is 1.c4-c5 a good move here?

Solution:

Again, we have a situation where we need to evaluate the importance of ceding a square for the opponent.

After White's move, Black gets the strong d5-square in the centre, but his bishop will remain very passive. Also, a black knight on d5 will have no important squares to attack (White firmly defends c3, b4, e3, f4).



On the other hand, White gets the strong c4-square for his knight and a better control over e5.

21.c5! Bf8 22.Nc4 Rd5
 [22...Nd5 23.Rhe1±]
23.Ba5 Qf7 24.Rd3±

Q4 – sol

(Diagram)

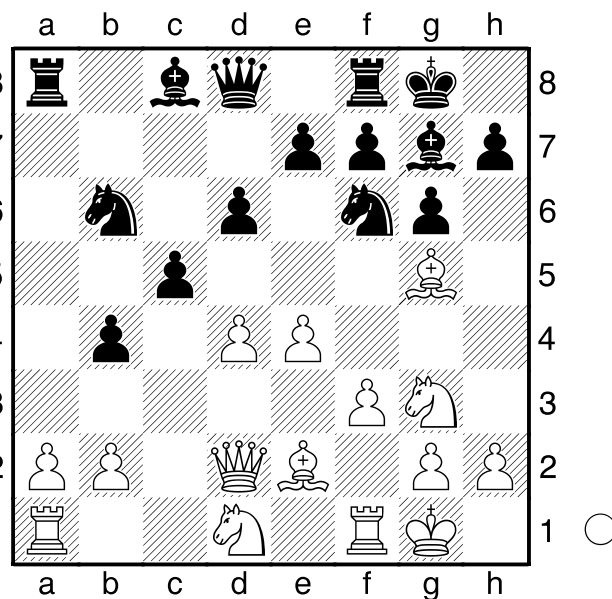
White is to move.

Black has a good piece dynamic and has just begun the attack against White's central pawns. How should White continue in order to defend his position?

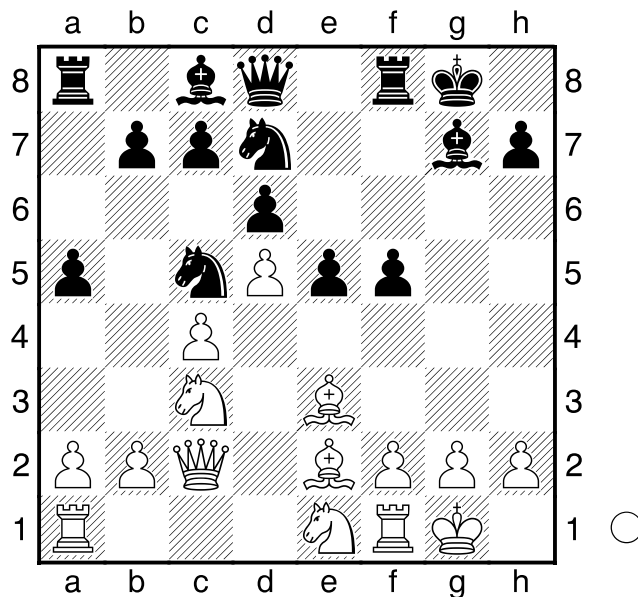
Solution:

Black exerts a strong pressure against White's queenside and central pawns. Black also threatens to take the control over the dark-squares in the centre. White should retreat his bishop to defend d4.

14.Be3!∞



Solution 1



White is to move.

How can White obtain a strong square in the centre?

Solution:

This position was easier for who knows the King's Indian Defense. However, the next White's move is a thematic pawn thrust which fixes the opponent central pawns and creates

strong squares in the centre:

13.f4! e4

After this reply, White obtains the strong squares d4 and e3.

[After 13...exf4 14.Bxf4 Ne5 15.Nf3
White obtains the strong squares d4 and f4.]

Now, White will regroup his pieces to bring his pieces on the new squares:

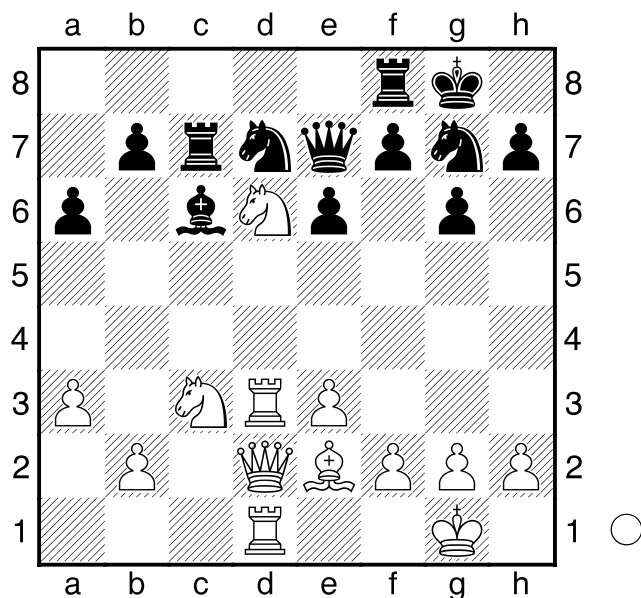
14.Qd2 Nf6 15.Nc2 Qe8 16.Nb5 Qf7

17.Bd4 Ne8 18.Ne3

with good play for White.

(Flohr - Suetin, 1950)

Solution 2



White is to move.

- Which are the weak squares in Black's camp?
- Can White obtain the control over one more square?

Solution:

Obviously, the d6-square is weak for Black. White already installed a knight there and, in addition, he has the major pieces doubled on the d-file. This offers White a strong presence in the centre, but he is still far from a clear-cut way

to win. Black firmly defends the key-squares from the d-file and all the squares attacked by the d6-knight.

So, in order to increase his advantage, White should look for other weaknesses in Black's position.

Beside d6, other weak squares are: b6, f6, and h6. In our lesson about weak squares, we mentioned that the weak squares have a major importance when they are on the centre or around the king.

Here, White can open the lines toward the Black's kingside weaknesses by:

23.e4!

After this, White can play Qd2-h6 and Rd3-h3, so a new problem appeared in Black's camp due to the weak dark-squares on the kingside. Here, we can see the "Two Weaknesses Principle". Black successfully defends his position in the centre although his pieces are less active. In this case, the attacking player should find a way to create new weaknesses in opponent's camp (here, they are already created) and open a second front there. After that, the pieces of the attacking player can move freely between the 2 weaknesses while the opponent's pieces are usually restricted in their movement.

Conclusion: when your opponent is able to defend one weakness, look for a way to create and attack a new weakness (the "Two Weaknesses Principle"). This technique works usually in the later stages of the game.

Ne8

[If 23...Ne5, White simply moves his rook 24.Rd4 followed by f2-f4 and e4-e5 or 24.Rh3 with the idea Qh6]

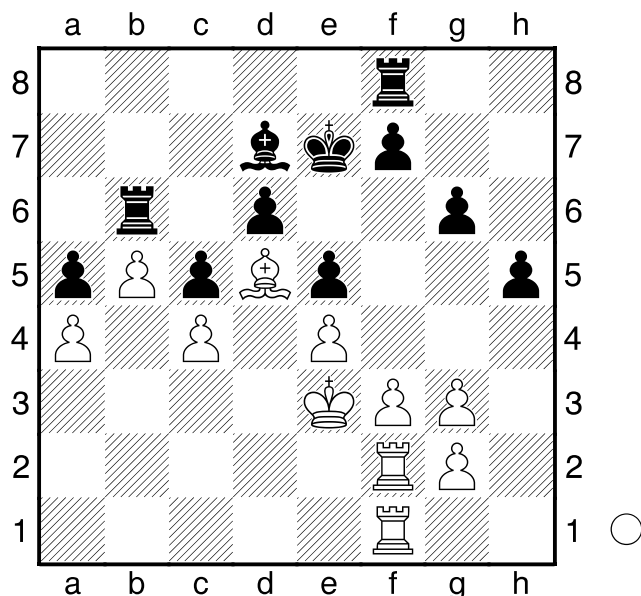
[or 23...Nc5 24.Rh3 followed by Qh6 and/or e4-e5.]

24.Nxe8 Rxe8 25.Rd6

with the idea Qf4 or f2-f4 and a possible attack on the kingside.

(Kramnik - Jussupow, 1997)

Solution 3



White is to move.

How can White create a weakness in Black's camp?

Solution:

Here, we have an endgame where White has a solid advantage due to his free b5-pawn and dominant position of the d5-bishop. Although the white pawns are on the same color with their bishop, his position in front of the pawns doesn't make it a "bad" bishop. In the same time, the pawns on light-squares obstruct the mobility of the black bishop.

White cannot win without opening the position on the kingside as the b5-pawn is strongly blocked. White prepared the active operations there by doubling the rooks on the f-file with the clear intention to open it and create a weakness here.

The question is how to do it?

41.g4!

[41.f4 The "normal move" doesn't create anything. Black can simply play: f6]

By attacking the h5-pawn, White forces Black to the next exchange, otherwise the h5-pawn will be seriously weakened.

41...hxg4

[41...h4 leads to a quick defeat as White can gain the h5-pawn or enter the seventh rank after:

42.g5!

For example:

f6 43.gxf6+ Rxf6 44.f4 exf4+ 45.Rxf4 Rxf4 46.Rxf4 g5 47.Rf7+]

42.fxg4

White opened the f-file creating threats against the black f7-pawn.

The white b5-pawn is always a problem for Black, forcing a rook to stay in a passive position. In this time, the white pieces are all free and can attack the Black's kingside with number superiority.

It is the same technique as in the previous exercise: "the 2 weaknesses principle".

Be6

[42...Bxg4 is not possible because of:

43.Rxf7+ Rxf7 44.Rxf7+ Kd8 45.Ra7]

[

Not better is:

42...f6 43.g5 f5 44.Rh1 f4+ 45.Kf3

and the g6-pawn cannot be defended in good conditions against Rh1-h6 or Rh1-h7+-g7.]

43.g5

Now, the black f7-pawn is fixed and White can use the f6-square to attack both d6- and f7-pawns.

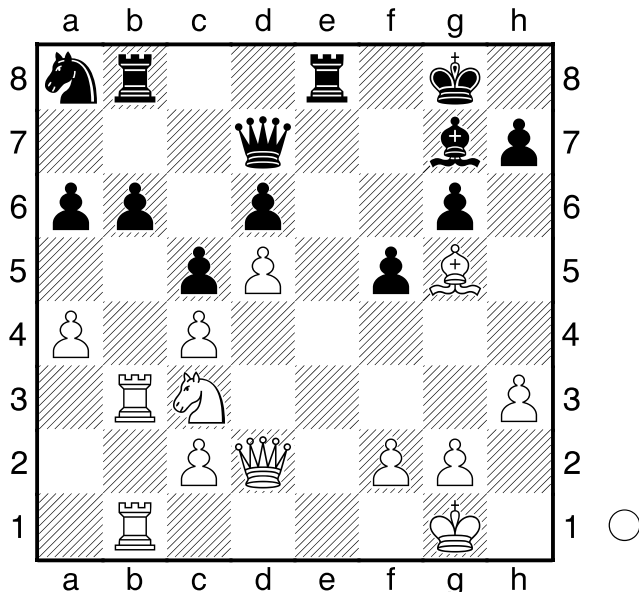
Rbb8 44.Rf6 Bxd5 45.cxd5

White has a winning endgame. The free, passed and protected b5-pawn keeps a black piece in defense, the d6- and f7- pawns are weak and also needs protections. White threatens to enter the h-file by Rf1-h1-h7 followed by Rf6xg6 and to bring the king on the queenside by Ke3-d3-c4 with the idea b5-b6 and Kb5.

Black is unable to defend against all these threats in the same time.

(Sokolov - Salov, 1994)

Solution 4



White is to move.

The GM Joel Lautier said "Black's position... bear a strong resemblance to some women portraits by Picasso."

- Which are the weaknesses of Black's position?
- Can White use them?
- Can White create new weaknesses?

Solution:

Black has 2 serious weaknesses: the b6-pawn and the e6-square.

However, Black strongly defends the b6-pawn and 23.a5 is met by 23...Qc7 and White has almost nothing.

White can use the weak e6-square for his knight by playing Nc3-e2-f4-e6. However, this maneuver needs to be prepared because the knight defends the a4-pawn. And unfortunately White hardly can find an easy way to eliminate Black's threat against the hanging a4-pawn.

On the other hand, the black pieces are passive, especially the a8-knight, so White has time to create one more weakness on Black's kingside which suffers because of f7-f5. The g6-pawn is White's target now:

23.h4!

Lautier comments on his move: "According to the well-known 'principle of the two weaknesses'. Having already achieved maximum pressure on the queenside, White needs to open a second front on the kingside in order to stretch Black's defences to breaking point. The g6-pawn is particularly vulnerable, since White can attack it easily with Ne2-f4 and Rb3-g3."

h5

Black has no way to avoid the weakening of the g6-pawn, but at least he avoids the opening of the h-file (after h4-h5-xg6).

[Black cannot take the a4-pawn:

23...Bxc3 because after: 24.Qxc3 Qxa4
25.Ra3 Qd7 26.Rxa6

White has total control over the dark-squares on the kingside and over the a-file with the threat to enter the 7th rank.]

24.a5

White prepares the knight's maneuver Ne2-f4 and eliminates the a4-pawn. Black's double pawns on the a-file will have no force.

Qc7

[24...b5 is bad in view of: 25.cxb5 Bxc3
26.Qxc3 axb5 27.Qf6 Kh7 28.Rxb5]

25.Ne2! bxa5 26.Nf4

White's knight maneuver Nc3-e2-f4 which targets the e6-square has gained in force due to the new weakness of the g6-pawn.

White has a clear advantage now and excellent attacking prospects on the kingside.

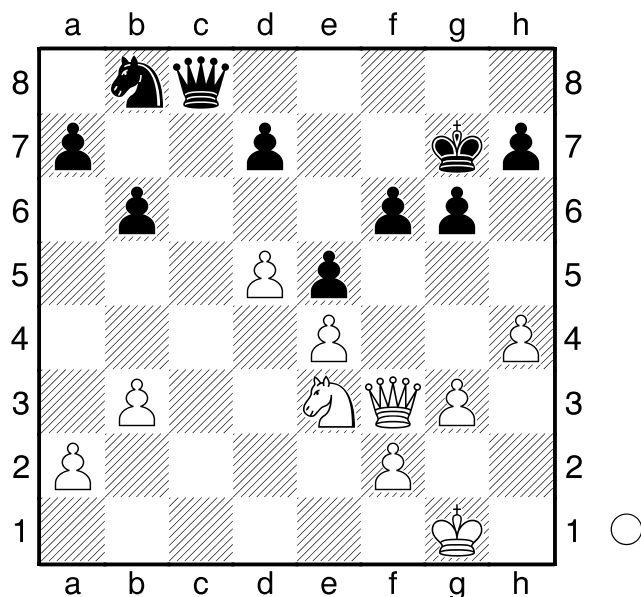
(Lautier - Ponomarev, 1999)

Solution 5

(Diagram)

White is to move.

Find a way to create a strong square for your knight on the kingside.



Solution:

White has more space in the center and therefore a better maneuverability. The white queen can easier go from a side to another than the black one.

If White succeeds to weaken the black kingside by creating a strong square for his knight, the black queen will be forced to stay near her king in defense. Thus, the queenside will remain undefended against the white queen.

It is clear that White would love to free the f5-square for his knight with h4-h5, but Black is not forced to take the white pawn. An intermediary move is required:

36.Ng4!

The white pieces succeed to draw the black queen to a passive position.

Qc8-c1+-g5 is not possible due to the h4-pawn.

[36.h5?! is not good in this regard. Black can move freely: Na6 because after: 37.Ng4 , Black can bring his queen in defense of the kingside by: Qc1+ 38.Kg2 Qg5]

36...Qf8 37.h5

This is White's idea: Black is now forced to take on h5 because of the threat h5-h6+

gxh5

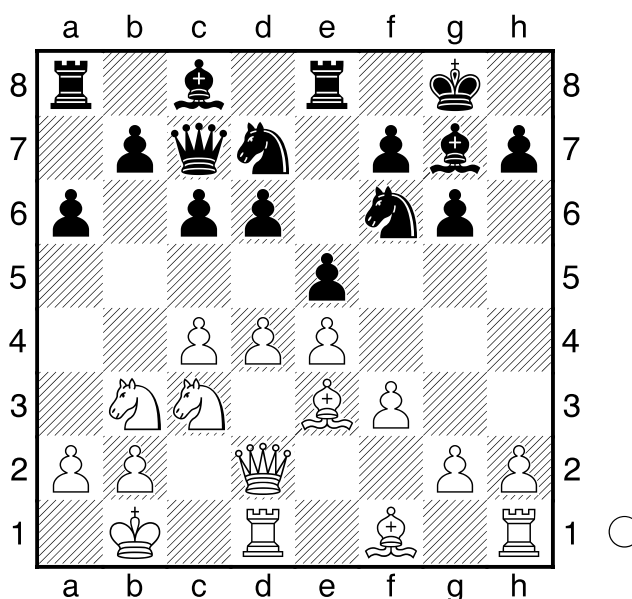
[Or: 37...Qe7 38.Qe3 Kg8 39.hxg6 hxg6 40.Qh6 Qf7 41.Qc1+-]

38.Ne3

with a white knight on f5, Black has to keep his queen in defense of the king and the white queen will easily enter Black's camp using the c-file.

(Lilienthal - Keres, 1941)

Solution 6



White is to move.

Find the best continuation for White.

Solution:

The development is almost complete, the kings are castled on opposite sides and the centre is still in tension. This evaluation can make us think that the game will continue tactically, with direct attacks against the kings.

However, White finds a strategical way to continue using the weakness of the Black's b6- and d6- squares.

13.dxe5! dxe5 14.c5!

The c5-pawn fixes the weak squares and the white knights can easily come on b6 and/or d6 by Nb3-a5-c4 and Nc3-a4-b6.

White has an advantage. The rest of the game is also very instructive and it is given with some few annotations:

Nf8 15.Qd6

Playing against weaknesses on the queenside, White prefers an endgame. Also, in an ending with few pieces, his king's position is better because it is closer.

Ne6 16.Bc4 Bf8 17.Qxc7 Nxc7 18.Na5

Black's queenside is paralyzed.

Rb8 19.Na4 Be6 20.Bxe6 Nxe6 21.Nc4

Nc7 22.Nab6 Ne6 23.b4 Nf4 24.Rd2 Rbd8

25.Rhd1 Rxd2 26.Rxd2 Bg7 27.Na5

b7 is attacked from a5, keeping the d-file opened for the rook.

[27.Nd6 Re7]

27...Rb8 28.Bxf4 exf4 29.Nd7 Rd8 30.Nxf6+

Bxf6 31.Rxd8+ Bxd8 32.Nxb7 Bc7 33.Kc2

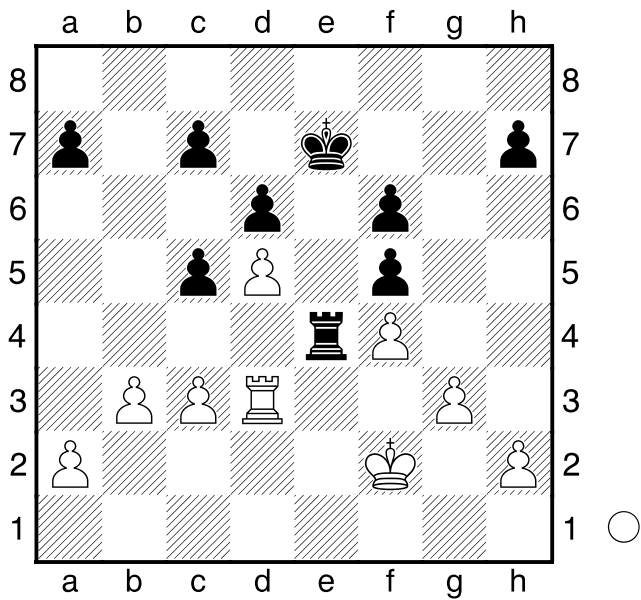
Kf8 34.Nd6 Ke7 35.Nc4 Ke6 36.Kd3 h5

37.Nd2 Be5 38.Nb3 Kd7 39.Nd4 Bf6

40.Kc4 Be5 41.a4 Bf6 42.b5 cxb5+ 43.axb5 a5 44.Nc6

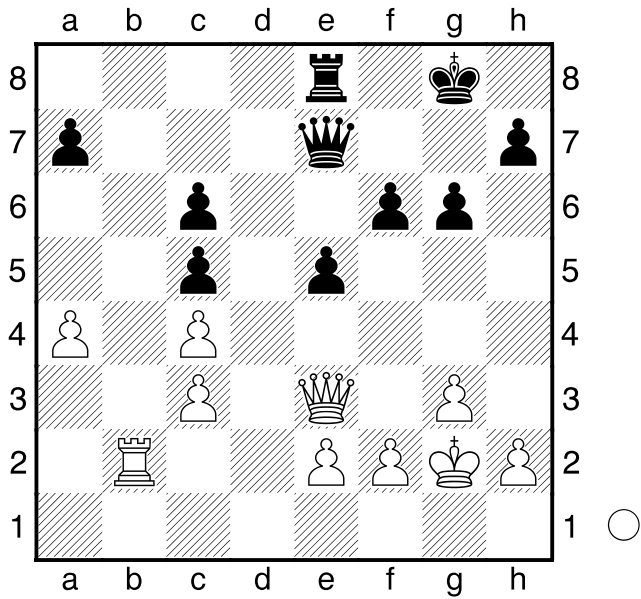
1-0 Geller - Boleslavsky, 1952

Exercise 1



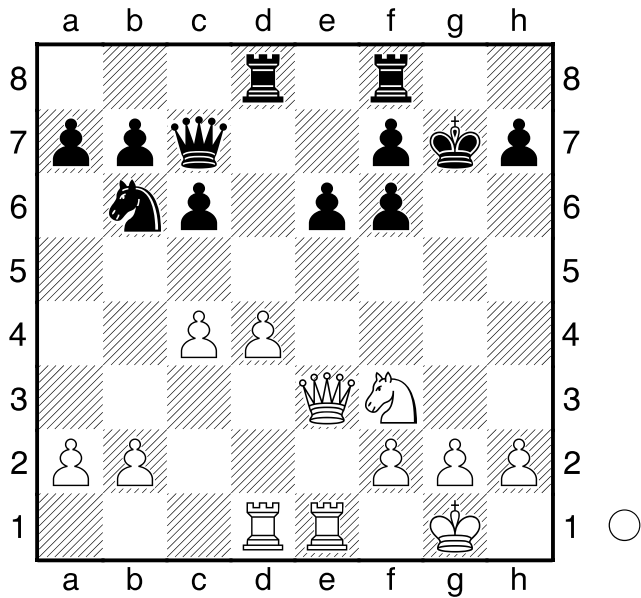
White is to move.
Who is better?
Find a plan and the best move for White.

Exercise 2



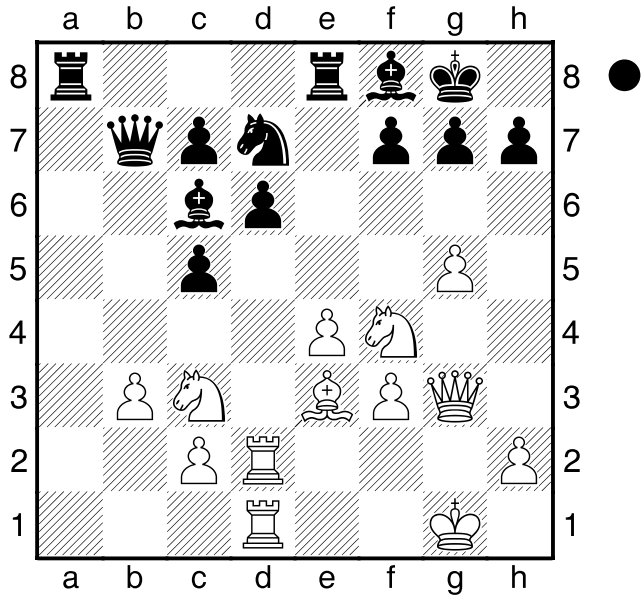
White is to move.
Who is better? Find a plan and the first move for White.

Exercise 3



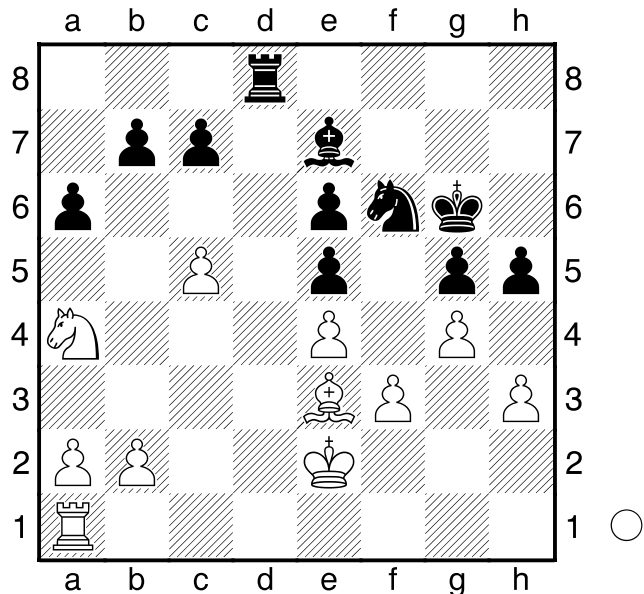
White is to move.
Find the best move.

Exercise 4



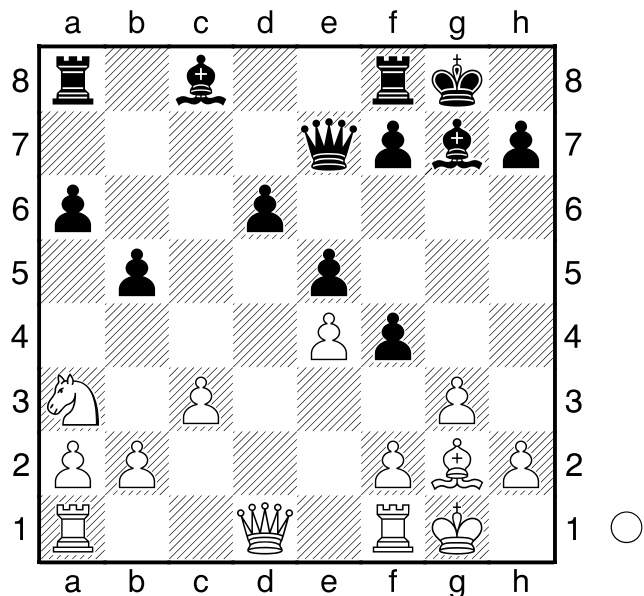
Black is to move.
Which is Black's first objective?
Which are the weaknesses in White's camp?
Find the best move for Black.

Exercise 5



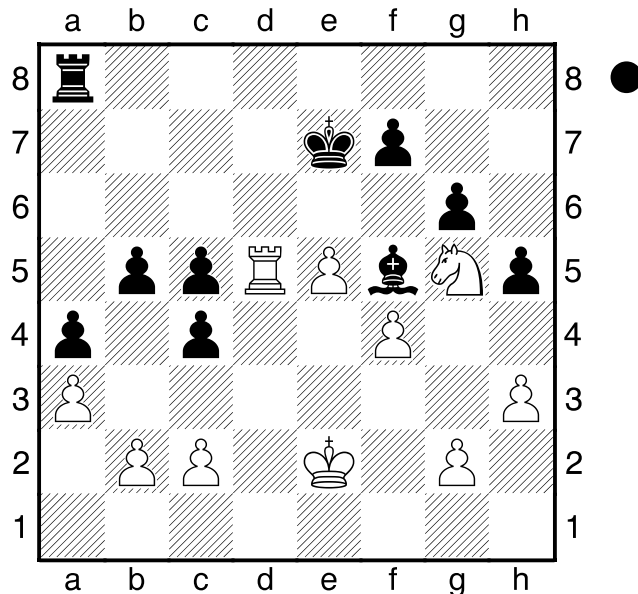
White is to move.
Find the best move.

Exercise 6



White is to move.
Evaluate the position and find the logical continuation for White.
What do you think about g3xf4?

Exercise 7

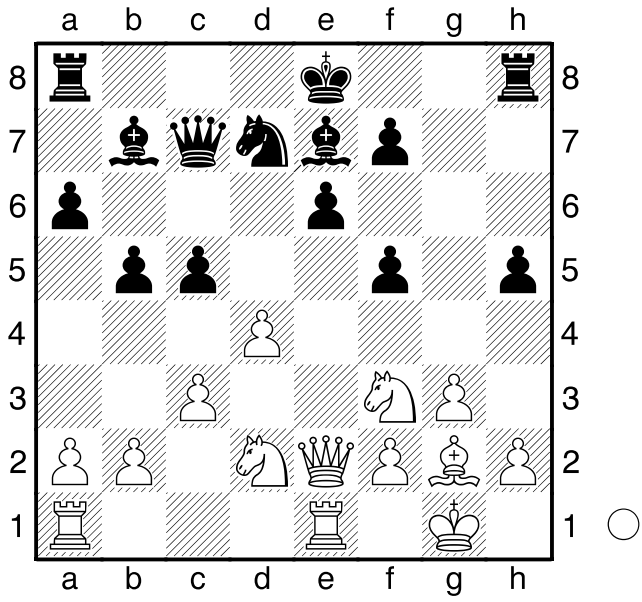


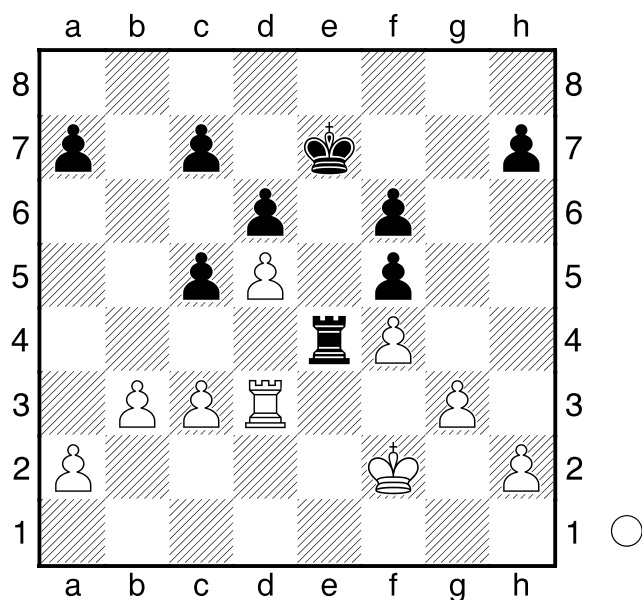
Black is to move.
Find the best continuation.
You can/should spend more time (30-45 mins)
to this problem and calculate as much and far
as you can.

Exercise 8

(Diagram)

White is to move.
Evaluate the position and find the best move for White.





White is to move.

Who is better?

Find a plan and the best move for White.

Solution:

Black has 2 pairs of double pawns that leave a lot of weak squares on both flanks.

White can exploit these weaknesses in a kings' ending. The rook is not able to arrive on c6, a6, or h5, but the king does. Therefore, White's simplest plan is to exchange the rooks and to bring his king on a6 or c6. Black's king must stay in defense as there is no counter-play (White has no weaknesses in his pawn structure).

29.Re3! Rxe3

[Black must take the rook on e3, otherwise, he will lose the e4-pawn after:

29...Kd7 30.Rxe4 fxe4 31.f5]

30.Kxe3 h5 31.Kd3 Kd7 32.Kc4 Kc8

[If Black tries to get rid of his double pawns by: 32...c6

White can create the pawn majority of a- and b- pawns which assures the victory:

33.b4! cxb4 34.cxb4+-]

33.Kb5 Kb7

Black defends the entry points, but his king and pawns are now in zugzwang (any Black's move is bad).

34.b4!

White is able to create a pawn majority on the a- and b- files using Black's zugzwang position.

a6+

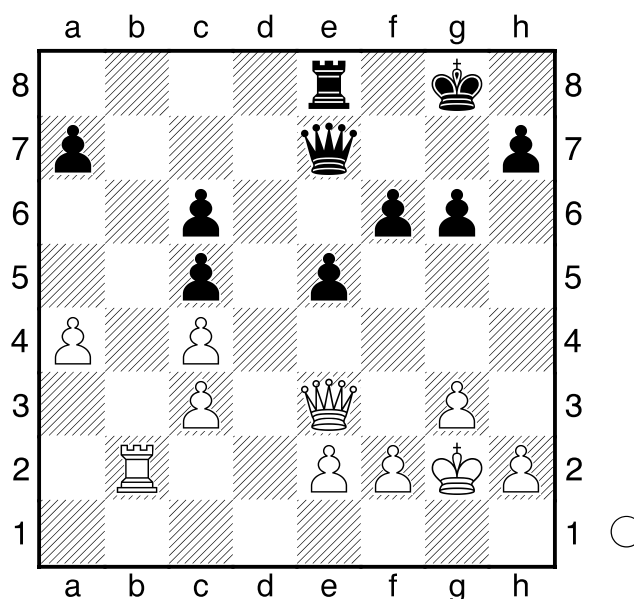
[34...cxb4 35.cxb4 zugzwang! a6+ 36.Ka5 Ka7 37.b5

and White creates a free pawn on the a-file.]

35.Ka5 Ka7 36.b5 Black resigns.

(Motylev,A 2649 - Odinokov,N 2325, 2004)

Solution 2



White is to move.

Who is better? Find a plan and the first move for White.

Solution:

The pawn structure is symmetrical and both sides have a pair of double pawns on the c-file. The question is if one of the players will be able to attack these pawns somehow.

Here, White is better because it controls the b-file and can set an entrance point in Black's camp:

28.a5!

By the help of the a-pawn (a5-a6), White will get

the control over the b7-square. The c-file is closed, but the Black's double pawns will be attacked from behind.

Rd8

[Black cannot protect his pawns or the entrance of the white rook. For example:

28...a6 29.Rb6]

[28...Rc8 29.a6 Rc7 30.Ra2! followed by Ra5 and Rxc5]

29.a6 Rd7

Black cannot defend all the attacked squares: c5, b7 and b8.

30.Rb8+ Kg7 31.Rc8

is the c-file open for the white rook now? :)

Qd6 32.Qe4 f5

[32...Rc7 33.Rxc7+ Qxc7 allows 34.Qb1! Qf7 35.Qb7

and the black queen and king are paralyzed.]

33.Qxc6 Qxc6+ 34.Rxc6

White won both Black's pawns and the game.

Kf7 35.f4! exf4 36.gxf4 Re7 37.Kf3 Ke8 38.Rxc5 Kd7 39.Re5 Rxe5 40.fxe5 g5 41.c5 h6 42.c4 h5 43.h4! g4+ 44.Kf4 Ke6 45.c6 Ke7 46.c5 Ke6 47.c7 Kd7 48.e6+ Kxc7 49.e3 Kc6 50.Ke5! g3 51.e7 Kd7 52.Kf6 g2 53.c6+ Kc7 54.e8Q g1Q 55.Qd7+ Kb6 56.c7 1-0 Bacrot,E 2729 - Kramnik,V 2744, 2005

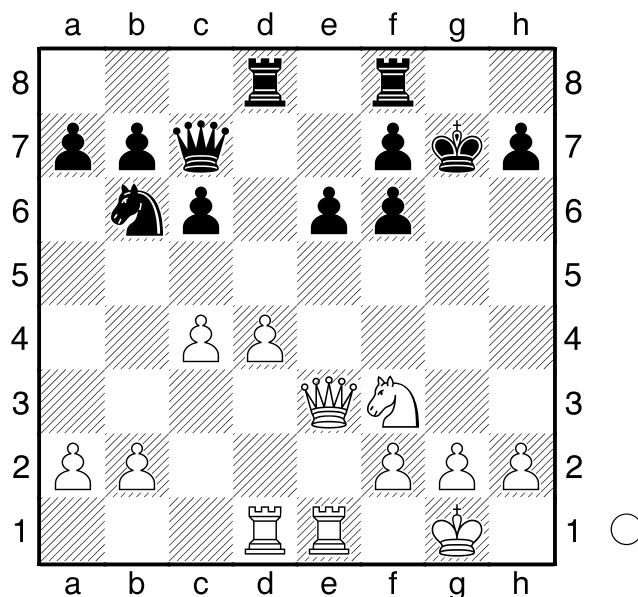
Solution 3

(Diagram)

White is to move.
Find the best move.

Solution:

Black's pawns on the kingside are doubled and, consequently, the g-file is opened. In such structures, the king's position is less secure and the main weaknesses are the f6-, h7- and h6-



squares. Another particularity of this structure in front of the king is that the presence of the f6-pawn obstructs the own pieces to come in defense.

White pieces are all ready to enter the attack, while the black knight is out of play on the queenside.

White starts the attack right away:

20.Ne5!

The knight cannot be taken and it is heading to g4 attacking the weak f6- and h6- squares. In the same time, it clears the 3rd rank for the rooks.

Qe7

[20...fxe5 21.Qg5+ Kh8 22.Qf6+ Kg8 23.Rd3 Rfe8 24.Rh3 followed by Qg5+ and Rxh7]

21.Ng4

White threatens Qh6+, Nxf6 and Qxh7#, so Black has to defend with Rf8-g8-g7:

Rg8

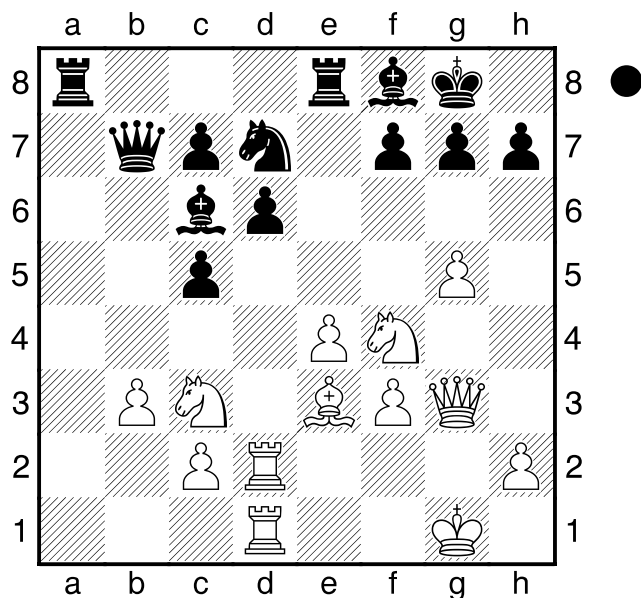
[21...Nd7 22.d5 cxd5 23.cxd5 e5 24.Qh6+ Kh8 25.Re3+-]

22.Nh6 threatens Nf5+

[22.Qh6+ Kh8 23.Nxf6 Rg7]

22...Qc7 23.Nxg8 Rxc8 24.b3+-
(Smyslov - Stahlberg, 1953)

Solution 4



Black is to move.

Which is Black's first objective?

Which are the weaknesses in White's camp?

Find the best move for Black.

Solution:

The position in the centre is stabilized and there are no possible pawn-trusts at this moment. White engaged himself in an attack on the kingside which also created some weaknesses. White's queenside remained less protected, so Black should consider a counter-attack here. So, from both strategical and tactical point of view, Black's first objective is to play c5-c4 eliminating the double pawns and opening the queenside. White has a lot of weaknesses on dark-squares (his pawns are on light-squares). Here, we are interested in the c3- and e3- squares. In addition, White's c3-knight and e3-bishop are not defended.

By the next move, Black prepares c5-c4, brings his rook on White's weakened third rank and also prepares doubling the rooks on the a-file:

23...Ra3!

[23...c4 24.bxc4 Ra3 25.Bd4 gives Black nothing.]

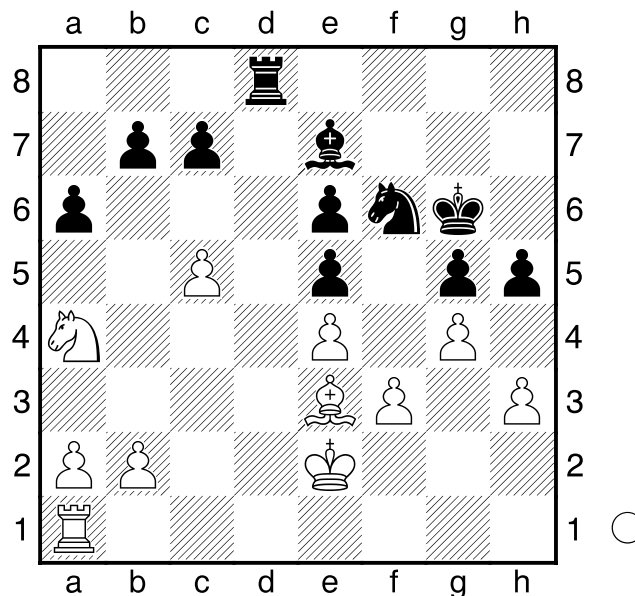
Now, White is almost forced to the next move in order to defend the c3- and e3- squares:

24.Nfd5 Bxd5 25.Rxd5

[After 25.Nxd5 c4 White cannot take on c4: 26.bxc4 because of: c6]

25...Nb6 26.R5d2 c4 and Black has the initiative on the queenside.

Solution 5



White is to move.

Find the best move.

Solution:

Not all the time, the double pawns can be attacked frontally, but their weakness exists. The player can find other main objectives and use the weakness of opponent's pawns as a second target. It is like in the "principle of the 2 weaknesses".

Here, White has local force superiority on the queenside: the knight, the bishop and the advanced c5-pawn against the black 3 pawns. This advantage of quantity should make any player think more deeply on that side of the board and find all opponent weaknesses, any

possible break, and/or a coordinated piece attack. Most often, the local force superiority can be transformed in a concrete advantage by tactical means.

23.Rc1!!

A very strong move. White brings his rook behind the advanced pawn threatening c5-c6, where Black's normal response b7-b6 is met by a piece sacrifice on b6 to free the c6-pawn.

[is not enough as it gives Black time to defend:

23.c6 b6 24.Rc1 hxg4 25.hxg4 Ne8=]

23...Ng8

[23...c6 24.Nb6

followed by Nc4 and Black will have a hard mission to defend the e5-pawn, d6-square, and even the b7-pawn after White's Rc1-c3-b3 and Nc4-a5.]

24.gxh5+ Kxh5 25.c6!

The point of White's Ra1-c1. In fact, White attacks the Black queenside with a overwhelming piece superiority. The partial weakness of the b6-square (after a7-a6) and of the double e6- and e5- pawns justify White's action.

bxc6

[The following tactical variation stayed behind White's plan:

25...b6 26.Bxb6! cxb6 27.c7 Rc8
28.Nxb6+-]

26.Rxc6

3 black pawns are attacked.

Bd6 27.Rxa6+-

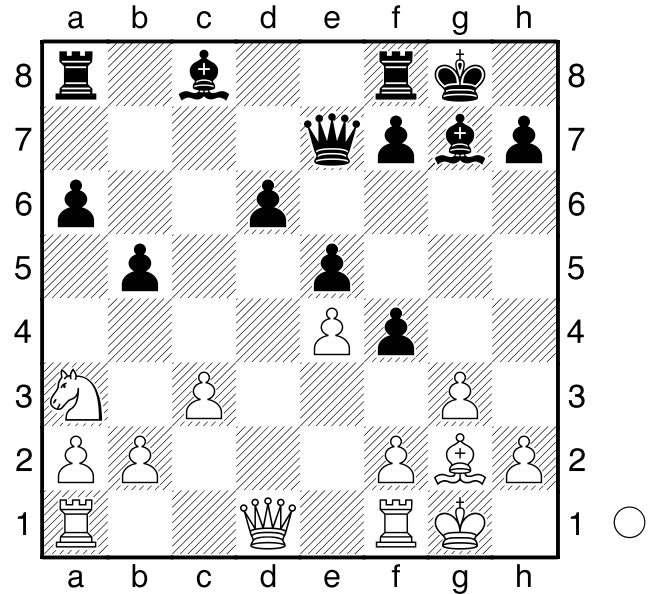
Tiviakov 2614 - Komliakov 2458, 2002

Solution 6

White is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the logical continuation for White.

What do you think about g3xf4?



Solution:

The position is complicated with equal chances for both players. Black tries to setup an attack on the kingside due to his advanced f4-pawn, c8-h3 diagonal and semi-open g-file. White has to look in the center, trying to use the d5-square and the weakness of the d6-pawn. Also, when Black's forces are concentrated on the kingside, White can open the queenside by a2-a4.

Chess might be very complicate if one wants to find a way to win from any position. A tough chess player has to know the moments where he should look for an attack, some combination or a preventive move and so on. Here, White (with a better rating than Black) was too optimistic in his divine chances and went wrong.

16.gxf4? White wants to destroy Black's pawn formation and then find a way to enter an endgame where the double pawns on the f-file will be really weak.

But his move is just a grave error. The black pawns don't represent any weakness in this position as they cannot be practically attacked. Black gets a very strong square for his dark-square bishop (on e5) and the g-file will become open. Black can attack now with 2 bishops (attacking pieces) while White's defending piece (the knight) is still far from his king.

[White should have not taken any action on the kingside. He should play logically by improving the position of his worst placed piece: Na3-c2-b4-d5.

White's logical move would have been:

16.Nc2

after which, a2-a4 is another idea that might give Black some worries.]

16...exf4 17.Nc2

[17.e5? Qg5 18.Kh1 (18.exd6 Bb7 19.f3 Rad8+) 18...Bg4 19.Bf3 (19.f3?! Be6 20.exd6 Rad8+) 19...Bxf3+ 20.Qxf3 dxe5+]

17...Be5 18.Nd4

[18.Kh1 Kh8 19.Rg1 Qh4+]

18...Kh8 19.Kh1 Rg8 20.Rg1 Bd7

and Black holds the initiative. White didn't succeed to defend his position. The game went:

21.Qd3 Rg6 22.Nf5 Qf6! 23.Bf3 Rag8 24.Rad1 Be6 25.Rxg6 hxg6 26.Nh6 Rg7 27.Ng4 Qh4 28.Nxe5 Rh7! 29.Ng4 Bxg4 30.Kg1 Qxh2+ 31.Kf1 Bxf3 32.Qxf3 Rh3 33.Qg2 Qh1+ 34.Qxh1 Rxh1+ 35.Ke2 Rxd1 36.Kxd1 Kg7 37.Ke2 Kf6 38.Kd3 Ke5 39.b3 g5 40.f3 f5

0-1 Vokarev 2529 - Kuzubov 2467, 2004

Solution 7

(Diagram)

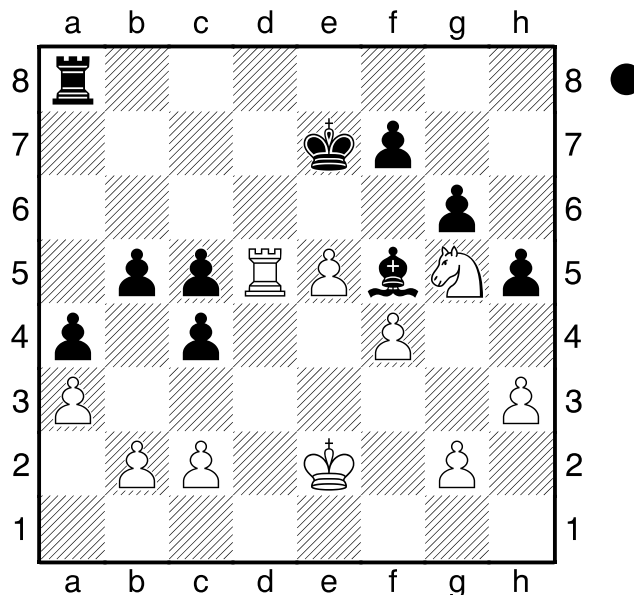
Black is to move.

Find the best continuation.

You can/should spend more time (30-45 mins) to this problem and calculate as much and far as you can.

Solution:

It is said that a formation of 'x' pawns is able to block an opponent formation of 'x'+1 pawns with double pawns. This is theoretically true, indeed, but there are some exceptions... Here, White's pawn structure is weakened by the advanced pawn on a3 which gives Black's far-advanced



pawns the chance to go through by a spectacular combination:

29...c3!! 30.bxc3

[30.Rxc5 b4! 31.Rc4 (31.Rb5 b3!) 31...Rb8 32.bxc3 b3 33.cxb3 axb3 34.Nf3 b2 35.Nd2 b1Q 36.Nxb1 Rxb1+]

30...b4 31.cxb4 cxb4 32.Rc5

[32.axb4 a3 33.Rd1 a2 34.Ra1 Bxc2 35.Ke3 Bb1+]

32...bxa3 33.Rc7+ Bd7 34.Rc3 Rc8!! 35.Kd2

[35.Rxa3 Rxc2+ 36.Kf1 Bb5+ 37.Kg1 Bc6+]

35...Rxc3 36.Kxc3 h4!

White will be put in zugzwang!

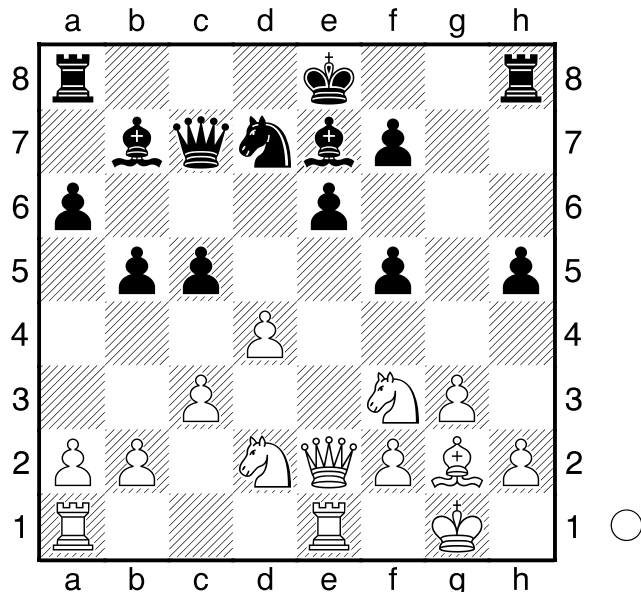
37.Nf3 Bc6 38.Nxh4 Be4! 39.g4 g5!

White will remain without moves!

40.fxg5 Ke6 41.Nf5 Bxf5 42.gxf5+ Kxf5 43.h4 Kg6

0-1 Nijboer,F 2562 - Kritz,L 2468, 2003

Solution 8



White is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best move for White.

Solution:

Here, Black's double pawn structure in the centre protects their king in the centre very well. Black doesn't intend to castle for now and has started an attack on the kingside (that will continue by h5-h4xg3). Also, Black's control over the centre is pretty good and White has not any real attack in the center.

The best move can be found by a very strong player because of his experience or genius. However, the following method of elimination can make a "normal" player find the same best move/plan.

- So, White has nothing to attack on the kingside or center and his pieces are already well placed. Where to play? It remains the queenside.
- Does Black have any weakness there? Because of the advanced b- and a- pawns, it is clear that Black has weaknesses there.
- Black's king in the centre is safe for now, but an attack on the queenside will expose the king too.
- The Black queen has no a safe position if

White opens the c-file and bring his rook there.
SO:

15.c4!! bxc4

[15...b4? is not good because White can open the center now by: 16.d5]

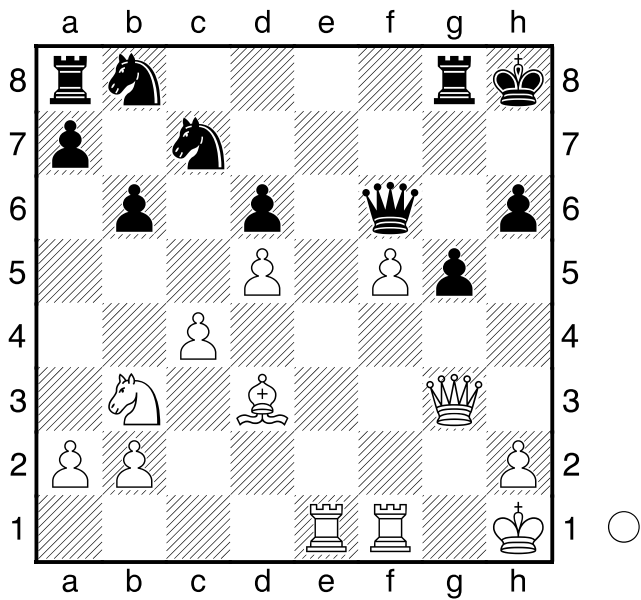
16.Nxc4

I am convinced that you like more this position. White improved the position of his knight (on c4), the a1-rook will get an excellent position on a1, and the black king is more exposed. White won easily.

The c3-c4 move was very logical so it should be a very simple move during a game. However, the human player subconsciously likes this kind of pawn arrangements like b2, c3, d4 and doesn't even look to destroy such a "nice" structure. Try to go over such conceptions, be more practical and you'll improve your positional play.

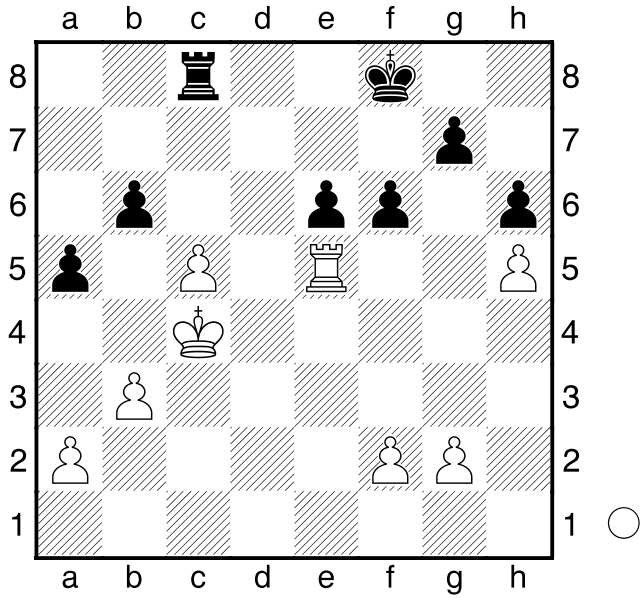
(Kovacevic 2556 - Jelecevic 2156, 2004)

Exercise 1



White is to move.
Find the best continuation.

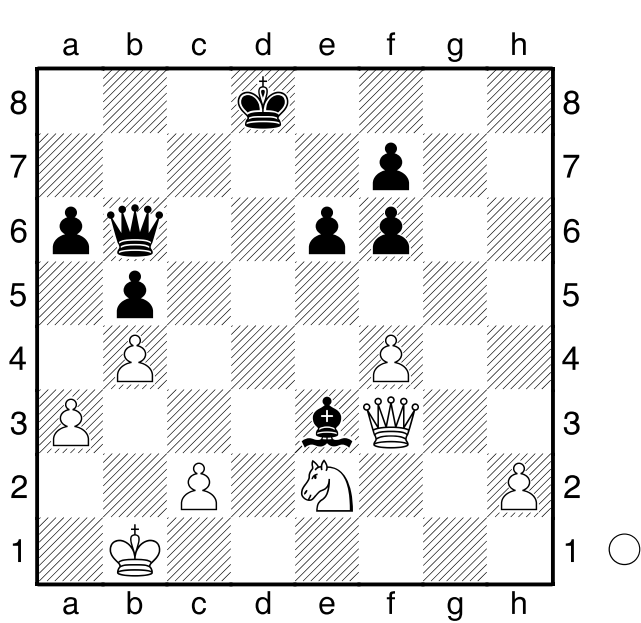
Exercise 2



White is to move.
Find the best move.

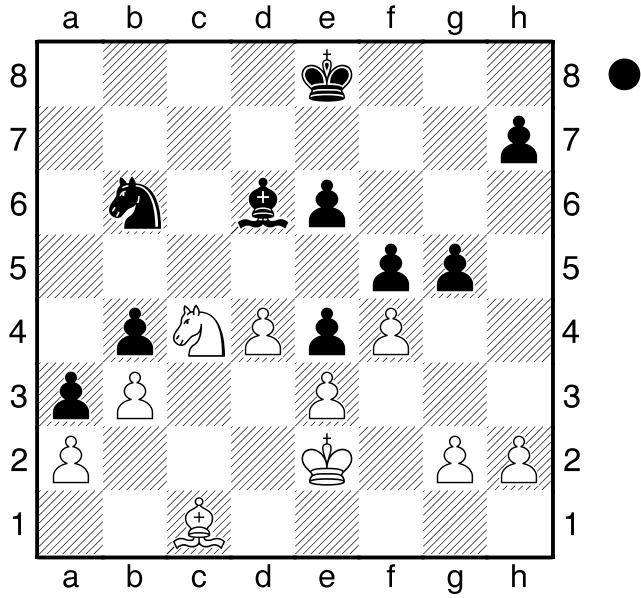
Exercise 3

White is to move.



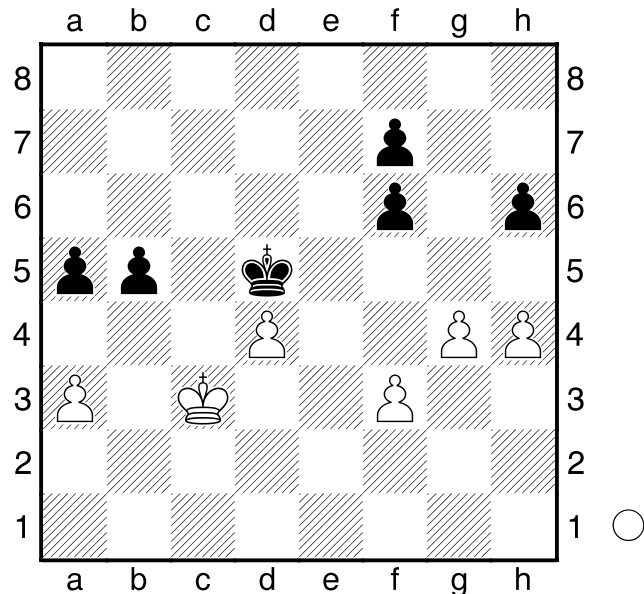
Find the best continuation and plan for White.
How should Black respond?

Exercise 4



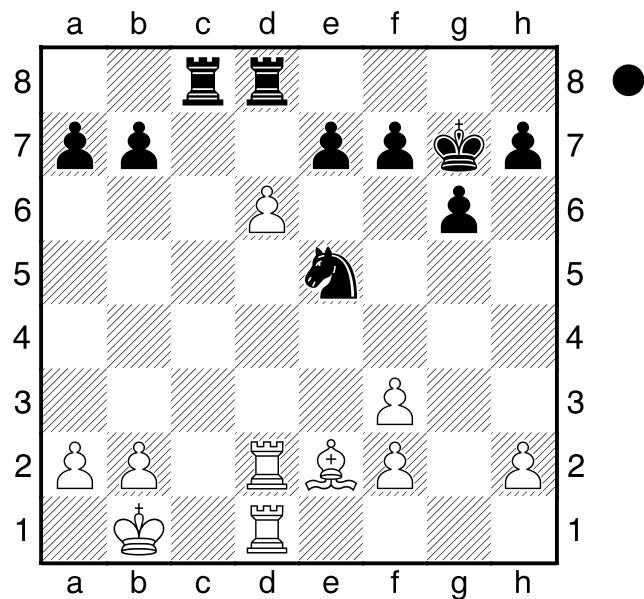
Black is to move.
Find the best continuation.

Exercise 5



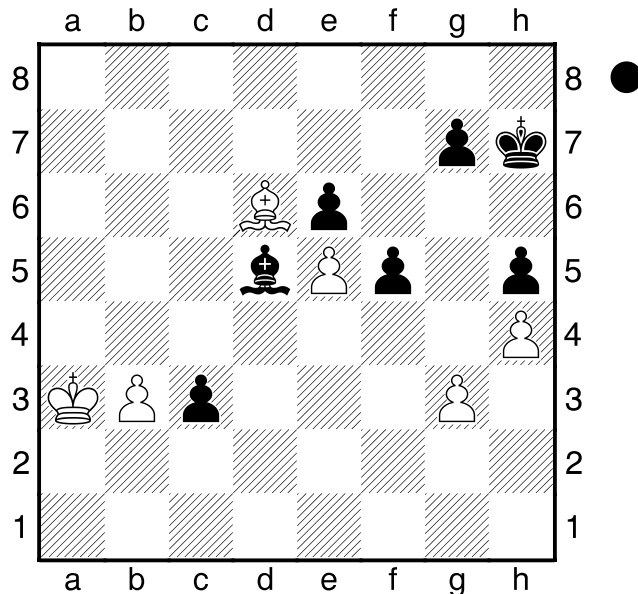
White is to move.
Can White win?
How or why not?

Exercise 6



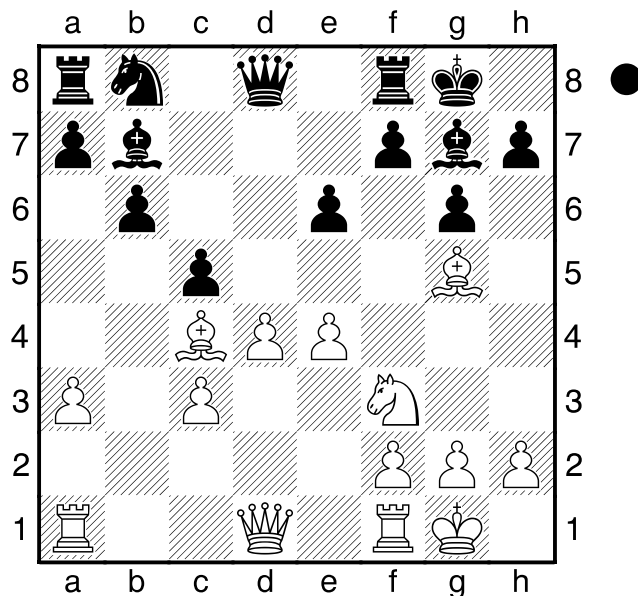
Black is to move.
Find the best continuation.

Exercise 7



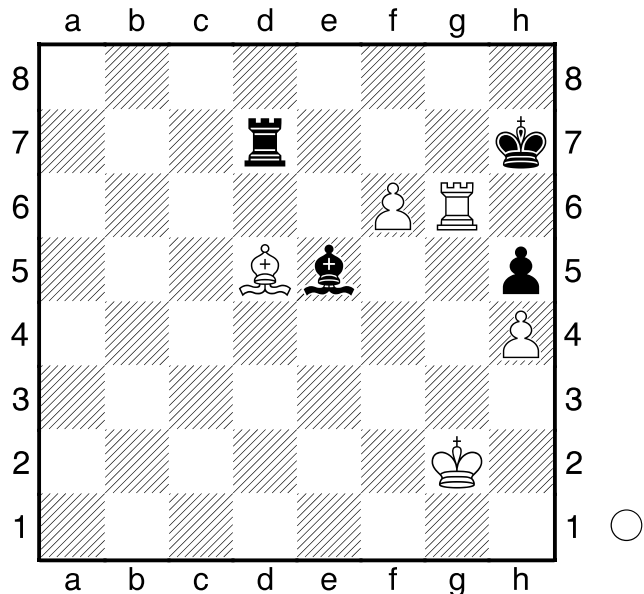
Black is to move.
Can Black win? How?

Exercise 8



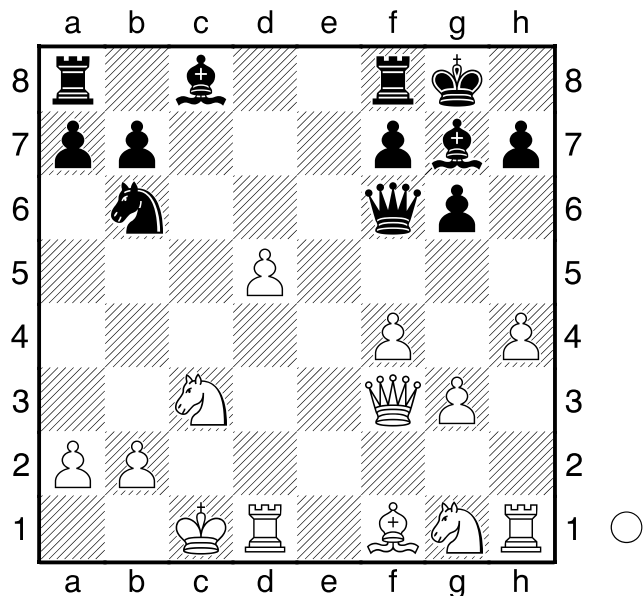
Black is to move.
Where he should retreat the queen?

Exercise 9



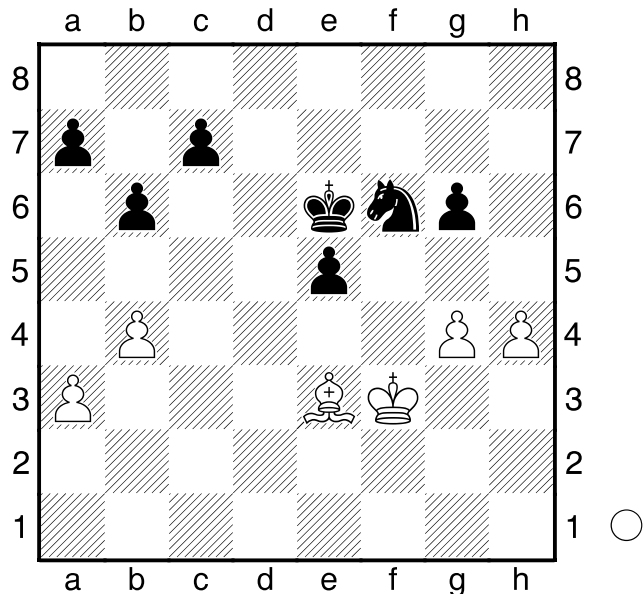
White is to move.
Find the best continuation.

Exercise 10



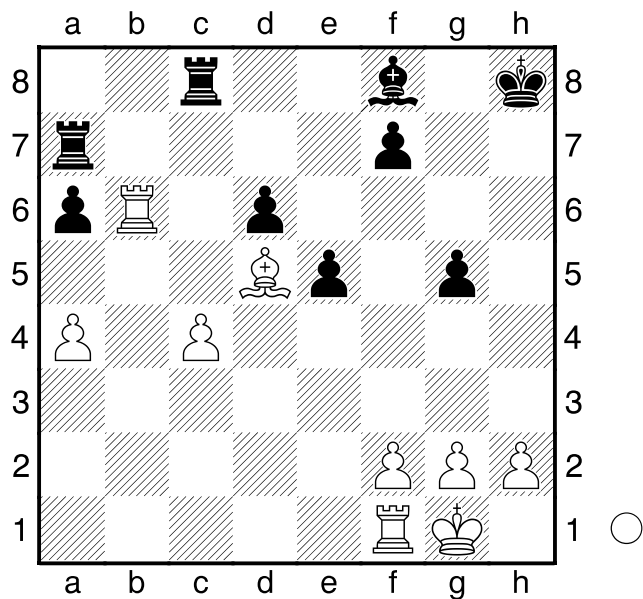
White is to move.
Evaluate the position, find Black's strategic threat and the best continuation for White.

Exercise 11



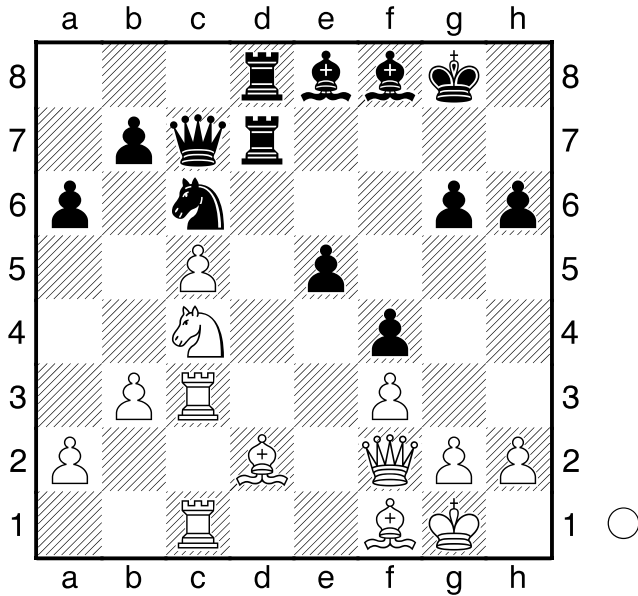
White is to move.
Evaluate the position and find the best move for White.

Exercise 12



White is to move.
Find a plan for White. How would you continue?

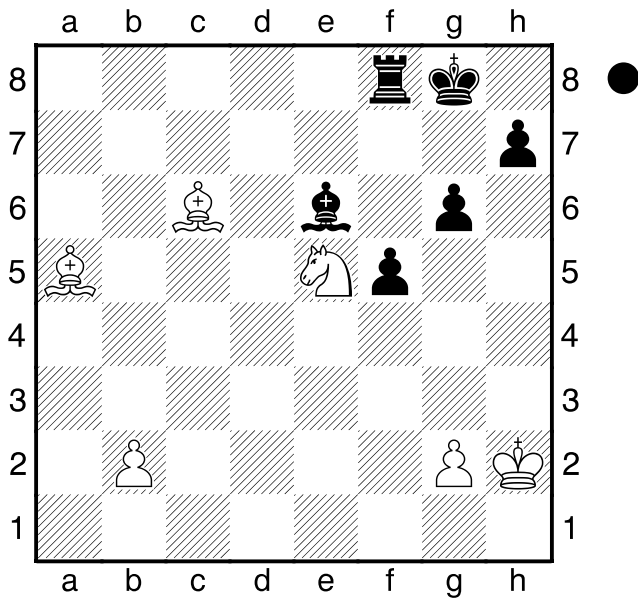
Exercise 13



White is to move.

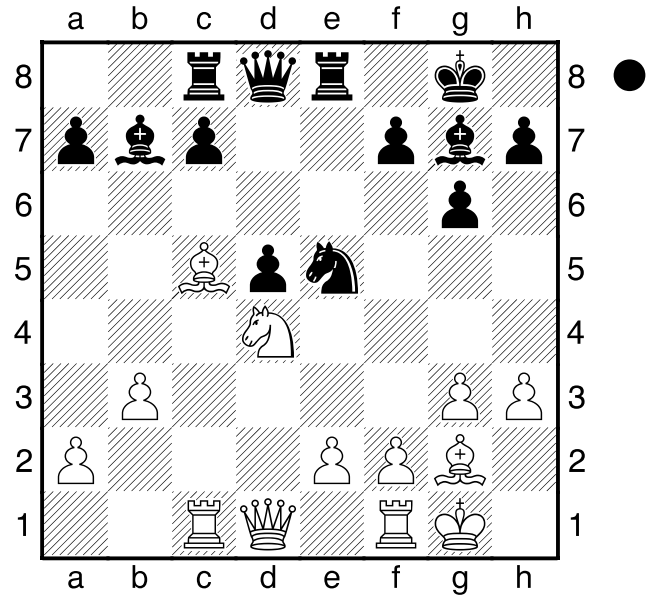
Evaluate the position and find the best continuation.

Exercise 14



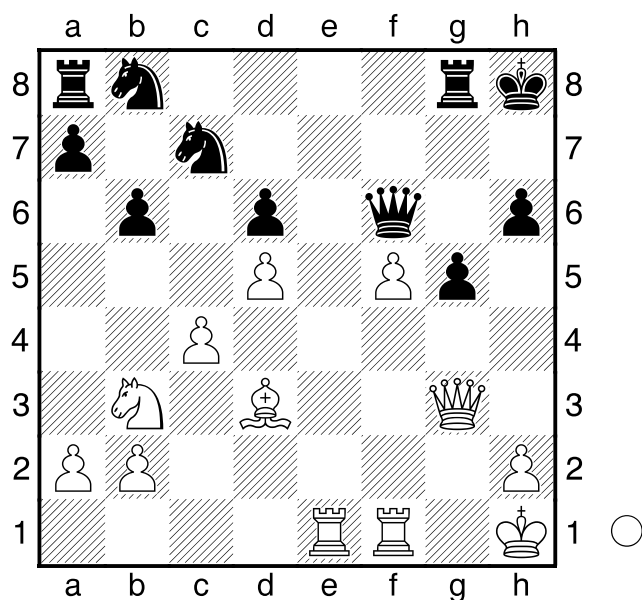
Black is to move.
Find the best move.

Exercise 15



Black is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best plan and next move for Black.



White is to move.
Find the best continuation.

Solution:

First of all, we must note that both kings have unsafe positions.

Then, White has a free pawn on f5 which for now limits the mobility of the light-square bishop. If White succeeds to advance this pawn on f6, the bishop will get free diagonal toward the black king.

Black blocks the f5-pawn with the worst "blocker", the queen. This piece can be easily removed by the maneuver Nb3-d2-e4, which also brings the knight close to the operations theatre. In addition, White will attack the Black's weak pawn from d6.

27.Nd2! Re8

[27...Nd7 28.Ne4 Qf8 29.f6 Ne5 30.Nxd6]

28.Rxe8+ Nxe8 29.Ne4 Qf8 30.f6

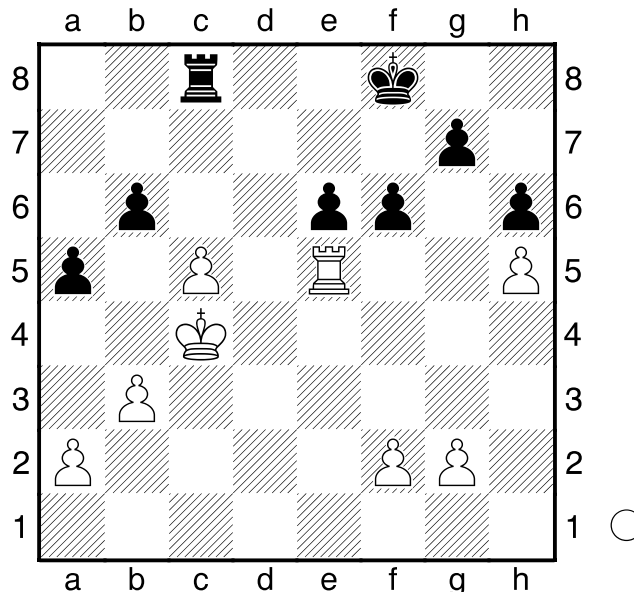
Black can attack the white free pawn on f6, but he cannot block it to advance on f7...

Nd7 31.f7 Ng7 32.Qh3

Black resigned as he was not able to defend the h6-pawn.

1-0 Baklan,V (2584) - Onischuk,V (2349), 2005

Solution 2



White is to move.
Find the best move.

Solution:

White is in process to create a free pawn on the queenside, but his rook is attacked.

However, the black king is far away from the queening squares of the white pawns which are sustained by the white one.

In this situation, a piece (even a rook) may be worth less than a free pawn, so after calculating all the variations, White finds that his pawns can promote sustained only by the king.

42.Kb5! fxe5

[Black cannot save the game by:

42...bxc5 43.Rxc5! (43.Rxe6 Rd8 44.Re2 Rd5) 43...Rd8 44.a4 Rb8+

(44...Ra8 45.Kc6 threatening Kb7 and Kd7 or Kd6.)

45.Kxa5 Rxb3 46.Rc2 Ke7 47.Ka6±]

[42...Rxc5+ 43.Rxc5 bxc5 44.Kxa5]

43.cxb6 Ke7

Black's only chance is to bring the king as quick as possible.

44.b7 Rb8

[44...Rf8 45.Kxa5 Kd6 46.Kb6
and Black cannot defend against the march of
the white a-pawn.]

45.Kc6 e4

[A very interesting position will be reached
after:

45...Kd8 46.f3!
and Black is in zugzwang!]

46.Kc7 Rd8 47.a3!!

White has to play very carefully and calculate all
the variations in order to obtain the full point. In fact,
his b7-pawn sustained by the king and the
pawn majority on the queenside is more
valuable than the black rook (there should be no
worry that the black rook will "escape").

[It is not enough:

47.b8Q? Rxb8 48.Kxb8 Kd6

A) 49.Kb7 Kc5

A1) 50.a3 Kd4

A1a) 51.Kc6 Kc3= (51...Kd3?

52.Kc5+-);

A1b) 51.Kb6 Kc3= ;

A2) 50.Ka6

A2a) 50...Kb4 51.Kb6 (51.a4 Kc3

52.Kxa5 Kd2 53.Kb6 Ke2 54.a5 Kxf2

55.a6 e3 56.a7 e2 57.a8Q e1Q

58.Qf8+ Kg1!=) 51...Kc3 52.Kb5 Kd3 ;

A2b) 50...Kd4!± ;

B) 49.Kc8 Kc5 50.Kc7 Kd4! 51.Kd6

(51.g4 Kc3!) 51...Kc3!=]

47...e5

[47...Rd7+ 48.Kb6 Rd6+ (48...Rd8 49.Kxa5
Kd6 50.Kb6!+-) 49.Kxa5 Rd8 50.Kb6+-]

48.b8Q Now this is winning already, the extra
a3 is very important.

[48.b4? axb4 49.axb4 Rd7+! 50.Kb6 Rd8
51.Ka7 Kd6 52.b8Q+ Rxb8 53.Kxb8 Kc6!
54.Kc8 Kb5 55.Kd7 Kxb4 56.Ke6 Kc4
57.Kxe5 Kd3=]

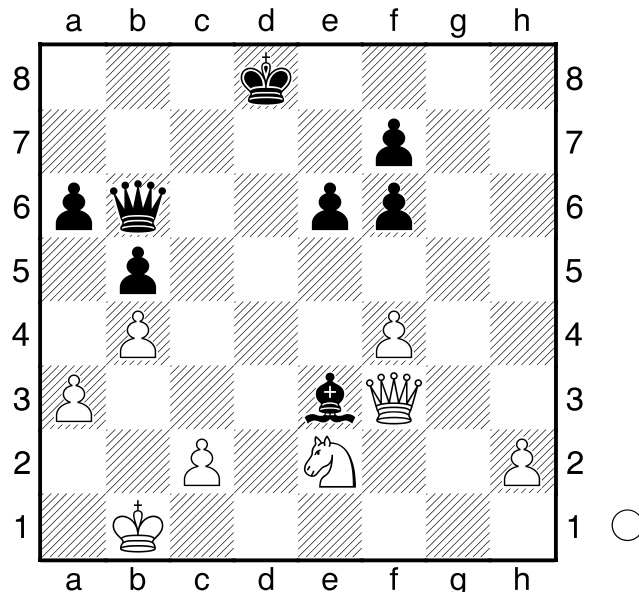
48...Rxb8 49.Kxb8 Kd6 50.Kb7 Kc5 51.Kc7

[51.Ka6+- was simpler]

**51...Kd4 52.Kd6 Kc3 53.b4 axb4 54.axb4
Kxb4 55.Kxe5**

1-0 Nataf,I (2559) - Chabanon,J (2424), 2005

Solution 3



White is to move.

Find the best continuation and plan for White.
How should Black respond?

Solution:

Even if the queens are on the board, the king's
positions are less important. Neither White nor
Black has a real chance for an attack. Moreover,
the white knight can hardly get an active
position. In the same time, Black's bishop is
theoretically better because of the relative open
position with pawns on both flanks and because
of the better collaboration with the queen.
Here, the pawn structure has the most important
role. In the assessment of the positions, we
must note that White has a free pawn on the h-
file and a pawn majority on the queenside.
Black has 3 pawns against one pawn on the e-
and f-files. So, Black should plan to advance his
majority. In this respect, the first thing he should
do is to exchange the queens as otherwise the
opening of the centre could be too dangerous
for his king.

So, White should avoid the exchange of the
queens. White's active plan is very clear:
advancing the h-pawn will force black pieces to
go into corner. At the proper moment, White will
use the second advantage of his pawn

structure: the queenside majority.

30.h4!

Unfortunately for Black, his pawn structure f7, f6, e6 makes the defense very hard. Black's only option is to play f6-f5, followed by Bd4, and Ke7 to clear the eight rank for the black queen. So:

Ke7 31.h5 f5

[31...Kf8? 32.h6 Kg8 33.Qg3+]

32.h6 Bd4 33.Nxd4

White succeeded a good exchange. It is instructive to remark how real threats (or initiative) bring other advantages by indirect means. Now, the black queen will have the ugly mission to block the free h-pawn.

Qxd4 34.Qh1!

Very important move: the white queen will sustain her pawn from behind, forcing the black one to go into corner.

[34.h7? Qg1+ 35.Kb2 Qh2 36.Qb7+ Kf6]

34...Qh8 35.h7 Kf8

Now, it is time to release the queenside majority... after the exchange of the queens on h8, the black king will be too far.

36.Qa8+! Kg7 37.Qxh8+ Kxh8 38.c4 Kxh7

[38...bxc4 39.a4]

39.c5 and Black resigned.

1-0 Gligoric,S - Fischer,R, 1959

Solution 4

(Diagram)

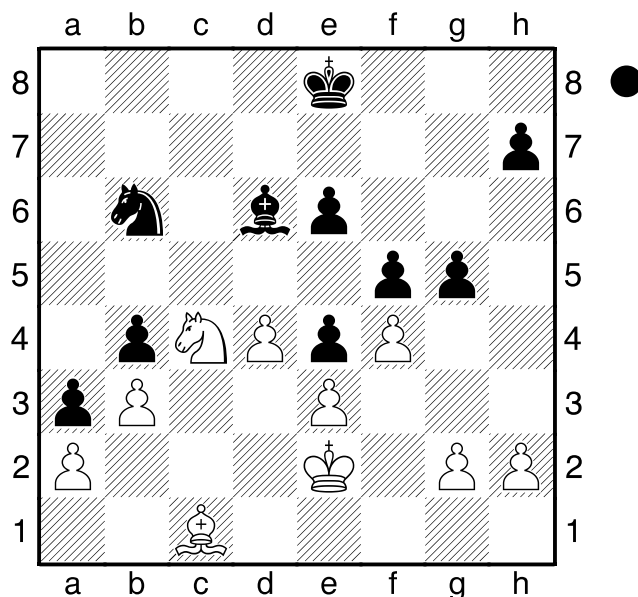
Black is to move.

Find the best continuation.

Solution:

One or more advanced pawns as Black has in this position on a3 and b4 are source of many combinations. Here, Black's task is quite simple: after the exchange on c4, he creates a dangerous majority:

34...Nxc4 35.bxc4 gxf4!



[Also good, yet not the best is:

35...b3 36.axb3 a2 37.Bb2 gxf4 38.exf4 Bxf4 39.g3 Bc1 40.Ba1+]

36.exf4 Bxf4+

and, now, the white bishop cannot escape on b2.

Solution 5

(Diagram)

White is to move.

Can White win?

How or why not?

Solution:

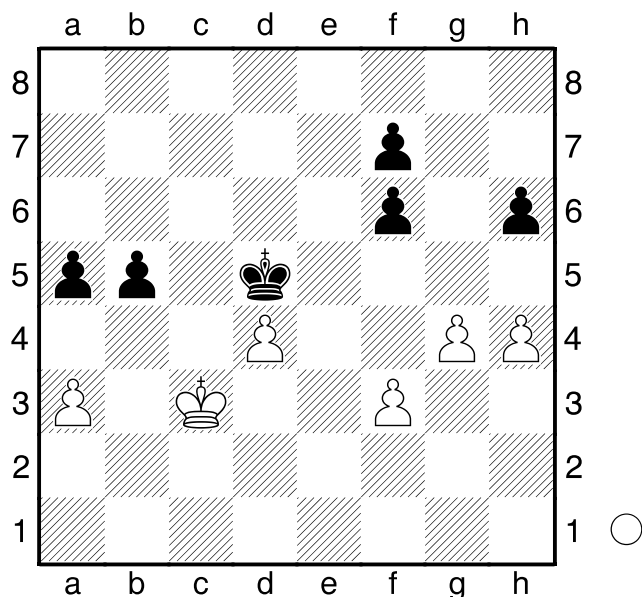
In the theoretical file about the double pawns we said that 2 doubled pawns can retain longer a majority of 3 opponent pawns. This is theoretically true but there are also many exceptions.

In this position, even if White has no majority on the kingside, his pawns are able to pass through the black pawns even helped by the black king!

38.h5!!

This move has more roles:

- it cedes the move to Black who is now in



zugzwang;

- the h5-pawn is closer to the queening square;
- the h5-pawn controls the g6-square, making the trick against the black king.

b4+

[38...Ke6 39.f4 doesn't help Black]

39.axb4 axb4+ 40.Kxb4 Kxd4

White pawns will create now a ladder attacking and dislocating the black h6-pawn:

41.f4! Ke4 42.g5 fxg5 (1-0 Pachman, L - Tatai, S, 1966)

43.fxg5 hxg5

[43...Kf5 44.gxh6

The h5-pawn stops the black king from catching the h6-pawn.]

44.h6+-

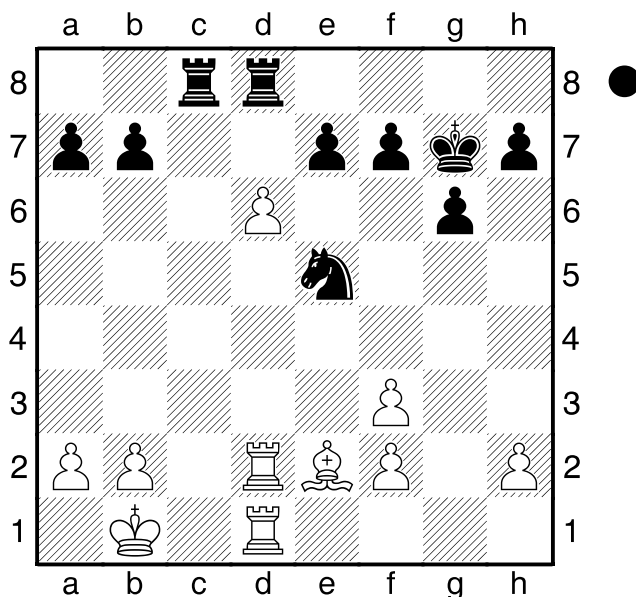
Solution 6

(Diagram)

Black is to move.

Find the best continuation.

Solution:



23...e6!

By this move Black accepts a white free pawn, deeply advanced in his camp.

However, anytime when it's about such a pawn, we need to evaluate the position deeper.

The first condition for a successful passed pawn (remember the theoretical lesson about the free pawn), is that the pawn should be sustained by ALL its pieces. Here, this is not satisfied: the white king and the light-square bishop cannot sustain the pawn. In the same time, ALL Black pieces are ready to attack the white pawn. More than that, Black has a better pawn structure now and the queening square is well protected (while the white bishop cannot control it). So, e7-e6 has created a "problem" for White and gave Black the practical chance to fight for a win.

[After 23...Rxd6 24.Rxd6 exd6 25.Rxd6 Re8

Black has a better endgame, but which is very hard to be transformed into victory.]

The game went:

24.f4

[24.Rd4!? Rd7 25.Bb5 Nc6 26.Rc4 (26.R4d2 a6+) 26...Kf6+]

24...Nc4! 25.Rd4

[25.Bxc4 Rxc4 26.Rc1 Rxc1+ 27.Kxc1 Kf6 28.Kc2 e5+]

**25...Nb6 26.Bf3 Rd7 27.Rb4 Kf6 28.a4 Rc5!
29.Rc1**

[29.Bxb7!? Rxb7 30.Rxb6 axb6 31.d7
Rxd7 32.Rxd7 Rh5 33.Rb7 Rxh2 34.Rxb6
Rxf2 35.a5 h5 36.Rb4 Rf1+ 37.Ka2 Rd1+]

29...Rxc1+ 30.Kxc1 Nd5 31.Rb5 a6

[31...Rxd6 32.Rxb7 a6 33.Bxd5 Rxd5
34.Rb6 a5 35.b4 axb4 36.Rxb4+]

32.Rb3

[32.Rc5 Nxf4+-]

32...Kf5

[32...Rxd6 33.Bxd5! (33.Rxb7 Nxf4 34.b4
Nd3+ 35.Kb1 Rd4+-) 33...Rxd5 34.Rxb7
Rd4 35.b4 Rxf4 36.Rb6 Rxf2 37.Rxa6
Rxh2 38.b5+]

33.Bxd5 exd5 34.Rb4?!

[34.Re3!? Rxd6 35.Re7 Rf6 36.Rxb7 Kxf4
37.a5 Kg4 38.Rb6 Rxf2 39.Rxa6+]

34...Kg4 Black king is marching towards
isolated white pawns. **35.a5 h5 36.Kd2 Kh3**

37.Kd3 Kxh2 38.Kd4 Rxd6 39.Rxb7 Rf6

40.Ke3 Kg2 41.Rb6 Re6+! 42.Rxe6 fxe6

43.b4 h4 44.b5 axb5 45.f5 gxf5

0-1 Mchedlishvili,M (2441) - Ftacnik,L (2589),
1999

[45...gxf5 46.a6 h3 47.a7 h2 48.a8Q h1Q
49.Qg8+ Kf1 50.Qxe6 Qe4+-+]

Solution 7

(Diagram)

Black is to move.

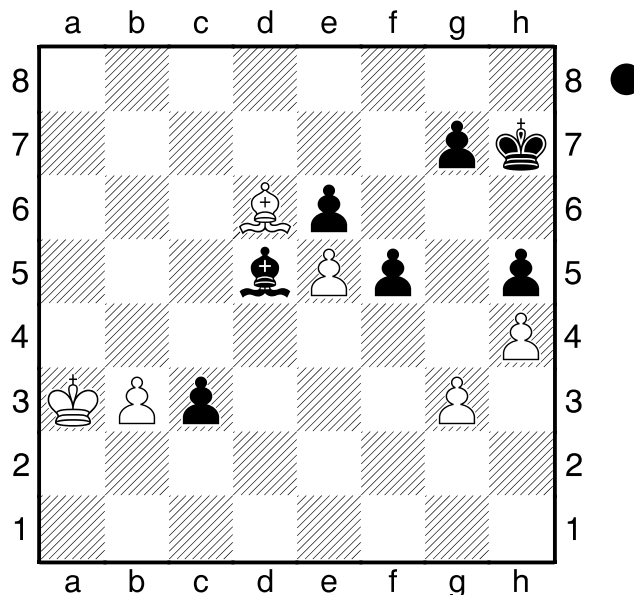
Can Black win? How?

Solution:

Black is a pawn up and has the possibility to win
a second pawn by 52...c2 53.Kb2 Bxb3, but
after 54.Be7, White succeeds to firmly block the
black pawns leading to a draw (as very often in
endgames with opposite colored bishops).
So, White's threat is Be7 and Black avoids this
by:

52...g5!!

This forces White to take on g5 after which, the
g3-pawn won't be able to stop both f5- and h5-
pawns. The next moves are forced:



**53.hxg5 Kg6 54.Be7 c2 55.Kb2 Bxb3
56.Kc1**

The white king has to come closer to the
kingside where one of the black pawns will be
free.

Ba4

Preparing the maneuver Ba4-e8-f7 which
controls the queening square g8. Then, the
black king will be free to sustain the h-pawn.

57.Kd2 f4! 58.gxf4 h4

White has no chance to defend. The game went
almost forced:

**59.Bc5 Kf5 60.Bg1 Kxf4 61.g6 Be8 62.g7
Bf7 63.Bh2+ Kf3 64.Kxc2 h3 65.Kd3 Kg2
66.Bf4 h2 67.Bxh2 Kxh2 68.Kd4 Kg3
69.Kc5 Kf4 70.Kd6 Bg8 71.Ke7 Kxe5
72.Kf8 Bh7**

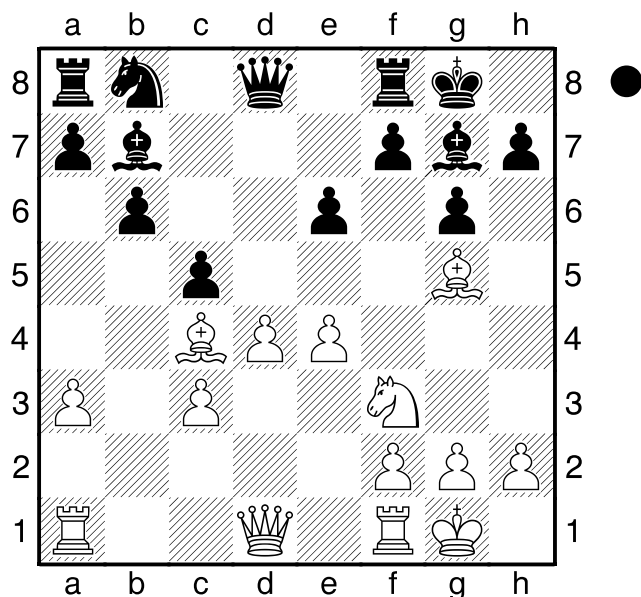
0-1 Spoelman,W (2362) - Wells,P (2513), 2005

Solution 8

(Diagram)

Black is to move.

Where he should retreat the queen?



Solution:

First of all, Black should think which White's next move/threat/plan is. Because of his lead in development, White's idea is to start active operations by d4-d5. By this pawn-advance, White creates a free pawn, well sustained by the bishop pair and also opens the e-file which will be controlled by Re1.

Black has serious reasons to worry about d4-d5 and possible d5-d6 which will let him without strong pawns in the centre.

Therefore, Black's best move is:

13...Qd6!

The queen is far to be the best to block an opponent pawn, but there is no other possibility here. On d6, the queen is safe for now (for example White has no knight on c3 to play Nc3-b5) and "sees" more squares than from c7 or c8.

[The next variation shows how dangerous is White's attack in the centre if the d-pawn is not blocked:

13...Qc7 14.d5

Now, Black has problems to block the passed pawn d5.

exd5 15.exd5 Bxc3

(15...Ba6 16.d6 Qd7 17.Bxa6 Nxa6

18.Re1!± (Babula,V (2593)-Johannessen,L

(2564), 2005) ;

15...Nd7 16.Be7 Rfe8 17.d6 Qc6

18.Qe2!?±)

16.Rc1 Bg7 17.Re1! Nd7 18.Be7 Rfe8

19.d6 Qc6 20.Qb3+-]

[

13...Qc8 is not better than Qc7 and, in addition, it blocks the a8-rook.]

and, now, if: **14.d5**

[Winning a tempo doesn't offer anything to White:

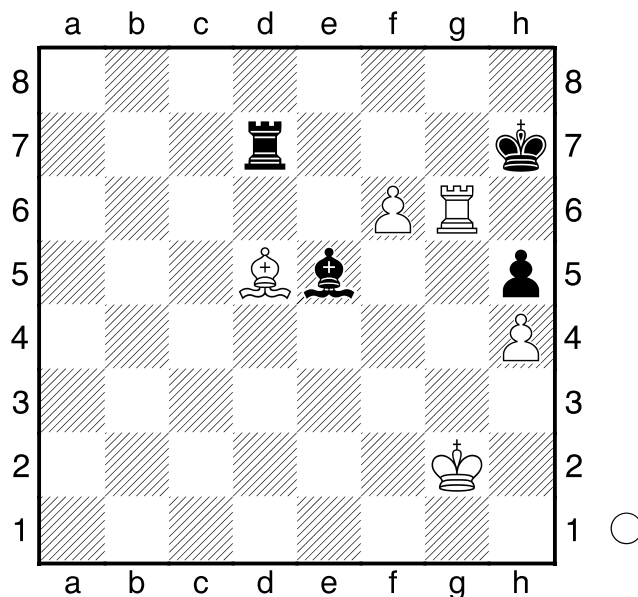
14.e5 Qc7 15.Rc1 Nc6

with idea Na5, Rac8, h6 and Black is okay.]

14...exd5 15.exd5 Bxc3 16.Rc1 Bf6

After exchanging some pieces, White's initiative is lost. Black will simply develop with Nb8-d7 and White has nothing for the sacrificed pawn.

Solution 9



White is to move.

Find the best continuation.

Solution:

This position looks simple but it is not quite so.

For who doesn't know very well the endgames rook + bishop (+ marginal pawn) against rook, it is even more complicate. We saw many endings

between strong players when the extra bishop and pawn were not enough for the full point. (For example, it is in vain if you remain with "just" a knight and a bishop against a king if you don't know the mechanism to lead the opponent king to the right corner.)

In this game, Aronian, one of the best players of the World, missed the victory and advanced the free pawn too early.

As a general rule in this type of endgames, the extra pawn (here on f6) should be kept on the opposite color with the bishop until the advance of the pawn really decides. This way, the pawn would control the dark-squares while the bishop controls the light-squares and complement each other.

67.Be4!

[In the game Aronian,L (2724) - Gelfand,B (2724), 2005, White played:

67.f7? which only led to a draw: Bg7 68.Rg5 Kh6 69.Kf3 Rd6 70.Rf5 Kg6 71.Ke4 Rf6 72.Rg5+ Kh6 73.Ke3 Bf8 74.Rg8 Bg7 75.Kd3 Rf4 76.Ke3 Rf6 77.Bc4 Kg6 78.Ra8 Bh6+ 79.Ke2 Rf4 80.Bd5 Bg7 81.Ra6+ Rf6 82.Ra4 Bh6 83.Ra1 Rf4 84.Kd3 Bf8 85.Rh1 Rg4 86.Kc3 Kg7 87.Be6 Re4 88.Bc4 Be7 89.Rg1+ Rg4 90.Rf1 Bf8 91.Rh1 Be7 92.Be6 Rxh4 93.Rg1+ Kf6 94.Bd5 Bf8 95.Rg8 Ke7 96.Rg6 Rf4 97.Re6+ Kd7 98.Re4 ½-½]

67...Rd4

[67...Kh8 68.Kf3 Rd4 (68...Bc3 69.Rh6+ Kg8 70.Bf5!+-) 69.f7 Bg7 70.Rg5 Rd6 71.Kg3!]

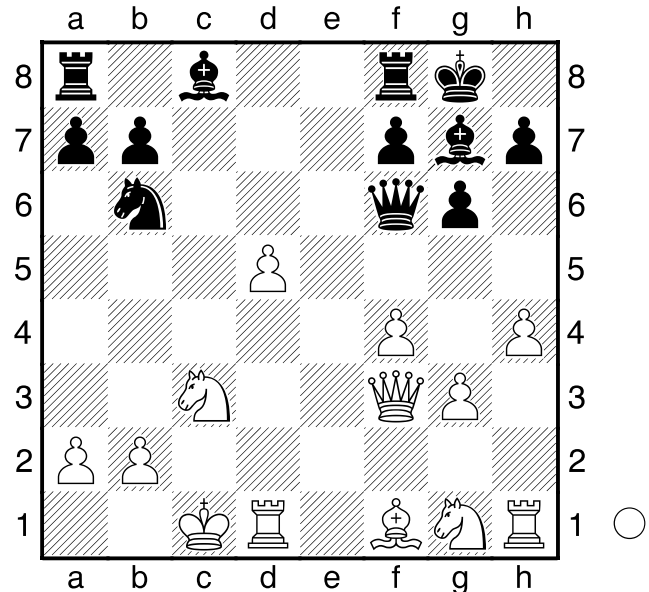
68.Bf5!

[easier than:

68.f7 Bg7 69.Re6+ Kh8 70.Re8+ Bf8 71.Rxf8+ Kg7 72.Rh8 Kxf7 73.Kf3 Kg7 74.Rxh5 Rd1]

68...Rf4 69.Bc2 Rc4 70.Bd3 Rd4 71.f7 Bg7 72.Rd6+ Rxd3 73.Rxd3 Kg6 74.Rf3 Bf8 75.Rf4+-

Solution 10



White is to move.

Evaluate the position, find Black's strategic threat and the best continuation for White.

Solution:

Let's see the major strategic elements of the position:

- the kings are castled opposite;
- the centre is open;
- White has a free passed pawn on d5;
- Black has the bishop-pair;
- both players have undeveloped pieces.

Black's strategic threat is to block the White's kingside pawns by h7-h5. If you didn't see that threat by now, look again to the structure f4, g3, h4. Such structures are usually problematic because of the left "holes" (here on g4). Black can fix White's pawns by h7-h5, so that's a threat that White must parry by playing:

19.h5!

This move has also one more reason to be good: White tries to open the h-file for his rook.

[In the game Kortschnoj,V (2615) - McShane, L (2625), Igualada 2005, White played:

19.Rh2?! and after h5!

White's kingside pawn structure is blocked and can be weak in an eventual endgame.

The game went:

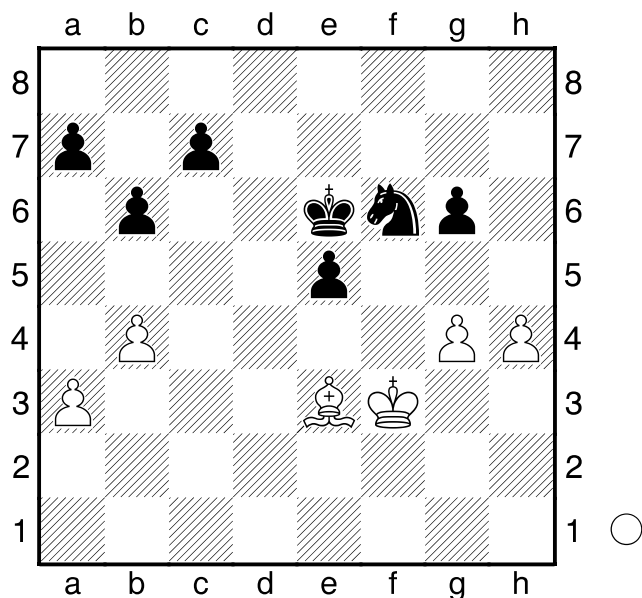
20.Bh3 (20.Ne4 Qd8 21.Bh3 Nc4 22.Rc2 Qb6!) 20...Nc4 21.Kb1 Black now seizes an important e-file but Re8 22.Qd3 Qa6 23.Bxc8 Raxc8 24.Re2 Rxe2 25.Ngxe2 Qb6 26.b3 Na3+ 27.Kb2 Nb5 28.Rc1 Qc5 29.d6 Nxc3?

Missing an immediate win: (29...Re8! 30.d7 Rxe2+ 31.Qxe2 Bxc3+ 32.Kc2 Na3+-+) 30.Nxc3 Rd8 31.d7 Qc6 32.Kb1 Rxd7 33.Qe4 Rc7 34.Qxc6 Rxc6

The next commentary is made by Krasenkow:

"So, by great efforts White has managed to liquidate into an endgame. However, Black keeps a serious advantage as the bishop is stronger than the knight in such open positions, with pawns on both sides; besides, White's kingside pawns, fixed on the squares of the black bishop, become a serious weakness - a consequence of the wise 19...h5 move!"]

Solution 11



White is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best move for White.

Solution:

Black is a pawn up so White has to find a way to save the game.

As in the previous exercise, here, Black's structure can be "penalized" by the move:

36.b5!

Now, one white pawn holds 3 black pawns! The next step for White is to create a passed pawn on the h-file which will hold one of the 2 black pieces with a short ray of action on the edge.

e4+

[Black's best chance to play for a win was: 36...Kd5!? 37.a4 Kc4 38.Bg5 but there were some huge risks: White's bishop will attack black pawns blocked on dark-squares and the h-pawn will be very dangerous.]

The game went:

37.Kf4 Nd5+ 38.Kxe4 Nc3+ 39.Kd3 Nxb5 40.a4 Nd6 41.Bf4 White's h-pawn assures the draw. a6 42.h5 gxh5 43.gxh5 Kf5 44.Be3 b5 45.axb5 axb5 46.Kd4 Ne4 47.h6 Nf6 ½-½ Akopian,V (2558) - Leitao,R (2598), 2005

[After: 47...Nf6 soon all the pieces will disappear from the board: 48.Kc5 Kg6 49.Kxb5 Ng8 50.Kc6 Nxh6 51.Bxh6 Kxh6 52.Kxc7]

Solution 12

(Diagram)

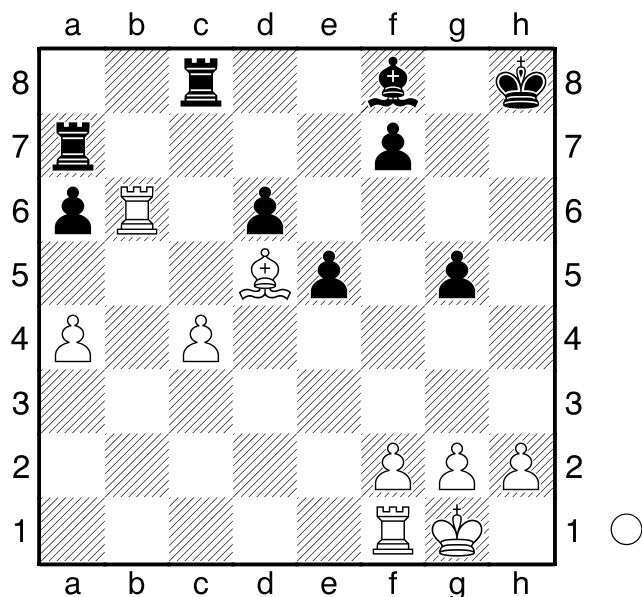
White is to move.

Find a plan for White. How would you continue?

Solution:

Again, we have a position where the mobility of the pawn structure makes the central element. Black's kingside pawn structure contains the "hole" on f5 that White can make permanent by: **26.g4!**

Now, the black bishop is restrained behind his pawns, while the white bishop has a strong operational base in the centre. The next step for White is to double his rooks on the b-file and



attack the weaknesses from Black's camp: a6-, d6-, f- pawns and also the black king (the opposite colored bishops make the attack against the king very dangerous).

Kg7 27.Rfb1 Kf6

[27...Rcc7 28.R1b3 Kg6 29.Rb8 Kg7 30.Kg2±

and the white king can enter Black's camp via f3-e4-f5.]

28.R1b3 Rc5 29.Rb8 Kg7 30.R3b7 Rc7?

[A stronger defense was:

30...Rxb7 31.Rxb7 Kg6 32.Bxf7+ Kf6 33.Bd5 Kg6

and Black can defend his a-pawn by Rc5-a5. However, White should win anyway.]

31.Rxc7 Rxc7 32.Ra8 Be7 33.Rxa6

and Black resigns.

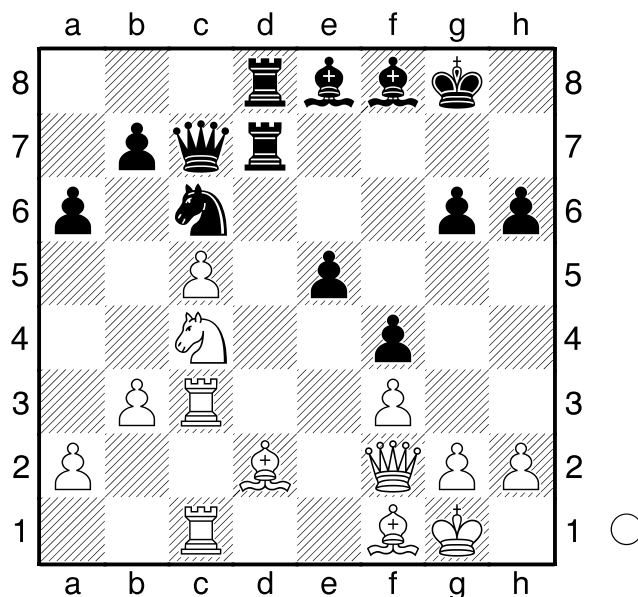
1-0 Kudrin,S (2559)-Tovillas,D (2310), 2005

Solution 13

(Diagram)

White is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best continuation.



Solution:

White has a difficult position. Black controls the d-file and more squares in the centre.

However, for a deeper evaluation, we should analyze the dynamism of the 2 pawn structures.

White's queenside pawns are practically immobile - therefore White cannot initiate any counterplay on the queenside. At most, White can (or has to) defend his c5-pawn by a2-a3 and b3-b4.

On the other hand, Black's pawn structure is dynamic. Black can organize a pawn avalanche on the kingside or can open the game in the centre by e5-e4 (prepared by Rd4). After e5-e4, Black can bring his dark-square bishop on d4 via Bf8-g7-d4 which leaves White without defense on the a7-g1 diagonal.

So, White's first worry is to block the black e5-pawn:

31.Be1! Rd4

threatening Bxc5 and e5-e4 with Bg7.

32.Nd2

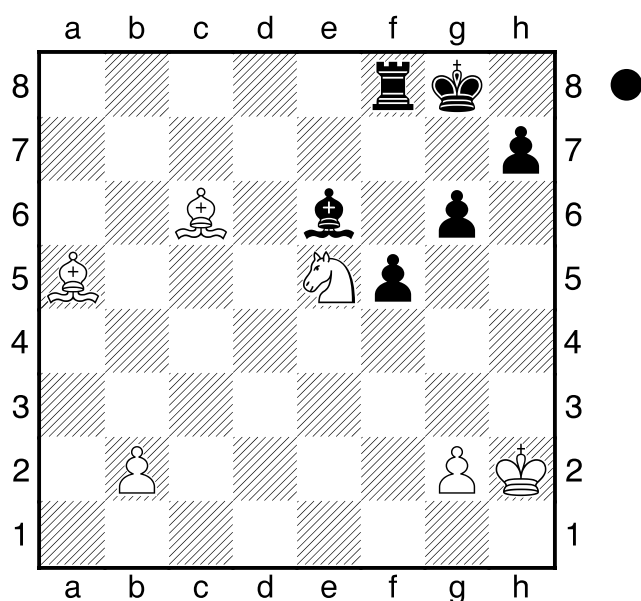
defends against both Black's threats (now you see the idea of Be1).

Even if Black has a better game, White succeeds to defend and eventually draw. The game went:

g5 33.a3 a5 34.Ne4 Bg6 35.Rc4 Kh8
36.Bc3 Rd1 37.Bb2 Qd7 38.Nd6 Rxc1
39.Rxc1 Bxd6 40.cxd6 Qxd6 41.Qb6 Rd7
42.Re1 Kh7 43.Bxe5 Qxa3 44.Bc3 a4
45.Bc4 axb3 46.Bxb3 Qa7 47.Qxa7 Nxa7
48.Re5 Nc6 49.Rc5 Re7 50.Bd5 Bd3
51.Bxc6 bxc6 52.Rxc6 Rb7 53.h3 Rb1+
54.Kh2 Rc1 55.Rc7+

1/2 Janjgava,L (2472) - Avrukh,B (2652), 2005

Solution 14



Black is to move.
Find the best move.

Solution:

White has 2 minor pieces (and the bishop-pair) against a rook and a pawn. However, White's b-pawn is much more dangerous than the black majority on the kingside which has some practical problems to start advancing. White b-pawn's way up to b8 is well sustained by white pieces, so Black has to block the pawn right now:

32...Bb3! 33.Kg3 Rb8? this is too passive.

[Black should have tried to create counter-play on the kingside by advancing his pawns:

33...g5]

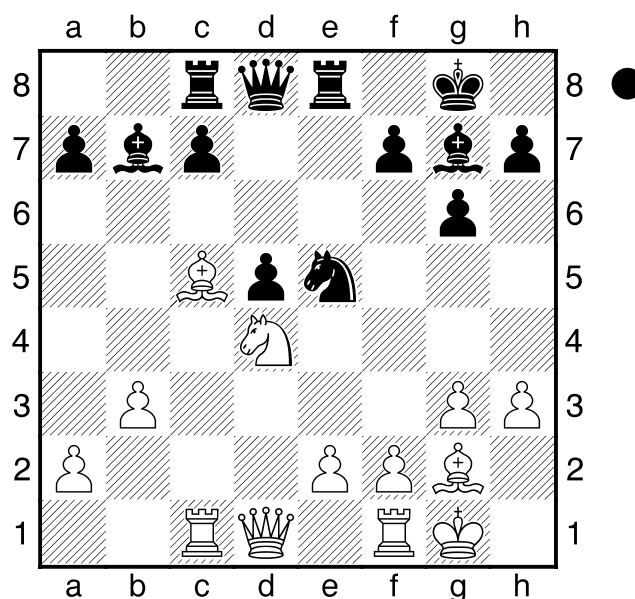
34.Kf4 Rf8 35.Ke3

[Transferring the knight to d4 would have decided the game immediately. 35.Nf3! Rc8 36.Nd4]

The game went:

35...g5 36.Kd4 h5 37.Kc3 Be6 38.b4+- f4 39.b5 g4 40.b6 Bc8 41.Kd4 f3 42.gxf3 g3 43.Ke3 h4 44.Ng6! Rf6 45.Bd5+ Kg7 46.Nxh4 Rf8 47.b7 Re8+ 48.Kf4 Bxb7 49.Bxb7 Rb8 50.Be4 1-0 Arizmendi Martinez,J (2504)-Garcia Roman,D (2394), 2005

Solution 15



Black is to move.

Evaluate the position and find the best plan and next move for Black.

Solution:

The main characteristic of the position is the couple of Black's isolated pawns. If Black succeeds to unblock his pawns and put them on the same rank (c5 and d5), he gets a good control over the central squares as compensation for the weakness of these pawns. In fact, this is the only good plan for Black, otherwise, White will consolidate the position by e2-e3, b3-b4 and maybe Nb3 immobilizing Black's pawns. An endgame with the black

pawns blocked on c7 or c6 and d5 would be very advantageous for White.
So, the black knight leaves the "good" position from e5 and attacks the c5 key-square.

18...Nd7! 19.e3

White's idea is to increase the control over the d4-square in order not to permit Black to play in the future c7-c5 and d5-d4.

[19.b4 Nxc5 20.Rxc5 c6 21.a3 Bf8 22.Rc3 a5

and Black unblocks his pawns and get an excellent dynamic play.]

[19.Ba3 c5 looks good for Black.]

19...Nxc5 20.Rxc5 Bf8!

This move is the logical continuation of the idea started with Ne5-d7. The long diagonal has a smaller importance now.

21.Rc2 c6 Black plays with much care - he doesn't want to weaken his d5-pawn yet. c6-c5 will be played after some preparation. Black at least equalized.

1/2 Akopian,V (2705) - Avrukh,B (2652), 2005

ABOUT THE DEFENSE (I)

One of the most important aspects of a chess game is the way in which we succeed in defending inferior, even desperate positions. Of course, nobody likes to reach such a position, but knowing how to play bad positions helps you to save points that seemed to be lost.

The main rule when playing an inferior position is: “don’t lose your hope”, permanently believing that there is still a chance for saving. Also you don’t have to wait for your opponent to bring you the saving solution, but you have to try to create as big obstacles for him as possible in his attempt to win the game.

The basic defensive methods in very difficult positions are:

1. “the defense in trenches”,
2. the creation of confusion and
3. the bluff,

depending on different situations.

The following game was played in a rapid chess tournament in Portugal and it decided the first place in that event. The short thinking time cannot excuse at all what happened. Even if the quality of the game could have been better in many moments, we are convinced that you have much more to learn from this game than from a game “without any mistake” played by two grandmasters. I consider this game one of the most pregnant with instructions games I have ever played.

Ceteras Marius – Rodriguez, J

Valpacos 1998

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nc6

The Chigorin Defense has been quite rarely used in high-level tournaments for a long period of time, being somehow against the classical principles. Black deliberately gives up the center, hoping to obtain compensation by having a very good play for his pieces. After the grandmasters Aleksandr Morozovich and Igor Miladinovic started to use it regularly, this defense has gained more and more popularity.

3.cxd5 Qxd5 4.Nf3?!

Better is here 4.e3! e5 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Bd2 Bxc3 7.bxc3 (7.Bxc3 exd4 8.Ne2! followed by Nxd4 is also possible) 7...Nf6 8.f3 and White has a better position due to his mobile pawn center.

4...e5 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.e3 exd4 7.exd4 Bg4 8.Be2

It is interesting that this position may result even from a totally different opening, the declined Goring Gambit: 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.c3!? d5 5.exd5 Qxd5 6.cxd4 Bg4 7.Nc3 Bb4 8.Be2

8...Bxf3 9.Bxf3 Qc4

QUIZ: Guess White’s next move

10.Kd2

The diagram is meant to convince you that it is not a typing mistake. Of course I have never thought I could make such a move. My intention was to castle, but after I had touched the king, I noticed two things that couldn't produce me a great happiness: the queen controls the f1-square, so the castle is not allowed and, second, the satisfied smile on my opponent's face.

At the first moment I didn't realized the dramatic situation, having the impression that I have no available moves for the king. When I saw the d2-square, I felt that my seat was trying to run away and my first impulse was to shake my opponent's hand and to resign. Fortunately, this thought was a matter of moment, and I realized I had nothing more to lose.



10...0-0-0

After this move, as after many others, Black has a clearly won position. I won't waste the time indicating hundreds ways in which Black could win, but I will focus on the way I treated this desperate position.

Considering that my only chance was to prolong the fight until my opponent would have less thinking time on his clock, I established that my main objectives should be:

1. Avoiding an immediate defeat
2. Resisting as much as possible, in order to create Black a complaint because he is not able to win more quickly a won position.
3. Putting my opponent in front of taking harder decisions

Of course, none of these objectives is easy to be realized, but if you don't have daring objectives, your chances are inexistent.

11.d5 Nf6 12.Qf1

QUIZ



Black can exchange the queens or avoid this exchange.

What do you prefer?

12...Qxf1?

Even if Black is still winning, I consider this move a mistake of principal, because my opponent made it without seeing anything concrete. I think it is very good to play 12...Qc5, and White has no good moves anymore. After the move in the game, I felt that my chances have increased considerably, even if my position was still completely lost. Such moments, in which you gain confidence, are essential when you are defending. They offer you the power to go further and to hope that the game will have a favorable result.

13.Rxf1 Nxd5

QUIZ



White has three major options: a) 14.Bxd5 b) 14.Bg4 c) 14.Kc2
Which of them would you choose?

14.Bg4+!!

From my point of view, this move is excellent for a rapid game, even if it is in fact a bluff. But we should not forget that the bluff is one of the defensive methods in desperate situations, especially when the opponent has little time.

14.Kc2? is without hope because of 14...Nd4+ 15.Kb1 Nxc3+ 16.bxc3 Bxc3 17.Bb2 Bxb2 18.Kxb2 Nxf3 19.gxf3 Rd2+ Such variations in which you create no obstacles for your opponent should be totally avoided when you are defending;

14.Bxd5 doesn't lose on the spot and it is, mathematically speaking, the best move. From a psychological point of view, I considered that the move 14.Bxd5 means accepting the defeat or trying to prolong my misery. After 14...Rxd5+ 15.Kc2 White would have some saving chances if he could lead the position to a rook ending. Unfortunately, this is also easy to win by Black, who wouldn't need too much time for making decent moves by which to preserve the advantage. Excluding the two above mentioned moves, which don't complicate Black's task, I resort to the move in the game.

14...Kb8?

A "natural" move played instantly by my opponent. Moreover, I based on this move when I bluffed: in a rapid game, such kinds of moves are automatically made.

14...f5! wins on the spot as attracts the white bishop on a bad position, for example: 15.Bxf5+ Kb8 16.Bd3 (16.Kc2 Nd4+-+) 16...Nf4-+

15.Kc2 Nd4+

QUIZ



What do you prefer, 16.Kd3 or 16.Kb1?

16.Kd3!

16.Kb1 leads again to a position in which White has no chances, for instance: 16...Nxc3+ 17.bxc3 Bxc3 18.Bb2 Bxb2 19.Kxb2 f5–+ So the move in the game is practically forced, because it is the only one which doesn't offer Black the possibility to win without effort.

16...Nf6 17.Bd1 b5

Already having emotional problems created by the time crises, Black tries to solve the problem immediately, threatening 18...Nb3+ and avoiding the variation: 17...Nb3+ 18.Kc4 Nxa1 19.Kxb4 in which he would have some problems related to the mislaid knight on a1.

QUIZ



How would you continue with White?

18.Nxb5!

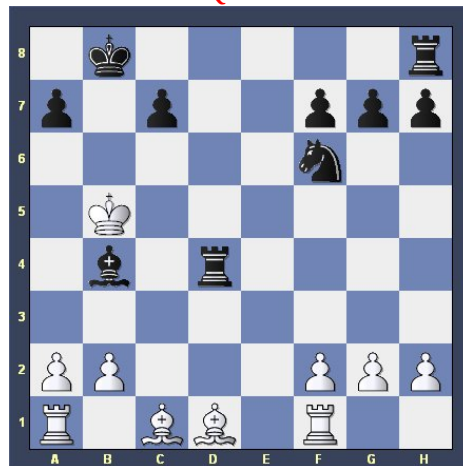
In such a position there is no “risky move”. The greatest risk is to stay quiet and to wait your defeat.

18...Nxb5+ 19.Kc4

The white king recuperates the sacrificed piece by a spectacular double attack, equivalent with “entering the lion’s mouth”.

19...Rd4+ 20.Kxb5

QUIZ



Find the winning way for Black

20...Rhd8??

This move is a terrible mistake, but don't you think it was a pity my opponent to see one of the following good variations?

20...a6+! 21.Ka4 (21.Kxa6 Rd5 with checkmate at the next move) 21...Be1+!-+;

20...Nd7! 21.Be3 c6+ 22.Kxc6 (22.Ka4 Nc5#) 22...Rc8+ 23.Kb5 a6+ 24.Kxa6 Rc5 with checkmate;

20...Ne4! with the same idea ...c6+ 21.Bf4 Kb7 followed by 22...a6 and 23...Nc5

A chess program finds all these moves in few seconds, but at the board, with little time, the problems are not that easy. However, I think that Black should have seen at least the first variation, which is less "computeristic" and even evident.

The move in the game has a logical justification, bringing another pieces for the king attack. But it will be proved that this was a waste of time which permits White to save his position.

21.Be3 a6+ White is saved also after

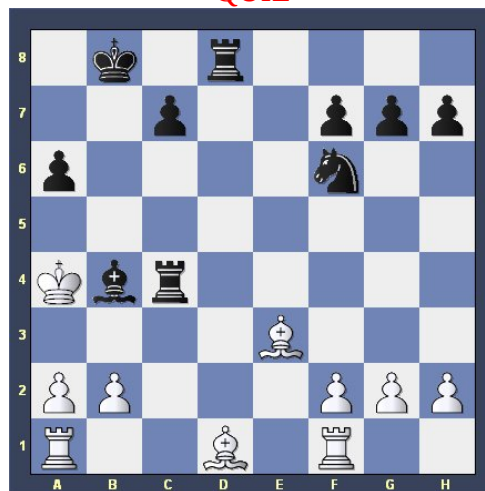
21...R8d5+ 22.Ka4 Ne4 23.Kb3! (23.Bxd4?? Rxd4-+) 23...Nd2+ 24.Bxd2 Bxd2 25.Bf3 or

21...c6+ 22.Ka4 Ne4 23.Kb3 Nd2+ 24.Bxd2 Bxd2 25.Bf3

22.Ka4 Rc4??

The decisive mistake. Good is here 22...Ne4! 23.Kb3 (23.Bxd4? Rxd4-+) 23...Nd2+ 24.Bxd2 Bxd2=

QUIZ



How should White continue?

23.Kb3!

Once again, the white king realizes a double attack, this time a devastating one. Worse is 23.Be2?! because of 23...Rh4 24.g3 Rxh2 25.Kxb4 (25.Bxa6!) 25...Nd5+!=

23...Re4?! Better is here 23...Rh4, even if White has clear advantage after 24.g3 Rd3+ 25.Kc2 Rxe3 26.gxh4±

24.Bc2!

Avoiding the check on d3.

24...Rh4 25.g3 Rxh2 26.Kxb4+- and White won after some other uninteresting moves.

CONCLUSIONS:

I think this game has convinced you that in chess there are also miracles! Was White's success only a matter of chance? It is hard to answer. Surely, without Black's "help", White couldn't save the game, but we shouldn't forget that that "help" hasn't come alone, but it was provoked by White in some key moments. Theoretical, a lost position cannot be saved without good luck, but as long as White used all his means to make Black's task harder, he can be acquitted. Why should be White guilty because he did his homework, but Black didn't? And let's not forget that the goddess Fortune has smiled him too, at the 10th move.

Why do I consider this game instructive, in spite of his low quality, from a technical point of view? Because it is an example of attitude during a chess game, and your attitude has an overwhelming importance. Do you think you haven't wasted precious points choosing resignation instead of defending until the last bullet?

ABOUT THE DEFENSE (II)

In the following game we will study a great example of technique in defense, offered by...the king of attack, Paul Keres. The game was played in 1948, during the tournament for deciding the new World Champion, after Aleksandr Alekhine died. The tournament was won by Mikhail Botvinnik, but many people sustained that Paul Keres was the one who really deserved the victory in the tournament, being in an uncomfortable situation after the Baltic countries were annexed to the Soviet Union. Probably his own words are relevant: "I was unlike like my country".

We will see in this game the usage of several defensive methods: the active defense, the creation of confusion and the bluff, all these at the highest level. Even if he got into difficulty since the opening stage, Keres permanently found resources to maintain the balance. The leitmotiv of the defense was the continuous search for counter chances instead of a passive defense.

Euwe, Max – Keres, Paul

World Championship 18th Den Haag/Moscow (21), 06.05.1948

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4

The Nimzowitsch Defense is one of the most popular defenses, being present in most of the tournaments of all levels. Black's plan is the quick development of the kingside, followed by an attack upon the center. Often Black gives away the bishop on b4, being forced to exchange him for the knight in c3, so he has to play very actively in order to compensate White's bishop pair.

4.Qc2 0–0 5.Bg5

A less played move today, but very popular at the beginning of the theory development of the Nimzowitsch Defense. Usually White prefers to gain the pair of bishops through 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.Qxc3 or 5.e4 d5 6.e5 Ne4 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3

5...h6

Interpolating this move before the attack over the center with c7-c5 is not forced. Many players prefer directly 5...c5 6.dxc5 The alternatives are 6.d5, 6.e3 or 6.Nf3, but none of them create problems for Black 6...Na6 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.Qxc3 Nxc5 9.Bxf6.

A small parenthesis:

QUIZ



If White plays 9.f3 (instead of 9.Bxf6), find the best answer for Black

Answer: 9...Nfe4! 10.Bxd8 Nxc3 11.Be7 Nb3! 12.Bxf8 Kxf8 Black has a knight for a rook, but the rook on a1 is cramped between the black knights 13.Rd1 Nxd1 14.Kxd1 b6 15.Kc2 Na5! 16.b3 d5 and Black has a small initiative in the endgame because of the possibility to complete the development more quickly.

9...Qxf6 10.Qxf6 gxf6=

The practice proved that Black's chances are at least equal in this complex endgame, even if there is an apparently advantage for White, thanks to a better pawn structure.

6.Bh4 c5 7.dxc5 Na6 8.e3

This new plan was introduced in this game. White intends to play Nge2 and only after this a2-a3, in order to retake on c3 with the knight, after...Bxc3. To be noticed that this plan is less attractive without the moves 5...h6 6.Bh4, which explains somehow why many players don't play 5...h6, preferring to attack directly the center with 5...c5. If White played after 5...c5 6.dxc5 Na6 7.e3 Nxc5 8.Nge2, Black plays 8...Nce4! with tempo, because the white bishop is on g5 and not on h4. This is a good example of how important is to know some apparently insignificant details in such complex opening systems like Nimzowitsch Defense.

8.a3 Bxc3+ 9.Qxc3 Nxc5 leads to a position analyzed above, the only difference is the pawn on h6 instead of h7, which is insignificant.

8...Nxc5 9.Nge2! d5

Renowned for his aggressive play, Keres immediately initiates the operations in the center. The alternatives are:

9...Nce4 10.a3 Qa5 11.Rc1 Bxc3+ 12.Nxc3 b6 (12...Nxc3 13.Qxc3 Qxc3+ 14.Rxc3 g5 15.Bg3 Ne4 16.Rd3 Nxg3 17.hxg3+/- Dao Thien Hai - Yu Shaoteng, 2004) 13.Bd3 Bb7 14.0-0 Nxc3 15.Qxc3 Qxc3 16.Rxc3+/- Spassky-Greenfeld, 1988. White has a small advantage caused by the pair of bishops.

9...b5!? 10.cxb5 Bb7 and Black obtained some compensation because of the development advantage in the game Michaelsen - Reeh, 1993

QUIZ



Find the best way for White to complete the development

10.0–0–0!

A very good move, through which White realizes two things simultaneously: gets free from the pin on the e1-a5 diagonal and exerts pressure upon the center. He now threatens to win the d5-pawn and Black has also problems because of his pinned knight on f6.

10...Bd7!

Black is at a high level, choosing the most active continuation. His hopes are related to quickly bringing the rook on the c-file in order to exert pressure upon White's castle. This choice involves losing a pawn, but not accepting a passive defense and searching for counter play is the best attitude in inferior positions.

Weaker would have been 10...b6 11.cxd5±

11.cxd5 Rc8!

The rook is placed on an open file, threatening ...Na4

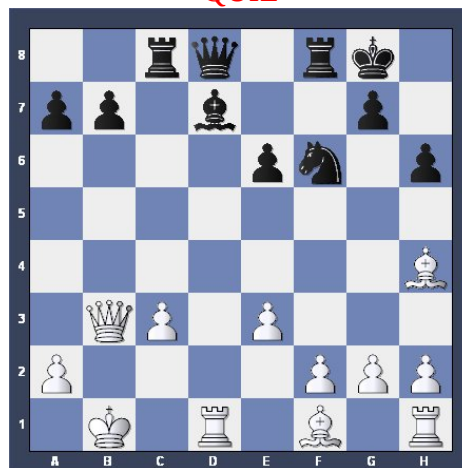
12.Kb1 Na4 13.dxe6 fxe6 14.Qb3

Wrong is 14.Qxa4? Bxa4 15.Rxd8 Rfxd8 and White cannot capture the bishop 16.Nxa4 because of 16...Rd1+ 17.Nc1 Rxc1#; Wrong is also 14.Bxf6 Rxf6 15.Qxa4 Bxa4 16.Rxd8+ Rxd8 17.Nxa4 because of 17...Rxf2 and Black has compensation because of his better activity of the rooks.

14...Bxc3 15.Nxc3 Nxc3+ 16.bxc3

In this moment we can assess the consequences of the opening stage. As a result of his new plan, which surprised his opponent, White is a pawn up and has the pair of bishops, but its materialization is not easy at all. White's castle is weakened and he didn't succeed to develop his kingside yet. We will see further that Keres proves extraordinary skills in the defense.

QUIZ



Find the best continuation for Black

16...Qe8!

Through only a move, Black gets free from two pins and creates two potential threats:...Ba4 and ...Qg6. I think it is enough for a move...

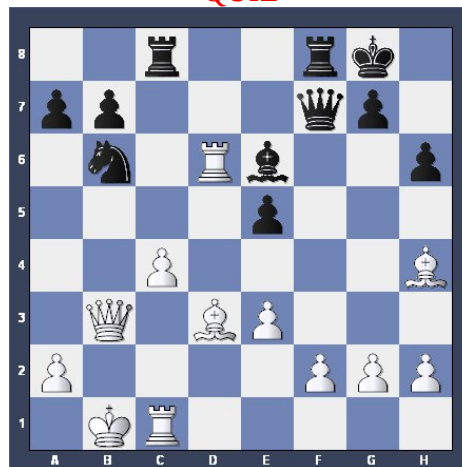
17.Rd4 Nd5

The black knight goes on the queenside, where Black tries to get counter chances, exploiting the weak position of the white king.

18.c4 Nb6 19.Bd3 Na4

Keres abstains from the very tempting continuation 19...e5 20.Rd6 Be6 21.Rc1 Qf7 through which Black immediately gets back the lost material.

QUIZ



Indicate the reason for which Black avoided this variation.

Answer: 22.Rxe6!! A positional sacrifice which allows White to keep the winning chances. After 22...Qxe6 23.c5 Qxb3+ 24.axb3 the white pair of bishops dominate the whole board, White having excellent compensation for the sacrificed material. Considering also that a time crisis was imminent, it is easy to understand why Keres has avoided such a variation, in which White has a quite easy play, choosing a complicated variation which would have obliged Black to use a lot of time.

20.Bc2 Nc5 21.Qc3 b5!?

Again, Black chooses a complicated variation. Possible was also 21...Ba4 22.Rhd1 b5 with enough counter play for Black

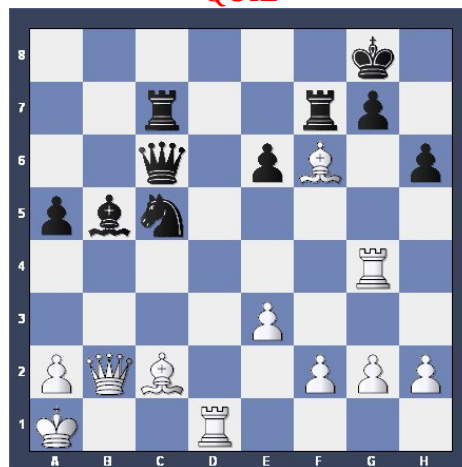
22.Ka1 a5 23.cxb5 Bxb5 24.Qb2

24.Qxa5 was very risky, because it opens new lines for Black's attack.

24...Qc6 25.Rg4! Rf7 26.Bf6! Rcc7 27.Rd1±

Euwe has defended himself with "cool blood" and he obtained a clearly better position. For this he use a lot of time, so he was forced to play very rapid further. It is very instructive how Black will speculate this situation.

QUIZ



Find the best practical chance for Black

27...Bd3!

This move is a good sample of how to bluff. Let's see how Keres himself describes his decision: "The commentators considered this move was a mistake, but none saw what Black had to play instead. Black's position is by no means desperate as White threatens 28.Rd8 and the sequel 27...Rcd7 28.Rxd7 Qxd7 29.Rd4 is hopeless. In these conditions the sharp move from the game gave the better chances to save the game, especially due to White's time trouble. Put under pressure Euwe doesn't find the best reply." (Keres);

27...Nb7 is strongly met by 28.Be4! ± and Black has no compensation for the pawn down. This is why Black's decision is the best. It is the only one who creates some serious obstacles in White's way to materialize his advantage, especially because the opponent was in time crisis. The time is an extremely important problem in the modern chess, especially nowadays when there is the tendency to reduce the thinking time. It is not immoral to exploit the opponent's time crisis; it is only his fault that he got in such a situation so you don't have to pity him, but to try to create as difficult problems as possible, whose solution to request a more complicated calculation. In this way, the chances that your opponent blunders are higher.

28.Bxd3?

The time crisis has arrived and Euwe chooses "the easiest continuation", but not the best. Better was 28.Rxd3! Nxd3 29.Bxd3 Qc1+ 30.Qxc1 (30.Bb1 Qxb2+ 31.Bxb2 Rxf2 with counter chances) 30...Rxc1+ 31.Kb2 Rg1 32.Bc3 h5! ± Although Black has some counter play, White must normally win the game.

28...Nxd3 29.Rxd3?

Step by step, White loses the advantage, in his attempt to "calm" the position. Better was 29.Bxg7! Rxg7 30.Rxg7+ Rxg7 31.Rxd3 Qxg2 "after which White has some winning change, while Black has good chances to draw" (Keres)(31...Rxg2!? is also interesting)

29...Rxf6!

White's advantage has vanished.

30.f3 Rf5!

Through each move, Keres creates problems to his opponent. He is threatening to bring the rook on the queenside for the attack.

31.Rgd4

After 31.Rd8+ Kh7 32.Rc8!? Qd7 33.Rxc7 Qxc7 Black has enough compensation for the pawn because of the weakened position of the white king.

31...Rc5 32.Rd8+ Kh7 33.Rd1 Rc2 34.Qd4?

The decisive mistake. Better 34.Qb3 or 34.Qa3 and White still has chances to maintain the balance

34...Rc1+ 35.Kb2 Qc2+

and in front of the checkmate, White resigned.

CONCLUSIONS

Was the result of the game influenced only by the White's time crisis? Surely not! Even if the time crisis had a determinant role, we don't have to diminish Black's role, who used all his defensive resources and the best strategy in the given conditions. Starting from the 10th move, Black met some major problems, managing very well. The difference was made by Keres' skills to use two main defensive methods: creating of confusion and the bluff. The time crisis, actually caused by the Black's very inventive play after the 10th move, didn't do anything else than to justify once more the usage of the two defensive methods by Black.

ABOUT THE DEFENSE (III)

The following game contains one of the most inspired moves I have ever played. Even if it was a mistake (from a mathematical point of view), I made it with the belief that it is the best chance to save the game. When you choose the bluff as an ultimate solution, you have to take into consideration also the psychological implications and to choose the right moment to set your opponent a trap. I did this against a grandmaster, which proves that the bluff is a dangerous weapon even against a high-rated player. Taking into consideration that an important motif of the game is the piercing with d5 in positions with isolated pawn, I will use as an introduction to this lesson a very important moment from the classic game Boleslavsky – Kotov, Zurich 1953.



Boleslavsky – Kotov, Zurich 1953

This is one of the most renowned chess positions, resulted after the White's 13th move. Here is how David Bronstein comments this moment: **13...Na5** "All the commentators agreed this move was a mistake, since it allowed White to carry out the pretty breakthrough that follows, with its lively play leading to a win for White, some thirty moves hence. Stahlberg, and Euwe as well in his earlier commentaries, suggested that 13...Nb4 was the required response here. However, Rauser showed in some rather old analysis that the continuation 13...Nb4 14.d5 Nbx d5 15.Nxd5 Bxd5 16.Bxd5 Nxd5 17.Bxe7 Qxe7 18.Rxd5 favors White. Najdorf therefore recommended 13...Nd5 14.Nxd5 Bxg5 15.Nc3 Nb4, a view later adopted by Euwe also. We should like to go a little more deeply into the concept of "mistake", as it is applied to chess. To begin with, the mistakenness of 13...Na5 was only demonstrated as a result of White's clever and by no means obvious continuation. His advantage finally boiled down to his possession of a strong bishop against Black's knight in an endgame: certainly not all that simple, nor all that much! Secondly, it's not clear how the battle might have gone after 13...Nd5, since White had the secret weapon 14.Nxd5 Bxg5 15.Nb6. If Black plays 15...Rb8, instead of taking the knight, he loses the exchange after 16.Nxg5 and 17.Nd7; and on 15...Ra7 16.d5 is very strong. If he takes the N on b6, however, Black will be in a real predicament after 16.Nxg5: 16...h6 loses to the sacrifice at f7 followed by 18.Qxe6, and there seems to be no clear defense to the thematic push d4-d5, since 16...Nxd4 fails against 17.Qd3 Nf5 18.Nxe6 fxe6 19.Bxe6+ Kh8 20.Bxf5, or 18...Qc6 19.Nf4, etc. Had the game in fact taken such a course, then 13...Nd5 would have been labeled the mistake, and 13...Na5

recommended instead, since it does not appear to be too dangerous. Black's difficulties appear to have another cause entirely. Compared with Black's pieces, White had made three extra moves! - both rooks to central files, and the bishop to an attacking diagonal. If there is logic in chess, then those three powerful developing moves must tell somehow. It is a grandmaster's task to demonstrate White's advantage, and in this case the proof was of the complicated combinative sort. Such melding of logic and combinative power is the hallmark of Boleslavsky." (David Bronstein)

Can someone add anything to this? Maybe just the strong recommendation to buy Bronstein's wonderful book in case you don't have it yet! 210 fully annotated games; what more can you ask from a chess book? This book is not for spectacular moves, or theoretical novelties to enhance your firepower in your future games. Things like that are normally entitled "Winning with..." and even if they don't bring you success, at least they claim to do so. Just for the record and to conclude this position I offer you the rest of the game. **14.d5 Nxb3 15.dxe6 Qb6 16.axb3 fxe6 17.Nd4 Bd6 18.Qxe6+ Kh8 19.Nf3 Rad8 20.Bf4 Bxf3 21.Rxd6 Rxd6 22.Qxd6 Qxd6 23.Bxd6 Re8 24.Rxe8+ Nxe8 25.Be5 Bc6 26.b4 h5 27.f3 Kh7 28.Ne2 g5 29.Kf2 h4 30.g3 hxg3+ 31.hxg3 Kg6 32.g4 Bb7 33.Ke3 Bc6 34.Nc3 Bb7 35.Ne4 Bd5 36.Nc5 Kf7 37.Nxa6 Ke6 38.Bc3 Ba8 39.Nc5+ Kf7 40.Ne4 Kg6 41.Be5 Bd5 42.Nd2 Kf7 1-0**

Istratescu,A (2515) - Ceteras,M (2330) [B22]

ROM-ch Bucharest (5), 1994

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.c3

Only 3 moves into the game and the psychological war is on! At that time my favorite openings were the Sicilian Najdorf and Kalashnikov (1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 e5), or 2.c3 b6, but for that game, I was prepared to play something less popular such as 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Qb6. This has been used with a lot of success by FIDE-GM Grivas from Greece. Andrei had sensed that something was in the air and deviated into things I was unfamiliar with...

3...d5

I would have loved to play 3...b6 and enter into familiar waters, but since my N is on c6 already, this cannot be recommended.

4.exd5 Qxd5 5.d4 e6

The alternative is 5...Bg4 6.Be2 cxd4 (6...e6 7.h3 Bh5 8.c4) 7.cxd4 e6 8.Nc3 where White has the initiative.

6.Be3 cxd4 7.cxd4 Nf6 8.Nc3

8.a3 Be7 9.Nc3 Qd6 leads by transposition to the main line.

8...Qd6 9.a3 Be7 10.Bd3

Another possible move is 10.Qc2, but I consider this inaccurate because it establishes too early the queen's position. The idea is to impede the development of the bishop on b7, but Black can play also ...Bd7 and ...Rc8.

10...0-0

10...b6 11.0-0 Bb7 12.Qe2 0-0 leads by transposition to the main line.

11.0-0 b6 12.Qe2 Bb7

QUIZ



White to move. Indicate the best placement for the rooks.

13.Rad1!

The best setup for White is "Rd1–Re1". 13. Rac1 is tempting, but since White enjoys a space advantage exchanges should be avoided if possible. Placing a R on the c- file would make them possible in the future. According to this plan, both rooks serve clear purposes: preparing the d4-d5 breakthrough and controlling the open e-file. I was facing a plan like this for the first time and couldn't find a way to solve my opening problems satisfactorily.

13.Rac1 Rac8 14.Rfd1 Rfd8 15.Bb1 g6 with the idea Bf8-g7;Nc6-e7-f5(d5)

13...Rac8

Other possible moves are 13...Rad8, 13...Rfd8, 13...Rfe8 and several others generously represented in several databases. Because one of the themes in this game is the isolated pawn, I would like to say something about the other Black's main continuations in this critical position:

13...Rad8 Through this move, Black intends to set his rooks on the central files, making more difficult for White to realize the penetration d4-d5. A possible continuation is: 14.Bb1 Rfe8 15.Rfe1 Qb8 even here, as in my game against Istratescu, White's main ideas are related to the moves Bg5 and Ba2.

14.Rfe1 Qb8?!

Surely not a very inspired move. To be honest, I cannot remember why I decided against the normal 14...Rfd8. White's plan could have been similar here as well: Bb1, Bg5 (weakening Black's King side), followed by Ba2 and the thematic d5 breakthrough. Nevertheless, Qd6 could have been more useful in defense than Qb8.

15.Bg5 Rfd8 16.Bb1 g6

QUIZ



How should White play after 16...Nd5 (instead of 16...g6)?

17.Qe4! g6 18.Qh4!± Scherbin,D-Malikov,S 1996 Bringing the queen on h4 guarantees a superiority of forces on the kingside.

17.Ba2

White has accomplished all ideas required in this opening. Black has to play really carefully now, as the d4-d5 threat is pretty annoying. 8 years later when I reanalyzed the game with the aid of those monster databases, I finally understood why Andrei managed to play these 17 moves in about 15 minutes, since I already consumed an hour and a half up to that point. 4 years before our game Andrei suffered with Black in this line during a Balkan team Championship; even if the order of moves in his game was different, they arrived at the same position as here after 17 moves. In that game Andrei decided to wait with 17...Re8 and eventually reached a draw when his opponent's generous play led to it.

17...Kg7

17...Re8 18.Ne5

(Black is in danger, as you can see from the following recent game: *18.h4!? Rcd8 19.Bxe6!!* destroying the protection *19...fxe6 20.Qxe6+ Kg7 21.d5! Nxd5 22.Rxd5 Bxg5 23.Rxd8 Rxe6 24.Rxb8 Rxe1+ 25.Nxe1 Nxb8 26.hxg5* This is why White needed the pawn on h4 before sacrificing the bishop! The ending is clearly in White's favor, who won in the game Mihailidis-Pitselis, 2004.)

18...Nxe5 19.dxe5 Nd7 20.Rxd7? (*20.Bxe7 Rxe7 21.Rd6±*) 20...Bxg5 21.Qg4 Be7 22.h4 Rcd8 23.Rxd8 Qxd8 24.Qa4 Qa8 25.Qg4 h5 26.Qg3 Kg7 27.Nb5 Rd8 28.Nd6 Bd5 29.Bxd5 Qxd5 30.Ne4 Qd4 31.b4 Qd3 32.Qxd3 Rxd3 33.g3 Rxa3 34.Rc1 Rb3 35.Rc7 Rxb4 36.f3 Bc5+ 37.Kg2 Bd4 38.Ng5 Rb2+ 39.Kh3 Bg1 40.Rxf7+ Kg8 41.g4 hxg4+ 42.Kxg4 Be3 43.Rf6 Bxg5 44.Rxg6+ Kh7 45.Rxg5 a5 46.Rh5+ Kg7 47.Rg5+ Kh7 48.Rh5+ 1/2–1/2 Mastrokoulou,G-Istratescu,A 1990

18.h3 h6 19.Bh4

This position is similar with Boleslavsky-Kotov, Zurich 1953. Black struggles as White has a clear positional advantage. Without even thinking about that game and its final result, I came up with one of my most inspired ideas ever.

19...Nh5

Probably anybody else but me would have considered this a blunder. I wouldn't jump so fast to such radical conclusions. Analyzing the position, I concluded that White has a clear advantage which would eventually lead to victory, especially true since I was running short on reflection time. 19...Nh5 has the clear disadvantage of dropping a piece. After weighing all possibilities, I still played it for reasons I will present later on.

QUIZ



White to move. Find the best continuation

20.d5!

The typical penetration is devastating.

20...Nf4

20...exd5? 21.Bxe7+; 20...Bxh4 21.dxc6 Nf4 22.Qf1 Rxc6 leads to the game.

21.Qf1 Bxh4

21...Nxd5 22.Bxd5! (22.Nxd5? Bxh4 23.Nxh4 exd5=) 22...Rxd5 (22...Bxh4 23.Bxc6+-) 23.Nxd5 Bxh4 24.Nxh4 exd5 25.Rxd5+-

22.dxc6 Rxc6 23.Nxh4 Rc5

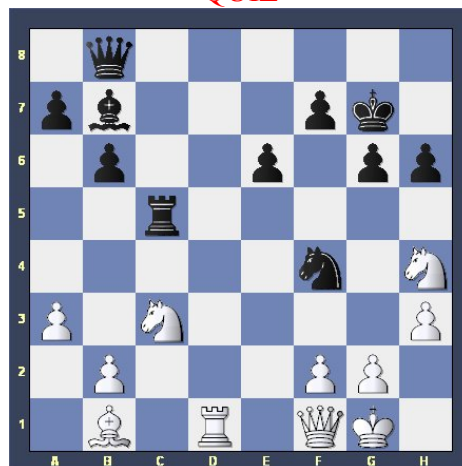
This is the position I had in mind when I decided in favor of 19...Nh5. My main reason was a psychological one: very often in over-the-board games when someone obtains the advantage, their sense of danger becomes less dominant. I knew Andrei pretty well and was counting on a similar reaction, leading him to believe I missed his combination started with the move 20.d5! He totally rejected the possibility that I entered this line voluntarily and consequently treated it lightly. In conclusion, I would prefer to add an exclamation mark next to my poker move 19...Nh5 instead of a question mark...

24.Bb1??

24.g3 wins immediately, but a player satisfied with his winning position will not bother analyzing moves which apparently weaken the light squares diagonal and plays for keeps with the simple threat Be4.

24...Rxd1 25.Rxd1

QUIZ



How can Black save the game?

25...Bxg2!?

An interesting alternative is 25...Nxb3+!? 26.gxh3 Rg5+ 27.Ng2 Rxb2+ 28.Qxb2 Bxb2 29.Kxb2 and Black has no problems because of the compact pawn structure on the kingside.

26.Qxb2?

Completely messed up by the overturned situation, White cannot concentrate anymore and enter an inferior position. Better was 26.Nxb2! Nxb3+ 27.Kh1 Rh5 28.Qc4! Qe5 (28...Ng5+ 29.Kg1 Qh2+ 30.Kf1 Qh1+ 31.Ke2 Qxb2∞; 28...Nxf2+ 29.Kg1 Qg3 30.Qd4+ e5 31.Qxf2 Rh1+ 32.Kxh1 Qxf2∞) 29.Qd4 Nxf2+ 30.Kg1 Nxd1 31.Qxe5+ Rxe5 32.Nxd1 Re2∞

26...Nxb2 27.Nxb2 Qe5 -/+

The tables have turned into Black's favor as I have now a clear advantage and even might be winning! However I was running short on time, plus it was my turn to be really excited about my poker combination. I proposed a draw, accepted by Andrei immediately, being content with only half the gift offered to me by Lady Luck.

CONCLUSIONS

What else can I say? Talking about comments, maybe I should add Andrei's opinion after I told him my reasoning behind 19...Nh5 - "You are completely out of your mind!" Maybe he is right. Sometimes in chess, straight knowledge is not sufficient to come up with the appropriate move and a little bit of madness should be added in to prompt the most suitable error!

½ - ½

THE COUNTER ATTACK

When one of the sides is attacking, the other side is usually forced to defense, parrying the opponent's threats. But there are also situations in which an attack is answered with a counter-attack, which means that the attacked side also organizes an attack, which is even stronger, hindering his opponent to end successfully his own attack. Usually these situations are very spectacular, equivalent with a boxing game in which both players fight the guards down, staking everything to attack. The following game is very impressive due to the quick and unexpected sequence of the events. White started an attack that seemed to be winning, but Black has found resources to organize a spectacular counter-attack. The result? We will see...

Konstantinopolsky,Alexander C - Veltmander,Ioganess

URS-ch Semifinals Tartu (3), 1950

1.Nf3

A very flexible move which lets White to opt for several openings: Queen's Gambit, The English Opening, Reti Opening. The main condition for White is to know these openings, so that passing from one to another not to affect him. Searching in our database, we have found that the oldest game that started with this move is the one between The Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte and General Bertrand. This thing shouldn't be a surprise because Napoleon preferred to use the cavalry at the beginning of a fight.

1...Nf6 2.c4

White proposes to enter the English Opening. An alternative is 2.d4 which leads to positions similar with those in which White plays 1.d4.

2...c6 3.Nc3 d5 4.e3

4.d4 would have led by transposing to the Slav Defense. Through the move in the game, White tries to avoid the system of the Slav Defense based on 4...dxc4 followed by 5...Bf5.

4...Nbd7

Now 4...dxc4 permits the development by a single move of the bishop on f1 (usually Black waits until White plays Be2 or Bd3 and only then he takes on c4.), while 4...Bf5 permits the variant 5.cxd5 Nxd5 (5...cxd5 6.Qb3!) 6.d4 in which White gets a stronger pawn center; The main alternative is 4...e6

5.cxd5

5.d4 e6 leads to a main position from the Slav Defense.

5...cxd5 6.d4 e6 7.Bd3 Bd6 8.0-0 0-0

After some normal developing moves, White has obtained a small advantage because the knight on c3 has a better position than the knight on d7. However this difference is minor, so White's advantage is insignificant.

9.e4!?

If White wants to fight for the initiative, entering a position with isolated pawn is the best idea. In this position, several plans were tried, for example based on the development of the bishop on d2, the queen on b3 and bringing a rook on the c-file, but White hasn't obtained any advantage in the opening. Moreover, White had problems when he permitted Black to make an isolated pawn, for instance: 9.b3 e5! 10.Nb5 Bb8 11.dxe5 Nxe5 12.Bb2? Nxf3+ 13.gxf3 Bh3 14.Re1 Ne4!! 15.f4 Qh4 with strong attack for Black in the game Polugaevsky-Kaidanov, 1993

9...dxe4 10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.Bxe4

It has resulted a typical position with isolated pawn, in which the weakness of the pawn is compensated by the activity of the white pieces. It is interesting that this position can result from another opening, the Colle Opening: 1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.e3 e6 4.Bd3 c5 5.c3 Nbd7 6.Nbd2 Nbd7 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 cxd4 9.cxd4 dxe4 10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.Bxe4.

11...h6

The main variation is 11...Nf6 12.Bc2 b6 or 12...h6, as Capablanca played against Riumin, Moscow 1936.

12.Bc2

To form a battery Bc2+Qd3.

12...b6

Black develops the bishop in the h1-a8 diagonal to control the d5-square. As you have already seen in the games about the isolated pawn, the fight for the d5-square is very important in these positions.

13.Qd3 Nf6 14.Re1 Qc7

More logical seems to be 14...Bb7 15.Ne5 Rc8 16.Bf4 Bb4! 17.Re2 Qd5! and Black has successfully solved the opening problems in the game Smyslov-Romanishin, 1976

By the move in the game, Black wants to play 15...Ba6, because the bishop on c2 is attacked, but developing the queen on the open c-file is not a good idea because it will allow a white rook to occupy this file with tempo.

15.Bb3 Rd8 16.Bd2 Bb7 17.Rac1 Qb8 18.Bxh6!?

Heavy clouds are over Black's position. Getting advantage from the unaesthetic position of the queen on b8 and the rook on a8, White tries to start a quick attack over Black's position. The first step is to destroy the protection of the black king. It is hard to believe that White could have prepared more this attack because Black was threatening to play Bb7-d5, followed by Qb8-b7 and Ra8-c8, case in which his position would have been better.

QUIZ



Find the best move for Black

18...Ng4!!

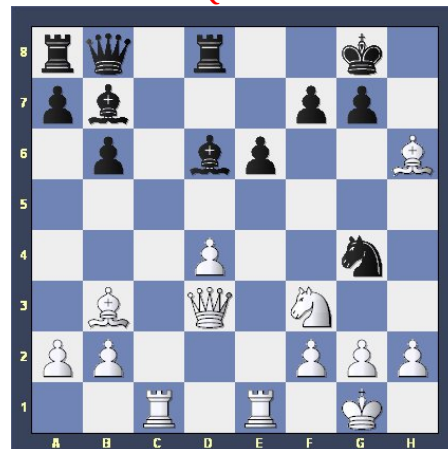
A sensational move by which Black ignores the White's attack and starts the counter-attack. Black threatens both 19...Bxh2 and 19...Nxb6. Accepting the sacrifice would have led to Black's collapse after a second sacrifice having the same target: destroying the protection of the black king: 18...gxh6 19.Rxe6!! The following variations will convince you that the black king has no escape:

19...Kg7 The best continuation. (19...fxe6 20.Qg6+ Kh8 21.Qxf6+ Kg8 (21...Kh7 22.Bc2+ Kg8 23.Qg6+ Kf8 24.Qxh6+ Ke8 25.Qxe6+ Kf8 26.Qf6+ Ke8 27.Bg6+ Kd7 28.Qf5+ Ke7 29.Qf7#) 22.Bxe6+ Kh7 23.Bf5+ Kg8 24.Qg6+ Kf8 25.Qxh6+ Ke8 26.Re1+-) 20.Rxf6!! The black king is pulled out of his shelter. 20...Kxf6 21.Qh7! Interdicts the retreat of the king on g7 and threatens 22.Qxf7# and 22.Qxh6+. 21...Rf8 22.Qxh6+ Ke7 23.Re1+ Kd8 (23...Kd7 24.Ne5+ Kc7 (24...Bxe5 25.Ba4+! b5 26.Bxb5+ Ke7 (26...Kc7 27.Rc1+ Kd8 28.Qxf8#) 27.Rxe5+-) 25.Rc1+ Kd8 26.Qf6+ Be7 27.Nxf7+ Rxf7 28.Qxf7+-) 24.Qf6+ Kc8 25.Rc1+ Bc7 26.d5 Rd8 27.Qf5+ Rd7 28.Ne5+-;

After 18...Bxf3 19.Qxf3 Bxh2+ 20.Kh1 gxh6 21.Rxe6!! White has a winning attack again, because of the exposed position of the black king: 21...fxe6 22.Qxf6 Qf4 (22...Re8 23.Bxe6+ Rxe6 24.Qxe6+ Kh7 25.Qf7+ Kh8 26.Qf6+ Kh7 27.Rc6 Qf4 28.Qg6+ Kh8 29.Qxh6+ Qxh6 30.Rxh6+ Kg7 31.Rxh2+-) 23.Bxe6+ Kh7 24.Bf5+ Kg8 25.Re1! Re8 26.Qg6+ Kf8 27.Be6! Rad8 28.Qg8+ Ke7 29.Bf7+!+-

Of course, all these variations are impossible to be calculated when having limited time, but it is evident that White's attack has big chances to succeed, after the black king's protection is destroyed. Moreover, White doesn't risk anything, having the possibility to force the draw by perpetual check in case the opponent can defend. This is why the decision to start a counter-attack seems to be the most logical.

QUIZ



Find the best move for White

19.Ng5!

White continues the offensive, ignoring the black attack on the h2-pawn.

Interesting is 19.Rxe6 Bxh2+ 20.Kf1 Bf4! 21.Bxf4 Qxf4 22.Ree1 Bxf3 23.gxf3 Rxd4 and the roles are exchanged, Black being the one who attacks. However, 24.Bxf7+!! launches another counter-attack: 24...Kh8 25.Rc4! Rxc4 26.Qxc4 Qxf3 27.Qd4! Nh2+ 28.Kg1 and the position was quieted down.

19...Bxh2+

The only move. Other moves lead to a quick collapse of the Black's position, for example:

19...Nxh6? 20.Qh7+ Kf8 21.Qh8+ Ng8 22.Bxe6!+-;

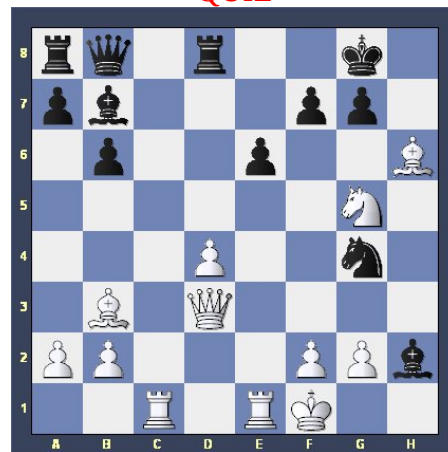
19...Kf8? 20.Bxg7+! Kxg7 21.Qh7+ Kf6 22.Qxf7+! Pulling out the king is decisive: 22...Kxg5 23.Qg7+ Kh5 24.Qh7+ Nh6 (24...Kg5 25.h4+ Kf4 26.g3+ Kf3 27.Bd1#) 25.Bd1+ Kg5 26.Qg7+ Kf5 (26...Kf4 27.Qxh6+ Kf5 28.g4#) 27.Bc2+ Be4 28.Bxe4+ Kf4 29.g3#;

19...g6 20.Bxe6!+-

20.Kf1

White seems to have got out of the wood, being able to continue his attack. Black's next move proves that the things are not like that.

QUIZ



How should Black continue?

20...Ba6!!

A new sensational counter attack. Black sacrifices a bishop to gain a tempo necessary to bring the queen on the kingside! A passive defense wouldn't have save Black:

20...Nxb6? 21.Qh7+ Kf8 22.Bxe6!! Qf4 (22...Ba6+ 23.Bc4+-) 23.Qh8+ Ng8 (23...Ke7 24.Qxg7!+-) 24.Nh7+ Ke7 25.Bd5+ Kd6 26.Bxb7 Rab8 27.Rc6+! (wins also 27.Bf3 but the move 27.Rc6+ is stronger) 27...Kd7 28.Nf8+!! Rxf8 29.Qh3+! f5 30.Qb3!! with decisive attack;
20...Kf8? 21.Bxg7+! (Possible is also 21.Nxf7 Nxb6 22.Nxd8 Qxd8 23.Bxe6±) 21...Kxg7 22.Qh7+ Kf6 23.Qxf7+ Kxg5 24.Qg7+ Kf4 (24...Kh5 25.Rc3!! Ba6+ 26.Re2 Bxe2+ 27.Kxe2+-; 24...Kh4 25.Rc3!!+-) 25.g3+! Bxg3 26.fxg3+ Kxg3 27.Rc3+ Kf4 28.Bxe6 with decisive attack;
20...Nf6? 21.Rxe6!! fxe6 22.Bxe6+ Kf8 23.Qg6 Ba6+ 24.Ke1+-

21.Qxa6 Qf4!

The saving move! Due to the mate threat on f2, White's attack is stopped. It is incredible how many things have happened in only 4 moves!

22.Qe2 Nxb6 23.Nh3

23.Nf3 Nf5 with the idea Nf5-h4

23...Qh4 24.Qe4

The position has calmed down, and after the queen exchange, the resulting endgame is equal, so the partners have agreed the draw. A game with a maximal intensity, in spite of the reduced number of moves.

½ - ½

CONCLUSIONS:

The counter attack weapon can often save you from situation apparently with no escape. In the case in which the opponent's attack is going to be decisive, do your best to obtain counter play, turning in this way the game to a favorable direction for you.

d- and e- Pawn Phalanx

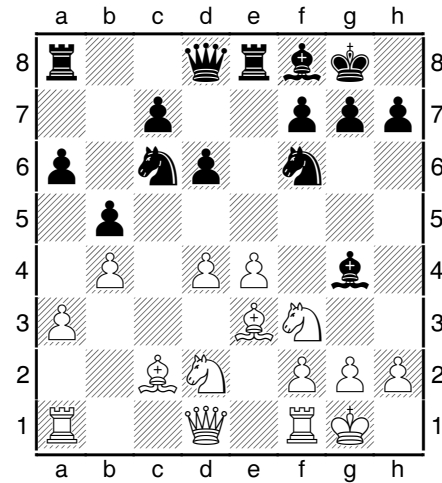
The dynamic force of the d- and e- pawn phalanx

will be illustrated by a game from the legacy of the great Capablanca.

After the first 14 moves in his game against Chajes in 1913, the position from the right was reached.

Capablanca has the white central pawn phalanx: d- and e- pawns against the black d-pawn. It is very important that the phalanx is:

- a) mobile – White can advance d4-d5 or can plan to advance e4-e5 - and
- b) sustained by the pieces – White's pieces are centralized, ready to support the pawns, and ready to take more centralized positions after the pawns will advance.



15.Rc1! By a “simple” move, Capablanca centralizes one more piece using the half-open file adjacent to the phalanx. Now, the c6-knight is in danger so Black retreats it:

15...Ne7

The d- and e- pawn phalanx is also known as the “perfect centre”. The 2 central pawns control 4 squares hampering the opponent pieces to take active positions. Usually, the fight AGAINST this kind of centre consists in 2 main ideas/plans:

- a) by semi-central pawn thrusts, the opponent tries to exchange one of the pawns getting the control of 2 squares in the centre;
- b) the blockade followed by pressure against one of the pawns – in our example, Black should have kept a strong control over the e5-square (blocking the e4-pawn) and, then, attack this pawn on the e-file.

None of these plans could be arranged by Black in this game.

On the other hand, white pieces are already in their best positions, so White starts the attack in the centre. At the proper moment, the pawn-phalanx advances driving away the opponent pieces and creating more space in the centre for the own pieces:

16.e5! dxe5 17.dxe5

An advanced pawn was created which can be sustained by the f-pawn. The d- and e-pawn phalanx was transformed into an e- and f- phalanx.

The resulting position is clearly in White's favor mainly because of the difference of quality between the 2 armies. White has a strong control over the centre and his pieces reached maximum activity.

17...Bxf3 18.Qxf3!

White avoids the queens' exchange because of his space advantage and brings the queen in attack.

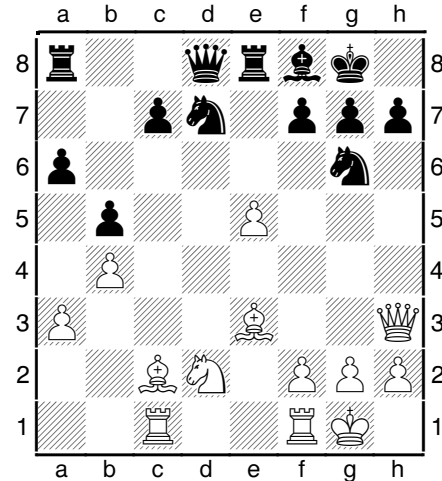
18...Nd7 19.Qh3 Ng6 (diagram)

20.f4

White's pawn phalanx advances without restriction.

Capablanca shows no mercy and wins convincingly:

20...Nb6 21.Nf3 Nc4 22.Ng5 h6 23.Nxf7! Kxf7
24.Qf5+ Kg8 25.Qxg6 Nxe3 26.Qh7+ Kf7 27.Bb3+
Nc4 28.Rfd1 Qb8 29.Rxc4 bxc4 30.Bxc4+ Ke7
31.Qf5 Qb6+ 32.Kf1 1-0



Position after 19...Ng6

This is an excellent example of a harmonious collaboration between pieces and a pawn phalanx, collaboration that guarantees the success.

The typical advances of the pawns

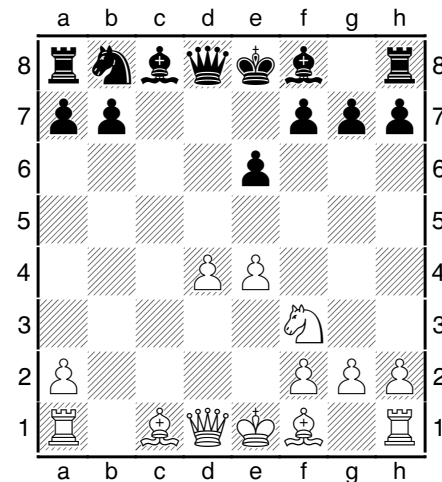
This position was reached after the first 8 moves in the game Keres – Fine, 1937.

White has the pawn phalanx formed by the d- and e-pawns which, in our case, is equivalent with the “mobile pawn centre”.

However, by his opening moves, Black has even helped to creation of this pawn structure. Why? Black's reason is his a- and b- pawn majority (a micro pawn phalanx) on the queenside which is a small strategic advantage but only during endgames. So, Black will try to do big simplifications and enter an endgame where the force of the central pawn phalanx is lower because of 2 reasons:

- during endgames, the attacks against the king are significantly reduced in danger;
- the space advantage in the centre is no important when there are only a few pieces on the board;
- a possible white free pawn on the d-file is less dangerous than a black free pawn on a marginal file (on a- or b- file).

The game is extremely instructive for the subject at hand, ideas, strategies and tactics related to the e- and d- pawn phalanx.



Black is to move

8...Bb4+ 9.Bd2 Bxd2+

Black could obtain even more simplification by: 9...Qa5 10.Rb1 Bxd2+ 11.Qxd2 Qxd2+ 12.Kxd2 0–0, but now White has a strong tactical resource: 13.Bb5! with a strong positional pressure: Black cannot manage to advance his a- and b- pawn phalanx.

10.Qxd2 0–0 11.Bc4

This move is more dynamic than 11.Bd3 or 11.Be2. White has 2 ideas behind his move:

- 1) **at the proper moment, the advance of the d-pawn (d4-d5) getting a free pawn on the d-file;**
- 2) **the concentration of forces in view of starting an attack against the black king by e4-e5.**

These 2 plans have both a good strategical base, so White should choose those moves which leave open both possibilities.

11...Nd7

The black knight is heading to the kingside with the objective to defend the king against a future White's attack.

12.0–0 b6 13.Rad1

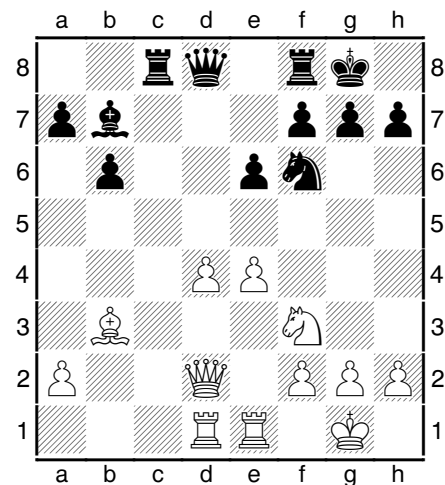
White places his rooks behind the pawn phalanx, being ready for both d4-d5 and e4-e5.

13...Bb7 14.Rfe1 Rc8 15.Bb3 Nf6 (diagram)

The f6-knight is in danger in view of e4-e5, but Black prefers an active defense instead of the maneuver Rf8-somewhere, Nd7-f8.

If White advances e4-e5 too early, the advantage of the “perfect centre” will disappear as Black gets a better control over the centre with a knight ideally placed on d5. So, White has to prepare his attack with e4-e5 or the other plan with d4-d5 very carefully.

For example, now: 16.d5 exd5 17.exd5 Re8 18.Rxe8 Nxe8 gives White nothing – Black will block the free d5-pawn by Nd6.



Position after 15...Nf6

In contrast with the previous example (Capablanca – Chages), here the fight is balanced. Black's active defense and good piece placement counteracts the white pawn phalanx.

16.Qf4 Qc7 17.Qh4

White avoids the queens exchange, favorable only to Black.

17...Rfd8 18.Re3?

This move is much too optimistic. White's attack can be easily stopped by the simple move h7-h6 at the proper moment. However, Black didn't correctly defend and finally lost the game.

As Keres indicated after the game, the move 18.e5 was better. Black had to play 18...Nd5 (18...Bxf3 is wrong in view of 19.exf6 Bxd1 20.Qg5), with the continuation: 19.Ng5 h6 20.Ne4 Nc3 21.Nf6+ Kh8 22.Rd3 with unpredictable complications.

18...b5!

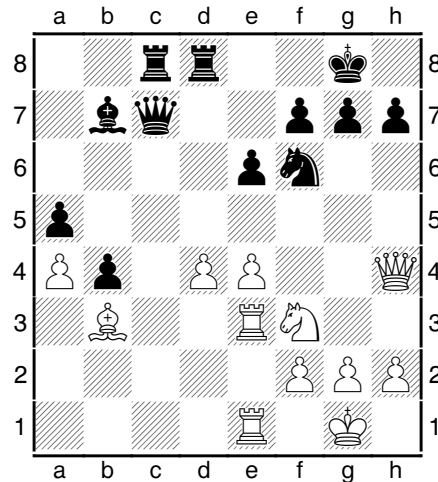
Black has time and starts his active operations on the queenside. Besides, putting the queenside pawns into motion, Black clears the b6-square for the queen.

For example: if 19.Ne5 Qb6! with good game for Black.

19.Rde1 a5?

Here, Black had to play a preventive move: 19...h6! after which White's attack becomes impossible. For example:

a) 20.g4 Qf4!; b) 20.d5 exd5 21.e5 Ne4! or c) 20.e5 Nd5 21.Re4 Qe7



Position after 20...b4

20.a4 b4?! [Black had to play 20...bxa4 21.Bxa4 h6]

Black was very confident in his position, always calculating the consequences of both White's typical pawn advances: 1.d4-d5 and 2.e4-e5.

Unfortunately for Black, White has one more possibility:

3) the tactical strike d4-d5 immediately followed by e4-e5

White prepared all his pieces for an attack against the king and now he uses a pawn sacrifice, typical in this kind of structure of the d- and e- pawn phalanx:

- the d4-pawn advances forcing Black to "put" his pawn on d5, then
- the e4-pawn advances attacking the f6-knight which cannot go on d5 which is occupied by the black pawn.

21.d5!! exd5 22.e5!

It is not all lost for Black however. But in a practical game, an attack like here has 90% chances to succeed. Of course, at home, a deep analysis can reveal many ways to defend and many other ways for attack. *(It would be very valuable for you to take this position and analysis it on the chess board for 30-60 minutes)*

22...Nd7 (22...Ne4 23.e6! fxe6 24.Rxe4 dxe4 25.Ng5 Qc3 26.Bxe6+ Kf8 27.Rf1!)

23.Ng5 Nf8?

As expected in a practical game, Black collapses and makes a grave mistake.

He had to play: 23...h6 with huge complications after: 24.e6 hxg5 25.exf7+ Kxf7 26.Re7+ Kg6!

24.Nxh7 Nxh7 [24...Ng6 25.Qh5 Nf4 26.Qf5]

25.Rh3 Qc1 26.Qxh7+ Kf8 27.Rhe3 d4 28.Qh8+ Ke7 29.Qxg7 Rf8 30.Qf6+ Ke8 31.e6 [31.e6 dxe3 32.exf7+ Kd7 33.Be6+ Kd6 34.Bxc8+] **1-0**

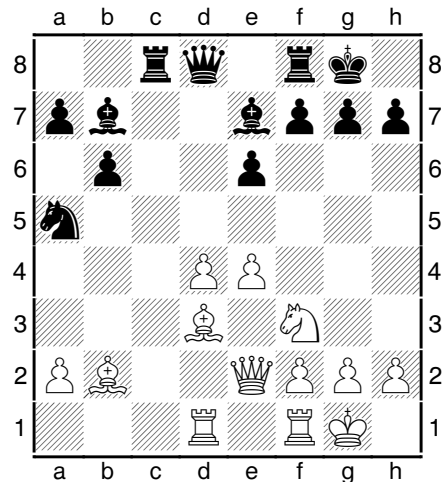
The position from the right is from the game Keres – Geller, 1962.

Here, Black adopted a plan with the development of the b8-knight on c6 (then on a5). Also, the dark-square bishops are still on the board.

15...Bb4?!

Black wants to exchange pieces so he plans Bb4-c3. Even if a top-notch chess player, Geller, forgets for a moment about the simplest threat of White's phalanx: the opening of the files after the pawns advance.

Black had to keep his bishop on the kingside and neutralizes the action of the b2-bishop by 15...Bf6



Black is to move

16.d5!

All White pieces are ready for attack, so White opens the centre and the lines toward the black king.

The pawn is indirectly defended (see the next variations) and therefore it will become a strong free pawn, well sustained by the bishop-pair and heavy pieces.

16...exd5

Black has to take the pawn. For example: after 16...Qe7 17.Nd4 is very strong or 16...Bc3 17.Ba3 Re8 18.dxe6 Rxe6 19.Bc4

17.exd5 Qe7

Better than a) 17...Re8 18.Ne5 threatening Bxh7+; b) 17...Bxd5? 18.Qe5 f6 19.Qh5 h6 20.Qf5 or c) 17...Bc3 18.Bf5!

18.Ne5! and White's attack is very strong. The game went:

18...f6 [18...Bd6 19.Qh5 g6 20.Ng4] 19.Qh5 g6 20.Nxg6 hxg6 21.Bxg6 Qg7 [21...Ba6 22.Bf5] 22.Rd3 Bd6 23.f4! Qh8 24.Qg4 Bc5+ 25.Kh1 Rc7 26.Bh7+ Kf7 27.Qe6+ Kg7 28.Rg3+ Kxh7 29.Qh3#

In this example as in the first one, the d- and e- pawn phalanx was advanced to create space and to open the lines for the pieces. In the first example White pushed the e-pawn, in the third example White pushed the d-pawn.

We are not going to give an example when the advance of the pawn is wrong or made too early. However, it is very important not to forget:

- advancing one of the pawns can create some strong squares for the opponent;
- advancing the pawns will open the center and will sharpen the battle.

So, the moment of advancing one of the pawns from the "perfect center" must be well prepared and calculated. In general, the pieces must be all centralized or take part to the fight will come.

Minority attack

This subtitle may seem strange in a lesson about pawn phalanxes, but it is a very interesting idea and offers no smaller chance than the typical pawn advances in the centre.

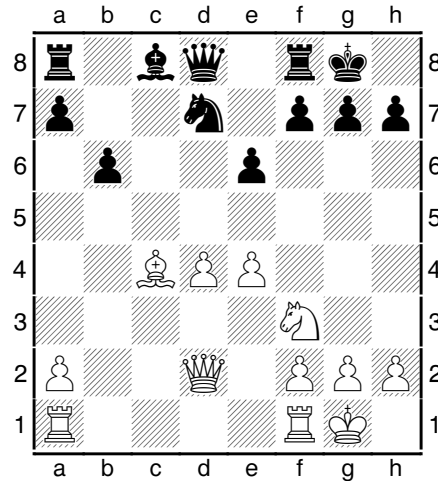
In this position from the game Petrosian – Tal, 1972, White adopts the minority attack against the black pawn majority on the queenside:

13.a4!?

There are 2 reasons behind White's move:

1. White gets rid of his weak a-pawn
2. By playing a4-a5xb6, the black b6-pawn will remain undefended (weak) and backward.

In conditions that White will have more space on the queenside, this plan work very good.



White is to move

The game went:

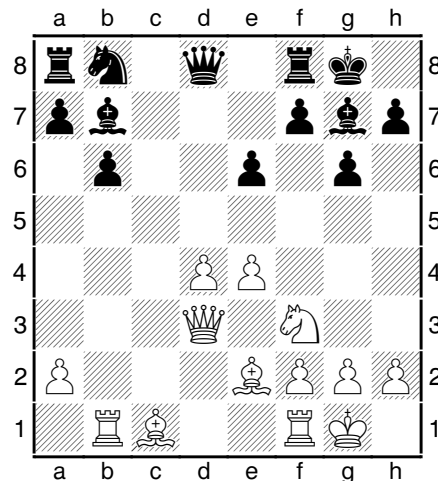
13...Bb7 14.Rfe1 Rc8 15.Bd3 Nb8 [15...a6 16.Qe2] 16.a5 Nc6 17.axb6 Nxd4 [17...axb6 18.Qb2; 17...Qxb6 18.Reb1] 18.Nxd4 Qxd4 19.bxa7 Rfd8 20.Ra3 Ba8 21.h3 h6 22.Rc1 Qb6 23.Rxc8 Rxc8 24.Ra2 Rc7 25.Qe3 Qb3 26.Ra1 Rd7 27.Bf1 Qb2 28.Qa3 Qb6 29.Qa5 Qb2 30.Qa3 Qb6 31.Qa6 Qc5 32.Qb5 Qd4 33.Qa4 Qd6 34.Rb1 Rd8 35.Qa5 Kh7 36.e5 Qd4 37.Rb8 Rd5 38.Qa3 1-0

Active operation on both sides and the centre

At the “shield” of the perfect centre, White knows that he can attack on flanks. When it is possible, the best strategy with such a pawn phalanx is the play on the entire board. Also, this way, the risk of facing a strong counterplay is reduced.

This position is from the game Beliavsky – Popovic, 1982. White has the same d- and e- pawn phalanx as in the previous examples with the difference that Black's dark-square bishop is fianchettoed on g7.

Here, White's main plan is to attack the opponent king at the “shield” offered by the pawn phalanx in the centre. In the same time, White plays some very neat moves on the queenside which will create weaknesses and problems in development of black pieces. At the proper moment, White will open the game in the centre:



White is to move

13.Rd1 Nc6 14.Bg5 Qd6 15.Qe3 Rfe8 16.Bb5!

White put pressure on both flanks and make Black's task to find a correct plan extremely hard. Beliavsky threatens now to play 17.d5! For example: 17..exd5 18.exd5 Rxe3 19.dxc6 Qf8 20.cxb7 Rb8 21.Bxe3

16...a6 That's a normal reply after Bb5 and, now, the b6-pawn is weakened.

17.Bf4 Qd8 18.Bf1 Na5

After 18...b5 19.a4 b4 White can bring his light-square bishop back into play: 20.Bc4

19.Ne5 Rc8 20.h4!

White start an attack on the kingside. He threatens to play h4-h5, forcing Black to make another weakness in his camp, now on the other side:

20...h5 21.Qf3 Rf8 22.a4 Kh7 23.d5!

And the final blow, now in the centre. Both Black's sides are weakened and white pieces will easily find entrances. The game continued very nicely:

23...exd5 24.exd5 Qe8 25.Re1 Qxa4 26.Rxb6 Qd4 27.Nd7 Rfd8 28.Be5 Bxd5
[28...Qxd5 29.Nf6+ Bxf6 30.Qxf6; 28...Bxe5 29.Qxf7+ Bg7 30.Qxg6+ Kh8 31.Nf6]
29.Qf6!! Qxe5 [29...Bxf6 30.Nxf6+ Kh6 31.Bxd4] 30.Rxe5 Rxd7 31.Rxd5 1-0

Will continue with the lesson" e- and f- pawn phalanx"

f- and e- Pawn Phalanx

Such a pawn phalanx can result from many modern openings or may be the result of transformation of the d- and e- pawn phalanx (as we saw in the game Capablanca – Chajes of the previous lesson).

The destroying force of the e- and f- pawn phalanx is remarkable, especially when the e-pawn is on a half-open file.

After the first 8 moves of the game Chigorin – Zukertort, 1883, the position from the right resulted.

After **8...f6!** Black defends his e-pawn and preserves the pawn phalanx formed by the e- and f- pawns.

9.cxb7 Bxb7 10.Be3 0–0 11.Nbd2 (2nd diagram)

The development is almost ready (only the major pieces are undeveloped) and we can state that Black has a serious advantage only because the presence of his phalanx on the kingside.

In exchange, White has a pawn majority on the queenside, so one might ask which the difference is.

First of all, both majorities are mobile (Black's e+f against f and White's a+b+c against a+c) – both players can put their pawns in motion.

The difference between the 2 phalanxes is:

1. the number of moves that the players need to play in order to reach their goal;
2. the importance of this goal.

We can easily observe that Black's goal is to destroy White's king defense while White's goal is very unclear. Moreover, Black's e- and f- phalanx will win extra tempi when advancing by attacking the white pieces.

So, in total, Black needs only 2 pawn moves (f6-f5 and e5-e4) as f5-f4 already gains a tempo. So, Black's plan is very clear: to advance his pawns.

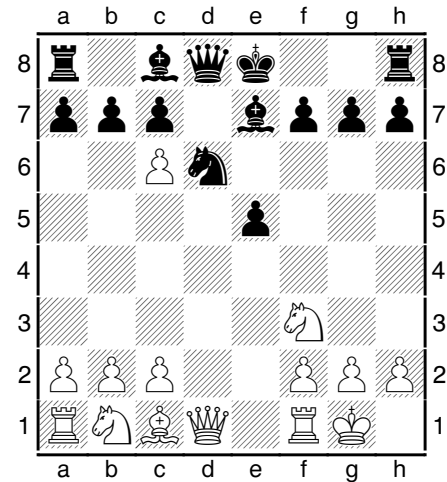
11...Nf7!

The only move which defends the e5-pawn preparing f6-f5.

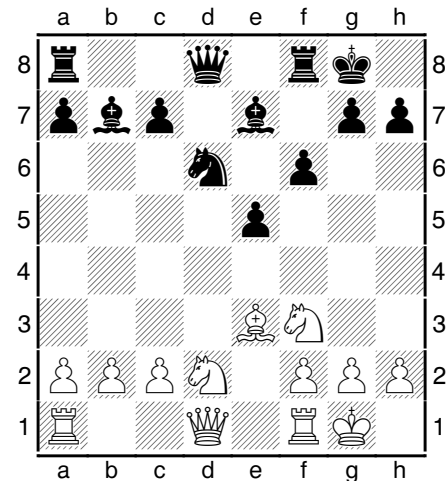
12.Qe2 f5 13.Nb3

As a result of advancing the pawn phalanx, Black gains space on the kingside.

White needs to assure an escaping square for his e3-bishop after Black's next f5-f4.



Black is to move



Black is to move.
(position after 11.Nbd2)

13...f4 14.Bc5 e4 15.Nfd4

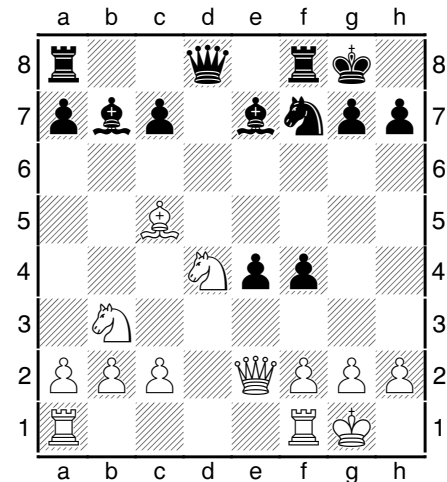
The e- and f- pawn phalanx reached a very advanced position being sustained only by the b7-bishop and the “poor” knight from f7.

As a result of advancing the pawns so quickly, Black looks to be behind in development while the White pieces got some free squares in and around the centre (c4, c5, d4, e6, f5).

Here, we need to make an important observation:

“chased away” pieces rarely get really good/efficient positions!

At a closer examination, we will see that, in fact, the white pieces do not cooperate and cannot do any harm to Black.



Black is to move
(position after 15.Nfd4)

Black is even continuing his pawn-avalanche:

15...f3!

This is one of the most important goals of the e- and f- pawn phalanx: to destroy the opponent king's protection by attacking the very sensible g2-square. Moreover, the black pawns chased away the white pieces from all the defensive positions and even split the board in 2 (it is very hard for White to transfer his pieces from the queenside to the kingside).

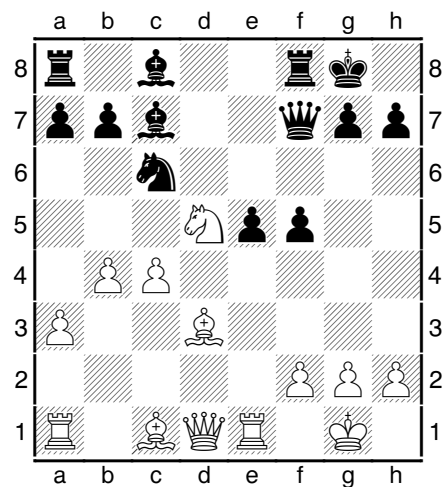
The rest of the game is still interesting:

16.Qb5 [It doesn't work 16.gxf3 because of 16...Bxc5 17.Ne6 exf3 18.Qc4 Qf6 and Black wins material because of the mate-threat on g2] **16...Qc8! 17.Rfd1** [17.Bxe7 Qg4 18.g3 Qh3] **17...Ba6 18.Qa4 Ng5!** [18...Qg4? 19.Nxf3] **19.Nxf3** [19.Bxe7 Nh3+ 20.Kh1 fxg2+ 21.Kxg2 Qg4+ 22.Kh1 Nxf2#] **19...exf3 20.Rd7 fxg2 21.Rxe7 Nh3+ 22.Kxg2 Nf4+ 23.Kf3 Qh3+ 24.Ke4 Bb7+ 25.Kd4 Ne6+ 26.Kc4 Rf4+ 27.Nd4 Nxc5 28.Kxc5 Qh5+ 29.Kc4 Rxd4+ 0-1**

In this position from the game Yates - Alekhine, 1921, White seems to be better than in the previous example. His queenside pawn-phalanx is already on the 4th rank and he has a centralized knight on d5.

However, after a closer examination, we will see that here, like in the previous example, Black's e- and f- pawn phalanx is much stronger than what White has on the other side. Why:

After e5-e4 Black will get the e5-square for the knight. The black knight will be BEHIND the pawns and will cooperate with them. White's phalanx does not cooperate with the knight or with the other pieces. The position of the knight on d5 makes the c4-pawn immobile.



Black is to move

16...Be6

Black develops while also making the position of White's knight on d5 very uncomfortable.

17.Bb2

Instead of 17.Bb2, it is interesting to analyze what happens after 17.Nxc7 Qxc7 and 18.f3 with the idea to stop Black's phalanx.

First of all, the student is invited to check on his own the line 18...e4!? 19.fxe4 f4. It is a very interesting method to clear the f-pawn's way toward the white king.

However, even if the black pawns remains on the fifth rank, Black is clearly better in the centre and can undermine White's queenside pawns by 18...a5! The game might then continue with 19.b5 Nd4 20.Be3 Rad8 with advantage to Black.

17...e4!

First of all, Black avoids the trap: 17...Bxd5 18.cxd5 Qxd5 after which White continues with 19.Bxf5 Qxd1 20.Be6+ Kh8 21.Raxd1 with good play.

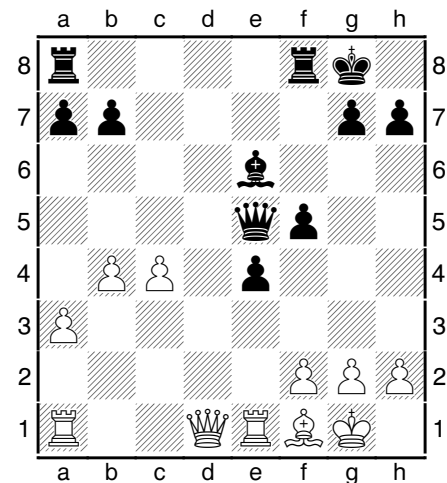
By this advance, Black clears the e5-square for his pieces, chases away the white bishop and prepares to take the control over the d-file and d3-square.

18.Nxc7 Qxc7 19.Bf1 Ne5! 20.Bxe5

(20.c5 Rad8 21.Qh5 Nd3 looks awful for White.)

20...Qxe5 (diagram)

After the simplifications, Black's pawn-phalanx is still dangerous for the white king, but the main advantage is the excellent position of the black queen in the centre. Black's advantage is given here by the dynamic of his pieces.



Position after 20...Qxe5

21.Qc2 Rad8 22.Rad1 Rxd1!

By this surprising move, Black cedes for the moment the control over the d-file.

However, Black's pawn phalanx must be watched so White cannot take on d1 with the rook, 23.Rxd1, because of 23...f4 with the very unpleasant threat e4-e3.

23.Qxd1 Qc3! 24.Qc1

White is forced to this move because after 24.Re3 Qf6 and 25...Rd8, Black gets the control over the d-file and together with the pawn phalanx, he has the control over the entire board. After this, Black will start a direct attack against the opponent king while White cannot initiate any counterplay.

After the exchange of the queen, we will be able to study the force of the e- and f- pawn phalanx during the endgame.

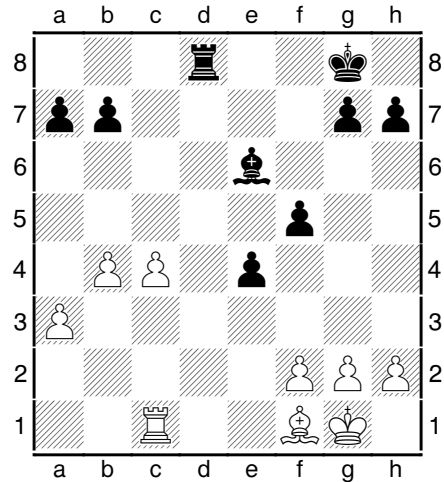
24...Qxc1 25.Rxc1 Rd8 (diagram)

In this endgame, White has the pawn majority on the queenside (a+b+c against a+b) against Black's semi-central majority e+f against f.

Theoretically speaking and without the concrete evaluation of this position, during an endgame, the queenside majority might be better than a central majority. This is because a future free pawn is more dangerous on marginal files than on the central files. Now, back to our position, Black has the advantage. By his last moves, Black used the threats of advancing the pawn phalanx and he actually planned this endgame where he has the control over the d-file.

The rest of the game will show us how the mobile central phalanx together with the control over the only open file assures the victory.

Besides the idea of creating a free pawn, Black's phalanx also plays an obstructing role against the white king. It is very important that while the black king can easily come up to e5, the white king can maximally achieve a poor position on e1.



Position after 25...Rd8

26.g3 Kf7 27.c5 Kf6 28.Bc4 Bc8!

Black wants to keep more pieces on the board because this way he preserves attacking chances against the white king. You already should know that the long-ray of action pieces are excellent in attack and weaker in defense. So, Black wants the bishops on the board and will threaten the restricted white king with 3 pieces: the rook, the bishop and a pawn.

29.a4 g5 30.b5 f4 31.Kf1 Rd2!

At the right moment, Black transfers his rook from the d-file to the second rank. The black rook will attack the white pawns from behind (the best position of a rook against opponent mobile/free pawns) and will cut the white king to the "back rank" (here, 1st rank).

32.Ke1 Rb2 33.gxf4 gxf4 34.Be2 Ke5 35.c6 bxc6 36.Rxc6 Be6

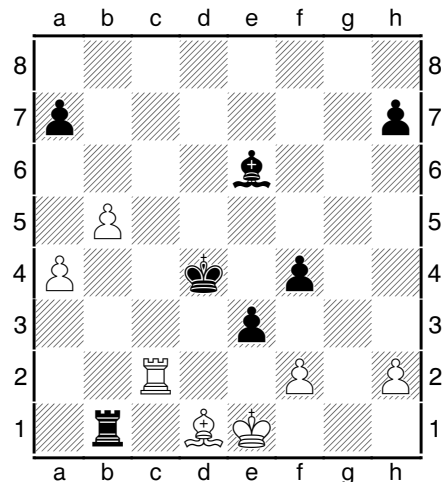
Black threatens 37...f3 38. Bd1 e3! 39. fxe3 (39. Bxf3 Rxf2 40. Be2 Rxh2) 39...f2+ 40. Kf1 Bh3#

37.Bd1 Rb1

The white king has no escape now. The game continued: **38.Rc5+ Kd4 39.Rc2 e3 (diagram)**

40.fxe3+ fxe3 41.Rc6 Bg4 42.Rd6+ Ke5 43.h3 Bh5

0-1



Position after 39...e3
Black is winning

In the game Botvinnik – Capablanca, 1938, after the first 14 moves, the position from the right was reached with Black to move.

Here, the great Capablanca made a grave strategical error. It is very interesting that the strongest chess engine gives his next move as the best:

14...c4?

The move seems very logical (as Capablanca's chess in overall):

- it blocks the white c3- and d4- pawns on the same color with the bishop;
- it sets a strong square for the knight on b3 (Black plans Na6-b8-c6-a5-b3) after which the a4-pawn is damned.

However, this move is wrong because:

- the black knight's maneuver is too long in a position which is far from being totally blocked;
- actually, the knight on b3 will be out of play and surely not on a strong square (the knight will not attack anything from there);
- Black doesn't anticipate next White's plan.

After Black's c5-c4, Botvinnik's plan is to put in motion his pawns in the centre by f2-f3 and e3-e4. After these moves, White will get 2 central mobile pawns (if Black does the exchange in the centre d5xe4, f3xe4) or a mobile e- and f- pawn phalanx.

15.Qc2 Nb8 16.Rae1 Nc6 17.Ng3 Na5 18.f3 Nb3 19.e4

White accomplished his plan and got a very dynamic position in the centre.

19...Qxa4

Black takes the pawn after which he long dreamed for but the price is too big.

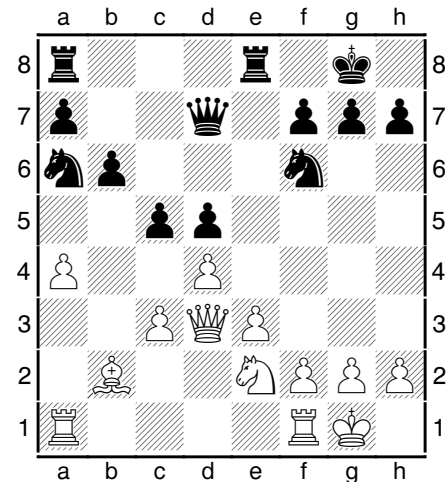
Of course, 19...d5xe4 20.f3xe4 is not acceptable for Black.

20.e5 Nd7 21.Qf2 g6 22.f4 (diagram) f5

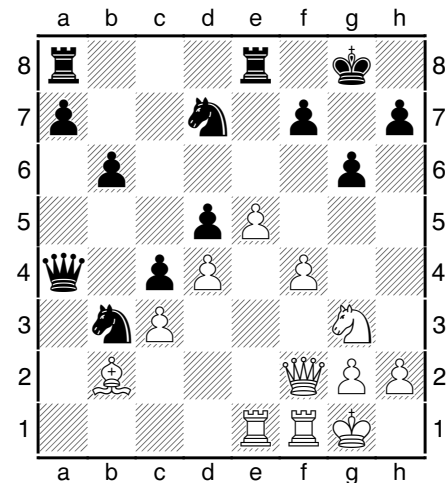
Black tries to stop White's pawns but everything is in vain now. The game continued:

23.exf6 Nxf6 24.f5 Rxe1 25.Rxe1 Re8 26.Re6 Rxe6
27.fxe6 Kg7 28.Qf4 Qe8 29.Qe5 Qe7 30.Ba3!! Qxa3
31.Nh5+ gxh5 32.Qg5+ Kf8 33.Qxf6+ Kg8 34.e7 Qc1+
35.Kf2 Qc2+ 36.Kg3 Qd3+ 37.Kh4 Qe4+ 38.Kxh5 Qe2+ 39.Kh4 Qe4+ 40.g4 Qe1+ 41.Kh5 1-0

This game is very well known, so we only stopped to discuss the theme at hand about the phalanx. Again: Black had to keep the tension in the centre (by not pushing the c-pawn). After c5-c4, White's e- and f- pawns were the only mobile structure in the game.



Black is to move



Position after 22.f4

c- and d- Pawn Phalanx

This sort of pawn phalanx is met in important systems of Caro-Kann Defense (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4) and French Defense (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4), but also in other openings, even Sicilian Defense.

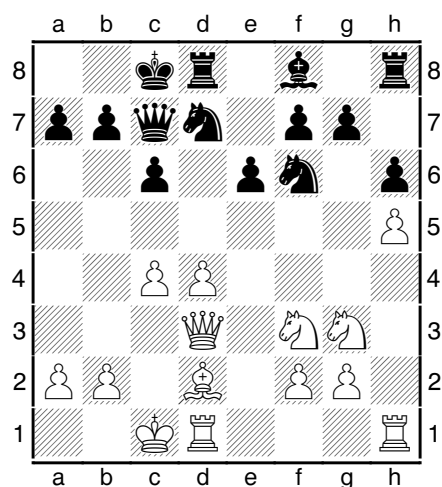
The c- and d- pawn phalanx often results in a queenside majority or in a free pawn on the d-file.

This position is from the game Spassky – Portisch, 1980 after the first 13 moves.

White has a c- and d- pawn phalanx, an essential strategic element in the future events of the game, for both sides.

White's plan is to make his central pawns mobile and to realize in good conditions the d4-d5 advance. Of course, this requires long preparations where the centralization of all the pieces plays the most important role.

White can also use the advance of the f-pawn (f2-f4-f5) with the idea to exchange Black's e6-pawn making possible the creation of a free pawn on the d-file.



White is to move

Black's main idea is to play c6-c5 at the proper moment (when d4-d5 as reply is not convenient for White). The result of the exchange of Black's c-pawn with the opponent d-pawn is the elimination of White's control over the e5-square, after which the Black's e- and f- phalanx becomes mobile.

As a short parenthesis, it is worth to explain now the idea of White's h2-h4-h5 in the Caro-Kann Defense. After the above mentioned plan for Black (c6-c5xd4), his kingside pawns (containing the e- and f- pawn phalanx) are restricted in some extent by the presence of White's h5-pawn which makes the black g7-pawn immobile.

14.Bc3 c5

This move is in fact almost forced not because some threat but because Black does not have enough space for his pieces to initiate some active plan. A great advantage of White's c- and d- phalanx is the difference of space that the 2 players have.

15.Kb1 cxd4 16.Nxd4 After the exchange, White got another type of phalanx on the queenside which is analyzed in a future lesson. The game continued:

16...a6 17.Nb3! (with the idea Ba5 to weaken Black's queenside structure) **Be7 18.Ba5 b6 19.Bc3 Nc5 20.Qf3 Qb7 21.Qxb7+ Kxb7 22.Nxc5+ bxc5 23.f3** restricting the

mobility of the black knight. The endgame is better for White due to his superior structure and better pieces.

This middlegame position is from the game Karpov – Spassky, 1980, after a Caro-Kann Defense. Recognizing the pawn phalanx is important in such positions in order to find the correct plan of play. Here, White has the c- and d- phalanx. Mobilizing and advancing a pawn phalanx will create (local) space advantage and the premises for getting the initiative.

So, White's plan is to mobilize his pawns:

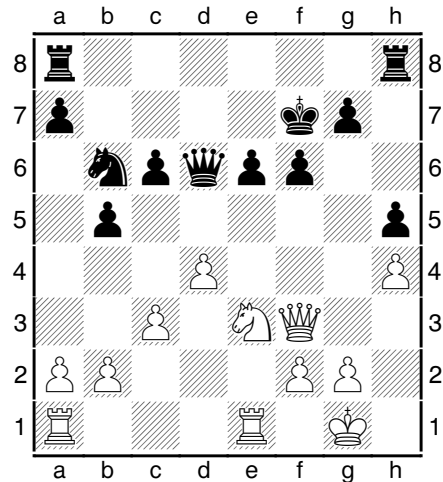
21.b3!

With the idea: Rad1, c3-c4 and after b5xc4, b3xc4, White will threaten to play c4-c5 and Ne3-c4-d6 or d4-d5.

21...Nd5 22.c4 Nxe3 23.fxe3 bxc4 24.bxc4 Rae8

25.Rad1 with the idea e3-e4 and d4-d5 and White has the first chance.

The rest of the game is less interesting for our subject.



White is to move

Of course, this is a typical position for the Sicilian Defense, Najdorf system. The game Karpov – Portisch, 1982, is a master piece for how White can develop active operations on the queenside in Sicilian-type positions.

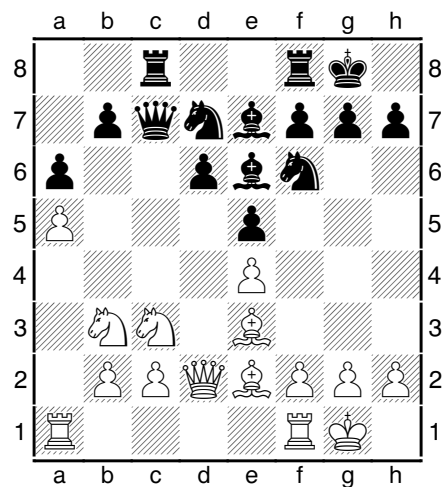
13.Rfc1!!

A very strong move by which White clearly announces his plans of playing on the queenside. The rook defends the c2-pawn freeing the c3-knight and also supports the c-pawn to advance on c4.

13...Qc6 14.Bf3

White has to defend the e4-pawn. Bf3 instead of Bd3 has 2 major pluses: it doesn't block the d-file and supports Nc3-d5.

14...Bc4 15.Ra4! The second white rook is thrown directly in the fight with the idea Ra4-b4 with pressure against the b7-pawn and b6-square.



White is to move

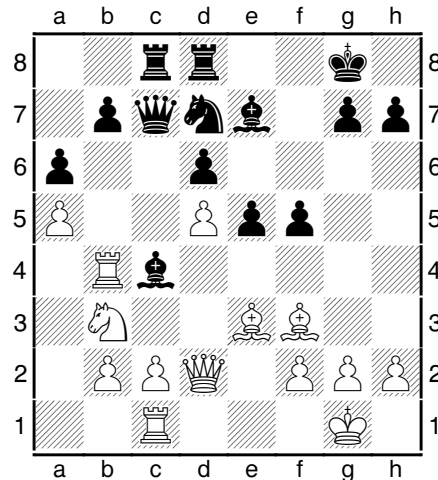
15...Rfd8 16.Rb4 Qc7 17.Nd5 This move is typical in this kind of pawn structure which forces Black to make the exchange on d5. After Nxd5 and e4xd5, the pawn structure is

deeply changed. Of course, all the previous moves and plans of both players had this modification in mind (as well as everyone who plays Najdorf).

17...Nxd5 18.exd5 f5 (diagram)

As a result of the previous exchange, 2 pawn phalanxes were resulted. White has the c- and d-pawn phalanx (here, with the c-pawn on the semi-central file) and Black has the e- and f-phalanx which was just put in motion.

Now, Black has more space on the kingside, while White can create local space advantage on the queenside after advancing the c- and b-pawns. The position remains complicated, but White keeps better chances because Black has weaknesses on the queenside: the b6-square – that can be used by white pieces – and the backward b7-pawn.



White is to move

19.Be2 removing the obstacle in front of the c-pawn

19...Bxb3

After 19...Bxe2 20.Qxe2 f4 21.Bb6 Nxb6 22.Rxb6, White can install a knight on e4, blocking the black phalanx and with pressure against the d6-pawn.

20.Rxb3 f4 21.Bb6 Nxb6 22.Rxb6 Bg5 23.Bg4

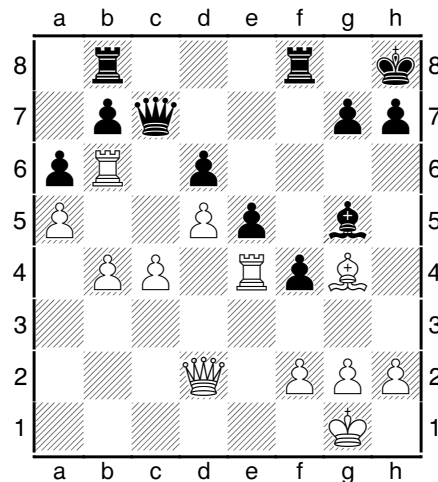
The presence of the opposite colored bishops in the middlegame favors the attacking side, here: White.

23...Rb8 24.Re1!

White's active plan is clear: to advance his pawn phalanx (b4, c4, and then c4-c5), but some preventive measures are very important too. The rook will come now on e4 blocking the black phalanx.

24...Qc5 25.Re4 Rf8 26.b4 Qc7 27.c4 Kh8

(diagram)



White is to move

28.c5! Crowning White's strategy: the d5-pawn will become a very dangerous (well supported and also defended) free pawn.

28...dxc5 29.d6 Qd8 30.bxc5

White has a large advantage. The game continued:

30...f3 31.Qd5 fxg2 32.Rxe5 Qf6 33.Rf5 Qa1+ 34.Kxg2 Bf6 35.d7 Qxa5 36.Rxb7 Rxb7 37.Qxb7 Qd8 38.c6 a5 39.c7 Qxd7 40.Rf4 1-0

Next lesson: the a-, b-, and c- phalanx

a-, b-, and c- Pawn Phalanx

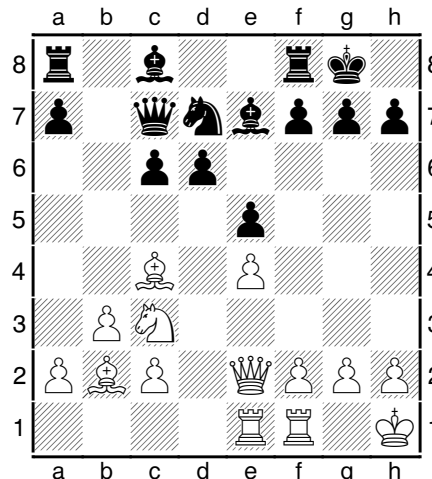
The most characteristic cases of the queenside phalanx are a-, b-, and c- pawns against a- and b- or b- and c- pawns.

In the beginning of formulating the classical theory of chess, a queenside pawn majority was considered an important advantage as in the endgame a free pawn could be created on a marginal file. As a result, a marginal pawn is much more dangerous than an opponent free pawn closer to the centre. Nowadays, a queenside pawn majority is no longer considered an advantage on its own. The concrete particularities of the positions are much more important. We have already talked about this in a previous lesson.

In this lesson about pawn phalanxes, we are interested to see how the a-, b-, and c- pawn phalanx can be used during the middlegame. We will study 2 positions where Karpov uses the pawn phalanx in this stage of game.

In this position from the game Karpov – Stein, 1971, White has the a-, b-, and c- pawn phalanx to which Black opposes the a- and c- pawns on the queenside and the immobile d- and e- phalanx in the centre.

In this middlegame, White has to formulate a plan of play. While he must always keep an eye on the centre to make Black's d6-d5 impossible, his plans are geared to the queenside, a very new idea for that time (1971). Karpov will clear the way for his queenside pawns by moving away the c3-knight and c4-bishop, after which c2-c4 and b3-b4 will follow. This way, White will gain space on the queenside and also will threaten to create a free pawn by b4-b5.



White is to move

14.Na4 Bb7 15.Bd3 Rfe8 16.c4 Bg5 17.Qc2 h6

Black's position is not bad at all, his pieces are not restricted and his pawn structure is quite solid. However, as you can see from his last moves, Black cannot initiate any active plan and he is damned to wait.

18.b4!

White's phalanx becomes a dynamic structure and b4-b5 or c4-c5 are possibilities that both White and Black have to consider at every ply. However, as Black has no counter-play, White has no reason to hurry with these pawn thrusts, so he plays quietly with the idea to improve the position of his pieces and even waiting for some Black's inaccuracy.

18...a6 19.Qb3 Rab8 20.a3 Bc8 21.Qc3

White threatens f2-f4 that Black has to parry:

21...Bf6 22.Qc2 a5?!

Black's text move and from now on, all Stein's moves are extremely precise if we consider what the best chess engine of our times "thinks". (As a short parenthesis, Kramnik was accused of cheating when he played the same moves that the chess engines indicate as best?!) The bad thing for Stein was he eventually lost the game and we can conclude that opening the position where the opponent is stronger cannot be good. Instead of 22...a5, Black had to consider any waiting move like 22...Nf8, 22...Nb6 or even 22...Rd8. Yet, how many chess players can wait doing nothing but only look at how the opponent freely regroups his forces.

23.Bc3 axb4 24.axb4 Nf8 25.b5 (diagram)

The result of advancing the pawn phalanx is a free pawn on the queenside, while Black's central phalanx is still immobile. White has all his forces ready to support the free pawn and also a considerable local space advantage.

25...cxb5

(22...Bd7 23.b5 followed by 24.c5 gives no chance for Black)

26.cxb5 Bd7 27.Rb1 Rec8 28.b6

Besides the advanced free pawn, White gains a large space for maneuver on the queenside.

An important problem for Black is that he lacks a good blockeur against the white free pawn. The queen will have to do this unpleasant job:

28...Qb7 29.Bb5 Ra8 30.Qb3 Be6

30... Bxb5 31.Qxb5 Rxa4 32.Qxa4 Rxc3 is not good because of 33.Qa7 Rc7 34.bxc7

31.Qb4 Be7 32.Rfc1 d5

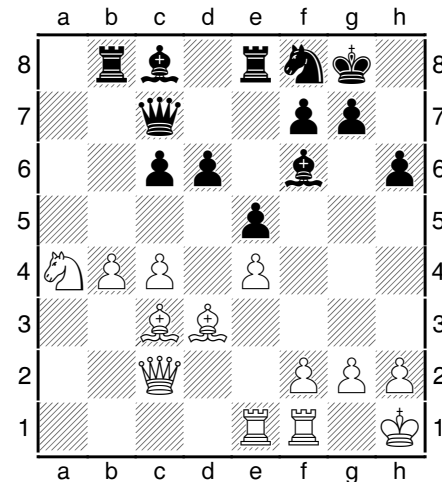
Finally, Black advances his central pawns, but as a consequence, the new weakness of the c5-square will give more freedom to white pieces.

33.Qb2 d4 34.Bb4 Bg5

The e4-pawn is intangible. For example: 34...Bxb4 35.Qxb4 Rxc1+ (35...Qxe4 36. Nc5 +-) 36.Rxc1 Qxe4 37.Bc6 Qf4 (37...Rc8 38.b7 Rxc6 39.Re1) 38.Rb1 and the free pawn cannot be stopped.

35.Rxc8 Rxc8 36.Qe2 Ra8 37.Bd6 Ng6 38.Qc2 Rc8 39.Bc7 Bd8 40.Nc5 Rxc7 41.Nxb7 Rxc2 42.Nxd8 Bc8 43.g3 Rxf2 44.Rc1 Rf6 45.Rxc8 Rxb6 46.Bc4 Kh7 47.Nxf7 1-0

This game will remain for a long time a masterpiece of a very wise plan in the middlegame and perfect transformation of the advantage.
The computer "could not believe his eyes".



White is to move

This position is from the game Karpov – Huebner, 1973, after 14 moves in Sicilian Defense.

As in the previous example, White has the a-, b-, and c- pawn phalanx against Black's a- and c-pawns. However, here, the white pawn structure looks rather immobile, given the presence of the black pawn on c5.

Now, Black to move developed his bishop to a logical position:

14....Bb7

The consequence of this move is that he blocks the b-file and White is now able to advance the queenside phalanx by a2-a3 and b2-b4. Instead, Black had to consider 14...Rb8 with pressure on the b-file and, of course, making almost impossible the advance of white b-pawn.

15.a3! Bc6 16.b4 cxb4 17.axb4 Qb7 (diagram)

A normal reaction, Black puts pressure against the white centre... and b4-pawn.

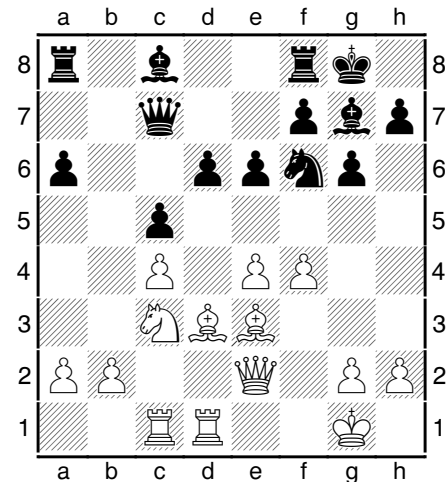
18.e5!

This move comes as a surprise as usually this pawn thrust in the centre has the objective of a future attack on the kingside. Here, White's idea is to gain more space in the centre in order to be able to transfer his pieces to support the queenside phalanx.

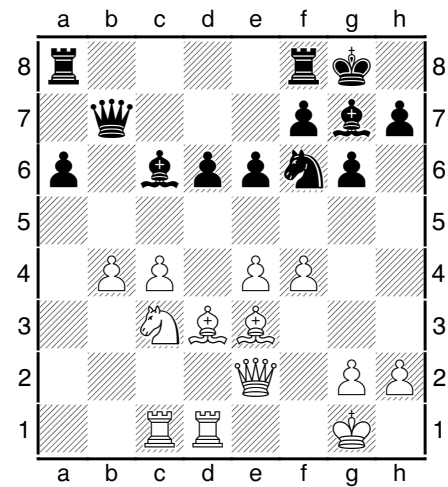
18...dxe5 19.fxe5 Nd7 20.b5 axb5 21.cxb5

The pawn phalanx was converted again in a free pawn on the queenside which gives the initiative to White. However, Black has more defending resources than in the previous example, especially due to the knight able to block the white pawn. Even if White had the first chance all the time, the game finally ended in a draw:

21...Bd5 22.Bd4 Qb8 23.Re1 Bb7 24.b6 Rd8 25.Bb5 Ra5 26.Qe3 Qa8 27.Qf2 Ba6 28.Rb1 Bxb5 29.Rxb5 Rxb5 30.Nxb5 Qa5 31.Nd6 Nxe5 32.Bxe5 Rxd6 33.Bxg7 [33.Bxd6 Bd4!] 33...Kxg7 34.Rb1 Rd8 35.Qb2+ Kg8 36.b7 Rb8 37.Qc2 Kg7 38.Qc8 Qa2 39.Qc3+ Kg8 40.Ra1 Qd5 41.Qc8+ ½–½

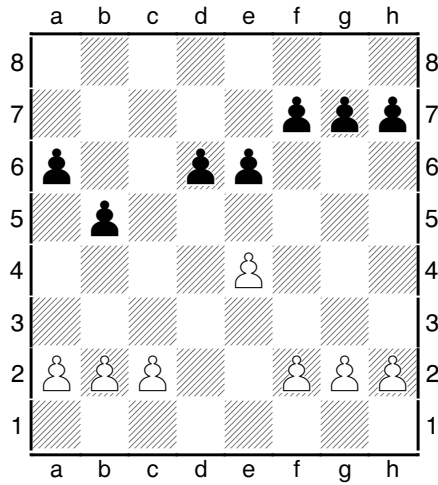


Black is to move

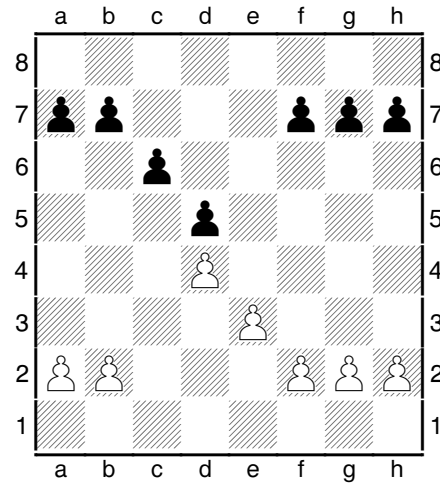


White is to move

In the end, it is important to mention again that the majority on the queenside is not necessary a mobile pawn phalanx, but it may be even a target for the opponent's attacks using the half-open file.



Sicilian position



Queen's Gambit position

In the first position, typical of Sicilian Defense, White has the majority on the queenside, but because of the c-file, Black is the one who attacks on that side using the c4-outpost. Usually, White has to keep his pawn structure untouched to minimize the creation of weaknesses.

In the second example, Black has the majority on the queenside, but White uses the minority attack (b2-b4-b5) in order to create a black backward pawn on c6.

Next lesson: creating weaknesses in the opponent's pawn phalanx

Weaknesses in the pawn phalanx

In the previous lessons we have studied the strength of different pawn phalanxes. Now, we will study the quality of these pawn phalanxes as they can be the subject of opponent's attack on the half-open file.

The weakness of the central e- pawn

In this position from the game Duras – Rubinstein, 1907, White has the e- and f- pawn phalanx which offers him the advantage of space.

The e-pawn is on the open e-file for Black and therefore White has to answer some questions:

- How many black pieces can attack the e4-pawn?

A: Re7, Re8, Nf6, and Bb7 (after b7-b6)

- How many white pieces can defend the e4-pawn?

A: Re1, Qd3, Bg2 (if Nf3 leaves), and Rae1 (after R1e3)

- Is e4-e5 possible? And how good is this advance? Calculation of variations is necessary to answer this question. In our position, after: 23.e5 dxe5

(Not 23... c4 24.Qf1 dxe5 25.Nxe5 and White has a solid position in the center)

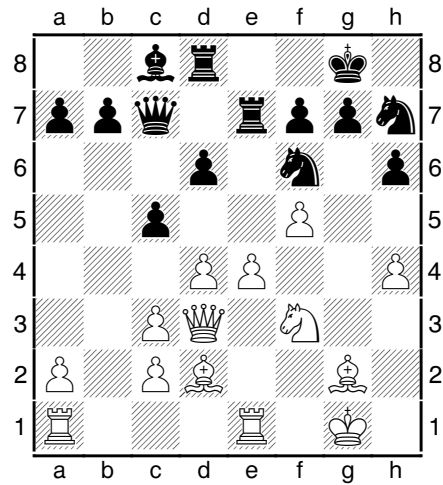
24.Nxe5 cxd4 25.cxd4 Qd6 26.Bc3 Nd5 the position remains complicated but Black's is preferable because his king is safer. It seems White didn't like this position and chose to defend his pawn on e4, instead of advancing it:

23.Nh2 Rde8 24.Re3 b6 25.Bf3 Bb7 The white phalanx is now immobile and the e4-pawn is strongly attacked by Black. White can defend the pawn only by 26.d5, but the resulted pawn structure is very bad for White. Black can install a knight on the e5-square by 26...Nd7 27.Bg2 Ne5 and after 28.Qf1 Nf6 29.Kh1 Qc8, the black pieces will come into play via the queenside and e4-square: Ba6, Nc4, Nf6-d7-e5, b6-b5-b4, Rb7 etc.

In the game, Black won the e4-pawn after **26.Rae1 26.c4 27.Qe2 Bxe4 28.Qg2 d5** and White resigned soon.

Important considerations:

As we saw in the previous lessons, the mobility of the pawn structure is very important. Against the e- and f- pawn phalanx, the e-file is usually open for the opponent who can use this element to create pressure against the e4-pawn with the major pieces. Because this phalanx is a central pawn structure, the importance of blockade, mobility and pressure against the e- pawn is of first importance.



White is to move

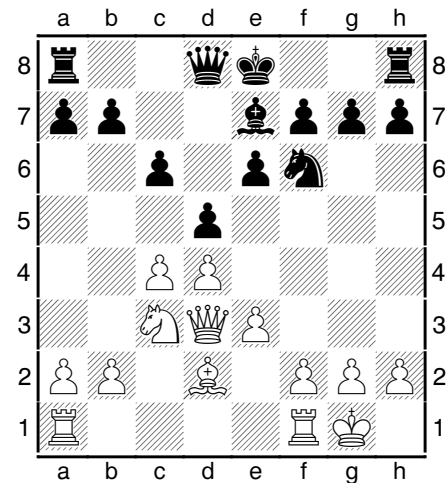
The creation of a pawn phalanx also implies some concessions as weakening the squares behind the advanced pawns. Therefore the opening of the game by e4-e5 must be well evaluated. A too early or too late advance of the central e4-pawn can lead to bad results as how the opponent is able to use the weakened squares behind the advanced pawns.

In our example, at 23rd move, White lost his last chance to advance the e4-pawn even if this would not have offered him very good prospects. However, after 23.Nh2, Black succeeded to block and to organize a strong offensive against the white e4-pawn.

The weakness of the central d-pawn

This position is from the game Kmochn – Alekhine, 1927, after the first 11 moves.

If we know some things about the Slav Defense, it is easier to evaluate the position. Here, Black succeeded to exchange his light-square bishop (the usual “bad” bishop) and a pair of knights. Black’s pawn structure is very solid and the “good” bishop does its job of protecting the dark-squares. We can conclude that the position is equal. More than that, after Black completes his development, he will be able to challenge White’s center by c6-c5 or e6-e5.



White is to move

12.e4

White’s reaction in this position looks very logical: he wants to gain some space in the centre and, in the same time, to give scope to his d2-bishop.

If White wants to prepare his e3-e4 by 12.f3, after 12...0-0 13.e4 dxc4 14.Qxc4 b5 15.Qd3 c5, Black gets a good counterplay in the center.

In this position, probably, best White’s choice would have been: 12.cxd5 cxd5 with the possible replies:

- a) 12...Nxd5 13.e4 Nb4 14.Qg3 Qxd4 15.Be3 Qf6 16.Rad1 is very dangerous for Black;
- b) 12...exd5 leads to a position where White’s minority attack on the queenside (the idea b4-b5xc6) is very strong while Black has no enough resources for his typical counter-attack on the kingside;
- c) 12...cxd5 (the best) 13.Rfc1 0-0 14.Rc2 with quiet game but more in the spirit of position.

12...dxe4 13.Nxe4

Now, White has the c- and d- pawn phalanx and more space in the centre. However, after the trade of 2 minor pieces, Black has enough space to maneuvering his pieces. In the resulted position, all black pieces are capable of attacking the white pawn on d4.

13...0-0 14.Bc3

White arranges his bishop in a safe position and protecting the d4-pawn. Little by little, all white pieces will get passive positions with the only scope to defend the d4-pawn. The result of this game clearly shows that White's strategy was not at all good. I would add that the idea of playing 12.e3-e4, an obvious optimistic move, has nothing in common with the future White's defensive play. Why to get space if you only want to defend?

Even, if the evaluation of a position cannot be changed by optimistic moves, White had to play more actively by 14.Bf4. A possible continuation could have been: 14...Nxe4 15.Qxe4 Bf6 16.Rfd1 Qb6 17.Rd2 Rfd8 18.Rad1 Rd7 19.h3 Rad8 20.Be5 Bxe5 21.Qxe5 Qa6 22.b3 b5 23.d5 cxd5 24.cxd5 Qd6 with unclear result.

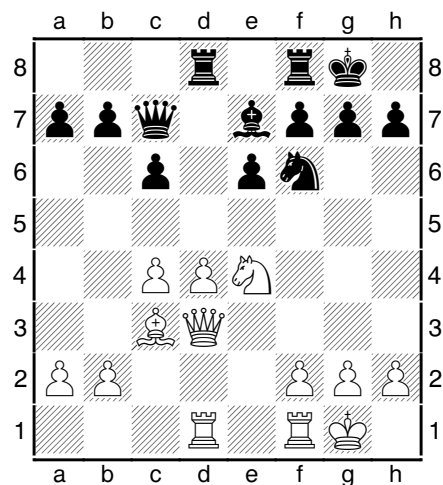
14...Qc7 15.Rad1 Rad8 (diagram)

Black starts to put pressure on the d-file. His plan is to attack the d4-pawn with all his forces: Rd7, Rfd8, Nxe4, Bf6, and Qf4. White will have to use all his pieces in defensive positions, and the difference of quality between the 2 camps' forces will decide somehow in the end... maybe a tactical strike.

16.Rd2?

White continues to go on a wrong direction. It was the last moment when the advance d4-d5 was possible. The idea of d4-d5 here was not to gain something, but to get rid of the weakness:

16.d5 cxd5 17.Nxf6+ gxf6 (17...Bxf6 18.Bxf6 gxf6 19.Qf3 Qxc4 20.Qxf6 Qe4 21.Rfe1 Qg6 22.Qd4 with attack) 18.Qf3 dxc4 19.Bxf6 Bxf6 20.Qxf6 with attack or perpetual check.



White is to move

16...Qf4 17.Nxf6+ Bxf6 18.Rfd1 Rd7 19.Qg3 Qf5 20.f4?

White creates other weaknesses in his position.

20.Qd3 would have been better, but the endgame after: 20...Qxd3 21.Rxd3 Rfd8 22.Kf1 b5! 23.cxb5 cxb5 is better for Black anyway.

20...Rfd8 21.Qe3

The concentration of forces around the d4-pawn reached the maximum level. The difference of pieces' quality of the 2 players is clear: White only defends, while Black can anytime move his pieces to other positions and for new targets. What to do when all the forces are on their best position? Remember from the previous lessons:

1. enter a technically won endgame OR
2. start an attack against the opponent king.

So, Black starts to look at the white king: **21...h5!**

At this moment, White did another strategical mistake:

22.b4?

The b-pawn won't be able to defend the c4-pawn by b2-b3 now and Black gets new squares by the next move. White should have played 22.a4.

22...b5! By this move, Black gets the control over the d5-square and a winning position.

The game continued:

23.Qf3 [23.c5 Rd5] 23...bxc4 24.Qxc6 Qxf4 25.Qxc4 e5 26.Qe2 exd4 27.Rd3 dxc3 28.Rxd7 Rxd7 29.Rxd7 Bd4+ 30.Kh1 Qc1+ 0-1

Isolated Pawn

- Introduction -

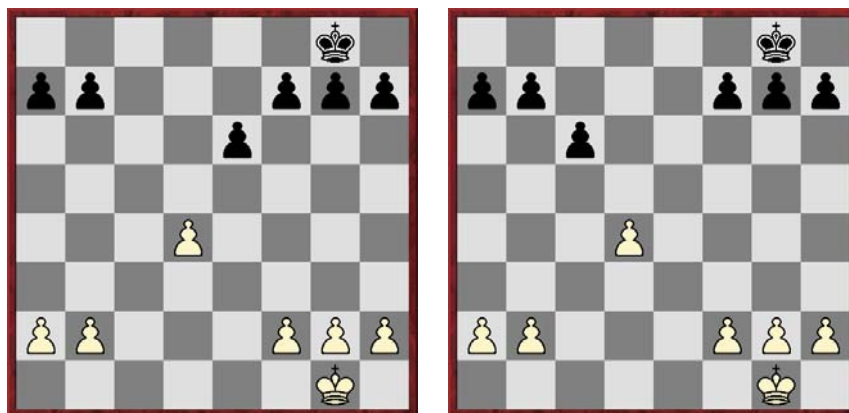
An isolated pawn is cut off from the other pawns, so it can only be protected by its pieces.

The isolated pawn structure can occur in many openings, e.g. for White:

- Alapin Variation (1.e4-c5, 2.c3-d5, 3.ed5-Qd5, 4.d4-Nf6, 5.Nf3-e6, 6.Be3-cd4, 7.cd4),
- French Defense, Exchange Variation (1.e4-e6, 2.d4-d5, 3.ed5-ed5, 4.c4-dc4, 5.Bc4),
- Caro-Kann Defense, Panov Attack (1.e4-c6, 2.d4-d5, 3.ed5-cd5, 4.c4-Nf6, 5.Nc3-e6, 6.Nf3-Nc6, 7.cd5-Nd5),
- Queen's Gambit Accepted (1.d4-d5, 2.c4-dc4, 3.Nf3-Nf6, 4.e3-e6, 5.Bc4-c5, 6.0-0-a6, 7.Bb3-cd4, 8.ed4)

and for Black:

- French Defense (1.e4-e6, 2.d4-d5, 3.Nd2-c5, 4.ed5-ed5, 5.Bb5-Nc6, 6.Ngf3-Bd6, 7.dc5),
- Slav Defense, Meran Variation (1.d4-d5, 2.c4-c6, 3.Nf3-Nf6, 4.Nc3-e6, 5.e3-Bd6, 6.Qc2-Nbd7, 7.b3-0-0, 8.Be2-e5, 9.cd5-cd5, 10.Nb5-Bb8, 11.de5),
- Queen's Gambit-Tarrasch Variation (1.d4-d5, 2.c4-e6, 3.Nc3-c5, 4.cd5-ed5, 5.Nf3-Nc6, 6.e3-Nf6, 7.Be2-Be7, 8.dc5).



The main principle that you should know in positions with an isolated pawn is: **when you have the isolated pawn, keep as many pieces on the board and when you fight against it, change as many pieces as you can.** This is quite easy to explain: with few pieces left on the board it must be protected so it becomes a major weakness. On the other hand, with a lot of pieces on the board, under its protection, you can launch a kingside attack or make a break in the center.

In the next lessons we will study in detail how to play with and against the isolated pawn, with lots of examples. For now, we will give some general considerations:

General Considerations

Let us assume that White has the isolated “d4” pawn (see the 2 diagrams above).

A. When you have the isolated pawn

1. The isolated pawn gives a better control of the centre (e5-, c5- squares). Because of this, White has more active squares where to develop his pieces and some space advantage.
2. White can make **the breakthrough d4-d5 (the major strategic threat)**, giving him the initiative.
3. Kingside attack:
 - 3.1. attack on f7-square (usually a knight sacrifice happens there);
 - 3.2. the transfer of the rook along the 3rd file to the kingside;
 - 3.3. sacrifices either with the bishop on h6, or with knight on e6;
 - 3.4. attack by the advance of the h-pawn (very rare);
 - 3.5. very good play along the e-file.
4. Queenside attack and play along the c-file.

B. When you play against the isolated pawn

1. The control over the d5-square that should be occupied specially by a knight.
2. The king is protected usually with g7-g6 (to stop the threats along the b1-h7 diagonal and as long as Black still has the dark-square bishop, there are no real threats on the weakened dark squares.).
3. The possibility to pass into the “isolated pawns structure” (pawns on c3 and d4 without pawns on the b- and e- files, if Black makes the exchange on c3).
4. Knowing which endgames offer better prospects of winning:
 - 4.1. King’s endgame- draw
 - 4.2. Opposite color bishops – draw
 - 4.3. Same color bishops:
 - 4.3.1. Bishop’s have the same color as the isolated pawn: usually draw, but very good prospects for win;
 - 4.3.2. Bishop’s have the opposite color as the isolated pawn: draw.
 - 4.4. Knight endgames – draw
 - 4.5. Knight vs. bishop:
 - 4.5.1. Knight vs. bishop with the same color as the isolated pawn: draw, but the one who has the isolated pawn must play very precisely.
 - 4.5.2. Knight vs. bishop of opposite color as the isolated pawn: draw.
 - 4.6. Bishop against knight - draw
 - 4.7. Queen endgames – draw
 - 4.8. Rook endgames – usually draw
 - 4.9. Two Rooks + Queen versus two Rooks + Queen – usually win

All these considerations about endgames start from the point that nobody has other strategic advantages (e.g. active king, control of open files, other weaknesses).

ISOLATED PAWN

How to play with isolated pawn

In this lesson we will discuss the ideas and plans for the player who has the isolated pawn. First of all, we need to say that the player with the isolated pawn has a better control over the centre and more active squares to develop his pieces. Therefore, his plans during the middlegame are and should be very active.

1. The breakthrough with d4-d5 (d5-d4 for Black)

When the isolated pawn has not been blocked yet by the opponent, the d4-d5 is the first and most important idea for White.

There are two basic ideas connected with this advance (besides the fact that you get rid of the isolated pawn).

1.1. Releasing the tension in the centre and, as a consequence of the better development, there are good prospects for a kingside attack.

In the game **De La Villa – Sion, 1995**, after the moves

1.e4-c5 2.c3-d5 3.ed5-Qd5 4.Be3-e6 5.d4-Nf6 6.Nf3-cd4 7.cd4-Nc6 8.Nc3-Qd6 White played **9.a3**.

Such moves like, a3 or h3, are not desirable in the opening because they are losing time. In positions with **isolated pawn, a3 (a6) are important moves** because they prevent the knight maneuver Nc6-b4-d5 that firmly takes the control over the d5-square. Beside that, the a2-a3 move clears the a2-square that allows the transfer of the bishop from one diagonal to another (a2-g8 and b1-h7).

9...-Be7 10.Bd3-00 11.00-Rd8 12.Re1-b6 13.Qe2-Bb7 14.Rad1-g6 15.Bb1-Rac8



16.Ba2! This position favors White due to a better placement of pieces (they are ready for action). With his last move, White is ready to open the centre.

16...-Re8? Better was 16...-Bf8, but after 17.d5-ed5 18.Nd5-Nd5 19.Bd5 White has the initiative anyway. **17.d5-ed5 18.Nd5-Nd5 19.Bd5** Now, Black is in serious trouble because of his misplaced queen and weak protection of the king.

19...-Qb8 20.Bh6! with the deadly threat of 21.Bf7 **20...-Nd4 21.Rd4-Bf8 22.Be3 1-0**

1.2. Sacrificing the d4 (d5) pawn to get the d4 (d5) square for the pieces.

This sacrifice is very strong when the opponent king is still in the centre.

In most of the cases, the d4 (d5) square will become an excellent base for the knight.



In the game **Spassky - Antonomov, 1949**, the breakthrough was made even though the d5-square was very well protected by Black (but of course, not blocked).

1.d5!-Nbd5 2.Bg5!-Be7 3.Bf6-gf6 forced **4.Nd5-Bd5 5.Nd5-ed5 6.Nd4** we can see that after sacrificing the pawn, Black's position is full of weaknesses and his king is stuck in the centre. **6...- Kf8** better was **6...-Qd7** but after **7.Qh5** followed by **Nf5** white has a big advantage.
7.Nf5-h5 8.Rd5-Qd5 9.Qe7-Kf8 10.Qf6 1-0

2. Attack on f7 (f2) square

This objective can be reached by the **advance of the f-pawn**, or more directly, **by sacrificing the Knight on that square**.

2.1. The advance of the f-pawn. This plan is rare because there is a simple reply against it, involving g6 (g3) move that stops it. So it works only when this answer is not possible.

Neverov – Maximenko, 1989: 1.d4-Nf6 2.c4-e6 3.Nc3-Bb4 4.e3-c5 5.Bd3-cd4 6.ed4-d5 7.Nf3-dc4 8.Bc4-Nbd7 9.00-Nb6 10.Bb3-Bd7 11.Bg5-Be7 12.Ne5-Bc6?! Black's last move increases the control over the d5-square, but in the same time, the control over the f5-square is lost so the advance of the f-pawn becomes very good.

13.f4! – 0-0 here **13...g6** is not good because there follows **14.f5-gf5 15.Rf5-ef5 16.Bf7-Kf8 17.Bh6#**

14.f5-ef5 15.Rf5 now the position favors White who has pressure on f7 and simply wants to finish his development by **Qd3** and **Raf1** with pressure against Black's kingside.

15....Nfd5? a book-like move that follows “when you have a cramped position, your aim is to change pieces to release the tension” (Dvoretsky). Here, this does not work. The only plan was to bring the knight to d6 via c8 to get some protection over f7, but even then White had better chances.

16.Be7-Qe7 17.Qd3-Rad8 18.Raf1 White has almost a winning position due to his strong pressure over the f7 pawn **18...f6 19.Rh5-g5 20.Ng4-Rd7 21.h4-gh4 22.Ne3-Rfd8 23 Rff5 1-0**

2.2. Sacrificing the Knight on f7 (f2). This is a strategic attempt. Usually after the knight sacrifice, White gets a rook and two pawns for two minor pieces, but the d-pawn becomes free and the rooks may enter in the enemy's camp.



Botvinnik - Batuyev, 1931. The position below was reached after Black's 17th move.

18.Nf7-Rf7

18...Kf7 19.Be6-Kg6 20.Qd3-Kh6 21.Bc8-Nc8 with clear advantage for White.

19.Qe6-Qf8 20.Ne4 White has a winning position because of his more active pieces and deadly pin on a2-g8 diagonal

20....Rc1 21.Rc1-Nfd5 22.Nd6-Ba8 23.Re1-g6 24.Nf7-Qf7 25.Qe7 1-0

3. Kingside attack

After opponent castles, a common plan is the kingside attack. A strong attack can be reached by transferring a rook to the kingside via the 3rd rank (rook-lift), transferring the queen to the kingside, and then by sacrificing the dark-square bishop.

The attack may also include the h-pawn advance. This works when the opposite side has moved the g- pawn, and h2-h4-h5 is meant to weaken the h7, g6, f7 (h2, g3, f2) pawn complex.

3.1. Transferring the Rook to the kingside.

The space advantage allows this transfer and normally is a deadly one. The rook adds more power to the attack and usually makes it unstoppable.



Benko - Filip, 1970. The position below was reached after Black's 12th move.

13.Rd3!-Bd7 14.Rg3-Kh8 15.Rh3-Be8 16.Nd5-ed5 17.Bd3

Now the position has changed and everything is in White's favor: he no longer has a weak pawn on d4, a splendid knight on e5, and very good prospects for the kingside attack.

17...g6 18.Bh6-Rg8 19.Re1-Bf8 20.Bg5

Now, white's attack is unstoppable and he won on the 28th move. Generally speaking, the transfer of the rook is possible when the isolated pawn is well protected.

3.2. Transferring the Queen to the kingside and the Bishop sacrifice on h6.

These two ideas are connected in general because the aim of the queen's transfer is to put pressure on h7 in order to force the weakening of the kingside pawns. This offers the opportunity for many sacrifices.

Kamsky-Beliavsky, 1994. The position below was reached after Black's 17^h move.



18.Bh6! this typical sacrifice allows White to get a strong attack (note that Ba2-b1 is possible!).

It is very hard, in normal chess games with limited time on clock, to defend against this kind of sacrifices that assure the initiative for a long time. For this reason, if you play against the isolated pawn, it is better to just prevent them. Or if you play with the isolated pawn and you have the opportunity, these sacrifices will give your opponent a very hard life.

18...gh6 19.Qh6-Nh7

Or 19...Be7 20.Rd3-Nh5 21.d5-Ne5 22.Re3 with decisive attack.

20.Bb1-f5

Better was 20...Nf8 although White still has better chances after 21.Ne4

21.b4!-Qc7 22.Qe6-Qf7 23.Bf5-Rc7 24.Ne4-Qe6

Better was 24...Nf8 25.Qd6-Rd6 26.Nd6-Qe7 27.Nb5 and White has the advantage.

25.Be6-Bf7 26.d5-Ne5 27.Nd4-Rc1 28.Rc1-Bb8 29.Nf5-Kf8 30.Nc5-Ng5 31.Nb7 1-0

Kavalek-Pritchett, 1976. The position below was reached after Black's 13^h move.



As you can see, there is no pressure against the isolated pawn. Now a typical maneuver starts:

14.Qd3-Bc6 15.Qh3. This kind of transfers (rook or queen to the kingside) are not possible especially with the knight on c6 because of the strong pressure over the isolated pawn.

15....Qd6 16.Bg5 now Black has to make a pawn move in order to protect the king and this leads to weaknesses in his pawn formation:

16...g6

16...h6? 17.Bh6!-gh6 18.Qh6 with decisive attack

17.Ba2-Rfd8 18.Rad1-Be8 19.Rd3?!

White could force a win after 19.Bd5!-ed5 (19...Nd5? 20.Ne4-Qc7 21.Rc1-Bc6 22.Nf7! with decisive attack) 20.Qh4 and Black has no defense. Even after 19.Rd3 White managed to win on the 29th move.

3.3. Including the “h” pawn-advance in the attack.

The main idea of pushing the h-pawn is to get some support for the pieces on g5 (g4) square or, more usually, to weaken the pawn formation of h7, g6, f7 (h2, g3, f2) which is the most reliable structure against kingside attack. This allows a lot of sacrifices especially on e6 and f7. This plan works well if there is no knight on f6 (f3).

Banas - Navarovszky Trencianske, Teplice, 1974. The position below was reached after Black’s 17^h move.



18.h4! with the battery Q+B on the b1-h7 diagonal, this advance looks logical in order to weaken the pawn formation.

18...a6? it was a good time for Black to get some protection for his king which could have been achieved by 18...Nc3 19.bc3-Qd5 or 19....Bf6 and the game was unclear although White has better chances.

Now White has devastating attack:

19.h5-Nc3 20.hg6-hg6 21.Re6!!-Ne5, forced against the Rxd6 threat.

22.Ne5-Be4 23.Rg6-fg6 24.Bb3- Kh7 25.Qh3-Bh4 26.bc3-Rc7 27.Nf7-Rf7 28.Bf7-Bf5 29.Qh2-Re2 30.Be3-Kg7 31.Bc4-Rc2 32.Qf4 1-0

4. Playing on the queenside

This plan can be successful only if the c-file and the c5- (c4-) square are under control and a knight can be placed there. It is a rare plan because the player who fights against the isolated pawn tries to get counterplay on the same side.

Karpov-Cu.Hansen Wijk aan Zee, 1988. This game is an excellent example for a queenside attack. The position below was reached after Black’s 15^h move.



It is clear that a kingside attack does not work here (there are not enough pieces “looking” on the kingside). So the time for playing on the queenside has come. The first objective is to take the control over the c-file:

15.Ba6-Rc6

15...Rc7? 16.Bf4-Rc6 17.Bb7-Rc4 18.b3 and the Rook is trapped

16.Bb5-Rc7

16....-Rc8 17.Bd7-Qd7 18.Bf6- gf6 19.Ng3 and now it is time for an attack on the other weakened wing.

17.Bf4-Rc8 18.Ba6-Ra8 19.Rc1

the first step (control over the c-file) has been realized.

19...Nb8 20.Bd3-Bb7 21.Bg5-Nbd7 22.00-h6 23.Bh4-Rc8

Finally after some maneuvers, Black managed to bring back his rook and fight for the open file.

24.Nc3-a6 25.Qe2!

White is creating concrete threats over the queenside pawns and that makes Black to move the pawns. This creates more weaknesses on his camp specially the c5- or b5-squares.

25...b5 ...so c5 is weak now

26.Ne4 now the time has come for the Knight to occupy this square.

26...Qb6 27.Nc5-Rfe8

27...Nc5 28.dc5-Rc5 29.Bf2-Nd7 30.Rc5-Nc5 31.b4 with wining position

28.b4 now White's advantage is clear and, more important, Black has no counter play. Karpov increased his advantage and won on 58th move.

5. Playing on "e" file

This plan can be realized only when against the isolated pawn the opponent has the c-pawn instead of the most classical situation of an e-pawn.

Vaganian - Huebner, 1983. The position below was reached after Black's 14^h move.



15. Re5! White is ready to take control over the e-file and, in the same time, is not allowing the access on "d5".

15...Ng6 16.Re4 this was not a waste of time: the black knight is misplaced on g6.

16....Nd7 17.Rd1-Qa5 18.Re3! The time has come for the Knight to get a better square on e4.

18....Rad8 19.Ne4-Qc7 20.h4! Against the threat of h5-h6 Black must weaken the kingside:

20...h6 21.Qg4-Kh8 22.h5-Nf4

23.Rg3-g5 24.hg6-fg6 25.Re1-Rde8 26.Rge3-Nb6 27.Nc5-Qc8? In a lost position Black blunders. **28.Qf4** 1-0

Conclusion:

To implement one of these plans, it is necessary to pay attention to the concrete character of the position. For example, it would be a mistake to play for the f2-f4-f5 advance if there is a simply reply g7-g6 to prevent it. You will get only more weaknesses. Also transferring the rook (queen) on the kingside cannot work if the isolated pawn is not enough protected ...and so on.

Usually these plans can be combined. Let's say that as a consequence of the transfer of your queen to the kingside, the opponent has weakened his pawn structure. Then a bishop sacrifice or the "h" pawn-advance might become possible.

Next lesson: "How to play against the isolated pawn"

ISOLATED PAWN

How to play against isolated pawn

As a general rule, the player who fights against the isolated pawn must **change as many pieces as possible**.

For the player with the isolated pawn, the most important piece is the bishop of different color with the pawn (in case of the isolated pawn on d4 for White, this is the light-square bishop). This bishop takes part to the attacks and therefore a position with isolated pawn but without this bishop is a bad one – so this is the best exchange when you play against the isolated pawn.

In this lesson we will discuss two aspects. The first one is about the endgames that can arise - which one offers better chances for a win, some general plans for winning in every endgame, and how to hold them. In the second part we will see some games in which the player who fights against the isolated pawn manages to carry out his plan that involves changing the pieces.

1. Endgames with isolated pawn

Usually all the endgames where there is an isolated pawn are **better for the side who hasn't the isolated pawn**. All the endgames that we'll discuss here are normal. By this I want to point out that beside the isolated pawn there are no other weaknesses or none of the sides has more active pieces. It is very important to know the following general rule: **Only one weakness is usually not enough for a win; there should be at least two.**

1.1. King endgames



It is a draw endgame, but there are some things that you should know:

- to hold this endgame (if you are on Black's side):
 - 1) it is necessary to put the pawns either on b6 and f5 in order to be able to move the King on e6-d6, or
 - 2) to put the pawns on b5 and f6 and move the King on c6-d6. In my opinion, the first setup is better.
- to win (if you are on White's side) you must manage somehow to put the pawns on f5 and b5 restricting the movement of the black King, and then put him in zugzwang in order to win the d5 pawn.

1.2. Opposite color Bishops endgames



This is the easiest endgame to hold. There are no real chances for any side to make any progress. The same thing is with the other bishops. You must apply the general rule in the opposite color bishop's endgames: **if you have the advantage always put the pawns on the opposite color of your Bishop (on the color of your opponent's Bishop in order to restrict its mobility), and if you are worse then put the pawn on the same color as your bishop in order to protect them better.**

1.3. Knight's endgames.



There is no great danger in these endgames and they are easy to hold because the Knight has great mobility. As you can see White is not even able to hold his King on d4, because Black can check him any time with his Knight.

1.4. Knight against "good" Bishop.



This endgame is also easy to defend because of the great mobility of the Bishop. White has no real plan for improving the position. All you have to do is to put the pawns on the opposite color squares as your bishop.

1.5. Same color Bishops but with the good one for the one who has the isolated pawn



As the previous ending, here is no real danger because of the great mobility of the Bishop. All you have to do is put the pawns on the opposite color squares as your Bishop.

1.6. Queen endgames



Because of the great mobility of the Queen, there is no danger at all in this endgame. To win it would be necessary to activate the King but with the Queens on the board this is practically impossible.

The above six endgames are easier to hold than the next ones where the chance to make mistakes is bigger. That is why we will see an example for each one of them.

1.7. Same color bishops but with the “bad” one for the side who has isolated pawn



Having only one weakness on d5 is not so difficult to hold, but attention is required. You must put the other pawns on dark squares like a7, b6, f6, g5, h6 and, after this, pay attention to the diagonal from which you will protect the d5 pawn with the Bishop. It will be a mistake to protect the d5 pawn from the a2-g8 diagonal if White attacks it from b3, because there are ideas with e3-e4, so you must stay in that case on the a8-h1 diagonal. Note that you should accept a passive policy and don't put the other pawns on the same color as your Bishop.



This endgame is from the game **Wojtkiewicz – Khalifman, Rakvere, 1993**.

The difference between this endgame and the position we discussed is that beside d5, Black has another weakness on b7.

1.a4 White is applying another basic principle: **any weakness should be fixed**.
1...g5 2.Kd4-Bf7 3.Bf3 yet another principle is applied: **when you have the advantage, keep as many pawns on the board as you can**.
3...Be6 4.f5! limiting more the black Bishop. Normally this is not a good move but there is no way for Black to attack the pawns from behind, so it is more important the other factor (limiting the Bishop) then putting the pawns on the same color as our Bishop.
4...Bf7 5.b4-Be8 6.b5 now the Bishop is totally limited and the loss of the d5 pawn is inevitable **6...Bf7 7.Bd1** the time has come to improve the position of the Bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal and then the e3-e4 blow will become deadly **7...Bg8 8.Bb3-Bf7 9.e4-Bg8 10.Bd5-Bd5 11.ed5** White manages to win a pawn. All he has to do now is to make a breakthrough on queenside in order to win. **11...Kc7 12.Kc3-Kd6 13.Kc4-Ke5** (13...Kd7 14.Kb4-Kd6 15.a5-ba5 otherwise a6 16.Ka5-Kd5 17.Kb6-Kc4 18.Kb7-Kb5 19.Kc7 winning) **14.a5-ba5 15.Kc5-a4 16.d6-b6 17.Kc6-a3 18.d7-a2 19.d8Q-a1Q 20.Qd6-Ke4 21.Kb6** with easy win. White managed to win after other twelve moves.

1.8. Knight against “bad” Bishop



This endgame is from the well known game **Flohr-Capablanca, Moscow, 1935**.

Capablanca was the first one who demonstrated how this endgame can be held. First of all you must put the pawns on dark squares (opposite color squares as your Bishop). Having the pawns on f6 and b6 you will gain control over the important e5- and c5-squares that otherwise can be used by your opponent to penetrate with his King. Then, you have to adopt a passive strategy. **In a worse position any active attempt will lead only to more weaknesses.**

Even in this case to hold the position is not so simple and it requires a lot of attention. This is a hard endgame to hold.

Now let us go back to the game and see how Capablanca carried out this plan. **1...Ke7 2.Kd2-Kd6 3.Kc3-b6 4.f4-Bd7 5.Nf3** White is regrouping. The d4 square is for the King

in order to put pressure on d5. 5...f6 Black is playing as planned 6.Kd4- a5 7.Nd2-Bc8 8.Nb1-Be6 9.Nc3-Kc6 10.a3-h6 11.g3-h5?! By now Black was waiting (a good approach). Now he is making other unnecessary weaknesses. Even that he was able to hold I don't recommend such moves. A "wait and see" tactic is better. There is no plan for White to improve his position although I. Rabinovich gave one in 5 stages starting with "first white has to move his Knight to h4". There is no need to see the next stages because the first one is impossible to achieve. It is quite easy to see that Black can protect the g2 square from h3 or the f3 one from g4. If White puts his Knight on e1 in order to cover both squares than the Bishop goes to e4 trapping the Knight. 12.b4-ab4 13.ab4-Kd6 14.b5-g6 forced in order not to allow f5 that restricts the bishop even more. 15.f5-gf5 16.Ne2-Bd7 17.Nf4-Be8 18.Nd5-Bb5 18.Nb6 now the only thing Black has to do is not allowing the Knight to reach f4 and he is able to do so without any trouble. 19...Bc6 20.Nc4-Ke6 21.Nb2-Bb5 22.Nd1-Be2 23.Nf2-Bf1 24.Nd3-Bd3 25.Kd3-Ke5 26.Ke2-Ke4 27.h3-Kd5 28.Kf3-Ke5 and a draw was agreed.

These two endgames with "bad" bishop are difficult to hold but if you know what to do, it is not so difficult at all. **Important is not to make other weakness.**

The next set of endgames are in my opinion close to win for the one who fights against the isolated pawn (especially the Queen + two Rooks endgame) so **these are the endgames you should aim for**. I put them in the order they give more chances for win.

1.9. Rook vs. Rook endgames



First I would like to say that if the side with isolated pawn manages to occupy first the open c-file and protect his pawn from c5 (or c4 for White), then, because of his active Rook, he is able to hold quite easily.

This endgame is from the game **Bareev - I.Farago Rome, 1990.**

Here is not so simple.

1...h5? It is very easy to go wrong in these endgames. The main problem is to identify which future weaknesses are more important, on the kingside or on the queenside? On the kingside are easier to defend because the King is closer. 1...a5 was necessary although after 2.g4 fixing black's h-pawn, Black is still in great danger. Now, Black is already lost. **2. b4!** The same endgame principle is applied: **fix the weakness**. Now the a7 pawn will be forever a reason to concern. 2...Ke6 3.Kd4-f6 4.h4-Kf5 5.f3-Kg6 6.a4-Kf7 7.a5 White is aiming to put his a-pawn as close to queening square as possible. As you can see, changing the b-pawns is not good because this gives the c5 square to White. 7...Ke6 8.a6-Kd6 9.b5-Ke6 10.g3-g6 11.Re8-Kd6 12.Rf8-Ke6 13.Rc8-Kd6 14.Rc6-Ke7 15.g4 the decisive blow. Now it is over because White either makes another weakness in Black's camp (on h5), or a distant pawn on the h-file, and any of these are

decisive. **15...Kf7 16.gh5-gh5 17.Rc8** Black is defenseless. White managed to win after another 14 moves.

1.10. Queen + Rooks vs. Queen + Rooks endgames



In this kind of endgames, it is much easier to create other weakness either on the queenside or on kingside because of the greater mobility of your pieces. As you can see Black, is tide down on defending the d5 pawn.

The position is from the game **Andersson - Comas, Benasque, 1995**. It is a delight to see such a great endgame player (in my opinion the best of all times) famous for his excellent technique in action. Andersson combines the attack over the d5 pawn with King attack and threats over the a6 pawn

1.Qc2-Qb6 2.Qc3-Qa5 3.Qa1-Kg8 4.Rf4-Qb6 5.Qe5-Qb7 6.Rd4 after only a few moves the Queen has taken by force a dominant position. **6...Rb6 7.e4-Re6 8.Qd5-Qb2 9.Rd2-Qe5 10.Rd4-Kg7 11.Qe5-Re5 12.Ra4** now White has decisive advantage and he managed to win after another 17 moves.



Spiridonov – Ghitescu, Bucharest, 1973

By now White has managed to do all the useful things that he could do. First he forced Black to push f5 (in order to prevent e4) simply by tripling on the d-file. Then he pushed the queenside pawns in order to fix a7 that will be a permanent weakness in any endgame and, finally, took control over the “c” file. You should note that Black is powerless against all these.

1.Rc8-Rd8 White was trying to double the Rook and the Queen on the 8th rank so Black’s move must be made on the next move so why not now?. Black can do nothing to improve his position. **2.Rd8-Rd8 3.Rd2-Rd7 4.Rc2-Qe5** (4...d4? 5.Rc7 wins) **5.Qc3!** The Rook endgame must be lost - there are three weaknesses in Black’s camp: g6, d5, and a7. It is impossible to protect them all. **5...d4 6.ed4-Rd4 7.Qa1-Kh6 8.Rc4-Rd5 9.Qe5-Re5 10.Rc7** the position is totally lost for Black and he resigned after 10 more moves.

In these types of endgames the second weakness is generally the King.

2. Middlegame. Changing pieces.

There are two approaches to fight against the isolated pawn. First one is the classical one that “an isolated pawn must be blocked” and this begins when you place the pawn on e3 (e6). The second one which is more modern is to attack and take the isolated pawn. This works especially when you have the bishop in g2 (g7) and the pawn is under attack already. In both cases changing pieces is what you should do.



This position arose after White's 11th move in the game **Kortchnoj – Karpov, Merano, 1981**.

11....Nh5! 12.Be7-Ne7 13.Bb3?! In my opinion, White should pushed d4-d5 to get rid of his weak pawn and be satisfied with equal position arising after massive exchanges on d5. 13...Nf6 14.Ne5-Bd7 15.Qe2-Rc8 16.Ne4? Quite strange, White is doing what Black has to do 16...Ne4 17.Qe4-Bc6 18.Nc6-Rc6 As you can see Black is keeping an eye over d5 not allowing White to get rid of his isolated pawn

19.Rc3-Qd6 20.g3-Rd8 21.Rd1-Rb6! Black no longer wants to change a pair of rooks in order to put more pressure on d4. 22.Qe1-Qd7 23.Rcd3-Rd6 24.Qe4-Qc6 25.Qf4-Nd5 26.Qd2-Qb6 27.Bd5-Rd5

Black has managed to get himself in an almost wining endgame. Karpov has chosen the endgame which is the best against the isolated pawn. From now on, he is wining it in a convincing manner. **28.Rb3-Qc6 29.Qc3-Qd7 30.f4-b6 White was forced to weaken his King and now, after some preparation, Black launches a direct attack against it.**

31.Rb4-b5 32.a4-ba4 33.Qa3-a5 34.Ra4-Qb5 35.Rd2-e5! The final blow 36.fe5-Re5 37.Qa1-Qe8 38.de5-Rd2 39.Ra5-Qc6 40.Ra8-Kh7 41.Qb1-g6 42.Qf1-Qc5 43.Kh1-Qd5 0-1



Karpov – Spassky, Montreal, 1979

In this game, Karpov starts to trade pieces:

16.Ne5!-Be6 17.Nc6-Rc6 18.Bf3 now the pressure against d5 begins. 18...Qb6 19.Be5-Ne4 the only way to release the pressure on d5 20.Qe2-Nc3 21.Bc3-Rd8 22.Rd3-Rcd6 23.Rfd1-R6d7 24.R1d1-Qb5 25.Qd1 now Black is tied down on defending the d5 pawn. This setup should be remembered as it is the best one, with the Rooks in front of the Queen.

25...b6 26.g3-Bf8 27.Bg2-Be7 the only thing Black can do is to wait.

28.Qh5-a6 29.h3-Qc6 30.Kh2-a5 31.f4 after some preparation, White is ready to take some action on the kingside (as you can remember this can be the second weakness) 31...f6 32.Qd1-Qb5 33.g4-g5?! This pseudo active move only makes things worse (in cramped positions every active move makes more weaknesses). 34.Kh1-Qc6 35.f5-Bf7 36.e4 now it is all over 36...Kg7 37.ed5-Qc7 38.Re2-b5 39.Re7-Re7 40.d6-Qc4 41.b3 1-0



Andersson – Portish, Tilburg, 1981

In this last example, White does not block the isolated pawn but he is just attacking the pawn making it to advance further. After this, he begins to play around it.

13.Ne1 the Knight is heading to f4 in order to increase the pressure 13...Be6 14.Nd3 -Bd4 as you can see this is a good way to force the opponent to make changes. He must change the pieces that attack the isolated pawn.

15.Rc1-Rac8 16.Nf4-Bc3 17. Rc3-d4

the character of the positions has been changed but White has a clear advantage: better placement of the pieces and better pawn structure. He manages to win at the 61 move.

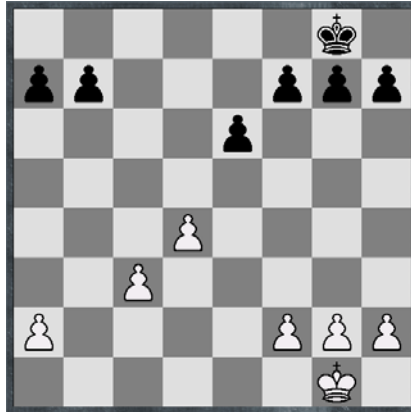
Which plan you implement depends on the character of the position. The last one (without blocking the isolated pawn) works only with the bishop on g2.

Another thing to remember is to **protect the king against any attack with the h7+g6+f7 structure**. This is the most reliable one.

Next lesson: Isolated pawn couple

ISOLATED PAWN COUPLE

This type of structure is characterized by the presence of the central pawns c3, d4 (c6, d5) on the open c- and d- files.



1. General considerations

Usually this type of structure results from an isolated pawn structure after a trade of pieces on c3 (c6). Main rule that applies here (like in the isolated pawn structure) is: **having the isolated pawns you should avoid exchanges, if you fight against them you should try to exchange as many pieces as you can.**

As you can see, now the d-pawn is well defended so it no longer needs protection. This gives “free hands” for more active operations especially on the kingside. On the other hand the weakness that will require protection has moved to c3 (c6). But this pawn is quite hard to attack with a lot of pieces on the board. It is a major weakness only in the endgame but it is really a chronic one. We will examine below with some examples how to play with isolated pawns and against them.

2. Playing with isolated pawns

There are two major possibilities and a particular 3rd one because it works only when the bishop is changed on c3 (c6).

2.1. The c4 (c5) advance that leads to a “hanging pawns” formation. This structure is very complex and it will be studied separately in the next lesson.

2.2. Kingside attack. As you can see in this type of position, a pair of pieces has already been changed on c3 (c6), usually knights. There are 2 consequences of this exchange:

- a) the side that fights against the isolated pawns has already traded a piece which serves his interest but, on the other hand,
- b) a piece that protects the king has disappeared (Nf6-d5xc3). For this reason a kingside attack looks like a logical plan.

The main ideas of how to attack are very similar with the ideas from “isolated pawn” type of structure. These are:

- pressing on b1-h7 (b8-h2) diagonal;
- transfer of the rook to the kingside via 3rd (6th) rank;
- advancing the “h” pawn in order to support the knight invasion to g5 (g4) or to weaken the kingside pawns;
- transfer of the queen to the kingside.

It is easy to see that in this kind of positions the knight from f3 (f6) is a more active piece because it no longer has to protect the d4 (d5) pawn.

Another difference is that a breakthrough in the center with d5 (d4) is no longer desirable. This breakthrough is hard to be supported and, even if it works, its effects are bad for the side that makes it. Instead of hanging pawns there will be two worse weaknesses: the “a” and “c” pawns. Therefore the d4-d5 advance should be made only if you made sure that it helps you to win material or get an unstoppable attack.



Baburin - B.Lengyel, Budapest, 1990.

Now White launches the kingside attack: **16.Ng5-Nd8** Black protects the f7-pawn and in the same time he puts pressure on the c3 pawn **17.Re3!** White also answers with a double purpose move, he protects the pawn and is heading with the Rook on the kingside **17....Qa5 18.Rg3** now the sacrifices on the kingside are “hanging in the air” so Black’s next operation is normal. **18...Bb5 19.Qe3-Ba4 20.Ba4-Qa4 21.h4** Black manages to trade the light square Bishop (a very important attacking piece) so White brings new forces into the attack.

When the pawn will arrive to h5, sacrifices will be possible again.

21...Qb3? A strange move. Black is under attack and he is doing nothing to prevent it. More normal was to bring his pieces in the center and kingside. This could be done after **21...e5! 22. de5-Qh4 23.Nh7** and even if he is a pawn down, Black can defend and hope to save the game due to White’s queenside weak pawns. Now it is over:

22. h5-Qb2 23.Re1-Qa3 24.Nh7-Kh7 25.hg6-fg6 26.Qe5-Bf8 27.Qf6 1-0



Razuvaev - I.Farago, Dubna, 1979.

13. h4!? White sacrifices a pawn in order to get strong initiative or if the sacrifice is not accepted he will get extra support on g5 for the Knight. **13...Na5** also possible was to take the pawn but after **14...Bxh4 15.Nxh4-Qxh4 16.Re3**, White gets a strong attack for the pawn.

14. Ng5-h6? Black should have eliminated the knight at once with **14...Bg5** but after **15.hg5** White is still better because of the attack on the h-file.

15.Qh5! Bd5 White was threatening **16.Bh7-Kh8 17.Nf7-Kh8 18.Re6** with devastating attack so Black protects the e6 pawn.

16.Nh7-Re8 17.Bh6!-gh6 18.Qh6-f5 19.Re3 the attack is unstoppable **19....Bh4 20.Rg3-Bg3 21.Qg6-Kh8 22.Nf6-Bh2 23.Kh1-Qf6 24.Qf6** and White won at move 31.

2.3. Transferring the Knight to d6 (d3). This is a rare plan and can be undertaken only if the bishop was traded for the Knight (Bb4xc3).



Dolmatov – Flesch, Bucharest, 1981.

12.Ba3-Re8 13.Nd2 the Knight is heading to d6 taking advantage of the fact that the c3 pawn is untouchable because of **14.Nc4** trapping the Queen. **13...Rd8 14.Qf3** Black defends against the invasion on d6 **14.Nc4-Nf8** so White gets another piece into the game in the same time preventing Black from doing the same (not allowing the development of the c8 Bishop. **14...Nf8 15.Ne4!-Ne4 16.Be4** White changed the only active piece of his opponent and now it is very hard to see a way to develop the black pieces.

16...Nd7 17.Be7-Re8 18.Bh4 White has a huge advantage and he won on move 37.

3. Playing against the “isolated pawns”

When fighting against the isolated pawns, you must block them. After this, pieces must be changed in order to get rid of any trouble regarding a kingside attack. This structure is weaker in the endgame due to another weakness: the “a” pawn. In order to combine more easily the attack over the weak “c” and “a” pawns, an endgame with only major pieces is the best choice. After the pawns are firmly blocked, there are ideas connected with the advance of the “e” or “b” pawns. This will leave the opponent either only with “c” and “a” pawns (which are very weak) or with the “d” and “a” pawns. Usually the advance of the “e” pawn is more effective.



Sir. George Thomas – Alekhine, Baden-Baden, 1925. Here white has no counterplay for his weaknesses. Black has to maintain his blockade over the pawns, and, at the appropriate moment, to change the queens and get his king in the centre. After that, he must try a breakthrough either with the “b” or the “e” pawn. In addition White has a “bad” Bishop. **22...Qd5 23.Qe3-Qb5 24.Qd2-Rd5 25.h3-e6 26.Re1-Qa4 27.Ra1-b5 28.Qd1-Rc4 29.Qb3-Rd6** after consolidating his position and getting the rooks on more active squares, Black is ready to trade the Queens.

30.Kh2-Ra6 31.Rff1-Be7 32.Kh1-Rcc6 33.Rfe1-Bh4 34.Rf1-Qc4 35.Qc4-Rc4 36.a3-Be7 37.Rfb1-Bd6 38.g3-Kf8 after forcing White to put another pawn to a dark square, the king begins his journey to the best square: “d5”
 39.Kg2-Ke7 40.Kf2-Kd7 41.Ke2-Kc6 42.Ra2-Rca4 43.Rba1-Kd5 44.Kd3-R6a5 45.Bc1-a6 46.Bb2-h5 47.h4-f6! After tying down White’s army a breakthrough will be done with the “e” pawn.
 48.Bc1-e5 49.fe5-fe5 50.Bb2-ed4 51.cd4-b4 52.ab4-Ra2 53.ba5-Rb2 0-1



Rubinstein – Salwe, Lodz, 1908.

11. Na4! White implements the first part of the plan: he blocks the pawns. **11...Qb5 12.Be3-00 13.Rc1-Bg4 14.f3-Be6 15.Bc5** now it is time for the second part: changing pieces, and White starts with the dark square bishop which leaves Black with poor control over the dark squares.

15...Rfe8 16.Rf2! White is regrouping. In the future, the pawn will go to e3 in order to prevent any attempt of moves like d4. The rooks must be doubled on the “c” file in order to put pressure on c6.

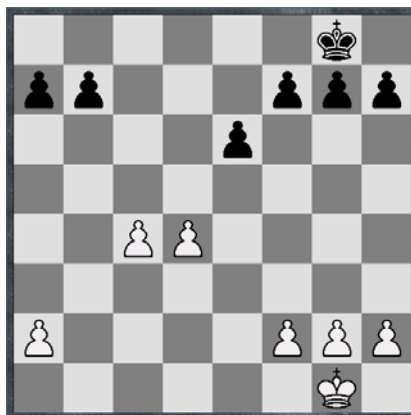
16....Nd7 17.Be7-Re7 18.Qd4-Ree8 19.Bf1-Rac8 20.e3-Qb7 21.Nc5-Nc5 22.Rc5
 White managed to achieve the same result as in the previous game. He had a crushing advantage and won on move 38.

The main thing that you should remember: **having the isolated pawns you should avoid exchanges, fighting against them you should change as many pieces as you can.**

Next lesson: Hanging Pawns

HANGING PAWNS

The “hanging pawns” is one of the most complex pawn structures. The diagram below presents a typical position of this formation on the c- and d- files.



1. Introduction

The possessor of hanging pawns has a large influence over the center due to his control over e5, d5, c5 (e4, d4, c4) squares, so more space. There are two major plans at his disposal. The first one consists in advancing his “d” pawn. This advance is connected with a direct attack over the king sustained by the creation of a very strong passed pawn. Advancing, this pawn can disturb the opponent’s piece coordination in their attempt of stopping it, therefore the chances of succeeding in kingside attack are greater. The second one consists in advancing the “c” pawn. This is connected either with the creation of a strong passed pawn, or has the purpose to fix the opponent “b” pawn in order to attack it.

The side fighting against hanging pawns has his plans too. He must attack the pawns, not allowing opponent pieces to take active places (they must protect the pawns). To change some pieces is in his best interest. He also has two major undermining moves either with the “e” pawn (more often) or “b” pawn. Another possibility, but a rare one, is a global undermining with both pawns. These undermining moves will lead to the creation of weak squares or pawns for the one who possesses the hanging pawns. He will lose his control over the centre in the same time. The endgames are worse for the side that has hanging pawns. Due to the possibility of advancing either the “c” or “d” pawn, and so changing the character of the position, we can say that endgames can be hold quite easily however.

Now we will examine in detail, with examples, all the possible plans for either side.

2. How to play with “hanging pawns”

As Botvinnik said, *when there are many pieces on the board, the hanging pawns cannot be attacked effectively*. To take advantage of them, you must keep the pieces on the board and prepare to push either the “d” or the “c” pawn.

2.1. The “d” pawn advance

As I said, this advance is connected with a direct attack over the king sustained by the creation of a very strong passed pawn.



Sokolsky – Botvinnik, Leningrad, 1938

As you can see, Black controls the centre. White has no active play, all he can do is to stop the major breakthrough with the “d” or “c” pawn - he is now prepared for this. If Black plays 1...d4, then he will lose the pawn, and the ruined structure on the kingside (after the trade on f3) will not offer him sufficient compensation. **17...Bh6!** White doesn't have any threat on the a1-h8 diagonal, so by leaving this diagonal, Black avoids the exchange of the dark square bishop when he moves the f6-knight.

Now Black threatens d5-d4 and puts pressure on e3. **18.Ba3-Ng4 19.Qd3-Nde5 20.N:e5-Q:e5 21.Ng3-Qf6 22.Nh1** (22.Rc2?-Qh4 23.h3-N:e3 winning a pawn.)

Now that all the black pieces are on active positions, the time has come for the breakthrough: **22...d4! 23.Qe2-Ne5 24.e:d4-c:d4 25.R:c8-B:c8** Now as you can see, the “hanging pawns” structure became a powerful “d” passed pawn. Connected with this, Black exerts a strong pressure on the kingside, so the end can't be far.

26.Re1-d3 27.Qd1-Bg4 28.Qa1-d2 29.Re5-d1-Q 30 Re8-Re8 31Qf6-Be2 and Black won at move 40.



Keres – Taimanov, Moscow, 1951

Here too, White has a space advantage while Black failed to put pressure on the hanging pawns. All white pieces are very well placed, so the “d4-d5” advance is possible. This leads to a very complicated position where White has the upper hand:

16.d5!-ed5 17.cd5 As John Nunn said in his book, “The Quest for Perfection”, pointed out that 17.Nxd5 was even stronger. **17...Nb8 18.Rd4-Qd6 19.Rcd1** Again, the “hanging pawns” structure was replaced by a strong “d” pawn that ties down black pieces offering White good prospects on the kingside.

19...Bf8 20.Ne4-Ne4 21.Re4-Re4 22.Qe4-Qh6 23.Ng5-Bd6 24.h4-Nd7 25.Qf5-Nf6 26.Bf6-gf6 27.Nf7 White has a winning position and he won at 37th move.

2.2 The “c” pawn advance

The main idea is to fix the “b” pawn in order to attack it. The structure can be modified by the advance of the “b” pawn, but then we’ll have a passed “c”-pawn.



Rubinstein – Nimzowitsch, Karlsbad, 1907

Here, a direct attack over the white king doesn’t work, because there are too many exchanged pieces. The “d5-d4” advance leaves only a weak pawn on the d file. So, another plan is required:

16...c4! Normally, in the presence of the light square bishop, such an advance is not desirable, but here are other factors that make this good. Now Black doesn’t have to worry anymore about the protection of the “c” pawn, and will have good prospects of attacking the “b” pawn.

17.Be2-a5 18.Rfd1-Qb4 19.Rd4-Rfd8 20.Rcd1-Rd7 21.Bf3-Rad8 As you can see, both sides consistently carried out their plans. White puts pressure on the backward “d” pawn, Black doing the same on the “b” pawn - the position is balanced. As Nimzowitsch pointed out “22.Kf1-Kf8 23.Kg1-Kg8 should be an appropriate end.” This proves that nobody can further improve his position. White tried to disturb the balance and was punished for that. He lost at move 44.



Bernstein – Capablanca, Moscow, 1914

15...c4 For a better understanding of this move, I will give you the words of Capablanca himself “*The plan conceived by white consist in using the weakness of the hanging pawns by attacking them on the semi - opened c and d files. As you can see the awkward position of the e7 bishop makes it only a defensive piece. The move played in the game is aimed against this. Now this bishop is an active piece and the “b2” pawn will be a weakness. The fact that the move c4 offers the d4 square for the knights is less important. If the knights will occupy this square, then the pressure on d5 will*

stop. I think that white should play 16.e4, content himself with equality, after 16...de4 17.Ne4-Ne4 18.Qe4-Bf6. But Bernstein is a player of great courage, always playing for a win, and he thought that the position is better for white, which is a mistake.”

16.Rfd1-Rfd8 17.Nd4-Bb4 18.b3-Rac8 19.bxc4-dxc4 Now the structure was modified and Black has a strong “c” passed pawn.

20.Rc2-Bc3 21.Rc3-Nd5 22.Rc2-c3 23.Rdc1-Rc5 24.Nb3-Rc6 25.Nd4-Rc7 26.Nb5-Rc5 27.Nc3-Nc3 28.Rc3-Rc3 29.Rc3-Qb2! An elegant solution. **0-1**

3. How to play against the “hanging pawns”

In order not to allow enemy pieces to occupy active positions, pressure must be exerted all the time against these pawns. Trading some pieces is also a good approach. Besides this, there are the typical undermining moves with the “e” and “b” pawns, and the global one with both pawns.

3.1. Putting pressure on the pawns



Yusupow – Ljubojevic, Tilburg, 1987

Grand Master Yusupow with his next move tries to put a direct pressure against the hanging pawns: **12.Ne5** This clears the f3-square for the bishop and, in the same time, threatens to change a pair of knights. As a general rule, it's always better to attack the pawns before their possessor completes his development. **12...Nb6** Even after **12...Ne5 13.Be5-Bd6 14.Bd6-Qd6 15.Qc2** White's chances are better. **13.a4 a5 14.Bf3 Re8 15.Nb5 Ra6** (15...Rc8 16.Na7 Ra8 17.Nac6 Bc6 18.Nc6 Qd7 19.Ne7 Qe7 20.Qb3 White has better position due to the fact that the pawns are under strong pressure.

16.Nd3?! As Yusupow pointed out, “16.b3 was a better move because it restrains completely the hanging pawns and so they lose their mobility”. Now the game enters a tactical phase. **16...c4 17.Bc7-Qd7 18.Ne5-Qc8 19.b3-Na8 20.bc4-Nc7 21.cd5-Bd6 22.Nc4** The structure changed. White has two strong pawns in the centre and better placement for his pieces in exchange for his piece down. After an interesting battle, this balanced position was won by white at 37th move.



Kramnik – Ribli, Groningen, 1993

Here also, White will start a direct attack over the “hanging pawns”. **12.Nh4** This is better than **12.Ne5-Ne5 13.Be5-Qd7**. White relocates his knight on a more active square (f5) in the same time putting the hanging pawns under direct attack. **12...Nb6 13.Nf5-Re8 14.Nb5-Qd7 15.Nbd6-Bd6 16.Nd6** White managed to change pieces letting Black only with the passive ones and so he got a big advantage. **16...Re6?** The only try was **16...Red8 17.Rc1-c4 18.Nb7-Qb7 19.Ng5** with a clear advantage. Now after the next White's move **17.Bh3** Black will lose the exchange and the game at 29th move.

3.2. Undermining the “hanging pawns” with the “b” pawn

The scope of this advance is to weaken the opponent’s influence over the centre. After changing the “b” and “c” pawns, the opponent will be left with an isolated pawn on the d-file. If he advances the “c” pawn instead of changing it, he will remain with the backward “d” pawn. This undermining move is effective only if either after the exchange of the pawns or after the advance of the “c” pawn, the remaining pawns are blocked.



Mecking – Polugayevsky, Lucerne, 1977

16.b4! Now Black has serious problems

16...Bc6

16...c4 17.Bf5 and it is very hard for black to protect his “d” pawn;

16...cb4 17.Nb5-a5 18.Bd4-Bc5 19.ab4-ab4 20.Rb4 and Black is left with an isolated pawn.

17.Ba1-Ne5 18.bc5-Qc5 19.Nb5-Bb5 20.Bb5-Rc7 21.Nd4 White’s advantage is beyond question, although, after some mistakes he lost at move 63.

3.3. Undermining the “hanging pawns” with the “e” pawn

The main idea of this undermining move is to let the opponent either with the weak “a” and “c” pawns after trading the “e” and “d” pawns, or with the vulnerable “c” pawn and control of the d6(d3), c5(c4) squares, if the opponent pushes the “d” pawn. Like the other undermining move, this works only if you have better control over the important squares mentioned above.



Portisch – Karpov, Bugoino, 1978

17....Bf3 18.Qf3-e5 Now it is impossible for White to maintain the pawn formation. **19.Qg3** If White would have played 19.d5 then, by placing his knights on c5 and d7, followed by the advance of the e- and f- pawns, Black would have got a long term advantage. As you can see, White has nothing to do against this. All he can do is to wait.

19...ed4 20.Re8-Ne8 21.Bf4-Qc6

Now Black’s advantage is clear and he won at move 40.

3.4. Global undermining with both “b” and “e” pawns

This undermining is quite rare because it is very hard to do it. As a result, there will be nothing left from the hanging pawns.



Larsen – Radulov, Riga, 1973

16.Qc2-g6 17.e4 The first undermining move **17...Qa8**

18.Qd2 Now Black is under direct threats on the kingside so he must take preventive measures. In this kind of position a move like “d4” is not desirable. After such a move the tension in the centre is released and so White has “free hands” to play on both flanks.

18...Bf6 19.Qf4-Qd8 20.Ba5-Nb6 21.b4

The second undermining move and the decisive one. Usually if you manage to make them both, the advantage will be great.

21...Be7 21...c4 22.Bc4 winning; **21...de4 22.Be4-Qe7 23.Bb7-Rb7 24.bc5** winning
22.ed5-Bd6 23.Qh6 After destroying the hanging pawns, White launches a decisive attack over the king. **23...cb4 24.Ng5-f5 25.Ne6-Qd7 26.Rc7 1-0**

4. Hanging pawns endgames

Usually the side fighting against the hanging pawns has the upper hand. We’ll examine two examples where the pawns were forced to advance. Usually this leads to advantage for the side who fights against them.



Petrosian – Botvinnik, Moscow, 1963

17.Rac1-d4 This advance is almost forced and it was made now in order to put the rooks on more active squares on the queenside. The “c” pawn advance is not good because this will lead to losing the “d” pawn, after Rfd1 and Bd4. **18.Bd2-a5 19.Nd3** It will be a mistake to move 19.b3 because after 19...a4 Black gains targets for an attack on the queenside.

19...Nd7 20.e3!-de3 21.Be3 Now the character of the position has changed, Black was left with two weak pawns on the queenside.

White eventually won the game.



Mikhalchishin – Beliavsky, Moscow, 1981

18...c4 Now the “c” pawn must be moved. If black tries to protect it with 18...Nd7 then after Rfd1 and Bf3 the other one will fall. **19.bc4-dc4 20.Rfd1-Rfd8 21.Rd8-Rd8 22.Nc5-Bd5 23.f3-Rc8 24.Na4-Be6 25.e4** The “c” pawn is firmly blocked and therefore it is only a weakness. Also we can see that White has better control over the centre. All he has to do is to bring the king in the center, and, then, at some moment, the “c” pawn will fall.

White won at move 37.

End of Strategy Lessons for Month 7

Tactical collaboration between pieces Importance. How to make use in practice.

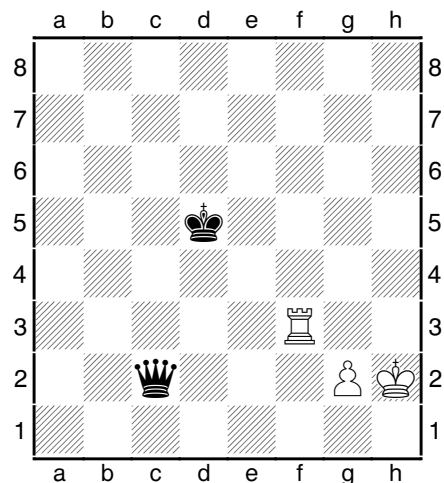
We discussed the qualitative value of the pieces even from the first month of ICS course. Beside this, there exists another very important criterion: **the importance (value) of pieces' coordinated actions.**

The value of the same piece varies a lot in function of the other ones on the board and of its participation in certain actions during the game. There are cases when a good tactical collaboration between pieces changes a lot their practical value.

For example, in this position, Black cannot win despite of his big material advantage.

It is enough for White to move his king on g1, h1, and h2 or rook on h3 and back to f3 and the game is draw.

The rook placed only on f3 and h3, sustained by the g2-pawn, succeeds to keep the black king away. On his turn, the white king defends the g2-pawn and the attacks of the *alone* black queen are useless. Because of the impossibility of collaboration between the Black's king and queen for realization of the double attack on g2, the position is draw.



Defying the quantitative value is possible due the perfect collaboration between pieces. From this basic example, we can understand that the material/quantitative values of the pieces are applicable only in the case of slightly the same degree of collaboration. Emanuel Lasker said that the value of coordinated action of more pieces may exceed a lot the sum of each individual piece's value. Also, true, as you could saw from the example above, is that the lack of coordination between pieces may temporarily decrease their practical value.

J.R. Capablanca was the first who observed the importance of piece collaboration and then he brilliantly put it in practice. To this principle of pieces collaboration, Lasker added that the coordination of actions of ALL pieces plays a vital role and therefore the inactive pieces must be quickly brought to help the others in their actions.

The realization of collaboration between pieces is a conscious and constructive operation which may only have concrete objectives.

It may be categorized after more criteria:

- After objective: collaboration between pieces in attack, in defense, in counter-attack, or for obstruction.
- After the board's area: collaboration for controlling an entire zone of the board, or for light-squares, dark-squares, or only for a certain square – key square.

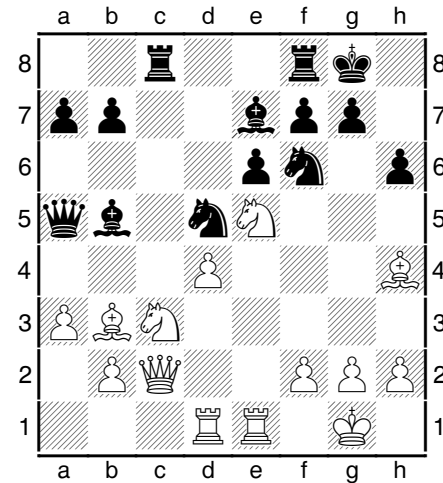
How to make use of “collaboration between pieces”.

Here, we are talking about tactical piece collaboration, so we took a relatively complicated position. The concept we are introducing in this lesson is a key-element for improving your results in this kind of positions – one of the worst nightmares of most players.

Let’s analyze a position from the game Lasker – Capablanca, 1921.

First of all, we must make a general evaluation of the position: Both players completed their development and white pieces are placed in the most active positions. However, the presence of the isolated pawn on d4 and Black’s pressure on the c-file and c3-knight (by the collaboration Qa5 + Rc8 + Nd5) makes White’s decision not so easy.

Lasker played: 1.Bxd5 Nxd5 2.Bxe7 Nxe7
3.Qb3 Bc6 4.Nxc6 bxc6! 5.Re5 Qb6 6.Qc2 Rfd8
7.Ne2 Rd5 8.Rxd5 cxd5 and nothing left from White’s initiative from the initial position.



White is to move
(set up the position on your board)

White can achieve much more here however.

This critical position requires a concrete analysis (the search for candidate moves, calculation and evaluation of the variations). So, let’s start to think at this position, now using the new concept of “piece collaboration”.

We must start by evaluating the role of each piece in attack and then the collaboration between them. First of all, we are looking for a way to attack Black on the center and kingside (we know that this is where White has the advantage from the theory of the isolated pawn structure). So, we will evaluate the collaboration between our pieces *in this area, in attack*.

- **Bh4** attacks on f6 and e7. By Bxf6, White eliminates one of Black’s defenders and therefore the action of the other white pieces will face a smaller resistance.

- **Bb3** attacks on a2-g8 diagonal with pressure on d5, e6, f7, g8. The bishop can also come on c2 changing his diagonal if the white queen will leave. Because Black’s light-square bishop is on b5 not defending the critical squares on kingside and center, White should look for ways to exploit these weaknesses! So... we should think at the *collaboration between the white pieces on light-squares*.

- **Re1** attacks on e6 and e7. Also, it is obvious that we can use the hanging position of the e7-bishop. This is defended only by the d5-knight (which can be easily traded off) and by the protection offered by the e6-pawn (which seems to plays too many roles: defends d5, defends against Bb3, and defends Be7). Also, the rook can use the third, fourth or fifth rank in some cases for transferring on the kingside.

- **Qc2** as being the most important attacking piece, the queen should come on the kingside sooner or later. Her way is via e4 or f5, both protected by only one black piece. So, White should have in mind some exchanges or other ways to eliminate Black's e6-pawn and/or f6-knight. Also, the c2-queen "sees" the g6-square in collaboration with the e5-knight...

- **Ne5** Can White's most active piece be used in attack? It seems that all the squares the knight attacks are defended by Black. So, the knight alone could do nothing. However, because of the piece collaboration, the knight plays an important role attacking on light-squares! Both Nxf7 or Ng6 (with double attack on f8 and e7) will destroy Black's pawn protection. Of course, these sacrifices must be very well calculated before. Also, the knight can come on g4 after Bxf6 ...so another square with big potential because of the attack on f6 and h6.

We must notice that we need to move the e5-knight at some moment in order to clear e1-rook's way to attack on the e-file.

- **Nc3** and **Rd1** are less important in this attack, both playing more a defensive role (Rd1 defends the back rank and the d-pawn, Nc3 defends the c-file).

Of course, even before working on "piece collaboration", we should notice that White has a local force superiority on the kingside and on the center. Moreover, Black has some weaknesses and *potential weaknesses* on that side without which the attack could hardly be successful (Be7's position is insecure, h6 weakened the g6-square, Bb5 doesn't defend the critical light-squares).

Now, we can draw some concrete conclusions in conjunction with the collaboration between white pieces. We can even see now some ideas and moves (not necessarily the first move).

- Ne5-g6 double attack on f8 and e7. It clears the e-file for the rook. This sacrifice/operation is "supported" by Qc2 (which sees on g6), e1-rook which can take on e6 after f7xe6 (as well as the b3-bishop in case Nd5 leaves) – collaboration between 4 white pieces!
- Collaboration between Re1 and Bb3xd5 with attack on e7;

This evaluation should reveal hidden resources of the position and give us a real helping hand in calculating the concrete variation – the next very important step.

First, we should find the candidate moves for us (White).

1.Bxf6

This is the first candidate move that should come into our mind because:

- It is a tempo move (Black is forced to retake on f6)
- The role of the dark-square bishop within the group of the other White's attacking pieces is limited. His only role is the possibility of the exchange the f6-knight. Of course, just trading the bishop in the case the attack doesn't work would have no point. In this case we'll have to reconsider 1.Bxf6.

As we already saw 1.Bxd5 (played in the game) was not good and because there are no other nice-looking candidate moves for White, we should start to analyze this line. So, which are Black's candidate moves?

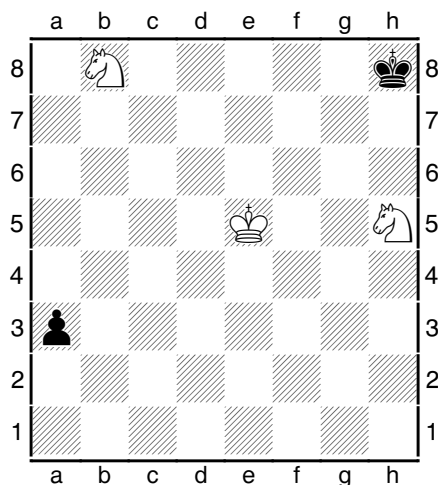
He can capture back with 3 pieces. So, we have 3 candidate moves. Before going any further, we must be sure that there is no any other possible good reply to 1.Bxf6. The counter-attack with 1...Nxc3 should not be overlooked! Now, we have 4 candidate moves and it seems there is no other. Only now, we can start to calculate every of them. In general, as here as well, we should analyze the candidate moves of the opponent starting with the less complicate ones. For this, we should *quickly* look over each candidate move and intuitively choose the easiest continuations.

- a) 1...Nxc3** First, we should calculate the strangest line, when Black doesn't take on f6 but on c3: 2.Bxe7 Nxd1 (2...Nd5 3.Bc5) 3.Qxd1 +- and White remains with material advantage – so we easily eliminated one of Black's candidate moves.
- b) 1...gxf6** 2.Ng6!! – collaboration queen + knight 2...fxg6 (if 2...Rfe8 3.Nxe7+ Rxe7 4.Bxd5 – collaboration of Re1 and Bb3) 3.Qxg6+ Kh8 4.Qxh6+ Kg8 5.Bxd5 – collaboration of Re1 and Bb3;
- c) 1...Nxf6** 2.Ng6!! Rfe8 (2...fxg6 3.Bxe6+ Kh8 4.Bxc8 and Be7 is hanging...) 3.Rxe6 and if 3...fxe6 a nice mate follows: 4.Bxe6+ Kh7 5.Nf8+ Kh8 6.Qh7+ Nxf7 7.Ng6#
- d) 1...Bxf6** Now 2.Ng6 doesn't bring anything so we need to look for other possibilities. Here, White will clear the f5-square for the queen: 2.Bxd5 exd5 3.Ng4! with the idea to gain a tempo after 3...Bg5 4.f4 Bxf4 5.Qf5 Now, White can bring the c3-knight in attack. 5...Bc7 (5...Bg5 6.Qxd5) 6.Nxd5 (with double threat 7.Ne7+ and 7.Ngf6+ gxf6 8.Nxf6+ Kg8 9.Nh5+ with mate) Kh8 7.Nxh6!! gxh6 and now the most deadly collaboration in attack of queen + knight: 8.Nf6 Kg7 9.Nh5+ Kg8 10.Qg4+ Kh7 11.Qg7#

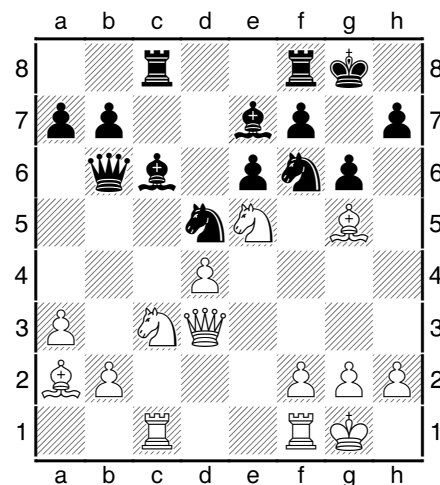
After examining these variations, it would be useful for you to review the “calculation in chess” file from Month 3 of training.

Problems

Try to solve these positions. Solutions are discussed in the next page.



- 1) How can White to move draw?
Thinking time: 10-15 minutes



- 2) White is to move. Find the best move.
Thinking time: 20-25 minutes

Solutions

1)

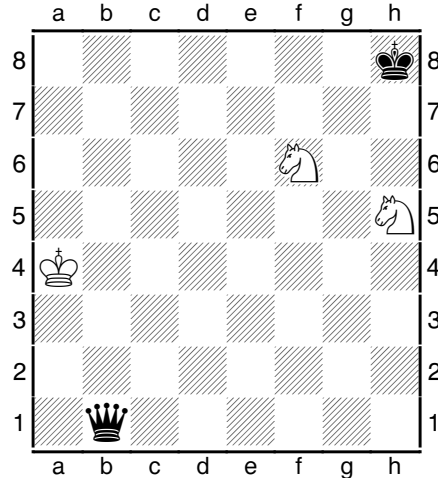
1.Nd7! with the idea Nc5-b3 stopping the black a-pawn to queen if this doesn't advance.
1...a2 2.Ndf6!! a1Q+ 3.Kf5 and draw as the black king is trapped in the corner and the collaboration with the queen cannot be established.

Beside this, it is important to notice the possibility / impossibility of zugzwang position. If the white king moves only on g5, g6, f7, f8, e7, e6, e5, and f5, the black queen cannot gain space and therefore she cannot destroy the collaboration between the white pieces.

Instead, if the white king is far from his knights (*diagram*), the black queen is able to bring the white king to the border and stalemate him.

For example, here, after:

1...Qb6 2.Ka3 Qb5 3.Ka2 Qb4 4.Ka1 Qb3, a white knight is forced to move and the black king will enter the game, eventually, winning.



2)

Alekhine, Euwe, Keres, Fine, Flohr and other players of different categories were asked to solve this position for an experiment made by De Groot, in 1938. Average players used between 10-15 minutes and they indicated moves like 1.Rfe1, 1.Bh6, or 1.h4. All the grandmasters indicated 1.Bxd5 as winning for White.

After 9 minutes, Alekhine gave the following answer:

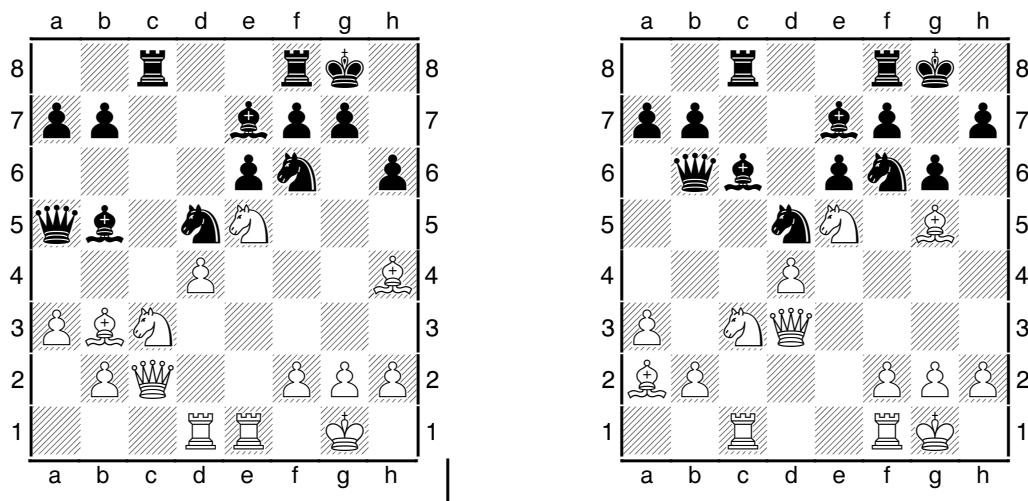
1.Bxd5! exd5 [1...Bxd5 2.Bxf6 Bxf6 3.Nd7; 1...Nxd5 2.Nxd5] followed by one of 2.Qf3, 2.Ng4, or 2.Rfe1. Alekhine said that the Ng4 move must be calculated now or later but for the moment it doesn't seem good.

He also gave 1.Nxc6 bxc6 and 1.Nxd5 Nxd5 2.Bxd5 Bxg5 as unsatisfactory for White and concluded that nothing is better than 1.Bxd5.

So, he chose 1.Bxd5 and preferred to think to his second move after the position is changed on the board.

Flohr (one of the strongest players of that time) made an instructive thinking mistake. After 10 minutes he said that after 1.Bxd5 exd5 2.Qf3 nothing is clear. He told that White wins after: 1.Nxc6 bxc6 2.Bxd5 exd5 3.Bxf6 Bxf6 4.Nd7. He forgot that the knight was changed even at the first move of this line.

The complete answer is: **1.Bxd5! exd5** [1...Bxd5 2.Bxf6 Bxf6 3.Nd7; 1...Nxd5 2.Nxd5] **2.Qf3! Qd8** [2...Kg7 3.Ng4 Nxg4 4.Bxe7] **3.Rfe1 Kg7 4.Ng4!! Nxg4 5.Bxe7 Qd7 6.Bxf8+ Rxf8 7.Qf4**



In the first position, the best move was 1.Bxf6, while in the second the best move was 1.Bxd5. Let's make a comparative analyze of these 2 positions seen in this lesson. The pawn structures are the same typical of isolated pawn. The configuration of white pawns is the same, but the black pawns on the kingside are different in the 2 positions. In the first, Black played h6, in the second g6.

Now, you are asked to see the differences between the placements of the pieces in the 2 positions. The common points of these 2 positions are:

- Black's control over the d5-square with the objective to block the d4-pawn.
- White's pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal and the collaboration of this bishop with Ne5 and Re1 with the clear objective of king attack (by means of sacrifices).

In conclusion, the main difference of these positions is the black structure on the kingside. In the first position, Black weakened the g6-square by h7-h6 which allowed the Ne5-g6 move and in the second, Black weakened the dark-squares by g7-g6 which allowed the collaboration Qf3 + Bg5 + Ng4 in attack against the weak f6-square.

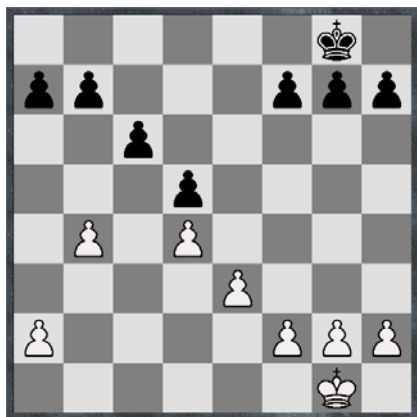
Conclusion:

The position assessment and the concrete calculation of variations are distinct actions. However, they depend each other and only together can lead to the "best move".

After making the position assessment and before calculation of variations, the evaluation of collaboration between pieces plays an important role in the player's technique!

Minority Attack

Usually the Queen's Gambit, exchange variation, is the most common way to get in a position that requires the minority attack. Another opening where we can find this plan is the exchange variation in the Caro-Kann defense after: 1.e4-c6 2.d4-d5 3.ed5-cd5 6.Bd3-Nc6 7.c3. The same structure is arising but here Black is the one who can start the minority attack. Of course there are other plans that can work in this kind of structure but here we will focus on minority attack.



As you can see the pawn chain d5, c6, b7 has its base on “b7”. To attack the base in a consistent way is almost impossible. So the idea of the minority attack comes on our mind. This starts with the question “how can this chain be weakened?”. The answer is quite simple: by pushing the pawns on the queenside, we can move the base of the chain on “c6” by trading the “b” pawns. After this, the “c6” pawn can be attacked more easily because it is on a half-open file so the rooks can be included in the attack. If the “b” pawn is traded for the “c” pawn, then the “d” pawn will be cut off from the chain. It will be a permanent concern so the pieces will occupy defensive positions in order to protect it.

Of course, there are defensive possibilities against the minority attack. There are two major possibilities. First one is connected with a kingside attack: the minority attack is ignored and the efforts are concentrated on the other wing. In this approach time is the essence. The second consists in a queenside play: the main concern is to slow down the pawns and take some defensive measures.

As you can see in both cases we speak about a flank play. This is quite normal in position where the center is almost blocked. For this reason the general rule *when the opponent is making a side attack you should respond with an attack in the center* cannot be applied here.



We will discuss the mentioned plans starting from the position above. This is a theoretical line after Black's 10th move of the exchange variation in the Queen's Gambit opening. Here are some plans but we will concentrate on the one starting with **11.Rab1**. By this move, White immediately takes active measures on the queenside. He just wants to push his pawns in order to weaken Black's pawn chain. As I mentioned Black has two major possibilities:

1. Kingside attack

More or less, almost all the pieces of the side who is confronted with a minority attack are "looking" on the kingside. For this reason this looks a tempting idea, but it is not so easy to be carried out. White's king is quite well protected but in order to attack Black's future weaknesses on the queenside some pieces must go in that direction. Therefore the chances for the attack to succeed are greater. The time factor is the most important one. Who is able to implement his plan first will have the upper hand. If the kingside attack will not succeed, then a long defense is required in order to protect the weaknesses on the queenside.

Akesson – Ivanchuk, PCA/Intel-GP, 1994

11.Rab1-Ng6 Black brings another piece on the kingside and in the same time he restricts the mobility of White's dark square bishop **12.b4-a6** this move's aim is to get rid of a potential weakness on the queenside (a7) and in the same time his undeveloped rook will be an active piece **13.a4-Bd6 14.b5-ab5 15.ab5-h6 16.Bf6-Qf6** until now both sides carried out their plans in consistent way. White has managed to put some pressure on the queenside and it is ready to trade the "b" pawns. By doing so, the weakness is moved to c6 and it will be an easier target. In the same time, Black has all the pieces directed towards White's king. **17.Rfe1** White is taking defensive measures, he vacates the f1 square in order to put his knight there. After this the king will be protected and White can think about active possibilities on the other wing. The trade on g6 is not desirable because it will weaken the light squares for no real advantages. **17...Bg4 18.Nd2-Nh4** Black managed to put immediate pressure on the kingside so White has no time to deal with the "c" pawn **19.g3-Bh3 20.bc6-bc6 21.Bf1-Bf5 22.Bd3-Bh3 23.Bf1-Bf5 24.Bd3-Bf5 ½**

Sandic – Flear, Belgrade, 1998

11.Rab1-Ng6 12.Bf6-Bf6 13.b4 White tries to gain some time for his queenside attack by denying Black's best setup **13....a6 14.a4-Bg4 15.Nd2-Be7** Black is aiming for the same setup like in the previous game. **16.Rfc1-Bd6 17.Nf1-Qg5 18.b5-ab5 19.ab5-h5 20.bc6-bc6 21.Ne2** yet again both sides carried out their plans in a consistent way. As you can see in order to protect the king, White must bring some pieces on the kingside. Doing this he will not have enough pieces to attack the weak c6 pawn. **21....Rac8 22.Rb6-Bd7 23.Rb7-Bg4 24.Rb6-Ne7 25.Kh1-h4 26.h3-Bh5 27.Ng1** both sides protect their weaknesses very well and the game is balanced. A draw was agreed on the 34th move.

2. Queenside game

By adopting this plan, Black will try to slow down White's advance on the queenside. In the same time he tries to get some play of his own on this wing. This can be achieved in two ways.

2.1 Playing on the "a" file

By doing so, Black restricts White's options to attack the "c" pawn in the same time putting some pressure on the queenside.

Spiess – Gabriel, Germany cup, 1992

11.Rab1-a5 this move is the starting point for plans containing queenside game. At once Black restricts the b4 advance. For continuing the assault White must open the "a" file for Black. **12.a3-Bd6 13.b4-Ng6 14.Rfe1-ab4 15.ab4-Bg4 16.Nh4-Bd7 17.h3-Ra3** Black can no longer manage to get the setup mentioned on the previous games. He now starts an active game on the queenside **18.Ng6-hg6 19.b5-Qa5** as you can see the one who has pressure on the queenside is Black. Attacking the c6 pawn is out of question. **20.Rec1-Bb4 21.Rb3?** necessary was 21.bc6 for a balanced position **21....cb5 22.Bf6-gf6 23.Qb2-Rb3 24.Qb3-Rc8 25.Ne2-Rc1 26.Nc1-Bc6** White has nothing for his lost pawn. He resigned at the move 32.

2.2 Blocking the queenside with b5

Adopting this plan is dangerous. Black will remain with a permanent weak pawn on c6, but this is not so easy to be attacked. On the other hand, White has some weakness of his own, the b4 pawn that requires permanent protection. Also Black creates a wonderful square on c4 for his knight. Generally, White's reaction against this plan is the e4 advance.

Pavlovic – Malakhatchko, Bar-Sozina, 2005

11.Rab1-a5 12.a3-g6 13.b4-Ne6 14.Bh4-ab4 15.ab4-b5 16.Rfd1 in order to put some pressure on the queenside, White must open the centre with e4. As you can see it is almost impossible to attack the "c" pawn. In the same time the "b" pawn requires

permanent protection. **16..Bb7 17.e4-de4 18.Ne4-Nd5 19.Be7-Qe7 20.Nc5-Nc5 21.bc5**
White managed to free his rook from defending the “b” pawn and left Black with a “bad” bishop. Black has a “b” passed pawn and control over the “a” file. Although White is slightly better there is no need for concern from Black.

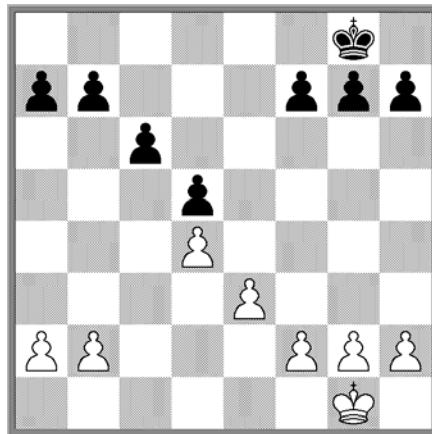
21...Qf6 22.Ne5-Red8 23.Be4-Ra3 24.Qb2-Ra4 25. g3-Rb4 26.Qd2-Rb1 27.Bb1-h5 28.h4-Kg7 29.Ba2-Bc8 30.Bb3 ½

Conclusion.

The minority attack was dangerous in the past. Now the defense is more accurate and this attack doesn't offer great prospects for a better game. Even if you manage to weaken the “c” pawn for no real compensation, the road to victory is hard. In order to achieve real winning chances another weakness is necessary, and it is very hard to make another one. In my opinion the other plans that we will discuss in the article “Carlsbad structure” offer better prospects to get an advantage.

Carlsbad Structure Queenside Castle

The name of this structure came from a chess tournament which took place in Carlsbad, in 1923. The reason is that it was played very often for the first time.



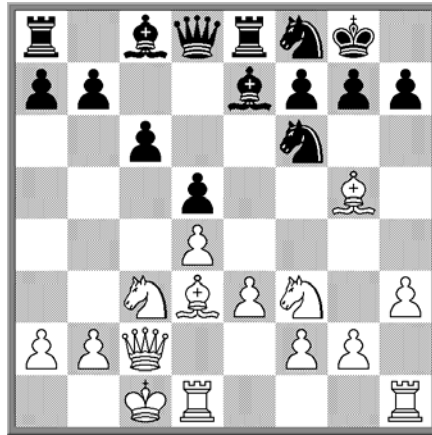
There are three major plans connected with this position: 1. The minority attack that was already discussed; 2. Long castle followed by a kingside attack and 3. Playing in the center with f3, e4 connected with a kingside attack. The last two plans are far more dangerous for Black than the first one.

Now we will study the long castle system. The main idea of this setup is to start a kingside attack with the help of the pawns from the kingside. To achieve this, White has two setups involving the “g1” knight path. First one is connected with the development of the knight on “f3” and then he will reach “e5” square. The second one is with development of the knight on “e2” and then he will go to “g3”. From there, the knight can go on “f5” or “h5” in order to support the kingside attack.

Black has some play of his own. It involves a queenside attack connected with the advance of his queenside pawns or the advance of the “c” pawn opening this file. More commonly these plans are connected. As you can see by advancing the “a” and “b” pawns, the “c” pawn will become a backward pawn. In this case White can seriously think to play on the queenside pressing on the “c” file. For this reason, sooner or later Black has to advance his “c” pawn. After this he will be left with an isolated pawn on “d5”. The general principles that we presented on the “isolated pawn” lessons are no longer available because there are opposite castles. Only the main one that you must exchange pieces is still available. The essence is given by the time factor. Who is able to get to the opponent’s king first has the “upper hand”. Now let’s discuss this on concrete examples.

Development of the “g1” knight on “f3”

The starting position from where we will discuss some games and plans will be the one below. It is a theoretical line after White's 11th move.



Before we will see some examples I would like to draw your attention to some interesting aspects about the advance of the pawns. It is clear that Black will advance his pawns quicker. On the other hand they are easier to be blocked. If Black pushes “a3” White can block the queenside with “b3” and on “b3” the same thing will be achieved with “a3”. Black is not able to do so on the kingside because there are three pawns there that White can attack simultaneously (“h” and “f”).

Sokolov, Ivan – Short, Nigel, PCA/Intel-GP, 1995

11...a5 As you can see Black is starting a direct attack on the queenside by pushing his pawns. **12.Kb1-b5 13.Ne5-Bb7 14.f4-a4** This is the best way of pushing the pawns. If the “b” pawn is pushed first, White has the additional Na4 that takes control over “c5”. In addition, the queenside pawns are difficult to be pushed forward. In this case, White can start playing on the queenside and on the “c” file. As you can see, the “c” pawn is a major weakness. Pushing the “a” pawn first will deprive white’s knight from reaching “a4”. **15.g4-a3 16.b3-Rc8** Now that the queenside is blocked, Black concentrates on the “c5” advance. **17.Bf5-Rc7 18.Rc1** White is taking some defensive measures on the “c” file. Interesting is an attempt to speed things on the kingside with 18.Bf6 and after 18...gf6 19.Nd3-Bc8 20.Rc1 White has better position because of his better structure. After 18....Bf6 19.g5-Be5 20.de5-Bc8 21.Bd3 there is no point in changing the opponent’s “bad bishop” 21...g6 22.h4 there are not so many pieces left on the board but White’s chances are slightly better. **18....Bd6 19.Bh4-Qa8 20.g5-N6d7 21.Rhg1** Another tempting idea was the direct attack over the king that involves a piece sacrifice. 21.Bh7-Nh7 22.Nf7-Kf7 23.g6-Kg8 24.gh7-Kh8 25.Qg6 and White has dangerous attack. It might be better for Black to give back his piece with 25....Nf8 26.Qd6-Rd7 followed by 27...Re3 with unclear position. **21....Nb6 22.Bd3-b4 23.Ne2-c5 24.dc5-Rc5 25.Qd2-**

Ba6 After this, the position is balanced due to the fact that Black can get rid of his “bad bishop” **26.Nd4-Rc1 27.Rc1-Be5 28.fe5-Bd3 29.Qd3-Nbd7 30.Qb5-Ne5 31.Bg3-Nfg6?** The position was equal after **31...Neg6 32.Qb4-Re3 33.Nf5-Re2 34.Qc3-d4 35.Nd4 32.h4-Rc8 33.h5-Rc1 34.Kc1-Qc8 35.Kd1-Qg4 36.Ne2-Nf3 37.hg6** there are some practical chances for Black, but the position is lost. White won at move 81.

Makarichev Sergey – Khalifman Alexander, Podolsk, 1992

11...a5 12.Kb1-Be6 13.Bf4 Black first develops his bishop and prepares to meet **13.Ne5** with **13...Nfd7** followed by “f6”. White’s last move is with double scope: he frees the path for his “g” pawn and in the meantime has some defensive purpose. If Black will push his “c” pawn, the bishop will come to help his king via “e5”. By doing this he will block the “d” pawn also. **13....a4 14.Ng5-Qa5 15.Be5-a3 16.b3-Rac8** Black has to open the “c” file in order to get some counter play otherwise White will simply push his kingside pawns. On the other hand White is well prepared for this but he must lose some time, so we can say that the game is balanced. **17.Ne2-c5 18.dc5-Bc5 19.Bc3** of course not **19.Bf6-gf6**. After this trade White will be left with a permanent weakness on his dark squares of the queenside, with no attack on the kingside, so with a bad position. We also can see that on **19.Bf6** bad is **19...Bd4** because of **20.Bd4** and White is winning. **19....Qb6 20.Qd2-Ne4** now White must trade some pieces and the position is equal **21.Be4-de4 22.Ne6-Ne6 23.Ng3-Red8 1/2-1/2**

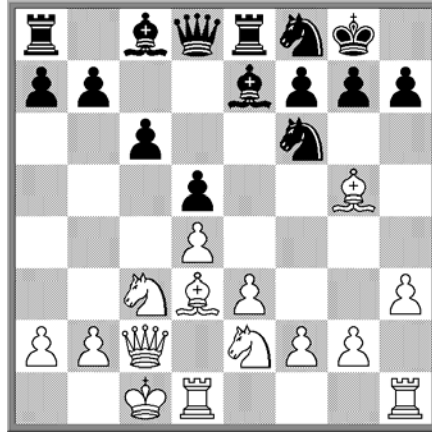
Bacrot Etienne – Bruzon Batista Lazaro, Lausanne, 2001

11....Be6 12.Kb1-Rc8 Here Black ignores the advance of his queenside pawns and he turns his attention at once on the advance of his “c” pawn. This is a rare plan but he can be taken into consideration. This plan leads to slightly better position for White but a long term one. **13.g4-N6d7 14.Be7-Qe7 15.Nd2** Also interesting was **15.Ne5-f6** (**15...Ne5 16.de5** followed by “f4” will lead to a dangerous attack on the kingside. It seems that White attacks first.) **16.Nd7-Qd7 17.Rdg1** and here also White has the upper hand. Instead of this, White opts for a massive advance of his queenside pawns that will also lead to a better game **15....c5 16.f4-f6 17.Rhe1** now White is well prepared against the “c4” advance at which he will play **Bf1** followed by “e4” with clearly better position due to his better control over the centre. Therefore, Black opts for a slightly worse position but one with no weaknesses. **17...cd4 18.ed4-Qd6** Black still has some problems but he accurately defended and made a draw on move 73.

Development of the “g1” knight on “e2”

The main difference between this setup and the previous is that after pushing his “g” pawn, White will start a kingside attack mainly with his light pieces. On the other hand, Black can take his chances on a queenside attack by advancing his “a” and “b” pawns or playing for exchanges with **Ne4**. The first plan can be seen in practice more often.

The starting position from where we will discuss some games and plans will be the one below. It is a theoretical line after White’s 11th move.



Vaganian Rafael – Hjatarson Johann, Oviedo, 1992

11...a5 Black starts a queenside assault with his pawns. Generally speaking the attempt to play the setup involving only the advance of the “c” pawn does not work here. The reason for this is that White can force Black to trade some pieces more easily mainly because of the “Ng3-f5” maneuver. As we already know, this is undesirable for the player who has the isolated pawn. The idea is to take some advantages on the queenside by pushing white pieces back and only then this advance should be made. **12.g4-b5 13.Ng3-a4** here again Black is pushing his “a” pawn first in order to prevent White to go there with his knight. **14.Kb1-Qa5**

Another interesting idea was tested in the game Hulak – Spassky Toluca 1982. 14...a3 15.b3-Qa5 16.Rhg1-Kh8 A prophylactic move against the opening of the “g” file which sooner or later will occur. 17.Nce2-Bd7 18.Nf5-Bf5 19.gf5-Rac8 20.Nf4 White is too optimistic. He is hoping to prevent Black to push his “c” pawn by putting pressure on the “d5” pawn. Better was to play on the centre with 20.f3 followed by e4. In addition this will make room for the dark square bishop to return if necessary on the queenside in order to cover the weakened dark squares. 20...N8d7 21.Qe2-c5 22.dc5-Nc5 23.Bf6-Bf6 24.Nd5 White managed to win a pawn and everything seems to be alright, but 24...Na4 is a devastating move that will leave White with a passive position and I may add a hopeless one. 25.Rc1-Nc3 26.Nc3-Rc3 Now White has no counter play on the kingside and his weakened queenside will gave us the assessment of the position. Black has a wining position and he managed to win at the 36th move.

15.Nce2-b4 in my opinion there was no need to give up the “c” pawn. It is clear that Black will get some counter play but the undermining move “c5” is no longer possible and it is far more easy for White to protect his queenside now under the shelter of his centre. 15...Bd7 was better. **16.Qc6-b4 17.Qc1-Bb5 18.Bb5-Qb5 19.Qd2-g6** Black is taking measures against the invasion of the knight on “f5” and “h5” squares. The position is still unclear but White has better chances, after all he is a pawn up and it is hard to see how Black can amplify his queenside attack. Black’s chances are connected with the fact that for White is also hard to make significant progress due to the fact that he has to keep an eye on the queenside all the time. After a long struggle White managed to win on the move 51.

Topalov Veselin – Gonzalez Jorge, Villarobredo, 2000

11...Ne4 12.Be7-Qe7 13.Be4-de4 Black managed to change a couple of pieces which in theory is good. There is an important principle that says “*In a cramped position you must change pieces*”. The difference here is that he will be left with a weak pawn on “e4” that will be a permanent motif of concerns. **14.g4** Of course not **14.Ng3-f5** and now the “e4” pawn will be well protected and Black can think of better times. White simply cuts off the pawn from his other pawns and then this one will be harder to protect. **14...f5 15.Rdg1-Be6 16.gf5-Bf5 17.Ng3** As you can see the big problem of **11...Ne4** is that for White it is far more easy to get a strong kingside attack. Topalov will show us how such attack should be carried out. **17...Bg6 18.h4-h6 19.Nge2** After opening files on the kingside the time has come for the knight to get on a more aggressive position **19....Bh5 20.Nf4-Bf3 21.Rh3-Qd7 22.Rhg3-Re7 23.Nb1!** The only white piece that covers some important squares on the kingside, mainly h5, is the light squared bishop. So White immediately goes for trading this bishop. After the bishop is exchanged White will have a devastating attack. **23...Qe8 24.Nd2-Qf7 25.Kb1-Qf6 26.Nf3-ef3 27.Nh5-Qh4 28.Ng7 1-0**

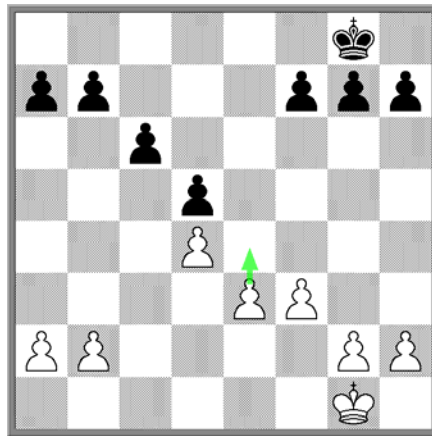
Conclusion

The plan involving the long castle is a promising one and leads to a complicated struggle. Where to develop the “g1” knight is a matter of taste although we prefer it on “e2”.

Carlsbad Structure

Playing in the center

This is one of the most promising setups that White can undertake fighting against the Carlsbad structure.

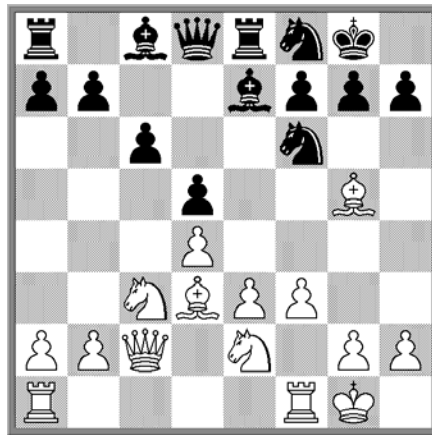


White's idea is simple and easy to spot. By pushing "e4" he wants to take a firm control over the centre. If he is able to do so without any challenge from Black, the position will be clearly in his favor. Not only that he will have better control over the centre but he will be able to undertake a dangerous attack over the kingside. Additionally if White manages to avoid the trade of "d" and "e" pawns, he will be able to push the "e" pawn forward. For Black this is undesirable. White then will push his "e" and "f" pawns forward, getting an unstoppable attack over the kingside. If necessary, the "g" pawn can support them.

Now let's discuss about what Black can do to oppose this setup. There are 2 major plans that he can try, both connected with the "c5" undermining move. He can make this move at once (the first plan) or he can make it after some preparatory phase (even if that means to let White to reach his pawn formation in the centre). This undermining move is a logical one. Making this move will take white's prospects in reaching a strong pawn formation in the centre. Even if he will be left with an isolated pawn on "d5" after the trade of "d" and "c" pawns, he has good prospects. The reason for that is that White also has a major weakness of his own: the "e" pawn. If White will be let to reach his strong centre with "e4, d4", then, by undermining the centre with "c5", Black can also obtain good prospects – for this he must be sure that the dark squares in the centre, "d6" and "e5", are under his control. With his centre already formed naturally against the "c5" breakthrough, White will push "d5". He will have a strong passed pawn. The assessment of the position will be given by the control over the "d6" and "e5" squares. If the pawns are blocked, the advantage is on the Black's side and, if not, the advantage is on the other side. It is clear that the pawns can be pushed forward in the last case. Another important aspect that Black should know is that after pushing "c5". the tension in the centre must

remain. If he trades on “d4” or pushes “c4”, then the advantage is on White’s side. Same principle is applied for White also; he must not take on “c5” because Black than can put pressure on the backward “e3” pawn.

The starting position from where we will discuss some games and plans will be the one below. It is a theoretical line after White’s 11th move.



Direct attack over the centre with “c5”

This direct attempt to clarify matters in the centre is a little too premature. Black is not able to maintain the tension in the centre therefore White will have the advantage. We will see how White has to play when the tension is released in the centre.

Sadler Matthew - Vaganian Rafael, Oviedo, 1992

11...c5 12.Rad1-cd4 Another possibility is 12...c4. This will be discussed in the next game. As I said above to release the tension in the centre is not a good idea. White has his pieces placed in almost optimal squares. For this reason he has a big advantage and he can put direct pressure on the isolated “d5” pawn. **13.Nd4-a6 14.Nf5-Bf5 15.Bf5-g6 16.Bh3** Now it is hard to give an advice for Black. Vaganian gave up the exchange for a pawn but although he was having some drawing chances he was not able to hold. **16...Qb6 17.Bf6-Qe3 18.Kh1-Bf6 19.Nd5-Qe5 20.f4-Qb2 21.Qb2-Bb2 22.Nc7** and White won at 43rd move.

Vallejo Pons Francisco – Mateuta Gabriel, Aviles, 2000

11...c5 12.Rad1-c4 13.Bf5-Be6 14.Be6-Ne6 15.Bf6-Bf6 16.e4 White’s last moves were made to support the “e4” advance. As you can see now, White’s centre will be mobile and very strong. The reason for this is that Black no longer can keep it under control due to the fact that his pawn is on “c4” instead of “c6”. **16...Nc7** Black can’t take the pawn **16...de4 17.fe4-Nd4 18.Nd4-Bd4 19.Kh1-Qb6 20.Na4-Qd6 21.Qc4-Rad8 22.Qf7-Kh8 23.Qb7** and White is two pawns up. If Black plays **16...de4 17.fe4-Rc8 18.e5** White has

almost a winning position. Note that the pawns in the center must be pushed all the time in such way that they be able to restrict the opponent's bishop. Another bonus is that they will be much harder to be blocked. **17.e5-Be7 18.f4-b5** It is time to discuss some aspects regarding this position. As you can see, both players have their pawns majorities, Black on the queenside and White in the centre and on the kingside. In this case the assessment of the position is given by the presence of the queens. If the queens are changed, the one who has queenside majority has the advantage. He will easily make a dangerous passed pawn on the queenside. In the other case with the queens on the board, with kingside majority there are good prospects to launch a direct attack over the king. **19.Ng3-b4 20.Nce2-a5 21.Rf3-a4 22.Nf5-Bf8 23.Rh3-g6 24.Ne3-b3 25.ab3-ab3** Both sides carried out their plans in consistent manner, but it seems that White has better prospects. As a Russian proverb says *"You can't improve on checkmate"* **26.Qd2-Nb5 27.f5-Ra6 28.Rf1- Bg7 29.f6-Bf8 30.Ng4-Qd7 31.Qg5** As you can see, White manages to bring all his pieces on the kingside, so the end is near. **31...Nc7 32.Nf4-Ne6 33.Qh4-h5 34.Ng6-fg6 35.f7-Qf7 36.Rf7 1-0**

Preparation of the "c5" advance

Here Black first puts his pieces on better squares and then makes the "c5" advance. In some cases he can allow White to make his centre and then he will attack it with "c5". By doing so, he has two major moves: "11...Be6" and "11...Nh5". Other moves will only transpose in the same type of position. In my opinion this approach offers Black better prospects than the direct "c5".

We will discuss an example for every move.

Timman Jan – Jussupow Artur, Riga, 1995

11.... Be6 12.Rad1 this move, in advance, places the rook on the "d" file in order to be prepared against the "c5" advance. 12.e4 is not dangerous now because after 12...de4 13.fe4-Ng4 14.Be7-Qe7 15.Qd2-c5 16.d5-Bd7 Black has total control over the central "d6" and "e5" squares. As I already mentioned, this gives Black better chances. **12...Rc8** Now Black completes his development and is ready to advance his "c" pawn. **13.e4-de4 14.fe4-Ng4 15.Bf4** Again 15.Be7-Qe7 16.Qd2-c5 17.d5-Bd7 is what Black wants. A nice trick that is worth to be mentioned is that after 15.Bd2-c5 16.d5 Black has the counterattack 16...c4! that will leave him with better chances. Now Black must take some aggressive measures in order to have some counter play to compensate White's strong centre. **15...Ng6 16.e5** White covers indirectly the "e3" square. **16...Bg5** the attempt of winning an exchange will give White a dangerous attack over the black king after 16...Nf4 17.Bh7-Kh8 18.Nf4-Ne3 19.Qd3-Nd1 20.Ne6-fe6 21.Rd1 and White has better perspectives due to the weaknesses of the light squares around the black king. With his last move, Black puts more pressure against the dark squares and forces White to trade some pieces. As I already mentioned *when you have a cramped position changing pieces is in your favor*. **17.Bg6-fg6 18.Qd2-Nf4 19.Nf4-Bc4 20.Rfe1-c5** If Black manages to make this advance he has no reason to fear. **21.Ne4** after 21.e6-cd4 (but no 21...Be6? 22.Ne6-fe6 23.Qf4 followed by 24.dc5 White has an edge due to his better

structure) 22.Qd4-Qd4 23.Rd4-g5 24.ef7-Bf7 Black has nothing to fear. **21...cd4 22.Nd6-d3 23.Nh3** White has nothing after 23.Nd3-Bd3 24.Qd3-Re5 25.Re5-Qb6 26.Qe3!-Qe3 (26...Ne3? 27.Nc8 wining) 27.Re3-Ne3 28.Re1-Rc6 29.Nb7-Nd5 with equal position. **23...Re5 24.Nc8-Qc8 25.Re5-Ne5 26.Qe3-f6** The position is balanced. For the exchange, Black has a dangerous and well protected pawn on d3 that ensures him sufficient counter play. The game ended in a draw at move 38.

Ivanchuk Vassily – Jussupov Artur, Candidates qf3 (3), 1991

11....Nh5 12.Be7-Qe7 13.e4-de4 14.fe4-Bg4 After trading the dark square bishops, Black managed to complete his development but he allows White to make his strong pawn center. We can say that White has an edge. As you can see Black is no longer capable to make his freeing move “c5” because of “Nd5”. **15.e5!?** White vacates “e4” for his knight and in the meantime puts his pawn “by the book” on a different color than his bishop. **15...Rad8 16.Ne4-Ng6 17.Rad1!** It will be a pity for White to play 17.Nd6-Rd6! 18.ed6-Qd6 because now, due to the weak “d4” pawn and poor placement of White’s pieces, Black will have more than enough compensation for the exchange. With his last move, White reinforces the “d4” pawn and it is prepared to put some pressure of his own on “f7”. **17...Rf8 18.h3-Be2 19.Be2-Nhf4 20.Bc4-Kh8?!** Better was for Black to put some more pressure on “d4” and get more stable squares for his knights. He can do that with 20...Nd5 21.Rf3-Ngf4 22.Raf1-Ne6 and although he still has problems he can hope because of his pressure on “d4”. Instead of that he tries to liquidate white’s strong pawn on “e5”. **21.Rf3-f6 22.ef6-gf6 23.Ng3** Now the character of the position has changed. White no longer has better prospects in the center but for this Black weakened his kingside. Still, White has better game and skillfully he manages to win at 41st move.

Conclusion

As you can see, White has an edge all the time in this variation. For this reason we recommend this setup against the Carlsbad structure. With this attempt, White has better prospects and in the same time he risks nothing.

PAWN CHAINS

BLOCKED STRUCTURES

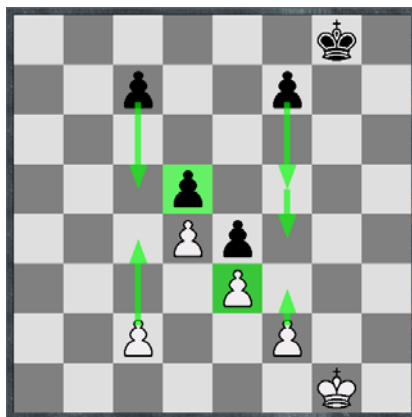
Introduction

Usually this type of structure appears from the opening. There are 4 major types of blocked structures:

- The French and Caro-Kann will give us the blocked chain: e5, d4 against e6, d5.
- The King's Indian will give us the blocked chain c4, d5, e4 against c7, d6, e5.
- The Old Indian Defense will give us the blocked chain c4, d5, e4 against c5, d6, e5.
- The Spanish (Ruy Lopez) Opening can give, in a lot of its variations, 2 chains:
a) d5, e4 against d6, e5 and b) c3, b4 against c4, b5.

Here we will discuss some general aspects of how we should play with this type of structures and general aspects of every these chains. On the next lessons we will study some concrete aspects and examples regarding each of the above structures.

General approach



First, let's see some important aspects regarding the blocked pawn chain as explained by Nimzowitsch in his famous book "My system". Then we will discuss these aspects.

Any pawn chain is characterized by pawns on the diagonal that are blocking each other and cut the table in two parts. The scope of the fight (for each other) must be the attack over the base of the chain. In order to destroy the chain we need two phases: first is to attack the base of the chain. If this is realized, then we will draw our attention to the next pawn (the top of the base or the next base) and this is the second phase.

Starting from the position above I will explain what our great predecessor wanted to say and why this is the best way to deal with the pawn chains.

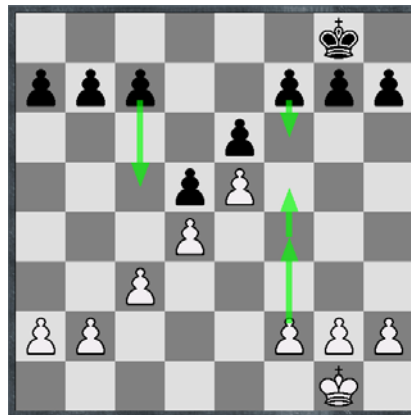
In this position, White must start with the attack over the chain with c2-c4. Let's imagine that there are some pieces on the board. It is much harder to attack the "c" pawn than the "d" one. **Always the pawns that are more advanced are easier to be attacked.** Only if Black takes on c4, White must attack the top of the chain with f2-f3. If he attacks the

chain with f3 (before c4) he gains nothing. The d5 pawn will not allow the opponent “e” pawn to advance further so White will be left only with a backward pawn on e3. As you can see if both central “e” and “d” pawns will disappear, White will be left with two strong connected pawns in the centre.

For the same reason, Black must first attack the opponent chain base with his “f” pawn and only if the “e” pawn will disappear, he should advance the “c” pawn.

Before we discuss about the pawn chains above I would like to draw your attention on another aspect. The destruction of the chain will not offer by itself an advantage to the side who manages to do it. **If the chain is replaced by pieces** (the squares that were occupied by your pawns) **and the opponent’s remaining pawns are firmly blocked, then the destruction of the chain will offer nothing.** So it is an effective destruction of the chain **only if your remaining part of the chain can be put in motion.** In the position above it is an effective destruction of the chain with c4 and f3 only if the “e” and “d” pawns can be put in motion. The most important pawn that must advance is the “e” pawn, this way the blocked structure will become a strong centre.

French and Caro-Kann type of structure.



This is a typical chain arriving from French and Caro-Kann openings. The big difference between these openings is Black’s “bad” light-square bishop. In French, this will be left closed behind the e6-pawn while, in Caro-Kann, it will be in front of the pawns. The advantages and disadvantages of this would be discussed in the next lesson.

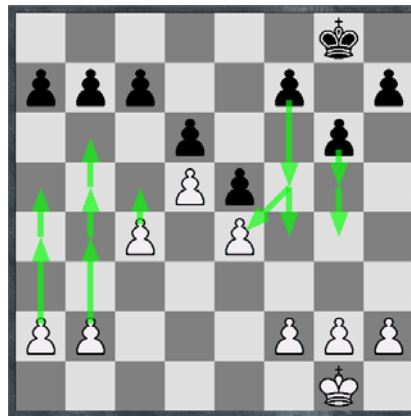
As you can see White has a chain with his base on b2. This pawn is hard to be attacked so Black will play c7-c5 in order to move the base on d4 (by c5xd4). It will be a mistake for Black to advance his “c” pawn on c4 because then White’s chain base will be moved on c3. In order to attack this new base, Black must put his “b” pawn in motion. This not only would lose valuable time but also would be much harder. **Always put pressure on the pawn that can be easiest attacked.** As we discussed if the White’s “d” pawn will disappear, f7-f6 becomes the effective move.

From White’s point of view the normal plan should be the advance of the “f” pawn in order to move the base from f7 to e6. In the game this is quite difficult to achieve. The reason is that Black can put immediate pressure on d4 and there is no time for White’s

plan. Another plan can be put into action. White simply gets his pieces in the game overprotecting his chain. He must be able to replace the pawns with the pieces. The e5 pawn that offers him space will give him the direction of the attack: the kingside. Only if his chain is unchallenged he can put his “f” pawn in motion.

We will discuss other aspects in the next article. This depends mainly by the placement of the pieces.

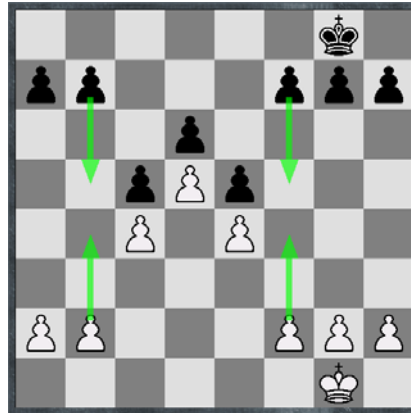
King’s Indian type of structure



Here, the presence of the d5 pawn gives White space advantage mainly on the queenside. White’s main plan is a pawn offensive on the queenside in order to put pressure on the opponent’s “c” and “d” pawns. If White can only move the base on d6 it will be hard for him to attack it. Trading pawns on d6 will be a major conquest only if White can invade the “c” file. The ideal position for White is to have both Black’s pawns under pressure. For doing this he must advance one pawn on c5 and the other on b6. Another plan is the advance of his “f” pawn. This is a good idea only if Black doesn’t have a firm control over the e5 square.

This structure gives also a clear plan for Black. By advancing his “f” pawn, he will put pressure on e4. This pawn must be supported by his fellow on g6. The reason behind this is a simple one: White can trade the “e” pawn with the black “f” pawn and then he can occupy the e4 square mainly with a knight. By doing so, extra pressure will be put over the d6 pawn. For this reason, Black should not trade his “f” pawn for White’s “e” pawn, only if he has other direct gains. Therefore, Black has another plan: the advance f5-f4 can be regarded like a concession but there is another important aspect. Generally, White will castle on the kingside. For this reason moving the base to f3 will give Black also another target: White’s king. Also Black can take defensive measures on the queenside by advancing his “c” pawn on c5. We will discuss this below.

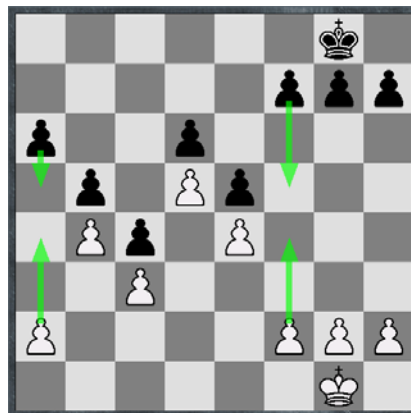
Old Indian type of structure.



As you can see, the base of Black's chain (d6) is untouchable. For this reason, White must draw his attention to the pawns next to the base: c5 and e5. In order to do this, he should advance the "b" and "f" pawns. The pawns must be supported by a3 and g3 in order to maintain control on the central squares if the pawns are traded. Both advances are strategically good. The most effective one is given by the control of the opponent over the important c5 and e5 squares. We should draw our attention to the less protected pawn by the pieces. It will be a serious mistake to trade the "b" and "c" pawns or the "f" and "e" pawns if the opponent can replace the pawn with an unchallenged piece.

Black has the same plan on the kingside like in the King's Indian defense. In addition he can try an active plan on the queenside with a6 and b5.

Spanish opening type of structure.



There are two pawn chains here. The central chain can be challenged with f2-f4 from White's point of view and with f7-f5 from Black's point of view, exactly like we discussed above.

The other chain can be challenged with a2-a4 from White's point of view and with a7-a5 from Black's point of view. The control over the "a" file with the rooks is the factor that will make these advances attractive.

These are general aspects concerning only the pawn structure. The presence of pieces will give us other interesting aspects. We will discuss every type of structure and the best placement of the pieces on concrete positions in the next articles.

BLOCKED STRUCTURES

French and Caro-Kann structures

Up until now we discussed only about the blocked structures and how to play against them in general terms. Now we will turn our attention on every type of blocked structure in particular. We will discuss about the major plans and where the pieces must be developed. So, we will start with the French type structure.



This position arises after the first moves of the French opening: 1.e4-e6 2.d4-d5 3.e5-c5 4.c3-Nc6 5.Nf3-Qb6

As you can see, Black puts early pressure on “d4” and in the same time he keeps an eye on “b2”. By this he disturbs the normal development of White’s pieces. The costs are not so high. He has less space on the kingside and a “bad” bishop on “c8”. His further game will be determined by White’s setup.

On the other hand, White has more space. He has 3 major plans that will determine the future course of the game:

- The first plan involves a pawn sacrifice with 6.Bd3.
- The second one is a direct attempt to clarify matters on the queenside with 6.a3
- The last one is 6.Be2

We will draw our attention to all these with some examples.

1. Developing the bishop on “d3”.

Blocking the d-file, White won’t be capable to protect in consistent way his “d4” pawn which will be sacrificed. White will get compensation consisting in lead in development. In the same time, White will occupy the central squares with the pieces. Remember what we discussed about the pawn chains: **if the pawns will disappear, then they must be replaced with pieces or we must have control over those squares**. If Black doesn’t take the pawn, then a typical fight with a pawn on “e5” will take place. We will draw our attention only to the last aspects that are directly connected with the blocked structures that we discuss.

Hector, J 2537 – Carlsson, P 2506, Sigeman, 2007.

6.Bd3 – Bd7 of course the d4 pawn is indirectly protected: 6...cd4 7.cd4-Nd4? 8.Nd4-Qd4 9.Bb5+. The pawn sacrifice I have mentioned before will be made after 6...cd4 7.cd4-Bd7 8.0-0-Nd4 9.Nd4-Qd4. For the pawn, white will get the initiative but in my opinions, Black has enough resources for defense.

7.dc5 at once White liquidates the tension in the center. By doing so, he must fortify his remaining “soldier” from “e5”. In addition now White has the “d4” square free for his pieces. On the other hand Black now can draw his attention on the last sequel of the chain, the “e5” pawn. If he is able to play “f7-f6” in good conditions, he will have the upper hand. If White can maintain his “e5” nail or keep a firm control over the “d4” and “e5” squares, he is better. If Black can destroy “e5” and push his central e6 and d5 pawns he will be better. The outcome of the battle is determined by these factors.

7....Qc7 8.Qe2-Bc5 9.Bf4 overprotection. This is a typical method pointed-out by Nimzovich - White is overprotecting his strong central pawn. This way he will be able to develop his remaining pieces on natural squares no fearing that Black can undermine his pawn with “f7-f6”.

9....Nge7 10.b4?! Up until now White’s play was according to the general strategic principles connected with this type of position but from now on he is trying too much. He wants to gain more space on the queenside and on kingside in the same time, neglecting his development. More normal was 10.Bg3 in order to have the bishop protected in case of “f6” and then 0-0, Nbd2, Nb3 with better chances.

10....Bb6 11.h4- f6! Now Black has the upper hand. He was able to put pressure on “e5” and White doesn’t have enough control over the central squares.

12.g3-fe5 13.Ne5-0-0 14.Qh5 it is not easy to give an advice for White but with his last move he makes Black’s task much easier.

14...Nf5 15.Qe2-Ne5 16.Qe5-Qc6 it is better to avoid queen trade. **In a cramped position trading pieces helps the side who stands worse.**

17. Nd2-Rac8 18.Rc1-Bc7 19.Qe2-e5 now Black has a huge advantage and it might be a decisive one. He was able to put his central pawn into motion. This is the reason for controlling the central squares. **If the pawns in the chain are changed, make sure that you control the squares that were occupied by these pawns.** By controlling these squares, you will not allow the advance of your opponent’s pawns. The rest of the game is the punishment for ignoring general principles.

20.b5-Qb6 21.Bf5-Rf5 22.Be3-Qb5 23.c4-Qc6 24.0-0-d4 25.Bg5-h6 26.Be7-Re8 27.Ba3-e4 28.Nb3-d3 29.Qd2-Bf4 30.gf4-Qg6 31.Kh1-Rh5 0-1

2. Clarifying matters on the queenside with 6.a3

By playing 6.a3, White threatens 7.b4, gaining space on the queenside and in the same time releasing Black’s pressure on the center and on the “b2” pawn. The dark-square bishop is free to protect “d4” and then White can develop his other pieces on more natural and aggressive positions. The most common way for Black to deal against White’s plan is to close the queenside with 6...c4. Generally speaking this move is not a desirable one as it frees White’s hands on the kingside. However, there are other strategical advantages that make this move a good one. First, Black is able to control any pawn advance on the queenside by playing Na5 and so he can get a safe place for his king on the queenside.

Then, he can prepare either a pawn advance on the queenside in order to attack White's pawn-chain base or attack White's "e5" pawn with "f6". A long and hard battle involving maneuvering is ahead.

Grischuk Alexander 2712 – Apicella Manuel 2501, 2003.

6.a3-c4 7.Nbd2-Na5 8.g3-Bd7 9.h4 After blocking the queenside, White starts to grab some space on the other side. The light-square bishop has nothing to do on e2, so White directs it to a more active square, on h3. From there, the bishop will support the "f" pawn advance and restrain somehow the f7-f6 undermining move by putting early pressure on e6. Now Black has two options: to calmly develop his pieces and make a long maneuvering game or to play on the kingside.

9....f5

In the game **Anand - Moreno Carnero, 2006**, Black played the first plan:

9...Ne7 10.Bg2-Qc7 in order to free the "b6" square for the knight.

11.h5-h6 12.Nh2-Nc8 13.Ng4-Nb6 14.Ne3 this knight maneuver looks strange but it has a clear idea. First of all on f3 the knight would have been in the "f" pawn's way. In order to make progress on the kingside, White must move the base of the chain to e6 which can be done only by advancing the "f" pawn. On the other hand, Black has revealed his plan also. First he wants to get a better square for his light-square bishop. He can achieve this by transferring the bishop on the kingside via "c2". From "e3" the knight prevents this. 14...0-0-0 15.Qf3-Ba4 16.0-0-Kb8 17.Re1-Ka8 Black puts his king in a safe place and in the same time frees the "b" file for the rook in order to support the further advance of the queenside pawns.

18.Qg4-Rg8 19.f4-Be7 20.Qh3-Bd7 after fine maneuverings, Anand managed to drive back some of the black's forces. But now Black is prepared to deal with the f5 advance, so White is strengthening his position further. Note that **you should attack on the side where you have space advantage and more pieces even if your king is there. Usually, an attack over the king has chances to succeed if you have 2 more in the attack than your opponent.**

21.g4-f6 22.Nf3-Nb3 23.Rb1-Rgf8 24.Qg3-fe5 up until now Black also played in a consistent way, but now his game stopped to be active and was transformed into a "wait and see" game. For this he was punished and lost at 65th move. Better was to get some initiative on the queenside with 24...Na4 and preparing a queenside assault with b5, a5, b4. Now let's return to the other plan.

10.gf6 this move is almost forced. If White allows Black to close the kingside, it will be almost impossible for him to put pressure on the base of the chain, the e6 pawn. Then, Black, after developing his pieces, can start advancing his queenside pawns.

10...Nf6 Interesting was 10...gf6 (not fearing of 11.Ne5-fe5 12.Qh5-Ke7 13.Qg5-Kf7 14.Nf3-Bg7 15.Ne5-Be5 16.Qe5-Nf6). After completing his development, Black can hope for better days due to his strong center and the possibility of advancing his "e" pawn. Now, skillfully, White manages to get better prospects.

11.Ne5-Bd6 12.Bh3-Be5 13.de5-Ng8 14.Qg4 White managed to make weak all the dark squares in Black's camp, so he has some advantage but, due to his better prospects in the center and on queenside, Black is still alive.

14...-g6 15.0-0-Ne7 16.Nf3-Nb3 17.Be3-Qc7 18.Rad1-h6 19.h5-g5 20.Nd4-Nd4 21.cd4-0-0-0 22.Bd2 In order to make further progress on the kingside, White must push his “f” pawn. As you can see like in the previous game there is no need to fear of opening the side where your king stands if you have superiority there.
22....Nc6 23.Kh2-b5 Black also advances his queenside pawns in order to gain space on the queenside.
24.f4-gf4? This was a mistake, the only way for Black to stay alive was **24....Nd4 25.fg5-Nb3 26.Bf4-hg5 27.Qg5-Nc5** with complicated position. Now Black will lose an important pawn for nothing.
25.Rf4-Qb6 26.Rf6-b4 **26...Qd4** is bad because of **27.Qd4-Nd4 28.Ba5 27.ab4-Nb4 28.Bh6-Nd3 29.Rd2-Nb2 30.Bg7-Rhe8 31.h6-a5 32.h7-a4 33.Qf3-Qb4 34.Rf2-c3 35.Rf8 1-0**

3. Variation with 6.Be2

This is not such a dangerous variation. White simply wants to protect his “d4” pawn. After that, he will try to grab some space either on the kingside or on the queenside. But this requires time and Black is able to get his pieces on good squares and being able to meet any of White’s attempts in a consistent way.

Benjamin, Joel 2620 – Bareev, Evgeny 2685, Munich, 1994.

6.Be2-Nge7 7.Na3-cd4 8.cd4-Nf5 9.Nc2-Bb4 10.Kf1-Be7 Now the “d4” pawn is well secured. But in the same time, Black manages to prevent White from castling and with his last move he is prepared to meet **11.g4** with **11...Nh4**. As you can see, Black is keeping an eye on any of White’s attempts to gain space.

11.h4-h5 yet again White’s threat to gain space on the kingside failed. So White is trying the same thing on the queenside:

12.b4-Bd7 of course the “b” pawn is indirectly protected: **12...Bb4 13.Rb1** or **12..Nb4 13.Rb1** and Black will lose a piece.

13.a3-Rc8 14.g3-Nd8 15.Ne3-Bb5 After trading his bad bishop, Black solved all his problems. The game ended in a draw at 43rd move.

Although it gave Black some other advantages on the queenside, in my opinion, the only way to fight for an advantage in these variations is the variation with 6.a3

Now I would like to draw your attention to a similar structure that can be reached from the **Caro-Kann Defense**. I will speak about the differences between this and the structure that came from the French opening. As you know in both openings, the same type of structure can be seen.



The major difference is that Black has managed to develop his light-square bishop in front of his pawns, so he is no longer a “bad” one. By Bc8-f5, Black spent the move to develop the bishop and did not put early pressure on White’s pawn-chain. If he is able to play in some moment “c6-c5” in good conditions, then Black will have the upper hand.

On the other hand, from White’s point of view, there are some important aspects: He has some time to put his pieces on more active squares because his pawn chain is not under pressure. The Black’s light-square bishop is out but White can use this factor. He can attack this bishop in order to grab space on the kingside. One of the most dangerous variations is 4.Nc3-e6 5.g4-Bg6 6.Nge2 followed by Nf4. Great attacking players like Shirov love this setup that leads to huge complications.

Other possibility is to fortify the center with f4 and c3 so that any attempt of “f7-f6” will be in advance defended. This leads to a long maneuvering struggle and the outcome depends on players’ skills in positional game.

Another idea is to put the knight on “b3” in order to prevent the advance of the “c” pawn. There are others plans but the main thing that you should remember is that if the opponent doesn’t put early pressure on the chain there are more possibilities for you to develop your pieces.

Ideal was to play “c5” at once and to put the light square bishop in front of the pawns but this was, of course, not possible. As you can see in order to gain a strategic advantage you must give up another.

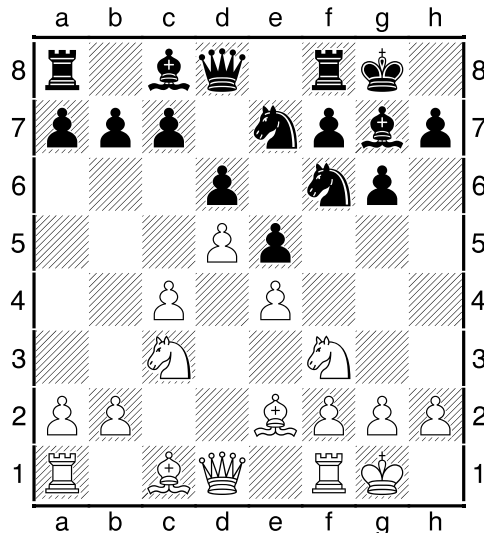
BLOCKED STRUCTURES

King's Indian structure

- Part 1 -

The blocked structures typical of the classical King's Indian are extremely complex. In this lesson, we are talking about the position after the very popular opening line:

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7.

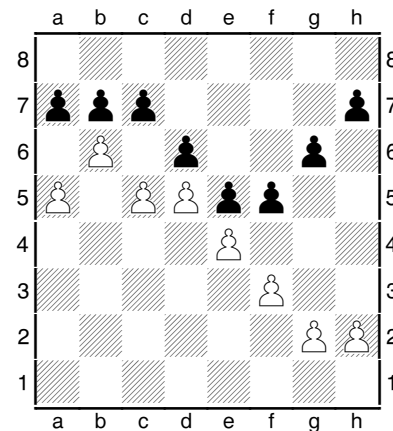


The center is closed by the pawn chains e4, d5 against d6, e5.

Obviously, **White** has more space in the center and on the queenside because of his d5-pawn. White's main plans are connected with a pawn offensive on the queenside with the first objectives to gain space here, open the lines for his pieces, and to create weak pawns in opponent's camp.

The first target is the base of the Black's pawn chain, the d6-pawn, which will be attacked by c4-c5. However, the exchange c5xd6, ...c7xd6 is usually not enough for White as Black can defend his d6-pawn. The most common idea is a double attack against Black's queenside structure, using the b-pawn: b4-b5-b6. (see the diagram)

This way, White succeeds to totally destroy the black chain and he will be left with great space on the queenside and, very important, a dangerous free pawn on d5.



Black has less space on the kingside than White has on the queenside, but because here is the white monarch, Black's actions are very dangerous. While, White can win material on the queenside, Black can checkmate on the kingside.

Black's plan is to push f7-f5 creating pressure on White's pawn chain base, the e4-pawn. In most of the cases, White will defend his e4-pawn by f2-f3, after which an exchange on e4 (...f5xe4, f3xe4) does not offer Black anything. At this moment, Black will advance f5-f4, changing his plans from attacking White's pawn chain to attacking the king.

In the initial position (after the first 9 moves), White has 3 main directions:

I) 9.Ne1 – White clears the f3-square for f2-f3, while moving the knight to the kingside (Ne1-d3) in a position from where he supports the pawn-thrust c4-c5;

II) 9.Nd2 – with the same idea to prepare f2-f3, but bringing the knight to a more active position: c4 from where the knight attacks the black d6-pawn;

III) 9.b4 – White starts the offensive on the queenside and leaves the f3-knight in place. The idea is to wait for Black's f7-f5 which will be met with a very interesting maneuver Nf3-g5-e6.

Both I) and II) do not allow Black to play Nf6-h5 and Black is forced to lose time with Nf6-d7 or Nf6-e8 in order to clear the way of the f-pawn.

Of course, each of these directions leads to sensible different positions and further plans of play. Now, we present some examples for all the important ideas tried in this pawn structure:

I) White plays 9.Ne1.

The knight is heading for d3 from where it supports the c4-c5 advance. Until White needs his knight for offensive, this makes a good defending job by protecting the g2-square. Now, with the idea to play f7-f5, Black has to choose between Nd7 and Ne8.

a) 9...Ne8 Black prepares f7-f5 moving his knight to a position from where it defends the important c7- and d6- squares. Also, Black intends to recapture on d6 with the knight after c5xd6. Indeed, the knight on e8 is a very important defender of key-squares on the queenside, but, in the same time, obstructs the black queen which cannot move anymore on the kingside via Qe8-g6. This is the space advantage. White has a large space on the queenside and his pieces can maneuver easily without obstructing each other, while Black is damned to concessions. Another drawback of Ne8 is that Black doesn't protect the e5-square and White can attack the front of the chain by the direct 10.f4 or by 10.Nd3 f5 11.f4. Not all "KID" players like this type of positions, so 9...Nd7 is the first choice of most of the players.

Nielsen, Peter Heine (2626) - Ost Hansen, Jacob (2425), 2002

9.Ne1 Ne8 10.Be3 (10.f4 or 10.Nd3 f5 11.f4 are possible). White develops his bishop in a good position just in time: f2-f3 will make room for the bishop on f2. On the g1-a7 diagonal, the bishop has an important role attacking the black a7-pawn together with Nc3-b5.

10...f5 11.f3 f4 12.Bf2 g5 13.c5 Bf6 with the idea Kh8 and Rg8

14.a4! 14.cxd6 allows Black to recapture on d6 with his e8-knight, so White prepares Nc3-b5 with double attack on d6 and also on a7. Moreover, the a-pawn will be then used to get the control over b6-square (after a4-a5) or c6-square (a4-a5-a6xb7).

14...Kh8 15.Nb5 Black has to take an unpleasant choice between ceding the a7-pawn or creating serious weaknesses on dark-square by the next move:

15...a6 16.cxd6 cxd6 After 16...Nxd6 17.Nxd6, White can bring the other knight on c4 (Ne1-c2-a3-c4) and after Qd1-b3-b6/b4, Black is unable to defend his weaknesses.

17.Na3 Bd7 18.Qb3 Qb8 19.Nc4 Nc8 20.Na5 b6 21.Nc6 Qb7 22.Nd3 Rg8

White obtained an overwhelming superiority on the queenside, but Black seems to defend everything and now starts his counter-attack on the kingside. It is important to understand that not only immediate material gains mean that White's strategy triumphed. Black pieces are tight in defense and practically they cannot enter attack. With small care to the kingside, White continues his pressure on the queenside:

23.h3 h5 24.Rfc1 g4 25.fxg4 hxg4 26.hxg4 Rg6 27.Ra3 Rh6 28.Bf3 Bxc6 29.Rxc6 Qh7 30.Kf1 Bd8 As we can see, Black has nothing on the kingside as 4 of his pieces are forced to defend the queenside. White won 10 moves later.

b) 9...Nd7 Again, Black prepares f7-f5, but this time the knight defends the e5- and c5-squares. Now, 10.f4 does not work for White as Black is ready to firmly occupy the e5-square with the knight. Also, 10.b4 is strongly met by 10...a5 after which Black gets the control over the c5-square and White's attack on the queenside is stopped.

So, how can White continue his attack on the queenside now?

b.1.) The fastest way is by sacrificing the c-pawn after which White will exert pressure directly against Black's c7-pawn. The idea is not just to recapture the sacrificed pawn, but to enter enemy's camp with the major pieces.

Piket, Jeroen (2609) - Ivanchuk, Vassily (2714), 1999

9.Ne1 Nd7 10.Be3 With the same idea to place the bishop on the important g1-a7 diagonal. **10...f5 11.f3 f4 12.Bf2 g5 13.Rc1** Against Black's control over c5 and his idea of playing a7-a5 against b2-b4, White came up with 2 ideas. First is to sacrifice the c-pawn which we see in this game, the second is to advance the a-pawn up to a5 (13.a4 with the idea a4-a5) which we will see in the next example.

13...Ng6 14.c5!? Nxc5 15.b4 Na6 Of course, 15...Nd7 16.Nb5 followed by Nxc7 and with the threat Ne6 is bad for Black. Therefore, the knight will stay on a6, not a fortunate position. **16.Nd3!** White does not hurry to recapture the sacrificed pawn (by Nb5) but increase the pressure and keeps the black a6-knight out of play.

16...Rf7 17.Nb5 Bd7 18.a4 Not 18.Nxa7 Qb8 and White's knight is trapped.

18...Qe8 19.Nb2 White simply defends the a4-pawn threatening Nxc7 now. Black has no time for active measures on the kingside. **19...Qb8 20.Qc2** renewing the threat Nxc7

20...Be8 After 20...Bxb5 21.axb5 Nxb4 22.Qb3 a5 23.b6, White has a strong initiative. However, this try may have been better for Black.

21.Qd2 h5 22.Rc4 White prepares the final assault against the black c7-pawn: Rfc1 and Qc3 after which Black has no defense.

22...Bh6 23.Rfc1 Kg7 24.Nd3 Qd8 25.Qc3 g4 26.Nxc7 Nxc7 27.Rxc7 Entering opponent's camp with the rooks, White not only wins the Black's queenside pawns, but also obstructs his kingside attack.

27...g3 28.Be1 gxf2+ 29.Kh1 Bg5 30.Rxf7+ Bxf7 31.Qc7 Qb8 32.b5 Bd8 33.Qxb8 Rxb8 34.Bb4 The weakness of the d6-pawn... Now, Black cannot defend both d6 and c7. **33...Be7 35.Rc7 Kf8 36.Nb2 Ke8 37.Nc4 Kd8 38.Bxd6 1-0**

In this game, you saw a very interesting way to attack the pawn-chain's base: opening the file with the help of a pawn sacrifice after which the space advantage on the queenside offered White excellent maneuverability and the possibility to recapture the pawn and conquering the seventh rank. An important aspect that made this plan work was the bad position of the black a6-knight.

b.2.)

Nielsen, Peter Heine (2626) - Kotronias, Vasilios (2626), 2004

9.Ne1 Nd7 10.Be3 f5 11.f3 f4 12.Bf2 g5 13.a4 White wants to play b2-b4 to support c4-c5, but wants to prevent a7-a5 first by playing a4-a5. Anyway, the a-pawn will help White in his actions on the queenside, so this idea is not a loss of time.

13...a5 Black prevents a4-a5. His plan now is to create a barricade by a5, b6, d6 against White's expansion on the queenside.

14.Nd3 b6 15.Be1 White's objective did not change: he wants to play c4-c5 to attack Black's pawn-chain. For this he needs to play b2-b4xa5 or after b2-b4, if Black takes a5xb4, White will continue with Bxb4 and a4-a5 trading the b6-pawn at last.

15...Nf6 16.Nf2 h5 In all the variations of the classical King's Indian after f2-f3 and ...f5-f4, Black advances the g-pawn and in most of the cases the h-pawn in order to clear the lines for his pieces and destroy White's pawn shield. Black's objective is not the chain-base, but, of course, the white king. His actions on the kingside are helped by many tactical resources.

17.h3 Kh8 18.Nb5 Opening the diagonal for the e1-bishop to make possible Be1xb4 after b2-b4 and a5xb4. Also, the knight is placed on an active position so that after the exchanges of the pawns and c4-c5 to attack the important c7 and d6 squares.

18...Neg8 19.b4 Rf7

After 19...axb4 20.Bxb4 Nd7 21.a5!, White opens the a-file and penetrate Black's camp. For example: 21...Nc5 22.axb6 Rxa1 23.Qxa1 cxb6 24.Qa7 Nh6 25.Qc7 and White has a clear advantage on the queenside, while Black attacks on the kingside remained without resources.

20.bxa5 bxa5 21.c5 Only now White succeeded to play c4-c5. However, for delaying White's actions on the queenside, Black got a new weakness on a5. **Usually, playing the pawns on the side where you are attacked lead only to new weaknesses.**

21...Bf8 22.cxd6 cxd6 23.Rc1 Nh6 24.Rc4 White prepares to enter Black's camp with the rook in front of the queen.

24...Rg7 Too slow.

Much more to the point was 24...g4 25.fxc4 hxc4 26.hxc4 Rg7 with very complicated position. Probably White should continue 27.g5!? (better than 27.Qc2 Nfxg4 28.Nxc4 Nxc4 29.Bxc4 Bxc4 and Black's attack looks dangerous) 27...Rxc5 28.Nc7 Ra7 29.Qc2 (29.Ne6 Bxe6 30.dxe6 Rg7 31.Bf3 Nhg4) 29...Bd7 30.Ne6 Bxe6 31.dxe6 Rg8 with mutual chances. (Avrukh Boris)

26.Bxa5! White wins a pawn with tempo.

26...Qe8 27.h4? this is a decisive mistake, which allows Black to seize a winning attack. Very strong was 27.fxg4! Bxg4 (27...hxg4 28.Nc7 Qg6 29.Nxa8 gxh3 30.Bf3!+-) 28.hxg4 Rxa5 29.Rc8 Qe7 30.gxh5+-

In King's Indian Defense, many games (maybe too many) are lost due calculations errors. This is not an exception even if the opponents are 2 strong grandmasters. Maybe this is why this opening still has his fans. The game continued:

27...gxf3 28.Bxf3 Bg4! 29.Bxg4 Nfxg4! 30.Bb6 Qe7 31.Nxg4 Nxg4 32.Bf2 [32.Rc3? Qxh4 33.Rh3 Qxh3 34.gxh3 Ne3+--+] 32...f3 33.g3 Ne3! 34.Bxe3 Rxc3+ 35.Kf2 [35.Kh1 Rh3+ 36.Kg1 Qxh4--+] 35...Rg2+ 36.Kxf3 Rxc2 37.Rxc2 Qxh4 38.Rg1 [38.Rc4 Qg4+ 39.Kf2 Be7 40.Ke1 Bh4+ 41.Kd2 Qg2+--+] 38...Rxa4 39.Nc3 Rc4 40.Ke2 Bh6 41.Bb6 Rxe4+ [41...Rxe4+ 42.Nxe4 Qxe4+ 43.Kd1 Qd3+] 0-1

b.3.) In these lessons about blocked structures, we see many plans and most of them are governed by attacks on different (opposite) flanks. In classical King's Indian Defense, Black attacks on the kingside by f7-f5. In the following example, we will see a very interesting plan for White when he does not attack on the queenside, but reacts on the kingside by g2-g4:

Rodshtein,M (2614) - Bologan,V (2663), 2008

9.Ne1 Nd7 10.f3 (not 10.Be3) **f5 11.g4!?** We met a similar idea in French Defense, where Black plays c7-c5 (attacking on d4) and White reacts by a2-a3 and b2-b4. Same here, White wants to solve the tension and, in the same time, acquires space on the kingside.

After 11...fxg4 12.fxg4 Rxf1 13.Bxf1, White threatens g4-g5 and his pieces have open lines, while all black pieces are seriously obstructed.

After 11...f4, Black's attack on the kingside is less dangerous as White can defend the second rank by Rf2... or even start an attack on this side.

11...Kh8 Black keeps the tension and regroup his pieces.

12.h4!? A very interesting situation. White attacks on the kingside now especially that he can maneuver easier the rook using the second rank. From now on, the game does not represent our theme so it is given without annotations for those who are interested:

12...a5 13.Nd3 b6 14.Kg2 Nc5 15.Rh1 Bd7 16.Be3 Ng8 17.Nxc5 bxc5 18.h5 f4 19.hxg6 h6 20.Bf2 Bf6 21.a3 a4 22.b4 axb3 23.Qxb3 Bg5 24.a4 Nf6 25.Kf1 Kg7 26.Ke1 c6 27.dxc6 Bxc6 28.Bd3 Qd7 29.Nb5 Qb7 30.Kf1 Rfd8 31.Bc2 Nxe4 32.fxe4 Bxe4 33.Bxe4 Qxe4 34.Rh3 Qxg6 35.Qd3 Qxd3+ 36.Rxd3 e4 37.Rd5 e3 38.Nc7 exf2 39.Nxa8 Rxa8 40.Kxf2 Bf6 41.Ra2 Be5 42.a5 Ra6 43.Rd3 Kf6 44.Kf3 Ke6 45.Ke4 Kd7 46.Rh3 Kc6 47.Rxh6 Ra8 48.a6 Kb6 49.a7 Rxa7 50.Rxa7 Kxa7 51.g5 Kb6 52.Re6 1-0

White attacks the e5-pawn

It is instructive to see what happens if Black does not play for f7-f5 plan and, instead, wants to get some counter-play on the queenside. Especially, in this variation with the white knight on d3, White can attack the black pawn chain with **f2-f4**.

Neverov,Valeriy (2530) - Zaitsev,Igor A (2430), 1994

9.Ne1 Bd7?! 10.Nd3 c6 This plan is rather dubious. Black puts pressure on White's d5-pawn and intends to continue with b7-b5. The exchange 11.dxc6 Nxc6 is good for Black that gets a good dynamic in exchange for the backward d6-pawn which can be well protected by Nc6-d4.

11.f4! As we said in the previous lessons, White can attack the front of the opponent pawn chain when Black is not able to occupy that square with a piece. Here, White has a good control over e5, so the attack f2-f4 is perfectly justified.

11...cxd5 12.cxd5 Rc8 It is important to understand the position after 12...exf4 13.Bxf4. Besides the open f-file for White, his space advantage, and good positions for his pieces, the pawn structure in the center is strategically won for White. After some preparation, White will play e4-e5 which will create a free d5-pawn. In these situations, it is very hard, if not impossible, for Black to organize a reliable blockade of the free pawn as White decides the moment when e4-e5 will come. Or even if e4-e5 won't be effectively played, it is a very strong threat that continuously obstructs Black's play.

13.fxe5 dxe5 14.Qb3 Not 14.Nxe5 Nxe4 with complications. Now, White has a clear advantage because of space advantage and supported free pawn on d5.

II) White plays 9.Nd2

In the idea that White will play c4-c5, the knight move is very strong as it prepares Nd2-c4 with attack against the black d6-pawn. Also, now, after Black's f7-f5, White may not need to play f2-f3 as the 2 knights can successfully replace the e4-pawn in the eventuality of the exchange f5xe4.

Now a good reaction for Black is to play **9...c5** blocking the white c-pawn, which leads to the "feather" pawn structure analyzed separately in our course. This move (9...c5) was not good after 9.Ne1 because the white knight would have been very strong on d3 (after Ne1-d3), supporting both b2-b4 and f2-f4 pawn thrusts and with control over e5- and c5-squares. These matters will be discussed in the lesson about "feather" pawn structure.

a) Black does not put any obstacle on the queenside. In the following game, Black played his best moves on the kingside, but without trying to delay White's attack on the other side. As we will see, this strategy leads to disaster.

Gleizerov, Evgeny (2592) - Shapovalenko, Maksim, 2004

9.Nd2 Ne8 10.b4 f5 11.c5! White is not forced to play f2-f3 as after 11...fxe4 12.Ndxe4, White has a strong knight on e4 (*remember: If the chain is replaced by pieces and the opponent's remaining pawns are firmly blocked, then the destruction of the chain will offer nothing*) that will help to attack the d6-pawn.

11...Rf7 the rook prepares to come in attack on g7, also defending the c7-square. This maneuver is good for Black if White plays passive, but this is not the case:

12.a4! preparing Ba3 to attack the d6-pawn, but without blocking the queenside pawns.

12...f4 Black's strategy is completely wrong, but fortunately, instructive for our lesson. Black didn't succeed to force White to play f2-f3 and now his f5-f4 only makes his position worse.

First of all, White did not need to play f2-f3 to put his bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal as Black's queenside strategy let White to play his bishop on the good position from a3 with attack on d6. Also, Black did not put pressure against the e4-pawn (by Nf6 after f7-f5) so no need for f2-f3.

Theoretically, f5-f4 means that Black renounced to the strategy of playing against the base of the pawn-chain. This is common in King's Indian because Black gets in exchange more space to attack the white king. However, the absence of the f3-pawn for White

changes the situation in White's favor who can still use the f3-square and also can play Bg4 later.

13.Nc4 Bf6 14.Ba3 Rg7 15.b5!

In absence of any obstacle on the queenside, White's strategy is very instructive.

Quiz: which is White's threat (TO DO) in this position? You can find the answer in the first page of this lesson, right before "(see the diagram)".

15...g5 16.Bg4! The exchange of light-square bishops leaves Black with minimum attacking resources on the kingside. White has a clear advantage.

Interesting is to see how the game should continue after: 16...dxc5 17.Bxc5 Nd6, Black trying to replace the chain base with a piece. In this case, the rest of the white queenside pawns will assure the advantage: 18.Bxd6 cxd6 19.b6! and now:

- 19...axb6 20.Nb5 and the d6-pawn falls or

- 19...a6 20.Rc1 followed by Be6+ and Black will be soon in zugzwang... (after Bc8-xe6, the opening of the d-file toward the d6-pawn decides).

b) Black plays 9...a5. As we said, 9...c5 is another alternative to play against White's expansion on the queenside. 9...a5 leads to more dynamic positions where White often attacks the front of the pawn chain.

Atalik,Suat (2554) - Ehlvest,Jaan (2599), 2004

9.Nd2 a5 Black stops b2-b4 for now. White needs to lose some time with a2-a3 and Ra1-b1. However, after this sequence, the a-file will be opened and this is only in White's advantage. There is a drawback too (comparing with the previous game): White cannot play so early the strong Bc1-a3, supporting c4-c5 and attacking on d6.

10.a3 Nd7 Defends c5, e5 and prepares f7-f5. When these comments become useless, it means you learned something ☺.

11.Rb1 f5 12.b4 When the 2 knights "see" the e4-square, a move like f2-f3 is useless. Black won't capture on e4, helping White to get a strong position in the center.

12...Kh8 13.Qc2 Ng8 14.exf5!

Usually this exchange is not good for White when Black can recapture with the g6-pawn. It only helps Black to get a strong pawn phalanx of e- and f- pawns and opens the g-file. However, connected with the next White's move, this is a good strategy.

14...gxf5 15.f4!

A move earlier, White renounced at his pawn chain base and now attacks on e5. In the open positions that result, the concrete situation on the board is extremely important.

15...Ne7 Black should keep his pawns in place. It is not good:

- 15...exf4 16.Nf3 Ndf6 17.Bxf6 and White's position is preferable (more space and better pieces)

- 15...e4 after which Black remains with no square in the center, while White can get the control over d4, and then e6: Nb5, Bb2 and so on.

16.Bb2 exf4

After 16...Ng6 White brings his knight on d4 after 17.fxe5 Ndx5 18.Nb5

17.Bd3 prepares Ne2-f4 **17...axb4 18.axb4 Ne5 19.Ne2 N7g6 20.Nxf4** with a complicate position.

Next lesson: King's Indian part II (White plays 9.b4)

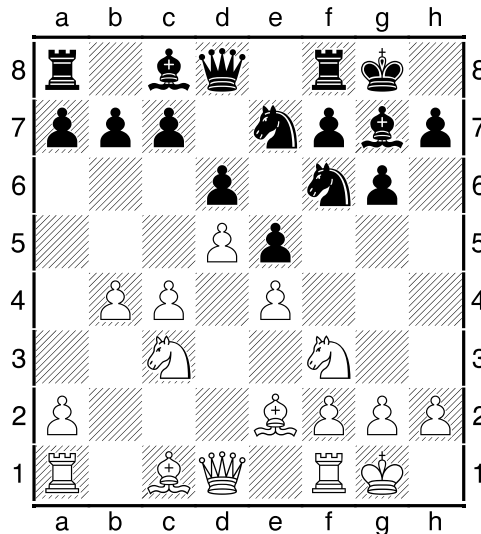
BLOCKED STRUCTURES

King's Indian structure

- Part 2 -

In the previous lessons we discussed about 2 of White's 3 plans in the classical King's Indian Defense. In this lesson, we will examine the plans for White and Black after the following move sequence:

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 0-0 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.b4



III) White plays 9.b4

Behind 9.b4 there are 2 ideas. The first one is obvious: the b-pawn sustains the thematic pawn advance c4-c5 which attacks the base of Black's pawn chain, the d6-pawn.

What is less obvious is that White keeps the knight on f3 with the idea to respond after Black's f7-f5 with Nf3-g5-e6! We will discuss about that a bit later in this lesson.

a) 9...Nd7 After 9.Ne1 or 9.Nd2, White controlled the h5-square and the black knight went on d7 or e8. Now, Black can move his knight to the more promising h5-square, with the same idea to clear the f-pawn's way and also with the idea Nh5-f4. Therefore, in the variation with 9.b4, 9...Nd7 is considered passive.

Atalik, Suat (2532) - Tomic, Tomislav (2189), 2001

9.b4 Nd7 10.c5 If we compare this position with the positions from the previous lesson, we will see that practically White is a tempo up on the queenside. The c-pawn is sacrificed to open the lines on the queenside where White gets a total control (10...dxc5 11.bxc5 Nxc5 12.Ba3 b6, forced, 13.Rc1!)

10...h6? Black wants to play f7-f5 but he wants first to avoid Nf3-g5. In King's Indian Defense, Black should take some risks if he wants to reach somewhere on the kingside.

11.Nd2 the knight goes now to c4 and White prepares f2-f3

11...f5 12.Nc4 Nf6 13.f3 f4 14.a4

Following the thematic attacking scheme: Ba3, b4-b5 with the threat b5-b6. Directly 14.Ba3 was also enough. For example: 14...g5 15.b5 Ne8 16.b6! axb6 17.cxb6 cxb6 18.Qb3 Ng6 19.Rab1.

14...Ne8 15.Ba3 Rf7 16.b5 b6 Black has to take hard decisions on the queenside. This move weakens many squares, but, otherwise, White could play b5-b6.

17.cxd6 cxd6 After 17...Nxd6 18.a5, White continues to open the queenside.

18.a5 g5 19.Bb4 Rb8 20.axb6 axb6 21.Na4 Ng6 22.Qe1 h5 23.Ncxb6 g4 or 23...Rxb6 24.Ba5 Rfb7 25.Nxb6

24.Nxc8 Qxc8 25.Qd1 g3 26.h3 with material and strategical advantage to White.

b) 9...a5 This move (now or after 9...Nh5 10.Re1) leads to some different positions. White's pawn structure on the queenside is damaged by this Black's pawn thrust; however, the attack is by no means stopped.

Anand,Viswanathan (2765) - Polgar,Judit (2645), 1997

9.b4 a5 10.Ba3 b6 (or 10...axb4 11.Bxb4 leading to the same position as in the game) **11.bxa5 Rxa5 12.Bb4 Ra8 13.a4** With the idea to destroy Black's b6-pawn clearing the way for the c-pawn.

13...Nh5 14.a5 Anand said that 14.Re1 with the idea to retreat the e2-bishop on f1 after Nh5-f4 was more accurate. We will see in a couple of move the importance Bf1.

14...bxa5 15.Bxa5 So, after these exchanges, White can play c4-c5. Even if this comes a bit later, the Black's queenside is already opened.

15...Nf4 16.Nd2 Qd7 Now, we can see the role of White's light-square bishop in defense. Black has some threats now (Nxc2, Qh3+) which were not possible with the bishop on f1.

17.Re1 Bh6? Black could have complicated the game by: 17...Nxc2! 18.Kxc2 Rxa5 19.Rxa5 Qh3+ 20.Kg1 Qxc3.

18.Bf1 c6 After 18...f5 19.c5 White threatens c5-c6 followed by Nb5 and the c7-pawn falls. Therefore, Black is forced to 19...dxc5 after which the rest of the chain pawns fall. For example: 20.Bc4! (with the threat 21.d6+) 20...Kh8 21.Bxc7!! Rxa1 22.Bxe5+.

In just 4 moves, all Black's c7, d6, and e5 pawns were destroyed.

19.c5! cxd5 20.exd5! White is creating a dangerous free pawn in the center.

20...dxc5 21.Nde4 Bg7 22.Bb5 White has an advantage because of his free pawn and good piece play on the queenside.

c) 9...Nh5 This is Black's best move after 9.b4. The knight is heading to f4 with the idea to exchange White's light-square bishop. This bishop is theoretically a "bad" bishop, but, in fact, it is very important for White on both flanks. First of all, the bishop defends important squares on the kingside: g4 – when Black plays g5-g4, g2 – which is attacked by Black after the opening of the g-file, and h3 – where Black often threatens dangerous sacrifices. Then, after the imminent c4-c5, the white bishop has also an important role on the queenside. Therefore, White wants to save this bishop with the maneuver Re1, Bf1 or Bf3 (after Nf3-g5).

In the variation with 9.b4, White keeps the knight on f3 with the idea to reply with Nf3-g5-e6 after Black's f7-f5.

Practically, Black cannot accept the white knight on e6 (this also attacks Qd8, Rf8, Bg7) and therefore he is forced to the exchange ...Bc8xe6, d5xe6. The consequences of this exchange are:

- White renounces at his pawn-chain while the Black's one remains.
- The white e6-pawn is not defendable by other pawns and Black can capture it. However, Black needs time to take this pawn, time which can be used by White to take the initiative in the center. In the same time, this e6-pawn creates some problems in Black's camp.
- The base of the Black's pawn chain, the d6-pawn, becomes much more vulnerable as now White has the open d-file.
- The d5-square becomes free and White can use it to bring a strong knight on d5, attacking especially the c7-pawn.
- After the exchange of Black's light-square bishop and the imminent White's c4-c5, White gets some threats along the a2-g8 diagonal (when the bishop is on f1) or on the h1-a8 diagonal when the bishop is on f3.

As you know, after the pawns of the chain disappear, the pieces must take their places or, at least, strongly impede the advance of enemy's chain pawns. Here, we are talking of course about the d5-square. Black can take the initiative if he is able to push d6-d5 in good conditions.

Golod,Vitali (2555) - Timoshenko,Georgy (2595), 1998

9.b4 Nh5 10.Re1 preparing Bf1 in case of Nf4.

10...f5 10...Nf4 11.Bf1 a5 12.bxa5 Rxa5 13.Nd2 c5 14.a4 is another possible variation here, that leads to a typical "feather" structure, discussed in the next lesson.

11.Ng5! The knight is heading to the e6-square, but will wait on g5 for the best moment or until Black will play h7-h6.

11...Nf6 12.Bf3 White can choose between 2 places for his bishop (f1 or f3). The main difference is the diagonal where the bishop will become active after the next exchanges in the center.

12...Kh8 13.Bb2 Clearing step-by-step the first rank for the rooks. White intends Qd1-b3, c4-c5, and Ra1-d1 with pressure on d6 after Ng5-e6 and d5xe6.

13...Neg8?! Grandmaster Timoshenko is trying to regroup his pieces on the kingside. It remained unclear what he wanted; White's attack came fast:

14.c5 Qe7 Of course, after 14...fxe4 15.Ngxe4, with a strong control over the e4-square and with direct attack against d6, White has a clear edge.

15.Qb3 The normal place for the queen having in view Ne6.

15...Rb8 15...dxc5 16.bxc5 Qxc5 is bad in view of: 17.Ba3 Qb6 18.Bxf8 Bxf8 19.Nf7+ Kg7 20.Nxe5

16.Rad1 White is now completely prepared for Ng5-e6

16...a6 17.Ne6! Bxe6 18.dxe6 5 white pieces control the d5-square, the e6-pawn is defended for now and the d6-pawn will be attacked by Rd1 and Ba3 (after b4-b5).

18...b6 19.cxd6 cxd6 20.b5! a5 21.Ba3 Ne8 The only way to defend the pawn. After 21...Ra(e)d8, White wins the e5-pawn by 22.exf5 and 23.Rxe5. Now, Black's defense will have to face new white forces:

22.exf5 gxf5 23.Bc6! After d5xe6, then e4xf5, the former "bad" bishop comes decisively in the battle.

23...Rd8 24.Na4 Rf6 25.Rxe5 and Black resigned some moves later.

In the following game, Radjabov, one of the KID's experts, played much better:

Eljanov,Pavel (2643) - Radjabov,Teimour (2667), 2005

9.b4 Nh5 10.Re1 f5 11.Ng5 Nf6 12.Bf3 c6!

So, White intends Ng5-e6 which forces the exchanges ...Bxe6, d5xe6.

QUIZ: which is the main idea of Black's 12...c6 move? You will find the response in the phrase right before the previous game, Golod-Timoshenko.

Besides, the c7-square is cleared for the knight maneuver Nf6-e8-c7 with attack against the e6-pawn.

13.Qb3 h6 14.Ne6 Bxe6 15.dxe6 Qc8 16.Ba3 Now, White's strategy becomes clearer. In fact, the e6-pawn is sacrificed. In exchange, Black remains with the backward d6-pawn which will be exhaustively attacked by white pieces. Gaining the d6-pawn, White does not only re-establish the material equality, but also enters opponent's camp with his pieces. In the next moves, both opponents concentrate their forces to attack/defend the critical d6-square. At some point, White also has the possibility of playing c4-c5.

16...Qxe6 17.Rad1 Rfd8 18.b5 Kh7 19.Rd2 Rd7 20.bxc6 bxc6

Black has to admit a second weakness in his pawn structure (the c6-pawn) as after 20...Nxc6, White gains the control over d5-square and gets a dangerous initiative. For example: 21.exf5 gxf5 22.Bd5 Qe8 23.Nb5

21.Red1 Rad8 22.Qa4 f4! Black wants to eliminate White's possibility of opening the diagonal for his Bf3 by e4xf5. Also, with the d6-pawn defended, he is trying to counter-attack on the kingside.

23.Qb4 Nc8 24.Be2 g5 25.Qa4 Nb6 26.Qa6 f3?! 26...g5 would have been better.

27.gxf3 Nh5 28.c5! White had to react quickly in the center; otherwise, Black's attack against his king could become deadly.

28...dxc5 29.Rxd7 Rxd7 30.Bxc5 Nf4 31.Rxd7 Nxd7 32.Be3 Qh3 33.Bxf4 exf4 34.Qc8 Qe6 35.e5 h5 and a draw was agreed.

35...Bxe5 or 35...Nf8 were better than the text which seems to be a mistake.

White could take the advantage now after (35...h5?) 36.Ne4 Kh6 37.Bc4! Qxc4 38.Qxd7 Bxe5 39.Qf5.

In the next games, White consolidates his e4-pawn with f2-f3 and keeps the bishop on the f1-a6 diagonal.

Pelletier,Yannick (2531) - Jenni,Florian (2461), 2001

9.b4 Nh5 10.Re1 f5 11.Ng5 Nf6 12.f3 Nh5 13.g3!? White creates some weaknesses on the kingside, but the black knight is now obstructed on the edge.

13...c6 Black is threatening Qb6+ and Qxb4, but White prepared a nice blow:

14.Ne6 Bxe6 15.dxe6 Qb6+ 16.c5! Qxb4 16...dxc5 17.Na4 Qxb4 18.Be3 b6 (18...Rfd8 19.Qc2 b6 20.Rab1 Qa5 21.Nb2) 19.a3 Qa5 20.Bd2 and White captures the black queen.

17.cxd6 White opened the center and the queenside and will remain with a free pawn on e6, sustained by the bishop-pair.

17...Qxc3 18.dxe7 Qc5+ 18...Qxa1 is not good because of 19.exf8Q+ Bxf8 20.Qb3

19.Kh1 Qxe7 20.Qb3 Rfe8 21.exf5 gxf5 22.Ba3 and White has a strong attack.

Bacrot, Etienne (2618) - Motylev, Alexander (2570), 2001

9.b4 Nh5 10.Re1 f5 11.Ng5 Nf6 12.f3 c6 With the ideas that you already know: in view of the position resulted after d5xe6, Black takes control over d5 and also prepares Nf6-e8-c7 with attack on e6.

13.Kh1 Kh8 Here, Black does not want to force Ne6 by 13...h6 (we will see this in the next game), but prefers to take his king out from the a2-g8 diagonal first.

14.b5! After this move, the tension in the center will disappear and White can continue his attack. Moreover, the a3-f8 diagonal is opened, White being ready to attack the d6-pawn by Ba3. For example, after 14...cxd5 15.cxd5 h6 16.Ne6 Bxe6 17.dxe6 Qc8 18.Qb3, followed by Ba3, Rac1, Red1 with strong pressure. Therefore, Black will advance the c-pawn, blocking the queenside (and the a3-f8 diagonal):

14...c5 15.Ne6 Bxe6 16.dxe6 Now, there is little space remained on the queenside, so White will continue to attack on the other side! The presence of the e6-pawn and the control over d5-square give White free hand to act wherever he like.

The game continued:

16...Ne8 17.Nd5 Ng8 18.exf5 gxf5 19.g4! f4 20.f4 e4 21.Rb1 Qh4 22.Bf4 Be5 23.Bxe5+ dxe5 24.Rf1 Ng7 25.Qc2 e3 26.Qe4 Rf2 27.Rxf2 exf2 28.Qxe5 Re8 29.Nc7 Rf8 30.Rf1 Ne7 31.Qxc5 Ng6 32.Qe3 Qe7 33.Nd5 Qxe6 34.Rxf2 Qxe3 35.Rxf8+ Nxf8 36.Nxe3 Nge6 37.Kg2 Nd7 38.Bf3 Nec5 39.Nf5 1-0

Van Wely, Loek (2655) - Kotronias, Vasilios (2587), 2005

9.b4 Nh5 10.Re1 f5 11.Ng5 Nf6 12.f3 c6 13.Kh1 h6 Black wants Ng5-e6 after which he will immediately start the attack against the e6-pawn.

14.Ne6 Bxe6 15.dxe6 Ne8 16.Qb3 Nc7 As Black planned with 12...c6, the knight arrived on c7 with attack on e6 and more control over the d5-square. White has little to do against d6-d5 now, so:

17.c5 d5 18.exd5 cxd5 19.Bb2 A few moves ago, the center was blocked, now this looks like a work of Picasso – which is not at all un-common for the King's Indian. White has a pawn majority on the queenside, while Black has a compact pawn-mass in the center. However, White was ready for this and he will exert a strong pressure against the black d5-pawn (Qb3, Nc3, and Rad1). Black cannot advance the pawns: 19...d4 because of 20.Nb5 (threatening Nd6) Nxb5 21.Bxb5 with the idea Bd7.

19...Qe8 Or 19...Qc8 20.Nb5! a6 21.Nd6 Qxe6 22.Nxb7 Rab8 23.Nd6 Nc6 unclear.

20.Nxd5 White takes drastic measures in the center. Safer and better would have been 20.Rad1 bringing the last piece into play. 20...Rd8 21.a4 taking space on the queenside 21...a6 22.b5 Kh7 23.Ba3 Nxe6 24.bxa6 Nd4 with a very unclear position (like in the game Bareev E - Topalov V, 2002)

20...Ncxd5 21.Rad1 with huge complications. Our theme about blocked structures is clearly finished. The game continued:

21...Kh7 22.Bc4 Nf6 23.Bxe5 b5 24.Bf1 a6 25.g3 Ra7 26.Bd6 Qa8 27.Bg2 a5 28.a3 Re8 29.Qd3 axb4 30.axb4 Ra2 31.Qxb5 Ng4 32.Kg1 Nc6 33.Qc4 Bd4+ 34.Rxd4 Nxd4 35.c6 Rc2 36.Qxd4 Rxd4 37.Kxg2 Qa2+ 38.Kg1 Qxh2+ 39.Kf1 Qh1+ 40.Ke2 Rxe6+ 41.Kd3 Qxf3+ 42.Kd2 Qg2+ 43.Kd3 Nf2+ 44.Qxf2 Rxd6+ 45.Ke2 Rd2+ 0-1

In this lesson, we have seen a very interesting way to attack the base of the pawn-chains with the maneuver Nf3-g5-e6 which forces the opening of the center, White gaining open lines to attack the enemy's d6-pawn. This is a variation of King's Indian Defense, but the idea can be used in different type of positions with blocked center.

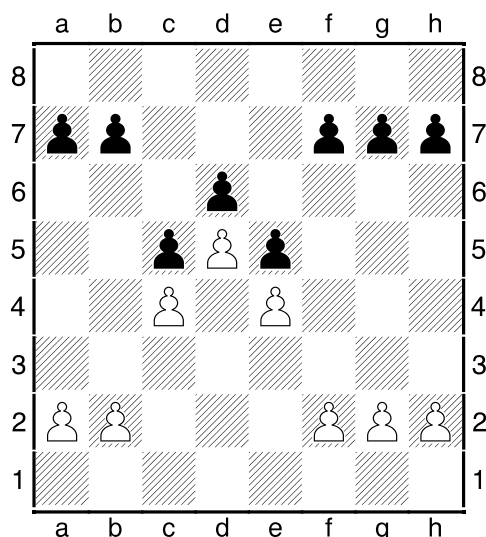
The most important thing to be remembered is to evaluate the possibilities / resources of blocking and attacking the d6-pawn.

Next lesson: the “feather” pawn structure

BLOCKED STRUCTURES

Feather Pawn structure

A typical blocked pawn structure arises after the Old Indian Defense and some variations of the King's Indian and it is known as the "feather" structure.



Here, Black has 2 pawn chains: d6-e5 and d6-c5 with the same base at d6 and 2 heads at c5 and e5. White's pawn structure has 2 bases at c4 and e4 and one head at d5. After some theoreticians, the "feather" structure is also when one of the black c- or e-pawns are still on c7 or e7.

White cannot attack the d6-pawn directly, so his active plans are:

- Attack on the kingside by g2-g4.
- Attack against c5 by b2-b4, prepared by a2-a3.
- Attack against e5 by f2-f4, prepared by g2-g3.

Black has 2 targets, the 2 bases of White's pawn chains, so his active plans are:

- Attack against e4 by f7-f5, prepared by g7-g6.
- Attack against c4 by b7-b5, prepared by a7-a6.

a) White attacks on the kingside with g4, h4

Nimzowitsch, A - Tartakower, S, 1929

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nc3 0-0 6.Be3 Nbd7 7.Nh3 e5 8.d5

Closing the center, White prepares to castle long and attack on the kingside.

8...a5

At this point, Black more often tries the following pawn sacrifice: 8...Nh5 9.g4 Nf4 10.Nxf4 exf4 12.Bxf4 Ne5 however without serious compensation for the pawn.

By 8...a5, Black prepares Nd7-c5 with the idea to create pressure on e4 after f7-f5.

9.Nf2 b6 10.Qd2 Nc5?! 11.Bg5!

With the queen on d2, the bishop cannot be chased away with h7-h6 and Black will lose important time to release the knight from the pin. This is why a move earlier, Black should have played Nh5. As Black does not have the counter-attack with f7-f5 now, White will start the attack on the kingside with g2-g4, h2-h4, and h4-h5.

11...Bd7 12.g4 Qc8 13.h4 Kh8 14.h5 gxh5 15.Bxf6 Bxf6 16.Rxh5

White succeeded to open the h-file and moreover has the control over f5 and h5 squares.

16...Bg7 17.Nh1 f6 18.Qh2 h6 19.Ng3 Kh7 20.Be2 Rg8 21.Kf2 prepares to bring the second rook in attack. In order to get more space and open lines, White will also prepare to push the f-pawn.

Averbakh, Y - Spassky, B, 1956

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.Be2 0-0 6.Bg5 c5 7.d5 Qa5 8.Bd2 a6 9.a4 e5?

Black makes a positional error. Because of the setup of white pieces ready to launch the kingside attack, Black should have kept the option to play ...e6 putting the center under tension and opening the e-file. Now, White has free hands:

10.g4! Ne8

As we saw in the previous game, Black has no chance if he just waits for White's attack. He must play f7-f5 in order to get some space for his pieces, even if this opens new lines.

11.h4 f5 12.h5 f4

Of course, Black tries to limit the mobility of white pieces on the kingside.

13.g5 Qd8 14.Bg4!

Making room for the queen and exchanging the defender of the e6-square.

14...Nc7 15.Bxc8 Qxc8 16.Nf3 with the threat Nh4, White has a clear advantage.

b) White attacks on the queenside with b2-b4, Black on the kingside with f7-f5.

Polugaevsky, L - Geller, E, 1962

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 g6 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 Bg7 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Be2 e5

Here we have a "normal" feather position, where Black will attack on the kingside with f7-f5 and White on the queenside with b2-b4.

8.Bg5

Trying to hinder Black's play on the kingside.

8...h6 9.Bh4 Qc7 10.Nd2 Nh7 11.f3 a6

Black needs this move in order to avoid the attack Nb5 which would make the black queen to occupy an unfavorable position on d7.

12.a3

White prepares the attack with b2-b4. Of course, a2-a3 is necessary in order to retake with the pawn in the eventuality of c5xb4.

12...f5 13.b4 Nd7

Black is ready to retake on c5 with the knight so b4xc5 is not yet favorable for White. He will increase the pressure on the queenside forcing somehow some weaknesses in Black's camp. After Rb1 and Bf2, White can think to b4xc5, ...Nd7xc5, Nd2-b3.

14.Rb1 b6

Black consolidates the c5-square – this way the base of the pawn chain on d6 seems to remain untouchable. However, the c6-square is weak now and White exploits it straight away:

15.Qa4

With the idea to play Qc6 at the right moment.

15...Bf6 16.Bf2 Bd8 17.0–0 Ndf6 18.Qc6!

The queen cannot be taken (18...Qxc6 19.bxc6) because White gets the d5-square for the knight, the open d-file and a strong (!) pawn on c6 – Black has no way to take it soon.

18...Rb8 19.Qxc7 Bxc7 20.Rb2

White prepares to take the control over the b-file after b4xc5, ...b6xc5. Of course, Black's ...d6xc5 or c5xb4 lead to a quick disaster because the quality of the pawns.

20...Ng5 21.h4 Nf7 22.Rfb1 Ra8 23.Bd1 Bd8 24.a4!

White threatens a4-a5 and if b6xa5, then b4xc5!

24...Nh5 25.g3 f4 26.g4 Ng3 27.a5! cxb4 28.Rxb4 bxa5 29.R4b2 Bxb4 30.Ba4

A success of White's strategy. He controls the b-file (also Bc6 threatens to win the exchange) and, most important, the d6-pawn is finally attackable.

Larsen, B - Fischer, R, 1971

1.c4 g6 2.Nf3 Bg7 3.d4 Nf6 4.Nc3 0–0 5.e4 d6 6.Be2 e5 7.0–0 Nc6 8.d5 Ne7 9.Nd2 c5

Black creates the “feather” structure, thus protecting the d6-pawn against the thematic c4-c5. After this preventive move on the queenside, Black is ready to take the initiative on the other side by f7-f5.

10.Rb1

White has to react very quickly on the queenside by opening the b-file.

10...Ne8 11.b4 b6 12.a4?!

This move is theoretically good: White is using all the pawns to open more space on the queenside. However, it is not so easy. As we will see, Fischer, playing Black, succeeds to take the initiative much quicker on the other side – so the conclusion is clear: White has practically no time to advance this pawn. Very interesting is a modern game where White's plan seems to be the best:

Sakaev, K - Fedorov, A , 2005

12.bxc5 bxc5 13.Qa4 *White intends to exchange the queens, weakening Black's attack on the other side. Also Nd2-b3-a5-c6 can help.*

13...Bh6 *Black wants to exchange his bad bishop, also getting more space for the other pieces.*

14.Nb3 Bxc1 15.Rfxc1 f5 16.Qa5! Qd7 17.f4!! *A wonderful strike in the center. White attacks the e5-pawn in order to win the c5-pawn!*

17...exf4 18.e5! dxe5 19.Nxc5 *Black had no other moves. Now, White has 2 connected free pawns which will advance easily. The game continued:*

19...Qd6 20.Nb3 e4 21.c5 Qe5 22.Qa4 Nf6 23.Qd4 Nd7 24.c6 Qxd4+ 25.Nxd4 Ne5 26.c7 Bd7 27.Bb5 Bxb5 28.Rxb5 a6 29.Rb6 Nc8 30.Re6 Nd3 31.Rb1 Ra7 32.d6 Nxd6 33.Rxd6 Rxc7 34.Nd5 Rc4 35.Ne6 Ra8 36.Rd7 1–0

12...f5 13.a5 Nf6 14.Qa4 Bd7 15.Qa3 Bh6 16.Bd3

White wants to keep the e4-square under control. However, it was better to do something on the queenside: 16.bxc5 bxc5 17.a6 with the idea Rb7 and/or Nb5.

16...Qc7 17.bxc5 bxc5 18.exf5 gxf5 19.Bc2?!

White is too passive. Better would have been 19.Nb5. Now, the Black's phalanx becomes very strong. The game continued:

19...a6 20.Nde4 Bxc1 21.Nxf6+ Rxf6 22.Rfxc1 Raf8 23.Rb6 Bc8 24.Ne2 f4 25.Be4 Nf5 26.Rc6 Qg7 27.Rb1 Nh4 28.Qd3 Bf5 29.Kh1 f3 30.Ng3 fxg2+ 31.Kg1 Bxe4 32.Qxe4 Nf3+ 33.Kxg2 Nd2 0–1

c) White attacks on the center/kingside by f2-f4

Smyslov,V - Nikolaevsky,Y, 1971

After the moves **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d6 4.e4 Bg7 5.Nf3 0–0 6.Be2 e5 7.d5 a5 8.0–0 Na6 9.Qc2 Bd7 10.Ne1**, Black closes the queenside by **10...c5** and we have a “feather”.

In this position, it is very hard for White to obtain the initiative on the queenside on time. It is clear that Black will come first on the kingside after Ne8 and f7-f5.

The problem for Black is that his strategy on the queenside left the important e5 square poorly defended (see the position of Bd7 and Na6). So, White's plan is to play f2-f4:

11.Bg5! h6 12.Be3 Ne8 13.Qd2 Kh7 14.f4!

We can see that after Nf3 and f4xe5, Black cannot hold a piece on e5. If needed, White can play Be3-f4 and after Rae1, e4-e5 will become a serious threat.

14...Qe7 15.Nf3 Bg4

Black fights for the control over the e5-square, but giving the light-square bishop is also a serious concession.

16.Rae1 exf4 17.Bxf4 Bxf3 18.Rxf3!

Of course, a game of chess cannot be given only around a single point (here the e5-square). White pieces are looking at the h6-square now. Now, you can understand the importance of the intermediary Bg5 move.

18...Nf6 19.Rh3 Ng8 20.Nb5! attacking d6 and preparing e4-e5.

The game continued:

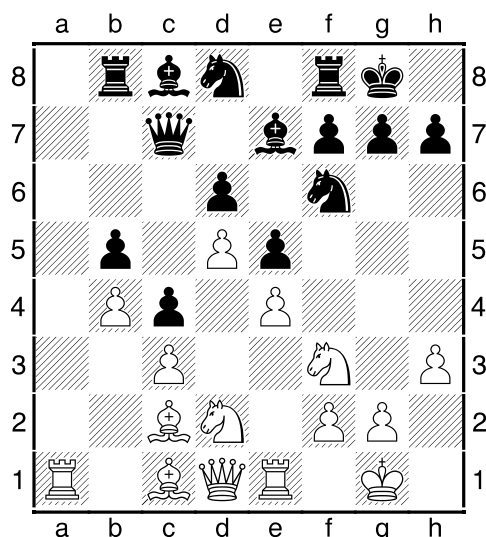
20...Rad8 21.Bg4 Nc7 22.Bg5 f6 23.Nxc7 Qxc7 24.Bf4 f5 25.exf5 gxf5 26.Qd3 Kh8 27.Bxf5 Ne7 28.g4 Nxf5 29.gxf5 Rd7 30.Bxh6 Kg8 31.Rg3 b5 32.cxb5 c4 33.Qd4 1–0

BLOCKED STRUCTURES

Spanish, 2 pawn chains

In Spanish (Ruy Lopez) Opening, we have 2 pawn chains after the moves:

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7 12.Nbd2 Nc6 13.d5 Nd8 14.a4 Rb8 15.axb5 axb5 16.b4 c4



We discuss the strategy of this position in the following games.

a) White attacks with f2-f4, Black defends with f7-f6.

In the following game, Black gets counter-chances by taking the a-file under control:

Karpov, A - Spassky, B, 1973

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7 12.Nbd2 Nc6

Nothing to comment until here – it is just the main variation of Spanish Opening. With his last move, Black chose to play a closed and solid position which arises after:

13.d5

White closes the center – the first pawn chain was created: e4, d5 for White against d6, e5 for Black. White has more space because of the head of the pawn chain, d5. The d6-pawn, the base of the black chain/s is protected by the advanced pawns on e5 and c5, so there are 2 heads, typical of the “feather” pawn structure.

We know that in that structure, White’s active plans are to attack the heads of the opponent’s chain. For now, only the structure on the kingside is fixed, so White intends to play f2-f4.

13...Nd8 The black knight is heading to c5 after c5-c4 (Nd8-b7-c5). Black has a solid position, but it is clear that he suffers from lack of space.

14.a4!

A very important move which brings White a second plus: the control of the a-file, after the exchange a4xb5, a6xb5. Black is forced to move his rook from the a-file in order to protect the b5-pawn.

After 14...b5xa4?, Black's queenside becomes serious weakened. White will open the lines with b2-b4, after a simple preparation: Ba4, Nc4, Qc2, and Be3.

Trying to stay with the rook on a8 is also not an option: 14...Bb7 15.Qe2 Qb6 16.Nf1 with the treat Be3 and b2-b4 and Black cannot defend his queenside pawns.

14...Rb8 15.axb5 axb5 16.b4!

Puts pressure on c5 which forces Black to play c5-c4 now or later. Of course, Black should not like the exchange 16...cxb4 17.cxb4 which opens for White the c-file and leaves the b5-pawn on air.

16...c4

Black could delay this advance by some few moves – as we will see in other games.

Now, there are the 2 pawn chains which we discuss in this lesson.

First of all, it is very interesting to note that there are only 3 squares available for pieces in the extended center (the c3-f3-f6-c6 square): e3, f3, and f6. Then, the queenside was reduced to only one file.

1) The queenside pawn chain (c3, b4 for White and b5, c4 for Black) looks very hard to be attacked by any player. There is no enough space around the bases from b5 and c3 to allow a direct attack. However.... in the endgame, these 2 weaknesses may become very important. In this game, we will actually see the weakness of the c3-pawn influencing the outcome of the game.

2) The central chain (e4, d5 for White and d6, e5 for Black) has the particularity that can be attacked only from the kingside. So, White has the option to attack the Black's chain head by f2-f4 and Black can attack the White's chain base by f7-f5. However, we will see that Black often likes to consolidate his e5-pawn by f7-f6 adopting a defensive (and solid) strategy.

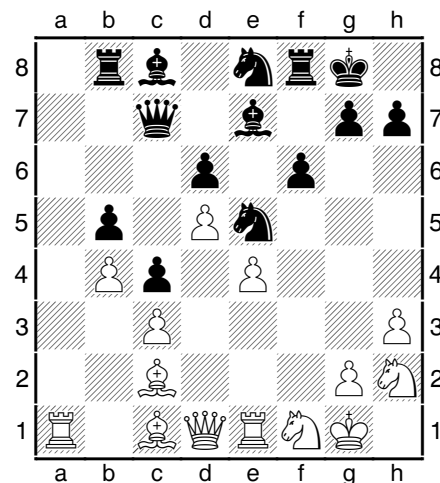
17.Nf1 Ne8 18.N3h2 f6

Not all the time, an active strategy is the best option. In this game and the next two, Black prefers to just defend. We will see other strategies for Black in the rest of the games.

19.f4 Nf7 20.Nf3

What do you think about 20.fxe5 Nxe5?

Think about 10 minutes at this position and evaluate Black's knight position on e5.



As we know from the other lessons with pawn chains, it is good when a pawn can be replaced by a piece blocking the opponent pawns. So 20...Nxe5 looks good as the black knight found a good square in the center. In this position, this is far from true! The square is good, but the knight does not attack anything and it is not supported by other pieces, so it is just a lone and useless knight (you may want to review the lesson about knight's operation bases from Month 3 of our course). In exchange, White gets the d4-square which is an excellent operation base for the white knight. We will see more about this in the games when Black responds with e5xf4 – leading to the same pawn structure. After 20.fxe5 Black should respond with 20...fxe5! with a good position; Black has nothing to worry about on the kingside.

20...g6

It does not prepare f6-f5, but gets some squares on the kingside (g7 for the e8-knight and opens the seventh rank to have the queen in defense if needed).

21.f5!

Black defended the e5-square very well (f4xe5, f6xe5 doesn't bring anything to White), so White gets space on the kingside. So, the particularities of the position change the typical ideas of attacking the base. With the center blocked, White is starting a direct attack against Black's king. The attack g2-g4-g5 has little to do with the pawn chains (even if it attacks a new base on f6), but more with the final objective of any chess player. 21...gxf5 22.exf5 just clears the e4-square which can be used only by white pieces.

21...g5 doesn't succeed to block the kingside. White can simply reply with 22.Ne3 and h2-h4 and, later at the proper moment, sacrifice a piece on g5.

21...Ng2 22.g4 Bd7 23.Be3 Ra8 24.Qd2 Qb7

Black defends very well. He has all the minor pieces ready to defend the kingside and, in the same time, prepares to trade rooks then enter White's camp with the queen. In these conditions, White tried to avoid the trades, but leaving the a-file under Black's control:

25.Rac1?!

As the game itself will show, the attack on the kingside cannot succeed when a black rook annoys white pieces from behind.

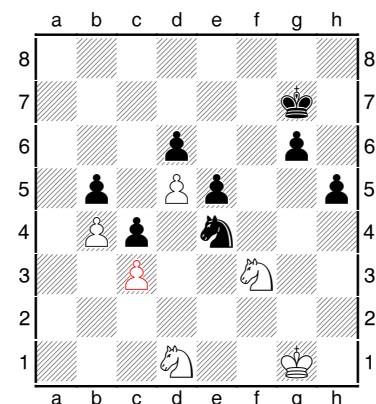
25...Ra2 26.Ng3 Rfa8 27.h4 Bd8 28.Kh1 Bb6 29.Rg1 Bxe3 30.Qxe3 Qa7 31.Qd2 Be8? Losing the pressure against f5, Black leaves White to advance g4-g5. Better was 31...Qa3 and Black is okay. Now, we are less interested in the game until the final stage when the weakness of the c3-pawn reveals.

32.g5! Qe7 33.Rcf1 fxg5 34.hxg5 Qd7 35.Nh2 Qd8!?

Black sacrifices a knight but gets some counter-chances.

36.f6 Better was 36.fxg6 hxg6 37.Ng4 or 37.Rf6 continuing the attack. 36...Bd7! 37.fxg7 Qxg5 38.Qg2 Rb2 39.Rb1 Rba2 40.Qe2 Qh4 41.Rbf1 Bh3 42.Rf2 Ng5 43.Qe3 Bg4 44.Rgf1 Kxg7 45.Bd1 Bxd1 46.Rxd1 Ra1 47.Rdf1 Rxf1+ 48.Rxf1 Ra2 49.Rf2 Ra1+ 50.Rf1 Ra2 51.Rf2 Ra1+ 52.Rf1 Rxf1+ 53.Ngxf1 Qxe4+ 54.Kg1 Qxe3+ 55.Nxe3 Ne4 56.Nd1 Nf6 57.Ne3 h5 58.Nf3 Ne4 59.Nd1 ♜ ½–½

Diagram: With 3 pawns for a piece, Black is in advantage in this endgame because of the weakness of the c3-pawn. However, players agreed to a draw.



In the next game, Karpov takes the a-file under his control first, and only after this he starts the f2-f4 attack.

Karpov, A - Unzicker, W, 1974

As in the previous game until move 16: **1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7 12.Nbd2 Nc6 13.d5 Nd8 14.a4 Rb8 15.axb5 axb5 16.b4 Nb7**

Black can delay c5-c4 for a couple of moves. However, the black knight on b7 will only limit the play of the other black pieces on the queenside.

17.Nf1 Bd7 18.Be3

The bishop will take part to White's actions on the queenside.

18...Ra8 19.Qd2!

White prepares to double the major pieces on the a-file. Qd2 will defend the rook on a2 after Bc2-d3.

19...Rfc8 20.Bd3 g6 21.Ng3 Bf8 22.Ra2

A logical move of the plan started at move 19. Now, White is threatening Rea1.

22...c4 23.Bb1 Qd8

A position that you should already know from the lesson about the open files ("Rooks" from Month 3). White is temporarily closing the open file with ...a piece:

24.Ba7!

It is like getting space advantage after a pawn move. Now, behind the bishop, White will be able to double his major pieces.

24...Ne8 25.Bc2 Nc7 26.Rea1 Qe7 27.Bb1 Be8 28.Ne2

So, White obtained the control over the a-file: at any time, Be3 will open the file in his advantage. Now, he starts the operations on the other flank with f2-f4-f5.

28...Nd8 29.Nh2 Bg7 30.f4 f6 31.f5 g5

Trying to close the kingside, but weakens the light-squares. Now, Karpov brings the bishop on h5 to exchange it for the opponent one.

32.Bc2 Bf7 33.Ng3 Nb7 34.Bd1 h6 35.Bh5 Qe8 36.Qd1 Nd8 37.Ra3 Kf8 38.R1a2 Kg8 39.Ng4 Kf8 40.Ne3 Kg8 41.Bxf7+ Nxf7 42.Qh5 Nd8 43.Qg6! Kf8

Black has no good moves. For example: 43...Qxg6 44.fxg6 Nb7 45.Nh5 Bf8 46.Nf5 Ne8 47.Bb6 Rxa3 48.Rxa3

44.Nh5 1-0

b) White attacks with f2-f4, Black counter-attacks with f7-f5.

Korneev, O - Postny, E, 2006

The first 16 moves remain the same: **1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7 12.Nbd2 Nc6 13.d5 Nd8 14.a4 Rb8 15.axb5 axb5 16.b4 c4**

White prepares the thematic f2-f4 with Nf1 and N3h2:

17.Nf1 Ne8 18.N3h2 g6 19.f4 f5

This is the typical plan for Black against the White's pawn structure. However, this active play does not work here. First of all, White has a strong pressure against the black e5-pawn (f4, Re1, Nf3) which will put Black in defensive. Of course that the exchange

e5xf4, Bxf4 is out of discussion because White gets a strong attack on the e-file, against the d6-pawn, gets the d4-square and the black f5-pawn remains weak and blocked.

20.exf5 gxf5 21.Nf3 Nf7

The black pawns cannot move. For example: 21...e4 22.Nd4 followed by Ne3 and g2-g4 leaves Black no chance to defend f5, b5, and the kingside. With this inflexible structure under pressure, the game is strategically lost for Black. It continued:

22.Be3 Ng7 23.Ng3 Bf6 24.Qd2 Re8 25.Ra7 Rb7 26.Rxb7 Qxb7 27.Ra1 Bd8 28.Kh2 Bb6 29.Bxb6 Qxb6 30.Nh4 e4 31.Nf1 e3 32.Qe2 Qd8 33.Nf3 Nh5 34.Nxe3 Nxf4 35.Qd2 Qf6 36.Ra8 Ne5 37.Bxf5 Bd7 38.Nxe5 Rxa8 39.N3g4 Qg7 40.Nxd7 Nh5 41.Qe3 Kh8 42.Be6 Rd8 43.Nh6 Re8 44.Nf5 Qg6 45.Qd4+ Ng7 46.Nxd6 Re7 47.Nf5 Rxe6 48.Nf8 Qf6 49.Nxe6 1–0

c) White attacks with f2-f4, Black makes the exchange e5xf4

After this exchange, Black will firmly control the e5-square and he will be able to place there a knight. However, White gets the d4-square and can get the initiative by the maneuver Nd4-e6 or Nd4-c6. We know this typical idea from the King's Indian where White plays Ng5-e6. Here as well, White forces the exchange Bxe6, d5xe6 or d5xc6 opening the d-file and gaining the d5-square. The extra black pawn from d6 is only a problem for Black. In this structure, White also has the possibility to use the a-file to attack the b5-pawn or to enter the seventh rank.

Ernst, T - Brandl, R, 1991

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0–0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 0–0 8.c3 d6 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7 12.Nbd2 Nc6 13.d5 Nd8 14.a4 Rb8 15.axb5 axb5 16.b4 c4 17.Nf1 Ne8 18.N3h2 f6 19.f4 exf4

After this exchange, the e5-square became free for Black. However, White gets a free central square too that Black underestimated.

20.Bxf4 Nf7 21.Nf3 g6

White's knight is heading to d4 with multiple attacks and threats: 1. attack against the base of the b5, c4 pawn chain (together with Ra5), 2. Nc6, 3. Ne6, and not the last 4.Nf5 (together with Nf1-e3). So, Black has defended f5.

OR like in the game Sinowjew - Nickl, 1994: 21...Ne5 22.Nd4 g6 23.Ra5 Bd7 24.Ne6! Bxe6 25.dxe6 Qc8 26.Bh6 Ng7 27.Qd5 Qc6 28.Ra7 Rfe8 29.Rea1 Qc8 30.Rd7 Qc6 31.Ne3 f5 32.Raa7 Qxd5 33.Nxd5 Nxd7 34.exd7 Bh4 35.dxe8Q+ Nxe8 36.exf5 Nf6 37.Ne7+ Kh8 38.fxg6 1–0

22.Nd4 Bd7 23.Ne3

White could play directly 23.Ne6! forcing the exchange 23...Bxe6 24.dxe6. White's "stranger" from e6 gives Black more problems than satisfaction. For example: 24...Ne5 25.Ne3 Qc8 26.Bh6 Ng7 27.Qd5 with the threat Ra7.

23...Ng7 24.Ra5 Qb7 25.Nc6!

Black cannot allow White's knight on c6.

25...Bxc6 26.dxc6 Qxc6 27.Qd5 Qxd5

Black could oppose a stronger resistance by 27...Qd7 and White has superfluous pieces for d5. However, White keeps the initiative after 28.Ng4 Ne6 29.Be3.

28.Nxd5 Rb7 and after 29.Nxe7+ Rxe7 30.Rxb5 White gets his pawn back but the weaknesses from d6 and c4 remained.

Conclusion:

The pawn chains we discussed in this lesson tend to deviate a little from the general ideas of play of the one-chain structures. The queenside chain keeps the position blocked on that side and therefore the active operations take place especially on the kingside where White attacks the head of the black chain. The importance of the blockading square (e5 for Black) also decreases a lot; with the d4-square free, White has a very strong attacking maneuver in Nd4-e6 or Nd4-c6.

However, because of the queenside chain remains unchallenged and subsequently unchanged during middlegame, this can prove to be an important weakness during the endgame. White has to be careful to the open a-file and not put all his hopes on a kingside attack.

Positional Exercises

Starting with Month 10, you will have to solve 8 **positional** exercises per week, a training which is ESSENTIAL for your progress.

Important notes for how to get the most benefit from the positional exercises:

Here, usually, there is NO forced win.

First of all, it is not enough to spot the right move, but this move must be made for the right positional reasons (otherwise your solution is not correct).

You should start with the evaluation of the position (pawn structure, weaknesses, position of the pieces and so on). Then, decide if one of the player has a better position and of what extent. As we continuously tell, it is essential to also think what the opponent wants to do (immediate threats and positional threats/plans).

After the evaluation of the position, find what you have TO DO and the best move (only now) and try to calculate as accurately as possible the possible continuations.

If the positions seem too hard, you can use the “*hints*”.

Time for solving: 20 minutes for every position.



1. White is to move



2. White is to move



3. White is to move



4. White is to move

Hints

Use these hints only after you tried to solve the problems without any help and after at least 10 minutes.

The hints include only some questions / ideas that try to help you to find the solution, but a complete evaluation (pawn structure, pieces etc.) must be done. The hints are not necessarily telling you about the *essence* of the position.

Position 1.

- a) Black is behind in development – so White has a short lasting advantage. What kind of actions must White take in this case?
- b) It is important to evaluate the pawn structures of both sides. Which is the main plan for White?
- c) The correct White's main plan can be helped.

Position 2.

- a) How can Black improve the position of his dark-square bishop?
- b) Where would you like to have the f3-knight?

Position 3.

- a) Where White should attack?
- b) Where would you like to have the f3-knight?

Position 4.

- a) Black has numerous weaknesses and one of his pieces does an excellent job defending them.

Solutions

Problem 1

Positional Evaluation

- King's safety: Black hasn't castled yet but he can do it easy.
- Center: White has a better control over the center.
- Pawn structure: White has space advantage because of his e4-pawn.
- Pawn structure: White has the *mobile e-f pawn phalanx*.
- Pawn structure: Black has no weaknesses in his pawn structure.
- Pieces: The bishop might be better than the knight in positions with pawns on both sides
- Pieces: The black b6-knight has not a safe position as it is exposed to the attack a4-a5.
- Pieces: The open d-file is hard to be exclusively controlled by one of the players. For the moment, it has a little importance; however Ra8-d8 is a tempo move that White needs to consider.
- Pieces: Both queens are active but also exposed, so much attention should be given at the queen moves / maneuvers / attacks.

In conclusion, we can say that White has better prospects and his most important advantage is the mobility of the e-f pawn phalanx.

Black's TO DO list:

Black has no weaknesses and after 0-0 and Rd8 he gets good prospects for balancing the game. Against White's idea to push f2-f4 and e4-e5, Black can occupy the d5-square (Nf6-d5).

So, White's advantage is not a long term one and therefore he has to act with energy otherwise his advantage will be reduced.

What we have to do / Planning

The presence of the mobile e-f pawn phalanx gives the main plan for White, especially because the pawns can be advanced with tempo: f2-f4 attacking the black queen and e4-e5 attacking the f6-knight. These moves should be added to White's TO DO list.

So, the first move that comes in our mind is **f2-f4**.

A short calculation is now necessary to see what happens after this move. Does Black have a good reply?

In a cramped position, trading pieces is the best way to release the pressure, so: 1...Qc5+ (tempo move) 2.Be3 Qc4! (tempo move) 3.Qd6-Rd8 (tempo move) and Black is okay.

So, even if f2-f4 should make part of our TO DO list, it is not good for the first move.

It needs to be prepared.

First of all, White has to take care of the retreating squares of Black's queen (Qa5 and Qc5). The move **a4-a5** does that: the b6-knight will be chased away (Qc5-c4 will be no more possible) and the a5-square is taken.

More than that, by continuing the advance of the white a-pawn (**a5-a6**) White will create disorder in Black's queenside.

Learn: Real targets are given by the presence of weaknesses in the opponent position. So, whenever possible, try to create / provoke permanent weaknesses in your opponent's camp.

In the initial position, Black has no weaknesses. After a5-a6, Black's queenside will be weakened and therefore, beside the mobile phalanx, White will have targets to attack on the queenside. So, the move a4-a5 has multiple roles.

So, our TO DO list is:

1. a4-a5
2. a5-a6
3. f2-f4 followed by e4-e5

Calculation

1. a5-Rd8 the only move.

After 1...Nbd7 2.f4-Qc5 (2...-Qe6 3.e5-Nd5 4.Nd5 Black loses a pawn) 3.Be3-Qe7 4.Rad1 or 4.Rfd1, it is very hard for Black to find a reasonable move to avoid a total collapse.

2.Qe2-Nc8 better than

2....-Nbd7 3.f4-Qe6 4.e5-Nd5 5.Nd5-Qd5 6.Rd1 and White has a huge advantage

3.a6! now the strong queenside pawn formation is disturbed. After

3...b6 (or 3...b5)

White can draw his attention to his major plan: the advance of his strong central pawns. In addition, Black has some real weaknesses on the queenside (the c6 and a7 pawns) and for this reason now White has a long term advantage after

4.f4 followed by e5.

Actually, in the game, White played with less energy and allowed Black to get a reasonable position:

1.f3 to restrict Nf6 **1...-Rd8** **2.Qe2-0-0** **3.Be3** and now after **3...-Qa5** the worst for Black has passed.

Problem 2

Positional Evaluation

- Center/ Pawn structure: The center is blocked and the pawn structure is typical of *King's Indian Defense*. So, already, we know the major plans of play: White will attack on the queenside by b4, c5, a4 and so on and Black will attack on the kingside.
- Pawn structure: Black has a weakness on the light-square, f5 (so which cannot be protected by the dark-square bishop).
- Pieces: Black's dark-square bishop is "bad" (obstructed by its own pawns)

So, White has a clear advantage.

Black's TO DO list:

The only hope for Black to get some activity is on the kingside. The "bad" bishop can come to life using the h6-square so Black's TO DO is 1...g4 followed by h5, Bh6, Qg6, Ke7 and, at some point, f5. From h6, the bishop will cover the important c1-square, slowing down White's attack on the queenside.

Although his position is worse, he can hope for "better days".

What we have to do / Planning

In closed positions, long maneuvers to improve the position of the pieces are allowed. The time factor is not so important, but you will see that accurate play is still necessary.

The weakness of the f5-square and Black's plan to play Bh6 gives the solution for White: the maneuver Nf3-e1-c2-e3-f5. The other knight can also support the f5-square from e3.

Calculation

1.Ne1! anticipating Black's plan. After the normal **2....h5 3.Nc2-g4 4.Ne3-Bh6 5.Nf5** (just in time), Black's activity on the kingside is history. Now White has all the time in the world to prepare his queenside assault because Black is doomed to passivity.

In the game, White played **1.Nc3?!** and after **1...g4! 2.Ne1-h5 3.Nc2-Bh6** the e3-square is covered and Black can trade his "bad" bishop for the white knight. White still has better chances but he lost a big part of his advantage.

We said that in closed positions, time is less important. Then, you saw that White could not conquer the f5-square when he lost only one tempo by playing 1.Nc3?!

A position where prophylactic thinking played the first role!

Problem 3

Positional Evaluation

- Center: The center is semi-closed and relatively stable, so attacks on flanks are possible. Black already showed his intention to attack on the kingside (the advanced f5-pawn).
- King's safety: the white king's position is weakened by the advanced h3-pawn. As a consequence, Black can open the lines easier by g6-g5-g4.
- Pieces: White has better pieces: a strong bishop on d5 and a better knight than the "bad" g7-bishop.

White is slightly better.

Black's TO DO list:

Black has a clear plan: the advance of his kingside pawns (f5-f4, g6-g5, h6-h5 and g5-g4) creating premises for a strong attack on flank.

What we have to do / Planning

Black's threats against the white king are really serious so they must be prevented. How can we do that? Generally, against a flank attack, a response in the center might be the best decision, but here this is not possible: d3-d4 is not good because it would open the "beast" from g7. Therefore we are left with 2 options: to defend against Black's attack or to get some quicker counter-attack on the other flank.

In his attack on the kingside, Black will use especially the queen and the light-square bishop, so White would like to defend the light-squares (with the queen).

White can start the attack on the queenside by b2-b4 which should be prepared by bringing the *reserves* on the queenside: Rfb1, Nc4. As a consequence of his attack, White wants obtain a weak black b7-pawn and a *local force superiority* since the black g7-bishop is closed on the other side.

So, White's TO DO list is:

1. bring the f3-knight on the queenside, on c4 to support the attack; this will also open the diagonal d1-h5 for the white queen;
2. play Qd1-f3 to defend the kingside (against h6-h5 and g5-g4) and clear the first rank for the rooks;
3. Rf1-b1 to support b2-b4
4. b2-b4

Calculation

1.Nd2! so a move with double scope: the knight will support the queenside attack and the queen prevents Black's kingside attack. **1...f4 2.Qf3** followed by Rfb1 and White is the first who creates real threats. Now Black must take some defensive measures on the queenside, therefore, it will be difficult for him to carry on his plan on the kingside.

A doubtful decision was **1.exf5?!** From a positional point of view, this move is not desirable. It's not good to open the position when your opponent has the pair of bishops. In the same time, Black gets a better control over the center by gxf5.

Anti-positional decisions should be taken only after precise calculation and only if such moves lead to concrete gains (like material advantage for example). Here, it is not the case.

In the game, White played **1.c4??** - a huge positional mistake. After this, White will have nothing to oppose to his opponent's kingside attack.

1...f4 The superb d5-bishop will be out of game. All Black has to do is to avoid the squares controlled by this bishop in order to double his rooks on the "g" file and then his attack will be unstoppable.

Problem 4

Positional Evaluation

White's advantage is clear:

- Pawn structure: Black has weak pawns on c5, c6 and a5.
- Pawn structure: White has weak pawns on b3 and d3.
- Pawn structure: the center is semi-closed and stable.
- Pawn structure: White has local space advantage on the kingside.
- Pieces: White has a superb knight on c4.
- Pieces: Black has a "bad" bishop that has not any chance to improve its position.

Black has no active plan; he focuses on keeping the balance by making pressure against White's weaknesses.

What we have to do / Planning

First of all, it must be said that Black cannot do the exchange g6xf5 because after e4xf5 White would get an excellent outpost for his knight on e4.

White's major plan is to increase his space advantage on the kingside – this is the only part of the board where some progress is possible. For this, White needs to play g3-g4 but this is not possible because the black h5-knight would go directly on f4. Therefore, White needs to release his pieces from the tension.

Black has a strong pressure against b3- and d3- pawns. How can White release from this pressure?

First we have to turn our attention to our opponent's weaknesses:

- It is easy to spot that any progress on the "c" file is not easy to be achieved. All Black has to do is to protect c5 with Bf8 (this had no active roles anyway).
- What about a5? This will be more difficult to protect. The active queen from b4 protects this pawn and, in the same time, keeps an eye on "b3".

Now everything is easy: the black queen must be eliminated and the only white piece that can attack the black queen is ...the queen.

Calculation

1.Qe2 (or Qe3) is the right move in order to play Qe1. Even if Black protects a5 in advance with **1...Ra7** or allows the trade of the queens, he must go in defense. This will allow White to prepare active measures on the kingside.

This time, White managed to find the right answer. After **1.Qe2-Rd4 2.Qe1-Qe1 3.Re1-Ra8** White improved his position. Now he is able to prepare a pawn advance on the kingside.

The Exchange

The simplest exchanges are between the same pieces: knight for knight, color like bishops, rook for rook, and queen for queen. Any other exchange leads to imbalanced positions (see “Pieces Value” and “Positions with material equivalence” from Month 1).

Now, let’s do a categorization of the exchanges after their basic objective (however, a combination of them being also possible):

1. Tactics;
2. Qualitative changes on the position;
3. Simplification of the position.

1. Tactics

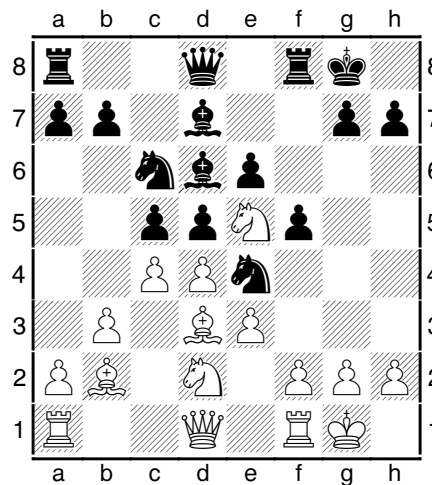
In most of the cases, after a player takes a piece, the opponent is forced to take back – so his next move is forced. Also, this trade eliminates some defenders, opens some lines, attracts pieces in maybe unwanted positions – all these being a possible source for tactics.

In this tensioned position, there are many possible exchanges: Ne5xd7, Ne5xc6, Nd2xe4, Bd3xe4, c4xd5, d4xc5. Also, White has to consider Black’s possible replies: Nc6xe5, Bd6xe5, Ne4xd2, c5xd4, d5xc4.

Strategically, any exchange doesn’t bring any advantage to White so he continued with 1.f2-f3.

However, White could win a pawn with:

1.Nxd7! Qxd7 2.cxd5 exd5 3.Nxe4 fxe4 4.dxc5 Bxc5 5.Bxe4. After some trades that looked harmless for Black, the d-file became opened, the black queen was attracted on d7 and now the d5-pawn is pinned.



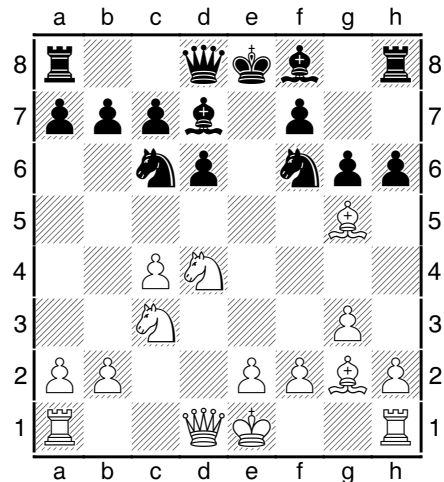
White is to move

Let’s go back to the game after 1.f3. Now it was Black’s turn to visualize different positions after the possible trades in the center. After: 1...Nxd2 2.Qxd2 cxd4 3.exd4 Nxe5 4.dxe5 Bc5+ 5.Kh1 Bc6 Black’s position is preferable.

Here, Black's last move was h7-h6. He didn't even consider that White will part with his bishop-pair by **1.Bxf6!** After **1...Qxf6**, other surprising exchanges followed: **2.Nxc6 Bxc6 3.Bxc6! bxc6**. So, White renounced at his fianchettoed bishop too, but not without a concrete idea:

4.Qa4! Now the previous exchanges are clearly explained: in the resulting position, Black cannot defend the c6-pawn with any piece and therefore he is forced to play the ugly: **4...Kd7**. After **5.0-0**, **6.Rac1** and **7.Rfd1**, White has a strong pressure in the center and an attack against the black king.

In this position, White had the task to visualize the position after making all the possible trades.



White is to move

Important conclusion: Exchanges are forcing moves that must be calculated like you calculate what happens after a check for example.

Also, in complicated positions where we have to calculate lot of variations, the exchanges (besides checks and other direct strong threats) are that “forcing” moves which we need to calculate first or at least consider in the list of candidate moves.

When you calculate an exchange you need to make sure that the exchanged piece will not appear again on the board (a very frequent error in calculation).

2. Qualitative changes on the position.

2.1. When an inactive/bad piece is exchanged for an opponent better one.

The comparison between the qualitative values of pieces of the 2 armies offer us concrete directions on what pieces should be exchanged.

A very simple and automatic exchange is when an open file appears and no player wants to leave opponent rooks controlling that file. The same is when a bishop controls a long diagonal, or a knight gets a centralized position: the opponent wants to neutralize those pieces by exchanges.

In many opening systems, Black has a bad piece and one of the opening battles is around the exchange of that bad piece. For example, the bad light-square bishop from French that Black often tries to exchange with the white one by Bc8-d7-b5 or the Stonewall bishop that comes into play via: Bc8-d7-e8-h5 only to be exchanged.

Sometimes, the battle for keeping / exchanging a good piece is more complicated. Let's see the following example:

A relative complicate position with all the pieces on the board. The opposite castles increase the value of open lines, so the quality value of bishops and rooks.

It is easy to see that Black has a very powerful bishop on e5 which defends the kingside, the d6-pawn and creates pressure on the White's queenside. With his last move, 1.Nc2-e1, White intends to exchange Black's best piece. In the next sequence of moves, both White and Black will fight against / for this bishop:

1...bxc4!

1...Ne8 2.Nd3 Bg7 doesn't work because the f4-pawn is hanging.

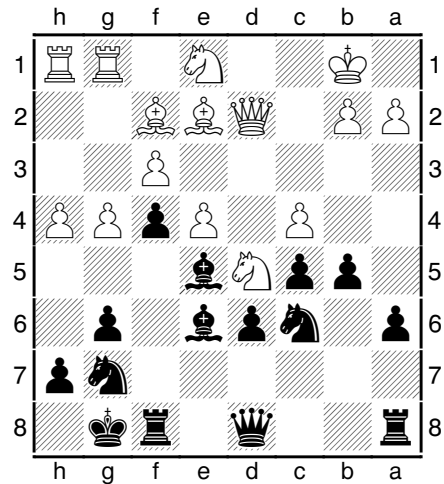
2.Bxc4 Na5 3.Qc2 Nxc4 4.Qxc4 Ne8!

Makes room for the bishop on g7 and also brings the knight on b5 to prevent Bf2-e1-c3.

5.Nd3 Bg7 6.Be1 Nc7!

Now, White cannot play 7.Bc3 because of Bxc3 8.Qxc3 Nxd5.

The strong dark-square bishop is saved as Nc7-b5 follows. Also, Black will do another advantageous exchange by Bxd5, White being forced to take back with the pawn.



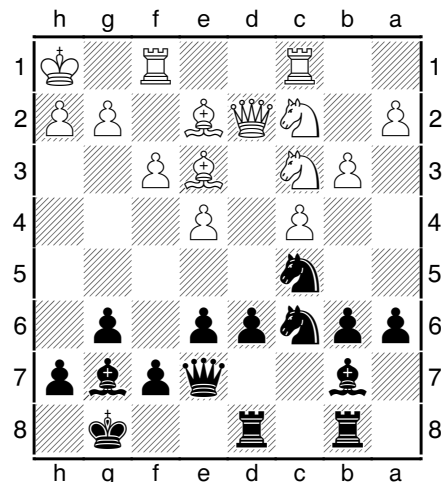
Black is to move

2.2. Space / Superfluous / Limited pieces

In many theoretical articles and books, it is said that the player with more space should avoid (unnecessary) exchanges and the player with less space should look for exchanges. This principle is partially correct... but often this is not true.

Think for example at the Hedgehog structure where Black stays behind its pawns from the sixth rank. In this structure, Black's counter-play is based on the dynamic of his pieces that may come very lively into play after b6-b5 or d6-d5. In some cases, White, the player with more space, should even look for exchanges which would deprive Black from his counter-play possibilities.

Let's see the position from the right (Leko – Ivanchuk, 2007). The difference of space of White and Black is obvious, but if you analyze the place and the role of each of Black's pieces, you will notice that they are all safely placed and they do not obstruct each other.

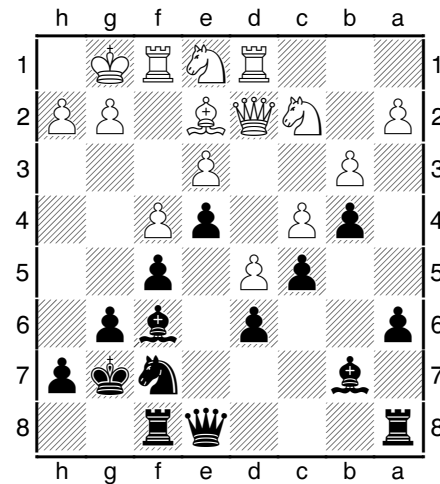


Black has less space, but not superfluous pieces

So, the connection between space and the principle of looking for / avoiding exchanges needs better thoughts. In the previous diagram, Black had no superfluous pieces, but in the next one (Game 7 – Month 5), the things are totally different:

If you take all the minor pieces from the board, the position is rather equal. However, here White has 3 minor pieces that do nothing than only limit each other.

“The seven white pieces find themselves in a ridiculous situation: the knight on e1 has no moves; the knight on c2 has only the possibility to move on a1; the bishop on e2 is able to move eventually around his axis of symmetry; the rook on f1 can move only on f2; the rook on d1 can move only on b1 and c1; the queen resembles his ancestor from the game Strandj, which was able to move only on square in diagonal; the most mobile piece is the king, who has the possibility to move on h1 and f2.”



2.3. In some cases, a piece defends important squares. By exchanging that piece, the opponent can take the control of those squares.

In the game Karpov – Browne, 1972, after the moves 1.c4 c5 2.b3 Nf6 3.Bb2 g6, White made a surprising exchange: 4.Bxf6! and after 4...exf6 5.Nc3 followed by g3 and Bg2, White had a total control over d5. The next step is to play e2-e3 and d2-d4 to open the d-file and to create pressure against the backward Black's d-pawn.

In this position from the game Alekhine – Nimzowitsch, 1930, White has space advantage on the queenside. Moreover, the qualitative value of the white d6-knight is clearly superior to the limited black b7-bishop. However, the real problem in Black's position is the weakness of the light-squares that White will exploit after trading off the Black's bad bishop.

The attack of the light-squares begins by:

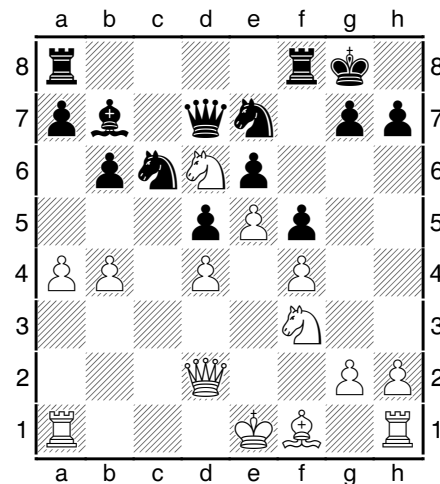
1.a5!

Black cannot take the pawn: 1...bxa5 2.b5! Nd8 3.Ra5 and the a7-pawns cannot be defended (White will continue with Bd3, 0-0, and Rfa1).

1...Nc8 2.Nxb7!

Black's bishop was really bad but he did a good job defending the light-squares.

2...Qxb7 3.a6!



White is to move

Taking under control b7, Black remains with few squares on the queenside. Now, White will increase the pressure against the c6-square doubling and then tripling the major pieces on the c-file:

3...Qf7 4.Bb5 N8e7 5.0-0 h6 6.Rfc1 Rfc8 7.Rc2 Qe8 8.Rac1 Rab8 9.Qe3 Rc7 10.Rc3 Qd7 11.R1c2 Kf8 12.Qc1 Rbc8 13.Ba4 b5 14.Bxb5 Ke8 15.Ba4 Kd8 16.h4! Black is in zugzwang! 16...h5 17.Kh2 g6 18.g3 1-0

3. Simplification of the position.

The exchange usually leads to a simplification of the position and brings the endgame closer. We have again 3 cases:

3.1. The quality value of the remaining pieces increase in importance by any exchange.

In this example, we are analyzing the qualitative value of minor pieces of the 2 camps.

White's last move was 1.Qg3 threatening to take the g7-pawn. If Black plays now 1...g6?, the White's dark-square bishop will get a new territory of activity around the weaknesses of the black kingside. Black does not like this and furthermore he wants to provoke f2-f4 after which the c1-bishop becomes limited.

Black played **1...Ne7!** defending indirectly the pawn (2.Qxg7?? Rg8).

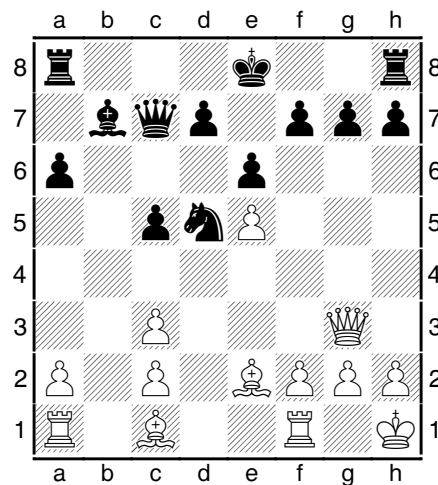
By **2.f4?** White wanted to release his queen from defending the e5-pawn and also to play Bd3 and f4-f5 with an attack. However, the consequence of his move matched Black's intentions.

2...0-0 3.c4 Be4!!

By this move, Black provokes the exchange of the light-square bishops (f4-f5 is stopped and the c2-pawn is attacked). Even if the Black's light-square bishop looked better than the White's one, this exchange will simplify the position and the difference of quality between the black knight and the white dark-square bishop will gain in importance.

4.Bd3 Nf5 5.Qh3 Qc6 Black does not hurry with the exchange; now the queen will take the place of the bishop as sooner or later White will be forced to make the trade. It is easy to observe that the black knight from f5 controls important squares, especially e3, and White is unable to re-organize his pieces.

6.Bb2 Rfd8 At the next move, Black will play d7-d5 gaining another advantage: the control of the d-file. Black has a strategically won position.



Black is to move

3.2. Simplification of material is one of the simplest ways to transform a complicate position into a technical won endgame.

When having material advantage, better pawn structure (the opponent has long-term weaknesses) or other long-term strategical advantages, the exchanges are the first option that the player with an advantage should look for. This way, the second player will be deprived by counter-play chances.

Not unusual exceptions from this rule are the positions with opposite-colored bishops or a pair of rooks where an extra pawn (or even 2 pawns) can be only a draw. Of course, there are also other rarer exceptions like for example: queen + 2 knights against queen, the queens should be not exchanged (2 knights alone cannot deliver mate).

Position from the game Zagoriansky – Kan, 1945.

White has the advantage of the bishop-pair in an open position. Also, all his pieces are ideally placed. In this stage when other advantages cannot be gained, there are 2 methods to continue:

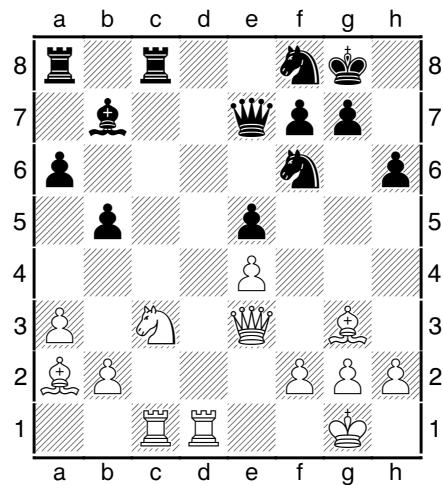
1. a direct attack against opponent king or
2. the simplification of the position looking for a technically won endgame.

Here, White cannot attack the black king, so he goes for exchanges (of course, after analyzing the resulting position):

1.Nd5! Nxd5 2.exd5 – so, by this exchange White gained another advantage, a free pawn. Because of the open files, the rook will be exchanged:

2...Rxc1 3.Rxc1 Ng6 4.Qb6 – threatening Rc7, it forces another exchange:

4...Rc8 5.Rxc8 Bxc8 6.d6 and in this simple, uncomplicated position, White can exploit his advantages without risks.



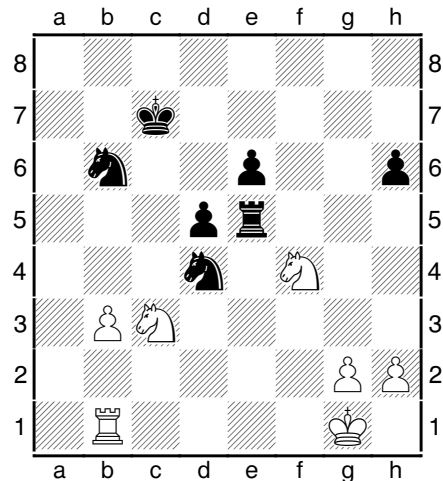
White is to move

Position from Mednis–Keene, 1975, White to move.

Black has a big advantage because of his 2 free connected pawns in the center. White is not able to stop the black pawns, but he finds a very nice simplification of the position, sacrificing a knight for the 2 pawns (irregular exchange):

41.Rd1!! Nxb3 42.Nxe6+ Rxe6 43.Nxd5+ Nxd5 44.Rxd5

The endgame rook + knight versus rook is a draw and Black is not able to keep his “h” pawn. Of course, White still needs to show a good technique, but from theoretical point of view, he saved the game. This continued:



44...Kc6 45.Rh5 Nd4 46.g4 Rg6 47.Kf2 Ne6 48.Kg3 Kd6 49.h4 Ke7 50.Rf5 Ng7 51.Ra5 Rd6 52.Ra7+ Kf8 53.Ra8+ Kf7 54.Ra7+ Kg6 55.Ra3 Ne6 56.Rc3 Nd4 57.Ra3 Rb6 58.Ra5 Ne6 59.Ra3 Nc5 60.Ra5 Rb3+ 61.Kg2 Rc3 62.Rb5 Rc4 63.Rb6+ Kg7 64.Kh3 Nd7 65.Rb5 Rc5 66.Rb7 Rd5 67.Ra7 Rd6 68.Ra5 Rd3+ 69.Kg2 Re3 70.Ra7 Re7 71.Kg3 Kf7 72.Ra6 Re6 73.Ra7 Rd6 74.Ra5 Kg6 75.Kh3 Rc6 76.Rd5 Nc5 77.Rd4 Re6 78.Rc4 Nd3 79.Ra4 Re3+ 80.Kg2 Nc5 81.Rc4 Ne6 82.Ra4 Rd3 83.Ra6 Kf7 84.Ra7+ Kg8 85.Ra8+ Kf7 86.Ra7+ Kf6 87.g5+ hxg5 88.hxg5+ Kxg5 89.Re7 Kf5 ½-½

3.3. Reducing opponent's initiative / attack

In this position from the game Ghinda - Jussupow, 1986, Black has the initiative because:

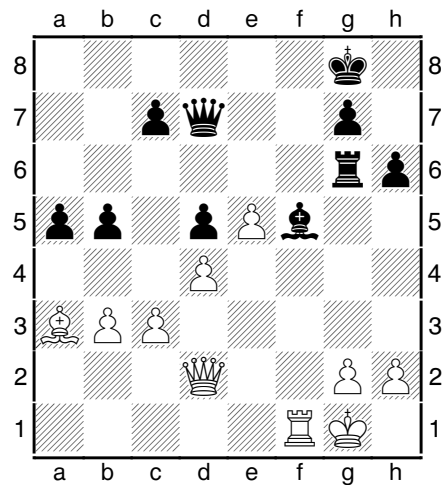
- he can create a free pawn on the a-file
 - the presence of the opposite colored bishops favors the player in attack who is practically a piece up.
- Here, after Bf5-e4, White's king will be in real danger.

The opposite colored bishops are a factor of instability in the presence of major pieces, so White will do an excellent maneuver to trade the rooks:

1.Rf3!! Be4 2.Rg3!

Even if White will get double pawns on the g-file, Black's initiative is strongly reduced.

2...Rxb3 3.hxg3



White is to move

THE EXCHANGE

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Bd3 Nc6

After this game, Nb8-c6 together with the next move 6...bxc6 became less popular. Black prefers 5...Nf6, 5...Qc7, or 5...Bc5.

6.Nxc6!

In Sicilian Defense, White usually refrains from this exchange. After bxc6, Black brings a marginal pawn closer to the center and also opens the b-file which helps for his plans of attacking on the queenside.

However, Black has too many pawns on light-squares and he also lost a tempo by a7-a6 comparing with the variation: 4...Nc6 5.Nxc6?! bxc6. White is now able to exploit his lead in development by creating a quick pressure on the center.

6... bxc6

[A bit better is: 6...dxc6

trying to get into a relative symmetrical pawn structure (equal number of pawns on both flanks). However, Black's moves (a6, c6, e6) have little sense in this position.

Black needs to play e6-e5 to develop the light-square bishop. After this, the black e5-pawn becomes an easy target for the white pieces: 7.Nd2 e5 8.Nc4 Nf6 9.O-O Qc7 10.Bd2 threatening Bd2-a5, White exploits the weak dark-squares on Black's queenside .

10... Bg4 11.Qe1 with the idea f2-f3 and Qg3.

Black is forced to weaken his structure even more:

11... b5 12.Ne3 Bc5 13.Nxg4 Nxg4 14.Qe2 Nf6 15.b4! followed by c2-c4, White opens the queenside.

15... Bb6 16.c4 Bd4 17.Rac1±

and White's attack on the queenside is very strong.

Leko,P (2701) - Khalifman,A (2628), 2000]

7.0-0 d5

[7...d6 If Black doesn't claim anything in the

center, White has free hand to start an attack on the kingside:

8.Nc3 Nf6 9.f4 Be7 10.Kh1 Bb7 11.e5 Nd5 12.Ne4 c5 13.exd6 Bxd6 14.f5± Adams,M (2716) - Polgar,J (2677), 1999]

8.c4!

Without this move, Black had no problems. White is attacking the center while the black king is in still the center which limits Black's options.

8... Nf6

[If Black takes one of White's pawns, the c6-pawn will be left very weak:

8...dxc4 9.Bxc4]

[8...dxe4 9.Bxe4]

[Also 8...d4 does not help Black for too much time: 9.e5 Ne7 10.Nd2 Ng6 11.Nf3 c5 12.Be4 Ra7 13.b4! the move which demonstrates that Black's strategy was not good.

13... cxb4 14.Nxd4 Nxe5 15.Bf4 Ng6

16.Be3 Rd7 17.Bc6± Adams,M (2755) - Dao Thien Hai (2555), 2000]

9.cxd5 cxd5 10.exd5 exd5

[10...Nxd5 11.Be4 with the threat Nc3.]

The result of central tension is that Black remained with a problematic pawn on d5. The pawn is free but it does not have enough support from Black's pieces and therefore is rather a weakness than an asset. White continues the development while increasing the pressure against the d5-pawn:

11.Nc3 Be7 12.Qa4+!

White got enough advantage after the opening (the weak black pawn from d5) to like an endgame so he proposes the exchange of the queens.

12... Qd7

[After 12...Bd7 the white queen gets an excellent position in the center:

13.Qd4 Bc6 14.Bf4 O-O 15.Rfe1

and Black is reduced to a total passivity.]

13.Re1!

Forcing Black to make the exchange on a4, White prepares another very important trade: of dark-square bishops.

13... Qxa4 14.Nxa4 Be6 15.Be3!

Now, it becomes clear the idea of having the knight on a4: White is ready to play Bc5.

15... 0-0 16.Bc5!

Black will have no time to advance d5-d4, so like in positions with isolated pawns, the player against the isolani seeks to trade the opponent's "good" bishop. The difference of quality between the light-squares bishops is evident as the Black's one is limited by the central pawn.

16... Rfe8

[16...Bxc5 17.Nxc5 with double attack on a6 and e6.]

17.Bxe7 Rxe7 18.b4

One shot, two rabbits: blocks the black a6-pawn and gets an outpost for the knight on c5. Black cannot play a6-a5 as White's b-pawn will become really dangerous after b4-b5.

18... Kf8 19.Nc5 Bc8 20.f3 Rea7 21.Re5 Bd7 22.Nxd7+!!

White renounces at his excellent knight for the much worse Black's bishop. However, Black was threatening to play Bb5 after which is not clear how White could exploit the only remained weakness from d5.

After this trade, Black is deprived by any counter-play chances and the game is transformed into a pure endgame where White attacks 2 weaknesses (a6 and d5) and has a better activity.

22... Rxd7 23.Rc1

The 2 open files are controlled by the white rooks and the bishop attacks the a6-pawn. The black pieces are reduced to passivity. It is clear now that White did not need to keep the c5-knight.

23... Rd6

Black is forced to renounce at the seventh rank as White was threatening Rc6.

24.Rc7 Nd7 25.Re2 g6 26.Kf2 h5 27.f4 h4 28.Kf3 f5 29.Ke3

Threatening Kd4, White forces Black to advance the d-pawn after which the light-square bishop will get the a2-g8 diagonal.

29... d4+ 30.Kd2 Nb6

Against Bc4, but White enters the seventh rank with the second rook. Black could not defend everything.

31.Ree7 Nd5 32.Rf7+ Ke8 33.Rb7 Nxb4 34.Bc4 1-0

Piece Mobility

Specific elements about the mobility of each piece were discussed in Month 3 of our course. In this lesson we present 3 important aspects about the general mobility of the pieces, precursor of “dynamic” (presented in the next lesson).

1. The Reserves

Until the endgame, rarely all the forces take part to the various local battles on the chess board. So, at some moment we may have active pieces and pieces that do not take part to the respective actions. But this classification of active versus non-active pieces should be conditioned as there are situations when the non-active pieces can enter the fight – this is often spectacular and can be even decisive.

In the game **Fischer - Geller, 1961**, after the moves: **1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 d6 5.0-0 Bg4 6.h3 Bh5 7.c3 Qf6** Black seems to have a good position because of the pin from the kingside.

White's queenside is still undeveloped but his pieces will enter the game extremely fast with a new threat at every single move:

8.g4!

By this move, White is weakening his kingside, but he gets time for the next actions.

8...Bg6 9.d4! with 2 threats: Bg5 and d5. White's dark-square bishop will participate to the battle as an active reserve but only 9 moves later it will be effectively developed.

9...Bxe4

Black was forced to accept this sacrifice but after which his king is in danger on the e-file.

10.Nbd2

In just 2 moves, White's queenside is ready to fight. Black is already in serious troubles as the following variations show:

10...Bg6

a) 10...Bxf3 11.Nxf3 e4 12.Re1 d5 13.Bg5 Qd6 (13...Qg6 14.Qb3! b5 15.Qxd5 bxa4 16.Rxe4+ Be7 17.Bxe7 Ngxe7 18.Rxe7+ Kxe7 19.Re1+ Kf8 20.Ne5) 14.c4! dxc4 15.d5! b5 16.dxc6 bxa4 17.Rxe4+ Ne7 18.Bxe7 Bxe7 19.Qe2+-; or

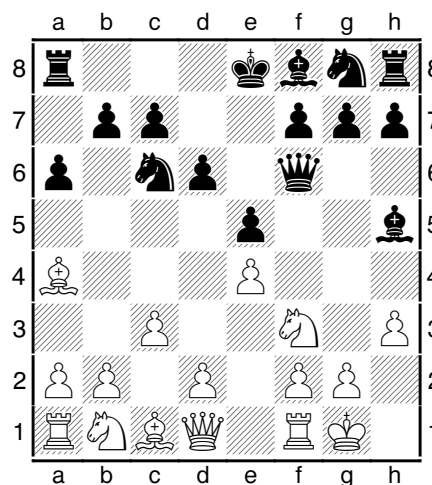
b) 10...Bd3 11.Bxc6+ bxc6 12.Re1 0-0-0 13.Re3 Bg6 14.Qe2

11.Bxc6+ bxc6 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.Nxe5 *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

The material equality is re-established but Black is behind in development, his pawn structure on the queenside was destroyed and the open files in the center give White a strong attack. Black could not resist more than 10 more moves:

13...Bd6 14.Nxg6! clears the e-file for the rook.

14...Qxg6 [14...hxg6 15.Ne4 Qe5 16.Nxd6+ Qxd6 17.Re1+ Ne7 18.Qf3]



White is to move

15.Re1+ Kf8 [15...Ne7 16.Nc4 0–0–0 17.Qa4] **16.Nc4 h5 17.Nxd6 cxd6** [17...Qxd6 18.Qxd6+ cxd6 19.Bf4 Rd8 20.Rad1 d5 21.Rd4±] **18.Bf4 d5 19.Qb3 hxd4 20.Qb7! gxd3+ 21.Bg3 Rd8 22.Qb4+ 1–0**

The attacks based on sacrifices followed by introducing the reserves into the battle are very strong and usually unpredictable. The feeling for the position plays the most important role in the decision making process.

In this position from the game **Maroczy – Tartakower, 1922**, Black's queenside is behind in development. However, Black correctly evaluates that he can bring these pieces in attack on the kingside after the following rook sacrifice:

17...Rxf2 18.Kxf2 Qxf2+ 19.Kh1 Nf6

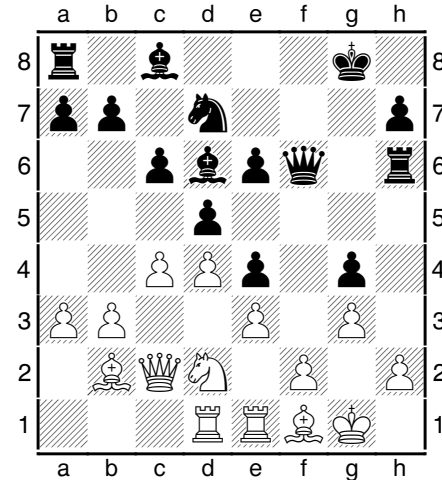
The reserves comes slowly in active positions (the knight needs one more move: Nh5 and the rook needs 2 moves: Bd7, Rf8), but White has not enough space to set up a good defense in time.

20.Re2 Qxg3 21.Nb1 Nh5 22.Qd2 Bd7 23.Rf2 Qh4+ 24.Kg1 Bg3 25.Bc3?

It is very hard to always find the best move like a machine, especially when you are under attack.

After 25.Rg2 Rf8 26.Bc1 Rf3 or 25.Rh2 Bxh2+ 26.Qxh2 Qg5 27.Bc1 g3 Black's attack remains dangerous, but White could still hope.

25...Bxf2+ 26.Qxf2 g3 27.Qg2 Rf8 28.Be1 Rxf1+ 29.Kxf1 e5 30.Kg1 Bg4 31.Bxg3 Nxd3 32.Re1 Nf5 33.Qf2 Qg5 34.dxe5 Bf3+ 35.Kf1 Ng3+ 0–1



Black is to move

In the next example, we will see that **the lack of reserves** constitute an important factor for evaluation if an attack based on sacrifices can or cannot succeed.

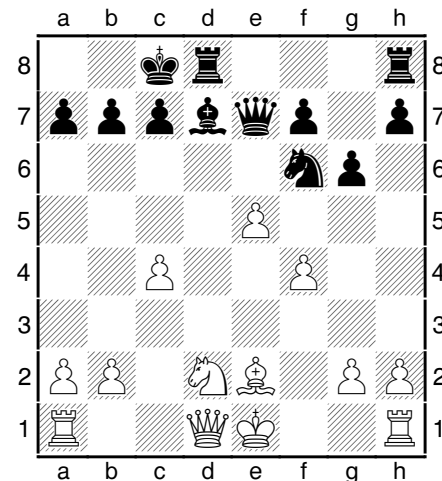
This position is from the game **Polugaevsky – Tal, 1973**. Black sacrificed a pawn in the opening to get some lead in development and he could have enough compensation after 12...Nh5, but he continued in the same style sacrificing a piece:

12...Bc6? 13.exf6 Qe3 14.Rf1 Bxg2 15.Rf2 Bh3 16.Qc1 Rhe8

Black pieces are ideally placed and White hardly defends his position. The problem is that Black has no pieces in reserve which in this situation could give the final strike. Little by little, White will improve his position and refute the attack.

17.Nf1 Qe6 18.Qc3 Bg4 19.Ng3 h5

Black tries to bring everything possible in attack,



Black is to move

but this marginal pawn is not enough.

20.Rd1 h4 21.Rxd8+ Kxd8 22.f5 gxf5 23.Qd3+ Kc8 24.Nxf5 Qxf6 25.Ne3 and some moves later Black resigned.

2. Destroying the barricades

By setting a “barricade” one of the players wants to defend his position against an attack toward his king, on one of the flanks, block an opponent free pawn and so on.

In fact, in almost any game, the players set up various barricades against opponent’s active actions. We will see that in adequate circumstances even a barricade that looks impenetrable can be destroyed or nullified.

In this position from the game **Fischer – Panno, 1970**, Black’s kingside looks well barricaded by the black pawns. Moreover, Black has 2 knights ready to come in defense, the white light-square bishop looks non-active and white cannot exploit the weakness of the dark-squares.

Fischer starts to attack Black’s barricade having in mind a strong resource:

26.h5!

White threatens 27.Ng5 Nf8 28.Nxh7 Nxh7 29.hxg6 fxe6 30.Qxg6+ Kh8 31.Bf1 and 32.Nh5

26...Qd8 27.Ng5

Without well placed pieces, there are no spectacular moves. Sometimes, the preparatory moves are in fact the one that are worth the exclamation marks.

27...Nf8 28.Be4!! Talking about the reserves...

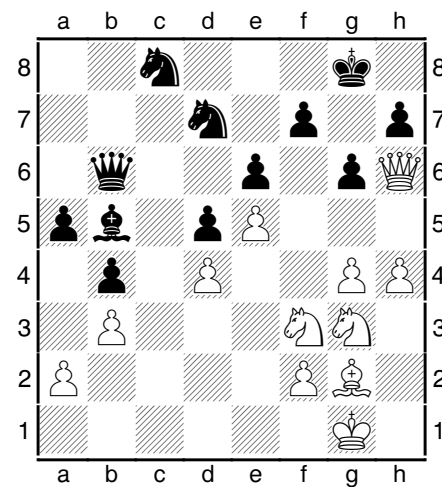
Black’s barricade doesn’t look impenetrable anymore. White’s bishop jumped on a square that is controlled by a black pawn but, in fact, the capture is impossible because after 28...dxe4 29.N3e4, the white knight arrives on f6 (a pawn cannot defend a square for 2 times...).

Now, White attacks the black pawns on light-squares with Be4, Ng5, Qh6 and h5-pawn.

28...Qe7 29.Nxh7!

In just 3 moves, Black’s barricade was destroyed. White is threatening Nf6+ so Black is forced to accept the sacrifice:

29...Nxh7 30.hxg6 fxe6 31.Bxe6 Ng5 32.Nh5 Nf3+ 33.Kg2 Nh4+ 34.Kg3 Nxg6 35.Nf6+ Kf7 36.Qh7+ 1-0



White is to move

In the game **Veresov – Levenfish, 1934**, Black got a bad position, but he tried to set barricades on both flanks. White seems to have no entrance, but:

30.g4!!

An unexpected move. White destroys the barricade using the g-pawn as after 30...hxg3 31.Rxg3, Black has problems in defending the g6-pawn. For example: 31...Rg8 32.Qxh5 gxh5 33.Rxg8

30...Rhh8 31.g5 Ka8

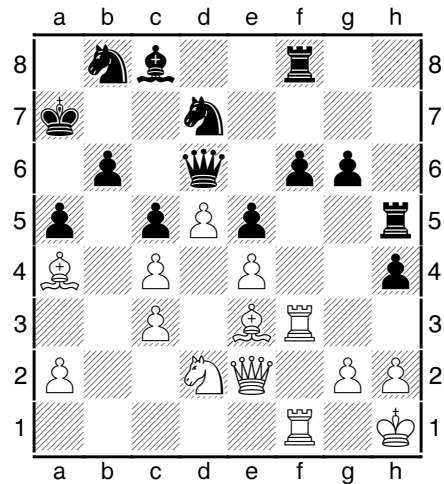
Black has no useful moves or counter attacks.

32.Qf2 fxg5 33.Bxg5

The f-file was opened and the white major pieces can now decisively invade Black's camp.

The game continued:

33...Rxf3 34.Nxf3 Ba6 35.Nd2 h3 36.Qg3 Bc8 37.Rf7 Na6 38.Be7 Qb8 39.Bc6+ Ka7 40.Bf6 Rf8 41.Rxf8 Nxf8 42.Bxe5 1-0



White is to move

3. Mobility in small space.

Usually, the pieces have possibilities of maneuvers in large space, but there are enough positions where the pieces do well in limited space too.

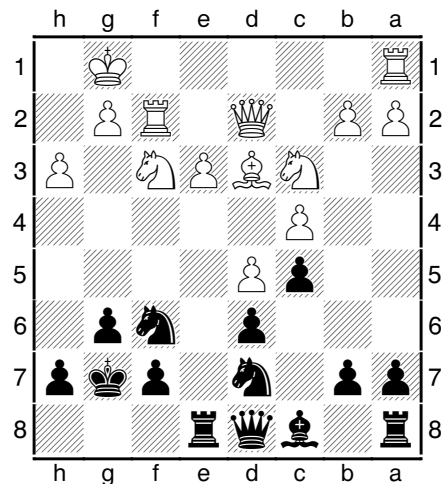
Game **Bagirov – Vasiukov, 1973**.

Black's cramped position doesn't look to promising. After doubling the rooks on the f-file followed by e3-e4-e5, White has a strong attack on the kingside.

The following regrouping of black pieces demonstrates the wealth of resources that can be used by proper maneuvers:

14...Ng8! 15.Raf1 f6 16.e4 a6 17.Qf4 Qe7 18.a3 Nh6 19.Qg3 Nf7 talking about barricades...

Black improved his position a lot setting a strong barricade on the f-file and against the advance of the white e-pawn. Despite the small space, Black has enough liberty to continue the piece maneuvers, for example: Rf8, Nfe5 with a dynamic position.



Black is to move

Dynamic in Chess

You surely heard many times about the dynamic of the pieces, a concept which is not easy to be defined, but it is a factor of first importance in chess.

We can call that the pieces have a good dynamic when:

- All or most of the pieces are placed in active positions;
- Critical squares and lines are controlled;
- The pieces cooperate well in reaching a certain objective.

A good dynamic of the pieces is not like “a rook is good on an open file”, “a knight is good in the center...” but something more complex and not always very clear. Also, it is not easy to be trained but it keeps more by the player’s natural talent; of course, the experience can complement this positional feeling in some extent.

In this position from the game **Larsen - Radulov, 1973**, White has much better pieces than Black: the rooks create pressure in the center, the bishops see both flanks and the Black’s kingside is weak. But this is not enough for Black to resign; White must seek concrete attacking ideas. **It is important to visualize where you would like to have the pieces attacking a certain target.**

White starts a specific attack against the “hanging pawns”, but also preparing an important improvement of the position of the pieces:

17.e4! Qa8

17...d4 is not good because of 18.Bxd4

18.Qd2!!

White is threatening to play 19.Qh6 Bf6 20.Ng5.

Larsen improves the position of the queen which comes on the kingside and will act extremely active in perfect harmony with the other pieces. NOW we can say that White has a good dynamic.

18...Bf6 19.Qf4

Already the white pieces create problems in Black’s camp. The double attack against c7 and f6 forces Black to play hazardous moves.

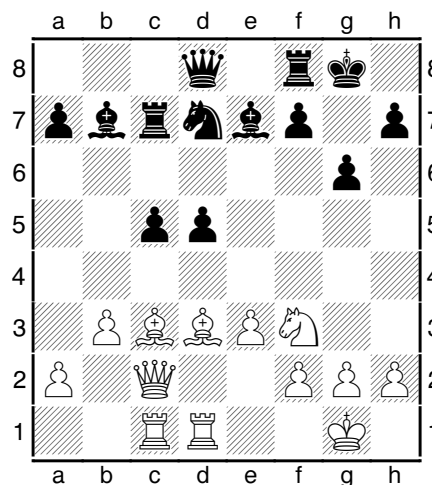
19...Qd8 20.Ba5

Not the best move. White could get more by 20.exd5! Bxc3 (20...Bxd5 21.Ba5 Nb6 22.Bc4) 21.d6 Rc8 22.Rxc3.

20...Nb6 21.b4?

Again 21.exd5 Rd7 22.Bb5 Rxd5 23.Rxd5 Bxd5 24.Rxc5 was better. Black could complicate matters now by: 21...Bb2! 22.Rxc5 (22.Rb1 Bc3 23.exd5 cxb4) 22...Rxc5 23.bxc5 dxe4 24.Be2 Nd5 25.Qd2 Qf6

21...Be7? Now, White is winning: **22.exd5 Bd6 23.Qh6 cxb4** [23...f6 24.bxc5 Bxc5 25.h4] **24.Ng5 f5 25.Ne6 Qd7 26.Rxc7** If 26...Bxc7 27.Qxf8#. Black resigned. **1–0**



White is to move

Zita - Bronstein, 1946

Another position where we can say that Black has a dynamic position and should find a way to seize the initiative. Qb6 and Bg7 exert X-ray action on d4, and all the other black pieces are active. However, it is not so obvious where Black can attack.

Like we said, it is essential to formulate a plan according to the objectives you can attack in the opponent's position. Try to find the best place for each piece taking into consideration the general plan of action.

After Nf6-g4, the long diagonal is opened, with increased pressure on d4, and the couple Qb6 with Ng4 exerting X-ray attack on f2. So Nf6-g4 is a move that increases the dynamic of black pieces.

Black needs to find something useful for the c5-knight which blocks Qb6 diagonal. First of all, we observe that Nc5-d3 would attack f2, b2 and e1 – so this is a resource that Black can use in some variations.

Nc5 also attacks b3 – a square that is now well defended by white pieces but can be undermined by a5-a4xb3.

Nd4 and Qd2 play too many roles (are overloaded). The queen alone defends f2, d4 and d3 – squares. Nd4 in the interaction of 2 diagonals and also defends b3.

All these characteristics of the position can be observed by a grandmaster in a couple of seconds.

Before starting the attack with Ng6-g4, Black needs to create another weakness in White's camp: the b3-square – which will be attacked by the b3-knight. Only this way, ALL his pieces will participate to the attack with maximum their potency.

14...a4! 15.Ba1

White defends the b3-pawn with the rook.

15...axb3!

After this exchange, the a8-rook is active as well. After a2xb3, the b1-rook will be overloaded by the defense of Ba1 and b3-pawn.

16.axb3 Ng4!

Black's piece collaboration reached the maximum level. The targets are clear: f2, d4, d3, b3. Try to find a good move for White and you will feel the tension to which his pieces are exposed.

17.h3

After 17.b4, Black wins with 17...Nd3!! 18.Qxd3 Bxd4

Maybe the best move for White was 17.Red1 defending the d4-square.

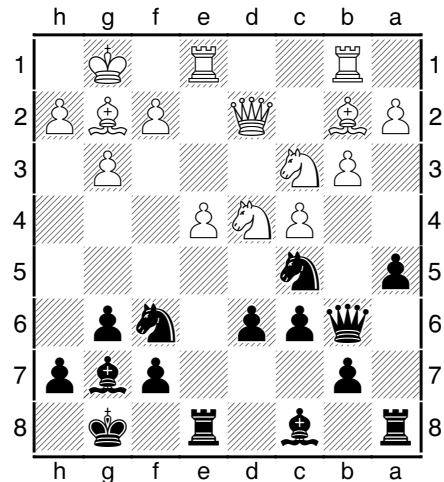
17...Rxa1!

This sacrifice of an exchange is the preparation of the next strike: Nxf2. Black wants to have the possibility of Nxb3

18.Rxa1 Nxf2 19.Re3 There was no defense: 19.Kxf2 Nxb3 or 19.Qxf2 Nd3

Black is winning:

19...Nxb3+ 20.Kh2 Nf2 21.Rf3 Ncxe4 22.Qf4 Ng4+ 23.Kh1 f5 24.Nxe4 Rxe4 25.Qxd6 Rxd4 26.Qb8 Rd8 27.Ra8 Be5 28.Qa7 Qb4 29.Qa2 Qf8 30.Bh3 Qh6 0-1



Black is to move

In the 2 positions before, the center was not closed and therefore the pieces navigated easily on the board. In closed positions, the pieces are somehow restricted by the blocked pawn structure and consequently the “dynamism” is not so much felt. Even if it is not the same thing, there is a connection between “dynamic pawn structure” (not closed structures) and “dynamic piece play”.

However, the dynamism still plays an important role even in closed position.

In this position from the game **Reshevsky – Botvinnik, 1948**, the center is closed and White has a clear advantage on the kingside because of the weaknesses on dark-squares.

All white pieces are active and the attacking idea found by Reshevsky combines the attack on dark-squares (Bd2-g5-f6), the pressure against the e6-pawn (Rc1-e1, Ne2-f4), and mating attacks that start with Nxg6+.

25.Bg5! Ng8 26.Re1!

White prepares Bf6+ and if Black takes the bishop, the e6-pawn cannot be defended against Nf4 and Rg3-e3.

26...Qf7 27.c3 Na5 28.Nf4!

White is threatening already 29.Nxg6+ hxg6 30.h7 Kxh7 31.Rh3+ Kg7 32.Qg3 followed by Qh2 and Rh7.

28...Rc6 29.Bf6+?

An impulsive move that messes everything. The position on the board will be changed and White is not ready. He wanted to force Black to take the bishop and after the exchange e5xf6 to attack the weakness from e6. The problem is that Black is able to keep away White’s Rg3 from entering the battle with the simple Na5-c4.

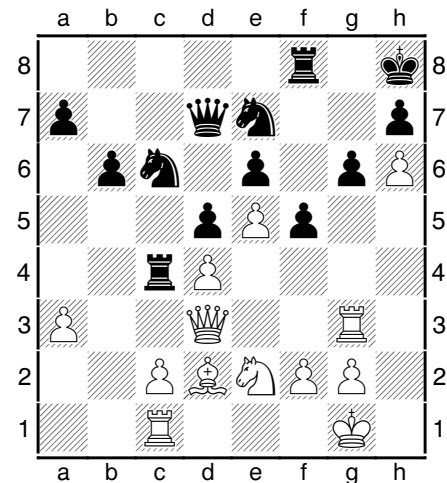
White could continue the attack with the idea Ng6+ (which directly doesn’t work because of 29...Qxg6! 30.Bf6+ Rxf6), bringing the e1-rook on the h-file: 29.Kh2, Rh1, Kg1, Bh4 and Nxg6+ with the idea h7xg6 h6-h7

Other possibility was to play 29.Rge3 Nc4 30.R3e2 after which Bf6+ is possible.

After:

29...Nxf6 30.exf6 Nc4 31.Qb1 Qxf6 32.a4 g5 33.Nd3 f4 34.Rh3 g4 Black completely turned the situation in his favor. White resigned some moves later.

We can learn a lot from White’s mistake. When pieces start to cooperate, the attacking target is well fixed, and the opponent has no counter-play, the player in advantage feels the taste of victory and wants to demonstrate his “greatness” upon the opponent in a quick manner. This “impulsive thinking” is one of the greatest psychological mistakes in chess. The active position and initiative should be followed by concrete calculation of variations and a thoroughly examination of opponent’s resources.



White is to move

The dynamic of pieces in complex endgames is by no means less important than during middlegame. In fact, because the smaller number of pieces or the missing of queens, the activity of each piece increases in importance.

In the game **Tal – Keres, 1963**, both White and Black have a strong and a weak square in the center. But because of the weak black pawn structure on the kingside, White can get active positions for his pieces:

1.Nd5 Nd4 2.Bd1

The bishop is transferred to the kingside on h5 with pressure against f7.

2...h4 3.f4!

Opens the file for the rook and creates collaboration between Rf1 and Bh5 against f7.

Also, by this move, White fights to get active squares for his dark-square bishop. The dynamism of white pieces will compensate Black's control over the central e5-square.

3...Bd6 4.Bh5 Be6 5.fxe5 Bxe5 6.Bf4!

White wants to trade the good black bishop which also defends the weak f6-square.

6...Bg7?!

Better would have been 6...Nc6 keeping the e5-square under control. In fact, the strong d4-knight is just an illusion as it doesn't attack anything. On e5, the knight could have a strong outpost with defensive role.

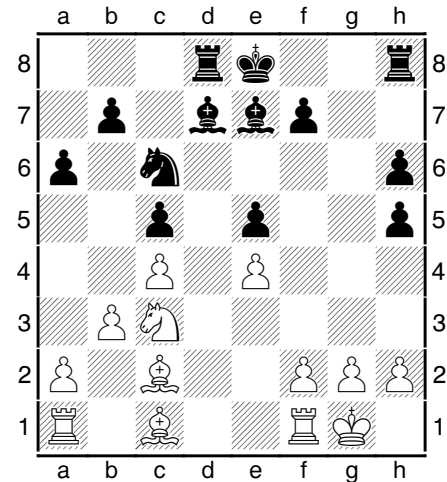
7.Nc7+ Kd7 8.Rad1 Rhg8

All white pieces are active but what do they attack? Do they cooperate for that objective? Tal will spot the weaknesses in Black's camp: the h4- and f7- pawns, by an excellent maneuver: Bf4-e3-f2.

9.h3!

The weakness is fixed and the regrouping starts:

9...Kc6 10.Nd5 Rgf8 11.Be3 Rd7 12.Bf2 f5 13.Bxh4 fxe4 14.Rxf8 Bxf8 15.Be8 and Black resigned in a few moves.



White is to move

The Initiative

In judging a position, we have to inspect its tactical and strategical factors. The second step is to determine and analyze the prospects and plans for both sides. In a **balanced position**, we try to realize our ideas and plans but in the same time we have to prevent opponent's plans.

The initiative means that we improve our position step-by-step while the opponent cannot put problems, his actions are reduced to parry our continuous threats and, consequently, his moves do not improve his position.

We need to make an observation: the initiative is not the same thing with the attack. Of course, in some cases, a strong attack determines the opponent to take only defensive measures, so in this case we have the initiative. However, we don't have the initiative if our attack makes the opponent to take just some few preventive measures and then he can continue his plans (counter-attack). Also, by no means any attack is correct so the initiative is just ephemeral. For example pushing the pawns on some flank can bring nothing but weaknesses in the own position. Or if you play 1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nc6 3.Qh5 we surely didn't seize the initiative.

In this lesson we will also continue to discuss about the dynamic of the pieces, which is tightly connected with the subject at hand.

Unzicker - Fischer, 1962

At first sight White seems to have an excellent position because of his total control over d5 and Black's "bad" bishop. This would be true if Black plays passive ceding the control of the a-file (the a8-rook is under attack).

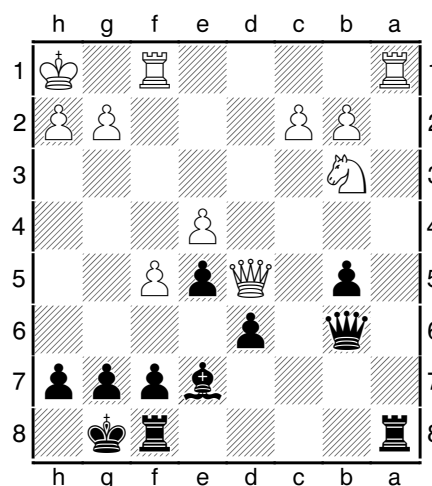
However, after a deeper examination we notice that Black CAN improve his position (starting with the uniquely good move Ra8-a4):

- his rooks can become active using the a- and c-files and the fourth rank (Ra4, Rc4);
- the black queen is not worse than the white queen; she can put pressure on the a-file after Ra4 and Qa6;
- the bishop can improve his position by Bg5;
- Black can attack various weak points in White's position: a1 (Ra4, Qa6), c2 (Rc8), e4 (Ra4, Rc4).

So, Black can get a good piece dynamic.

In exchange, White CANNOT improve his position, there are no better squares for his knight (which does not do anything on b3) and there are no points in Black's position that White can effectively attack.

19...Ra4! 20.c3 This is a forced move especially because it defends the d4-square if the b3-knight will have to leave.



Black is to move

20...Qa6 21.h3

The back rank threats must be prevented. Black will do the same in 2 moves.

21...Rc8 22.Rfe1 h6 23.Kh2 Bg5

Because of the pressure Black exerts, the d6-pawn doesn't represent a real problem. The evaluation of the position changed drastically without any error from White's side.

24.g3?

White wants to defend the dark-squares but it weakens the king's position. Anyway his position was already very hard.

24...Qa7 25.Kg2 Ra2 26.Kf1 Rxc3 0-1

In most of the cases, after a correct opening (12-20 moves), an equilibrium is established. Then, both players try to carry on their plans while repelling opponent's ones. This clash of ideas creates tensioned situations and raising different problems that the chess players try to solve. Even after a correct play, the equilibrium of the position starts to be affected and one of the players takes the initiative.

Pure Initiative

Let's see first an example of pure and lasting initiative.

Rubinstein - Cohn, 1911

The position resulted after the opening is quite calm. However, White has a small advantage that he tends to increase systematically. The first phase of the plan is to get more space on the queenside:

13.b4! Bb6 14.Qc2 Bd7 15.a4 Rc8 16.a5 Bc7

As a result of the space gained, White can improve the status of his worst piece, the dark-square bishop, that will come now on d6:

17.Bc3! Qh4 18.Bd4 a6 19.Qb3 Bd8 20.Bc5 Rf7 21.Rf2 Be7 22.g3 Qh6 23.Bd6 g6 24.c5

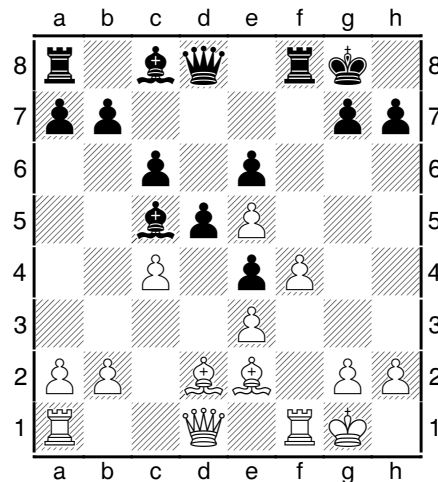
White's plans worked without any problem and his position improved a lot. After placing the bishop on d6, Black's forces are paralyzed. Now, White prepares the attack on the kingside:

24...Qf8 25.Raf1 Qg7 26.Bg4 Rcf8 27.Qd1 Qh6 28.Kh1 Kh8 29.Rg1 Rg8 30.Qf1 Rgf8 31.h4

White is threatening Qh3 with attack on e6 and then, at the proper moment, h4-h5. Black doesn't resist White continuous pressure and try to complicate the struggle, though without success: **31...Bxd6 32.cxd6 g5 33.fxg5 Rxf2 34.Qxf2 Qxh4+ 35.gxh4 Rxf2**

36.Rd1 Kg7 37.Kg1 1-0

In this game, White improved his position by every move while Black was just a spectator, not being able to create anything.



White is to move

Methods to affect the equilibrium and take the initiative

Especially between relative equal players, seizing the initiative is not so simple like in the previous example. The premises are created by neat ideas that imply some risks and even sacrifices.

Marshall – Bogoljubow, 1928

The position seems perfectly equilibrated. The queens cannot penetrate opponent's camp and the pawn formations are symmetrical.

Of course, Black would love to have the knight on c4 but this is tight by defending the b5-pawn. The maneuver Na7-c8-b6 meets Nd1-c3 and the black queen cannot defend the b5-pawn in good conditions. However:

41...Nc8!

Black will bring the knight on c4 sacrificing the b5-pawn. The idea is that he evaluated that in the resulting position, his queen and bishop will get a good dynamic:

42.Nc3 Nb6 43.Nxb5

It was better to refuse the pawn sacrifice but Black had a better position anyway after 43.Nxe4 fxe4 44.Kf2 Nd5.

43...Qd7 44.Nc3 Na4 45.Nxa4 Qxa4

This is the position that Black had in mind when he started the knight's maneuver. The cooperation of queen and bishop is very strong now. The black queen is behind White's pawn shield, the white a5-knight is kept out-of-play, the white king's position is weakened and the e3-pawn is also weak; so the objectives of attack exist.

46.h3

White has to parry threats and has no time to bring his knight into play. For example after 46.Nc4 Qd1+ 47.Kf2 Qh1 48.Kg3 Qf1 followed by Qe1+-Qxe3

46...Bd5 47.Kh2 Qb5 48.Qd2 Kf8 49.Kg1 Ke8 50.Kf2 h5

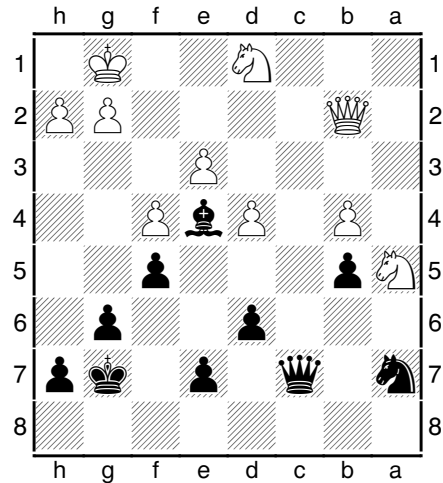
Black is improving his position little by little while White cannot initiate any counter-play. Black has a lasting initiative.

51.Qc3 Qa4 52.Nc4??

In hopeless positions, the mistake is at his home.

White could not save the game anyway. For example after 52.Qd2 h4, the white king starts to lack space and Black is threatening to set the mating net by Qa1-h1.

52...Qc6 53.Nxd6+ Qxd6 and White resigned some moves later.



Black is to move

Many positions hide such resources that permit to the chess player to take the advantage by brilliant moves or maneuvers.

The complicate middlegame struggle is a source of human errors and the chance to take the initiative can easily move to one player to the other, sometimes unobserved:

Alekhine – Reshevsky, 1937

After 17.Qxf5 exf5 White is practically a pawn up because of his pawn majority on the queenside while black pawns are doubled on the f-file. However, Alekhine considered that this endgame requires more patience than he had at that time, so he preferred to keep the queens:

17.Qg3 e5 18.Be3 Bb4 19.Na4

The knight is more active on a4 attacking the b6 and c5 squares. The fight for the initiative began.

19...Ba5!

Black defends the problematic dark-squares and is threatening Bc7 and e5-e4, so White has to parry it:

20.f4!

Beside reacting against Black's idea of attacking on b8-h2 diagonal, White activates his f1-rook.

20...Bc7 21.b3

Against Qf5-c2 with tempo.

21...f6 22.fxe5 Qe6 [22...Qxe5 23.Bf4] 23.h3!

A "small" move in a tensioned position. The idea is to control the g4-square and cut Black's possibility to exchange the queens with Nxe5 and Qg4.

23...Rhg8 24.Bd4

Puts the bishop in a safer position and makes room for the queen to come on c3.

24...Nxe5?!

24...fxe5! was better as the free e-pawn would have given Black good counter-play.

25.Qc3

White is threatening Nb6+ and Nc5. For example: 25...Kc8 26.Nc5 Qd6 27.Qb4 b6 28.Na6+ Kb7 29.c5. So Black's next move is forced:

25...Nd7 26.c5 Rge8 27.b4?

White continues the attack sacrificing a pawn.

However, after 27...Qa2! 28.Ra1 Qd5 followed by Re2 it is Black who would have the initiative.

27...Nb8?

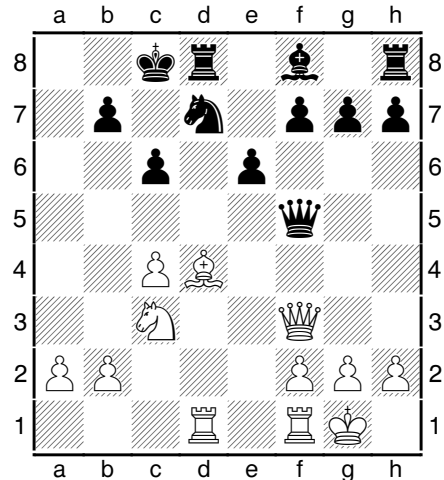
With this passive move Black exhausted any chance to get counter-play.

28.Nb6+ Bxb6 29.cxb6

Now White keeps a lasting initiative. First of all his bishop is much stronger than the black knight and secondly the black king is in danger.

The game continued:

29...Qxa2 30.Qg3 Rd7 31.Bc5 (31.Bxf6! was better.) 31...Qf7 32.Ra1 Qg6 33.Qh2 Re5 34.Ra8 Rd2 35.Rxb8+! Kxb8 36.Qxe5+ 1-0



White is to move

Any chess player faces better quiet situation when the moves "come" after some logic. The tensioned, maybe irrational, situations definitely create the premises of a positional des-equilibrium that favors the player with better technique:

Fischer – Bertok, 1970

Fischer didn't obtain any advantage after the opening and he is taking a risky decision to attack on the kingside.

19.g4

This attack is not a logical continuation of some advantage on the kingside, but a method to seize the initiative. In general, such an attack where you don't have any clear advantage and weakening the own king's position is not advisable. However, Fischer, a player with an incommensurable understanding about chess, knew that in the following complications he will outplay his opponent. The game continued:

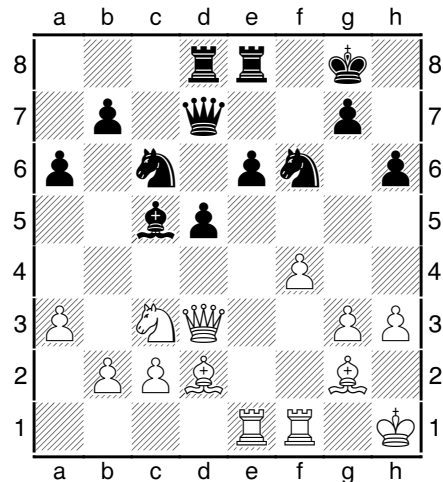
19...Qf7 20.g5 Ne4 21.Nxe4 dxe4 22.Qc3 Bd4

23.Qb3 Bxb2 24.Qxb2 Rxd2 25.gxh6 Re7?

Better would have been: 25...Qg6, but anyway White gets a better endgame with 26.Qxg7+ Qxg7 27.hxg7 Rxc2 28.Bxe4 Rc3 29.Rf3 Rxf3 30.Bxf3 Kxg7 31.Rb1

26.Bxe4 Qh5 27.Qc3! Red7 28.Qe3 Ne7 29.hxg7 Nf5 30.Qb3 Kxg7 31.Bxf5 exf5 After 31...Qxf5 White wins by 32.Re5 Qxc2 33.Rg1+ Kf8 34.Rg8+! Kxg8 35.Qxe6+

32.Rg1+ 1-0



White is to move

The initiative as a salvation resource

When the opponent has an advantage, one of the best defensive measures is to try to take the initiative in order to complicate the position.

Capablanca – Nimzowitsch, 1928

White is an exchange down. It is true that the d-pawn can be easily blocked by Qd6, but Capablanca's only chance to save the game is to put his hopes in this pawn advance:

30.Rd1 Kg8 31.d5 Qxc3?

Nimzowitsch took an optimistic decision. He has a great material advantage now, 3 free connected pawns but White gets the initiative.

After 31...Qd6 White lacks any real chance.

32.d6

Black has to stop the d-pawn.

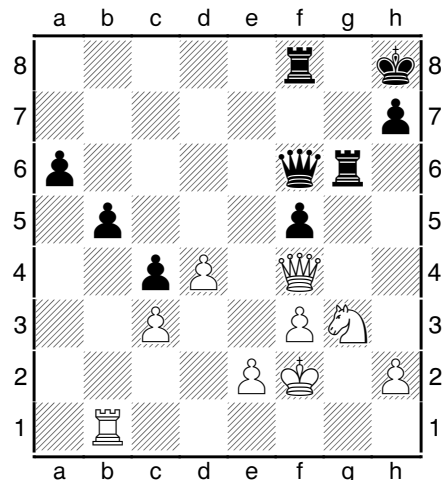
32...Qf6 33.d7 c3 34.Nxf5 c2 35.Rd6 Qd8

After 35...Qxd6 36.Nxd6 Rxf4 37.d8Q+ Rf8 38.Qc7 Rxd6 39.Qxc2, the position is drawn.

36.Qe5!

Threatening Rxg6+ White forces the draw.

36...Rxf5 37.Rxg6+ hxg6 38.Qe8+ Rf8 39.Qxg6+ 1/2-1/2



White is to move

The Initiative – evaluation factor

Of course, the initiative is an important positional factor but sometimes other strategical factors can have a greater importance. For example, a player can hold the initiative for just some moves but without an important gain, while his opponent has a long-term advantage like a better pawn structure.

In certain situations, the simple possession of initiative plays the most important role. These situations are:

1. Positions with material equivalence
2. Unlike (opposite colored) bishops
3. Exposed kings
4. “Equal” endgames

1. Positions with material equivalence

If the material imbalances do not derive from some errors, the positions with material equivalence are the result of some sacrifices or tactical operations for the initiative.

So, it is very logical to consider the initiative the key factor in such positions.

The player with less material must have the initiative and also the possibility to hold it for a long time. Moreover, he must do anything for keeping and increasing the initiative, giving lesser importance to the material that may need to be further sacrificed.

In this complicate King’s Indian position, Black decided to sacrifice the queen for initiative:

18...Nxd5!? 19.Bxd8 Nxe3 20.Qc1

The only good square for the white queen.

For example: 20.Qd3 Nxf1 21.Bxc7 (21.Bxf1 Rfxd8) 21...Nc5 22.Qxd6 Nxe4 23.Qd3 Nfd2 24.Bxb8 Rxb8

20...Nxf1 21.Bxc7

White is forced to the c7-pawn, otherwise is impossible to stop c7-c5-c4-c3.

After 21.Bxf1 Bd4+ 22.Kh1 Rfxd8, Black has material advantage.

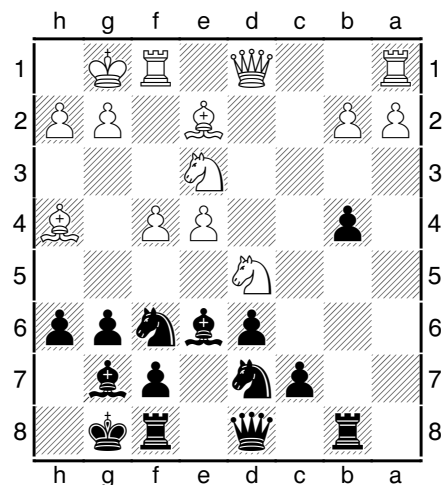
21...Rbc8 22.Kxf1?!

22.Bxf1?! is also not enough: 22...Bd4+ 23.Kh1 Nf6 24.h3 Bb6

However, White had a good continuation which

could save the game: 22.f5! Nc5 (22...gxf5 23.exf5 Bxf5 24.Qxf1) 23.fxe6 Rxc7 24.Kxf1 (24.Bxf1 Bd4+ 25.Kh1 Nxe4 26.Qxc7 Nf2+ 27.Kg1 Nh3+ 28.Kh1 Nf2+=) 24...fxe6+ 25.Bf3 and the position remains complicated.

22...Nc5 23.Bxd6 Nxe4 24.Bc7 Nc3!



Black is to move

Black wins more material (more than the value of a queen) but continues to hold the initiative until the end of the game:

25.bxc3 Rxc7 26.c4 [26.f5 Bxf5 27.Qf4 Rc6!] **26...Bxa1 27.Qxa1 Bxc4 28.Qd4 Bxe2+ 29.Kxe2 Rc2+ 30.Kf3 Rfc8** and White resigned.

2. Unlike bishops

It is known that the presence of opposite colored bishops create the premises of a draw. However, this is only partially correct because **in the presence of major pieces, the unlike bishops create a positional disequilibrium.**

In presence of the major pieces, the unlike bishops favors the attack on kings and also increase the importance of free pawns. So, in such situations, the side that holds the initiative has an important advantage because it is like attacking with a piece up. The player in defensive has no piece to defend the squares of the color of opponent's attacking bishop.

In this position, Black has a stable positional advantage due to the weak d4-pawn and his better dynamic. White is not totally passive however, because of his control over the c-file and threatening to improve his position by Bb5 or Ne5.

19...Bxf3!!

In a relative complicate position, Black starts a series of exchanges that lead to a better endgame. He renounces at his strong b7-bishop but in the resulting position, his pieces will be much more active than White's ones.

20.Bxf3 Nd3 21.Qxd3 Rxb2 22.Bd5 Qxd4!

White could have some hopes of counterplay with the queens on board. Black doesn't need them as his rooks and dark-square bishop are enough to attack the white king.

23.Qxd4 Bxd4 24.Rxa5 Rc8

White cannot stop Black's rooks to come in attack against the f2-square. Now, we can see that because of the unlike bishops, White is unable to defend his king's position and the presence of the white free a-pawn has no importance.

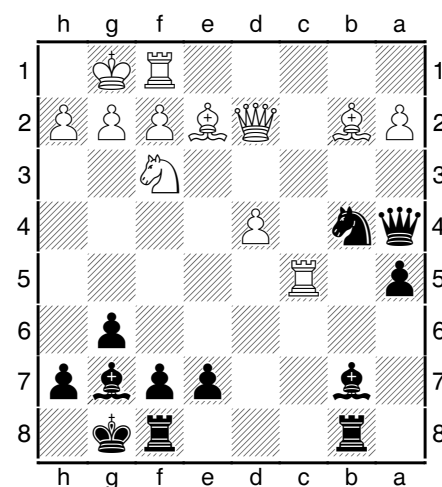
25.Ra4 e5!

Black has the initiative... so White has no time to bring his pieces to attack the critical f7-square. The e-pawn protects the bishop in the center of the board but it will be also used in attack and as a free pawn after the f2-pawn is captured.

26.Bc4 Rc2 27.Ba6

27.Bb3 Rxf2! or **27.Bd3 Rd2 28.Bc4 Rc6 29.h3 Rf6**

27...Rb8 28.Kh1 Rbb2 29.Bc4 Kg7 30.g3 f5 31.Bb3 Rd2 32.Rc4 Bxf2 33.Rc7+ Kf6 34.Rxh7 e4 and White resigned soon.



Black is to move

Filip – Pachman, 1953

White has the bishop-pair but this is compensated by Black's strong d5-knight and his space advantage in the center and queenside.

22...b4?

By this queenside attack, Black tries to seize the initiative. He gains a "longer" diagonal for the g7-bishop and the control over the d4-square.

The problem of this move is that he loses the d5-square and the control over the light-squares:

23.c4! Ne7 24.Bf4! provokes the next move: **24...e5** After which the d5-square becomes irreparable weak and, sooner or later, the white light-square bishop will be able to occupy it with activity on both flanks.

25.Be3 Nc6 26.Qa4!

Hitting the sore points in Black's camp and indulging the next grave positional error:

26...Nd4?

The knight looks perfectly placed on d4... but it can be changed and a position with unlike bishops arises, where White has the initiative.

Black had to avoid the trade of the knight with the white dark-square bishop by playing 26...Rb6 or 26...Rc7.

27.Bd5 Qc7 28.Bxd4! exd4?!

Again a positional error after which White can use the e-file and start a direct attack against the black king. Black had to play 28...cxd4 after which White still has the initiative occupying the a-file (29.Ra1) but not a direct attack.

29.Re4!

White controls both open files and the f7-square is vulnerable.

In fact, White is a piece up in attack; the black dark-squares bishop cannot defend the light-squares that White attacks.

29...Re7 30.Rde1 Bf8

Black cannot fight for the e-file: 30...Rbe8? 31.Qxe8+! Rxe8 32.Rxe8+ Bf8 33.Ra1 Kg7 34.Rea8 and Ra1-a7.

31.h4!

White increases the number of attacking pieces.

31...Kg7 32.h5 Rd8!

The first "threat" of Black. He wants to play Rd8-d7 followed by the exchange of both rooks on the e-file. However, White sees that threat:

33.Rxe7 Bxe7 34.Qd1!

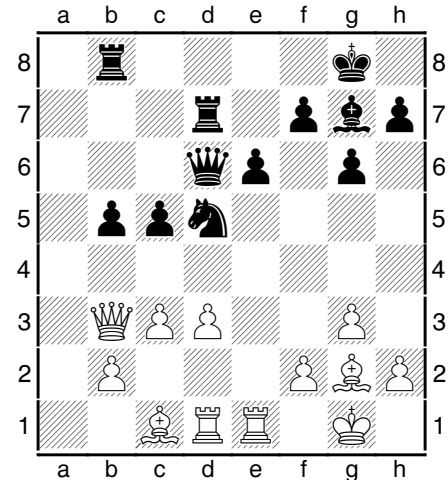
White brings the playing coordinator in attack to increase the pressure.

34...Rd6 35.Qe2 Bf6 36.Kg2!

An example of pure initiative. White plays calmly and improves his position move by move. The king makes room for a possible Rh1 and also moves away from the back rank to avoid any check in the future.

36...Rd7 37.Qf3 Qd6 38.Re4?

38.h6+! followed by 39.Be6! would have won on the spot.



Black is to move

However, White keeps the initiative and eventually won: 38...g5 39.Qf5 h6 40.Re1 Re7 41.Be4 Kf8 42.Ra1 Rd7 43.Ra5 Be7 44.Bd5 Bd8 45.Ra8 Kg7 46.Be4 Kf8 47.Qh7 Qf6 48.Bd5 g4 49.Rc8 Rc7 50.Rxd8+ Qxd8 51.Qxh6+ Ke7 52.Qg5+ f6 53.Qxg4 Qf8 54.Qg6 Kd6 55.h6 Qh8 56.Qg8 Rh7 57.Qe6+ Kc7 58.Qc6+ Kb8 59.Be4 f5 60.Qb6+ 1-0

3. Exposed kings

When the kings are exposed, the initiative is the most important factor.

Here, White started a quick attack on the kingside. He is threatening to chase the f6-knight away by e4-e5 and after Qxg4 to checkmate by Qh4-h7 or even directly Rh8+.

In the same time, White left his king exposed in the center. However, for now, Black seems to have no counter-play as White's central pawn formation defends and closes every square and line.

Black must find a way to take the initiative as soon as possible, so he planned to open the e-file sacrificing the f6-knight:

13...e6! 14.e5 dxe5 15.fxe5 exd5!

Black is losing on the spot after 15...Nxd5 16.Qxg4 after which he has no defense against 17.Qh5 or 17.Rh8+ Bxh8 18.Nxe6+

16.exf6 Re8+ 17.Ne2 The only move.

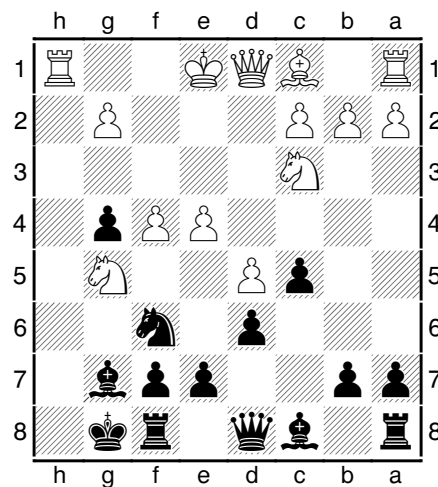
Black wins quickly after 17.Kf2 Qxf6+ 18.Kg3 (18.Kg1 Qd4+ 19.Qxd4 cxd4 20.Nxd5 Re1+ 21.Kh2 g3+) 18...d4 19.Nce4 Qe5+ 20.Bf4 Qxf4+! 21.Kxf4 Be5#

17...Qxf6 18.Rf1 Bf5!

The situation was drastically changed. White has not any attack anymore, while Black has a very strong initiative. Moreover, White can only dream to long-castle, so it is clear that Black will keep the initiative for a long time.

Black is not even too much material down (2 pawns for a piece) because the central c5, d5 formation has a great control and influence over the center.

The game could continue: **19.Rf2** [19.Qxd5 Re5 20.Qxb7 Rae8 21.Rf2 g3] **19...Re5 20.Bf4 g3 21.Bxg3 Rxe2+ 22.Qxe2 Qxg5 -+**



Black is to move

In the next example (see next page) from the game **Bacrot – Carlsen, 2008**, Black found a way to disturb the equilibrium of the position by sacrificing an exchange:

28...Rxd3! 29.Qxd3

After the capture of the white light-square bishop, the position of the white king became unstable. Also, the black pieces will get excellent dynamic as Qe8-a4 and Nf6-d5 are suddenly possible:

29...Nd5! 30.Re1 Qa4

In fact, Black is attacking with superiority of forces numerous targets on White's queenside (the weak king's position, a3, c4, c3).

31.Qc2 Qxa3+ 32.Qb2 Qxb2+!

The trade of the queens doesn't diminish Black's initiative. The white king remains exposed in front of the remained black pieces and the new free a-pawn gains in importance.

33.Kxb2 Nxc4+ 34.Nxc4 Bxc4 35.Be3 g4 36.fxg4 fxg4 37.Rg6 a5 38.Rxg4 a4

All black pieces cooperate perfectly. The minor pieces have secure and active positions, the a-pawn became dangerous and the rook (the playing coordinator) will sustain the pawn on the a-file.

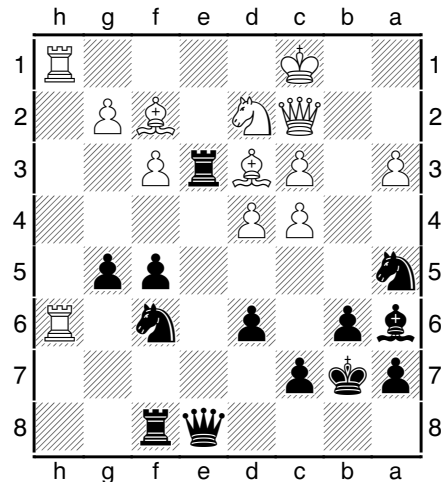
39.Rg3 a3+!

Black opens the a-file for the rook which will come up to a2 in perfect collaboration with the knight on c3.

40.Kxa3 Ra8+ 41.Kb2 Ra2+ 42.Kc1 Nxc3

Black threatens Bb3 and Rc2# or to gain the exchange back by Ne2+, so there is no escape for White.

The game continued: 43.Bd2 Ne2+ 44.Rxe2 Bxe2 45.Rg7 Ra4 46.Bc3 b5 47.g4 Bf3 48.g5 b4 49.Bb2 Ra5 50.Kc2 Bd5 51.Re7 Bc4 52.Bc1 Rf5 53.Bd2 Rf2 54.g6 Rg2 55.g7 Kc6 56.Re8 Bf7 57.Rb8 b3+ 58.Kc3 Rxc3 59.Kb2 Bc4 60.Kc3 Kd5 61.Rb7 Rg3+ 62.Kb2 Kxd4 0-1



Black is to move

4. "Equal" endgames

We are using the term "equal" in order to express that there is no material imbalance, no free pawns, no long-term weaknesses or other advantages specific to the endgames.

Carlsen – Eljanov, 2008

In an endgame rook + knight versus rook + knight White has no other advantage than active pieces. Because of this activity, the black king's position becomes unsafe. (If you look, the white king is not more protected, but there is no need for that).

38.Nf4!!

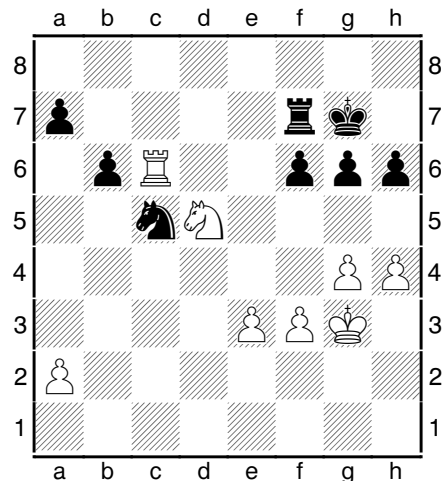
White doesn't release the pressure; now his pieces (and pawns) cooperate to attack a (new) weak point in Black's position: g6. White is threatening:

39.g5! hxg5 40.hxg5 fxg5 (otherwise Black is in zugzwang!) 41.Rxg6+ Kh7 42.Rxg5 and the 2 connected free pawns win easily.

So, Black is forced to weaken his position:

38...g5 39.Nh5+ Kg6 40.f4!

With a new threat: f4-f5+



White is to move

40...gxf4+ 41.exf4 Kh7 42.f5!

Fixing the weak f6-pawn. Of course, 42.Nxf6+ was not good because of 42...Rxf6 43.Rxf6 Ne4+. Now, the black pieces are tight in defense of the weakness, while White will improve his position by bringing the king in the center:

42...Kg8 43.Kf3 Nd7 44.Ke4 Kf8 45.Rc8+! Ke7 46.Kd5

Black pieces are totally immobilized. White won easily: 46...b5 47.Rh8 Nb6+ 48.Kc6 Nc4 49.Ra8 Ne5+ 50.Kc5 Nd7+ 51.Kxb5 Kd6 52.Rxa7 Rf8 53.Kb4 Nc5 54.Kc4 1-0

 **Gufeld, Eduard**
 **Ivanovic, Bozidar**
 Sochi (14)

B33
2530
2460
 1979

THE INITIATIVE

One of the less understood advantages in chess is the initiative. There is a tendency among beginners to run after "one-move" attacks but this is far from fighting for the initiative. The initiative is a much more complicated process which consist in the capacity of one of the players to permanently create threats, within a series of more moves, restricting this way the opponent's options.

In the opening, the principal premise for obtaining the initiative is the lead in development. Only by a quick mobilization of forces into play we can hope to seize the initiative. When the lead in development is complemented by the remaining of opponent's king in the center, there are big chances to transform the initiative into a strong attack on king.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5

This is probably one of the most controversial moves from chess opening theory. I can say from my own experience as a coach that it is very hard to explain to a trainee why such a move is played today by so many grandmasters. In only one move, Black is weakening on long term his pawn structure, the d-pawn becoming a backward pawn on a central half-open file. Moreover, the d5-square is weakened too and White can use it as an outpost for his pieces. So, what on earth does determine Black to make such concessions without being forced by anyone?

The answer to this question is by no means simple. Let's try to see what advantages Black gets. First of all, the d4-knight, one of the most powerful White's pieces in Sicilian is forced to renounce at his position. Then, Black re-equilibrates the situation in the center by brining his pawn on e5. This setup makes impossible the breakthrough f2-f4 and e4-e5, one of White's weapons in Sicilian. Not the least, Black

opens the f8-bishop's diagonal with tempo and creating the threat Bf8-b4.

Do all these compensate the drawbacks created by the e7-e5 move? Practice demonstrated that "yes", Black's piece dynamic counter-balances the static defects of his position.

6.Ndb5

Sometimes, a move is the best move not only because it brings a certain plus to the own position, but for the simple fact that all the other alternatives are weaker. It is the case of this move, White bringing his knight to the unhappy position on a3. Which are the other White's alternatives?

[The "attacking" 6.Nf5 bringing the knight closer to the black king could look a normal move for a beginner. The problem of this move is that it allows Black to play 6... d5! suddenly solving his 2 problems: the weakness of the d-pawn and of the d5-square. After 7.exd5 Bxf5 8.dxc6 Qxd1+ 9.Nxd1 bxc6 Black has no reasons to be unsatisfied with the opening outcome.]

[6.Nxc6?! is even worse. After 6... bxc6 Black escaped again from his problems and will be able to create a strong pawn center by d7-d5.]

[The typical retreat from other Sicilian variations 6.Nb3 meets the strong 6... Bb4! Now Black threatens not only the e4-pawn but also to play d7-d5. In this position, Black has the initiative because his threats Nxe4, d5 or even Bxc3 impedes White to continue his normal development of pieces. This position explains why Black played 5...e5, a move which also creates threats so a move which fights for the initiative.

The move 7.Bg5 the only that parries Black's threats do not bring nothing after: 7... h6 8.Bxf6 Bxc3+ 9.bxc3 Qxf6 and White's pawn structure is weaker than Black's one.]

[Things are no different after 6.Nf3 Bb4! again with excellent play for Black.]

6...d6 A necessary evil, otherwise Black loses the bishop-pair without obtaining any improvement of his position.

[The alternative is: 6...a6 7.Nd6+ Bxd6 8.Qxd6 Qe7 9.Qxe7+ Nxe7 10.Bg5 b5 11.f3 Bb7 12.0-0-0±]

7.Nd5

If the logic of the move 5...e5 can be understood, the logic of this move is ambiguous. After this move and the next exchange of the knights, the important d5-square will be occupied by a pawn and not a piece and, in addition, the d-file will be closed - so Black's weaknesses will disappear. However, White renounces at some advantages in the exchange of the others.

[In my opinion, the logical continuation is 7.Bg5 which is the main line of Sveshnikov Sicilian. White's plan is to weaken Black's control over d5 through the elimination of the f6-knight. The only drawback is that after 7...a6 White has to move back his knight 8.Na3 Black's next move 8... b5 is very logical. Not only that creates an immediate threat (b5-b4) but also gains more space on the queenside and restricts the mobility of the a3-knight by controlling the c4-square. Now White has to find other ways to increase the qualitative value of that knight which from the center arrived on the edge. One of the possibilities is: 9.Nd5 Be7 10.Bxf6 Bxf6 11.c3 where the a3-knight will try to help his colleague from d5 through the maneuver Na3-c2-e3 or -b4.]

7...Nxd5 8.exd5

[Of course, White cannot take back with the queen. For example: 8.Qxd5 a6 9.Nc3 Nd4 10.Bd3 Rb8 followed by Be6.]

8...Nb8 9.c4

The resulted position doesn't keep any of the features of the position from 3 moves before. Now, White's advantage is his space advantage on the queenside limiting Black's development there. In exchange, Black has superior perspectives on the kingside because of his e- and f- pawn phalanx which will control the

central squares.

9... a6

[Nowadays, many players prefer 9...Be7 followed by 0-0, a continuation through which Black concentrates on finishing his kingside development first with the idea to fight for the initiative through a quick f7-f5.]

10.Nc3 Nd7

[Again, Black should have developed his kingside by 10...Be7 followed by 0-0]

11.Be2 g6?!

[Black tries to place his pieces in the best positions but this requires too much time. Better would have been: 11...Be7 12.0-0 0-0 13.Kh1!? f5 and White can choose between 14.f4 Bf6 15.Be3 or 14.f3.]

12.0-0 Bg7

Black realized the development of the bishop in fianchetto from where it plays a double role: defensive and offensive but this cost him a tempo. If Black will now manage to castle, his plan would be flawless ...but:

13.Ne4!

The beginning of a very energetic plan of action through which White speculates Black's inaccuracy from move 11. Taking advantage from his SMALL lead in development, White launches the fight for initiative creating a first threat using the weakness of the d6-square. Regularly for such an attack to work the initiator would need a greater development advantage. What did White base on? Gufeld, an excellent attacking player, estimated his chances correctly. He evaluated that his development advantage can increase systematically by bringing THE RESERVES in attack with tempo.

13... Qe7

[When you see how bad Black ended in this game you ask yourself if that 13...Qc7 was not better. However, White could still continue to create immediate threats by 14.b3! after which he obtains a protected free pawn on d5 if Black doesn't play 14... b6 15.Ba3

Nc5 16.Nxc5 bxc5

In this case, White takes the initiative by:

17.b4! cxb4 18.Qa4+! Bd7 19.Qxb4

If you still have doubts about how you must play when having the initiative, then look carefully at the next sequence of moves, more or less forced: 19... e4 20.c5! Bxa1 21.Rxa1 0-0 (or 21...dxc5 22.Qxe4+ Kf8 23.Qd4 Kg8 24.Bxc5 with total domination on dark-squares.) 22.c6 Bf5 23.g4! Bc8 24.Qxe4 and Black is hopeless in front of White's threats.]

14.Qa4!

Follow White's play and you'll see that by every move new threats and problems appear for Black. By his last move, White interdicts Black to bring his d7-knight into play and also threatens with the strong Qb4.

14... f5

[A move which looks risky but the alternative was a positional unconditioned abandon by 14...0-0 15.Qb4! Nc5 16.Nxc5 dxc5 17.Qb6!± and White threatens Be3, Rd1, d6 and then Bxc5.]

15.Bg5!

One by one, White's reserves come into play.

15... Qf8 Diagram

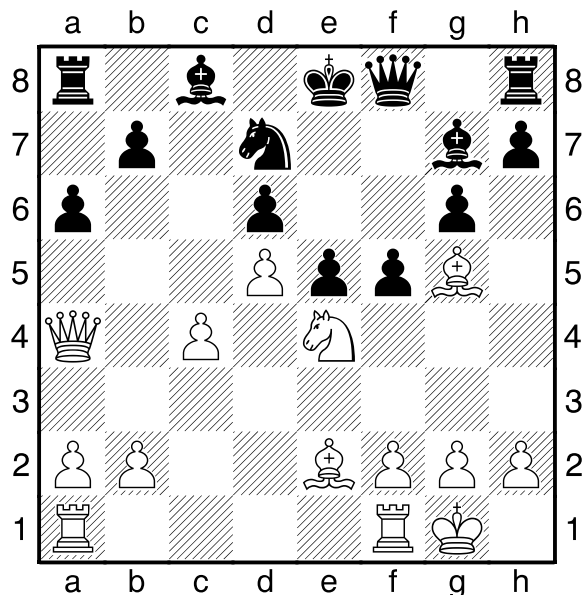
(Diagram)

A critical moment of the game. White mobilized his forces in attack, permanently creating new threats and he obtained now a clearly development advantage. Moreover, Black's king remained in the center of the board.

The next White's move is therefore predictable even if its consequences cannot be calculated until the end but rather intuited:

16.f4!

White opens up the center to be able to create new direct threats especially toward opponent's king.



16... h6

[After 16...fxe4 17.fxe5 Black's position is quickly falling down.]

[Another try to escape would have been 16...exf4 however, in this case too, White obtains a strong attack after 17.c5 dxc5 18.Rxf4 Bd4+ 19.Kh1 Kf7 20.g4!]

17.Bh4 exf4 18.Rxf4!

Without worries about 18...g5 because of 19. Rxf5!

White is threatening 19.Rxf5 anyway.

18... Be5 19.Raf1!

The last reserve come in attack with the same threat 20.Rxf5!

19... Qg7? The decisive mistake.

[More saving chances were offered by the continuation: 19...Bxf4 20.Rxf4 Kf7! 21.Rf2 Nc5 (21...Kg7 22.Bg3±) 22.Nxc5 dxc5 23.Qa5 Qd6! 24.Bg3 Qf6 25.d6 Bd7 26.Qxc5 However White had a healthy compensation for the sacrificed material because of the bishop-pair and strong free pawn on d6.]

20.Rxf5!

A decisive sacrifice which opens the lines toward the black king.

20... **gxf5 21.Rxf5 h5 22.c5!**

Shaken e5-bishop's position, the only piece that gave some resistance to Black's position.

22... **Qh6**

[22...Qg6 23.Nxd6+ Bxd6 24.Qe4+ Be5 25.c6+-]

23.Bg5!

Even if other continuations win as well, it is remarkable White's technique not letting any counterplay chances to his opponent.

23... **Qg6**

[23...Qh7 24.Rxe5+! dxe5 25.Nf6+-]

24.Nxd6+!

The beginning of the end.

24... **Bxd6 25.Qe4+! Be5**

[Or 25...Ne5 26.Rxe5+ Kf7 27.Qf4+ Kg7 28.cxd6 Rf8 29.Bh6+! Qxh6 30.Re7+ Kg6 31.Qg3+ Qg5 32.Rg7+!+-]

26.Bd3!

An elegant finish of the game.

26... **Qg7**

[26...Rh6 27.Rxe5+ Nxe5 28.Qxe5+ Kf7 29.Bxg6+ Rxc6 30.Qe7+-]

27.c6!

The rest is only Black's choice to prolong his agony.

27... **bxc6 28.dxc6 Nc5 29.Rxe5+ Ne6**

30.Bc4

[Also possible was 30.Rxe6+ Bxe6 31.Qxe6+ Kf8 32.Qd6+ Kg8 33.Be3+-]

30...Qa7+

[For the beauty of the game Black should castle at move 30... Of course, White wins after 30...0-0 31.Bxe6+ Bxe6 32.Rxe6 Qxg5 33.Rg6+ Qxg6 34.Qxg6+ Kh8 35.Qxh5+-]

31.Be3 Qh7 32.Rxe6+ Bxe6 33.Qxe6+ Qe7

34.Qg6+ and in face of inevitable checkmate, Black resigned.

[34.Qg6+ Kd8 (34...Kf8 35.Bh6+ Rxh6 36.Qg8#) 35.Bb6+ Kc8 36.Be6+ Kb8 37.Qg3+ etc.

CONCLUSIONS:

Not considering Black's mistake from move 19, we can say that Black's inaccuracies were relatively small. Like we saw, it was sufficient to delay a little the development to allow White to take a strong initiative. The bringing of reserves into play corroborated with permanent threats increased White's superiority in attack until Black's collapse. The final position is interesting. While the black rooks are still on the initial positions, the white rooks disappeared after sacrifices that opened the lines toward the black king. So, we can say that a sacrificed piece is always better than an unused one.

] **1-0**

 **Spassky, Boris V**
 **Petrosian, Tigran V**
 World Championship 26th (7)

25.04.1966

THE INITIATIVE

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.Bg5 d5 4.Nbd2 Be7
5.e3 Nbd7 6.Bd3 c5 7.c3 b6 8.0-0 Bb7
9.Ne5

White played the opening unpretentiously and he is trying now to get space advantage on the kingside and center by f2-f4 and Nd2-f3 setting a typical Stonewall structure.

9... Nxe5!?

By exchanging the knights now (before f2-f4), Black thwarts White's plans.

10.dxe5 Nd7 11.Bf4?!

The e5-pawn gives White some space advantage and prospects for an attack on the kingside. Therefore, Spassky refrains from exchanging pieces especially that his dark-square bishop can play an important role in attack.

However, this is a mistake as we will see in a couple of moves.

[After 11.Bxe7 Qxe7 12.f4 the position was approximately equal.]

11...Qc7!

An elastic move for Black but which forces White to take a decision: the e5-pawn is under attack so White has to decide now if he wants the queen on the kingside or not because Nf3 will block the d1-h5 diagonal.

12.Nf3?!

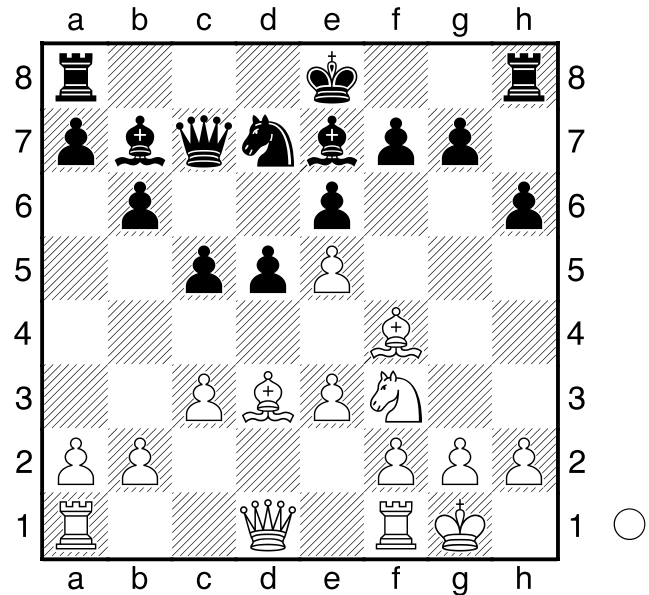
The start of a wrong plan after which Black takes the initiative.

The white pieces lack any dynamic now (12. Qh5 was more elastic) but he wants to undermine Black's pawn structure with b2-b4 trying to take the d4-square under control.

The position of white Bf4 and Nf3 gives Black the possibility of a quick pawn attack with g7-g5 which proves to be much more efficient than

D03 White's actions.

h6! Diagram



Black intends to castle long and play g7-g5.

13.b4

White starts immediately the attack against Black's pawns and on the queenside even with the price of a pawn.

g5!

[After 13...cxb4 14.cxb4 Bxb4 White takes the initiative using the open c-file and the strong d4-square.]

14.Bg3 h5 15.h4 gxh4 16.Bf4 0-0-0 17.a4 c4!

blocking the queenside (with this and the next move, a7-a6), Black cuts any White's possible counter-play. The d4-square has less importance now because the white knight has to defend the kingside against Black's attacks. Of course, before weakening such an important central square (which has a long-term effect), Petrosian had to evaluate the strength of his initiative on the kingside.

18.Be2 a6

a simple method by which a 2 pawn formation avoids the opening of the lines. Otherwise,

White could have played 19.b5 followed by 20.a5.

19.Kh1

[19.a5 b5]

[19.b5 a5]

19...Rdg8

Black's target is clear: the white king, he can improve his position move-by-move while White has no counter-play. White's almost imperceptible mistake from move 12 was exploited and turned into a lasting initiative.

20.Rg1 Rg4 21.Qd2 Rhg8 22.a5 b5

23.Rad1 Bf8

White has no way to improve his position and therefore Black gets time for a maneuver to attack the e5-pawn (Be7-f8-g7 or Bh6 after Rg8-g6.)

24.Nh2 Nxe5!

Black is sacrificing an exchange but gets 2 dangerous connected pawns and more liberty for his pieces.

25.Nxg4 hxg4

The initiative was transformed into a dangerous attack against the white king which is weakened and deprived from a good defense.

26.e4 Bd6

[Of course, not 26...dxe4 27.Bxe5 Qxe5 28.Qd8#]

27.Qe3 Nd7

Exchanging the best defender of White's king.

28.Bxd6 Qxd6 29.Rd4 e5

a perfect collaboration between black pieces and pawns.

30.Rd2 f5!

Threatening to open the long-diagonal. Black is attacking with all his forces and leaves no escape.

31.exd5 f4 32.Qe4 Nf6 33.Qf5+ Kb8 34.f3 Bc8 35.Qb1 g3

Black's attack is very similar with the offensive typical of King's Indian Defense.

36.Re1 h3 37.Bf1 Rh8 38.gxh3 Bxh3

39.Kg1 Bxf1 40.Kxf1 e4!

The last white kingside pawn cannot resist against 3 black pawns and the threat of Ng4.

41.Qd1 Ng4 42.fxg4 f3 43.Rg2 fxg2+

CONCLUSION:

Another game where an imperceptible inaccuracy was enough to allow Black to take the initiative. The arrangement of white pieces Nf3 and Bf3 encouraged black pawns to advance with gain of time while the black king was safely castled on the other side.

From these 2 games, you could see that a weakness, a bad arrangement of opponent pieces or some other defect in opponent's camp can be a source of seizing the initiative. The idea is to analyze if the opponent can take simple defensive measures or your threats create real problems like: opponent pieces will occupy bad defensive position, his defensive measures will not improve his position, new weaknesses are created and so on.

Of course, this is not a simple process - everyone would be a master if he/she knows when and how can take the initiative.

What you must not forget is that by simple / "disciplined" moves, the success is hard. We must put problems to the opponent, find targets, attack them, create superiority of forces, not allow him to play freely - in a world: "be evil".

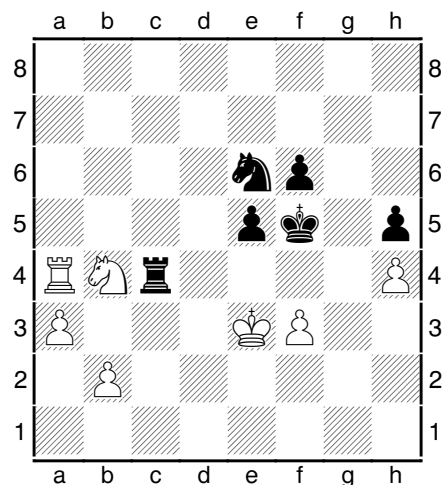
0-1

Co-operation between pieces and pawns

The co-operation between pieces (and pawns) can take many different forms, can be evident or hidden, positional or tactical. Therefore, it is possible to make various categorizations of the co-operation but this would be merely impractical.

In chess, even the smallest difference between a position and another may change a lot the evaluation.

For example, in this position from the game Tal – Averkin, 1973, Black is threatening to capture the h4-pawn creating a dangerous marginal free pawn, but White wins instantly by 1.Nd5!! This could be labeled as a “tactical co-operation” between the white knight, Ke3 and the f3- and h4- pawns. However, almost every piece and pawn, both white *and* black, takes part to create this possibility. If the black knight was not on e6, for example, the general evaluation of the position would have been totally different.



White is to move

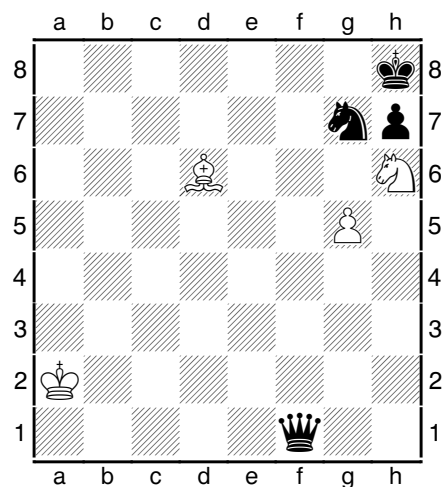
In fact, the only criterion to tell if there is a good harmony between pieces is the concrete situation on the board.

The co-operation between pieces leads to even paradoxical situations.

Look at this position where Black has the material advantage of a queen for a bishop but he cannot win. The co-operation of white pieces is extremely efficient and, in the same time, the black king, knight and pawn create a negative situation.

In practice, there are rare situations when the co-operation between pieces is perfect. More or less, some pieces will obstruct others, some of them cannot take part to the battle and so on.

The 2 players continuously try to reach the best possible harmony against one or more weaknesses in opponent's camp or for defending the own position.



Black is to move

We talked in several circumstances about the co-operation between pieces. In this lesson we will examine the co-operation between pieces **and** pawns.

Morrison – Capablanca, 1918

The kings are castled oppositely, the development of forces is finished and White has space advantage in the center. By now, we can say that White is slightly better but the assessment is not complete...

After a concrete analyze of the position, we can tell that white bishops have no purpose. They are as from another movie...

12...g5!!

...especially after this move. The h4-bishop was helping White in the fight for the important d5-square. Now, the bishop is chased away on g3 from where it will “attack” the stonewall c7-d6 formation. In the same time, Black’s move is weakening his king’s protection a lot. In Capablanca’s times, when the kings were castled on different flanks, the only commonly accepted strategy of play was the direct attack. However, Capablanca evaluates that the vulnerability of his king will be less important than the obstructed position of the g3-bishop.

13.Bg3 Nh5 14.Nd5 a6!

The second bishop is chased away. On b5, the white bishop was doing almost nothing, but on d3 the bishop will do something “important”: will obstruct his major pieces closing the open d-file.

15.Bd3 Be6!

Black puts pressure on d5 – a strong point for ...White! This can be a way to determine the moment when a player seizes the initiative: when he succeeds to exert real pressure against the *strong* squares of his opponent.

16.c3

White cannot move toward f5 because the a2-pawn is hanging: 16.Ne3 Bxa2 17.b3 a5

16...f5!!

This was too much for that time. Even the modern masters of nowadays dynamic chess would have serious reserves about such a move, even they would ever consider it. Doesn’t this still demonstrate the greatness of Capablanca?

Instead of trying to attack on the queenside, Black puts his kingside pawns into motion against the white g3-bishop.

17.h4 f4 18.hxg5 hxg5!

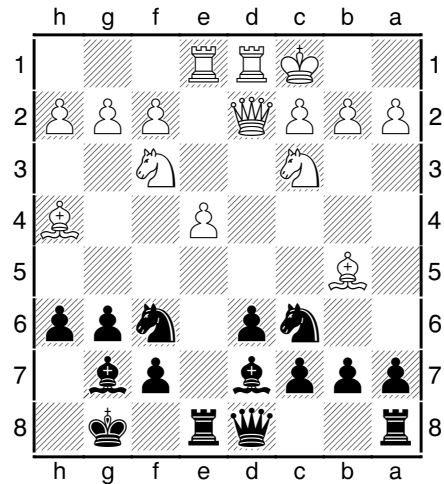
Black doesn’t take the bishop by 18...fxg3 because the future is uncertain after 19.gxh6 Be5 20.Rh1 Bxd5 21.Rxh5. Capablanca keeps playing following the initial plan without changing the character of the position without a serious reason.

19.Rh1 Bf7 20.Kb1 Ne5!

The fight is opened on the kingside so the reserves enter the fight. Besides, the d5-knight’s position becomes insecure as Black creates the possibility of playing c7-c6 anytime.

21.Nxe5 Rxe5 22.Bh2 Nf6!

A symphony of perfect strategy. The marginal knight did his job freeing the f-pawn, not it’s time to come back and trade the best white piece.



Black is to move

23.g3!

White reacts correctly trying to complicate the position and also to open his closed bishop. However, Black wins a pawn and succeeds to simplify the position keeping the material advantage.

23...Nxe4 24.Bxe4 Rxe4 25.gxf4 c6!

As a consequence of the move Nc6-e5, the pawn is free and chases the white knight. The weakness of the d6-pawn is annihilated by the attack Black starts against the white king.

26.Ne3 Qa5 27.c4 Qxd2 28.Rxd2 gxf4 29.Ng4 Bg6 and White resigned in a couple of worthless moves.

Black's co-operation between pieces and pawns was highly evident in this game. Let's see again some of the ideas:

- Black used the moves a7-a6 and g6-g5 to send White's bishops in unfortunate positions (Bg3 closed by the c7-d6 formation, Bd3 closed by the e4-pawn and obstructing the major pieces)
- The advance of the kingside pawns was possible due to the excellent positions of the black bishops on e6 and g7 supervising 2 long diagonals, the center and also protecting the kingside.
- The moves Nf6-h5 and Nc6-e5 cleared the way for the pawns: f7-f5 and c7-c6
- f7-f5 and c7-c6 demolished White's space advantage and his control over the d5-square

Like we said in the beginning of the lesson, the co-operation of pieces is not always so clear like in our first example.

In this position from the game **Fischer – Rubinetti, 1970**, White observed something imperceptible for many chess players.

There are 2 motifs in this position that allowed Fischer to start decisive operations:

- Black's king in the center
- the c5-knight has few squares at disposal and can become a target being in an advanced position.

12.Bd5!

White forces the opening of the e-file with the price of a bishop. Also, the b-pawn is now free to move.

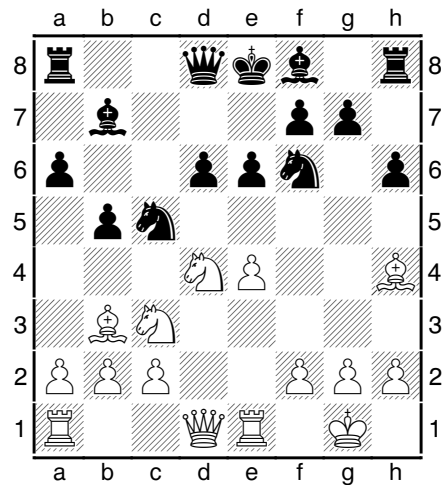
12...exd5 13.exd5+ Kd7

Forced (13...Be7 14.Nf5) but now the black knight cannot go back on d7.

14.b4! Na4 15.Nxa4 bxa4 16.c4

Only now White's plan became clear. In exchange for a piece, White got 2 pawns but which create a compact, mobile formation which go directly toward the black king. In fact, White can create at least a free pawn that Black cannot stop as he must protect the king. The game continued:

16...Kc8 17.Qxa4 Qd7 18.Qb3 g5 19.Bg3 Nh5 20.c5 dxc5 21.bxc5 Qxd5 [21...Bxd5 22.Qc2 Nxc3 23.hxc3 with big advantage] 22.Re8+ Kd7 23.Qa4+ Bc6 24.Nxc6 1-0



White is to move

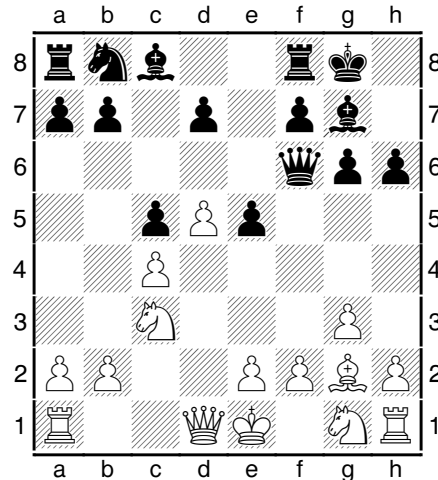
Euwe – Najdorf, 1953

Probably you already know this position but it is an excellent example of co-operation pieces-pawns.

9.d6!!

The white pawn is cut off from the other pawns and therefore it becomes a weakness. In the same time, White clears the d5-square and opens the long diagonal for his bishop. However, the most important benefit is not the increased activity of the white pieces but the obstruction of Black's play:

- the c8-bishop and a8-rook will come harder into play;
- Black will have problems in the fight for the center. The advance f7-f5 will weaken his light-squares on the kingside.



White is to move

9...Nc6 10.e3 b6 11.Bd5!

White disposes his pieces in the best attacking positions. The knight will come on e4 and a pawn storm on the kingside will begin. Here, you can see that as a consequence of White's 9.d6, Black has no good control over the center and consequently the defense of the kingside becomes critical. Black must play f7-f5 even if this will bring weaknesses in his position as the light-square bishop is out-of-play.

11...Kh8 12.Ne4 Qd8 13.h4

The center is under White's total control and the pawn attack has just begun. At the moment, Black defends his kingside with a bishop... It is very interesting that Black did not make any real mistake but White took the initiative playing in an aggressive style.

13...f5 14.Ng5!

The h4-pawn supports the knight on the attacking g5-position. Here, the co-operation piece-pawn has only one direction as the pawn supports the knight, but this immobilizes the pawn. However, White does have reserves and so another pawn will advance to open the kingside.

14...Bb7 15.g4

After 15.Nf7+? Rxf7 16.Bxf7 Nb4 followed by Qf6 and e4, Black has the initiative

15...e4

Because White controls the light-squares, Black needs the g7-square to be cleared for his king. So 15...e4 was forced in order to gain squares for his g7-bishop. As a consequence the f4-square became free for the second white knight:

16.Ne2 Bxb2 17.Nf4

White forces reached the maximum activity.

17...Qf6

It is interesting that after 17...Bxa1 the winning move is not 18.Qxa1+? but 18.Nxg6+!

Kg7 19.gxf5! with big complications. However, it is far beyond the subject of this lesson to give hundreds of variations.

The game continued: 18.gxf5 Bxa1 19.Nxg6+ Kg7 20.Nxe4 Bc3+ 21.Kf1 Qxf5 22.Nf4 Kh8 23.Nxc3 Rae8 24.Nce2 Rg8 25.h5 Rg5 26.Ng3 Rxg3 27.fxg3 Rxe3 28.Kf2 Re8 29.Re1 Rxe1 30.Qxe1 Kg7 31.Qe8 Qc2+ 32.Kg1 Qd1+ 33.Kh2 Qc2+ 34.Ng2 Qf5 35.Qg8+ Kf6 36.Qh8+ Kg5 37.Qg7+ 1-0

Beliaevsky - Tarjan, 1979

The black pawns advanced on the fifth rank give Black some space advantage and therefore his position looks very well. However, this is not true. In fact, the black pawns do not have the necessary support from their pieces to have such advanced positions. Especially the d5-pawn is weak (Black has no light-square bishop) and cannot be advanced.

17.a4!

White undermines Black's pawn structure and gains control over the a-file. The threat is to gain a pawn by: 18.axb5 axb5 19.Rxa8 Rxa8 20.Bxg5 (or 20.Qd3) 20...Bxg5 21.f4 Be7 22.Bxf5 Qxf5 23.Qxd5+, so Black is forced to leave the file:

17...Rad8 18.axb5 axb5 19.Qe2

Forcing black pawns to advance, White gains the control over important central squares.

19...c4

After 19...Qc6 20.Ra7, White's threats are very unpleasant.

20.Be3 b4

This was not necessary but Black has nothing else to do. He is in a strategic zugzwang (theoretically there is not such a thing). We can say that White has the initiative: he can improve his position move by move (we will see how) and Black has no useful moves.

21.Qd2 b3 22.Bd1 h6 23.h4! Nf7 24.f4!

Finesse of grandmaster! By his last 2 moves, White put his pawns on dark-squares limiting his own bishop but also Black's only bishop. In the same time, the importance of light-squares was drastically increased (so as White's light-square bishop).

The question is: does White want to block the kingside? Moves like h4 and f4 give the feeling that this is White's intention but this is far from true. Because of his control over light-squares (including g4 and h5), White started in fact a pawn assault on the kingside. The threat is 25.g4 which attacks what else than the ...light-squares.

Also look at the f7-knight which is highly obstructed. In fact, this knight will do absolutely nothing in the next fight.

24...g5

Black cannot take the pawn: 24...Bxh4 because White gains the d5-pawn after 25.Bf3 and Rfd1 and then the e5-pawn is unblocked. By 24...g5 he tries to complicate the struggle in hope for some luck in tactical complications.

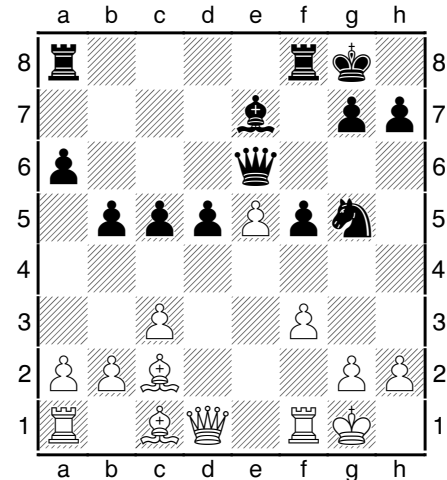
25.Bd4 Kh7

Black has no chance to block the kingside: 25...g4 because of 26.Bxg4 fxg4 27.f5 and e6.

26.g4!

The kingside is under tension but only White can take benefit of that because the quality of his light-square bishop versus the black knight. The game continued:

26...gxh4 27.Kh1 Rg8 28.Qe3 Rd7 29.Be2 Nd8 30.Ra8 h5 31.g5 Nb7 32.Ra7 Nd8 33.Rxd7 Qxd7 34.Qf3 Qe6 35.Ra1 Kg7 36.Ra5 Nc6 37.Rxd5 Rc8 38.Bc5 Nd8 39.Bxe7 Qxe7 40.Qxh5 Ne6 41.Qh6+ Kg8 42.Bf3 Nxf4 43.Rd6 Rd8 44.Bd5+ Nxd5 45.Rg6+ Kf7 46.e6+ 1-0



White is to move

Like we said in the beginning of the lesson, the co-operation between pieces and pawns is rarely perfect. It is rather relative in the conjuncture of the fight.

However, from the examined positions, you could observe something important: while one of the players succeeds to increase the harmony between his pieces, the second player's pieces are starting to lose in vitality.

In the games: Morrison – Capablanca, Euwe – Najdorf and even Beliavsky - Tarjan, the advantage was brought by fighting against the opponent's co-operation. This technique of play (“anti-play”) will be examined in detail in a next lesson.

Prophylaxis

From the very beginning of our course, we told about the correct thinking in chess. One of the most important questions that the chess player has to always ask in his mind is: “What does the opponent threat?” followed by “Is that a real threat?”

Here, *the threat* doesn’t only mean something like simple captures, simple tactical strikes or so. The opponent can threat to make a favorable exchange, to improve his pawn structure, to complete his development, to obtain a strong square and so on – these are positional threats.

So, again, a strong player has to:

1. identify his opponent’s immediate threats (simple/tactical operations)
2. identify his opponent’s positional threats (what the opponent wants TO DO)
3. evaluate if these threats are real (evaluate if opponent’s threats and plans are really good and if they make any harm to his position).

Prophylaxis is this thinking process and the operations that you take to prevent opponent’s threats (and plans).

Usually, by prophylaxis you do not improve your own position, but obstruct the opponent to improve his position. Therefore, another important aspect that must be taken into consideration is **the economy of time and forces**. You should try to find the best prophylactic measures and in the same time you should try to do this in a natural way, without investing too much time or deviating from your own plans.

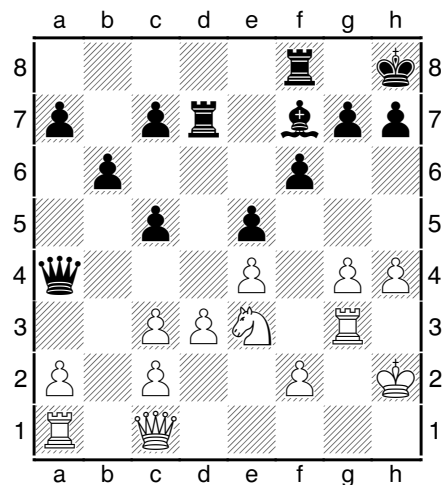
So, prophylaxis is not a continuous defense against opponent’s threats; in this case, the opponent has the initiative, isn’t it? A good prophylactic play is when you succeed to carry out your own plans and in the same time you put obstacles against opponent’s ones. This is why the evaluation of opponent’s threats and plans plays an important role.

Position from the game Nimzowitsch – Leonhardt, 1911.

The center is semi-closed and White started an attack on the kingside. The problem is that Black’s queen and bishop succeeds to keep the white pieces in defense of the queenside.

White can solve this problem by playing c3-c4, closing the center and also preventing a possible breakthrough c5-c4. The problem of this move (c3-c4) is that it weakens the d4-square and the black queen will get another threatening position, this time in the center.

Nimzowitsch evaluated the 2 positions (with pawn on c3 and with pawn on c4) and got to the conclusion that, in the first case, Black’s obstruction against white pieces is real, while, in the second



White is to move

case is not. So, he played:

24.c4 Be6 25.Qb2 a5 26.Rag1 Qc6

The black queen is heading to d4 and White has nothing to do to prevent it, but...

27.R1g2! Qd6 28.Qc1 Qd4? 29.Nd5!

This was White's idea: the black queen on d4 was not a real threat for White's position since she will be trapped and attacked by c2-c3.

Position from the game Thelen – Treybal, 1927.

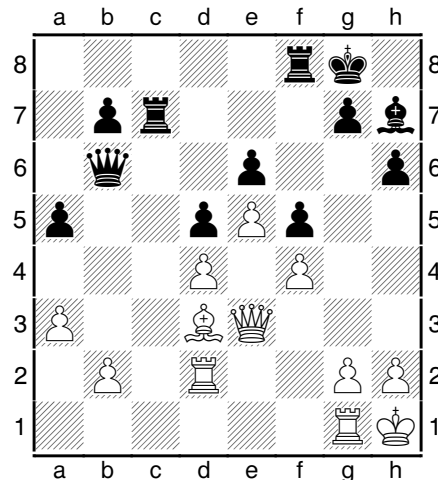
The essence of this position is the open c-file and the advantage will go to the player who succeeds to occupy it (if possible!). White has a better bishop, not obstructed by his own pawns, but obstructed by the opponent pawns. In the other hand, White has problems with the weakness of the d4-pawn which needs permanent protection.

In conclusion, White has NO advantage, but he played **1.h3!?** with the tricky idea to show Black that his intentions are to attack the kingside starting with g2-g4.

Black immediately took preventive measures against White's threat and he played **1...Rcf7?** forgetting about the important control over the c-file.

Black didn't make a correct evaluation of White's "threat" which was merely a psychological test for Black. The threat was not real and Black should have simply played 1...Rfc8 or anything else that keeps the c-file under control.

Now, the c-file was cleared so White went back to the logical plan playing **2.Rc1**, conquered the c-file and, then, won the game.



White is to move

Conclusion: *although we need to take into account opponent's threats and plans, this doesn't mean we need to prevent them all!*

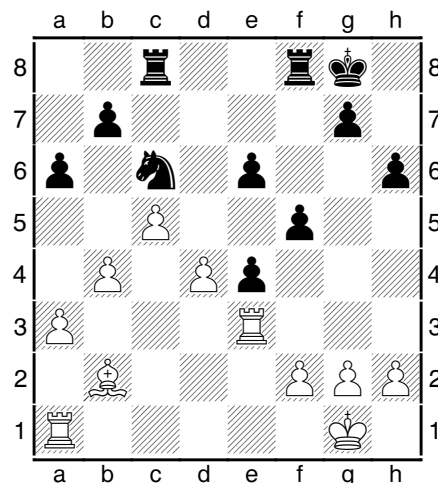
While prophylactic thinking is always good, prophylactic measures are not.

Remember the position from the Test 01 from the beginning of the course?

The white bishop is behind the pawns which are almost blocked on dark-squares. White would be in serious trouble if Black succeeds to play Ne7-d5, blocking forever the central d4-pawn.

This is a real positional threat and therefore White has to do everything possible to prevent it. The only way is to start attacking the black pawns targeting the e6-pawn by **1.f3!**

Besides this problem no2, many other problems of



the Test 01 were about prophylactic thinking:

Problem 4: White starts an attack against the Black weak structure on the kingside, this way not giving Black the necessary time to regroup his forces (“active prophylaxis”: pressure, obstruction);

Problem 5: Defending against an immediate tactical strike (Nxd4);

Problem 6: Defensive measure against Black’s pressure: the exchange of the queens;

Problems 11-14: were merely problems of finding a defense in a tensioned position, anyway prophylactic thinking played an important role.

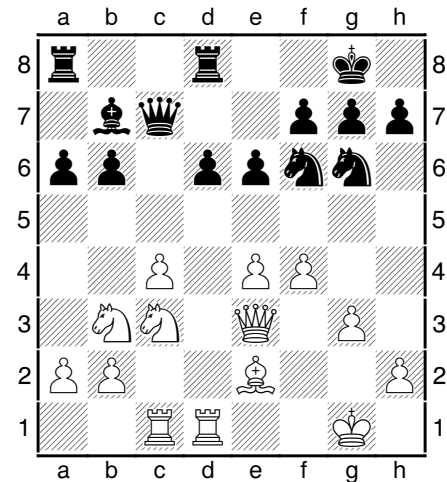
Prophylaxis – Preparatory moves

The best way to explain this is directly by an example. In this position from the game Karpov – Huebner, 1972, White intends to improve the position of his minor pieces by Nb3-d4 and Be2-f3. But the direct 1.Nd4 would meet 1...Qc5 which is not so pleasant for White.

Therefore, White prepares the knight move with **1.a3!**

Now, after 2.Nd4 Black doesn’t like 2...Qc5 because of 3.b4.

This kind of preparatory moves, a result of prophylactic thinking, are important finesses that eventually make the difference.



White is to move

Let’s see what happens when preparatory moves are forgotten.

In the game Karpov – Cobo, 1972, White has just played 12.Be3 with the threat a4-a5 and control over the b6-square.

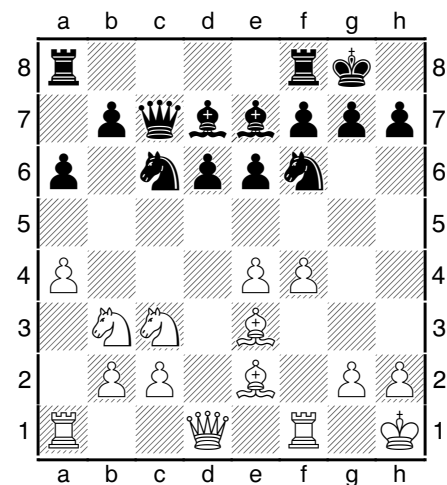
Black did not take into account White’s possibility and played directly **12...Nb4**

It was necessary 12...b6 and only after this Nc6-a5 or Nc6-b4.

Now, White gets a clear advantage by:

13.a5! Bc6 14.Bb6 Qb8 15.Qd2!

White defends indirectly the e4-pawn and threatens to capture Black’s b4-knight by 16.Nd1 and 17.c3



Black is to move

Prophylaxis – Preventive Defense

The master of defensive prophylaxis was Tigran Petrosian who liked to always keep things under control, extensively defending his position.

Preventive defense means strengthening the own position, somehow passively, in advance of an opponent attack. This strategy looks contradictory with what we have just recommended about the economy of time and forces and that only real threats should be repulsed.

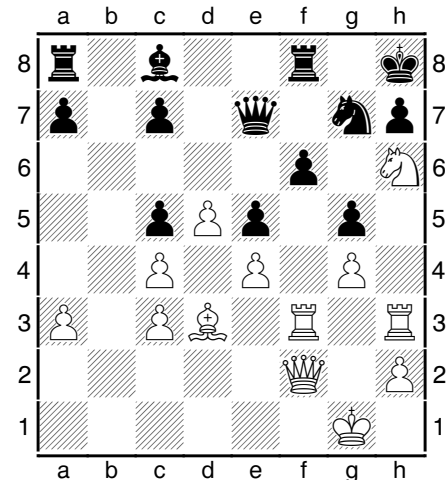
However, the nuance is very important. Let's say that once the opponent started the attack, the position becomes complicated and you need to invest a serious time to defend. In exchange, you could make some only few moves and the attack is discouraged from the start. Of course, in this case, you should choose the second option: the preventive defense.

In this position from the game Saemisch – Gruenfeld, 1929, Black has good prospects because of his “good” bishop against White’s “bad” bishop. In an endgame, this advantage would be very important. White’s only chance is to continue the attack on the kingside where his pieces have a better dynamic.

So, Black should necessarily ask the question: “how can White continue the attack?”.

There is not enough space for White at this moment to organize anything, but more space can be created by advancing the h-pawn: Rh3-g3, followed by h2-h4. Suddenly, White will get more room for his major pieces on the h-file and the f6-pawn will become problematic.

So, White’s attacking plan is real, therefore Black should take defensive measures before it begins.



Black is to move

Once you know what you have TO DO, the idea comes more easily: White needs to remove the rook from the h-file and, as a consequence, the h6-knight becomes undefended.

The correct solution was: 29...Ne8! 30.Rhg3 Kg7 attacking the knight! 31.Nf5+ Bxf5 32.gxf5 h5 and Black has a safe position and can hope to a better endgame.

Instead of using the prophylactic thinking, Black played:

29...Bd7 and White’s plan cannot be stopped anymore: **30.Rhg3 Be8 31.h4! gxh4 32.Rg2 h3 33.Rxh3 Bg6 34.Rf3 Rab8 35.Qh4** and White has clear superiority; in fact, Black has nothing to do against 36.Rgf2 and 37.g5

This position from the game Nimzowitsch – Bernstein, 1923, is characterized by long pawn chains in the center. This characteristic is more important than the opposite castles. In fact, the 2 players will attack on the same sides with their own kings because of the local space advantage: Black on the kingside and White on the queenside. So, Black's plan is to play f7-f5-f4 opening the f-file for the rook and creating a weakness on e3. After the necessary move, Nf6-e8, the rest of Black's moves will come easily and White will be soon in trouble. On the other hand, White's attack on the queenside needs more time to become dangerous. Therefore, Nimzowitsch, the first player who formulated the theory of prophylaxis, first of all took care to put obstacles in front of Black's plan:

13.g3 Ne8 14.Ng2 f5 15.h4!

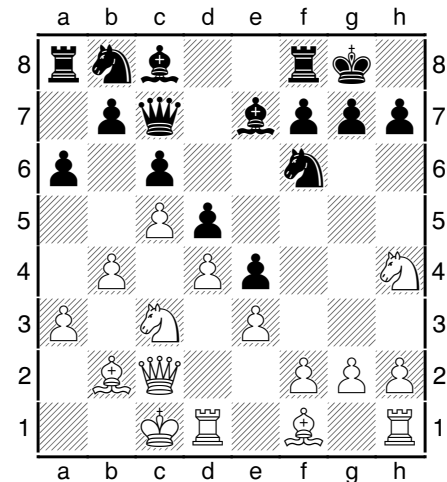
With this setup of white pawns, Black's pawn advance on the kingside is much more difficult, if not even impossible. If Black wants to continue his plan, he will need to play h7-h6, g7-g5 which would lead to a complete opening of the kingside.

15...Bd8 16.a4 Once Black's plan was hindered, White carries out his own plan.

16...b6? When a player sees his logical plan stopped by the opponent, he usually starts to make other plans which ...are not logical. By his last move, Black only worsens his position on the queenside where White attacks.

17.b5! Nf6 18.Nf4 axb5 19.axb5

and White's attack on the queenside is very strong. He will only need to play Be2, Kd2 and bring the rooks on the open files.



White is to move

Prophylaxis – Elimination of weaknesses in the own position

In position from the right, White has a small but long-lasting advantage because of his space advantage and better bishop.

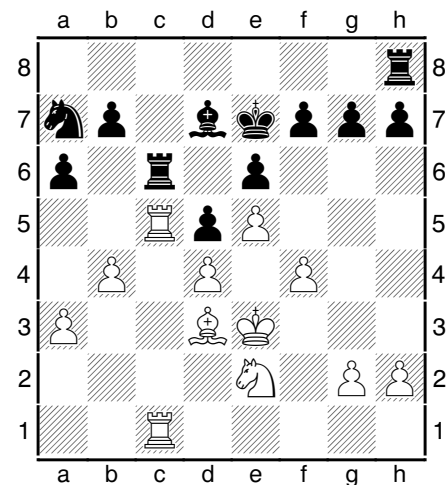
It is very important to determine the correct plan of play for White. Because of the pawn structure (typical of French Defense), White will try to attack on the kingside by the typical f4-f5.

1...Rhc8? a weak move that doesn't do anything against White's active plan.

2.g4! g6 3.f5 gxf5 4.gxf5 Rg8?

Another weak move that doesn't prevent White's threat of playing f5-f6.

Better was: 4...exf5 5.Nf4 Be6 6.Rg1 even if White keeps an advantage.



Black is to move

Now, after:

5.f6+ Kf8 6.Rg1 Rxd1 7.Nxd1 Black remained with the very weak h-pawn which cannot be defended for too much time, giving White's large space advantage on that side.

We saw a very clear example where non prophylactic measures against a positional plan led to a quick loss.

Black should have played **1...g6!** followed by h7-h5 which still could not stop White's plan of playing on the kingside (for example: h2-h3, g2-g4 and f4-f5), but would have eliminated the black kingside pawns, the potential weaknesses.

Remember: especially at the border between middlegame and endgame, pay particular attention to your weaknesses and *potential* weaknesses and try to eliminate them.

Prophylaxis – Strengthening the key-squares/pawns

Sometimes, a square or a pawn is very important for the evaluation of the position, for example: the squares of blockades in front of free pawns, the advanced pawns which confer space advantage, weak central squares, pawns that restrict the mobility of opponent pieces and so on. Therefore, the control of such kind of squares/pawns is very important as the entire position may “hang” on them.

More than that, some theoreticians recommend the overprotection of such important pawns and squares in the idea that the pieces which “see” them gains in importance. Although there are cases when this is true, there are many situations when superfluous pieces targeting a same square at least doesn't help. Every position has its own characteristics and finesses, therefore, rules cannot be given. Only concrete evaluation can tell you when overprotection is good or not.

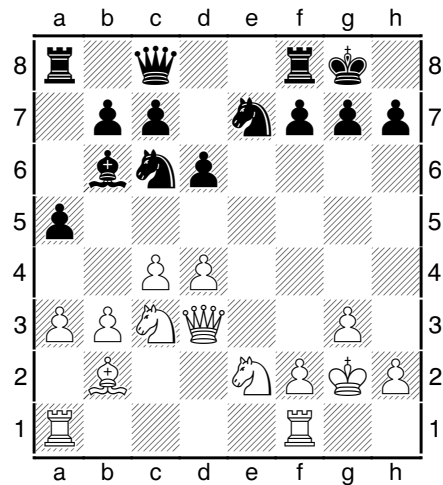
In this example from the game Nimzowitsch - Alekhine, 1925, the white d4-pawn restricts the mobility of Black's Bb6 and Nc6 and confers White space advantage in the center. For that reason, this pawn is very important and White has to strengthen its defense, especially that Black exerts serious pressure over it.

14...Qf5 15.Rad1 Rae8 16.Rd2!?

White starts to overprotect the d4-pawn by preparing to double the rooks on the d-file. Also good for the same reason was directly 16.Nb5!

16...Qg5 17.Rfd1 Ba7 18.Nf4 Nf5 19.Nb5! Bb8 20.Nd5

It is clear that White dominates the center so his strategy of overprotection triumphed.



Black is to move

Prophylaxis – Freeing pawn moves

The prophylaxis against opponent's freeing pawn moves was exposed for the first time by Nimzowitsch in his book "My System".

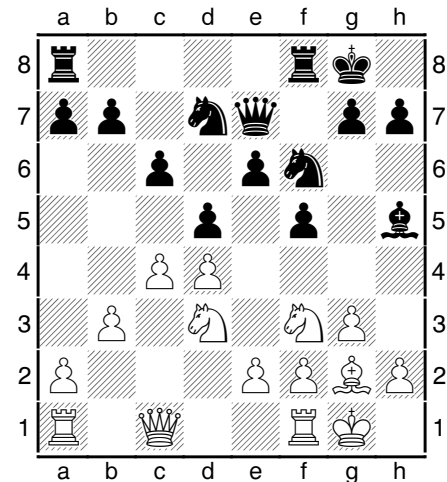
In this example from Vukic - Davcevski, 1979, Black's plan is to push e6-e5 which is technically realizable after Bxf3.

Since for White the time for active actions has not come yet, the prophylactic measures are the best:

14.Re1!

The rook looks passive behind the e-pawn, but prevents Black's idea: 14...Bxf3 15.exf3 and the rook is now on an *open* file.

Moreover, this is also a preparatory move as sooner or later White will play Nf3-e5, f2-f3, followed by e2-e4.



White is to move

Here we will see a very famous example of prophylactic thinking from the game Dolmatov - Beliavsky, 1989, after a Ruy Lopez opening.

The next White's move is extremely "mysterious" (like Nimzowitsch named such rook moves behind the pawns):

18.Rab1!

The idea is very complex and altogether this move does not drastically improve White's position.

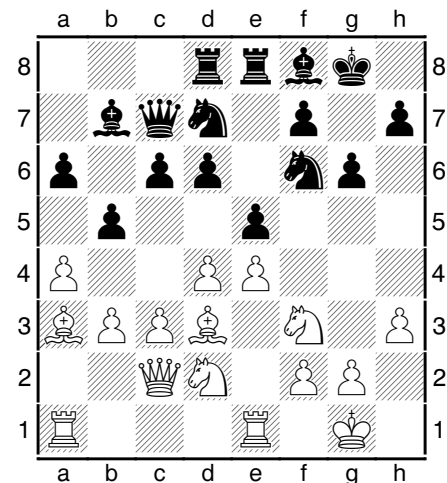
In this structure, Black's "freeing" move is d6-d5.

But let's evaluate the consequences of this move:

after 18...d5 White can trade the dark-square bishops and then play b3-b4 blocking black pawns on light-squares and consequently turning the black light-square bishop into a very bad / passive piece.

So, if Black wants to play d6-d5, he should prepare it first. Following the prophylactic reasoning, Black should play first 18...b5xa4 and after 19.b3xa4 d5, White has not the b3-b4 move anymore.

So, Dolmatov looked deeply into Black's position and anticipated his prophylactic / preparatory move b5xa4 by putting the rook on the b-file which would become open...



White is to move

In the game, Black continued directly by: **18...d5?** and after **19.Bxf8 Kxf8 20.b4 dxe4 21.Bxe4 exd4 22.cxd4**, White obtained a clear advantage due to the problematic Black's Bb7 behind the weak and immobile queenside pawns.

“Active Prophylaxis”: Obstruction / Pressure

When you are in advantage and your opponent only can hope to defend his position, prophylactic is still important. Even if now it is not about defending against opponent's threats, it is logical to play obstructing his plans of re-establishing the equilibrium of the position.

We call this “active prophylaxis” and it refers to actions that keep the initiative on your side, obstruct opponent's pieces, or increase the pressure. In fact, it is logic that the fight for the initiative must include the limitation of opponent's possibilities.

Let's see an example from Mikhail Tal's practice, a game against Gligoric in 1959.

In his book “Life and Games”, Tal commented that his next move “*was necessary – otherwise Black would prepare for queenside castling, and then I could not find an active plan for White*”.

16.d5!

So, White fights against the normal Black's development (“active prophylaxis”).

The acceptance of the pawn sacrifice would leave the black king unsafe for the rest of the game while white pieces would become extremely dangerous:

16...exd5 17.cxd5 Bxd5 or 17...Nxd5 18.0-0

16...Qe7 17.0-0 Nd7

Black loses the exchange in case of 17...0-0-0: 18.dxe6 fxe6 19.Ng6

18.dxe6 Qxe6 19.Bf5

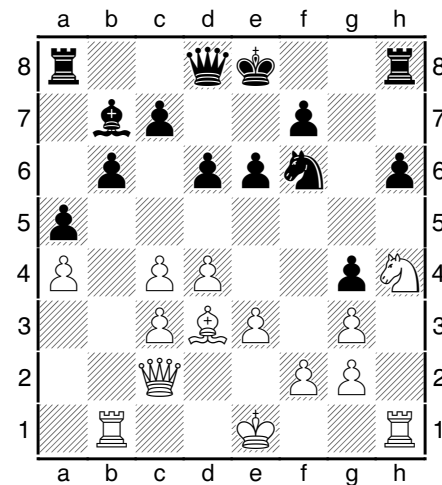
In just some few moves, the situation on the board was drastically changed in favor of Tal who was in his element in this kind of positions.

Let's see some few more moves:

19...Qxc4 20.Rfd1 Nf6 [20...0-0-0 21.Rd4 Qc5 22.Rb5 Qa3 23.Bxg4] **21.Rd4 Qc6**

22.Be6 Rg8 [22...fxe6 23.Qg6+ Kd7 24.Qg7+] **23.Bc4 Kf8** [23...0-0-0 24.Bxf7] **24.Bb5**

Qc5 25.Rc4 Qe5 26.Rxc7 Be4 27.Bd3 d5 28.Rc6 Rb8 29.c4 and White has a clear advantage.



White is to move

Final Word

The prophylaxis, or better said the prophylactic thinking, is the highest form of positional mastery. While ordinary players are merely busy to see only their threats and plans, the

strong players invest time to “see” in opponent’s mind and limit their actions. Beside all evident advantages, another one is created: the psychological pressure. When a chess player (let’s say your opponent) constantly sees his ideas repulsed, he will soon disappear, starting to take dubious decisions.

We hope that by this lesson your desire to think in both directions increased in some extent. Continuous training in this direction can help you a lot, but fortunately this is not difficult and can be done by everyone:

1. Always use the correct thinking in chess that we recommended from the very beginning of our course: always think what your opponent wants to do, evaluate if his intentions are “real” (only in this case you need to prevent them) and how you can do that with *minimum* effort.
2. After you finish a game (over the board; face 2 face with your opponent) take benefit of his opportunity, be a gentleman and offer him to analyze together the game while it’s still “hot”. You will be extremely surprised how many of his ideas you didn’t consider during the game. You may write down some of them and re-study the game when you are back home. Try to understand why you didn’t see all his intentions during the game.
3. Every time you lose a game, be sure this was because you didn’t use the prophylactic thinking at least in one key-moment of the game! Don’t blame the “weather”, but try to identify the mistakes from your game.
4. Take Karpov’s “My Best Games” annotated by himself and study them paying particular attention to his prophylactic moves/thinking – try to discover the Karpov’s prophylactic thinking behind every of his move. If any of his games seems to you *easy*, it means you need to restudy the game again and discover the mastery behind that “simplicity”.
5. When you will analyze trying to solve the over 100 problems from the advanced section of our course, don’t forget to think carefully to “what opponent wants”; many of these problems are about prophylaxis.

Reflect upon this:

Rarely a game is won by you, but in a greater extent is lost by your opponent (by no means doesn’t this imply you weren’t superior; you were!). If you are in doubt, take a look at the top level games which very often end in a draw.

To continue this reasoning: you will get better results limiting opponent’s play than only focusing at your own ideas. Once again: not only defensive prophylaxis, but also as much as possible: **active prophylaxis**.

Exercises Months 10-13

Tactics / Calculation

Every set of exercises starts with 2 simple tactics and a complicate position. Start your training with these exercises which should take you about 30 minutes (10 minutes for the 2 simple exercises and 20 minutes for the complicate position). Try to find the best move and calculate all the possible good responses of your opponent (candidate moves).

Positional Exercises

Very often, there is nothing spectacular in the positional exercises. The positional decisions are normal, un-spectacular moves, but with a logical reason that are indispensable for improving one's position. So, even tactics is subordinated to the strategical play.

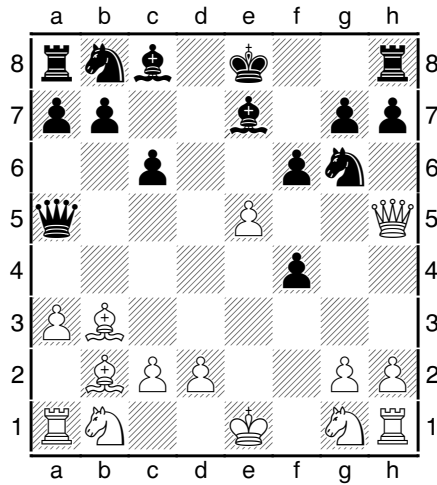
However, after evaluating the position from strategical point of view, you often need to calculate some variations, not complicated, but necessary to check the viability of the moves.

How to solve the positional exercises:

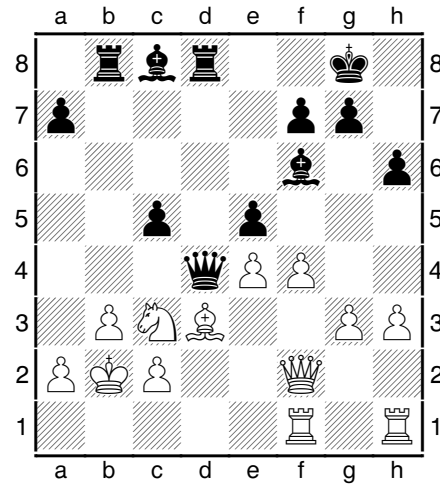
1. Use the real board and pieces- setup the position on the board.
2. Use maximum 20 minutes for every position.
3. Do not go from one position to another; take one position at a time and go the next one only after you solve it.
4. How to think at every exercise:
 - a. Evaluate the position: king's safety, center, pawn structure, pieces;
 - b. Determine who is better and to what extent;
 - c. Find what the opponent wants to do;
 - d. Make a plan for yourself; determine TO DO list
 - e. Calculate variations, if necessary
5. If after 10 minutes of thinking, the position is still unattainable for you, download the "hints" file and use it. There, we will help you to get closer to the solution, but you still have some work to do.
6. At least in the beginning of this training, it is recommended to write down your solutions.
7. The exercises are chosen to be instructive, so there are not very simple positional decisions. However, once again: some of these exercises do not hide anything spectacular; you are supposed to find something normal like in a real game. So, try to take a decision like you would take in a real situation.
8. Only after you complete a set of problems, look at our solutions.

Exercises Month 10 / Set I

Simple Tactics

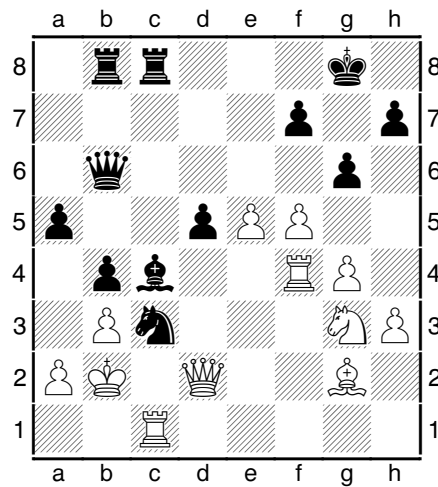


1. White is to move



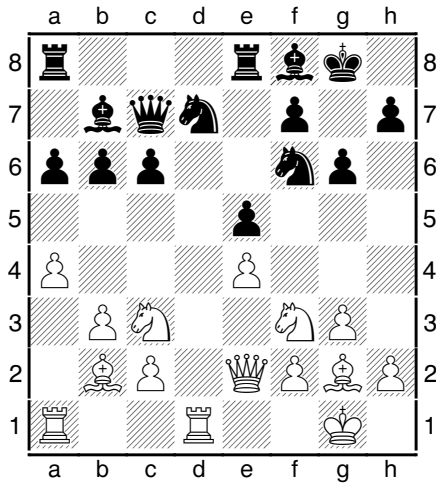
2. Black is to move

Complicate Position

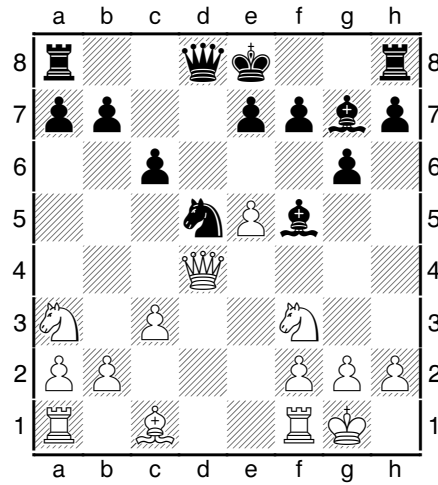


Black is to move

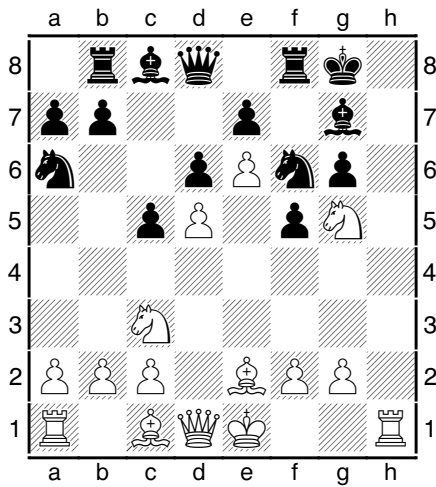
Positional Exercises



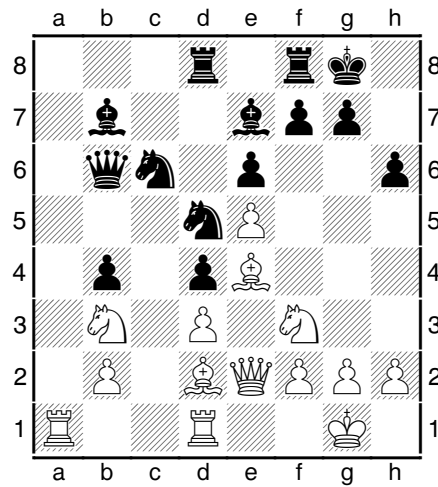
1. White is to move
Improve pieces' position



2. Black is to move
Prophylaxis



3. White is to move
Prophylaxis / Reserves



4. White is to move
Improve pieces' position

Hints

Month 10 / Set I

Complicate Position

- a) Use the force of 2 free connected pawns.

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Where would you like to have the c3-knight?

Position 2

- a) What advantage does Black have?
- b) How can White turn off this advantage?

Position 3

- a) Which point can give Black some counter-play chances by attacking it?
- b) Find a weak point in Black's camp and how can White attack it?

Position 4

- a) Where would you like to have the b3-knight?

Solutions Set I

Tactics 1

We can see that the black queen is on the same rank with the white queen and the first is not protected. If this is spotted, the winning move is simple: **1.Bf7+!**

If 1...Kxf7 2.e6+ wins the queen, otherwise White gains the g6-knight.

Tactics 2

- The black d4-queen and f6-bishop look at the weakened long diagonal.
- By exf4, Black opens the bishop.
- The black rooks control the b- and d- files.

The idea is to attract the white king out from his shelter using a queen sacrifice: Qxc3+ followed by exf4+ and the white king has only d2 to escape.

Therefore, the first move is: **1...c4!** which attack the d3-bishop. After **2.Bxc4** (2.Qxd4 exd4 wins a piece), **2...Qxc3 3.Kxc3 exf4 4.e5 Bxe5** Black wins

Tactics 3

The black a- and b- pawns supported by the heavy artillery can become a real force.

Black sacrifices 2 minor pieces for the white pawns:

35...Nxa2!! 36.Kxa2 [36.bxc4 Nxc1 37.Bxd5 b3 38.Qxc1 a4 39.Kb1 Qa5 40.fxg6 b2]
36...Bxb3+ 37.Kxb3 a4+ 38.Kb2 [38.Ka2 b3+ is the same] **38...a3+ 39.Kb3** [39.Ka1 Rxc1+ 40.Qxc1 b3+; 39.Kb1 b3 40.Rxc8+ (40.Bxd5 a2+ 41.Kb2 Rc2+) 40...Rxc8 41.Rb4 a2+ 42.Kb2 a1Q+ 43.Kxa1 Qa5+ 44.Kb1 Rc1+! 45.Qxc1 Qa2#] **39...Rc3+ 40.Rxc3 bxc3+ 41.Kxc3 a2 42.Rf1 Qb3+ 43.Kd4 Rb4+ 0-1**

Of course, it is very hard to calculate all the lines until the end. Here, player's intuition plays the most important role.

Problem 1

(Position from: Obukhov A 2415 – Kalegin E 2485 RUS-Cup4 Perm 1997)

Positional Evaluation

This example demonstrates once again that without a correct evaluation of the position, one cannot find "good moves".

Here, the open d-file is less important since there are no weaknesses and no entry points for the rooks. Both White and Black would have an easy task to neutralize opponent's rooks on that file which eventually would only lead to exchanges of major pieces.

The pawn structure is relatively symmetrical. In such positions, the dynamic of the pieces and collaboration pieces – pawns are criteria of first importance.

First of all we should observe that the center and kingside are stable. The queenside is the only place where a fight for initiative can start. So, let's see which of the 2 armies stands better for this purpose:

- Black's queenside pawns are mobile! Black can grab space on the queenside with b5 and then he will continue to play either with: a) Qb6 followed by c5-c4 or b) Nb6, b4, c5, c4 (**Black's TO DO list**).
- On the other hand, White is not prepared for a battle on this side. Especially the c3-knight blocks the c-pawn and the b2-bishop.

What we have to do / Planning

So, it is quite clear that White achieved nothing from the opening and he has no real possibility for active measures. On the contrary, if he plays careless he is in danger of getting worse. So, White has to defend his position taking prophylactic actions against Black's plan.

Now, the right plan is not so difficult. In such cases, the best idea is to improve the position of the pieces. So we should ask "which piece is misplaced?" and the answer comes from the evaluation: "the knight from c3".

The knight has no activity at all on c3, but only limits White's play on the queenside.

Now, we need to see more deeply into position and find a good position for this knight. Can the knight take an active position somewhere on the board or we are forced to re-direct the knight into a position with defensive roles?

Prophylactic thinking again: "What Black wants TO DO"? After he advance the b- and c-pawns, the b7-bishop, the f6-knight and possible Nd7-c5 will create a strong pressure against the central e4-pawn. So, White needs to think in advance to how he will defend that pawn... He needs the c3-knight! Where? On d2!

White's TO DO list:

- defend the e4-pawn by Nc3-b1-d2 and Qe2
- keep pressure against the black e5-pawn with Bb2 and Nf3
- be ready to close the queenside at the proper moment with c2-c4!

Calculation

There is no need for calculating something at this point. The first move from the TO DO list is possible so:

1. Nb1! By this move, White brings the knight on d2 and also clears the long diagonal for the dark square bishop. Now he is ready to meet any active measures on queenside. In the game white managed to find the right answer.

Remember what Tarrasch pointed out: “When a piece is bad, the whole game is bad”.

Problem 2

(Position from: Vydeslaver A 2449 – Fressinet L 2640 EU-Cup, 2003)

Positional Evaluation

- King’s position: Black didn’t castle yet but this is not a problem since White has no direct threats. In fact, this might be an advantage as Black can castle even on the queenside.
- Center: White has more space in the center because of his advanced e5-pawn
- Pieces: Black has the bishop-pair (usually, an important advantage in not closed positions)
- Pieces: All black minor pieces already have good positions; White still needs to find good places for his a3-knight and c1-bishop.

White’s TO DO:

White has some space advantage but it is un-utilizable since Black pieces are not limited. The e5-pawn confers him space advantage but it is under pressure and also limits his dark-square bishop.

Because Black has the advantage of the bishop-pair and because the white bishop has not a good square, White would like to exchange the bishops. How can he do that? By playing Qh4 and Bh6! After this exchange, there will be no pressure against the e5-pawn and White can get a better play, especially that there will be weak dark-squares in Black’s camp.

What we have to do / Planning

It is time for prophylactic thinking again: how can Black prevent White’s threat? The normal move is 1...h6. But doesn’t this move weaken the kingside?

To answer this question, a general principle can help: *when you have the pair of bishops and your opponent one bishop, place your pawns on the same color with the opponent bishop in order to restrict its activity.*

Therefore 1...h6 must be the right decision. Now we have to calculate some short variations.

Calculation

1....h6! 2.Qh4 Qc7 followed by 0-0-0 and g5 with better chances in attack;

1....h6! 2.Rd1- Nb6 with better endgame because of the bishop-pair;

1...h6! 2.h3 0-0 3.Qh4 g5 4.Qg3 Qc7 5.Rd1 Rd8 6.h4 f6 and Black has nothing to fear.

So, the prophylaxis and general principles helped the top French grandmaster find the right answer.

Problem 3

(Position from Moldovan D 2444 – Kislinsky A 2429, Bucharest, 2003)

Positional Evaluation

White has an obvious advantage. He has a huge space advantage and the e6- and d5-pawns cut the coordination of black pieces.

The center is stable, so White has all the reasons to start an attack on one of the flanks.

White can get local force superiority on the kingside and, moreover, the h-file is open for his h1-rook.

Black's kingside is weak not only because of the open h-file but also because of the advanced f-pawn which weakens the g6-pawn.

Black's TO DO

Here, Black is very limited in his actions. The only point that Black can attack is the base of the White's pawn chain, meaning d5. Black will play Na6-c7, b7-b5 with the idea b5-b4 and Bb7 attacking the d5-pawn with 3 pieces while White has only Qd1 (Nc3 will be chased by b5-b4).

What we have to do / Planning

First of all White must decide on which wing should he play, the center being blocked. The answer is obvious: the kingside because of the numerous weaknesses around Black's king.

This position has 2 solutions:

A. Because of superiority of forces, White can start a **direct attack** by opening the lines with: **1.g4!**

Here, an accurate calculation is necessary. If White overlooks a defense of his opponent, the advantage may slip or even Black can get some unexpected counter-play.

1...fxg4 2.Bd3 with the deadly threat of Bxg6

1...Qa5 2.gxf5 and now Black has a lot of options:

2...-Nd5 3.Qd5-Rf5 (3....Bc3 4.bc3-Qc3 5.Qd2-Qa1 6.Rh6! with decisive attack) 4.Qd2 winning.

2...-c4 3.Nf7! (3.Kf1-Nc7 4.fg6-Ncd5 and Black has some counter play; 3.Bc4-b5 4.Bb3-b4 and Black is still alive) 3...-Rf7 (3...-Nd5 4.Nh6-Bh6 5.Rh6-Rf5 6.Rg6 winning) 4.gf7-Kf8 5.fg6-Bf5 6.Bh6-Bg6 7.Qd2 winning

2...-gf5 3.Qd3 with deadly threats

As you can see, White is winning after 1.g4. In order to enter in such complicated variations, a great degree of self-confidence is necessary. Just a small slip in your calculation is enough to turn the game around.

B. The second solution is much less risky. White can prevent in advance any Black's counter-play over-protecting the d5-pawn. This can be done by Bf3 and Nc3-e2-f4.

By this maneuver, the c3-knight will be brought in an active position with multiple roles:

- defensive role (protects d5) and
- attacking role (attacking the weakness from g6 and Black's kingside, in general).

1.Bf3! defends d5 and vacates the e2-square for the knight.

The game continued: **1...b5 2.Ne2-Qe8 3.Nf4-Bb7 4.Rh3** and White has a decisive advantage while Black is tied down with no chance for activity. White can prepare his kingside attack without any risk now.

Although 1.g4 is winning by force, from a practical point of view 1.Bf3 is preferable.

Remember: in a clear winning position, try to find the continuation which implies the minimum risk. However, this doesn't mean that in a winning position you may allow yourself to be lazy and forget about calculation.

Problem 4

(Grischuk A 2606 – Kostur P 2589, RUS Cup final, 2000)

Positional Evaluation

This is a very hard problem because of the high equilibrium of the position.

- Pawn structure: First of all, we need to realize that the pawn structure is immobile (for both players). The queenside and central pawns are blocked and the kingside pawns cannot be advanced without creating un-justified weaknesses.

For example, if Black plays f7-f5, after e5xf6, he will be left with big holes on light-squares. Therefore, there are no "freeing" moves.

- Pieces: The pieces of both players are well placed. They defend or create pressure against important key-squares in the center as d4 or e5.

- The open a- and c-files are not useful for any player as for the moment there are no entry points for the rooks.

- King's safety: White has more space on the kingside (because of the e5-pawn) and Black's king position is a bit weakened because of the h6-pawn.

A comparative evaluation of the quality of the pieces can help now:

Qe2 ~ Qb6

Rd1 ~ Rd8

Ra1 > Rf8

Bd2 ~ Be7

Be4 > Bb7 (the white bishop sees both flanks!)

Nf3 ~ Nc6

Nb3 < Nd5

So, White is slightly better mainly because of the position of his e4-bishop and a1-rook (but this is a very small advantage and only a short-term one). On the other hand, the black d5-knight is stronger than the white b3-knight.... Can White improve the position of this knight? We will see.

Because of the equilibrium of this position and the lack of weaknesses, there are small chances to find a real active plan. Both players are in expectative and wait for the mistake of the opponent which usually happens when one of the players wishes the victory too much and takes risky actions. At such level (both players are around 2600 rating) such mistakes are improbable and this is why many games end in a draw.

Black's TO DO

Black pieces are already on good positions. Although they do not threaten opponent's position too much, they create a latent pressure that might transform into a volcano if White plays careless. Black hardly can improve the position of his pieces. His TO DO list is to keep pressure in the center in order to limits White's possibilities, especially discouraging an attack over his kingside (so Black's ideas are more of prophylactic nature).

What we have to do / Planning

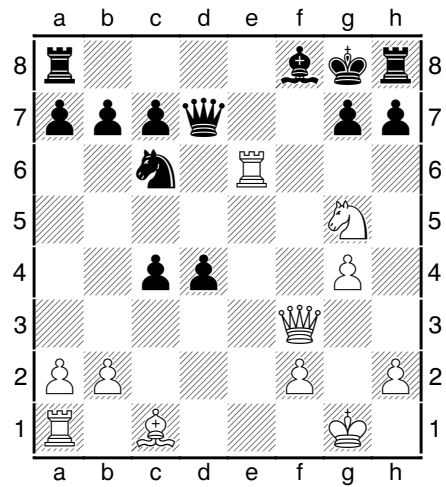
The evaluation took some time but was very productive. Now, White knows what to look for and this is the improving of the position of the b3-knight... if possible. So, is there any square on the board where this knight could be better than on b3?

There is: the strong outpost from c4 ...or in attack on the kingside (g3-h5)!

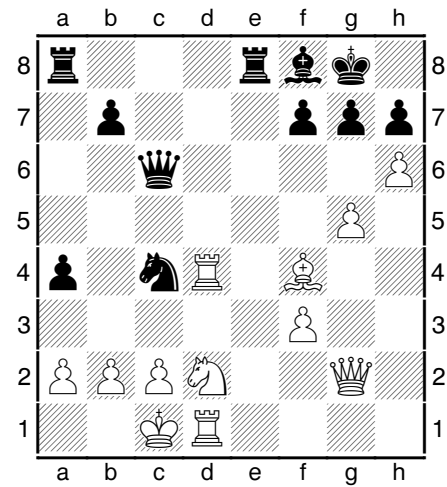
In order to achieve this, grandmaster Grischuk played **1.Bc1** vacating the d2-square for his knight.

Exercises Month 10 / Set II

Simple Tactics

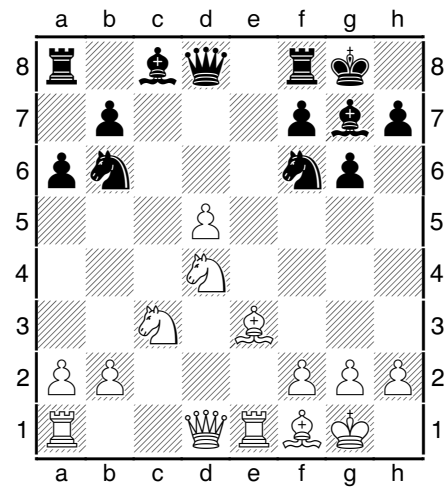


1. White to move



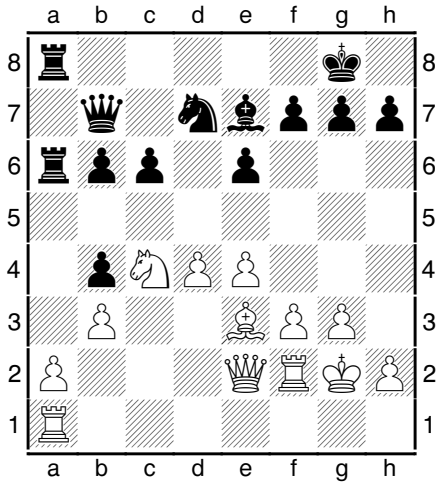
2. Black to move

Complicate Position

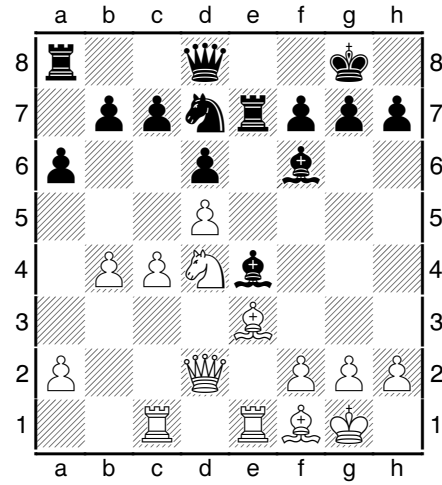


3. White to move

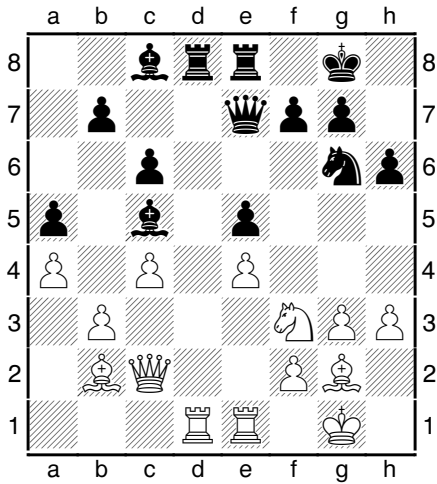
Positional Exercises



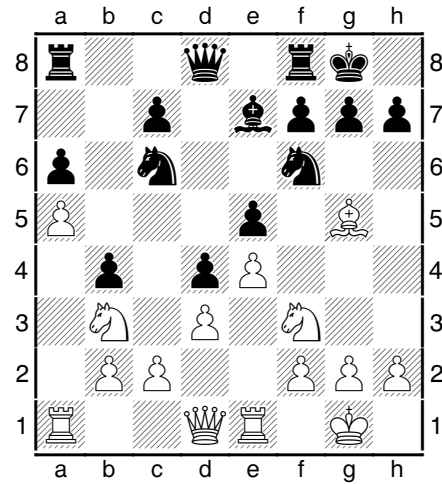
1. White to move



2. White to move



3. Black to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 10 / Set II

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Which is White's worst piece? ...

Position 2

- a) On which side should White play?
- b) Find a better square for the d4-knight. (Of course, try to also find the plan of play, not only moves)

Position 3

- a) Which is Black's worst piece? ...

Position 4

- a) White has the possibility to obtain a (new) long-term strategical advantage.

Solutions Set II

Tactics 1

1.Re7! Qxe7 (otherwise 2.Qf7#) **2.Qd5+ Qe6 3.Qxe6#**

Tactics 2

(Glek I – Chiburdanidze M, Minsk, 1983)

White has not a strong defense around his king:

- the back rank is defended only by the d1-rook
- the dark-squares on the queenside are defended only by the b2-pawn.

So, Black eliminates the only defender of the dark-squares also taking out the white king:

25...Nxb2! 26.Kxb2 Ba3+ 27.Kb1 [27.Kxa3 Qc3+ 28.Nb3 axb3+ 29.Ra4 b2#] 27...Qc3 28.Nc4 Qxd4 0–1

Tactics 3

(Gheorghiu F – Gipslis A, Moscow, 1967)

The center is open; White is better developed and temporarily he is a pawn up. However, these are short-term advantages and Black is threatening to retake the pawn at the next move by Nbx d5 also attacking the e3-bishop.

The idea is to try to keep the d-pawn or to cede it in better conditions:

14.d6! Nbd5

If Black takes the pawn by 14...Qxd6?, after the forced variation 15.Nf5! Qxd1 16.Ne7+ Kh8 17.Raxd1 Nbd7 18.Bf4 White has an overwhelming piece superiority. Black pieces do not cooperate and cannot enter the game.

15.Nxd5 Nxd5 16.Nf5! Nxe3

After 16...Bxf5 17.Qxd5 Bxb2 18.Rad1, White's advantage is clear.

17.Nxe3!

In the game, White played 17.Ne7+ which only led to an unclear position after 17...Kh8 18.Rxe3 Be6 19.Rc1 Qb6

17...Bxb2

17...Re8 18.Bc4 +/-

17...Be6 18.Nd5! and the black knight's position compensate for Black's bishop-pair.

18.Nd5 Bxa1 (18...Qxd6 19.Ne7+) 19.Qxa1 with decisive attack on dark-squares

Problem 1

(Position from: Kaspi A 2488 – Huzman A 2574, Modiin, 2000)

Positional Evaluation

- Center: White controls the center.

However, *the control of the center, the pair of bishops, and queenside pawn majorities do not guaranty an advantage only by their presence alone.*

Generally, the control over the center is used either to get a strong passed pawn, to launch a flank attack because of greater mobility of our pieces or to restrict opponent pieces. Here it is not the case. So, this factor doesn't give White any practical advantage.

- Pawn structure: The pawn structure is balanced: White has a weak pawn on a2 and Black has double pawns on the b-file. Black is pressing the only weakness in White's camp.

- Pieces: Black's major pieces are pressing on the a-file restricting the mobility of white major pieces. The minor pieces' positions and roles are balanced. The position of the c4-knight is not secure because Black can play b6-b5 (...is that a real threat?).

We can say that Black is slightly better.

Black's threat

Black is threatening: 1...b5 2.Ne5 (the only move) Nxe5 3.dxe5-c5! and sooner or later he will get a strong passed pawn on the c-file. This is a real threat.

What we have to do / Planning

So, White has to prevent Black's positional threat and to improve the position of his major pieces.

The a1-rook is the worst piece because it only defends the a2-pawn. The rook *has* to defend the pawn, but this can be done from a much better position: c2. On c2, the rook will have a much greater mobility and will also control the c-file, hindering Black's plan to advance the c-pawn.

With the rook on c2, White's queen and other rook will become freer and can be used for active plans.

Always the moves that fit with our plans and, in the same time, prevent opponent's plans are the strongest.

Calculation

1. Bf4?-b5 2.Ne5 (2.Nd6-Qb6 3.Qd3-g5 winning a piece) - Bf6 3.Rd1-Ne5 4.Be5-Be5 5.de5-c5 with clear advantage.

1. Qc2?-b5 2.Nd2-e5 with advantage

1. Rd1?-b5 2.Ne5-Ne5 3.de5-c5 and Black achieved his plan (this was actually played in the game)

1. Rc1!-b5 (1...- Ra2? 2.Qa2-Ra2 3.Ra2-b5 4.Nd2! and White has better prospects because the activity of his rooks) **2.Ne5-Ne5 3.de5** and now 3...-c5 is not possible.

After Rc1-c2 White will have no reason for concern.

Problem 2

(Position from: Vokac M 2523 – Pribyl J 2376, Steinitz memorial, 2000)

Positional Evaluation

- Center: The center is more or less blocked and the influence over the central squares is almost equal. Black has good control over the e-file.
- Pawn structure: White has local space advantage on the queenside. No one has weakness.
- Pieces: The activity of the pieces is balanced.

White is slightly better because of his space advantage and, consequently, greater mobility of the pieces.

Black's TO DO

Because of his lack of space, Black has no real chance for activity. He will probably play Qf8 followed by Rae8 (this is not a real threat) in order to consolidate his position on the e-file.

What we have to do / Planning

White has local space advantage on the queenside. We can also notice that almost all his pieces are “looking” in that direction. So, White has all the reasons to plan an attack on this side.

How this attack can be developed? The ultimate breakthrough will be, of course, c4-c5 which will open the lines for major pieces and bishops (the attacking pieces). However, because Black has no real weaknesses, it is hard to guarantee the success of this attack. So, White would like to create some weaknesses first which will tie down black pieces a little more. The next question is: How to create such weaknesses? The answer is not at all obvious, so let's keep this question in our mind and think how c4-c5 can be actually played.

In order to push c4-c5, White needs either to defend the d5-pawn (by removing the knight from d4) or to drive away the black e4-bishop (by f2-f3). The second idea is obviously weaker because it weakens the e3-square and therefore it helps Black who wants to double the rooks on the e-file. In conclusion, White needs to move the d4-knight from that nice looking position.

So, White has to find another active square for his d4-knight and also a way to create weaknesses on the queenside. The answer is on a5: Nd4-b3-a5.

In fact, because the attack against the b7-pawn will create problems in Black's camp, the knight will be more active on a5 than on d4.

Calculation

1.Nb3! – Qf8

In case that Black wants to prevent Nb3-a5 by playing 1...-b6, the white knight finds another route using the c6-square: 2.Nd4

2.Na5 - b6

2....-Rb8 3.c5 followed by c5-c6 and the a6-pawn will be difficult to protect

3.Nc6 White has improved his position and, in the same time, he created targets on the black queenside, especially the a6-pawn.

Remember this *typical* maneuver of the knight (Na5 or, in other positions: Nh5) attacking the vulnerable b7-, respectively g7-, squares.

Problem 3

(Position from: Klenburg M 2376 – Golod V 2538, Novy Bydzov, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

- Center: is stable with a balanced control over the central squares.
- Pawn structure: We can notice that White has 2 weak squares: d4 and b4. Black's c-pawn defends d5, while White's c-pawn is advanced and left 2 "holes" behind.
- Pieces: White's c4-pawn restricts the mobility of the light-square bishop which cannot be activated via g2-f1-c4. So, Black has another long-term advantage: his "bad" bishop (of dark-squares) is much more active than White's "bad" bishop (of light-squares).

Only for these reasons we cannot say that Black has a clear advantage. However, he has better prospects.

What White can do?

There is nothing that might worry Black.

It is hard for White to find any active plan. Therefore, the best idea for White is to play for a draw exchanging the major pieces on the d-file.

What we have to do / Planning

In order to improve his position, Black has to invade White's weakened squares (b4 and d4). Also, in the future White can have problems with his b3-pawn.

Black has a passive knight that only defends the e5-pawn. So, he has to improve the position of this knight by bringing it into play: via g6-f8-e6-d4.

For this, he has to protect the e5 pawn by f7-f6 which, in the same time, will reduce Bb2 and Nf3 activity.

Calculation

1...-f6! 2.Rxd8-Rxd8 3.Rd1-Nf8 4.Bc3! a good move that forces Black to occupy the b6-square, otherwise he will bring the queen there.

4...-b6 5.Rxd8-Qxd8 6.Qxd2-Qxd2 7.Bxd2-Ne6

Black has realized his plan, although it is not clear that the better placement of his pieces will be enough for a win. However, at least, White is reduced to defensive for the rest of game.

Problem 4

(Position from: Sutovsky E 2674 – Hracek Z 2591, EU-chT, 2005)

Positional Evaluation

- Center / pawn structure: The position is closed, Black has more space but White has a stable great square for his knight on c4.
- Pieces: Black has a "bad" dark square bishop.

What does Black want?

Black's only real problem is his dark square bishop. So he wants to play Ne8 trading the bishops, followed by Nd6 covering the c4-square. After that, White will have no real reason to hope for an advantage.

What we have to do / Planning

White's major and long-term plan is given by the pawn structure with pawn chains in the center. White's logical plan is to attack Black's chain base with f2-f4.

It will be a positional mistake to prepare any plan connected with an attack against the front of the black chain with c2-c3. After trading White's b- and c- pawns with Black's b- and d- pawns, White will be left with a weakness on d3-pawn. In addition, the Black's "bad" bishop will get an active position on the a7-g1 diagonal.

So, in order to prepare f2-f4, White wants to bring the f3-knight on c4. However, this doesn't work immediately because Black responds with Ne8-d6 getting rid of his problems (as we saw in Black's TO DO).

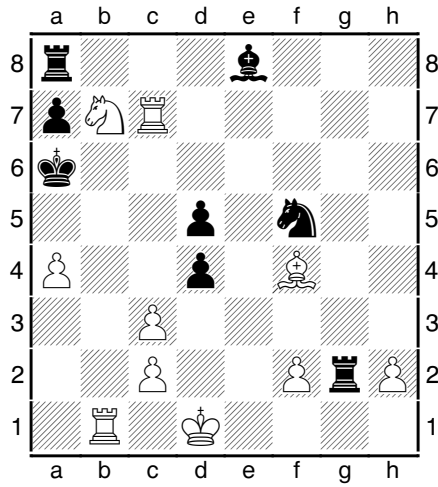
White also wants to let Black with his bishop on the board (his only real problem). In order to do this, the exchange Bxf6 suggests itself and White gets the long-term of knight versus "bad" bishop in closed positions.

Calculation

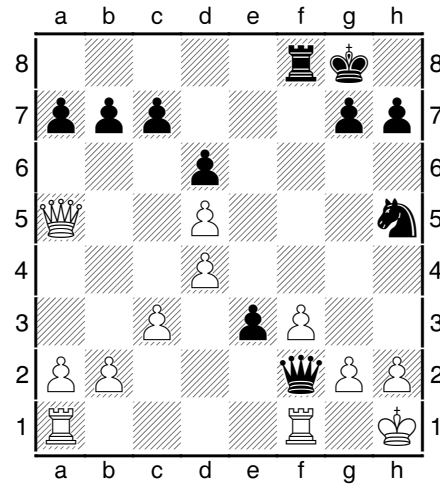
1.Bf6!-Bf6 2.Nfd2 this is one of the rare cases where there is no need to calculate further any variation. The way White will prepare the f2-f4 advance is determined by the setup Black will choose. Only after Black's next move, White has to calculate variations.

Exercises Month 10 / Set III

Simple Tactics

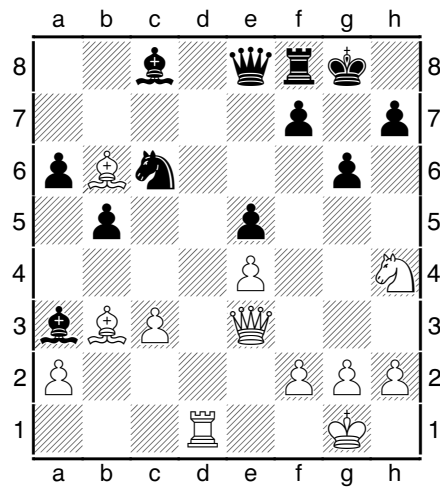


1. White to move



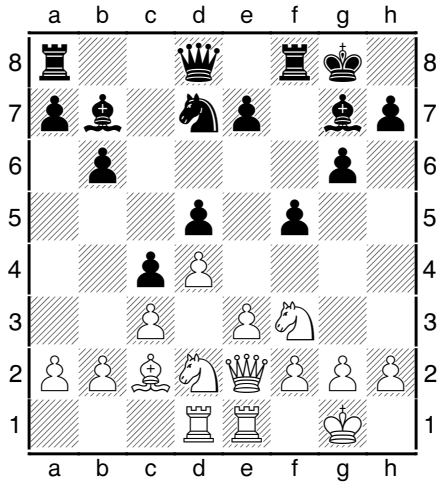
2. Black to move

Complicate Position

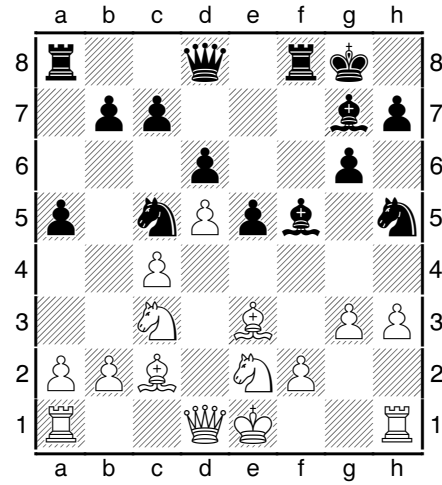


3. White to move

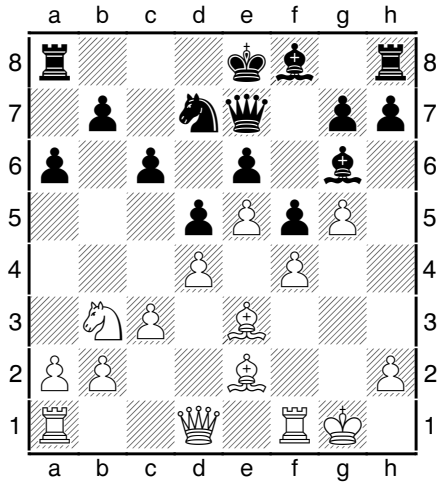
Positional Exercises



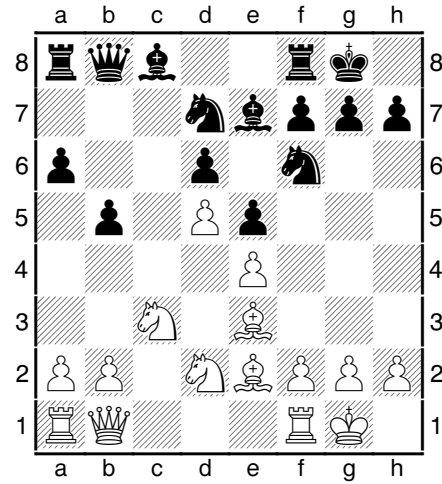
1. White to move



2. White to move



3. Black to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 10 / Set III

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) The center is nearly blocked. Where White should attack?
- b) How an attack on flank should begin when the center is blocked?

Position 2

- a) Determine a key-square for White and how you can secure it

Position 3

- a) No direct hint is needed. Just think *correctly*.

Position 4

- a) Find a weak square in Black's camp and how can White reach there.

Solutions Set III

Tactics 1

(Ivkov – Portisch, 1961)

1.Rc6+! clears the c7-square for the bishop **1...Bxc6 2.Nc5+ Ka5 3.Bc7#**

Tactics 2

The white king has no moves, so Black opens by force the h-file and, then, Rf8-f6-h6#:
1...Ng3+!! 2.hxg3 Rf6! 3.Rxf2 exf2 followed by **4...Rh6#**

Tactics 3

(Position from: Spassky B, 2560 – Beliavsky A, 2655, 1988)

Black's king position is seriously weakened on dark-squares and all the white pieces are ready to enter attack very easily: Qe3-h6, Rd1-d3, and Bb6-c7-xe5 or, after b3-b4, Bb6-c5. Moreover, because of the pin on a2-g8 diagonal, the g6-pawn is also weak.

White can start the direct attack straight away by:

25.Nxg6!! hxg6 26.Qh6 with the threat **27.Qxg6+ Kh8 28.Qh6+ Kg8 29.Rd3 26...Ne7**

Another possible defense is **26...Be6**. White continues the attack by bringing the reserves: **27.Rd3! f5** forced in order to make room for the king on f7. **28.Rg3!** forces the black rook to move on f6 where it will be blocked then by the own king: **28...Rf6 29.Rh3 Kf7 30.Qh7+ Kf8 31.exf5 Bxb3 (31...gxf5 32.Rg3!+-) 32.axb3 Rxf5 33.b4!!** a "quiet" move that prepares the strong **Bc5+ 33...Qe6 34.Bc5+ Ke8 35.Qb7** followed by **Rh8**

27.Bc7!! the last reserve is brought in attack **27...Nf5** Black is forced to give back the piece to defend the e5-square. **28.exf5 Bxf5 29.g4! Be4 30.Re1 +-**

Problem 1

(Position from: Smyslov V, 2480 – Polgar J, 2670, Hoogeveen, 1997)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: Blocked and balanced structure. Black has some space advantage on the queenside.

Pieces: Black has the pair of bishops but this doesn't give him any advantage. As we already know the pair of bishops is very strong in open positions, but here it is not the case. In fact, Black has a long term "bad" bishop on b7. It is hard to see how this bishop

can be activated in the future. On the other hand, White got rid of his “bad” bishop and he has only “good” pieces.

White is better (because it is his turn to move). If Black was to move he was better which becomes clear after we see what Black wants to do.

What Black wants to do?

So, Black has a bad bishop on b7 but, in the same time, has space advantage on the queenside. Therefore, Black would like to open the game on this side by pushing his pawns forward. After b6-b5-b4-xc3 together with a5-a4-a3 etc., Black will get the initiative on the queenside, will be able to trade his bad bishop by Bc6-a4 and his dark-square bishop will exert a stronger pressure on the long diagonal (the b2 and c3 pawns were eliminated). This is Black’s long term plan and because of the blocked structure White hardly can get some counter-play.

Before starting the active operations on the queenside, Black will play e7-e6 covering the g5-square and preparing a possible maneuver Bg7-f8 (reserves for the queenside play).

What we have to do / Planning

As we mentioned, White is in great danger to be tied down.

If Black plays 1...-e6, White can only bring a knight on e5 (for example 2.Ba4-xd7, Nf3-e5 and Nd2-f3) getting a “beautiful” position in the center but that is all. After that, there is no possibility for White to improve his position.

For this reason, White has to be creative and quickly find a real active plan on the kingside. Why kingside: the center is blocked and any action on the queenside will only help Black. Moreover, if the fight is given on the kingside, Black’s b7-bishop will be out of play.

How this can be achieved? The center is only partially blocked, so White has to secure it even more with f2-f4 and, then, start the attack by pushing the pawns, meaning: g2-g4!

But White needs to gain a tempo in order to free the f-pawn’s way and there is only one way: **1. Ng5!** (threatening Ne6) followed by **2.f4**.

After this, White also gets a strong outpost on e5 (if Black will do an exchange on e5, after d4xe5, there will be another excellent square for White’s remaining knight on d4). With all his pieces “looking” at the kingside, White will open the lines here (by simply pushing his “g” and “h” pawns) obtaining a strong attack over the black king.

Calculation

1.Ng5! Of course, the former World champion (and one of the greatest positional players) managed to find the right solution

1....-Rf6 2.f4!-b5 3.g4 After Qg2, Ndf3, Ne5 White has a dangerous attack over the king. This example shows the importance of spotting the right positional decision in order to avoid a strategical bind.

Problem 2

(Position from Efimenko Z, 2643 – Lahno E, 2498, UKR-ch, 2005)

Positional Evaluation

We are dealing with a dynamic position, typical of King's Indian Defense.

- King's safety: White has not an easy task to find a secure position for his king. Because of his weak pawn structure on the kingside, he probably should castle on the queenside.
- Center/pawn structure: Concerning the control over the center and pawn structure, no one has a clear advantage, still weaknesses on both camps exists. White has a little more space but which is compensated for now by Black's better development.
- The e4-square is critical in this position. Black made a committal decision when he took on f5 with the bishop (from strategical point of view, Black should have secured the e4-square by taking on f5 with the pawn: g6xf5).

Now, if White succeeds to take control over this square and install a piece there, the e5-pawn will be blocked, the g7-bishop will be blocked and Black will not be able to open up the position and attack the un-castled white king.

What Black wants to do?

Black wants to secure the e4-square in order to be able to play e5-e4 at the proper moment and open up his dark-square bishop. Although after e5-e4 White will gain the d4-square, Black will gain the more dangerous d3- and f3- squares.

So, Black wants to play 1...Nf6, followed either by 2...Bxc2 and e5-e4, or by 2...Qd7 and Rae8 (and at some point e5-e4). In both cases, taking advantage of the white king stuck in the center, Black will get a good activity.

What we have to do / Planning

1. With the king in the center, White has to stabilize the position first by blocking the e5-pawn and consequently the Black's dark-square bishop.

This can be achieved by **1.Bxc5!** followed by 2.Be4, Qd3 or 2.Ne4, N2c3, spoiling Black's pawn structure and any attempt of activity.

2. Then, White can castle on the queenside.

3. After he secured his king and the position in the center, White can think to active measures on the kingside, although this will not be an easy task: In order to make any progress on the kingside, White has to play g3-g4 sooner or later which will permit to the black knight to jump on f4.

Calculation

1.Bxc5!-dxc5 2.Ne4!

Better than 2.Be4?! (like in the game) and Black can play 2...Bd7! preventing 3.g4 that would force Black to part with his only defender of light squares. After 3.Qd3-Bh6, White has problems with his king and the misplaced knight from e2.

2...-Qe7 3.N2c3-Bh6 4.Qe2 followed by 5.Bd3 and Ke1-d1-c2 and White's position is to be preferred.

The game was: 1.Bxc5-dxc5 2.Be4?!-Qf6?! 3.Qd3-Bh6 4.g4!-Nf4 5.Nxf4-Bxe4 6.Nxe4-Qxf4 7.0-0 with a long term advantage of good knight against bad bishop.

Problem 3

(Position from: Parligras M, 2559 – Svetushkin D, 2568, Calvia, 2004)

Positional Evaluation

It's a blocked position where White has a huge space advantage.

Black's only compensation lies in his "bad" bishop's position: the light-square bishop is not behind the blocked pawns (like would have been on c8 for example). With the bishop on g6, Black has more chances to activate it: Qf7 and Bg6-h5.

What White wants to do?

There is an obvious positional threat: White will push 1.h2-h4 followed by h4-h5 after which Black's position is hopeless. After this, it will be impossible to find any reasonable setup that will allow Black a decent play.

What we have to do / Planning

Black has to deal with his opponent's threat right now, otherwise he will not be able to leave the last 2 ranks. This can be done by pushing the h-pawn.

Calculation

1...h5 is not a desirable solution as the "bad" bishop will be permanently closed behind the pawns and nothing will compensate Black's lack of space.

Fortunately, there is another solution: **1...-h6!**

For sure Moldavian grandmaster foreseen this solution in advance, otherwise he was trying to avoid this position.

The game continued: **2.h4-hxg5 3.hxg5-Qf7!** everything is clear now. Black trades his light-square bishop by force, balancing the game. **4.Kg2-Bh5 5.Rh1-Bxe2 6.Qxe2-Rxh1 7.Rxh1-Be7**

Black's lack of space is fully compensated by White's permanently "bad" dark-square bishop.

Problem 4

(Position from: Kozul Z, 2585 – Aronian L, 2502, Vidmar mem, 1999)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: We are dealing again with a typical King's Indian structure with closed center where the players attack on flanks.

Here, White has managed to make more progress on the queenside: the "c" file is open and his pieces are very actively placed. Black has a weakness on this side: the c6-square. On the other hand, Black needs a lot of time in order to organize the f7-f5 breakthrough. Therefore, White has the advantage.

What Black wants to do?

As we saw in evaluation, Black is much behind with his normal plans on the kingside so there is no time to organize an attack on that side. He has to look on the queenside taking prophylactic measures.

However, Black has even a positional threat on the queenside: he can grab space here by advancing b5-b4 (after 1... Nb6 not to allow Nc3-a4).

After 1...Nb6, Black will threaten Ng4 too, picking up one of White's bishops.

What we have to do / Planning

White has to deal with Black's threat also making a useful move.

Black's main weakness is the c6-square. Therefore the knight from d2 will head in that direction (d2-b3-a5-c6). It is easy to spot that after the careless 1.Nb3, Black can easily defend with 1...-Bd8, therefore White needs to prepare Nb3-a5 with **1.b4!**.

So, beside dealing with Black's threat, White makes a useful move.

Calculation

1. b4!-Nb6 2.Nb3-Bd7

If 2...-Ng4 3.Bxg4-Bxg4 4.Na5 and the c4-square is covered.

Also it is hard for Black to deal with White's threats on the queenside, for example:

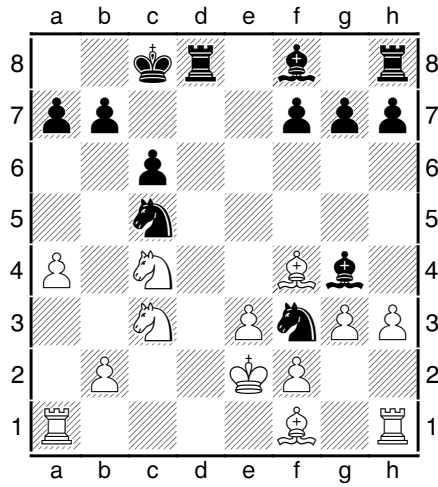
2...-Nc4 3.Bxc4-bxc4 4.Na5 with big advantage.

3. Na5-Rc8 4.Rc1

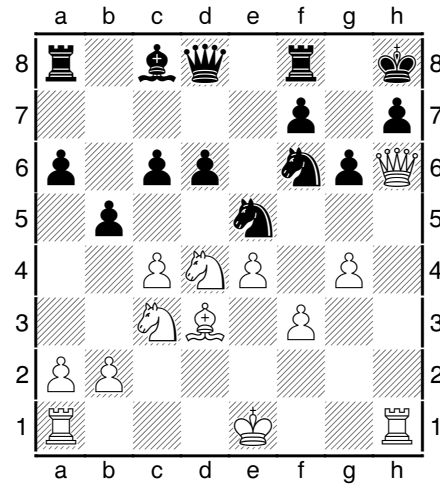
White has consolidated his advantage.

Exercises Month 10 / Set IV

Simple Tactics

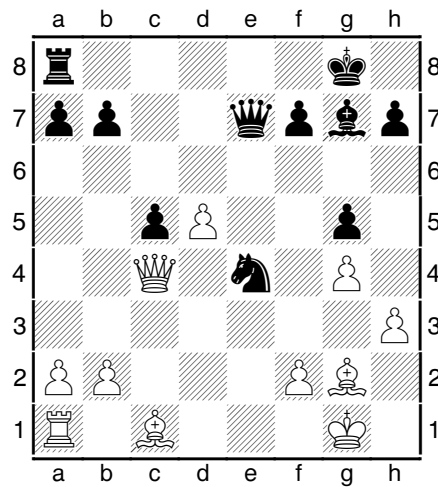


1. Black to move



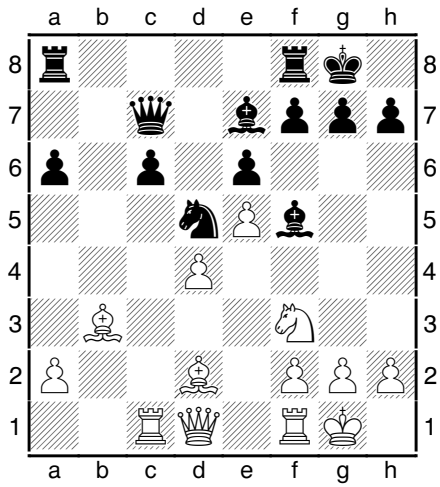
2. White to move

Complicate Position

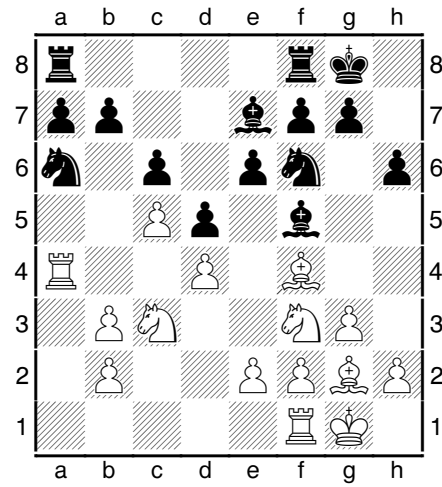


3. Black to move

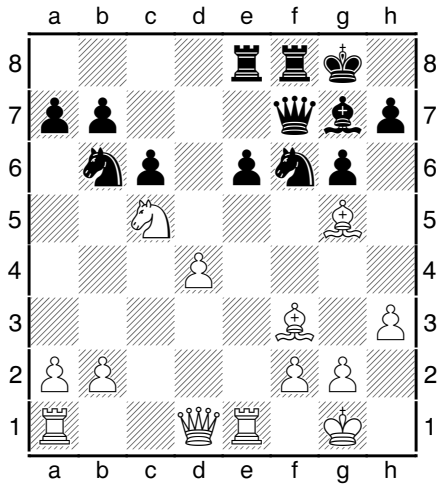
Positional Exercises



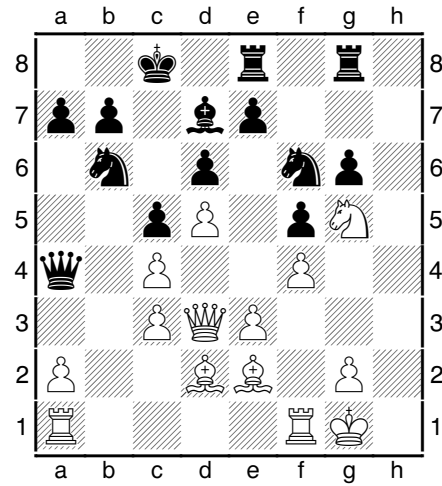
1. White to move



2. Black to move



3. White to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 10 / Set IV

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Find a way to fix Black's weaknesses.

Position 2

- a) Black has to defend. So, you need to discover which is White's plan and how it can be stopped.

Position 3

- a) It is better when pieces are acting together against a weakness. Which white piece can do more?

Position 4

- a) Black's position is superior. How can he start the active operations?

Solutions Set IV

Tactics 1

1...Rd2+ 2.Nxd2 Nd4+ 3.Ke1 Nc2#

Tactics 2

(Position from Hort V – Byrne R, 1962)

If White manages to attack Black's f6-knight, he wins because of the checkmate on h7. 1.h5 is not good because of 1...Nh5 so it remains Nc3-d5 if the c6-pawn was not there. So: **1.Nxc6!! Nxd3+ [1...Nxc6 2.Nd5] 2.Kd2 1-0**

Tactics 3

(Position from Itkis B, 2455 – Popovic P, 2525,1994)

25...Nxf2!

Black drives out the white king in the center. Black will attack with 3 pieces of long-ray of action (queen, rook and bishop) while White has not any defending specialized piece (the knight). Moreover, White cannot defend on dark-squares which are very weak and the queen is out of play.

26.d6

an important intermediary move that you had to consider as candidate move for White! [26.Kxf2 Bd4+ 27.Kg3 (27.Kf1 or Kf3 27... 27...Re8! followed by Qf6) 27...Qe5+! (27...Qe1+ is not good because of 28.Kh2 and if 28... 28...Be5+ 29.Bf4! Bxf4+ 30.Qxf4 unclear) 28.Kf3 Re8!+-]

26...Qxd6

[26...Qe1+ 27.Qf1 Qxf1+ 28.Kxf1 Nd3 29.Bxg5÷]

27.Kxf2

[27.Bxg5 Nxh3+! (Also very strong are: 27...Bd4 ; and 27...Qg3) 28.Bxh3 Qg3+ 29.Bg2 Bd4+ 30.Kh1 Qxg4-+]

27...Bd4+ 28.Kf3

[28.Kf1 Re8 and Qf6; 28.Ke2 Re8+ 29.Kd2 Bxb2+-+]

28...Qf6+ [28...Re8 was also good]

29.Ke4 Re8+ 30.Kd3 Qf2!-+ and White's king is trapped in the middle without any chance to escape. For example: 31.Qc2 Qg3+ 32.Kc4 [32.Kd2 Qe3+ 33.Kd1 Qe1#] 32...b5+ 33.Kxb5 Rb8+ 34.Kc4 Rb4+ 35.Kd5 Qe5+ 36.Kc6 Rb6+ 37.Kd7 Qd6+ 38.Kc8 Rb8#

Problem 1

(Position from: Shirov A, 2720 – Hracek Z, 2615, Ostrava, 1998)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: The influence in the center is balanced. However, White has a better pawn structure and, moreover, Black has a weak pawn on c6. White has also more space.
 - Pieces: Black knight is better placed than the white one. On the other hand, the black queen is misplaced being on the same file with the white rook.
- White is slightly better especially due to the pawn structure.

What does Black want?

His long term plan will certainly be connected with c6-c5 advance in order to get rid of his weak pawn. It's not possible 1...c5 now because after 2.dxc5 or 2.Bxd5 followed by 3.dxc5 Black will simply lose a pawn. Therefore, he wants to place his rooks on d8 and c8 followed then by c6-c5. White will be unable to stop this advance if Black manages to get this setup.

What we have to do / Planning

In order to hope for an advantage White has to act quickly. The first move that may come in our mind is 1.Ba4 with immediate pressure against c6 pawn. However after 1...c5! 2.dxc5-Bxc5 it is hard to see how White can take an advantage from the pin on the c-file. So this will give White nothing.

In order to maintain his advantage, White has to prevent the c6-c5 advance. He also has to find better placements for his minor pieces (especially the knight).

There is a simple and direct way to solve this problem: **1.Bxd5!** followed by Qa4 and Bb4. After this sequence he removes the strong black knight, trades the dark square bishops, vacates the d2-square in order to bring the knight on c5 via d2-b3 and, more important, Black's c6-c5 advance will be out of question.

Calculation

1.Bxd5! Of course, the brilliant Spanish grandmaster managed to find the right answer **1...-exd5 2.Qa4-Rfc8 3.Bb4-Bd8**

After 3...-Bxb4 4.Qxb4-Rb8 it may look, at first sight, that Black has an active position. But after the quiet 5.Qc3! followed by Nd2-b3-c5 the weakness of dark squares will tell. **4.Rc3!** Black kept the bishop in order to cover some of his weakened dark squares. White's last move is a multi purpose one. First, White is ready to increase his pressure on the c-file by Rfc1. In the same time, he covers the d3-square not allowing to Black's light square bishop to come on the queenside. Now his advantage is indisputable.

Problem 2

(Position from: Grinshpun E, 2380 – Kundin A, 2425, Givataim, 1998)

Positional evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: The position is blocked and Black has a better pawn structure (White has double pawns on the b-file). This is fully compensated by White's local space advantage on the queenside and his pressure on the a-file.

- White has better placed pieces.

We can say that White has better prospects.

What does White want?

White wants to play 1.Rfa1 followed by b4-b5 after which he repairs his pawn structure and spoils Black's one. After this, his advantage on the queenside will become clear and a long term one.

What we have to do / Planning

First we have to see that Black has to take defensive measures against White's plan. There is no possibility for active play now: For example: 1...- Bc2? 2.Rc1!-Bxb3 3.Ra3-Bc4 4.b3-Bb5 5.Nxb5-cxb5 6.Ra5 and White recovers his pawn increasing his advantage (he won the pair of bishops and got a better pawn structure). It is not possible 6...-b4?? 7.c6 winning at once.

If Black is able to defend against opponent's plan, his position can be only better (White will have nothing to compensate his worse pawn structure).

There's an easy way to accomplish this: all he has to do is to play 1...Nc7 followed by a7-a6. After this, any pressure on a-file or the b4-b5 advance is history. This is not possible at once because White's dark-square bishop covers the c7-square. So, in order to accomplish his plan, Black has to drive the white bishop away.

Calculation:

1...-g5! 2.Be3

White cannot keep his bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal: 2.Be5?-Ne8! in order to cover the d6-square. Now there is no good defense against 3...-f6.

2...-Nc7! followed by 3...a6 and Black solved his problems on the queenside.

After this, he can concentrate his efforts in the center and kingside.

In the game Black didn't cope with his task and after 1...-g5! 2.Be3-Nd7? 3.Rfa1! White got a huge advantage.

As you can see a good move has no importance if the idea behind is a wrong one!

Problem 3

(Position from: Rowson J, 2490 – Motwani P, 2465, Edinburgh, 1999)

Positional evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: White has a better pawn structure and more space in the center (the isolated d4-pawn is better than the isolated and backward Black's e6-pawn).
 - Pieces: White has the pair of bishops. Still, Black is better developed and a stable square on d5 for his knights.
- Overall, White is better.

What does Black want?

If Black manages to play 1...-Nfd5 followed by e6-e5, he will have no reason to fear. His pieces will come to life and, in the same time, his pawn structure will be improved. White will also have difficulties in defending his queenside because of the power of g7-bishop.

What we have to do / Planning

In order to maintain his advantage White has to stop the e6-e5 advance making the e6-pawn a long-term weakness. This will allow him to increase the pressure against Black's position by doubling the rooks on the e-file.

White can block the e6-pawn with the knight maneuver Nc5-d3-e5. But the white knight is already well placed on c5 creating pressure against that weakness. Also, the knight can be used to attack another weak square: d6 (Nc5-e4-d6).

Another minor piece which can block the black pawn is the dark-square bishop which does almost nothing on g5. So, the idea is to bring the bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal which can be achieved in two ways: by placing the bishop directly on this diagonal by 1.Bf4 or by playing 1.Bh4 followed by 2.Bg3.

In order to decide which is best an exact calculation is required.

Calculation:

1.Bh4! The most restrictive move.

1Bf4 is also a good move but not the best one.

After 1...-Nc8! Black covers the d6-square threatening 2...-Nd7 in order to trade some pieces (in a cramped position, trading pieces releases the tension). 2.Bg3-b6 3.Nd3-Nd5 4.Ne5-Be5 5.Be5 and although White is clearly better, it is not so easy to improve his position. Black will play Qd7-Nd6(e7)-Nf5 improving his position.

1...-Nbd5

1...-Nc8? 2.Qb3-Nd5 3.Bg4 and Black is lost;

1...-Nh5 2.Ne4! threatening Nd6 with huge advantage;

1...-Nfd5 2.Bg3-e5 (the best way to defend against Bd6 or Bg4) 3.dxe5 and Black has nothing for the pawn (this was actually played in the game).

2.Bg3 White accomplished his task without allowing Black to coordinate his pieces like after 1.Bf4

2...- b6 3.Nd3 now Black is not able to put any pressure on the long diagonal and he is doomed to passivity.

Problem 4

(Position from: Sosko M, 2438 – Shabalov A, 2566, MK Café Cup, 1999)

Positional evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: Black has a better pawn structure. White's weak c4-pawn needs constant defense.

- Pieces: Black has only good minor pieces: 2 knights and a good bishop. White's pair of bishops is at no importance (the dark square bishop is almost a pawn). Apart from the g5-knight, all white pieces have only defensive prospects.

Black has a large advantage.

What does White want?

It is hard for White to think at any activity in this position.

The only try is doomed to failure: 1.e4?-Ne4 2.Ne4-fe4 3.Qe4-Bf5 and the c4-pawn falls. All White can do is to wait.

What we have to do / Planning

Black pieces are already in excellent positions but his problem is the closed character of the game. This restricts his pieces especially the rooks, so the answer has to be the opening of position by playing 1...-e6!. After this, Black will get the possibility to attack new weaknesses in White's position beside only c4.

In order to play e7-e6, the d6-pawn has to be defended. Therefore the right move is **1...Kc7!**

Calculation

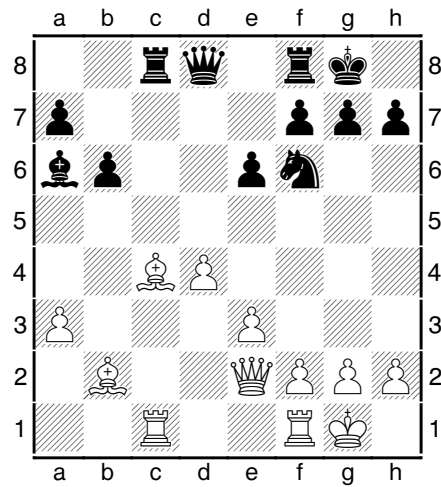
1....-Kc7! 2.Rd1 (the move played in the game, but it is hard to give White any other advice). **2...- e6! 3.Be1** (3.de6-Be6 4.Be1-Qd7 5.Ne6-Qe6 6.Bf2-Ne4 or 6...-Rh8 in order to double the rooks on the h-file.)

a) **3...- Nbd5** picking up the fruits of his strategy with a completely winning position.

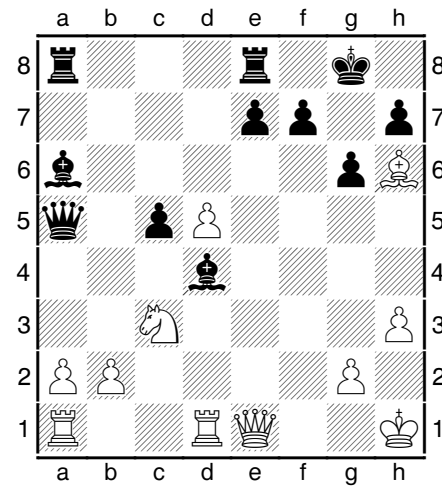
In the game, Black preferred a dominating strategy: b) **3...-Ne4 4.c4-Ng5 5.fg5-Re4** also with a huge advantage.

Exercises Month 10 / Set V

Simple Tactics

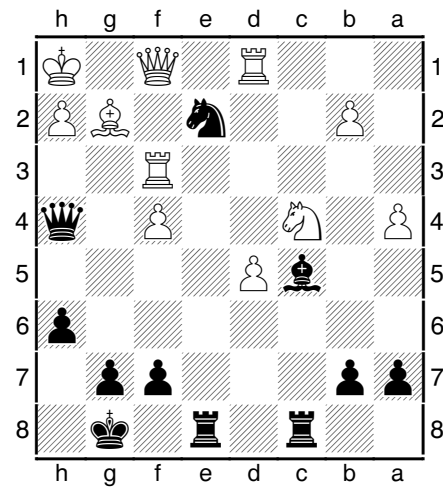


1. Black to move



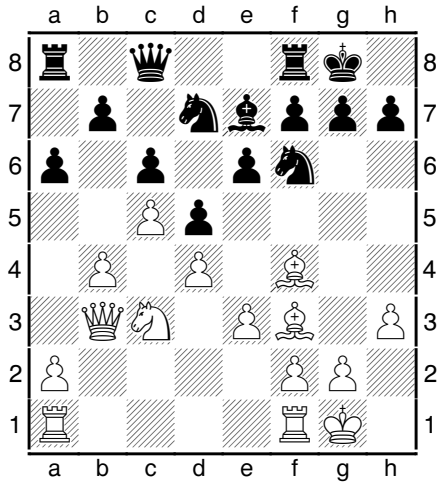
2. White to move

Complicate Position

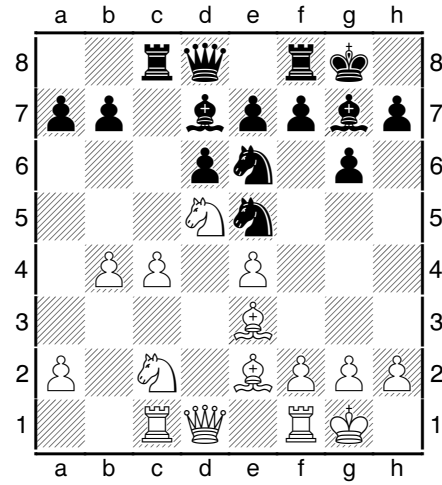


3. Black to move

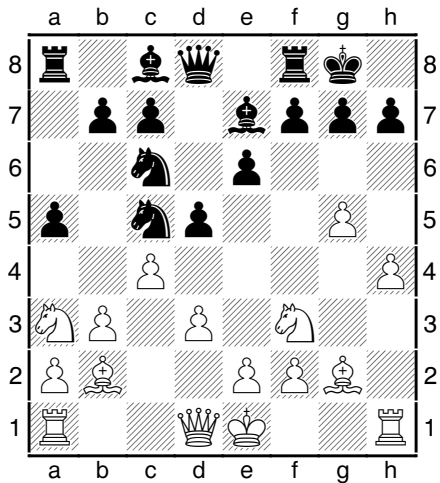
Positional Exercises



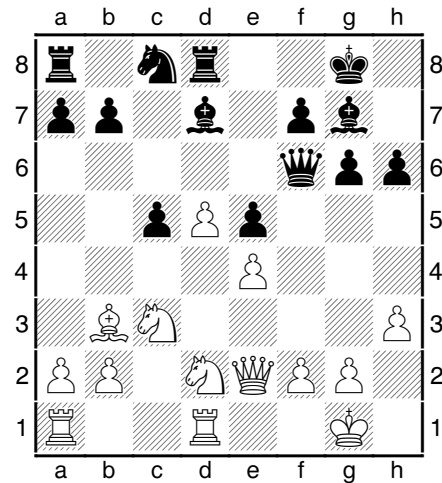
1. Black to move



2. White to move



3. Black to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 10 / Set V

Tactics

None of the 3 positions are easy. At the first 2 positions, the opponent has some possible defenses that you need to consider.

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) There are blocked pawn chains. Which of White's bishops is the „bad” one? How good or bad is Black's bishop?
- b) Black needs some counter-play. Where?

Position 2

- a) What does Black immediately threaten?
- b) You can find the best move by eliminating the other possibilities.

Position 3

- Please allow to give no hint here.

Position 4

- a) Think at long term advantage/s.

Solutions Set V

Tactics section for this set was a bit tricky because, maybe against your expectations, no position was easy (who can assure you during a game that the position is easy?).

In the first position, White has an excellent defense which can save the game. In the second position Black has 2 defenses against the “obvious” White’s attacks and, finally, the “complicate” position was not a winning position anymore.

These tricks help you! During a real game, when much more factors acts against you, your task will be much more complicate than during your home-preparation. So, your home-preparation should not be easy and, remember: chess is the same for all.

Tactics 1

Black takes advantage of the pin on a6-f1 diagonal. The pin is one of the most important sources of tactical strikes. Here, Black sacrifices the exchange 1...Rxc4 but wants to win back a whole rook by the maneuver Nf6-e4-d6:

1...Rxc4!! 2.Rxc4 Ne4! 3.d5!!

A unique move which saves White. Any other reply leads to material loss:

a) 3.Qc2 Bxc4 4.Qxc4 Nd2-+

b) 3.Rfc1 Nd6-+

After 3.d5, White opens the b2-bishop and by Qg4 wins a tempo (threatening Qxg7#) getting his queen out from the pin.

3...exd5 4.Qg4 g6 5.Rc6 Bxf1 6.Kxf1 Qe8 Black is a pawn up and has a strong knight on e4. However, White has some compensation for the pawn because of the weak dark-squares on the kingside, so the game remains open.

Tactics 2

1.Rxd4!! cxd4 2.Qe5 f6 we hope you saw this simple defense... and the continuation of White’s attacking plan:

3.Qe6+ Kh8 4.Qf7 Rg8 5.Re1!

White’s idea is to destroy the e7-pawn and then to attack on f6. Directly 5.Qxe7? is not good because Qd8! And Black wins

5...Rae8 6.Rxe7 Rxe7 7.Qxe7 Qd8 [7...Qb6 8.d6+-] **8.Bg7+!!**

Tactics 3

Here it is no clear way to winning.

Black attacks on the kingside with the advantage of opposite colored bishops and this advantage is a long term one. However, White’s free d-pawn hinders Black’s play who

has to watch d5-d6-d7. Therefore Black's best plan is to postpone immediate actions and rearrange his pieces first in order to cut out any White's possible counter-play.

27...Nd4! the knight is heading to f5, a much better position. In all the following variations, Black obtains/remains with a clear advantage.

a) 28.Rc3 Rcd8 29.Ne5 Nf5 30.Rh3 Qf6

b) 28.Rh3 Qf6 29.Ne5 Nf5;

c) 28.Rfd3 Nf5 (with more threats, e.g. 29...Be3) 29.Bh3 Bf2;

In the game Black was not able to keep his calm and tried to force the events:

27...Bf2?! 28.Qxf2 [28.Rh3 Qxf4 29.Rf3 Qh4] **28...Qxf2 29.Rxf2 Rxc4 30.d6?!**

White didn't find the correct answer which was: 30.Rxe2! Rxe2 31.Bf1 Rec2 32.Bxc4 Rxc4 33.d6 Rc8 with a probable draw.

30...Nxf4 31.Bxb7 Rd4! 32.Rdf1 g5 33.d7 Re6 34.Bc8 Red6 and Black has the initiative.

Problem 1

(Position from: Kramnik V, 2710 – Shirov A, 2705, Linares, 1994)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a blocked position. White has the pair of bishops and space advantage on the queenside. No one has weaknesses. White is slightly better.

What does White want?

White's plan is easy to be anticipated: he will simply advance his queenside pawns in order to open the game where he has local space superiority. Then, he will enter b7 trading the queens. The resulted endgame will surely be in his favor especially because of Black's lack of counter play.

What we have to do / Planning

In order to oppose something against White's plan, Black has to find some active play of his own, otherwise he is doomed to lose. It's clear that nothing can be achieved on the kingside. Trying something on queenside will suit only White's plan. So, it remains the center and the only idea to obtain something here is the e6-e5 advance, which for now it's not possible.

First I would like to draw your attention to some important aspect that can be used in many positions. Generally speaking, from a dogmatic point of view, trading dark-squares bishops will be in White's favor. After all, White's dark square bishop is a "bad" one (the blocked pawns are on dark squares). Although this is right, it is important to look to his activity and role. In fact, White's dark square bishop is the most annoying pieces. We can

speak about a bad bishop mainly when it is closed behind his pawns (not in front of them) and in the endgame.

So, looking to dark squares bishops, it is clear that Black's bishop is bad because it lacks any activity. In order to release the pressure on the queenside and to advance his e-pawn, Black has to trade the dark square bishops.

Calculation

1....-Bd8! with the idea Bc7 and e5

2.a4 2.Bd6 is not dangerous because after 2...-Re8 followed by Bc7, White has to trade the bishops on c7 (if he remains on d6, then after Bxd6 followed by e5 and Re6 White will lose his d6 pawn)

2....-Bc7 (2...-Re8! 3.b5-Ba5! Shirov)

3.Bg5 3.b5-Bxf4 4.exf4-axb5 5.axb5-Rxa1 6.Rxa1-b6 and after trading the queenside pawns, the game is equal.

3...-h6 4.Bxf6-Nxf6 5.b5-e5 and although White is slightly better, Black has some counter-play.

Problem 2

(Position from: Ananchenko I, 2290 – Tseshkovsky V, 2510, Krasnodar, 1997)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a Maroczy type of structure. White has better control over the center and a huge space advantage. Moreover, the black pieces are on less stable squares.

We can say that White has a big advantage. In fact, the only thing that makes Black's position playable is the lack of weaknesses.

What does Black want?

He threatens the c4-pawn. However that's all; he can only wait and try to parry White's future actions. Trying active moves like 1...-f5 will only create weaknesses. The big difference between the "normal" Maroczy structure and this position is that here Black didn't manage to get a stable square on c5.

What we have to do / Planning

White's task is quite simple: he has to protect the c4-pawn.

It would be a huge mistake to play 1.Bxa7?. After 1...-Nxc4, Black gets some counter-play out of nothing. Nothing is achieved by 2.Bxc4-Rxc4 3.Bb6-Qe8.

So, White has to move his c2-knight, but where?

The worse decision is on d4. **When you have a cramped positions try to trade pieces.** So 1.Nd4 will only favors Black.

On a3 is also not good because it is the end of line; there are no good squares to go from there.

So, we are left with 2 squares: a1 and e1. How we decide where?

Actually, it is not so difficult. In order to decide is important to find where the white knight has more chances to improve his position. Almost all white pieces are “looking” on queenside and there White has also space advantage. So, the knight should remain on the queenside.

Calculation

1.Na1! followed by 2.Nb3. There is no need to calculate further. The next course of the game will be determined by your opponent’s moves.

Problem 3

(Position from: Kharlov A, 2555 – Kharitonov A, 2520, Kstovo, 1997)

Positional Evaluation

Black has a better position: His pieces are better placed, on central squares with stronger influence over the center. White’s pieces are not coordinated and, moreover, it is no easy for him to get a safe place for his king, mainly because of the kingside advanced pawns.

What does White want?

For sure, White’s first move will be 1.Nc2. Although there is no real threat with this move, its preventive nature should not be underestimated. After this, Black will not be able to advance his central pawns in order to gain space and White can try something like Qd2, Qf4, h5, h6 weakening Black’s castle.

What we have to do / Planning

Black’s main task is to get all his pieces in the game (the continuation of the development), meaning the development of the light square bishop. At this moment, Black’s central pawn structure doesn’t allow this, so, the solution should be the advance of the central pawns.

After 1...-**d4!** Black gets a lot of advantages: he is gaining spaces in the center, will be able to develop his light square bishop (after e6-e5), and he also blocks White’s dark square bishop.

The closing of the Black’s dark square bishop will be less important because this can be activated on the kingside sooner or later after the f7-f6 breakthrough.

Calculation

1...-d4 2.Nc2

2.Nb5-e5 3.Nd2-Nb4! (threatening Nd3) followed by c6

2....e5 3.Nd2-Bf5 Black increased his advantage. He will play f7-f6 opening the game after which all his pieces will be active. For White it is difficult to defend against Black's pressure on the f-file and on the kingside.

Problem 4

(Position from: Anastasian A, 2575 – Pelletier Y, 2470, EU-ch, 1997)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: The position is blocked with balanced influence over the center. White has a strong passed pawn on d5, although for the moment this is blocked.

Pieces: White has a "bad" light square bishop; Black has the pair of bishops but in blocked positions this factor has less importance. Black's dark square bishop is also a "bad" one.

We can say that White has the better position.

What does Black want?

He will play 1...-Nd6 (threatening 2...-b5) trying to grab space on the queenside. For White it is not possible to oppose a real plan to get an advantage.

a) If he is playing 2.Nc4-Nb5! (threatening Nd4) 3.Nb5-Bb5 4.a4-Bc4 5.Bc4-Bf8 followed by Bd6 and, in this position with opposite color bishops, White's advantage is just symbolic.

b) After 2.Ba4-Bc8! White remains with his "bad" bishop.

c) If 2.a4-Bf8 3.Nc4-Bc4 4.Bc4-Bd6 Black has no real problems.

What we have to do / Planning

White has to use his turn in order to make something useful. He can't stop Black for placing his knight on d6 and therefore he has to identify another way of improving his position.

Trading light square bishops would be clearly in White's favor which can be done now by **1.Ba4!** and Black cannot avoid this trade. The idea behind this trade is a long term advantage that White gains. Black will surely play Nd6. In order to make any progress white has to trade the knight, so, in due course, the game will be "good" knight against "bad" bishop, instead of opposite color bishops (that has a great tendency for draw).

As you can see the time factor has a great importance. Here the character of the position is given by whose turn is. If White moves he can increase his advantage but if Black is to move, he is able to avoid the trade of light-squares bishops.

Calculation

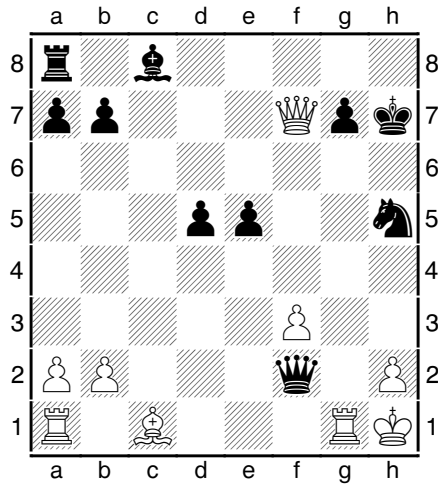
1.Ba4!-Rb8 (the move played in the game) 1...-Ba4 2.Na4-b6 3.Nc3-Nd6 4.a4 followed by Nc4 in order to get the position we already discussed.

2.Bd7-Rd7 3.a4 now White's advantage is a long term one. Black has no real chance to get activity. If **3...-Qa6 4.Nb5!-Nd6 5.Nc4-Nb5 6.ab5-Qb5 7.Ra7** with huge advantage. Note that 4.Qxa6 would be a mistake. After 4...-bxa6 although Black's structure is ruined, he has activated his pieces and has targets for attack.

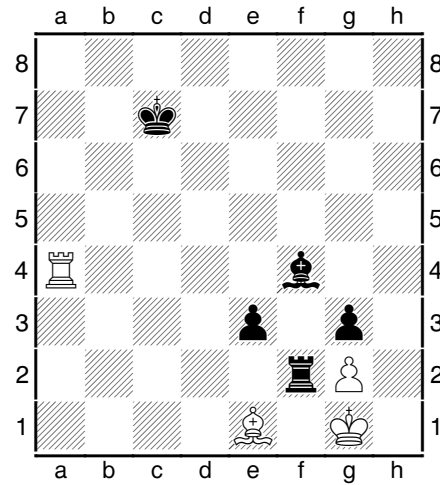
Whenever possible, try to keep your opponent out of active possibilities.

Exercises Month 10 / Set VI

Simple Tactics

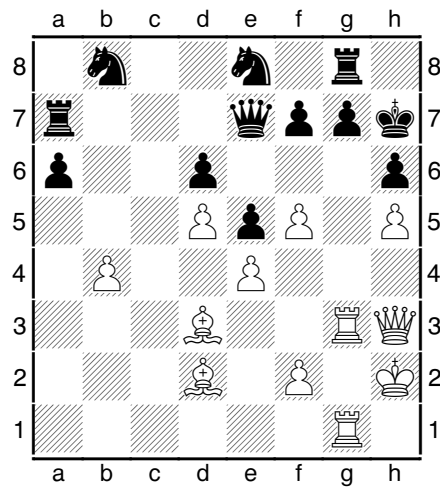


1. Black to move



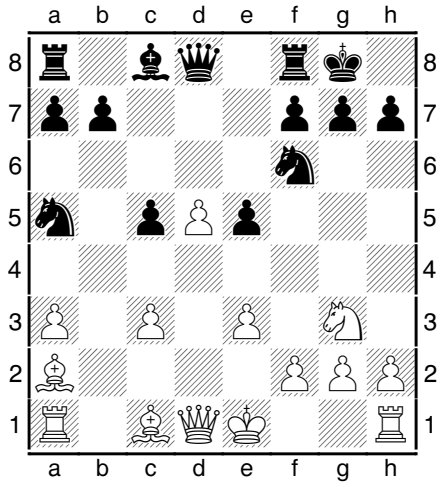
2. Black to move

Complicate Position

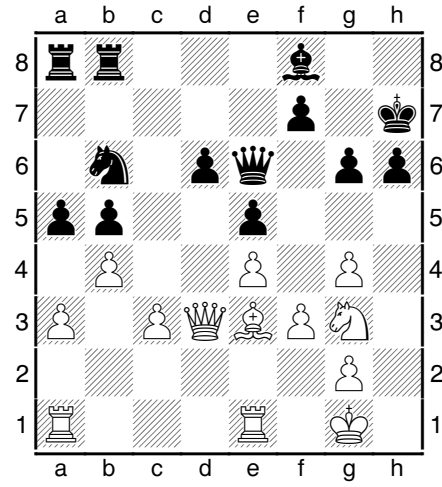


3. White to move

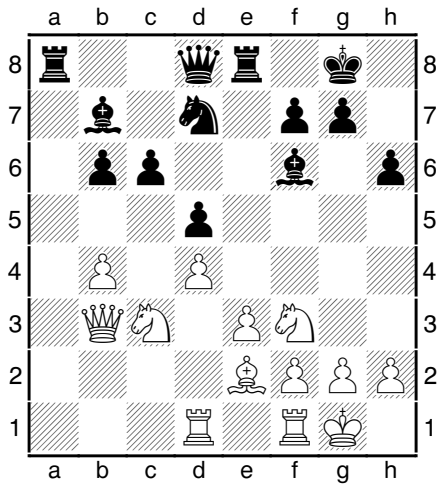
Positional Exercises



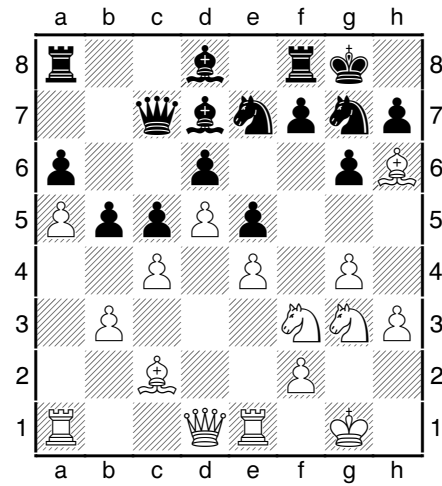
1. Black to move



2. White to move



3. Black to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 10 / Set VI

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Which is the best piece to block an opponent free pawn?
- b) White has the pair of bishops but the position is blocked. How can White try to open the game for his 2 bishops? (and... of course, what should Black do against that?)

Position 2

- a) Where should White play for an advantage?

Position 3

- a) It is a Carlsbad structure with White using the minority attack against which Black has a typical defense.

Position 4

- a) Black should prepare the typical f7-f5 advance.

Solutions Set VI

Tactics 1

1...Bg4! 2.fxg4 [2.Rxg4 Qf1+ 3.Rg1 Ng3+! 4.hxg3 Qh3#] 2...Qxf7 -+

Tactics 2

1...e2! 2.Bxf2 [2.Ba5+ Kc6 3.Ra1 Be3!; 2.Rxf4 Rxf4 3.Bxg3 Kc6] 2...Be3!! -+

Tactics 3

White wins by a relatively simple combination. It is simple because once the attack begins, Black is forced to almost unique moves.

When the defender has no good candidate moves, the combination is called “linear”.

1.Bxh6! Kxh6 2.Rg6+ Kh7 3.h6! fxg6 4.Rxg6! and Black has no escape. For example:
4...Rf8 5.hxg7+ Kg8 6.Qh8+ Kf7 7.g8Q+ Rxg8 8.Qxg8#

Problem 1

(Position from: Milov V, 2580 – Psakhis L, 2625, Haifa, 1995)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: The position is almost blocked. White has a slightly better pawn structure because of his passed pawn and more pawns in the center. In the future, this can be an important factor. There are no weaknesses on either side.

- Pieces: White has the pair of bishops, but the position is blocked. Now, there is a “bad” dark square bishop. If White will advance his c- and e- pawns there will be a “bad” light square bishop.

Black’s pieces have better prospects. He has a “good” light square bishop, and although his a5-knight is temporarily passive his “status” can be improved easily.

We can say that is a balanced position. Black has better pieces to oppose White’s better structure (and his passed pawn).

What does White want?

For sure White will be happy to open the game. This is not possible right now but it makes part from his plan. If the game is opened, White’s pair of bishops will be an important factor and combined with better pawn structure it will offer him an important advantage.

In order to achieve this plan, after castling, White will play e3-e4! and f2-f4! to open the game. White's pressure against e5 is increased because Black doesn't have his dark-square bishop (generally, it is better to put pressure on squares where the opponent misses his bishop).

What we have to do

Black has two major possibilities at his disposal:

- a) To stop at once White's plan by playing 1...-e4 which will limit White's dark squares bishop, or
- b) To activate his misplaced knight from a5. The second plan can be achieved in two ways: b1) 1...-b6 followed by Nb7-d6 and the knight is well placed or b2) to activate the knight using c4 which can be done by controlling the c4-square by Ne8-d6 and Bd7-b5 or b6-Ba6.

To make the right decision an accurate calculation is necessary and opponent plans also have to be taken into account. Every possibility will be discussed on calculation section:

Calculation

a) 1...-e4?! From a general point of view, this is a good move. It gains space in the center and hinders White's plans of opening the position. On the other hand, after **2.c4-b6 3.Bb2-Re8 4.Qc2-Nb7 5.00-Nd6 8.Rae1** White will still open the game by 9.f3. His dark square bishop is not closed and his light square bishop will be opened soon.

b1) 1...-b6 2.c4! Otherwise Black successfully plays 2...-Ba6 followed by Bc4 or Nc4 with excellent game.

b1.1) 2...-Ba6 3.Qc2-Ne8 4.Bd2 at one tempo White manages to restrict Black's control over c4. **4...-Nd6 5.Ba5-ba5** and Black's ruined pawns structure doesn't compensate the disappearance of White's dark square bishop.

b1.2) 2...-Nb7 3.e4-Nd6 4.Qc2-Bd7 Now all pieces are on good squares but, yet, it is hard to find a decent active plan to oppose White's f4 advance. The position is very solid but the lack of active possibilities makes it undesirable.

b2) 1...-Ne8! the right decision (also made by Psakhis in the game). The knight is heading to d6 in order to block the d5-pawn (the best blocking piece is the knight). From d6, the knight also controls the c4-square. This is the only plan that keeps an eye on White's plan. Black is prepared to meet f4 with f6 in order to keep the position closed. **2.e4-Nd6 3.00-f6! 4.f4-Bd7** Black has mobilized all his forces and is ready for active play on the queenside.

Observe that Black's best idea creates an excellent collaboration between his pieces (and pawns): the f6-knight is brought to d6, clearing the f6-square for the pawn (anticipating White's plan) and supporting Na5-c4.

By making the right decision, Black was able to maintain the balance.

Problem 2

(Position from: Hracek Z, 2595 – Almasi Z, 2590, Odorheiu Secuiesc, 1995)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: The influence over the center and the pawn structure is balanced. White has a weak pawn on c3 and a weak square on c4; Black on d6 and d5. White's double pawns on the g-file is actually an advantage (the g2-pawn protects the king and the f3-pawn, while g4 restricts Black's f7-f5 breakthrough).
- Pieces: Black has a long-term "bad" bishop on f8. White is slightly better.

What does Black want?

In order to hope for better days, Black has to play 1...-Nc4 immediately by which he would obtain some activity on the queenside and also protecting the d6-pawn freeing his dark square bishop. Then, the bishop can be traded via Bf8-e7-g5 as White's bishop has no better square than on e3.

What we have to do

First, White has to check if he can grab the undefended b5-pawn. After 1.Qxb5-Nc4 2.Qc6-axb4 3.cxb4-Rxa3 White remains with a major weakness on b4 and has to be careful in order to maintain the balance.

White has to play on the queenside in order to hope for an advantage. Here he has a pawn majority and can get a passed pawn after c3-c4.

In order to increase his influence on the queenside, White has a simple solution: after **1.Bxb6!-Rxb6 2.Nf1** heading to d5 via e3, the character of the position has been dramatically changed. Black's bishop will remain a permanent "bad" one, while White will get a dominant knight on d5. We can say that White's advantage is a decisive one. There is no way for Black to oppose something against White's plan on the queenside.

White has to calculate only if he can bring his knight to d5. Only after reaching this square more calculation is needed in order to convert his decisive advantage.

Problem 3

(Position from: Beliavsky A, 2610 – Pigusov E, 2575, Novosibirsk, 1993)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a typical Carlsbad type of structure where White started the minority attack.
 - Pieces: Black's pair of bishops is at no importance (the game is rather closed). The only free file is in Black's hands
- The game is balanced.

What does White want?

White's main threat is 1.b5!. After this, Black's queenside structure will be spoiled (he cannot play 1...c5 because he loses a pawn). Then, Black has nothing to oppose for his bad structure.

What we have to do

Black's main task is to deal with White's threat and he has a typical response in this type of structure (see the lesson on Carlsbad structure).

After **1...b5!** Black stops at once White's threat. He will also cover his long term weakness (c6) by bringing his knight on c4, via b6 and, then, he can undertake some offensive action on the kingside by activating his light squared bishop by Bc8 (c6 no longer needs protection).

Calculation

1...b5! 2.Bd3! the only way for keeping the game tense is the e3-e4 advance. After this, White will attack the c6 pawn, not allowing Black to organize his kingside attack. **2...Nb6 3.e4-Nc4** (3...de4 4.Ne4 followed by Nc5 with advantage) **4.ed5-cd5 5.Nb5-Qb6 6.Nc3-Ra3 7.Qc2-Qb4** with an equal position.

Problem 4

(Position from: Short N, 2645 – Bareev E, 2650, Dortmund, 1995)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: we are dealing with a typical King's Indian structure. Black managed to make more progress than White. On the queenside, there's no way for White to make some progress (at the moment). Beside the fact that White has space advantage on the kingside, it's difficult for him to achieve any progress on this side too.

- Pieces: Black's pieces are a little cramped, but his "bad" dark square bishop has more chances to get in the game than White's light square bishop.

The position is balanced, but Black has more hopes for a better game.

What does White want?

His hopes lie on the kingside and are connected with the f2-f4 advance. Also Black must keep an eye on his queenside in order to stop any attempt of the b3-b4 breakthrough (it is a long shot try).

What we have to do

Black's plan is dictated by the structure. As we already know, in this type of structure, Black's play is connected with the f7-f5 breakthrough.

In this moment, this will be a mistake: after 1...f5?! 2.Bxg7-Kxg7 3.exf5-gxf5 4.Nxf5-Nxf5 5.Bxf5-Bxf5 6.gxf5-Rxf5 7.Nd2! Black will remain with his bad bishop, and White will acquire a beautiful square on e4 for his knight.

So, first, Black has to improve the position of his pieces by a typical maneuver:

Calculation

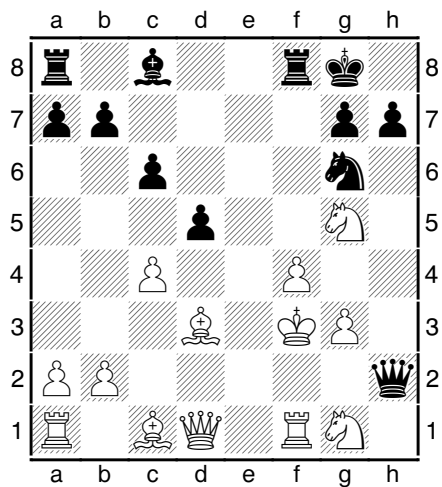
1...Kh8! First Black wants to kick the white bishop out of h6, and also to prepare to fight for the e4 square with Nf6. Generally, in King's Indian structure, Black's main problem is his misplaced knight from e7.

2.Kh2-Ng8 3.Be3-bc4 also possible is 3...b4. In order to start his game on the kingside, first Black has to clear things on the queenside.

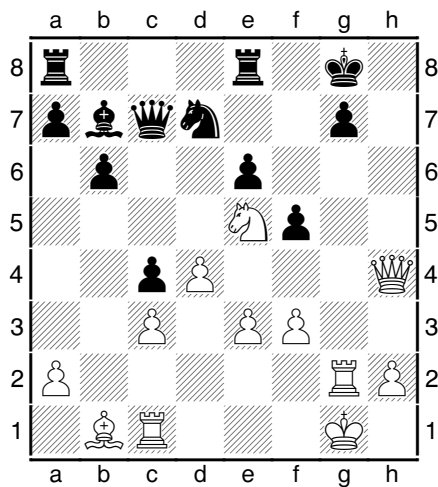
4.bc4-f5 5.ef5-gf5 6.gf5-Nf5 7.Qd3-Bc8 now Black has the initiative. He will be first who can create threats on the kingside (he also can bring quicker his queenside rook on the kingside via a7).

Exercises Month 10 / Set VII

Simple Tactics

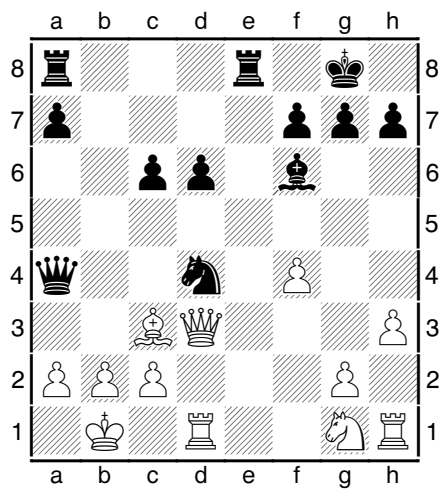


1. Black to move



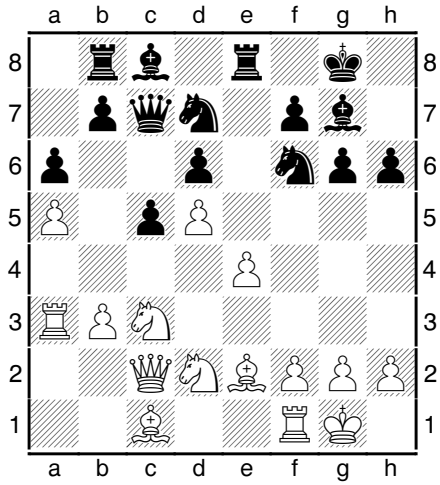
2. White to move

Complicate Position

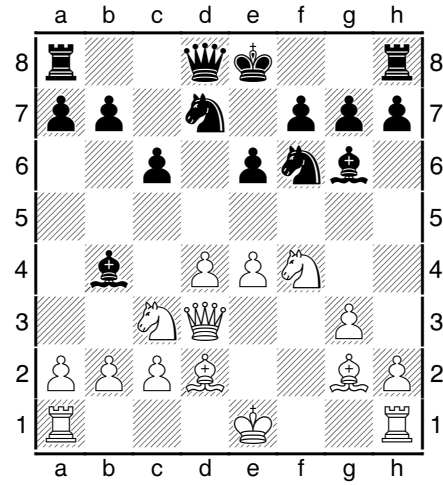


3. Black to move

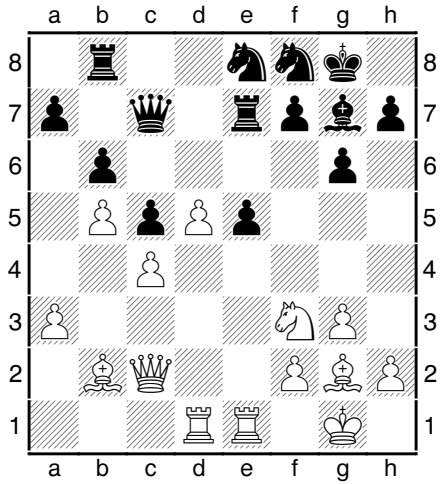
Positional Exercises



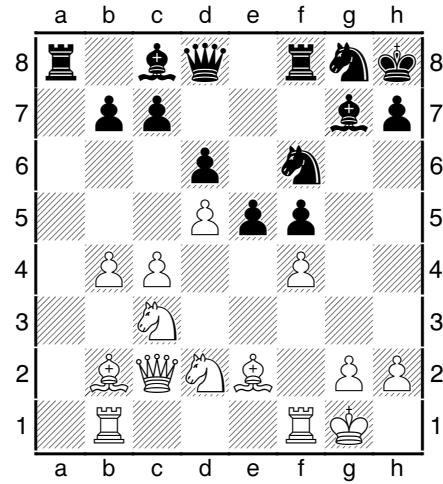
1. Black to move



2. Black to move



3. White to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 10 / Set VII

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Black has a cramped position. What he should do in this situation?

Position 2

- a) There is a weak square in Black's camp that White threatens to occupy.

Position 3

- a) White has the bishop-pair and the position is closed.

Position 4

- a) What Black should NOT do?

Solutions Set VII

Tactics 1

1...Bg4+! 2.Kxg4 Ne5+! 3.fxe5 h5#

Tactics 2

1.Rxg7+! Kxg7 2.Qg3+! putting the queen on the same diagonal with the black queen which is undefended **2...Kf6** [2...Kh7 3.Qg6+ Kh8 4.Nf7#; 2...Kf8 3.Ng6+] **3.Ng4+**

Tactics 3

1...Re3! brings another piece in attack with tempo **2.Qd2** [2.Qxe3 is not possible because of 2...Qxc2+] **2...Rxc3!!** removes the defender of the b2-square **3.Qxc3** [3.bxc3 Rb8+ followed by the nice checkmate 4.Ka1 Qa3 5.Rb1 Qxc3+ 6.Qxc3 Nxc2#] **3...Rb8**

Now, White cannot defend against the X-ray threats on the long diagonal and b-file.

4.Qd3 Rxb2+ [4...Nb5 also wins] 5.Kxb2 Qb4+ 6.Kc1 Ne2+ 7.Nxe2 Bb2+ 8.Kb1 Bc3+ 9.Kc1 Qb2#

Problem 1

(Position from: Bischoff K, 2550 – Luther T, 2550, Altensteig, 1995)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a Benoni Defense structure where White has space advantage. He also has more mobile pawn structure while Black's queenside pawn majority is well blocked. Any Black's attempt on the queenside will only leave him with more weaknesses.

- Pieces: At the moment both sides has one more piece to develop, but given White's space advantage, his task is much easier.

We can say that White has a clear advantage.

What does White want?

White can a) increase his space advantage and complete the development by Nc4, f4, Bd2 and bring his misplaced a3-rook on e1 via a1 or

b) fortify his center by f3 and Be3 followed by a queenside operation: Rb1 and b3-b4.

White can easily gain a winning position if Black won't do anything to disturb these plans.

What we have to do

Black's normal active play would be on the queenside where he has the pawn majority, but, here, his pawns are well blocked. Any attempt of advancing the b-pawn would leave him with weaknesses, so he has to find something on the kingside or center.

In order to reduce the influence of White's space advantage, Black will be more than happy to trade one of his minor pieces (apart from his dark square bishop). Another issue for Black is to activate his light-square bishop.

If Black succeeds to install a knight on e5, this strong position will make White to trade this piece (*Remember: if you want to trade a piece, place it on a good square and the opponent will do it for you*).

However, apparently, the key-square, e5, is not safe for Black because it meets White's plans of playing f2-f4. But this (Nd7-e5) needs to be calculated as it's a very important freeing move for Black. Another possibility is the preparatory move 1...g5.

Calculation:

1...- Ne5! 2.f4 this is the most testing move. After 2.h3-g5!, securing the e5-square, Black has no problems.

2...-Neg4 the only reasonable move **3.Nc4-Nh7** forced, otherwise the g4 knight is trapped: 3...-Nh5? 4.e5-de5 5.f5!-gf5 6.Rf5 and because of his misplaced h5-knight, Black is almost lost.

4.Bg4-Bg4 5.f5! with the deadly threat 6.Bf4 **5...-gf5 5...-Bd4 6.Kh1-gf5 6.Bf4-Bd4 7.Kh1-Rbd8 8.h3-Qe7** with sharp game were Black has his own chances.

1...-g5 2.Nc4-Ne5 3.Ne5-Re5 4.f4-gf4 5.Bf4-Re8 6.Ra2! in order to protect against any tactical trick connected with the c5-c4 advance. Now Black has activated his pieces too, but he has less activity than in the previous variation.

So, both choices are good, but 1...Ne5 directly seems better (although it is more difficult to be calculated).

Problem 2

(Position from: Zuse K, 2335 – Donev I, 2375, Germany, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: White has a slight advantage. He has more space and controls the center (d- and e- pawn phalanx). There is a weak square in Black's camp: d6 which in normal conditions cannot be used by White.

- Pieces: both players are well developed; White can gain the bishop-pair.

What does White want?

White's threat is to increase his space advantage immediately by e4-e5. After 1.Nxg6-hxg6 2.e5!-Nd5 3.Ne4 his advantage becomes larger. Black will be unable to maintain his centralized knight and, moreover, the d6-square will cause him a lot of trouble.

What we have to do

White's positional threat is very serious, so Black cannot allow to enter such a cramped position and, therefore, he has to play a "must" move: e6-e5 to stop e4-e5, to challenge White's center and to try to fix the central pawns (as he will be probably left without the bishop-pair).

When there are no other reasonable ways to play, these kinds of decisions are the easiest to be made.

Calculation:

1...-e5! you have to make this move first and calculate later if it's really good (in order not to change your mind).

Dealing with "must made" moves is easy. If the move doesn't lead to a reasonable position, then, for sure, the mistake was made earlier in the game and now you should play for complicating the game.

2.Nxg6-hxg6 3.d5 3.dxe5-Nxe5 leads to better game for Black. There is no need for White to spoil his pawn structure.

3...-0-0 4.0-0-0 – Qb6 White still has a better game but Black can hope for better times. He was able to maintain the closed character of the game and created some counter-chances on the queenside, especially on the c-file. He is not doomed to passivity.

Problem 3

(Position from: Stoczek J, 2465 – Nedela V, 2445, Turnov, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: White has some space advantage and has better pawn structure due to his passed d-pawn. Yet, this pawn also restricts the light square bishop.

- Pieces: White has the pair of bishops but this is a closed position.

White is slightly better.

What does Black want?

For sure, Black will be very happy to get a setup like: Nd7, Nd6, Re8, Re7, f5. Sooner or later after this, he will be able to advance his e-pawn getting a very good game, while White will remain with a really bad light square bishop.

What we have to do

White has two majors plans connected with this position.

The first idea is to advance his a-pawn in order to open this file and then take it under control with his rooks. However, even if White opens the a-file, it will be not easy to make any progress there.

The second plan is to trade the e- and d- pawns in order to open the center for his bishop-pair. This can be achieved by 1.d6-Nxd6 2.Nxe5.

The white pieces are better placed for the second plan: his rooks are already on the central files and, after trading the central pawns, the g2-bishop will dominate the light squares (including the excellent d5-square).

Calculation:

1.d6-Nd6 2.Ne5-Rbe8 3.f4 it is clear that White's advantage increased. It is hard for Black to find a real plan because he is not able to trade pieces on the e-file.

After **3...-f6 4.Rd6!-Qd6 5.Bd5-Re6 5...-Ne6? 6.Ng6!-hg6 7.Qg6-Kh8 8.Re6-Re6 9.Qh5** winning **5...-Kh8 6.Nf7-Rf7 7.Re8-Re7 8.Ra8!** with huge advantage

6.Nf3 and White's advantage is unquestionable.

These kinds of positions are harder to be well played in real game. There, you have played all the moves to reach this position with a certain pawn structure and your mind is somehow blocked to think inside that pawn structure. When solving problems, you are detached from how the game was played until that moment and therefore your thinking is much more elastic.

Problem 4

(Position from: Gligoric S, 2475 – Pikula D, 2455, Podgorica, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: we are dealing with a classic Kings Indian type of structure. Both players deal with their plans in consistent way: White grabbed space on the queenside and Black advanced his f-pawn.

The position is balanced.

What does White want?

White's plan is very clear as it is connected with this type of structure

For sure, White's next step is to prepare the typical c4-c5 advance. He also can take under control the a-file by 1.Ra1.

What we have to do

In fact, the question for this position should be "What Black should NOT do?"

The tempting e5-e4 advance that creates a strong passed e-pawn would be a huge positional mistake. After this, White will play Nc3-d1-e3 blocking the black pawn with the knight, followed by the typical undermining move: g2-g4. Black will have nothing to oppose against this plan and his pieces will be doomed to passivity (mainly because of his central pawns).

So, Black has to keep the central tension. Another thing we have to think at is to evaluate if White trades the central pawns (fxe5-dxe5). Then, Black will be left with a strong pawn center (in this case, e5-e4 will be possible as the f5-pawn is not blocked).

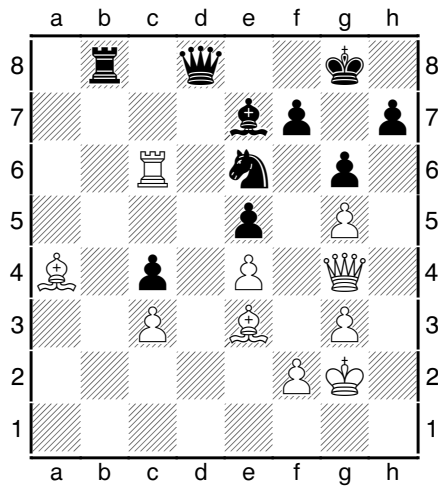
So, in order to get a good game, Black simply has to maintain and increase the central tension and, in the same time, to improve the position of his worst piece (Ng8):

1...-Ne7 followed by Ng6 adding more pressure on the f4-pawn.

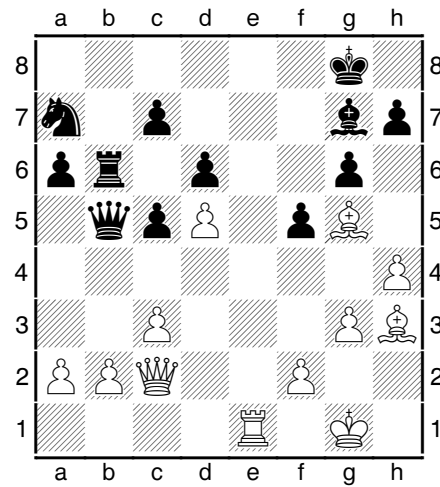
No further calculation is necessary here. After the activation of the black knight, White will have to take a decision: he can fortify his f4-pawn or trade the central pawns.

Exercises Month 10 / Set VIII

Simple Tactics

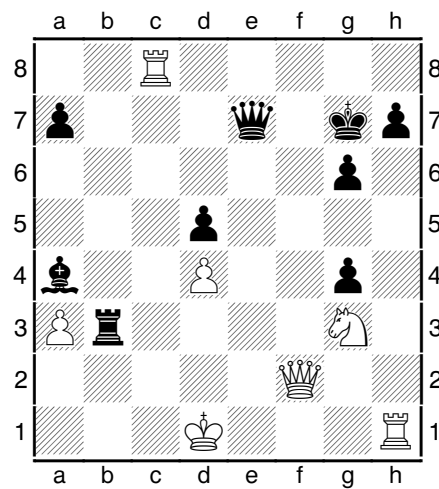


1. White to move



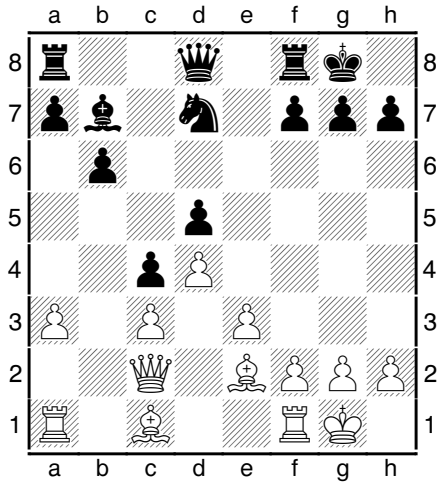
2. White to move

Complicate Position

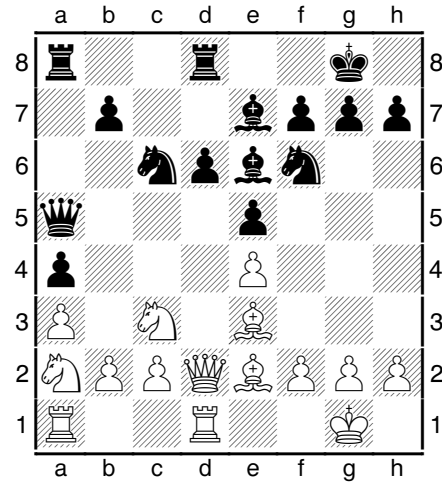


3. White to move

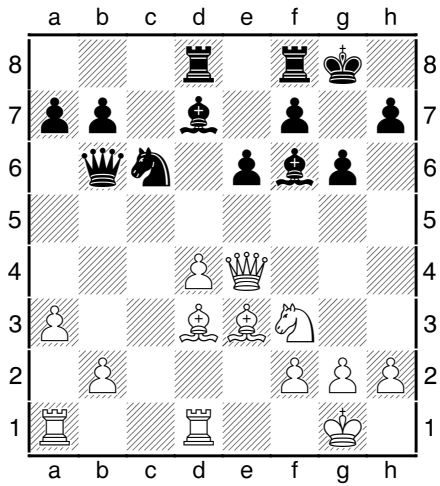
Positional Exercises



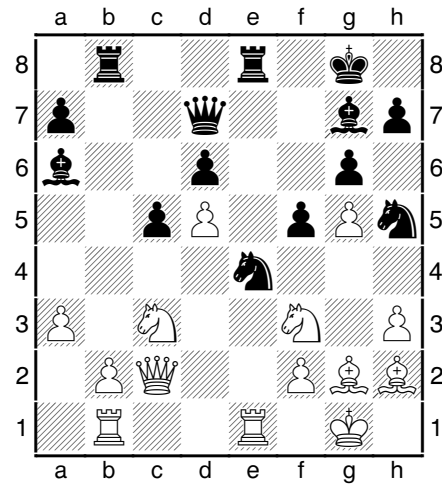
1. Black to move



2. Black to move



3. Black to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 10 / Set VIII

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Does Black want an open position?

Position 2

- a) Should Black play d6-d5?
- b) Which is Black's worst piece?

Position 3

- a) Which is the most important action to be taken against an isolani?

Position 4

- a) Black wants to keep the most active pieces.

Solutions Set VIII

Tactics 1

1.Rxe6! a relatively simple move, but did you see Black's next move?
1...Qc8 pinning the rook [1...fxe6 2.Qxe6+ Kf8 3.Qxe5] **2.Bd7! Qxd7 3.Rxg6+**

Tactics 2

1.Bxf5! gxf5 2.Qxf5 Rb8 3.Re7 Rf8 4.Rxg7+! Kxg7 5.Bh6+ Kxh6 6.Qg5#

Tactics 3

White's king is in danger, but White can save the game by perpetual check:

1.Nf5+!! gxf5 2.Rxh7+! Kxh7 3.Qxf5+ and the black king has no escape from White's queen checks.

3...Kg7 [3...Kh6?? 4.Rh8+ Kg7 5.Rh7+ Kg8 6.Qg6+ Kf8 7.Rh8#] **4.Qxg4+ Kf6 5.Qf4+ Kg7** [5...Ke6 6.Qe5+ Kf7 (6...Kd7?? 7.Rc7+) 7.Qf4+] **6.Qg4+ 1/2**

Problem 1

(Position from: Gelfand B, 2700 – Seirawan Y, 2630, Amsterdam, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a typical Nimzo-Indian structure. White has a slightly better pawn structure because he has a pawn more in the center.

- Pieces: White has the bishop-pair, but, for the moment, the closed character of the game nullifies this advantage. Black has a “bad” bishop but at the moment it is by no means worse than white's one.

White has better prospects (Black is passive but has a solid position).

What does White want?

White surely wants to open the game by e3-e4. Now, his both bishops are passive (the dark-square bishop is restricted by his own pawns and the light square bishop is obstructed by black pawns). Another plan is to advance the a-pawn in order to make some weaknesses on Black's queenside.

What we have to do

First, Black has to determine which of White's plans is more dangerous. The second plan is not so dangerous because White will be unable to take any advantage as long as his bishops are closed.

On the other hand, Black will be in real trouble if White manages to open his bishops, so Black has to stop the first plan.

White can open the position by direct 1.e4 Bxe4 2.Bxc4 or by 1.f3 and 2.e4. Black's only way to keep the position definitely blocked in the center is **1...f5!**.

Now it will be very difficult for White to advance his e-pawn. Even if White succeeds later to advance e3-e4 in the center, Black will be able to trade his "bad" bishop after massive exchanges on e4 and consequently White's bishop-pair will disappear.

Here, there is no need for more calculation.

Problem 2

(Position from: Zapata A, 2505 – Rodriguez Cespedes A, 2485, Capablanca mem, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: this is a typical Sicilian Najdorf structure characterized by Black's d6- and e5- pawns. The backward d6-pawn cannot be successfully attacked by white pieces and, therefore, it is not a pure weakness. In exchange, Black has a good piece dynamic and possibilities of playing on both flanks as the center is well secured by his "Najdorf" pawns. In our position, Black even got some space advantage on the queenside.

Also, it is said that in Sicilian Defense, Black equalizes when he can advance d6-d5 in good conditions and, after a quick checking, it seems that here Black can play 1...-d5.

- Pieces: in this particular position, Black made more progress than White. All black pieces are all well placed, while White didn't achieve anything special by now. Moreover, the a2-knight looks strange.

We can say that Black is slightly better.

What does White want?

At the moment White cannot make any real progress. He will probably play something like 1.f3 followed by Nd5 by which he hopes to gain the pair of bishops (although the closed character of the game will give him little).

What we have to do

As already pointed out, Black can open the game by 1...d5 which theoretically equalizes. However, is that what Black really wants? After 1...d5, massive exchanges will be done in the center and the middlegame tension will be much reduced. This can help only White whose pieces lack harmony. So, Black should look for more.

So, if it is not the time to open up the position, it means that Black should find a way to improve further the position of his pieces. The next question is, of course, which is his

worst piece? This is the dark-square bishop. The bishop can be brought in the game by an excellent multipurpose move: **1...Rd7!**

Black achieves more tasks:

- It clears the way for his e7-bishop to go on b6 via d8. Trading dark-square bishops is clear in Black's favor whose pawns are on light-squares
- It is ready to double the rooks on the d-file after which the d6-d5 advance gains in force
- In the same time, the e7-square will be cleared for Nc6.

Calculation:

1...-Rd7!

1...-d5 2.ed5-Nd5 3.Nd5-Rd5 4.Qa5-Rd1 5.Rd1-Na5 6.Nc3-Rc8 and Black equalized, but also White did. The massive trades gave a clear draw tendency to the game.

2.Bf3-Bd8 3.Nd5-Bd5 4.ed5-Qd2 5.Rd2-Ne7 and Black can hope for better game. It is hard for White to prevent 6...-Nf5 (6.g4-e4) followed by Ne3 and Bb6.

Problem 3

(Position from: Kamsky G, 2735 – Karpov A, 2770, Wch Elista, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a typical “isolated pawn” structure. In the lessons about this type of structure we showed that the evaluation of this kind of position is determined by the condition of the isolated pawn. If Black manages to block the isolated pawn, he is better, but if White can advance his pawn or obtain a kingside attack he will be better.

What does White want?

White threatens to win a piece by 1.Qf4-Bg7 2.d5.

From strategical point of view, White might want to advance d4-d5 or, sooner or later, to start a kingside attack by Ng5 and Qh4.

What we have to do

First move that should be considered is grabbing the b2-pawn. However, this doesn't work because after 1...-Qb2?? 2.Rfb1-Qc3 3.Bd2, White wins.

So, Black has to defend against White's immediate threat but also trying to do something useful for his position. A first priority against the isolani is to block it, preferably with the knight, so **1...Ne7!**. After this move, the d4-d5 advance is history, the c6-square is cleared for the d7-bishop, and Black can improve his position in order to put pressure on the pawn. If White cannot reply to 1...-Ne7 with 2.d5, Black is clearly better. For this reason, only 2.d5 has to be calculated.

Calculation:

1...-Ne7! 2.d5-Qb2 3.Rab1 3.Rfb1-ed5 4.Qf4-Qa1 5.Ra1-Ba1 with huge advantage. **3...-Qa3 4.Rb7-Nd5 5.Ra7-Qd6** and Black is a pawn up. Still, converting the advantage is not so easy because there are few remaining pawns and on the same flank. White 2.d5 is not good, 1..-Ne7! is the best move.

Problem 4

(Position from: Gelfand B, 2700 – Kasparov G, 2795, Novgorod, 1997)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: This kind of position generally arises from Benoni Defense. Concerning the pawn structure, we can say that the situation is balanced.
 - Pieces: The pieces setup clearly favors Black. Except his h5 knight, all pieces are placed on very active squares. On the contrary, White has misplaced pieces (especially his bishops).
- We can say that Black has a clear advantage.

What does White want?

White's only real threat is to win a pawn at once with 1.Nxe4. There is no way for him to improve his bishops' position.

What we have to do

First of all, Black has to defend against White's immediate threat and for this he has 3 candidate moves. One is the tactical blow 1...-Rxb2 and other 2 are: 1...Nxc3 and 1...Bxc3. In order to decide, an accurate calculation is necessary and, at the end of variations, the resulting positions have to be evaluated.

Calculation:

A) 1....-Rb2 this leads by force to a position where Black gains an exchange. **2.Rb2-Bc3 3.Re4-fe4 4.Qc3-ef3 5.Bf3-Qh3 6.Bd6-Be2! 7.Re2-Re2** these moves are the best from either sides. For sure a great tactician like Kasparov dealt with this line very easily. At first glance, Black is easily won. However, things are not so clear after **8.Bc5-Re4 9.Bb4-Rf4 10.Be2-Qc3 11.Bc3** and White's bishops are very dangerous, he has a strong passed pawn, Black's knight is out of game. More important is the psychological factor. From a dominating position, Black has to deal with White's most passive pieces that were transformed in real beasts. For sure, this change of events wasn't desirable for a dynamic player like Kasparov. Why to change the character of the game that flows in your favor in an unclear position?

B) 1...-Nc3 2.bc3 Black keeps his advantage, but is not able to create immediate threats. Moreover, the d6-pawn is less protected which increases the role of the passive h2-bishop.

C) 1...-Bc3! The move played by Kasparov. Black is more interested by pieces' activity than by material gains. His main purpose is to cut White's h2-bishop out of the game. After this, the next moves are forced:

2.bc3-Rb1 3.Rb1-Bc4 4.Nd2-Nd2! Black ignores the pawn and is aiming for his strategic goal: to restrict White's dark-square bishop.

5.Qd2-f4 6.Re1 (6.Bf4??-Qf5 wins) **6...-Re5 7.Re5-de5** and Black has a winning position. In fact we can say that he is a piece up. All he has to do is to bring his misplaced knight back in game via "g7".

From a practical point of view this last move is the best decision. Black still has the initiative, so there are no changes in the character of the game.

Playing Technique

Lesson 1

When looking over annotated games, very often we see phrases like “the rest is a matter of technique“. This *usually* means that one of the players accumulated a long-term advantage that should be now transformed into victory during *the endgame*.

From the beginning of our course, we told what we have to do when our strategical advantage cannot be grown anymore. To clarify this situation: when you have a certain advantage (like for example the opponent has weak pawn structure) and when *you cannot improve anymore the position of your pieces*, it is time for:

- a) an attack against the opponent king, or
- b) simplifications which lead to a technically won endgame. After this, it follows the phase of the game often referred as “the rest is a matter of technique”.

However, in this stage of the game which might be simple for a master, the most un-experimented players lose their advantage. How many of you didn't lose a “technically won position” or, at least, lost the thread of the game in the second part of it? So, your question is probably “How can I improve my playing technique?”

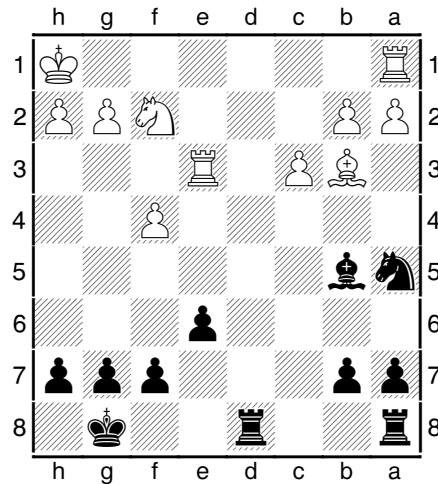
The difference between poor, good, or excellent playing technique is a matter of poor, good, or excellent knowledge of strategy AND knowledge of endgame. This does not mean only theory, but also the *knowledge accumulated from the own experience and from the study of masters' games*.

So, although, the theory *is essential*, the playing technique cannot be improved without:

- playing many games – your own practice and brain challenge is of first importance;
- studying various games. There are many good books annotated by World Champions like Alekhine, Botvinnik, Tal, Karpov and many other great players. Also, an excellent book that we recommend is “Zurich International Chess Tournament, 1953” by David Bronstein. Unfortunately, you will still often meet the phrases “the rest is a matter of technique” or large sequences of un-annotated moves. However, you have the moves played by a strong player in front of you and you only need to discover their sense.

In this section of our training (“Playing Technique”), we will present to you various and instructive examples where technique is in the forefront. The majority of the positions are from the endgame, but not only.

In order to support the theory *more knowledge = better technique*, we start with an example from Botvinnik's practice and his comments:



Plater – Botvinnik, 1947

Referring to this position, Botvinnik said: “Everything is clear. Black firmly holds the d-file and his bishop will be stronger than opponent knight especially because of the kingside weaknesses”.

For Botvinnik, a master of the endgame, the rest of the game will be “just a matter of technique”. He went on a well known path to the victory:

1.Ne4-h6 2.Rae1-Nb3 3.ab3-a5!

This move fixes White’s queenside pawns and now we can say that Black is a pawn up (because of his mobile majority on the kingside).

4.h3-Rac8 5.Kg1-Kf8 6.Kh2-Rc7 7.Kg3-b6 8.Kh2-Rcd7 9.Kg1-Rd1 10.c4-Bc6 11.Nc3-Re1

Botvinnik: “After Black will improve his king’s position, he will trade the rooks. Rubinstein demonstrated many times the superiority of the bishop against the knight in this type of positions”. So, Botvinnik knew very well the games played by Rubinstein, an expert of the endgames of that time.

12.Re1-Ke7 13.Re2-f6 14.Kf2- Rd3

Botvinnik: “The game is over, after trading rooks White can do nothing against e6-e5 collaborated with king invasion on b4”. After some moves, black won.

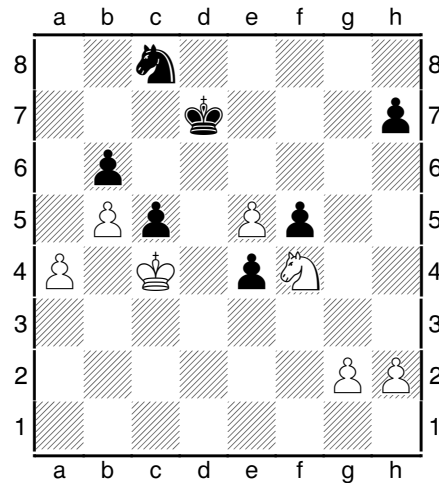
As you can see, all Botvinnik did was to apply the knowledge he gathered. So, in order to improve your technique you have to pay particular attention to this phase of the game when studying various games.

Now, we present a general principle that is present in all examples about technique. Generally, there are 2 types of advantages (speaking about positions with equal material):

1. Permanent. In this case, the opponent is completely tied down. He has no chance for activity and even if we play passive moves, intending nothing, opponent is not able to get rid of his weaknesses.

2. Volatile. Here any inaccurate move will lose a part of the advantage. Therefore an exact play is necessary in order to maintain the advantage.

Position 1



Moldovan D, 2445 – Parligras M, 2375, 1998

White to move

White has a clear and permanent advantage. How can we draw this conclusion? The easiest way is to analyze what Black can do if White does nothing (for example Kc4-c3-c4-c3 and so on). Will Black be able to get some activity or to improve his position? If he tries trading the knights, he will lose the king's endgame (after a4-a5, the white pawns cannot be stopped). To activate the king via g5 is also not possible because after a4-a5 Black will lose the knight.

After we clarified that White has a permanent advantage and Black is tied down, White has to find the best and most secure way to convert his advantage (TO DO list):

1. First he has to determine the weaknesses in his opponent's camp. It is easy to identify that now there is only one: the b6-pawn.
2. Then, White has to ask himself if he can make another weakness. In order to determine this he imagines a position that will force his opponent to make another weakness. There is no need to calculate variations, just to imagine the position. Because he lacks mobility, Black will not be able to oppose any resistance. Of course, this imagined position has to be an obtainable position not an utopist one (for example it is not possible for the white king to arrive on b7). As a general rule: **one weakness is not enough for a win, but two are.** On this step, White spotted that with his king on e3 he is threatening h2-h3 followed by g2-g4 winning a pawn. This will force Black to make another weakness by moving h7-h5 in order to stop g2-g4.
3. After obtaining maximum of weaknesses possible, it is time for the next step. Imagine some obtainable positions which are winning. In this case there are two and we will present them in the annotations of the game.
4. The last step is to accurately calculating the winning position and decide about the best moves.

Now let's see what happened in the game.

1.h3! White has identified the weakness that already exists in Black's camp (step 1). He also discovered the way to make another weakness in opponent's position and goes for it.

1...-Ne7 sadly for Black, there is nothing to do but only wait.

2.Kc3 as you can see, White's king is heading to e3 in order to reach the position he imagined at step 2. Knowing what to do, the moves are logical and simple.

2...-h5 Black prevents White's threat immediately. He could wait for 2 more moves (until Ke3) but this wouldn't help him.

3.g3! There is another important principle: **any weakness must be fixed**. This way, the weakness is made *permanent*.

3...-Nc8 4.h4 The h5-pawn is indirectly defended as after 4.Nxh5 Ke6, Black will capture the e5-pawn complicating the game. In a winning position, complications must be avoided.

4...Ne7 5.Kc4

After creating the second weakness in his opponent's camp (step 2), White returns to the starting position threatening Kd5.

5...Nc8. It is clear that the black king must stay on d7 in order to stop the decisive Kd5-c6 so his only option is to move his knight.

Now it's time for step 3. White has to decide which position is a winning one: this position or the same one but with the black knight on e7. Only now an accurate calculation is required. If neither of the 2 setups wins, it is necessary to find other possibilities and evaluate them.

6. Kb3! White correctly decides that he should go for the position with the black knight on e7 and makes a typical maneuver of 3 moves to change who is to move.

6...- Ne7 7.Kc3-Nc8 8.Kc4 zugzwang

8...-Ne7 9.Nxh5! Finally, grabbing the h5-pawn collecting the fruits of a well conducted endgame. For this, White calculated precisely all the possible variations (step 4).

9...-Ke6 9...Ng6 10.e6-Ke7 (10...-Ke6 11.Nf4 easily winning the pawn endgame)
11.Nf4-Ne5 12.Kc3 followed by h5 and a5 at some point, then white pawns will be unstoppable.

10. a5! The most precise way to victory although 10.Nf4-Ke5 11.a5-ba5 12.Kc5 is also winning but there Black can still put some resistance. Now Black is hopeless against white free pawns.

10...-ba5 11.b6-a4 If 11...-Nc6 12.Kc5-Nb8 13.Nf4-Ke5 14.Kb5. White will take the a5-pawn and then he wins the knight with his b-pawn.

12. Nf4-Kd7 12...-Ke5 13.Kc5-a3 14.b7 transforming with check.

13... Kd7 14.h5-e3 15.h6-Ng6 16.e6! There is no good square for the black king.

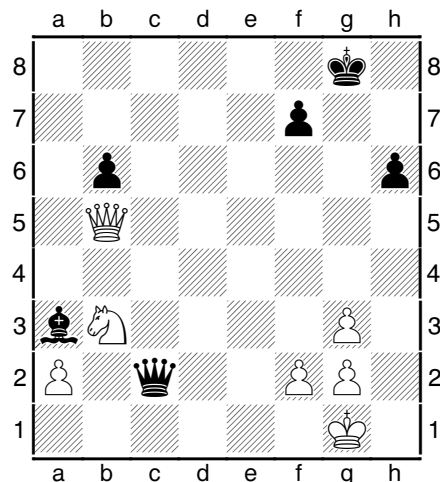
16...- Kc6 17.Ng6 The last trick.

17...-e2 18.Ne5 followed by Nf3 (d3). Black resigned 1-0

Playing Technique

Lesson 2

Position 1



Karpov A – Vaganian R, 1973
White to move

White's advantage is big. He is a pawn up, has better pieces Q+N vs Q+B while the Black's kingside is weak. Considering all these facts that clearly favors White, at first glance, Black should resign at once.

In fact, things are not so easy and here we are dealing with a **volatile advantage**. Black is not doomed to passivity. In fact, he has some immediate and long term threats. White cannot afford (like in the first lesson's example) to play anything and hope his advantage will remain.

Here also, White has to follow some steps in order to convert his advantage:

1. First he has to identify his opponent's weaknesses. These are the b6-pawn and, more important, the black king will be defenseless against a combined Q+N attack.
2. Then, he has to identify his own weaknesses. These are the a2-pawn and his misplaced b3-knight.
3. Also White has to pay attention to the long-term threats. Trading the bishop for the knight will greatly increase Black's chances for a draw! Another threat that must be taken into account is the perpetual check. Also, the immediate threats must be identified: after 1...-Bc5 Black will make an immediate draw.
4. Now it is time to determine a plan that will give good chances of success and, in the same time, to diminish opponent's counter-play. In this case, if White can trade the queenside pawns, he will be able to concentrate on the kingside. Also White has to find a way to improve his knight's position.
5. The last step involves accurate calculation. Note that any inaccurate move can throw now the advantage away.

Now let's see the game:

1. Qd5 First of all, White prevents Black's immediate threat: after 1...-Bc5 2.Qd2 White defends everything. A huge mistake was 1.Qxb6-Qd1 2.Kh2-Qh5 with draw.

Besides defensive measures, White imagined a safe position against Black's threats and a way to bring the b3-knight on an active position in the center or kingside. This position is with the queen on d2, which then supports the knight to come on f4 via c1-d3.

1...-Bf8 After 1...Qxa2 2.Qd8+ and 3.Qxb6, White solved the problem of the a2-pawn.

2.Qd2-Qe4! If Black trades the queens, he will be left with no chance of counter-play and White will easily convert his permanent advantage of a pawn up.

3. Kh2-Bc5 4.Nc1 White improves his knight position. Another mistake was 4.Nxc5-bxc5 5.Qxh6-c4 and Black has no trouble in reaching a draw because of his free and advanced c-pawn.

Generally, in queen endgames with free pawns, the most important factor is how far are advanced the free pawns. Let's say you are 6 pawns up which are not advanced and your opponent has a pawn on the 2nd (7th) rank. In this case you have to fight for a draw.

4...-Kg7 5.Nd3-Qd4 6.Qe2-Bd6? By now Black managed to keep White away from reaching his plan. Now he allows white knight to enter the game. He thought that the queen endgame which will follow by force, will offer him better chances for a draw. It was better to play 6...-Qc4! in order to keep the knight away from the kingside.

7.Kh3! Threatening 8.Qg4 and forcing Black to clear the 4th rank.

7...-Qd5 8.Nf4 Threatening Qg4 followed by Nh5 with deadly threats against the opponent king, so Black's next move is forced:

8....Bxf4 9.gxf4. Now the character of the game has changed and White's advantage is **permanent**. Black is unable to create any real threat so White only has to come with a winning plan. He will play f3 in order to restrict Black's king movement (because of the threats of changing the queens on e4- and e5- squares) and then he will march with his king on the queenside in order to capture the b-pawn.

9...Kf8 10.Kg3-b5 11.Qb2-Qd3 12.Kh4-Qd8 13.Kg3-Qd3 14.Kh2-Kg8 15.a3-Qd6 16.Qb4-Qf6 17.f3 After some "waiting moves", probably made to get rid of time troubles, White goes for the winning plan.

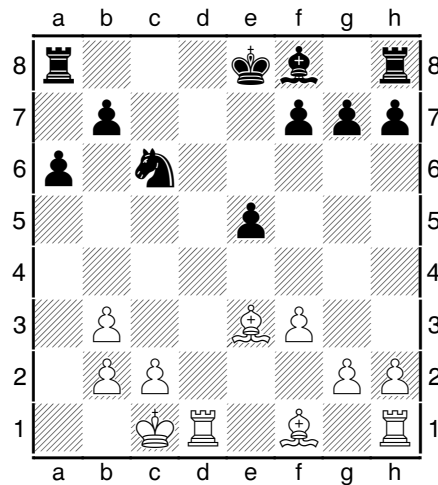
17....Qh4 18.Kg1-Qh5? This mistake ends Black's struggle. He was lost anyway, without anything to oppose White's plan.

19. Qe7-Kh7 20.g4 1-0

As you can see, it is harder to win with a volatile advantage (when opponent has some counter-play). If you are in the situation to choose between a small permanent advantage and some bigger volatile advantage, it is advisable to choose the permanent one.



Position 2



Lupulescu C – Mosnegutu K, 2008
White to move

White has an obvious advantage: has the bishop-pair, better development, and Black's e-pawn is not so well placed (it was better to be on e6 in order to restrict white's light square bishop). Also he has worse pawn structure.

It's obvious that we are dealing with a **volatile advantage**.

Either White or Black does not have any weaknesses. (step 1, step 2)

Black has no immediate threat. The long term threat is to develop his pieces. Another aspect that has to be taken in account by White is Black's defensive resource of trading his knight for the white dark-square bishop (Nc6-d4). In this case, even if he will lose a pawn, the draw chances are big because the presence of opposite color bishops, while there is no attacking targets for White. (step 3)

The absence of weaknesses makes White's task more difficult in finding a plan. Obviously it is easier to deal with concrete things (like weaknesses, mating attack and so on). Black's main problem is to find a good square for his bishop and to put his king on a safer place. In order to come up with the right plan, White has to make Black's task more difficult and to follow some general rules as: **when you have the pair of bishops try to open the game**. (step 4).

Here, step 5 will be mostly used for prophylaxis. If White manages to disturb Black's attempt of finishing his development, it will be easier for him to improve his position.

Now let's see how White accomplished his tasks.

1.f4! this move suits perfectly with White's intentions: he opens the game in order to get more activity for his bishops; opens the e-file for the other rook and making black king to feel uncomfortable (the king has to cover d7, not allowing Rd7 that would have a devastating effect).

White has to focus his calculation only on 1...-e4 that would allow Black to keep the game closed. However, after 1...-e4 2.g4! (threatening 2.Bg2) 2...-g6 3.g5 Black is losing his e4- pawn.

Let's say that White is not paying attention to Black's plan and plays a "normal" (but less accurate) move like 1.Bd3?!. Although after 1...0-0-0! 2.Bb6-Rd6 3.Bf5-Kb8 he is still better, White lost a big part of his advantage. Black manages to get a safe place for his king, he will easily finish his development and white didn't do any progress. **When dealing with a volatile advantage always pay attention to your opponent's threats.**

1...-Rd8 a normal move. Trading pieces is the best way for Black to decrease the pressure. Weaker is 1...-Be7 2.Bc4 and it is not possible 2...0-0 3.Rd7 winning material. **2.Bc4-Bd6 3.Bb6 Rd7 4.Rhe1** due to his exact play, White achieved his task: he mobilized his forces with high speed while Black still has difficulties in completing his development.

4...-Bb4? Black makes things easier for White. Better was 4...Bc7 5.Bxc7-Rxc7 6.Bd5-f6 7.Bxc6+-Rxc6 8.fxe5-O-O and although White is a pawn up and more active, Black has some chances for a draw (rooks endgames have a great tendency for draw).

5.c3-Rxd1 6.Rxd1-Be7 7.fxe5-Nxe5 8.Bd5-0-0 finally Black has managed to complete his development, indirectly defending the b7-pawn (9.Bxb7?-Rb8 10.Bc7-Rxb7 11.Bxe5-Rb3 with equal endgame). The price is too high.

Now, White's pair of bishops is dominating the board and the b7-pawn still remains a major weakness. White has an easy plan now: he will simply push his queenside pawns, activates his king and, then, will pick up a pawn on queenside. Black has nothing to oppose this plan.

9.b4-Bg5 10.Kc2-Nc6 11.Bf3-Rc8 12.Kb3-g6 13.Rd7 White is ready to collect the queenside pawns. Black's position is hopeless.

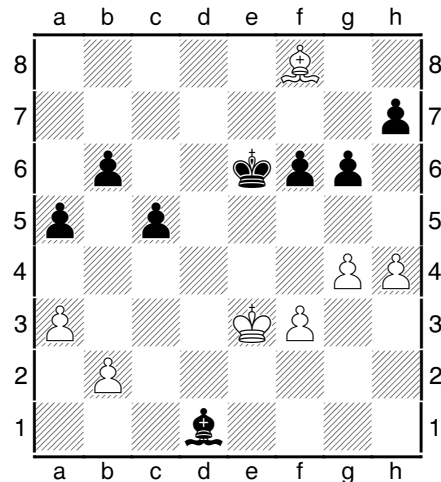
13...-Nd8 14.Bb7-Rb8 15.Bd8-Bd8 16.Ba6-f5 17.Rb7-Ra8 18.Bc4-Kh8 19.Bd5-Rc8 20.c4-Bf6 21.c5-Rd8 22.c6-Be5 23.Kc4 1-0

When it is not clear what you have to do, just follow the general principles (here, White's f4 opened the position for his bishops).

Playing Technique

Lesson 3

Position 1



Ljubojevic L – Karpov A, 1975
White to move

Until now the examples were focused on converting an advantage with the help of technique. Technique is also necessary in order to defend worse positions.

Now we are dealing with a **permanent** advantage. Black is a pawn up and White has no possibility for an active play. So how we deal with this situation?

First we **MUST** find how Black can win (Black's TO DO). So let's follow the steps. White has his kingside pawns weak (f3, g4) (step 1). Black cannot make any more weaknesses in White's camp (step 2). If Black manages to put his king on c2, his queenside pawns on a4, b5, c4, then he will be able to obtain a free pawn by the b5-b4 breakthrough. This free pawn will cost White his bishop (step 3).

In conclusion, Black can win, so White has to find a way (if there is one) to oppose Black's plan.

Here we are dealing with an example where knowledge is similar with technique. In order to solve the problem, White only has to apply the general principles connected with opposite color bishop's endgame. So let me present what principles are applying here:

1. The weak side has to place his pawns on his bishop's color in order to can protect them; and **2. The opponent's passed pawns have to be blocked with the king.**

In conclusion, White has to put his kingside pawns on dark squares and then go with the king on the queenside to deal with Black's potential passed pawn.

Strangely enough, the top Yugoslavian grandmaster didn't manage to solve his task.

Let's see how the game developed:

1.Ke4?!

Knowing what we would have to do, the best move was easy: 1.g5!-f5 (1...-fxg5 2.hxg5 followed by f4 and then the kingside pawns can be easily protected by the bishop. White is now able to go with the king on the queenside and the game is draw) 2.f4-Kd5 3.Bg7 also with easy draw.

1...-a4 2.h5? White is playing against the principles. Now Black is able to get very close to his winning position. The draw still could be made after 2.g5!

2...-gh5 3.gh5-f5 4.Ke3-Kd5 Now because of his misplaced pawns, White has to lose valuable time in order to protect them.

5.h6-Kc4 6.f4-Kb3 7.Bg7?

The decisive mistake. If White had spotted Black's winning position, for sure, he didn't allow Black's king to reach on c2.

Now, it was the last time when White could make a draw by:

7.Kd2!-Bf3

[7...-Kxb2 8.Kxd1-c4 9.Bg7-c3 10.Ke2!-Kxa3 (10...-Kc2 11.Ke3-b5 12.Kd4-Kd2 13.Kc5 with draw) 11.Bxc3-b5 12.Be5-b4 13.Bd6! with draw]

8.Bg7 and Black was left without any winning plan. White didn't bother to calculate the bishop sacrifice and was playing convinced that the game was draw. So, White ignored another important principle: *in the endgame, precise calculation is a must.*

7...-Kc2! The punishment for White careless attitude. Now, there is no way for him to save the game anymore.

8.Be5-Bh5 9.Bf6 9.Bc7-Kb2 10.Bb6-c4 11.Bd4+ (11.Bc5-c3 12.Bd4-Kc2 13.Bf6-Be8 14.Be5-Bb5 followed by Kb3 winning) 11...-Kxa3 12.Kd2-Kb3 13.Bf6-a3 winning. The plan to win is: Black will advance a3-a2, and then he will put his bishop on b1 and the king will go on g6. After this, he will trade one of his queenside pawns for the h-pawn by playing c4-c3.

9...-Bf7 10.Be5-Bb3! you will see later the reason of this move.

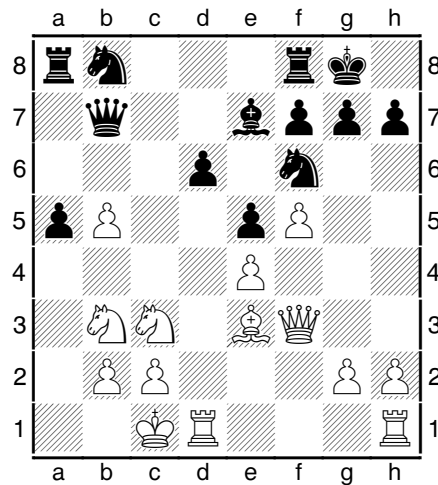
11.Bg7-b5 12.Bf8 12.Bc3 doesn't help because of 12...-b4! 13.axb4-a3 (13.Bg7-c4 reaching the same position like in the game; or 13.Be1-Kxb2 14.axb4-cxb4 followed by 15...a3 winning).

12...-c4 13.Bg7-b4! 14.Kd4 after 14.axb4-c3! 15.Bxc3 (15.bxc3-Bc4!! preventing c3-c4 opening the long diagonal) 15...-a3 16.Be5-a2 Black wins. As you can see without the bishop on b3 White manages to save the game by 17.b3. Karpov spotted every nuance of the game and didn't allow his opponent any chance.

14...-c3 15.bxc3-bxa3 16.c4-a2 17.Kc5-Kb1 18.Kb4-a1Q 19.Bxa1-Kxa1 20.c5-Kb2 21.c6-a3 22.c7-Be6 23.Kc5-a2 24.Kd6-Bc8 0-1

As you can see, it is not enough to have a draw position on the board, you also need to make it!

Position 2



Dolmatov S – Koscielski J, 1992
White to move

White is pawn up and, at the moment, his pieces are better placed. So, he has a clear advantage. Yet this is a **volatile advantage**: Black has some threats and chances of counter-play.

Now we are dealing with another type of position than in the previous examples. The game is in middlegame stage and, moreover, there is a sharp situation with opposite castles. In such cases, there is no need to follow all the steps that we discussed until now.

First, we have to determine our opponent's threats, and our plans. After this, we have to determine the next course of action (the most probable moves).

There are 2 ways that can be followed. First is to defend against opponent's threats trying to obtain a permanent advantage. The other approach is to ignore opponent's threats and go on with your threats and plans.

Although in some cases, the second approach is the only one to get to victory, it is more dangerous because *the time factor* and *accurate calculation* become critical and any mistake is fatal. So, when possible, the first approach is preferable.

So let's ask ourselves what are Black's chances to get activity.

The first idea is 1...-Rfc8 followed by Rxc3 and Qxb5 after which the white king is unsafe. In addition, the dangerous a-pawn and White's weak e4-pawn will give Black enough compensation for the exchange sacrifice.

Another idea is to advance the a-pawn in order to disturb White's queenside pawns.

How can White deal with these threats?

All white pieces have determined roles, but there is the misplaced b3-knight which does nothing. So, White should use THIS piece to prevent Black's counter-play. (It is not at all desirable to move a piece from an active position just to prevent opponent's play.)

If White will be not able to find any good prophylactic role for the b3-knight, probably the second approach (ignoring opponent's threats) will be the right decision. In this case, White should start the attack by 1.g4.

Let's see what happened in the game.

1. Nd2!-Rc8 2.Ndb1! So, White found an excellent prophylactic plan using the b3-knight only. This defends the other c3-knight and also the a3-square.

2...-a4 3.Rd3! we are dealing with an overprotection (the trademark of Nimzowitsch): Black defends the 3rd rank and also the c3-knight which, on its turn, protects the b5- and d5- squares.

3...-Nbd7 4.Rhd1? up to this moment, Dolmatov brilliantly dealt with his prophylactic tasks. Now he makes a mistake that allows Black to equalize the chances.

After the correct 4.Bg5 continuing to defend the 3rd rank and threatening to trade one of the Black's dangerous knights, White's advantage would have become a permanent one. After 4...-Nc5 5.Rd2 Black gains nothing.

4...-Nc5? Black returns the favor.

After 4...-d5! 5.Nxd5-Nxd5 6.Rxd5 (6.exd5-Qxb5) 6...-a3 7.Nxa3-Bxa3 8.bxa3-Rxa3 Black's initiative is very strong.

After Black's last move, Dolmatov gets a permanent advantage that he will easily convert into full point:

5.Bxc5-Rxc5 6.Na3 White protected (or even over-protected) everything on the queenside, so that Black lacks any chance of counterplay.

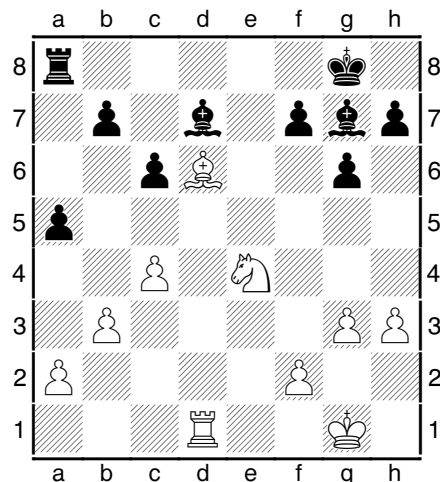
6...-Bf8 7.Kb1-Nd7 8.Nd5-Nb6 9.g4-Nc4 10.Nxc4-Rxc4 11.b6-Qc6 12.Rc3-a3 13.Rxa3-Rxa3 14.Qxa3-Rxe4 (14...-Rxc2 15.b7) **15.Qb3-Qb7 16.Qf3 1-0**

In tense situations, always pay attention to any move that might lead to complications even if, at first sight, it might look like a bad move. Dolmatov almost lost his advantage because he was not paying attention to 4...-d5.

Playing Technique

Lesson 4

Position 1



Khalifman A – Van Wely L, 1997

White to move

White forces an exchange: **1.Bb8!-Rxb8** (try to see the forced win after 1...Be6) **2.Rxd7** after which he gets a clear advantage because of his more active pieces.

However, this is a **volatile** advantage. If Black manages to drive away White's active rook from the 7th rank (long term threat, step 3), the advantage will be history (White will be even worse due Black's R+B against R+N).

At the moment, Black has two major weaknesses: the b7- and f7- pawns (step 1).

If Black manages to activate his rook, White's queenside pawns are in trouble (step 2).

White's long term plan is to attack Black's weaknesses, in the same time, keeping an eye to Black's attempts of creating counter chances and trying to prevent them (step 4).

2...-b5 Black chooses to play actively with a clear plan in his mind: even if the f7- pawn will be lost, he will trade all queenside pawns and because of the reduced material he gets excellent chances to draw.

Other attempts are bad:

2...-Bf8 (in order to prevent Nd6) 3.Ng5-f6 4.Ne4-Bg7 5.Nd6 with a winning position.

2...-Re8 3.Nd6-Re2 4.a4-b6 5.c5!-bxc5 6.Rd8-Bf8 7.Nc4 winning the a-pawn.

2...-b6 3.Nd6-f5 4.Rc7-c5 5.Rc8! winning the ending.

3.Nd6! a very good defensive move! White is just defending against Black's threat to activate his rook after bxc4.

After the careless 3.c5?-Re8 Black is alive again and has no real problems. As you can see, dealing with a volatile advantage requires an accurate play.

3...-a4 Consistent with his plan of trading the queenside pawns.

4.cxb5 again the best move. After **4.Nxf7?-bxc4 5.bxc4-Rb2** Black's activity fully compensates his lost pawn.

4...-cxb5 5.Nxf7-Re8 6.Kf1! Again White prevents Black's attempts of activating his pieces.

6...-Bc3 7.Nh6+-Kh8 8.g4! After losing the f7-pawn, Black got rid of his weaknesses and, therefore, he remains only with threats (threats to draw).

In order to diminish Black's activity, White found an excellent plan creating another weakness in Black's camp: his king! Using the g-pawn, White creates a mating net in order to bind the black rook on 8th rank.

8...-axb3 9.axb3-Rf8 10.g5-Re8 11.Nf7+-Kg8 12.Nh6+-Kh8 13.h4-b4

Now the character of the game has changed. White has a permanent advantage. In order to win he has to advance his kingside pawns. Note that now Black has 2 weaknesses: the b4-pawn and his king.

14.Nf7+-Kg8 15.Nh6+-Kh8 All these repetitions of moves are made in order to gain time on clock in order to spot the most precise way to win.

16.Kg2-Rf8 17.Nf7+-Kg8 18.Nh6+-Kh8 19.f4-Bb2 20.Nf7+-Kg8 21.Nh6+-Kh8 22.Kf3-Bc3 23.Nf7+-Kg8 24.Nh6+-Kh8 25.Kg4-Bg7 26.Rb7-Bc3 27.Nf7+-Kg8 28.Nh6+-Kh8 29.f5! Beside many repetitive moves, White prepared his pawns with the support of their king (active piece in the endgame) to advance creating a free pawn.

29...-gxf5+ 30.Nxf5-Bd2 31.Rd7-Bc1 32.Rd1! White has to drive the black bishop away from the c1-h6 diagonal in order to advance his h-pawn. Otherwise he loses the g-pawn after Rg8.

32...-Bb2 33.h5-Rg8 threatens Bf6

34.Nh6-Re8 35.Rd8! the easiest way to win. Now Black is unable to defend against queening threats and, in the same time, to defend his b-pawn.

35...-Rxd8 36.Nf7+-Kg7 37.Nxd8-Bc3 38.Kf5-Bd2 39.Ne6+-Kf7 40.Nf4-Kg7 41.Nd5-Kf7 42.h6! The h7-pawn is fixed and White gains new threats with Nf6

42...-Kg8 43.Nf6+-Kh8 44.Ne4! White is still paying attention to his opponent threats. After the careless **44.g6??-hxg6 45.Bxh6** White cannot take the bishop because of stalemate; or **44.Kg4??-Bxg5!** also with draw.

In order to advance his g-pawn, White has to put his king on h5 (to defend his h6-pawn) and avoid stalemate. This is an easy job now.

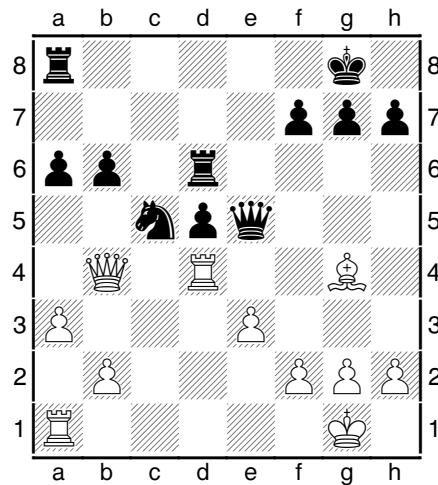
44...-Bc1 45.Kg4-Kg8 46.Nf6+-Kh8 47.Nd5!-Bd2 48.Kh5-Kg8 49.g6 1-0

After **49...hxg6 50.Kxg6** and **51.h7+**, Black is unable to defend in the same time the b4-pawn and e5- and d8- squares that will allow white knight to jump on f7 and b4 pawn.

Excellent endgame technique of the former FIDE World champion, top grandmaster Khalifman.



Position 2



Anand V – Kramnik V, 2008
Black to move

A typical position with an isolated pawn on d5. White is slightly better. As we already know the isolated pawn is strong when there are many pieces on the board but here this is not the case (3 pairs of minor pieces were traded). For this reason, Black cannot hope to get any attacking chances on the kingside and his hopes are to equalize the game by getting rid of his weakness by pushing d5-d4. Trading the last pair of minor pieces would also be a great mistake (if the pawn structure remains like this, with isolated pawn).

The well known game Kortchnoj – Karpov is a great example for how to play in such cases. As a matter of fact, this is the only theoretically lost endgame with isolani (presuming that the weaker side defends well).

This kind of position is unpleasant to defend. If Black plays at once 1...-Ne6, after 2.Bxe6-fxe6 3.Rc1 White will have a lasting advantage due to his better pawn structure and weakened black king's position.

Another drastic decision was 1...-f5 2.Bf3-Rad8 3.Rc1 (there is no need for White to keep his both rooks on the d-file, because he is unable to stop the d4 advance) 3...-Ne6 4.Rd3-d4 5.g3. Black managed to advance his pawn but his king is also insecure, so White still has the advantage.

The former world champion found a plan that has never tried before. His excellent technique in defending worse static positions helped him in finding the best way to fully equalize the game:

1...-h5! 2.Bh3 Anand decides to keep the e6-square guarded. The other option would have allowed Black to immediately equalize the game with 2...-Ne6 followed by Rad8 and d5-d4.

2....- Rad8 3.g3-g5! This is the point of Black's previous move. He wants to kick white bishop from the h3-c8 diagonal by playing g5-g4 (then Ne6). The idea is that Black uses the g- and h- pawns and the f-pawn remains to defend the seventh rank.

4.Rad1 now it is not so good for White to play 4.Rc1 like after 1...-f5. Keeping another rook on the board is in Black's favor. With his pawn on f7, the black king is safely defended (better than with the g- and h- pawns). White's king is in danger to be under fire due the fact that Black's advanced pawns on the kingside restrict White's possibilities to make a window or escape route for his king

.

For this reason White decided to play safely and trade both rooks. After:

4...-g4 5.Bg2-Ne6 6.R4d3-d4 7.exd4-Rxd4 8.Rxd4-Rxd4 9.Rxd4-Nxd4 the game is level. White is even in danger to be worse due the Q+N against Q+B cooperation when the kingside structure is weakened. So, it is safer to grab at once the b6-pawn in order to force Black to give perpetual check. 10.Qxb6-Qe1 11.Bf1-Nf3 12.Kg2-Qe4 with obvious draw.

If this game was played in the era of classical players, for sure such an idea was out of question. The dogma did not allow classical players to think at such plans.

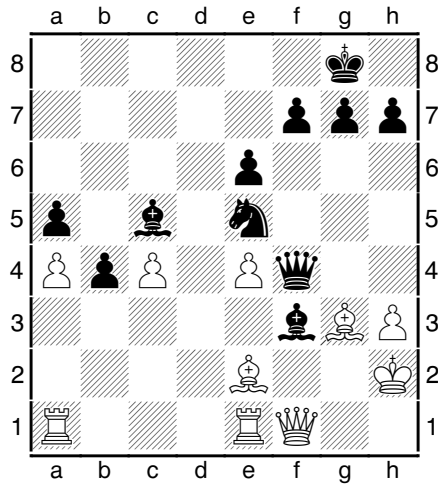
Today, in order to achieve a goal any idea has to be taken into account.

Answer to the question from Position 1:

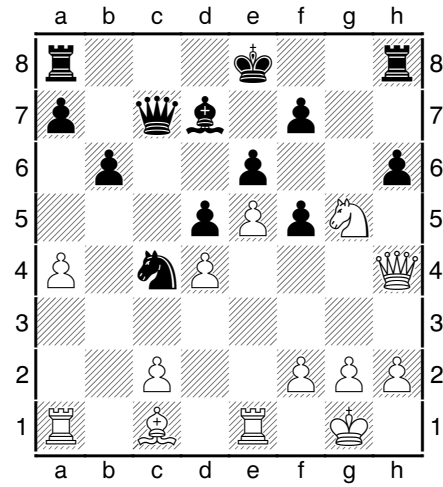
After 1.Bb8 Be6?, White wins by force with 2.Rd8+ Bf8 3.Nf6+ Kg7 4.Ne8+ Kg8 5.Nc7

Exercises Month 11 / Set I

Simple Tactics

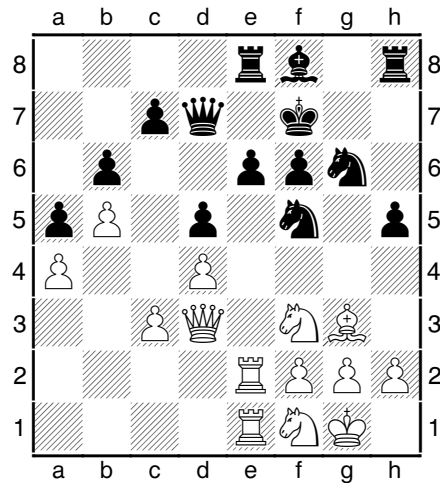


1. Black to move



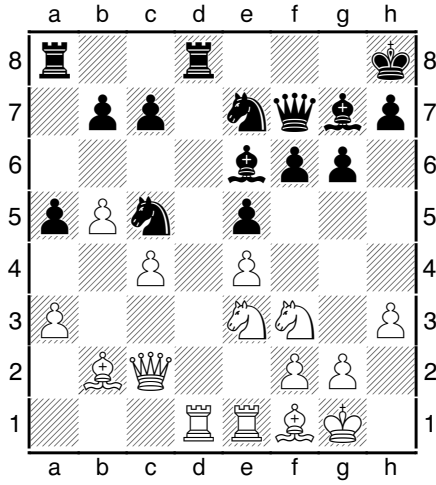
2. White to move

Complicate Position

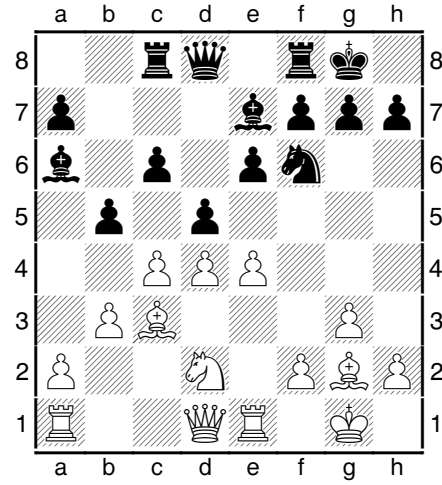


3. White to move

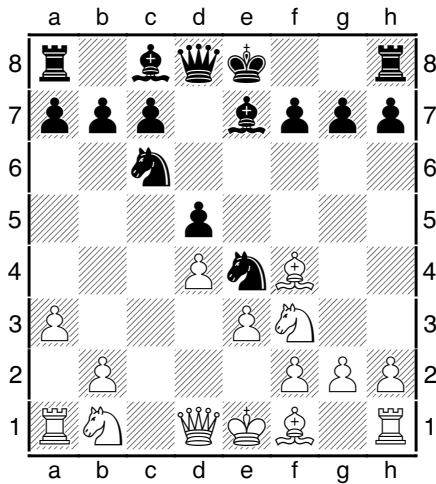
Positional Exercises



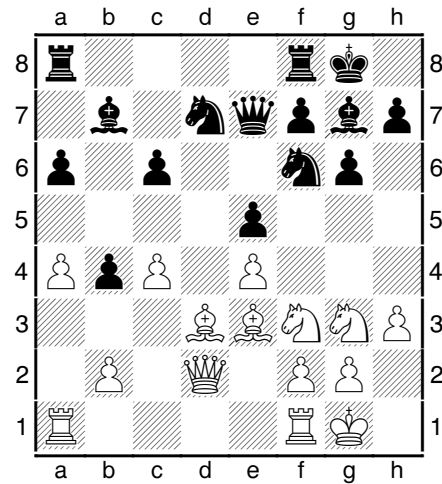
1. Black to move



2. White to move



3. Black to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 11 / Set I

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Should Black take into account the defense of the a5-pawn?
- b) How important is the d-file?

Problem 2

- a) On which side (or center) should White play in the future?

Problem 3

no hint

Problem 4

- a) How is the situation of the central squares?

Solutions M 11 / Set I

Tactics 1

1...Bg1+! forcing the white queen to occupy the retreating square of the king.
[Also possible is 1...Ng4+ 2.hxg4 Bg1+ 3.Kxg1 Qxg3+] **2.Qxg1 Ng4+** forces White to open the h-file. **3.hxg4 Qh6+ 4.Bh4 Qxh4#**

Tactics 2

1.Nxf7! Kxf7 2.Qf6+ Kg8 3.Ra3! the c4-knight cannot hold both white rooks from entering the 3rd rank. **3...f4** [3...Nxa3 4.Qg6+ Kf8 5.Bxa3+; 3...Be8 4.Rg3+ Kh7 5.Qxh6#] **4.Bxf4 Nxa3 5.Re3 Be8 6.Rg3+**

Tactics 3

Again, a relatively simple exercise.

1.Rxe6!! Rxe6 [1...Qxe6 2.Rxe6 Kxe6 3.Bxc7+- White wins Black's queenside pawns.]
2.Ng5+! [2.Qxf5?! Bh6÷] **2...fxg5 3.Qxf5+ Ke7 4.Qxg5+ Kf7** [4...Ke8 5.Qxg6+ Ke7 6.Bh4+ Kd6 7.Qg3+ Re5 8.Qxe5#] **5.Qf5+ Ke7 6.Qxg6 h4** [6...Rxe1 7.Bh4#; 6...Rh6 7.Bh4+ Kd6 8.Qg3+ Re5 9.Qxe5#] **7.Bxh4+ [7.Bf4+-] 7...Rxh4 8.Qg5+ Kf7 9.Rxe6 Qxe6 10.Qxh4+-**

Problem 1

(Position from: De la Villa Garcia J, 2525 – Campora D, 2540, San Roque, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a semi blocked pawn structure that generally arises from the exchange variation of King's Indian Defense. There are no weaknesses in either camp concerning pawns. Still White has the weak c5-square giving Black an excellent outpost there.

- Pieces: At the moment, Black has an active knight on c5 that is hard to be driven away. He has also better prospects in improving his pieces (the e7-knight can easily arrive on d6 via c8 from where it can add more pressure against White's center).

So Black is slightly better.

What does White want to do?

White would like to trade as many major pieces on the d-file as possible. After that, he can attack the Black's a5-pawn. If Black defends it by b7-b6, White gets an unchallenged outpost on d5 (unable to be attacked with the classical c7-c6), or if he pushes a5-a4, this pawn will be a long time reason for concern.

What we have to do / Planning

For sure Black wants to improve his e7-knight position and there is an excellent position for it on d6. But first he must ask himself what he will do in the future. Of course, in order to increase the pressure, he has to open the game in the center by f6-f5 or to advance his kingside pawns to get some attacking prospects. In both cases, it is better to keep the rooks (attacking pieces) on the board.

Therefore the move that comes in our mind is **1...- Rg8!** Another possibility is 1...- Re8. The first alternative looks better because in both cases (Black advances f5 or he advances the kingside pawns) the g-file will be probably open and the rook is better placed there. Still such a move is psychologically hard to be made (leaving an open file to go somewhere passive). In order to help us decide to such a rook move, some other aspects has to be observed: on the d-file, White cannot do anything because all squares are well protected. Also it is hard to find any real plan that can make White's play more active (or to improve his pieces position). For this reason, trading pieces is for sure in his advantage.

Calculation

1...-Rg8! In the game Black preferred 1...-Re8 with the same idea. Both are good moves if the idea behind them is the right one.

2.Nd5-Nc8 2.Bc1-c6 4.a4-Bf8 5.Ba3-g5 and only Black is able to play actively.

Problem 2

(Position from: Pavlov A, 2225 – Trushelyov V, Novgorod, 1997)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: White is slightly better due to his space advantage. There are no weaknesses

- Pieces: at the moment, we can say that no one has an advantage (both players have a bad bishop: White the dark-square one and Black the light square one).

As a matter of fact the assessment of the position depends on whose turn is.

What does Black want to do?

Black threatens to fully equalize after 1...-bc4 2.e5 (2.bc4-dc4 and Black has no problem) 2...-Nd7 3.bc4-dc4! with equal game.

What we have to do

So White has to defend against this threat and, in the same time, to make something useful for his future plans. The first thing White has to do in order to make the right decision is to see on which side of the board he has more chances.

On the queenside there are no real chances to make something useful (Black is better prepared for any opening of the position on this side). In the center also Black is well prepared. Therefore it remains the kingside.

After **1.e5!-Nd7 2.c5!** White has a strategically winning position. After 1.e5 and 2.c5, the center is closed, Black is left without any counter play on the queenside, White gets space on the kingside and he threatens to advance his kingside pawns.

To play a position with no counter play chances is the worst thing can happen. In this kind of positions all you have to do is to wait for the inevitable finish.

This type of decision requires no calculation. You only have to decide on general terms if it is the right one or not.

Problem 3

(Position from: Babula V, 2535 – Blatny P, 2540, Zlin, 1997)

Positional Evaluation

After only 8 moves from the start, the game is leveled. Black managed to solve his main problem in this type of structure: the opening of his light square bishop.

What does White want to do?

White will just simply develop his pieces followed probably by a minority attack on the queenside.

What we have to do

For sure Black has to complete his development with 0-0 and Bf5 and, at some moment, to improve his Nc6 position.

By his previous move 8.Bg5-f4 White made a huge mistake. Generally, in the opening the players don't pay enough attention to immediate threats but they are concerned only in develop their pieces. Only this can explain why an experienced grandmaster as Babula made such a mistake. Now with a "nonstandard" move (1...-g5!) Black is capable to get a winning strategic position.

Calculation

1...-g5! 2.Be5-f6 3.Bg3-h5 This forces White to move the h-pawn and leave the g3-bishop defended only by the f-pawn

4.h3 (4.h4-g4 5.Nfd2-Ng3 6.fg3-Bd6 7.Kf2-Ne7)

4...-Ng3 5.fg3-Bd6 6.Kf2-Ne7 threatening Nf5

7. Bd3-c6 Also 7...-c5 is a good move.

After this operation, Black gained the bishop-pair and irremediably spoiled White's pawn structure, so now he has a winning strategical position.

Even when the game is at an early stage, always pay attention to unexpected possibilities in order not to miss any opportunity. Very often, the game can be decided quicker than you think.

Problem 4

(Position from: Palac M, 2545 – Ftacnik L, 2580, Ljubljana, 1998)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: The position is semi-blocked and no one has any weakness.
- Pieces: No one has bad pieces or, at least, if we compare the pieces of the 2 camps, no one has better pieces.

Therefore we can consider that the game is leveled.

What does Black want to do?

The solution of this problem is again of prophylactic nature.

Black has a major positional threat that would give him an excellent position. This is 1...c5 followed by Nb8-c6-d4 with a strong outpost in the center.

On the other hand, after 1...c5, White meets major technical problems of reaching the other weakened square in the center, d5. For this he would need to find another place for his e3-bishop to can play Ng3-f1-e3. In this time, Black will already have his knight on d4 with serious threats against White's position and especially b3-pawn.

What happens after 1...c5 and Black's knight maneuver does not need to be calculated as it is clear that Black will get the initiative.

What we have to do / Planning

So, we are dealing with a "must make" move, again: White has to play **1.c5!** by which he immediately stops Black's threat.

If this move doesn't work, for sure, White has made some mistake earlier.

Calculation

1.c5 and it is not possible 1...Nc5? because White wins a piece by 2.Qb4!

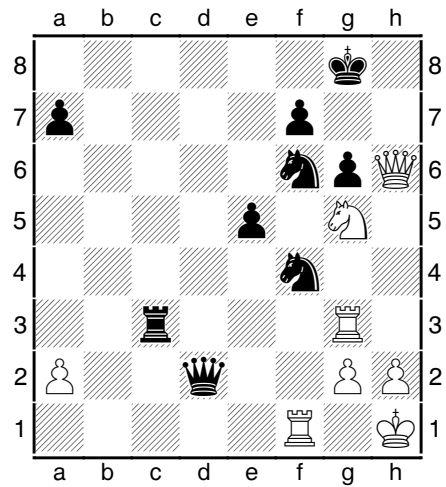
As already pointed out, there is no need to calculate such a move, you have to make it!

In fact, even if White would lose the c5-pawn, he had to make this move in order to avoid a grave strategical bind.

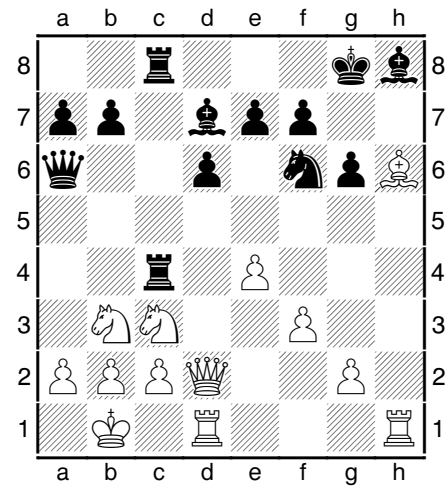
After 1.c5 White gains some more space on the queenside, however, his advantage is only symbolic.

Exercises Month 11 / Set II

Simple Tactics

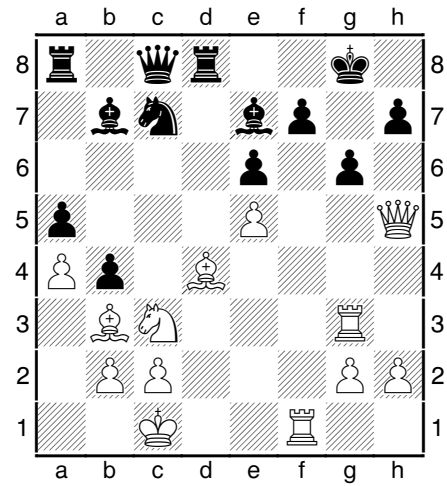


1. White to move



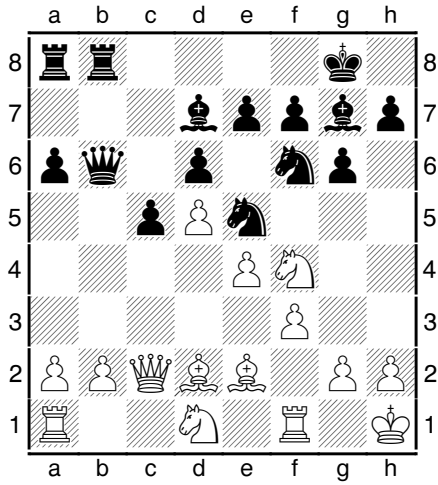
2. White to move

Complicate Position

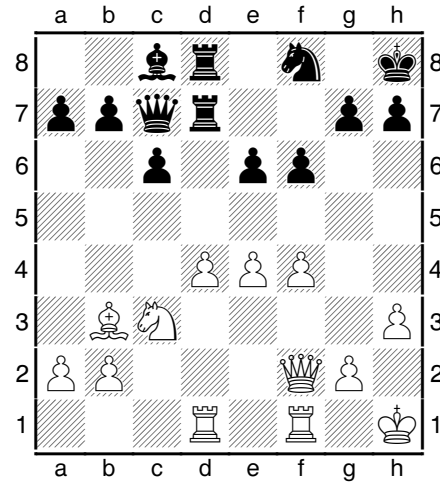


3. White to move

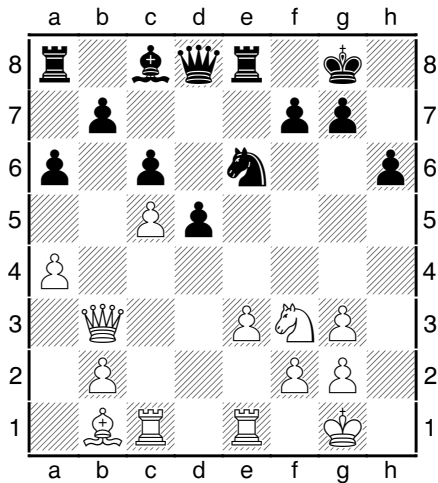
Positional Exercises



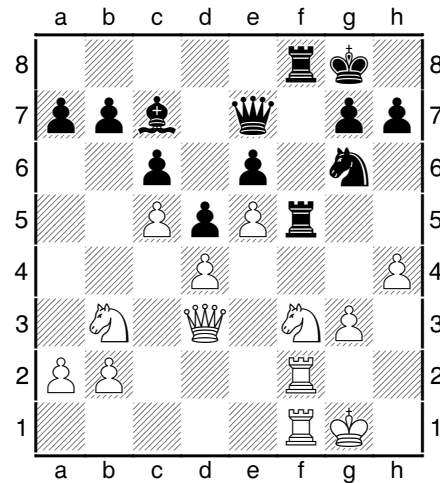
1. Black to move



2. White to move



3. White to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 11 / Set II

Tactics

Starting with this set, the tactical exercises are a bit harder than before.

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Improve the position of a piece.

Position 2

- a) Where should White play?
- b) What would you do with the center?

Position 3

- a) White is better developed.

Position 4

- a) Which is White's worst piece?

Solutions M 11 / Set II

Tactics 1

(Position from a game between 2 top grandmasters, Barrev – Kuprejckik, 1990)

1.Ne6!! an amazing move, possible because of the pin on h1–d2. White threatens Qg7#
In fact, the text move is the only sound move for White. Any other move would lead to defeat. For example 1.Nf3 Qb2 with the threat Nf4 and Rc1

1...N6h5 [1...fxe6 2.Rxg6+ Nxg6 3.Qxg6+ leads to mate (of course 3.Qxd2 also wins)
3...Kf8 4.Qxf6+ Ke8 5.Qxe6+ Kd8 6.Rf8+ Kc7 7.Rf7+ Kb8 8.Qe8+ Rc8 9.Qb5+ Ka8
10.Qb7#]

2.Qf8+ Kh7 3.Ng5#

Tactics 2

In the Sicilian Dragon structure, White can easily open the h-file by pushing h2-h4-h5 and then h5xg6. The problem is that Black defends the squares from the h-file: the bishop defends h6 and h8 and the f6-knight defends the h7-square. However, White has some nice tactical strikes to remove the defenders of the black king. The following combination is one of them:

1.Bf8!! threatening Qh6 and Black has no the typical defense Bg7

1...Rxf8 [1...Nh5 2.Bxe7 with a pawn up and clearly better position, White has a winning position.; 1...Kxf8 2.Rxh8+ Kg7 3.Qh6#]

2.Rxh8+ removing the defender of dark-squares around the king. **2...Kxh8 3.Qh6+ Kg8**

4.Nd5 removing the defender of the h7-square and also threatening Nxe7+

4...Nxd5 5.Rh1 and checkmate on h8.

Tactics 3

1.Nb5!! a kind of prophylactic move: the defender of the e6-pawn is eliminated in advance for the next strike.

Direct 1.Rxf7 doesn't lead to the same result: 1...Kxf7 2.Qxh7+ Ke8 3.Qxg6+ Kd7 and White has nothing. However, the calculation of this variation gives White the idea of the preparatory move: 1.Nb5.

1...Nxb5 now it works: **2.Rxf7! Kxf7 3.Qxh7+ Ke8**

[3...Kf8 4.Qxg6 with the threat Rf3 4... 4...Bg5+ 5.Rxg5 and now Qg8+ and Rg7#]

4.Qxg6+ Kd7 5.Bxe6+ Kc7 6.Bb6+!!

[Better than 6.Bxc8 Nxd4 7.Bg4 Bd5 and White's advantage isn't so clear.]

6...Kxb6 [6...Kb8 7.Bxc8 Rxc8 8.axb5+ -] **7.Bxc8+ Bc6 8.axb5** with big material advantage.

Problem 1

(Position from: Sliwa B – Petrosian T, Gothenburg, 1955)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: Generally, this type of structure arises from Benoni Defense (without the a6-pawn it would have been a Volga structure).

In these structures, mainly because of the advanced c5-pawn, Black plays on the queenside using the long h8-a1 diagonal, and the open files. On the other hand, White tries to obtain superiority in the center by the thematic e4-e5 breakthrough. After this, White will obtain the open e-file and Black's e7-d6-c5 pawn chain is seriously affected.

- Pieces: Black has succeeded to open the game on the queenside while White is still far from threatening something in the center. White's misplaced knight from f4 even obstructs his normal plans of advancing the central pawns (f3-f4 followed by e4-e5).

Overall, the position is equal as White still controls the centre and has more space.

What does White want to do?

At the moment White doesn't threaten anything serious. Still, if Black doesn't do anything active, White can slowly improve his position, by Bc3, Ne3-c4, Nd3, f3-f4, and e4-e5.

White can also try another idea on the queenside: Rb1 followed by b4. In this case, the white b-pawn is traded with the black c-pawn, and Black's pressure on the queenside will disappear while White still remains with his space advantage in the center.

What we have to do

When the position is balanced, the plans of both sides are already defined, there are no obvious attacking maneuvers and there is no real threat upon us, usually we should look to improve the position of our pieces.

To find the right answer we shall apply the principle of "the worst piece". First we have to identify which black piece is badly placed or has little to do with our plans. After this, if possible, we will try to find another square for that piece from where to help our plans or obstruct opponent's plans.

First, let's note that the light-square bishop is not a bad piece, but it has its own role. White's best setup would be with the f4-knight placed on f2. He can achieve this only via h3 (on d3 will be traded), but this is not possible because of Bd7xh3. So, if Black would play 1...Bb5?, after 2.Bc3 followed by Nh3, and f3-f4, White will increase his influence on the centre, while Black has done nothing.

In this position, Black has 2 inactive pieces: Nf6 (which is limited by the white central pawns and which also obstructs Bg7) and Ra8. Since it is hard to improve the position of Ra8, we will look to the knight. Where would we like to have the knight with minimum of effort and maximum efficiency? This is the b5-square: the knight can get there in only 3 moves (Nf6-e8-c7-b5) and will threaten to occupy d4.

Now, the best move is quite easy: **1...Ne8!**.

If White won't allow the knight to go to b5 by playing a2-a4, then, after a6-a5, the knight will go on b4, via a6.

There is no need to calculate any variation because it is in vain. It's not possible to anticipate what decision White will take: to play a2-a4 or not. Only after this we can start calculating variations.

Problem 2

(Position from: Reti R – Watson C, London, 1922)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: White controls the centre and this gives him also a significant space advantage. On the other hand, Black has no attackable weaknesses and he is the one who puts pressure on White's center (d4).

- Pieces: Because of his space advantage, White's pieces are better. Moreover, White has a good bishop against a bad bishop (Black's light-square bishop is blocked behind his pawns).

So, White is clearly better.

What does Black want to do?

In order to solve his main problem (the c8-bishop), Black has to play b7-b6, Bb7, followed by c6-c5. After this maneuver, Black will also challenge White's center and after trading the rooks on the d-file, White's advantage will be history.

What we have to do

White cannot stop Black's plan (b6 and Bb7) but in the same time he has to find a good plan in order to transform his theoretical advantage into something clearer.

The first question is where? In the centre, White is not able to make any progress (Black is more than prepared to meet any breakthrough). So, he must look on the 2 sides. Also it's hard if not impossible to make any progress on the queenside, therefore White has to think to the kingside. Here, he has more space for his pieces and black c8-bishop cannot participate.

The next question is which will be Black's reaction against a kingside attack? **Against a flank attack, the best response is in the centre.** Therefore, first White has to close the center making sure that Black will not get a counter-play here.

He can do this by **1.e5!** by which he does not only close the centre, but also fixes Black's pawns on light squares (restricting his bishop).

Calculation

1.e5!-f5 Black is almost forced to this move, otherwise the white knight enters d6 via e4.

2.g4! with the centre closed, White can start his kingside attack.

2...g6 3.Rg1-Rg7 4.Qh4-Qe7 5.Qf6.

White improved his position and Black wasn't able to even start his plan of getting his bishop into play.

Problem 3

(Position from: Capablanca J – Alekhine A, Buenos Aires World Championship, 1927)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: No one has a real advantage in the centre or somewhere else. White's outpost on d4 is counterbalanced by Black's outpost on e4.

- Pieces: All white pieces are in the play while Black failed to finish his development: Bc8, Ra8 and Qd8 are still on the initial position. Also, Black has a "bad" bishop.

Because of his lead in development, White is better.

What does Black want to do?

In order to get out of trouble, it's enough for Black to get his bishop in the game. This can be achieved after 1...Ng5 (threatening Ne4), 2.Nxg5-Qxg5, followed by Re7 and Bf5 trading the light-square bishops.

What we have to do

As a general rule, **when you have an advantage in development, you should open the game.** *This important rule can also help you when you can capture a pawn in the opening if you are still undeveloped. If the position is opened, it's better not to take it; but if it is closed, you can take the pawn.*

Therefore, in this position, White must open the game in order not to lose his development advantage (a volatile advantage) and this can be achieved with only one move: **1.e4!** The consequences of this pawn advance have to be accurately calculated.

Calculation

1.e4-de4 2.Re4-Re7? The move played by Alekhine. Better was 2....Nc7 in order to trade the rooks. As you already know, **in a cramped position it is good to trade pieces in order to release the pressure.** Now Black's position is already lost.

3.Rce1-Bd7 of course not **3...Nc5 4.Re7** winning. **4.Qc2-g6 5.Ba2-Qf8 6.Ne5** and White wins material and still remains with a positional advantage due to his better placement of the pieces.

Problem 4

(Position from: Zemgalis E – Ulvestad O, Seattle, 1952)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a blocked pawn structure. White has space advantage but no one has weaknesses.
 - Pieces: At the moment no one has better pieces. Still it is hard for Black to find a future for his dark square bishop which is completely limited by white pawn. On the other hand, White can improve his knight's position.
- White has a huge advantage mainly because of Black's lack of counter play.

What does Black want to do?

It's hard to find an immediate or long time threat for Black. All he has to do is to wait and make sure that no weaknesses will appear in his camp.

What we have to do

As you can see from the evaluation of the position, actually we are dealing with a **permanent advantage**. For this reason, White does not have to calculate accurately the variations, but to find a way to improve his position. With this in mind, we can think to improve our worst placed piece.

First of all, it is clear that White has to play on the kingside. It is hard to achieve something on the queenside because Black's pressure on the f-file keeps the white rooks here. In order to achieve any progress on the kingside, White needs more pieces there. For this reason, the b3-knight is misplaced on the queenside where White doesn't intend to play and Black doesn't threat anything yet.

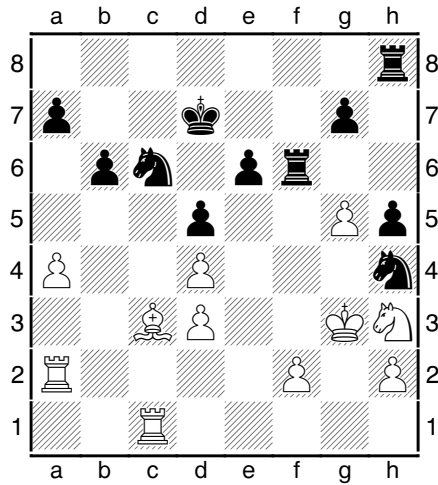
Another thing that we have to keep in mind is avoiding trading pieces that would only ease Black's defense.

White also has to find a route for the knight in order not to interfere with the other one. Now it's easier to find the right answer: **1.Na1!!** The knight is heading to e3, in order to push Black's rook backwards. Achieving this allows White to push back also black's g6 knight by h4-h5.

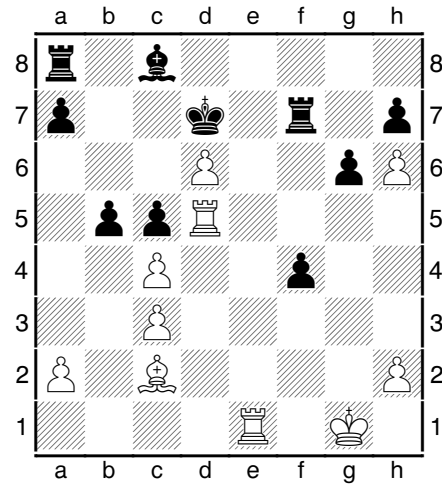
Here, again, we are dealing with a case where no calculation is necessary (only after achieving the best setup, we have to calculate in order to find a winning variation).

Exercises Month 11 / Set III

Simple Tactics

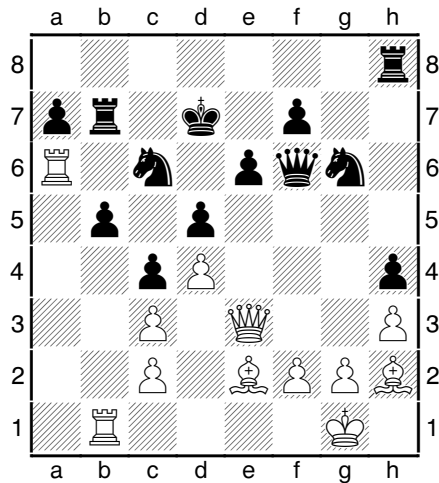


1. Black to move



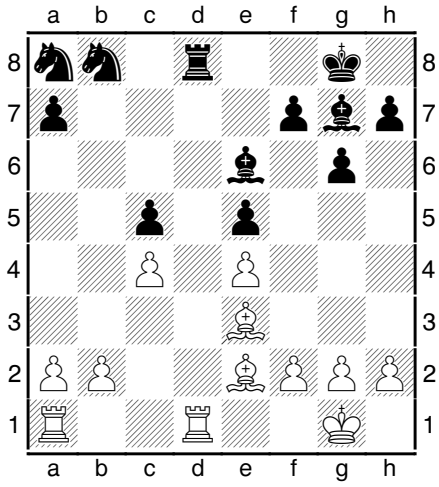
2. White to move

Complicate Position

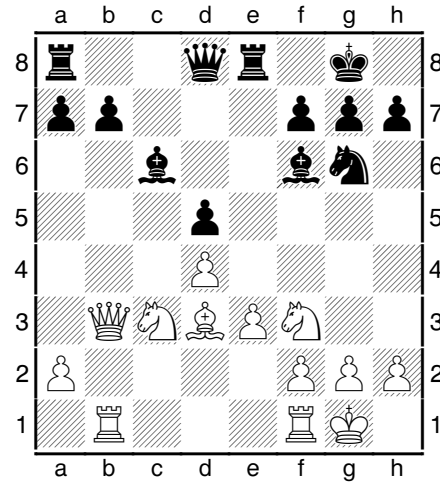


3. White to move

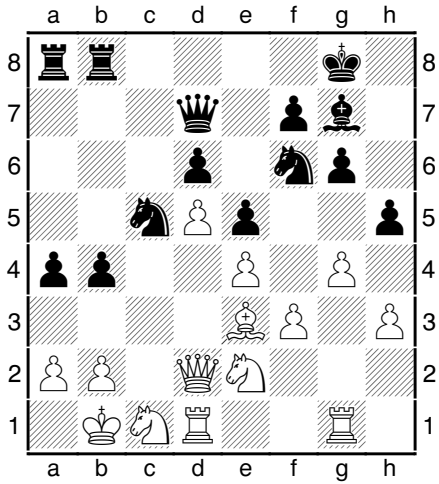
Positional Exercises



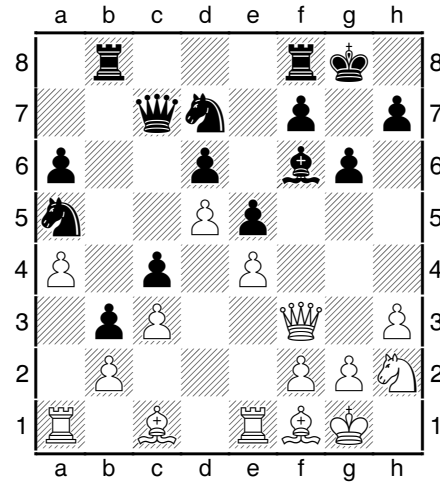
1. Black to move



2. White to move



3. Black to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 11 / Set III

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Instead of defending against White's threats (which are they?), Black can obtain an active position.

Position 2

- a) Which is Black's "bad" bishop?
- b) Which is the best defender of Black's weaknesses?

Position 3

- a) Black wants to bring more pieces on the queenside.
- b) How can Black gain maximum time, given that White threatens to open the lines on the kingside?

Position 4

- a) Where should Black play? How?
- b) How can Black obtain a good exchange?

Solutions M 11 / Set III

Tactics 1

1...Rf3+! forcing the white king to enter a mating net. **2.Kxh4 Ne7!! 3.g6 Nxg6+ 4.Kg5 Rh6!** and Rf5#

Tactics 2

1.Bxg6!! clearing the way of the h-pawn to queening **1...hxc6 2.Re7+!** eliminating the defender of the h7-square **2...Rxe7 3.dxe7+ Kxe7 4.Rd8!!** protects the 8th rank or forces Black to block this rank with his own king: **4...Kxd8 5.h7+-**

Tactics 3

Behind the shield of the blocked pawn structure, the black king looks safe. However, after a closer examination, we will see that the white h2-bishop controls an important diagonal near the black king, the white rooks are active on the queenside, the black queen cannot help his king too much and, most important: the b5- and d5- pawns are essential to close the b-file and, respectively, the h1-a8 diagonal. If we would remove the black d5-pawn, White wins by 1.Rxc6 Kxc6 2.Qe4+ Kb6 3.Rxb5+. So, the black pawns are overloaded and this gives White the idea of the next attack:

1.Bxc4!! dxc4

1...Nb8 2.Rxb5+-;

1...b4 2.Bb3! (with idea Ba4) 2...Rb6 3.Rba1 Rc8 4.Rxa7+ Nxa7 5.Rxa7+ Kd8 6.Be5 Qf5 (6...Nxe5 7.dxe5 and Qxb6) 7.Qh6 with idea 8.Qg7

2.Rxc6! Qf5 [2...Kxc6 3.Qe4+ Kb6 4.Rxb5+ +-] **3.d5! exd5** [3...e5 4.Qc5 Rhb8 5.Re1 f6 6.Qd6+ Ke8 7.Qxf6+-] **4.Rd6+ Kc8 5.Qc5+ Rc7 6.Qxb5** and mate on b8.

Problem 1

(Position from: Cobo Arteaga E – Ivkov B, Havana ol, 1966)

Positional Evaluation

First of all, this is a position with material equivalence (PME), balanced material: a rook and a pawn against 2 knights.

- Center/pawn structure: White has a better pawn structure because he has no weaknesses while Black has a major weakness on c5.

- Pieces: Black has “the play coordinating piece” (the rook) but this is obviously threatened to be exchanged by White on the d-file. We know that in PME, the existence of a major piece is essential to keep the equilibrium.

What does White want to do?

Of course, White wants to trade a pair of rooks after which it will be easier for him to penetrate Black’s camp with the other rook. Also he has an immediate threat, not easy to be parried: to grab the c5-pawn.

What Black has to do

Black has to find a way to defend the c5-pawn:

a) The first option is 1...Rc8 which would also protect the coordinator of play. After this, Black can obtain a good position playing Bf8 and Nc6-d4. Unfortunately, 1...Rc8 is not possible because of 2.Bxc5! Rxc5 3.Rd8 and White is almost winning. Quite a normal approach would be 1...Rc8!? 2.Bxc5!-Nc6! and then Black can bring his other knight in the game trying to balance the position by a good piece play but White has the first chance.

b) Also 1...Nd7 is not possible because of 2.Bxc5.

Still, Black has at his disposal an excellent strategic exchange: **1...Rd4! 2.Bd4-ed4** (Note that 2...cd4 will be a huge mistake. After 3.b4! White’s strong queenside pawns will be unstoppable.)

Now it is time to assess the position again. After this little operation, Black managed to improve his pawn structure: he eliminated the weakness and got a strong passed pawn. Another important aspect is that white rooks have no open files to operate while the black knights can become very active.

Although the position is still unclear, because of the unusual material balance, Black’s chances are better. It is hard to see how White can open the lines for his rooks without losing at least a pawn. Probably, if White doesn’t try anything active, he can hold the game, but still the initiative is in Black’s hands.

Problem 2

(Position from: Smyslov V – Keres P, World championship, 1948)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: This is a “minority attack” position (static center). White managed to make more progress: he already traded his b-pawn with the black c6-pawn and now he is pressing on the queenside (especially against b7 and d5). White has a better pawn structure.

- Pieces: White has also better pieces: his major pieces are ready to make pressure on the queenside and Black has a “bad” light-square bishop.

What does Black want to do?

At the moment Black has no real threat. In this type of position, Black's counter-play should be on the kingside but his pieces are obviously misplaced for this. Therefore, Black should try first to improve the position of his dark square bishop by placing it on the b8-h2 diagonal.

What we have to do

Using the "minority attack" (b2-b4-b5-xc6), White managed to create weaknesses in Black's queenside pawn formation. Still it is not easy to attack them. We have to look further and see how Black defends these weaknesses: this is the "bad" light-square bishop from c6.

GM Mihail Suba was the first who pointed out an important principle about "bad" bishops: **There are two types of bad bishops: those that are simply bad (they are passive not having any function and limited by their own pawns) and bad bishops that defend "good" pawns.**

Here we are dealing with the second case. Black's light square bishop has an important role defending his weaknesses and therefore it is quite difficult for White to make real progress on the queenside.

Now the best move is clear: **1.Bb5!** In normal conditions, this would be a huge strategic mistake. Why to trade white "good" bishop for his "bad" homologue? As a matter of fact things are reversed: while Black's light square bishop is defending weaknesses, the white bishop is doing nothing. Trading bishops will allow White to attack more easily Black's weaknesses and also will clear the c-file with the threat to penetrate Black's 7th rank with the rooks.

After we are sure that we took the right strategical decision and because it's a calm position, there is no need for calculation.

Problem 3

(Position from: Chuprov D, 2425 – Fedorov A, 2555, Omsk, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: This is a typical blocked structure of King's Indian Defense.
 - Pieces: White managed to trade his "bad" light square bishop but Black was able to make more progress on the queenside – an important factor as White castled on this side. Black's attack compensates that he remained with his "bad" dark square bishop.
- The game is unclear, but Black has the initiative so we can say that he has better chances.

What does White want to do?

White has to try to get some counter-play on the kingside (in this kind of positions, only defense without counter-play has no chances). In order to open the g-file (by g4xh5), White has to remove the black knight from f6 by Bg5.

What Black has to do

First of all, we note that Black can achieve nothing on the queenside by only advancing the pawns because White can block the structure. So, in order to increase the pressure on attack, Black needs to bring more reserves on this side. An essential piece would be the f6-knight which would love to arrive on the critical c4-square (Nf6-d7-b6-c4).

However, before transferring pieces from kingside to the queenside, Black has to take preventive measures to delay White's attack on the kingside.

This can be easily achieved by **1...h4!** and White cannot open the g-file anymore. However, after this move, Black will lose a pawn so he needs to calculate accurately and, then, to evaluate the final position.

Calculation

1...h4! 2.Bf2 the most testing move, otherwise Black can transfer his knight without losing a pawn. For example 2.Nd3-Qb5 (with the idea Nfd7) 3.Bg5-Nb3! 4.Qe1 (4.ab3?-ab3 winning) 4...Qc4 followed by Ra7-c7 with strong attack.

2...Qb5 3.Bh4-Nfd7 4.Bf2-Nb6 With the cost of a pawn, Black has improved his chances in the queenside attack by bringing more pieces on this side. On the other hand, White didn't make any progress on the kingside.

5.Ng3 White already has to defend against the deadly threats (5...Nc4).

5...Nc4 6.Qe2 Bh6 now all black pieces are in the game and it is hard to give White a defensive advice.

The game is still unclear but Black's initiative has a concrete character now. Because Black was able to bring all his pieces in active attacking positions, it is clear that the pawn sacrifice was a good decision.

Problem 4

(Position from: Klinger J, 2445 – Nunn J, 2585, Vienna, 1986)

Positional Evaluation

The queenside and the center are almost completely blocked. Black can attack the base of the white pawn chain (e4) by f7-f5, but White cannot attack the d6-pawn.

White has a weakness on a4 and Black on c4. In the future, White's weakness may prove more critical because it needs to be defended by a rook. Although a weakness, the black c4-pawn obstructs White's light-square mobility and also confers Black space advantage on the queenside and the c5-square.

What does White want to do?

White will probably turn his attention to the c4-pawn playing Ng4-e3. Then, he will try to change his kingside pawn formation by means of g2-g3 and h3-h4 in order to activate his light-square bishop on h3.

What we have to do

Because of the closed pawn formation in the center with White's pawn chain e4-d5, Black should plan to advance his f-pawn.

When you have a clear but also unique plan, it is always useful to improve your position first in such a way to realize your plan in the best circumstances (with maximum force).

In this position, the improvement Black can make is to trade his dark-square bishop which is quiet passive. For this reason **1...Qd8** is the best preparatory move. Instead of **1...Bg7** (with the idea f7-f5) remaining with his dark square bishop on the board, Black prefers to trade the bishop (Bf6-g5) and also bringing the queen closer to the theater of the next battle.

Moreover, trading White's dark-square bishop, Black will obtain an unchallenged position on c5 attacking the a4-pawn permanently.

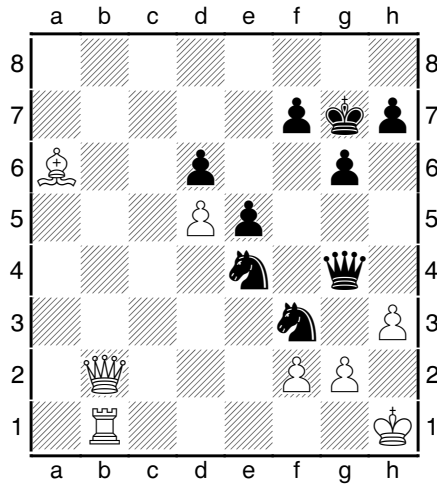
Calculation

1...Qd8 2.Ng4 the best way to oppose against Black's attempt. White wants to avoid trading dark square bishops by closing the c1-h6 diagonal.

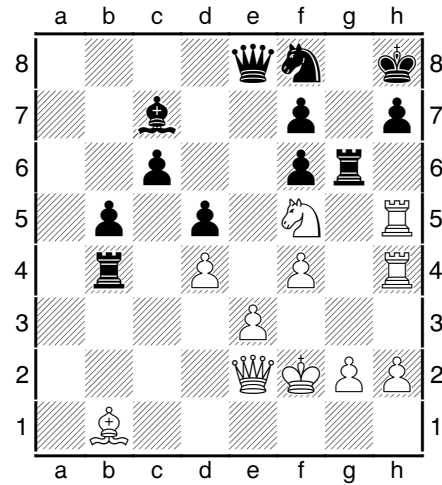
2...Bg5 3.Ne3-Nc5! 4.Nc4-Bc1 5.Rec1-Nc4 6.Bc4 Although Black is a pawn down, he is still better because of the high quality of the c5-knight versus White's bishop. It is easy to demonstrate this: if Black does nothing for many moves, White cannot improve his position. After **6...a5!** fixing White's main weakness, Black can play Rb7 and f7-f5 with pressure on White's kingside.

Exercises Month 11 / Set IV

Simple Tactics

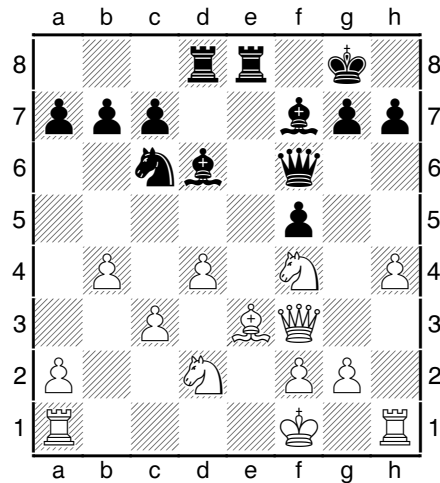


1. Black to move



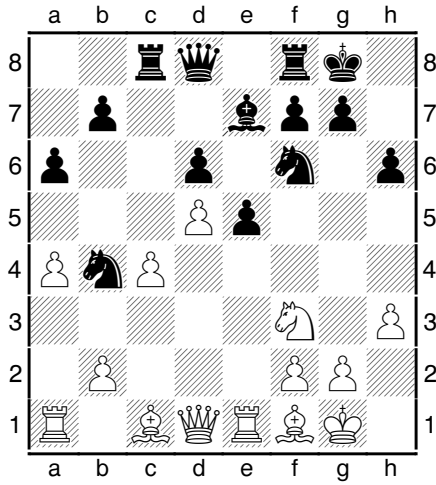
2. White to move

Complicate Position

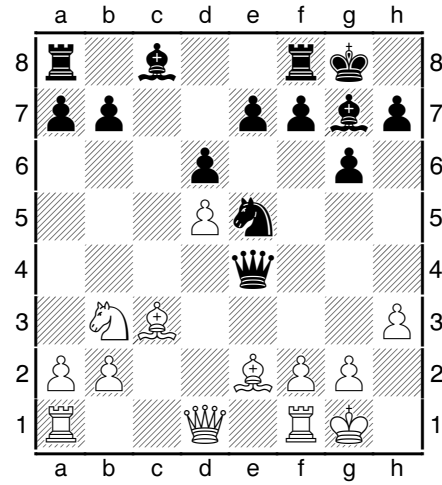


3. White to move

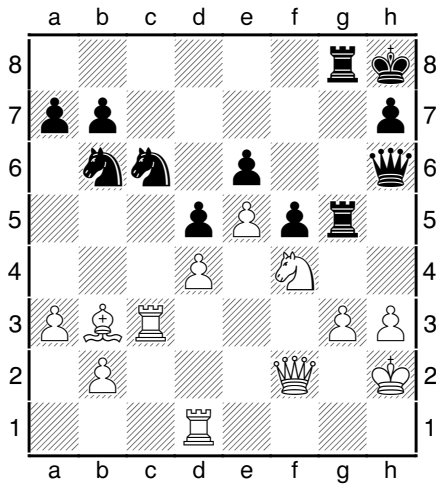
Positional Exercises



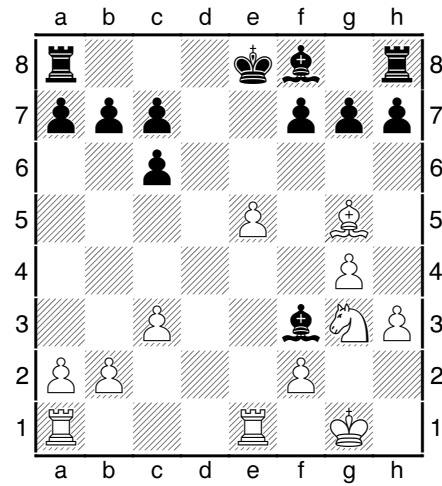
1. Black to move



2. Black to move



3. White to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 11 / Set IV

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Prophylaxis on the queenside.

Position 2

- a) Prophylaxis in the center.

Position 3

- a) Improve the position of your (white) pieces.

Position 4

- a) Evaluate the position of the f3-bishop.

Solutions M 11 / Set IV

Tactics 1

1...Qg3!! 2.gxf3 [2.fxg3 Nxg3#] 2...Nxf2+ 3.Qxf2 Qxf2

Tactics 2

This position hid a calculation trap. In practice, we do not know if the “combinations” work or not and therefore a very exact calculation is necessary.

1.Rxh7+?? This sacrifice might look very good, but it's not.

A correct move would have been **1.Bd3**

1...Nxh7 2.Qh5 Qg8 3.Ne7 White's position already looks winning, but surprise:

3...Rxb2+! 4.Kf3 Rf2+!! Clearing the g-file for the queen

5.Kxf2 Rb2+ and Black is the one who wins.

Tactics 3

Black sacrificed a pawn for initiative: he has very well placed pieces while White has no connection between rooks and a weak structure on the queenside. Also, it is very hard to imagine a way for White to improve his position.

Black has strategical threats as starting an attack on the queenside by a7-a5 or even tactical threats. For example: **18...Bxb4!? 19.cxb4 Nxd4 20.Qxb7 (20.Bxd4 Qxd4 21.Rd1 Qxb4+)** **20...Nc2 21.Rd1 Qc3** with strong attack.

In the game, under the psychological pressure of having a bad position, White made a blunder: **18.Nh5??** and resigned after **18...Bxh5 19.Qxh5 f4**

A chance of improving the position is to try to bring the h1-rook into play by:

18.Rh3 The game could continue: **18...a5!** weakening White's queenside even more **19.b5 Ne7 20.a4 (20.Qxb7 Rb8 21.Qf3 Rxb5 with attack; 20.c4 c6 21.c5 Bxf4 22.Qxf4 Nd5 with clear advantage)** **20...c6 21.bxc6 bxc6 22.Nh5 Qg6 23.Nf4 Qg4** and Black has clear compensation.

However, White has a simple way to save the game: **18.Nd5!** and Black has no good squares for the queen:

18...Qe6

Both **18...Bxd5 19.Qxd5+ Kh8 20.Bg5** and

18...Qg6 19.Bg5 Rd7 20.Rh3 are not good.

19.Nf4 Qf6 20.Nd5 and White draws by repetition of moves.

Problem 1

(Position from: Jakubowski K, 2507 – Jaworski M, Ustron, 2006)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: This position is typical to positional lines that White has at disposal against Sicilian Najdorf. White has a queenside pawn majority but at the moment this is firmly blocked. Black's e- and f- pawn phalanx has better chances to advance in the center.

- Pieces: White has the bishop-pair but this has little importance because of the closed character of the position.

We can say that the game is balanced.

What does White want to do?

White has an immediate positional threat: a4-a5. After 1.a5 b6 (forced, otherwise White plays 2.Bd2) 2.ab6-Qb6 3.Be3 followed by Qa4 and Rfc1, White obtains a strong pressure on queenside and, more important, his pawn majority becomes mobile.

What Black has to do

After we identified White's threat (which is real), the first move that suggests itself is **1...a5**. Here, it is no need for calculation, but Black has to see if this prophylactic move is also a good positional move for his own position.

After a6-a5, Black vacates the a6-square for the knight and, more important, he blocks White's queenside majority even better. After this, Black will play Nf6-d7 in order to advance the f-pawn and grab more space in the center.

Note that the b-pawn has to stay on b7 in order to cover the c6-square. At some point, Black will surely play e5-e4 allowing White to play Nd4 and thus the c6-square has to be defended. Another reason to keep the pawn on b7 is to have the b6-square free for the queen if necessary (in order to increase the pressure on queenside).

Problem 2

(Position from: Avrukh B, 2603 – Smirin I, 2652, ISR-championship, 1999)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: Black is a pawn up and has a good structure, typical of Dragon.

- Pieces: In some extent, White has better pieces. Black has a strong knight on e5 but his pieces are not at all secure in the center (the knight can be chased away by f2-f4 and the black queen and the e7-pawn are exposed on the e-file). White's main chances are also connected with the fact that Black has some difficulties to develop his pieces on natural squares.

So, although Black is better, White has the initiative which can grow in case of un-accurate opposition.

What does White want to do?

White wants to improve his pieces' positions by Qd2, Rae1 and f2-f4 in order to get advantage of Black's misplaced queen and his weak e7-pawn.

What Black has to do

It is clear that Black has to continue his development (the c8-bishop and the rooks) and, in the same time, to find safe positions for his pieces with coordinated actions in order to be able to parry White's future threats.

Also, it is important to find a way to consolidate the position of the best piece in the center which is, of course, the e5-knight against f2-f4. The only way is g6-g5.

In this position, accurate calculation is necessary so Black has to make a list of candidate moves that make sense and, after this, to evaluate the final positions. The candidate moves are: a) 1...Bd7, b) 1...Bf5 and c) 1...g5.

Calculation

a) 1...Bd7 2.f4-Nc4 3.Bg7-Kg7 4.Re1-Qf4 5.Bc4-Qc4 6.Rc1-Qa4 7.Rc7 and White has an excellent dynamic, will soon regain at least a pawn while maintaining a strong initiative.

b) 1...Bf5 in order to meet f4 with Nd3 and also with the threat Qc2 trading the queens. **2.Nd4** bringing the knight in the game and threatening to win the pair of bishops. **2...Rac8** (2...Qd5?? 3.Nf5- Qd1 4.Ne7 winning) **3.Nf5-gf5** (3...Qf5? 4.f4-Nc4 5.Bg4 winning the exchange) **4.Re1-Rc5 5.Bg4-Qd5 6.Qd5-Rd5 7.Bf5** followed at some point by Be5 entering an opposite color bishops endgame with big chances for a draw, even with a pawn up.

c) 1...g5! The right move. Black fortifies his e5-knight in the center which also covers the only weakness (the e7-pawn). The queen gets more space being able to retreat on g6 (another safe position) and, in the same time, getting some chances for a future attack on the kingside.

2.Re1-Qg6 3.Nd4-f5 Black can seriously think now to a kingside attack, but more important, he assured the position of his strong e5-knight that stopped White's initiative.

Problem 3

(Position from: Vajda L, 2484 – Conquest S, 2488, Bucharest, 1999)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: The game is closed and no one has better pawn structure.
- Pieces: White has a small advantage due to better placement of his pieces. The f4-knight is more active than his homologues and, more important, it is hard to find any active plan for Black.

What does Black want to do?

Black has no real chance to improve his position on the kingside due the fact that no reinforcements (reserves) can be brought here. His game can be improved by transferring his rooks on the c-file trying to trade them. As you already know, the exchanges are favorable for the player who has a cramped position. So, probably, Black will play something like R5g7-c7 and Rc8.

Also Black has a hidden idea of playing Nd8-f7-g5-e4.

What White has to do

In order to get something concrete, White has to find a way to enter opponent's camp using the c-file. But first he has to improve the position of his pieces at maximum.

Of course, the worst piece in this setup is the bishop. Which would be the best square for the bishop? This is e2 from where it guards c4 and also threatens to support the f4-knight to arrive on f6 via h5.

To achieve this transfer of the bishop, the d1-rook has to be moved. But where? The answer is not so easy.

Calculation

1.Rdd3! This is the right move. Now White overprotects his g3-pawn and consequently the other rook gets free hands to use the c-file.

(After 1.Rdc1- R5g7 2.Bd1-Nc4 3.Ba4-Nd8 Black continues with Nf7-g5-e4).

1...R5g7 2.Bd1-Nc4 3.Ba4! threatening Bb5. The difference is that now after **3...Nd8 4.Bb5-Nf7** White can grab the pawn on c4 since g3 is still well defended.

Problem 4

(Position from: Rowson J, 2499 – Miles A, 2579, Southend, 2000)

Positional Evaluation

- Pawn structure and pieces: This position arises after the Berlin Wall system which is quite similar with the Exchange System of the same opening (Spanish Opening). White has a better pawn structure because he has a pawn majority in the center (so White is able to create a free pawn) while Black has doubled pawns on the queenside (which are not able to create a free pawn). In exchange for the quality of the pawns, Black has the bishop-pair and a solid position.

What does Black want to do?

Black will probably improve the position of Bf3 by playing Bd5 defending the light squares in front of white pawns and also keeping an eye on White's queenside. Then, Black can play h7-h6, Kd7 and Re8 activating his pieces.

What White has to do

If White is not able to generate some improvements in his position or to disturb Black's plans, then any chances for an advantage will be history. He has to do something before Black consolidates his position and completes his development.

With this in mind, White has to calculate accurately a few variations and evaluate the final position.

Calculation

a) 1.e6 it makes sense to open the game when your opponent is under-developed. On the other hand, Black has the bishop-pair and therefore the opening of the position only suits Black's long-term plans

1...fe6 2.Re6 - Kf7 3.Re5 - Bd5 4.Rf5 - Kg8 and Black has nothing to fear. So, 1.e6 is not good as doesn't bring any initiative for White.

b) 1.Nh5 in order to keep obstruct the development of the black dark-square bishop. **1...Bd5 2.b3-a5** and Black gets an active play on the queenside.

c) 1.c4! By this move, White does not allow to the Black's light-square bishop to arrive on the a2-g8 diagonal. From there, the bishop would not only protect the king but also would create an unpleasant pressure against White's queenside pawns.

Also White created an immediate threat: 2.Re3 trapping the bishop.

1...c5 (1...Bb4 2.Re3-Bd2 3.Rf3-Bg5 4.Ne4-Be7 5.Rd1 and Black has nothing to oppose against White's better structure).

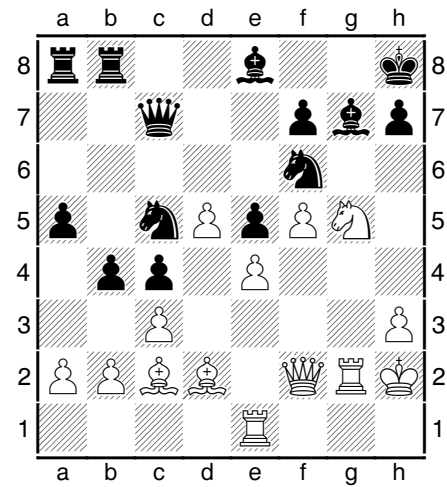
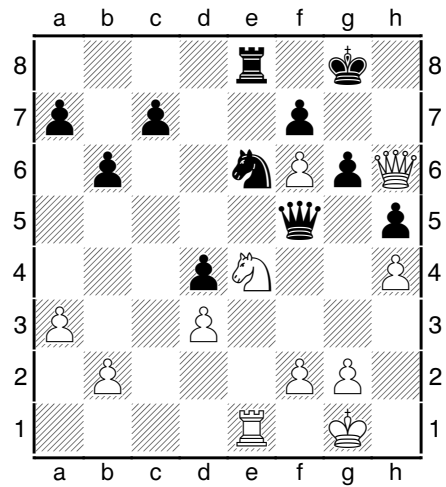
2.Nh5 – h6 3.Bh4 – g5 4.Bg3 – Be7 5. e6! now it is time to open the game because the white pieces are on active squares.

After **5...fe6 6.Re6 – Kd7 7. Rae1** Black hardly can find a reasonable response.

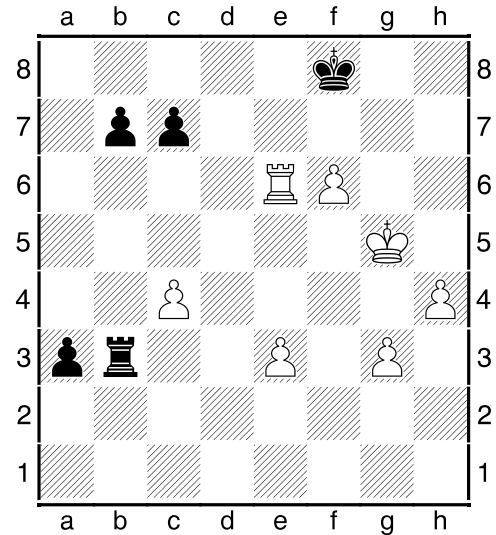
So, 1.c4 which limited Black's bishop and also cut it from the rest of black pieces (creating a disharmony in Black's pieces coordination) was a "winning" move.

Exercises Month 11 / Set V

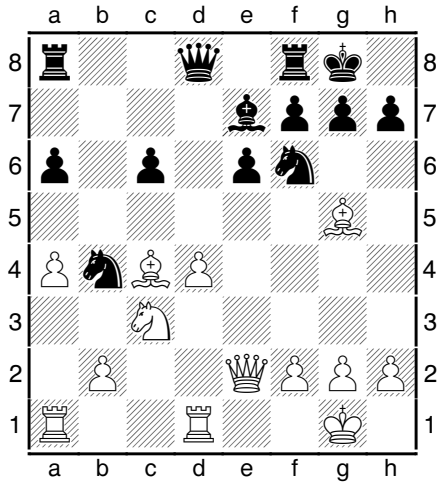
Simple Tactics



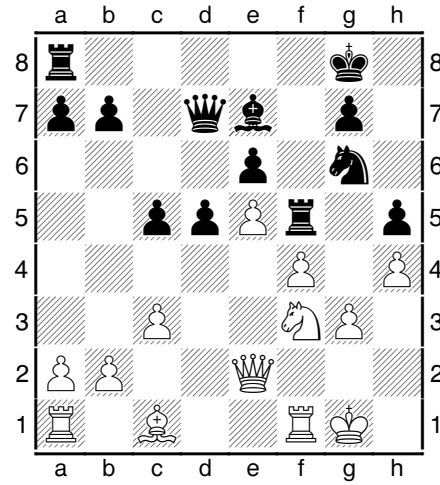
Complicate Position



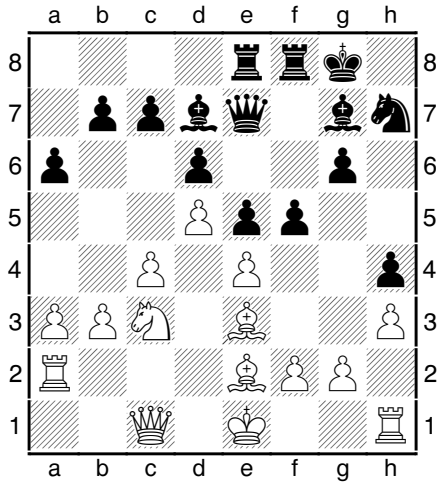
Positional Exercises



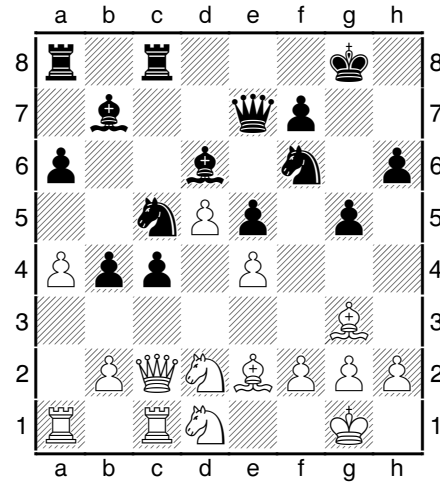
1. White to move



2. Black to move



3. Black to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 11 / Set V

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) On which side should White play?
- b) Which is a condition to can attack a target/weakness?

Position 2

- a) Are Black's pieces in ideal positions?

Position 3

- a) Is f5-f4 a good move?
- b) Or is Bf6-g5 a good idea?

Position 4

- a) No hint.

Solutions M 11 / Set V

Tactics 1

1.Nd6!! cxd6 2.Rxe6!

Tactics 2

1.Nxh7! Nxh7 [1...Kxh7 2.Qh4+ Kg8 3.Qxf6]

2.Reg1! [2.Rxg7?! Kxg7 3.f6+ Kh8! Is still unclear]

Now, Black cannot defend the g7-bishop and this cannot leave because of Rg8#

2...f6 3.Rxg7 Qxg7 4.Rxg7 Kxg7 5.Qxc5+-

Tactics 3

In this position, Black eventually wins; however, White still can create a lot of obstacles for Black who will have to pay very exactly:

1.Re5, of course, the only move – White wants to play Ra5 and stops the a-pawn.

1...Rb6! prepares 2...Ra6 in response to 2.Ra5. In the game, White resigned here, but he could still continue the fight with:

2.c5!! a very tricky move, we will see later why.

2...Ra6

2...Rxf6 3.Rd5! (*not 3.Kxf6 a2*) 3...a2 4.Rd1 is still unclear

3.c6! setting up a threat: if Black plays: 3...bxc6?? which seems very normal, White even wins by using threats of back rank mate: 4.Kg6 a2 5.Rh5!! and black king is in danger and has to move away: 5...Ke8 6.f7+ Ke7 7.Re5+ Kd6 8.f8Q+ Kxe5 9.Qf5+ Kd6 10.Qd3+ Ke6 11.Qxa6;

3...a2?? is also wrong because of: 4.cxb7 a1Q 5.b8Q+ Kf7 6.Qe8#

3...Rxc6! This is the only good move for Black.

4.Rd5 with the idea Rd1–a1

4...Rd6! again the only way to a clear win. Black has to drive away White's rook from the open d-file first, otherwise he will have again problems with the back rank mate.

For example: 4...a2? 5.Rd1 Ra6 6.Kg6!! Ra8 7.Ra1 b5 8.h5 and White queens first.

5.Rc5 [5.Ra5 Ra6] **5...a2 6.Rc1 Ra6 7.Ra1** [7.Kg6 doesn't help anymore as the white rook is no longer on the d-file and there is no mate threat.]

7...b5 8.h5 b4 9.h6 Kg8! and Black finally wins.

Sometimes, a position that seems clearly lost may hide interesting resources. Before resigning (as White did here after 1...Rb6!), you have to think twice (anyway, the game cannot be lost for 2 times) and make sure that there is no any saving chance.

Problem 1

(Position from: Izoria Z, 2569 – Ganguly S, 2542, Nakhchivan, 2003)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: Both players have some weaknesses of their own: White has the isolated d4-pawn (which can be easily attacked). Also, in the future, the backward b-pawn can be an easy target on the open b-file. Black's queenside pawns (a and c) are both weak.
 - Pieces: White has the bishop-pair but at the moment black's knights are also active and have good outposts so they fully compensate for White's bishops.
- The game is balanced.

What does Black want to do?

His long term plan is connected with a pressure against the d4-pawn. This can be attacked by doubling the rooks on d-file. For the moment, the queenside rook is tied down to defend the a6-pawn so the first thing Black has to do is to play a6-a5 moving his weakness to a less dangerous square.

What White has to do

In normal circumstances in positions with isolated central pawn, White should try to attack on the kingside, but this is almost impossible now because there are not enough pieces on this side and it is also hard to bring more (the knight from b4 is very annoying for White as it controls all routes for the light square bishop to get on the b1-h7 diagonal).

White cannot stay passive so it remains the queenside for active actions. In order to make any progress there is absolutely necessary to fix Black's weak a-pawn on an attackable square. So the best move is **1.a5**. In addition, White vacates the a4-square for his knight and at some moment he can turn his attention on attacking the Black's b4-knight.

Calculation

1.a5! Nfd5 this is the normal way for Black to finish the development. In addition, White's bishop-pair is eliminated. However, another consequence is that Black loses the control over the c5-square that White will use now by **Nc3-a4-c5**.

2.Be7-Qe7 3.Na4 As d4-d5 will be never possible, the white knight is heading to more active squares.

3...Nc7 4.Nc5 Nb5 followed by Nd5.

The game is still balanced both sides having a weakness (that can be attacked): White has the d4-pawn and Black has the a6-pawn (thanks to 1.a5 move).

Problem 2

(Position from: Sulskis S, 2555 – Dautov R, 2625, Elista, 1998)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: Black has a better control over the center because of his d5- and c5- pawn phalanx. On the other hand, White has more space because of his e5-pawn. However, White's kingside majority is well blocked so we can say that Black has a better pawn structure.

- Pieces: Black's kingside pieces are misplaced: his g6-knight is out of game and his f5-rook has an awkward position only defending the h5-pawn. White's dark square bishop is a "bad" bishop but only considering the kingside pawns, otherwise it can get active possibilities on the queenside.

So, White has better pieces balancing his worse pawn structure. The game is balanced.

What does White want to do?

White has two major plans: first is to bring his knight to e3 via e1-c2 in order to grab the h5-pawn and the second is connected with c3-c4 advance disturbing Black's center.

After c3-c4, Black can either a) advance d5-d4 blocking his own bishop and concealing an excellent d3-square for the white knight or b) allow c4xd5-Qxd5 (better than e6xd5 which would free White's pawn majority) that will leave him without his strong center

What Black has to do

Unfortunately, it is hard to find a good prophylactic idea for Black. Also, Black cannot have an active plan at the moment. Therefore, he should better find a way to improve his pieces' positions. Remember: **when you don't know what to do, always think how you can improve the positions of your misplaced pieces.** This hardly can be a bad thing.

So, Black's worst piece is the g6-knight. In order to keep an eye on the kingside (keeping White's pawn majority blocked), Black has to control the f5- and g4- squares and both these squares can be controlled from h6.

Now everything is clear: the black knight has to be brought on h6 via h8-f7. So the first move has to be **1...Nh8!**

Calculation

a) 1...Nh8! 2.Ne1-Nf7 3.Nc2-Nh6

Better than 3....d4? 4.Rd1-Rd8 5.Ne3 with huge advantage for White.

4.Ne3-Qe8! 5.Nf5-Nf5 followed by 6...Qg6 and Black has nothing to fear because of the closed position, White's weak g3-pawn, and weak light-squares in White's kingside.

b) 1...Nh8 2.c4-Nf7 3.cd5-Qd5! 4.Rd1-Qc6 5.Be3-Nh6 and Black keeps the balance of the game.

Problem 3

(Position from: Van Wely L, 2635 – Damjanovic B, 2555, Elista, 1998)

Positional Evaluation

We have a typical King's Indian structure. It is obvious that Black managed to make more progress on the kingside than White on the queenside (f5 is already played while White has no threat on the other side). Black's forces are also mobilized; therefore we can say that he is a little better.

What does White want to do?

At this point, White has no real threats. Probably he will play something like Rc2 and then start pushing his queenside pawns.

However, he is well prepared against a direct attack on the kingside with f4 followed by Ng5. In order to close the game, after 1...f4 2.Bd2-Ng5 3.f3!, he has to stay with the king in the centre, otherwise Black can sacrifice on h3.

What Black has to do

It will be a huge mistake for Black to play f5-f4, because White will be able to close the position on the kingside (Bd2 followed by f2-f3), after which White will have free hands on the queenside.

At some point, Black wants to open the f-file or even to prepare the f5-f4 advance (when White cannot block the kingside).

At this point, Black has to do something useful, preparatory and this is, as usual, the improvement of the pieces. So, Black should trade his dark-square bishop (the "bad" bishop and also the worst piece in this setup). This can be achieved quite easily, by **1...Bf6!** followed by Bg5 and White has nothing to do against. After this exchange, White will have fewer forces to attack on the queenside (the e3-bishop had an important role), while Black will get more space to maneuver on the kingside.

In order for this move to work, accurate calculation is necessary because after exchanges on g5, White can play f2-f4 (after he castled first) and this will bring the white rook on f4 with attack on the black h4-pawn.

Calculation

1...Bf6! 2.0-0-Bg5 3.Bg5-Qg5 4.Qg5-Ng5 5.ef5-gf5 6.f4 the point of White's previous moves (castle and exchanges on g5).

6...ef4 7.Rf4

It looks like White has the upper hand (because of the weakness on h4) but Black foresees a tactical nice trick:

7...-Re3! 7.Rc2-Rh3! and he is the one who wins a pawn.

Problem 4

(Position from: Tsesarsky I, 2470 – Kaspi A, 2486, Israel 1999)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: White has a better pawn structure with a strong past d5-pawn. On the other hand, Black managed to grab some space on the queenside.
 - Pieces: Mainly because of his space advantage, Black's pieces are more active. Moreover, his knights put annoying pressure on the e4-pawn. The main problem for Black is that he is in danger of losing the c4-pawn.
- The game is very complicated with chances for both sides.

What does White want to do?

White threatens to win a pawn. On a long term, he will play f2-f3 in order to free his pieces from defending the e4-pawn and to bring his misplaced dark square bishop into the game via f2.

What Black has to do

At the moment, Black blocks the strong white passed d-pawn with his bad bishop (this is a good thing because he is using a passive piece). He also has a misplaced bishop on b7 and if he wants to bring it in the game (on d7 via c8) he also has to move his rook. Black has to find a way to loose the c4-pawn in the best conditions. Actually we are dealing with a typical pawn sacrifice that generally can be found in "Benoni Defense". After **1...c3!** Black will fortify his c5-knight remaining with a strong b-pawn. In order to protect the pawn, Black will bring his rook on b8 which fits perfectly with his future plan to bring his misplaced light squared bishop into the game.

Calculation

1...c3! 2.bc3-b3! 3.Qb1

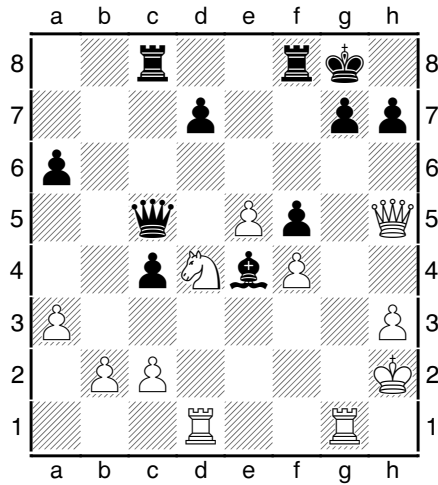
3.Nb3 is bad because after 3.Nce4 White will lose his pair of bishops and the d5-pawn.

3...Rcb8 followed by Bc8-d7. After this, Black is able to activate all his pieces obtaining a strong pawn on b3 while White has a bad pawn on c3 which limits the activity of his pieces.

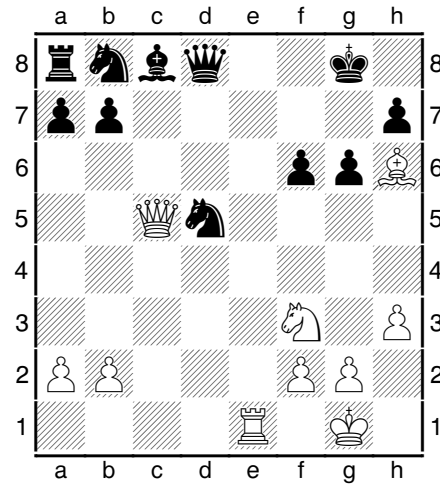
Even with a pawn down, Black is better.

Exercises Month 11 / Set VI

Simple Tactics

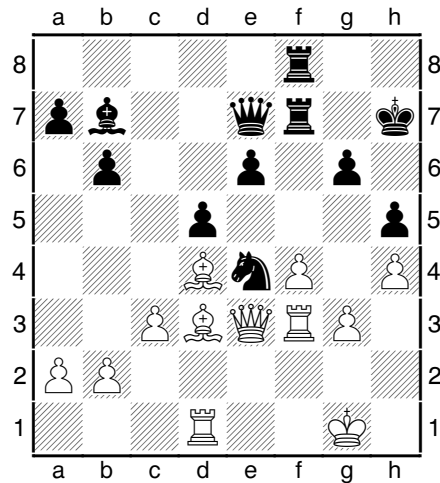


1. White to move



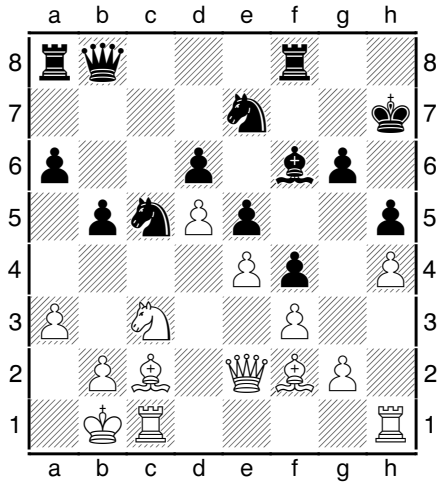
2. White to move

Complicate Position

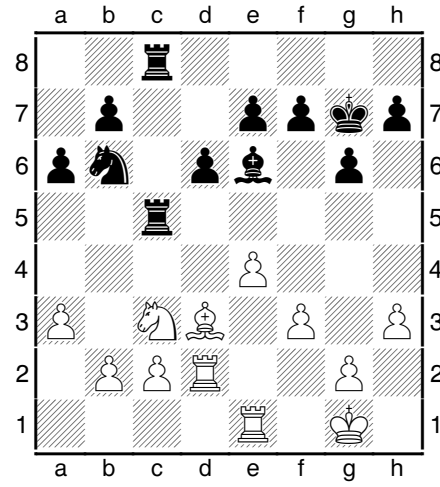


3. Black to move

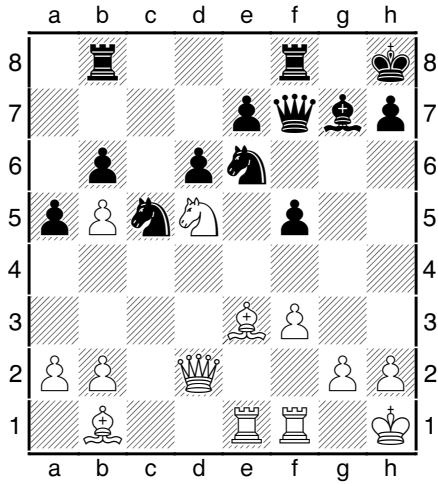
Positional Exercises



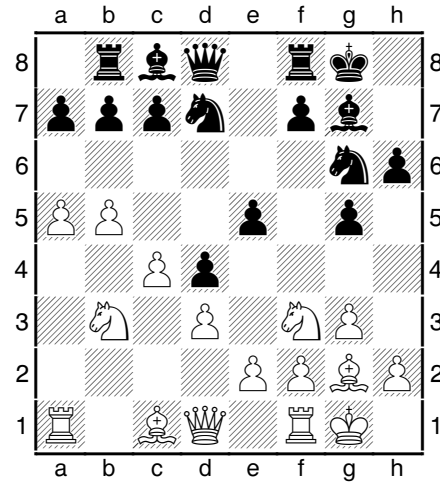
1. White to move



2. Black to move



3. White to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 11 / Set VI

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) On which side should White play?
- b) What strategical element can be used on that side?

Position 2

- a) A small improvement considering White's light-square bishop.

Position 3

- a) Which are the weakest squares in Black's camp?

Position 4

- a) How can White increase his advantage/superiority on the queenside?

Solutions M 11 / Set VI

Tactics 1

1.Rxg7+!! a typical sacrifice to open the lines toward the king.

1...Kxg7 2.Ne6+! The second rook enters the seventh rank using the d-file.

(The typical continuation **2.Rg1+** would give White nothing after **2...Kh8**)

2...dxe6 [2...Kh8 3.Nxc5] 3.Rd7+ and mate.

Tactics 2

1.Ng5!! threatening **Qxd5+** and **Re8#** **1...fxg5 [1...Nf4 2.Qc7!!] 2.Qd4 Qd7 3.Re8+ Kf7**

4.Qg7+ Kxe8 5.Qf8#

Tactics 3

1...e5! The insecure position of the f3-rook gave Black the idea of sacrificing the queen for a bishop and a rook. With the support of the strong e4-knight, b7-bishop on the long diagonal, the 2 black rooks will begin a strong attack against the weakened white king.

2.Bxe5 Qxe5! 3.fxe5 [3.Bxe4 Qxe4] 3...Rxf3 4.Qd4 [4.Qxf3 Rxf3 5.Bxe4 dxe4 6.Rd7+ Kh6 7.Rxb7 e3 8.Kg2 Rf2+ 9.Kg1 Rf5] 4...Rxg3+ 5.Kh2 [5.Kh1 Rf4] 5...Rf2+ 6.Kh1 Rf4 7.Rd2 Rxh4+ 8.Rh2 Nf2+! 9.Qxf2 d4+ and Black wins.

Problem 1

(Position from: Zagorskis D, 2520 – Seul G, 2445, Bonn, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a typical King's Indian closed structure. White has space advantage. There are no weaknesses.

- Pieces: Here White has the advantage. Black has only one active piece (Nc5) and two passive minor pieces (Bf6 and Ne7). At the moment, White has only one bad piece: his light-square bishop.

What does Black want to do?

Generally in King's Indian, Black's play is on the kingside, but here it is not the case. For sure he will try to improve his misplaced pieces by playing something like **Nc8** and **Bd8- Bb6**, in order to get rid of his "bad bishop". If he manages to improve his pieces, White's small advantage will be history.

What White has to do

It is not possible to prevent Black to activate his pieces. Therefore, in the meantime, White has to make something useful (to obtain some other advantages while Black will carry on his plan).

Opening the kingside by 1.g3 will be in Black's favor because after 1...fg3 2.Bg3-Bg7 followed by 3...Bh6, Black will activate his bishop and will also put pressure on the f-file.

So the only hope for White to obtain some advantage remains on the queenside (which is by the way the typical course of action in this kind of structure).

The right move is **1.b4!** by which White obtains space advantage on the queenside and drives away the black active knight. There is no need for White to fear that his king will be in danger after this pawn advance because all his pieces are on the queenside. After removing the knight, White has to clear the c-file for his rooks in order to enter opponent's camp. He can also transfer his knight on b3 via a2-c1 in order to keep an eye on the a5-square.

Calculation

1.b4!-Nd7 2.Bd3 starting the clearing of c-file for the rooks.

2...-Nc8 3.Na2-Bd8

4.g4!? White could also stick with his plan on queenside by playing 4.Rc6. The text move (4.g4) is interesting from theoretical point of view. **One of the major qualities of space advantage is that it enables you to transfer your pieces quicker from one flank to another.** So it makes sense to open the game on the kingside now that Black transfers his pieces on the queenside.

Problem 2

(Position from: Handoko E, 2475 – Hodgson J, 2550, Jakarta, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: The pawn structure is typical of the "Dragon variation" from the Sicilian Defense. No one has any weaknesses.

Black's position is to be preferred because he has slightly better placement for his pieces (he also has the "better" bishop).

What does White want to do?

White will try to improve his position and bring his king in the game in order to be well prepared against any active operations from Black.

Generally, when you are slightly worse active operations only spoil your position by adding new weaknesses.

What Black has to do

At the moment there are no active possibilities for Black either. For example, at 1...Bc4 White will just stay and at 1...Nc4 White will trade his light square bishop removing all his problems.

So, in this type of position, the best policy is to try to quietly improve it step by step. How can Black do this? A small achievement will be fixing White's kingside pawns on light squares. Achieving this will let White with a permanent "bad" bishop.

The right move is **1...g5!** Now, in addition, the black knight can go on e5, which now is a stable square.

We don't have to calculate anything when making moves based on general considerations.

Problem 3

(Position from: Kortschnoj V, 2635 – Hernandez G, 2560, Merida, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: Black has a better pawn structure (White has doubled pawns and Black has a central pawn mass).

- Pieces: White has better placement of his pieces and also the pair of bishops. His light square bishop has no opponent, and in the same time (because almost all his pawns are on dark squares) Black has a lot of weak light squares.

White is better.

What does Black want to do?

In order to get a good game, Black has to put his central pawns on e6 and d5. By doing so, he will severely restrict White's light square bishop, also covering his weaknesses. At the moment this is not easy, because moving his knight from e6 is equivalent with losing a pawn (after Bxc5 and Rxe7).

First Black has to play Rb7 followed then by Nd8, e7-e6, and d6-d5.

What White has to do

In order to maintain his advantage, White has to come up with a prophylactic plan against Black's intentions.

Finding this plan is not so difficult, because White knows that he needs to act on light squares, where Black is weak. At the moment, there is no scope for his bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal, so he has to change it. Now the right move is quite easy to spot: after **1.a3!** White threatens to put his bishop on a more dangerous diagonal (a2-g8) and at some point he also can drive away Black's strong knight from c5 (by b2-b4).

Calculation

1.a3!-f4 Nothing can be achieved by 1...Nb3 2.Qf2-Nbd4 3.Ne7 winning a pawn. Also after 1...Rb7 2.Ba2 is devastating. By the text move, Black is trying to cover the “e” file with his bishop.

2.Bg1! White could play 2.Bxc5-bxc5 3.Ba2-Nd4 4.Re7-Qh5 5.Nf4-Qh6 6.g3-Bf6 7.Re4-Rb5 and although White is a pawn up, Black manages to get some activity.

2...Be5 3.Ba2-Qg7 4.b4-ab4 5.ab4-Nd7 6.Rc1 and Black still doesn’t have any counter play and will soon lose his b6-pawn.

Problem 4

(Position from: Johansen D, 2485 – Barua D, 2550, Asia Cities, 1992)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: There is a semi blocked pawn structure that can be met in Benoni Defense (of course, with reversed colors). Black has space advantage in the centre and on the kingside, and White has superiority on the queenside. We can say that the game is balanced.

What does Black want to do?

Black will play some typical plan in this type of structures connected with f5, Nf6, e5-e4-e3 in order to get some attacking chances on the kingside. Another plan is to take some defensive measures on the queenside that involves Re8 followed by Bf8 activating his dark square bishop on this side.

What White has to do

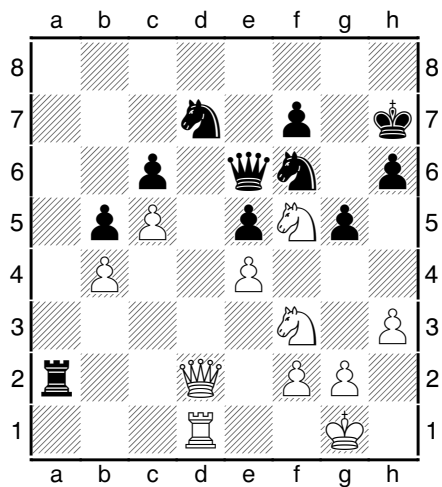
Yet again we are dealing with a position where there is no need bothering calculating variations, but to play on general considerations.

In order to increase his pressure on the queenside, White has to bring more pieces on that side. Also he has to take some prophylactic measures against Black’s plan of expansion in the center. With this in mind it is easy to spot a move that fits well in covering both aspects before mentioned. Playing **1.Ne1!** White will bring his knight to the queenside via c2-b4, in the same time, taking control over e4 with his light square bishop.

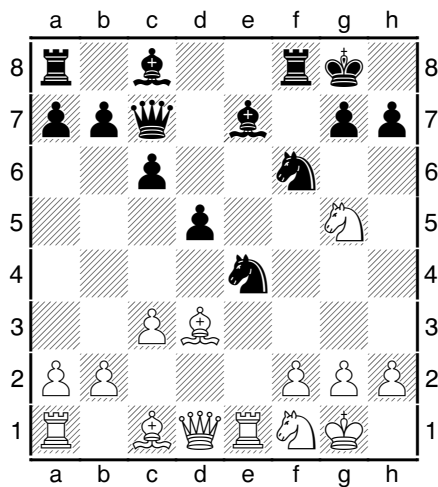
This kind of moves: suiting in your plans and keeping an eye against your opponent plans have great efficiency.

Exercises Month 11 / Set VII

Simple Tactics

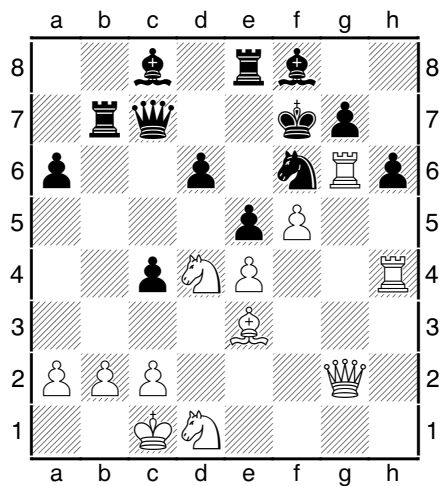


1. White to move



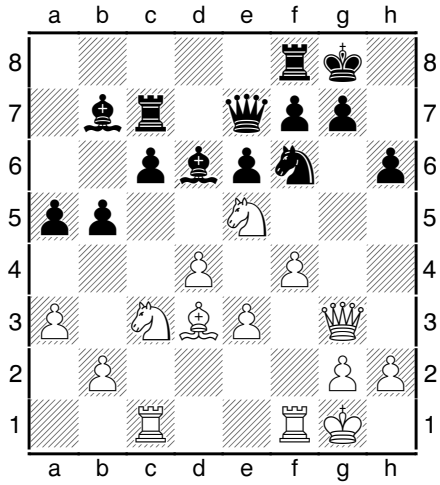
2. Black to move

Complicate Position

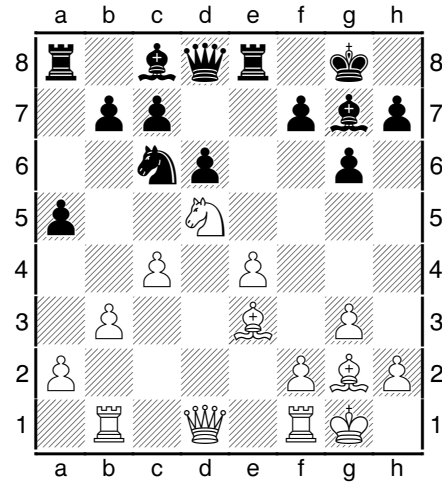


3. White to move

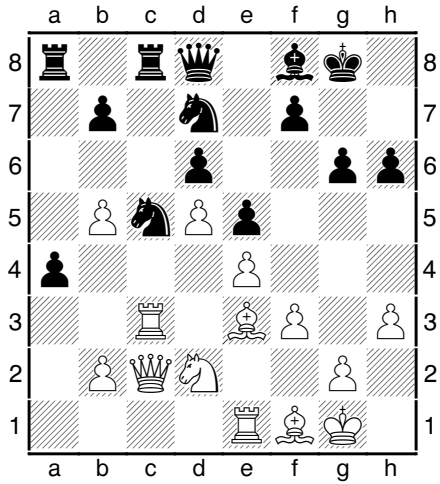
Positional Exercises



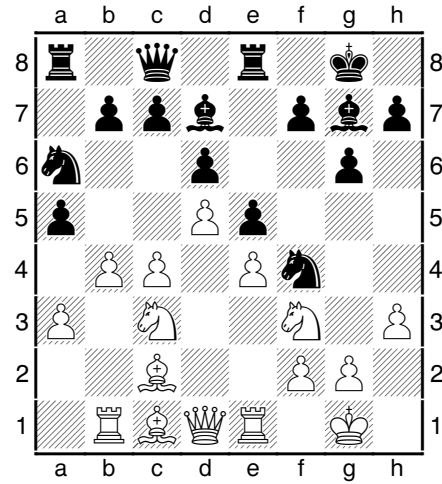
1. White to move



2. Black to move



3. Black to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 11 / Set VII

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Which is Black's bad piece?

Position 2

- a) A good exchange

Position 3

- a) Improve the worst piece's position.

Position 4

- a) Prevent Black's counter-play.

Solutions M 11 / Set VII

Tactics 1

1.Nxg5+!! hxg5 2.Qxg5 Ne8 3.Rd6!

Tactics 2

1...Nxf2 2.Kxf2 [2.Qe2 Nxd3—+] 2...Ng4+ 3.Kg1 Bc5+ 4.Be3 [4.Kh1 Rxf1+ 5.Bxf1 Qxh2#] 4...Bxe3+ 5.Rxe3 Rxf1+ 6.Kxf1 Nxe3+

Tactics 3

1.Nc3!! In view of the next sacrifice Rxf6, the white knight goes to the very strong attacking position on d5.

1...Qb6 [1...Qd8 2.Nc6 Qd7 3.Rxf6+!+;-; 1...Ng8 2.Bxh6 Nxh6 3.Rgxf6 Qc5 4.Nd5!+;-; 1...exd4 2.Rxf6+ gxf6 3.Qg6+ Ke7 4.Nd5+-] 2.Rxf6+ Kg8 3.Rfxh6 Qxb2+ 4.Kd2 exd4 5.Bxd4+-

Problem 1

(Position from: Krasenkow M, 2609 – Jakubowski K, 2483, Warsaw, 2003)

Positional Evaluation

- Centre/Pawn structure: White has a better pawn structure and bigger influence over the centre. For Black, the main problem is his backward c-pawn.

- Pieces: Black has the pair of bishops, but at the moment this is not an advantage because the game is closed (the light square bishop is very passive).

White is better.

What does Black want to do?

In order to get rid of all his problems, it is enough for Black to solve the problem of his backward c-pawn by advancing it. Then, his bad light square bishop will be also free.

So, at the moment Black is threatening 1...b4 followed by c6-c5.

What White has to do

White has to find a way to stop Black from activating his light square bishop. Any other attempt of active play like launching a kingside attack has no chance until then.

White can prevent Black's plan by **1.Ne4!** which requires an accurate calculation.

Calculation

1.Ne4!-Ne4 2.Be4-Ba8

If Black tries to advance his c-pawn, then he will lose it for no compensation. For example: 2...c5 3.Bb7-Rb7 4.dc5-Be5 (4...Bc5 5.Nc6-Qd6 6.Na5-Rc7 7.Nb3-Bb6 8.Rcd1-Qe7 9.Nd4) 5.fe5-b4 6.Rc4;

Or 2...Rfc8 3.Nd3 followed by Nc5 and Black will remain with his weakness on c6

3.Qf3-f5 4.Bc6-Rfc8 5.d5 and although the game is complicated, White is a pawn up.

Problem 2

(Position from: Ehlvest J, 2587 – Christiansen L, 2544, New York, 2003)

Positional Evaluation

- Centre/Pawn structure: Concerning the pawn structure, there are no weaknesses. White has more space and a more active knight on d5. Therefore we can say that he is slightly better.

What does White want to do?

In order to improve his position he has to push his queenside pawns. The reason for playing on the queenside is that almost all his pieces are directed in that way. For sure he will play something like a2-a3 followed by Qc2, Rfd1, b3-b4, and c4-c5 in order to provoke some weaknesses on Black's queenside.

What Black has to do

As we already pointed out, **in cramped positions, trading pieces favors the weaker side**. If you are able to trade a bad piece with a good opponent's piece, it is even better. With this general principle in mind, it is easy to find the right move: **1...Nb4!**

For White it will be better to avoid trading the knights (even by retreating his own knight from d5), but this is not possible here.

Of course after 2...Nd5 3.cd5 Black will be left with a backward pawn on c7 but this will be his only weakness which is easy to be defended.

Calculation

1...Nb4! 2.Qd2-Nd5 3.cd5-Bd7 followed by f5 and Black has nothing to fear.

Problem 3

(Position from: Sokolov I, 2677 – Damjanovic B, 2587, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 2003)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/Pawn structure: We are dealing with a King's Indian position where Black has a better pawn structure (because of White's doubled b-pawns). White has space advantage.

- Pieces: Both White and Black have a bad bishop: White - the light square, Black - the dark square. Black also has an excellent fortified knight on c5.

In my opinion, Black is already slightly better.

What does White want to do?

Because of the black strong knight that covers the c-file (it is almost impossible for White to drive this knight away), White's game on the queenside is not possible. Also, trying to play in the centre by f3-f4 will be only in Black's favor because it will open the long diagonal for his dark square bishop and will let White with a weak pawn on e4. The only way for White to do something is to play 1.g3 followed by f3-f4 and now, if Black opens his bishop with ef4, then after gf4 White will get a strong centre in exchange.

What Black has to do

There is no way for Black to do something on the queenside. To open the game by the classical f7-f5 is also in White's interest because it opens his bad light square bishop.

So what Black has to do? In order to find the right answer, it is enough to apply the principle of "bad pieces". Black's worst piece is his dark square bishop. Also Black has to do something to oppose White's plan of advancing g3 and f4. For this reason all he has to do is to fix White's pawns on light squares (maintaining White's light square bishop a bad permanent one).

This can be easily achieved by 1...h5 followed by h4. Now White will be left with no plan. Moreover, Black will change his dark square bishop by force playing Kh7, Bg7, Qf8, and Bh6 increasing his advantage and the stability of the c5-knight.

Problem 4

(Position from: Yudasin L, 2595 – Finkel A, 2505, rapid, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

- Centre/Pawn structure: Again we are dealing with a King's Indian structure. Both players carried out their plans in a consistent way. White advanced his queenside pawns in order to gain space and to prepare the typical c4-c5 advance. Black activated his pieces on the kingside and at some point he can play f5.

The game is balanced.

What does Black want to do?

Black wants to play Bh6 in order to fortify his f4 knight. After that, he will push his kingside pawns starting with f5. Note that if Black plays at once 1...f5?!, then after 2.ef5-gf5 3.Bf4-ef4 4.Ne2, White obtains a huge positional advantage. If Black takes on f5 with his bishop, then White will obtain the e4-square.

What White has to do

In long terms, White has to prepare the c4-c5 advance but at the moment this is quite difficult to achieve. Therefore he has to find a plan to improve his position first. Because of his space advantage, White will be better in long term. Black's only chance to get an active game is on the kingside and therefore it makes sense to prevent Black to achieve this. What could be better than trading his most active piece from that side, the f4-knight? Now everything is clear: the right move is **1.Ne2!**

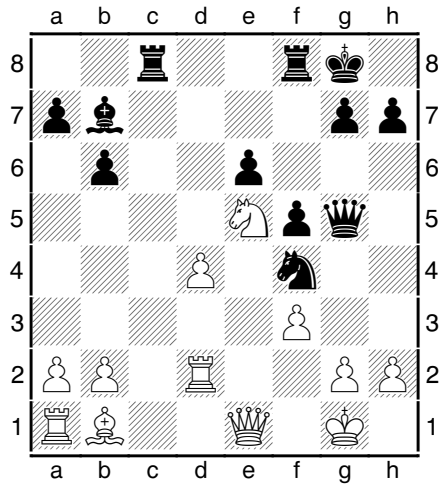
Calculation

1.Ne2-Ne2 2.Qe2 Now White connected his rooks and released the pressure on the kingside. If Black is playing 2...f5, White can simply ignore it (Black doesn't have enough pieces to get any chance of attack now) and develop his pieces in order to prepare the c4-c5 advance. So, White will play something like 3.Bd2 followed by Bd3, Rec1, c4-c5 with clear advantage.

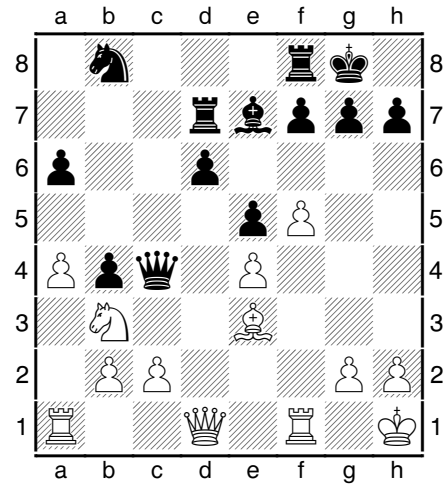
Note that if White was playing 1.Bf4? – ef4, then even if he managed to spoil Black's pawn structure, this will be fully compensated by Black's total control over dark squares. Now, Black's dark square bishop (that generally is a bad one) will dominate the board.

Exercises Month 11 / Set VIII

Simple Tactics

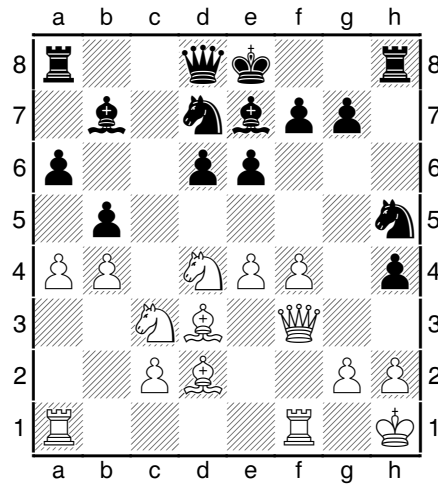


1. Black to move



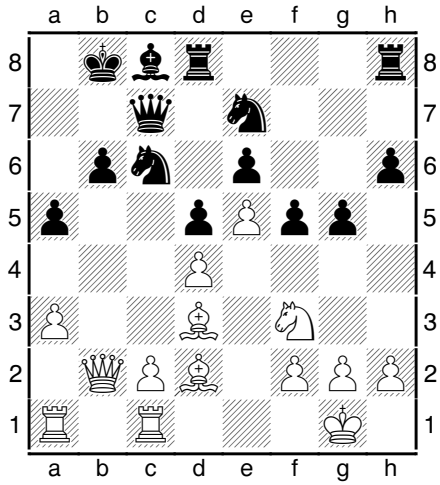
2. White to move
(a lot of calculation)

Complicate Position

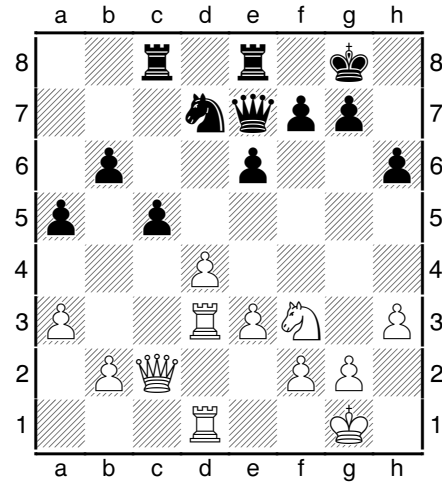


3. Black to move

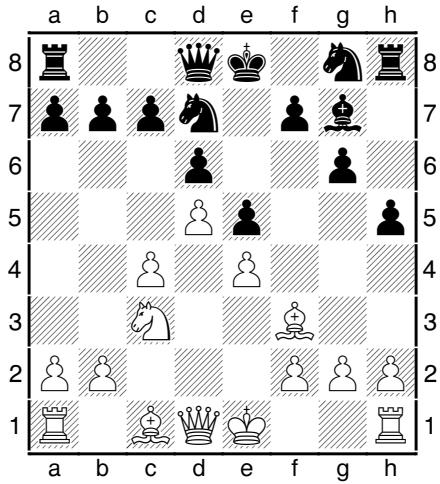
Positional Exercises



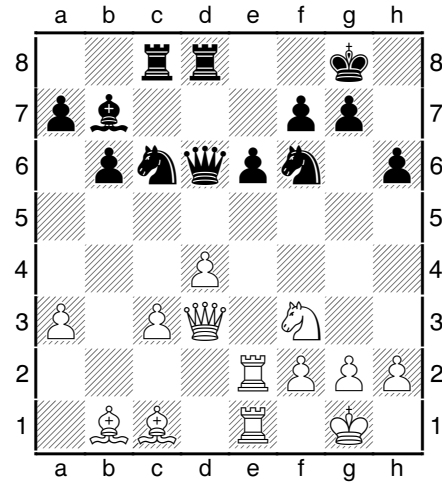
1. White to move



2. White to move



3. White to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 11 / Set VIII

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) How can White increase the efficacy of the c2-c4 advance?

Position 2

- a) Find a modality to get some pawn structure superiority.

Position 3

- a) Is 1.b3 good for anything? Or better is 1.b4?

Position 4

- a) Which black piece position doesn't fit with his plans?

Solutions M 11 / Set VIII

Tactics 1

1...Rc1!! 2.Qxc1 Ne2+! 3.Rxe2 Qxc1+ 4.Kf2 Qf4

Tactics 2

1.f6! a thematic attack forcing the opening of the g-file and doubling black pawns on the f-file (which makes the defensive f7-f6 impossible). However, an exact calculation is still necessary.

1...Bxf6 2.Rxf6 gxf6 3.Qg4+ Kh8 4.Qh4! Qe6 5.Nd4!! this nice resource had to be foreseen from the start, otherwise the attack could not continue.

5...Qe7 [5...exd4 6.Bxd4 Rg8 7.Bxf6+ Rg7 8.Qg5+-] **6.Nf5 Qe6 7.Rf1** threatening the rook lift Rf3-g3 **7...d5 8.Ng7! Qe7** [8...Kxg7 9.Bh6+ Kh8 10.Bxf8 followed by Qh6; 8...Qc6 9.Rf3 Qxc2 (9...Rg8 10.Nf5) 10.Qxf6 Qd1+ 11.Bg1 and Nf5 with mate]

9.Bc5!! Qxc5 10.Nh5 Rd6 11.Nxf6 Rxf6 12.Qxf6+ Kg8 13.Rf3+-

Tactics 3

1...Ng3+!! A thematic sacrifice: Black opens the h-file with tempo

2.hxg3 hxg3+ 3.Kg1 Bf6! The point of the previous sacrifice. Black clears the d8-h4 diagonal with tempo, preparing Rh1+ followed by Qh4+ and Qh2#. White has no good defense.

4.Nde2 [4.Be3 Bxd4 5.Qxg3 Bxc3+-; 4.Nce2 Bxd4+ 5.Nxd4 Rh1+] **4...Bd4+ 5.Nxd4 Rh1+ 6.Kxh1 Qh4+ 7.Kg1 Qh2#**

Problem 1

(Position from: Atlas V, 2460 – Rueetschi U, 2250, Switzerland, 1997)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a structure typical for French Defense. Black has more space on the kingside and White has some pressure on the queenside. There are no major weaknesses at the moment (the backward white c- and black b- pawns are easy to defend).

- Pieces: White has the bishop pair that gives him a small advantage.

What does Black want to do?

Even if he has a kingside space advantage, it is unlikely for Black to obtain something through a direct attack over the white king (there are not enough black pieces on this side). In order to can start active operations on the kingside, Black has to defend the

queenside first. His best plan is to trade the light square bishops by Ka7 and Ba6. After that, White's chances to get a real attack on the queenside are very small and Black will be then able to advance his kingside pawns.

What White has to do

In order to increase his attack on the queenside, sooner or later, White has to advance his c-pawn to open the c-file. However, at the moment this advance doesn't bring anything to White but only cedes the d5-square to the Black knight after d5xc4.

So, White needs to make c2-c4 more effective and this can be obtained if he will retake on c4 with a knight. After that, he will get pressure on b6 or can occupy with his knight the d6 square.

Now, the first move is easy to spot: **1.Be1** ! vacating the d2-square for the knight.

Calculation

1.Be1!

1.c4?! directly is not good: 1...Ba6! 2.cd5-Bd3 3.dc6-Ka7 4.Qb3-Be4 5.Qe6-Nc6 Even if white is a pawn up, his chances of attacking the queenside are history. Now Black has an excellent light-square bishop and he will soon make a blockade on light squares getting excellent winning chances.

1...Ka7 2.Nd2-Ba6 3.Ba6-Ka6 4.Rab1 followed by c4 with excellent attacking chances. If Black doesn't take on c4, White will advance c4-c5 with even bigger advantage.

Problem 2

(Position from: Karpov A, 2745 – Jussupow A, 2640, Dortmund, 1997)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: White has a slight advantage. There is a potential target for White: the black b6-pawn.

- Pieces: Although it seems that white pieces are more active, this is not true. If the d-file will be opened, the white rooks do not have any good square to enter Black's camp.

What does Black want to do?

In order to get a comfortable game, Black has to trade the "c" and "d" pawns. So probably he will play something like Nf6 followed by cxd4.

What White has to do

Because Black has his pawn on a5, White has an excellent opportunity to get a small but long term advantage by playing a3-a4 and blocking black queenside pawns.

The idea is connected with the **1.d5!** advance. After more or less forced variation **1...ed5 2.Rd5-Nf6 3.Re5-Qc7 4.Re8-Re8 5.a4!** White achieved an excellent positional advantage. On the queenside, with only two pawns he manages to block his opponent's three pawns. Now he will place his knight on c4 and then will advance his pawn majority in the centre. Black is unable to get any kind of activity to oppose White's plan.

Problem 3

(Position from: Polugaevsky L – Gurgendize B, Kharkover, 1967)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: A King's Indian Defense structure without weaknesses.
- Pieces: White has the pair of bishops that gives him better prospects.

Explanation: Even if it is a closed position, White's bishops are important. This is because Black plans to play f7-f5 which will weaken in some extent the light-squares (e6, g6) and, moreover, his chances of attacking on the kingside are reduced without the bishop on c8-h3 diagonal (Generally speaking, in King's Indian, if Black wants to have real chances on a kingside attack, his light squared bishop is an important piece).

What does Black want to do?

Because Black has small chances for a kingside attack, Black's main strategic goal is to trade the dark square bishops and then, with no weaknesses, the game becomes balanced.

What White has to do

This time we are dealing with quite a simple solution. In order to maintain his advantage, White has to avoid trading the bishops. He has to play **1.b3!** so that after 1...Bh6 to be able to answer with Bb2.

Note that 1.b4? will be a huge positional mistake. In the future White wants to play on the queenside preparing the c4-c5 advance. So, after 1.b4?-a5! Black will spoil White's queenside formation, getting an excellent outpost on c5.

Problem 4

(Position from: Jussupow A, 2640 – Enders P, 2485, Bremen, 1998)

Positional Evaluation

We are dealing with a "couple of isolated pawns" structure. The weak c3- and d4- pawns are compensated by White's pair of bishops and his good play on the e-file and attacking chances on the queenside.

We can say that the game is balanced.

What does White want to do?

With his rooks doubled on the e-file, white will not be able to transform the pawns in “hanging pawns” advancing the c-pawn, because the pawns will be too vulnerable. For this reason, his future plan is connected with a kingside attack. To achieve this, White will play something like Re3, followed by Nh4, Rg3, or Ne5 followed by the transfer of the rook on the kingside.

What Black has to do

Generally when dealing with this kind of structure, the isolated pawns must be blocked in order to stop them to form a “hanging pawns” structure (after c3-c4). Here it is not the case, because as already pointed out White cannot transform his pawn formation.

So Black has to rearrange his pieces on better squares, in order to increase the pressure over the white pawns and, in the same time, to fortify his kingside. For this plan, all black pieces are on good squares excepting the c6-knight which blocks the c-file, the b7-bishop and doesn't exert pressure on vulnerable white squares.

So this is the piece that Black must move. In the same time, he must not allow White to play Nf3-e5 in good conditions. This can be achieved only by **1...Nb8!** (threatening Ba6). Now Black will play Nbd7 and, if necessary, Nf8, followed by a direct attack over white isolated pawns.

Calculation

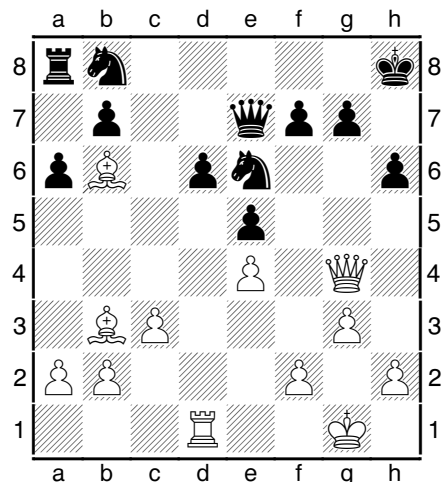
1...Nb8!

Now 2.Ne5 is not possible because after 2...Qd5 3.f3 (3.Qg3-Rc3) Ba6 White will lose the exchange. Any other square for the knight (e7, a5) was bad because Black has no good answer against Ne5.

Playing Technique

Lesson 1

Position 1



Smyslov V – Reshevsky S,
World Championship, 1948
White to move

White's advantage is clear. He has the pair of bishops, better development and also a target to attack: black's weak d6-pawn.

This advantage is not permanent however. Black has some counter-chances mainly because of the closed character of the game. If it was his turn to move, then after 1...-Nd7 2.Be3-Nf6 3.Qf5 (3.Qf3-Ng5 with equal game) 3....-Nc5 4.Bc2-b5 although he would be still worse, the main problems were passed.

For this reason White has to find a way to improve his position at once or he is in danger to lose the advantage. An accurate calculation is necessary here (not a long term plan).

The former world champion brilliantly copes with this task:

1.Be6!! From a strategical point of view, this move would be a mistake. Giving his strong bishop White had to accurately calculate the consequences. Any slip in calculation will leave him with nothing.

2....-fe6 3.Qh4! The point of White's previous move. Black is losing a pawn by force.

3...-Qd7

3...-Qh4 doesn't change much. After 4.gh4- Nc6 5.Rd6-Re8 6.h5! fixing black kingside pawns on dark squares making them a future target, White is winning.

Instead of this Black opts for a rook endgame with a pawn less that theoretically gives him greater chances for a miraculous escape. Now after a forced variation the endgame mentioned above will arise.

4.Qd8-Qd8 5.Bd8-Nd7 (5...-Nc6 6.Bb6 followed by Rd6) **6.Bc7-Nc5 7.Rd6-Rc8 8.Bb6-Na4 9.Re6-Nb2 10.Re5-Nc4 11.Re6-Nb6 12.Rb6-Rc3 13.Rb7-Rc2 14.h4**

After a more or less forced variation, the game entered the “technical” phase. White’s advantage is now permanent. All he has to do is to walk on a well known ground. Black’s last chance is to advance his a-pawn in order to create some threats. Therefore it will be a huge mistake to advance the pawns. In order to win White has to go with the king inside the enemy camp using his pawns as protection against black rook’s checks.

14...-Ra2 15.Kg2-a5 16.h5 fixing Black’s kingside pawns.

16....-a4 17.Ra7 Another move that perfectly fits with the general rules of rooks endgames: **In a rook endgame the rook’s best position is behind of the pawn.** The other side rook has to occupy a defensive position as now the black rook.

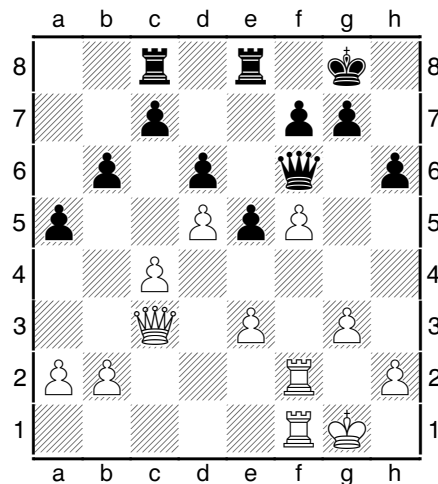
17...- Kg8 18.g4-a3 19.Kg3-Re2 20.Kf3 to trade the e-pawn for the a-pawn was a mistake that only would give Black huge drawing chances. As a matter of fact the a-pawn is at no importance here.

20...-Ra2 21.Ke3-Kf8 22.f3-Ra1 23.Kf4-a2 24.e5 Now the difference between the 2 rooks is more clear. White’s rook has an active position cutting Black’s king on the back rank, in the same time, keeping an eye at the a-pawn. His homologue is doomed to passivity.

Now black has no defense against Kf5-g6 or Kf5-e6.

24...-Kg8 25.Kf5-Rf1 26.Ra2-Rf3 27.Kg6-Kf8 28.Ra8-Ke7 29.Ra7 1-0

Position 2



Keres P – Euwe M,
Netherlands, 1940

White is slightly better because of his space advantage and his better perspectives. On the other hand, Black has no weaknesses or bad pieces. Black’s main problem is that he has no real counter-play to oppose White’s plans. These plans are connected with some pawn advances either on the queenside or kingside. Still White has to pay attention to any opponent attempt to free his position.

So we are dealing with something between a permanent advantage and volatile one. White's main task is to clarify the things in the center not allowing Black any chance of activity there, by advancing his "e" pawn.

Also it should be noted that in a rook endgame White's advances on either flank will give him nothing – so the queens must be saved.

1.e4! By this move, White also makes Black to keep the queen on f6 in order to block the f-pawn (if the black queen moves away, then f5-f6 will increase White's advantage).

1...-c6 At the moment Black doesn't know where White's breakthrough will come from. If he takes defensive measures on the kingside by moving his king from there, White can advance his queenside pawns in order to make the breakthrough there. For this reason it is easy to understand Black's decision: he wants to get some counter-play on the queenside or to force White to close the game there.

2.dc6-Rc6 3.a4! There is no need for White to give Black any activity on this side of the board. However, he still keeps the possibility to open the queenside by b2-b4. On the other hand, at this moment, White's main plan is connected with the advance of the kingside pawns (g3-g4-g5).

3...Kf8 Black is trying to escape with his king from the kingside, where it can be easily attacked.

4.Rd1-Rec8 5.b3-Ke7 Any attempt to free the queen from blocking the "f" pawn is met by the devastating f5-f6.

6.Qf3-Kd7 7.h4 The 2 players are carrying out their plans in consistent way. White is prepared to advance his kingside pawns, while Black is moving his king in a safer side.

7...Kc7 8.Kf1-Kb7 9.Ke2-R8c7

Another possibility for Black was to try to block the kingside by 9...Rh8 10.Rh2-h5 11.Rg1 with the idea g3-g4 in order to press on the "g7" pawn. 11...g6 12.fg6-Qf3 13.Kf3 and White is still better because now Black has his king misplaced on the queenside. Still, in this variation, Black had better chances to make a draw.

10.Rh2-Qd8 11.g4-f6

Quite an interesting attempt was 11...Rd7. Now, if White doesn't pay attention to the opponent's move, he can get into trouble: 12.Rg1?-d5!! 13.ed5-Rd5 and black pieces come to life.

First, White has to move the rook from the second rank (12.Rh3!) followed then by Rg1.

12.Rg2-Rc8 13.Rg3-Qd7 14.Qd3-Qf7 15.Rh1-Rh8

16.Rhh3 more to the point was Rgh3.

16...Rcc8 17.g5 Finally, White manages to make the kingside breakthrough.

A huge mistake would have been 17.Qd6?-Rhd8 and now Black can penetrate on the d-file, getting a better position.

17...hg5 18.hg5-Qc7 19.Qd5-Ka7 20.Rd3-Rh3?

Black could have big drawing chances with 20...fg5 for example 21.Rh8-Rh8 22.Qd6-Qd6 23.Rd6-Rh4 24.Rd7-Ka6 25.Kf3-Rf4 26.Ke3-g4 27.Rg7-Rf3 28.Ke2-Rf4 29.f6-Re4 30.Kd3-Rf4 31.f7-g3 32.Rg3-Rf7 33.Ke4-Kb7 with probably draw.

21.Rh3 now it is all over. Black cannot defend both flanks.

21...fg5 22.Rh7-Qe7 23.Kf3-Rf8 24.Kg4-Rf7 25.b4 Also winning was 25.Qe6-Qe6 26.fe6-Re7 27.Kg5-Re6 28.Rg7

25...ab4 26.a5-Qb7 26...Qf8 27.ab6-Kb6 28.Qb5-Kc7 29.Qb4 with decisive advantage. **27.ab6-Kb6 28.Qd6-Ka7 29.Qe5-b3 30.Rh3** with the threat Qa5+

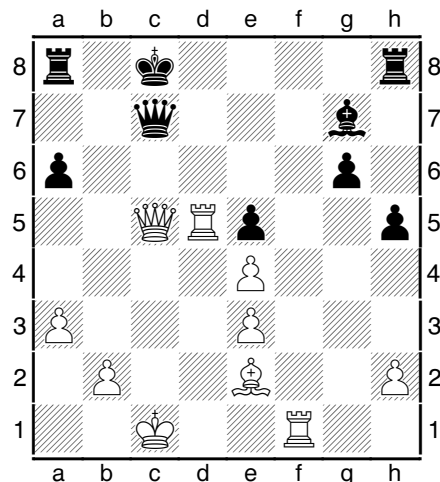
30...-Rf6 31.Qd4-Rb6 32.Rb3 1-0

As you can see, even if White was able to carry out his plan, at some point (move 30), Black had excellent drawing chances.

This means that in slightly worse positions, with a solid defense, you can be able to hold the game.

Playing Technique Lesson 2

Position 1



Sakaev K, 2600 – Yemelin V, 2460
St. Petersburg, 1996
Black to move

Up to this position, our lessons about technique were referring to better positions or worse position. Now we would like to draw your attention to another type of positions where a good technique can come in our help: the lost positions.

At first sight, this is a bit strange. How can be defended a lost position and how technique can come in our help? Let us explain.

Generally speaking when a player has a decisive advantage he may think that every move is a winning one and “normally” he starts to play less carefully.

In order to make any use of this “human mistake”, it is necessary not to lose your nerve but try to oppose a strong defense. If you are able to maintain some chances for a number of moves than your opponent might get in panic at some point. “How is it possible to hold this lost position for so many moves?” our opponent may ask himself. And in this moment already there is a great chance for a mistake to occur.

Also from a psychological point of view it is easier to play when you are lost. The tension disappear, “it’s too late to be afraid” so it’s easier find the only moves to get something.

Now let’s turn our attention to the game.

1...Rf8! The only chance that Black has lies in the presence of opposite color bishops. If he will be able to escape from the attack and trade as many pieces as possible, then even if he will lose a pawn the great tendency for draw of opposite color bishops endgames may offer him some chances.

2.Rfd1! At the moment White is playing at his best. By avoiding trading the rooks he makes Black’s task harder.

2...Rf7! keeping the same policy: trading pieces (Rf7-d7).

3.Bc4-Rd7 4. Kb1?! This move loses a big part of the advantage, although White still keeps a winning position. After the logical 4.Qb4 avoiding the queens' trade, Black's task becomes impossible. His weak king will leave him defenseless. So we can see small fruits of the defense.

4...Qc5 5.Rc5-Kd8

6.Bd5 again not the best. 6.Rg1 was winning a pawn, maintaining an active position.

6...Bh6 7.Re1? after this mistake the winning is already problematic. Black is now able to activate his pieces while White didn't manage to improve his position.

After 7.Rc6-Be3 8.Rg6-Raa7 9.Rd3 followed by Rb3 White was still winning.

7...Rb8 8.Rc6-Rdb7 9.Rd6-Ke7 10.Bb7-Kd6 11.Ba6-Rb3 now Black has activated his pieces and has huge chances for a draw.

12.Rf1-Be3 13.Bc4-Rb8 14.Bd5? the final mistake. Now White lost any chance for a win. The last possibility to fight for victory was 14.Rf6-Kc5 15.Bd5-g5 16.Kc2

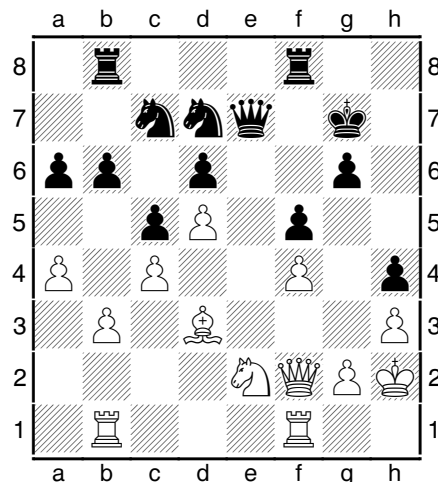
14...Bf4 Now, the white rook remains inactive.

15.h3-g5 16.Rg1-Kc5 now the game is level. The material advantage is only symbolic. Black's active pieces and strong kingside pawns are more than enough for a draw. The rest of the game only confirms this.

17.Rd1-g4 18.b4-Kb5 19.hg4-hg4 20.Be6-g3 21.Rd6-g2 22.Bd7-Kc4 23.Rg6-Kb3 24.Rg2-Rh8 25.Be6-Ka3 26.b5-Rh2 draw

Sakaev is a very strong grandmaster, but also a human and he didn't succeed to convert his winning position into a full point in the score sheet. So, there are hopes even against strong opposition.

Position 2



Itkis B, 2447 – Manescu T, 2387,
Eforie-Nord, Romania, 2008
White to move

White has a huge positional advantage. This advantage is volatile, still there are chances to transform it into a permanent one. At this point, Black has no real active possibilities. His knights are poorly placed and there is no way to improve their position. On the e-file only trading the rooks is possible. Generally speaking this should suit Black (having a cramped position any trade should be in his favor). However, here, it is not the case because a rook is necessary to defend his main weakness: the h4-pawn. For this reason, it is easy to spot White's next plan. He will simply attack the pawn with Ng1-f3 and it will be quite difficult for Black to defend the pawn. After he grabs the pawn, White also has a simple way to increase his advantage: the g2-g4 advance. We can say that Black is actually lost.

Before we see what happened in the game I would like to draw your attention to some important psychological factors that makes part from the technique baggage of the human chess player. This game was played in the Romanian first division. Boris Itkis (with white pieces) was playing near me = *IM Daniel Moldovan* - (we play for the same team) and I was able to see quite an interesting psychological approach from his opponent. Up until now his opponent had a "normal look" during the game. But now while Boris was thinking, he started to blush and his look radically changed into a "desperate one". By this, he almost said that he understands that his game is lost and after some more moves he will actually resign. Looking at the game I also was sympathetic with him. Now let's see what happened.

1.Ng1! the right move. White is improving his knight's position adding more pressure against the weak h4-pawn.

1...Rbe8 Black's move came in a second. At this point, White's attention was somehow asleep. If he is now paying attention to his opponent's threat (although this is quite a hidden and also very ingenious), he was surely play 2.Rfe1 and after 2...Qf6 3.Nf3 the game is back in normal. Black cannot hold the game for long.

To foresee Black's threat was an easy job for an experienced IM like Itkis. Still he was quite convinced that any move can win so why bother calculating variations.

The punishment was immediate.

2.Nf3?!-Qe3 3.Qe3-Re3 4.Rfd1?? at first glance White still has an easy job. If Black defends his pawn with 4...Rh8 (otherwise white simply grabs the pawn), then after 5.Kh2-g1-f2 any Black's activity is history. But....

4....Rf3!! now Black creates an impenetrable fortress. The rest of the game is at no importance since draw could be agreed at once.

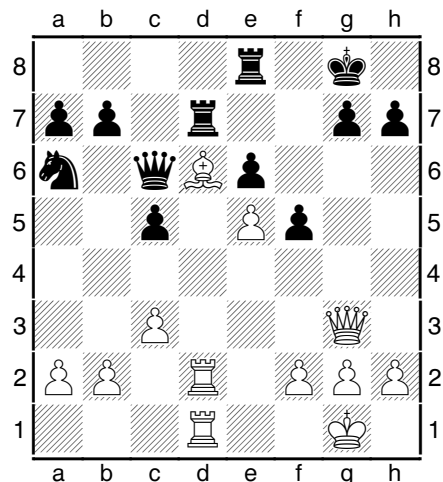
5.gf3-a5! 6.Re1-Re8 7.Re8-Ne8 8.Re1-Kf7 9.Re1-Kf7 10.Kg2-Nc7 11.Kf2-Nf8 12.Rg1-Kf6 draw.

So, when your opponent makes "moves", pay attention only to his board moves and ignore other "moves". **The game is finished only after your opponent resigns.**

Playing Technique

Lesson 3

Position 1



Nevednichy V, 2569 – Nikolaidis I, 2498

Istanbul 2003

White to move

White's advantage is clear. He has a "beautiful" bishop on d6, more space and better placement for his pieces. Black has a misplaced knight, but more important for him in order to hold the game is the lack of weaknesses in his camp. In order to balance the game, it is enough to bring his misplaced knight in the game.

As Tarrasch pointed out ***when a piece is bad, the whole game is bad.***

Therefore we can say that we are dealing with a volatile advantage.

White has to do something useful if he wants to keep his advantage (until Black manages to bring his knight in the game).

This is not so easy to achieve because Black has no weaknesses and therefore White has not a "clear target". In this kind of positions, there are two possibilities: first is to prevent your opponent to activate his piece (here there is no way to prevent Black for playing Red8 followed by Nc7-e8), and the second one is to create some weaknesses in opponent's camp. If neither of these 2 operations can be realized, then you have no advantage or it is too small (not enough for victory).

Now let's see what happened in the game.

1.h4! White is correctly trying to make weaknesses on the kingside by advancing his "h" pawn (to disturb Black's pawn structure or to create weak squares).

1...Red8 Black develops his main plan to bring his knight in the game.

Nothing can be achieved with 1...Nc7 2.h5-Nd5 3.c4 and the knight is driven back. Another try could be 1...c4 2.h5-Nc7 3.Bc7 (not allowing 3...Nd5) 3...Rd2 4.Rd2-Qc7

5.h6 and Black gets weaknesses on the kingside and has no control over “d” file (more than enough for White to win the game).

2.h5-Nc7 Black could try to stop the “h” pawn advance with 2...h6 but after 3.Qg6-Nc7 4.c4 he is almost zugzwang. All he can do is moving his queenside pawns in order to avoid material losses.

3.h6-g6 3...Ne8 is not helping because after 4.Qg5-b6 3.Kh2, Black is in the same type of zugzwang.

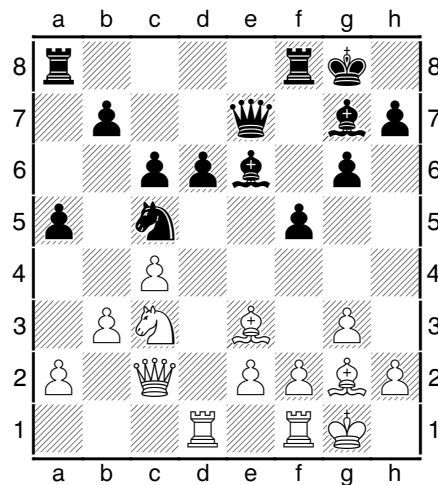
4.Qg5 Black is almost lost. He is not able to bring his knight in the game and is almost zugzwang. The game concluded **4....Ne8 5. Bc5** winning a pawn while Black remains passive. Black resigned because after 5...Rd2 6.Rd2-Rd2 7.Qe7 he is losing his queen.

I would like to draw your attention to some interesting aspect.

Let's say in the starting position was Black's turn to move. In this case after 1...Red8 White has no time to create weaknesses in Black's camp. For example after 2.h4-Nc7 3.h5-c4 or Ne8 Black can defend easily, in time.

So in order to maintain the advantage, the time factor is essential (of course if you find the right plan).

Position 2



Andersson U, 2640 – De la Villa Garcia J, 2485

Pamplona, 1998

White to move

White is slightly better mainly because Black's pawn is on f5. In this type of structure, at this point, the d6 pawn is not a major weakness, because it is easy for Black to defend it. On the other hand, the f5-pawn restricts black light square bishop's activity, therefore Black has no active possibilities on the kingside. For this reason the only thing he can do is to wait and defend against White's threats. In the hand of a player like Ulf Andersson this is a permanent advantage. White will gradually increase his advantage in a consistent way.

1.Bd4 In order to trade Black's most active piece and the defender of the dark-squares.
1...Rad8?! This was the only moment when Black could hope for active possibilities.
After **1...f4 2.Bg7-Kg7 3.Rd4-fg3 4.hg3-Rad8** Black could create some counter play at some point by **h5-h4**.

From now on, it will be a one way game.

2.Bg7-Qg7 3.e3! Now any attempt to activate his light square bishop is history for Black.
3...Qe7 4.Rfe1! "the normal" course of action will be doubling the rooks on the "d" file, but at the time Black is well defended here. For this reason, White sets up his rook in order to be prepared for another plan: the breakthrough with **e3-e4**.

4...Bc8 5.h3-Rf6 6.Kh2-Re8 7.Re2 White was preparing **f2-f4** followed by **e3-e4**, but now Black is well prepared for this. Therefore White changes his plan and will pressure on the d-pawn.

7...h5 8.h4 prevents **h5-h4 8...Ne4 9.Rd4-Nc5?!**

Better was **9...Nc3** (In cramped positions, trading pieces favors the defender.) **10.Qc3-Qc7 11.Rd5-Re5** and White still maintains the pressure, but at least Black got rid of one of his problems.

10.Red2-Rd8 11.Qd1-Kg7 12.a3! After tying down Black's major pieces on defending the "d6" pawn, White starts to grab more space on the queenside, also driving away black's central knight.

12...Qe5 13. b4-ab4 14.ab4-Na6 15.Na2?!

White made a very good strategic move, but he could win on the spot by **15.b5-Nb4 16.c5!-Qc5 17.Qb3-Nd5 18.Rc4-Qa7 19.Bd5-cd5 20.Nd5** winning.

15...Nc7 16.Nc1 the knight is heading to his best square: **f4**. Note that before starting any tactical operations, White improves his pieces.

16....Qe7 17.Ne2-Ne8 18.Nf4-Be6 19.e4 Finally, after improving his pieces, White is ready for the breakthrough.

19...Bf7 19...fe4 doesn't achieve nothing. After **20.Re4-Nc7 21.Rde2-Re8 22.Bh3-Qf7 23.Qe1** material losses are inevitable.

20.Re2-fe4 21.Rde4-Qf8 22.Qd4-Ng8 23.Re7-Rb8 24.Bh3-b6 24.b5-c5 25.Qc3-Qg7 26.Nd5 1-0

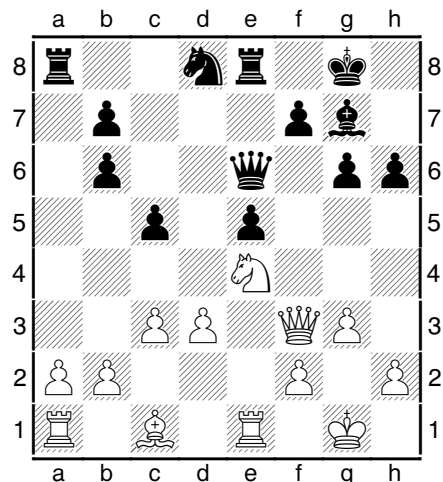
The final position is an example of total domination. White's pieces are very active while black pieces are all passive.

As you have seen, the grandmaster didn't rush to launch in complicated variations; instead he was improving his position step by step.

Playing Technique

Lesson 4

Position 1



Moldovan Daniel, 2460 – Murariu Andrei, 2395
 Bucharest 2002
 White to move

At first sight, Black has a better position. His spoiled pawn structure (double pawns on the b-file) works in his favor because he can exert pressure on the “a” file. In the same time, the white backward “d” pawn is also a major weakness that can be attacked. Black has only one problem: his “bad” dark square bishop. So it seems that Black is slightly better and White will have a hard time defending.

Actually the things are not as they seem to be. White has at his disposal a tactical operation (giving 2 minor pieces for a rook and 2 pawns) that changes the assessment of the position in his favor:

1.Bh6!-Bh6 2.Nf6-Kh8 3.Ne8-Qe8 4.d4-Bg7?! A move that gives White a permanent advantage.

Better was to trade first the “c” pawns. 4...cd4 5.cd4-Bg7 6.de5-Be5 7.Qe3-Nc6 8.Qb6 and White is still better but at least Black has some chances to get an active play.

5.dxe5-Qe6 6.Qe4-Nc6 7.f4-c4 In my opinion, this was the last time when Black could disturb the waters with 7...Ra2 8.Ra2-Qa2 9.e6-Bf6 (9...Qe6 10.Qe6-fe6 11.Re6-Kh7 12.Rd6 with winning position) 10.ef7-Qf7 11.Rd1 and White is still better but at least Black managed to get back one of his pawns.

Instead of this, Black wanted by c5-c4 to bring his bishop on c5 in order to activate him.

8.a3-Bf8 9.Rad1-Kg7 10.Kg2-Bc5 A very interesting position came up. White has all his pawns on dark squares therefore restricting at maximum the black bishop. White was following an important endgame principle: **when your opponent has one bishop, always place your pawns on the color of that bishop.** The only pawn that can be

attacked is b2, but this is almost unreachable. For White, it is quite easy to win, knowing what endgame is the easiest to win. This is one rook and 2 pawns against two minor pieces, so White needs to trade a pair of rooks and the queens.

11.Qd5!-Re8 12.Qxe6-Rxe6 13.Re4-Na5 First, White forced Black's knight on a bad square. Now, in order to win it is enough to push his kingside pawns. Sadly for Black, he has nothing to oppose this plan.

14.Kf3-Kf8 15.h4-Ke7 16.g4-f6? This move approaches the end. The game will enter the exact ending that white was hoping for.

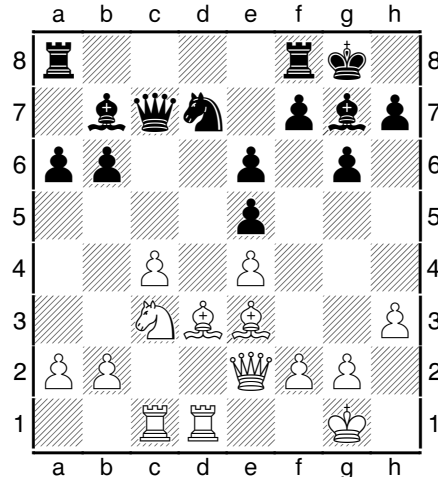
Still the game was already lost. A stronger resistance was a waiting strategy although this could not save Black. For example: 16...Ke8 17.g5-Ke7 18.Kg4 followed by h5 with winning position.

Now White will create faster his two connected pawns:

17.exf6-Kxf6 18.g5-Ke7 19.Rde1-Rxe4 20.Rxe4-Kf7 21.Kg4-b5 22.f5-gxf5 23.Kxf5-Nc6 24.h5-Ne7 25.Kg4-b6 26.Rf4-Kg7 27.h6-Kg6 28.Rf6-Kh7 29.Kh5-Kg8 1-0

As you can see, knowing the basic endgames helps you to take decisions in the middle game. When starting the tactical operations, White was helped in evaluating the position by his pawn structure. If his pawns were on the different color than opponent bishop, then probably he wouldn't make the sacrifice.

Position 2



Xie Jun, 2510 – Movsesian Sergei, 2635

Hastings 1996

White to move

The game favors White. Everything is balanced except the pawn structure. White has the upper hand because of his queenside majority (we can say that he is a pawn up). Black's central "e" pawns controls a lot of squares in the center but that's all. His central pawns are not mobile and blocked. Therefore White's plan of increasing his advantage is easy to

spot: he will try to create a passed pawn on the queenside. This is not so easy however and in the same time White needs to be alert on Black's attempts to get some activity.

1.b4! White is grabbing space on the queenside and supports the c4-c5 advance.

1...f5 Black decides to go for an active defense.

Another possibility was a passive and solid one. After the most likely 1...Rfd8 2.Qb2-a5 3.a3-Bf8 4.Bg5-f6 5.Be3-ab4 6.ab4 Black has a passive defense ahead but now his only concern will be the passed white pawn on queenside. His chances of defense are high. After all, the way you defend is a matter of taste.

2.f3

A huge positional mistake would was 2.ef5-gf5 and now Black has a strong center that can advance and therefore better prospects.

2...Rf7 3.c5-bc5 4.Na4-fe4 5.fe4

5.Be4-Be4 6.fe4-Qb7 7.Nc5-Nc5 8.Bc5 is not so strong. Now White has to keep an eye on his e4 pawn therefore his future progress on the queenside is harder to be achieved.

5...Bf8 6.Nc5-Nc5 7.bc5 at the moment White has realized his plan in consistent way. He has a strong passed pawn on queenside and Black's counter play is far away.

7...Rd8 8.Bc4-Rd1 9.Rd1-Qc6 10.Kh2! At the moment White has no direct way to win the game therefore he improves his position. On g1 the king was exposed so White is taking preventing measures in advance.

Now White has a permanent type of advantage so there is no need for him to rush. Even a slight improvement works in his favor therefore he has to do it.

10...h5 11.Qb2-Re7. Covering the e6-pawn but weakening 8th rank. It is hard to give an advice for Black. Already he has a lot of weaknesses: the e6-pawn, the king's position and also has to keep an eye to White's strong passed pawn. Now with all his pieces well placed White is ready for the final assault.

12.Rd8-Qc7

12...Qe4 13.Bh6 winning at once after 13...Qc4 14.Qf2!

13.Qb6!-Kg7

13...Qb6 14.cb6 with heavy loses. For example 14...Kg7 15.Bg5

14.Bg5 now everything is over. Black can't avoid losing material.

14...Be4 15.Be7-Qe7 16.Qd6-Qd6 17.cd6-Kf7 18.d7-Bh6 19.Rf8 1-0

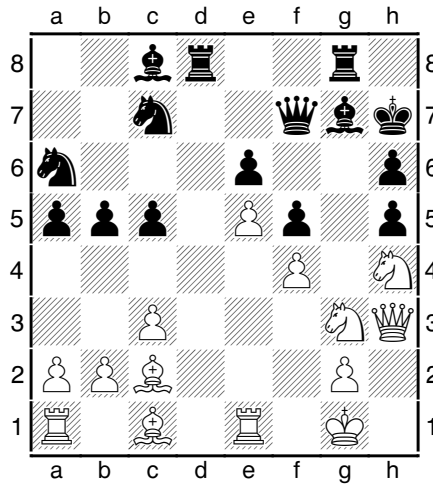
I would like to draw your attention to some important aspect. As you could see Black was opting for an active defense. This was the reason for his further weaknesses. From my experience I can say that: **Generally when you have a slightly inferior position, an active play will only give you additional weaknesses.**

So when an active play doesn't lead to any kind of palpable results, the solid defense should be preferred.

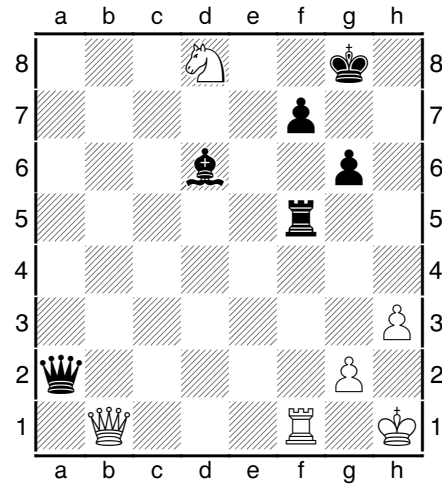
In this game, Black's only result of his active play was more weaknesses.

Exercises Month 12 / Set I

Simple Tactics

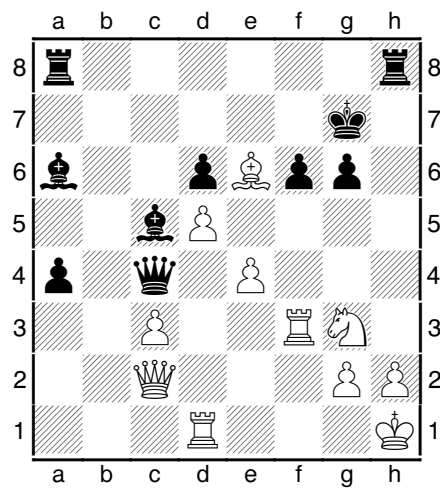


1. White to move



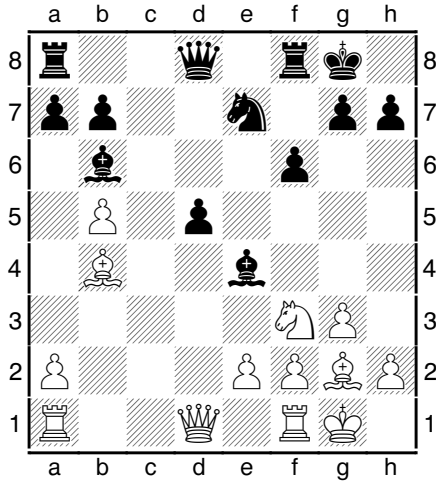
2. Black to move

Complicate Position

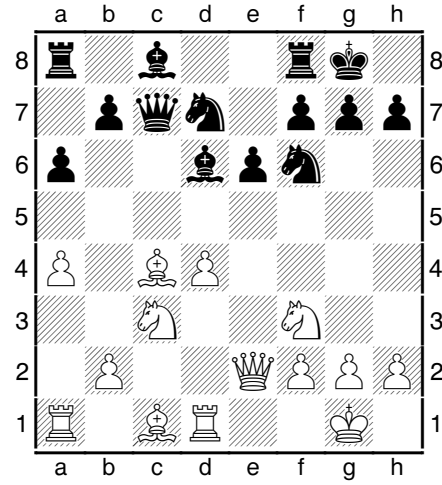


3. White to move

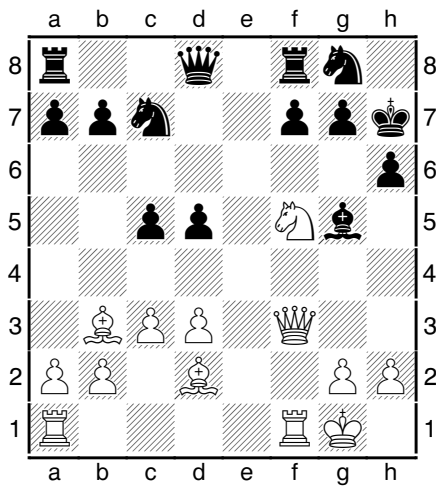
Positional Exercises



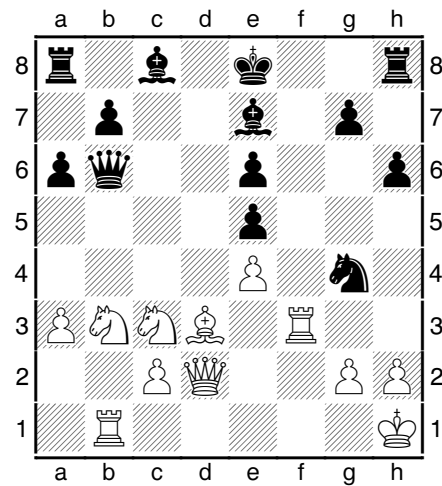
1. White to move



2. Black to move



3. White to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 12 / Set I

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Which are Black's weaknesses?

Position 2

- a) Is 1...Re8 good for anything?

Position 3

- a) Black is a pawn up...

Position 4

- a) Black is a pawn up...

Solutions M 12 / Set I

Tactics 1

1.Ngxf5! exf5 2.e6! Qf6 [2...Bxe6 3.Rxe6+-] **3.Qxf5+ Qxf5 4.Bxf5+ Kh8 5.Ng6+ Kh7 6.Ne5+ Kh8 7.Nf7#**

Tactics 2

1...Rf3!! [1...Qb3! is also possible with the threat Qg3. 2.Qe1 Qg3 3.Qxg3 Rxf1+ 4.Kh2 Bxg3+ 5.Kxg3—+ Still, Black has to know how to win this endgame.]
2.Kg1 [2.Nb7 Rxh3+ 3.Kg1 Bh2+ 4.Kh1 Be5+ 5.Kg1 Bd4+ 6.Rf2 Qxb1#] **2...Qa7+ 3.Kh1 Rxf1+ 4.Qxf1 Qd7 5.Qf6 Bc7 6.Qxf7+ Qxf7 7.Nxf7 Kxf7—+**

Tactics 3

The black king's position is far from safe. White opens the lines sacrificing a pawn and a knight so he needs to calculate exactly the following moves.

1.e5! dxe5 [1...fxe5 2.Rf7+ Kh6 3.Qc1+-; 1...f5 2.Nxf5+ gxf5 3.Rg3+-; 1...Raf8 2.Nf5+] **2.Nf5+!! gxf5** [2...Kf8 3.Nd6 Bxd6 4.Qxg6+-] **3.Rg3+ Kf8 4.Qxf5 Qf4** [4...Qh4 5.Rh3+-] **5.Qg6 Ra7 6.Rh3!** an important move without which the double sacrifice would not have been correct. **6...Rxh3 7.Qg8+ Ke7 8.d6+! Bxd6 9.Qf7+ Kd8 10.Rxd6+-**

Problem 1

(Position from: Anand V, 2752 – Timman J, 2616, Eurotel, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a typical “isolated pawn” structure. Black has nothing to compensate for his weak pawn: no chances to advance it or kingside attack. In addition his f6-pawn no longer protects the “e6” square. So there are two weaknesses in Black's camp.
 - Pieces: White also has more active pieces (black's e7-knight is clearly misplaced).
- In conclusion, White has a clear advantage.

What does Black want to do?

Black doesn't have an immediate threat. He will simply improve the positions of his misplaced pieces by Rf8-e8 and Ne7-g6-e5-c4. If he is able to play these moves without being disturbed, he will have no reason to fear.

What White has to do

White has a rather difficult choice at his disposal between 2 different strategies:

a) to follow the classical principle when playing against an isolated pawn: trading pieces in order to increase the pressure against the isolated pawn – which would start by **1.Nd4** or

b) to avoid trading pieces as he has better pieces which would start by **1.Bh3** in order to prepare 2.Nd4 and attack the weak light-squares in Black's camp.

The decision has to be taken after accurate calculation of the variations and the assessment of the 2 resulting positions.

Calculation

a) **1.Nd4-Bd4 2.Qd4-Nf5 3.Qd2-Bg2 3.Kg2-Re8** it looks like Black was able to solve his problems quite easily because now White also has a weakness on e2 and it is difficult for him to attack the d-pawn in consistent way. For example **4.Rfd1-d4** followed by Qd5 and Rad8.

b) **1.Bh3!-Re8**

1...f5? 2.Nd4 and the e4-bishop is in danger (f2-f3).

1...Bf3 2.ef3 and Black is left without the pair of bishops and has big problems defending the “d” pawn.

2.Nd4-Bd4 3.Qd4 the difference is that now White has the pair of bishops and it is difficult for Black to organize a consistent attack over the e2-pawn.

Note that the main reason for playing 1.Bh3 is Black's weakness on e6. Otherwise probably 1.Nd4 would be the right decision.

Problem 2

(Position from: Karpov A, 2690 – Anand V, 2752, Eurotel, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: Again we are dealing with a typical “isolated pawn” structure. White has a small development advantage that compensates for his weak d4-pawn. We can say that at the moment the game is balanced.

What does White want to do?

In order to obtain a little edge White sooner or later has to advance his d-pawn. It is hard for White to obtain an edge with another plan (a kingside attack for example). After getting his dark square bishop in the game, White will surely advance his “d” pawn getting rid of his weakness and obtaining some good perspectives because of his better development.

What Black has to do / Calculation

Normally Black has to bring his light square bishop in the game starting with 1...b6. This move would suit White's plans. After 1...b6 2.Bg5-Bb7 3.d5!-ed5 (3...e5 4.Rac1 and now Black's Qc7 and Bb7 are misplaced) 4.Nd5-Nd5 5.Bd5-Bd5 6.Rd5-Nc5 7.Rad1 and white has the upper hand because of his better placement of his pieces.

But here Black has a strong move that puts an end to any attempt of d4-d5 advance. After **1...Re8!** White is unable to advance his pawn. Then, Black can start with his main plan of activating his light square bishop maintaining the game balanced.

After 1...Nb6 2.Bd3 Nbd5 3.Ne5, Black indeed blocked the white d4-pawn, but in the meantime White pieces got excellent positions for a kingside attack. Also after 4.Bd2 and Rac1, the black queen will have problems to find a safe position.

Problem 3

(Position from: Macieja B, 2584 – Bobras P, 2435, Warsaw, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

Black is a pawn up but White has more than enough compensation for that. He has the pair of bishops, better placement for his pieces, good chances to get a strong attack on the kingside.

White has better chances.

What does Black want to do?

Fore sure he will be more than happy to trade some pieces in order to suppress White's pressure. In addition if Black can play in good conditions g7-g6 forcing the white strong knight to go back, then he will have no reason to fear.

What White has to do

White can get back his pawn immediately by 1.Bg5-Qg5 2.Bd5-Nd5 3.Qd5 but after 3...g6 4.h4-Qh5 5.Ne3 the position is only equal.

If White wants to get more, he has to avoid trading pieces. Now the right move can be spot easily: **1.Be1!**. Still an accurate calculation is necessary. If Black is able to play 1...g6, there is no way fore White to increase the pressure.

Calculation

1.Be1!-g6

1...Ne7 2.h4-Nf5 3.Qf5-g6 4.Qe5-Be7 5.Bg3-Rc8 6.h5 and White has a huge advantage.

All black pieces are tied down. After White brings his last piece in the game (Ra1), it will be difficult for Black to avoid material losses.

2.Bg3!-gf5 3.Qf5-Kg7 4.Qe5-Nf6 5.Qc7-Qc7 6.Bc7 Although Black escapes from the attack, he has big problems in the endgame. White has the pair of bishops and better pawn structure that gives him good chances to win.

Problem 4

(Position from: Sulskis S, 2577 – Malisauskas V, 2541, Vilnius, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: Black is a pawn up. This time White doesn't have real compensation for the pawn especially because of Black's double pawns on the "e" file that cover important central squares.

What does White want to do?

At the moment White has no real threat. Probably in order to get some active play he has to improve his c3-knight's position. If he is able to bring the knight on c4 via d1-e3, then he can hope to get some chances of creating real threats.

What Black has to do

Black's main concern is to put his king in safe and on the kingside seems to have better protection. On the queenside with b-file open, White can create some threats.

Also as we already know, trading pieces is in his favor. Now the right move is clear **1...Rf8!** With this Black solves his 2 tasks by one move!

Calculation

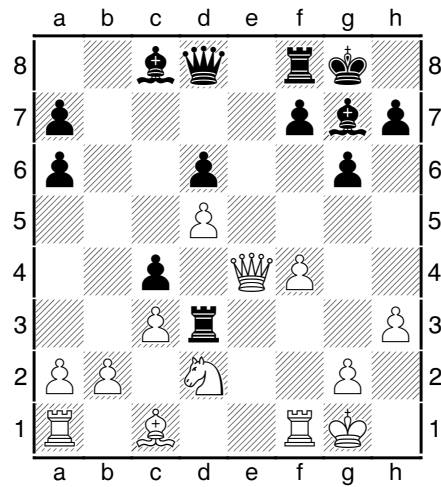
1....Rf8! 2.Rf8

2.Raf1-Rf3 3.Rf3-Bd7 followed by 0-0-0 and now with only one rook which just left the b-file, white cannot create real threats in time.

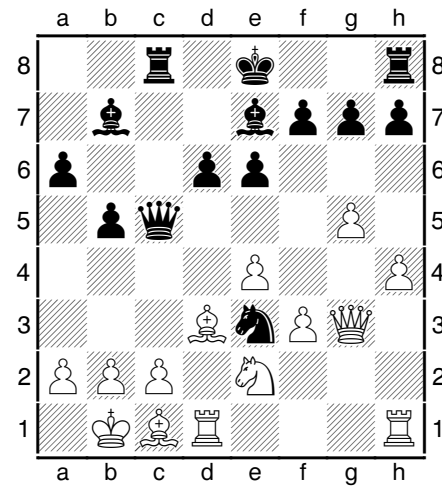
2...Kf8 followed by Kg8 and Bd7 with huge advantage.

Exercises Month 12 / Set II

Simple Tactics

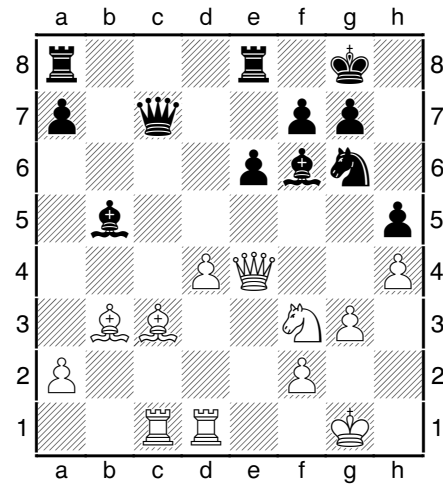


1. Black to move



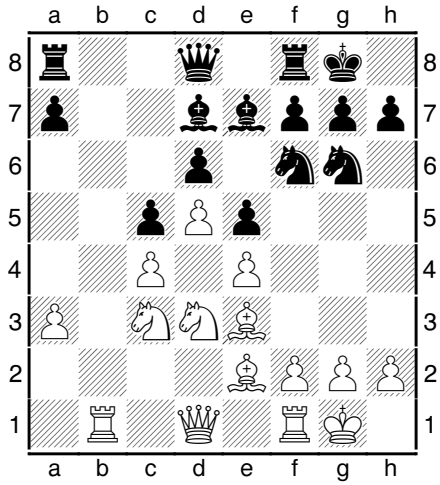
2. White to move

Complicate Position

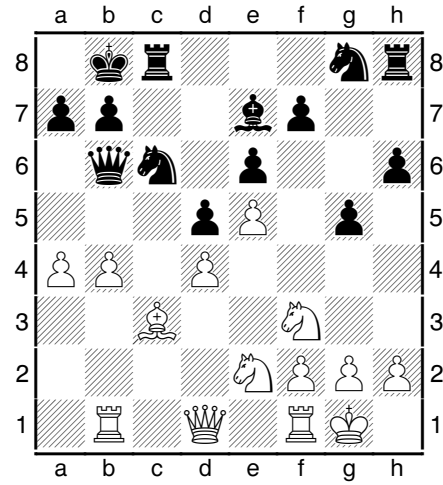


3. White to move

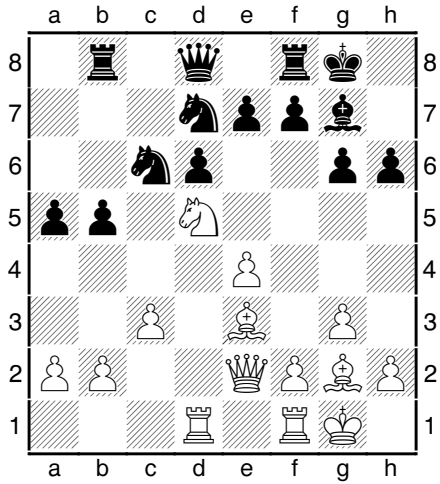
Positional Exercises



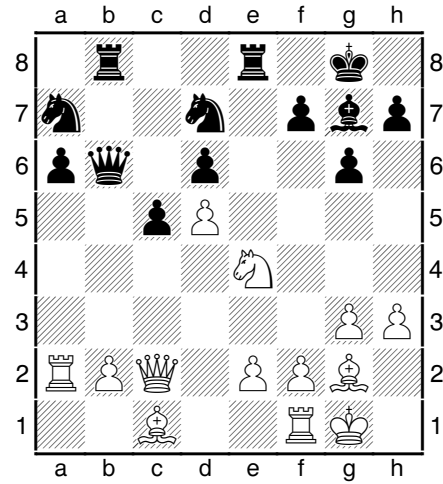
1. White to move



2. White to move



3. White to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 12 / Set II

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- no hint

Position 2

- a) How can White advance his queenside pawns in good condition?

Position 3

- a) How can White create weaknesses in Black's position?

Position 4

- a) Where the e4-knight threatens to go?

Solutions M 12 / Set II

Tactics 1

Both tactics 1 and 2 are related to the combinational theme of catching the opponent queen in the middle of the board.

1...Bd4+! 2.cxd4 [2.Kh1 Re8–+] 2...Re8 3.Qxe8+ Qxe8–+

Tactics 2

The difficulty of this exercise is that the “brilliant” move is not the first move as usual but comes after a simple exchange:

1.Bxe3 Qxe3 2.Nd4!! Kf8 [2...e5 3.Nf5+–; 2...Qxd4 3.Bxb5+; 2...0–0 3.c3 followed by Rhe1 and the black queen is trapped] **3.Bxb5+–**

Tactics 3

(Position from game Holmov – Antosin, 1988)

Here the advance of the isolated pawn opens the lines and gives White a strong attack.

1.d5!! Qb7

1...exd5 2.Qxd5 Bc6 3.Qxh5! threatening 4.Qxg6 and 4.Bxf6 (3.Bxf6 Bxd5 4.Rxc7 Bxb3! 5.axb3 gxf6 6.Rdd7 Rf8 7.Rxa7± but White still has a long way to win.) 3...Bxf3 4.Qxf3 Bxc3 5.Rxc3 with deadly attack.;

OR 1...Bxc3 2.dxe6 Kf8 (2...Nh8 3.Ng5 Kf8 4.Qf3+–) 3.Qf5!+–

2.Bxf6 gxf6 3.Nd4 Bd7 4.Qf3 e5 5.Nf5 e4 6.Qxh5 Re5 7.d6! threatening Qxg6+ **7...Bxf5 8.Rc7 Be6 9.Bxe6! Rxh5 10.Bxf7+!+–**

Problem 1

(Position from: Ilincic Z, 2554 – Tosic M, 2503, Subotica, 2000)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a blocked pawn structure in the center. White is better because of his space advantage. There are no weaknesses.
- Pieces: For the moment White has the control of the only open file.

What does Black want to do?

Black has an easy plan. His lack of weaknesses (so he has nothing to defend) allows him to fight for the b-file. So his plan is to play 1...Rb8 in order to trade all the major pieces on this file. After this, White's space advantage will be no longer important.

What White has to do

In order to maintain his volatile advantage, White has to act quickly otherwise his advantage will vanish. So, White should find a way to transform his volatile advantage in a permanent one, if possible. How this can be achieved? With the help of a small trick White can gain the pair of bishops and also creating a weakness in Black's camp.

Calculation

1.Nc5!-dc5 2.d6-Qa5

After 2...Bd6 3.Qd6-Rc8 4.Rfd1 White has a clearly better position

3.de7-Ne7 4.Qd3 now White has the pair of bishops and Black has a major reason for concern: his c5-pawn. Note that 4...Qa3?? 5.Nd5 loses a piece.

Problem 2

(Position from: Short N, 2675 – Ward C, 2473, Monarch Assurance, 1999)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: This is a typical structure for the French Defense. White has space advantage and good perspectives on the queenside. Black managed to get rid of his "bad" bishop (the light square one).

- Pieces: White has better development.

We can say that White is better (at least he has better perspectives).

What does Black want to do?

Black's main task is to finish his development. He can achieve this by 1...h5 followed by Ng8-h6-f5. If he can do this undisturbed, he has great chances to balance the game.

What White has to do

In order to increase his pressure on the queenside, White has to advance his queenside pawns. However, it is not desirable to advance the queenside pawns when they can be blocked. For this reason Qd2 is necessary otherwise 1.b5 can be met by 1...Na5.

So, White needs to prepare the pawn advance by 1.Qd2. After this, White threatens b4-b5 and a4-a5 at once.

Calculation

Sadly, this move fails on calculation: 1.Qd2?!-g4! 2.Ne1-Bg5 and the queen has to leave the important e1-a5 diagonal. Black will play then Nge7 finishing his development and balancing the game.

Therefore White has to find a way to make Qd1-d2 possible. In order to increase his chances in his queenside attack, White also has to bring more forces on this side. The move that suits perfectly with both tasks is:

1.Ne1!

Now White reinforces his threat, in the same time heading with his knight to c5 adding new forces on queenside.

The b4-pawn is poisoned:

1...Nxb4 2.a5 Qxa5 3.Bxb4 Bxb4 4.Qb3 Rc4 5.Nd3 or 1...Bxb4 2.a5 Qxa5 3.Qb3

Now, it is difficult for Black to stop White's strong attack on queenside. For example:

1...h5 2.Nd3-Nh6 3.Qd2 and the advance of queenside pawns cannot be stopped.

Problem 3

(Position from: Atlas V, 2465 – Ballmann M, 2413, SUI-chT, 2000)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: This position is typical of Sicilian Dragon. White has more space in the center because of the open d-file and Black has more space on the queenside. Black already started to advance his queenside minority in order to create weaknesses on White's camp (after b5-b4xc3, the white c3-pawn is weak and backward).

- Pieces: White has the pair of bishops but the light square bishop is quite passive for the moment. In the same time, Black's knights have good outposts in the center (e5, c4) and therefore they annihilate White's theoretical advantage. White has a strong knight on d5 which can be chased away by e7-e6, but this would leave Black's d6-pawn unprotected.

We can say that the game is balanced.

What does Black want to do?

Black obviously plays on the queenside. At some point he will play e7-e6 in order to drive away the annoying d5-knight and b5-b4 to get some targets on the queenside.

If White advances c3-c4 in response to b5-b4, then his light square bishop will be really bad and, in addition, Black can sooner or later install a strong knight on d4.

Then we have to notice that Black doesn't threat 1...b4 yet because after 1...b4? 2.cb4-ab4 3.Rc1-Na5 4.Qd2 White wins a pawn. This gives him some time.

What White has to do

White doesn't have an obvious plan but nevertheless we must find one. On the queenside and in the center there are no hopes to get any real play yet. Therefore it remains the kingside. In the same time, White has to think how can improve the light square bishop's prospects. This can be achieved by weakening Black's light squares.

With this in mind White can find the right answer. **1.h4!**

Now White can hope to get some attacking chances on the kingside by advancing his pawn further (h4-h5) and weakening Black's light squares (g6, f5, e6).
Note that Black is not able to respond with the normal 1...h5 because after 2.Bg5, he will suddenly find himself in a tight position.

Problem 4

(Position from: Mikhalevski V, 2499 – Ribštein N, 2362, Ramat Aviv, 2000)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: This is a typical Benoni structure. In the future White can get bigger influence in the center by advancing his central pawns (e2-e4 and f2-f4 with the threat e4-e5). Black on the other hand has some pressure on the queenside, especially on the b-file. The white b2-pawn and black a6- and d6- pawns are weak.

- Pieces: White has the pair of bishops which work very well in this position.

White is slightly better.

What does White want to do?

White has a deadly positional threat. If he is able to play undisturbed 1.e3 followed by Ne4-d2-c4, then Black will be left without any counter-play. After that White will start advancing his strong central pawns getting a huge advantage. The knight on c4 will defend the b2-pawn, will attack the weak d6-pawn and will support the thematic advance e4-e5. In addition White can play also on the queenside by doubling his rooks on the a-file with pressure against a6.

What Black has to do

Black has to do something immediately: he has to annihilate White's strong knight. This also will help him from a general point of view: trading pieces in a cramped position is in his favor.

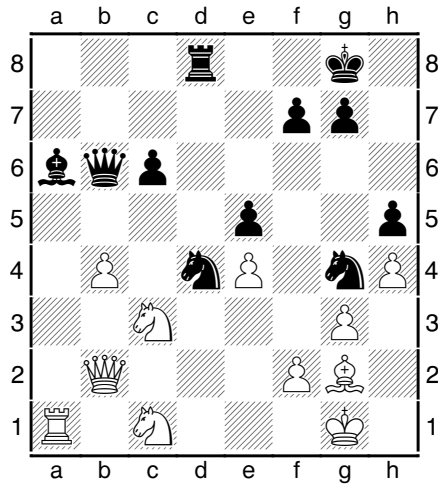
The right move therefore is **1...Nf6!** White is not able to play 2.Nd2 now because his e2 pawn is hanging. Also 2.Nc3-Nb5 doesn't achieve anything.

Black also has to assess the position after trading knights: White still has better prospects but it will be harder for him to improve his position. Without a strong knight on c4, his b2-pawn will become a weakness which will require permanent defense. Also if he advances his strong center, Black will get an excellent square on d4

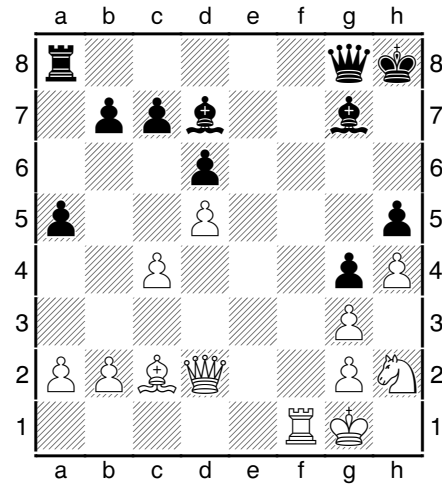
For this reasons **1...Nf6** is the right and the necessary move.

Exercises Month 12 / Set III

Simple Tactics

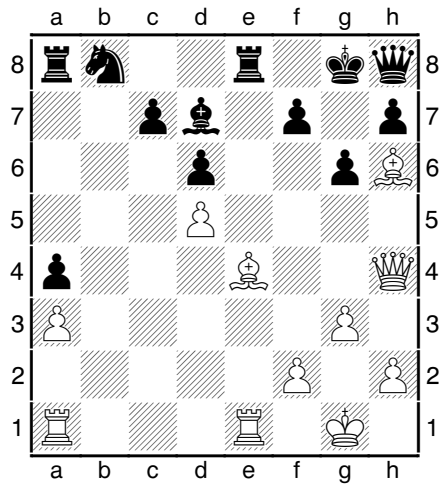


1. Black to move



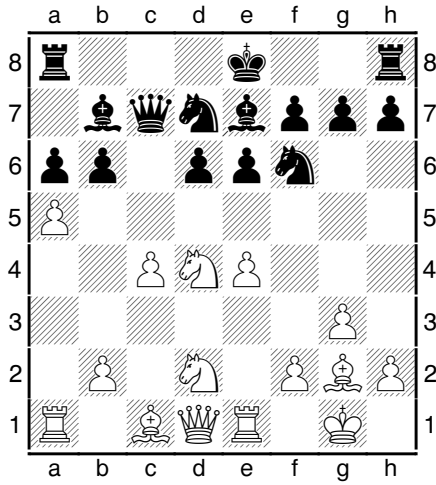
2. White to move

Complicate Position

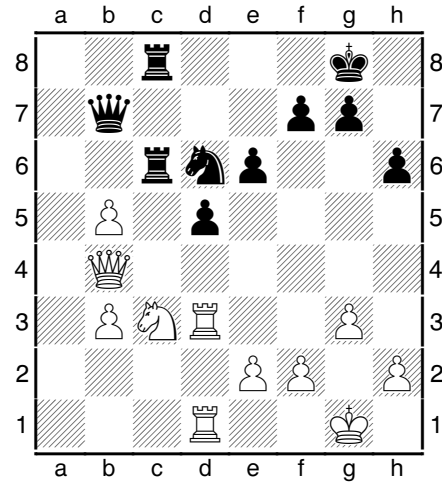


3. White to move

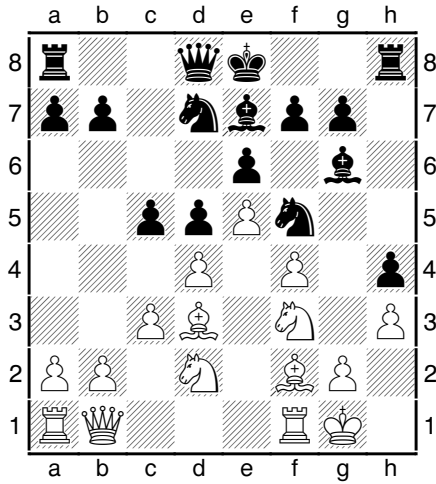
Positional Exercises



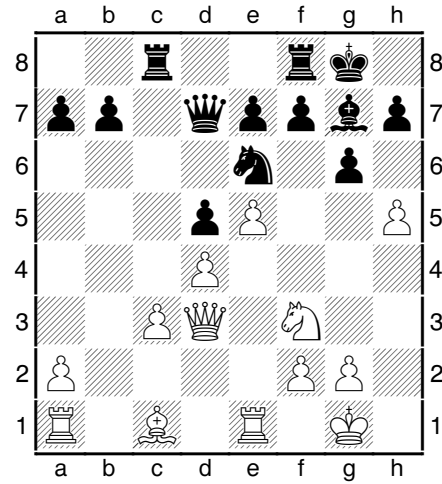
1. White to move



2. White to move



3. Black to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 12 / Set III

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Which is the best square for the d2-knight?

Position 2

- no hint

Position 3

- a) On which flank / center wants White to play?
- b) But Black?

Position 4

- a) On which flank / center does White have any chance to obtain an advantage?
- b) How this can be prepared?

Solutions M 12 / Set III

Tactics 1

1...Be2!! 2.N1xe2 [2.Nd3 Bxd3--+] 2...Nf3+ 3.Bxf3 [3.Kh1 Nxf2#] 3...Qxf2+ 4.Kh1 Qh2#

Tactics 2

1.Rf6! with the threat Qh6 **1...Qe8 2.Qd3!** [2.Rh6+?! Kg8±] **2...Qg8 3.Qg6** threatening Qxh5+ **3...Be8 4.Qg5+-** again Rh6+

Tactics 3

1.Bf5! Qc3 [1...Bb5 2.Rxe8+ Bxe8 3.Re1 Na6 4.Qe7!+-] 2.Rxe8+ Bxe8 3.Rc1 Qe5 4.Qd8 gxf5 5.Kf1!! the only winning move! [5.Bd2? Nc6! 6.Qxa8 Nd4÷; 5.Bf4? Qe4÷] **5...Nd7 6.Qxa8 Nf8 7.Re1 Bb5+ 8.Kg2+-**

Problem 1

(Position from: Huzman A, 2570 – Har Zvi R, 2510, Israel, 1996)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a Hedgehog type of structure. As usual in this type of structure, White has a big space advantage but Black has no weaknesses. White is slightly better.

What does Black want to do?

Black will finish his development and then will react to any White's attempt in gaining something palpable. Actually this setup is a reactive one: Black is just waiting to see what White will do and then will protect against that. The only active possibility is to advance his "d" or "b" pawns in order to open the center and, generally, when Black manages to do so, he has better prospects. Still, if White is playing with no ambition, it is hard for Black to get real winning chances.

What White has to do

At the moment White's main task is to find a way to put his pieces on the best squares. By advancing his "a" pawn White revealed his main plan: playing on the queenside. Therefore he has to find the best setup that gives him better chances of success on queenside. The d2-knight has no prospects at the moment, so this is the piece that has to

be improved. The best square for the knight is a5 attacking the black light-square bishop, but accurate calculation is necessary in order to get it there because White can lose his c4 pawn in process.

Calculation

1.N2b3! but not 1.ab6-Nb6 and now it is almost impossible to bring the knight on a5 because of the weakness on c4.

1...Rc8 in order to vacate the a8-square for the b7-bishop.

1...Qc4? 2.ab6-Nb6 3.Na5-Qc7 4.Nb7-Qb7 5.e5-Nfd5 6.ed6-Bd6 7.Ne6! with devastating attack.

2.ab6-Nb6 3.Na5-Ba8 3...Nc4? 4.Nb7-Qb7 5.e5-Nd5 6.ed6-Nd6 7.Ne6-fe6 8.Re6-Rc5 9.b4-Rb5 10.Ra5 with winning position.

4.b3 and White has the advantage.

Problem 2

(Position from: Pantsulaia L, 2461 – Palac M, 2561, Rethymnon, 2003)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: White is a pawn up. Still, Black has a compact pawn structure and if he is able to regain the pawn his chances are to be preferred because of his better pawn structure. The assessment of the position depends on whose turn is.

What does Black want to do?

This is quite easy to spot. Black will simply play 1...Rb8 regaining his pawn with good game.

What White has to do

If White is unable to activate his pieces at once his temporary material advantage will evaporate. There is only one way to achieve this: White has to open the game. An accurate calculation is also necessary.

Calculation

1.e4!-Nb5! Other alternatives are weaker:

1...Ne4? 2.Ne4-de4 3.Rd8 followed by Qe4+ winning material

1...de4 2.Rd6-Rc3 3.Rd7 with huge advantage because White can now advance his “b” pawn: 3...Qb6 4.R1d6.

2.Qb5 2.Nb5-Rc5 and Black regains the knight

2....Rb6 3.Qa4 White gains nothing with 2.Qa5-Ra6 3.Qb5-Rb6
3...Rb3 4.Rc1-de4 5.Rd7-Qb4 6.Qb4-Rb4 7.Ne2-Rc1 8.Nc1 and although White is a piece up, Black has excellent drawing chances due to the reduced material and the presence of only one wing pawns.
Still White maintains the advantage.

Problem 3

(Position from: Anand V, 2755 – Karpov A, 2688, Corsica, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: We have a blocked pawn structure on the board, typical of French Defense. The difference is that Black has the light-square bishop out.
On the other hand, White has space advantage.
We can say that the game is balanced (although I would prefer Black's side).

What does White want to do?

Normally, White should play on the kingside by advancing his pawns. However, this is not possible because of Black's "h" pawn. For this reason, White's only possible play is in the center. For sure White will play either 1.c4 or 1.dc5 in order to open his "bad" dark-square bishop.

What Black has to do

Black's normal play is on the queenside. In order to increase his influence on this side of the board, the queenside pawns have to be advanced. Also Black has to take care of White's plans.

By playing **1...c4!** Black solves both tasks. He closes the center and White's dark-square bishop and he moves the base of the white pawn-chain on c3 (where it is easier to attack). Now by advancing his queenside pawns he will grab more space and his d7-knight also will become more utile.

Such a move is made by general assessments and there is no need to calculate.

The game continued: 16...c4 17.Bc2 b5 18.Rd1 Nb6 19.Nf1 a5 20.Ne3 Nxe3 21.Bxe3 Bxc2 22.Qxc2 g6 23.Bf2 b4 24.Be1 Kf8 25.Nh2 Kg7 26.Ng4 Qd7 27.Ne3 Qb5 28.Qe2 Rac8 29.b3 Rc7 30.Qg4 Rh5 31.Qe2 Qd7 32.Rdc1 Qc8 33.Bd2 cxb3 34.axb3 bxc3 35.Be1 Bb4 =/+

Problem 4

(Position from: Erenburg S, 2494 – Kundin A, 2429, Tel Aviv, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: White has a space advantage but a weakness on c3. Black has better pawn structure.

The game is balanced.

What does Black want to do?

Black will double his rooks on the “c” file (after which White will have passive pieces), then by advancing his queenside pawns will increase his influence on that side.

What White has to do

Normally, White has to get some active play on the kingside. Any tries of attacking there have little chances of success due to the reduced material. So White has to come with another strategy. This is not so easy to find.

A lot of elements have to be taken into account. First of all, White can easily defend his c3-pawn, so Black has to lose a lot of time in order to increase his pressure on the queenside. If Black wants to undermine White’s e5-pawn by f6, this will be in White’s advantage because it will weaken the kingside. In the future White also can get some good prospects on the queenside (using the “b” file). With all these in our mind we have good chances to find the right answer:

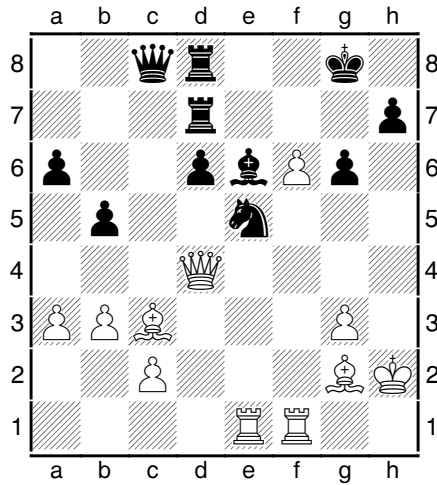
1.h6! A well founded strategic decision. White decided that his chances lie on the queenside, therefore first of all he wants to leave Black with a bad piece. If Black wants to bring his bishop in the game he has to play f7-f6 which will help White.

On the other hand, if White manages to play f2-f4 then Black is left with a piece completely out-of-play (the bishop is caged).

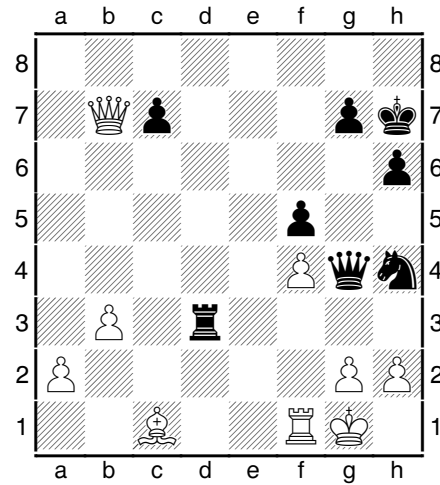
Now White can turn his attention to the queenside.

Exercises Month 12 / Set IV

Simple Tactics

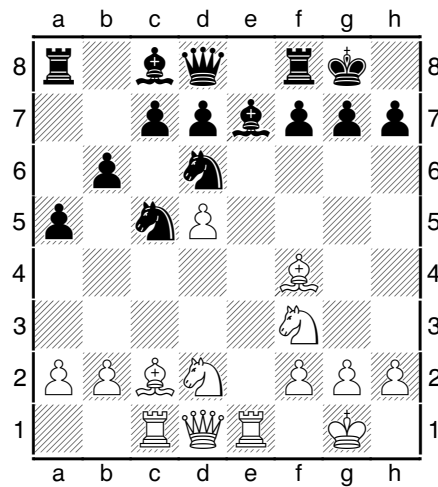


1. White to move



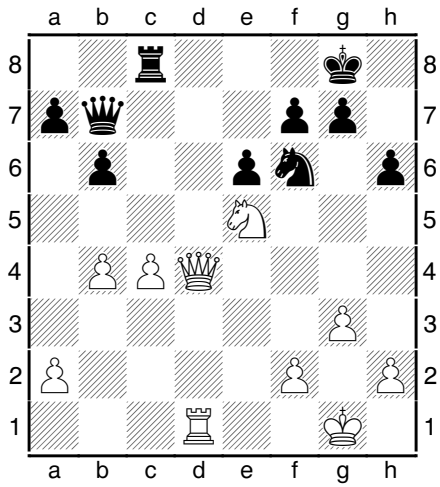
2. Black to move

Complicate Position

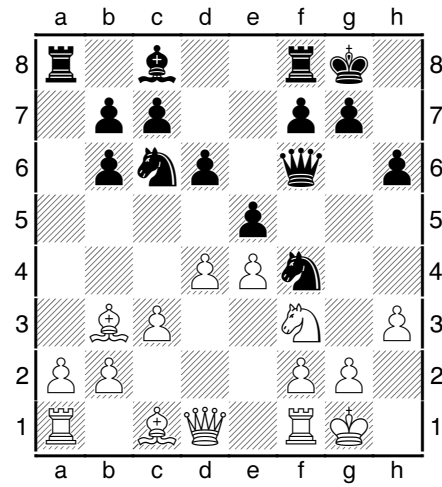


3. White to move

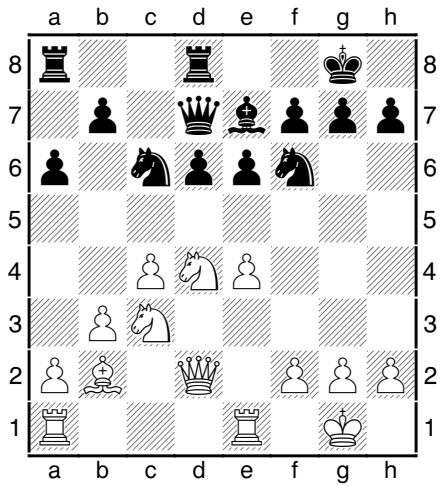
Positional Exercises



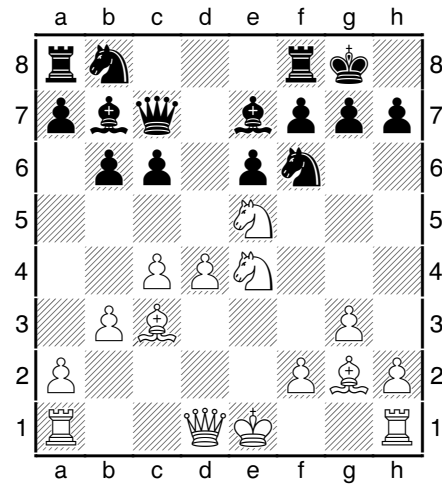
1. Black to move



2. White to move



3. Black to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 12 / Set IV

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Can Black obtain a strong square for his knight?

Position 2

- a) Can White drive away the annoying f4-knight?

Position 3

- no hint

Position 4

- a) How can Black react in the center?

Solutions M 12 / Set IV

Tactics 1

1.f7+ [1.Rxe5 dxe5 2.f7+ Rxf7 3.Qxe5 also works] **1...Rxf7** [1...Bxf7 2.Rxe5 dxe5 3.Qxe5] **2.Rxe5 dxe5 3.Qxe5**

Tactics 2

Black wants to bring his rook on c2, so he gains a tempo for Rc3: **1...c6!** [1...Rc3 directly also works] **2.Qxc6 Rc3! 3.Qd5** [3.h3 Qg3] **3...Rc5 4.Qd2** [4.Qb7 Rc2!] **4...Rxc1!**

Tactics 3

The following attack is rather a positional attack than a “combination”. White gives up material but the conclusion is almost impossible for any human player to calculate at the board.

Of course, there is need for a lot of calculation before giving up pieces, but the most valuable in this situation is the feeling for the position: “in this position, where White attacks with all the pieces, he should win, not sure how, but... let’s start the sacrifice:”

1.Bxh7+!? Kxh7 2.Rxe7! Qxe7 3.Ng5+ Kg6 [3...Kg8 4.Qh5+-; 3...Kh6 4.Qg4! f5 5.Qh3+ Kg6 6.Ndf3 Nce4 7.Ne5+ Qxe5 8.Qh7+ Kf6 9.Bxe5+ Kxe5 10.Qxg7+-]

4.Ndf3!! Re8 it seems to be the best defense, but the computer found it, not the grandmasters that played and analyzed this game (Lanka - Malaniuk).

[4...f6 5.Nh4+ Kh6 6.Ne6+! g5 (6...Kh7 7.Qh5+ Kg8 8.Ng6+-) 7.Bxd6 Qxd6 8.Nf5+; 4...Nf5 5.g4+-;

In the game, Malaniuk played: 4...Rh8 5.Ne5+ Kf6 (5...Qxe5 6.Bxe5 Kxg5 7.f4+ Kf5 8.Rxc5! bxc5 9.Qc2+ Ne4 10.g4+ Kxg4 11.Qxe4 d6 12.f5+ Kg5 13.Qf4+ Kh5 14.h3!+-) 6.Qf3! g6 (6...Nf5 7.Rxc5 bxc5 8.Ne4#; 6...Qe8 7.Re1! Bb7 8.Bd2+-) 7.Nc6 here, Black resigned. 7...dxc6 8.Bxd6+ Bf5 9.Qc3+-]

5.Qc2+ [5.Ne5+ Qxe5 6.Bxe5 Rxe5+-]

5...f5 [5...Nce4 6.Re1 f5 7.Nh4+ Kf6 8.Qd3 and Qd4+]

6.g4 Nce4 [6...Qe2 7.Nh4+ Kf6 8.Qc3+ Ke7 9.Re1 Qxe1+ 10.Qxe1+ Kd8 11.Qd2+-]

7.h4 White is a whole rook down, but it is very hard for Black to defend in such position. Some of the strongest chess engines consider White better (+0.6). So, in the end, it's about self-confidence and strong nerves.

Even if at the board, the decision should be taken in several minutes, such positions are worth to be analyzed at home for much more time (even moving the pieces on the board as correspondence chess players do for their games). This work, if done with pleasure, will help you to find defensive and attacking maneuvers in your real games too.

Problem 1

(Position from: Dautov R, 2617 – Naiditsch A, 2586, Saarbruecken, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: White has space advantage, queenside pawn majority, and better placement of his pieces.

All these assure him a solid advantage.

What does White want to do?

By advancing his queenside pawns further, White will eventually get a strong passed pawn here. He can also improve his pieces' positions by Qd6, or b5 and Nc6 for example. Also, there is not problem for White to trade the queens because then he can enter the d-file with the rook.

What Black has to do

Black has no weaknesses. Still, a wait-and-see strategy cannot work here because White has many ways to increase his advantage. Another problem for Black is the lack of space. Getting some counter play on the kingside is quite difficult mainly because the knight is tied down to defend the d7-square. So it remains the queenside.

The first idea that comes in our mind is 1...a5 in order to open the "a" file. This is not so good because after 2.b5, White gets an excellent square for his knight on c6 and Black "gets" a weakness on b6. In addition, Black won't be able to generate any counter play.

Another idea is 1...b5! in order to obtain the excellent d5-square for the knight. To decide to such a drastic solution (White will get a strong well defended passed pawn on c5), Black has to evaluate very well the gains and drawbacks.

White will have a strong passed pawn. Black an excellent square on d5 for his knight. This is not enough to compensate White's strong passed pawn. For this reason, Black has to get more than the d5-square and this is possible: by playing a7-a5 after installing the knight on d5 (this also covers the "d" file), Black gets a target (the white b4-pawn) that requires constant attention.

In addition, Black is not doomed to passivity (he can get some active play on the "a" file). All these are enough to decide on such a drastic solution.

Problem 2

(Position from: Erenburg S, 2494 – Kreizberg M, 2346, Tel Aviv, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: This kind of structure usually can be met on Italian Opening and rarer on Spanish Opening. White has the pair of bishops and greater influence over the center.

White is better.

What does Black want to do?

The chances for Black to balance the game lie on the kingside. He will play something like 1...Ne7, Be6, Nf6 in order to get attacking chances on this side.

Note that closing the center by d4-d5 is in Black's favor. He remains with the "good" light-square bishop and White's pair of bishops will be less strong.

What White has to do

At the moment, White has no chance to increase his influence in the center. In this case, it is better for him to take some prophylactic measures against Black's plans. How? The answer is quite difficult but it is a maneuver that any player of Italian Opening has to know. In order to leave Black without real chances of attack, it is enough to drive the strong f4 knight away. This can be achieved easily by **1.Kh2!** The idea is typical. In order to play g2-g3 (the move that drives the knight away) White has to protect his h3-pawn. So White will play 2.Ng1 followed by g2-g3 and Be3 if necessary to defend the f2-pawn.

If Black plays 1...Qg6 then after 2.Bf4-e4 3.Re1 White has increased his influence over the center and also Black spoiled his pawn structure.

Problem 3

(Position from: Postny E, 2497 – Lerner K, 2504, Tel Aviv, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: We are dealing with a Hedgehog type of structure. As usual in this type of structure White has a huge space advantage, and Black no weaknesses. The small difference with the typical Hedgehog is the absence of light-square bishops. Generally speaking, this is in White's favor as the light-square bishop is restricted by the c4 and e4 pawns.

White is slightly better.

What does White want to do?

White will improve his pieces (for example Nc2-e3) and then either advances his queenside pawns or will play in the center and kingside by means of f2-f4 and e4-e5.

What Black has to do

All the time, Black has to calculate his active possibilities in this setup: the advance of his "d" or "b" pawns in order to open the center. Generally when Black manages to play d6-d5 or b7-b5, he gets better prospects.

Calculation

1...b5! 2.cb5

After 2.Nc6-Qc6 3.cb5-ab5 Black has no trouble

2...Nd4 3.Qd4-ab5 and Black solved all his problems.

Problem 4

(Position from: Lerner K, 2504 – Gershon A, 2562, Tel Aviv, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: White has space advantage therefore he is slightly better.

What does Black want to do?

In order to fully equalize Black has to advance his “c” pawn after which he will diminish White’s influence over the center and also open the lines in order to trade some pieces. White still has a queenside pawn majority but this is merely a symbolic advantage.

What White has to do

This time prophylaxis is the right answer. If White is able to disturb Black’s plan of advancing c6-c5 then his advantage will remain for a long time. Without the c5 advance, Black also remains with a long term “bad” light-square bishop on b7.

This can be achieved with **1.Qf3!**, a move which is justified only by accurate calculation:

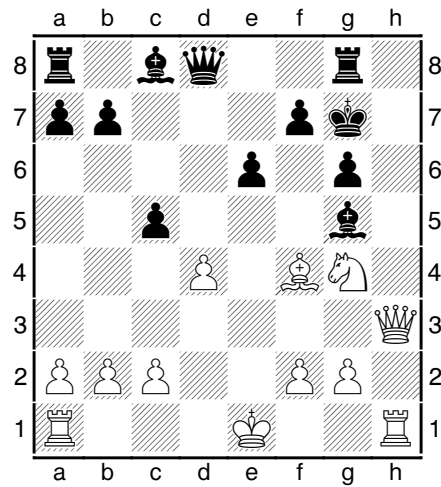
Calculation

1.Qf3!-Nbd7 2.Nf6-Bf6 2....Nf6? 3.Nc6-Kh8 4.0-0-Rac8 5.d5 and White is a pawn up.
3.Ng4-Be7 4.0-0 White finishes his development and now is ready to oppose against Black’s freeing attempt

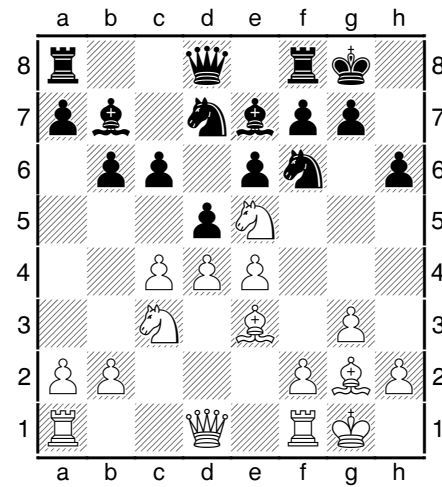
4...Rab8 5.Rad1-c5 6.d5! and Black still has an inactive bishop on b7 while White gets a strong passed pawn on d5.

Exercises Month 12 / Set V

Simple Tactics

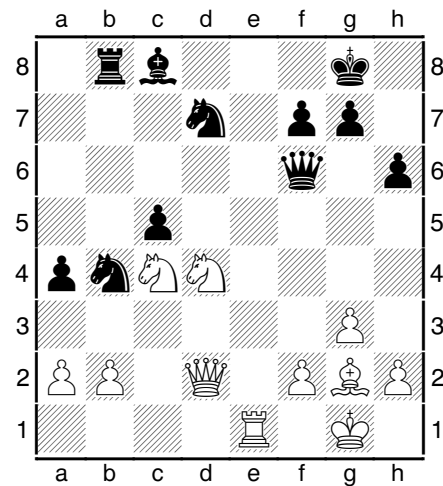


1. White to move



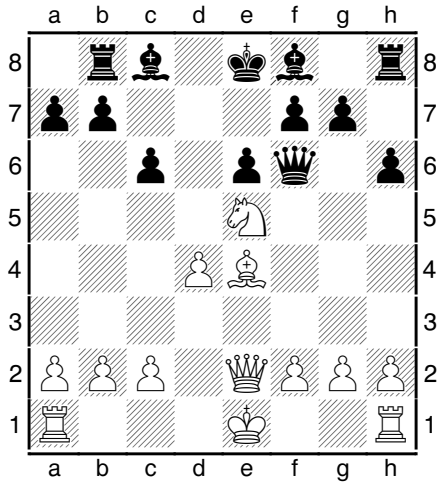
2. White to move

Complicate Position

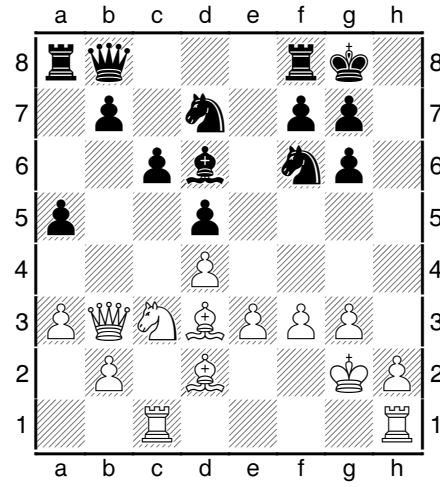


3. White to move

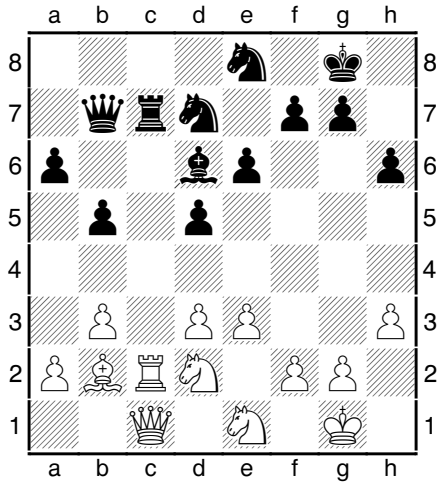
Positional Exercises



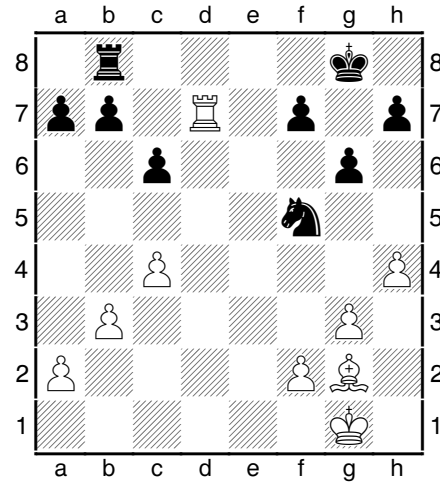
1. White to move



2. Black to move



3. Black to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 12 / Set V

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Find the correct move order taking into account Black's plans

Position 2

- a) Is White's e3-e4 a real threat for Black?

Position 3

- a) How can Black increase his advantage on the queenside?

Position 4

- a) Can Black drive away White's rook from the 7th rank?
- b) How can White obtain an advantage on the queenside, also using his bishop?

Solutions M 12 / Set V

Tactics 1

1.Qh6+ Bxh6 2.Bxh6+ Kh7 3.Bf8+ Qh4 4.Rxh4#

Tactics 2

1.Nxc6! Bxc6 2.exd5 exd5 3.cxd5 Bb7 4.d6 Bxg2 5.dxe7 Qxe7 6.Kxg2
and White is a pawn up.

Tactics 3

1.Nf5! opens the d-file for the queen.

Also strong is: 1.Re8+ Kh7 2.Ne6!! with strong attack. It is hard for Black to find good moves. 2... 2...fxe6 doesn't work because of: 3.Be4+ g6 4.Qd6 threatening Qxb8 and Rxe6

1...Qxf5

1...Ba6 2.Qxd7 Bxc4 3.Re8+ Rxe8 4.Qxe8+ Kh7 5.Ne7 h5 6.Qg8+ Kh6 7.Qh8+ Kg5 8.h4+ Kg4 9.Qxg7+!! Qxg7 10.Kh2 threatening f3# 10...Be2 11.f3+ Bxf3 12.Bh3#;

Best for Black would be: 1...Ne5 2.Nxh6+ gxh6 3.Rxe5±

2.Re8+ Nf8 [2...Kh7 3.Be4+-] **3.Rxf8+ Kh7** [3...Kxf8 4.Qd8#]

4.Qe1!! Qf6 [4...Nd3 5.Be4+-] **5.Qe8+-**

Problem 1

(Position from: Sutovsky E, 2657 – Shachar E, 2374, Tel Aviv, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

White has some lead in development, space advantage and better placement of his pieces. Black has no weaknesses and the pair of bishops.

White is slightly better.

What does Black want to do?

In order to balance the game, Black has to undermine White's center by c6-c5 after which he will open the game (this is good for him because he has the pair of bishops) and also diminish White's influence in the center.

First he will bring his king in safe by castling and then he will advance his "c" pawn. So, Black will play something like 1....Bd6 followed by 0-0 and c6-c5.

What White has to do

At this point White has a major task. His next move will determine the future development of the game.

His major plans are determined by his king position. If he castles on the queenside, then his plan will be a massive pawn storm on the kingside. If he castles kingside then he will play in the center (he will place his rooks on “d” and “e” files).

It seems that the first plan assures White better prospects. Still, at the same time, he has to keep an eye to his opponent’s plans and this can be done by placing the queen on e3 (to stop c6-c5).

In order to find the right order of moves to implement his plan, White has to accurately calculate variations.

Calculation

1.f4! the most precise order of moves. If White wants to accomplish the best setup (f4, Qe3 in order to prevent c5 and 0-0-0) this is the only way.

After 1.0-0-0-Bd6 White has no possibility of playing a quick f2-f4. For example: 2.Qe3-c5! (2....Be5 3.de5-Qe5?? 4.Bc6 winning the queen) 3.f4-cd4 4.Rd4 (4.Qd4-Qf4 winning a pawn) 4...Bc5 with advantage.

1....Bd6 1...Qf4? 2.g3-Qg5 3.0-0-f5 4.Bf5! with winning position

2.Qe3 followed by 0-0-0 and White can then continue to advance his kingside pawns. Now it is very hard for Black to get some active play since the c6-c5 advance is almost impossible to accomplish.

Problem 2

(Position from: Vera R, 2544 – Shirov A, 2699, Bali, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

White is slightly better. He has the pair of bishops and better pawn structure (because of black double pawns on the “g” file).

What does White want to do?

If White manages to play e3-e4 then he will have a huge advantage. He will advance his e-pawn further, driving away Black’s f6 knight. After this, White will advance his “h” pawn getting a strong kingside attack.

What Black has to do

At any cost, Black has to stop White in achieving his plan.

The first move that comes in our mind (and quite the normal one) is 1...c5 in order to attack at once White’s center. Sadly this doesn’t work because Black will lose his d5

pawn after 2.Nd5 and it's easy to see that Black will have nothing to compensate for the pawn loss.

1...Re8 increasing Black's control over e4 also achieves nothing because White can still play 2.e4.

The only remaining idea is to attack the d4-pawn that will become undefended as a consequence of e3-e4 move. After **1...Qa7!** Black makes the e3-e4 advance impossible (White loses the d4-pawn). If white protects his pawn by 2.Nd2, Black can attack White's center by 2...c5 since the d5 pawn is protected now.

Black then is able to return to his main plan: a queenside attack. So he will advance his queenside pawns (like b5-b4) in order to drive the white knight away. After this he can attack the center by c6-c5.

Problem 3

(Position from: Annaberdiev M, 2305 – Erenburg S, 2490, Wch U20, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

There are no weaknesses in any camp, the pawn structure is compact (we are dealing with a semi blocked pawn structure), the pieces activity is balanced.

Black has a slight edge because of his space advantage.

What does White want to do?

White's task is easy to spot. He will trade as many pieces he can in order to release the little pressure Black has (because of his space advantage), and then will apply a "wait and see" tactic.

What Black has to do

At the moment, Black can hardly improve his pieces position due to the blocked character of the game and because some squares (f6, e5) are guarded by White's dark-square bishop (White cannot wait to trade the bishop in order to push then d4 gaining space). It's easy to spot that if White pushes d3-d4 at once he will limit his dark-square bishop for no reason.

So, Black has to come up with a long term plan. Because of his space advantage on the queenside his plans has to be on this side. After **1...b4!** he gains more space here.

It's true that placing a pawn on dark squares, limiting the own bishop, is not a good strategic measure on general terms. However, the gains of this advance are more important. Beside of space gains, Black fixes a weakness on a2 that will require constant protection from white pieces in a future endgame. In addition, the c3-square can be used later by a black knight.

These are enough gains for making this move.

Problem 4

(Position from: Gomez Esteban, 2476 – Paunovic D, 2532, Elgoibar, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

White has a clear advantage. His advantage is given by the cooperation rook + bishop better than rook + knight and his active rook on the 7th rank.

What does White want to do?

In order to get something palpable, White has to increase his pressure against Black's b7-pawn. This can be achieved by advancing his queenside pawns in order to open his "dormant" bishop. So White will play something like b4, b5 in order to attack the b7-pawn.

What Black has to do

Black's main task is to drive away white's strong rook from the 7th rank. This can be achieved with a long, but consistent, knight maneuver. So after 1...Ng7-h5(e8)-f6, the white rook has to leave the 7th rank (Rc7-Ne8).

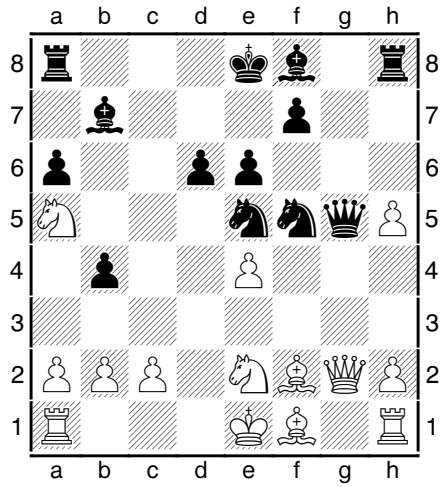
With this in mind, Black has to take first some defensive measures on the queenside also. (Even if he drives White's strong rook away from the 7th rank, White will still be better so defensive measures on the queenside are helpful anyway.)

As you already know, in cramped positions any trade favors the weaker side. Therefore it is better, first, to put a stop against white queenside pawn advance by **1...a5!**

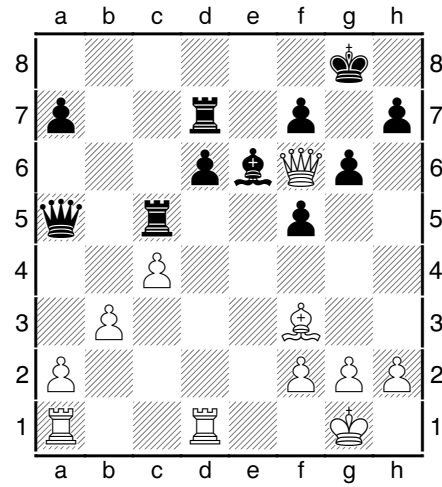
After this, Black can go on with his main plan.

Exercises Month 12 / Set VI

Simple Tactics

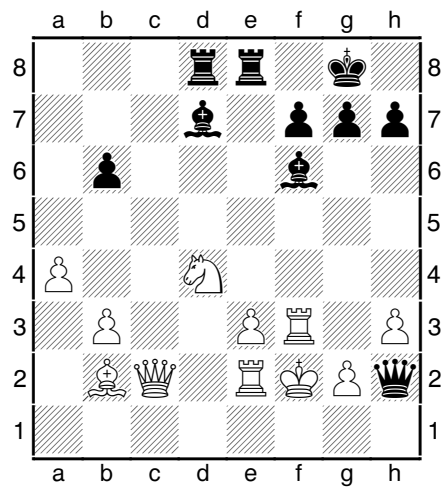


1. Black to move



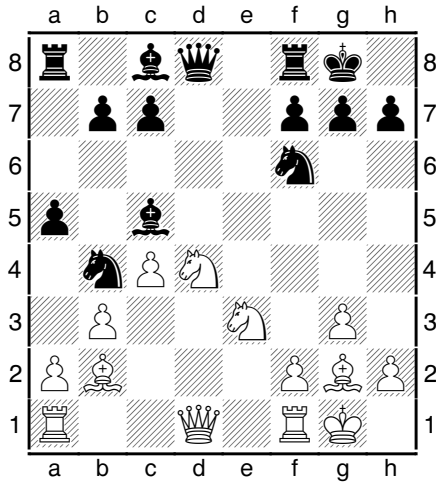
2. White to move

Complicate Position

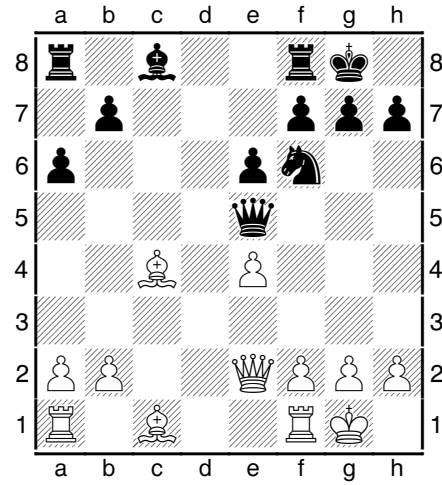


3. White to move

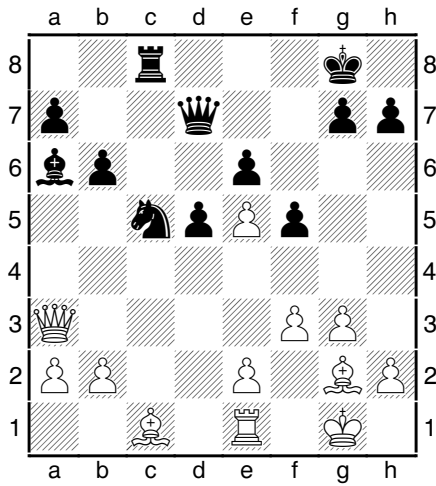
Positional Exercises



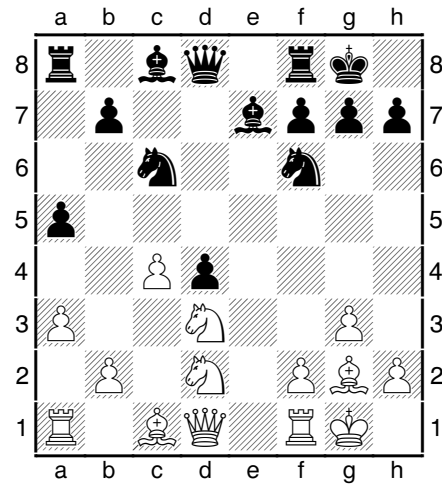
1. Black to move



2. White to move



3. Black to move



4. Black to move

Hints

Month 12 / Set VI

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) How can Black activate his pieces?

Position 2

- a) How can White restrict opponent pieces play at maximum?

Position 3

- a) How can Black use the c-file?

Position 4

- a) Which is Black's long-term objective?
- b) Can White attack the black d4-pawn? → Prophylaxis.

Solutions M 12 / Set VI

Tactics 1

1...Ne3!! 2.Qg3 [2.Qxg5 Nf3#] **2...Qxg3** [2...Nxc2+! is even stronger 3.Kd1 Qxh5 4.Rc1 (4.Kxc2 Bxe4+) 4...Bxe4 5.Bg2 Qf5] **3.Nxg3 Nxc2+ 4.Kd1 Nxa1 5.Nxb7 b3–+**

Tactics 2

1.b4! Qxb4 2.Rdb1 Qxc4 Have you seen that after 2...Qxc4, Black defends the c8-square and after 3.Rb8+, he can play 3...Rc8? But... **3.Be2! Qc2 4.Bd3 Qc3 5.Rb8+ Rc8 6.Qxc3** and White wins.

Tactics 3

White sacrifices an exchange, but weakens Black's dark-squares in front of the king. Given the opposite color bishops, this will compensate for the material:

1.Rxf6! gxf6 2.Nf5 Rc8 [2...Re6 3.Rd2! Qb8 defending the back rank 4.Qd1!+- threatening Rxd7 and Qg4.] **3.Qd3 Bc6** [3...Bxf5 4.Qxf5 Qd6 (4...Re6 5.Rd2!+-) 5.Bxf6 Re6 6.Qg4+ Kf8 7.Bd4 material being about equal, White is better because of his very strong bishop on d4 and exposed Black's king.] **4.e4! Qf4+ 5.Qf3 Qxf3+ 6.gxf3** with idea Ke3 and Rg2 and White is better because of his attack on the g-file and dark-squares (a3-f8 diagonal is also weak) and weakness from f6.

Problem 1

(Position from: Graf A, 2646 – Carlsen M, 2581, Sanxenxo, 2004)

Positional Evaluation

- Center/pawn structure: This is an open position. The pawns in the center were traded so the important factor is pieces position.
- Pieces: This factor is in White's favor. His pieces are in the center and the bishops on the long diagonal. *The bishop's best placement is on the long diagonal (Capablanca).* White is slightly better.

What does White want to do?

White's plan is to transform his better placement of his pieces in something more palpable. This can be achieved by 1.a3 (in order to drive away black's knight on a passive square) followed by Ndf5 and White will be able either to gain the pair of bishops or to spoil Black's kingside structure.

What Black has to do

In order to balance the game, Black has to get his pieces in the game without allowing White any gains.

Because Black has no good squares for his light-square bishop, his rooks remains passive which is also an important factor in open positions. However, the a8-rook can be activated using the rook lift: Ra8-a6-d6, so Black's first move can be 1...Ra6. Still, this has to be accurately calculated.

Calculation

1...Ra6!

1...c6 the other "normal" move that limits white light-square bishop is less accurate: 2.a3-Na6 3.Ndf5 and Black has nothing to oppose White's threats to obtain the pair of bishops or spoil the kingside structure.

2.a3 2.Ndf5-Nd3 3.Bc3 (3.Bf6-Rf6 4.Be4-Bf5 5.Nf5-Nf2! and Black wins the exchange) 3...Re8 and Black has nothing to fear.

2...Rd6 the point of 1..Ra6 **3.ab4-Bd4 4.Bd4-Rd4 5.Qe1-ab4 6.Qb4-b6** and Black solved all his problems.

You can see that in a cramped position, Black was finding a way to trade as many pieces as possible in order to diminish the pressure.

Problem 2

(Position from: Pelletier Y, 2589 – San Segundo Carrillo, 2516, Sanxenxo, 2004)

Positional Evaluation

We are dealing with a symmetrical pawn structure. White is slightly because he has the pair of bishops and some space advantage.

What does Black want to do?

Black will surely develops his pieces and then will trade the rooks on the central lines. He will also try to trade one of White's bishops. Having a position without weaknesses, Black can hope to hold the game.

What White has to do

White's main problem is of a strategic nature. He has to decide about his pawn structure at once. There are two possibilities: he can maintain his pawns on light squares by playing 1.f3 or he can put his pawns on dark squares by 1.Re1 followed by f2-f4 and e4-e5.

The second plan offers White more space, but leaves good squares for Black's minor pieces: the knight will have an excellent square on d5 and the bishop an active square on

c6. This plan is good if White can get a kingside attack, but this is out of question because there are not enough pieces left on the board.

The first plan offers White better prospects. First of all he places his pawns on his opponent bishop's color restricting its activity (*when you have the pair of bishops and your opponent knight and bishop, place your pawns at the same color with your opponent bishop*) and also restricting Black's knight activity. In addition, if Black manages to trade the light-square bishops white pawns will be on the right color (opposed with the remained bishop).

So, the right move is **1.f3!**

Problem 3

(Position from: Benjamin J, 2554 – Adamson R, 2373, San Diego, 2004)

Positional Evaluation

The position is blocked. White has the pair of bishops (but an ugly one on g2). Black has better pawn structure and active pieces and also controls the only open file.

Black has a clear advantage.

What does White want to do?

For sure, he will activate his pieces. If he can play undisturbed something like Be3, Kf2, Rc1 all advantages that Black has will evaporate, and Black will have a tough defense ahead. Then, at the appropriate moment, White can open the position by advancing his "e" pawn.

What Black has to do

In order to maintain or increase his advantage, Black has to act quickly before White manages to get his pieces in the game. Black will increase his advantage if is able to penetrate with the rook on the 2nd rank, so he wants to open the c-file.

By playing **1...Qa4!** Black trades the most active white piece (which also could defend the c2-square) and open the c-file. Still, accurate calculation is necessary.

Calculation

1...Qa4 2.b4

2.b3?-Qd4 and Black has an irresistible attack, therefore White must trade the queens.

2.Qa4?-Na4 3.b3 (otherwise Black plays Rc2 gaining material) 3...Nc3 winning a pawn.

2....Qa3 3.Ba3-Na4! 4.e4 4.Rc1-Rc1 5.Bc1-Be2 with winning position

4...fe4 5.fe4-d4 and Black obtains a strong passed pawn

Problem 4

(Position from: Enhbat T, 2406 – Shahade J, 2361, San Diego, 2004)

Positional Evaluation

Black has a passed pawn on d4, which is firmly blocked by the best pieces that can make a blockade: the knights. Both sides are equally developed. There are no weaknesses at the moment.

So, the game is balanced.

What does White want to do?

White will develop his pieces by means of Nf3, Re1, Bf4(g5) and then will either advance his queenside pawns or will play Nfe5 in order to activate at maximum his light-square bishop. Another plan involves the attack of the d4-pawn by means of Nf3, b2-b3, and Bb2.

What Black has to do

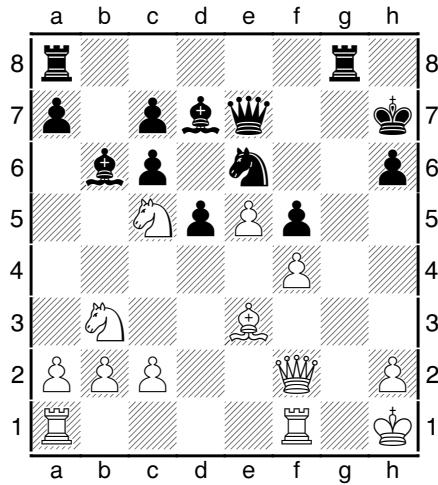
On long term, Black has to free the way of his passed pawn. For this he has to play at some moment (after developing his light-square bishop) Nd7-c5.

For the moment, the first task is to evaluate the plan that offers White better prospects. It seems that the attack over the “d” pawn is the most dangerous plan because it also obstructs Black’s plan.

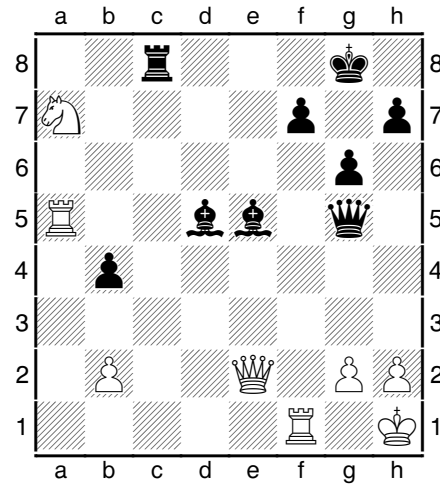
Therefore, Black has to put an end to White’s dangerous plan and the move **1....a4!** suits perfectly with this task. In addition, a4 is also a good move for long term because this way Black annihilates White’s queenside majority.

Exercises Month 12 / Set VII

Simple Tactics

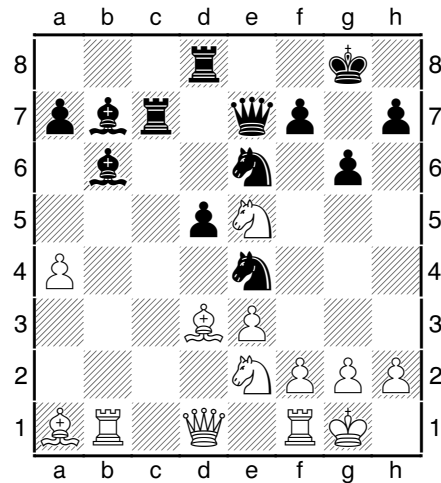


1. Black to move



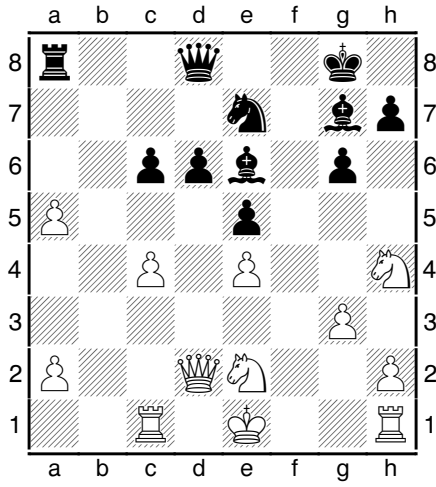
2. Black to move

Complicate Position

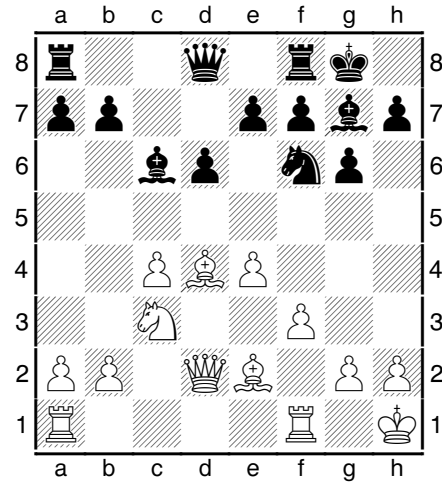


3. White to move

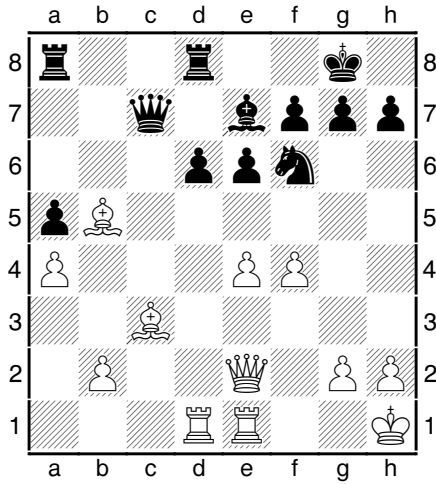
Positional Exercises



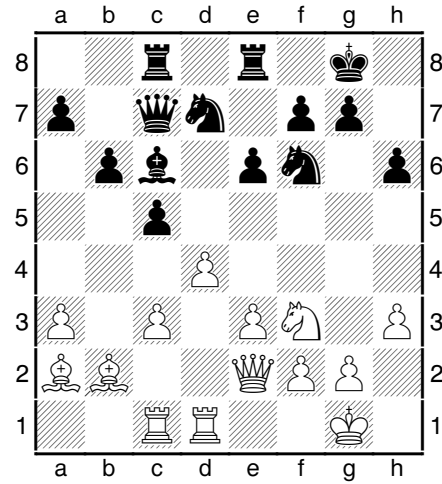
1. Black to move



2. White to move



3. White to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 12 / Set VII

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- a) Improve the position of the pieces.

Position 2

- a) Can White improve his position?

Position 3

- a) Can White increase the scope of one of his pieces?

Position 4

- a) Where should White play?

Solutions M 12 / Set VII

Tactics 1

Black wants to open the a8-h1 diagonal for his bishop, so:

1...d4! 2.Bxd4 Nxd4 3.Qxd4 Be6 4.c4 Rad8 5.Qe3 Bxc4

Tactics 2

1...Qh4!! [1...Rc1? 2.Rxd5 Qf4 3.Rd8+ Kg7 4.Qxe5+ Qxe5 5.Rxc1±] **2.Qxe5** [2.Nxc8 Qxh2#; 2.h3 Qxh3+ 3.Kg1 Bd4+ 4.Rf2 Qxg2#] **2...Qf2** threatening Bxg2#, Qxg2# and Qxf1# **3.Rg1 Bxg2+ 4.Rxg2 Rc1+ 5.Qe1 Rxe1+ 6.Rg1 Qxg1#**

Tactics 3

Black is better, but White can fight for the initiative or to complicate matters by:

1.a5!? Bxa5 [1...Bc5 2.Rxb7 Rxb7 3.Nc6 Qg5 4.Nxd8 Qxd8 5.Nf4! Nxf4 6.Bxe4 with small advantage to White]

2.Qa4 Bb6 [2...Bd2 3.Bxe4 dxe4 4.Rfd1 followed by Ng4 and White has the initiative.]

3.Bxe4 dxe4 4.Ng4 h5!

[In the game, Black didn't choose the correct move: 4...f5 5.Bf6 Qe8 6.Nh6+ Kf8 7.Qa3+ Bc5 8.Qa1!! with the threats Bxd8 and Bh4 8...Rdd7 9.Bh4 Rg7 10.Qf6+ Rcf7 11.Nxf7 Qxf7 12.Qe5 Qe8 13.Nf4 1:0 (Patrosian - Andruet);

Bad is 4...Bc6 5.Qa2 Bd5 because of 6.Qb2]

Now, the game is draw: **5.Nf6+ Kf8 6.Nh7+ Kg8 7.Nf6+**

Problem 1

(Position from: Shulman Y, 2549 – Shabalov A, 2608, San Diego, 2004)

Positional Evaluation

This is a quite complicate position. White is an exchange up, but Black has some advantages that compensate this: he has better pawn structure and the pair of bishops.

In an open position the pair of bishops and rook is as strong as two rooks and knight (Botvinnik).

We can appreciate that the game is balanced.

What does White want to do?

White will finish his development, then he either will press on the d6-pawn or will try to enter the “b” file (so will try to activate his major pieces).

What Black has to do

Black's early sacrifice was made mainly for positional reasons. White's structure is spoiled beyond repair, his knight has no real good squares, his rooks are also quite passive for the moment. So, Black's compensation is of strategic nature and therefore he doesn't have to rush in obtaining something palpable. *The time factor is important when you sacrificed material in order to get matting attack.*

Black's task is to find a way for improving his pieces. At the moment the knight and the dark-square bishop are his misplaced pieces. It's easier to improve the knight position by means of **1...c5!** followed by **Nc6-d4**. By this maneuver, Black does not only improve the knight's position, but also covers his only potential weakness: the d6-pawn. After that, he can turn his attention on White's weak pawns.

An accurate calculation is also necessary.

Calculation

1...c5! 2.Rd1

2.Nc3-Nc6 3.Nd5-Bh3! In order to keep the white king in the center **4.Nf3-Ra5** and Black is better because of his better coordination of his pieces threatening either **Qa8** or **Qf8-Bh6**. White has no real plan now.

Or **2.0-0 Nc6 3.Rfd1-Nd4 4.Nd4-ed4 5.Nf3-Qa5** and Black is not worse because of White's many weaknesses.

2....Bc4 3.Qd6-Qa5 4.Qd2-Qa6! White's king is stuck in the center. Black only has to improve his knight position in order to get a better game.

Even in unbalanced positions (from a material point of view) positional factors has to be taken into account.

Problem 2

(Position from: Agrest E, 2605 – Kallio H, 2471, Aarhus, 2003)

Positional Evaluation

We are dealing with a typical Maroczy structure. White has space advantage but Black has no weaknesses or misplaced pieces.

White is slightly better.

What does Black want to do?

The typical plan for Black in this type of structure involves a queenside active play. The strong g7-bishop will be particularly useful for this: either it is traded with its homologue weakening White's dark squares or will dominate the a1-h8 diagonal.

The standard moves to achieve the best setup are **a5**, **Nd7-c5**, **Qb6** and **Rfc8** and then by advancing his "a" pawn further will try to spoil White's queenside pawn formation.

What White has to do

White has a direct and consistent way to disturb at once Black's main plan on the queenside, by advancing his "b" pawn: **1.b4!** By this move, White takes under control the important c5-square leaving Black with no real course of action.

This move has also a positional foundation: White has no clear objectives to attack (Black has no weaknesses), therefore he has to improve his position by other means. His pieces are quite well placed, excepting his rooks - with no open files they hardly can be better. However, there is one way to improve their status: gaining more space. So, the move b2-b4 suits perfectly with this aim.

Problem 3

(Position from: Ermenkov E, 2478 – Kobalia M, 2590, Dubai, 2001)

Positional Evaluation

White has more space, the pair of bishops, better influence over the center and better placement of his pieces.

So, White is clearly better.

What does Black want to do?

In order to free from his cramped position, Black has to advance his "d" pawn by which he will activate his minor pieces and increase his influence over the center. It's hard to find another reasonable plan for Black.

What White has to do

If White manages to find a way to undermine Black's plan and also make something useful for him, then his advantage will considerably increase. Generally speaking, these kinds of moves are rare but have great effect.

Now we have to determine White's best plan. From a general point of view, advancing the "e" pawn comes in our mind (placing the pawns on dark squares in order to limit Black's bishop). This is not good because suits perfectly with Black plans of activating his minor pieces.

Another plan is to grab the "c" file (by 1.Rc1), but White achieves nothing serious because Black can trade later the major pieces on this file (trading pieces is in his interest).

The remaining plan is to improve the status of the light-square bishop. This can be achieved by weakening Black's light squares and such a move is **1.f5!**

Calculation

1.f5!-e5 1...d5? 2.fe6-fe6 3.ed5 winning material.

2.Bc4 followed by 3.b3 Now Black's chances of activating his pieces are history and White can calmly improve his position. He will activate his dark-square bishop (by placing it on the c1-h6 diagonal), then will start a kingside attack (by advancing his kingside pawns).

Problem 4

(Position from: Milov V, 2602 – Adams M, 2731, EU-chT, 2001)

Positional Evaluation

White has the pair of bishops (but for the moment his dark-square bishop is less active), there are no weaknesses on either side.

The game is balanced.

What does Black want to do?

Black's plan is connected with the queenside (he has pawn majority there). To improve the position he has to activate his minor pieces. This can be achieved with something like Qb7, b5, cd4, Nb6 followed by Bd5-c4 or Bd5, Nc4. This improves his position and confers him a good game.

What White has to do

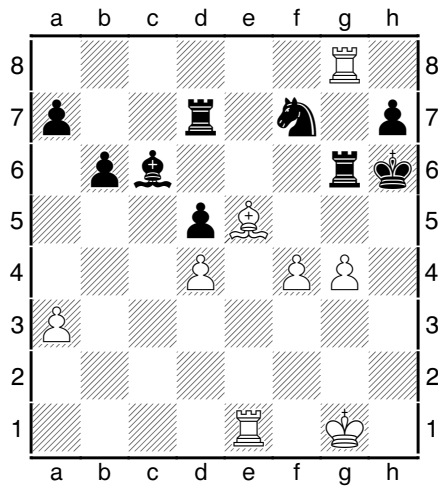
White has no real possibility to stop Black's plan. For this reason, he has to make a plan of his own to improve his position. Improving his dark-square bishop will be a great achievement. Also generally speaking **against a flank attack, the best counterplay is in the center.**

With this in mind the plan is clear: White has to advance his central pawns (f2-f3 followed by e3-e4). He will increase his influence over the center and also will activate his dark-square bishop. In addition he will limit Black's bishop.

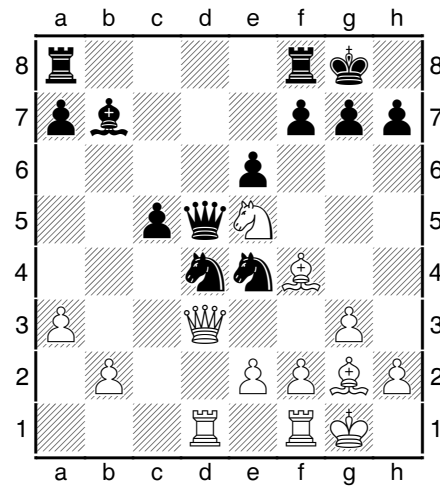
1.Nh2! followed by f2-f3 and e3-e4 is the right answer. Note, that the h2 square is better than e1. From h2 the knight will easily come back in the game via f1-e3 (g3) or in some cases can jump to g4.

Exercises Month 12 / Set VIII

Simple Tactics

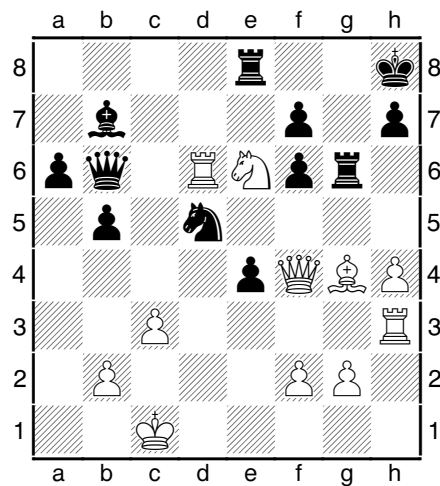


1. White to move



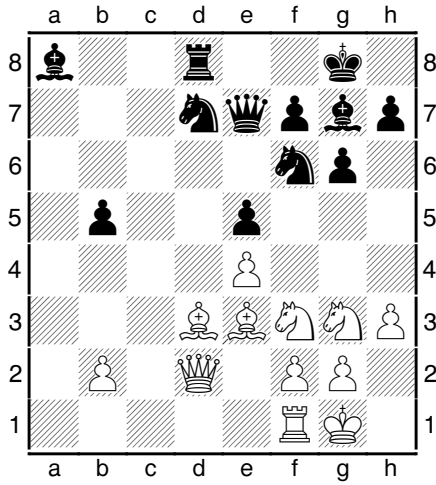
2. Black to move

Complicate Position

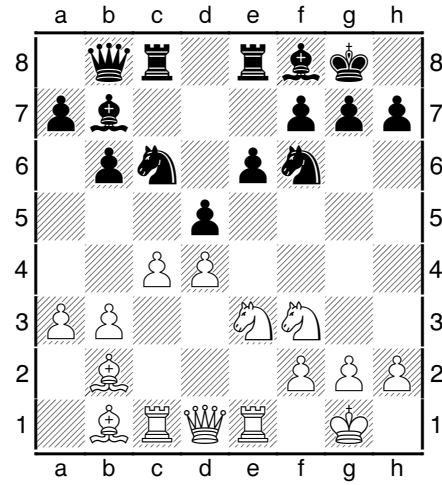


3. White to move

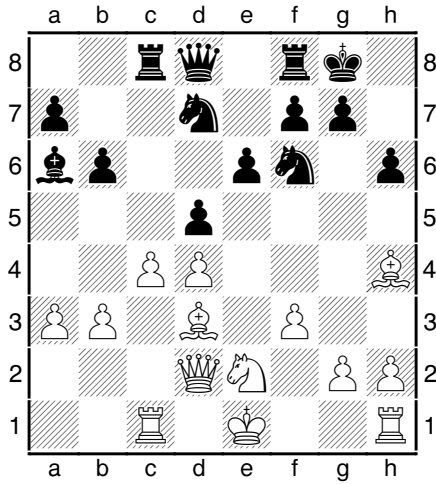
Positional Exercises



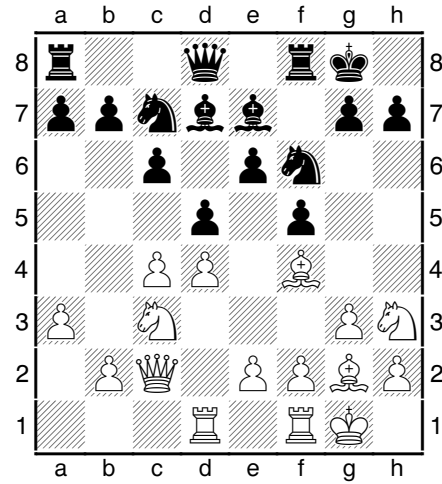
1. White to move



2. White to move



3. Black to move



4. White to move

Hints

Month 12 / Set VIII

Positional Exercises

Position 1

- no hint

Position 2

- a) Is directly 1.c5 good or should be prepared?

Position 3

- no hint

Position 4

- no hint

Solutions M 12 / Set VIII

Tactics 1

1.Kf2! [or 1.Kg2] **1...Rxc3 2.Rh1+ Kg6 3.f5+ Kg5 4.Kg3 Nxe5 5.dxe5** and Rh5#.

Tactics 2

1...Nxc3 2.Bxd5 [2.Qxc3 Nxe2+ 3.Kh1 Nxc3+ 4.hxc3 Qxc3#] **2...Ndxe2+ 3.Kg2 Bxd5+ 4.Qxd5** [4.Kh3 Nxf4+] **4...Nxf4+ 5.Kxc3 Nxd5** and Black is 2 pawns up.

Tactics 3

A long, but linear (with few opponent candidate moves) variation that leads to White's advantage:

1.h5! Nxf4 [1...Rxc4 2.Qxc4 Rg8 3.Qxc8+ Kxc8 4.Rg3+ Kh8 5.Nd8+-]
2.hxc6 Qxd6 [2...Rxe6 3.Rxc7+ Kg8 4.gxf7+ Kf8 (4...Kxh7 5.Rxb6 Kg7 6.Bxe6+-)
5.Rh8+ Kxf7 6.Bxe6+ Nxe6 7.Rxb6+-; 2...fxe6 3.Rxc7+ Kg8 4.Rxb6+-]
3.Rxc7+ Kg8 4.gxf7+ Kxh7 5.fxe8Q Nxe6 6.Bf5+ Kg7 7.Qg6+ Kf8 8.Qxf6+ Ke8 9.Bxe6 e3
[9...Qf8? 10.Bd7+ 1:0 in Kasparov - Kramnik, 1994]
10.fxe3 Bxc6 11.Bf7+ Kd7 12.Be8+ Kc7 13.Qg7+ Kd8 14.Bxb5+-

Problem 1

(Position from: Adams M, 2742 – Gurevich M, 2641, Wijk aan Zee, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: The position is symmetrical. **In this type of games, any detail counts.** Black has a weakness in b5, in rest the position is level.

White is better.

What does Black want to do?

Black has an immediate threat. After 1...Nc5 his problems will be history because he wins the pair of bishops. If he takes the light-square bishop, then he will increase the pressure against the e4-pawn, or if he takes the dark-square bishop, then by advancing his “b” pawn he will remain without any weakness.

On long term, Black will advance his “b” pawn because will be easier to defend (by Bf8).

What White has to do

A huge strategic mistake is trading the “b” pawn for the “e” pawn (after 1.Bb5-Ne4). After all he trades a central pawn for a major weakness.

White’s first task is to defend against opponent’s immediate threat and on long term has to find a good setup for his pieces. The move that suits perfectly with this task is **1.Qa5!** By this move White threatens the b5 pawn and defends against 1...Nc5 (1...Nc5?? 2.Bc5 winning a piece). In addition if Black plays 1...b4 then the white queen is on an active position, not cut off like she would have been on d2.

Calculation

1.Qa5-b4 forced, otherwise Black is losing his “b” pawn for nothing

2.Rc1! Now White increased his advantage. His major pieces are on excellent squares and he is threatening 3.Bd2 winning the b4-pawn and 3.Rc7 tying down black pieces. His advantage is clear.

Problem 2

(Position from: Bareev E, 2707 – Lautier J, 2687, Wijk aan Zee, 2002)

Positional Evaluation

White has better placement for his pieces and more space. Still, Black has no weaknesses and a solid position.

White is slightly better.

What does Black want to do?

Black has no direct threat. At some point he will change the character of the game by trading the “d” pawn for the “c” pawn (transforming the position in a typical “hanging pawns” structure). He will play something like 1...Red8, dxc4, and then the typical breakthrough: a7-a6 and b6-b5 in order to disturb the white hanging pawns.

He only has to be prepared against any decisive advance of the “d” pawn that could give White a strong kingside attack.

What White has to do

The pawn structure suggests that a queenside play is on the way. Therefore, the first move that White should consider is 1.c5 in order to obtain a queenside majority and also a strong passed pawn. However, this achieves nothing (see calculation section) therefore White has to improve his idea. His bishop’s placement suggests some tactical possibilities on the kingside when the center opens.

With this in mind, we have to calculate a direct way to advance c4-c5 in good conditions. This can be achieved by **1.b4!** that supports the c5 advance. An accurate calculation is

necessary (if Black can reply with 1...dc4 then 1.b4 is not good because it activates black pieces and releases the tension in the center).

Calculation

1.b4!

1.c5?!-a5! Cutting off the important supporting move b3-b4. 2.cb6 (2.Bc3-Ne4 3.b4-Ba6 and Black activates his pieces at maximum and has nothing to fear) 2...Ba6 winning the pawn back and getting rid of any problems.

1....dc4 on any other moves, White will advance his c-pawn increasing his influence on the queenside and his advantage also (therefore only 1...dc4 has to be accurately calculated).

2.d5! opening the dark-squares bishop

2....c3

2....ed5 3.Bf6-gf6 4.Qc2-Re4 5.Nd5-Re1 6.Re1-Bg7 7.Qh7 with strong attack

2...Nd5 3.Ng5-Nf4 (3...g6 4.Qh5! winning) 4.Bh7-Kh8 5.Rc4 threatening Rf4 and Qh5 with devastating attack.

3.Bc3-Ne7 4.de6-fe6 5.Bf6-Rc1 6.Qc1-gf6 7.Qc4-Qc8 8.Qh4 and White has strong threats against Black's weakened king. For example 8...f5 9.Ng4-Nd5 10.Nh6-Bh6 11.Qh6 with clear advantage.

This is a good example where tactics serve strategic aims.

Problem 3

(Position from: Lautier J, 2580 – Psakhis L, 2570, Baden-Baden, 1992)

Positional Evaluation

Center/pawn structure: White has the pair of bishops and more space. On the other hand he didn't finish the development and it is Black's turn to move.

The game is balanced.

What does White want to do?

White will finish his development by castling and then will consolidate his position in order to take advantage of his pair of bishops.

What Black has to do

All his pieces are well placed so it is time to find some concrete variations to improve his position. An attack over the white king is out of question, so Black should find a way to gain some positional advantages.

A good positional move can be 1...Ne4 in order to regain the pair of bishops, but sadly this is tactically refuted. Another good idea is a direct attack against White's center by

1...dc4! 2bc4-e5! undermining the hanging pawns, so obtaining central squares for the black knights.

Calculation

1...dc4

1...Ne4? 2.Bd8-Nd2 3.Kd2-Rfd8 4.cd5-Bd3 (4...Rc1 5.Rc1-Bd3 6.Kd3-ed5 7.Rc7 with huge advantage) 5.Rc8-Rc8 6.de6 winning a pawn

2.bc4 taking with a piece will leave White with an isolated pawn, well blocked.

2...e5 3.0-0 3.d5-Nc5 is better for Black because now the game is closed and bishops are not so strong (the passed d5-pawn is at no importance since is well blocked).

3...ed4 Black has a good game. He has a real target on c4 and good squares for his knight.

4.Ng3 4.Nd4-Ne5

4...Rc6 overprotecting the f6-knight in order to free the other. The game remains complicate, White having some compensation for the lost pawn.

Problem 4

(Position from: Korobov A, 2565 – Nosenko A, 2506, Kharkov, 2004)

Positional Evaluation

A structure typical of the Stonewall system from Dutch Defense. White is better because of better placement of his pieces and lack of weaknesses while Black has a weak square on e5. There is no active play for Black on the kingside to compensate this.

What does Black want to do?

Black threatens to win a pawn by 1...dc4. By this move, he also activates his c7-knight via d5. Besides this, it is hard to find a long term plan that could offer him a good game.

What White has to do

This time, White's task is simple. He has to protect against Black's immediate threat. This can be achieved in 2 ways: by protecting the pawn with 1.Qd3 or advancing the "c" pawn. (Trading the pawns with 1.cd5 suits Black's plans: after 1....ed5, he gets a good square for his pieces: e6.)

In the first case, Black can get the d5-square for his misplaced knight after dxc4.

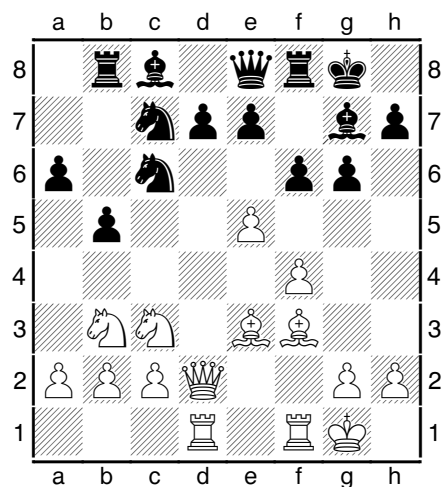
Therefore the right answer is **1.c5!** After this, White has two major plans at his disposal: a queenside play that involves a pawn storm on this side or a central play connected with f2-f3, Nf2 and e2-e4.

Both plans give White better prospects while it is hard for Black to find any active idea.

Playing Technique

Lesson 1

Position 1



White to move

Moldovan D, 2455 – Moraru M, 2420, Bucharest, 1998

White has the advantage because of his space advantage and better development. Still Black has no weaknesses. White's advantage is volatile one.

White's main task is to transform his advantage into something palpable. In order to achieve this he has to create some weaknesses in Black's camp.

1.Nd5! generally speaking this move is in Black's favor because it helps him to trade a couple of pieces consequently diminishing the pressure. Still White has a concrete, forced variation in his mind after which he will transform his advantage in a permanent one.

If you want to change the character of the game, make sure that you accurately calculated the variations and the assessment of the resulting position is the right one.

1...Nd5 1...Ne6 2.ef6-Bf6 (2...ef6 is worse 3.Rfe1 and there is no way for Black to avoid losing material, 3...Qf7 4.Nb6) 3.Nf6-Rf6 4.Bd5 with total domination.

2.Qd5-e6 Not 2...Kh8? 3.e6 winning

3.Qd6-Ra8 4.ef6-Bf6 5.Bc6-dc6 6.Bd4! After a forced series of moves, White succeeded to weaken Black's dark squares beyond repair. Therefore trading the dark-square bishops will increase his influence over those weaknesses.

6...Bd4 Black can't avoid the trade of dark squares bishops. After 6...Be7 7.Qe5-Bf6 8.Qe3-Be7 9.Bc5 nothing is changed.

7.Rd4 Now everything is clear; White managed to transform his advantage in a long term one. With complete control over dark-squares and a better knight against Black's "bad" light-square bishop, White will have no trouble in converting his advantage. First he has to improve at maximum his pieces, keeping an eye to any Black's attempt to free himself.

7...Rf5 8.Re1-Ra7 9.Nc5-Re7

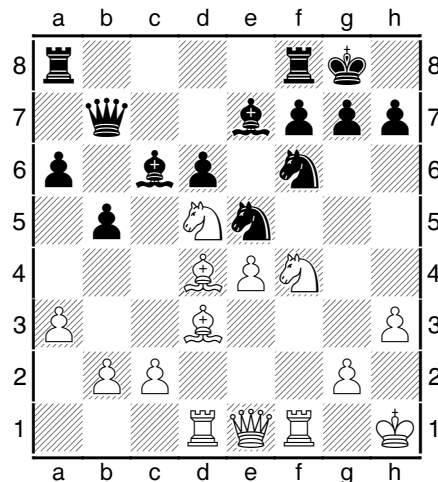
After 9...Qe7 10.Ne4! (White can win a pawn with 10.Ne6-Qd6 11.Rd6-Be6 12.Ree6-Rf4 13.Rc6-a5 and Black can hope saving the game in the rooks endgame. There is no need to win material if you can maintain the domination.) 10...Rd7 11.Qe7-Re7 12.Rd8-Rf8 13.Red1-Kg7 14.Rf8-Kf8 15.Rd8-Re8 16.Re8-Ke8 17.Kf2 White has a winning endgame.

10.Re5-Rf6 11.g3-h6 12.Qd8 After increasing at maximum his pieces position, it is time for White to take concrete actions. First he has to get rid of Black's only potential active piece.

12...Rf8 13.Qe8-Rfe8 14.Kf2 getting in game the last inactive piece. Now Black has nothing to oppose king's invasion on queenside or losing his "e" pawn.

14...Kf7 15.h4 in order to cut any g5 attempt. **15...Rf8 16.Rd6** now Black is unable to avoid material loses and, in the same time, he cannot get any activity. So the end is close. **16...Rc7 17.Ne6-Ke7 18.Nf8-Kd6 19.Ng6-Rg7 20.h5-Bg4 21.Nh4-Re7 22.Nf5** and in this hopeless position, Black resigned **1-0**

Position 2



Black to move

Hort V, 2550 – Andersson U, 2630, Kottnauer, 1996

The game is balanced (also quite complicate). White has some attacking perspectives on the kingside. Both sides have strong outposts in the center (d5 vs e5).

White will surely play 1.Qg3 reinforcing the kingside attack.

Black has to come up with a plan of defense at the moment. In future he will try opening the game on queenside but now he has no time for this. Black has to find a good setup to oppose against any threat White may have on the kingside. In order to achieve this, an excellent technique is necessary. This defensive setup has to leave Black with active pieces also.

1....Rae8! 2.Qg3

If 2.Ne7-Re7 and White cannot defend his e4 pawn.

2...Bd5! 3.ed5

3.Nd5-Nd5 4.Be5 (4.ed5-Qd5 and White has nothing for the pawn) 4...de5 5.ed5-Qc7 (not 5...Bd6?! 6.Rf6! and now it is hard for Black to get rid of the annoying rook) 6.Rde1-Rd8 7.Qe5-Qe5 8.Re5-Bf6 followed by 9...Bb2 with huge advantage. White's central pawns are firmly blocked and his bishop very passive. *In opposite color bishops' positions the one who attack is like a piece more.*

2...Bd8 this was the setup Black had in mind. Now the bishop doesn't disturb the rook's connection, the seventh rank is open for the black queen. The bishop "sees" both flanks and therefore can defend kingside and, at some point, can become active on b6.

3.Bc3-g6! Black takes protective measures in advance also limiting White's d3-bishop.

3.Rfe1-Nfd7 4.Bf5-Bf6 5.Ne2? It was time for White to leave at home his ambitious play.

He has no advantage so reaching a draw endgame was the normal outcome. After 5.Bd7-Qd7 6.Nd3-Nd3 7.Qd3-Bc3 8.Qc3-Qf5 9.Qd2, the position is equal. Now Black can undertake offensive measures getting the initiative.

5...Nc5! with two major threats: 6...Qe7, threatening Bh4, and 6...Na4, trading the c3-bishop and then controlling all dark-squares on the board.

6.Nd4

6.b4 (in order to keep the bishop on the board) 6...Na4 7.Bd4-Bg7 8.Be4

(8.Bd3 Qd5 and White has nothing for the pawn.)

8...-f5 9.Bf3-Nf3 10.gf3 (10.Qf3-Re4 winning the d5 pawn) 10...Bd4 11.Rd4 (11.Nd4-f4 12.Qg5-Nc3 13.Re8-Re8 14.Rd2-Qd7 with huge advantage) 11...Qg7 12.Rdd1-Nb2 followed by Nc4 with clear advantage

6...Na4 7.Be4-Nc3 8.bc3

Better was 8.Qc3-Qb6 however Black dominates the dark squares. White also is left with a "pawn" instead of light square bishop. Here is an illustrative example of the principle mentioned before (in fact Black is a piece up). Still White avoids material losses.

9...Qb6 10.Ra1

White wants to get rid of his weak pawn from a3.

10...Qc5 11.Nb3

11.a4 is strongly met by 11...b4 winning a pawn

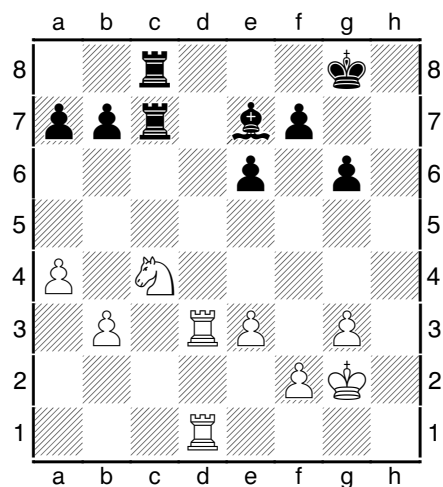
11...Qc4 12.a4-Nd7 13.Qd6

13.Bd3-Qd5 14.ab5-ab5 winning a pawn.

13...Bc3 winning the exchange. White resigned **0-1**

Playing Technique Lesson 2

Position 1



White to move

Romanishin O, 2562 – Kozul Z, 2565, Solin, 2002

White has a better endgame. His knight is better than Black's bishop (strong position in the center). In addition, Black has to guard any attempt of invading the 7th rank. On the other hand, Black has no weaknesses so White has nothing to attack. This is a kind of position where technique is very important in order to make further progress.

1.f4! First, White is placing his kingside pawns on dark squares in order to restrict at maximum black bishop's activity. By doing so, White is improving his position.

Note: **when you have a knight and your opponent has a bishop, it is better to place your pawns on the same color with the opponent bishop.**

1...Rc5

1...g5 was a move that made sense. Trading a pair of pawns will ease the defense. Still this can be in White's favor here because it opens the black king's position. For this reason Black opted for a wait and see tactic. From my point of view, this is the right one.

2.Kf3-R8c7 3.Rd7! White also is paying attention to his opponent threats. Black was trying to play 3...b5 in order to get some activity on the queenside by attacking the b3-pawn. With his last move, White prevented that.

3...Kf8 The black king is heading to e8 in order to get rid of white annoying rook.

4.g4 White can't prevent the centralization of Black's king so he is continuing with his plan of improving his kingside pawns.

4...Ke8 5.Rc7 another possibility was to avoid trading a pair of rooks. After **5.R7d2-b5 6.ab5-Rb5 7.Rh1** White has some attacking chances but Black also manages to get an active play.

By his last move, White maintains the character of the game: Black remains passive.

5....Rc7 6.g5-Rc5?! Up until now Black stayed with his wait and see tactic. Now for no reason he changes it aiming for the b5 advance. There is no time for this so it was better to wait further and play **6....Bb4** or **6...Bc5**. After that, White would have a hard time to prove if his advantage is enough for a victory.

When you started with a plan, stick with it.

7.Rh1! White starts active operations. There was no reason to wait since b5 advance could not be stopped.

7...Bf8 8.Rh7-b5 going on the wrong direction. It was time for Black to recognize his mistake and return to passivity with **8...Rc7 9.e4** and White improved his position but still had hard work ahead. Now Black's defense will fall.

9.Ne5-Rc3

9...ba4 10.ba4-Ra5 (10...Rc7? 11.Ng6) 11.Nf7-Ra4 12.Ne5 winning another pawn.

10.Rf7-Bc5 It may seem that Black has his chances, but White's kingside pawns are too advanced.

11.Rb7-Re3 12.Kg4-b4 nothing can be changed with **12...ba4 13.ba4-Ra3 14.Rb8-Ke7 15.Ng6-Kd6 16.Ne5** and the pawn is indirectly defended **16...Ra4 17.g6** winning immediately.

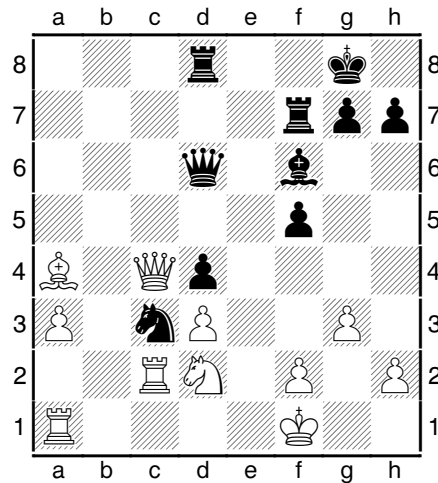
13.Ng6-Rb3 14.Ne5-Rb1 15.g6 with his advanced pawn and all his pieces on active squares white is winning easily.

15...Rg1 16.Kf3-Bd6 17.Ng4-b3 18.g7 1-0

In this game, Black had a worse endgame but a calm defense, a "wait and see" tactic could save it. After some good moves, he changed his tactic and left the defense for active operations. That decision brought him the defeat.

So, when you decided for a course of action stick with it unless accurate calculation proves that it can be changed.

Position 2



Black to move

Marin M, 2551 – Moldovan D, 2434, Predeal, 2007

White has the advantage. He is a pawn up and his light square bishop is more active than his opponent dark square one. Black's only chances lie in his strong c3-knight that disturbs, at the moment, White's attempts in getting an excellent setup. Still White has a potential strong passed pawn on the "a" file, and moreover he threatens 1.Bb3 winning material.

In this cases, it is important not to lose your heart (Black still has his chances connected with his strong knight) and try to put up the best resistance you can. It's possible that your opponent considers the game easily won, or to get tired of your tough defense, in both cases, his chances to make a mistake are high.

Also the presence of opposite color bishops gives Black some additional hopes for a draw.

However, generally speaking, White's chances to win are much bigger than Black's chances to obtain draw.

1....Rdf8! The best chance. Black defends against the immediate threat and, more important, keeps his strong knight on the board. After 1...Na4? 2.Qa4 Black has nothing to oppose White's material advantage.

2.Qc6 2.Bb3-Kh8 3.Qf7-Rf7 4.Bf7-Qc6 5.f3-g5 and Black has gained some chances of a kingside attack. More important is that the character of the game is changed: now White has to defend. Although White still has the advantage I also prefer his choice from the game.

2....Qc6 forced **3.Bc6-Rc7 4.Bf3-Rb8!** a move against any attempt of activating the major pieces (like Rb2). If White has no possibilities to activate his pieces, then his passed pawn will not be so dangerous.

5.a4 by advancing his pawn, White intends to tie down black pieces. The drawback of this move is that the pawn will be harder to defend. Still this is the most reasonable plan.

5...Ra7 6.Nc4!? an important moment.

White has two alternatives: to give up his pawn in order to activate at maximum his pieces, or to protect his pawn (but his pieces will remain on passive squares). White opted for the first alternative. After **6.a5-Ra6 7.Nc4-Bd8**, it is hard to see how White can make further progress without losing his “a” pawn.

6...Ra4 7.Ra4-Na4 8.Nd6 Black balanced the material and the danger for relaxation is great. After the “normal” **8...g6 9.Bd5-Kf8 10.Rc7!** White has dangerous attack (the presence of opposite color bishops makes things even harder for Black).

8...Nc3 9.Nf5-Rb6! In order to maintain the character of the game (keep White’s pieces as passive as possible) Black sacrificed his “f” pawn. As you can see, the white rook and knight are out of game.

10.g4 10.Kg2-Kf7 11.h4-h5! followed by g6 and Black has no problems.

10...g6 11.Ng3-Be5 12.Kg2-Kg7 for the pawn, White was forced to make huge concessions: he spoiled his kingside structure (the kingside pawns’ best squares are the dark ones) and his rooks is still out of game. Now the normal outcome is the draw.

13.Rc1-Rb1! There is no need to allow any activity for white’s pieces.

14.Rb1-Nb1 15.Bd5-Nc3 16.Bc4-Kf6 17.h4-h6 18.h5

18.Ba6-Bg3 the threat was to get in the same position like latter in the game, but with the possibility to protect the g4 pawn. **19.Kg3-Ne2 20.Kf3-Nc3** with draw.

18...Bg3 19.Kg3-g5 19...gh5? 20.gh5-Kg5 21.f4-Kh5?? 22.Bf7 mate

20.f4 the last attempt otherwise Black plays Ke5 with easy game.

20....Ne2! 21.Kf3-Nf4 22.Ke4-Nh3 23.Ba6 if the bishop was already on a6 than White was winning after **23.Bc8**. After **23.Kd4-Nf2** Black has better position.

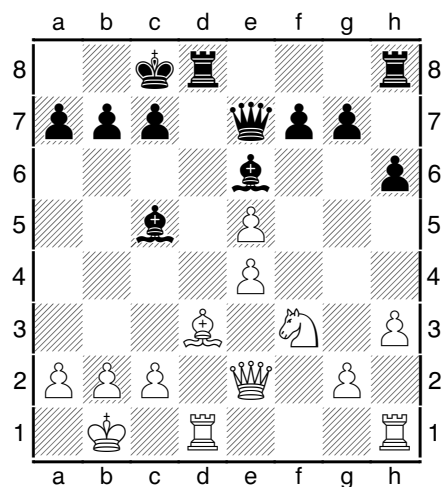
Now the draw is forced.

23...Nf2 24.Kf3-Nd1 25.Ke4-Nf2 26.Kf3 draw

Playing Technique

Lesson 3

Position 1



White to move

Nisipeanu L, 2693 – Huzman A, 2591, Dresden, 2007

White has the advantage. He is a pawn up, but Black has some chances of his own in obtaining a draw: he has better pawn structure, and White's extra pawn is a double one. In addition, Black has the pair of bishops that also gives him some compensation.

1.Bc4! *Here I considered my position technically won (Nisipeanu).* From now on he will prove this in consistent way.

First let's ask what White is intending. Right from this moment he has to find a plan that will guarantee an improvement of his chances in winning the game. With his last move White wants to get rid of Black's pair of bishops (a factor which may prove dangerous for White), in the same time, trading a less active piece of his own. On long term, White is also heading for a queen + knight versus queen + bishop endgame that will increase his advantage. *Generally, in endgame queen + knight is better than queen + bishop (Capablanca).* This is quite logical. In queen endgames there are also great chances in getting an attack over the king. For this reason both color squares have to be covered (which bishop cannot).

1...c6 2.Be6-Qe6

2...fe6 was less good. It's true that any attempt from White to trade one of his doubled pawns is history, but now Black has a major weakness of his own (e6 pawn). In addition now White's pieces are freer since they don't have to guard his weak pawns.

3.Rd3-Bb6 3...Rd3 will only improve white pawn structure after 4.cd3 allowing him to create a strong center.

4.Rhd1-Bc7 5.Qf2 White is more than happy to trade one of his double pawns for any other black pawns (5...Bxe5 6.Qxa7).

5...Kb8 6.Rd8-Rd8 7.Rd8-Bd8 8.Qg3! the next step in White's plan is to trade one of his double pawns. The last move achieves this goal.

8...g6 9.Nd4 Qe7

The active 9...Qc4 10.Qd3-Qd3 11.cd3 leads to a winning endgame for White.

10.e6-Bc7 11.Qe3-c5 11...fe6 12.Qh6-Qf6 13.Nf3 and White will easily win by combining a king attack with the creation of a passed pawn on the kingside.

12.Nf3?! the only slip in a well conducted game. White still has a winning position but the direct 12.Qh6 was winning easier 12....cd4 13.ef7-Bd6 (13...Qf7 14.Qh8) 14.Qg6 followed by the advance of the "h" pawn.

12...Qe6 13.Qc5-a6 White got rid of one of his doubled pawn, but he traded it with a less important one (a kingside one was more valuable).

14.Qd5 White is centralizing his pieces at maximum.

When you want to trade pieces, place them on very active squares and the opponent will want to make the exchange.

14....Qd5?! this makes thing easier for White. Better was 14....Qb6 15.Qd4-Qe6 16.e5 and although White still has a winning position, the presence of the queens gives Black some practical chances.

15.ed5-b5 16.c4! White is activating his king immediately. Now is all over.

16...bc4 17.Kc2-Kc8 18.Kc3-Kd7 19.Kc4-Kd6 20.b4 the last phase of the game. White is creating another passed pawn on the queenside.

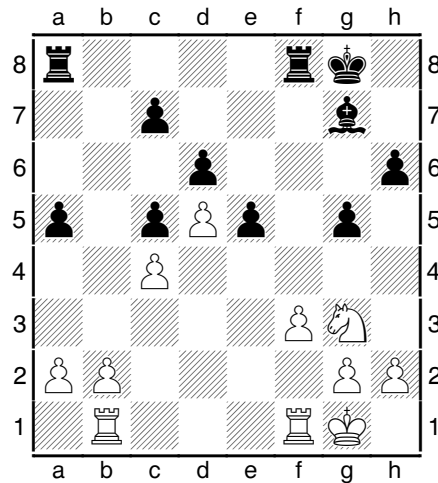
20....a5 21.Nd4-Bb6

21....ab4 22.Nb5 with winning kings endgame.

22.ba5-Ba5 23.a4-f5 24.Nc6

The knight can support the pawn on both color squares. Black resigned. **1-0**

Position 2



Black to move

Wang Y, 2739 – Radjabov T, 2761, Wijk aan Zee, 2009

At first glance, White has better chances. Black has all his pawns on dark squares therefore a “bad” bishop. White also has a better pawn structure.

However, the things are not at all like this. The blocked character of the game makes very important the activity of major pieces. At this chapter, Black is clearly better because he can press on the “b” file. Even if it was White’s turn (he will surely play Ne4 in order to close the cage of the Black’s bishop) this will give him no real advantage because White still has to defend his main weakness, the “b” pawn. Remember that a good piece gives you no advantage if it’s not cooperating with the other pieces to threat or attack something.

1...e4! After this move that sacrifices a pawn in order to activate the bishop, Black’s chances are to be preferred. Black achieves important strategic advantages: he is able to increase the pressure on b2 and drives the white king in the corner.

2.Ne4 2.fe4 achieves nothing 2...Bd4 3.Kh1-Rf1 4.Rf1-Bb2 5.Rb1-Rb8! 6.Nf5-Rb4 and white queenside pawns will fall.

2...Bd4 3.Kh1-a4 Black is now prepared against the b2-b3 move. He will trade the pawns activating his rook using the a-file.

4.h4!? Normally, White wants to activate his king. The passive approach gives White no chances, for example 4.Rc1 in order to protect the b2-pawn 4...Rab8 5.Rc2-Kg7 and Black will activate his king, double his rooks on the “b” file and then will either gain the b-pawn (trading only one pair of rooks) or will decisively enter with his king.

4....gh4! a good move, Black doesn’t want to have any pawn in knight’s range.

5.Kh2-Rfb8 6.b3-ab3 7.ab3-Ra2 8.Rfd1-Kf7 The time has come to activate the king. As you can see, Black doesn't make any concrete actions until all his pieces are on active squares.

9.Rd2-Ra3 The same principle, trading pieces is in white's favor

10.Kh3?! White is sticking with his plan, active defense.

Better was 10.Rd3-Kg6 11.Kh3-Kh5 12.f4!-Ra2 13.g4 (13.Rd2-Rd2 14.Nd2 Be3 winning a pawn) 13...hg3 14.Ng3-Kg6 and although Black has a distant free pawn (h pawn), White at least manages to activate his king.

10...Rab3 11.Rb3-Rb3 12.Kh4-Kg6 13.Rc2-Rb1 Black has turned his attention to White's king.

14.Ng3 Protecting the h1-square. **14...h5!** Now Black will activate his king in consistent way, in the same time, driving the white king back.

15.f4-Bf6 16.Kh3-Rb3! 17.Kh2-h4 18.Ne2 After 18.Ne4-Kf5 19.Nf6-Kf6 Black will grab all the pawns with the king.

19...Kf5 Now everything is lost for white. His pieces lacks of coordination. On contrary black's pieces are excellent coordinated and he threat a decisive king penetration via e4-d3.

19.Ra2 because White is already in a lost position, he is activating the rook in order to confuse matters.

19....Rb4 20.Ra8-Rc4 21.Re8-Rb4 22.Re6-Rb3! Keeping an eye to White's threats (g2-g4). Black is defending in the most consistent way, keeping his pieces on active squares and accurately calculating all variations.

23.g4-hg3 24.Ng3-Kg4 25.Ne2 25.Rf6-Rb2 26.Kg1-Kg3 winning

25...Rb2 26.Kg2-Be5 tricky till the end. Now Black will gain all White's pawns remaining with two pawns up and better placement of his pieces.

27.Kf2-Bf4 28.Re7-Kf5 29.Rf7 29.Rc7-Ke4

29...Ke5 30.Kf3-Bd2 31.Rc7-Kd5 32.Ng3-Rb3 Black is not allowing any slightly improvement of White's pieces.

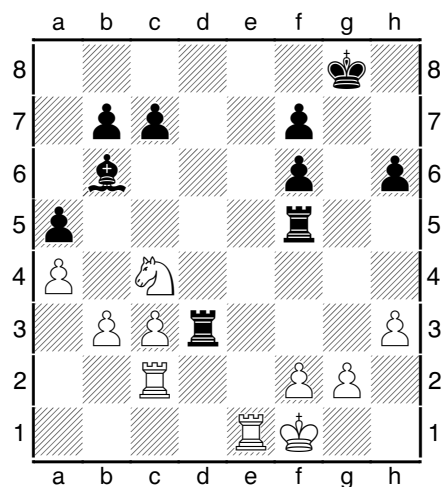
33.Kg2-Bf4 34.Ne2-Be5! Total domination of bishop against knight.

35.Kf2-Ke4 36.Rh7-Rf3 37.Ke1-d5 38.Kd2-d4 39.Rh4-Kd5 0-1
An excellent endgame technique.

Playing Technique

Lesson 4

Position 1



White to move

Short N, 2663 - Kasimdzhanov R, 2687, Wijk aan Zee, 2009

We are dealing with the same type of endgame like in the previous example (lesson 3, position 2). This time White has the advantage. He has better pawn structure and a stronger knight on c4 than his opponent's bishop. His king is also better placed. In addition, Black has a potential weakness on a5 – so White's long term plan is to exploit this.

For the moment, Black has active major pieces which makes things harder for White. If White manages to activate his major pieces, then he can hope in increasing his advantage.

There is another aspect that allows us to determine White's advantage. If he trades his stronger knight for the black bishop, then the advantage is still on his side, although Black's chances to save in a rook endgame are bigger. Rooks endgames have great tendency for draw, and here, particularly, Black is able to protect easily his weaknesses (kingside with the king, queenside with the rooks).

1.Re8- Kg7 2.Ke2-Rd7 3.f3 The first task was realized in consistent way. White activates one rook, the king and covers the "f" file. In addition, he drives away one of Black's active rooks and leaves the other without scope.

3...Bg1 4.Rd2 Another good technical move. Trading a passive piece for an active one perfectly suits White's plans.

4.....Rfd5 5.g4 Fixing Black's weak pawns.

5....Rd2 5....f5 was another try. After 6.Rd5-Rd5 7.Re5-Re5 8.Ne5-fg4 9.fg4-Kf6 10.Nc4 followed by b4 with great advantage. Black is unable to avoid the creation of a strong passed pawn on the “a” file.

6.Nd2-f5 Black gets rid of one weakness (unlucky for him there are a lot more).

7.Re5! Another good technical move. From the 5th rank, the white rook controls any other attempt of getting rid of weaknesses.

7...fg4 8.hg4-b6 9.Ne4 White is improving his pieces in order to prepare for the next step (obtaining a passed pawn on the “a” file).

9...Bh2 10.Rf5-Re7 Black is heading for a normal approach: trading a passive piece for an active one.

11.b4-Re5?! Better for Black was to change his strategy. Now it was better to keep the rooks. After 11....ab4 12.cb4-c6 13.a5 [13.Kd3-Ra7 14.a5-ba5 15.Ra5 (15.ba5-Bc7 losing the pawn) 15...Re7 and Black has bigger chances to survive than in the game] 13...Bd6 14.b5-ba5 (14...cb5 15.ab6) 15.bc6-Bb4 and Black is still fighting.

12.Re5-Be5 13.ba5 ba5 14.Ke3 Now White’s advantage is of a permanent nature and a decisive one (Black has more than one weakness). In order to win, White will activate his pieces at maximum first.

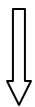
14...c6 15.f4-Bc7 16.Ng3! Keeping an eye on Black’s attempt of activating his king by means of h5 or f5.

16...Kg6 17.Ke4-Bd6 Sadly for him, Black has nothing better than wait.

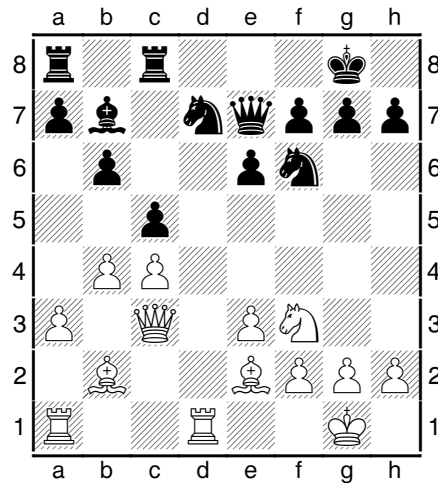
18.Nf5-Bc5 19.Nh4 The knight is heading to e5 in order to attack the c6-pawn.

19...Kg7 20.Nf3-f6 At the moment, Black defended against White’s immediate threats but this won’t save him.

21.Nd2-Bb6 22.Kf5-Kf7 23.Nb3-Kg7 24.c4! Threatening 25.c5 followed by Nd4 winning the c6-pawn. If Black defends by 24...c5, after 25.Nd2 followed by Ne4, Black also loses a pawn. Black is hopeless therefore he resigns. **1-0**



Position 2



Black to move

Kramnik V, 2809 – Karpov A, 2690, Eurotel Trophy, 2002

White is better. He has the pair of bishops and more space on the queenside. On the other hand, Black has no weaknesses or bad pieces (he has the “good” bishop). Black’s main task is to find a setup that would offer the best prospects in balancing the game.

First he has to detect White’s most dangerous plan. This is a queenside play by advancing b4-b5 followed by a4-a5-a6 or a5xb6. With this idea, White will increase his space advantage on the queenside and will bother the b7-bishop.

Black also has to determine his long term plan. This consists in massive trades on the “d” file (the major pieces) after which he releases from pressure and almost balances the game (because of the symmetric and blocked structure, white pair of bishops is just a symbolic advantage).

Black’s last task consists in finding the most consistent way that achieves his plan while keeping an eye to his opponent’s threats.

The former world champion managed to achieve his task in impressive manner.

1....Ne8! a true grandmaster move. Black needs his rooks in order to defend his queenside (you will see further in the game), so he asked himself what else he can do in order to improve his position. If he puts his central pawns on f6+e5, then White’s dark square bishop will be limited at maximum and Black also improves his influence in the center. The normal 1...Ne4?? fails to 2.Qg7 mate!

2.b5 White goes further with his plan of increasing his pressure on the queenside.

2...f6 3.a4-a5! good and almost forced otherwise White’s pressure on the queenside would have been too strong.

4.ba6! the only way to fight for an advantage. To any other move, the queenside will remain closed and Black can go on undisturbed with his long term plan (trading major pieces).

4....Ra6 5.a5 also the normal move. White is trying to open the game in order to activate his bishops at maximum.

5....Rca8 6.Qd2 White tries to avoid trading both rooks in order to maintain the tension. After **6.ab6-Ra1 7.Ra1-Ra1 8.Ba1-Nb6** White's advantage is just symbolic.

6...Bc6 7.Bc3 with the same idea (avoiding the trade of both rooks)

7...ba5 8.Ra5-Nb6! Black fights against all White's advantages. By his last move, Karpov threatens **Na4-xc3** eliminating the opponent bishop-pair.

9.Rb1-Ra5! 10.Ba5-Na4 The point of **8...Nb6**. Now the retreating **c3**-square is unavailable for the bishop against the threat of **Qa7**. Black fully equalized.

11.Rd1-Qa7 12.Bc3 **12.Bd8** is interesting but the awkward position of the bishop hardly can give White any real chances. Now the game is equal so... **1/2-1/2**

 **Mamedyarov,S**
 **Gurevich,M**
 ETCC Crete GRE (1)

D36
2752
2627
 28.10.2007

No surprise in Crete, Greece, at the first round of European Team Championships.
After the first round the majority of favorites won their duels.

1.d4

The members of national teams are very experimented players, many of them of over 2600 rating. However, the emotional pressure when playing in and for a team is bigger than playing individual competitions.

Mamedyarov proved one more time that he is an outstanding player, winning in great style against the veteran GM Gurevich. Actually this game was one of the main encounters of the first round.

d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.Bg5

A classic opening system, but also very modern, used with success by Vishy Anand in Mexico in the World Championship.

Be7

Black refuses to enter the modern theoretical duel and sets up the classical system.

6.e3

The Azeri grandmaster is playing this classic Queen's Gambit with great accuracy, having a lot of experience in this type of structures.

Nbd7 7.Qc2 0-0 8.cxd5

Exchanging first on d5, White avoids losing a tempo by moving the bishop twice.

exd5 9.Bd3 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8

The classical disposal since Murphy first played it and then used by Capablanca, Lasker, Alekhine, and also by almost nowadays player. Black tries to create a local force superiority on the kingside and eventually to respond to a White's attack on the queenside (by b2-b4-b5) with a piece attack against the white king.

11.Rae1

In most of the games in this opening system, White sets up the minority attack with the b-pawn advance (starting with Rab1), but Mamedyarov chooses to play in the centre and kingside.

Be6

[Here, more common was another continuation, trying to exchange some minor pieces in order to loosen White's attacking potential:

11...Ne4 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.Bxe4 dxe4 14.Nd2 f5 15.f3 exf3 16.Nxf3
but White is better developed and has superior dynamic.]

12.Ne5

Preparing f2-f4.

N6d7

Black's strategy is simple: he wants to trade pieces and enter a simpler position with good chances for a draw.

13.Bxe7 Rxe7 14.f4

White has to play actively trying to get the initiative in the time Black re-arranges his pieces.

f6 15.Nf3 Nb6 16.f5

The centre is static and White has a good control over it, so he can think at a wing attack. By this move, White creates a local space advantage on the kingside and prepares to open the lines by g2-g4-g5.

Bf7 17.g4 h6

Black has to stop White's pawns advance, but creates weak squares around his king. It is important to notice that White also weakened his pawn structure on the kingside, but his superiority of forces and space for maneuvers on that side makes these weaknesses un-utilizable by the opponent. In the same time, look for example at the black knight from f8 which is obstructed by White's pawns.

18.h4

In other games in this position, White tried the knight's maneuver Nf3-h4-g2-f4 with the idea to attack the weak squares from Black's camp e6 and g6.

Instead of this long and dubious plan, Mamedyarov starts immediately the pawn avalanche and preserves the knight on f3 which has the very important role to sustain the centre.

Qd6 19.Qg2 Rae8 20.e4!?

One of those moves of the middlegame which require a deep evaluation.

Mamedyarov's choice is very interesting because his attack on flank may become very risky if Black succeeds to counterattack and open the centre. Instead of following the general principles, he is the one who opens up the centre.

With a strong confidence in one's own possibilities, the chess player should evaluate the position concretely and exploit all his trumps. Here, by e3-e4, White brings his c3-knight in the centre, with 2 purposes: 1. to help in the attack against the black king and 2. to block the e-file using the strong e4-square.

dxex 21.Nxe4 Qd8 22.g5 fxg5 23.hxg5 hxg5 24.Qxg5 Nh7

Even if White has no real advantage, from psychological point of view, Mamedyarov is leading the game: he is in attack, has more space and excellent positions for his knights on e4 and e5.

25.Qh4 Nd7 Diagram
[25...Bd5 26.Ne5±]

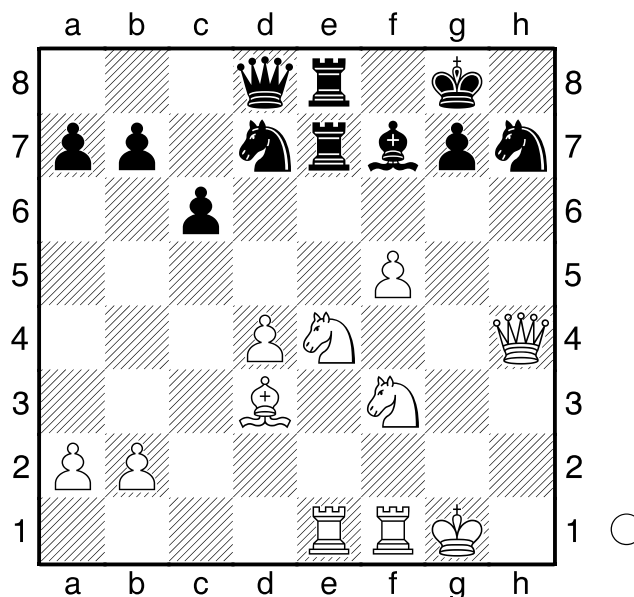
(Diagram)

26.Kf2!

A beautiful and simple move clearing the way for the rooks toward the g- and h- files.

Ndf6 27.Nxf6+ Nxf6 28.Rh1

The Azeri grandmaster didn't let his opponent any time to play freely. Black was all the time



under pressure, had to solve problems and all these will bring the human player, even a strong grandmaster like Gurevich, to fatigue and finally to a blunder that lose the game.

Kf8 29.Qh8+ Bg8 30.Rhg1

We can see now the importance of the white knight which was kept on f3 to sustain the centre. Black cannot initiate any counterplay even if White's position is weakened too. Almost all black pieces are tied up in defense and White has a lot of tactical threats. For example: Bc4 with idea Bxg8 and f5-f6 after Nf6xg8.

Qd6

Black fails to resist the strong pressure and cedes the point for courageous GM from Azerbaijan.

31.Re6

White rook cannot be taken and is threatening Rxf6. Black resigns.

1-0

 **Karjakin, Sergey**
 **Shirov, Alexei**
 EuroTeams 2007 (2.2)

B33
2694
2739
 29.10.2007

The young Ukrainian player, Karjakin, is already in top thirty, one of prodigious GM in the world.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5

Shirov is choosing a risky opening system with Karjakin, who is famous for his opening preparation. Lasker Svesnikov is a very dynamic opening system where Black is hoping to get a rapid attack on the kingside, appealing in many occasion to a pawn sacrifice.

6.Ndb5 d6 7.Bg5 a6 8.Na3 b5 9.Nd5 Be7 10.Bxf6 Bxf6 11.c3 0-0 12.Nc2 Rb8

Shirov had played before this position with both colors. The idea of Black's move is to prevent a2-a4 due to the weakness of b2-pawn.

13.h4

White's pawn is defended indirectly by Qh5, this retort being a typical theme in Svesnikov system.

Be7 14.g3

With this move, White is increasing his possibilities of activating the f1-bishop, also making possible White's queen depart, now that h4-pawn is defended.

[14.Nce3]

14...Be6 15.a3

An interesting move, played this year by Alekseev against Khalifman, preventing b5-b4 and making possible Nce3 in the future.

a5?!

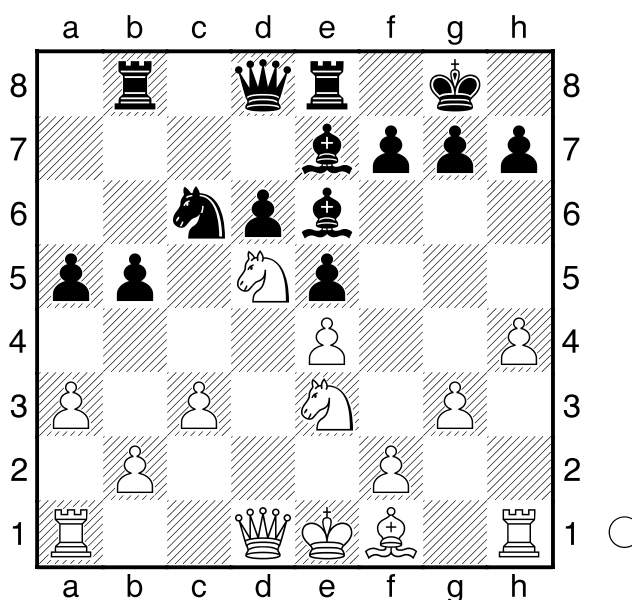
Probably the move that lost the game. Even if the advancing of the queenside pawns is one of the Black's plans in the Svesnikov system, this should have been prepared first by Qd7. Shirov's aggressive style will be punished by an exact play now.

16.Nce3 Re8 Diagram

[Re8 was meant to defend the e7-bishop in

view of the following variation:

16...b4 17.axb4 axb4 18.Ra6± and White is threatening to win the d6-pawn.]



Shirov had to take a hard and unpleasant decision. It is well known that in this opening system Black usually tries to break on kingside with f5, so his rook should stay normally on the f8-square.

17.a4!

Using the consequences of the Black's last 2 moves, the weakening of the b5-square and the emplacement of the e8-rook on the a4-e8 diagonal, Karjakin starts an attack on light-squares on the queenside.

b4

[17...bxa4 18.Qxa4 Bd7 19.Bb5 Qc8 20.Nf5 looks bad for Black]

18.Bb5

In Svesnikov systems, White has the advantage if he manages to dominate the light squares.

Bd7 19.0-0 bxc3 20.bxc3 Bf8 21.Qd3

A simple move, creating the bond between rooks, preparing to seize the b-file and bringing the queen in attack on the queenside.

Na7 22.Bxd7 Qxd7 23.Qa6

White exploits the weaknesses and disorganized placement of Black's pieces.

Nc6 24.Rab1

White dominates the queenside. White's knights are emplaced ideally and the b-file will be under his control. Black didn't succeed to create any counterplay on the kingside.

Red8 25.Rb6 Rxb6 26.Nxb6 Qa7 27.Qxa7 Nxa7 28.Nbc4

White efficiently used the exchange strategy to get an endgame with a huge positional advantage. The a5-pawn is under attack, the rook will invade Black's camp and the d5-square is an excellent base for the white knights.

Rc8 29.Rb1 Rc5

Black defended the weak a5-pawn, but left the back rank unprotected.

30.Rb8 g6 31.Ra8 Nc6 32.Nb6

and Black resigned, not waiting for the variation: 32...Ne7 33.Nd7 Rc8 34.Rxc8 Nxc8 35.Nc4 and the a5 pawn is lost, then White's king march decides the game.

Karjakin exploited the smallest inaccuracy in Black's play when he started pushing the pawns (15...a6-a5) a bit too early without some preparatory moves (15...Qd7). A direct attack on light-squares on the queenside caught Black unprepared and with his pieces disorganized. Then, White entered the Black's camp with the major pieces, forcing exchanges and entering a technically won endgame.

1-0

Nxg5 24.Bxg5

The game looks now like chess again, where White has a healthy plus due to his bishop-pair, pawn majority on the queenside and control over the dark-squares on the kingside.

Nc5 25.Re3 Ne4

The black knight looks strong on e4, but in fact, will only bring Black new problems. The knight has no a secure position there because of Bf3 and because it has no squares where to retreat.

26.Bf3 Kf7 27.Bh4 Be6 28.Rd4

Defending c4-pawn and menacing to capture on e4.

[28.Bxe4 fxe4 29.Rxe4 Bf5 30.Rxe8 Rxe8+ 31.Kf1 Re4 is not convincing for White.]

28...Rac8 29.b3 a5

[29...Nc5 30.Kf2 followed by b4 is also good for White.]

30.Bxe4 fxe4 31.a4!

An incredible positional move! White puts his pawns on the opponent bishop's color and also leaves a "hole" on b4 that makes difficult for his majority to advance. In the same time, White also fixed black pawns on dark-squares where his bishop can attack them. The difference is that White has a better control of the board, his pieces are more active, and can easier create threats, so his pieces should manage to unblock the queenside pawns.

[31.Rdxe4 a4]

31...Bf5 32.Rd5 b6

Now black queenside pawns are fixed on the dark-squares where white pieces (superior on dark-squares) can capture them.

33.Rd6 Rb8 34.Kd2 Rb7 35.Kc3

The white king has a safe position, defending the base of the white pawns, and also ready to support his pawns to advance after the pieces capture the black pawns on dark-squares. White is winning.

Re6

A mistake, Black is not resisting pressure and leaves White the control of the back rank.

36.Rd8 g5 37.Bxg5 Rg6 38.Rg3 e3 39.Rd5 Be6 40.Rf3+

and the mate is close. Black resigned.

A very interesting game, but please never put the pawns in Morozevich's style: e2, f4, g2, h5, never let your kingside minor pieces undeveloped bringing the rook into play this way, never attack with only 2 pieces (Qg3, Bh6), never let your king more than 20 moves in the centre... I know you understand the joke.

1-0

 **Shirov,Alexei**
 **Kozul,Zdenko**
 EuroTeams 2007 (3.6)

B67
2739
2609
 30.10.2007

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Bg5 e6

The former European champion made many victims in this Sicilian system, being one of the promoter of Black's superiority.

7.Qd2 a6 8.0-0-0 Bd7

It's well known that in this system, Black attacks on the queenside, so he prepares b7-b5 defending the c6-knight.

9.f4 b5 10.Bxf6 gxf6

In this opening system, White gives his dark square bishop in order to destroy Black's pawn structure.

11.Kb1

[White can choose to advance the f-pawn right away, weakening Black's king position:

11.Nxc6 Bxc6 12.f5 Qb6 13.fxe6 fxe6 14.Qf4 with complications.

For example, Black can sacrifice a pawn in order to open the dark-square main diagonal: h5 15.Qxf6 Qe3+ 16.Kb1 Rh6∞]

11...b4

Driving away the c3-knight, Black weakens indirectly White's control over the e4-pawn, one of the key squares in Sicilian.

12.Nce2 Qb6 13.Qe1 Rc8

Black's plan is to quickly attack on the queenside, leaving the king in the centre relying on the pawn shield in front of the king and on his bishop-pair ready to defend all the squares.

14.Nxc6 Bxc6 15.Nd4 Bb7 16.f5

Provoking e6-e5, creating a backward pawn on d6, and a possible counterplay on a2-g8 diagonal.

e5 17.Nf3

Unfortunately for White, his knight is not so well placed on f3, much better was on g3 with idea

Nh5, so 15.Nd4 does not give White any advantage.

Rg8 18.Qh4 Ke7

Black's king position in this system is on the centre, so the king defends the pawns which protect him. It is like the king in the corner: Kg8 defends the f7, g7, and h7 pawns. Now, the white queen's attack on the queenside is very economically stopped by the king himself.

19.Rg1

[19.Qxh7 Bxe4+]

19...h5!

Black prepares to develop his bishop on h6 and the white queen cannot take the h5-pawn because after Bxe4, Black activates his light-square bishop and creates a strong pawn majority in the centre, very dangerous connected with the bishop-pair.

20.Bd3 Bh6

Development move with tempo because of the threat Be3 and Rxd2.

21.g3

A forced move which blocks the queen out of play on the kingside. White has no success on the queenside, while Black starts to push the pawns against the white king. Black has the initiative.

a5 22.Rg2

While Black attacks, White is forced to play quiet moves in order to free his queen. The idea is to play Rg2-e2, defending the e4-pawn and the e3-square, then Qxh5.

[22.Qxh5 is not good because of: Be3 23.Rg2 Rh8 24.Qg4 Rcg8]

22...a4 23.Re2 b3

A typical thrust forcing the opening of the lines.

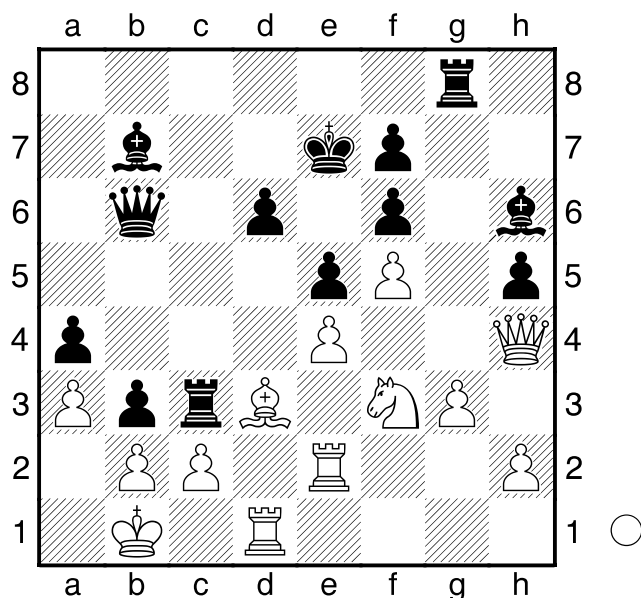
24.a3 Rc3 Diagram

[Much clearer was:

24...bxc2+ 25.Rxc2 (25.Bxc2 Rb8-+)

25...Rxc2 26.Bxc2 Rb8

with terrible threats on the b-file.]



Black is choosing the hard way to gain advantage, delaying to take on c2. In attack, opening the lines toward the opponent's king is of first importance, but Kozul cannot stop to play the 'artistic' move Rc3.

25.Qxh5 Rb8 26.Qxh6 bxc2+ 27.Rxc2 Ba6 28.Qd2

White's queen is back but she must be sacrificed to stop Black's attack.

Rxd3 29.Qxd3 Bxd3 30.Rxd3

Instead of finishing his attack winning the game with the direct 24...bxc2, Kozul got a position with material equivalence (PME): queen against rook, knight and a pawn. Let's see the criteria of evaluation a PME:

1. Position of the kings: both kings have an unsafe position, but White's king is more exposed;
 2. The quality of minor pieces: the white knight is far to get a good position on d5.
 3. White has 2 rooks (so "play coordinating piece"), with some chances to enter Black's camp in the future using the c7-square.
 4. White has a free pawn on the h-file, while Black can free the e4-pawn after the exchange d6-d5, e4xd5.
- So, Black is better because of the very poor position of the white knight on f3.

Let's see how Kozul turns this into a full point.

Qa6 31.Rdc3 Kf8 32.Nd2

The knight wants to come on d5 by Nd2-c4-e3, but Black avoids that putting pressure against the e4-pawn.

Kg7?!

[32...Qe2 directly was much better.

It seems both players played inaccurately this sequence maybe because of the time pressure.]

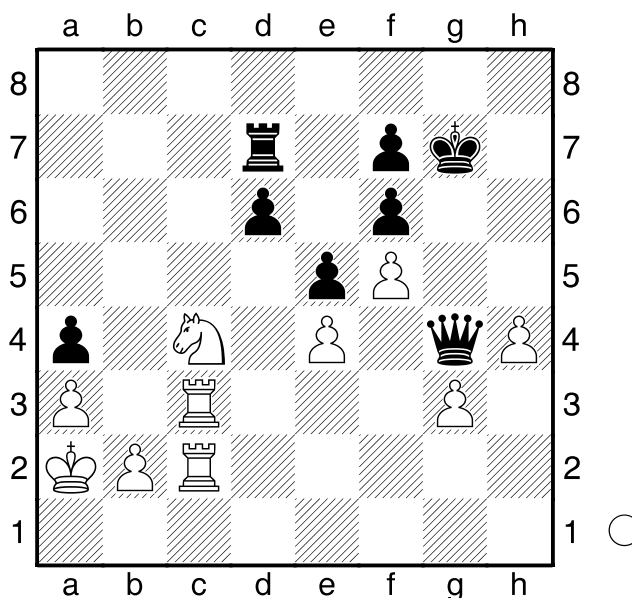
33.h4?!

[33.Nc4 was a better try for White. Qc6 34.Nd2]

33...Qe2 34.Ka2 Rd8 35.Rc4 Qd3

The black queen does a wonderful job obstructing white pieces with the final aim to interdict the coming of the white knight to a good place.

36.R4c3 Qe2 37.Rc4 Qd1 38.R4c3 Rd7 39.Nc4 Qg4! Diagram



The same preventive task, the white knight is not let to come on e3 using the weakness of the e4-pawn. In the same time, Black prepares d6-d5.

40.Nd2 d5!

White didn't succeed to bring his free pawn to a threatening position, the knight is still bad, while Black realized his plan and got a free pawn. Black's position is won.

41.exd5 Rxd5 42.Nc4 Rd4 43.Ne3

Too late, the outpost on d5 does not exist anymore.

Qe4

The black queen move freely while white pieces has to defend one another because they (especially the knight) do not have safe places on the board.

44.g4 Qh1 45.g5

[45.h5 e4 followed by Rd3 also wins]

45...Qxh4 46.g6 Rd7 47.Rg2 Qh1 48.Rcc2 fxg6 49.Rxg6+ Kf7 50.Rc8 Qb7

The power of the queen is clear: she defends the seventh rank, attacks on b2, supports the advancing of the e-pawn and harasses the movement of white pieces. The rest of the game does not need further comments:

51.Rc3 Rd2 52.Nc4 Qd5 53.Kb1 Qe4+**54.Ka2 Qd5 55.Rg1 Rd3 56.Rgc1 e4**

Finally Black's free pawn is marching!

57.Kb1 Qd4 58.R3c2 Rd1 59.Rc3 Rxc1+**60.Kxc1 Qg1+ 61.Kc2 Qf2+ 62.Kb1 Ke7****63.Ne3 Kd6 64.b3 Qe1+ 65.Kc2 Qe2+****66.Kb1 Qe1+ 67.Kc2 Qa1 68.bxa4 Qa2+****69.Kc1 Ke5**

Black will bring White's pieces in zugzwang, using the cooperation Q+K with the objective to free the e4-pawn's way to queen.

70.Nc2 Qd5 71.Ne3 Qa8 72.a5 Kd4 73.Kb2**Qxa5 74.Nc2+ Ke5 75.Ne3 Qb5+ 76.Rb3****Qe2+ 77.Kb1 Qa6 78.Kb2 Kf4 79.Rc3 Qb5+****80.Kc2 Qa4+ 81.Kb2 Qd4 82.Nc4 Qd7****83.Ne3 Qd2+ 84.Nc2 Qd7 85.Ne3 Qb7+****86.Ka2 Qb5 87.Ka1 Kf3 88.Nd5+ Ke2****89.Nxf6 e3 90.Ng4 Kd2 91.Rc8 e2 92.Rd8+****Kc3 93.Rc8+ Kb3 94.Rc1 Qa5**

A beautiful technique displayed by Kozul,

playing a practical difficult endgame.

0-1

 **Djukic, Nikola**
 **Topalov, Veselin**
 EuroTeams 2007 (3.8)

B90
2528
2769
 30.10.2007

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e5 7.Nb3 Be6 8.f3

Topalov is one of the most tenacious fighters of our era with an excellent "home" preparation for the opening systems that he uses. This opening systems is not an exception, Topalov using it with both colors.

h5

A very practical move, cutting any White's active play on the kingside, while he prepares an attack on the queenside.

9.Qd2 Nbd7 10.0-0-0 Qc7

The move order in Sicilian is very important. Black keeps his dark-square bishop on initial square, keeping the possibility of activating it on h6 (after g7-g6).

11.Kb1 b5 12.Nd5

White is forced to this move, otherwise after b5-b4 and Nc3-e2, White's position will become extremely cramped. The following exchange will bring White the temporary advantage of the bishop-pair, but the closed character of the position makes this less powerful. In addition, the backward d6-pawn will be no more vulnerable as the open d-file will be closed:

Bxd5 13.exd5 Diagram

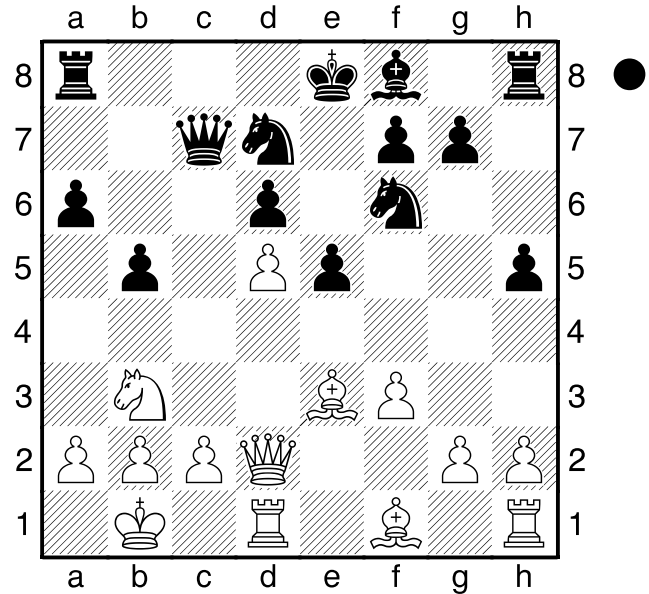
(Diagram)

Nb6

Forcing White to renounce at his bishop pair due to the weakness of d5-pawn.

14.Bxb6 Qxb6

We can say that the opening was a total success for Black. He has excellent prospects for getting an attack on the queenside which in connection with the opposite color bishops (the black dark-square bishop will become active using the h6-c1 diagonal) will be very powerful.



15.Qa5

Trying to reduce the attacking potential.

Nd7 16.c4

White has to increase the scope of his bishop.

bxc4 17.Bxc4 g6 18.Qxb6 Nxb6 19.Na5 Bh6

The position is about equal but, from practical point of view, Black has an easier game with a simple plan to follow: to attack on the queenside using the open b- and c- files.

20.Rd3 Kd7 21.Rb3 Nxc4 22.Nxc4

In open positions, the cooperation rook + bishop is better than rook + knight.

Rab8

Black exchanges the best white piece.

23.Rxb8 Rxb8 24.Kc2 f5

Topalov starts to advance his pawn majority (e- and f- pawns against the f-pawn), creating a free pawn on the e-file and also separating the white d5-pawn from the rest of the pieces.

25.a3 Rc8 26.Kb3 Rc5 27.Rd1 Kc7 28.Rd3?!

[White had to play 28.Kc3 with idea b2-b4.]

28...e4!

Usually, the advance of the free pawn should be done only when all the pieces can support it, otherwise, the pawn can be lost as it's too far in the opponent's camp. In this case, however, the black e-pawn is merely a tactical element, producing disorganization in White's camp.

**29.fxe4 fxe4 30.Rd1 e3 31.Kc3 Bg7+
32.Kb3 Rxd5 33.Re1**

[33.Rxd5 e2 and Black's queen the pawn.]

33...Rb5+ 34.Kc2 d5

Using this intermediary check, Black attacks the b2-pawn, entering a favorable tactical complication.

35.Rxe3 Bd4 36.Re7+ Kd8 37.Re6 Kd7

Now White has 2 pieces under attack.

38.Rd6+ Kc7 39.b4 g5

Topalov plays to bring his opponent into zugzwang, yet, White has no useful moves.

40.h3 h4 41.Kd2 Ba1

White is losing now one of his 2 pieces. Djukic resigns.

A perfect game by one of the strongest players in the World that makes us think that it's more enjoyable to play against a computer (a very strong one) than against such a human player. The smallest nuances from the opening stage are perfectly known (even from the home preparation) and extensively used to bring a better middlegame, then a better endgame and, finally, the full point. We could see a strong grandmaster that lost with the white pieces without making any evident mistake ...without counting 1.e4.

0-1

□ **Morozevich,Alexander**

■ **Beliavsky,Alexander G**

EuroTeams 2007 (4.1)

E32

2755

2646

31.10.2007

When Morozevich is in good shape, his games are very probable to be analyzed and published in chess magazines, often changing chess theory in openings and not only. Morozevich, like Polugaevsky in the past, is a player with a huge imagination and a very unpredictable style that produce some of the most interesting chess games in our days.

Beliavsky is a top GM with huge experience, a very strong opponent for any player in this world.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 0-0

Black is choosing a more solid disposal avoiding the dangerous lines with 4...c5.

[4...c5 5.dxc5 Na6]

5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.Qxc3 b6

In the classical style Black fights to control the e4-square, while puts his pawns on dark-squares to minimize the power of white bishops.

7.Bg5 Bb7 8.e3 d6 9.Ne2

In order to gain some advantage from the opening, White has to fight for the key-squares in the centre. Even if his aims won't be actually reached, the threats make Black to solve concrete problems and therefore his options of developing are smaller.

Here, White plans to play Qc2 and Nc3 threatening e3-e4.

Nbd7 10.Qc2 c5

Black continues to place his pawns on dark-squares and hopes for d4-d5 after which his knights are stronger than white bishops and his light-square bishop will get the status of "good" bishop (after e6-e5).

11.Rd1

However, White keeps the tension in the centre and targets the weakness on d6.

Qc7

Black defends the d6-square and un-pin the f6-knight.

12.Nc3 cxd4

[In the game Ivan Sokolov - Ponomarev, played in January 2005, Black played:

12...a6 and after: 13.d5 exd5 14.cxd5 b5 he obtained a good play.]

13.Rxd4

An interesting but logic reaction: White keeps the d-file opened to pressure on d6-pawn, defends the e4-square, and brings the rook on the fourth rank with the possibility to transfer it on the kingside.

a6 14.Be2!?

In Morozevich's style! He continues the development of pieces without care about the g2-pawn. In fact, Black is forced to accept the sacrifice, otherwise White will castle, play Rfd1 with an excellent position.

In chess, the time is very important. Often, we need to lose something in order to accomplish our plans quickly.

h6

An intermediary move before to take the g2-pawn.

[Directly: 14...Bxg2 is not good because of: 15.Rg1 Bb7 16.Bh6]

15.Bh4 Bxg2

Black accepts the 'gift' which change the character of the position from a strategical one into a more dynamic one, with many tactical issues.

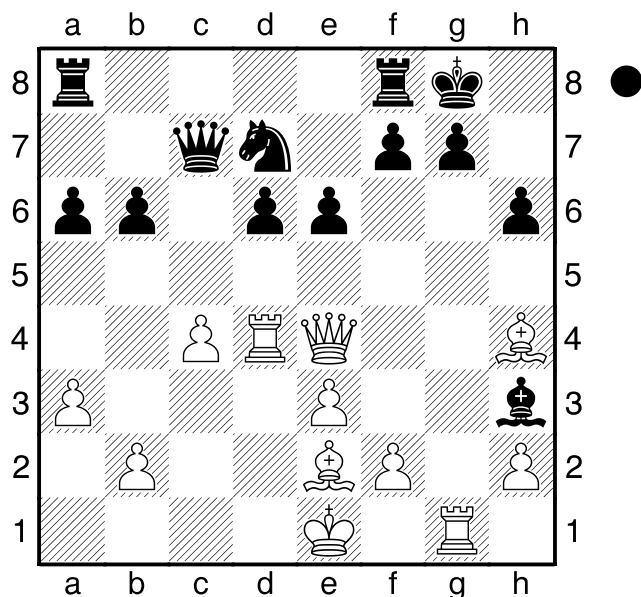
16.Rg1 Bh3

Beliavsky changes the diagonal of his bishop, bringing it in defense as White attacks with almost all his pieces.

17.Ne4

exchanging one of the pieces that didn't take part to the attack with one of the defenders of black king's position.

Nxe4 18.Qxe4 Diagram



Statistically, White's attack should succeed: he attacks with all his pieces and, moreover, all of them are of long-ray of action.

In addition, Morozevich likes this kind of positions and, certainly, the psychological duel between the 2 grandmasters is in his favor.

Bf5

A mistake. Black left the g2-square uncontrolled and now White can double his major pieces on this file.

[18...Ne5 was better. 19.Bf6 Ng6 20.Qf3 with great complications.]

19.Qg2 Bg6 20.Be7

White regains his pawn (or gains the exchanges), keeping the attack and the bishop-pair advantage. In just a couple of moves, White gained the battle.

d5 21.Bxf8 Nxf8

Black better gave up the exchange with the idea to try to open the lines and counter-attack in the centre against the uncastled white king.

After some gain of material, many players are satisfied with the result and go back in defense hoping that their quantitative plus is enough for victory. However, it is important not to give the opponent (who has nothing to lose now) the possibility of taking up the initiative.

Morozevich continues his attack:

22.h4 Qe5 23.Qg3

without queens on the board, Black wouldn't have any chance for counter-play and subsequently any chance to save the game.

Qf6 24.h5 Bf5 25.Qc7

Black succeeded to defend the kingside, but left the queenside undefended, so White changes his plans attacking the black pawns and rook. The game is already won.

b5 26.Qc6 Rd8 27.cxd5 Kh7 28.Qxa6 Qe5 29.d6

With a free pawn on sixth rank, White has a decisive advantage.

Qh2 30.Rf1 e5 31.Rb4 Rc8

Having nothing to lose, Beliavsky is still playing trying everything possible.

32.Qxb5 Rc1+ 33.Kd2 Rc2+ 34.Kd1 Nd7 35.Bd3 Nf8

and Black resigns as Bxf5+ would follow.
1-0

 **Lenic, Luka**
 **Jakovenko, Dmitry**
 EuroTeams 2007 (4.1)

A32
2531
2710
 31.10.2007

A new star appeared in the last two years on top chess level. The Russian player, Jakovenko, have progressed enormous, achieving an impressive rating of over 2700.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c5

Jakovenko is a player who always fights for the full point.

4.Nc3

White avoids entering Benoni structure and prefers to play a normal line from English Defense.

cx d4 5.Nxd4 Bb4

Black's setup is very dynamic, with a quick development of pieces and ideas to fight for the central squares with d7-d5.

6.Ndb5 d5 7.Bf4 0-0 8.cxd5

[8.Nc7 Nh5 9.Nxa8 Nxf4 10.e3 Bxc3+ 11.bxc3 Ng6∞

The game remains complex and very risky for White who can lose his a8-knight also.]

8...exd5 9.a3 Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 Nc6

Black has already equalized and can hope for even more due to the opponent king's position in the centre.

11.e3 a6

Black forces White to take a decision about the position of his knight and to weaken the defenses of the c3-pawn.

12.Nd6 Qa5 13.Qb3 Nh5

Black wants to eliminate White's knight from d6 which controls the c8- and e8-squares in order to occupy the respective files with the rooks as soon as possible and then to start active operations while the white king is still in the centre.

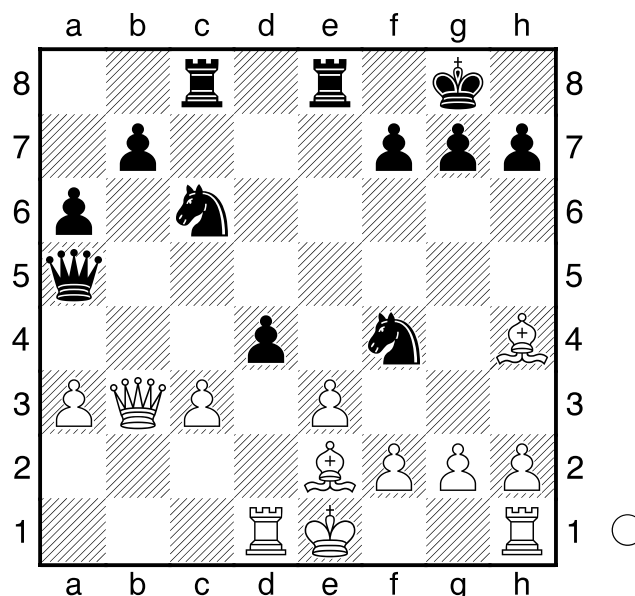
14.Bg3 Rd8 15.Nxc8 Raxc8

Black is threatening d5-d4 now.

16.Bh4 Re8 17.Rd1 d4

A very logical pawn thrust, opening the lines toward the uncastled king.

18.Be2 Nf4! Diagram



All or nothing. Jakovenko opts for the decisive attack sacrificing the knight to open the file for the rook.

19.exf4 dxc3

all black pieces are perfectly arranged. Black is threatening c2+ now.

20.Qc2 Qxa3

By taking intuitive and logical decision, Black managed to obtain decisive advantage. He has three free connected pawns now and menaces 21...Nb4 to free the c-pawn.

21.0-0 Nb4 22.Qf5 c2 23.Rc1 Qc3

White's bishops have no scope in this position. Black controls the entire the board.

24.Bh5

White is lost but prefers to create some threats on the kingside before resigning. However, Black has no problems in defending his king.

g6 25.Qg4 Nd3
winning material.

26.Rxc2 Qxc2 27.Bf6 Re1
and White can't escape from mate.
An impressive game by the apparent simplicity
of Black's decisions.
0-1

□ **Mamedyarov, Shakhriyar**
 ■ **Svidler, Peter**

EuroTeams 2007 (5.1)

D43
2752
2732
 01.11.2007

Mamedyarov, the former under twenty world chess champion has had an incredible ascension and is now in the Top 5 with a huge rating. He is a very powerful player who scored 9 points out of 9 in the last European Rapid Chess Championship.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 e6 5.Bg5 h6

Svidler is an adherent of Grunfeld Defense against 1.d4, but due to his great chess experience he is capable of playing any opening system in function of his opponent and tournament circumstances.

6.Bxf6

[After: 6.Bh4 g5 7.Bg3 dxc4 8.e4 b5 the position is very complex with good chances for Black. From this position, Anand scored his first victory at the World Chess Championship in Mexico, playing against Aronian.]

6...Qxf6 7.Qb3

[The main line is: 7.e3 preparing the castle.]

7...dxc4 8.Qxc4 Nd7 9.g3

Now the structure is similar with the Catalan system, the main difference being the absence of the c1-bishop and f6-knight.

e5 10.0-0-0

White castles long, where his king is not very safe and also an attack on the other side against the black king is almost impossible because of the structure of fianchetto (f2, g3, h2). White's idea is a quick development.

Be7 11.Ne4 Qf5 12.Qc2 0-0

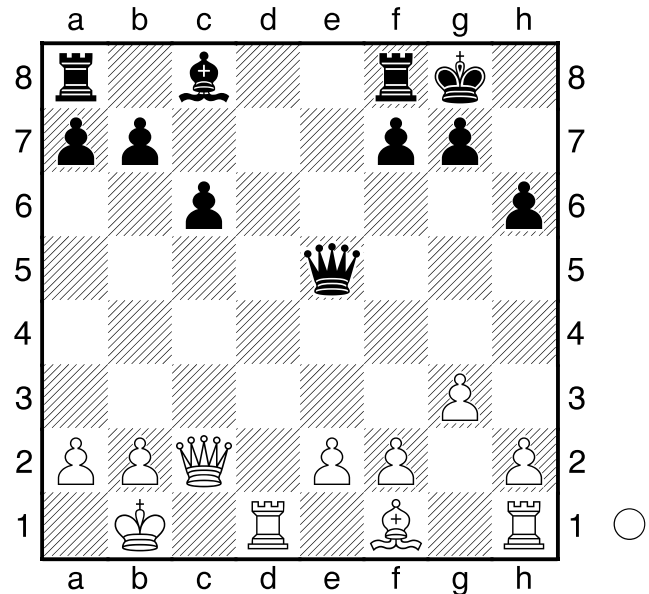
Black still has to find a way to develop his queenside.

13.Kb1 Nf6

Only this move is somehow new. In the game

Kortschnoj - Dreev, Black played 13...exd4 and the game was a draw.

14.Nxf6+ Bxf6 15.dxe5 Bxe5 16.Nxe5 Qxe5
 Diagram



Black had the bishop-pair for a couple of moves, but usually when the opponent has a better control over the centre and/or a better development, this advantage cannot be hold. Now, the position is level. No player has weaknesses and the material on the board is seriously reduced. The strategic elements of this position are the kings castled opposite, the open d-file and the pawn majorities (Black has 3 pawns against 2 on the queenside, White has 2 pawns against one in the centre: the e- and f-pawn phalanx).

Let's see where Mamedyarov played wrong giving the full point to the Russian player.

17.f4?!

White puts his pawn phalanx in motion with tempo, but this was not the first priority.

[Better was:

17.e4 Bg4 18.Be2 Bxe2 19.Qxe2
 and White preserves the d-file.]

17...Qh5!

A very clever move.

The white pawn phalanx can be a good asset

only if White controls or at least doesn't cede the d-file.

However, White cannot avoid exchanges on this file which would lead to a draw due to the reduced material on the board.

Svidler realizes that his young opponent wants the full point and therefore he (Mamedyarov) will probably play after a risky plan, keeping the rooks on the board, so ceding the d-file. By Qh5 and Bg4, Black takes the control over the d1-square.

18.e4 Bg4 19.Re1

As predicted. White gives up the control of d-file with too much confidence in his pawn phalanx.
[19.Rd2 would have been safer.]

19...Rad8 20.Be2

[20.h3 Qa5 21.Qc3 Qxc3 22.bxc3 Bf3
23.Rg1 (23.Rh2 Bxe4+ 24.Rxe4 Rd1+)
23...Rd2]

20...Rd4

Now, Black plays simple and logical moves. The rooks will be doubled on the d-file and, moreover, the d4-rook will put pressure on all the board. With a total control over the only open file, the advance of black pawn majority on the queenside will be decisive.

21.Bxg4 Qxg4 22.e5?!

Mamedyarov is still very confident in his chances or too proud to recognize his mistake.
[22.Rd1 Rfd8 23.Rxd4 Rxd4 24.Re1
is still good for Black, but with smaller chances to win.]

22...Rfd8

Now, the d-file is lost forever for White.

23.Re2 g6

A prophylactic move, against the f4-f5 advance.

24.Rc1 Rd3 25.a3

White has no good moves. a2-a3 was almost a must, otherwise, he always has to be careful at the back rank threats. However, this move weakens the position of the king and b7-b5-b4 will open the lines quicker. Of course, a strong

player like Mamedyarov knew that his position is already lost.

Qe6 26.Qc4 R8d5

Black keeps the queens on the board to keep the attacking potential against the white king.

27.Ka1 a5

Preparing b7-b5-b4.

28.Qc2 h5!

Svidler intends b7-b5, but this is still impossible because of Qxc6. Therefore, he plays a prophylactic move on the kingside and gives the move to White who has no good move again (zugzwang!).

29.Rf1 b5 30.Ref2 Qf5

Black has a very solid position so he has no reason to permit any counter-play.

31.Re1

[31.Qxc6 Rd1+ 32.Rxd1 Rxd1+ 33.Ka2
Qb1+ 34.Kb3 Rd3+]

31...c5 32.e6

A desperate sacrifice, but useless.

fxe6 33.Rfe2 Rd6

Defending the e6-pawn and clearing the d5-square for the queen.

34.Qc1 Qd5 35.Re5 Qb3

White resigned as Rd3-d1 will follow.

We cannot say that the 5th player in the World doesn't know the importance of open file. Mamedyarov's decisions were probably dictated by the tournament's circumstances where his team would have few to lose and much to gain in case of a victory against Russia. The game is very instructive for the manner in which Svidler played accurately, took the control of the d-file and exploit it until the end, putting White in zugzwang for several times.

0-1

□ Ivanchuk,Vassily

■ Bacrot,Etienne

EuroTeams 2007 (5.2)

D15

2787

2695

01.11.2007

A game between the second high rated player in the world (Ivanchuk) and a prodigious child who came very quickly in the chess elite (Bacrot).

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 a6

This move is played in many GM's encounters, providing Black a solid structure but also good chances for an active play.

5.c5 Nbd7

When White advances his c-pawn on c5, Black's best plan is to counter-attack in the centre with e7-e5. For this, Black arranges his pieces with Nd7, Bg7 (after g7-g6), Qc7 and, then, Nf6-g4.

6.Bf4 Nh5 7.Bd2 Nhf6

White won a tempo after this sequence, but the dark-square bishop doesn't have any active role on d2 for the moment.

8.Qc2

Defends the c5-pawn, clears the d1-square for the rook and sustains the advance e2-e4.

g6 9.g3

This move was seen in only one game before.

[The central break 9.e4 gives White more space for his pieces.]

[9.h3 Bg7 10.Bf4 0-0 11.e3 Ne8 12.Be2 Nc7 13.0-0 e5 14.dxe5 Ne6 15.b4 a5 16.b5 Ndxc5∞ Topalov,V (2757)-Shirov,A (2713)/Monte Carlo 2005]

9...e5 10.dxe5 Ng4 11.e6?!

White gives the pawn back, trying to create weaknesses in Black's structure.

However, as the events will show, Black's pieces will become extremely active.

[11.Bg2 Ngxe5 12.0-0

with a solid position for White.

It is dangerous: Nxf3+ 13.exf3 Nxc5

14.Rfe1+ Ne6 15.f4

and White has a large compensation for the

pawn.]

11...Nxc5

[After: 11...fxe6 , Black will have problems with the e6-pawn, like you can see after the moves:

12.Na4 Ngf6 13.Ng5 Qe7 14.Bh3]

12.exf7+ Kxf7 13.e4

Ivanchuk reacts promptly trying to open the lines toward the black king, but in the same time, he is also exposing his own.

[13.Bg2 Bf5 14.Qd1 d4

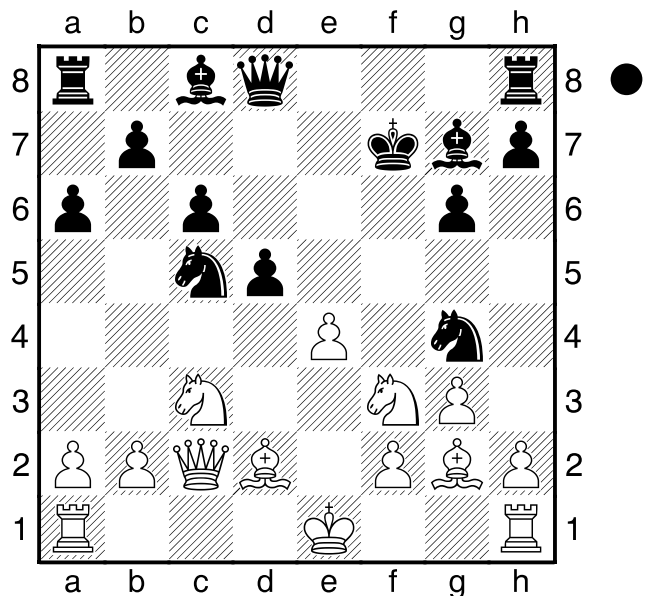
and Black has a better control of the board.]

13...Bg7

When defending, completing the development is of first importance. Also, the white king is now unsafe on the open e-file.

14.Bg2 Diagram

[14.Ng5+ Kg8 15.h3 (15.Bg2 h6 16.Nh3 Ne5 and Black has many threats due to the weaknesses from d3 and f3.) 15...Nf6 followed by h7-h6, Kh7 and Re8]



14...Bxc3!!

Black renounces at his dark-square bishop, h8-rook and safety of his king! Black's sacrifice is based on concrete calculation - his knights,

bishop and queen are ready to create serious threats against the white king.

15.Bxc3 dxe4

White has to accept the exchange sacrifice and his next moves are also forced.

16.Bxh8 Nd3+ 17.Kf1 exf3 18.Bxf3 Ngxf2

For this position aimed Bacrot when he played 14...Bxc3. Both kings are in very unsafe positions, White has an exchange for a pawn and the bishop-pair. However, Black has the initiative (which is very important in this kind of positions) because his pieces create more real threats.

19.Qb3+ Ke7

Incredible: Black is attacking with his king in the centre and no pawn shield.

20.Bg7

White retreats his bishop also defending the f8-square against a future Ra8-f8.

Bh3+ 21.Bg2 Qd7

Black threatens Ne4 and Qf5, forcing the exchange of light-square bishops.

22.Bxh3

Now, Black attacks with 3 pieces against unprotected white king.

[22.Rg1 Ne4+]

22...Qxh3+ 23.Kg1 Qf5!

with the strong threat Qf3.

24.Qxb7+?

A check which doesn't resolve anything.

[White had to play:

24.Re1+ Nxe1 and, now, White has the b4-square.

(24...Kd6?! 25.Re3! Nc5 26.Qc3 Nxh1 27.Be5+ Kd7 28.Rf3 and White gets a strong attack.)

25.Qxb7+ Kd6 26.Qb4+ Kd5 27.Qd4+ Ke6 28.Qc4+ Kd7 29.Qd4+ Kc7 30.Qxf2 Qe4 31.Qf4+ Qxf4 32.gxf4 Nd3 33.h4 Re8 and Black wins a pawn which however might be not enough to win the full point.]

24...Kd6 25.Qb6 Qf3 and the mate is inevitable.

26.Qd4+ Kc7 27.Be5+ Kc8

Now the checks are finished and White resigns.

White entered complication very early in the game, at the 11th move. He hoped that his pawn advance (e5-e6) will weaken the Black's pawn structure (which it actually did), but the young grandmaster got excellent positions for his pieces in the stage of development. Then, Bacrot was very alert at that moment and found an astonishing combination winning against the second rated player in the World; a game where tactics and precise calculation were in the first place.

0-1

 **Rodshtein, Maxim**
 **Jakovenko, Dmitry**
 EuroTeams 2007 (6.1)

D30
2615
2710
 03.11.2007

Again, a game played by Jakovenko, one of the strongest player in the World, player with a great confidence in his powers.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Bg5 h6

The most aggressive move nowadays which forces White to take a clear decision about his dark square bishop.

5.Bxf6

White adopts a more positional path for the game.

Qxf6 6.Nbd2

Now, it becomes clear that White doesn't fight for an advantage in the opening and just wants to get a solid position.

[6.Nc3 c6 7.e3 Nd7 8.Bd3 dxc4 9.Bxc4 g6 10.0-0 Bg7 is the main line of this system.]

6...dxc4

Having the bishop pair, Black quickly opens the lines to give more freedom to his forces.

7.e3 c5

A natural decision, Black is weakening the d4-pawn, making more visible the absence of the white dark square bishop.

8.Bxc4

[Opening the position even more with: 8.dxc5 was surely not in White's mind. Also, he has to lose a tempo to defend the b2-pawn.]

8...cxd4 9.exd4 Bb4

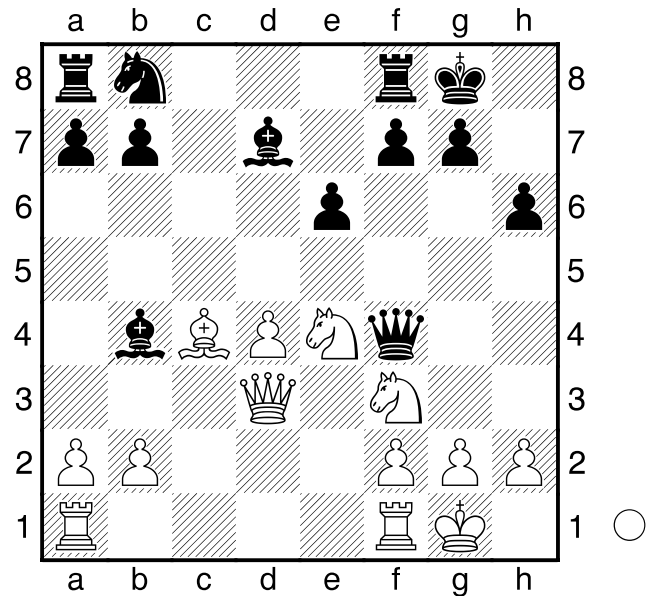
Already Black solved his opening problems and has a target, the isolated white pawn on d4. White's idea is to use the e5-square as an outpost for his knight/s and to initiate an attack on the kingside.

10.0-0 0-0 11.Ne4 Qf4

Black doesn't have a knight on f6 to protect his

king, but using the absence of white dark-square bishop, Jakovenko uses his queen in defense also impeding White to obtain a harmonious piece play.

12.Qd3 Bd7! Diagram



By normal means, Black is improving the status of his pieces, with the idea to complete his development with Bc6 and Nd7-f6.

It is very important for the chess player to see his final goal which is, of course, to win the game. For example, here, Jakovenko places his bishop on c6, a very active position, but not at all safe. White can play Nf3-e5 exchanging that bishop and subsequently eliminating Black's bishop-pair.

However, the exchanges (especially of the white e5-knight) are favorable to Black because the fewer pieces on the board, the weaker is the isolated d4-pawn. A strong player must learn that many times one has to "drop" something in order to win something.

13.g3?

A very risky move that White decides to play, chasing the black queen from that annoying position, but weakening the long diagonal a8-h1. It is clear that White lost the psychological duel - just think at his opening moves intending a solid approach...and, now, he needs to take such

risky decisions.

[13.Ne5 Bc6 14.Nxc6 Nxc6
and White has no chance to hold the game
against a perfect player like Jakovenko.]

13...Qf5 14.Qe3

With such "long" and "threatening" moves,
White is perhaps about to despair.

Bc6 15.Bd3 Nd7

Jakovenko evaluates if there is any real threat
and continues his development.

16.a3 Be7 17.Rac1 Qd5

A safe and active position for the black queen
which defends his king indirectly putting
pressure on White's weaknesses.

18.Rfe1 Rac8

A simple developing move, but very precise.
Black interdicts Bd3-c4 as you can see in the
next variation.

19.h4

It is hard to believe that a grandmaster like
Rodshtein thinks that his attack can succeed.
White has nothing on the kingside and by this
move, he only weakens his position even more.
However, what else to do?

[19.Bc4? Qxe4 20.Qxe4 Bxe4 21.Rxe4 b5]

19...Rfd8

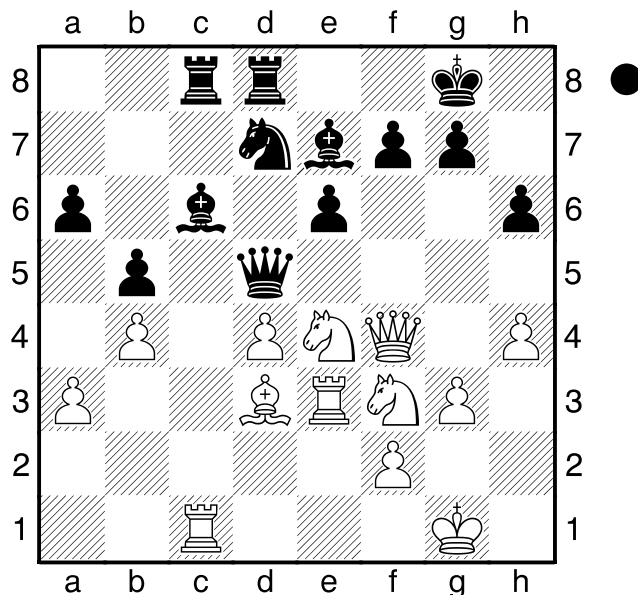
Black completed his development, his pieces
are centralized and put a strong pressure
against White's position. The next step is to
make some exchanges entering a better
endgame due to his better pawn structure.

20.b4 a6 21.Qf4 b5

Black leaves the c5-square weak, but protects
his queen (against Bc4) which is the most active
piece in this position. This way, the weaknesses
from White's position are put in light.

22.Re3 Diagram

White's weak and hesitant play brought him to
disaster. His pieces are forced to defend each
other with a total lack of harmony and scope.



It is instructive to replay Black's moves until
here and observe how logical and natural they
are.

Ba8!

What could be more natural than grabbing the
control of c-file (and maybe the first rank too)
after the strange sortie of one of the white
rooks?

23.Rxc8 Rxc8 24.Ne5

[White had to block the c-file with
24.Nc5

Here, the white knight is merely out of play
than on a strong square. After
Nf6

Black has many threats against the white
"pack".]

24...Nxe5 25.Qxe5 f5

Black gets a technically won endgame. All
White's pawns are weak, on the same color with
the e7-bishop and also seriously threatened on
the first rank and long diagonal.

26.Qxd5 Rc1+ 27.Bf1 Bxd5 28.Nd2

[28.Nc5 Bxc5 29.dxc5 Bc4]

28...f4

White is almost in zugzwang, so Black can play
practically anything. Jakovenko, attacks now the

white pawns which are hopeless on dark-squares.

29.Rd3 h5

Quietly blocking the white pawns on dark-squares.

30.gxf4 Bxh4 31.Nb3 Re1 32.Re3

White is totally demoralized and loses a piece. He resigns before 33...Rxe3 and 34...Bxb3

White started the game very reserved probably dreaming to a draw. In just some moves, his position with an isolani on d4 became unsatisfactory and he started to take risky decisions (g2-g3 and h2-h4) in order to avoid a slow defeat against a very strong and precise player.

Taking logical and normal decisions, Jakovenko won in great style, just improving move by move his position and the status of his pieces.

0-1