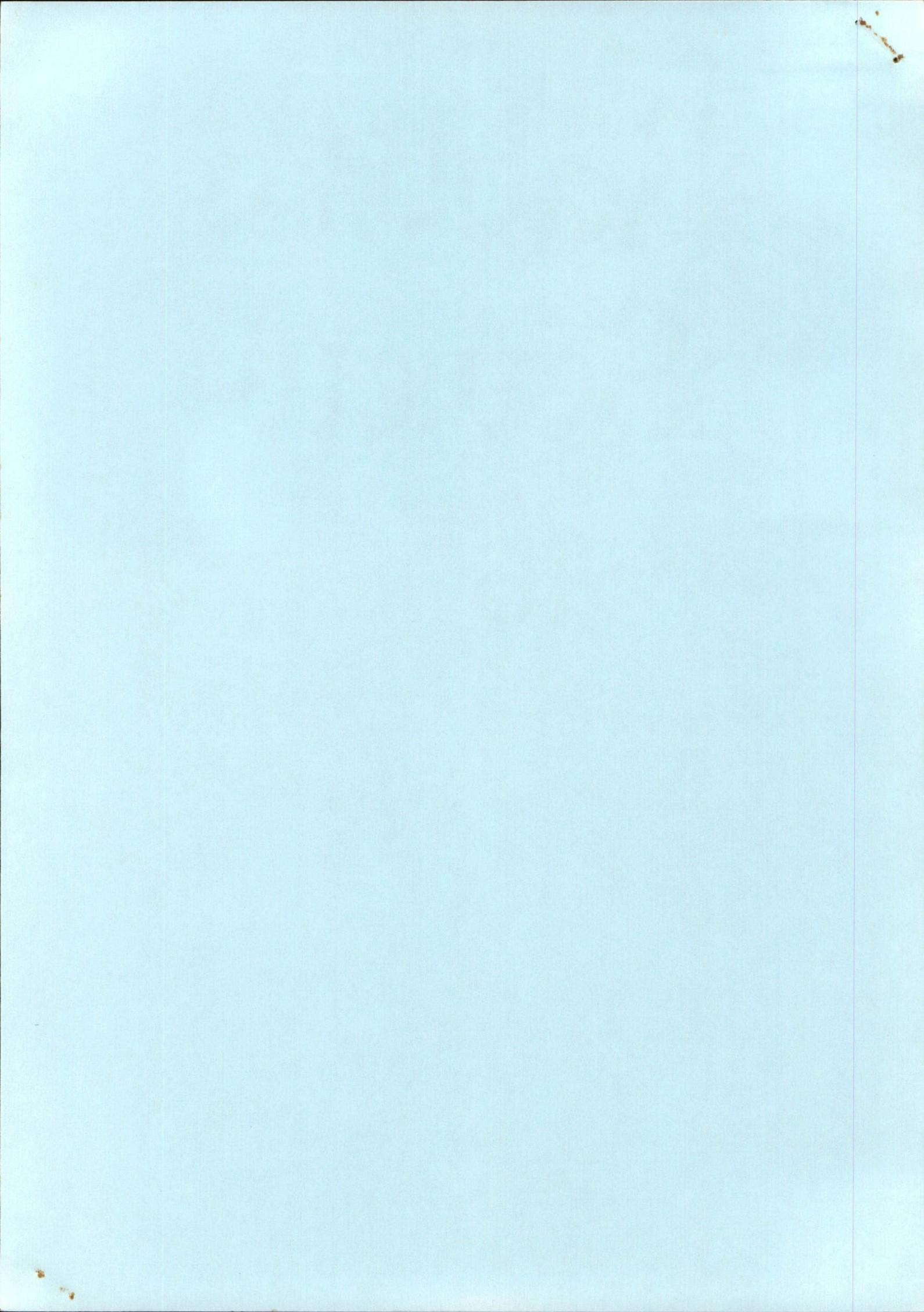


Rabbits
Review

16



Gold and silver

Hello you 80 - 120 grades! It's Ian Josephs, your friendly local rabbit first class (136) again - here to help you mount the chess ladder painlessly from minor to major tournaments.

"Learn by playing through games of the Masters" say the books - well I'll tell you how to learn a lot more. "PLAY THROUGH THE GAMES YOU LOST IN TOURNAMENT OR LEAGUE PLAY". Find out why you lost and resolve not to repeat the same mistakes again. Do this and you MUST improve!

I usually score 4 - 5 points out of 6 in major tournaments and recently analysed all my games to see where my "grand strategy" had failed and where it had prevailed:-

To my shame and consternation I found over half the games were decided by simple blunders made by myself or my opponent!!!. - i.e. obvious forks, pins or captures of vital pawns - "overlooked" in the heat of the moment - wonderful positions that took hours to achieve demolished in seconds due to stupid blunders! I wanted not to believe this, but my written record proved it to be true. Most of my 'brilliances' were in fact due to the stupid blunders of my opponent, and many of my losses occurred when a knight forked my bishop and rook etc.

I have, therefore, evoked a GOLDEN RULE to avoid such defeats in future, and will tell you all gratis - free - and without charge!

Write down the magic letters P.F.CH and C on your score sheet. (They stand for pins, forks, checks and captures. Then each time you decide on your move, write it down but BEFORE actually making the move, check off all possible pins (skewers included) forks, checks or captures (a) by your opponent after your move to see if there is any danger and (b) by yourself before your move to see if there is anything better! It is tedious but quick, and once you get used to doing this systematically you can say goodbye to gross blunders. I sometimes skip the rule in the end game and pay the penalty - so check off all four points for both yourself and your opponent right from the start until the bitter end - even if he swaps queens your reply may be better with an interpolation - especially a check-in-between - SO FOLLOW THE RULE!

This takes care of the middle game to some extent, but what about the Opening? The masters say "develop the pieces", but my opponent stops me with threats etc. Well, if you did not like my suggestion last month (Repertoire King's Indian Attack as white, and King's Indian Defence and Pirc as black) because you have your own pet openings, I'll still give you the SILVER RULE you can follow for any opening.

You have 8 pieces on your back row and NONE of them is usually on the "Best Square" - i.e. all of them should be moved to complete your development. The Silver Rule, therefore, is 'Always try to have moved MORE of the 8 pieces than your opponent (if white) or at least as many (if black). If you have three or four more pieces on their original squares than your adversary you should be a pawn up at least or else.....

Do not exchange pieces, therefore, if it means that by retaking your opponent centralises an extra piece while yours is removed from the board! Better to protect with a pawn or another piece. It takes only a second to check the back row of both ranks - so do it until all your eight pieces have moved. The KING of course should preferably castle rather than wander aimlessly into the centre of the board! If your opponent advances a pawn, however, it is usually best to take him before he takes you but 'look before you leap' every time. Even when there are no blunders I found two losing moves that gave me bad positions CONSISTENTLY. They are P-R3 and N-R4 (either side of the board). Now I know that sometimes they may be brilliant but usually unless there is a GOOD REASON, they waste time and space. DO NOT make these moves unless you can see a definite advantage from them and I mean DEFINITE!

Pawn moves often weaken, so bear in mind the following generalities that apply 90% of the time, but not 100% of the time. BAD POINTS are (a) doubled pawns (b) isolated pawns (c) backward pawns on a half open file - all usually worth at least - $\frac{1}{2}$ point. GOOD POINTS are (a) passed pawns (b) rooks on an open file (c) doubled up rooks on an open file (d) rooks on the 7th rank (e) doubled rooks on the 7th rank (f) outposts (pieces supported by a pawn that cannot be attacked by an enemy pawn). All these are worth at least 1 point (a) (b) (d) or two points (c) (e). When evaluating your position and deciding an exchange. Lastly, BISHOP and KNIGHTS - 'good' bishop and unobstructed by its own pawns is worth about $3\frac{1}{2}$ points, a 'bad' bishop restricted by lots of its own pawns is worth $2\frac{1}{2}$ points - so 2 GOOD bishops are worth more than 2 knights at 3 points (at least one point better).

All these things may seem obvious to the Karpovs and the Basmans of this world, but it took the likes of me YEARS to learn and I still make the same mistakes even now ...

Be strong minded fellow rabbits and follow this ever so simple advice. I can only say that every single game I have ever lost in a tournament play was through neglect of my own rules! It is will power I need as much as knowledge - perhaps you have more self discipline than I have, in which case - follow this advice, especially the Golden and Silver Rules and you must improve.

What about the end game I hear you cry. I have found no golden rule for this yet - except 'Do not skip the analysis' - some players tend to move too rapidly because the end game is 'simple' when in fact it needs a careful analysis of all variations and a 'counting' of king and of pawn moves to the eighth rank for both sides before each move and not 'every so often' - which usually means 'too late' !

All I know about chess is in this short article - which may explain why I am not a Grand Master. It still makes me an above average tournament player and it may make you a champion - SO GO TO IT !

ONE DAY TOURNAMENTS

If you are looking for some good chess practice, without expending a whole weekend, the one day tournaments could supply the need. You play 5-7 games in one day, with half an hour or 40 minutes on the clock.

Tournaments are held in LONDON on Sundays, (13 Dec, 24 Jan, 14 Feb, 7 March, 25 April, 16 May). Details from George Goodwin, 63 Aberdeen Park, Highbury, London, N5.

There are also tournaments in Basingstoke, on a monthly basis. Write to R. Boxall, 91, Campsie Close, Basingstoke.

BOOK list

Overleaf you will find a recommended booklist, with a guide to the level of player (beginner to 150 grade) who would best benefit from each work.

There are several books by the american writers, Chernev, Horowitz and Reinfeld. All authors with a lively, readable style, without too much cramming of information. These books have some defects, though. With Reinfeld, punishment for chess transgressions is always quick and brilliant, which gives a mistaken impression to the reader. In the first place that all errors can be dealt with in whizz-bang fashion; and secondly, that he the reader will be able to carry out the beautiful combinations perfectly, just as happens in the book. With Chernev there is sometimes a defect in analysis. He prefers positional games, but his playing strength is not up to charting all the shifts that occur in a game. So one is presented with a constant series of good moves by the winning side, with no mention of the times when the winner's moves were dubious, or his position ropey. He also has a tendency to make things look too easy ('just get a knight at Q5 or wherever and the attack will play itself'). The antidote to this is to cover up the moves and try to work them out yourself; then you can find out how easy it was. Chernev's books on tactics (Winning Chess) and strategy (Logical Chess) are masterpieces of basic chess instruction.

Horowitz probably strikes the best balance of the three authors; a practicing player, his ideas are often interesting, particularly in his two opening books (How to win... and Modern Ideas...).

These books should be obtainable from the Chess Centre, 3 Harcourt Street, London W1
(01-402-5393). Add 40p per book if ordering by post.

<u>LEVEL</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PUBLISHER</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
I - II	Logical Chess Move by Move	Chernev	Faber	£2.50
I - II	Winning Chess	Chernev	Faber	£1.50
I - II	Nine Bad Moves of Chess	Reinfeld	Faber	£1.50
I - III	Understanding Open Games	various	R.H.M.	£6.95
II - III	Understanding the Caro Kann	various	R.H.M.	£6.95
II - III	How to Win in the Chess Openings	Horowitz	Cornerstone	£2.40
II - III	Modern Ideas in the Chess Opening	Horowitz	Cornerstone	£2.40
IV	Comprehensive Chess Openings	Panov/Estrin	Pergamon	£15
III - IV	Penguin Book of Chess Openings	Hartston	Penguin	£1.95
III	Winning Chess Tactics	Horowitz	Cornerstone	£2.40
II - III	Test Your Chess I.Q. Book 1	Livshitz	Pergamon	£3.95
IV	Test Your Chess I. Q. Book 2	Livshitz	Pergamon - not pub. yet	
III	Play for Mate	Hooper/ Cafferty	Bell	£5.50
VI !	The Best Move	Hort/Jansa	R.H.M.	£5.95
III - IV	It's Your Move	Miles/ Teschner	Batsford	£3.95
IV	How to Open a Chess Game	various	R.H.M.	£4.95
I - IV	How to get the most out of your Computer	Kaplan	R.H.M.	£6.95
II - IV	How to Win in the Chess Endings	Horowitz	Kaye & Ward	£1.75
III - IV	Practical Chess Endings	Chernev	Dover	£2.75
IV	My System	Nimzovich	Bell	£5.50
IV	Blockade	Nimzovich		£1.50
IV	Practical Chess Endings	Keres	Batsford	£4.95
II	Chess Self Instructor	Lasker (Ed)	Batsford	£5.95
III - IV	New Ideas In Chess	Evans	Cornerstone	(OOP)
IV	Simple Chess	Stean	Faber	£1.00
II	How to think Ahead in Chess	Horowitz/ Reinfeld	Faber	(OOP)
I - III	How to Improve your Chess	Horowitz/ Reinfeld	Collier Books	£2.25

OOP = Out of print - get it from the library.

- Level 0 - Beginner
- Level I - Near beginner
 - II - Weaker club player 60 - 90 grade
 - III - Middle club player 90 - 120 grade
 - IV - Higher club player 120 - 150 grade

3 LEVELS OF CHESS

The basis of chess is material. By this we mean extra force usually wins. Therefore, the first thing a player should learn is to see attacks on his own and enemy pieces. This is by no means such an elementary factor, and the reason that chess computers are able to beat most human opponents is solely because they see these attacks.

Moving upwards from the simple one move attacks on enemy units, we come to the realm of TACTICS. Whereas if you attack an enemy unit, the opponent can thwart this by noticing the attack and moving away, TACTICS make use of the double or multiple attack; the player attacks more than one piece at the same time; and the opponent being able to make only one move at a time, is often unable to defend against all the threats. A special branch of tactics is concerned with cornering and capturing the enemy king.

Moving higher still, we come to POSITIONAL CHESS. In material and tactical play we are concerned with winning large units of material, with positional chess we are dealing with units of value which are often far less than a pawn. A given positional factor, for example, an open file, or a well posted bishop, may be worth only 1/10 or 1/4 pawn advantage to its possessor.

It follows, therefore, that one should first learn to perceive the cruder factors of material and tactical chess before moving on to positional chess. Of course, some rudimentary positional knowledge is still necessary, but its refinement should wait until tactical skills have reached a certain level. Tackling the subject in this way will enable a player to establish a hierarchy of values, and will avoid the absurd situation when a player refused to recapture a bishop 'because it would double my pawn'.

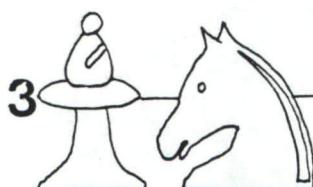
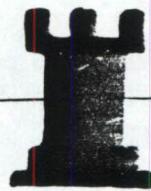
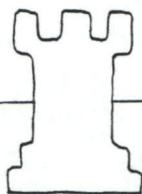
Positional - 2nd
Tactical - 1st
Material - ground floor



MATERIAL

EQUALS

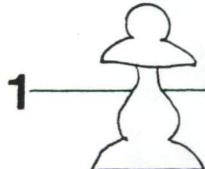
STRENGTH



KING
SAFETY

POSITIONAL
FACTORS =

Pawn Structure, Central Control,
Piece Placing, Development, Etc.



Most club players - though certainly not all - will be able to play chess on a material level; if a piece is attacked, they see it and move it. Psychologically though, many suffer from a weakness of trying to think tactically and positionally, and as their attention is fully occupied in these two areas, they overlook attacks and are brought down with a bump.

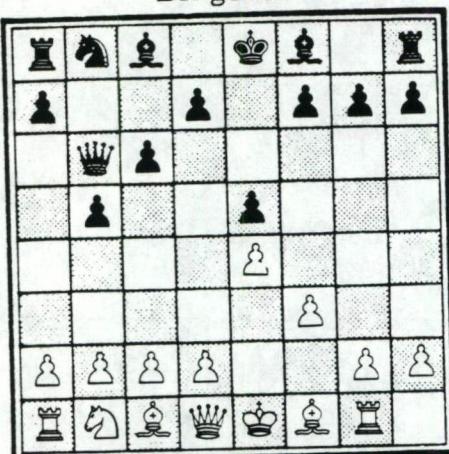
Psychological factors for making errors should be studied carefully and weeded out. Many players are impatient and move too quickly, thus not bothering to look for the obvious beforehand; sometimes, finding their mental apparatus unequal to a tactical or positional problem before them, they become frustrated and commit an elementary material error.

A few simple tests will suffice to establish how good you are at material chess.

Study the diagrams, then answer the questions by filling in the slots opposite them.

TEST 1

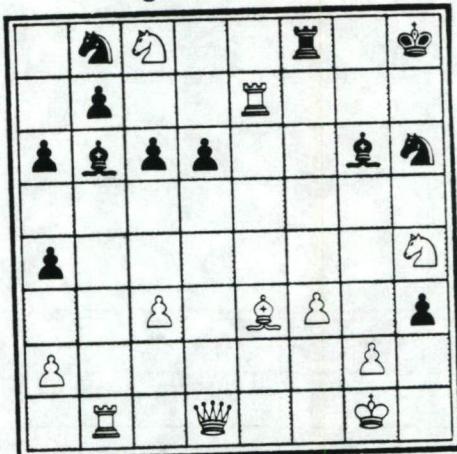
Diagram 1



Black to play.

Write down a
capturing move.

Diagram 2



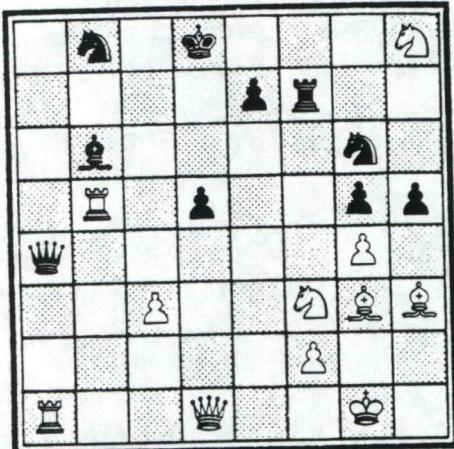
White to play.

How many separate attacks
by white can you see in this
position?

MAGNETIC POCKET SET

Board is 5 inches square. Folds and fits neatly into the pocket without bulges. Very clear pieces. Leatherette effect. £2.25 post free from Audio Chess, 7 Billcockby Close, Chessington, Surrey.

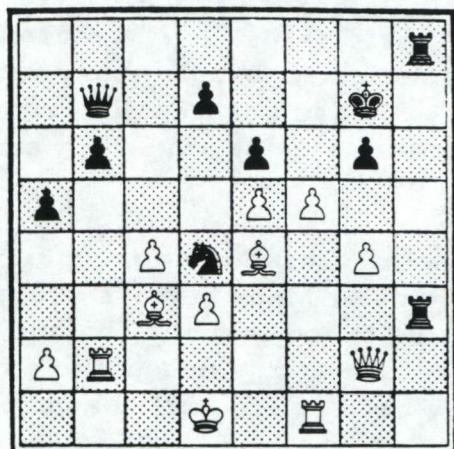
Diagram 3



White to play.

How many separate attacks by white can you see in this position?

Diagram 4

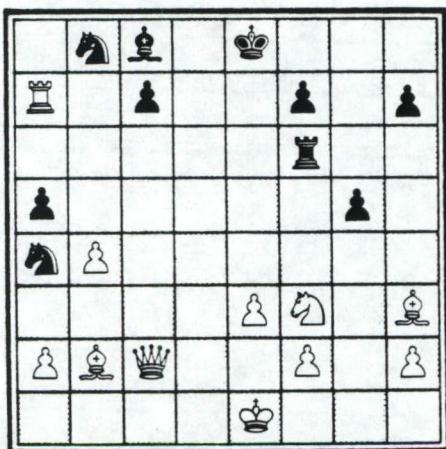


White to play.

1. How many separate white attacks can you see in this position?

2. How many are against undefended pieces?

Diagram 5

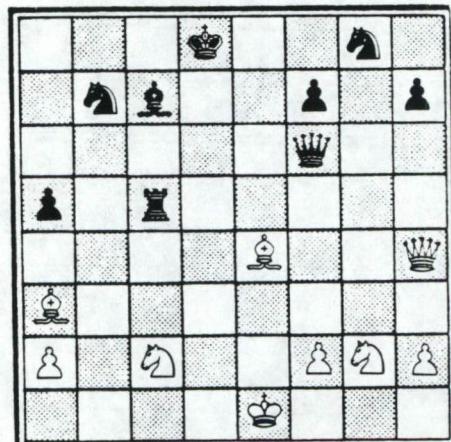


White to play.

1. How many attacks do you see in this position for white?

2. How many attacks for Black do you see?

Diagram 6



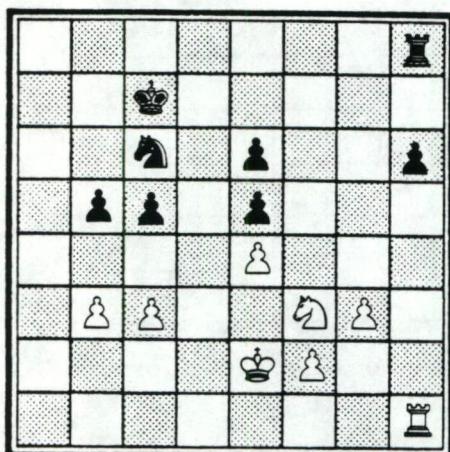
1. How many attacks for white do you see?

2. How many attacks for black?

3. If it were white to play, which capture would you make?

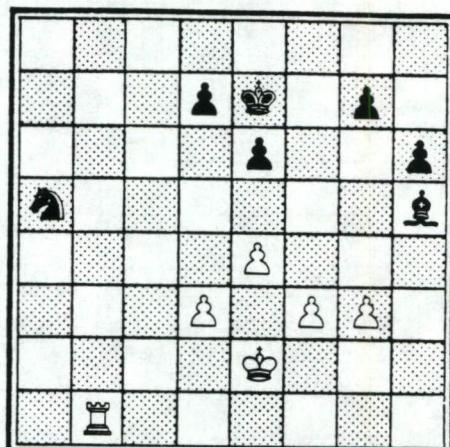
The next set of tests might properly belong in the tactics section, but as they are of such a simple nature, I have called them a part of material chess. They comprise the most straightforward forms of double attack. This can take the shape of two pieces ganging up upon an enemy unit, or the same unit striking in different directions.

Example 1



Here by 1R-R5 white doubly attacks the black king pawn.

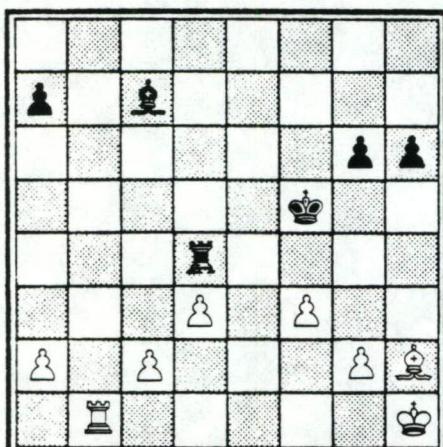
Example 2



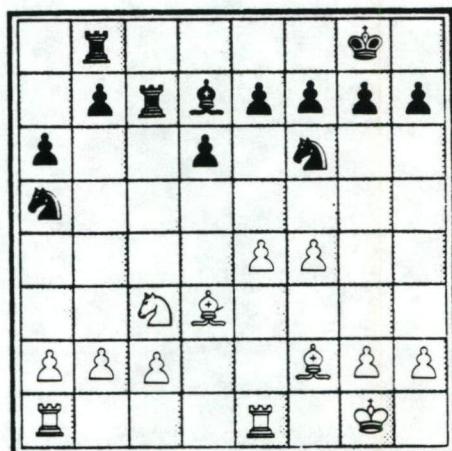
Here white can attack both knight and bishop by playing 1R-N5.

TEST 2

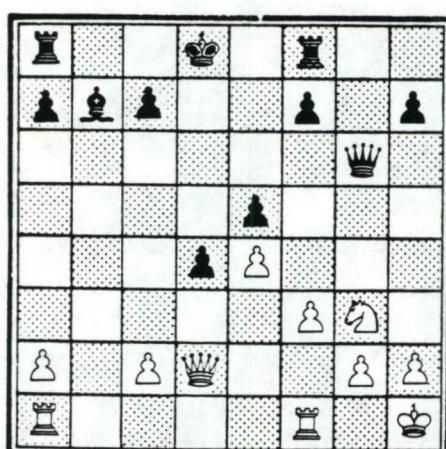
Now try and solve the test positions and write your solutions in the boxes provided.



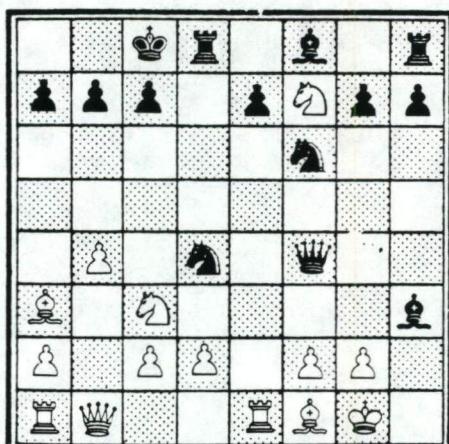
How can black make a double attack on an enemy unit?



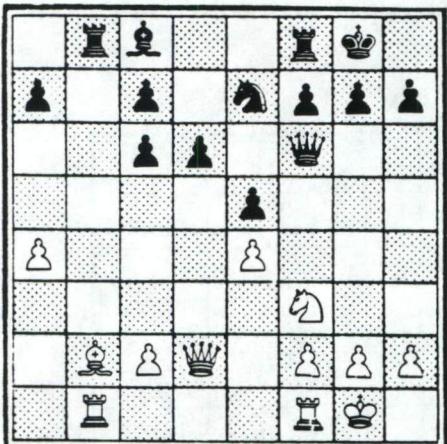
How would you play white here?



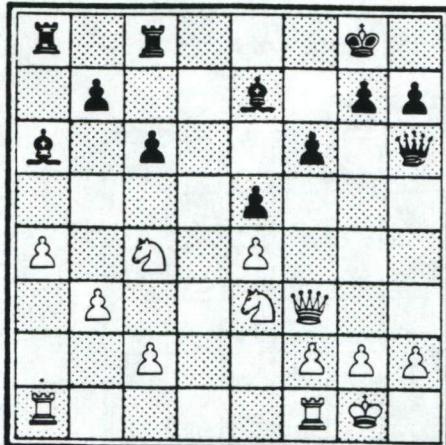
White can make a strong double attack in this position. What is it?



Black seems to be in trouble due to the fork on his rooks. But he can escape with a multiple attack of his own.



The multiple threat wins material for white here.
How ?



Can you see a good double attack for white here ?

Now turn to page 17 for the solutions.

On test 1 you scored: out of 6

On test 2 you scored: out of 6

The mini books

The Monster book has spawned! Every two months Audio Chess will be releasing these booklets to keep you up to date in the latest news and experiences with the famed Audio Chess opening series.

Single issues cost 60p post free (stamps accepted) or you can subscribe to a years issues (6 in all) for £3.50. No. 1 is out already!

Available from Audio Chess 7 Billockby Close Chessington Surrey KT9 2ED

If you scored badly, this means you are a beginner, and should concentrate in your chess games on spotting all the attacks going; play against a computer will be most beneficial here.

If you did well in the tests, but find you make blunders in your own games, then the fault is not lack of capacity, but insufficient attention being directed by you during a game to material factors. You should train yourself to look at a position from a purely material stand point more often.

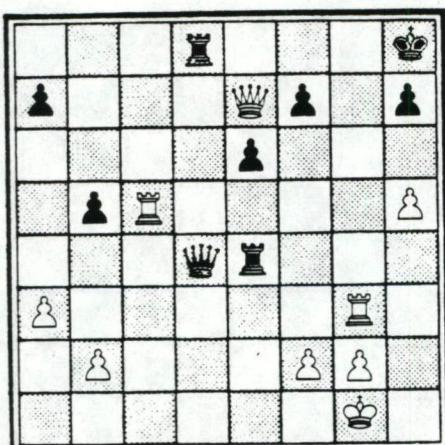
TACTICAL CHESS

TACTICAL CHESS (or chess on level 2) is also quite simple to test. Tactics are based not only on visual and calculating skill, but also on (1) a knowledge of standard tactical ideas (2) the ability to foresee the opponent's replies to your thrusts, and your subsequent counters.

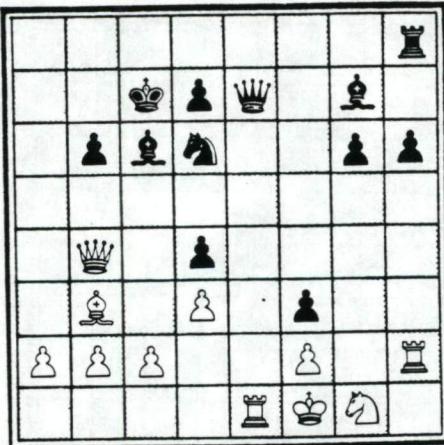
The tests here are two sets of six positions. The first six are meant to be 'easier' though this is a relative term. The second set are more difficult.

You should study the positions from anything from five to fifteen minutes each. If you set them up on your board - DO NOT MOVE THE PIECES IN ANALYSIS. In each case there is either a mating attack or a large amount of material to be won on forced methods. Write down your solution and take a note of the time spent on each problem.

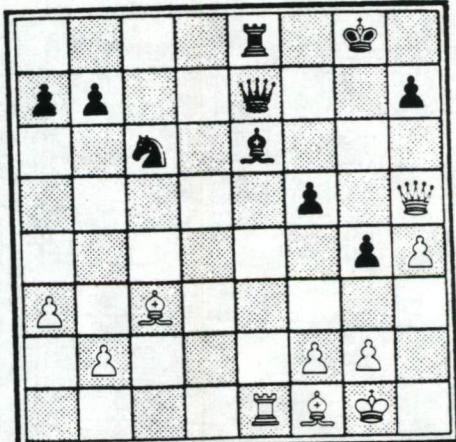
SET I



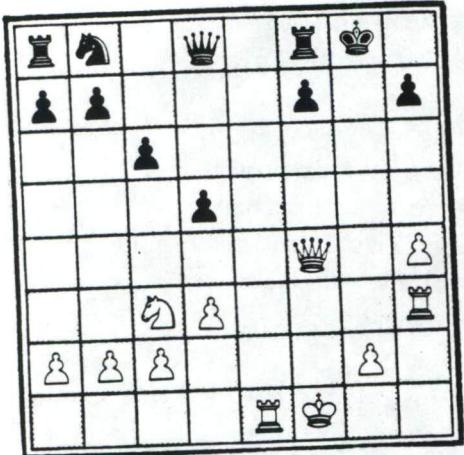
WHITE TO PLAY



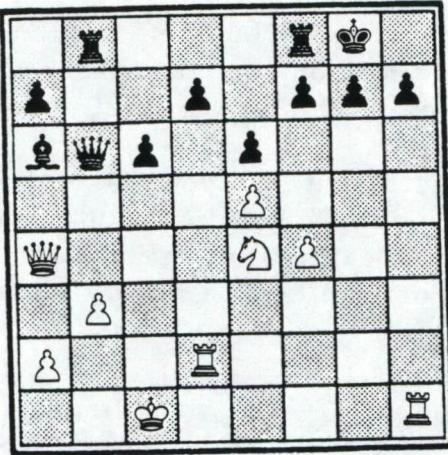
BLACK TO PLAY



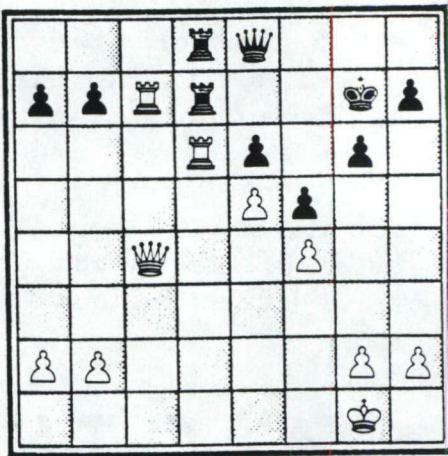
WHITE TO PLAY



WHITE TO PLAY

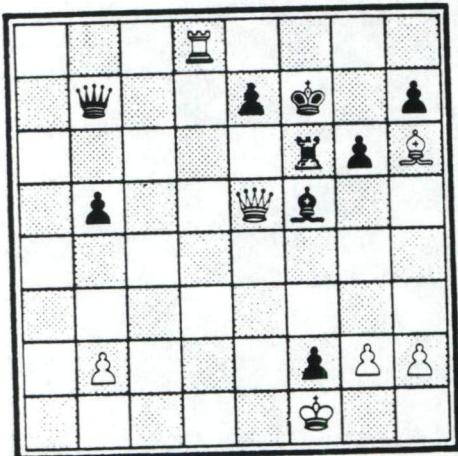


WHITE TO PLAY

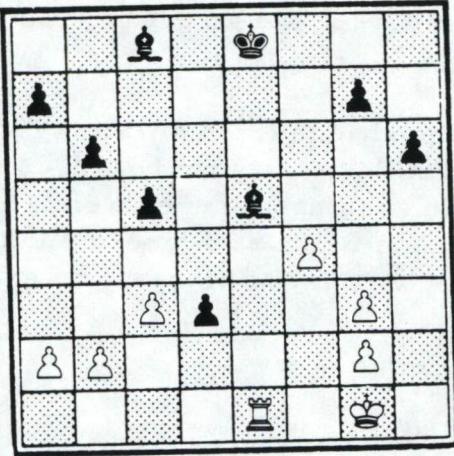


WHITE TO PLAY

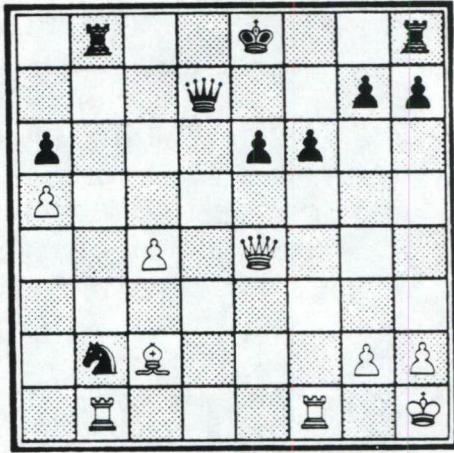
SET 2



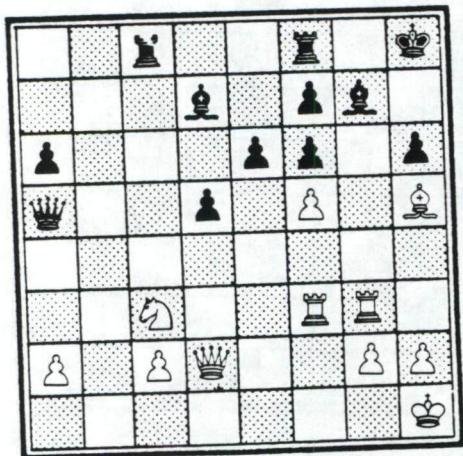
BLACK TO PLAY



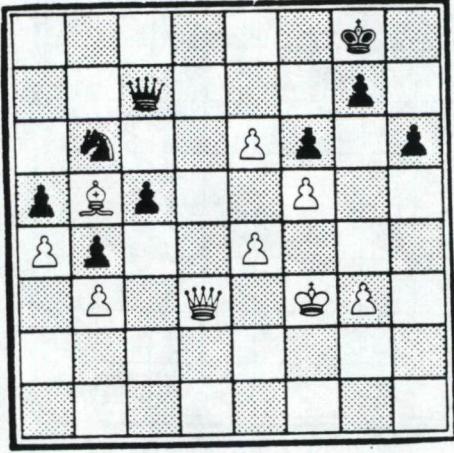
BLACK TO PLAY



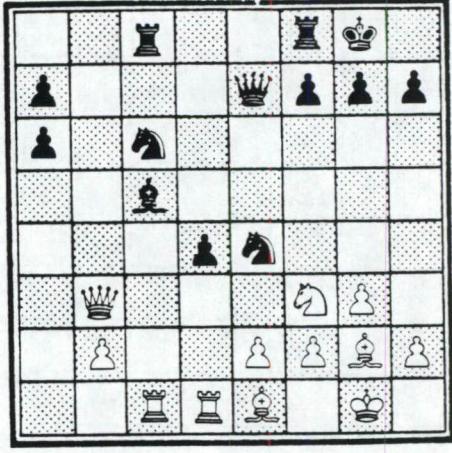
WHITE TO PLAY



WHITE TO PLAY



WHITE TO PLAY



WHITE TO PLAY

Solutions on page 21

On test 3 you scored out of 6

On test 4 you scored out of 6

From your results achieved I can make the following assessment of your tactical play and what should be done to improve it.

If you scored badly - say 0 - 2 on even the first section, then knowledge of tactical ideas is lacking and you should obtain it from the following source.

WINNING CHESS by Chernev and Reinfeld.

published by Faber at £1.50

also useful is - TACTICS FOR BEGINNERS by Wade, Bott & Morrison
Lutterworth Press

You should not, however, read these books too passively. When you come to a diagram, cover the commentary and try to work out the continuation by yourself. Chess is a doing game; just reading about tactics, and not being able to do them is not enough.

If you scored say 2 - 4 on the easy tasks and perhaps 2 - 3 on the second set, then you have basic tactical knowledge and skill, but there is great scope for improvement by testing yourself regularly against set positions. I recommend the following:

WINNING CHESS TACTICS - Horowitz

published by Cornerstone Press at £2.40

This book contains 300 positions, and I suggest you tackle them in sets of six. Work them out as you did for the above test examples, noting the time spent on each position, and the number of solutions you got right.

Besides the above book, there are several others which could prove useful to develop your tactical strength.

TEST YOUR CHESS IQ - Livi Shitz

(Pergamon) £3.95

PLAY FOR MATE - Cafferty/Hooper

(Bell) £5.50

CHESS POSITIONS - Alexander

(Penguin) Out of print I think, perhaps your library has it.

SIMPLE CALCULATIONS Book 1 & 2 - Basman)

(Turnover Chess) 65p for two books

If you do a lot of these positions, you need to avoid the trap of thinking your own games will suddenly become replete with all the most glorious combinations. Tactics are an important part of the game of chess, but only a part. Think of yourself as a boxer who spends months working on his knockout punch. However, you may have to wait 14 rounds and make hundreds of intricate movements before you see the right moment to deliver the punch. In developing tactical skills you should also learn to judge when a particular tactic is applicable; and at that point you must be able to deliver the blow and not muff it.

To return to our tests. If you scored 5 or 6/6 on the easy problems, and above 50% on the more difficult ones, your tactical abilities are already of quite a high order. Of course, the time taken is important. If you managed the first set in 20 minutes and the second took you less than 40 minutes, the above scores are good.

To sharpen yourself still more, I suggest the following books.

TURNOVER BOOKS ON TACTICS & ANALYSIS - Basman

Set of 4 books - £2.25

IT'S YOUR MOVE by Teschner & Miles
(Batsford)

THE BEST MOVE - Hort and Jansa
(this last book makes demands of IM/GM strength in
many cases). RHM Books.

When solving tactical positions, it is a help to look for underlying themes rather than plunging straight in with the calculations. This can cut down the time spent on analysis enormously. That is, before launching into calculations try to work out a theme - discovered attack, fork or whatever - which could apply.

POSITIONAL CHESS

We now move up to the third floor. If the previous tests have placed you firmly on one of the lower levels, then, as I have stated positional chess is a bit too refined for you at present. However, it is possible to learn positional ideas even if you can not yet apply them with 100% accuracy. In fact you must have a stock of positional ideas to see you through the opening and the middle game. What I am suggesting, however, is that you put the main part of your efforts towards achieving a good degree of tactical skill. I would say a score of at least 4/6 on the easy tests and 3/6 on the harder tactical tests before you move to positional chess.

However, read through this section, do the tests and you can come back to the more intense parts of the work later.

I have stated earlier that positional factors usually amount to no more than a pawn's worth. There is one exception which is the king position. A badly exposed king can prove fatal, and sometimes it may be worth investing a piece or more if the attack is strong.

The first thing to look for then is the king position. When assessing a position, check if queens are still on the board. If they are, then king safety is of the utmost importance. Is the king castled? Are the pawns unblemished in front of the king? (pawn weaknesses are doubly dangerous in the vicinity of the king). Does the enemy have open files against the king? Is there a large concentration of enemy forces near the king, and few defenders? If the king is uncastled check whether he is in danger. This would be signalled by the presence of open or partially open files near the king, or vulnerable diagonals.

After the king look at the other pieces. If there were no pawns on the board, all pieces would have perfect scope - except the knights - and games would soon be over. So a clear area of the game is concerned with moving pawns in such a way as not to interfere with the action of one's pieces; and to move them too, so that the opponents pieces are hampered. We have mentioned the crucial importance of pawns in king protection and the pawns likewise affect the mobility of the pieces. Rooks are particularly hampered by pawns, and it is generally only after an exchange of pawns, resulting in an open file, that the rooks have real work to do. The bishops, moving along diagonals have less trouble in finding good lines to move along; however, it is quite possible to have a whole chain of pawns on the same colour square as your bishop and the bishop looks a very sorry piece. The only piece relatively unaffected by pawns are the knights, since they can hop over them. More frequently the case is that the knights interfere with the advance of the pawns, if they develop in front of them.

Another factor to look for in piece activity, certainly in the opening and early middle game, is exposure. The further a piece advances, the more vulnerable it is to attack from other pieces and pawns; and the stronger the piece, the greater the vulnerability. For that reason you often see kings, queens and rooks working from the first and second ranks. Knights need to advance a little further to have any striking power. Bishops are an odd case, they are long range pieces like rooks so can stay on the back row, though in that case they interfere with the flow of rooks to open file. They often develop on the second rank, but can take up more advanced positions, where their extra scope has to be balanced against vulnerability to knights and pawns.

Besides exposure, there is limitation. A piece can be crippled permanently by its own pawns; it can also be muffled by the judicious advances of enemy pawns. Rooks and bishops sometimes bite futilely against small pawn chains, and knights may find themselves centrally placed but ineffective because they attack points that are all guarded by pawns.

After the pieces, look at the pawns. Pawns have three main aspects - their ability to help and hinder pieces, their control of space especially in the centre and their strengths and weaknesses solely as pawns. The first category has already been discussed, but we should add that if the pawns are advanced incorrectly, they lose control over certain squares. These squares then can become targets or entry points for the opponent's pieces.

Regarding pawn control of the centre, whole opening systems are developed round this idea, so we cannot deal with it in depth here.

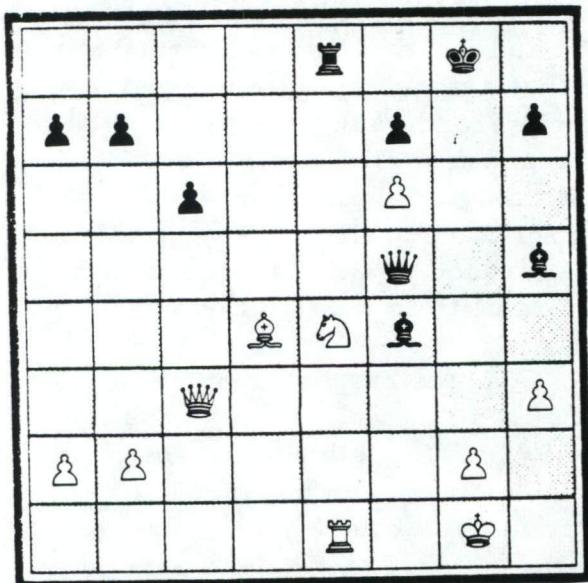
Finally, the pawns regarded in isolation have great strength when they are passed and threaten to queen; can be inexpensive battering rams aimed to break open an enemy fortress; they can be weak when they are doubled, isolated or backward, because they are more vulnerable to attack in these situations and the squares around them (looking back to the first category) are also weak and offer potential out posts for enemy pieces.

This thumbnail stretch of positional factors should help to show what a vast subject it is. In material chess one can say - this piece is worth three points and leave it at that; it will apply in the majority of cases. Once you have started a positional factor - for example - a doubled pawn, you have to further embellish it. The pawn itself may not be weak; there may be compensating factors in the presence of an open file. The doubled pawn may be irrelevant because another positional factor may be more significant in the given position.

In future issues we shall investigate the subject of positional chess more deeply. One can look at it quantitatively, assigning numerical values to positional concepts; and this approach is used in programming computers. Or, recognise the difficulty of affixing firm figures to these elusive factors, one can collect several examples of each theme from master play and then proceed to compare the samples with each other.

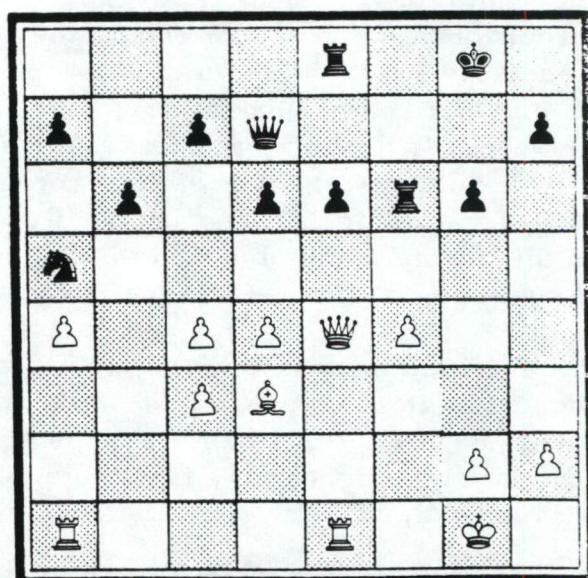
Meanwhile, we shall look at a few positions to see how positional ideas can be applied.

Diagram 1



White to play

Diagram 2



White to play

Study these positions in the following manner.

1. check the material balance
2. check if there are any direct threats in the position
3. look at the king positions
4. then the placing and activity of the pieces
5. the pawns

Out of this analysis one should select what are the most important features of the position.

Any positional assessment is static, but the assessment has to be used as a base for future action. This is PLANNING. Out of the most important features of the position one has to be able to devise a plan. This is what all players do, albeit unconsciously.

(After you have made your analysis, turn to the following page)

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SOLUTIONS

Material Chess:

Test 1

(1) 1...QXR on g1 (2) 10 (3) 10 (4) 7, 2 (5) 9, 4 (6) 5, 4, 1BXN is answered by 1...RXN, so better is 1BXR NXB winning the exchange.

Test 2

(1) 1...R-KR5 pins and wins the bishop on R2. (2) 1B-N6 forks rook and knight (3) 1Q-N4 attacks two undefended pieces (4) 1...N-N5! threatens both mate at KR2, the pawn at KB2 and the knight at KB7(f7) (5) 1BXP is a double attack by DISCOVERY. Black loses his unguarded rook on QN1 (b8) after 1...PXB 2RXR. (6) The best fork is 1N-B5, hitting queen and bishop; 1N-N6 is a fork on the rooks but can be answered by 1...BXR.

Looking at the first position, we can see that material is even. There is a direct threat against the white knight at K4. In the king's position, we can see that white is fairly safe, but that black's king suffers from a draughty KN file and the white pawn at KB6 could be a worrisome threat. For example, it can possibly support a mating attack with the white queen coming to KN7. The pawn at KB6 also shuts in the black king and makes a back rank mate possible.

Our positional analysis has already led us to think that this position could be a tactical one. For exposure of a king may be a positional feature, but its exploitation is usually tactical. Looking round for a tactical solution with his skills already sharpened to a razor point by his work upon tactical play (see previous section) our scrutinizer notes the undefended position of the black rook at K8 and the fact that his own rook is on K1 is defended. Eventually, looking for a multiple attacking blow (which is the fundamental weapon of tactical chess) he spots the move 1N - N3, which uncovers the attack from white's rook against its fellow at K8, and at the same time forks the black queen and bishop. Black removes one of the threats by 1... RXRch, but after 2QXR he is in the same position. He needs to defend both his K8 square against mate and his queen; his best bet is probably to give up his bishop at KR4 by playing 2... Q-Q2.

We should note that white even had a surplus of tactical advantages, because in this sequence he did not need to use the idea of moving his queen to KN7 to attack the black king (to explain this idea further, I mean that on move two black could play 2... BXN allowing 3QXBch K-B1 4Q-N7ch, but that white has better in 3Q-K8 mate).

So positional assessment can tell us whether a tactical solution may be at hand.

Turning to the second position, once again material is level. However, there are no direct threats. As for the kings positions neither side is in great danger. Black's king has less pawn protection, but he has managed to barricade himself against the threats from white's queen and bishop. Looking at the pieces, the white queen has a dominating position in mid board but is not particularly exposed, since the number of pieces that can attack her have been reduced, and the queen is still within the white territory, as defined by the pawns on the fourth rank. Black's queen is less active, but still enjoys useful scope; she attacks a weak pawn at QR5; she defends the K3 pawn and can swing over to the defence of the king or the half open KB file if necessary.

White's rook at K1 is a strong piece because it bears down on a weak pawn at K6; whereas the black rook at KB3, also on a semi-open file, is less strong because white's pawn at KB4 can be defended firmly by the move P.KN3. White's other rook at QR1 is tied to the defence of the QR pawn, and the black rook at K1 has a fairly passive role.

The only minor pieces on the board are the white bishop and the black knight. Which is the better piece? At first sight the black knight at QR4 is very poor, because it is on the edge of the board. This is true,

however, it does perform a useful function in preventing the further advance of white's QR pawn, which would open up the QR file for white, and it also strikes at a tender spot in white's camp, the doubled pawn at QB4. This pawn needs constant attention; and like the white queen's rook, the white bishop is tied to the defence of a pawn.

Having said that, however white's bishop is still the superior minor piece. It performs one defensive role at Q3, but its diagonal in the other direction, towards the black king side is not blocked by its own pawns. In an open position such as this, the long range ability of the bishop is an advantage.

Concerning the pawns we have already mentioned that white's weak pawns on the queen side tie some of his pieces to their defence; on the other hand, black's pawn at K3 has to feel the full blast of white's major piece power down the king file; and the white pawns at Q4 and KB4 perform the role of watchdogs, preventing the K3 pawn from advancing and perhaps exchanging itself off.

So a general assessment shows an advantage to white here, but a qualified one:

His king is more secure

His pieces are more actively placed, and his bishop better than the black knight.

He has more central control, and pressure against K6.

On the debit side white's queen side pawns need attention and tie down potentially offensive pieces to defensive tasks.

Forming a plan from the above set of features require one to aim to enhance one's own characteristics, whilst diminishing those of the opponent.

One possibility is to try to put more pressure on the obvious weak black pawn at K3, and our assessment leads us to look at this.

Noticing that the pawn at K3 is pinned, can white play 1 P.Q5 here, since black cannot answer 1...PXP because of 2QXRch? Unfortunately, this move is suspect on two counts. In the first place black, by answering 1 ... P-K4 could virtually eliminate the weakness of his pawn, and in the second place, every pawn advance must be weighed up against the possible weak squares it leaves in its wake. Here if white plays 1P-Q5, black would immediately espy the square QB4 as a likely out post for his knight, and would consider the manoeuvre N-N6-B4, securing an unassailable out post near the centre.

So white drops this idea like a hot potato and looks around for something else. Perhaps he can double rooks on the king file, for example by 1R-R2 followed by RK2 and put pressure on the pawn like this. This would no doubt be a natural plan, arising directly from the position, but white, firmly grounded in the rules of material chess (see earlier section) is rightly unwilling to abandon his QR pawn to the black queen, in the hope of nebulous pressure down the king file.

White briefly looks at the possible alternatives, such as liquidating his queen side doubled pawns by 1P.B5. This however, loses a pawn and the tactical stroke 2B-QN5 does not win material because black has 2...P-B3 in reply. He then considers 1PKN4, planning a king side attack by a later P-B5. But this too looks risky, because black can quickly gang up against the pawn at KB4, trebling major pieces against it. So white feels it would be better to have his pawn at KN3, guarding the pawn at KB4 and limiting black's pressure along the KB file.

At this point we have made a fairly exhaustive assessment of the position, and considered various likely plans, without finding any clear one. The danger to be resisted in such positions is that of ruining ones game due to frustration at not finding a straight forward plan. Capablanca, who seemed to have great skill in playing positions where the advantages are very finely balanced, managed to find a good continuation here, which increased the scope of his pieces without incurring other disadvantages. He played 1P-KN3, (supporting his KBP) and later K-N2, P-KR4 and P-R5. This enhanced the scope of his queen and bishop, hammering away at black's king side, and even gave a possible alternative avenue for the rooks to invade along (the KR file).

I shall now append some more positions for you to examine in the same way. This will be discussed in the next issue.

Books on positional chess are quite plentiful, but I have not found a good work yet for the middle levels of student. I, therefore, send you back to read the basic work, Logical Chess Move by Move, by Chernev. However, read the games differently this time. Isolate the main positional themes of each game and make a personal collection of examples; in some cases you will have more than one sample of the same theme, which will be valuable for comparison purposes. A positional concept, once learnt, requires continual refining, so you see it in various lights and different aspects.

Another practical suggestion is to study the games going on around you at your club. Make mental assessments of the positions as you pass them, in the manner outlined in this article.

Diagram 1

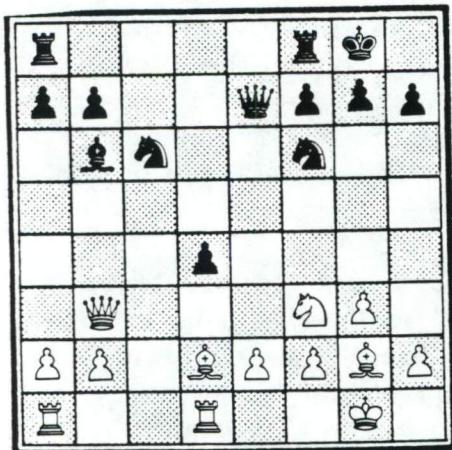


Diagram 2

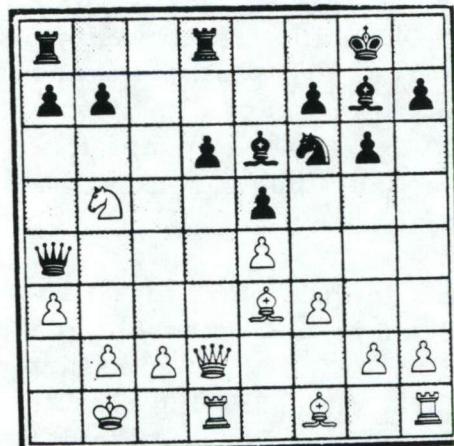


DIAGRAM 3

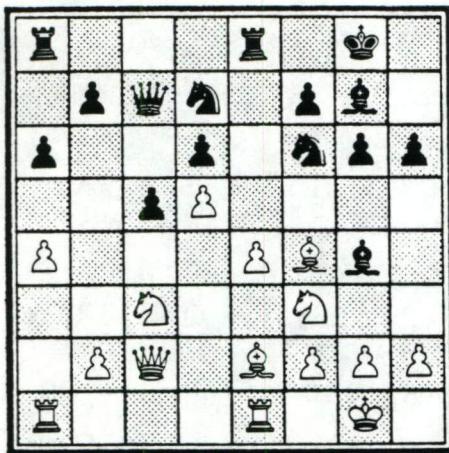
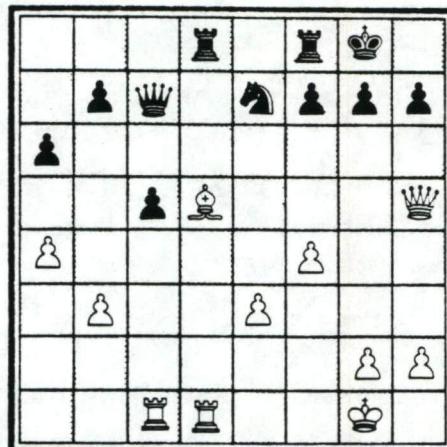


DIAGRAM 4



All these positions will be discussed in the next issue; in all of them, white is on the move.

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Tactical Chess:

Set 1

(1) white can cause interference by 1R-Q5; if 1...QXR 2Q-B6 mate, or 1...PXR 2QXR and mate. 1R-K5 also wins in similar fashion.

(2) 1...N-K5 discovers an attack on the white queen. If 2QXQ N-Q7 mate

(3) 1RxB QXR 2B-B4 QXB 3QXR mate, 1B-B4 is less strong because of 1...N-Q1

(4) 1R-N3ch K-R1 2Q-R6 R-N1 3RK8 paralyses black. If 3...QXR 4Q-B6 mates or 3...RXR 4Q-N7 is mate.

(5) 1N-B6ch Pxn (1...K-R1 2RXP mate) 2 R-N2ch K-R1 3 RXP ch KXR 4Q-K4ch P-B4 5R-R2ch K-N2 6Q N2 mate. There may be other ways to win, but this sequence, involving all checks is completely forced.

(6) 1R(Q6) XR RXR 2QN5 wins because of a curious double pin. 1RXKP only wins a pawn.

Set 2

(1) Black can win material and blot out white's attack by 1...B-Q6 ch! 2 RXB QXNPch 3 KXQ P - Qch 4 K-N3 QXRch with an easy win.

(2) Black plays 1...P-Q7 2 RXBch B-K3!! 3 RXBch K-Q2 and the rook cannot get back to stop the pawn. On move 2 white has to play 2R-Q1, but then with 2 bishops against a rook black has an easy win.

(3) White's first move is 1B-R4, exploiting the pin on the knight at QN2 to lure the black queen away from defence of the pawn at K3. This is obvious enough, but were you able to work out the rest of the sequence precisely?

1...QXB 2QXK Pch K-Q1 3R-B5 is stronger than 3KR-Q1ch because black can answer this by QXRch. If black's king goes the other way on move 2, by 2...K-B1, white must play 3RXPch PXR 4QXPch K-N1 5 Q-N5ch K-B2 6 R-KB1ch with a quick mate.

(4) In this position too, the initial sacrifice is obvious, but the continuation is not easy to see. This position is a good example, in higher tactics, of the need to see your opponents best counter move when you embark on a combination

1 RXB KXR 2R-N3ch K-R2 3B-N6 ch

So far so good, if 3...PXB 4RXNP and white mates on 4QXRP. However, black plays 3...K-N2 and how does white now continue? His obvious discoveries 4 BXBP ch, 4B-R5 ch do not seem to work, and the move 4R-R3 PXB 5QXRPch K-B2 lets the black king out.

On move 4, white plays B-R7ch KXB 5R-R3 and mates with 6QXRPch etc. One difficulty in solving this position is the number of times the white rook lands on KN6 in the variations; it takes a mental switch to move in sideways instead of upwards in the final sequence.

(5) Here the plausible 1 B-Q7 is easily met by 1...K-B1. Instead white plays a break through sacrifice with 1P-K5 since if black answers 1...PXP 2P-B6 PXP 3 QN6ch is devastating. After 1P-K5 black captures by 1...QXKP 2Q-Q8ch K-R2 3P-K7. This is the position which needs to be assessed before going into the combination. White will queen a pawn, but black looks to have good chances of a draw by perpetual check. However, he does not get it.

3...Q-B4ch 4K-N2 Q-K5ch 5K-R2 Q-B7ch 6K-N1! Q-B8ch 7B-B1 Q-K6ch 8K-R2 Q-B7ch 9B-N2. Were it not for the minuscule pawn at KN3, white's king would lack protection, and black could draw by 9...Qh4ch. As it is, white wins.

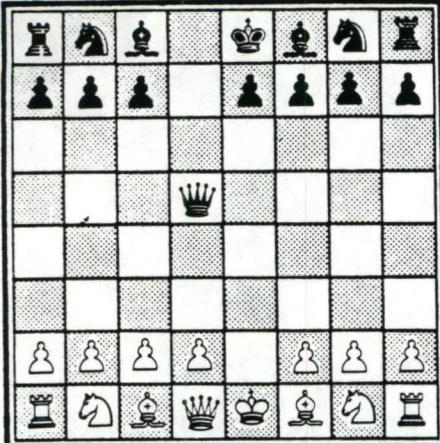
(6) Most of the positions have involved attacks on the king, but tactics do occur, in less spectacular forms, when the kings are not threatened.

Here, white's move 1 N-R4 puts black in difficulties due to his loosely defended pieces. White's threat is 2 BXN and 3 RXB, so black plays 1...B-N3 only to lose the exchange by the sequence 2 N-B5 Q-K4 3 BXN QXB 4N-Q6 and 5 NX R.

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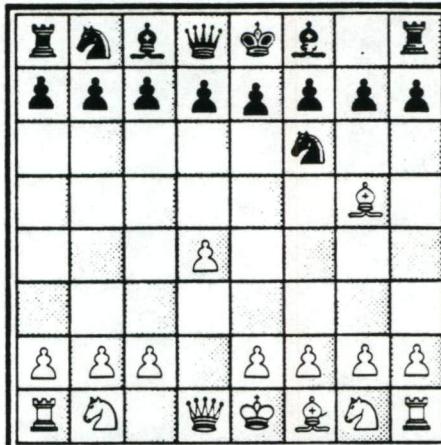
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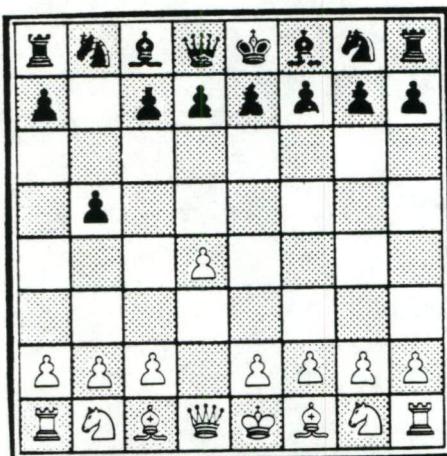
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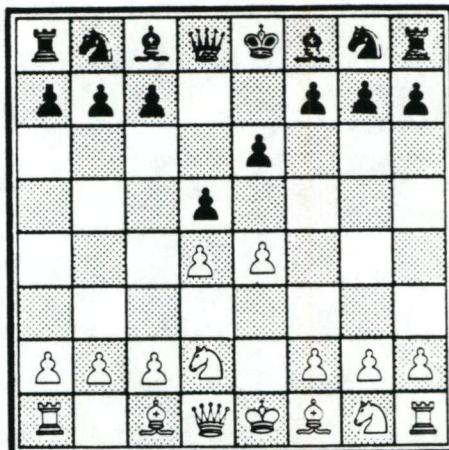
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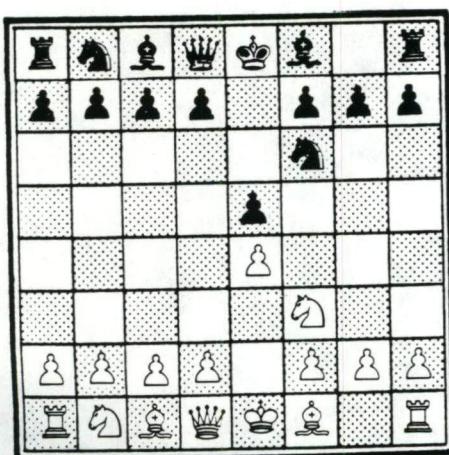
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