

THOMAS WILLEMZÉ



THE CHESS TOOLBOX

**Practical Techniques
Everyone Should Know**

NEW IN CHESS

For my girlfriend Amy and my children Olaf and Emma.

Thomas Willemze

The Chess Toolbox

Practical Techniques Everyone Should Know

New In Chess 2018

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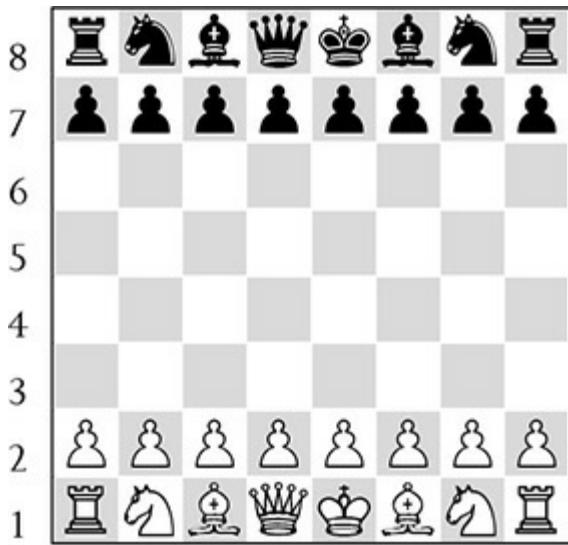
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The chessboard with its coordinates:



a b c d e f g h

□	White to move
■	Black to move
♔	King
♕	Queen
♖	Rook
♗	Bishop
♘	Knight
±	White stands slightly better
∓	Black stands slightly better
±	White stands better
∓	Black stands better
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
=	balanced position
!	good move
!!	excellent move
?	bad move
??	blunder
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move

Introduction

Congratulations! You have just acquired your first Chess Toolbox. Inside, you will find concrete tools that you can apply to your game, improving your results. These tools are not easy to use, but I will demonstrate the techniques in great detail and provide you with enough exercises to master them.

Chess is fun

The aim of this book is to make you a better chess player, but never forget: studying chess has to be fun! Therefore, I have added quizzes, puzzles and as many entertaining subjects as possible. Think, for instance, of beautiful combinations like **the Windmill** and **Lasker's double bishop sacrifice**. These topics were a lot of fun to cover; hopefully you will appreciate studying them as well.

The most important tools

When you study chess, it is much more effective to become an expert on a limited number of topics than to acquire only a shallow knowledge of almost everything. Drawing from my experience as a trainer, I have carefully selected the most important tools; the ones that I consider to be the most beneficial for your improvement. The tools I picked are all related to one central theme: **piece coordination**. We will see how important concepts like **structure** and **initiative** can help us to find the right destination for our pieces.

In the first three parts, you will learn a whole range of techniques that enable you to **make the right exchange**, **mobilize your rooks** and execute a successful **attack** or **defence**. In the final part, we will wrap up all the techniques and apply them to a practical situation: the Isolated Queen's Pawn (IQP). In my experience, IQP positions are extremely suitable occasions to demonstrate the clash between structure and initiative and practice your piece coordination skills.

Ambitious club player

If you want to learn new skills, you have to make sure they connect to your current level. This book is written for the ambitious club player. I have broken down the subjects into pieces that are both large enough to stay interesting and small enough to digest. The exercises have the same level of difficulty, although, I must admit, I have added quite a few brain teasers.

I sincerely hope you will enjoy reading this book and I wish you all the best in your chess career! If you have any comments regarding this book, or stories to tell about how you were able to apply your new tools, please feel free to reach out to me at chesstoolbox@outlook.com.

Thomas Willemze

Haarlem, June 2018

Foreword by International Master John Watson

Most works on positional chess list and describe the many elements of strategic play in some systematic fashion. That's fine, of course, but it gives the reader only a brief and incomplete exposure to each topic. Thomas Willemze's book takes a different, intensely practical, approach. The reader is meant to develop specialized skills that go well beyond a general understanding. Hence the term 'tools', indicating that the player will have these skills at hand, ready to use as required. As a chess teacher myself, I recognize how Willemze's method stems from his experience of what works with his students. As he himself says, 'When you study chess, it is much more effective to become an expert on a limited number of topics than it is to have only a shallow knowledge of almost everything'. Indeed, most masters and grandmasters will tell you the same thing.

This book's organization is unique in the literature of chess improvement books. Willemze first expounds upon a number of skills that he feels are particularly useful, beginning with how to decide upon when to exchange pieces and when not to. That subject splits into a number of practical tasks, including but not limited to trading inferior pieces for good ones, using exchanges to combat a space advantage, and breaking down blockades. In the latter case, he demonstrates how exchanging minor pieces and retaining rooks tends to be the way to make progress, a principle I haven't seen elsewhere in the literature. In addition, the discussion of passed pawns is particularly insightful and original.

Willemze then turns to the important but little-explored topic of how best to use one's rooks. His focus, as elsewhere in the book, is on how to improve one's chances by understanding what it takes to achieve optimal rook effectiveness, rather than simply showing a series of positions in which the rooks are already well-placed on the 7th rank or unopposed on open files. He emphasizes problem-solving in real-world positions.

A large part of the book is devoted to attacking themes and defensive techniques. While covering a considerable number of these (many under the rubric of 'entrance squares'), he again uses the principle that immersion in specifics is important for improvement, as reflected in his lengthy, example-driven chapters on the Greek Gift sacrifice and the Double Bishop sacrifice. Part 4 continues that theme, with a 60-page discussion of the Isolated Queen's Pawn which could constitute a book on its own. In this section, Willemze brings together all of the skills previously described (the 'toolbox') and applies them to solving problems that arise in IQP positions. Refreshingly, he devotes as much time to defending against the isolated pawn as he does to the ways in which the side with the IQP can attack. Most authors concentrate upon the latter topic and brush over the former.

In order to significantly improve your play, it's necessary to employ these tools in practice. The book's 281 exercises offer you the chance to do so, and are essential to go through if you want to get full value from this work. They are also full of interesting content, which makes studying more enjoyable.

To sum up, Thomas Willemze has made a unique and thoughtful contribution to the literature of chess improvement, as well as contributing new insights into several areas of the game. His writing is clear and uncluttered, with a consistent focus on the practical player's needs. I can't think of another book that would be more helpful to the average player who is intent upon improving his chess.

John Watson

San Diego (CA), USA

July 2018

PART I

Exchange your way to victory

Keep it simple!

The value of the pieces is one of the first things you learn when you start to play chess: one point for a pawn, three for the knight and bishop, five for the rook and nine for the queen. Children often use this knowledge to keep score during the game, usually with the pieces that have been captured, instead of the ones that are still on the board.

A strict interpretation of what pieces are worth can provide beginning players with order in the chaos. It really helps if you know that it pays off to trade your rook for a queen. It also safeguards you from worries about knights and bishops; they have the same value and can therefore be exchanged for each other whenever you like.

Exchanging as many pieces as possible is perfectly normal behaviour for beginning players. It helps you to keep things simple. Having the movements of the pieces still as your main concern, you should not make chess more complicated than necessary.

Exchange with care

Unfortunately, this phase does not last very long. If you take chess seriously, you will improve rapidly and start to face stronger opponents. From that moment on, the value of the pieces stops being static. You can no longer just dump your bishops because you like knights better. Nor will you get away with sacrificing a piece for three pawns without a decent follow-up. You will also learn that randomly exchanging pieces usually only benefits your opponent, for two reasons:

- With every exchange you make, you improve his recapturing piece;
- The easiest trades are your active pieces against his passives ones.

Before you know it, your main concern is not only which pieces to exchange, but also when, where and how.

High impact

The more you improve, the more you realize that decisions that involve an exchange of material are the hardest ones to take in chess. They also come with the highest impact. A piece trade is by definition irreversible and is therefore very likely to change the course of the game. If you analyse your games carefully, you will encounter many critical moments where you are required to make **the right exchange**. If you are not a computer, you are definitely going to find room for improvement in this respect.

But here is the good news: exchanging pieces can, when employed rightly, be a very powerful weapon, and I am going to show you exactly how.

The right exchange

Entire books could be written about when and why you should **not** exchange your pieces. But this would be the wrong approach. I always try to focus on the things you **should** do, since this will automatically point you in the right direction. Therefore, the best thing to remember when it comes to exchanging pieces is: **only exchange pieces for a good reason!**

These ‘reasons’ will be the subject of the first and only chapter in this Part. I will demonstrate five different techniques to use the exchange of pieces to your benefit. These techniques are:

- 1. Simplification;**
- 2. Getting rid of an inferior piece;**
- 3. Eliminating an important defender;**
- 4. Changing the structure;**
- 5. Lifting a blockade.**

This list is not exhaustive. To stress this, we will finish the chapter with a quiz that is aimed at discovering new techniques for yourself.

The aim of this chapter is to help you transform the technique of exchanging a piece into a powerful weapon.

CHAPTER 1

Five powerful weapons

1.1 Simplification

Ever considered to implement a *lean approach* in your chess games? Then *simplification* is the place to start! With this technique, you focus on your favourite characteristic of the position and make it more prominent by eliminating everything else. It is the perfect tool for **exploiting an advantage**.

I will demonstrate the power of the simplification technique in the context of the following five ‘advantages’:

1.1.1 Material advantage;

1.1.2 Better equipped for an ending;

1.1.3 The buried piece (permanently);

1.1.4 The buried piece (temporarily);

1.1.5 Piece majority.

1.1.1 Material advantage

This is the most obvious advantage. If you are ahead in material and you see an opportunity to eliminate your opponent’s counterplay by trading pieces, you should definitely go for it.

Game 1

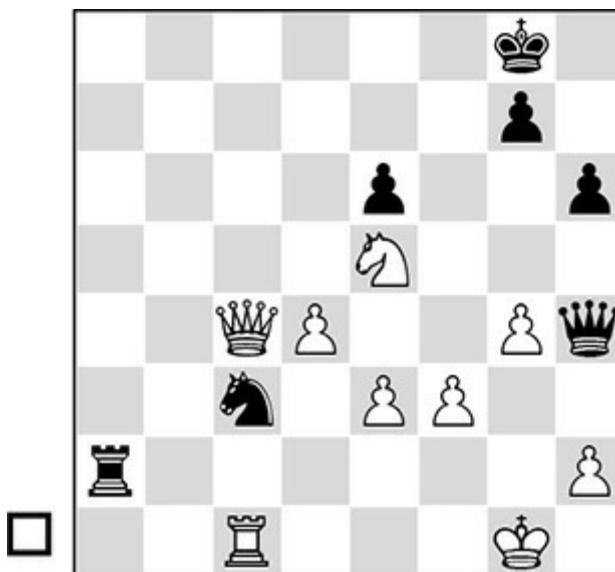
Zsuzsa Polgar

2560

Vasili Smyslov

2530

Vienna tt 1993



39. ♕xa2! ♜xa2 40. ♜c8+ ♔h7



41. ♜h8+ ♛xh8 42. ♜g6+ ♛h7 43. ♜xh4 g5 44. ♜g2

And White won the ending convincingly.

1.1.2 Better equipped for an ending

You do not necessarily need a material advantage to be able to simplify into a winning ending. Watch how Kasparov transformed the following position into a full point within two moves.

Game 2

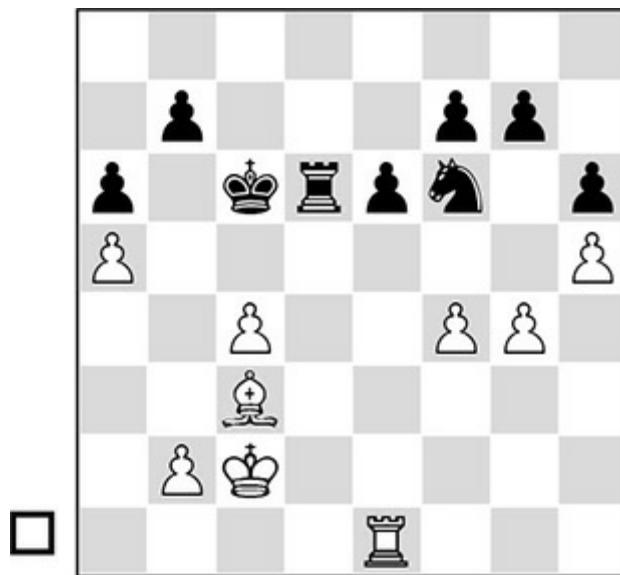
Garry Kasparov

2595

Milan Vukic

2460

Skara Ech tt 1980 (7)



36. ♜xf6 gxf6 37. ♜d1!

Kasparov exchanged all the pieces for a good reason. The remaining pawn ending is winning. Black came to the same conclusion and resigned immediately. The game might have continued: 37... ♜xd1 38. ♛xd1 ♛d7 39.g5 fxg5 40.fxg5 ♛e8 41.gxh6 ♛f8 42.b4 ♛g8 43.b5 ♛h7 44.bxa6 bxa6 45.c5 1-0.

If we find a forcing line that simplifies into a winning ending, we often speak of **liquidation**. However, I always find the difference between simplification and liquidation a bit arbitrary. When can we consider a position winning?

I remember playing a very interesting rook ending. At least, that is what I thought. My opponent, a strong Dutch grandmaster, had already put his coat on and was impatiently waiting for me to resign. Unfortunately, his evaluation turned out to be correct.

1.1.3 The buried piece (permanently)

If your opponent has a piece that is permanently out of play, for instance because it is trapped in a corner of the board, we might speak of a material advantage as well. In that case, simplifying by exchanging pieces can again be a very effective tool. This will not only reduce his chances for counterplay, it will also increase the *relative value* of your advantage. Defending with four pieces against five is much easier than with one against two, as the following example shows.

Game 3

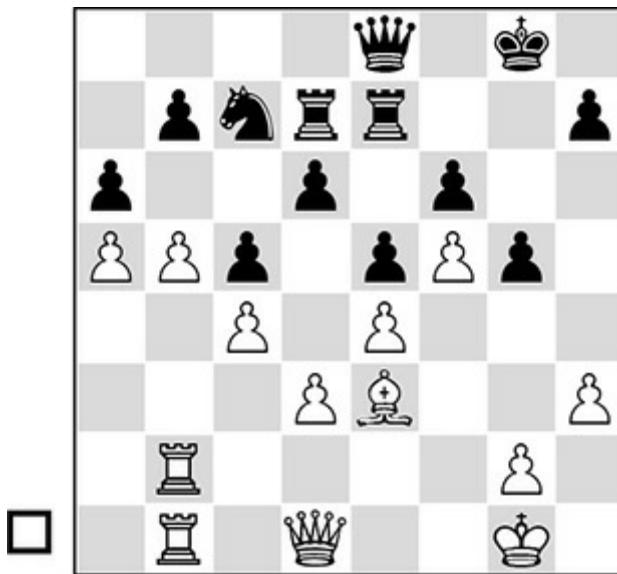
Zahar Efimenko

2702

Matej Sebenik

2518

Halkidiki Ech tt 2011 (1)



33.b6!

Forcing the knight into the corner. It looks like this will be its final destination.

33... ♜a8 34.h4 h6 35.g4 ♜h7 36.♗a4 ♜d8

Black cannot really take the h-pawn, since it would severely damage his pawn structure. As a result, White has all the time in the world to optimize his pieces and wait for the right moment to open up the h-file. This favourable pawn configuration will return in Part II, where open files and the 7th rank are discussed.

37.♖h2 ♕dg7 38.♕f2 ♜e7 39.♖bh1 ♕f8 40.♖f3 ♕g8 41.♖h3

There is only one piece that needs further improvement: the white queen. She will get a spot on the h-file as well. With his last move, White started the creation of a so-called **Alekhine's gun**, which consists of three major pieces on one file. The queen is put behind both rooks, since she is the most vulnerable one.

41... ♜d8 42.♖1h2 ♜e7 43.♖d1 ♜d7 44.♕h1



The Gun is ready and... Black resigned! There is no rule that you should resign if your opponent has found the best spot for each of his pieces. So why did the game end so suddenly?

The answer is that Black is well aware of his opponent's simplification strategy. It is about to start and there is nothing he can do against it.

A move like 44... $\mathbb{B}e7$ would allow White a very elegant finish: 45. $h \times g5!$ $h \times g5$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$.



Now it is two against one if we do not count the black knight as a serious piece. The white bishop is not exactly a hero either, but that will change quickly after the beautiful 49. $d4!!$. A crucial move for the evaluation of this entire game fragment. Now Black can choose:

- A) 49... $c \times d4$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ leaves Black effectively a piece down, deciding the game;
- B) 49... $e \times d4$ loses in a similar fashion after 50. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}h2$, and the black pawns drop.

This was the simplification technique in its purest form, and a clear demonstration of an important rule when it comes to exchanging pieces:

Only the pieces that remain matter!

White had a clear goal in mind and was even willing to exchange his entire Alekhine's Gun for it.

1.1.4 The buried piece (temporarily)

The knight on a8 was in a pretty bad shape in the previous example, allowing White all the time in the world to execute his strategy. It gets more complicated if a piece is only temporarily displaced. In that case, either you have to be very quick with taking advantage of it, or you have to keep your opponent busy, so he won't find the time to reactivate his piece.

The stakes become even higher if we have sacrificed real material for our 'temporary material advantage'.

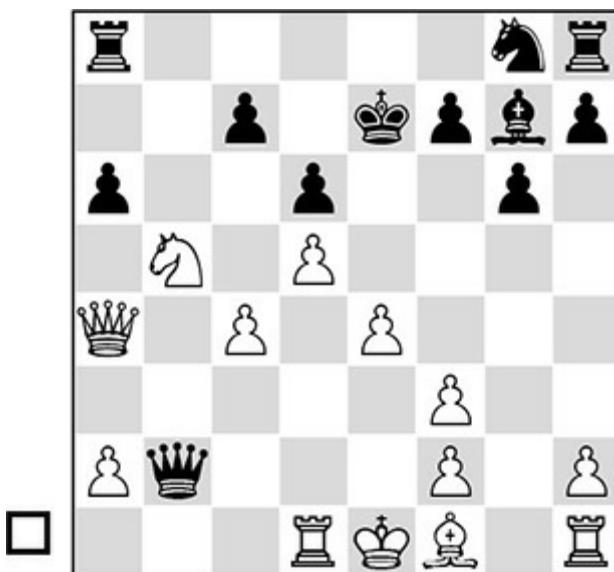
Game 4

Csaba Daday

Leifur Vilmundarson

2044

Gardabaer 2010 (6)



Black is threatening 15...axb5 followed by 16... $\mathbb{Q}c3+$, and White needs to develop his bishop quickly. The only question is: where to?

15. $\mathbb{Q}g2$

We will soon find out that this move has two serious drawbacks, and it would be perfectly justifiable to attach a question mark to it. However, I decided to omit question mark evaluations in this book in order to force myself to provide you with verbal explanations instead.

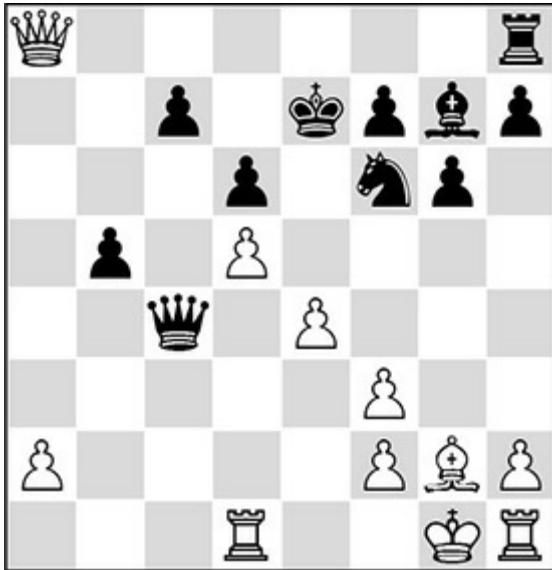
15...axb5 16. $\mathbb{B}xa8 \mathbb{B}b4+$

Missing a chance to finish the game at once. Black could have played 16... $\mathbb{Q}c3+!$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}c2$ when a white bishop on e2 would have been very welcome to support the rook.

17. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}xc4+$

The second drawback of the move 15. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ becomes clear. The white king is driven all the way to g1, after which the rook on h1 can serve as a nice illustration for our topic.

18. $\mathbb{R}g1 \mathbb{Q}f6$



This is where it gets interesting. White is an exchange up, but will effectively be a piece down for a while as we cannot really take the rook on h1 seriously. So, who will benefit most from simplification? The player with the **real** material advantage, or the player with the **temporary** one?

19.♕c6

White still considers he is an exchange up and strictly follows the ‘rule’ of exchanging material in case of a material advantage. However, the answer was: Black benefits most! The fewer pieces there are on the board, the more White will be hampered by his temporary material deficit.

19.♕a3 would have been the best move: 19...♕c5 20.♕e3. White does not mind exchanging his queen on e3, as it would free the f2-square for his king and reactivate the rook.

19...♘xc6 20.dxc6 ♜h5 21.♖b1 ♜a8

Black has played really well. He did not hesitate to exchange queens, and now he realizes that as soon as the rook gets out, the tables will be turned.

22.♖xb5 ♜d4

22...♜xa2 would have given Black more than enough pawns to compensate for the exchange: 23.h4 ♜d4 24.♔h2 ♜xf2.

23.♗b4 ♜f4 24.a4 ♜c5

Missing a nice opportunity with 24...♜xf2+! 25.♔xf2 (25.♔f1 ♜c5 is a disaster for White) 25...♝d3+ 26.♔e3 ♜xb4. The rook is free to go, but Black has a large advantage.

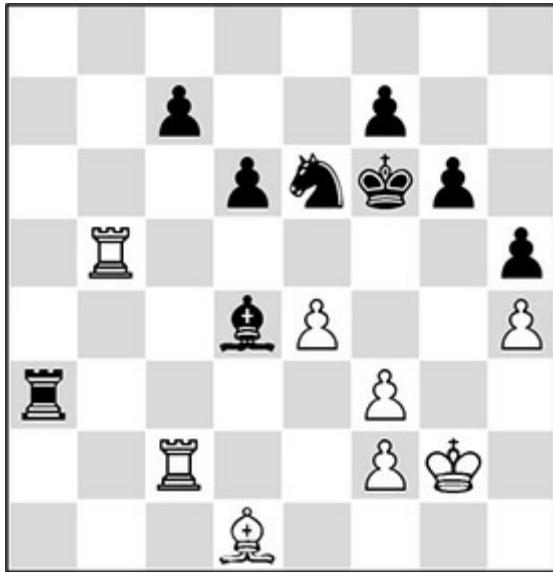
25.♝c4 ♜d3 26.♝c2 ♜xa4 27.h4 h5 28.♝f1 ♜a1 29.♝d2 ♜e5

Notice how long it takes White to activate the rook on h1. Black keeps his opponent busy the whole time.

30.♗g2 ♜a3 31.♝e2 ♜xc6 32.♝b1

Finally, the rook is set free and White is a real exchange up. In the meantime, however, Black has picked up enough pawns.

32...♝d4 33.♝d1 ♜e6 34.♝b7 ♜b6 35.♝b2 ♜d4 36.♝c2 ♜f6 37.♝b5



37... $\mathbb{Q}g7$

The black pieces are very well coordinated. He could have emphasized this by playing 37... $\mathbb{R}a1$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$, when things start to look really unpleasant for White.

38. $\mathbb{R}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

The poor rook has finally managed to escape from the corner but is now almost trapped on d2.

40. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$

41... $\mathbb{R}a2$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}c5-e6-d4$ would have given White a very hard time: 42. $\mathbb{R}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

42. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$

42... $\mathbb{Q}e6!$.

43. $\mathbb{R}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 44. $\mathbb{R}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 45. $\mathbb{R}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

47... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ was the final chance to get an advantage. In the game, a draw was inevitable once White managed to exchange rooks.

48. $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 50. $\mathbb{R}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 53. $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 54. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $f5$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 56. $\mathbb{R}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 57. $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 58. $\mathbb{R}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 59. $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

1.1.5 Piece majority

The previous games showed us that simplification can be a very effective device if our opponent has an immobile piece and we can therefore claim a (temporary) material advantage. The more restricted the piece, the larger the impact.

I will show you how the same technique can be applied if the pieces are not evenly distributed over the board and we can create a **piece majority** in a certain area; for instance, on the queenside.

Game 5

David Bronstein

Vladimir Simagin

Moscow ch-URS 1961



All the white pieces have more or less access to the queenside. That cannot be said from the black knight on e8 and the rook on f8. So, for the time being, White has a material advantage on the queenside. This means we can start using our simplification technique. White went for

16.c5

This pawn sacrifice opens both the c-file and the a6-f1 diagonal and prepares the exchange of at least the bishop and, hopefully, more pieces.

16... ♜xd3 17. ♜xd3 ♕xc5 18. ♜e3 ♕d5!

Black wisely decides to leave the c-file, making it harder for White to force a rook exchange.

19. ♔a6 ♜c6 20. ♜fc1 ♜g7



It looks like Black has everything under control. The c-file is safely blocked and the f8-rook is on its way to join the defence of the queenside. This is, however, where the fun starts. This game became famous because of the following sequence:

21. ♕xc6 ♜a5 22. ♜xa5 bxa5 23. ♜c7 h6 24. ♜b1 ♜e8 25. ♜xa7 g5 26. ♜b6 ♜b8 27. ♜xd7 ♜c8 28. ♜e7

With a completely winning position for White.

This game has been in my database with training positions for a long time and I always liked the way White used his piece majority on the queenside to break through. I was therefore a bit surprised to find out that Stockfish was not so impressed when I checked this game with a computer for this book.

It comes up with the computer line 21...dxc6 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ c5 23. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xb6$ g5! (a crucial move, preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$) 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ h6 27. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 28. $\mathbb{B}b8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ and claims Black is holding his own. That is the problem with computers, they never seem to appreciate beauty.

Normally, when a computer messes up one of my training examples, I dismiss the game and try to find a cleaner one. But this is where it gets interesting. Stockfish does like the starting position of this example. In fact, it comes up with a much stronger and cleaner suggestion, which illustrates our subject even better!



In turns out there is nothing wrong with sacrificing the c-pawn to open up the queenside. But we have to follow an important rule when it comes to exchanging pieces:

If possible, always let your opponent make the trade!

The best continuation is therefore:

16. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

Black can ignore the c-pawn, but White can always use his piece majority to push a4-a5 or c4-c5 whenever it suits him best. For instance, 16... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17. a4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}b3$, with a very strong initiative. Black simply does not have enough pieces to hold the blockade.

17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$



18. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$

Again, the same technique. Let your opponent make the trade!

18...♝xd3

What else? ♜c1 was coming.

19.♛xd3 ♜c6 20.♜ac1 ♜a8 21.♜xc6 ♜xc6 22.♝a6 ♜a8 23.♜c1

Mission accomplished! With only the black queen as sole defender, the black queenside pawns are soon going to drop.

Conclusion

The simplification technique can be a very powerful weapon to convert an advantage into a full point. The key is to focus on the part where you have an advantage and eliminate the rest.

Use this technique with care and be quick when time matters!

1.2 Getting rid of an inferior piece

The simplification technique is all about focusing on the pieces that remain instead of the ones that are about to leave the board. However, sometimes it does help to identify a piece that by itself is worth exchanging. This could for instance be a very passive one. A limited scope of one of your pieces can justify an exchange. It may even pay off to invest a considerable amount of time in order to get rid of it.

Game 6

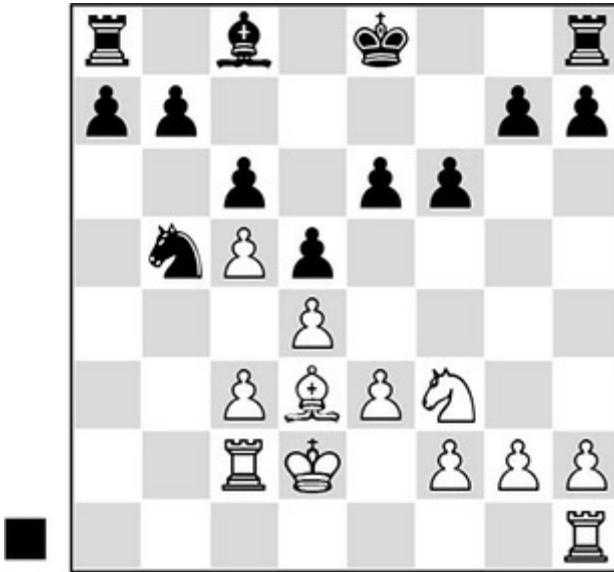
Dirk Wolfradt

2087

Hans Wacker

2113

Germany tt 2013/14 (6)



Black is a pawn up, but he has to do something about his bishop. The freeing push ...e6-e5 is not possible at the moment, so he decides to organize an escape plan.

16...♝d7 17.♜a1 a6 18.♜b2 ♛e7 19.♚c2 ♜e8 20.♜d2 ♜g6 21.c4 dxc4 22.♜xc4 ♜ad8 23.♜xg6 hxg6

Black had no problems converting his advantage.

We do not always have the time or the opportunity for such an elaborate escape plan. In that case, a tactical resource may do the job.

Game 7

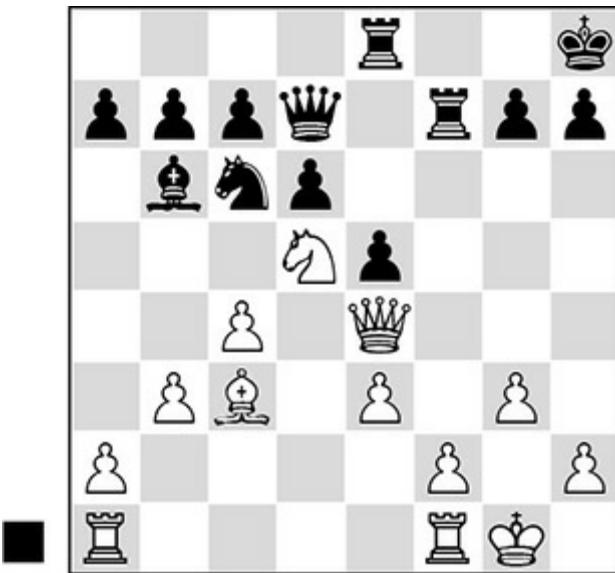
Miron Sher

2500

Vladimir Epishin

2620

Geneva 1993 (3)



19...Qd4! 20.Qad1

20.exd4 exd4 21.Qc2 dxc3 22.Qxc3 Qe2 would also have led to a level game.

20...Qxc3 21.Qxc3 b6

The half-open d-file made the pawn on d6 the only potential weakness in Black's camp. Black discourages c4-c5 by covering the c5- and b4-squares.

22.Qg2 a5 23.h3 Qd8

Improving his worst piece. Once the knight reaches e6, Black will have an easy game.

24.Qd2 Qe6

Black is doing fine. In the game, he got a large advantage, but had to settle for a draw in the end.

Conclusion

There are many ways to get rid of a bad piece. The techniques can range from a simple exchange to a complex tactical combination or an elaborate strategic plan. They all share one characteristic: you will only be able to find the solution if you know what the problem is. It is therefore very useful to develop a feeling for your bad pieces and keep looking for ways to resolve them.

1.3 Eliminating an important defender

When looking for candidates for an exchange, we do not have to limit ourselves to our own pieces. We can also look at our opponent's army, identify his most important piece, and try to exchange it. The target could be an annoying attacker. Swapping it off may make our life a lot easier. More of this in Part III, where we deal with attack and defence.

You can also aim at one of your opponent's most important defenders. That is the subject of this section. The technique I would like to demonstrate is not just about exchanging this enemy piece. That would be the final step of the process. The key step is to search for the Achilles' Heel in your opponent's position. This means we have to understand **where** and **how** we can hurt our opponent the most.

The Achilles' Heel

The weakest spot in our opponent's position can come in many forms and shapes. To give you an impression, I have selected three different versions of an Achilles' Heel:

- 1.3.1 Single square;
- 1.3.2 Weak colour complex;
- 1.3.3 Space 'advantage'.

I want to show you how we can employ the technique of exchanging defenders to exploit these vulnerable areas.

1.3.1 Single square

Game 8

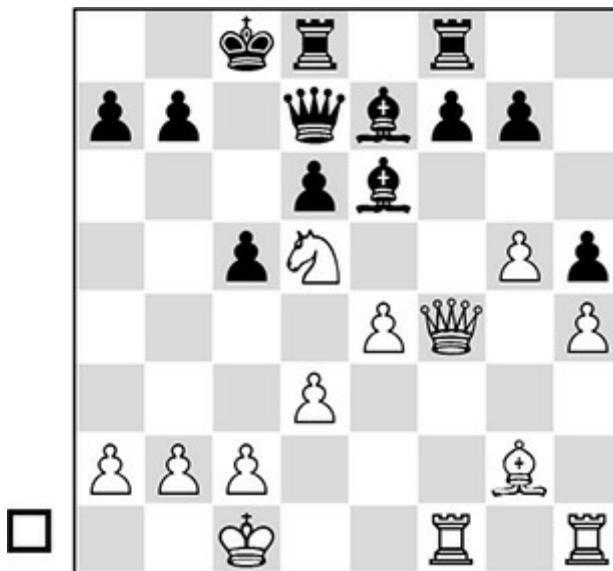
Rune Djurhuus

2536

Thomas Ernst

2479

Sweden tt 2001/02 (3)



White has set his sights on the f7-pawn, which is not only the weakest point in Black's position, but also an important defender of the light squares. The normal approach would be to triple on the f-file, but this has only little effect as long as the bishop on e6 is in place. This brings us to a simple conclusion: we have to get rid of the defender!

19. $\mathbb{B}f3$ g6 20. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{R}de8$ 21. $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{R}xe6$

22...fxe6 23. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24. gxf6 is also very unpleasant for Black.

23. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$

With the bishop gone, we can safely triple our major pieces.

24. $\mathbb{R}f3$ $\mathbb{R}ee8$ 25. $\mathbb{R}hf1$ $\mathbb{B}e6$ 26. $\mathbb{R}f2$

The pawn is lost.

1.3.2 Weak colour complex

A weak colour complex is a set of weakened squares that are all of the same colour. If we want to benefit from a weak colour complex in our opponent's position, we should go after his bishop. This is the most

natural defender of either the light or the dark squares. This sounds pretty straightforward. It gets more complicated if the squares have not been weakened yet.

The next example could fit nicely into the simplification paragraph. Blacks puts all his cards on his opponent's dark squares and tries to eliminate the pieces that protect the rest.

Game 9

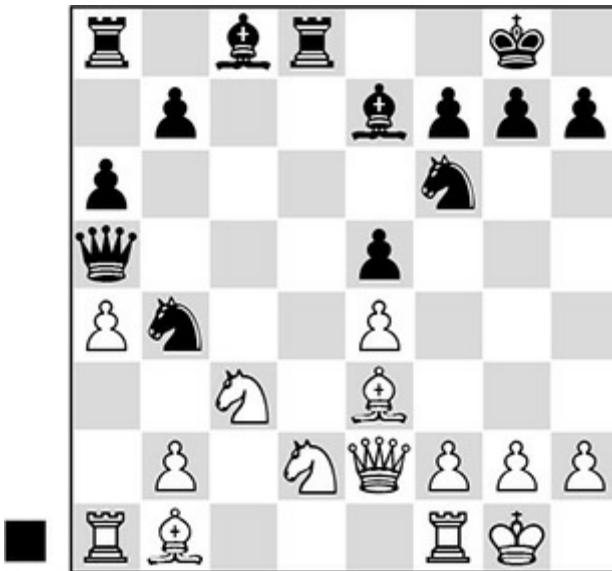
Raja Panjwani

2404

Yusnel Bacallao Alonso

2554

Medellin Ach 2017 (6)



16...♝g4!

An instructive move, provoking 17.f3. Every pawn that leaves the dark squares makes the bounty on the head of the e3-bishop go up. Soon it will become very attractive for Black to exchange it for our mediocre friend on e7.

17.f3 ♝e6 18.♝c4 ♞xc4

There was nothing wrong with this bishop, but as you already know: only the pieces that remain matter. Black is following the simplification technique. He has put his mind on the potentially vulnerable dark squares and is already starting to neutralize the rest.

19.♛xc4 ♜ac8 20.♝e2



Black has skilfully turned the dark squares into the Achilles' Heel of the white position. He probably did not need much time for his next move.

20... ♜c5! 21. ♜xc5 ♜xc5+ 22. ♜f2 ♜d4!

Simplification does not mean you have to exchange all your pieces. The black queen is much stronger than its counterpart and has a bright future on the open d-file or the weakened dark squares.

23. ♜e1 ♜d6 24. ♜e2 ♜d7!

Again, very well played! Black is in control and can afford to spend some time on improving his worst piece.

25.g3 ♜c5 26. ♜a2



26... ♜xa2!

It is very instructive to see how the dominance of the black major pieces increases with every set of minor pieces that is being exchanged.

27. ♜xa2 ♜b3! 28. ♜c2

Black has total control. There are many ways in which he can improve his position, but the most effective technique is often to create a second front. I will come back to this technique in Part II Chapter 4, where we deal with open files.

28...h5 29. ♜g2 h4 30. ♜a3



30... ♜d3!

A very subtle combination. Black is threatening both 31... ♜xc3 and 31... ♜d4. White is forced to give up the exchange.

31. ♜xb3 h3+ 32. ♛xh3 ♜e6+ 33. ♛g2 ♜xb3 34. ♜d2 ♜d4

Black has kept his dominant position and is now an exchange up. He won the game convincingly:

35.h4 ♜xd2 36. ♜xd2 ♜b4 37. ♜h3 ♜d4 38. ♜g5 ♜d7+ 39.g4 ♜d3 40. ♛g3 ♜d4 41.h5 ♜c6 42. ♛g2 b5 43.axb5 axb5 44. ♜d5 ♜c2+ 45. ♛h3 ♜g1 46. ♜e7+ ♛h8 47. ♜g6+ ♛h7 48. ♜xe5 ♜h1+ 0-1

An impressive strategic performance by Black!

The technique of weakening the dark squares and eliminating the defending bishop shortly after can of course also be applied in a concrete tactical way.

Game 10

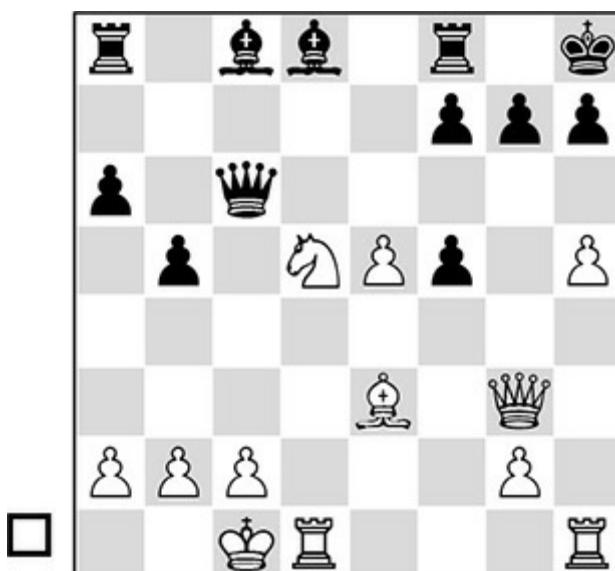
Emil Sutovsky

2646

Daniel Forcen Esteban

2545

Minsk Ech 2017 (9)



20.♗b4!

This would have been the most convincing continuation. The black bishop on d8 does not realize it yet, but it is soon going to be the most important defender in the black camp.

20...♝c7 21.h6! g6

The bishop just got appointed as the sole guard of the dark squares. But not for long.

22.♕xd8!

Not your traditional exchange of equal pieces, but the effect is the same. The defender is gone and it is game over after, for instance:

22...♝xd8 23.♗g5 ♝e8 24.♗f6+ ♔g8 25.♗d5 ♜a7 26.♗g7

In the game, White went for 20.♗f4, after which Black erred with 20...h6 (20...♝e6 would have been the only way to stay in the game). White continued with the forcing 21.♗g6+!, opening up the h-file and herewith bringing the rook to the attack: 21...fxg6 22.hxg6 ♝e4 23.♗xh6 ♝g4 24.♗g5+ and Black gets mated, so he resigned.

1.3.3 Space ‘advantage’

Most players like to possess a lot of space on the board. Having many options for the development of their pieces and the opportunity to switch plans easily provides them with a sense of freedom. That is why, in some opening lines, White rapidly starts seizing as much space as possible – sometimes even at the expense of piece development. This can, however, be a highly dangerous strategy.

Take for instance the following game, played by my brother. We were playing in the same team at that time and I remember I was curious how his opponent’s aggressive set-up would work out.

Game 11

Jochem Aubel

2249

Jeroen Willemze

2393

Netherlands tt 2009/10 (2)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♜f5 4.h4 ♝b6 5.g4 ♜d7 6.h5 e6 7.f4



Only try this at home. Black has an impressive score in this line.

7...c5 8.c3

One of the most powerful rules in chess is: open up the position when you are ahead in development. From now on, Black gradually increases the pressure on the centre and waits for the right moment to break it open.

8... $\mathbb{R}c6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{R}c8!$

This rook will prove to be useful later.

10. $a3$ $f6$ 11. $\mathbb{R}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}h3$

Black has taken all preparatory measures, now it is time for the harvest.

12... $cxd4$ 13. $cxd4$ $fxe5$ 14. $fxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{R}xc1$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$



The smoke has cleared and White finds himself in a hopeless position. Without pieces to cover his land, his space ‘advantage’ has turned into a serious liability. There are simply too many weak squares to cover and the unsafe king and uncoordinated pieces are not really helpful either.

17. $\mathbb{R}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 0-0+ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 0-1

The conclusion we can draw here is that a large territory comes with a large responsibility. From the very start of the game, White raised the bets without having the right cards. He got badly punished for it.

There is nothing wrong with aiming for a space advantage, but you have to make sure you develop your pieces accordingly. At the same time, keep your ranks closed to prevent your opponent from starting to swap off pieces.

The player with less space benefits from an exchange of pieces in two different ways:

First, it grants his remaining pieces more breathing space, making it easier to manoeuvre them to the right squares. The analogy with a small room stacked with a lot of furniture is often made.

Second, having less space often implies that your opponent’s territory covers the larger part of the board. The fewer defending pieces he has, the harder it gets for him to keep this area under control.

In the next example, Black was well aware of this, and convincingly demonstrated how exchanging minor pieces can be a dangerous weapon.

Game 12

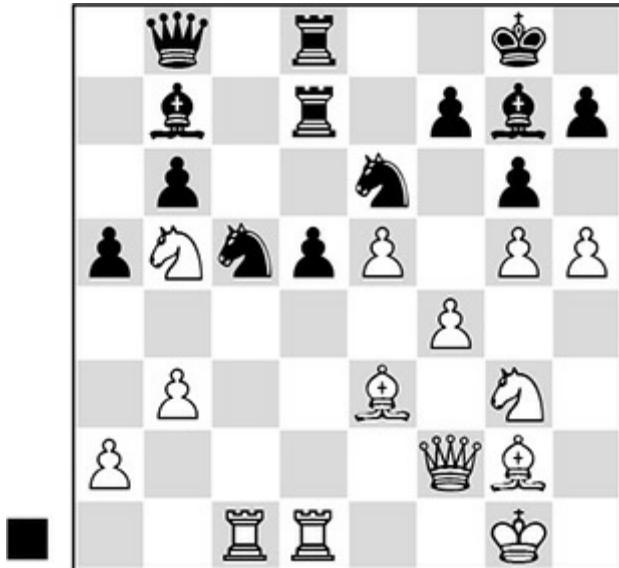
Brede Alexander Kvisvik

2330

Karol Ulanowski

2133

Olomouc 2016 (4)



If White were to play, he could close down the position with ♘d4, after which his space advantage would grant him very comfortable play. Unfortunately for him, it is Black's turn, and he knows exactly what to do. 'When you are attacked on the flank, react in the centre' was one of the most important lessons I learned from my first trainer, the late Rob Brunia. In this case, the aim is to swap as many pieces as possible and see how your opponent is going to protect all the weak spots.

27...d4! 28.♘xd4 ♜xd4 29.♗xd4 ♜e6

The most straightforward plan would have been 29...♝xg2! 30.♛xg2 ♕b7+ 31.♕h2 ♘e6 32.♘e2 ♜f8, followed by ...♝c5.

30.♕xb7 ♕xb7 31.♘e2 ♜e4



It always strikes me that as soon as the centre starts to burst, there is really no way back. And after a more or less forced sequence, White is again stuck with weak spots, an unsafe king and uncoordinated pieces. The rest of the game speaks for itself.

32.hxg6 hxg6 33.♘c3 ♕f5 34.♘b5 ♜xf4 35.♗f3 ♜xe5 36.♗xe5 ♜xd1+ 37.♗xd1 ♜xd1+ 38.♗xd1 ♕xg5+ 39.♕f2 ♜xe5 40.♘d8+ ♔g7 41.♗xb6 ♕e2+ 42.♗g3 g5 43.♗c6 ♘h5+ 44.♗h3 ♘f4+ 45.♗g3 ♘h5+ 46.♗h3 g4+ 47.♗h4 ♘f6 48.♘d6 ♕g6 49.♗g3 ♘h5+ 50.♗h4 ♜h2+ 51.♗xg4 ♜g3# 0-1

Conclusion

Aiming your exchanging activities at your opponent's most important defenders can be a very dangerous weapon. This technique usually starts with locating your opponent's Achilles' Heel. As soon as you understand where you can hurt him the most, identifying the key defenders will follow next.

1.4 Changing the structure

In this section, I will show you several ways in which an exchange of pieces can affect the pawn structure. You can use an exchange to:

- 1.4.1 Improve your own structure;
- 1.4.2 Damage your opponent's structure;
- 1.4.3 Create a passed pawn.

1.4.1 Improve your own structure

In the first example, White could have used several piece exchanges to polish up his pawn structure.

Game 13

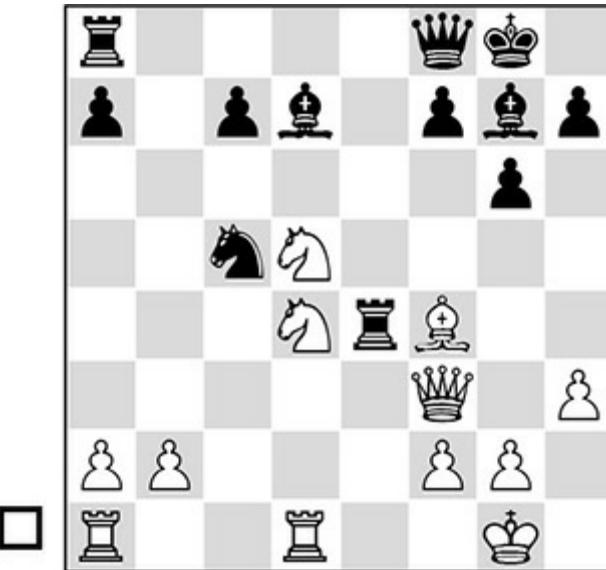
Sergei Dolmatov

2550

Vereslav Eingorn

2450

Tashkent 1983



Just like the Bronstein-Simagin game we discussed earlier, this is another classic game in which Stockfish pointed me into a new direction. In my training database, the game had always been labelled as an exercise in eliminating one of your opponent's most important pieces. The game went:

22. ♜h6 f5 23. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 24. ♜c3 ♜ee8 25. ♜d5+ ♜e6 26. ♜xf5 gxf5 27. ♜xd7 ♜ad8

The complications are over and White is a pawn up. He immediately liquidated into a knight ending with

28. ♜xg7+ ♛xg7 29. ♜xd8 ♜xd8 30. ♜d1 ♜xd1+ 31. ♜xd1

... which he managed to win.

A very nice game, but I find the alternative even more instructive. Stockfish comes up with a line that not only exchanges Black's most important pieces, but also manages to improve our own structure: our current subject.

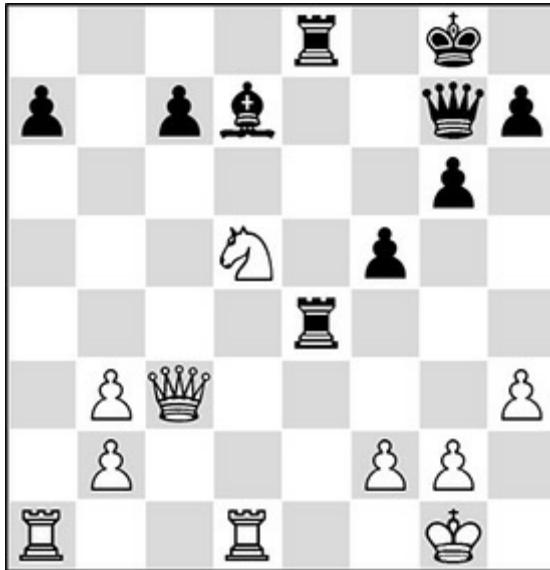
22. ♜b3! ♜xb3 23. axb3

The first adaptation of the white pawn structure. It opens up the a-file for the rook.

23... ♜ae8 24. ♜h6!

The same idea as in the game.

24...f5 25. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 26. ♜c3



26... ♜xc3 27.bxc3

This is the second pawn recapture, undoubling the pawns. It is nice to see that both pawns shifted a file towards the centre. The black position is hopeless since his queenside pawns are doomed.

1.4.2 Damage your opponent's structure

It is of course not always advantageous to (be forced to) make the recapturing pawn move. Therefore, you can also use this technique to damage your opponent's pawn structure. In this game, White trades his rook for a bishop, which technically speaking is not an exchange but a sacrifice. However, the effect is the same, and therefore I decided to include it in this chapter anyway.

Game 14

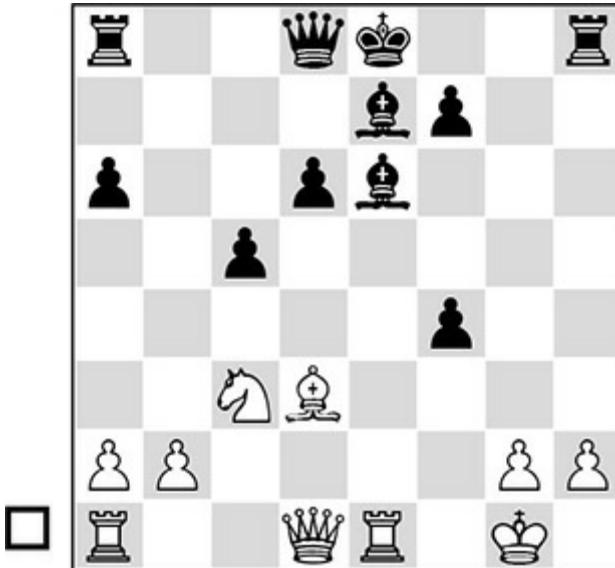
Thomas Willemze

2401

Nargiz Umudova

2267

Haarlem 2016 (1)



Just like in the Djurhuus-Ernst game, the f7-pawn is the most important defender of the light squares in the black camp. Unfortunately, we are unable to attack it this time. What we can do is force it to move to a place where it can no longer fulfill its defensive tasks.

18.♘a4+ ♜f8 19.♖xe6!

A sacrifice instead of an exchange, but with the same effect. Two pieces are traded to change the black structure. This is only step one. The f-pawn is lured away, but it still controls enough light squares from e6. However, it will be very hard for Black to maintain the pawn.

19...fxe6 20.♘xf4+ ♜e8



21.♖e1!

Developing his last piece and increasing the pressure on the e6-pawn. Without this pawn, Black will be defenceless on the light squares.

21...♘d7 22.♗g4

The pawn can no longer be maintained on e6. Black decides to sacrifice it to gain time to evacuate her king.

22...♕d8 23.♖xe6 d5

Defending this position is extremely hard for Black. The fact that she was in severe time trouble only made it more difficult for her.

24.♗f5 c4 25.♗d4

25. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ would have been much stronger, winning directly after 25... $\mathbb{Q}a7+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$.

25... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}h6!$

The most stubborn defence.

27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$



28. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$

Stockfish is not impressed and points at an easier path to victory: 28. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xa7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$.

28... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$

This was the move I was counting on. However, 28... $\mathbb{Q}f7!$ would have rewarded Black for her stubborn defence. The position is still very hard to defend in time trouble, but objectively speaking, Black is doing fine.

29. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+!$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$

29... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e3+$.

30. $\mathbb{Q}c8$

30. $\mathbb{Q}g6!$ was much stronger: 30... $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$.

30... $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+-$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 34. $b3!$

The last hurdle. The rest is easy.

34... $a5$ 35. $bxc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 37. $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $a4$ 39. $c5$ $a3$ 40. $c6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}a7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 42. $c7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 43. $h5$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 44. $c8\mathbb{Q}+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 1-0

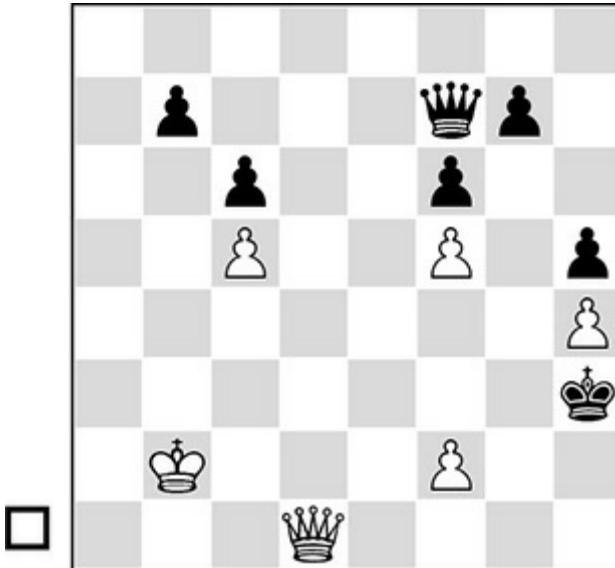
1.4.3 Create a passed pawn

I will end this section with one of my favourite studies and ask you to solve it. I have used this study often in training sessions, and have found out it is quite difficult. Therefore, I generally accompany it with one or more tips. If you want a tip as well: read on until you arrive at the second diagram and start from there. If you feel confident enough to solve the study at once, feel free to do so! You can be really proud of yourself if you succeed.

Game 15

Kubbel

1936



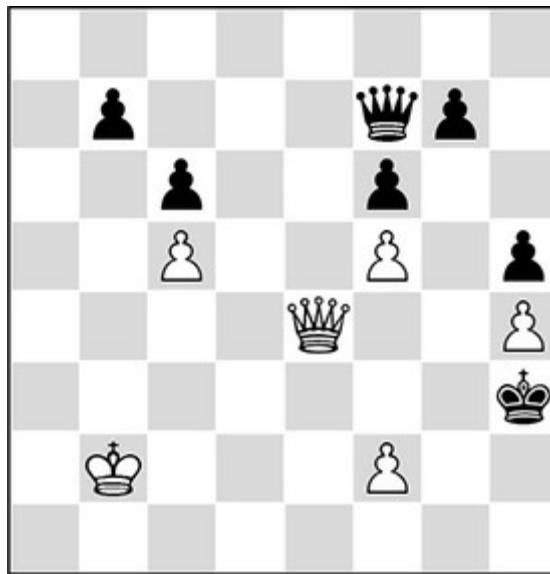
The first pieces of advice I usually give are:

- A) Improving a piece for free is always a good thing to do; and
- B) where does the queen belong in a queen ending?

1. ♕h1+

1. ♕g1? does not work on account of 1... ♕c7.

1... ♕g4 2. ♕e4+ ♖h3



Yes, the queen belongs in the centre! Now White is again to move. The only difference with the previous diagram is the better placement of the queen.

How should White continue? I must warn you. These kinds of puzzles are only really easy if you know the answer!

3. ♕e6! ♖c7

3... ♖f8 leads to the same.

4. ♕d6!

This is the point. ♕g3# is in the air and the exchange of queens can no longer be avoided. In itself, Black would not mind this, but...

4... ♖xd6 5.cxd6

... it changes the pawn structure to his disadvantage! The pawn is unstoppable.

1-0

As we have seen, the exchange of queens worked out very well for White. He created a deadly passed pawn that decided the game immediately.

Conclusion

An exchange of pieces can have a major impact on the pawn structure. Be aware of this technique and keep looking for ways to use it to either damage your opponent's pawn structure or improve your own.

1.5 Lifting a blockade

In the year 2000, I was trying to get rid of my reputation as a player that could only win games with tactical tricks. One of the books that really helped me to improve my positional understanding was the Dutch predecessor of the book *Chess Strategy for Club Players*, written by my former trainer Herman Grooten. The following game made a huge impression on me. It is a clear demonstration of the power of a passed pawn in a major piece ending.

Game 16

Tigran Petrosian

2645

Viktor Kortchnoi

2645

Ciocco m 1977 (6)

1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 3.c4 d5 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 5.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 6.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 7.bxc3 cxd4 8.cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 0-0 11. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12.0-0 b6 13. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5



16... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

The knight is on its way to d6, where it would stop the passed pawn. A knight is an excellent blockading piece, since its mobility is not limited by the pawn.

17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

White knows what to do. The knight is on its way to the beautiful outpost at c6 in order to exchange at least one minor piece.

17... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

Keeping the strong knight alive with, for instance, 18... $\mathbb{Q}h4$ would not have been pleasant, but would have been preferable to the text move. In the game White uses a *petite combinaison* to exchange the minor pieces

and acquire a very dominant position.

19.dxc6 ♜xc4 20.♘f4!

20.♗xd8 looks tempting, but fails to 20...♝fxd8 21.♝xd8+ ♜xd8 22.c7 ♜f8! 23.♝d1 b5 24.♝d8 ♜b6. 20...♝d6 21.♝xd6 ♜c7



White has achieved his main goals. The position is wide open and the absence of knights and bishops deprives Black of suitable blockers. His major pieces are not built for this job and are therefore doomed to passivity.

I strongly recommend you to carefully play through the remainder of the game and enjoy the fine way in which Petrosian patiently optimizes his position and combines the threat of pushing the pawn with an attack on the king.

22.g3 h6 23.♗e5 ♜ac8 24.♗d5 ♛h7 25.♗e4 ♛g8 26.♗g2 a6 27.h4 b5 28.g4 ♛h7 29.♗e2 ♛h8 30.g5 h5 31.♗d2 ♜fe8 32.♗f3 g6 33.♗2d5 ♜f8 34.♗f6 ♗e7 35.♗d7

White finishes the game in style, making use of the outpost.

35...♗e8 36.♗xg6 ♗e5 37.♗xh5# 1-0

This game clearly demonstrates the pure strength of a passed pawn combined with an attack on the king when all the minor pieces have been swapped off.

There was however something else with this game that struck me at the time. I often used this game as training material and one of the things I would do is discuss the game in quiz form, letting my pupils think of the critical moves for themselves. When we arrived at the point where the last minor piece has been exchanged (after 21...♗c7) I would stop the quiz and play out the position in a simul. Everyone who could beat me gained extra points. It always surprised me how little points I got out of it, even when playing against students with 500 or 600 Elo points less. Without minor pieces Black is doomed to passivity and is completely without counterplay.

Petrosian's lessons in practice

I always remembered Petrosian's lesson: **if you possess a passed pawn, exchange the minor pieces!**

Seventeen years later, I was allowed to bring it into practice.

Game 17

Thomas Willemze

Alexander Kabatianski

2420

Germany tt 2016/17 (4)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♘f6 5.♗g2 ♘e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♗e2 d6 8.c3 ♘d7 9.♖d1 ♕c8 10.♗bd2 b5 11.a3 ♗b6 12.♗f1 ♘fe8 13.h3

Due to my slow play, Black has easily equalized. My aim was to keep my pieces flexible and wait for him to show his cards.

13...♘a5

13...a5 would have been the most natural move in this position. The text move is more ambitious, aiming at the weakened b3-square. It does, however, temporarily remove the knight from the front. For me this was the sign to stir things up in the centre.

14.e5 ♘d5 15.c4



15...♘c7

A very provocative move, putting the rest of his cavalry temporarily out of play as well. Within two moves, the position has transformed from purely positional into one that is screaming for a tactical reaction.

It was vital to insert 15...♗b3! 16.♗b1 first. Black is doing more than fine after 16...♘c7 17.exd6 ♗xd6 18.♗1d2 ♗xc1 19.♗bxc1 e5, followed by ...♘c7-e6-d4.

16.exd6 ♗xd6 17.b4! ♗b3 18.d4! cxb4 19.c5 ♗a6 20.♗b1 ♗xc1 21.♗dxc1 ♗d5 22.axb4 ♗b8



The smoke has cleared and I was convinced that the strong passed pawn should give me very comfortable play. Thanks to Petrosian, I knew what I had to do: exchange as many minor pieces as possible and finish the game with the major ones.

23.♘e3

Here is piece exchange number one.

23...♝c6 24.♞xd5 ♝xd5 25.♜a1

There was nothing wrong with 25.♞e1, forcing piece exchange number two. However, there is no need to hurry. Both rooks can be improved first.

25...♝b7 26.♜a3 ♞ed8 27.♜ca1 h6 28.♜a5 ♜c6 29.♞e3 ♞e8 30.♜a6 ♜d5 31.♝c3 ♞ed8 32.♜6a5 ♜c6 33.♞e1 ♜d7 34.♝xc6 ♞xc6 35.♞c2



Both players have only one minor piece left and we can already see that Black's light-square blockade has been severely softened. The next steps are manoeuvring the knight to e3 and calling the white rooks back to the centre. If White manages to push d4-d5 at the right moment, he gets an improved version of the Petrosian game.

35...h5 36.h4 ♜d8

This move is basically a pawn sacrifice. But what else could Black do? A continuation like 36...g6 37.♝f3 ♜g7 38.♝g2 ♜d5 39.♜d1, followed by ♜aa1, ♜e3 and d4-d5, is not very appealing either.

37. ♜d3 a6 38. ♜f3 ♜c8

38...g6 39. ♜xa6 and 38... ♜d7 39. ♜g2 g6 40. ♜xa6 would drop a pawn as well.

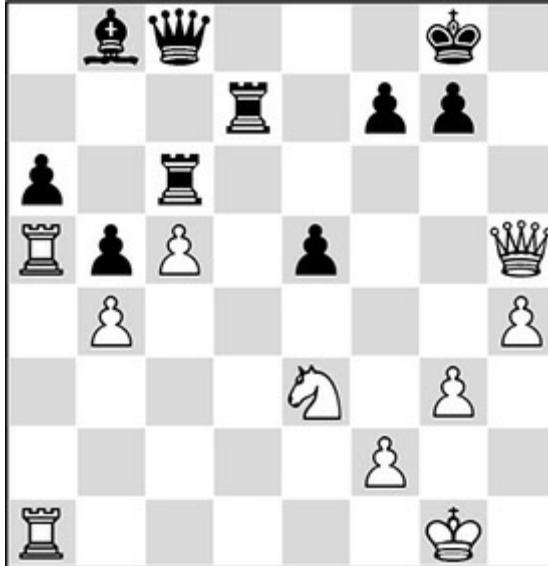
39. ♜xh5 e5!

Black has to act. A very practical decision in time trouble.

40.d5

I did not have much time left either, and preferred keeping the initiative over a material advantage.

40... ♜xd5 41. ♜e3 ♜d7



The game enters a new phase. Note how the poor rook on c6 has become a victim of the absence of minor pieces. Rooks are very bad at blocking pawns. As a result, the upcoming fight for the d-file will be uneven, with two white rooks against one black one.

42. ♜d1 ♜xd1+ 43. ♜xd1 ♜c7 44. ♜a2 ♜e6 45. ♜d2



45...a5

This move loses by force, but it was the only try.

46. ♜d7

It looks a bit scary to go for the bishop and allow Black to create a passed pawn in return, but it is the principled continuation and it had to be calculated.

46...axb4 47. ♜xc7 ♜xc7 48. ♜d8+ ♛h7 49. ♜xc7 b3 50. ♜d1

The knight is in time to block the pawn.

50... ♜c4 51. ♜d6 ♜c1 52. ♜d3+ 1-0

Petrosian's demonstration of the power of a passed pawn in a major piece ending did prove its value for me. Hopefully you will be able to apply his lesson in one of your own games as well.

Blockade without a passed pawn

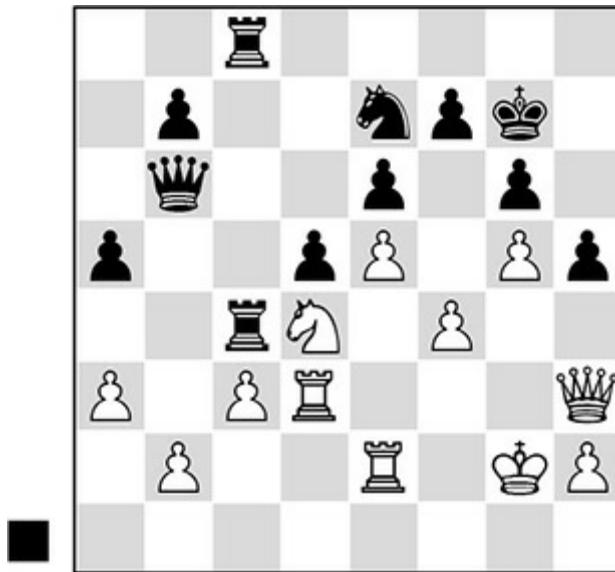
The technique of exchanging minor pieces to lift a blockade does not always have to involve a passed pawn.

Game 18

Aron Nimzowitsch

José Raul Capablanca

New York 1927 (15)



The limited number of minor pieces already makes the white kingside a bit vulnerable, but the remaining knight does a good job keeping Black's major pieces out. Black knows what to do.

30... ♜f5

Even stronger is 30... ♜c6! 31. ♜xc6 ♜xc6, followed by ...b5-b4 with a large advantage. In the game, Black unnecessarily weakens his kingside, making it harder for him to develop the initiative. It is nevertheless very instructive to see how Capablanca overpowers his opponent.

31. ♜xf5+ gx f5 32. ♜f3

The greedy 32. ♜xh5 ♜h8 33. ♜f3 ♜h4 would only have helped Black.

32... ♜g6 33. ♜ed2 ♜e4 34. ♜d4 ♜c4 35. ♜f2 ♜b5 36. ♜g3



36... ♜ cxd4 37.cxd4

White has too many weak spots to cover, which forces his pieces into very passive positions.

37... ♜c4 38. ♛g2 b5 39. ♛g1 b4 40.axb4 axb4 41. ♛g2 ♜c1 42. ♛g3 ♜h1 43. ♜d3 ♜e1 44. ♜f3 ♜d1 45.b3 ♜c1 46. ♜e3 ♜f1 0-1

Conclusion

If you want to lift or prevent a blockade: exchange the minor pieces!

This technique may be applied to minor pieces that either stand in front of a passed pawn, or play an important role in keeping the position closed.

Either way, the knight is your main target for an exchange. The knight is the only piece with ‘jumping’ abilities and therefore it feels comfortable in tight spaces. It gets even better if you manage to eliminate the bishops as well. In that case, your opponent will be stuck with major pieces and they are clearly not built for this job. It will allow us to develop a piece majority elsewhere and create a successful attack on the enemy king.

1.6 Discovering more techniques

We have arrived at the final paragraph of this chapter, and hopefully you already feel confident enough to practice your new tools in the exercise section. The aim is of course to apply them successfully in real games. We have come across several techniques for the right exchange. There are, however, many more to explore. To stress this, we will finish the chapter with a quiz that is aimed at discovering new techniques for yourself.

The right exchange

I will show you a game between a talented youth player, Colin Stolwijk, and an experienced IM, Manuel Bosboom. Bosboom is famous in the Netherlands for being a very creative player and a blitz expert.

Making the right exchange plays a crucial role in nearly all the critical moments in this game. Bosboom won because he handled this theme better than his opponent.

I will pause at these critical moments, and I ask you to think for yourself. This does not only maximize the learning experience, it also enables us to appreciate the tough decisions both players had to make during the game.

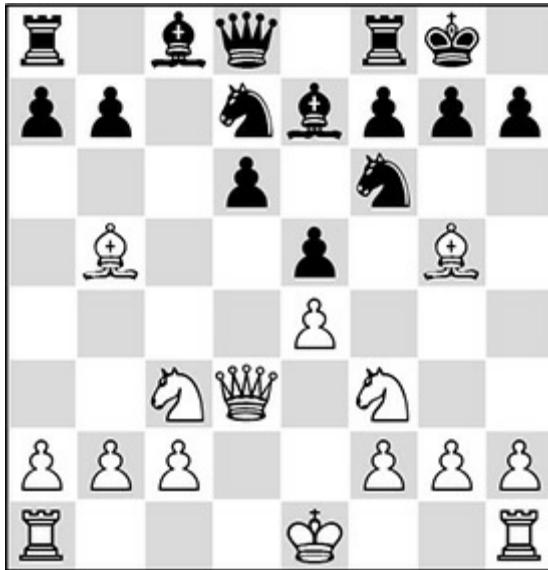
Game 19

Colin Stolwijk

2226

Amsterdam 2017 (4)

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.♗b5+ ♜d7 4.d4 cxd4 5.♗xd4 e5 6.♗d3 ♜e7 7.♗c3 ♜gf6 8.♗g5 0-0



QUESTION 1: Would you play 9.♗xd7 ?

9.♗xd7

The right decision. This move has been played many times before. White abandons both bishops in exchange for easy development and maximum pressure in the centre.

9...♝xd7 10.♝xf6 ♜xf6 11.0-0-0 a5

11...♞d8 is the most common move, but Bosboom is known for choosing his own path.

12.♝xd6 ♜g4

Black is of course not interested in an exchange of queens.

13.♟d5 ♞a6



White is a pawn up and has to use his domination in the centre to constrain his opponent's compensation for it.

QUESTION 2: Would you exchange with 14. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$?

14. $\mathbb{Q}a3$

The text move makes a lot of sense. Why would you exchange the phenomenal knight for a large pawn on f6? Well, there are good reasons to do so. In fact, the pieces that disappear from the board are not relevant for the evaluation of an exchange. Only the ones that stay behind count.

14. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+!$ $gxf6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ secures total control over the d-file. The opening of the g-file weakens the black king and indirectly protects g2. White has a clear advantage.

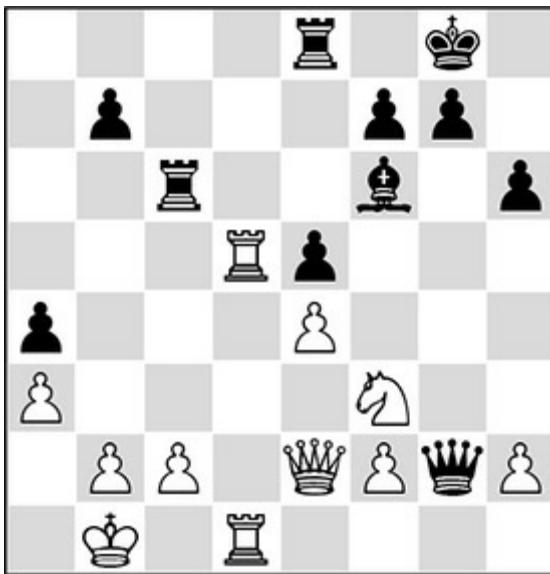
14... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

Objectively, 14... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ would have been the way to take advantage of White's last move. Black probably did not like it because 15. $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}df1$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ leads to a forced draw.

15. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $gxf6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}he1$ was again preferable.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}hd1$ $a4$ 18. $a3$ $h6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$



QUESTION 3: Would you offer an exchange of rooks with 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6$?

21. $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Before attaching an evaluation to this move, let me ask you another question.

QUESTION 4: How should Black continue?

21... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Both players did not get the evaluation of the exchange right. White should have kept his rook on the board and Black should have accepted the invitation after 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ to exchange a set of rooks. The players were probably focused on the role of the 'bad' bishop on f6. And it is true that the more pieces disappear, the more prominent the shortcomings of the remaining pieces will become.

But the story of this position is different. In fact, Black should have been happy to exchange rooks. The more the better! He should have continued with 21... $\mathbb{Q}xd6!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$.



analysis diagram

White faces a tough decision. Exchanging pawns with 24. $\mathbb{R}xe5$ 24... $\mathbb{B}xh2$ 25. $\mathbb{R}d3$ $h5!$ only seems to help Black, since it would open up diagonals for the bishop and give him a very dangerous passed h-pawn. Another option was the prophylactic 24. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ to start playing against the ‘bad’ bishop. But how does this work? Exchanging queens would be a logical next step, but the queen is tied to the defence of the knight. Manoeuvring the knight to d5 would be a nice Plan B, but it is tied to the defence of h2 – which brings us to an unpleasant conclusion: White cannot move!

It turns out that it is not the black bishop’s role that became more prominent. It is the active black queen in combination with the weak white pawns that counted. Black can simply improve his position with ... $h6-h5$, ... $g7-g6$, ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$, ... $g6-g5$ etc., so staying passive is not going to help. His best attempt could be 25. $b3$ $axb3+$ 26. $cxb3$, but this will never really work on account of the vulnerable white king. Black can slowly improve his position with ... $h6-h5$ and ... $g7-g5$ and transfer his queen to the queenside whenever necessary.

22. $\mathbb{R}xc6$

It was not too late for 22. $\mathbb{R}6d2$, but White had already put his mind on the rook exchange.

22... $bxc6$ 23. $\mathbb{R}d7$

23. $\mathbb{R}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 24. $\mathbb{B}e3$ would have been the last chance for a balanced game. White has to take action against the hostile queen, since it completely paralyses his own queen and knight.

23... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ 24. $\mathbb{R}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$



The white pieces are clearly lacking coordination and it is very hard to come up with a constructive plan. He therefore decides to go all in and start an attack on the black king.

25.♘h4 ♗xh2 26.♗f5 ♗xf2 27.♕a6

But this is too much. He should have kept his queen centralized with 27.♕c4, with insufficient compensation for the pawns but still a lot to play for. In the game, Black is able to get full control over the centre.

27...♗e1+ 28.♔a2 ♗xe4

The centralized queen puts an end to White's aspirations for a successful attack. Black resigned on move 50.

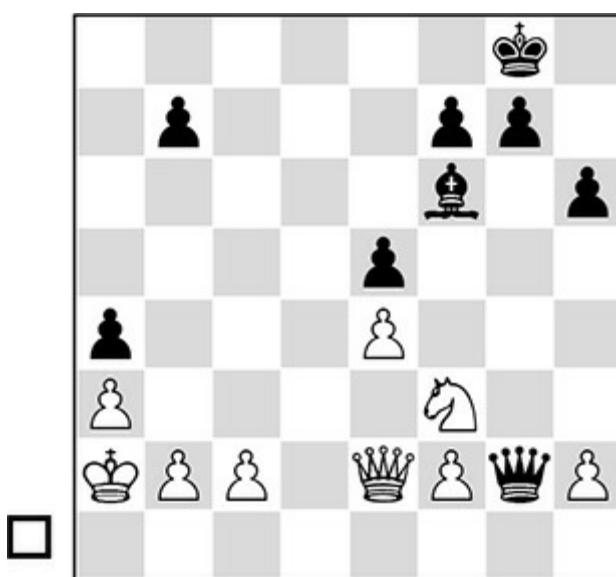
What can we learn?

I want to ask you to go through the game again, this time with the following questions in mind:

- What did you learn from this game?
- Can you think of other situations in which these learnings can be applied?
- Did you learn a new technique that you can apply in your own games?

Please take your time for this and remember: there is not a single right answer to any of these questions.

For me there were two interesting things to take away, which come together in the following diagram.



For starters, there is the 'bad' bishop that turned out to be not so bad after all. In fact, it played an important role in dominating the white knight. The concept of a good knight versus a bad bishop can be very useful, but

you have to always make sure to keep a fresh look at such motifs instead of applying them too strictly. This position may serve as a reminder of this.

What struck me most in this game was the active role of the black queen in combination with the vulnerable white pawns. And, more specifically, the technique of exchanging rooks to enable the queen to reach its full potential. For me, this was the most important conclusion. It is basically about eliminating the opponent's important defenders, which we discussed in section 1.3.

I immediately had to think of a game that I once played in the Dutch league.

Game 20

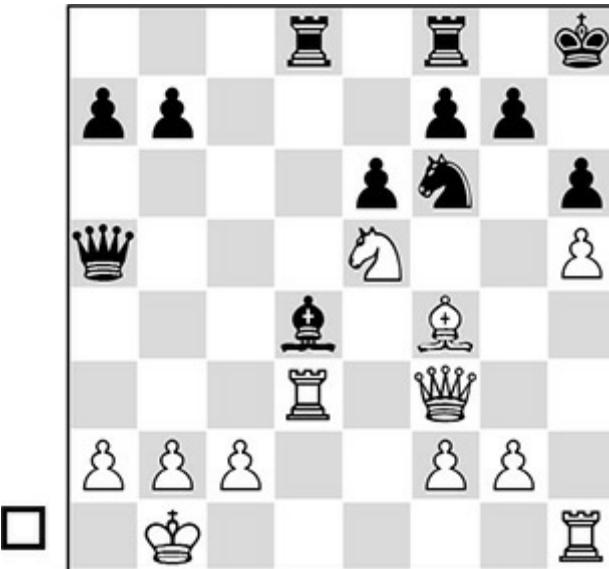
Arno Bezemer

2376

Thomas Willemze

2324

Netherlands tt 2004/05 (7)



QUESTION: What would you play, 21. $\mathbb{Q}hd1$ or 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$?

The white knight is currently under attack and White has to do something about this. In the game, he went for:

21. $\mathbb{Q}hd1$

This move indirectly protects the knight and leads to an exchange of rooks.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 22. $\mathbb{R}xd8$ $\mathbb{R}xd8+$ 23. $\mathbb{R}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$



It seems like the active bishop promises White good prospects. This impression, however, is deceptive. Black has the safer king and White is still in the possession of a weak h-pawn. This is an important element in this line of the Caro-Kann. Without the rooks, White suddenly has a hard time keeping the hostile queen out. In fact, he loses the h-pawn by force after

24... ♕a5 25. ♔e2 ♘xh5

The white queen is overloaded, since she has to keep an eye on the back rank. White decides to go for a queen ending.

26.a3 ♘f6 27. ♜xf6 gxf6

But after

28. ♜f3 ♕g7 29. ♜xb7 ♔e1+ 30. ♔a2 ♜xf2 31.c4 ♔d4



Black is not only a pawn up, but he is also in possession of the more active queen and the safer king.

32. ♜c8 e5 33. ♜b3 ♔d1+ 34. ♜b4 e4 35. ♜h3 ♔d2+ 36. ♜c3 e3 37. c5 a5+ 38. ♜c4 h5 39. c6 ♜xg2 40. c7 e2 41. c8 ♜e4+ 42. ♜b5 e1 ♜ 43. ♜xe1 ♜xe1 44. b4 axb4 45. axb4 ♜g3 46. ♜a6 h4 47. b5 h3 48. b6 h2 49. b7 h1 ♜ 50. b8 ♜ ♜a1+ 0-1

The exchange of rooks obviously did not work out well. This is where we can recognize the pattern we spotted in the previous game. White has a vulnerable king and pawn and he really needs his rooks to restrain

the enemy queen. Therefore, he had to exchange queens instead of rooks, which brings us to 21. ♔e2 as the right answer. White gets a slightly inferior ending after 21... ♕xe5 22. ♔xe5 ♕xe5 23. ♔xe5 ♕xd3 24.cxd3, but he should be able to hold it.

More evidence

At first, the patterns that link these two games may seem a bit far-fetched. But this is normal for a sample size of only two. The pattern, however, does occur quite frequently. All you have to do is look for it.

As a small experiment, I searched the Mega Database 2017 for a double rook exchange with queens on the board, with a white pawn on g4 and a victory for Black. The first five hits produced two instructive examples:

Game 21

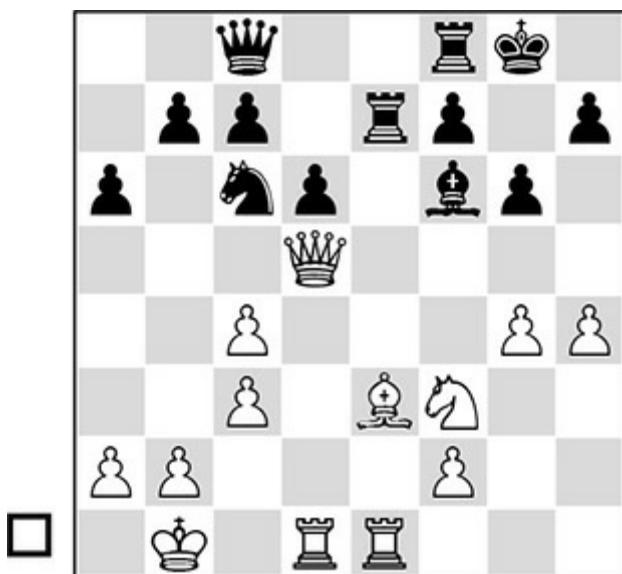
Zbynek Hracek

2618

Momchil Nikolov

2561

Paleochora 2017 (8)



25.  g5

25. g1 would have been stronger, preserving both rooks for the attack.

25... xg5!

Black shows no hesitation.

26.  xg5

We already know what is going to happen. White has quite a few weak pawns; the next step is to get rid of the rooks!

26... ♕xe1 27. ♕xe1 ♕e8 28. ♕e3 ♕xe3 29. fxe3



Now bring up the queen!

29... ♕e6 30. ♔f4 ♕e5

Black has a large advantage.

Game 22

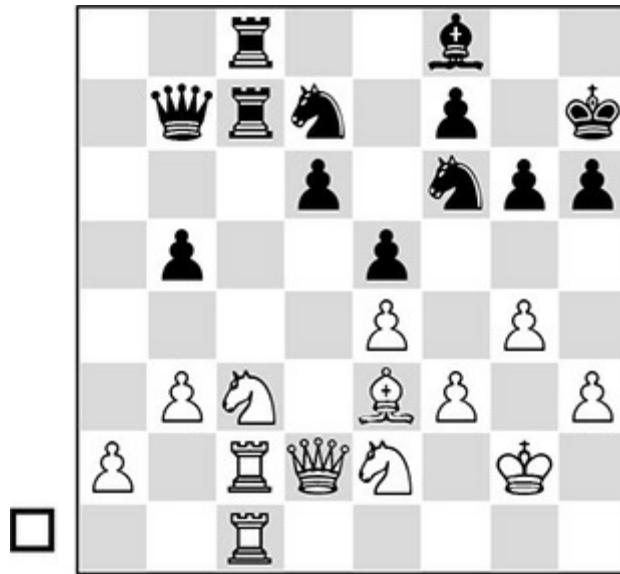
Salvador Lluverol Torrents

1931

Jorge Gonzalez Rodriguez

2274

Torredembarra 2017 (2)



25. ♔g3

25.a3 could have prevented Black's plan and kept the balance.

25...b4! 26. ♘a4 ♖xc2 27. ♖xc2 ♖xc2 28. ♖xc2 d5!

The key move, opening the centre and weakening the white pawn structure.

29.exd5 ♖xd5

Again, with a clear advantage for Black.

The exchange of rooks to increase the scope of your queen is just an example of the right use of an exchange

in a specific situation. There are of course many, many others. All you have to do is look out for them!

Conclusion

Trying to recognize new patterns, applying them in your own games and carefully analysing these games afterwards is an effective way to keep improving your exchanging skills.

1.7 FLASH CARDS



Only the pieces that remain matter!

The **simplification technique** in optima forma. White exchanges all the major pieces after **45.hxg5!** and wins the remaining bishop vs knight ending with the elegant **49.d4!!..**



Try to let your opponent make the trade!

White is eager to exchange the bishops, but should let his opponent make the trade and go for **18.Qe3!**. This will give him a free extra tempo after **18...Qxd3 19.Qxd3 Qc6.**



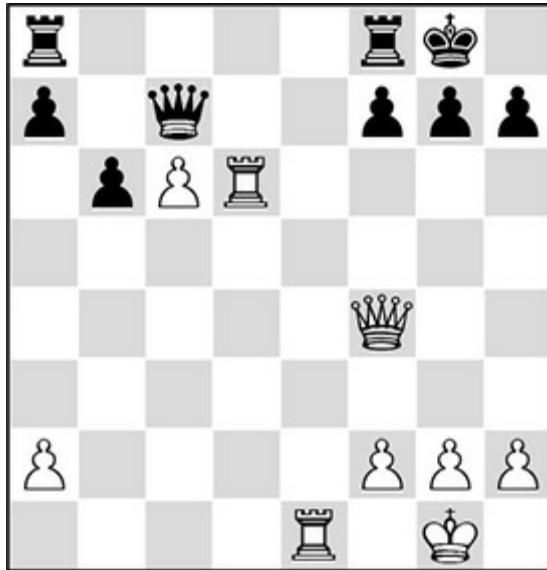
Aiming at the Achilles' Heel!

Black has just skilfully weakened the dark squares in the white camp by provoking f2-f3. The next step is to eliminate the most important defender with 20... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ with a large advantage.



If you have less space: exchange pieces!

With a lot of space, you also need many pieces to cover the important squares. Black understood this well. He opened the centre with 27...d4!, swapped off three (!) pairs of pieces and successfully invaded the white camp.

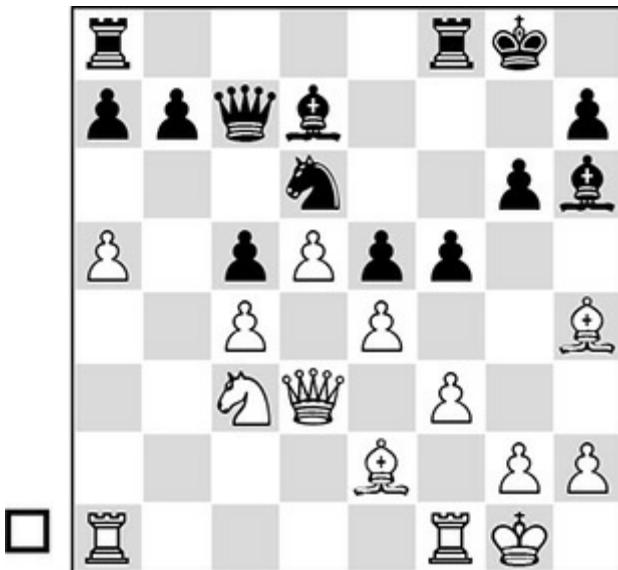


Lifting the blockade: exchange minor pieces!

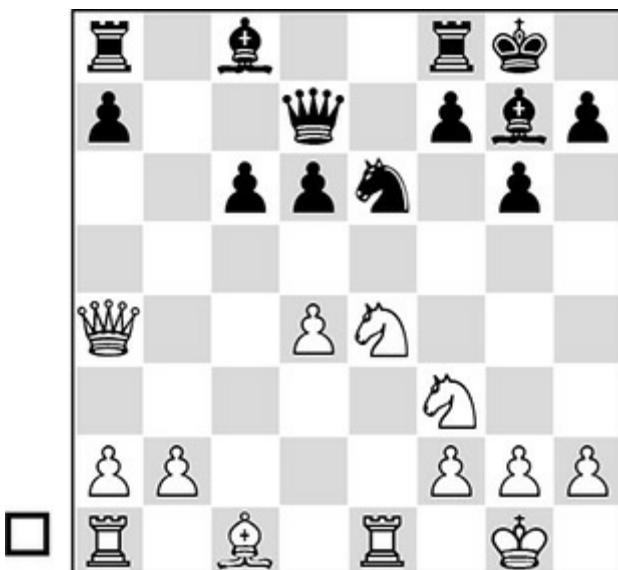
This is what a hopeless position for Black looks like. White successfully exchanged all the minor pieces, forcing the black queen into an awkward position. Black was unable to combine his blockading and defending tasks and got crushed badly.

Exercises – Exchange 1

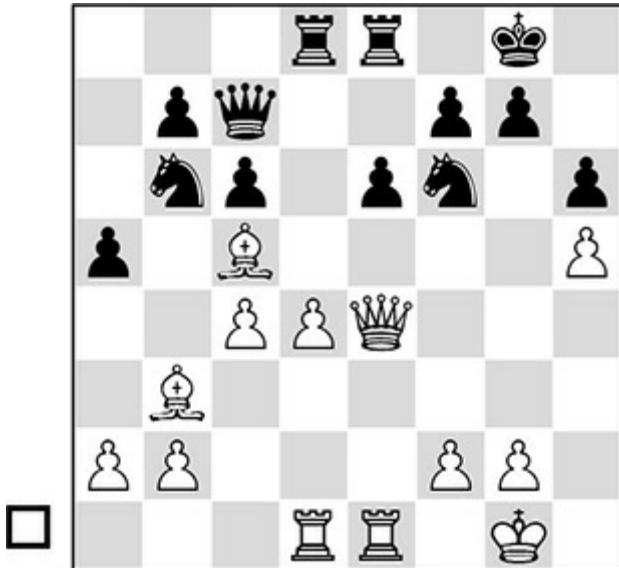
Solution 1.1



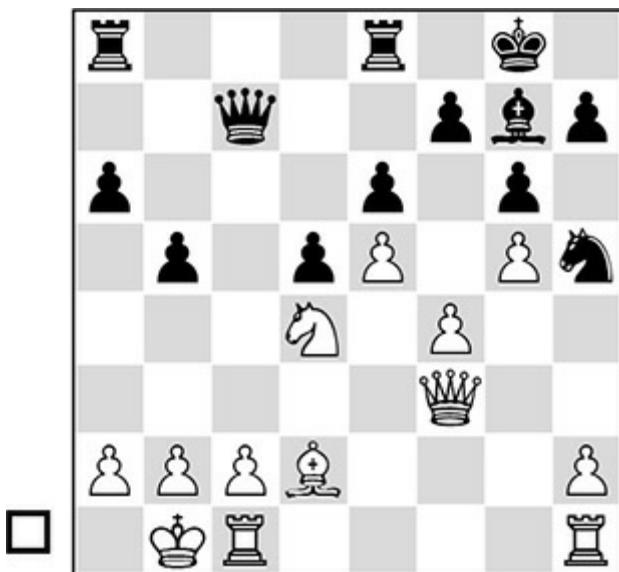
Solution 1.2



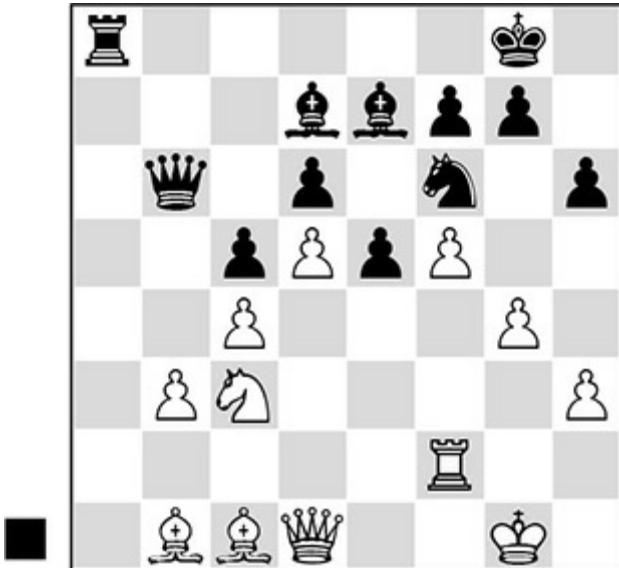
Solution 1.3



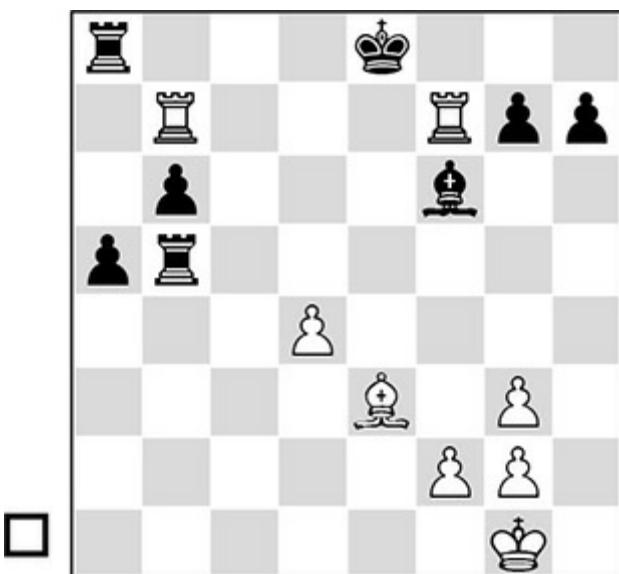
Solution 1.4



Solution 1.5

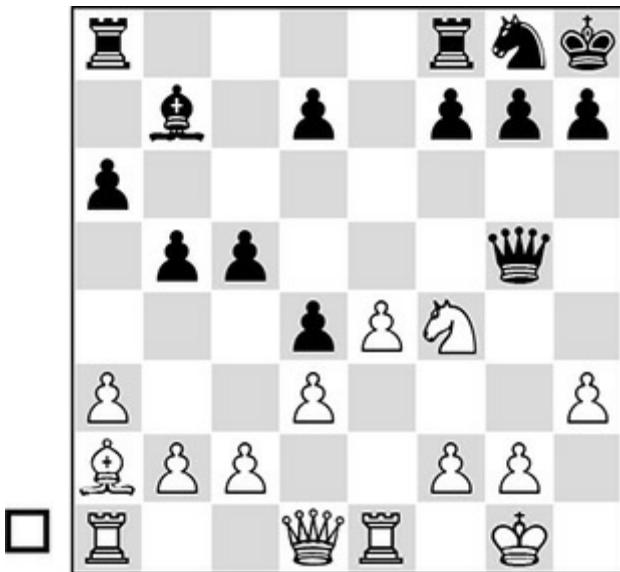


Solution 1.6

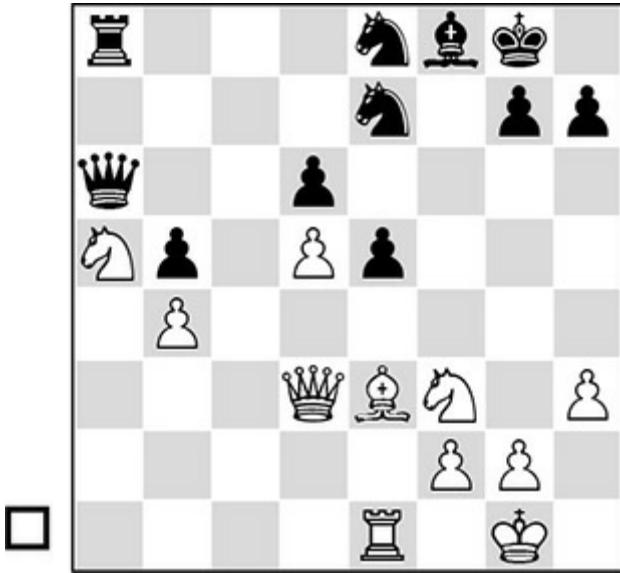


Exchange 2

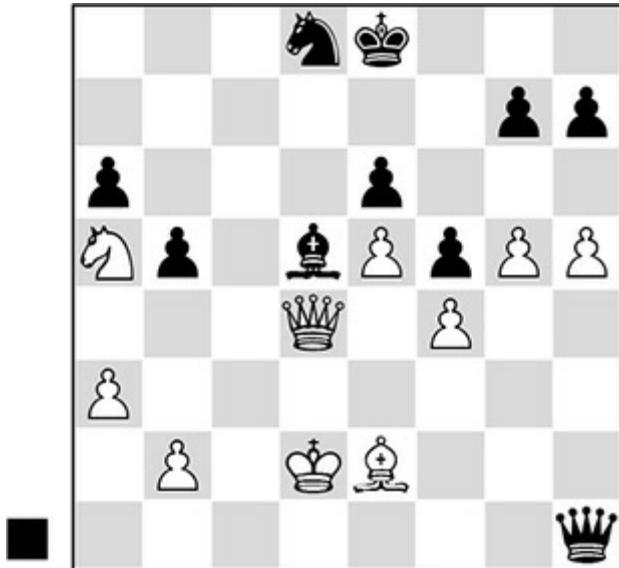
Solution 1.7



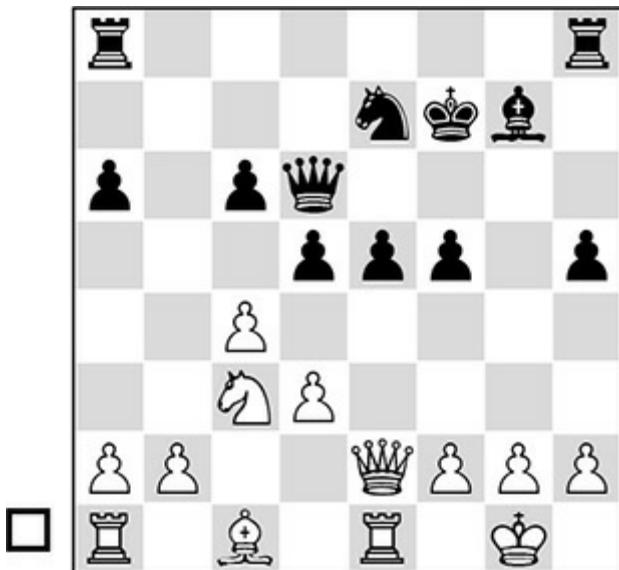
Solution 1.8



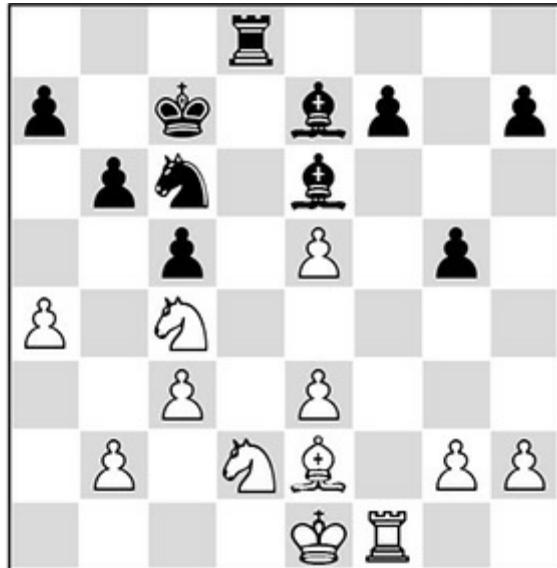
Solution 1.9



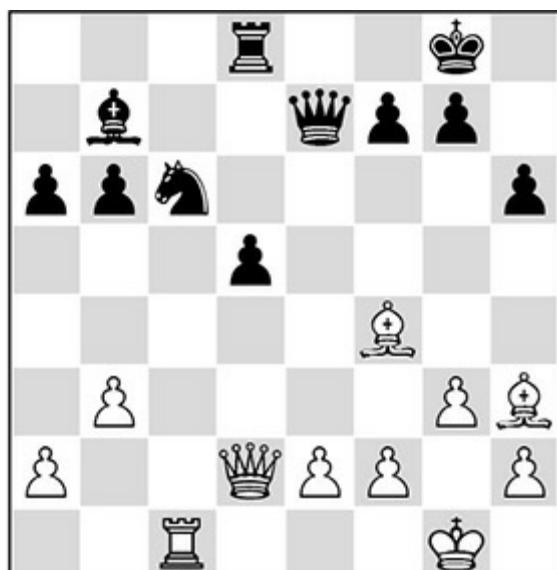
Solution 1.10



Solution 1.11

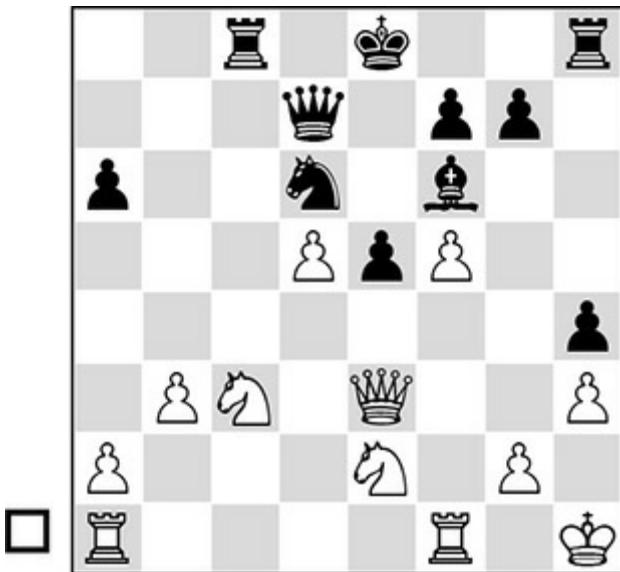


Solution 1.12



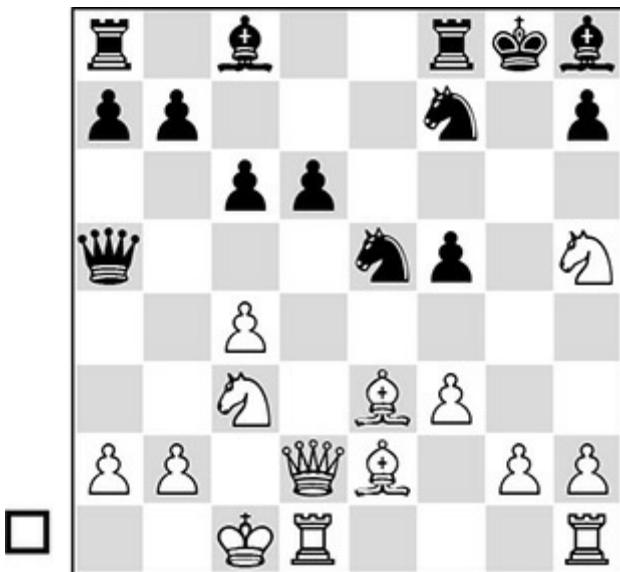
Exchange 3

Solution 1.13



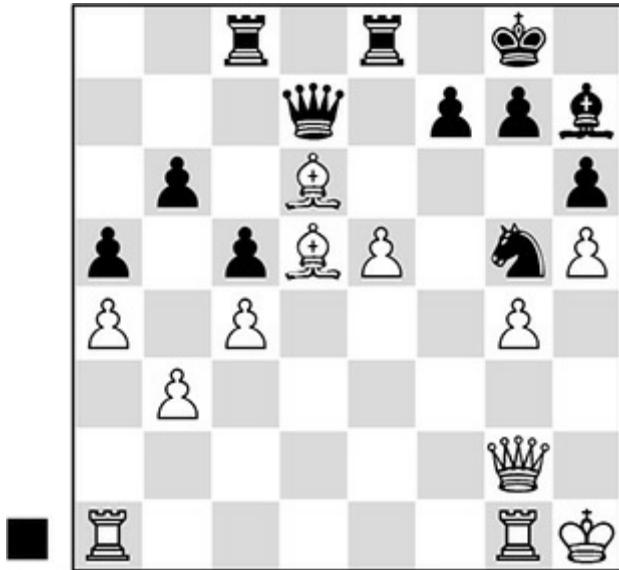
□

Solution 1.14

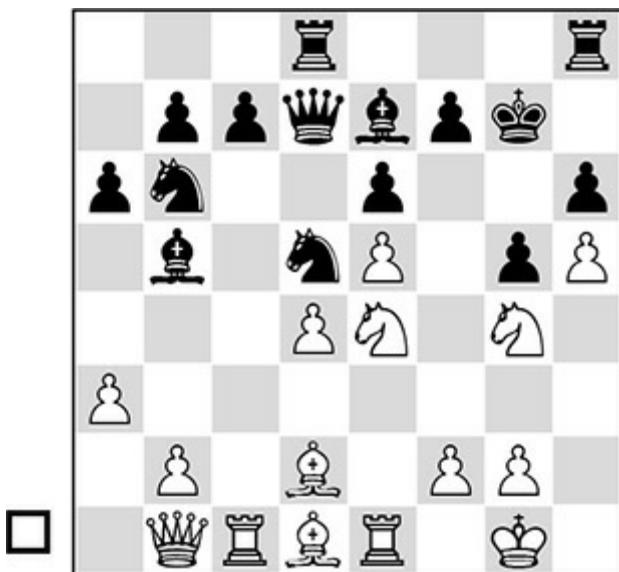


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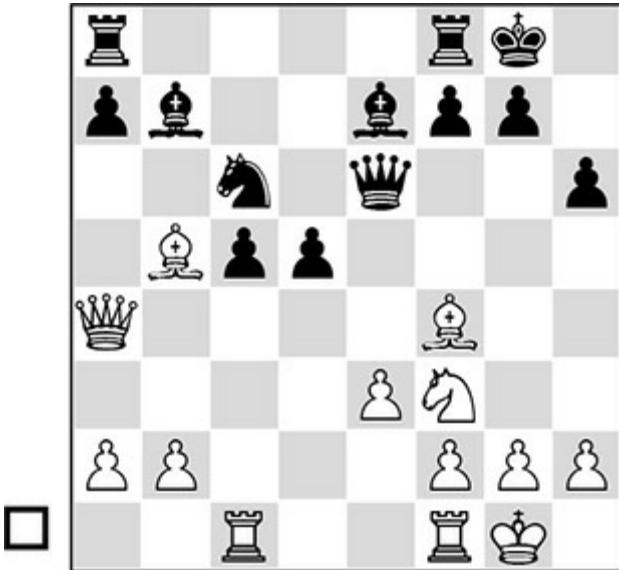
Solution 1.15



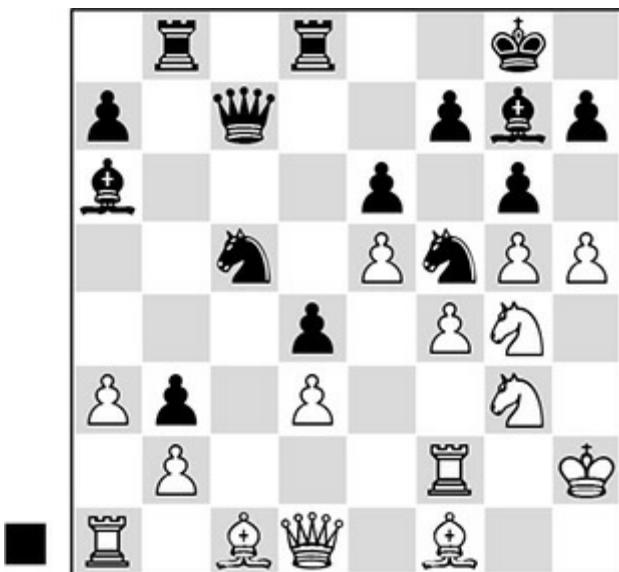
Solution 1.16



Solution 1.17



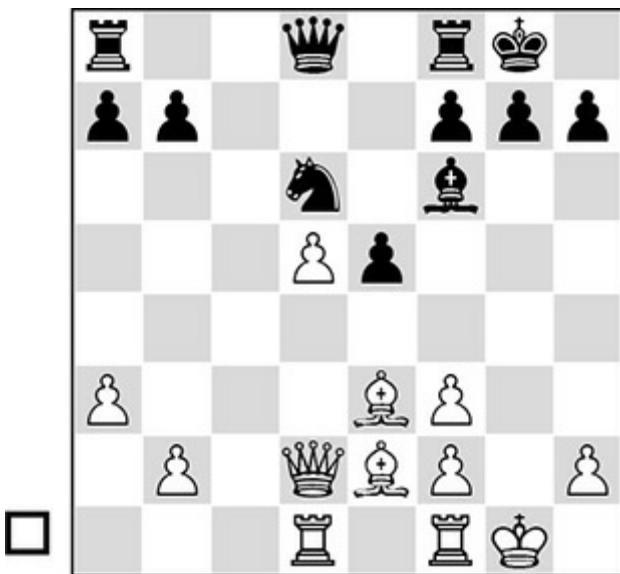
Solution 1.18



... \mathbb{Q} xd3 or ... \mathbb{Q} e3 ?

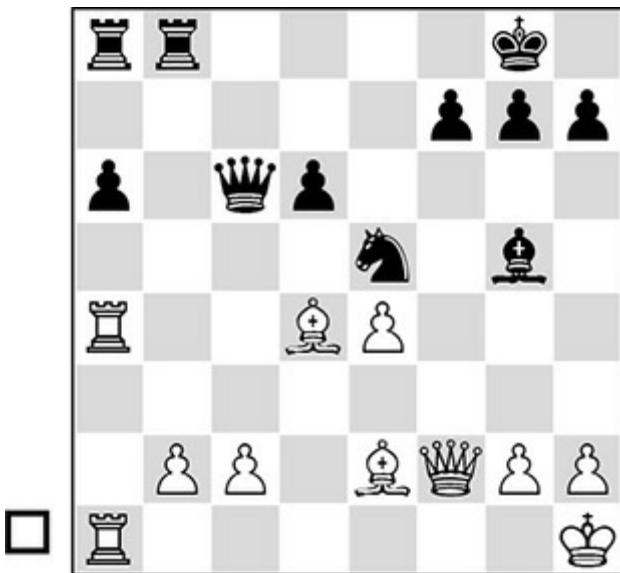
Exchange: yes or no? – 1

Solution 1.19



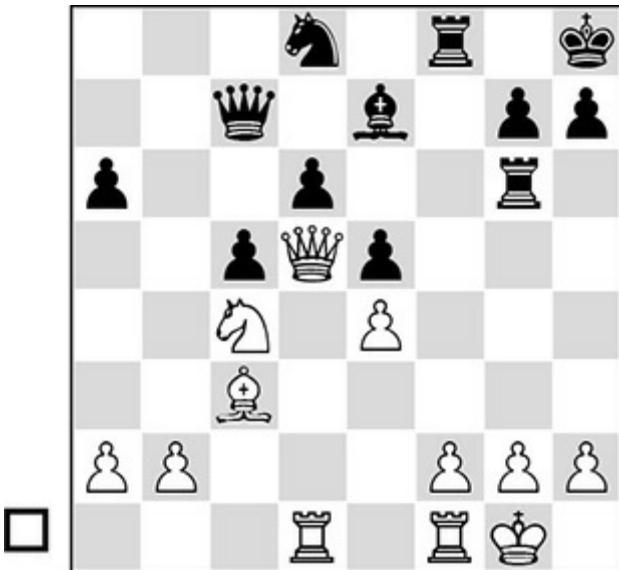
♝ c5 ?

Solution 1.20



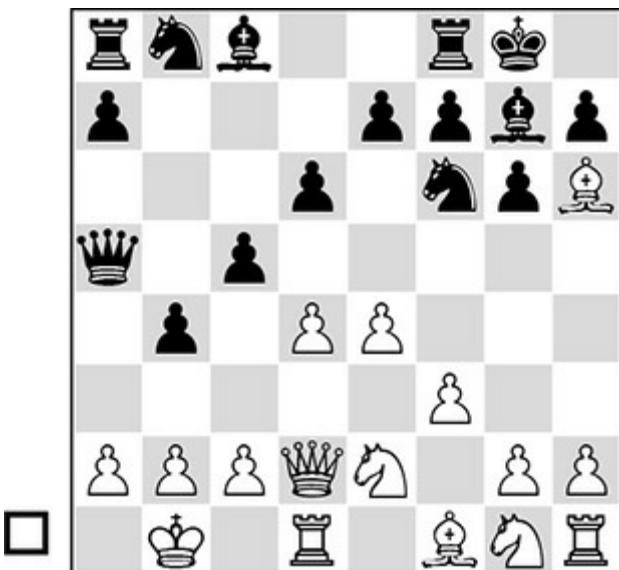
♝ xe5 ?

Solution 1.21



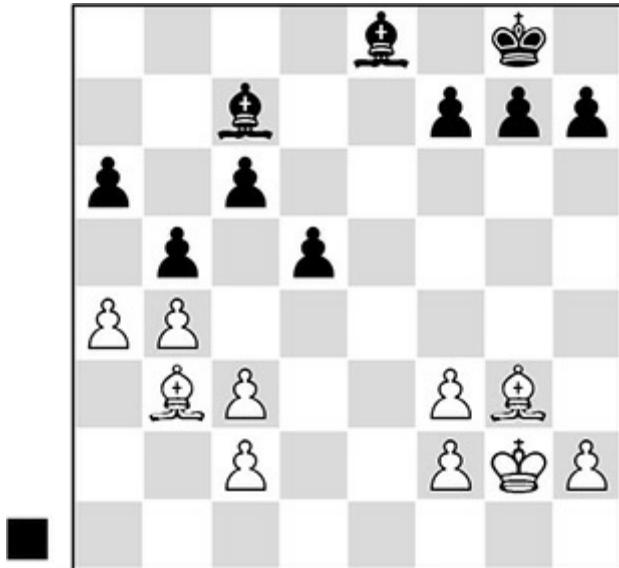
♕ a5 ?

Solution 1.22



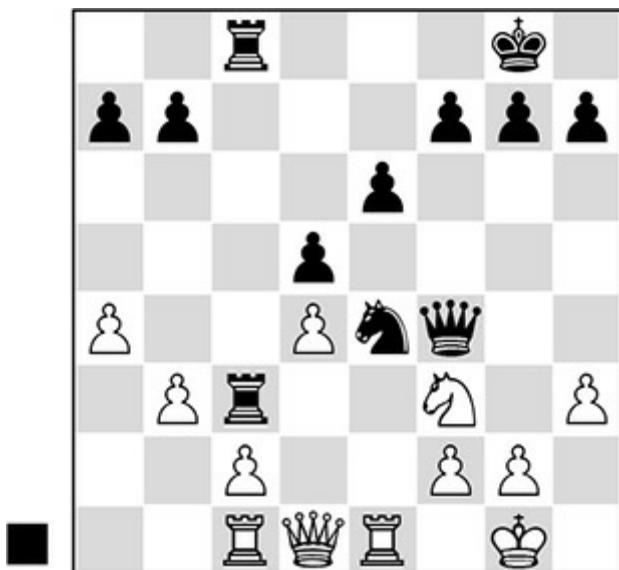
♕ xg7 ?

Solution 1.23



... ♕xg3 ?

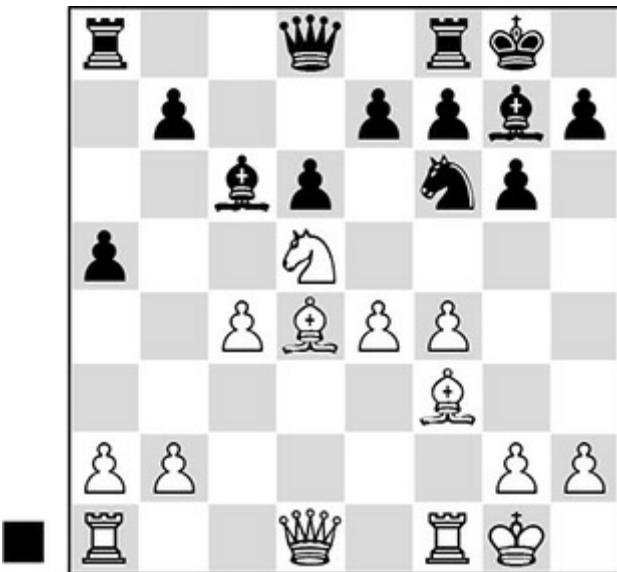
Solution 1.24



... ♕g5 ?

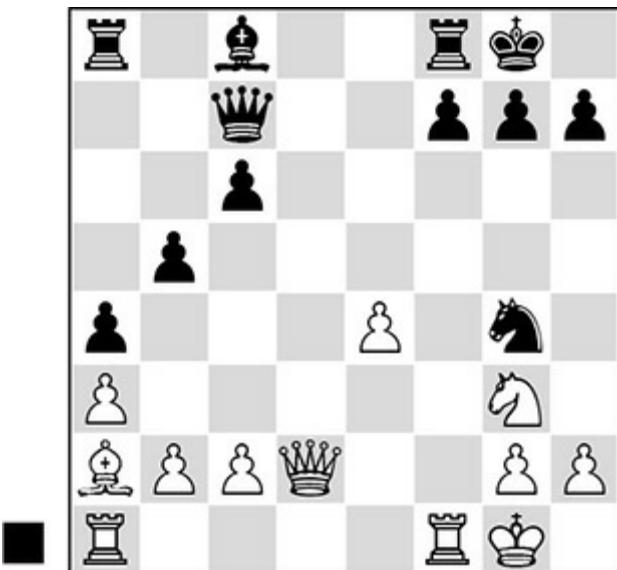
Exchange: yes or no? – 2

Solution 1.25



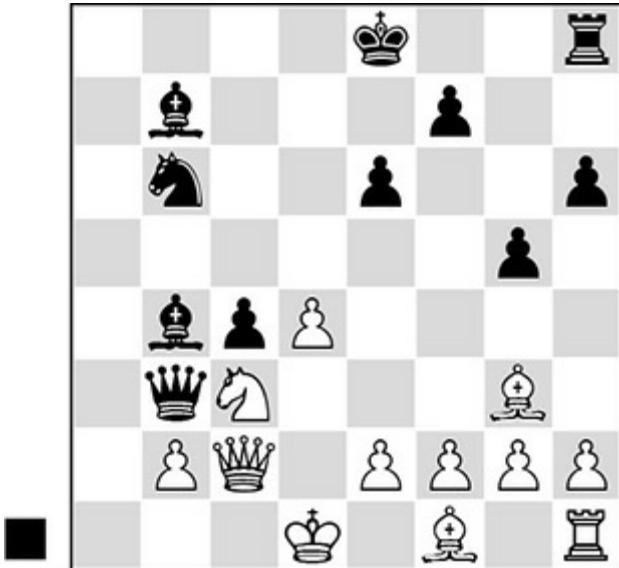
... \mathbb{Q} x d 5 ?

Solution 1.26



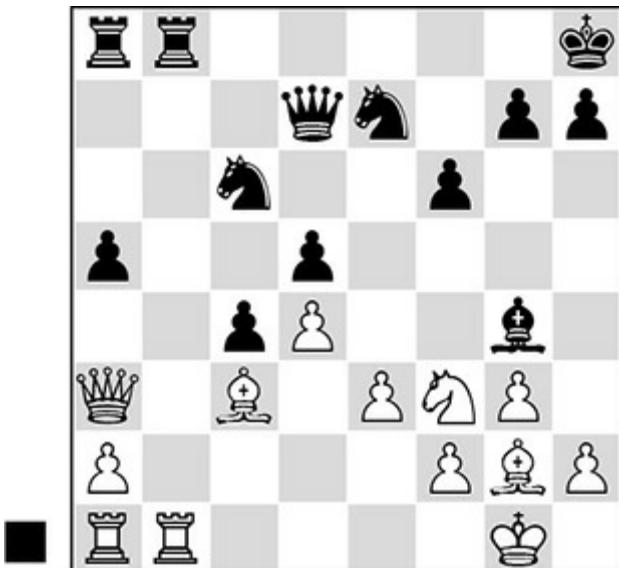
... \mathbb{Q} e6 ?

Solution 1.27



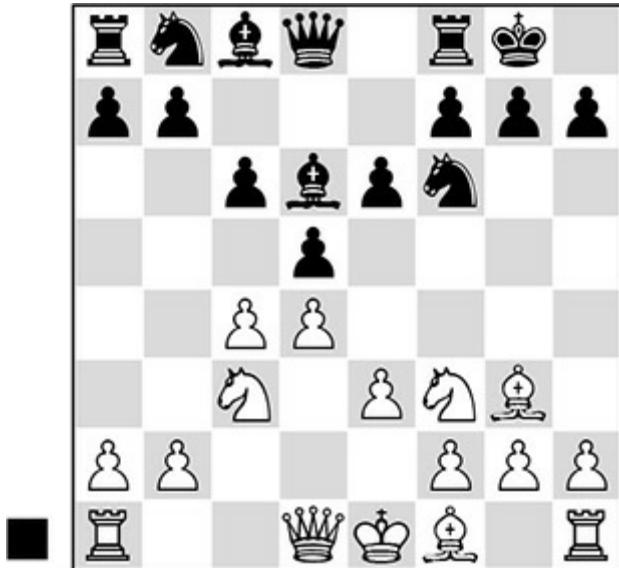
...♝xc3 ?

Solution 1.28



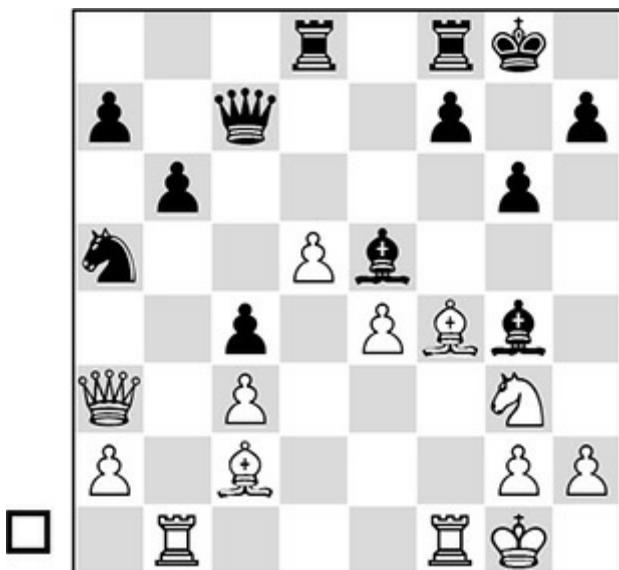
...♞xb1 ?

Solution 1.29



... ♜ e4 ?

Solution 1.30



♝ xe5 ?

PART II

Unleash your rooks

The reliable rook

If you take a close look at the previous chapter again, you may notice that we exchanged dozens of minor pieces and an occasional queen, but hardly ever a rook. This is not a coincidence. The rook is often the last piece that comes into play; usually at a point when the first exchanges have already taken place. It is therefore the most likely piece to stay with us until the very end of the game.

Open files and empty ranks

The rook is a late bloomer, but under the right conditions it is capable of incredible accelerations. Take the following game, for instance. Note how White takes advantage of an open file and an empty rank to transform two passive rooks into monsters within a couple of moves.

Game 23

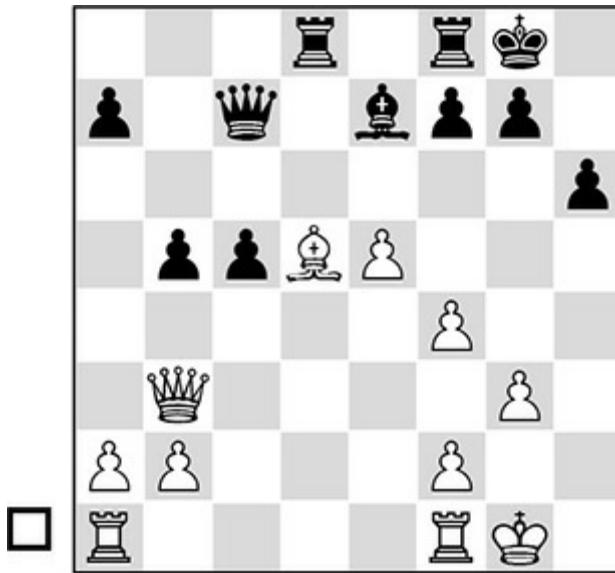
Vladislav Artemiev

2682

Kirill Alekseenko

2585

Minsk Ech 2017 (8)



25.a4!

An excellent decision. White keeps the d-file closed and focuses on the a-file instead. The bishop controls a8, making it very hard for Black to place his rook there.

25...a6 26.axb5 axb5 27.♖a6!

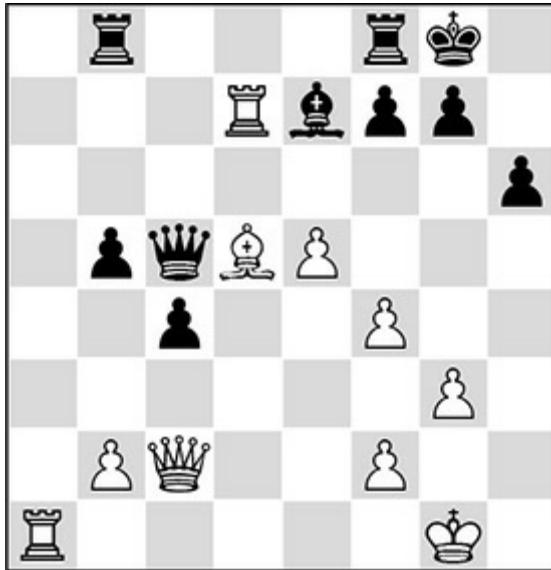
The rook has already made it to an empty rank. It currently controls 14 squares – the absolute maximum for a rook.

27...♗b8 28.♗fa1 c4 29.♕c2 ♗b6 30.♕a7

The first rook has reached its final destination: the 7th rank! This is often the rank where you can hurt your

opponent the most.

30... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}bb8$



32. $\mathbb{Q}a6$

A completely normal move would have been 32. $\mathbb{Q}aa7$, after which the pressure on e7 and f7 would almost be unbearable for Black. White decided to skip this stage and go after the ‘Final Boss’ at once.

32... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}bd8$

33... $g6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $fxg6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ would only have postponed resignation for a couple of moves.



34. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $gxh6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 1-0

Four steps

White had to take four steps to optimize his rooks in order to turn an ordinary position into one where he exerted total domination:

1. Open a file;
2. Control the open file;
3. Enter the 7th rank;

4. Exploit the 7th rank.

These steps are applicable to many positions with ambitious rooks and will therefore serve as a common thread in this part. In the introductory game, White only needed ten moves to reach his goal. Unfortunately, circumstances are not always so ideal. More often you will have to fight for every step, which is why I want to devote a separate chapter to every one of the steps and discuss them in great detail.

Reason backwards

Studying chess often works best if you start with the end in mind and then reason backwards. For instance, trying to master the move-order subtleties in a certain opening will only work if you truly understand what kind of middlegame positions you are aiming at.

The same holds true for the open file and the 7th rank. Before you start the struggle for an open file, make sure it is about the right file and there is indeed a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow! This was clearly not the case in the following example.

Game 24

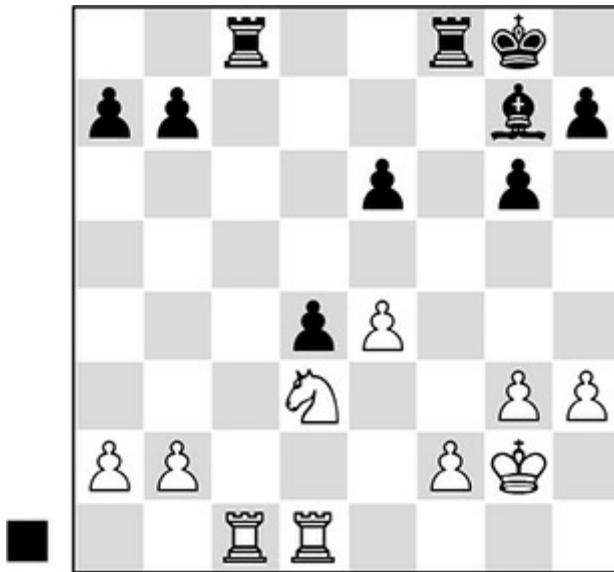
Krzysztof Jakubowski

2497

Aleksander Czerwonski

2382

Warsaw rapid 2006 (10)

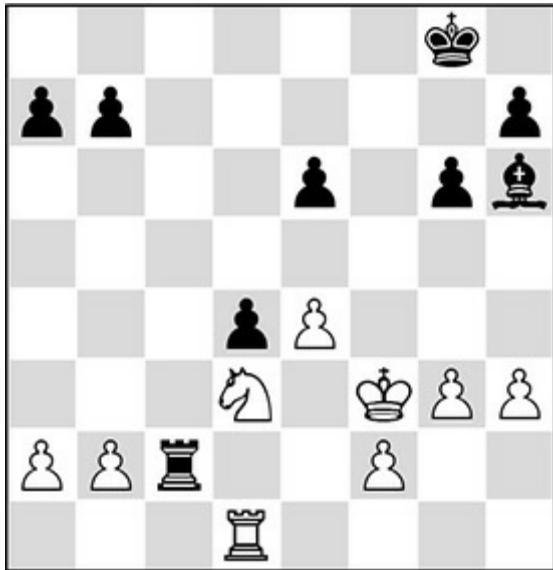


Black is under pressure in this position. He has a passed pawn, but it is comfortably blocked by a knight that is very hard to expel. Black's attention is drawn to the struggle on the c-file and he decides to apply a technique that will return in Chapter 4: chasing away the opposing rook.

22...♝h6

Stabilizing the centre with 22...e5 and preparing a transfer of the king towards the centre would have been a better alternative; for instance, 23.f4 ♛f7 24.fxe5 ♛e7 with a decent game. The c-file is indeed an important element in this position, but the struggle is about keeping the white rook away from c7. Black, however, pushes it too far and goes for the '7th rank' himself.

23.♜xc8 ♜xc8 24.♝f3 ♜c2



Black reached his goal, but will soon find out that this ‘7th rank’ is pretty worthless. The hero on d3 does not only block the d-pawn, it also takes care of protecting both b2 and f2. Without particular weaknesses to worry about, the white king can march safely towards the centre.

25.e5! ♜f7 26.♔e4

The d-pawn is lost and Black is still unable to benefit from his rook on the 7th rank. White decided the game in a tricky rook ending.

Table of contents

Applying the logic of reasoning backwards to the earlier defined steps leads to the following table of contents for this part:

Chapter 2: Exploiting the 7th rank

Chapter 3: Entering the 7th rank

Chapter 4: Conquering the open file

Chapter 5: Opening and closing files

Once we have acquired a good feeling for the potential of a rook on the 7th rank, we work our way back to the first step: the process of opening (and closing!) a file.

Before we start, two final notes. Keep these in mind when reading the following chapters.

- When we discuss the 7th rank, we always start counting from our own back rank. Therefore, Black can also aim at the 7th rank, even though the desired move in the previous example was ... ♛c2;
- For practical reasons, I refer to putting rooks on the 7th rank as our common technique. However, the same manoeuvres can of course apply for putting rooks on the back rank or sometimes even for putting queens on the 6th.

CHAPTER 2

Exploiting the 7th rank

2.1 Introduction

The main purpose of conquering an open file is to transport your major pieces to their most promising positions. Take for instance the introductory game Artemiev-Alekseenko. The white rook had a short stopover at a6, after which it continued its journey to its final destination: h6. The trip went very smoothly in this game, but what if the rank had not been an empty one, but one packed with hostile pieces?

That is where our knowledge about the **right exchange** comes in handy. **Eliminating the important defenders** can help us to clear the rank and reach our goal.

Clearing the 7th rank

Game 25

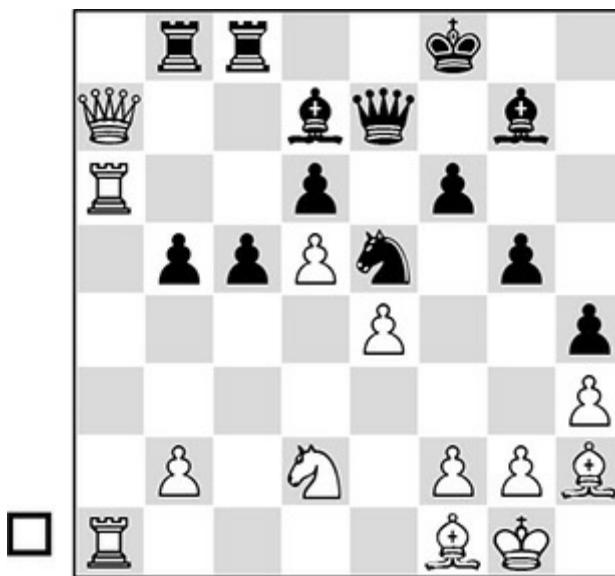
Mikhail Peschansky

2196

Leonid Muhtarov

2013

Voronezh 2016 (7)



White has clearly won the battle for the a-file and has already managed to install a rook and a queen on the 6th and 7th rank. There is, however, still a long way to go to get at the black king.

29. $\mathbb{Q}b6$

White knows what to do. First, he has to shift his major pieces to the 7th rank. Next, this rank needs to be cleared in order to get at the black king.

29... $\mathbb{R}xb6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ c4



31. ♜a7

31. ♜xe5 would have been the most precise continuation. Black is now forced to recapture on e5 with his pawn, leaving his dark-squared bishop in an awkward position. White has to eliminate the knight, since it is an important defender of the blocking bishop at d7.

31... ♛f7

Black does not take advantage of the inaccuracy. 31...f5! would have allowed him to answer 32. ♜xe5 with 32...♜xe5, even though White is still clearly on top.

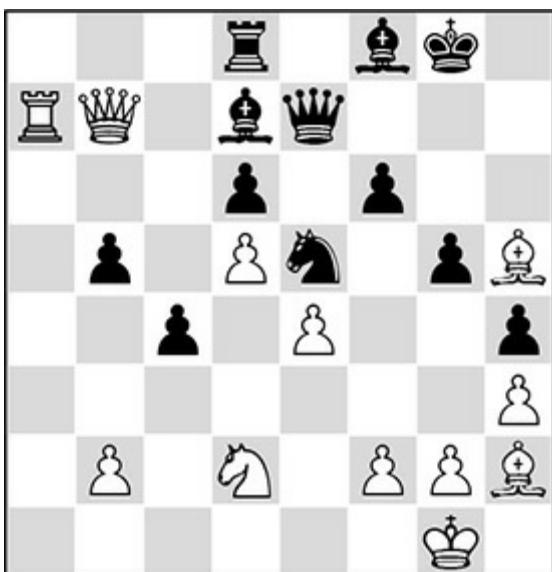
32. ♜b7 ♛d8 33. ♜e2

33. ♜xe5! was again required.

33... ♜f8

Again, missing his chance. 33...f5! would have even levelled the game.

34. ♜h5+ ♛g8



35. ♜xe5!

Third time's the charm. From now on, White shows no mercy.

35... ♜xe5

35...fxe5 was hardly an improvement. Black is completely dominated; for instance, 36. ♜b6 ♜f6 37. ♜f1 ♜g7 38. ♜e3 followed by ♜g4, ♜c7 and ♜f5.

36. ♜g4! f5 37. ♜xf5 ♜xf5 38. ♜f7+

Mission accomplished. The following phase resembles a game of Pacman.

38... ♜ h8 39. ♜ h5+ ♜ g8 40. ♜ xg5+ ♜ g7 41. ♜ xd8+ ♜ h7 42. ♜ xh4+ ♜ g8 43. ♜ d8+ ♜ h7 44.exf5 ♜ xf5 45. ♜ xd6

Game over. Black resigned at move 55.

Dominating the 7th rank

The previous example can serve as a nice illustration of the dominating effect of major pieces on the 7th rank. As soon as they had managed to clear the 7th rank and found their way to the black king, the game was quickly over. It is very easy to find examples in which two rooks or a rook and a queen enter an empty 7th rank and immediately decide the game. I find it more interesting to look at positions where a single major piece completely dominates the enemy king by controlling the seventh rank.

The next example is my favourite one. It demonstrates that you do not necessarily need an army to lure the enemy king into a mating net.

Game 26

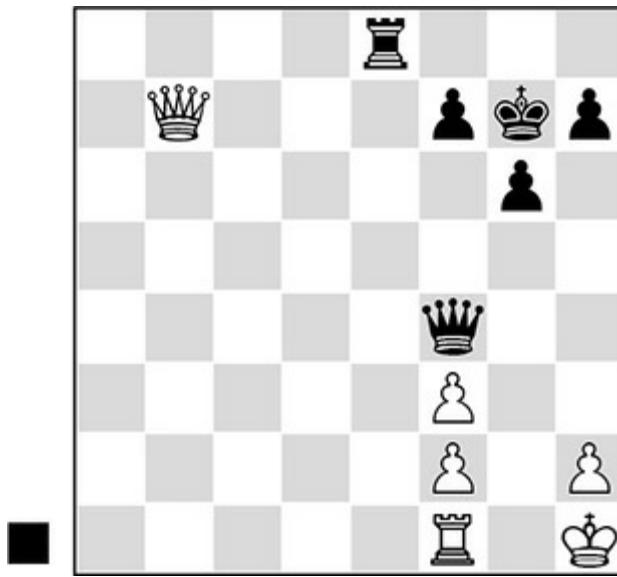
Ralf Hein

2136

Atila Gajo Figura

2336

Germany tt 2009 (5)



Black has the better prospects due to the weakened white pawn structure. His rook can already enter the 7th rank, but it is not clear what it can achieve on e2. Therefore Black slowly starts to improve his position.

26...h5

White has to stick to the defence of his weak pawns and is therefore deprived of any counterplay. He can only sit and wait.

27. c6 e5!

The rook lift enables Black to shift his rook to a more promising open file whenever he pleases.

28. c3 h7

With this prophylactic move, Black further improves his position. There is no need to hurry.

29. ♔d3 h4 30. h3

Forced, as White cannot allow a hostile pawn on h3. This pawn is, however, a second weakness, and White is in fact already on the verge of losing the f3-pawn!

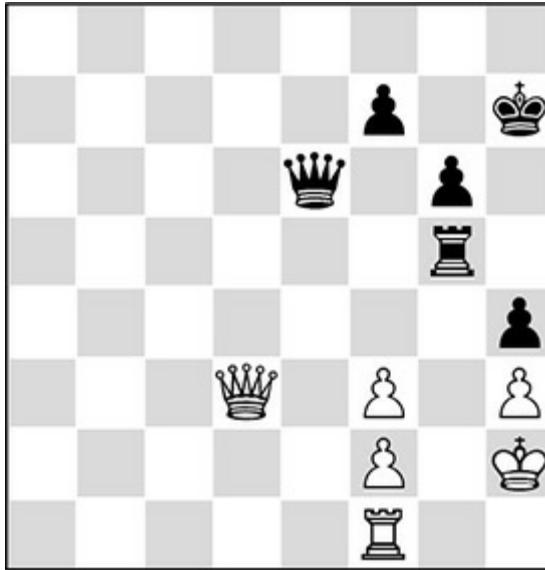
30... ♕f5 31. ♕g2

Trying to hold onto the pawn, but if White had known what was coming he would have gone for the very unpleasant 3 vs 2 rook ending by playing 31. ♕a1 ♖xf3+ 32. ♖xf3 ♕xf3 33. ♕g2.

31... ♖g5+! 32. ♔h2 ♖f6 33. ♕g2

While White sticks to the defence of the pawn, he is slowly being manoeuvred into a very tricky combination.

33... ♖g5+ 34. ♔h2 ♖e5+ 35. ♔h1 ♖e6! 36. ♔h2



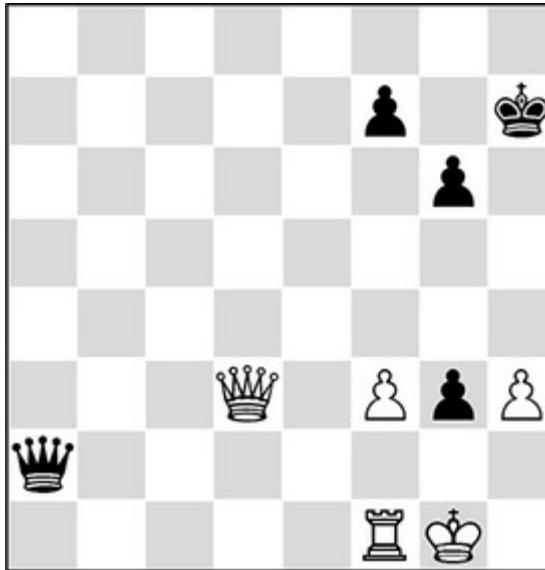
If you were wondering what this example had to do with the 7th rank, here is the answer!

36... ♖g3!!

A combination to remember. The 7th rank is opened by force, after which the white king is so vulnerable that it only takes a queen and pawn to mate it.

37.fxg3 ♖a2+

White resigned in view of 38. ♔g1 hxg3!.



analysis diagram

Mate is inevitable. I advise you to remember this picture. It will help you to solve one of the exercises at the end of this chapter and it will return later in this book as well.

An impressive performance by her majesty. Note how it all started with subtle coordination between the black

queen and rook. It looked as if Black created opportunities out of nothing.

But enough about a queen on the 7th rank. From now on, I want to focus our attention on the rook!

Rook on the 7th rank

The rook is of course not as powerful as a queen. It will always be dependent on the help of other pieces to seriously jeopardise the enemy king. In this chapter, the rook will be on the 7th rank, operating in three different piece configurations:

- A rook and a queen;
- Rook, knight and bishop;
- A rook and a bishop.

The first configuration will teach you how effective it can be to attack a king from two sides. The technique we use here is searching for the Achilles' Heel in the enemy position.

The second puts a large emphasis on piece coordination and we get a chance to discover various mating patterns.

The third highlights one specific combination in great detail: the Windmill! The focus will not only be on how to employ this deadly device for an attack, but also on how to defend yourself against it.

The aim of this chapter

The fight for an open file is often tough. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how rewarding it can be. You are about to see many dominating rooks and helpless kings.

2.2 Rook and queen: attack from two sides

The coordination between the two major pieces works best if you put your rook on the 7th rank and allow the flexible queen to switch between files and ranks. It is very hard to defend against an attack from two sides.

Game 27

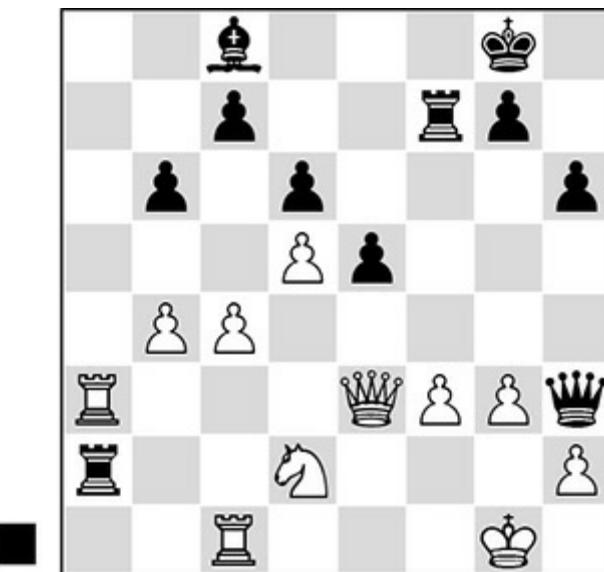
Bart van Gelder

2222

Thomas Willemze

2283

Amsterdam 2004 (2)



The black rook has already made it to the 7th rank and it is only due to the knight on d2 that White has not

been mated yet. After studying the section about exchanging your opponent's crucial pieces, the following combination should be easy to find.

33... ♕xf3

The queen is overloaded and there is no choice but to allow Black to open up the 7th rank.

34. ♜xf3 ♜xd2

Even though Black is an exchange down and does not have a forced mate, he is winning. The opening of the 7th rank has made the white king extremely vulnerable. The defence now depends solely on the white queen, which will therefore be very susceptible to combinations involving deflection.

35. ♜a8

A nice illustration of the impotence of the white pieces is the following variation: 35. ♜h1 ♜f5! 36. ♜e3 ♜d3! 37.c5 ♜c4 and there is nothing White can do about 38... ♜xd5.

35... ♜h7

A prophylactic move. Black could have got an improved version of the game by playing 35... ♜xh2+! 36. ♜f1 ♜h3+ 37. ♜g1 ♜h7.

36. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 37. ♜e4+ ♜g8

Black has regained the exchange and is now a pawn up, while the 7th rank is still weak.

38. ♜f1 ♜h3

With fewer pieces on the board, defending has only become harder for White.

39. ♜h1

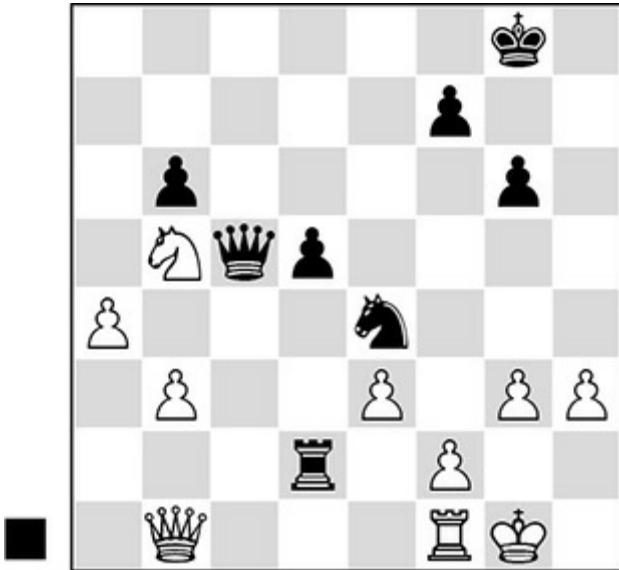


39...e4 40. ♜e1 e3 41.c5 ♜f5 0-1

The combined threat of mate and the advancing pawn is simply too much.

Searching for the Achilles' Heel

I would like to invite you to make a little test exercise. Please put the following position on a chessboard, set your alarm at five minutes and pretend that you are playing an actual game.



QUESTION: How would you continue?

Time is up. What is going on in this position? Black has invested two pawns, but the outpost for his knight and the dominant position of his rook on the 7th rank provide him with obvious compensation. Both pieces are very hard to expel, since White's rook and f-pawn are already saddled with important defensive tasks. We are currently looking at a very typical Isolated Queen's Pawn position. More of these will appear in the last two chapters of this book. By then, you will be able to recognize the fragility of the white king's position and understand that White's dependency on the f-pawn makes it extremely susceptible to piece sacrifices. So, kudos to you if you already started your calculations with one of the two thematic knight sacrifices 1... ♜xf2 and 1... ♜xg3! These should definitely be the first moves to look at when encountering this position in an actual game.

But... are they also correct? Let us have a closer look. We start with:

1... ♜xf2

The most concrete way to eliminate the important defender. White is forced to take, allowing the black queen to enter the stage. However, it looks like Black is lacking a convincing follow-up after

2. ♕xf2 ♜xe3 3. ♜f1

Pushing the d-pawn would most likely lead to a perpetual after 4. ♜g2 ♜e1+, while 3... ♜xg3+ probably leads to a mass exchange after, for instance,

4. ♜g2 ♜d1+ 5. ♜f1 ♜xb3 6. ♜xd1 ♜xd1+ 7. ♛f2 ♜xa4 8. ♜xd5

with only equality.

That was a bit disappointing. Maybe grabbing the g-pawn offers Black better prospects?

1... ♜xg3

This move does look very tempting at first sight, since 2.fxg3 opens up the 7th rank for the black pieces and leads to a forced mate after 2... ♜xe3+ 3. ♛h1 ♜e2. But White is not obliged to take.

2. ♜d1!



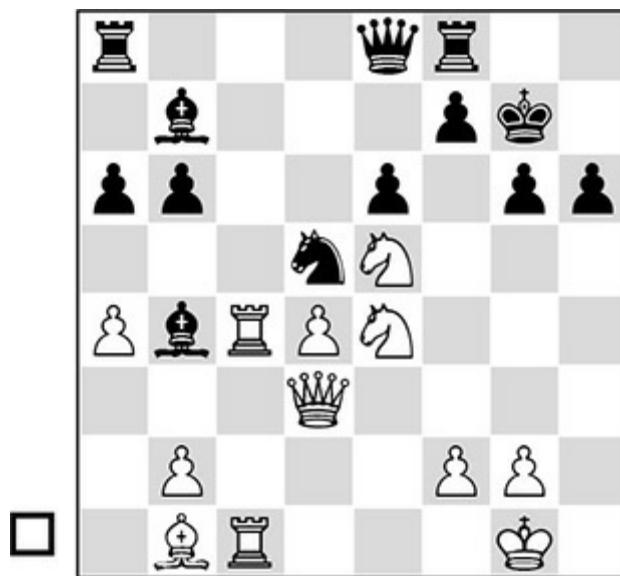
This move ignores the knight and keeps e3 protected. As a result, the black queen is unable to join the attack, and White will get the upper hand after, for instance,

2... ♜e2+ 3. ♜f1 ♜c3 4. ♜xc3 ♜xc3 5. ♜xd2 ♜xd2 6. ♜g1

with a healthy extra pawn.

In conclusion, both knight sacrifices were the right place to start your calculations, but they lead to nothing more than a draw. This could be a satisfactory outcome given the fact that Black is two pawns down, but, as you probably already guessed, the position is much richer than that.

Before we continue our search for the right plan, allow me to show you a different example, containing the same fragile pawn structure on the kingside.



Knowing that this chapter is about rooks on the 7th rank, it is probably not too difficult to spot the most promising candidate move:

1. ♜c7! ♜xc7 2. ♜xc7 ♜b8 3. ♜d7 ♜c8

White has managed to install his rook on the 7th rank and his entire army is aimed at the black king. Just like in our test exercise, the entire black king's position is relying on the f-pawn. There are, however, two important differences:

- A) The white queen is pointing at g6 instead of e6; and

B) the f-pawn is pinned!

Combining these elements suddenly makes life very easy. The white bishop, queen and knight form a giant battery. A possible $\mathbb{B}xg6+$ would lead to mate in two, so White can execute a discovered attack by removing the knight. However, the rook at d7 is an important element of the combination and it is currently under attack. So where should the knight go?

4. $\mathbb{N}g5!$



The rook is about to be taken, so the knight takes over the critical task of eliminating the stronghold on f7.

4... $\mathbb{R}xd7$

What else?

5. $\mathbb{N}gxf7!$

The white queen is about to enter the black king's position with devastating force.

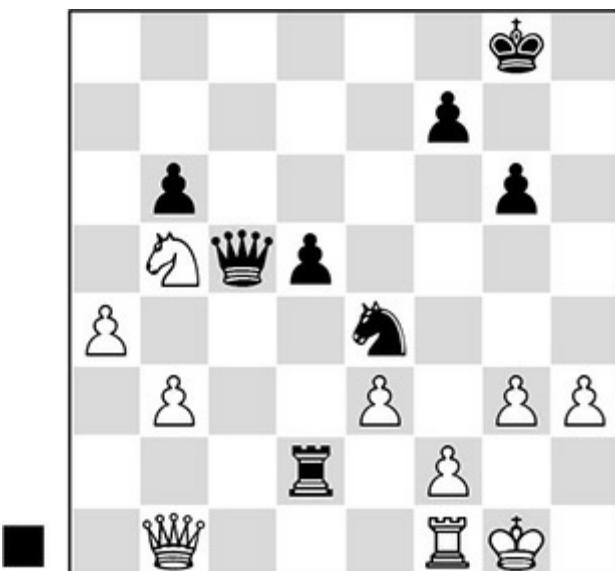
5... $\mathbb{R}g8$

5... $\mathbb{R}xf7$ 6. $\mathbb{B}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 7. $\mathbb{B}xf7\#$.

6. $\mathbb{B}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 7. $\mathbb{B}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 8. $\mathbb{B}h7$ $\mathbb{R}f8$ 9. $\mathbb{B}g6$

Black is defenceless.

Now we return to our test exercise.



The success of the attack in the previous example and the difference between the two positions should point us in the right direction. We already noticed that the black rook and knight have found their dream squares. But what about the queen? Having seen her full potential in the previous example, we should draw the conclusion that she can do better here. Entering the position via e3 was not good enough. Instead we have to look for the true Achilles' Heel in White's position, which is: g3! But how can we get our queen over there?

1... ♕c8!

Correct! The queen is heading for b8, from which it exerts pressure on the crucial g3-square.

2. ♔g2

White was facing a tough choice. The most stubborn defensive try would have been 2.g4 ♘g5, but it would take a computer to stay alive for a few more moves:

A) The engine comes up with the shaky 3. ♖c1 ♗xh3+ 4. ♔h2 ♕c2 5. ♖d1 ♗xf2 6. ♖f3, but even here Black should be winning easily after 6... ♗xg4 7. ♖xg4 ♗xg4+ 8. ♔g3 f5;

B) 3. ♔g2 ♖e6, followed by ... ♖f6, is just as hopeless as the main line;

C) The more natural 3. ♔h1 d4! is an elegant illustration of the queen's long-distance attacking capabilities combined with the absolute control of the 7th rank: 4. ♗xd4 ♖b7+ 5.f3 ♖b8 6.f4 ♖b7+.

2... ♕b8



Mission accomplished! I still find it fascinating to see the devastating effect of the rook on the 7th rank and the pressure on the g3-pawn. Just like earlier, I advise you to take a mental picture of this theme. You can use it in two different exercises further on in this chapter.

So, what should White do now? Well, the computer comes up with moves like 3. ♖xe4 and 3. ♖c7 just to avoid the forced mate. There is really nothing serious White can do about ... ♖xf2+ and ... ♖xg3+. In an actual game, White would probably resign, or do his opponent a favour and allow the pretty

3. ♖f3 ♖xf2+ 4. ♖xf2 ♖xg3+ 5. ♔e2 ♖xf2+ 6. ♖d3 ♖d2#

Conclusion

The most effective way to deploy the rook and queen combination is to put the rook on the 7th rank and to give the queen a free role. An **attack from two sides** combined with a good feeling for the **Achilles' Heel** in your opponent's camp are the right ingredients for an irresistible attack.

2.3 Rook, knight and bishop: coordination!

The rook does not necessarily require the presence of a queen to execute a successful mating attack. In this

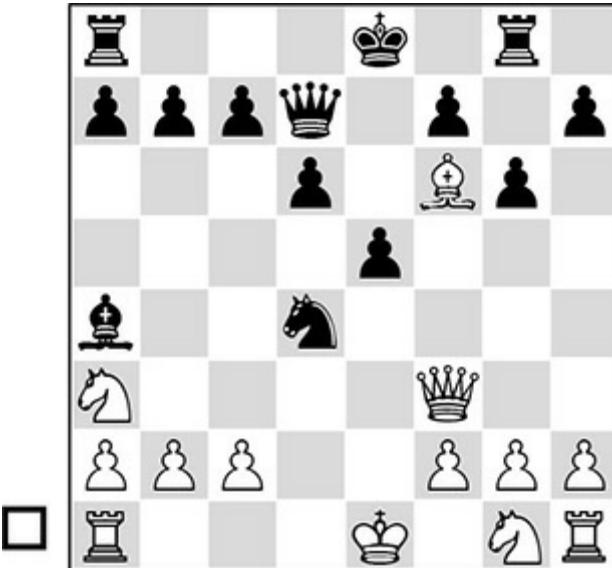
section, I want to focus on the coordination between rook, knight and bishop, who are capable of creating beautiful mating patterns together.

Game 28

Moises Kupferstich

Harry Andreassen

Copenhagen ch- DEN 1953



Black has two central pawns for a piece. Furthermore, the bishop on f6 dominates the black rook. White decides to exchange queens, hoping to be able to open up the position afterwards.

16. ♕h3! ♕xh3 17. ♕xh3 ♕xc2+

Although it makes sense to try to capture a third pawn when you are a piece down, this only helps White. He will be able to exchange an extra piece and, more importantly, his rooks are about to find their way to the 7th rank.

18. ♕xc2 ♕xc2 19. ♜c1 ♜e4



20. ♜g5

White should have gone for the 7th rank immediately as now Black could have stayed in the game by

blocking the c-file with 20... $\mathbb{Q}c6$.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 21. $\mathbb{R}xc7!$

Simply ignoring the attack on the rook on h1. White is winning. His control of the 7th rank and well-coordinated pieces are simply too much for Black's king and his paralysed rooks. In the remainder of the game, I would like to emphasize the different mating patterns that can arise when you play around with the rook, knight and bishop.

You can find more of these mating patterns in the exercise section. It is extremely useful to develop a feeling for mating patterns, since they are essential for executing a successful attack on the enemy king.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xh1$



22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

Simple and strong. However, please allow me to delve a bit deeper into the line starting with 22. $\mathbb{R}e7+$, because this is where the mating power of a rook on the 7th rank combined with two minor pieces is truly demonstrated. It is always useful to learn new mating motifs: 22... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$. Note that the bishop at h1 still acts as a defender.



analysis diagram after 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

And now:

A) 25...a5 leads to a forced mate in 5. Can you find it?



analysis diagram after 25...a5

26. $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 27. $\mathbb{R}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (27... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c6\#$) 28. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f7\#$;

B) 25...b6 is the only way to prevent a direct mate: 26. $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 27. $\mathbb{R}c7+$ (White has managed to set up a Windmill! More about this tactical device in the next chapter) 27... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 28. $\mathbb{R}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 29. $\mathbb{R}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (29... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}f7\#$) 30. $\mathbb{R}xa7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 31. $\mathbb{R}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 32. $\mathbb{R}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xb6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xg8+$, winning both rooks and the game.

More on mating with rook, bishop and knight in the exercises section. Back to the game.

22... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{R}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$



Here it is again, the Windmill in action!

26. $\mathbb{R}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{R}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$



29. $\mathbb{R}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30. $\mathbb{R}xb7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 31. $\mathbb{R}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 32. $\mathbb{R}xa7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

After the 7th rank has been polished off there are many ways to win this position. However, I like this one the most:

33. $\mathbb{R}xa8!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$



Black now realizes that both his king and his rook are trapped and there is no way he can stop the a- and b-pawns. Therefore, he resigned.

Conclusion

Rook, knight and bishop can form a deadly trio against a king that is cut off on the back rank. Familiarity with various mating patterns and a good feeling for the right coordination of the Three Musketeers should do the job.

2.4 Rook and Bishop: the Windmill

We already gave a sneak preview of a Windmill under construction. Now it is time to look at it in more detail. Studying the Windmill will show you the most effective way to coordinate your rook and bishop. On top of that, it will contribute to your attacking skills in general.

The following techniques will be highlighted:

- Constructing a windmill;
- Keeping the threat alive;
- Mating the king;
- Locking up the king;
- Using the power of a passed pawn.

Section 2.5 will be devoted to defensive resources.

Constructing a Windmill

I want to start with a complete game, to show how the attack was built up before White was able to construct a deadly Windmill.

Game 29

Balazs Csonka

2062

Avital Boruchovsky

2084

Fermo Ech U12 2009 (5)

1. ♕f3 ♕f6 2. d4 d5 3. ♔f4 e6 4. e3 ♔e7 5. ♔bd2 0-0 6. ♔d3 b6 7. h4

White has not treated the opening very ambitiously so far, but now he reveals his true intentions. His last move is a prelude to either the ♕h3-g3-rook lift or a complete pawn storm. Either way, Black has to be on his qui vive.

7... ♔b7 8. c3 c5 9. ♔e5 ♔bd7 10. ♕h3



There it is: the rook lift!

10...c4

Black has played the opening very well, but now he takes a step in the wrong direction. White just kept his king in the centre in order to start an attack on the kingside. As a result, the only correct strategy for Black is **to open up the centre as quickly as possible**. That would not only make the white king feel very uncomfortable, but would also be the best remedy against the white attack.

Black could, for instance, start with 10... ♔xe5 11. ♔xe5 ♔d6, provoking 12. ♔xd6 ♔xd6, after which it would suddenly be very dangerous for White to stick to his plan. For example: 13. ♕g3 cxd4 14. cxd4 e5!

15.dxe5 ♜xe5 16.♗b3 d4 and Black takes over.

The text move removes the pressure from the centre and makes it easier for White to keep things under control.

11.♕c2 b5

This is the logical follow-up to Black's last move. He's going for a counterattack on the queenside. White, however, is much quicker.

12.♖g3 g6 13.h5!



White shows no hesitation. His king is still quite safe and the closed centre makes it very hard for Black to defend.

13...♝xe5!

Black correctly switches his attention to the centre, but he is already in serious trouble.

14.♕xe5 ♜e4

A very logical move, closing the b1-h7 diagonal, but it runs into a very convincing forced line for White. It was not easy to find an improvement. The consistent 14...b4 would be met with 15.♔b1!, threatening an invasion on g6, while the prophylactic 14...♝e8 looks a bit passive. Black is completely dominated after, for instance, 15.♔f3, and will probably be mated soon.

15.♝xe4 dxe4 16.hxg6 fxg6

16...hxg6 would not have been an improvement, since after 17.♔h5 ♜f6 18.♖xg6+ fxg6 19.♖xg6+ ♔h8 20.0-0-0 mate cannot be avoided.

17.♔h5! ♜e8

A very logical move, defending g6. However, it loses by force. The only alternative to stretch out the game a little longer would have been 17...♜f6, although there is little hope left after 18.0-0-0 ♜f8 19.♖h1 with a crushing attack.



18. ♜xh7+!

White does not grant his opponent any time to build a defence.

18... ♕xh7 19. ♜h3+ ♕g8 20. ♜h8+ ♕f7 21. ♜h7+ ♕g8

White is a full queen down and one might draw the conclusion that he is aiming for a draw by perpetual.

22. ♜g7+!



Chasing the black king into the corner and creating a battery for a discovered attack. It turns out that White has more ambitious plans in mind.

22... ♕h8 23. ♜xe7+ ♕g8

Black cannot break the construction since 23... ♜f6 24. ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 25. ♜xf6+ would simply leave him a piece down.

24. ♜g7+!

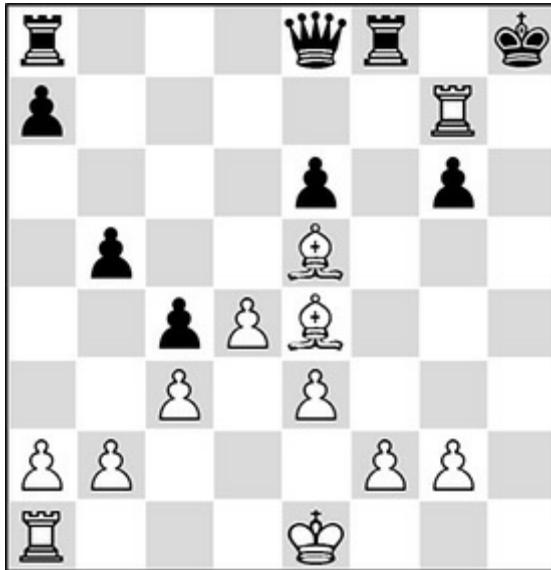
This is the point! The white rook returns to its original square and builds up a new battery to keep the momentum going. This construction is called a **Windmill**. The bishop functions as the rotor, the rook as the blade. Once set into motion, they form a deadly combination.

24. ♜xe8 ♜axe8 would give White not more than enough compensation for the exchange.

24... ♕h8 25. ♜xb7+ ♕g8 26. ♜g7+ ♕h8 27. ♜xe4!

Well played! Regaining the queen with 27. ♜e7+ ♕g8 28. ♜xe8 ♜axe8 would definitely have been enough

for a win, but the text move is deadlier. As so often: **the threat is much stronger than the execution!**



Notice how dominant the battery is. The black queen is unable to escape the discovered attack.

27... ♕c8 28.0-0-0 1-0

The Windmill as a mating device

We just saw White using the Windmill to regain the sacrificed material with interest. In the next example, Radjabov shows us that the Windmill can also be used for eliminating defenders and mating the king.

Game 30

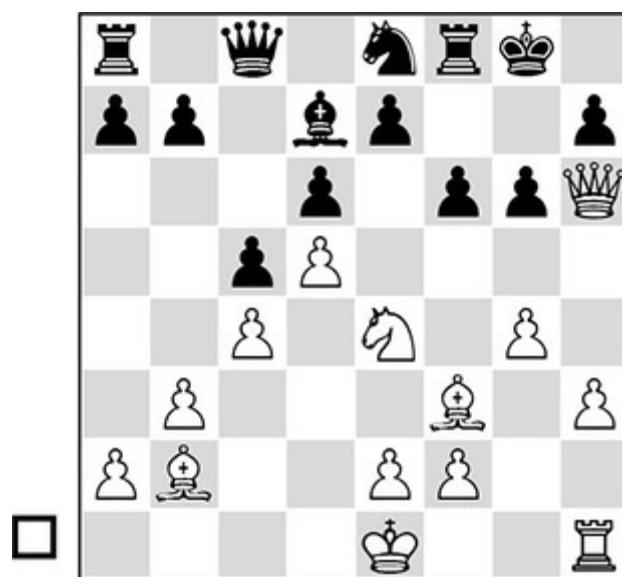
Teimour Radjabov

2710

Olexandr Bortnyk

2581

Doha Wch rapid 2016 (9)



17.h4!

A very strong pawn sacrifice. The pawn at g6 is an obvious target for the h-pawn.

17... ♗xg4 18.h5 gxh5

Forced. Allowing White to open up the h-file would have a devastating effect. 18...g5 19.♕xg5 ♔f5 20.♖g1 leaves the h-file closed, but would not help Black either.

19.♗g5! fxg5 20.♗xg5+ ♔f7

Here it comes:



21.♗xh5+!!

This was the whole point of the line. White will only have three pieces left after the sacrifice, but they are very well coordinated and will soon force the black king into a mating net.

21...♗xh5 22.♗xh5+ ♔g8 23.♖g1+ ♔g7 24.♖xg7+ ♔h8



25.♖xe7+

White is already too far behind in material and has only one option left: mating the black king. Taking the pawn on e7 is a crucial element of this plan. Black will no longer be able to build a permanent blockade on f6 and is therefore defenceless.

25...♔f6

25...♔g8 would only shorten the game: 26.♖g7+ ♔h8 27.♖g3+ ♔f6 28.♕xf6#.

26.♕xf6+ ♔g8 27.♖g7+ ♔f8 28.♖xh7 ♕f5 29.♖h8# 1-0

Locking up the enemy king

Sometimes we have to make sure that the enemy king is unable to get away, before the Windmill can be constructed.

Game 31

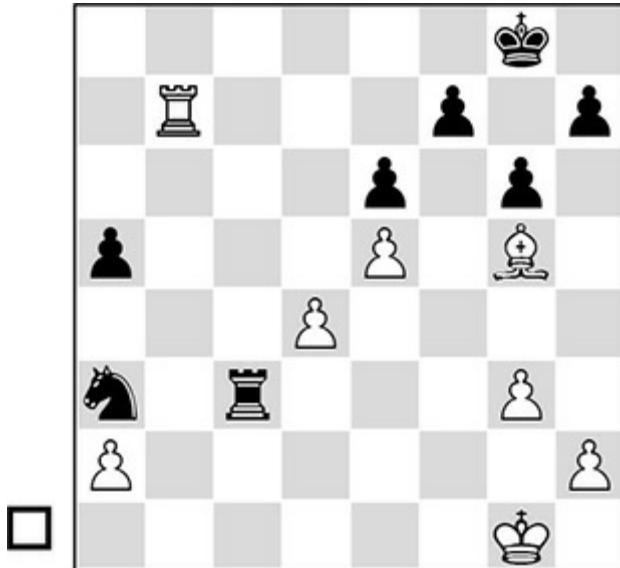
Vladimir Hamitevici

2406

Bogdan Pavlenko

2254

Kishinev ch-MDA 2009 (12)



28...♝e7!

A very tricky move, threatening mate in three.

28...h6

This move allows White to create a Windmill. 28...h5 29.♜b8+ ♛h7 30.♝f6 g5 would have been the only way to keep the game level. Black had to do something about his king's position, since 28...♝c4 leads to a forced mate after 29.♜b8+ ♛g7 30.♝f8+ ♛g8 31.♝h6#.

29.g4

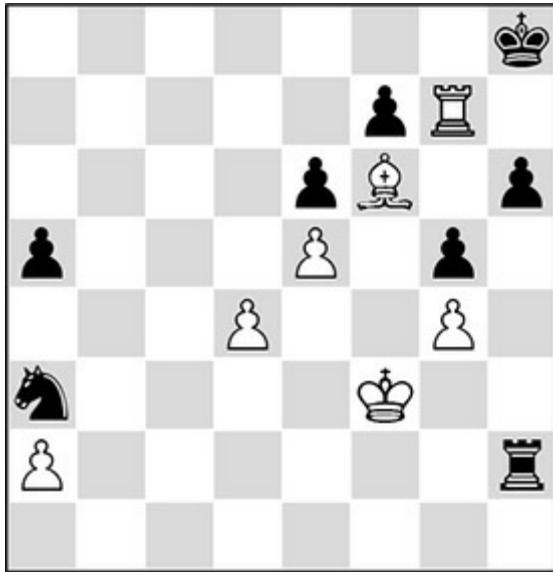
The right plan, but not with the optimal move order.

29.♜b8+! ♛h7 30.♝f6 g5 31.g4! was stronger. The construction with g4 is worth remembering, since it occurs quite often. It prevents the black king from escaping the deadly rook and bishop combination.

29...g5

29...♜c1+ 30.♛f2 ♜c2+ 31.♛f3 ♜c8 is very passive, but was the only way to prevent White from creating a Windmill.

30.♜b8+ ♛h7 31.♝f6! ♜c1+ 32.♛g2 ♜c2+ 33.♛f3 ♜xh2 34.♜h8+ ♛g6 35.♜g8+ ♛h7 36.♜g7+ ♛h8



37. $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$!

We already saw a glimpse of this motif in the previous example. The Windmill can be effective in two directions!

37... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}a7$

White is going to win this game convincingly, but here he misses a very instructive continuation: 41.d5! would have given him a deadly passed pawn and was the quickest way to victory.

41... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}a7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 46. $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 1-0

The power of a passed pawn

In the next game, the Windmill also functions in two different directions. However, the attacker underestimates the power of a passed pawn, combined with a rook on the 7th rank, and allows his opponent to escape with a draw.

Game 32

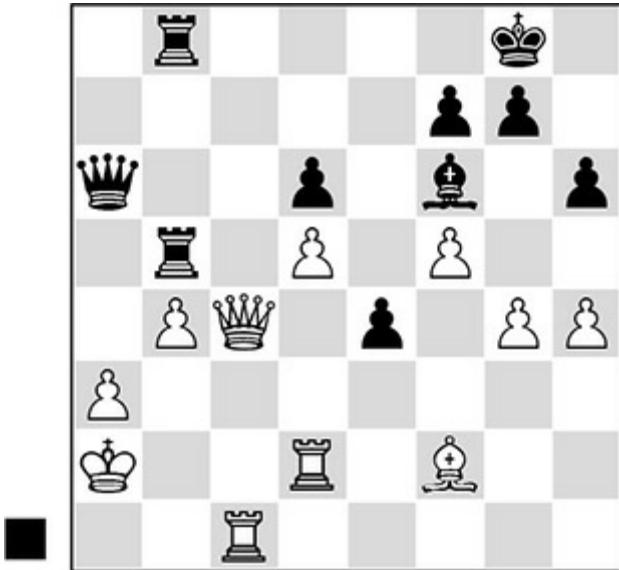
Jon Viktor Gunnarsson

2369

Sigurdur Pall Steindorsson

2211

Selfoss 2002 (1)



32... ♜xb4!

A very elegant combination. Black sacrifices a queen in return for a powerful Windmill.

33. ♛xa6

White has nothing better than to take the queen and hope for the best.

33... ♜b2+ 34. ♜xb2 ♜xb2+ 35. ♛a1



35... ♜b6+

Black is a queen down, but his rook is able to execute a discovered attack in two different directions, making the Windmill extremely effective. The best way to take advantage of this would have been by playing 35... ♜xf2+ first.

Black must have seen this during the game, but probably he did not like 36. ♜c3! (36. ♛b1 would be a simple win for Black after 36... ♜b2+ 37. ♛a1 ♜b6+) 36... ♜xc3+ 37. ♛b1.

It is very instructive to see that the white queen is absolutely powerless against a rook on the 7th rank in combination with a strong bishop, a passed pawn and a safe king. Black is winning after 37...e3! 38. ♛c8+ ♜h7 39. ♜xc3 e2. The pawn is unstoppable.

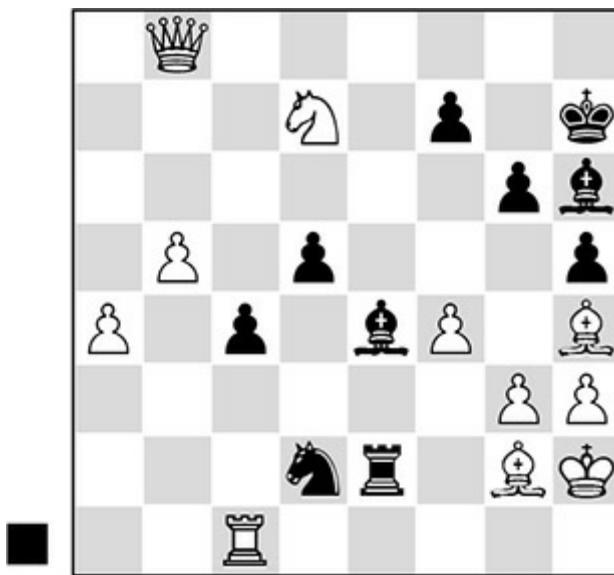
36. ♛a2 ♜b2+ 37. ♛a1

Bringing us back to the same position and again providing Black with the opportunity to take the bishop with check. He had, however, already rejected that line and agreed a draw.

Mate in 9

We end this section with my favourite example of a Windmill.

Solution 2.0



QUESTION: It is mate in 9. Can you solve it? The answer can be found in the solutions section.

Conclusion

The Windmill is a deadly construction that can justify large material investments. We came across several attacking resources that are worth remembering:

- The threat is more dangerous than the execution. Keep the threat alive as long as necessary!
- A passed pawn is often an underestimated ally in the attack on the king;
- Make sure the king cannot escape the discovered attacks too soon;
- The Windmill works best in two different directions (e.g. 7th rank and g-file).

2.5 Defending against a Windmill

One thing should have become very clear after the previous examples. The Windmill can be a very powerful weapon! Even more so if the rook manages to work in two different directions, both the 7th rank and the g-file. So, what should you do when you face such a nasty construction? In most of the cases: swallow your pride, sit still and wait for the storm to pass. If you are lucky, your opponent has already invested too much material and is unable to regain it all or mate you. In those cases, a draw by perpetual will be the most likely outcome.

If this is not enough and tough defence is required, you have two options. The best one is to block the long diagonal, breaking the coordination between the rook and the bishop. If this is not possible, you can try to take the sting out of the Windmill by focusing on the Achilles' Heel of the battery: the back piece.

Blocking the long diagonal

The Windmill becomes completely harmless if you manage to disconnect the rotor from the blade.

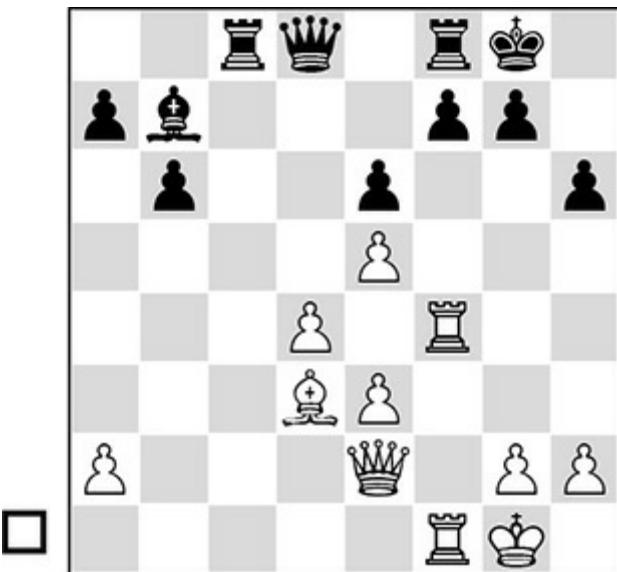
Game 33

Alexandru Mihai Cotruta

1886

Stefan Mario Berechet

1586



The pressure on the f-file gives White a clear advantage, but precise play is required. As soon as his initiative fades away, he will be stuck with an inferior pawn structure.

21. ♔g6!

Maximizing the pressure.

21... ♕c7 22. ♔h5

The right idea, but too hasty. 22.h4! would have been much stronger, keeping the black queen out first.

22... ♕g5!

Suddenly Black takes over.

23.g3 ♕c2

But now it is Black's turn to be impatient. The rook is too important as a defender. Moreover, Black does not need to win in the attack since he can easily make progress with a move like 23...b5, emphasizing that White is unable to improve his position.

24. ♔xf7+! ♕h8



25. ♔xg5

Often, when we capture a queen, we more or less expect our opponent to take it back since it is such an

important piece. However, there is no rule stating that we are obliged to recapture. If White had been familiar with the strength of a Windmill, he would most certainly have opted for the main defensive resource: blocking the long diagonal with 25.e4! when White is clearly on top after, for instance, 25... \mathbb{Q} xh5 26. \mathbb{Q} xh5 \mathbb{Q} xf4 27. \mathbb{Q} xf4 \mathbb{Q} h7 28. \mathbb{Q} g4.

25... \mathbb{Q} g2+! 26. \mathbb{Q} h1



26... \mathbb{Q} xg3+

White gets a second chance to break the Windmill. 26...hxg5! would have restored the material balance and kept the threats alive. There is no way White can keep this position together. Black wins a piece after, for instance: 27.e4 gxf4 28. \mathbb{Q} xg2 \mathbb{Q} xe4+ 29. \mathbb{Q} h3 \mathbb{Q} xf7.

27.e4 \mathbb{Q} xg5 28. \mathbb{Q} xe6

Ouch... this move allows a nasty trick. 28.h4! was the way to go, with total dominance; for instance, 28... \mathbb{Q} g3 29.d5 exd5 30.e6 and the pawn is unstoppable.

28... \mathbb{Q} xe4+! 0-1

Chasing the back piece

If disconnecting the parts does not work, we have to focus our energy on the most vulnerable part of the construction: the rotor.

Game 34

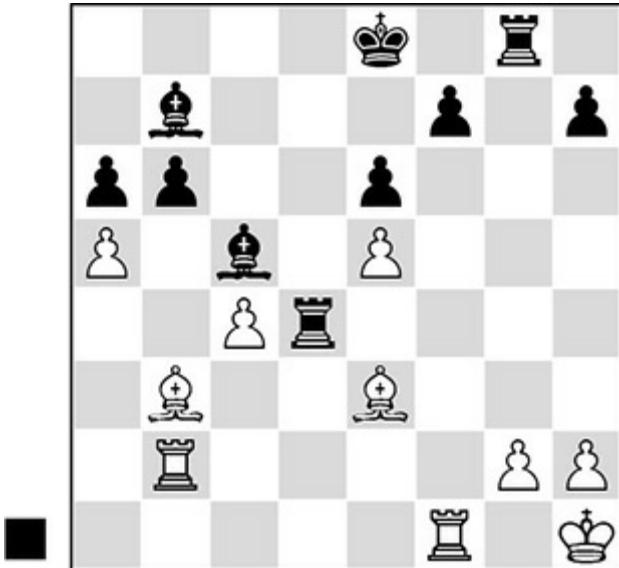
George O'Toole

2241

Adam Radnai

2288

Budapest 2016 (8)



Black is facing a tough choice. Should he increase the pressure or strike at g2 straightaway?

30... ♜dg4

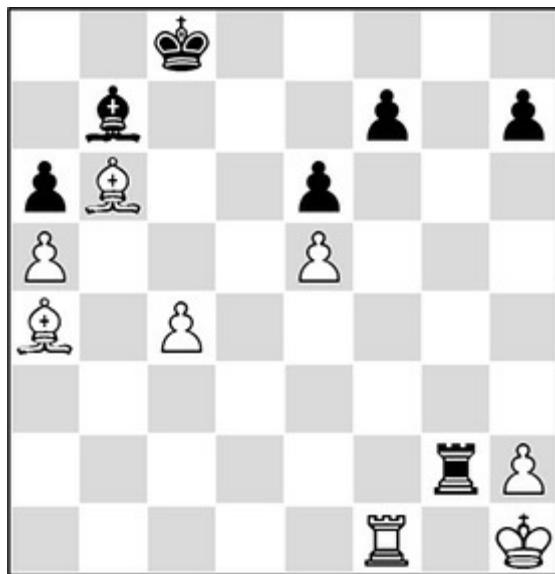
The patient approach. Unfortunately, White is going to use this time to build up a counterattack. It would, therefore, have been much stronger to opt for the forcing 30... ♜xg2! 31. ♜xg2 (31. ♜a4+ b5!) 31... ♜g4 32. ♜xc5 ♜xg2+ 33. ♜g1 ♜xf1+ 34. ♜xf1 bxc5 with a winning position.

31. ♜a4+ ♛d8

31...b5 32.cxb5 ♜xa4 33. ♜xc5 axb5 would still have given Black a slight edge.

32. ♜xc5 ♜xg2 33. ♜xb6+ ♛c8 34. ♜xg2 ♜xg2

34... ♜xg2+ 35. ♜g1 ♜c6+ 36. ♜f2 ♜xa4 was required, after which a draw would have been the most likely result. After the text move, we have arrived at a very interesting position.

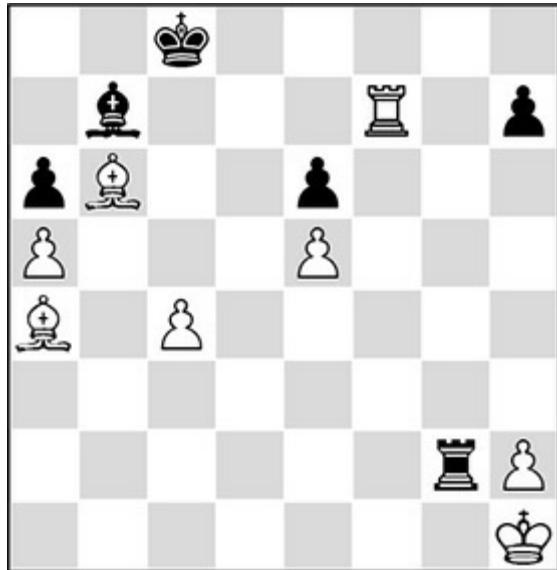


35.h4

This move steers the game into a perpetual after

35... ♜a2+ ½-½

White could, however, have aimed his forces at the Achilles' Heel of the construction by playing 35. ♜xf7!!.



analysis diagram

Suddenly the Windmill does not look so strong anymore. White threatens a back-rank mate and discovered attacks like 35... $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ can simply be answered with 36. $\mathbb{R}xb7 \mathbb{Q}xb7$ 37.c5 with a winning ending.

Conclusion

It is very hard to defend yourself against a well-constructed Windmill. The best remedy is often to sit still and hope for the best. If you prefer a more active defence, there are two techniques to remember:

- Blocking the long diagonal;
- Chasing the back piece.

2.6 FLASH CARDS



Attack from two sides

Try to put your rook on the 7th rank and enable the flexible queen to switch between files and ranks. It is very hard to defend against an attack from two sides.



Achilles' Heel

Find the spot where you can hurt your opponent the most! Black just manoeuvred his queen from c5 to b8 in order to invade the crucial g3-square. White is suddenly lost.



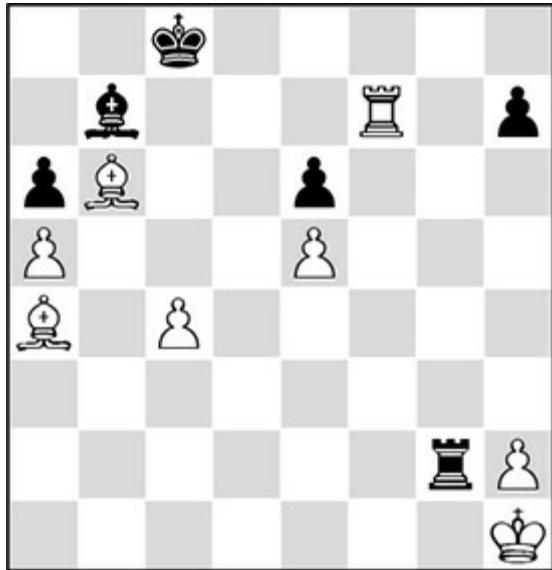
Keep working on your mating patterns

Being familiar with an endless amount of mating patterns is one of the most important assets for a chess player. It requires constant practice!



The threat is stronger than the execution

The battery is one of the most powerful tactical devices. It is so powerful that preserving it in order to keep the threat alive is often more important than the actual execution.



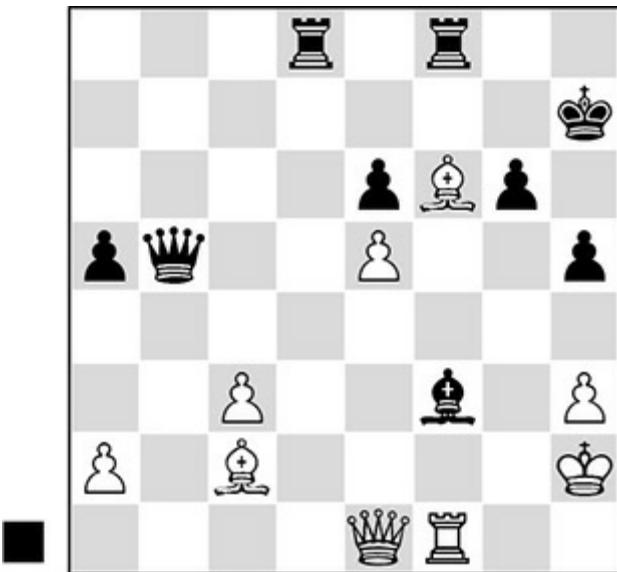
Go after the back piece

There are two ways to neutralize a battery:

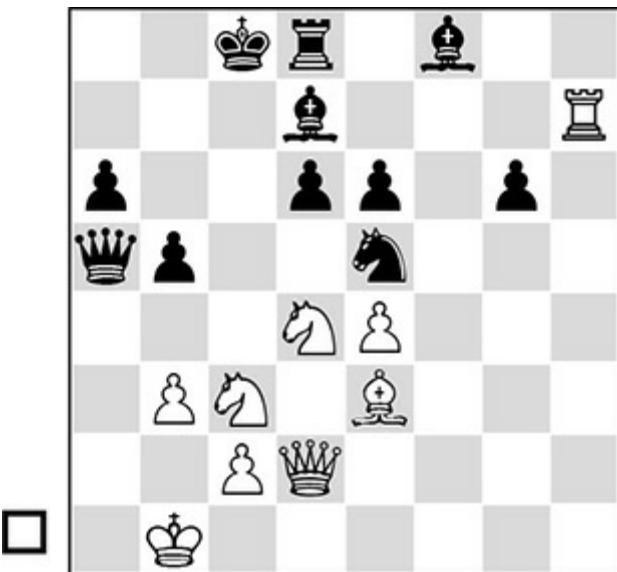
- * Block the file or diagonal in order to disconnect the two pieces; or
- * attack the back piece!

Exercises – 7th rank

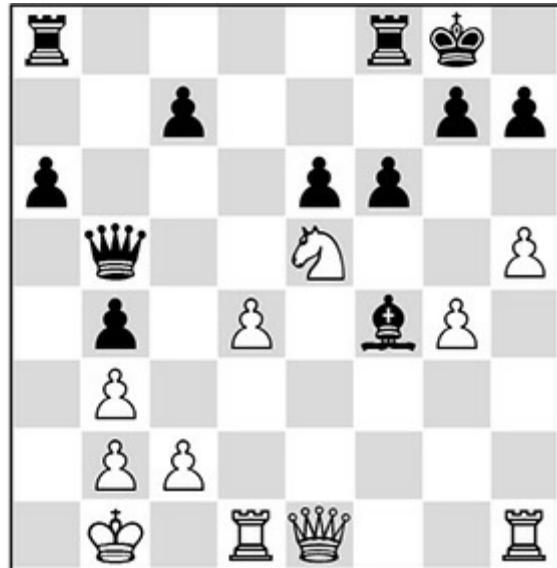
Solution 2.1



Solution 2.2

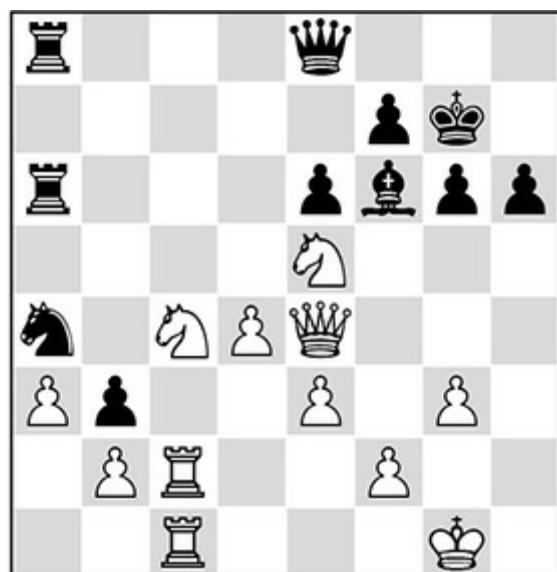


Solution 2.3



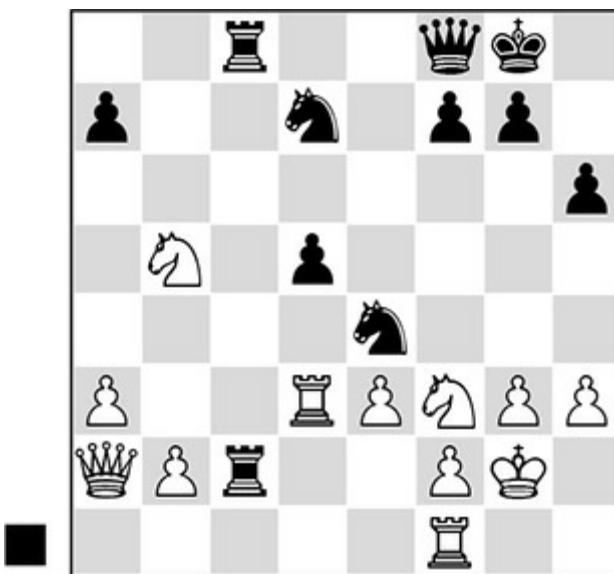
□

Solution 2.4

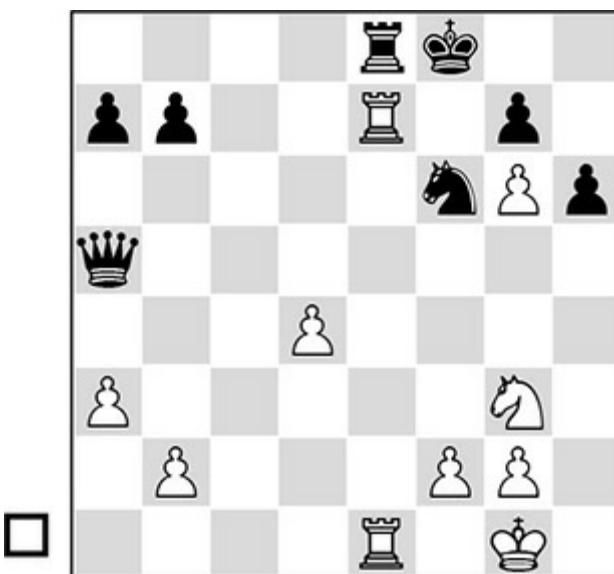


□

Solution 2.5

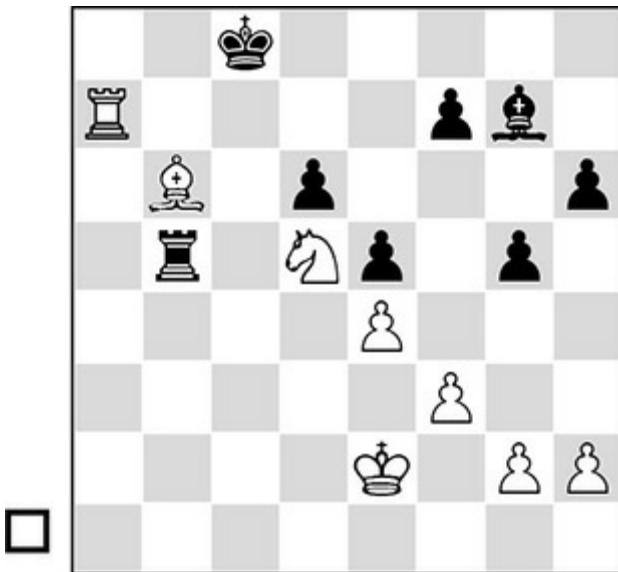


Solution 2.6

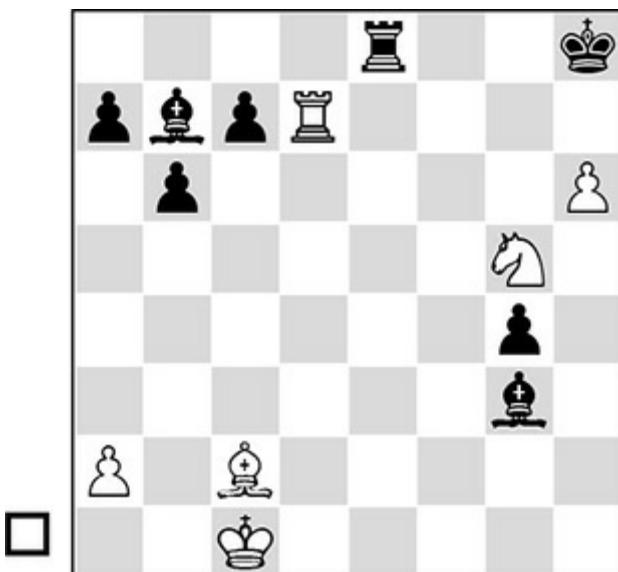


Mate in 3

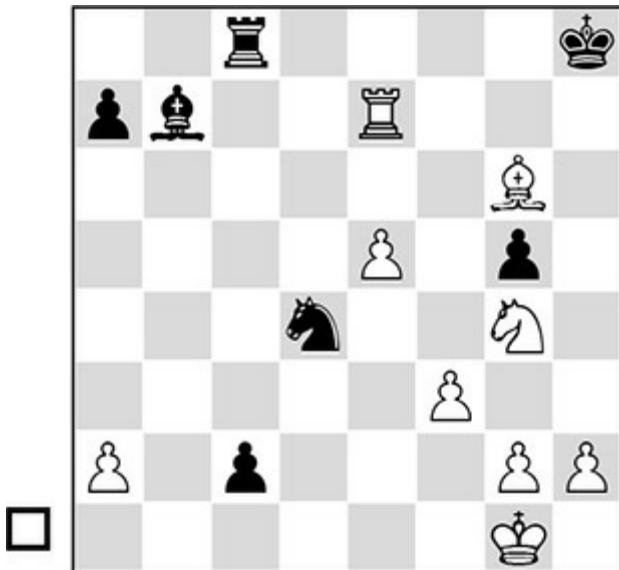
Solution 2.7



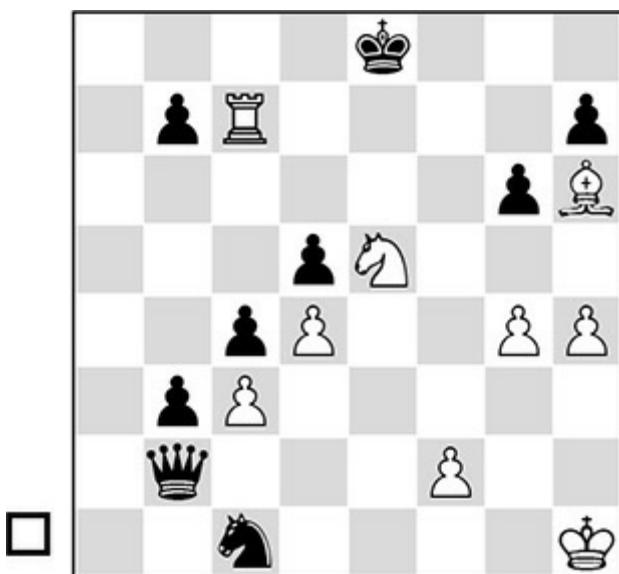
Solution 2.8



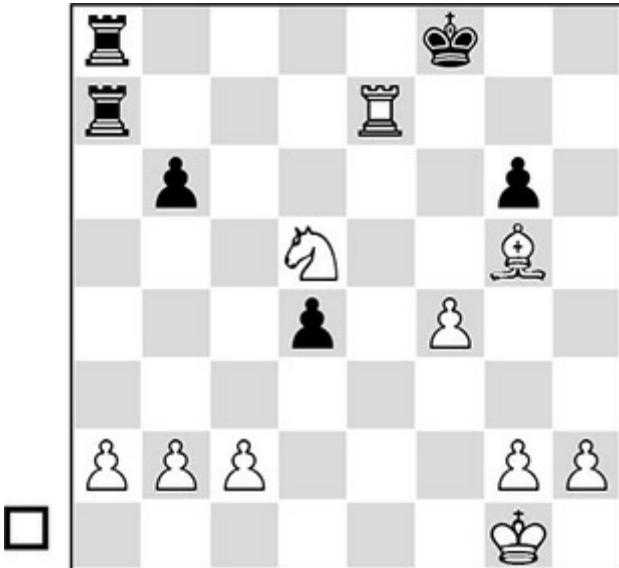
Solution 2.9



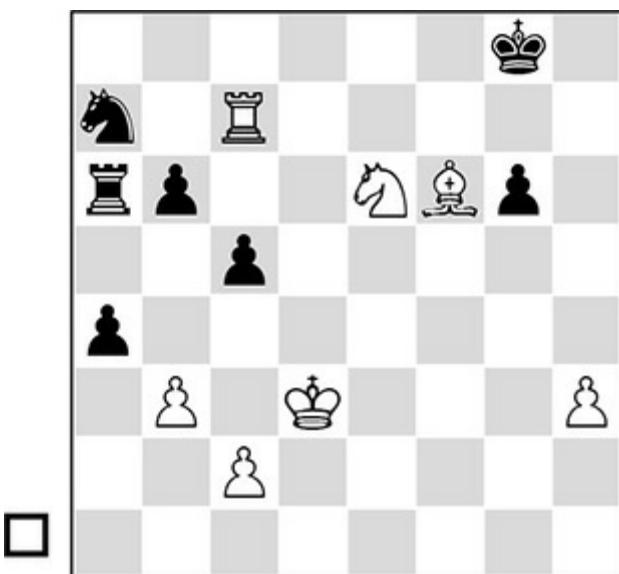
Solution 2.10



Solution 2.11

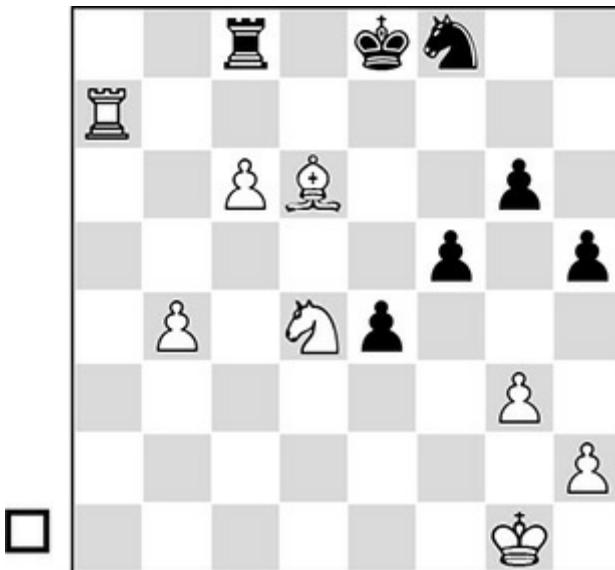


Solution 2.12

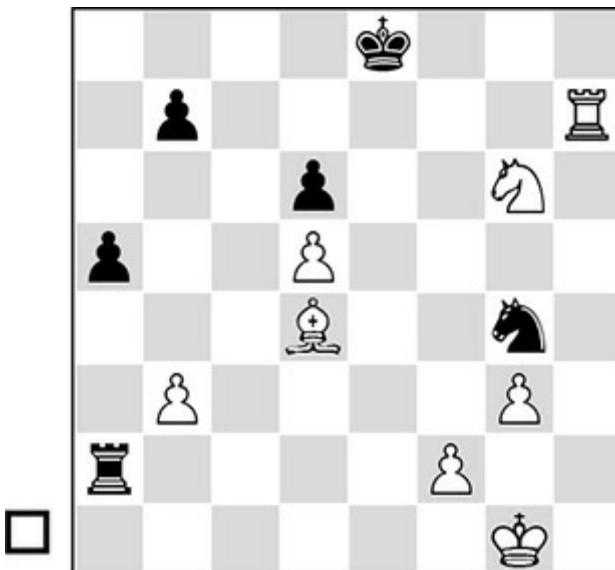


Mate in 4

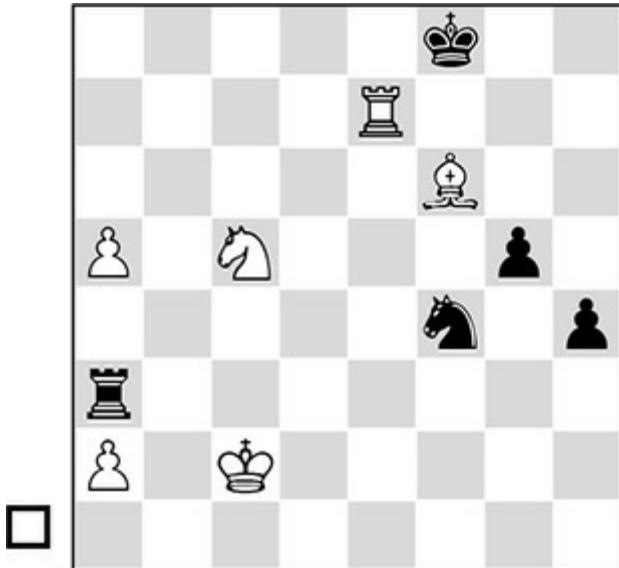
Solution 2.13



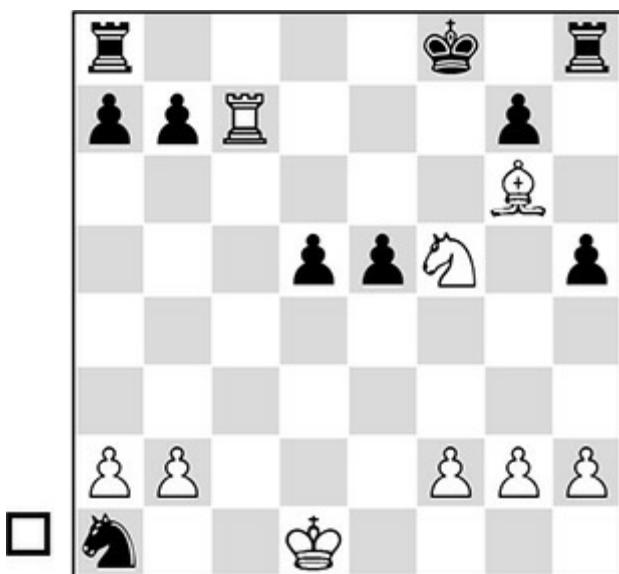
Solution 2.14



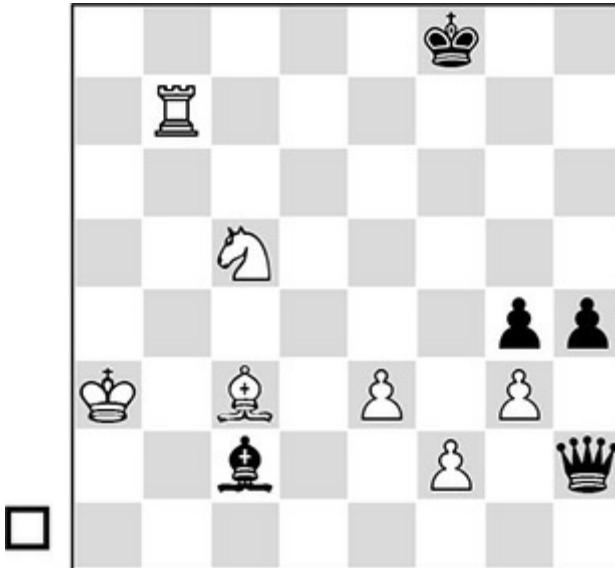
Solution 2.15



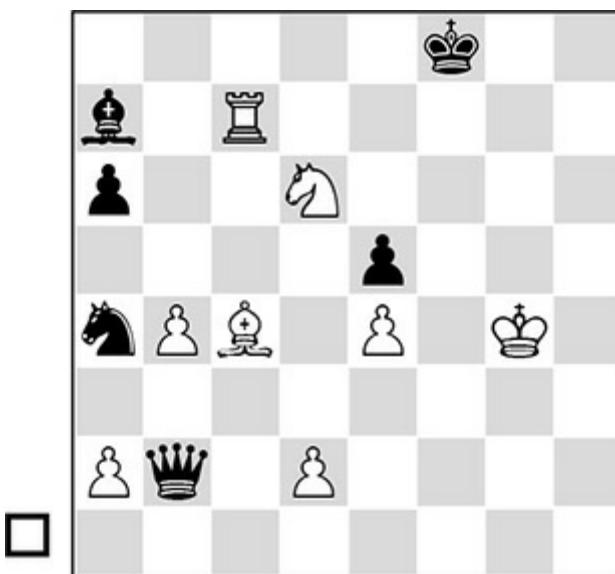
Solution 2.16



Solution 2.17

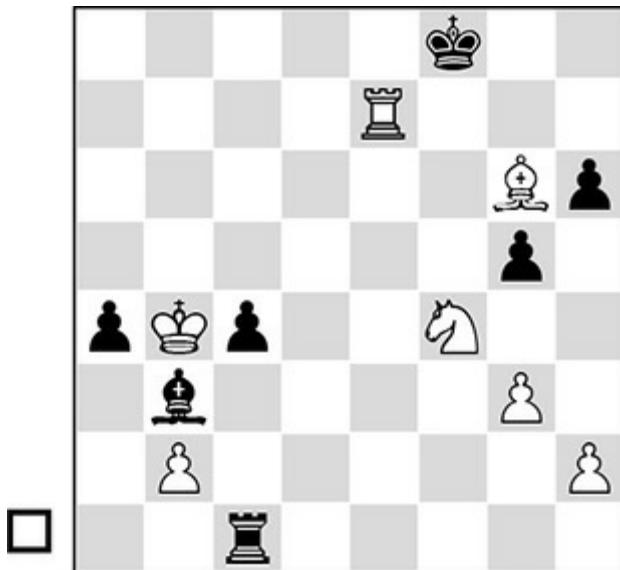


Solution 2.18



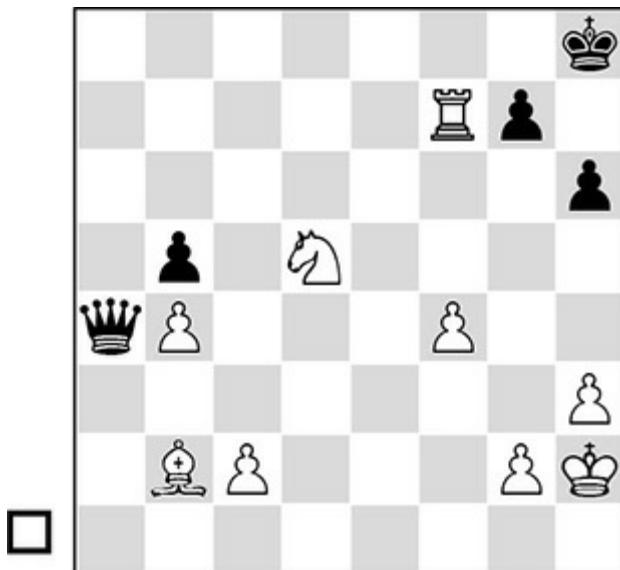
Difficult mates

Solution 2.19



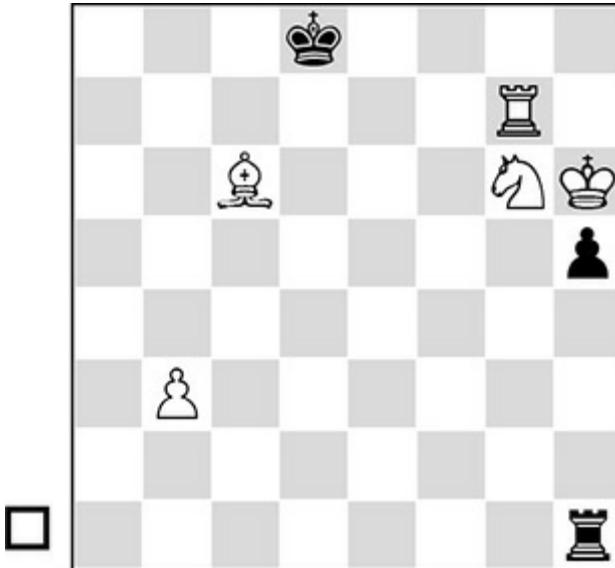
Mate in 4

Solution 2.20



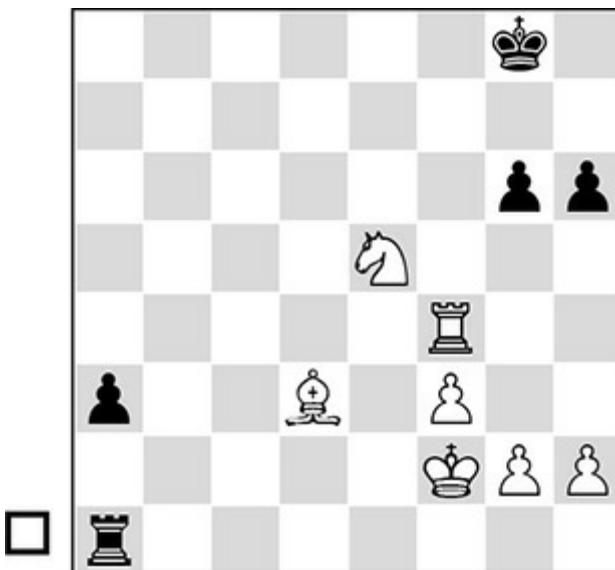
Mate in 4

Solution 2.21



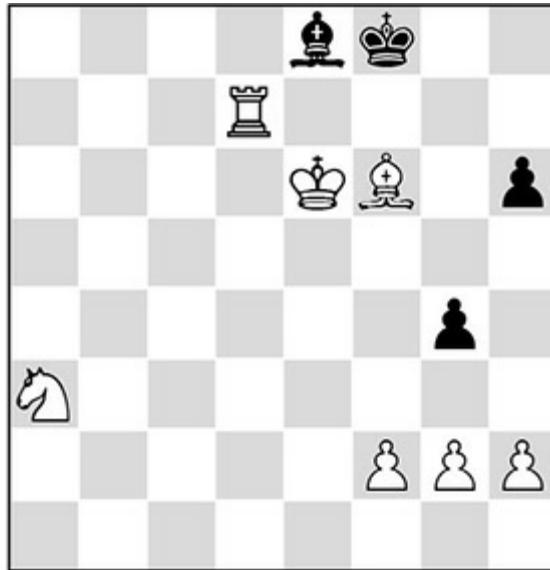
Mate in 5

Solution 2.22



Mate in 5

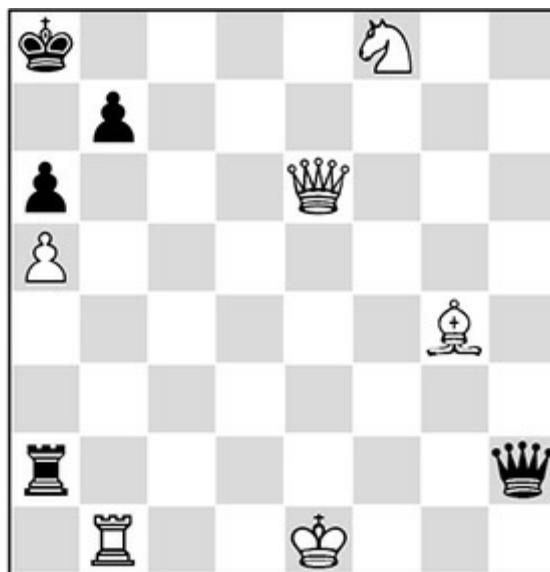
Solution 2.23



□

Mate in 5

Solution 2.24

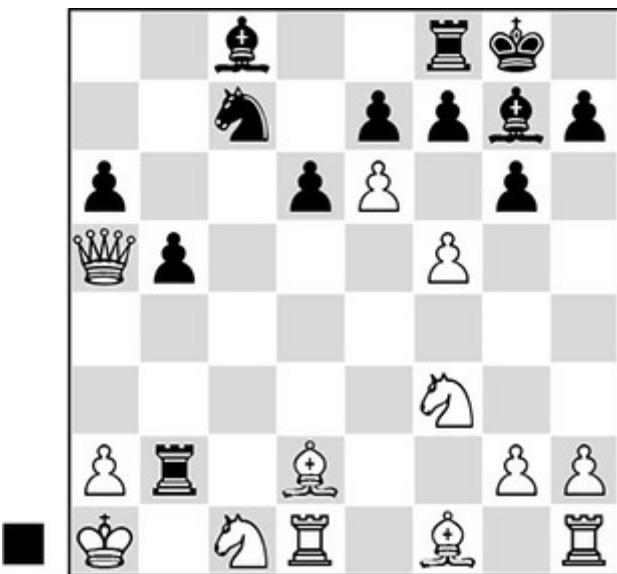


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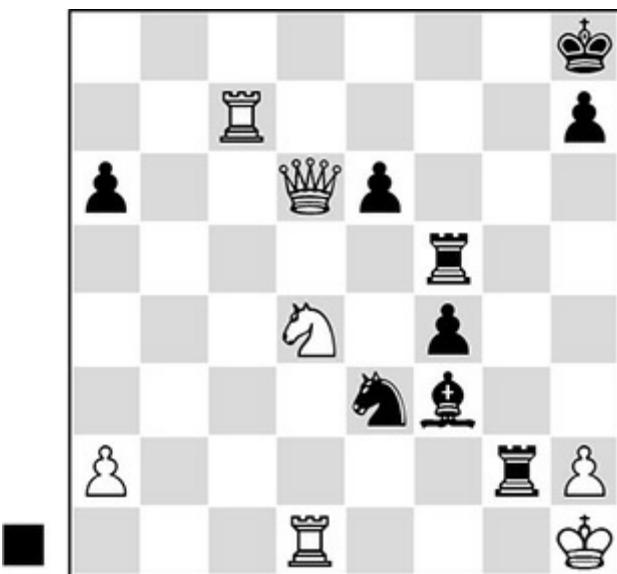
Mate in 6

The Windmill

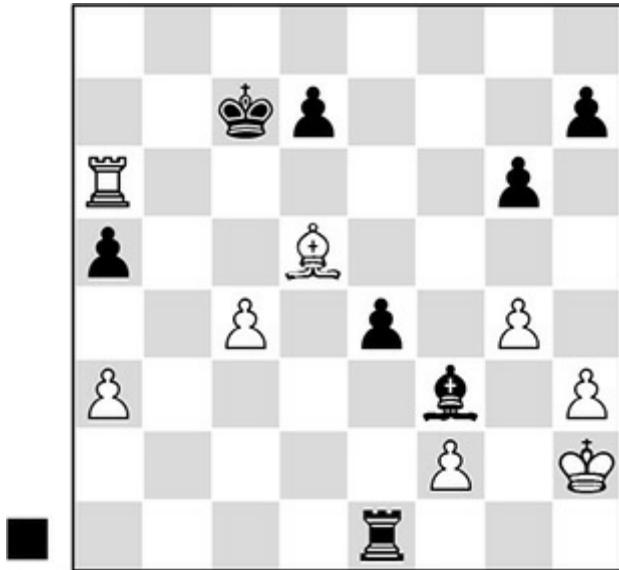
Solution 2.25



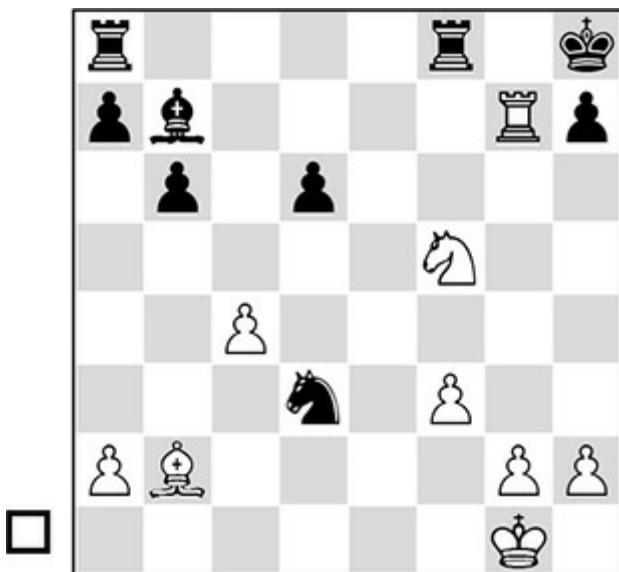
Solution 2.26



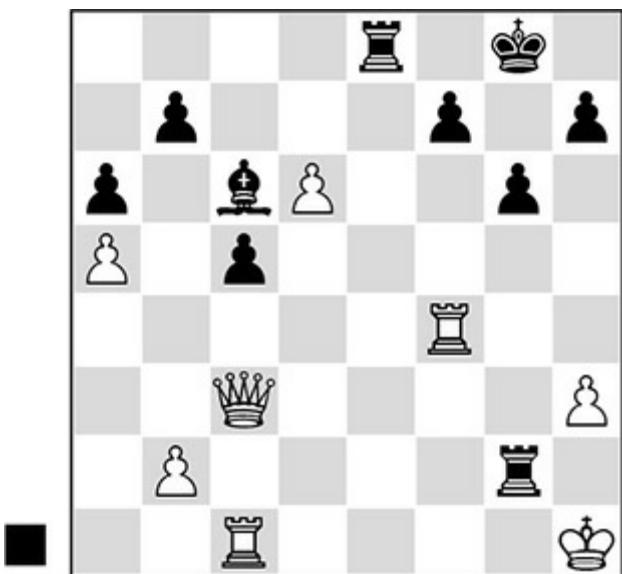
Solution 2.27



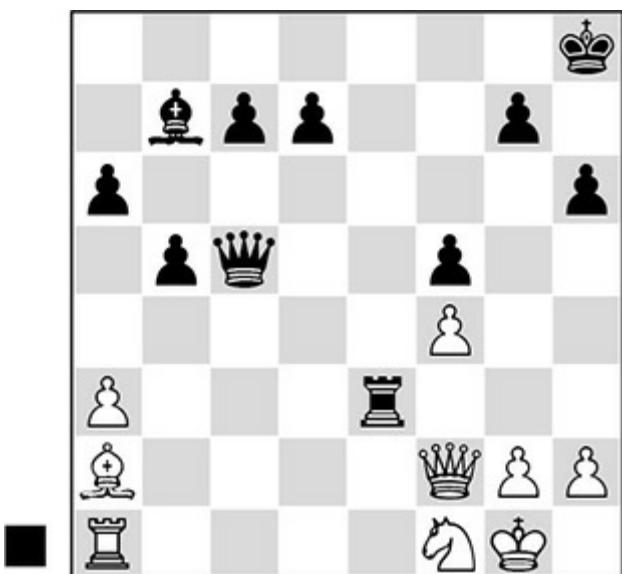
Solution 2.28



Solution 2.29



Solution 2.30



CHAPTER 3

Entering the 7th rank

3.1 Introduction

A promising 7th rank in itself is not enough to justify a fierce battle for the open file. The rank is still pretty useless if your rook is unable to enter it. What you need is an available **entrance square**.

Take, for instance, the following position:

Game 35

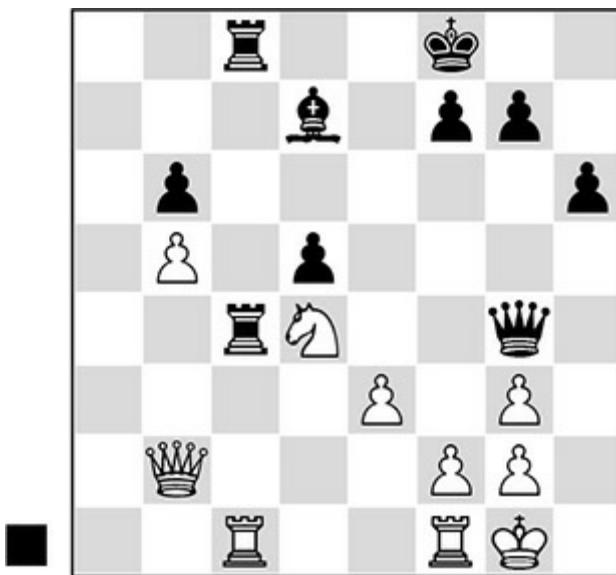
Abhijeet Gupta

2632

Irine Kharisma Sukandar

2407

Doha 2014 (1)



Black has put her cards on the c-file and followed all the necessary steps to acquire a dominant position on it. In the meantime, her opponent opened the a-file. It looks like Black is already far ahead and should have the better chances. But there is one thing missing: an entrance square! The white knight spoils all the fun. As long as it stays in place, Black will never be able to benefit from her dominant rooks. Even worse, she has to be extremely careful since White does have an entrance square on the a-file.

33... ♜e4

A very instructive mistake. From a psychological point of view, it must be very hard to give up the two dominant rooks and switch to defence mode with 33... ♜xc1 34. ♜xc1 ♜xc1+ 35. ♜xc1 ♛g8. Still, this was the right thing to do.

Now it is White's turn. The Indian grandmaster is about to try his luck on the a-file and demonstrate to us how an entrance square can make the difference.

34. ♜a1! h5

Black still seems to be a bit too optimistic. It was time for a prophylactic move like 34... $\mathbb{Q}g8$.

35. $\mathbb{R}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}4c7$ 36. $\mathbb{R}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}a3+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 39. $\mathbb{R}a1$

White is of course not interested in the d-pawn. This would only give Black more chances for counterplay.

39... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}c6!$



It was time to shut down the c-file to free the white rook from the task of protecting the back rank.

40... $g6$ 41. $\mathbb{R}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 42. $\mathbb{R}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}a1+$

Simple and strong. The white queen provokes 43...f6 and then returns to her original square. The weakening of the 7th rank might turn out useful later in the game.

43... $f6$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}a8$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$

There were many wins, but this is certainly the most elegant one.

48... $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $h4$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 1-0

Now we know that without an entrance square, there is no point in fighting for an open file. So, what can we do if this important square is currently unavailable? Gupta already showed us one technique: **switching lanes**. You could leave the open file with your rook and try your luck on another one – ideally, one that does have a vacant entrance square.

If you do not have this opportunity, you will have to fight for your entrance square. Luckily, there are at least two techniques you can rely on: **eliminating the defence** and **using an outpost**. They will both be discussed in this chapter.

It speaks for itself that defensive resources also have to be taken into consideration along the way. Otherwise you might end up with the false impression that the struggle for an open file is an easy one. Various defensive techniques will be dealt with in the final paragraph.

The aim of this chapter is to familiarize you with both these attacking and defending techniques that can be used in the fight for the entrance square on the 7th rank.

3.2 Eliminate defenders

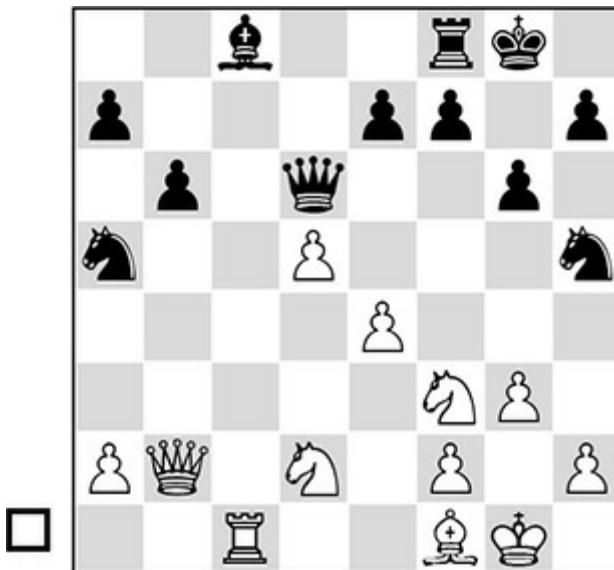
The most common approach to gain control over an entrance square is by getting rid of all the defenders. We already got acquainted with this technique when we discussed *the right exchange*. Eliminating the defenders can be a pretty straightforward job.

Game 36

Manuel Fenollar Jordà

Carlos Garcia Fernandez

Cullera 2007 (2)



White just forced his opponent to trade a pair of rooks on c1 and lured the black bishop to c8. He is now in control of the c-file and rightly considered that the black queen is the only reason why he cannot enter the 7th rank yet.

24.♘e5!

Chess can be very simple if you know what to do.

24...f6 25.♗xd6 exd6 26.♖c7

Mission accomplished! Suddenly the entire black position starts falling apart.

26...a6 27.♗d4 b5 28.♗a7 ♜g7 29.♗xb5 axb5 30.♖xa5 ♜d7 31.♗xb5 ♜xb5 32.♖xb5 ♜a8 33.♗c4 ♜e8 34.a3 f5 35.exf5 gxf5 36.♖b6 1-0

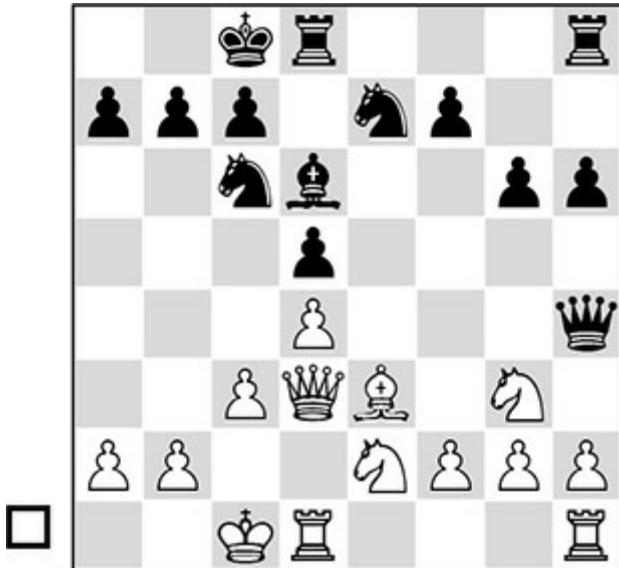
This famous game is a subtler version of the same theme.

Game 37

William Winter

Alexander Alekhine

Nottingham 1936 (10)



Black has just exchanged the light-squared bishops on d3. His opponent now makes a mistake.

14.f4

This move not only reduces the mobility of the white pieces, but also weakens several squares on the e-file.

14...♝g4

It is very instructive to see the patience with which Black goes about exploiting his opponent's weaknesses. He starts by calling back his queen, which was a little out of play on h4.

15.h3 ♛d7 16.♞hf1

The next step is to fix White's weaknesses on the kingside.

16...h5 17.♝g1 h4 18.♞e2 ♜f5

The knight has found itself a wonderful outpost, putting pressure on e3 and keeping an eye on g3.

19.♞f3 f6 20.♞h2

After having improved all his pieces, it is now time for Black to focus on the e-file.

20...♜de8 21.♝d2 ♜e6 22.♝g4 ♜he8 23.♞de1 ♜8e7 24.♛d1 ♜e8

Black has maximized the pressure along the e-file. White is completely paralysed. There is, however, no entrance square available yet.

25.♝f3 ♜a5

Very instructive. Black uses the open file to dominate his opponent. Now he is going to open a second front. More on this technique in Chapter 5.

26.b3



Trying to keep the knight out, but without much success...

26...♞c4! 27.♝c1

27.bxc4 ♜a4+ leads to a forced mate.

27...♞ce3+!

And with a little detour, the knight has landed on the entrance square. The defenders of e3 are now eliminated one by one. The rest is easy.

**28.♝xe3 ♜xe3+ 29.♝xe3 ♜xe3 30.♚f2 ♜b5 31.♝c1 ♜xc3 32.♜xe7 ♜xe7 33.♚e1 ♜d7 34.♚f5 ♜e3 35.♚f2 g5
36.♚e1 ♜e4 37.♜xe4 dxe4 38.♚d2 ♜d6 39.♚c3 ♜f4 0-1**

Conclusion

The ‘eliminating the defender’ technique from Chapter 1 can also be applied when you are fighting for the entrance square. All you need to do is identify the defenders and find a way to exchange them.

3.3 Outpost

Another way to reach the desired goal is by making use of an outpost. This often involves a pawn on the 6th rank that covers the entrance square on the 7th. This way, you can simply put your rook on the entrance square and allow your opponent to take it. If you do this correctly, the recapturing move with the pawn will do more damage than the rook on the 7th rank itself.

Here is a very convincing example:

Game 38

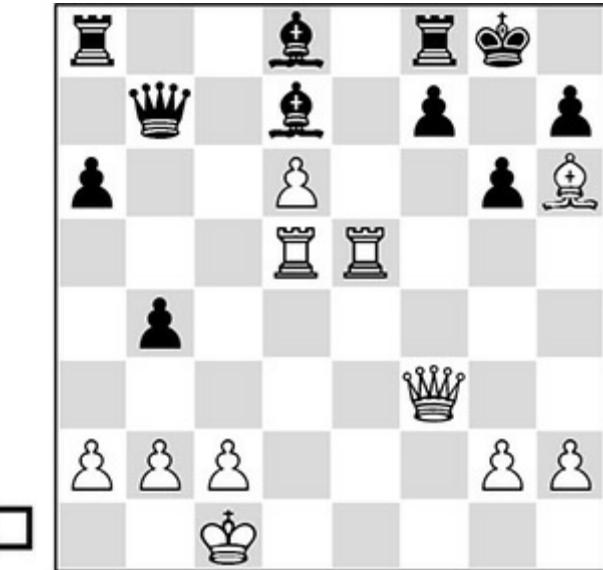
Iozefina Paulet

2308

Adriana Nikolova

2219

Plovdiv Ech W 2008 (7)



After a tense fight, White managed to push her opponent close to the edge. It's time to finish the game.

26. ♜e7!

A powerful move, shutting out the most important defenders. Black now has to take drastic measures to prevent 27. ♔f6.

26... ♗xe7

The only move. 26...f5 27. ♔b3! is hopeless.

27. dxе7 f5 28. ♜d3!

White has found a new entrance square. This time, she is aiming her major pieces at d8.

28... ♗e6 29. exf8 ♗+ ♜xf8

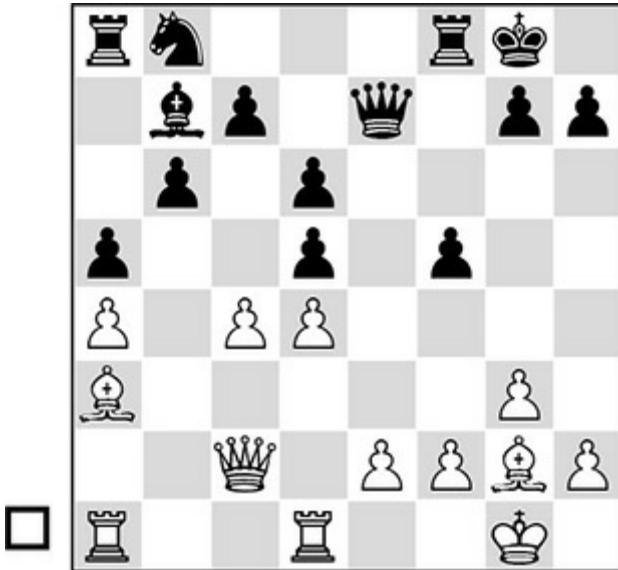


30. ♜d8!

The technique of attacking the enemy rook from two sides and forcing it to exchange itself for your rook is very common in the fight for an open file. More on this in the next chapter. It is very interesting to see that this technique can also be applied when you want to conquer a rank instead of a file.

30... ♗g7 31. ♗xg7 ♕xg7 32. ♜xf8 ♕xf8 33. ♗xa6 ♕e7 34. ♔b7+ ♕f6 35. ♗xb4 1-0

Outposts that reach all the way to the 7th rank usually do not fall from the sky. You have to create them yourself.



16.c5! c6

16...bxc5 17. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ c6 18.dxc5 or 16...dxc5 17.dxc5 would only make things worse.

17.cxd6 ♔e6

The outpost is in place – time to call in the rook.

18. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ ♕d7 19. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ ♕ae8 20. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ ♕f6 21. $\mathbb{Q}e7!$

Here we are!

21... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 22.dxe7

The untouchable pawn promised White a very clear advantage, which she managed to convert into a win.

Conclusion

An outpost can be a very valuable support for a rook entering the 7th rank. Ideally, the outpost should be constructed in such a way that the recapturing pawn does more damage than the rook itself. If this is the case, then the number of defenders of the entrance square is suddenly not so relevant anymore.

3.4 Defending your entrance squares

Defending is one of the toughest tasks in chess. As opposed to the attacker, the defender can rely less on standard schemes and has to put greater emphasis on prophylactic moves. This does not only make his calculations more complex, but the price for a mistake is much higher as well. It is therefore very useful to focus on defensive techniques. They should point you in the right direction and help you see the forest for the trees.

How to react when your opponent controls the open file and he has an entrance square for his rook in sight?

There are in general four techniques you can apply:

- Exchange the rooks;
- Seek counterplay;
- Guard the entrance square;

- Block the open file.

Exchange the rooks

We already came across an example of the first technique in the Gupta-Sukandar game. Black could have equalized by exchanging the rooks while she still had the chance.

Seek counterplay

The most effective response would arguably be to counterattack your opponent on another part of the board. Such counterattacks can of course take many forms or shapes. The dream scenario would be to checkmate his king while his rooks are on their way to the 7th rank.

Game 40

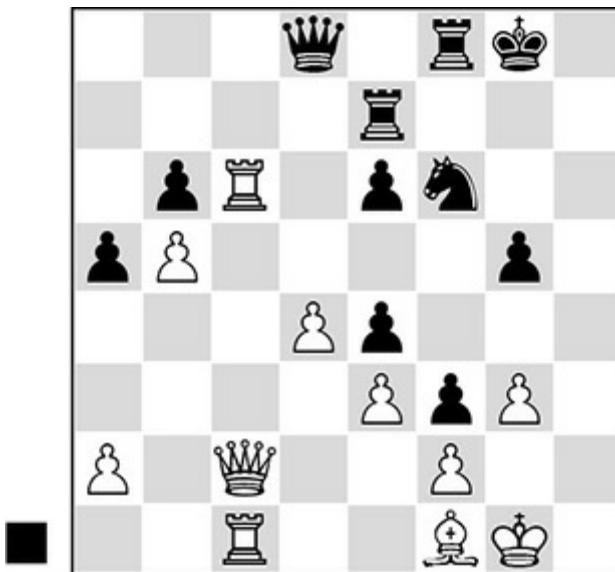
Alperen Akdogan

2152

Jergus Pechac

2443

Prague Ech U16 2016 (7)



30... $\mathbb{Q}e8!$ 31. $\mathbb{R}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 32. $\mathbb{R}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}h2+$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{R}fxg2+$ 0-1

Counterplay can, however, also occur in a subtler form. The most common way to create counterplay here is by opening a second file for your own rooks. Opening and closing files is the subject of the next chapter, but here is already a sneak preview:

Game 41

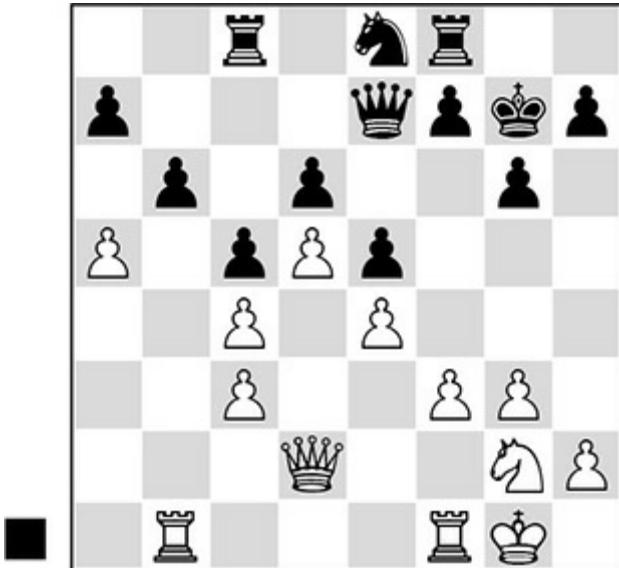
Justin Horton

2059

Max Gedajlovic

2304

Prague 2016 (3)



White just pushed his pawn to a5 and is getting ready to open up a file and be the first to occupy it.

21...bxa5!

The correct response! This way Black makes sure that two files are opened, also getting one for his own rooks.

22.♖b5 ♖c7 23.♖xa5 ♖b7 24.♖fa1 ♜f6 25.♘a2 ♖fb8



The black rooks are by no means inferior to their white counterparts. In fact, they have just prepared a little trap.

26.♖xa7

Too greedy. 26.♖b5 would have kept the game balanced.

26...♖xa7 27.♔xa7 ♖b1+!



This was the point. Black arrives first at the entry square, and with check! Moreover, the white king's position is quite weak and therefore far more susceptible to tactical combinations.

28. ♜f2 ♜xe4+! 29. fxe4

29. ♜e3 ♜g5+ 30. ♜xe4 ♜c1 31. ♜xb1 ♜xb1+ 32. ♜e3 ♜g1+ 33. ♜d3 ♜xg2 would not have saved the game either. The white king is far too weak, for instance: 34. ♜e3 ♜g1+ 35. ♜d3 ♜f2 36. ♜d7 ♜xf3+ 37. ♜d2 ♜f6.

29... ♜f6+ 30. ♜f4 ♜b2+ 31. ♜g1 exf4 32. ♜a3 ♜e2 33. ♜f1 f3

White resigned in view of ... ♜g2, ...g6-g5 and ... ♜h6. It is impossible for White to defend without losing a handful of pawns. In the end, it is the black rook on the 7th rank that decides the game!

Guarding the entrance square

We already discussed the importance of an entrance square for a rook. Keeping this square safe is therefore a useful defensive technique. It should have been applied in the following example:

Game 42

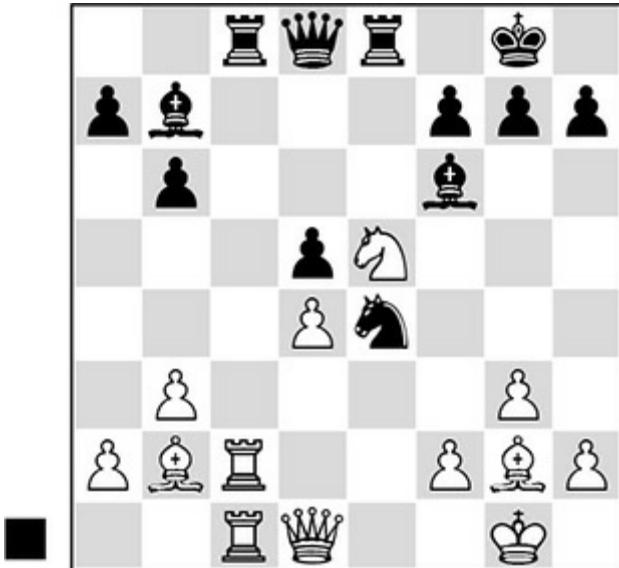
Igor Novikov

2589

Ronald Burnett

2433

Minneapolis 2005 (7)



Black is about to lose the control of the open file after $\mathbb{Q}h3$. He decided not to act upon it yet and played
20... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

A decision he would soon regret, since he will have to take drastic measures to close down the c-file later in the game.

21.h4! g6 22. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{R}xc2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$



Already there was nothing better. Black hits the break and decides to shut down the c-file. But now a new problem arises in the form of the a1-h8 diagonal.

24.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d4

A logical attempt to seek counterplay, but Black will hardly get any compensation for the pawn. 25... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is also insufficient. It closes the diagonal but opens up the file again: 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 27. $\mathbb{Q}c7$.

26. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{R}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}b4$

And White had no problems to convert his large advantage into a win.

Doing nothing was not a success in this game. Black should have voluntarily surrendered the open file and focused on the entrance square instead:

20... $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

An important intermediate move.

21.f4

The outpost for the knight is being secured. Time to call in the bishop for the defence of the entry square.

21... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h3$

22. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ leads to the same idea: 22... $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ with a balanced game.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$



The entry square is firmly secured. Black is doing fine.

Block the open file

In the next example, Black could have combined two different techniques: guarding the entrance square and blocking the open file.

Game 43

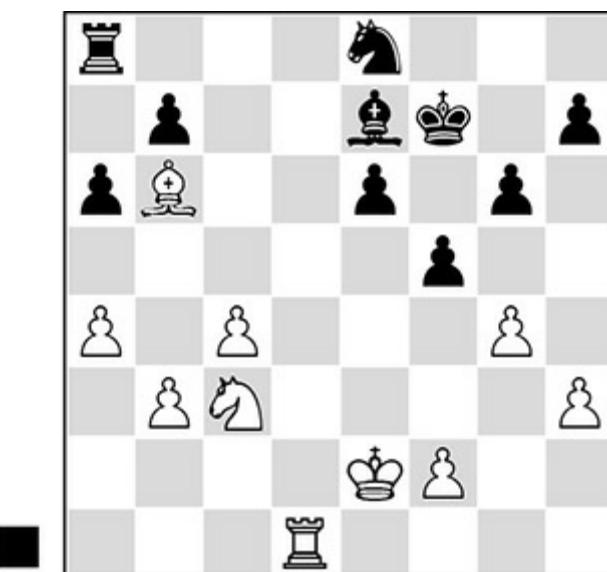
Thomas Fiebig

2416

Vlastimil Babula

2569

Germany Bundesliga 2009/10 (5)



White just provoked ...a7-a6 and secured control of the d-file by putting his bishop on b6. From here on the fight will be about the entrance square d7. Black therefore decided to cover it.

26... κ f6

White was not impressed and immediately expelled the knight.

27.g5! κ h5 28. κ d7

The rook has a solid place on the 7th rank. Black is suddenly in trouble.

28... κ e8 29. κ xb7 κ f4+ 30. κ f1 κ xh3 31.c5 κ xg5 32.b4 κ f3 33.b5 κ f6 34.bxa6

The control of the 7th rank, combined with the passed pawns, makes it hard for Black to hold this position.

34... κ xc3 35.a7 κ e5 36.c6 κ d2+ 37. κ e2 κ c4 38.a5 h5 39.c7 1-0

Black could have improved:

26... κ c8!



This multi-purpose move both takes prophylactic measures against the κ d7 and prepares the blockade of the d-file with ... κ c8-c6-d6! White has different approaches, but none of them are very convincing:

A) 27.f3 κ c6 28. κ e3 κ d6;

B) 27. κ d7 κ d6 (note that the black rook now prevents the deadly κ c5) 28.c5 (the critical move) 28... κ e8 29. κ xe7+ κ xe7 30.cxd6+ κ xd6 and the open files and the lack of outposts for the knight promise Black equal chances in this ending;

C) 27.a5 would be the most natural way to discourage ... κ c6, but now Black can either block the file with 27... κ d6 or switch back to his original plan 27...h6, preparing 28... κ f6.

Conclusion

Defending against a rook that is about to enter the 7th rank is not an easy thing to do. Often there is already an open file that is being controlled by your opponent and you are looking for a last resort to save the game. Luckily, there are at least four defensive techniques you can rely on.

In ideal circumstances, you are in a position where you can forget about your 7th rank and focus on creating **counterplay** instead. He can have your 7th rank, as long as you can checkmate his king.

If you do not have this opportunity, **exchanging all the rooks** could be the way to go. Without rooks, your opponent will be having a hard time putting one on the 7th rank.

If this does not work either, then you're going to need strong nerves. The most stubborn ways to fend off your opponent **are guarding the entrance square and blocking the open file**.

3.5 FLASH CARDS



Attacking technique 1: switch lanes

Black has nice rooks, but no entrance square. White successfully switched lanes with 34. $\mathbb{R}a1!$ and invaded the 7th rank via the a-file.



Attacking technique 2: eliminate the defender

Find the most important defender of the entrance square and get rid of it! White reached his goal with 24. $\mathbb{N}e5!$.



Attacking technique 3: use an outpost

An outpost is effective for entering the 7th rank if the recapturing move with the pawn does more damage than the rook itself.



Defensive resource 1: seek counterplay

Counterplay is the most important defensive tool. You can allow your opponent to enter the 7th rank and checkmate his king yourself.

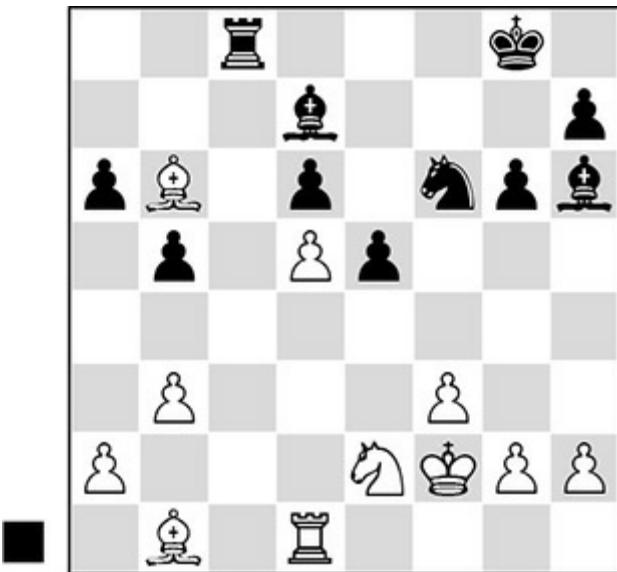


Defensive resource 2: protect entrance square

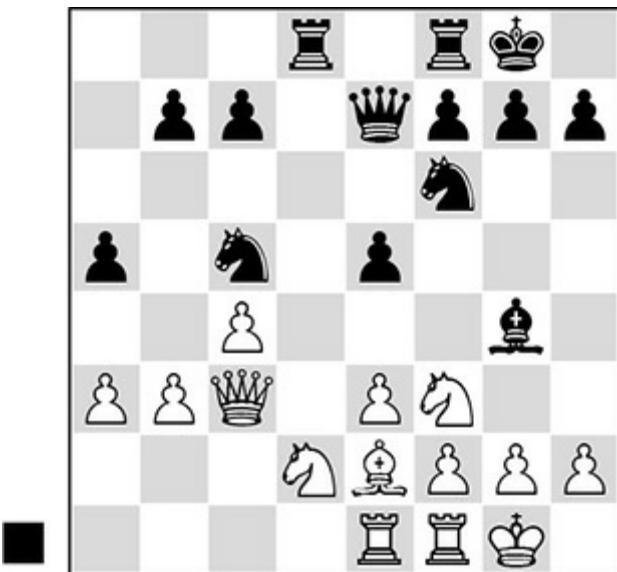
Black just exchanged his rook on the open file and surrendered the c-file to his opponent. There is no need to worry. White cannot take advantage since the black bishop controls the entrance square c7.

Exercises – Enter the 7th rank

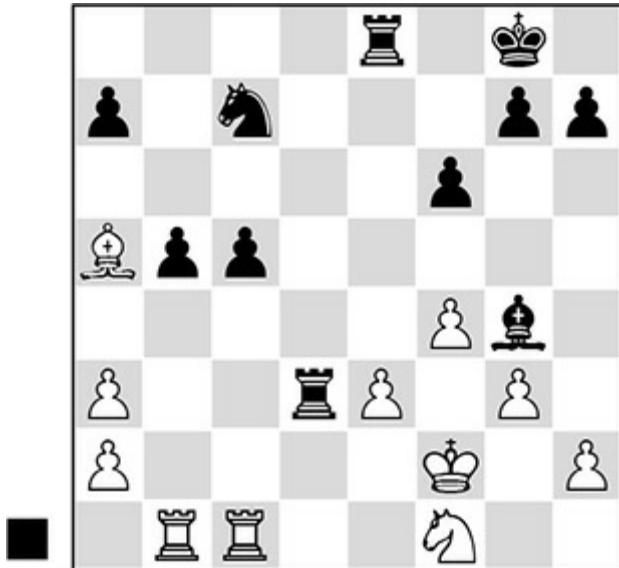
Solution 3.1



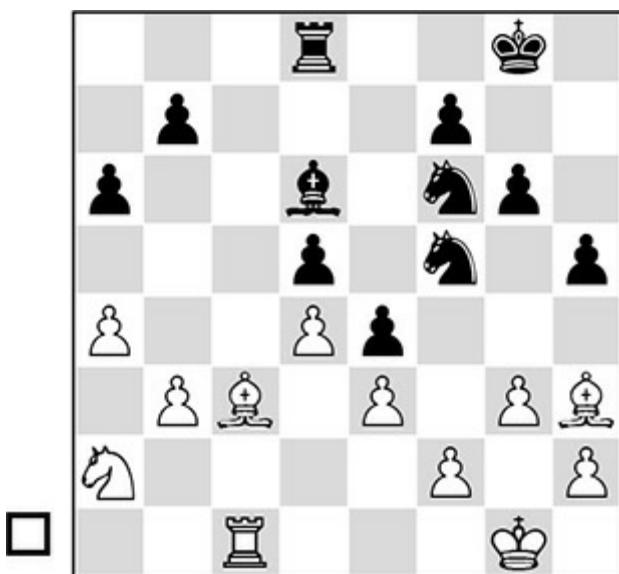
Solution 3.2



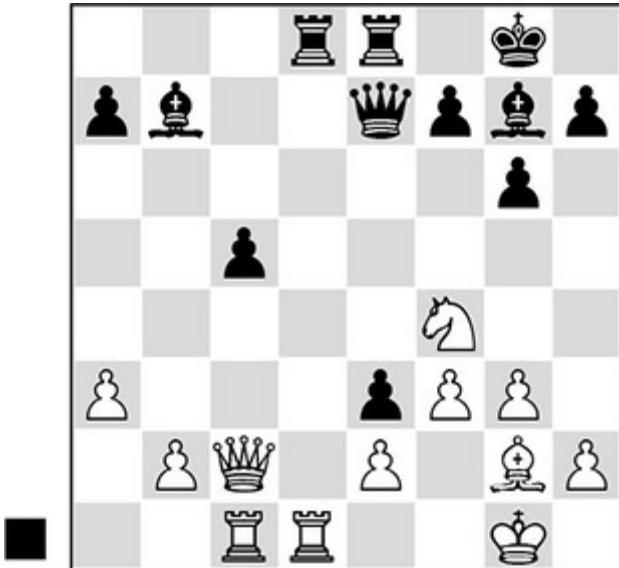
Solution 3.3



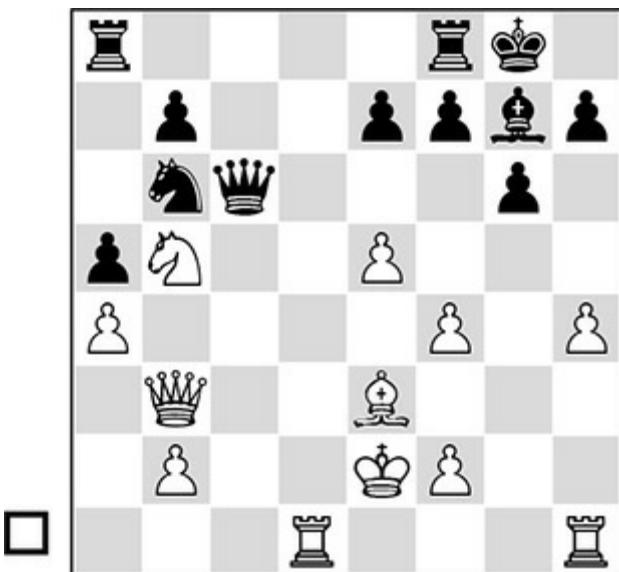
Solution 3.4



Solution 3.5

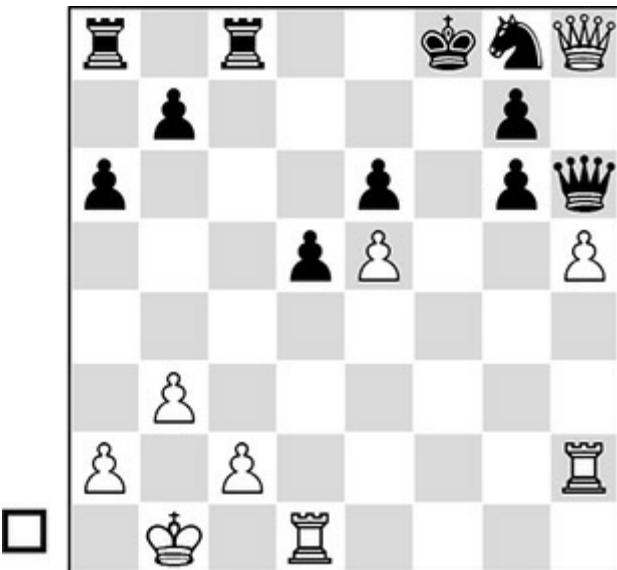


Solution 3.6

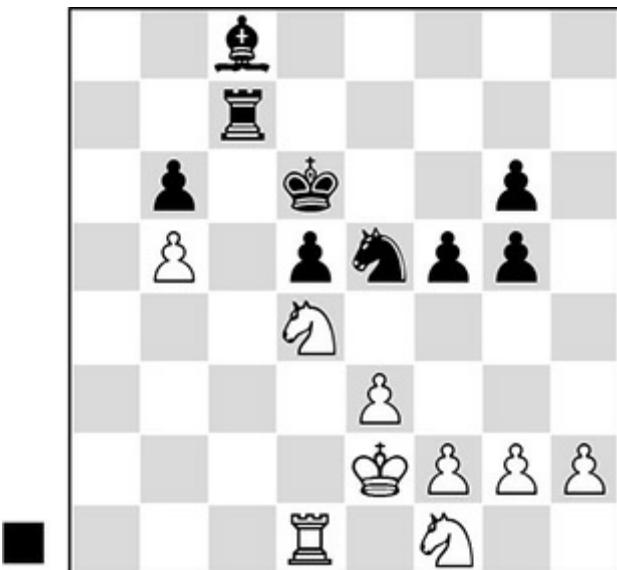


Enter the 7th rank 2 – difficult

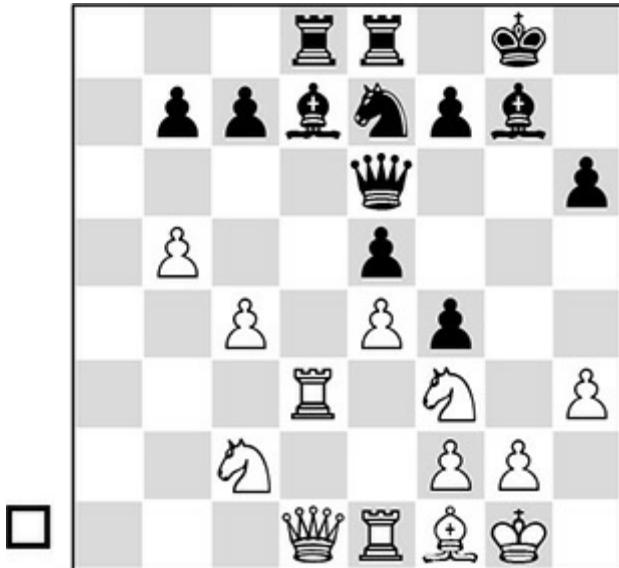
Solution 3.7



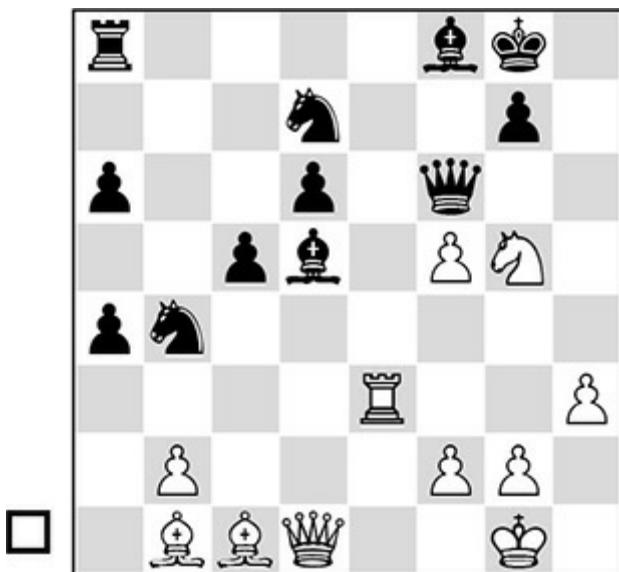
Solution 3.8



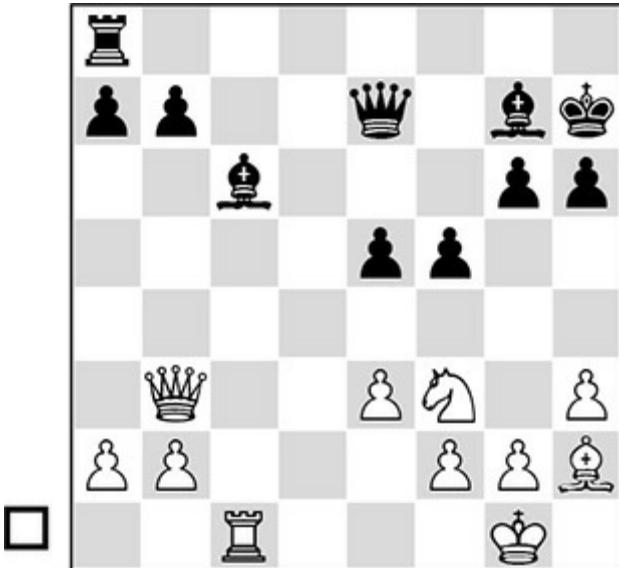
Solution 3.9



Solution 3.10



Solution 3.11



□

Solution 3.12

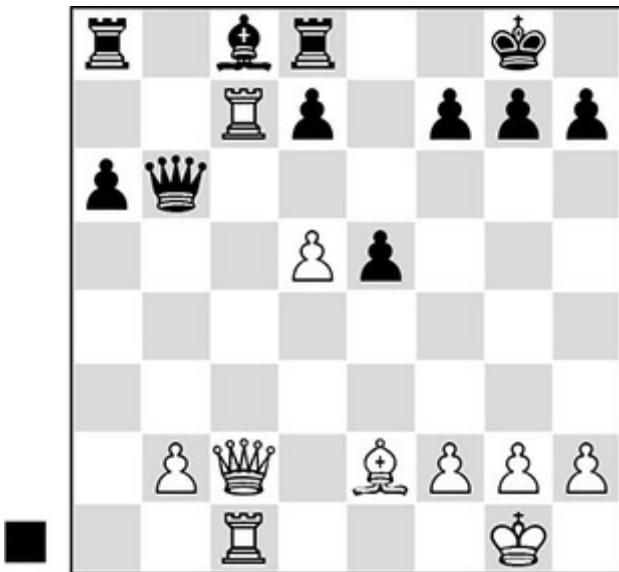


□

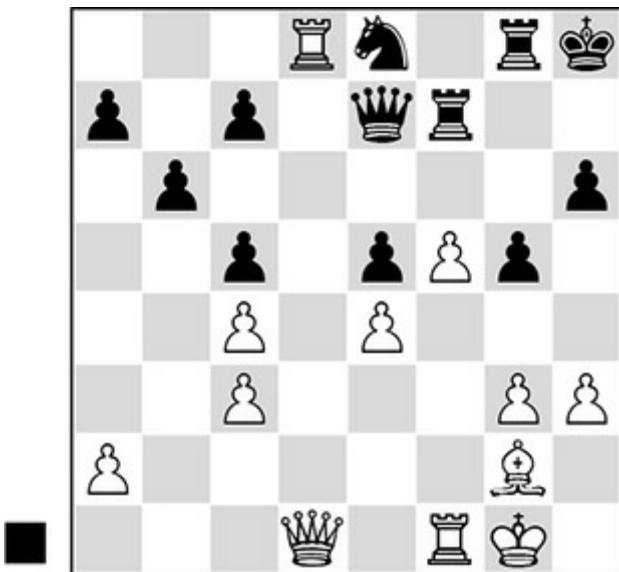
♞ e3-c1-a3 or ♞ b5 ?

Defend your 7th rank

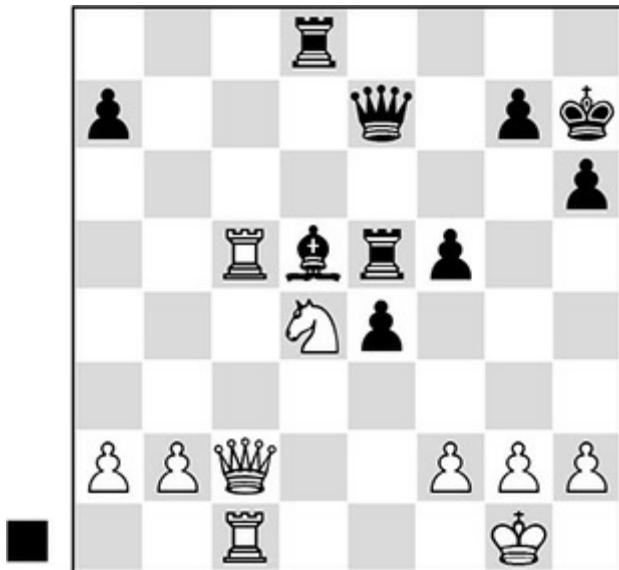
Solution 3.13



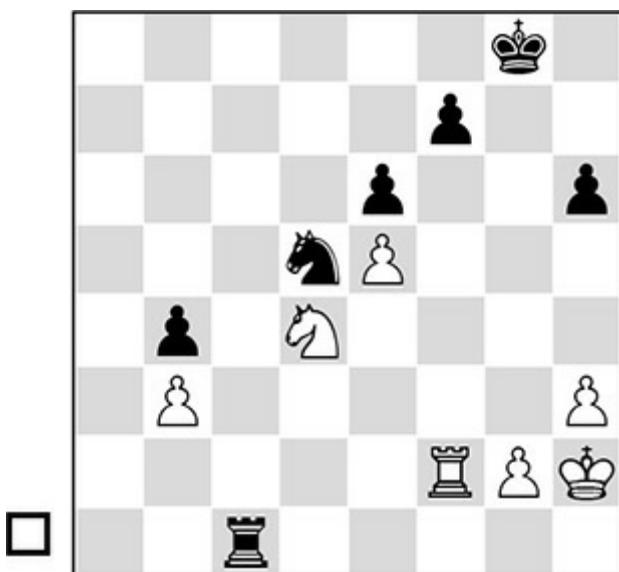
Solution 3.14



Solution 3.15



Solution 3.16



Solution 3.17



Solution 3.18



CHAPTER 4

Conquering the open file

4.1 Introduction

After covering different techniques for entering the 7th rank, it is time to take one step back and see how our rook got into this promising position in the first place. As an example, I want to repeat one of the first games from the previous chapter:



White understood the black queen's important defensive role, exchanged it with 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ and won convincingly.

This fragment only shows how Black got pushed over the edge. The seed for the successful transfer of the rook to the entrance square was planted seven moves earlier.

Game 44

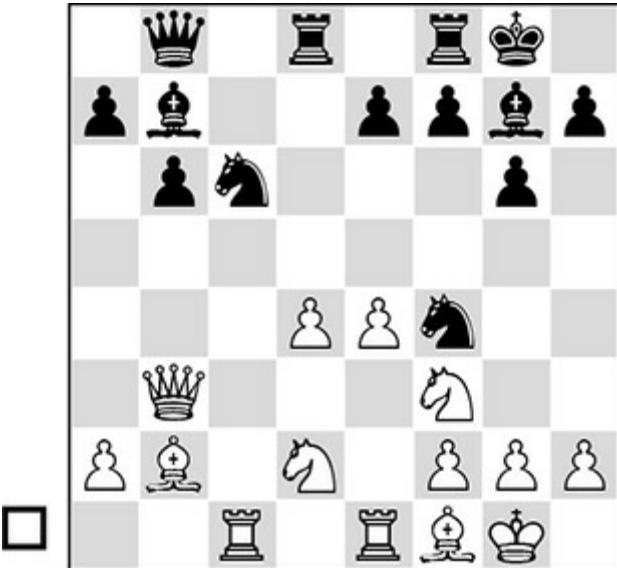
Manuel Fenollar Jordà

2287

Carlos Garcia Fernandez

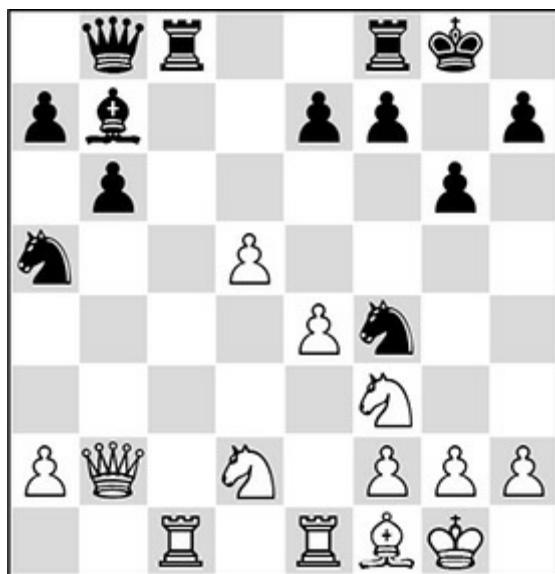
2377

Cullera 2007 (2)



White started by grabbing space in the centre and opening up the c-file.

17.d5 ♜a5 18.♗a3 ♜xb2 19.♗xb2 ♛c8



Both rooks have taken their spots on the open file. Now White comes up with a very instructive technique.

20.g3 ♜h5 21.♗h3!



Forcing the black rook to exchange itself on c1 or abandon the open file. Either way, White will temporarily seize control of the open file.

21... ♜xc1 22. ♜xc1 ♜c8

Black cannot oppose the white rook on account of the white light-squared bishop. Therefore, Black tries to remove it.

23. ♜f1 ♜d6

23... ♜d7 24. ♜a3 ♜e8 25. ♜d4 would also have been very good for White.

24. ♜e5

We already know what happened next.

The dividing line between the phase in which you gain control over the open file and the one in which you put your rook on the 7th rank is of course not always this clear-cut. Sometimes you have to switch back and forth between both phases – for instance, by allowing your opponent to expel your rook from the 7th in order to let it return with more force later.

Given the close relationship between both phases, you probably won't be surprised to find a few techniques in this chapter that are similar to the ones we discussed in the previous one. Hopefully you will recognize them and find out that repeating them in a slightly different setting will help you to master them even better.

The aim of this chapter

After studying this chapter, you will be able to master the most important techniques to gain control of an open file:

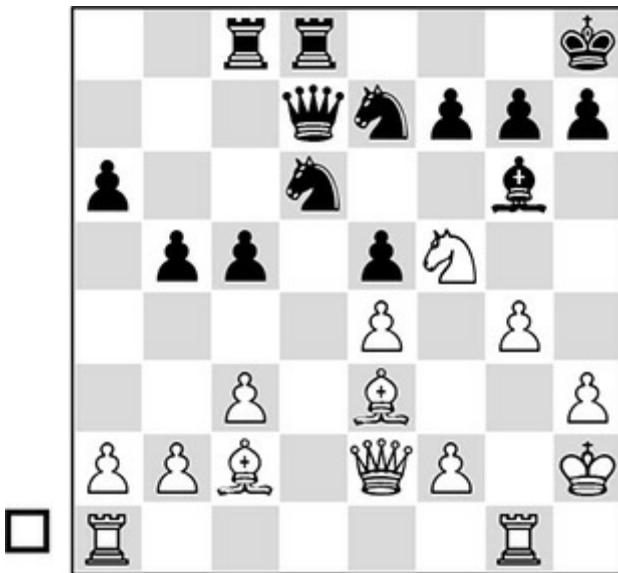
- Exchange one opposing rook and use the other to gain control;
- Use an outpost to double the rooks;
- Control the opposing rook's square.

The second technique should sound familiar. We already dealt with the outpost in the previous chapter. Only this time we are using it to double our rooks on the open file, instead of entering the 7th rank.

We will again finish the chapter with a few examples that show how you can set up a defence against your opponent's attempt to control the open file.

4.2 Exchange the opposing rook

This is the most straightforward approach. You start with exchanging one or more major pieces and then make sure you are the first to bring in new ones to control the file.



23. ♕ad1!

Nothing good would have come from an attack on the kingside, since Black would simply be able to react in the centre.

Therefore, White shifts his attention to the centre himself.

23... ♜e6 24. ♜xd6!

The knight was very well placed on f5, but instead of focusing on the pieces that disappear it is better to pay attention to the ones that remain on the board. White is going to take over the d-file by force and, furthermore, the bishop on g6 is going to feel left out.

24... ♜xd6 25. ♜xd6 ♜xd6

This was the first stage. One set of rooks have been exchanged. Now it is important to act quickly and direct the remaining rooks to the open file.

26. ♜d1 ♜c6 27. ♜d3

The open file is secured. Black can never oppose the dominance of two major pieces. The white queen is heading for the 7th rank.

27...c4 28. ♜d7



Conquering the 7th rank and forcing Black to exchange queens, which will increase White's domination even further.

28...♝xd7 29.♜xd7 ♜c6 30.g5

An elegant prophylactic move, preventing ...f7-f6, which would be an attempt to reactivate the bishop.

30...♝h5 31.♛g3 ♛g8 32.f3

Again, aimed at making life harder for Black's bishop.

32...♚f8 33.♜b7 ♚e8 34.a4!

Creating an extra weakness and an entrance for the light-squared bishop.

34...♜b8 35.♜c7 ♜d8 36.♜a7 b4 37.a5 b3 38.♜d1 1-0

Conclusion

Exchanging the major pieces on a file and quickly bringing up a new rook is an important technique for conquering an open file. Time is very important. Only go for the exchange if you are sure you will be the first one to put the remaining rook on the file.

4.3 Use an outpost to double the rooks

Another method to overpower your opponent on an open file is by doubling or tripling your major pieces. A common way to do this is by making use of an outpost. We already got acquainted with this concept in the chapter on the fight for an entrance square. An outpost can be a square on the open file that is protected by a pawn. An effective outpost is a square on which it is very unattractive for your opponent to capture the rook, because for instance the recapturing pawn will do a lot of damage.

Game 46

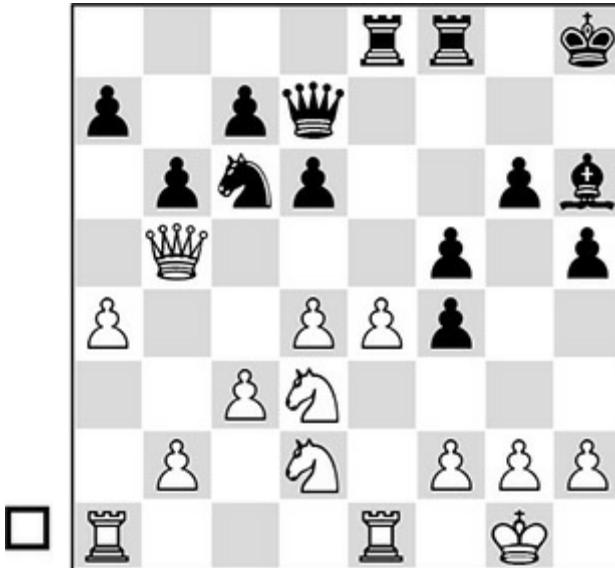
Lukasz Cyborowski

2534

Marcos Llaneza Vega

2424

Lublin 2017 (4)



With ...f7-f5, Black just provoked his opponent to set his centre into motion. White, however, does not mind at all since he is more than ready to open up the centre.

20.d5!

First the outpost is created.

20...♜b8 21.e5

Next, it is time to open up the file.

21...dxe5 22.♞xe5 ♜g7 23.♝ef3

An interesting alternative would have been 23.♝df3, temporarily keeping the file closed and preparing the doubling of the rooks. The text move is equally strong. White has correctly estimated that the black rooks cannot force a trade, so White will have enough time to execute his plan.

23...♝d7 24.♝d4!

Pointing all his pieces to the vital e6-square.

24...♛xe1+ 25.♚xe1 ♜f7 26.♝f3!

The most accurate move. 26.♝e6 ♜c5 might give Black some chances due to the weakness of the d-pawn. It is a very good habit to improve all your pieces first, before you execute your plan.

26...♛e8 27.♛e6!



The key move. The outpost is firmly under White's control. The rook is taboo, so White will have all the time

in the world to double on the e-file and push the black rook away.

27... ♕e7

The rook refuses to leave the sinking ship. White is now going to maximize the pressure on the e-file until Black collapses.

28. ♔e2 ♜f8 29. ♜c6

Black has run out of options and therefore he resigned.

Your opponent will most likely try to defend the outpost, just as he did in the previous chapter with the entrance square. In that case we first have to eliminate the defender and clear the outpost for the rook.

Game 47

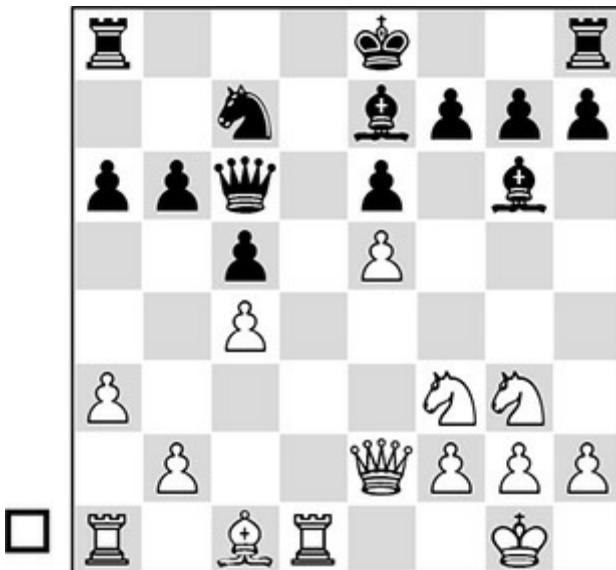
Anand Saurabh

2168

Suthandram R Manu David

1820

Jammu ch-IND U15 2015 (7)



17. ♜g5! f6

Black did not like the most logical continuation 17... ♜xg5 18. ♜d6 ♜b7 19. ♜xg5 0-0 20. ♜ad1, and with good cause. The dominant d-file and the cleared entrance square on the 7th rank promise White a large advantage. Unfortunately for Black, the game continuation is no picnic either.

18.exf6 gxf6 19. ♜h6 ♜f7 20.h4! ♜d6 21.h5 ♜xg3 22.fxg3 ♜f5 23. ♜f4

23. ♜e5+ would have been more convincing, reinstating the outpost after 23...fxe5 24. ♜xe5 ♜hg8 25. ♜d6! ♜e8 26. ♜ad1. Black is lost.

23... ♜ad8 24. ♜e5 ♜a8



25. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $f \times e5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 27. $h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$ 1-0

The $\mathbb{Q}g5$ -manoeuvre to soften the d6-square is worth remembering, since it is very common in these kinds of structures. However, I cannot emphasize often enough that you always have to keep thinking for yourself. Recognizing a certain pattern in a position is only step one. On the next step, you have to calculate and assess for yourself whether the corresponding technique is indeed the right way to go.

Game 48

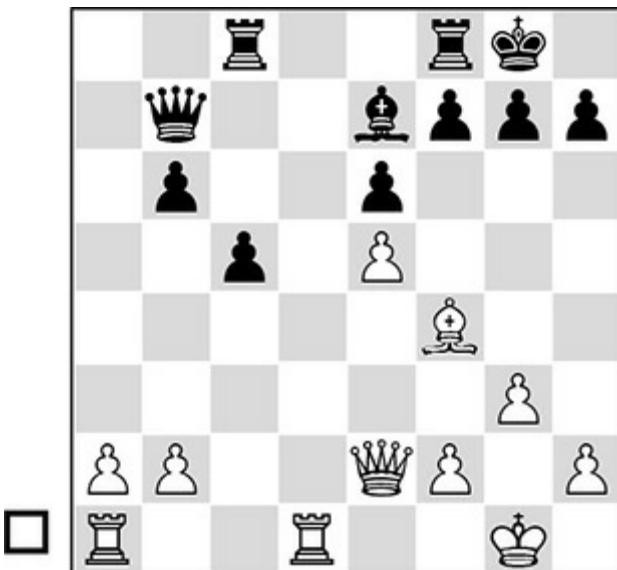
Walter Schatz

2308

Jan Okke Rockmann

1850

Berlin 2014 (1)



This position shows a lot of similarities to the previous example. That was probably the reason White went for:

20. $\mathbb{Q}g4$

The aim is to exchange the dark-squared bishops and seize the outpost for his rook. This is, however, a bit too

optimistic. In fact, White is about to surrender the d-file to his opponent! It would therefore have been better to look for counterplay on the queenside with 20. $\mathbb{B}b5$, followed by a2-a4, with a balanced game.

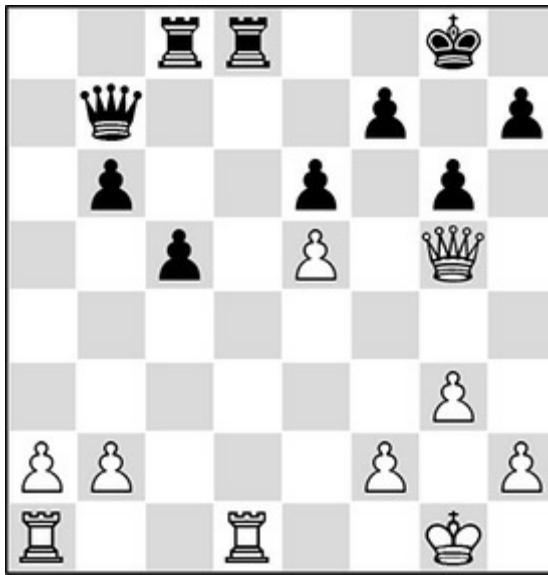
20... $\mathbb{R}fd8!$ 21. $\mathbb{B}h6 g6$

This move allows White to hit the emergency break by exchanging both rooks. 21... $\mathbb{R}f8!$ would have been more precise, since now 22. $\mathbb{R}xd8 \mathbb{R}xd8$ 23. $\mathbb{R}d1$ is impossible due to 23... $\mathbb{R}xd1+$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xd1 gxh6$.

22. $\mathbb{B}g5$

Just like in the Gupta-Sukandar game, neutralizing the d-file with 22. $\mathbb{R}xd8+!$ $\mathbb{R}xd8$ 23. $\mathbb{R}d1 \mathbb{B}a8$ 24. $\mathbb{R}xd8+ \mathbb{B}xd8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}e2$ would have been the right way to go. But White does not think about equalizing – he wants the d-file for himself.

22... $\mathbb{R}xg5$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xg5$



23... $\mathbb{R}d5!$

This is the point! Unlike the previous example, White needed some time to get rid of the defending bishop. In the meantime, Black has found an outpost for himself!

24. $h4 \mathbb{R}cd8$

A natural move, but not the best one. This allows 25. $\mathbb{B}xd8!$ with a very interesting ending in which the Elo difference eventually decided the game in White's favour. 24... $h5!$ would have led to a promising position for Black.

Conclusion

Just as an outpost turned out to be a great help if you want to put a rook on the 7th rank, it can also assist your major pieces with their doubling or tripling manoeuvres on an open file. In both scenarios, your opponent is discouraged to exchange your rook, which gives you the time to maximize the pressure and acquire control of the open file.

If the outpost is too heavily guarded, eliminating the defender is again an effective technique.

4.4 Controlling the opposing rook's square

This last technique that helps you get rid of an opposing rook is often the most effective one: **controlling the opposing rook's square** on the file. We already got a sneak preview of this motif in the introductory game. This technique comes in two different versions. If the opposing rook has already reached its destination on the open file, you can simply attack it with a minor piece and chase it away.

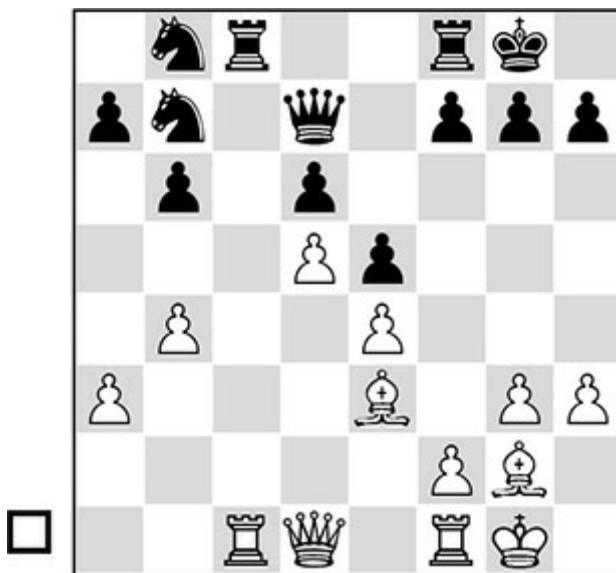
Vasily Ivanchuk

2733

Mariya Muzychuk

2491

Cap d'Agde blitz 2013 (4)



20. $\mathbb{Q}g4!$

The entrance square is defended by two major pieces, so Ivanchuk starts by exchanging the first one.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 21. $\mathbb{R}hxg4$ f6

Trying to prevent White's next move, but Chuky is not impressed.

22. g5!

A pawn is only a small price for the 7th rank.

22... $f \times g5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h3$



This was the point. Black has no choice but to surrender the open file. The clumsy knights make it impossible for Black to defend.

23... $\mathbb{R}xc1$ 24. $\mathbb{R}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{R}c7$ a5 26. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb4 27. axb4 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 28. $\mathbb{R}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 30. $\mathbb{R}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 1-0

The same technique applies if you want to prevent your opponent's rook from moving to the open file in the first place.

Game 50

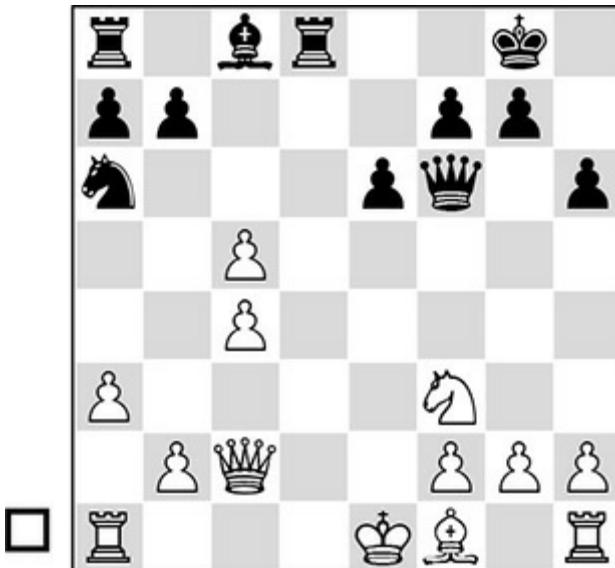
Vasily Smyslov

2560

Svetozar Gligoric

2560

Soviet Union 1979



Black has just opened the d-file and is hoping to acquire a dominating position on it while his opponent is finishing his development.

14...♝e2

A very natural move, but in fact a grave error. It was essential to fix the hole on b3 with 14.♜c1 ♜xc5 15.b4!.

14...♜xc5 15.0-0

Finally, White is able to move his b-pawn again in order to restore his pawn structure. Unfortunately, it is not his turn yet.

15...♝d7! 16.♞ac1

16.b3 ♜c6, followed by a quick ...e5-e4 or 16.b4 ♜a4 17.♝b1 ♜b3 18.♞a2 ♜d4 would also have led to a promising game for Black.

16...♝a4!



This was the whole point behind Black's set-up. The weakness in the white camp has been fixed and the bishop has found a very comfortable spot to control the important d1-square.

17.♗c3 ♗xc3 18.♖xc3 ♗b3 19.♘fc1 a5! 20.♔f1 ♖a6 21.♕e1 ♖ad6 22.♗b1 a4 23.h3

Black has optimized his grip on the d-file to the fullest. He has no entrance square, so he uses his domination to start a second front on the kingside.

23...f6 24.♗h2 b6 25.♗f1 ♗f7 26.f3 f5 27.♗e3 g5 28.♗c2 ♗f6 29.♗a1 h5 30.♗xb3 axb3 31.♖d1

Finally, White managed to put his rook on the open file. But it won't solve his problems.

31...♖xd1+ 32.♗xd1 ♗d3+ 33.♗f1 ♗xb2 34.♗e2 ♗a4 35.♖xb3 ♗d6 36.g4 ♗c5 37.♗b5 hxg4 38.hxg4 f4 39.♕e1 ♗e5

39...e5, threatening ...e5-e4 or ...♗c5-e6-d4, would have been more precise.

40.a4 ♗d4 41.a5 bxa5 42.♖xa5 ♗a6 43.♗b5 e5 44.♗f2 e4 45.♗b1 ♗a2 0-1

Conclusion

One of the most common techniques to conquer an open file is to make sure your opponent does not have an opposing rook available. There are two possible scenarios:

- Chase the rook away;
- Prevent the rook from entering the square.

Either way, your major pieces will no longer have to worry about neutralizing exchanges and you can fully focus on the next phase: entering the 7th rank.

4.5 Defending the open file

The defensive techniques in the struggle for the open file are more or less similar to the ones where the entrance square is at stake. You can:

- Exchange the rooks;
- Seek counterplay (open another file);
- (Surrender the open file and) guard the entrance square;
- Block the open file.

Since we have already covered these topics one by one in the previous chapter, I will present to you two examples of an interesting fight for the open file instead, and along the way I will discuss the defensive techniques that show up.

Sometimes it's just not enough

When browsing the Mega Database for instructive material for this chapter, I came across a very interesting

game in which several techniques to occupy the open file were nicely combined. However, after White had done everything by the book, and he indeed controlled the file, it turned out that there was no advantage! Probably Black had not been play so badly either.

It reminded me of one of my favourite rules in chess: ‘if you haven’t done anything wrong, you should be okay.’ It also works the other way around. Following the right plan is not always a guarantee for an advantage. Sometimes your opponent is just making the right moves too.

It is important to be aware of this and to never let it frustrate you. If you simply keep your patience and focus on playing the right moves, it is very likely that at some point your opponent will start to make mistakes after all.

Game 51

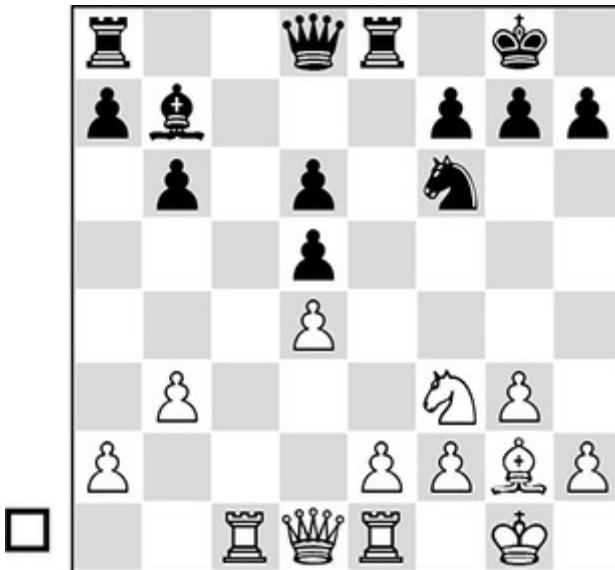
Smbat Lputian

2614

Ashot Anastasian

2596

Armenia tt 2005 (2)



The dark-squared bishops have just been exchanged on d6 and by recapturing with his c-pawn, Black has just officially signalled the fight for the open c-file.

16.♗h3

The same idea that was also applied by Ivanchuk. The bishop controls the c8-square in order to shut out the black rooks.

16...♝e4 17.♖c2 g6 18.♝c1 ♜c8!

Black does not like to sit and wait for his opponent to lift his rook to the 7th rank.

19.♕h6!

A very instructive move, keeping the tension. Taking on c8 would unnecessarily activate the black rook and 19.♕g2 would allow 19...♝f6, followed by ...♝g5, with counterplay.

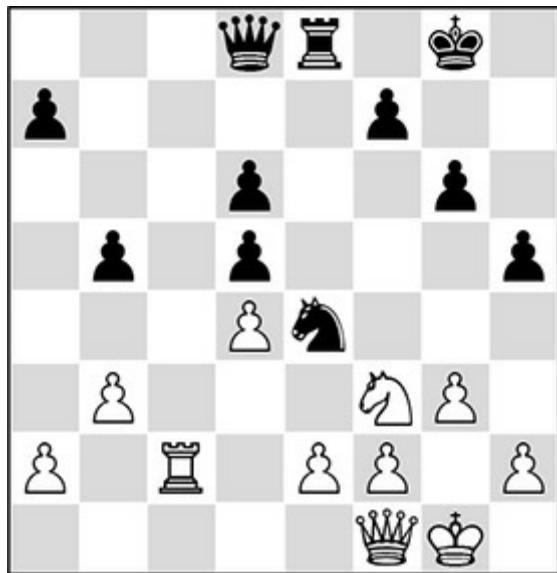
19...♝xh3 20.♝xh3 ♜c8

Finally the black rook has reached its destination. But White has more than one trick up his sleeve.

21.♖ec1 ♜xc2 22.♖xc2 h5 23.♝f1

The queen returns, ready to take up her place on the c-file and push the rook to c7. Mission accomplished, right? Well, not entirely.

23...b5!



White's domination on the c-file will soon be too strong to think about an exchange of rooks or the defence of the entrance squares as defensive techniques. As a result, Black will have to focus on the two remaining techniques:

- A) Block the file; or
- B) open a new file for counterplay.

24.a3

In order to prevent ...b5-b4. Black was trying to construct an outpost for his knight in order to block the c-file. If this does not work, he has to switch to plan B: opening up a new file for counterplay.

If 24. $\mathbb{N}c1$ b4!.

24... $\mathbb{N}a5$

But this is not the right way. Instead, 24...a5 would have been the most logical continuation if Black wanted to build a blockade. White can only prevent this with 25. $\mathbb{N}e1$ $\mathbb{N}b6$ 26.b4, but Black would get decent counterplay along the a-file after 26... $\mathbb{N}a8$.

The most convincing equalizer, however, would have been 24...b4! 25.axb4 $\mathbb{N}b6$ 26. $\mathbb{N}a1$ $\mathbb{N}xb4$ 27. $\mathbb{N}xa7$ $\mathbb{N}xb3$ 28. $\mathbb{N}c7$ $\mathbb{N}f8$, opening up the entire queenside and providing Black with sufficient counterplay.

25. $\mathbb{N}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26.b4 $\mathbb{N}a4$ 27. $\mathbb{N}e1!$ a5

The a-file will sooner or later be opened after all, but this time White is ready for it.

28. $\mathbb{N}d3$ $\mathbb{N}a8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ axb4 30.axb4 $\mathbb{N}b3$ 31. $\mathbb{N}c7$ $\mathbb{N}a2$ 32. $\mathbb{N}f4$ g5 33. $\mathbb{N}c2$ $\mathbb{N}b3$ 34. $\mathbb{N}xh5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 35.g4 $\mathbb{N}xb4$



36. ♜c8

White has played very nicely so far, but now he spoils the win. He should have gone for 36.f3 ♕xd4 (on 36... ♛f6 37.h4! wins) 37.e3 ♛e5 38.fxe4 ♛xe4+ 39. ♛g1 with good winning chances.

36... ♜xc8 37. ♛xc8 ♜xd4

The white king has now become a target as well, so White decides to settle for a draw:

38. ♛g8+ ♚h6 39. ♛xf7 b4 40.e3 ♛b2 41. ♛f8+ ♚g6 ½-½

Try to stay active!

Voluntarily surrendering the open file and keeping the entrance squares secured can be an effective defensive technique. We already saw an example of it in the Novikov-Burnett game in the previous chapter. But I have to warn you. Make sure you do not end up in a passive position in which you can only sit and wait. Your opponent will simply improve his position, open a second front and crush you on the other side of the board. More about this in the next chapter.

Here is an example of what active defence could look like and at the same time a sneak preview of what might happen if you fail to do so.

Game 52

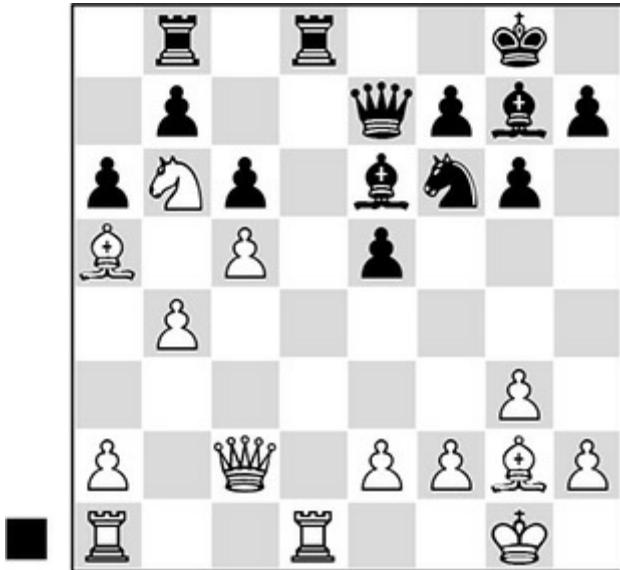
Jaroslaw Grzelak

1834

Andrzej Matusiak

1800

Poland tt 2006/07 (9)



17... ♜xd1+

Not the most accurate move. Black has to defend actively! The best way to do so would have been 17...e4!. By developing an initiative on the kingside he is going to create a strong outpost on the d-file. 18.e3 (the only move. White cannot allow ...e4-e3) 18... ♜g4! 19. ♜ab1 ♜xd1+ 20. ♜xd1 f5, with a slight advantage for Black. The next step will be to manoeuvre the knight to d3 or, if White tries to prevent this with ♜c4, to manoeuvre his bishop to d5.

18. ♜xd1 ♜d7

With this move Black throws in the towel much too quickly. The fight for the d-file would have continued after 18... ♜d8! 19. ♜d2. Doubling on the d-file is the only way to get rid of the black rook, since the knight cannot go to a4 or c4 for tactical reasons: 19...h5 20. ♜d1 ♜xd2 21. ♜xd2. The queen has formally conquered the d-file for White, but without rooks or a square to enter the enemy camp he cannot really claim an advantage.

19. ♜c4!

The knight is heading for d6. Black is now doomed to passive defence.

19... ♜xc4 20. ♜xc4

The more pieces are exchanged, the firmer White's grip on the d-file becomes.

20... ♜f8 21.a4



White realizes that there is no need to hurry. The bishop on a5 secures his control of the d-file and he can slowly improve his position.

21... ♕h8 22. ♖d3

22. ♕d6! would have been stronger. The rook dominates most of the black pieces and the white queen can set about creating a second weakness on the kingside: 22... ♔e6 23.h4.

22... ♔f6 23. ♔b6 ♕g7 24.b5

When exploiting an open file, it is usually not a very good idea to open a second one, because it might allow the opponent's rook to become active. In this exact position, however, the b4-b5 break makes a lot of sense. It opens up the h1-a8 diagonal for the light-squared bishop and soon the white bishops will form a deadly combination with the active white rook.

24... axb5 25.axb5 ♔e6 26. ♖c4

26.bxc6 bxc6 27. ♕d6! – without a queen the defensive task would be much more difficult for Black.

26... ♔d4

Black is trying his best to keep the position as closed as possible.

27.bxc6 ♔xc6 28. ♕h3

White has finally found his entrance square. Black is in serious trouble now.

28... ♕a8 29. ♕d7

The rook has reached its goal: the 7th rank!

29... ♕e8



White is clearly in control. His rooks control both the d-file and the 7th rank, he has a strong pair of bishops, and his queen is very mobile. The only thing Black can oppose to all this is the open a-file, but without additional active pieces there is not much he can do with it.

30. ♕xb7

White decides to collect the harvest. He could have minimized the risk by first further improving his position, e.g. by playing 30. ♖e4! followed by ♔g2 and capturing the pawn later. In the game, White keeps a clear advantage, but he has to be careful.

30... ♕a1+ 31. ♔g2

The most natural move, but White misses a nasty trap. 31. ♕f1 was required.

31... ♔d4

Black misses the unexpected opportunity. 31... ♔a5! would have turned the tables. After this unexpected blow, it is White who has to play accurately to stay alive. In the game, Black gets crushed.

32. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 33. c6 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 37. $gxf4$ 1-0

Conclusion

Most of the defensive techniques we got acquainted with in the fight for an entrance square can also be used when the control of the open file is at stake. The most important lessons to remember are:

- Try to defend as actively as possible;
- Always look out for counterplay!
- If you cannot win the fight for the open file, open a new one!

4.6 FLASH CARDS



Attacking technique 1: exchange one rook

Exchanging major pieces on an open file and quickly bringing up a new major piece is an important technique for conquering the open file. White secured total control over the d-file with 25. $\mathbb{R}xd6$, 26. $\mathbb{R}d1$ and 27. $\mathbb{R}d3$.



Attacking technique 2: use an outpost

This is the ideal scenario for this technique. White uses the outpost to conquer an open file. Black cannot take the rook, nor can he ignore it. Therefore, he resigned.



Attacking technique 3: control rook's square

If you manage to control the square for your opponent's rook, the open file is yours. This way, you avoid all neutralizing exchanges and your major pieces can focus on the next phase: entering the 7th rank.



Defensive resource 1: open a new file!

Instead of fighting your opponent for a file, you can also open up fresh files for yourself. After 24...b4!, White cannot keep the queenside closed, since 25.a4 would allow his opponent to block the c-file with 25...
♞c3.

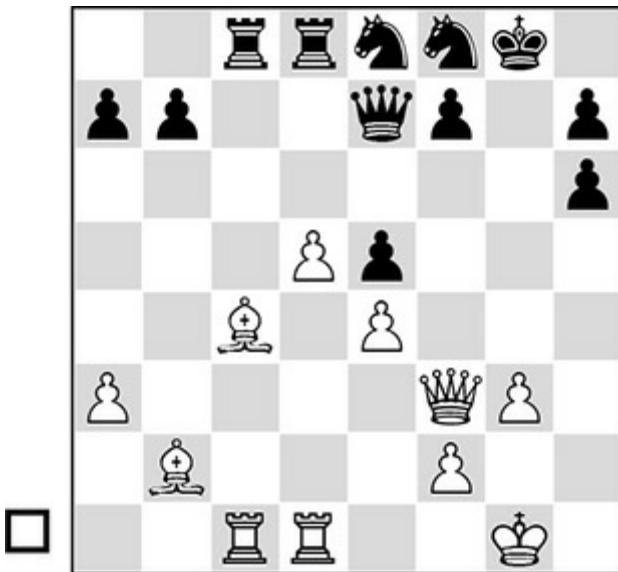


Defensive resource 2: stay active!

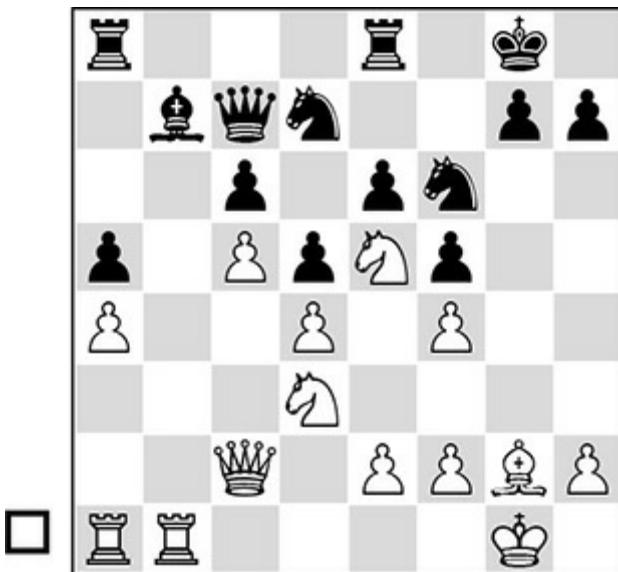
Always be prepared to defend actively! **17...e4! 18.e3 ♕g4**, followed by ...**♕g4-e5-d3**, would have promised Black a comfortable game. Instead, he defended passively and ended up in trouble.

Exercises – Conquer the open file 1

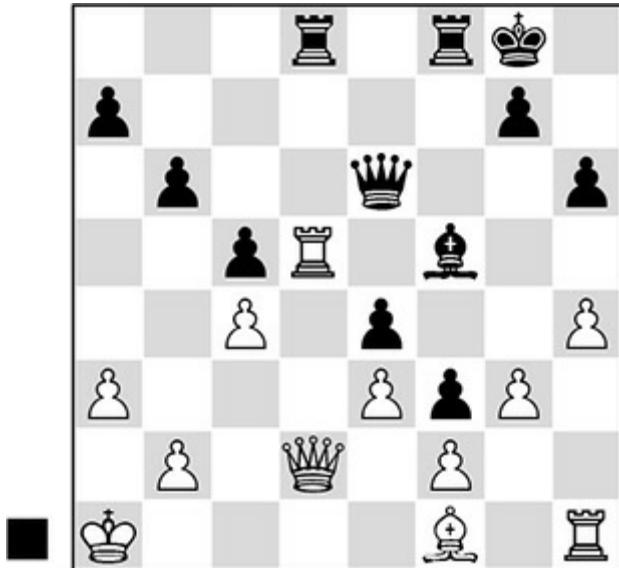
Solution 4.1



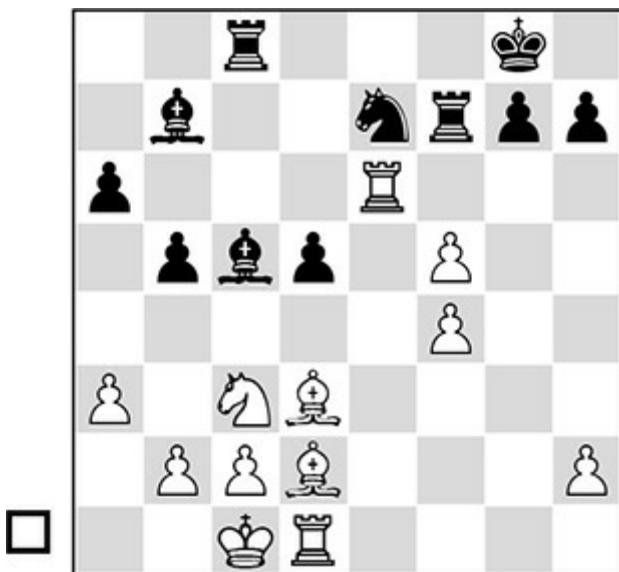
Solution 4.2



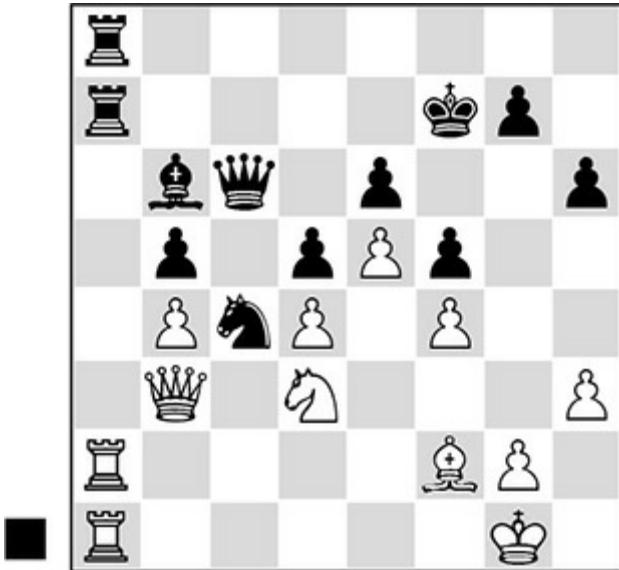
Solution 4.3



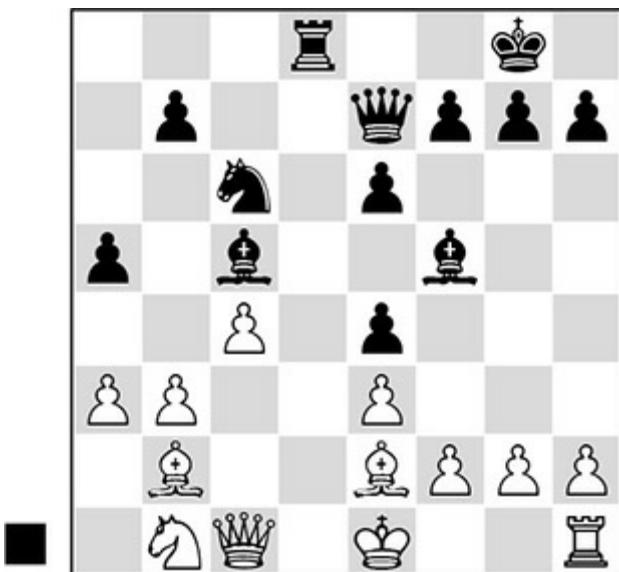
Solution 4.4



Solution 4.5

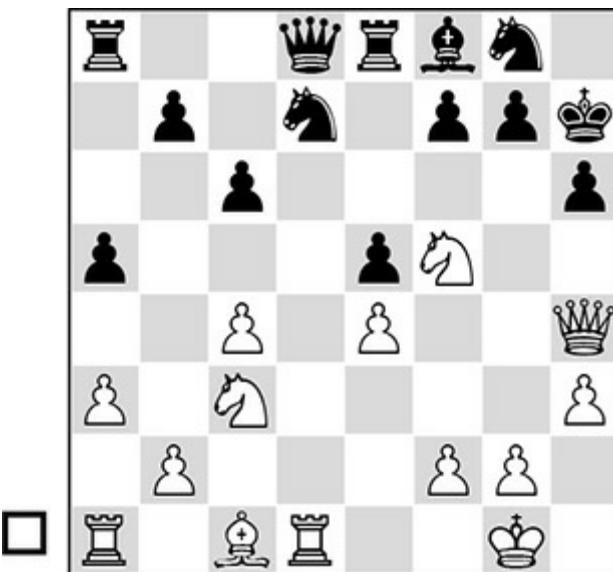


Solution 4.6

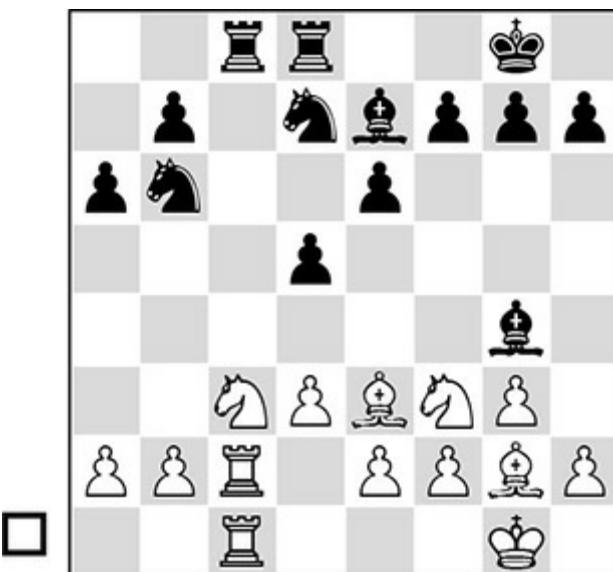


Conquer the open file 2

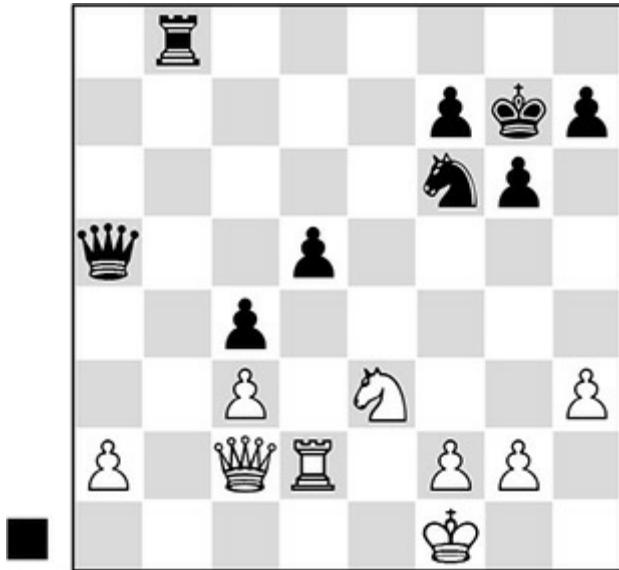
Solution 4.7



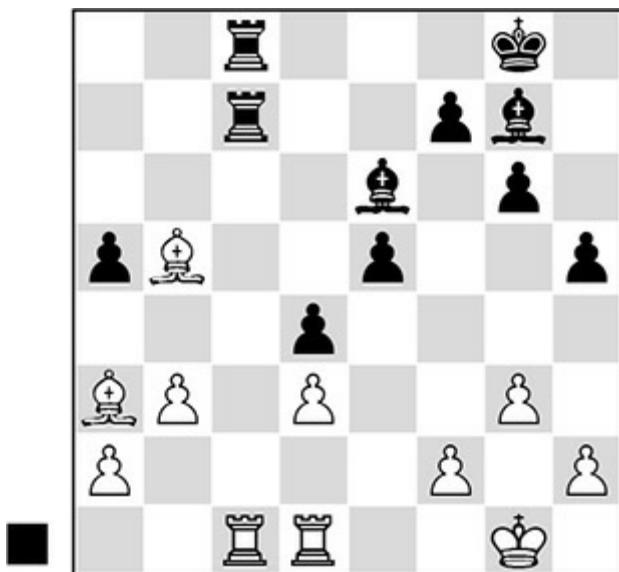
Solution 4.8



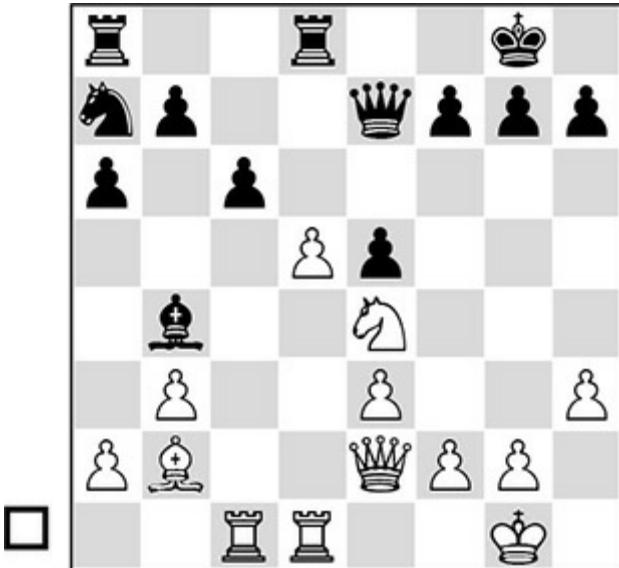
Solution 4.9



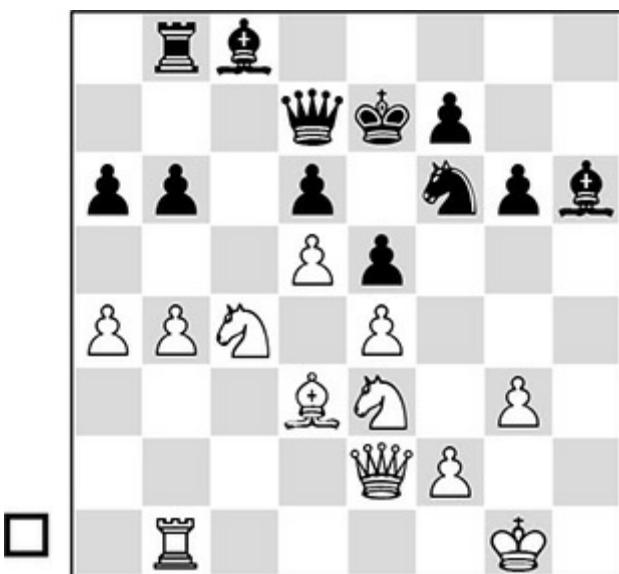
Solution 4.10



Solution 4.11



Solution 4.12



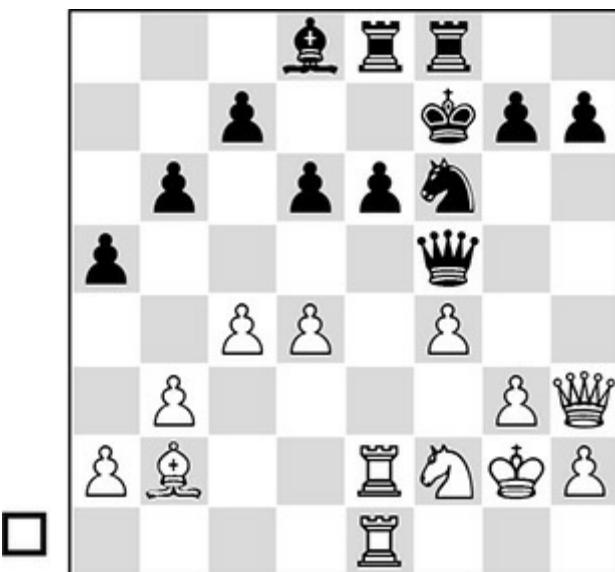
Create or prevent an outpost

Solution 4.13



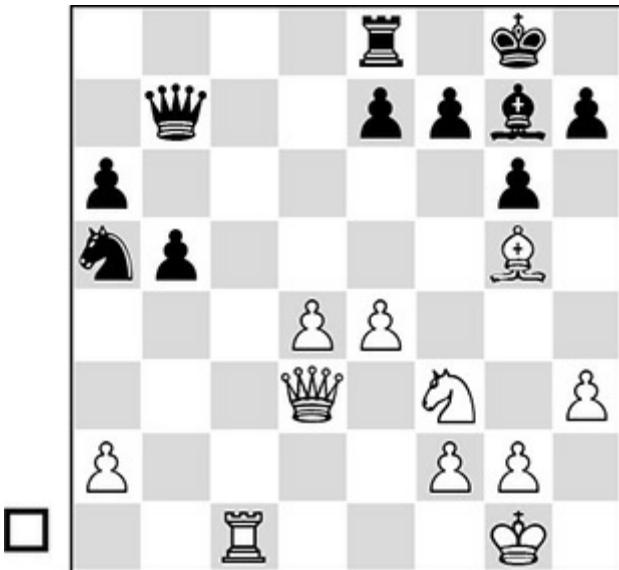
Create

Solution 4.14



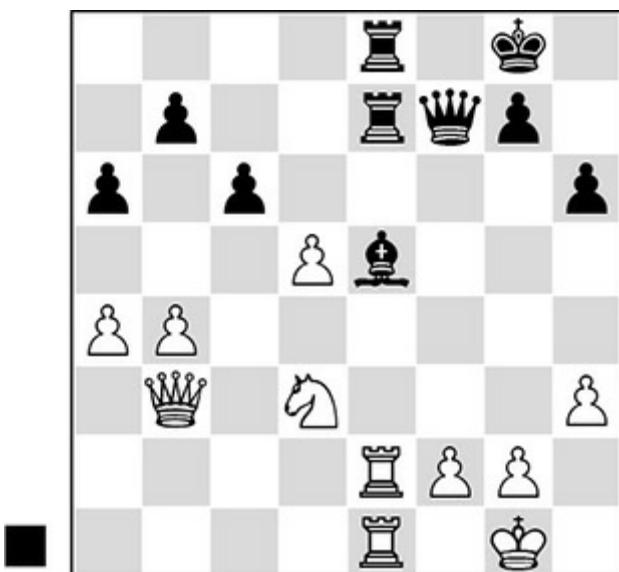
Create

Solution 4.15



Create

Solution 4.16



Prevent

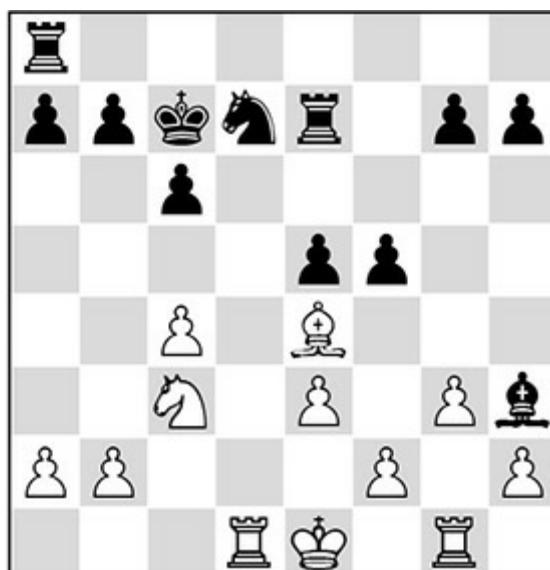
Solution 4.17



□

Prevent: ♜b2 or ♜e1 ?

Solution 4.18

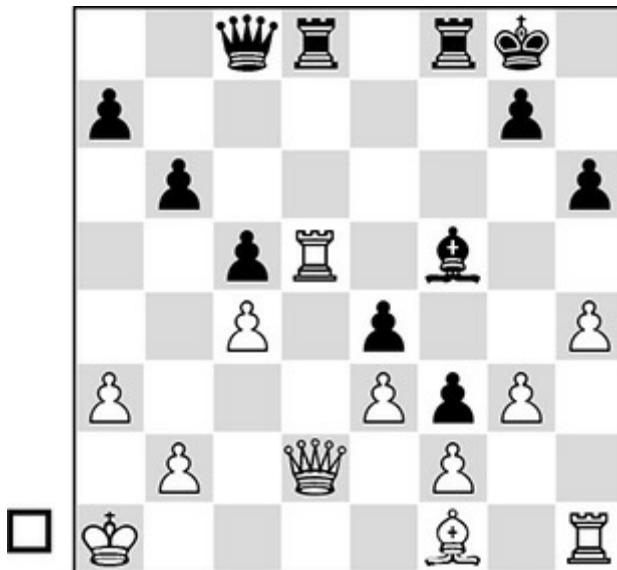


□

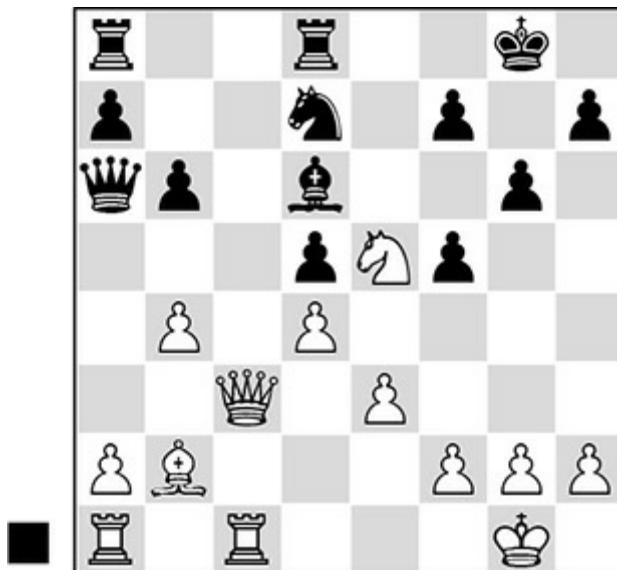
Prevent

Defend the open file

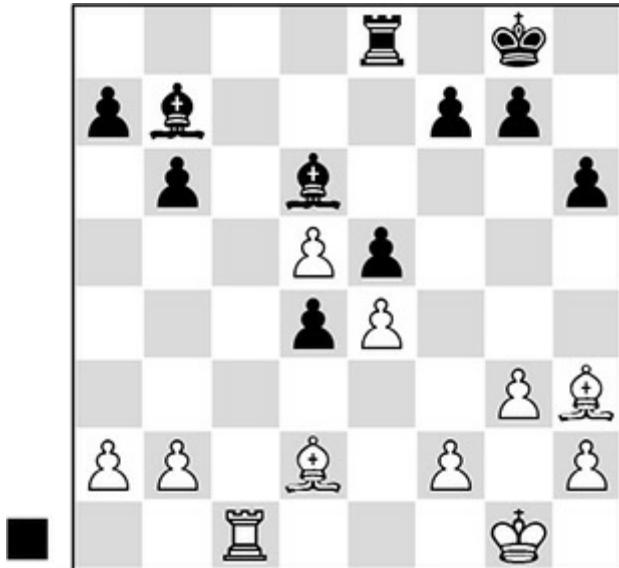
Solution 4.19



Solution 4.20

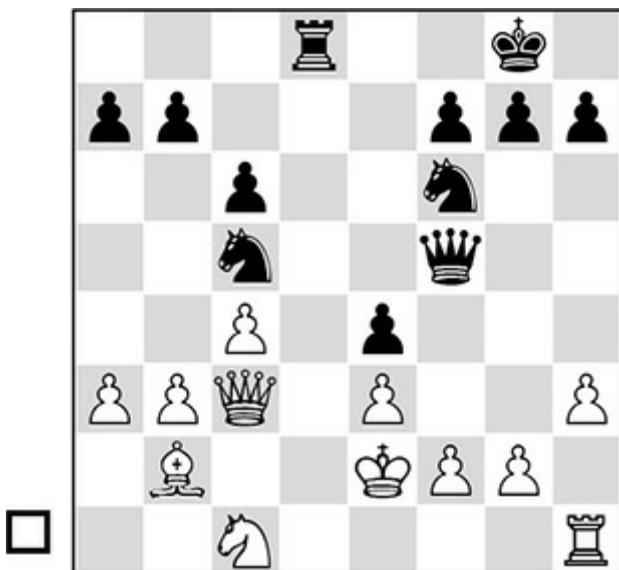


Solution 4.21

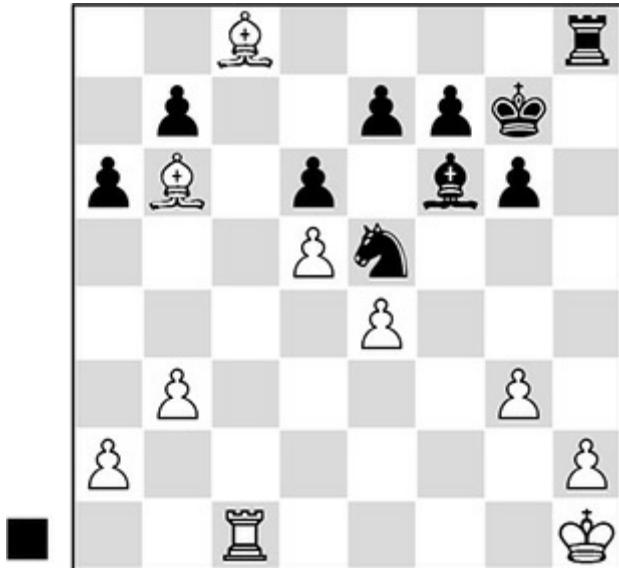


...a7-a5 or ... $\hat{\square}$ e7 ?

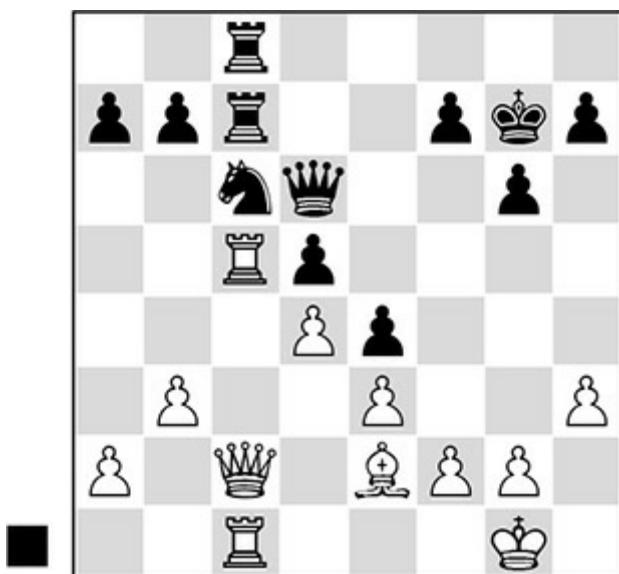
Solution 4.22



Solution 4.23



Solution 4.24



CHAPTER 5

Opening and closing files

5.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a quiz. I invite you to play the moves on a board and answer the questions along the way.

It is a game of one of my former students, Anna-Maja Kazarian, in the Dutch women's championships.

Game 53

Mariska de Mie

2270

Anna-Maja Kazarian

2242

Amsterdam ch-NED W 2017 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗c4 ♗e7 5.d3 d6 6.♗d2 ♗f6 7.♗f1 ♗g4 8.f3 ♗e6 9.♗e3 0-0 10.0-0 a6 11.♗cd5 b5 12.♗b3 ♗d4 13.♗d2 ♗a7 14.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 15.♗d5 ♗g5 16.c3 ♗xe3+ 17.♗xe3 ♗xd5 18.exd5 ♗f5 19.♗d2 ♗a8 20.c4 ♗xe3 21.♗xe3 bxc4 22.dxc4 f5 23.♗fd1 a5 24.b3 ♗b7 25.♗ab1 ♗a6 26.♗d3 g6 27.h3 ♗fb8 28.♗h2 ♗g7 29.♗c3



Black has played the opening and the early middlegame well. She has comfortably equalized, exchanged the right pieces, opened the b-file for her rook, and is now slowly building up a minority attack on the queenside.

QUESTION 1: Would you play

- A) 29...a4, to put more pressure on the white pawns;
- B) 29...f4, to prevent White from developing counterplay on the kingside; or
- C) 29...g5, to win more space on the kingside in order to create a second weakness in the white camp?

29...f4!

Well played! This prophylactic move was required, since White was indeed threatening to play 30.f4 herself. As a result, 29...a4 would have been premature. White seizes the initiative after 30.f4! ♗e7 31.fxe5 ♗xe5

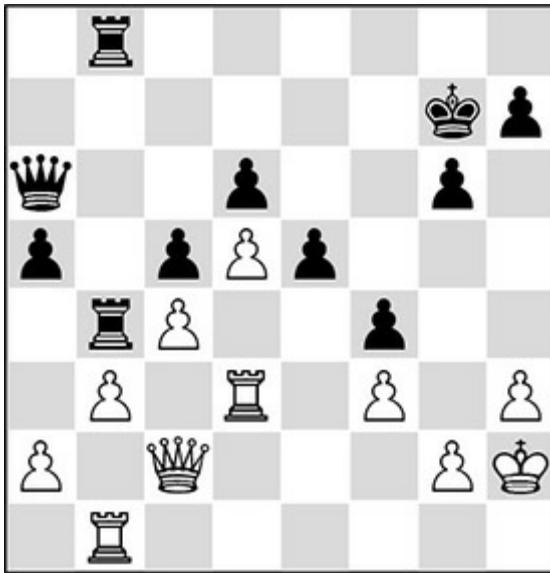
32. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 33. $bxa4$.

29...g5 also prevents 30.f4, but unnecessarily weakens the black kingside as well. White can try to create counterplay with 30.h4 h6 31.hxg5 hxg5 32. $\mathbb{Q}h1$.

30. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{B}b4$

There is no need to hurry. Black patiently improves her position first, before she advances the a-pawn. You can only open the file once, so you'd better make sure you get your timing right.

31. $\mathbb{Q}d3$



QUESTION 2: Would you play

- A) 31...a4, to increase the pressure on the white pawns;
- B) 31... $\mathbb{Q}b7$, to optimize the placement of Black's major pieces even more; or
- C) 31... $\mathbb{Q}f6$, to bring up your king and prepare the creation of a second weakness with ...g6-g5/...h7-h5/...g5-g4 ?

31...a4

This move gives White an extra option, as we are about to see. 31... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ would have been the best choice. The queen was not on its optimal place at a6. There is no need to hurry with ...a5-a4, since White cannot prevent it.

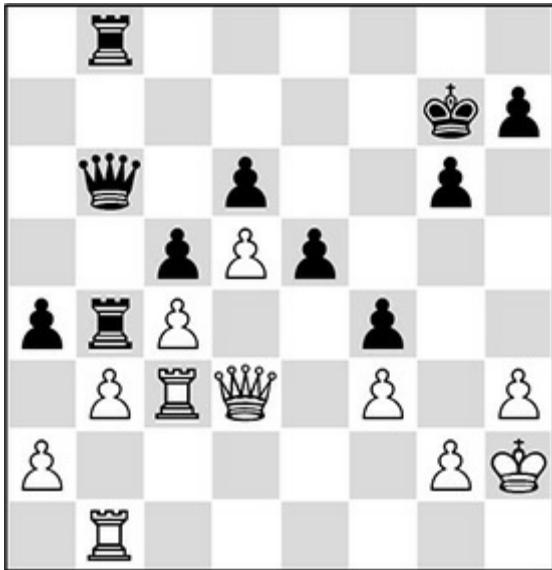
31... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is still too early. White can create counterplay with 32.g3! $fxg3+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$, followed by f3-f4, with unclear play.

32. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

White sticks to her waiting strategy – a practical decision. Both players already started to run out of time. She did, however, have an interesting opportunity – one that Black should have prevented by waiting a little longer with the move ...a5-a4: 32.a3!. Suddenly the position gets very complicated. The game might continue 32... $\mathbb{Q}4b7$ 33.b4 $cxb4$ 34.axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 36.c5 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ a3 39.cxd6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 41.dxc6 a2 42.c7 a1 \mathbb{Q} 43.c8 \mathbb{Q} and we have arrived at a drawish queen ending.

There are of course at least 100 different ways in which the game could have continued after 33.a3, but the conclusion will always be the same: the line involves risks that Black should have avoided by improving her queen first.

32... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d3$



QUESTION 3: Would you play

- A) 33...axb3, to force something on the queenside;
- B) 33... $\mathbb{R}b7$, to keep improving your position; or
- C) 33...a3, to close the queenside and shift the entire army to the kingside for a crushing attack?

33... $\mathbb{R}b7$!

Well done! Black stays loyal to her strategy and takes all her time for the next step. 33...axb3 would not only have been premature because Black can keep improving her position, but it also runs into a nasty tactical trick: 34.a3! Ouch!

33...a3 still leaves Black with the better position, but would unnecessarily have limited her options. A simultaneous attack on two fronts is always much more dangerous than an attack on one front only.

34. $\mathbb{N}c2 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 35. $\mathbb{R}d3 \mathbb{N}a7$ 36. $\mathbb{R}dd1 \mathbb{Q}b8$ 37. $\mathbb{N}f2 g5$ 38. $\mathbb{N}c2$



QUESTION 4: Would you play

- A) 38...axb3, to break through on the queenside;
- B) 38... $\mathbb{N}c8$, to keep improving your position; or
- C) 38...h5, to start an initiative on the kingside as well?

38...axb3

Regardless of its exact evaluation, this move violates an important practical rule:
when in time trouble, **postpone irreversible decisions until after move 40!**

Both players were in severe time trouble. If Black had waited two more moves, she would have got 30 extra minutes. This should be enough to keep control of the position and find a way to convert this into something concrete.

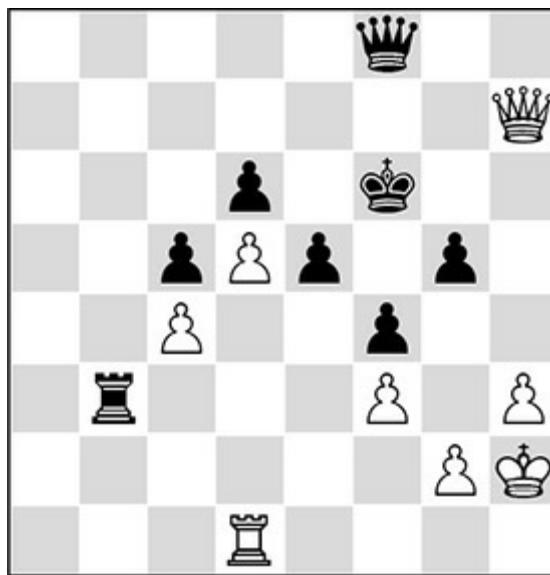
38... $\mathbb{Q}c8!$ would therefore have been the best move. It does not spoil anything and adds the move ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ as an extra option. Exchanging queens (after move 40!) might be a good way to reduce White's counterplay and simplify the position in Black's favour.

38... $h5$ would have been a strong move as well. However, it is also an irreversible move that could easily wait for two more moves.

39. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 40. $a\mathbb{x}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$

The infamous 40th move spoils everything for Black and allows White to take over. In my opinion, this is a result of the chosen path two moves earlier. 40... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ would have kept Black in the lead.

41. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$



42. $\mathbb{Q}h5$

It was time to bring in an extra attacker with 42. $\mathbb{Q}a1!$. The rook has to use the open file to reach the 7th rank! The queen was already optimally placed on h7, so White is basically wasting a move, allowing her opponent to recover.

42...e4

Kazarian is an active player, and she starts looking for counterplay. However, the counterintuitive 42... $\mathbb{Q}b8!$ was the only way to equalize – a very difficult move to find. The aim is to exchange the annoying attacker! Now 43. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ could be answered with 43... $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$.

43. $f\mathbb{x}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}a1$

This time 44. $\mathbb{Q}h7!$ was called for, to protect the e-pawn. Remember this set-up, with the queen behind the enemy king. It will return in the next part of the book, where we deal with mating attacks.

44... $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ 45. $h4$ $g\mathbb{x}h4$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}a7$



46... $\mathbb{g}8!$

Well defended. This was the only move to keep Black in the game; for instance, 46... $\mathbb{e}5$ 47. $\mathbb{w}xh4+$ $\mathbb{f}5$ 48. $\mathbb{w}h7+!$ $\mathbb{f}6$ and now the prophylactic 49. $\mathbb{g}1!$ leaves Black completely paralysed.

47. $\mathbb{w}xh4+$ $\mathbb{f}5$

Unfortunately, Black did not find the right follow-up. She should have played 47... $\mathbb{e}5!$, using the dark squares to find a safe haven. The game move leads to a forced mate.

48. $\mathbb{w}h5+$ $\mathbb{f}6$ 49. $\mathbb{w}h6+$ $\mathbb{g}6$ 50. $\mathbb{w}h8+$ $\mathbb{f}5$ 51. $\mathbb{w}g7$ $\mathbb{w}e8$ 52. $\mathbb{w}g8$ $\mathbb{w}e7$ 53. $\mathbb{w}h5+$ $\mathbb{f}6$ 54. $\mathbb{w}g6+$ $\mathbb{f}7$ 55. $\mathbb{w}f5+$ $\mathbb{e}8$ 56. $\mathbb{w}g8+$ 1-0

If you study this game carefully, you will notice that it contains four different concepts that are all connected in a certain way. These are:

- Timing;
- Counterplay;
- Prophylaxis;
- Second weakness.

Black started by patiently improving her position before she took action on the queenside. She used **prophylactic moves** (like 29...f4!) to prevent her opponent from creating **counterplay** on the kingside.

She had a very promising position, not only because of her pressure on the queenside, but there were good prospects of creating a **second weakness** on the kingside as well. She was very careful not to push her kingside pawns too soon, since this would give White unnecessary **counterplay** again.

Black went wrong in time trouble. She did not time the opening of the queenside well, allowing her opponent to create **counterplay** after all. After that, Black defended well, but was unable to find the right escape route for the king and got mated.

Timing, counterplay, prophylaxis and the principle of the second weakness are factors that play a role in almost every game and are therefore extremely valuable topics to study.

The aim of this chapter

This chapter will improve your understanding of **how** and **when** files should be opened and how you can restrict your opponent's options by **keeping certain files closed**.

We start with two techniques to open up a file. In the remainder of the chapter, we borrow the subject of 'opening and closing files' to discuss four important concepts in great detail:

- Timing;

- Counterplay;
- Prophylaxis;
- Second weakness.

5.2 Opening and closing a file

Pawns play an important role in the process of opening a file. We consider a file to be ‘open’ if it does not contain a single pawn. Consequently, opening a file often requires a capturing move that involves a pawn. Forcing your opponent to exchange a piece and recapturing it with a pawn can, for instance, be an effective way to open a file. We already saw examples of this in the first chapter, when we discussed the **right exchange**.

In this section, I will demonstrate two important techniques that can be used to open a file:

- Blocking the pawn first;
- Using *high tension* to break through.

Blocking the pawn first

The first example could have easily fitted into the first chapter as well. It also starts with a question about the right exchange.

Game 54

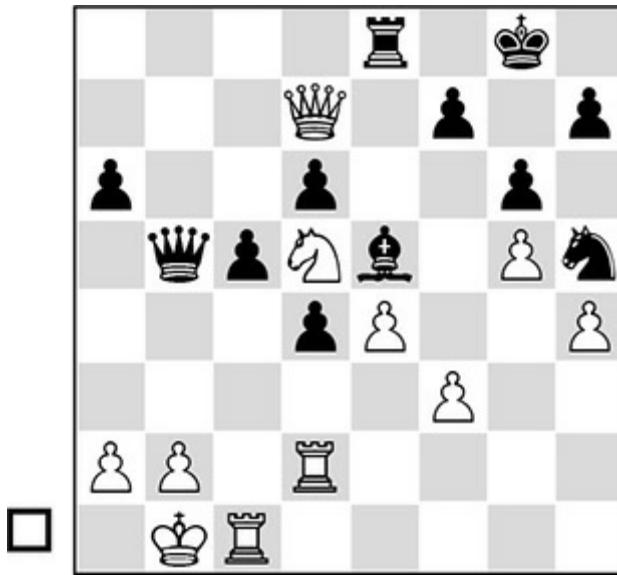
Viswanathan Anand

2779

Rinat Jumabayev

2611

Doha Wch rapid 2016 (1)



QUESTION: Would you exchange queens with 31. ♔xb5 ?

Before we answer this question, we have to look deeper into the position. What is going on?

White is currently an exchange up, but Black has a pawn and the better pawn structure as compensation. Rooks need open files. Therefore, when you enter an ending with an exchange up, you have to ask yourself: will I be able to open a file for my rooks? The answer in this particular position is: **yes!**

31. ♔xb5! axb5

This is where I want to introduce an important technique that can be used to open a file: if you want to

exchange a certain pawn, **block it first!** The b-pawn will be our target, and therefore White started with 32.b4! c4

The only way to keep the files closed a little longer.

33.a4!

The b-pawn is blocked and cannot prevent getting traded for the white a-pawn. As a result, the queenside will soon open its doors for the white rooks. Watch how Anand patiently neutralizes the black pawns before converting his advantage into a full point.

33...c3 34. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 37. $a \times b5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $h6$ 40. $g \times h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 48. $b5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 49. $b6$ $\mathbb{Q}a4+$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 52. $b7$ 1-0

Using *high tension* to break through

The technique of blocking a pawn and attacking it next to open up a file only works in asymmetrical pawn formations. An extra black a-pawn would, for instance, have spoiled most of the fun in the previous example. When playing with a more symmetrical pawn configuration, we will have to come up with something different. We are going to borrow an idea from a completely different area. If you have studied your endings well, you are probably already familiar with it.

Game 55

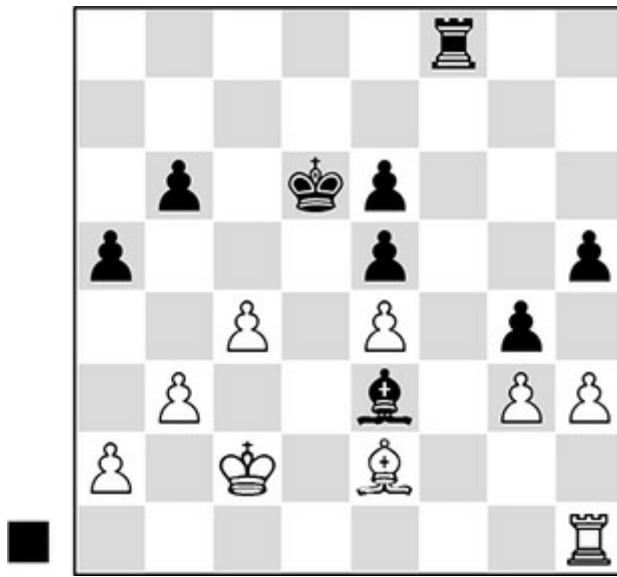
Milo Stankovic

2395

Davit Maghalashvili

2489

Turkey tt 2017 (2)



QUESTION: How would you continue with black?

Black just pushed his kingside pawns as far as possible and ordered his bishop to escort one of them to g1. But how to break down the white wall?

36...h4!

Creating this pawn formation is a common technique to force a breakthrough in (pawn) endings. The concept comes in different names in different languages, but I do not really like anyone of them in particular.

Therefore, I consulted my former trainer Cor van Wijgerden. As the author of the *Step-by-Step Method*, he is used to finding the right terms for chess patterns in different languages. He came up with the term ‘high

tension'. And that is what I will call this motif in this chapter.

The idea is that all four pawns are currently under attack and White cannot resolve the tension in one move.

He is therefore unable to prevent his opponent from breaking through with at least one of the pawns.

37. ♖d1+ ♜c7 38.gxh4 g3!

The pawn is unstoppable.

39. ♗f1 ♖xf1 40. ♖xf1 g2 41. ♖e1 g1 ♗ 42. ♖xg1 ♗xg1 43.a3 ♗c5 0-1

Next, we **transfer** this endgame technique to our middlegame situation.

Game 56

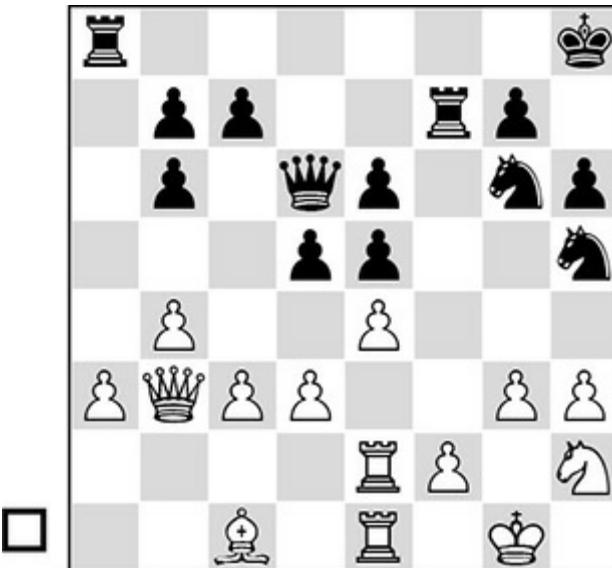
Rodrigo Machado Mendes

1933

Matheus Nunes Dias

1722

Sao Paulo 2016 (6)



White has doubled his rooks and now has to open up the e-file quickly, before Black develops an initiative on his open f-file.

21.d4

A pawn formation with high tension is not only a suitable formation to escort one of your pawns to the other side. It can also help you to open up a file! Note that our first technique, blocking the pawn first, also plays a role. The naive 21.exd5 exd5 22.d4 would, for instance, have allowed Black to close the gate with 22...e4.

21... ♖af8



This is where it becomes interesting. Despite the high tension, it is not so easy to reach our goal. This is mainly because the black pawns have more defensive resources than in our straightforward ending example. I will analyse three options.

- A) 22.dxe5 would run into 22... $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$, threatening 23... $\mathbb{Q}d3$;
- B) The move 22.exd5 led to great success in the game after 22...exd5 23.dxe5, but Black had an elegant improvement with 22...e4!.



analysis diagram

Remember: the more you want to open up a file, the more fiercely your opponent is going to fight to prevent it. He will use every tactical resource he has to keep the file closed. Black is threatening both 23... $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ and 23...exd5. White's best try is 23.c4, but 23...exd5 24.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ gives Black the upper hand;

C) We have tried both captures now – both without success. Which leaves us with only one option: maintaining the tension and improving our position first. Luckily, we have the strong 22. $\mathbb{Q}c2!$, aiming at the g6-knight. For instance:

- C1) 22... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ loses a pawn after 23.dxe5;
- C2) 22...dxe4 is bad due to 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}xe5$; and

C3) on 22...exd4 23.e5! wins a piece.

Black is in trouble.

Conclusion

We saw two important techniques to force the opening of a file:

- Block your opponent's pawn before you attack it;
- Use high tension to break through.

In asymmetrical positions, the former technique will often prove sufficient to reach your goal. However, life gets more difficult when the pawns are lined up on the same files. In that case, creating high tension can be a very effective tool to bring about an unbalanced position in which you can open a file.

Be careful: positions with high tension are often very complicated and your actions may easily backfire.

Precise calculation and an extra check for hidden tactical resources are always required!

5.3 Timing

Timing is extremely important in chess. Without a good feeling for timing, important skills like recognizing the relevant patterns in a position and being able to formulate the right plan can suddenly lose their effectiveness. A promising position with opposite-side castling can be fatal if you dawdle too long with your attack. Rushing into complications without taking the right preparatory measures first can have the same effect. In conclusion, it is essential to get a feeling for when you need to take action right away or when you have to improve your position first.

This of course also applies to the fight for an open file. Knowing **how** to open a file is certainly useful. But knowing **when** to open it is what matters most. Take, for instance, the following positions, in which White can open up one or more files.

Position 1:



c2-c4

Position 2:



axb5

Position 3:



b4-b5

All three positions are closed, with White holding the key to open it. The question is: should he take action right away or is it advisable to take preparatory measures first?

I am not a big fan of strict schemes when it comes to the decision-making process. But I do believe in asking yourself the right questions. If I had to formulate the critical questions for these positions, they would probably look like this:

1. Who will benefit most from the opened file?
2. Will it be more advantageous for me to postpone it? In other words, do I have better opportunities than my opponent to improve my position first?
3. Can my opponent prevent my idea, or develop counterplay elsewhere?

It goes without saying that the final decision should be accompanied by concrete calculation.

It is time to take a closer look.

Position 1:

Game 57

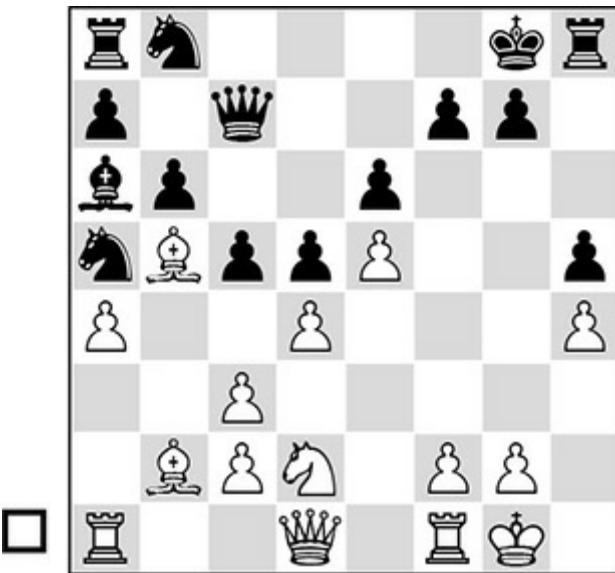
Thomas Willemze

2409

Jop Delemarre

2455

Netherlands tt 2010/11 (2)



We are dealing with a typical French position in which Black has the better pawn structure, but is behind in development. There is a very powerful rule in chess:

when you have a lead in development, open up the position as quickly as possible!

This rule also applies in the present position. Waiting any longer would only enable Black to develop his pieces, and, even worse, to prevent our plan by playing ...c5-c4 himself!

16.c4

As we saw in the previous paragraph, this high-tension pawn formation is very suitable if you want to open the position. If your opponent takes one of the pawns, then as a rule you can open a file by taking the other one.

16...dxc4

The only attempt to keep the files closed would be to ignore the pawns and continue with, for instance, 16... $\mathbb{Q}b7$. However, White would still get the upper hand after, for instance, 17.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 20.cxb3. White has used the exchange to change the structure. We have already seen this technique to open up a file in Chapter 1.

17.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$



The tension has been released, and Black is a pawn up – however at a very high price. His pieces are still grossly underdeveloped and White can quickly start an initiative.

18. ♜e4 ♜e7 19. ♜a3

The high-tension formation did not serve only to open the d-file, but also the 3rd rank! This enables the rook to join the party and makes it very hard for Black to defend.

19... ♜h6 20. ♜g3 ♜xb5 21. axb5

A quite normal move for a human player, leading to a winning advantage. However, it is always interesting to see how a computer can take the concept of ‘timing’ to a whole new level. According to Stockfish, recapturing the piece is simply a waste of time. It suggests 21. ♜f6+! ♜h8 22. ♜a3! ♜c7 23. ♜f8 with a hopeless position for Black.

It can be very instructive to check such computer lines at home after the analysis of your game, since they can provide you with new tactical insights. However, do not forget that we are only humans. If you can reach a winning position with simple moves, this is usually the wisest thing to do. Complicating things will only make it more likely that you will miscalculate somewhere.

21... ♜d7 22. ♜f6+

Objectively not the strongest move, but it is again the easiest path to a clearly winning position.

22... ♜xf6 23. exf6 ♜xf6 24. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 25. ♜xh5 ♜d8 26. ♜d1



Finally, after 13 moves, the rooks find their way to the open d-file.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 1-0

Position 2:

Game 58

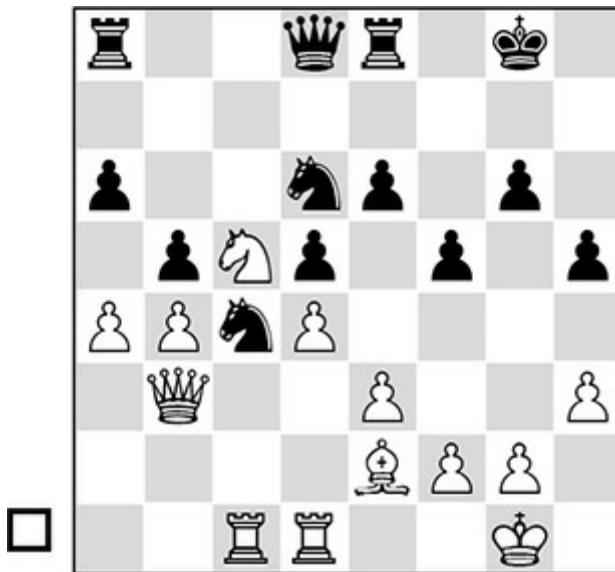
Ian Cheparinov

2688

Evgeny Postny

2588

Minsk Ech 2017 (3)



The c-file has already been opened, but it was neutralized when both knights arrived at their strong outposts. White therefore switched his attention to the a-file and pushed his pawn to a4. A remarkable idea, since Black is the one with a rook on a8. However, if the file is opened this pawn formation favours White. Black usually does not like to take on a4 since it would leave his a6-pawn backward. As a result, White has time to first improve his pieces, increase the pressure and then pick the right moment to open up the a-file.

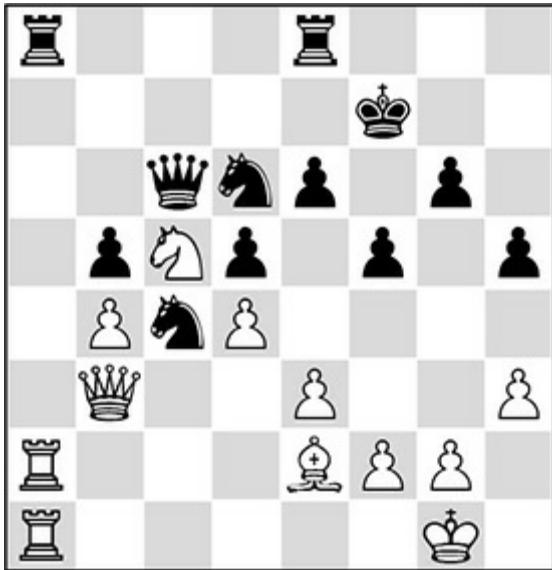
29. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}da1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

A tough decision. The rook needed extra support, but this move leaves the entrance square a7 unprotected.

32. $a\text{x}b5$

The most direct approach. An interesting alternative would have been to wait a little longer with 32. $\mathbb{Q}d1$, adding extra pressure on the black position. Black now has to reckon with the $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ sacrifice as well.

32... $a\text{x}b5$



33. $\mathbb{Q}a7+$! $\mathbb{R}xa7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xa7+$ $\mathbb{R}e7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}a2$

We are back on familiar territory. White controls the a-file, he has found an entrance square and is now heading for the black king.

35... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 37. $h4$

Again, there is no need to hurry, since Black does not have the means to contest the a-file. White therefore improves his position to the maximum before taking action.

37... $\mathbb{Q}4d6$ 38. $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$

Black cannot stand the pressure and prepares ... $\mathbb{Q}a7$. But now the white queen will find her way to the stage as well. The most stubborn defence would have been 38... $\mathbb{Q}d8$, keeping an eye on a5 and staying alert on potential $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ sacrifices. White's initiative is very promising, but there is still a lot to play for.

39. $\mathbb{Q}a5!$

The white rook was already annoying, but it is even harder to keep a hostile queen out!

39... $\mathbb{Q}c7$

39... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}d8!$.



40. $\mathbb{Q}g2!$

White again improves his position to the maximum before taking any action. This move is exemplary for the subject 'timing'.

40... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}a6$

This combination would not have been possible with a king on g1 due to 42... $\mathbb{Q}c1+$.

42... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 1-0

Position 3:

Game 59

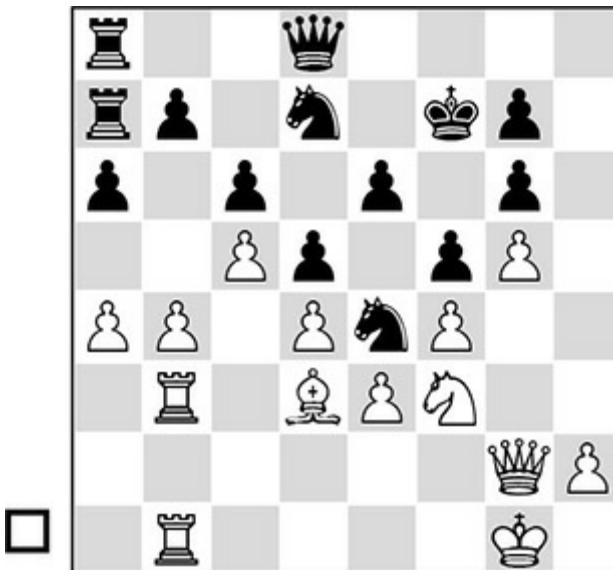
Wei Yi

2732

Xiongjian Peng

2431

China tt 2017 (6)



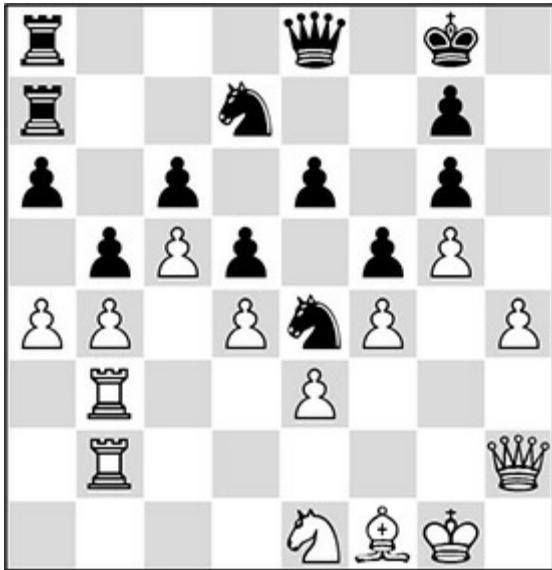
So far, we have seen an example where the position had to be opened right away and one in which only a few preparatory moves were required. This is an example in which White really has to take his time. The main reason is that Black does not have any counterplay. On top of that, he has already more or less manoeuvred his pieces to their optimal squares, given the limited amount of space he has. White, on the other hand, still has some furniture to shift. His king is a bit unsafe and there are also some opportunities on the kingside (h2-h4-h5) that need to be explored.

30. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}1b2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 32. $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}e1$

White has already made some progress. His pieces have improved their coordination, making his king feel a bit more comfortable. Furthermore, h4-h5 has become a move to be reckoned with.

It is not entirely clear if White would win this position with optimal play by both sides, but that is not very relevant in a practical game. He can play around for many more moves without any worries. The fact that Black has only very limited space and has to be on the alert for both b4-b5 and h4-h5 all the time, makes it almost impossible to defend.

34... $b5$



Black decides to take matters into his own hands. But...

35. ♜a3

White simply ignores him! We already saw this pawn formation in **Position 2**. It is still very unpleasant for Black to release the tension, so White continues his plan as if nothing has happened.

35... ♜b7 36. ♜d3 ♜ba7 37. ♜ba2 bxa4

Black could have maintained the tension a bit longer with 37... ♜b8, but after 38. ♜a1 the pressure would have been unbearable anyway. White is threatening both h4-h5 and ♜a2.

38. ♜c2 ♜b8 39. ♜xa4 ♛f7 40. ♜e1

The knight has done its job – it's time to go back to keep an eye on the h-pawn. Defending pawns is not a job for a queen.

40... ♜h8 41. ♜g2 ♜b8 42. ♜e2

42.b5 was already strong, but you already know the theme of this game: don't hurry, be happy!

42... ♜g3 43. ♜d3 ♜h5 44. ♛h2 ♜e4 45. ♜e2 ♜h8 46. ♜c1 ♜c8 47. ♜e1 ♜h8 48. ♜f3 ♛e7 49. ♜e1 ♜d7



Now, finally, the time is right. For the first (!) time in this game White decides to put tension on the pawns himself. And with reason: the black position suddenly falls apart.

50. b5 cxb5 51. ♜xb5 ♜b8 52. ♜xd7 ♜xd7 53. ♜e5 ♛e8 54. ♜xd7 ♜b1 55. ♜xa6!

The easiest.

55... $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}a7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}b8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 60. $dxc5$ 1-0

Conclusion

Timing is very important in chess. Strike when you have to, but otherwise make sure you eliminate your opponent's counterchances as much as you can!

5.4 Counterplay

Black was doomed to passive defence in **positions 2** and **3**, making the fight a bit one-sided. All he could do was try to keep his pieces as flexible as possible, hoping to get counterplay if his opponent picked the wrong moment to open up the position.

For the defending side, it will help a lot if he is able to open up a file for himself. This way he can start developing counterplay, increasing his chances considerably. In the next game, Black does have this opportunity, but does not take it. I want to use this example to show you what a difference active counterplay can make. First, I show you the game, in which Black sticks to passive defence. Then we compare the outcome with the most promising continuation.

Game 60

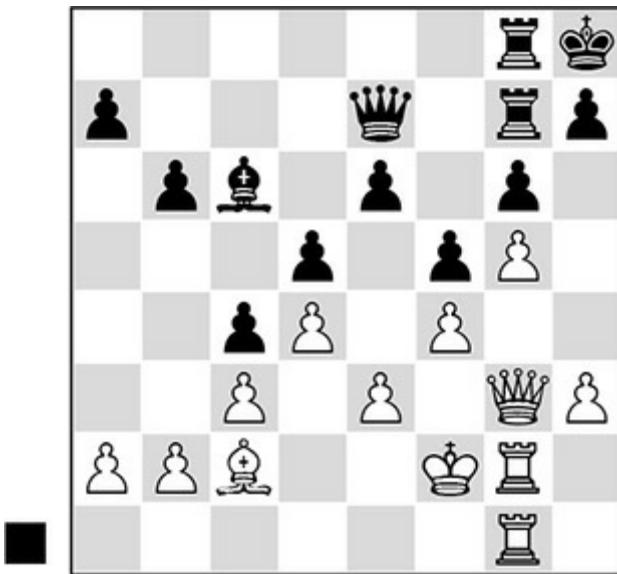
Lukasz Kaluzny

1979

Pawel Witwicki

1972

Poland tt 2012/13 (3)



This position may look a bit scary for Black at first sight. White has a space advantage on the kingside and has an obvious plan with h3-h4-h5 and tripling the major pieces on the h-file. Black tried to keep the gates closed, continuing with

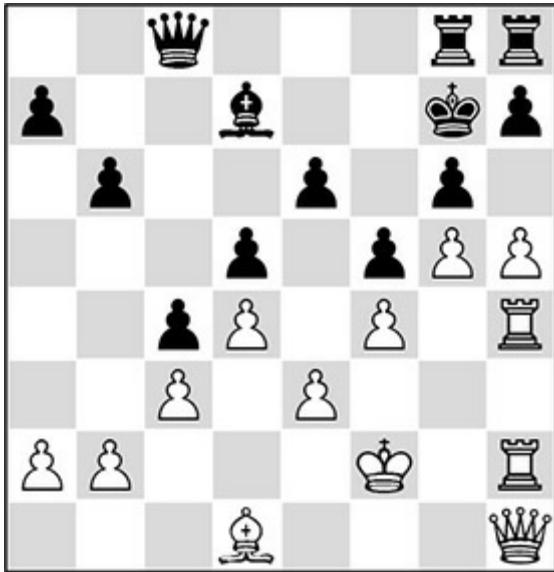
25... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27. $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 28. $h5$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}gh1$ $\mathbb{Q}ff8$

The rook at h8 is securely defended, but with **positions 2** and **3** of the previous section in mind, we already know that this is probably insufficient. White is going to build an Alekhine's Gun, improve his pieces to the maximum and enter the 7th rank with deadly force. That is exactly what happens.

30. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}fg8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d1$

32. $hxg6$ $hxg6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ was already decisive, but White saw no reason to hurry.

32... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}1h2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$

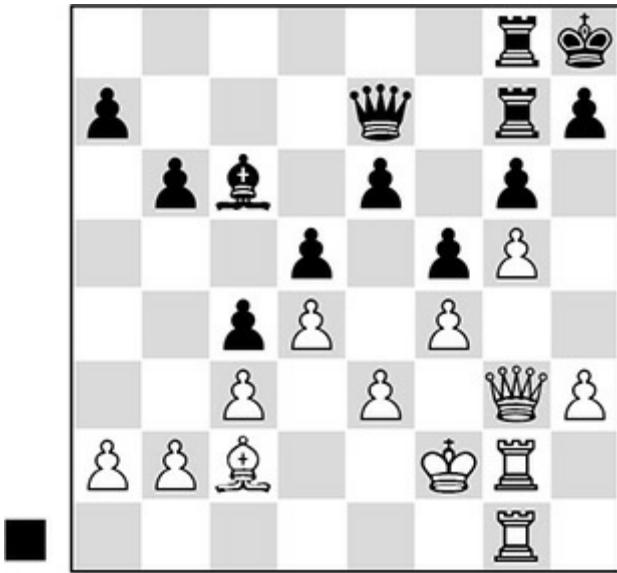


36. $h \times g6$ $h \times g6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$

White has a winning advantage.

Active defence

Passive defence did not work out very well. Let's go back to the starting position and open up a file!



25... $b5!$ 26. $a3!$

An important move, as 26. $h4$ $b4!$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $bxcc3$ 28. $bxcc3$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ would already be very good for Black. Exchanging both a-pawns makes a huge difference, since White will be able to use the a-file for his own rook later.

26... $a5$ 27. $h4$ $b4$ 28. $axb4$ $axb4$

Black is seriously knocking on the door and now it is the white king who is starting to feel uncomfortable. White already has to forget about his offensive intentions on the kingside and has to switch to defensive mode:

29. $\mathbb{Q}a1$

Black is doing more than fine.

Here is another example in which Black failed to appreciate the opportunity to open up a file.

Game 61

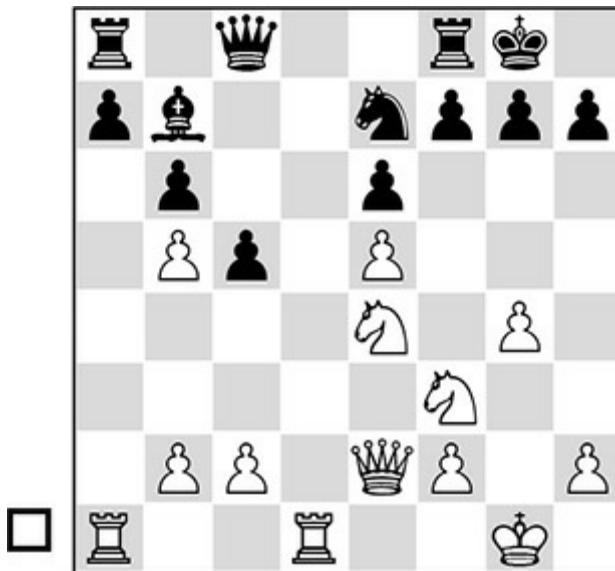
Hans Werner Ackermann

2292

Michael Ehlers

1937

Travemünde 2012 (1)



White has a nice outpost for either his rook or his knight, which makes it very hard for his opponent to contest the d-file. He therefore played the thematic

18. ♜d6,

probably with the idea to double the rooks. Black answered with 18...c4, managed to equalize by blocking the d-file, and won after a tense fight. He did, however, have a much stronger reply:

18...a6!

The aim is clear: open up a file and develop counterplay. Black is already better. For instance:

19.bxa6 ♜xa6 20. ♜e1 ♜b7 21. ♜ad1 ♜a4!

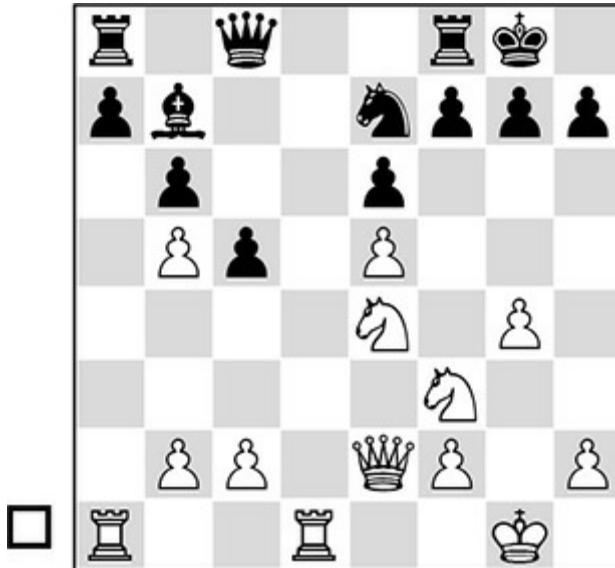
Suddenly the weakness of the white knight and pawn on the 4th rank are being felt. The d-file does not seem to be so important anymore.

Conclusion

Try to defend as actively as possible! Opening files for your own rooks is an important way to develop counterplay and make life more difficult for your opponent.

5.5 Prophylaxis

Once we understand that our opponent would like to have an open file for himself to develop counterplay, we can take prophylactic measures against it. In the previous example, this would mean we would have to prevent the move ...a7-a6 in order to keep the a-file closed.



If you know where to look, finding the best move is suddenly no longer so difficult. Black needs his bishop in order to play ...a7-a6, so it has to be neutralized.

18.♘d6! ♘c7 19.♘h4!

This prophylactic move is aimed against another source of counterplay for Black: ...♗g6 and ...f7-f6 to undermine the important e5-pawn. White has a very comfortable position. He can follow up with moves like ♜a3 or f2-f4-f5.

Keeping the open files to yourself

It is of course not always possible to keep all the remaining files closed; even less so if there were already multiple open files to start with. If this is the case, what can we do to obtain complete dominance? There are two important techniques to remember:

- Deny our opponent access to the open file;
- Close the file.

On the theme of keeping the opponent from enjoying an open file for himself, a true masterpiece has been delivered by Levon Aronian. At some point his opponent had no less than four (!) potential open files for his rooks, but he could not benefit from a single one of them.

Game 62

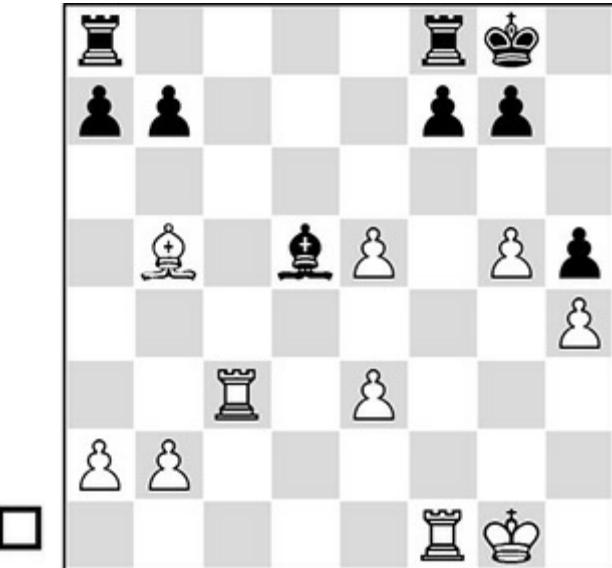
Levon Aronian

2805

Pentala Harikrishna

2669

Ningbo Wch tt 2011 (6)



The white rook is ready to enter the 7th rank, but this can wait. The main priority is preventing his opponent from developing counterplay.

23.♗d7!

Controlling three open files in one move! Suddenly the black rooks look very passive.

23...♜fd8 24.♜c7 a5

The only way to activate one of the rooks.

25.a4 ♜a6 26.♜f4

A subtle rook lift. 26.♜d1 would allow 26...♝e6!.

26...♜f8 27.♜d4 ♜c6 28.e6!

A very thematic move, opening the 7th rank for the rook.

28...fxe6

It looks like there is a drawback as well. Finally, the black rook is enjoying the view of an open file.

29.♝xe6+

But not for long. The bishop is already on its way.

29...♚h8 30.♝f7!



The same strategy. White gets a monopoly on the open files.

30...♜b6 31.b3

There is no need to hurry.

31... $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 32.g6 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 34.e4

The pawn is unstoppable.

34... $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 35.e5 1-0

Closing your open file

Another masterpiece was delivered by a teammate of mine, with BSG in the Dutch league: Ewoud de Groote. It is a very nice demonstration of another prophylactic technique: closing and re-opening your own(!) open file.

This motif was invented by Karpov in the 1970s in a game that I will show you in the next section. The idea is that if you cannot fully control the file of your choice, your opponent may use it to exchange all the major pieces, or worse: to develop counterplay himself. In order to keep your opponent passive, you can decide to temporarily close this file and only reopen it after you have improved your position to the maximum. That is exactly what Ewoud did.

Game 63

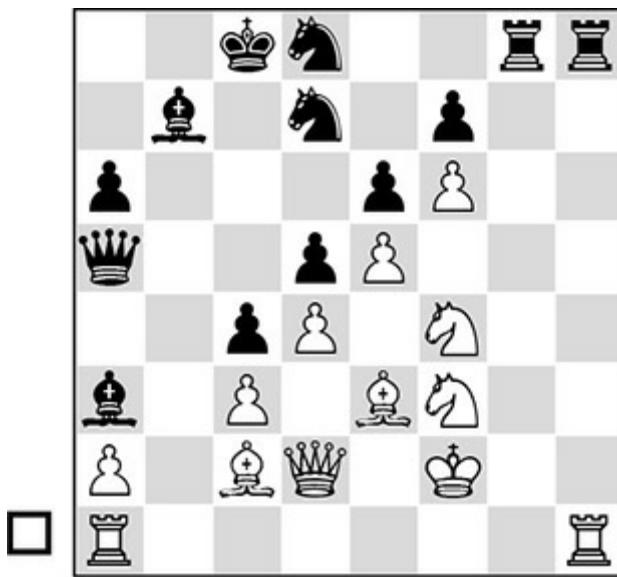
Ewoud de Groote

2274

Jelmer Sminia

2158

Netherlands tt 2016/17 (9)



As you can see, there are three open files in this position. However, on the b-file there is no entrance square for White and Black is unable to get his rooks over there. As a result, the open files on the kingside are the only ones that really count for the moment. White seizes the opportunity to reduce the activity of both black rooks to a minimum.

24. $\mathbb{Q}h7!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c2$

The rooks are not going anywhere for a while. White can start improving his position.

25... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c1$

White does not mind to exchange a few pieces. I would like to remind you of one of the conclusions of Chapter 1. The more pieces are being exchanged, the harder it gets to overcome a situation with one or more passive pieces.

26... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Black offered a draw at this point. But White was only getting started.

28. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}hxc1$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}cb1$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$



Exchanging queens would be really advantageous for White as well. He could already force a trade with 31. $\mathbb{Q}c1$, but this is something Black cannot really prevent from happening in the long run anyway.

31. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $a5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}bb1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}ef8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}axc1$



The queens are off and we have entered a new phase in the game. White still cannot really take advantage of the open b-file, but he has enough opportunities on the kingside instead. More important is the fact that Black will never be able to bring his rooks to the queenside in order to organize counterplay.

The situation is a bit sadistic. Black has three ways to protect f7, but when either the bishop or the knight jump in, the rook's route to the queenside will be blocked. It reminds me a bit of a so-called 15-puzzle. These are 4x4 sliding puzzles with one frame missing. The goal is to slide the parts around until you get the picture right. In this puzzle it looks like they have put 16 pieces, making it impossible to move them around.

36... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$



42... ♜c2

White is satisfied with his improvements and decides to re-open the file. Please note that he waited with this until after move 40. If you are trying to win a game without allowing your opponent any chance, you might as well use those extra 30 minutes for your most critical decisions.

42... ♜d8 43. ♜h7

And it is closed again! And the g-file reopened! White is on his way to the 7th rank.

43... ♜fg8 44. ♜hg1 ♜xg1 45. ♜xg1 ♜b6 46. ♜g7 ♜a4 47. ♜b1

White, of course, has no intention of exchanging these pieces. An even stronger move would have been 47. ♜g6!, but this would have spoiled most of the fun for the audience.

47... ♜d7 48. ♜g4

White has identified a new target: f7. Winning this pawn would not only severely weaken the black pawn structure, it would also open up the 7th rank for his rook.

48... ♜f8 49. ♜xf8 ♜xf8 50. ♜h6 ♛d7 51. ♜g6 ♛e8 52. ♛e3



A nice picture. The only black piece that is able to move has no targets.

52... ♜d1 53. ♛f4 ♜a4 54. ♛g5 ♜d1 55. ♜g8

The king is invited to join the party.

55... ♜c6 56. ♜h7 ♜a4 57. ♛h6 ♛d7 58. ♜g2 ♜b8

For the first time, the rook is allowed to have an open file for itself. It is, however, too late to develop counterplay on it. The black pawn structure is already falling apart.

59. $\mathbb{Q}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}h8$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 62. $\mathbb{Q}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 63. $\mathbb{Q}f8$ $\mathbb{B}b2$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 65. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{B}h2$ 66. $f7$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 67. $\mathbb{Q}g8$
1-0

Conclusion

If you have the initiative, keep your opponent as passive as possible! Try to look at the position from his perspective every once in a while, and make sure you take **prophylactic measures** to prevent him from becoming active if you can.

If your opponent has opened a file in order to create counterplay, there are two things you can do against it:

- Deny your opponent access to the open file;
- Close the file.

5.6 Second weakness

In the last example, White's domination was so large that he needed only a single target to outplay his opponent. In reality, such situations are quite rare. Take for instance the following position.

Game 64

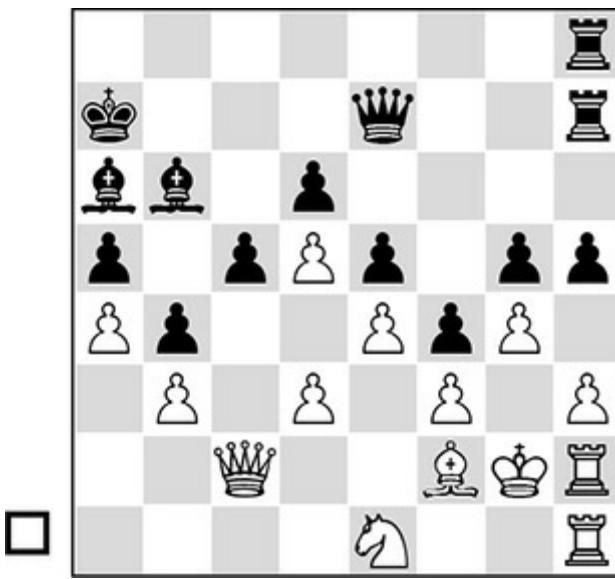
Ismael Molano Lafuente

2022

Filemon Cruz

2425

Santa Eulalia de Roncana 2012 (4)



Black has played a very nice game. After depriving his opponent from any kind of counterplay, he slowly started to improve his pieces. This even involved a king march from g8 to a7. His bishops are nicely grouped together, his rooks are doubled and he is almost ready to focus his attention on the h-file again. But then suddenly it turns out that his opponent is not impressed at all. Even worse, he comes up with a clear statement.

41. $\mathbb{Q}c4!$

You cannot explain the sense of humor behind this move to a computer – nor can you do anything about his evaluation of -8.00. But you can make a draw against even the strongest supercomputer. All you have to do is: nothing at all. That is exactly what happened in the game.

41... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 42. $dxc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}8h7$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $hxg4$ 48. $hxg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$



There is no way to make any progress.

Second weakness

One weakness is often not enough to win a game. That is why they invented the concept of the second weakness. As a defender, you can cling on to one weakness with everything you have, but defending a second one simultaneously will often prove too difficult. If you've paid close attention, you have probably already spotted a few glimpses of this concept in examples given so far.

The technique of combining threats against two different weaknesses does of course work best if your opponent is lacking serious counterplay. In that perspective, it is highly recommendable to wait as long as possible with the opening of files.

Game 65

Dawid Janowski

José Raul Capablanca

New York 1916 (3)



Black has acquired a very dominant position on the queenside and can pick a favourable moment to open up the a-file. His opponent is unable to move, so Black decides to open up a second battlefield.

25...h6 26.Qf3 g5 27.Qe1 ♕g8



Now White has to watch both sides. Please note that if Black had prematurely opened up the a-file in the starting position, White could now have taken advantage of this by putting his own rook on a1 to acquire counterplay.

28.Qf3 gxf4 29.gxf4 ♕aa8

Black switches his attention to the g-file. White will, of course, do the same, but his knight is severely slowing him down.

30.Qg2 ♕g4 31.Qg1 ♕ag8 32.Qe1



Black is fully mobilized on the kingside while his opponent is clinging on to that weakness. It's time to attack on the first battlefield again.

32...b4 33.axb4 ♕a4 34.Qa1

White would be completely paralysed after 34.Qc1 h5.

34...Qc2 35.Qg3 ♕e4+ 36.Qf2 h5 37.Qa7

Finally White has developed some counterplay. But he is clearly too late.

37... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ h4 39. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2+$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 0-1

Karpov's masterpiece

Keeping the files closed for a while can be a very useful technique. But what if the file is already open? This is where Karpov's idea comes in. I already mentioned his famous motif concerning the closing and reopening of a file. To be honest, Karpov never actually reopened the file in that particular game. The whole beauty lies in the fact that the threat of opening the file was strong enough to completely paralyse his opponent. This enabled him to open a second front and crush his opponent on the other side of the board.

Well, to be honest again, 'crush' may not be the correct term. The second weakness was exploited by mere threats too. This is by far the subtlest example of the 'second weakness' technique I know.

Game 66

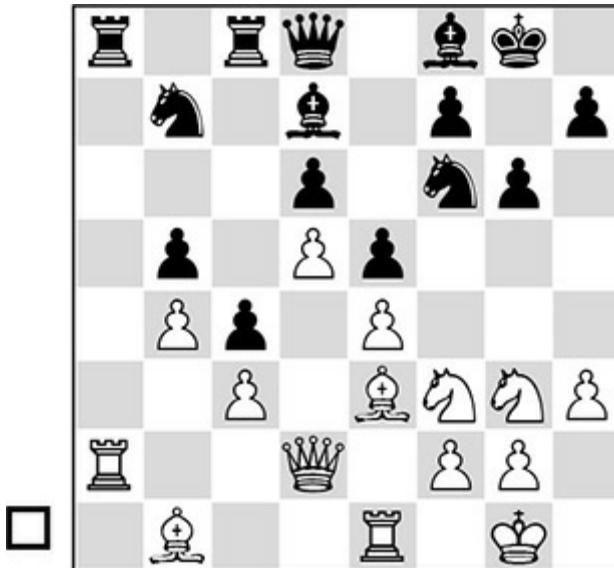
Anatoly Karpov

2700

Wolfgang Unzicker

2535

Nice ol 1974 (3)



Black is ready to exchange a rook on a2 and double his remaining major pieces on the a-file. Therefore, Karpov decides to close down the a-file.

24. $\mathbb{Q}a7$

Without an a-file to focus on, Black's major pieces suddenly start to look a bit awkward. And there were already very few positive things to be said about his other pieces.

24... $\mathbb{R}e8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c2$

White's plan is pretty straightforward. As always, we start by improving our pieces to the maximum. The obvious first step is doubling the rooks on the a-file.

25... $\mathbb{R}c7$ 26. $\mathbb{R}ea1$ $\mathbb{R}e7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$

The knights are next.

28. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

Now it is time to open up a second front.

30.f4 f6 31.f5 g5

Black is going to regret this move pretty soon, since it weakens the light squares in front of his king and

buries his dark-squared bishop alive.

32. $\mathbb{Q}c2$



It must be said, Black cannot move a muscle, and there are probably many ways to win this position. However, the instructional value of this fragment lies in the fact that Black's chances are reduced to an absolute minimum. From that perspective, the next part is what I like most about this game. If you asked different people how they would continue in this position, a lot of them would come up with plans involving h3-h4 and opening up the h-file. This is, however, never without risk. Karpov manages to win this game without even touching a single pawn!

32... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $h6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}h5$



An extra open file is not necessary for the moment. Karpov tries to enter the position via the weak light squares.

35... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}a3$

When you have all the time in the world, you can even improve your pieces to the minutest detail. Karpov removes his rook from the first rank, just in case there will be a combination ending with ... $\mathbb{Q}xa1+$.

37... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}1a2$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

The bishop is of course poisoned: 39... $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$.

40. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$



Finally, Karpov is satisfied. It's time to finish the game.

41. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 1-0

Outpost

There are different ways to (temporarily) close a file in order to limit your opponent's activity. One of them is by making use of an outpost.

Game 67

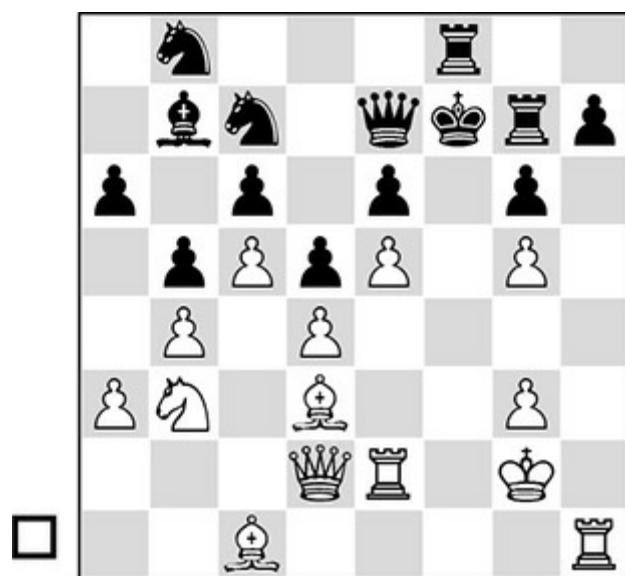
Tomas Likavsky

2498

Peter Michalik

2330

Banska Stiavnica ch-SVK 2006 (8)



The black pieces are entombed by their own pawns and there is not much that can be done. Despite White's large advantage, it is not so clear how he can win this position. He starts by conquering the f-file, further

restricting the mobility of the black forces.

34. $\mathbb{R}f2+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 35. $\mathbb{R}f6!$

A highly convincing outpost, since it is not very attractive to capture the rook. As a result, White has all the time in the world to improve his pieces and increase the pressure on the black position.

35... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 36. $\mathbb{R}hf1$ $\mathbb{R}gf7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

39... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ is not really a threat. After 40. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ Black might as well resign.

40. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$



White has optimized his pieces on the kingside and his forces are probably strong enough to break through. However, he goes for a plan we have seen before. He starts by creating a second front!

43. $\mathbb{Q}a1!$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 44. $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 46. $a xb5$ $a xb5$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}a7$

From now on, the black pieces will have to divide their attention between both sides of the board.

47... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 53. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 54. $\mathbb{Q}af1$



And back to the kingside.

54... $\mathbb{Q}ee7$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}f8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}g8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}f6$



And a new rook has arrived at f6!

58... ♜xf6 59.exf6 1-0

Conclusion

Having a dominant position in which your opponent is lacking counterplay is not always enough for a win. If he is stuck with only one weakness, he can cling on to it with all he has and just wait for the storm to pass.

If this is the case, creating a **second weakness** and forcing your opponent to divide his attention between both of them is often the key to success.

But I have to warn you: use this technique with care! Creating a second weakness often implies opening the position in two different places, which might offer your opponent **counterplay**.

Make sure your **timing** is correct and use techniques like the **temporary closure of a file** to keep your opponent passive.

5.8 FLASH CARDS



Timing

Postpone far-reaching decisions until after move 40! In this position, 38... $\text{Qc}8!$ would have kept all options open and added 39... $\text{Qf}5$ as an extra option. Timing is very important in chess.



Opening a file: block the pawn first

The most straightforward way to open up a file is by **blocking a pawn before you attack it**. Anand used this technique to convert his ending with an exchange up into a full point.



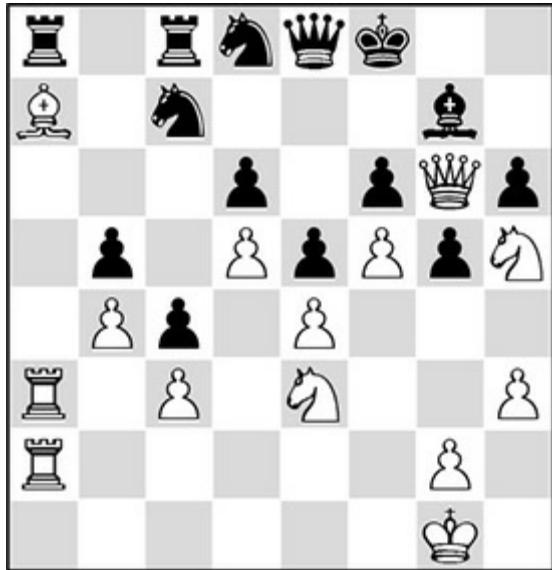
Opening a file: use high tension

In more symmetrical pawn structures, you can create a pawn configuration with high tension in order to make sure that files are opened. All four pawns are currently under attack and Black is unable to keep the e-file closed without losing material.



One weakness is not enough

Creating a single weakness in your opponent's camp is often not enough to win the game!

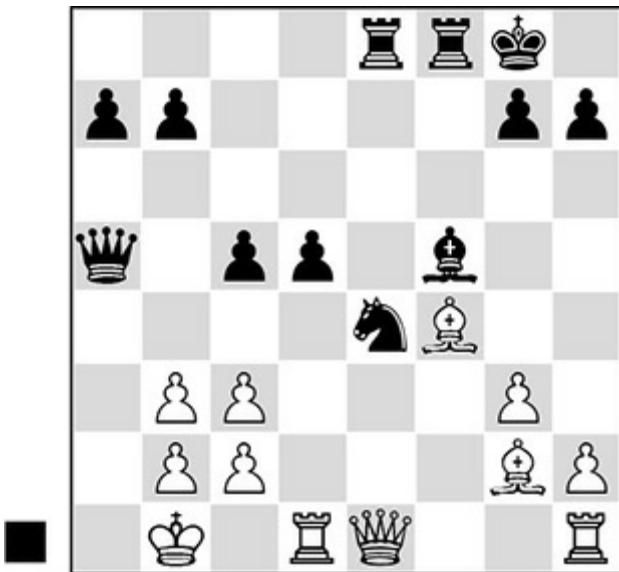


Prophylaxis/second weakness

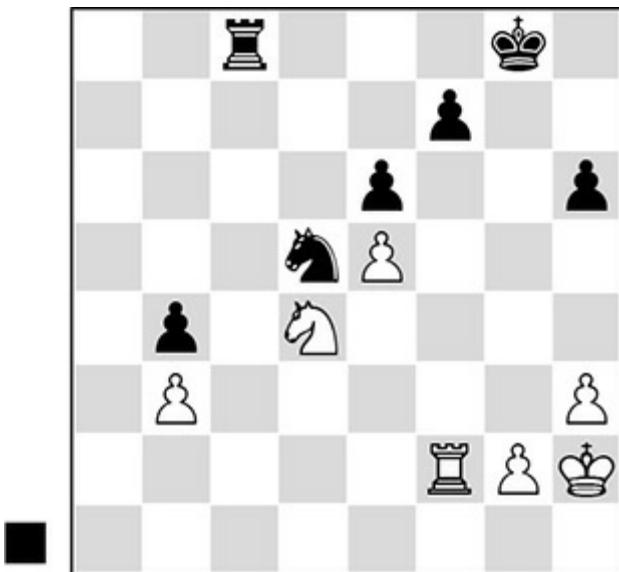
Karpov invented the technique of closing a file to prevent the opponent's counterplay. He combined it with creating a second front and outplaying his opponent there as well. In this position, Black had run out of moves and therefore resigned.

Exercises – Counterplay/prophylaxis

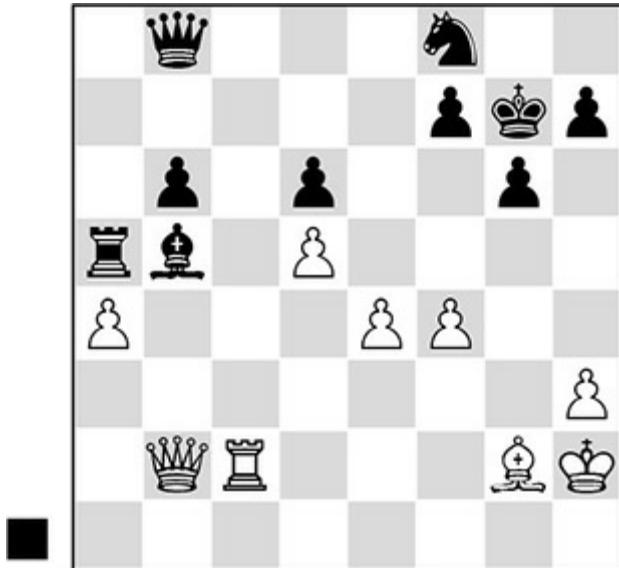
Solution 5.1



Solution 5.2

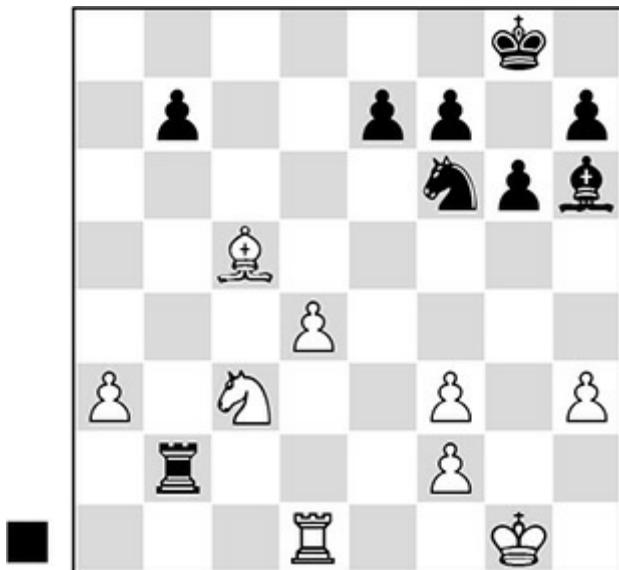


Solution 5.3



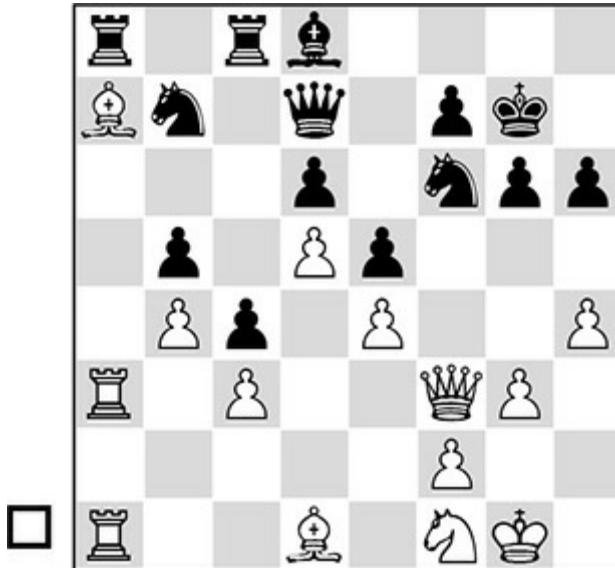
$\dots f7-f6$ or $\dots \text{Castling} g8 ?$

Solution 5.4



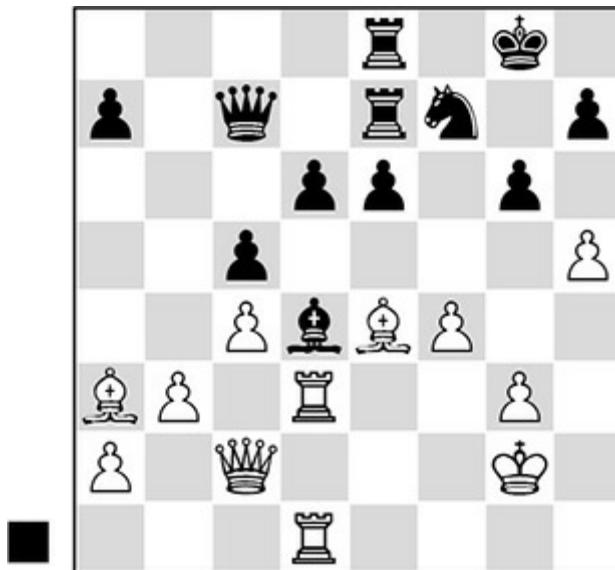
$\dots e7-e6$ or $\dots \text{Castling} f8 ?$

Solution 5.5



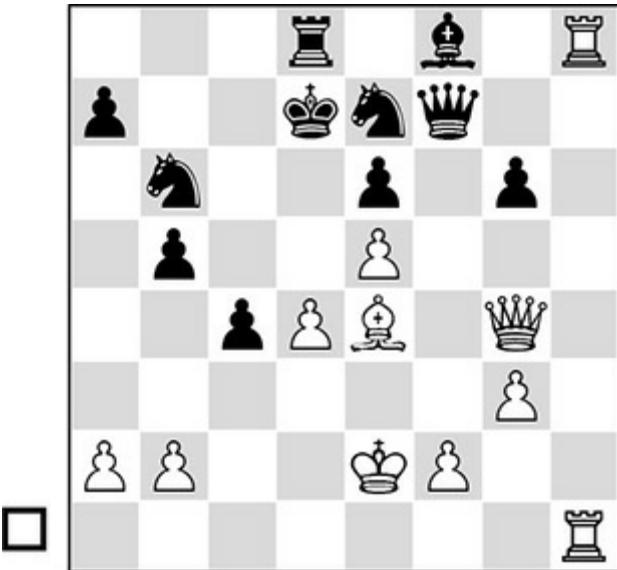
↙h2 or ↙e3 ?

Solution 5.6

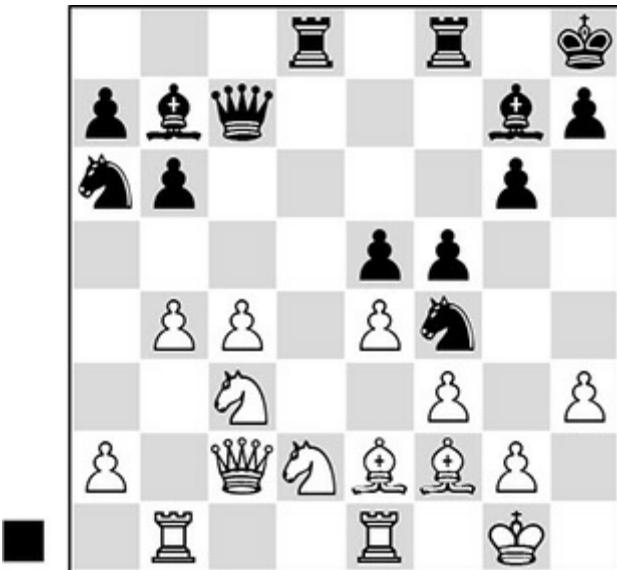


Attack

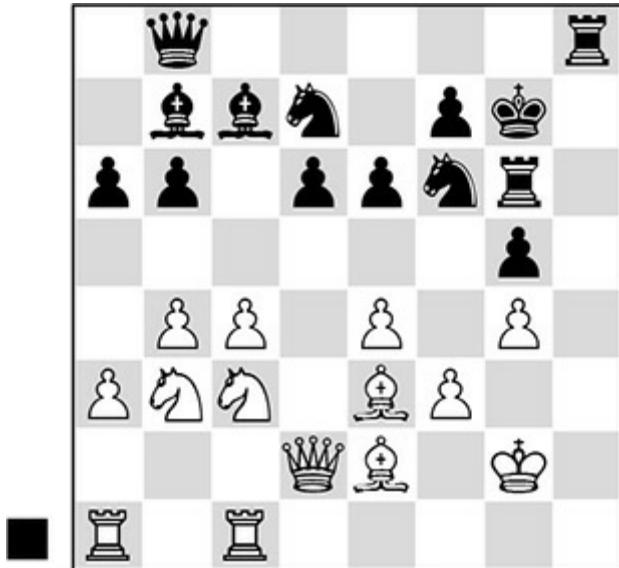
Solution 5.7



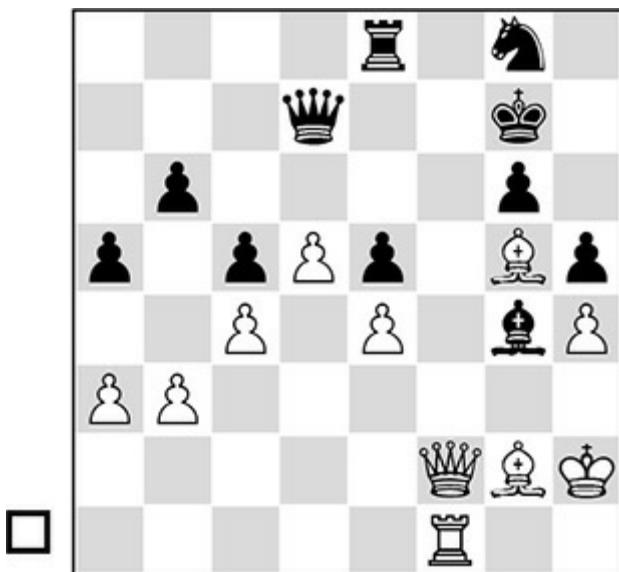
Solution 5.8



Solution 5.9



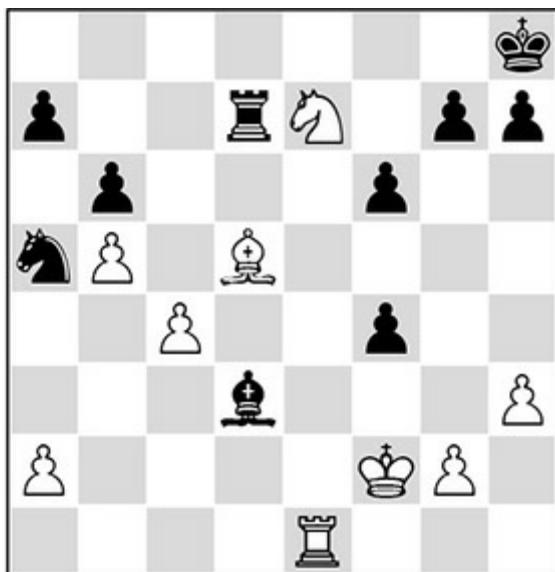
Solution 5.10



Solution 5.11

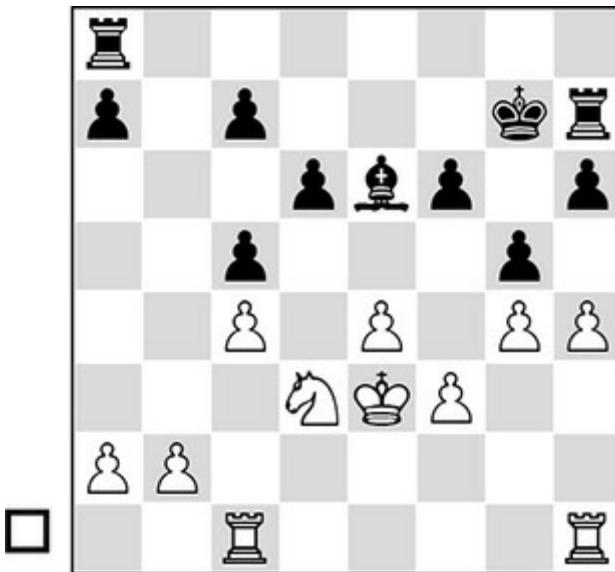


Solution 5.12

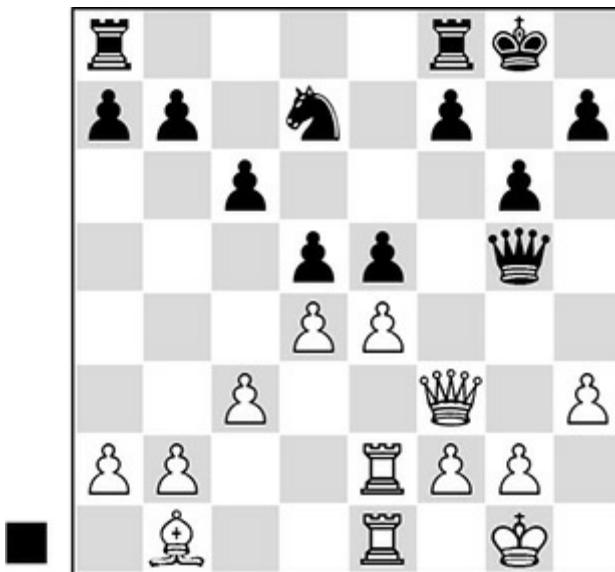


Open or close a file

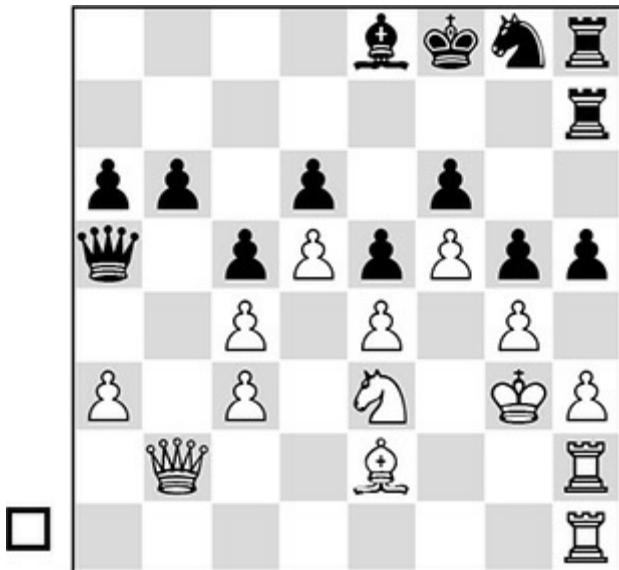
Solution 5.13



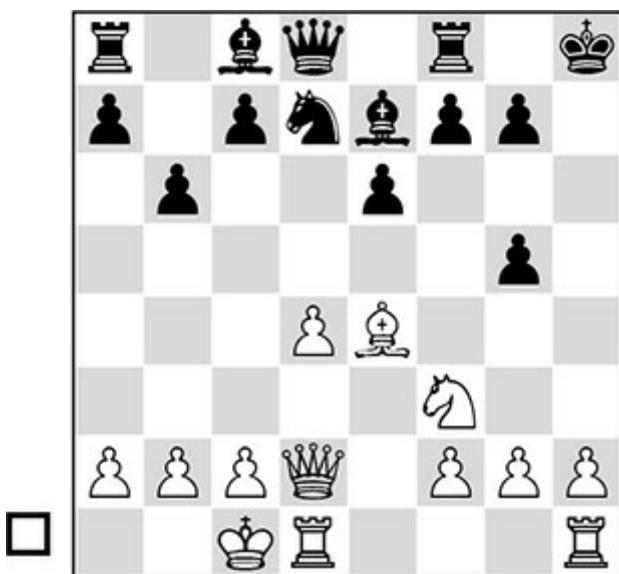
Solution 5.14



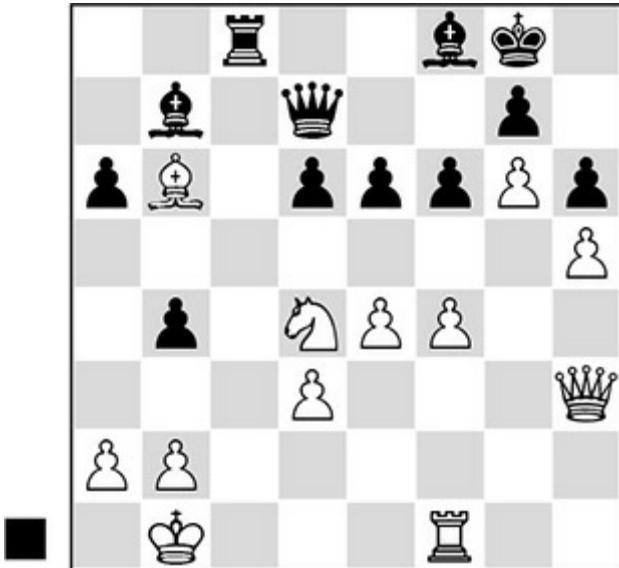
Solution 5.15



Solution 5.16

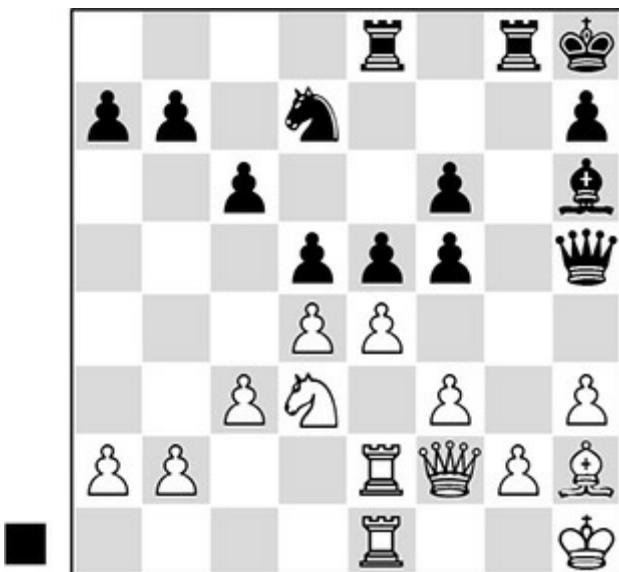


Solution 5.17



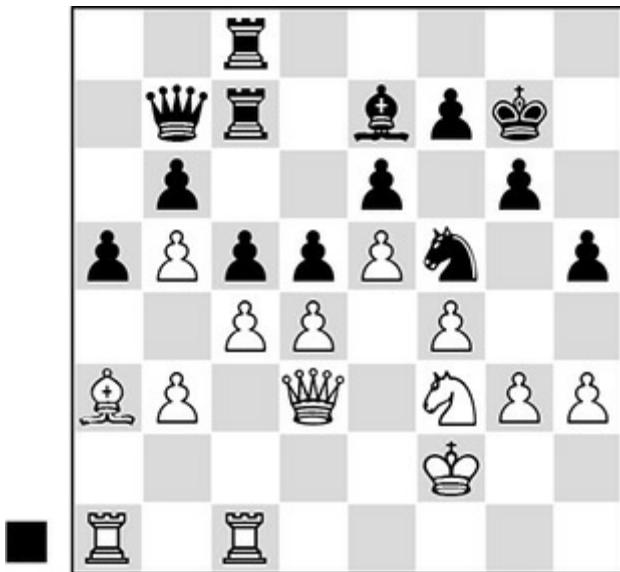
...f6-f5 or 1...d6-d5 ?

Solution 5.18



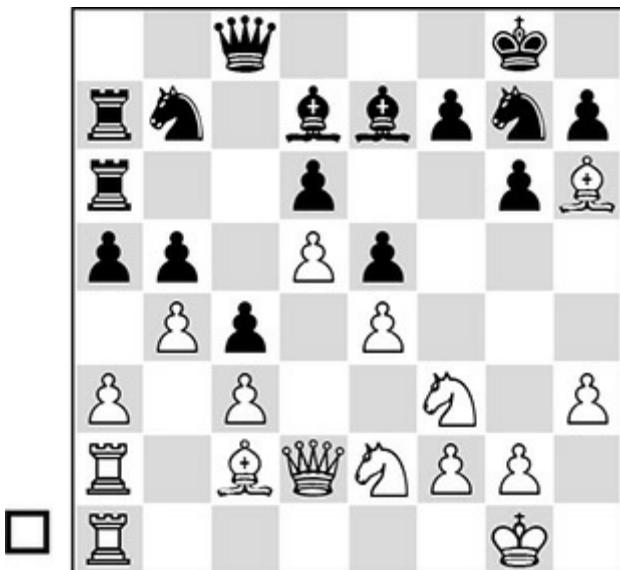
Open or close a file – 2

Solution 5.19

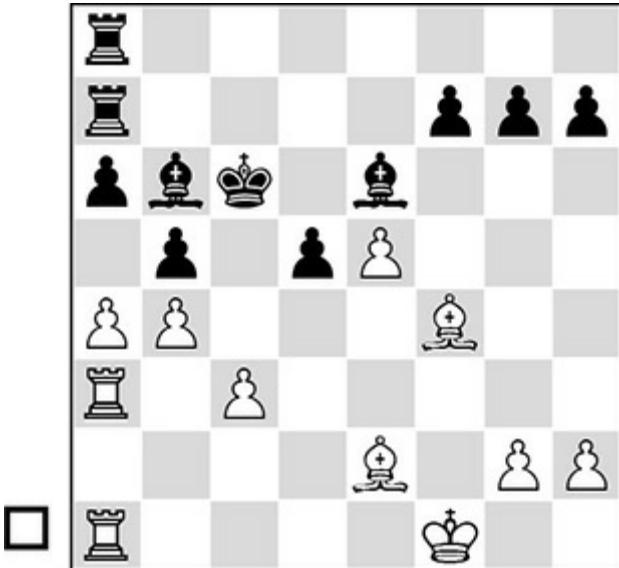


...dxc4 or ...cxd4 ?

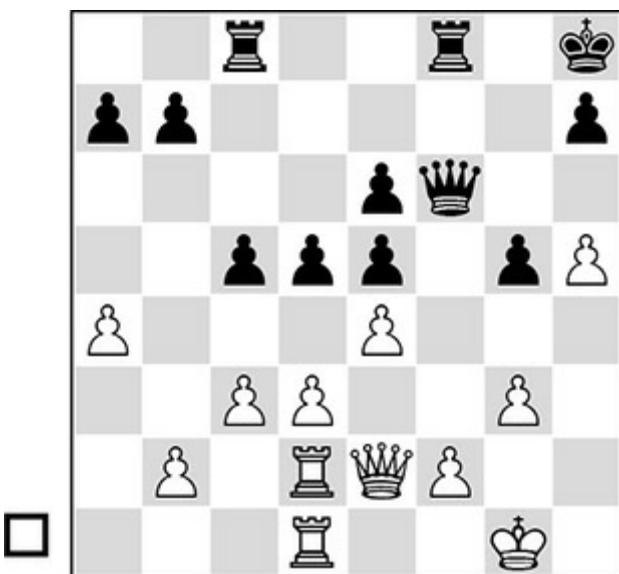
Solution 5.20



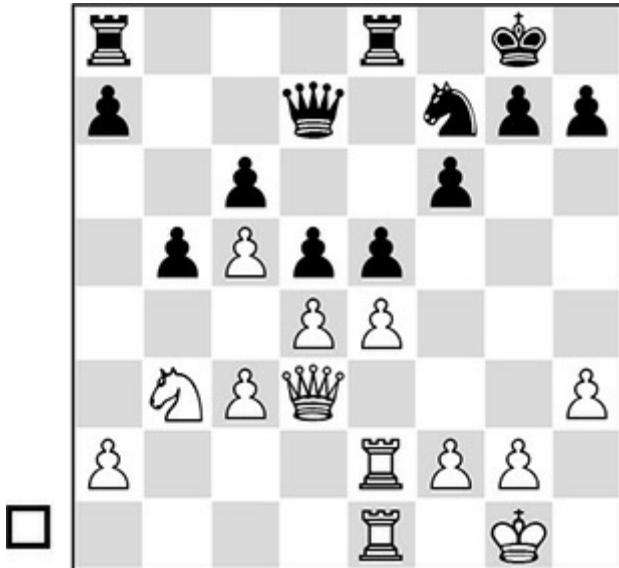
Solution 5.21



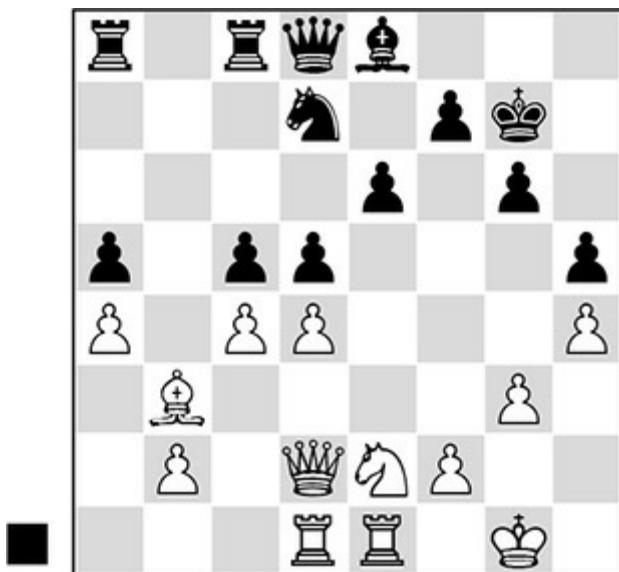
Solution 5.22



Solution 5.23



Solution 5.24



PART III

Attack and defence

Attacking the king

One of the golden rules in chess is that you can bring your king into safety by castling kingside or queenside. Once it is tucked away in the corner, sheltering behind three solid pawns, you can focus on completing your development, coordinating your pieces and, for instance, starting the fight for the centre.

Unfortunately, the safety of a castled king is often only temporarily. Sooner or later your opponent might feel confident enough to start an attack on the castled king.

The *Step-by-Step Method* distinguishes four stages for executing a successful attack on the king:

- Bring up your pieces;
- Get access to the enemy king;
- Eliminate defenders;
- Deliver mate.

Piece sacrifice

The first three stages can of course occur in different orders. Sometimes your opponent has even weakened his king's position himself, in which case opening it up is no longer required. If not, there are generally two ways in which you can create access to the enemy king's position: with pawns or with pieces. In this part, we are going to focus on the use of **piece sacrifices** to provide access to the king – to be more precise: access to the **castled** king.

Deliver the mate

In the previous part, we got acquainted with the principle of starting with the goal in mind and then reasoning backwards. The same rule applies here. Mating the king is of course always the last stage of the game, and the most important one. An attack on the king can never be successful if you lack an understanding of mating patterns. I already stressed this in Chapter 2. If you do not feel confident about your tactical skills, I highly recommend you to practise these topics in the *Step-by-Step Method* very carefully.

Attacking the castled king

Now that checkmating an exposed king with several pieces has become a piece of cake for you, it is time to move on to the next level and focus on the other three stages.

Game 68

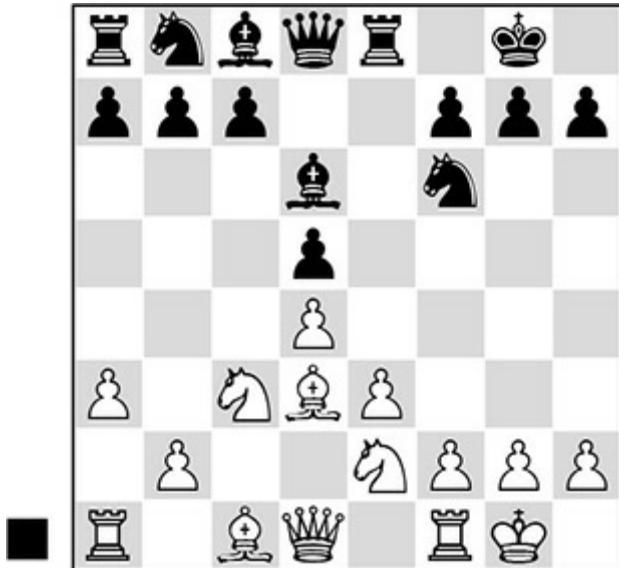
Loek van Wely

2681

Peter Acs

2591

Hoogeveen 2002 (6)



Up to this point, the pawns in front of the white king have not moved yet. This is the most solid configuration you can get.

9... ♜g4

Bringing the first attacker towards the king and hoping to create the first crack in White's solid king position.

10.h3

10. ♜f4 would have been a better option.

10... ♜h2 11. ♜e1

Already a decisive mistake since now Black will be able to execute a successful attack. If White had known what was coming, then he would definitely have given up the exchange with 11. ♜xd5 ♜xf1 12. ♜xf1 with decent compensation.



11... ♜f3+!

The topic of this part. Black gives up a piece to secure access to the white king.

12.gxf3 ♜g5+

Bringing up the first attacker.

13. ♜h1 ♜h4



The piece sacrifice did not only open up the g-file. The h-pawn is now deprived of its sole defender and the white king will soon find itself out in the open.

14. ♜f4 ♜xh3 15. ♜cxd5

15. ♜xh3 would have led to a very thematic mate: 15... ♜xh3+ 16. ♛g1 ♜h2+ 17. ♛h1 ♜g3+ 18. ♛g1 ♜h2+ 19. ♛f1 ♜xf2#.



15... ♜e6!

Well played! Black realizes that he has no successful discovered attack and simply brings on a fresh attacker while keeping the threat alive. As a result, the pressure on the white king becomes unbearable.

16. ♜xe6

We now arrive at the final stage: delivering the mate.

16... ♜f5+!

The only way! The white queen is now assigned with keeping an eye on the white bishop, which makes her a very poor defender of the king.

17. ♛g1 ♜h2+ 18. ♛f1 ♜g3!



A beautiful finish, after which White resigned. It is mate in a few moves. For instance:

- A) 19. fxg3 ♜h3#;
- B) 19. ♜c2 ♜xd3+ 20. ♜xd3 ♜xf2#;
- C) 19. ♜e2 ♜h1#.

Once Black managed to open up the king's position, his pieces followed quite smoothly and he finished the game in style.

Bring in your friends

In theory, executing an attack on the enemy king might seem easy. Create a hole, bring up your pieces and checkmate the king. Whether the same holds true in practice depends to a large extent on the level of your opponent. Meaning, the level of defence.

As a child, I had the idea I was quite good at attacking and always tried to move my pieces towards the enemy king as soon as possible. Indeed, I won a lot of games this way. Until I passed the 2000 Elo barrier. Suddenly my attacks did not go so smoothly anymore.

It was at that time that I started to train with Cor van Wijgerden. The first thing he did was create training exercises from my own games. Most of them showed two or three of my pieces fiercely attacking a well-defended king, while the rest of the army was still unutilized.

Van Wijgerden taught me to 'bring in your friends!' when setting up an attack. Shortly after, my results improved again.

Defence

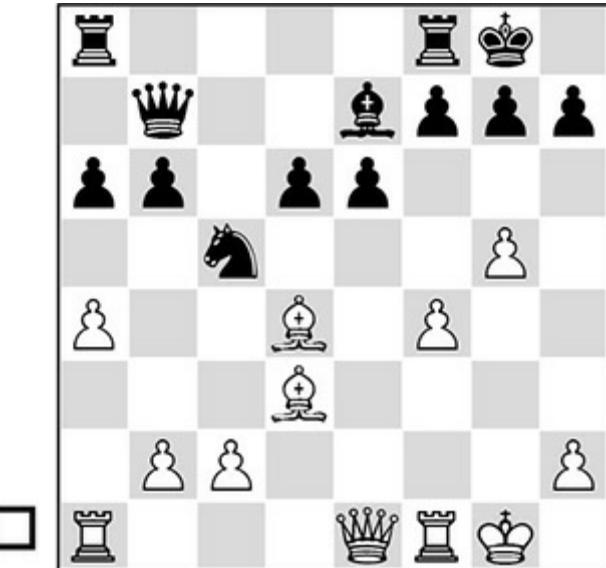
Having the right defensive skills is just as important as being able to mate your opponent's king. We have already discussed the most important attacking techniques. It's time to look at the defender's devices.

Game 69

Fernando Herrera

E de Marval

Azul ch-ARG 1960



This fragment starts with a very tempting double piece sacrifice. This famous combination will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

20.♘xh7+ ♕xh7 21.♗h4+ ♔g8 22.♗xg7 ♔xg7 23.♗h6+ ♔g8

The last moves were all forced. Now White has to play 24.g6 and settle for the perpetual. But he wants more.

24.♖a3



Black has to come up with a defence against his opponent's obvious plan. His king is currently on his own, so he has to bring in defenders. But how? There are two important techniques from which he can choose.

First, Black could go for a 7th-rank defence with 24...♝d8. The idea is to cover the vital h7-square after 25.♖h3 f5! and to be ready to meet 26.g6 with 26...♝g7!.

But that is not all. Clearing the 7th rank does also prepare an evacuation of the black king. For instance, 26.♗h8+ ♔f7 27.g6+ ♔e8 28.g7 ♗f7 29.♔xf8+ ♗xf8 30.gxf8♗+ ♔xf8 with a very promising ending for Black.

The 7th-rank defence works well in this position. But the game continuation is even stronger.

24...♝e4!



Central play is another important defensive technique. It works especially well for a queen, who can use her central position to combine attack with defence.

25. ♕h3 ♖d4+!

This was the idea. Her majesty is on her way to g7 in order to exchange the most important white attacking piece.

26. ♕h1 ♗g7 27. ♕ff3 ♖xh6

Without a queen, the attack is over. Therefore, White resigned.

To wrap up: Black won the game because he managed to **exchange the most important attacker**. This was achieved by bringing in the most important defender: the queen. The queen was activated **through the centre**, but a decent alternative would have been to travel over the empty 7th rank, using the **7th-rank defence**. The same 7th rank can also be utilized for **an evacuation of the king**, but this was not necessary in the game.

Counterattack

I want to finish this introduction with a beautiful example of the most important defensive technique: **the counterattack!**

Game 70

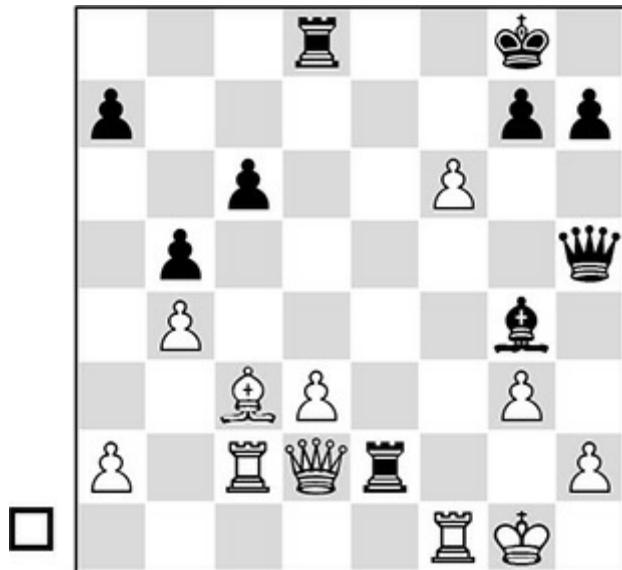
Viswanathan Anand

2783

Fabiano Caruana

2807

St Louis 2017 (5)



Attack is the best defence! Watch how Anand directs his pieces with tempo towards the centre and mates the enemy king:

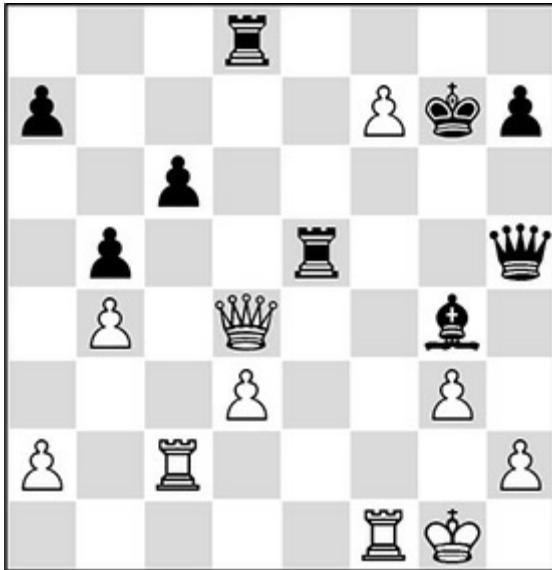
23.f7+! ♔ f8 24.♕ xg7+ ♔ xg7 25.♔ c3+



25... ♕e5

25... ♜e5 26. ♜xe2 ♜xc3 27. ♜e8! ♜d4+ 28. ♜f2 ♜xb4 29. f8 ♜+ ♜xf8 30. ♜fxf8 ♜xd3 would most likely have led to the same result.

26. ♔ d4!



The queen has made it to her favourite spot: the centre! She was sent to defend her king, but now it turns out her assignment has changed: checkmate the black king!

26... ♕g5

26... ♜xd4 27.f8♕ + ♛g6 28.♕f6#.

27.♖c5 ♜xd4 28.f8♕ + ♛g6 29.♕f7+ 1-0

Conclusion

The following techniques for attacking or defending a castled king have been discussed:

Attack:

- Bring up your pieces;
- Get access to the king;
- Eliminate defenders;
- Deliver mate.

Defence:

- Bring in defenders;
- Exchange important attackers;
- 7th-rank defence;
- Central play;
- Evacuation of the king;
- Counterattack.

Keep these techniques in mind. They will return in the following chapters. This part will consist of:

Chapter 6: The Greek Gift

Chapter 7: Lasker's double bishop sacrifice

Chapter 8: Fighting for the entrance square

Sacrificing one or more pieces to get access to the king is a central theme in each of these chapters. With regard to the other attacking techniques, Chapters 6 and 7 will focus on how you can bring up your pieces (with tempo!), while Chapter 8 puts more emphasis on the elimination of the defenders.

CHAPTER 6

The Greek Gift

6.1 Introduction

If you want to explore the world of piece sacrifices aimed at the castled king, the Greek Gift is a good place to start. It has many representatives in the databases and the clear patterns make it very useful training material for improving your attacking and defending skills.

The Greek Gift is also known as the ♜xh7 sacrifice as it always uses the bishop to open up the king's position. However, the true strength of the combination is in the second phase: bringing up the pieces to the enemy king with tempo. Why is it so important to execute our attack **with tempo**? Because without it, our opponent would have time to organize his defence.

Bring up your pieces with tempo

Let me illustrate this with an extended version of the Greek Gift.



The white queen has gone on a little pawn-grabbing adventure and is therefore temporarily unavailable to assist her husband. This is the sign for Black. Watch how he brings up his pieces for the attack without allowing White a single move for his defence.

1... ♜b8!

Black starts with chasing the white queen to a7 or (eventually) a5.

2. ♜xa6 ♜b6 3. ♜a5 ♜xc6!

This was the point. The first knight has moved... with tempo!

4. ♜c3



We arrive at the starting point for the famous Greek Gift combination. It always kicks off with the same bishop sacrifice.

4... ♜xh2+

Getting access to the king!

5. ♛xh2

This move is usually obligatory, as otherwise Black simply wins a pawn.

5... ♜g4+



Always the standard follow-up. It does not only direct the knight to the king, it also opens a diagonal for the queen. Now White usually has two choices. I call them ‘the passive king defence’ and ‘the active king defence’.

A) 6. ♜g1 is the **passive king defensive set-up**. It can be highly effective if White has the right follow-up at his disposal. But not in this position. It is mate in 7!: 6... ♜h4 7. ♜e1 ♜h2+ 8. ♛f1 ♜h1+ 9. ♜g1 ♜h2+ 10. ♛e2 ♜g4+ 11. ♜f3 ♜xf3+ 12. gxf3 ♜xf3#;

B) The alternative was 6. ♜g3, **the active king defence**. This set-up usually leads to less clear-cut attacking and defensive patterns and is therefore harder to assess. It is not going to help White in this position either. He should resign after, for instance, 6... ♜e7, because there is little he can do about the crushing 7...

$\mathbb{Q} f5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q} h3$ $\mathbb{Q} h4\#.$

Successful defence

How can we recognize the Greek Gift set-up? A very common piece configuration is the $\mathbb{Q} d8/\mathbb{Q} d6/\mathbb{Q} f6$ triangle, but this is not always necessary. The most important feature is the possibility of the move sequence 1... $\mathbb{Q} xh2+$ 2. $\mathbb{Q} xh2$ $\mathbb{Q} g4+$ and, in case of 3. $\mathbb{Q} g1$, 3... $\mathbb{Q} h4$. Needless to say, this does not work with a white pawn on g3 or h3, or with a white knight on f3.

As a careful reader, you probably immediately have to think of our introductory game Van Wely-Acs.

Game 71

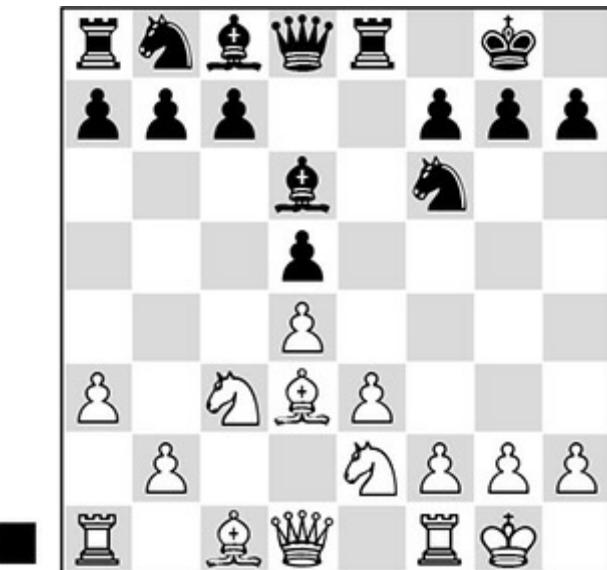
Loek van Wely

2681

Peter Acs

2591

Hoogeveen 2002 (6)



What kept Acs from executing the famous sacrifice?

9... $\mathbb{Q} xh2+$ 10. $\mathbb{Q} xh2$ $\mathbb{Q} g4+$

Now the passive king defence leads to a quick victory for Black: 11. $\mathbb{Q} g1$ $\mathbb{Q} h4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q} e1$ $\mathbb{Q} h2+$ 13. $\mathbb{Q} f1$ $\mathbb{Q} h1+$ 14. $\mathbb{Q} g1$



analysis diagram

14... ♜h2+ 15. ♛e2 ♜g4+ 16. ♜f3 (16.f3 ♜xg2#) 16... ♜xg2. However, it turns out that the active king defence saves the day for White.

11. ♜g3!



This could have been one of my own games when I was a youth player. The queen and knight are on their way to the enemy king, while the rest of the army is left behind. This blunt approach actually does have a chance of succeeding in some versions of the Greek Gift, but not without a pawn on e4. This is a crucial difference with the previous example, since the absence of a black pawn on e4 provides White with extra possibilities like f2-f3, f2-f4 or the freeing e3-e4.

For instance:

11... ♜d6+

11... ♜g5 12.f4!.

12. ♜f4 c6

12... g5 13. ♜b5 gxf4+ 14.exf4 ♜c6 15. ♜e1 also puts a stop to Black's ambitions.

13.e4!

White takes over after this thematic counterattack in the centre.

The black pawn on e4 turns out to be an important ingredient for a successful Greek Gift. This is of course not the only indicator for the distinction of a promising Greek Gift combination from a hopeless one. Studying many different examples and comparing them to each other is the most effective way to separate the wheat from the chaff.

The aim of this chapter

This chapter is roughly divided into two parts:

- Passive king defence;
- Active king defence.

Both the attacking and defending resources will be discussed in great detail.

The aim of this chapter is not just to make you a ‘Greek Gift specialist’. Studying this chapter will boost your attacking and defensive skills because you will be shown techniques that are applicable to many different positions.

6.2 Defence 1: the passive king

When calculating a Greek Gift opportunity, I would always recommend starting with the passive king defence. I already explained how this version usually contains the most clear-cut lines. If withdrawing your king behind the remaining pawns already refutes the sacrifice, you will not have to enter the muddy waters of the active king defence.

The next position is yet another success story for the Greek Gift. We will use it to identify potential defending resources and explore them in the remainder of this paragraph.



This position is begging for the Greek Gift sacrifice. Whenever you are able to sacrifice the bishop on h7 and can follow up with ♜g5+ and queen to the h-file, you should seriously consider it. However, be aware of over-optimism. Only precise calculation should tell you whether it is advisable to go for it or not. A refuted piece sacrifice will not win you the brilliancy prize!

1. ♜xh7+ ♕xh7 2. ♜g5+ ♕g8



The passive king defence. It is not effective if Black

- A) is ready to cover the h7-square; or
- B) has a plan to evacuate his king.

Covering the h7-square

Plan A consists of answering $\mathbb{Q}h5$ with ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (or ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$), or by putting a queen or a bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal. There are dozens of examples in which simply defending the h7-square guarantees Black an easy win.

Evacuation of the king

If h7 cannot be defended, Black is forced to go for plan B. There are several criteria to assess whether the white king stands a chance. In this particular position, the evacuation plan is doomed to fail as:

- The f7-pawn is solely defended by the rook; and
- the back rank is too crowded.

As a result, the passive king defence is doomed to fail. The most stubborn move in this position would therefore have been 2... $\mathbb{Q}g6$. The active king defence is in the majority of games the critical continuation. It often leads to very messy positions. This set-up will be discussed later.

3. $\mathbb{Q}h5$



The standard follow-up. The most important piece is called into the attack. h5 is the perfect square for the queen, where it attacks both f7 and h7, but in some cases a queen on h4 may also work.

3... ♕e8

What else? 3... ♕f6 4.exf6 ♕e8 5.♕h7+ ♔f8 6.♕h8# will not change the outcome of the game.



4.♕xf7+!

A very important move to remember! This is the Greek Gift variation in its purest form. White has the option to collect the f7-pawn for free and return to the previous position afterwards. The pawn in itself is not so important. The aim is to discourage the evacuation of the king.

♕xf7+ is not always possible, for instance if the black queen defends f7, nor is it always the most promising move. Always consider both options carefully and pick the most convincing one.

4... ♔h8 5.♕h5+ ♔g8

Without the pawn on f7, it is suddenly mate in three.

6.♕h7+ ♔f8 7.♕h8+ ♔e7 8.♕xg7#

If you look at a few convincing examples of a well-executed Greek Gift sacrifice it may look as if life is easy and all you have to do is remember the standard winning procedure. Recognizing the pattern is, however, only the first step. Precise calculation and an assessment of the particular features of the position should tell you what to do.

In the previous example, we already came across the two major defensive mechanisms when the passive king defence is involved. These are:

- Defending the critical squares;
- Evacuating the king.

We will look at both techniques in more detail.

Defending the critical squares

With the first technique Black covers the important h7-square by a knight or via the long diagonal.

Game 72

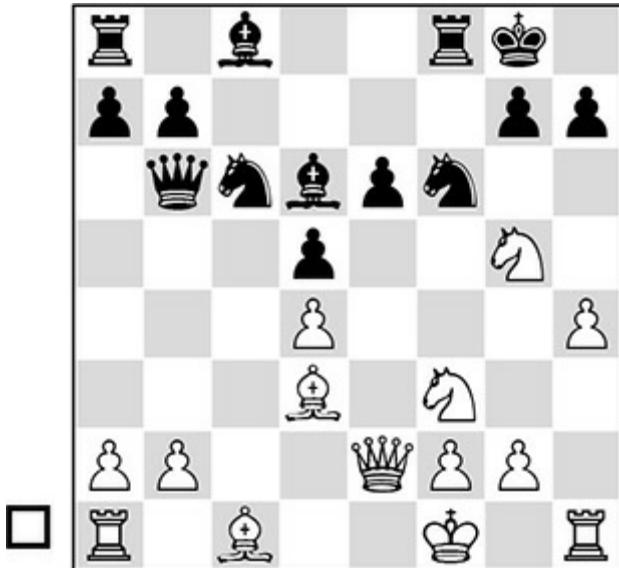
Ruben Martin Hernandez

2107

Daniel Gutierrez Olivares

2228

Tenerife 2011 (7)



This example does not start with the standard Greek Gift move order, but arrives at the same kind of position.

15. ♜xh7 ♜xh7 16. ♜xh7+ ♔xh7 17. ♜g5+ ♔g8 18. ♜h5



Mate in one is threatened, so Black has to choose: remove the rook to start an evacuation plan for the king or try to cover the crucial h7-square?

18... ♜b5+! 19. ♜g1 ♜d3

Covering the h7-square it is! If it is possible, then this is the most important defensive mechanism. Black remains a piece up and usually gets a very good position. However, precise defence is required, since the white pieces are still aiming at the black king.

20. ♜h3

The best attempt. White has to bring fresh resources into the attack.

20... ♜c2 21. ♜e3 ♜e7!



Well played! Black would love to put his queen at g6, forcing the white queen to either retreat or exchange. Both scenarios should give Black a winning position.

22. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$

The defence is at full swing, the rest should be easy.

24. $h5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 0-1

Defend with the knight or the queen?

We have seen that Black had a relatively easy game once he managed to defend h7 and bring his queen home. Things are, however, not always so clear-cut. It all depends on how easily the attacker can bring extra forces to the front.

Game 73

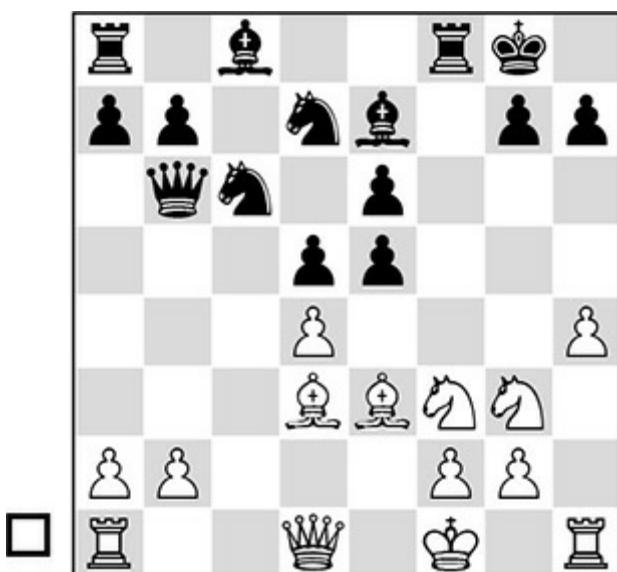
Moritz Gentemann

2179

Christian Hess Jr

2283

Werther 2008 (6)



15. ♜xh7+ ♕xh7 16. ♜g5+ ♕g8 17. ♜h5 ♜b5+!

If Black manages to control h7 he gets the upper hand. Still, he has to be careful, as White has still other attacking resources.

18. ♜g1



Precise calculation is required here. There are two ways to defend h7. Which one should Black choose?

18... ♜d3

This is the logical follow-up to Black's previous move, but 18... ♜f6! was the only road to a large advantage. Black gets a very comfortable position after, for instance, 19. ♜g6 ♜xd4 20. ♜xd4 ♜e8 21. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 22. ♜xe5.

19. ♜d1

Missing a huge opportunity. Can you find it? We will come back to this position in the next paragraph.

19... ♜c2 20. ♜c1 ♜f6!

Defending h7 with the knight after all. Suddenly the white queen is the one that is being driven away.

21. ♜xc2 ♜xh5 22. ♜xh5 exd4

Without queens, the attack is over. Black's extra pawn and impressive centre should guarantee him an easy win.

23. ♜xc6 bxc6 24. ♜xd4 g6 25. ♜g3 ♜f6 26. ♜c5 ♜e8 27. f4 e5 28. ♜f2 ♜g4 29. fxe5 ♜xe5 30. ♜f3 ♜xb2 31. ♜b1 ♜ab8 0-1

Evacuating the king

If you are unable to defend the entrance square in your king's position, it is usually time for plan B: Evacuating your king. This is, however, not always possible. An ideal position for a successful escape plan would look more or less like this:



The black position contains all the ingredients for a successful escape by his king:

- The pieces on the 7th and 8th rank create a passage for the king;
- The queen protects the 7th rank, both covering the f-pawn and facilitating a 7th-rank defence;
- The position is closed. The white pieces will have a hard time interfering with the evacuation.

So much for the theory. Now it's time to see what a successful escape looks like in practice.

18. ♜xh7+ ♕xh7 19. ♜g5+ ♕g8 20. ♜h5



20...f5

This is a very interesting position. Black starts the 7th-rank defence to involve the queen in the defence.

20...**♕f8** would be too hasty and it loses by force after 21. **♜h7+! ♕g8** (if 21...**♕e7** 22. **♝g5+** wins for White) 22. **♝f6+!** **gxsf6** 23. **♝g4+ ♕f8** 24. **exf6** (once again the exit is blocked) 24... **♞ec8** 25. **♝g7+ ♕e8** 26. **♝g8#**.

21. ♜h7+

The black king is now chased into the escape route. This was exactly what Black was waiting for. The logical alternatives would be met with a 7th-rank defence:

A) 21. **g4 g6!** (opening the 7th rank and directing nine points to the defence) 22. **♝xg6+ ♕g7** 23. **♝xg7+ ♕xg7** with a clear advantage for Black;

B) 21.exf6 gxf6 (again opening the 7th rank) 22. \mathbb{Q} f3 \mathbb{Q} h7 and Black is winning.
 21... \mathbb{Q} f8 22. \mathbb{Q} h8+ \mathbb{Q} e7 23. \mathbb{Q} xg7+ \mathbb{Q} d8



The king reaches the safe haven of the queenside, leaving Black clearly on top.

Conclusion

The passive king defence is usually backed up by two different defensive techniques:

- Covering the vital h7-square; or
- Evacuating the king.

Covering the vital h7-square

This is usually done by:

- Putting a knight on f6 or f8;
- Covering the b1-h7 diagonal with a bishop or a queen.

The evacuation of the king

This plan has the greatest chance of success if:

- The pieces on the 7th and 8th rank create a passage for the king;
- The queen protects the 7th rank, preparing a 7th-rank defence;
- The position is closed.

6.3 Attacking the passive king

As an attacker, you can use your knowledge of the most important defensive resources to sharpen your attacking skills. There are two techniques we can use to refute a passive king defence:

1. Interference;
2. Keeping the king in his cage.

The first one is directed against the coverage of the vital h7-square over the long diagonal by Black. The second one is used to discourage the black king's evacuation plans.

6.3.1 Interference

Interference is a tactical weapon that is usually employed to obstruct the defender of a certain piece or square. It was the key to the solution of the little exercise in the previous section.

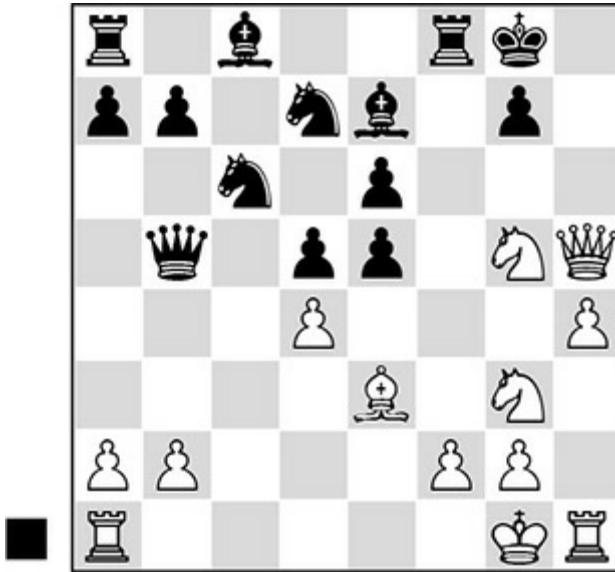
Moritz Gentemann

2179

Christian Hess Jr

2283

Werther 2008 (6)



18... ♕d3

This move was played instead of the more accurate 18... ♔f6!. The disadvantage of using the queen as a defender of the h7-square is the fact that it might be driven away or become susceptible to interference.

19. ♖3e4!

A move to remember! This interfering move reinforces the ♗h7# threat and keeps White in the game.

19... ♕xe4 20. ♖xe4 exd4 21. ♗g5 dxе4 22. ♗xe7 ♕xe7

An amazing position has arisen in which Black is only slightly better.

6.3.2 Keeping the king in his cage

When the king has prepared an escape plan, the attacker will of course try to block the escape route, keeping the king in his cage. There are three techniques that can help:

- Using a diagonal to block the exit;
- Barricading the open file;
- Breaking through in the centre.

The diagonal

Game 75

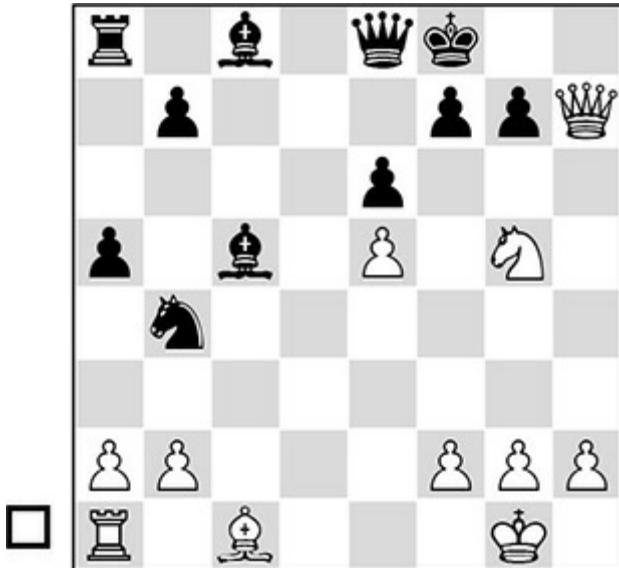
Marco Codenotti

2406

Hans-Jörg Cordes

2257

Gibraltar 2016 (6)



22. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ $b6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 1-0

The open file

Game 76

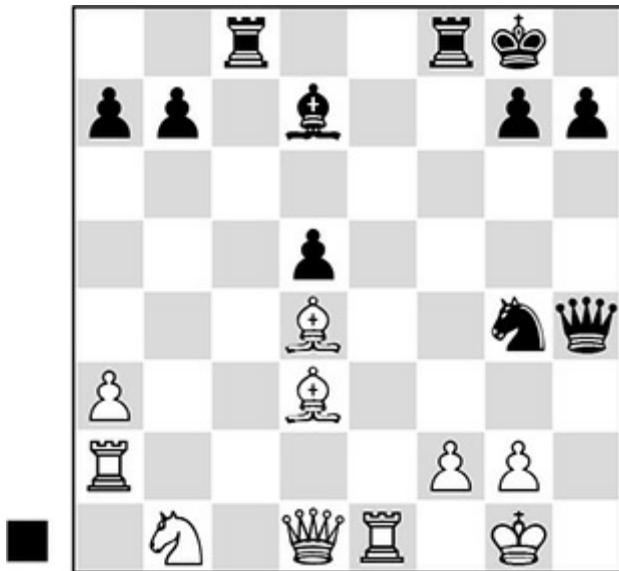
Amir Zaibi

2264

Sebastien Abello

2327

Sliema 2014 (9)



20... $\mathbb{Q}ce8!$

The escape route is blocked and suddenly mate in two is threatened. The only way for White to regain the e2-square for his king is by sacrificing his bishop.

21. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}h2+$

Black is not interested in regaining the material.

22. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5+$

This time the diagonal is used to block the escape route. White resigned.

Opening the centre

If open files or empty diagonals are lacking in the position, you have to find other techniques to obstruct the king's escape route. The most effective way to discourage the king from running away is by opening up the centre.

I would like to demonstrate this technique in the following quiz and invite you to answer the question along the way. One piece of advice: the actual move that opens up the centre is rather obvious. The real challenge is to find the right timing.

Game 77

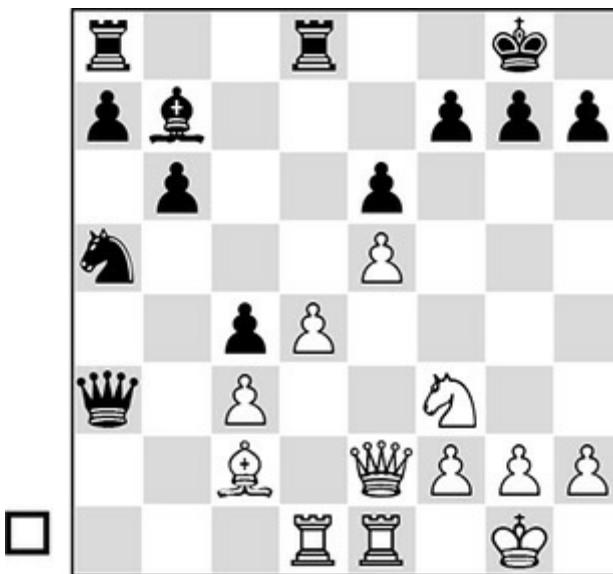
Gustavo Adolfo Cadena

2142

Ramiro Dominguez

2196

Mosquera 2014 (5)



QUESTION 1: Would you play

- A) 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ to execute the Greek Gift combination;
- B) 22. d5 to open up the centre first; or
- C) 22. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ to build up a risk-free attack?

22. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$

White is better after each of the three options, but this is by far the most convincing one.

22. d5 would allow Black to prevent the Greek Gift combination with 22... g6. White can develop a very promising attack with 23. dxе6 fxе6 24. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g4$, but there is still a lot to play for.

22. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 23. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ promises White more than enough compensation for the pawn, but would be a relief for Black compared to the game continuation.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

23... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ amounts to suicide due to the absence of black defenders. Black has to sacrifice heavy material since a normal move like 24... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ is already mate in three: 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g5\#$.

24. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$



QUESTION 2: Would you play

- A) 25. ♔h7+ to smoke out the black king;
- B) 25.d5 to open up the centre; or
- C) 25. ♕e3 to bring up an extra attacker?

25. ♕e3

This is the most solid option. White adds an extra piece to the army and keeps a very promising attack. He does, however, miss a large opportunity to decide the game at once with 25.d5!. With the Greek Gift combination White created access to the enemy king and it enabled him to bring up the most important attackers with tempo. The principled follow-up is to open up the centre in order to obstruct the evacuation route. Without an escape plan, the black king will be helpless against the ♔h7+ threat.

Black has three different options to take the d5-pawn, but they all lose by force:

- B1) 25... ♜xd5 26. ♕xd5 ♜xd5 (26... exd5 27.e6) 27. ♜xf7+ ♔h8 28. ♜g6 ♔g8 29. ♜xe6+ ♔h8 30. ♜xd5;
- B2) 25... exd5 26.e6! d4 27. ♔h7+ ♔f8 28.e7+! ♜xe7 29. ♔h8#;
- B3) 25... ♜xd5 26. ♜xf7+ ♔h8 27. ♜xe6;
- B4) And finally, 25... ♜ad8 26.d6!.

The hasty 25. ♔h7+ spoils most of the fun. This check fits perfectly in the evacuation plans of the black king. Not only is 25... ♔f8 the first step towards the safe queenside, relieving the pressure on f7 also took the sting out of White's central break. 26.d5 can now be met with 26... ♜xd5!. After 27. ♔h8+ ♜e7 28. ♜xg7 ♔d8 the king reaches the desired queenside. This of course does not mean that he can lean back and relax. White keeps the attack going with 29. ♜xd5! exd5 30.e6! and now Black needs the precise 30... ♜e7! 31. ♜g8+ ♔c7 32. ♜xa8 ♜c6! 33. ♔h8 fxe6. Black is a healthy pawn up.

In conclusion: try to keep your queen as flexible as possible!

25... ♔f8



QUESTION 3: Would you play

- A) 26. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ to smoke out the black king;
- B) 26. d5 to open up the centre; or
- C) 26. $\mathbb{N}g3$ to bring an extra attacker to the front?

26. $\mathbb{N}g3$

White continues his plan. This is the most consistent move, and the strongest.

26. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ would again only facilitate the escape of the black king and leave Black on top after 26... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 27. $\mathbb{N}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$.

The break 26.d5 has lost a lot of venom, compared to the same break one move earlier. 26... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ still gives White interesting compensation for the material, but the principled 27. $\mathbb{N}xd5$ no longer works on account of 27... $\mathbb{Q}a1+$! Ouch!

26... $\mathbb{Q}d5$



Black has blocked the centre and is ready to evacuate his king. However, he has underestimated the power of the three white attacking pieces.

26...g6 would have been the most stubborn defence, when there is still a lot to play for – at least, from a human point of view. Stockfish thinks it can play for the brilliancy prize and comes up with the following

line: 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$.



analysis diagram

Very instructive. The hunters find the time to regroup while the prey is stuck in the centre. 30... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ (there is still no need to hurry) 31... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32. $e6+!$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$



analysis diagram

33. $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ (interference!!) 33... $bxc5$ 34. $exf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}b1+$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$. The king has made it to the other side of the board, but you cannot exactly call it a safe haven: 36. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ (threatening 38. $\mathbb{Q}a1$) 37... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}e8+!$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 40. $f8\mathbb{Q}$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 44. $h3$, threatening 45. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ with a winning advantage – according to Stockfish...

These computer lines are usually not very relevant for the evaluation in a practical human game. What you should do is forget about the moves and the evaluation and try to pick out a few techniques that you can apply in your own game.

To me, the most interesting techniques were:

- Keeping the king trapped in the centre while you organize your attack; and

- the interfering move 33. $\mathbb{Q}c5+!$.

Back to the game. Watch how the three white pieces break the black defence with very precise play.

27. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$!

The only path to victory! 27. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ would again be Black's dream scenario and 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ g6 is unclear.

27... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$!

Again, the only move. 28. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is better for Black and 28. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ gxf6 29. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g8$ wins a queen, but Black has already collected enough material and gets the upper hand after 30... $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32. exf6+ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$.

28... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ 1-0

Lookalikes

I would like to finish this section with a warning. Sometimes a position is screaming for a Greek Gift sacrifice, but it turns out that not all the pieces are in the right places. This is by itself not a problem. You spot the opportunity, you carefully assess whether the sacrifice is correct, and only then you play it. Recognizing the pattern can, however, make you a bit too optimistic, and destroy your objectivity.

This may have been the case in the following game. At first, it looks as though everything is plain and simple:

Game 78

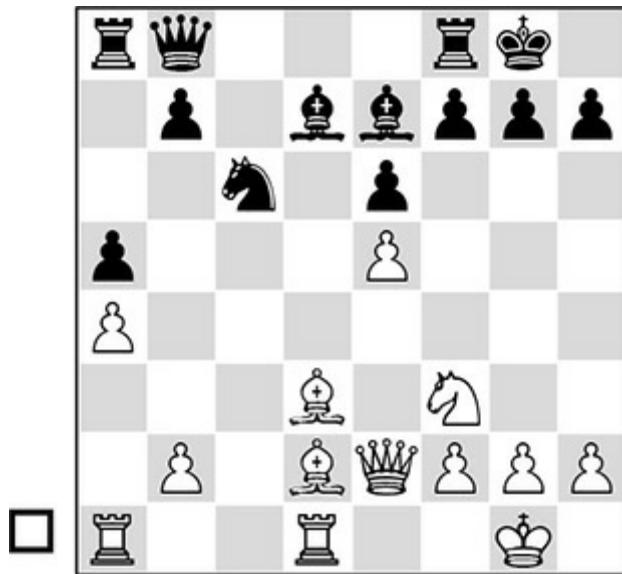
Pascal Vandevoort

2295

Pieter Claesen

2430

Liege ch-BEL 1998 (2)



19. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

The sacrifice does not work with a bishop on e7, as it covers the g5-square. The text move is strong, but White gets carried away by the Greek Gift opportunity.

19... $\mathbb{Q}d8!$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

White persists in going for the sacrifice, but if he had taken a more objective look at the board he could have rewarded himself for playing an excellent game up to this point. After 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$, 20... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ is Black's best option, but it simply loses a pawn after 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$.

20...g6 will not save the day either. The absence of the black queen is felt, as the following line illustrates:
 21. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ h5 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$
 28. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f7\#.$

20... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$



21. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$

There are two things working in Black's favour here:

- i) The open centre and, more importantly:
- ii) the rook is no longer on f8! The extra tempo is making a vital difference.

21. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ would still have given White a comfortable game.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h5$

If the rook were still on f8 White would win easily. Now Black strikes back in the centre.

23... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8!$



This move overprotects the vulnerable squares in the black camp and simultaneously sets up a counterattack along the d-file.

25. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

A beautiful defence. White resigned.

Conclusion

The attacker has different techniques to refute the passive king defence. If the defender tries to cover h7 over the long diagonal, you can use **interference** to eliminate the defence of this vital square.

Once you gained control over h7, the defender usually switches to plan B: the **evacuation of the king**. You can frustrate his plans by:

- Using a diagonal to block the exit;
- Barricading the open file;
- Breaking through the centre.

The first two are pretty straightforward, but not always possible. If you want to discourage the king's evacuation plans by opening up the centre, make sure you get your timing right.

The right order is usually:

- Get access to the king with $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$;
- Bring up your knight and queen with tempo;
- Open up the centre to keep the king trapped;
- Mate the king over the h-file.

One final warning: be aware of **lookalikes**. Always calculate the Greek Gift carefully before executing it.

6.4 Defence 2: the active king

We start with another practical example of a successful Greek Gift and focus on the active king defence. This time it is Black who has all the fun.

Game 79

Patrice Couronne

1874

Fabrice Winckel

1636

Montigny le Bretonneux 2006 (5)



18... $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

The active king defence! This is the best option for White in this position. The game continued with 20. $\mathbb{Q}g1$, but without much success: 20... $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}h2+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ and White resigned. It is mate on the next move.



The treatment of the active king defence usually consists of three main branches:

A) 20...h5. ...h7-h5-h4 is often very dangerous for White, but in this position it can easily be parried with 21. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 22.f4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (22...exf3 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ would drive the black queen off the g-file, after which White wins easily) 23. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ Black probably does not have enough compensation for the piece, although the position remains very unbalanced. In any case, the inclusion of ...h7-h5 only favoured White;

B) 20... $\mathbb{Q}c7+$. Usually the queen goes to d6, which leaves the option of it getting to g6 in one go. Now Black is about to lose precious time: 21.f4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g1$. We have arrived at the same position as in the ...h7-h5 line, but without the move ...h7-h5! This must be better for White;

C) 20... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is often the critical continuation: 21.f4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ (the only move) 22... $\mathbb{Q}ac8!$ (22... $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ – in these kind of positions, I usually prefer White) 23.f5 $\mathbb{Q}g5$.



I would slightly prefer Black in this position. White has a hard time getting rid of the knight on g4, while Black can continue improving his position.

The clear patterns of the passive defence make it very suitable to break the attacking and defending manoeuvres into small pieces and discuss them one by one. The variations in the active king defence are less clear-cut, but the attack usually starts with the choice between three critical lines. These are, from a white perspective:

- ♕d3;
- ♕g4;
- h2-h4.

We will now have a look at examples with each of the three continuations. I will try to keep the lines as simple as possible and focus mainly on the most important defensive and attacking resources that are useful to remember when facing these positions over the board.

Attacking along the diagonal: ♕d3

Game 80

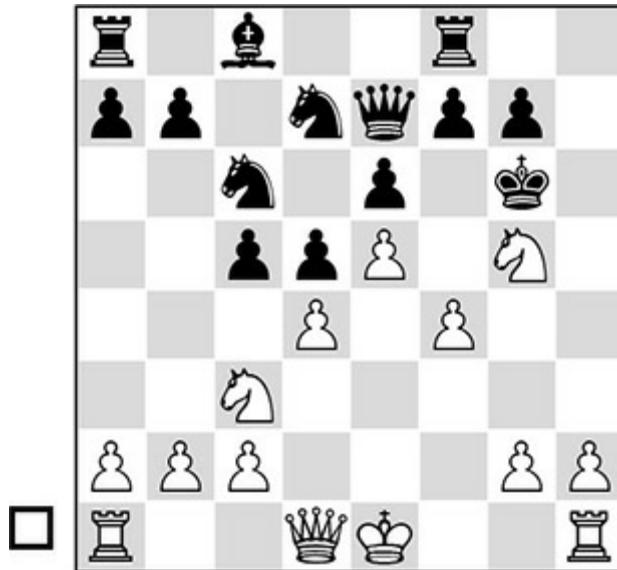
Wiede Friedrich

2193

Eduard Miller

2118

Oberhof 2011 (6)



White has a great initiative for the piece and the black king is stuck in front of its pawns. But although it looks as if Black will have to do without proper defensive resources, his position is in fact hard to crack. The only thing he has to be fully aware of is that he will not be allowed to keep his extra piece.

The main questions are: a) **when** and b) **how** he should return the material and what the resulting position will be like. On some occasions White will keep his initiative after the material balance has been restored, but there are also many examples in which Black takes over.

12. ♕d3+

A very natural move, which together with h2-h4 and ♕g4 is the most frequently played in this kind of position. The aim is to provoke ...f7-f5, after which the freeing move ...f7-f6 is no longer possible. I will consider the alternatives briefly:

A) 12. ♕g4, preparing a discovered check and always important to consider. On some occasions it does not have much significance, as we return to the ♕d3 line after 12...f5 13. ♕g3;

B) 12.h4 is only a serious option when White controls the c1-h6 diagonal, for instance when the dark-squared bishop is still on c1. In this position, h2-h4 does not make much sense as the king can easily shelter on h6 after h4-h5+;

C) 12.0-0 would probably have been the most promising move in this exact position, preparing the rook

lift. Introducing an extra piece increases White's attacking potential enormously. Now:

C1) 12...f6 loses by force: 13. \mathbb{Q} xd5! exd5 (13... \mathbb{Q} e8 14. \mathbb{Q} xe6 will not help Black either) 14. f5+ \mathbb{Q} xg5 15. \mathbb{Q} d2+ \mathbb{Q} h5 16. g4+ \mathbb{Q} h4 17. \mathbb{Q} f2+ \mathbb{Q} g5 18. \mathbb{Q} f4+ \mathbb{Q} h4 19. g5+ \mathbb{Q} h5 20. \mathbb{Q} f3 fxe5 21. \mathbb{Q} h3#;

C2) The attacking potential of the white pieces is well illustrated after 12...f5 13. \mathbb{Q} f3 \mathbb{Q} h8 14. \mathbb{Q} g3 \mathbb{Q} f6!.



analysis diagram

An important resource to remember. It is in many cases the most stubborn move. Nevertheless, the white initiative is very powerful and will remain so after he has regained his piece: 15. exf6 \mathbb{Q} xf6 16. \mathbb{Q} e2 with a large advantage.

Back to 12. \mathbb{Q} d3+.

12...f5



13.g4

There were two important alternatives:

A) 13. \mathbb{Q} h3 \mathbb{Q} f6!. As I mentioned before, this move is important to remember as it is sometimes the only defensive resource for Black and is easy to overlook. Black returns the piece and is doing fine after, for instance, 14. exf6 gxf6 15. \mathbb{Q} f3 \mathbb{Q} d7;

B) 13. $\mathbb{N}g3$. The discovered check is White's main weapon and hard to parry, but it is also a typical example of a threat that is more powerful than the actual execution. On many occasions, Black would love to exchange his rook on f8 for the annoying knight. 13...cxd4 14. $\mathbb{N}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 15. $\mathbb{N}g5!$ (threatening mate in two; 15. $\mathbb{N}xf8$ $\mathbb{N}xf8$ would solve most of Black's problems) 15... $\mathbb{N}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{N}xd5$ and although there is still a lot to play for, White's compensation for the piece is overwhelming.

13... $\mathbb{N}dxe5$

Black decides that it is time to return the piece and fight for the centre.

14. $dxe5 \mathbb{N}xe5$



15. $\mathbb{N}e2$

15. $\mathbb{N}h3!$ would definitely have been a more dangerous square. Suddenly, Black's defensive task has become very difficult: 15... $\mathbb{N}xg4$ 16.0-0-0 with an overwhelming attack.

15... $\mathbb{N}f6$

Black has done very well so far, but he now shipwrecks within sight of the port. Best would have been 15... $\mathbb{N}xg4!$, after which the black king can start breathing again.

16. $\mathbb{N}g1!$

White finishes the game convincingly.

16... $\mathbb{N}xg4$ 17. $h3$ $\mathbb{N}d4$ 18. $f3$ $\mathbb{N}xf4$ 19. $hxg4$ $\mathbb{N}f6$ 20. $gxf5$ $\mathbb{N}xf5$ 21. $\mathbb{N}h4$ $\mathbb{N}h3$ 22. $\mathbb{N}f2+ 1-0$

The tricky battery: $\mathbb{N}g4$

Game 81

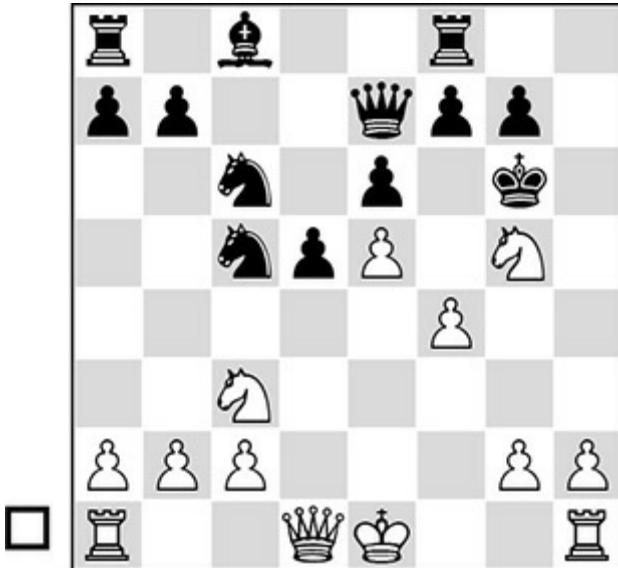
Alexander Kornev

2278

Oleg Yuzhakov

2334

Nizhny Tagil 2010 (3)



13. $\mathbb{Q}g4$

13. $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ was not possible this time and the h4-h5 plan would again make little sense due to the safe h6-square for the black king.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

It looks very tempting to grab an extra pawn, but this was exactly what White was hoping for. Opening up the centre with an exposed king is a very tricky habit!

13...f6 would have been a stronger alternative, for instance: 14.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}ge4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ and Black is slightly better. This is often the case if White decides to take back the exchange.

14. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$

White keeps the important knight on g5 alive and is planning to attack the king from behind.

14...f5



15. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$

White starts a king hunt, but is unable to prevent the black king from finding a safe haven. Just like in the previous paragraph, White had to keep his queen flexible and had to prepare an attack through the centre first. The black king is not going anywhere as long as the queen stays at h3. White has enough time to finish his development with 15.0-0-0 first and prepare an action in the centre. It will be very hard for Black to defend himself against an attack from two sides.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18.0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$



The king has reached its hiding place. As soon as Black manages to coordinate his pieces, White is doomed.

19. $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}cxe4$ $\mathbb{Q}fxe4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

It was time to settle for a draw with 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ $dxe4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4+$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e3+$.

21... $b5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $a5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

Now it is too late.

24... $dxe4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6!$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}f1+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ 0-1

Pawn power: h2-h4

Game 82

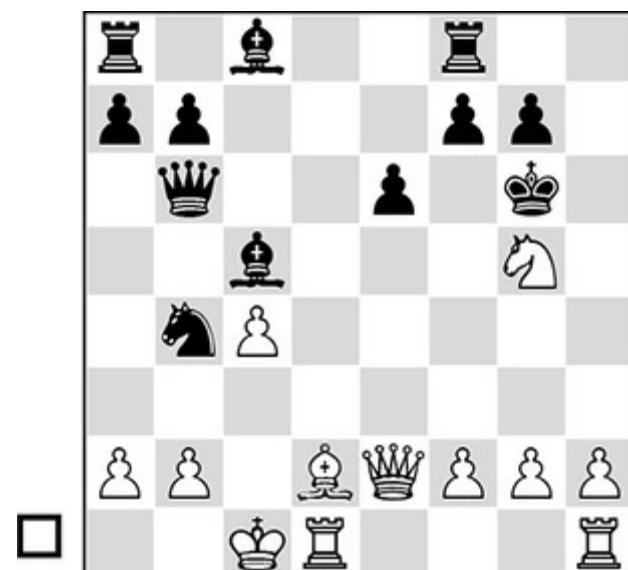
Emil Schmidek

2053

Sebastian Hanisch

2131

Berlin 2014 (3)



16.h4

The h-pawn is brought in as an extra attacker. This is the only promising plan. The absence of a white pawn on e5 enables Black to meet 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ with 16...f5! 17. $\mathbb{Q}h4 \mathbb{Q}xa2+$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c2 e5!$ with a large advantage. Creating a battery with the thematic 16. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ does not work either, since Black can continuously attack the back piece until it has to leave the g-file: 16... $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c2 \mathbb{Q}xf2!$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g3 \mathbb{Q}d6!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h4$. The battery has been dismantled. Now it is Black's turn: 19...e5! A very powerful move, preparing the counterattack with 20... $\mathbb{Q}f5+$. White is lost.

16... $\mathbb{Q}xa2+$

The idea behind pushing the h-pawn is that 16...f6 can always be met with 17. $h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$.



analysis diagram

Earlier I explained that grabbing the exchange is usually not good enough for White. But the open d- and e-file change everything. White wins after 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb4 \mathbb{Q}xb4$ (20... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d8!$) 21. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ f5 22. $\mathbb{Q}e8 \mathbb{Q}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 24. $hxg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d8$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}hh8$.

17. $\mathbb{Q}b1 \mathbb{Q}d4$



This is a crucial moment in the game. White decided to throw all his pieces to the enemy king with

18.h5 ♕f6 19.♕h7+ ♔e7 20.♗g5+ f6

... which restored the material balance, but left him with very poorly coordinated pieces. Black, on the other hand, has brought his king to a safe place and now uses his influence in the centre to take over. The game continued:

21.♕xa2 ♕d8 22.♗e3 e5 23.h6 ♔e6 24.♖c1 ♕a6+ 25.♕b3 b5 26.♗xd4 ♕xd4 27.♘f3 ♕a4+ 28.♕c3 ♕xc4# 0-1

Instead, White should have kept his minor pieces in place and gone for

18.♘d3+!

This tactical manoeuvre is called ‘aiming’. Black cannot prevent ♘a3 with a double attack and is in serious trouble.

18...f5 19.h5+ ♕f6 20.♘a3! ♕e8 21.♘xa2



analysis diagram

Without an extra piece, defending the black king is not such a pleasant job anymore. 22.h6 is threatened, and a move like ...e6-e5 can always be answered with c4-c5!.

Conclusion

The active king defence often leads to complicated positions.

The defender has an exposed king standing in front of his pawns. At some point, he has to be willing to give back the piece in order to restore the safety of his king. Sacrificing a knight on f6 (or e5) is the most common way to do so.

The attacker has three main attacking moves to choose from:

- Attacking along the long diagonal in order to provoke ...f7-f5 and prevent a future ...f7-f6 (seen from the white side);
- Creating a battery by putting your queen on g4. This does not work well if the defender can attack the queen and drive it off the g-file;
- Push your h-pawn to h5. This only works if the king is unable to find shelter on h6.

6.5 FLASH CARDS



Defending resource 1: return a piece

Black returns a piece with ... $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ and is doing fine. An important resource to remember! It is often the most stubborn move in the active king defence.



Defending resource 2: cover the h7-square

Bringing in a defender! Black transfers his queen to the kingside with 18... $\mathbb{Q}b5+!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and neutralizes the white attack.



Defending resource 3: evacuate the king

Black is ready for the evacuation of the king:

- * The pieces create an escape route;
- * The centre is closed;
- * The 7th-rank defence is possible.



The king hunt 1: block the emergency exit

Black uses both the **open file** and the **diagonal** to block the escape route for the white king. Mate is inevitable.

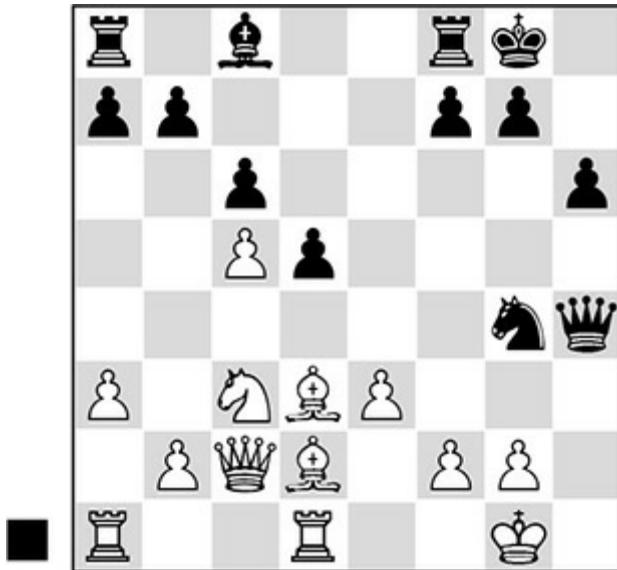


The king hunt 2: break through the centre

White opens up the centre and discourages the black king from leaving the kingside. Without an escape plan, ♜h7+ is going to be very unpleasant.

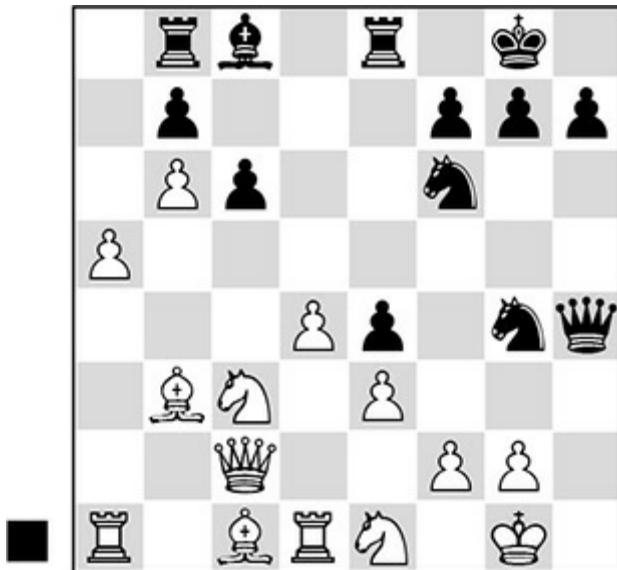
Exercises – Passive king defence – Attack

Solution 6.1

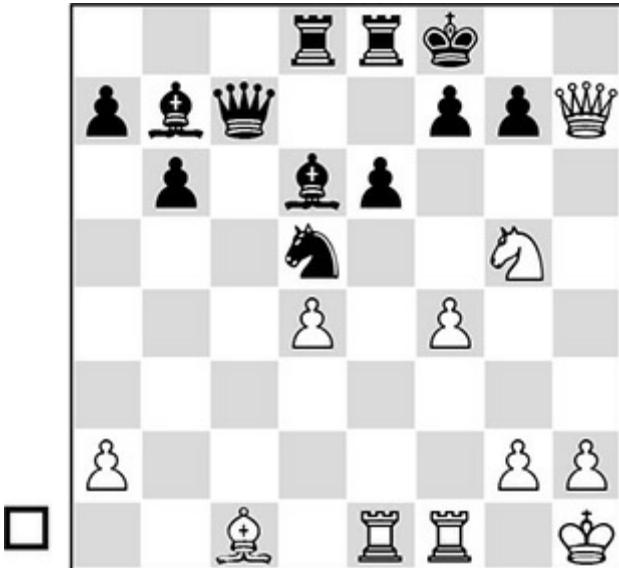


Mate in 6

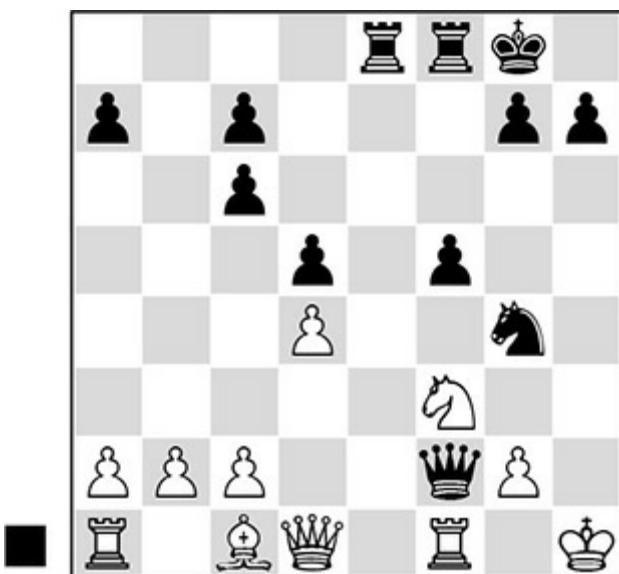
Solution 6.2



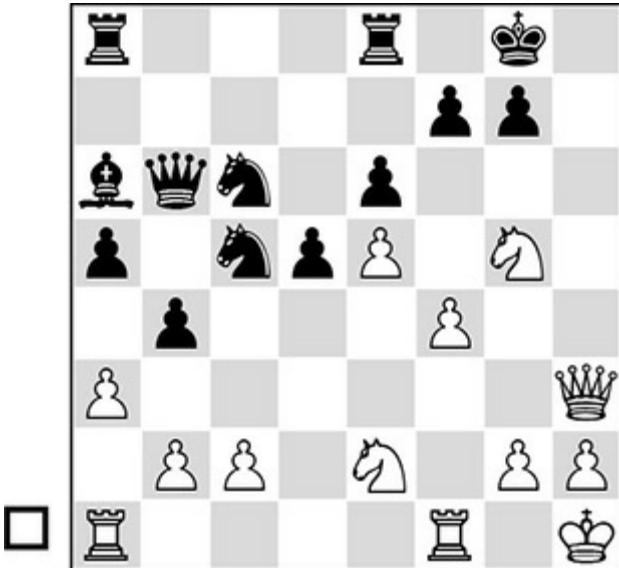
Solution 6.3



Solution 6.4

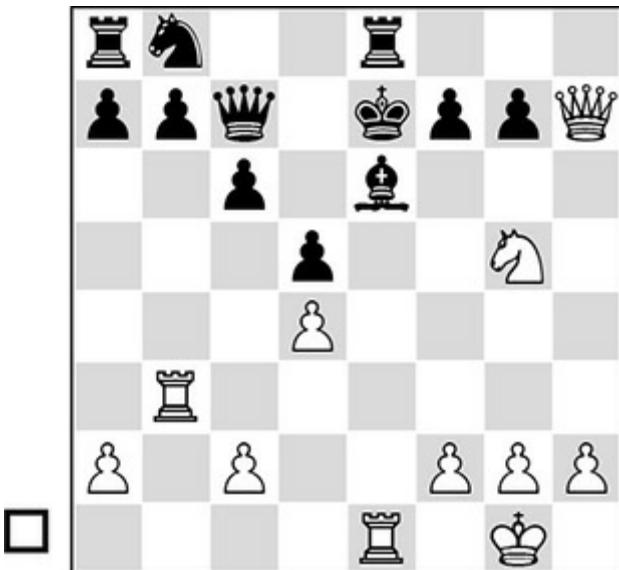


Solution 6.5



f4-f5 or ♕h7+ ?

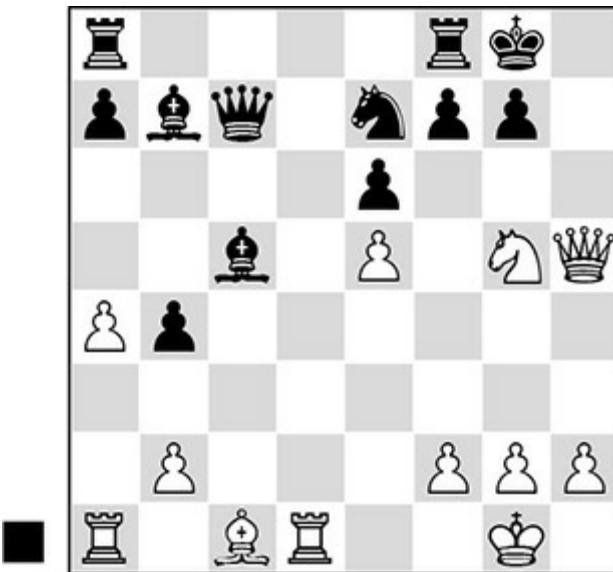
Solution 6.6



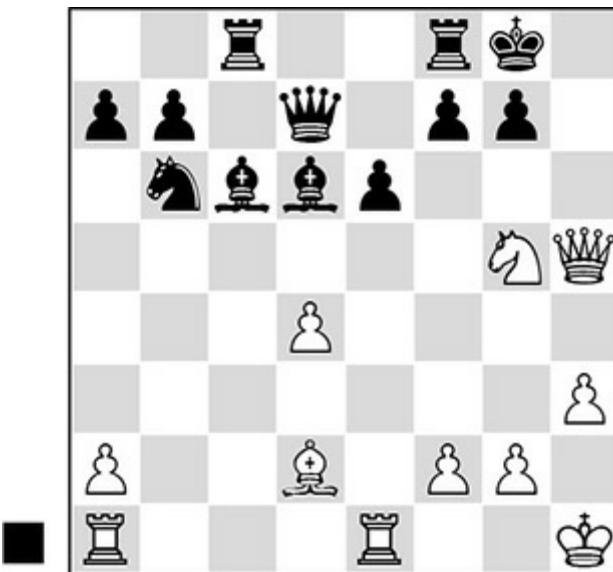
♜xf7, ♜xe6 or ♜h4 ?

Passive king defence – Defend

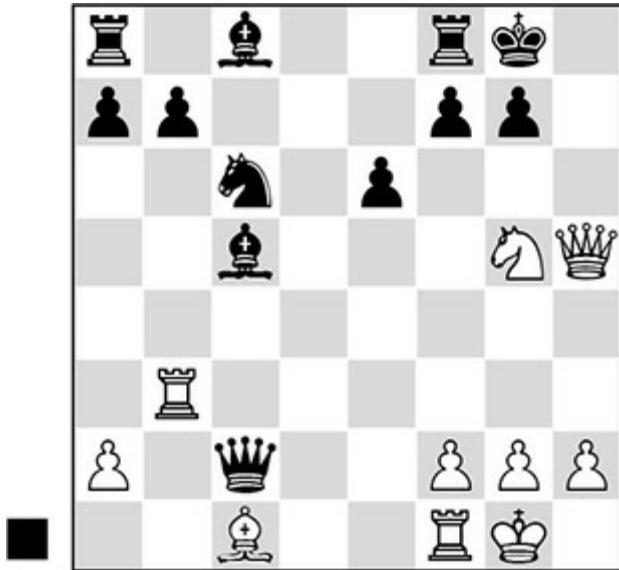
Solution 6.7



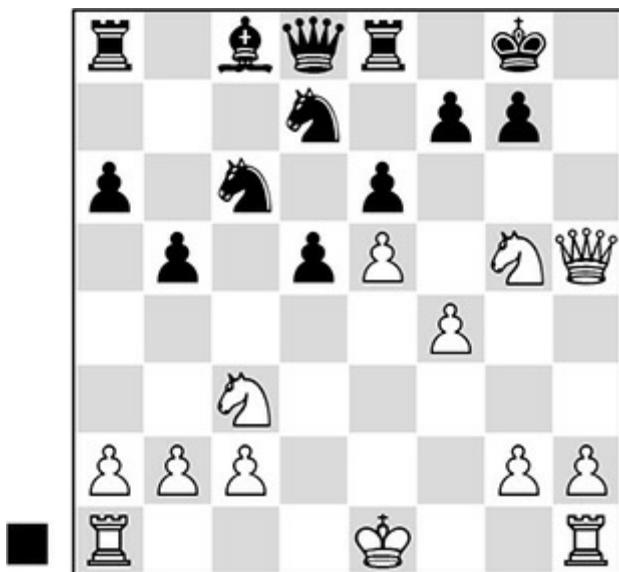
Solution 6.8



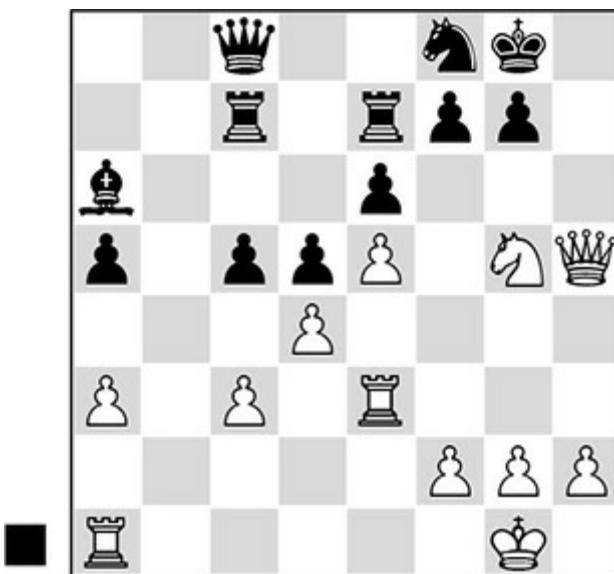
Solution 6.9



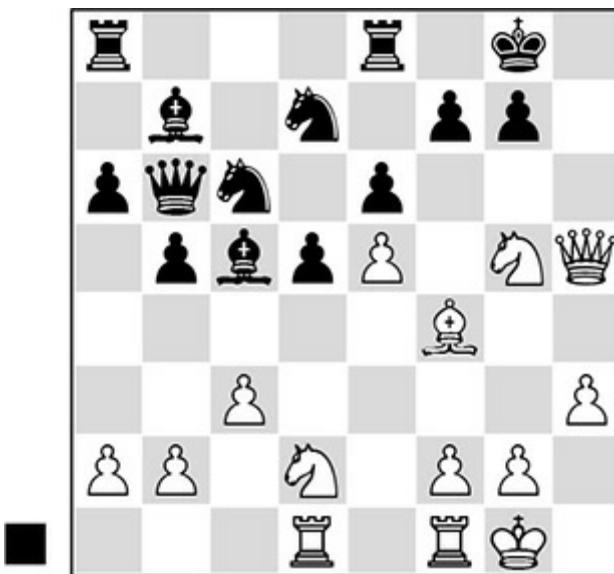
Solution 6.10



Solution 6.11



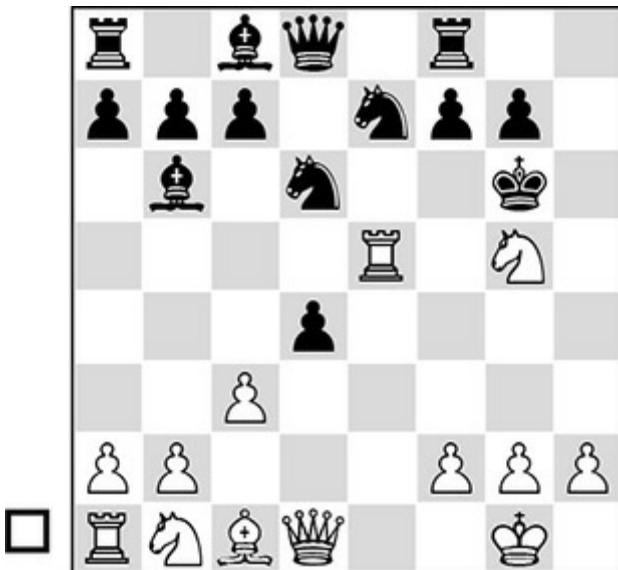
Solution 6.12



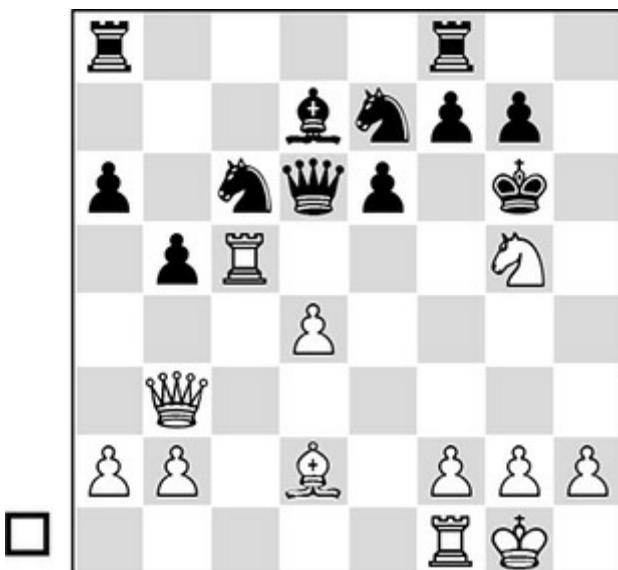
...♝cxe5 or ...♝dxe5 ?

Active king defence – Attack

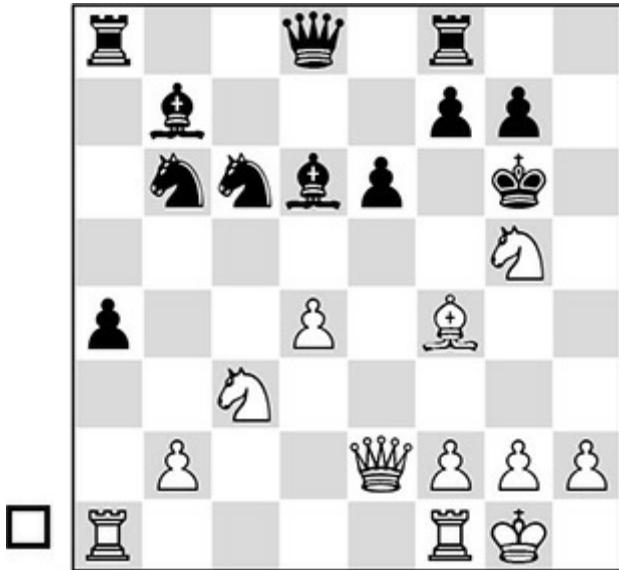
Solution 6.13



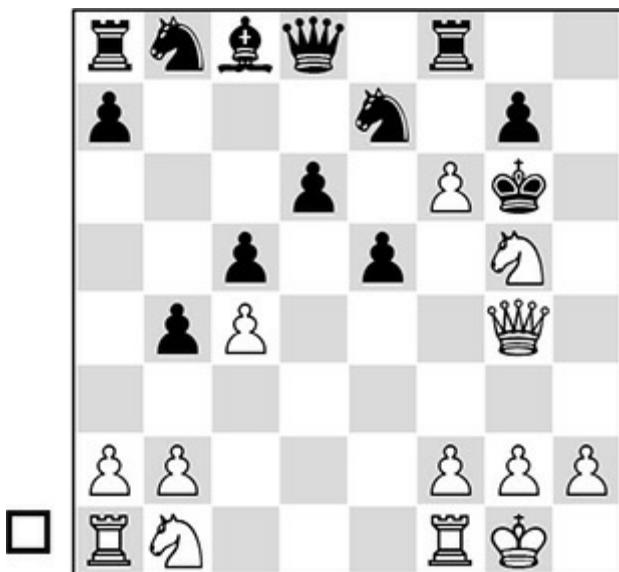
Solution 6.14



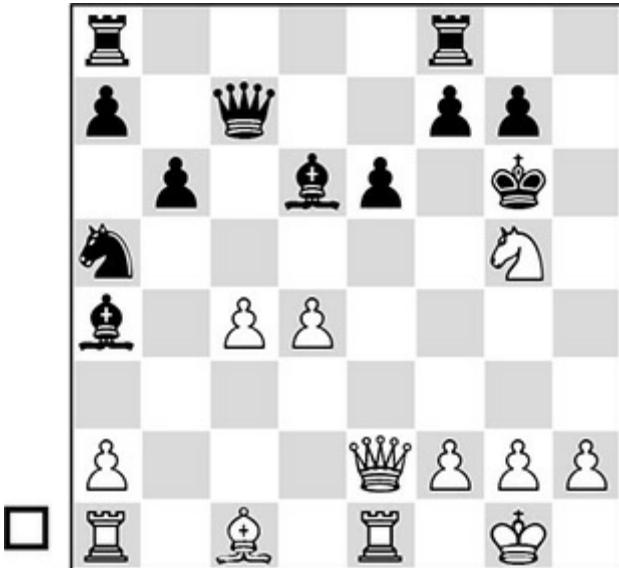
Solution 6.15



Solution 6.16



Solution 6.17



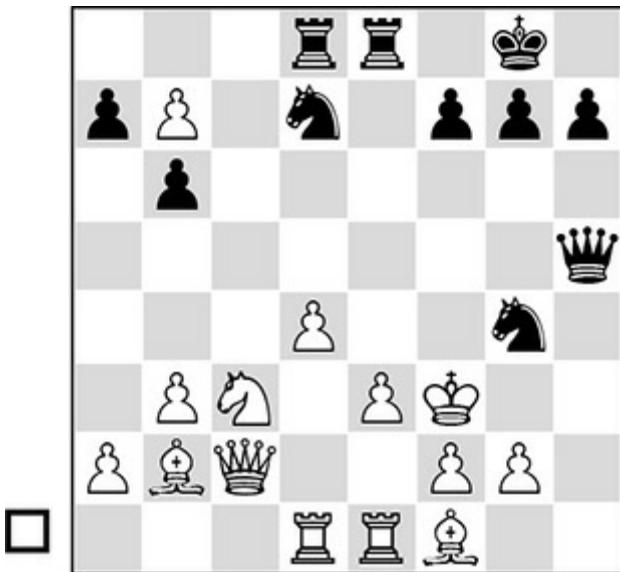
♕e4+ or ♔d3+ ?

Solution 6.18

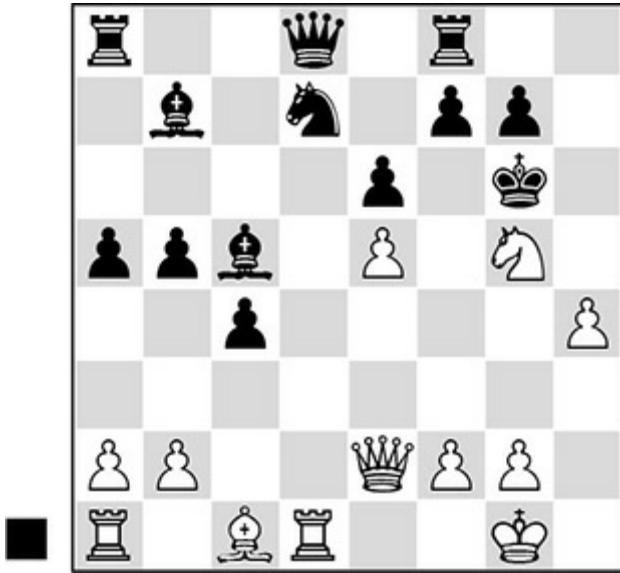


Active king defence – Defend

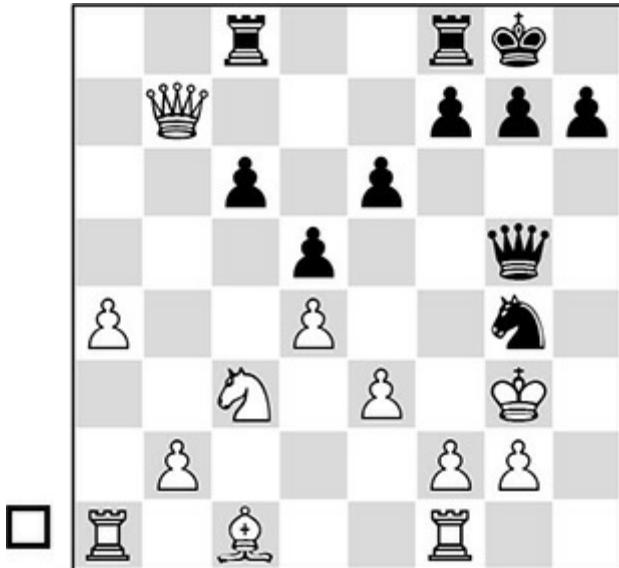
Solution 6.19



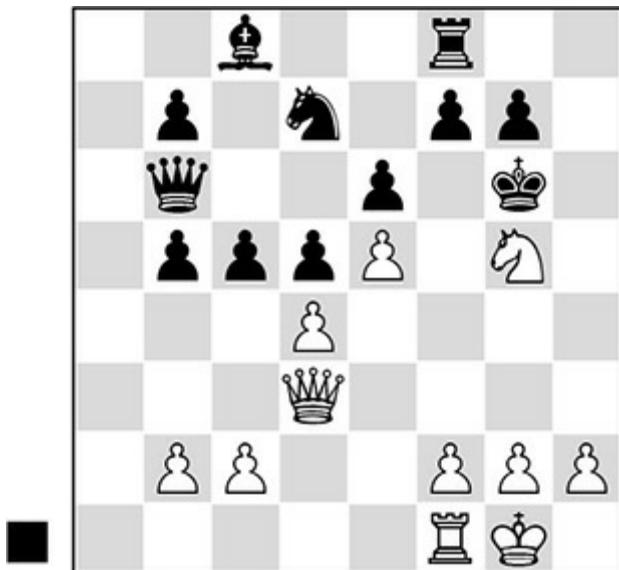
Solution 6.20



Solution 6.21



Solution 6.22



Solution 6.23



Solution 6.24



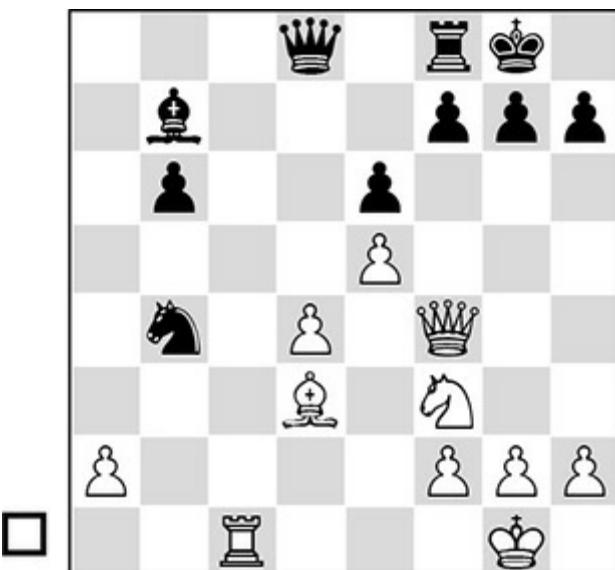
The Greek gift: Yes or No?

Solution 6.25



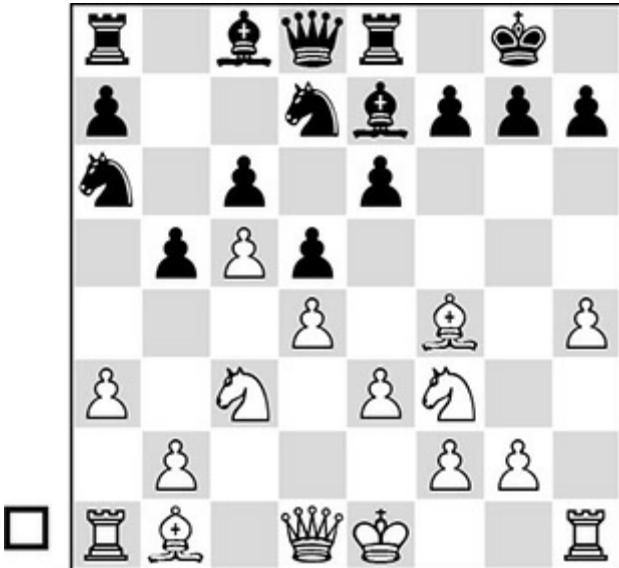
... ♕xh2+ ?

Solution 6.26



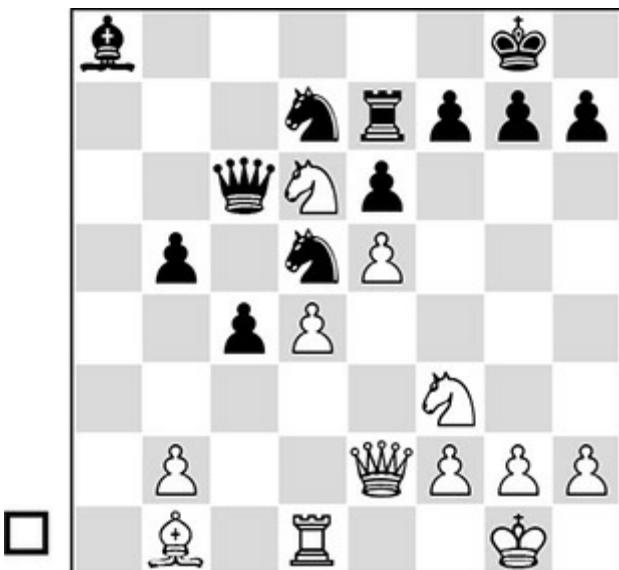
♕xh7+ ?

Solution 6.27



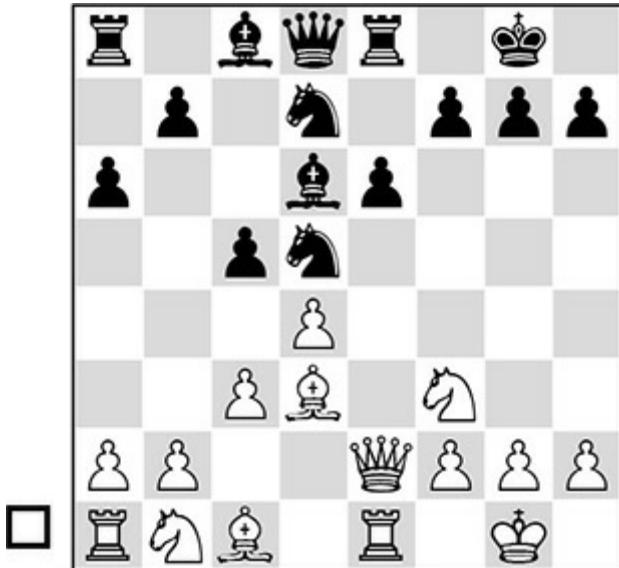
♕ xh7+ ?

Solution 6.28



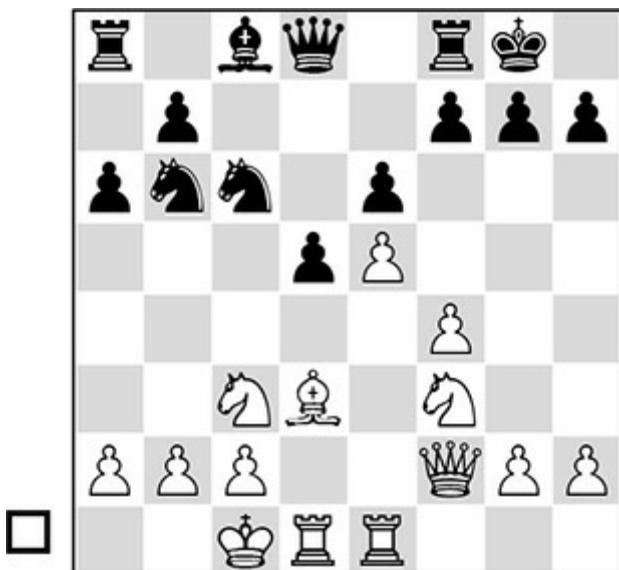
♕ xh7+ ?

Solution 6.29



♕xh7+ ?

Solution 6.30



♕xh7+ ?

CHAPTER 7

Lasker's double bishop sacrifice

7.1 Introduction

You have just become an expert on the Greek Gift combination. It is time for the next step. In this chapter, we are going to sacrifice a second bishop in order to create an even bigger hole in the enemy king's position. The vulnerability of the king will be used to position the queen on the most promising square with tempo. A well-timed rook lift will finish the job.

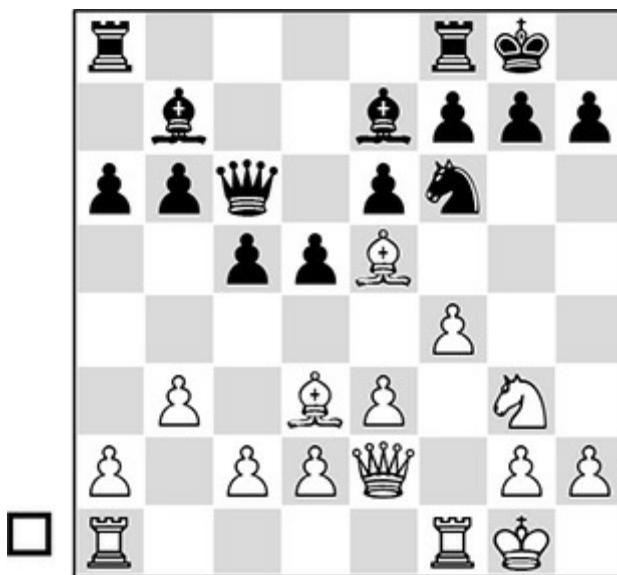
The sacrifice I am referring to is **Lasker's double bishop sacrifice**, named after the inventor of the combination: Emanuel Lasker.

Game 83

Emanuel Lasker

Johann Hermann Bauer

Amsterdam 1889 (1)



14. ♜h5

The white knight came all the way from b1 and now finishes its journey towards the black king.

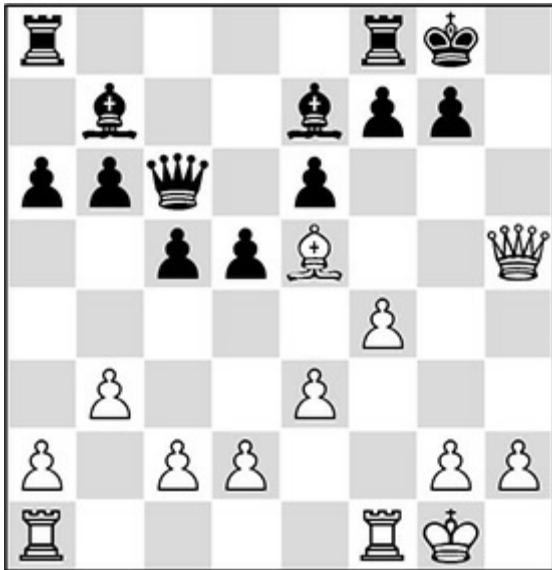
14... ♕xh5

Black displaces his most important defender and involuntarily unleashes the white attack.

15. ♜xh7+!

The combination starts just like the Greek Gift. 15. ♜xh5 would be too slow because of 15...f5 16. ♖f3 ♕e8!.

15... ♕xh7 16. ♜xh5+ ♔g8



17. ♜xg7!

Lasker uses a second sacrifice to widen the access to the black king even further!

17... ♛xg7 18. ♜g4+

A crucial move. White has just run out of minor pieces and puts all his money on the rook lift.

18... ♕h7!

The only attempt.

19. ♜f3 e5 20. ♜h3+ ♕h6

Black is two pieces up and can afford to sacrifice his queen for a rook. Unfortunately, the combination has not finished yet.

21. ♜xh6+ ♛xh6 22. ♜d7!

One of the bishops drops, which effectively puts an end to this game.

22... ♜f6 23. ♜xb7 ♛g7 24. ♜f1 ♜ab8 25. ♜d7 ♜fd8 26. ♜g4+ ♛f8 27. fxe5 ♜g7 28. e6 ♜b7 29. ♜g6 f6 30. ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 31. ♜xf6+ ♛e8 32. ♜h8+ ♛e7 33. ♜g7+ ♛xe6 34. ♜xb7 ♜d6 35. ♜xa6 d4 36. exd4 cxd4 37. h4 d3 38. ♜xd3 1-0

A very convincing demonstration by Lasker. This is the first game in the Mega Database that combines ♜xh7+ with ♜xg7 (or ♜xh2 with ♜xg2). Many others would follow.

The aim of this chapter

Before we delve into the details of this attractive combination, one warning: there is a chance that you will never actually encounter it in a real game. For that reason, do not consider this chapter as a ‘Lasker’s double bishop sacrifice course’ for which you will receive a certificate. The true aim is to be able to *transfer* the different techniques to completely different positions in order to boost your attacking and defending skills. The following techniques will be discussed in this chapter:

Defending techniques:

- Returning material to save the day;
- The evacuation of the king;
- The 7th-rank defence.

Attacking techniques:

- Finding the right move order;
- The double rook lift;
- Preventing the 7th-rank defence.

Note that we already came across the majority of these techniques when we discussed the Greek Gift. If they

do not ring a bell with you, then I strongly recommend you to repeat Chapter 6 before you move on.

7.2 The double rook lift

Attacks in which you sacrifice at least fifty percent of your minor pieces will automatically put a large emphasis on your rooks. Queens are unable to deliver checkmate on their own. They need help. A successful rook lift can therefore mean the difference between settling for a perpetual check and crushing your opponent. We already came across quite a few convincing examples of rook lifts in previous chapters. Now we are going to learn about an even more powerful device: the double rook lift!

Game 84

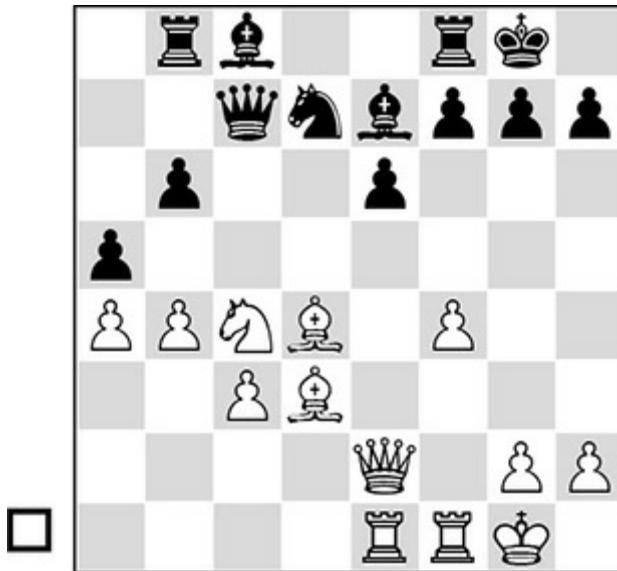
Arghyadip Das

2466

Momchil Nikolov

2545

Roquetas de Mar 2013 (7)



21. ♜xh7+

Just like with the Greek Gift, Black cannot really ignore the first sacrifice. It would give his opponent an extra pawn and a dangerous attack for free.

21... ♕xh7 22. ♜h5+

An important move to remember. White brings his queen to the attack with tempo, before he sacrifices the second bishop.

22... ♕g8 23. ♜xg7 ♔xg7



24. $\mathbb{R}g4+$!

The most accurate move. White forces the king to the rim, preparing a deadly rook lift.

24. $\mathbb{R}e3$ would be less convincing due to 24... $\mathbb{R}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{R}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{R}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{R}xg8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$. White is of course much better, but there is still a lot to play for compared to the game.

24... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{R}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 26. $\mathbb{R}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$



27. $\mathbb{R}xh7+!$

The only path to victory! The simple 27. $\mathbb{R}h5$ would leave Black on top after the instructive 27... $\mathbb{Q}c5+!$

28. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ (28. $bxc5$ $\mathbb{R}xc5+$ forces a queen trade) 28... $f6!$ – the 7th-rank defence! Black is winning.

27... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 28. $\mathbb{R}f3$

Here comes rook number two! Mate is again threatened and Black has to dig deep into his pockets to keep the game going.

28... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 29. $\mathbb{R}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 30. $\mathbb{R}xh4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 31. $\mathbb{R}xh4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$



Just like in the Lasker-Bauer game, Black has more or less survived the skirmish from a material point of view. But again, it is the quality of the pieces that counts instead of the number of points on the board. Lasker took advantage of the poorly coordinated black pieces with a double attack. This time, the deadly queen and knight duo is heading straight for the black king.

32. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 1-0

We finish this section with a subtler version of the double rook lift. It is presented as a quiz.

Game 85

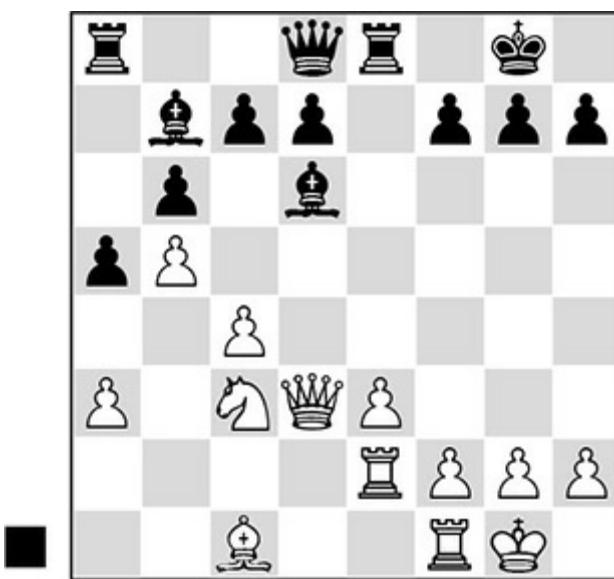
Nelson Gamboa

2390

Pavel Blatny

2515

New York 1996 (4)



16... $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4+!$

19... $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ is less convincing. White still has to sacrifice his queen, but his king can reach a safer part of the board in return: 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 24. e4 gives White real chances of

survival.

20. ♔h2



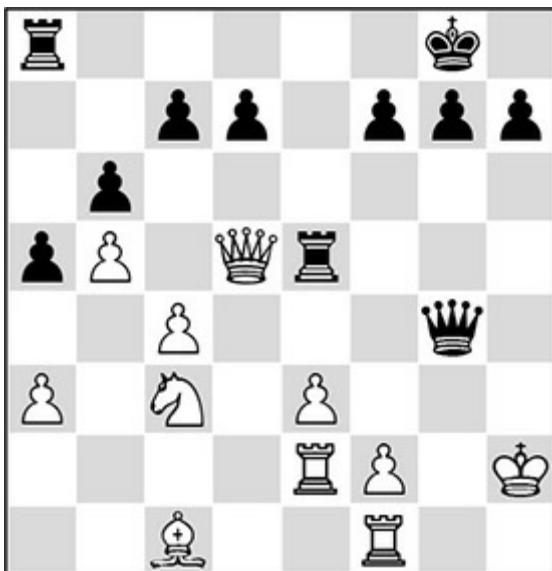
QUESTION 1: How should Black continue?

20... ♕e5!

This time the 5th rank is used for the rook lift.

20... ♕e6 does not work on account of 21.e4! and White is winning.

21. ♔d5!



The only way to prevent mate.

QUESTION 2: Would you play

A) 21... ♕ae8, to bring in an extra attacker; or

B) 21... ♔h5+, to move the major pieces to their most optimal squares?

21... ♔h5+!

The most accurate move, since it allows Black to win the queen with check and keep the attack going.

The quiet move 21... ♕ae8 is not recommendable. White restores his king's safety with 22. ♔g2! ♔h5+ 23. ♔h3 ♔g6 24. ♕g1 and his two extra pieces will do the rest.

22. ♕g1 ♕g5+ 23. ♔xg5 ♔xg5+ 24. ♔h1



QUESTION 3: The optimal square for the black queen is f3. How can she get there?

24... ♕f6!

Well played! Black uses the double attack to optimize his queen.

25. ♖b2 ♕f3+ 26. ♖g1

26. ♖h2 would have been more stubborn: 26... ♜e8 27. ♜g1 ♜e6 28. ♜g2 and now:



analysis diagram

28... ♜d6! 29.e4 ♖h5+ 30. ♖g1 ♜d1+! (the right exchange! Without the rook on e2, the remaining white pieces are suddenly very poorly coordinated) 31. ♗xd1 ♖xe2 32. ♗xg7 ♖xd1+ 33. ♖h2 ♖h5+ 34. ♖g1 (the battery is nice, but completely innocent as long as Black keeps his queen on the light squares) 34...f6 35. ♗xf6+ ♔f7 is winning for Black.

26... ♜e8

White is helpless against the second rook lift.

27. ♜d2 ♖g4+ 28. ♖h1 ♜e6 29.f3 ♖h3+ 0-1

Conclusion

Rooks play a very important role in Lasker's double bishop sacrifice. The attacker is often running short on minor pieces and therefore being able to lift your rook(s) to the attack is a vital condition for delivering the

checkmate.

7.3 Evacuation of the king

Sacrificing a second piece comes with extra complexities. The defender is, for instance, not always obliged to accept both sacrifices. He can sometimes be satisfied with only one extra piece and politely refuse the second one. Always consider this option seriously in your calculations!

The right move order

It is interesting to note that every single Lasker's double bishop sacrifice starts with $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$. But why? What if we turn the moves around? I will show you a practical example.

Game 86

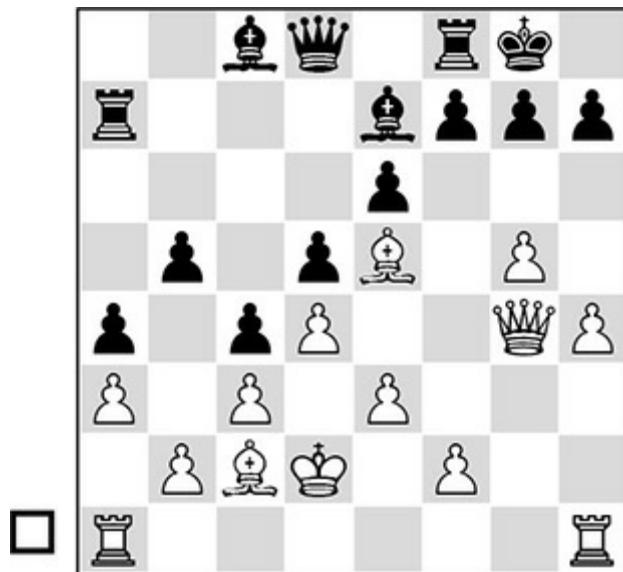
Pierre Lemieux

1887

Rejean Tremblay

2245

Quebec 2005 (3)



We already know the standard line: 19. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 20. $\mathbb{B}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$.

There are only three legal moves that prevent mate in one, and they all lose in this position:

- A) 21...f5 22. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ wins for White;
- B) 21...f6 22. g6 is a forced mate;
- C) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 22. $\mathbb{B}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 23. g6 fxg6 24. $\mathbb{B}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 26. $\mathbb{B}ag1+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xg5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 28. $\mathbb{B}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ and White wins.

In the game, White decided to sacrifice the dark-squared bishop first.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$

The first sacrifice is always hard to reject, since otherwise Black would not only have a ruined king's position, but would also be a pawn down.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$

20. $\mathbb{B}h5$ could be easily met with 20... $\mathbb{B}h8$.



This is where the disadvantage of the reversed move order becomes visible. In the correct move order, the second piece sacrifice is accompanied by a direct mate in one threat and there were only three legal moves to prevent it. This time, White does not threaten anything concrete yet, which enables Black to refuse the second bishop and work on his defence instead. He went for 20... \mathbb{Q} h8 and won after a complicated struggle.

He did have a better option with

20...e5!

to bring in an important defender after

21. \mathbb{B} h5 \mathbb{B} a6!

Defending is never easy, but there is reason for optimism in the black camp. Especially if you compare this position to the 19. \mathbb{Q} xh7 line.

Conclusion

Make sure that sacrifice number two and onwards are with force! This way you prevent your opponent from only accepting the first and rejecting the other ones for a stronger defence.

One warning: the position changes during the combination. As a result, a certain move can lose its forcefulness along the way. Keep this in mind in your calculations!

Returning the material

If the defender does accept both pieces, he can use them as leverage for the defence of his king. In our introductory game, Bauer tried to save the game by returning his queen for a rook. It looked as though he was fine from a material point of view, but Lasker had more tricks up his sleeve.

The most straightforward way to invest material in order to facilitate the defence is by simply returning one of the two extra pieces. There are countless ways to do so. For the price of a minor piece you can, for instance, launch a counterattack, disrupt the coordination between the attackers, or bring in your defenders with tempo.

The remainder of this paragraph will be devoted to returning a piece for a different purpose: **creating an evacuation square for your king**.

Evacuation square

The evacuation of the king was already one of the most common defensive resources against the Greek Gift. It is even more important with Lasker's double bishop sacrifice. The king got stripped from his pawns and is often facing a hostile rook and queen. You can imagine that his instincts will tell him to run for his life

instead of waiting for backup.

Game 87

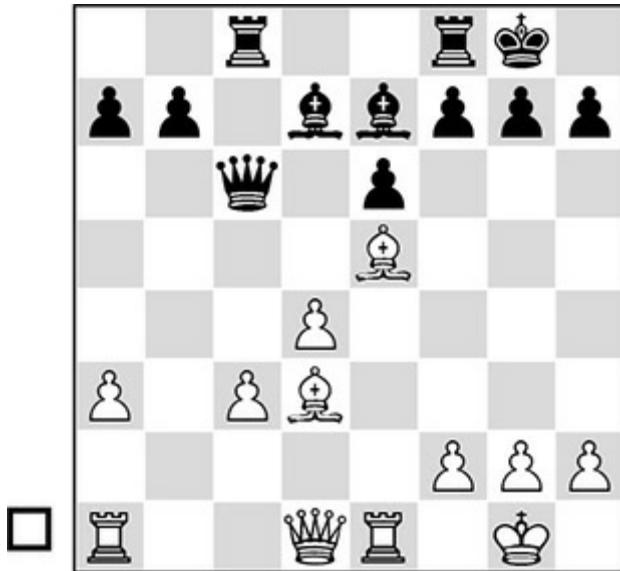
Sam Collins

2401

Ian Snape

2229

Hastings 2007/08 (5)



18. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$

It is again important to start with this move. The hasty 19. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ loses to 19... $\mathbb{Q}g8!$.

19... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$

Black is forced to take the second bishop as well. Under specific circumstances, he can play ...f7-f6 or ...f7-f5 in order to set up a 7th-rank defence. More on this in paragraph 7.5. In this particular position, Black does not have a queen or a rook on the 7th rank to support the king. Moving the f-pawn would therefore amount to suicide.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$

20...f5 21. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$, followed by a deadly $\mathbb{Q}e3$, and 20...f6 21. $\mathbb{Q}h6!$ (21. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8!$ only helps Black) 21... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ are refutations that are worth remembering.



21. ♜e3

21. ♜g4+ is the standard move, trying to force the black king to the rim, just like Lasker did. It does not really work in this position, since Black has a pretty manoeuvre at his disposal: 21... ♛h6! (remember this move!) 22. ♜e3 ♜g5 (this interposing move also works with a queen instead of a bishop on the d8-h4 diagonal) 23. ♜h3+ ♛g6 24.f4 ♜b5 25. ♜h5+ ♛f6 26.fxg5+ ♛e7 and White has insufficient compensation for the bishop.

21...e5

Black hits the emergency break and invests a queen to slow down the white attack. This is a very normal move leading to an interesting position. Black could, however, have played more ambitiously with 21... ♜h8! 22. ♜g3+ ♜g5!.



analysis diagram

A very instructive move! It not only clears the vital e7-square for the black king, it also disrupts the coordination between the white rook and queen, making it easier to escape. 23. ♜xg5+ (23. ♜xg5+ ♛f6 is even worse for White. Rooks can be very clumsy if they come too close to the king) 23... ♛f8 and the king escapes, for instance: 24. ♜g7+ ♛e7 25. ♜g5+ f6 26. ♜g7+ ♛d6 27. ♜xf6 ♛c7 28. ♜g7 ♛b8. The king has

reached his new home and can face the future with confidence.

22. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $fxg6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}a5$



25...a6

Black has a very clear task: coordinating his pieces! If he succeeds, his chances will be slightly preferable.

26. $\mathbb{B}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 28. $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 30. $h3$ $\mathbb{Q}ed8$ 31. $\mathbb{B}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 33. $f4$



33... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Unfortunately for Black, coordinating your pieces is only the beginning. Keeping them coordinated is much harder! 33... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ would have kept the game level. The text move opens Pandora's Box by putting a third piece on an unprotected square.

34. $\mathbb{B}e6!$

Double attack number one.

34... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 35. $d5$

White goes for the elimination of the defending bishop. There was, however, nothing wrong with 35. $\mathbb{B}f5!$.

35... $\mathbb{Q}b5$

Forced. The rook is pinned and the bishop cannot leave the a4-e8 diagonal.

36. $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

The bishop has run out of squares and is lost since 36... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ would be met with double attack number two:

37. ♜e4!.

37. ♜xc3

White collects the pieces and wins easily.

37... ♜xc3 38.axb5 ♜f7 39.bxa6 bxa6 40.d6 ♜xf4 41.d7 ♜f6 42. ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 43.d8 ♜g5 44. ♜h2 ♜g6 45. ♜d3+ ♜h6 46. ♜g3 a5 47. ♜b5 1-0

The emergency exit

A single escape route for the king is sometimes not enough.

Game 88

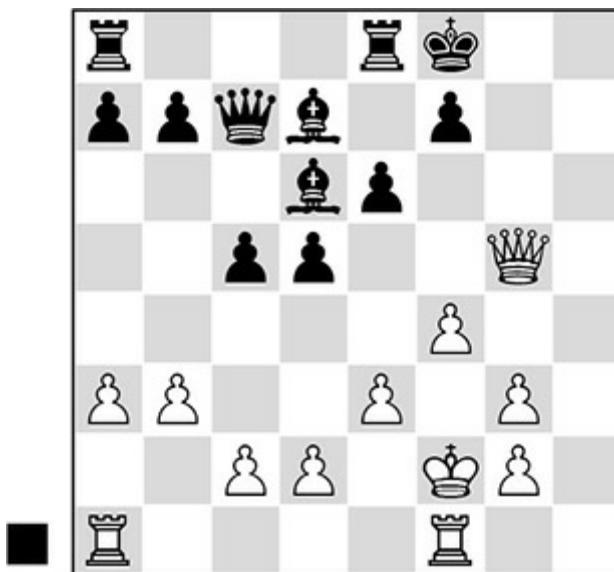
Nikolai Kabanov

2504

Oleg Krivonosov

2432

Internet 2006



The black king has already made it to f8, but is unable to cross over to the queenside yet. Black has to act quickly, since 25. ♜h1 is a serious threat.

24... ♜xf4!

Black decides to return a piece in order to create an emergency exit. The materialistic 24... ♜d8 would prevent 25. ♜h1, but plugs the only escape route and allows the white queen to force a perpetual with 25. ♜h6+ ♜e7 26. ♜h4+.

25.gxf4 ♜d8 26. ♜h6+ ♜e7 27. ♜h1 ♜g8 28. ♜h5 ♜f8 29. ♜ah1 ♜xh6 30. ♜xh6

The attack is over. If this had not been an internet game, White would definitely have resigned here.

Too many options

We finish this section with a position in which the defender has more than one option to return a piece for his defence. Which one should he choose?

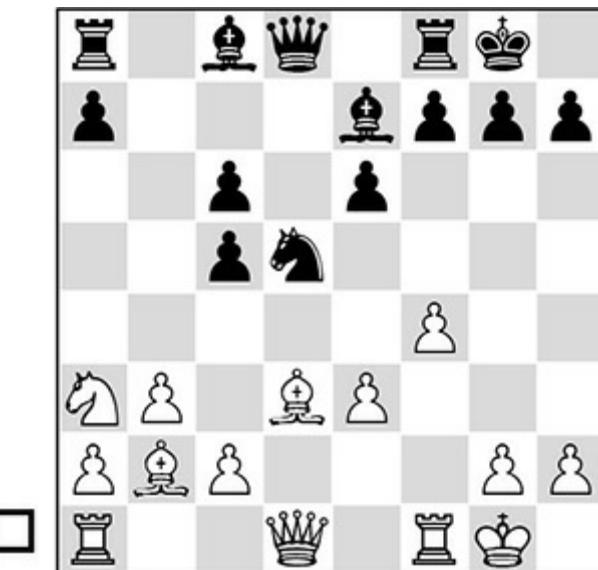
Game 89

Jörg Kappelt

2180

Heinz Mersch

Düsseldorf 2005 (1)



12. ♜xh7+ ♕xh7 13. ♜h5+ ♕g8 14. ♜xg7 ♕xg7

14...f5 15. ♜e5 and 14...f6 15. ♜h6 ♛f7 16. ♜g6+ are again very convincing for White.

15. ♛f3



This is a very interesting position. Black has to return a piece in order to organize his defence, but how? You can take a look for yourself.

QUESTION: Would you play

- A) 15... ♛h8;
- B) 15... ♜xf4; or
- C) 15... ♜h4 ?

Let me start with the good news. Whatever answer you choose, Black is doing fine! However, one of them does not lead to a convincing advantage.

A) 15... ♛h8! is the most thematic continuation. Black has the better chances after 16. ♛g3+ ♜g5 17. ♛xg5+ ♔f6!;

B) 15... \mathbb{Q} xf4! is even more convincing. For instance:



analysis diagram

B1) If 16.exf4, 16... \mathbb{Q} d4+! wins the a1-rook with check: 17. \mathbb{Q} f1 \mathbb{Q} xa1+ 18. \mathbb{Q} f2 \mathbb{Q} d4+ gives Black an extra rook compared to the other lines;

B2) If 16. \mathbb{Q} xf4, 16...f5! keeps the white rook from the g-file and seriously slows down the attack;

B3) 16. \mathbb{Q} e5+ is the best try. White has insufficient compensation for the piece after 16...f6 17. \mathbb{Q} xf4 e5 18. \mathbb{Q} g3+ \mathbb{Q} f7.

C) 15... \mathbb{Q} h4

This was the game move, and it is the worst of the three options. Black returns a bishop to close the g-file.

16. \mathbb{Q} g4+ \mathbb{Q} g5 17.fxg5



Here, a draw would be the most likely outcome after 17... \mathbb{Q} e7!. The knight has to cover the crucial h6-square: 18. \mathbb{Q} h5 \mathbb{Q} f5 19. \mathbb{Q} xf5 exf5 20. \mathbb{Q} h6+ \mathbb{Q} g8 21.g6 fxg6 22. \mathbb{Q} xg6+ \mathbb{Q} h8 23. \mathbb{Q} h6+ with a perpetual. Instead, Black went for the inaccurate

17... \mathbb{Q} a6

and ended up in trouble after

18. ♜h5!

The standard reply would be 18... ♛h8, but the rook is stuck to the defence of f7! Black had to take very drastic measures to keep the white queen from the deadly h6-square and lost.

18...f5 19.gxf6+ ♕xf6 20. ♕g3+ ♛f8 21. ♜h7 ♛e8 22. ♜c4 ♜xc4 23.bxc4 ♜xe3 24. ♜xe3 ♜d4 25. ♜ae1 ♜d8 26.h3 ♜d7 27. ♜g8+ ♛e7 28. ♜h2 ♜f4+ 29. ♜h1 ♜d6 30. ♜g3 ♜f7 31. ♜b1 ♜xc4 32. ♜b7+ 1-0

Conclusion

When you sacrifice more than one piece, it is advisable to add force to the second one. This way you prevent your opponent from only accepting the first and rejecting the other one for a stronger defence.

Accepting both pieces and returning one of them is a very common defensive resource when facing Lasker's double bishop sacrifice. Black's dark-squared bishop is often the victim, for two reasons:

- The king needs the dark squares for his evacuation ambitions. The bishop is often an impediment at e7;
- The dark-squared bishop is the most obvious candidate to throw itself in front of the queen-rook tandem in order to slow down the attack and allow the king to get away.

7.4 The 7th-rank defence

The chances to execute a pure Lasker's double bishop sacrifice in a practical game are limited. There are, however, a few specific opening set-ups that carry all the ingredients for the sacrifice. Think of bishops on the right diagonals, the move f2-f4 that accommodates a rook lift, the queen on the d1-h5 diagonal, etc. These opening lines are the place to be if you are looking for practical examples of the double bishop sacrifice. Browsing through these games and comparing the differences gave me some cool insights that I want to share with you. It is centered around the following position:



Before we move on, I want to ask you to analyse the position for yourself. To point you into the right direction, here are two specific questions:

- How can White enforce a double bishop sacrifice?
- What is the final verdict?

The standard scheme

We start with a pretty straightforward game.

Game 90

Gunnar Stray

2050

Nansy Davidsdottir

1778

Reykjavik 2016 (10)

1.d4 d5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.e3 e6 4.♗d3 c6 5.b3 ♗bd7 6.♗b2 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♗bd2 b6 9.♗e5 ♗b7 10.f4 c5 11.♗f3 ♗c7



12.♗xd7 ♗xd7 13.dxc5 bxc5

The diagonals have been cleared. Here we go!

14.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 15.♗h5+ ♔g8 16.♗xg7 f5

Black did not have anything better, since 16...♔xg7 leads to a forced mate after 17.♗g5+ ♔h8 18.♗f3 ♗f6 19.♗xf6+ ♔g8 20.♗g3+ ♔h7 21.♗h4# and 16...f6 17.♗h6 is very similar to the game.

17.♗g6 ♕f7 18.♗h6+ ♔h8 19.♗xf7

The attack was a great success. White is an exchange and two pawns up and he won convincingly.

Nothing new so far. White executed the standard scheme and was successful.

However, it gets more interesting if we consider the next example. This game shows the exact same position at move twelve and was played six years earlier. Only this time, Black won!

Let us compare the two games and see what Black came up with.

The 7th-rank defence

Game 91

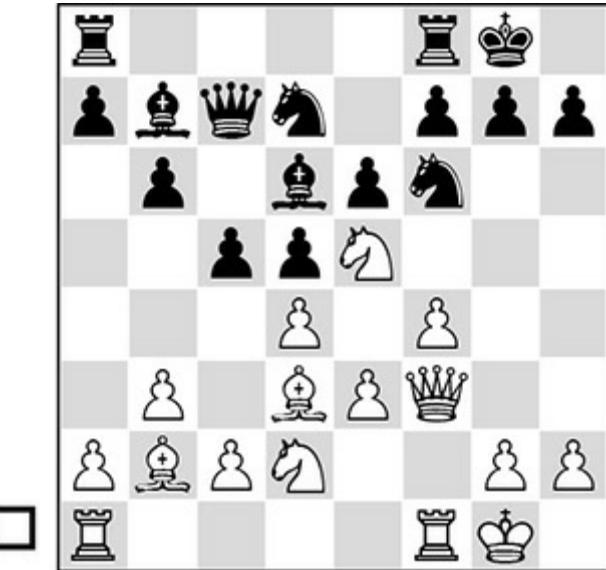
Radim Petruzalek

1606

Tsveta Galunova

1984

Sunny Beach 2010 (2)



12. ♜xd7 ♜xd7 13. dx c5 ♜xc5!

This is the difference. It is very important for the defender to keep the 7th rank cleared.

14. ♜xh7+! ♚xh7 15. ♜h5+ ♚g8 16. ♜xg7

Sacrificing bishop number two, but suddenly it becomes clear why Black removed her knight from the 7th rank two moves ago.

16...f6



A cool move, involving the queen in the defence! 16...f5!, with the same idea, would have been perfectly fine for Black as well.

17. ♜h8+

White sticks to his attacking ambitions, but it was definitely time for plan B: grabbing material with 17. ♜xf8 and hoping for the best. In the game, things quickly get worse for White.

17...♚f7 18. ♜h5+ ♚xg7 19. ♜f3 ♜f7!

Creating a gateway for her king.

20. ♜g3+ ♚f8 21. ♜h8+ ♚e7

The attack is over and White is left without any compensation for the two pieces.

22. ♜g8 ♜xg8 23. ♜xg8 ♜e4 24. ♜xe4 dxe4 25. c4 ♜d8 26. ♜g6 ♜xf4 27. exf4 ♜d4+ 0-1

The story does not end here. When digging deeper into the Mega Database, I found an exact copy of our position, with the colours reversed! None other than Anthony Miles was on the attacking side.

Preventing the 7th-rank defence

Game 92

Emir Dizdarevic

2425

Anthony Miles

2570

Biel 1985

1.c4 b6 2.d4 e6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♗b7 5.♗d3 d5 6.b3 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♗b2 ♘bd7 9.♗bd2 ♘e4 10.♗c2 f5 11.♗ad1



We have seen how the defender triumphed in the previous game. What would a brilliant grandmaster like Anthony Miles have in mind?

11...♘xd2 12.♗xd2 dxс4 13.♗xc4

Dizdarevic of course realizes he needs to clear the 7th rank for his queen.

13...♗xh2+ 14.♔xh2 ♗h4+ 15.♔g1



We have arrived at the critical moment in the game. Taking the g-pawn did not reach the desired result in the previous game, so how can Miles improve?

15...♝f3!

It might look as if the bishop slipped out of Miles' hand one square too early, but this is actually a very logical move if you consider it more closely. The bishop is blocking the f-pawn, keeping the white queen out of play and threatening a deadly 16...♝g5+. White will be mated after 16.gxf3 ♚g5+ 17.♚h2 ♜f6, so the best attempt is to chase away the bishop:

16.♝d2

This, however, blocks the 7th rank again and Black can switch back to his original sacrifice.

16...♝xg2! 17.f3

17.♛xg2 ♚g4+ 18.♚h1 ♜f6 19.♝xc7 e5 would be an easy win.

17...♜f6!

Very thematic and strong. Sacrificing a lot of material would be the only way for White to prevent his opponent from playing the straightforward ...♝h3 and ...♜g6. Black is winning.

18.♝c4 ♚h3 0-1

Miles put a final verdict to our position: the attacker prevails!

What did we learn?

- Keeping the 7th rank cleared for the major pieces is an important defending technique;
- Always take the prophylactic move ♜f6/♝f3 into consideration.

Reinstating the 7th-rank defence

The ♜f6/♝f3 manoeuvre temporarily neutralizes the 7th-rank defence, but does not stop it altogether. The moment the bishop leaves f6, the defender can move his f-pawn again and continue his plan.

It is, however, vital to keep the 7th rank cleared. Think of the Dizdarevic-Miles game, in which 16.♝d2 was answered with a deadly 16...♝xg2!. The defender also has to be quick. There is no point in clearing the 7th rank after the king has already been mated.

Game 93

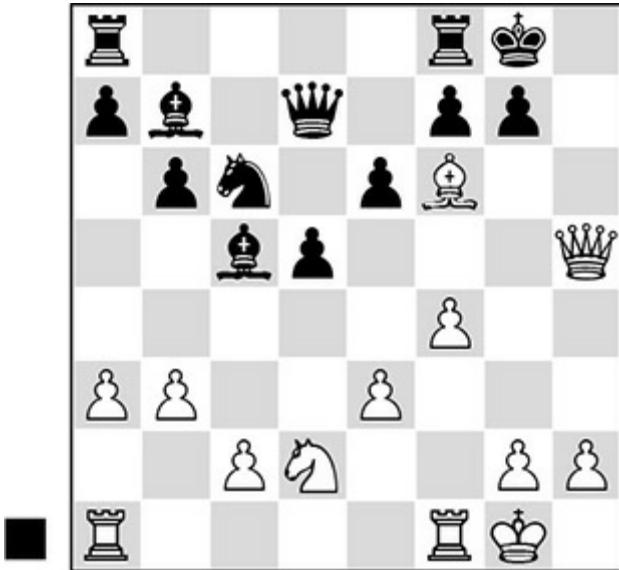
Thomas Kuckelkorn

1996

Arijit Gupta

2030

Hamburg 2011 (6)



16... ♜xe3+!

Black clears the crucial d4-square with tempo.

16... ♜e7 would congest the 7th rank again. We already know what will happen: 17. ♜xg7! f5 18. ♜g6! (White voluntarily provokes Black's next move in order to block the king's evacuation route) 18... ♜e8 19. ♜h6 ♛f7 20. ♜h7 with a very promising attack.

17. ♜h1 ♜d4

This is the point. The bishop is attacked from behind! This way Black can keep the 7th rank clear.

18. ♜f3

White simply ignores the bishops and goes straight for the king.

18... ♜xf6 19. ♜h3



This time it is the black bishop that disturbs the 7th-rank defence! But there is a simple solution at hand.

19... ♜h4!

This is not the time to be close-fisted. Black is two pieces up and can easily return one in order to free his f-pawn.

20. ♜xh4 f6

Black restores his defence and is winning.

21. ♜f3 ♜e8 22. ♜h7+ ♛f7 23. f5 ♜h8 24. ♜g5+ fxg5 25. ♜g6+ ♛g8 0-1

Switching to plan B

Sometimes the bishop on f6 is hard to expel. But there is no need to despair. Clearing the 7th rank is not the only defensive resource. Just ignore the bishop and switch to plan B.

Game 94

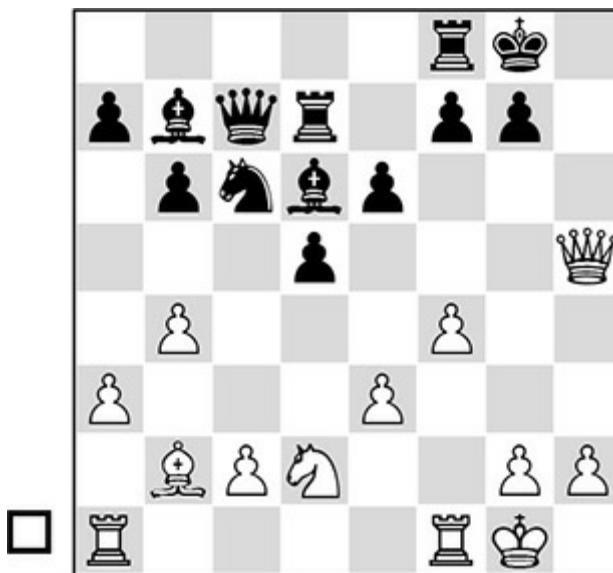
Georg Danner

2385

Andreas Dückstein

2360

Austria Bundesliga 1998/99



The game continued 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ f6 19. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. b5 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$. An elegant attacking victory by White.

However, a draw would have been the correct result after the straightforward 18... $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$. White has nothing better than a perpetual, since 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f6! wins for Black.

A draw would also be the correct result after the thematic

18. $\mathbb{Q}f6$

But this time, Black has to play very precisely to keep the balance.

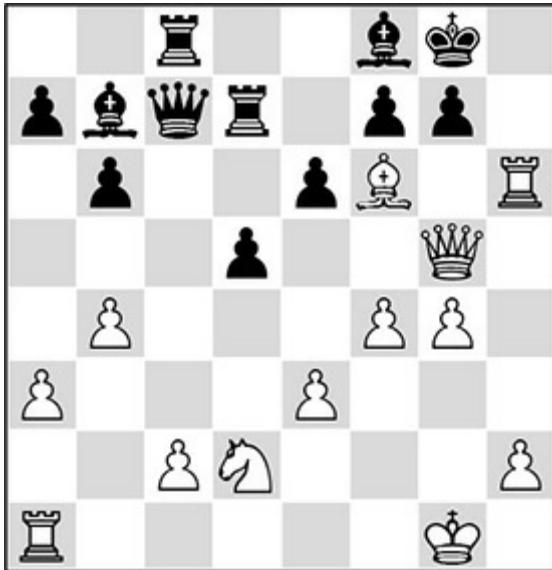
18... $\mathbb{Q}c8!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

White again has a very straightforward plan: using the h-file to mate the king. It will be very difficult for Black to expel the white dark-squared bishop without blocking the 7th rank. Therefore, he decides to follow a manoeuvre that we already familiarized ourselves with when we discussed the *passive king defence* against the Greek Gift: installing the queen on the b1-h7 diagonal!

20... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

The knight is unable to resolve the threats. Its mission is to slow down the attack and then pass the baton to the queen.

21. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$



The coordination in the white attacking camp is temporarily disturbed. It's time for the queen to step in.

23... ♕xc2! 24. ♖h3 ♕xd2

24... ♔g6 25. ♔h4 ♔h6 would be fine for Black as well.

25. ♔h4 ♖c1+

This is why the rook had to go to c8 on move 18!

26. ♖xc1 ♕xc1+ 27. ♔f2 ♕d2+ 28. ♔g1 ♕d1+

With a perpetual.

Conclusion

The 7th-rank defence is a very important defensive resource when facing Lasker's double bishop sacrifice.

Make sure you keep your 7th rank cleared in order to answer the second bishop sacrifice ($\mathbb{B}xg7$) with a direct ...f7-f6 or ...f7-f5 !

The attacker, in his turn, can prevent the most reliable defensive set-up by blocking the f-pawn with his bishop. The final result depends on the defender's ability to either expel this bishop or switch to an alternative defensive set-up.

7.5 FLASH CARDS



Defending technique 1: return material

Always be ready to return one of your extra pieces! The elegant ... $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ clears the vital e7-square for the black king and disrupts the coordination of the white pieces.



Defending technique 2: the 7th-rank defence

Instead of accepting the second piece, you can accelerate your defence with ...f7-f6 (or f5)! The aim of the 7th-rank defence is to bring in your queen and create an escape route for your king.



Attacking techniques 1: find the right move order

When you sacrifice more than one piece, make sure the second one is as forcing as possible. Here, Black refused the sacrifice and was better after 20... $\mathbb{Q}h8$.



Attacking technique 2: the (double) rook lift

With precise play, Black manoeuvred his queen to f3 and established a firm grip on the white position. White was helpless against the threat ... $\mathbb{Q}e8-e6-g6+$.

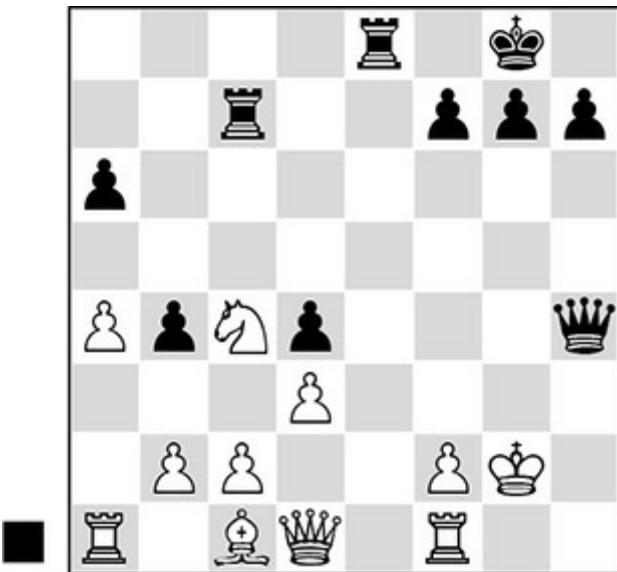


Attacking technique 3: preventing the 7th-rank defence

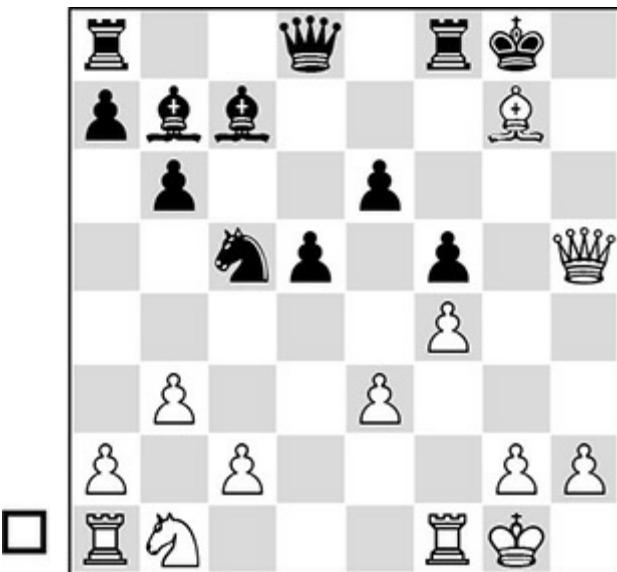
The 7th-rank defence can only work in combination with a well-timed f2-f3 or f2-f4. Blocking this pawn is therefore an attacking technique to remember.

Exercises – Attack 1

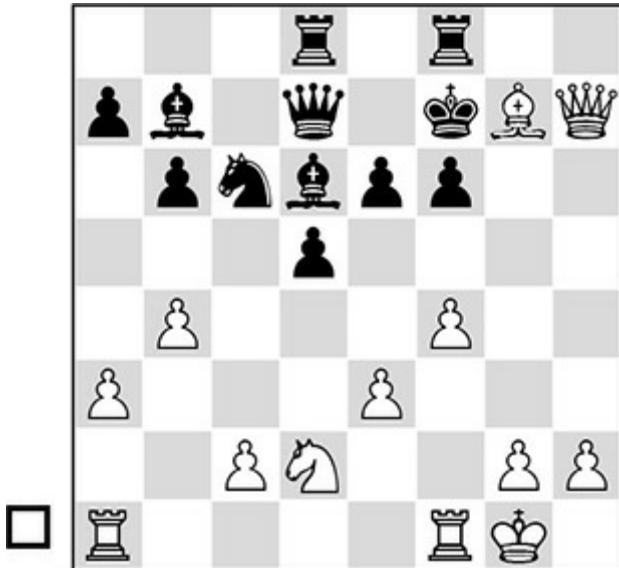
Solution 7.1



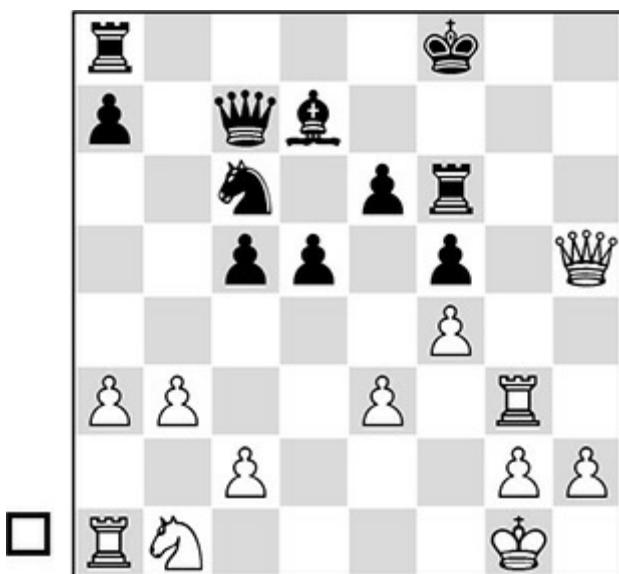
Solution 7.2



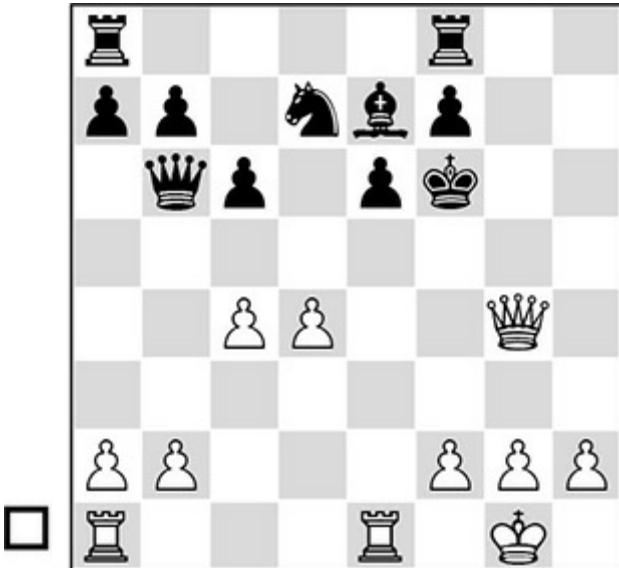
Solution 7.3



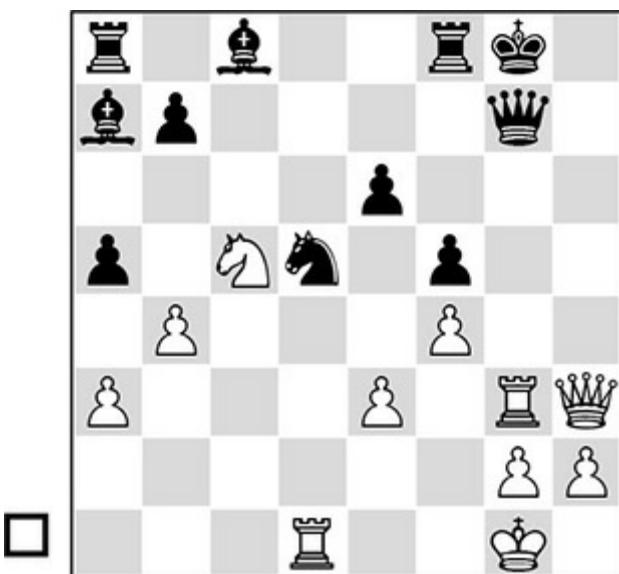
Solution 7.4



Solution 7.5

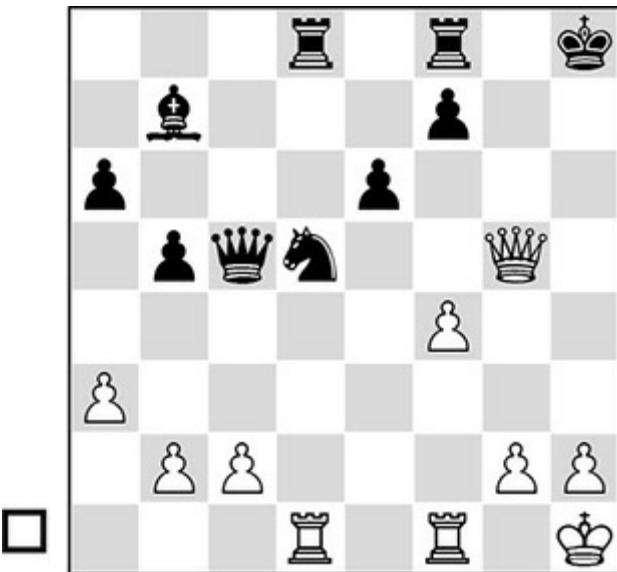


Solution 7.6

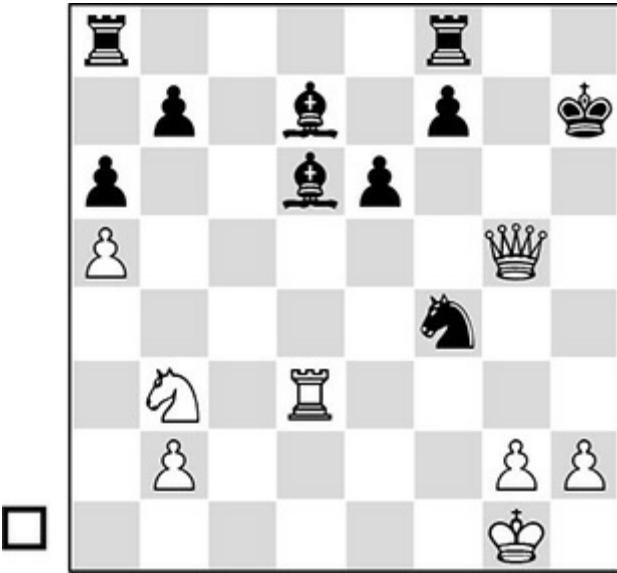


Attack 2

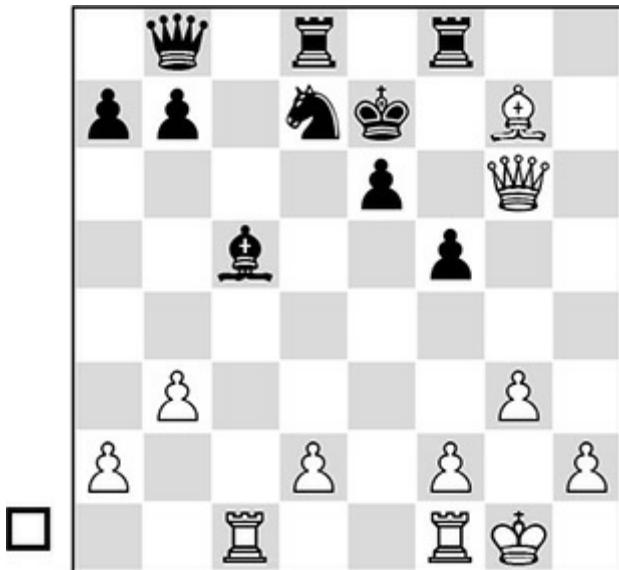
Solution 7.7



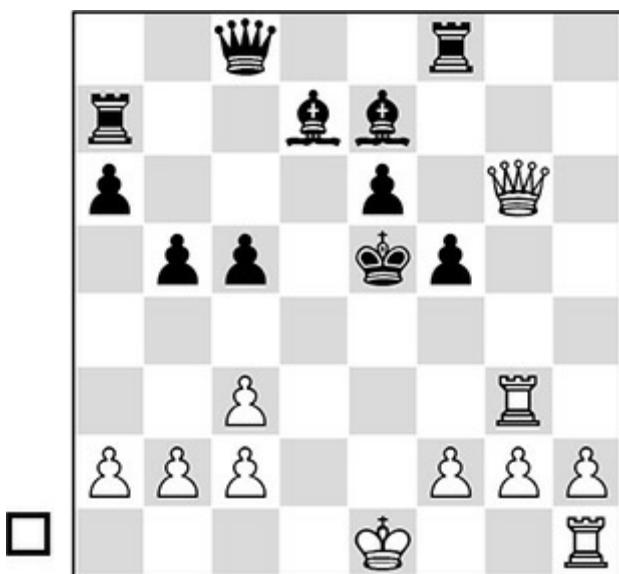
Solution 7.8



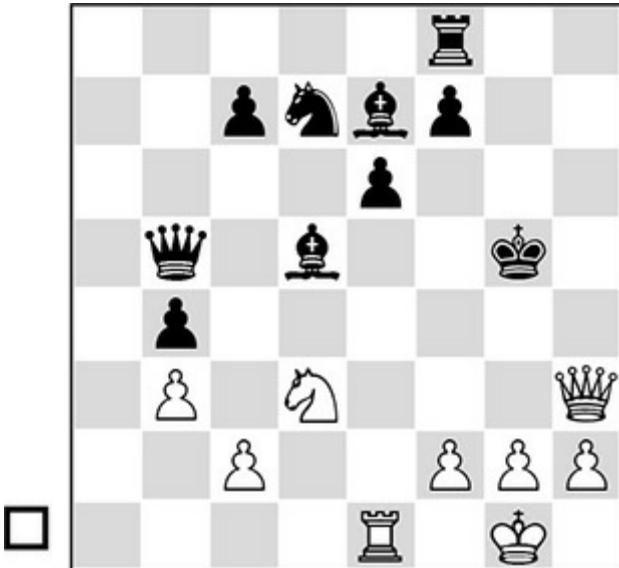
Solution 7.9



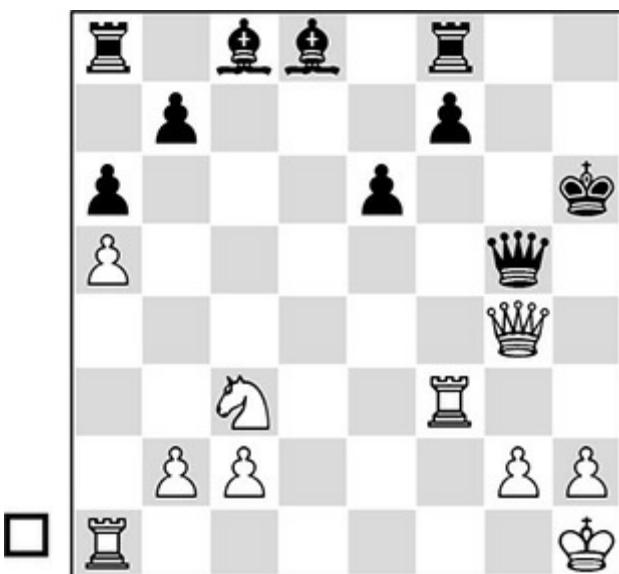
Solution 7.10



Solution 7.11

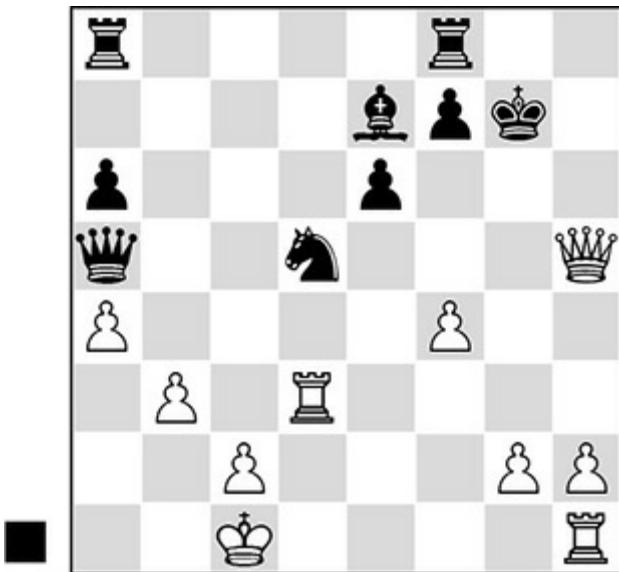


Solution 7.12

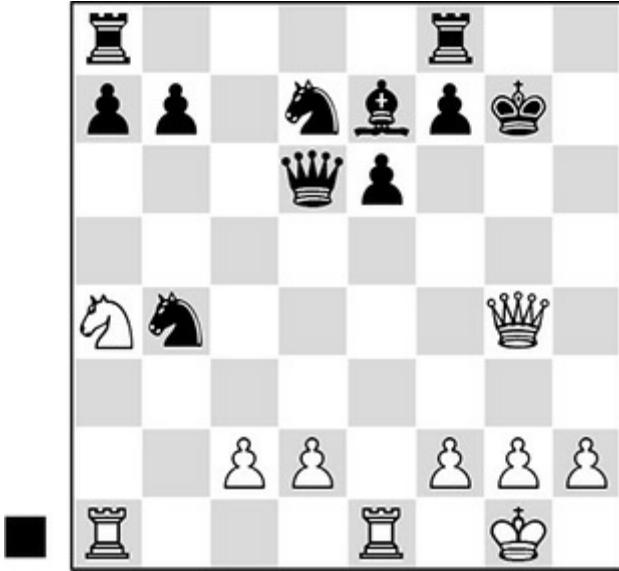


Defend 1

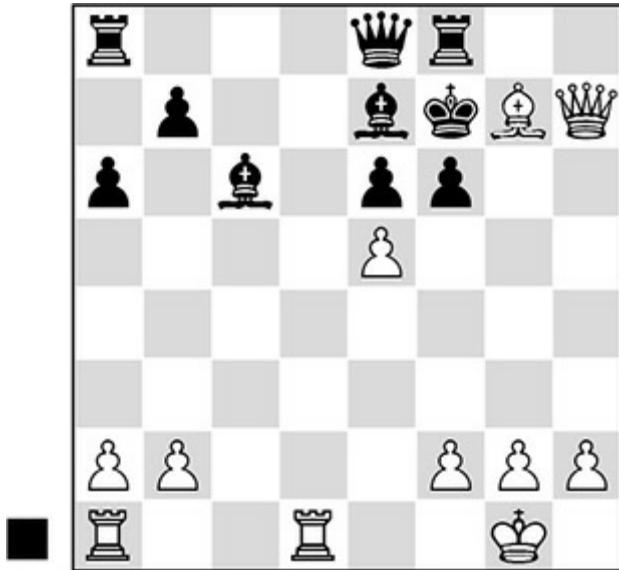
Solution 7.13



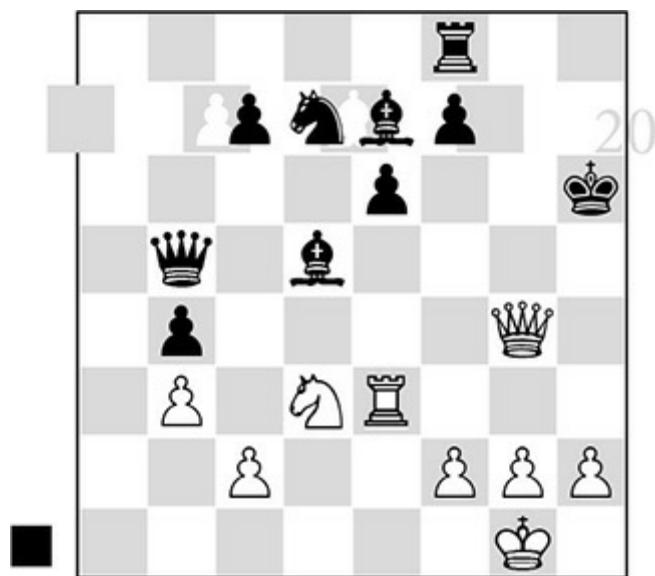
Solution 7.14



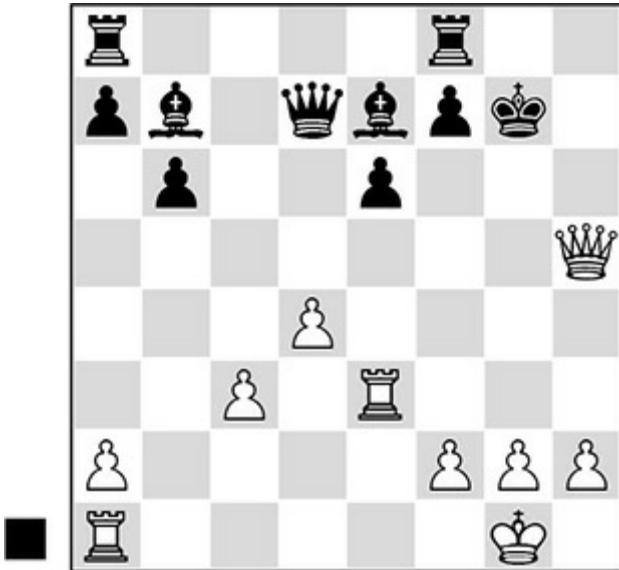
Solution 7.15



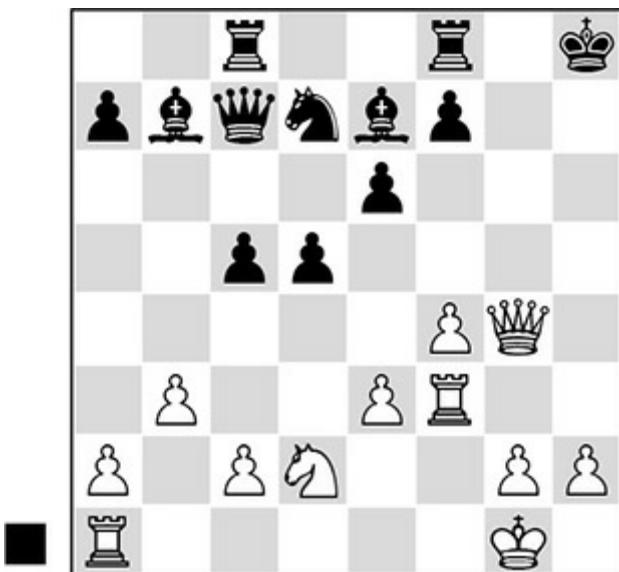
Solution 7.16



Solution 7.17

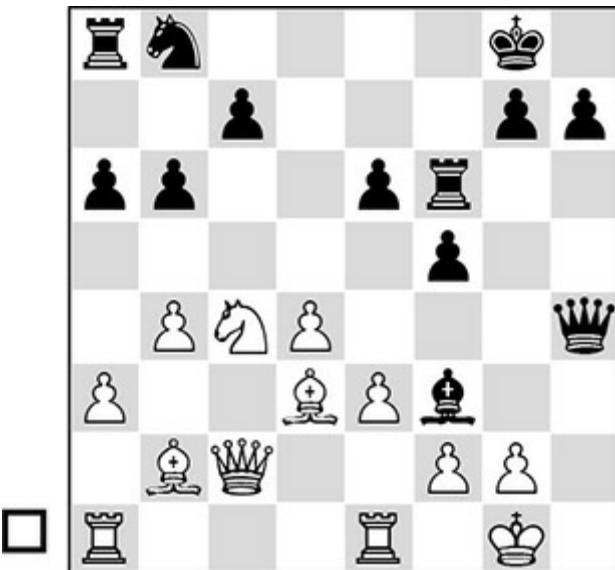


Solution 7.18

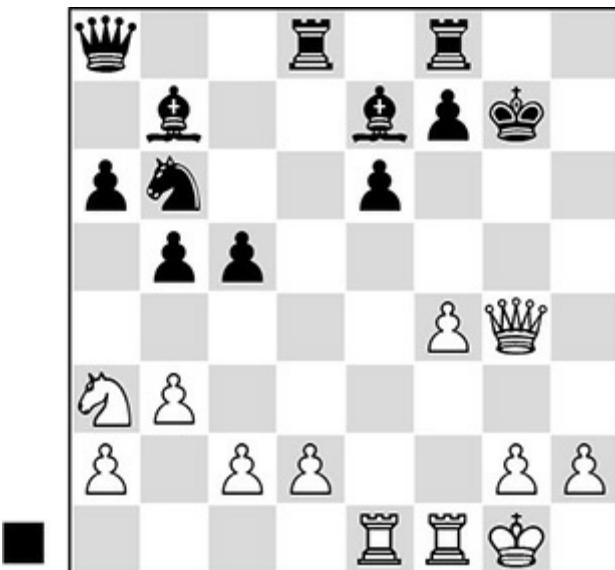


Defend 2

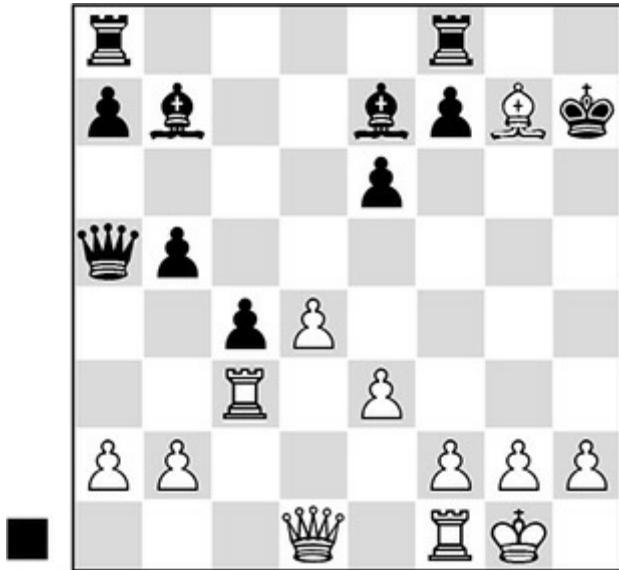
Solution 7.19



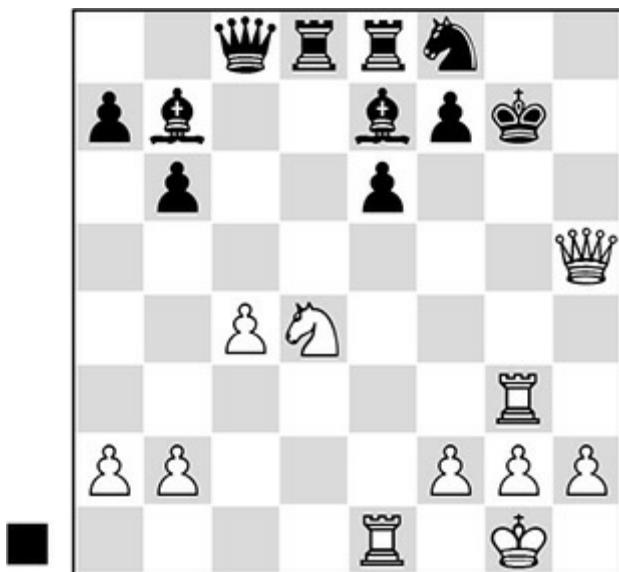
Solution 7.20



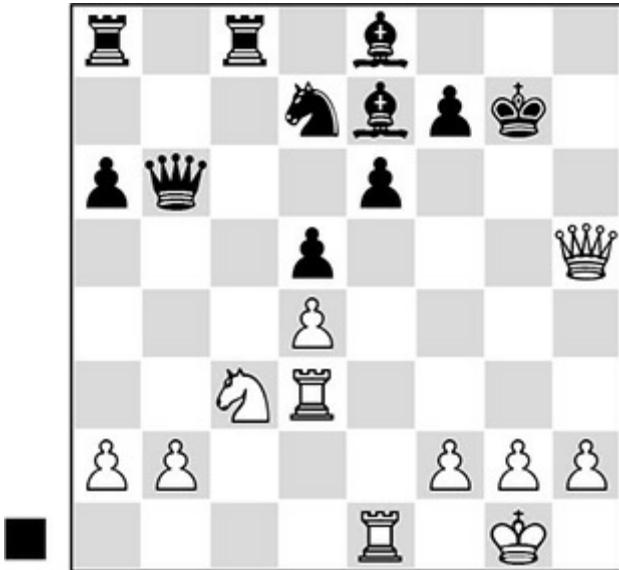
Solution 7.21



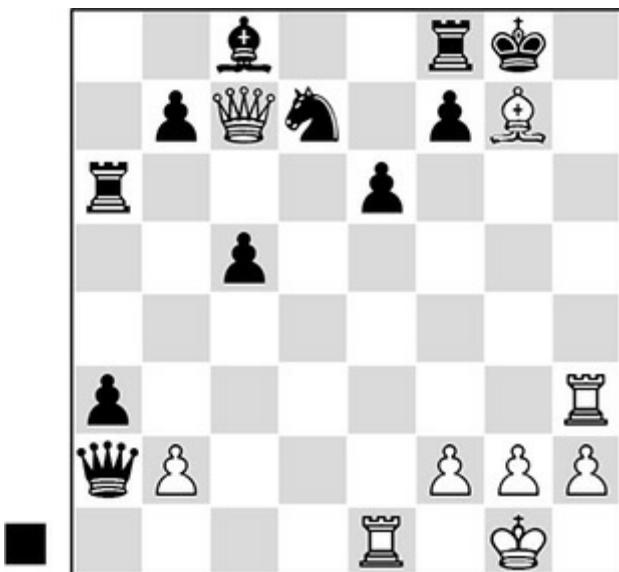
Solution 7.22



Solution 7.23

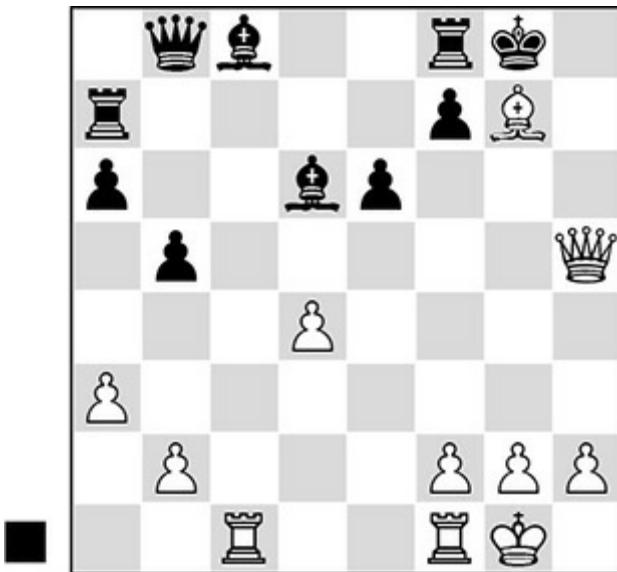


Solution 7.24



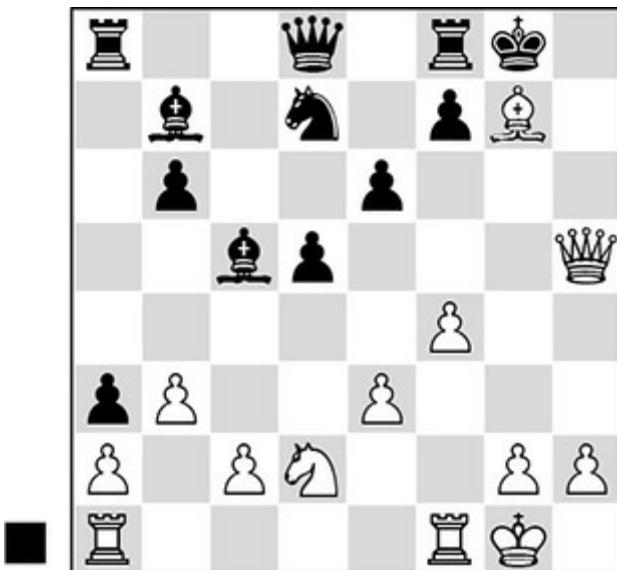
Accept the sacrifice: Yes or No?

Solution 7.25



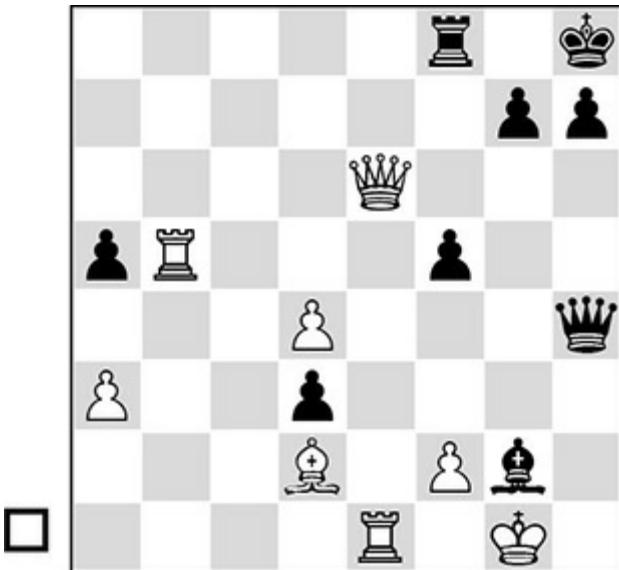
... \mathbb{Q} xg7, ...f7-f6 or ...f7-f5 ?

Solution 7.26



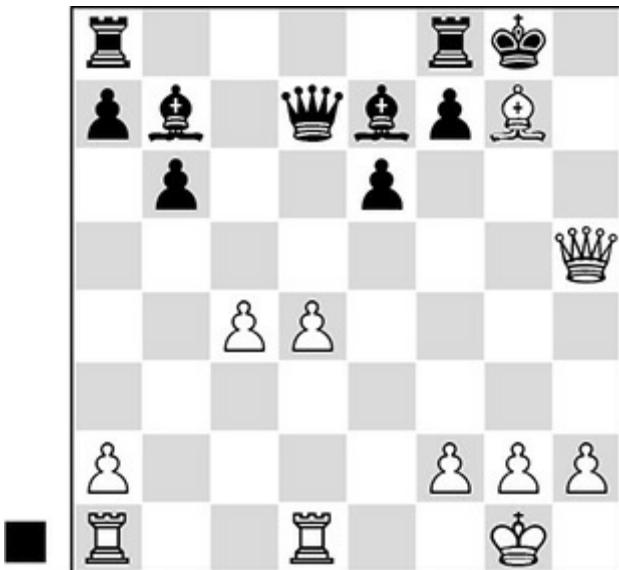
... \mathbb{Q} xg7, ...f7-f6 or 1...f7-f5 ?

Solution 7.27



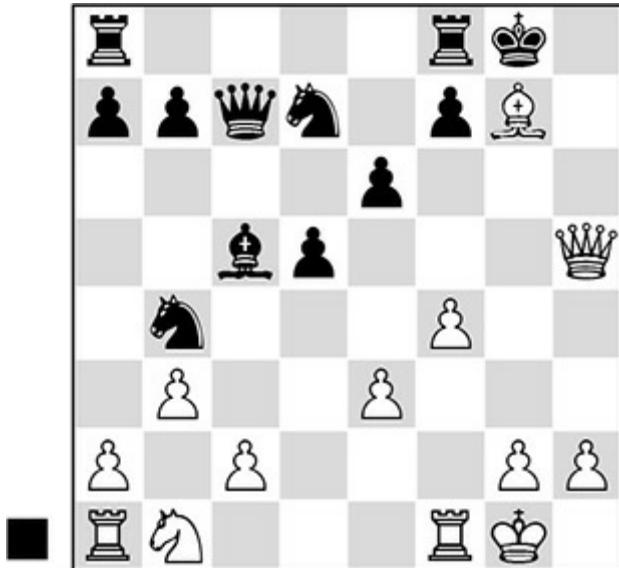
♕xg2, f2-f3 or f2-f4 ?

Solution 7.28



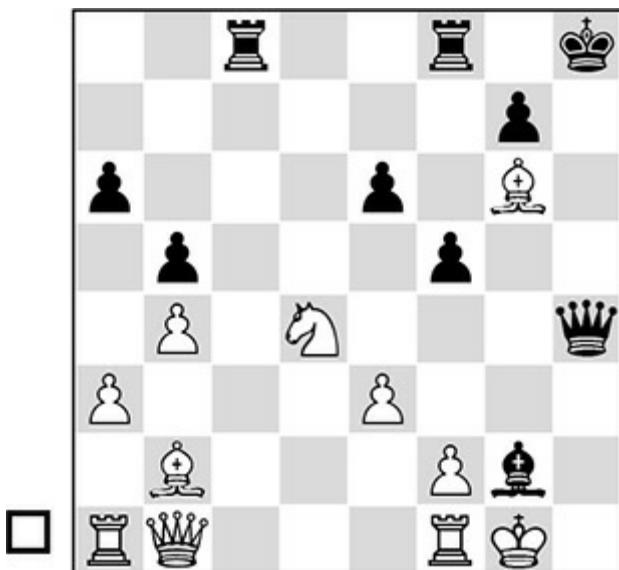
... ♕xg7, ...f7-f6 or ...f7-f5 ?

Solution 7.29



... \mathbb{Q} xg7, ...f7-f6 or ...f7-f5 ?

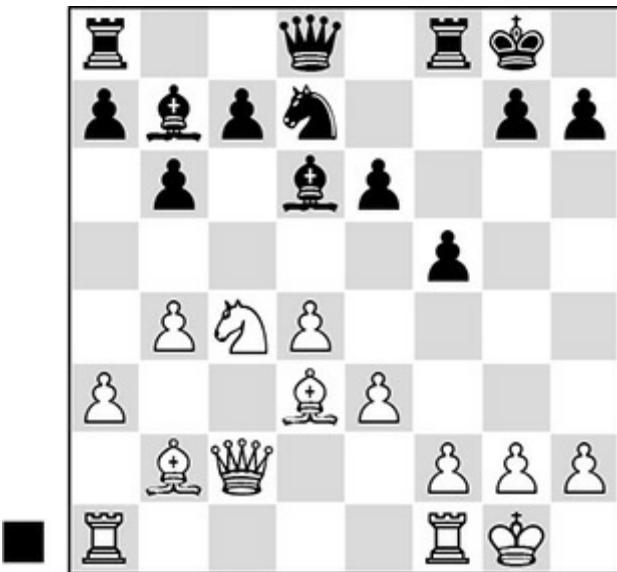
Solution 7.30



\mathbb{Q} xg2, f2-f3 or f2-f4 ?

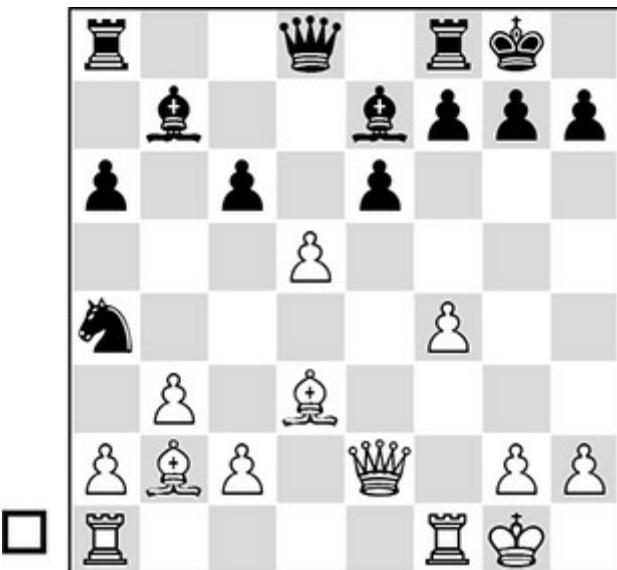
Sacrifice: Yes or No?

Solution 7.31



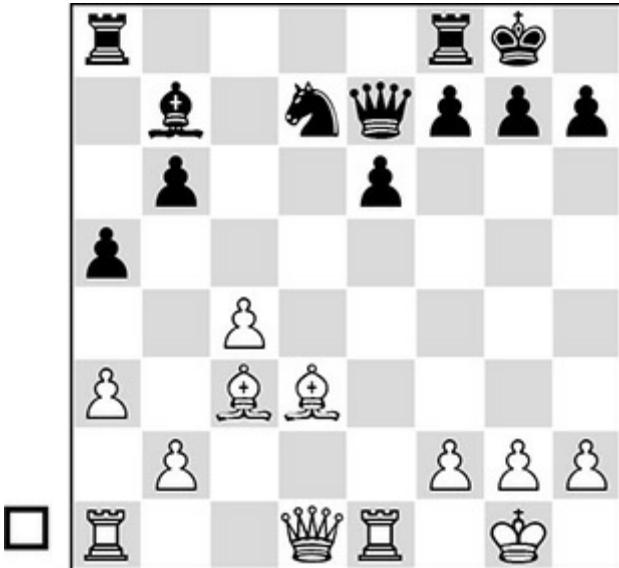
... ♕xh2+ ?

Solution 7.32



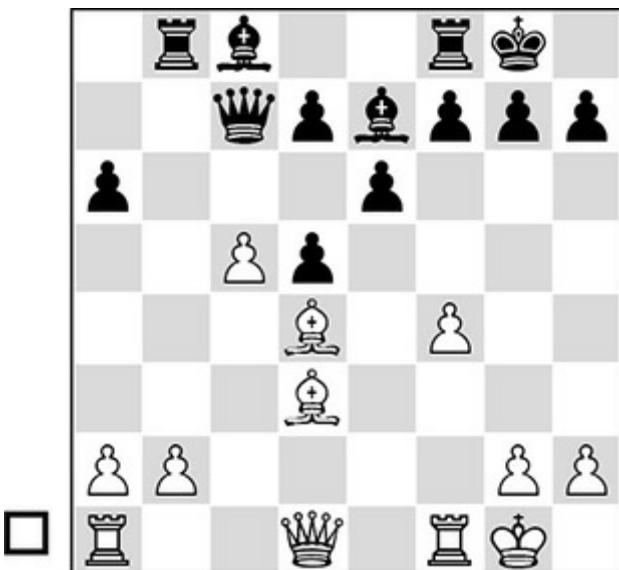
♕xh7+ ?

Solution 7.33



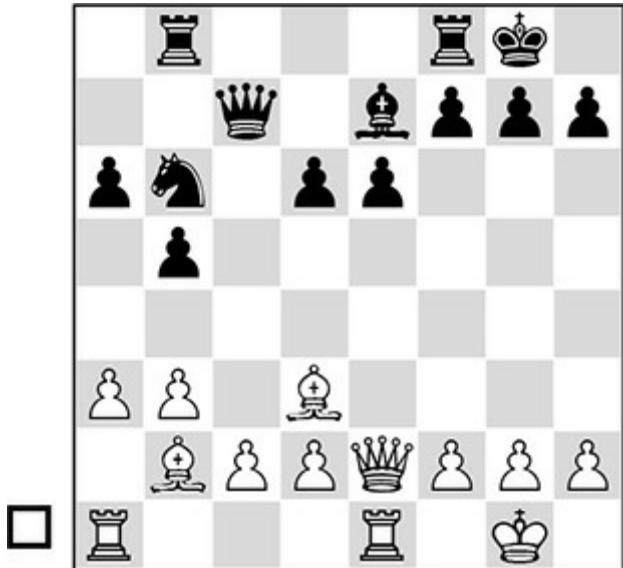
♕ xh7+ ?

Solution 7.34



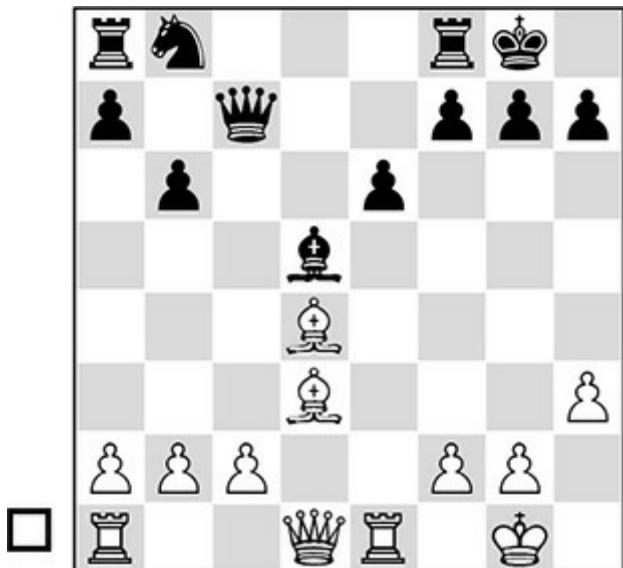
♕ xh7+ ?

Solution 7.35



♕ xh7+ ?

Solution 7.36



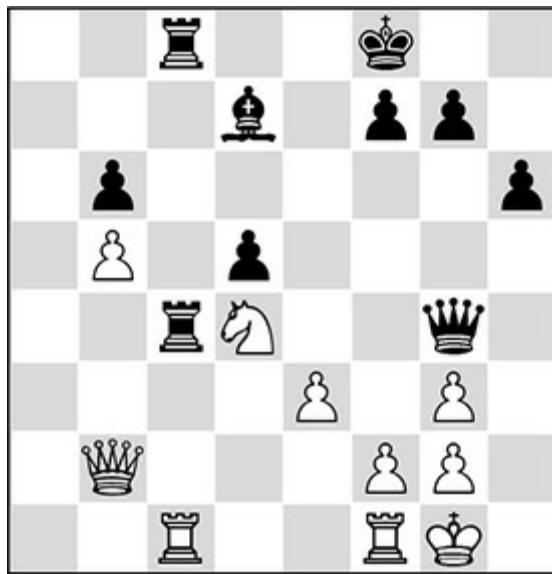
♕ xh7+ ?

CHAPTER 8

Fighting for the entrance square

8.1 Introduction

One of the most important reasons for sacrificing a piece in a mate attack is to get access to the enemy king. Unfortunately, simply removing the pawn that stands in front of the king will not automatically give you access. You can compare this to the conclusion on the 7th rank, which was demonstrated in the Gupta-Sukandar game in Chapter 3:



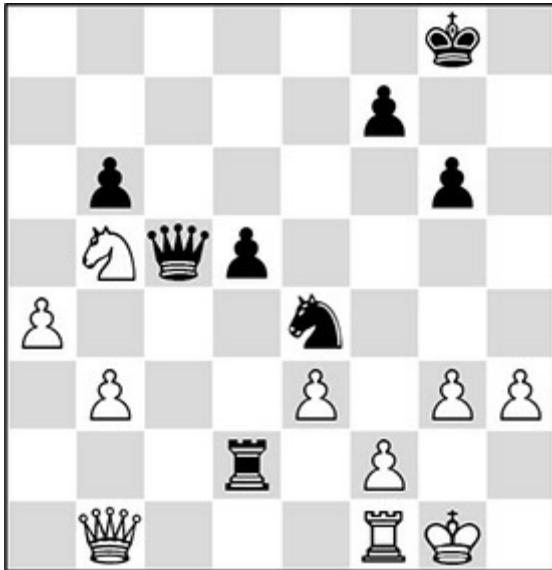
A promising 7th rank does not mean anything without an entrance square for the rook.

We need this same entrance square when it comes to getting access to the enemy king. Only this time, the queen is the most likely candidate for it.

The right entrance square

Finding the right entrance square for your queen is not always easy.

Take, for instance, our example from Chapter 2:



Both ... $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ are very suitable sacrifices to get access to the king, but they do not work yet. Why? Because the queen needs the g3-square to enter the king's position, instead of e3. That is why Black should wait a little longer and execute the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}c5-c8-b8$ first. Only when the black queen is in place, the timing is right for one of the two knight sacrifices. We have already seen the devastating effect of this manoeuvre in Chapter 2.

The Caro-Kann as a practical example

This chapter is about delivering the mate by finding the right entrance square for your queen. I decided to center the entire theme around one single opening line: the main line of the Caro-Kann. Or what was considered to be the main line, before the rise of the Advance Variation.

There are two reasons why I only selected one specific opening in this chapter:

- The different examples have many characteristics in common, which makes it easier to draw comparisons;
- This is one of the most effective ways to increase your understanding of a particular opening.

I choose this specific line for its static black kingside pawn structure, which looks like this:

Game 95

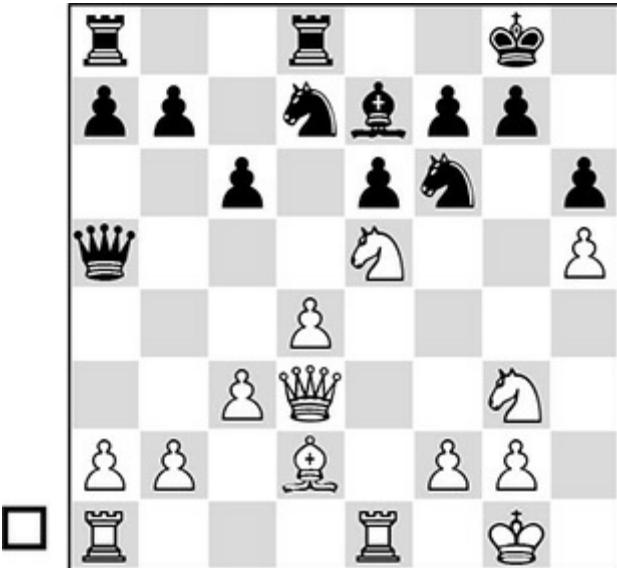
Joachim Solberg

2211

Uwe Arndt

2023

Helsingør 2016 (7)



Black has four kingside pawns that are unable to move and are therefore highly susceptible to piece sacrifices. White clearly understood the specific role of the different black pawns, as he was able to deliver the right sacrifices with the right timing.

17. ♜xf7!

White starts with the elimination of the f7-pawn. This important defender was not just supporting its colleague on e6, its main task was to prevent the white queen from entering the position.

17. ♜xh6 would have allowed Black to counter with 17... ♜xe5!.

17... ♜xf7 18. ♜g6+

You can imagine that in this particular position, e6 would have been a nice entrance square for the queen as well.

18... ♛g8

After 18... ♛f8, White finds the time to eliminate pawn number two with 19. ♜xe6 before he continues his attack. The e6-pawn is responsible for keeping both the white rook and knight at a safe distance.

19. ♜xh6

The white bishop is heading for g7 and collects an extra pawn on its way. With the elimination of h6, the white h-pawn will soon be able to join the attack as well.

19. ♜xe6 would now have been met with 19... ♜f8.

19... ♜f8



20. ♜xg7!

There goes pawn number three.

20... ♜xg7 21. h6! ♖e8 22. ♕xe6



The black king has become pawnless. With both the white rook and knight at striking distance, the battle will soon be over.

22... ♜df6

22... ♜f8 23. ♕xe8!.

23. ♕xf6 1-0

In conclusion, each of the black pawns had his own task:

- h6: blocking the white h-pawn;
- g7: protecting h6 and shielding the king;
- f7: covering e6 and g6;
- e6: keeping the e-file closed and controlling f5.

Many different sacrifices possible

These pawns can be eliminated with piece sacrifices. In this specific line, there are at least six (!) different ways to sacrifice a white knight, bishop or rook, and also many combinations are possible. To make sure we keep seeing the forest for the trees, we will split this chapter into three different categories:

- Sacrifices involving a knight on f5;
- Sacrifices involving a knight on e5;
- No knights involved: the ♜xh6 sacrifice.

The aim of this chapter

This chapter is about sacrificing one or more pieces in order to give your queen access to the enemy camp and deliver the mate. Studying it will enable you to identify the most vulnerable spot in your opponent's camp and finding the most convincing way to exploit it.

8.2 Knight on f5

If White wants to use the f5-square for bringing his knight to the attack, he has to use the following pin:



Black sometimes takes on f5, hoping that his control over the e4-square will compensate for the loss of his bishop. If he decides to ignore the knight, extreme care is required. The white knight went to f5 with a reason, as the following game demonstrates.

Game 96

Frederic Decoster

2145

René Tiggelman

2219

Belgium tt 2005/06 (1)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♗f5 5.♗g3 ♗g6 6.h4 h6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.h5 ♘h7 9.♘d3 ♘xd3 10.♗xd3 e6
11.♗f4 ♖a5+ 12.♗d2 ♖b4 13.c3 ♗e7 14.c4 ♖a6

The most popular choices are 14...♗c7 and 14...♗b6.



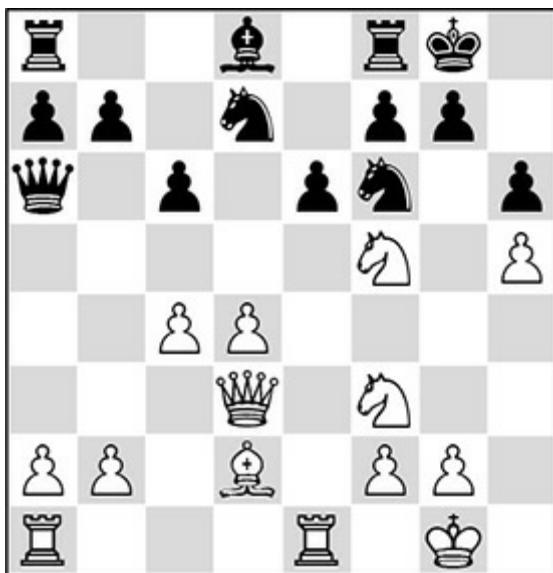
With the text move, Black wants to keep an eye on the a-pawn, preventing White from castling queenside. Without opposite-side castling, it should be harder for White to build up an attack. However, the queen does seem a bit out of play.

15.0-0 ♕gf6 16. ♖fe1 0-0

Both players have more or less finished their development and things seem to be alright for Black. However, appearances can be deceiving. White has a clear plan in mind: trying to take advantage of the stray queen on a6.

17. ♘f5! ♖fe8

Black did not like to allow a rook on the 7th rank. There was, however, no real choice. Taking the knight would have been the only way to stay out of trouble. 17... ♗d8 would not have helped either. Black is simply unable to defend without his queen.



analysis diagram

18. ♘xh6+! gxh6 19. ♘xh6 ♕e8 20. ♘e5! (allowing the queen to enter the stage via g3. The white pieces cooperate beautifully and Black needs too much time to organize his defence) 20... ♕xe5 21. dx e5 ♘g4 22. ♘g3 ♔h7 (White wins back his piece after 22... ♘xc4 23. ♘f4 with a winning position) 23. ♘xg4 ♔xh6 24. ♘f4+ (the queen is looking for the right square to enter the black position) 24... ♘g5 (24... ♘g7 25. ♖e3 is hopeless for Black) 25. ♖xf7 ♕g8 26. ♖xe6+ ♔g7 27. ♖ad1 with four pawns and a strong initiative for the piece. The black queen is still enjoying a sabbatical.



We have arrived at a crucial point in the game. It is time for White to show his cards. Once he starts sacrificing, there is no way back.

The main challenge is to grant the queen access to the black king's position, with g6 as the most promising entrance square. This means that both the g7- and the f7-pawns have to be eliminated. This is possible:

- The f-pawn is overloaded and could be lured away with $\mathbb{Q}xe6$;
- The g-pawn could be removed directly with $\mathbb{Q}xg7$, or lured away as well with either $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ or $\mathbb{Q}xh6$.

This brings us to two important questions:

- What is the right move order: should we start with the f7- or the g7-pawn?
- What is the most effective way to get rid of the g7-pawn?

If we combine the two questions into a concrete line, we get six (!) different possibilities. Which one should we take?

18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$!

The right move! White starts with the least forcing sacrifice and saves the more powerful ones for later. This makes a lot of sense. In the previous chapter, we already came to the conclusion that you should prevent your opponent from only accepting the first and rejecting the second sacrifice.

18. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ is rather unclear.

18...fxe6



The first question has been answered, leaving us with three options for the second one. What is the most effective way to eliminate the g-pawn?

19. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$?

This move has a large advantage compared to the other two: it lures the black king to the front, making it more vulnerable. 19. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$! loses for White and 19. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ only leads to a perpetual after 21. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$

A more stubborn defence would have been 19... $\mathbb{Q}f8$, even though White had too much compensation for the piece in the game Alexander van Beek-Speelman, Gibraltar 2007, after 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$.



20. ♜xh6+!

Three sacrifices in a row! Again, with force! This is why the king had to be lured to g7. A very thematic line, well worth remembering. White first removes all the black pawns on the kingside, after which his queen will have free rein.

20... ♕h8

This king feels much more comfortable on the back rank.

21. ♜g7+!

But this magnet pulls the king back to g7 to prepare the entrance of the white queen to g6 with tempo. It is very important to realize that time is much more important than material in this attack. White has already invested too much material to allow his opponent to organize a defence.

21... ♕g8 22. ♕g6 ♜xh5 23. ♜e5+

23. ♜f6+ ♔f8 24. ♜g5 would have been a quicker mate, but the text of course also wins.

23... ♔f8 24. ♕h6+ ♕g8 25. ♕h8+ 1-0

Note that in the final position, the queen still stands at a6.

The queen joins the defence

To get an idea of how much the black queen is missed in the defence of the king, we will now look at the same line, with a queen on c7 instead of a6. This does not stop 18. ♜xe6! from being a dangerous line, but this time Black has enough defenders at his disposal and should be able to hold the game.

Game 97

Harmen Jonkman

2470

Frank Kroeze

2419

Netherlands tt 2005/06 (8)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3. ♜d2 dxe4 4. ♜xe4 ♜f5 5. ♜g3 ♜g6 6.h4 h6 7. ♜f3 ♜d7 8.h5 ♜h7 9. ♜d3 ♜xd3 10. ♜xd3 e6 11. ♜f4 ♜a5+ 12. ♜d2 ♜b4 13.c3 ♜e7 14.0-0 ♜gf6 15.c4 ♜c7 16. ♜fe1 0-0 17. ♜f5 ♜fe8



18. ♜xe6 fxe6

In the game Rothuis-Abeln, Netherlands tt 2006/07, Black did not feel confident enough to allow the sacrifices and went for 18... ♛f8 19. ♜xe8 ♛xe8 20. ♜e1, after which White was simply a pawn up.

19. ♜xg7



19... ♛f8!

Also in this line this is the most stubborn defence. With the queen on c7, Black should also be able to hold in the line that arises after 19... ♜xg7. He has to be very precise though: 20. ♜xh6+ ♛h8 21. ♜g7+! (again, the standard procedure)

21... ♛g8! (the only move. He cannot allow the white queen to enter the stage with tempo after 21... ♛xg7?? 22. ♜g6+ ♛f8 23. ♜g5 and white wins) 22. ♜g6 ♛f8 23. ♜xf8+ ♛xf8 and here White went for a perpetual in Geske-Bravo Lutz, Schwäbisch Gmünd 2013. He could have tried 24. ♜g5.



analysis diagram

Now Black has to be careful:

A) The most logical move 24... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ loses. It is interesting to see that keeping the rooks connected is far more important than preserving the knight: 25.h6 $\mathbb{R}e7$ (suddenly the awkward position of the black bishop is being felt; 25... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 27.c5+ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 28. $\mathbb{B}g6$ also leads to a quick mate) 26. $\mathbb{B}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 28.h7. This would have been a draw with a bishop on d6 or b4, but now Black can answer 28... $\mathbb{R}g7$ with 29. $\mathbb{B}e8+!$;

B) Now Black knows what to do: keep the rooks connected! He can save the day with 24... $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ (or 24... $\mathbb{Q}b4$), for instance: 25. $\mathbb{B}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 26.h6 $\mathbb{R}e7!$ (Black's defence is fully organized, covering both the 7th and the back rank) 27. $\mathbb{B}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 28. $\mathbb{B}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ with a perpetual.

20. $\mathbb{B}xe8$

Already here a draw was agreed in Bobras-Hoffmann, Bad Wiessee 2007.

20... $\mathbb{R}xe8$



21. $\mathbb{R}e1$

21. $\mathbb{B}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}8h7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ would have been stronger, with a balanced position. After the text move, White no longer had sufficient compensation for the piece, but he managed to

equalize quickly:

21... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 23. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 24. $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 26. $gxh5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $a6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 31. $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

The double knight sacrifice

The aim of $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ is to clear the g6-square for the white queen. This can, however, also be achieved in a different way. Sometimes $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ can be successfully combined with sacrificing the other knight on f7, with the same result.

Game 98

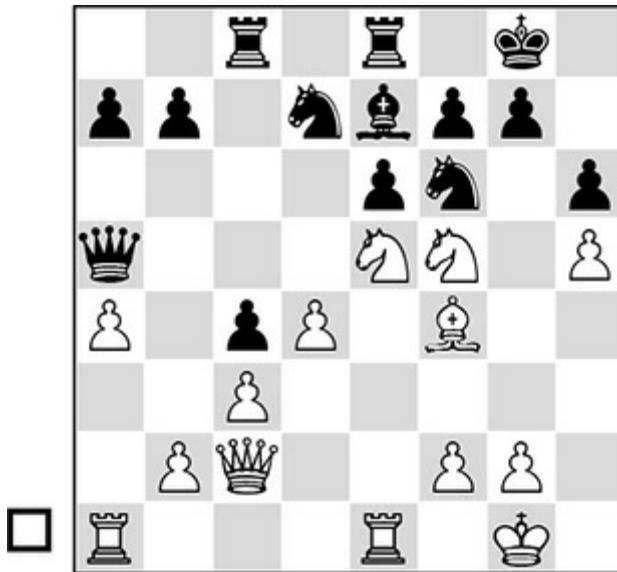
Nona Gaprindashvili

2405

Juraj Nikolac

2450

Wijk aan Zee 1979 (1)



19. $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$

19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ is easily refuted with 19... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$!.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

20... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e3$! (bring up your pieces!) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 22. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h5$! $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ with a winning attack.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$

Only now does White remove the important defender of the g6-square. With tempo!!

21... $\mathbb{Q}xh5$

There is no way back for the black king, and it should not come as a surprise that he will be mated quickly.

22. $g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 23. $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 1-0

Conclusion

It takes more than one piece sacrifice to both open up the king's position and clear the entrance square for your queen. This often leads to complex combinations in which the attacker has to keep the initiative and make sure his opponent is unable to organize his defence. The following guidelines are useful to remember:

- Save the most forcing sacrifices for last;
- Bring up your pieces with tempo;

- Time is more important than material;
- From a defensive point of view, we were once again witness of the strength of the 7th-rank technique. It does, however, only work when the queen is ready to step in.

8.3 Knight on e5

This last example in the previous section formed a nice bridge to the next topic: sacrifices with a knight on e5! These kind of positions are much more common than those with a knight on f5. There is a logical explanation for this. The knight on f5 is usually under attack by the black pawn on e6 and will therefore only be able to stay there for a short period of time. The knight on e5, on the other hand, has often found a very comfortable place in the centre, on which it can relax and wait until the time has come to sacrifice itself for the pawn on f7.

The ♜xf7 sacrifices are often a bit less complex than the ones we have seen in the previous section. When searching for these in the Mega Database, you can find lots of examples in which Black went astray and White could successfully play ♜xf7. Here are two very straightforward positions that don't require any further comments.



1. ♜xf7 ♛xf7 2. ♜xe6#



1. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 2. $\mathbb{N}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 3. $\mathbb{N}xe7+$

This chapter contains many ideas that you are already familiar with. It will again be about removing the pawns on f7 and g7 in order to allow the white queen to enter the stage. The f-pawn will most likely be eliminated by the move $\mathbb{Q}xf7$, and the move $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ usually takes care of the g-pawn. Move orders will again play a very important role, since Black can always decide to accept the first sacrifice and reject the second one. This becomes clear in the next example:

Game 99

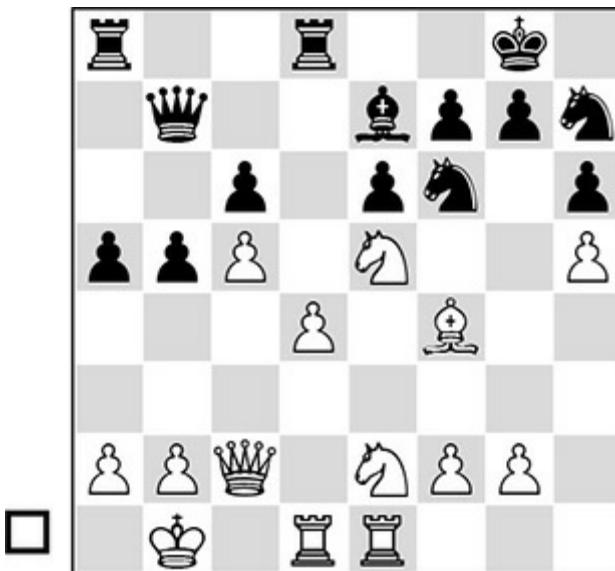
Petr Haba

2525

Zoltan Gyimesi

2610

Germany Bundesliga 2007/08 (12)



QUESTION: Should White start with 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ or with 23. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$?

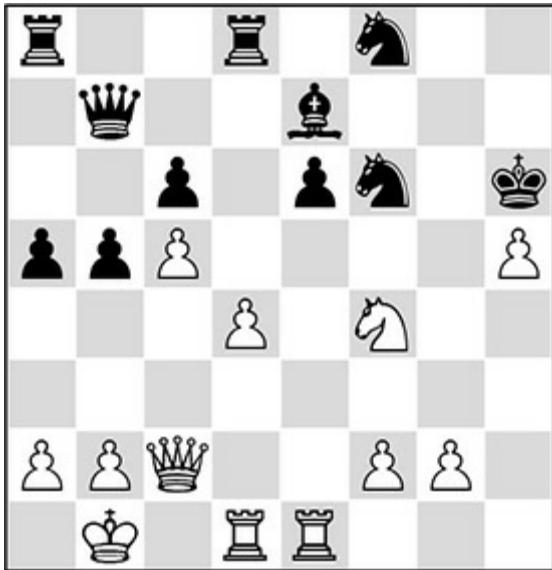
23. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$

The right choice! 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 24. $\mathbb{N}g6+$ (24. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$) 24... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{N}f7$ allows Black to defend successfully.

23... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

24... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ would only make things worse: 25. $\mathbb{N}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

25. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$



27. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$

Eliminating the last defending pawn. The black pieces are completely uncoordinated and White decides the game convincingly.

27... $\mathbb{Q}6h7$ 28. $\mathbb{R}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 29. $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}fh7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 38. $g4+$ 1-0

The queen enters the 7th rank

The main aim of the $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ sacrifice is to remove the defender of the important g6-square. There is, however, another way to do so. This was experienced by the Dutch Grandmaster Sipke Ernst in the C-group of the Corus Tournament in Wijk aan Zee in 2004. He had played a fantastic tournament. With already enough points for a GM-norm he had to play the 14-year old (and even younger looking) Magnus Carlsen. Ernst was confronted with a line that looked quite innocent at first sight. However, things went very wrong shortly.

Game 100

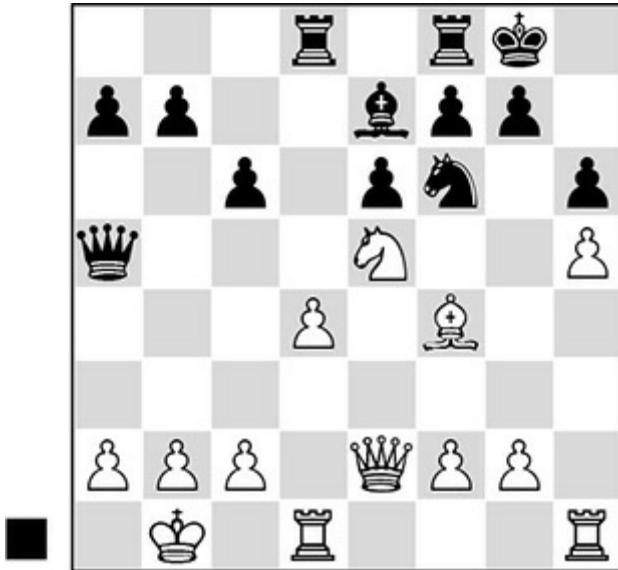
Magnus Carlsen

2484

Sipke Ernst

2474

Wijk aan Zee 2004 (12)



White just played 17. ♔d3-e2. In 2004, this was a very relevant position from a theoretical point of view. Black's best option would be 17... ♕b6, to keep an eye on b2 and, in some occasions, facilitate the useful zwischenzug ... ♘a3. Black, however, went for the less promising

17...c5

Magnus showed no hesitation:

18. ♘g6! fxg6

Ernst soon regretted his decision to accept the sacrifice. The best reply would have been 18... ♕fe8 19. ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 20. dxс5 with an advantage for White.

19. ♕xe6+ ♔h8 20. hxg6 ♘g8



At first sight it looks as if Black should be able to hold this position. This is, however, far from true. In fact, White is completely winning. The black pieces lack coordination and White is soon going to launch a crushing attack.

21. ♘xh6! gxh6 22. ♕xh6+! ♘xh6 23. ♔xe7

The black kingside has open wounds on both the 7th rank and the h-file, which makes it almost impossible to defend.

23... ♘f7 24. gx f7!

From now on the black king is on its own, and it will be an easy target for the white queen and rook. It is

instructive to see how well those two can cooperate in checkmating the enemy king.

24... ♜g7

24... ♜b6 25. ♜e5+ ♛h7 26. ♜h1+ would not have helped either.

25. ♜d3

The rook is lifted towards the king.

25... ♜d6

25... ♜b6 26. ♜g3+ ♜g6 27. ♜xg6+ ♛xg6 28. d5 is also completely winning.

26. ♜g3+ ♜g6 27. ♜e5+ ♛xf7 28. ♜f5+ ♜f6 29. ♜d7# 1-0

Conclusion

The ♛xf7 sacrifice is a very common way to clear both the g6 and e6 entrance squares for the queen. If White directs his queen to g6, we get lines that are very similar to the ones we discussed in the previous chapter. Carlsen showed us how the e6 entrance square has its merits as well. He opened both the 7th rank and the h-file and developed an irresistible attack from two different directions.

8.4 No knights involved

After having witnessed half a dozen convincing knight sacrifices, you might understand how tempting it can be to simply swap those knights off. However, I have to warn you. This can be very dangerous. White will recapture with a pawn and try to start a very dangerous attack on your king.

Game 101

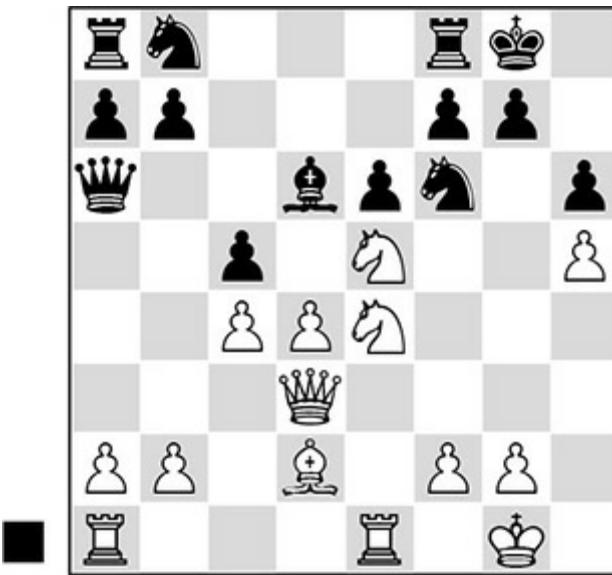
Irisberto Herrera

2475

Julio Becerra Rivero

2545

Las Tunas ch-CUB 1996 (13)



This is a very standard set-up in this variation. White has manoeuvred both knights towards the centre and is aiming for a powerful attack. Black was probably a bit intimidated by the cavalry and decided to swap off both of them.

16... ♜xe5

A risky move. White will recapture with his pawn, allowing it to get a firm hold on the centre. It is already very hard for Black to defend himself. The most natural reply would have been putting pressure on the centre

with 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ cxd4 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ with a balanced position.

17.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

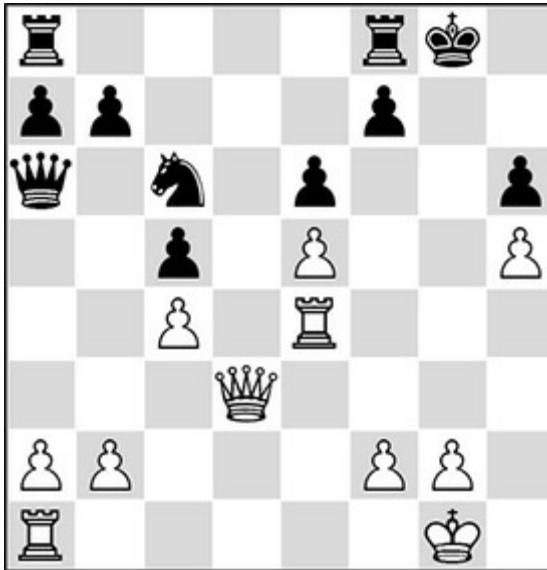


19. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$

White shows no hesitation. This move should not come as a surprise by now. However, things are different without minor pieces on the board. This game is a very elegant demonstration of the brute force of the queen and rook combination. All they need is a few lines and files and it seems like mating the king goes all by itself.

19...f5

Unfortunately, Black does not allow his opponent to finish the game with a very instructional mating attack. This would have happened if he went for 19...gxh6



analysis diagram

20. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ and now White has two different roads to a brilliancy prize nomination:

A) 21. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$. The queen is beginning the so-called ‘staircase’ manoeuvre. A very elegant way to bring up the most important attacker with tempo! 21... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ White has managed to direct the queen from d3 to f6, without allowing his opponent to move a single piece. A quick mate is now

unavoidable: 24... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{N}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 27. $hxg6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$;

B) I like 21. $\mathbb{N}d2$ even better: 21... $\mathbb{Q}h7$



analysis diagram

22. $\mathbb{Q}g6!$ $fxg6$ 23. $\mathbb{N}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24. $hxg6$ Remember this one? If not: check the Hein-Figura game in Chapter 2. Note that Carlsen created a similar pattern in his game against Ernst in the previous section.

The text move did not help Black either.

20. $exf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 22. $\mathbb{N}d7$

The queen and rook are at their best if they can combine play on an open file with play on the seventh rank. In the meantime, the black pieces are poorly coordinated.

22... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 23. $h6!$



It is almost impossible to defend when you are under attack from two sides.

23... $g5$ 24. $\mathbb{N}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25. $\mathbb{N}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 26. $\mathbb{N}g6+$ 1-0

Conclusion

It can be very tempting to get rid of the centralized white knights and avoid the dangerous double or triple piece sacrifices we saw earlier in this chapter. Swapping off the knights is, however, not without risk either.

White can recapture with his pawn and use his central dominance to launch an attack with his major pieces.

8.5 Defending techniques

We have seen quite a few examples in which White managed to develop a convincing attack. In the worst case, he had to settle for a draw by perpetual. Luckily for Black, things are not always this clear. There are lots of examples in which White is a bit overexcited, receiving some compensation for the piece(s) but then going down anyway. I want to show you three examples from which black players can build some confidence. They show the following defensive techniques that we are already familiar with:

1. Evacuation of the king;
2. Bring up defenders;
3. Controlling the centre.

8.5.1 Evacuation of the king

We will first look at a complete game. Note how Black first manages to fend off the white attack with active play. Afterwards, he refutes the pieces sacrifice by successfully evacuating his king.

Game 102

Claire Marchadour

2127

Pierre Theon

2214

France tt 2002 (1)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♜f5 5.♘g3 ♜g6 6.h4 h6 7.h5 ♜h7 8.f4

An ambitious approach!

8...e6 9.♘f3 ♜f6 10.♘d3 ♜xd3 11.♘xd3 ♜c7 12.♘d2



12...♘e7

12...♘d6, immediately challenging f4, would have been the best continuation.

13.0-0-0 c5

Opening the position is in Black's favour, since that would make it harder for White to execute an attack. Black aims to exchange a few pieces in order to take advantage of the weakened white kingside pawns.

14.♘e5 cxd4 15.♘xd4 0-0 16.♘e4!

White correctly directs her knight to the battlefield and brings the option of g2-g4 into the position.

16...♞c8 17.♞c3

A better way of preventing mate would have been 17.♞c3, since the knight is needed for the attack.

17...b5



Black plays aggressively as well. As long as he manages to keep White busy on the queenside, he does not have to worry about her attack!

18.♝d3 b4 19.♝b5 ♜b6 20.♝d4 ♜a6

20...♝bd7 would have been the most natural square for the knight. If Black manages to neutralize the important knight on e5, he will be clearly better.

21.♝b3

A bit too careful. Instead of taking defensive measures, she should have accelerated her own attack with 21.f5! ♜c5 22.♝f3 with a very double-edged position.

21...♜c5 22.♝xc5 ♜xc5 23.♝b1 ♜d5

Black has managed to manoeuvre all of his pieces to the right squares and now has a very nice advantage. White most likely realized there was no time to waste and started a brave attempt to revive her attack.

24.♝h3 ♜c7 25.♝g3 ♜ac8



26. ♜xf7!

The last chance to put pressure on the black position. Even though the sacrifice is not winning, it is by far the best attempt. 26. ♜c1 ♜f6 would have given Black a simple and risk-free attack.

26... ♜xf7 27. ♜g6+ ♜f8 28. ♜xg7+ ♜e8 29. ♜g6+ ♜d7

Up to this point the moves have been more or less forced. Black has managed to evacuate his king to the queenside and has a clear advantage. However, White already had a difficult position four moves ago and sacrificing the knight was therefore the most practical decision.

30. ♜e3

After 30. ♜c1, White would still have had something to play for, for instance by grabbing h6 and pushing the h-pawn. The text move, however, enables Black to exchange queens and liquidate into a winning ending.

30... ♜xc2+ 31. ♜xc2 ♜xc2 32. f5 ♜f6 33. ♜c1 ♜e7 34. ♜gd3 ♜b6 35. fxe6 ♜xe6 36. ♜e1+ ♜f7 37. ♜f3 ♜8c6
38. ♜ef1 ♜xg2 39. b3 ♜d5 40. ♜xh6 ♜b2+ 0-1

8.5.2 Bring in defenders

In the second example, Black simply has too many defenders at his disposal for his opponent's piece sacrifice to be successful.

Game 103

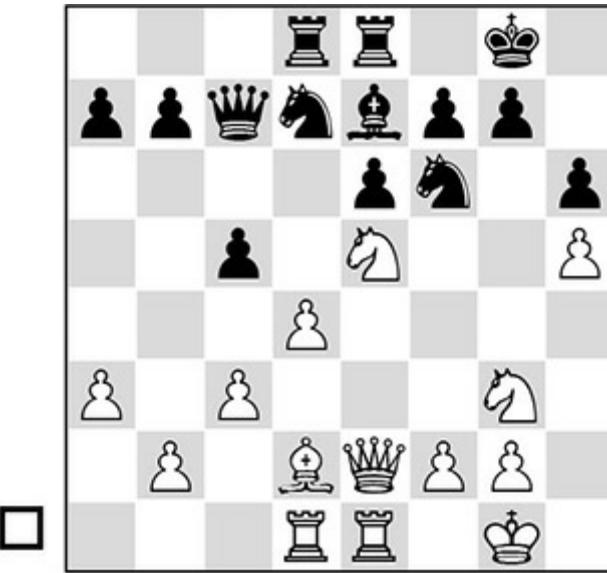
Miguel Navarro Cia

2338

Fernando Peralta

2563

Andorra 2007 (2)



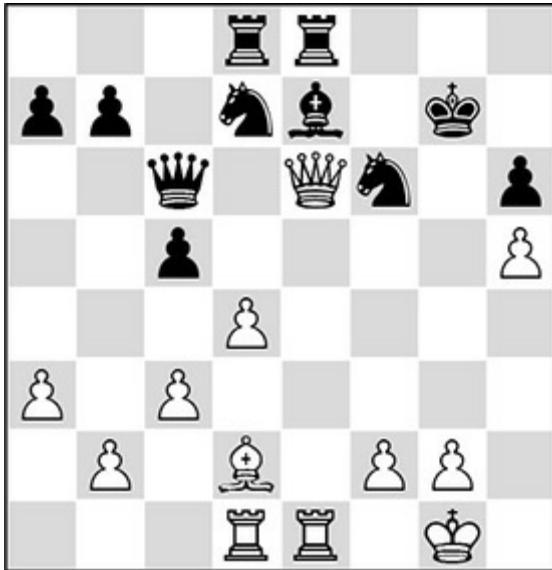
20. ♜xf7 ♜xf7 21. ♜xe6+ ♜f8 22. ♜f5

This is the standard follow-up after the ♜xf7 and ♜xe6+ combination. White threatens to take on h6 with either the knight or the bishop and ♜f4 is a threat as well. However, he won't get time for any of this. Black will immediately try to exchange queens, which would suddenly remove the sting out of the white attack.

22... ♜c6 23. ♜xg7

A desperate attempt, but White was already in trouble. He cannot prevent the black queen from neutralizing all the threats. For instance, 23. ♜a2 ♜d5! 24. ♜b1 ♜f7 promises a large advantage for Black, and 23. ♜e3 ♜d6 24. ♜h3 ♜g8 has the same evaluation. White has a hard time directing his pieces to the right squares.

23... ♜xg7



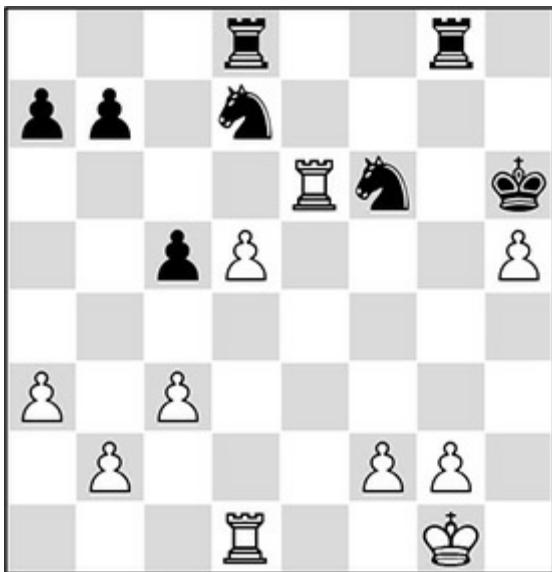
24. ♜xh6+

We know this sacrificing scheme by now and have seen a few very convincing victories with it. In this case, however, White does not have any pieces left that could back up his queen. Black, on the other hand, has no less than six (!) defenders at his disposal.

24... ♕xh6 25. ♔f7 ♖g8

With three extra pieces, one can easily sacrifice one in order to force a trade of queens.

26.d5 ♘d6 27. ♕xe7 ♕e5 28. ♘e6 ♕xe6 29. ♕xe6 ♕ed7



The two knights are of course much stronger than the four pawns. Black is winning easily.

30.f3 ♕xh5 31.g4+ ♕g5 32. ♔f2 ♕f4 33.b4 ♖h8 34. ♕g2 b6 35.c4 ♖h7 36. ♖g1 ♖dh8 0-1

8.5.3 Controlling the centre

In the introduction to Part III, Anand demonstrated how central play can be a powerful defensive tool. Chess always looks simple if you click through the games of great players like Anand. Finding yourself in the driver's seat (without an engine!) is, of course, a completely different story.

Anand followed the adage 'Under attack on a wing? React in the centre!'. Chess wisdoms like this can be helpful guidelines that point you in the right direction. They are, however, rather useless if you are unable to apply them correctly in a practical game.

Take for instance the following position.

Game 104

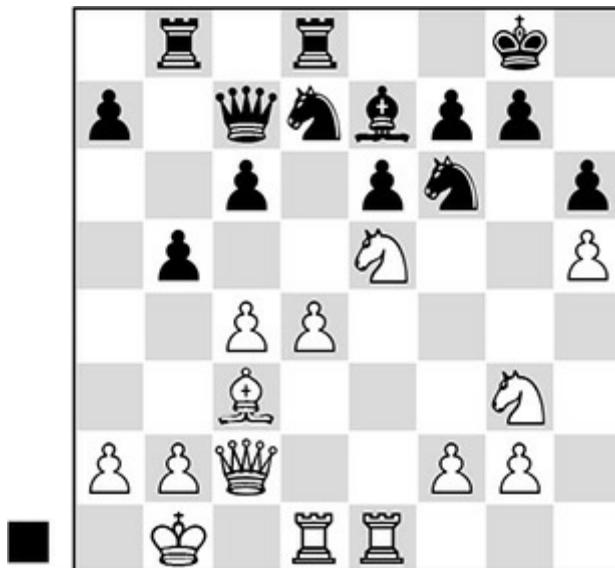
Jiri Lhotka

2082

Alexandre Belsley

1842

Prague Ech U18 2012 (7)



White is building up an attack and Black has taken the right preparations to react in the centre. But how should he continue? What is the right move to quell the white attack?

He went for the thematic

20...c5

However, this move fails to keep the white pieces at a distance. On the contrary, White does not hesitate and launches a deadly attack.

21.♘xf7! ♕xf7 22.♗g6+ ♔g8

22...♔f8 23.♖xe6! or 23.d5!, both followed by a quick ♘f5, is also rather hopeless.

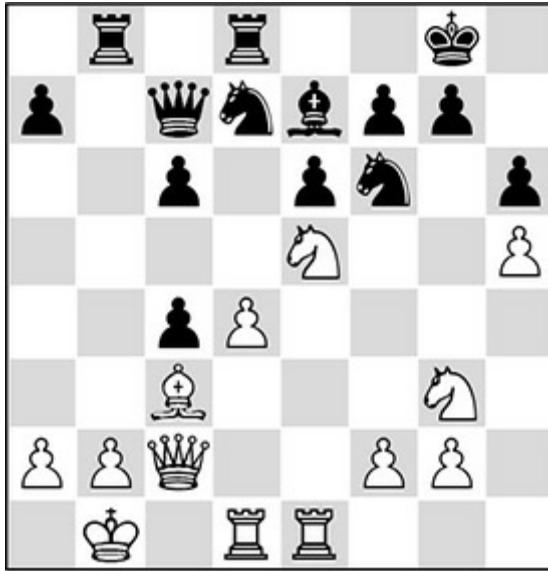


23. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 25. $d5!$ $b4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 1-0

A tough defeat for Black. It is a fate that every Caro-Kann player has to undergo every now and then. The stakes are always high for a defender, since a single move can turn a promising position into a complete disaster.

Black's position was very promising in our starting position. He had rightly pushed his pawn to b5, attacking the white c-pawn. The aim is not just to open up the b-file, but also to acquire the control of the important d5-square in order to optimize the defence. This leads us to the right reaction in the centre:

20... $bxc4!$



A normal move like 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ would allow Black to control all the important squares with 21... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ and get a very comfortable game. But what happens if White persists and goes for the sacrifice anyway?

21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$



23... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

24. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5!$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ puts an end to the white attack as well.

24... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$

The white pieces have been expelled and Black can start an attack himself. Mission accomplished!

Conclusion

We have seen quite a few convincing piece sacrifices in this chapter, but of course the attacker does not always prevail.

Defending is never easy. Here are three guidelines that can help you find the right moves:

- If the attack cannot be neutralized, always consider the evacuation of your king to a safer part of the board;
- Make sure you always have enough defenders at hand;
- Fight for the control of the important central squares (especially d5!!).

8.6 FLASH CARDS



Entering technique 1: eliminate the f7-pawn

g6 is the most common entrance square for the queen and a well-timed 17.♕xf7! is the standard way to clear it. 17...♕xf7 18.♖g6+ ♕g8 19.♕xh6 ♖f8 brings us to flash card number 2.



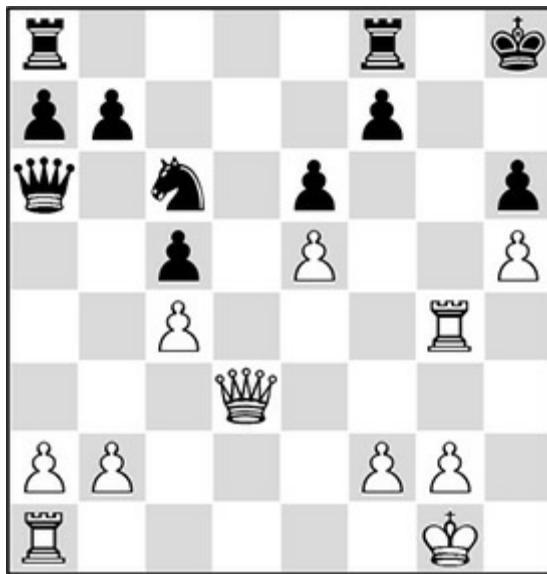
Entering technique 2: eliminate the g7-pawn

Bringing the queen up to the attack is not always enough. We need access to the king as well. The pseudo-sacrifice 20.♕xg7! is worth remembering. White won after 20...♕xg7 21.h6! ♕e8 22.♕xe6.



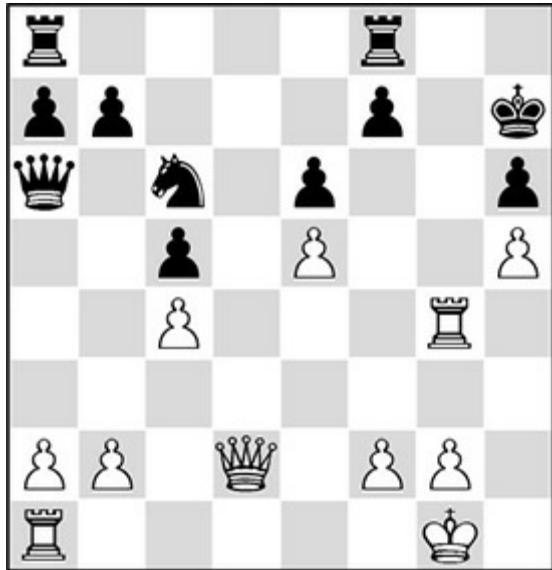
Entering technique 3: attack from two sides

Remember how Carlsen successfully combined an attack along both rank and file. Black is a rook and a piece up, but lost quickly after 23... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 24. $\mathbb{g}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{R}d3$ $\mathbb{R}d6$ 26. $\mathbb{R}g3+$ $\mathbb{R}g6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{R}f6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d7\#$.



Entering technique 4: the staircase

A very elegant way to bring up your queen to the attack with tempo is the so-called staircase manoeuvre:
 21. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{R}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26. $\mathbb{R}g6!$ $\mathbb{R}xg6$ 27. $\mathbb{hxg6}$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$.

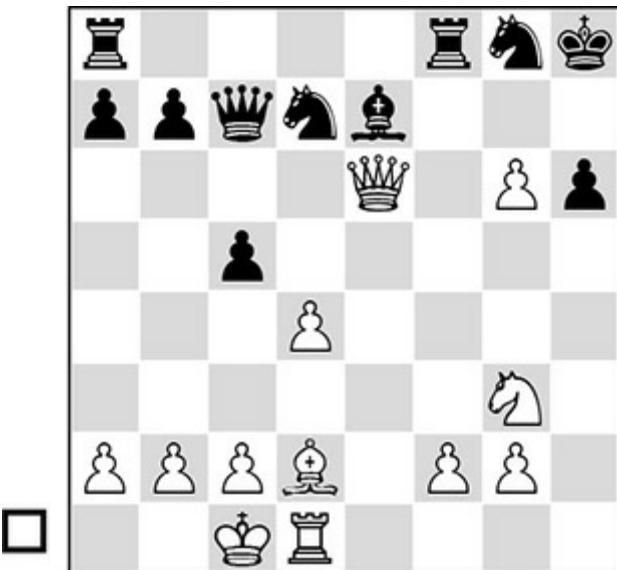


Entering technique 5: the sneaky 7th rank

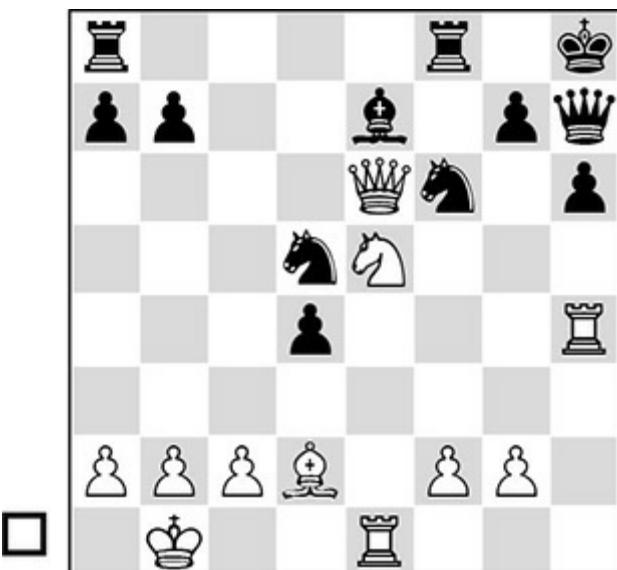
Sometimes you can deflect your opponent by entering from the side instead of using the front door. White wins after the beautiful 22. $\mathbb{R}g6!$ $f \times g6$ 23. $\mathbb{N}d7+$ $\mathbb{K}g8$ 24. $h \times g6$.

Exercises – Attack

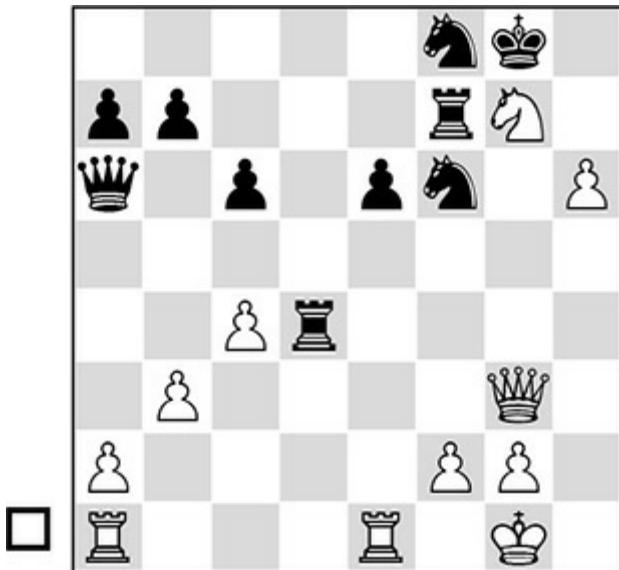
Solution 8.1



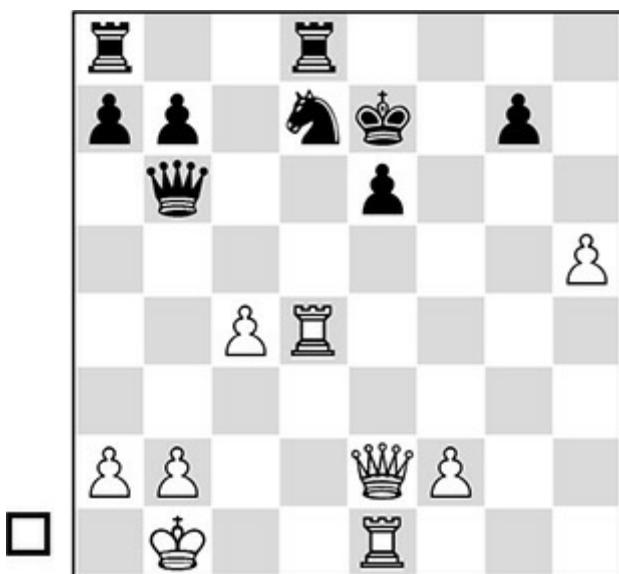
Solution 8.2



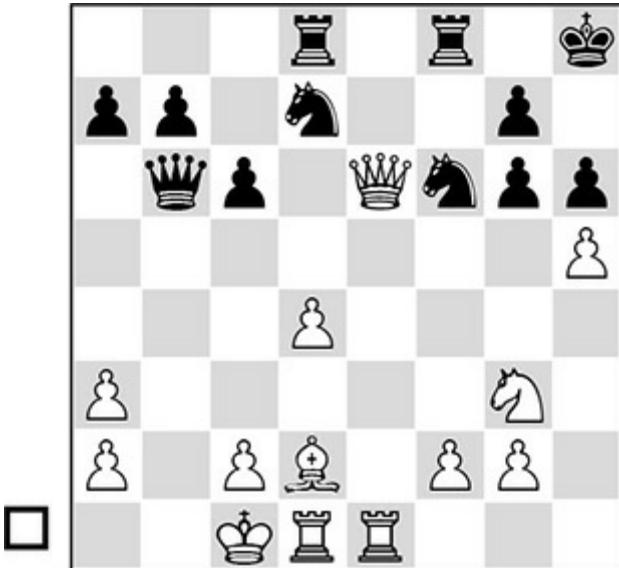
Solution 8.3



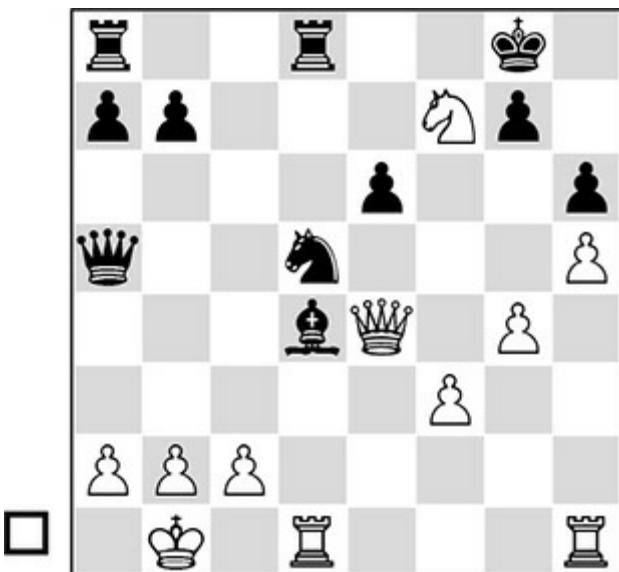
Solution 8.4



Solution 8.5

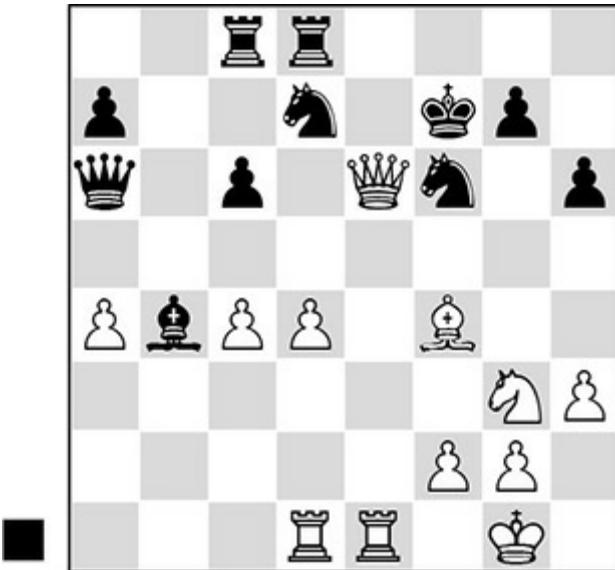


Solution 8.6

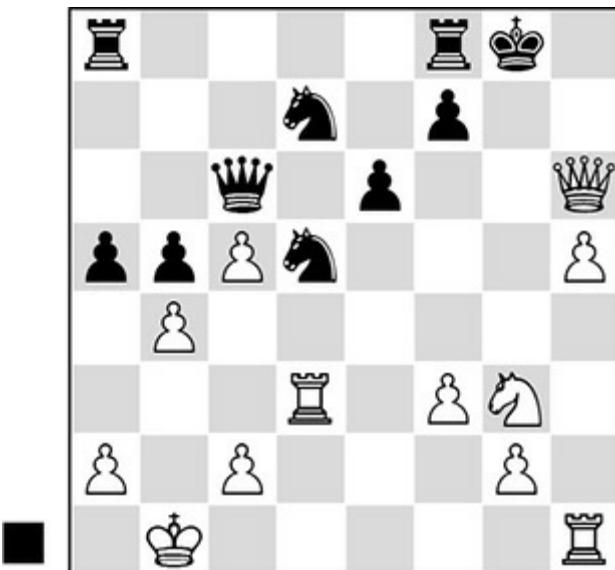


Defend

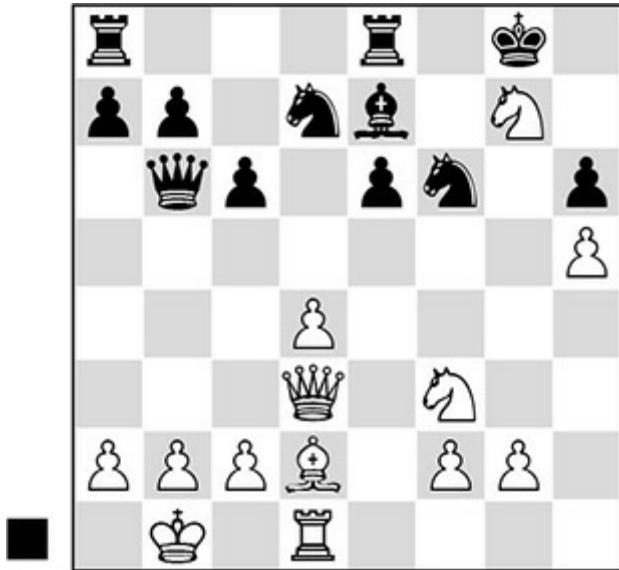
Solution 8.7



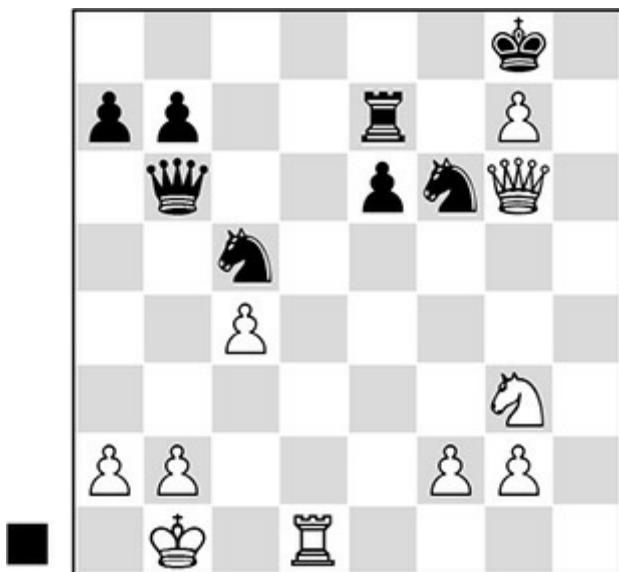
Solution 8.8



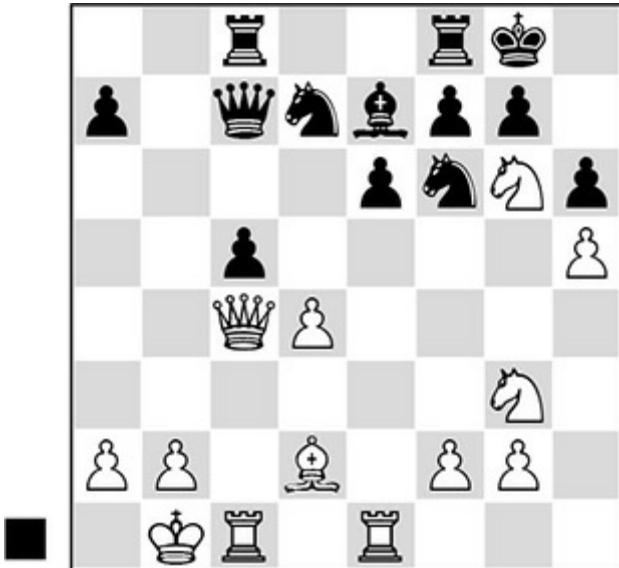
Solution 8.9



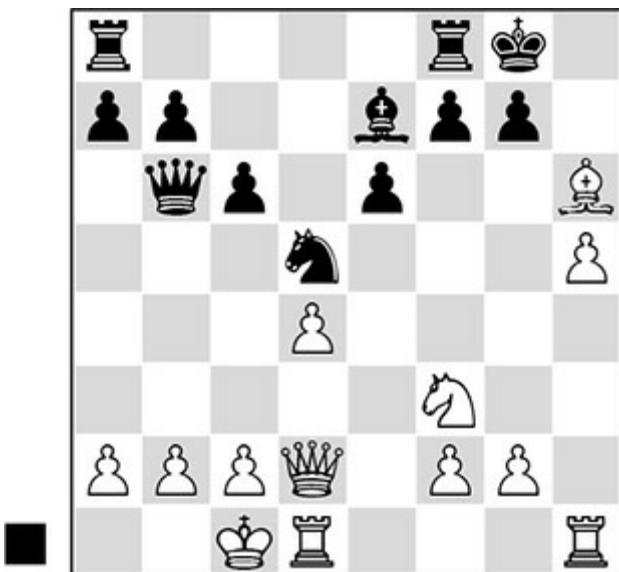
Solution 8.10



Solution 8.11



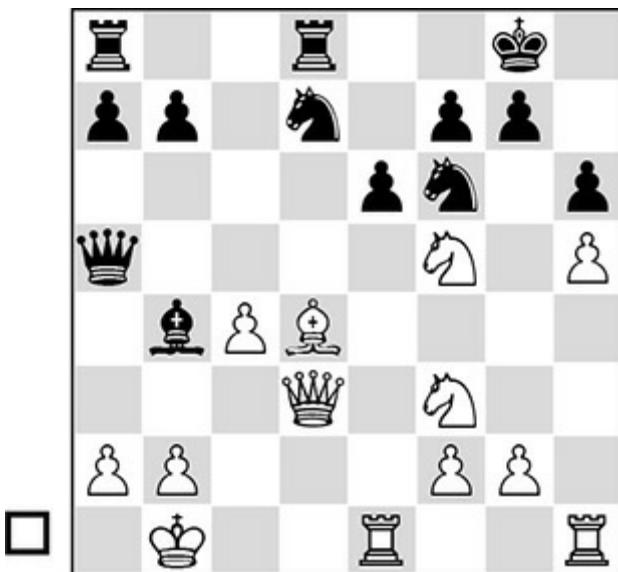
Solution 8.12



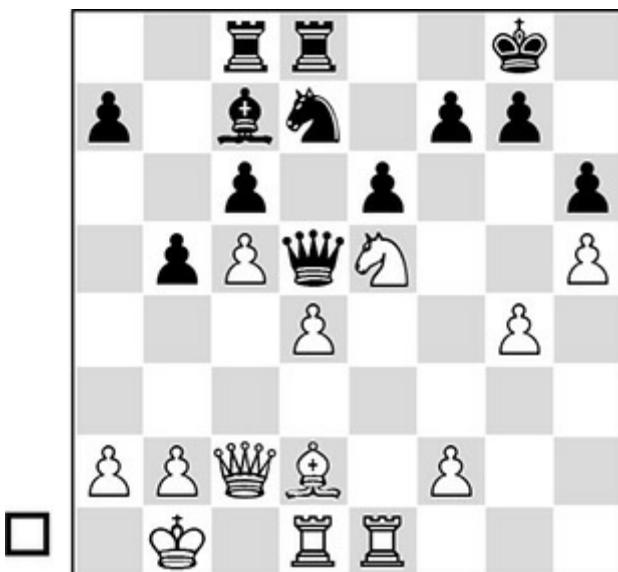
How should Black bring the queen to the defence?

The right sacrifice

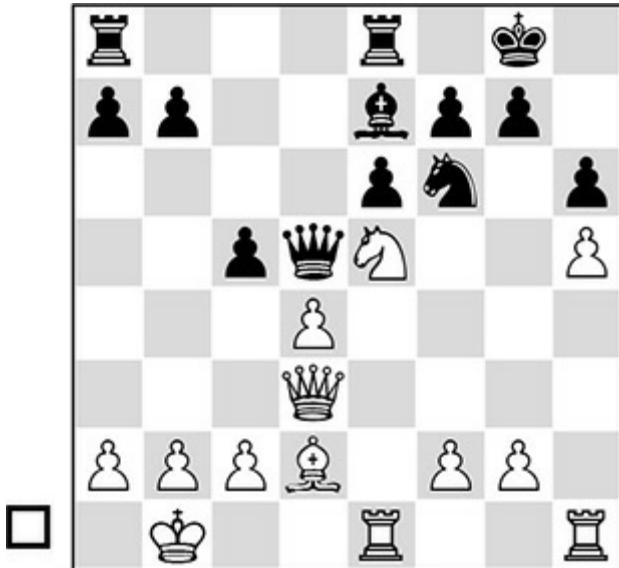
Solution 8.13



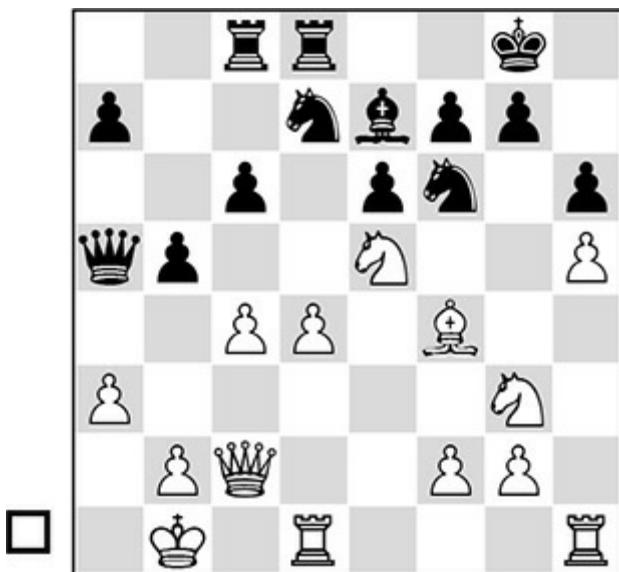
Solution 8.14



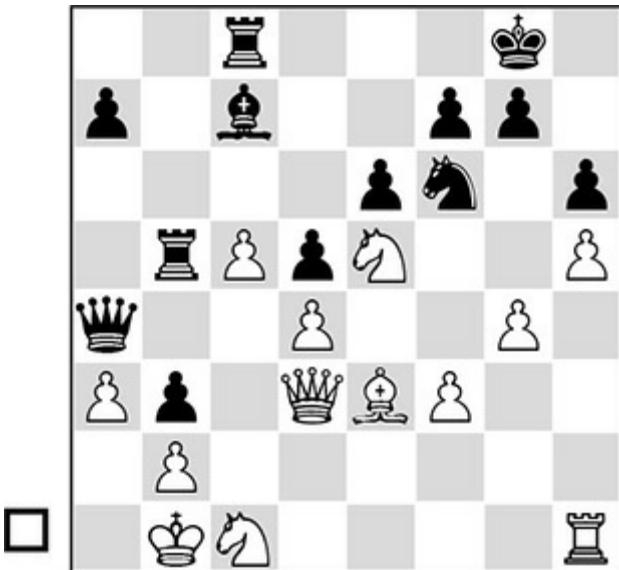
Solution 8.15



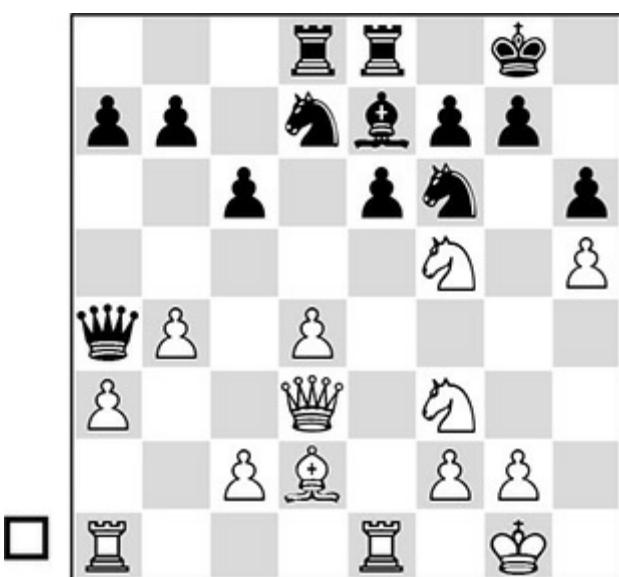
Solution 8.16



Solution 8.17

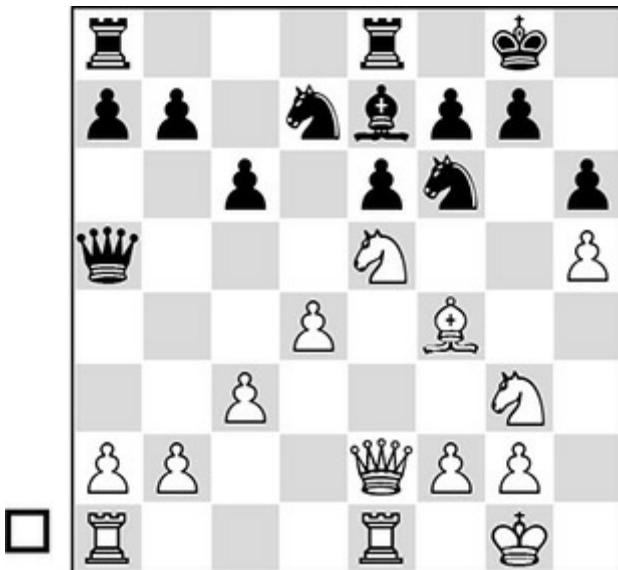


Solution 8.18

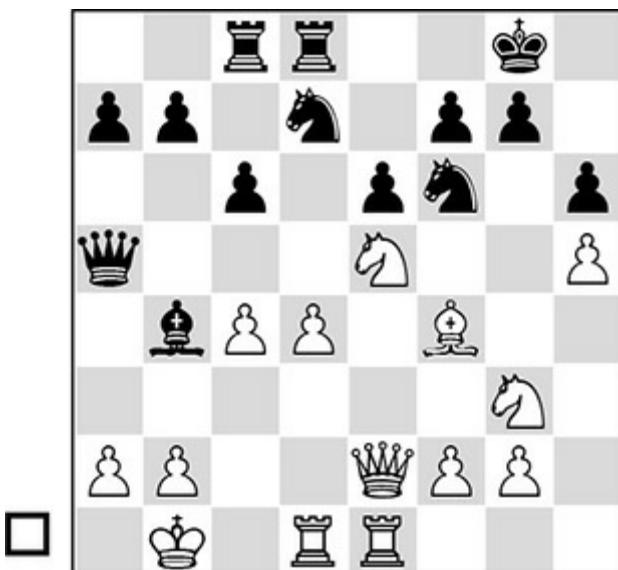


Sacrificing: yes or no? – 1

Solution 8.19



Solution 8.20



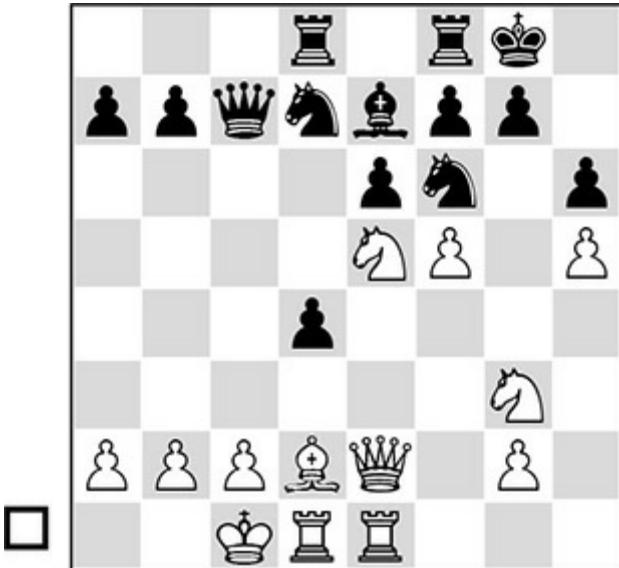
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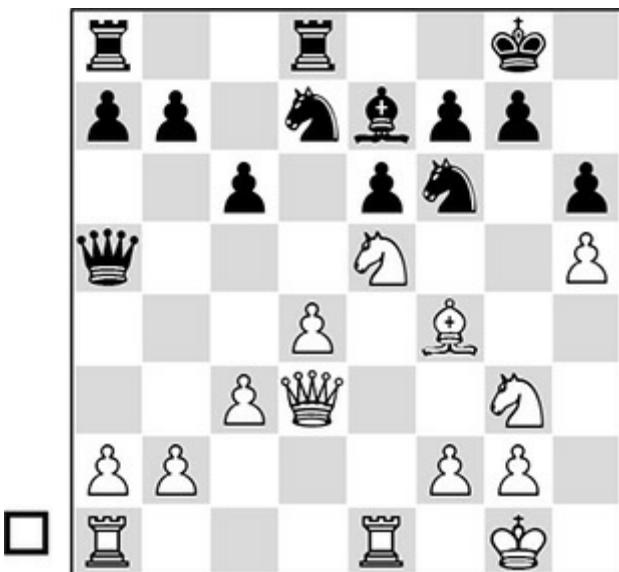
Solution 8.22



Solution 8.23

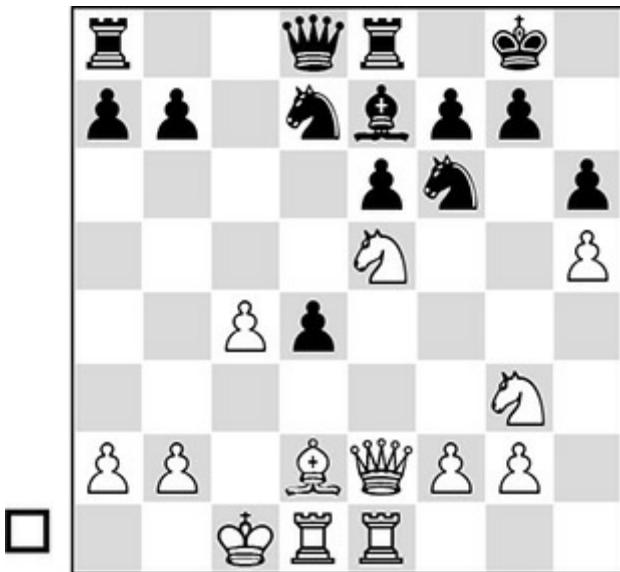


Solution 8.24

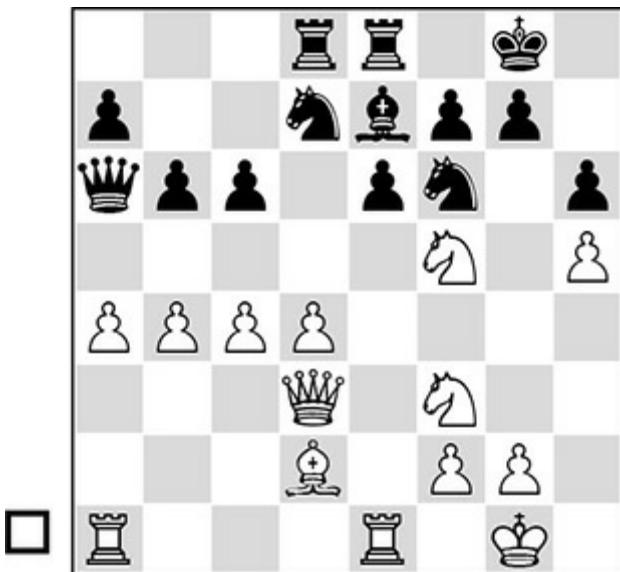


Sacrificing: yes or no? – 2

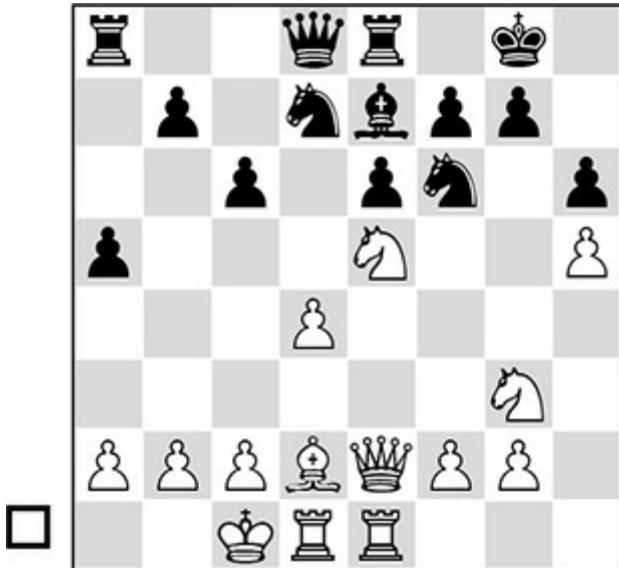
Solution 8.25



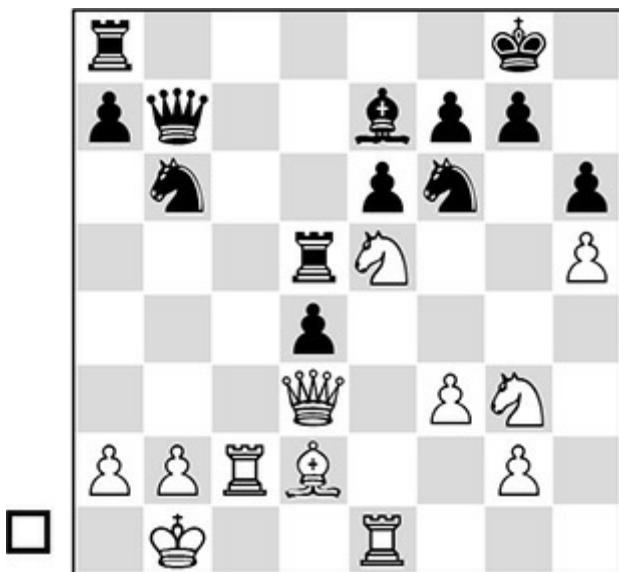
Solution 8.26



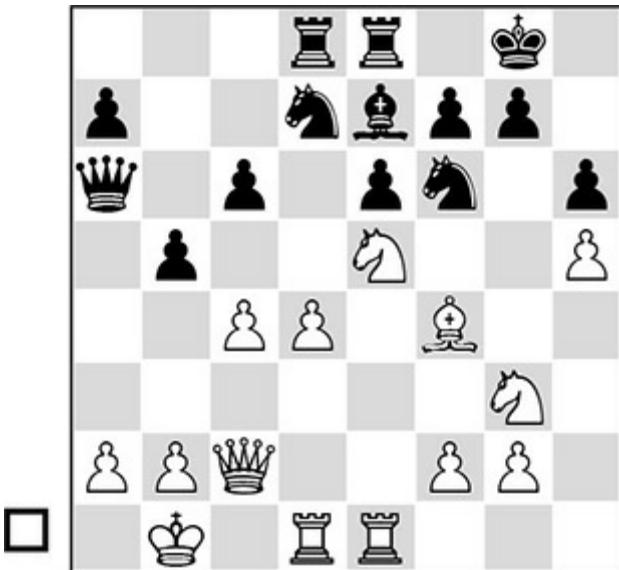
Solution 8.27



Solution 8.28

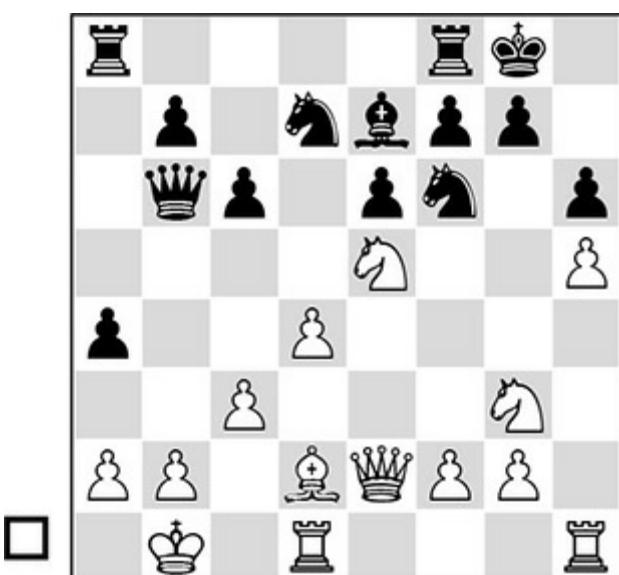


Solution 8.29



□

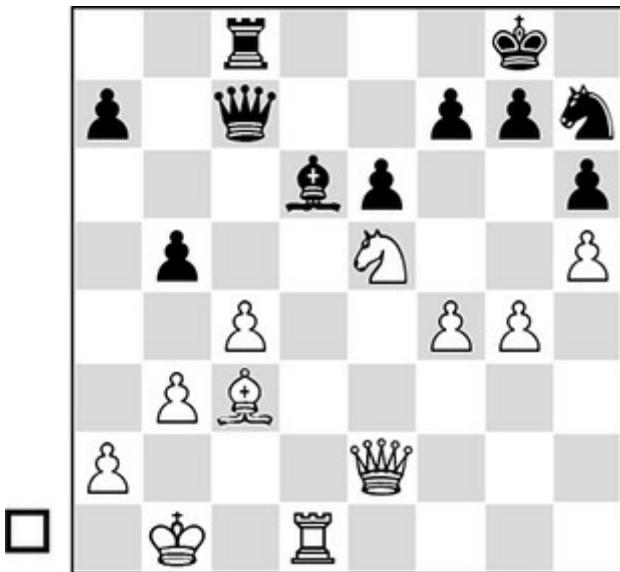
Solution 8.30



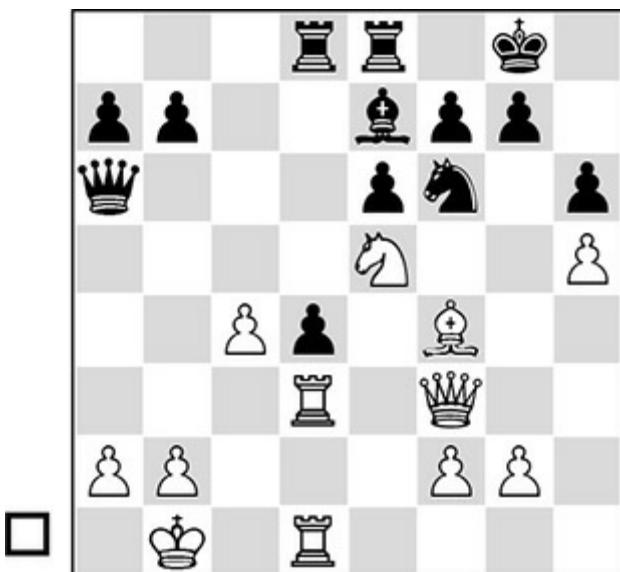
□

Sacrificing: yes or no? – 3

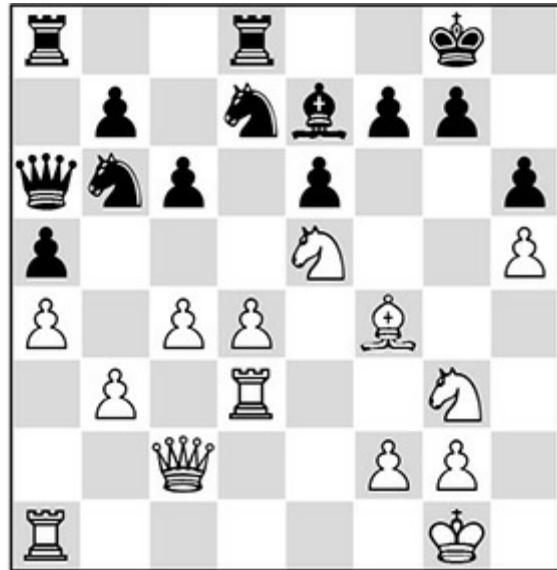
Solution 8.31



Solution 8.32



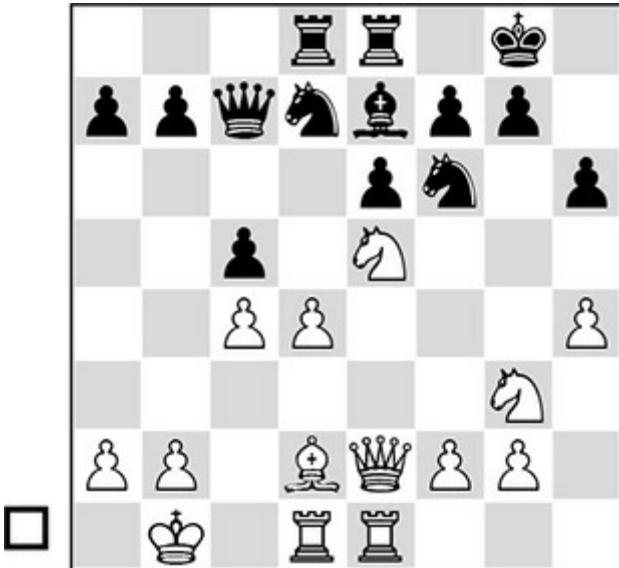
Solution 8.33



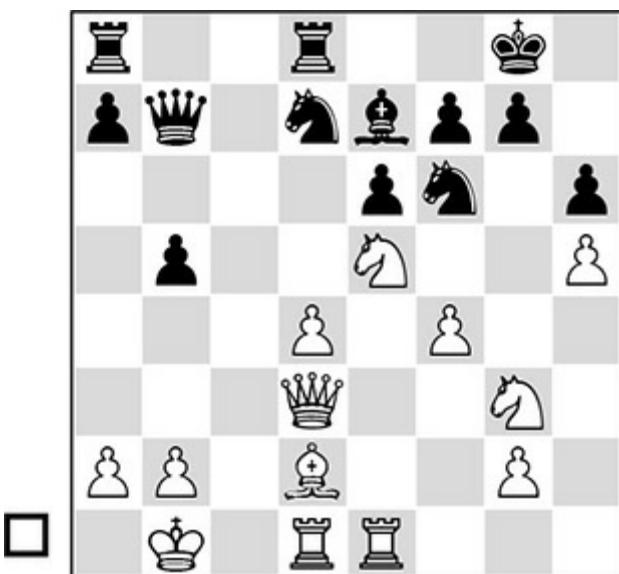
Solution 8.34



Solution 8.35



Solution 8.36



PART IV

Getting ready to use your new tools

Introduction

We have arrived at the final and most important part of this book. In the previous eight chapters, you were able to load your toolbox with important techniques like simplification, conquering the open file and finding the right entrance square for mating the king. It is now time to employ our entire toolbox and see if everything has been put at the right place.

For this final stage, I want to call in the help of an old friend: **The Isolated Queen's Pawn (IQP)**. After a short introduction, I will explain why the IQP is such an important topic to study and how it is going to help us to employ our new tools in our games.

Isolated Queen's Pawn

Positions with an IQP can present themselves in many forms and shapes. To keep things as simple as possible, we will exclusively focus on the following structure, pretending as if White is always the one with the IQP:



A few important characteristics are already visible. Black has a slightly nicer structure, whereas White has a space advantage and therefore often the more active pieces. We are going to see a dynamic fight in which White tries to develop an initiative and Black wants to keep things under control and take advantage of the potential weakness of the d-pawn in the long run.

Improve your chess with the IQP

The clash between **structure** and **initiative** is what makes the IQP structure so interesting. Both sides need to master a wide array of techniques in order to play these positions well. White needs strong **attacking skills** to turn his space advantage into a dangerous initiative. In response, Black has to **defend** very carefully and might want to **exchange minor pieces** in order to highlight the potential weakness of the IQP in an ending. Both sides have to understand how to cope with the **open c-file** and the semi-open files.

All these underlying techniques make the IQP a very important topic to study. Even if your opening repertoire leaves little room for this specific structure, your results will certainly improve if you master these important techniques.

Getting ready to use your new tools

And this is where I have good news for you. If you have invested enough time in the first eight chapters of this book, you already have the most important techniques for playing with an IQP in your Toolbox! In the final part of this book, we are going to wrap up all the skills we have gathered so far and practice them once again in the context of the Isolated Queen's Pawn.

This part consists of two chapters. They both cover the fascinating IQP battle from their own perspective:

Chapter 9: Winning with the IQP

Chapter 10: Fighting the IQP

CHAPTER 9

Winning with the IQP

9.1 Introduction

We start this chapter with a model game from White's perspective. Watch how Danielian uses her space advantage to build up a promising attack.

Game 106

Elina Danielian

2475

Bela Khotenashvili

2531

Dilijan W 2013 (10)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e3 ♘f6 5.♘d3 c5 6.♘f3 cxd4 7.exd4 dxc4 8.♘xc4



After a slightly odd move order, we have arrived at an IQP pawn structure in the Nimzo-Indian Rubinstein Variation.

8...0-0 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.♗e1 ♘b6 11.♗b3 ♘bd5

Black puts all her cards on the blockade of the d-pawn. This is a logical plan, but not one without risk. Without any pressure on the d-pawn, White will be free to develop her pieces to their most promising squares.

12.♘d3 ♘e7 13.a3 b6 14.♗c2 a6 15.♗e5 ♘b7 16.♗h3 ♘d6



Most of the white pieces have just arrived at their favourable squares. The knight has a comfortable outpost close to the black king and the long-range pieces have found a spot at a safe distance, pointing their arms at the most vulnerable black pawns. The next step is to provoke the first real weakness in the black camp. This is where our exchanging skills come in handy. The knight on f6 is the main defender of the crucial h7-square and needs to be dismantled.

17.♘xd5!

White knows exactly what she is doing. First she eliminates the piece that is responsible for defending the most important defender.

17...♝xd5 18.♝g5

Next, she goes after the crucial knight itself.

18...♜fc8 19.♝d3 g6

This move removes the pressure from h7 and releases the knight from its duty. Unfortunately, the g-pawn is now going to be a target itself!

19...h6 would only have made things worse: 20.♝xh6 gxh6 21.♝xh6, followed by a deadly ♜e1-e3-g3.

20.♝h4! ♜d8 21.♜e3

Black is completely paralysed and has to watch how her opponent steadily directs more pieces to her king.

21...♜a7 22.♝f4!

Well played! With this renewed pin, the knight is still unable to move.

22...♛g7 23.♜h3

♝xf7 is already in the air.

23...♚g8



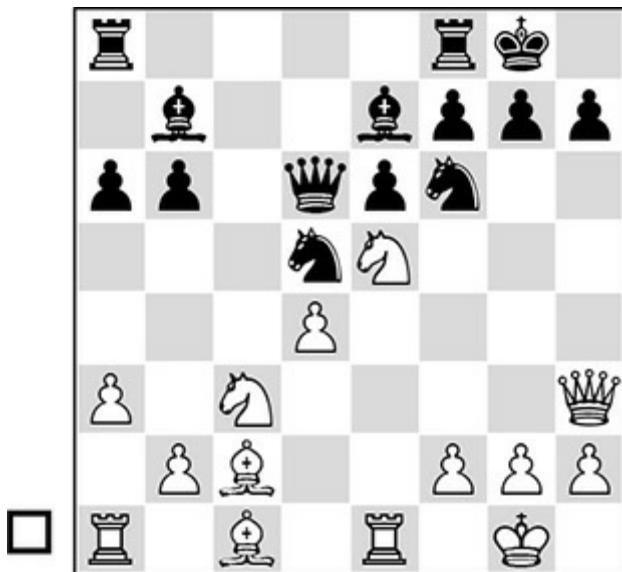
White has calculated a forced win and decides to go for it.

24. $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$ fxg6 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 26. $\mathbb{B}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 29. $\mathbb{B}d3$

With only two bishops for the queen, Black had to fight an uneven battle and lost quickly.

Important techniques

The first introductory game already demonstrated quite a few techniques that enable White to convert his space advantage into a crushing attack on the black king.



Danielian showed us among others how:

- The bishops can create weaknesses on the long diagonals;
- The knight loves the e5-outpost;
- The queen feels perfectly comfortable at h3;
- The empty third rank can be used for a deadly rook lift;
- Black has to reckon with various piece sacrifices.

On top of that, she demonstrated that the rule for being reluctant with exchanging minor pieces should never become a dogma. Instead, it is better to follow the advice from Chapter 1:

Only exchange pieces for a good reason!

Danielian had a very good reason in the position above. The elimination of the d5-knight and the pressure on the second one with 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ more or less decided the game into her favour.

More to explore

The different techniques from the introductory game will return in this chapter, but there is of course much more to explore. Danielian did not have to use the dangerous d4-d5 break to reach her goal, nor was it necessary to weaken the black position with the useful f2-f4-f5 or h2-h4-h5 pushes first. The c-file also remained uncontested. These and many other subjects will be covered in this chapter as well.

The aim of this chapter

As mentioned earlier, the aim of this (and the following) chapter is to wrap up all the skills we have gathered so far and apply them to a practical situation. The focus in this chapter is on the attacking player. It is divided into five different sections, each starring a different piece.

9.2 Bishops: promising diagonals

Bishops feel very comfortable when playing alongside an IQP. These kinds of positions often contain a lot of open space, providing the bishops with plenty of free diagonals to demonstrate their firing power.

The light-squared bishop

The real star is generally the light-squared bishop. Its game plan consists of two stages:

- Provoking a weakness over the b1-h7 diagonal;
- Switching along the d1-a4 diagonal in order to hit the opponent where it hurts most.

Creating weaknesses over the long diagonal

Danielian already gave us a sneak preview of this stage in the introductory game. I want to show you another example.

Game 107

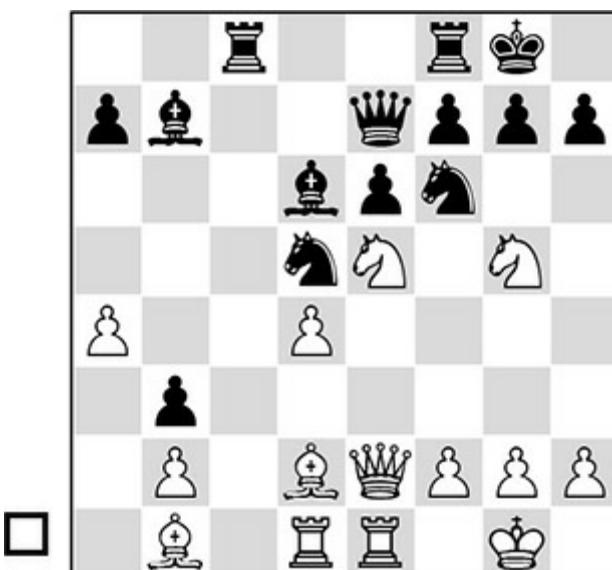
Adrien Demuth

2542

Jean Fabien Decosse

2216

France tt 2017 (9)



20. ♕d3

The h7-pawn is under attack and Black faces a tough decision.

QUESTION: Should he play 20...h6 or 20...g6 ?

20..h6

Black does not want to weaken the dark squares around his king, but now has to deal with an open b1-h7 diagonal instead.

$20\dots g6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ would also have promised White a strong initiative after, for instance, 21... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g4$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}e4$. These patterns are very similar to the ones demonstrated by Danielian.

21. h7

White is again going after the important defender at f6.

21... ♕ fd8 22. ♔ xf6+ ♕ xf6

Black voluntarily invites the white queen into his king's position – a very dangerous strategy. 22... ♔xf6 was absolutely necessary, even though White is clearly better after 23. ♕xb3.

23. ♕ h7+ ♔ f8



This is where we can use our knowledge from Part III. The black king has developed an escape plan. Time to open up the centre!

24. $\text{N}g4!$ $\text{K}h4$ 25. $\text{K}h8+$ $\text{K}e7$ 26. Kxg7 Kg8

26... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ would have been more stubborn, but it does not change White's plan: opening the e-file! 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ gives White a winning attack.



27. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$! $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$



White has run out of rooks. Time to call in the bishops!

33. $\mathbb{Q}a5+$! $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$!

Black resigned. It is mate in two after 34... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$.

The bishop switch

When the bishop has finished its job on the b1-h7 diagonal it is time to move on and look for new targets. This is where the powerful technique of the **bishop switch** comes in. The bishop usually moves along the d1-a4 diagonal in its search for the most promising diagonal.

Diagonal 1: a2-g8

The most common destination to move your bishop to is b3. The aim is to put pressure on the e6-pawn and prepare a future d4-d5 break.

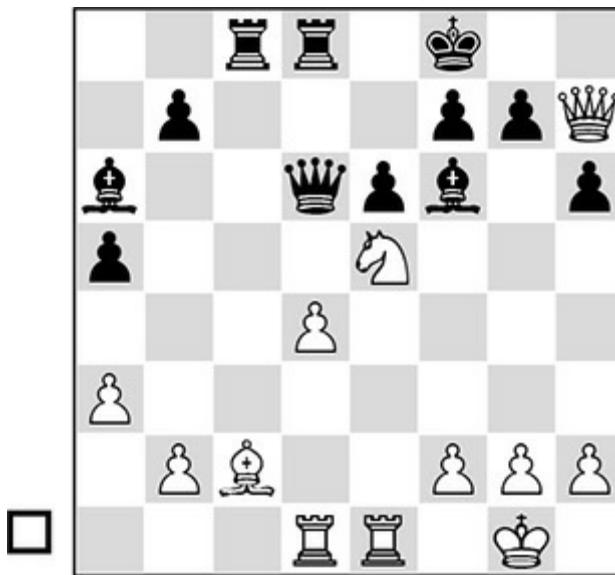
Game 108

Anatoly Karpov

Jan Timman

2690

Moscow 1981 (8)



White has manoeuvred his queen inside the black position, but still does not have anything concrete. The big question in such positions is often whether White can push d4-d5 and open up the e-file. This would deprive the black king of its only evacuation square, with lethal consequences. There are dozens of examples in which the move ... $\mathbb{Q}g8-f8$ is directly followed by a powerful d4-d5 break. Those games are usually not very long. In this position, however, d4-d5 is not possible due to the unstable position of the knight on e5. As a result, White has to be patient and wait for his chances.

26.h3 b6

This is what Karpov was waiting for. Now is the time to start pushing his pawn. Timman should have gone for the patient 26... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, with still a balanced game. Black now has the b6-square available for his queen and he can answer 27. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ with 27.... $\mathbb{Q}b6!$, hitting both the bishop and the d-pawn.

27. $\mathbb{Q}b3!$

Suddenly, the black position is about to collapse.

27... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 28.d5! $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29.dxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$

And mate will follow soon: 1-0

Diagonal 2: a4-e8

Some players use the squares a2 and b1 for their bishop to switch diagonals. On c2, however, the bishop has access to another square where it may be annoying in certain cases:

Game 109

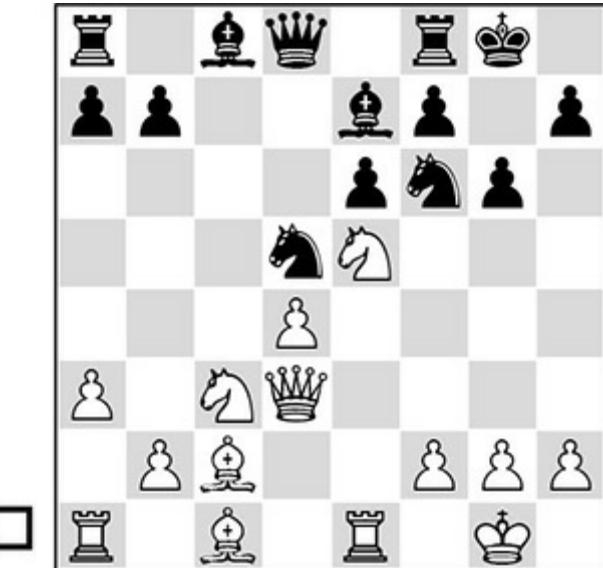
Angelica Ynojosa Aponte

1753

Adeline Chaumont

2049

England 4NCL 2009/10 (1)



16. ♜h6 ♕e8 17. ♜a4!

This manoeuvre would not have been possible with the bishop on b1. When the black queen is still on d8, the bishops can often give the black rook a hard time. Black is already in serious trouble as the tactics all work in White's favour.

17... ♜d7 18. ♜xd7 ♜xd7 19. ♜xd5 exd5 20. ♜h3

Black has to choose between directly giving up the exchange or opening up the kingside structure.

20... f5 21. ♜f3 ♜f6 22. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 23. ♜e3 ♜d6 24. ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 25. ♜e6 ♛f7 26. ♜ae1

White won the resulting ending convincingly.

The dark-squared bishop

The dark-squared bishop is usually less promising than its light-squared colleague. It can certainly prove its value over the c1-h6 diagonal, but is hampered by its own isolated d-pawn and therefore less able to switch between diagonals.

That made Kramnik decide to sacrifice the d-pawn in order to give the entire floor to his bishop pair. This is one of the rare examples in which the dark-squared bishop is turned into the man of the match.

Game 110

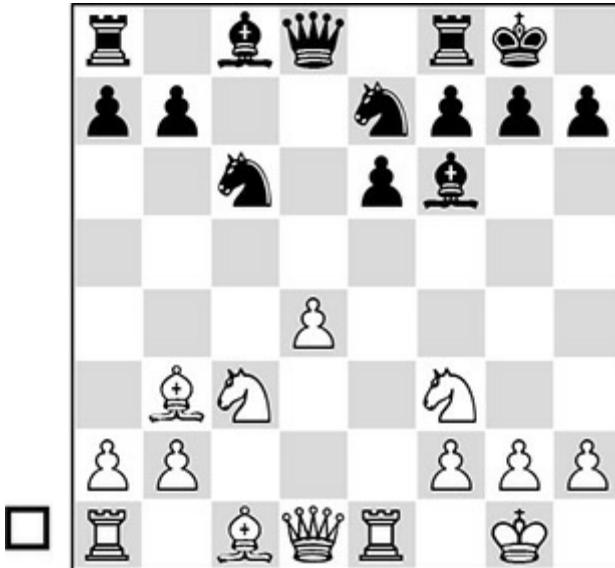
Vladimir Kramnik

2799

Georg Meier

2644

Dortmund 2012 (9)



12. $\mathbb{Q}f4!$? $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Of course, the bishop pair needs to be preserved.

14... $\mathbb{Q}ec6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c7!$

This move reminds me of the Aronian-Harikrishna game from Chapter 5. The black rook is not allowed to enter the open file.

16...e5 17. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 18. f4

Kramnik decides to open up the position even more.

18...exf4 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

Kramnik in his Chessbase analysis: ‘The only mistake of my opponent in this game, but in such a sharp position you pay the full price for it.’ He suggests 20... $\mathbb{Q}g5$, which should end in a ‘more or less equal position’.

21. $\mathbb{Q}c7$

White is now going to exploit his total control over the dark squares.

21... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$



The white pieces are optimally placed, time to invite the other bishop to create access to the king.

24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$! $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $g6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$

There is only one thing more powerful than an attack from two sides: an attack from three sides! Black is

defenceless.

30... ♕f6 31. ♖f1+ ♔e6

31... ♜f5 also leads to a forced mate: 32. ♜g7+ ♔g5 33. ♜f4+ ♔h5 34. ♜h7+ ♔g4 35.h3#.

32. ♜xg6+ ♔d5 33. ♖c5# 1-0

Conclusion

The white bishops feel very comfortable in IQP positions. White's light-squared bishop has the best prospects. In cooperation with the queen, it is often responsible for provoking the first weaknesses in the black camp, followed by a powerful bishop switch. The next stop could be b3, to prepare the d4-d5 break, or a4, to harass the black rook on e8.

The dark-squared bishop's scope is usually limited to the c1-h6 diagonal, but it can nevertheless play an important role in a kingside attack.

9.3 Knights: comfortable outposts

Knights are slow-moving pieces who feel most comfortable at an outpost close to the front. In the previous eight chapters, we already came across at least a dozen examples of powerful knights on e5 that played a key role in kingside attacks. They could either assist the queen in mating the king, or were willing to sacrifice themselves on f7 or g6 for the greater good.

Outposts are a very common theme in IQP positions. If White is lucky, he can not only install a knight on e5, but create an outpost on c5 for the other knight as well. The following examples demonstrate the power of two perfectly satisfied knights.

Game 111

Ruslan Galauov

2117

Vladislav Loginov

2086

Novosibirsk 2007 (5)

1.e4 c5 2. ♜f3 ♜c6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 ♜xd5 5. ♜e2 ♜f6 6.d4 cxd4 7.cxd4 e6 8. ♜c3 ♜d6 9.0-0 ♜e7 10. ♜b5



White drives away the black queen in order to clear the b8-h2 diagonal for his dark-squared bishop. This is usually the hardest piece to develop. It could go to g5, but White does not want to exchange it after a move

like ... $\mathbb{Q}d5$. As we know, White is not very eager to exchange minor pieces.

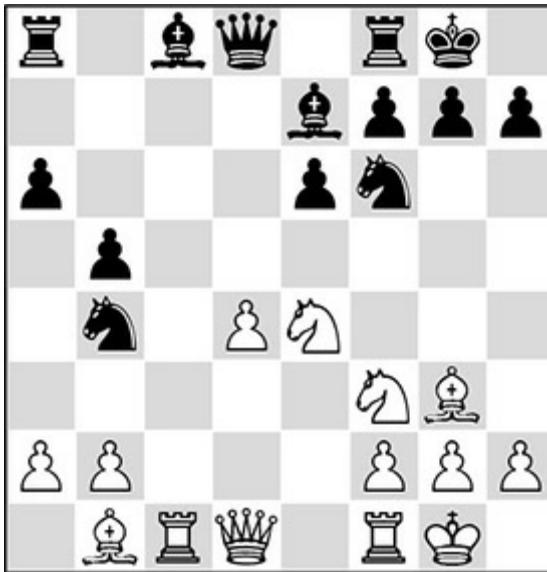
10... $\mathbb{Q}d8$

10... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ would not help much since 11.g3! secures the f4-square after all.

11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ a6 13. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 0-0 14. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

15.a3, to prevent the blockading manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ -b4-d5, is the most popular continuation.

15... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ b5 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$



17... $\mathbb{Q}bd5$

Black does not take the opportunity to exchange a set of pieces. 17... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$! 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ would have been better. Black is doing fine after 19. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$. In the game, both knights are about to reach their favourite positions: the outposts on e5 and c5.

18. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ g6 20. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 21.a3



The bishop has done its job on the b1-h7 diagonal. It is time to switch! Furthermore, White would like to strengthen the knight on c5 with b2-b4.

21...b4 22. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d1$

23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$, preparing $\mathbb{Q}h4$ and $\mathbb{Q}a2$ to put maximum pressure on the black knights, would have been a bit more ambitious.

23...bxa3 24.bxa3 ♜h5 25.♕a2

The pressure on the e6/f7 chain has become enormous. Black has to be very careful now.

25...♝g5



The only way to stay in the game would have been playing 25...♜xg3 26.hxg3 ♜c8. After the text move, all the tactics work in White's favour.

26.♞xf7!

Suddenly Black's position collapses. Things go really fast now, mainly due to the dominant position of the white knights.

26...♜xf7 27.♝xe6 ♜xc1 28.♝xd8 ♜xd8 29.♝xc1 ♜xg3 30.hxg3 ♜fd7 31.♝g5 1-0

Eliminating the knight on e5?

Given the dominance of the white knight on e5, it can be very tempting to exchange it. However, this would allow White to recapture with a pawn and start a very dangerous attack on your king. We already discussed this in section 8.4. In addition, I would like to show you another example, from my own experience. It is not exactly an IQP, but it features the closely related 'hanging pawns' and is highly instructive.

Game 112

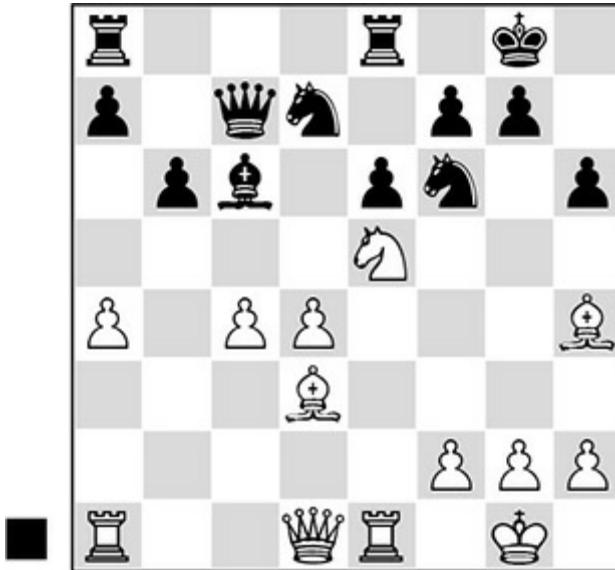
Maarten Solleveld

2468

Thomas Willemze

2324

Leeuwarden 2005 (2)



17... ♜xe5

In the game I felt there was not much of a choice. A move like 17... ♜ac8 would also have given White a large initiative after 18. ♜xd7 ♜xd7 19.a5.

18.dxe5

Pay attention to the strength of the e5-pawn. It gives White firm control in the centre and he can easily start an attack on the kingside. In the meantime, there is only so much that Black can do.

18... ♜d7 19. ♜h5 ♜c5 20. ♜c2



It is instructive to see how inflexible the pawns in front of the black king are. This makes them easy targets.

20... ♜b7 21. ♜a3!

The rook lift!

21... ♜e4 22. ♜xe4 ♜xe4



23. $\mathbb{R}g4$

23. $\mathbb{R}ae3$ would have been even more convincing after 23... $\mathbb{R}c5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f6!$.

23... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 24. $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ $g6$ 26. $\mathbb{R}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 27. $exf6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{R}d1$ $h5$ 29. $\mathbb{R}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 30. $\mathbb{R}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 31. $\mathbb{R}f1$ 1-0

Conclusion

The e5-square is the perfect outpost for a knight in IQP positions. From there, it controls the important f7- and g6-squares, creating all kinds of tactical opportunities. It would take an entire book to cover all the successful $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ sacrifices in the Mega Database.

Swapping off the e5-knight is not going to help Black either. The recapturing e-pawn gives White firm control in the centre and promises him serious attacking chances.

The other knight could go to c5, depriving the black rooks from their c-file and putting extra pressure on the important e6-pawn.

9.4 Rooks: the rook lift and the c-file

This is where we can use our knowledge from Part II. The IQP positions we are discussing contain an open c-file and White is often able to free the third rank in order to bring his rook to the attack. The **rook lift** and the **conquering of the open file** are therefore very relevant themes in positions with an IQP.

The rook lift

In the next game, a Dutch junior player shows us how to execute a successful rook lift in an IQP position and simultaneously provides us with another demonstration of how to treat bishops in the most convincing way.

Game 113

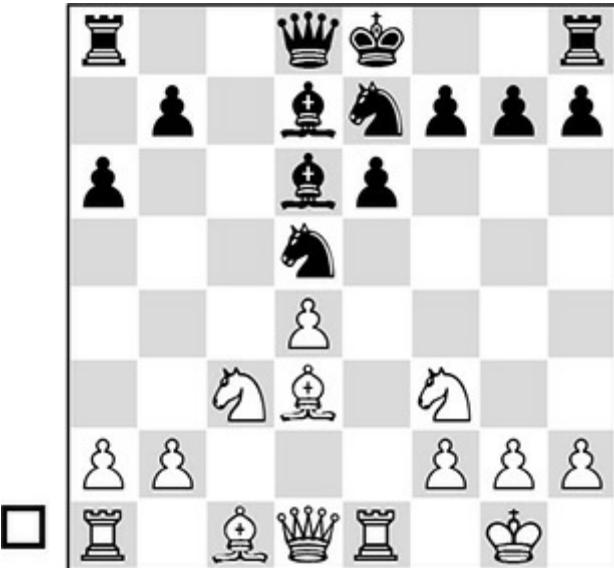
Nick Bijlsma

2177

Alan van der Heijden

2235

Maastricht 2010 (5)



12.♘e5 ♘xc3

Black probably wanted to keep the white knight from e4 and decides to change the structure into one with ‘hanging pawns’.

13.bxc3 0-0 14.♗h5

White does not hide his intentions. His opponent now has a tough decision to make: how should he prevent mate on h7?

14...♝g6



A very logical move, but also one with a great disadvantage: the black pawns on the kingside are now fixed. It will be very hard for Black to defend himself against the upcoming rook lift. A better set-up would have been 14...g6 15.♗h6 ♛f5.

15.♖e3! ♜xe5

We already know how dangerous it is to take the knight on e5. White recaptures with his pawn and has total control of the centre. However, Black did have not much choice. 16.♗h3 was a very serious threat.

16.dxe5 f5

Creating some *luft* for the black king, but also heavily weakening the a2-g8 diagonal. The white bishops will soon be unleashed.

17.♗h3 ♛f7 18.g4 ♜c7 19.gxf5 exf5 20.♗a3 ♜xe5

Opening more files and speeding up the process. However, the position was already almost impossible to defend.

21.♘c4+ ♜f6 22.♖d1

Simple and strong. White is not interested in grabbing the exchange.

22... ♜fc8 23.♗b3 ♜e8 24.♖e3 1-0

The lifted rook decides the game!

The other rook

Lifting the e1-rook to g3 is often pretty straightforward. In the following game, White had to put in a little more effort to manoeuvre her rook to the kingside.

Game 114

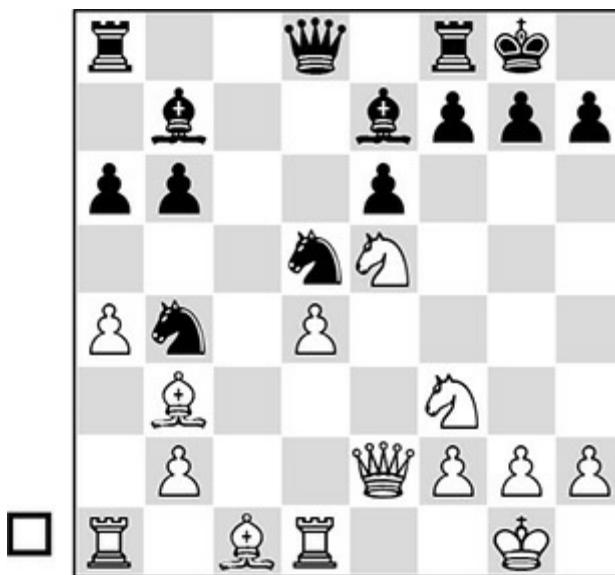
Zsofia Edes

2043

Nino Khomeriki

1832

Tbilisi Ech W 2011 (5)



15.♘d2

The strongest move. White simply finishes her development. The black a6/b6 configuration enabled her to create an outpost with 15.a5, but after 15...b5 it will be very hard for a white knight to make it to c5 without getting exchanged on the way. The d3-square is covered by a black knight and 16.♘d2 fails to 16...♝f4.

15...♝d6

Although she is by no means worse, this position is very difficult to play for White. Most of the pieces have already been developed and improving them is not easy since the black knights control the most important squares. Furthermore, the knights are looking at each other, and are therefore automatically less mobile. White comes up with a very original idea.

16.♞e1

The knight had no future on f3, as e5 was already taken by its partner. It looks as though the knight is on its way to c5 and the move a4-a5 will probably follow quickly, but White had a different plan in mind.

16...♜ac8 17.♘c4 a5



18. ♜a3

White had just cleared the 3rd rank for a rook lift! Objectively, White is not completely ready for an attack on the kingside as Black has a firm grip on the centre and the white pieces are not very well coordinated. However, the prospect of five extra points on the kingside suddenly makes the game very exciting.

18... ♜c7

The most effective way of responding would have been 18...f6, repelling the knight. 19. ♜f3 ♜c7 would have closed the 3rd rank again, after which Black can continue her plan.

19. ♜h3 ♜f6 20. ♜f4 ♜bd5 21. ♜g3 ♜d8 22. ♜f3 ♜d6 23. ♜d3 ♜b4 24. ♜b1



The bishop has finally reached its favourite square.

24... ♜a6 25. ♜d2 ♜e7

Strengthening the defence with 25... ♜bd5 was required. After the text move the attack becomes very serious.

26. ♜h4 ♜fc8



27. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+!$

A nice blow, using both the pin and the battery. White finishes the game very convincingly.

27... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g6!$

Also a move worth remembering.

28... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 1-0

The open c-file

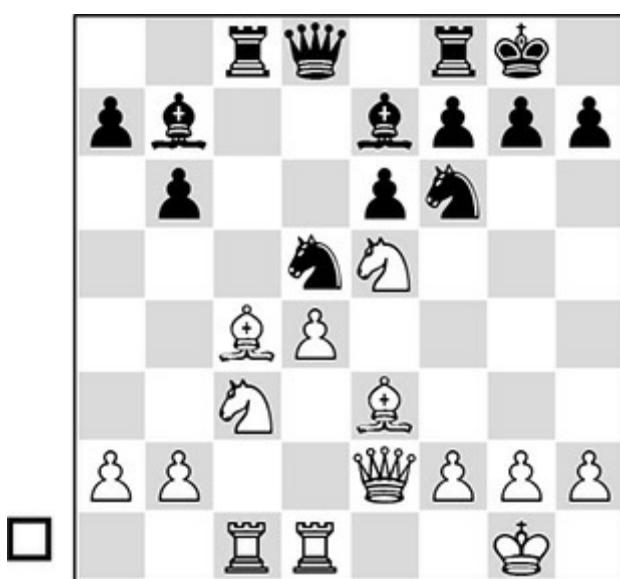
Games in which White conquers the c-file and even manages to put his rook on the 7th rank are relatively rare in IQP positions, but it is still a technique to keep in mind. Watch how Nimzowitsch used c5 as an outpost in order to conquer the open file.

Game 115

Aron Nimzowitsch

Jean Taubenhaus

St Petersburg 1913



15. $\mathbb{Q}b5$

An annoying move, giving Black the choice between weakening his queenside structure or defending

passively with 15... $\mathbb{R}a8$.

15... $a6$ 16. $\mathbb{B}a7$

This move looks a bit strange, but White is aiming for the bishop on e7.

16... $\mathbb{R}a8$ 17. $\mathbb{B}ac6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

The position is already difficult to play for Black. The rook on a8 is passively defending a6 and cannot really participate in the struggle for the c-file.

19... $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 20. $fxe3$ $b5$



It is understandable that Black takes away the pressure from a6, but this move has a serious drawback: the c5-square is now available for a white rook. We already know how to exploit this.

21. $\mathbb{R}c5!$ $\mathbb{R}fc8$ 22. $\mathbb{R}dc1$ $g6$ 23. $a3$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 24. $b4$

Strengthening the outpost.

24... $\mathbb{B}d6$ 25. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $f5$ 26. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}d6$ 28. $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{R}xc5$

Black cannot hold any longer and releases the tension. The passed pawn is, however, much more dangerous than the two rooks. White is winning.

29. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 30. $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 31. $c6$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 32. $c7$ $\mathbb{R}a7$ 33. $\mathbb{R}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 34. $\mathbb{R}xc8$ $\mathbb{R}xc7$ 35. $\mathbb{B}xg6$ 1-0

Textbook examples like this usually show a rather one-side game. They are very useful for learning new techniques, but not always very realistic.

The following game is an illustration of how tense the struggle for open files and 7th ranks can be in practice. White takes control of the c-file rather quickly, but finds out that this is only where the fight is getting started.

Game 116

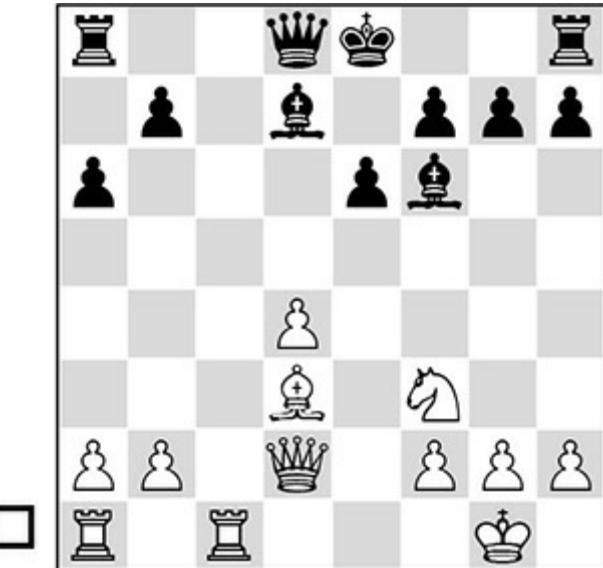
Natalja Pogonina

2469

Alexander Utnasunov

2444

Sochi 2017 (8)



18. ♜e4

White puts pressure on the b-pawn in order to tie the black rook to its defence. The idea is to make it hard for Black to oppose the white rooks on the c-file.

18... ♕b8 19. ♜c2 ♕c8 20. ♜b3 ♕b8 21. ♜c2 0-0 22. ♜ac1

Mission accomplished! It is not clear how White can take advantage of the c-file, but occupying it does seem like a good start.

22...a5 23.h3 ♜e7

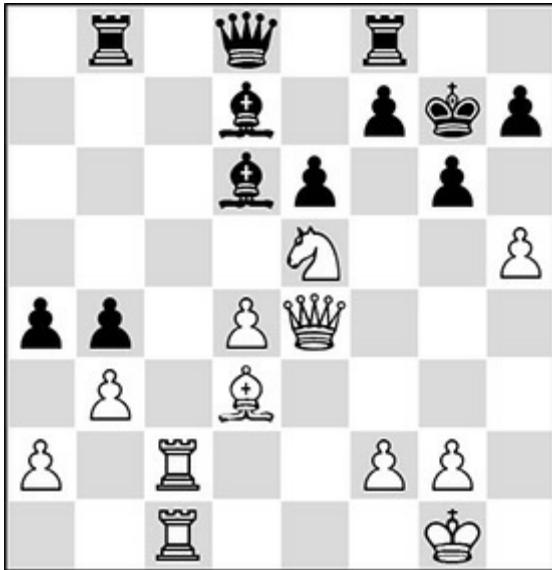
Do you remember this manoeuvre from Chapter 3? The bishop is on its way to d6, from where it can protect the entrance square on the 7th rank.

24. ♜e5 ♜d6 25. ♜f3 b5 26. ♜d3 a4



White is still unable to enter the 7th rank, but her control of the c-file does limit the black pieces. It is therefore time to think of creating a second weakness on the kingside.

27. ♜e4 g6 28. h4 b4 29. h5 ♔g7 30. b3



This move has a clear drawback. It enables Black to open the a-file and create an open file for his own rook. This was one of the defensive resources we discussed in Chapter 5.

30...axb3 31.axb3 ♕b5 32.Qc6

White wants to keep her bishop and simultaneously conquers a better square for the rook on the c-file.

32...Qxc6 33.Qxc6 ♖e7 34.g3

Preparing the transfer of a rook to the h-file in order to attack the king from two sides.

34...♖fd8 35.♗g4 ♕d7 36.♕g2 ♕a8

Black seizes the opportunity and enters his own open file.

37.♕h1 ♕a5 38.hxg6 hxg6 39.♗f3 ♕b8 40.♕c8 ♕d8 41.♕c5 ♕a2 42.♕b5 ♕a7

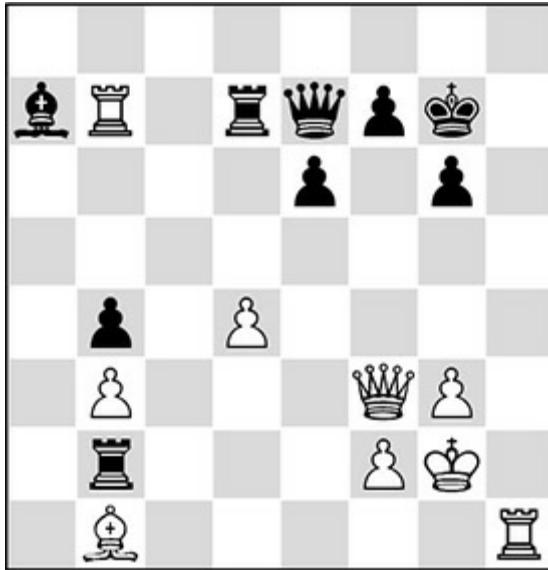


We have reached a very interesting position in which both (!) players have a rook with access to the 7th rank and the other pieces are not doing badly either. The assessment of dynamic positions like these usually depends on concrete variations, especially with opposite-coloured bishops. White goes for a move that implies an exchange sacrifice.

43.♕b7

According to Stockfish, this move leads to a more or less balanced position. The engine agrees with putting the rook on the 7th rank, but suggests a very subtle improvement which secures a clear advantage for White. Pogonina should have started with 43.♗b1!. The idea is to put the bishop with gain of tempo on a defended

square in order to make it less vulnerable in case of future complications. After 43... $\mathbb{Q}b2$ he continues with 44. $\mathbb{Q}b7 \mathbb{Q}d7$, just like in the game.



analysis diagram

But now: 45. $\mathbb{B}f4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (45... $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ leads to mate after 46. $\mathbb{B}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 47. $\mathbb{B}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 48. $\mathbb{B}h8\#$) 46. $\mathbb{B}xd4+!$. Black is forced to exchange queens and the ending after 46... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ looks very promising for White.

43... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$

White has to give up the exchange because d4 is about to drop.

44. $\mathbb{B}f4$ does not work here because after 44... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 45. $\mathbb{B}xd4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ the white bishop is hanging! Black keeps an extra pawn with 46. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$.

44... $\mathbb{Q}axa7$ 45. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 46. $\mathbb{B}e5$ $f6$ 47. $\mathbb{B}e3$

47. $\mathbb{B}e4!$ followed by $\mathbb{B}c4$ would have promised White just enough compensation for the exchange. After the text move, life becomes difficult.

47... $\mathbb{B}d6$ 48. $\mathbb{B}h6$ $\mathbb{B}d5+$ 49. $\mathbb{B}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 51. $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$

It is clear that Black has taken over. He managed to win the game after a tense fight.

Conclusion

The rook lift is a very common technique to strengthen your attack in an IQP position. White has a lot of free space for his pieces, making it relatively easy to clear the third rank and direct the rook towards the black king.

The fight for the open c-file is another theme that is worth paying attention to.

Make sure you have all the tools from Part II ready and be prepared for a tough battle until the end!

9.5 Queen: the perfect h3-square

So far, the most important diagonals for the bishops, the outposts for the knights and the files (and ranks!) of the rook have been discussed. The piece that has not yet been covered, but is essential in the attack, is the queen.

We already saw quite a few examples of a queen in action. It usually moved to d3 first, forming a mighty battery with the bishop. In most cases, Black replied with the move ...g7-g6, after which the queen shifted to h3. From there, she could keep an eye on both the e6- and the h7-pawns, waiting for different kinds of tactical opportunities.

The next game shows many of the thematic piece manoeuvres from the previous sections, with a prominent role for the queen on h3.

Game 117

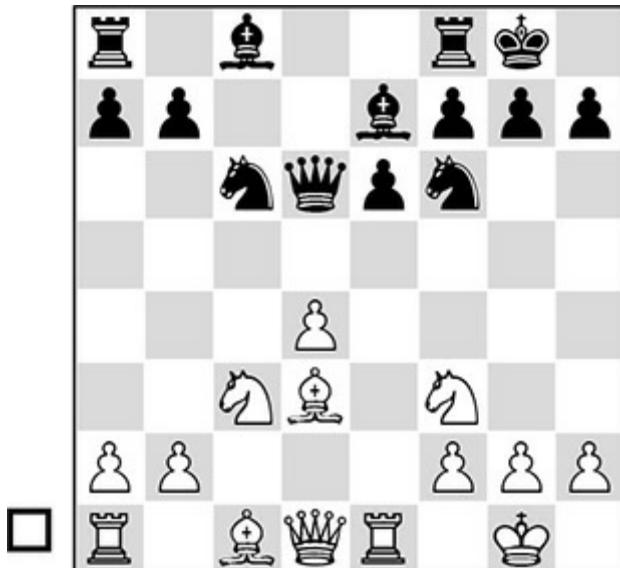
Mohammadreza Khorshidi

2130

Mohmmad Naderi

2084

Esfahan 2011 (8)



11. ♔g5 ♟b4

The knight is heading for d5, putting a halt to the dangerous white d-pawn. This move makes a lot of sense and is played very often, but it not always right. The manoeuvre costs Black two moves and leads to a quite static set-up. I cannot stress too much that it is often more effective to put as much pressure on the d-pawn as possible, for instance by playing 11... \mathbb{N} d8. This will make it harder for White to direct his pieces to their favourite squares.

12. ♕ b1 b6 13. a3 ♟ bd5 14. ♔ d3 g6

In the next phase we are about to see several manoeuvres which have been discussed before. The knight finds a strong square on e5, the light-squared bishop has done its job by provoking ...g7-g6 and moves to the a2-g8 diagonal and, last but not least: the queen feels very comfortable at h3!

15. e5 b7 16. h3



16... ♜ac8

White has done everything right so far and after the text move he is ready to move on to the next phase of his attacking plan. In order to stay in the game, Black should have gone for 16... ♜xc3! 17.bxc3, changing the position into a ‘hanging pawns’ structure. After, for instance, 17... ♜h5 he gets a slightly worse, but playable position.

17. ♜b5! ♜b8 18. ♜h6 ♜fd8 19. ♜a2!

The white pieces have taken up their positions and the final step will be to break through by force. It is already impossible for Black to prevent the upcoming thematic sacrifice, since neither f7 nor e6 can be protected without simply losing material. Pay attention to the pressure that is being exerted by the queen on h3.

19...a6

The best attempt was probably 19... ♜h5. After 20. ♜xf7, he can defend e6 with 20... ♜hf4, but knights tend to be very vulnerable when they defend each other. White can highlight this with 21. ♜f3 ♛xf7



analysis diagram

22. ♜xe6!.. A very elegant sacrifice, leaving both knights without any pawn support. 22... ♜f6 (22... ♛xe6 would not have been advisable, due to the more or less forced 23. ♜xf4 ♜a8 24. ♜e1+ ♛d7 25. ♜h3+ ♛c6

26. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ and the black king will soon be mated) 23. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ g5. Black does all he can to hang on to the knights, but he clearly lacks a solid pawn structure. His position is falling apart after 24.h4!.



20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

After this move, Black will soon be crushed. The best alternative would have been 20... $\mathbb{Q}e8$, but the absence of the black queen becomes visible after 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5$. White has a winning attack.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$



26. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

Simply retreating the queen, for instance with 26. $\mathbb{Q}e4$, would have put an immediate end to the game: 26... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$, with the deadly threat 29. $\mathbb{Q}e8$. After the text move, White is still close to winning, but Black can struggle for a little longer.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$

28... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ would have allowed White to keep the extra piece, since 29.d5! $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ costs a rook after 30. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ and 29... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$ is mate!

29. $\mathbb{Q}xb7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 31.b4

White is three pawns up and won without any problems.

Controlling the dark squares

The queen has a preference for the light squares, since the bishop on c8 is often blocked by the e-pawn and is therefore hardly able to disturb the queen. The dark-squared bishop usually has more options.

This is no longer the case if Black's ...g7-g6 is followed by an exchange of the dark-squared bishops. This would give White the option to abstain from breaking through with force and try to enter the black position via the dark squares instead. Look at this elegant example from our editor in his younger years.

Game 118

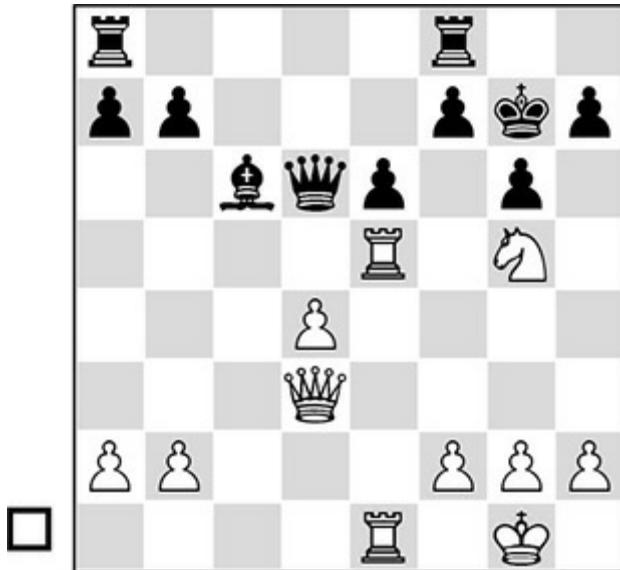
Frank Erwic

2224

Allan Stig Rasmussen

2199

Hallsberg 2000/01



20.d5!

The only serious attempt to play for a win. White clears the d4-square for his queen.

20...♜xd5 21.♝d4 ♛g8 22.♞e4

Black has to be precise now.

22...♝d8

This is exactly what White was hoping for. Only 22...♝b6 would have led to equality. **Attacking the back piece** is a technique we already got acquainted with in Chapter 2. White has nothing better than entering a drawish ending with, for instance, 23.♞f6+ ♛g7 24.♞h5+ ♛h8 25.♞xd5+ ♛xd4 26.♞xd4 gxh5 27.♞d7.

23.♞xd5! exd5 24.♞f6+ ♛h8 25.♞e3!

Of course! White keeps the threat alive and aims five extra points at the black king.

25...♜c8



26.g4!

Again, the only move that leads to a clear advantage. It is a multi-purpose move, both preventing ...h7-h5 and providing the white king with some air.

26... ♜c4

26... ♜c6 27. ♜xh7+ ♛g8! 28. ♜xf8 ♜c4! was the most stubborn try, but White keeps a healthy extra pawn after 29. ♜e5! ♜xg4+ 30. ♜f1 ♜e4 31. ♜e6! fxe6 32. ♜xe4 dxe4 33. ♜xe6+ ♛g7 34. ♜xe4.

27. ♜h3 h5

27... ♜xd4 28. ♜xh7# would have been an elegant finish.

28. ♜e5

White has kept the battery intact for four (!) consecutive moves. The knight is now ready to remove itself from f6 with devastating force. However, the threat once again proved to be stronger than the execution: Black resigned.

The ♜xh6 sacrifice

If Black decides to go for ...h7-h6 instead of ...g7-g6, White often uses the bishop/queen battery in an attempt to enter the black position via h7. Entering without knocking with a thematic bishop sacrifice, however, sounds like a more attractive idea.

Game 119

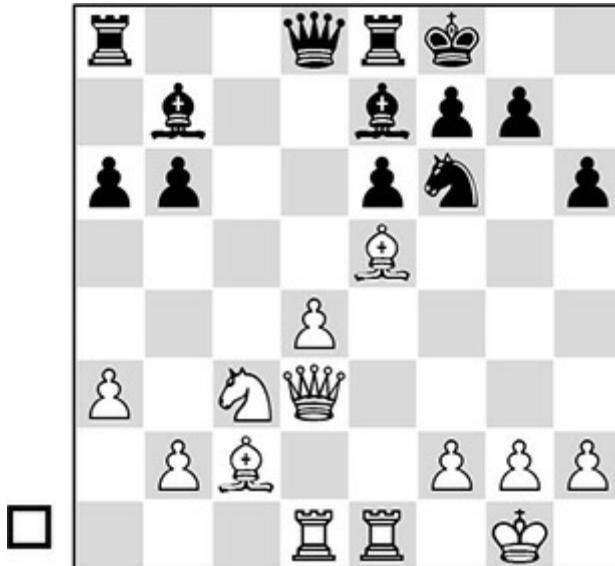
Jan Banas

2365

Daniel Batulik

2161

Slovakia tt 2002/03 (7)



21. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

This is an interesting move to remember. The white queen makes a short stopover at g3, hoping to win a tempo later.

21... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b3$

The thematic d4-d5 break is now a serious threat, which forces Black's next move.

22... $\mathbb{N}h5$

And this is what White was aiming for. The queen moves on to h3, chasing the knight back to f6 and winning a tempo compared to a direct $\mathbb{Q}d1-d3-h3$.

23. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 24. $\mathbb{B}f4$

Not a very subtle move, but it is already hard for Black to prevent the bishop sacrifice.

24... $\mathbb{B}d6$



25. $\mathbb{B}xh6!$ $gxh6$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

26... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ would have been the trickiest reply, forcing White to find the beautiful 27. $\mathbb{B}e5!$.



analysis diagram

An unusual rook lift, but a very effective one (27... $\mathbb{Q}g4$!): 27... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 28. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (28... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29. $exf6$) 29. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xg4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ is completely winning for White.

27. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

27... $fxe6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g7\#.$

28. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

White regained his sacrificed material with interest en won easily.

Conclusion

Building up an attack on the king is one of White's main resources in IQP positions. The success of the attack depends to a great extent on the ability to manoeuvre the white queen behind enemy lines.

There are different ways in which the queen can enter the black position, depending on whether Black chooses to parry the first wave with either ...g7-g6 or ...h7-h6.

If Black plays ...h7-h6, the white queen can form a battery with the light-squared bishop in order to prepare the move $\mathbb{Q}d3-h7+$. If that does not work, the queen can move to h3 and try to get access to the king by force with the $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ sacrifice.

If Black decides to go for ...g7-g6, the most comfortable square for the queen is often h3. From there, she is able to participate in different kinds of dangerous piece sacrifices. Plan B is to exchange the dark-squared bishops and try to take advantage of Black's weak colour complex.

9.6 Pawns: dangerous breaks

Even though we have discussed all the pieces so far, some of White's most important resources still remain untouched: pawn pushes and pawn breaks! The following manoeuvres can be employed to reinforce your attack:

- The d4-d5 break;
- The f-pawn push;
- The h-pawn push.

The d4-d5 break

The d4-d5 break is one of White's most dangerous weapons. Karpov already gave us a brief demonstration in section 9.2, in his game against Timman. He switched his bishop to b3, pushed d4-d5, and the game lasted only two more moves.

The move d4-d5 is very common in IQP positions. It is a resource that Black needs to consider very seriously on every single move. The break may result in a mass exchange with an equal ending as a result, but more often, White's active pieces make him better equipped for the struggle with the remaining pawnless centre. Take for instance the following game, in which Cramling turns her advantage into a direct assault on the black king. She employs a manoeuvre that is very common and therefore worth putting in your toolbox.

Game 120

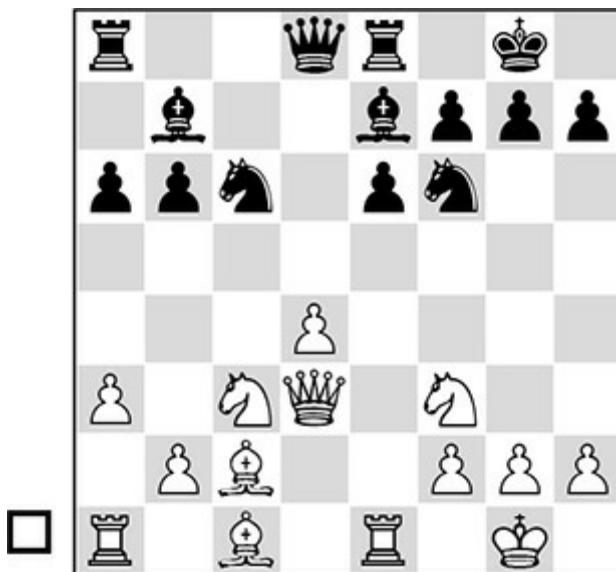
Pia Cramling

2434

Katerina Nemcova

2359

Tehran Wch W 2017 (1)



14.d5! exd5 15.Qg5!

A very thematic follow-up, intending to eliminate the knight. Launching the queen to h7 is the obvious threat, but later we will see that a stable white knight at d5 can be very unpleasant for Black as well.

15...♝e4

The only move to parry both threats. 15...g6 would run into 16.♖xe7! ♜xe7 17.♗xd5 ♜xd5 18.♕xe7 ♜cxe7 with too little in return for the queen.

16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♕xe4 g6



18. ♕ad1

Activating five extra points with tempo is always a good idea, but White could have refined her attack with 18. ♔h4!. The aim is to provoke 18... ♗xg5 and bring the knight to the attack: 19. ♖xg5 and now it is interesting to see the deadly force of the queen-knight combination. After, for instance, 19...h5 20. ♖f4 ♖d7 21. ♖b3 it is already impossible to cover f7 since 21... ♖f8 runs into 22. ♖xf7! ♖xf7 23. ♖f6!.

18... ♗c8 19. ♔h4 ♖f8

White's attack is of course still very promising, but the presence of both dark-squared bishops definitely does not work in her favour.

20. ♖b3 ♖f5



21. ♖f6

The right diagonal, but the wrong move. 21. ♖d2! followed by ♗c3 would have been the way to go. White has to prevent ...h7-h6, since that would deprive her knight of the important g5-square.

21...h6

It was important to move the white rook from the d-file first: 21... ♖xe1+! 22. ♖xe1 and only then 22...h6! 23. ♗c3 ♗g7 would have brought Black completely back in the game.

22. ♗c3 ♗g7 23. ♖xg7

23. ♖d5! was the only way to keep the white initiative alive: 23... ♖xe1+ 24. ♖xe1 ♗e5 25. ♖d6, after

which the pressure on both b6 and g6 is quite annoying. In the game, Black managed to liquidate into a drawish ending with 23... \mathbb{Q} xg7 24. \mathbb{Q} d4 \mathbb{Q} xe1+ 25. \mathbb{Q} xe1 \mathbb{Q} f6 26. \mathbb{Q} xf6+ \mathbb{Q} xf6 27. \mathbb{Q} xc6 \mathbb{Q} xc6, but eventually lost.

The dominant central knight

I already explained briefly how the central break may lead to a dominant white knight at d5. The following game is a convincing example.

Game 121

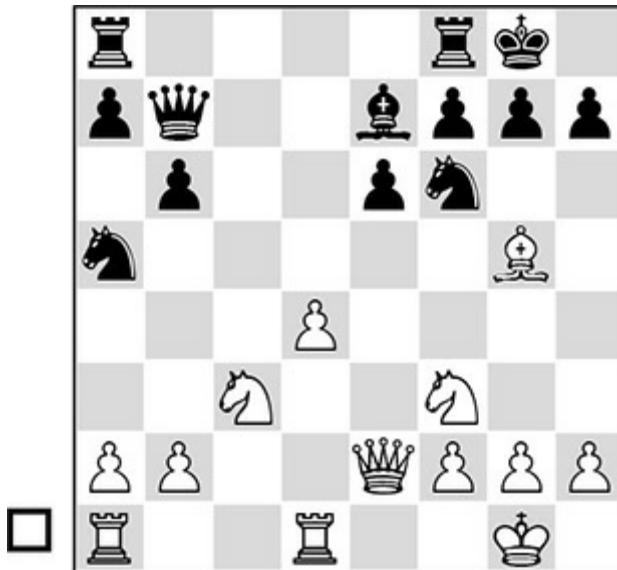
Robert Hübner

2569

Mihajlo Stojanovic

2509

Switzerland tt 2017 (1)



White just exchanged bishops on b7 in order to weaken the light squares in the black camp a little. The next move is a logical follow-up.

16.d5! exd5

The point is that Black cannot go for 16... \mathbb{B} xd5 due to 17. \mathbb{Q} xd5! with a large advantage.

17. \mathbb{Q} xf6 \mathbb{Q} xf6 18. \mathbb{Q} xd5 \mathbb{Q} d8 19. \mathbb{Q} d2

Note how well coordinated the white pieces are. The knight on d5 does not even need a pawn for its nice outpost!

19... \mathbb{Q} c8 20. \mathbb{Q} ad1 b5



What do you do when all your pieces are perfectly placed and you have complete control over the centre?

21.h4

Right, you start opening a second front! There was, however, no need to hurry. The prophylactic 21.b3, first keeping the knight from c4, would have been even stronger.

21... ♜c4 22. ♜d4 ♜d6 23. ♜e5 ♜c4 24. ♜e4

Threatening the sneaky 25. ♜f6+.

24... ♜d6 25. ♜f4 ♜c4 26. ♜g5

The more prudent 26.b3 ♜b6 27. ♜e3, with a very dangerous initiative, would have been stronger. The text move sets up a very nice tactical combination, but allows his opponent to fish in troubled water.

26...h6



A more stubborn defence would have been 26... ♜xb2!, allowing the same trick as in the game, but with far better prospects for Black. After 27. ♜e4 ♜xg5 28. ♜f6+ ♜xf6 29. ♜xb7 ♜xd1 30. ♜xd1 ♜xh4 there is still a lot to play for.

27. ♜e4!

Again, aiming with the queen, and preparing a deadly discovered attack. In this version, the game is immediately over.

27...hxg5 28. ♜f6+ ♜xf6 29. ♜xb7 gxh4 30. ♜xb5 ♜xd4 31. ♜xd4 ♜b6 32. ♜xh4 ♜fd8 33. ♜h5 f6 34. ♜f3 ♜c1+

35. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}dd1$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}b8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xa7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}cc1$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 1-0

One more dangerous d4-d5 break

This last d4-d5 break example is a game in which I experienced its strength myself. My opponent was a strong youth player whom I had been training in the period when this game was played. I remember I was happy to play against an IQP, until the following position.

Game 122

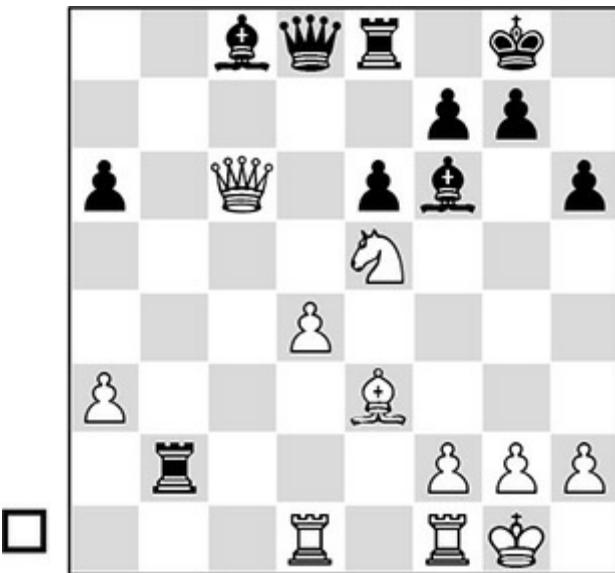
Donna Schut

1999

Thomas Willemze

2417

Hoogeveen 2007 (2)



19. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

I knew I had to be careful about sacrifices on h6. They do not work at the moment, but...

20. $d5!$ $exd5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$!

Now they do! The thematic d4-d5 break has opened the 6th rank for the queen. Suddenly Black is in trouble. I should have ignored the pawn and gone for 20... $\mathbb{Q}d6$.

21... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

I did not trust 21... $gxh6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d4$, but the text move is even worse.

22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$

The only way to stay alive would have been 22... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$, but life is still very difficult for Black.

23. $\mathbb{Q}f5!$



Well played! Donna does not hide her intentions.

23... ♜f6 24. ♜c5+

24. ♜c5+ ♜e7 25. ♜xf6 gxf6 26. ♜f5, followed by 27. ♜h6+, would have been even more convincing.

24... ♜e7 25. ♜d6

White was already in severe time trouble and she decided to exchange queens.

25... ♜xd6 26. ♜xd6 ♜b6 27. ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 28. ♜g4 ♜c3 29. ♜c5 ♜b3 30. ♜c1 ♜d2 31. ♜d1 ♜f4 32. ♜c4 g5 33. ♜cd4

This ending is of course completely winning for White, but my opponent was very short on time and I was lucky to escape with a draw.

The f4-f5 push

If d4-d5 is not possible and the pieces are already on their optimal squares, there is one more thing White can do: call in the help of his kingside pawns to soften the defence. One option is the f4-f5 push, which is aimed at putting pressure on the e6-pawn.



There are two possible scenarios:

- **Black takes the pawn:** this gives White a passed central pawn. We have seen examples of this theme in Chapter 1;

Black ignores the pawn: this would severely weaken the black structure, making a kingside attack more likely to succeed.

I once had a very bad experience with the f4-f5 push myself. Shortly after the game ended, I realized I had been crushed, but I was unable to figure out where things had gone wrong. Further analysis revealed several instructive mistakes, which turned out to occur elsewhere in my games as well. This is by far the most effective way of improving your play: look for recurring mistakes in your games and try to eliminate them.

Game 123

Martin Krämer

2285

Thomas Willemze

2363

Germany tt 2006/07

1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.cxd5 ♜f6 5.♗b5+ ♜bd7 6.♘c3 a6 7.♗a4 ♜b8 8.♗e2

This move is rarely played. More common is 8.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 9.♘f4 ♜a8 with a balanced position.

8...b5 9.♗d4 ♜b7 10.♘f3



10...♝b6

The most natural continuation would be 10...♝b6 11.0-0 ♜bx d5 followed by ...e7-e6, ...♝e7 and ...0-0. The queen is doing fine on d8 and once Black simply finishes his development he will have a comfortable game. The text move is not bad in itself, but it distracts Black from his main task: developing his pieces.

11.♝h4 b4

Black continues his ‘active play’. Again, not bad, but developing with 11...♝xd5 would still have been the easiest plan.

12.♝a4 ♜a5 13.b3 ♜xd5

The first real inaccuracy. This square belongs to a knight.

14.0-0 e6 15.♝b2 ♜e7

15...♝xb3 was the reason I took on d5 with the bishop, but suddenly I no longer really liked the position after 16.♘c4 ♜xc4 17.♘xc4.

16.♘c4



It all started when Black allowed himself to get a bit carried away with the pseudo-active move 10... ♔b6. Five moves later, his pieces lack coordination, while the white pieces are quickly improving.

16... ♕c7

16... ♕d8 is, strangely enough, the most natural move. It covers the bishop while the queen on c7 is just vulnerable.

17. ♖b2 0-0 18. ♖fe5 ♕d8 19. ♖d3 ♕e4 20. ♖g4 ♕df6

20...f5, intending to build up a blockade, was the only way to justify the previous move.

21. ♖e2 ♕c5 22. ♖c2 ♕a8

22...g6, followed by ... ♕fd7, to exchange a piece, was stronger.

23. ♕ae1 ♕d5 24.f3

Black has achieved nothing with his ‘active’ moves, while, on the other hand, White’s pieces are now ready for action.

24... ♕cd7 25.d4 ♕b7 26. ♕h1 ♕a7 27. ♕d3 ♕fd8 28.f4 ♕c5

The same mistake again. Black aims for activity, but is not in any position to do so. A defensive move like 28...g6 was necessary.

29. ♕h3

Things have got completely out of control for Black.

29... ♕ce4



30.f5!

Here it is, the f4-f5 push! The aim is to weaken the black pawn structure and to open up the f-file for the rook.

30.♘xf7! was a worthy alternative.

30...exf5 31.♗xf5 ♘d6 32.♗h3 g6

32...h6 would have been more stubborn.

33.♘e3

33.♘xd6 ♘xd6 34.♘xf7 was already decisive.

33...♘bc8 34.♗d3 ♗b7 35.d5!

Not a pleasant move to face in time trouble. White will soon be able to choose between many different winning piece sacrifices.

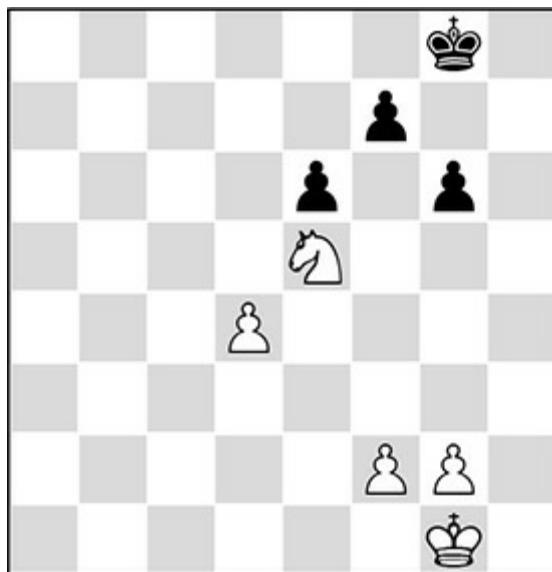
35...♘xd5 36.♘xg6

36.♗xg6, 36.♘xf7 and 36.♘c6 were winning as well.

36...♗f6 37.♘xd5 ♗xd5 38.♘e7+ 1-0

The h4-h5 push

If Black picks the h7/g6/f7 set-up, White usually switches to the h4-h5 push to soften the black kingside. An exchange on g6 would have the following result:



As you can see, weakening the black king was not the only achievement. The position of the knight on e5 also got strengthened, since the weakened g6-pawn discourages the move ...f7-f6. Both elements contribute to the possibility of a sacrifice that should have become quite familiar by now.

Game 124

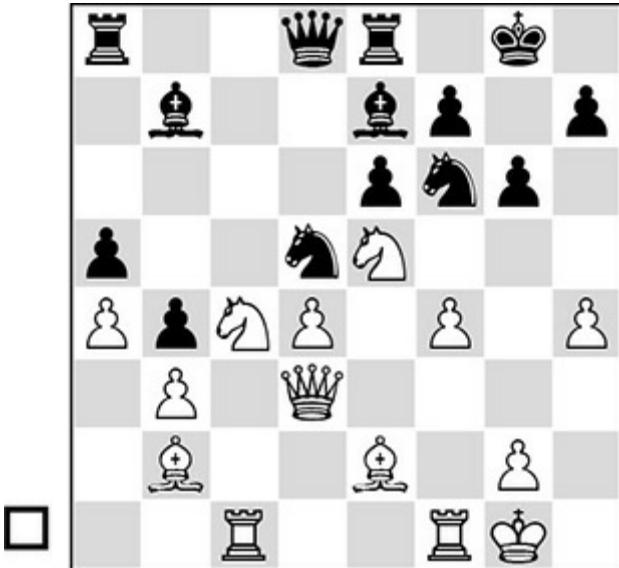
Viktoria Johansson

2189

Irina Botvinnik

2239

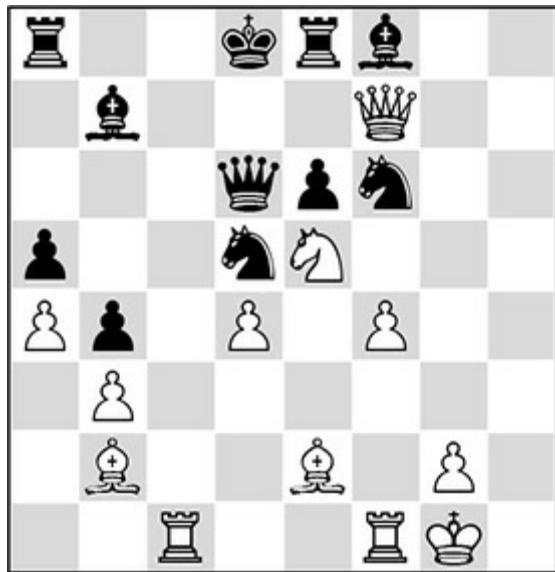
Izmir tt W 2004 (6)



19.h5 ♕f8 20.hxg6 hxg6

20...fxg6 was absolutely necessary. The h-pawn is much more reliable than its colleague on the f-file, as we are about to see.

21.♕xf7! ♔xf7 22.♖e5+ ♔e7 23.♘xg6 ♔d6 24.♘f7+ ♔d8



25.♗b5

25.♗xb7! would have been the killer.

25...♗e7

It was absolutely necessary to keep the white queen out. 25...♗e7! would have brought Black back into the game.

26.♗xe8+



White resigned in view of the beautiful 26... \mathbb{Q} x e8 27. \mathbb{Q} f7#.

Postponing $h \times g6$ until after the piece sacrifice can also be a possibility, depending on the way Black has organized his defence.

Game 125

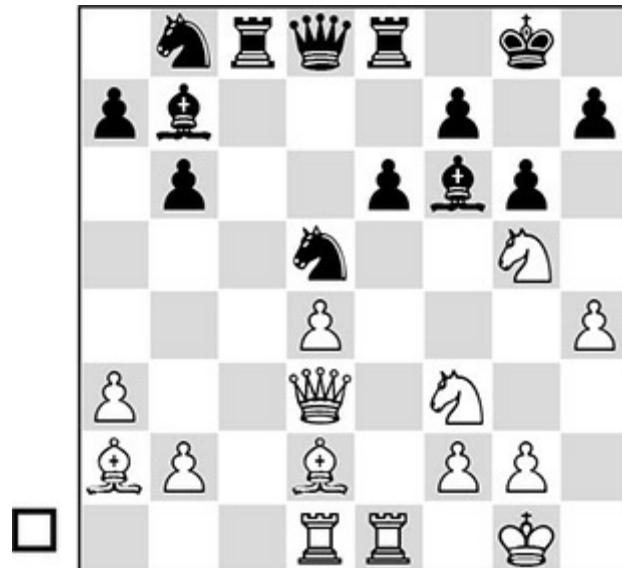
Daniel Gormally

2557

Josep Manuel Lopez Martinez

2507

Gothenburg Ech tt 2005 (3)



19.h5 \mathbb{R} c7

This is a very common way to set up a 7th-rank defence.

20. \mathbb{Q} b1 \mathbb{R} d7

The rook is involved in the defence of the f-pawn, so White decides to change his plan and focus on the h-pawn instead.

21. \mathbb{Q} xh7! \mathbb{Q} xh7 22.hxg6+ \mathbb{Q} g8

22...fxg6 23.♘xg6+ ♔h8 24.♗g5 is not an improvement for Black compared to the game.

23.♔h6 fxg6 24.♘xg6+ ♔h8 25.♗g5



The position has become very similar to the ones we studied in Chapter 8. Black has put all his money on the 7th-rank defence, but it is not going to help him. The white attack is simply too strong.

25...♝e7 26.♗h5 ♔g8 27.♗xe6 ♜e8 28.♗g6 ♜c8 29.♗d3 ♜xe6 30.♗xe6 ♜e7 31.♗g3 1-0

Conclusion

White has different promising pawn manoeuvres at his disposal in IQP positions. The **d4-d5 break** is the most important one. It is a weapon that contains a lot of venom and should therefore never be underestimated. White also has two slower pawn manoeuvres available. Both **f4-f5** and **h4-h5** can be promising pawn pushes. The aim is to soften the black kingside structure and increase the likelihood of a successful piece sacrifice.

9.7: FLASH CARDS



Bishops: the bishop switch

Once the queen/bishop battery has provoked either ...g7-g6 or ...h7-h6, it is time to switch the bishop to a new diagonal. Karpov went for 27.♗b3!, followed by a deadly 28.d5!, and won two moves later.



Knights: promising outposts

Look how comfortable both knights are at the outposts c5 and e5. White called his cavalry into action with 26.♘xf7! ♕xf7 27.♘xe6 and won shortly after.



Rooks: the open c-file

White can also use the c5-outpost for his rook to gain control over the c-file. But remember: controlling the c-file is not the end of the game. Be prepared for a tough battle until the end!



The queen: the perfect h3-square

The queen usually travels via d3 to h3. From there, she is able to participate in different kinds of dangerous pieces sacrifices. White went for 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ and won convincingly.

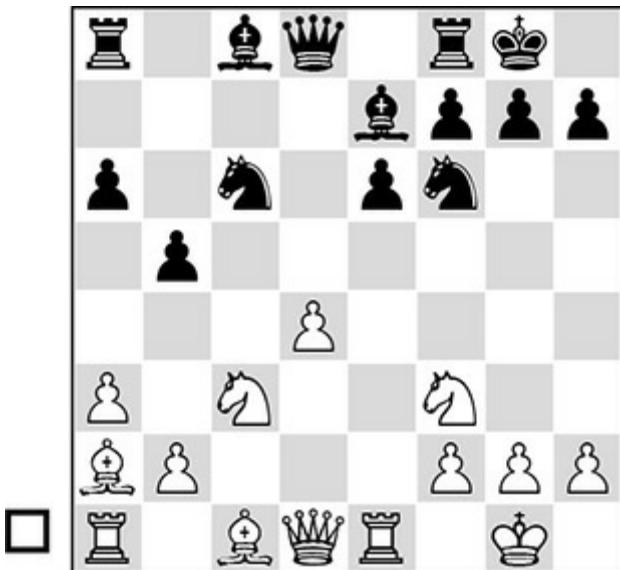


Pawn: the dangerous d4-d5 break

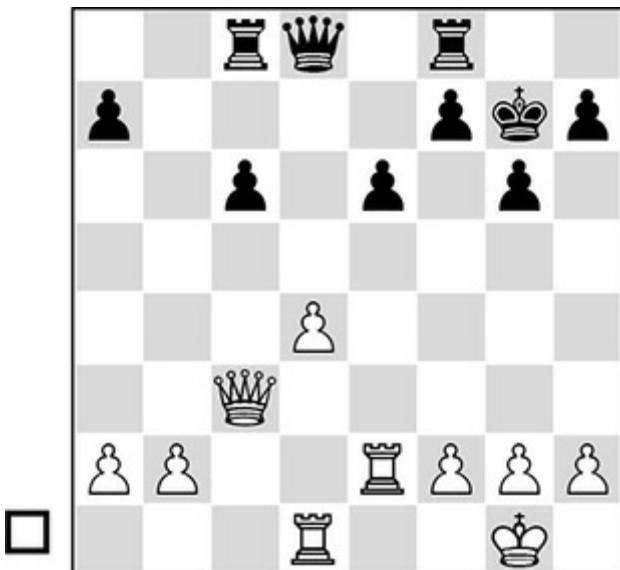
The tricky d4-d5 break is one of White's most dangerous weapons. Cramling swept the centre clean with 14.d5! exd5 15.Qg5! and used her central control to develop a very promising attack on the black king.

Exercises – d4-d5: yes or no?

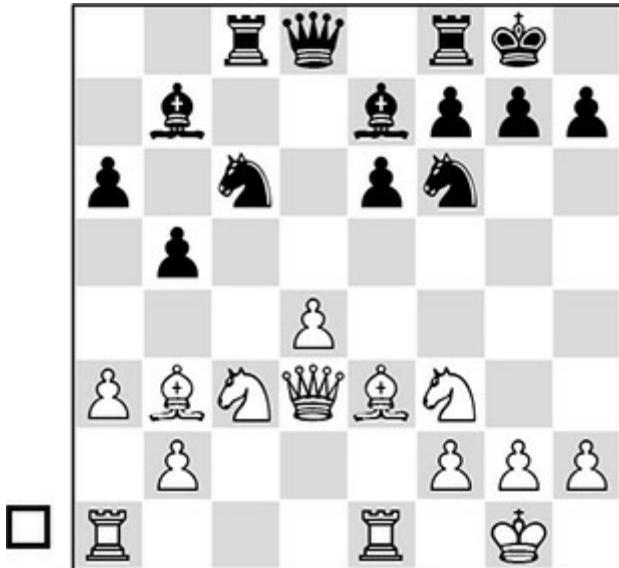
Solution 9.1



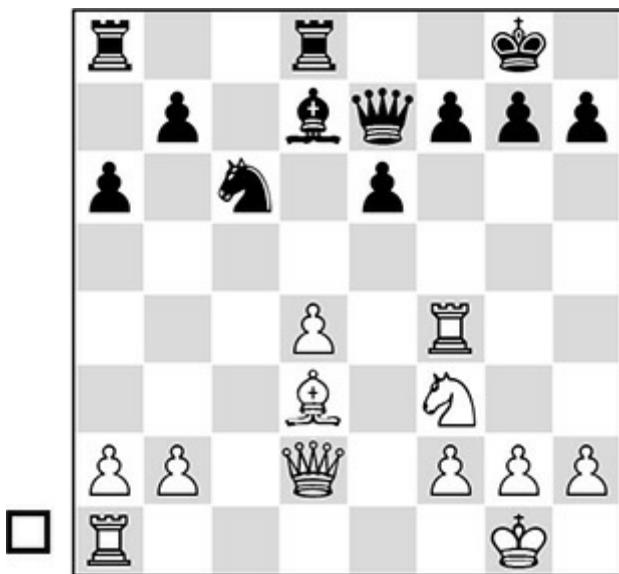
Solution 9.2



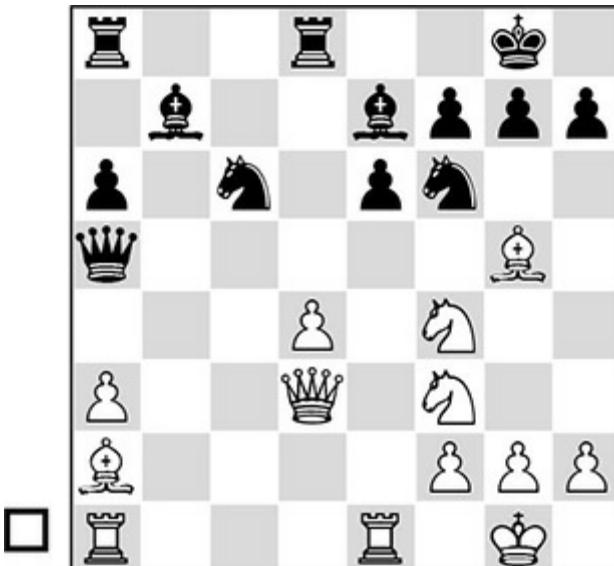
Solution 9.3



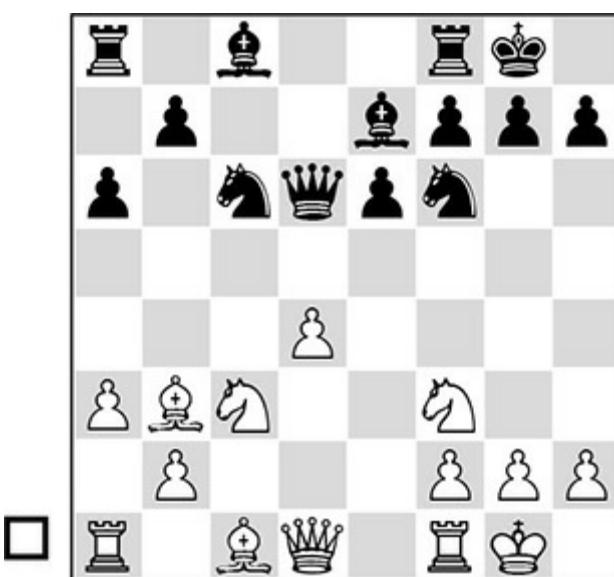
Solution 9.4



Solution 9.5

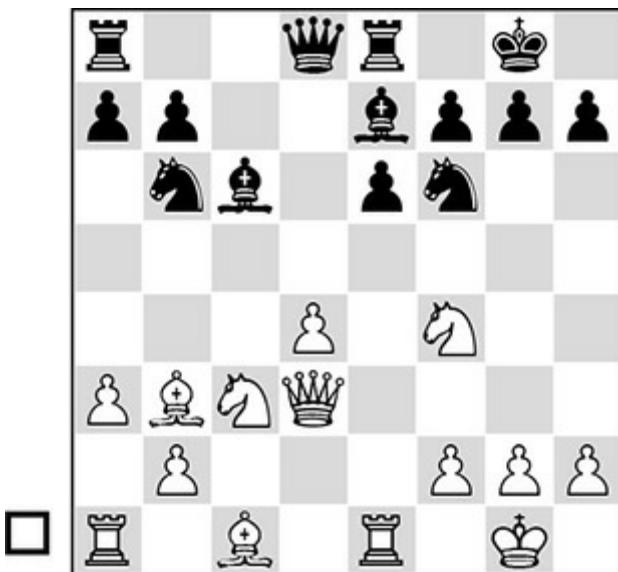


Solution 9.6

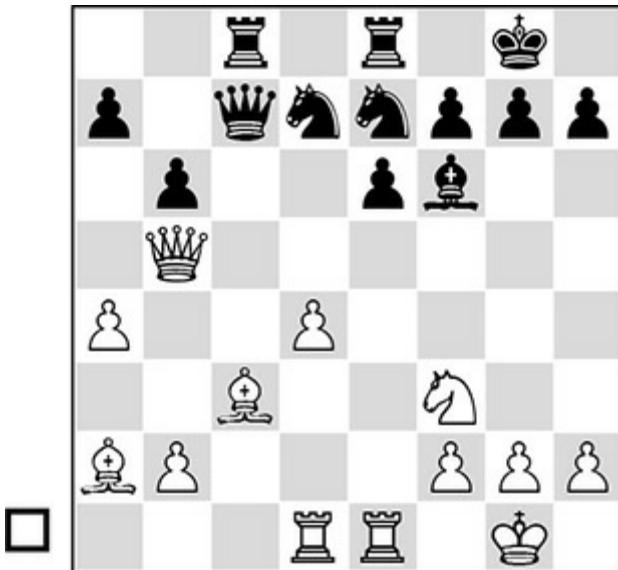


♖xe6: yes or no?

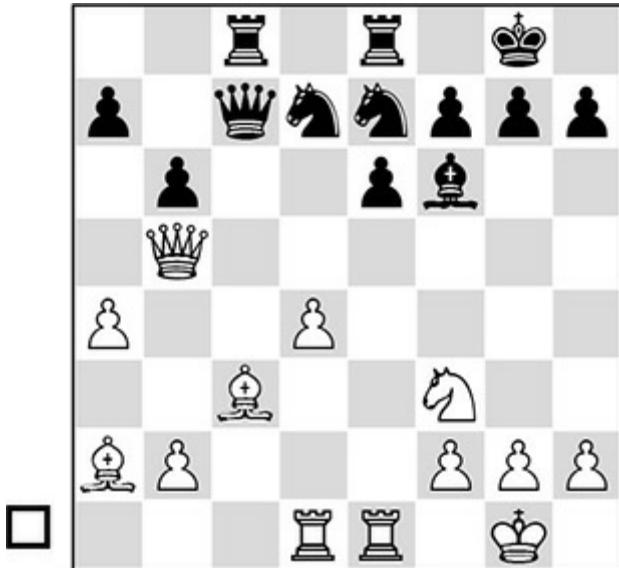
Solution 9.7



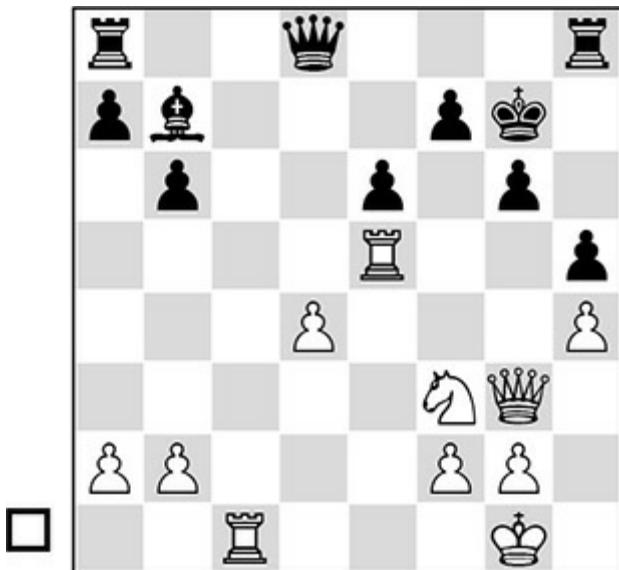
Solution 9.8



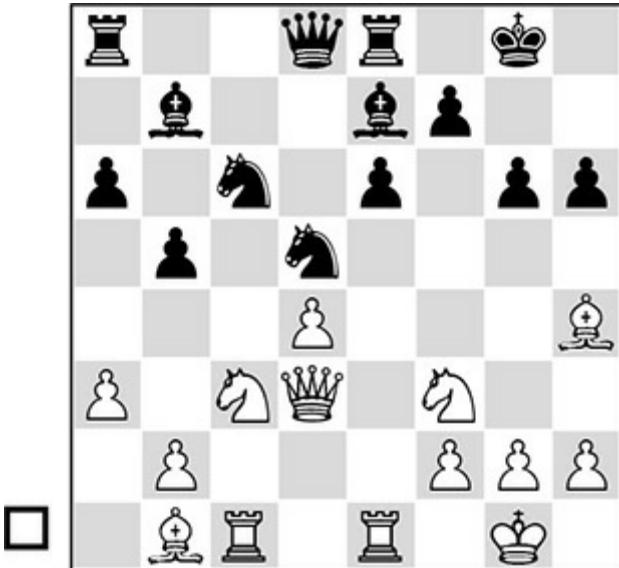
Solution 9.9



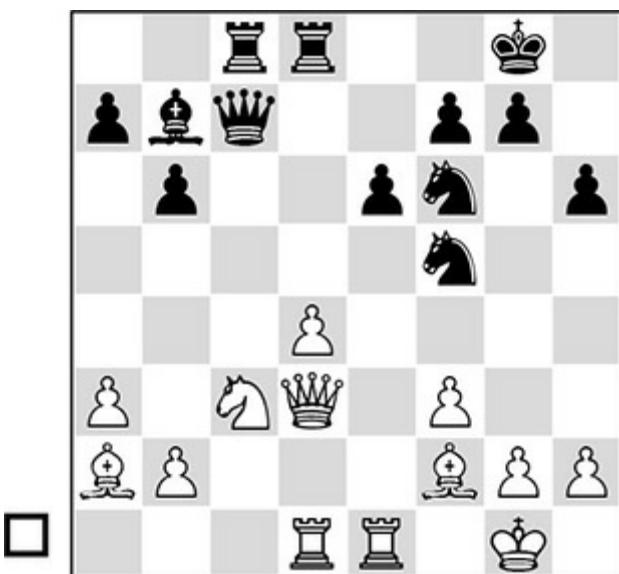
Solution 9.10



Solution 9.11

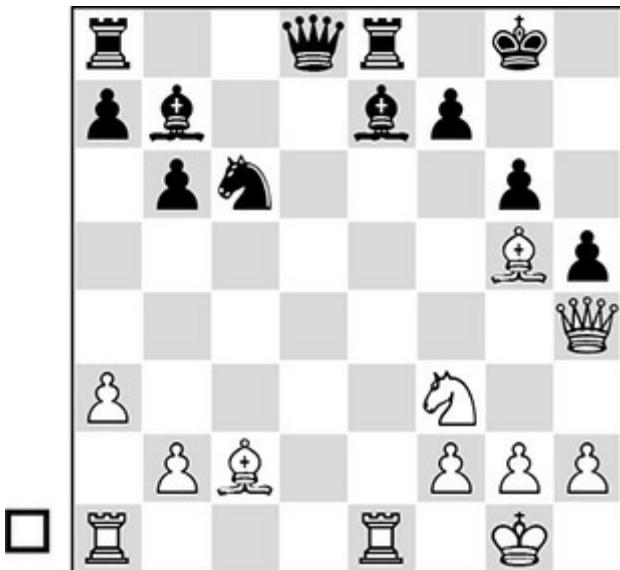


Solution 9.12

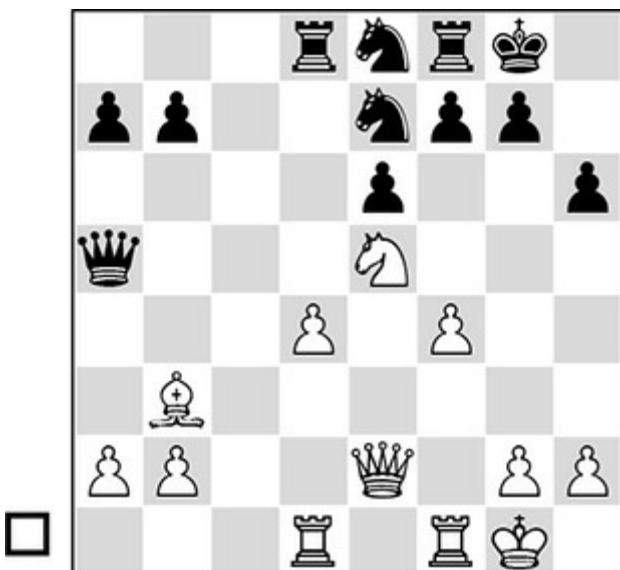


Attack

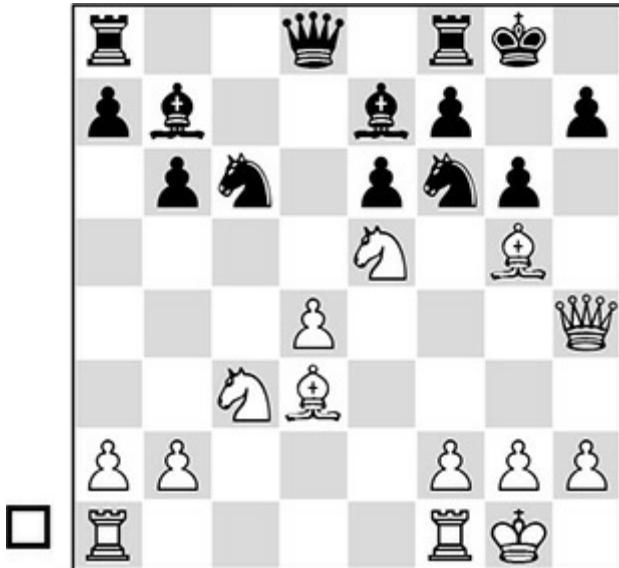
Solution 9.13



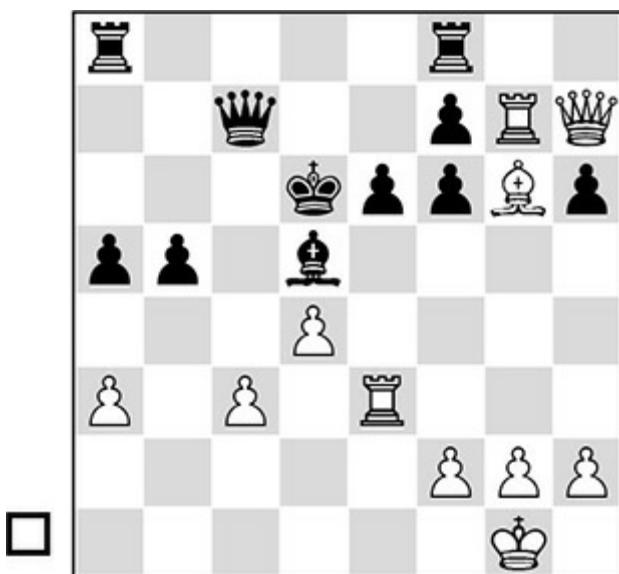
Solution 9.14



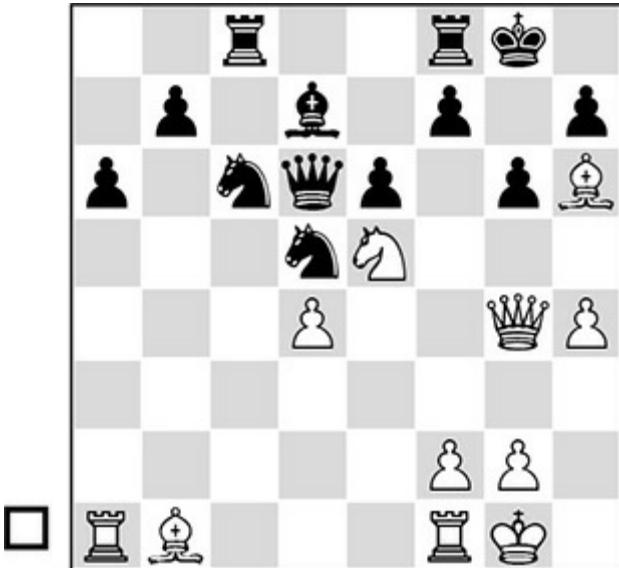
Solution 9.15



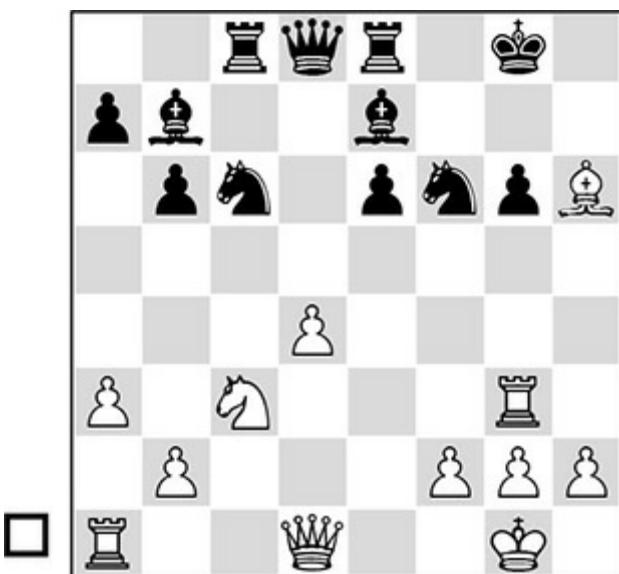
Solution 9.16



Solution 9.17

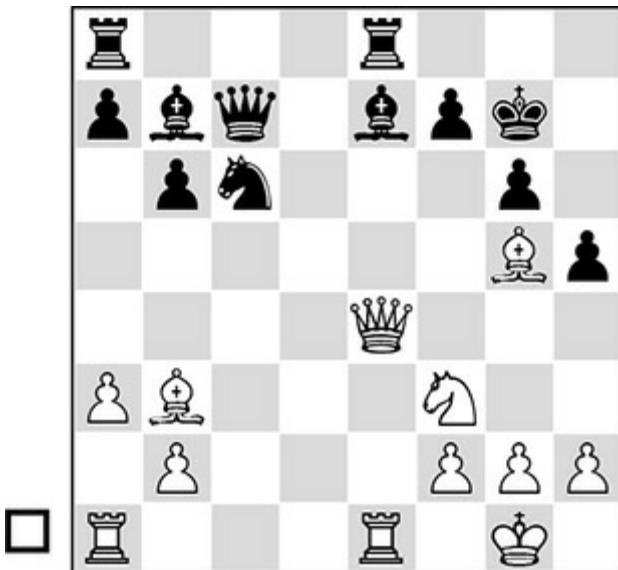


Solution 9.18

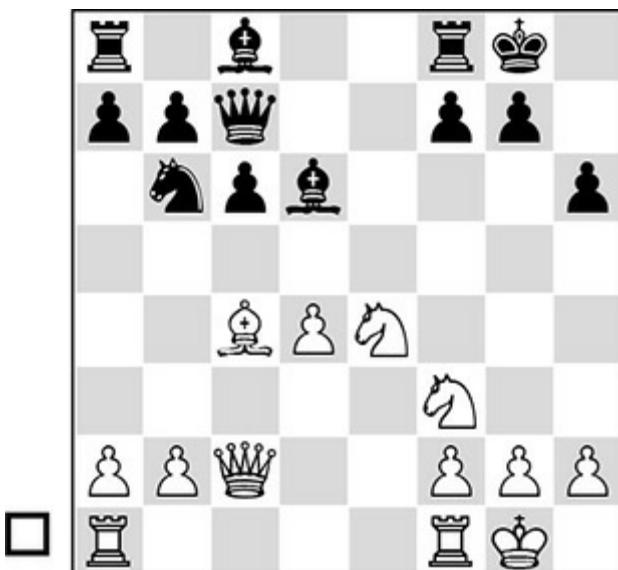


Attack 2

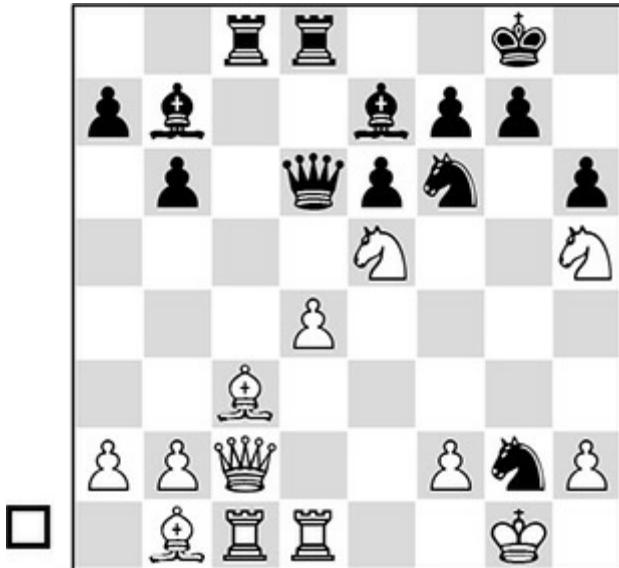
Solution 9.19



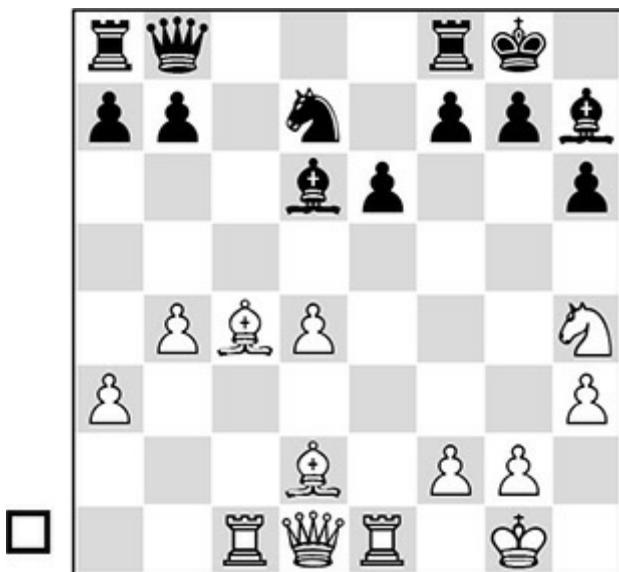
Solution 9.20



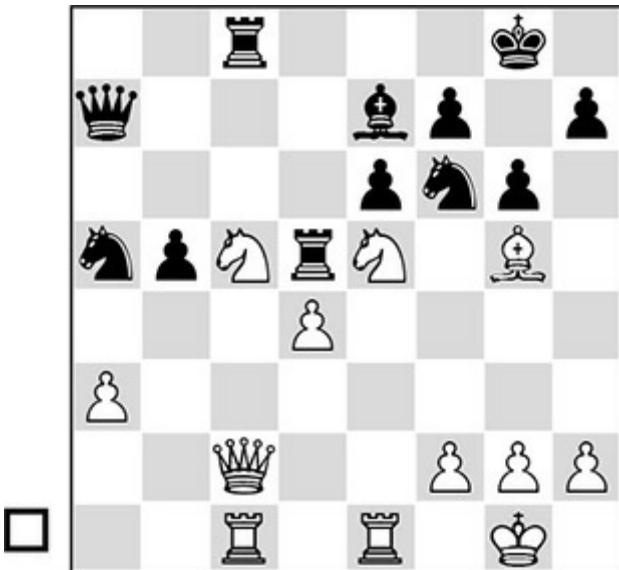
Solution 9.21



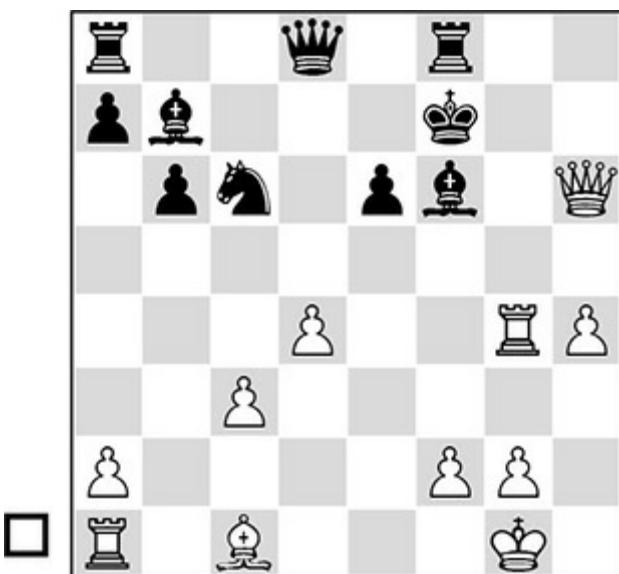
Solution 9.22



Solution 9.23

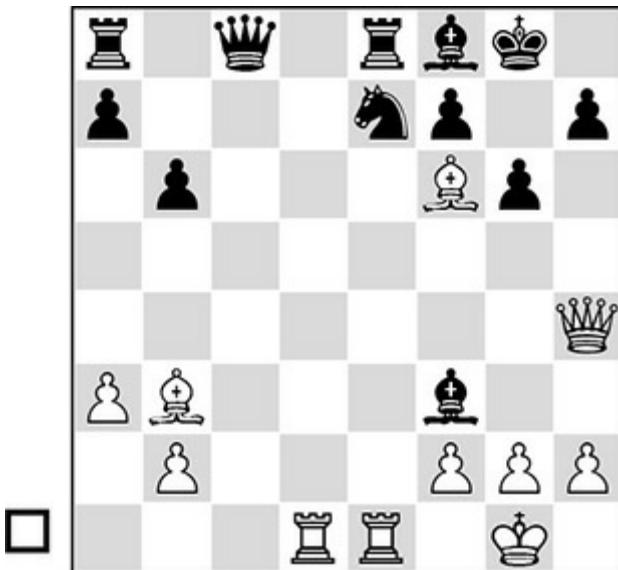


Solution 9.24



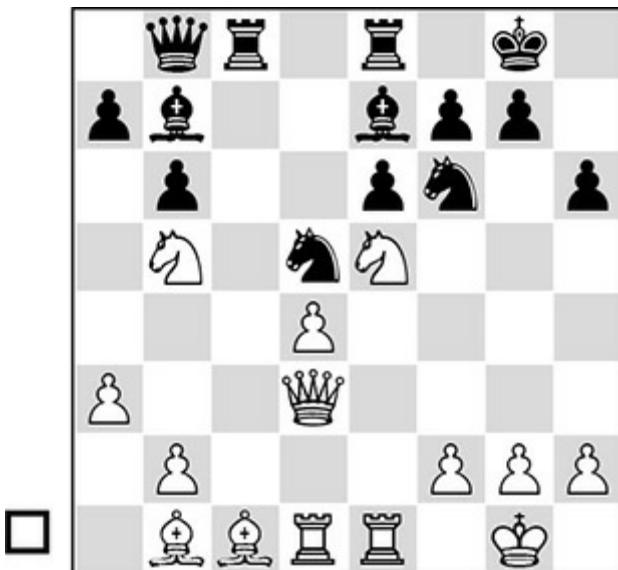
Piece sacrifice: yes or no?

Solution 9.25



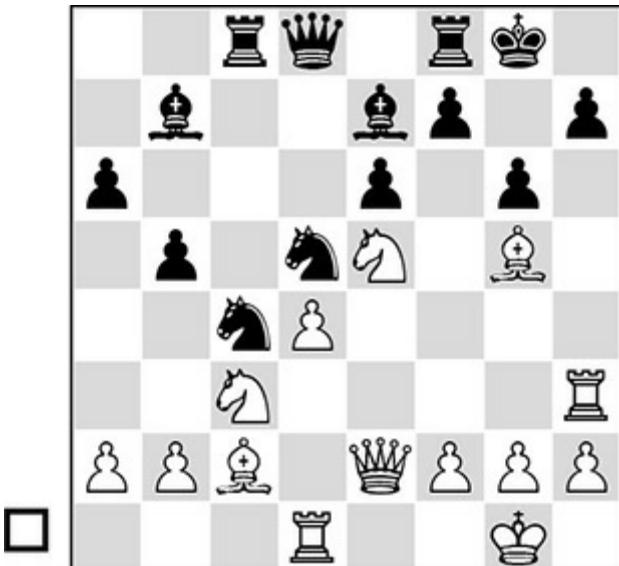
♕xf7+ ?

Solution 9.26



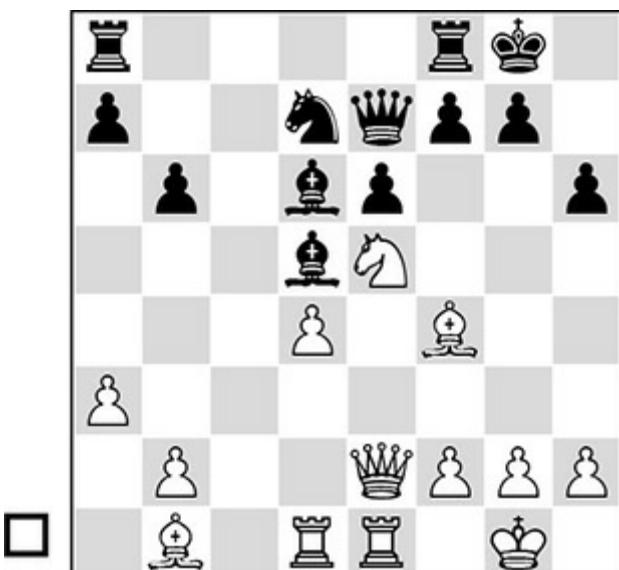
♕xh6 ?

Solution 9.27



◻ $\mathbb{Q}xg6 ?$

Solution 9.28



◻ $\mathbb{Q}xh6 ?$

Solution 9.29



♕ xg6 ?

Solution 9.30



♕ xf7 ?

CHAPTER 10

Fighting the IQP

10.1 Introduction

Studying a chapter full of successful rook lifts, bishop switches, pawn breaks and knight sacrifices might have given you the impression that an Isolated Queen's Pawn is a guarantee for a crushing victory. It is therefore time to look at these positions from a black perspective in order to provide you with a more realistic image.

A model game for Black

If there is one conclusion we have to derive from the previous chapter, it is that **Black has to be very careful**. He does run a serious risk of getting mated every once in a while.

Luckily, there is also an upside. As soon as the white dynamics fade out, Black can still boast a structural advantage in the form of the better pawn structure. Let's call in Karpov for a demonstration.

Viktor Kortchnoi

2695

Anatoly Karpov

2700

Merano Wch m 1981 (9)

1.c4 e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 ♜e7 4.♘f3 ♜f6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 0-0 7.♖c1 dxс4 8.e3 c5 9.♗xc4 cxд4 10.exd4 ♘c6!



This time, Black puts pressure on the d-pawn right from the beginning. He has no intention to allow his opponent easy development.

11.0-0 ♘h5

Remember this manoeuvre! It is aimed at exchanging the dark-squared bishops. An alternative would be 11...b6 followed by ...♗b7 and ...♖c8. The main challenge for Black in this kind of position is to find a nice post for his light-squared bishop.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

This is another common way of activating the bishop. Of course, Black would not mind an exchange for the strong knight on e5.

15. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Just like in the previous game, White decides to eliminate the defending knight on f6. White dreams of an invasion on h7 or a well-timed d4-d5 break. Only this time, none of these plans are very realistic and Black will be happy to see both knights disappear.

As a rule, the exchange of minor pieces favours Black in IQP positions. He is usually on the defending side and has a little less space. And, more important: the less minor pieces there are on the board, the more likely it is that the isolated pawn changes from an asset into a liability.

16... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$



17... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ can be met with 19... $bxc6$! – an important idea. This move puts an end to all d4-d5 ambitions.

19. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ loses its venom without a knight on e5 and a dark-squared bishop on the c1-h6 diagonal. Black can easily reply with 19...g6.

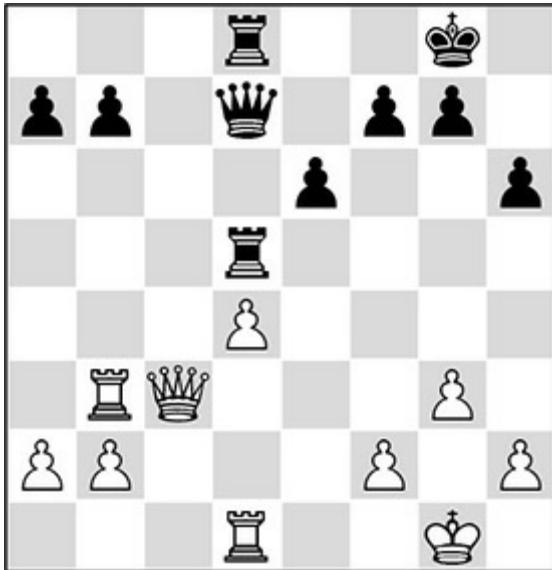
19... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 20. $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Black is maximizing the pressure on d4, making it impossible for White to think of anything else.

23. $\mathbb{Q}cd3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

It is not easy to come up with a constructive plan for White, but again, exchanging only helps Black.

27... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

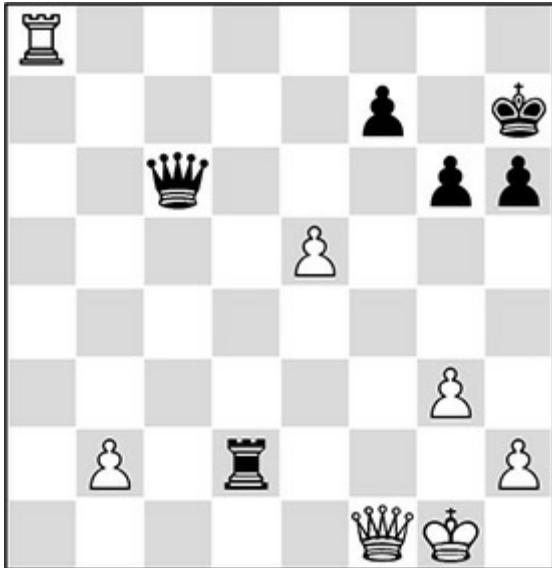


Remember this picture. It is the ideal position for Black. With all the minor pieces gone, White is deprived of any kind of counterplay and a well-timed ...e6-e5 will do the rest.

30.f4

This move prevents 30...e5, but has an obvious drawback. The white king is going to feel very uncomfortable for the remainder of the game.

30...b6 31.♗b4 b5 32.a4 bxa4 33.♘a3 a5 34.♖xa4 ♘b5 35.♖d2 e5 36.fxe5 ♖xe5 37.♗a1 ♘e8 38.dxe5 ♖xd2
39.♖xa5 ♘c6 40.♖a8+ ♔h7 41.♗b1+ g6 42.♗f1



Karpov finishes the game with a little ‘staircase manoeuvre’.

42...♘c5+ 43.♔h1 ♘d5+ 0-1

The conclusion is: if Black defends well and manages to take the sting out of the white initiative, he can start pursuing his own goals.

There are two dream scenarios he can aim at:

- Winning an ending;
- Executing a successful counterattack.

The aim of this chapter

We will have a closer look at the two dream scenarios for Black, i.e. **winning an ending** and **active**

counterplay. They will be the subject of sections 10.2 and 10.3.

We already know that Black has to survive quite a few obstacles in order to reach his goals. A few of them were extensively highlighted in Chapter 9. The following strategies are vital for success:

- Keep an eye on the white d-pawn;
- Be aware of piece sacrifices;
- Defend!

Each of these strategies will be discussed separately in the sections 10.4-10.6.

Just like in the previous chapter, the aim is to wrap up our learnings from the first eight chapters and apply them to the positions with an IQP. This time, the emphasis will be more on the defending side.

10.2 Dream scenario 1: a favourable ending

The main strategy against an Isolated Queen's Pawn looks pretty straightforward on paper:

- Exchange the minor pieces;
- Triple the major pieces on the d-file;
- Collect the d-pawn.

Things are, of course, never that easy in a practical game. In this section, we are going to take a closer look to investigate where we can expect the firmest resistance. We will again start at the end, and reason backwards.

Collect the d-pawn

Once the minor pieces have been removed and the major pieces have taken their spots on the d-file, it is time for the harvest. There are two ways to outnumber your opponent's defence and collect the d-pawn:

- More attacking than defending pieces;
- The thematic ...e5-e4.

Too many attacking pieces

Game 126

Ralf Kilian

2133

Romuald Mainka

2346

Germany tt 2014/15 (5)



10.cxd5 ♜xd5

This is a very common way to create an Isolated Queen's Pawn for your opponent. This move includes an exchange of the dark-squared bishops, which works in Black's favour.

11.♝xe7 ♜xe7 12.♛xd5 ♜xd5 13.♝b1

Already a step into the wrong direction. 13.♝e2 would have been the best attempt to avoid an IQP structure. The idea is to recapture on d4 with a piece after 13...♝xf3 14.♝xf3 cxd4 15.♝e4 ♛f6 16.♝xd4. The position is balanced.

White should avoid the IQP position, since it will be very hard for him to create active play with only two minor pieces left.

13...♞fd8 14.♝e2

14.dxc5 ♛xc5 15.♝e2 would have been the final chance to avoid an IQP structure. Black is nevertheless still slightly better on account of his more active pieces.



14...♝xf3!

The right exchange! Black gives up his powerful bishop with a clear goal in mind.

15.♝xf3 cxd4 16.exd4 ♛f6

White has more space, but with only one minor piece left, you cannot call this an advantage. On the contrary. Black has everything he can dream of. The pawn is securely blocked and is soon going to be a target.

17.g3 ♜ab8

This simple move releases the d-rook from duty. 17...♝b4 would already have won the d-pawn, but Black chooses to take it slow.

18.♜fd1 ♜d6 19.♝a3 ♜d7 20.♝c3 g6 21.♝cd3 ♜d8



Step 2 has been accomplished: the major pieces are lined up against the IQP!

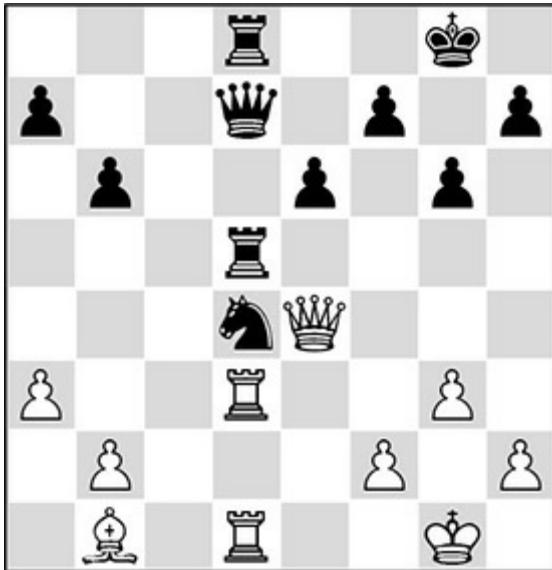
22.♗c3 ♜d5

The white bishop is securely protecting the d3-rook, making the standard ...e6-e5 break ineffective. This is, however, where the good news ends for White. This same bishop is unable to protect d4 and it will be very easy for Black to create a man-up situation.

23.♗d2 ♜e7 24.♗g5 ♜d5!

This is more accurate than 24...♝f5 25.d5 exd5. Black wants to keep his pawn chain intact and therefore sets his mind on capturing the pawn with a piece.

25.♗e3 ♜f5 26.♗e4 ♜xd4 27.a3



Being a pawn down is White's least concern at the moment. He is completely paralysed and can only watch how his opponent strengthens the outpost for his knight and sets his kingside majority into motion.

27...e5 28.♔g2 f5 29.♔h4 ♜g7 30.♔a2 ♜d6 31.♔c1 h6

There is no need to hurry.

32.♖dc3 ♜b7+ 33.f3 ♜8d7



White has the tough choice between allowing the violent 34... $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ or the crushing 34...e4. Instead he decided to resign.

The thematic ...e5-e4

If the minor pieces have already left the board, Black can no longer create a man-up situation. That's when it is time to call in the e-pawn!

Game 127

Julio Granda Zuniga

2663

Gabriel Sargissian

2673

Spain tt 2015 (3)



Just like in the previous example, Black cleverly exchanged most of the minor pieces before creating the IQP structure. His experienced opponent is a true expert in these kind of positions, but he underestimated the consequences of his next move.

16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

16.dxc5 was absolutely necessary, with a passive but defendable position after 16... \mathbb{Q} xc5 17. \mathbb{Q} xc5 \mathbb{Q} xc5 18. \mathbb{Q} d2 \mathbb{Q} d5 19. \mathbb{Q} xd5 \mathbb{Q} xd5 20.b3 \mathbb{Q} c8 21. \mathbb{Q} d3! \mathbb{Q} c3 22. \mathbb{Q} d1.

16... \mathbb{Q} d6!

Black is again able to create his dream position.

17. \mathbb{Q} xb7 \mathbb{Q} xb7



18. \mathbb{Q} g4

18. \mathbb{Q} d3 \mathbb{Q} ad8 19. \mathbb{Q} g4 e5 is not an improvement.

18...cxd4 19.exd4 \mathbb{Q} d5

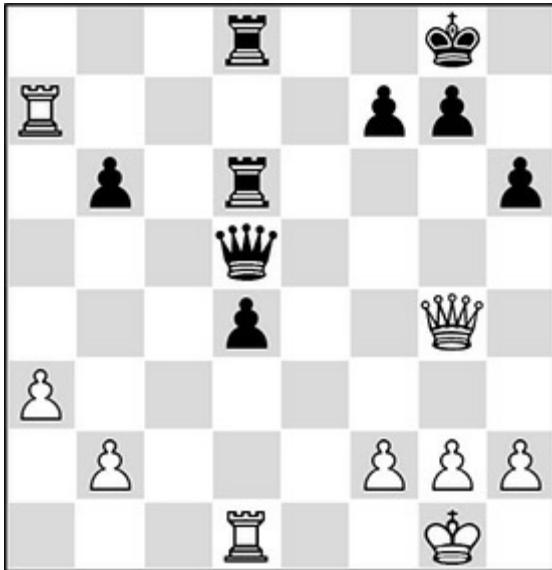


White is again defenceless against Black's plan to conquer the d-pawn.

20. \mathbb{Q} d1 \mathbb{Q} ad8 21.a3 e5! 22. \mathbb{Q} c7

White immediately goes after the a-pawn in an attempt to restore the material balance.

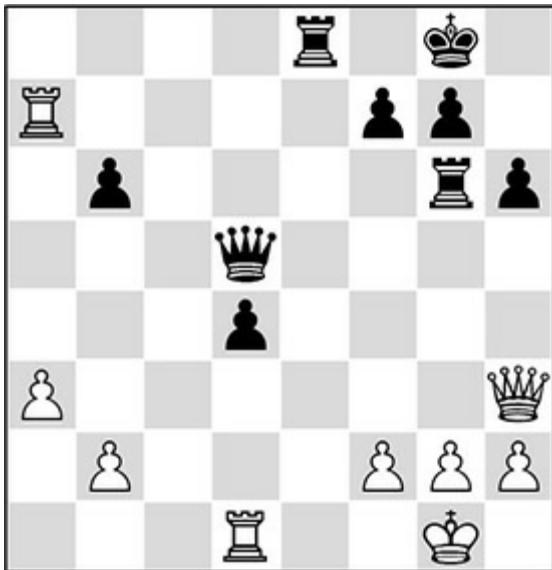
22...exd4 23. \mathbb{Q} xa7



White has regained the pawn, but we already saw the power of a passed pawn in a major-piece ending in Chapter 1.5.

23...d3

Simply pushing the pawn as far as possible makes a lot of sense and promises Black a large advantage. However, focusing on a kingside attack first would have been much stronger: 23... $\mathbb{Q}g6!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h3 \mathbb{Q}e8$.



analysis diagram

The threat is 25... $\mathbb{Q}ge6$ and 26... $\mathbb{Q}e1+$. White has the choice between covering the back rank with the rook or with the queen. Both continuations are pretty hopeless:

A) 25.g3 $\mathbb{Q}ge6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}e2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c7 d3$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}cc1 d2$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}b1 \mathbb{Q}e4$ and the next move will be the deadly 30.. $\mathbb{Q}e1$;

B) 25. $\mathbb{Q}c7 \mathbb{Q}ge6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}cc1 d3$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a1 d2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{Q}e1+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe1 \mathbb{Q}xe1+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe1 d1\mathbb{Q}!$ – this is another convincing example of the power of a passed pawn in a major piece ending.

24. $\mathbb{Q}e7 d2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

25. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 26.h3 would have been a better attempt.

25... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 26.h3 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h2 \mathbb{Q}xd1$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd1 \mathbb{Q}c5$ 0-1

Tripling the major pieces

Lining up the major pieces on the d-file is another key concept in our strategy. This can, of course, only be accomplished if we keep them on the board! Avoiding the exchange of major pieces is therefore an important technique for Black, and this can even outweigh the control of the c-file, as the following game illustrates.

Game 128

Vasili Ivanchuk

2750

Levon Aronian

2744

Morelia/Linares 2007 (7)



15.dxc5

Again, the transformation to an IQP structure only takes place after two pairs of minor pieces have already been exchanged. Only this time, the colours are reversed!

15... ♜xc3 16. ♜xc3 ♜xc5 17. ♜cc1!

White is not interested in the fight for the open file and evacuates his rook as quickly as possible.

17... ♜fc8

17... ♜xc1+ 18. ♜xc1 ♜c8 19. ♜d1 would have made Black's defensive task easier compared to the game.

18. ♜d1

White has preserved his rooks and can focus on doubling them on the d-file in order to put pressure on the IQP. In return, he had to grant the control of the open c-file to his opponent. This is, however, of very limited value, since he can easily control the entrance square with a minor piece and expel the black rook later.

18... ♜c2 19. ♜b5 ♜f8 20. ♜ab1

White carefully defends all the squares on the 7th rank. Moving the b-pawn would unnecessarily extend this rank and hand the c3-square to a black rook as well.

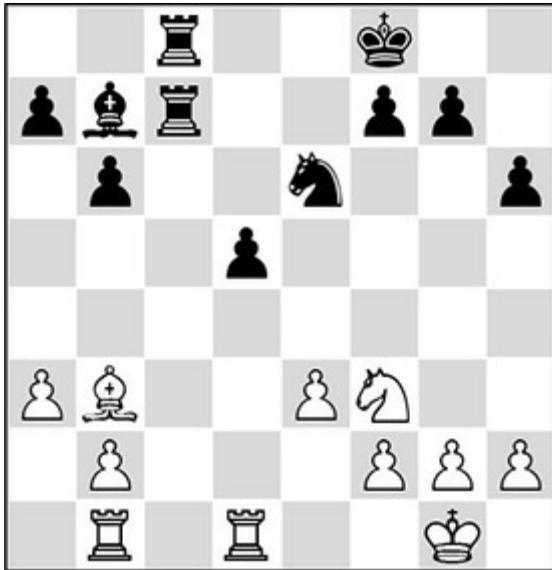
20... ♜2c7 21. ♜a4

In Chapter 3 we saw a few examples of a strong knight that covered the entrance square from d4. This time, the bishop is more suitable for the job.

21... ♜e6 22. ♜b3

Note how the bishop nicely combines attacking and defensive tasks.

22... ♜f8



23.h3!

Very instructive! White removes his king from the back rank in order to prepare the doubling of his rooks. The premature 23... $\mathbb{R}d2$ $\mathbb{R}c1+$! would have spoiled most of the fun.

23... $\mathbb{R}c5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25. $\mathbb{R}d2$ $\mathbb{R}b5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{R}bc5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e1$

A common manoeuvre. The knight is no longer needed to block the pawn and is on its way to b4 or f4 to add more pressure.

27... $a5$ 28. $\mathbb{R}bd1$ $\mathbb{R}d8$

White is not in a hurry at all. The strong pressure on the d-pawn makes it again impossible for the player with the IQP to come up with an active plan. This does not mean that White has an easy win. As long as Black has enough defending pieces at hand, and is able to prevent the e4-e5 push, he is still holding.

29. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{R}b5$ 30.f3



White bets on two horses and waits for the right moment for either $\mathbb{Q}d3-f4$ or $e3-e4$.

30... $\mathbb{R}c8$

Black loses his patience and decides to activate his rook.

30... $\mathbb{R}c5$, preventing $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and preparing to answer 31.e4 with 31... $\mathbb{Q}a4!$, would have promised him reasonable chances. After the text move, things start getting out of hand quickly.

31. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$

Suddenly the black rook is trapped!

31...d4

What else? 31... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$! would give White the man-up situation he was hoping for.

32. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f4+$!

It is, again, more attractive to capture with a piece.

33... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}1d2$ $\mathbb{Q}bc5$ 36.e4

Setting the kingside majority into motion is the logical next step. In the remainder, Ivanchuk had no difficulties converting his extra pawn into a full point.

36... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}4c6$ 38.e5 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 41.b4 g5 42. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ axb4 43.axb4 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}b8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 1-0

Exchanging the minor pieces

If we compare the previous examples with the dangerous attacks from Chapter 9, we can conclude that Black's life becomes a lot easier when (most of) the minor pieces have disappeared. It will not always be possible to convert the pleasant ending into a full point, but at least he no longer has to fear the white initiative.

Getting rid of the minor pieces is usually the hardest part of the plan. It really helps if the IQP structure appears only *after* half of the minor pieces are already gone. This way, White never really gets the chance to develop his typical initiative.

These situations are, however, not very common. In most IQP positions, Black has to deal with an intact white army and needs to play very carefully to neutralize White's initiative before he can think of simplifying the position. This is not an easy task at all, but the more you practice, the better you will get at it. Studying the games of true experts is another effective way to develop these skills.

Granda Zuniga is one of those experts. Somehow he always seems to find the right squares for his pieces and knows when to put pressure and when to stick to stubborn defence. Watch how he slowly but surely improves his own position first, before switching to the simplification mode, in the following fragment.

Game 129

René Stern

2521

Julio Granda Zuniga

2648

Germany Bundesliga 2016/17 (10)



The black pieces are passive, but quite harmoniously placed. White does not have a concrete threat at the moment, so Granda Zuniga starts by improving his dark-squared bishop.

20...Bf8 21.Ba2 Bce7 22.Bc3 g6 23.Be5

A very logical move, but improving his worst piece with 23.Bd2 and 24.Bg5 would have been stronger.

23...Bg7 24.h4

White has an unstable centre and poorly coordinated pieces. An attack on the king will, therefore, only help Black. Maybe it was already time for White to switch to plan B with 24.Bxd5 Bxd5 25.Ba5 in order to swap a few rooks on the c-file and try to equalize. Switching to plan B before it is too late is, however, one of the most difficult things to do in chess from a psychological point of view.

24...Bc7

This move adds pressure on d4, making it more difficult for White to manoeuvre his pieces to the optimal squares.

25.h5

White sticks to his plan, but Black has skilfully overprotected his vulnerable f7- and e6-pawns and is perfectly safe.

25.Be4 Bb5 would also cause serious problems for White.



25...Bc6

Black is satisfied with the placement of his pieces and starts simplifying activities. Objectively, it would have been even stronger to go after the d-pawn straightaway with 25... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, but this is never without risk.

26. $\mathbb{B}xc6$

White cannot prevent the exchange of his most active piece without losing the d-pawn.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 27. $\mathbb{h}xg6$ $\mathbb{h}xg6$ 28. $\mathbb{B}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{B}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

There goes minor piece pair number 2. Note how the other white bishop is still waiting for orders at e1!

30. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 32. $\mathbb{B}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$



33. $d5$

White cannot stand the pressure anymore and exchanges the d-pawn, despite the fact that the ending that follows by force is unpleasant. The more patient 33. $\mathbb{B}h4$ would have been stronger. The threat is $d4-d5$, and after 33... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ White can finally liberate his bishop with 34. $\mathbb{Q}d2$, followed by 35. $\mathbb{Q}g5$. Black is better, but there is still a lot to play for.

33... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 34. $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Black is a healthy pawn up and should be winning relatively easily. It is nevertheless instructive to see how quickly Granda Zuniga optimizes his queen and bishop and manages to finish the job within ten (!) moves.

39. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 40. $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 42. $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 43. $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}b8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$

White resigned.

Conclusion

Simplifying into a favourable ending is one of the most important strategies when playing against an IQP. The aim is to exchange all the minor pieces, line-up the major pieces against the d-pawn, and try to conquer it.

Getting rid of the minor pieces is often the hardest part. Black has to play very carefully and neutralize the white initiative first, before he can start his exchanging activities.

10.3 Dream scenario 2: counterattack

Carefully exchanging minor pieces and steering the game into a favourable ending is not the only way for Black to defeat an IQP set-up. There are also many practical examples in which Black benefits from a lack of coordination in his opponent's camp and launches a deadly counterattack.

Black's counterplay can appear in different shapes. In this section, I will discuss three of them:

10.3.1 Tactical combinations;

- 10.3.2 Attack on the king;
- 10.3.3 Conquering the c-file.

10.3.1 Tactical combinations

Black should always be on the lookout for tactical opportunities. They usually arise when White loses the coordination between his pieces or is unable to keep both the d-pawn and the various vulnerable squares in his camp under control.

A very common tactical theme is the overloaded piece. This is when two different tasks are assigned to a single piece. The next game fragment is full of overloaded pieces. I will present it to you as a quiz.

Game 130

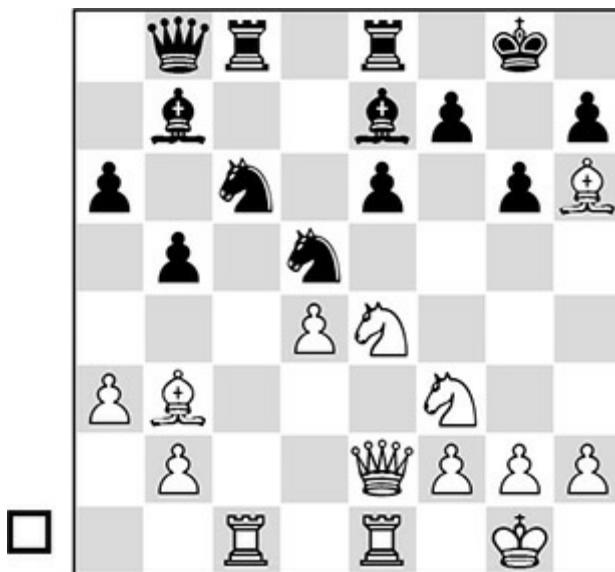
Alexander Razmyslov

2452

Julio Granda Zuniga

2653

Burguillos 2012 (5)



QUESTION 1: Would you play

- A) 21. \mathbb{N} c5, to occupy the outpost with your knight;
- B) 21. \mathbb{Q} d2, to reinforce your control over the dark squares or;
- C) 21. \mathbb{B} g5, to eliminate the most important black defender of the dark squares?

21. \mathbb{B} g5

Before we comment on this game continuation, let's have a closer look at the starting position.

White has played everything by the book and has good reasons to be optimistic:

- Both rooks on the open files;
- Both knights close to an outpost;
- The light-squared bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal to put pressure on d5;
- The dark-squared bishop comfortably placed at h6.

There is only one piece missing on this list: the queen. It is White's worst piece and, therefore, the one that needs to be improved. All the critical points in the position are on dark squares, so the queen needs to be a dark square as well.

White gets a large advantage after 21. \mathbb{Q} d2!. From there, the queen strengthens d4 and covers the vital f4-

square. The relevance of reinforcing both d4 and f4 becomes clear if we take a closer look at the alternative moves.

For instance, 21. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ loses the **d-pawn** with the following standard tactical combination:



analysis diagram

21... $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$. Being able to recapture on d4 with a queen is an effective remedy to this trick. The **f4-square** turned out to be relevant in the game. This piece of information can help you solving the next question.



QUESTION 2: Would you play

- A) 21...f5;
- B) 21... $\mathbb{Q}f4$; or
- C) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$?

21...f5

This is the most logical move, chasing away the e4-knight and overloading the f3-knight with the defence of both the white pawn and bishop. However, the game will show that this line is less clear than the convincing 21... $\mathbb{Q}xg5!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}exg5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4!$.



analysis diagram

Remember this manoeuvre. The f4-square often plays a key role in various tactical combinations.

21... ♜f4 gives White a second chance to find the right square for his queen. White is clearly better after 22. ♖e3! ♜d5 23. ♖d2.

22. ♜c5

White does not take the opportunity to steer the game into muddy waters. 22. ♜xc6! ♜xc6 23. ♜c5 would have promised him decent compensation for the exchange.



The next question is a difficult one. I advise you to set a clock on twenty minutes and decide what you would play in an actual game.

QUESTION 3: Would you prefer

- A) 22... ♜xd4; or
- B) 22... ♜xg5 ?

22... ♜xd4

This is a very logical move, but reversing the move order with 22... ♜xg5! would have been a more promising continuation for Black. For instance: 23. ♜xg5 ♜xd4 24. ♖d1 (24. ♖d2 ♜f4!) 24... ♜xb3

25. $\mathbb{B}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4!$. The knight is also very comfortable at f4, especially in combination with the fianchettoed light-squared bishop. White has to be very careful now. 26.g3 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 27. $\mathbb{B}d1!$ (the only move. The queen has to keep an eye on d3) 27... $\mathbb{B}d6$ 28.b4 h6! 29.gxf4 hxg5 30.fxg5 $\mathbb{B}f4$ and Black has the better chances.

23. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$



Now it is White's turn to overload one of his opponent's pieces.

24. $\mathbb{Q}xa6!$ $\mathbb{Q}f4!$

24... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 25. $\mathbb{R}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ is slightly better for White.

25. $\mathbb{B}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xa6$ $\mathbb{R}xc1$ 27. $\mathbb{R}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ 28. $gxh3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$

The smoke has cleared. White has survived the complications and has decent counterplay for the exchange. The position is, however, far from easy.

29. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$

This is too greedy. Bishops do not feel very comfortable at such a short distance. It would have been better to go for 29. $\mathbb{Q}a4!$ and leave the e-pawn for the knight. The game might end in a move repetition after 29... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 30. $\mathbb{B}a7$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ (30... $\mathbb{R}f8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ does not help Black either) 31. $\mathbb{Q}a6$.

29... $\mathbb{Q}g7$

The e-pawn came at a high price. The white pieces have lost their coordination and the black rook can look to the future with confidence again.

30. $b3$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 31. $\mathbb{B}b7+$ $\mathbb{R}e7$ 32. $\mathbb{B}d5$

The tricky 32. $\mathbb{B}b4!$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 33. $\mathbb{B}d5!$ would have been the most stubborn try.



analysis diagram

The game might continue 33... $\mathbb{Q}xa3!$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ (34... $gxf5$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}d4+!$ with a deadly discovered attack) 35. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $gxf5$. Black is better, but there is still a lot to play for. In the game, White was unable to coordinate his minor pieces and lost quickly:

32... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 37. $h4$ $h6$ 38. $h3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 40. $b4$ $f4$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 0-1

Five years later, Granda Zuniga played a game in which he could have won a d-pawn with a similar trick. However, he preferred to completely outplay his opponent with an equal amount of pawns instead. We already covered the last part of this instructive game in section 10.2. Here is the prequel.

Game 131

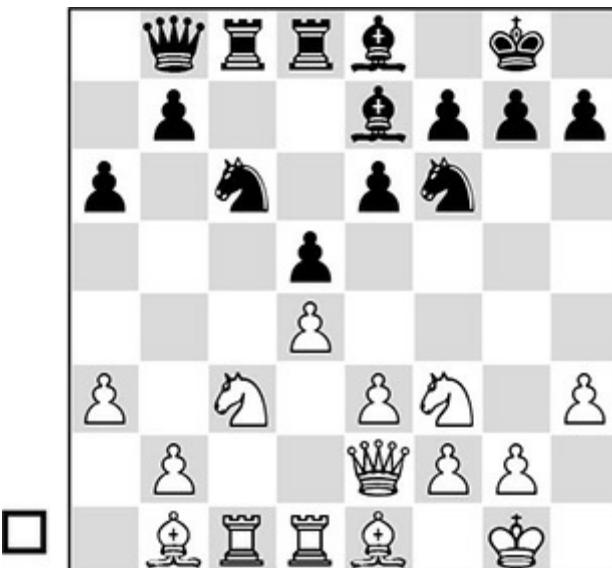
René Stern

2521

Julio Granda Zuniga

2648

Germany Bundesliga 2016/17 (10)



18.e4 dxe4 19.♕xe4

White has deliberately created an Isolated Queen's Pawn for himself, but probably misjudged the following tactical trick.

19...♝xd4!

19...♝d5 was the game, which we already discussed in the previous section.

20.♝xd4 ♕xc1

Black takes advantage of the overloaded white rook.

21.♕xc1 ♕xd4 22.♝c3!



Both players probably calculated this line during the game, but ignored it because of 22...♜d8 23.♝xf6+ ♜xf6 24.♝xf6 gxf6 25.♝g4+ ♜h8 26.♝h4 f5 27.♝f6+, with only a perpetual. However, Black has a thematic zwischenzug at his disposal:

22...♝f4!

Attacking a rook and defending the knight!

23.♜e1 ♜d8

Black is a healthy pawn up.

10.3.2 Attack on the king

The attractive f4-square can also be deployed for a direct attack on the enemy king. There is again an important role for the fianchettoed light-squared bishop.

Game 132

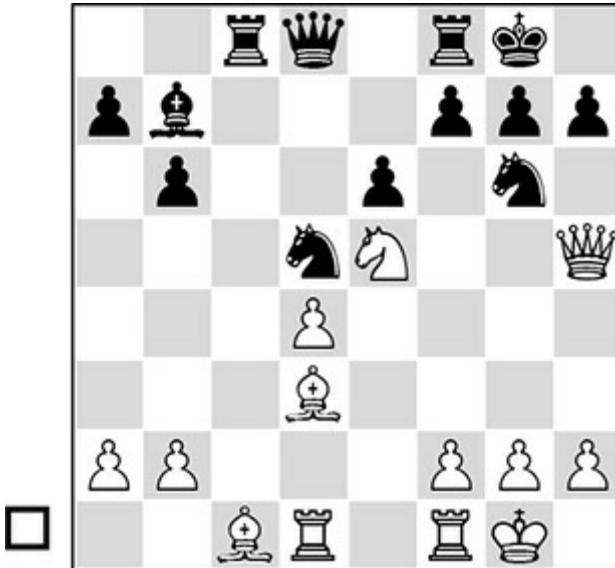
Georg Waldschmidt

2231

Thomas Willemze

2398

Germany tt 2008/09 (6)



23. ♔b1

This is already the decisive mistake.

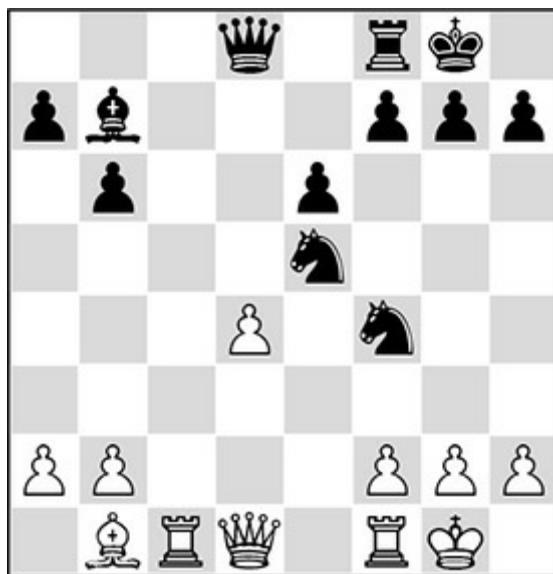
23. ♔g5 would have led to a balanced game.

23... ♕xc1!

Eliminating the defender of the important f4-square!

24. ♕xc1 ♘df4 25. ♖d1 ♘xe5

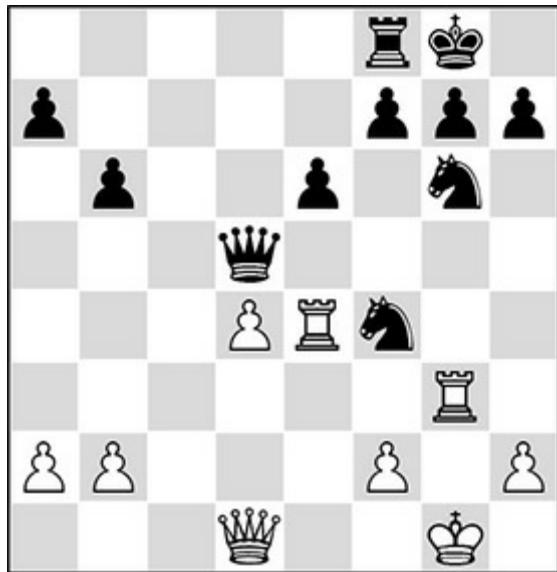
25... ♔xg2 is also very convincing.



26. ♖c3

White is unable to recapture the knight, since 26.dxe5 ♔g5! is a very clear demonstration of Black's deadly attacking power.

26... ♘eg6 27. ♖e1 ♘xg2 28. ♔e4 ♘xe4 29. ♖xe4 ♘2f4 30. ♖g3 ♔d5



Defending this position is almost impossible. Two knights are simply too strong for a rook in an attack.

31. $\mathbb{R}f3 \mathbb{R}c8$ 32. $\mathbb{R}xf4 \mathbb{R}c1+$

White resigned. 33. $\mathbb{R}g2 \mathbb{Q}xf4\#$ would be mate.

10.3.3 The open c-file

Seizing the c-file is not one of Black's main strategies. The fight for the open file might result in an exchange of rooks, and we already discussed in section 10.2 that Black usually prefers to preserve both rooks for the major-piece ending. However, if Black does have the opportunity to conquer the open file and bring a rook to the 7th rank, he should go for it, of course!

Game 133

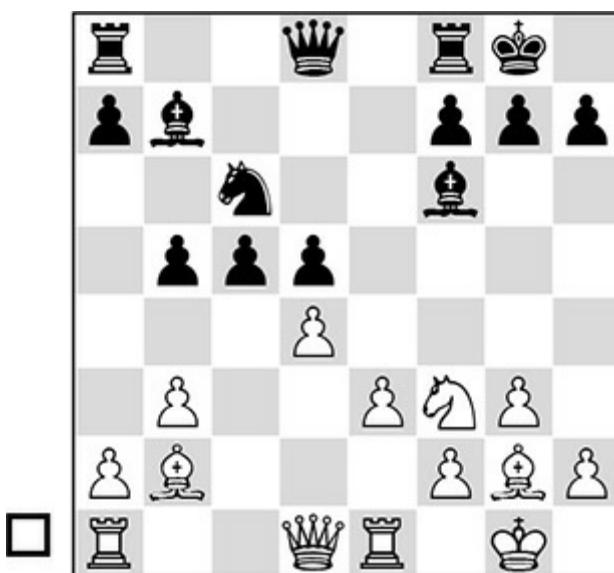
Eesha Karavade

2421

Thomas Beardson

2404

Hoogeveen 2016 (6)



Black is a very talented Dutch junior player, who however has just brought himself into trouble by pushing ...

b6-b5. This move allows White to create a highly favourable IQP structure.

14. ♕b1!

A multifunctional move. White prepares 15.dxc5 and prevents 14...c4.

14... ♜e7

14...c4 was the only way to avoid the IQP structure, but it runs into 15.bxc4 bxc4 16. ♘a3!.

15. dxc5 ♘xb2 16. ♕xb2 ♜xc5

We arrived at an IQP position with the colours reversed. White has good reasons to be optimistic. She has already exchanged two minor pieces and Black's knight and bishop are both awkwardly placed.

17. ♕d2 ♜fd8 18. ♕d4 ♜e7 19. ♕c2



Black has employed all his pieces for the support of the d-pawn. Therefore, White decides to open up a second front: the c-file. It will be very difficult for Black to defend both the pawn and the entrance square on the 7th rank.

19... ♜b6 20. ♜d3 b4 21. ♜ec1 ♜a6 22. ♜d2 ♜ac8 23. ♜h3



Remember this technique from Chapter 4? White takes control of the square of the opposing rook. Now Black is able to exchange one set of rooks, but he cannot prevent the other white rook from seizing control of the open file.

23... ♜xc2 24. ♜xc2 h6 25. ♜c7!

Mission accomplished! White enters the 7th rank.

25... ♜f8 26. ♜xb6 axb6 27. ♜c7 ♜a8

Black could have exchanged the rook with 27... ♜c8 28. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 29. ♜xc8+ ♜xc8, but the knight ending after 30. ♜c6 ♛e8 31. ♜xb4 is rather hopeless too. White has the opportunity to create an outside passed pawn and should win without too many problems.

28. ♜c2 ♜d3 29. ♜xb4 ♜b1 30.a4

White is not just a pawn up, but both the b6- and d5-pawns have to fear for their lives too. She will soon collect a second pawn and win the remaining ending convincingly.

30... ♜d8 31. ♜b7 g6 32. ♜xb6 d4 33. exd4 ♜xd4 34. ♜f1 ♜e4 35. ♜e2 ♜d2 36. ♜f1 ♜b2 37. f3 ♜f5 38. ♜c4 ♜e6 39. ♜xe6 fxe6 40. ♜d3 ♜b1+ 41. ♛e2 ♜d5 42. ♜b7 ♛e8 43. ♜c5 ♜d8 44. a5 ♜a1 45. a6 1-0

Conclusion

Besides aiming for a favourable ending, Black can also try to develop active counterplay. We came across several important topics that are worth remembering:

- The attacking power of Black's fianchettoed light-squared bishop;
- The vulnerable f4-square;
- The overloaded defender of the d-pawn;
- The c-file as a second front.

10.4 Be aware of the d4-d5 break!

The d4-d5 break is an important weapon for White in IQP positions. In Chapter 9 we already drew the conclusion that Black should never underestimate this move and take it into consideration all the time.

An even better approach would be to take preventive measures against this important weapon. In this section, I will show you four different techniques that can be used to discourage the d4-d5 break:

10.4.1 The solid ... bxc6;

10.4.2 The ... ♜c7-d7 manoeuvre;

10.4.3 Keeping the pawn under pressure;

10.4.4 Preparing a counterattack.

10.4.1 The solid ... bxc6

Putting a pawn on c6 is a very effective way of preventing the d4-d5 break altogether. This technique was already briefly mentioned in the Kortchnoi-Karpov game in our introduction to Part IV:

Game 134

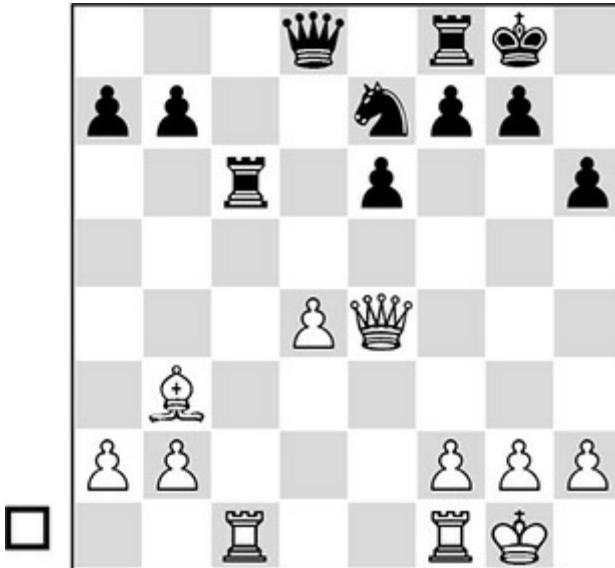
Viktor Kortchnoi

2695

Anatoly Karpov

2700

Merano Wch m 1981 (9)



Here, Black was ready to meet 19. $\mathbb{N}xc6$ with 19... $bxc6!$, preventing the d4-d5 push altogether. Instead, White went for 19. $\mathbb{N}c3$. We already know how the game ended.

Recapturing on c6 with the pawn is an extremely solid option, since it deprives White of one of his main weapons. You might consider the isolated c-pawn to be a bit weak, but it is a lot easier to defend than its d4 counterpart. Even if White is able to move his d-pawn to a safer place, Black should be able to develop enough counterplay for his ‘weak’ pawn, as the following game shows.

Game 135

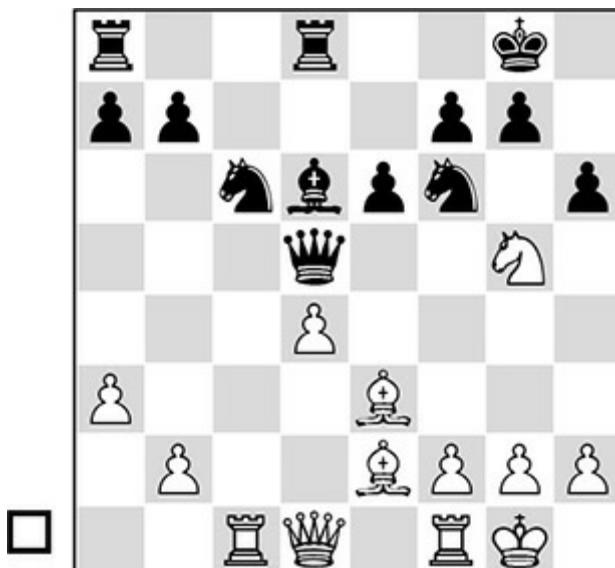
Lin Chen

2526

Ni Hua

2681

China tt 2016 (4)



14. $\mathbb{N}f3$

White cannot resist the temptation and gives up his strong light-squared bishop in return for an isolated black c-pawn. The natural 14. $\mathbb{N}f3 \mathbb{N}c7$ 15. $\mathbb{N}c4 \mathbb{N}d6$ 16. $\mathbb{N}e2$, followed by 17. $\mathbb{N}fd1$, would have been better.

14... $\mathbb{N}f5$ 15. $\mathbb{N}xc6$ $bxc6$ 16. $\mathbb{N}f3$ $\mathbb{N}b5$ 17. $\mathbb{N}c2$ $\mathbb{N}d5$ 18. $\mathbb{N}e2$ $a5$ 19. $\mathbb{N}fc1$ $\mathbb{N}ab8$



White aims all his forces at the c-pawn, but his opponent does not seem to be impressed and attacks the white b-pawn in return.

20.♘e5

This is the wrong idea. White solves his isolani problem, but allows his opponent to develop a strong initiative along the d-file in return.

20...♗xe5! 21.dxe5 ♗xe3

21...♖xe2 22.♕xe2 ♗xe3 23.fxe3 ♕b6 would have promised Black a clear advantage as well.

22.♗xe3 ♕d3 23.♗e4 ♕bd8

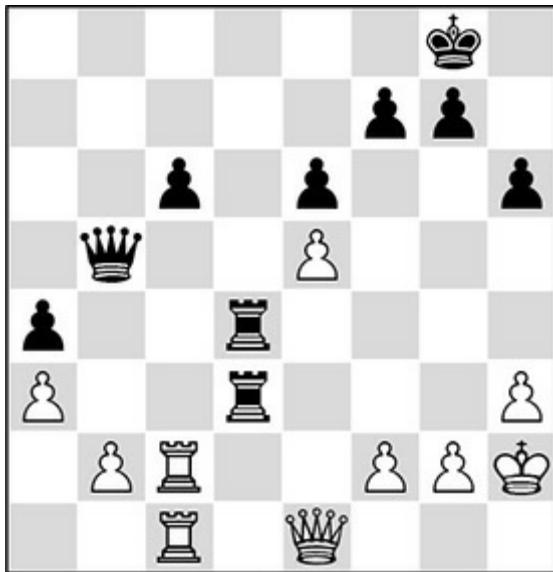


Black has managed to double the rooks with tempo, and now wins an extra tempo since his opponent has to prevent the back-rank mate.

24.h3 ♕8d4 25.♗e1 a4

As long as Black exerts enough pressure on b2, his c-pawn will be safe. An exchange of these two pawns is not in White's interest.

26.♗h2



Black has complete control over the position. It is time to bring the lessons from Chapter 5 into practice: opening a second battlefield!

26...g5 27.♖xc6

White sees what is coming and decides to end his waiting strategy. He will, however, be stuck with several weak pawns.

27...♗xb2 28.♕c8+ ♗g7 29.♕8c3 ♕xc3 30.♕xc3 ♕d2 31.♕g3 ♕xf2



Black is not only a pawn up. He also has the better pawn structure, the safer king and the more active pieces. He manages to convert his overwhelming advantage into a win in a couple of moves.

32.♗e4 ♕f5 33.♕e3 ♕f4 34.♗a8 ♗d4 35.♕e1 ♗c3 36.♕e2 ♗xa3 37.♕d2 ♗e3 38.♕d8 ♗xe5 0-1

10.4.2 The defending rook lift

Manoeuvring your rook to d7 is another way to discourage the d4-d5 push.

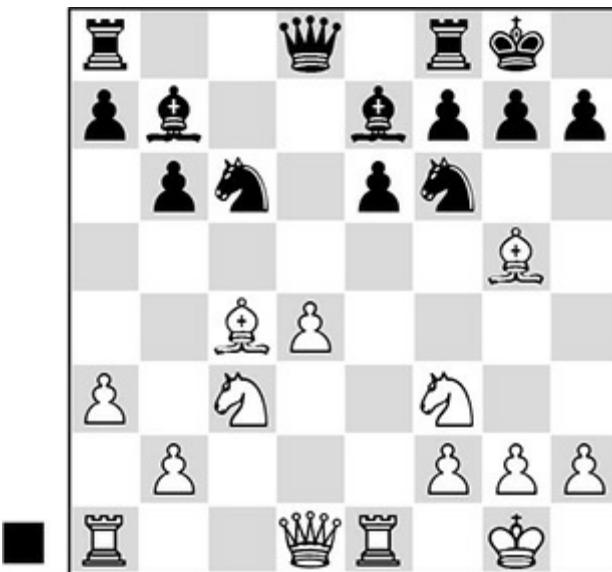
Game 136

Helmut Scheide

Falk König

1955

2037



Black has put a fair amount of pressure on the IQP. He now starts an instructive manoeuvre that increases the pressure and anticipates the potential d4-d5 break at the same time.

12... ♜c8 13. ♜a2 ♜c7! 14. ♜b1



This is the right idea, but White should have developed his a1-rook first.

14... ♜d7! 15. ♜c2 g6 16. ♜h6



16... ♜e8

Black is doing very well after this move. An even more promising continuation would have been the bold 16... ♜xd4! 17. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 18. ♜xf8 ♜xf8 19. h3 ♜h6. Speaking of ‘compensation for the exchange’ would be a large understatement here. Black has an irresistible attack and is simply winning. Note how strongly the absence of the a1-rook is being felt.

17. ♜e3

Both White’s attacking ambitions and the d4-d5 opportunities have been eliminated. Black has all the time in the world to increase the pressure on d4 and exchange a few minor pieces along the way.

17... ♜d5 18. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 19. ♜a2 ♜d6 20. ♜ad1 ♜f6!

Always keep the pawn under pressure!

21. ♜a4 a6 22. ♜d2 b5 23. ♜d1 ♜e7 24. ♜g5 ♜f5 25. ♜f3 ♜a8



Black has played a true model game. If you told me that a grandmaster had been behind the black pieces, I would have believed it. Now Black is going to convert his wonderful position into a deadly attack on the king.

26. ♜e5 ♜xg2 27. ♜g4 ♜g7 28. ♜e5 ♜h4 29. f3 ♜xf3 30. ♜c1 ♜h1 31. ♜g5 ♜xe5 32. ♜xh4 ♜xd4+ 33. ♜f1 ♜f3+ 0-1

10.4.3 Always keep the pawn under pressure!

Chapter 9 showed us several examples in which Black did everything he could to block the d-pawn, but forgot to put it under pressure. By omitting this, he provided his opponent with a lot of freedom to manoeuvre his pieces to their optimal squares. The result was a crushing kingside attack, often in combination with the same d4-d5 break that he tried to prevent in the first place.

Keeping the pawn under pressure in order to limit your opponent's possibilities is a very important technique. Magnus Carlsen employed it in the following top-level game.

Game 137

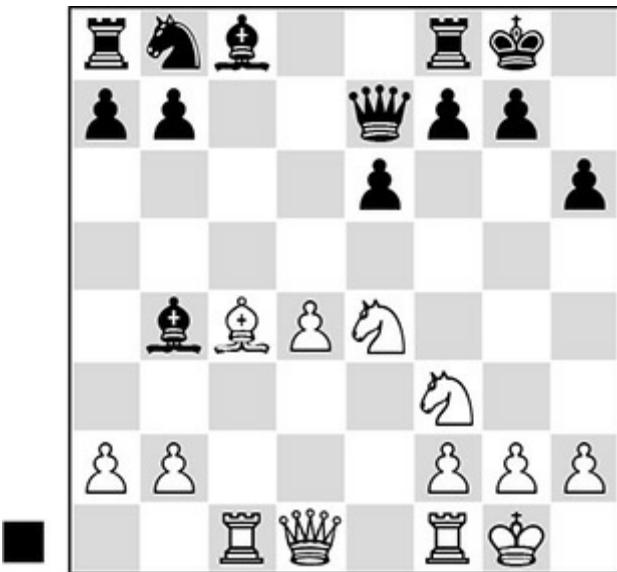
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

2748

Magnus Carlsen

2834

Doha 2015 (8)



In the next four moves, Black is going to point three (!) different pieces at d4.

12... ♜d8 13. ♜e2 ♜c6 14. ♜fd1 ♜a5 15. ♜g3 ♜b6 16. ♜e4 ♜d7

The light-squared bishop is often the most difficult piece to develop for Black. Carlsen temporarily tucks it away at e8, in order to connect his rooks.

17.h4

As always, Mamedyarov keeps playing ambitiously. It was, however, already time to start thinking of hitting the brake with 17.d5 exd5 18. ♜xd5 ♜xe4 19. ♜xe4, even though Black keeps the more pleasant position after 19... ♜e6. In the game, Black continues to increase the pressure on d4, until the d4-d5 escape is no longer possible.

17... ♜e8 18.a3 ♜d6



19. ♜g4

This was the last chance for 19.d5, with an acceptable position after 19...exd5 20. ♛xd5 ♛xd5 21. ♜xd5 ♜f6 22. ♜c2. In the game, White ends up in trouble quickly.

19... ♛ad8 20.d5

Now White no longer had a choice, since it was already quite difficult to defend the pawn. The passive 20. ♜e2 would for instance only have prolonged the problem. The pawn is still doomed after 20... ♜f6.

20... ♜f8!

Black was unable to capture the pawn because of 21. ♜f5!, but he simply postpones it for one move. The d-pawn is pinned and is not going anywhere.

21. ♜e4 ♜e7 22. ♜d3 f5 23. ♜e5 ♜xd5



Black finally decides to accept the pawn. He had to calculate this line well, because Mamedyarov had one final trick up his sleeve.

24. ♜xf5

The final desperate attempt, but Black is ready for it.

24... exf5! 25. ♜xf5 ♛c6!

The d1-rook has to keep an eye on its neighbour and is unable to capture the knight. 26. ♛xc6 is simply met by the thematic 26...bxc6. Therefore, White resigned.

10.4.4 Preparing a counterattack

On some occasions, you can simply allow your opponent to push d4-d5 and execute a deadly counterattack. This is a highly dangerous strategy, but it might win you a brilliancy prize every once in a while.

Game 138

Sotelo Juan Campos Calvo

2028

Philip Vanparys

2174

Gibraltar 2012 (3)



15.d5

The normal reply to this pawn break would be 15... ♜ xd5 16. ♜ xd5 exd5 17. ♜ xd5 ♜ xd5 18. ♜ xd5 ♜ fd8, with a perfectly acceptable position for Black. Apparently, however, this was not good enough for Black, as he went for the highly dubious 15... ♜ b8 16. dxe6 ♜ xc3 17. exf7+ ♛ h8 18. ♜ e1 ♜ e4 instead. He ended up in serious trouble, but somehow he managed to win the game.

Black took a lot of risk in this game by ignoring the equalizing move 15... ♜ xd5. However, further analysis reveals that he was right to leave the beaten path and aim for more. It turns out that Stockfish is also a big fan of the black position. The machine shows us the way to start an impressive counterattack:

15... ♜ fd8!



Both players must have rejected this move because of

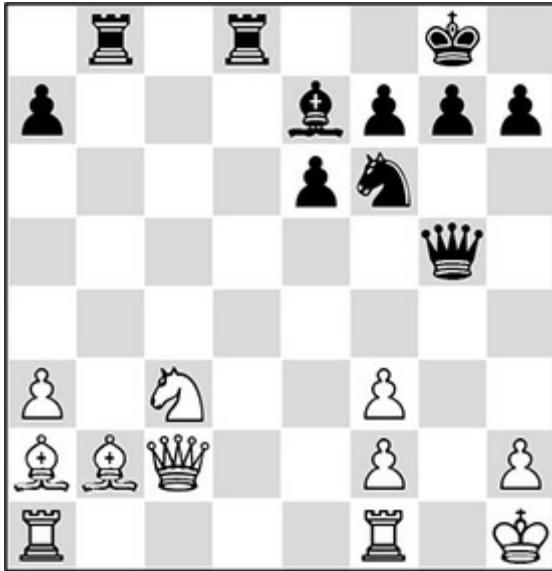
16. ♖b3

It seems like Black loses a piece, since both the knight and bishop are under attack. The engine is, however, not impressed at all and comes up with the cool

16... ♕b8!

Now it is White's turn! 17.dxe6 ♗a6 18.exf7+ ♔h8 does not look good for him, so let's see what happens if he accepts the gift.

17.dxc6 ♗xc6! 18. ♖c2 ♗xf3 19.gxf3 ♗g5+ 20. ♔h1



It looks as if the black queen is on her own, and White should be able to hold. However, after

20... ♗f4!

it becomes clear that more troops are on their way, while the vulnerable b2-bishop makes it very difficult for White to organize his defence. As an illustration, I will finish this game with three different defensive attempts for White:

A) 21. ♗e2 ♗xf3+ 22. ♔g1 ♕bc8! already wins back the piece;

B) 21. ♕ad1 ♗d6 22. ♕xd6 ♗xf3+! 23. ♔g1 ♕xd6 – Black is doing fine from a material point of view and still has a promising attack;

C) 21. ♗c1 ♗xf3+ 22. ♔g1 ♗d6 23. ♗e2 ♗g4 24. ♗g3 ♗xh2! 25. ♔xh2 (25. ♗e2 ♗xg3 26. ♗xf3

$\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$, with 28... $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ coming next, wins for Black) 25... $\mathbb{Q}xg3+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}fxg3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ and Black wins.

Conclusion

Black should always be aware of the dangerous d4-d5 break. The most important way to deal with this is by **keeping the d-pawn under constant pressure**. This will make it more difficult for White to manoeuvre his pieces to the most promising squares and combine an initiative with the pawn break.

Black can also try to discourage the move by **recapturing with ... bxc6** or by executing the ... $\mathbb{Q}c7-d7$ **manoeuvre**.

If you are unable to prevent a promising d4-d5 break, you'd better make sure you have a nasty **counterattack** ready.

10.5 Watch out for piece sacrifices!

An attack on the king is one of White's main strategies in IQP positions. Most of the time, these attacks are executed by pieces instead of pawns. It is therefore very logical that Chapter 9, in which White's plans were unfolded, was stacked with dangerous piece sacrifices.

The player with the black pieces should be alert and arm himself against these combinations. One way to do this is to load your toolbox with the defensive techniques that we discussed in Part III. However, many of those are aimed at situations that arise after the sacrifice has already been made. Think, for example, of the evacuation of your king.

In addition, it is also important to focus on **prophylactic measures**. They will be the subject of this section. I will provide you with two important defending strategies that should discourage your opponent from sacrificing his pieces:

- Fortifying your weakest spots;
- Bringing in enough defenders.

Fortifying your weakest spots

The Achilles' Heel in the black king's position is very often the f7-pawn. We are going to look at two effective ways to strengthen this crucial point:

- Putting your bishop on e8;
- Lifting your rook to the 7th rank.

Strengthening f7: the ultra-solid $\mathbb{Q}e8$

The light-squared bishop is Black's most difficult piece to develop. It has to deal with an unmovable object on e6 and has only two options for development:

- The ambitious ...b7-b6 and ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$;
- The modest ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$.

Moving the bishop to b7 is the most ambitious set-up. Earlier in this chapter, we saw quite a few examples in which Black was successful with his fianchettoed bishop. It could, for instance, assist a knight on f4 in a counterattack or exchange itself for a white piece in order to simplify into a favourable ending.

However, this ambitious set-up with ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ is not without risks. There are two reasons for this:

- It takes an extra move;
- The fianchettoed bishop is no longer available for the defence.

If the white army is already mobilized for a kingside attack, then it is often too dangerous to fianchetto your bishop. This is where the ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ set-up comes in. From d7, the bishop does not lose sight of e6, which reduces the likelihood of the thematic $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ sacrifice. Later, it can still be activated by ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (when $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

can be met with ...bxc6!), but it might also drop back to e8 and protect the real Achilles' Heel in the black position: the f7-pawn.

This latter plan is nicely illustrated in the following game. Black uses the light-squared bishop as an extra lock on the door and boldly starts collecting pawns.

Game 139

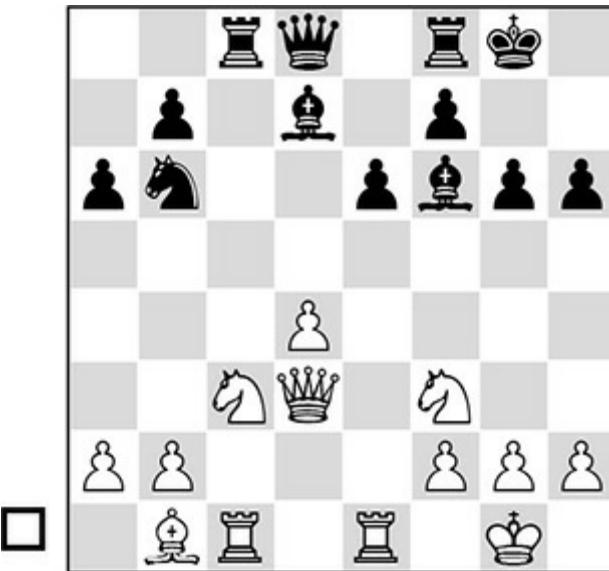
Dastan Turar

2205

Igor Tokuichi Kikuc Cadilhac

2269

Khanty-Mansiysk Wch U16 2016 (6)



18.h4

White is in an aggressive mood today.

18...♝xh4!

But Black shows no fear. A pawn is a pawn!

19.♛e5 ♛e8

It makes a lot of sense to strengthen the black kingside pawns, since there was already quite some pressure on g6. The careless 19...♝c6, could, for instance, already have been met with 20.g3 ♜f6 21.♝xg6!. Black is unable to accept the sacrifice: 21...fxg6 22.♝xg6+ ♜g7 23.♝h7+ ♛f7 24.♝g6+ ♛f6 25.♝h5! wins for White.

20.a4

This is a move on the wrong side of the board. White has to focus on his kingside attack and could, for instance, opt for the thematic ♜b1-c2-b3 switch.

20...♝f6 21.♜cd1 ♜d5 22.♝h3 ♜xc3! 23.bxc3 ♜g7



Black plays very well. He first protects all the weak spots in his position, before he starts to think of anything else.

24.a5 ♜h7 25.c4 ♜xa5

There is pawn number 2.

26.c5 ♜d8 27.♘f3 ♜xd4

And pawn number 3! Note how both black bishops make it very difficult for White to accomplish anything on the kingside.

28.♗c1 ♜d5 29.♗c4 ♜c7 30.♗d6 ♜c6

The bishop has done its job and is free to go. The queen will now take over the defence of the f-pawn.

31.♗e4 ♜g5 32.♗xb7



This is the start of a forcing line in which Black loses one of his three extra pawns but is able to simplify the position. He won the game without any difficulties.

32...♝xb7 33.♝xb7 ♜xc5 34.♜xc5 ♜xc5 35.♝xa6 ♜a5 36.♝e2 ♜d8 37.♝c4 ♜d2 38.♝f3 ♜c2 39.♝e4 f5 40.♝h4 ♜c1+ 41.♝f1 ♜b5 0-1

You don't know what you've got till it's gone

It is important to appreciate the defensive power of the light-squared bishop on e8. It is not just temporarily tucked away to ease Black's development; it really has prophylactic value too.

Relocating your bishop to the more active c6-square is definitely a good idea, but if you consider this move, always keep the following line from Joni Mitchell's song *Big Yellow Taxi* in mind:

'Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
Till it's gone...'

In the next game, Black did not follow this piece of advice and found out the hard way.

Game 140

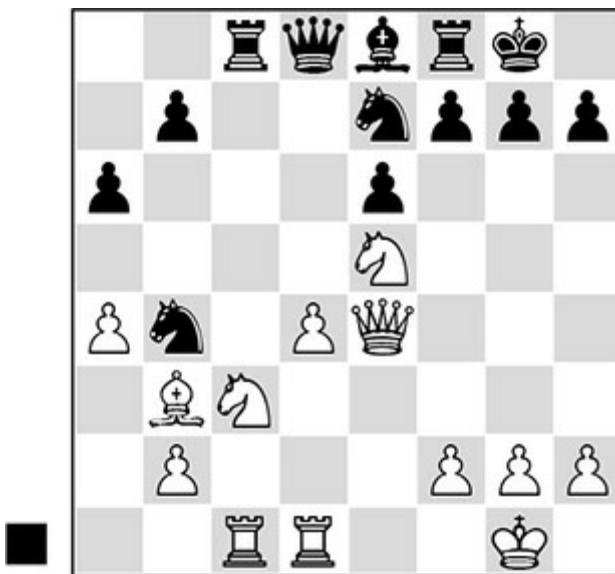
Peter de Roode

2265

Fred Slingerland

2338

Haarlem 2006 (8)



17...♝c6

The right idea, with the wrong timing. Black should have first arranged a stand-in for the protection of f7 with 17...♜c7, before even starting to think of dismissing the bishop.

18.♝xf7! ♜xf7 19.♝xe6 ♜e8

You don't know what you've got till it's gone. The bishop swiftly returns to its original square, but the damage is already done.

20.♝e4

20.d5 was also strong.

20...♜xc1 21.♜xc1 ♔h8 22.♝d6!



The right exchange! White swaps the queens and enters a favourable ending.

22... ♕xd6 23. ♖xd6 ♜f8 24. ♜e1 ♜ec6 25. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 26. ♜xe8 ♜xd4 27. ♜c4

White's extra pawn promises him excellent winning chances, even though the game only ended in a draw.

Strengthening f7: the rook on the 7th rank

Lifting a rook to the 7th rank (i.e., the second rank for Black) was already mentioned as a technique to prevent the d4-d5 break in the previous section. White executes a similar manoeuvre in the next game, only this time the rook is not going to put pressure on the d-pawn. Its main task is to defend the vulnerable f-pawn and, if necessary, assist in setting up a 7th-rank defence.

Game 141

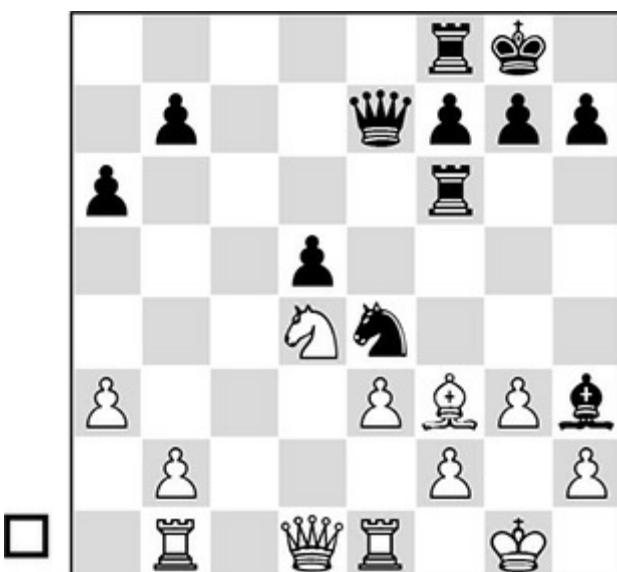
Sarasadat Khademalsharieh

2429

Gulmira Dauletova

2275

Baku ol W 2016 (8)



25. ♜c1 h5 26. ♜c2 h4 27. ♜g4

With the f-pawn properly defended, the bishop can finally leave its post. Its new assignment is to remove its annoying counterpart from h3.

27... $\text{h}x\text{g}3$ 28. $\text{h}x\text{g}3$ $\text{g}5$ 29. $\text{xh}3$ $\text{xh}3+$ 30. $\text{g}2$

The c2-rook again proves its value.

30... $\text{e}4+$



31.f3

The only move. Putting all your kingside pawns on the 3rd rank is usually not a very good idea, but White has enough defenders available and should be able to fend off the attack.

31... $\text{h}7$ 32. $\text{h}1$ $\text{h}6$ 33. $\text{c}1$

Taking advantage of the clumsy black knight would have been stronger. White is clearly better after the forcing 33.f4 $\text{xf}4+$ 34.gxf4 $\text{xh}1$ 35. $\text{xh}1$ $\text{e}4+$ 36. $\text{h}2$ $\text{xe}3$ 37. $\text{xd}5!$.



analysis diagram

The rook is again in excellent shape on the (protected!) c2-square. 37... $\text{xf}4+$ 38. $\text{h}3$ White is doing great. Her king will be relatively safe as soon as she manages to get her knight close.

The game continuation involves less risk, but promises White only a small advantage.

33... $\text{g}5$ 34. $\text{b}3!$

Well played! Always let your opponent make the trade!

34... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}cd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

Black was probably in time-trouble and goes for an incorrect exchange sacrifice.

38. $\mathbb{Q}hh1$

This must be the move she had underestimated. White keeps both rooks and will soon be able to enter a very promising ending.

38... $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}df1$

40. $\mathbb{Q}hf1!$ leads to an improved version of the game after 40... $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}d7$, and Black can resign here.

40... $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}hd1$

White had to work hard and long in this ending, but finally took the victory home.

Bringing in defenders

Besides strengthening your Achilles' Heel, Black can also discourage the various piece sacrifices by bringing in extra defenders for his king. We are going to look at a game in which Black successfully anticipated on a sacrifice by **keeping his queen close to the defence**. His opponent went for the sacrifice anyway, but became subjected to a deadly counterattack.

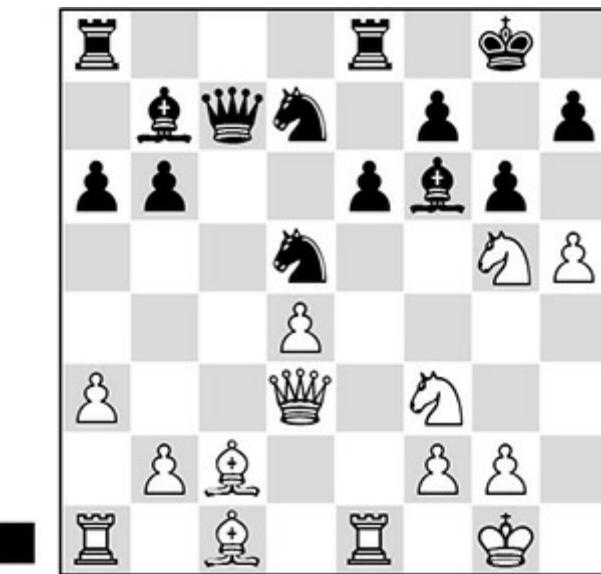
Game 142

Vega Alejandro Ortiz Fernandez

José Antonio Garcia Fernandez

2110

Asturias 1999 (2)



White's intentions are very clear in this position. He has made all the preparations for the thematic $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ sacrifice and is very eager to continue with 18.hxg6 hxg6 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g5+!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$, when the emergency exit is blocked and Black is lost.

Luckily for Black, it is his turn first! He anticipates the sacrifice by directing his queen to the front.

17... $\mathbb{Q}f4!$

Again, f4 proves to be a useful square. Black achieves two goals with this move: exchanging an important white attacker and securing an optimal place for the queen. These two elements make a huge difference, as the game shows.

18. ♜xf4 ♜xf4 19. hxg6 hxg6 20. ♜xf7

White ignores all the signs and goes for the brilliancy prize anyway. The prudent 20. ♜e3 ♜xe3 21. fxe3 would have been his best attempt at damage control, even though Black is still better.

20... ♜xf7 21. ♜xg6+ ♚e7



With all the dark squares under control, the king is perfectly safe in the centre.

22. ♜e5 ♜xe5 23. dx5 ♜f8!

Of course, Black is not interested in the e-pawn at all. Instead, he optimizes his pieces and prepares a counterattack against the white king. It turns out that the queen is perfectly able to multi-task at f4, combining attack with defence.

24. ♜e2 ♜f7 25. ♜ae1 ♜h8

White is completely defenceless against the 22 points that are targeting his king.

26. f3 ♜h2+ 27. ♜f2 ♜xf3# 0-1

Conclusion

An important step in White's attacking plan is the sacrifice of one or more pieces in order to get access to the king. In response, Black should be familiar with the different sacrificial patterns and try to prevent them by taking prophylactic measures.

He can, for instance, **bring in extra defenders or strengthen the most vulnerable spots** in his king's position. The Achilles' Heel is very often the f7-pawn. Overprotecting it with a bishop on e8 or a rook on the 7th rank are useful ways to discourage the various piece sacrifices.

10.6 Defend!

Besides a toolbox filled with defensive techniques, you also need the right attitude during a practical game. You have to be able to stay calm and continue fighting until the very end. This last section of this book should provide you with the right inspiration. I have analysed two highly entertaining games in which Black showed the right attitude and was able to survive all the storms.

Keep a cool head

The first game is a clash between David Smerdon and Ivan Saric. Smerdon is well-known for his creative and uncompromising play, which is why the dynamic IQP positions suit him so well. This game is exemplary for his playing style; note how he simply refuses to make a backward move during almost the entire game. Even though Saric is put under a lot of pressure, he does not seem to be intimidated by the friendly Australian

grandmaster. He keeps a cool head, keeps his pieces active, and walks the narrow path towards victory.

Game 143

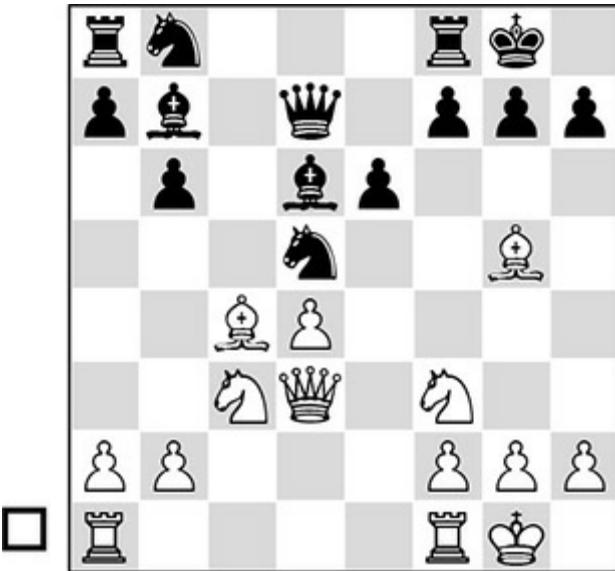
David Smerdon

2531

Ivan Saric

2668

Baku ol 2016 (2)



13. ♜fe1 h6 14. ♜e4

White simply ignores the attack on his bishop and directs his pieces towards the black king.

14... ♜b4!

Accepting the sacrifice was not recommendable: 14...hxg5 15. ♜fxg5! (the threat is 16. ♜c5 or 16. ♜xd6) 15... ♜e8 (it looks as if we just executed a Greek Gift combination, but somehow we still have our light-squared bishop! However this may be, we can use our knowledge from Chapter 6. Black is unable to cover h7, which leaves him with only one option: to evacuate the king) 16. ♜h3 ♜f4 (the best try. The aim is to exchange a set of minor pieces and vacate an extra dark square for the royal fugitive) 17. ♜h7+ ♛f8 18. ♜h8+ ♛e7 19. ♜xg7 ♜xg5 20. ♜xg5+ ♛f8.



analysis diagram

There are many winning continuations from here, but I like the following one best. White pulls the king back into the corner in order to finish the game with a rook lift. I will show you one potential line until the end:
 21. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $f6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
 28. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $exd5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ and it is time to resign.

15. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

Without the queen on the b1-h7 diagonal, 15... $hxg5$ has suddenly become a serious option for Black. However, the position turns into a complete mess after, for instance, 16. $\mathbb{Q}fxg5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}8c6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$. These are probably the kinds of positions Saric was trying to avoid against Smerdon.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}8c6$



Saric sticks to his strategy and continues his development instead of entering a complicated tactical line. This was, however, the right moment to take up the gauntlet, since in the game White gets the opportunity to sacrifice the piece on his own terms. Black should have gone for 16... $b5!$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5!$. An elegant way to shut out the queen. It will be hard for White to find enough compensation for the piece.

17. $\mathbb{Q}f6$

An interesting piece sacrifice, but 17. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$ is the better version and would have given White the kind of

game he was looking for:

- A) 17...gxh6 – this move is hardly ever possible with a white rook already on e4: 18. $\mathbb{R}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19. $\mathbb{R}e3$ f5 20. $\mathbb{R}g6!$ wins for White;
- B) 17... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ is the only move: 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and now:



analysis diagram

B1) 18...gxh6 is again asking for trouble. If you have studied Part III well, you will know what to do: 19. $\mathbb{Q}c1!$. Step 1: bring your queen to the attack. 19... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 20. $\mathbb{R}g4+$. Step 2: create an entrance square for the queen. 20... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (20... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 21. $\mathbb{R}h4$) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$. Step 3: open up the centre before the black king gets away. 22...fxe6 23. $\mathbb{R}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g6$. White wins. 26. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is coming;

B2) 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20. $\mathbb{R}h4$. White has a very promising position. Black cannot hold up ...gxh6 forever and will have to deal with a very dangerous attack shortly after, for instance: 20...gxh6 21. $\mathbb{R}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (only not 22. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7!$) 22...f6 23. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ (to clear the g5-square for the queen) 23... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 25. $\mathbb{R}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and White has a very dangerous initiative.

17... $\mathbb{Q}d5$

It is quite impressive how Saric keeps ignoring White's provocations and sticks to his plan. 17... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ would have led to a forced draw after 18. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ f5 19. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$.

18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$



19...gxf6!

Black has been ignoring the bishop for five (!) consecutive moves and now finally decides to take the bait. His timing is excellent. Watch how he rewards himself for his patient approach with very impressive play.

20.exf6 ♜ xf6 21. ♜ xe6



21...♝g4!

The only move! The knight needs to protect the h-pawn. For instance, 21...♝h7 22. ♜xh6 ♛g7 23. ♜h3 is very promising for White.

22. ♜d1 ♜d4!

Again, the only road to an advantage. Black needs to stay active in order to keep the white pieces at a distance.

23. ♜h3

23. ♜g3 is met with 23...♝xe6! 24. ♜xd4 ♜e1+ 25. ♜f1 ♜xf2+ 26. ♜xf2 ♜xf2 27. ♜xf2 ♜ad8 with a winning ending.

23...♝e2+ 24. ♜xe2

Fun fact: this is the very first time in this game that Smerdon moves a piece backwards! This is not a good sign. He did not have a choice though.

24...♝xe6 25. ♜xg4 ♜ad8!

And another useful combination. Black maintains his material advantage and now steers the game into calmer waters.

26. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 27. $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}8d4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

Black has skilfully stabilised his position and can now focus on developing an initiative himself.

31. $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 33. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 34. $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

This is already the second (!) time Smerdon moves back a piece – a sign that the game is nearing its end.

35... $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}4xb3$ 0-1

Fight until the end

In this second and last example, Black underestimates a piece sacrifice and ends up in serious trouble.

However, somehow he survives the storm and after a true **king carousel** he restores the coordination of his defending pieces and brings home the point.

Game 144

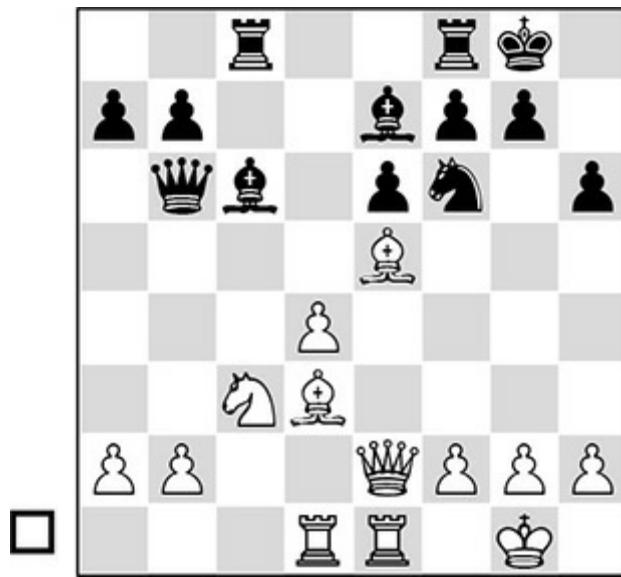
Adrien Demuth

2515

Fabian Döttling

2588

France tt 2015 (1)



18. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$

White clearly wants to launch his queen to h7. Therefore, Black already starts to prepare for the arrival of her majesty.

19. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$

An important prophylactic move, in anticipation of $\mathbb{Q}h7$.

20. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$

Black is asking for serious trouble. There was nothing wrong with the thematic 20... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, followed by 21... $\mathbb{Q}d8$.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$!

White enters the position without knocking. At the small price of a piece, he will be able to execute his deadly attack with tempo.

21. $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ was probably Black's idea, with an excellent position.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$



23. $\mathbb{R}xe6+$

White gets a little over-optimistic, spoiling his advantage. His most important task was to keep the black king in the centre and prepare the final, lethal check. At least three different moves would have done the job, with 23. $\mathbb{R}e4!$ being the most practical. The rook is heading for the f-file. After 23... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 24. $\mathbb{R}xg4$, Black is left without any material compensation for the deadly attack and is lost.

23... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

White is now not only a piece and a rook down, but he has also voluntarily created an emergency exit for the black king.

24. $\mathbb{N}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 25. $\mathbb{N}f4+$

The only move, since 25. $\mathbb{N}xg4$ would allow the king to escape for good via the dark squares with 25... $\mathbb{Q}c7$.

25... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 26. $\mathbb{N}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{N}xg4$ $\mathbb{R}c7$ 28. $d5$

It was time to hit the brake and go for perpetual check with 28. $\mathbb{N}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 29. $\mathbb{R}e1+$ $\mathbb{R}e7$ 30. $\mathbb{R}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 31. $\mathbb{N}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 32. $\mathbb{N}e5+$.



28... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

A very logical move. The king finishes its carousel and returns to the safe f8-square. However, 28... $\mathbb{N}b4!$ would have been much stronger. The aim of this move is to exchange queens and keep the most important dark squares under control. For instance:

- A) 29. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ looks like the most dangerous move, but the white attack runs out of fuel after 29... $\mathbb{R}xd5!$
 30. $\mathbb{B}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 33. $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{R}c6$ 34. $\mathbb{B}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$;
 B) 29. $dxc6$ $\mathbb{B}xg4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{R}xc6$ 31. $\mathbb{R}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ – this ending should be winning for Black as well.



29. $\mathbb{B}h5$

The decisive mistake in a very complex position. The best attempt would have been 29. $\mathbb{Q}h7$, after which White has good chances to secure a draw. A possible line could be 29... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 30. $\mathbb{B}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31. $d6$ $\mathbb{R}xd6$ 32. $\mathbb{R}xd6$ $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 33. $\mathbb{R}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 34. $\mathbb{B}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 35. $\mathbb{B}d6+$ $\mathbb{R}d7$ 36. $\mathbb{B}b8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 37. $\mathbb{B}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 38. $\mathbb{B}b8+$, with a perpetual.

29... $\mathbb{Q}e8!$

A very elegant 6th-rank defence. The black pieces have found their dream positions and White is no longer able to prove compensation for the sacrificed rook.

30. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{B}xb2!$

Bring on the defender!

31. $d6$

If 31. $\mathbb{B}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{R}xd5!$ wins.

31... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{B}f6$

Simple and strong, even though

32... $\mathbb{R}xd6!$ 33. $\mathbb{R}xd6$ $\mathbb{R}c1+$ 34. $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{B}d2$ would have won on the spot.

33. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{R}xd1+$ 34. $\mathbb{B}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 35. $g4$



35... ♕f8

Very instructive. The king returns to f8 for the very last time. The destination is g7. With a completely safe king, it will be Black's turn to start a king hunt.

36. ♔g2 ♕g7 37.f3 ♕b2+ 38. ♔h3 ♕c1 39. ♕d6 ♕f1 40. ♕e4 b6 41.a4 ♕a1 42. ♕c6 ♕f6 43. ♕d5 ♕a3 44. ♕e4 ♕a2
45. ♕d5 ♕d2 46. ♕b3 ♕d6 0-1

Conclusion

Defending is more than just possessing the right defensive techniques. You also need the right attitude during the game. Stay cool and fight until the end!

10.7 FLASH CARDS



Keeping the rooks for the ending

When playing against an IQP, it is favourable to keep the rooks on the board. After **17. $\mathbb{R}c1!$** **$\mathbb{R}fc8$** **18. $\mathbb{R}d1$** Ivanchuk doubled both rooks on the d-file and eventually won the d-pawn and the game.



The important f4-square

f4 is an important square for either a black queen or a knight to execute tactical combinations.



Prevent d4-d5 – pressure on the IQP

Carlsen understands that putting pressure on the IQP is an effective method to restrain your opponent. He aimed four (!) of his pieces at the pawn and collected it shortly after.



Strengthen your weak spots – ... ♕e8

You don't know what you've got till it's gone. Black prematurely ‘activated’ his important defender with 17... ♕c6 and soon had to admit his mistake after 18. ♜xf7! ♕xf7 19. ♜xe6 ♕e8.

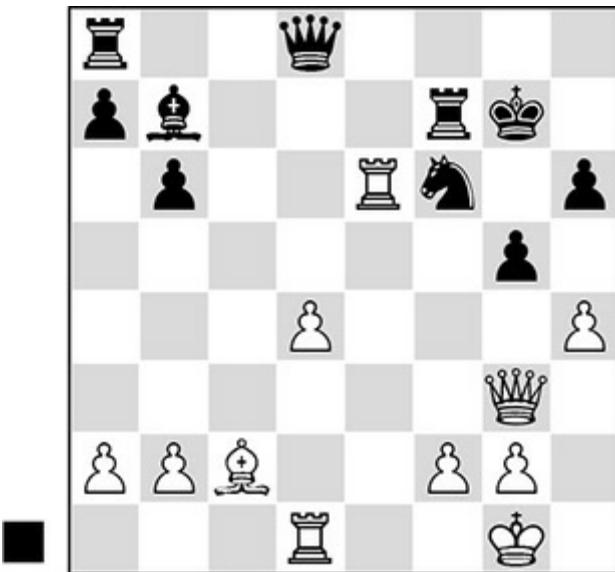


Keep fighting until the end

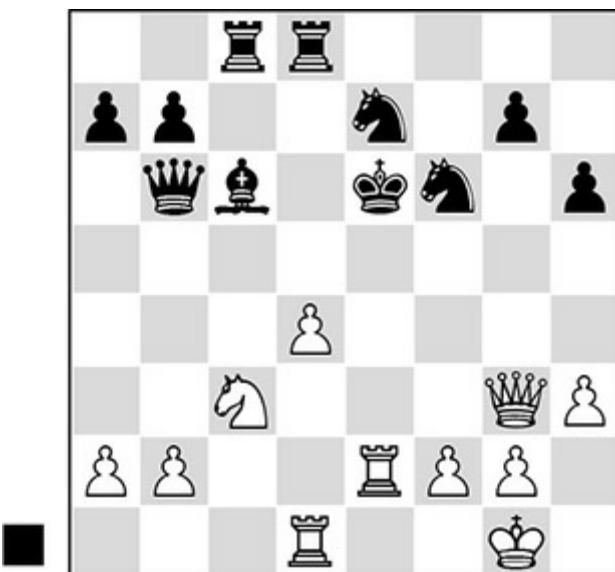
Black survived a few storms, but kept fighting and managed to construct this fantastic defensive set-up. After **30.♘e4 ♜xb2!**, the queen was able to join the defence and Black won convincingly.

Exercises – Defend 1

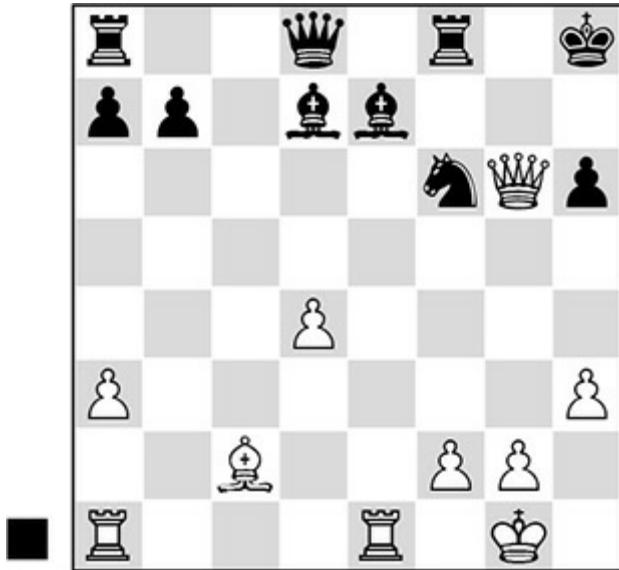
Solution 10.1



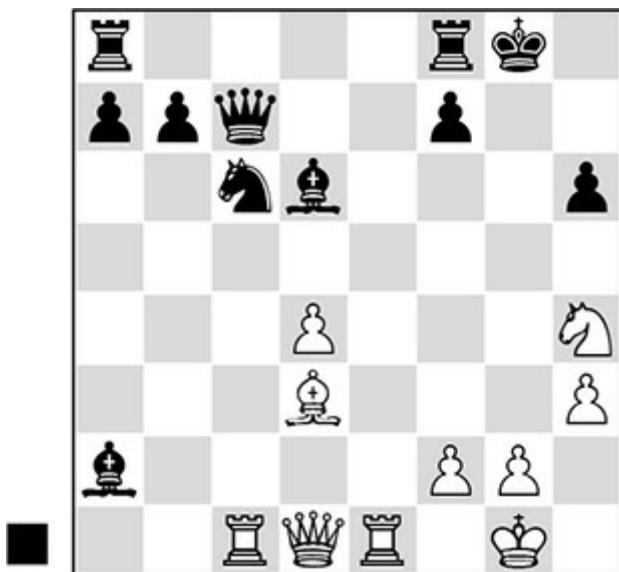
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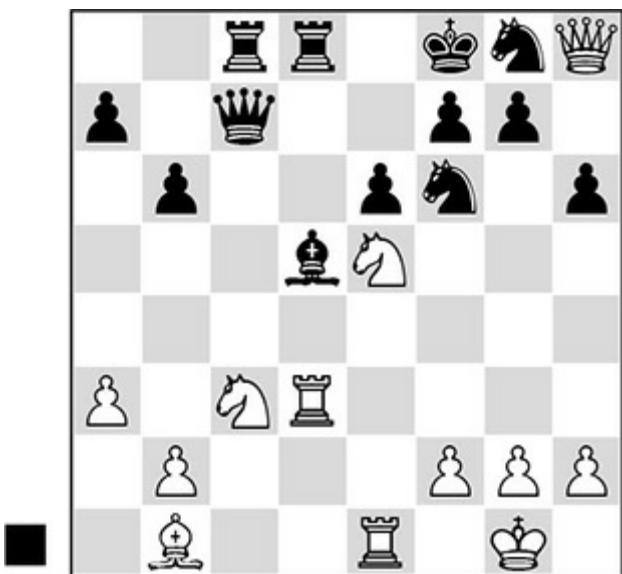
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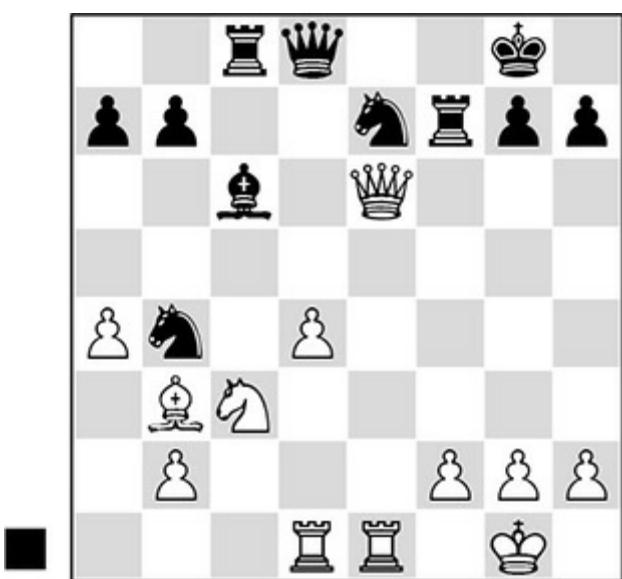
Solution 10.4



Solution 10.5

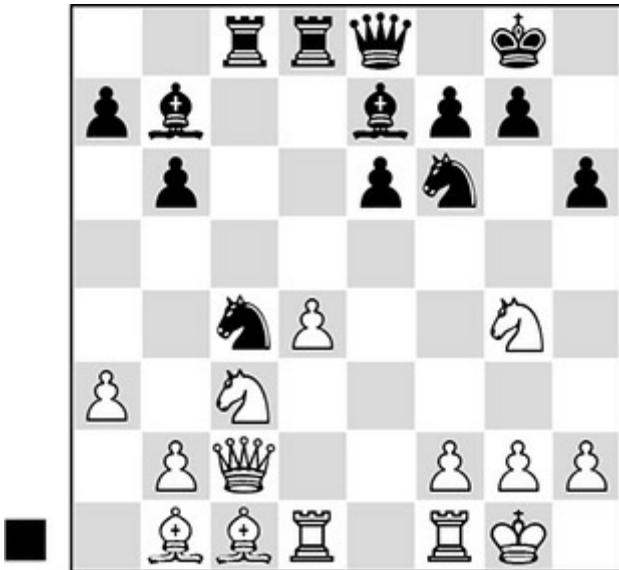


Solution 10.6

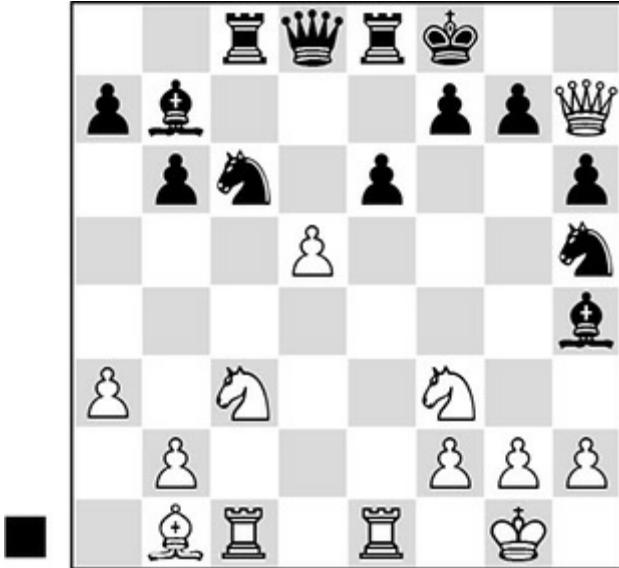


Defend 2

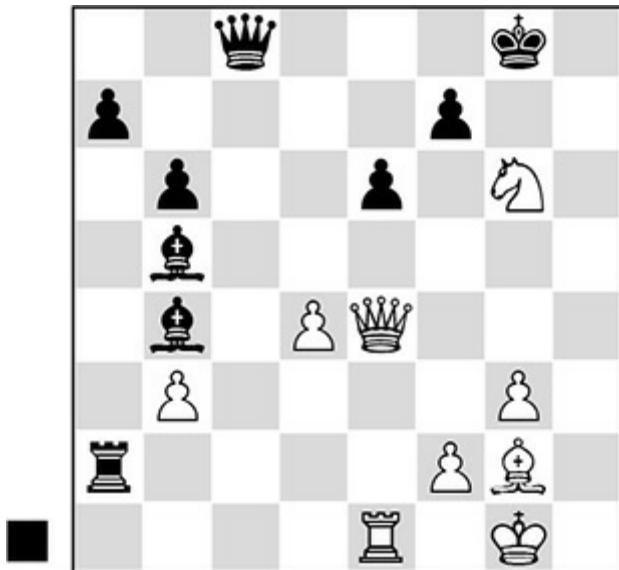
Solution 10.7



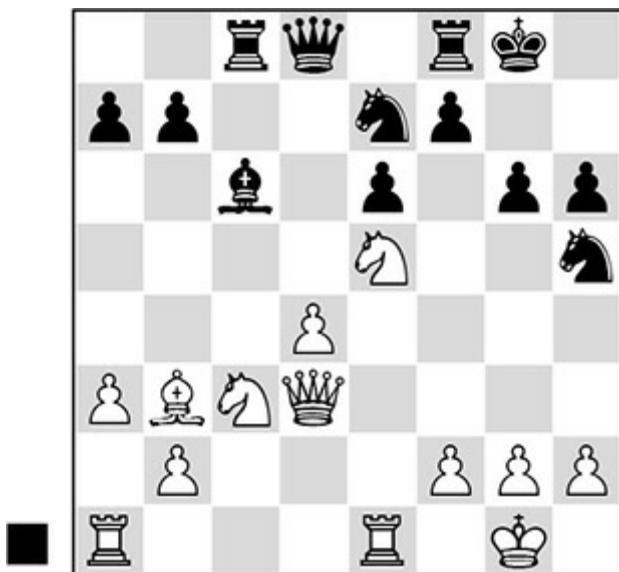
Solution 10.8



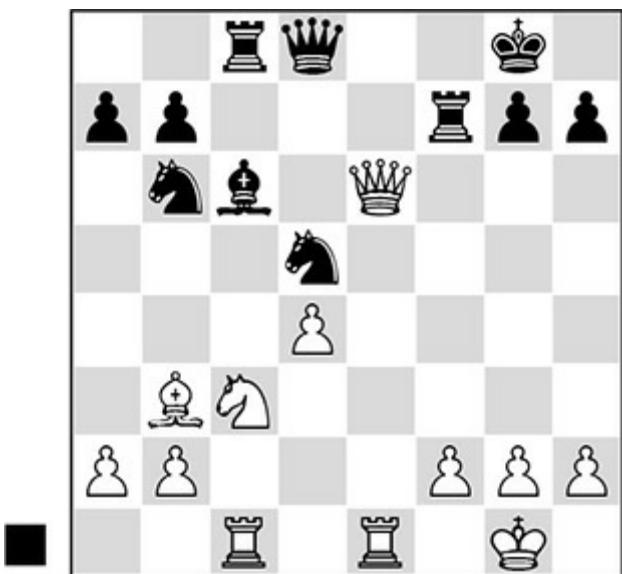
Solution 10.9



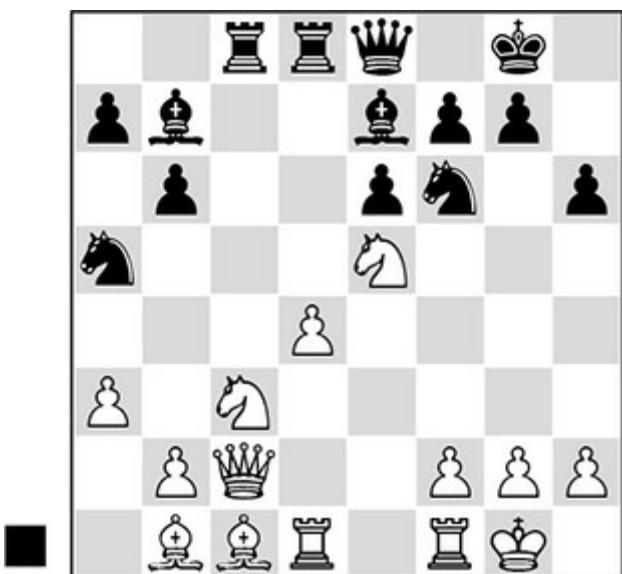
Solution 10.10



Solution 10.11

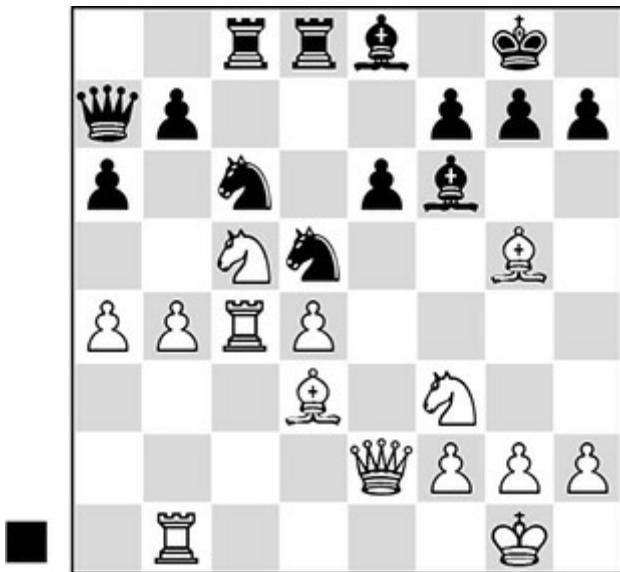


Solution 10.12

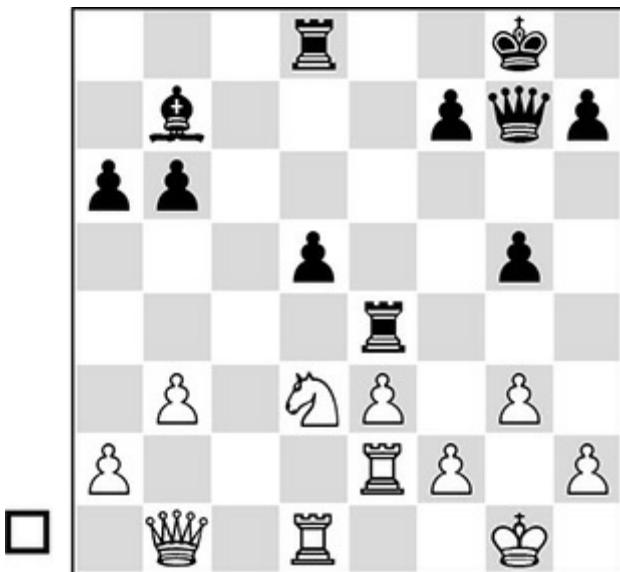


Playing against an IQP 1

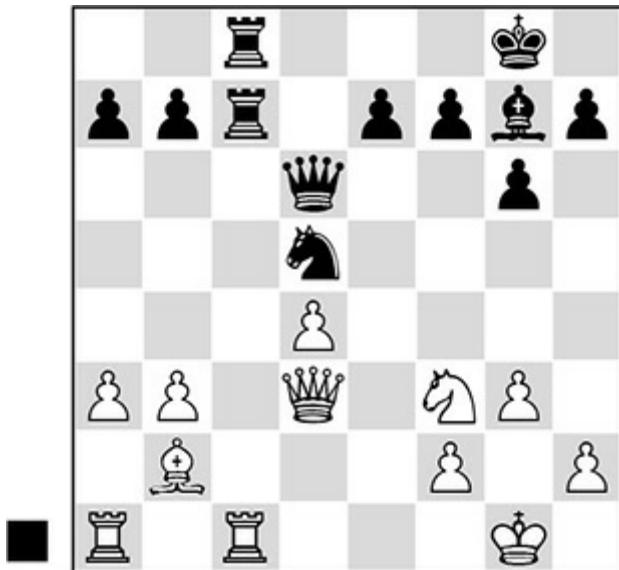
Solution 10.13



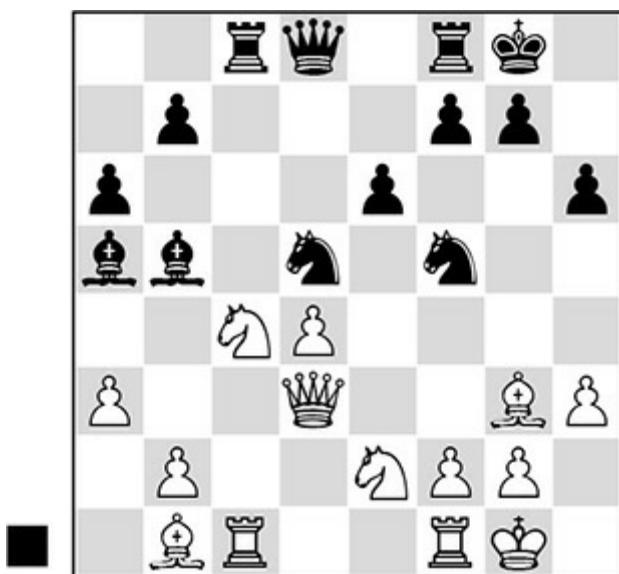
Solution 10.14



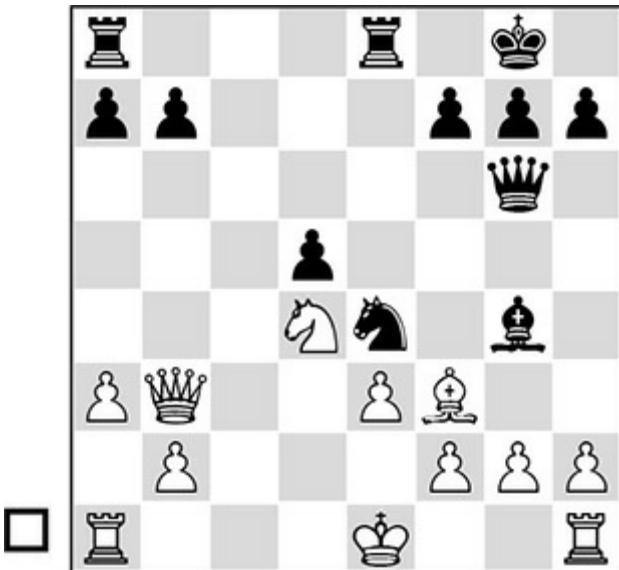
Solution 10.15



Solution 10.16



Solution 10.17

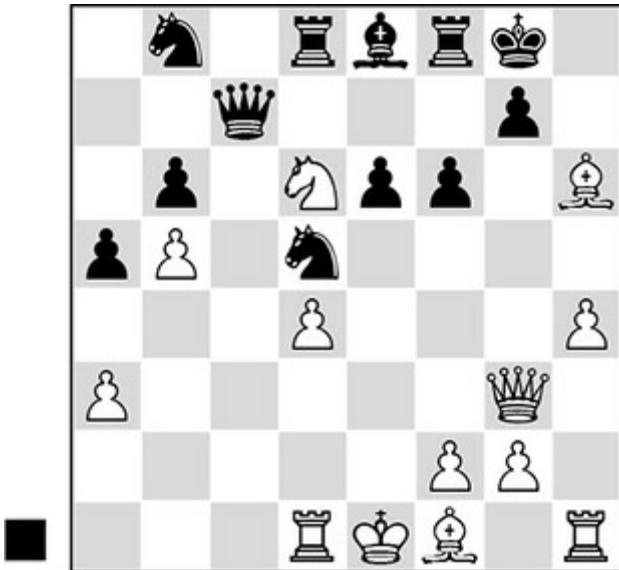


Solution 10.18

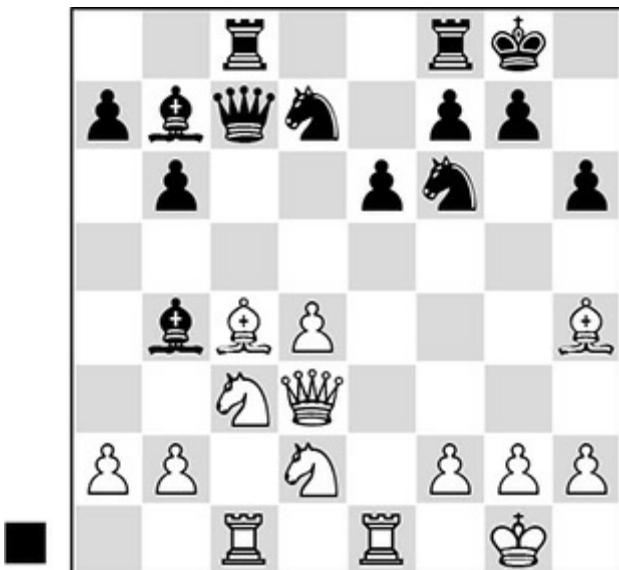


Playing against an IQP 2

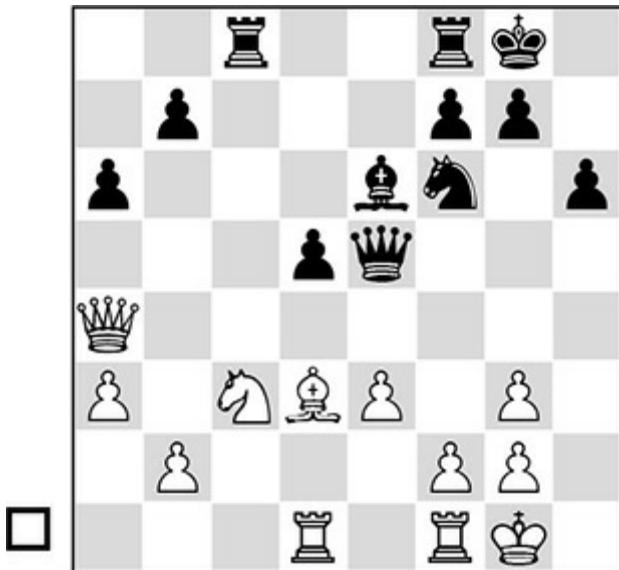
Solution 10.19



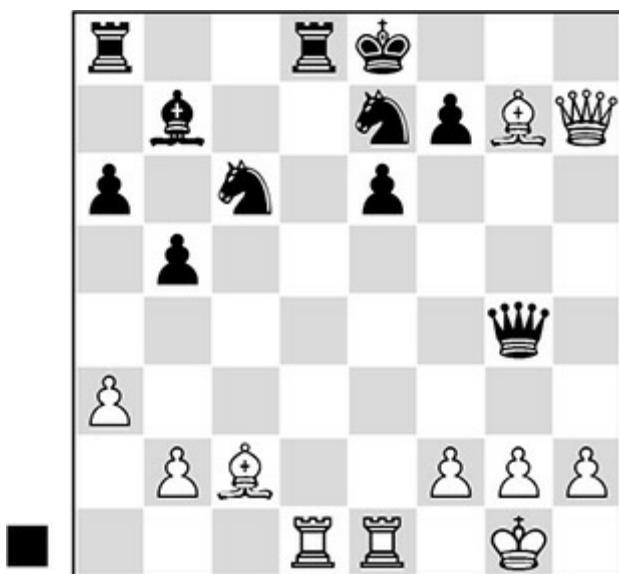
Solution 10.20



Solution 10.21



Solution 10.22



Solution 10.23



... \mathbb{Q} x f 3 or ... \mathbb{Q} a8 ?

Solution 10.24



... \mathbb{Q} d6 or ... \mathbb{Q} d8 ?

PART V – SOLUTIONS

Chapter 1: Five powerful weapons

Exercise 1.1

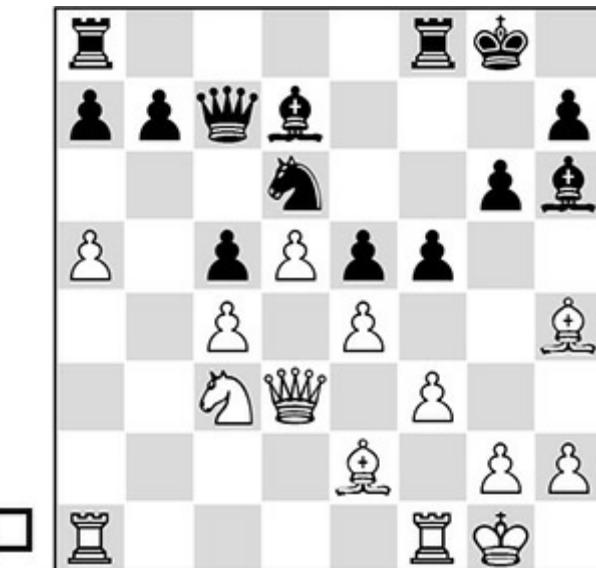
Bartłomiej Macieja

2617

Bartosz Socko

2636

Warsaw ch-POL 2012 (9)



22.♕e7!

Of course! White would love to exchange the important blockading piece and force the queen to take its place.

22...♖f7 23.♕xd6 ♖xd6 24.♖fb1

Black has his kingside under control, so White tries his luck on the other wing.

24...♗b8 25.♗d1

Heading for exchange number 2.

25...♘f6 26.♗a4 ♗c8

The black pieces are tied down to the defence of the queenside, so the passed pawn is used to maximize the pressure.

27.d6! ♗e6 28.d7 ♕d8

If 28...♕ff8 29.♕e1! followed by exf5 would also have led to a clear edge.

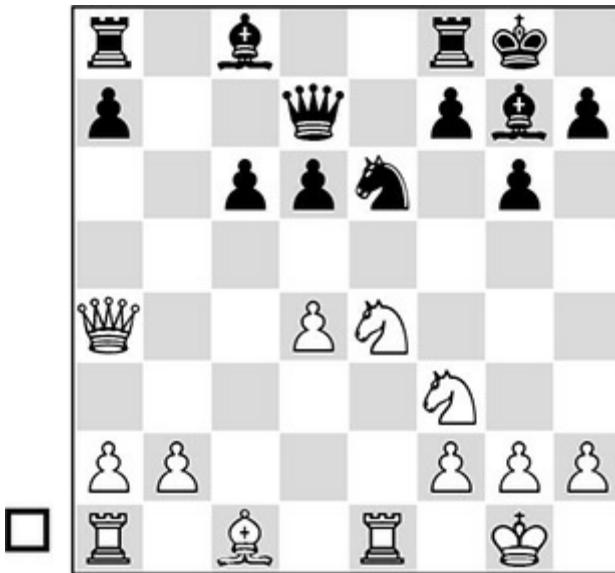
29.♕xb7 ♘h4 30.g3 ♘h5 31.♕f1 ♘h3 32.♕xa7 f4 33.g4 ♗xg4 34.a6 ♗g5 35.♕b7 ♘h4 36.a7 ♕ff8 37.♕d5 ♘g3 38.♕b2! ♘h4 39.♕b6 ♘g7 40.♕c6 1-0

Exercise 1.2

Thomas Willemze

2390

James Morris



15. ♜h6

Without the bishop on g7 White will no longer need to keep a constant eye on d4.

15...d5 16. ♜xg7 ♕xg7 17. ♜c5

This move does have a clear drawback. After the exchange on c5 the black pawn on c6 no longer has to worry about coming under pressure on the c-file. On the other hand, White will get the d4-square and a weakened dark-square complex around the black king in return.

17... ♜xc5 18.dxc5 ♜b7 19. ♜d4+ f6

Often it makes a lot of sense to put the pawns on the dark squares to compensate for the absence of the dark-squared bishop. In this position, however, the weakness of the 7th rank will soon be felt. It would therefore have been safer to go for 19... ♛g8.

20. ♜e3 ♜b8 21. ♜ae1 ♜xb2

Black had no choice but to take the pawn and see what happens.

22. ♜e7+ ♜f7

22... ♜g8 23. ♜e3.

23. ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 24. ♜h4 h5 25. ♜f4 g5

25... ♜f5 was the defence I considered during the game. White keeps an initiative after 26. ♜c7+ ♜g8 27. ♜e7 g5! 28.h4!.

26. ♜xg5+ ♜g6 27. ♜f3 ♜g4 28. ♜h4+ ♜g7 29.h3 1-0

Exercise 1.3

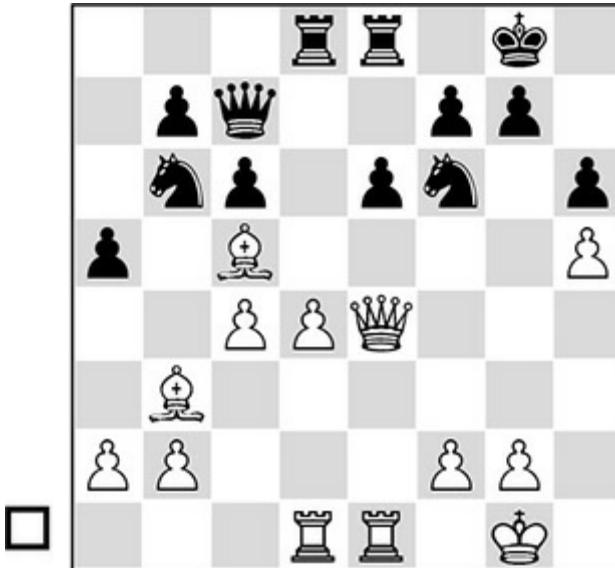
Eduardas Rozentalis

2571

Filippou Kouvatsos

2152

Vrachati 2011 (2)



26. ♔e5!

Change the structure! White is ready for opening up the d-file.

26... ♕xe5

Black has no choice. The artificial 26... ♕a8 simply costs a pawn after 27. ♕xc7 ♕xc7 28. ♕b6.

27. dxe5 ♕fd7 28. ♕d6

28. ♕d4 would have been a very decent alternative.

28...a4 29. ♕c2 ♕a8

From now on life will be very hard for Black. The best defence would have been the most active one: sacrificing the exchange with 29... ♕xc4! 30. ♕c7 ♕xb2. After 31. ♕d6 ♕c4 32. ♕d4 White is definitely on top, but compared to the game Black has more resources.

30. ♕d3 ♕c8 31. ♕b4

White is playing very carefully, not allowing Black to exchange pieces.

31...c5 32. ♕c3 ♕db6 33. ♕e2 ♕e7 34. ♕d6 ♕c6 35. ♕ed1 ♕f8 36. f4

White has secured the d-file, so now it is time to gain some space on the kingside and allow the bishops to have their say.

36... ♕e7 37. ♕e1 ♕ed8 38. ♕h4+ f6 39. ♕g4

A nice picture. The white pieces have found their ideal set-up.

39... ♕xc4 40. exf6+ gxf6 41. ♕xe6+ ♕f7 42. ♕xf6+ ♕g7 43. ♕g6+ 1-0

Exercise 1.4

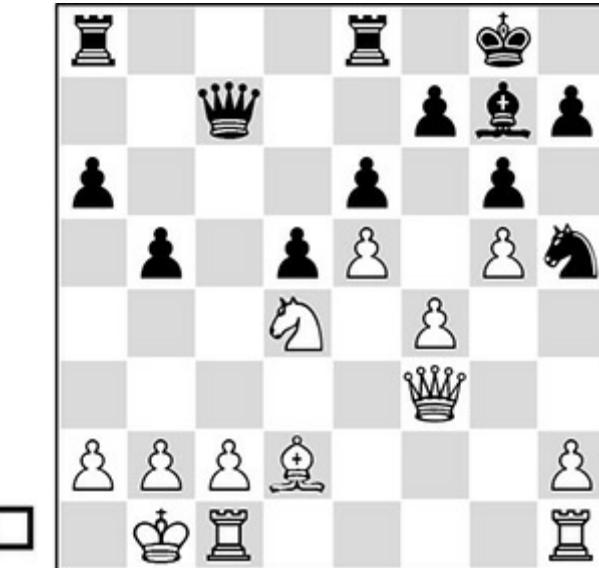
Zoltan Hajnal

2417

Zdenko Kozul

2594

Austria Bundesliga B 2008/09 (5)



26. $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ $a5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

This was the idea. White wants to use the exchange of knights to open up the h-file for his attack.

27... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 28. $hxg3$ $\mathbb{Q}ec8$ 29. $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h3$

The first small victory lies in winning the h-pawn.

30... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 32. $f5$

The next step is to remove the king's armour. Things are, however, far from simple.

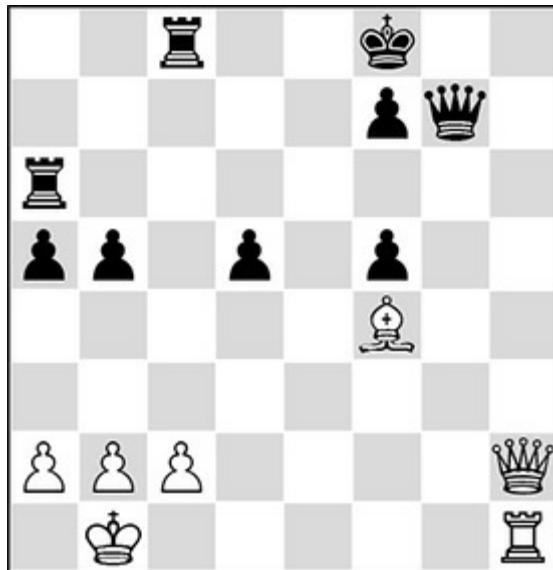
32... $exf5$ 33. $gxf5$ $gxf5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 35. $e6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 36. $g6$

36. $\mathbb{Q}ce1$ would have led to a similar position, but with an extra pawn on g5. This pawn is important, since it takes away f6 from the black queen: 36... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}h2$.

36... $\mathbb{Q}xg6$

After this move Black will soon end up in trouble. A clear improvement would have been 36... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 37. $c3$ $fxg6$.

37. $\mathbb{Q}h2!$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}cg1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$



40. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$!

In the game White played 40. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$, allowing Black to escape and missing the winning continuation:

40... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$

40... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}g1$; 40... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

41. $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}h2$

winning the queen or the rook.

Exercise 1.5

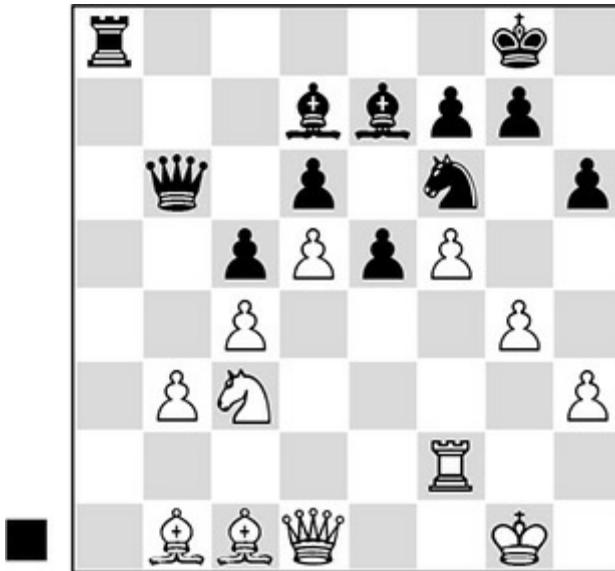
Marc Narciso Dublan

2467

Jorge Cori Tello

2641

Spain tt 2017 (1)



Black decides to exchange the dark-squared bishop, his most passive piece.

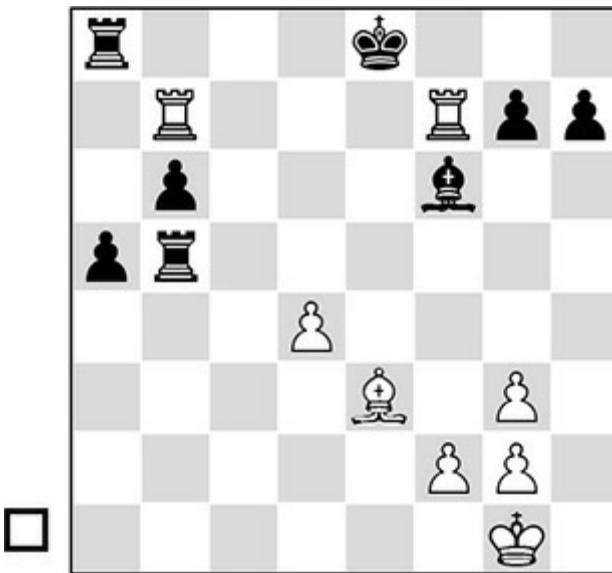
25... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $hxg5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}f2$



With only two pieces left, Black can patiently figure out how he is going to benefit from the empty space in the white camp.

32... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b2+$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $f6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a1+$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h1$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f1+$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 46. $b4$ $cxb4$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 49. $a8$ $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $e4$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $e3$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 53. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 54. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b2+$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}b2+$ 62. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $e2$ 63. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}a7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 0-1

Exercise 1.6
Training position



The bishop on f6 is currently holding Black's position together. Exchanging it would unleash the rooks on the 7th rank and provide White with an irresistible initiative.

1. ♕f4! ♖d5
 2. ♖d6 with a forced mate was threatened.
 2. ♕e5! ♕xe5 3. ♖be7+! ♔d8 4. dxе5
- The combination of both rooks on the 7th rank and the passed pawn is deadly. For instance:
- 4...a4 5. ♖xg7 a3 6. ♖ef7 ♖xe5
 - 6... ♔e8 7.e6.
 7. ♖f8+ ♔e8 8. ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 9. ♖g8+ ♔d7 10. ♖xa8 1-0

Exercise 1.7

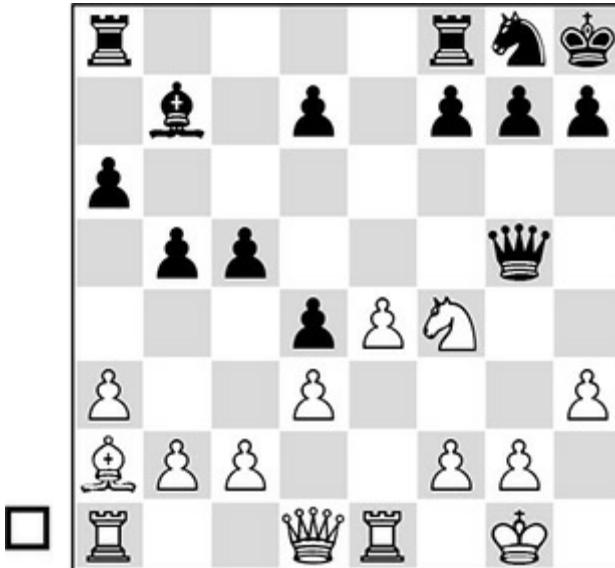
Thomas Willemze

2397

Sergi Obon Temprano

2288

Catalunya tt 2013 (1)



17. $\mathbb{Q}g4$

White is better equipped for an ending.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 18. $hxg4$

Changing the structure. The open h-file promises White additional attacking chances.

18... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $fxg6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $g5$ 22. $e5$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 23. $e6$ $dxe6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

White has a clear advantage, which he converted into a win.

Exercise 1.8

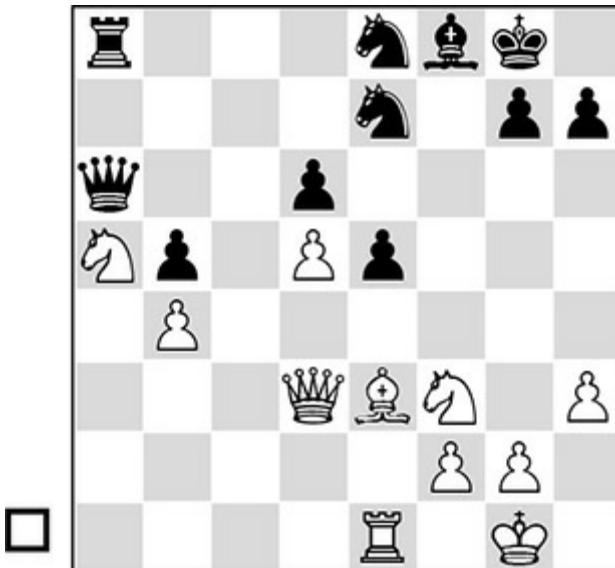
Tatiana Kosintseva

2497

Elena Zaiatz

2364

St Petersburg Ech W 2009 (6)



30. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

It is important to trade off one knight, so that Black cannot attack the pawn on d5.

30... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $gxf6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$

It seems as though Black has managed to cover the light squares, but now the knight on a5 unexpectedly

jumps into play.

33. $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$

34... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$.

35. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f5$

Black can do nothing to oppose the dominance of the white pieces.

36... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$

If 37... $\mathbb{Q}a7$, defending the second rank, then 38.g4 followed by $\mathbb{Q}c8$ and $\mathbb{Q}c6$.

38. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

Also losing is 38... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}h2$. and it is hard to advise Black what to do next, since after g2-g4 the white queen will penetrate into Black's camp, with decisive threats.

39. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $hxg6$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 1-0

Exercise 1.9

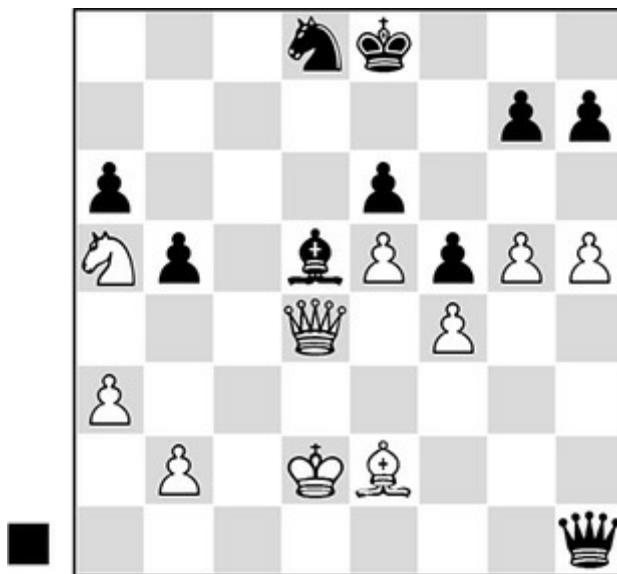
Hans Esterluss

2240

Joachim Duncker

2230

Germany tt 2001/02 (8)



The game continued 47... $\mathbb{Q}g2$, after which White should have been able to keep the game level, but lost after a tense fight. If Black had identified the most important defender and tried to exchange it with

47... $\mathbb{Q}f3!$

he could have made life easier for himself. Pawns will start to drop after, for instance,

48. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 49. $h6$ $gxh6$ 50. $gxh6$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$

Exercise 1.10

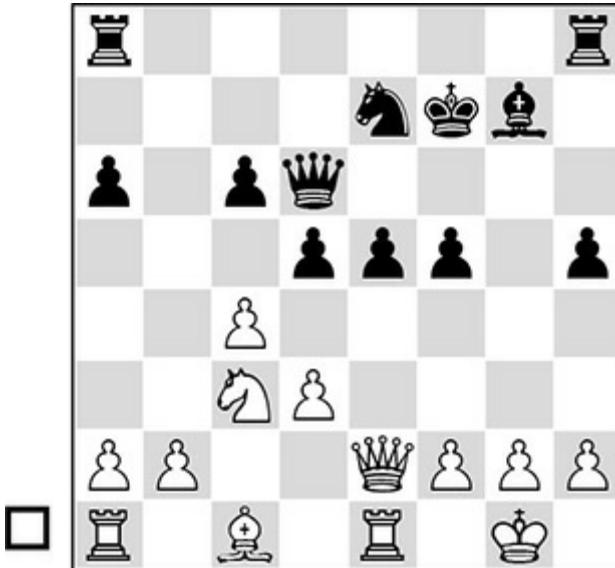
Thomas Willemze

2370

Alje Hovenga

2234

Hoogeveen 2011 (4)



White's aim is clear. He has to tear down the centre in order to harass the enemy king. In the game, he increased the pressure with 17. $\mathbb{N}f3$, but after 17... $\mathbb{N}f6!$ it is not so easy to add additional pressure to the centre. After a tense fight, the game ended in a draw.

White should have identified the black knight as the important defender of the centre and start with eliminating it right away.

The right move would have been:

17. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

Everything is different now. The rook on h8 is tied to h5 and the knight cannot move either, because of $\mathbb{N}f3$, attacking both d5 and f5. White will play $\mathbb{R}ad1$ and choose the right moment to exchange the bishop for the knight. After that it will be very hard for Black to keep the centre closed.

Exercise 1.11

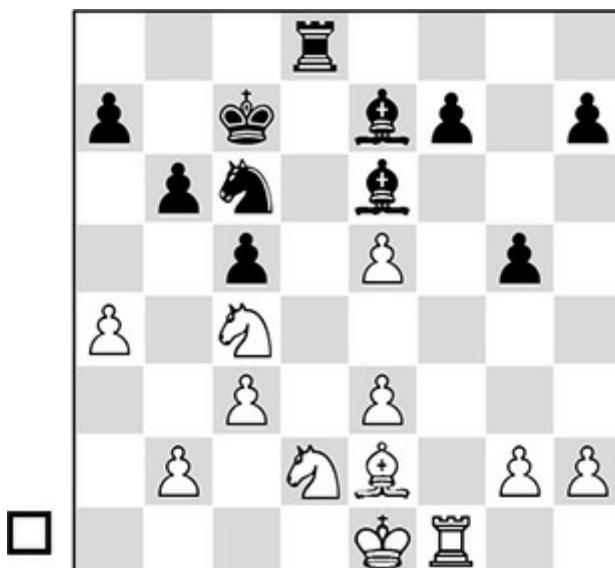
Eduardas Rozentalis

2610

John Emms

2485

Germany Bundesliga 1995/96



f7 is the Achilles' Heel, and the e6-bishop is the most important defender.

20.h3! a6 21.Qg4! b5 22.Qxe6 fxe6 23.axb5 axb5

Now White went for 24.Qd6 Qxd6 25.exd6+ Qxd6 26.Qe2 and won a nice game. However,

24.Qa3!

would have been the most accurate, e.g.

24...Qxe5 25.Qxb5+ Qd7 26.Qf3!

Simplification!

26...Qxf3+ 27.Qxf3 Qb8 28.c4

With a large advantage.

Exercise 1.12

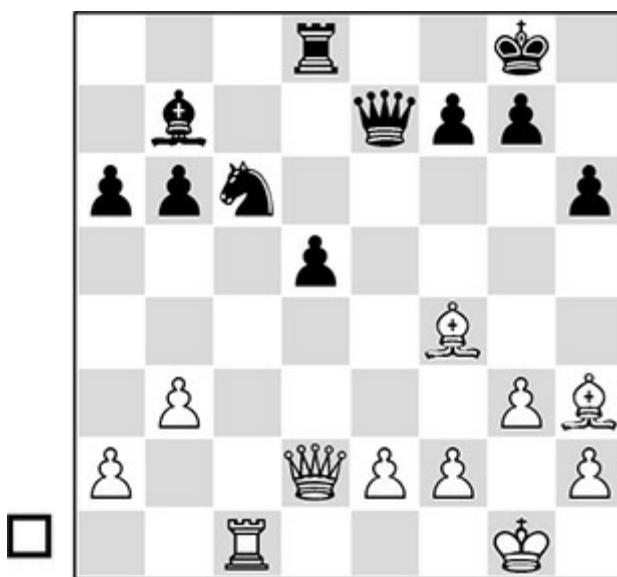
Rinat Jumabayev

2589

Artem Smirnov

2444

St Petersburg 2011 (6)



24.Qe3!

The black queen is an important defender. Without the queens, the remaining white pieces will be extremely dominant.

24...Qxe3

25.Qxe3 gave White a nice advantage, which he converted into a win. However,

25.fxe3

was even stronger, strengthening White's grip on the centre.

Exercise 1.13

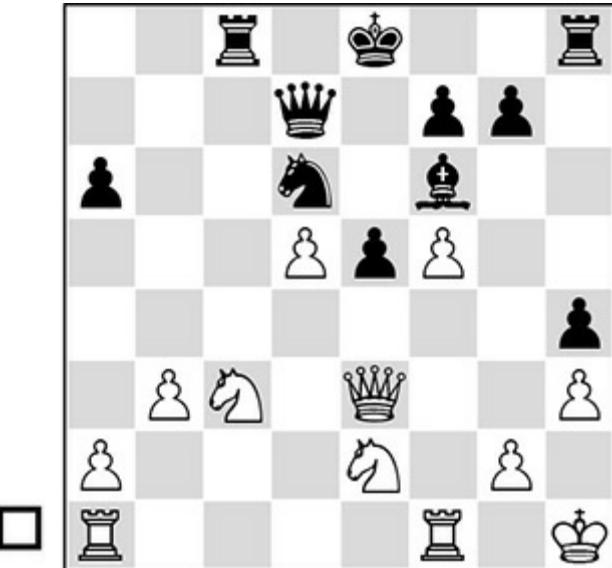
Alexandre Dgebudze

2544

Mathias Röder

2398

Belgium tt 2011/12 (6)



25. ♜e4!

Exchanging the blockader!

25... ♜xe4 26. ♜xe4 ♜c5 27. ♜ad1 0-0 28. ♜f3 ♜fc8 29. ♜fd3 ♜d6 30. ♜e3!

A new knight is heading for e4.

30...e4 31. ♜xe4 ♜c2 32. ♜3d2 ♜xd2

Black did not have much choice. 32... ♜2c5 33. ♜g1, followed by ♜f3, would also have left him with insufficient compensation for the pawn.

33. ♜xd2 ♜a3

Black is trying to develop some active counterplay, but it would have been better to keep the queen at her post and hope for the best. The d-pawn will now start to play a prominent role.

34.d6! ♜h7 35.d7 ♜d8 36. ♜d3 ♜c5 37. ♜xa6 ♜g5 38. ♜d1 ♜xf5 39. ♜d3 ♜xd3 40. ♜xd3 f5 41. ♜g1 ♜g6 42. ♜f3 ♜f6 43. ♜d5 ♜f7 44. ♜d4 ♜xd4 1-0

Exercise 1.14

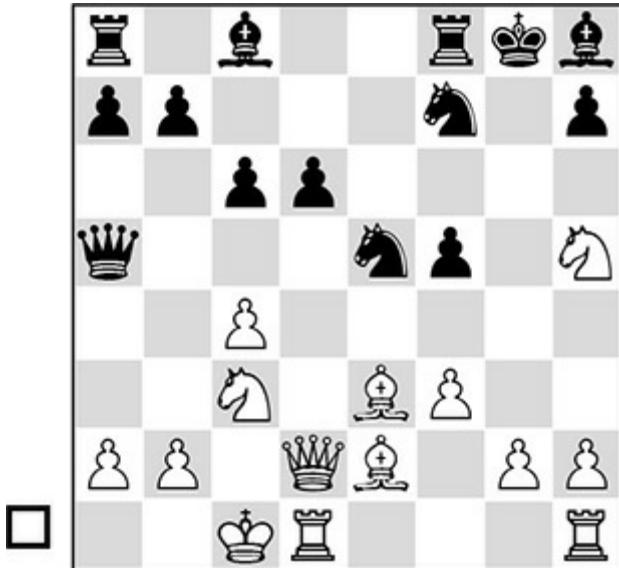
Darwin Yang

2448

Giorgi Margvelashvili

2547

St Louis 2012 (1)



15.f4! ♜g6 16.♗d4!

The bishop is an important defender of the dark squares in the black camp and needs to be eliminated.

16...c5 17.♕xh8 ♛xh8 18.b3!

Another key move. b2 is cleared and the white queen is on her way to the weak colour complex.

18...d5 19.cxd5 ♜d6 20.♗b2 ♛g8 21.♗b5 ♜e8 22.♗c4 ♜d7 23.d6+ ♜f7 24.♖he1 ♛f8 25.♗xf7 ♛xf7 26.♖xe8 ♛xe8 27.♘f6 1-0

Exercise 1.15

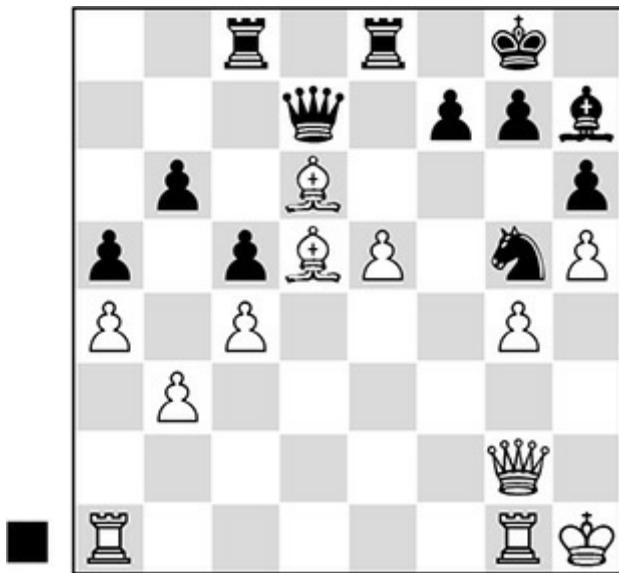
Rafael Vaganian

2615

Karsten Müller

2485

Germany Bundesliga 1995/96



The black pieces by themselves are doing quite well. However, the bishop on h7 is in particularly sharp contrast to both white bishops. An exchange would be very helpful.

35...♝e4! 36.♗xe4 ♜xe4 37.♖ad1

37.♗xe4 ♜xd6!.

37... ♜c6 38. ♜h2

White gives up his centre pawn with this move. The only way to avoid that would have been 38. ♜d5! ♜g5 39. ♜gd1 with a balanced position.

38... ♜e6 39. ♜d5 ♜xd6 40. exd6 ♜xd6 41. ♜gd1 ♜xd5 42. ♜xd5 ♜e8

Black is a pawn up and has the better position, and he went on to win.

Exercise 1.16

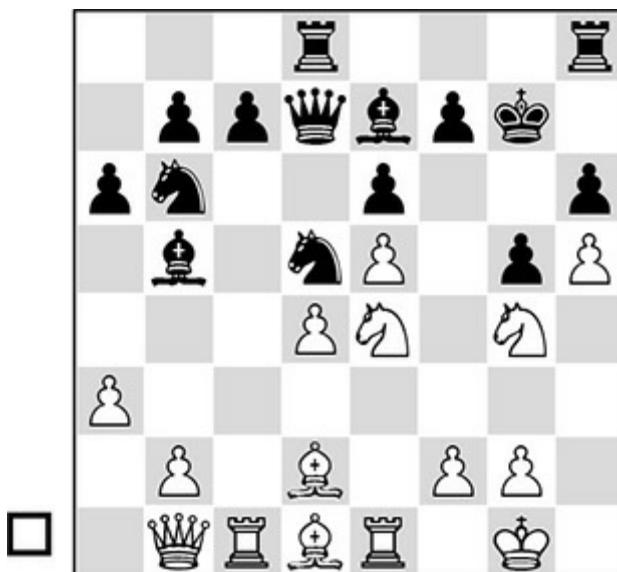
Jaan Ehlvest

2660

Artur Jussupow

2665

Vienna 1996 (2)



The black minor pieces are firmly blocking the d-pawn and keeping an eye on the weak f6-square. It is instructive to see how White strengthens his position with every minor piece he exchanges.

24. ♜b3 ♜df8 25. ♜ef6! ♜d8

Taking the knight was not really an improvement:

A) 25... ♜xf6 26.exf6+ ♜xf6 27. ♜xe6! (remember this move; it will return in later chapters) 27... ♜d8 28. ♜xf7 (the f7-pawn was the sole defender of g6, the Achilles' Heel) 28... ♜xf7 29. ♜g6+ ♜f8 30. ♜b4+ and White wins;

B) 25... ♜xf6 26.exf6+ ♜g8 27. ♜e5 followed by ♜xh6! is hopeless for Black too.

26. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 27. ♜xd5 exd5 28. ♜b4!



Minor piece exchange number 3.

28... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}axb4$ $\mathbb{R}e8$ 30. $e6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{R}xe6$ 32. $\mathbb{R}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $f\times e6$ 34. $\mathbb{R}xc7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 1-0

Exercise 1.17

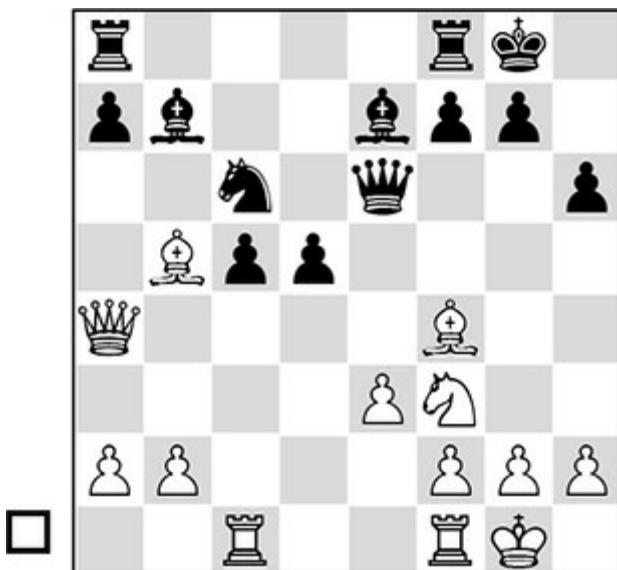
Viacheslav Ikonnikov

2538

Eelke Wiersma

2352

Dieren 2017 (5)



Black needs his minor pieces to support his hanging pawns. Therefore, White decides to exchange one.

16. $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

The only move. 16... $c\times d4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 18. $\mathbb{R}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ loses a pawn.

17. $e\times d4$



White used the exchange of pieces to put his pawn in the centre, securing a large advantage.

17...c4 18. $\mathbb{Q}ce1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 20. g3 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 22. a3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 26. g4 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 27. h4 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 29. g5 1-0

Exercise 1.18

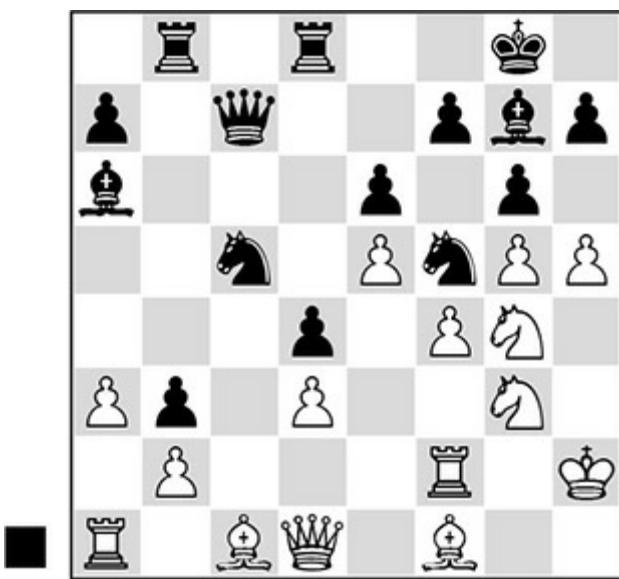
Josef Augustin

2410

Michael Bezold

2490

Brno 1993 (4)



The most promising way to a large advantage would have been:

27... $\mathbb{Q}xd3!$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}e3!$

The exchange of pieces is used in a tactical way to open up the d-file.

29. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $dxe3$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $exd2$

And Black wins.

The game continued 27... $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $dxe3$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$,



but with 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ White could have kept a decent position.

Exercise 1.19

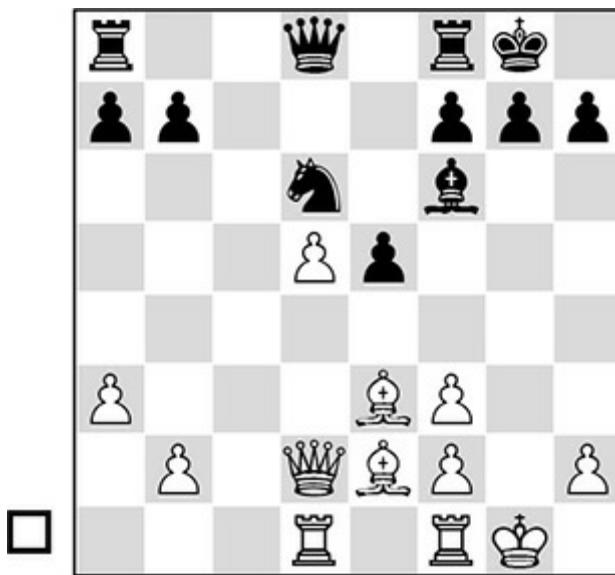
Zoran Colovic

2168

Irina Chelushkina

2280

Pozarevac 2012 (2)



No! With the above examples in mind you might draw the conclusion that White is doing great here, and that he could exchange the crucial knight on d6 and have an easy game. Practical games are, however, hardly ever easy.

After 18. $\mathbb{Q}c5$, Black would, indeed, be obliged to recapture with his queen at d6, but it would be almost impossible for White to expel it, since he does not have a knight or a dark-squared bishop and also lacks control of the critical c6- and e6-squares. Furthermore, an attack against the black king would also have a very low chance of success. In fact, after moves like 18... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$, it becomes clear that the white king will be the one getting mated.

White was therefore right to keep the bishops on the board with

18.  d3

and wait for better times. The chances are about even.

Exercise 1.20

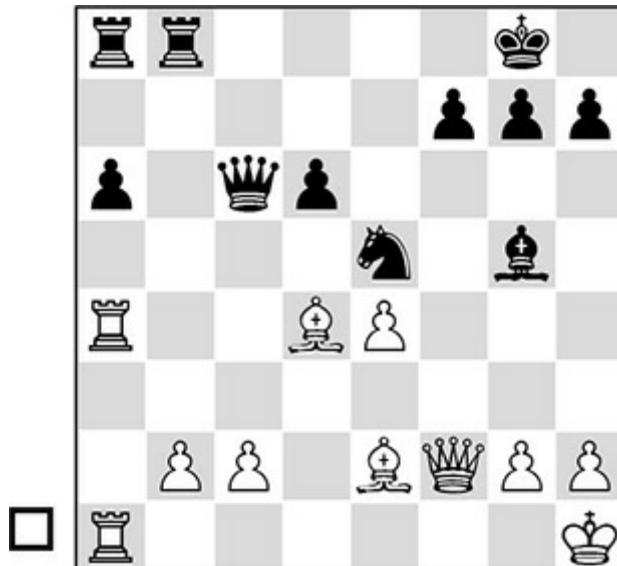
Thomas Willemze

2393

Hou Yifan

2509

Wijk aan Zee 2007 (10)



Yes! The knight was keeping White's light-squared bishop out and has to be exchanged. The opposite-coloured bishops work in White's favour, since his pieces are much better coordinated.

32. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$! $dxe5$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 38. $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 40. $h3$ $h6$ 41. $c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 42. $c5$ $\mathbb{Q}b1+$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 44. $c6$ $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$



47. ♕xf6 ♜g1+ 48. ♔g3 ♕c3+ 49. ♔f3 ♕xf3+ 50. ♔xf3 ♜f1+ 51. ♔e3 ♜e1+ 52. ♔d3 ♜f1+ 53. ♔c3 1-0

Exercise 1.21

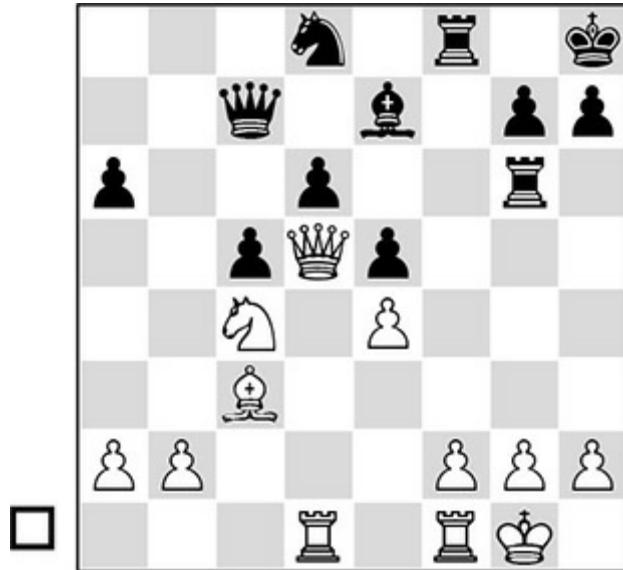
Valery Salov

2670

Joel Lautier

2596

Enghien-les-Bains 1999 (2)



No! The idea is right. White would love to exchange his bishop for the knight in order to reach a favourable good knight vs bad bishop position. However, a tactical trick spoils the fun. After 24. $\mathbb{Q}a5 \mathbb{B}c8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{B}xg2+$! 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg2 \mathbb{B}g4+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{B}f3+$ Black escapes with a draw.

Therefore, in the starting position, White continued with

24.f4!

and won a very nice game.

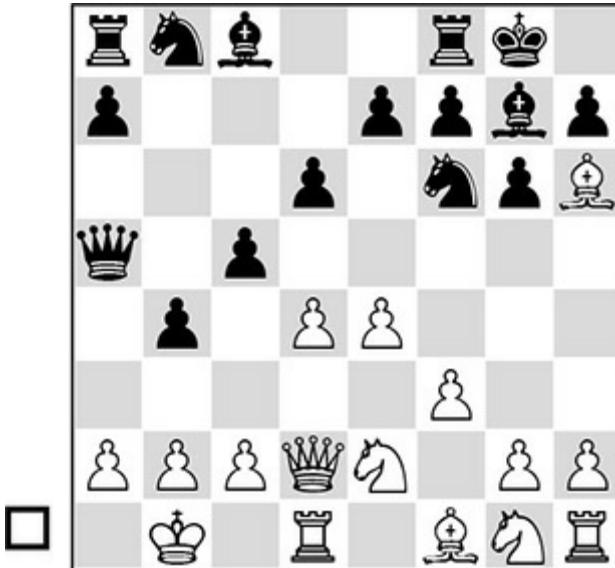
Exercise 1.22

Alban Delorme

2005

Yvain Boizante

Pau France tt U20 2000 (7)



No! In itself there is nothing wrong with exchanging the strong black bishop. But there was no need to hurry. White just gives his opponent an extra option since after 11. $\mathbb{Q}xg7 \mathbb{Q}xg7$ 12. h4 he is now able to reply 12... h5!, with good defending prospects.

Keeping the bishop on h6 a little longer and starting with **11.h4!** right away would have deprived Black of this option and promised White a strong attack.

Exercise 1.23

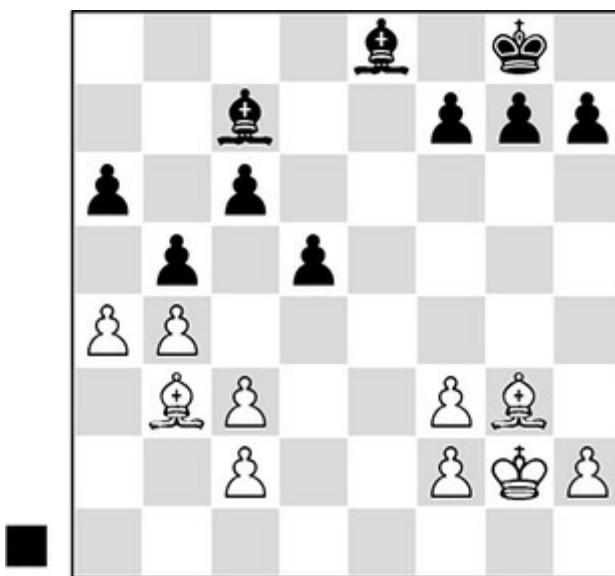
Nigel Short

2698

Vladimir Kramnik

2800

London 2011 (2)



No! Black just swapped off all the rooks in order to highlight the awkward placement of White's light-squared bishop. His dark-squared bishop is, however, too important to be missed. Exchanging it would allow the white king to enter the black queenside via the weakened dark squares.

27... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Kramnik had no problems converting this ending into a full point. Or, as he puts it himself in his Chessbase annotations: ‘In practical terms Black is playing a two bishops versus one ending. I am particularly strong in such endgames ☺.’

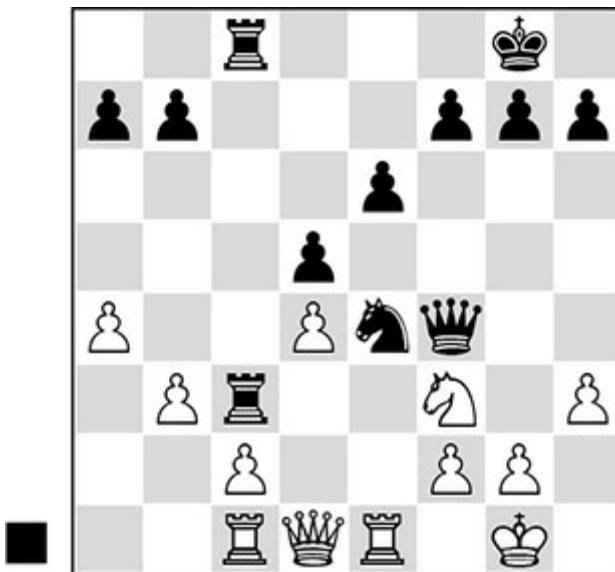
28...f6 29.♗b8 ♗g6 30.axb5 axb5 31.♔f1 ♔f7 32.♕e2 ♕e6 33.♕e3 ♘b6+ 34.♕e2 ♘h5 35.♘a2 g5 36.♘b3 f5
37.♘a2 f4 38.♘b3 ♕f5 39.♘d6 g4 40.♔f1 g3 41.fxg3 fxg3 42.♘xg3 ♘xf3 43.♘a2 ♘e3 0-1

Exercise 1.24

Marcella Günther

Catheleijne Sanders

Rhenen 2010



No! The knight on f3 looks like an important defender that needs to be exchanged. And indeed, Black kept a nice initiative after: 21...♝g5 22.♝xg5 ♛xg5 23.♚h1 ♛f5 24.♜e2 ♛f4 even though the game ended in a draw.

But Black could have done much better. This becomes clear if you take a step back and try to look at the position from White’s perspective. What can she do? Assume we play a move like

21...h6!

It turns out the knight is pinned, the c1-rook and the queen have to defend c2, and 22.♜e2 is impossible on account of 22...♞xb3!. In other words: White is in zugzwang! She has nothing better than a move like 22.♞f1, after which Black can choose between slowly improving her position or immediately winning the pawn with 21...♛c7!.

Exercise 1.25

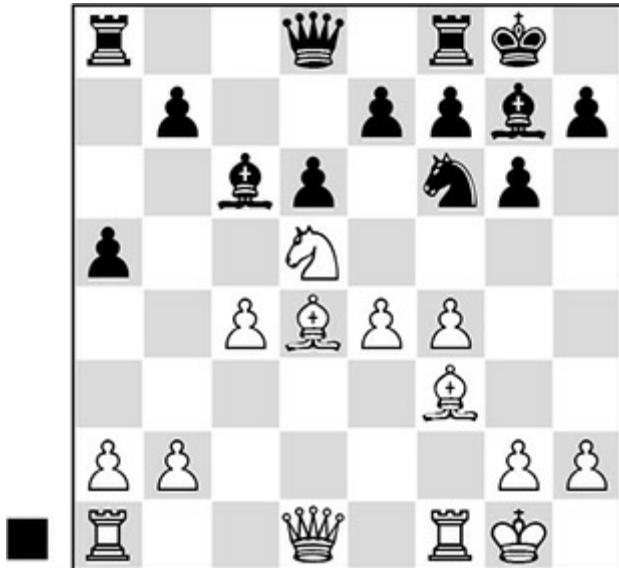
Szabolcs Laza

2176

Richard Varga

2029

Hungary tt U18 2016 (7)



No! Black does want to exchange the dark-squared bishops, but the text move helps White to improve his structure.

13... \mathbb{Q} x d5 14.exd5 \mathbb{Q} d7 15. \mathbb{Q} xg7 \mathbb{Q} xg7 16. \mathbb{Q} d4+ \mathbb{Q} g8 and now 17.a4!, followed by b2-b3 and a rook doubling on the e-file, would have promised White a nice initiative.

It was therefore better to go for

13... \mathbb{Q} d7!

with the same exchange in mind, but without collateral damage.

Exercise 1.26

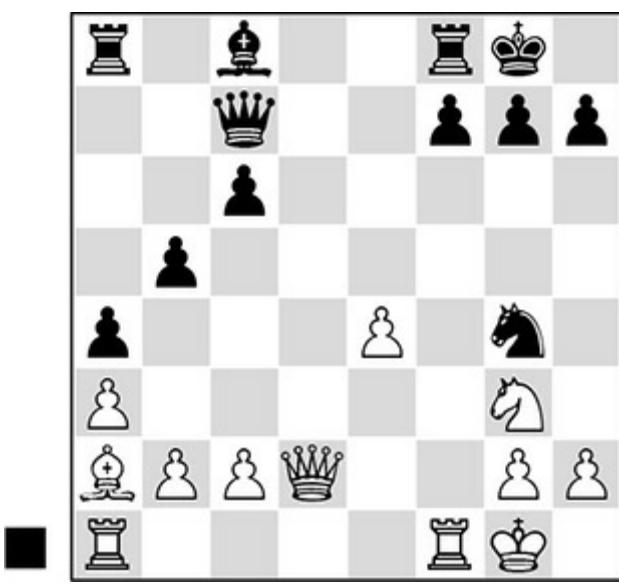
Paul ten Vergert

2214

Thomas Willemze

2416

Netherlands tt 2014/15 (9)



Yes! Black can use the exchange of bishops to open up the f-file for his rook.

19... \mathbb{Q} e6!

19... \mathbb{Q} e5 20. \mathbb{Q} xf7! illustrates the other motive behind the exchange: getting rid of the annoying bishop on

a2.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$

The open f-file makes it much harder for White to cover his weakened dark squares. This becomes clear after, for instance:

21. $\mathbb{Q}h1$



21... $\mathbb{Q}e5!$

The inferior 21... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ was played in the game. Black kept an advantage, but the game ended in a draw.

22.c3 h5! 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 26. h3 $\mathbb{Q}f2+$

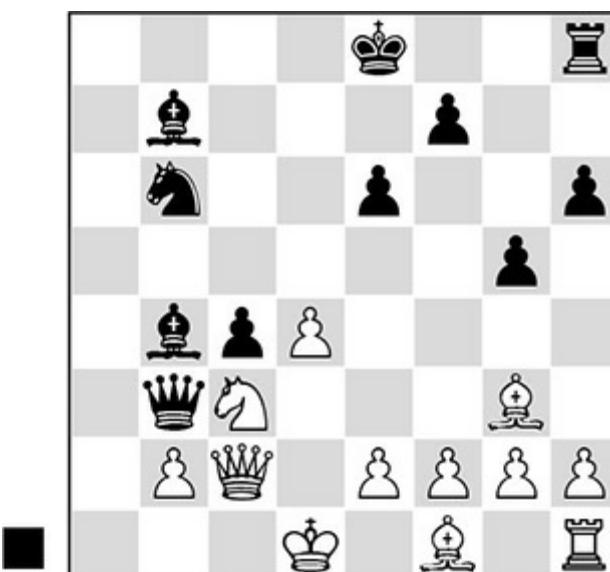
Black wins a pawn and is clearly better.

Exercise 1.27

Sergey Nikolaevich Freiman

Alexander Alekhine

St Petersburg 1914 (11)



Yes!

21... $\mathbb{Q}xc3!$ 22. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

It is often wise to let your opponent carry out the exchange instead of doing it yourself. This rule applies especially well in this position. Black is winning.

23. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $cxb3$ 24. e3

24. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ would not have stopped the pawn either: 25. $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

24... b2 0-1

Exercise 1.28

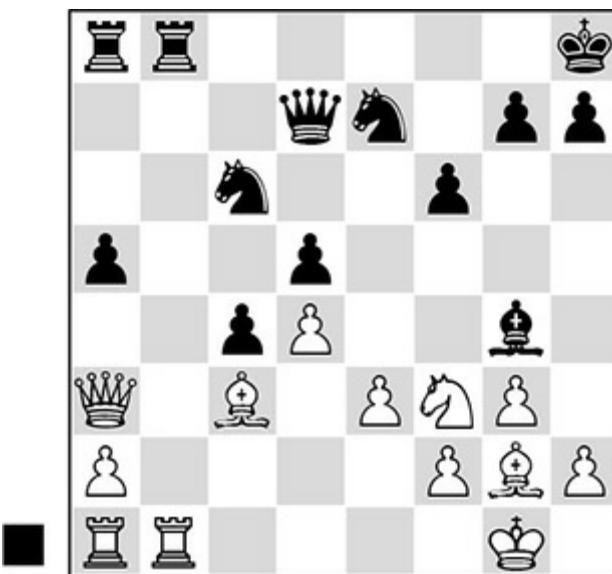
Stanislav Korotkjevich

2395

Thomas Willemze

2348

Germany tt 2011/12 (4)



Yes! Black has a tactical win.

19... $\mathbb{R}xb1+$ 20. $\mathbb{R}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 22. $\mathbb{R}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 23. $\mathbb{R}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{R}b8$ 0-1

Exercise 1.29

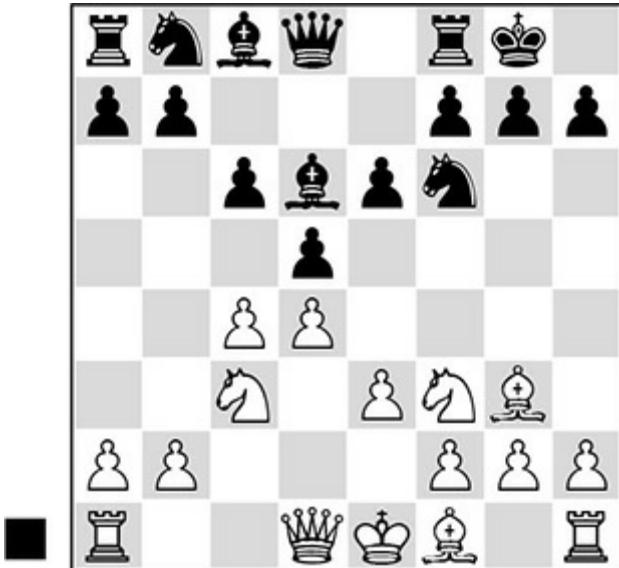
Peter Lombaers

2327

Vasco Diogo

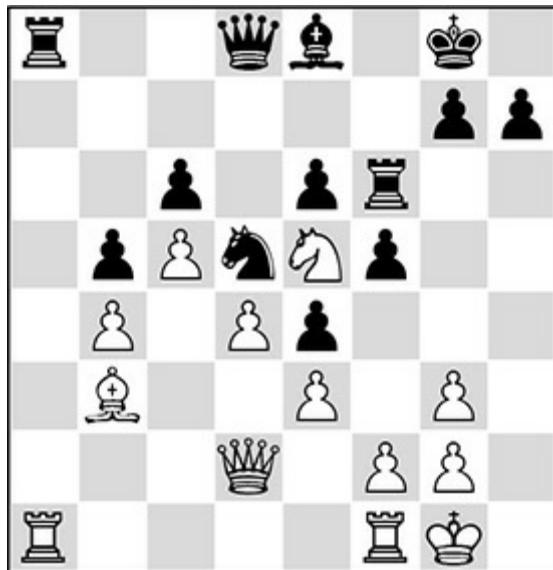
2213

Leiria 2017 (3)



No! The exchange weakens the black pawn structure. White accepted the gift and skilfully developed an irresistible initiative.

7... ♜e4 8. ♜xe4 dxe4 9. ♜d2 f5 10. c5 ♜xg3 11. hxg3 ♜d7 12. b4 ♜f6 13. ♜c4 b5 14. ♜e5 ♜d7 15. a4 a6 16. ♜e2 ♜e8
17. ♜d2 ♜d5 18. ♜d1 ♜b8 19. 0-0 ♜f6 20. ♜b3 ♜d8 21. axb5 axb5



22. ♜xd5 exd5 23. ♜xa8 ♜xa8 24. ♜b2 g5 25. ♜a1 ♜d8 26. ♜a7 ♜f8 27. ♜a2 ♜f6 28. ♜a5 f4 29. ♜c7 ♜h6 30. ♜d6
♜f6 31. ♜e7 ♜e6 32. ♜c7 fxe3 33. fxe3 ♜f8 34. ♜d7+ ♜g8 35. ♜e5 ♜f8 36. ♜g4 ♜g6 37. ♜d8 h5 38. ♜e5 ♜h6
39. ♜f7 ♜f6



40. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ 1-0

Exercise 1.30

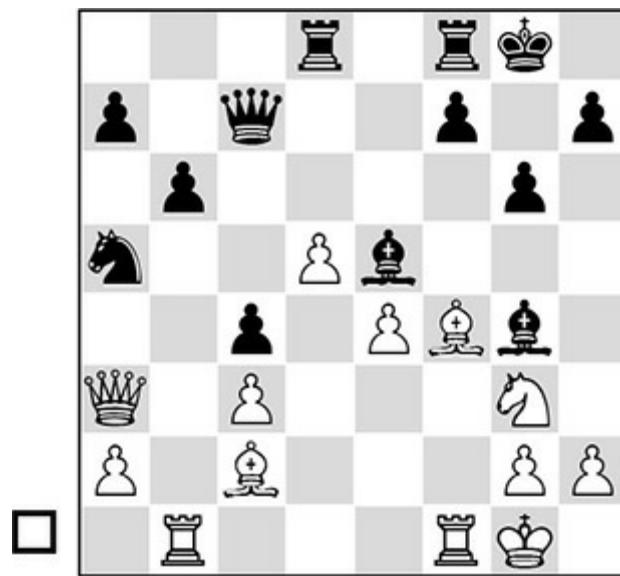
Alberto David

2597

Andreas Heimann

2459

Zurich 2011 (3)



Yes! In the game, White played 21. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ but after 21...f6 22.h3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ Black managed to organize a blockade and was doing fine, even though he lost the game in the end.

At our starting position, the queen was well-placed at a3, so it would have been a better idea to exchange the bishops right away with

21. $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f2$

giving Black less time to organize a blockade and securing a promising position.

Chapter 2: Exploiting the 7th rank

Exercise 2.0 – Windmill (from page 65)

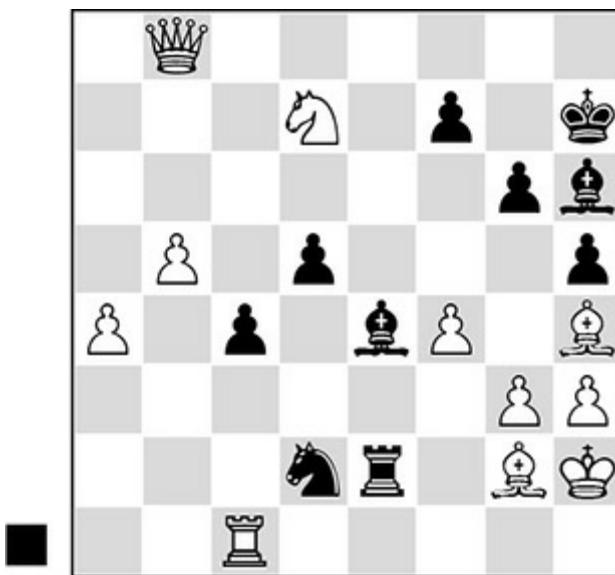
Luis Ernesto Rodi

2344

Manuel Larrea

2292

Montevideo ch-URU 2016 (2)



37... ♜xg2+ 38. ♛h1 ♜xg3+ 39. ♛h2 ♜g2+ 40. ♛h1 ♜g4+ 41. ♛h2 ♜f3+ 42. ♛h1 ♜xh4+ 43. ♛h2 ♜g2+ 44. ♛h1 ♜d2+ 45. ♛g1 ♜f3+

White resigned in view of 46. ♛f1 ♜d3#.

Exercise 2.1

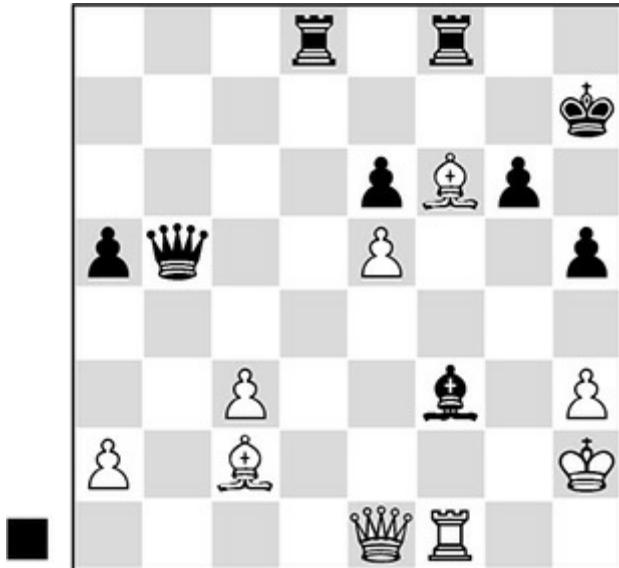
Andranik Matikozian

2515

Igor Novikov

2589

Minneapolis 2005 (4)



40... ♕xf6!

Opening the diagonal to the white king.

41.exf6 ♔b8+!

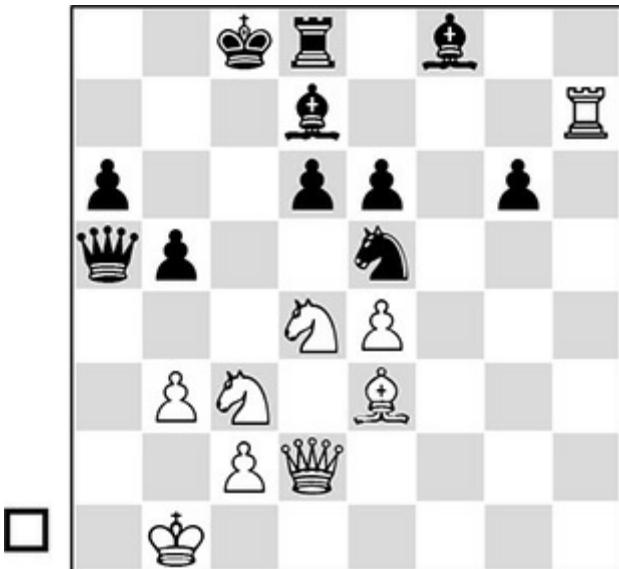
This manoeuvre is very similar to the test exercise from Chapter 2.2. The queen travels via b8 to the weak g3-square. The next step is to bring the rook to the 7th rank.

42.♔g1 ♕d2 0-1

All the white pieces are stuck on the back rank, unable to parry the threats. If White takes the rook, ... ♔g3 will be mate in two.

Exercise 2.2

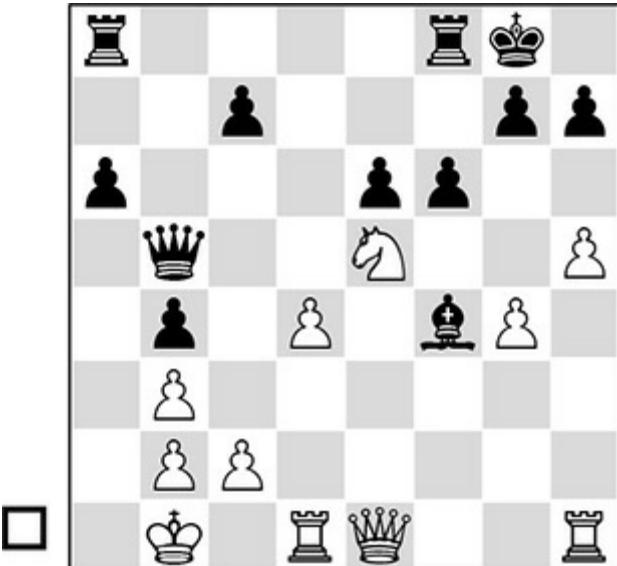
Training position



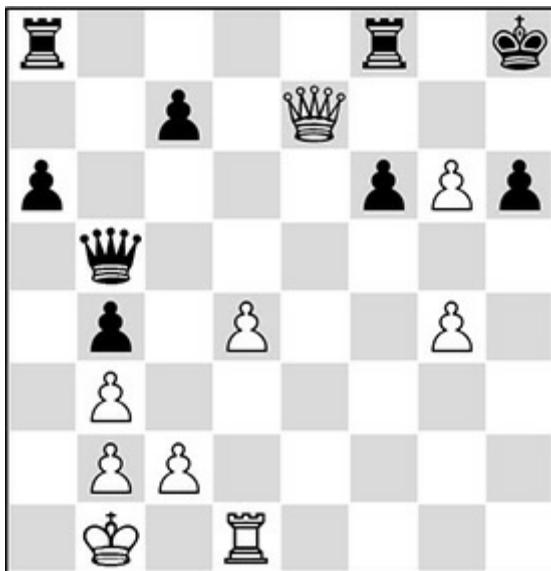
1.♕xe6 ♔xe6 2.♖d5 ♔xd2 3.♕c7+ ♔b8 4.♔a7+ ♔a8 5.♕b6# 1-0

Exercise 2.3

Training position



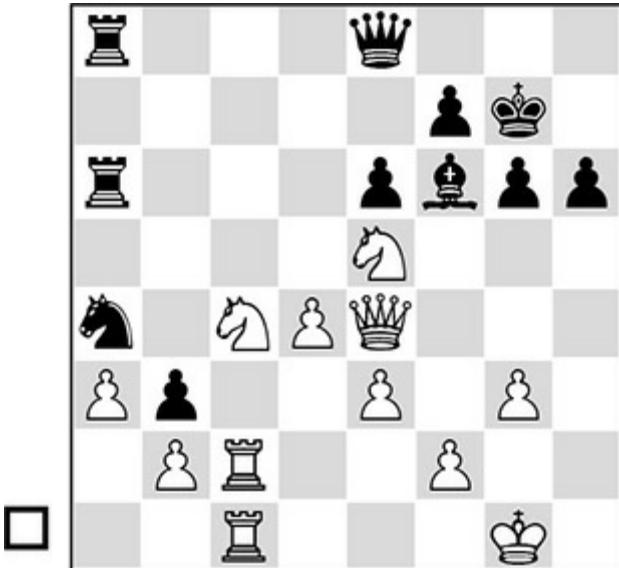
1. ♕g6 hxg6 2. ♔xe6+ ♕h8 3. hxg6+ ♔h6 4. ♕xh6+! gxh6 5. ♔e7 1-0



This picture should look familiar by now. The queen has trapped the king in a mating net.

Exercise 2.4

Training position



1. $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

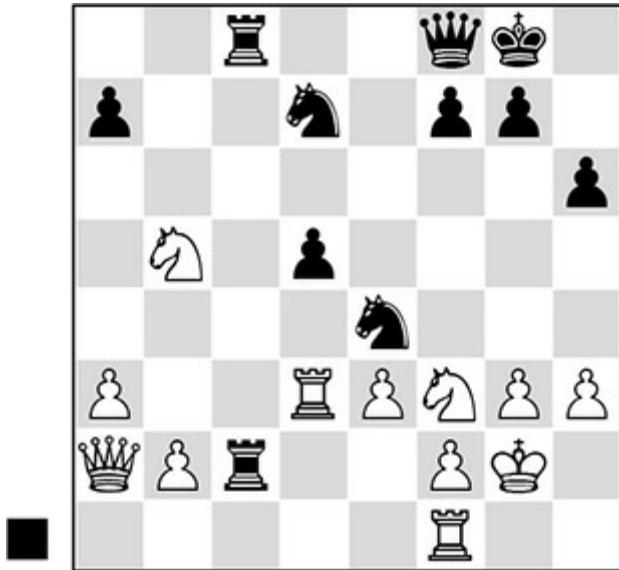
If 2... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ wins.



3. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 1-0

Exercise 2.5

Training position



1... ♕b8c5! 2. ♘bd4 ♕b8

This is the point. The black queen has found her way to White's Achilles' Heel. It can no longer be saved.

3. ♘xc2 ♕xc2 4. ♔g1 ♘xf2 5. ♕xf2 ♕xg3+ 6. ♔h1 ♕xf2 0-1

Exercise 2.6

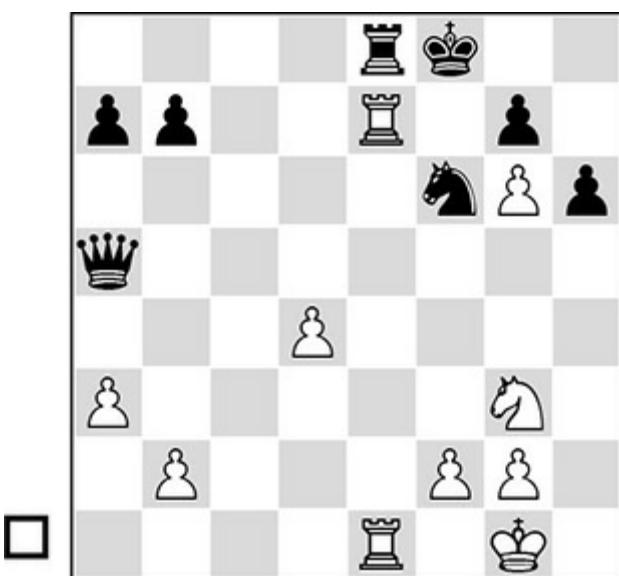
Juan Carlos Moreno Cameno

1686

Agustin Marrero Cardenes

1937

San Agustin 2012 (7)



White could have turned the game upside down with

28. ♕f7+! ♔g8 29. ♕xe8+ ♘xe8 30. ♘f5

followed by 31. ♘e7+ and 32. ♕f8#.

Exercise 2.7

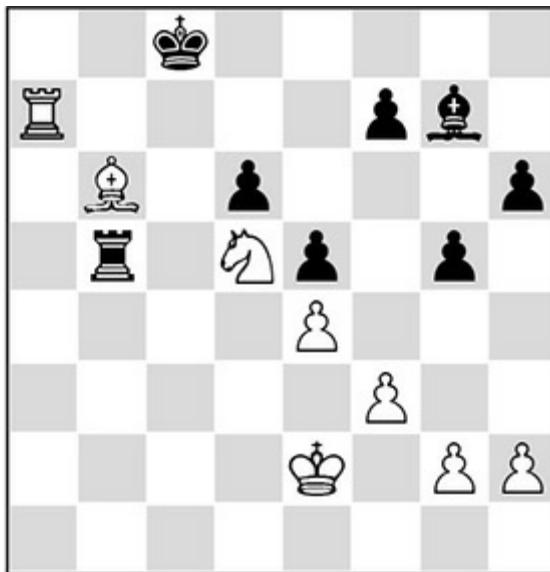
Josef Gabriel

2062

Fred Brandt

1838

Sooden Allendorf 2015 (2)



39. $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}c7\#$

Exercise 2.8

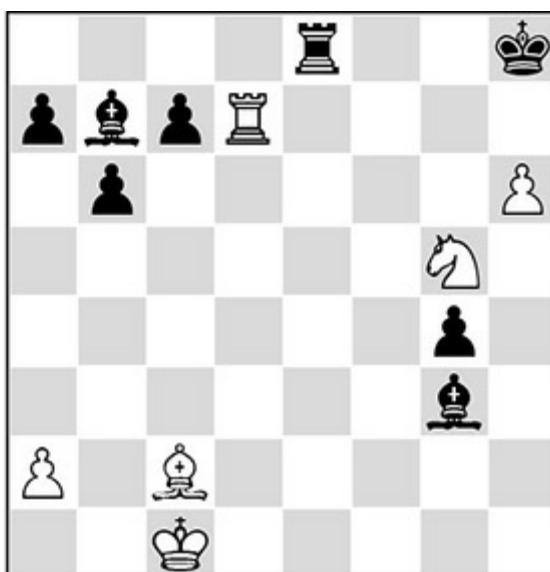
Gabriel Tenorio de Albuquerque

1564

Daniel Yoshito Ikejiri

1988

Sao Paulo 2017 (1)

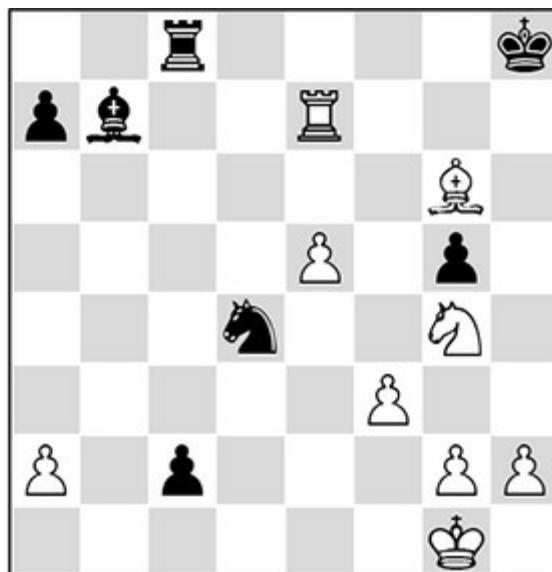


30. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ 1-0

Exercise 2.9

Geir Moseng

2018



40. ♕h7+ ♔g8 41. ♜f6+ ♔f8 42. ♕f7# 1-0

Exercise 2.10

Training position



1. ♜g5 ♔f8 2. ♜f6 ♔e8 3. ♕c8# 1-0

Exercise 2.11

Training position



1. ♜h6+ ♕g8 2. ♜f6+ ♕h8 3. ♜g7# 1-0

Exercise 2.12

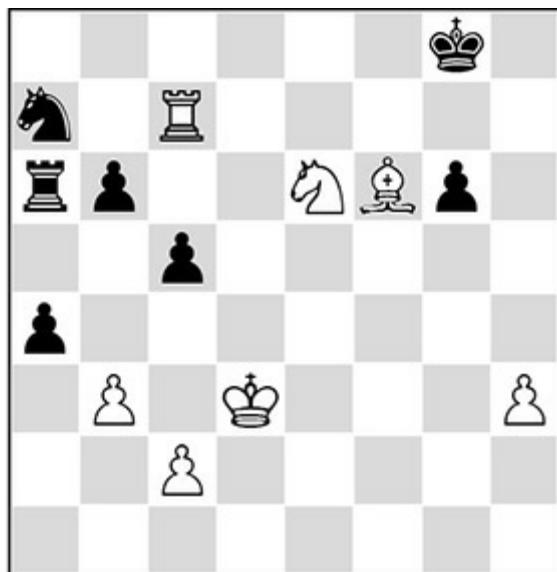
Yahor Silich

1783

Timon Waser

1346

Batumi Wch U10 2016 (1)



49. ♜g7+ ♕h8 50. ♜xg6+ ♕h7 51. ♜f8# 1-0

Exercise 2.13

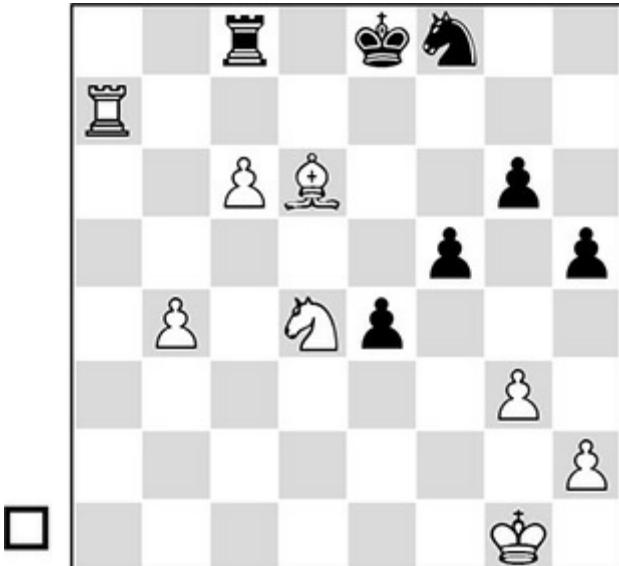
Jan Lundin

2230

Colum Jezierski

1984

London 2015 (1)



39. $\mathbb{R}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 40. $\mathbb{R}f7$ $\mathbb{R}xc6$ 41. $\mathbb{N}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 42. $\mathbb{R}e7\#$ 1-0

Exercise 2.14

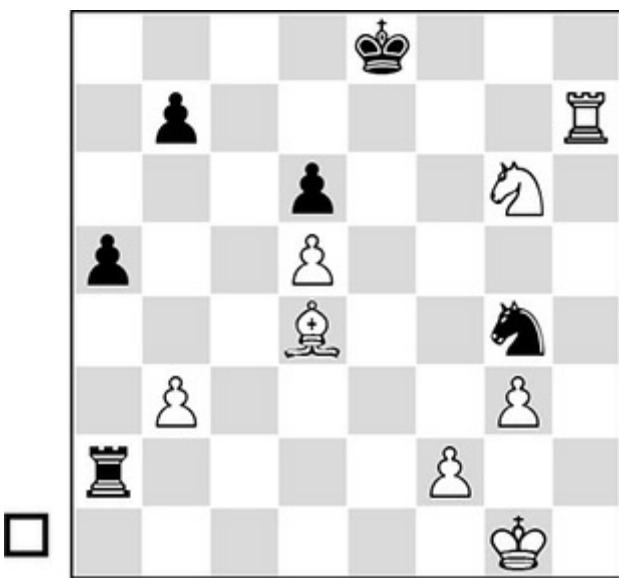
Humpy Koneru

2557

Nino Batsiashvili

2482

Doha Wch rapid W 2016 (10)



31. $\mathbb{R}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 32. $\mathbb{N}b6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 33. $\mathbb{R}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 34. $\mathbb{R}d8\#$ 1-0

Exercise 2.15

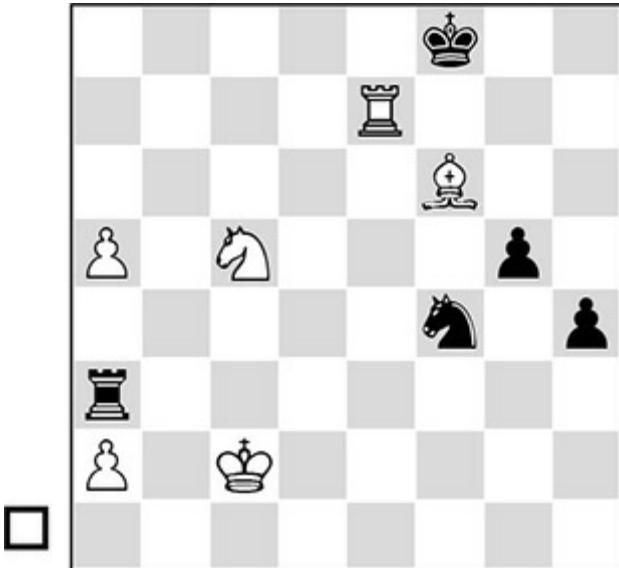
Miro Pandurevic

2295

Filip Cvitkovic

2077

Zagreb 2016 (6)



46. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}f8\#$ 1-0

Exercise 2.16

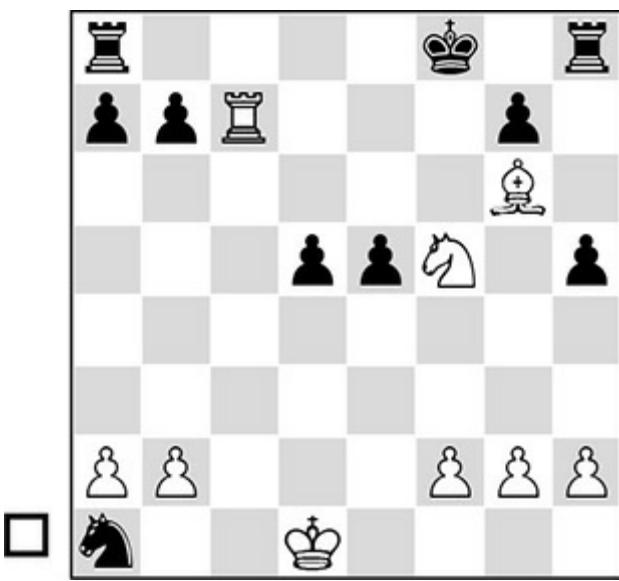
Vitaly Boiarintsev

2391

Evgeny Klimentov

2187

Moscow 2017 (1)



26. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 1-0

Exercise 2.17

Training position



1. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
 1... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}f6$.
 2. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}f8\#$ 1-0

Exercise 2.18
Training position



1. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ 1-0

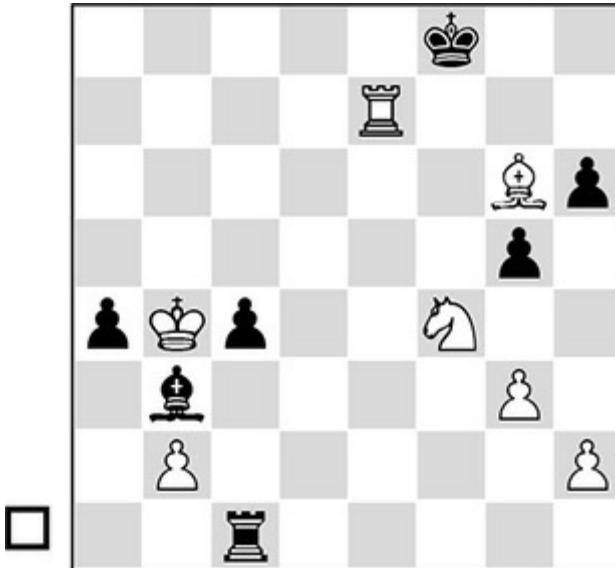
Exercise 2.19
Borki Predojevic

2631

Matthias Dann

2477

Germany Bundesliga B 2015/16 (6)



38. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$

38... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ c3 40. $\mathbb{Q}f8\#.$

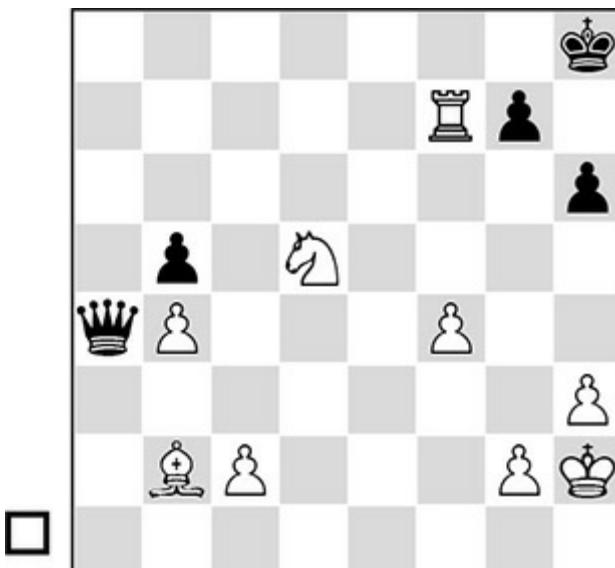
39. $\mathbb{Q}c7+!$

39. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ was played in the game.

39... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}c8\#$ 1-0

Exercise 2.20

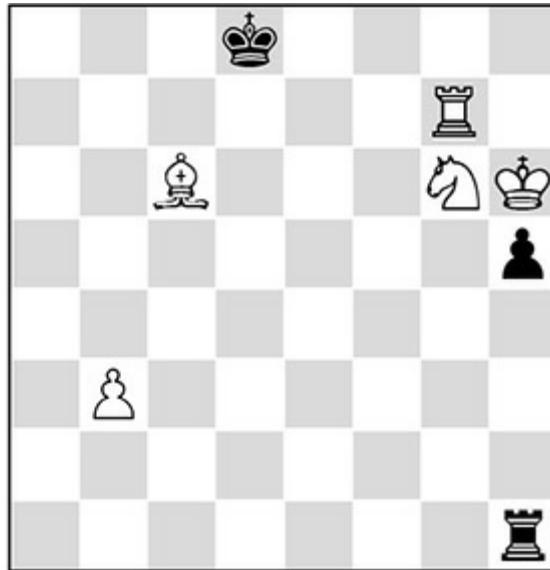
Training position



1. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ h5 2. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}g5\#$ 1-0

Exercise 2.21

Training position



1. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$

1... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ h4 5. $\mathbb{Q}b6\#$.

2. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}g7$ h4 5. $\mathbb{Q}c6\#$ 1-0

Exercise 2.22

Training position



1. $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}f8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

3... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}a7\#$.

4. $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}xg6\#$ 1-0

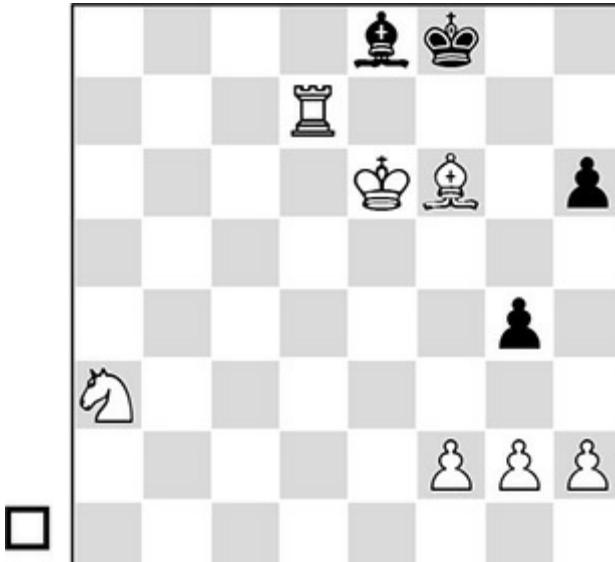
Exercise 2.23

Benjamin Lu

Cai Qihong

Hong Kong 2016 (1)

1753

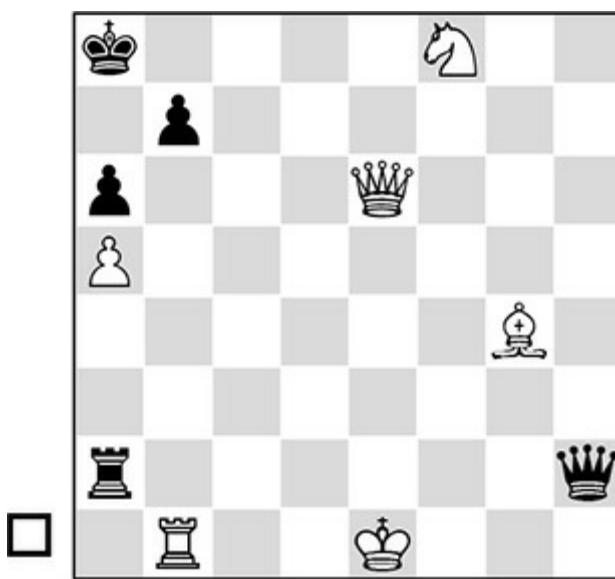


37. $\mathbb{Q}d8$ g3 38. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ gxf2 39. $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ f1 \mathbb{Q} 41. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ 1-0

Exercise 2.24

Anderssen

1856



1. $\mathbb{Q}xa6+$ bxa6 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}b7+$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$ 1-0

Exercise 2.25

Training position



1... ♕b4+! 2.f6 ♔xf6+ 3.♕d4 ♔xd4+ 4.♕c3 ♔xc3# 0-1

Exercise 2.26

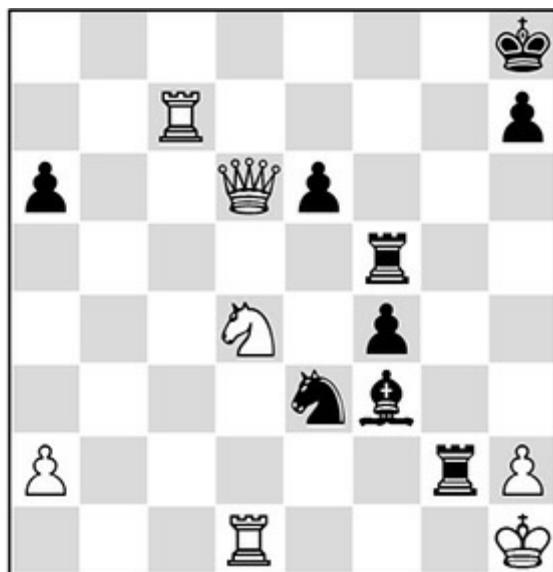
Konstantin Savenkov

2324

Dmitry Gordievsky

2596

Moscow 2017 (1)



33... ♕e4!

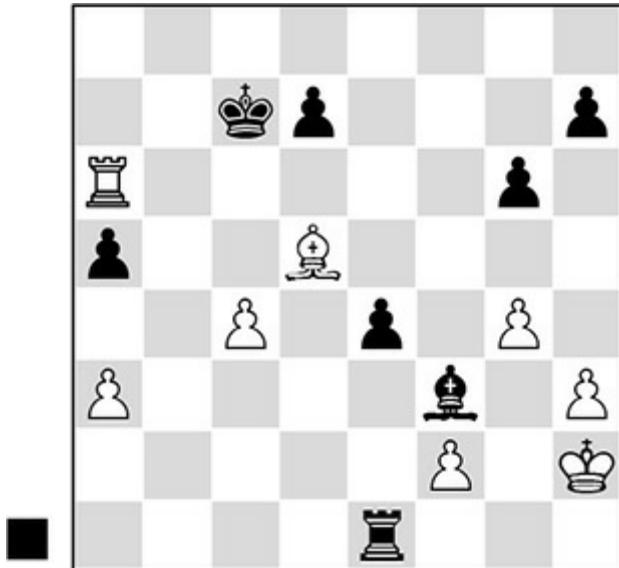
Renewing the threat. Now there is nothing White can do to prevent a deadly discovered attack.

33... ♕d2+ 34.♕xf3 ♕xd1+ 35.♔xd1 ♕xd1 would be less clear.

34.♕xe6 ♕d2+ 35.♔g1 ♕g5+ 36.♔g4 ♕xg4# 0-1

Exercise 2.27

Training position



1...g5!

Locking up the king! White can no longer prevent his opponent from constructing an annoying Windmill.

1... $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ g5, with the same idea, would have been strong as well.

2. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}g2+$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}h1$



5... $\mathbb{Q}xg4+!$

The Windmill works in two directions!

6. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}g2+$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ h5 0-1

The most accurate move, keeping the treats alive. Black is helpless. Many other moves were at this point of course winning as well.

Exercise 2.28

Training position



1. ♕g8+ ♔xg8 2. ♖h6# 1-0

Exercise 2.29

Training position



1... ♕ee2!

The threat is again stronger than the actual execution. Black is threatening mate in two with 2... ♖h2+/3... ♖h1, so White must return large material in order to block the long diagonal.

2. ♖f3 ♖h2+!

2... ♗xf3 3. ♗xf3+-.

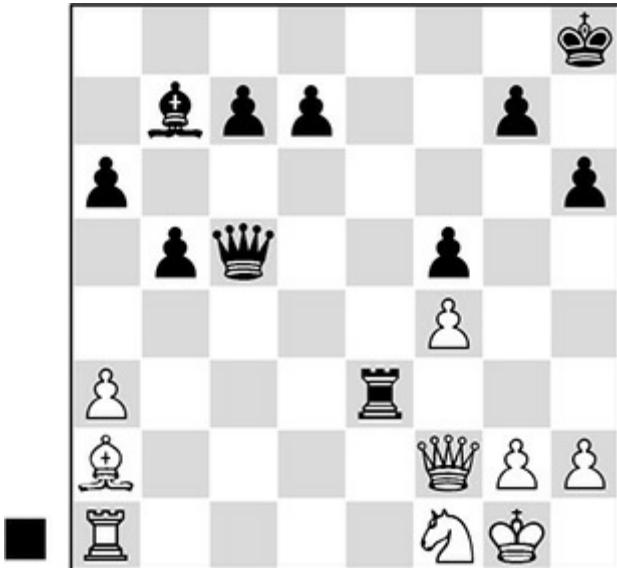
3. ♔g1 ♖eg2+ 4. ♔f1 ♗b5+! 5. ♖d3 ♖d2 6. ♔g1

6. ♔e1 ♖he2+ 7. ♔f1 ♖xd3 (a fresh battery is set up) 8. ♗xc5 ♖f3+ 9. ♔g1 ♖g3+ 10. ♔f1 ♖c2+ and Black wins.

6... ♗xd3 7. ♗xd3 ♖xd3 8. ♔xh2 ♖xd6 0-1

Exercise 2.30

Training position



1... ♜e2! 2. ♖xc5 ♜xg2+ 3. ♔h1



3... ♜xa2+

3... ♜g4+ 4. ♗d5! and White wins!

4. ♔g1 ♜g2+ 5. ♔h1 ♜g4+ 6. ♗d5 ♗xd5#

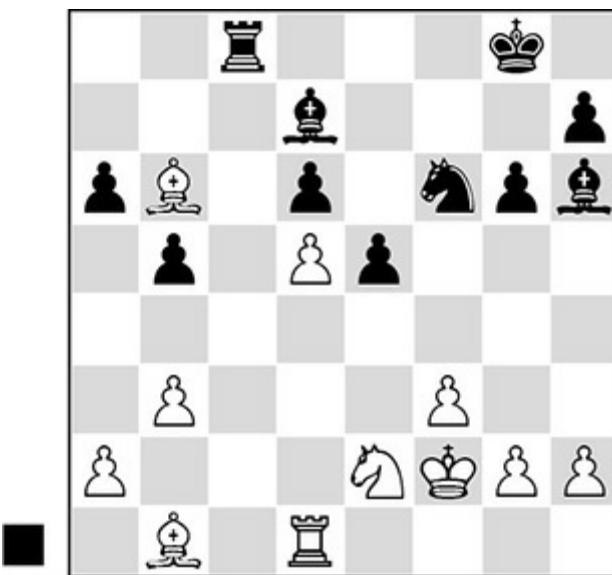
Chapter 3: Entering the 7th rank

Exercise 3.1

Julio Salas Romo

Robert James Fischer

Santiago 1959 (8)



26...Qf5

Eliminate the defender!

27.Qxf5 gxf5 28.Qg3 Qc2+ 29.Qg1 f4 30.Qf5 Qf8 ... 0-1 (68)

Exercise 3.2

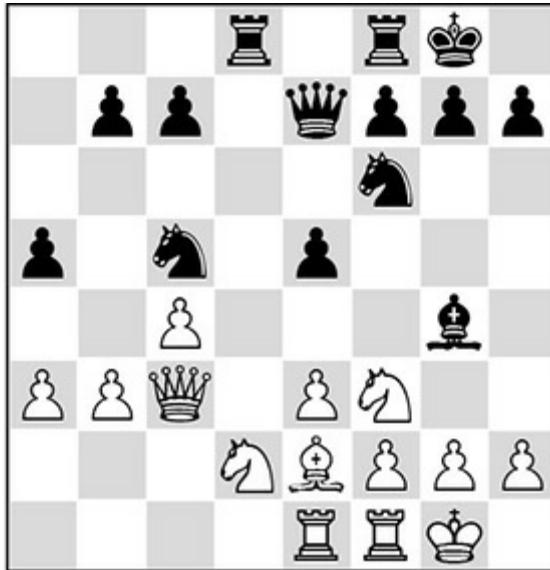
Ana Kuchava

2122

Meri Arabidze

2366

Tbilisi ch-GEO W 2015 (2)



The game continued with 15...e4, which allowed White to block the open file with 16. $\mathbb{R}d4!$. Instead, Black should have focused on exchanging the defenders:

15... $\mathbb{Q}fe4!$

15... $\mathbb{Q}ce4$ is also strong, but it gives White an extra opportunity with 16. $\mathbb{B}b2$.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$

The next move is 21.a4. Black has a clear advantage.

Exercise 3.3

Mihai Grunberg

2472

Attila Groszpeter

2522

Paks 2007 (5)



The d2-square is heavily guarded. Black needs to switch his rook to a more promising square, just like Gupta did in our introductory game.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xa3!$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2+$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3!$

Black did not just enter the 7th rank. He also created a deadly Windmill!

27.h4 ♜g2+ 28.♔h1 ♜d2+ 29.♕g1 ♜g2+ 30.♔h1 ♜c8 31.♗d6 ♜d2+ 32.♕g1 ♜g2+ 33.♔h1 ♜c6 34.♗xc5 ♜e2+
 35.♕g1 ♜g2+ 36.♔h1 a5 37.f5 ♜a2+ 38.♕g1 ♜g2+ 39.♔h1 h5 40.♗a1 ♜e2+ 41.♕g1 ♜g2+ 42.♔h1 a4 43.e4
 ♜c2+ 44.♕g1 ♜6xc5 45.♗xc2 ♜xc2 46.♗e3 0-1

Exercise 3.4

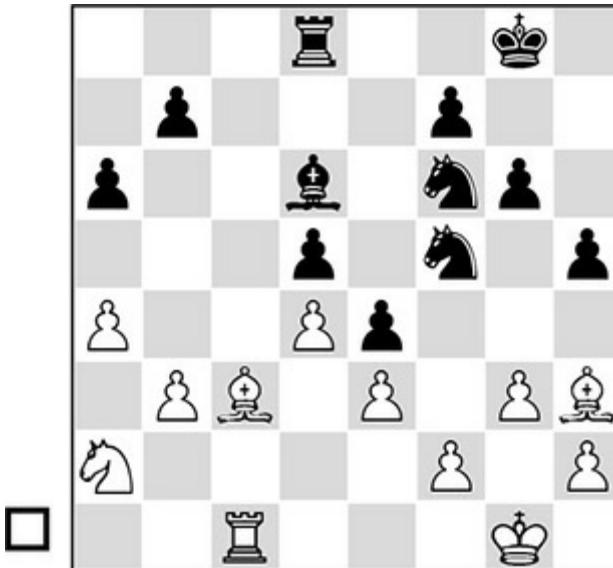
Milan Drasko

2468

Ilir Seitaj

2392

Durrës 2013 (5)



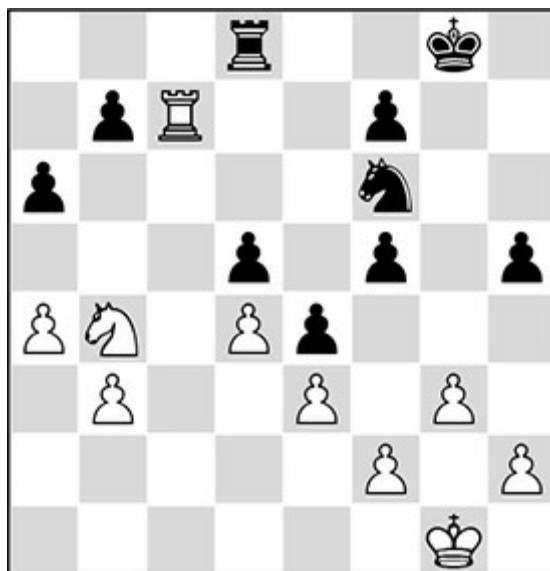
27.♗b4!

Eliminating the defender! 27.♗a5 gave White an advantage in the game, in which, after a tense fight, a draw was agreed.

27...♝xb4 28.♝xf5!

28.♝xb4 ♜d6.

28...gxsf5 29.♝xb4 ♜e8 30.♜c5 ♜f6 31.♜c7



The rook on the 7th rank gives White a clear advantage.

Exercise 3.5

Ali Morshedi

2232

Cristhian Cruz

2538

Bogota 2015 (4)



22... $\mathbb{Q}d2!$

Black thankfully uses the outpost.

23. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ g5 26. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ c4 0-1

Exercise 3.6

Wolfgang Uhlmann

Julius Kozma

Zinnowitz 1967 (8)



21. $\mathbb{Q}c1!$

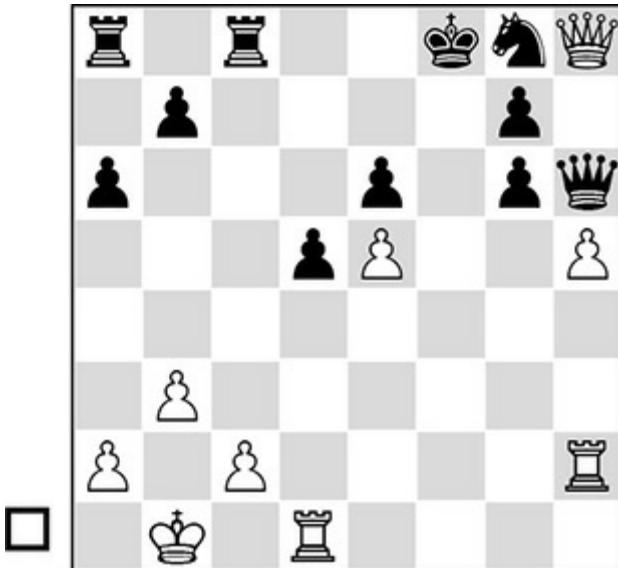
Again switching to a more promising file. 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ does get the rook on the 7th rank, but

Black gets sufficient counterplay after 22... \mathbb{Q} c6!.

21... \mathbb{Q} d5 22. \mathbb{Q} xd5 \mathbb{Q} xd5 23. \mathbb{Q} c7 \mathbb{Q} xe3 24.fxe3 \mathbb{Q} ad8 25. \mathbb{Q} c5 \mathbb{Q} d7 26. \mathbb{Q} d1 \mathbb{Q} xd1 27. \mathbb{Q} xd1 \mathbb{Q} c8 28. \mathbb{Q} e6 \mathbb{Q} xc5 29. \mathbb{Q} xc5 b6 30. \mathbb{Q} d7 f6 31.e6 f5 32.b4 1-0

Exercise 3.7

Training position



1. \mathbb{Q} f1+! \mathbb{Q} e7 2.hxg6 \mathbb{Q} xh8

2... \mathbb{Q} xg6 3. \mathbb{Q} h4+ \mathbb{Q} d7 4. \mathbb{Q} b4 \mathbb{Q} c6 5. \mathbb{Q} xb7+ \mathbb{Q} c7 6. \mathbb{Q} xa8 wins for White.

3. \mathbb{Q} f7+

3. \mathbb{Q} xh8 \mathbb{Q} h6!.

3... \mathbb{Q} e8 4. \mathbb{Q} xh8 1-0

Exercise 3.8

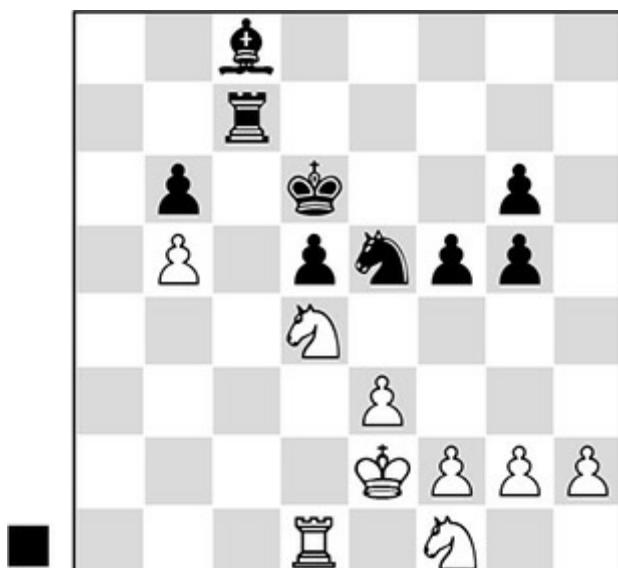
Ghazal Hakimifard

2169

Hagen Poetsch

2509

Stockholm 2015 (2)



Again, a strong knight at d4 is keeping an eye on the entrance square. The knight is hard to expel, so Black should have switched lanes with 37... $\mathbb{N}a7!$ with a nice advantage.

Exercise 3.9

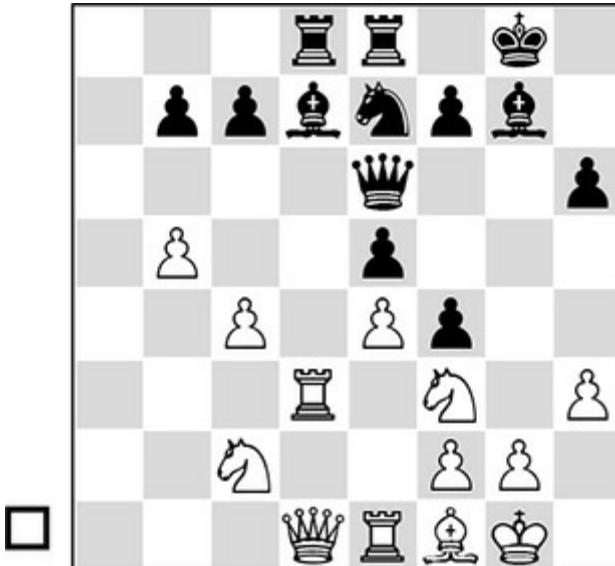
Ivan Sokolov

2626

Jacob Aabling Thomsen

2391

Helsingør 2017 (6)



22.b6!

The c-pawn is an important defender of the d6-square!

22... $\mathbb{N}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{N}b4$ $\mathbb{N}a4$ 24. $\mathbb{N}d2$ $c5$ 25. $\mathbb{N}a2$ $\mathbb{N}g6$ 26. $\mathbb{N}c3$ $\mathbb{N}c6$ 27. $\mathbb{N}d1$

With an overwhelming advantage for White.

Exercise 3.10

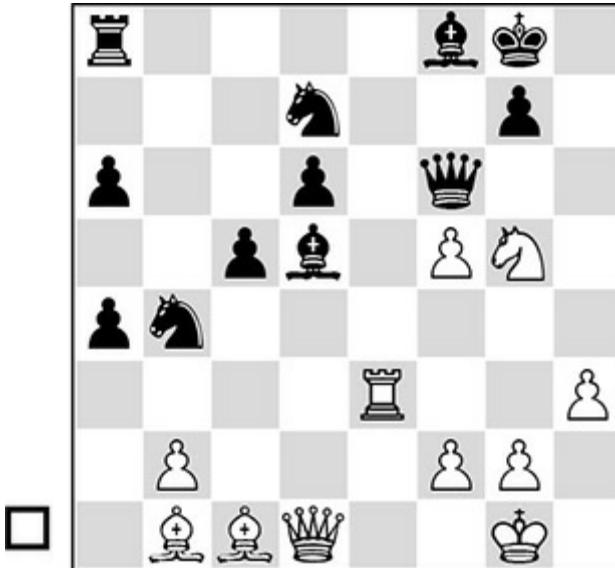
Alexei Shirov

2695

Peter Leko

2605

Belgrade 1995 (4)



This time it is the 6th rank we want to place our rook on. The outpost is already in place.

26. $\mathbb{R}e6!$

Very thematic and extremely strong.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 27. $fxe6$ $g6$ 28. $exd7$ $\mathbb{R}d8$



29. $\mathbb{Q}g4$

29. $\mathbb{Q}a2+$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ would have been a worthy alternative.

29... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30. $h4$ $d5$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ 1-0

Exercise 3.11

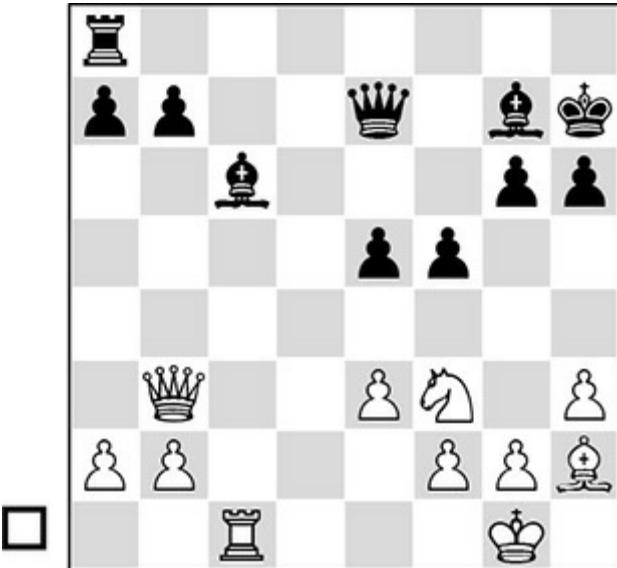
Koen Leenhouts

2488

Eelke de Boer

2168

Hilversum 2016 (4)



24. ♜xe5!

White found a nice combination to grab a pawn and get rid of the solid black light-squared bishop.

24... ♜xf3

24... ♜xe5 25. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 26. ♜xc6 bxc6 27. ♜b7+ ♜g7 28. ♜xa8 was the point.

25. ♜xg7 ♜xg2



26. ♜f6!

An important zwischenzug.

26... ♜xf6 27. ♜c7+ ♜h8 28. ♜xg2

With an overwhelming advantage.

Exercise 3.12

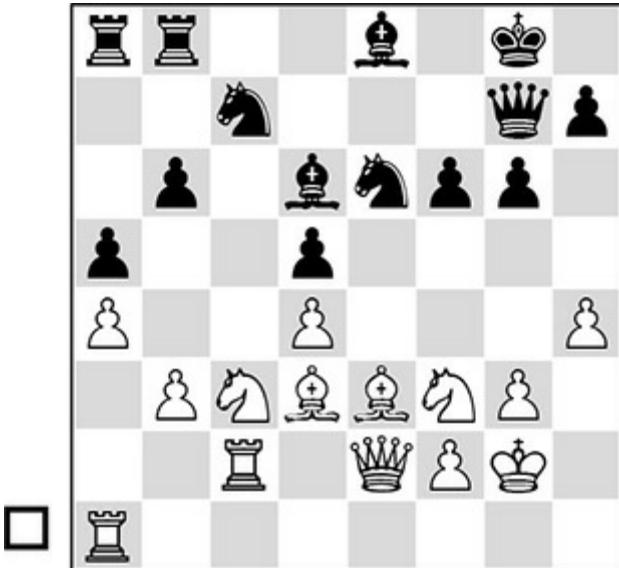
Henk Vedder

2373

Bob Beeke

2231

Maastricht 2012 (7)



31. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ was the right way to go. White secures the c6-square for his rook after 31... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ and gets a nice initiative.

In the game, he went for the slightly devious

31. $\mathbb{Q}c1 \mathbb{Q}d7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}a3$

This manoeuvre certainly makes sense, but it is a bit too slow.

32... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Black should have used this time to work on his counterplay with 32... $\mathbb{Q}xa3!$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $g5$.

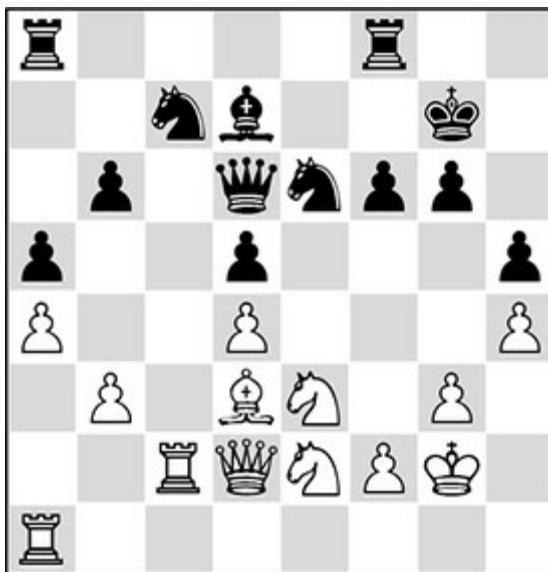
33. $\mathbb{Q}xd6 \mathbb{Q}xd6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}g7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

35. $\mathbb{Q}ac1!$

35... $h5$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}h2 \mathbb{Q}f8$

36... $\mathbb{Q}a6!$.

37. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}fe6$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}e3 \mathbb{Q}f8$



White has outplayed his opponent in the last couple of moves and now finishes the game elegantly:

39. $\mathbb{Q}xg6 \mathbb{Q}xg6$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}f5 \mathbb{Q}b4$

40... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 42. $f3\#$.

41. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}xh5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ 1-0

Exercise 3.13

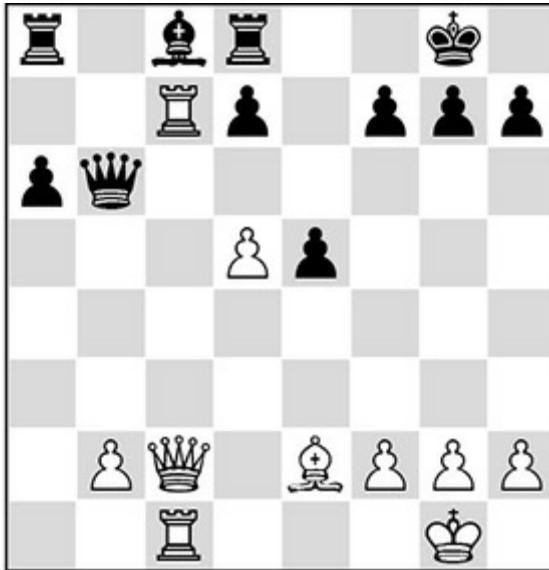
Jonas Roseneck

2107

Gunnar Johansson

2205

Berlin 2016 (7)



22... ♜b7!

Attacking d5 and threatening to block the c-file, cutting off the rook from its defenders.

23. ♜f3 ♜c6!

The rook is trapped! White already anticipated the exchange sacrifice, but got too little compensation:

24. ♜xc6 dxc6 25. ♜xc6 ♜xb2 26. d6 ♜ab8 27. ♜d1 ♜b6 28. ♜d5 ♜b5 29. ♜e4 g6 0-1

Exercise 3.14

Miguel Cuellar

2400

Mikhail Tal

2655

Leningrad izt 1973 (10)



In the game, Black played 29... $\mathbb{Q}gf8$, after which White kept a slight edge. However, Black missed a very elegant opportunity to neutralize the open file and get a clear advantage:

29... $\mathbb{Q}xd8!$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{N}d6$

The queen is trapped and the material balance will soon be restored. Black's strong knight will provide him with excellent winning chances.

Exercise 3.15

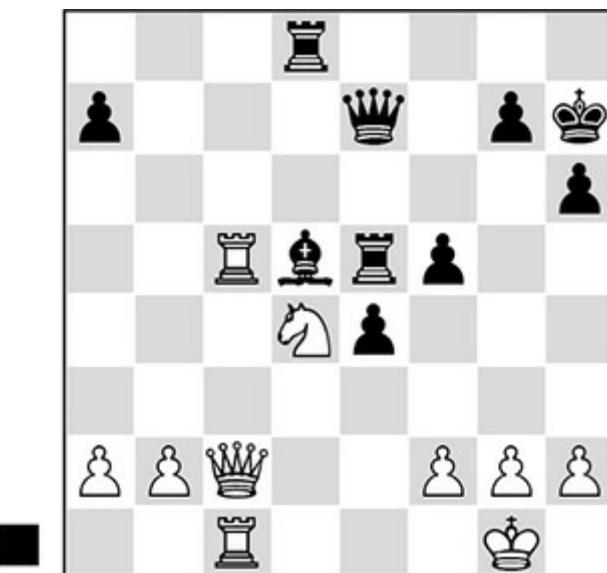
Luong Phuong Hanh

2148

Wynn Zaw Htun

2405

Ho Chi Minh City 2017 (1)



Black realizes he cannot prevent his opponent from entering the 7th rank and starts looking for counterplay.

31... $\mathbb{Q}a8!$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 33. $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c3$



Here Black should have finished the game with

34... $e3!$

Instead, things became very unclear after 34...f4 35. $\mathbb{Q}c6$, even though Black won the game after all. After 34...e3, the game might have continued:

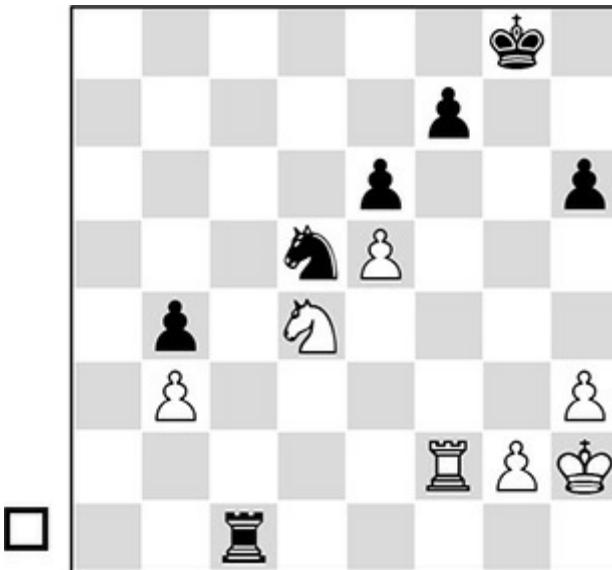
35. $\mathbb{Q}c6$

35.f3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}7c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ e2 wins for Black.

35...e2! 36. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 0-1

Exercise 3.16

Training position



1. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$

White has to look for counterplay.

1... $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 2. g4!

This move prevents 2... $\mathbb{Q}f5$.

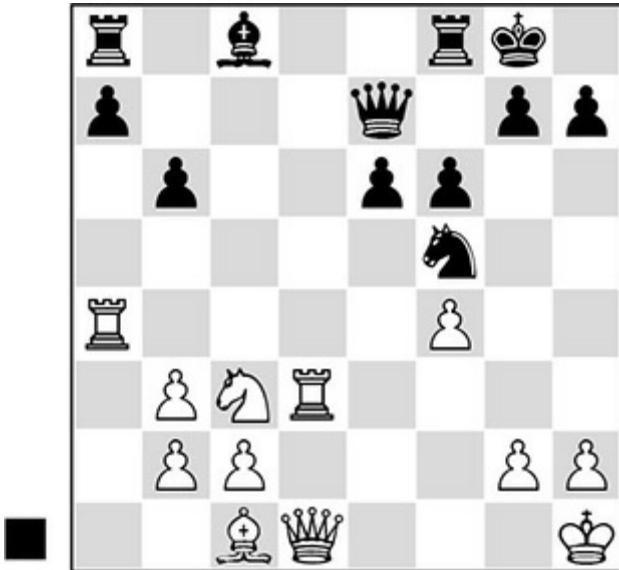
f7 has become as much of a target as b3 and the game is equal.

Exercise 3.17

Oleg Neikirkh

Mikhail Botvinnik

Leipzig ol 1960 (1)



18... ♜e8!

Preparing ... ♜b7 with counterplay over the long diagonal.

19. ♜e4

Now Black is going to take over the d-file.

19. ♜e4 would be an attempt to regroup the major pieces, but Black gets a large initiative after 19... ♜b7 20. ♜e1 ♜g6 21. ♜d2 ♜ae8, followed by ...e6-e5.

19...b5 20. ♜a5 ♜b7 21. ♜d6 ♜xd6 22. ♜xd6 ♜d8 23. ♜d2 ♜xd6 24. ♜xd6



24... ♜d8 25. ♜xe6+ ♜f7 26. ♜e1 ♜e7 0-1

Exercise 3.18

Lajos Portisch

Jan Hein Donner

Santa Monica 1966 (16)



In the game, Black got into trouble after 16... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f5$.

Instead, he should have blocked the c-file with

16... $\mathbb{Q}c4!$

The tactics work in his favour after

17. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 22. $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $dxc4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $c3$

Chapter 4: Conquering the open file

Exercise 4.1

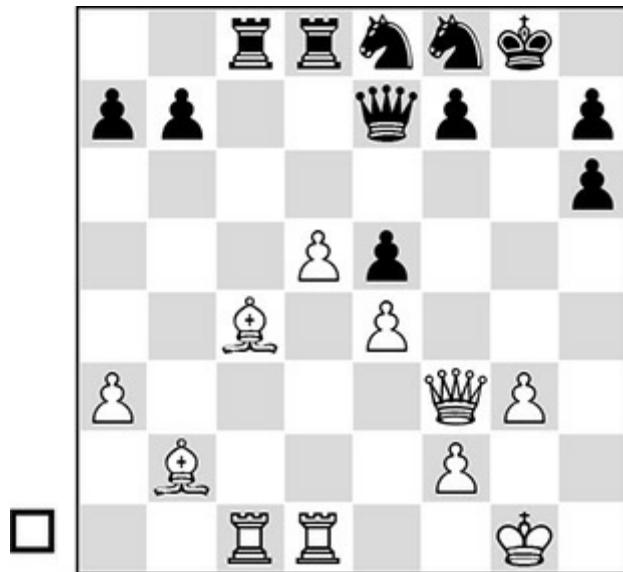
Jayaram Ashwin

2490

Anthony Saidy

2334

Las Vegas 2015 (2)



29. $\mathbb{Q}f1!$

Chasing away the opposing rook!

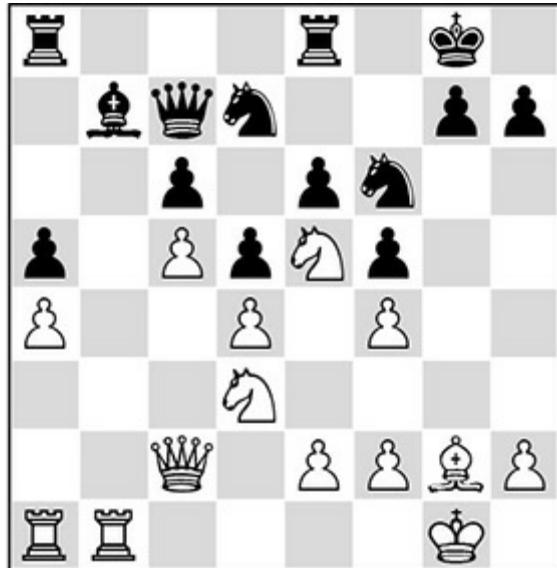
29... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 30. a4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ h5 35. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ a6 38. a5 h4 39. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ hxg3 40. fxg3 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ h5 45. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 1-0

Exercise 4.2

Lajos Portisch

Ivan Radulov

Budapest 1969



White wants to use the outpost on b6, but has to eliminate the defenders first.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xd7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 22. $fxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}eb8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 26. $cxb6$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 30. $e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 31. $exf5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $cxd5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c8+$
1-0

Exercise 4.3

Francesco Sonis
Krishnan Sasikiran

2688

Helsingør 2017 (5)



White's ambitions to control the d-file are still visible in this position, but his passive rook and bishop will soon force him into defensive mode. With accurate play, Black should be able to take over control of the d-file.

25... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ was played in the game. The idea is to chase the rook away with 26... $\mathbb{Q}e6$. However, there is an antidote. You can find it for yourself in Exercise 4.19.

The more accurate

25... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$

would have secured Black's control of the d-file. Black threatens 26... $\mathbb{Q}d8$, so

26. $\mathbb{Q}xd7 \mathbb{B}xd7$

is forced. Now White is still stuck with his passive rook and bishop and it's easy for Black to take control of the file.

Exercise 4.4

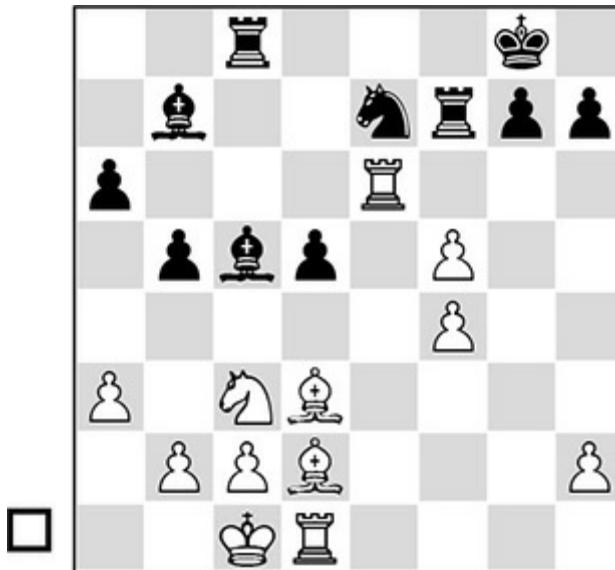
Rosa Ratsma

2137

Barry Brink

2370

Hilversum 2017 (5)



White cannot conquer the open e-file at once on account of the blockading black knight. Therefore, White starts to unravel the defence of the knight and patiently brings up more attackers to the front.

20.b4! $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23.f6!

Well played! This move increases the scope of White's minor pieces.

23...gxf6 24. $\mathbb{Q}de1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25.f5 $\mathbb{Q}g8$

Here White took a step back with 26. $\mathbb{Q}6e2$ and won after a tense fight. The more ambitious 26. $\mathbb{Q}h5$, followed by 27. $\mathbb{Q}f4$. would have kept firmer control of the outpost, securing a large advantage.

Exercise 4.5

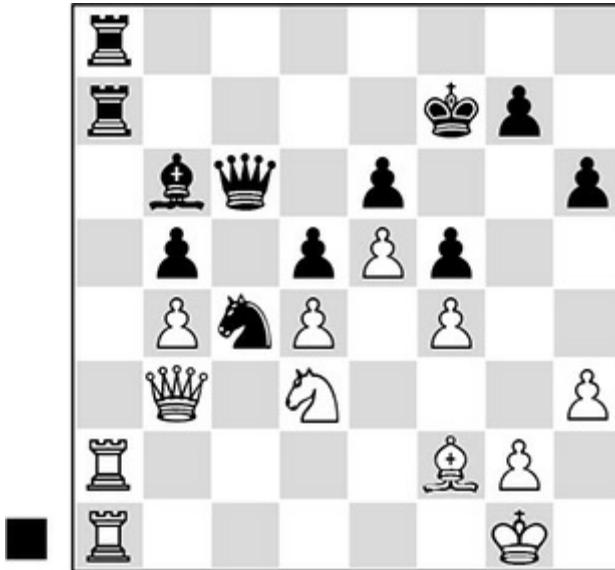
Zoubaier Amdouni

2253

Mohamed Mahmoud Ezat

2456

Monastir 2013 (6)



37... ♜a4!

Black uses the outpost to triple his major pieces. 37... ♜xa2 38. ♜xa2 ♜a4, with the same idea, works as well.

38. ♜c5 ♜xc5 39. dxc5 ♜a6 40. ♜xa4 bxa4 41. ♜d1

Here, the prophylactic 41... ♛g8!, followed by ...a4-a3, would have given Black a clear advantage.

Exercise 4.6

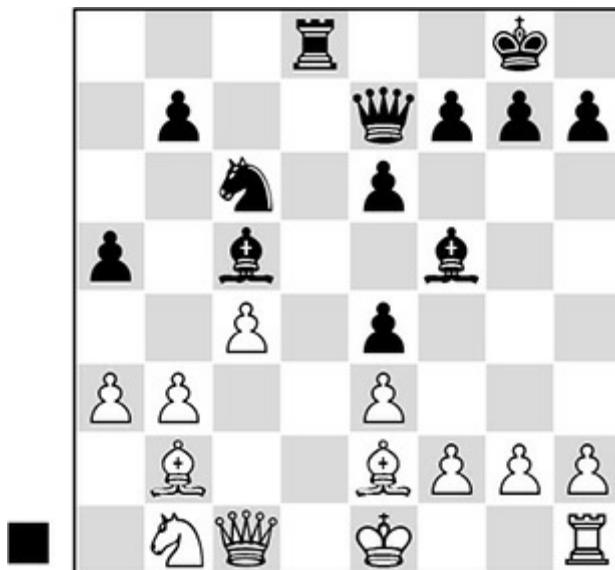
Detlef Röfe

1975

Stephane Hautot

2375

Belgium tt 2012/13 (6)



The outpost is currently being covered by the white light-squared bishop. Therefore, we have to eliminate the defender.

17... ♜g5!

The game continuation 17... ♜h4 would have been less clear after 18.0-0.

18.g3

Black gets a crushing attack after 18.g4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ f5 20.h3 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 21.hxg4 f4.

18... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$

This is even more convincing than 18... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 20.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

With a large advantage for Black.

Exercise 4.7

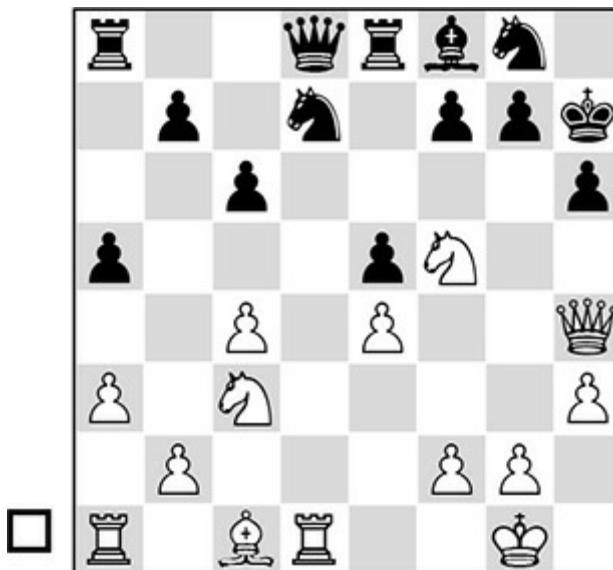
Joona Uusitalo

1820

Risto Karttinen

1907

Finland tt 2015/16 (5)



White should have played:

20. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

The idea is to prepare the exchange of the important black dark-squared bishop.

20... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$

And Black is in trouble.

In the game, he went for the logical 20. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ but after 20... $\mathbb{Q}gf6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ g6 23. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ Black should have taken over with 23... $\mathbb{Q}e6!$ 24.c5 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ and there is nothing White can do against the 25... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ threat.

Exercise 4.8

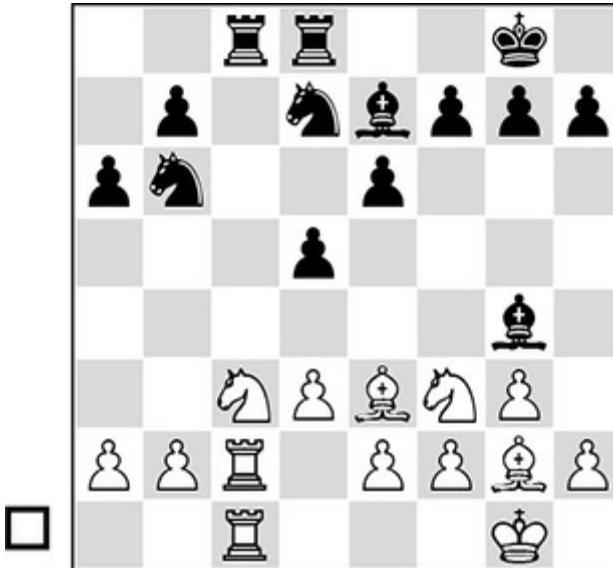
Yannick Pelletier

2593

Julian Geske

2329

Reykjavik 2011 (4)



16. ♜e5!

Eliminate the defenders!

16... ♜xe5 17. ♜xb6 ♜e8 18. h3 ♜f5 19. g4 ♜c4

19... ♜g6 20. ♜xd5!.

20. ♜a4 ♜xb6 21. ♜xb6 ♜xc2 22. ♜xc2 ♜g6 23. ♜c7 ♜f6 24. ♜xb7 ♜xb2 25. ♜xd5 ♜e5 26. ♜e7+ ... 1-0 (37)

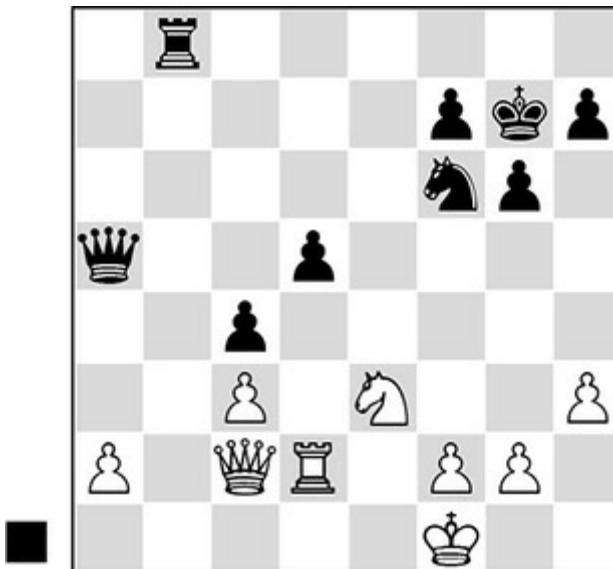
Exercise 4.9

Milan Michalicka

2210

Johan-Sebastian Christiansen

Veliko Gradiste 2017 (1)



30... ♜b5!

An instructive manoeuvre. Doubling the major pieces is most effective with the queen behind the rook.

31. f3 ♜b6 32. ♜f2 ♜h5 33. a4 ♜b1 34. a5 ♜b8!

We have seen this manoeuvre before!

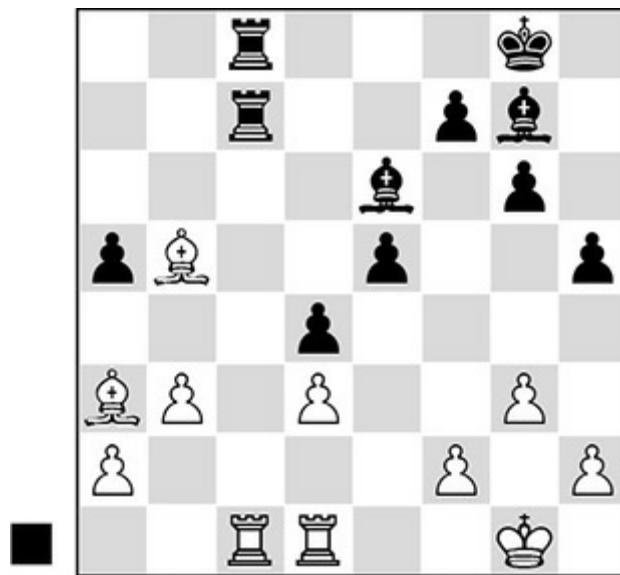
35. ♜xd5 ♜g3+ 36. ♜e3 ♜e5+ 37. ♜e4 ♜e1+ 0-1

Exercise 4.10

Tomasz Rosiak

Tomasz Sikorski

Mazowsze 2009/10 (9)



This was a tricky one. Chasing the rook away with 26... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ would have fit nicely in this chapter, but after 27. $\mathbb{R}xc7$ $\mathbb{R}xc7$, White could have blocked the file with 28. $\mathbb{Q}c4!=$.

The right solution was therefore to enter the 7th rank right away. However, precise calculation was required:

26... $\mathbb{R}c2!$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{R}xa2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{R}xc1$

Or 28... $\mathbb{R}c3$.

29. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $f\#6$

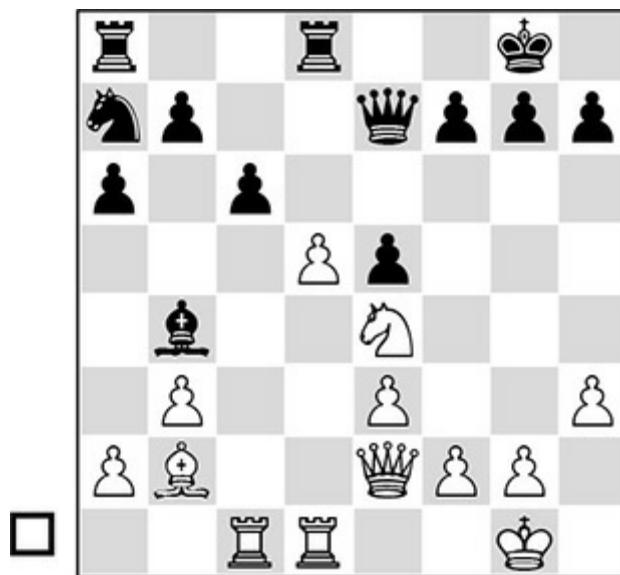
And Black is better.

Exercise 4.11

Wolfgang Uhlmann

Włodzimierz Schmidt

Polanica Zdroj 1967 (7)



This famous example would also fit nicely in the ‘simplification’ paragraph in Chapter 1. White exploits the temporarily passive position of the black rook and knight in the corner by exchanging all the other pieces.

19.d6! ♜xd6 20.♘xd6 ♕xd6 21.♕xd6 ♜xe6 22.♕d1 ♜e6 23.♕g4! f5 24.♕c4

Mission accomplished, even though keeping the queens on the board was even stronger: ... 1-0 (30)

Exercise 4.12

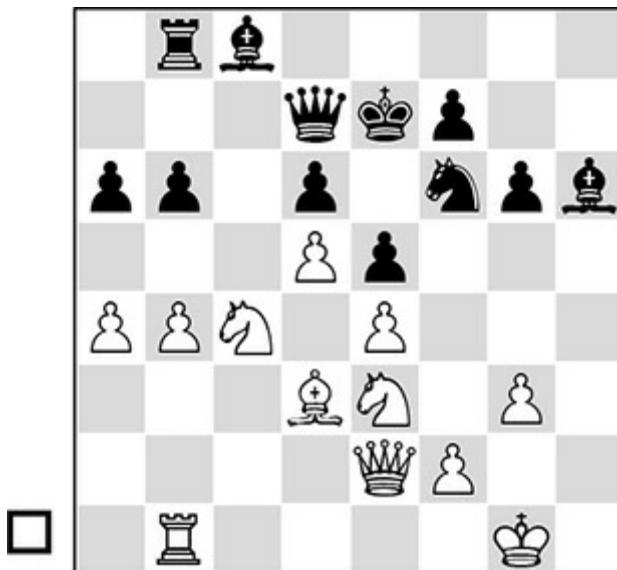
Alisa Galliamova

2444

Baira Kovanova

2376

Riga Ech W 2017 (6)



This was a tricky one. If your answer was 35.b5 securing the outpost, you found the thematic solution and understood this chapter well.

The game continuation, 35.a5 b5 36.♗b6, is less impressive. Not only is it unclear what the knight is exactly doing at b6, it also would have allowed 36...♞h3!, with counterplay for Black.

But there is more. If you found 35.♗xe5!, you can call yourself a tactical genius. You rightly ignored all the positional temptations and went for the kill instead. Black can resign after 35...dxe5 36.♗b2.

Exercise 4.13

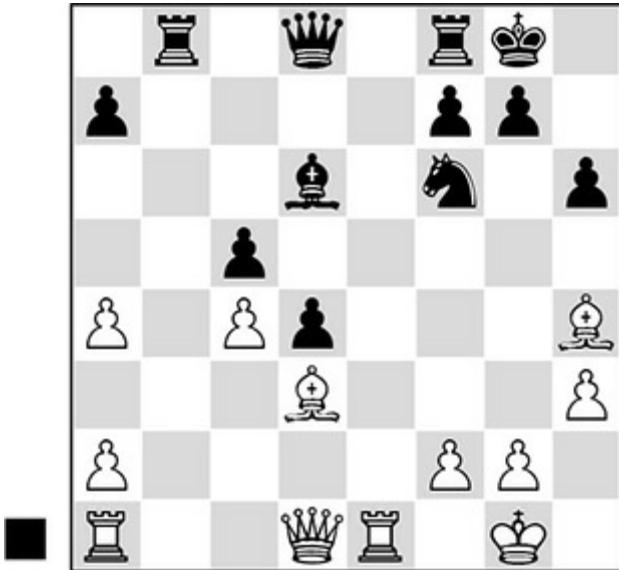
José Fernando Cubas

2455

Duc Hoa Nguyen

2501

Tromsø ol 2014 (4)



18...g5! 19.Qg3 Qxg3 20.fxg3

With the important f2-pawn moved, Black can direct his rooks to the outpost on e3.

20...Rd6 21.Rf1 Rfe8 22.h4 Re3 23.hxg5 hxg5 24.Rf5 Rb2 25.Rxg5+ Rf8 26.Qc1 Rb8 27.Qf5 Rb7 28.Qh3 Ree2 29.Rd5 Rxg5 30.Qh6+ Re7 31.cxd5 Qxd5 32.Qh4+ f6 33.Qh7+ Qd8 34.Qh8+ Qc7 35.Qc8+ Qb6 36.Qb8+ Qa6 37.Qc8+ Qa5 38.Qxa7+ Qb4 39.a3+ Qb3 0-1

Exercise 4.14

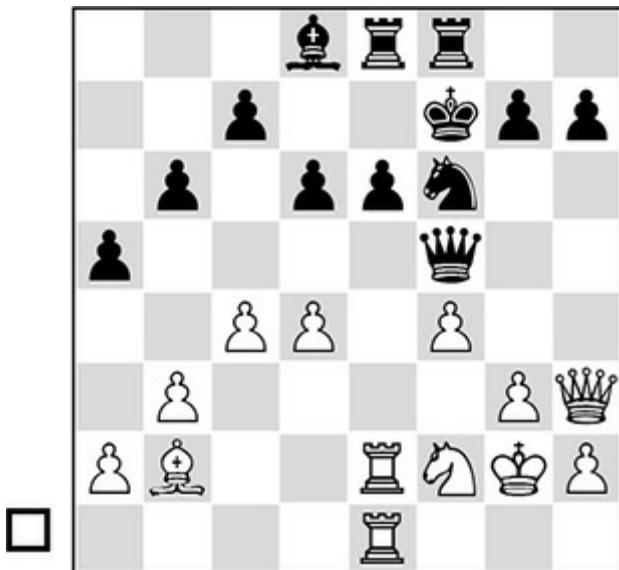
Ulf Andersson

2625

Eduardas Rozentalis

2600

Tilburg 1993 (3)



30.d5!

White starts a long forced variation in order to secure an outpost at e6. 30.Qxf5 exf5 31.d5 Rxe2 32.Rxe2 g6 is not so clear.

30...Qxh3+ 31.Qxh3 exd5



32. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$! $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{R}f7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 35. $cxd5$ $g6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $a4$ 37. $\mathbb{R}c1$ $axb3$ 38. $AXB3$ $\mathbb{R}a8$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{R}a3$ 40. $\mathbb{R}e3$ $\mathbb{R}e7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 1-0

Exercise 4.15

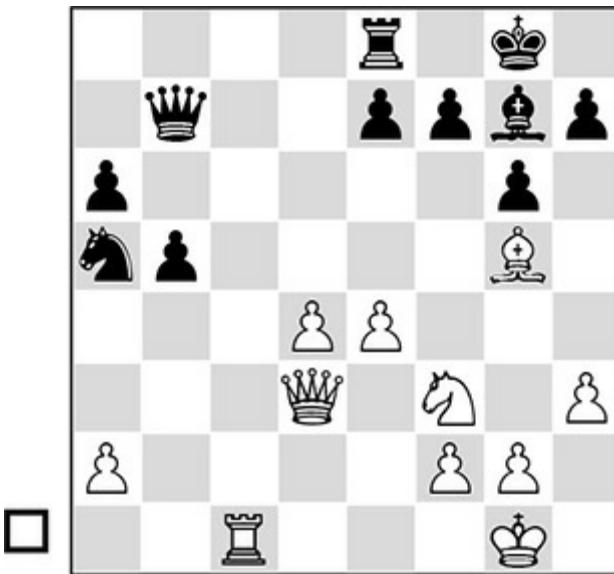
Anatoly Karpov

2730

Garry Kasparov

2800

Lyon/New York Wch m 1990 (17)



23.d5!

The outpost is in place. The next step is getting rid of the defending knight. 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ would not be so clear after 23... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 24. $d5$ (24. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $e5!$) 24... $e6$.

23... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{R}c8$ 26. $\mathbb{R}c6!$

Although the outpost is only protected by one pawn, it is still very effective. White has tactical resources that prevent his opponent from taking on c6.

26... $\mathbb{Q}e5$

26... $\mathbb{R}xc6$ would not be advisable, as it would give Black the ugly choice between allowing a strong passed

pawn or being mated after 27.dxc6 ♜xc6 28.♕d8+ ♔f8 29.♕h6.

27.♗c3!

White would love to exchange the bishops. As we saw earlier, the fewer pieces there are on the board, the more the domination of the c-file will make itself felt. The black bishop has to retreat.

27...♗b8 28.♗d4

Provoking an extra weakness.

28...f6 29.♗a5

Securing the c-file, which would be very useful if Black decided to capture the rook.

29...♗d6

Again, taking on c6 was impossible for tactical reasons.

30.♗c3 ♕e8 31.a3

31.♗c7 would not have been a bad idea at all, but Karpov usually likes to improve his position first.

31...♕g7 32.g3 ♗e5 33.♗c5 h5 34.♗c7 ♗a1 35.♗f4 ♕d7

White has achieved his goal. The rest is easy.

36.♗c7 ♕d8 37.d6 g5 38.d7 ♕f8 39.♗d2 ♗e5 40.♗b7 1-0

Exercise 4.16

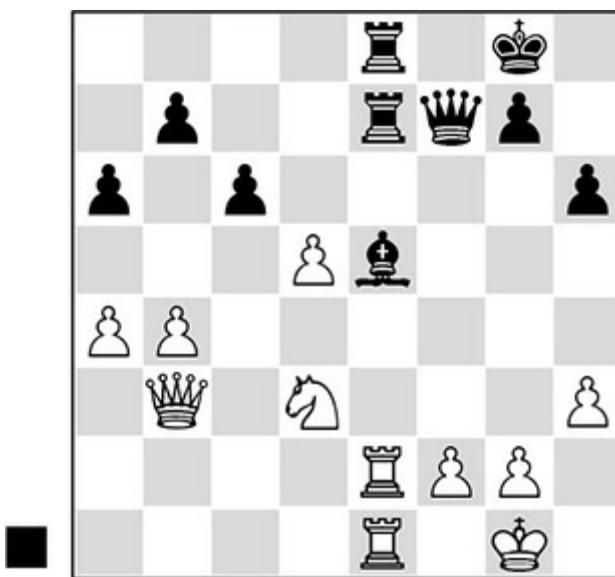
Jens Uwe Maiwald

2500

Arnulf Westermeier

2274

Austria Bundesliga B 2008/09 (9)



28...♗h2+

28...♗f6 gives White exactly what he wants: 29.♖xe7 ♕xe7 30.♖e6!.

29.♖f1 ♕xe2 30.♖xe2 ♕xe2 31.♖xe2 ♗d6

Without rooks, the outpost is not so impressive anymore. Black is doing fine.

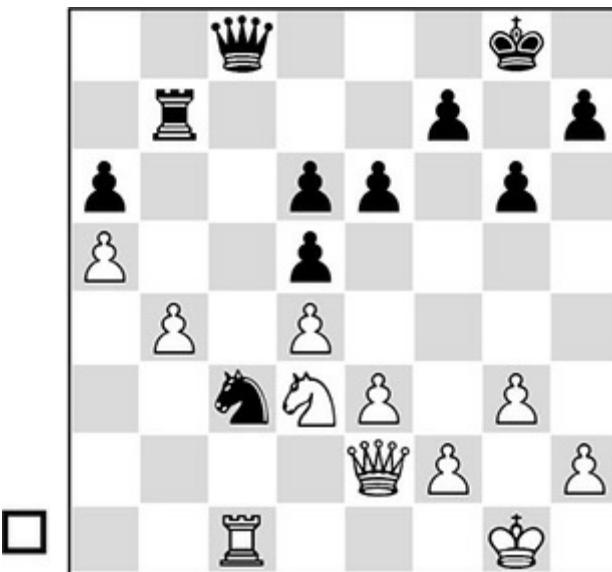
Exercise 4.17

Meelis Kanep

2451

Nikita Meskovs

2479



28.♕e1!

was the right answer. After, for instance,

28...♖c7 29.♕g2

Black cannot use the outpost with

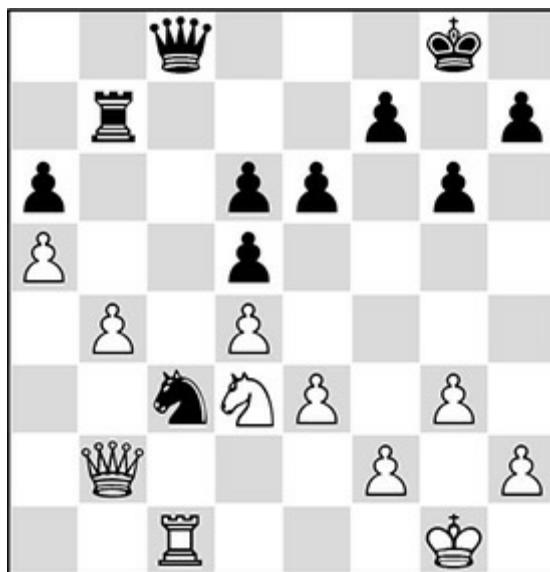
29...♖c4

on account of

30.♗b2 ♖c7 31.♗d3

White is of course still under pressure, but he has far better prospects compared to the game.

White played 28.♔b2



This is an uncomfortable square for the queen, since it blocks her own knight. Black won a nice game:

28...♖c7 29.♕g2 ♖c4 30.♗a1 ♗b5 31.♗b2 ♖c6 32.♕g1 f6 33.f4 (33.♗b1) 33...♗f7 34.♗f2 ♗c3 35.♗e1 ♗e7 36.♗d2 ♗e4+ 37.♗d1 ♗a4+ 38.♗e1 ♗d7 39.♗e2 ♗b5 40.♗e1 g5 41.♗e2 ♗d8 42.♗e1 h6 43.♗c2 ♗a4 44.♗d1 ♗c3 45.♗e1 ♗b3 46.♗c1 ♗b1 0-1.

Exercise 4.18

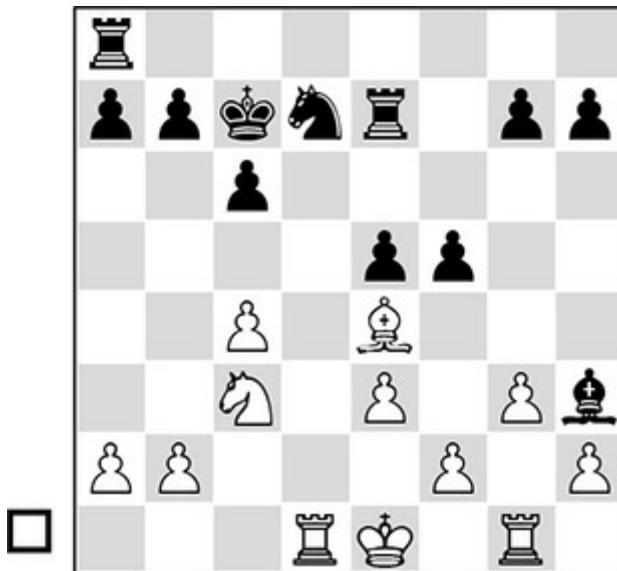
Jasmin Bejtovic

2397

Predrag Nikolic

2612

Sarajevo 2013 (2)



Black is very close to creating an outpost, so White has to be quick!

17. $\mathbb{Q}g2!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$

17... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 18. $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 19. $e4$.

18. $\mathbb{R}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

White cannot completely prevent the outpost, but at least his pieces are ready for it.

19. $f3$ $e4$ 20. $f4$

Black will always keep a slight pull, but White should be able to hold.

It is interesting to compare this line to the game. Look how Nikolic used all the ingredients to deliver a true masterpiece:

17. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 18. $\mathbb{R}b1$ $e4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $h5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 21. $b3$ $\mathbb{R}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $hxg4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{R}ed7$ 24. $\mathbb{R}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 25. $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{R}d3$ 26. $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{R}h8$ 27. $\mathbb{R}cc1$ $\mathbb{R}hd8$ 28. $\mathbb{R}c2$ $g5$ 29. $c5$ $\mathbb{R}h8$ 30. $\mathbb{R}cc1$ $\mathbb{R}xh2$ 31. $\mathbb{R}xd3$ $exd3+$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{R}xf2$ 33. $\mathbb{R}h1$ $\mathbb{R}d2+$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 35. $b4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 36. $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 37. $b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 38. $bx6$ $bc6$ 39. $\mathbb{R}b1$ $\mathbb{R}d7$ 40. $\mathbb{R}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 41. $\mathbb{R}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{R}b7+$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}b3+$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5+$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{R}b6$ 0-1.

Exercise 4.19

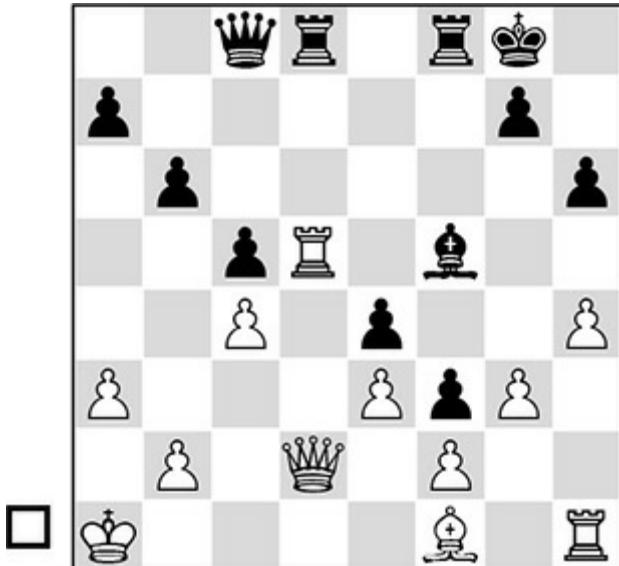
Francesco Sonis

2440

Krishnan Sasikiran

2688

Helsingør 2017 (5)



You probably recognise this position from Exercise 4.3. White could have saved the day with:

26. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 27. $\mathbb{R}xh3$ $\mathbb{B}xh3$ 28. $\mathbb{R}xd8$ $\mathbb{B}f1+$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 30. $\mathbb{R}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}c8+$ With a perpetual.

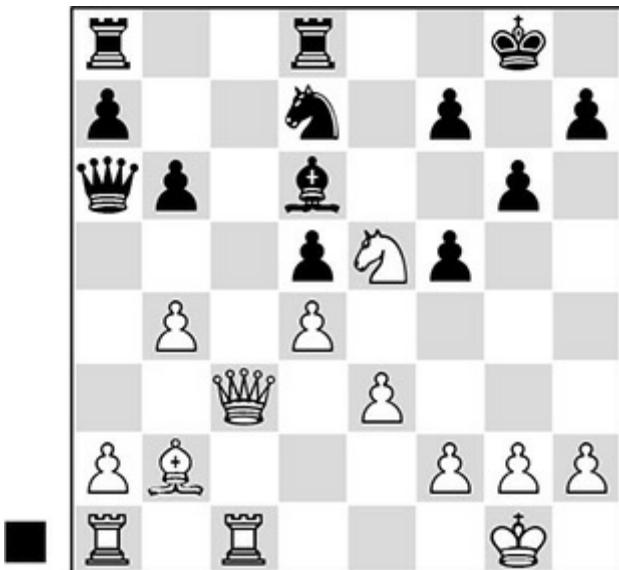
Instead, Black reached his goal after 26. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 27. $h5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 28. $\mathbb{R}xd8$ $\mathbb{R}xd8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $a6$ 32. $\mathbb{R}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $b5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $a5$ 35. $a4$ $b4$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{R}d6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{R}d7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{R}d2$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}a8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{R}xb2+$ 0-1.

Exercise 4.20

Alexander Alekhine

Boris Kostic

Bled 1931 (13)



17...b5!

followed by ... $\mathbb{R}d7$ - $b6$ - $c4$, would have securely blocked the c-file and put an end to White's aspirations for an advantage.

Exercise 4.21

Igor V Ivanov

2407

René Tanner

2159

Las Vegas 2005 (1)



Black has to keep the door closed with

20...a5!

keeping the balance.

In the game, he ran into 20...e7 21.Qc8! Qh7 22.a4 Qxc8 23.Qxc8 Qc7 24.Qxc7 Qxc7 25.Qb4 f6 26.Qe7 1-0.

Exercise 4.22

Helmut Küspert

2081

Franz Geisensetter

2065

Schloss Schney 2007/08 (3)



Black threatens to clear the outpost with 20... $\mathbb{Q}d3$. Therefore, the d-file needs to be blocked:

20. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

22... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d1$; 22... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ is the only way to get the black rook on d3, but it won't stay there for long after 24. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 26.f3.

23. $\mathbb{Q}d1$

The d-file has been neutralized.

Exercise 4.23

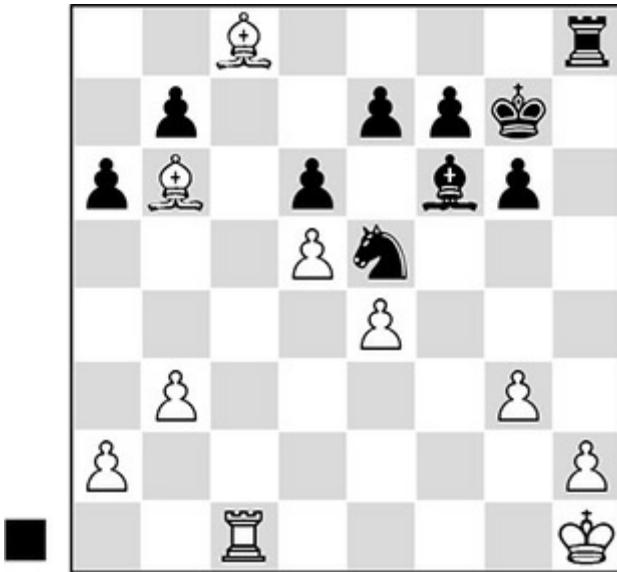
Michael Fischer

2079

Guido Guggenberger

2177

Bad Wörishofen 2002 (7)



28... $\mathbb{Q}f3!$

The knight is on its way to block the c-file.

The game continued 28... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ after which White won convincingly.

29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

With equality.

Exercise 4.24

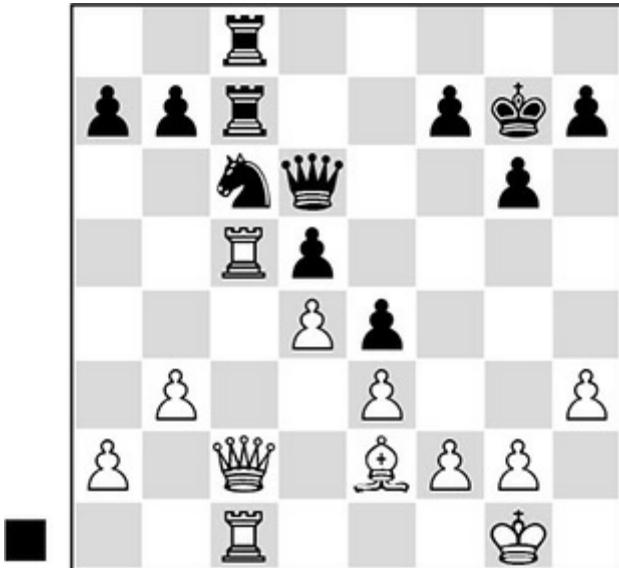
Hendrik Tabatt

2358

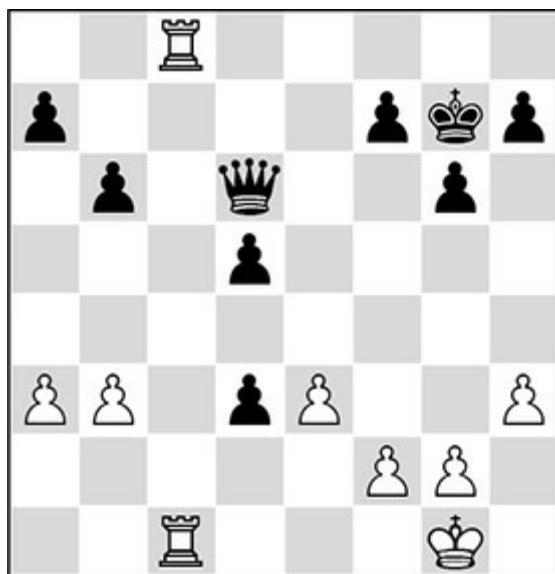
Lorenzo Lodici

2312

Germany Bundesliga B 2016/17 (2)



Black is under a lot of pressure. Luckily, he has a tactical resource at his disposal:
22...b6! 23.♕c3 ♜xd4 24.♖xc7 ♜xc2 25.♖xc8 ♜b4 26.a3 ♜d3 27.♗xd3 exd3



Black is clearly on top: ... 0-1 (61)

Chapter 5: Opening and closing files

Exercise 5.1

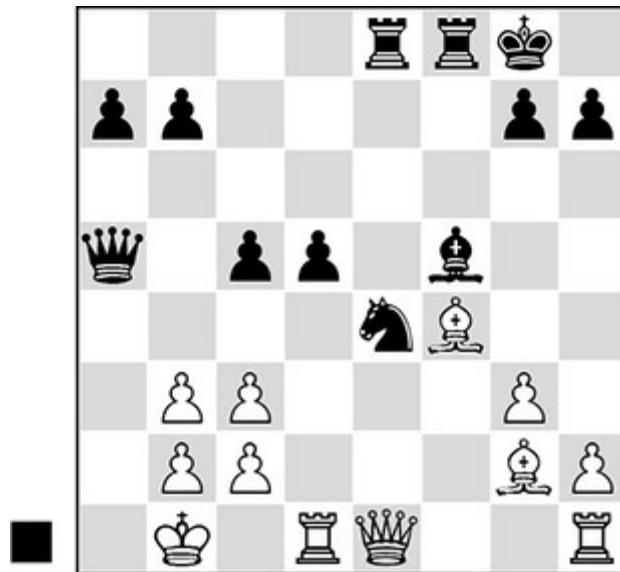
Daria Charochkina

2309

Anton Demchenko

2495

Vladimir 2008 (1)



20...c4!

This prophylactic move prevents White's last defensive resource. 20... $\mathbb{R}f6$ 21.c4! would have saved the day.

21.bxc4 $\mathbb{R}f6$ 22. $\mathbb{R}xd5$ $\mathbb{N}a4$ 0-1

The deadly 23.. $\mathbb{R}a6$ is in the air.

Exercise 5.2

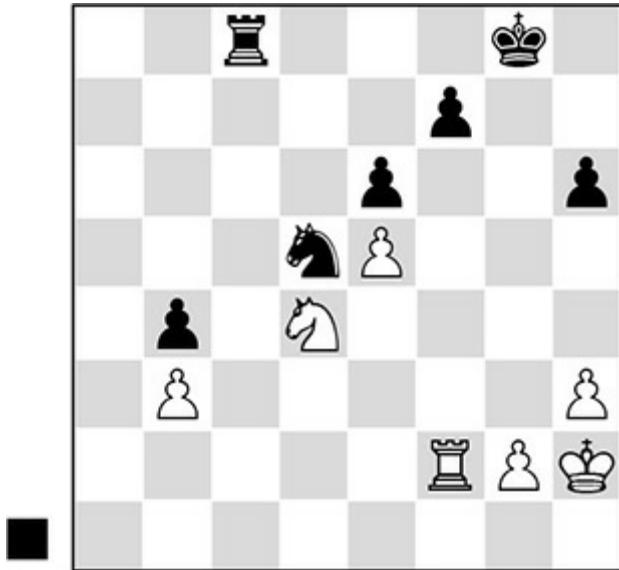
Mg Lwin Tin

1965

Peng Kong Chan

2233

Mandalay 2016 (7)



If you were wondering if you had seen this position before, you were right! After 42... $\mathbb{Q}c1$, we arrive at Exercise 3.16. The right move here was 43. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}d6$, with sufficient counterplay for White. In this exercise, we can use this knowledge to find the most accurate move. The prophylactic 42... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$

would have kept the White pieces under control:

43. $\mathbb{Q}c2 \mathbb{Q}c3$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}f3 h5$

With a very dominant position for Black.

The game continued 42... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ with good chances to hold the balance.

Exercise 5.3

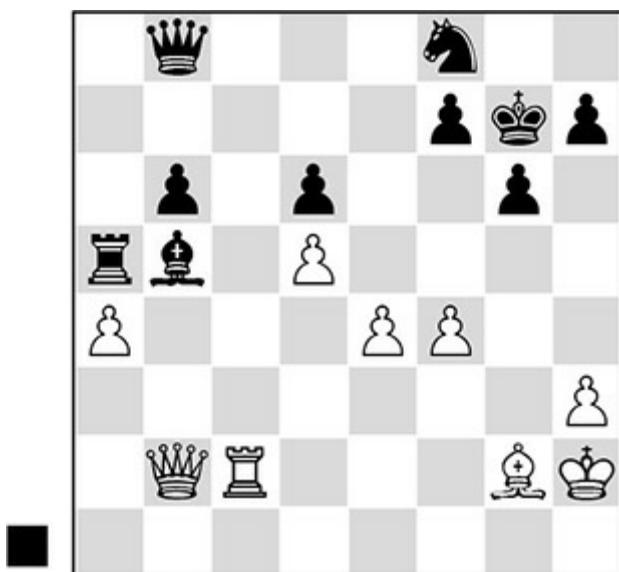
Stefan Djuric

2424

Miodrag Cetkovic

2186

Novi Banovci 2017 (3)



33... $f6$ makes it harder for Black to create counterplay. The game continued 34.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c6 \mathbb{Q}c5$

36. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 37. $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 38. $h5$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 41. $h6+$ 1-0.

A clear improvement would be:

33... $\mathbb{Q}g8!$

The black queen needs the dark squares to reach the kingside.

34. $a \times b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$

The position is certainly not easy to play, but Black should be able to hold the balance. For instance:

36. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$

39. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$.

39... $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e3+$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5+$

With a perpetual.

Exercise 5.4

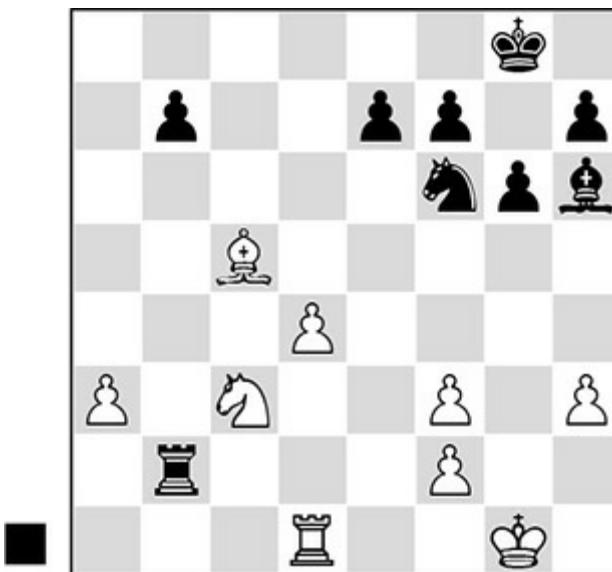
Vanessa Feliciano Ebert

2284

Alberto Becker Queiroz

2139

Sao Paulo 2015 (1)



The game continued 26...e6 27.d5!, which allowed White to exchange his d-pawn and open up a file for his rook with 27... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$.

Black could have prevented this with the modest

26... $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$

The passive placing of the black pieces is only temporarily. Once Black puts his king on d7 and reactivates his pieces, the weakened white pawns will secure him a nice advantage.

Exercise 5.5

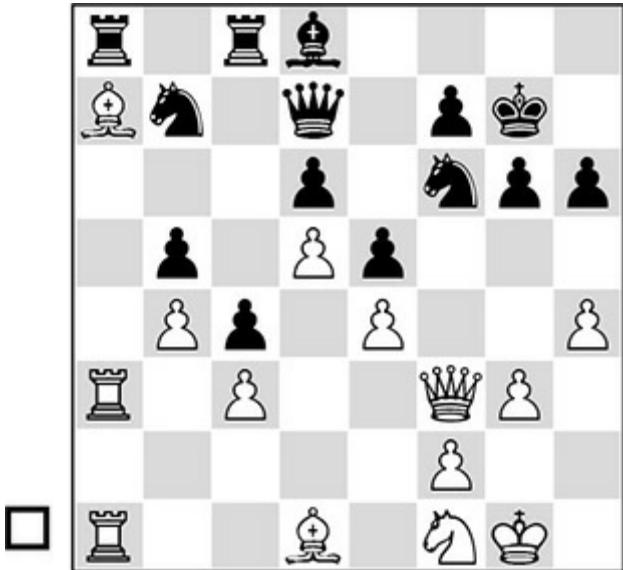
Andrew Greet

2439

Rudy van Wessel

2321

Fügen tt 2006 (3)



White has played convincingly up to this point, but 27. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ is inaccurate here.

Black misses the opportunity to shut down the a-file with 27... $\mathbb{Q}a5!$. The knight on e3 is blocking the bishop's retreating square. Black can escape with a draw after 28. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (28.bxa5 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ blocks the a-file) 28... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}1a2$ $\mathbb{Q}c1$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$.

The game continued with 27...h5 28. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (the bishop reaches the c8-h3 diagonal. Things go really fast now) 33... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 1-0.

27. $\mathbb{Q}h2!$

would have been stronger, with an almost winning advantage for White.

27... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

is now losing because of

28. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$

Exercise 5.6

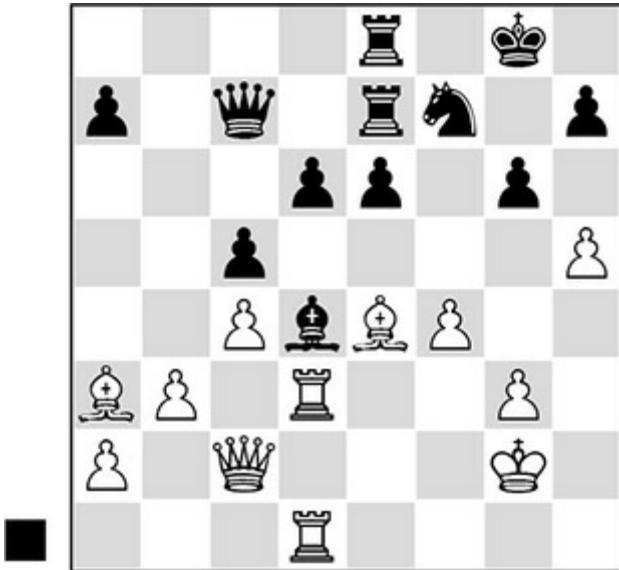
Michael Bezold

2456

Klaus Bischoff

2561

Pulvermühle 2004 (2)



The game continued with 28...gxh5 29.Qxh7+ Qxh7 30.Rxd4+ Qh6 31.Re4 Rc6 32.Re2 Qg7 33.Qb2+ e5 34.Rd5 Qf8 35.Qxh5 exf4 36.Rxf4 Re2+ 37.Qh3 Qd7+ 38.Rdf5 Rxh2 39.Qh8+ Qe7 40.Qf6+ Qf8 41.Qxb2 Re5 42.g4 Re3+ 43.Qh2 1-0.

A very unpleasant game for Black. His main problems were his unsafe king and his lack of counterplay. Black had nicely doubled his rooks on the e-file, but they were wasting a lot of energy pushing against a pawn that only moved when the game was already decided. They would have been a lot happier if Black had started with:

28...e5!

Black can afford having an unsafe king, as long as he has sufficient counterplay in return. Now White is the one who has to be careful. He must keep the e-file closed at all cost and therefore has to go for the messy

29.hxg6 hxg6 30.f5!

30.Qxg6 exf4! is devastating.

30...gxf5 31.Qd5!

With about equal chances. 31.Qxf5 would be a mistake: 31...Rb7+ 32.Qh2 Rg5, losing on the spot.

Exercise 5.7

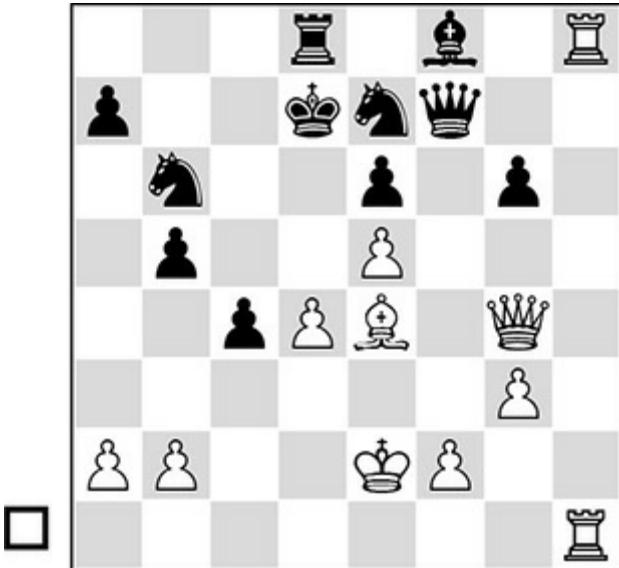
Dorian Rogozenco

2530

Karsten Müller

2500

Germany Bundesliga 1996/97



24.a4!

White opens up a second battlefield!

24... ♜f5

Black is unable to keep the queenside closed. For instance, 24...a6 25.axb5 axb5 26.♖a1 or 24...bxa4 25.d5 ♜bx d5 26.♕xd5 ♜xd5 27.♘xc4.

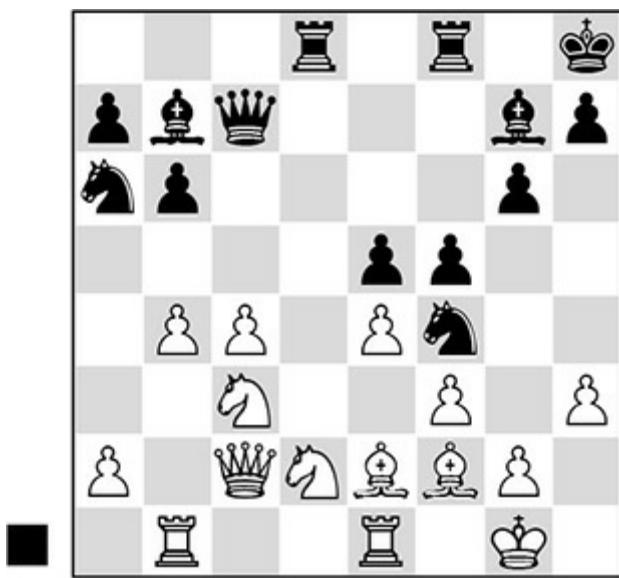
25.♖1h7 ♜g7 26.♖xd8+

26.♕xf5 exf5 27.♘f3 was even stronger.

26... ♜xd8 27.a5 ♜d5 28.♕xf5 exf5 29.♗f3 ♜c7 30.♗c6 ♜e6 31.♗c5 ♜d7 32.♗xa7 ♜e8 33.♗b7 ♜f8 34.d5 ♜xd5 35.♗xd5 ♜xd5 36.a6 ♜c7 37.a7 ♜g8 38.e6 ♜xh7 39.e7 ♜xb2 40.a8 ♜xa8 41.e8 ♜b6 42.♗xb5 ♜d4 43.♗b4
1-0

Exercise 5.8

Training position



1... ♜e7

Black already controlled the d-file and is now going for a second target: the king! White has to surrender the b-pawn, since 2.a3 ♜g5! is immediately game over.

Exercise 5.9

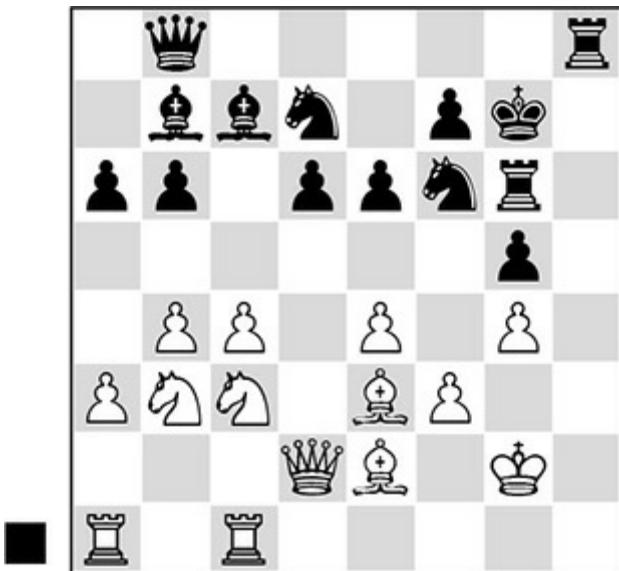
Sergey Kasparov

2546

Sergei Azarov

2583

playchess.com blitz 2007 (2)



25...d5!

The combination of the open file and the deadly diagonals makes it very hard for White to defend.

26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ dx e 4 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 28. fx e 4 $\mathbb{Q}h2!$

Black closes the h-file temporarily to keep it under total control.

29. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}gh6$



Black gets his forces ready for the reopening of the h-file.

31. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ $\mathbb{Q}h8+$

For a long time, the queen was only involved via the b8-h2 diagonal, but now it suddenly shows up on the h-file. Mate is inevitable.

35. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}h2+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-1

Exercise 5.10

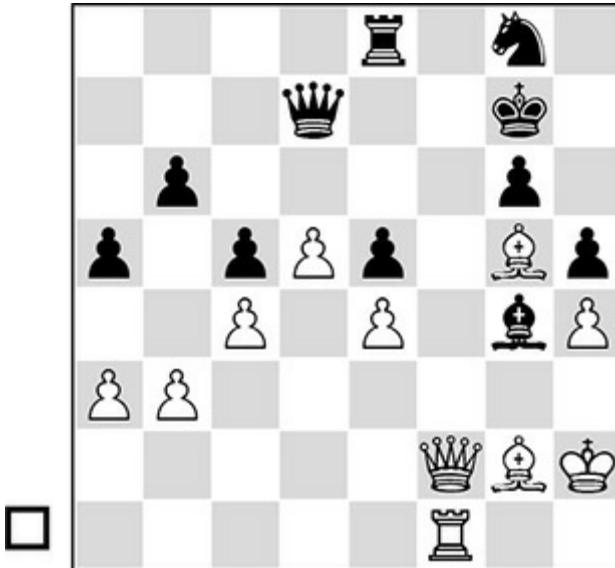
Erwin I'Ami

2610

Hing Ting Lai

2393

Dieren 2017 (2)



42.b4!

Creating a second weakness!

42...axb4 43.axb4 a7 44.bxc5 bxc5 45. \mathbb{Q} b1 \mathbb{Q} f8 46. \mathbb{Q} b2 \mathbb{Q} c7 47. \mathbb{Q} b7 \mathbb{Q} f7 48. \mathbb{Q} xc7 \mathbb{Q} xc7 49. \mathbb{Q} b6 1-0

Exercise 5.11

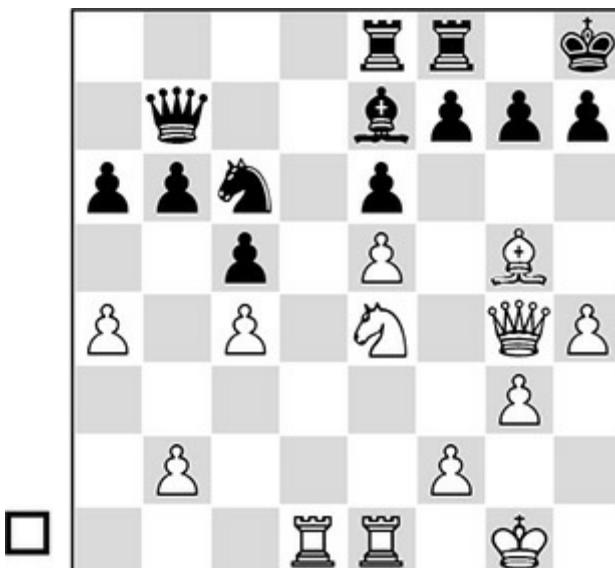
Vladimir Baklan

2612

Stefan Kristjansson

2500

Reykjavik 2012 (7)



This exercise is not about conquering an entrance square. The aim is to mate the enemy king!

23. ♜h5!

23. ♜xe7 ♜xe7 24. ♜d6 ♜c7, followed by a future ...f7-f6, is very unclear.

23... ♜d4

And now:

24. ♜xd4!

24. ♜d3 was the game. Black should have defended with 24... ♜d8 25. ♜f6 ♜xf6 26. exf6 g6 27. ♜g5 ♜f5, but instead lost quickly after 24... ♜c6 25. ♜f6 gxf6 26. exf6 ♜g8 27. fxe7 ♜xe7 28. ♜f6 ♜g7 29. ♜e5 ♜c7 30. ♜g5 ♜d8 31. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 32. ♜xh7+.

24... cxd4 25. ♜f6

This is the point! White blocks the 7th rank and develops a crushing attack.

25... gxsf6

25... ♜g8 26. ♜g5 ♜xf6 27. exf6 g6 28. ♜h6.

26. exf6 ♜g8 27. ♜xf7 ♜ef8 28. ♜g5! ♜xg5 29. ♜xe7 ♜xe7 30. fxe7 ♜e8 31. hxg5 ♜xe7 32. f4

With a winning ending.

Exercise 5.12

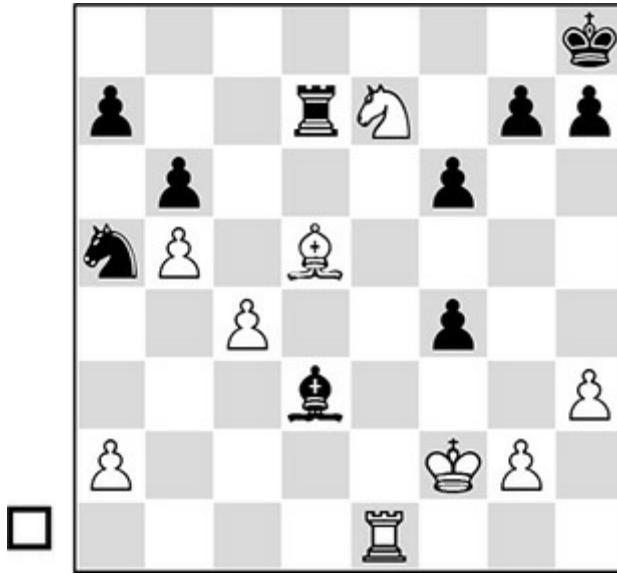
Vladislav Artemiev

2695

Pavel Ponkratov

2603

Sochi 2017 (2)



30. ♜c6!

White has to create a second trump.

30... g5 31. ♜xa5 bxa5

A passed pawn!

32. ♜c6 ♜c7 33. c5

With good winning chances for White.

In the game, White solely focused on entering the back rank with his rook and constructing a mating net with knight, bishop and rook. Unfortunately, there is no mate. 30. ♜f5 h5 31. ♜e8+ ♜h7 32. ♜e6 (White pushes too far. He had to take the perpetual after 32. ♜g8+ ♜g6 33. ♜h4+ ♜h6 34. ♜e6 ♜c7 35. ♜h8+ ♜g5 36. ♜f3+ ♜g6 37. ♜h4+) 32... ♜c7 33. ♜e7 ♜xc4 34. ♜f5+ ♜h6 35. ♜h8+ ♜g5 36. h4+ ♜xh4 37. ♜c8

♕ g5 38. ♜ e4 f5 39. ♜ f3 g6 40. a4 ♜ b3 41. ♜ d6 ♜ d7 42. ♜ e8 ♜ d8 0-1.

Exercise 5.13

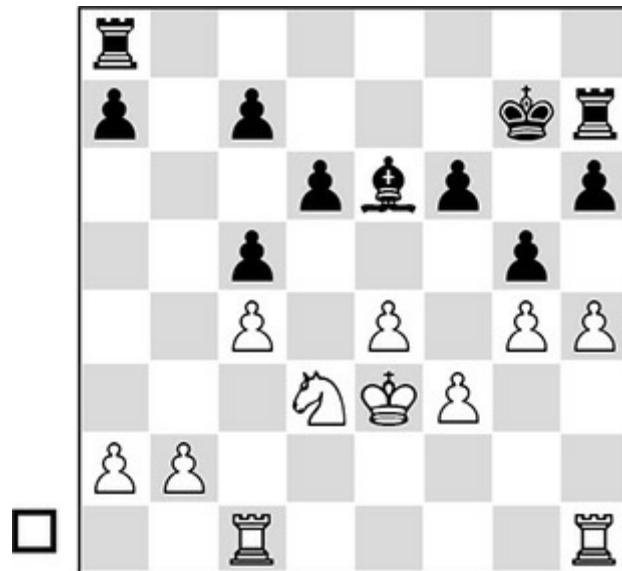
Etienne Bacrot

2705

Ivan Saric

2616

Deizisau 2013 (8)



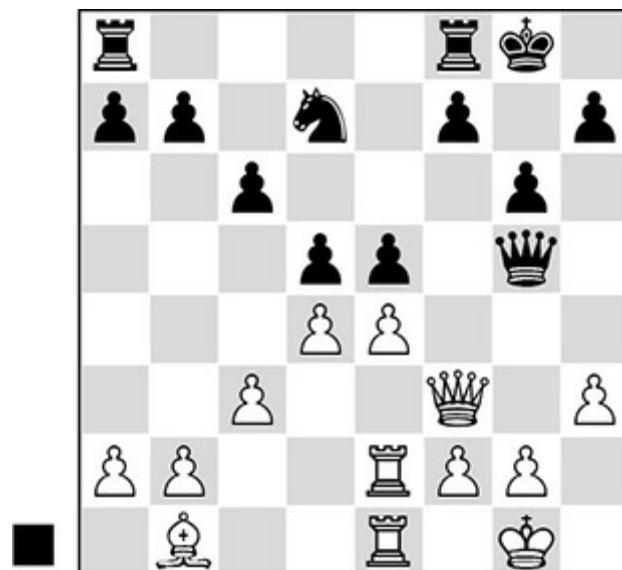
28.b4! cxb4 29. ♜ xb4

White has to create a second open file in order to make life more difficult for his opponent.

In the game, 28.b3 ♜ ah8 29. ♜ c2 h5! was played, after which Black managed to survive: 30.hxg5 fxg5 31.gxh5 ♜ xh5 32. ♜ g1 ♛ f6 33. ♜ cg2 a5 34. ♜ g3 ♜ g8 35. ♜ 1g2 ♜ h3 36.e5+ dxe5 37. ♜ xc5 ♜ xg3 38. ♜ e4+ ♛ e7 39. ♜ xg3 g4 40. ♜ c5 gxf3 41. ♜ xg8 ♜ xg8 42. ♜ xf3 ♛ d6 43. ♜ e4+ ♛ c6 ½-½.

Exercise 5.14

Training position



White has high ambitions on the e-file, but Black is first:

1...f5!

High tension with three against two! This formation is similar to the one in Willemze-Kabatianski from Chapter 1. The black pawns are hard to stop.

2.exf5 e4!

The file is closed and the position is about equal after

3.♘e3 ♘xe3 4.fxe3 ♗xf5

Exercise 5.15

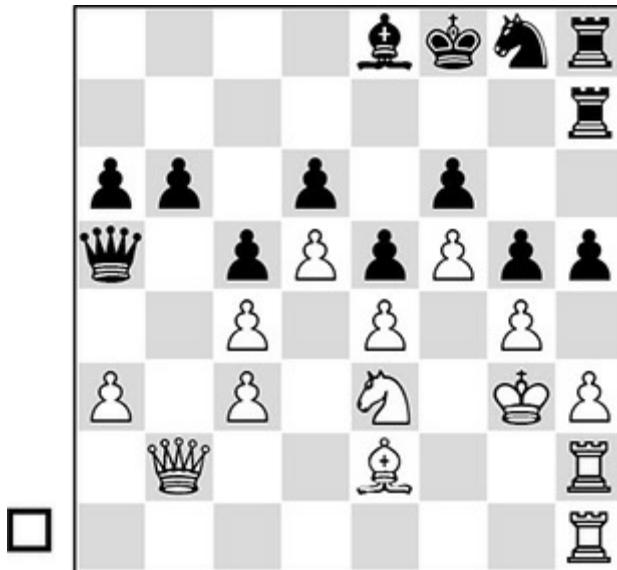
Heidrikur Tindskar Jacobsen

1979

Johann Hjartarson

2541

Runavik 2016 (1)



The black queen has got a little sidetracked on the queenside. White seizes the opportunity to open up the kingside.

37.h4!

Again, creating high tension is the right technique.

37...♗g7 38.hxg5 ♗xg5 39.♕f2 ♗h6 40.gxh5 ♗hg8 41.♕f3

White is a clear pawn up, but he could not keep track with his higher-rated opponent and lost.

Exercise 5.16

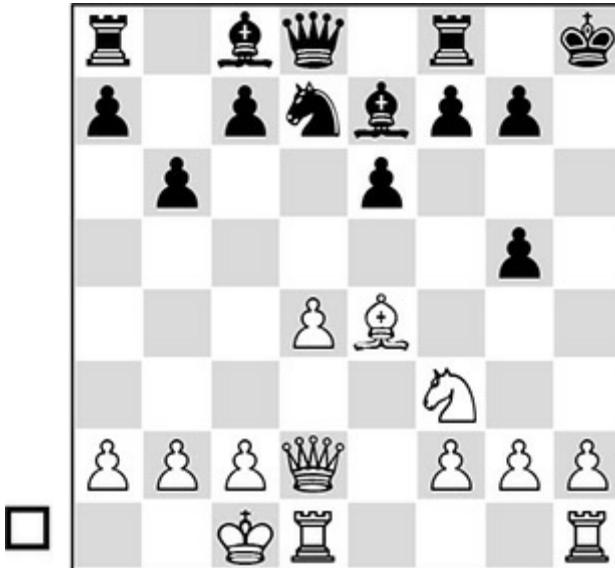
Judit Polgar

2715

Ferenc Berkes

2578

Budapest 2003 (7)



How do you open up a file? Block the pawn and attack it! Enjoy how Polgar deploys this technique to checkmate her opponent's king.

14.g4! ♜b8 15.h4 g6 16.hxg5+ ♛g7 17.♘f4 ♜b7 18.♖h7+ ♛xh7 19.♕h2+ ♛g8 20.♖h1 ♜xg5+ 21.♗xg5 ♜xg5+ 22.f4 ♜xf4+ 23.♘xf4 ♜xe4 24.♘xe4 1-0

Exercise 5.17

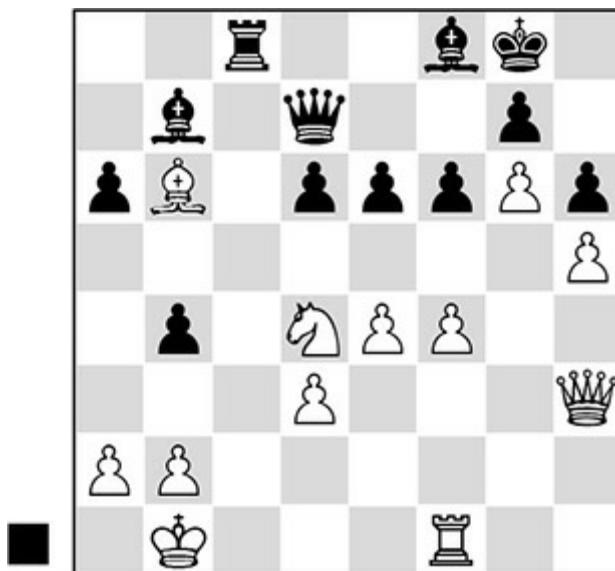
Roeland Pruijssers

2508

Renze Rietveld

2312

Dieren 2017 (3)



Black is under pressure. He has to open up the position in order to create counterplay with his bishops. The right break would be

26...f5! 27.exf5 e5!

followed by ... ♜d5.

Instead he played 26...d5. This allows his opponent to close the position with 27.e5!. I highly recommend playing through the remainder of the game. It is a very nice demonstration of the simplification technique,

which we discussed in Chapter 1.2:

27...f5 28.♕e3 ♜e7 29.♖c1 ♛f8 30.♗e1 ♛e8 31.♖xc8+ ♜xc8 32.♗c1 ♜f8 33.♗c2 ♜b7 34.♗c5 ♜d7 35.♗xf8 ♛xf8 36.♗c5+ ♛e8 37.♗c2 ♜a4+ 38.♔d2 ♜d7 39.♔e2 ♜b8 40.b3 ♜b7 41.♔d2 ♜b8 42.♔e2 ♜b7 43.♗e3 ♜b8 44.♗c6 ♜xc6 45.♗xc6+ ♛e7 46.♗d4 1-0.

Exercise 5.18

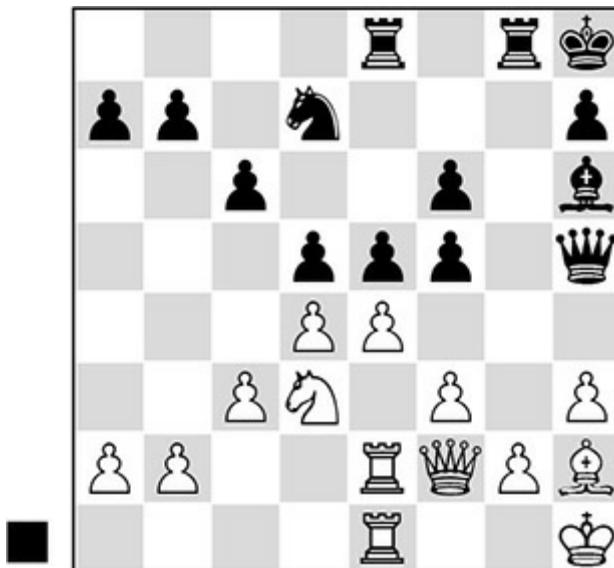
Kishor Ramaswamy

2024

Herver Rodriguez

1760

Montreal 2002 (1)



The right way to close the e-file would have been

23...dxe4 24.fxe4 f4!

With equal chances.

Instead, the game continued 23...f4 24.dxe5 fxe5 25.♘xa7.



This is the difference. If Black had included 23...dxe4 24.fxe4 first, he could now meet 24...♘xa7 with the

killing 25.f3!. In the game, Black was a full pawn behind:

25...dxe4 26. \mathbb{Q} x e4 \mathbb{Q} x g2 (Black tries to make the most of it, but his opponent is not impressed) 27. \mathbb{Q} x g2 \mathbb{Q} g8+ 28. \mathbb{Q} f2 \mathbb{Q} x h3 29. \mathbb{Q} e2! (well played! Safety first!) 29... \mathbb{Q} g2+ 30. \mathbb{Q} f2 \mathbb{Q} x h2 31. \mathbb{Q} f1 \mathbb{Q} g8 32. \mathbb{Q} h1 \mathbb{Q} g2 33. \mathbb{Q} x h6 \mathbb{Q} g3 34. \mathbb{Q} d6 \mathbb{Q} x f3+ 35. \mathbb{Q} d2 c5 36. \mathbb{Q} x d7 \mathbb{Q} x f2+ 37. \mathbb{Q} e2 \mathbb{Q} g1 38. \mathbb{Q} b8+ 1-0.

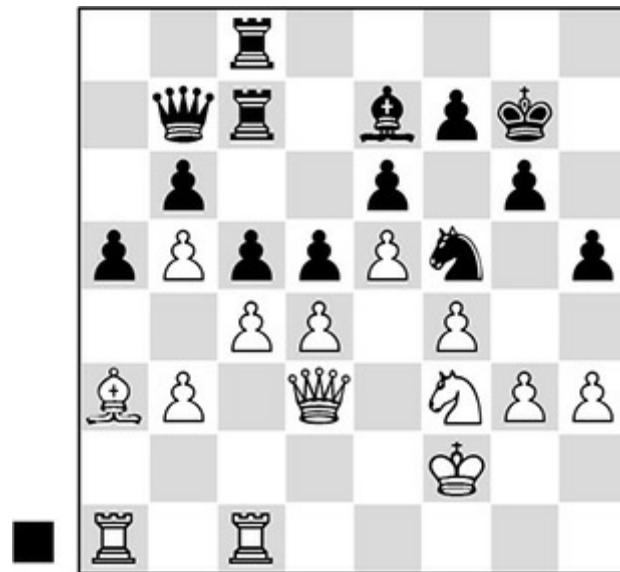
Exercise 5.19

Gyorgy Tamas

Peter Rozsa

2150

Hungary tt 1997



23...dxc4!

Black is certainly better after 23...cxd4 24. \mathbb{Q} x e7 \mathbb{Q} x e7 25.g4, but at least White is able to keep the position closed with 25...hxg4 26.hxg4 dxc4 27.bxc4.

24.bxc4 \mathbb{Q} d8!



Black moves the struggle to the more advantageous d-file and develops a winning advantage.

25.d5

25. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $cxd4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ would have been the best attempt to keep the position closed and exchange bishops, but it is clearly inferior to the 23... $cxd4$ line. White has lost two tempi with his bishop and Black still has his knight on f5. 26... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$, followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}dc8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}e3$, is close to winning for Black.

25... $exd5$ 26.e6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $fxe6$ 28.g4 $dxc4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $hxg4$ 31. $hxg4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 32.g5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}cd7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}7d2+$ 0-1

Exercise 5.20

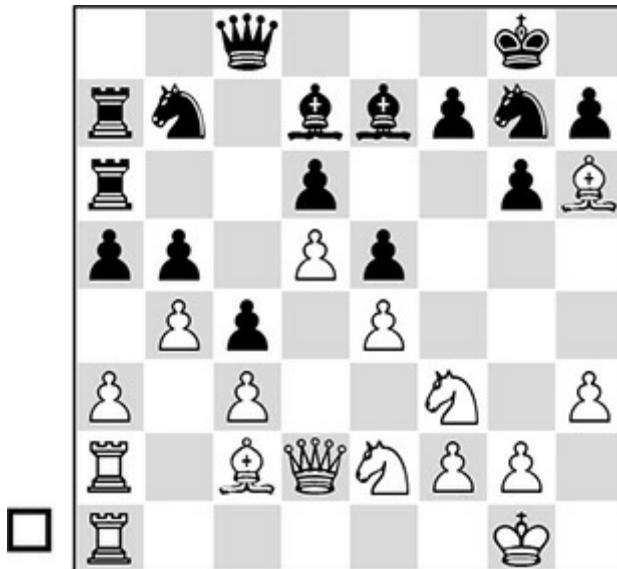
Kevin Mo

2095

Michael William Brown

2121

Crossville ch-USA U16 2011 (3)



24.a4!

Opening the queenside is the right way to take advantage of the clumsy placement of the black pieces.

24... $\mathbb{Q}e8$

24... $axb4$ 25. $cx b4$ $bxa4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c3$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}xa4$, is very good for White.

25. $axb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}a4 \pm$

Exercise 5.21

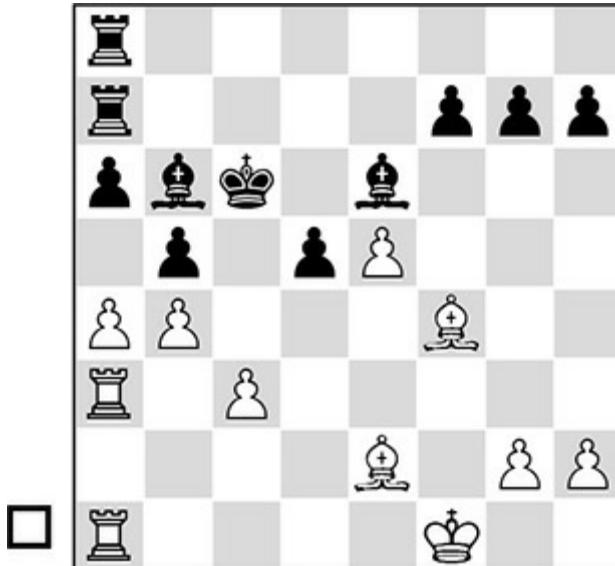
Yaroslav Remizov

2234

Shamsiddin Vokhidov

2355

Moscow 2017 (5)



The game continued 23. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ bxa4 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ a5! and eventually ended in a draw.

Instead of solely focusing on the a-file, White should have switched his attention to the vulnerable d-pawn:

23. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 24. a5 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d1$

25. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ is unclear.

25... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}a2$

The next move is 27. $\mathbb{Q}ad2$, with a nice advantage for White.

Exercise 5.22

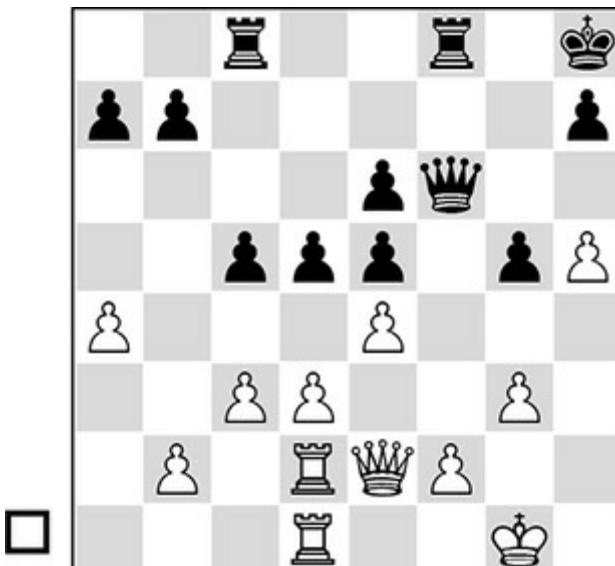
David Marciano

2508

Avni Ermeni

2257

Switzerland tt 2012 (1)



27. d4! exd4 28. cxd4 c4

The first battle is won by Black, who closes the d-file and limits the scope of the white rooks. However, the game continues.

29. $\mathbb{Q}e1!$

White switches his army to the e-file. The remaining pawn configuration makes it almost impossible for Black to keep that file closed as well.

29... ♜c7 30.exd5

According to plan, but not with the right timing. There was no need to hurry. Improving the queen with 30. ♜g4! first was much stronger. White has a large advantage.

30... exd5 31. ♜e6 ♜xe6 32. ♜xe6 ♜d7 33. ♜de2

33. ♜e5! h6 34. ♜e6 ♜h7 35. ♜de2 would still have led to a promising ending for White.

33... ♜g7 34. ♜2e5 ♜f7 35. ♜g2 ♜b8 36. ♜h3 b5

Counterplay!

37. ♜g4 bxa4 38. ♜xg5 ♜b6 39. ♜e8 h6+ 40. ♜f5 ♜xb2 41. f4 a3 42. ♜h8 ♜g7 43. ♜ee8 ♜f7+ 44. ♜g4 ♜e7 45. ♜xe7+ ♜xh8 46. ♜xa7 a2 47. f5 c3 48. f6 c2 49. ♜a8+ ♜h7 50. f7 c1 ♜ 51. ♜h8+ ♜xh8 52. f8 ♜+ ½-½

Exercise 5.23

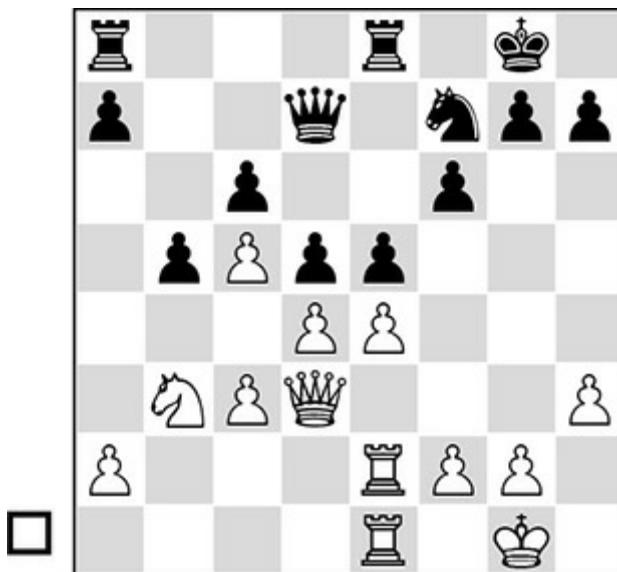
Adrian Chrast

2040

Jan Tomka

2117

Slovakia tt 2007/08 (1)



27.exd5!

The right way to open up the centre for the white rooks.

In the game, White went for 27.dxe5, but after 27... ♜xe5! 28. ♜d4 dxe4 29. ♜xe4 ♜ed8, Black has a file for his own major pieces as well.

27... cxd5

27... ♜xd5 28. ♜a5 ♜d7 29.f4, followed by ♜f3, is also good for White.

28.dxe5 fxe5 29.f4

The e-pawn is lost.

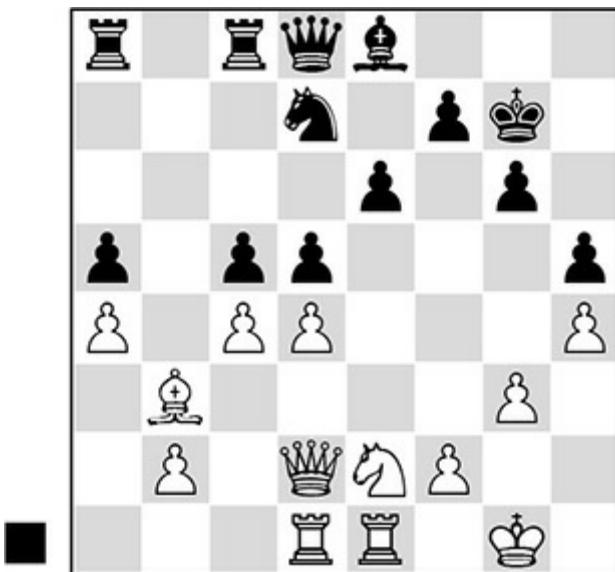
Exercise 5.24

Sila Caglar

1976

Roeland Pruijssers

2508



24...e5!

Another example of high tension with three against two. The white pawns are outnumbered and therefore unable to force an opening of the central files.

25.dxc5

25.dxe5 ♜xe5 was very dangerous.

25...d4

Mission accomplished!

In the game, Black lost after 24...dxc4 25.♕xc4 ♜b6 26.♕b5 (26.♕xe6!) 26...♜xa4 27.♕xe8 ♜xe8 28.♕f4 ♜d8 29.d5 ♜ab8 30.♕xh5+ gxh5 31.♕g5+ ♛f8 32.dxe6 fxe6 33.♕f6+ ♛g8 34.♕xd8 ♜xd8 35.♕xe6 ♛f8 36.♕g5+ ♛h7 1-0.

Chapter 6: The Greek Gift

Exercise 6.1

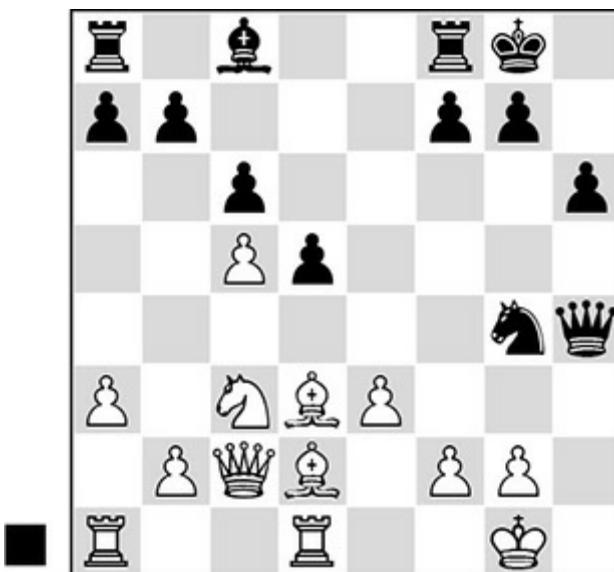
Pol Martinez Torras

1530

Marc Alquezar Calpena

1775

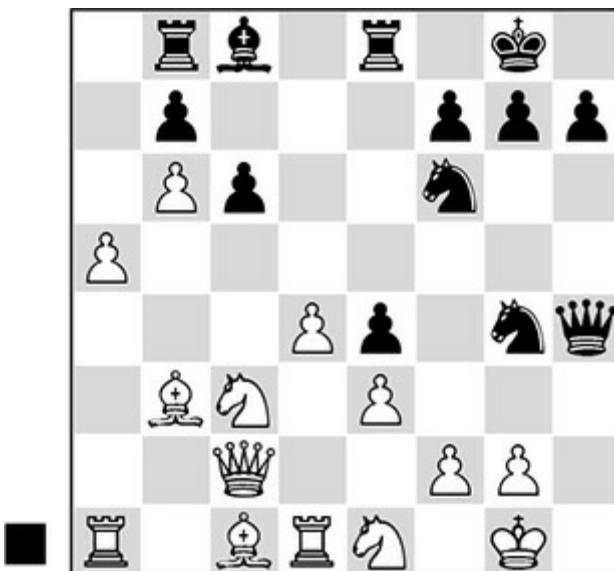
Barcelona 2013 (6)



16... $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h2+$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2\#$

Exercise 6.2

Training position

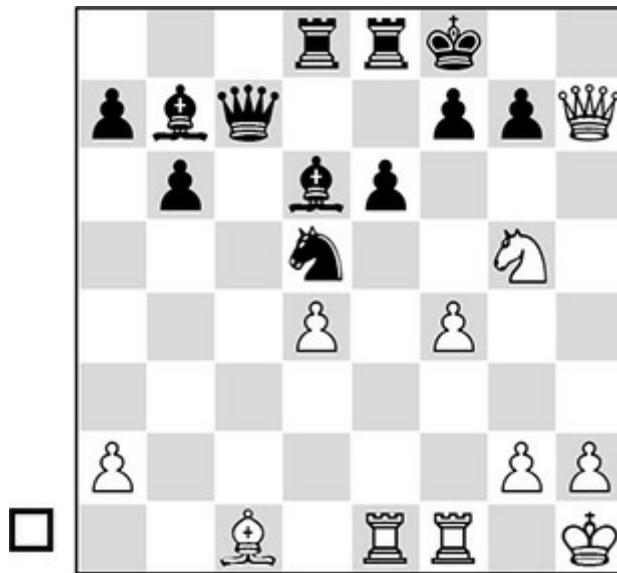


1... $\mathbb{Q}h2+$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g1$

White is unable to defend f2.

Exercise 6.3

Training position



1.f5!

White has to open up the e-file! If 1. $\mathbb{N}h8+$ $\mathbb{K}e7$ 2. $\mathbb{N}xe6+$ $\mathbb{K}d7$!.

1... $\mathbb{N}f6$ 2. $\mathbb{N}h8+$ $\mathbb{K}e7$ 3. $\mathbb{N}xg7$ $\mathbb{K}d7$ 4. $\mathbb{N}xf6$

With a winning advantage.

Exercise 6.4

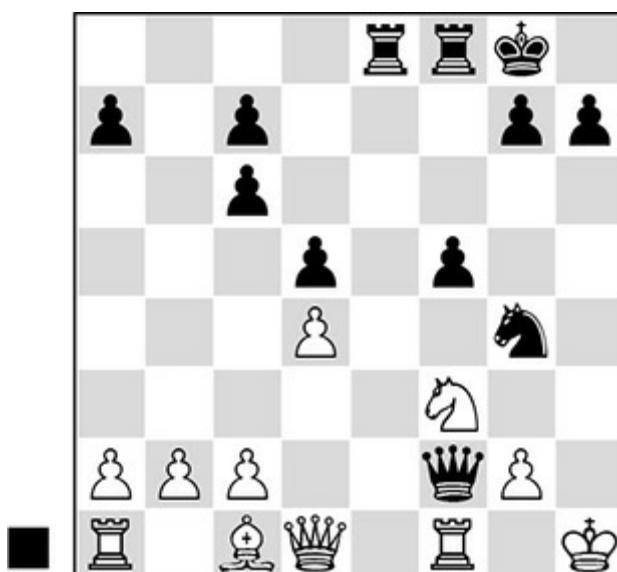
Aleksandra Losinska

1562

Marcin Kosiba

1832

Lazy 2017 (6)



16... $\mathbb{N}e2!$

would have decided the game at once:

17. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3!$ 18. $gxf3$ $\mathbb{Q}h2\#$

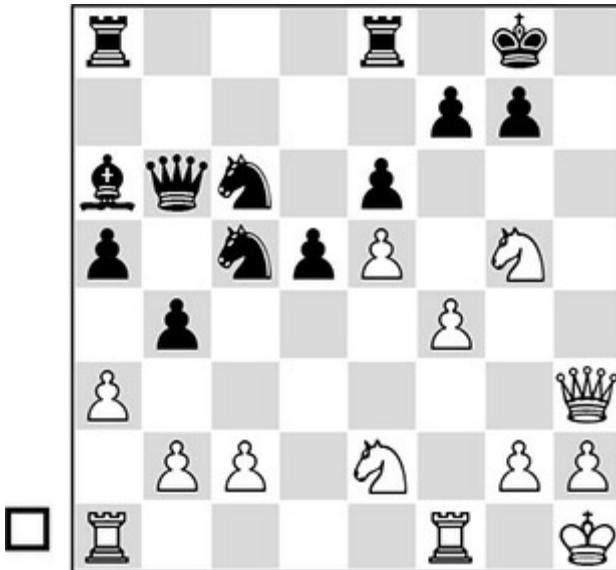
Exercise 6.5

Bela Jakab

Felix Blohberger

2319

Zalakaros 2017 (7)



20.f5

If opening up the centre is one of your ambitions, it is often advisable to keep your queen at a distance. This way you can use your most valuable piece to attack from two sides.

20. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21. $f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ is nothing for White.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $f6$ $gxf6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$

23... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+!$.

24. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$



If the game had continued with

25. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$

... it would have been a nice candidate for the brilliancy prize.

Exercise 6.6

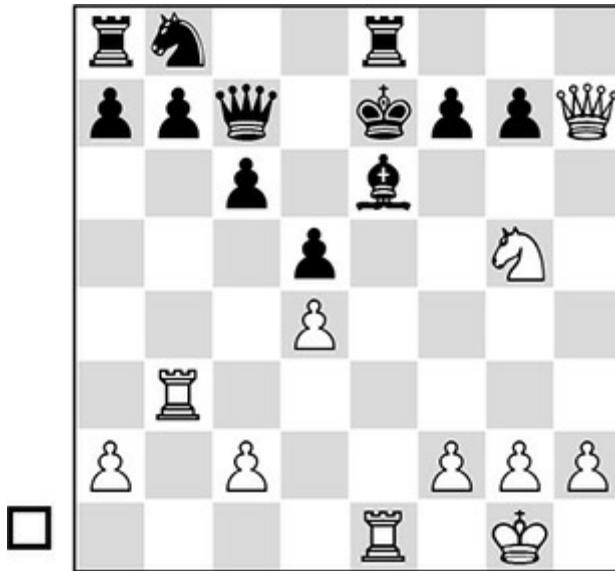
Vladimir Tolkanov

2222

Mikhail Nagibin

2210

Kirov 2014 (7)



23. ♜xf7!

would have given White a winning advantage. Black can resign after

23... ♛xf7 24. ♜h5+ g6

24... ♔e7 25. ♜xe6+.

25. ♜h7+ ♔f8 26. ♜f3+ ♔f5 27. ♜h8+ ♔f7 28. ♜xe8

The alternatives were clearly worse:

A) 23. ♜h4 ♔d7 is exactly what Black wants. White will have a hard time finding sufficient compensation for the piece;

B) 23. ♜xe6 was the game continuation and indeed looked convincing after 23...fxe6 24. ♜xb7!. However, Black missed a very nice tactical opportunity. He could have levelled the game with 23... ♔d6! 24. ♜g3 ♛a5! 25.c3 fxe6.

Exercise 6.7

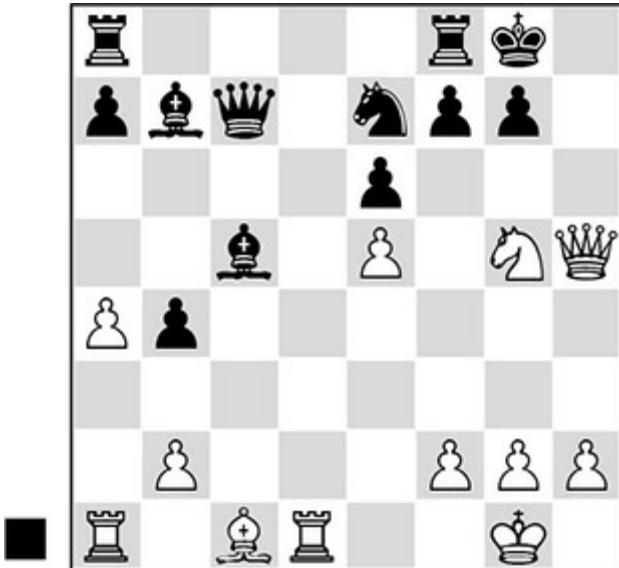
Areg Shmavonyan

2058

Tamir Nabaty

2644

Yerevan 2016 (1)



19... $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$! 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{R}c2+$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{R}ac8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 29. $gxf3$ $\mathbb{Q}cd8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 0-1

Exercise 6.8

Training position



1... $\mathbb{Q}fe8!$

Black has to prepare the evacuation of the king. Covering the h7-square with 1... $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{R}c6+$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{R}c2$ does not work because of the interfering 4. $\mathbb{Q}e4$!.

2. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ --

Exercise 6.9

Baadur Jobava

Vladimir Malakhov

2687

Warsaw Ech rapid 2013 (9)

2716



18...Bg6! 19.Bh4 e5 0-1

18...f6 is only a draw after 19.Rc3! Rb1 20.Rb3 Rc2 21.Rc3.

Exercise 6.10

Marisa Zuriel

2205

Maria Luz Zalimben

1673

Buenos Aires ch-ARG W 2010 (4)



16...Qf8!

The defence of the h7-square is crucial!

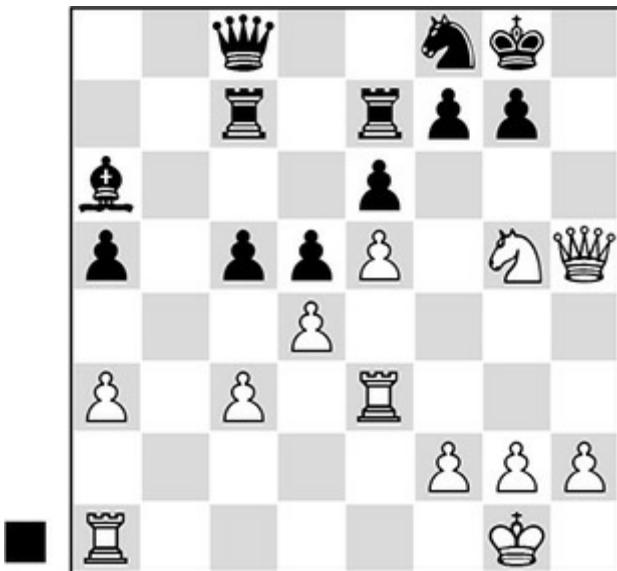
In the game, Black played the desperate 16...Rdxe5 and lost after 17.fxe5 Qc7 18.0-0 Rd8 19.Qh7+ Qf8 20.Qh8+ Qe7 21.Qxg7 Qc5+ 22.Qh1 Rf8 23.Qh7 Re8 24.Qg5+ f6 25.Qxf6 Qd4 26.Qg7+.

17.Qxf7+ Qh8 18.Qh5+ Qg8

With a perpetual.

Exercise 6.11

Training position



1... ♕e8!

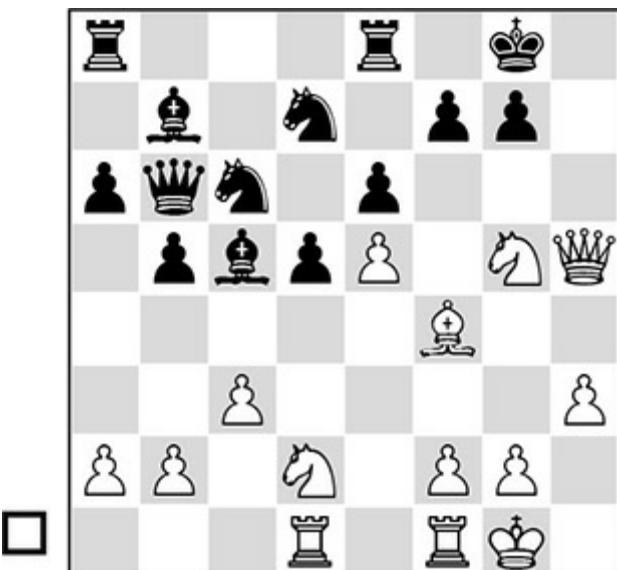
Creating an escape route for the king!

2. ♔h3 ♕g6 3. ♔h7+ ♔f8

Black is better.

Exercise 6.12

Training position



1... ♕cxe5

This is the only road to an advantage for Black. It is vital to keep the knight on d7 in order to answer 2.b4 with 2... ♕f6!.

1... ♕dxe5 gives White a large initiative after 2.b4! ♕d6 3. ♕de4!, for instance:



analysis diagram

- A) 3... ♜c7 4. ♜e3 traps the queen;
- B) 3... ♜b8 4. ♜h7+ ♛f8 5. ♜e3 ♜c7 6. ♜c5+ wins for White;
- C) 3... ♜ad8 4. ♜h7+ ♛f8 5. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 6. ♜h8+ ♛e7 7. ♜xg7 ♜dd8 8. ♜e4! and the weakened dark squares make it almost impossible to defend for Black.

Exercise 6.13

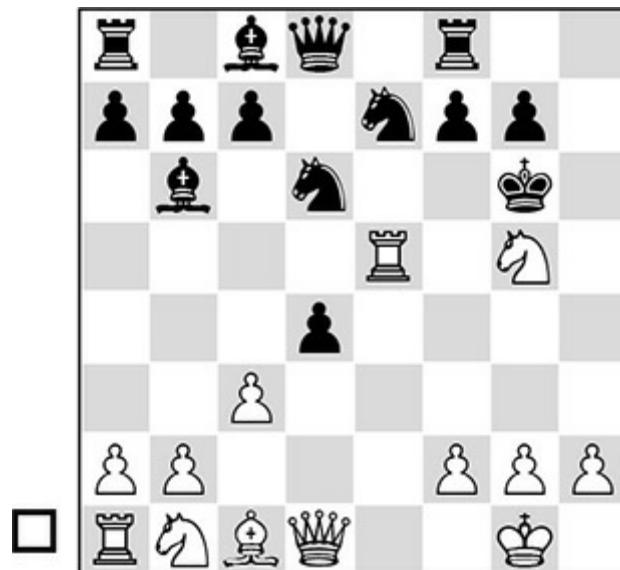
Andras Biro

2288

Istvan Piroska

2195

Hungary tt 2010/11 (6)



14. ♜e6! fxe6 15. ♜h5+ ♛f6 16. ♜g5+ ♛xe5 17. ♜xe7+ ♜f5 18. ♜e2+ ♜e4 19. ♜xd8 ♜xf2 20. ♜b5+ ♛f4 21. ♜d2 ♜xd2 22. ♜f1+ ♜f2 23. ♜g5+ ♜xg5 24. ♜xf2+ ♛e4 25. ♜e2+ ♛f4 26. ♜e5+ ♛g4 27. ♜g3+ ♛h5 28. ♜e5 dxc3+ 29. ♛h1 ♛g6 30. ♜xg5+ 1-0

Exercise 6.14

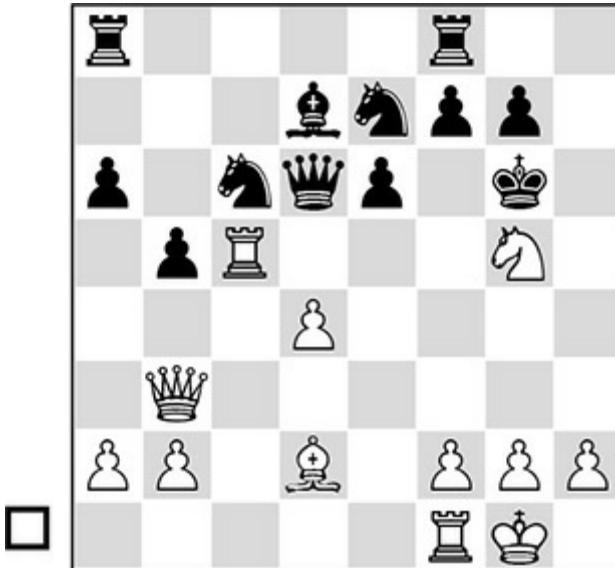
Valentin Buckels

2234

Arthur Pijpers

2444

Germany Bundesliga B 2015/16 (1)



19. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{B}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 21. $\mathbb{R}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c3 f5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 24. $\mathbb{B}d6 fxe4$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 26. $\mathbb{R}xd5$ 1-0

Exercise 6.15

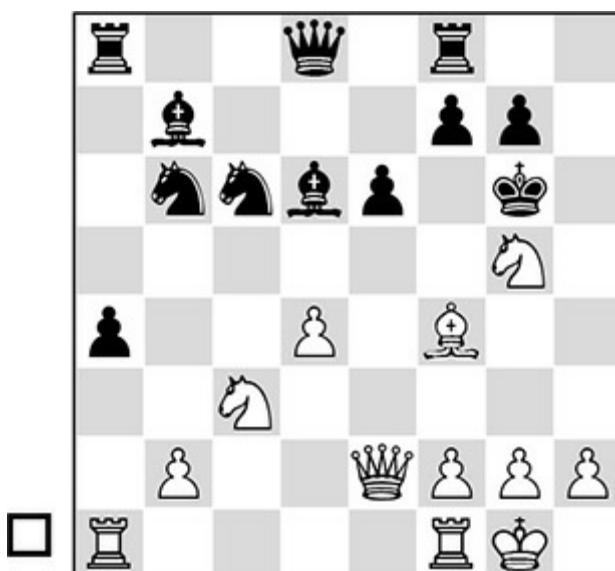
Sopiko Khukhashvili

2383

Salome Melia

2423

Tbilisi ch-GEO W 2013 (10)



22. $\mathbb{B}d3+!$

22. $\mathbb{B}g4 f5!$.

22...f5

22... \mathbb{Q} f6 23. \mathbb{Q} xd6 \mathbb{Q} xd6 24. \mathbb{Q} ce4+.

23. \mathbb{Q} xe6 \mathbb{Q} xf4 24. \mathbb{Q} xd8 \mathbb{Q} axd8 25. \mathbb{Q} b5 \mathbb{Q} c7 26.d5 +-

Exercise 6.16

Vitaly Kunin

2554

Henrik Teske

2521

Werther 2014 (6)



15. \mathbb{Q} e6+! \mathbb{Q} xf6 16.f4! \mathbb{Q} xe6 17.fxe5+ \mathbb{Q} xe5 18. \mathbb{Q} e2+ \mathbb{Q} d4 19. \mathbb{Q} d1# 1-0

Exercise 6.17

Denis Gjuranić

2342

Marko Glavan

2069

Split 2017 (2)



20. $\mathbb{Q}d3+$! $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$! $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$

This is winning for White. Black is unable to recapture the piece due to

- A) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}a3$; and
- B) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4+$.

In the game, the white queen went to the wrong square: 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$. Now the queen is blocking the rook, allowing Black to defend with 20...f5!.



The game continued with 21. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ and ended in a draw after a tense fight.

Exercise 6.18

Vignir Vatnar Stefansson

2353

Kumar Jena Rakesh

2315

Stockholm 2017 (9)



22. $\mathbb{Q}h4!$

This move is the way to go for White. After 23.h3, Black has to trade queens at the cost of his two extra

pieces.

In the game, White underestimated his chances and went for a perpetual with 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg4+$ $f \times g4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xg4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$.

22... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d6$

White is winning.

Exercise 6.19

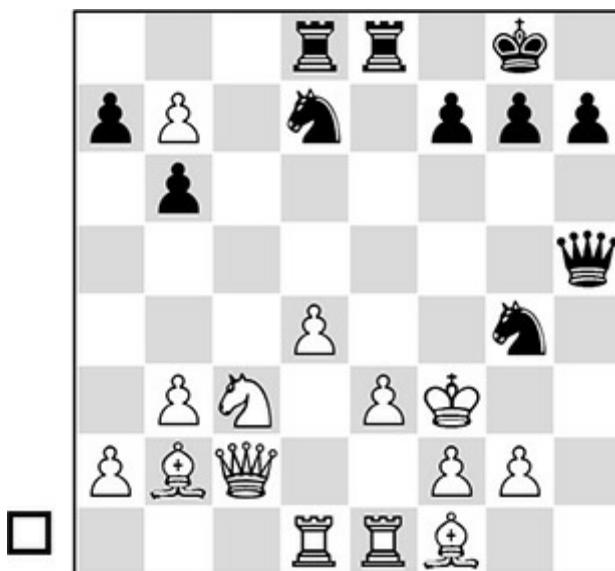
Mikhail Simantsev

2434

Igor Yagupov

2410

Police 2014 (9)



20.e4!

20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3+!$.

20... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$



24. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $h6$ 31. $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d4$

$\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 33. $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}bd8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 1-0

Exercise 6.20

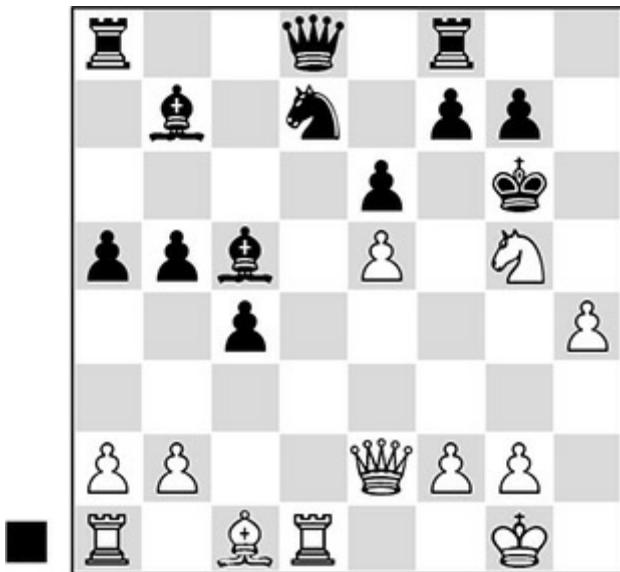
Alexander Motylev

2658

Nikita Vitiugov

2719

Chita ch-RUS 2015 (10)



17... $\mathbb{Q}h8!$

The standard reply to the h4-h5 threat. White has nothing better than a perpetual.

18. $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ $f5$ 19. $exf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ ½-½

Exercise 6.21

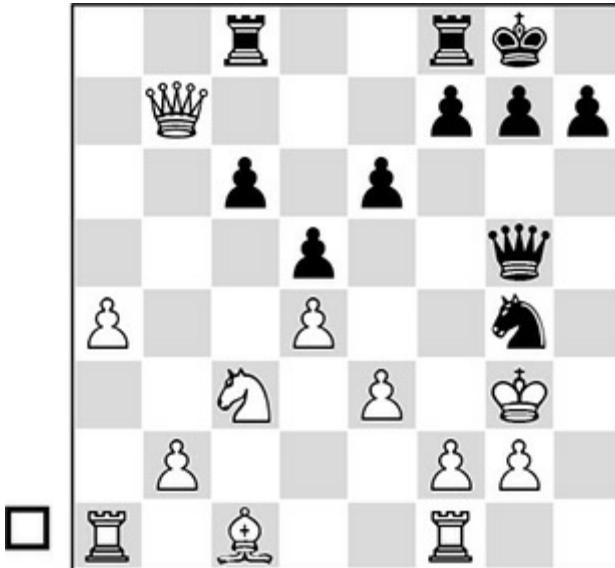
Lubov Markelova

2133

Anastasia Sazonova

2115

Sochi ch-RUS blitz W 2016 (20)



19.f4!

A very important move, which creates space for the king and attacks the back queen.

In the game, 19.e4 was played, after which Black missed the opportunity to reach a winning position with 19... \mathbb{Q} e3+ 20. \mathbb{Q} f3 \mathbb{Q} xg2+ 21. \mathbb{Q} xe3 \mathbb{Q} xf1.

19... \mathbb{Q} g6 20. \mathbb{Q} a6!

Again, the most accurate move. The queen must join the defence. White does not mind returning some material.

20... \mathbb{Q} xe3+ 21. \mathbb{Q} f2 \mathbb{Q} c2 22. \mathbb{Q} b1 \mathbb{Q} xd4 23. \mathbb{Q} d1 \mathbb{Q} a8 24. \mathbb{Q} d3!

White is doing fine.

Exercise 6.22

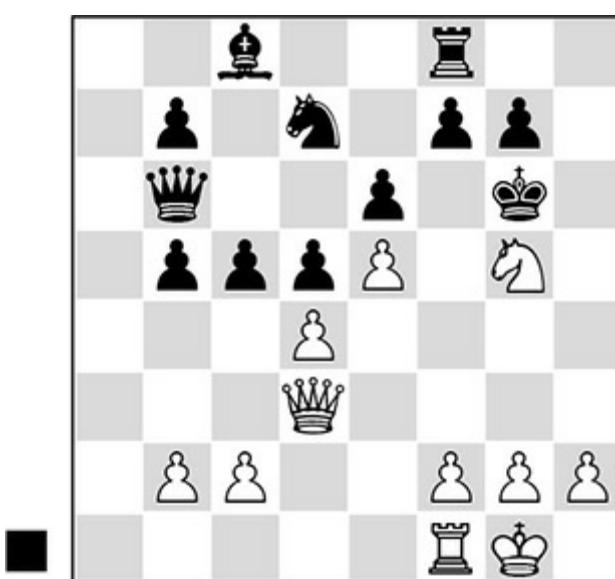
Vladimir Poliakov

2375

Vladimir Semeniuk

2259

Lugansk 2010 (5)



19...f5!

This move does not solve all Black's problems, but it is the only move to stay in the game! If 19... \mathbb{Q} xg5, 20. \mathbb{B} h7! is a manoeuvre to remember. It is now mate in 8: 20... \mathbb{Q} xe5 21.dxe5 c4 22.h4+ \mathbb{Q} f4 23. \mathbb{B} h5 \mathbb{Q} e4 24. \mathbb{B} g4+ \mathbb{Q} xe5 25. \mathbb{B} g3+ \mathbb{Q} f5 26. \mathbb{B} g5+ \mathbb{Q} e4 27. \mathbb{B} e1+ \mathbb{Q} e3 28. \mathbb{B} xe3+ \mathbb{Q} f5 29. \mathbb{B} g5#.

20. \mathbb{B} h3

20. \mathbb{B} g3! was necessary. Now it is Black's turn.

20... \mathbb{Q} f6!

Remember this move?

21.exf6 \mathbb{Q} xg5 22.fxg7 \mathbb{B} g8 23. \mathbb{B} h7 \mathbb{B} d8 24.dxc5 \mathbb{Q} f6 25.f4 \mathbb{Q} f7 26. \mathbb{B} h5+ \mathbb{Q} xg7 27. \mathbb{B} f3 \mathbb{Q} f8 28. \mathbb{B} h6+ \mathbb{Q} e8 29.b4 \mathbb{B} e7 30. \mathbb{B} a3 \mathbb{Q} d7 31.c3 \mathbb{B} g7 32. \mathbb{B} xg7+ \mathbb{B} xg7 0-1

Exercise 6.23

Dmitry Starkov

2047

Ivan Faleev

2064

Vladivostok 2010 (5)



13... \mathbb{Q} xd2+! 14. \mathbb{Q} xd2

14. \mathbb{Q} xd2 \mathbb{Q} cxe5! 15. \mathbb{B} g3 \mathbb{Q} c4+ 16. \mathbb{Q} e2 \mathbb{Q} f6, followed by ... \mathbb{Q} e7 is very good for Black.

14... \mathbb{Q} xd4 15.f4

15. \mathbb{Q} ge4+ \mathbb{Q} h7 is also a clear win for Black.

15... \mathbb{Q} dxe5

The battery is again neutralized with an attack on the back piece.

16. \mathbb{B} g3 \mathbb{Q} d3+

16... \mathbb{Q} xf4! was also strong.

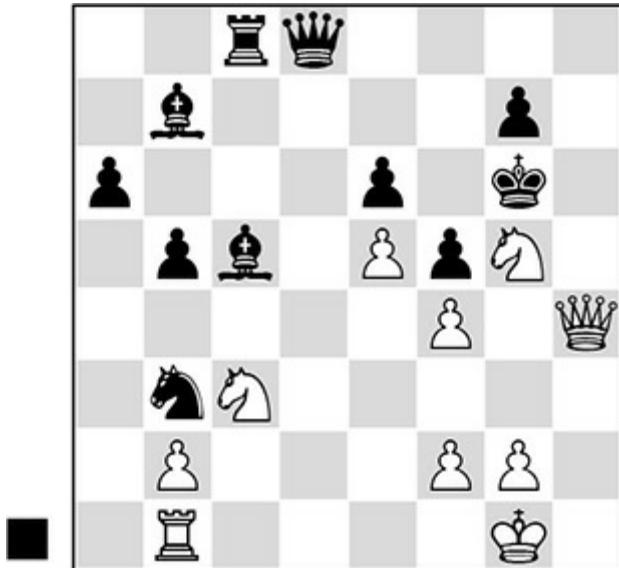
17. \mathbb{Q} d1 \mathbb{Q} f2+ 18. \mathbb{Q} c1 \mathbb{Q} xh1

Attacking the back piece again!

19. \mathbb{B} h4 \mathbb{Q} c5+ 20. \mathbb{Q} d1 \mathbb{Q} f2+ 21. \mathbb{Q} e2 \mathbb{Q} d4+ 22. \mathbb{Q} f1 \mathbb{Q} f5 23. \mathbb{B} h7+ \mathbb{Q} f6 24.h3 \mathbb{Q} g3+ 25. \mathbb{Q} e1 \mathbb{Q} e3# 0-1

Exercise 6.24

Training position



1... ♜h8! 2. ♜g3 ♜h5!

followed by 3... ♜g4, removes the sting from the white attack.

Exercise 6.25

Ferenc Pasztor

2084

Lajos Nadasi

2039

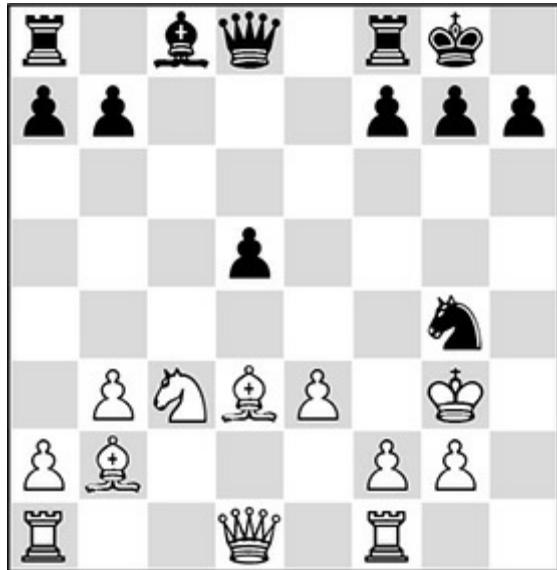
Hungary tt 2010/11 (10)



No! Black does not have a good follow-up after the active king defence.

12... ♜xh2+ 13. ♜xh2 ♜g4+ 14. ♜g3!

14. ♜g1 ♜h4 15. ♜e1 ♜xf2+ 16. ♜h1 ♜h4+ 17. ♜g1 ♜h2+ 18. ♜f1 ♜h1+ 19. ♜e2 ♜xg2#.



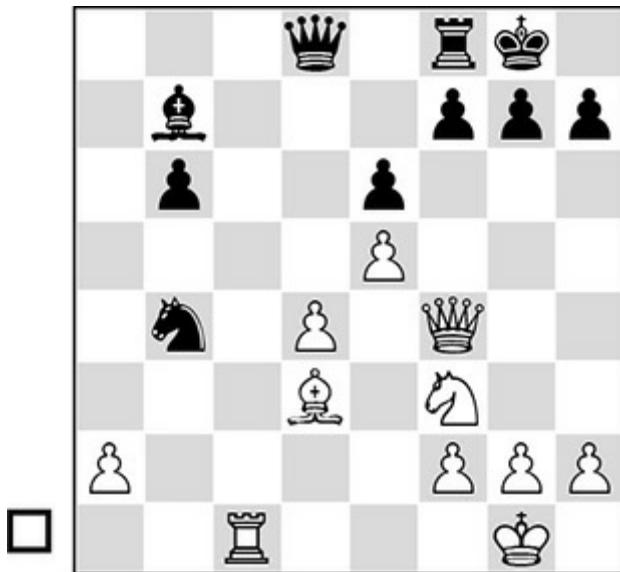
14... ♔d6+

14... ♔g5 15.f4!; 14...h5 15. ♕h1!.

15.f4 ♔xe3 16. ♕h5 ♔xf1+ 17. ♕xf1 f5 18. ♔xd5 ♔e6 19. ♔g5 ♕f7 20. ♔c4 ♔h8 21. ♔h6 ♔g8 22. ♔g5 b5 23. ♕d1 ♔c5 24. ♔f6+ ♔h8 25. ♔h5 ♕g8 26. ♕d8 bxc4 27. ♔xg7+ 1-0

Exercise 6.26

Training position



No! White is slightly better in the starting position and has a lot to prove after, for instance,

1. ♔xh7+ ♔xh7 2. ♕g5+ ♔g8!

If 2... ♔g6 3. ♕c3 wins.

3. ♕g4

3. ♕h4 ♔e4!.

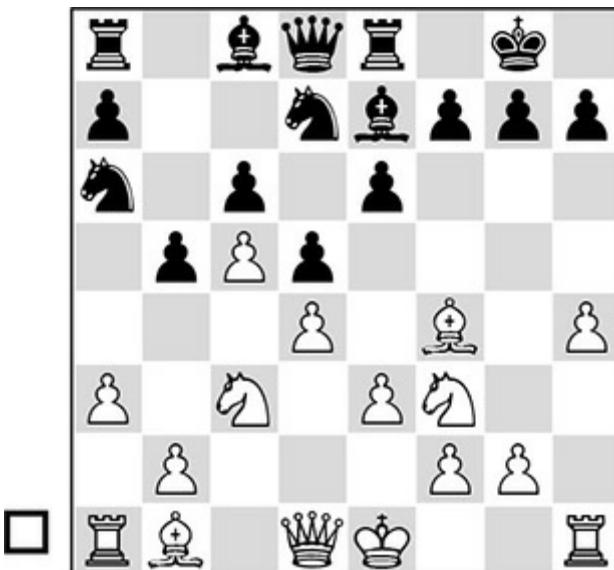
3... ♕a8 4. ♕h4 ♕c8! 5. ♕e1 ♕d5

Exercise 6.27

Virgilio Vuelban

Jasen Giretti Kanev

Crema 2016 (5)



Yes!

14. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 15. $\mathbb{B}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ On 15... $\mathbb{Q}g6$, 16. $\mathbb{B}g4$ is killing.16. $\mathbb{B}h5$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}g6$ This moves spoils everything. 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ would have decided the game at once.19... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{B}c2$ $\mathbb{B}h5$ 21. $f3$ $b4$ 22. $\mathbb{B}a4$ $b3$ 23. $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xe6$ $\mathbb{B}xe5$ 25. $dxe5$ 0-1

Exercise 6.28

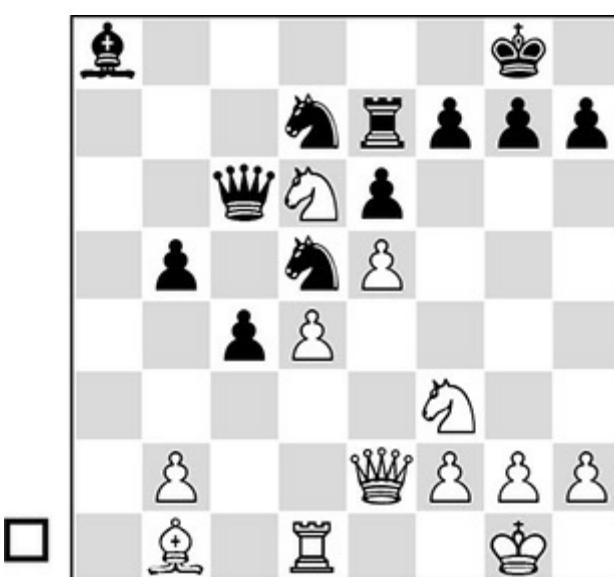
Federico Perez Ponsa

2589

Diego Salvatti

2033

Villa Martelli 2016 (1)



No! White already had a clear edge and does not get anything concrete out of the complications.

22. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8!$

23... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}gxf7$ $\mathbb{Q}5f6$ 25. d5! exd5 26. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ wins.

24. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}7f6!$

This thematic move saves the day. Instead, Black played 24... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ and resigned after 25. $\mathbb{Q}dx7$.

25. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}de4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

Black is doing fine. For instance:

29... c3 30. bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$

With a perpetual.

Exercise 6.29

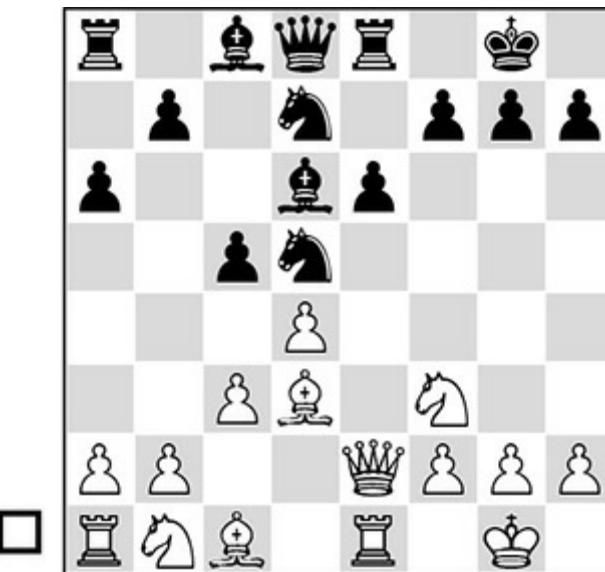
Gupta Prithu

2219

Anna Vrtiakova

2010

Stockholm 2016 (4)



Yes!

12. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

13... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 14. h4! is very strong. Both f7 and e6 are poorly protected, which makes it hard for Black to free himself. For instance: 14... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e4+!$ f5 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (preventing 17. $\mathbb{Q}f7$) 17. h5+! $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ and White wins.

14. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

14... $\mathbb{Q}7f6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg7\#$.

15. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

We have seen this move before.

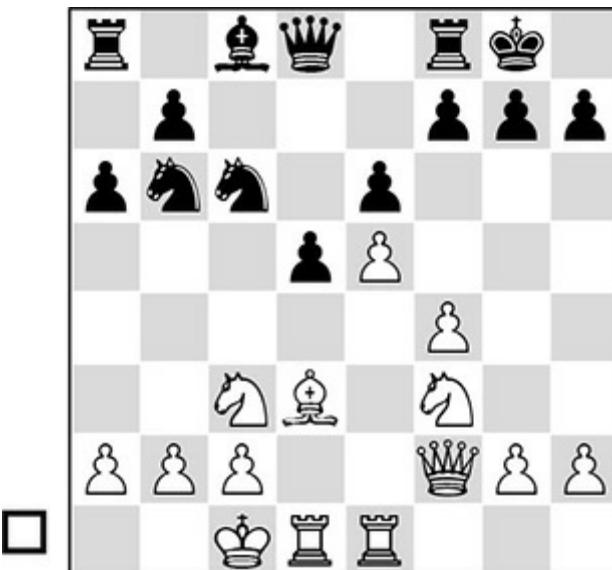
16... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ fxg6 19. dx5 $\mathbb{Q}7f6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. b4 e5 22. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 23. c4 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 25. f3 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 26. g3 $\mathbb{Q}4h5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}hf6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}ce4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ a5 31. b5 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 32. c6 bxc6 33. bxc6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 1-0

Exercise 6.30

Eduardo Thelio Limp

Flavio Sanchez Leao

1871



Yes! The attack is very convincing.

15. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

If 16... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21. $f5!$ is crushing.

17. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$

Black resigned. It is mate after 18... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 20. $g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh4\#$.

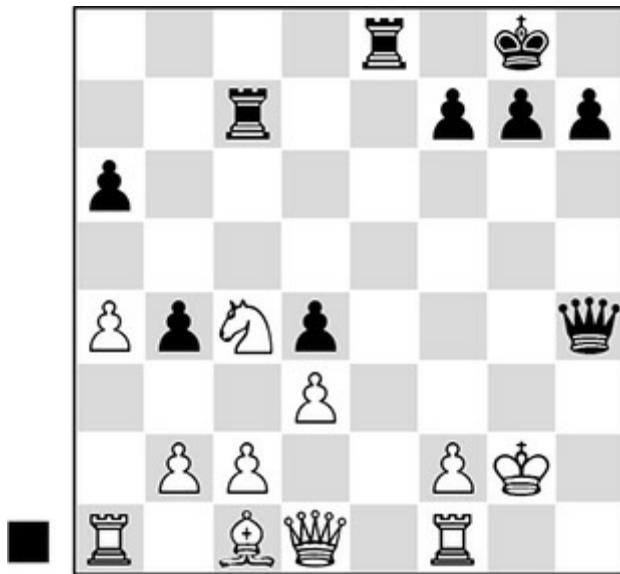
Chapter 7: Lasker's double bishop sacrifice

Exercise 7.1

Valentins Kirilov

Semen Furman

Vilnius ch-URS 1949 (6)



22... $\mathbb{B}c6!$

22... $\mathbb{B}e6?$ 23. $\mathbb{B}e5!.$

23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}g6+$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{B}e2!.$

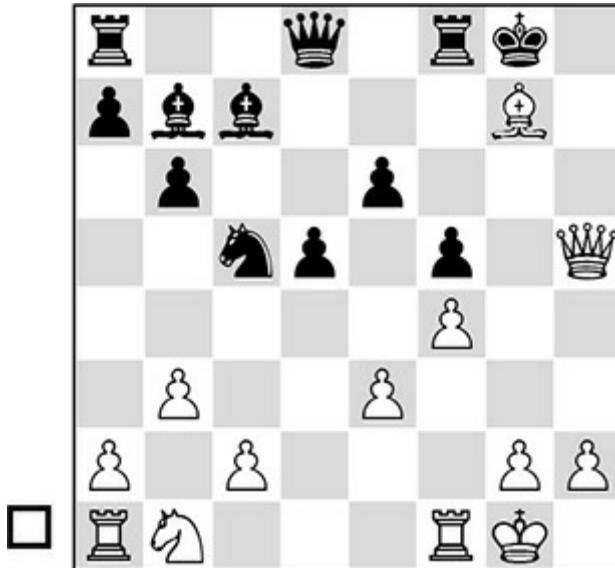
23... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 24. $\mathbb{B}h1$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 25. $\mathbb{B}h2$ $\mathbb{B}g6+$ 26. $\mathbb{B}h1$ $\mathbb{B}e1+$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xe1$ $\mathbb{B}f3+ 0-1$

Exercise 7.2

Martin Eltrich

Robert Sandholzer

Götzis 1997 (6)



16. ♕b2!

Other squares on the diagonal have the same effect. White develops a winning attack. The alternatives were:

A) 16. ♕f3 ♔xg7 17. ♕g3+ ♔f6 18. ♕h7 ♕g8 19. ♕h4+ ♔f7 20. ♕h7+ ♔f6 ½-½ was the game;

B) 16. ♕g6 ♕e8! 17. ♕h6 ♕e7 is better for Black.

16... ♕f6

The only move that prevents 17. ♕g6. 16... ♕e8 is mate in two: 17. ♕h8+ ♔f7 18. ♕g7#.

17. ♕f3 ♕e4 18. ♕d2!

White eliminates the defender, leaving Black defenceless. The natural 18... ♕e8 can be met with the elegant 19. ♕xe4!.

Exercise 7.3

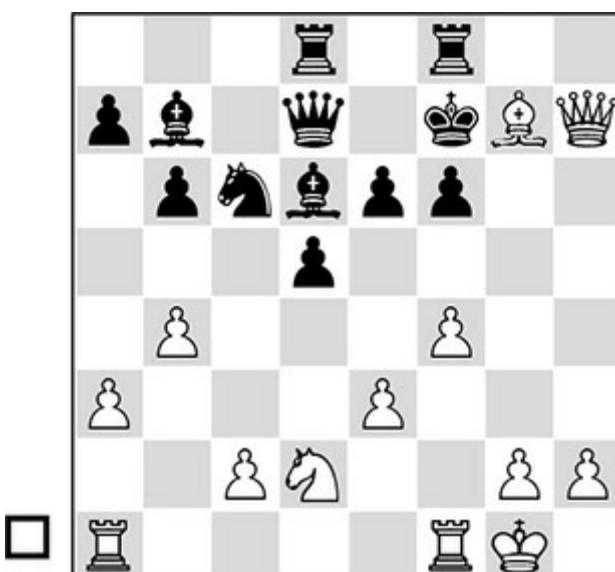
Inigo Axpe Balenciaga

2086

Angels Cucarella Montell

1982

Zornotza 2013 (7)



White should keep the battery alive and bring up an extra attacker:

21.e4! ♜e8

What else? Black cannot take the pawn: 21...dxe4 22. ♜xe4 followed by ♜ad1 gives White a killing attack.

22.exd5 ♜d4 23. ♜e4

With a large initiative for White.

Exercise 7.4

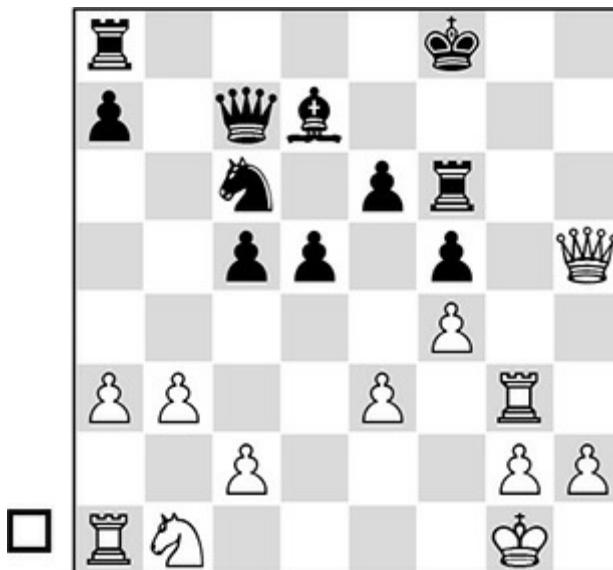
Alexey Popov

2130

Mikhail Scherbakov

1785

Khanty-Mansiysk 2013 (9)



19. ♜h7!

Cutting off the king and preparing the deadly ♜g8+ wins for White. For instance:

19... ♜e8

19... ♜f7 leads to the same: 20. ♜g8+ ♜e7 21. ♜h4+ ♜d6 22. ♜xa8 wins.

20. ♜g8+ ♜f8 21. ♜g6+ ♜e7 22. ♜g7+ ♜f7 23. ♜g5+ ♜d6 24. ♜xa8 1-0

In the game, White went for the inaccurate 19. ♜h8+ ♜e7 20. ♜g7+ ♜f7 21. ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 22. ♜xa8



after which Black resigned.

The game should have lasted one more move. After 22... $\mathbb{Q}d8!$, it would have been White who could resign!

Exercise 7.5

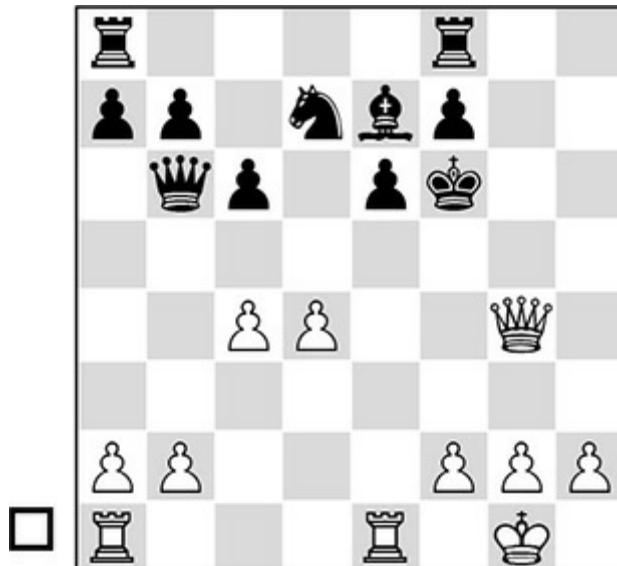
Mateo Ivic

2234

Zdenko Jukic

2314

Croatia tt 2016 (5)



20. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

The only way to victory. The point is that the g3-square is unavailable for the rook after 20. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$. White has nothing better than a perpetual.

20... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$

White played a great game, but now forgets to bring in an extra attacker.

22. $\mathbb{Q}ae1!$

was the killer. This move prepares both 23. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ and a second rook lift with $\mathbb{Q}e1-e3-f3$. It would have ended the game in style.

Instead, Black was able to escape with a draw after 22. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}g8!$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$.

Exercise 7.6

Training position



1. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 4. $hxg3$

This is winning for White.

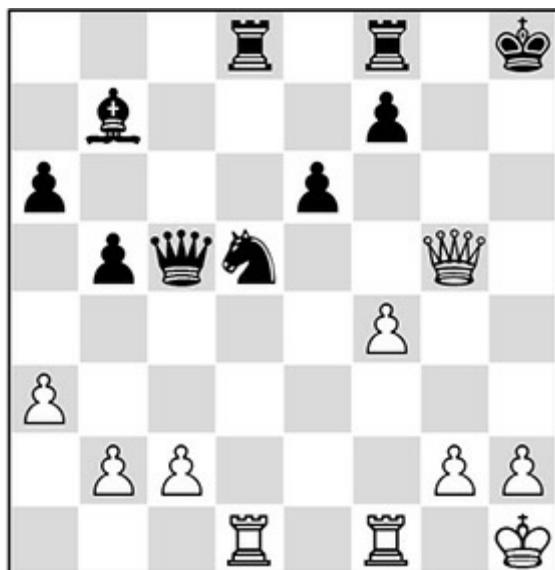
Exercise 7.7

Rastislav Moravcik

2080

J Cerna

Ceske Budejovice 1996 (6)



22. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $fxg6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf4+$

This leads to victory for White.

The game saw 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$, after which Black forgot to force a draw with the pretty 22... $\mathbb{Q}xf4!$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ (24. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2!$ wins for Black) 24... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $fxg6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$.

Exercise 7.8

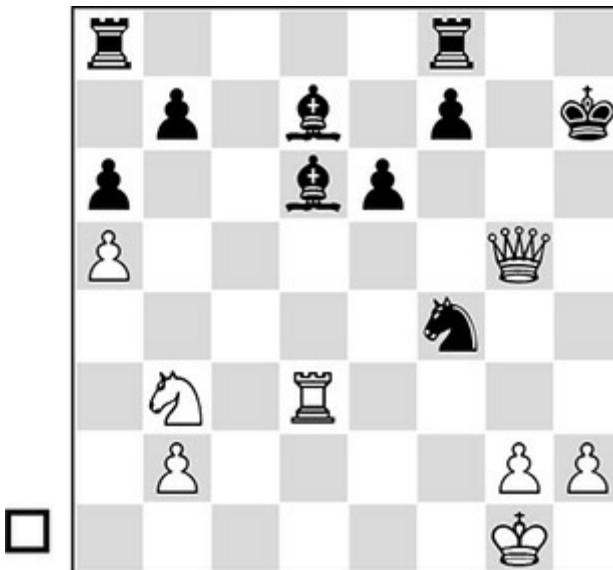
Vilmos Varga

2122

Odon Csoli

2162

Hungary tt 2013/14 (6)



White is completely winning, but has to be accurate here.

30. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$! $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 31. $\mathbb{R}xd6$

would have forced Black to resign.

Instead, the game continued 30. $\mathbb{R}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}h3+$! Ouch! 31. $gxh3$ $\mathbb{R}g8$ and the game ended in a draw.

Exercise 7.9

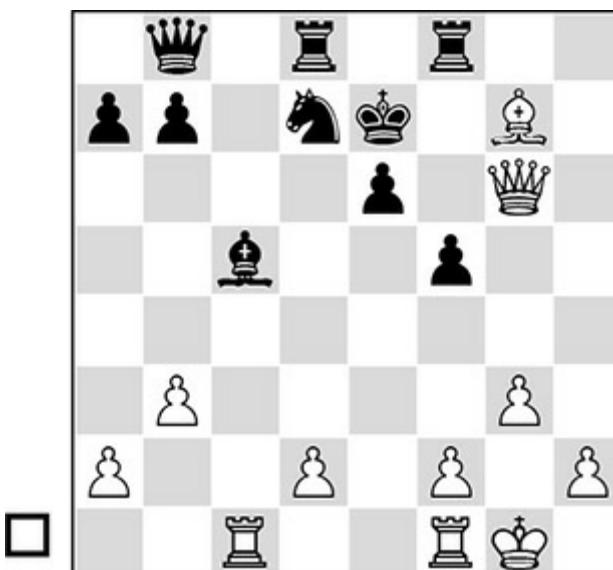
Helmut Quelle

2100

Alexander Hobusch

2205

Germany tt 2011/12 (2)

23. $d4!$

The most convincing line, even though preparing it first with 23. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ or 23. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ was also better for White.

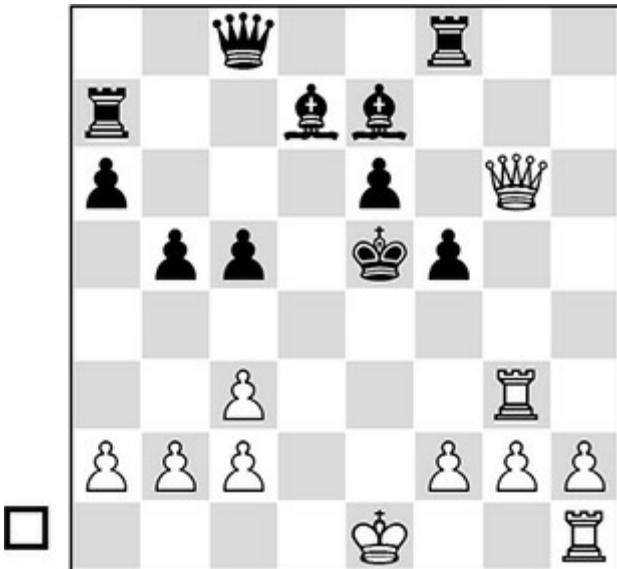
23... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 24.a3

24.d5 was equally strong. In the game, White frees the e1-square first before he opens up the centre.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 25.d5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27.dxe6+ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ f4 32. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ fxg3 33.hxg3 1-0

Exercise 7.10

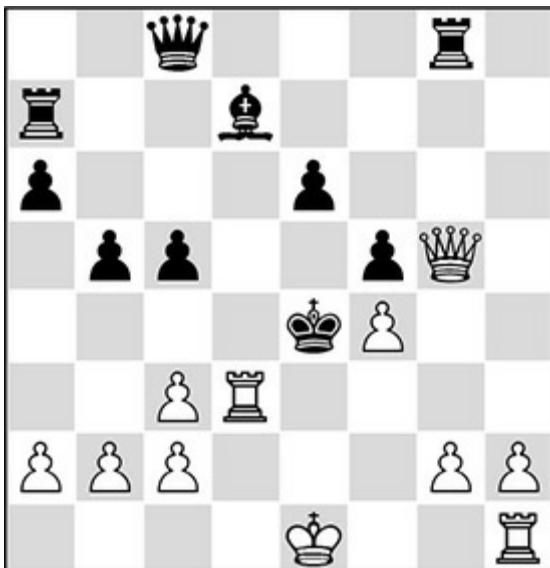
Training position



1. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Blocking the evacuation route of the king leads to a forced mate!

1... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 3. f4+ $\mathbb{Q}e4$



4.0-0!

4. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ leads to the same line: 4... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 5.g3 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 6.hxg3 b4 7. $\mathbb{Q}e1\#$.

4... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 5.g3 $\mathbb{Q}xg3+$ 6.hxg3 c4 7. $\mathbb{Q}e1\#$

Exercise 7.11

Training position



1. ♔ h7!

Remember this move! White wins by forcing the king to stay in the open field.

1... ♕ f6

1...f5 2. ♕g7+ ♔h5 3. ♕f4+ ♔h4 4.g3#.

2. ♕h6+ ♔f5 3.h3

This move prepares 4.g4#. Black has to start returning minor pieces to stay in the game.

3... ♗xg2 4. ♕h5+ ♗g5 5.h4 ♕f6 6. ♖e5!

White wins the queen and the game.

Exercise 7.12

Training position



1. ♕d4! e5 2. ♕d6+ ♔g7 3. ♖g3

White has the better chances.

Exercise 7.13

Training position



The attack is the best defence!

1... ♜a3+! 2. ♛b1 ♜c3+ 0-1

Exercise 7.14

Ruslan Scherbakov

2555

Arghyadip Das

2352

Pune 2004 (1)



The thematic

19... ♜h6! 20. ♜a3 ♜g5 21. ♜h3+ ♛g6 22. ♜h5+ ♛f6

gives Black the advantage.

Instead, Black played 19... ♛f6 and lost after 20. ♜c3 ♜c5 21. ♜e3 ♛c6 22. ♜f4+ ♛g6 23. ♜g3+ ♛h7 24. ♜g4.

Exercise 7.15

Training position



1... ♜e4!

Attacking the back piece is the most effective way to dismantle a battery. Black stays in the game after
2. ♕xe4 f5 3. ♕xb7 ♔xg7.

Exercise 7.16

Ioannis Kalogeris

2280

Alexandros Papasimakopoulos

2182

Greece tt 2016 (3)



Black secured a draw with 24... ♜f3 25. ♜xf3 ♜g5 26. ♜d4 ♜d6 27. ♜h3+ ♜g6 28. f4 ♜c5 29. ♜xc5 ♜xc5 30. ♜g3+ ♜h7 31. ♜h3+.

He could, however, get an improved version with

24... ♜xg2!

And now:

A) 25. ♜g3 ♜g5! wins;

B) 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ wins as well for Black;

C) 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}g5!$. Black successfully keeps the white pieces at a distance and is winning.

Exercise 7.17

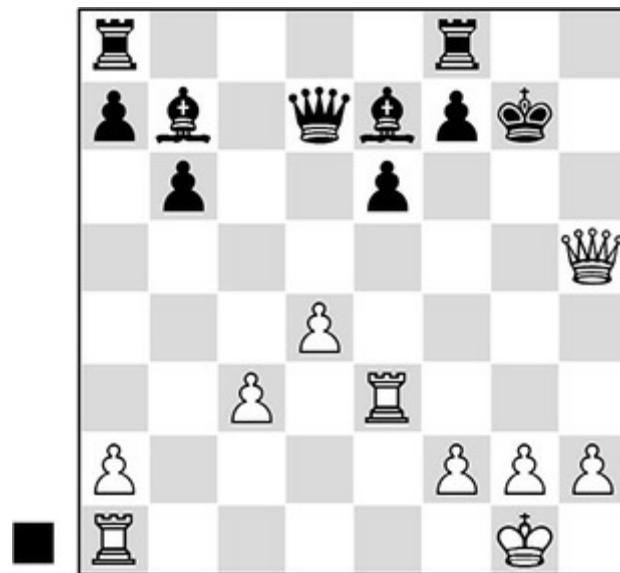
Jozsef Palkovi

2425

John Pigott

2380

Budapest 1993 (10)



Black played 20... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and lost directly after 21. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$. If you studied this chapter carefully, you probably knew the answer. Black could escape with 20... $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5!$



22. $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$

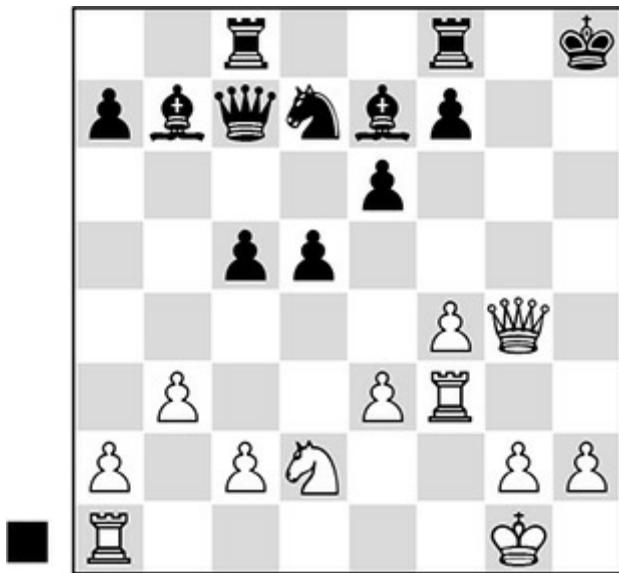
22. $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$.

22... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

White does not have enough compensation for the bishop.

Exercise 7.18

Training position

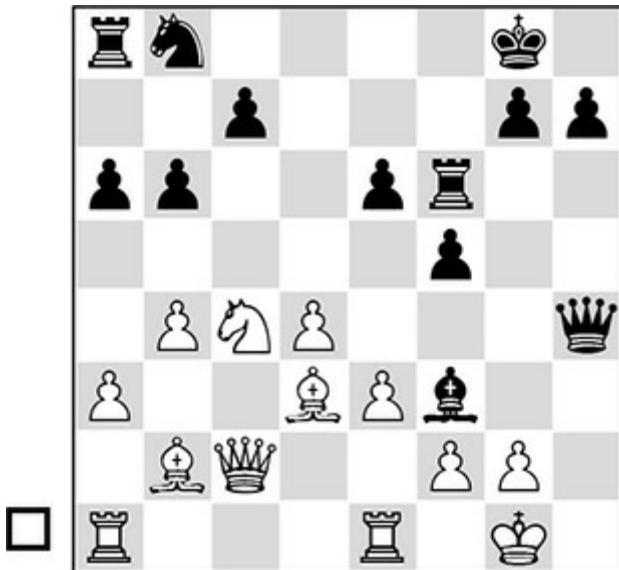


1... $\mathbb{B}f6!$ 2. $\mathbb{R}h3+$ $\mathbb{B}h7$ 3. $\mathbb{R}xh7+!$

Forcing the perpetual is the right decision! The tempting 3. $\mathbb{B}h5$ is a mistake. Black is better after the instructive 3... $\mathbb{B}h4!!$. The bishop is once again returned in order to speed up the defence. Black is right in time to set up a 7th-rank defence after 4. $\mathbb{R}xh4$ $f6!$.

Exercise 7.19

Training position



1. $gxf3!$ $\mathbb{B}h3$ 2. $\mathbb{B}xf5$ $\mathbb{R}xf5$

2... $exf5$ 3. $\mathbb{B}e5$.

3. $f4$ 1-0

Exercise 7.20

Training position



1... ♕h6!

This move secures the draw.

1... ♕h7 2. ♖e3 ♗xg2 3. ♖g3 ♗g5 4. ♖xg5 ♗xf1 5. ♖h5#.

2. ♖e3 ♗xg2! 3. ♖h3+

3. ♖g3 ♖g8 wins for Black.

3... ♗xh3 4. ♖xh3+ ♕g6 5. ♖g4+ ♕h6 6. ♖h3+ ½-½

Exercise 7.21

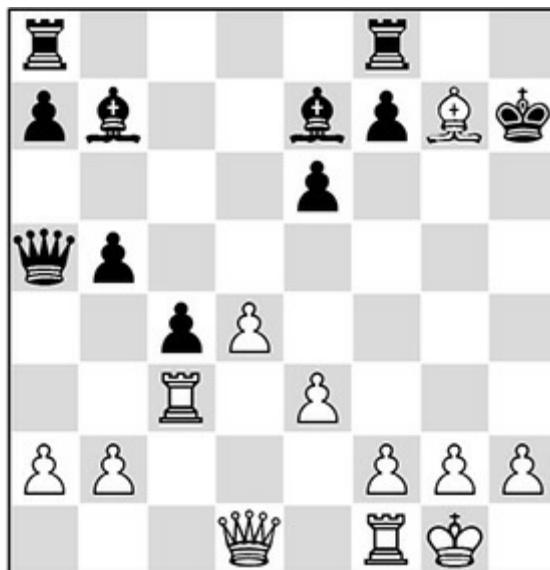
Karl Robatsch

2410

Harald Casagrande

2395

Gamlitz ch-AUT 1993 (1)



18... ♖g8!

Black creates an escape route for the king and wins.

In the game, there followed 18... ♕xg7 19. ♖g4+ ♕h6 20.e4 ♖xc3 21.bxc3 and White won after a long fight.

Exercise 7.22

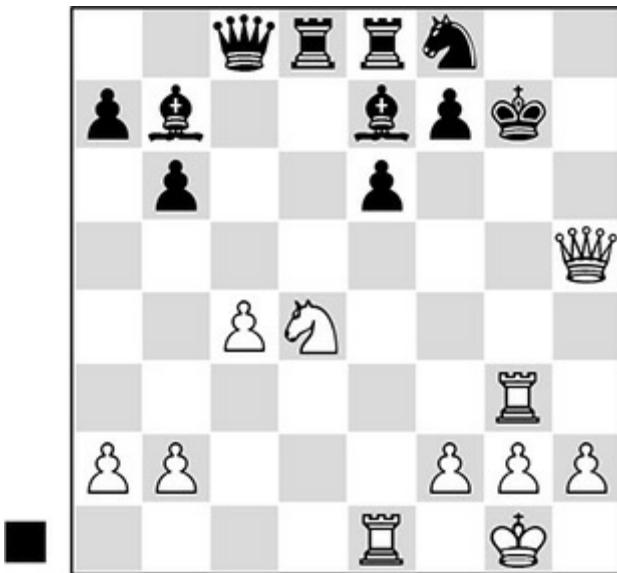
Cemil Can Ali Marandi

2394

Yasin Sari

1829

Turkey tt 2012 (12)



25... $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

The game continuation 25... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ is met by 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+!$.

26. $\mathbb{Q}xg5+ \mathbb{Q}g6$

The position is more or less balanced. It could end in a perpetual after, for instance:

27. $\mathbb{Q}e5+ \mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h5 \mathbb{Q}d7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f5! exf5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+ fxg6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+ \mathbb{Q}h8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}h5+ \mathbb{Q}g7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g5+ \mathbb{Q}f8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$

Exercise 7.23

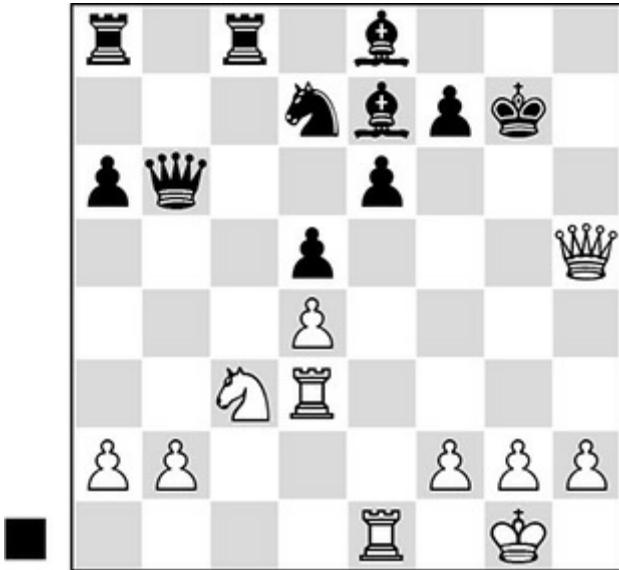
David Miedema

2362

Sebastian Siebrecht

2445

Germany Bundesliga B 2016/17 (5)



21... $\mathbb{Q}xc3!$

21... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ is just a draw after 22. $\mathbb{R}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$.

21... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (this is why the knight had to be eliminated) 22. $\mathbb{R}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$.

22. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23. $\mathbb{R}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24. $h4$ $\mathbb{R}c8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$



The king is safe and the three pieces for a rook promise Black a winning advantage.

26. $h5$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 28. $\mathbb{R}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 29. $h6$ $\mathbb{R}xc3$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-1

Exercise 7.24

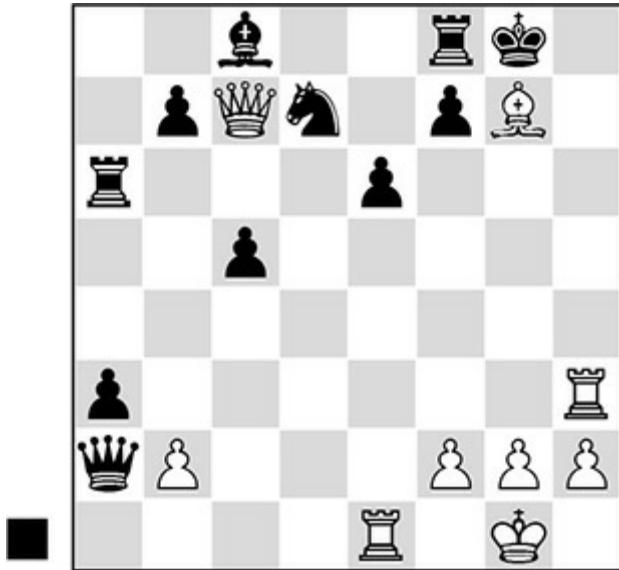
Igor Stohl

2560

Ilir Seitaj

2420

Moscow ol 1994 (2)



23...e5!

Bringing in a defender enables Black to hold the game.

24.♕xf8 ♜xf8 25.♖g3+ ♜g6 26.♖xg6+ fxg6 27.bxa3 ♜d2 28.♖f1 ♜f5 29.♘xc5 ♜d4 30.♘c7 ♜e4 31.♖c1 ♜e6 32.♘e7 ♜f8 ½-½

Exercise 7.25

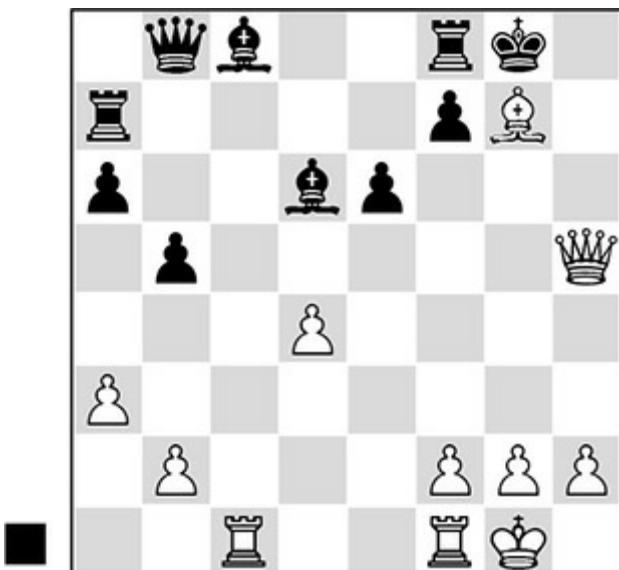
Thomas Mollema

1976

Wilfried Harff

2151

Maastricht 2013 (4)



20...♕xg7!

The right move! It gives White nothing more than a perpetual. The alternatives:

A) The game continued 20...f5 21.♕xf8 ♜xf8 22.♘e8 ♜c7 23.♘d8! ♜d7 24.♘xc8 ♜a7 25.♖c3 ♜xd4 26.♖g3+ ♛f7 27.♘xa6 and White won convincingly;

B) 20...f6 21.♕xf8 ♜xf8 22.♘e8 is similar to the game.

21.♘g5+ ♛h8!



22. ♔h5+

22. ♕c3 f6! 23. ♕h3+ ♕h7 24. ♕xh7+ ♔xh7 25. ♔h5+ ♕g7 26. ♔g4+ ♕f7 wins for Black.

22... ♕g7 23. ♔g5+

With a draw.

Exercise 7.26

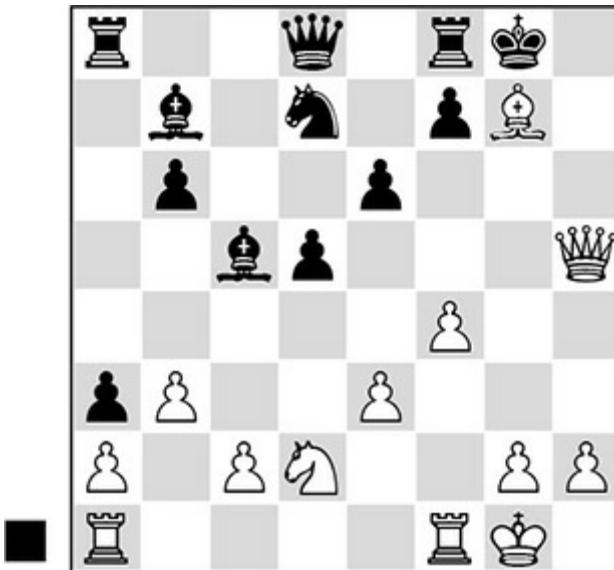
Ruud Janssen

2492

Vincent Rothuis

2313

Netherlands tt 2005/06 (2)



A) 17...f5! was the only way to keep the game level. For instance:

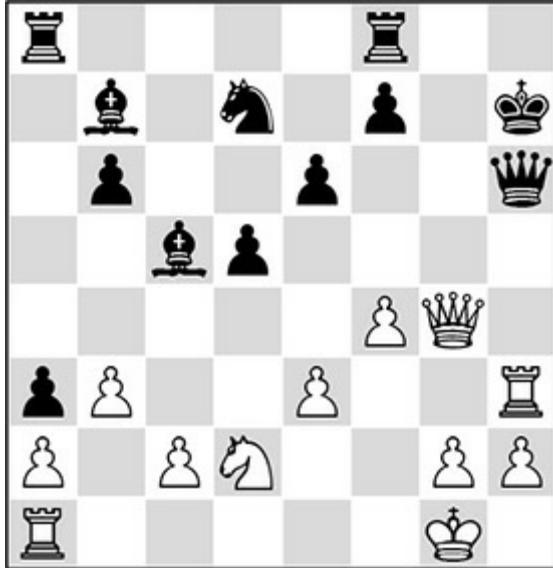
A1) 18. ♕c3 ♕xe3+ 19. ♕h1 d4 20. ♔g6+ is a perpetual;

A2) 18. ♕f3 ♕xg7 19. ♕g3+ ♕f6 20. ♔h7 ♕g8 21. ♔h4+ ♕f7 22. ♔h7+ ♕f6 leads to a draw as well;

A3) 18. ♕g6 ♕e8 19. ♕g5 ♕f7 is better for Black.

B) 17...f6 loses with the standard manoeuvre 18. ♕h6! ♕f7 19. ♕g6+ ♕h8 20. ♕xf7;

C) 17... \mathbb{Q} xg7 was the game continuation, which led to a nice technical win for White: 18. \mathbb{Q} g4+ \mathbb{Q} h7
19. \mathbb{Q} h5+ \mathbb{Q} g7 20. \mathbb{Q} g4+ \mathbb{Q} h7 21. \mathbb{Q} f3 \mathbb{Q} f6 22. \mathbb{Q} h3+ \mathbb{Q} h6



23. \mathbb{Q} f3 (23. \mathbb{Q} xh6+ \mathbb{Q} xh6 24. \mathbb{Q} g5+ \mathbb{Q} h7 25.f5! was even stronger) 23...f5 24. \mathbb{Q} xh6+ \mathbb{Q} xh6 25. \mathbb{Q} g5+ \mathbb{Q} h7 26. \mathbb{Q} h5+ \mathbb{Q} g7 27. \mathbb{Q} g5 \mathbb{Q} f6 28. \mathbb{Q} h7 \mathbb{Q} xe3+ 29. \mathbb{Q} h1 \mathbb{Q} xf4 30. \mathbb{Q} xd7 \mathbb{Q} xg5 31. \mathbb{Q} xb7 ... 1-0 (88)

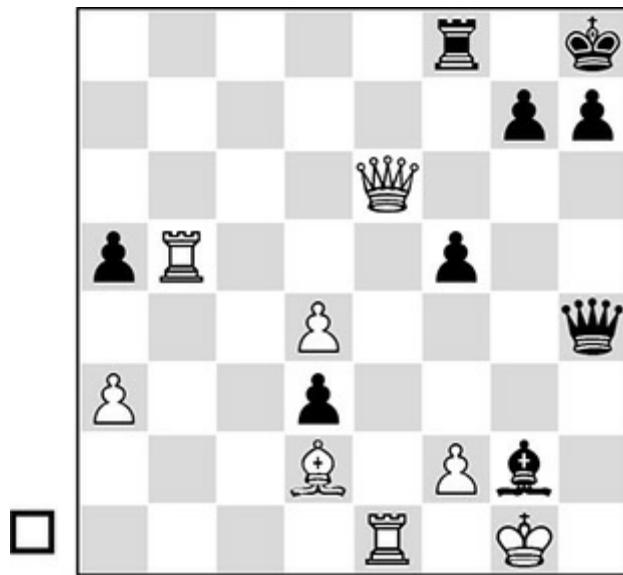
Exercise 7.27

Holger Grund

Klaus Richter

2240

Ladenburg 1992 (6)



30.f3!

The right move! It gave White a nice victory in the game.

30.f4 \mathbb{Q} f3 leads to a forced mate and 30. \mathbb{Q} xg2 \mathbb{Q} g4+ 31. \mathbb{Q} f1 \mathbb{Q} h3+ 32. \mathbb{Q} g1 \mathbb{Q} g4+ is only a draw by perpetual.

30... \mathbb{Q} xf3 31. \mathbb{Q} d6 \mathbb{Q} h1+ 32. \mathbb{Q} f2 \mathbb{Q} g2+ 33. \mathbb{Q} e3 \mathbb{Q} e8+ 34. \mathbb{Q} e5 \mathbb{Q} g5+ 35. \mathbb{Q} xd3 \mathbb{Q} e4+ 36. \mathbb{Q} c3 \mathbb{Q} c8+ 37. \mathbb{Q} c5 ... 1-0 (52)

Exercise 7.28

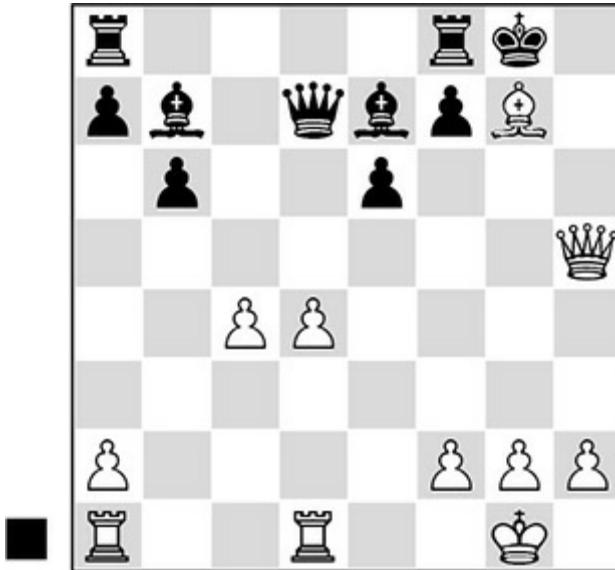
Thomas Ochsner

2300

Dan Andersen

2265

Denmark tt 1997/98 (2)



20... \mathbb{Q} xg7!

This is the standard manoeuvre to secure the advantage.

20...f5 was played in the game, but leads at best to equality after 21. \mathbb{R} d3.

20...f6 21. \mathbb{Q} h6 \mathbb{Q} d6 22.c5! is good for White.

21. \mathbb{Q} g4+ \mathbb{Q} h6 22. \mathbb{Q} h3+ \mathbb{Q} g6 23. \mathbb{Q} g4+ \mathbb{Q} g5 24.h4 \mathbb{Q} e7 25.f4 f5! 26. \mathbb{Q} g3 \mathbb{Q} h8

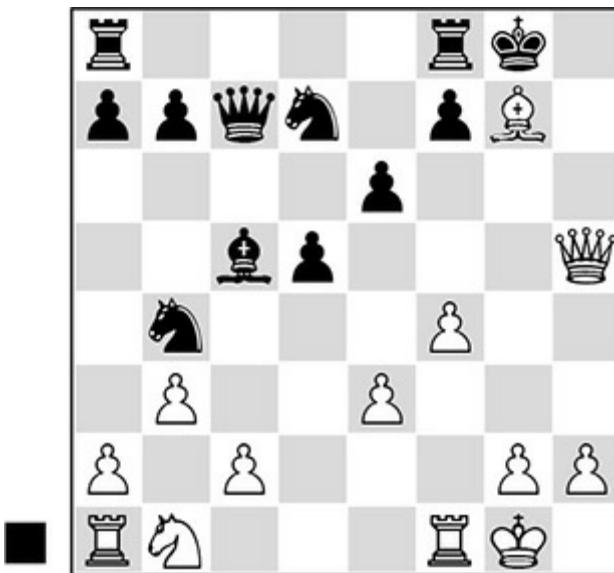


White wins back a piece, but has insufficient compensation for the other one.

Exercise 7.29

Ihsan Shahiran Mhd Muhammad

Gerald Pramoedya Priguna



15...f6!

This move prevents the white queen from entering the g-file.

15...f5 loses directly, since Black is unable to attack the queen at g6: 16. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{R}f7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ is bad too. Black can sacrifice the queen for the rook, but loses an extra piece at the end of the line: 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 17. $\mathbb{R}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$



analysis diagram

18. $\mathbb{Q}h1!$ (18. $\mathbb{R}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 19. $\mathbb{R}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 20. $\mathbb{R}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 21. $\mathbb{R}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. $\mathbb{R}g3+$.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$

The best try. 16. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ and 16. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ are met by 16... $\mathbb{Q}e5!$, and the standard reply 16. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ does not work here because of 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2!$ with a clear advantage for Black.

16... $\mathbb{Q}xf8$

Black has the better chances.

Exercise 7.30

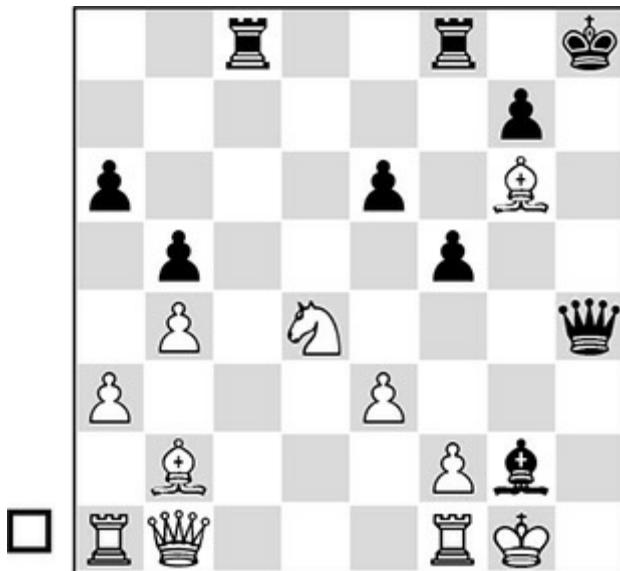
Matthew Turner

2475

James Cobb

2345

Newport 1999 (6)



23.f3!

The equalizer! 23... ♕h3 24. ♔e2 ♕g5+ 25. ♔f2 ♕g2+ 26. ♔e1 ♕xf1+ 27. ♔d2 ♕xf3 28. ♔d4 should be fine for White.

Instead, White went for the straightforward 23. ♔xg2, but soon found out that his opponent was not interested in a perpetual at all! Instead, he came up with the elegant 23... ♕g5+ 24. ♔h2 ♕h6+ 25. ♔g2 ♕xg6+ 26. ♔h2 ♕h5+ 27. ♔g2 ♕g4+ 28. ♔h2 ♕f6 29. ♔xf5 ♕xf5 30. ♔xf5 exf5 and won convincingly.

23.f4 ♔e4 would have led to the same result.

Exercise 7.31

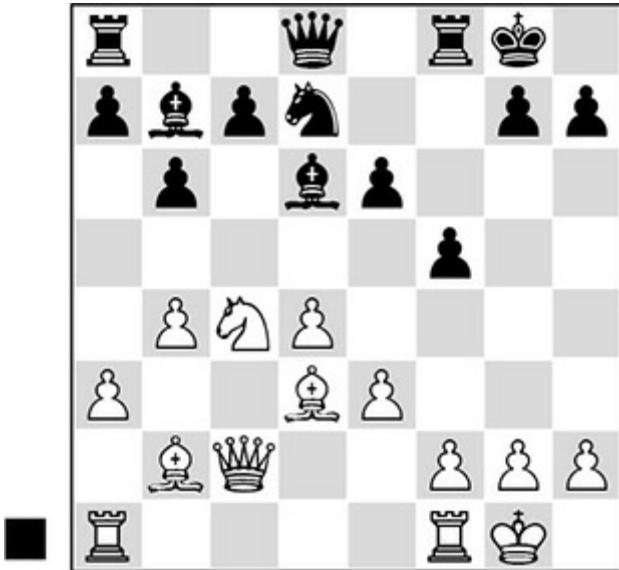
Glenn Flear

2430

Sun Xinyue

2080

England 4NCL 2016/17 (5)



Yes!

14...Qxh2+ 15.Qxh2 Qh4+ 16.Qg1

Here Black should have followed the example of Anthony Miles with

16...Qf3!

Instead, he played 16...Qxg2 17.f3 Qf6 18.Qxg2 Qg6 19.Qxg6 hxg6 and lost.

17.Qd2

Mate is unavoidable after 17.Qfc1 Qf6 18.Qxf5 Qh6 19.Qxe6+ Qh8 20.Qh3 Qxh3 21.gxh3 Qxh3.



17...Qxg2 18.Qxg2

18.f4 Qg3 19.Qf2 Qh3+ and 18.f3 Qf6, followed by ...Qg6, are convincing wins for Black.

18...Qg4+ 19.Qh1 Qf6 20.Qxc7 e5

With a forced mate for Black.

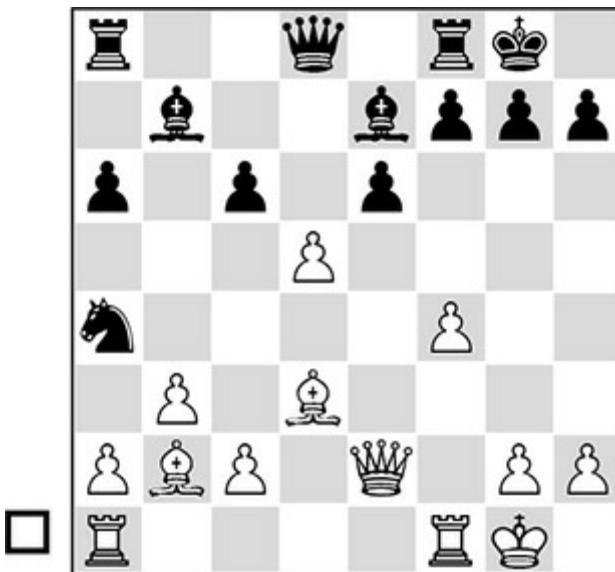
Exercise 7.32

Hannes Stefansson

2495

Mark Klarenbeek

2375



No!

15. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

18. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 19. $bxa4$ $f5$ is also clearly better for Black.

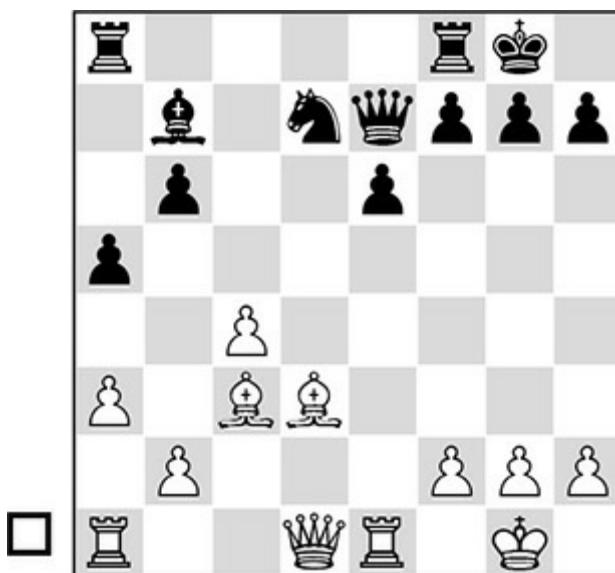
18... $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20. $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22. $bxa4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 23. $c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}ee3$ $c5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 26. $exf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 0-1

Exercise 7.33

Henk Jan Paalman

Marco Kuijvenhoven

Hengelo jr 1996 (5)



No! White has a nice initiative in this position and there is no need for him to go into muddy waters.

18. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

The best attempt, but not good enough for an advantage.

21. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ was the game. Black evacuated the king with 21... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and won.

21... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ f5 23. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Black is fine.

Exercise 7.34

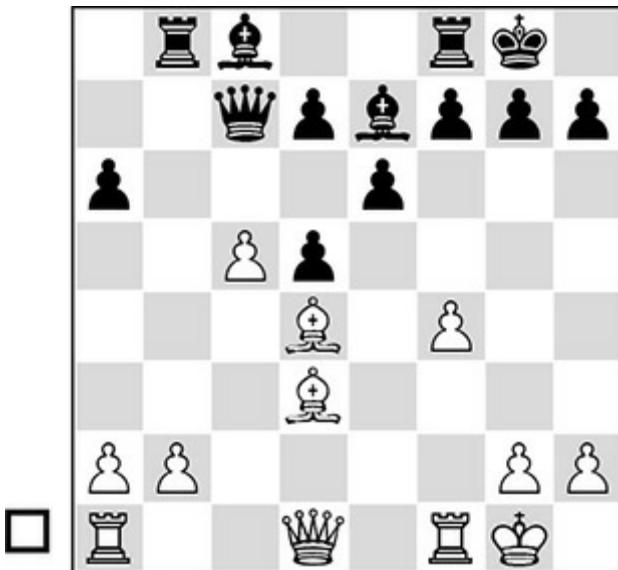
Gabor Szamoskozi

2353

Janos Szabolcsi

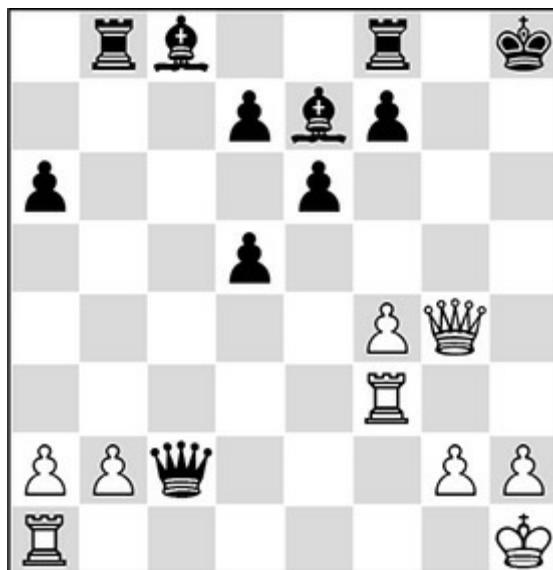
2353

Hungary tt 2013/14 (1)



Yes!

18. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5+$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$



24.f5!

24. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h5+=$.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}exf5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ f6 31. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 34.h4 $\mathbb{Q}be6$ 35.h5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}f8+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}dxc6$ 40.h6 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ d4 43.h7 d3 44.h8 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ 1-0

Exercise 7.35
Training position



No! The black king gets away.

1. ♜xh7+ ♕xh7 2. ♖h5+ ♔g8 3. ♜xg7 ♕xg7 4. ♖e3
4. ♖g4+ ♔h6 5. ♖e3 ♜g5.
- 4... ♖h8 5. ♖g3+ ♜g5 6. ♖xg5+
6. ♖xg5+ ♔f6.
- 6... ♔f8

White has insufficient compensation for the piece.

Exercise 7.36

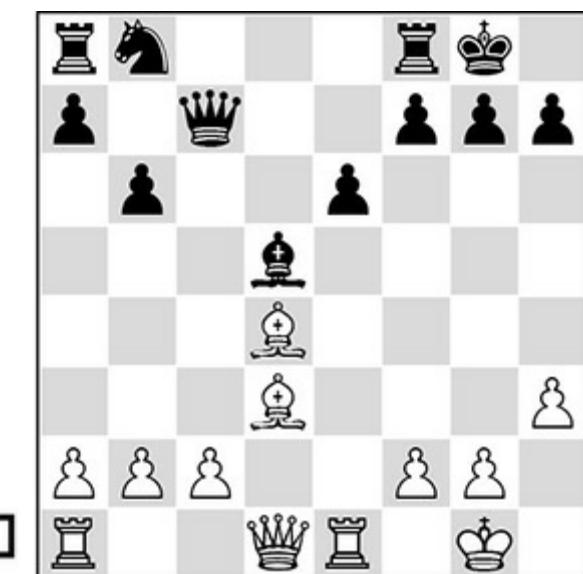
Viktor Sebo

2025

Tomas Peitl

2213

Banska Stiavnica 2012 (6)



No! White has the strong and risk-free

14.c4! ♜b7 15.♗h5

with a killing attack. It turns out it is very hard to resist a sacrifice like Lasker's double bishop sacrifice.

Probably people realize they might never get the chance again.

The game continued 14.♗xh7+ ♕xh7 15.♗h5+ ♕g8 16.♗xg7 ♕xg7 17.♗g5+ ♕h7 18.♗h5+ (18.♘e3 ♗xc2! 19.♗h5+ ♕g7 20.♘g3+ ♗g6 is not very convincing for White) 18...♕g7 19.♗g5+ ♕h7 20.♗h5+ ½-½.

Chapter 8: Fighting for the entrance square

Exercise 8.1

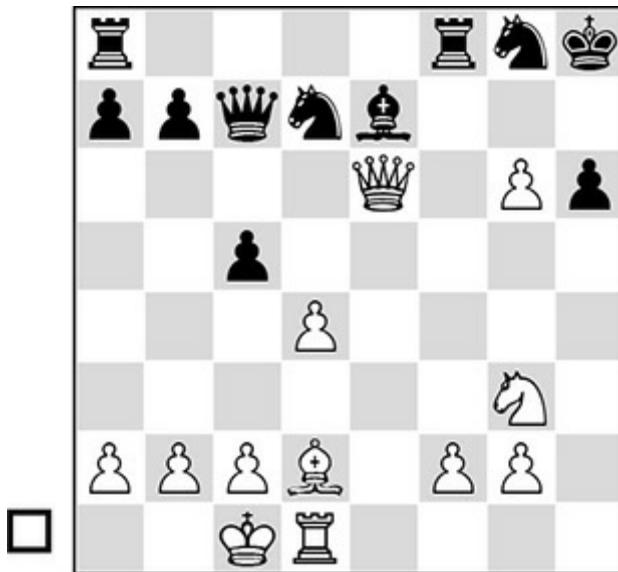
Frank Sawatzki

2318

Stephan Bruchmann

2284

Germany tt 2009/10 (7)



20. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

20... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21. $g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 22. $gxf8\mathbb{Q}+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ leads to a quick mate.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

You might recognize this pattern from the Carlsen-Ernst game. The white queen enters via the 7th rank. Black is again defenceless.

In the game, White decided to approach the king via the h-file: 20. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (this is highly unfortunate. It runs into a forced mate! Black could have prevented the white queen from entering his position with the complex 21... $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}dxsf6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!!$ (the best way to neutralize a battery is to attack the back piece!) 24. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!$, followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$. Black is winning) 22. $g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d3+ 1-0$.

Exercise 8.2

Andrea del Monaco

2315

Matthias Kierzek

2153

Arco 2011 (7)



25. ♜eh1! ♜ac8 26. ♜xh6! gxh6 27. ♜xh6 ♜xh6 28. ♜xh6

would have given White a winning attack.

Instead, the game continued 26. ♜xh6 ♜xc2+! 27. ♛a1 gxh6 28. ♜xh6+ ♛g7 29. ♜g6+ ♜xg6 30. ♜xg6 ♛xg6 with a draw as the final result.

Exercise 8.3

Jilin Zhang

2294

Xu Yuanyuan

2405

Suzhou 2006 (1)



27. ♜h5+! ♜g4

And now:

28.f4!

would have cleared the path for the white queen and led to victory. For instance:

28... ♜b6 29. ♜xg4+ ♛h8 30. ♜h2 ♜c7 31. ♜g7+! ♜xg7 32. hxg7+ ♜g8 33. ♜f6+ ♛xg7 34. ♜e8+

28. ♜e5 was the game, and put Black into the driver's seat: 28... ♛h7 29. ♜g5 ♜xa2! 30. ♜f1 ♜e2 31. ♜g7+

\blacksquare xg7 32.hxg7 \clubsuit g6 33. \clubsuit b8 \blacksquare d1 (Black returns the favour; 33... \clubsuit h6 was clearly better) 34.g8 \clubsuit +! \clubsuit h6 35. \clubsuit xg6+ \clubsuit xg6 36. \clubsuit f4+ 1-0.

Exercise 8.4

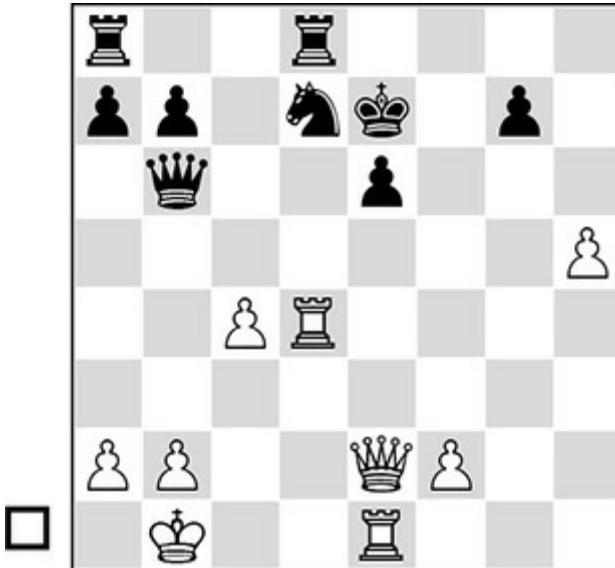
Hou Yifan

2629

Valentina Gunina

2509

Beijing blitz W 2013 (15)



26. \clubsuit g4!

White uses the unprotected kingside to manoeuvre his queen into the enemy camp.

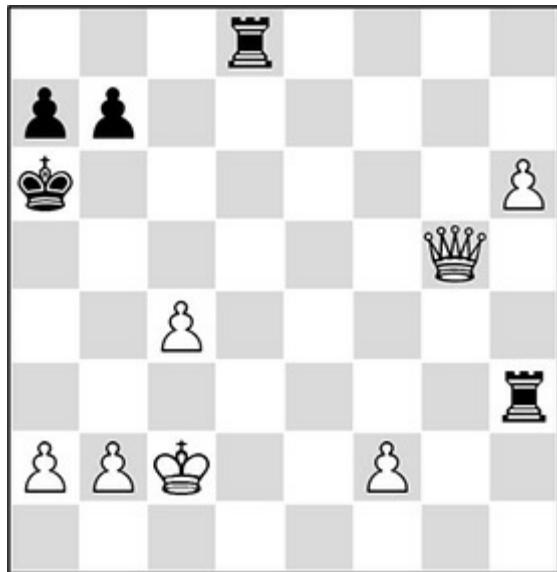
26... \blacksquare g8

26... \clubsuit f7 27. \clubsuit g6+ \clubsuit f8 28. \blacksquare f4+ \clubsuit f6 29.h6!.

27. \blacksquare de4

27.c5! was even stronger.

27...e5 28. \blacksquare xe5+ \clubsuit xe5 29. \blacksquare xe5+ \clubsuit d8 30. \blacksquare d5+ \clubsuit c7 31. \clubsuit f4+ \clubsuit c8 32. \clubsuit f7 \blacksquare d8 33. \clubsuit f5+ \clubsuit b8 34. \clubsuit e5+ \clubsuit c8 35. \blacksquare c5+ \clubsuit xc5 36. \clubsuit xc5+ \clubsuit d7 37. \clubsuit d4+ \clubsuit c6 38. \clubsuit xg7 \blacksquare d1+ 39. \clubsuit c2 \blacksquare ad8 40. \clubsuit g6+ \clubsuit c7 41. \clubsuit g3+ \clubsuit b6 42. \clubsuit e3+ \clubsuit a6 43.h6 \blacksquare 1d4 44. \clubsuit c3 \blacksquare h4 45. \clubsuit g5 \blacksquare h3+ 46. \clubsuit c2



46... ♜d6 47. ♜b5# 1-0

Exercise 8.5

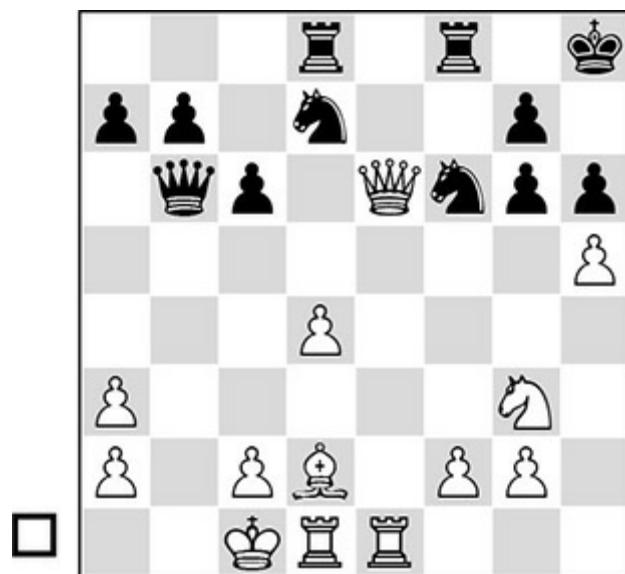
Yu Ruiyuan

2548

Zeng Chongsheng

2521

China tt 2014 (20)



19. ♜b4! ♜fe8 20. ♜e7!

The black rooks are paralysed and the important f7-square is now available for the white queen.

20... ♜a5 21. ♜f7 gxh5 22. d5! ♜xd5 23. ♜b4 ♜xe1 24. ♜xa5 ♜xd1+ 25. ♜xd1 ♜e5 26. ♜xh5 1-0

Exercise 8.6

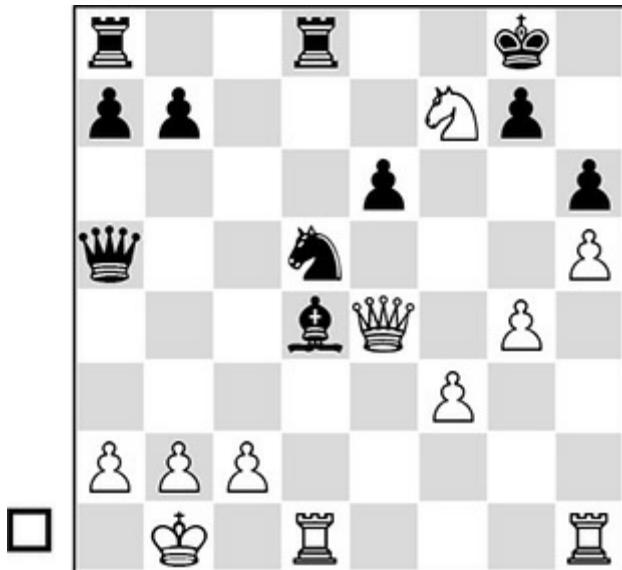
Olaf Wegener

2428

Hans Christoph Andersen

2220

Germany tt 2013/14 (3)



24. ♜xh6+! gxh6 25. ♜xe6+!

g6 is the final destination, but White takes a little detour to add more force to his attack. 25. ♜g6+ ♜g7 was what Black was hoping for.

25... ♜g7 26. ♜g6+! ♜f8 27. ♜xd4 ♜b6 28. ♜f5+ ♜f6 29. ♜f4 ♜d6 30. ♜h7 ♜ad8 31. ♜xh6+ ... 1-0 (59)

Exercise 8.7

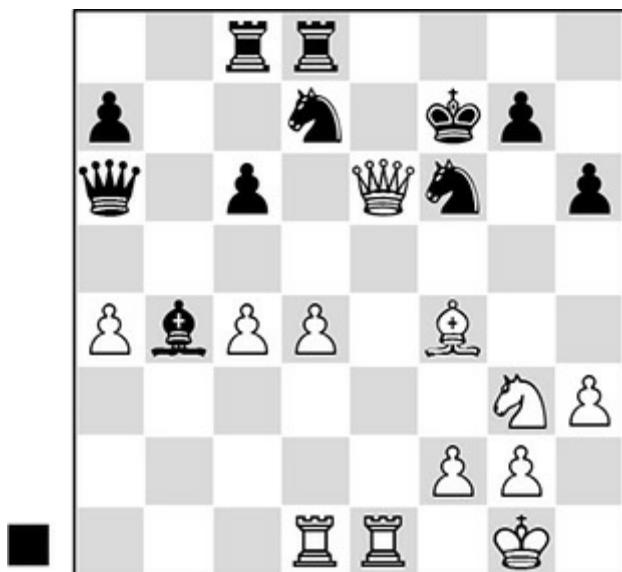
Can Dolgun

1750

Kaan Kucuksari

2200

Manavgat 2016 (1)



25... ♜g6!

would have given White nothing more than a perpetual after

26. ♜f5+ ♜f7 27. ♜e6+

The large Elo difference probably convinced Black to take his chances with 25... ♜f8,



but he got severely punished for it: 26.c5 ♜xc5 27.♕d6+ ♜xd6 28.♕xd6+ ♛g8 29.dxc5 ♜xe1 30.♖xe1 ♜f8 31.♘f5 ♜xa4 32.♘e7+ ♛h7 33.♘d3+ ♛h8 34.♘g6+ ♛g8 35.♘xf8 ♛xf8 36.♘d8+ ♛f7 37.♘e7+ ♛g6 38.♘d3+ ♛h5 39.♘f5+ 1-0

Exercise 8.8

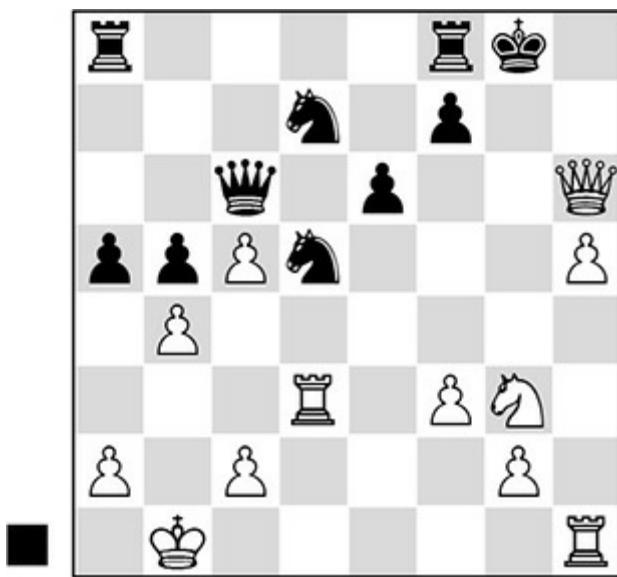
Tomas Ligart

2211

Jan Smolen

2453

Slovakia tt 2014/15 (2)



Black needs to keep the white knight at a safe distance and 22...f5! was the right move, with nothing more than a perpetual for White.

The game did not last very long:

22...♞c7 23.♘f5 ♞e5 24.f4 1-0

Exercise 8.9

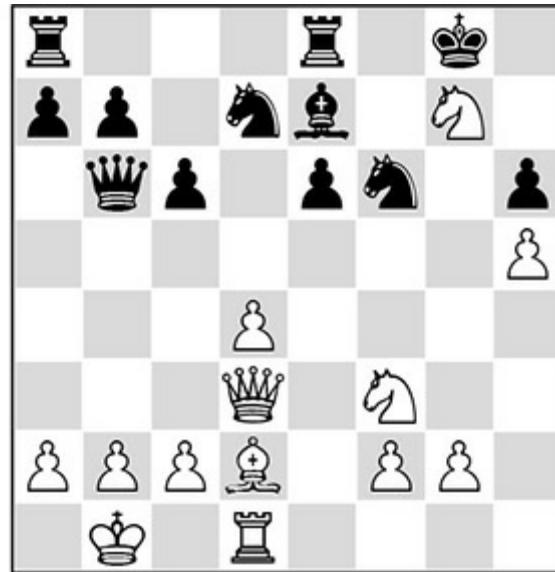
Upadhyaya Anwesh

2408

Niranjan Navalgund

2161

Mumbai 2011 (6)



White is ready to launch his queen to g6 with deadly force. The key to Black's defence is clearing the 7th rank. He should therefore have started with

17...Qa3!

And now:

- A) Black is doing fine after 18.Qxa3 Qxg7;
- B) White cannot really afford to go all in with 18.b3, since he has to deal with a stubborn 7th-rank defence: 18...Qxg7 19.Qxh6+ Qh8! 20.Qg5 Qe7! – Black has all the vital squares under control and is winning.

The game showed how much difference a rook on the 7th rank makes for the defender: 17...Qxg7 18.Qxh6+! Qh8 19.Qg5 (the thematic 19.Qg7+ Qxg7 20.Qg6+ Qf8 21.Qg5 was equally strong) 19...Qf8 20.Qf7+ 1-0

Exercise 8.10

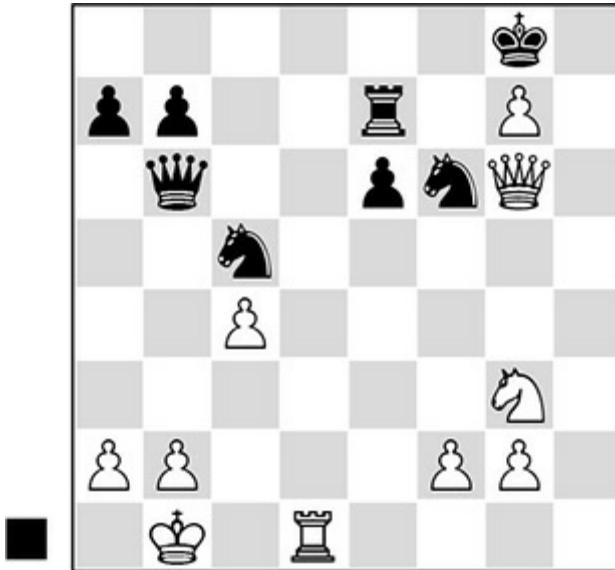
Valentin Dragnev

2385

Robert Ruck

2562

Zalakaros 2015 (9)



25... ♜ cd7!

The f6-knight must be retained in order to keep the white knight at a safe distance.

26. ♜ h5 ♜ xf2 27. g4 ♜ f3 28. ♜ e1 ♜ xh5 29. gxh5 ♜ f6 30. ♜ g2 ♜ c5 31. ♜ d1 ♜ xg7 32. ♜ h2 ♜ h7 33. a4 ♜ xa4 34. ♜ a2 ♜ c5 35. h6 ♜ f7 36. ♜ b8 ♜ f4 37. ♜ xf4 ♜ xf4

And Black won convincingly.

Exercise 8.11

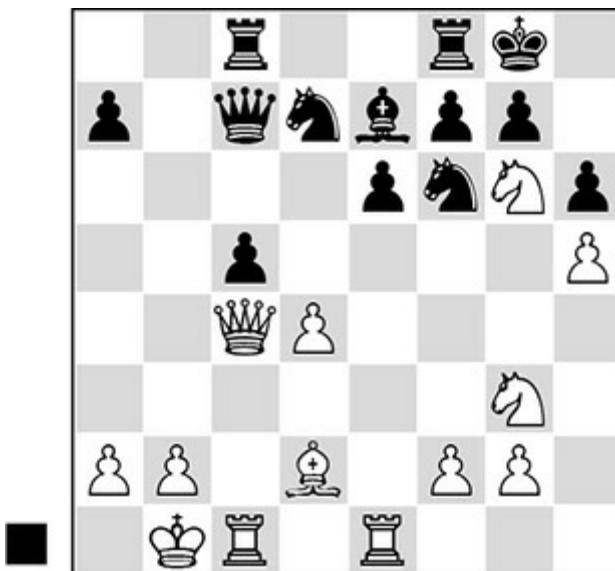
Fabrizio Magrini

2239

Vladimir Sveshnikov

2404

Bratto 2016 (5)



21... ♜ b6!

This zwischenzug is very important. The aim is to expel the white queen from her most promising square.

Black is OK after

22. ♛ e2 ♜ fe8

The alternatives are worse:

- A) White wins back the piece with interest after 21...fxg6 22. \mathbb{Q} xe6!;
 B) The game continuation was not very pleasant for Black either: 21... \mathbb{Q} fe8 22. \mathbb{Q} xe6 \mathbb{Q} b6 (22...fxe6
 23. \mathbb{Q} xe6+ \mathbb{Q} h7 24. \mathbb{Q} xe7 wins for White) 23. \mathbb{Q} xe7+ \mathbb{Q} xe7 24. \mathbb{Q} xe7 \mathbb{Q} xe7 25. \mathbb{Q} e2 \mathbb{Q} xe2 26. \mathbb{Q} xe2 cxd4
 27. \mathbb{Q} xc8+ \mathbb{Q} xc8 28. \mathbb{Q} xd4 \mathbb{Q} xh5 29. \mathbb{Q} c6 1-0

Exercise 8.12

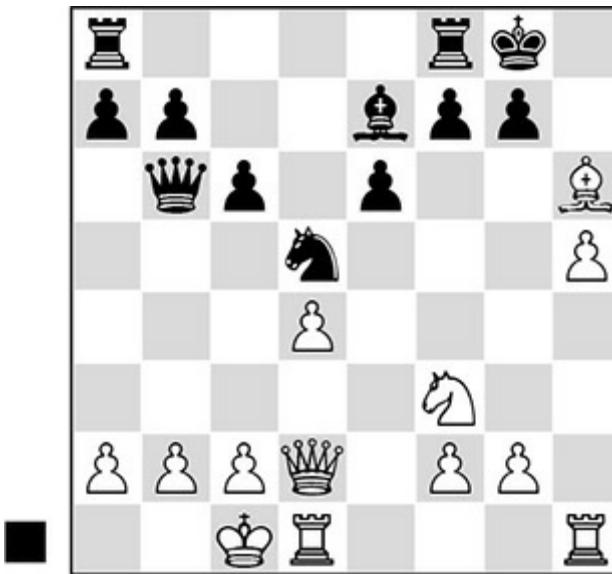
Quang Hung Pham

1902

Hoang Minh Nguyen

1487

Ho Chi Minh City ch-VIE U9 2014 (5)



18... \mathbb{Q} a6!

The game saw 18...gxh6 19. \mathbb{Q} xh6 c5, which would have promised White a deadly attack if he had continued with the thematic rook lift 20. \mathbb{Q} h3!.

19. \mathbb{Q} b1 gxh6 20. \mathbb{Q} xh6 \mathbb{Q} e2!

The rook lift is prevented and the black queen is on its way to h7. White has nothing better than

21. \mathbb{Q} de1 \mathbb{Q} xf2 22. \mathbb{Q} xe6 fxe6 23. \mathbb{Q} g6+ \mathbb{Q} h8 24. \mathbb{Q} h6+

with a perpetual.

Exercise 8.13

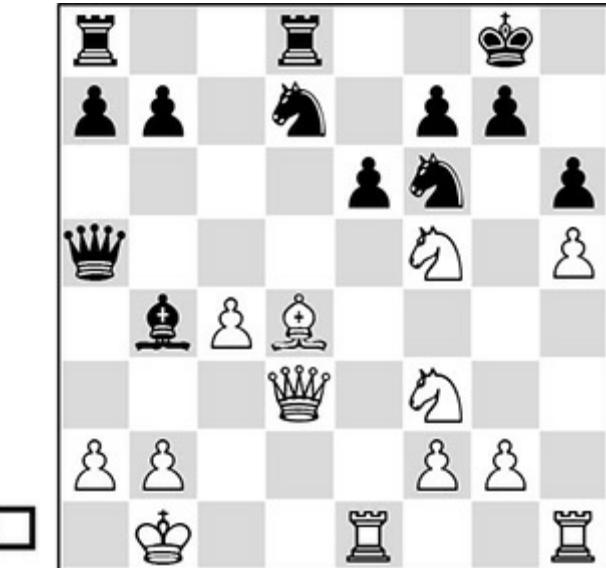
Bartosz Swiatek

2034

Dawid Bajerlein

2059

Poland tt 2012/13 (5)



The rule is to finish with the most forcing sacrifice.

19. ♜xe6!

This is therefore the best candidate to start with. The game will most likely end in a draw:

19...fxe6 20. ♜xh6+ gxh6 21. ♜g6+ ♛f8



22.c5!

An important move, keeping the black queen out. 22. ♜xf6 is met by ♜f5+!.

22...e5 23. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 24. ♜xe5 ♜a6 25. ♜xh6+

25. ♜xf6 ♜d3+!.

25...♛e7 26. ♜g7+ ♛e8 27. ♜g6+ ♛e7

With a perpetual.

In the game, White turned the moves around and got punished for it:

19. ♜xh6+ gxh6 20. ♜xe6 ♜c5 21. ♜f5 ♜xe6 22. ♜xf6 ♜xd4 23. ♜e5 ♜d6 24. ♜xf7+ ♛h8 25.f4 ♜a6 26.a3 ♜f8 27. ♜d7 ♜d2 28. ♜c1 ♜b6 29. ♜g6+ ♛g8 30. ♜d5+ ♛h7 31. ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 32. ♜e4+ ♛g8 33.b4 ♜xf4 34. ♜e7 ♜f5+ 35. ♜a2 ♜f6 36. ♜e4 ♜e6 37. ♜d5 ♜d8 38. ♜xb7 ♜e2+ 39. ♜b1 ♜f5+ 0-1

Exercise 8.14

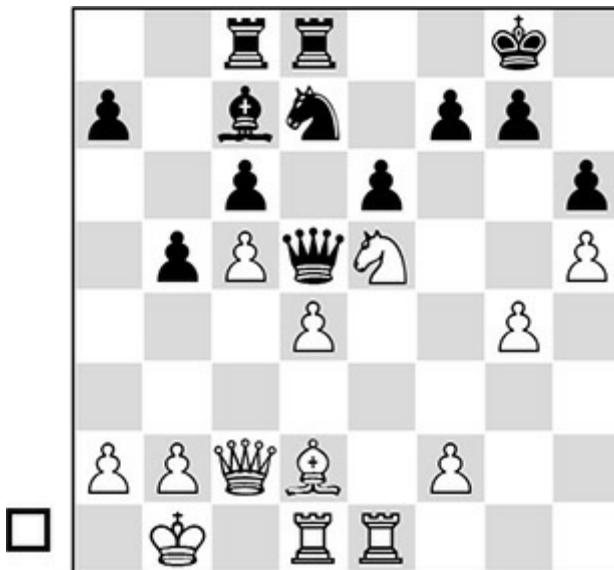
Luis Busquets

2189

Joshi Supriya

1953

Barcelona 2015 (2)

**23. ♜xf7!**

23. ♜xh6 gxh6 24. ♜xf7 ♛xf7 25. ♜g6+ ♛e7!. This is the difference. White has nothing better than a perpetual.

23... ♛xf7

23... ♜f8 24. ♜xh6+ ♛h8 was the game. White should have played 25. ♜e4! ♜xe4+ 26. ♜xe4 gxh6 27. ♜xe6 with a very promising position.

24. ♜g6+ ♛f8 25. ♜xh6 gxh6 26. ♜xh6+ ♛g8

26... ♛e7 27. ♜g7+ ♛e8 28.h6 is a completely different story than after 23. ♜xh6.

27. ♜xe6

White has a very powerful attack. For instance:

27... ♜e5 28. ♜g6+ ♛f8 29. h6 ♜f3 30. ♜e1 ♜xc5 31. ♜6xe5 ♜d3+ 32. ♜xd3 ♜xd3 33. ♜f5+ ♛g8 34. ♜e7
With a promising ending for White.

Exercise 8.15

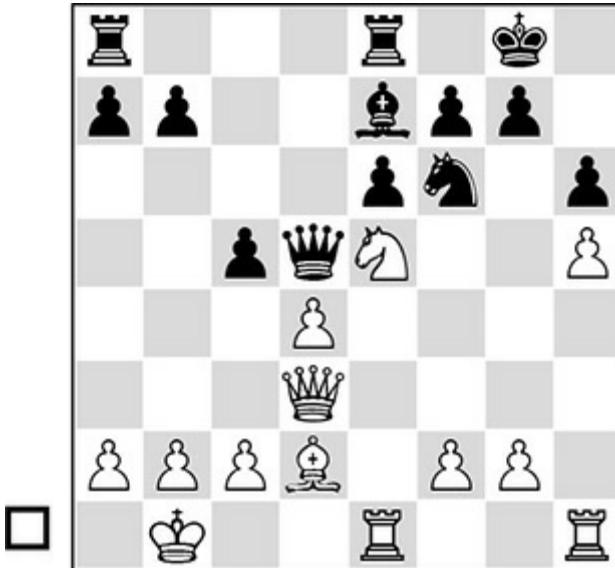
Thomas Manhardt

2217

Richard Singer

2260

Austria tt 2016/17 (2)



19. ♜xh6!

The standard 19. ♜xf7 ♛xf7 20. ♜g6+ ♛g8 21. ♜xh6 ♜f8 22. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 23. h6 does not work very well since the defender can rely on the 7th-rank defence again. Black should be able to hold after 23... ♜d7.

19... gxh6 20. ♜xf7 ♛xf7 21. ♜g6+ ♛f8 22. ♜e5

This move spoils the win. 22. ♜xh6+ ♛f7 23. ♜g6+ ♛f8 24. h6 would have rewarded White for a fine game.
22... ♜xd4 23. ♜xh6+ ♛f7 24. ♜g6+ ½-½

Exercise 8.16

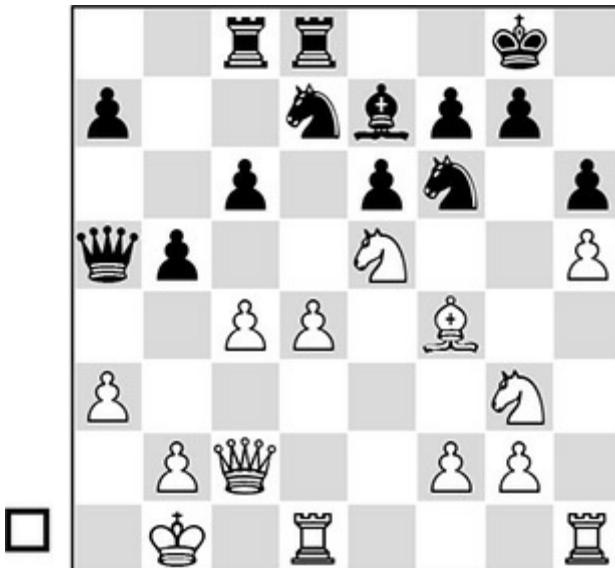
Jose Cambando

2049

Georgi Angelov

2180

Benidorm 2012 (3)



18. ♜xf7!

White has to keep the bishop, as the game shows: 18. ♜xh6 gxh6 19. ♜xf7 ♛xf7 20. ♜g6+ ♛f8 21. ♜xh6+ ♛g8! 22. ♜g6+ ♛h8 23. ♜h6+ ♛h7 24. ♜xe6 ♜f8 wins for Black.

18... ♜xf7 19. ♜g6+ ♛f8 20. ♜xh6

20. $\mathbb{N}he1!$ would now have been the narrow path to victory. Black is unable to organize his defence. 21. $\mathbb{N}xe6$ is threatened and the desperate 20... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ is met by 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $gxh6$ 22. $\mathbb{N}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ (22... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 23. $\mathbb{N}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24. $h6$ wins) 23. $\mathbb{N}f5!$. As soon as the knight enters the stage, the game is over.

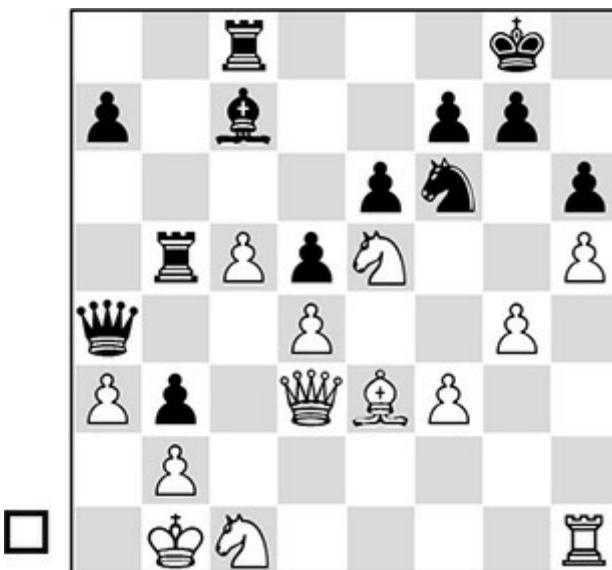
20... $gxh6$ 21. $\mathbb{N}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{N}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

Black cannot afford to invite the white knight to the party. 22... $bxc4!$ would have been a completely different story: 23. $\mathbb{N}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24. $\mathbb{N}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{N}f5$. Here comes the knight again, but this time Black is ready for it. His defence is well organized and 25... $\mathbb{N}b8$ would allow him to start a deadly attack himself.

23. $\mathbb{N}f5!$ $exf5$ 24. $\mathbb{N}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 25. $\mathbb{N}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26. $\mathbb{N}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 27. $\mathbb{N}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}fe6$ 28. $h6$ 1-0

Exercise 8.17

Training position



1. $\mathbb{N}xf7!$

If 1. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ 2. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ puts an end to White's attacking ambitions.

1... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 2. $\mathbb{N}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 5. $\mathbb{N}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 6. $h6$ 1-0

Exercise 8.18

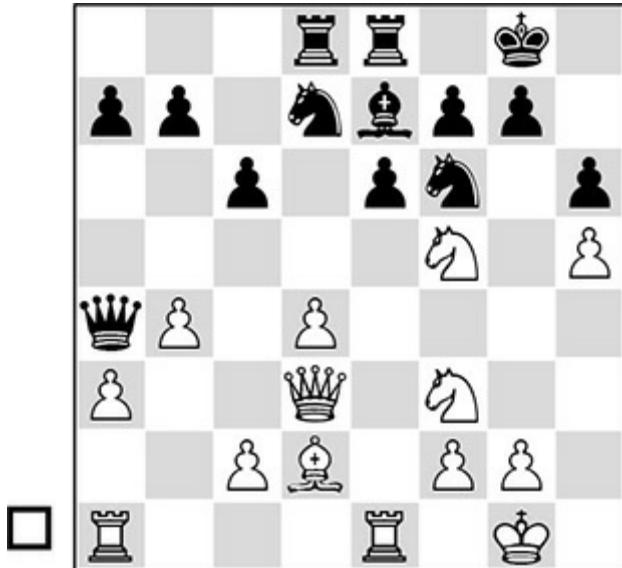
Alexandra Kosteniuk

2495

Daria Charochkina

2343

Nizhnij Novgorod ch-RUS W 2013 (7)



18. ♜xe6!

The position is very similar to the Decoster-Tiggelman game we discussed in section 8.2.

18...fxe6 19. ♜xg7



19... ♜f8

19... ♛xg7 20. ♜xh6+! ♛h8 21. ♜g7+! ♛g8 22. ♜g6.

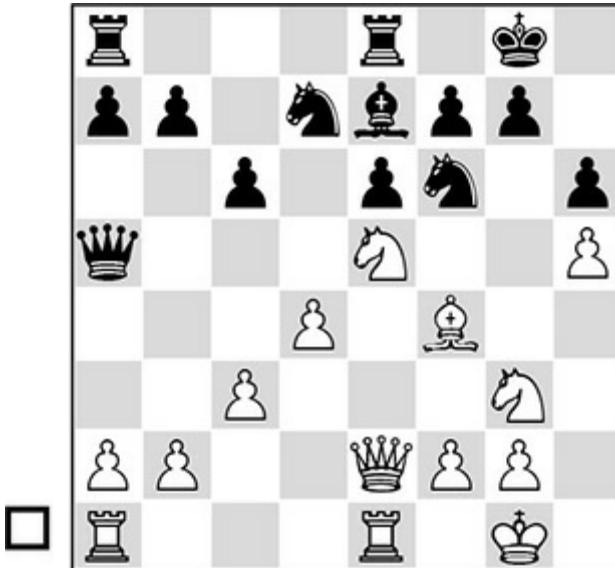
20. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 21. ♜e5 ♛g7 22. ♜e1 ♜h7 23. ♜e3 ♜f6 24. ♜g3+ ♜g5 25. f4 ♜d8 26. ♜f3 ♜fh7 27. fxg5 hxg5 28. ♜xg5 ♜xd4+ 29. ♛h1 1-0

Exercise 8.19

Jiri Soukup

Alexej Simecek

Czechia tt 1996/97



No!

17. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$

Black has a clear advantage and won the game.

Exercise 8.20

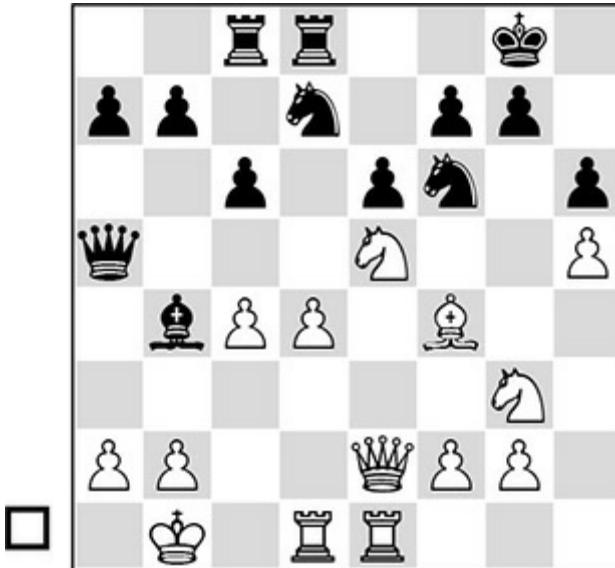
Lothar Arnold

2367

Herman Grooten

2405

Gelsenkirchen 1999



Yes!

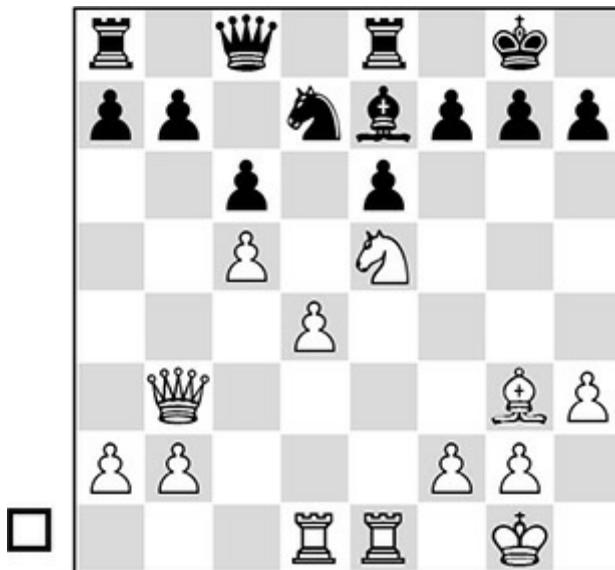
18. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20. $a3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 21. $bxa3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}df6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 1-0

Exercise 8.21

Raimundas Jasiunas

1823

Vilnius ch-LTU 2017 (3)



Yes!

25. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 26. $\mathbb{R}xe6!$

A critical move!

26... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{R}de1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 28. $\mathbb{R}xe7$ $\mathbb{R}xe7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ Here White played 30. $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ and won a nice game. Even more convincing was the rook lift 30. $\mathbb{R}e4!$, with the idea 30... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 32. $\mathbb{R}f4+$.

Exercise 8.22

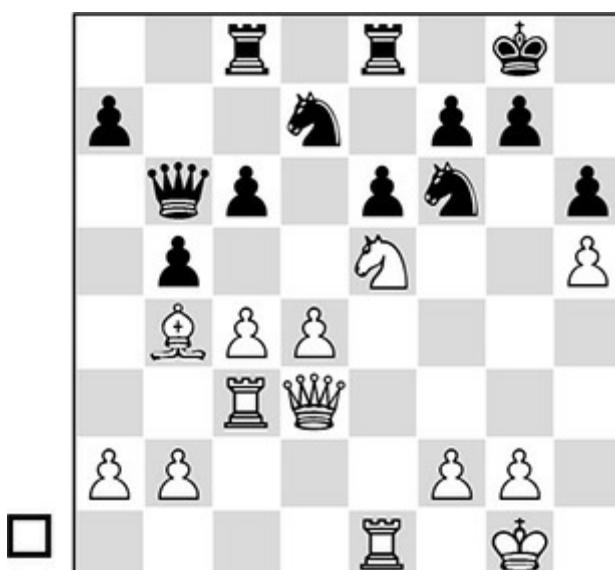
John Shaw

2445

Hamad Al Tamimi

2210

Gibraltar 2005 (10)



Yes!

23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $bxc4$

If 23... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$, 24. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ wins.

24. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 1-0

Exercise 8.23 – Sacrifice: yes or no? 1

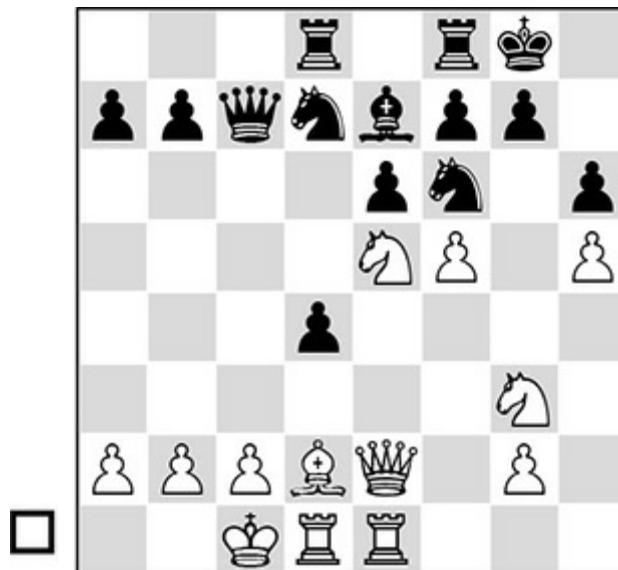
Engelbert Schoeppl

2231

Zoltan Medvegy

2478

Schwarzach 2002 (3)



No!

18. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 20. $fxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $d3$ 23. $cxd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $gxh6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3+$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 0-1

Exercise 8.24

Kameswaran Visweswaran

2299

Aditya Prasetyo

2133

Boston 2001 (5)



Yes! If you move the white dark-squared bishop to d2, we get an exact copy of the Solberg-Arndt game that we discussed in the introduction.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 17. $\mathbb{B}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

17... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ wins as well.

18. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$



19. $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 20. $h6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}df6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 23. $h7+$ 1-0

Exercise 8.25

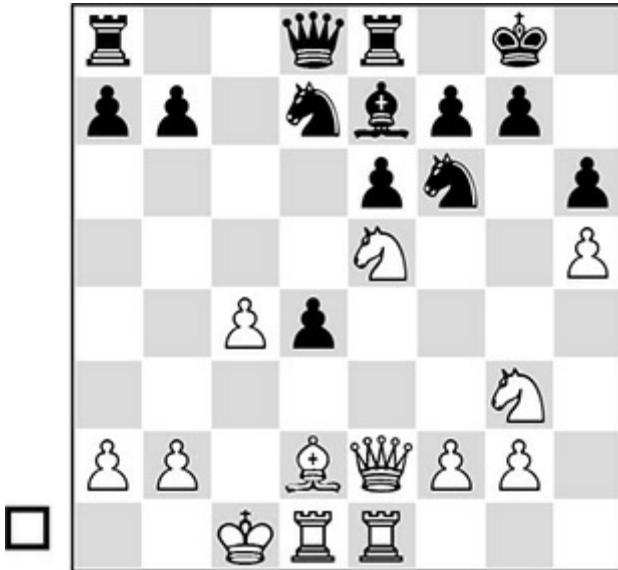
Franz Mietner

1794

Ralf Scheipl

2166

Essen 2003 (3)

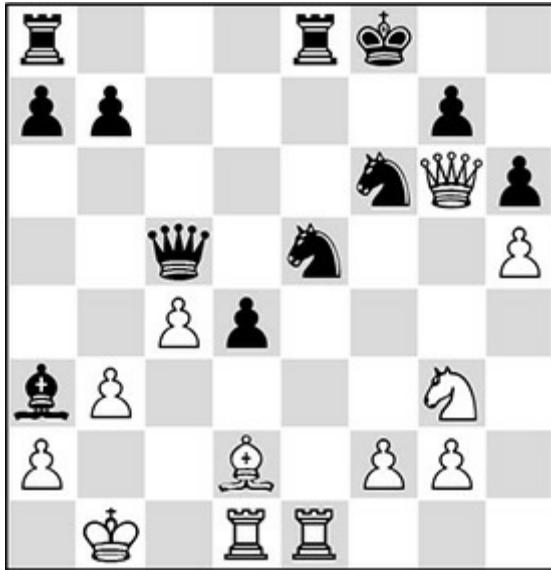


No!

17. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}f5$

White lacks a concrete plan. The standard continuation would be 19. $\mathbb{B}f5$ with various threats, but it is Black's move. For instance, 19... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$!. In the game White keeps his pieces on the board and continues his attack. Black, however, has enough defenders and is about to take over.

19... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 20. $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a3+$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ 22. $\mathbb{B}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$



Black has everything under control now thanks to his nicely centralized pieces. However, White still has some attacking chances and even manages to win this game!

23. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25. $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28. $h6$ $gxh6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$

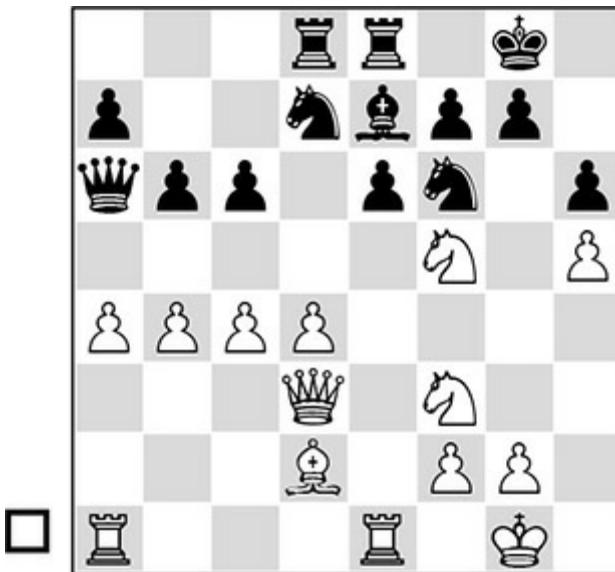
30... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ would have been the final blow, followed by 31. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$. In the game, White gets rewarded for his fighting spirit!

31. $f5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh1+$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $b5$ 36. $cxb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $d3$ 39. $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 40. $g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}xa7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}a4+$ 1-0

Exercise 8.26

Konstantin Landa

Russia tt 2005 (3)



Yes!

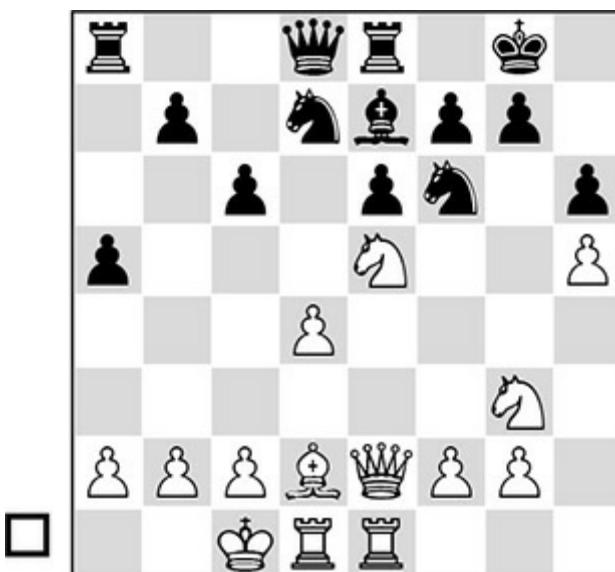
20. $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ was not bad either: 20...fxe6 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ with a deadly attack.20... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ 1-0Followed by 25. $\mathbb{Q}g5$.

Exercise 8.27

Jan Clementsson**Per Larsson**

2335

Jönköping 1987 (3)



No!

16. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xb4+$ axb4 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 23. a3

\mathbb{Q} xf5 24. \mathbb{Q} xb7 \mathbb{Q} b8 25. \mathbb{Q} xc6 \mathbb{Q} f4+ 0-1

Exercise 8.28

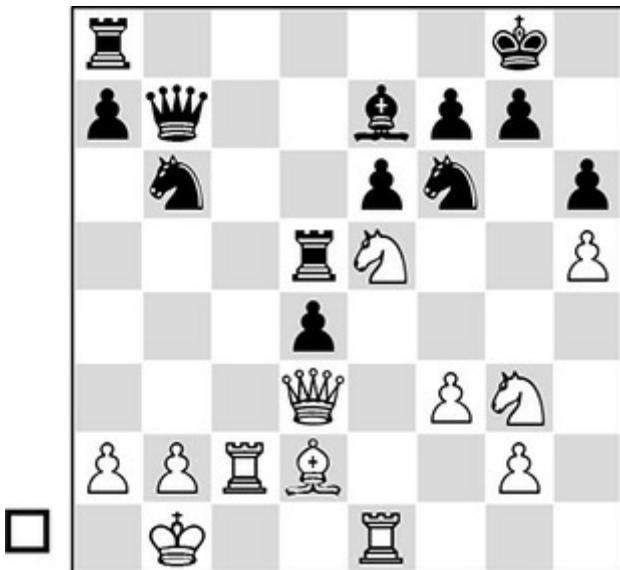
Carlos Daniel Urchipia

2173

Jorge Gomez Baillo

2429

Buenos Aires Ach 2003 (1)



No! Black has the 7th rank for his defence.

25. \mathbb{Q} xf7 \mathbb{Q} xf7 26. \mathbb{Q} g6+ \mathbb{Q} g8 27. \mathbb{Q} xh6 \mathbb{Q} f8 28. \mathbb{Q} xe6 \mathbb{Q} f7 0-1

Exercise 8.29

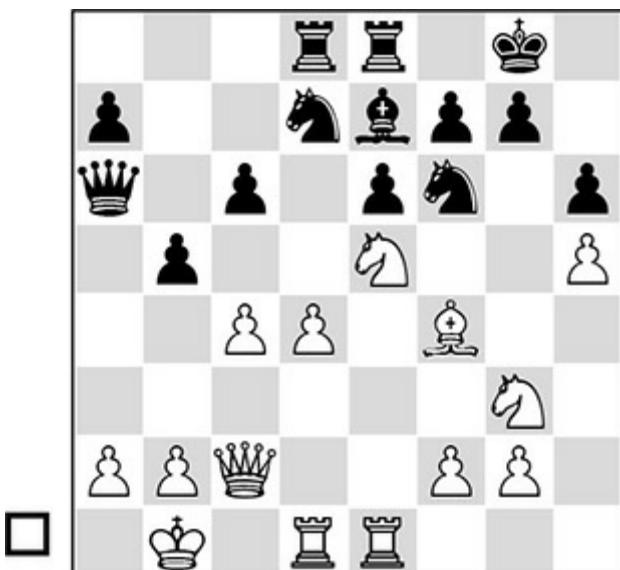
Vladimir Drozdov

2010

Zoltan Gunyecz

1883

Prague 2016 (6)



Yes!

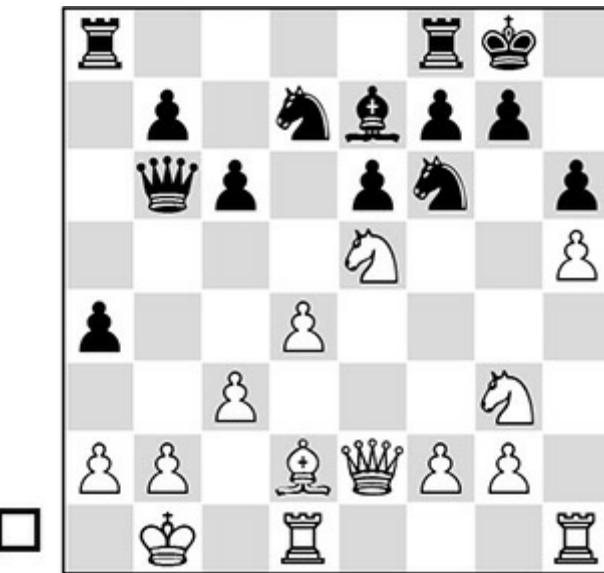
19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

20... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 23. $h6$ wins as well.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 24. $h6$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 1-0

Exercise 8.30

Training position



No!

1. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}a3!$

An important zwischenzug.

2. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $f\mathbb{x}g6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 4. $h\mathbb{x}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$

The accurate 4... $\mathbb{Q}ae8!$ was the only way to a large advantage for Black.

5. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$

5. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$! $g\mathbb{x}h6$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ would have kept White in the game.

5... $a3$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8!$ 0-1

Exercise 8.31

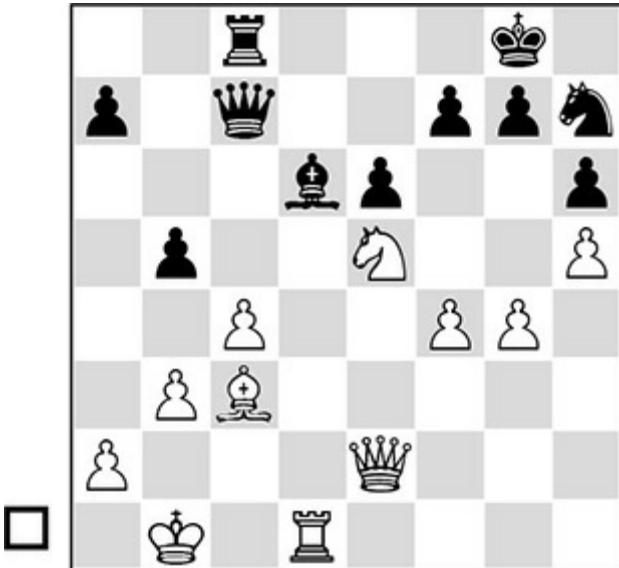
Zoltan Almasi

2631

Igor Khenkin

2627

Germany Bundesliga 2003/04 (8)



Yes!

29. ♜xf7! ♚xf7 30. ♜d3 ♜f8 31. ♜xd6 bxc4 32. b4 ♜xd6 33. ♜xd6 ♜c7 34. ♜a6 ♜b7
White won the ending convincingly.

Exercise 8.32

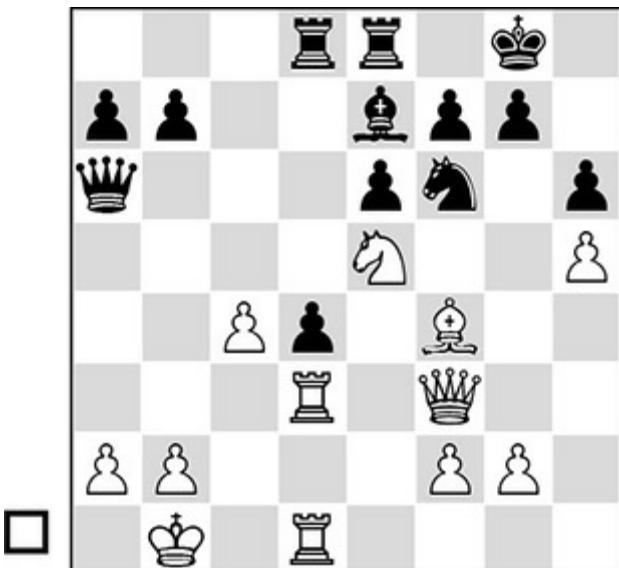
Saidali Iuldachev

2513

Mikheil Mchedlishvili

2566

Abu Dhabi 2003 (7)



Yes!

22. ♜xh6! ♜gxh6 23. ♜g3+!

In the game, White spoiled most of the fun with 23. ♜f4. This is not forcing enough. Black can escape with 23... ♜d6! 24. ♜xh6 ♜xe5 25. ♜g3+ ♜xg3 26. fxg3 and even has the better chances then.

23... ♜h7

23... ♜f8 24. ♜f4 wins for White.

24. ♜xf7 ♜g8 25. ♜f4 ♜g5 26. ♜xg5+ hxg5 27. ♜xg5 ♜g8 28. ♜e5

White has a very promising initiative.

Exercise 8.33

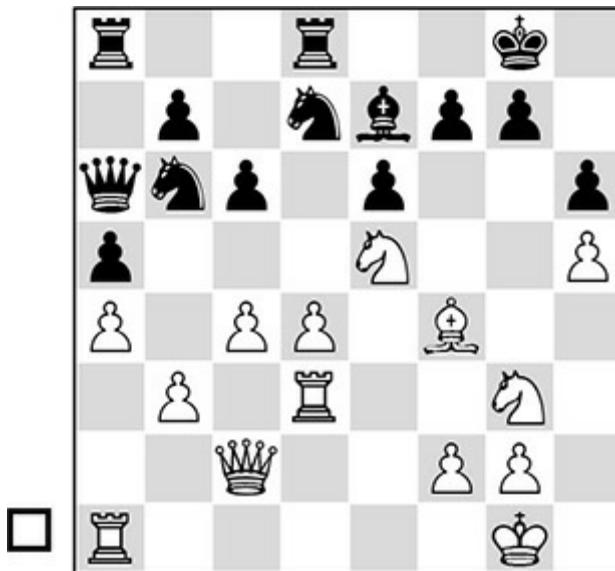
Valerian Gaprindashvili

2446

Anatolij Bets

2413

Alushta 2000 (4)



Yes!

21. ♜xf7!

21. ♜xh6 ♜xe5 22. dx5 ♜xd3 23. ♜xd3 ♜d8 is not so convincing.

21... ♜xf7 22. ♜f3!

22. ♜xh6 is also strong.

22... ♜g8 23. ♜xh6 ♜f8 24. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 25. ♜f5+ exf5 26. ♜xf5 ♜e6 27. ♜e1 ♜ac8 28. ♜xe6 1-0

Exercise 8.34

Günter Kuba

2396

Robert Hafner

2132

Austria Bundesliga B 2007/08 (4)



Yes!

16.Qxf7! Qxf7 17.Qxe6+ Qf8 18.Qf5 Qa3 19.Qd6+

A crucial move.

19...Qxd6 20.Qxd6+ Qg8 21.Qe7 Qa5 22.Qxg7+ Qh8 23.Qf4 Qxf5 24.Qxf5 Qxg7 25.Qg6+ Qf8 26.Qxh6+ Qe7 27.Qe1+ Qf7 28.Qg6+ Qf8 29.Qxe8+ Qxe8 30.g4 Qe7 31.g5 Qd5 32.h6 1-0

Exercise 8.35

Liga Ungure

2043

Dana Matisone

1719

Riga ch-LAT W 2013 (2)



No!

17.Qxf7 Qxf7 18.Qxe6+ Qf8 19.Qf5 Qc6 20.d5 Qxe6 21.Qxe6 Qf7 22.Qde1 Qf8



This gave White too little for the sacrificed material: ...0-1 (65)

Exercise 8.36

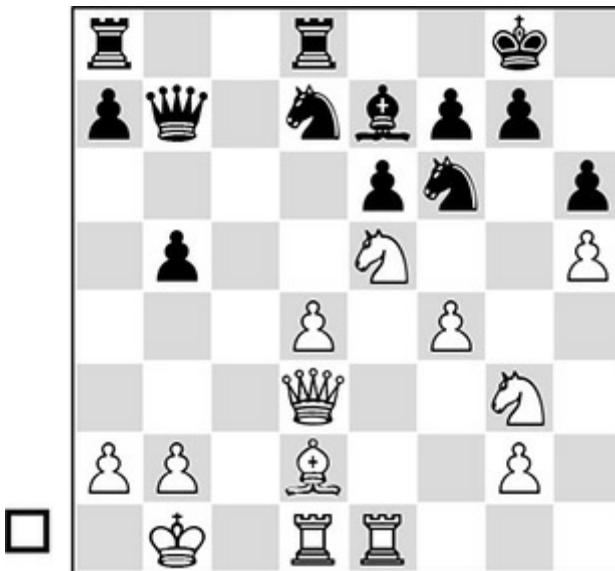
Ioannis Georgiadis

2449

Jonathan Rosenthal

2338

Switzerland tt 2013 (4)



Yes!

21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{B}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

22... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{R}xe6$.

23. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 24. $\mathbb{R}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 26. $\mathbb{B}f7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 27. $\mathbb{R}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 1-0

Chapter 9: Winning with the IQP

Exercise 9.1

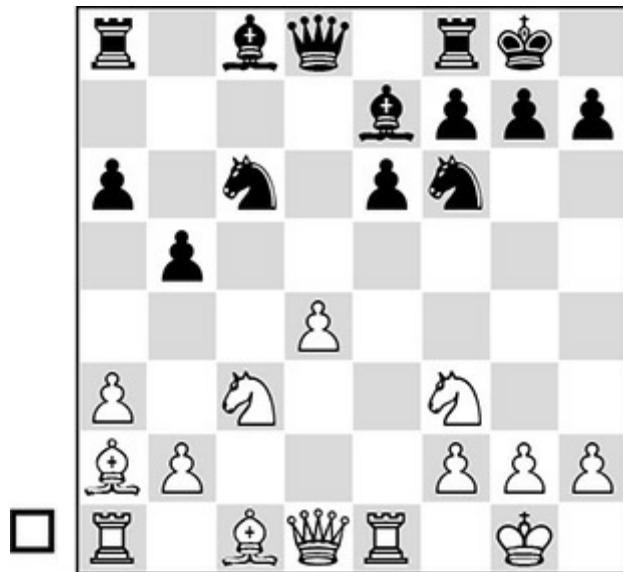
Andrei Zhigalko

2571

Ekaterina Kovalevskaya

2423

Moscow 2017 (6)



No!

13.d5! exd5 14.Qxd5 Qxd5 15.Qxd5 Qb7 16.Qh5 Qd6 17.Qg5!



White has a very good reason for exchanging his bishop: the g5-square has to be cleared for the knight.

17... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

White is a healthy pawn up and went on to win.

Exercise 9.2

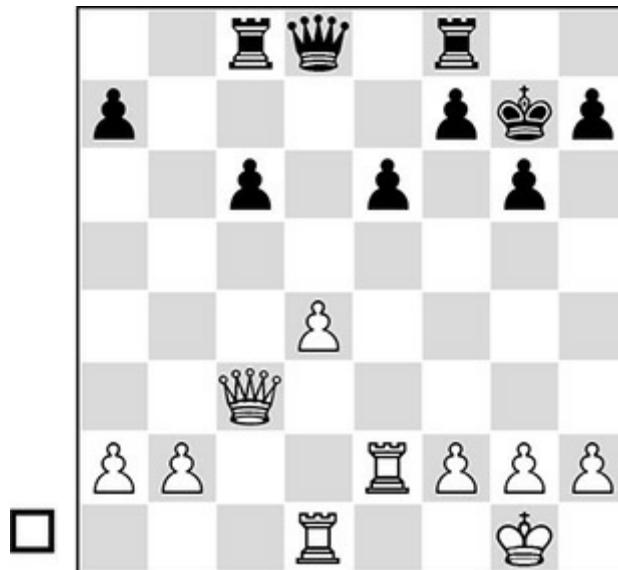
Leon Piasetski

2303

Matthias Kierzek

2127

Seville 2011 (5)



Yes!

22. $d5+$! $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 23. $d6!$



White has suddenly managed to convert his d-pawn into a passed one! Remember Chapter 1.5? This is a very promising position since there are no minor pieces left to block the pawn. Now a black rook has to block the pawn and White's strategy is very straightforward: use the d-pawn as a distraction and go straight for the black king!

23... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 26. $h4!$ $\mathbb{Q}fb8$ 27. $b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 28. $h5$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 29. $h6$ $f5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

32. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 1-0

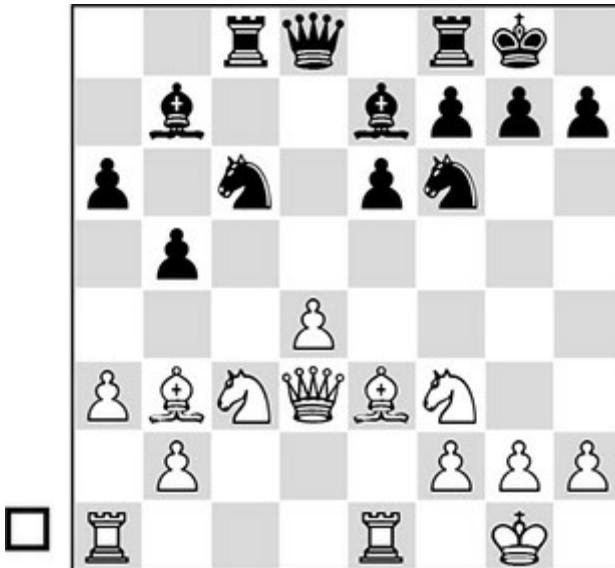
Exercise 9.3

Alexander Koukolik

2115

Robert Fiala

Pribram 1998



No!

14. $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a5!$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

This would have left White without compensation for the pawn.

Exercise 9.4

Arkadij Naiditsch

2724

Predrag Nikolic

2620

Germany Bundesliga 2013/14 (9)



Yes!

16.d5 exd5 17.♘e1!

This is the point. White brings five extra points into play with tempo and develops a very promising attack.

17...♝e6 18.♗h4

There was nothing wrong with 18.♗xf7 ♜xf7 19.♗g5.

18...h6 19.♕xh6! ♜b4 20.♗g5 ♜g4 21.♗h7+ ♜f8 22.♗hxe6 ♜xg5 23.♗xg5 fxe6 24.♗xe6+ ♜f7 25.♗xd8+ ♜xd8

26.♗d3 ♜f6

And White managed to convert his extra pawn into a full point.

Exercise 9.5

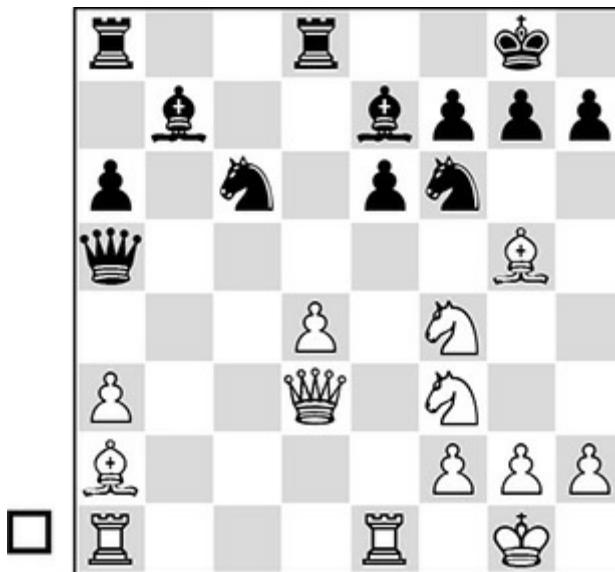
Roman Ganzhurov

2267

Nikolay Vorontsov

2306

Kostroma 2013 (7)



Yes!

17.d5! exd5

17...♝xd5 18.♝xd5 drops a piece.

18.♖ab1!

The whole idea behind 17.d5! is to eliminate the f6-knight and install a knight on d5. White now prepares this move by removing both his rook and his queen – very instructive. 18.♖xe7 ♜xe7 19.♝xf6 gxf6 was the game, but is less clear.

18...♝c8 19.♗c2! ♜d7 20.♝xf6 ♜xf6 21.♝xd5

White has accomplished all he dreamed about.

Exercise 9.6

Pontus Carlsson

2531

Alexej Gorbatov

2363

Golden Sands 2012 (2)



No!

12.d5 exd5 13.♘xd5 ♘xd5 14.♗xd5

Now Black should have played

14... ♔g6!

Black is better equipped for the pawnless centre due to his more active pieces. The threats are both 15... ♔e6 and 15... ♔h3.

Exercise 9.7

Carsten Hoi

2368

Tobias Rostgaard

2366

Copenhagen 2017 (8)



Yes!

15.♖xe6 fxe6

15...g5 was much stronger, but 16.♖xc6 bxc6 17.♗fe2 is also clearly better for White.

16.♔xe6+ ♔h8 17.♔h3 g5 18.♘g6+ ♔g7 19.♕xg5 h5 20.♘e5 ♔h7 21.♗xh5 1-0

Exercise 9.8

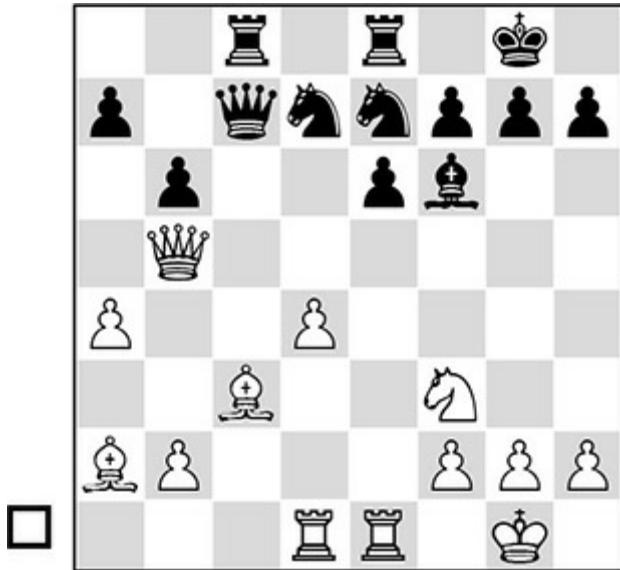
Marcelo Lanzilotta Mernies

2029

Alvaro Ruggiero

1906

Montevideo 2017 (5)



No!

22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ a6!

White probably missed this tricky move.

23. $\mathbb{N}h5$ $f \times e 6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. d5 $\mathbb{N}d6$!



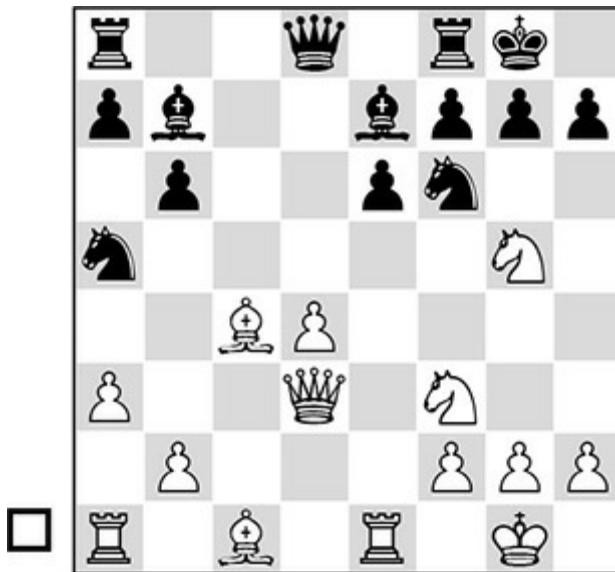
White is a full rook down and faces a well-organized defence.

26. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 27. $\mathbb{N}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 28. $\mathbb{N}g4$ $\mathbb{R}cd8$ 29. $\mathbb{R}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}de5$ 30. $\mathbb{N}d4$ $\mathbb{N}c5$ 31. f4 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 0-1

Exercise 9.9

Alexander Karpachev

2463



Yes!

16. ♜xe6! g6

16...fxe6 17. ♜xe6+ ♛h8 18. ♜e5! – a crucial follow-up.



analysis diagram

Black is unable to defend against both 19. ♜f7+ and 19. ♜xh7+.

17. ♜a2! ♜d5 18. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 19. ♜e1 ♜c8 20. ♜e4

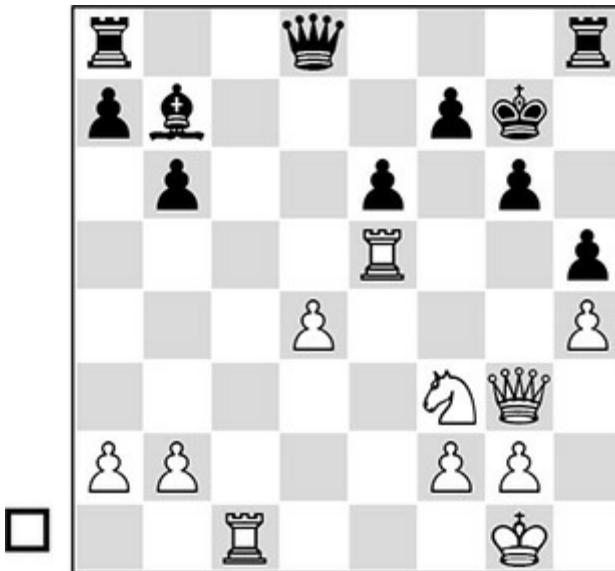
White is a healthy pawn up.

Exercise 9.10

Yuri Razgoverov

Vladimir Bykovskikh

Barnaul 2015 (5)



Yes!

22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{Q}xf3$ 22...fxe6 23. $\mathbb{R}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f7\#.$ 23. $\mathbb{R}c7!$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ 1-0

Exercise 9.11

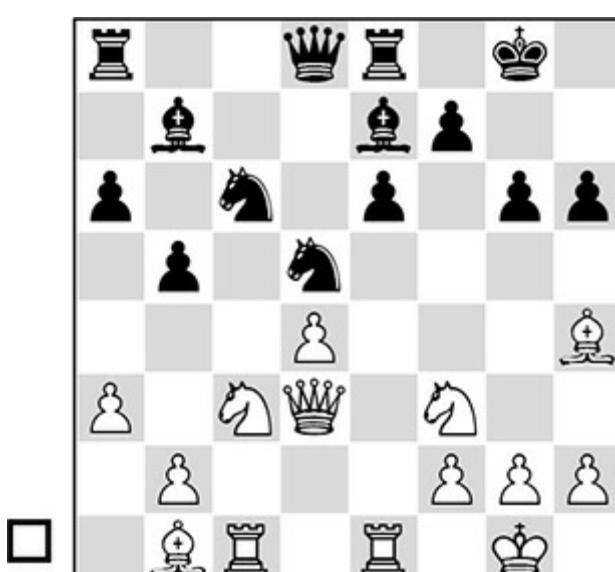
Joan Pujol Gaja

1973

Miquel Estape Jorba

1876

Llinars del Vallès 2014 (7)



No!

18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{Q}f4!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e3 \mathbb{Q}xe6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg6 \mathbb{Q}xh4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh6 \mathbb{Q}xf2+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $f\times g6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

And now

24... ♜e6 25. ♜g4 ♜xd4

would have been one of many winning continuations for Black.

24... ♜e7 spoils the win: 25. ♜f6+ ♜f8 26. ♜h7+ ♜g8 27. ♜f6+ ♜f8 ½-½

Exercise 9.12

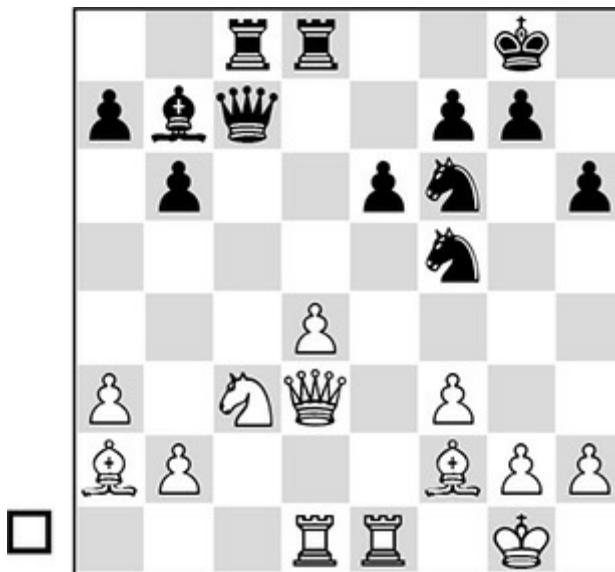
Eugene Tripolsky

2203

Jürgen Kaufeld

2227

Germany tt 2014/15 (5)



Yes!

21. ♜xe6 fxe6 22. ♜xe6+ ♛h8 23. ♜xf5 ♜a8 24. ♜g6

With two pawns and a strong bishop pair, White has more than enough compensation for the exchange.

24... ♜c8 25. ♜a2 ♜f4 26. ♜b1 ♜d7 27. ♜d3 ♜e8 28. ♜g3 ♜g5 29. ♜e5 ♜d7 30. h3 ♜ad8 31. f4 ♜h4 32. ♜f5 ♜g8

33. ♜h2 ♜h5 34. ♜xf6 gxsf6 35. ♜xf6 ♜d6 36. ♜e7 ♜f7 37. ♜c2 ♜xd4 38. ♜e4 ♜b5 39. ♜f6+ ♜g7 40. ♜xd4 ♜xd4

White played very well up to this point, but 41. ♜b3 allows his opponent to escape with a draw:

41... ♜xb3 42. ♜e8+ ♜g8 43. ♜f6+ ♜g7 44. ♜e8+ ♜g8 45. ♜f6+ ♜g7.

41. ♜h7 ♜c5 42. ♜f6+ ♜g8 43. ♜xh6

would have been the most straightforward path to victory.

Exercise 9.13

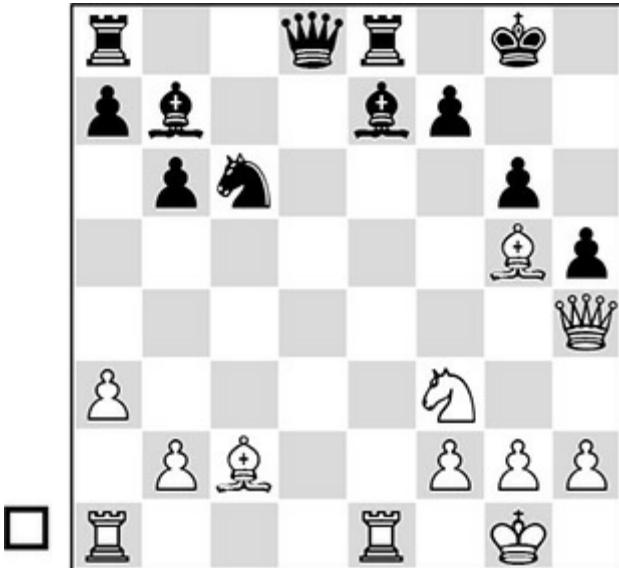
Janez Barle

2420

Aljosa Grosar

2365

Maribor 1989



19.♘b3!

Time to switch to the next diagonal!

19...♝c7 20.♝e4 ♛g7

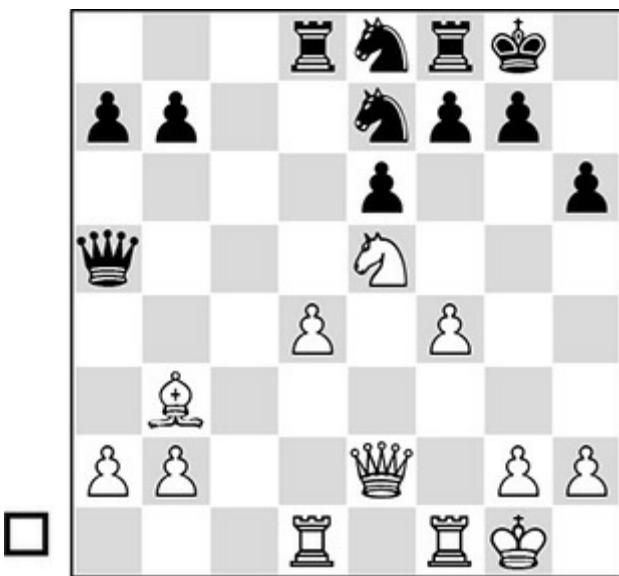
The only way to defend g6, but Black is outnumbered on the kingside. For the elegant finish, see Exercise 9.19.

Exercise 9.14

Gideon Stahlberg

José Raul Capablanca

Moscow 1935 (16)



Black has put a lot of effort into preventing d4-d5, but as a result the white knight on e5 has become very dominant and exerts annoying pressure on f7. Time to exploit this.

20.f5!

If you found this move, you have a good understanding of the position. If you planned to go for 20.♞xf7 you were on the right track, but the position is still unclear after 20...♝xf7 21.♞xe6 ♜d5. The text move is stronger, since it lures away the black knight first.

20...♝xf5 21.♞xf7! ♜xf7 22.♝xe6 ♜ed6 23.g4

This move is premature. 23. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ would have been a nice finish: 23... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25. g4. 23... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 25. dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 27. exd6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

Exercise 9.15

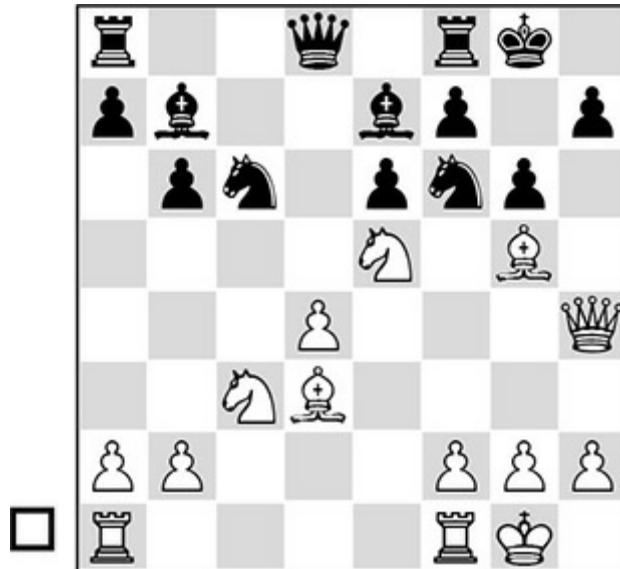
Artur Jussupow

2601

Dmitry Gurevich

2515

Minneapolis 2005 (8)



14. $\mathbb{Q}a6!$

This move can be easily overlooked if you are unfamiliar with the pattern.

14...h6

The best try, but Black's position is already hopeless.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ would have been a much easier win for White.

15. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17. bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 1-0

Exercise 9.16

Boris Taborov

2425

Sergey Perun

2375

Kiev 1998 (4)



□

The white pieces have done their job on the kingside and have to start a new king hunt through the centre. It would therefore have been time to regroup with

32. ♔xh6!

The continuation could be:

32...b4 33. ♔e4!

Eliminating an important defender!

33... ♕c6 34. ♔f4+ ♕e7 35. ♔xd5 ♕xd5 36.axb4 axb4 37. ♔e1!

White has a powerful initiative. Note how he patiently redirected all his pieces to the optimal squares before even considering how he should mate the king. Finding the right coordination for your pieces is one of the most important skills in chess!!

None of this was played in the game. White went for 32. ♔xf7 and was left empty-handed after 32... ♕a7! 33. ♔xh6 ♕xf7.

Exercise 9.17

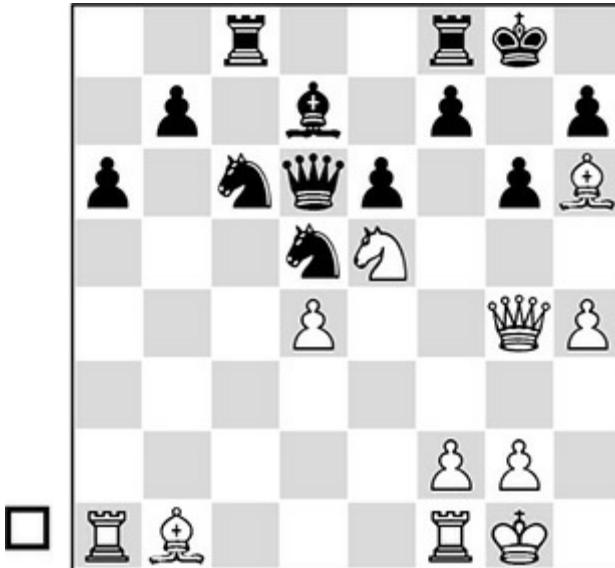
Pascal Blachon

2076

Kai Rudolf Wornath

2382

playchess.com 2004 (1)

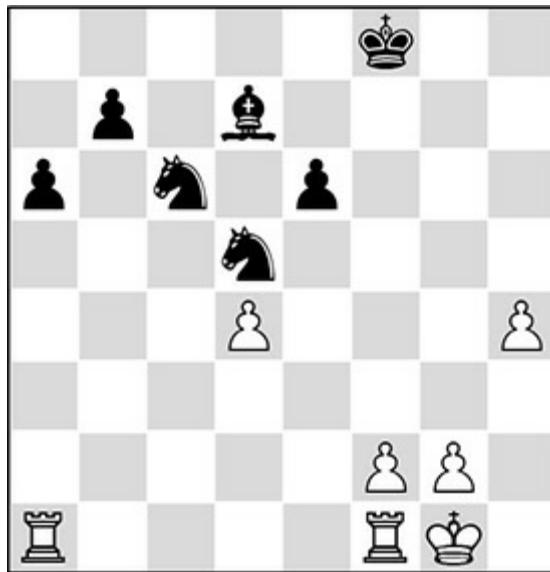


White has brought enough pieces to the attack and is now eager to get access to the king. But how?

21. $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$

was the right sacrifice:

21...fxg6 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$
29. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$



with a very promising ending for White.

Unfortunately, 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ allows Black to take over: 21...fxg6 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ and now 23... $\mathbb{Q}f7$, followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$, would have rewarded Black for his cool defence.

Exercise 9.18

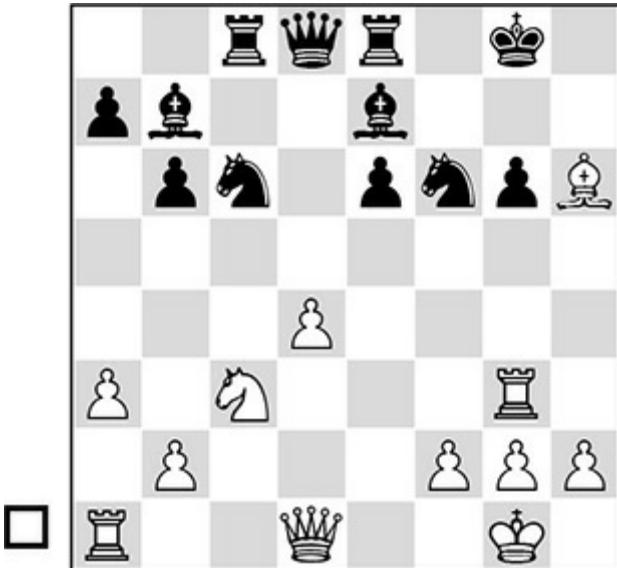
Raymond Keene

2505

Anthony Miles

2435

Hastings 1975/76 (13)



White has just lifted his rook to g3 and sacrificed two (!) pieces on g6. The important question is, how can the queen enter the black position?

Two steps have to be taken here. First, White needs to realize he needs his queen at the front of the attack. Therefore, 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ does not work. The rook is too clumsy at such a close distance to the king: 20... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ and Black is clearly better.

Once we have drawn the conclusion that we need to take on g6 with the queen, there are only three options left: **20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$** , **20. $\mathbb{Q}c2$** and **20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$** . All we need to do now is calculate the three lines accurately and choose the best one. If none of them is convincing then we should not have sacrificed on g6 two moves earlier!

20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$!

The right choice. Let's have a look at the alternatives:

A) 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ 21. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and Black is winning;

B) 20. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ involves a more complicated defence. After 20... $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ 21. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ Black cleverly uses the pin along the c-file and White won't get any advantage.

20... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 21. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$



23. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg7\#$ 1-0

Exercise 9.19

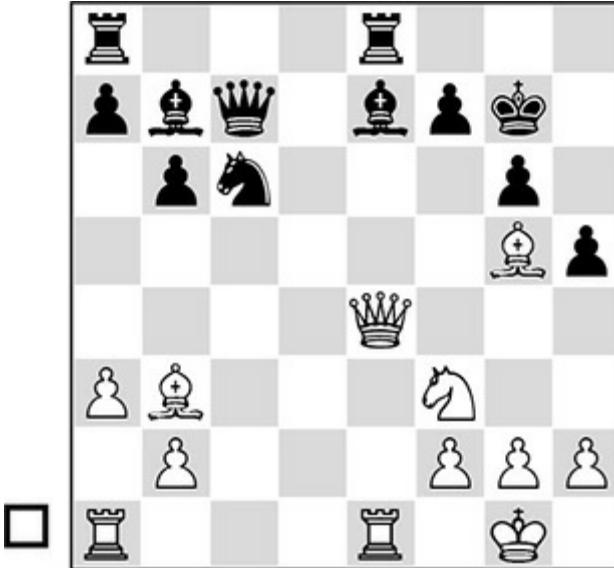
Janez Barle

2420

Aljosa Grosar

2365

Maribor 1989



This is the end of Exercise 9.12.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h6!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ 1-0

Exercise 9.20

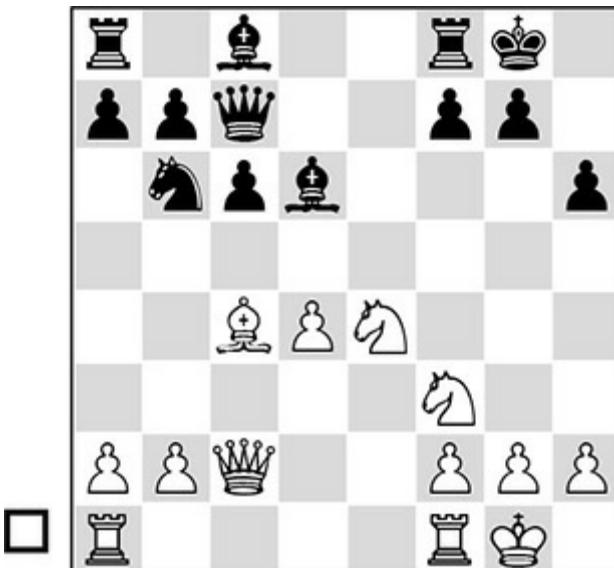
Mikhail Gurevich

2644

Jan Smeets

2515

Hoogeveen 2004 (5)



If you decided to go for

16. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$

you are in good company! In heavy time trouble, Gurevich also went for this move, but he missed an easier win. He should have played 16. $\mathbb{Q}eg5!$ $hxg5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ (Black's main concern is the fact that the f7-pawn is pinned) 17... $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

White has taken a few pawns with tempo and gained some time. Now it is time for a good follow-up.

23. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

After 24. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Black manages to escape with a draw:

24... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $f6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ ½-½

White should have gone for

24. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$

threatening 25. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e4$. Black has three unsuccessful attempts to prevent this:

- A) 24... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $fxg6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is winning;
- B) 24... $f6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ $cxd5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ followed by the deadly $\mathbb{Q}g3+$ wins as well;
- C) 24... $f5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ $cxd5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ gives White a winning attack.

Exercise 9.21

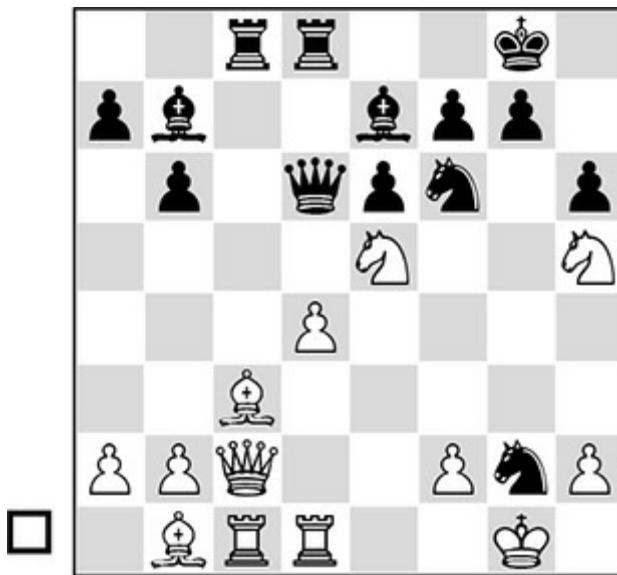
Jiri Marek

1965

Petr Hrabe

2130

Czechia tt 2004/05



21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g6#$

was called for.

In the game, White let the black king get away: 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $a3$ (23. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ would have kept the game balanced) 23... $a5!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $f5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 0-1.

Exercise 9.22

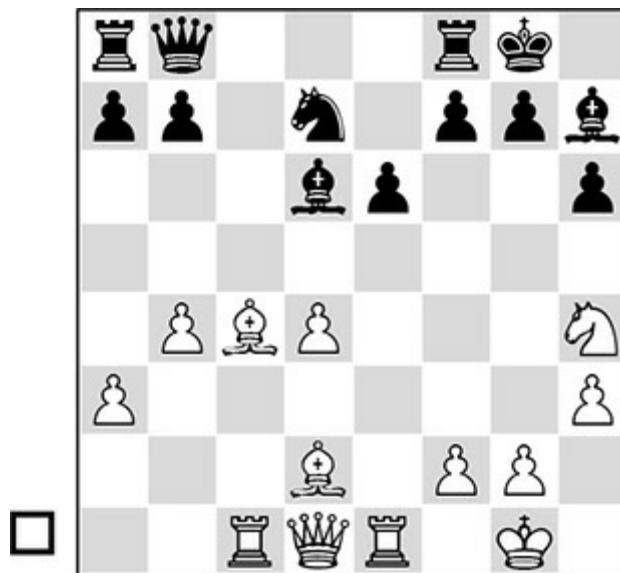
Gylfi Thorhallsson

2084

Flemming Borg

1828

Reykjavik 2015 (3)



18.d5 exd5 19.Qxd5

would have promised White a nice initiative.

18.Qxe6 is too optimistic: 18...fxe6 19.Qxe6+ Qh8 20.Qxd7 Qd8! 21.Qg4. Now Black could have rewarded his convincing defensive work with: 21...h5! 22.Qxh5 Qxd7 23.Qg6+ Qg8 24.Qxf8 Qxf8. The bishop is much more valuable than three pawns.

Exercise 9.23

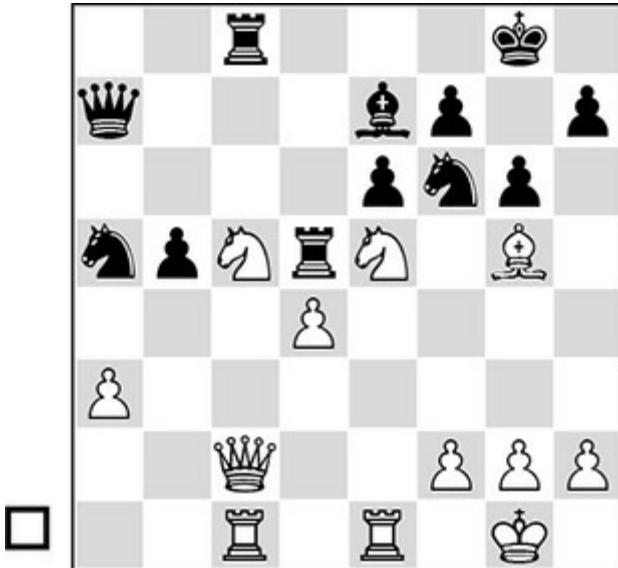
Twan Burg

2490

Michiel Bosman

2327

Netherlands tt 2013/14 (3)



24. $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$

The passive 24... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ would have prevented the coming sacrifice, but White still develops a killing attack with 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26. $h4$ $h5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g3$.

25. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$



Black resigned. He is about to lose the d5-rook after 26. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$.

Exercise 9.24

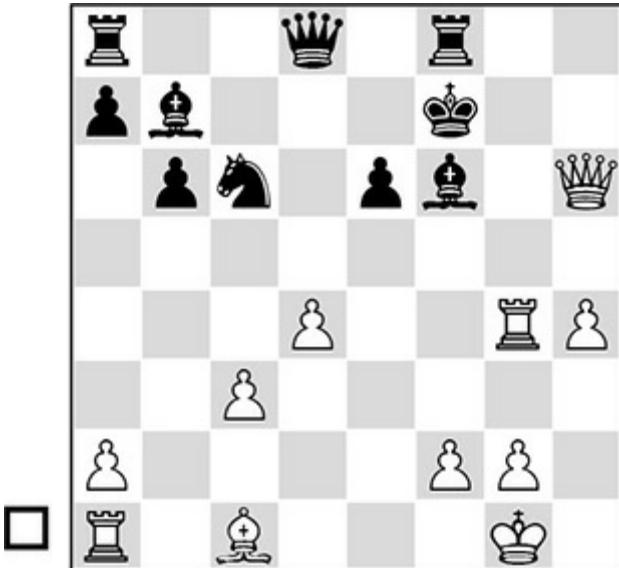
Frank Erwic

2318

Ramon Koster

2279

Nijmegen ch-NED U20 2001 (3)



21. $\mathbb{Q}a3!$

Blocking the escape route along the diagonal! We already encountered this motif in Chapter 6.3.

21...e5 22. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 24. d5+ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ 1-0

Exercise 9.25

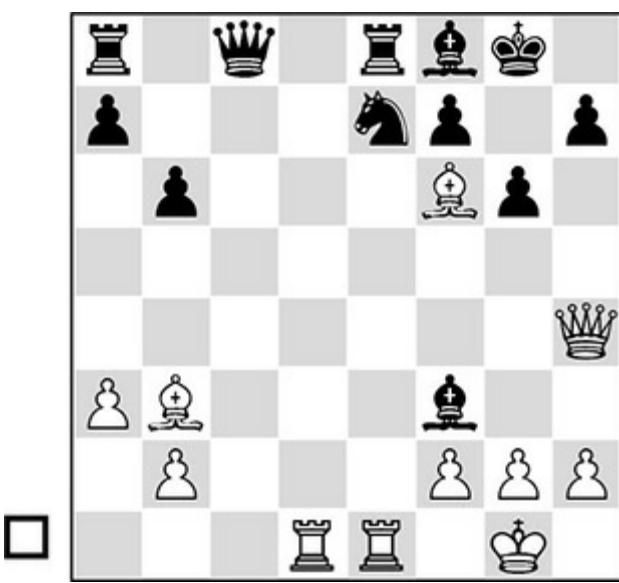
Ricardo Kropff

2298

Pablo Garcia Cardenas

2314

Asuncion zt 2009 (7)



Yes!

22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 25. gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 27. f4+ 1-0

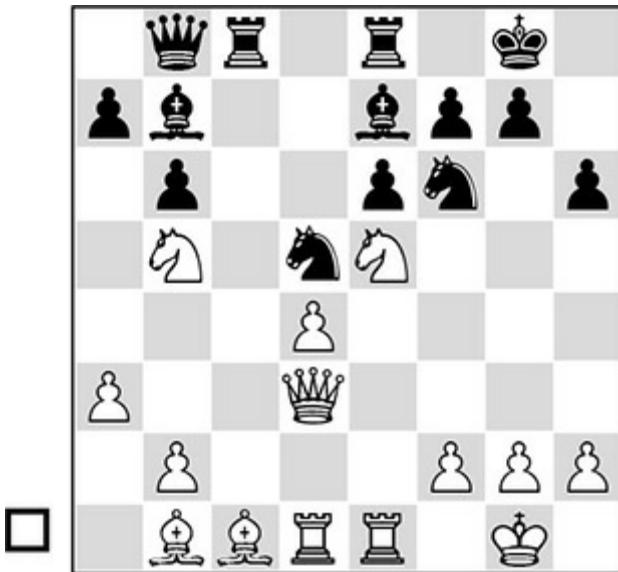
Exercise 9.26

Luc Winants

2480

Alexander Kabatianski

2425



Yes!

21. ♜xh6! gxh6 22. ♜g3+ ♔f8

And now

23. ♜g6!

would have been the right follow-up! The following long, but more or less forced, line promises White a winning advantage:

23... ♜c6?

What else?

24. ♜xf7 ♜xb5 25. ♜g6 ♜d6 26. ♜xe6 ♜c7 27. ♜xh6+ ♔e7 28. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 29. ♜g7+ ♔d8 30. ♜g5+ ♜e7 31. ♜f7+ ♔e8 32. ♜g8+ ♔d7 33. ♜g4+ ♔e8 34. ♜xd6+ ♜xd6 35. ♜xc8+

The game continued: 23. ♜h4 h5 24. ♜g5 ♜d6 25. ♜f5 (a logical move, but not good enough for an advantage; 25. ♜g6 would, again, have been an interesting alternative) 25...exf5 26. ♜d7+ ♜xd7 27. ♜h6+ ♔g8 28. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 (Black panics. The cool 28... ♜f6 29. ♜g5+ (29. ♜xf5 ♜xh2+!) 29... ♜h8 30. ♜h6+ would only have led to a perpetual) 29. ♜xd6 ♜f6 30. ♜g5+ ♔f8 31. ♜g5 ♜xe1+ 32. ♜xe1 f4 33. h3 ♜e8 34. ♜h6+ ♔g8 35. ♜e5 ♜xe5 36. dxе5 1-0.

Exercise 9.27

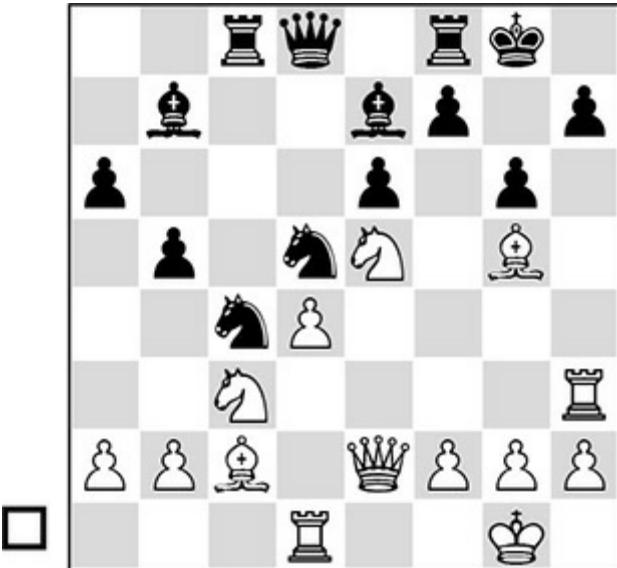
Radoslaw Wojtaszek

2744

Leinier Dominguez Perez

2726

Beijing blitz 2014 (15)



No!

18. ♜xg6 hxg6

18... ♜xg5! 19. ♔h5 h6 was also strong.

19. ♜xg6 ♜xg5! 20. ♔h5 ♔g7!



The black king escapes!!

21. ♔h7+ ♕f6 22. ♜f3+ ♜f4 23. d5 ♕e7 24. ♜e4 ♜e5 25. ♜xf4 ♜xf4 26. ♔h4+ f6 27. ♔h7+ ♜f7 28. ♔g7 ♜e5

White is left without compensation for the piece.

Exercise 9.28

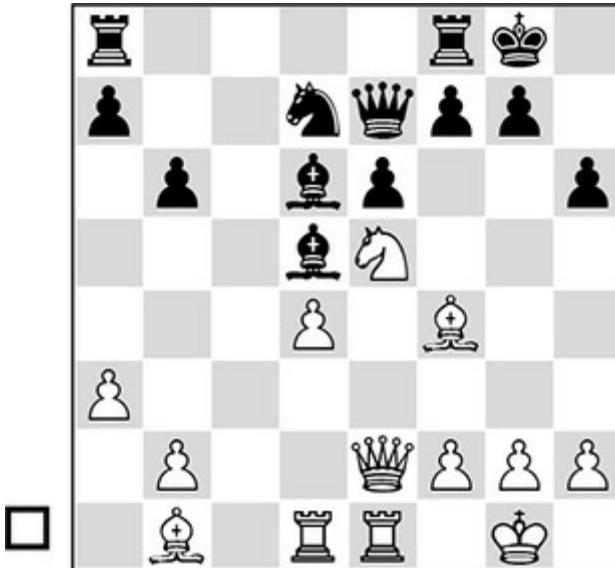
Jan Banas

Huseyin Sertbay

2259

2014

Banska Stiavnica 2016 (8)



No!

22. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 23. $dxe5$ $gxh6$ 24. $\mathbb{R}d3$ $f5!$ 25. $exf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 26. $\mathbb{R}g3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 27. $\mathbb{R}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{R}ee3$ $\mathbb{R}f6$ 29. $\mathbb{R}c3$ $\mathbb{R}d8$

30. $\mathbb{R}c1$ $\mathbb{R}f7$ 31. $h4$ $\mathbb{R}df8$ 32. $\mathbb{R}g6$ $\mathbb{R}g7$ 33. $h5$ $\mathbb{R}xg6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{R}g5$

Black keeps his piece and the attack is over.

Exercise 9.29

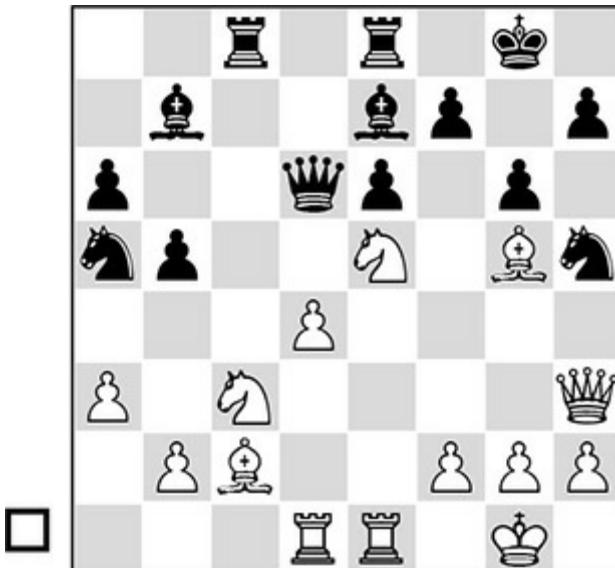
Sebastian Nemeth

2124

Irina Tetenkina

2199

Gothenburg 2004 (6)



No!

20. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $hxg6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$

Now Black should have gone for the greedy

21... $fxg6!$ 22. $\mathbb{R}xe6$

and then the cool

22... $\mathbb{Q}xg2!$

22... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 23. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ works as well.

23. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3!$ 24. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$

Black is winning.

Exercise 9.30

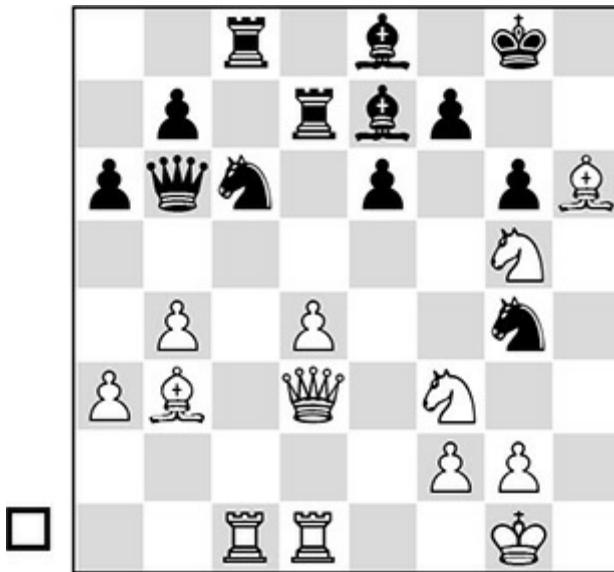
Gellert Voros

1995

Richard Staffen

1890

Lubovnianske Kupele ch-SVK U18 2012 (4)



Yes!

24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

24... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 29. $d5$ gives White a very strong attack.

25. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xh6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 30. $d5$ 1-0

Chapter 10: Fighting the IQP

Exercise 10.1

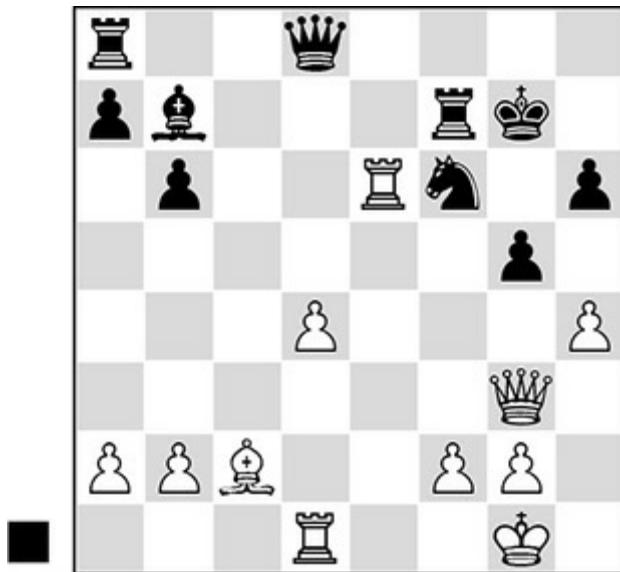
Kevin Paveto

2445

Pablo Lopez Rebert

1947

Villa Martelli 2014 (3)



22...Qc7!

The game saw 22...g4 23.d5! Qxd5 24.Qb3 Qxe6 25.Rxd8 Rxd8 26.Qxe6 Re7 27.Qxg4 and White won.

Instead, Black has to attack the back piece! He will have the better game after

23.Qd3 Qh8

Exercise 10.2

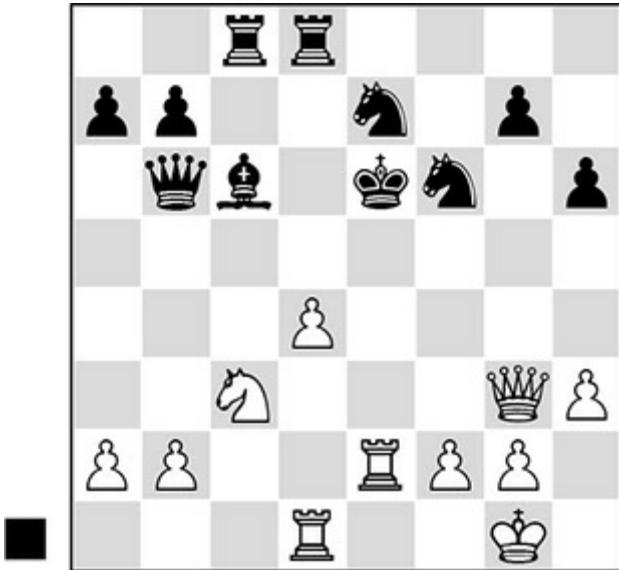
Jeroen Piket

2590

Paul van der Sterren

2490

Eindhoven ch-NED 1993 (9)



24... ♜e4!

This would have been the right move! Black has to return a piece in order to disturb the coordination between his opponent's pieces. A technique we learned in Chapter 7.

The game went: 24... ♜d7 (24... ♜f7 leads to the same) 25. ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 26. ♜xg7+ ♜d6 27. ♜xf6+ ♜c7. White is completely winning and should now have finished the job with 28. ♜f4+! ♜d6 29. ♜c1, followed by either 30.d5 or 30. ♜e4.

25. ♜xg7

This is the critical line. 25. ♜xe4 ♜f7 26. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 27. ♜b3+ ♜d5 28. ♜xb7+ ♜g8 is clearly better for Black.

25... ♜g8! 26. ♜xe4+ ♜xe4 27. ♜e5+ ♜d7 28. ♜xe4 ♜d8 29. ♜c5 ♜g6

Black is still under a lot of pressure, but his extra rook should promise him the better chances.

Exercise 10.3

Tim Janzelj

2203

Manuela Schmitz

2024

Split 2012 (8)



22... $\mathbb{R}f7!$

The only way to stay in the game. Black returns a rook to gain time for organizing his defence.

23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

And now the right defensive set-up would have been

23... $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g6 \mathbb{Q}f8$

Black has all the important squares under control, will continue with 25... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ in order to exchange queens, and should be doing fine in the remaining ending.

In the game, White was able to continue his attack after 23... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ and won:

24. $\mathbb{Q}e3 \mathbb{Q}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e7 \mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd7 \mathbb{Q}xd7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd7 \mathbb{Q}d8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb7 \mathbb{Q}xd4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}c4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b3 \mathbb{Q}c3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d5 \mathbb{Q}c7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e1 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g3 \mathbb{Q}g7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}c8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}h5 \mathbb{Q}b7+$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}d5 \mathbb{Q}c5$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}g4+$ 1-0.

Exercise 10.4 – Defend 1

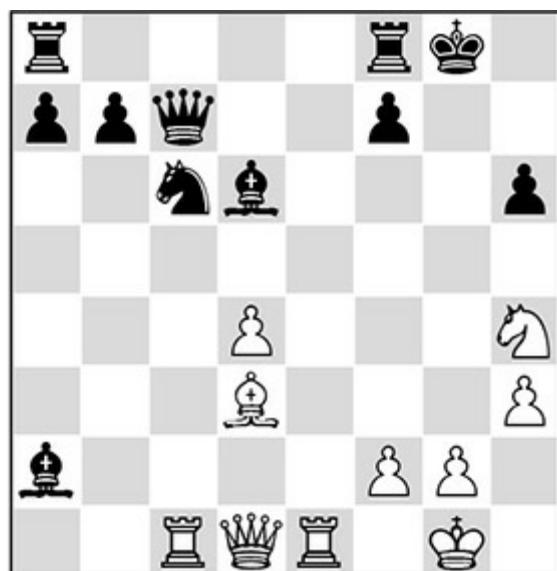
José Manuel Garcia Serrano

1902

Eduardo Sanchez Millan

1976

Madrid 2009 (9)



In the game, Black ended up in trouble after 18...f5 19.Qxf5 Qxf5 20.Qxf5 Qd5 21.Qg4+ Qh8, and here 22.Qe6! would have been a strong move to gain control over the most important squares. White is very close to winning.

What went wrong? Black was short on defenders. He should therefore have started with

18...Qd8! 19.Qf5 Qf6

Having a queen close to the defence makes a huge difference. The attack is over and now Black is winning.

Exercise 10.5

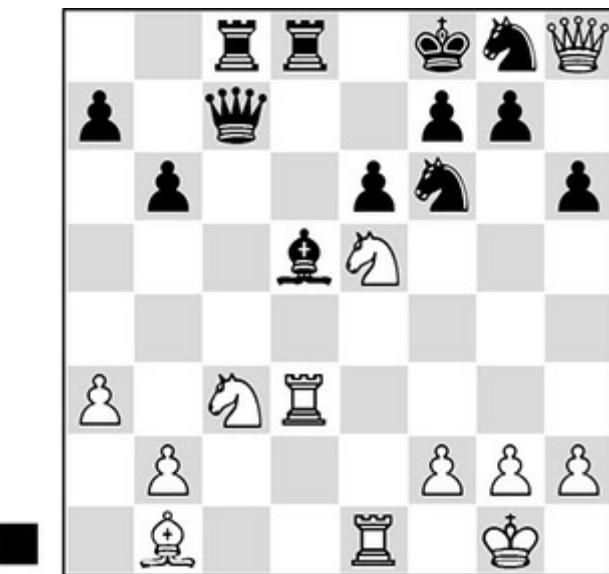
Denis Khismatullin

2639

Dmitry Bocharov

2603

Vladivostok 2012 (6)



Black has a very nice tactical resource at his disposal:

27...Qe4! 28.Qg3 Qh5 29.Qxe4 Qxe5 30.Qge3 Qg5

Black has a fantastic position. The white queen is completely out of play and ...Qe7 and ...Qf4 are coming.

In the game, Black ended up in serious trouble:

27...Qa8 28.Qg3 g5 29.h4 Qh5 30.hxg5 Qxg3 31.gxh6 Qh5 32.h7 Qe7 33.hxg8Q Qxg8 34.Qxh5 Qxg2+ 35.Qf1 Qg7 36.Qd1 Qd8

And now:

A) 37.Qg6+ was the game: 37...Qxg6 38.Qxd8 Qxd8 39.Qxg6 fxg6 40.Qh7+ Qf6 41.Qh4+ g5 42.Qh6+ with a draw as the final result;

B) Much stronger was the fantastic queen switch 37.Qh4+ f6 38.Qb4+ Qc5 39.Qg6+ Qe8 40.Qxd8+ Qxd8 41.Qh4!. The queen is about to enter the black position with devastating force.

Exercise 10.6

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

2703

Ernesto Inarkiev

2667

Warsaw Ech blitz 2010 (12)



19... ♜ed5!

The only move that leads to a black advantage! The alternatives are better for White:

A) 19... ♜e8 20. ♜xe7;

B) 19... ♜bd5 20. ♜e5;

C) 19... ♜d5 was the game: 20. ♜xd5 ♜exd5 21. ♜e5 ♜c6 22. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 23. ♜xd5 ♜d6 24. ♜xf7+ 1-0.

20. ♜e5 ♜d7! 21. ♜xd5 ♜xd5

Black gets to keep his extra piece.

Exercise 10.7

Georg Braun

2147

Benedict Krause

2074

playchess.com 2012 (6)



19... ♜f8!

This gives Black excellent chances. It is the same idea as in the Demuth-Döttling game. Black anticipates on a future ♜h7 and already moves his king away. This will provide him with an extra move for his defence when things start to heat up later.

The game continued 19... ♜c6 20. ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 21. ♜h7+ ♜f8 22. d5 ♜e8 23. dxе6 with a huge initiative for White.

Exercise 10.8

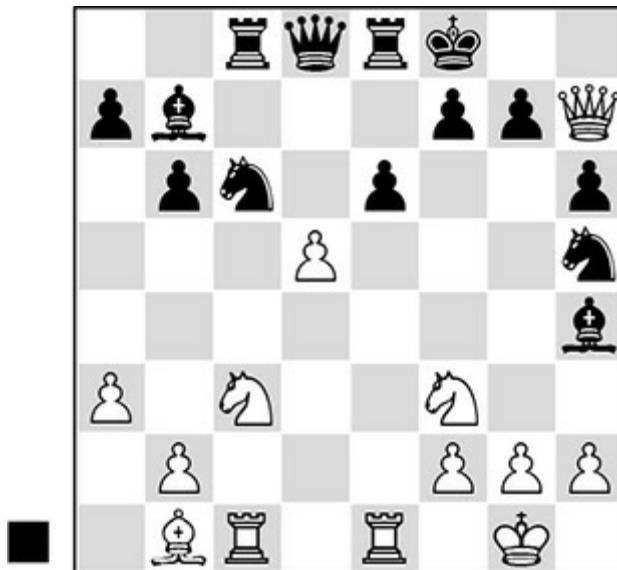
Arkadij Naiditsch

2674

Pavel Eljanov

2761

Croatia tt 2010 (8)



Black had a very cool tactical defence:

18... ♜d4! 19. ♜xd4 ♜xf2+ 20. ♜xf2 ♜h4+ 21. ♜f1 ♜xd4



and Black is winning.

He did not seize the opportunity in the game and went down after 18... ♜g5 19. ♜cd1 ♜f6 20. d6 g6

21. ♜xg5 ♛cd8 22. ♜xe6+.

Exercise 10.9

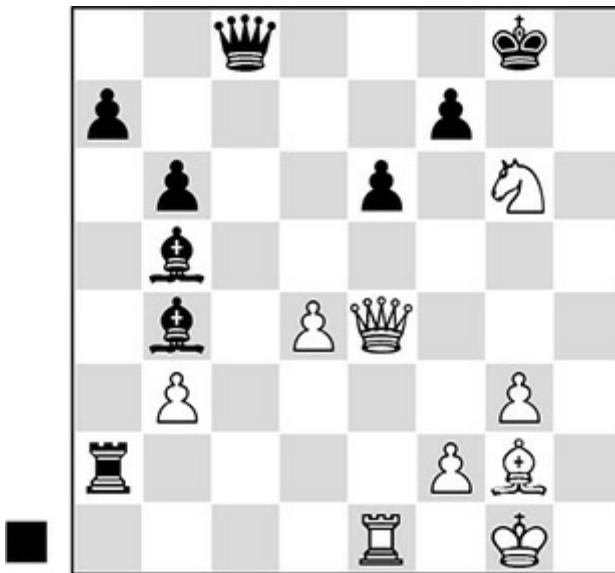
Nils Petersen

1989

Søren Jensen

2109

Copenhagen 2004 (9)



27... ♜e8!

This elegant defensive move was the most convincing way for Black to get an advantage. The queen overprotects the most vulnerable spots, after which both the rook and knight are hanging.

28. ♜f4 ♜xe1 29. ♜xe1 ♜f8

And Black is clearly better.

Exercise 10.10

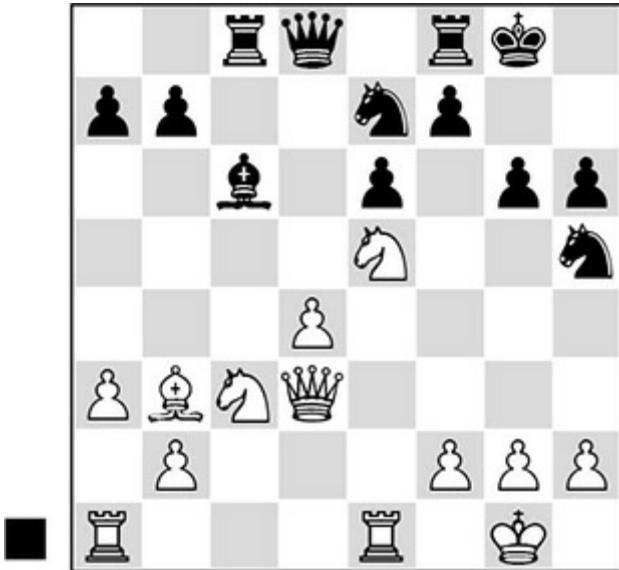
Thibaut Maenhout

2379

Marcel Becker

2353

Belgium tt 2011/12 (7)



19... ♜xg2!

Black goes for the counterattack! The f4-square again plays a key role.

19... ♜f4 is less convincing, since White is able to eliminate the important black light-squared bishop after
20. ♜d2 g5 21. ♜xc6.

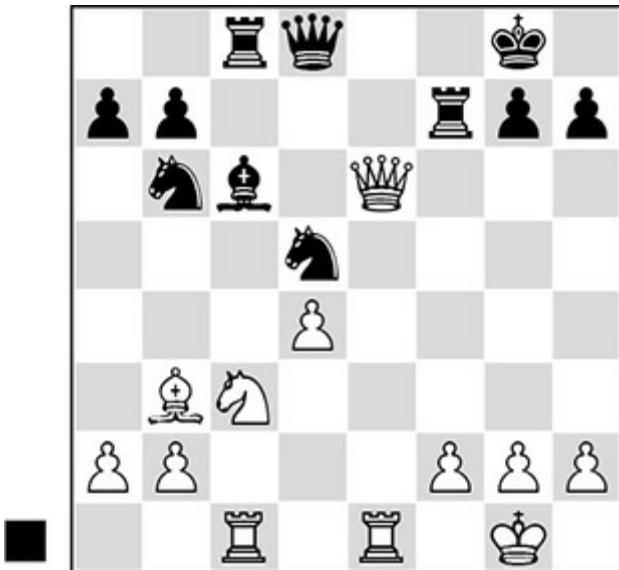
20. ♜xf7 ♕xf7 21. ♜xe6 ♜f4 22. ♜xf7+ ♔xf7 23. ♜d2 g5 24. d5 ♜eg6 25. ♜c2 ♜f6 26. ♜e3 ♜g7 27. ♜a4 ♜h3+
28. ♜xh3 ♜xh3 29. ♜e4 ♜f4 0-1

Exercise 10.11

R Gasanov

V Gadzikasumov

Baku ch-AZE 1967



This is not an easy position. Black is pinned on all sides.

19... ♜cc7!

This rook is going to play a vital role in the ‘unpinning process’.

20. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 21. ♜xd5

In the game, Black came a long way, but here he went for 21... ♜xd5 and lost quickly after 22. ♜e8+ ♕f8
23. ♜xd8 ♕xd8 24. ♜xc7 1-0.

21... ♕ ce7!

This is the point! Soon all the pins will be gone.

22. ♔xe7 ♔xd5 23. ♔e4 ♔xe4 24. ♕xe4 ♕xe4

And Black reached a winning ending.

Exercise 10.12

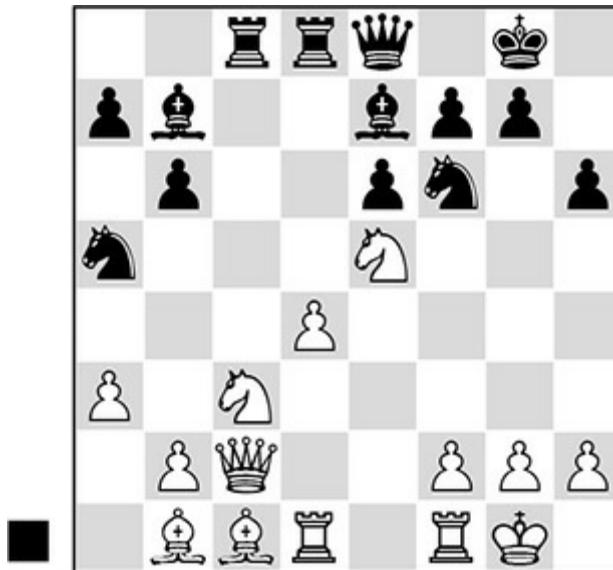
Georg Braun

2147

Benedict Krause

2074

playchess.com 2012 (6)



This is the same game as Exercise 10.7. Black could have eliminated an important attacker with:

18... ♕ e4!

A move to remember.

19. $\text{e}2$ $\text{x}\text{b}1$ 20. $\text{x}\text{b}1$ $\text{c}6$

Black is much better.

Exercise 10.13

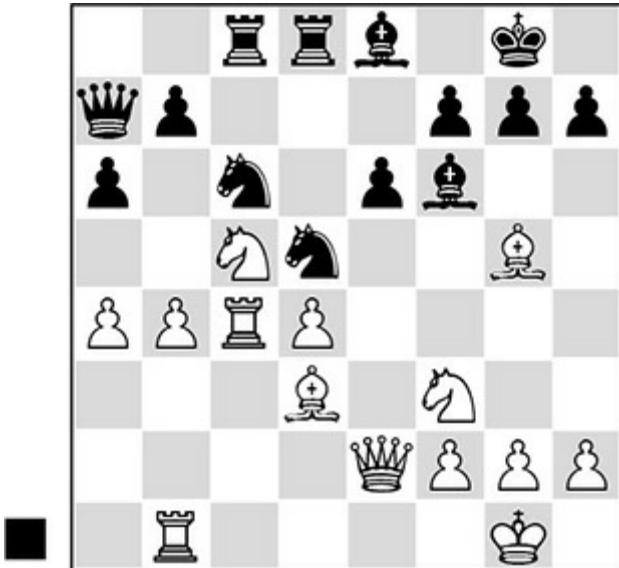
Daniel Gurevich

2465

Conrad Holt

2551

Dallas 2016 (6)



23...b5! 24.axb5 axb5 25.♕cc1 ♕xd4 26.♗xd4 ♔xg5 27.♗cxe6

If 27.♖c2, 27...♝xb4! wins another pawn.

27...♕xc1+ 28.♕xc1 fxe6 29.♗xe6 ♔xc1 30.♗xd8 ♔e7 0-1

Exercise 10.14

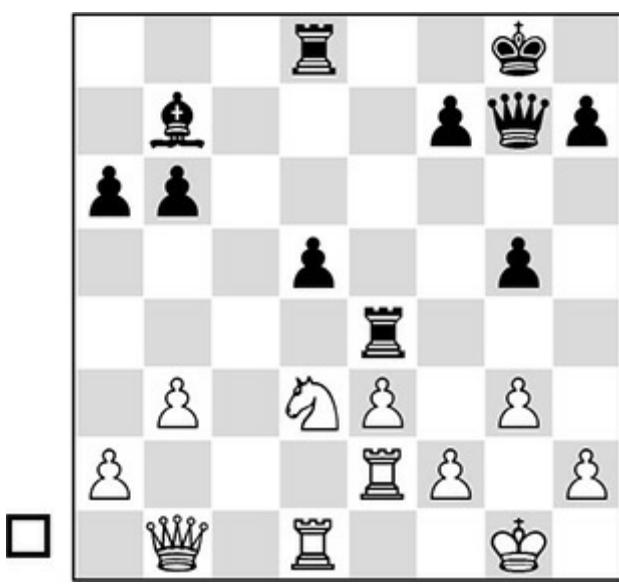
Elshan Moradiabadi

2597

Pablo Patricio Salinas Herrera

2433

Port of Spain 2016 (6)



26.♗c5!

White uses a tactical combination to exchange the last minor piece.

26...♔e7

26...bx_c5 27.♗xe4 dx_e4 28.♖xd8+ ♔f8 29.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 wins for White.

27.♗xb7 ♕xb7 28.♕ed2 ♕bd7 29.♕d4

White has reached his goal. The minor pieces have left the board and the slow, but risk-free manoeuvring game against the d-pawn can start.

29... ♜e5 30. ♜d3 b5 31. ♜c1 ♜d6 32. ♜d1 h6 33. ♜c2 ♜f8 34. ♜cd2

Remember Alekhine's Gun from Chapter 1.1?

34... ♜e7 35. ♜c2 ♜e6 36. ♜d3 ♜8d7 37. ♜c2 ♜c6 38. ♜xc6 ♜xc6 39. ♜g2 ♜d6 40. ♜f5 ♜d7 41. ♜f3 ♜c6 42. ♜d1
♜c5 43. h4

The second weakness!

43... ♜c6 44. hxg5 hxg5 45. ♜g4 f6 46. ♜f5 ♜d7 47. ♜h7+ ♜d8 48. ♜d3 ♜c7 49. a4



The black king has found a relatively safe spot on the queenside. A good reason for White to create a weakness there as well.

49... ♜c6 50. ♜d2 ♜d7 51. ♜e2 ♜c7 52. axb5 axb5 53. ♜d2 ♜d7 54. ♜g1 ♜e6 55. ♜d1 ♜c5 56. ♜h5 ♜e7 57. ♜h7+
♜e8 58. ♜d1 ♜d7 59. ♜g8+ ♜e7 60. ♜a1 ♜b6 61. ♜a8 ♜d8 62. ♜g7+ ♜e6 63. ♜a7 ♜c5 64. ♜f7+ ♜f5 65. ♜h7+
♜e6 66. g4 d4 67. ♜f7+ 1-0

Exercise 10.15

Vlastimil Flegl

Hajek

Svetla nad Sazavou 1994



We can apply the techniques from Chapter 4 and conquer an open file.

25... $\mathbb{Q}h6!$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$

26. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ does not really make a difference: 26... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 0-1

Exercise 10.16

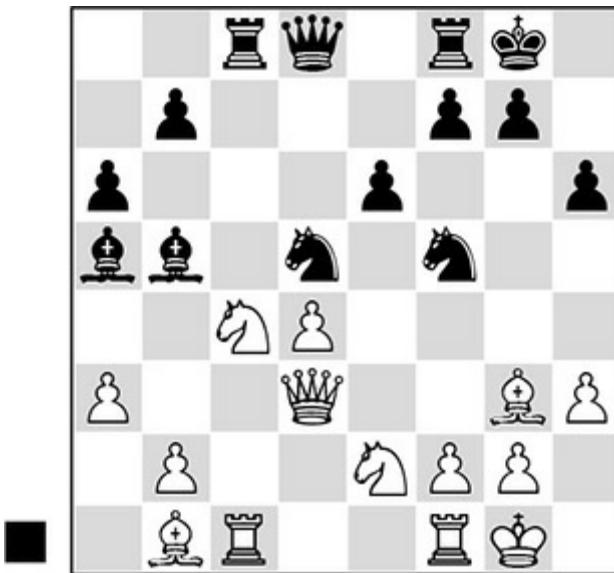
Vasiliy Gagarin

2289

Pia Cramling

2518

Stockholm 2014 (3)



23... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ was played in the game, where it led to a more or less equal position. Black could, however, have collected a pawn with either

A) 23... $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ 24.b3 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}cd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$; or

B) 23... $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ and now:

B1) 24.b3 $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 26.fxg3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ with an extra pawn;

B2) 24.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 27.fxg3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ and Black is, again, a pawn up.

Exercise 10.17

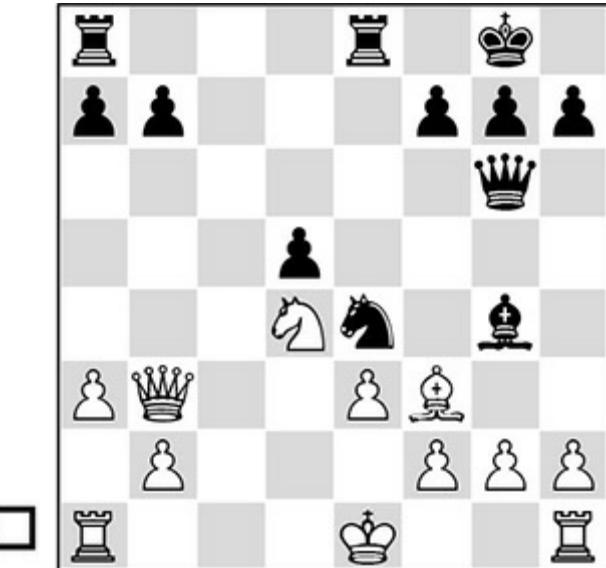
Ivan Sokolov

2625

Sipke Ernst

2535

Amsterdam ch-NED 2017 (2)



17. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 18. 0-0!

White calculated this line well.

18... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d1!$



A very important move!

19... $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}fxd1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 21. $b3$ $a5$ 22. $b5$ $e5$ 23. $d3$

White had a clear advantage, even though the game ended in a draw.

Exercise 10.18

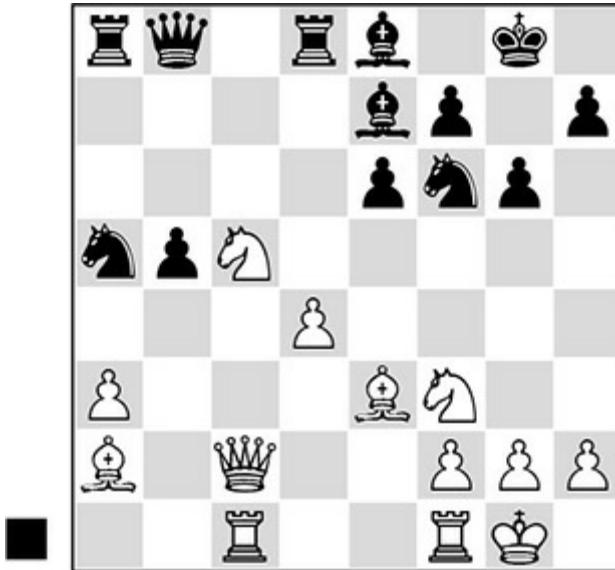
Twan Burg

2490

Michiel Bosman

2327

Netherlands tt 2013/14 (3)



19...Bc6

The best move, with a very pleasant position for Black.

In the game Black was tempted to improve his bishop with 19...Bc6, but it was doing quite well on e8. We are soon going to see another example of a situation where ‘you don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone’.

20.Be5 Bd5 21.Qg5 Ba7 22.Qfe1 Qac8 23.Qxd5



23...Qxd5. This is the decisive mistake. Black was still in good shape after 23...Qxd5 24.Qxe7 Qxe7. After the text move, we have arrived at Exercise 9.23. Therefore, you will already know what happens next: 24.Qe2! Bb8 25.Qxf7 Qxc5 1-0.

Exercise 10.19

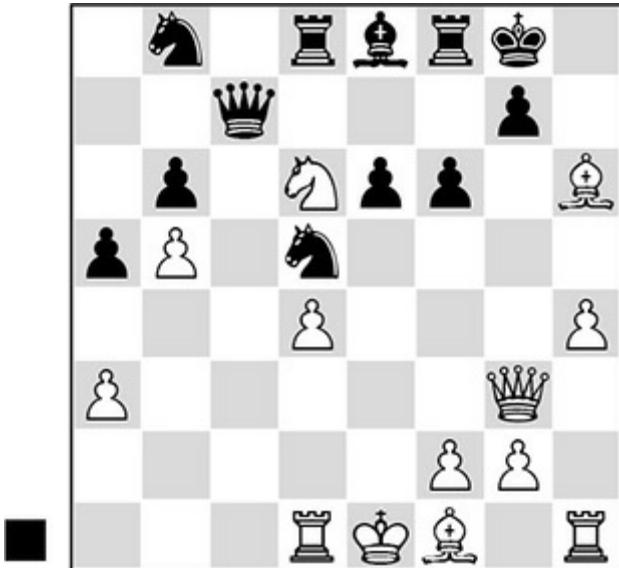
Roman Skomorokhin

2404

Alexa Donchenko

2554

Karlsruhe 2017 (7)



23... ♕d7!

Overprotecting the important g7-pawn and winning a piece!

Exercise 10.20

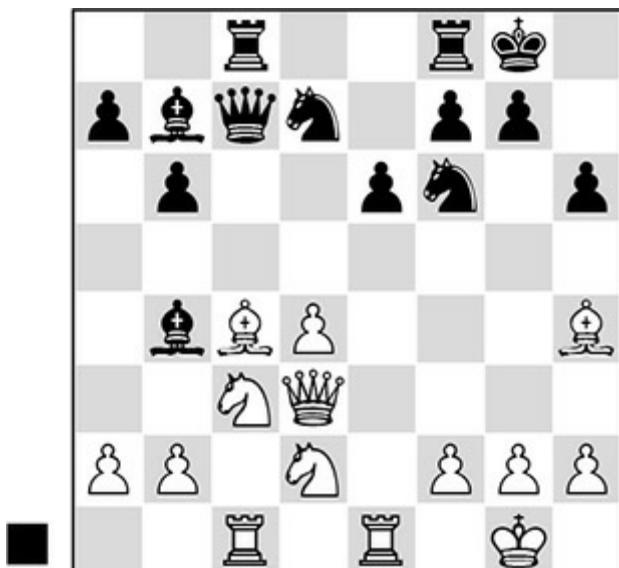
Daan in 't Veld

2181

Thomas Willemze

2404

Haarlem 2009 (1)



15... ♘h5!

The knight is on its way to the comfortable f4-square.

16. ♖e2

This move loses on the spot. A move like 16.f3 or 16.g3 was called for, but these were not very pleasant for White either.

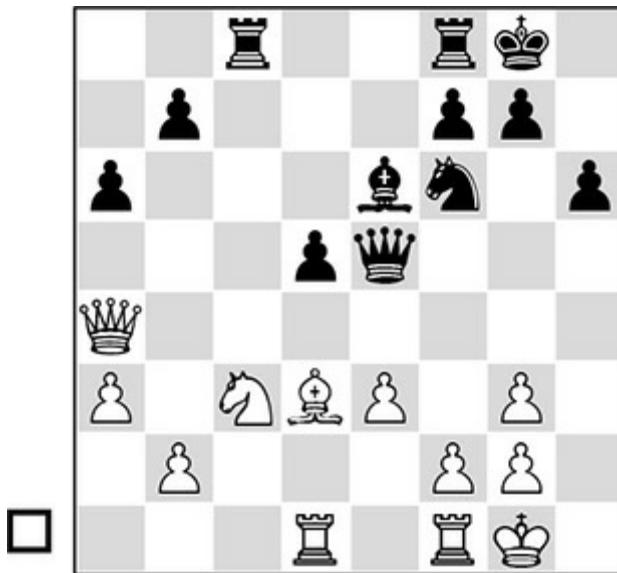
16... ♘f4

Suddenly all the white pieces are hanging.

17. ♗c2 b5 18. ♗g3 ♕xe2+ 19. ♕xe2 ♖b6 0-1

Ashley Krishnasing

Hilversum 2017 (1)

**19. ♕f4!**

Exchanging queens is in White's favour, since it puts an end to all Black's attacking ambitions. Next, White can focus on putting pressure on the d-pawn by doubling his rooks.

19... ♔xf4 20.gxf4 ♜d7 21.f3 h5 22.♔f2 ♜fe8 23.♕fe1 g6 24.♗b1 ♜c6 25.♖d4 ♜e7 26.♗a2 ♜d7 27.♖ed1 ♔f8 28.g3 ♔g7 29.♖1d2 ♔f8 30.♗e2 ♔e7 31.♗xd5+ ♜xd5 32.♗xd5 ♜xd5 33.♗xd5 ♜xd5 34.♗xd5 ♜h8 35.e4

White is a pawn up and won the ending convincingly.

Exercise 10.22

Wojciech Smieszek

1809

Adam Pawlicz

2079

Police 2012 (4)



In the game, Black went for 23... $\mathbb{Q}d5$, but ended on the wrong side of the attack: 24. $\mathbb{R}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g8+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}de7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+ +-$.

He had two different options to start a successful counterattack himself:

- A) 23... $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ is the most accurate one: 24. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8!$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and Black wins;
- B) 23... $\mathbb{R}xd1$ 24. $\mathbb{R}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ is a worthy alternative.

Exercise 10.23

Lutz Fritzsche

2304

Fritz Meyer

2130

Germany tt 2015/16 (2)



Black went for 20... $\mathbb{Q}a8$. However, the queen is a bit out of place here and Black will land in trouble quickly: 21. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26. $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ 1-0. 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf3!$

would have been the best continuation. Chances are about even after

21. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

Exercise 10.24

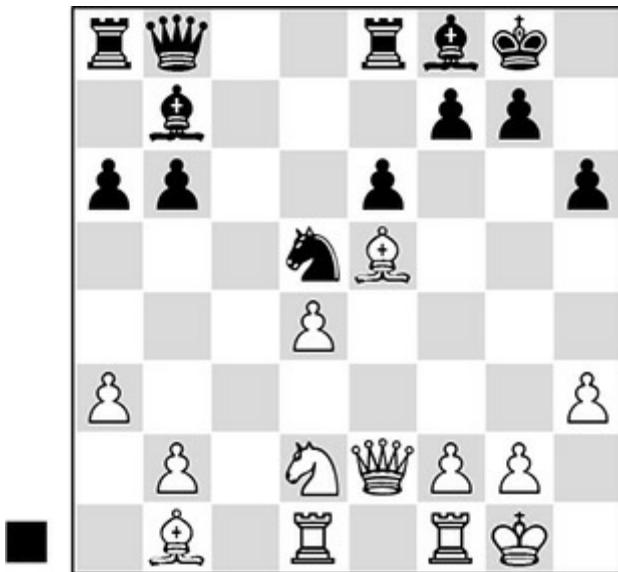
Richard Broemel

2185

Bernd Baum

2303

Germany tt 2012/13 (2)



19... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ looks like a very natural move and, indeed, Black was satisfied in the game after 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}ed8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$.

However, things would have looked different if White had gone for 20. $\mathbb{Q}c4!$. White takes a firm control over the dark squares and is clearly better after either 20... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $dxe5$ or 20... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g4$.

In conclusion: Black should have played 19... $\mathbb{Q}d8$, with an acceptable position.

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