

Curriculum

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Introduction

May 31, 2014

Dear Teacher, Coach and Reader,

A hearty welcome to each and every one of you!

We are about to embark on our journey learning about the wondrous and beautiful world of Chess. The modern game of Chess has an extraordinary history going back centuries the direct origins being traced as far back to the sixth century Anno Domini (AD). When we learn Chess we discover a world where science, logic, art, geometry, math, language as well as competition are all fused together creating the Royal Game of Chess. For centuries Chess has been called the "Game of Kings" and is widely considered the single most popular board game in the world. Therefore I'm delighted, honored and more than humbled to be able to share my knowledge with you as we enter a journey of Chess discovery together.

Before we begin I'd like to start with a brief background about this work, its goals and how it came into being as a Chess Curriculum aimed at teaching Chess to beginning players in a classroom

setting. Today, in America and throughout the world, the ancient game of Chess is perceived in a most positive light. Increasingly, Chess is recognized as an important educational tool that can help teach what scholastic Chess coaches call the “Five R’s.” They are: *Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Reasoning* and perhaps the most important “R” of all, *Responsibility*. When children play Chess they actively engage with all these disciplines. In addition, Chess forces all its practitioners to be creative as well as original while using their own *critical thinking* skills. During play (competition) as well as study (theory) the brain is exercised. Oftentimes most rigorously. As a result of this new-found recognition as a tool to sharpen the mind – better to say this forgotten reality – educators have increasingly been willing to teach Chess in schools as either an after-class activity or even within the school curriculum as an *elective* course. In a number of nations around the world, most famously, Russia, Bulgaria, Venezuela, and Armenia, Chess has been taught as a *mandatory* course in Primary schools. In some nations this has been the case for decades.

In 2012, the European Parliament, recognizing the benefits that Chess offers to students, passed a proclamation encouraging schools within the twenty-eight nation group to teach Chess in their Primary classrooms. This decision was the culmination of a decade’s long initiative to have Chess officially recognized as an educational tool to help develop and strengthen young minds.

Teaching the Five R’s in a game playing setting is a fantastic means of getting students to not only learn, but to actively exercise their creativity and to strengthen their own critical thinking skills. In many schools around the United States, Chess is also used as a treat. If the class should collectively hand in their homework early, for example, the rest of the class period allows for Chess play. Chess is fun too!

World Champion Viswanathan Anand speaks

In an interview published by the news agency IANS on December 20, 2012 in New Delhi, the five-time World Champion Viswanathan Anand from India was inaugurating an NIIT Mind Champions Academy at the Global Indian International School (GIIS). He explained that Chess is not only a game but a fun activity for schoolchildren as it inculcates useful skills for education as well as for life. *"Playing Chess enhances the memory, gives confidence, teaches problem solving, and increases concentration..."* The champion also added that, *"Chess teaches you that all moves have consequences."* That this too is an important lesson to learn for impressionable minds.

Thank you Vishy! Children learn planning and consequences, and to take personal responsibility for the decisions made. What an excellent way to prepare the young for the challenges they will face in life.

Chess Scholarships in Colleges and Universities

More so than at any other time in my life, Chess is also being taught in Colleges and Universities where scholarships are being offered to students skilled in Chess attending these institutions of higher learning. Therefore it is a most auspicious time that a new, original, didactic Curriculum for Chess be developed and delivered. We hope that this effort will be a ground breaking exercise that will encourage teachers and coaches to teach Chess and that it will be used as an indispensable resource.

My Chess Background

Allow me to introduce myself by discussing my own Chess background. I started playing Chess at the age of twelve in the summer of 1972 in Seattle, Washington. It was a heady time for Chess and Chess players the world over as that was the year that America’s Robert James Fischer, challenged the Soviet World Champion Boris Spassky in a twenty-four game World

Championship Chess match. I got caught up in the “Bobby fever” that swept the nation and from a challenging hobby, Chess became my passion. At the age of thirteen, while attending Meany Middle School in Seattle, Washington, I was invited by the school’s Principal to teach a Chess class as an elective in-class course. With trepidation, I asked the Principal if I could give grades to the students? The Principal confirmed that indeed, I could give my school mates a grade. My Principal told me that while there would be an adult in the class recording attendance all the lessons, homework, lectures, study were all up to me including grades. Disbelieving of this marvelous opportunity, I cautiously explained to the Principle that I intended to give myself an “A” grade. He laughed and said that he expected that indeed I would. I also told him that I’d give my classmates an “A” as well. He told me that if they deserved an “A” I should do that as well. A deal was instantly struck.

As soon as the next semester began, I found myself teaching Chess to my fellow students. For the first day of class, seven students had signed up for the elective class but by the end of the semester there were forty-two students attending Chess class every school day. Happily for everyone in my class, including myself, we all got an “A” grade. It is fair to say that mine was a popular class. At that time I certainly could have used a lesson planner as well as a Curriculum. Unfortunately, to my knowledge none existed and I was thrown onto my own devices making lectures, organizing competitions, creating Chess puzzles daily and oftentimes on the fly.

The graduating class of Meany Middle School came with me to Garfield High School in Seattle where a Chess dynasty began. Soon we were winning competitions in the metro King County league, then the State of Washington and finally we even attended the National High School Championships, winning scores of trophies along the way. Our success led to our Chess team receiving “letters” in Chess allowing our team to get letterman jackets from Garfield High. This was a fantastic achievement in a school which consistently won State championships in the traditional athletic sports of track and field, basketball and football. Getting a “letter” for Chess was a first in Garfield High history.

After graduating Garfield High I decided to give professional Chess a shot before going onto higher education at the University of Washington in Seattle. Wouldn’t you know it, in 1978 and 1979 I won the US Junior Championship and in 1979 the World Junior Championship, held in Skien, Norway. A few months later, in January 1980, I tied for first in the prestigious Premiere Group tournament of Wijk Aan Zee, Holland, garnering my third and final Grandmaster norm, becoming at the time the fourth youngest Grandmaster in history, at nineteen years and ten months old. Nowadays, I no longer brag about that particular achievement as today’s generations have even surpassed Bobby Fischer’s incredible record of becoming a Grandmaster at fifteen years old! A record, I was quite certain would never be broken. My successes in tournament play led me to becoming a professional Chess grandmaster. A career choice I’m very happy I made.

My happy experiences from school-hood days have never been forgotten including how desirous it would have been for me to have had a Chess Curriculum from which I could have taught. It was only in the 1990s that the President of Microsoft Press, Mr. Min Yee, approached me and asked me to author a Winning Chess Series of instructional books. It was a task I relished but even the Winning Chess Series of books were not designed in the way that this Curriculum has been written.

My goals for this work are manifold: To assist coaches and teachers with a lesson planner; this would allow substitute teachers to be able to pick up the program where a previous teacher had left; to impress school principals and academia with the types of knowledge and skills being taught to students who learn how to play Chess; to create a Curriculum which will evolve to becoming a national standard; to create a Curriculum that is not rigidly fixed but rather is constantly refined, updated and improved by the coaches and teachers from their own hands-on-

experience working on the front lines; to get kids started on a right track of basic fundamental chess knowledge; to make Chess easy to teach as well as easy to learn; and finally for both teacher and student to have fun during the process. In short to create both a standard for the here and now as well as a living work that evolves and grows from hard won experience. Hence, nothing in this Curriculum is meant to be cast in immovable rock but rather to act as a stepping stone for the improvements and refinements destined to come at the hands of those who use this work.

Today, many Chess coaches have their own unique syllabus for teaching Chess. This Curriculum is not written as an attempt to replace the work of others. The aim of this work is to create a large base of knowledge presented in a way that makes Chess easy to learn and can be used in combination with their favorite lessons or to help them create their own syllabus. The foremost goals of this work are to make learning Chess as easy as possible and to have fun while learning. Two very lofty goals indeed.

Whenever a particular lesson, diagram, puzzle, quiz or test can be shown to be more effective by featuring a different diagram, a different question or a better answer, it should be replaced by the improved version. If it is shown to be more effective to introduce a different concept earlier or later, the material should be adjusted accordingly. In this way learning techniques can be better standardized and constantly updated and improved.

With that background completed I'd like to speak to the difficulty I had in properly structuring the Curriculum. The challenges start immediately. How to begin? Which concepts to introduce first? Obviously I needed to start with the very basics, including the rules of play, piece movements, principles and elements of play, and so forth before wandering into the fields of successful strategies, checkmating patterns as well as tactics. When introducing a basic concept I often tripped myself up realizing that I needed to introduce something else first. At times a near conundrum occurred, similar to the age old question: What came first, a chicken or an egg? Putting Chess knowledge in a logical introductory sequence is surprisingly difficult. I tried my best but even now with the benefit of months of hindsight and many years of experience teaching Chess I'm not sure I got it right. Feedback from students, teachers and coaches is not just welcome it is needed. Compliments are certainly appreciated but useful criticism and suggestions for improvements are even better!

Teaching Techniques

If learning Chess is to be considered hard, teaching Chess is harder still. It is a challenge that should not be underestimated. As you will see throughout this work, I've striven hard to be both *playful* and *complimentary* with the class. There is nothing in the learning process quite as powerful as positive reinforcement. I have a pet theory that goes as follows, which I first pose as a question, "What is the best *currency* in the world?" Give the question some thought before I get to my theory.

The best currency in the world is the compliment. Why? Because when you give a compliment you make the recipient as well as yourself feel good. *Both* persons are empowered by the compliment, which makes it a powerful teaching tool. When students struggle to learn Chess they will give numerous wrong answers including offering illegal moves. This is obvious and most understandable! Even a well thought wrong answer shows that the students are *thinking*. That they are actively *engaged*. Creative wrong answers especially deserve a compliment! Be generous with your praise. Do not shoot down a wrong answer just because it is wrong. Encourage thoughtful reconsideration.

When tackling a difficult subject matter create a challenge for the class as a *whole*. Single out individual answers when you are sure the individual has the correct answer, which gives you a

chance to offer a word of praise. Encourage creative, original thought. Ask for the logic that brought a student to formulate a particular answer.

In my past, I've often done, "Summer School Chess Camps" that vary from several days to two weeks in length. Two things I've always kept in the forefront of my mind while doing these Chess camps is my Hippocratic Oath: "*Do no Harm.*" I take it as a given that any student that has joined one of my classes has an interest, a spark, in learning more about Chess. I do my very best to nourish that spark and to make it grow into a flame. I never, ever, want to stomp it out. Secondly, I know that the subject material I am teaching is hard. To pound the student non-stop with hour after hour of rigorous training would benefit no one. So I oftentimes take a break. This could mean telling a short story, usually one that has a humorous ending. Or it could mean taking a longer break allowing the class to play and compete with one another. Be sensitive to the mood of the class. Eager learners are the best, of course, but sense that moment when the lesson has gone too long and create a time out. Play time is fun time.

Who should play Chess?

The simplest answer is everyone. The younger the better as well. Today it is common for four, five and six year olds to learn Chess. One great advantage of Chess is that it is the most democratic game of all. Anyone can play young and old alike, male or female, the blind, deaf, physically challenged... Simply everyone. All of us play under absolutely fair and equal conditions using the same *universal* rules of Chess. Furthermore, Chess is *cheap*. A good quality plastic set and roll up canvas board might cost twenty dollars but last decades. A high quality wooden Chess set for a few hundred dollars can last a lifetime. Compare these costs to any other sport and we see why Chess is truly a democratic game.

Will Chess make you smart?

One question that journalists repeatedly ask me is this, "*Will Chess make you smart?*" Since I'm an International Chess Grandmaster I'd like to answer with an emphatic, "*Absolutely! Not just smart but down right brilliant!*"

Sadly, I know this highly desirable answer is simply not true. While Chess is a tool, a very good tool for exercising our brains, the truth is that becoming smart or even brilliant depends entirely upon the student. Being smart is a reflection of the amount of work, time, discipline, thinking that students spend not just on their Chess studies but all their learning activities. Chess will help us, indeed encourage us, to think critically about the lessons received but it is up to us to do that and to what extent in all our endeavors. We must constantly challenge ourselves, our perceptions, our views, even our very way of thinking when we engage in critical thinking. We must be willing to not only set our own goals high but we must work hard to achieve them. Working hard to successfully meet our goals is smart. Hard work, serious study, will pay off in time and that indeed will make us smart. Maybe even brilliant. It is up to the student. How hard are you willing to work? That is the choice facing us all.

Besides working hard there is one other thing that *will* make you smart. I call it *developing the curious mind*. And what is that? Nothing more difficult than learning to ask questions. How do things work? Why do they work like that and not like this? The curious mind belongs to someone who always asks questions! They *want* to learn to grasp knowledge with both hands and we learn more quickly by asking questions. Chess is a game in which everyone asks questions. It happens all the time. Millions of times a day in fact... "Why did you play that?" "Why didn't you play this?" "Is that move best?" "Where did I go wrong?" "What are my choices now?" "Has anyone played such a beautiful combination?" Chess is a game which is a never ending search for truth where questions are constantly asked. There are some positions that are so fathomless that no "best move" can be proven. But we apply ourselves and try our best to find solutions.

Chess *does* develop the curious mind and in our journey we will find ourselves always, always asking questions.

Chess Studies: What has been proven?

Still the question persists, “Will Chess make me smart?” It can be reasonably argued that the push we are witnessing to teach Chess in schools is being supported by empirical observation and numerous studies, which strongly demonstrate that Chess is helpful to the learning process. One of the most definitive was a study sponsored by the American corporation International Business Machines (IBM). This study was perhaps the most revealing and accurate of all Chess studies.

That study demonstrated that playing Chess will improve the reading ability of Chess practitioners. This is actually a colossally important observation concerning learning improvement. After all it is from *reading* as well as through *observation* that we gather nearly all of our knowledge. So rejoice. The correct clinically proven answer to the question is, “Yes, Chess will *help* make you smarter by improving your *reading* skills.”

Why does Chess improve a student’s reading? The Laws of Chess for tournament competitions *require* that competitors *write* down all the moves made by both players on a score-sheet. A copy of which is given to the arbiter and a copy is kept by the player. Each tournament game is thus recorded and saved for posterity. To compete in tournament play it is vital that we learn to properly record all the moves played. The accuracy of our score-sheet is crucial to playing Chess correctly. The score-sheet must provide an accurate written account of a game played. Once a game is properly recorded it can be shared with coaches and others so that an *analysis* of the game can be made thereafter. In Chess parlance such an analysis session is referred to as a *post-mortem*. A rather appropriate expression.

Writing and reading Chess game score-sheets will become a springboard for the development of all our future Chess skills. Skilled players can often read a score-sheet without the need or benefit of a Chess set to replay the moves. This ability is referred to as *blindfold* play. By correctly writing down our Chess moves, the *patterns* of Chess play are *etched* in our brains and become hard-wired. Short term memories become long term memories. Comprehension is increased. Recurring patterns of play are recognized and soon become second nature. Writing down and reading Chess moves are central to learning how to play Chess. Indeed, it’s a requirement for tournament competition. Such constant practice improves the reading, retention and comprehension of students who learn Chess. Furthermore as this comprehension is realized by the student they will start to take all their reading activity far more seriously, sharpening their concentration. A positive reinforcing feedback loop is achieved.

Consider the example of a child who reads how to trap an opponent in the Opening from a book and is successful in springing such a trap in their next game. Brimming with success the child delves into such a book yet again hopeful of even further successes. How could it be otherwise?

Chess Vocabulary

Every discipline has its own commonly used expressions unique to the discipline itself. For instance, if we wanted to learn how to sail a ship, we would learn to use words like: Starboard; port; bow; stern; galley; anchor; hull; rudder; berth; moor; pilot; course; compass; wheel and so on. Similarly, the Chess world also has its own unique lingo. Becoming familiar with the “Chess vocabulary” of expressions and idioms commonly used in Chess will make the whole learning process easier and more enjoyable. As Chess has an extraordinary history having been embraced by many cultures throughout the ages, Chess lingo features numerous words from many languages. Chess idioms have been carried on in French, German, Russian, Italian,

English, Spanish, Arabic and Farsi to mention a few. The richer our knowledge and use of the Chess vocabulary is the more our understanding increases.

Throughout the Curriculum there are numerous words that are underlined. These words will be put in our glossary for easy reference and definition or as a footnote on the page they appear. It is the goal of this Curriculum to use a rich vocabulary with a wide variety of expressions in order to help expand our knowledge as well as our use of words. A rich vocabulary will be a key feature of this Curriculum. Please do make every effort to be sure that your students fully understand these underlined words and practice them as well. It will make the learning/teaching experience a lot easier and a rich vocabulary will assist the student later in life with all their endeavors.

How is this Curriculum different from others?

This Curriculum is designed to teach Chess as methodically as possible in simple, easy steps. The instruction is meant to be complete and comprehensive so that the lessons learned, especially in the earliest chapters, become second nature. Building on a solid foundation of basic Chess knowledge and skills makes it natural for practitioners to move on to more sophisticated knowledge. In many instances other books and basic Chess instruction material I've read move from Chess basics to higher skills far too quickly. The result can leave the student bewildered. Worse still such failure can make the student wrongly believe that in case they fall behind their classmates that "Chess is too hard" for them. Thus it is vital that the early lessons be greatly elaborated upon to insure full comprehension. We are not in a hurry! Chess mastery is not the goal here rather mastery of the very basics. Master the basics and mastery comes easily thereafter.

If a student knows how all the pieces move as well as all the rules of Chess *before* entering a class, well *bravo!* That is wonderful. Even so, an experienced player may benefit from the early lessons in this Curriculum to reinforce some aspects of the *elements* of Chess they may have missed while learning how to play. An "advanced" student is a great asset for the class as well. They can assist their classmates in the learning process by helping to teach them too. It is nice to have skilled little helpers.

THE Challenge that Chess Instructors Face

While scholastic Chess has grown enormously in popularity over the last few decades this development hasn't made it any easier to teach Chess. Children today are presented with an amazing variety of games which they can play. The *feedback rewards* for video games, with the video and audio graphics most especially, is oftentimes instantaneous. A child is charmed by such games on the spot. This reality presented by video games creates an extraordinary challenge to Chess instructors. Why?

Let us consider a specific video game like "Mario Brothers" for a moment. This is simply a mesmerizing computer/video game for youngsters with audio and video moving stimulation to boot. A new player would start on "level one" which is the perfect level for them and whether they crash and burn or do well right out of the gate instantly a "personal best score" is achieved and the player has a benchmark from which they will judge themselves against in future play.

As a player moves to "level two, three, four and beyond" again it is the perfect level for them to practice their skills. A skilled player who practices often will see their personal best scores as well as their levels increase with improved performance. In time, such a practiced player may reach the highest levels of all. Let us say level twenty. Outstanding! The child is delighted with the challenge as well as their success in gaining new levels.

Unfortunately for chess coaches, to compare with the above example for a moment, the game of Chess is nearly the inverse of a Mario Brothers game. Let us imagine a youngster receives a Chess set as a gift. Excitedly, the child unwraps their new gift makes use of an “instruction sheet” thoughtfully provided in the set to help them properly set up the starting position. The child is understandably anxious to play their first game. This is akin to playing a Mario Brothers game at level twenty in your very first gaming experience. If anyone was to do that in a Mario Brothers game what would happen? Obviously, a near instant crash and burn experience at the very onset. Chess is difficult to learn and a child who has absolutely no experience playing Chess from the starting position means an instant loss on the spot to a more experienced player. Each and every move will be vexing for the beginning player. Without a doubt the first moves tried will be illegal ones. Numerous losses later the Chess game will likely be put to the side as being far too difficult. A potentially brilliant career shorted on the spot.

On the other hand, slowly introducing the Chess pieces one at a time while explaining the rules of play as well as the movements of each piece may well bore a youngster to tears. The kids of today are spoiled; they want action on the spot as well as the instant feedback provided they’ve grown accustomed to through video games. Playing a single game of Chess and losing will not provide an instant personal best which the child could use as a future benchmark. Thus one challenge is to protect the child from playing their first game of Chess too soon, resulting in a clobbering on the spot. On the one hand, making sure that the child is being sufficiently challenged by the instruction and is given an opportunity to play may well quench their thirst for action. Doing so at each early step of instruction will ensure students don’t get bored. Even at the best of times it is an awkward balancing act. It is a fine teacher indeed who can judge both.

Thus, with the exception of the first chapter, a short history of Chess, the instructional chapters beginning with chapter two have “mock battle games” of Chess that the student can play and master designed to give the very feedback that playing Chess from the starting position lacks. In as much as possible the instructor should make an effort to shield students from playing a “full game” of Chess early. I assure you playing at level twenty on a Mario Brothers game for the first time and with no experience will see you crash and burn in a near instant. It is necessary that students are first taught the basics of play including the rules. Doing this while playing mock-battle games of Chess with one another beginning with the first lessons will see them gradually “brought up” to the point where a full game of Chess can be engaging and fun. Perhaps even challenging. Having a young charge being clobbered game after game after game is simply no fun for anyone and will quickly lose you an opponent.

Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis (CCSCSL)

This Curriculum has been created at the behest of the ***Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis (CCSCSL)***. The CCSCSL is an educational foundation that was started in 2008. Since its creation, the CCSCSL has sent coaches and teachers into public schools throughout the Saint Louis area to teach students Chess. It has positively impacted the lives of thousands of students each and every year since its founding. Working together with the CCSCSL staff, coaches and teachers this Curriculum is the first step in what we hope will be a long and fruitful effort to inspire school boards, principals, teachers and students everywhere to embrace Chess as a powerful educational tool that can help young students unlock their minds and increase their potential.

The staff at the CCSCSL envision that this Curriculum will be printed, updated and revised for many years to come. That it will host a website where coaches and teachers can freely communicate and compare updates, lessons, homework and the like. That as a not-for-profit foundation and educational entity, this work is not meant for commercial purposes. That written copies of the Curriculum can be purchased by teachers, coaches, schools from the CCSCSL at an inexpensive greatly subsidized price. Furthermore, permission for reprinting can be given to

qualified education institutions. Written requests for such permissions should be addressed to the CCSCSL. Commercial use of the Curriculum is to be discouraged. Authorized copies of this Curriculum can be purchased directly through the CCSCSL website as well as licensed to teachers and coaches that they can print their own copies of the Curriculum at the school where they work.

Parting Thoughts

It is my sincerest hope that if this work can make you smile, laugh and infect you with just a percentile of my passion for the game I've done my job well. Beware! I'm a very tricky coach. In various places I've salted this Curriculum with deliberate mistakes. It will be the task of the students to catch them and find the proper answers and solutions. Quizzes are at the end of the chapter to test that the student has properly comprehended the lessons and ideas taught. Always and throughout critical thinking is to be encouraged and complimented.

Yasser Seirawan
Saint Louis
May 31, 2014

Chapter One:

A Brief History of Chess

Mankind – what anthropologists call homo-sapiens – is a playful species. We love our physical sports as well as our mental games. When I was young I was quite athletic. I loved to climb trees, ride my bike and run around a lot. My favorite game was hide-and-seek with the children of the neighborhood, endless afternoons of heated pleasure hiding as well as sprinting to the safe zone. If enough players could be assembled then it was a game of football or baseball. However, when the weather was bad and we were stuck indoors then Monopoly games were a family favorite. I enjoyed playing the role of the banker. In fact we had a whole closet full of games with card tricks being a special delight. While enjoying the many board games from the closet I never stopped and thought to ask myself this question, “*Where do games come from?*” Instead I just accepted that games exist. Hadn't they always?

Stop for a moment and muse over that question, “Where do games come from?” Are they invented by a single person or did someone come up with a bright idea which other people improved upon? Put more simply: Are games just invented by someone or do games evolve? If games do evolve then it stands to reason that games improve with age.

It is easy for me to imagine that when mankind was in the “hunter gatherer” stage of existence, long before there were cities, towns, villages or simple habitations; folks would sit around the fire, telling stories to explain the mysteries of the heavens, singing, dancing and playing games. What games? While I can't be sure I'd postulate that they likely played games with the bones of their prey. For example by simply throwing the bones in the air and see what patterns might occur after they had fallen to the earth. Over time perhaps favored bones, those that fell flat or became smooth for example, were kept for future nights. We can imagine that this was the way for example how games like dice and dominoes were created. Perhaps a scorebook or a ledger was kept to keep tally of which player was ahead? Perhaps a mat or a board might be needed to catch the falling bones? Consider the question of how games came into being long enough and all kinds of ideas might spring to mind how games were created.

How old is Chess?

Many scholars have researched at great length the question, how old is Chess? It seems that no definitive answer to this question can be given. We know through hieroglyphics that the ancient Egyptians played a game that looked very similar to modern Chess but there is no surviving rulebook as to how this ancient Egyptian chess game was played. The rules have been lost with the shifting sands of time.

What we can say is that Chess is one of the oldest games in the world and that it definitely evolved. Chess is oftentimes called the “Game of Kings” as well as the “King of Games” and it directly descends from the fourteen hundred year old game from India called “Chaturanga.” In the Sanskrit language of India it would be written as: Caturaṅga which often means army. Chaturanga developed in the Gupta Empire of India in the 6th Century AD where it seems to have flourished and was soon transported through trade to foreign lands.

The Chaturanga pieces in Sanskrit were called Raja (King); Mantri or Senapati which meant counselor or general (Queen); Ratha, a chariot (Rook); Gaja, an elephant (Bishop); Ashva a horse (Knight) as well as the Padàti or Bhata which means infantry or foot-soldier (pawn).

Chaturanga reflected Indian society at that point in time. It was a very slow developing game as the movements of the pieces and pawns were severely restricted when compared with modern Chess. While the movements of the Raja match the moves of the King today, the Mantri was much weaker than our modern day Queen. In those ancient days the Raja would have many wives whereas the Mantri would have been an advisor or general to the King. The Mantri might well be considered as the second most powerful person in the land but not as powerful as the King. The Mantri moved one step diagonally in any direction. It wouldn't be until the 15th century, nearly a thousand years later, that the rules would change and this piece the Mantri/Queen would have greatly enhanced powers. The Ratha/Rook and Ashva/Knight have the same movements today as they did in the original game of Chaturanga. The movements of the Gaja (elephant) however remain a bit of a mystery. They may have been allowed to “jump” over one square upon a diagonal, that is be able to move a maximum of two squares on a diagonal only. Whereas the Bishops in modern chess that replaced the elephant can move freely along an open diagonal over many squares. The Padàti or Bhata capture the same as the pawns of today but they were only allowed to move one square at a time. They did not have the option of moving two squares forwards on their first move as allowed by modern chess. The rule changes of *en passant* which is a rule for pawns as well as *castling* would also come a thousand years later as well as resolving which side would win in case of a *stalemate*.

By the time of the 6th century AD there had existed for nearly a thousand years a whole series of trade routes collectively called, the Silk Road, which extended for roughly four thousand miles across the vast expanse of Asia. These trade routes got their name from the lucrative trade of silk. Silk was created in China and was transported along these routes. From China first to India, then to Persia which is modern day Iran, to Arabia, Egypt, Somalia and finally Europe the silk would pass along by caravan, horse and camel. As Chaturanga developed in India it would be transported along the Silk Road both to Persia in the West and China in the East. It is supposed that Chaturanga is the common ancestor to other games like Shogi (called Japanese chess), as well as Xiangqi (called Chinese chess).

The map below shows how the Silk Road looked in the first century.



As Chaturanga sets traveled along the Silk Road with the traders it was transported to Persia, where in the 7th century the Persians renamed the game “Shatranj” in their language called Farsi. In Farsi, the word “Shatranj” means “Chess.” Shatranj would travel further west to Arabian countries and Africa. Then across the Mediterranean ocean to medieval Europe where it would undergo rule changes as well as new names as well as new designs for the pieces.

Checkmate!

As a fan of athletics as well as many professional team sports I often feel a pang of jealousy when watching an athlete achieve their pinnacle of success within their sport. How thrilling it is to see a new world record. A touchdown! A slam dunk! A goal! A home run! Or better still, a *grand-slam home run!* It is all so very exciting and high-fives are shared all around. In Chess our great success is *checkmate*. Huh? What’s up with *that*? How does the pinnacle of our success in chess become to be described with such a confused word as checkmate?

Checkmate itself sounds like the combination of two utterly incongruous words. I understand “check” as in, “I’ll write you a check for the amount owed.” Or when filling out a form I have to remember to “check” a box to a question. While “mate” is equally clear for me: a mate as in a wife for example. Combining these two words into one hardly makes sense to begin with and then to use this word to describe the movement of our crowning

achievement? Flabbergasting! What is the etymological root, the history for the term (word) checkmate?

As Chaturanga traveled along the Silk Road west to Persia, the Persian's introduced their own names for the pieces. As previously mentioned, they switched terms and instead of calling the game Chaturanga they called it Shatranj (chess). The Farsi term for King wasn't Raja as in the Sanskrit language rather the Persian King was called, "Shah." When the King was placed under threat of capture, the Persian's would say "Shah" to draw their opponent's attention to the threat to the King. When the Shah was defeated by being placed under threat of capture that could not be avoided they would say, "Shahmot." Which in Farsi meant the "King is dead." This practice of saying "Shah" to point out a threat to the King as well as "Shahmot" was Anglicized and became "check" as well as "checkmate" in the English language. A charming history to be sure but checkmate does sound far more dramatic in Farsi.

From Persia Shatranj traveled along the Silk Route to the Arab nations where from the 9th-13th centuries, Muslim players were the best in the world. So much so they studied the game at length and wrote their analysis of chess positions on animal skins as well as scrolls. Some of which have survived to today. Amazingly enough some of their studies of chess and their analysis of endgame positions have been confirmed as correct by the most sophisticated computers in the world. It turns out that our ancestors were pretty clever.

The Moors brought the game to Europe where the Farsi word "Shatranj" was translated and the game was called "chess" in the English language. The Europeans, like the Persians before them would change the names of the pieces as well as their designs to better reflect their geographies and societies. Far more importantly Europeans would change the rules as well.

As Shatranj now called Chess was introduced into medieval European societies the pieces as well as their designs changed to reflect their new host nations. The piece in Chaturanga called *Mantri* (Minister); also known as *Senapati* (General) was replaced both in name and image as a Queen and was called a "Queen." In 15th century France the powers of the Queen were greatly extended over the slow moving Mantri and she instantly became the most powerful piece in the chess army. The French also created a rule change involving Pawns allowing a capture known as "en passant." Which when translated to English means, "in passing."

There weren't a lot of elephants in Europe but the Catholic Church was a dominate force in medieval European societies. The *Gaja* or elephants from Chaturanga were replaced and became known as Bishops; the *Ratha* (Chariot) in Chaturanga – also spelled *Śakata* – was replaced by a Rook, which has the image of a Castle of which medieval Europe had plenty. After all there weren't many elephants in Europe.

The last rule change was also made in 15th century by the Italians. During the 14th and 15th centuries the Italian school of chess experimented with what was called "free castling" whereby the King combined movement with a Rook on the same turn. In free castling, a King might go to anyone of numerous squares on a flank while the Rook might go to a number of squares in the center or even to the other flank.

These rule changes had a powerful impact as they significantly accelerated play by making the game far more dynamic than the slower game of Chaturanga. For example early checkmates in Chaturanga were not allowed as compared to modern chess.

When the new rule of Castling was first introduced, there were some doubts that castling could be allowed in a single movement and the castling player was charged with two moves as two pieces were being moved at the same moment. In time, castling became a single move. Free castling became limited and a "fixed" castling operation became universal. The castling move is the only

time in a Chess game where during a single move two chess pieces of the same color are made together.

The issue over the outcome of a game that ended in stalemate was also definitively ended. A game that ended in a stalemate position was declared “drawn.” These were the last rules changed and Chess has been played in its current form for well over five hundred years. Which easily makes chess hundreds of years older than any of our modern day professional team sports. Along with Go, Backgammon, Dice and Dominoes, Chess is one of the oldest games in the world surviving the test of time.

What also made Chess an extraordinary mental activity far different from the games of Dice and Dominoes for example was that each and every move of every Chess game played could be recorded and replayed exactly as originally played.

This is a really remarkable achievement if you think about it for a minute which elevates chess far above the routine of other games. For example if we were to talk about say a volleyball game or a basketball game we would have to watch a video replay or witness the game in person to recall precisely what happened. Otherwise we might have only a general idea about the game if we read a sports writer’s perspective. For example, suppose we were listening to a conversation about a baseball game and heard that one team won 3-0. At first we might think the game was one-sided but a witness explained that the game was extremely tense, that the winning team scored three runs with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning. This drama might be completely lost by just knowing the final score. With Chess a score-sheet of a game allows us to replay the game perfectly well so that we can relive each and every move and understand why a particular move had been made or rejected. A Chess score-sheet allows us to accurately replay a game of chess that might have been played hundreds of years ago. We need no video record or a writer’s fuzzy description of what happened. Instead we can learn precisely what happened.

The notation of how a game of Chess was recorded has also evolved. When I started to play Chess in the 1970’s most of the books I read used what was called “descriptive notation.” Today, across the world, “algebraic notation” has become the universal standard and allows anyone, regardless of which language they speak to replay a game of Chess perfectly.

As we’ve learned, the game of Chess is incredibly old. Over the course of history many outstanding historical figures were entranced by the allure of chess. Kings, Queens, Popes intellectuals and commoners down through the centuries have played chess. One of America’s founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, loved to play chess. He even wrote a book entitled, *The Morals of Chess*. In today’s modern world many celebrated people play chess. From South Africa’s former prisoner and President Nelson Mandela, to the world’s richest man, Bill Gates, to Pope John Paul II, Chess entranced them as well.

At a recent Closing Ceremony of a chess event, the President of South Africa, Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, made a speech and had this to say about his years while incarcerated in prison:

“On Robben Island chess provided a solace to us that we needed in those conditions of isolation and deprivation. It propelled our minds beyond the confines of the prison wall and allowed us to reflect and to position our thoughts strategically to fight the regime. [...] Many comrades made chess sets out of soap and driftwood that allowed us to continue to play this noble and great game. We improvised with makeshift chess boards and we enjoyed the fullness of the game.”

When we play Chess, we join alongside with great historical figures that played Chess. Perhaps we can learn to play a better game than history’s greatest general Napoléon Bonaparte?

Any student wishing to learn more about the history of chess, are strongly encouraged to read, Murray, H. J. R. (1913). *A History of Chess*. ISBN 0-936317-01-9.

Chapter Two:

The Chessboard our Battlefield

The game of Chaturanga was originally conceived as a game depicting warfare between two equally opposing armies, one White the other Black. The players are the generals of their armies allowing them to practice their military skills; their ability to make plans, calculate attacks, counter-attacks, defend, set traps and sometimes create an impregnable fortress. Over the centuries, the rules of chess evolved turning chess into an extremely sophisticated strategical game where the element of luck was reduced to nil and it was entirely the skill of the players that decided the result.

Our first *graphic* what we call in Chess language a Chess diagram features the starting position for a game of Chess.

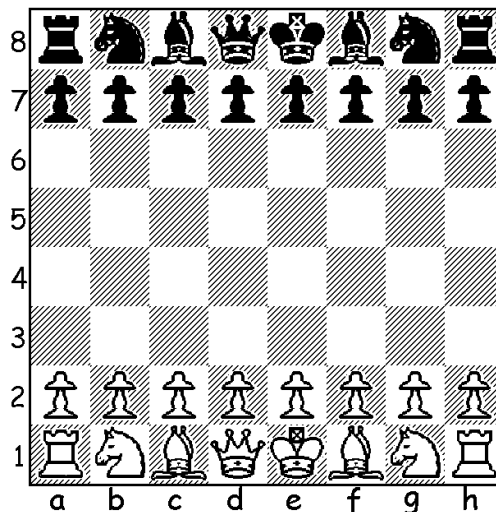


DIAGRAM 1
The starting position

I won't pull any punches, chess is a complicated game. It is *hard* to master and we will have to apply our minds to become good. The challenge before you will be a large one. However, before this warning drives us to despair and makes us think that chess might be too complex for our feeble brains, take heart, chess can also be very easy to learn. It is all about how we are *taught*. If we are taught properly, we can learn chess quite easily and become quite conversant in no time.

Any complicated task is best broken down into its smaller component parts. By understanding small things, like bricks and mortar, foundations and beams we can better understand the whole building and how it can be built. Anyone who has ever played with Legos knows that an object not built on a good foundation can easily topple over.

Take a longer look at diagram number one the starting position again. It even *looks* complicated. Two armies face off bristling at one another from afar with a variety of different looking pieces opposing one another. It certainly looks hard to me. Difficulties begin at once. What should we do? What move to make? What is the best move?

Once during a tournament game International chess Grandmaster (IGM) and former Challenger for the World Championship, David Bronstein, thought for forty-five minutes before making his very first opening move as White. When asked afterwards why he had thought so long on his very first move David Bronstein answered, *"I was thinking about what to play."*

Indeed, how should we even open the game? Which leads to a very good question, which army makes the first opening move? (White makes the opening move.) What will be our plan? Do we even have a plan at move one? The starting position provokes so many questions that even understanding the answers is not easy. It will be a long time before we come back to the starting position. There is a lot to learn beforehand, let's get started.

Learning chess the right way and the wrong way

Like many others when I've received a gift of a new game, I'm anxious to set it up right away, to get started and to play! That was my first experience with chess as well. Without knowing anything beyond the rules – even the rules were complicated and weren't very clear to me – I was thrown onto my own devices from the very start. My moves were without rhyme or reason, about as close to random as possible. I most certainly tried to make many illegal moves as well. Mine was a frustrating journey from the very beginning.

The pieces were set up for me on a chessboard I was told how each of the individual pieces moved, an instruction that I struggled very hard to remember, and proceeded to lose game after game. When I tried to make an illegal move my opponent, would endeavor to correct my movement, naturally allowing me to complete any move that left one of my own pieces or pawns in capture. Before too long my whole army was captured and removed from the board leaving my King stripped bare of all defenders. I would lose game after game after game in this precise fashion. The games were wipeouts. Again, it is a compliment for me to think that these numerous early losses didn't include illegal moves from me. I'm quite sure they did!

Describing my first experiences playing chess most likely mirrors that of many millions of other people. The package is unwrapped; the pieces are set up in the starting position; we are told the rules and then we start to play. If two inexperienced beginning players play together it is a near certainty they will make numerous illegal moves. While if a beginner plays an experienced player it is an absolute certainty the beginner will lose. Beginner players all over the world oftentimes and in nearly every game would make an illegal move if allowed. The movements of pawns and pieces being so different and so complex from one another just playing a legal game is a remarkable achievement!

After losing so many of my initial games, in hindsight, it is amazing that I didn't just shrug my shoulders and give up chess with a backwards, *"I'm no good at chess,"* comment. Indeed, I suspect a great majority of players have repeated just my very same experience, losing one game too many and given up on chess as being too difficult for them. Clearly I learned Chess the wrong way. My only explanation for why I continued playing is that the rain in Seattle kept me stifled and indoors. I didn't have other things to do. Either that or I must have been a very stubborn person. Perhaps both. My motto at that time was, *"Those that never admit defeat are seldom ever defeated."* A fine motto indeed. A pity that it didn't act as a talisman to ward off my many future losses.

As luck would have it a fellow chess player, Jeffrey Parsons, took pity on me. He told me, *"Yasser if you don't learn the elements of chess you are bound for a lifetime of chess losses."*

Elements? Earth, air, fire and water? What do these earthly elements have to do with chess? Well in truth, the earthly elements have nothing to do with chess. The elements that Jeffrey was referring to me were the elements peculiar to chess. They are Space, Material, Development, King Position and Pawn Structure. Oh dear, even the chess elements sound complicated! Yikes. Let us learn what Jeffrey taught me and has been a life-long lesson throughout my career. We will start to learn about Space in chess.

The 64-Square Battlefield

The best way to think of our role in a game of chess is as a military General in command of our whole army. It will be up to us to make our own decisions that will determine the outcome of the upcoming battle. Like all good Generals it is vital that we have a full grasp of the battlefield before the battle begins. We should know very well the terrain where all the moves of a game of chess are played. Therefore, we should first have a complete understanding of the chessboard before the battle commences.

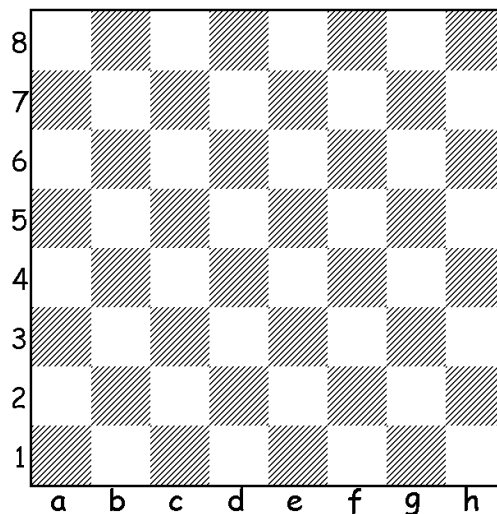


DIAGRAM 2
The Chessboard battlefield

As we see from diagram 2 I've removed both armies stripping the chess board bare. While many of us may be familiar with the 64-square checkered chessboard pattern let us survey the terrain in detail to be sure that we understand the battlefield's finer points. The chess board is an eight by eight (8 x 8) square, with eight ranks and eight files. The colors of each square alternate between light squares and dark squares. There are 64 squares in all, with 32 light squares and 32 dark squares. To properly set up the chessboard before a game begins we should first be sure that the lower right hand corner square is a light square. The convention of chess diagrams is to feature White's army at the bottom of the diagram and Black's army at the top as was shown in diagram 1.

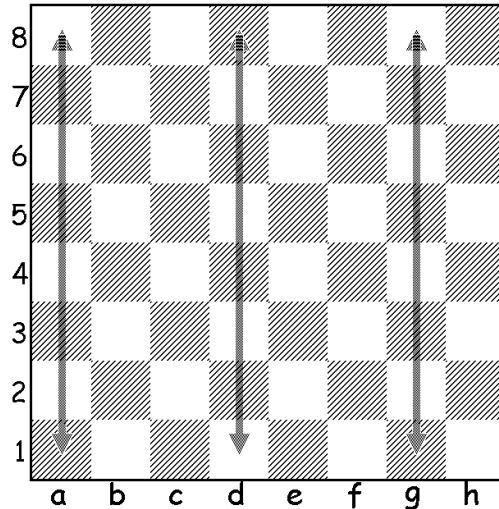


DIAGRAM 3
Three files are highlighted

From our first diagram which featured the starting position, as well as the second diagram, the sharp eyed student might have noticed the letters at the bottom as well as the numbers on the left side of the chessboard. The letters and numbers help us identify the unique address of each and every square. Let us first become conversant with the *files* on the chessboard. In diagram 3 I have drawn arrows on three files of the board. Match up the eight letters at the bottom of the chess board with each individual file. From left to right are the “a-file” the “b-file” the “c-file” the “d-file” the “e-file” the “f-file” the “g-file” and finally the “h-file.” The three arrows drawn in diagram 3 are drawn upon the “a-file” the “d-file” and the “g-file.” Each file is comprised of eight squares.

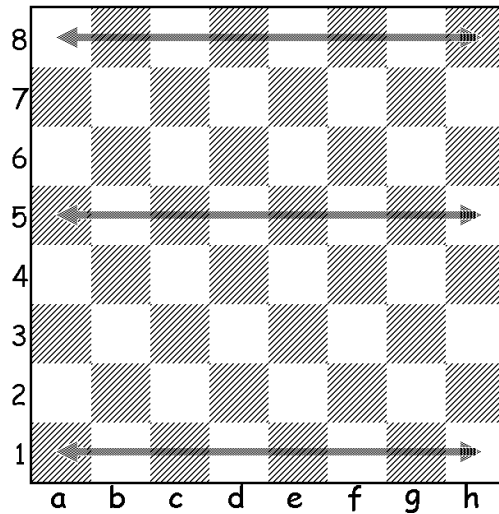


DIAGRAM 4
Three ranks are highlighted

Now let us learn the *ranks* on the chessboard. In Diagram 4 I have drawn arrows on three ranks of the chess board. Notice the eight numbers on the left side of the board. These eight numbers go from the bottom rank all the way to the top of the board. There are eight ranks, from the first, second, third and all the way to the eighth rank. The three arrows drawn in diagram 4 are across the “first rank,” the “fifth rank” and the “eighth rank.” Each rank is also comprised of eight squares.

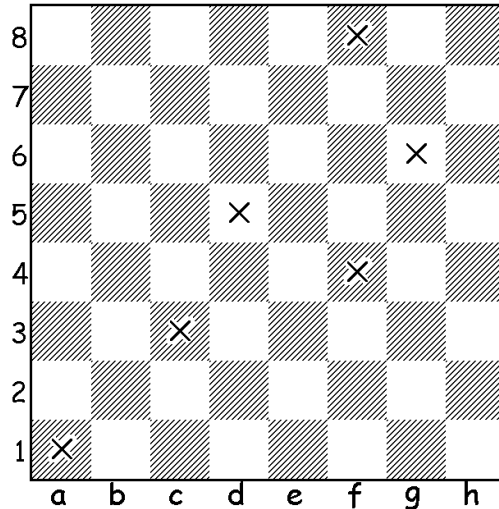


DIAGRAM 5

Six squares marked with an "x"
a1, c3, d5, f4, g6 AND f8

As we can readily discern, each square has its own unique coordinate, just like an address to a house. In giving the address of each square, we always write the letter first and the number second to identify each individual square. In diagram 5 I've marked six squares with an "X" mark. The first square is the "a1" square in the lower left hand corner. We discover the address of each square by consulting the letter on the top or bottom of the board and then the number on the side of the board. In turn we can identify the "c3" by finding the letter and the number. We do this for the other four squares marked by an "X". These squares are the: d5, f4, g6 and f8-squares. Pick out your own random square on the chess board, place your finger on a square and then try to properly name the coordinates of the square you chose.

In time and with practice, we will become so familiar with the address of each square that we will no longer have to consult the helpful letters and numbers on the borders of the board for confirmation. Indeed, when we become really good at knowing the squares of the Chessboard the letters and numbers will become an unwanted distraction!

The chessboard, our battlefield, is akin to a map, at the *North* and *South* ends of the map, the Black and White armies will be placed. When any piece or pawn is moved, we can record their movement by identifying which square the piece or pawn originated from and to which square it is moved. This is referred to as recording our chess moves. Chess games played in tournament competitions are logged onto a score-sheet to which we should be careful to keep a copy. The system of notation we will learn is called algebraic notation. In the next chapter we will learn more about chess notation, let us learn more about the battlefield.

Long diagonals

Further observation of the board leads us to realize that the chess board isn't just made up of eight ranks and eight files but it also contains numerous *diagonals* as well.

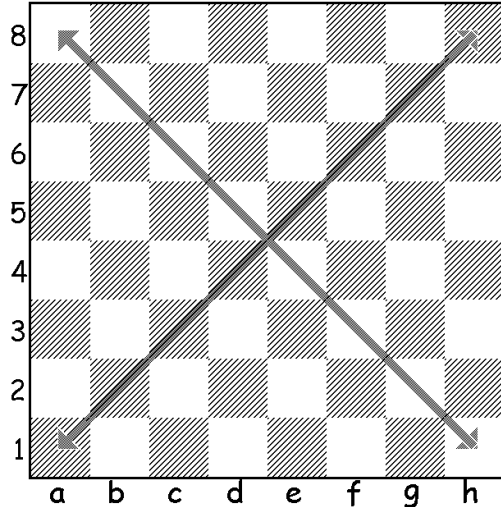


DIAGRAM 6
The two long diagonals of the chessboard

Of all the diagonals on a chessboard, the diagonals which comprise the most numbers of squares are called the long diagonals. They have been marked by two arrows in diagram 6. As we can see the long diagonal from a1-h8 is comprised of eight squares. While the other long diagonal from h1-a8 is also comprised of eight squares. The a1-h8 long diagonal is called the long dark-squared diagonal while the h1-a8 long diagonal is called the long light-squared diagonal.

While much of what you've already learned in this chapter might seem obvious, intuitive or even intuitively obvious, it took me many losses to gain even this basic understanding. Trust me usually it is only after scores of games do experienced players begin to grasp the importance of ranks, files and diagonals. We still have much more to learn about the seemingly simple chess board. Furthermore there is a mysterious illusion that lies just ahead.

From the starting position in diagram 1, where the pieces oppose one another there was a gap of empty space between them which separated the two armies. In diagram 7 I've divided the chess board into half.

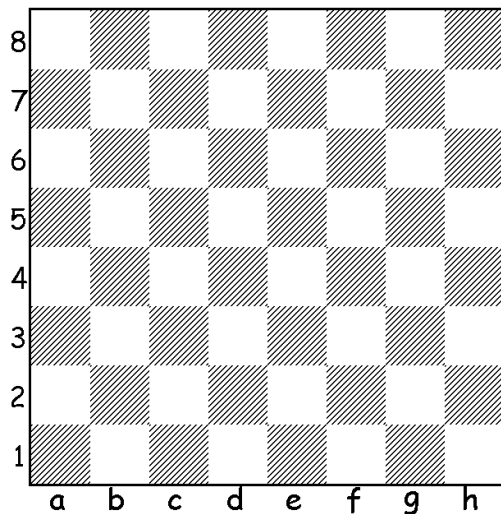


DIAGRAM 7
(DRAW A LINE BETWEEN THE SQUARES A4 & A5 ACROSS

THE RANK TO AND IN-BETWEEN THE H4 & H5 SQUARES)

The chessboard with an imaginary equator

The line I've drawn in diagram 7 is an imaginary one – although on some chessboards that fold in half it can be quite acute. The line I've drawn is intended to be like the imaginary equator line that is drawn on maps and globes of the earth. On our chessboard battlefield our imaginary equator line splits the chessboard into two halves. This imaginary line is drawn between the 4th and 5th ranks.

By splitting the board in half it helps us to visualize that each player has their “own space” of thirty-two squares. In geometry we would say that the quadrangle from a1-a4-h4-h1 and back to a1 represents “White’s Space.” While the quadrangle from a8-a5-h5-h8-a8 represents “Black’s Space.” Each side therefore has their own space comprising thirty-two squares. In chess as in life we say, “*I have my space, you have your space.*” Fair deals for both generals wouldn't you agree?

Now, if we were to imagine the movements of one army, we could properly think that the general would like to better mobilize their army from the starting position *within* their own space. Indeed, such a concept makes a lot of sense. The armies should better ready themselves for a pitched battle ahead by occupying squares that are superior to their original starting squares. Put another way, it is helpful for us to think that at the start of play our armies are asleep in their barracks. When the battle is joined we want our armies not to be in their barracks but to be better positioned. Advantageously repositioning our armies within our own space should be an easy task.

What we are doing now is just *thinking* about chess, *imagining* what might take place without even knowing how the armies move. From our imagination a thought might start to take place that a major strategy of chess might be to control the squares in the opposing camp's space to interfere with the opponent's preparations. If we could control much of the space in the opponent's camp we might be able to reduce the opponent's preparations to maneuver. In fact we could suffocate the opposing army by controlling as much of his space as possible.

This is the key explanation for the element of *space* in chess. When Chess players say, “*I have a space advantage.*” What this claim really means is that our army controls more of the opponent's space than his army controls of ours. When we read the comment, “*Here, I stood worse as my position is cramped.*” What we understand the writer to mean is that the opponent controlled more space in his camp and as a result his movements were limited.

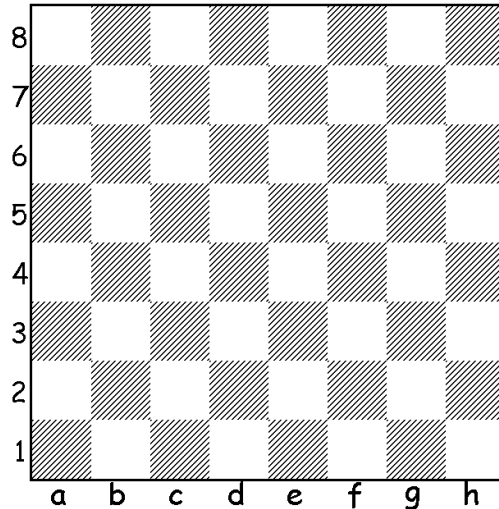


DIAGRAM 8

(DRAW A LINE BETWEEN THE SQUARES A4 & A5 ACROSS THE BOARD.
DRAW A SECOND LINE BETWEEN THE D & E FILES)

The four quadrants of the chessboard

Now that we know the concept of space let us become a little more familiar with how space is broken down by both camps. In diagram 8, along with the equator, I've drawn a second imaginary line this time between the D and E files. We've cleaved the board neatly into four perfect squares. Each of these squares is comprised of sixteen squares and each of these four squares of the chessboard is given a special name in Chess.

The square on the lower left, which is drawn from a1-a4-d4-d1-a1, is called White's Queenside. The square on the lower right, which is drawn from h1-e1-e4-h4-h1, is called White's Kingside. For the Black army, it is a mirror reflection as well. The square on the upper left, which is drawn from a8-a5-d5-d8-a8, is called Black's Queenside. Finally, the square on the upper right, which is drawn from h8-h5-e5-e8-h8, is called Black's Kingside.

By breaking the chess board into quadrants it makes it easier for us to explain the types of battles taking place around the chessboard. For instance, if I wrote, "Black's army is breaking through on White's Queenside," for example, you'd know right where to look. Instead of drawing your eye to a single square your eye would be drawn to a special quadrant, sixteen squares of the chessboard.

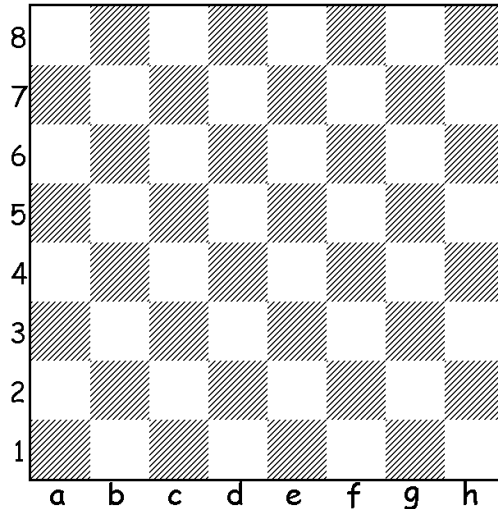


DIAGRAM 9
 (DRAW A LINE BETWEEN THE SQUARES C3-C6-F6-F3-C3
 THE CENTER)

The Center

Diagram 9 features the trickiest area of the chess board to explain. I really hope I don't mess up and confuse you, dear reader. You will have to make an extra hard effort at concentrating to understand what I want to say. I've drawn some imaginary lines to create a square on the chessboard from the c3-c6-f6-f3-c3 squares. All these squares inside this area are called the *center* of the chess board. The center straddles the space of both armies from the starting position. It is crucial that we play to control the center of the board throughout the game. The central tenet of strategic chess play is, "Control the center." As well as, "Capture towards the center." I will certainly repeat these expressions throughout this Curriculum. It is vital that you know the sixteen central squares of the chessboard.

The Chessboard Mystery

Earlier I mentioned that the chessboard contains a mystery. What is that mystery? If you have a chessboard in front of you that is bare, run your hands across the empty chessboard. How does it feel to you? Does it feel flat? If you said yes, that is the mystery of the chessboard. In truth, the chessboard is not flat. That is an illusion. Surprise!

Think of the chessboard as a topographical map. Remember what I said that the chessboard is the terrain on which our armies would battle? Well doesn't it stand to reason that some parts of our battlefield might be just a little bit higher than other parts? That a hill or a valley might exist? So it is with the chess board's center squares. These sixteen squares shown in Diagram 9 constitute the high ground of our battlefield. The center squares are a type of a hill, if we can conquer a hill and place our army at the top of that hill it will be easier for us to charge down into the opposing camp.

We should think of the center squares as being worth "two points" while all the other squares of the board as being worth "one point." While most top grandmasters do not assign a point value system to the squares on the chessboard, they know that the center squares are more valuable than the other squares of the board and endeavor to control them.

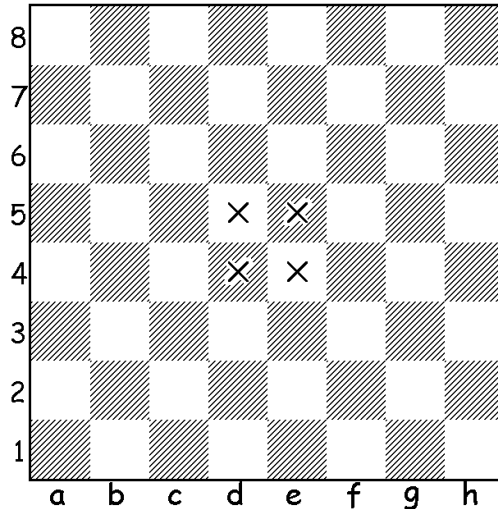


DIAGRAM 10
The four "sweet center" squares

In diagram 10 I've marked an "X" on the four squares that are smack dab in the center of the chessboard. These four squares: e4, d4, d5 and e5-squares, are collectively called, the sweet center. Naturally, these four squares are the most important squares on the board. They constitute the truly "highest ground" of the battlefield and they should be assigned a value of "three square points" each. Both sides will battle long and hard to control these squares. First we will try to control the sweet center and then occupy these squares.

As we can see, if we were to combine the center square of diagram 9 with the equator line we drew in diagram 7, the center square, overlays with space in White's camp as well as space within Black's camp. In fact the center square overlays into all four quadrants of the board, White's Kingside and Queenside as well as Black's Kingside and Queenside. When we read a chess comment to a particular move played, also called an annotation, such as, "*White attacks in the center,*" or "*Black makes a central breakthrough,*" our eyes will be drawn directly to the center square outlined in diagram 9. Central breakthroughs usually involve the sweet center squares as well. We will know where White is attacking and where to look.

In passing, chess annotations include the term "*howler.*" What on earth is a howler? This is a move that is so bad the cries of anguish from the player making a howler can be heard in the next county! My games contain numerous examples of what can best be described as world-class howlers.

DIAGRAM 11

A visual representation of the value of the chessboard

Diagram 11 is a visual representation of how we might view the chessboard from a value perspective of how important the squares are to one another. The sweet center squares are the highest hill on the chessboard with a point system of three for each square, while the center squares that surround the sweet center squares are all worth two points as they are elevated ground as well. Every other square on the chessboard is worth one point.

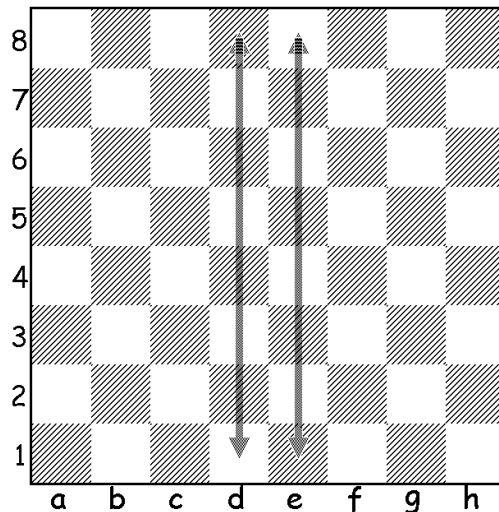


DIAGRAM 12

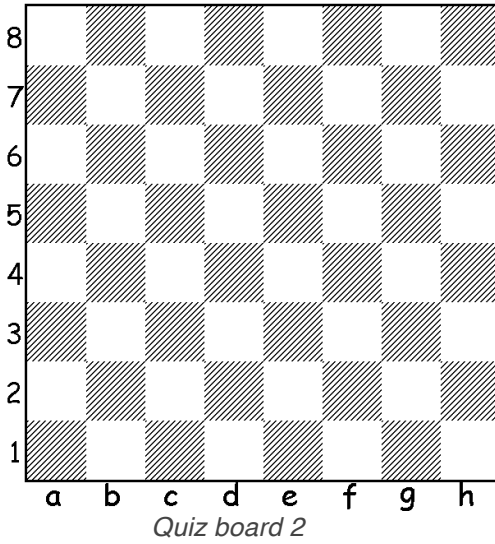
The two center files

In diagram 12, two arrows have been drawn: One arrow up and down the e-file and one arrow up and down the d-file. These two files are known as the center files. This term seems intuitively obvious as both of these files, are indeed, in the center of the board. See how simple it is to learn the chessboard battlefield? We can expect a lot of action to take place along these center files.

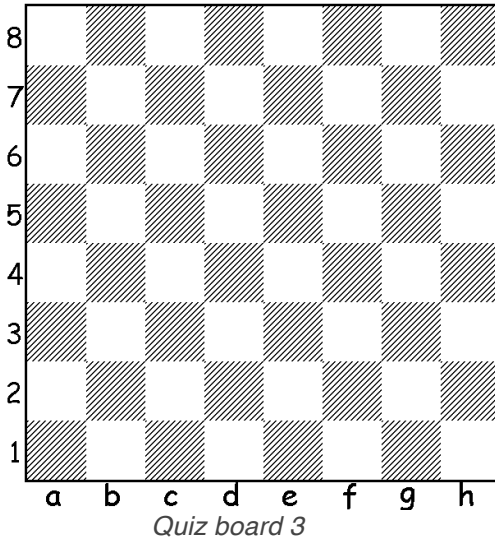
We have now learned a great deal about our battlefield, the terrain, as well as the value of the squares. Let us take a quiz regarding our new found knowledge to be sure it has sunk into our craniums.

QUIZ

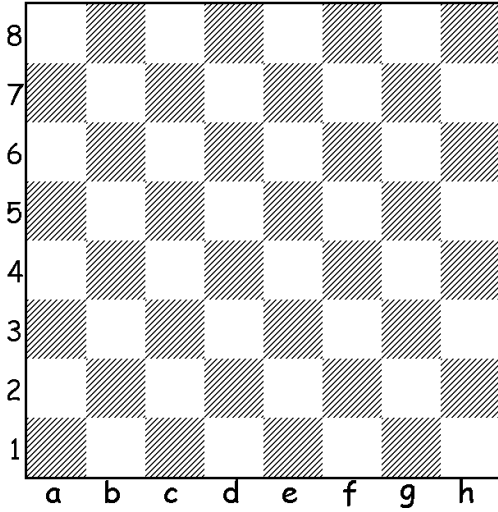
1. The “sweet center” is comprised of four squares. What are the total square point values of these four squares when added together?



2. On the blank diagram quiz board 2, draw the square that comprises Black’s Kingside.

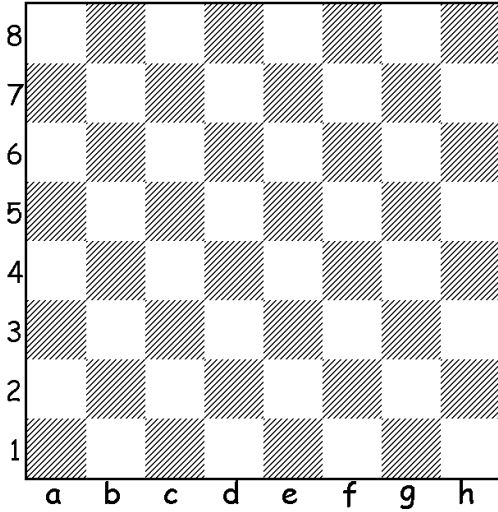


3. On the blank diagram quiz board 3, draw the square that comprises the center square.



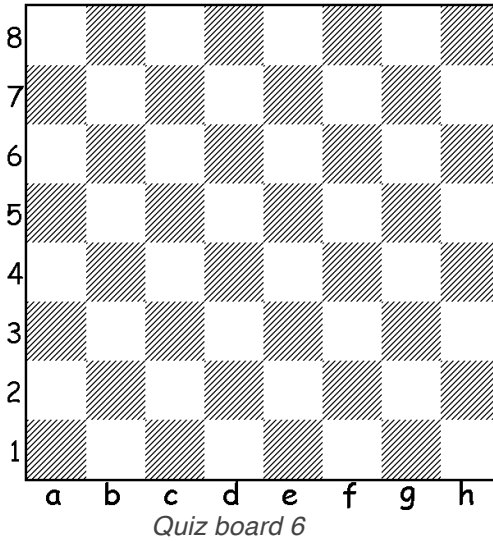
Quiz board 4

4. On the blank quiz board 4, draw an arrow across the seventh rank.

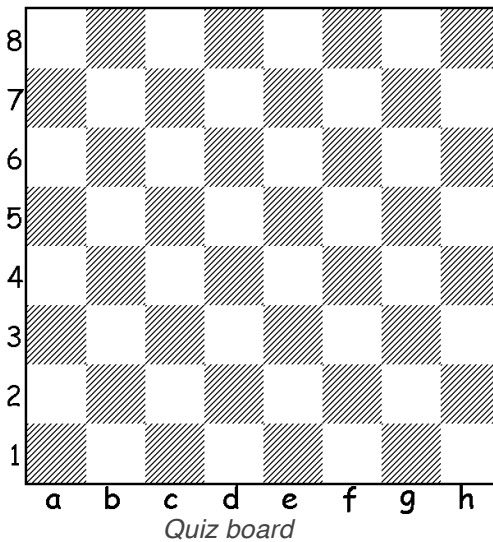


Quiz board 5

5. On the blank quiz board 5, draw an arrow across the long light squared diagonal.



6. On the blank quiz board 6, draw an arrow across a central file.

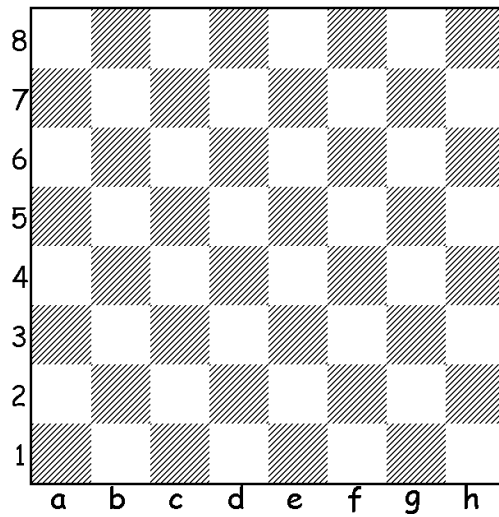


7. On the blank quiz board 7, pick any random square you choose on the chessboard and put an "X" mark on the square you chose. Now, properly identify the coordinates of the square that you chose.
8. When properly setting up the chessboard, the lower right hand corner square (the h1-square) should **always** be a "light square" or a "dark square?"

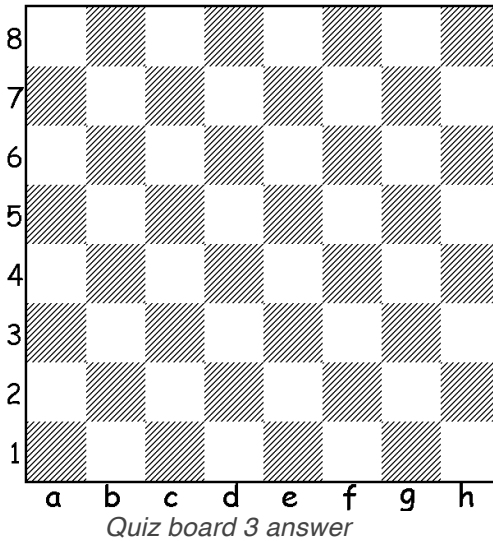
As a group test for the whole class, the coach should point to a specific square and ask the whole class to collectively call out and identify the exact address of the square. Once the answer is correctly called out, move quickly to another square far away. Do this exercise five times as quickly as possible. As the class correctly identifies each square, move to a square far away from the previous one. Congratulate the class collectively on their correct answers!

ANSWERS

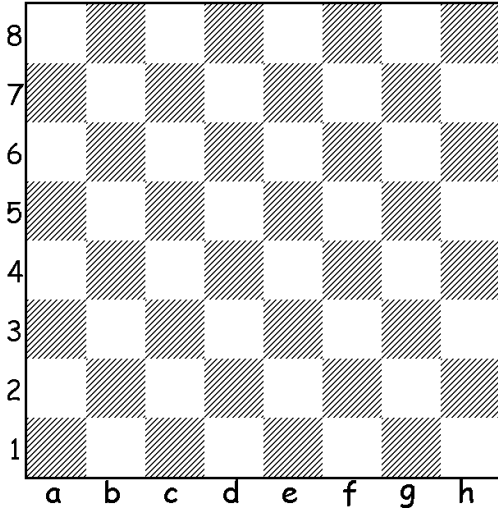
1. Twelve. Each of the sweet center squares is worth three in the square values count that we are using for this chapter. There are four sweet center squares, so four times three equals twelve in the square values count.



2. On the blank diagram quiz board 2, draw the square that comprises Black's Kingside. **(ANSWER TO BE DRAWN)**

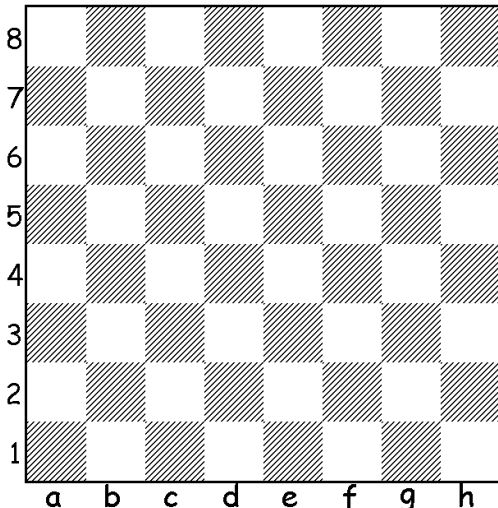


3. On the blank diagram quiz board 3, draw the square that comprises the center square. **(ANSWER TO BE DRAWN)**



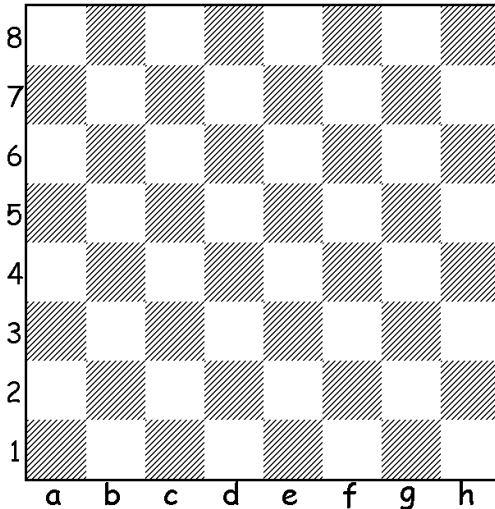
Quiz board 4 answer

4. On the blank quiz board 4, draw an arrow across the seventh rank. **(ANSWER TO BE DRAWN)**

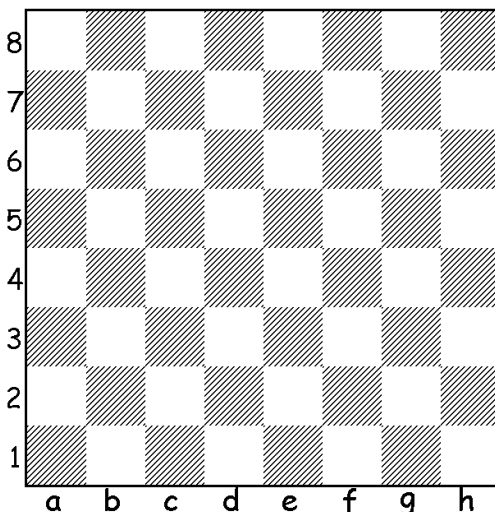


Quiz board 5 answer

5. On the blank quiz board 5, draw an arrow across the long light squared diagonal. **(ANSWER TO BE DRAWN)**



6. On the blank quiz board 6, draw an arrow across a central file. (**ANSWER TO BE DRAWN**)



7. On the blank quiz board 7, pick any random square you choose on the chessboard and put an "X" mark on the square you chose. Now, properly identify the coordinates of the square that you chose. (Verify that the student has correctly given the coordinates of the square they chose.) Square coordinates are:

8. Answer to question 8: The corner h1-square should **always** be a light square.

Chapter Three:

Introducing his Majesty, the King

The object of the game of chess is simple: To win the opponent's King. In chess, the King is not actually captured. Rather it is placed in a position where it is threatened with capture, and when

such a capture cannot be prevented, the King is said to be “checkmated” and the game is over. Therefore the King is the most important piece in chess! Since we lose the game if our King is checkmated, we better learn as much about the King’s qualities as we can so that we can put our knowledge to good use. All hail the King as he is now officially introduced!

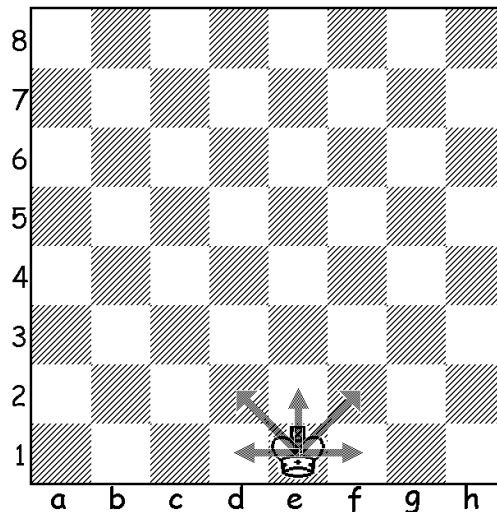


DIAGRAM 15

Arrows showing how the King moves

As we start to introduce the pieces and their movements, I've deliberately swept the board clean of other pieces and pawns so that our attention is focused only at the piece at hand. In diagram 15, the graphic image represents the White King. This graphic image is universal. In any country in the world, regardless of the language spoken, chess players will recognize the diagram and the image and know it is a White King. I've placed the White King on the e1-square. The King's movements are quite simple: The King is allowed to move to any square in any direction one square at a time. Provided, of course, that the move is legal. A King may not capture any piece or pawn of its own army but the King, oftentimes to save itself, is more than willing to capture a piece or pawn of the opponent's army! Even though we lose the game if our King is checkmated, the King can be quite fierce especially where self-protection is concerned. Sometimes the King can bravely attack the opposing army too as we will discover.

As the arrows in Diagram 15 point out, a King placed on the e1-square can move in any direction to five possible squares: The f1, f2, e2, d2 and d1-squares. Let us say White's King would like to make a short trip, from the e1-square to the c2-square. It would take him two moves to complete his short trip. One possible route is to play: Ke1-d2-c2, while the other route would be to play: Ke1-d1-c2, in both cases it will take White two moves to complete this maneuver.

Taking the King on a long journey can be more complicated than it seems at first glance. For example, with the White King on the e1-square move it, within seven moves to the e8-square. The laws of geometry teach us that the shortest distance between two points in space is a straight line. Thus, the maneuver: Ke1-e2-e3-e4-e5-e6-e7-e8, accomplishes the exercise perfectly well. The King moves in a straight line right up the board arriving on the e8-square in seven moves. But the King can violate this law of geometry by zigging or zagging its way as it likes up the board. For example one path along the dark squares might go like: Ke1-f2-e3-d4-e5-f6-e7-e8, while a trip along the light squares might go: Ke1-e2-d3-e4-f5-e6-d7-e8, in both cases the King makes it to the destination e8-square in precisely seven moves. Even though the routes are completely different!

The class should be charged with a collective assignment: The class should collectively move the King as far as possible to the *Kingside*, calling out the coordinates of each square that the King passes through. (Ke1-f2-g3-h4-g5-f6-e7-e8, is the path I have in mind for this collective assignment.) Next, The Class should collectively move the King as far as possible to the *Queenside*, calling out the coordinates of each square that the King passes through. (Ke1-d2-c3-b4-c5-d6-e7-e8, is the path I have in mind.)

It is rather remarkable how many different ways the King may choose to reach the e8-destination square within the seven move limit. The Class may be challenged to guess how many pathways there are for moving the King from the e1-square to the e8-square within seven moves. Take a poll! How many would raise their hands who think the correct answer may be one hundred different routes? Is two hundred the correct answer? Perhaps more than three hundred? The correct answer is exactly, 393. An amazing answer that leaves me quite breathless. This lesson goes to show just how many possibilities of movements there are in a game of chess. Yet so far we've only introduced the King. The possibilities increase *exponentially* as we place more pieces and pawns on the board.

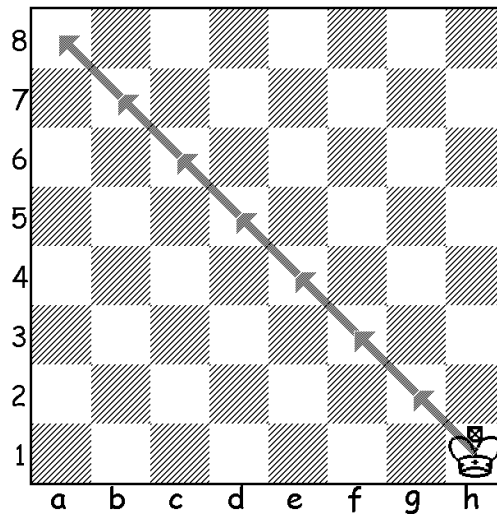


DIAGRAM 16

White's King moves from one corner to another

As we have seen, walking up a file or for that matter walking across a rank can give the King many options as to how it gets to its final destination square. However, this freedom of which path to choose is not true when a King makes its way along a diagonal. As we see in diagram 16, now move the King from the h1-square to the a8-square, calling out the coordinates of each square that the King passes through. Note that in this case a straight line along the diagonal is the shortest distance between h1 and a8. As we counted out, it takes the King seven moves to make it from the h1-square all the way to the a8-square. Can the King take any other path to the a8-destination square in seven moves? No. Going on the diagonal squares, h1-g2, g2-f3, f3-e4, e4-d5, d5-c6, c6-b7, b7-a8, is the only way to make it to the a8-square in seven moves.

Quick question for the Class: "Is the same true if the King wanted to walk from the a1-square to the h8-square, dark-squared long diagonal?"

(Answer: yes it is!) In this case, when the King walks along a diagonal, the shortest distance between two squares is a straight line.

Let us go back and talk about the element of *space* for a moment and how the King can *control* the space of the opponent. Returning to diagram 15 for a moment let us move the King from the

e1-square, to the e2-square. As we understand, from the e1-square the King has the possibility of moving to five different squares. Now, with the King on the e2-square, the opportunity of the King's movements have increased. It can now move to eight squares. Have the Class call out which squares the King may now move. They are (f1, e1, d1, f2, d2, f3, e3 and d3). Now let us move the King from the e2-square to the e3-square. From this perch, how many squares can the King move to? The correct answer is the same as before, there are eight possible moves of the King. At the *height of its powers*, the maximum number of squares that the King can move to is eight different squares. Now let us move the King from the e3-square to the e4-square. The King now sits just alongside our imaginary equator line that separates the two players' space. As we see in diagram 17.

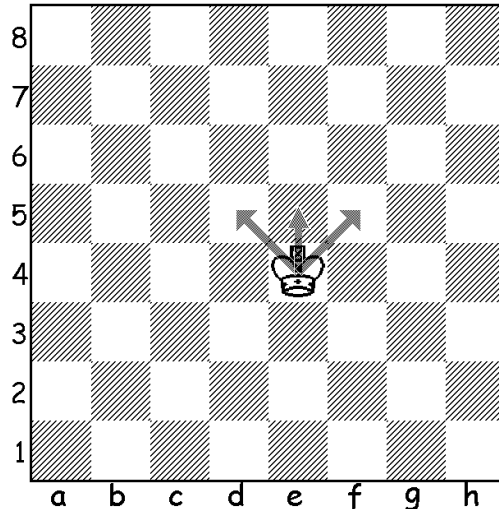


DIAGRAM 17
White's King is at the equator

On the e4-square, the White King attacks three squares of the opponent's territory. They are the f5, e5 and d5-squares as pointed out by the arrows drawn in diagram 17. In our chapter on the battlefield, we gave a higher point value to the sweet center squares as well as the other central squares. This was deliberate, but only to emphasize, how much more important these squares are relative to other squares. To keep things simple, from this point onwards in the Curriculum we will count squares as all having the same value as "one" each. Every square will have the value of one. Even so, never forget that the center is the high ground on the hill of the chess board and that the four sweet center squares are the highest hill of all.

Now let us move the White King into enemy territory for the first time. The White King crosses our imaginary equator line moving from the e4-square to the e5-square as we see in diagram 18. While in this new situation the White King still has all possible movements to eight different squares. Now from the e5-square how many squares of the opponent's territory does the White King **attack**?

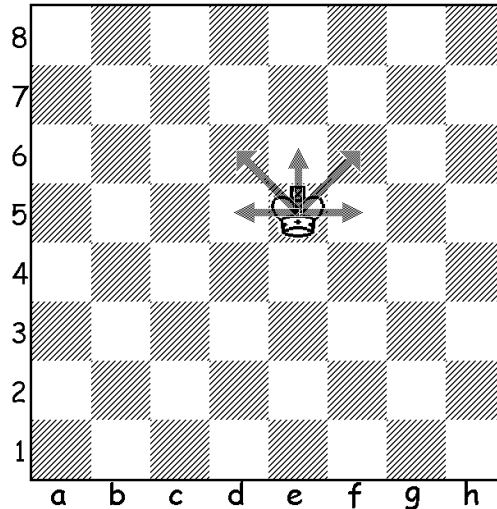


DIAGRAM 18

White's King crosses the equator into Black's space

With the White King now on the e5-square, it has crossed our imaginary equator line into enemy territory. As we see in diagram 18 from the arrows, the White King attacks five squares of Black's territory. When we count space, we count the number of squares that are attacked, we do not count the square that a piece or pawn *occupies*. In this case, with the White King on the e5-square, we don't count the e5-square as being attacked. Why? The White King occupies the square and it doesn't attack the square it sits upon because it cannot attack and capture itself!

Please notice that while White's King is on the e5-square it can also move to and indeed does "attack" the f4, e4 and d4-squares as well. However, we don't count these three squares as part of the space count as they belong to White. We accept that White already controls all of his own space/territory. What we are trying to learn is how we can control squares in our opponent's territory.

Let us continue our journey and move the White King from the e5-square to the e6-square. Now ask the Class how many squares the White King attacks with the King on the e6-square. (The correct answer is eight.) Notice how the deeper the King moves into the opponent's territory, the more squares of our opponent we control. A key clue! Invading our opponent's territory with our pieces will gain us an *advantage of space*. In chess parlance, we call "space" or rather the control of squares in our opponent's territory as our first element, the **space element**.

As we can see, the King can be a formidable piece. Positioned deeply into the enemy camp it can indeed control a lot of squares. Eight is the maximum in fact. An invading King can control eight squares out of a total of the thirty-two squares of our opponent's space. But caution is advised! We should not be in a hurry to bring our King into the enemy camp where we might be ensnared in a checkmate trap. In the Opening and Middle-game phases of the game, the King is usually best kept safe and squirreled away safely protected on our side of the board. Much later in the Endgame, when many pieces and pawns have been traded away, when it is safe to travel about, the King can be brought into the battle where it may play a heroic role.

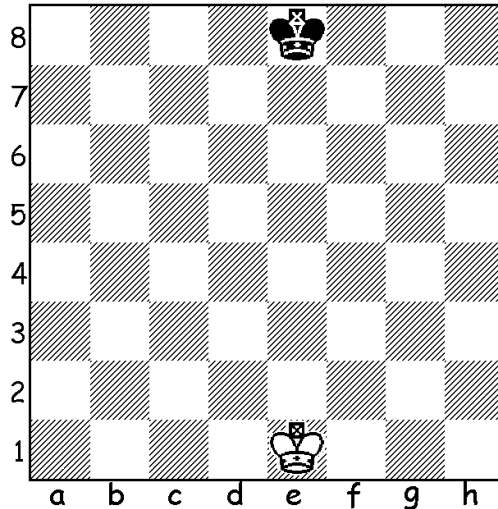


DIAGRAM 19
The Battle of the Kings

So far we've allowed White's King to have all the fun, playing by himself against no opponent, making all the moves without an answer in turn. Chess of course is a game where the two generals alternate their moves. In diagram 19, it is time to introduce the opposing Black King. Our rival appears on stage for the first time.

It is time to introduce a new type of battle. In this exercise there is no checkmate. Rather the goal here is for White's King to move first and for it to try to make it all the way to the 8th rank. Black's King will act as the defender, trying its best to stop White from accomplishing its goal as the players alternate their moves. Warning! This battle is not as easy as it might first appear. Some deft subtleties may be required for White to triumph. For Black to triumph all he need do is to block the White King from reaching the 8th rank.

Let me show you how this battle might be won or saved while introducing some key concepts in this battle of the Kings along the way. From diagram 19, let us imagine that two inexperienced players are to match wits against one another. The game might proceed as follows: 1.Ke1-e2 Ke8-e7, 2.Ke2-e3 Ke7-e6, 3.Ke3-e4, brings us to diagram 20.

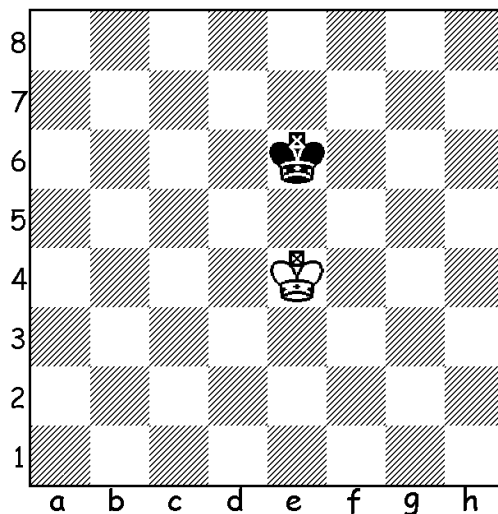


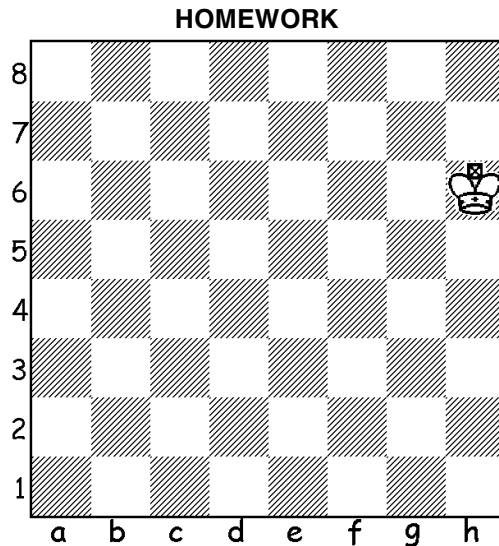
DIAGRAM 20
The Battle of the Kings: The Opposition

With his third move, White brought his King into opposition to the Black King. While it is Black to move, it is illegal for Black to bring his King forwards, as White's King attacks the three squares in front of Black's King and Black is not allowed to put his King into capture. Such a move violates the rules of chess. The Kings oppose one another and White has won the opposition. It is Black's turn to play and Black's King must give way. Let us suppose that Black chooses the move: 3...Ke6-d6. This move allows White to see a way to achieve his goal in this particular "battle of the King's," to the 8th rank and victory! White quickly presses his claim to success and swiftly moves: 4.Ke4-f5. Black's King has not defended well and retreats with: 4...Kd6-e7. White presses ahead: 5.Kf5-g6 Ke7-f8, 6.Kg6-h7, when White has won this battle. Black cannot prevent White's King from playing the move: 7.Kh7-h8, when White's King has won the battle, he conquered the 8th rank.

Well, that mock battle sure went White's way! Let us try to help the poor Black defender with another try. This time the Black army general is a more experienced player. Let us see how he might defend: 1.Ke1-e2 Ke8-d7, 2.Ke2-e3 Ke7-e7, Black makes a cunning move that seemingly loses a move and invites White's King to move ahead and stake his claim. Oblivious to his opponent's ploy, White continues as before: 3.Ke3-e4, when Black now plays: 3...Ke7-e6! With this move Black's King springs his surprise. Again, the Kings are placed in opposition to one another but this time Black has won the opposition. White's King cannot go forwards as Black's King also attacks the squares separating the Kings. White attempts at bringing his King to the 8th rank are frustrated: 4.Ke4-f4 Ke6-f6, 5.Kf4-g4 Kf6-g6, 6.Kg4-f4 Kg6-f6, 7.Kf4-e4 Kf6-e6, 8.Ke4-d4 Ke6-d6, 9.Kd4-c4 Kd6-c6, with each move of the defense, Black continues to keep the King's in opposition and blocks White's King from further incursion into his territory. In this second mock battle of the Kings, Black's King is the victor as he successfully defended his 8th rank.

Quiz and/or Homework

Students have to play two mock "battles of the Kings." Once on the White side, once on the Black side. Both players are required to keep a score-sheet and write down their moves as well as their opponents using the long-algebraic method of notation. (A good in class assignment.)



A journey to the a8-square

White's King is on the h6-square and he has been given a mission. The White King is to journey all the way to the a8-square deep inside Black's Queenside territory. His problem is that he

wants to do this while attacking as *few* of the opponent's squares as possible. Which path is the very best one for accomplishing this goal?

ANSWER: The King has to creep its way back cross the equator, come back into his own territory before crossing the board to the Queenside. White's King should avoid the equator until the last moment: 1.Kh6-h5! (With this move, White's King attacks three of Black's squares.) 2.Kh5-h4! (With this move, White's King attacks two of Black's squares. For a space count total of five, thus far.) 3.Kh4-g3, 4.Kg3-f3, 5.Kf3-e3, 6.Ke3-d3, 7.Kd3-c3, 8.Kc3-b3, 9.Kb3-a4!, (With this move, White's King attacks two of Black's squares. For a space count total of seven, thus far.) 10. Ka4-a5! (With this move, White's King attacks three of Black's squares. For a space count total of ten, thus far.) 11.Ka5-a6!, (With this move, White's King attacks five of Black's squares. For a space count total of fifteen, thus far.) 12.Ka6-a7, (With this move, White's King attacks five of Black's squares. For a space count total of twenty, thus far.) 13.Ka7-a8, (With this final move, White's journey with his King is complete. The White King attacks three of Black's squares for a space count total of twenty-three for making this journey.) These thirteen moves are the correct path to attacking as *few* of Black's territory squares as possible while making this journey. From moves three to nine, the students may have chosen a more creative path and should be awarded bonus points for having done so. Compliments for correct and creative play should be awarded as generously and as often as possible!

Note that after the moves some of them were rewarded with an exclamation mark. In chess convention an exclamation mark following a move means that the move made is judged to be a "good move." Two exclamation marks mean a "brilliant move." A question mark after a move means "a mistake" while two question marks would mean a "terrible move" was made.

This type of exercise example can be made a bit trickier and creative problems of this type are to be encouraged. For example: the White King can be placed on the c7-square with the destination the g5-square. White must plan how to get to the g5-square while stepping on as few squares in the space count as possible. I "think" the correct answer is: 1.Kb6, (Eight in the space count.) 2.Ka5 (An additional three in the space count.), 3.Ka4, (An additional two in the space count.) 4.Kb3, 5.Kc3, 6.Kd3, 7.Ke3, 8.Kf3, 9.Kg3, 10.Kh4!, (An additional two in the space count.) 11.Kg5! (An additional five in the space count, for a total of twenty in the space count.) If the student took the direct route: 1.Kd6, (Eight in the space count.) 2.Ke5, (Five in the space count.) 3.Kf4 (Three in the space count.) 4.Kg5, (Five in the space count. The total would be twenty-one in the space count, only one more than our correct solution. A close call!

It is fun for the instructor to create other similar challenges especially if the solution requires critical thinking, counting and calculation. While it is best if there is but one correct solution, a solution that offers two equally good answers is nice as well. The student may in this way be tricked. Believing there is only "one answer" they will be forced to double check their calculations. Ha! Let them think and count carefully as well! In the following class the exercise should be collectively shared to see if the students understood their missions.

Chapter Four:

Introducing *her* Majesty, the Queen

The Queen is the most powerful piece in our chess army. As such the Queen is a beginner's delight. When I first started playing chess the Queen was my absolute favorite piece. I did

everything wrong. I developed my Queen too early, right out of the opening and counted upon her to vanquish my opponent's army, oftentimes singlehandedly. When I lost my Queen that pretty much ended the game. I was forlorn. Hopelessly lost in fact. I simply didn't know how to play Chess without my favorite piece. Even worse, chess felt boring if I didn't have my Queen to make threats to my opponent's army. Let us try to understand the properties of the Queen so that we can better understand why she is able to dazzle and to captivate starting players.

The Queen, can move like a King, in any direction, but her movement is much more extended than to one square at a time. She can fly around the board going to the far corners of the battlefield in a single move. When the French extended her powers in the 15th century she was referred to as a "Mad Queen" because her powers became so heightened.

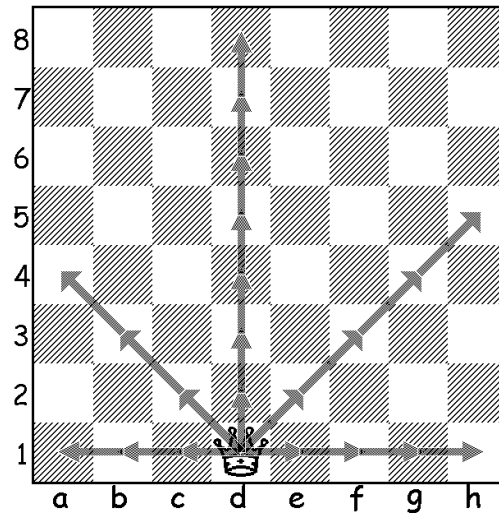


DIAGRAM 22
The powers of the Queen

In diagram 22 I've placed the Queen on her starting d1-square. From the arrows that have been drawn we can see that the Queen can go to many different squares. She can move in any direction, like a King, but her ranks, files and diagonals are not limited to moving to a single square at a time. Rather as long as the ranks, files and diagonals are *open* she can traverse along the length of all of them.

As we see in diagram 22, the Queen can move to her left along the first rank, to the c1, b1, a1-squares; to her right the e1, f1, g1, h1-squares; up the d-file, capable of going to the d2, d3, d4, d5, d6, d7 and d8-squares; along two diagonals the e2, f3, g4 and h5-squares; as well as the c2, b3 and a4-squares. In all, the White Queen, from the d1-square can move to a total of 21 different squares, as the board is stripped bare and there is nothing standing in her way.

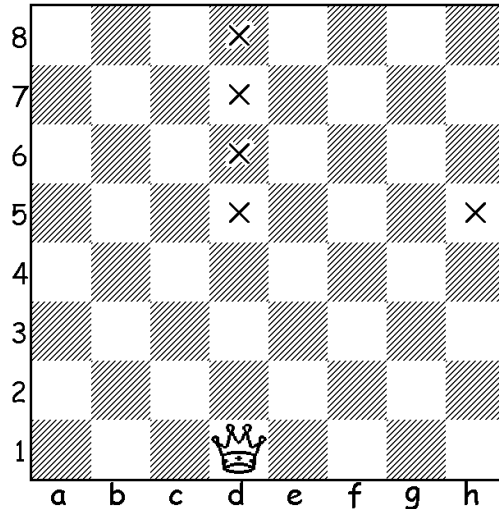


DIAGRAM 23

The White Queen attacks five squares in Black's territory

In terms of the space count, it can be seen that the Queen on the d1-square attacks five squares in the enemy's camp as shown by the "X" marks in diagram 23. The four squares along the d-file the, d5, d6, d7 and d8-squares as well as the h5-square are all attacked by the Queen, for a total of five in the space count.

Clearly, with the ability to move to 21 different squares out of a total of 64-squares the Queen is a very powerful piece indeed. With more pieces on the board the movement of the Queen can be blocked.

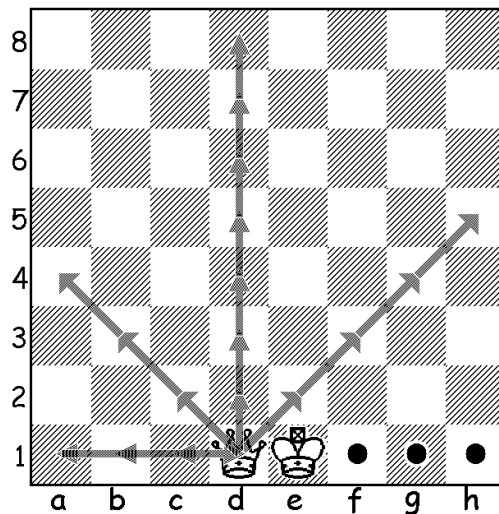


DIAGRAM 24

The White Queen is blocked from the Kingside

In diagram 24, I've added the White King and put it on the e1-square. In this situation, the White Queen is blocked from moving to White's Kingside. White's Queen cannot "jump" over the White King and at this moment, the f1, g1 and h1-squares are blocked by the White King. Also, the White Queen does not attack her own King. The Queen cannot capture the King and thus the Queen cannot move to the e1-square either. At no time in a chess game can two pieces occupy the same square.

However, as we see from the arrows in diagram 24, the Queen is quite capable of moving to the Queenside, along the first rank, she can move up the d-file, as well as the two diagonals from d1-a4-square(s) as well as from the d1-h5-square(s).

Still, in diagram 24, the White Queen attacks five squares in Black's territory, so the White Queen has a space count of five.

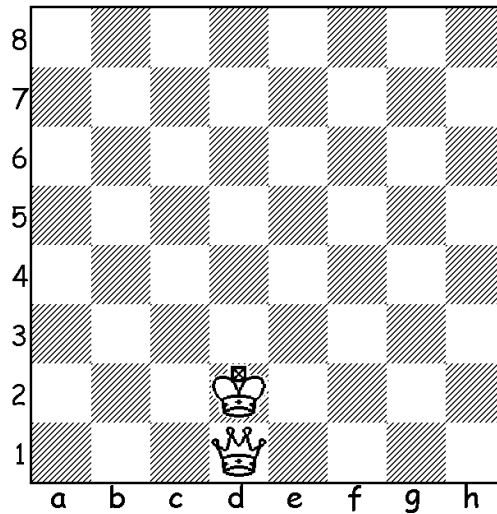


DIAGRAM 25

What is the space count for the White Queen?

In diagram 25, I've tried to be tricky. I've placed the White King on the d2-square, which blocks White's Queen as well. Two questions for the class: "To which squares can White's Queen move?"

"What is the space count for White's Queen in diagram 25?"

The answers are shown in diagram 26.

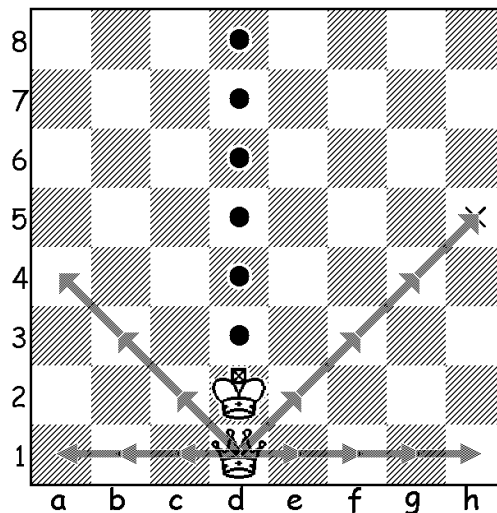


DIAGRAM 26

The d-file is blocked from the White Queen

In diagram 26, the Queen has a full range of possible squares along the first rank. Also, the Queen can move along the diagonals shown, including to the h5-square which is marked by an

“X.” This is the lone point in the space count. The Queen attacks only one of Black’s squares, the h5-square. The White King blocks the Queen from moving up the d-file. All the squares marked by a “black dot” are no longer available to White’s Queen. Sometimes the Queen can get very frustrated that her pathways are blocked by her own army!

Let us try to see the properties of the Queen in terms of the space count when she is at her most radiant glory.

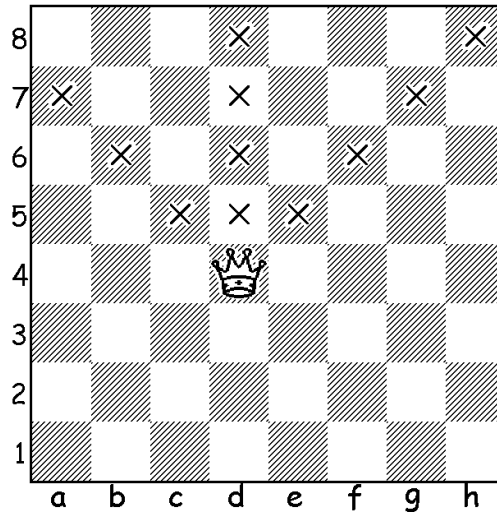


DIAGRAM 27

White’s Queen is placed at the equator

Let us catch up to diagram 27 and move our Queen on our chessboard from the d1-square up to the d4-square. In *long algebraic notation* this move would be recorded as: 1.Qd1-d4, in *short algebraic notation* this move would be recorded as: 1.Qd4. For players who are just starting to learn chess, I strongly recommend using the long algebraic form of notation for recording their moves as it reinforces the unique address of each square on the chess board and accelerates the learning process. We become familiar with each and every square more quickly. By constantly recording your moves in long algebraic, the battlefield will become second nature and you will learn and remember each square effortlessly and easily. For this Curriculum I will use long algebraic notation throughout.

Notice that with the Queen move: 1.Qd1-d4, the White Queen moves right up to the equator, the Queen has not yet crossed the equator into enemy territory but is at the very edge. From the “X” marks in diagram 27, we see that the Queen has considerably added to the number of squares that she attacks in the opponent’s territory. She now attacks the same four squares along the d-file as before, d5, d6, d7 and d8-squares; but now she also attacks four new squares, e5, f6, g7 and h8-square, along the diagonal to Black’s Kingside; and she attacks three new squares, c5, b6 and a7-squares, along the diagonal to Black’s Queenside. In total, from the d4-square, the White Queen attacks eleven of Black’s squares. We say that in the “space count” the White Queen attacks eleven squares. An impressive gain in the space count by making one single move, wouldn’t you say?

Can the White Queen do better? Can she move to another square that might help her increase her space count? From the d4-square, the White Queen occupies one of the four “sweet center” squares, the highest squares on the chessboard.

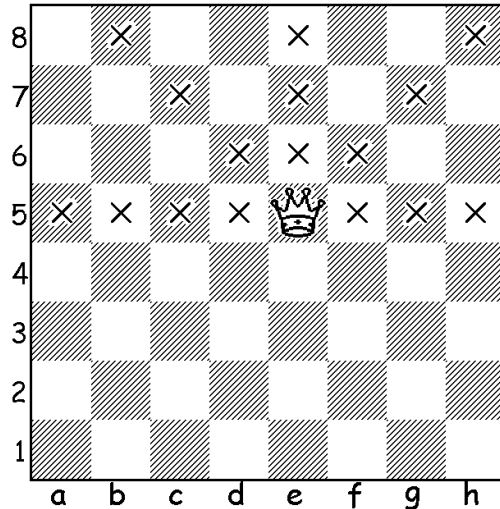


DIAGRAM 28
White's Queen crosses the equator

Let us now catch up to diagram 28 and make a short diagonal movement with the Queen moving her from the d4-square to the e5-square on our chessboards. We will record this second move as: 2.Qd4-e5. With this move the White Queen crosses the equator, but just barely, stepping but one square into Black's territory. What happens now to White's space count?

As we see from diagram 28, in terms of the space count, White's Queen has grown increasingly more powerful. Only attacking *five* squares from her starting position on the d1-square, she launched up to the equator on the d4-square and the space count went up to *eleven*. Once she crossed over the equator but just inside Black's territory, the Queen suddenly attacked *sixteen* squares.

Quick question for the class: "How many squares in Black's territory are there?" (The correct answer is thirty-two squares.) Second question for the class: "If the White Queen attacks sixteen of the thirty-two squares, in Black's territory, what percentage of Black's territory does the White Queen attack?" (The correct answer is "half" of Black's territory or "fifty-percent.")

Amazing! The Queen on her own has the ability to attack half of the opponent's space! Talk about making your presence felt. The Queen can be a real bully. It is important to note that when we do the space count we only count the squares that our Queen *attacks*. While the Queen occupies the e5-square, we do not count this square in our space count because the Queen is not attacking herself. She cannot capture herself either!

Let us roam inside Black's territory for a while to see if we can possibly increase the space count of White's Queen. This time, we will not use a diagram, we will play the move: 3.Qe5-c7, on our chessboards.

Question for the class: "From the c7-square, how many squares in Black's territory does White's Queen attack?"

The correct answer is sixteen.

Remarkable, just as before when placed on the e5-square, the Queen attacks sixteen squares. Even after going deep into Black's territory she isn't any more effective than she was before. Let us try again, let us move: 4.Qc7-g7. Now having invaded to the g7-square, what is the Queen's space count? Surprise! The space count falls by one, the Queen controls but fifteen squares in the space count when occupying the g7-square.

Let us make a fifth move with the Queen and go to a corner square: 5.Qg7-h8. Now what is the space count? From the h8-square, the Queen controls but thirteen squares. Her powers in the space count were reduced.

What can we glean from this new knowledge about the Queen? This lesson teaches us that the Queen is likely to be at her most effective while *centralized* and away from the corners. The Queen doesn't have to probe deeply into the opponent's territory but stepping across the equator does make a big difference in her ability to control the opponent's space.

Our First Checkmate: King & Queen versus King

Now that we have learned how the King and Queen both move it is now time to learn how to checkmate an opponent's King. As we know, the object of the game of chess is simple: To win the opponent's King. In chess, the King is *not* actually captured rather it is placed in a position where it is threatened with capture and when such a capture cannot be prevented, the King is said to be "checkmated" and the game is over. But how *exactly* do we checkmate the enemy King?

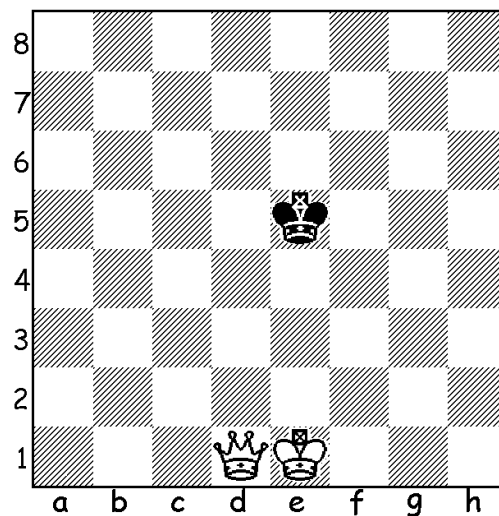


DIAGRAM 29

Challenge! How to checkmate the Black King

Diagram 29 features our first checkmating challenge and one of the most important in chess. We simply have to know, backwards and forwards, inside and out, up and down and right to left, so to speak. Our challenge is to checkmate the enemy King with an extra Queen.

What is White's first objective to successfully accomplish the goal of checkmate? It turns out that the Black King cannot be checkmated when it is in the middle of the board or *centralized*. Rather the Black King has to be herded, pushed, or otherwise forced to the *sides* of the board. The first rank or eighth rank will do nicely as will the a-file or h-file for the side trying to deliver a checkmate. Simply put the Black King has to be forced away from the center, to the sides of the board. Great! Now that we know the first objective, pushing the opposing King to the side of the board, how do we go about doing that?

As we saw in diagram 22, even though for the moment, White's Queen is far away from Black's King, the powers of the White Queen even from afar have a valuable influence. In diagram 29, since we know how the Queen moves, it is clear that Black's King is cutoff from the d-file. In other words, White's Queen controls the squares d4, d5 and d6-squares, Black's King is

forbidden to move to any of these squares. That would be an illegal move as it would place the Black King in capture to the White Queen and is therefore not allowed.

Chess is often considered to be a *science* because there are numerous positions in chess that can be won in exactly the same way using exactly the same technique each and every time. The winning procedure has been scientifically proven to work so to speak and will always work exactly the same way. Time after time. From diagram 29, I like to use the "coffin technique" to win the game. Starting players will appreciate it because it wins every time! Once you have mastered this technique you can use it again and again. Forever in fact.

In the coffin technique White uses his Queen to "shadow" Black's King and force it to the side of the board and eventually to a corner square. Any corner square (a1; h1; h8 or the a8-square) will do. Once the Black King is cornered the White King steps up the board to seal the fate of the cornered King with a checkmate pattern. Even though White only has two pieces, his King and Queen, never forget that chess is a team sport. You must learn to use your entire army. It will take the combined efforts of White's King and Queen to overcome Black's resistance.

From diagram 29, White has many moves that will lead to his triumph. Let us start by shadowing the Black King with the White Queen. White starts with: 1.Qd1-d7, with this move, White's Queen considerably impairs the movements of Black's King. The choices of where Black's King can move are limited. White's Queen now controls the d4, d5 and d6-squares just as she did before the Queen moved but now the Queen also controls the additional e6 and f5-squares. The Black King's movements have been reduced to just three squares: Black can choose only the e4, f4 and f6-squares as legal squares to move.

Let us back up to the position in diagram 29 for a moment. Since we know that White wants to bully the Black King to the sides of the board, why didn't White just begin with: 1.Qd1-d5+, attacking the Black King at once? Well the problem is that the White Queen is not defended! Black's King would be delighted by this terrible move. Black would play: 1...Ke5xd5, removing White's Queen from the board while placing his King on the d5-square. The game is an immediate draw. Whoops! The Black King has teeth, it bites when undefended pieces get to close. We must be careful not to blunder away our Queen.

Did you notice in this long algebraic recording there were some different characters? At the end of White's recorded move: 1.Qd1-d5+, I added a plus sign "+". In chess notation, when we see a "+" sign recorded on our score-sheet, we know that a King has been placed in "check." That is, the King has been threatened with capture. Notice when recording Black's response, to this terrible initial move: 1...Ke5xd5, I used an "x" which in chess notation means a capture has been made. When a piece or pawn has been captured, the captured piece or pawn is lifted off the board and placed to the side of the board, and the piece or pawn that made the capture is placed on the square that the captured piece came from. Hence, in this mistaken opening move from diagram 29, the move: 1.Qd1-d5+, would cost White his Queen as the best move for Black is to play: 1...Ke5xd5, capturing and removing White's Queen from the board and occupying the d5-square. The very square that White's Queen gave the mistaken check.

An important lesson to remember: Make sure that the Queen is protected when giving a check especially when the Queen is very close to the opposing King!

Once more, from diagram 29, let us continue with the very good opening move that we previously made: 1.Qd1-d7, which limits the movement of Black's King. The Black general is a crafty fellow, he knows that his King needs to stay in the middle to avoid checkmate for as long as possible and he plays: 1...Ke5-e4, trying to stay in the center and away from the sides as well as the corners of the board.

Now the White Queen, *shadows* Black's King with the move: 2.Qd7-d6, notice how Black's options as to which squares he can move his King are limited by the powers of White's Queen. Black advances with: 2...Ke4-e3, doing his very best to stay in the center. White's Queen continues to shadow Black's King: 3.Qd6-d5, with this move Black's King has to back up. The Black King can no longer go forwards. White's King attacks the d2, e2 and f2-squares. White's Queen attacks the d4, d3, d2, f3 and e4-squares. Black's King has but a single move, in chess parlance, we say a *forced move*. Black's King has only *one* option it is forced to move: 3...Ke3-f4, stepping backwards and to the side. White continues his shadow technique with his Queen and plays: 4.Qd5-e6, now Black's King has lost the option of playing to the e-file squares as well as the f5 and g4-squares. Black plays: 4...Kf4-f3, and White continues to shadow Black's King with: 5.Qe6-e5, further controlling the movements of Black's King.

Black realizes that he is being bullied to the side of the board but is helpless to stop White's *inexorable* technique. Rather than head to the h1-corner, Black pulls up with his King and plays: 5...Kf3-g4, hoping for the best. White's Queen continues to shadow the Black King: 6.Qe5-f6, a move that denies Black's King any further use of the squares along the f-file. Once more, Black's King is reduced to a choice of only three legal squares to which he can move his King. Black chooses: 6...Kg4-g3, and White shows perfect coffin technique by continuing to shadow Black's King. White moves his Queen: 7.Qe6-f5, limiting Black's choices once more. The Black general decides to avoid the h1-corner, his coffin, and tries his best chance to dance away from the corner h1-square: 7...Kg3-h4, which leads us to diagram 30.

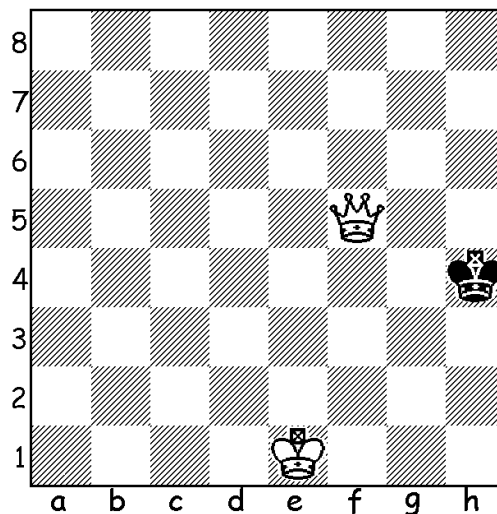


DIAGRAM 30

Black's King on the side of the board

If we compare the two diagrammed positions of 29 and 30, we see that White has made *fantastic* progress. We really must congratulate ourselves on our brilliant play thus far. Black's King has been herded away from the center all the way over to the h-file. This is simply great, but it is vital that we don't become so overjoyed with our *pro prowess* that we blow the victory. White's best move is for his Queen to continue to shadow Black's King and to drive the Black King to the h1-square, the coffin, where Black's doom will be sealed. Therefore: 8.Qf5-g6!, is White's best move. Now the Black King is cut along the g-file. Black cannot move to any square on the g-file. Instead, Black's King has but *one* move which makes it a forced move. Black must play: 8...Kh4-h3, moving closer and closer to the *fatal* h1-square. White keeps up his shadow technique which has worked so brilliantly thus far: 9.Qg6-g5, Black is left with no choice: 9...Kh3-h2, and White herds the Black King into his coffin: 10.Qg5-g4, again Black has no choice and must play: 10...Kh2-h1, which brings us to diagram 31.

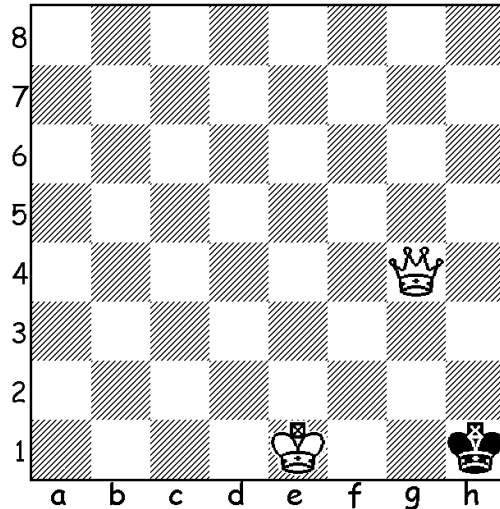


DIAGRAM 31

Black's King is now in the coffin. A critical moment!

As we can see in diagram 31, the White Queen has single-handedly forced the Black King all the way into a corner square. While it may not appear critical, in fact we have indeed reached a pinnacle moment in our learning of the coffin technique. The lazy White King has not moved at all and now that Black's King has been cornered it is time for the White King to step into the fray and play the best move: 11.Ke1-f2!, which sets up a bevy of various checkmate patterns as we will soon see.

When we have successfully driven the opposing King into the corner it is vital that we *allow* our opponent to make a legal move with his King. I have blown this key moment so many times I can't count them all as the number is so high. Our shadow technique has worked like a charm. But too much of a good thing can ruin our fine work.

In this critical moment, it would be a disaster to play the move: 11.Qg4-g3??, which shadows Black's King one move too far. As we consider playing the move: 11.Qg4-g3, we have to ask ourselves a key question, "*Have we left Black's King with a legal move option?*" We know that a player cannot put his King in capture but our opponent has a legal requirement to move. With the White Queen lording over the g3-square, Black's King on the h1-square has no legal movement whatsoever. Black's King cannot go to the h2, g2 or g1-squares, as these squares are all controlled by White's Queen!

This predicament leads to a condition we call, Stalemate. This example of stalemate is shown in diagram 32.

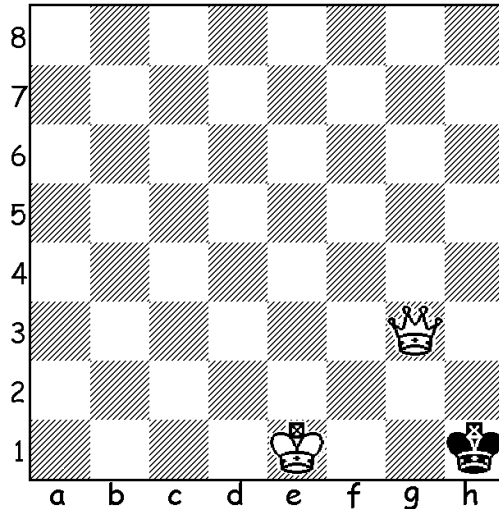


DIAGRAM 32
Black's King is in Stalemate

As we see in diagram 32, Black has no legal moves; that is, Black can make no move without placing his King in check. In short, Black cannot move his King. Black has no legal move. When this happens, the situation is a stalemate. Stalemate does not lead to a victory; rather a stalemate means the game is tied or better to say in chess language the game is declared a draw. In the chess scoring system, a victory is counted as one point for the victor and the loser gets a zero for his efforts. In a draw, the point is split and both players get half a point. Stalemate snatches a draw from the jaws of victory! Yikes. Don't let it happen to you, as it has happened so many times to me. Learn from my mistakes.

Be alert! Once your shadowing technique has pushed your opponent's King into the corner, stop! Think. Make sure that you leave your opponent with a legal move and do not stalemate the King.

Proceeding to a proper Checkmate

From diagram 31, at last our lazy King which has not moved gets off the bench and is put to work. We avoid the disastrous move: 11.Qg4-g3??, which would produce stalemate but instead play the star move: 11.Ke1-f2!, White's best move by far. This move sets up numerous checkmating patterns as we shall see. Black has but one move, a forced move: 11...Kh1-h2, but his coffin is now about to be sealed shut.

Thanks to White's King on the f2-square, it controls the g1, g2 and g3-squares, making it impossible for Black's King to move to any of these squares. What is now necessary is for White's Queen to directly threaten Black's King.

In diagram 33, we see our first checkmating pattern. White plays the move: 12.Qg4-g2, checkmate.

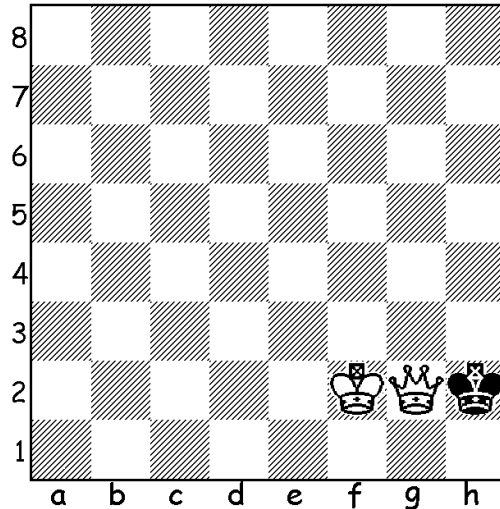


DIAGRAM 33
Black's King is in Checkmate

Let us closely study the diagrammed position 33, to be sure that we understand it fully. Thanks to White's King on the f2-square it protects the White Queen on the g2-square. Black's King is not allowed to capture White's Queen due to this protection. From the g2-square, White's Queen attacks Black's King on the h2-square. That is Black's King has been placed in "check" by White's Queen. Black's King is under attack. But Black's King is denied movement to both the h3 and h1-squares because White's Queen also attacks both of these squares as well. Black's King, under attack, cannot avoid capture, hence the position is checkmate and the game is over. White has won.

It is absolutely vital that we fully understand the difference between the stalemate position shown in diagram 32, in which case the game ends in a draw, and the checkmate position shown in diagram 33, which is a victory for the player delivering the checkmate.

Let us go back and have a second glance at diagram 30 for a moment. From that diagrammed position, White cleverly continued with his shadow technique which led to a victory when White played: 8.Qf5-g6, and drove Black's King towards the h1-corner. An excellent move. Good moves are often rewarded with an exclamation mark at the end of the move. For example: 8.Qf5-g6!, signifies that the move was a good one. If the move was sublime, as in a simply brilliant move, it is rewarded with a double exclamation mark as in: 8.Qf5-g6!!

Conversely, we use a question mark to signify a poor move and a double question mark at the end of a move to signify a really rotten one. A howler of a move. Let us say from diagram 30, rather than continue with the good move: 8.Qf5-g6!, White erred badly by playing the move: 8.Ke1-f2??, instead. What would the situation be called?

The move: 8.Ke1-f2??, is indeed dreadful because it would instantly produce a stalemate on the board and the game would be drawn on the spot. Yikes! Black's King on the h4-square is not in check, but he cannot be compelled to make an illegal move that would place his King under attack and capture. All of the possible squares that Black's King could move to are attacked by White's King and Queen. Black's King has no legal moves and he is not under being attacked. Whoops! The game is drawn.

Let us get back to further checkmating patterns. In diagram 34, we see our second checkmating pattern. Previously, White had played the move 12.Qg4-g2 checkmate, now he plays the move: 12.Qg4-h4, checkmate.

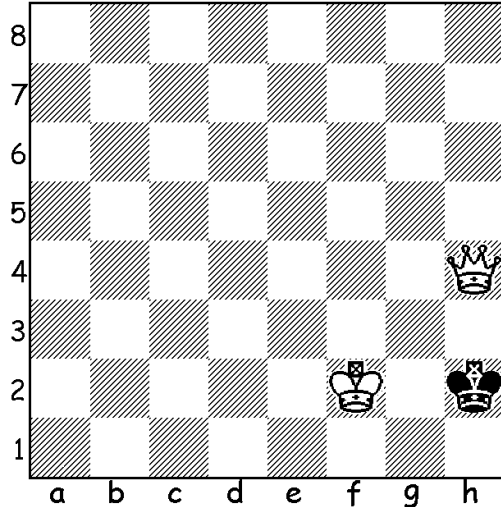


DIAGRAM 34

Another checkmating pattern: Black's King is in checkmate

In diagram 34, let us delve further into the position and fully understand the mechanics behind this checkmating pattern. Black's King is under attack by the White Queen. Therefore Black King is placed in "check." White's King stands guard over the g1, g2 and g3-squares, preventing Black's King from escaping to any of these squares. Black's King cannot go to the h3 or h1-squares, as White's Queen controls those squares as well. Black's King is thus checkmated.

Previously, White had played the move 12.Qg4-h4 checkmate as we saw in diagram 34, now he plays the move: 12.Qg4-h5, checkmate.

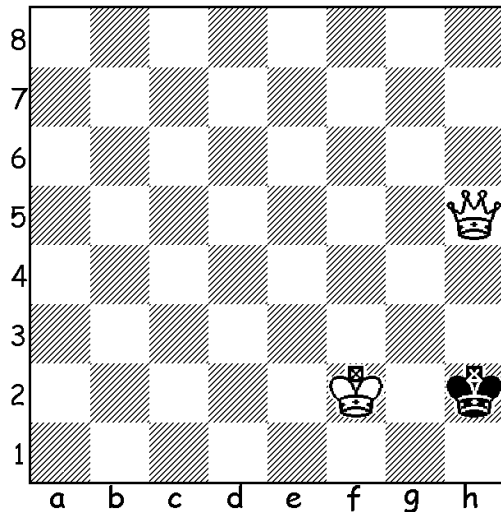


DIAGRAM 35

Black's King is in checkmate

Once more the mechanics behind the checkmate in diagram 35 are exactly the same as in diagram 34. The only difference between the two diagrams is that White's Queen is just one square further away from the Black King. It makes no difference however as Black's King is in checkmate. In both cases, the White Queen threatens the Black King either from the h4-square or the h5-square.

Quick question for the class: “If White’s Queen was on the h8-square, as far away from the Black King as possible, would the situation still be checkmate?”

(Correct answer is yes.)

When White played the move: 11.Ke1-f2, he was able to create a situation where on his very next move he was given a choice of *three* different types of checkmating patterns. Clearly, driving the opposing King into a corner square offers a choice of victories. At such moments we get the flattering decision to choose which checkmating pattern that we like best. The choice is yours.

Before we leave this discussion, quick question for the class: “Would the move: 12.Qg4-h3+, be a good move?”

(Answer: No! That would be a terrible move. The move: 12.Qg4-h3+??, properly deserves two question marks, signifying a terrible move, as Black’s King could simply capture the unprotected White Queen with: 12...Kh2xh3, when the White Queen is removed from the board and the game is an instant draw.)

Once again, let us practice both our shadowing and coffin techniques. I’ve taken the same diagrammed position that we used in diagram 29 and called it diagram 36.

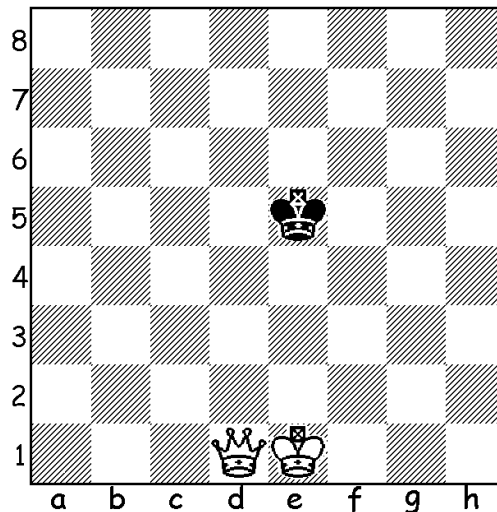


DIAGRAM 36

*Let's try that again!
Shadows and coffins*

As stated earlier, from the position in diagram 36, White has a number of good opening first moves after which he can employ the shadow technique. Let us try a different first move than the one we used before. White plays: 1.Qd1-g4, bringing the Queen into play and cutting Black’s options of crossing the 4th rank. Black plays: 1...Ke5-d5, staying in the center. White begins his shadow technique: 2.Qg4-f4 Kd5-c5 3.Qf4-e4, when Black stops to have a think. He decides to not continue heading towards the a-file and instead backs up with his King by: 3...Kc5-d6, and White keeps up his technique of shadowing Black’s King by moving his Queen: 4.Qe4-f5 Kd6-e7 5.Qf5-g6, when Black has another think. He wants to avoid getting cut off along the 8th rank and so plays: 5...Ke7-d7, and White is happy to shadow Black’s King as before: 6.Qg6-f6 Kd7-c7 7.Qf6-e6 Kc7-b7 8.Qe6-d6 Kb7-a7 9.Qd6-c6!, is a move that deserves an exclamation mark. (However, note that 9.Qd6-b4!, would also be an excellent move as well since Black’s King would be cutoff and is stuck along the a-file. In Chess it is common to have two equally good moves,

sometimes even more than two.) Now Black is left with no choice and must step to the 8ⁿ rank: 9...Ka7-b8 10.Qc6-d7!, Kb8-a8, when the play brings us to diagram 37.

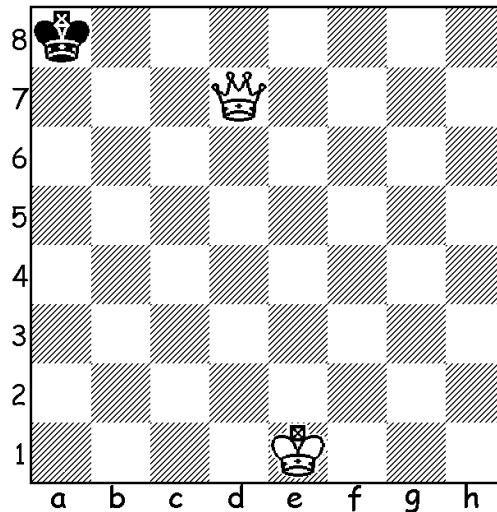


DIAGRAM 37

Another critical moment!

I've given diagram 37 a special caption that reads, "Another critical moment!" Indeed that is precisely what the situation is: it is critical. White's shadowing technique has been stellar. World class in fact and certainly deserving of a gold medal. Compared with diagram 36, Black's King has been herded into the a8-coffin corner. The White general must now recognize that Black's King is helpless. All the Black King can do is move back and forth moving between the a8 and b8-squares. Black's King is well and truly trapped. But! Black's King must be allowed to make a legal move. A dreadful mistake would now be to play the move: 11.Qd7-c7??, which sets up a dreaded stalemate situation. In that case Black is unable to move his King. His King is not under threat and the game is drawn on the spot.

Once we realize that Black's King is in a coffin corner, it is time for our White King to make an exalted entrance. It will have to move to many more squares than it did before to deliver a checkmate pattern but that is not a problem. Black's King is helpless and can only shuffle from one square to another. Now that the first objective has been achieved, herding Black's King into a coffin corner, it is time for the next stage of the winning plan, bringing the King into the battle: 11.Ke1-d2! Ka8-b8 12.Kd2-c3 Kb8-a8 13.Kc3-b4 Ka8-b8 14.Kb4-b5 Kb8-a8 15.Kb5-b6 Ka8-b8, the play has brought us to diagram 38.

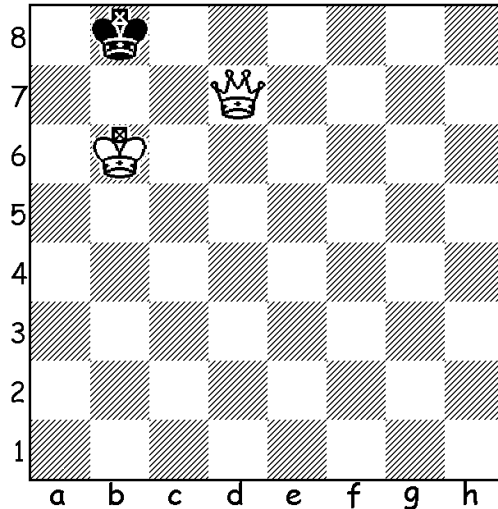


DIAGRAM 38

The time is right for a checkmate pattern!

While it may not appear that way, the position in diagram 38 is actually very similar to the position when Black's King was previously checkmated on the h2-square. Question for the class: "How many different moves can White play that will checkmate the Black King?"

(The correct answer is that there are "three different checkmate moves." Ask the class to call out the three legal checkmates. They are: 16.Qd7-b7#; 16.Qd7-d8#; 16.Qd7-e8#. Notice that in these answers I gave a "hash tag" sign of "#" following White's sixteenth move. In algebraic notation, both long and short, the hash tag sign (#) at the end of a move means the move played creates a checkmate and the game is finished.)

Quiz and/or Homework

Students have to play two mock battles of the King and Queen versus King position against one another. Once playing the superior side having the extra Queen, once playing the inferior side having no Queen. Both players are required to keep a score-sheet and write down their moves as well as those of their opponents using the long-algebraic method of notation.

(A good in Class assignment as well.) Use the two different starting positions from diagram 39 and 40 for this assignment:

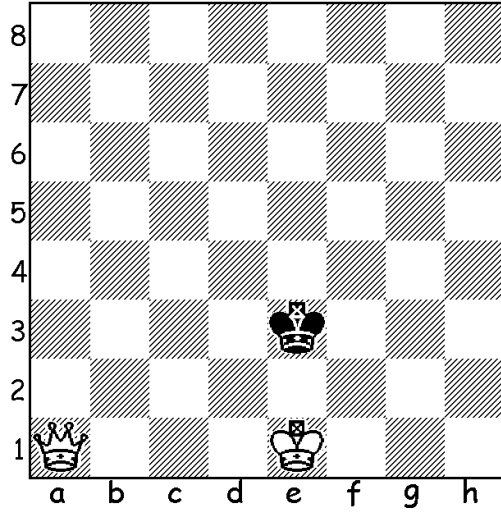


DIAGRAM 39

Checkmate the Black King if you can!

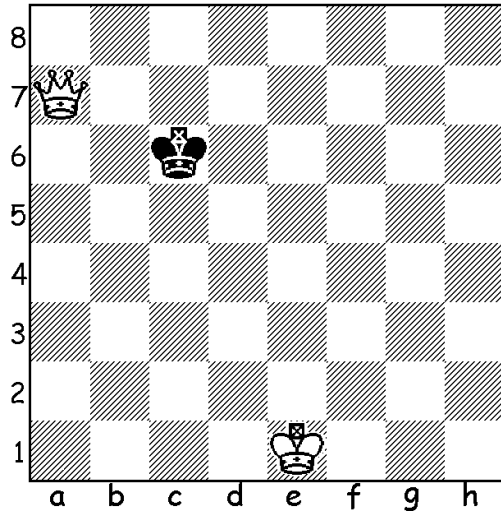


DIAGRAM 40

Checkmate the Black King if you can!

HOMEWORK and Quizzes:

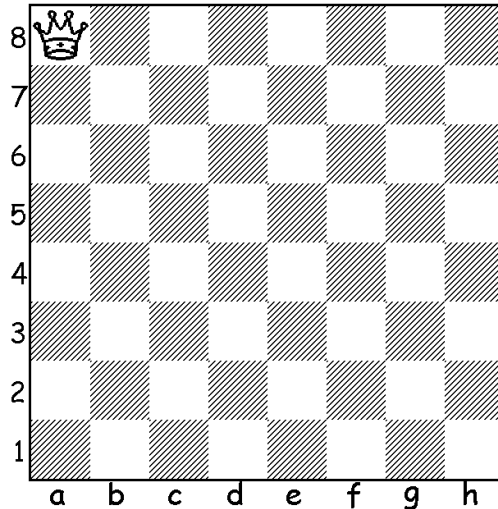


DIAGRAM 41

Move the White Queen to two different squares that would increase the Space Count for White's Queen

Question: "In diagram 41, White's Queen on the a8-square attacks thirteen squares in Black's space." Is this statement correct?

Move the White Queen to two different squares in Black's camp which would increase the square count of the White Queen to a maximum of sixteen squares.

In fact, there are four squares. Extra credit for getting all four answers right!

1.Qa8- ,
1.Qa8- ,

The correct answers include:

1.Qa8-d8
1.Qa8-e8
1.Qa8-d5
1.Qa8-c6

In the question for diagram 41, would the move, 1.Qa8-f8, be a correct move to attack 16 squares in Black's territory?

(Answer: "No." On the f8-square, the White Queen would only attack fifteen Black squares, not sixteen.)

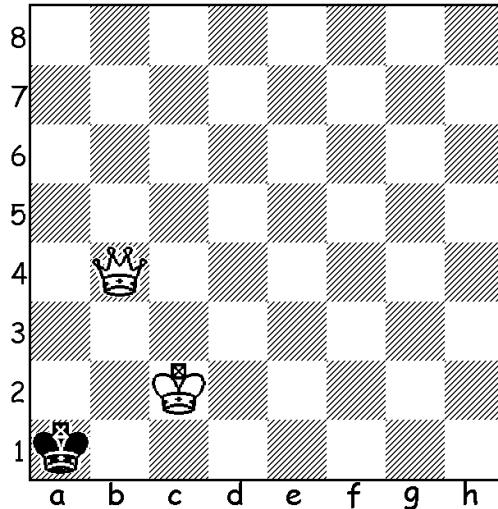


DIAGRAM 42

How many ways can the White Queen checkmate the Black King?

Question: "In diagram 42, Black's *predicament* is *dire* indeed. How many ways can White checkmate the enemy King on the move?"

Write down the move number "1." first and then write down the move that would give checkmate in one move in long algebraic notation.

The correct answer is that there are five ways for White to checkmate in one move. I deliberately wrote the word "move" (singular) to try and trick the student into thinking there was only one right answer. There are five checkmates in one move:

- 1.Qb4-b1#
- 1.Qb4-b2#
- 1.Qb4-a3#
- 1.Qb4-a4#
- 1.Qb4-a5#

(When sharing the correct answer of five with the class begin with the comment, "There are *four* checkmate moves that White can play." Wait to see if the class corrects you. Give them the opportunity for a few seconds. If it is not taken at once. Ask the class, "Correct? There are four possible checkmates in one move. Correct?" If someone or the whole class corrects you and says, "No. There are five checkmates!" Act surprised. "Really?" Let the class correct you. Be playful.)

From the position in diagram 42 give the class a contrary challenge. Ask the class to find the *worse* possible move for White that creates an immediate stalemate and a draw. What is this horrible move?

The correct answer:

1.Qb4-b3??

Black's King is stalemated after this howler!

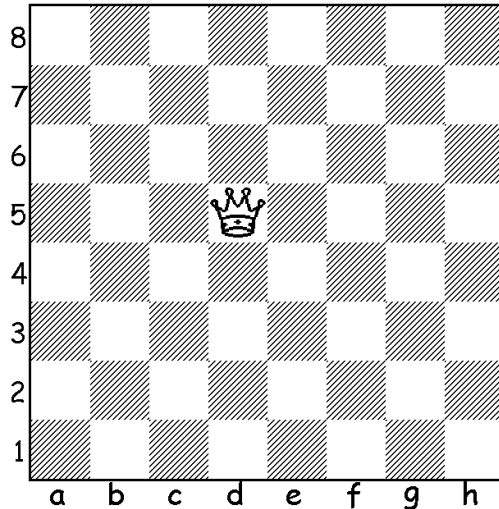


DIAGRAM 43

White's Queen is at the peak of her powers

In diagram 43, White's Queen is at the peak of her powers attacking sixteen squares of Black's territory. Put a White King on any square of the chessboard that you would like that would block the Queen and reduce her space count.

One correct answer is to put the White King on the e5-square. This would block White's Queen from controlling the e5, f5, g5 and h5-squares.

Another correct answer is to put the White King on the e6-square, as this would block White's Queen from attacking the e6, f7, g8-squares.

Other correct answers include putting White's King on the f6-square, the d6-square, the c6-square and the c5-square. As you can imagine this exercise opens up a wealth of opportunities for quizzes. For example, you could put the White Queen on the b2-square and ask the class, "How could the White King *most effectively* block the long diagonal from the White Queen thereby reducing the space count?" There are three correct answers: White King on the c3-square; on the d4-square and on the e5-square, the very best answer is a White King on the c3-square. Placing the White King on either the d4-square or the e5-square *does* block the Queen's diagonal reducing *her* space count, but from the d4-square or the e5-square, the *White King* now controls squares in the space count as well. When the White King is on the c3-square, it does not contribute to the space count as it does not attack any of Black's squares.

Other possible quiz positions are to put both the White King and White Queen on random squares inside Black's territory and ask the class/student what is the space count from both the King and Queen, separately and together.

Get in the habit of using the terms, "good" and "excellent" when describing a chess move. This is the correct parlance in chess vernacular to describe a move.

Also use "poor" "bad" and "terrible" for describing a move that is a mistake in the position. Reserve the word "terrible" for mistakes that are really, really bad. In chess parlance a howler. A chess move must not always be "described" thusly with a notation of "good" "bad" and so forth. There may be a multitude of chess moves at any given moment with most of them being reasonable or fair.

Chapter Five:

Introducing the Rook The second most powerful piece

It is the strangest thing, when I first started learning to play chess I had a lot of difficulties with my Rooks. What I mean is that I just found them clumsy and I didn't know how to properly use them for the longest time. In fact, I played so badly they were often captured right away. To give myself some credit, it is hard to learn how to use your Rooks if your opponent is taking them off the board very early in the game.

While the movements of the Rooks are quite easy to grasp, it is difficult to master their movement. Mastery knowledge is knowing *where* as well as *when* to move a Rook.

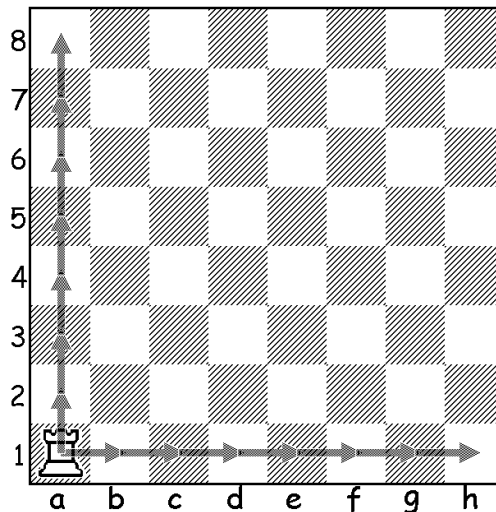


DIAGRAM 44

The movements of the Rook 'easy peasy'

In diagram 44, the arrows show where the Rook on the a1-square is capable of moving. Simply put, the rooks move horizontally, from left to right as well as vertically, up and down. They patrol the ranks and files and are constantly looking for ways to invade into the opponent's camp. Once installed in the opponent's territory they are transformed into formidable attackers. The Queen, as the most powerful piece on the board, is understandably called a *major* piece. The Rook is the second most powerful piece in our army. It too is called a *major* piece.

As we see from Diagram 44, the a1-Rook has been placed on its original starting square. The arrows show to which squares the Rook can move. For the moment, our concern is to place the Rook as *actively* as possible and that means our focus will be on which squares the a1-Rook attacks in the enemy camp. As we see the a1-Rook attacks four of Black's squares, the a5, a6, a7 and a8-squares. In the space count we would say that the a1-Rook attack's *four* of Black's squares. Since Black has no army at all, we would say that at the moment, the space count is four to nothing in White's favor. White is dominating!

If we move the a1-Rook to the a4-square, right up to the equator, but still inside White's territory, the space count of White's Rook remains unchanged. It is still at four. Now something magical happens, when we move the a4-Rook, to the a5-square, just across the equator and inside Black's territory, the space count for the Rook changes dramatically.

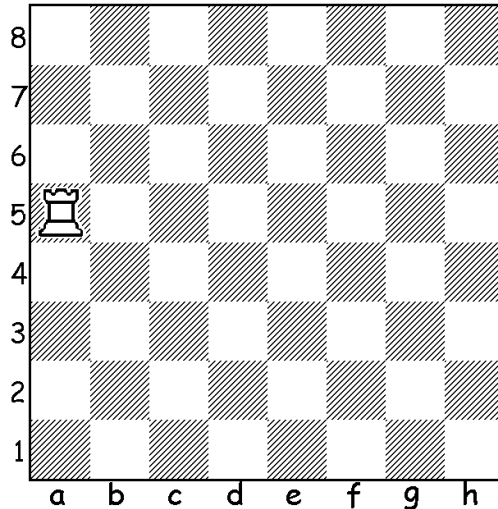


DIAGRAM 45

What is the space count for White's Rook?

Looking at Diagram 45, as well as reading the caption, what is the space count for the a5-Rook?

The correct answer is ten. The a5-Rook attacks ten squares of Black's territory. Shall we collectively call out those ten squares? Along the *a-file*, there are three: The a6, a7 and a8-squares. Along the *fifth rank*, there are seven. They are: The b5, c5, d5, e5, f5, g5 and h5-squares. Note the Rook, which occupies the a5-square does not attack itself. So we can't count the a5-square as a square that is being attacked.

Let's get more comfortable with the Rook and try to better understand its properties. Let us move the Rook on our chessboard from the a5-square and occupy the highest ground, a sweet center square. I'm going to choose the e5-square. When the Rook occupies the e5-square, how many squares in Black's territory does the Rook attack? The correct answer is ten. Surprise! The exact same number as before. The power of the Rook has not increased even though it is in the sweet center and on the highest ground on the chess battlefield.

With the Rook on the e5-square, shall we collectively call out those ten squares that it attacks in Black's territory? Along the e-file, there are three squares that the Rook attacks: The e6, e7 and e8-squares. Along the fifth rank, there are seven. They are: the a5, b5, c5, d5, f5, g5 and h5-squares. A total of ten squares are attacked by the Rook. How strange. Hmm. Let us continue exploring Black's territory to see if we can't find *any* square in Black's territory where the space count of ten can be improved.

Let us move the Rook from the e5-square, first to the e7-square and then to the g7-square which takes us two moves to make. Surely the Rook will be more powerful the deeper we go into Black's territory right? Well let us collectively count the number of squares the Rook on the g7-square attacks. They are: Three squares on the g-file, the g8, g6 and g5-squares. That makes three. Along the seventh rank, they are: the h7, f7, e7, d7, c7, b7 and the a7-squares, seven, for a total of ten. Once more, we have not improved the space count of the Rook.

It turns out that the maximum number of squares that a Rook can attack of the enemy camp is ten. Once the Rook is in the opponent's territory, remarkably *any* square will do! As a good general of our army this is a good *insight* to know. The Rook is very powerful when *inside* the opponent's territory and practically any square will do.

Learning to Checkmate with King and Rook

The second most fundamental checkmate in chess is the checkmate with a King and a Rook versus a lone King. Imagine that we were to play the best game of our lives and to have achieved the success of having a King and a Rook against an opponent who only has a bare King and then not being able to properly checkmate. That would be tragic! About as bad as dropping our ice-cream on the ground! It is therefore vital that we learn this checkmate so that we can do it each and every time and always guarantee ourselves a victory. Ice-cream tastes much better after a victory too!

What makes checkmating with a Rook a much more difficult challenge is that the Rook is not as powerful as the Queen. Forcing the enemy King to the side of the board and *preferably* to the corners of the board means that the Rook is going to need a lot of help. Unlike the shadow technique used with a Queen, the Rook is going to need the *active* services of the superior's side King. The King and the Rook have to work well together to drive the enemy King to the side of the board.

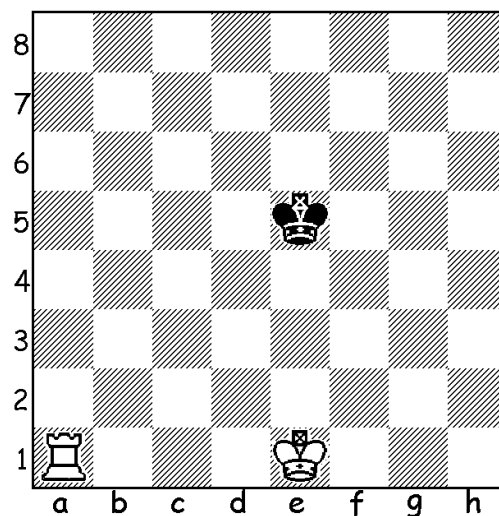


DIAGRAM 46
King & Rook versus Lone King

As we see in diagram 46, I set the table with White's King and Rook on their original squares. I've put the Black King prominently in the center of the board on a sweet-center square. White is on the move. How should White begin? Let us give that question some thought before jumping at an answer. Hmm. This is going to be tough. Not impossible but we are really going to have to rack our brains to figure it out.

Well we know that we are going to have to drive Black's King to the sides of the board and most likely to a corner square as well. The first thing we should do is cut-off the Black King's movements and to limit the options of the Black King as best we can.

White starts with the move: 1.Ra1-a4!, the purpose of this move is to control all the squares along the 4th rank. Black's King is now limited to precisely half the board, its own half in this case. Thanks to White's first Rook move, Black's King cannot move to the f4, e4, or d4-squares. Black's King marks time by: 1...Ke5-d5, waiting to see how or indeed if White can make further progress.

At this point, we have done well with our Rook, a pat on the back for us, but we now need to introduce our King into the battle. White's King marches up the board, 2.Ke1-e2 Kd5-e5 3.Ke2-d3 Ke5-d5, brings us to diagram 47.

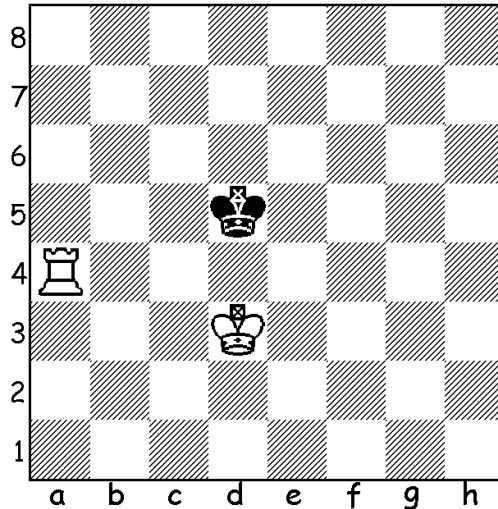


DIAGRAM 47

King & Rook versus Lone King - A Key Moment

A very important moment has occurred in Diagram 47, as I mentioned in chapter two on the King's notice that the Kings are in direct *opposition* to one another. Once the superior side has made King opposition it is time to check with the Rook! Then the checked King must give way and retreat!

In diagram 47, White should continue with: 4.Ra4-a5+!, a most excellent move for which we should be very proud. Now that White's King guards the c4, d4 and e4-squares, the Rook check means that Black's King has to go *backwards*. What we call in chess a *forced retreat*. Let us say Black plays: 4...Kd5-e6, getting out of the attack, a check, by White's Rook.

The check with the Rook has been wonderful. Black's King is now cut-off along the *fifth rank*. Black's King can now only wander to squares along the 8th, 7th and 6th ranks. While very pleased with himself White still has a lot of work ahead of him and must *concentrate* on what to do next. White proudly and correctly, advances with his King, 5.Kd3-d4, notice how White's King moves up the board and takes control of some of the squares that Black's King would like to move. This is kind of like "blocking" in the sense that White's King is blocking Black's King from escaping.

Stung from that moment when the King's were in opposition to one another, Black avoids another opposition moment from happening and plays, 5...Ke6-f6, trying to avoid putting the Kings into opposition.

White shadows the Black King by, 6.Kd4-e4, and again Black avoids the opposition by playing 6...Kf6-g6, which bring us to diagram 48.

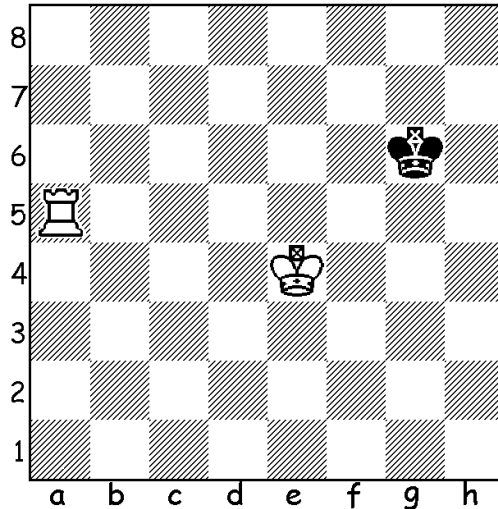


DIAGRAM 48

King & Rook versus lone King

Another key moment: Cutting the board

In diagram 48, White has two very good moves. Our goal is to first limit the movement of Black's King as much as possible. This will enable us to force the defending King to the side of the board. Once there, we will force the defending King into a coffin corner and finish up with a checkmate. In diagram 48, White has two moves that are quite effective at limiting the *mobility* of Black's King. One move is: 7.Ra5-f5!, which keeps Black's King cut along the fifth rank but now *also* cuts Black's King along the f-file as well. This will mean that the Black King is kept in a rectangle of squares that goes from g6, g7, g8-squares to the h6, h7 and h8-squares. Black's possible choice of moves has been greatly *reduced*. This makes, 7.Ra5-f5!, a very effective move indeed as Black in that case would have only six squares to play his King. The second choice by White is the move that I'd like to play: 7.Ke4-f4, insisting upon creating an opposition moment.

Reluctantly, Black decides to play: 7...Kg6-f6, stepping into the opposition that he had tried to avoid. Black didn't play: 7...Kg6-h6?, which would be a helpful move to White as it would allow him to play: 8.Ra5-g5!, when Black's King is cut and can only play along the h-file: Specifically, the h6, h7 and h8-squares. After Black's move: 7...Kg6-f6, opposition has been created and White pounces at once: 8.Ra5-a6+!, just as before White places the Black King in check by the Rook and forces the Black King to retreat.

Black decides that he wants to avoid the h8-corner and tries to make a sprint in the other direction: 8...Kf6-e7 9.Kf4-e5, White readies his King, once more, he is planning to set up an "opposition check" and to press Black's King back. Black decides his best strategy is to run away from White's King and towards the Rook: 9...Ke7-d7, which brings us to our next key moment as shown in diagram 49.

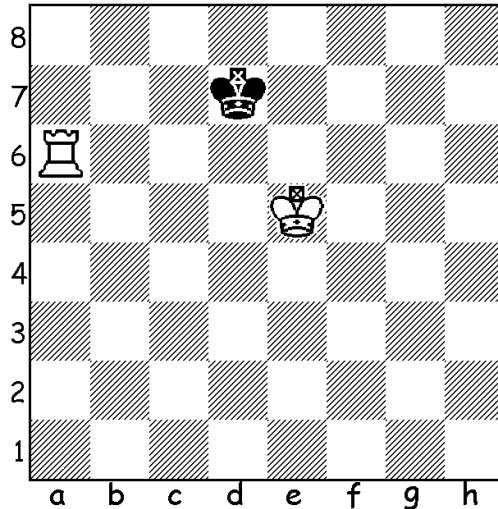


DIAGRAM 49
King & Rook versus lone King
A key moment

Chess is a fun but at times it is also an *exasperating* game. Ninety-nine percent of the time, we want to be the player on the move. When it is our turn we are hopeful that something good can be accomplished but there are those moments when it is best for us to simply “pass” and give the move to our opponent. But in chess we cannot say “pass” rather we too have to make a move. In the type of position we have in diagram 49, we would prefer our opponent to have to move so that an opposition check can be set-up. To do this we have to give the move to our opponent. In this case, the superior side, White, makes just such a pass move by: 10.Ra6-h6, giving the move to Black. White reasons that he is making this move because Black’s King has no useful move. Quite the opposite, Black has only bad choices left. If Black’s King moves to the e7-square, moving into opposition, White is ready to give a check and to drive Black’s King back to the 8th rank. Black decides: 10...Kd7-c7, is his best chance avoiding an opposition check for the moment. White shadows Black’s King with a move of his own: 11.Ke5-d5, waiting for a chance to give an opposition check. Black avoids the d7-square and plays: 11...Kc7-b7, and White continues to shadow Black’s King by 12.Kd5-c5, which brings us to diagram 50.

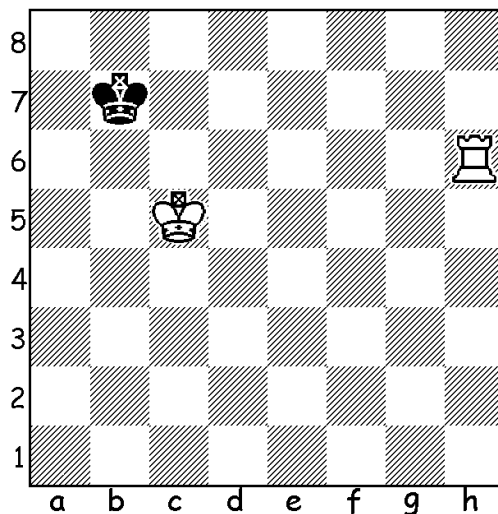


DIAGRAM 50
King & Rook versus lone King
A fateful choice

In diagram 50, Black faces a fateful choice. He is fast running out of good moves. If Black plays: 12...Kb7-a7, White plays: 13.Rh6-b6!, confining Black's King to the a-file, with only the a7 and a8-squares on which to move. If Black's King retreats to any square on the 8th rank such as: 12...Kb7-c8, White pounces on the opportunity to play: 13.Rh7-a7!, and this time Black's King is restricted to squares only on the 8th rank. Therefore, from diagram 50, Black decides to play: 12...Kb7-c7, allowing an opposition check. Recognizing his opportunity, White plays the very best move: 13.Rh6-h7+!, forcing Black's King to retreat. Black decides his best chance to resist is to go after White's Rook. Black plays: 13...Kc7-d8, when Black's King is now confined to the 8th rank. White confidently plays: 14.Kc5-d6, and Black plays: 14...Kd8-e8, when the play has brought us to diagram 51.

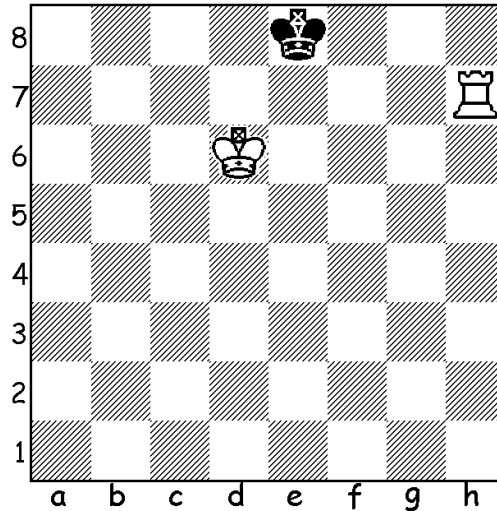


DIAGRAM 51
King & Rook versus lone King
A key moment

Just as in diagram 49, another key moment has been reached. White reasons that he would like Black to have to move. He therefore decides to make a "pass" type of move that we have seen before and plays: 15.Rh7-a7, giving Black the decision of where he wants to move his King. Black decides that his best choice is: 15...Ke8-f8, and White's King shadows Black's with: 16.Kd6-e6, and Black's King goes towards the corner with: 16...Kf8-g8, and White keeps up his shadowing moves by: 17.Ke6-f6, Black's King goes into the corner: 17...Kg8-h8. The play has brought us to diagram 52.

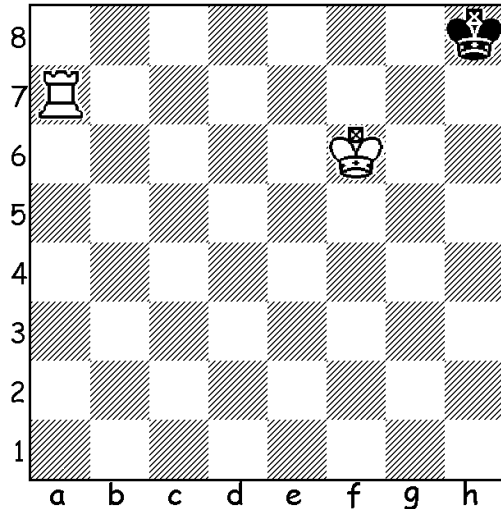


DIAGRAM 52

King & Rook versus lone King. Sealing the coffin.

From diagram 52, White plays the powerful move: 18.Kf6-g6!, which seals the lid on Black's coffin. Now that the White King controls the h7, g7 and f7-squares, Black's King is acutely vulnerable to a Rook check. In any case, Black has only one legal move: 18...Kh8-g8, and with the King's in opposition White plays: 19.Ra7-a8#, checkmate. This is shown in diagram 53.

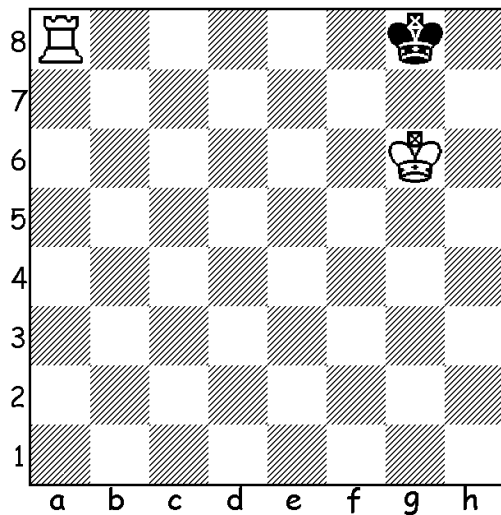


DIAGRAM 53

King & Rook versus lone King. Checkmate pattern

It is absolutely vital that we understand the mechanics of the checkmating pattern shown in diagram 53. As mentioned White's King controls the possible escape squares of h7, g7 and f7-squares for Black's King. The White Rook *attacks* Black's King and denies the Black King the f8 or h8-squares. Black's King is checkmated!

It is impossible to learn chess any further if we are unable to checkmate with a King and a Queen against a King or a King and a Rook against a King. However, if we can master these two checkmates, learning chess will be a lot easier than you think!

Let us go back to diagram 52, for a moment, as I'd like to ask the class a question. "Instead of the move: 18.Kf6-g6, would the move 18.Ra7-g7, the consequence of which is shown in diagram 54 be a good move?"

To give a proper answer, consider the situation of Black's King. To which square can the Black King move in Diagram 54?

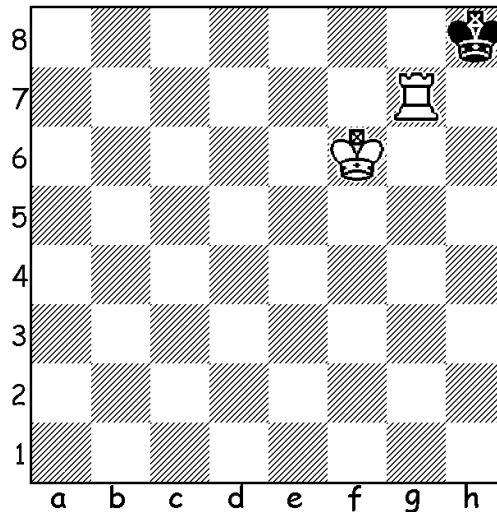


DIAGRAM 54

King & Rook versus lone King. Stalemate pattern

As we can see in diagram 54, White blew it badly with his last move. He played a howler and has placed the Black King in stalemate. Black's King cannot capture the Rook as the Rook is protected by the White King. The Rook controls the g8 and h7-squares which means Black's King has no legal move. The situation is a stalemate and the game is a draw. It turns out that the move: 18.Ra7-g7??, is a real howler and deserves two question marks for being a truly terrible move.

Still, I have a lot of questions about the play! Let us return to diagram 51 for a moment. At that moment, White played the "waiting" or sometimes called the passing move, 15.Rh7-a7, which I understood. Black then played: 15...Ke8-f8, and moved his King to corner, where it became a coffin corner and was checkmated. Why didn't Black decide to avoid the corner and to keep his King in the center instead? Wouldn't it have been better to play: 15...Ke8-d8, avoiding the corner and his inevitable doom? The position after, 15...Ke8-d8, is shown in diagram 55.

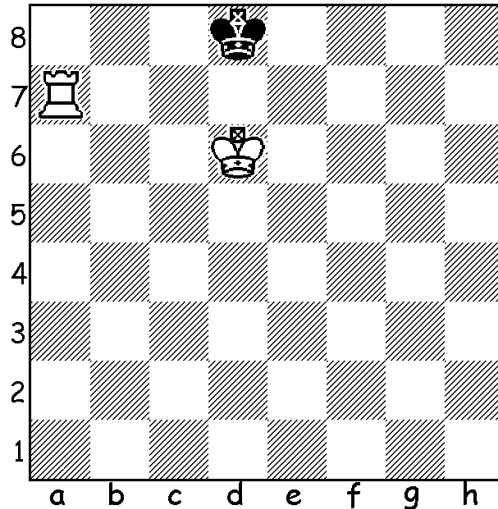


DIAGRAM 55

King & Rook versus lone King. Black avoids the corner

Does the class know the answer? “In diagram 55 what move should White play?”

The move: 15...Ke8-d8?, would actually only *hasten* Black’s end. Now that Black has moved his King into opposition White has the *devastating* finish: 16.Ra7-a8#, checkmate is the powerful answer! As we see, if Black had refused to be herded into the coffin corner the checkmate can occur earlier. It turned out that Black has no choice in his effort to last as long as possible.

Because learning how to checkmate with King and a Rook versus a lone King is of such critical importance, we will stick with this skill for a while and hone it to the degree needed so that we have it mastered. Chess mastery starts with these skills. Properly mastered the sky’s the limit. Practice and repetition is the key to chess understanding and even chess mastery.

In diagram 56, I’ve set up a tricky situation. White is to move:

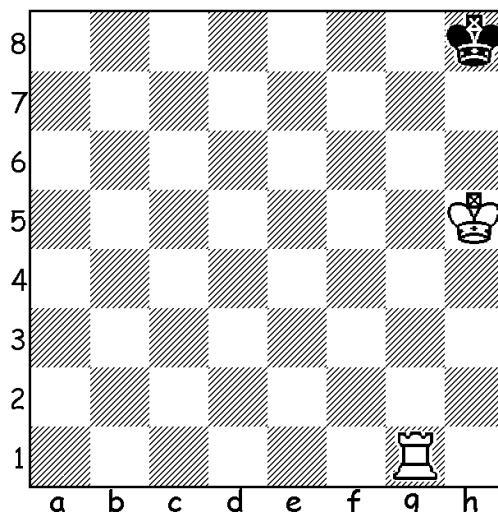


DIAGRAM 56

King & Rook versus lone King. Both Kings are cut

In diagram 56, Black’s King is already in a coffin corner. White’s task should therefore be really easy. But there are problems. White’s Rook does a *splendid* job of preventing Black’s King from

using squares on the g-file. But White's King is cut as well. White would like to bring his King to the f7-square to set up an opposition checkmate pattern that we know so well but is worried that if his King tries to move to the f7-square, such a move may release Black's King from the coffin corner. What are two logical tries that White can make?

One try is to bring the Rook up the board and to scoot the White King around the Rook. To my mind: 1.Rg1-g6 Kh8-h7 2.Kh5-g5 Kh7-h8 3.Kg5-f6 Kh6-h7, Black has no choice: 4.Kf6-f7, White has completed his task, his next move will be checkmate. Black has no choice and must move with his King back to the corner square: 4...Kh7-h8 5.Rg6-h6#, checkmate! White ran a circle with his King around his Rook so that the Black King could not escape along the g-file. A very clever idea. If this plan came to your mind as well, give yourself a big pat on the back. An insightful idea indeed!

The second solution however is far more powerful and sudden. From diagram 56, White plays the direct move: 1.Kh5-g6!, leaving Black with no choice: 1...Kh8-g8, when White makes a fine switch. He moves his Rook from the g-file to the f-file by: 2.Rg1-f1!, cutting off the Black King and not permitting it to escape along the f-file. Black's King is forced to go back into the coffin corner: 2...Kg8-h8, when White now plays: 3.Rf1-f8#!, checkmate is the sudden and unexpected conclusion. Checkmate in just three moves. This example shows us just how important it is for the superior side to use his King *effectively*. In the *endgame*, the King is a powerful piece and must be used in the battle.

Before leaving diagram 56, a quick question for the class: "Would, 1.Kh5-h6, be an "excellent move" or not?"

Answer: "No!"

Dohh! The move: 1.Kh5-h6, would be a terrible one. Black's King would be in a stalemate.

Okay, let us practice our checkmating skills with the Rook one more time. This time I'll turn the pieces "around" in an attempt to confuse each and every one. Including the coach! Have a look at diagram 57 and let us see how to best drive the Black King to the side of the board and then to a corner where we can checkmate our adversary. The situation is White to move.

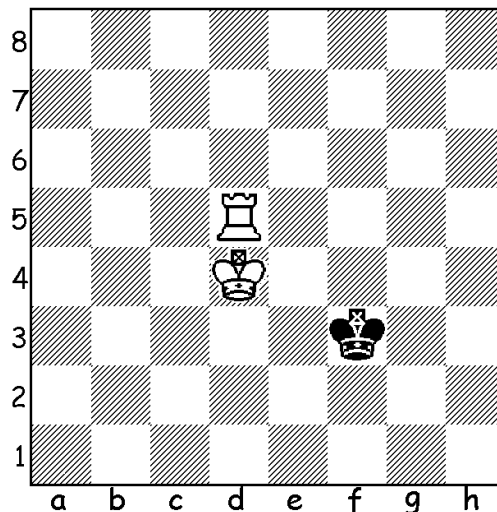


DIAGRAM 57
King & Rook versus lone King
Herding the King to the sides of the board

White has two very good moves. After: 1.Rd5-e5, Black's King will be cut and will be unable to use squares along the e-file. However, in this situation, an even stronger choice of move is the immediate check: 1.Rd5-f5+! Excellent! White correctly reasons that Black will not want to move to the g-file where his King will be cut off and be pushed to the side of the board. White anticipated that Black's King would try to hang around in the center: 1...Kf3-e2, when White has devised a fantastic waiting move with his Rook. White plays: 2.Rf5-f8!, giving the move to Black. Black tries: 2...Ke2-d2, hoping to keep his King in the center for as long as possible.

Did you realize that after Black played his second move, the two Kings are in opposition to one another? The moment that we recognize this condition, it is time for the Rook to give a check. Provided of course that it can do so without being captured! White plays: 3.Rf8-f2+, which forces Black's King to move to the first rank, where it will now be cut. Black tries: 3...Kd2-e1, *attacking* the White Rook. White's King rushes to the defense of his Rook: 4.Kd4-e3!, Black has only one legal move: 4...Ke1-d1. The play has brought us to diagram 58, where it is White to move.

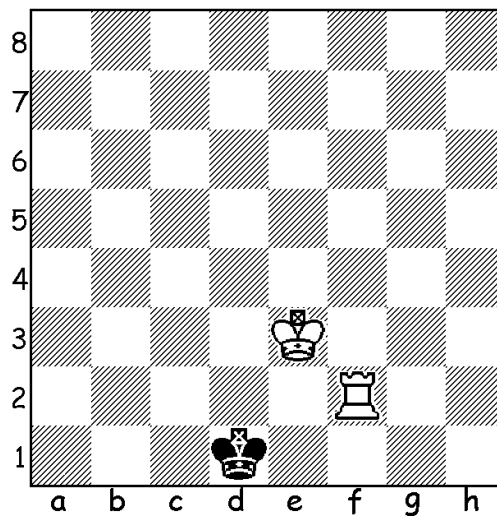


DIAGRAM 58

King & Rook versus lone King. A key moment

White realizes that a key moment has been reached. For him to be able to set up a proper opposition checkmate situation he needs to lose a move and give Black the opportunity to play to play with his King. White plays: 5.Rf2-h2!, which forces Black's King to march to the coffin corner. Black plays: 5...Kd1-c1, heading for the corner.

Quick question for the class: "Why didn't Black play: 5...Kd1-e1? How would White respond after that move?"

Correct answer: That move puts the Kings into opposition and would allow a checkmate in one move by: 6.Rh2-h1#.

Heading for the corner is what White wants as well and White shadows Black's King there: 6.Ke3-d3 Kc1-b1 7.Kd3-c3 Kb1-a1 8.Kc3-b3, sealing the coffin, 8...Ka1-b1 9.Rh2-h1#.

Well, playing the position in diagram 57 turned out to be a bit of a snap. White checkmated the Black King much faster than I would have expected. Either the examples are getting easier or we are getting better.

Now it is time for the class to have a mini-chess battle. The task, of course, is that you have to play both the superior as well as the inferior side of a King and Rook versus Rook position. I will give you two positions from which these battles can commence. Both players will be required to

write down the moves that they play. Your task with the superior side will be to try to checkmate in as few moves as possible. On the defending side, your task is to try to last for as many moves as possible. In both positions of diagram 59 and 60, White is to start. Extra credits to the players who do the best by checkmating fastest or for those resisting the longest!

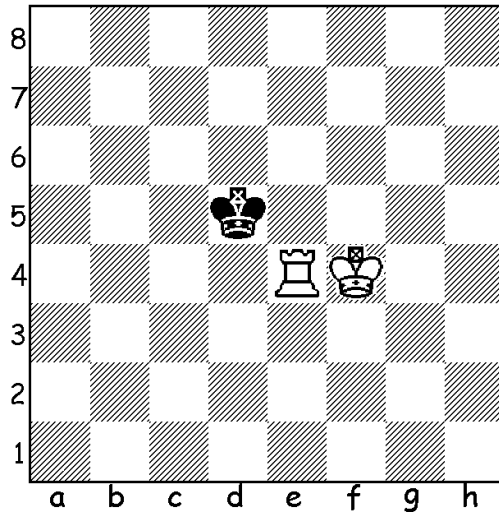


DIAGRAM 59

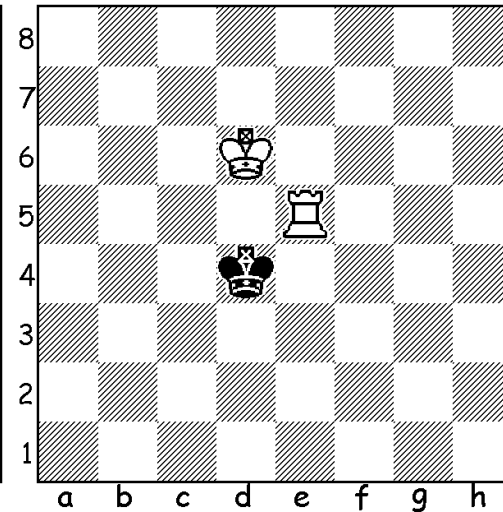


DIAGRAM 60

Two positions to try to Checkmate the Black King – if you can!

Castling

In chess there is a very special rule that can only be done once by both players in a game. It is called Castling. Castling was introduced to chess in the fifteenth century by the Italian school of chess. In principle, as we will learn, usually a move by either player involves moving one pawn or one piece per move only. When Castling a player moves both the King and a Rook on the same move. Two pieces are played on the *same* turn instead of one. First and foremost Castling is considered a move with the King. When castling touch your King first, move the King to the intended square, before touching the Rook, when the King's move is completed, then move the Rook to the intended square thereafter. The Castling move is thus completed.

Let us see the mechanics of Castling. In diagram 61, I have put the White King and both White Rooks on their original starting positions. Castling is only permitted if the King is on its original square and has *not* moved prior to Castling. The same is true for the Rook as well. In order to Castle neither the King nor the Rook that we intend to use to Castle with has ever moved.

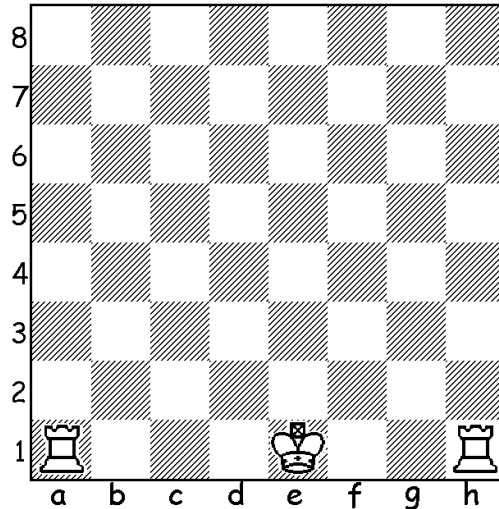


DIAGRAM 61

White's King is about to Castle

In diagram 61, let us assume that White's King has never moved; also let us assume that White has never moved either of his Rooks. If these conditions are met White can *Castle Kingside* or he can *Castle Queenside*. How would he do that? When Castling Kingside White *first* moves his King from the e1-square to the g1-square. The Rook on the h1-square moves to the f1-square. Diagram 62, shows us the situation after White has completed castling Kingside.

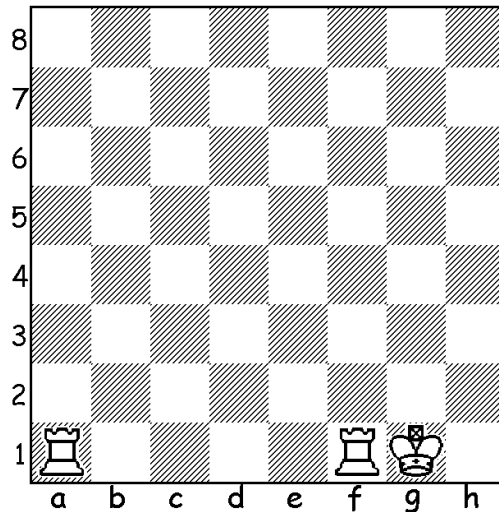


DIAGRAM 62

White's King has Castled to the Kingside

The proper way to record White's Kingside castling move on our score sheet is to write: 1.O-O.

Let us flip back to diagram 61. How could White Castle Queenside? In this case White's King on the e1-square *first* moves over to the c1-square, thereafter the a1-Rook moves to the d1-square. Diagram 63 shows the resulting position when White's King has properly completed Castled Queenside.

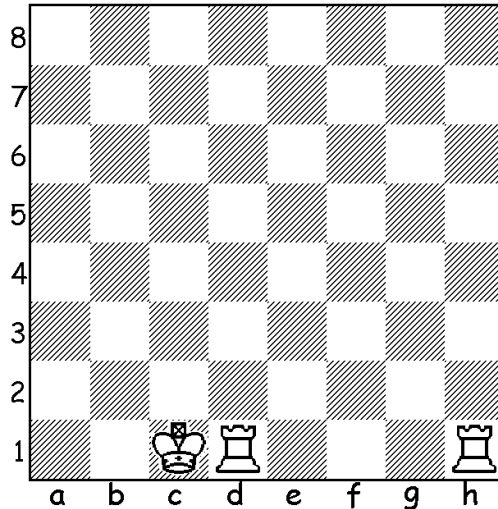


DIAGRAM 63

White's King has Castled to the Queenside

The proper way to record White's Queenside castling move is to write:

1.O-O-O, on our score sheet.

From Black's point of view, the rules of Castling are identical. Black can Castle Kingside, if his King has not moved, as well as his h8-Rook. The same is true for Castling Queenside if the Black King has not moved and neither the a8-Rook, then Castling Queenside is permitted. Black records Kingside Castling by writing: 1...O-O, or Queenside by writing: 1...O-O-O. Of course the move number that either player Castles on will be higher than the number one! Notice when we record on our score-sheet Kingside Castling we use two "O" capital letters. When Castling is made on the Queenside, we record that move using three "O" capital letters.

There are two other special rules for Castling. These rules don't permit Castling.

For diagram 64, White's position is the same as in diagram 61, but I have added two Black pieces: A Black King on e8 and a Black Queen on the d8-square.

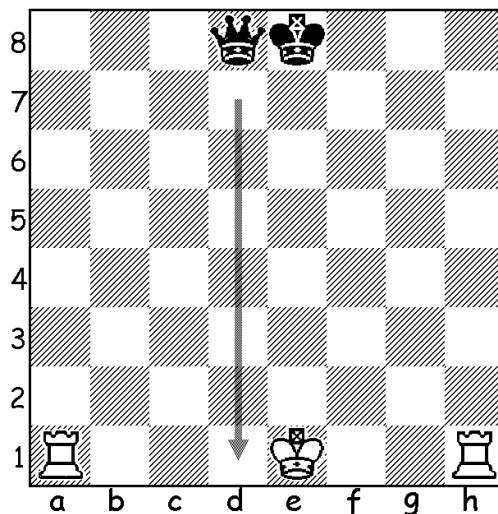


DIAGRAM 64

Special Rules about Castling:

The King cannot “pass through check”

In diagram 64, it is White to move. Assuming that neither White’s King nor h1-Rook has ever moved, White may Castle Kingside. The move would be recorded as usual by: 1.O-O.

Let us say in diagram 64, the White player tried to Castle Queenside. This would not be allowed as it is an illegal move. In diagram 64, I have helpfully drawn an arrow showing that the Black Queen on the d8-square attacks the d1-square. White’s King in Castling Queenside would have to pass through the d1-square to get to the c1-square. Castling Queenside is not allowed as the White King would have to pass through check.

Let us consider the position in diagram 65:

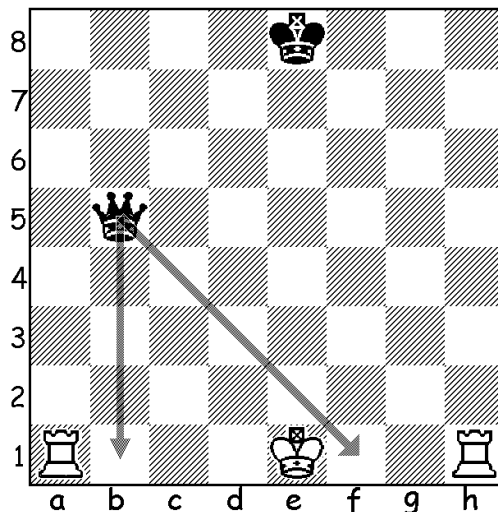


DIAGRAM 65

*Special Rules about Castling:
The King cannot “pass through check”*

In diagram 65, I have placed the Black Queen to the b5-square. The arrows show what squares she attacks. In this situation, the Queen on the b5-square attacks the f1-square. This means that White is *not* allowed to Castle Kingside. To do so the King on the e1-square has to go to the g1-square and it would “pass through check” because the b5-Queen attacks the f1-square. Thus, Castling Kingside is illegal and not allowed.

Let us consider the situation in diagram 65 a little further. Suppose that White decided that since he can’t Castle Kingside he will try to Castle Queenside. Would Queenside Castling be allowed by the rules? The answer is a surprising yes!

Remember, the Castling move is considered to be a move *with* the King. So the path of the King takes priority over the Rook. In diagram 65, the Black Queen does not attack either the d1-square or the c1-square. Thus, Queenside Castling is permitted as White’s King does not pass through check.

Take a closer look at diagram 65 for a moment. Note that if White chose to Castle Queenside, the a1-Rook to get to the d1-square would have to “pass through” the b1-square which is attacked by Black’s Queen. Even though this is true the Rook passes through the attacked b1-square Castling Queenside is permitted for White in diagram 65. It is the King, not the Rook that takes priority. The King cannot pass through a square that is attacked by the opponent. The Rook, that is Castling however, can.

Now we can turn our attention to diagram 66. I've made one subtle but important difference. I've moved the Black Queen from the b5-square to the b4-square.

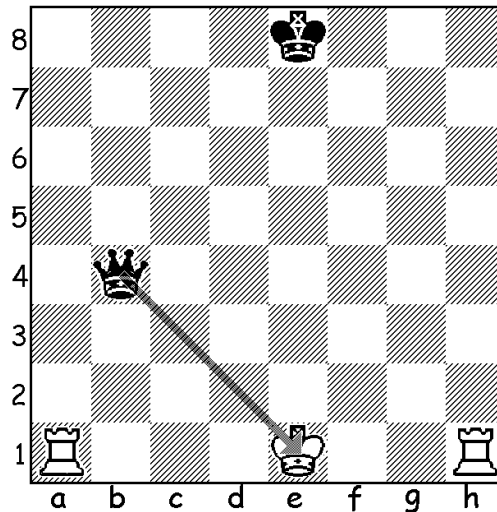


DIAGRAM 66

*Special Rules about Castling:
The King cannot Castle while in check*

In diagram 66, the White King on the e1-square is under attack. The White King is in check from the Black Queen. A player whose King is in check is not allowed to Castle while in check. Even if White were desperate to Castle Kingside he cannot Castle when his King is in check. If the King is forced to respond to the check by moving, a King that has moved from its original square forfeits the right to the Castling move for the rest of the game.

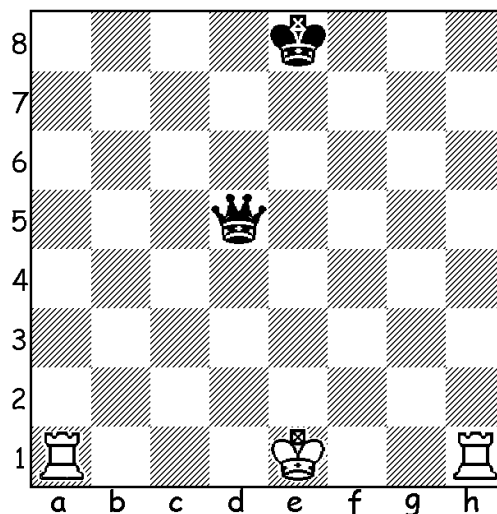


DIAGRAM 67

*Special Rules about Castling:
the Rook on h1-is attacked!*

To be sure you understand the Castling Rule and the different roles played by the King and Rook, let me draw your attention to diagram 67. This time I have not drawn the useful arrows. As you know, White cannot Castle Queenside because the Black Queen on the d5-square controls the d1-square. Likely you realized the Black Queen also attacks the h1-Rook. (If you spotted that

this was Black's threat, good eye and well done!) The question for the class is, "Can White's King Castle Kingside?"

The correct answer is: "Yes." Although White's Rook is under threat of capture the rules permit White to Castle Kingside.

In diagram 68, I've made a tiny adjustment. I've moved the Black Queen to the d4-square.

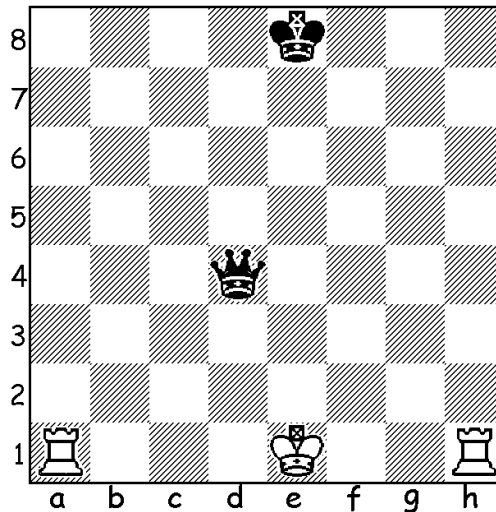


DIAGRAM 68

*Special Rules about Castling:
Can White Castle to either side?*

The question posed to us in diagram 68 is, "Can White's King Castle Kingside?"

The correct answer is: "No!" Even without our helpful arrows we should see that the Black Queen controls the d1-square, so no Queenside Castling is allowed, also the Black Queen controls the g1-square, which means White's King would be under attack. It would be illegal to move our King into check, so Kingside Castling is not allowed either.

Be sure to ask your coach a lot of questions about the Castling rule to make certain you understand this very special unique rule. At no other time in a chess game can you move two pieces on the same move. You have to be absolutely sure that you understand the subtleties of the Castling rule. They can be quite tricky, especially when there are many pieces on the chessboard.

On a personal note, I remember I once played a tournament game against a Master from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. His name was Nigel Fullbrook. Earlier in the game, I had moved my Rook from the a1-square to the b1-square. Later I moved the Rook back from the b1-square to the a1-square. Suddenly, my King that had remained in the center got into trouble. Nigel's threats were coming fast, forgetting that I had previously moved my Rook I Castled Queenside. Nigel, kindly pointed out that my move was illegal! Shocked, I instantly realized that he was right and put my King and Rook back to their squares and pondered over my move. While I was thinking about what to do next, Nigel, again kindly pointed out that I had touched my King. In tournament competition the rules are "touch move." If you touch a piece you have to move it – provided it is a legal move. I was forced to move my King as Castling is considered a King move and I had indeed touched my King first and then my Rook.

It is of vital importance that you be able to Checkmate when you have a King and Queen versus a King. Be sure not to Stalemate your opponent! Equally true is to be able to Checkmate with a King and a Rook against a King. If you can master these two fundamental checkmates, the rest of this curriculum will appear easy! So practice, practice, practice!

Homework and Quizzes:

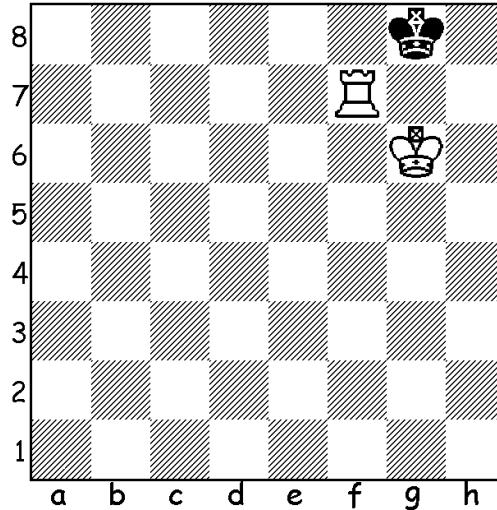


DIAGRAM 69

It will take White how many moves to Checkmate Black?

In diagram 69, White is to play. With very best play by the White general, how many moves would it take him to Checkmate?

The correct answer is two. Surprise! If we take the problem logically, we could say to ourselves, "It is a pity that the situation is not Black to move. If Black was on the turn, he would *have* to play: 1...Kg8-h8, and then I could checkmate brilliantly with: 2.Rf7-f8#, checkmate! Unfortunately, White is on the turn. Hmm. If we could just "lose a move" and make a waiting move, that keeps the position stable, the Black King would have to move into the coffin corner and I would checkmate next. How can I do that?"

The correct solution is to drop back with the Rook along the f-file. For example: 1.Rf7-f6, or any square along the f-file will do nicely. Black is forced to move his King into the corner by: 1...Kg8-h8, and White has: 2.Rf6-f8#, checkmate on his next turn.

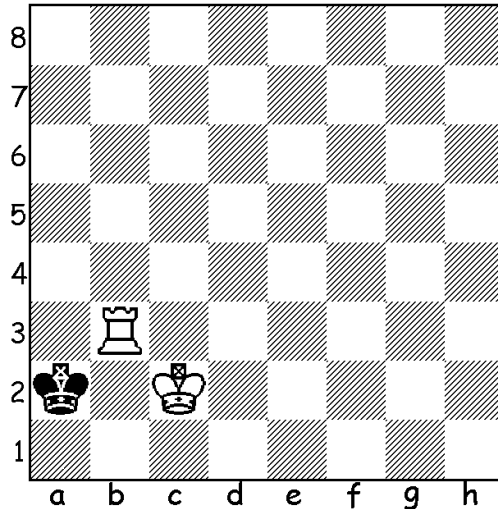


DIAGRAM 70
White to play

In diagram 70, it is White's turn to play. The general of White's army thinks he is very clever. Close to brilliant in fact. The best in the whole class! White correctly reasons that with the King's in opposition it is time to give a Rook check. White plays: 1.Rb3-a3+, and confidently announces checkmate. The general of the Black army agrees that this is indeed checkmate. The two players shake hands and the result is recorded as a win for White on the score sheets of both players.

Question: "Did Black have a better choice than magnanimously accepting defeat?"

Answer: "Yes he did!"

Black should have been alert and recognized that the move: 1.Rb3-a3+, placed the White Rook in capture. On the b3-square the Rook is protected by the White King. On the a3-square the Rook is *unprotected* and since it is so close to Black's King... Black should have played: 1...Ka2xa3!, and wiped away the smile of triumph. The game would have been a draw.

Please note this situation: If both you and your opponent agree on the result, the outcome of the game, that result will be accepted by the referee as binding. In chess, the referee is called an arbiter. Black should not have agreed that White had made a checkmate move as it was not checkmate!

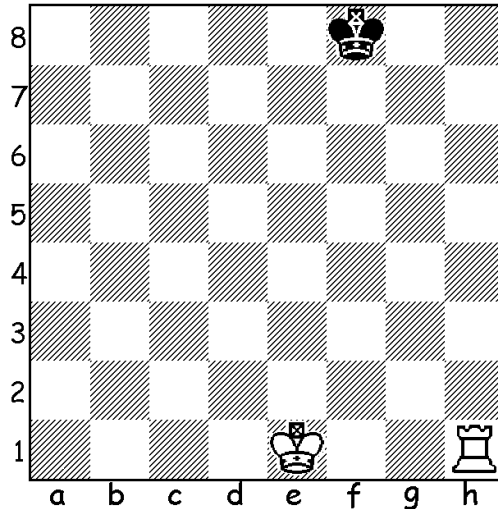


DIAGRAM 71
White to play

In diagram 71, the general of White's army had a doubt... He wanted to Castle Kingside but noticed that if he made that move he would place his opponent's King in check. Unsure about the rule of Castling and check he did not make that move.

Question: "Was it possible for White to Castle Kingside?"

Answer: "Yes."

White certainly can Castle Kingside. The fact he makes such a move and happens to attack the opponent's King as well is a real bonus. Remember, when you are Castling, the rules are concerned about whether *your* King has previously moved, whether the Rook you are intending to Castle with has previously moved, whether *your* King is in check, or whether *your* King is passing through a square controlled by your opponent! The Rules of Castling are not interested in your opponent's King's position. In diagram 71, White Castling Kingside would be a most excellent move.

Note: More challenges and quizzes are needed for this chapter. On the other hand getting the students to practice and master the technique of winning King and Rook versus Rook is the primary focus of this chapter. So perhaps assigning more mock battles is simply the best homework.

Chapter Six:

Introducing the Minor Pieces: The Bishops

I like the Bishop. Ever since I first started to play chess as a twelve year old it was the singular piece I seemed to understand best of all. Bishops move exclusively along the diagonals. Thus a light-squared Bishop, for example, will only be able to move on the light squares during its entire career. A funny way to think about is that a Bishop will be a prisoner of exactly 32-squares on the battlefield. In my boyhood imagination I thought of the Bishops as archers. Armed with their bow and arrows they would lay in ambush along a diagonal. My goal was to be sure to put a Bishop on a diagonal that was open.

Let us see a graphical representation of how the Bishop moves.

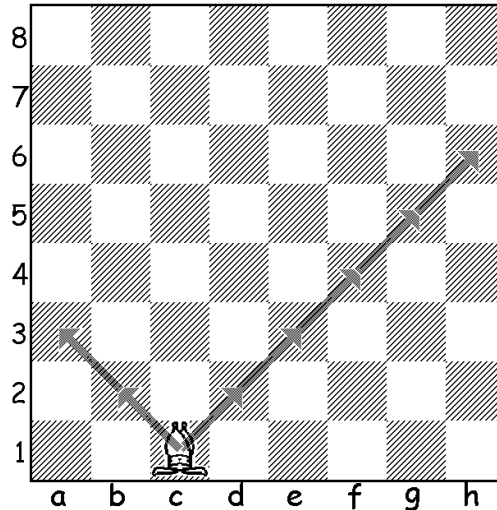


DIAGRAM 72
Bishops move on diagonals

In diagram 72, the Bishop placed on the c1-square is called the “dark-squared” Bishop as it moves only on dark squares along the diagonals. In this example the c1-Bishop has a choice of seven possible squares that it can move. Along the c1-h6 diagonal the Bishop can move to any of the squares, d2, e3, f4, g5 or the h6-square in one turn. The Bishop could also move to either the b2-square or the a3-square also in one move.

Question for the class: “In the space count, for diagram 72, how valuable is the Bishop?”

Answer: “Two.”

The Bishop attacks the g5-square and the h6-square. Both of these squares are in Black’s territory.

Let us take a stroll with the Bishop and see if we can keep the pace. From diagram 72 let us move the Bishop from the c1-square to the b2-square: 1.Bc1-b2, is the way would write that move on our score sheet. The Bishop moves onto the long diagonal as we see in diagram 73.

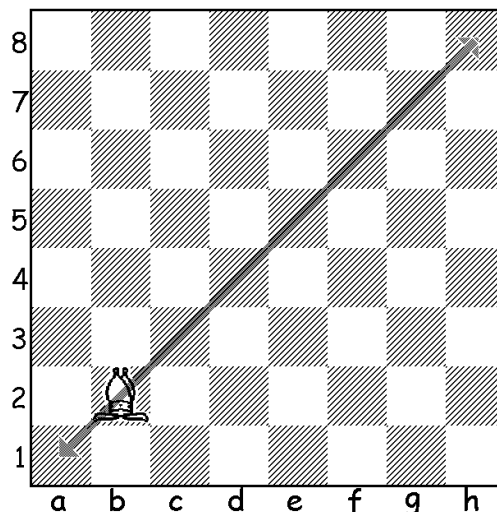


DIAGRAM 73

The Bishop on the long dark-squared diagonal

The long diagonals on the chessboard are like magnets for Bishops. While from their original starting squares the Bishops may take off and move to different diagonals as the game progresses the Bishops are attracted to the long-diagonals on the chessboard and often take up their stations there. Why? Simply put because the long diagonals are the longest on the chessboard. Simple!

Question for the class: "By moving his Bishop to the long-diagonal on the first move what is the space count now for the b2-Bishop?"

The answer is: "Four."

The b2-Bishop attacks the e5, f6, g7 and h8-squares.

Let us continue our journey. We will move the Bishop from the b2-square to a sweet center square: 2.Bb2-d4. I'll choose the d4-square as shown in diagram 74. From this highest ground on the chessboard we can see the possible moves of the Bishop radiate in all four directions. Note that the d4-Bishop is right up next to the equator but still in its own territory.

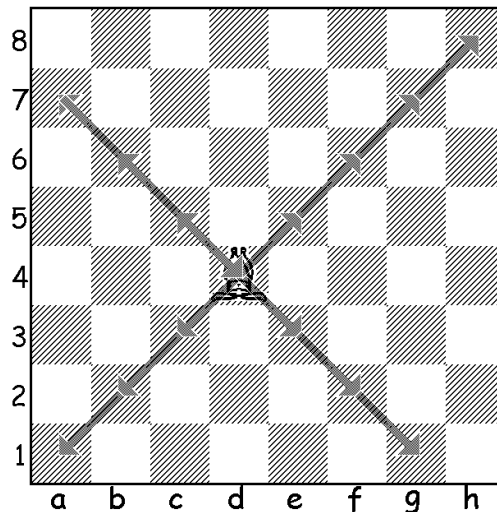


DIAGRAM 74

*The Bishop occupying a sweet center square
Alongside the equator but still within White's territory*

Question for the class: "What is the space count of the Bishop in diagram 74?"

Well I helpfully gave away the answer by drawing the arrows in the diagram... You should correctly see that the Bishop attacks seven Black squares: The e5, f6, g7 and h8-squares, the same four squares it attacked when it was on the b2-square. In addition, the Bishop on the d4-square attacks three more squares in Black's territory, the c5, b6 and a7-squares, for a total of seven in the space count. Very impressive. From only attacking two squares at the starting c1-square position the Bishop now triumphantly attacks seven squares of the opponent's camp.

Now let's move the Bishop just across the equator but by only a single square. Let us play the move: 3.Bd4-e5. This is shown in diagram 75.

Question for the class: "Now that the Bishop is on the e5-square what is its space count?"

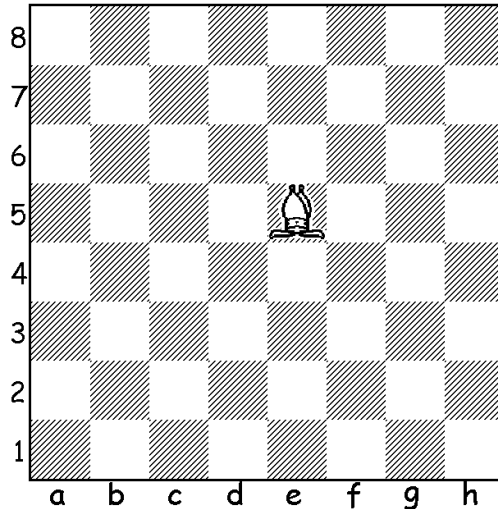


DIAGRAM 75
The Bishop crosses the equator

It is remarkable! The Bishop crossed *into* Black's territory and it *lost* value in the space count. From the e5-square the Bishop attacks six Black squares: The f6, g7 and h8-squares along one diagonal and the d6, c7 and b8-squares along a second diagonal. For a total of six in the space count. Note we don't count the e5-square because the Bishop doesn't attack and cannot capture itself.

That was pretty strange if you ask me. Counter intuitive if we really think about it. By moving *into* the opponent's territory, the space count for the Bishop can go down? For all the other pieces we've studied, the King, Queen and Rook, their space count went up when invading the opponent's territory. With the Bishop this is not the case. While a bit confusing we've learned an important fact about Bishops. What does this bit of information tell us about Bishops? Well it is clear that it is a long-range piece but it also means that Bishops don't necessarily have to be *inside* the opponent's territory to be formidable attackers. They can attack from afar.

Let us now bring the light-squared Bishop into play. In diagram 76, I've placed the two Bishops on their original starting squares.

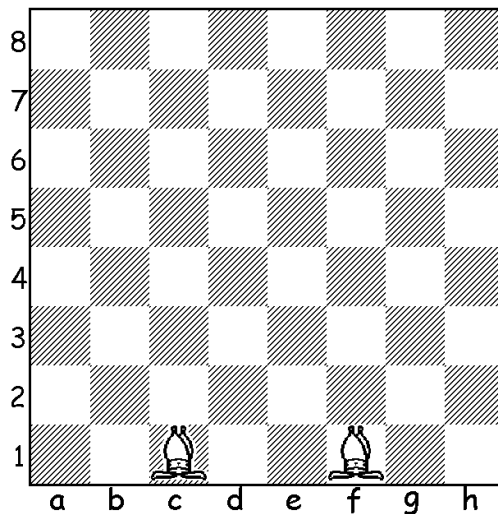


DIAGRAM 76

The Bishops in their starting positions

A challenge to the whole class: "You have four consecutive moves to make in a row. Place the Bishops on their very best squares according to the space count." I'm waiting!

The correct answer could be: 1.Bc1-b2 2.Bb2-d4 or 1.Bc1-e3 2.Be3-d4 combined with a similar maneuver for the light-squared Bishop: 1.Bf1-g2 2.Bg2-e4 or 1.Bf1-d3 2.Bd3-e4, placing the Bishops on the sweet center squares.

From the e4-square, the light-squared Bishop attacks seven Black squares for a space count of seven. Equally true is that from the d4-square, the dark-squared Bishop also has a space count of seven. Combining the total of both Bishops produces a score of fourteen in the space count. Black has only 32-squares in his territory so we can already guess that working together the two Bishops are a formidable attacking duo.

Checkmating with King and Two Bishops

Let us ask ourselves a question and think about the answer carefully: Can a King and two Bishops checkmate an enemy King? While it stands to reason that it will take two Bishops to checkmate the enemy King as we have to control both the light squares and the dark squares where the opponent's King might hide, the question is: How are we going to do this? The *only* winning technique is to drive the King into a *corner* to produce a Checkmate pattern. We can't do it from the sides of the board as we did with Queen and Rook the opposing King must be driven into a corner for a checkmate to work.

Let us see an example of the proper winning technique. In diagram 77, the Bishops are on their original squares and I've placed the defending King in the center of the board to make the process of scoring a victory as hard as possible for myself. Fortunately, armed with a lot of chess knowledge I know with scientific certainty how to force checkmate. You can learn too!

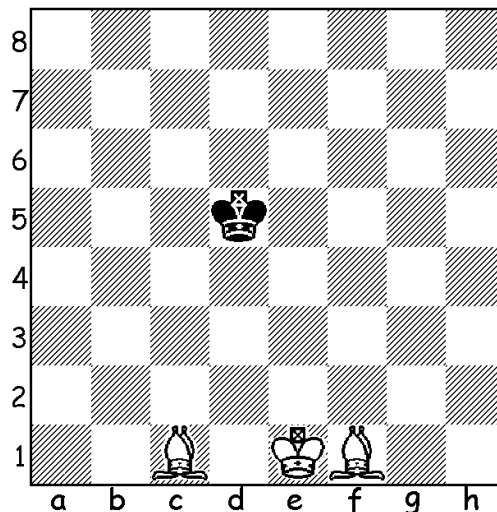


DIAGRAM 77

Learning to Checkmate with the two Bishops

As with the Rook, it is vital that White puts his King to work to help drive Black's King into a corner. Any corner will do just fine. So a starting move with the King is pretty good: 1.Ke1-d2, White's King enters the battle. Black tries to keep his King in the center: 1...Kd5-d4, but is soon forced back by: 2.Bf1-d3!, an important part of the checkmating technique is to keep covering squares that the Black King could move. Reducing his possible moves so to speak. With this

move, Black's King has to go backwards because both the c4 and e4-squares are now protected by the Bishop: 2...Kd4-d5 3.Kd2-e3!, I really like this move best. White's King makes its presence felt as with each advance made, the Black King will have fewer possibilities. Black tries to hold his center ground: 3...Kd5-e5 4.Bd3-e4!, a maneuver we have seen just two moves ago. Once more Black is forced to retreat: 4...Ke5-d6 5.Ke3-d4! Kd6-e6, when the play has brought us to diagram 78.

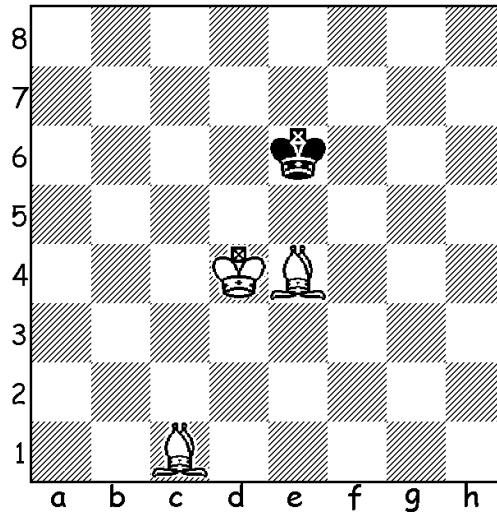


DIAGRAM 78
Paving the way for the King

Thus far White has been able to make good progress even without having included his dark-squared Bishop in the battle. Now it is time to bring it into the action. In this ending, the central winning idea is to use the White King aggressively. With, 6.Bc1-f4, the Bishops pave the way for White's King to advance.

Notice how when the Bishops are next to one another, their diagonals radiate all around them.

Question for the class: "After White has played: 6.Bc1-f4, would it be possible for Black's King to ever maneuver his way to *any* square in White's territory?"

Answer: "No."

White's Bishops by themselves prevent Black's King from making any such possibility.

Black's King is forced to give way: 6...Ke6-f6 7.Kd4-d5!, White's King boldly charges ahead attacking more squares, while confining Black's King to fewer squares. Black is forced to retreat: 7...Kf6-e7 8.Bf4-e5, the squeeze is on. This time it is the turn of the dark-squared Bishop to deny Black's King squares. In this case, the f6 and g7-squares are now off limits. Black takes the opposition and plays: 8...Ke7-d7, when the play has brought us to diagram 79.

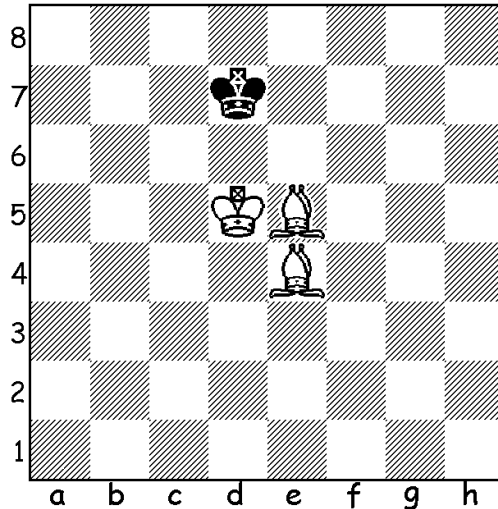


DIAGRAM 78
Paving the way for the King

If we compare the starting position of diagram 77 to the progress made in diagram 79, we can see that things are really going White's way. Black's King has been driven backwards, out of the center and now with his next move, Black's King is driven all the way backwards to the 8th rank: 9.Bd6!, a maneuver that should be second nature to us now. Black has no choice. His King must retreat: 9...Kd7-d8 10.Kd5-e6!, White's King has bullied its way right up the board. Now it takes up a commanding position by controlling the d7, e7 and f7-squares. Black tries to keep his King as centralized as possible and avoids a corner square. He therefore tries: 10...Kd8-e8, which leads us to diagram 79.

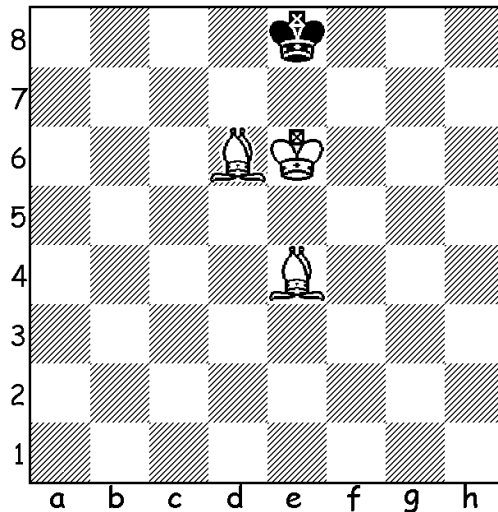


DIAGRAM 79
Driving the King into the corner

As we see in diagram 79, White's King dominates the action from the e6-square. White's next step is to drive Black's King to the h8-corner. The dark-squared Bishop moves: 11.Bd6-c7!, denying Black use of the d8-square. This is the best move.

Quick question for the class: "Why didn't White play, 11.Bd6-e7, confining Black's King even more?"

Answer: "Because that move is actually too confining! In fact it is stalemate."

You must insure that Black will have a legal move after your move is completed. Don't blow the victory by not allowing your opponent a legal move!

Black's reply is forced: 11...Ke8-f8, with this move Black secretly hopes that he can escape via the g7-square. White clamps down on that ambition immediately: 12.Ke6-f6!, with this move, the g7-square is now covered by White's King. Black tries to avoid the corner as best he can: 12...Kf8-e8, once more with a secret ambition of trying to escape this time via the d7-square. Now it is vital that White prevent Black's King from escaping the h8-corner. Escape routes have to be closed off and the Black King has to be driven into the corner: 13.Be4-c6+! Ke8-f8, a forced move. Now it is the turn of the dark squared Bishop: 14.Bc7-d6+!, and once more, Black's King must make a forced move: 14...Kf8-g8, the play has brought us to diagram 80. White is to move. How can he seal the deal?

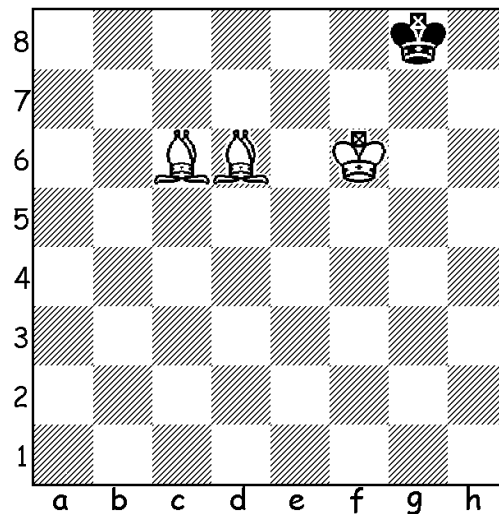


DIAGRAM 80
Seal the deal

Once more the key to this ending of King and two Bishops versus a King is that the superior side must use his King to bully his counter-part. With the move: 15.Kf6-g6!, White's King takes up a dominating position sealing the f7, g7 and h8-squares. Black has no choice and must move into the coffin corner by 15...Kg8-h8. Which brings us to a situation which is common for this ending: White must lose a move. That is he should make a pass move, giving the move to his opponent. This situation is shown in diagram 81 is a critical moment.

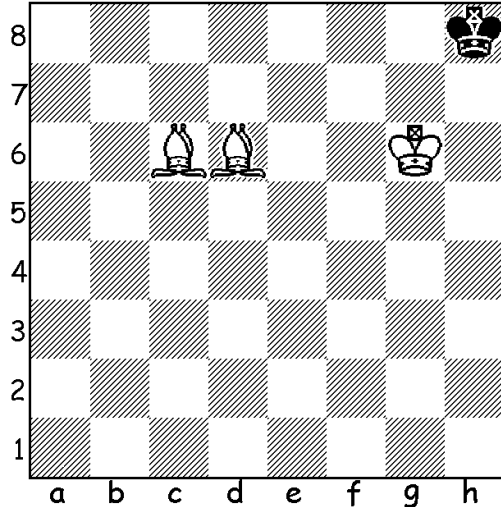


DIAGRAM 81
A critical moment

To fully understand this critical moment we have to reason as follows by asking ourselves a question: "What will Black's next move be?" Well by definition, Black has only one move. It is a certainty that Black will play ...Kh8-g8, as he has no other choice. We must *allow* Black to make that move! If we make a bone-head play by: 16.Bc6-d5??, a real howler, Black's King is stalemated and the game is a draw. We want Black to make the forced move so that afterwards we can give a series of checks with our Bishops which lead to checkmate. While there are many ways for White to make a "pass" move, I'll choose: 16.Bd6-c5 Kh8-g8 17.Bc6-d5+!, now this move is a winner as it comes with *check*. Black's King, now under threat, has to go back to the corner square: 17...Kg8-h8 18.Bc5-d4#, checkmate. A classic finish.

Let us perform this play by play checkmate finish again this time from a different starting position. I've tried to confuse the situation by having Black's King start in White's territory attacking one of White's Bishops. We turn to diagram 82 with White to play.

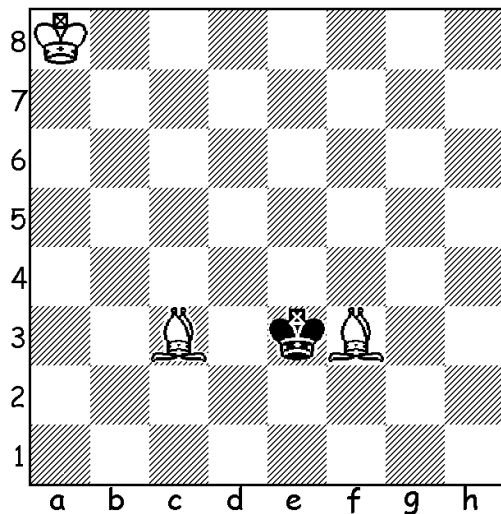


DIAGRAM 82
Two Bishops vs Lone King checkmate

In diagram 82, I've placed White's King as far away from the action as I could and we know that the King has to be a bully so it will take awhile for the King to get into action. Also I've placed the

f3-Bishop under attack to Black's King, so White will have to spend time settling his Bishops into harmonious positions out of the way of potential captures as well. In short, for diagram 82, I've tried to make White's task as difficult as can be. Even so, you should have no trouble driving Black's King to a coffin corner. Let me walk you through a possible play-by-play.

First, we have to start by getting our f3-Bishop away from capture! If we lose a Bishop, either one, the position would be an immediate draw. White plays: 1.Bf3-d5, removing his light-squared Bishop from capture. Black takes a swipe at White's dark-squared Bishop: 1...Ke3-d3 2.Bc3-e5!, now both Bishops are out of harm's way and Black can only mark time with his King. Notice how in diagram 83 White's Bishops control so many squares that they create an "invisible barrier" keeping Black's King from going anywhere special.

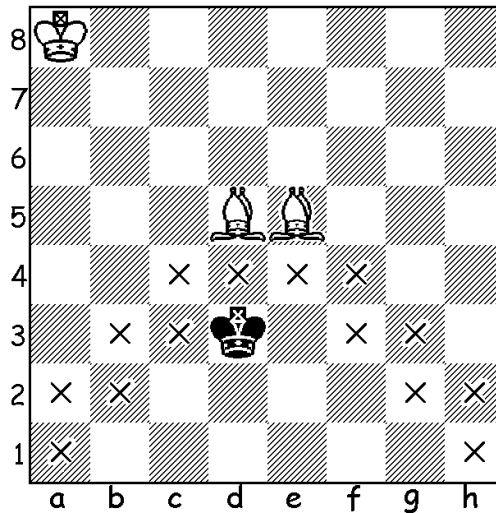


DIAGRAM 83

The Bishops control squares creating a barrier

The visual representation of all the "X" squares in diagram 83 make it clear that Black's King is actually quite confined. While Black's King will move back and forth, White will use the time to bring his King into battle. Once in position White's goal will be to press Black's King to the 1st rank.

An example of how this is done: 2...Kd3-e3 3.Ka7-b7 Ke3-d3 4.Kb7-c6 Kd3-e3 5.Kc6-c5 Ke3-d3, Black has done his best trying to keep his King in the center for as long as possible. White now forces its retreat: 6.Be5-d4! Kd3-d2 7.Kc5-c4!, bringing the King closer. Black opposes: 7...Kd2-c2 8.Bd4-c3!, presto! Just like that Black's King is forced to the 1st rank: 8...Kc2-c1 9.Kc4-d3 Kc1-d1, the play has brought us to diagram 84.

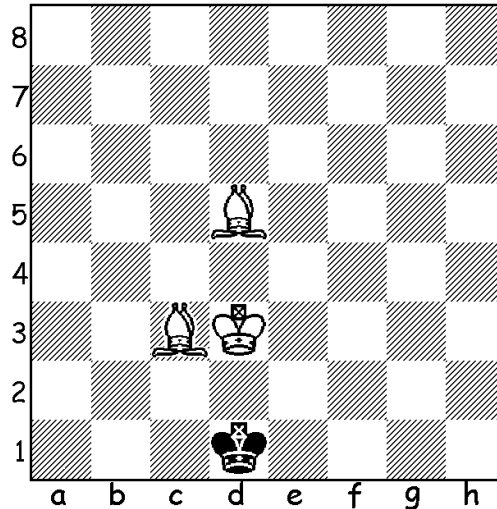


DIAGRAM 84
Pick a corner!

It is incredible how much progress White has made between diagrams 83 and 84. At this point it is White's choice to pick a corner and drive the Black King to it. I'll drive the Black King to the h1-corner for a checkmate. After I'm done, the Class will have to collectively work together to drive the King to the a1-corner to checkmate. Then we can compare your solution and mine.

First my Checkmate in the h1-corner. I'll begin with: 10.Bc3-b2, covering the c1-square and forcing Black's only move: 10...Kd1-e1, as Black has no choice. I now want to keep Black's King sealed on the first rank so I'll move into opposition: 11.Kd3-e3!, a nice move that takes away the d2, e2 and f2-squares from Black's King. Black tries: 11...Ke1-d1, hoping to slip away via the c2-square. No self-respecting grandmaster would allow that to happen: 12.Bd5-b3+, forces Black's King right back. Note that 12.Bd5-e4, would also be an excellent move as that move would also guard the c2-square.

Black is forced to return with his King: 12...Kd1-e1 13.Bb2-c3+ Ke1-f1 14.Ke3-f3!, White's King takes up an even more powerful position. Black is not allowed to slip away through the g2-square and must walk to the coffin corner: 14...Kf1-g1 15.Kf3-g3!, sealing the deal. Black is now checkmated in short order: 15...Kg1-f1 16.Bb3-c4+! 17.Kf1-g1 17.Bc3-d4+! Kg1-h1 18.Bc4-d5#, checkmate. Very nicely done if I do say so myself.

Okay, now it is the turn of the class. Flip back to diagram 84. It is the collective task of the class to figure out the best series of moves to checkmate Black's King on the a1-square. Be sure to write down your solution and then compare it with mine to see if the class did it better.

I started with the move: 10.Bd5-f3+, which I figured was a pretty good way to drive Black's King towards the a1-corner. Black has a forced move: 10...Kd1-c1, and here I played: 11.Kd3-c4, which does release White's control over the c2-square if only for a moment. Experience has taught me that White's King has to get to the b3-square to seal the deal. So I decided to head there directly.

I'd expect that Black would seize the opportunity to move off the 1st rank by: 11...Kc1-c2, the play has brought us to diagram 85.

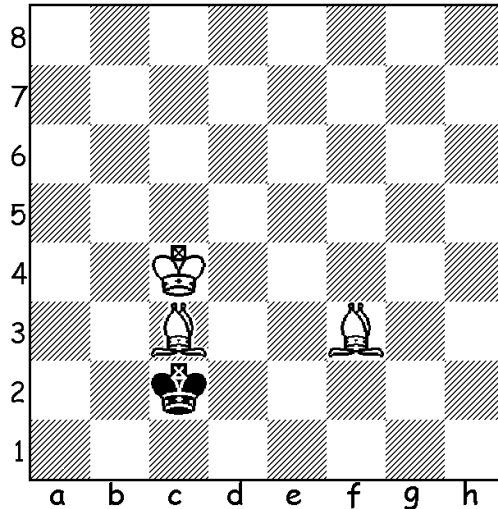


DIAGRAM 85

Class Challenge to checkmate at the a1-corner!

From diagram 85 I played the move 12.Bf3-e2, as I reasoned that Black's next move with his King would have to be a retreat. I wanted to keep the d1-square controlled so that the Black King could not slip away. Black retreats: 12...Kc2-b1 13.Kc4-b3!, sealing the deal. I now know with a certainty that Black's King will soon be checkmated. I just have to avoid blowing it by allowing a stalemate. Trust me, I've blown it before. Black's King tries to escape: 13...Kb1-c1, creating a position where I need to make a pass move that hands the move to my opponent. While I have a lot of moves that don't alter the position, I'll choose: 14.Bf3-e2, which forces Black's King back towards the a1-corner. Black has no choice: 14...Kc1-b1 15.Bc3-d2!, now taking control over the c1-square. Black's King has no choice again: 15...Kb1-a1, and again a critical moment is reached as we see in diagram 86.

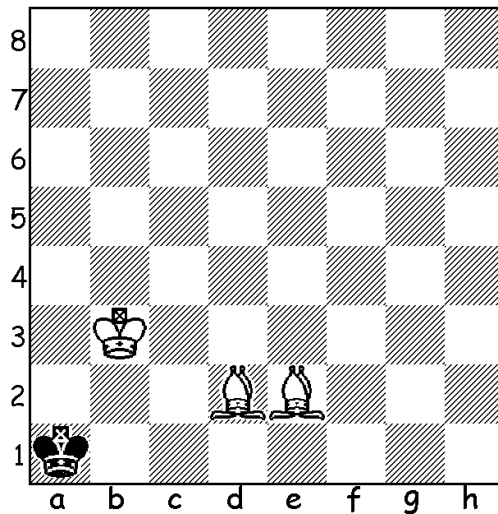


DIAGRAM 86

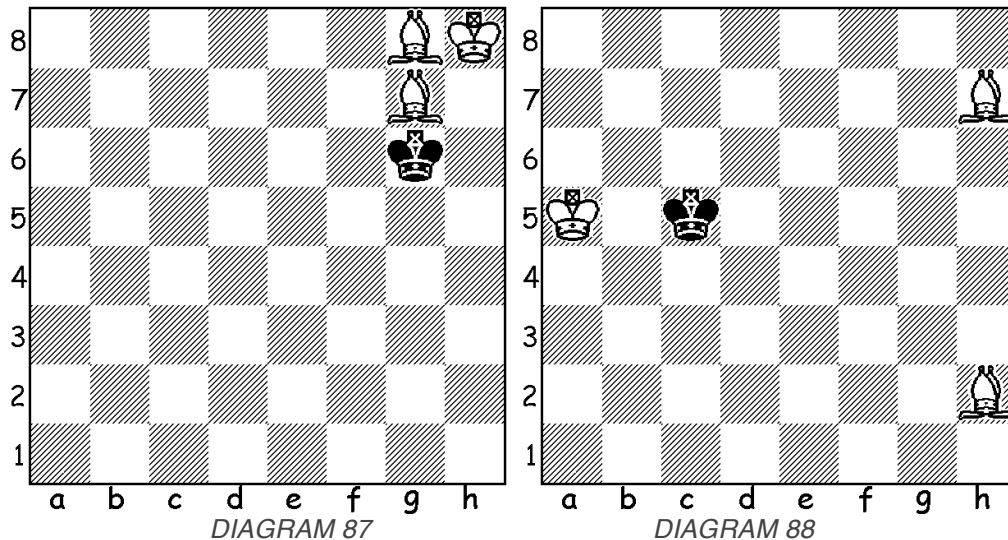
Critical Moment Alert!

What I really want is for Black to have the move so that I can checkmate in two moves by force. I know that Black's King has to move to the b1-square, I just have to allow him to do it! So I will avoid the howler: 16.Be2-d3??, which produces stalemate and instead opt for a pass move by: 16.Be2-d1, letting Black move his King: 16...Ka1-b1 17.Bd1-c2+ Kb1-a1 18.Bd2-c3#.

Okay! So how did I do? From the position in diagram 84, I started with: 10.Bd5-f3+, and made a checkmate on my eighteenth move. Did the Class do better? If any of you did, bravo!

HOMEWORK and Quizzes:

Your only assignment is to find a partner and play the Superior side of King and Two Bishops versus a Lone King as well as to play the inferior side against the same opponent. Both players are, of course, required to write down their moves. I'll give two starting positions for this exercise. They are diagrams 87 and 88. In both cases White is to play:



Be sure to keep your score sheets accurate and legible! Write your moves as clearly as possible.

Bonus Points and Extra Credit

Try to compose the following position. You have the White pieces, you have a King and a light squared Bishop. Your opponent has a King and a dark squared Bishop. That is all. Can you create a position where the Black King can be placed in checkmate? If you are able to do so you will have completed your first *study*!

While this extra credit might seem hard at first, after all White cannot checkmate the Black King when all he has is a lone Bishop, it turns out that Black's possession of a Bishop is traitorous! You must place Black's Bishop in such a way that it takes away a fleeing square from Black's King.

This type of a composition was an epiphany for me when learning chess: The idea that I could use my opponent's pieces *against* my opponent. We are about to learn many ways that we can do precisely that...

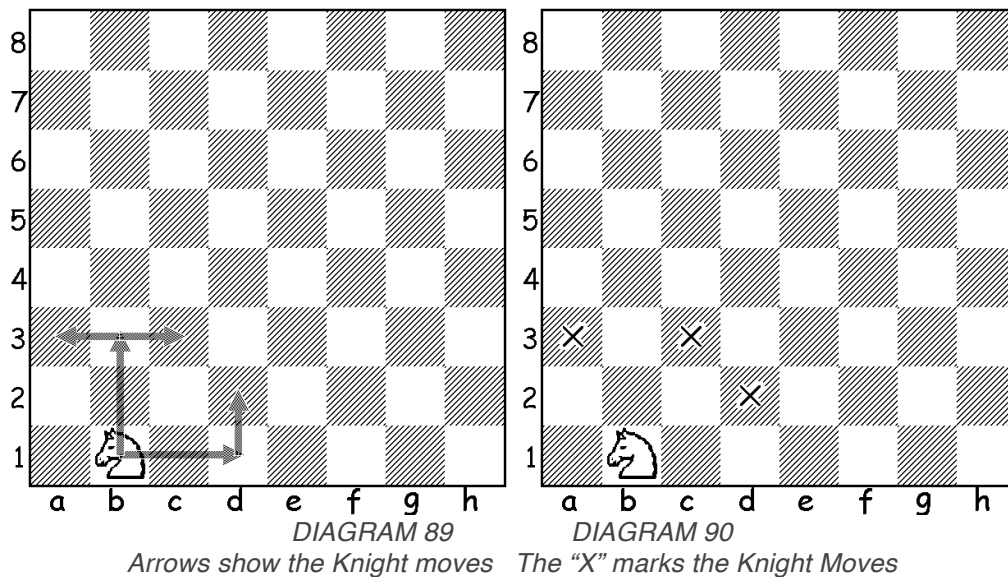
Chapter Seven:

Introducing the Minor Pieces: The Knights

Of all the pieces in a game of chess, the movements of the Knights are the most difficult to master. They move unlike any other piece. To remember their movements best chess coaches like to say, “Knights move in the shape of a letter ‘L.’” As well as, “Knights move in a circular motion.” And the ever useful reminder, “A Knight on a light-square, can only move to a dark-square.” Or the other side of that advice, “A Knight that sits on a dark-square, can only move to a light-square.” Finally, “Knights can jump over other pieces. No other piece can do that.” Are you confused yet? Good. So was I.

The Knights are tough to understand but once you get the hang of their movements, trust me, you’ll really come to really appreciate the Knights. They make Chess difficult to understand but they make Chess a lot of fun too! Just wait until you get to make a *Royal Fork!* Your grin will go from ear to ear.

Let us try to get rid of some of the confusion I’ve just introduced. In diagrams 89 and 90 below, two graphical representations show how the Knight moves. A Knight has been placed on the original b1-square starting position and using the arrows in diagram 89 as well as X marks in diagram 90, show how the b1-Knight has a choice of three possible squares to which the Knight may move.



Diagrams 89 and 90 deserve a second look and deeper concentration. The b1-Knight, which sits on a light-square, can only move to three possible squares as shown by the “X” marks in diagram 90, all three squares, the a3, c3 and d2-squares are dark-squares. In diagram 89, the arrows are meant to convey the idea that the Knight moves in the shape of a letter “L.”

As mentioned Knights are tough pieces to understand. It is very easy to get confused. Do not despair! We are about to take a journey with the Knights by the end of the journey we will gain a fine awareness of the Knights movements.

As we see, the b1-Knight has only three possible squares on which to move. Right now, on its original square, it is in its barracks, so to speak and needs to move around the battlefield and stretch its hooves. Let us take the Knight on a jaunt around the battlefield. We will begin with the move: 1.Nb1-a3, moving the Knight to the *side* of the board. Our first move is shown in diagram 91. As a consequence of this first move, I’ve marked the squares with an “X” of where the Knight might move next.

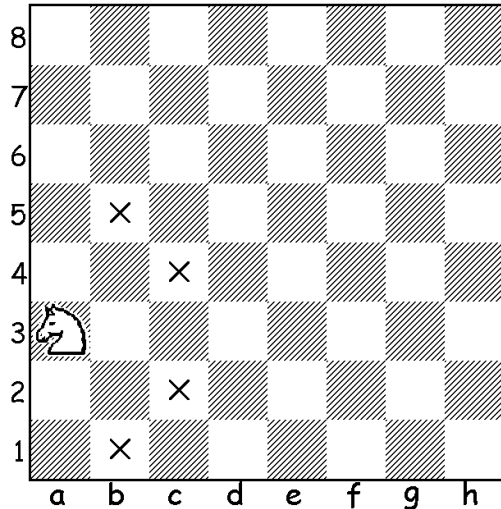


DIAGRAM 91

The a3-Knight now has four possible moves

By bringing the Knight from the b1-square to the a3-square the Knight's range of possible movements has been increased. Remember on the b1-square the Knight had only three possibilities of where it could move. As we see in diagram 91, the four squares marked with an "X" shows that the Knight now has four possible squares to move. This is an improvement in the Knight's mobility to be sure but can we do better?

A question for the class: With White's Knight now on the a3-square, what is the space count of the Knight?

Correct answer is "one." The a3-Knight attacks the b5-square in Black's territory.

Returning the Knight to the b1-square for a moment, as seen in diagrams 89 and 90, let us make a different first move. Let us play: 1.Nb1-d2, instead. In diagram 92, the results of that move are shown with an "X" as to which squares the Knight might move next.

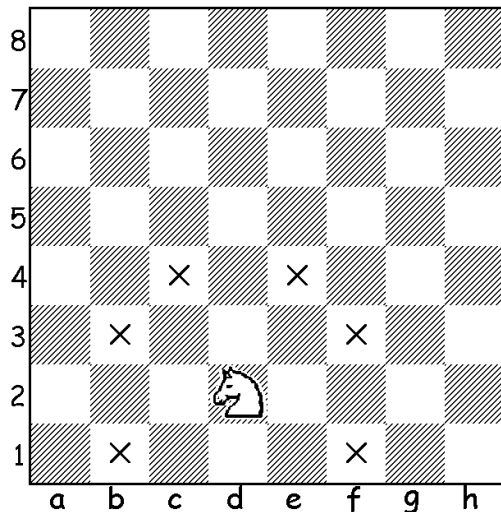


DIAGRAM 92

The d2-Knight now has six possible moves

As we see in diagram 92, by bringing our Knight to the d2-square, it now has six possible squares to move to next. A considerable improvement! From the b1-square the Knight only had three possibilities from the d2-square it has six. The Knight has doubled its possibilities. Quite an improvement over placing the Knight on the a3-square where it has only four possible moves thereafter. Take another look at diagram 92 for a moment. Did you notice that the 'X' marks make a nearly circular pattern? Did you also notice that all the 'X' marks are on light squares, while the d2-Knight sits on a dark square?

Question for the class: With White's Knight now on the d2-square, what is the space count of the Knight?

Correct answer is, "None." The d2-Knight does not attack any squares in Black's territory.

Let us try again. This time on move one, we will choose the c3-square. We will play: 1.Nb1-c3, which is shown in diagram 93. The Knight is brought into the *center* of the battlefield. Remember the *center square* is from the c3-square, to the f3-square, to the f6-square, to the c6-square and back to the c3-square. On the c3-square the Knight just sits inside the center square.

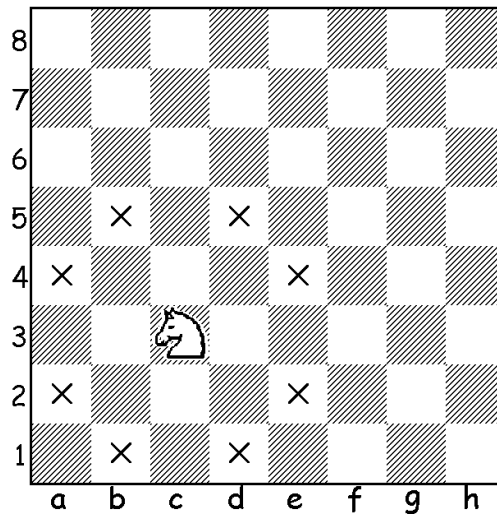


DIAGRAM 93

The c3-Knight now has eight possible moves

All those "X" marks have really lit up diagram 93. By comparing diagram 93 with the previous diagrams the White Knight seems much more alive with numerous possibilities. Once it was brought into the *center*, the Knight instantly reached its maximum moves ability and can now move to eight possible squares. If you look at all the "X" marks they do begin to resemble a bit of a "circular" like movement don't you think?

Question for the class: "With White's Knight now on the c3-square, what is the space count of the Knight?"

Correct answer is, "Two." The c3-Knight attacks the b5 and d5-squares in Black's territory.

I must say the Knight is really beginning to blossom. When the Knight moved to the side of the board as we saw in diagram 91, its range of movements were fewer than when it was placed in the center. The c3-square seems like the most effective starting move from the original position. Is that the perfect square on the battlefield for a Knight? Well how can we be sure if we don't explore the chessboard? Let us continue our investigation.

Let us move the Knight up to the equator but still on the White side of the equator. I'll move it to the sweet center e4-square and will write down that move as: 2.Nc3-e4, the result is shown in diagram 94.

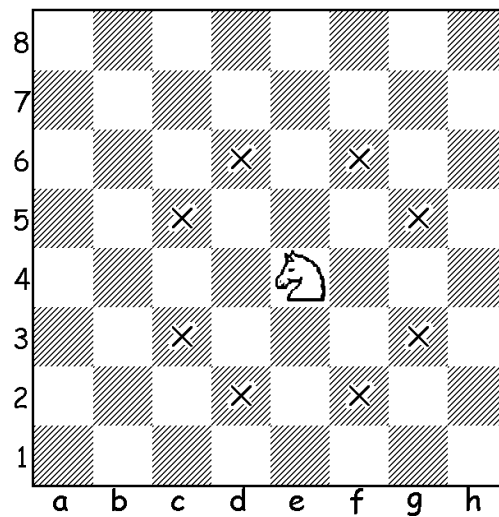


DIAGRAM 94
The e4-Knight at the equator

Once more, as we see in diagram 94, the Knight still has eight possible moves to play next. In fact, eight is the maximum number of squares that a Knight might ever be able to move to. The X marks show all the new possibilities. Make a careful comparison between diagram 94 and diagram 93. Did you notice that the e4-square is a light square and that the e4-Knight can now only move, on its next turn, to a dark square? Also, do you see once again, how the X marks are making a kind of circular pattern? These graphical representations are meant to help you see where the Knight can move. So study them carefully to *imprint* the patterns on your minds.

Remember: Chess is a game of patterns. These patterns recur time and time again. As we gain experience and become familiar with the patterns we are learning together our chess knowledge leaps higher and higher. Soon the patterns of how all the pieces move will feel like we “know” where the pieces want to move next.

Question for the class: “With White’s Knight now on the e4-square, what is the space count of the Knight?”

Correct answer is, “Four.” The e4-Knight attacks the c5, d6, f6 and g5-squares in Black’s territory.

Alrighty then! Things are moving right along and we are making discoveries along the way we will learn which squares are pretty good for the Knight and which squares are very good, what we call *ideal squares*. Let us now move: 3.Ne4-g5, this move takes us out of the *center* but we do cross the equator just inside Black’s territory. The new situation is shown in diagram 95.

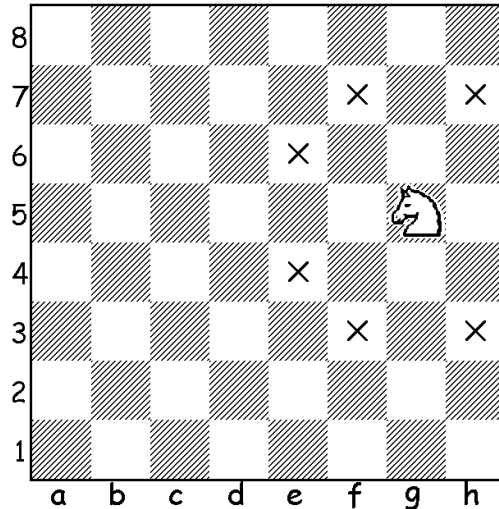


DIAGRAM 95

The g5-Knight has crossed just inside the equator

The g5-Knight is now inside Black's territory. But just inside. The expectation was for the space count to increase. As we can see it did not!

Question for the class: "With White's Knight now on the g5-square, what is the space count of the Knight?"

Correct answer is, "Three." The g5-Knight attacks the e6, f7 and h7-squares in Black's territory.

With White's third move: 3.Ne4-g5, the space count dropped from four to three. That was disappointing. Even worse, the eight possible moves available to the e4-Knight also dropped. Now that the Knight is on the g5-square as the X marks in diagram 95 show, the Knight has only six squares on which to move next. So both the space count dropped as well as the number of possible moves decreased for the Knight. What happened?

We have just learned a great insight: *For the Knights to be at their maximum strength they belong in the center.*

Let us return to diagram 93 and embark the b1-Knight onto a different path. The first move began: 1.Nb1-c3, now let us jump forwards with the Knight and play: 2.Nc3-d5, crossing the equator but just barely. The Knight is now on another sweet center square. These two moves lead us to diagram 96.

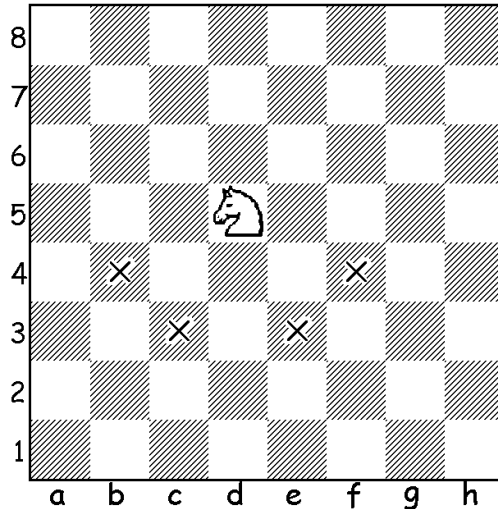


DIAGRAM 96

The d5-Knight is just inside the equator on a Sweet Center square

In diagram 96 the White Knight is just inside Black's territory and has crossed the equator. The four 'X' marks show the squares that the Knight attacks in *White's territory*. Question for the class: "What four squares inside *Black's territory* does the White Knight attack?"

Correct answer, "The b6, c7, e7 and f6-squares." Four squares in total in the space count.

Hmm. That is a bit of a surprise wouldn't you say? In diagram 94, the Knight was just outside the equator sitting on the e4-sweet center square attacking four squares in Black's territory, in diagram 96, the Knight has crossed the equator into Black's territory but the space count still remains at four. Can the Knight become more effective in the space count? Let us continue to explore the battlefield and see if the answer is "yes" or "no."

We will move the Knight from the d5-square to the f6-square, writing this move down on our score sheet as: 3.Nd5-f6, the result is shown in diagram 97.

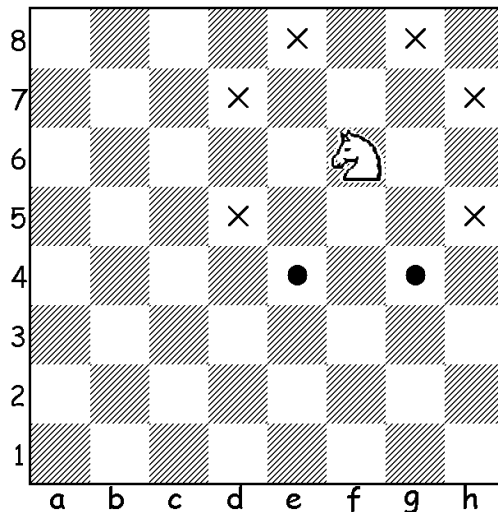


DIAGRAM 97

The f6-Knight in Black's territory

Let us make a careful study of diagram 97 so that we can understand the dynamics of the situation and how White's Knight has become more powerful. As we see, the Knight is at its maximum strength, it attacks eight squares. The six "X" marks show the squares in Black's territory that the Knight attacks, while the two dots, on the e4-square and the g4-square show that the Knight can move back retreating into White's territory. The space count is now six to nothing in White's favor. The space count between diagrams 96 and 97 has increased by two.

Again, make a careful note that the f6-Knight is sitting on a dark-square and all the possible squares that it can move to next are light-squares. Also by considering the "X" marks as well as the "dots" we again see a circular pattern as before. By practicing the Knight moves, it will become easier and easier to see where the Knight can move next.

On your score sheets write the move: 4.Nf6-e8, and make the move on your chessboards. I'm not going to make a diagram for the resulting position.

Question for the Class: "Now that the Knight has gone as deeply into Black's territory as possible, what is the space count now?"

The correct answer is: "Four squares in total for the space count."

Question for the Class: "Can you name the four squares that the e8-Knight now attacks?"

The correct answer is, "The c7, d6, f6 and g7-squares."

Again, something peculiar happened to the Knight. From having a range of eight squares a move ago, its possible moves dropped in half, to a mere four squares. How strange, the deeper the Knight moved into Black's territory it lost some of its mobility. Furthermore, a move ago the Knight had a count of six in the space count and now it is reduced to four in the space count. Why did this happen? Again, our previous knowledge has been confirmed, a Knight on the edge or sides or at the border of the chessboard is not as effective when it is in the *center square*.

One of the favorite expressions of Chess Coaches is, "*The Knight on the rim is dim.*" It is a nice rhyme that is helpful to remind ourselves that to be effective Knights need to be centralized.

Let us continue our journey. On your score sheets write the move: 5.Ne8-g7, and make the move on your chessboards. Before looking at the next diagram, make an effort to see for yourselves what squares the g7-Knight attacks.

Question for the Class: "Does the Knight attack three or four squares?"

Let us see the answer in diagram 98.

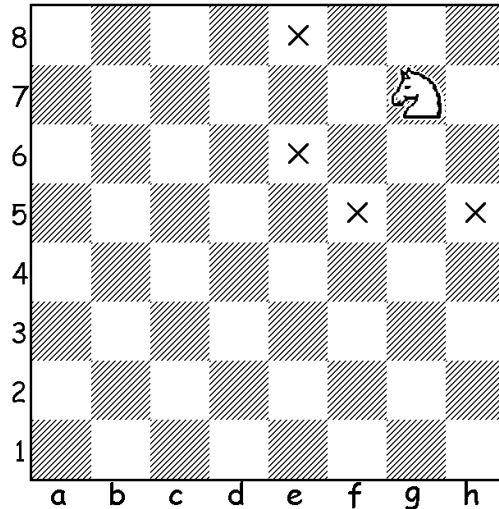


DIAGRAM 98

The g7-Knight in Black's territory is not at full strength

As we see in diagram 98, the g7-Knight only attacks four squares. When the Knight is at full strength, it can move to eight squares.

Question for the Class: "Is the Knight at 'half strength' or at 'quarter strength'?"

The correct answer is: "At half strength." Four squares are half of eight squares.

A task for the Class: "Make one move with the g7-Knight to a square where it will regain its full strength and be able to attack eight squares, six of which are in Black's territory."

Did the Class discover the correct answer? Did the Class write the move correctly on their score sheets? Drum roll please, the correct answer is: 6.Ng7-e6!

Did you notice that when I wrote the move down, I added an exclamation mark after White's sixth move? That is because that move is the best one. More importantly it was the correct answer to the task!

Let me test the Class with a truly hard task. If you can find the correct answers you are all well on your way to mastering the Knight move.

Class Task: "As we know, Black's territory is made up of 32-squares on the chessboard. There are only four squares inside Black's territory where the Knight has a space count of six while also having a maximum ability of moving to eight squares on the next turn. We know that the f6-square is one correct answer. Can you name the other three squares that are also correct answers?"

The correct answers are, "The e6-square, the d6-square and the c6-square." (As well as the f6-square.) These four squares are called *ideal squares* for the Knight.

Class Task: "As we learn more and more about Chess, we come to realize that the battlefield contains many ideal squares for our pieces. In chapter six about Bishops, without turning the pages and looking back for the answer, what are the two ideal squares for White's Bishops, where they will be at their maximum power in the space count?"

The correct answers are: "The e4-square and the d4-square."

Because the moves of the Knight are so tricky to understand it is important that we practice its movements a lot. Completing this quiz is going to be hard, so you have been warned. If you get a right answer, you deserve a big pat on the back. You are doing very, very well indeed.

Ready?

In diagram 99, I've placed a White Knight on the a1-square. Your mission (if you choose to accept it) is to correctly maneuver the White Knight all the way to Black's a8-square. You must write down the moves on your score sheets.

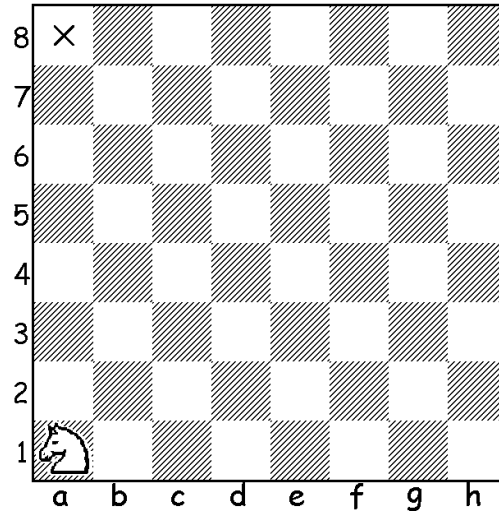


DIAGRAM 99

*MISSION: Maneuver the a1-Knight to the a8-square marked by an "X"
Write White's moves down on your score sheet*

Because the mission is a tough one, I've helpfully informed you that the maneuver is going to take you five moves as you can see from the move notations below:

- 1.Na1-
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...

While accomplishing your mission, did you notice there are actually several correct ways for the Knight to go? That is, did you realize you had a *choice* of correct answers?

In Diagram 100, I show the path that I chose. Did it match your own? If not, that is fine! Chess is a game that allows *your* originality to shine through!

Compare your answer with those of your classmates. How many different answers did the class discover?

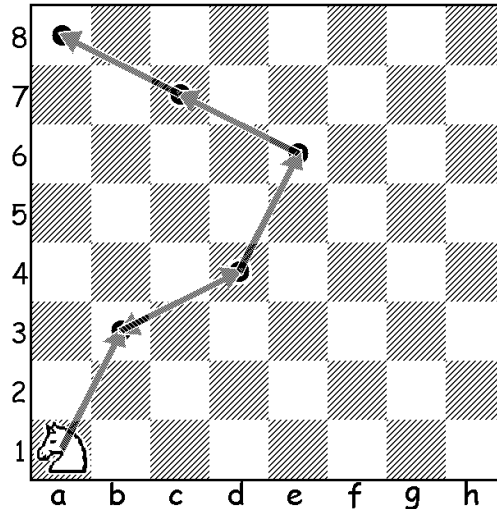


DIAGRAM 100
Yasser's Answer

My answer is shown in diagram 100 and I wrote down my moves as follows:

- 1.Na1-b3
- 2.Nb3-d4
- 3.Nd4-e6
- 4.Ne6-c7
- 5.Nc7-a8

I accomplished my mission and received a certificate of accomplishment! I accept my award on behalf of all those persons who have helped me become a better Chess player. Thank you one and all!

Are we ready for our second Knight mission? I bet you can already guess what I'm about to ask... This time, I want everyone in the class to move the a1-Knight to the far corner h8-square.

Once more I'm going to give you a helpful clue by letting you know how many moves ahead you have to calculate. Normally, I'm not so kind! Write your moves in the notation spaces below:

- 1.Na1-
2. ...
3. ...
4. ...
5. ...
6. ...

Is everyone sure that your notation is absolutely correct?

Very good!

Compare your solution with the one I chose, shown in diagram 101:

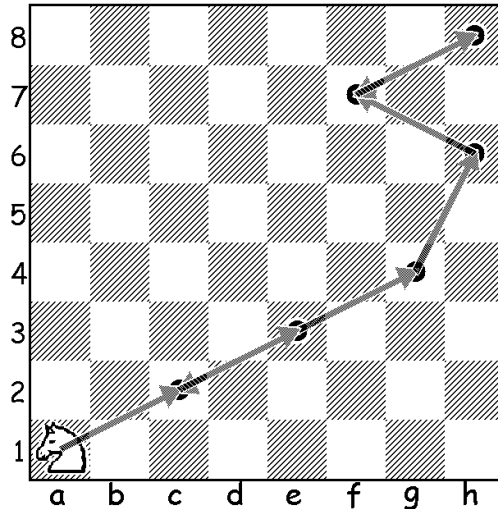


DIAGRAM 101
Yasser's Answer

Once more, compare your answer with mine as well as your classmates. How many correct solutions did the class discover? Any number of solutions greater than six is really scary. You guys are good. Remind me not to challenge any one of you!

Hey, while everyone is in a good mood. A quick challenge question for the class: "If White had a Bishop on the a1-square. How many moves would it take a Bishop to go to the h8-square?"

The correct answer is, "One."

Just wanted to make sure you guys were on the tips of your toes and understood the difference of moves between a Knight and a Bishop.

The quick challenge question I just posed wasn't meant to be a trivial one. My purpose in asking the question was to make you think about how a Knight, a minor piece, compares to a Bishop, also a minor piece. The Knight on the a1-square takes six moves to get to the h8-square, while it only takes the Bishop one move to land on that square. So we can say, "The Bishop is faster than a Knight." Or "the Knight moves slowly as compared to a Bishop." Both these observations would be absolutely correct. While the Knight is slower than the Bishop in getting around the chessboard, the advantage that the Knight has over a Bishop is that the Knight can play on all sixty-four squares, while the Bishop is *always* limited to thirty-two squares.

Checkmating with Two Knights versus a Lone King

Just as we've learned how to checkmate with a Queen, with a Rook, with two Bishops, we are now ready to learn how to checkmate with two Knights. Because you've learned a number of checkmating techniques already, how we have to drive our opponent's King *out* of the center and to the edges of the chessboard as well as to the *corners*, I'm actually going to skip ahead. In the next two diagrams, I've composed checkmating patterns to show what type of positions we *want* to achieve. Once we see these two patterns we can get busy trying to force their creation.

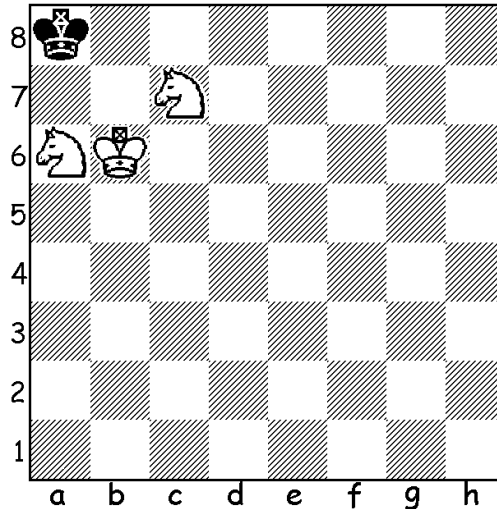


DIAGRAM 102
Checkmate with Two Knights

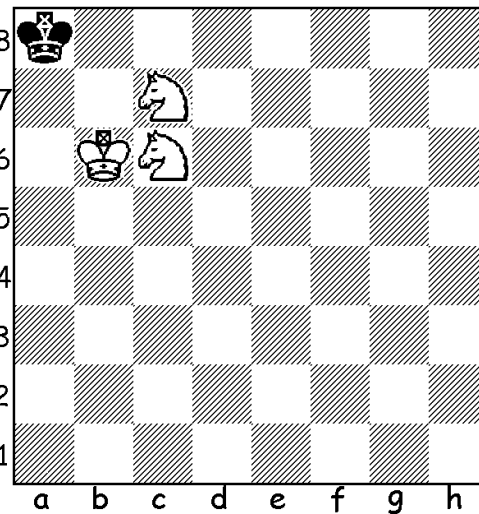


DIAGRAM 103
Checkmate with Two Knights

Let us break down the situation in diagrams 102 and 103 so that we are sure we understand that both situations are indeed checkmates. We will start with diagram 102. Black's King in the corner, on the a8-square, is under threat by the c7-Knight. White's a6-Knight controls the b8-square. So Black's King cannot go to the b8-square. In addition, White's King is ideally placed on the b6-square. White's King controls the a7-square, the b7-square and *protects* both of his Knights. Black's King is checkmated.

Now let us turn our attention to diagram 103. As before, the c7-Knight attacks Black's King. This time, it is the White Knight on the c6-square that controls the b8-square. As before, White's King is ideally placed, controlling the b7-square and the a7-square as well. Black's King is in checkmate.

Question for the Class: "In diagram 103, if we put the c6-Knight on the d7-square, where it is *not* protected by White's King, is the resulting position still checkmate?"

The correct answer is, "Yes it is still checkmate." It does not matter that White's King does not protect his d7-Knight. I was only trying to trick you! Black's King is still checkmated. Congratulations if you did not fall for my trick.

Great! Now we know what types of positions we are trying to achieve let's get started. White must use his King and Knights to force Black's King into the corner so that it can be checkmated. But can this be done by force? As we know the Knights are short range pieces, Black's King is pretty nimble, which means White's Knights are going to have to control a lot of squares. Our task is not going to be so easy. Let me therefore set up a position where White has already made a great deal of progress. We turn our attention to diagram 104.

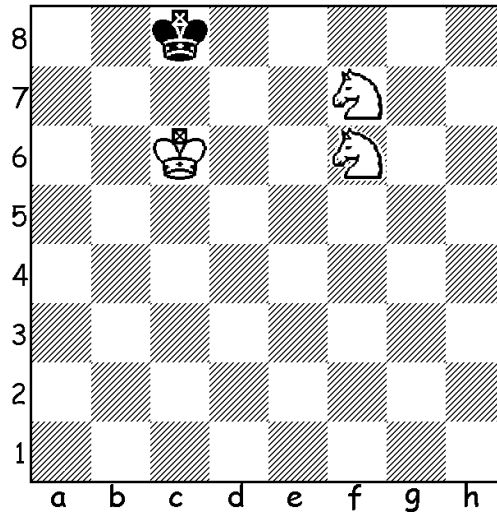


DIAGRAM 104

Two Knights versus King - White to Play

As we can see from diagram 104, I've set up a position that is already very favorable for White. Black's King is pressed down to the 8th rank; White's King is on a good square, close to the ideal b6-square in fact; and White's f7-Knight, controls the d8-square which means that we know Black's only next move is to play his King to the b8-square. White has a free move to improve the f6-Knight to get it more involved in the action. Write down on your score sheets: 1.Nf6-e4, preparing to bring the Knight over to Black's Queenside. White will want to use this Knight to keep Black's King well controlled and to try and force it to the a8-corner square.

Question for the class, "Your author really wanted to make the move: 1.Nf6-d7, bringing the Knight into close contact with Black's King. Would that have been a good move, worthy of an exclamation mark?"

Answer, "No. Your author (that is me) would have made a mistake. The move 1.Nf6-d7, would result in an immediate Stalemate!" Black's King has no legal move and it is not under direct attack. So that move would deserve a double question mark, not an exclamation mark after the move.

As mentioned after: 1.Nf6-e4, Black's King has to make a forced move: 1...Kc8-b8, and White's King seals the coffin corner by: 2.Kc6-b6!, protecting the a7-square and not allowing Black's King to escape. White's King now occupies the same ideal b6-square, as we saw in diagrams 102 and 103.

Naturally, Black's King flees away from the corner, fearing that it would be doomed if it went to the a8-square. Black plays: 2...Kb8-c8, hoping to escape from the corner via the d7-square. White's Knight cuts off the escape route: 3.Ne4-c5, which controls the d7-square. Black's King is forced to go back: 3...Kc8-b8, when White's f7-Knight takes control over a key square: 4.Nf7-d6, which forces Black's King into the corner: 4...Kb8-a8, the play has brought us to diagram 105 with White to play.

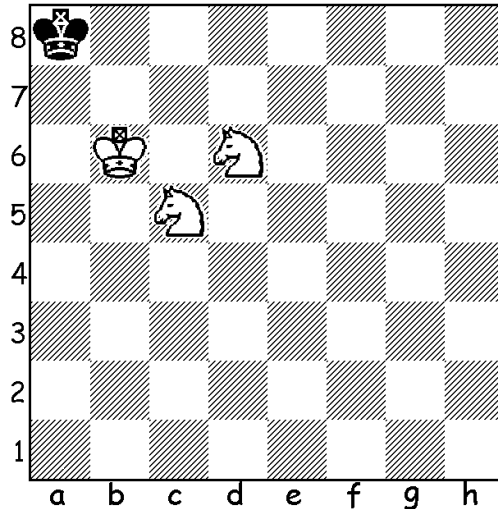


DIAGRAM 105
Two Knights versus King
White to Play

If we compare diagrams 104 to 105, White has made great progress: Black's King has been forced into the a8-corner square; White's King is better placed than before; the Knights are closer to the coffin corner and are ready to pounce. The table seems perfectly set for a checkmate pattern to occur... But how to make it happen? Give diagram 105 some thought before deciding on the right course of action. Be careful not to create a Stalemate!

One thing we have to realize is that Black's next move is going to be: 5...Ka8-b8, indeed we have to allow Black to make that move. Thus, if we play either: 5.Nc5-d7 or 5.Nc5-a6, in both cases, Black's King is in Stalemate and the game is a draw.

We have time to hop around with our Knights as Black's King is confined to the corner. One line of play that you might consider is: 5.Nd6-b5 Ka8-b8 6.Nb5-a7, to keep the c8-square under control, 6...Kb8-a8, 7.Nc5-e6 Ka8-b8 8.Na7-c6+, which brings the play to diagram 106.

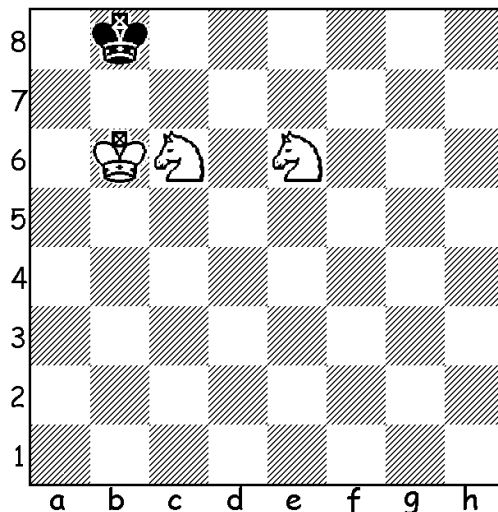


DIAGRAM 106
Two Knights versus King
Black to Play

The position in diagram 106 is critical to understand and the key to this ending. Black's King is in check by the c6-Knight. Black is to play. If Black plays a howler: 8...Kb8-a8??, he obligingly walks into, 9.Ne6-c7#. Which is Checkmate. However, Black is *not* forced to play: 8...Kb8-a8, which would lose the game on the spot. Instead, Black's best defense is to run away from the corner square by, 8...Kb8-c8!, when White cannot deliver checkmate.

Let us try again. Let us return to diagram 105 for a moment. This time let us try the move: 5.Kb6-c7, leaving Black but one legal move: 5...Ka8-a7, White now forces Black's King back into the corner: 6.Nd6-b5+ Ka7-a8, when the play has brought us to diagram 107.

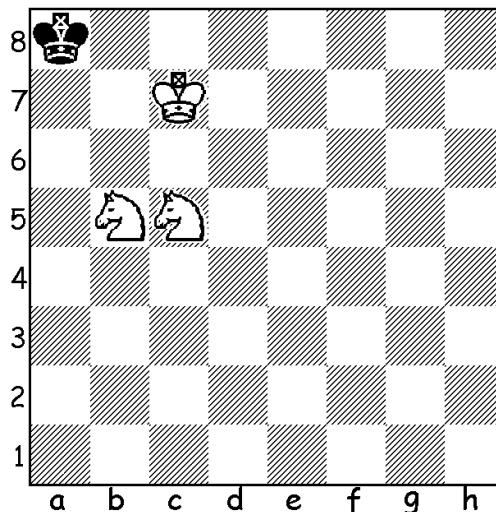


DIAGRAM 107
Two Knights versus King
White to Play

Consider the situation carefully in diagram 107, White is to play. While White's King and b5-Knight are working together well, the c5-Knight needs to move and deliver Checkmate. It seems perfectly natural to play the move: 7.Nc5-d7, preparing, the next move: 8.Nd7-b6, Checkmate. Very good if you realized that! Unfortunately, after the move, 7.Nc5-d7, Black's King is left in Stalemate! The game is a draw.

Here is the incredible truth about this ending: With King and Two Knights versus a lone King, the superior side cannot *force* a win. A player can *blunder* and allow a Checkmate, but the superior side has to rely upon a mistake by the opponent. A shocking truth!

HOMework and Quizzes:

Play mock battles with a classmate playing both sides of the position in diagram 104. Write down your moves. Convince yourselves that I'm right, that the superior side cannot win by force. Do your best to try to trick your opponent and allow him an opportunity or two to make a fatal mistake. When I started to learn chess, I was really surprised that the superior side could not win this ending by force.

1. Create a position where a White Knight and King is on the chessboard and there is a Black King and a Black light-squared Bishop. Your job is to compose a position where the Knight attacks *both* the Black King and the Black Bishop at the same time. This situation in chess is called a, *Knight Fork*. In your composition, after Black's King is moved, the White Knight is able to capture the Black Bishop for free. The Knight is not allowed to be recaptured!

2. Create a composition, where White has a King and a Knight, Black a King and a Bishop. That Black's King is in a Checkmate position.
3. Create a composition, where White has a King and a Bishop, Black a King and a Knight. That Black's King is in a Checkmate position.
4. In the position in diagram 108, is the position a Checkmate or a Stalemate?

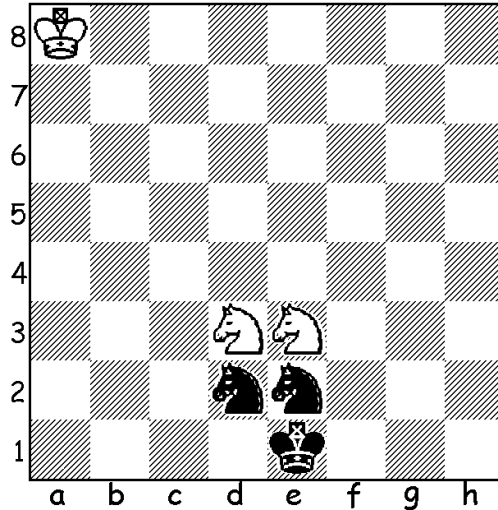


DIAGRAM 108

Is Black's King in Checkmate or Stalemate?

Answer: Black's King is in Checkmate.

If the students hesitated with their answer that is a very good thing. They have been taught that to checkmate a King it should be driven to a corner square but in this case the Black King is checkmated in the center. In this case, Black would be better off not having two Knights. In fact they get in the way of Black's King escaping.

- In diagram 109, White thinks he has a very good move.

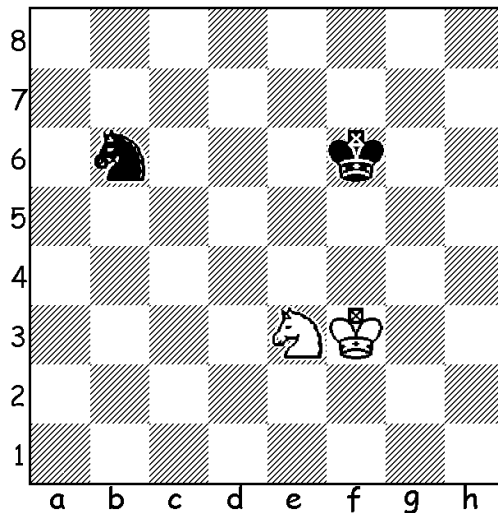


DIAGRAM 109

White to play

The White player sees a Knight fork and plays: 1.Ne3-d5+, and proudly announces “check” to Black’s King. White is expecting Black to move his King when he intends to pounce with, 2.Nd5xb6, capturing and winning Black’s Knight for free.

Question: “Can the Black player cross up White’s cunning plan?”

Answer, “Yes! Black should just play, 1...Nb6xd5, gleefully capturing White’s Knight!”

In diagram 110 below, White is to move and he is in deep trouble. Black is threatening two checkmates in one move on the spot. Things look bleak. Should White throw in the towel, admit the situation is lost and give up the struggle? Or... “Can White save himself by making a Royal Fork?”

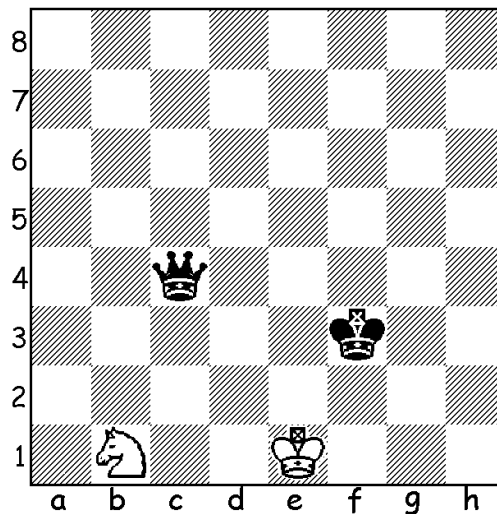


DIAGRAM 110

Does White Have an Opportunity to execute a Royal Fork?

Answer, “Yes! White should play: 1.Nb1-d2+, attacking Black’s King as well as Black’s Queen. Black is forced to move his King and on his second move White will play: 2.Nd2xc4, capturing Black’s Queen and saving his position! This situation after White plays: 1.Nb1-d2+, is called a Royal Fork. The Knight attacks *both* King and Queen.

Chapter Eight:

Introducing the Lowly Foot Soldier: The Pawns

At long last we come to the last member of our army, the lowly foot soldier, the modest pawn. The pawn is considered the least valuable member of our army. Despite its low station within the ranks of our army we should learn to love our pawns. Why? Well in the first place we have so many of them! In fact both players will start a game of Chess with eight pawns each. That is a lot. As we can expect, the movements of the pawns are quite different from the movements of our *major* pieces as well as *minor* pieces. Pawns are far less mobile and move much slower. Another important feature of their movements is that pawns, unlike pieces, can never retreat. They can only advance forwards and even then only on the files they occupy. Their ability to capture is quite limited as well. Other pawns or pieces have to be quite close to be threatened by a pawn capture. This dreary state of affairs in the life of a pawn has a

silver lining: Pawns have an ability that no other member of our army has. They are able to promote to any piece except the King.

A pawn can earn promotion if it manages to advance all the way up the chessboard to the very last rank of our opponent. Therefore, a pawn, if it gets all the way to the last rank can promote to a Queen, the most powerful piece in our army. Each and every pawn harbors a fond dream: Either to deliver a checkmate, by itself, or to promote itself. Theoretically, it is possible for a player to promote every one of his pawns to a Queen and might have nine Queens in a single game! (I've never seen that happen.) But such a game would be a complete wipeout.

The greatest player of his era was a French man François-André Danican Philidor (September 7, 1726 – August 31, 1795). He wrote his famous book in 1749, "*Analyse du jeu des Échecs*," and in one sentence created an expression that modern players paraphrase as follows, "*Pawns are the soul of chess*." With this simple thought provoking comment, Philidor revolutionized the way Chess was played. Before his time, Chess was a kind of swashbuckling mess where pawns and pieces were sacrificed with wild abandon, the goal of checkmate was paramount and everyone played for an attack against the opponent's King with little thought for the loss of one pawn or even many. Philidor's comment inspired a completely different approach to playing Chess, one in which the pawns could be useful; that their positioning was important; that they could in fact be quite powerful; that pawns could decide the battle; that in fact proper play with the pawns are critical to understanding Chess. Philidor was a man ahead of his time as today's modern grandmasters know he was absolutely right.

Let us therefore plumb the soul of Chess and understand the movements of the Pawns and why they deserve our love.

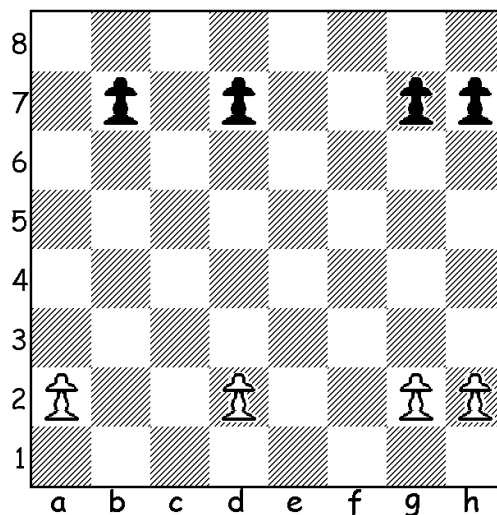


DIAGRAM 111
Introducing the Pawns

For diagram 111 the pawns are introduced in a simple setting. I've given both sides only four pawns each, with all the pawns in their starting positions. At the start of a Chess game, both players will have eight pawns but I wanted to begin things slowly to help our understanding of how pawns move, capture and promote.

From their starting positions, in modern chess, pawns have been given a choice: They can move forwards, on the same file, either one square or two squares forwards on their *first* move. After making their first move, the pawns can only advance forwards one square at a time. In the older

game of Chaturanga the pawns only advanced one square at a time and did not have the option of moving two squares forwards on their first move.

From the position in diagram 111, let us consider White's lonely a2-pawn for the moment. If White wanted, he has the option of playing either: 1.a2-a3, or 1.a2-a4, as the first move for this pawn. The same is true for all the other pawns in diagram 111, they too could choose to move either one square or two squares forwards on the file that they are on. Each pawn has the right to advance one square or two squares on the same file only. Let us decide to advance the a2-pawn two squares forwards. Charge! How would we write this move down on our score-sheets?

In Algebraic notation, it is not necessary for us to first write "P" for "Pawn," rather a pawn move is written without mentioning the pawn at all. The move would be written simply as, 1.a2-a4.

Okay that was fun, let us imagine that Black's response was a bit more timid and he played: 1...g7-g6, these moves for both sides are shown in diagram 112 with the arrows showing how the pawns moved on their same file.

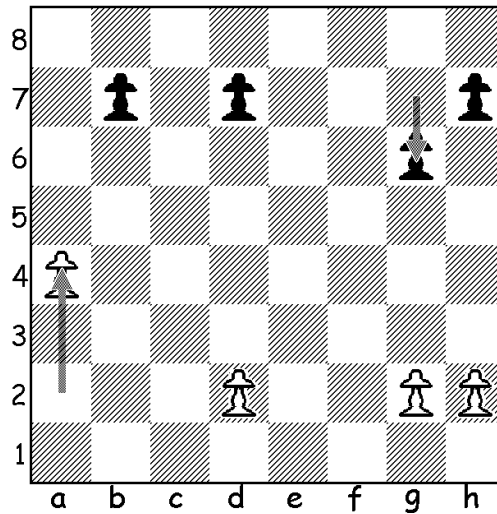


DIAGRAM 112

Both sides have advanced their Pawns

As we see in diagram 112, the position has changed, White's a2-pawn has advanced two squares up the a-file, while Black chose to advance his g7-pawn just one square forwards to the g6-square. For his second move, White decides to play: 2.d2-d4, and this time Black follows suit by: 2...d7-d5, when the d-pawns are mutually blocked and can no longer move forwards. White turns his attention to the Kingside pawns and decides to play: 3.g2-g4, while for his turn Black decides to advance his h7-pawn two squares: 3...h7-h5, which leads us to diagram 113.

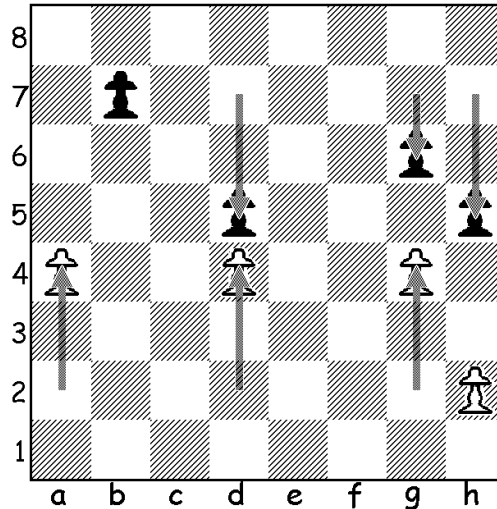


DIAGRAM 113

The Pawns have come into contact

As we see in diagram 113, the pawns have advanced and their movements are shown by the arrows. The pawns are now in closer contact with one another. It is now time to introduce how pawns *capture* other pawns and other pieces. Of particular interest is the battle occurring between White's g4-pawn and Black's h5-pawns. Pawns attack and capture *diagonally*. White decides to play: 4.g4xh5, capturing Black's h5-pawn. This is done as follows: White removes Black's h5-pawn from the board, places it to the side off the chessboard and places his g4-pawn onto the h5-square. The result of this capture is shown in diagram 114.

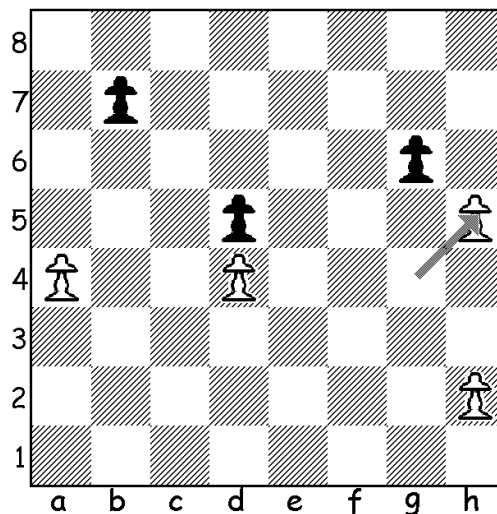


DIAGRAM 114

White has captured Black's h5-Pawn

As we see in diagram 114, the arrow shows how White's g4-pawn has just captured Black's h5-pawn, removed Black's h5-pawn off the board and now the g4-pawn occupies the h5-square. The moves played since diagram 111, shows that White is now one pawn ahead but it is Black's turn to play. The g6-pawn can now capture White's h5-pawn. Black decides that: 4...g6xh5, is his best move and executes that move as we see in diagram 115.

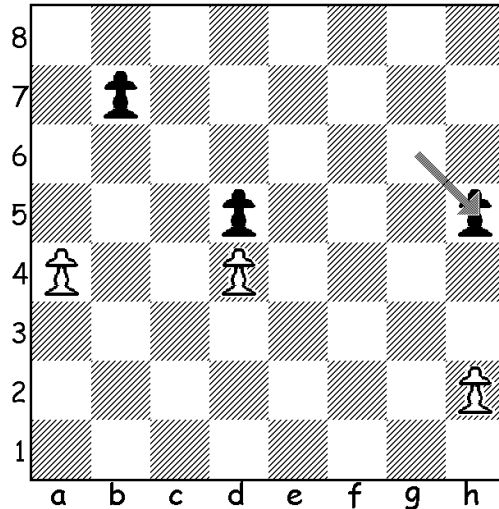


DIAGRAM 115

Black has recaptured the h5-Pawn

In diagram 115 we see that Black's g6-pawn, captured White's h5-pawn, removed White's h5-pawn from the board and placed his g6-pawn on the h5-square. Black has restored the material balance and both sides have an equal number of pawns.

I'm not completely sure that I understand how pawns capture. Let us be sure that we understand that pawns capture diagonally. Let us review the position from diagram 111. What were all the squares that the pawns could potentially capture? Diagram 116 arrows show the squares that the pawns *attack*.

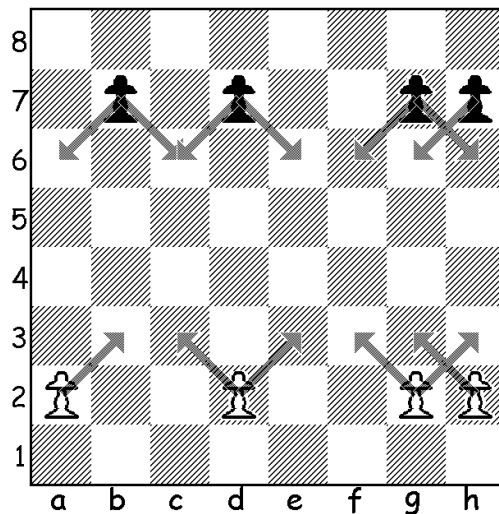


DIAGRAM 116

Arrows show the squares the Pawns attack

Diagram 116 features a lot of arrows, so let us be sure that we understand what is what. Let us start with the a2-pawn. It attacks only one square, the b3-square. Notice the square that the a2-pawn attacks is a diagonal move and up one rank. Moving over to the d2-pawn, it attacks two squares, the c3-square and the e3-square. On the Kingside, the g2-pawn attacks two squares as well, the f3-square and the h3-square. The h2-pawn attacks only one square, the g3-square.

Now let us turn our attention to Black's pawns in diagram 116. We will first look at the Black Queenside b7-pawn. The b7-pawn attacks two squares, the a6-square and the c6-square. The d7-pawn attacks two squares, the c6-square and the e6-square. On the Kingside the g7-pawn attacks two squares, the f6-square and the h6-square. While the h7-pawn attacks a single square, the g6-square only.

Quick question for the class: "If in diagram 116, there was a White Queen on the c6-square, would it be safe from capture?"

Answer: "No! In fact there are two ways that Black's pawns could capture. Black has the pleasant choice of either, $1...b7xc6$ or a second choice, $1...d7xc6$, in both cases, the White Queen would be captured, removed from the board and the capturing pawn would move to and occupy the c6-square.

Let us return to diagram 112 for a moment. Both players have just played their first moves. They were: $1.a2-a4$ $g7-g6$, which is shown in diagram 117. This time, I show how the first moves have changed which squares the pawns now attack having moved forwards.

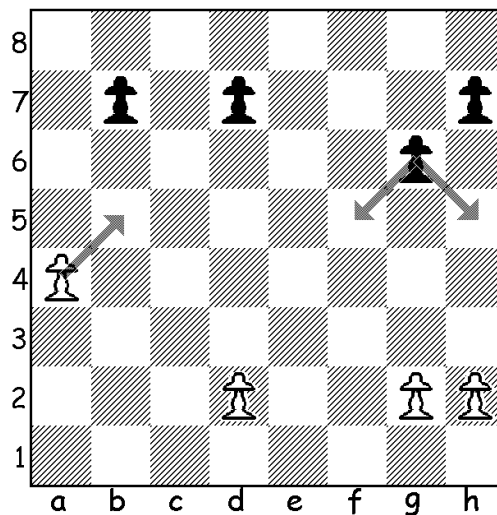


DIAGRAM 117

Having moved the pawns now attack different squares

As shown in diagram 116, when White's pawn was on the a2-square, it attacked the b3-square. Once the move: $1.a2-a4$, was played, the pawn, now on the a4-square, no longer attacks the b3-square. With the pawn now on the a4-square, it attacks the b5-square only as shown in diagram 117.

From Black's point of view, the g7-pawn attacked both the f6-square and the h6-square a move ago. Once the move: $1...g7-g6$, was played, the pawn no longer attacks those two squares. Instead, now that it is on the g6-square, the pawn attacks two new squares, the f5-square as well as the h5-square as shown by the arrows in diagram 117.

On the second turn, the move: $2.d2-d4$ $d7-d5$, was played. Now let us compare how this move by the players changed which squares are now attacked by the d-pawns. In diagram 118, the arrows show the squares that are attacked by both d-pawns.

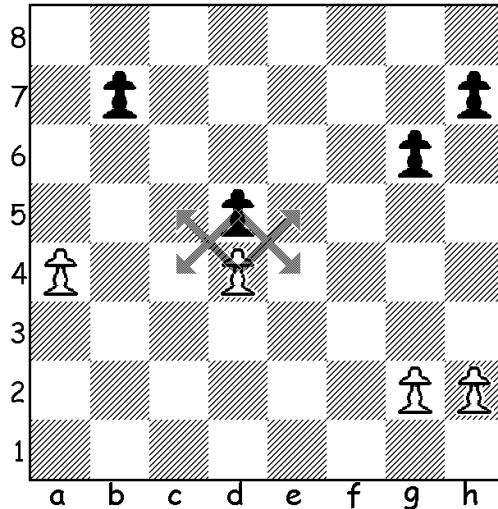


DIAGRAM 118
The d-pawns block each other

The position in diagram 118 is going to teach us a lot about pawns. In Chess parlance, we say that the d-pawns are “mutually blocking” one another. White’s d4-pawn cannot advance any further. The same is true of Black’s d5-pawn. It too cannot advance. The pawns mutually block one another’s advance. Also in Chess parlance we say that the d-pawns are “locked together.”

Now let us turn our attention to White’s d-pawn. When it was on the d2-square it attacked the c3-square and the e3-square. This is no longer the case. With the pawn on the d4-square, it now attacks two new squares. The d4-pawn attacks the c5-square and the e5-square.

So we are learning some new insights into the pawn movements. The first is that as pawns advance they no longer attack the squares they left behind. Instead they attack new squares with each advance they make. Secondly, as they collide with the opponent’s army, pawns can block one another so that neither pawn can advance.

Now let us consider the new state of affairs for Black’s d-pawn. When Black’s pawn was on the d7-square, it attacked the c6-square and the e6-square. Once the d7-pawn advanced to the d5-square, it is no longer attacking the c6-square and the e6-square. As we see in diagram 118, the arrows show us that the d5-pawn now attacks the c4-square and the e4-square.

Let us review the third move that we played in our original sequence of moves: 3.g2-g4 h7-h5, is what we had played before. The new situation is show in diagram 119. As the arrow indicates, the g4-pawn attacks the h5-pawn. But, the h5-pawn also attacks the g4-pawn. It was Black’s third move, 3...h7-h5, which initiated the mutual threat of captures.

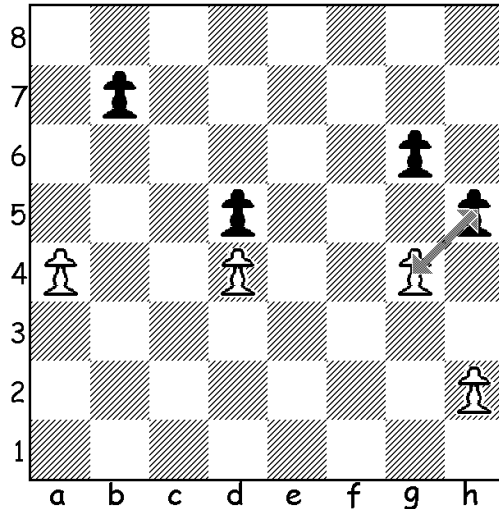


DIAGRAM 119
Pawns in mutual combat attacking one another

The arrow in diagram 119 shows that White's g4-pawn attacks Black's h5-pawn. It also shows that Black's h5-pawn attacks White's g4-pawn. In our original sequence we played: 4.g4xh5 g6xh5, when a pair of pawns were traded.

Question for the class: "Suppose that White chose the move: 4.g4-g5, instead of capturing the h5-pawn. In that case, with the pawn on the g5-square, which squares would the g5-pawn attack?"

Correct answer: "A White pawn on the g5-square would attack the f6-square and the h6-square."

Another question for the class: "Imagine that White played the move: 4.h2-h3, would that move protect White's g4-pawn?"

Answer, "My question is a bit tricky. Indeed, after: 4.h2-h3, the g4-pawn is protected but only in the sense that after: 4...h5xg4 5.h3xg4, the captures result in a trade of pawns. The original g-pawn was captured and the h-pawn became a g-pawn after these trades have been made."

Does everyone understand how pawns advance? Remember pawns can only move forwards on the same file that they are on and that pawns capture diagonally. Very good.

Let us continue our journey and find out more about the pawns. The situation after the fourth move is shown in diagram 120.

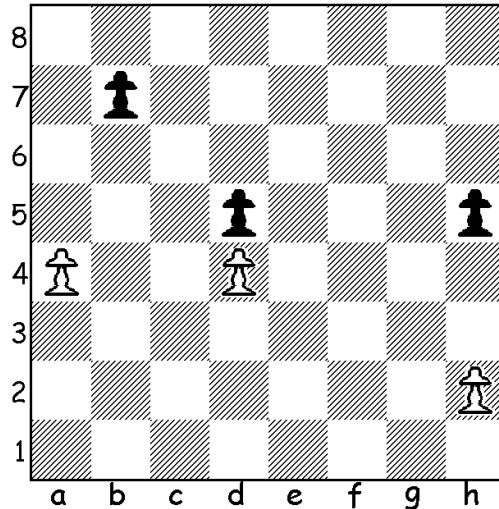


DIAGRAM 120
White to play

In diagram 120, we see the position after a trade of pawns. White realizes that he can advance his h2-pawn either one square or two squares forwards. The d4-pawn however is blocked and cannot advance. On the other side of the board, the Queenside, White decides to advance his a4-pawn forwards and plays the move: 5.a4-a5, he knows that pawns can promote when they reach the last rank and with this move the a-pawn moves one step closer to the eighth rank. The new situation is show in diagram 121.

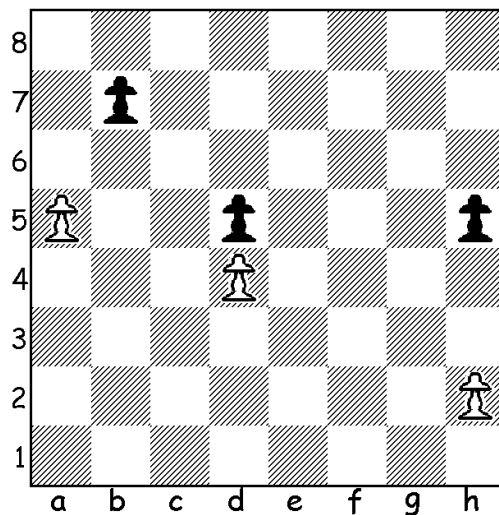


DIAGRAM 121
Black to play

Question for the class: "White's pawn is now on the a5-square. Which square does the a5-pawn attack?"

Answer, "The a5-pawn attacks the b6-square."

In diagram 121, it is Black to play his fifth move in our sequence. Black realizes his d5-pawn is blockaded and cannot advance. Black reasons that while he can move his h-pawns forwards in short order both the h-pawns will be mutually blocked as well. He therefore decides to launch his b7-pawn forwards and plays the move: 5...b7-b5, hoping that his b-pawn will advance all the way

to the first rank and to the b1-square for promotion. The new situation after Black's fifth move is shown in diagram 122.

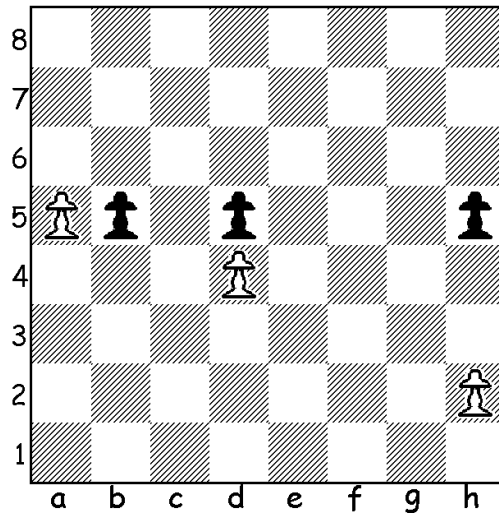


DIAGRAM 122
White to play

The position in diagram 122 has caused the player with the White pieces to get very excited! He sees that while the d-pawns are mutually blockaded and that his h2-pawn doesn't have any real prospects, the a5-pawn on the other hand can advance unimpeded! He very quickly comes to the conclusion that he should push his a-pawn forwards and plays: 6.a5-a6, advancing his pawn.

After White plays his sixth move, Black also finds the opportunity of pawn advancement compelling. With his own sense of excitement he plays: 6...b5-b4, advancing his b-pawn forwards.

The move sequence has brought us to the position in diagram 123.

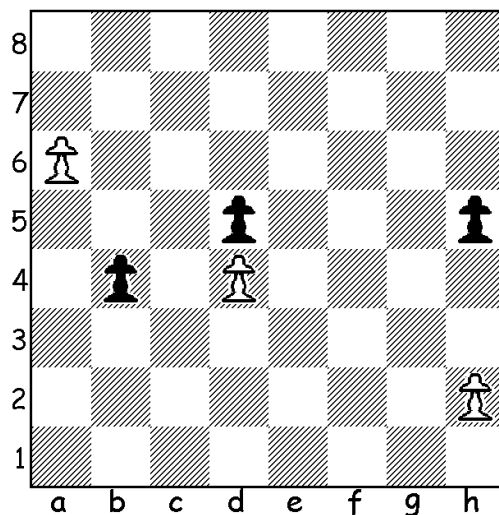


DIAGRAM 123
The Pawn race is on!

The game has suddenly turned into a *pawn race*. White is trying to push his a-pawn to the a8-promotion square as fast as he can. Black is trying to push his b-pawn to the b1-promotion square as fast as he can. The race is on!

Question for the class: “Who will win the pawn race?”

Answer, “White will win the race to promote a pawn because his pawn is *more advanced*.”

In diagram 123 it is White’s turn to play, he quickly advances his pawn forwards and plays: 7.a6-a7, and Black in turn advances his pawn and plays: 7...b4-b3, when the play has brought us to diagram 124.

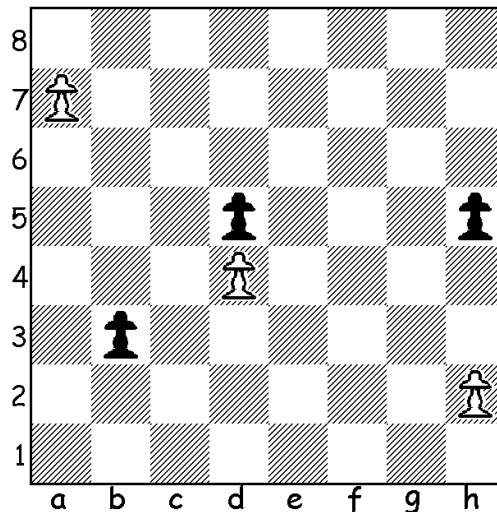


DIAGRAM 124

White is about to promote his a7-pawn

As we see in diagram 124, it is White’s turn to play. He is about to push his pawn to the last rank, in this case the 8th rank and he plays the move: 8.a7-a8, the pawn has reached its goal. It has reached the back rank of the opponent. But what happens now?

This is a very good question indeed! Now that the White pawn has trundled up the entire board and reached the dream promotion square, what happens next? Actually, it is up to the general of the White army. He has a choice. He must remove the White pawn from the a8-square, and put the pawn to the side of the board, but he has to decide which piece to replace the pawn with. He can decide to promote the pawn to any piece he would like, a Knight, a Bishop, a Rook or a Queen. The pawn cannot promote to a King. You only get one King per game so protect him well! Because the Queen is the most powerful piece in our army, in most cases, we will promote the pawn to a Queen. However the position in our chess games may call for a promotion with a piece other than the Queen. Pawn promotions can be tricky and it really depends up the specific situation in *your* game. In most games we will want to promote the pawn to a Queen. In this case, that is what White decides to do and promotes the pawn to a Queen.

How do we do this? We remove the pawn from the board and replace the pawn that moved to the a8-square with a Queen that we place on the a8-square. That would complete White’s move and then it would be Black’s turn to play.

How do we write White’s promotion move on our score-sheet? This too, is a very good question. We would write it as follows: 8. a7-a8 = Q.

Wow. That notation of a chess move almost looks like a math equation. Let me elaborate further about this promotion move notation so that it makes sense. Our promotion move was made on our eighth move. So the part that reads "8." is clear, that is White's eighth move from our starting diagram 111 position. The move we actually played was to push our pawn forwards, that part explains, "a7-a8," which makes sense. But this is the very first time we have ever seen the "equals" sign which is "=" and then we got a Q, which we know means Queen. Well we left off understanding that a7-a8, pushing the pawn was the move we made. But since the move led to the promotion of the pawn we had to decide to what piece the pawn would promote. Thus we say, "The pawn move promotes" but to what did we promote? We promoted the pawn to a Queen. We would read the notation on our score-sheet as: 8.a7-a8=Q, "on his eighth move, White pushed his pawn from a7-a8 and the pawn 'equaled' a 'Queen'." In simple Chess parlance we would say, "White promoted his pawn to a Queen."

In diagram 125, we see a graphical representation of the new situation now that White has promoted his a-pawn.

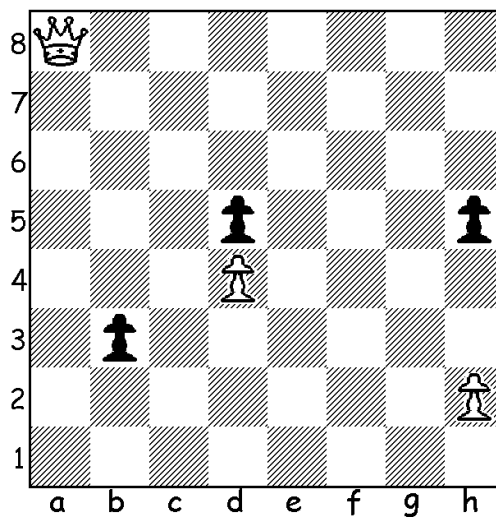


DIAGRAM 125

White has promoted his a-pawn to a Queen!

As we see in diagram 125, White's a-pawn has been removed from the board and in its place a new White Queen has appeared on the a8-square where the a-pawn was promoted. White has won the pawn race but Black is hoping to get a new Queen as well! Black therefore decides to push his b-pawn forwards and play: 8...b3-b2, which brings up a new challenge for the White player. As we see in diagram 126, Black is threatening to promote his b-pawn as well.

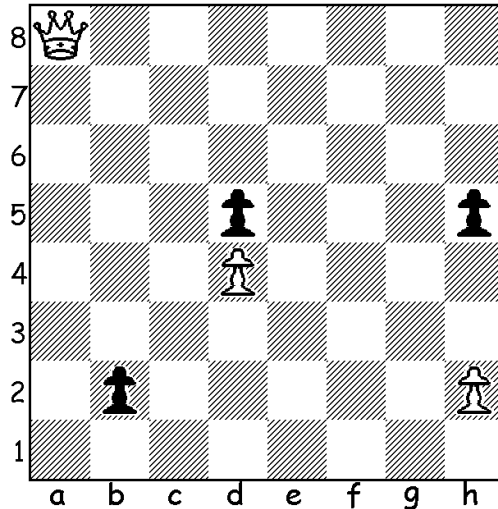


DIAGRAM 126

Black is about to promote his b2-pawn to a Queen!

This one is a challenge for the whole class. As we see in diagram 126, Black is one move away from promoting his b2-pawn to a new Queen by playing: 9... b2-b1=Q, in Chess parlance we would describe this as, "Black threatens to promote his pawn." White must find a move that puts a stop to Black's ambitions.

Challenge: "White has three good moves to stop Black from promoting and getting a new Queen as well. What are these three good moves?"

Answer: "White can stop Black's b-pawn from promoting in three different ways. They are: 9. Qa8-a2, 9. Qa8-b8, 9. Qa8-b7."

Of the three different moves, pointed out above in the answer, I'm going to choose one. The move I will choose is: 9.Qa8-b8, write this move down on your score-sheets and play the move on your chessboard in front of you.

While all three moves are equally good, I'd like to talk about the move I chose for a moment. Did you notice that: 9.Qa8-b8, attacked the b2-pawn? If you did, very good! But what I find interesting about this move is that after White's Queen moved to the b8-square it now has a kind of an "X-Ray" quality about it. The Queen on the b8-square does not attack the b1-square but it does "see through the b2-pawn" to the b1-square. Are you confused? Good! So was I. Let us see what I mean by this X-Ray quality...

Now it is Black's turn to play. He is not going to be denied. Black decides to promote his pawn and he plays: 9...b2-b1=Q, the result of this move is shown in diagram 127.

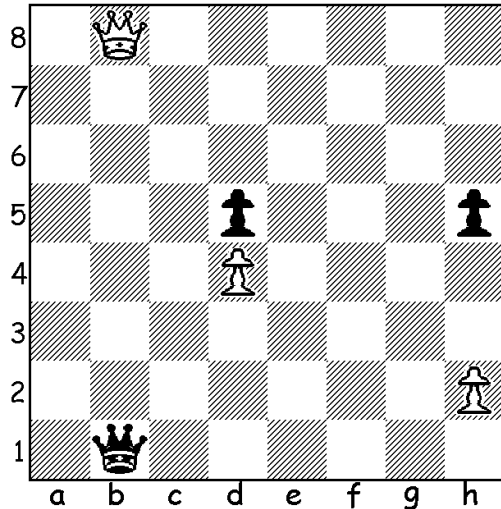


DIAGRAM 127

Black has promoted his b-pawn to a Queen!
White to play

As we see in diagram 127, Black has just promoted his pawn to a Queen. It is White to play.

Question for the Class: "What move should White make from the position in diagram 127?"

I hope the answer was a unanimous one! "White should certainly play: 10.Qb8xb1, capturing and removing Black's Queen from the board."

Well, that certainly was an interesting sequence of ten moves and we have learned a lot about the pawns. How they move by advancing forwards; how they capture diagonally; how they promote; and how we record the promotion move on our score-sheets. We've learned a lot. Unfortunately, we are not yet finished with learning about the pawn moves. There is one more rule about the pawn moves that is the most difficult rule in chess to get right. It is called, the rule of *en passant*. I will get to that rule in a moment.

First, I would like to make a challenge for the whole class. We are going to reconsider the situation in diagram 124 for a brief moment. I'll bring up the same position and label it diagram 128, what we see below.

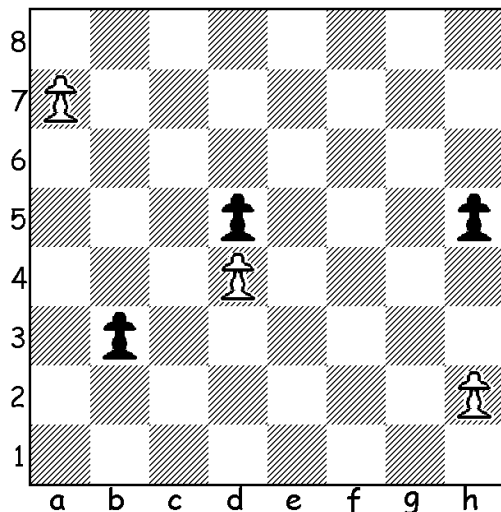


DIAGRAM 128

In diagram 128, I'm going to be very mean to the White player. Instead of allowing him to promote his a7-pawn to a Queen and to let him win the game as we have seen, I'm going to challenge the class as follows: "You are not allowed to Queen your pawn. Instead, you have to promote your pawn to some piece other than a Queen. You have two further challenges: After you promote to a new piece your new piece must stop Black from promoting his pawn. Also you must correctly record on your score-sheet the piece that you have decided to promote. It is a triple challenge!"

Answer: "Since the class is not allowed to make a Queen, the only way to stop Black's b-pawn from promoting is to promote the pawn to a Rook! The correct play as well as notation should read: 8.a7-a8=R! b3-b2 9.Ra8-b8! b2-b1=Q 10.Rb8xb1!"

Did the class correctly meet this triple challenge? Extra credit if you did!

Since everyone is so very clever in getting the right answers, another quick challenge for the whole class. "After promoting his a-pawn to a Rook, why did White play: 9.Ra8-b8, couldn't he have stopped the Black b2-pawn from promoting with the move: 9.Ra8-a1, covering the b1-square?"

Answer: "No. The move: 9.Ra8-a1??, is a real howler! That Rook move would put the Rook in capture to the b2-pawn. Black would have a really powerful reply: 9...b2xa1=Q!"

Question: "Could someone decipher the move notation: 9...b2xa1=Q!, in common Chess parlance for me?"

My answer to this question would be to describe Black's move as follows: "On Black's ninth move (9...), the b2-pawn captured a Rook on the a1-square (b2xa1), the pawn was promoted (=) to a Black Queen (Q), the move was a good one (!) as well."

So far this has been a heavy lesson. It might be a good time to take a break or simply review all the action of the ten move sequence.

En Passant

Of all the rules of Chess, I have saved the rule of *en passant* for last as it is the most difficult rule in Chess to understand. In my opinion the second most difficult rule is Castling. For me, en passant was really hard. In my early chess experience it seemed that I always got the rule wrong committing many illegal moves along the way. Hopefully, you will do better than me. If you don't "get it" right away, do not worry! With a little practice and more understanding of the pattern the rule will soon seem trivial.

The words "en passant" are French. Translating them to English would be, "in passing." The rule of en passant refers to a pawn capture. In a particular situation when one pawn on an adjacent or neighboring file "passes" by another pawn, the rule of en passant comes into effect. Whew, boy, just trying to explain the rule is difficult. Trying to understand the rule requires us to concentrate extra hard. We have to put our super powers of concentration to work.

I'm going to recall the position from diagram 111 and renumber it as diagram 129. This time I'm going to make different pawn moves.

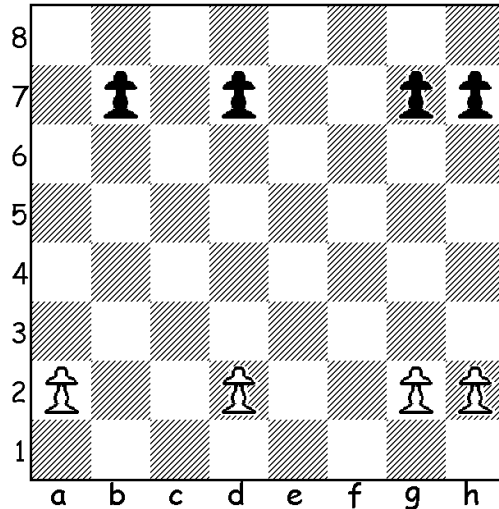


DIAGRAM 129

As before, I will start with the move: 1.a2-a4, but this time I will have Black play the move: 1...h7-h5, and I will continue by: 2.a4-a5 h5-h4, when the play brings us to the position in diagram 130.

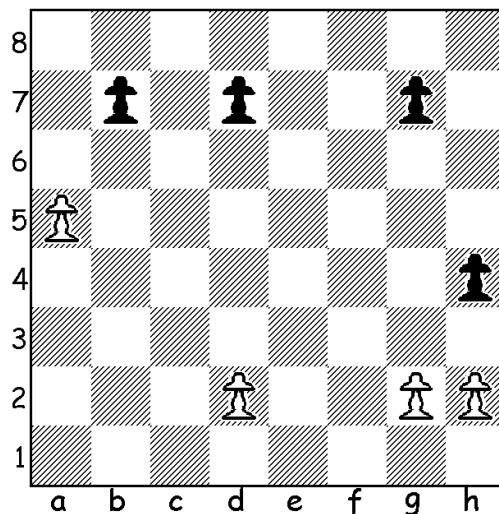


DIAGRAM 130

Introducing en passant

In diagram 130, White decides he would like to push forwards his g2-pawn, which is on its *starting* square. White reasons that if he pushed his g2-pawn to the g3-square, Black's h4-pawn could capture the White g3-pawn. Therefore White decides to be clever. He plays: 3.g2-g4, passing by Black's h4-pawn. This move is shown in diagram 131, and I've added arrows to show which squares the pawns that have *advanced* attack.

normal pawn capture move. Now it is Black to play. Black decides that he would like to play: 4...b7-b5, which bypasses White's pawn on the a5-square.

Question for the class: "In diagram 133, the arrow shows us Black's last move. Can White play the move: 5.a5xb6, making a capture by en passant?"

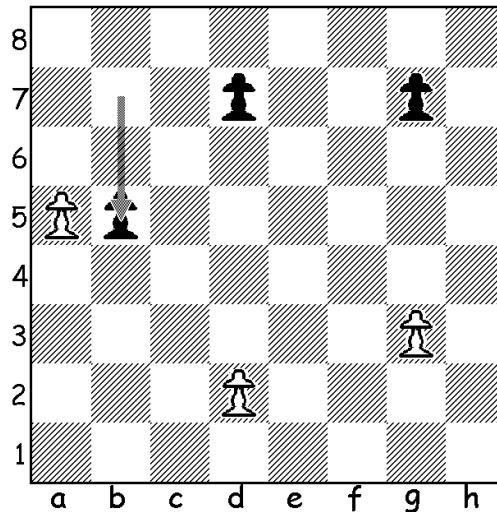


DIAGRAM 133

Can White capture by en passant?

The correct answer is, "Yes." White can indeed play: 5.a5xb6, capturing Black's b5-pawn, removing it from the board and place the a5-pawn onto the b6-square.

Let us understand the mechanics of the en passant rule. In diagram 133 White's pawn on the a5-square is three squares up the board from its starting position. In chess parlance we say that White's a-pawn is "on the 5th rank." The neighboring Black pawn is on the b-file, an adjacent file, made an attempt to bypass the a5-pawn. The b7-pawn was on its starting square and tried to move two squares forwards on its first move. White was allowed to make the en passant capture.

Let us review the play in diagrams 130, 131 and 132. In this case, Black's h-pawn move to the h4-square, again, in chess parlance, "Black has moved his pawn to the 4th rank. Black's h-pawn advanced three squares from its starting position. The g2-pawn tried to bypass the h4-pawn from its starting square by moving two squares on its first move. Black had the option to capture en passant.

Hopefully, this very difficult rule to understand is starting to make sense. Trust me it will take a bit of practice but once you "get it" you will master this rule perfectly.

Let me make a mock battle featuring all the pawns as shown in diagram 134. What I'll do is deliberately play moves that set up situations that allow en passant as well as those that do not.

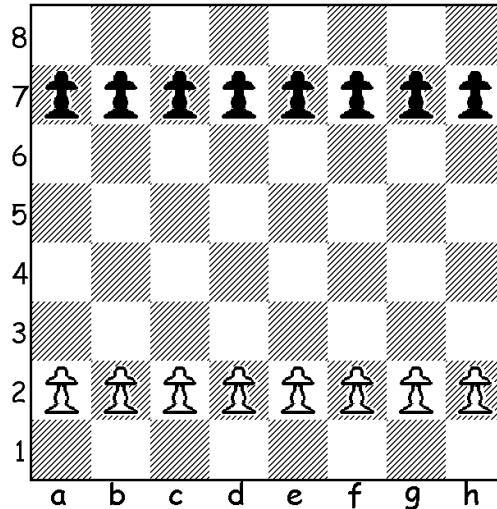


DIAGRAM 134
Pawns in their starting position

From diagram 134, on your Chess sets play the moves: 1. d2-d4 g7-g5 2. d4-d5 g5-g4, when the play has brought us to diagram 135.

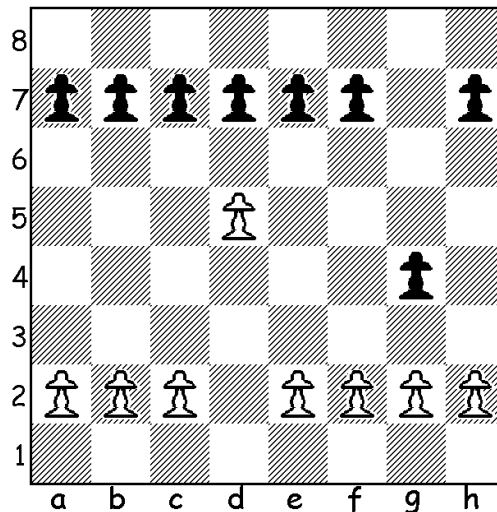


DIAGRAM 135
Both sides have advanced one Pawn

In diagram 135, White has advanced his d-pawn three squares from its starting position, to the fifth rank. Black has advanced his g-pawn three squares from its starting position, to the fourth rank. Both these pawns are poised to make an en passant capture if given an opportunity to do so.

Question for the class: "If White were to play: 3. h2-h4, does that move give Black an option to play: 3...g4xh3, capturing en passant?"

The correct answer is, "Yes. Black could if he wanted to play an en passant capture."

Another question for the class: "If White played the move: 3. e2-e4, could the Black g4-pawn play: 3. g4xe3, capturing en passant?"

The correct answer is, "No. White's e-pawn is not on a neighboring file to Black's g4-pawn. It is two files away on the e-file. No, an en passant capture of White's e-pawn is not possible."

Question for the class: "If White were to play: 3.f2-f4, does that move give Black an option to play: 3...g4xf3, removing the White f4-pawn from the board and capturing en passant?"

The correct answer is, "Yes. The capture: 3...g4xf3, is a correct en passant capture."

Remember en passant is not a forcing rule! If you have an opportunity to make a pawn capture, en passant, you are not required to make the capture. En passant rule gives you the option to make a capture or not. It is your choice.

Let us continue the play from diagram 135. This time we will play some different moves. White decides to play: 3.b2-b4 f7-f5 4.b4-b5 f5-f4, when the play has brought us to diagram 136.

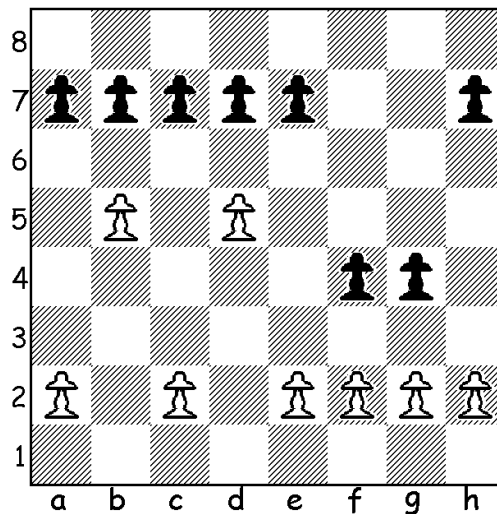


DIAGRAM 136
White to Play
Setting up for an en passant

As we see in diagram 136, White's d-pawn and b-pawn have moved up to the fifth rank, while Black's g-pawn and f-pawn have moved up to the fourth rank. All four of these pawns have advanced up the board, three squares from their starting position. All four pawns are poised for an en passant capture if given a chance.

From diagram 136, let us say White decides to play: 5.h2-h4, advancing his h-pawn.

Question: "If Black decided that he would like to play: 5...g4xh3, capturing the pawn en passant, would Black's fifth move be allowed?"

Answer, "Absolutely!" Black could indeed play: 5...g4xh3, when White would likely recapture the pawn by: 6.g2xh3, restoring material equality. After White's sixth move, both sides would have seven pawns each. Let us continue the play. Suppose that Black decided to play: 6...e7-e6, offering a trade of pawns. White decided to play the move: 7.c3-c4, protecting his d5-pawn. The play has brought us to the position show in diagram 137.

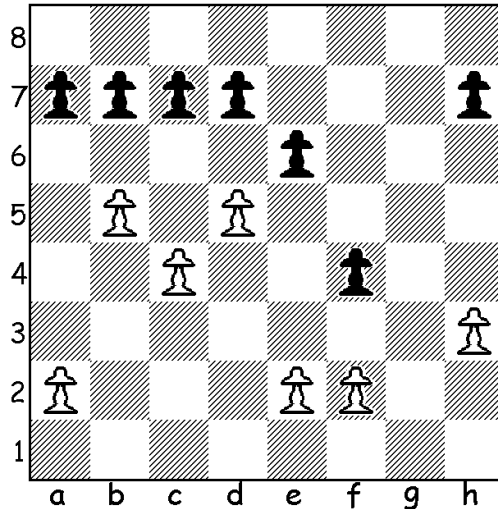


DIAGRAM 137
Black to play

The play from diagram 134 has brought us to the position shown in diagram 137, it is Black to move and he decides to play: 7...e6-e5. The White player now decides to make an en passant capture and tries to play the move: 8.d5xe6, which is not allowed because it is an illegal move! Think about this question for a moment.

Question: "Why is the move: 8.d5xe6, not allowed?"

Answer, "Black's e-pawn did not attempt to bypass the d5-pawn. The e6-pawn was *not* on its original square. Black's e-pawn did not go two squares on its first move. White had the opportunity to capture the e-pawn on the previous move not on the eighth move."

White tries again. He decides to try to blockade Black's e5-pawn and plays: 8.e4-e4, when Black decides to capture White's e-pawn en passant by: 8...f4xe3.

Question: "Would Black's en passant capture: 8...f4xe3, be allowed?"

Answer, "Yes." Indeed Black's move would be allowed as it is in accordance with the rules. White plays: 9.f2xe3, and Black plays: 9...c7-c5, the play has brought us to the position shown in diagram 138. The arrow shows us Black's last move.

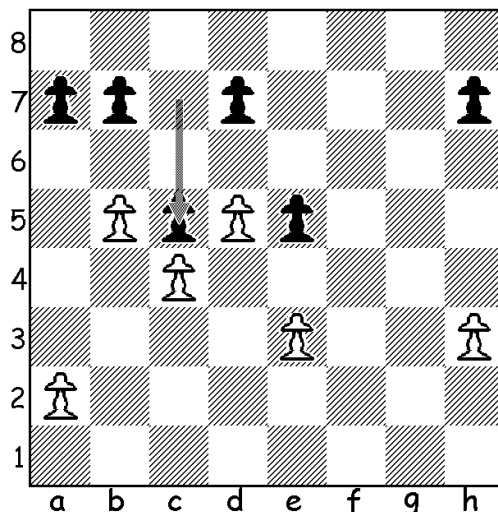


DIAGRAM 138

White to play

Challenge for the whole class: “As we can see in diagram 138, Black has just advanced his c7-pawn two squares. Can White make an en passant pawn capture?”

Correct answer: “Yes indeed! In fact White has a choice of *two* different en passant pawn captures. If he desired, White could play either: 9.b5xc6 or 9.d5xc6.”

As we see in diagram 138, White is really tempted to play: 9.b5xc6, as he might hope that Black would recapture by: 9...d7xc6??, a real howler that would allow: 10.d5-d6!, when the d-pawn is about to make promotion. White’s problem is that: 9.b5xc6 b7xc6!, is Black’s best move and after this pawn trade, White earns no tangible benefit.

Let us suppose that White decides on his ninth move not to make either en passant capture and instead decides to play: 9.e2-e4, blocking Black’s e-pawn. Black in turn decides to play: 9...d7-d6, blocking White’s d-pawn. The play has brought us to diagram 139.

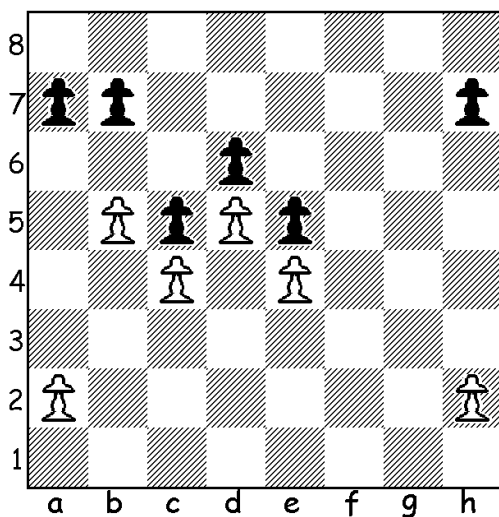


DIAGRAM 139

White to play

After Black’s last move, the general of White’s army suddenly has a flash of inspiration. Now that Black’s d7-pawn no longer protects the c6-square, White reasons that it would be terrific for him to play: 10.b5xc6, capturing en passant. Because then after: 10...b7xc6 11.d5xc6, White’s pawn would be in prime position to make a promotion.

But the move: 10.b5xc6, is not legal. An en passant capture can only be executed immediately after the opponent has made his move. If we choose not to capture by en passant on our very next turn, we cannot make the capture later.

Quiz:

While I know from my own personal experience all too well that en passant is the most difficult rule in chess, I’m going to ask you to take a very hard quiz. From diagram 140, all the pawns are in their starting position. What I’d like for you to do is to create two en passant positions for both sides. Four en passant positions in all. You can use any pawns that you would like. The choices are all yours. Check with your teacher that your composition is correct!

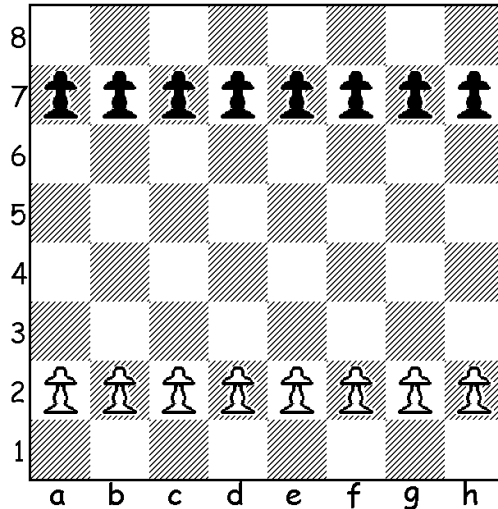


DIAGRAM 140

White to Play

Create Two En Passant Positions for both sides

Anyone who can create three or four or more En Passant positions from diagram 140 gets extra credit!

Chapter Nine:

Obstacle Courses & the Second Element: Material

Sometimes when taking a very long journey it is a good idea to stop for a break to relax and think about how far you have come. This is an especially good idea when learning a new skill or discipline. To take a moment to recap what you've learned. It might surprise you how far you have gone!

So let us take a pause, catch a breath and recall how much we have learned. In our first chapter on the history of chess we learned that Chess is a very old game, ancient in fact, about one thousand and four hundred years old. That Chess originated in India, spread to Persia – modern day Iran – and then to Arabic countries, to the continent of Africa, to Europe and eventually to the America's. As Chess traveled through the hands of many people as well as their different cultures the rules of Chess evolved. Chess sets also changed in their appearance. The designs of the pieces from elephants, chariots, camels, and foot soldiers bearing spears became Bishops, Knights, castles or Rooks and pawns. The final rule changes become standardized about five hundred years ago and Chess has remained the same ever since. While we are learning a sophisticated game it is also an ancient game that spans a very long time.

In our second chapter on the Chess battlefield we learned all about the sixty-four squared checkered board. About the element of space, your space and the territory of your opponent and how to count which side has a spatial advantage. That each individual square has a unique address, about ranks, files, diagonals, Kingside, Queenside, the Center Square as well as the Sweet Center.

We've learned how the pieces, the King, the Queen, the Rooks, the Bishops, the Knights all move, as well as the unique rule of Castling either Kingside or Queenside including the conditions

of when Castling is possible or not. How pawns move, capture and promote as well as the most difficult rule of all in Chess the en passant pawn capture.

We've learned how to Checkmate with King and Queen versus a King; to Checkmate with a King and a Rook versus a King; to Checkmate with a King and Two Bishops as well as how to avoid a Stalemate and to recognize the differences. In addition we've learned how to properly record a move, any move, in a Chess game and to keep an accurate score-sheet. While we gained all this knowledge and much else as well, along the way you've also composed some of your very own Chess compositions. That is a lot. As one of my many Chess teachers would say, "*Not too shabby, almost too much!*"

Now let us have some fun with our new found knowledge. We are about to embark on a new series of challenges: Obstacle courses. They will test our Chess knowledge as well as trick us into learning even more. These obstacles are made to be entertaining. Enjoy yourselves but take the specific challenges seriously as well. They will help you in the chapters to come.

Read the "rules of the obstacle courses" carefully and be sure you understand them well as one obstacle challenge can be quite different from another. Also, I have to warn you that I'm a mean author. I promise to try to trick you as best I can. If you don't fall for at least ten of my tricks I will be disappointed with myself. If you fall for more of my tricks I'll treat myself to an ice-cream as a reward. Smile.

So here goes.

In obstacle courses one side, White makes all the moves. Black doesn't move at all! The difficulty is to complete the course, within the parameters of different sets of rules. The obstacle rules for different types of positions can be quite different so prepare to meet different challenges. Are you ready?

I'll do the first obstacle problem myself to show you that they can indeed – with great mental effort – be solved. I will start with an extremely difficult one to show you my great cleverness...

In diagram 141, the mission is for White's Queen is to capture all of Black's pawns in as *few* moves as possible. As Black has five pawns it will take the White Queen at least five moves to capture them all. The rule for play in this obstacle: *White cannot put his Queen in capture.*

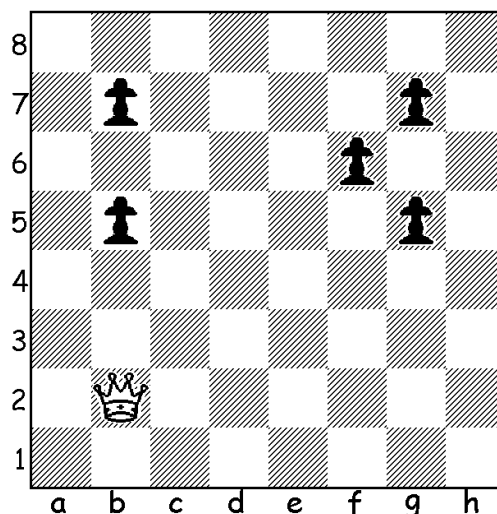


DIAGRAM 141

White to Play

Capture all the Black's Pawns in as few moves as possible

Set up the position in diagram 141 on your chessboards. Watch in stunned amazement as I correctly solve this arduous obstacle course: 1.Qb2xb5, 2.Qb5xb7!, 3.Qb7xg7, 4.Qg7xf6!, 5.Qf6xg5, I'm done!

Was that incredible? Let me see if I can read your mind... Yes, I think you are all saying to yourselves that your author, that is me, played brilliantly. Did I guess your thoughts correctly? I'm sure I did!

Did you notice the nasty traps that I set for myself? On move two I did not play: 2.Qb5xg5??, because that move puts White's Queen in capture to the f6-pawn. Also on move four I avoided: 4.Qg7xg5??, for precisely the same reason. In order to capture the g5-pawn, I had to first capture the f6-pawn which was protecting it and in order to capture the f6-pawn I had to first capture the g7-pawn which protects the f6-pawn. Just look again how carefully I had to plan all five of my captures. Pretty impressive right?

In this type of pawn formation on Black's Kingside we say in Chess parlance that the g7-pawn is the "*base pawn*" as it is the foundation of Black's whole Kingside pawn structure. In some chess circles the g7-pawn is also called the "*root pawn*" because to capture the Kingside pawns you have to pull out the root pawn first. Similarly, if you capture the base pawn then the whole pawn formation can collapse.

Turning to the Queenside pawns we say that the b5-pawn and the b7-pawns are doubled because they are *both* on the same *file*. In this case they are doubled on the b-file. I had no problems in capturing the doubled pawns at all. However, to successfully complete this obstacle I had to be very careful in the way I captured the Kingside pawns.

Okay, now that I've solved the herculean first problem, I'll give you the easy ones to solve.

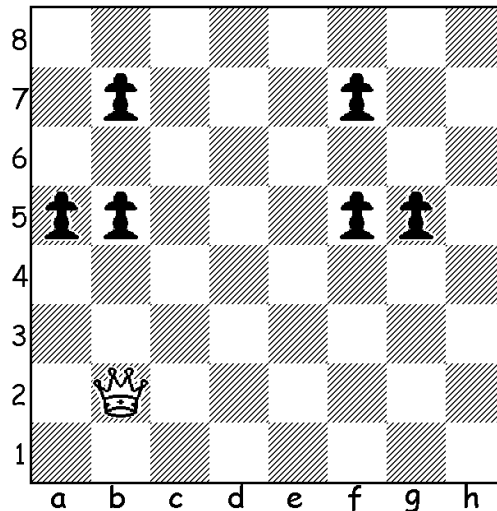


DIAGRAM 142

White to Play

Capture all the Black's Pawns in as few moves as possible

In diagram 142, White's obstacle is to capture all of Black's pawns in as few moves as possible. Black has six pawns so we know it is going to take at least six moves. Can you do it in six moves?

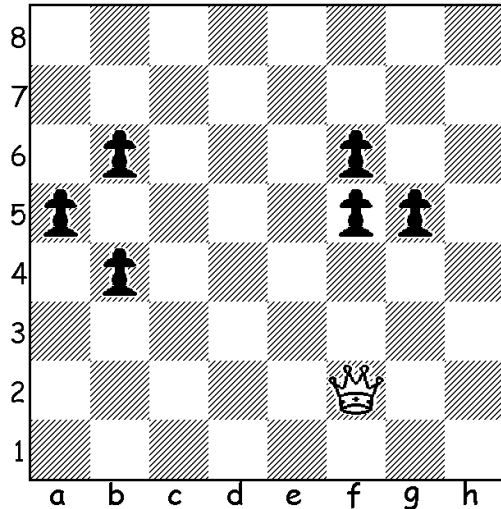


DIAGRAM 143

White to Play

Capture all the Black's Pawns in as few moves as possible

In diagram 143, White's obstacle is to capture all of Black's pawns in as few moves as possible. Black has two base pawns but which to capture first? Can you do it in six moves? Remember: Do not put your Queen in capture!

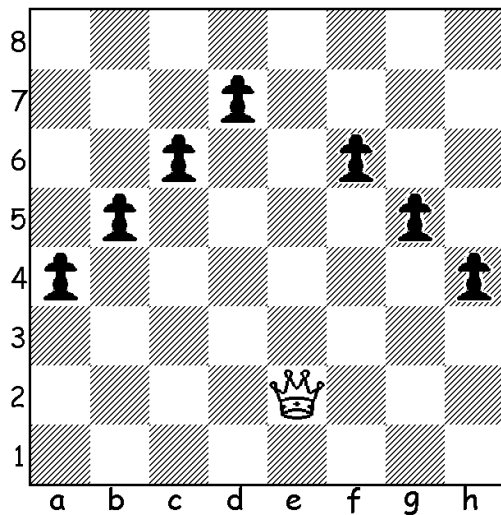


DIAGRAM 144

Capture all the Black's Pawns in as few moves as possible

In diagram 144, White's challenge is to capture all of Black's pawns as quickly as possible. As usual, you are not allowed to put your Queen in capture, so the first move: 1.Qe2xb5, is not permitted according to our rule for these obstacles. Black has seven pawns, so you know that it is going to take you at least seven moves to capture them all. In addition, White's Queen is going to have to make an initial first move, in order to begin capturing. Can you do this obstacle in eight moves?

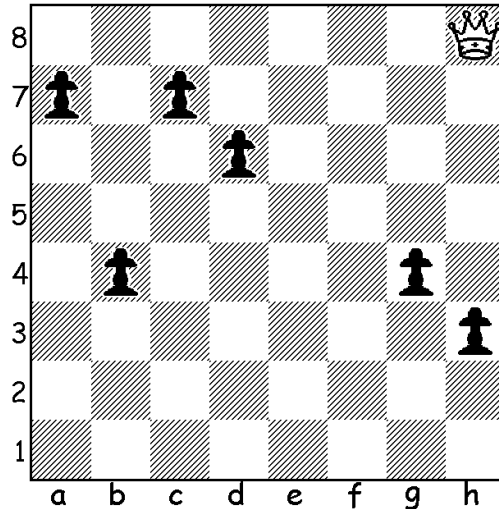


DIAGRAM 145

Capture all the Black's Pawns in as few moves as possible

Six Black pawns are scattered across the whole board! It seems impossible but can you figure out a way for the powerful Queen to do this obstacle in diagram 145 in only seven moves?

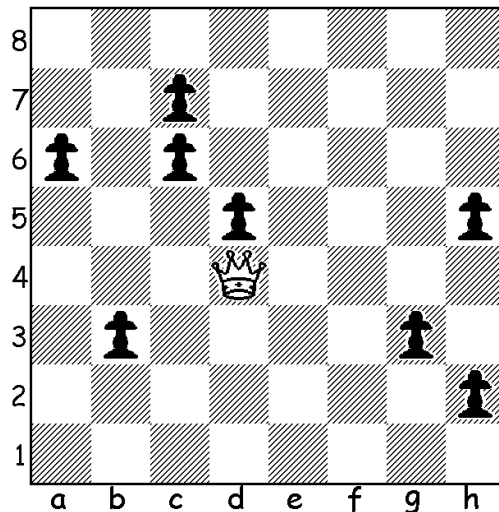


DIAGRAM 146

Capture all the Black's Pawns in as few moves as possible

This will be the last of our “Queen obstacles” before we move on to other challenges. Okay, diagram 146 features a position that is not as hard as the challenge that I solved all by myself in diagram 141, but it is still pretty tough. This time Black has all eight pawns! So that means it will take you at least eight moves to execute all the captures. As well as an initial move because: 1.Qd4xd5, is not allowed. Can you do the obstacle in diagram 146 in nine moves? This obstacle may call for a *team effort* so the whole class may want to solve it *together*.

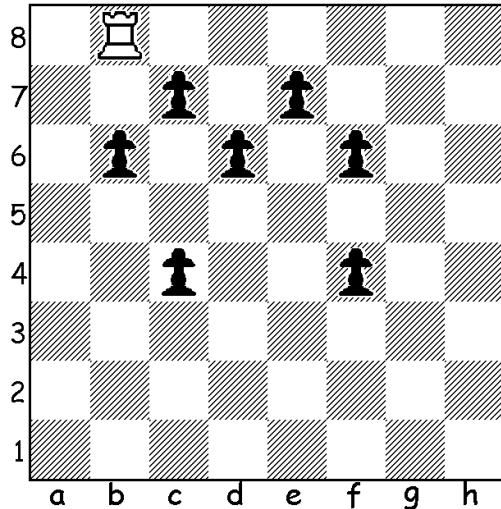


DIAGRAM 147

Capture Black's Pawns as quickly as possible

We know the Rook is not as powerful as the Queen and is going to have a harder time vacuuming up all the pawns in diagram 147. As before, you cannot put your Rook in capture, so the starting move: 1.Rb8xb6, is not permitted. There are seven pawns to be captured. How many moves will it take you to capture them all?

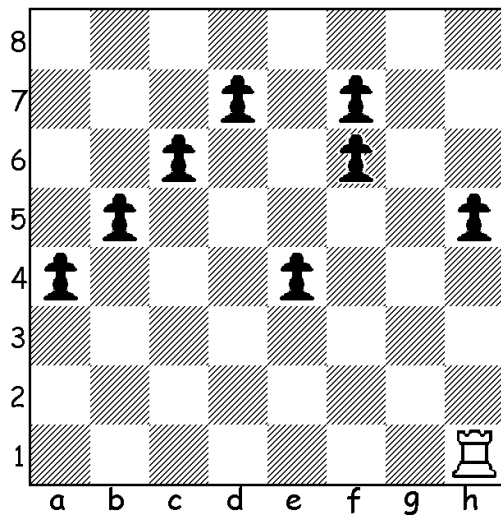


DIAGRAM 148

Capture Black's Pawns as quickly as possible

While the Rook will not have a problem gobbling up all of Black's pawns doing it as fast as possible is your obstacle. Now you have to consider that I've warned you that I'm a mean author. Have I tricked you in the position in diagram 148 by offering you a tempting h5-pawn to begin the solution? Or am I tricking you now by planting a seed of doubt that you should not capture the h5-pawn with your first move? Quite a deception wouldn't you say?

Quick question for the class: "Which pawns are doubled in diagram 148?"

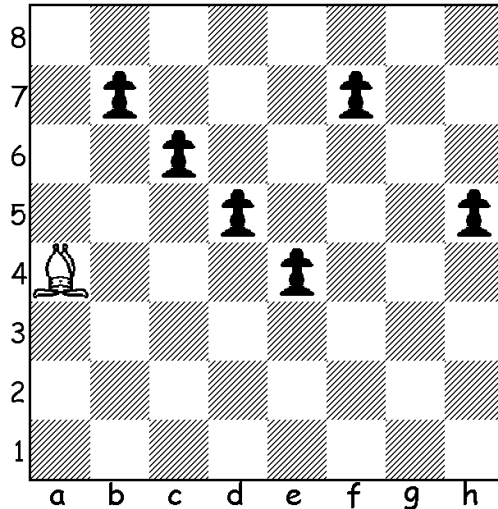


DIAGRAM 149

Capture Black's Pawns as quickly as possible

Obstacle course positions with Bishops tend to be less challenging for the simple reason that a Bishop is restricted to moving only on thirty-two squares of the chessboard – squares of its own color. Nonetheless your task is to capture all of Black's pawns as quickly as possible. You cannot put your Bishop in capture, thus the move: 1.Ba4xc6, is not allowed thanks to the b7-pawn. Remember the base pawn has to be captured first.

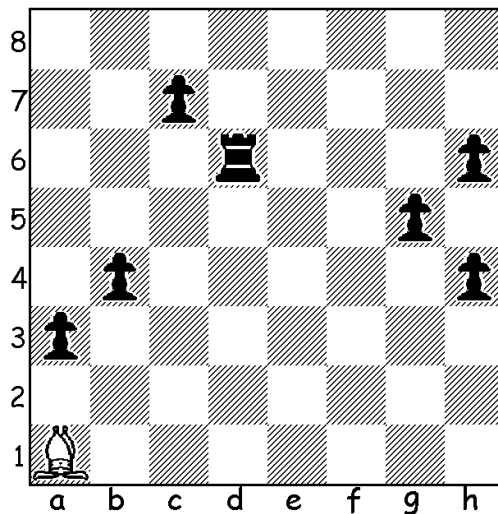


DIAGRAM 150

Capture All of Black's Pawns and Rook as quickly as possible

In diagram 150 I've raised up the difficulty level a notch. Your task is to capture all of Black's pawns as well as the Rook. Remember, you cannot put your Bishop in capture. Thus you will not be able to capture the Black h6-pawn without first capturing Black's d6-Rook. Good luck!

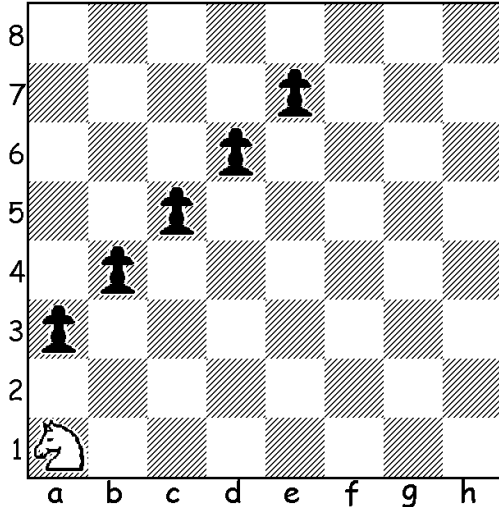


DIAGRAM 151

Capture Black's Pawns as quickly as possible

A funny obstacle. Once you see the pattern to capture the pawns it repeats itself all the way up the board. After completing the obstacle course I will pose a question for extra credit.

Did you finish? Good. Quick question for extra credit: If I had put two additional Black pawns on the f5-square and the e4-square, would you still be able to capture all the pawns in the same number of moves as before? This is a "yes" or "no" question. No credit for guessing!

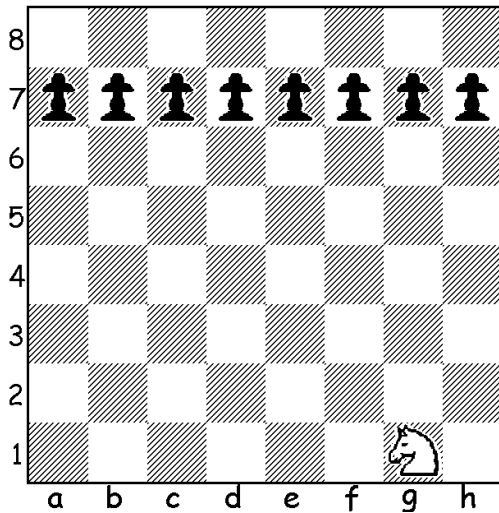


DIAGRAM 152

Capture Black's Pawns in a particular order

The obstacle course in diagram 152 is *different* from all the others. In this exercise do not worry about trying to catch all of Black's pawns in a few moves. This time the obstacle rule is changed: Your task is to capture the h7-pawn *first*. You must then capture the g7-pawn *second*, the f7-pawn *third*, the e7-pawn *fourth* and so on all the way across the seventh rank, wiping out one pawn at a time. The *last* pawn you will have to capture is the a7-pawn. At no time can you put the Knight in capture from the pawns. This obstacle will make you do some fancy footwork with the Knight! Towards the end of the obstacle you may see a pattern repeating itself.

I hope you enjoyed these obstacle courses and that it made you think about the pieces and their quite different powers. Did you notice how easy it was for the Queen to wipe out all the pawns? The Rook was pretty good too but it took some extra moves. The Bishops can do a very good job but all the targets have to be on the same colored squares as the Bishop to be captured. The Knight had to do a lot of jumping and the solution for diagram 152 took the longest of all our obstacle challenges.

These observations about how efficiently the pieces were able to complete the obstacles make me think about a question: Do the pieces have a numerical value? That is can we give a number to the Queen, describing her value? As well as for the Rook? What about for the Bishops and all the other members of our army? Indeed we can! It is now time to introduce you to the second element in Chess: Material.

The Second Element in Chess: Material

As we saw in our obstacle courses, the Queen is really good. Her mobility in chomping off all the pawns showed us why she is the most powerful piece in our army. But how to assign the Queen a value? The Queen would have to receive a value greater than a Rook. While a Rook would have a value greater than a Bishop. How to create a good value system? On what will our value system be based?

It is only after introducing the pawn, the lowest unit in our army that we can make a number based value system for all the men in our army. The pawn will be our lowest denominator.

In the material element we say the pawn has a value of “one.” That a Knight is worth “three”; that a Bishop is worth “three”; a Rook is worth “five” and the Queen, our strongest piece is worth “nine.” Notice that the *minor* pieces the Bishops and Knights have a value of three each; while the *major* pieces of the Queen and Rooks have much higher values.

Material Table

Pawn = 1
Knight = 3
Bishop = 3
Rook = 5
Queen = 9
King = Priceless

This numerical ranking system helps us work out the relationships between the pawns and pieces. Let me explain: Suppose we “trade” one of our Knights for three of our opponent’s pawns. How do we know we made a good bargain or a poor one? Well now that we have a material table we can see that would be a pretty even trade. A Knight is considered to have a value equal to three pawns. Or let us say we lost one of our Rooks but in return we were able to capture a Bishop and two pawns of our opponent as a trade. This too according to our material table is a pretty even trade.

Many beginning players love to keep a running “material count” of what is happening during a game. What I mean to say is they count the pieces and pawns that they have captured and then compare them to those captured by the opponent. When they are ahead in the material count they are happy. Because they know *it is an advantage to be ahead in the material count*. But instead of worrying about what comes *off* the board we should concentrate instead on the pieces and pawns that stay *on* the board. After all, let us never forget that the object of a game of chess is to checkmate the opponent’s King. That is why we say the King is priceless. If I lose my whole

army and am far behind in the material count I would not mind one bit if my only remaining pawn can give a checkmate!

We are now going to solve some obstacle courses that feature the material count. These are a lot of fun. As before, I will solve the first and hardest problem so that you are able to solve the easier ones to come.

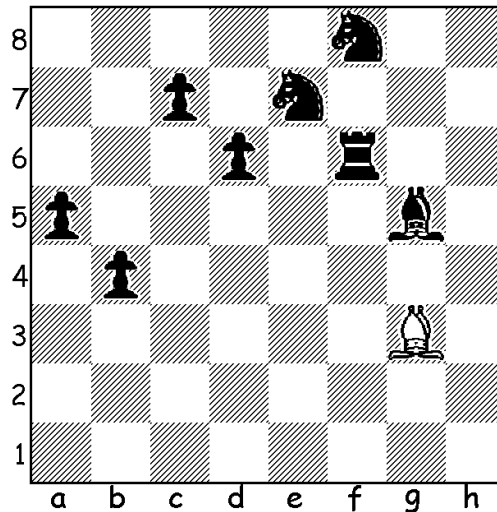


DIAGRAM 153

Material Count Obstacle:

Capture as much of Black's army as possible

In material count obstacles the rules are different. In diagram 153, I've given myself an awesome task. I have to capture as many units in Black's army as I possibly can. We do not have to worry about the number of moves as I can play as many as I would like. However, as soon as I put my obstacle piece, in this case the Bishop, in capture to Black's forces that is the end of my play. Afterwards we have to count all the material that I captured using our material table and subtract the material count of the obstacle piece that I lost. We then have a total material count.

For example in diagram 153, suppose I started with the move: 1.Bg3xd6??, winning a pawn for a total of "plus one" but my turn would be over because Black could play either: 1...c7xd6, or 1...Rf6xd6, when I have to subtract the value of my Bishop, which is worth three points. So I won a pawn for a plus one score but lost a Bishop, a minus three score, for a total of minus two points in the material count. Dare I say the obvious: 1.Bg3xd6, would be a terrible first move.

Fortunately for me, I'm quite clever and am able to see an amazing idea. Follow along with the logic that I use. I see that the base pawn, Black's c7-pawn lacks protection. If I can somehow capture it, I might then be able to capture other forces of Black's army. But how can I threaten the c7-pawn with capture? I have to find a path for my Bishop... I move: 1.Bg3-h2!, 2.Bh2-g1!, 3.Bg1-a7!, 4.Ba7-b8!, I found a way to attack the c7-pawn from behind! Very clever indeed. Did you notice that if I had tried to get on the g1-a7 diagonal immediately by: 1.Bg3-f2??, my turn would be instantly over? Black's Rook would capture the Bishop: 1...Rf6xf2!, and I would finish with a minus three score for this obstacle. Yikes! That would have been a terrible score.

Now with my Bishop on the b8-square, I can begin to capture some of Black's men: I'll continue boldly with: 5.Bb8xc7!, when I'll pause to see what else I can capture. For the moment I've scored "plus one" in the material count which is very good for me. Being exceptionally alert, I notice that the a5-pawn can be captured as well. In fact two pawns will fall in quick succession:

6.Bc7xa5, 7.Ba5xb4, I'm really on a roll now and have managed to score "plus three" in the material count. What else can I now capture?

Here I notice that Black's remaining forces are mostly defending one another. The only undefended unit is the e7-Knight. Can it too be captured? I see another path for my Bishop and I can approach the e7-Knight from behind as well. I now play: 8.Bb4-a5!, 9.Ba5-d8!, 10.Bd8xe7!, winning the Knight has doubled my material count. A moment ago I won three pawns for a "plus three" count, but thanks to capturing the e7-Knight, I'm now up to "plus six" in my material count.

I now consider what to do next? My Bishop on the e7-square can capture a Rook, Knight or d6-pawn. But which one to take? According to the material table, the Rook is the most valuable of my three choices so I choose to capture it: 11.Be7xf6! Bg5xf6, my turn is over as my Bishop has been captured.

Okay, now we have to add up how I performed. I captured, three pawns (+1) (+1) (+1), for a total of (+3), I captured a Knight (+3) for a total of (+6) I then captured a Rook worth (+5) adding everything up I have a total of (+11). A fantastic score! However, I have to subtract the piece I lost, a Bishop (-3), so in total I scored eight points in the material count. A big pat on the back for me for a truly outstanding solution.

Now it is your turn to try some material obstacle challenges. The rules for these obstacles are: Don't worry about how many moves you need. Take as many moves as you would like. You are trying to capture as much as possible and to get a high score in the material count. Your turn is over the moment the obstacle piece is captured. Your last move in your solution is to have your obstacle piece captured. You then have to tally up the material count to see how many points you have scored. Black only moves to capture the obstacle piece when it has been placed in capture otherwise the Black forces never move.

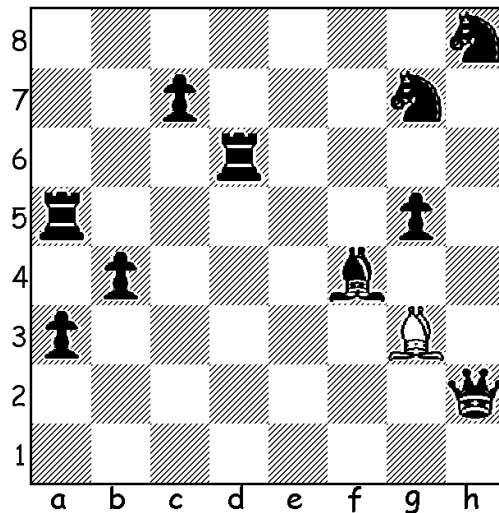


DIAGRAM 154
Material Count Obstacle:
Capture as much of Black's army as possible

In diagram 154, I've given you a very attractive proposition on move one: 1.Bg3xh2, capturing Black's Queen (9) in the material count at the cost of losing your Bishop (-3) after: 1...Bf4xh2, for a plus six (+6) in the material count. Do you agree that this is White's best solution?

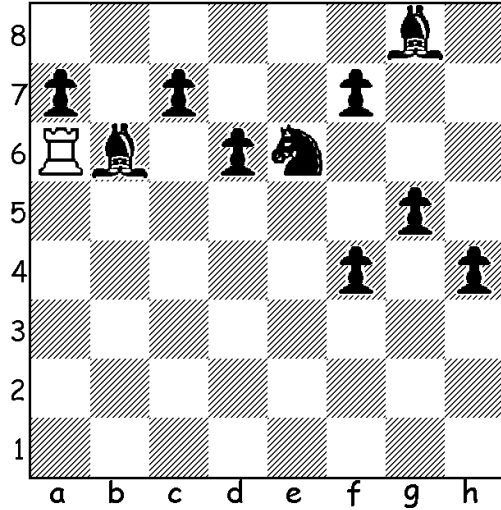


DIAGRAM 155

*Material Count Obstacle:
Capture as much of Black's army as possible*

In diagram 155, Black's army appears to be well defended. How can you possibly capture anything? Be careful! Don't put your Rook in capture too soon.

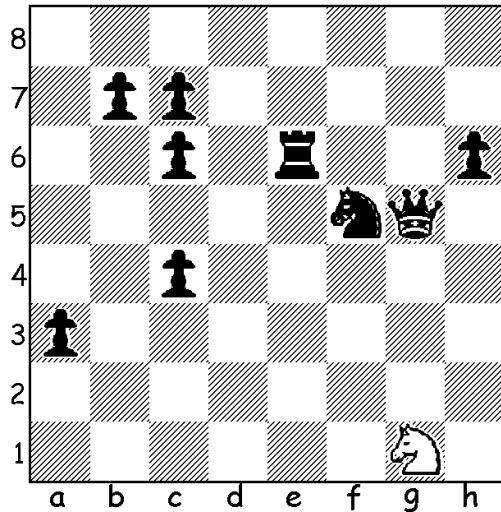


DIAGRAM 156

Material Count Obstacle: Capture as much of Black's army as possible

I'm proud of this obstacle course! White's Knight is practically *trapped*. I'm sure you will agree White can hardly do any better than capturing Black's Queen right away in two moves!

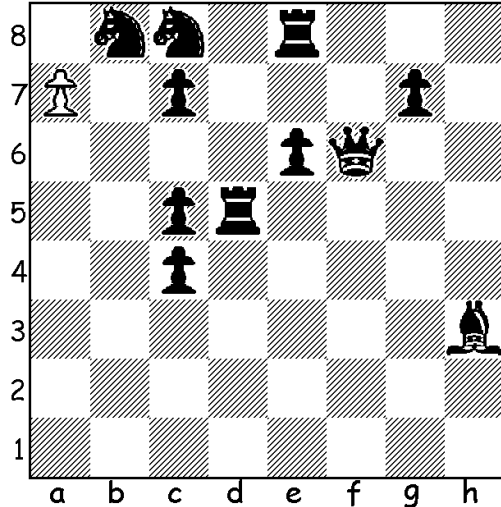


DIAGRAM 157

Material Count Obstacle:

Capture as much of Black's army as possible

Okay, diagram 157 is a tricky one and I'm forced to admit this is going to be an even harder material count obstacle problem than the one I solved all by myself in diagram 153. Here, I propose a different way to solve the obstacle: Do it as a class problem. A student will start and capture as much as possible and when finished, their score will be the marker. Then we will see if the marker's score can be bested by anyone else. Will White's first move be a capture with a promotion? To which piece should White promote his pawn? Good luck!

Note to Chess coaches and teachers: It is a near certainty that the "marker" will begin with the wrong solution! See the solution in advance when preparing the Class for the position shown in diagram 157.

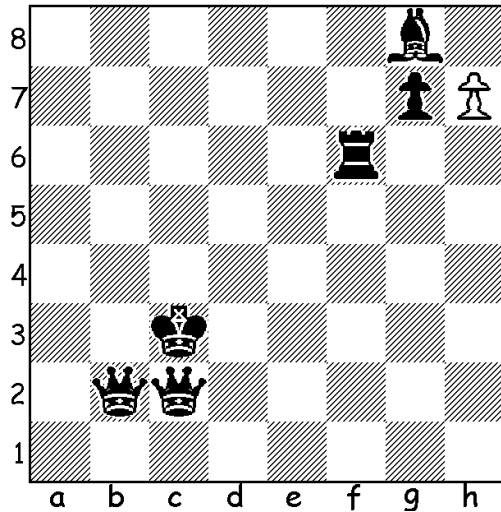


DIAGRAM 158

Material Count Obstacle:

Capture as much of Black's army as possible

Respect the King

There are many types of obstacle courses. The position in diagram 158 features for the first time, a King. In this obstacle type where a King is present, we have an additional rule, "respect the

King.” What does that mean? It means that if White gives a check, then Black must be allowed to move his King in response. Then White can continue moving as before trying for a high material count. If in such an obstacle course, White does give a check, Black’s King must make a good move. Black is not allowed to move his King to a bad square. The solution to the obstacle is over when the obstacle piece is captured.

I will first solve diagram 158 before giving you a chance to solve this type of an obstacle yourself. Follow the logic of my moves. Of course, I notice the Black King but also the presence of two Black Queen’s that protect one another. It is clear I will only be able to win one of the Black Queen’s and not both.

Logically I’d start with a capture and want to promote my pawn to a Queen. So my first thought would be to try: 1.h7xg8=Q, 2.Qg8xg7, 3.Qg7xf6+ Kc3-b3 (Checking Black’s King has required Black to move) 4.Qf6xb2+ (there isn’t a better capture) 4…Kb3xb2, when I have to add up my material count totals: (+3) (+1) (+5) (+9) = (+18) – (-9) = (+9). Capturing and promoting to a Queen on my first move gave me a final material count tally of “plus nine.” I started really well but when I traded Queens I lost a lot of points. This makes me think about another possibility.

What if I promoted to a Rook instead? In that case: 1.h7xg8=R, 2.Rg8xg7, 3.Rg7-c7+ Kc3-b3 4.Rc7xc2 Kb3xc2, and let’s see how I did this time. My totals: (+3) (+1) (+9) = (+13) – (-5) = (+8). Yikes! I did worse than my first try when I promoted to a Queen. So should I accept my first solution?

One more look. Capturing and promoting to a Knight seems like a dead end. Capturing and promoting to a Bishop? That looks like a dead end as well. But I know the author is a tricky guy. He may have put Black’s Bishop on the g8-square as bait, to lure me away from the correct solution!

How about declining the bait and playing: 1.h7-h8=B!, 2.Bh8xg7, 3.Bg7xf6+ Kc3-b3, 4.Bf6xb2 Qc2xb2, and let’s see the totals: (+1) (+5) (+9) = (+15) – (-3) = (+12). That is a much better total and this will be my final solution.

Okay now it is your turn.

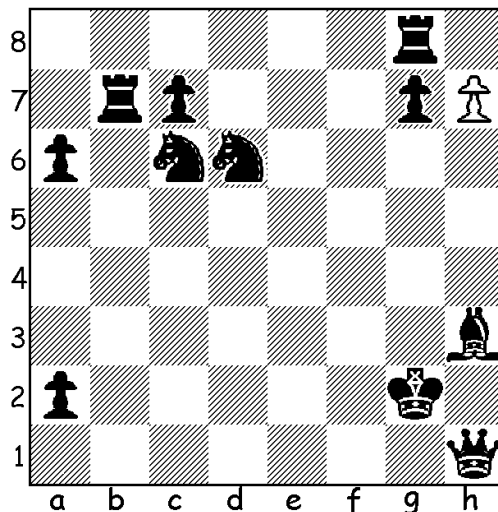


DIAGRAM 159

Material Count Obstacle:

Capture as much of Black’s army as possible

Respect the King

The rules for diagram 159 are simple: Capture as much of Black's army as possible. Your last move will be when the obstacle piece is captured. Any checks to Black's King must be respected and the Black King is allowed to move.

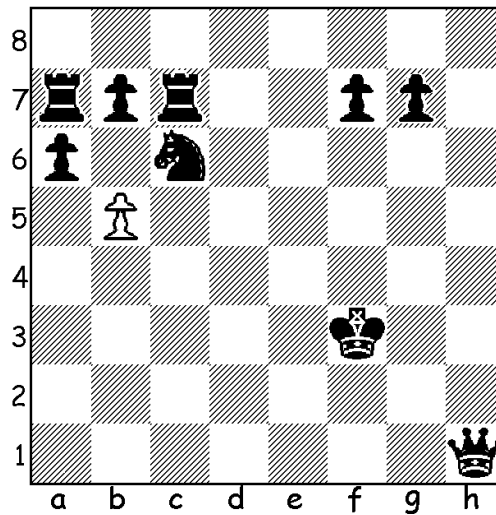


DIAGRAM 160

*Material Count Obstacle:
Capture as much of Black's army as possible
Respect the King*

You know the rules: Capture as much as you can and respect the King. Tally up your material count at the end.

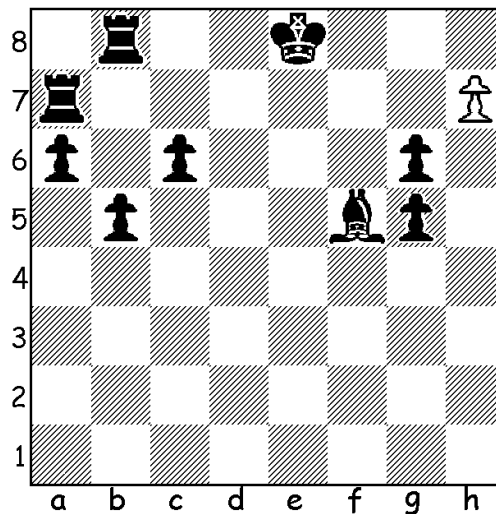


DIAGRAM 161

*Material Count Obstacle:
Capture as much of Black's army as possible
Respect the King*

The King may have to be respected more than once.

New Obstacle Challenges

I will conclude this chapter with two new and different obstacle challenges. In these challenges both sides have Kings and both must be respected. Any checks must allow a response... In these challenges, we are not worried about the number of moves, take as many as you would like. Secondly, we are not worried about the material count. Rather, your turn is completed when your last move delivers *Checkmate!* Can you solve these two challenges?

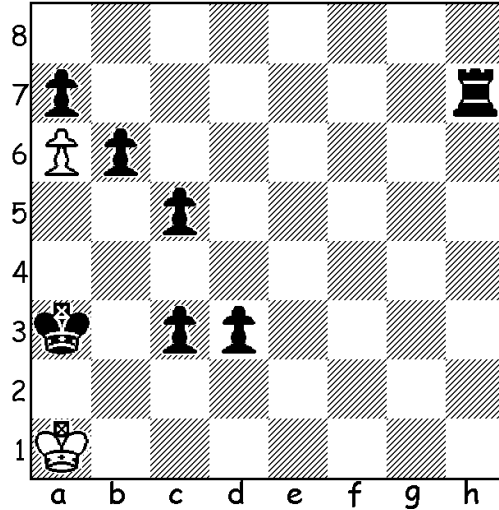


DIAGRAM 162

*Checkmate Obstacle: Final move is to be Checkmate!
Respect the Kings!*

White to play!

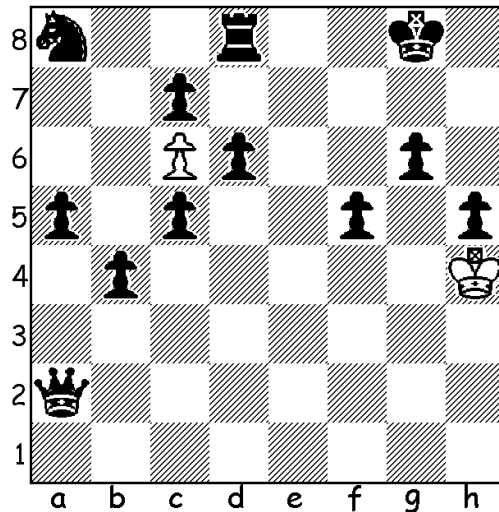


DIAGRAM 163

*Checkmate Obstacle: Final move is to be Checkmate!
Respect the Kings!*

Last obstacle challenge! White to move, the last move is Checkmate.

SOLUTIONS

o diagram 142: 1.Qb2xb5, 2.Qb5xb7!, 3.Qb7xf7, 4.Qf7xf5, 5.Qf5xg5, 6.Qg5xa5

o diagram 143: 1.Qf2xb6!, 2.Qb6xf6! 3.Qf6xf5, 4.Qf5xg5!, 5.Qg5xa5, 6.Qa5xb4

- ▷ **diagram 144:** 1.Qe2-e7, (1.Qe2-d2/d3/d1 1.Qe2-g4) 2.Qe7xd7!, 3.Qd7xc6, 4.Qc6xf6!, 5.Qf6xg5, 6.Qg5xb5!, 7.Qb5xa4, 8.Qa4xh4
- ▷ **diagram 145:** 1.Qh8-b8 (1.Qh8-a8 1.Qh8-d4), 2.Qb8xa7!, 3.Qa7xc7, 4.Qc7xd6, 5.Qd6xb4, 6.Qb4xg4, 7.Qg4xh3
- ▷ **diagram 146:** 1.Qd4-a7 (1.Qd4-a4, 1.Qd4-a1, 1.Qd4-d3), 2.Qa7xa6!, 3.Qa6xc6, 4.Qc6xd5!, 5.Qd5xb3!, 6.Qb3xg3, 7.Qg3xc7!, 8.Qc7xh2, 9.Qh2xh5
- ▷ **diagram 147:** 1.Rb8-e8!, 2.Re8xe7, 3.Re7xc7, 4.Rc7xc4, 5.Rc4xf4, 6.Rf4xf6, 7.Rf6xd6, 8.Rd6xb6
- ▷ **diagram 148:** 1.Rh1-d1!, 2.Rd1xd7, 3.Rd7xf7, 4.Rf7xf6, 5.Rf6xc6, 6.Rc6-c5, 7.Rc5xh5, 8.Rh5xb5, 9.Rb5-b4, 10.Rb4xa4, 11.Ra4xe4
- ▷ **diagram 149:** 1.Ba4-d1!, 2.Bd1xh5, 3.Bh5xf7, 4.Bf7-e6!, 5.Be6-c8, 6.Bc8xb7, 7.Bb7xc6, 8.Bc6xd5, 9.Bd5xe4
- ▷ **diagram 150:** 1.Ba1-e5!, 2.Be5-h2!, 3.Bh2-g1!, 4.Bg1-a7!, 5.Ba7-b8!, 6.Bb8xc7, 7.Bc7xd6, 8.Bd6xb4, 9.Bb4xa3, 10.Ba3-f8, 11.Bf8xh6, 12.Bh6xg5, 13.Bg5xh4
- ▷ **diagram 151:** 1.Na1-c2!, 2.Nc2-e3!, 3.Ne3-d5 (3.Ne3-f5), 4.Nd5xe7, 5.Ne7-f5, 6.Nf5xd6, 7.Nd6-e4, 8.Ne4xc5, 9.Nc5-d3, 10.Nd3xb4, 11.Nb4-c2!, 12.Nc2xa3
- ▷ **diagram 152:** 1.Ng1-f3 (1.Ng1-h3), 2.Nf3-g5!, 3.Ng5xh7, 4.Nh7-g5!, 5.Ng5-f3, 6.Nf3-d4, 7.Nd4-f5, 8.Nf5xg7, 9.Ng7-f5!, 10.Nf5-h6!, 11.Nh6xf7, 12.Nf7-e5, 13.Ne5-g6!, 14.Ng6xe7, 15.Ne7-d5, 16.Nd5-f6, 17.Nf6xd7, 18.Nd7-c5, 19.Nc5-e6!, 20.Ne6xc7, 21.Nc7-b5, 22.Nb5-d6, 23.Nd6xb7, 24.Nb7-a5, 25.Na5-c6, 26.Nc6xa7!
- ▷ **diagram 154:** 1.Bg3-e1!, 2.Be1xb4, 3.Bb4xa5!, 4.Ba5xc7!, 5.Bc7-a5!, 6.Ba5-b4!, 7.Bb4xa3!, 8.Ba3-b4!, 9.Bb4-c3!, 10.Bc3xg7!, 11.Bg7-f8!, 12.Bf8xd6 Bg3xd6. Total: (+1), (+5), (+1), (+1), (+3), (+5) = (+16) (-3) = (+13) in the material count.
- ▷ **diagram 155:** 1.Ra6-a1, (Other Rook retreats down the a-file are good as well.) 2.Ra1-d1, (2.Ra1-b1-b5 is also good) 3.Rd1-d5!, 4.Rd5-f5!, 5.Rf5-f6!, 6.Rf6-h6!, 7.Rh6-h8!, 8.Rh8xg8!, 7.Rg8-e8, (7.Rg8-h8-h7) 8.Re8-e7!, 9.Re7xf7!, 10.Rf7-f6, 11.Rf6xe6!, 12.Re6-g6!, 13.Rg6xg5!, 15.Rg5-g4, 16.Rg4xf4, 17.Rf4xh4! 18.Rh4-b4, 19.Rb4xb6! axb6 Total: (+3) (+1) (+3) (+1) (+1) (+1) (+1) (+3) = (+13) (-5) = (+8) in the material count.
- ▷ **diagram 156:** 1.Ng1-h3!!, a brilliant move. A big bravo for those who found this move. White has to get his Knight on a good circuit. (1.Ng1-f3? 2.Nf3-d2?? Qg5xd2, was my trap.) 2.Nh3-f2!, 3.Nf2-d1!, 4.Nd1-c3!, 5.Nc3-b1!, 6.Nb1xa3!, 7.Na3xc4!, 8.Nc4-a5!, 9.Na5xb7!, 10.Nb7-c5!, 11.Nc5xe6!, 12.Ne6-c5 13.Nc5-d7, 14.Nd7-b8!, 15.Nb8xc6, 16.Nc6-e5!, 17.Ne5-f7!, 18.Nf7xg5! Total: (+1) (+1) (+1) (+5) (+1) (+9) = (+18) (-3) = (+15) in the material count.
- ▷ **diagram 157:** Note to Chess coaches and teachers: It is a near certainty that the “marker” will begin with the wrong solution: 1.a7xb8=Q?, 2.Qb8xc7, 3.Qc7-c6!, 4.Qc6xe8!, 5.Qe8-h8!, 6.Qh8xh3!, 7.Qh3-g4!, Qg4xc4!, hit a wall and after due consideration continue: 8.Qc4xd5 e6xd5, finish. The material count would be: (+3) (+1) (+5) (+3) (+1) (+5) = (18) (-9) = (+9), for the marker.

The correct solution will be: 1.a7xb8=N!!, 2.Nb8-a6!, 3.Na6xc7!, 4.Nc7xe8!, 5.Ne8-c7!, 6.Nc7-b5!, 7.Nb5-a3!, 8.Na3xc4!, 9.Nc4-a5!, 10.Na5-b3!, 11.Nb3-c1!, 12.Nc1-e2!, 13.Ne2-g1!, 14.Ng1xh3!, 15.Nh3-g1!, 16.Ng1-e2!, 17.Ne2-g3!, 18.Ng3-e4!, 19.Ne4xf6! g7xf6, finish. The material count would be: (+3) (+1) (+5) (+1) (+3) (+9) = (22) (-3) = (+19), in the material count.

▷ **diagram 159:** 1.h7xg8=B!, 2.Bg8xa2!, 3.Ba2-g8!, 4.Bg8-h7!, 5.Bh7-d3!, 6.Bd3xa6!, 7.Ba6-d3!, 8.Bd3-c2!, 9.Bc2-a4!, 10.Ba4xc6+ Kg2-h2, 11.Bc6xh1! The material count would be: (+5) (+1) (+1) (+3) (+9) = (19) (-3) = (+16), in the material count.

▷ **diagram 160:** 1.b5-b6!, 2.b6xc7!, (Not: 2...b6xa7?? Nc6xa7) 3.c7-c8=B!, 4.Bc8-d7!, 5.Bd7-e8!, 6.Be8xf7!, 7.Bf7-d5+ Kf3-f2, 8.Bd5xh1!, 9.Bh1xc6! Total: (+5), (+1), (+9), (+3) = (+18) (-3) = (+15) in the material count.

A possible false solution: 1.b5-b6!, 2.b6xc7!, 3.c7-c8=Q?, 4.Qc8-d7!, 5.Qd7-d5+ Kf3-e2, 6.Qd5xh1, 7.Qh1-h7, 8.Qh7xg7, 9.Qg7xf7, 10.Qf7-c7, 11.Qc7-b6, 12.Qb6xa7! Nc6xa7. Total: (+5), (+9), (+1), (+1), (+5) = (+21) (-9) = (+12) in the material count.

▷ **diagram 161:** 1.h7-h8=R+! Ke8-d7, (This is Black's best move.) 2.Rh8xb8, 3.Rb8-h8, 4.Rh8-h7+! Kd7-d6! (Again best, protecting the c6-pawn.) 5.Rh7xa7, 6.Ra7xa6, 7.Ra6-a1, 8.Ra1-g1, 9.Rg1xg5, 10.Rg5xf5 g6xf5. Total: (+5) (+5) (+1) (+1) (+3) = (+15) (-5) = (+10) in the material count.

Note that a Queen promotion is a false path: 1.h7-h8=Q+? Ke8-d7, (This is Black's best move.) 2.Qh8xb8, 3.Qb8xa7+ Kd7-d6! (Again best, protecting the c6-pawn.) 4.Qa7xa6, 5.Qa6-a1, 6.Qa1-g1, 7.Qg1xg5, 8.Qg5xf5 g6xf5. Total: (+5) (+5) (+1) (+1) (+3) = (+15) (-9) = (+6) in the material count.

▷ **diagram 162:** 1.Ka1-b1, 2.Kb1-c1, 3.Kc1-d1, 4.Kd1-e1, 5.Ke1-f2, 6.Kf2-g3, 7.Kg3-g4, 8.Kg4-g5, 9.Kg5-g6, 10.Kg6xh7, 11.Kh7-g7, 12.Kg7-f7, 13.Kf7-e7, 14.Ke7-d7, 15.Kd7-c7, 16.Kc7-b7, 17.Kb7xa7, 18.Ka7xb6, 19.Kb6xc5, 20.Kc5-c4, 21.Kc4xc3, 22.a6-a7, 23.a7-a8=Q#

▷ **diagram 163:** 1.Kh4-g5, 2.Kg5-f6, 3.Kf6-e7, 4.Ke7xd8!, 5.Kd8-c8, 6.Kc8-b8, 7.Kb8xa8, 8.Ka8-b8, 9.Kb8xc7, 10.Kc7xd6, 11.Kd6-e7, 12.Ke7-f6, 13.Kf6xg6, 14.c6-c7, 15.c7-c8=Q#

Test

Hopefully, you will enjoy this homework assignment... Just as you've seen me try to trick you with these obstacle courses, I'd like you to compose your very own obstacle course... In can be where the challenge is to take all the material in as few moves as possible... Or a material count challenge... Or perhaps you would like to create a checkmate obstacle? Make it as simple or as complicated as you would like! Just make sure your solution is correct too!

If your coach or teacher likes your creation it may be posted on the Saint Louis Chess Club & Scholastic Center website!

Chapter Ten:

Basic Checkmate Patterns & the Third Element:

King Position/Safety

We must never forget a simple truth about Chess: Checkmate ends the game. To win the game all we have to do is Checkmate the opponent's King. What could be more simple? It is therefore critical that we become as familiar as possible with basic Checkmating patterns. We must recognize when an opponent's King is vulnerable to a sudden and swift Checkmating attack. This chapter will deal with the third element in Chess: King safety or what I like to call *King Position*. It will teach us when opportunity exists as well as when the King is safe.

First, let us set the table with the most common types of checkmating attacks. Not surprisingly we will find that the Queen is a potent attacking force. The Queen will be featured in many of the patterns. While there are numerous Checkmating patterns I'll do my best to put them in order of those that occur most often.

In games of Chess played between two experienced players it is usual that both sides will Castle hoping to tuck their Kings safely on the flanks away from the center of the board as the center is the primary area of battles. The idea of Castling is to get the monarch out of harm's way when the center is pried open. The majority of Chess games feature Kingside Castling when the White King might enjoy the safety of a shield of pawns on the f2, g2 and h2-squares. This is equally true for the Black King. When he Castles to the Kingside his pawn shield is likely to feature pawns on the f7, g7 and h7-squares. Learning how to pierce a pawn shield as well as to how to use the forces of your opponent to your advantage are the keys to understanding this chapter.

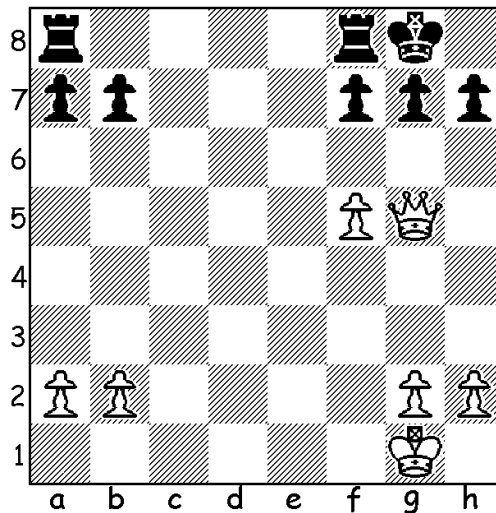


DIAGRAM 164
Common Checkmate Patterns with Queen and pawn

The position in diagram 164 is a typical situation of the most common Checkmate patterns that occur in my games. In terms of the material count, Black is doing fine, he has two Rooks versus a Queen and his King appears, at first glance, to be safe enough. But the crucial point of the position is that White's advanced f-pawn will work well with the Queen to breach Black's pawn shield and sack the King. White advances his pawn with: 1.f5-f6, with the immediate threat of: 2.Qg5xg7, Checkmate. In chess parlance after White's move we say, "White threatens Checkmate in one move." Or more simply, "White threatens mate." Black has no way to protect the g7-pawn. The g7-pawn cannot capture the f6-pawn as that move is illegal. It would expose the King to capture by the White Queen. Black's only move to prevent White's threat of "mate in one" is to advance the g6-pawn: 1...g7-g6, and now White's Queen steps forwards with: 2.Qg5-h6, once more with the same threat. Black has no defense and tries: 2...Rf8-d8, which is answered by: 3.Qh6-g7, Checkmate.

Let us be sure we understand the mechanics of this Checkmate pattern. White's Queen is protected by the f6-pawn. Which means Black's King cannot capture the White Queen. The Queen threatens the King with capture while also attacking the f8 and h8-squares. The King has nowhere to run and is therefore Checkmated.

A very similar Checkmating pattern is shown in our next example in diagram 165.

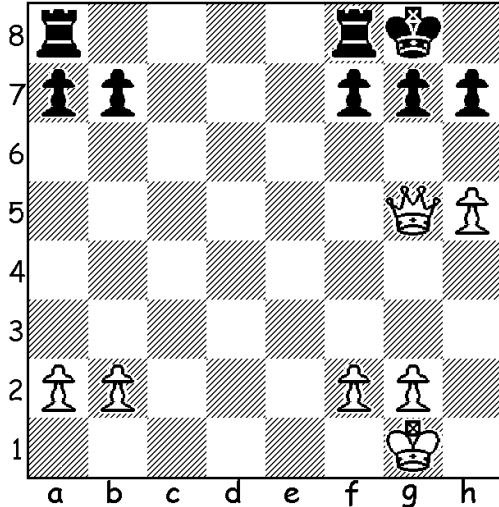


DIAGRAM 165
Common Checkmate Patterns with Queen and pawn

Instead of having an advanced f-pawn, this time White has an advanced h-pawn. It is just as destructive as in the previous pattern. White plays: 1.h5-h6, with the same threat of capturing the g7-pawn with the Queen as seen before. Black has no choice and plays: 1...g7-g6, when this time White's Queen goes in the other direction: 2.Qg5-f6!, Black's King's position has been breached. Checkmate on the next turn cannot be prevented: 2...Rf8-d8 3.Qh6-g7, Checkmate.

These two Checkmating patterns are the most common type of Checkmates in Chess. As we can imagine, the pawn did a good job in causing an opening in Black's King's position. But a White Bishop for example would work just as well as a pawn in creating a breach in Black's defenses.

Another common Checkmating attack featuring Queen and pawn is shown in diagram 166.

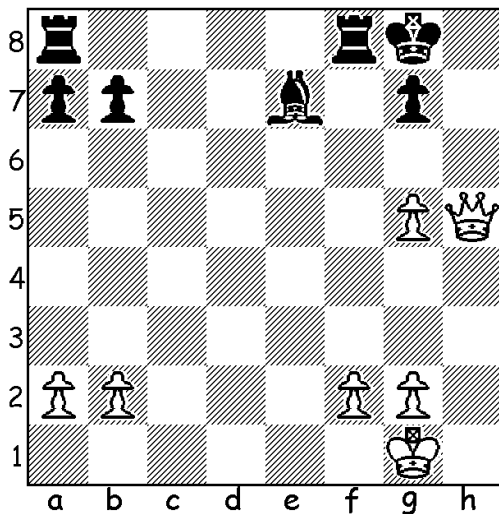


DIAGRAM 166
Common Checkmate Patterns with Queen and pawn

The position in diagram 165 has shifted over by one file. White plays: 1.g5-g6, with the threat of: 2.Qh5-h7, Checkmate. While once again, in the material count Black is doing fine, it is *the*

vulnerable position of his King that decides the outcome of the game. Black seeks room for his King to run away and tries: 1...Rf8xf2, hoping that White will capture the Rook. White ignores the Rook and instead continues pursuing his attack: 2.Qh5-h7+ 3.Kg8-f8 3.Qh7-h8, Checkmate.

Let us be sure we understand the dynamics of the final position. Firstly, White's Queen is threatening Black's King. White's Queen cannot be captured. (Which is why White played: 3.Qh7-h8, Checkmate and not: 3.Qh7-g8+??, which would have allowed Black's King to play: 3...Kf8xg8!, capturing White's Queen!) Black's e7-Bishop blocks Black's King from escaping to the e7-square. Finally, White's g6-pawn attacks the f7-square, so Black's King cannot go to the f7-square either. Black's King is Checkmated.

These three patterns of the Queen working together with a pawn to force a Checkmate occur in many Chess games. So take care when an opponent is advancing a pawn towards your King. Danger is approaching.

The Queen is more than happy to work together with pieces as well. In all of these positions, if we substituted a Bishop in place of the White pawn, the Checkmate pattern would have worked just as well.

Naturally, because the Bishop is more powerful than a pawn, there are some Checkmating patterns that a Bishop and Queen can perform that a pawn cannot.

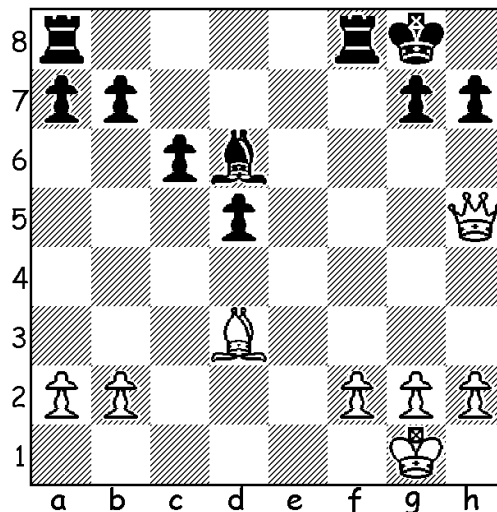


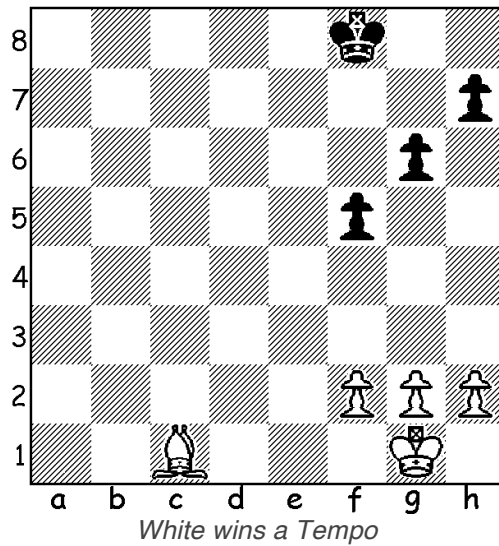
DIAGRAM 167

Common Checkmate Patterns with Queen and Bishop

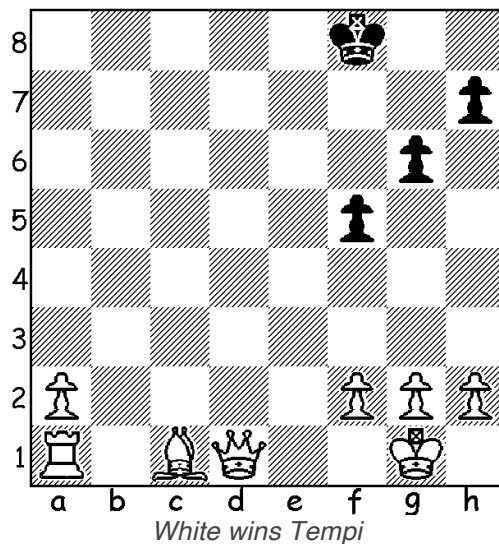
In diagram 167, the Queen and Bishop are working nicely together to attack Black's h7-pawn. The White player is anxious to capture the h7-pawn with his Queen but is concerned that after: 1.Qh5xh7+ Kg8-f7, the Black King might be able to run away and escape Checkmate. Indeed, White has a far superior first move: 1.Bd3xh7+!, leaving Black with no choice. The King must move to the corner: 1... Kg8-h8 2.Bh7-g6+!, the Bishop backs up one square, exposing Black's King to a check by White's Queen. Black's King has no choice to escape the threat of capture: 2...Kh8-g8, 3.Qh5-h7, Checkmate!

A pleasing sequence of moves for the White player. What happened? In the first place the h7-pawn, which was helping to protect Black's King, was removed with check. When the Bishop retreated to the g6-square, it took the f7-square under control so that in the final position Black's King could not escape to the f7-square. The Black Rook on the f8-square prevented the Black King from moving to that square and so Black's King is Checkmated.

Carefully note that in the sequence of moves from diagram 167, White's Bishop started on the d3-square but in the final position was transferred to the g6-square *without* losing a move. This is vital to understanding Checkmating attacks. How did this happen? It was because Black's King was forced to move back and forth while White was able to reposition his Bishop without losing a turn. In Chess parlance this is called, "gaining a *tempo*." Gaining time to reposition our forces by checking the enemy King is a key part of successful Checkmating attacks. In Chess winning a single move is called a *tempo*. In this case, White's Bishop repositioned from the d3-square to the g6-square without losing a move. White won a tempo. Winning *tempi*, means winning a lot of moves, which we can use to reposition our forces to more advantageous squares. This is a key part of Chess strategy, which is often featured in Checkmating attacks. To be sure that we understand the difference between winning a tempo and winning tempi let me give you two fragment positions to make the difference clear.



In the above position, White's c1-Bishop is on its original square. It can move to a more active square by either: 1.Bc1-a3+, or 1.Bc1-h6+, attacking Black's King. In either case, Black would have to move his King and then it would be White to play. White has won a tempo because his Bishop is now better positioned than before and it is still his turn to play again.



In the above position, White's c1-Bishop; the d1-Queen as well as the a1-Rook are all on their original squares. For illustrative purposes, White develops his pieces to better squares and wins time or rather tempi by moving them with check. White starts with: 1.Bc1-h6+, attacking Black's King. Black tries: 1...Kf8-f7 2.Qd1-d5+, again attacking Black's King. Black's King would have to move again: 2...Kf7-e7 3.Ra1-e1+, now White brings his Rook into play with gain of time. In this example White has won three tempi as his Bishop, Queen and Rook are now all better positioned and after Black moves his King it will be his turn to play again.

Quick question for the class: "If in the above fragment, Black played: 3...Ke7-f6, how could White's Queen give Checkmate?"

Correct answer, "4.Qd5-e6#." This is true because the Queen is protected by the e1-Rook.

Let us resume our study of Checkmating patterns.

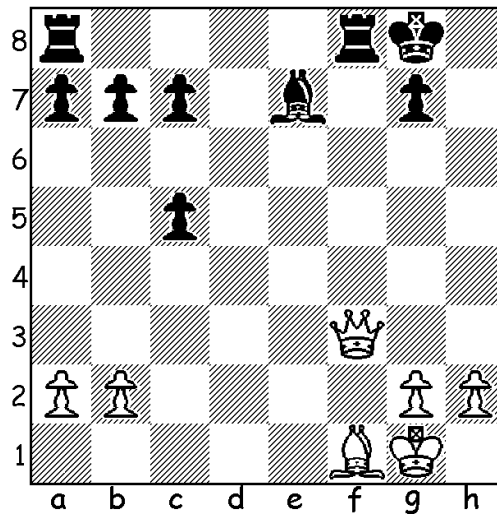


DIAGRAM 168

Common Checkmate Patterns with Queen and Bishop

As we see in diagram 168, Black is missing both his f7-pawn as well as his h7-pawn. His King on the g8-square is exposed to a potential check along the a2-g8 diagonal check either by a Queen or a Bishop. But which piece to choose? As powerful as a Queen is she often needs help to create a Checkmate pattern and it is for that reason that White checks with the Bishop: 1.Bf1-c4+, Kg8-h7 2.Qf3-h5#!

That was a fast Checkmate. What happened? Several things, firstly, Black's pawn shield was in tatters. The only pawn defending his King was the g7-pawn and it didn't help at all. Black's King with *only* one pawn for safety was vulnerable to a swift attack.

Let us go back for a moment and consider what would happen if Black had played differently on move one: 1.Bf1-c4+! Rf8-f7!, blocking White's check would have been Black's best move. White has to consider, should he capture the Black Rook with his Bishop or with his Queen? The best capture is with his Queen. After: 2.Qf3xf7+! Kg8-h7 or 2...Kg8-h8, would both be answered by: 3.Qf7-h5#.

What about a capture with the Bishop? In this case: 1.Bf1-c4+! Rf8-f7 2.Bc4xf7+, would not have been the best move. Black's King is not forced to go to the h-file and instead could play: 2...Kg8-f8!, when repositioning the Bishop by: 3.Bg7-e6+ Be7-f6!, White would have spoiled his own Checkmating attack.

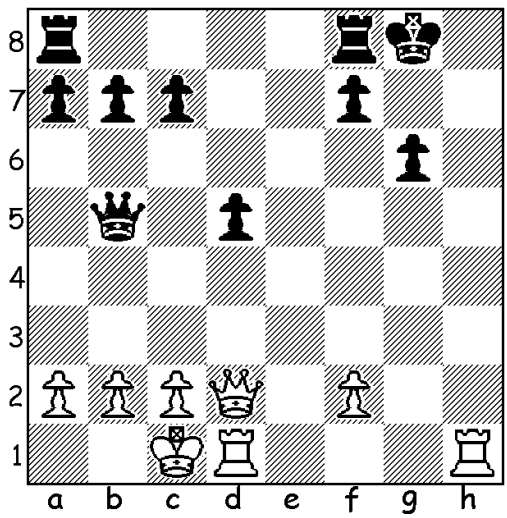


DIAGRAM 169
Common Checkmate Patterns with Queen and Rook

Checkmating attacks along the h-file as well as the g-file happen all the time, especially in games where the Kings have castled on opposite flanks. The position in diagram 169 will be well known to experienced players. White plays: 1.Qd2-h6!, which is made possible by the fact that the g7-pawn is on the g6-square, so that the h6-square is no longer protected. Now, thanks to the h1-Rook, White is threatening to play both: 2.Qh6-h8, Checkmate as well as: 2.Qh6-h7, Checkmate. Black tries to advance his f-pawn to give his King a chance to escape: 1...f7-f6, which gives White a chance to execute *two* different types of Checkmating patterns. White could play: 2.Qg6-h7#, when thanks to the h1-Rook, White's Queen is protected. Or White could play: 2.Qh6xg6#, when thanks to the f8-Rook, Black's King has nowhere to run.

By the way, the position in diagram 169 could feature what Chess players call a "spike check." A spike check refers to a final check before giving up. After: 1.Qd2-h6, the Black player recognizing his position as hopeless could play: 1...Qb5xb2+, delaying loss of the game by one move: 2.Kc1xb2, when Black faces unstoppable Checkmate. Black loses but he gets in one check before giving up!

The pattern shown in diagram 169 could be made a bit more complicated by including a Bishop for both sides. Let me show you how in diagram 170.

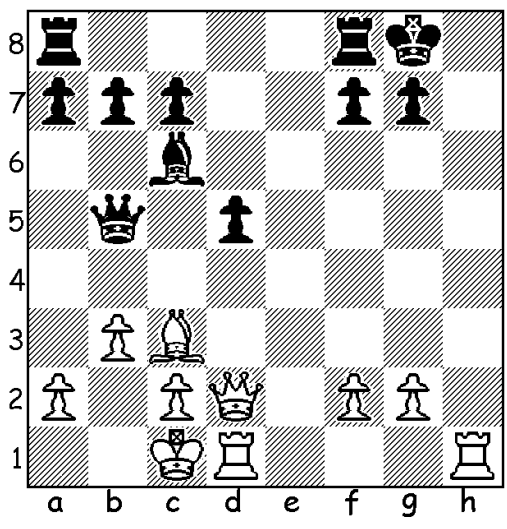
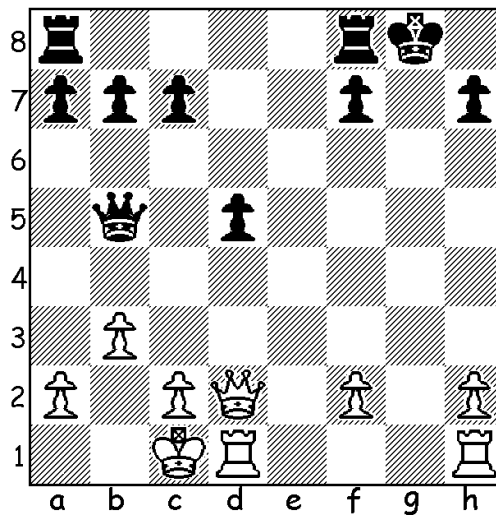


DIAGRAM 170
Common Checkmate Patterns with Queen and Rook

As we see, I've moved the g6-pawn back one square to the g7-square. Now White no longer has the winning move: 1.Qd2-h6, as the pawn would capture and remove White's Queen from the board. With: 1.Qd2-g5, White would still have a very promising Checkmating attack. However, from experience White knows a nice trick to force Checkmate quickly. He plays: 1.Rh1-h8+!, an unexpected Rook sacrifice which Black has to accept: 1...Kg8xh8, Black's King is forced to move onto the same diagonal as White's Bishop. White is now able to play: 2.Qd2-h6+!, when the pawn cannot capture White's Queen as that move would expose Black's King to capture from White's Bishop. Black's King is forced to move back: 2...Kh8-g8, and White plays: 3.Qh6xg7#, when thanks to the protection of the Bishop, White's Queen is able to deliver Checkmate. A nice trick to keep in mind!



Common Checkmate Patterns with Queen and Rook

Another common Checkmating pattern with Queen and Rook occurs along the g-file. As we see in diagram 171, Black is missing his g7-pawn and thanks to this crucial fact, White is quick to play: 1.Qd2-g5+ Kg8-h8 2.Qg5-f6+! Kh8-g8, 3.Rh1-g1#.

Again, please note that in this sequence of moves, White was able to reposition his Queen from the d2-square to the f6-square with gain of tempi. Black was forced to move his King back and forth as White created a Checkmate.

In diagram 169, White could also have carried out a Checkmate pattern by beginning with: 1.Rh1-g1+ Kg8-h8 2.Qd2-g5, with the threat of mate in one by: 3.Qg5-g7#, Black is forced to protect by: 2...Rf8-g8 3.Qg5-f6+! Rg8-g7 4.Qf6xg7#. While both solutions are winning for White, the first solution was more *forcing* as White began and finished all his moves with check.

This is an important trait among great attacking players: When given a choice between forcing variations or quiet preparatory moves, attacking players prefer the forcing lines.

If we take the position in diagram 171 and make a few changes as shown in diagram 172, White has a Rook sacrifice leading to Checkmate.

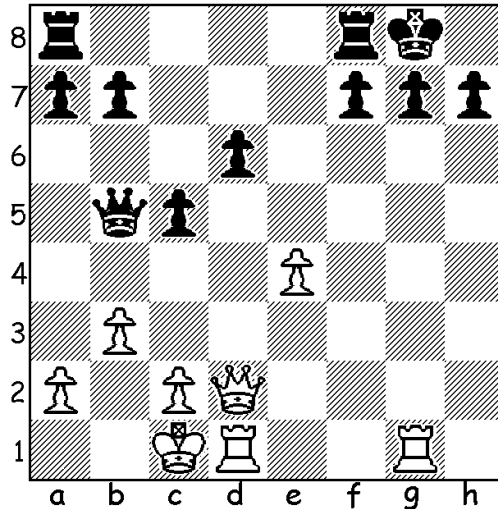


DIAGRAM 172

Common Checkmate Patterns with Queen and Rook

In diagram 172, I've made a few changes and placed a pawn back on the g7-square so that the pattern of attack along the g-file appears to be blocked. I've also moved White's f2-pawn to the e4-square, a small difference which has a big importance as we will see. White can sacrifice a Rook to repeat the original pattern: 1.Rg1xg7+ Kg8xg7 2.Qd2-g5+ Kg7-h8 3.Qg5-f6+! Kg8-h8 4.Rd1-g1#, the same pattern as we saw before is completed. Except in this example to carry it out White had to begin with a Rook sacrifice to *open* up Black's King's position.

Let us imagine on move one, Black decided to decline the Rook sacrifice: 1.Rg1xg7+ Kg8-h8, White could follow up his attack with: 2.Qd2-h6, with the idea of capturing the h7-pawn to force Checkmate. He could also consider: 2.Rg7xh7+, offering the Rook sacrifice once more. If Black declines again with: 2...Kh8-g8 3.Qd2-g5+, forces Black to capture the Rook: 3...Kg8xh7 4.Rd1-h1#.

Let us see this pattern a bit more deeply: 1.Rg1xg7+ Kg8-h8, 2.Rg7xh7+, 2... Kg8xh7, only now does Black accept the Rook sacrifice: 3.Rd1-h1+ Kh7-g6 4.Qd2-h6#, thanks to the e4-pawn Black's King cannot escape to the f5-square. While the f7-square is occupied by a Black pawn so that Checkmate is complete.

When there are open files against the opponent's King the Rooks can be formidable in the attack. The patterns shown in diagram 173 may seem similar but contain a few differences.

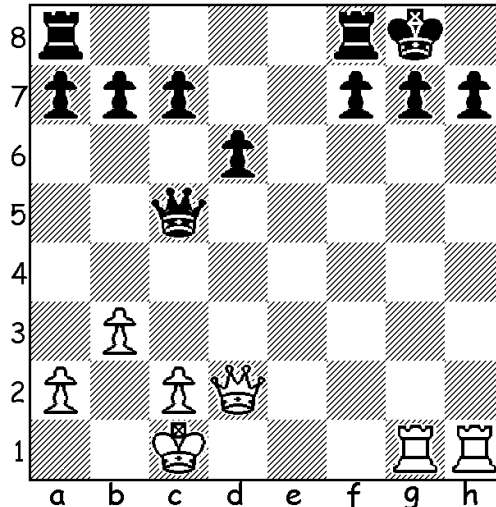


DIAGRAM 173
Common Checkmate Patterns with Queen and Rooks

In diagram 173 the position may seem familiar but this time Black's Queen is protecting the g5-square. That means our favorite Rook sacrifice and Queen to the g5-square and Checkmating pattern is not playable. However, in this case, thanks to the half-open h-file, White's h1-Rook can be a hero too. White starts with: 1.Rg1xg7+! Kg8xg7 2.Qd2-h6+! Kg7-g8 3.Qh6xh7#!

Quick question to the Class, "Instead of capturing the h7-pawn on move three could White play: 3.Rh1-g1+?"

Correct answer, "No! Black's Queen could capture the Rook with check: 3...Qc5xg1+!, when White's attack would be over and he would be in a losing position." The move: 3.Rh1-g1+??, would be a real howler.

The position in diagram 173 features another very common Checkmating pattern. White could also have started with the powerful move: 1.Qd2-h6, taking advantage of the fact that the g7-pawn cannot capture White's Queen as that move would expose Black's King to attack from the g1-Rook and would therefore be illegal. After: 1.Qd2-h6, White is threatening two different Checkmates: 2.Qh6xg7# as well as 2.Qh6xh7#, thanks to support of the White Rooks. Does this mean that: 1.Qd2-h6, was a stronger move than the more forcing: 1.Rg1xg7+!, Rook sacrifice? Not necessarily. The Rook sacrifice was forcing while after: 1.Qd2-h6, Black would likely play: 1...Qc5xg1+, giving up his Queen for a Rook but staving of Checkmate for a few moves. In that case the play might go: 2.Rh1xg1 g7-g6! 3.Rg1-h1 Rf8-e8! 4.Qh6xh7+ Kg8-f8, when White is certainly winning but the Checkmate has not yet been delivered.

Another very important pattern to remember is one where two Rooks deliver a Checkmate. We will see this pattern later as well but here goes. Let us say on move one in diagram 173 White chose to sacrifice his Rook with: 1.Rg1xg7+!, but Black declined to capture the Rook and instead played: 1...Kg8-h8, in that case White delivers Checkmate by: 2.Rh1xh7#, a pattern shown in diagram 174.

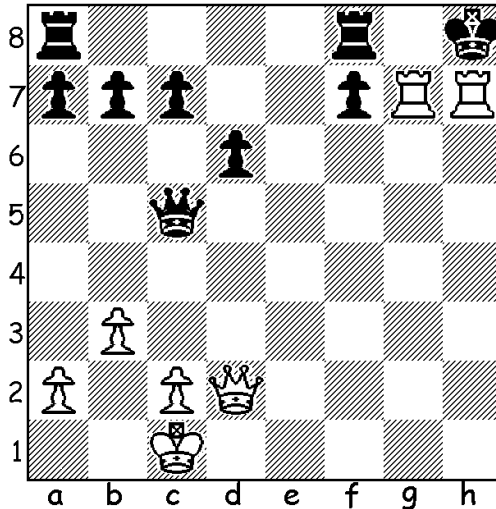


DIAGRAM 174

Common Checkmate Patterns with Two Rooks

The pattern that we see in diagram 174, Checkmate with two Rooks is well worth remembering. It happens quite often.

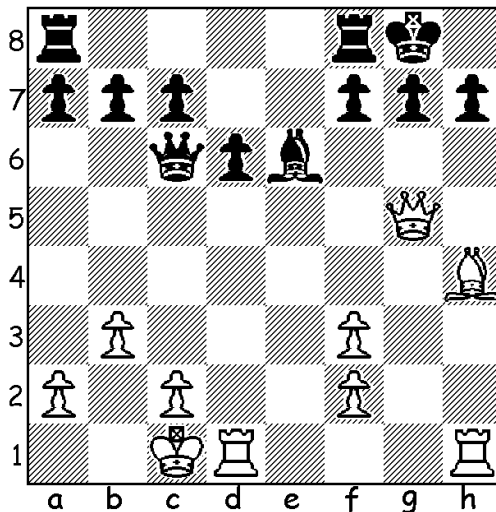


DIAGRAM 175

Common Checkmate Patterns with Rook & Bishop

The position in diagram 175 has the general of the White army annoyed. While his Queen is in a good attacking position, the h4-Bishop is on the wrong square. White would love to play the move: 1.Bh4-f6, and to establish the Checkmating pattern that we saw at the start of the chapter in diagram 164. The small problem with this powerful move is that it is illegal. Darn. Furthermore, White sees that if he plays: 1.Rd1-g1, threatening mate in one against the g7-pawn, Black is not forced to answer: 1...g7-g6, which would allow: 2.Qg5-h6, with the powerful idea of: 3.Bh4-f6, creating another one of our favorite Checkmate patterns. No, the problem is that: 1.Rd1-g1, would allow Black to *defend* the g7-pawn with: 1...Qc6-c3, setting up threats against White's King as well. What to do?

Fortunately, White is an experienced player and is familiar with Checkmating patterns that feature the Rook and Bishop. Dipping into his bag of tricks, White plays: 1.Qg5xg7+!!, sacrificing his Queen! Black has no choice of course and is forced to accept the sacrifice: 1...Kg8xg7 2.Rd1-

g1+!, placing Black's King is in a terrible dilemma. If the King retreats to the h8-square: 2...Kg7-h8, the Bishop delivers checkmate: 3.Bh4-f6#. This pattern is shown in diagram 176.

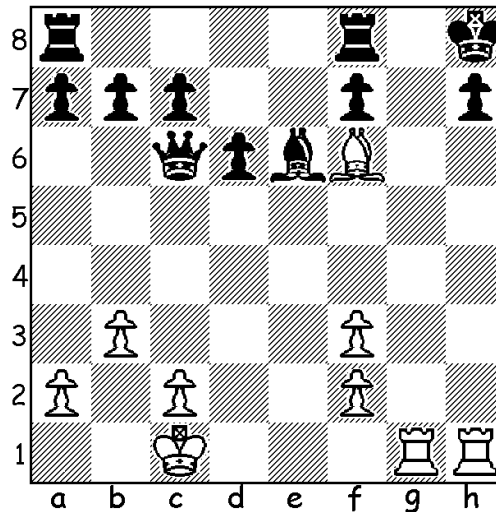


DIAGRAM 176

Common Checkmate Patterns with Rook & Bishop

As we see in diagram 176 Black's King is Checkmated by the Bishop. Black's King cannot go to the g8-square thanks to White's g1-Rook. A key Checkmate pattern well worth remembering.

Okay, that was a nice one. Let's try another move for Black: 1.Qg5xg7+!!, Kg8xg7 2.Rd1-g1+! Kg7-h6, this try walks into the line of fire from the h1-Rook. White moves his Bishop out of the way so that the h1-Rook can give check: 3.Bh4-f6+ Be6-h3 4.Rh1xh3#. This Checkmate with the Two Rooks is worth its own diagram as well. I show the final Checkmate pattern in diagram 177.

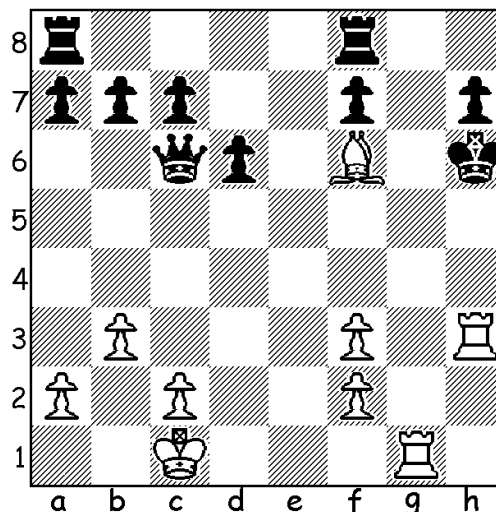


DIAGRAM 177

Checkmate Patterns with the two Rooks

The pattern shown in diagram 177 is one where two Rooks Checkmate the King along the g-file and the h-file. White's Bishop is not necessary for the final Checkmate pattern to be complete. The Rooks do the job by themselves.

Let us explore the position in diagram 175 a bit more because we can learn a lot of things about Checkmating patterns by studying it in depth.

Once more, let us consider the move: 1.Rd1-g1, threatening mate in one against the g7-pawn. The move White rejected. White was prepared to answer: 1...g7-g6, with: 2.Qg5-h6, planning: 3.Bh4-f6, with a Checkmate on the g7-square. White thought that the problem with: 1.Rd1-g1, is that Black would play: 1...Qc6-c3, *defending* the g7-pawn when he didn't know how to continue. In fact, White does have a powerful continuation in this case as well. He can play a brilliant move in fact: (1.Rd1-g1Qc6-c3) 2.Qg5-f6!!, this move is possible thanks to the fact that the g7-pawn cannot capture White's Queen due to the g1-Rook. If Black trades Queens: 2...Qc3xf6 3.Bh4xf6 g7-g6, the play has brought us to the position in diagram 178.

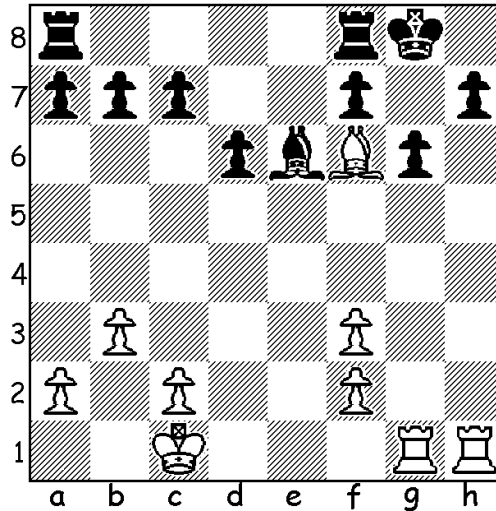


DIAGRAM 178
Checkmate Patterns with Rook & Bishop

White reasons that his Bishop is beautifully placed on the f6-square. If only it was possible to play a Rook to the h8-square it would be the perfect setting for a Checkmate. Is there a way for White to break through Black's Kingside defenses? Indeed there is! It involves a Rook sacrifice. From the position in diagram 178, White continues his attack by: 4.Rh1xh7!! Kg8xh7 5.Rg1-h1+ Be6-h3 6.Rh1xh3+ Kh7-h8 7.Rh3-h8 #. The final position is shown in diagram 179.

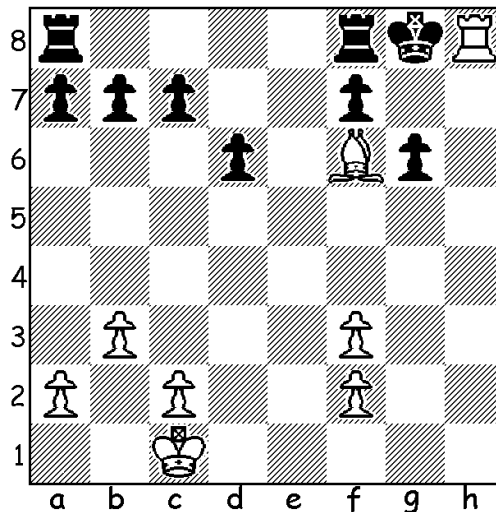


DIAGRAM 179

Checkmate Patterns with Rook & Bishop

A very common Checkmating pattern indeed. The Bishop protects the h8-Rook and Black's King cannot escape the Checkmating net. In this case, Black's f7-pawn prevents Black's King from fleeing.

The pattern shown in diagram 179 repeats itself time after time. Once more, let us look at the position from diagram 175 to be sure that we have examined the possibilities well. Let us again consider: 1.Rd1-g1, and this time we will have Black play: 1...g7-g6, the move that White wanted to provoke. White happily plays: 2.Qg5-h6, when he can see that: 3.Bh4-f6, will be winning. Black however plays a move that stops White cold. Black plays: 2...Be6-f5, when the play has brought us to the position shown in diagram 180.

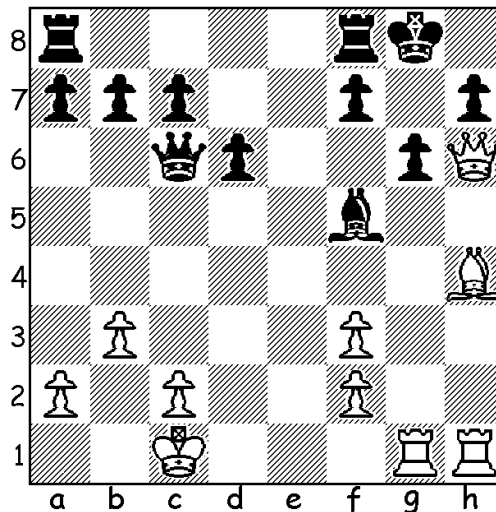


DIAGRAM 180

Checkmate Patterns with Rook & Bishop

With his last move Black sets up his own counter-threat, he is threatening Checkmate in one by: 3...Qc6xc2#, suddenly, White has to take care! White could take defensive measures like: 3.Qh6-d2, protecting the c2-pawn but that would mean giving up his own attacking possibilities. Recalling the pattern show in diagram 179, White sacrifices his Queen in fine style: 3.Qh6xh7+! Kg8xh7 4.Bh4-f6+! Be6-h3 5.Rh1xh3+ Kh7-g8 6.Rh3-h8#. Whew! That was a relief. This final variation should give us pause and make us think. When we can make *forcing* moves such as checking our opponents King that is often the best way to play the position. In that case, our opponent would not have the opportunity to create his own threats. An example of which we just saw.

While Checkmating patterns with the major pieces, the Queen and the Rooks come easily, there are several Checkmating patterns with the minor pieces that we should add to our arsenal. Let us explore some of these familiar patterns.

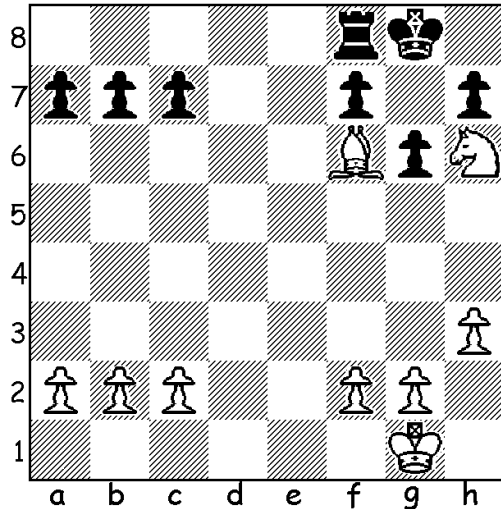


DIAGRAM 181

Checkmate Patterns with Knight & Bishop

The position in diagram 181 features a familiar pattern. The f6-Bishop *restricts* Black's King and covers some key squares such as the g7 and h8-squares. When a King is restricted as is the case here, a Knight can deliver a deadly check. Note the mechanics of the situation. Black's King is hemmed in by his own forces. The f8-Rook stands in the way of escape as does the h7-pawn. White uses this to his advantage. Our next position is quite similar.

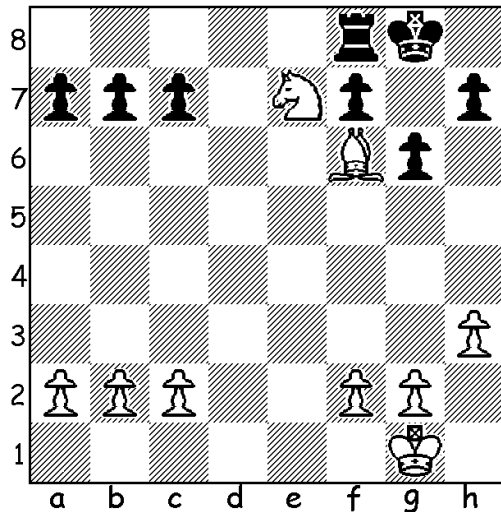


DIAGRAM 182

Checkmate Patterns with Knight & Bishop

In the case of diagram 182, the same mechanics apply as before. This time the Knight delivers a deadly check from the e7-square.

In our next pattern, it is the Bishop that delivers the deadly check.

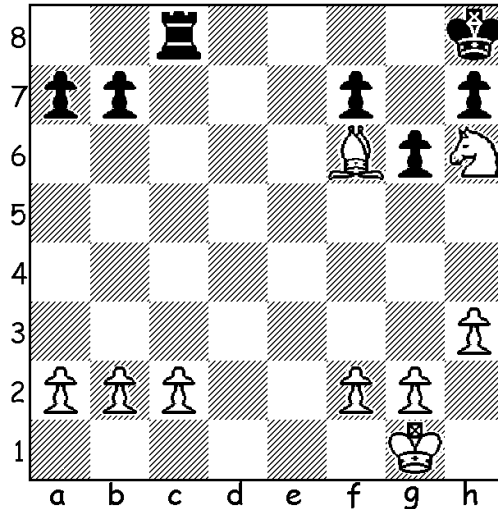


DIAGRAM 183
Checkmate Patterns with Knight & Bishop

The mechanics in diagram 183 look very familiar. This time the h6-Knight attacks the g8-square, while it is the Bishop's turn to give Checkmate. This pattern would be just as good if the h6-Knight was transferred to the e7-square, which would also attack the g8-square.

Checkmates with the two Bishops can also feature some pleasing patterns. The most basic is shown in diagram 184.

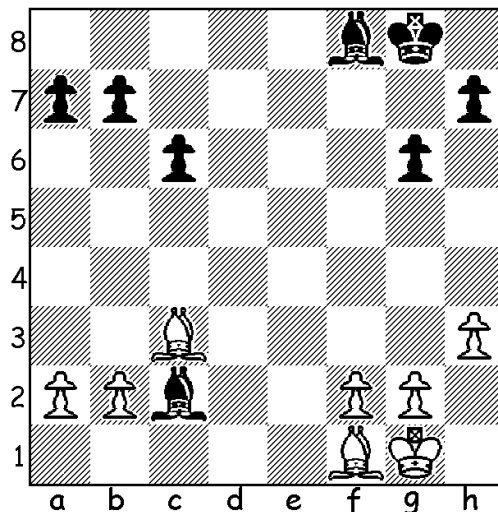


DIAGRAM 184
Checkmate Patterns with two Bishop's

In diagram 184 White's c3-Bishop cuts across the Black King's position restricting its movement. Placed on the long diagonal, the c3-Bishop attacks the g7 and h8-squares which makes Black's King particularly vulnerable to a check on the light squares. Recognizing opportunity, White quickly plays: 1.Bf1-c4#!

Notice again the mechanics of the position. Black's h7-pawn prevents the King from moving to that square, while the Bishop occupies the f8-square. Black's King is hemmed in by his own forces and is Checkmated.

The position in diagram 185 looks far more complicated. It is only the experienced eye that would recognize the opportunity that White has in the position.

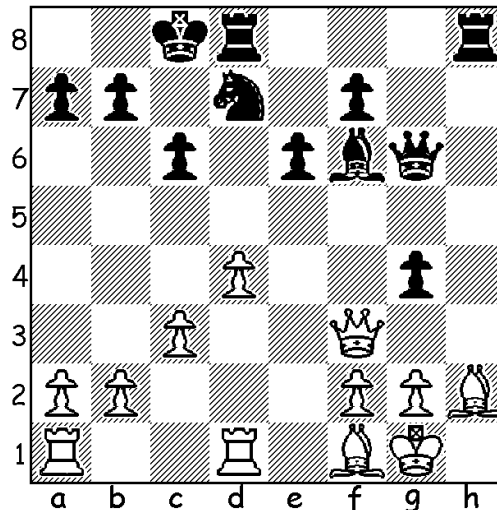


DIAGRAM 185

Checkmate Patterns with two Bishop's

The position in diagram 185 is quite sharp. Each move by both sides has to be considered carefully. In the first place, Black has managed to open up the h-file for his h8-Rook, giving him threats against White's King. Also, White's Queen is under direct threat from Black's g4-pawn so the general of the Black army was feeling quite satisfied. However, there is one very important detail in this position of great importance: White's h2-Bishop cuts across the position of Black's King, controlling the c7-square as well as the b8-square, restricting its ability to move. If White could deliver a check to Black's King it could well be Checkmated.

Again, the experienced player, knowledgeable in patterns featuring two Bishop Checkmates uncorks a simply brilliant move! White plays: 1.Qf3xc6+!!, sacrificing his Queen to make Black's King vulnerable to a Bishop check. Black has no choice but to capture White's Queen: 1...b7xc6 2.Bf1-a6#. Just like that the game is over!

Let's check the mechanics of this final position. As is common to many Checkmate patterns, Black's King is hemmed in by his *own* forces. The d8-Rook and the d7-Knight prevent Black's King from escaping.

In this case, as in others, the key was the role played by the h2-Bishop which restricted Black's King and cut through his Castled position. Thanks to the h2-Bishop the Queen sacrifice was possible.

Before leaving the position in diagram 185, White may well have been tempted to play: 1.Qf3-g3, which appears to be a very good move indeed. With that turn, White would threaten: 2.Qg3-c7#, a mate in one threat! The problem with this attractive Queen move is that after: 1...Rh8xh2!, Black eliminates the h2-Bishop, stopping White's threat. After the recapture: 2.Qg3xh2, Black would play: 2...Rd8-h8!, and begin to generate threats down the h-file against White's King. In short it was a very lucky chance that White could sacrifice his Queen. However, unless you are familiar with this pattern this is a very easy opportunity to miss.

Recognizing when a King is safe or vulnerable to a Checkmating attack is the third element in Chess. The first two are Space and Material. It is critical for our success that we know that the "King Position" or "King Safety," as the third element is variously called, is in our favor or against us. What we have discovered so far is that open files, open diagonals, especially those that

restrict the enemy King from moving, are key in understanding King Position. While other coaches like the term “King Safety,” my preference for calling the third element in Chess is “King Position.” Let’s mix things up by showing how Rooks on an open file can deliver a fine Checkmate.

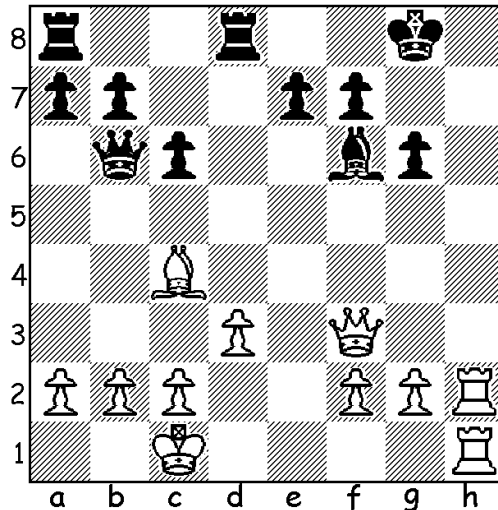


DIAGRAM 186

Checkmate Patterns with the two Rooks

White has *doubled* his Rooks along the *open* h-file in the hopes of creating threats to Black’s King. However, Black is satisfied that his f6-Bishop *defends* the h8-square and isn’t worried by White’s possibilities. In addition, to playing the role of a defender, the f6-Bishop is also *attacking* the b2-pawn giving Black the threat of safely capturing the b2-pawn with check with his Queen. White however plays a stunning Queen sacrifice before Black can snack on the b2-pawn: 1.Qf3xf6, removing the defender of the h8-square. Black has no choice but to capture White’s Queen: 1...e7xf6 2.Rh2-h8+ Kg8-g7 3.Rh1-h7#. That last pattern is worth a diagram.

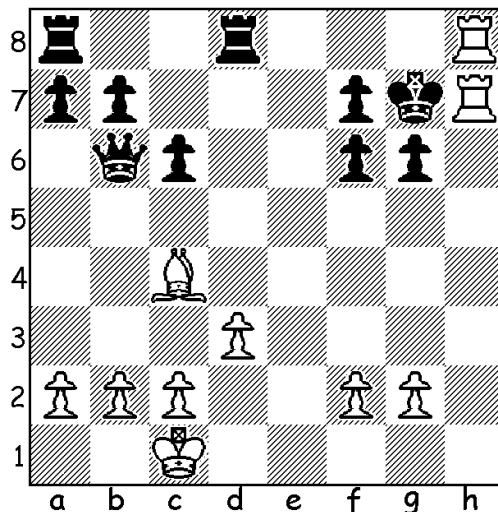


DIAGRAM 187

Checkmate Patterns with the two Rooks

The mechanics of the position in diagram 187 are worth carefully noting. The h7-Rook directly attacks the Black King. It is protected by the h8-Rook which attacks the g8 and f8-squares

preventing Black's King from running away. While Black's f6-pawn and g6-pawn trap the Black King from escape. This pattern of two Rooks Checkmating on open files usually need a bit of help to be successful but such attacks are universal.

Let us take a second look at the position in diagram 186 for a moment. As spectacular as White's Queen sacrifice was it would have been more effective to make a Rook sacrifice instead. White's best move was: 1.Rh2-h8+!!, this *forcing* move comes with *check* leaves Black helpless. If he accepts the sacrifice by: 1...Bf6xh8, this capture uncovers an attack against the f7-pawn. White would play: 2.Qf3xf7#. If Black refuses the Rook sacrifice and plays: 1...Kg8-g7 2.Rh1-h7#, wins one move faster than the variation with the Queen sacrifice.

This example reminds me of a quote from former World Champion Mikhail Tal, "If you see a good move wait and think. Maybe you will find a better one."

Now let us turn to some Checkmating patterns with the Knights as heroes. We will start with a Smothered Mate pattern.

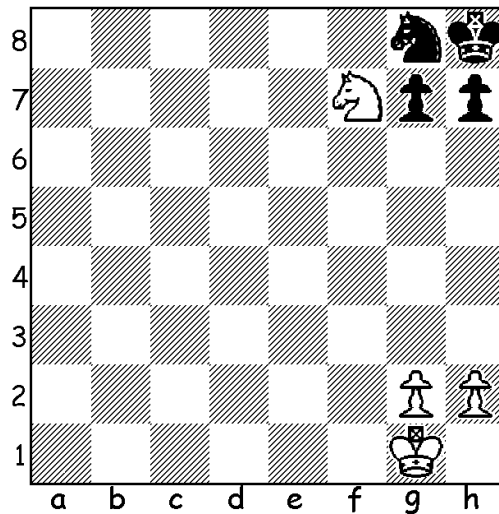


DIAGRAM 188
Smothered Checkmate

The position in diagram 188 shows a Smothered Checkmate in its simplest form. Black's King is enclosed by his own forces while a lone attacking Knight delivers Checkmate. This pattern can feature some beautiful sacrificial play leading up to the final position.

Our next example features two Knights.

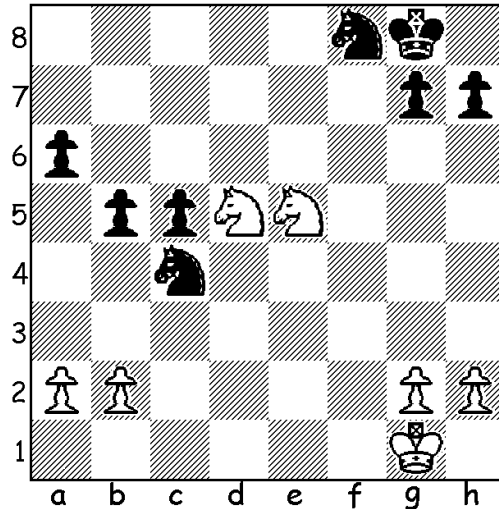


DIAGRAM 189
Checkmate with two Knights

In diagram 189, Black has just played the move: 1...Na5-c4, thinking this would force a trade of Knights. He had not thought that his King was vulnerable to a sudden Checkmate attack. White plays: 2.Nd5-e7+!, forcing Black's King to the corner: 2...Kg8-h8 3.Ne5-f7#.

The mechanics of this Checkmate are similar to the pattern in diagram 188. The difference is that White's e7-Knight attacks the g8-square while before there was a Black Knight on the g8-square that blocked Black's King from escaping.

Another pleasing Checkmate pattern with two Knights is shown in diagram 190.

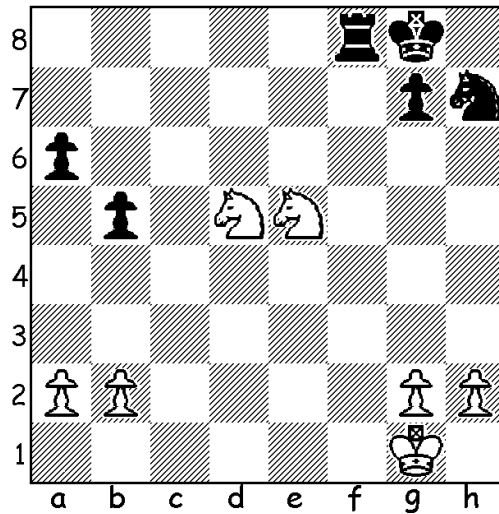


DIAGRAM 190
Checkmate with two Knights

White begins with: 1.Nd5-e7+ Kg8-h8 2.Ne5-g6#. The dynamics in this case are clear, Black's h7-Knight hems in the King preventing escape. If Black has a pawn on the h7-square he would be able to capture the offending Knight. This brings us nicely to the next pattern.

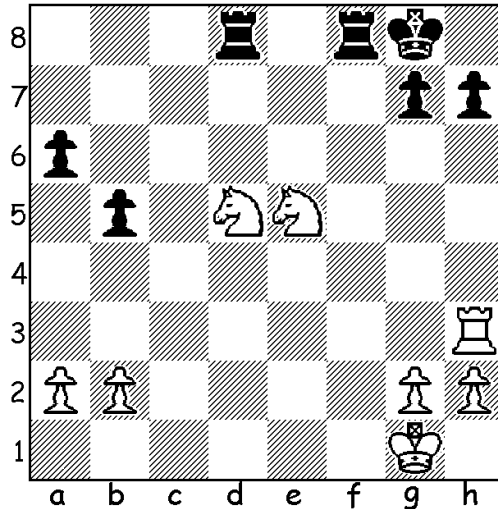


DIAGRAM 191
Checkmate with two Knights

The position in diagram 191 is very similar to the previous one. The difference is that Black has a h7-pawn but I've also added a Rook for both sides. As before, White begins with: 1.Nd5-e7+ Kg8-h8 2.Ne5-g6#. The dynamics in this case are clear; Black's h7-pawn is unable to capture the g6-Knight because that capture is illegal, as it would expose Black's King to an attack from White's h3-Rook. Black's King is checkmated.

Now let us see some Checkmates that feature a Rook and a Knight working together. Our first pattern is shown in diagram 192.

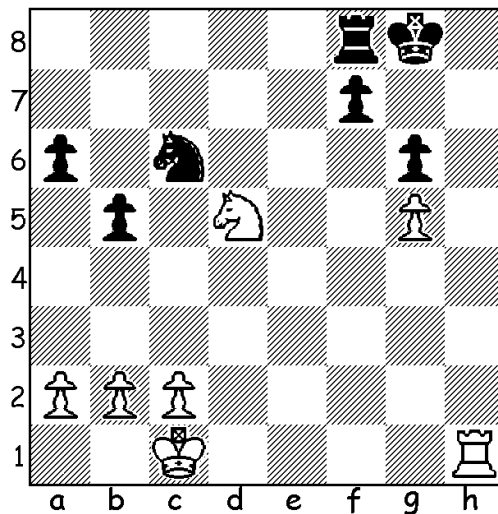


DIAGRAM 192
Checkmate with Rook and Knight

The position in diagram 192 shows that Black's King is in real danger. The open h-file means that the h1-Rook restricts Black's King by controlling the h7-square and the h8-square. Black's pawn on the g6-square means that Black is unable to protect the f6-square. The White Knight immediately invades the f6-square to deliver a check: 1.Nd5-f6+! Kg8-g7 2.Rh1-h7#. Once more we have to be sure that we understand the dynamics of this pattern. White's g5-pawn protects the f6-Knight so that Black's King cannot capture the Knight. The f6-Knight protects the h7-Rook

which is attacking the Black King. Black's King cannot go to either the g6-square or the f8-square because both of those squares are occupied by Black's own forces. The situation is Checkmate.

This pattern can be just as effective if White's Rook is able to get to the g8-square.

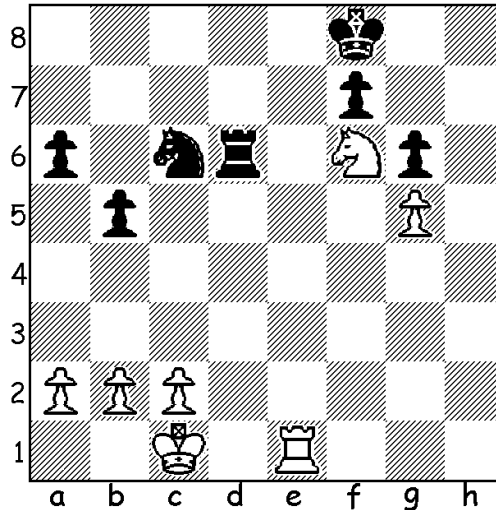


DIAGRAM 193
Checkmate with Rook and Knight

The position in diagram 193 is very similar as the previous pattern as White's Knight is ideally placed on the f6-square. White executes the Checkmate pattern with: 1.Re1-e8+, Kf8-g7, this move is forced as Black's King cannot capture White's Rook. It is protected by the f6-Knight. Now White completes the pattern: 2.Re8-g8#. Here the dynamics of the final Checkmate are clearer than before. It is only the f7-pawn that gets in the way of the King's escape. The f6-Knight protects the g8-Rook, while also attacking the h7-square. The g5-pawn protects the f6-Knight and cannot be captured.

There is one other Checkmate pattern with Rook and Knight that I really like. It can strike like a bolt of lightning from a clear blue sky!

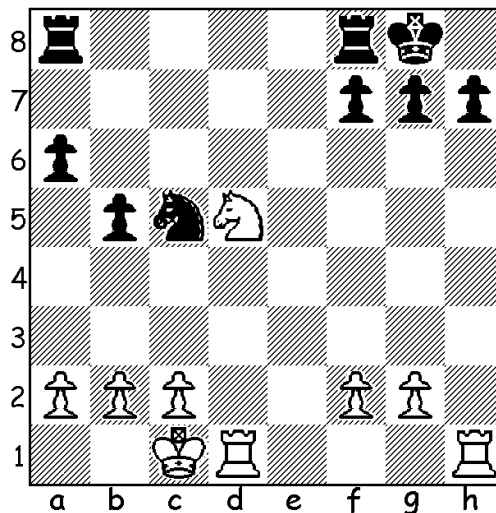


DIAGRAM 194
Checkmate with Rook and Knight

The position in diagram 194 appears at first glance to be completely normal. The material count is equal and neither side seems to have much of an advantage. In this innocent setting an experienced player would spot a Checkmate pattern. White pounces with: 1.Nd5-e7+! Kg8-h8 2.Rh1xh7+!!, a brilliant Rook sacrifice as White opens the h-file for a Checkmate. Black has to accept the offer: 2...Kh8xh7 3.Rd1-h1#. A pretty final picture. White's Rook attack's Black's King but there is no place for it to run. White's e7-Knight attacks the g8-square and the g6-square. While the g7-square is occupied by a Black pawn.

What is interesting about the position in diagram 194 is that if we take away the h1-Rook and place a White Queen on the f5-square, for example, the same pattern works perfectly well. White would play as before: 1.Nd5-e7+! Kg8-h8, and this time White sacrifices his Queen: 2.Qf5xh7+!! Kh8xh7 3.Rd1-h1#. With the very same pattern as before.

Back Rank Checkmate

When I was a young man about thirteen years old I came across a book, "*Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess.*" Of course I was immediately interested and read the book. I was shocked to discover the whole book showed example after example of the "Back Rank Checkmating Pattern." I was stunned. A year earlier Robert James Fischer had won the World Chess Championship and I wanted to learn his secrets. Reading his book I thought that Bobby was a mere, "one trick pony." Could the Back Rank Checkmate be that important? Let us find out.

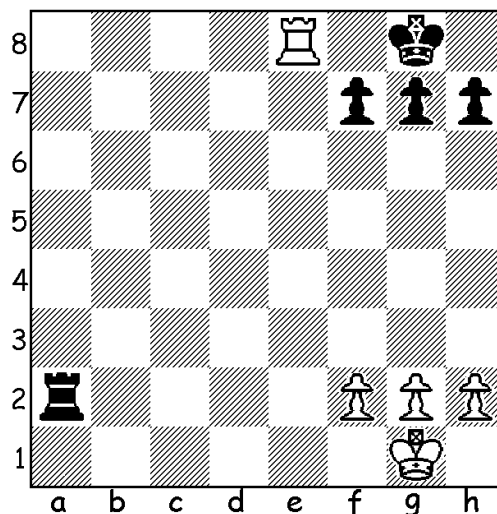


DIAGRAM 195

Back Rank Checkmate

In its simplest form the back rank Checkmate is show in diagram 195. White's Rook threatens Black's King and the Black pawns all conspire against their own monarch! Black's King is trapped behind its own protective pawn shield and is thus Checkmated. While it is a simple mating pattern an entire book was devoted to it.

Let us back up a few moves and see how Black might have landed in such a predicament. In the next diagram I'll talk through how the back rank Checkmate might have come about.

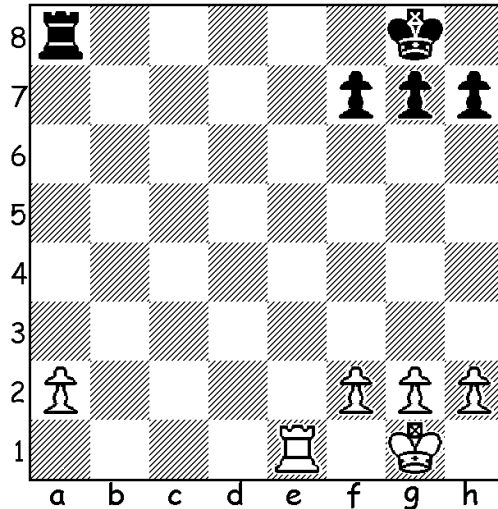


DIAGRAM 196
Back Rank Checkmate

In the position in diagram 196, Black is a pawn down and understandably the player wants to restore the material balance. Without giving the position enough thought Black grabbed the a2-pawn: 1...Ra8xa2??, allowing: 2.Re1-e8#.

The position in diagram 196 is a good one to talk about. Black's desire to capture the pawn makes sense but he forgot about his King Position. Black has many superior moves. One of them is to play: 1...h7-h6, making *luft* for his King. Luft is a German word that means "air." With the move: 1...h7-h6, Black has given air to his King so that it could move to the h7-square. Thus if White played similarly: 2.h2-h3? Ra8xa2! 3.Re1-e8+, the Rook check is no longer Checkmate. Black simply plays 3...Kg8-h7, and Black's King is perfectly safe.

Let us go back to move one in diagram 196. Black has many moves to create luft. He might have chosen: 1...g7-g6; 1...f7-f6; as well as 1...Kg8-f8, simply guarding the e8-square. Also he might have advanced any of his pawns two squares on his first move. After first playing any one of these moves, Black on his next turn, would be threatening to capture the a2-pawn.

All moves that create luft should be carefully considered. In the first place we should be sure that we are indeed creating luft at all! Let me show you what I mean with our next position.

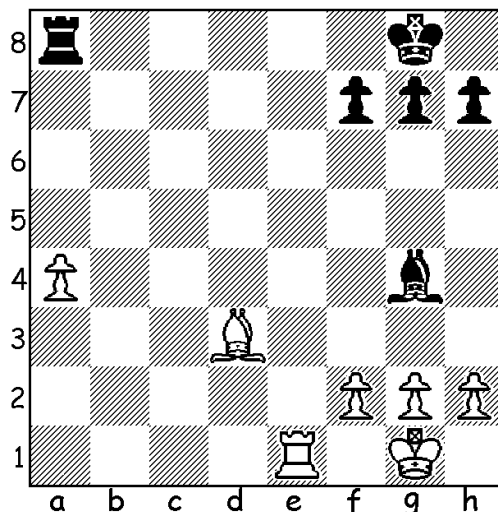


DIAGRAM 197
Back Rank Checkmate

For this example I've added Bishops for both sides and I've advanced the a4-pawn to the a4-square. Black is anxious to capture the a4-pawn but recognizes that he is vulnerable to a back rank Checkmate. He decides to make a luft move and plays: 1...h7-h6?, White now sets a little trap and advances his a4-pawn as bait: 2.a4-a5, Black falls for White's trap and captures the pawn: 2...Ra8xa5??, a big mistake. White plonks down: 3.Re1-e8#. Black is horrified to discover his luft move did not make luft at all! White's d3-Bishop attacks the h7-square so Black's King cannot move there. Black is therefore Checkmated.

In this case, it would have been better for Black to have played: 1...Kg8-f8, or 1...g7-g6, in both cases, these moves would have created genuine luft.

Before leaving the position in diagram 197 I'd like to point out an important note about tempo. Suppose that Black had played: 1...g7-g6, creating luft for his King. And now let us imagine that White wanted to create luft himself. With either the move: 2.h2-h3 or 2.f2-f3, White would create luft while at the same time attacking Black's g4-Bishop. Not wishing to be captured, the Bishop would move, likely retreating for example to the e6-square. In this case, what happened is it is White's turn to move again and he has gained a luft move with a gain of tempo.

Back rank checkmates can feature a wide variety of tricks but in the end all the tricks come down to the same pattern. For example I've made the position in diagram 198 a bit more complicated but the final pattern is still a basic back rank Checkmate.

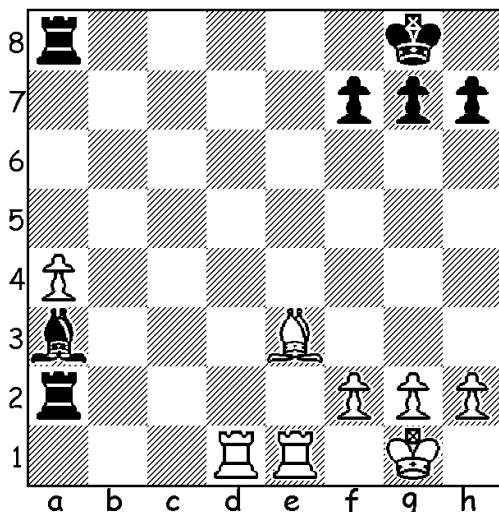


DIAGRAM 198
Back Rank Checkmate

Black has an awareness that he is potentially vulnerable to a back rank Checkmate but thinks he has a good defense. Black confidently plays: 1...Ra8xa4, capturing a pawn and restoring material equality. White plays: 2.Rd1-d8+! Ba3-f8, this is the move that Black had counted upon. White's check has been blocked. However, White has an opportunity to force a bank rank Checkmate after all. White makes a sacrifice: 3.Rd1xf8+!! Kg8xf8 4.Be3-c5+, when Black's King has to move back: 4...Kf8-g8 5.Re1-e8#, the Bishop that had previously blocked a check has been eliminated and the back rank Checkmate pattern is completed.

Let us analyze the possibilities in position 198 a bit more. While it is clear that Black missed White's Rook sacrifice he had hoped for a trap of his own. Black had hoped that after: 1...Ra8xa4 2.Rd1-d8+! Ba3-f8, White would play the move: 3.Be3-c5, threatening mate in one by:

4.Rd8xf8#. This is where Black had intended: 3...Ra4-a8, to defend the eighth rank. White could now renew the mate in one threat by playing: 4.Re1-e8??, in the heat of battle, White forgets about his own King Position giving Black the opportunity to play: 4...Ra2-a1+, creating his own back rank Checkmate pattern. White could interpose this check with his Rooks but they would be captured and White's King would be Checkmated: 5.Rd8-d1 Ra1xd1+ 6.Re8-e1 Rd1xe1#.

If Rooks can produce a back rank Checkmate it stands to reason that Queens can as well. Queens are constantly scanning the board for back rank Checkmating opportunities. These opportunities occur in some well hidden situations.

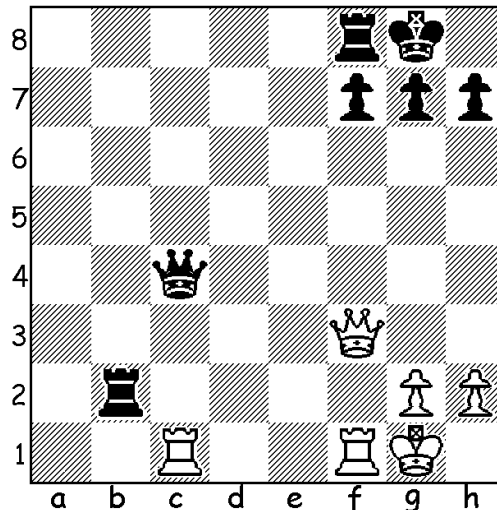


DIAGRAM 199
Back Rank Checkmate

Black has an excellent position in diagram 199. He has a healthy extra pawn in the material count to begin with as well as what appears to be a safe King Position. White has just attacked Black's Queen which has a large number of good squares to move. The most obvious one being: 1...Qc4-d4+, attacking White's King. This move would have won a tempo. Black would have gotten his Queen away from a threat of capture *and* put White's King in check. After White moves his King Black could think of another good move. Instead, Black discovers a howler and plays: 1...Qc4-e2??, expecting a Queen trade. Suddenly Black's King is vulnerable to a back rank Checkmate: 2.Qf3xf7+!!, a fantastic shot that completely turns the situation around. Obviously, Black had thought that the f7-pawn was well protected. After: 2...Rf8xf7 3.Rc1-c8+!, Black is lost. He can only block the checks for two moves: 3...Qe2-e8 4.Rc8xe8+ Rf7-f8 5.Re8xf8#. Also note in this final sequence that White could choose the move: 5.Rf1xf8#, as well.

While Checkmate is our goal, not all attacks end in Checkmate of course. Sometimes the defender will lose material in order to stop a Checkmate from happening.

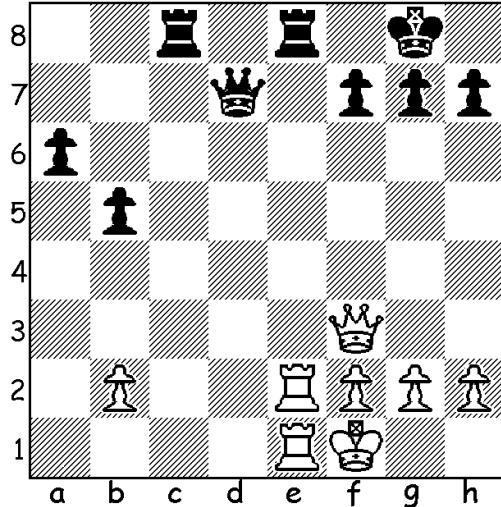


DIAGRAM 200
Back Rank Checkmate Attacks

The position in diagram 200 is far more complicated than the basic pattern that we saw in diagram 195. Despite this fact the basic pattern is still there. Again, it appears that Black is doing just fine. He is a pawn ahead in the material count and his King appears to be safe. However, if we look a bit deeper we begin to see potential for problems for Black. White has doubled his Rooks on the open e-file. This means that Black's Queen has to keep a protective eye on the e8-Rook. White reasons if he can push Black's Queen away from the defense of the e8-Rook, he could create a back rank Checkmating pattern. How to do that?

White plays what is called a deflection move in Chess parlance. White offers his Queen in order to deflect away Black's defending Queen. The key move is: 1.Qf3-d5!, leaving Black with only bad choices. Black cannot capture White's Queen: 1...Qd7xd5?!, 2.Re2xe8+ Rc8xe8 3.Re1xe8#. Black cannot defend his Queen either: 1...Re8-d8, as this leaves the back rank vulnerable after a Queen trade: 2.Qd5xd7 Rd8xd7 3. Re2-e8+ Rc8xe8 4.Re1xe8#. Therefore, Black has to lose material. Relatively best is: 1.Qf3-d5! Re8xe2 2.Qd5xd7 Re2xe1+ 3.Kf1xe1 Rc8-f8, when Black has avoided a Checkmate but White has won a Queen for a Rook and is well ahead in the material count.

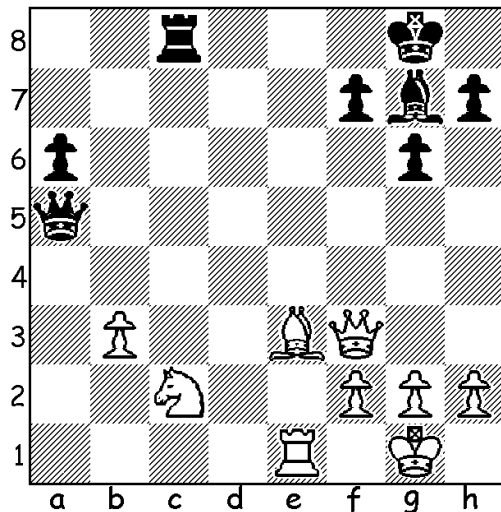


DIAGRAM 201

Back Rank Checkmate Attacks

Sometimes the back rank Checkmate pattern can be well hidden. In diagram Black quite reasonably thinks that his King is perfectly safe. There is no back rank Checkmate because besides the fact that his eighth rank is defended by the c8-Rook, there is also the defending g7-Bishop and his pawn is on the g6-square already giving his King luft. Black's problem is that he is a Knight behind in the material count and is anxious to capture the c2-Knight and even things up. Black plays: 1...Rc8xc2, and threatens mate in one. White an experienced player, recognizes a golden opportunity: 2.Qf3-a8+! Bg7-f8, Black blocks the check with his Bishop and hopes to capture White's Rook. However White is to play and he finds a stunning move: 3.Qa8xf8+!! Kg8xf8 4.Be3-h6+!, forcing Black's King to move back: 4...Kf8-g8 5.Re1-e8#. Quite a shocking finish. Strictly speaking this isn't exactly a back rank mate because Black's g7-pawn is on the g6-square. It is thanks to the h6-Bishop that attacks the g7-square that leaves Black's King with nowhere to run.

Chess games where a lot of pieces have been traded are described in Chess parlance as the *endgame* phase. During this phase of the game Rooks can be particularly powerful as the position has opened up. They can combine together to weave numerous types of Checkmating patterns. Let us see the most common types of Checkmates featuring two Rooks.

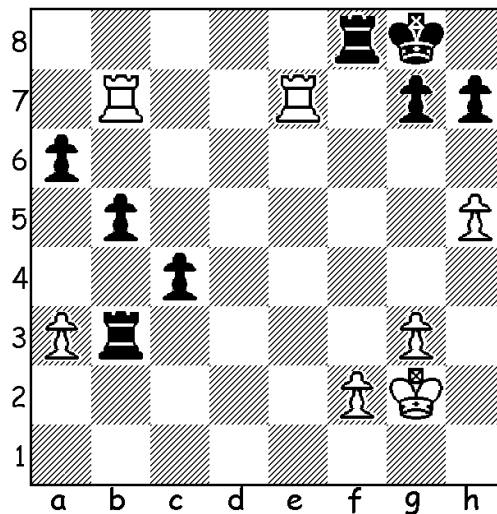


DIAGRAM 202
Double Rook Checkmate Attacks

In Chess parlance players would describe the position in diagram 202 as, "White has doubled his Rooks on the seventh rank." Such situations can be extremely powerful often spelling doom for the opponent. For example, let us say White is to play. In that case, his task is simple and straight-forwards. White would snack on Black's Kingside pawns beginning with the g7-pawn: 1.Re7xg7+ Kg8-h8 2.Rg7xh7+ Kh8-g8 3.Rb7-g7#. Checkmate occurs because the f8-Rook is in the way.

Let us turn things around and suggest it is Black to move. He cannot protect the g7-pawn and instead decides it is best to move the f8-Rook. But to which square? Let us look at two possibilities. In the first one Black's Rook moves up the board. Black tries: 1...Rf8-f5 2.Re7xg7+!, note that this is White's best move. If White had tried: 2.Re7-e8+, Black would block this check with: 2...Rf5-f8, retreating his Rook when White has not gained anything. After the pawn capture play might continue: 2...Kg8-h8 3.Rg7xh7+ Kh8-g8 4.Rb7-g7+! Kg8-f8 5.h5-h6!, a very nice move indeed. The pawn now protects the g7-Rook that allows White to menace: 6.Rh7-h8#, a mate in one threat. The play has brought us to the position in diagram 203.

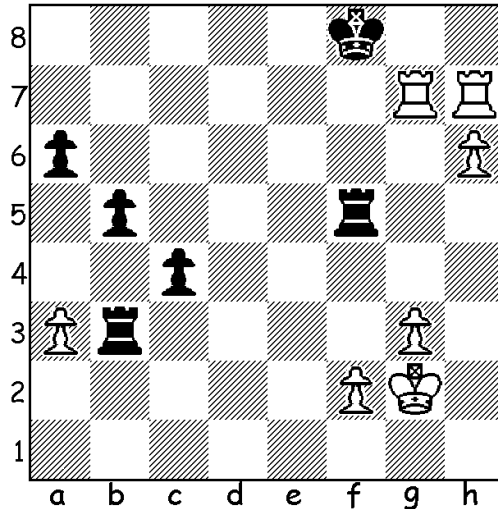


DIAGRAM 203
Double Rook Checkmate Attacks

Realizing that his only way to counter White's threat of Rh7-h8#, Black moves his King: 5...Kf8-e8, Black's plan is to meet: 6.Rh7-h8+, with 6...Rf5-f8, blocking the check. But White has other plans! Instead White plays: 6.Rg7-e7+!, forcing Black's King to make a decision. Which square to go to? The f8-square or the d8-square? Both have their own consequences. Let us first look at: 6...Ke8-d8, in that case White would play: 7.Re7-a7, which brings us to the position in diagram 204.

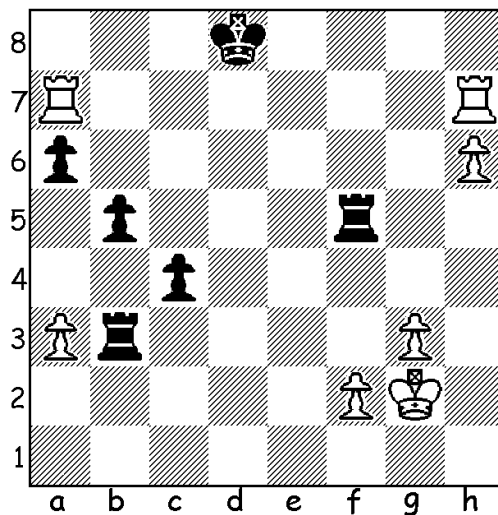


DIAGRAM 204
Double Rook Checkmate Attacks

Black's King is in a terrible situation. It faces Checkmate threats from both of White's Rooks either by: 8.Ra7-a8# or 8.Rh7-h8+ Rf5-f8 9.Rh8xf8#. Black has a few spike checks before giving up.

What would have happened if back on move six Black's King had moved to the f8-square: (1...Rf8-f5 2.Re7xg7+! Kg8-h8 3.Rg7xh7+ Kh8-g8 4.Rb7-g7+! Kg8-f8 5.h5-h6! Kf8-e8 6.Rg7-e7+!) 6...Ke8-f8, again White would play: 7.Re7-a7, with the same twin threats of Checkmate by either White Rook. If Black tries: 6...Kf8-g8, White creates a familiar mate: 7.Ra7-g7+ Kg8-f8 8.Rh7-h8#.

While all these checking moves going back and forth with the Rooks was probably very clever, did you have any questions? I know I did!

As a class exercise could someone explain to me why White's sixth move: 6.Rg7-e7+, was rewarded with an exclamation mark. Why was that move so good? Couldn't White have played: 6.Rg7-a7, with the same winning threats?

The correct answer is that White's sixth move stopped Black from a possible defense. In case of: 6.Rg7-a7, Black is given the possibility to play: 6...Rb3-d3, in order to block a check. White would still win the game by: 7.Rh7-h8+ Rf5-f8 8.Ra7-a8+ Rd3-d8 9.Rh8xf8+ Ke8xf8 10.Ra8xd8+, when White is a Rook ahead. By playing the Rook check on move six: (1...Rf8-f5 2.Re7xg7+! Kg8-h8 3.Rg7xh7+ Kh8-g8 4.Rb7-g7+! Kg8-f8 5.h5-h6! Kf8-e8) 6.Rg7-e7+!, the possible defense of: ...Rb3-d3-d8, was prevented.

Black's second possible Rook move from diagram 202 is easier to defeat: 1...Rf8-d8 2.Re7xg7+! Kg8-h8 3.Rg7xh7+ Kh8-g8 4.Rb7-g7+! Kg8-f8 5.h5-h6!, with this move White threatens an unstoppable: 6.Rh7-h8#, pattern.

Carefully replaying the moves from this pattern of Rooks doubled on the seventh can bring you a lot of benefits as you will learn to spot a number of different Checkmating patterns.

Before leaving this example let us answer one more question: Why did Black have to move his King into the h8-corner square? Was that move forced? Good questions! Let me try to answer them. Again, from the position in diagram 202, we will investigate: 1...Rf8-f5 2.Re7xg7+! Kg8-f8, Black's King avoids the corner square. White now plays: 3.Rg7xh7, *transposing* into the exact position that we had looked at above. This often happens in Chess games: That a position which occurs in one line of study occurs as well in another. After: 3.Rg7xh7, Black's King faces the same dual Checkmate threats from White's Rooks as before.

In these patterns, where "White has doubled his Rooks on the seventh rank" the Rooks can create different Checkmates. For Black such situations are described as, "Black has doubled his Rooks on the *second* rank." There are also some nice patterns where "White doubles his Rooks on the *eighth* rank."

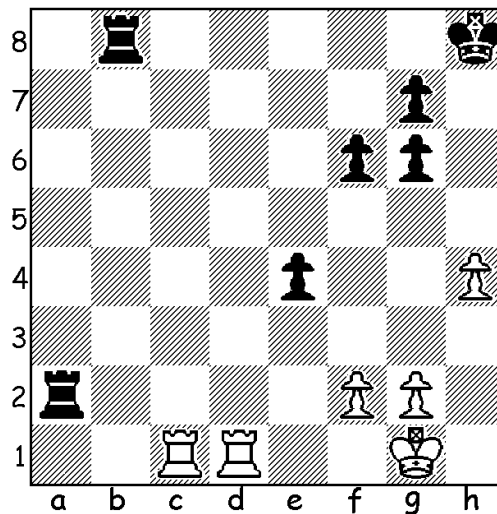


DIAGRAM 205

Double Rook Checkmate Attacks
(On the Eighth Rank)

In the position in diagram 205, Black thinks he is doing great. He is a pawn ahead and his a2-Rook is already on the second rank. Familiar with Checkmating patterns with Rooks on the second rank Black quickly plays: 1...Rb8-b2, as he is anxious to capture the f2-pawn. Before making his first move, Black checked to be sure there was no back rank Checkmate. Satisfied that his King had luft on the h7-square, Black doubled his Rooks on the second rank.

Now it is White's turn to play. He could defend his f2-pawn with: 2.Rd1-f1, but after: 2...e4-e3!, the pressure on the f2-pawn is increased. However, once again, the White player is experienced and he knows a few Checkmate patterns with Rooks doubled on the *eighth* rank. White plays: 2.Rd1-d8+ Kg8-h7, Black had counted on this "escaping" move with his King and he wrongly thought his King was now safe. White pursued his attack by: 3.Rc1-c8!, with the sudden threat of mate in one. Black had thought that White's h4-pawn was innocent. But now he realizes that it controls the g5-square. How to escape the mate in one threat?

Black plays: (1...Rb8-b2 2.Rd1-d8+ Kg8-h7 3.Rc1-c8!) 3...g6-g5, hoping to escape with his King to the g6-square. Black realized that: 3...Kh7-h6, does not avoid White's mate in one threat: 4.Rd8-h8#, thanks to the h4-pawn which controls the g5-square Black's King is Checkmated. White is not about to let Black's King escape to the g6-square and so he plays: 4.h4-h5!, taking the g6-square under control and renewing his threat of mate in one. Black has no choice but to play: 4...g7-g6, when the play has brought us to the position in diagram 206.

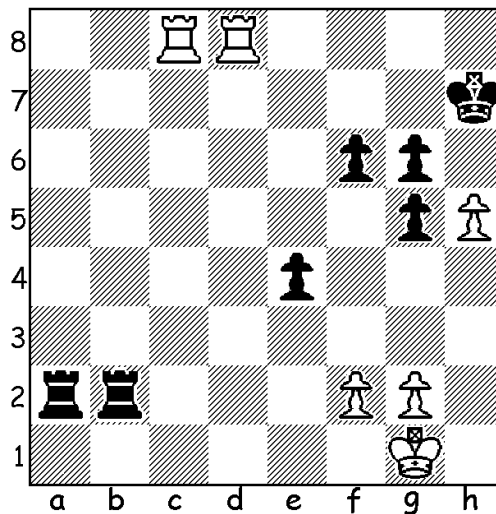


DIAGRAM 206
 Double Rook Checkmate Attacks

As we can see, Black's last move has given Black's King an option of going to the g7-square. But Black's last two pawn moves have exposed his King to a check on the seventh rank. White completes a Checkmating pattern in a pleasing forcing way: 5.Rd8-d7+ Kh7-h6 6.Rc8-h8#. The final position is worth a second look.

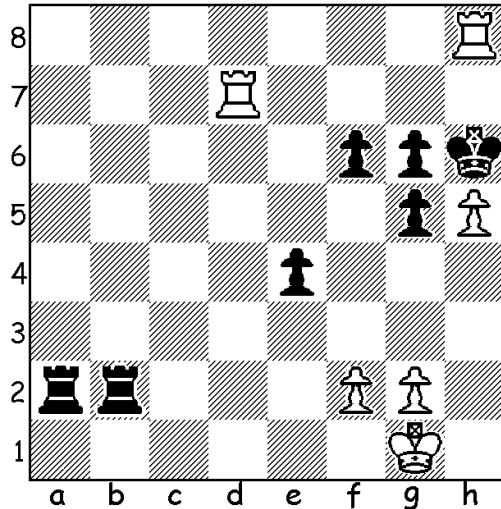


DIAGRAM 207
Double Rook Checkmate Attacks

Let us understand the mechanics of this Checkmate. White's h8-Rook attacks Black's King. The d7-Rook controls the h7 and g7-squares and Black's pawns occupy the g6 and g5-squares. Black can't capture the h8-Rook and so his King is Checkmated.

Returning to the position in diagram 205, Black should have played: 1...Kg8-h7!, as his first move to help safeguard his King. It turned out that: 1...Rb8-b2??., was a howler that cost him the game. My advice is that before capturing material or launching an attack be sure to double check and make sure that your King Position is safe.

While I'm sure you are all dizzy by the many Checkmating patterns there is one last one I'd like to show you before we put your prowess to the test with a few quiz questions.

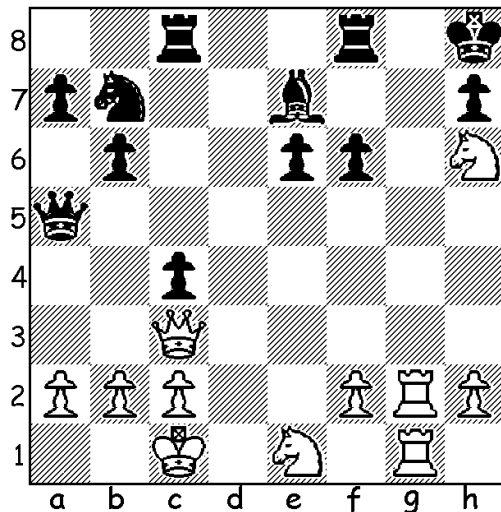


DIAGRAM 208
Rook & Knight Checkmate

White has a wonderful attacking position in diagram 208. The g-file is open and White had doubled his Rooks along this open file. This means that Black's King is extremely restricted. Also, White's h6-Knight is well positioned for a strike and it controls both the f7 and g8-squares. White is sure he has a devastating blow but is having trouble finding the right move. He

would like to play: 1.Rg2-g8+, but reasons Black has the g8-square well protected thanks to his two Rooks. If it wasn't for Black's c4-pawn, perhaps White would capture the c8-Rook so that a Rook Checkmate on the g8-square is possible. Sadly, the c4-pawn is in the way! Another attractive option would be: 1.Qc3-g3, threatening a mate in one on the g7-square. Unfortunately, Black has the blocking move: 1...Qa5-g5+!, forcing a Queen trade. What to do?

Again, it is the experienced player that will recognize a Checkmate pattern that looks like a Smothered Checkmate: 1.Rg2-g8+!! Rf8xg8 2.Nh6-f7#. It is the surprising Knight move that is hidden. Our eyes are drawn to the g8-square because all of White's fire power seems to be concentrated there. But by *deflecting* the f8-Rook away from the protection of the f7-square Checkmate is achieved.

The position in diagram 208 is worthy of further study because White seems to have a good first move alternative. He could have tried: 1.Qc3xc4, offering a Queen sacrifice with the thought that: 1...Rc8xc4 2.Rg2-g8+ Rf8xg8 3.Rg1xg8#. If you saw this idea, bravo! I am impressed!

There is one detail however: 1.Qc3xc4 Qa5xe1+!, is a counter-sacrifice. White's g1-Rook is deflected from the g-file: 2.Rg1xe1 Rc8xc4, when White is a Knight behind in the material count. Fortunately, for the first player he can make amends for his first move and return with: 3.Re1-g1! Rc4-c8 4.Rg2-g8+! Rf8xg8 5.Nh6-f7#, with the same pattern.

Okay! Quiz time. Put on your thinking caps and see if you can spot the Checkmate patterns. I've mixed things all up so you will not have a clue which piece is supposed to Checkmate. In all the quiz positions it is White to play. I'll give a few words about the position and will, perhaps, try to trick you as well... After all it has been awhile since I had an ice-cream.

Checkmate Quizzes

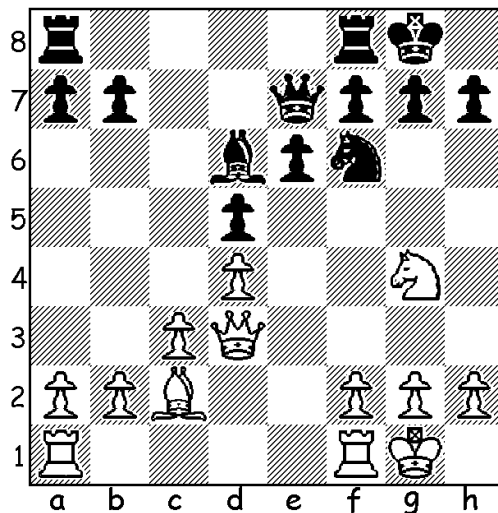


DIAGRAM 209

Let us start with an easy one. Can White Checkmate in two moves?

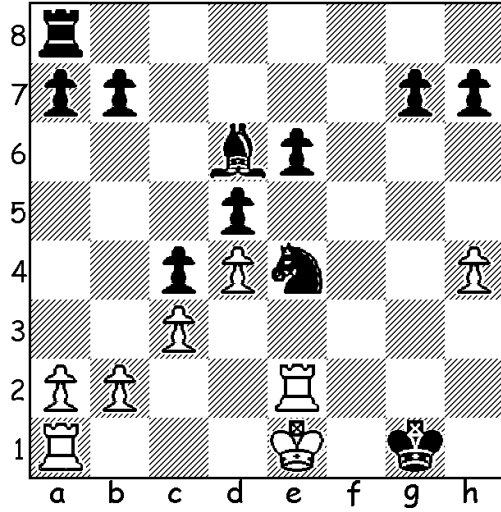


DIAGRAM 210

In diagram 210 the general of the Black army thinks it is a good idea to charge with his King into battle. Is he right?

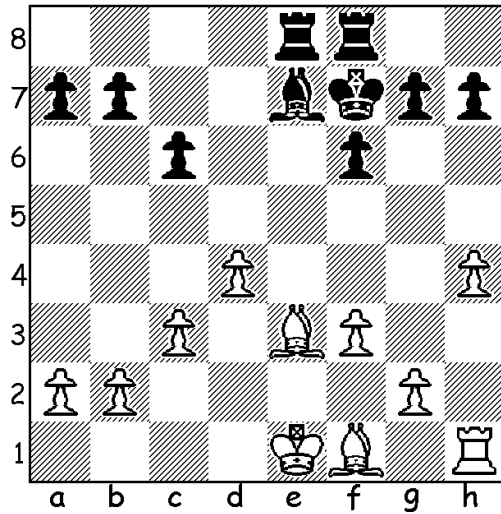


DIAGRAM 211

Black thinks he is doing fine in diagram 211. Wouldn't you agree?

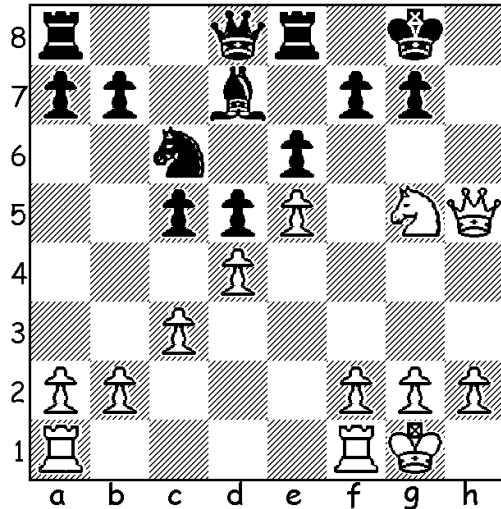


DIAGRAM 212

Whoa! The difficulty in solving the position in diagram 212 just got a lot higher. White is a piece behind and could be in big trouble. Right? With perfect play, can you force a Checkmate?

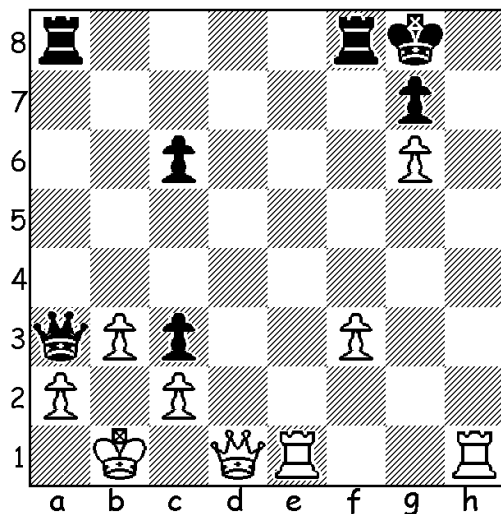


DIAGRAM 213

In diagram 213 Black has just played: 1...Qc5-a3, threatening White with mate in one. The highly desirable: 2.Qd1-d5+, would result in White losing his Queen. Darn. Would you admit defeat or can you find a way for White to save his position? Pay attention to the g6-pawn. Can you use it to your advantage?

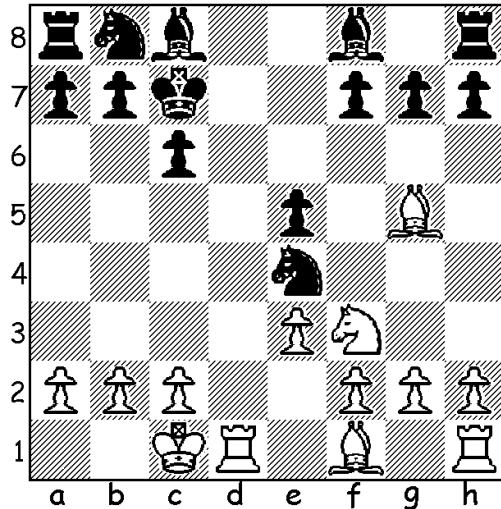


DIAGRAM 214

In diagram 214 the game seems to just have gotten started. Black has just played: 1...Nf6xe4, capturing a Knight that White had offered as bait. Can you spot the idea that White had in mind?

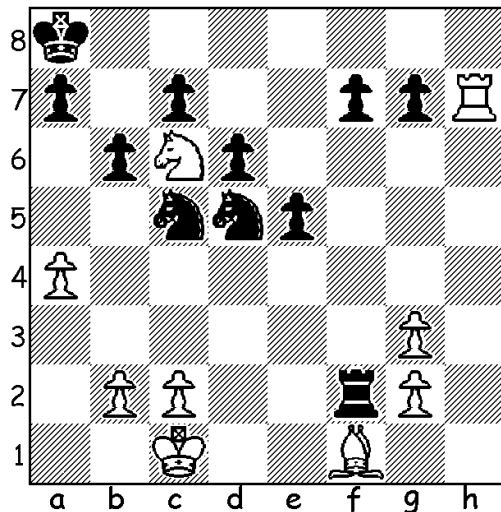
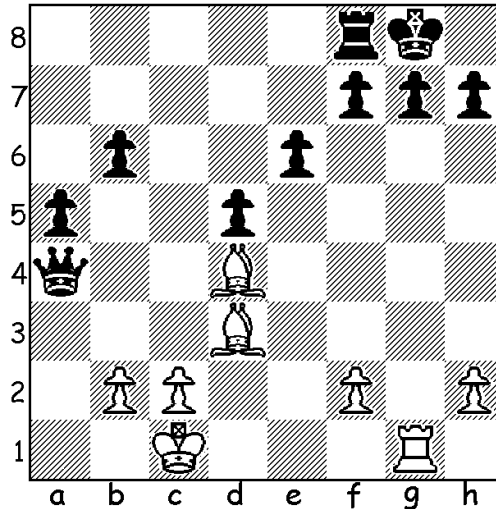


DIAGRAM 215

Another tense position is shown in diagram 215. The Rooks for both players have broken into the enemy camp. Black is quite happy as he is ahead in the material count. Also, since the c6-Knight is not protected, no Checkmating pattern could possibly exist. Right?



In diagram 216 White has to act quickly. He is behind in the material count and Black threatens: 1...Qa4xd4, capturing a Bishop. Whatever White decides to do he has to do it forcefully. The Checkmate pattern is a classic. Can you figure it out?

The quizzes are over. Did you answer five or more correctly? If you did a very big bravo and hearty congratulations as well. I was trying hard to trick you. If you liked these Checkmate quizzes there are entire books dedicated to them and I'd encourage you to read them and test your skills.

Checkmate Quiz Answers

Diagram 209: 1.Ng4xf6+!, White removes the defender of the h7-pawn. After either recapture by Black, 2.Qd3xh7#.

Diagram 210: 1.O-O-O#. We didn't forget how to Castle did we?

Diagram 211: 1.Bf1-c4+! Kf7-g6 2.h4-h5+! Kg6-f5 3.g2-g4#. Pawns can Checkmate too!

Diagram 212: 1.Qh5xf7+! Kg8-h8 2.Qf7-h5+! Kh8-g8 3.Qh5-h7+! Kg8-f8 4.Qh7-h8+! Kf8-e7 5.Qh8xg7#. A very important Checkmating pattern. Note that the immediate: 1.Qh5-h7+? Kg8-f8 2.Qh7-h8+ Kf8-e7 3.Qh8xg7, is *not* Checkmate because the f7-pawn has not been captured. Please go over this solution carefully.

Diagram 213: 2.Rh1-h8+!! Kg8xh8 3.Re1-h1+! Kh8-g8 3.Rh1-h8+! Kg8xh8 4.Qd1-h1+! Kh8-g8 5.Qh1-h7#. Whew! That was a close call. These sacrifices by White's Rooks are known as a "clearance sacrifice." White "clears" the first rank with these Rook sacrifices so that his Queen can come to the h-file with gain of tempo.

Diagram 214: 1.Bg5-d8#. That was a sudden finish!

Diagram 215: 1.Rh7-h8+ Ka8-b7 2.Rh8-b8+! Kb7xc6 3.Bb5#. Thank goodness for the a4-pawn!

Diagram 216: 1.Rg1xg7+ Kg8-h8 2.Rg7xh7++! Kh8-g8 3.Rh7-h8#. A very important Checkmating pattern. Note that White's second move: 2.Rg7xh7, was a "double check" and therefore two "plus signs" "++" were made in the notation.

Chess to Enjoy

After all those checkmating patterns and quizzes your brain might hurt. So why don't we stop and just enjoy Chess for a moment. There is a field of Chess that I personally find quite charming: Chess Studies. In Chess studies the composer creates a position that has a particular motif. Many of these studies are simply astonishing. The following study is sure to bring a smile to your face as it did mine.

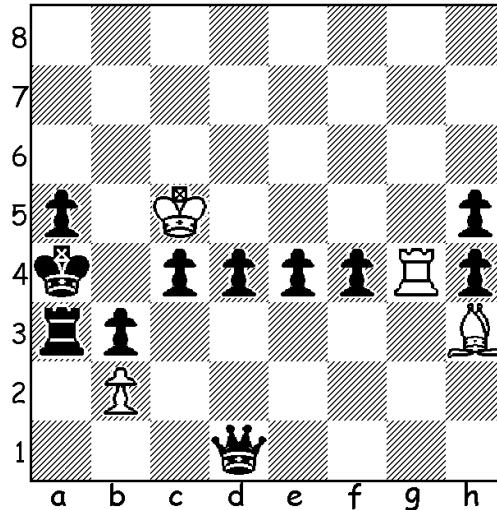


DIAGRAM 217
Chess Study

The position in diagram 217 looks completely crazy. The composer informs us that it is White to move and to win. Since White is way behind in the material count it would seem impossible. Then we start to notice Black's King Position. It is completely restricted and we start to think, "Any check will be Checkmate." But how to check the King? Then we see our h3-Bishop and think, "Aha! I know the solution. All I have to do is move our Rook out of the way and Black is helpless to stop a Bishop check to the d7-square and it will be mate."

Therefore, with such happy thoughts we play: 1.Rg4-g1!!, with a mate in one threat. Black has no choice and must block White's threat with his Queen: 1...Qd1-g4!, now comes the amazing surprise move conceived by the composer. White plays: 2.Bh3xg4!!, the only way to win. Black has to capture: 2...h5xg4 3.Rg1-c1!, threatening mate in one. Black has no choice: 3.c4-c3 4.Rc1-d1! d4-d3 5.Rd1-e1! e4-e3 6.Re1-f1! f4-f3 7.Rf1-g1! g4-g3 8.Rg1-h1, and the eventual Rh1-h4#, cannot be prevented! Isn't that a delightful Checkmate?

Did you wonder why on move two, White didn't capture Black's Queen with the Rook? I did. Let us see what would have happened in that case: 1.Rg4-g1 Qd1-g4 2.Rg1xg4, this was the trap that the composer created for us to fall into. We are so focused on the mate with the Bishop we didn't consider a mate with the Rook as it didn't seem possible. Black cannot capture the Rook and instead plays: 2...Ra3-a2!, going after White's b2-pawn. As soon as the b2-pawn is captured Black's King will slip away to the a3-square. For example: 3.Rg4xf4 Ra2xb2, White's mating net is no longer there.

The field of Chess studies can be really beautiful. If you found this one charming make an effort to look further. You will discover that there are countless beauties waiting just for you.

Chapter Eleven:

Basic Chess Tactics

Chess tactics come in great variety. Tactics are a sequence of moves that limit the opponent's options. There are dozens and dozens of different tactics many are identified by their own names. Nearly every game of Chess played features at least one tactic and more often many of them. One way to think of Chess tactics is that a player has made a poor plan or a poor move which will allow the opponent an opportunity to win material either immediately or in a few moves. The truth about tactics is very simple: One of the players has left a piece, a pawn or his King unprotected. If you keep your King safe, your pawns and pieces protected you will guard yourself against falling victim to a tactic. Entire books have been written about tactics including specific types. For this chapter I've concentrated on three types of Chess tactics: Double attacks which include Knight forks as well as pawn forks; Pins and Skewers. These three types comprise the overwhelming majority of tactics. Learning them will make you a much better player as you'll develop an "eye for tactics" and sense opportunity. Soon tactics will become second nature to you.

Virtually *all* tactics have an element of the *double attack*. Two units or more of an army are attacked on the same move. Over the next few diagram positions I'll show the very basic idea of how each individual piece can create a double-attack from the lowliest, a pawn, to the holiest, our King!

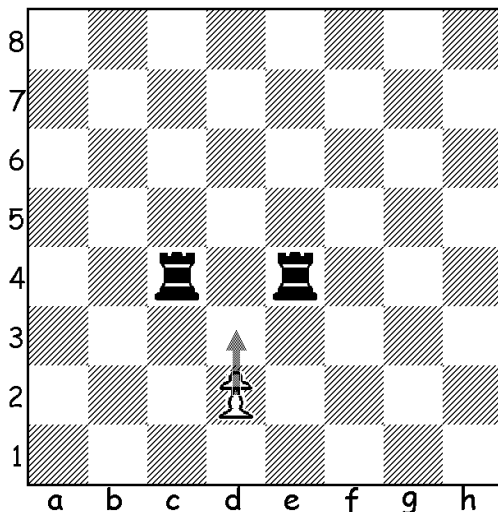


DIAGRAM 218
Pawn Fork

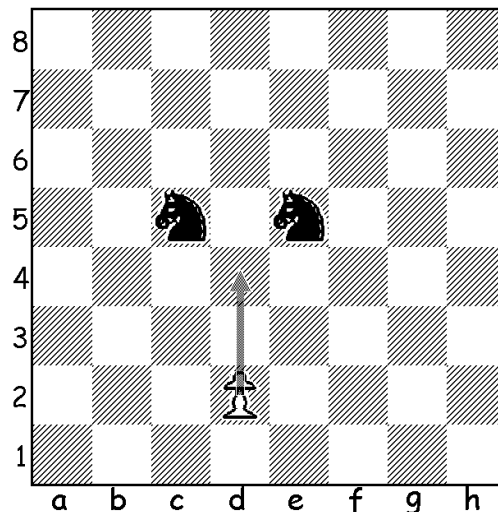


DIAGRAM 219
Pawn Fork

In diagrams 218 and 219 we have two basic examples of a double attack by a pawn. I'm not sure why double attacks by pawns are called a "pawn *fork*" but that is the common Chess parlance. In diagram 218, White plays the move: 1.d2-d3, simultaneously attacking both of Black's Rooks. On his next move, White will capture one of them. In diagram 219, White plays: 1.d2-d4, this time forking two Black Knights and once more capturing one of them. The trick of course is to maneuver your opponent in such a way that you will have such an opportunity.

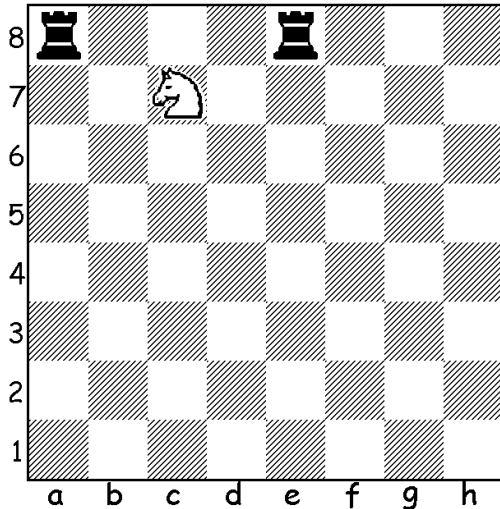


DIAGRAM 220
Knight Fork

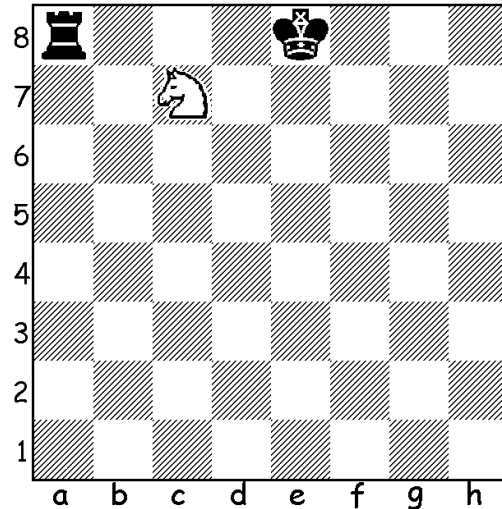


DIAGRAM 221
Knight Fork

In diagram 220, the Knight attacks both Black's Rooks and is called a Knight Fork. Knight forks are especially good when they check the enemy King. If the Knight can't be captured the King must move. In diagram 221, Black's King must move and the a8-Rook will be captured. Note that in diagram 220 the Rooks defend one another. When one is captured, a minus five in the material count, the Knight will be recaptured by the other Rook a plus three in the material count. Black will fall behind by two points in the material count. In this type of a trade when a minor piece a Bishop or Knight is traded for a Rook, a major piece, the player who captures the Rook is said to have "won the *Exchange*" in Chess parlance. At Chess tournament competitions it is common to hear, "I sacrificed the Exchange," whereby a player means that he took a risk and deliberately sacrificed a Rook for a minor piece.

There is one type of a Knight fork that rises above all others and is my personal favorite: The Royal Fork! In this case the Knight performs a *triple* attack on a King, Queen and Rook, as shown in diagram 222.

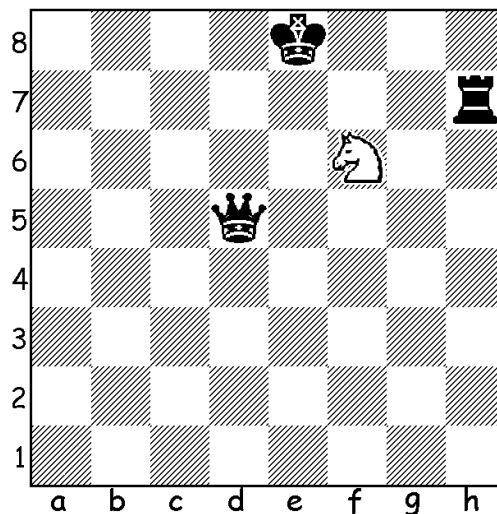


DIAGRAM 222
Royal Fork

In diagram 222 White's Knight is at its zenith. Black's King will have to move and the Queen will be captured.

What is funny about a Royal Fork is that it sometimes happens that the Knight is able to capture *both* the Rook and a Queen! How is that possible you ask? Well let's add some "stuff" to the position in diagram 222 and create a new position shown in diagram 223.

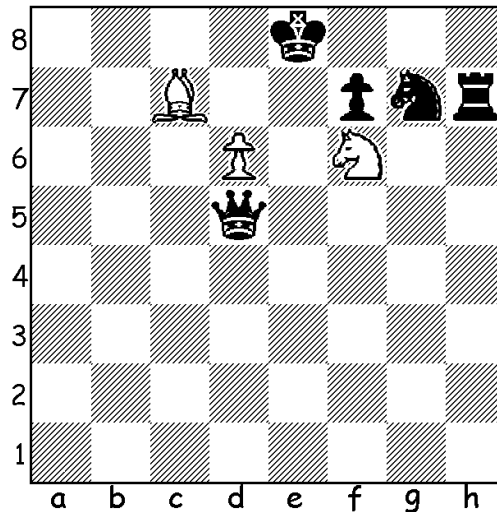


DIAGRAM 223
Royal Fork

With the addition of material for both sides we can see in diagram 223 that Black's King has no choice. He must play: 1...Ke8-f8, when White should carefully consider what to capture, the Queen or the Rook? Capturing the Queen would be very good but if we capture the Rook, we would do so with check. Black's King would have to move again. But to which square could the King move? White gleefully plays: 2.Nf6xh7+! Kf8-g8 3.Nh7-f6+! Kg8-h8 4.Nf6xd5!, White's Knight has managed to collect *both* the Rook and the Queen. White made a very good business indeed! Black was wiped out of fourteen points in the material count.

Knights are short range pieces and must be *close* to the action to make a fork Bishops on the other hand are long range pieces and can make a double-attack against pieces all the way at opposite corners of the board.

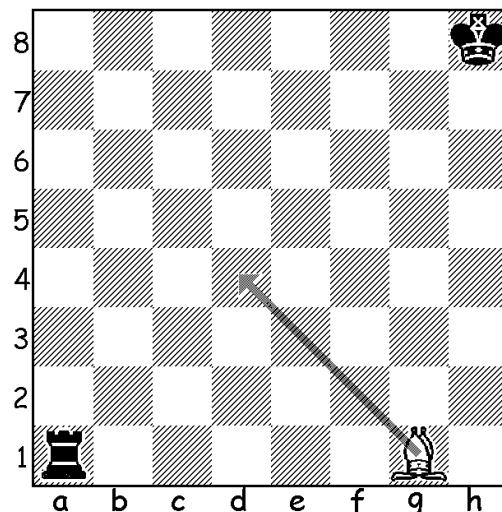
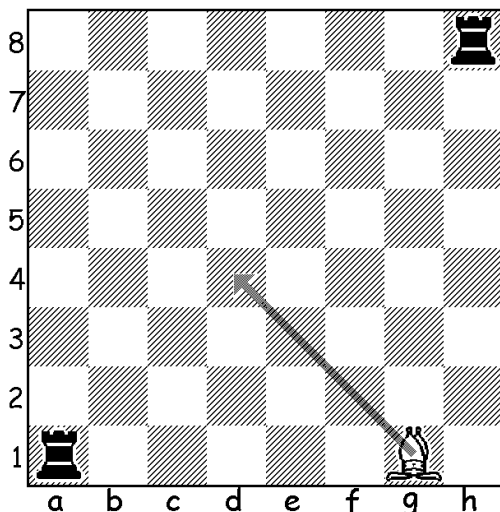


DIAGRAM 224

DIAGRAM 225

Double Attack by the Bishop

In diagram 224, with the move: 1.Bg1-d4, White's Bishop will attack both of Black's Rooks. True, one of the Rooks may defend the other in which case White will win an Exchange.

Double attacks that include a King are always stronger as they come with a threat of check. For example, if we change one of Black's Rooks to a Black King as shown in diagram 225, then White would pick up a *whole* Rook and not just win an Exchange.

Rooks are stronger than Bishops in double attacks for the simple reason that they can capture on all squares while Bishops are limited to thirty-two squares.

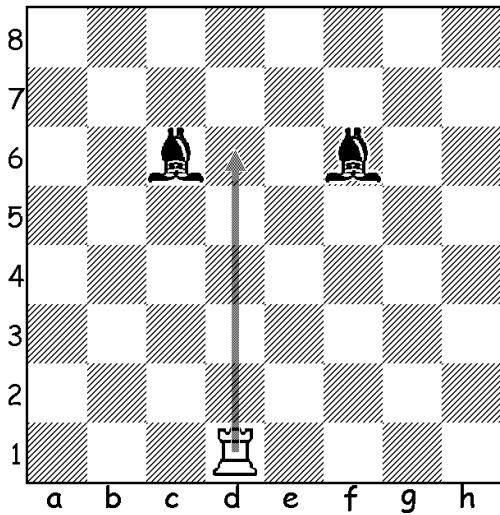


DIAGRAM 226

Double Attack by the Rook

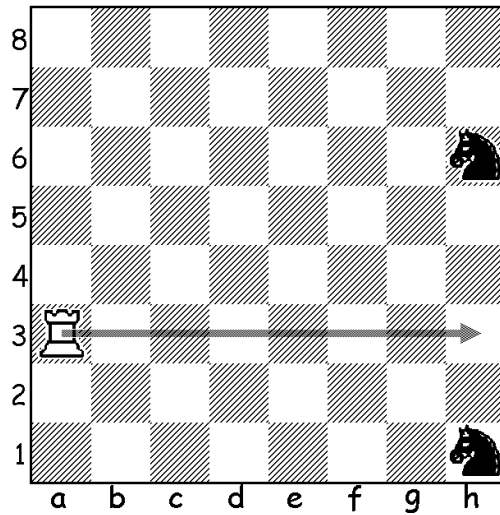


DIAGRAM 227

In diagram 226, White plays: 1.Rd1-d6, attacking both Bishops. One of them will be captured. In diagram 227, White plays: 1.Ra3-h3, attacking both Knights. In both cases White will win a piece. A few things to note in these examples, in the case of the Bishops they are unable to protect one another. Whereas we will make one change in diagram 227 which allows the attacked Knights to mutually defend one another.

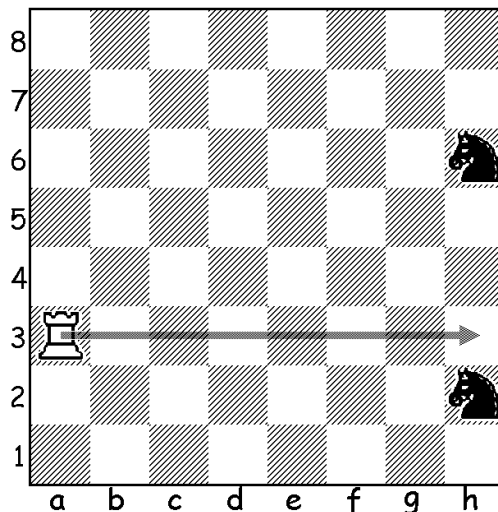


DIAGRAM 228
Double Attack by the Rook

By moving the h1-Knight in diagram 227, to the h2-square as shown in diagram 228, White's double attack against the Knights is not effective as before. In the new situation the Knights can protect each other: 1.Ra3-h3 Nh2-g4, or 1...Nh6-g4, and Black has escaped from losing a piece. If in diagrams 227 or 228, if we were to change a Knight to a Black King, the double attack by the Rook would win a piece.

The Queen is by far the most formidable attacker able to create double attacks and even a triple attack all over the Chessboard. An example of what I mean is shown in diagram 229.

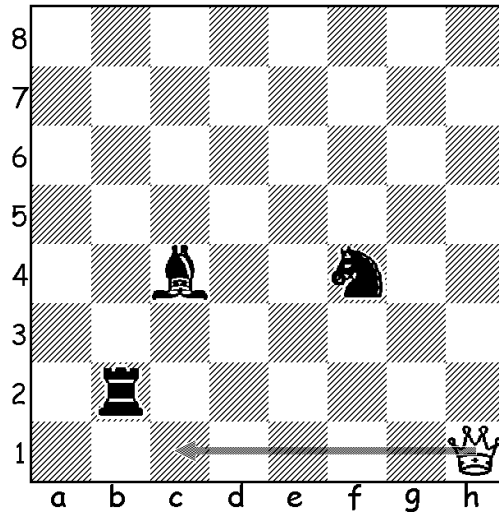


DIAGRAM 229
Triple Attack by the Queen

In diagram 229, White has two attractive moves. With: 1.Qh1-e4, the Queen would make a common double attack against the c4-Bishop and f4-Knight. However, with: 1.Qh1-c1!, the Queen makes a rare triple attack.

Far better than any other piece the Queen is often able to chase down pieces that are being double-attacked. An example of what I mean is shown in diagram 230.

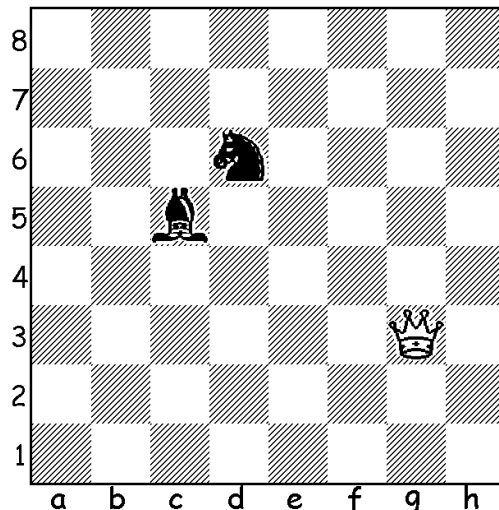


DIAGRAM 230
Double-Attack by the Queen

In diagram 230 Black's pieces appear to be clinging on together in self-defense but the powerful Queen is able to force them apart and capture one of them. With: 1.Qg3-e5!, the c5-Bishop is attacked and forced to flee. If Black tries: 1...Bc5-a3 2.Qc6-c3, *traps* the Bishop. After: 2...Nd6-b5 3.Qc3-b3 or 3.Qc3-d3, wins a piece. Let's try again: 1.Qf3-e5! Bc5-b4 2.Qe5-d4 Bb4-a3 3.Qd4-c3, *transposes* to the exact position we saw in the first line of play. Last look: 1.Qg3-e5 Nd6-b7, defending the Bishop. Now White plays either: 2.Qe5-d5 or 2.Qe5-c7, and in both cases is able to win one of Black's pieces. This fantastic ability of the Queen to quickly change directions and double attack pieces makes it clear that they should not be left undefended. If in diagram 230, we added a b7-pawn for Black, then: 1.Qg3-e5 b7-b6!, defends the c5-Bishop, leaving White's Queen empty-handed.

As an experiment, imagine in diagram 230, we took away White's Queen and placed a White Rook into the position instead. Let us say our first move was: 1.Rd1-d5, and Black played: 1...Bc5-b4, in reply. White's Rook would be frustrated trying to chase away the defending Bishop: 2.Rd5-d4 Bb4-c5 3.Rd4-d5 Bc5-b4, the Rook is not able to win a piece.

Obviously, in diagrams 224-228, if either the Rook or Bishop was substituted by a Queen, the double attacks would work as well. However! Consider this thought for a moment: The power of the Queen is also her own weakness. Hmm. What on earth do I mean by that? Let us reconsider diagram 224 for a moment. Suppose instead of a Bishop, White was able to play: 1.Qb6-d4, with a double attack against Black's Rooks. What worked well for the Bishop works less well for the Queen *if* Black's Rooks are able to protect each other. In that case, White would not want to trade his Queen for one Rook. For example: 1.Qb6-d4 Ra1-h1, the move: 2.Qd4xh8? Rh1xh8, would be bad business for White as he loses points in the material count. This double attack by the Queen would not be very effective.

Finally, we come to the King. After the last chapter of Checkmate patterns we may have the wrong impression of the King as a weakling in need of constant protection. Actually, at times, the King can be quite fierce and make powerful double attacks as well. Here are two examples:

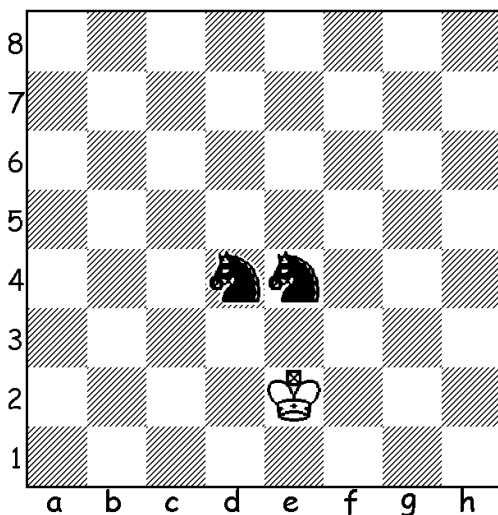


DIAGRAM 231

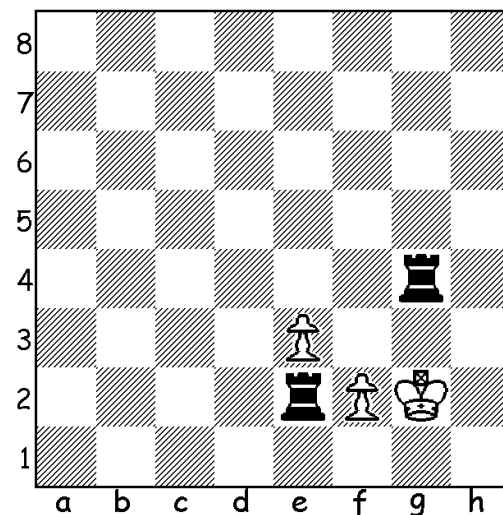


DIAGRAM 232

Double Attack by the King

In diagram 231, Black's Knights appear quite threatening like a dark cloud over White's King. Black's d4-Knight is giving check to White's King and it has to move. However if we look

carefully at the position we soon realize that neither Black Knight has any *protection*. White can play either: 1.Ke2-e3! or 1.Ke2-d3!, and in both cases White's King double-attacks the Black Knights. The King will capture one of them and the dark cloud will disappear.

In diagram 232, I've added a few pawns so that White's King is able to win a Rook. Black's g4-Rook is giving check to White's King but White can turn the attacking g4-Rook into an embarrassed one with the move: 1.Kg2-f3!, when both Rooks are simultaneously attacked.

Quick question for the class: "If we took away White's e3-pawn, could the Rooks protect one another?"

Correct answer: "Yes. Black could play either: 1...Rg4-e4 or 1...Re2-e4, when the Rooks protect each other."

After double attacks our second most common tactic is a *pin*. Pins are performed by Bishops, Rooks and Queens. Pawns, Knights and Kings are not able to make a pin. There are two types of pins: An absolute pin and a relative pin. Let us see some basic examples of a pin as well as the difference between an absolute pin and a relative pin.

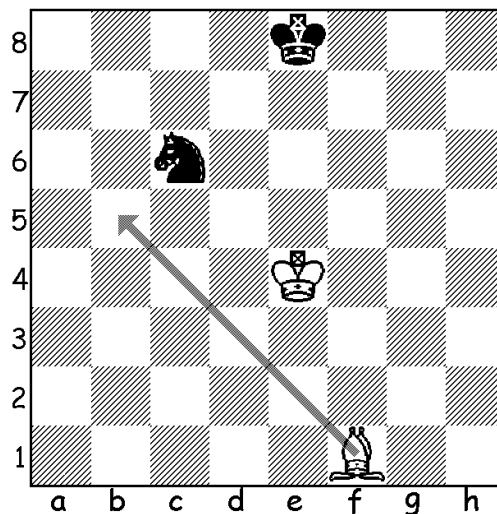


DIAGRAM 233
Bishop makes an Absolute Pin

In diagram 233, White starts with the move: 1.Bf1-b5!, attacking the c6-Knight. With this move, the Bishop pins the Knight and it *absolutely* cannot move. Pins against a King are called "absolute pins" because the pinned piece cannot move because doing so would expose the King to a direct threat. Let us say that Black played: 1...Ke8-d7, in response. Black's move protects the c6-Knight but it does not *break* the pin. The Knight is still pinned. However, Black's next move may be: 2...Kd7-c7 or 2...Kd7-d6, when the pin will be broken. Thereafter the Knight might move away.

In this example of a pin, the c6-Knight is called the "object piece." With the move: 1.Bf1-b5, the c6-Knight is pinned and has become the object piece in White's attack. The idea of creating a pin is to then put additional pressure on the object piece so that we can win material. Let's play this example out some more. Black has just defended his Knight: 1.Bf1-b5! Ke8-d7, and is hoping to break the pin on his next move. White knows this and plays: 2.Ke4-d5!, attacking the object piece, the c6-Knight, once more. White does this before the pin is broken. With his next move: 3.Bb5xc6, White will win the object piece, the Black Knight. In this example, White was just in the nick of time.

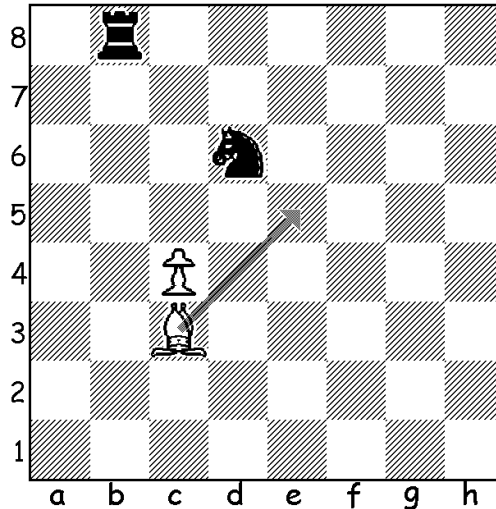


DIAGRAM 234
Bishop makes a Relative Pin

In diagram 234 White plays the move: 1.Bc3-e5, creating a *relative* pin. In this case the d6-Knight is pinned to the b8-Rook. The Knight *may* move out of the pin but in that case the b8-Rook is captured. Black would want to break the pin and to protect his Knight. He can do this in two ways: 1...Rb8-b6, does indeed protect the Knight but that move steps into a pawn fork: 2.c4-c5!, and White would win material. Black would be well advised to play: 1...Rb8-d8, getting out of the pin while protecting the d6-Knight and avoiding a pawn fork. So the difference between an absolute pin and a relative pin is that an absolute pin involves a King and the object piece cannot move away before the pin is broken. In the case of a relative pin, the object piece can move away but material might be lost.

At times, pins can be confusing. Consider the position in our next diagram for a moment.

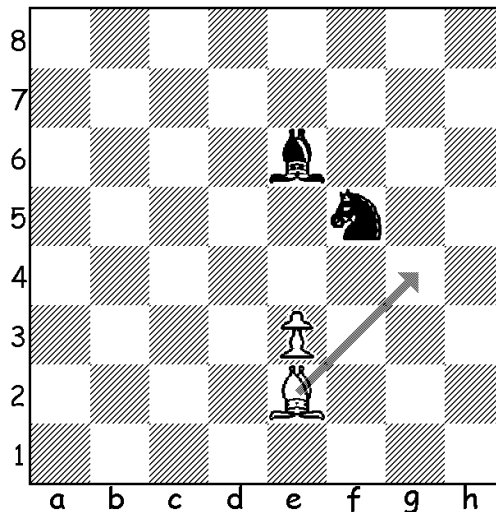


DIAGRAM 235
Does the Bishop make a Pin?

In diagram 235, if White played the move: 1.Be2-g4, strictly speaking we would not call this move a pin. Why not? Because the pinning piece, White's g4-Bishop and the e6-Bishop are of *equal* value. If Black replied: 1...Nf5-g7 2.Bg4xe6 Ng7xe6, White has not gained anything just a simple trade of Bishops happened. The object piece, the f5-Knight, was able to move immediately and

the pin was broken. Alright that wasn't so confusing. But now consider the next diagram after making a small change.

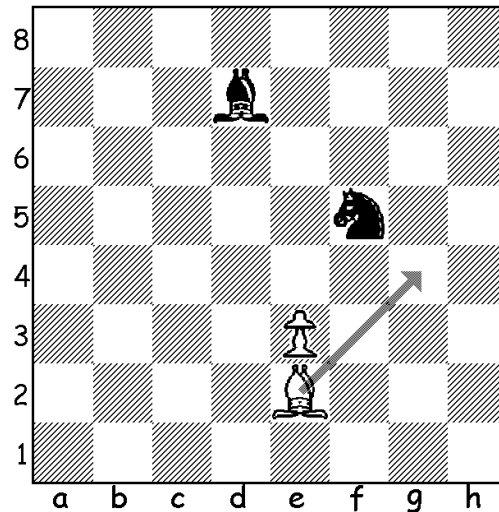


DIAGRAM 236
The Bishop makes a Pin!

In diagram 236, I've made a small change. I've moved the e6-Bishop to the d7-square. With this change when White plays: 1.Be2-g4, the Knight *is* in a pin. The object piece cannot move as that would allow White to capture the d7-Bishop for free. Indeed, after his first move, White is now threatening: 2.e3-e4, attacking the object piece with the hope of winning material. Black should play either: 1...Bd7-e6 or 1...Bd7-c8, in order to be able to break the pin on his next move.

Question for the class, "Why would the move: 1...Bd7-c8, break the pin?"

Correct answer, "Because Black's Knight could then play: 2...Nf5-e7, protecting the c8-Bishop."

In principle, a pin is most effective when the piece behind the object piece is more valuable than the piece that creates the pin. In diagrams 235 and 236 if Black's Bishop was instead a Black Rook or a Black Queen, in both cases the move: 1.Be2-g4, would create a pin.

Let us see some absolute pins as well as relative pins featuring the Rook.

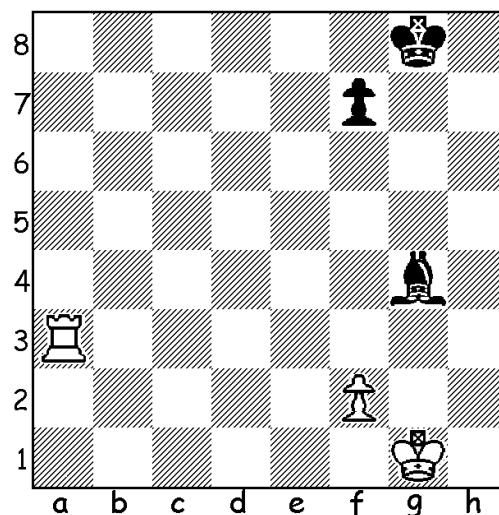


DIAGRAM 237

Rook makes an Absolute Pin

Hopefully, everyone sees how the Rook can move *across* the *third rank* creating an absolute pin to win Black's Bishop. Our eyes should be drawn to the position of the Black King and recognize that the g-file is open. That with the move: 1.Ra3-g3!, White's Rook puts the g4-Bishop in an absolute pin. After Black plays: 1...f7-f5, defending his Bishop. White should play: 2.f2-f3!, putting the object piece under attack again. Black's Bishop is lost.

Question for the Class: "If in diagram 237, I had placed the g4-Bishop on the c8-square, what move can the Rook make that would create an absolute pin?"

Correct answer: "1.Ra3-a8!, pinning the Bishop on the 8th rank."

We can change the position in diagram 237 from an absolute pin to a relative pin by adding a Queen to both sides.

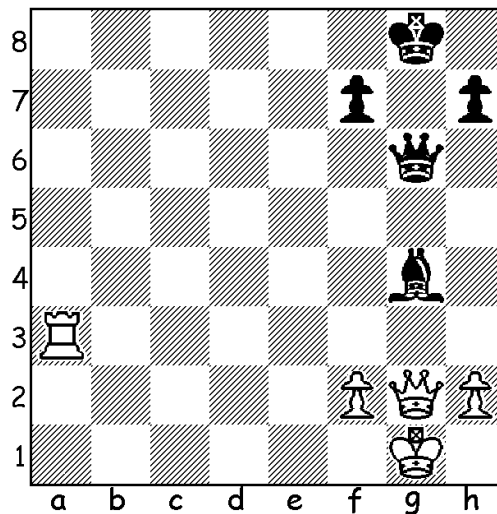


DIAGRAM 238

Rook makes a Relative Pin

In diagram 238, White's Queen on the g2-square is not pinning Black's Bishop as it may move away. White however has a powerful move: 1.Ra3-g3!, when the g4-Bishop is in a relative pin. The Bishop may move away but in that case, the less valuable Rook will capture Black's Queen and win four points in the material count.

If Black played: 1...Qg6-b1+, as a response. White would block the check by: 2.Qg2-f1, when the g4-Bishop is now in an absolute pin. If on move one Black tried: 1...h7-h5, defending the Bishop, White would play: 2.h2-h3, attacking the object piece, the g4-Bishop again. White would win material.

Because the Queen is so powerful we might wonder can the Queen make a relative pin? The answer is yes but we have to learn why.

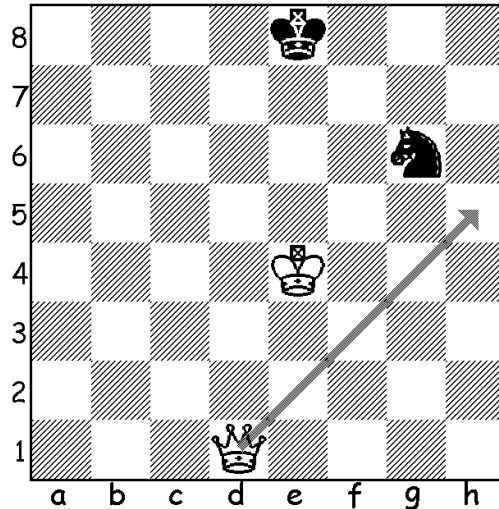


DIAGRAM 239
Queen makes an Absolute Pin

The Queen can certainly make an absolute pin. Oftentimes it can be a very strong move. In diagram 239, White plays: 1.Qd1-h5!, pinning the object piece, Black's Knight to the King, placing the Knight in an absolute pin. When Black plays: 1...Ke8-f7, defending his Knight, White increases the pressure with: 2.Ke4-f5!, and White will capture Black's Knight on his next move.

Back to the question: Can a Queen make a relative pin? Because she is so powerful the Queen would not want to trade herself for a piece less than a Queen. So how can the Queen create a relative pin? Hmm. Perhaps if the pieces were not protected? Let us have a look.

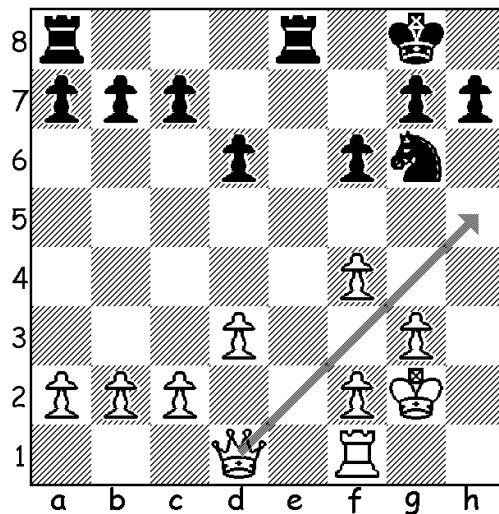


DIAGRAM 240
Queen makes a Relative Pin?

In diagram 240, your author, that's me, has tried to create a relative pin for White's Queen. As I look at the position, I realize I have failed. My intended move: 1.Qd1-h5, does not pin the g6-Knight at all. In the first place, the g6-Knight is protected by the h7-pawn; while the e8-Rook is protected by his colleague, the a8-Rook. The g6-Knight can move away without consequence, if the leader of Black's army decided to do so. About the only thing I can say in defense of my less than beautiful construction is that White would be threatening: 2.Qh5-d5+, with a double attack against Black's King and b7-pawn. Let me try again!

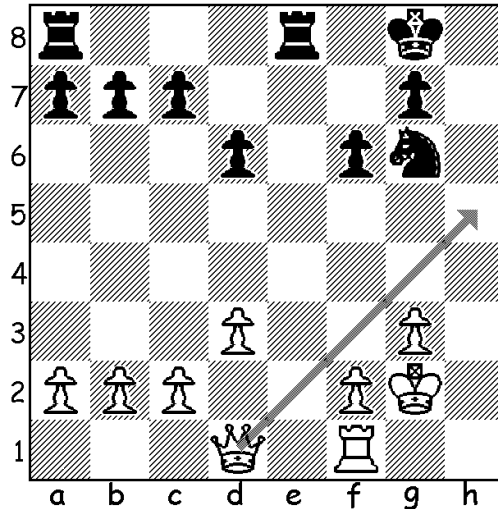


DIAGRAM 241
Queen makes a Relative Pin?

In the case of diagram 241, I've been much more clever! I removed a pawn each from both sides. Now with the move: 1.Qd1-h5!, the g6-Knight is unprotected. A big difference. However, I see that I have still failed. The Knight may move: 1...Ng6-e5, and White is still empty-handed. Okay. One more try!

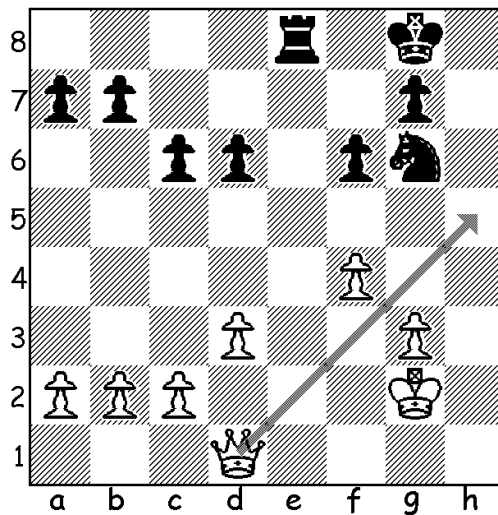


DIAGRAM 242
Queen makes a Relative Pin!

Okay! This time I think I've got it. I had to be brilliant. What I did is I removed one Rook from both sides. Now, with the move: 1.Qd1-h5!, the g6-Knight is well and truly pinned. If it moves, the e8-Rook is left unprotected. If Black plays the move: 1...Kg8-f7, defending the Knight and hoping to break the pin by: 2...Re8-h8, White has: 2.f4-f5!, attacking the g6-Knight which is now in an absolute pin. Whew! That was a complicated one. What we can learn from this small failure by your author is that for the Queen to make an effective pin oftentimes the pieces she is trying to attack must lack protection.

A quick question for the class: "If in diagram 241 Black plays the move: 1.Qd1-h5 Ng6-e7?, could White make an *effective* pin?"

Correct answer: "Yes. White could then play: 2.Rf1-e1, when the e7-Knight is pinned. In this case, both the h5-Queen and the e1-Rook are putting pressure on Black's e8-Rook. Black would have to figure out a way to break the pin."

The third type of tactic I'd like us to learn is the *skewer*. In many ways the skewer is the opposite of a pin. The object piece is *behind* the *initial* piece that is attacked. Boy, sometimes I confuse myself trying to explain things! It is better for me to show you what I mean. As with a pin, only a Bishop, Rook and Queen can make a skewer. Let's start with a Bishop.

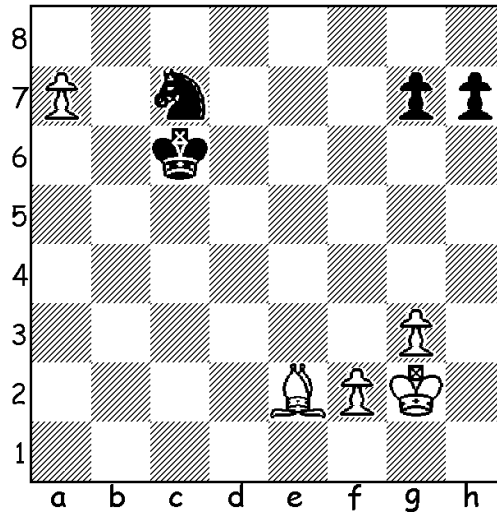


DIAGRAM 243
Bishop makes a Skewer

In diagram 243 White can see that Black wants to attack and capture White's a7-pawn with his King. White has to do something about this quickly in order not to lose his passed a-pawn. White plays: 1.a7-a8=Q+ Nc7xa8 2.Be2-f3+!, with this Bishop check the a8-Knight is *skewered*. As soon as Black moves his King out of the way of check the a8-Knight will be captured. On move one, White could also have played: 1.Be2-f3+ Kc6-b6 2.a7-a8=Q Nc7xa8 3.Bf3xa8, winning the Knight but that isn't a skewer. That wasn't a particularly sparkling example of a Bishop skewer was it? Let me see if I can't conjure up something a bit better.

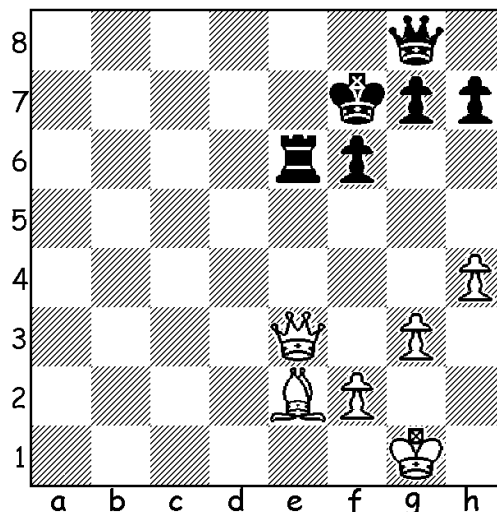


DIAGRAM 244
Bishop makes a Skewer

The position in diagram 244 looks much more complex and interesting. This example might better demonstrate a good Bishop skewer. White has the very tempting move: 1.Be2-c4, which places the e6-Rook in an absolute pin. That appears to be a very strong move until we consider the defense: 1...Qg8-c8!, protecting the Rook while also attacking the Bishop. Hmm. It would appear that White needs a better first move. He has it too: 1.Qe3xe6+!, White temporarily sacrifices his Queen to set up a skewer by the Bishop. Black captures the Queen: 1...Kf7xe6 2.Be2-c4+!, Black's King has to move and White will play: 3.Bc4xg8, winning Black's Queen. In these tactics White will emerge a Bishop ahead. In the starting position he was an Exchange behind. This skewer allowed White to win a whole Rook!

In both these cases the piece that White eventually captured was sitting behind Black's King which was the *initial* piece to be attacked. The object piece being captured was behind Black's King.

Skewers that involve a King are much easier to understand as there are fewer opportunities for the defender to save material.

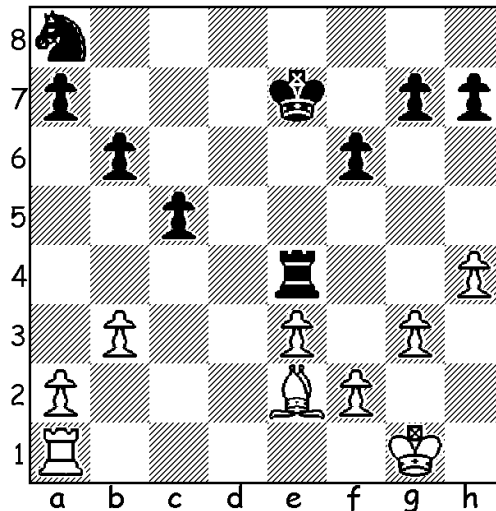


DIAGRAM 245
Bishop makes a Skewer

In the position in diagram 245, White's Bishop sees that two Black pieces are perfectly aligned on the long diagonal. The move: 1.Be2-f3!, is an automatic move for White to make. White will win material. If Black's Rook moves, the a8-Knight is lost. From Black's point of view, it really is a pity that his King is sitting on the e7-square. If Black's King was on say the g8-square, Black could defend against the skewer by: 1...Re4-e8, moving away from the threat of capture while also defending the a8-Knight. This possible defense shows why a skewer is so much more effective when a King is being checked.

Before leaving this example we should note that Black's best move is: 1...f6-f5, defending the Rook. Black will lose an Exchange but that is less of a loss than losing a Rook or a Knight for nothing. Lastly, if the e4-Rook and the a8-Knight were to trade squares with each other, the move: 1.Be2-f3, would turn from a skewer and into a pin.

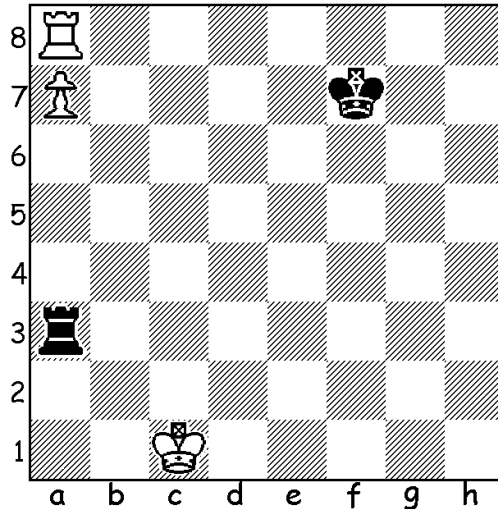


DIAGRAM 246
Rook makes a Skewer

The position in diagram 246 is a *classic*. White would like to promote his passed a-pawn to a Queen in order to win Black's Rook. White's problem is that his Rook is in *front* of the pawn. White is afraid that if he moves his Rook, the a7-pawn will be captured so he feels stuck. Can you see a way to create a skewer for White's Rook?

If you found the move: 1.Ra8-h8!, a hearty bravo! That is indeed a winning move. If Black does not capture the a7-pawn and plays: 1...Kf7-g7 2.a7-a8=Q Ra3xa8 3.Rh8xa8, White wins a Rook. If Black plays: 1...Ra3xa7 2.Rh8-h7+!, skewers Black's Rook. A nice trick to remember!

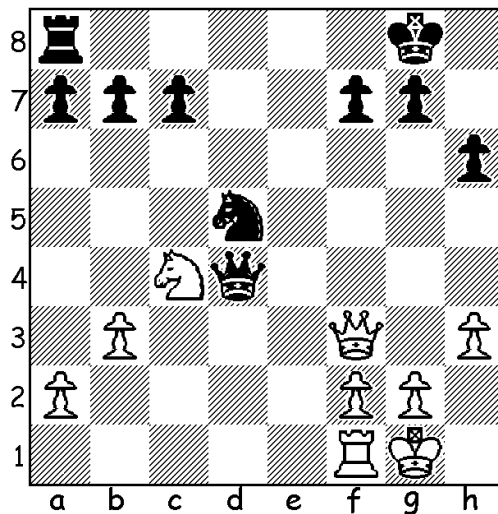


DIAGRAM 247
Rook makes a Skewer

In the position in diagram 247, things don't appear so bad for Black. In the first place he is a pawn ahead until we see that Black has two pieces on the along the d-file that can be attacked. White is quick to play: 1.Rf1-d1!, attacking Black's Queen. Black's Queen is the initial piece in a skewer. The d1-Rook is protected by White's Queen and as soon as Black moves his Queen away the d5-Knight can be captured. In this example it is also an important point that White's Queen attacks the d5-Knight.

Quick question for the class: "If White's Queen was on the e2-square instead of on the f3-square. Would: 1.Rf1-d1, still be a good move?"

Correct answer: "No it would be a howler. In that case, 1.Rf1-d1, allows Black a Knight fork by: 1...Nd5-c3!, attacking White's Queen and Rook. If White captured the Queen: 2.Rd1xd4 Nc3xe2+!, White would lose a whole Rook. Yikes!"

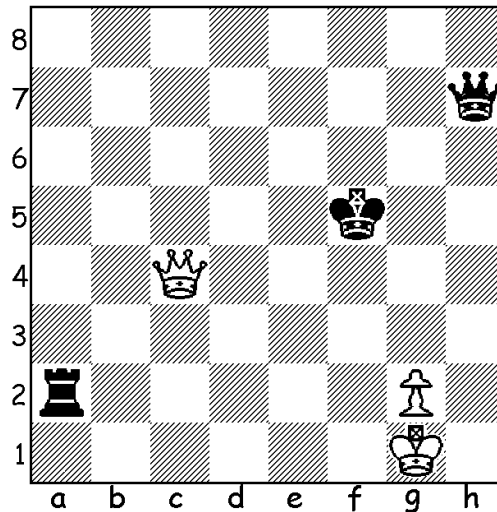


DIAGRAM 248
Queen makes a Skewer

In diagram 248, White has a pleasing opportunity to play: 1.Qc4xa2, winning a Rook free. In that case, White would be a pawn ahead and would try to win the game. Instead White has a nice skewer tactic. Can you see it? Once again, if you saw: 1.Qc4-d3+!, winning Black's Queen, you are making me proud. That is a much stronger move than capturing the Rook. This is another case of, "If you see a good move, stop and think first. Maybe you will see a better one!"

Tactical Positions

We have learned three types of tactics: Double attacks, pins and skewers. We are now ready to put our new knowledge to work! Let us solve some tactical positions together. I'll walk you through some of them explaining the details of what is going on. Then I'll ask you to try to solve some of them on your own in a "blitz quiz."

In the previous chapters after introducing you to a basic concept I'd give you some easy tasks at first and then make them progressively harder. This time, let's change things around! I'll give some really hard examples to get us started. You can thank me later! The following *study* could very well happen in a chess game as the position looks quite normal.

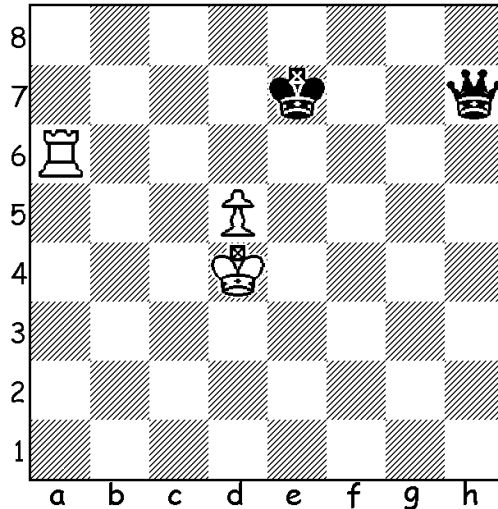


DIAGRAM 249
White to move and to win!

After first glancing at the position in diagram 249 I'm worried you might be angry with me! As you can see underneath the diagram we are told it is "White to move and to win." We should all realize that: 1.Ra6-a7+, is a Rook skewer that wins Black's Queen, so you may be offended that I offered you such an easy test of your prowess. But please do not judge me too harshly. It really is quite an incredible situation! Did you consider that after: 1...Ke7-d6! 2.Ra7xh7, what Black should do for his next move? Think about that one. I'm waiting... Oh my goodness! Did you realize that after capturing Black's Queen that Black is left in a Stalemate position? The game would be a draw as we see in the next diagram.

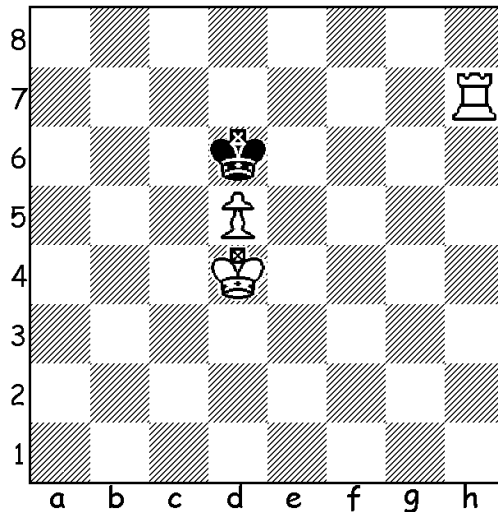


DIAGRAM 250
Black is Stalemated!

If we try to capture Black's Queen at once we put the Black King in stalemate and the game is a draw. But we are told that White is to move and to win. How can that be? Now we really do have to put on our thinking caps on. This one could be tough. If we don't act forcefully Black's Queen will start checking White's King and soon Black would be winning. That means that the only other forcing continuation in diagram 249 is to play: 1.d5-d6+ Ke7-e6!, Black avoids retreating his King to the 8th rank: 1...Ke7-d8? 2.Ra6-a8+ Kd8-d7 3.Ra8-a7+, is a skewer that

works this time. As the pawn has advanced there is no Stalemate. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

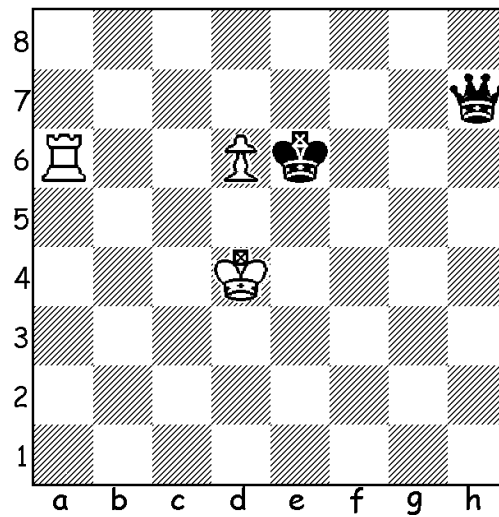


DIAGRAM 251
White to play and Win!

Now White appears to be in serious trouble. White missed his opportunity to make a skewer and now Black's Queen is ready to start checking White's King. What can White do?

If you saw that White simply *must* play: 2.d6-d7+, good for you. There was no choice. The same is true for Black. White is threatening to promote his pawn while at the same time his King is in check. Black moves to stop the pawn from promoting: 2...Ke6-e7, leaving it up to White to find a good move. Note that Black avoided: 2...Ke6xd7?, because: 3.Ra6-a7+, skewers Black's Queen. With the pawn gone there is no stalemate.

White has to see one more really fine pawn advance: 3.d7-d8=Q+!, at first this move doesn't seem possible as Black's King is able to capture White's promoting pawn. But White had seen further ahead into the position: 3...Ke7xd8 4.Ra6-a8+! Kd8-d7 5.Ra8-a7+, and 6.Ra7xh7, winning. A fine study and a good example of the power of the skewer.

The tactics of a double attack and skewers seem like short term opportunities, which indeed they are. Pins on the other hand can be long-term even what we might describe as "eternal." These are pins that cannot be broken. Two nice examples come to mind.

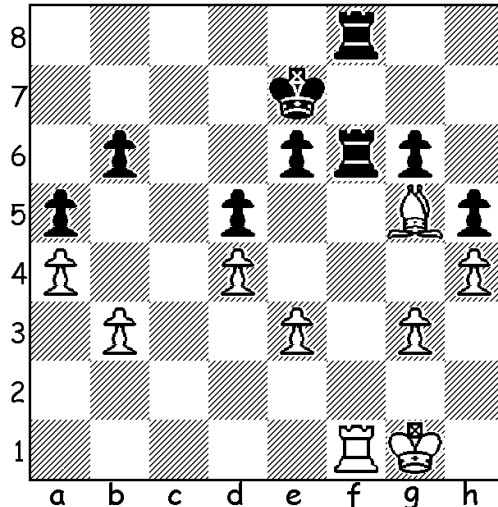


DIAGRAM 252
An Eternal Pin

In diagram 252 Black is in a nearly hopeless position. Although he is an Exchange ahead and therefore doing well in the material count the f6-Rook is in an absolute pin. Black cannot move his King away as that would leave the f6-Rook unprotected. He can't move his pawns without losing material. The only thing he can do is play: 1...Rf8-f7, and see if White can make any progress.

From White's point of view he has his opponent tied up in an absolute pin. "All" of his army appear to be working well. Except for one piece: White's King is doing nothing! It is time to put the King to work! The problem is that Black's Rooks control the f-file. How to put the King to work if it cannot cross the f-file? In Chess parlance we say that White needs to "build a bridge" so that White's King can cross the f-file. Okay. How do we build a bridge to cross the f-file? White starts with the fine move: 2.Rf1-f4!, and Black can only wait as White improves the position of his King: 2...Rf7-f8 3.Kg1-f2!, the bridge has worked! White's King is brought into battle as it is now able to cross the f-file. Black can only wait: 3...Rf8-f7 4.Kf2-e2 Rf7-f8 5.Ke2-d3 Rf8-f7, so far so good, White has improved the position of his King. The play has brought us to diagram 253.

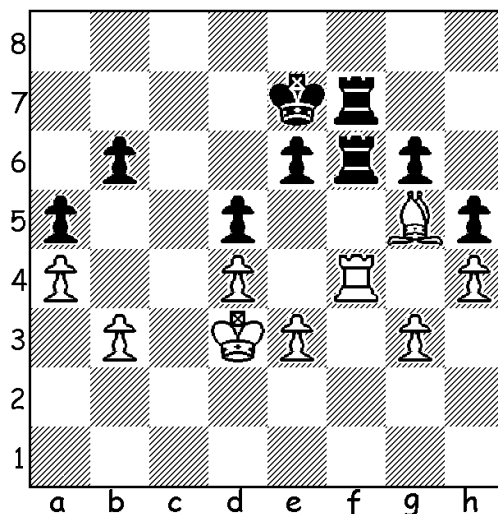


DIAGRAM 253
An Eternal Pin

As we can see in diagram 253, White indeed has improved the position of his King. So, what can he do next? The object piece as we know is the f6-Rook. White needs to put more pressure on the Rook. White finds a way: 6.e3-e4!, with the powerful threat of playing: 7.e4-e5, on his next turn. Black has to capture White's pawn before it can advance: 6...d5xe4+ 7.Kd3xe4!, suddenly White's winning plan is as clear as daylight. White is planning to advance with his King and Black cannot stop this march forwards: 7...Rf7-f8 8.Ke4-e5! Rf8-f7 9.Rf4xf6, White wins a Rook and the game.

The first time I fell victim to an eternal pin I felt so *physically* helpless. There was nothing I could do to escape my bad position.

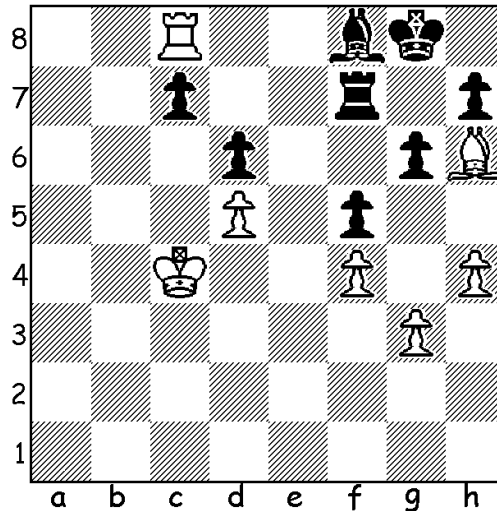


DIAGRAM 254
An Eternal Pin

In diagram 254 Black is in a terrible position. His f8-Bishop is in an absolute pin, while his f7-Rook can hardly move and is tied to the Bishop's defense. On the other hand can White win? It is hardly possible that White's King can put additional pressure on the f8-object piece. However, White can in fact win this position thanks to a peculiar situation...

White first starts his winning plan by going after a *weakness* in Black's position: The c7-pawn. White plays: 1.Kc4-b5, when Black can only wait with: 1...Rf7-f6 2.Kb5-c6 Rf6-f7, when the play has brought us to our next diagrammed position.

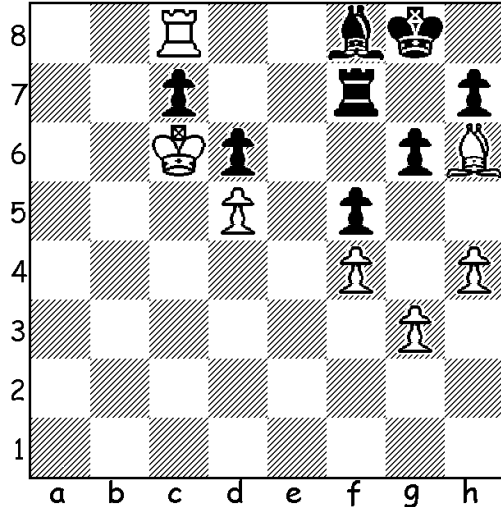


DIAGRAM 255
Zugzwang

In diagram 255 White seems ready to capture the c7-pawn but for the moment he cannot as it is protected by the f7-Rook. The general of the White army now asks himself a question, “*What will my opponent play on his next move?*” A very good question indeed. Black’s King cannot move, the f8-Bishop cannot move, the pawns are stuck, which leaves only a move for the Rook. White decides to make a “pass” move and leaves it up to his opponent to find a good response: 3.Rc8-e8!, is a good pass move. Other good pass moves would include: 3.Rc8-b8, 3.Rc8-a8, 3.Rc8-d8, but I like this one best. Black is now in what Chess players call a “zugzwang” position.

Zug what? What is zugzwang? Zugzwang is a German word. While it doesn’t translate into English in an elegant way it would mean, “Compulsion to make a bad move.” Black is compelled to move, he has to move according to the rules of Chess. Unfortunately for Black *any* move he makes only makes his position *worse*. To avoid a checkmate Black plays: 3...Rf7-f6, and White captures the c7-pawn: 4.Kc6xc7 Rf6-f7+ 5.Kc7-c6, when the situation is the same as a few moves ago, except that Black lost his c7-pawn. Once more Black doesn’t have much choice: 5...Rf7-f6 6.Kc6-d7! Rf6-f7+ 7.Kd7-e6, brings us to our next diagram.

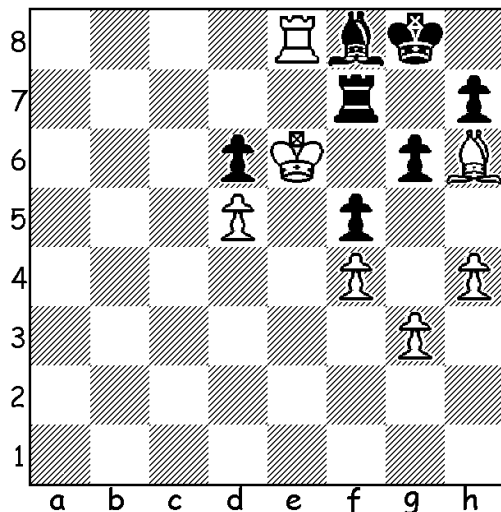


DIAGRAM 256
Zugzwang

Once again as we see in diagram 256 Black has been placed in a zugzwang situation again. This time it is even more *severe* than before. On the previous zugzwang Black had to lose a pawn. This time he will lose even more material. Black's Rook is no longer able to go to the f6-square because White's King now controls that square. Black's only move is: 7...Rf7-g7, giving White some nice options. White can win an Exchange or he could play: 8.Re8xf8+! Kg8xf8, now Black's Rook is in an absolute pin. White plays: 9.Ke6-f6, winning Black's Rook. White emerges a Bishop ahead. All thanks to the eternal pin.

Let us take another look at a fine example of zugzwang featuring a host of skewer tactics.

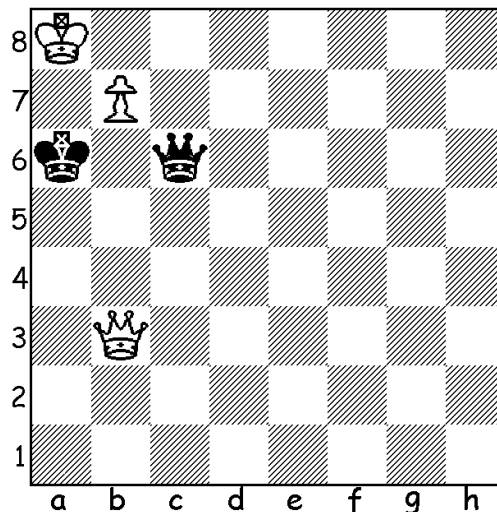


DIAGRAM 257

Zugzwang! Domination! Skewers!

Along with zugzwang there is a concept in Chess called, "domination." In the Chess concept of domination a piece is able to move but wherever it moves it is dominated. The themes of domination, zugzwang and skewers are nicely expressed by the position in diagram 257. As we can see White would like to promote his b-pawn but for the moment the pawn is in an absolute pin and cannot advance. What should White play?

The answer is a very nice move that forces Black to move his Queen. White plays: 1.Qb3-b4!, which restricts Black's King from moving at all. Black is forced to move his Queen. But wherever the Queen moves it is dominated. White's move puts Black into zugzwang as any move by the Black Queen makes his position worse. Let us see the variations.

The first point is that Black must maintain the absolute pin against the b7-pawn: 1.Qb3-b4! Qc6-e8+?, this move releases the b7-pawn from the absolute pin. White would play: 2.b7-b8=N+!, a fantastic move. White blocks the check from Black's Queen while making a counter-check to Black's King! Black would have to give up his Queen: 2...Qe8xb8+ 3.Qb4xb8!, did you notice that: 3.Ka8xb8??, would leave Black in stalemate? After capturing with the Queen, White's task is simple: To Checkmate Black's King with King and Queen against King. A technique we mastered in an earlier chapter.

This first variation shows us that Black's Queen needs to stay on the h1-a8 diagonal to keep the pin. In that case, let us make a second try for Black: 1.Qb3-b4! Qc6-d5 2.Qb4-a4+! Ka6-b6, Black's King is placed on the b-file so White can create a skewer: 3.Qa4-b3+!, with a double-attack against Black's King and Queen. After: 3...Qd5xb3 4.b7-b8=Q+ Kb6-c6 5.Qb8xb3, the newly promoted Queen skewers Black's Queen. White wins.

Okay, that didn't work. Perhaps Black should retreat his Queen further? How about: 1.Qb3-b4! Qc6-f3 2.Qb4-a4+! Ka6-b6 3.Qa4-b3+!, with the same double-attack as before. The skewer works again: 3...Qf3xb3 4.b7-b8=Q+ Kb6-c6 5.Qb8xb3, winning Black's Queen.

Retreating even further? This time to the g2-square: 1...Qc6-g2 2.Qb4-a3+! Ka6-b5 3.Qa3-b2+!, with the same double-attack as before. The skewer works again: 3...Qg2xb2 4.b7-b8=Q+ Kb5-c4 5.Qb8xb2, winning Black's Queen.

Now it is the turn of the Class. "How should White win against the retreating move: 1...Qc6-h1?"

The correct answer is: 2.Qb4-a3+! Ka6-b6 3.Qa3-b2+! Kb6-a6 4.Qb2-a2+ Ka6-b6 5.Qa2-b1+!, with a double attack. The skewer works as before: 5...Qh1xb1 6.b7-b8=Q+ Kb6-c5 7.Qb8xb2, winning Black's Queen.

One more question for the Class: "If the play had gone: 1.Qb3-b4! Qc6-h1 2.Qb4-a3+! Ka6-b6 3.Qa3-b2+!, Black had played the move: 3...Kb6-c7, the play leads us to our next diagram.

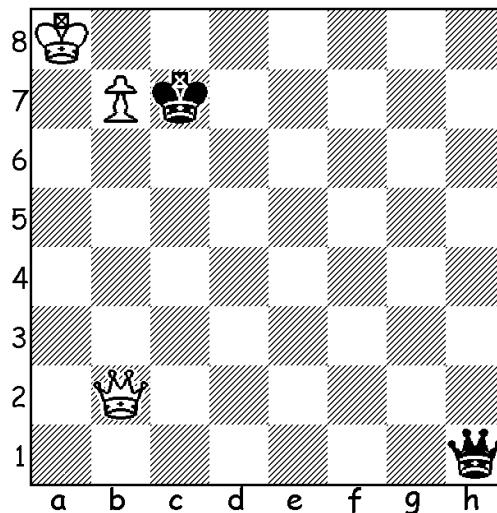


DIAGRAM 258
Zugzwang! Domination! Skewers!

Okay Class, "How could White win by a skewer tactic now?"

The correct answer is: 4.Qb2-h2+!! Qh1xh2 5.b7-b8=Q+ Kc7-c6 6.Qb8xh2, and once again Black loses his Queen.

A few more words before leaving this position, after White's first move: 1.Qb3-b4, Black had to move his Queen. But no matter where it moved Black's position became worse. Black was in zugzwang as any move he made weakened his position. Furthermore, no matter where he moved his Queen on the diagonal it fell victim to a skewer tactic. So the Queen had no safe square to go. That means the Queen was dominated. The position is remarkable in how many skewer possibilities it contained.

By the way, the position in diagram 256 is a study which was composed by Louis van Vliet a Dutchman. The study was published in the German chess magazine, "Deutsche Schachzeitung," in the year 1888. A very clever composition don't you think? It could easily be from a competitive game.

The idea of tying your opponent up in pins and skewers leading to an eventual zugzwang position is a concept that has been used for centuries. The following position is a classic example of what I mean.

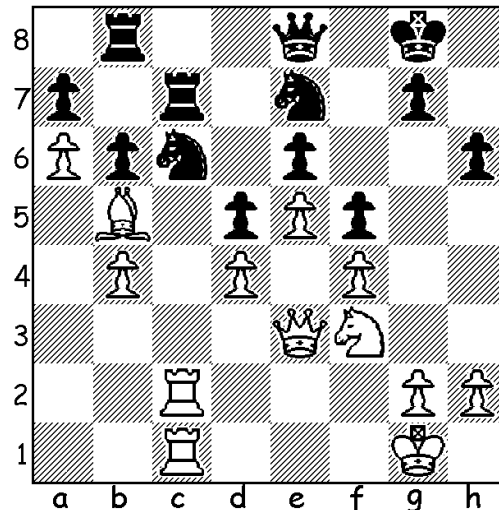


DIAGRAM 259
A Double Pin

The position in diagram 259 was taken from a game played between World Champion Alexander Alekhine and Aron Nimzowitsch from the 1930 tournament played in San Remo, Italy. If we look carefully at the position we see that the b5-Bishop pins the c6-Knight to Black's Queen on the a4-e8 diagonal. In addition, the c6-Knight is pinned along the c-file as well by White's doubled Rooks. The object piece, the c7-Knight is placed in a cross-pin. It is pinned along a diagonal as well as a file. The question is, "How can White increase the pressure on the object piece, the c6-Knight?"

Can you too play like a World Champion and figure out White's best move? Take your time and give the position some thought. The idea is really well hidden so if you don't see the right moves don't feel bad. I didn't find it either!

Alexander Alekhine found a really nice plan. He played: 24.Rc2-c3!, I didn't understand this move. White's plan will unfold in two more moves. If you thought about: 24.Qe3-b3, with the idea of playing: 25.Qb3-a4, give yourself credit. That was my plan! You are thinking like an international Chess grandmaster.

Aron Nimzowitsch is tied up but he tries to set up a good defensive formation: (24.Rc2-c3) 24...Qe8-d7 25.Rc1-c2! Kg8-f8 26.Qe3-c1!, this was White's fine idea. White *triples* his major pieces on the c-file keeping the c6-Knight in a cross-pin: Along the c-file and a4-e8 diagonal as well.

Black is not in an absolute pin but the relative pins are so strong Black can hardly move. For the moment, Black has to protect his c6-Knight: 26...Rbc8 27.Bb5-a4!, with this retreat, White prepares to advance his b-pawn. A threat that Black must prevent: 27...b6-b5 28.Ba4xb5 Kf8-e8 29.Bb5-a4 Ke8-d8, the play has brought us to our next diagram.

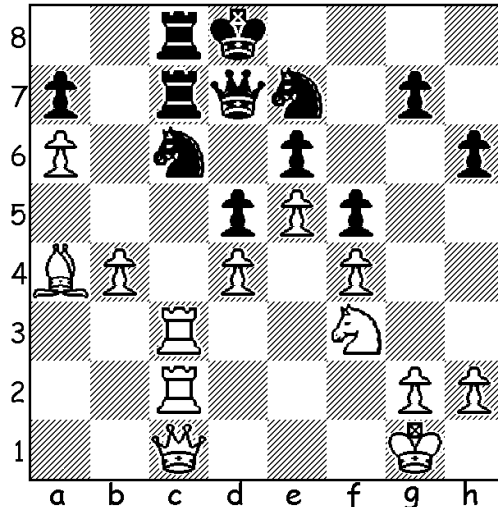


DIAGRAM 260
Zugzwang!

Black has done his best to avoid immediately losing a piece. Now White makes a “pass move” with: 30.h2-h4, leaving it up to Black to make a move. Nimzowitsch now realized that he has no constructive moves. His Knights and Rooks cannot move. If either his King or Queen moves away from the protection of the c7-Rook, White will advance his b-pawn to win material. Black can play: 30...g7-g6, but will eventually run out of pawn moves. For example: 31.Kg1-h2 h6-h5 31.Kh2-h1, Nimzowitsch realized he would soon be in a more severe zugzwang so he gave up. In Chess parlance he *resigned* the game, *admitting* defeat.

After I had first learned how to play Chess, my first teacher, Jeffrey Parsons, showed me a Checkmating pattern that we learned in the previous chapter, a Smothered Mate. I was so excited I ran home to show my mother. She was busy in the kitchen washing dishes and I dragged her over to my Chess set to show her what I had just learned. She listened while I explained the various moves leading to a beautiful finish. She said, “Yasser that is really nice. Now can I go back and finish washing the dishes?” I couldn’t believe that she wasn’t as carried away with this beautiful pattern as I was. Hopefully, you will get some of the joy I felt.

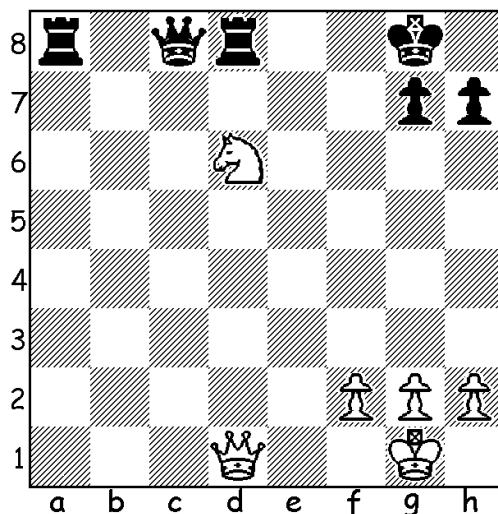


DIAGRAM 261
Smothered Checkmate!

The position in diagram 261 is a basic setting for a Smothered Checkmate pattern. As we can see White is way behind in the material count. To make matters worse White faces a back-rank Checkmating pattern as well. Finally, the d6-Knight is in a relative pin to the d8-Rook. In short, White's position appears grim. The one thing that White has going in his favor is that Black's King Position is vulnerable. The f7-pawn is missing which exposes Black's King to a check. When Jeffrey told me that White has a "winning position." I was shocked. I tried my best to "find the win" but I could not.

I certainly started well and found the first two best moves for White: 1.Qd1-d5+ Kg8-h8, a forced move as: 1...Kg8-f8?? 2.Qd5-f7#, on the spot! After Black moves his King to the corner, I played: 2.Nd6-f7+ Kh8-g8, so far so good! I realized that my second move was a Knight fork and so I gleefully continued by capturing the Rook with check! In order to reduce the material deficit: 3.Nf7xd8+ Kg8-h8, a forced move for the same reason as before, 4.Nd8-f7+ Kh8-g8 5.Nf7-d6+ Kg8-h8, and here I hesitated. I really wanted to play: 6.Nd6xc8, capturing Black's Queen. But I realized that in that case Black would play: 6...Ra8-a1+, and I would be in a back-rank Checkmate pattern. I was stumped and could not find the win.

Eventually, Jeffrey showed me the win that I did not find: 1.Qd1-d5+ Kg8-h8 2.Nd6-f7+ Kh8-g8 3.Nf7-h6++, a move I never considered! I was so happy to capture the d8-Rook I didn't consider any other move. Please note that White's third move is a *double check*. Black's King is attacked by *both* the Queen and the Knight. Black cannot capture White's Queen because of this double check. Therefore, Black's King has to go back into the corner: 3... Kg8-h8, the play has brought us to the next diagram:

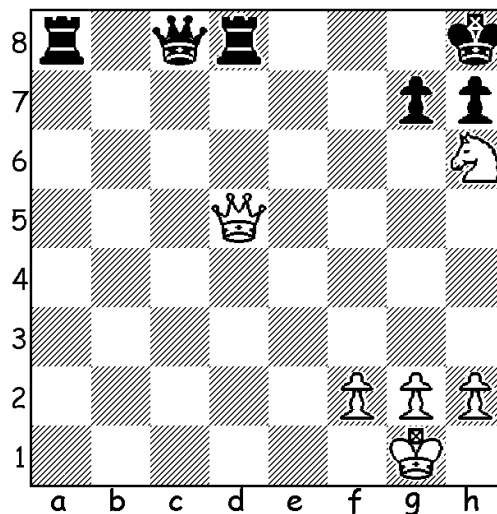


DIAGRAM 262
Smothered Checkmate!

Now comes the truly stunning move: 4.Qd5-g8+!!, White sacrifices his Queen! This seemed crazy to me. I prized my Queen very much and would hardly ever voluntarily give the Queen up. Indeed I usually lost my Queen by making a *blunder*. Black has no choice and must capture White's Queen: 4...Rd8xg8 5.Nh6-f7, Checkmate! An incredible finish. White is way behind in material; faces a back rank Checkmate and has only one piece left, a lone Knight but it is that lone piece that gives Checkmate! What an amazing concept. I wanted to learn more!

Before leaving this position, a quick question for the class, "Now that you have seen the solution, why would it be a mistake for White to capture Black's d8-Rook?"

Correct answer, "Because in that case, the Smothered Checkmate pattern would not work. Black's Queen would capture on the g8-square and also protect the f7-square."

The following position was taken from one of my favorite Chess websites, Chess History. The site has over eight thousand "Chess Notes" featuring all kinds of articles about Chess history as well as chess positions.

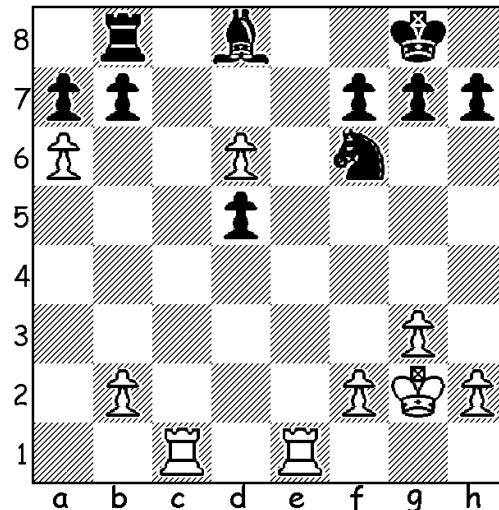


DIAGRAM 263
Pawn Fork!

The position in diagram 263 is taken from *Chess Notes 8623* the situation is White to move and to win. What is the first thing about the position that attracts your eye? My first thought was that Black's King Position is vulnerable to a back-rank Checkmate and that by "working" with the passed d6-pawn White should win.

My first winning attempt was to play: 1.d6-d7, with the threat of: 2.Re1-e8+, with mate to follow. I was quite satisfied with this idea as: 1...Nf6xd7 2.Re1-e8+ Nd7-f8 3.a6xb7, with: 4.Rc1-c8, to come Black would lose material.

But then I started to wonder about a different defense: 1.d6-d7 Kg8-f8!, protecting the e8-square. Suddenly I felt less sure about the solution. If White continued by: 2.Rc1-c8 Nf6xd7! 3.Rc8xb8 Nd7xb8 4.a6xb7 Bd8-e7, and I began to feel that I was on the wrong plan. Maybe: 1.d6-d7, is not the correct first move?

Taking a second look I began to think about: 1.a6xb7 Rb8xb7 2.Rc1-c8 Rb7-d7 3.Re1-e7 Rd7xd6 4.Re7xa7 Kg8-f8, and again I had that sinking feeling the win had slipped away.

One critical insight into Chess tactics is this: The *closer* the pawns are to the promotion square the *more powerful* they become. With the White d6-pawn and a6-pawns so far advanced up the board I started to think, "How can I create a pawn fork?" Then I saw the nice idea. Take a moment and see if you too can't find a way to create a pawn fork for White in the position before I present the solution.

Ready? Spoiler alert, here comes the solution: 1.Rc1-c8!, a stunning move. White gives up a Rook for free? Can that really be a good move? Black of course must accept the gift: 1...Rb8xc8 2.Re1-e8+, a second Rook sacrifice? Can this really be good for White? Black has no choice and accepts the second Rook offer as well: 2...Nf6xe8 3.d6-d7!, the point of White's play. The play has brought us to diagram 264.

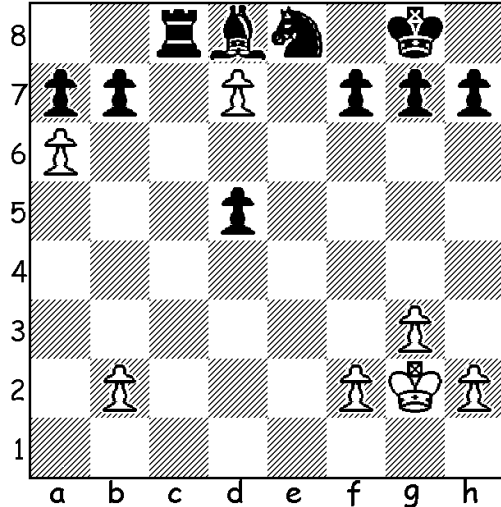


DIAGRAM 264
Pawn Fork!

With this pawn fork White now threatens mate in one! Black is forced to play: 3...Ne8-d6 4.d7xc8=Q Nd6xc8 5.a6xb7!, it is the a-pawn that breaks through and wins the game! Oh my, I didn't see that one coming. Did you? I'm sure you'll agree that was a pleasing example of a pawn fork.

Alright, this has been a fun chapter on tactics featuring double-attacks, pins, skewers and a smothered checkmate as well. Now let us do a "blitz quiz." Here are the rules of the Blitz quiz: I'm going to give you six positions. You will have one minute for the whole test! That is right. Only ten seconds per quiz on average. On a piece of paper prepare to write down *one* move for each position. In all positions it will be White to move and win. Your coach will tell you when to turn over the blitz quiz sheet of positions. Write your move below each position.

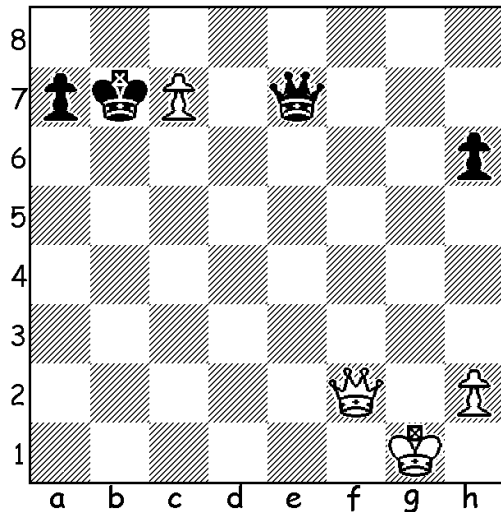


DIAGRAM 265
Can you create a Royal Fork?

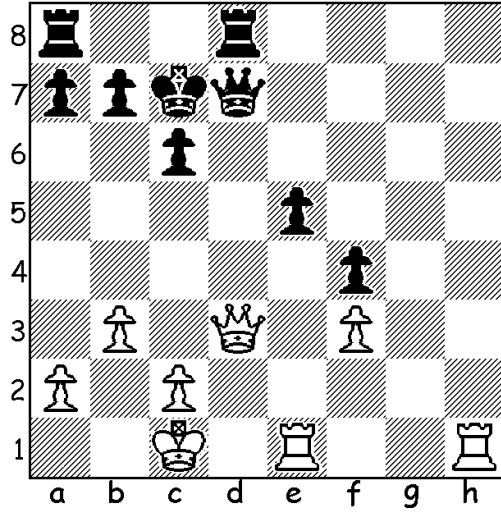


DIAGRAM 266

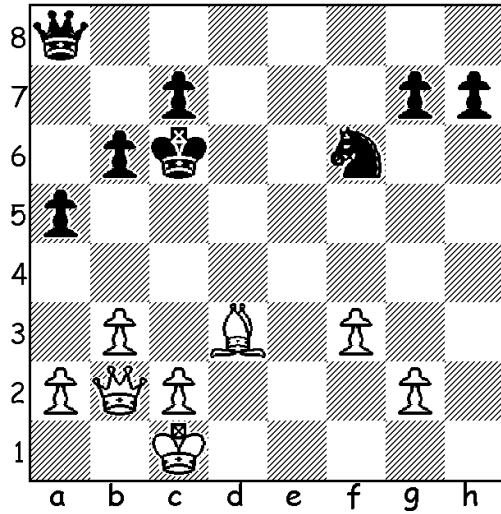


DIAGRAM 267

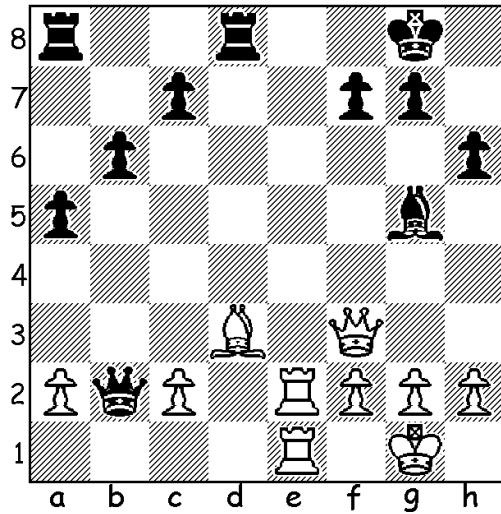


DIAGRAM 268

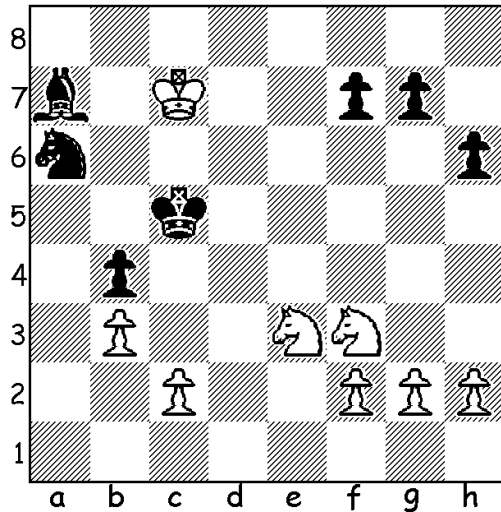


DIAGRAM 269

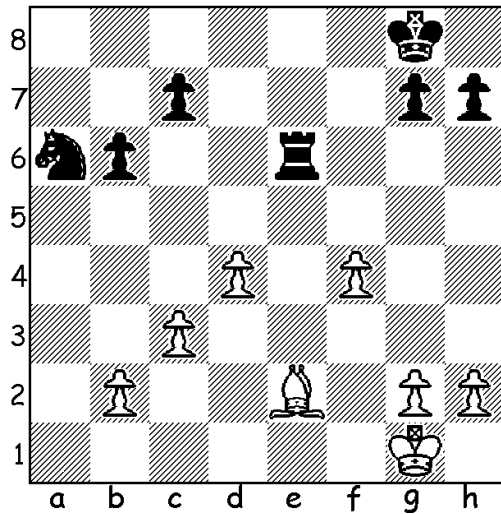


DIAGRAM 270

An extra credit bonus question if you have the time!

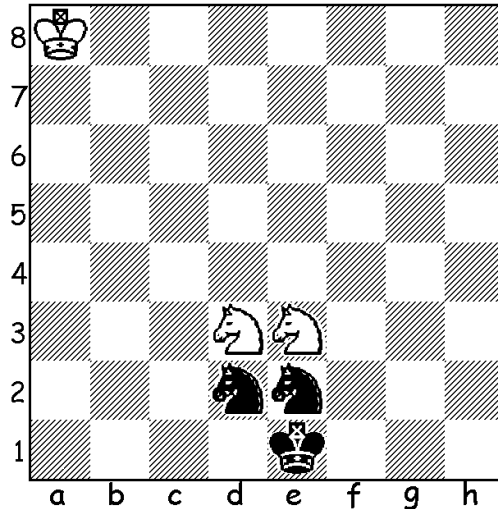
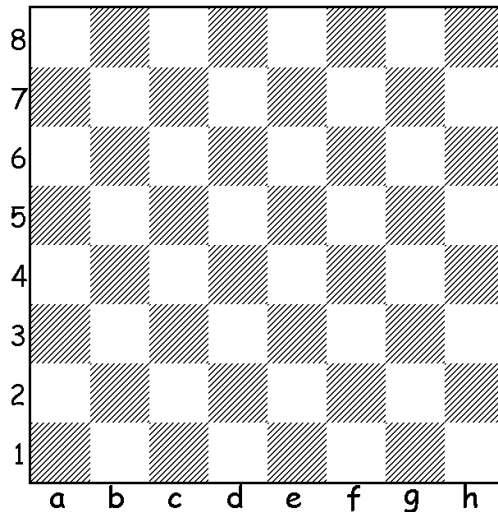


DIAGRAM 271

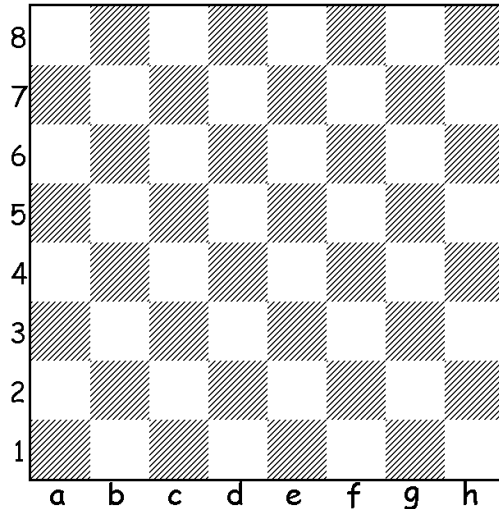
Is Black's King in Checkmate?
Or is it a Stalemate?

Homework

For your homework I would like you to make *two* of your very own composition studies.



In the above blank diagram, what I'd like you to do is to place a White Queen on the d-file, any square that you would like. The White Queen is to make a triple attack against three Black pieces, with one of the attacks being a skewer against a King (so there will be four Black pieces). This is *your composition* so be creative!



As before, in the above blank diagram, place a White Queen anywhere you would like on the 6th rank. The White Queen is to make a triple attack against three Black pieces, with one of them being a skewer against a King (so there will be four Black pieces). Creativity gets extra credit!

Blitz Quiz Answers

DIAGRAM 265

1.Qf2xa7+!

DIAGRAM 266

1.Rh1-h7!

DIAGRAM 267

1.Qb2xf6+!

DIAGRAM 268

1.Qf3xa8!

DIAGRAM 269

1.Kc7-b7!

DIAGRAM 270

1.Be2-c4!

DIAGRAM 271

(#) Checkmate!

Chapter Twelve:

Two Inspiring Games of Chess

Chess is a competitive game but it is also an art form. An often quoted expression is, "Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder." Art is meant to showcase beauty. Games of Chess can also be very beautiful. But to truly appreciate a beautiful chess game, we have to know the rules of play. In fact the greater our Chess understanding the better able we are to appreciate a really beautiful game of Chess.

Generations of artists have been inspired by Leonardo Da Vinci's painting masterpiece the "Mona Lisa." Similarly generations of Chess players have replayed the masterpieces of great Chess players from the past with the same feeling of awe and inspiration. While I've been inspired by the games of others in my career two Chess games in particular stood out for me. They made me go, "Wow!" I hope the following two games will inspire you as well.

The first game was played in Paris, France at an opera house in 1858. It was an "off-hand game" a "fun game" in chess parlance it was merely a "skittles game." It wasn't played in a tournament under hushed conditions. In fact it was played close to a stage where an opera was being performed!

Playing the White pieces was the pride of American Chess, Paul Morphy (June 22, 1837 – July 10, 1884) considered the strongest player of his era. In my view, Paul Morphy should be recognized as the first World Champion although he is not officially honored with such a title – a serious mistake in my view. His opponents playing the Black pieces were two noble men, the German Duke Karl of Brunswick and the French Count Isouard. The noblemen consulted together as a partnership. A first hand written account explains that Paul Morphy played the game while wanting to watch the opera.

With that background we are now ready to play through this beautiful game which is known all over the world.

Let us take one more look at our starting position.

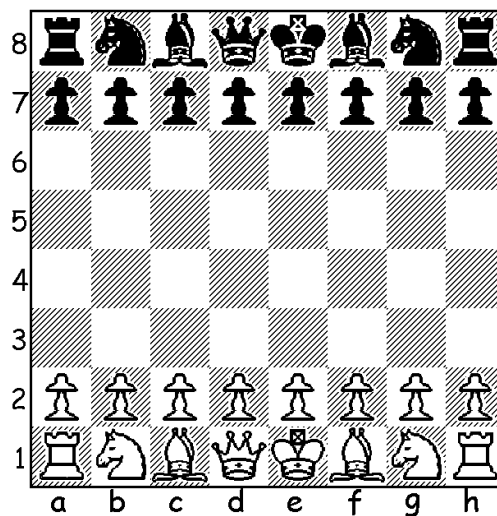


Diagram 272
Starting Position

My goodness it has been quite a while since we have seen the starting position. Was it chapter one or perhaps chapter two when we first laid eyes on this position? We have learned so much we can now actually see the position with "new eyes."

The proper way to think about the starting position is to imagine that all of the troops in our army are sleeping in their barracks. We have to wake them up and to prepare them for battle as quickly as possible. In Chess parlance to mobilize our pawns and pieces by moving them forwards is called, "development." It is the fourth element in chess. (Reminder: Space; Material; King Position, were our first three elements.)

We must never forget that Chess is a team sport. We have to use all the members of our team, our army, putting them to work, coordinating them together as quickly as possible. We want to

develop fast. The game we are about to see is a wonderful example of the benefits of rapid development.

Still we need a principle to guide our play in the Opening. We cannot just bring our pawns and pieces “out” moving whichever one suits us as “best” for the moment. Something has to help guide our choice of moves. That something is the *center*. We must do our very best at the start of the game to control the center squares and occupy them with our pawns and pieces.

As a helpful reminder I’ve imposed the *center square* on top of the 273 diagrammed starting position below. It is those squares in the center of the board that we must control. Remember this is the “high terrain” of the chessboard. We will develop our army in such a way, from the starting moves, to *control the center!* These will be our guiding principles in the Opening: Control the center; mobilize our troops quickly.

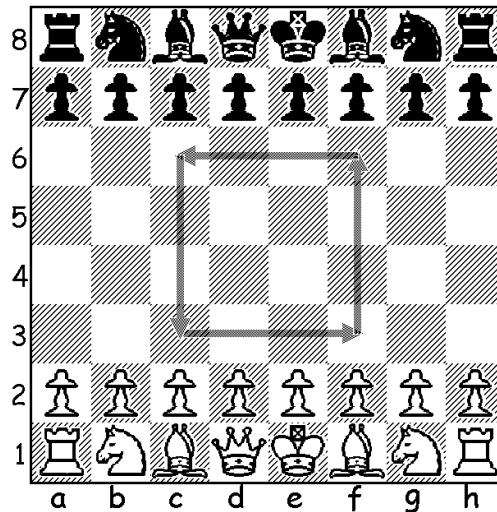


Diagram 273
Control the Center Square!

At long last we are ready to begin!

Philidor Defense
Paul Morphy
Duke of Brunswick and Count Isouard
Paris 1858

1.e2-e4

With this Opening move, White’s e4-pawn now attacks the d5-square as well as the f5-square. The e4-pawn occupies the sweet center e4-square. In addition it opens a diagonal for White’s Queen and f1-Bishop to develop off the first rank. This Opening move is called the, “King’s Pawn *Opening*,” in Chess parlance because, logically enough, it is the pawn that is in front of the King that moves first.

The King Pawn Opening along with the Queen Pawn Opening (1.d2-d4) are the two most popular Opening moves for White in Chess. World Champion Robert James Fischer favored the King Pawn Opening (1.e2-e4) throughout his career and is often quoted, “Best by test!”

1...e7-e5

Black responds in kind, duplicating the same advantages as White's first move. This Opening move by Black is called, the "King's Pawn *Defense*."

2.Ng1-f3

White brings his Knight into the game and attacks Black's e5-pawn. Again, notice how Morphy develops his pieces directly into the center square.

2...d7-d6

Black protects his e5-pawn. This move is known as the "Philidor Defense," named after Danican Philidor who we learned about in the previous chapters. Today, it is considered a bit too passive a move. What do I mean? Well, consider the f8-Bishop for a moment. A move ago the f8-Bishop was getting itself all excited. It was about to get into battle! Black's second move however closed the window to its development. Now it doesn't have such a good opportunity to play. More popular moves for Black are: 2...Nb8-c6, developing and defending the e5-pawn as well as 2...Ng8-f6, developing and making a counter-attack against White's e4-pawn.

3.d2-d4!

A good central advance by White. Again, he attacks Black's e5-pawn and opens the game for both his Queen and c1-Bishop.

3...Bc8-g4?

A bad move by Black. However it is certainly understandable. Black pins the f3-Knight to White's Queen and in this way Black wrongly thinks that he is able to defend his e5-pawn from capture. Once again, a better move was: 3...Ng8-f6, developing his g8-Knight while making a counter-attack against White's e4-pawn.

4.d4xe5!

Capturing and removing Black's e5-pawn from the board. In order not to remain a pawn behind in the material count Black's next move is forced.

4...Bg4xf3

Black captures and removes White's Knight from the board so that he can then regain his lost pawn. Black could not play: 4...d6xe5?, because after: 5.Qd1xd8+ Ke8xd8, Black has lost the right to Castle but more importantly with the Queens traded the f3-Knight is no longer pinned. White would continue: 6.Nxe5, not only winning a pawn but also threatening to capture the f7-pawn, with a fork against Black's King and h8-Rook as well as attacking the g4-Bishop.

5.Qd1xf3

Capturing the Bishop while developing his Queen. White is focused upon rapid development.

5...d6xe5

Black recaptures his pawn restoring the material balance. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

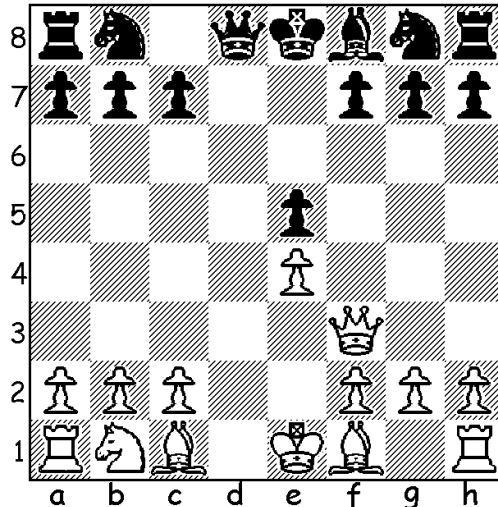


Diagram 274
White to play

It is now White's turn to play in diagram 274. We know we want to rapidly develop our forces and we want to direct them towards the center. Which move would you play as White?

Paul Morphy played.

6.Bf1-c4!

A fine move! White attacks the f7-pawn with his Queen and Bishop and threatens a mate in one! A very serious threat indeed. Black has to find a good defense.

6...Ng8-f6?

And this was not it. Black blocks the attack against the f7-pawn, which is a very good thing. Also Black develops a piece which speaks in favor of this move. However it is a mistake as it allows White an opportunity for a double attack tactic. A better move was: 6...Qd8-e7, defending the f7-pawn with the Queen.

We now come to our next diagram with a question posed for you to answer.

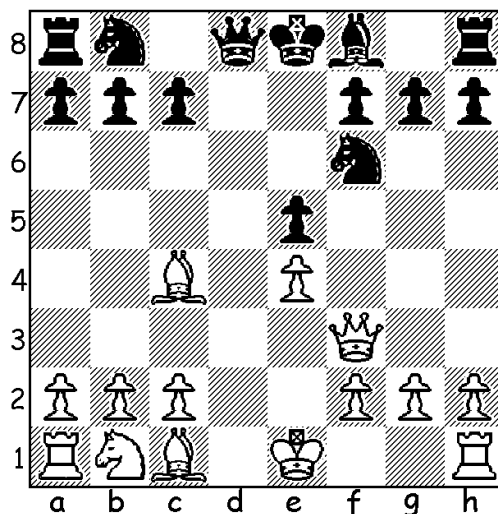


Diagram 275

*White to play
Can you find a double-attack?*

Paul Morphy was quick to spot his opportunity.

7.Qf3-b3!

A fine *principle* of Opening play is, “Don’t move the same piece twice in the Opening.” This principle is a good reminder that we need to develop our *whole* army. However, if we see a good opportunity we should violate the principle and make the best move possible. Principles help guide our decisions but they are certainly not rules.

With his seventh move Morphy creates a battery with his Queen and Bishop attacking the f7-pawn which threatens Checkmate in two moves. Another very serious threat! In addition, the b7-pawn is also attacked by the Queen. With this double attack tactic White is ready to win a pawn.

7...Qd8-e7

Black protects his important f7-pawn and defends against a Checkmate threat. In fact this was Black’s best move. A worse choice was: 7...Qd8-d7? 8.Qb3xb7 Qd7-c6, trying to save the a8-Rook allows a devastating pin. Can you see how White would win in this line of play?

The correct answer is, “After: 8...Qd7-c6, Black would move his Queen onto the same diagonal as his King. With: 9.Bc4-b5!, Black would lose his Queen as it would be in an absolute pin.”

We now come to our next diagram.

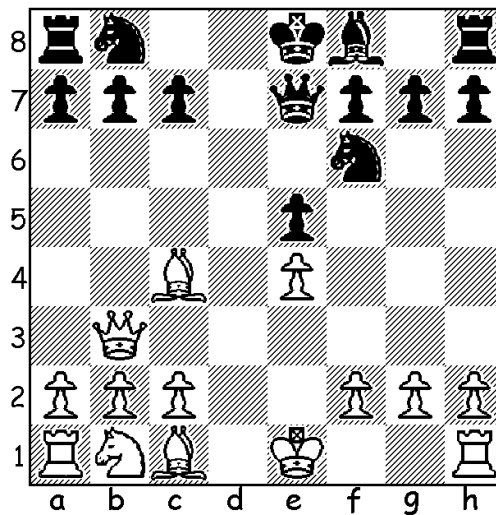


Diagram 276
White to play

In diagram 276, it is White to play. What would be your choice? Think about your decision carefully. After selecting the move that you would play, what would you expect Black to do in response to your move? Don’t peek ahead!

If you wanted to play: 8.Qb3xb7, winning a pawn. Good for you! That move was my first *desire* as well. After capturing the b7-pawn I would certainly want to capture the a8-Rook next! Black’s only defense would have been: 8...Qe7-b4+!, which would force the trade of Queens: 9.Qb7xb4 Bf8xb4+ 10.Bc1-d2, when White is a healthy pawn ahead in the material count. It is this

defensive move: (8.Qb3xb7) Qe7-b4+!, which would make me think twice about capturing the b7-pawn. Perhaps White has a better choice?

If you wanted to play: 8.Bc4xf7+ Qe7xf7 9.Qb3xb7, in order to win the a8-Rook – the defense: ...Qe7-b4+, trading Queens is no longer possible – an even bigger bravo for you. White would certainly make good material gains with that line of play.

Paul Morphy however preferred a third possibility. He wanted to continue developing his pieces as rapidly as possible.

8.Nb1-c3

A good move as White continues with his development. White doesn't go for immediate material gain but chooses to bring more pieces into the battle. Now the threat to capture the b7-pawn is really serious because: ...Qe7-b4+, forcing the trade of Queens is no longer available.

8...c7-c6

With this move Black's Queen protects the b7-pawn.

9.Bc1-g5!

Morphy continues with his fine play, developing his pieces as rapidly as possible. Now the f6-Knight pinned. The play has brought us to our next diagram. This time it is Black to play.

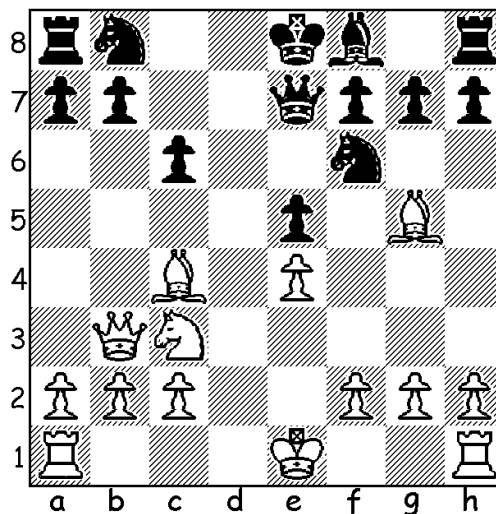


Diagram 277
Black to play

If we put ourselves in Black's shoes we can really appreciate how difficult his position has become. Black would like to develop his forces but the natural move: 9...Nb8-d7, blocks the Queen's protection of the b7-pawn. White would simply capture: 10.Qb3xb7, winning one pawn and likely: 11.Qb7xc6, winning a second pawn next.

Breaking the pin with: 9...h7-h6 10.Bg5xf6 gxf6, Black recaptures with the pawn in order to keep the b7-pawn protected: 11.O-O-O, offers a nice advantage to White. The last reasonable alternative: 9...Nb8-a6 10.Bc4xa6 b7xa6 11.O-O-O, leaves Black with a number of weak pawns on the Queenside.

The noblemen decided that their best chance was to attack the c4-Bishop.

9...b7-b5

With this move, the Black players were hoping to force White to retreat the c4-Bishop. Any retreat such as: 10.Bc4-e2, would give Black time to play: 10...Nb8-d7, developing. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

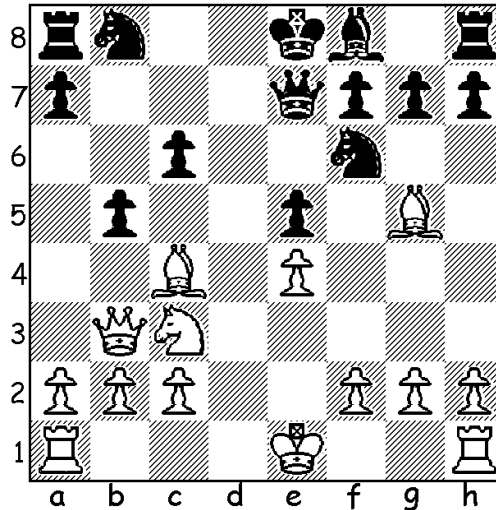


Diagram 278
White to play

10.Nc3xb5!

A fine Knight sacrifice by Paul Morphy. He correctly reasoned that thanks to his lead in development sacrificing a Knight for two pawns was more than justified. This is entirely correct. Notice how many pieces Black has on the eighth rank, sleeping in their barracks while White's army is well mobilized.

10...c6xb5

Black accepts the piece sacrifice. In the *post-mortem* it was suggested that Black should have played: 10...Qe7-b4+, in order to trade Queens. While that was a better choice after: 11.Nb5-c3 Qb4xb3 12.a2xb3, White would have a host of advantages. He would be a pawn ahead in the material count; he has better development; in addition Black's Queenside pawns would become targets.

11.Bc4xb5+

White captures a second pawn for the lost Knight. More importantly, Black's King is placed in check.

11...Nb8-d7

Black blocks White's check and develops a piece. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

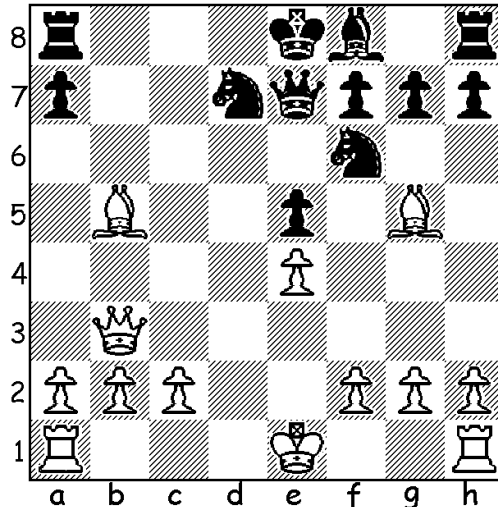


Diagram 279
White to play

Once more imagine that you were Paul Morphy and you had to choose which move to play as White. What would you do? Think over your move carefully before I share with you my thoughts.

If I had White in the position in diagram 279, I would be very pleased. My thoughts might go something like this, “My g5-Bishop pins the f6-Knight in a relative pin to Black’s Queen, while my b5-Bishop pins the d7-Knight in an absolute pin. Very good! I’m going to make my object piece the d7-Knight because I know with certainty that the d7-Knight cannot move. So I need to bring as much fire power as I can against the d7-Knight. I should Castle Queenside because I bring my a1-Rook into play. I also put my King in a safe position while avoiding: ...Qe7-b4+, as a potential defense trading Queens.” If these were your thoughts too, a big bravo! Because that was the exact move that Paul Morphy chose as well.

12.O-O-O!

Simply excellent! The text fits perfectly with everything that we are told to do. White develops; brings his King into safety; places his Rook on the *open* d-file. In this case, the open d-file is particularly important because the d7-Knight is White’s target.

While our next chapter will discuss this element in more depth it is a good time to introduce our fifth element in Chess: Pawn Structure. (Our first four elements have been: Space, Material, King Position and Development.) The pawn structure can help us in our plans. In this case, the pawn structure tells us that the d-file is the open file because neither side has a pawn on the d-file. *Rooks just love open files.* Just as Bishops love open diagonals. White immediately brings his Rook to the open file and once again focuses upon the d7-Knight.

12...Ra8-d8

Black defends his Knight while developing his a8-Rook.

Quick question for the class: “What would the class have done if Black had played: 12...O-O-O, getting his King out of the absolute pin?”

Correct answer: “Black’s King would not have had any protective pawn shield on the Queenside. White would play: 13.Bb5-a6+! Kb8-c7 14.Qb3-b7, checkmate!” Black’s King Position would not have been a safe one on the Queenside. This would be a case of Black’s King jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire.

The play has brought us to our next diagram.

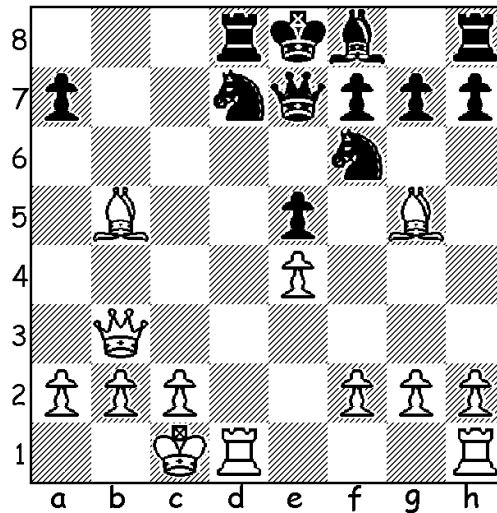


Diagram 280
White to play

As before, same questions, if you had White's position what move would you play? I'll share my thoughts in a moment. Give yourself time to see if you can find a good move.

My approach to diagram 280 would be great satisfaction with White's position. The pieces are coordinating well and things seem to be in harmony. If there is one piece I would really like to improve, it would be the h1-Rook. It is still asleep. I know that my object piece is the d7-Knight. I'd be tempted to play: 13.Rd1-d3, making a *Rook-lift*. The idea with that move is to play: 14.Rh1-d1, in order to double Rooks on the d-file, keeping up the attack against the d7-Knight. Morphy finds the best move of all.

13.Rd1xd7!!

Simply brilliant. White does not waste time trying to double Rooks he simply captures the d7-Knight at once.

13...Rd8xd7

Black has no choice. If he played: 13...Nf6xd7? 14.Bg5xe7, would mean the loss of his Queen.

14.Rh1-d1!

Bringing his last reserves into battle. White has completed his piece development while Black's Kingside pieces his Rook and Bishop have not moved. They are still sleeping. White is now ready to capture the f6-Knight first and then the d7-Rook recovering all his sacrifices.

14...Qe7-e6

Black is in a terrible bind. His pieces are pinned in so many ways he can hardly make a move. With the text, Black is hoping to be able to develop his f8-Bishop while getting out of the relative pin. The play has brought us to diagram 281.

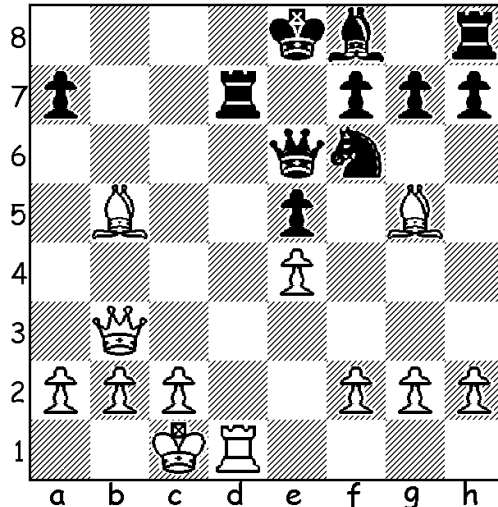


Diagram 281
White to play

Once more I would like to challenge you to find White's best move. There are a number of different captures that White can make so think over your move carefully.

Okay, what did you pick?

If you wanted to play: 15.Bg5xf6 g7xf6 16.Bb5xd7+ Qe6xd7 17.Rd1xd7 Ke8xd7 19.Qb3xf7+, congratulations that indeed would be a winning series of captures. However, there is an even better path to victory. Consider the position once more before the answer is revealed.

Paul Morphy played.

15.Bb5xd7+!

At first glance this move seems wrong as it gives Black's f6-Knight a chance to capture the Bishop. But Morphy had foreseen a beautiful win.

15...Nf6xd7

Recapturing with the Queen would cost Black a huge loss of material: 15...Qe6xd7 16.Qb3-b8+! Ke8-e7 17.Qb8xe5+! Ke7-d8 (17...Qd7-e6? 18.Qe5-c7+ Ke7-e8 19.Rd1-d8#) 18.Bg5xf6+ g7xf6 19.Qe5xf6+ Kd8-c7 20.Rd1xd7+ Kc7xd7 21.Qf6xh8, when White is ahead a Queen for a Bishop and he has won many pawns along the way.

The play has brought us to our next diagram.

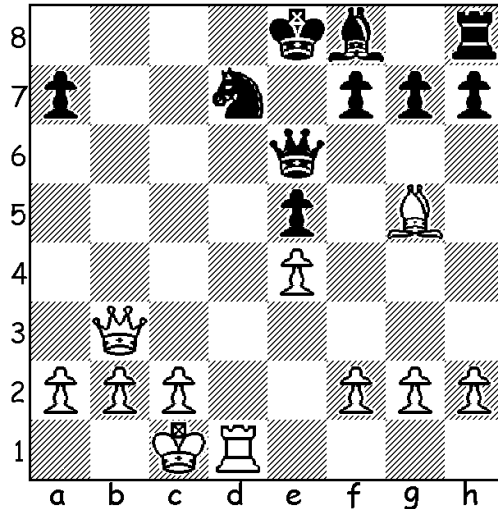


Diagram 282
White to play

The last challenge. Can you see the Checkmate that Paul Morphy has in mind? Take your time. It is a beauty!

16.Qb3-b8+!!

How joyful! A brilliant Queen sacrifice. Black has no choice but must accept.

16...Nd7xb8 17.Rd1-d8#

White's final move deserves a diagram of its own.

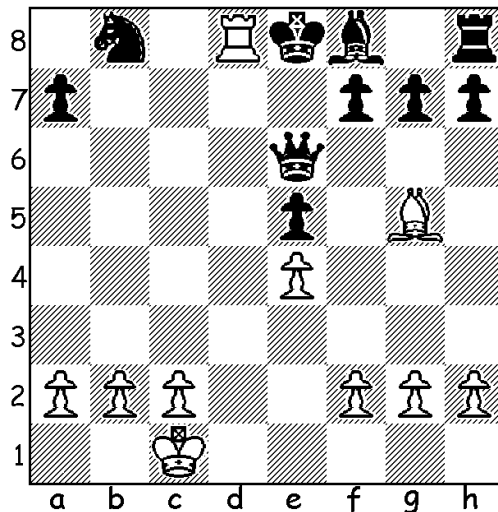


Diagram 283
Black is Checkmated!

The final move shown in diagram 283 is a telling picture. White has only a Bishop and Rook but those are the ones giving Checkmate! Meanwhile Black's Kingside pieces never moved. This game is considered a *model* example of why developing our pieces quickly in the Opening is critical.

I've played and replayed this game dozens of times. In fact, I've memorized this game as it taught me so much. With hindsight it seemed that Black never recovered from his mistake on move three. After move three all of Morphy's moves were logical as each move fit together perfectly. A wonderful game from start to finish – for White!

One Opening principle that coaches tell their Chess students is, "Develop your Knights before developing your Bishops." I suspect this game in particular played nearly one hundred and fifty years ago is the reason for this principle!

The first officially recognized player to become "World Champion" was Austrian born Wilhelm Steinitz (May 17, 1836 – August 12, 1900). In 1886 Steinitz along with Johannes Hermann Zukertort (September 7, 1842 – June 20, 1888) were considered the two strongest players in the world. A match was arranged between them "for the Championship of the World" played in New York, St. Louis and New Orleans. The winner would be the first player to win ten games. After five games Zukertort led the match 4 – 1 but Steinitz would come storming back to win the match decisively by the final score of ten wins, five draws and five losses.

The following *tournament* game was played in 1895 in Hastings, England and is considered a sparkling tactical brilliancy. It too made me go, "Wow!" The buildup is slow but by the end I think you will agree it is spectacular.

Italian Game: Classical Variation

Wilhelm Steinitz

Curt von Bardeleben

Hastings, England 1895

1.e2-e4 e7-e5 2.Ng1-f3

Thus far we have the same opening moves as our first game. Black now makes the most common move in this position.

2...Nb8-c6

Developing a Knight and protecting the e5-pawn.

3.Bf1-c4

White in turn develops his f1-Bishop helping to control central squares. White is also putting potential pressure against the f7-pawn. With his third move, the Opening is called the, "Italian Game." The oldest Opening in Chess is called the "Ruy Lopez Opening" that variation would occur after: 3.Bf1-b5, putting pressure on the c6-Knight.

3...Bf8-c5

Black in turn develops his f8-Bishop also with the aim of controlling central squares. The play has brought us to our first diagram for this game.

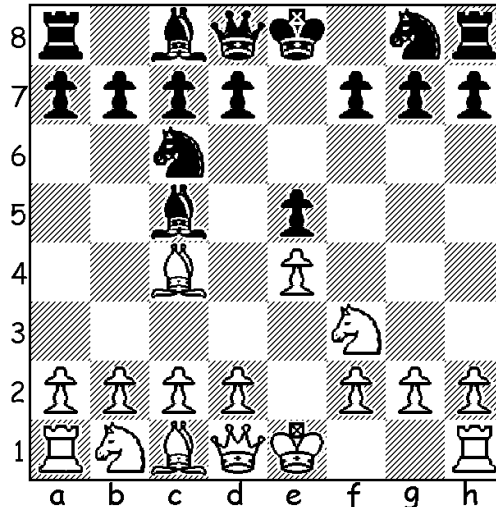


Diagram 284
White to play

From the position in diagram 284 White has tried a large number of moves including: 4.b4!?, 4.d4!?, 4.d3, 4.Nc3, and 4.O-O, for this game, Steinitz plays what is called the, "Italian Classical" Opening variation. Classical is a nice word that is often used in Chess which refers to an Opening or a pattern that is very, very old. As the last rule changes for Chess were made five hundred years ago, classical is a very commonly used word.

4.c2-c3

With this move White intends to advance his d2-pawn to the d4-square and to try to gain a tempo against the c5-Bishop. It is the classical move in this Opening. For those of you who noticed the heading for this game, at the top I wrote, "Italian Game: Classical Variation." Good eye if you caught that one.

4...Ng8-f6

Developing a Knight while also attacking White's e4-pawn.

5.d2-d4

White follows through with his intention of attacking Black's c5-Bishop.

5...e5xd4 6.c3xd4 Bc5-b4+ 7.Nb1-c3

The last few moves for both sides have been very *forcing*. Today's grandmasters consider: 7.Bc1-d2, as White's best move. The play has brought us to our next diagrammed position.

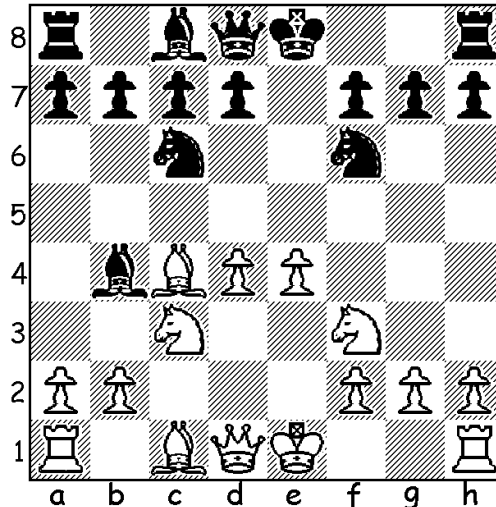


Diagram 285
Black to play

Steinitz is playing a well-known gambit. He is offering Black an opportunity to capture his e4-pawn. In return he hopes to gain compensation for his lost pawn with quick development.

7...d7-d5?!

Bardeleben declines White's gambit. Black's best play was to accept the pawn offer: 7...Nf6xe4! 8.O-O Bb4xc3 9.d4-d5, is a complicated line of play but is considered best play for both sides. The variation usually continues: 9...Nc6-e5! 10.b2xc3 Ne5xc4 11.Qd1-d4! O-O! 12.Qd4xe4 Nc4-d6 13.Qe4-f4, when Black is a pawn ahead but White has better development. The position is considered roughly equal and many games have been drawn from this position.

Black's seventh move in the game is considered to be "dubious" as White will gain an advantage as we will see. That is why in the notation after Black's seventh move we see a question mark followed by an exclamation mark. In Chess the notation (?!) after a move is universally recognized as meaning the move played was dubious or more simply a poor move.

8.e4xd5 Nf6xd5 9.O-O!

White is first to Castle and bring his King into safety. Also, note that with this move White breaks the absolute pin against his c3-Knight which means that now Black's d5-Knight is threatened with capture. Note that if White had played: 9.Bc4xd5 Qd8xd5!, the c3-Knight is not allowed to capture Black's Queen!

9...Bc8-e6?!

While in appearance this is a sensible move, developing a Bishop and protecting the d5-Knight looks alright, in fact it too is a dubious move. Black should have played: 9...Bb4xc3! 10.b2xc3 O-O, getting his King safely out of the center.

Quick question for the class: "If Black had played: 9...Bb4xc3! 10.b2xc3 Nd5xc3?, can you see a double attack for White that wins a piece?"

Correct answer, "With the move: 11.Qd1-e1+!, White would pick off the c3-Knight."

The play has brought us to our next diagram.

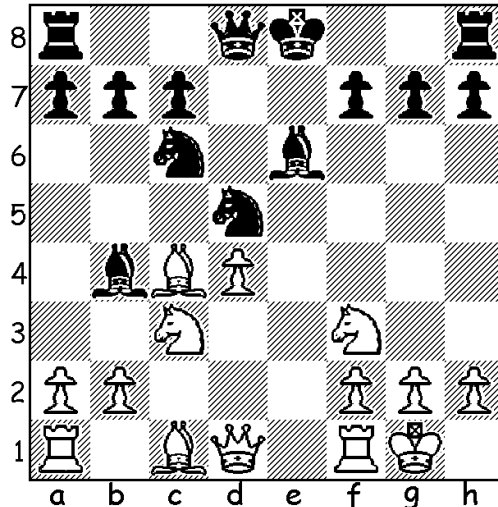


Diagram 286
White to play

The position in diagram 286 is quite sharp. The moves have to be precise. If you were White what move would you play?

Again and again, in the Opening it is vital that you develop your pieces as quickly as possible. At the moment the c1-Bishop is sleeping. Learning to develop your pieces especially when you can do so with a *tempo* in the Opening will make you a champion.

Steinitz understood all of this and played the best move.

10.Bc1-g5!

Nicely played. White develops his c1-Bishop and attack's Black's Queen as a bonus.

10...Bb4-e7

With this retreat notice that Black is falling further behind in development. This is the third time that Black has moved his dark-squared Bishop. Black did not want to play: 10...f7-f6, blocking White's threat to his Queen because that would weaken the protection of the e6-Bishop. White would play: 11.Rf1-e1!, when Black is in serious trouble.

11.Bc4xd5 Be6xd5 12.Nc3xd5 Qd8xd5 13.Bg5xe7 Nc6xe7

After a series of captures and recaptures the play has brought us to our next diagrammed position.

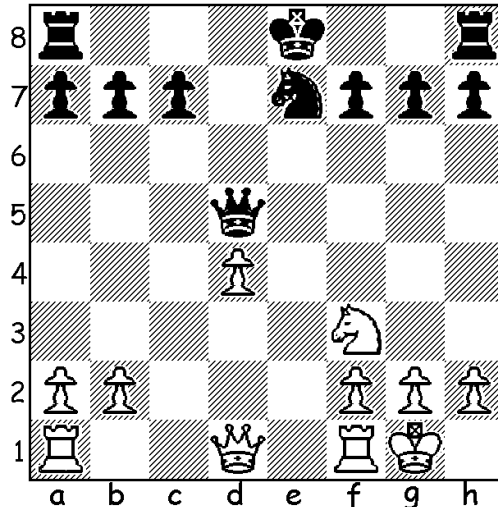


Diagram 287
White to play

If you had the White pieces what move would you play? And why? Do your best to explain why you chose the move you did and then I will share my thoughts with you.

I think White is doing very well. The critical reason is that White's King Position is safe while Black's King is still in the center. Because the e-file is *open* it means White should put a Rook on the e-file as soon as possible. The added bonus of such a move is that it places the e7-Knight in an absolute pin making it an object piece to attack!

If you wanted to play: 14.Qd1-a4+, that is a reasonable move. The problem is that after: 14...Qd5-d7, blocking the check: 15.Qa4xd7+ Ke8xd7 16.Nf3-e5+ Kd7-e8, while I much prefer White's position I'm not certain that White has a winning continuation.

Steinitz played the best move.

14.Rf1-e1!

This move keeps Black's King *stuck* in the center. If he tries to Castle the e7-Knight would be captured for free.

14...f7-f6

Bardeleben tries to put up a defense. Black protects the e5-square stopping both the f3-Knight and the e1-Rook from going there but also he is trying to play: ...Ke8-f7, in order to break the pin on the e-file.

15.Qe2!

Another powerful move by White putting further pressure on the e7-Knight.

15...Qd5-d7

Black retreats his Queen in order to protect his Knight.

16.Ra1-c1

White develops his last piece, this time putting pressure on the c7-pawn.

16...c7-c6

Black tries to limit the activity of White's c1-Rook along the c-file. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

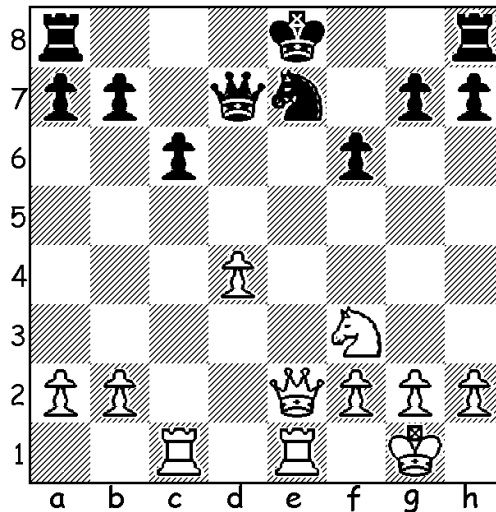


Diagram 288
White to play

At this point you might be a bit disappointed with me. The game is boring! On the surface nothing appears to be happening. Please bear with me for a few more moves. The fireworks are about to start. I promise.

In the position in diagram 288 what would you do as White? Do your best to express your thoughts with words as well as moves. What "advantages" do you see in White's position? How can White improve the position of his pieces?

My approach to the position would be that thanks to White's big lead in development (Black's Rooks and his King on their original squares) White would like to *open* up the position for his better developed army. In particular the f3-Knight needs to get involved in the play. But the squares in the center are either protected (the e5-square) or blocked (the d4-square). What to do about it?

17.d5!

A strong pawn sacrifice. For the investment of one pawn, the c-file will be opened for the c1-Rook while the f3-Knight can jump into battle.

17...c6xd5

This time Black has no choice and accepts White's pawn sacrifice. A dreadful error would be: 17...Qd7xd5?? 18.Qe2xe7, allowing Checkmate on the spot!

18.Nf3-d4! Ke8-f7

At last, Black connects his Rooks together. Now all he needs to do is to develop his Rooks and his position will not be so bad. White has to act quickly!

19.Nd4-e6!

A very strong attacking move. White now threatens: 20.Rc1-c7, bringing his Rook to the seventh rank which Black must prevent.

19...Rh8-c8

Black stops White's threatened invasion and offers to trade a pair of Rooks. If Black can manage such a trade he would be doing well. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

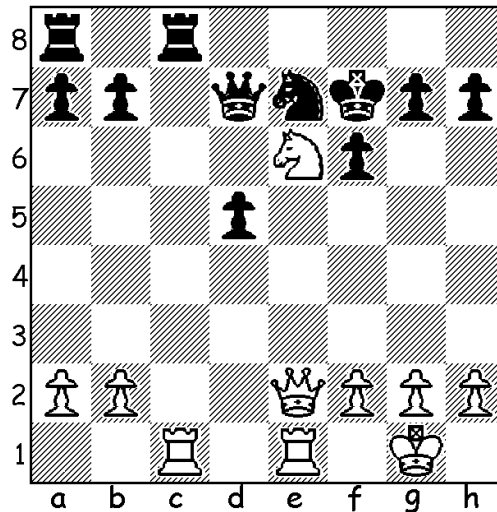


Diagram 289
White to play

The position in diagram 289 has reached a critical moment. White must conduct his attack very accurately. If Black is able to trade Rooks White's attacking forces would be diminished.

Same question as before. What would be a good attacking move for White?

If you wanted to play: 20.Qe2-h5+, the problem is that after: 20...Kf7-g8, Black's King has been driven back to a safer square. If your choice was for: 20.Ne6-c5, attacking Black's Queen, Black could return a pawn by: 20...Qd7-d6 21.Nc5xb7 Qd6-d7 22.Nb7-c5 Qd7-d6, and I don't see a knock-out blow.

Steinitz found a very strong attacking move.

20.Qe2-g4!

The e6-Knight *reaches* into Black's camp, not just attacking the c7-square but also the g7-pawn. With the text White threatens Checkmate in two moves.

21...g7-g6

Black guards his g-pawn.

Quick question for the class: "If Black had played: 21...Rc8xc1??, how would White Checkmate in two moves?"

Correct answer, "22.Qg4xg7+! Kf7-e8 23.Qg7-f8#."

The play has brought us to the next diagrammed position.

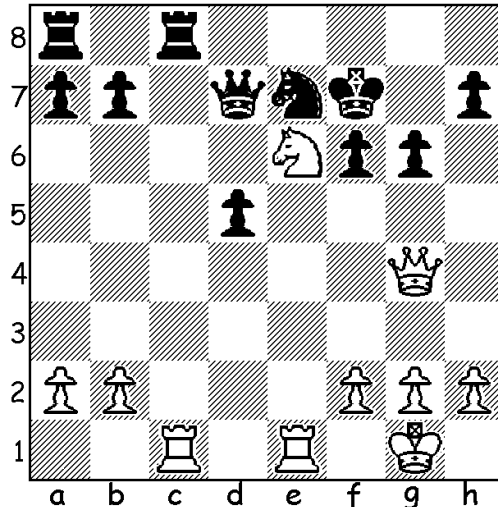


Diagram 290
White to play

The position has a tactical opportunity. What would you play? I'll give you a hint: Black's Queen is *unprotected*. Is there a way to make a double attack?

Indeed there is. Steinitz played a double attack tactic.

21.Ne6-g5+!

By this move Black's King is placed in check from the Knight and Black's Queen is attacked as well. In order not to lose his Queen, Black's King has to protect her.

21...Kf7-e8

In Chess parlance we would say that Black's twenty-first move was "forced." Any other move such as: 21...f6xg5 22.Qg4xd7, would have lost immediately.

The table has now been sent for one of the finest *combinations* in chess history as we turn to our next diagram.

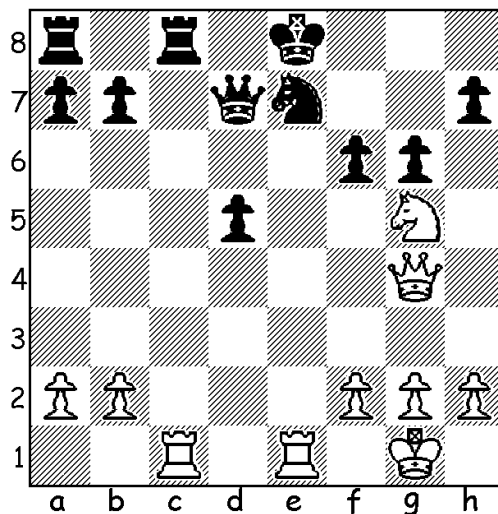


Diagram 291
White to play

The word “combination” has a very special meaning in Chess parlance. A combination is a “forced sequence” of moves for both sides that features a “sacrifice.” In the position in diagram 291, it appears that White faces a host of different threats. Now White’s Queen is *en prise*. This is a French term which means “in capture.” Not only is White’s Queen in capture also White’s g5-Knight is en prise as well. Finally Black is hoping to trade Rooks along the c-file. White has to find a move to avoid all of Black’s threats.

Steinitz found a truly brilliant move!

22.Re1xe7+!!

Breath-taking! The e7-Knight appeared to be well protected but take a closer look yourself. Try to answer the following two questions:

1. What would you do if Black played: 22...Qd7xe7?
2. What would you do if Black played: 22...Ke8xe7?

I’ll answer these two questions at the end of this chapter. Then compare your answers with mine. Maybe your answers will be better than mine?

Recognizing that both captures of the Rook would lead to a lost position for him Bardeleben moved his King.

22...Ke8-f8!

An excellent move! In the heat of battle it is easy for White to go wrong as we see in our next diagram. The challenges for White have just gone higher.

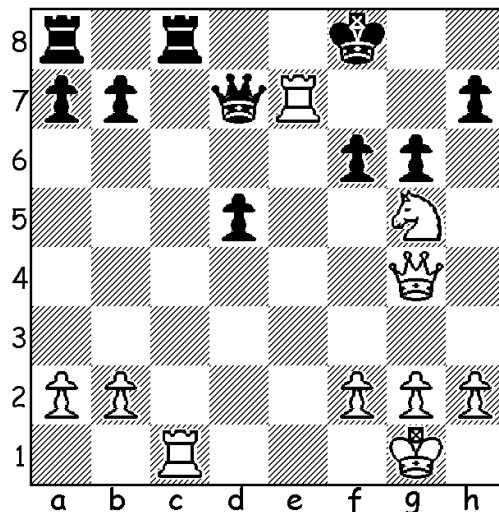


Diagram 292
White to play

The position in diagram 291 is wild. *All* of White’s pieces are en prise! Even worse, Black has a threat to play: ...Rc8xc1+, when White is even in a back-rank Checkmate pattern. White is going to need a really clever move to continue his attack. Give it your best shot and see if you can find the move of the first World Chess Champion. (Full confession, I didn’t find White’s best move when I first saw this game.)

23.Re7-f7+!

Well played! Considering all of Black's threats White's moves had better come with *check!*

23...Kf8-g8

Once again, Black makes a forced move. He could not play: 23...Qd7xf7? 24.Rc1xc8+ Ra8xc8 25.Qg4xc8+, when White is a Knight ahead in the material count. Also: 23...Kf8-e8? would be dreadful. White would play: 24.Qg4xd7, Checkmate on the spot!

The play has brought us to our next diagram.

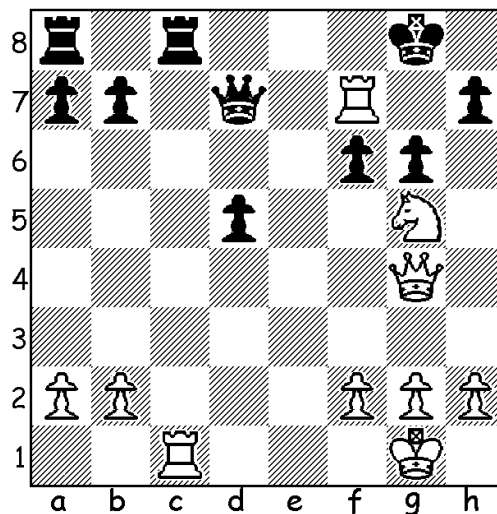


Diagram 293
White to play

Once more the position in diagram 293 is extremely tense. It is as if both players are walking on a high wire tightrope. A single slip by either player would be fatal. What would you do if you were the first world champion? Don't forget White is facing a back rank Checkmate also his Queen is en prise. Your move has to be perfect else White may lose.

24.Rf7-g7+!!

Another remarkable move. It is as if White's Rook leads a charmed life. Although unprotected Black is unable to capture the Rook.

24...Kg8-h8

Black has no choice. Several questions for the Class:

1. What would you do if Black had played: 24...Qd7xg7?
2. What would you do if Black had played: 24...Kg8xg7?
3. Okay, those first two questions were easy ones. What about: 24...Kg8-f8?

Correct answers, "For the first question, White would capture the c8-Rook by: 25.Rc1xc8+ Ra8xc8 26.Qg4xc8+, winning; for the second question, White would capture Black's Queen with check! Black has no time to play: ...Rc8xc1, with a back rank Checkmate. For the third question, White would play: 25.Ng5xh7+!, and Black's Queen would fall with check in a few moves.

The play has brought us to our next diagram.

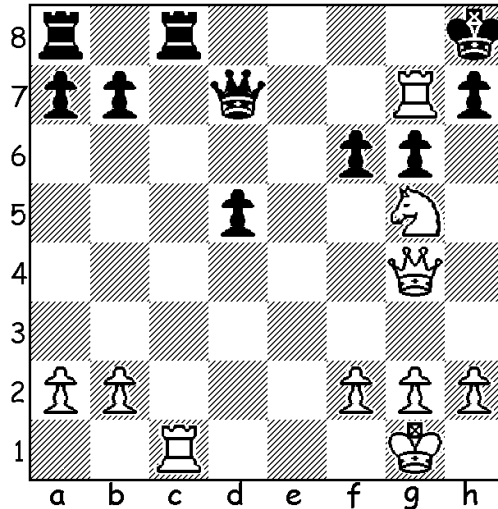


Diagram 294
White to play

By now you are probably getting the hang of the position. I'm sure you are able to correctly predict White's move. What would you play?

25.Rg7xh7!

White's Rook continues to hound Black's King. At this point Bardeleben realized that he was losing and resigned the game. A pity! Steinitz showed a forced series of moves that would have created Checkmate for himself. Let us continue the game according to Steinitz's analysis.

For the same reasons as before, White's Rook cannot be captured. Black's move is forced.

25...Kh8-g8

While the position might appear to be the same as it was a few moves ago a key difference is that Black's h7-pawn has been captured with check.

White now continues checking with his charmed Rook.

26.Rh7-g7+! Kg8-h8

The game has reached the position shown in diagram 295.

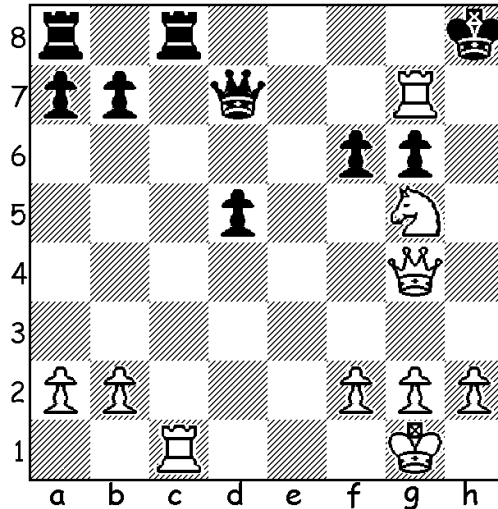


Diagram 295
White to play

Once more all of White's pieces are en prise. Most worrying White still faces a back rank Checkmate threat. With so many concerns White has to continue making moves that check the Black King. What move would you play?

If you wanted to play: 27.Rg7-h7+ Kh8-g8, White gains nothing. The position would be the same as it was two moves ago. If White continued making the same checking moves: 28.Rh7-g7+ Kg8-h8 29.Rg7-h7+ Kh8-g8 30.Rh7-g7+ 31.Kg8-h8, the players are simply moving back and forth. In Chess parlance we call this situation, "perpetual check." A rule in Chess is when the identical position is repeated three times, the game is declared a draw. This is known as the, "*three move repetition*" rule. White however is trying to win! Have another look at diagram 295. Can White make a different checking move?

Steinitz showed that his intention was to sacrifice his Rook!

27.Qg4-h4+!

At last! Black has no choice and must accept the Rook sacrifice.

27...Kh8xg7

The charmed life of the Rook is at an end and it has been removed from the board. How can White continue his attack?

28.Qh4-h7+! Kg7-f8

The play has brought us to our next diagram.

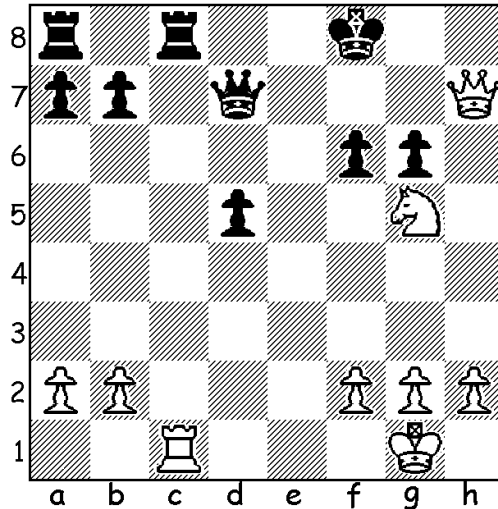


Diagram 296
White to play

White has forced Black to capture his Rook. But what has White gained? White still faces a back rank Checkmate and all of his pieces are still in capture. What would you play as White? How can White continue to prosecute his attack? Give it some thought to be sure that you are right.

29.Qh7-h8+! Kf8-e7

Black has no choice and makes another *forced* move.

30.Qh8-g7+! Ke7-e8

Quick question for the class: "How would you meet: 30...Ke7-d6?"

Correct answer, "It would be Checkmate in two moves: 31.Qg7xf6+ Qd7-e6 32.Qf6xe6 #."

31.Qg7-g8+! Ke8-e7 32.Qg8-f7+! Ke7-d8

The play has brought us to our next diagram 297.

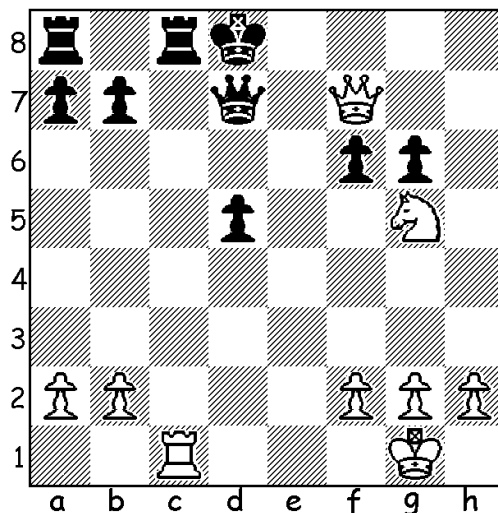


Diagram 297
White to play

You are in charge. What would you play?

If you wanted to capture the f6-pawn with check: 33.Qf7xf6+? Qd7-e7!, you would allow Black to resist. You need to find a better thirty-third move for White! If you wanted to play: 33.Ng5-e6+?? Qd7xe6!, you have not been paying attention. Don't forget White faces a back rank Checkmate threat.

33.Qf7-f8+! Qd7-e8 34.Ng5-f7+! Kd8-d7 35.Qf8-d6#

Simply outstanding! The final position deserves its own diagram.

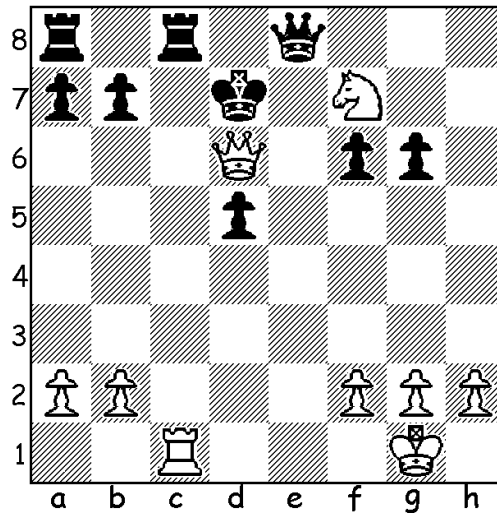


Diagram 298
Black is Checkmated

The final position shown in diagram 298 is a beauty. Black's King is in an "Epaulette Checkmate" pattern. There are dozens of names for different Checkmate patterns. One way to think of an Epaulette Checkmate is to think about a military uniform. Like that of a general's. On some of them you will see a golden rope type of an ornament above the shoulders. To compare the Checkmate in diagram 298 we can think of the retreat c8 and e8-squares as being occupied by Black's forces. These occupying forces, the c8-Rook and e8-Queen are "epaulettes." The classic Epaulette Checkmate is if we put Black's King on the d8-square and change the e8-Queen with the a8-Rook. The Rooks would be the epaulettes blocking Black's King from moving and is therefore Checkmated.

I hope you were inspired by these two games. Play them over many times to be sure that you understand their intricacies well. They are considered works of art in the Chess world. Who knows? Maybe you too will create a Chess masterpiece one day...

Answers

1. What would you do if Black played: 22...Qd7xe7?

White would play: 23.Rc1xc8+ Ra8xc8 24.Qg4xc8+, when White is a Knight ahead in the material count and has a won position.

2. What would you do if Black played: 22...Ke8xe7?

White has a nice series of checks which win a lot of material: 23.Rc1-e1+ Ke7-d6 (23...Ke7-d8 24.Ng5-e6+ Kd8-e7 25.Ne6-c5+, with a double attack against Black's King and Queen. White

would win Black's Queen.) 24.Qg4-b4+! Rc8-c5 (24...Kd6-c6??, 25.Re1-c1#) 25.Re1-e6+! Qd7xe6 26.Ng5xe6 Ra8-c8 27.Ne6xc5 Rc8xc5 28.Kg1-f1, White has won a Queen for a Rook and has a won position.

Chapter Thirteen:

Tabiya Positions for Queen Pawn Openings

In this Curriculum I've shown *White* winning time and time again. This was a deliberate decision. The convention in chess books and chess studies is to show things from White's point of view. It is easier to read a diagrammed position where an example of play consistently features the position with *White to play*. Victory after victory for White from all the examples shown might give you the wrong impression that only White wins. This is certainly not true. I could have made a deliberate decision to have *Black* winning all the time. Rest assured that in Chess Black can and does win as well. As my friend, Hungarian International Chess Grandmaster András Adorján likes to say, "The Black pieces are one of the best colors to have in Chess."

Forgive me for repeating myself for emphasis Black does win in Chess and sometimes brilliantly as well! It is just the convention in the world of Chess to show diagrammed positions from White's point of view.

We are now about to learn a number of different Openings and Defenses. When I started to play Chess I knew nothing about what you have learned already. I was only told how the pieces and pawns move and that was all. The board and pieces were set up and suddenly I faced the *starting position*. I didn't know what to do. My earliest games were really, really bad. Most of my moves had no purpose at all because I had no understanding of what I should do. While most of my moves were random even worse a large number of my moves were simply illegal. I got mixed up with how all the different pieces moved having never practiced their movements. It would have been wonderful to have a coach who could explain the Openings to me. That didn't happen until I had lost dozens and dozens of games. After so many losses my brain hurt.

Over the next three chapters I'm going to go move by move through several classical Openings and Defenses as well as a modern Opening. You will then have to "test" the positions with your classmates alternating colors of the "preset" Opening positions I've prepared for you. After you've had a bit of practice playing these positions, the reins come off. Thereafter, you should play your games from the *starting position*. By first learning to play from preset positions, gaining practice along the way, thereafter you will play much better with rapid improvement the expectation.

These preset Opening positions that we will practice are called a tabiya position. The word "tabiya" comes from the Arabic language and means "normal manner." Chess games often repeat Opening positions that come from "good play" from both sides what is called "standard play." These positions come about in a "normal manner" and are therefore called tabiya positions. All of the pre-set Openings that we are learning are known as tabiya positions because they have been played in exactly this way for centuries.

While Chess Openings and Defenses can be extremely complicated with numerous tactical variations to learn as well the goal of Chess Openings for both players come down to three simple concepts:

1. You want to control your "fair share" of the center;
2. You want to develop your pieces to "effective" squares;

3. You want a safe King.

If you are able to accomplish all three of these Opening goals you will enjoy a good position.

In chapter twelve we saw two games that featured King Pawn Openings. Let's start this chapter with a different flavor and first look at Queen Pawn Openings. Over these three chapters on Openings we will pay closer attention to our five Chess elements of Space, Material, King Position, Development as well as Pawn Structure, to help us find and create plans. Let's get started!

Queen Pawn Openings

1.d2-d4

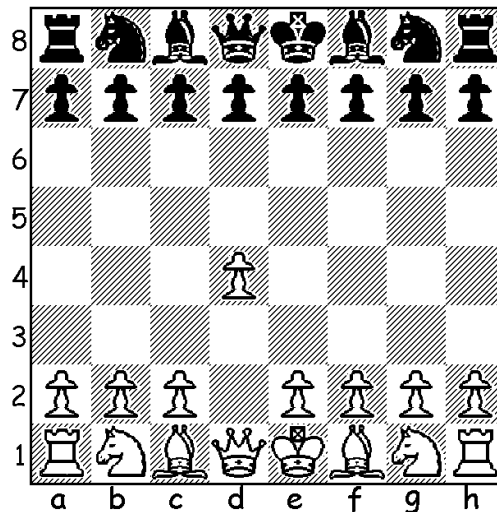


Diagram 299
Queen Pawn Opening

White's opening move is called the Queen's Pawn Opening because as we can see in diagram 299 the d-pawn, the one in front of White's Queen, has advanced. Chess players are very logical persons.

The Queen Pawn Opening is one of the two most popular opening moves for White. The other is the King Pawn Opening. What makes these two moves so attractive is that White takes advantage of the fact that he moves first and so he immediately stakes out control of the center while doing his best to help his own quick development.

The d4-pawn occupies a sweet center square, attacks the c5-square and e5-square, opens up a diagonal for the c1-Bishop and also gives White's Queen opportunity to develop as well. That is quite a nice list of plusses for a single move.

All those plusses for White mean that our first Queen Pawn variation will be the *classical* Queen Pawn Defense. Black responds in kind advancing his Queen pawn as well.

1...d7-d5

With his opening move Black enjoys all the same advantages that came with White's opening move as well.

Now White faces the usual key question that Chess players face all the time, “What do I do now?” Developing either Knight seems very reasonable. Perhaps the c1-Bishop should be developed to the f4-square or perhaps the g5-square? All these moves look quite reasonable but which choice to make?

Fortunately, we live in a modern era of computer databases. Millions upon millions of grandmaster games have been recorded which means they can be easily replayed. Hundreds of years of practice have shown that White’s best second move is to attack Black’s d5-pawn.

2.c2-c4

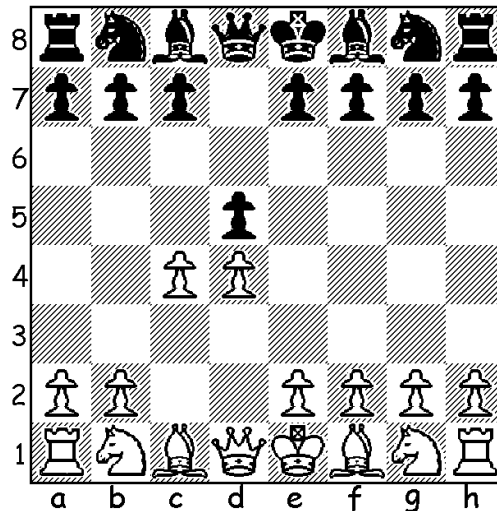


Diagram 300
Queen's Gambit

With his second move, White places his c4-pawn en prise. In Chess parlance *deliberately* offering a pawn for “free” is called a “Gambit.” If you make a mistake and lose a pawn unintentionally, well, that is called a “blunder.” Don’t worry you will join a very long line of players and make many, many blunders. As we can guess, all blunders are there on the chessboard just waiting to be made! With practice you will blunder less and less.

White offers Black an opportunity to capture his c4-pawn and thus this move is called the, “Queen’s Gambit Opening.” White hopes that after Black captures his c4-pawn that a few moves later White will be able to recapture the pawn with his f1-Bishop. If White is successful with his gambit idea he will be *ahead* in development.

Question for the Class: “Why do you think that after recapturing the c4-pawn White would be ahead in development?”

Correct answer, “If Black moves his d-pawn twice and White moves his f1-Bishop once, to recapture the pawn on the c4-square, Black would fall behind in development.”

Black now has three *primary* choices. He can play: 2...d5xc4, a move known as the, “Queen’s Gambit *Accepted*.” He can play: 2...c7-c6, supporting his d5-center pawn, a move known as the, “Slav Defense,” that will be our second Defense. Finally, the classical move that we will concentrate upon.

2...e7-e6

This move is Black's most popular response. It supports his d5-pawn while playing for the quick development of his *Kingside* pieces. In Chess parlance this move is considered a "solid" choice. The drawback of the move is that Black's c8-Bishop is now cramped. That is the c8-h3 diagonal has been closed. Hopefully, for Black this will be a temporary condition. By not capturing White's c4-pawn, the opening is now called the, "Queen's Gambit Declined." We come to our next diagram.

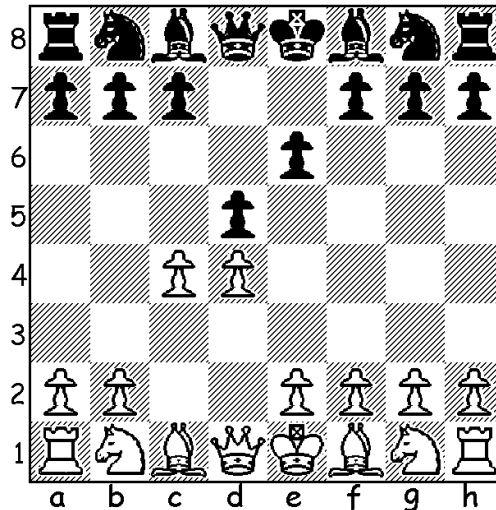


Diagram 301
Queen's Gambit Declined

Now it is White's turn to play and as usual a large number of moves are on offer. White could play: 3.c4xd5 e6xd5, resolving the tension in the center. He could develop either Knight as well. In view of the possibility of Black playing ...Bf8-b4+, White's most popular choice is to develop his b1-Knight first. It will serve as our main line of play.

3.Nb1-c3

White develops a piece off his first rank; brings his Knight into play and attacks two squares in the space count, the b5-square and more importantly the d5-pawn. White's second most popular move is: 3.Ng1-f3, developing the other Knight.

A brief word in favor of White's decision to keep the central tension: Notice that after the pawn trade: 3.c4xd5 e6xd5, Black's c8-Bishop would now have good prospects to develop to an effective square as the c8-h3 diagonal is now open.

3...Ng8-f6

Black develops a piece off the eighth rank; brings his Knight into play; defends his d5-pawn; attacks the g4-square and more importantly the e4-square gaining two squares in the space count. This is Black's most popular move by far. Black has also played: 3...c7-c6; 3...f7-f5; 3...Bf8-b4 and 3...Bf8-e7, as reasonable alternatives. The play has brought us to diagram 302.

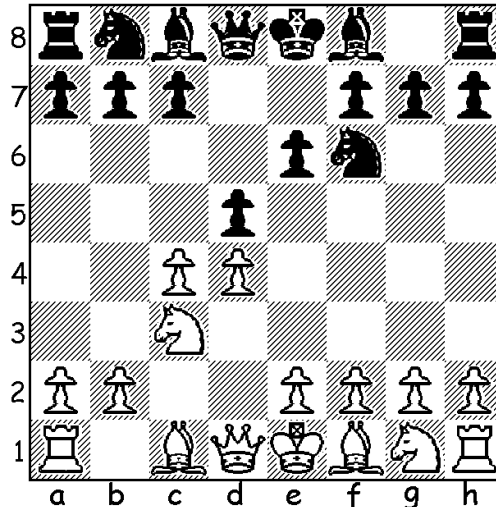


Diagram 302
Queen's Gambit Declined

White must now decide on his fourth move. Quick question, look for a moment at diagram 302. Think about *three* different moves you would choose for White. Write them down on your notebook in order of your preference. Your top pick should be number one; your second choice number two; and your last selected move number three. Then compare your choices against those moves that the grandmasters have played. Are you ready to continue to the main line? Don't peek ahead!

4.Bc1-g5

This is White's most popular move. He develops his Bishop off the first rank; makes a relative pin on the f6-Knight; and creates a potential threat of capturing the f6-Knight which defends the d5-pawn.

White's other most common moves are: 4.Ng1-f3; 4.c4xd5; 4.Bc1-f4 and 4.e2-e3. How does this list compare to your own list of moves? If you got two out of three right, that is really good. Bravo!

4...Bf8-e7

For his turn, Black develops a Bishop; breaks the pin against the f6-Knight; and prepares to Castle, sprinting his King to a safe position.

Other good choices for Black include: 4...Bf8-b4; 4...Nb8-d7 and 4...c7-c6, all of which have been played in many games.

The play has brought us to our next diagram.

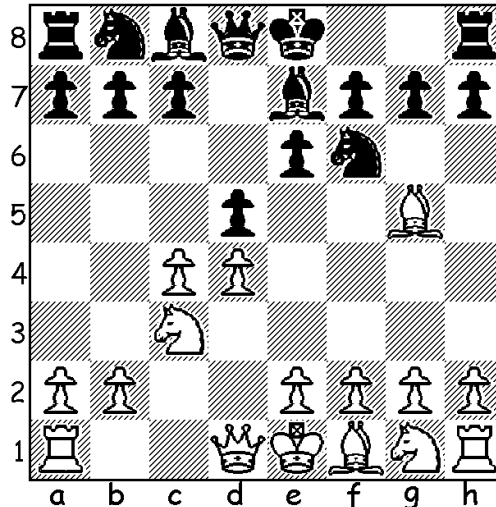


Diagram 303
Queen's Gambit Declined

As we see in diagram 303 White has done a good job of developing his *Queenside* pieces. For the moment however White's *Kingside* pieces have not moved. This is common in Queen's Pawn Openings, usually White develops his *Queenside* pieces first and his *Kingside* pieces next. For King's Pawn Openings it is usually the other way around. White develops his *Kingside* pieces first and his *Queenside* pieces next.

Now the question is what to play next? Should White resolve the tension in the center by trading pawns on the d5-square? Keep the tension in the center? Concentrate on developing his *Kingside* pieces?

5.e2-e3

This is White's most popular move. White protects his c4-pawn and prepares to develop his *Kingside* pieces. Pay careful attention to the fact that White only played the text move *after* he developed his c1-Bishop. He didn't want to play the move e2-e3, too early because in that case the diagonal for the c1-Bishop would be blocked leaving the Bishop cramped. If you expected White to play: 5.Ng1-f3, a big bravo. That also is an excellent move. In fact some grandmasters prefer to play: 5.Ng1-f3, as their favorite choice. It often happens in the Queen's Gambit Declined that moves are played in a slightly different order but the game will oftentimes transpose to the same *tabiya* position.

5...h7-h6!

Did you see that I placed an exclamation mark after Black's fifth move? Why did I do that? Because I think it is Black's best move in this particular position. In Chess parlance, this type of pawn move is called: "Putting the question to the Bishop." Black's fifth move asks White a question: "Do you intend to trade your Bishop for a Knight or do you intend to retreat your Bishop?"

6.Bg5-h4

This Bishop retreat will be our main line. The alternative approach: 6.Bg5xf6 Be7xf6, has been played as well. From a material count point of view it has been an equal trade. Most grandmasters prefer to avoid the trade in order to keep the Bishop.

From Black's point of view he has won a tempo! He was able to develop his h7-pawn to the h6-square and at least for the moment is pleased with his small victory. He is ahead in development.

6...O-O

An important accomplishment. Black is the first player to Castle and to bring his King into safety. Note with this move Black develops *two* pieces from their original squares. This allows him to *increase* his advantage in development. To catch-up White will have to Castle soon as well.

Of our three Opening concepts, Black has managed to achieve two already. He has his "fair share" of the center and he has a safe King. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

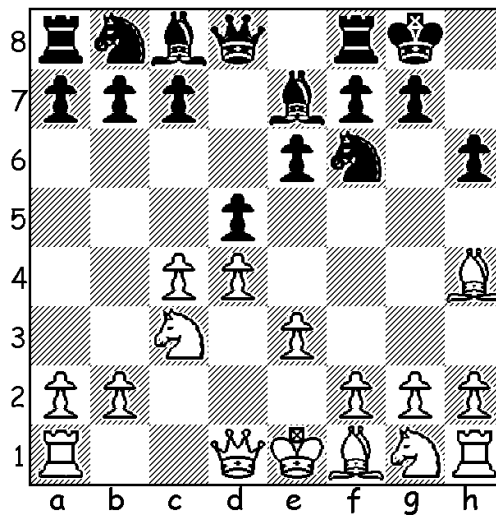


Diagram 304
Queen's Gambit Declined

As we see in diagram 304, White's Kingside pieces remain *undeveloped*. This is not good. White now concentrates on bringing his Kingside pieces into play *always* trying to control the center.

7.Ng1-f3!

Again carefully note that I've placed an exclamation mark in the move notation. This time for White's move as I consider it to be the best move in this specific position. White develops his Knight, attacks the g5-square as well as the more important e5-square and continues to mobilize his forces. Note that both players have held back the development of their Queen preferring instead to develop their minor pieces first.

Black now faces a problem. How to best complete the development of his *Queenside* pieces? In particular, he has a problem with his c8-Bishop, the e6-pawn blocks the Bishop's most natural development along the c8-h3 diagonal. Black needs a better diagonal for this Bishop.

7...b7-b6!

Black prepares to put his Bishop on the *long diagonal*. At the same time he bolsters the possibility of advancing his c7-pawn with an eye to playing in the center. The play has brought us to diagram 305.

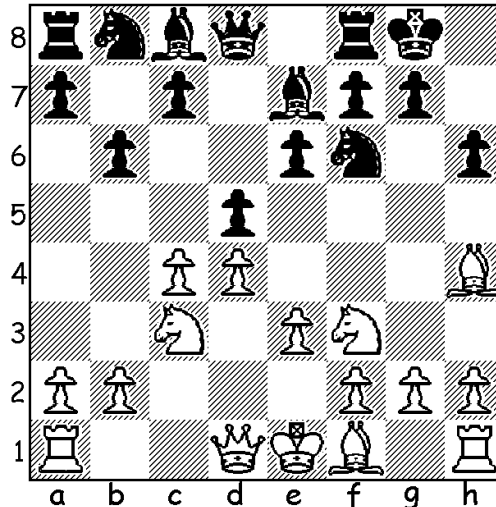


Diagram 305
Queen's Gambit Declined

White *needs* to complete his development; Castle and *connect* his Rooks. The most natural thing for White to do is to move his f1-Bishop. But to which square? The e2-square or the d3-square? Which move would you choose?

Our main move and the most popular one by far is to place the Bishop on the d3-square.

8.Bf1-d3

With this fine developing move White is ready to Castle while placing his Bishop on the *open* b1-h7 diagonal. The Bishop also keeps an eye on the e4-square. In terms of the space count, the d3-Bishop now attacks three of Black's squares: the f5, g6 and h7-squares.

8...Bc8-b7

Black also develops his Bishop. At the moment the a8-h1 diagonal is closed as it is *blocked* by the d5-pawn. When the central tension is resolved the b7-Bishop hopes to be effectively placed as it also keeps an eye on the e4-square.

9.O-O

Naturally, White also brings his King to safety with pawns and pieces surrounding and protecting his majesty.

9...Nb8-d7

Black develops his Knight and prepares to support the advance of his c7-pawn in order to attack in the center.

10.Qd1-e2

White develops his Queen in the center. With this move, White *connects* his Rooks. When a player connects his Rooks in the Opening, I consider this to be the end of this phase of a Chess game. White can face the next phase, the Middle-game with confidence. He has fair control of the center; good development for his pieces and a safe King.

10...Nf6-e4

Thanks to the support of the b7-Bishop Black can place his Knight on a sweet-center *outpost*. The play has brought us to our final diagram for this Opening, the Queen's Gambit Declined.

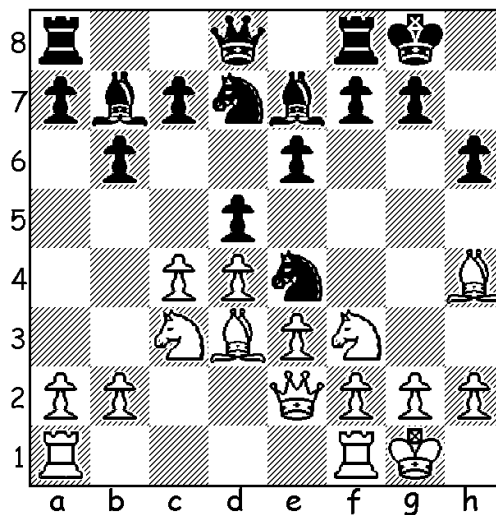


Diagram 306
Queen's Gambit Declined

The position in diagram 306 will be our first *tabiya* Opening position. Take your turn playing both sides of this position with the White pieces and Black pieces. Consult with your teacher after the game about what you did right and wrong. Do make an effort to keep a proper score-sheet of your moves!

Let us move along to our second *tabiya* Opening position. This one is called the, "Slav Defense."

1.d2-d4 d7-d5 2.c2-c4

So far the players have played the same Opening moves as our first Opening. Black now deviates and fortifies his center with a different pawn move.

2...c7-c6

This is the introductory move of the Slav Defense. Black guards his d5-pawn but he also has a secondary idea. He wants to capture White's c4-pawn and to *keep* it by playing ...b7-b5, thereafter. Very sneaky!

3.Ng1-f3

White develops a Knight and challenges Black to capture the c4-pawn.

3...Ng8-f6

Black in turn develops his Knight. Why didn't Black capture the c4-pawn? A very good question indeed! Practice has shown that the line: 3...d5xc4 4.e2-e4 b7-b5 5.a2-a4, is favorable for White. He intends to use a pin along the a-file to win back his pawn. This intention is shown most clearly after: 5...a7-a6 6.a4xb5 c6xb5 7.b2-b3! c4xb3 8.Bf1xb5+!, this is White's idea. If the Bishop is captured: 8...a6xb5 9.Ra1xa8, White would win the Exchange.

In the tactical variation shown above, notice that White was quick to grab the center with: 4.e2-e4, which the text prevents. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

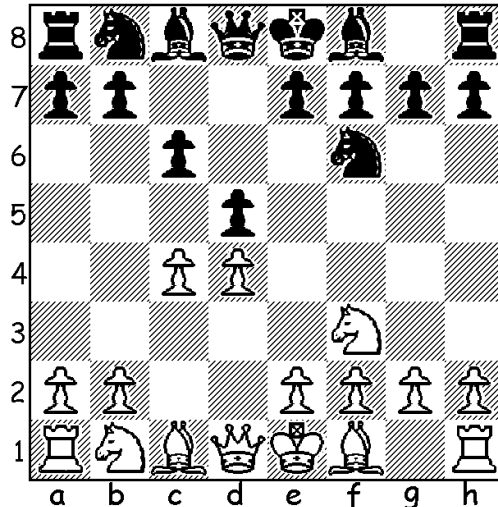


Diagram 307
Slav Defense

As we see in diagram 307 White faces an important decision. Should he be worried about losing his c4-pawn? If he is he can protect the pawn with: 4.e2-e3, in which case the diagonal for the c1-Bishop is closed. White could also play: 4.c4xd5 c6xd5 5.Nb1-c3 Nb8-c6, playing an Opening variation known as the, "Slav Exchange" variation. This variation gets its name because the c-pawns have been traded. The resulting position would be *symmetrical* and a high number of draws are the result of that line of play. The most challenging choice for White will be our main line.

4.Nb1-c3

White develops a Knight and challenges his opponent to try to capture the c4-pawn.

4...d5xc4

Black accepts the challenge and captures the pawn! Black intends to play: ...b7-b5, keeping the extra c4-pawn. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

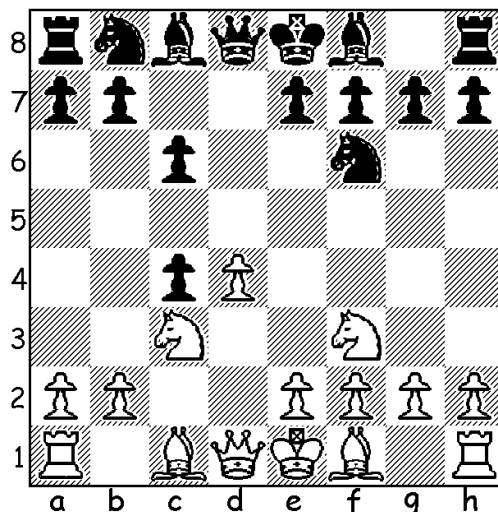


Diagram 308
Slav Defense

In diagram 308, White could be *tempted* to take control of the center with: 5.e2-e4 b7-b5, a line of play called the, “Slav Gambit” because White has lost a pawn in return for central control. Practice has shown that after: 6.e4-e5 Nf6-d5 7.a2-a4, the game is “dynamically equal.” To describe a position as dynamically equal is a fancy way of saying both sides have good chances to win.

Our main line will be for White to recapture the c4-pawn. To do this he will have to prevent ...b7-b5, which protects the c4-pawn.

5.a2-a4

Once more this is White’s most popular move. It prevents ...b7-b5, while preparing to play: e2-e4 and Bf1xc4, regaining the sacrificed pawn. If White accomplishes these goals by playing these two moves he will have full control of the center with a very advantageous position.

We might frown upon White’s fifth move as it is not a move that seeks to “control the center” but White made this decision for a concrete reason: He wants to stop, ...b7-b5, so that the c4-pawn can be recaptured.

How should Black stop White from making the two moves he intends while *also* developing his pieces?

5...Bc8-f5!

This is the move that grandmasters like best. Black develops a piece and takes the e4-square under control. Now White cannot continue with his intended move e2-e4, as Black would happily capture White’s e-pawn. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

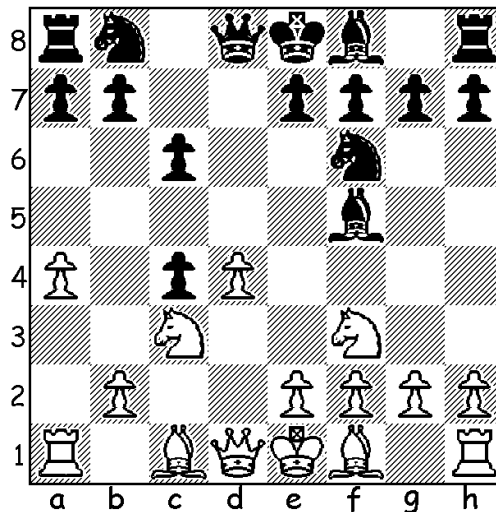


Diagram 309
Slav Defense

6.e2-e3

Naturally, White is anxious to regain his sacrificed pawn.

6...e7-e6

Black in turn opens up a diagonal for his Bishop and prepares to complete his development.

7.Bf1xc4

White regains the gambit pawn that he had sacrificed a few moves ago; develops a Bishop and prepares to Castle. A fine list of accomplishments for a single move!

7...Bf8-b4

In turn, Black also develops a Bishop; prepares to Castle and for the moment places the c3-Knight in an absolute pin.

8.O-O

White is first to Castle and bring his King into safety. The text also breaks the pin against his c3-Knight.

8...O-O

Black follows right behind. Black tucks his King into safety as well. The play has brought us to diagram 310.

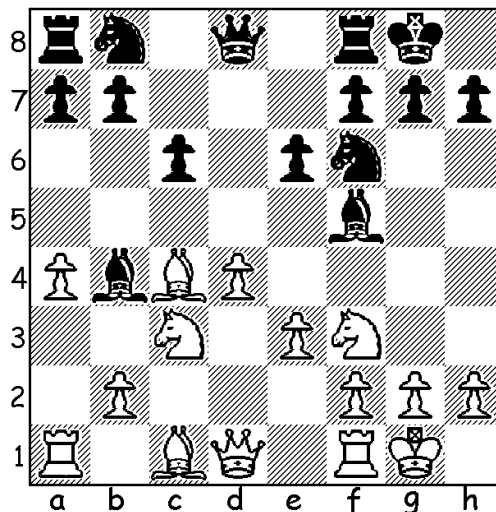


Diagram 310
Slav Defense

As we see in the position shown in diagram 310, White has a bit of a problem: The c1-Bishop is not developed and the e3-pawn blocks it from being effectively developed. White has to come up with a good plan that will help him improve his position.

9.Qd1-e2!

Practice has shown this move is White's best. White wants to advance in the center with his e-pawn so that the diagonal for the c1-Bishop is opened.

9...Nb8-d7

Black continues to develop his pieces, taking control of the e5-square as well. Black may try to play for: ...c6-c5 or ...e6-e5, to chip away at White's center.

10.e3-e4

White advances his e-pawn with a gain of a tempo as the f5-Bishop is attacked.

10...Bf5-g6

Black retreats his Bishop from attack. The play has brought us to our final diagram for the Slav Defense.

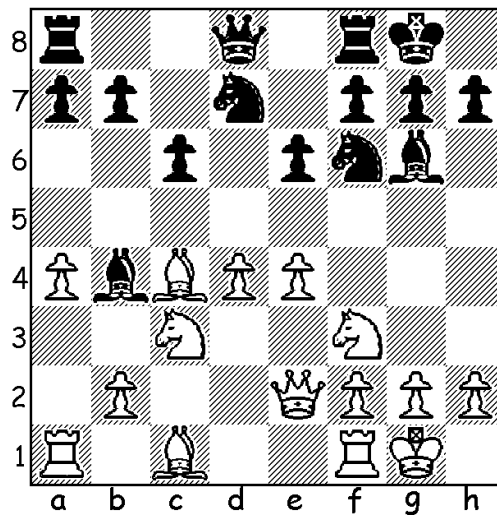


Diagram 311
Slav Defense

At this point we will stop with our second tabiya Opening position in the Slav Defense and invite you to play the position from both the White side and the Black side. White has managed to achieve the *classical center pawn duo*. That is he has a d4-pawn and e4-pawn occupying the sweet center, which also control the squares: c5, d5, e5 and f5-squares. Very nice. However, the central pawn duo are also under threat. Black has a plan to capture the c3-Knight and then to capture the e4-pawn. A threat that White has to stop. Good luck with your games! Do make a good effort to keep score-sheets of your practice matches.

Chapter Fourteen:

Tabiya Positions for Classical King Pawn Openings

In chapter twelve we saw two inspiring games that both opened with the move: 1.e2-e4, the King Pawn Opening. In this chapter we will look at two Openings for our tabiya positions that I'd like you to practice from both sides of the board.

1.e2-e4

As we know this move is called the King Pawn Opening because White advances the pawn in front of his King.

1...e7-e5

Black responds in classical style. The text gives Black all the same advantages as White's Opening move.

2.Ng1-f3

White develops his Knight and attacks Black's e5-pawn.

2...Nb8-c6

Black develops his Knight and defends his e5-pawn while also attacking the b4-square and more importantly the d4-square. The play has brought us to diagram 312.

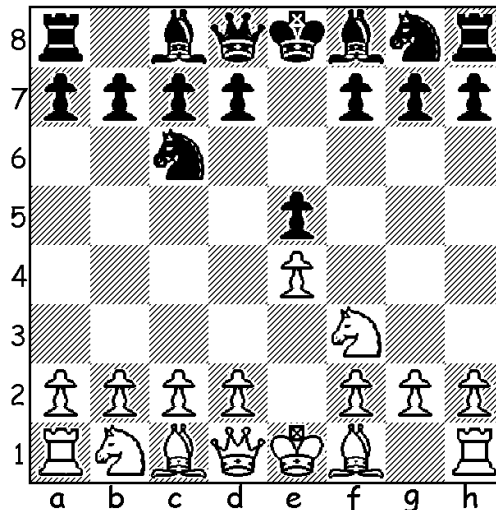


Diagram 312
Classical King Pawn Defense

As we look at the position in diagram 312 what move would you play as White?

To my eyes it would appear that the most *natural* move for White is to develop his f1-Bishop. The two most *active* squares are the b5-square and the c4-square. We will look at both of these moves for our pre-set Opening tabiya positions.

3.Bf1-b5

White develops his Bishop and puts pressure on the c6-Knight – the defender of the e5-pawn. This developing Bishop move is called the Ruy Lopez Opening. In honor of the 16th century Spanish priest Ruy Lopez de Segura who wrote a book, “Libro del Ajedrez,” in 1561. The book is over four hundred and fifty years old! In Spanish, “libro” means “book” and “Ajedrez” is the Spanish word for “Chess.” So the name of the book would be translated as the not so inspirational title, “Book of Chess.” Did I mention that chess players are logical people? Because Lopez was a Spanish priest, this opening move is sometimes called the, “Spanish Opening” as well as the “Spanish Game.”

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in Queen Pawn Openings, White often develops his Queenside pieces first. In King Pawn Openings, White often develops his Kingside pieces first. With the text, White makes it possible to Castle as soon as possible.

Make a note that White avoids the move: 3.Bf1-d3, which makes for a good question for the Class. “Why would the move, 3.Bf1-d3, be considered a poor move?”

Correct answer, “The move, 3.Bf1-d3, blocks the d2-pawn from advancing which currently blocks the c1-Bishop from developing as well. The move, 3.Bf1-d3, would misplace the Bishop and prevent White from developing his Queenside forces effectively.”

3...a7-a6

Black puts the question to White’s b5-Bishop. Will White capture the c6-Knight or retreat his Bishop? The play has brought us to the position shown in diagram 313.

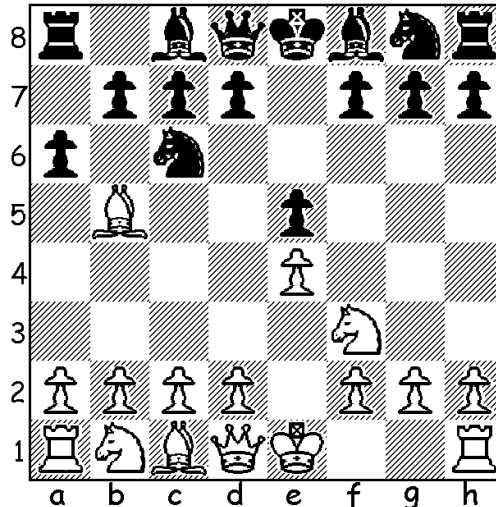


Diagram 313
Ruy Lopez Opening

Our main line will be to retreat the Bishop.

4.Bb5-a4

The alternative: 4.Bb5xc6, is called the, “Ruy Lopez – Exchange Variation,” as White trades his Bishop for Black’s Knight. The move: 3...a7-a6, was popularized by Paul Morphy, a player we learned about in Chapter twelve. The tactical justification for that move is seen in the variation: 4.Bb5xc6 d7xc6 5.Nf3xe5? Qd8-d4!, thanks to the double attack against the e5-Knight and e4-pawn, Black will win his pawn back. This variation might continue: 6.Ne5-f3 Qd4xe4+ 7.Qd1-e2 Qe4xe2+ 8.Ke1xe2 Bc8-g4, when the results of practice show that Black has the better position. White’s best move is to play: 5.O-O Bc8-g4!?, which leads to an interesting position after: 6.h2-h3 h7-h5!?, when I would like to pose a question to the class: “Should White capture the Bishop: 7.h3xg4?”

Correct answer, “Capturing the Bishop would be a mistake. Black would have a strong attack after: 7...h5xg4, thanks to the open h-file. For example if we continue this variation: 8.Nf3xe5? Qd8-h4!, when suddenly Black has a winning attack.”

White should continue with the careful move: (5.O-O Bc8-g4!? 6.h2-h3 h7-h5!?) 7.d2-d3, planning to continue his development by: 8.Bc1-e3 and 9.Nb1-d2, in a few moves the tension caused by the g4-Bishop which is en prise will be resolved.

In passing, did you notice that after Black’s fifth and sixth moves I added an exclamation mark first and a question mark second to the move notation? This punctuation (!?) is universally recognized as “interesting.” The move is neither considered “good” nor “bad” rather it is judged to be a relevant move in the position.

4...Ng8-f6

Black develops a Knight and makes an attack against the e4-pawn. The position has brought us to our next diagram.

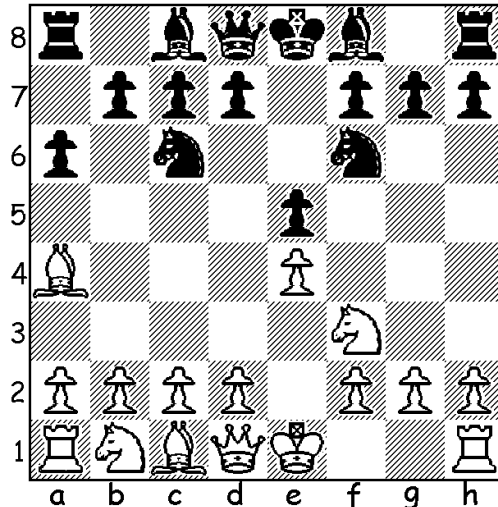


Diagram 314
Ruy Lopez Opening

As we can see in diagram 314, Black has attacked White's e4-pawn. White has a lot of moves that defend the pawn: 5.d2-d3, 5.Nb1-c3, 5.Qd1-e2, all of these moves have their strengths and weaknesses. Hundreds of years of practice have shown that White's best move is to ignore the threat to his e4-pawn. Our main line is to Castle.

5.O-O!

White tucks his King safely on the Kingside and challenges Black to capture the e4-pawn.

5...Bf8-e7

By far this is Black's most popular move in grandmaster games. If Black captures the e4-pawn: 5...Nf6xe4 6.d2-d4! b7-b5 7.Ba4-b3 d7-d5 8.d4xe5 Bc8-e6, leads to a line of play called the, "Ruy Lopez Open Variation." The results in this variation have favored White. The text move leads to the, "Ruy Lopez Closed Variation." The Ruy Lopez Open variation is quite a complex one and needs a great deal of practice to play well. In fact entire books are written on all the Openings that we are studying now.

6.Rf1-e1

White protects his e4-pawn and is now ready to capture the c6-Knight and then to capture the e5-pawn.

6...b7-b5

Black stops White from carrying out his just mentioned threat. Best of all, from Black's point of view, the text wins a tempo by attacking White's Bishop.

7.Ba4-b3

White has to retreat his attacked Bishop.

7...d7-d6

Black supports his e5-pawn while also opening up a diagonal for his c8-Bishop. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

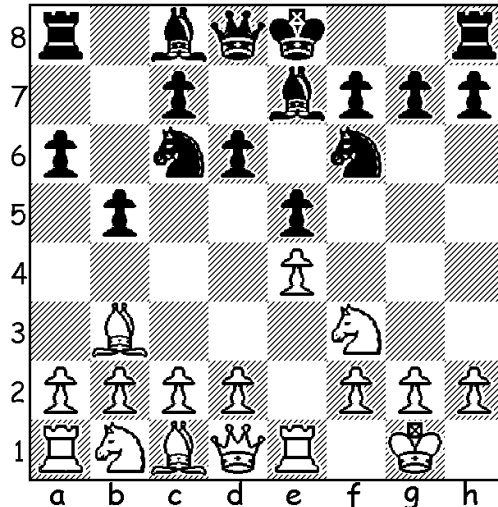


Diagram 315
Ruy Lopez Closed Variation

As usual, White now has to ask himself, "What do I do next?" As we understand from our guiding Opening principles, we should "play in the center" therefore, what could be more natural then to play: 8.d2-d4? That move looks simply splendid! Unfortunately for White, that move has a tactical drawback: 8...Nc6xd4 9.Nf3xd4 e5xd4 10.Qd1xd4?? c7-c5!, leads to a line where Black wins material. Once White moves his Queen, his b3-Bishop will be *trapped*. For example: 11.Qd4-d3 c5-c4! 12.Bb3xc4 b5xc4 13.Qd3xc4, when White has won two pawns for a Bishop. In the material count White is behind and so this variation with: 8.d2-d4, is not considered good.

8.c2-c3

The text will be our main line. What is the *purpose* of this move? White is trying to build up a classical central pawn duo with his pawns on the d4-square and e4-square. With such an advantage in the center, White is hopeful that he will have the better position.

8...O-O

Black brings his King into safety as well. Black counts on his f7, g7 and h7-pawn shield to protect his King. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

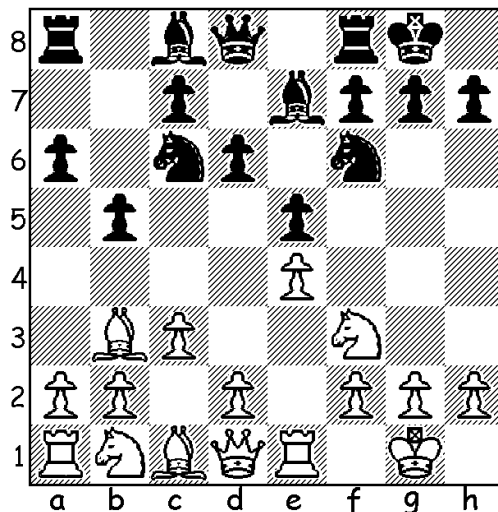


Diagram 316
Ruy Lopez Closed Variation

From the position in diagram 314 White has two main ways of playing the position. The first way is to play: 9.d2-d4, establishing the central pawn duo immediately. However, practice has shown that the pin: 9...Bc8-g4, is quite annoying for White. Therefore our most popular move will be our main line.

9.h2-h3

Before establishing a central pawn duo, White first spends a tempo to stop the pin from the c8-Bishop.

9...Nc6-b8!

This is the move that I like best in this specific position. This move is known as the Breyer Defense in the Ruy Lopez. More properly I should write, "Ruy Lopez, Breyer Defense," as the Opening started as a Ruy Lopez *first*.

This move *does* violate our principle of not moving a piece that is already developed. Black makes this retreating move for good reasons as we are about to see.

Other popular moves for Black include: 9...Nc6-a5; 9...Bc8-b7; 9...Rf8-e8; 9...Bc8-e6 and 9...h7-h6.

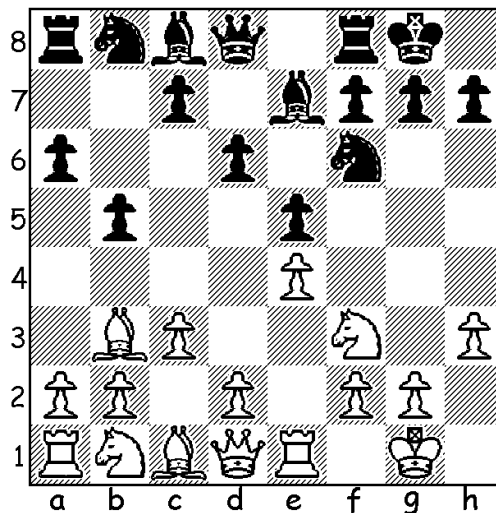


Diagram 317
Ruy Lopez Breyer Defense

The play has brought us to the position in diagram 317. White has set the stage to create a classical center pawn duo.

10.d2-d4!

Advancing a pawn and attacking Black's e5-pawn.

10...Nb8-d7!

Black brings his Knight *back* into play and protects his e5-pawn.

11.Nb1-d2

At last White starts to develop his Queenside pieces as well.

11...Bc8-b7!

The point of the Breyer Defense now becomes a bit more obvious. By repositioning the c6-Knight, the diagonal a8-h1 is *opened*. That means the b7-Bishop effectively strikes out against the e4-pawn. The play has brought us to our next diagram.

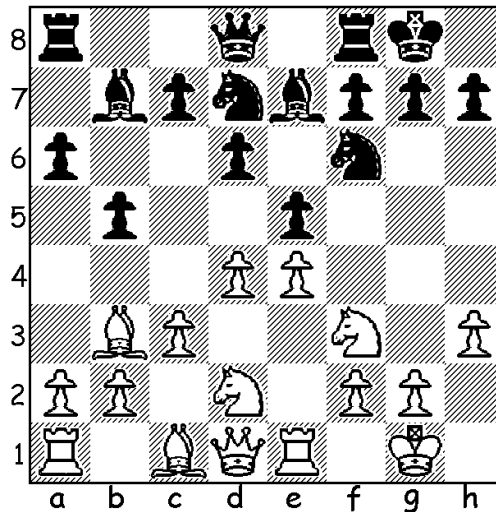


Diagram 318
Ruy Lopez Breyer Defense

As we see from the position in diagram 318, White has a problem: his c1-Bishop is not participating in the game. The reason for that is White's d2-Knight is in the way. It has to move. But at the moment the d2-Knight is performing important defensive duty by protecting the e4-pawn. Our main line will be a retreat by the b3-Bishop.

12.Bb3-c2

With this move White protects his e4-pawn once more, so that the d2-Knight can find better lodging on a more effective square.

12...Rf8-e8

Black brings his Rook to a center file and prepares to put more pressure on White's e4-pawn.

13.Nd2-f1!

The d2-Knight gets out of the way so that the c1-Bishop can join the battle.

13...Be7-f8

In turn, Black moves his Bishop out of the way so that the e8-Rook can have a better look at the e4-pawn.

14.Nf1-g3

White's Knight comes back into action, off the first rank. It protects the e4-pawn as well as offering extra protection for White's King. It also has ambitions that one day it may leap to the f5-square.

14...g7-g6

Black wants to give his f8-Bishop a more active role in the game. The text also protects the f5-square and leads to our next diagrammed position.

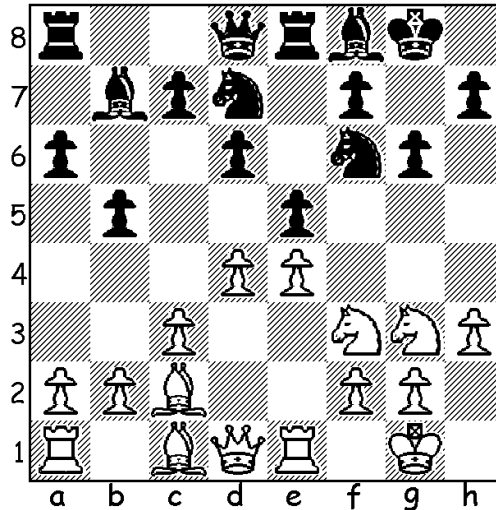


Diagram 319
Ruy Lopez Breyer Defense

We have come to the end of our Ruy Lopez, Breyer Defense variation and have now reached our tabiya position. Take your turn playing both White and Black's position. Remember, "Practice makes perfect."

By the way, did you notice that in this Opening, both players made a lot of maneuvering moves with their pieces? They were trying to bring them to effective squares. These types of maneuvering battles often take place in positions that are *closed*. Closed positions mean that there are a lot of pawns on the board – for both sides of course. Open positions are described as positions where two pawns for both sides have been traded. (Four pawns in total have been captured.) In open positions it is considered dangerous to spend a lot of tempi moving your pieces around the board.

We will start towards our next pre-set position by playing the same moves as before:

Classical King Pawn Openings

1.e2-e4 e7-e5 2.Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6

Instead of playing the Ruy Lopez, 3.Bf1-b5, variation, we will play a different third move for White.

3.Bf1-c4

This Bishop move is known as the, "Italian Game." This move as well as the whole line is considered the *oldest* Opening in chess. The position after White's third move is shown in diagram 320.

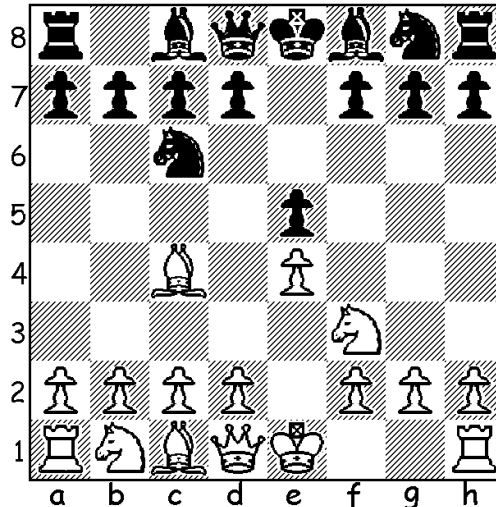


Diagram 320
Italian Game

As we see from diagram 320, White develops his Bishop, controls the d5-square and more importantly puts pressure on the f7-pawn. In King Pawn Openings the f2-pawn and the f7-pawn are particularly sensitive to fast attacks because these pawns are defended *only* by the King. If these pawns are captured early, the King may be vulnerable to a Checkmate. So when the opponent attacks the f2-pawn or the f7-pawn, look out! Danger may be close at hand.

Against the Italian Game, Black has two main defenses the Giuoco Piano: 3...Bf8-c5, and the Two Knights Defense, 3...Ng8-f6, attacking White's e4-pawn. In the Italian language, Giuoco Piano, would be translated as the, "Quiet Game." In the case of why the Two Knights Defense gets that name, well, that is because Black develops two Knights...

Let us first look at how we get to our tabiya position that comes from the Giuoco Piano.

3...Bf8-c5

Black develops his Bishop in "Italian" style as well by attacking White's f2-pawn.

4.c2-c3

White prepares to advance his d-pawn by, d2-d4, establishing a classical pawn center duo. A plan that we have seen several times already.

4...Ng8-f6

Black develops his Knight and attacks White's e4-pawn. The play has brought us to diagram 321.

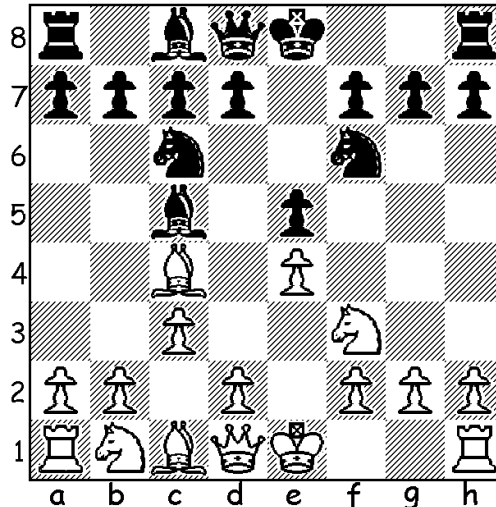


Diagram 321
Giuoco Piano

As you look at the position in diagram 321 I'd like you to consider your top two moves for White. Write them down and then compare them with my comments. What two moves would you consider are White's best choices?

The two moves played most often by White are: 5.d2-d4, attacking the c5-Bishop and 5.d2-d3, *quietly* protecting the e4-pawn. The latter move will be our main line and it is because of this move that the Opening gets its name as a quiet line of play.

In contrast: 5.d2-d4, is a *forcing* line of play. After centuries of practice modern day players consider the positions resulting from this move as too balanced. Many draws are the result. Let us see how that variation might go: 5...e5xd4 6.c3xd4 Bc5-b4+ 7.Bc1-d2, this move has become more popular than the move that Steinitz played, 7.Nb1-c3, in Chapter twelve. The modern day line continues: 7...Bb4xd2+ 8.Nb1xd2 d7-d5 9.e4xd5 Nf6xd5, with an even position. This line is an example of an *open* position because four pawns have been traded. In this *exact* position White usually continues by: 10.Qd1-b3, attacking Black's d5-Knight. Black's two main responses are: 10...Nc6-a5 11.Qb3-a4+ Na5-c6, as well as 10...Nc6-e7 11.O-O O-O, in both cases with a rather balanced game.

5.d2-d3

For the moment, White simply defends his e4-pawn. He hopes to be able to advance his d-pawn further later in the game.

5...d7-d6

Black also develops his d-pawn and opens up a diagonal for his c8-Bishop while also protecting his e5-pawn. There was the possibility that White might play: b2-b4-b5, attacking Black's pieces in order to chase away the c6-Knight which defends the e5-pawn. Supporting the e5-pawn with the text takes away such a possibility.

White takes the tempo to Castle and bring his King into safety.

6.O-O

Black also uses his move to Castle and to make sure his King is well protected as well.

6...O-O

The play has brought us to our next diagram.

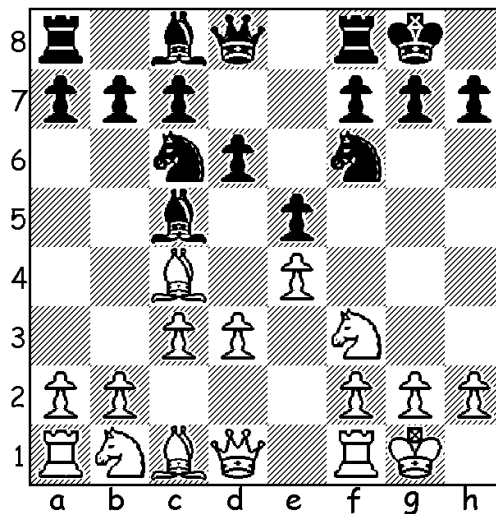


Diagram 322
Giuoco Piano

Looking at the position in diagram 322 we need to figure out a *plan* for White. How to best develop his forces?

Question for the Class: "What are two good moves for White?"

Answer, "There are a large number of good moves and it is a question of *style* as to which moves that *you* might like best. Remarkably, the quiet move: 7.Bc4-b3, is the most popular move. Quite a surprise for me! The aggressive: 7.Bc1-g5!?, pinning the f6-Knight seems most attractive to me. The quiet: 7.Bc1-e3, offering to trade Bishops seems reasonable. Developing the Knight by: 7.Nb1-d2, must be a good move. After all developing your pieces in the Opening is a great idea! The advance: 7.d2-d4, attacking the c5-Bishop and even the *flank attack*, 7.b2-b4, also attacking the c5-Bishop, would be the moves that I'd consider as White's best moves."

How did your choices compare with mine?

Let us consider these choices carefully. The attractive looking central advance: 7.d2-d4?!, seems to be too early. After Black retreats his Bishop: 7...Bc5-b6, White's center is under a lot of pressure. The e4-pawn is attacked and after defending it by: 8.Rf1-e1 Bc8-g4, the pin on the f3-Knight is unpleasant because the d4-pawn is also under attack. The central advance, d2-d4, needs more preparation.

Trading Bishops by: 7.Bc1-e3 Bc5-b6! 8.Be3xb6 a7xb6, seems favorable to Black.

The popular move: 7.Bc4-b3, avoids a line that might allow: ...Nc6-a5, when Black tries to trade the c4-Bishop. It also makes the c4-square available. For example if Black played: 7...Bc5-b6 8.Nb1-d2, White's Knight can jump to the c4-square. The move: 7.Bc4-b3, however is too *tame* for my taste.

The developing move: 7.Nb1-d2, strikes me as better than the moves we have considered so far. White quietly develops his Knight and waits to see how the game will progress.

The two moves I like best are: 7.Bc1-g5, pinning Black's f6-Knight as well as: 7.b2-b4, with the idea of a Queenside *pawn storm*. These two moves will lead to our tabiya positions.

The particular idea that I have in mind is quite aggressive. My intention is to sacrifice a Knight for two pawns.

7.Bc1-g5 h6-h6 8.Bg5-h4 g7-g5

This sequence of moves is natural. Although Black's eighth move, pushing his pawn shield forwards is not forced. However it is a way for Black to try to break the pin. White plays the sacrifice I have in mind.

9.Nf3xg5 h6xg5 10.Bh4xg5 Kg8-g7 11.Qd1-f3

These moves lead us to our tabiya position shown in diagram 323.

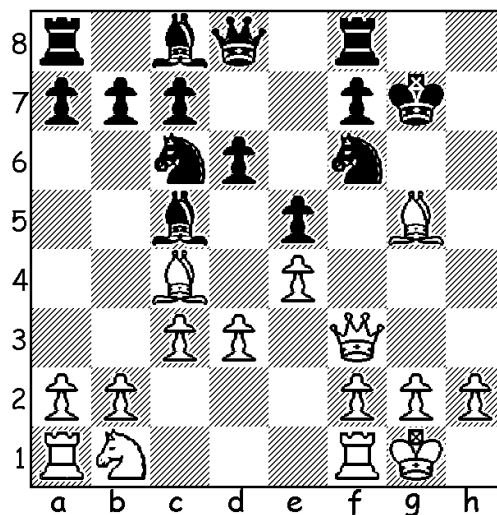


Diagram 323
Giuoco Piano Tabiya Position
Black to play

Our tabiya position is a complicated one. Black is ahead in the material count but he is in an awkward pin. The position is a good one to practice for training. White needs to find a way to develop an attack while Black needs to defend well. If Black finds a good defense, his chances of winning are excellent. The position is full of challenging adventures. Have fun!

Our second tabiya position from the Giuoco Piano features a different type of game. (The line is reached after: 1.e2-e4 e7-e5 2.Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 3.Bf1-c4 Bf8-c5 4.c2-c3Ng8-f6 5.d2-d3 d7-d6 6.O-O O-O)

7.b2-b4

White starts a “flank attack,” also called in chess parlance, “a pawn storm,” by aggressively pushing his Queenside pawns. Black's c5-Bishop is attacked and must step back.

7...Bc5-b6 8.a2-a4

White is now threatening to *trap* Black's Bishop on the Queenside by: 9.a4-a5, winning material.

8...a7-a6

Black makes the a7-square available for the b6-Bishop so that it may retreat there.

9.Nb1-d2 Nc6-e7

This is Black's most popular move. Black maneuvers his Knight over to the Kingside and to get out of the way of White's pawn storm.

10.Bc4-b3 Ne7-g6 11.Nd2-c4 Bb7-a7

The play has brought us to our next diagram and features our second tabiya position from the Giuoco Piano Opening.

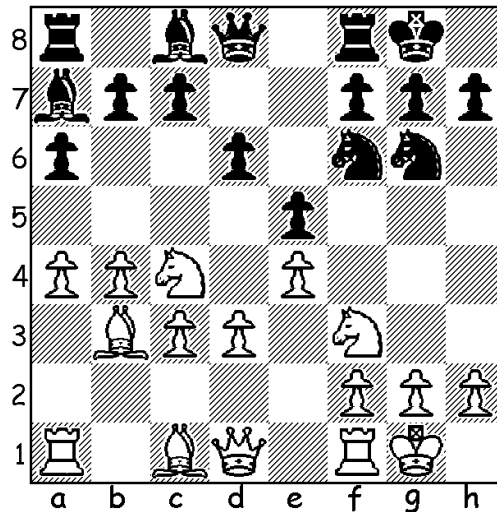


Diagram 324
Giuoco Piano Tabiya Position
White to play

As always when practicing these tabiya positions make an effort to record the games you play on a score-sheet. Save your score-sheets! This will allow you from time to time to compare how you have played the positions in the past. Good luck!

Chapter Fifteen:

Tabiya Positions for Modern Openings

Like all arts, sports and sciences, with greater knowledge and understanding ideas, thoughts, concepts all change. Different approaches to challenging problems are tried. We experiment and then weight the result. With Chess the great experience handed down through the centuries taught us that to gain an advantage in the opening we have to *occupy* and control the center. By the turn of the 19th century a different approach was beginning to take place. This *modern* approach to Chess told us that we should first strengthen our flank positions and only thereafter turn our thoughts to the center.

When I was beginning this modern approach was taught to me as, "*building a fortress.*" Of course I didn't know what that meant in Chess but I did know what a fort was and the idea of building a fortress was very exciting!

What did fortress building mean? At the foundation of a fortress the idea was to put your Bishops on the long diagonals *early* in the game. This meant making a *fianchetto*. What is a “fianchetto?” I’m glad you asked most especially because I know the answer! The word fianchetto is from the Italian language and means “little flank” when translated to English. White makes a fianchetto on the Kingside when he plays the moves: 1.g2-g3 and 2.Bf1-g2, developing his Bishop to the long h1-a8-diagonal. White makes a fianchetto on the Queenside when he plays the moves: 1.b2-b3 and 2.Bc1-b2, developing his Bishop to the long a1-h8-diagonal.

The same is true for Black when he wants to make a fianchetto. Black plays: 1...g7-g6 and 2...Bf8-g7, for a Kingside fianchetto and 1...b7-b6 and 2...Bc8-b7, for a Queenside fianchetto. There are two ideas to the fianchetto. The first is that the fianchetto Bishops would be waiting in ambush on the long diagonals, the second is that the Bishop would help defend the King depending upon which flank he Castled.

Building a Fortress

The majority of our games will feature Castling to the Kingside; therefore it is most natural for us to build our fortress on the Kingside so we will create a tabiya position making a Kingside fianchetto. Instead of Opening with either our King Pawn or Queen Pawn, moves we will save for later in the game, we will start by developing a Knight.

1.Ng1-f3

This opening move gives Black the opportunity to stake out control of the center. The exception being that Black cannot play: 1...e7-e5? 2.Nf3xe5!, which simply blunders a pawn. Let us play in classical style for Black.

1...d7-d5

If White doesn’t occupy the center, then Black takes a classical approach, seizing the opportunity to do so himself.

2.g2-g3

This is the *real* idea behind the fianchetto. White prepares to develop the f1-Bishop to the long diagonal.

2...c7-c5

As before, Black continues to occupy and control the center directly.

3.Bf1-g2

White develops his Bishop to the long diagonal and completes his fianchetto. The play has brought us to diagram 325.

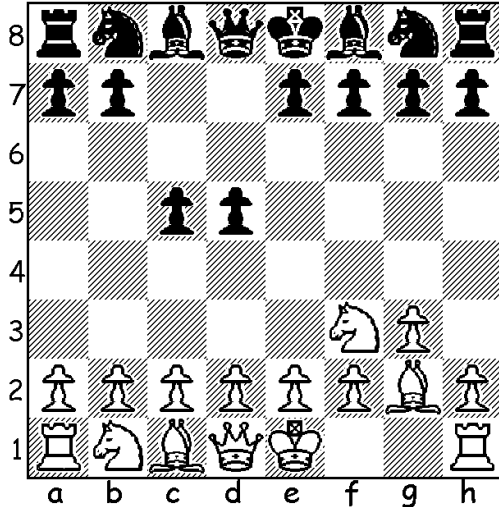


Diagram 325
 White completes his fianchetto
 Black to play

As we can see in diagram 325, White has *strengthened* his Kingside flank. Black on the other hand has played to control the center. The battle of ideas continues as Black develops in classical style.

3...Nb8-c6 4.O-O

White Castles and has completed the building of his fortress.

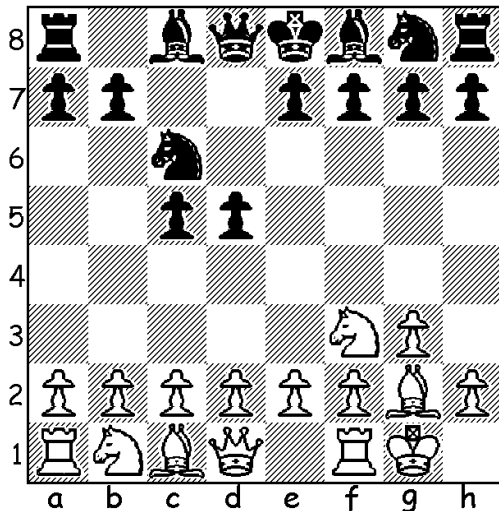


Diagram 326
 White completes his Fortress
 Black to play

As we seen in diagram 326, White's King will be quite safe behind his g2-Bishop as well as his, f2, g3, h2-pawn shield. White has completed one of the goals of the Opening: He has an exceptionally safe King. Now that White has achieved one of his Opening goals he will now turn his attention to the center. However, it is Black to play.

4...e7-e5

Black continues in classical style, first occupying the center with his pawns and then developing his pieces. The position is a battle of ideas, classical versus modern.

5.d2-d3

White begins to turn his attention to the center. With this move White opens a diagonal for his c1-Bishop.

5...Ng8-f6

Black develops another piece and is quite pleased with his position; he has occupied the center, creating a classical pawn duo on the d5-square and e5-square, while also developing both Knights. The play has brought us to diagram 327.

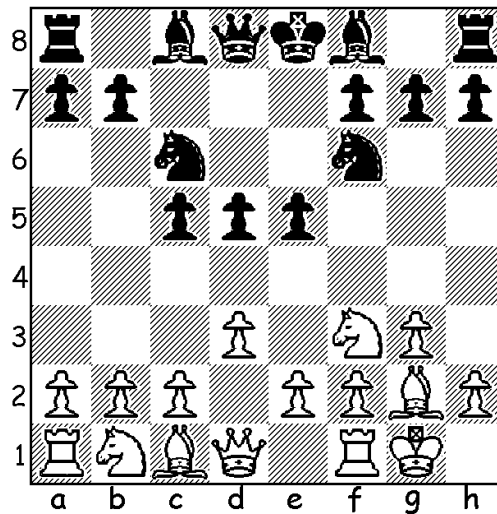


Diagram 327

With his Fortress complete White strikes in the Center

6.c2-c4

White attacks the d5-pawn but this move has another purpose: White wants to open the long diagonal for his g2-Bishop. Another, entirely different approach is for White to play: 6.e2-e4, also playing in the center. Try to answer for yourself if Black can capture the e4-pawn for free in that case.

6...d5-d4

In classical style, Black continues his occupation of the center.

7.e2-e3

While White keeps chipping away at Black's *big* center.

We will stop here. Diagram 328, will feature our first modern Opening tabiya position.

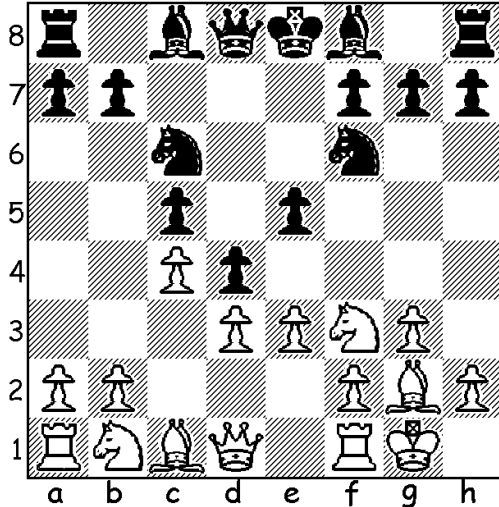


Diagram 328
 Modern tabiya position
 Black to play

Of course if Black also wants to play in a modern style of fianchettoing his Bishop he certainly can do so as well. In fact, one of the most popular modern positions in grandmaster practice will be our next tabiya position.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.O-O O-O

Both players have built a fortress, fianchettoing their Bishops and Castling on the Kingside.

Besides the word fianchetto, in the names of many Openings and Defenses the word “Indian” is used to describe a fianchetto. In the situation after these four moves, Black’s setup could be described as a “King’s Indian Defense” while White’s might be described as a “King’s Indian Attack.” Naturally, if the players make a Queenside fianchetto, this might be called a “Queen’s Indian Defense” as well as a “Queen’s Indian Attack.”

5.c2-c4 c7-c5 6.d2-d4

We have come to another tabiya position shown in diagram 329.

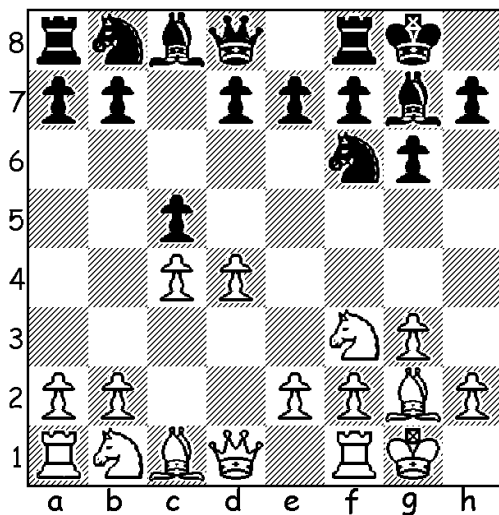


Diagram 329

*Modern tabiya position
Black to play*

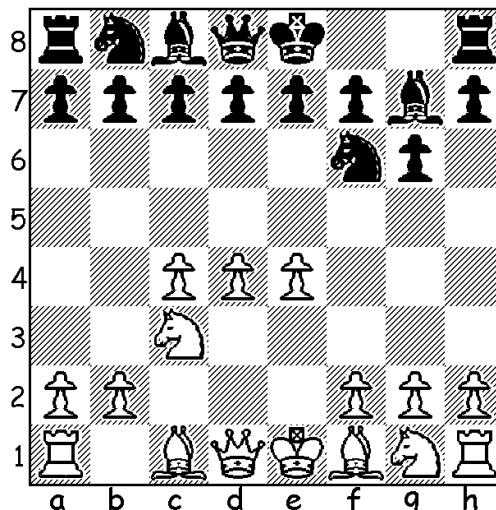
This tabiya position is often played in games between grandmasters. Try the position yourself, keeping track of your moves as well as your results. I'm sure you will start to appreciate the strength of your fianchettoed Bishop.

Creating a strong fortress when you are White is easy. It can be harder when you are Black. The White player can play for a direct attack against the fortress. That is why I would first recommend playing the classical defenses from the previous two chapters; gain some practical playing experience before playing a fortress defense as Black.

Just to show how tricky it is to play a fortress defense as Black allow me to present two examples where White attacks a fortress directly. The first one comes from a Queen Pawn Opening.

1.d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2.c2-c4 g7-g6 3.Nb1-c3 Bf8-g7 4.e2-e4

The play has brought us to our next diagram position.



*Diagram 330
Black to play*

The position shown in diagram 330 is called the, "King's Indian Defense." Knowledgeable chess players often call it the, "KID." In view of White's possible, e4-e5, advance Black stops this possibility with his next move.

4...d7-d6 5.f2-f4

White occupies as much of the center as he can. The resulting position is shown in our next diagram.

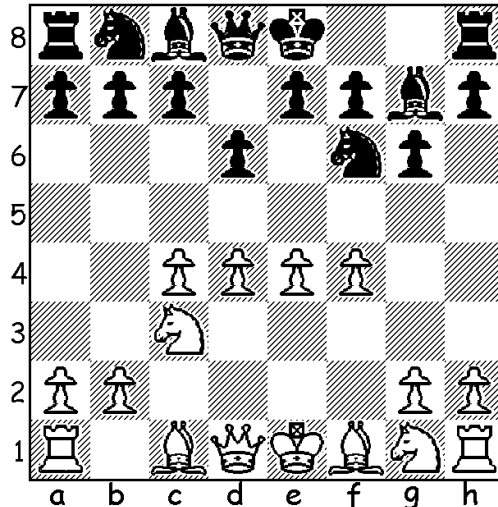


Diagram 331
Black to play

Anyone care to guess what this Opening is called for White? Look at the position in diagram 331 for just a moment and think about it before making your guess.

It is called the, “Four Pawns Attack.” Want to guess why it gets that name?

If you said, “Because White is attacking with four pawns,” (c4, d4, e4 and f4) well done. That is correct.

After decades of practice, the normal line of play has gone as follows.

5...O-O

Black safely tucks his King away but by the time he is ready to fight back in the center he might be overwhelmed.

6.Ng1-f3 c7-c5 7.d4-d5 e7-e6 8.Bf1-e2 e6xd5 9.c4xd5

These moves have been well tested. The play from both sides are considered to be the best moves. We are now at our next diagram.

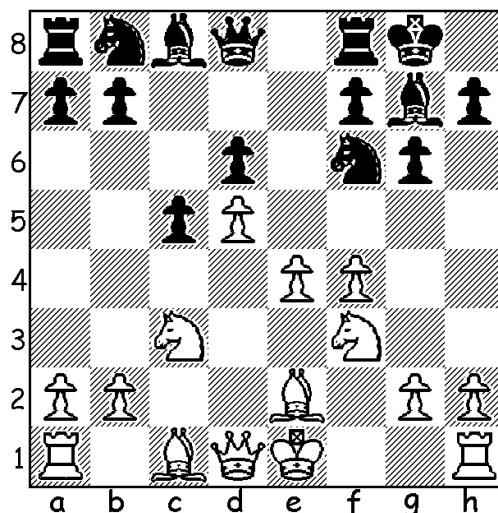


Diagram 332
Four Pawns Attack
Black to play

As we see in diagram 332, White has a “big” center. If he manages to keep it Black’s pieces will have difficulties finding effective squares to develop. So Black has to attack the center as quickly as possible.

9...Rf8-e8! 10.e4-e5 d6xe5 11.f4xe5 Nf6-g4

The position is very complicated. One wrong move by either player and the position is lost. In the Four Pawns Attack, White usually gambits a pawn for fast development. Grandmaster play has continued as follows.

12.Bc1-g5

White develops a Bishop with a tempo.

12...Qd8-b6 13.O-O

The play has brought us to our final diagram in this line.

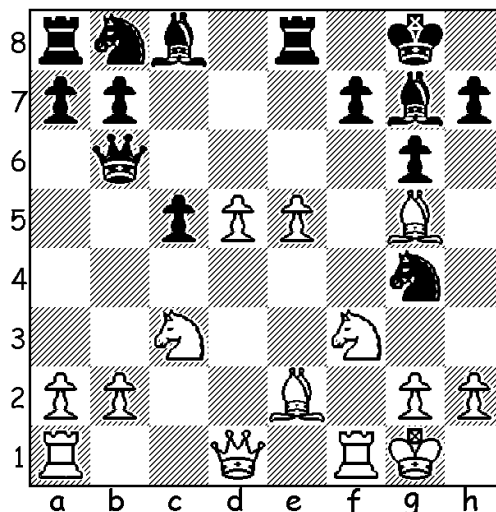


Diagram 333
Four Pawns Attack
Black to play

Entire books have been written about the King’s Indian Defense and one of White’s sharpest answers is the Four Pawns Attack. In the position in diagram 333, Black can consider: 13...Ng4xe5, winning a pawn. Or 13...c5-c4+ 14.Kg1-h1 Ng4-f2+ 15.Rf1xf2 Qb6xf2, winning an Exchange. In either case the positions are complex and require a great deal of study.

Playing a fortress defense to a King Pawn Opening can also be a challenge for Black.

1.e2-e4 d7-d6 2.d2-d4 Ng8-f6 3.Nb1-c3 g7-g6

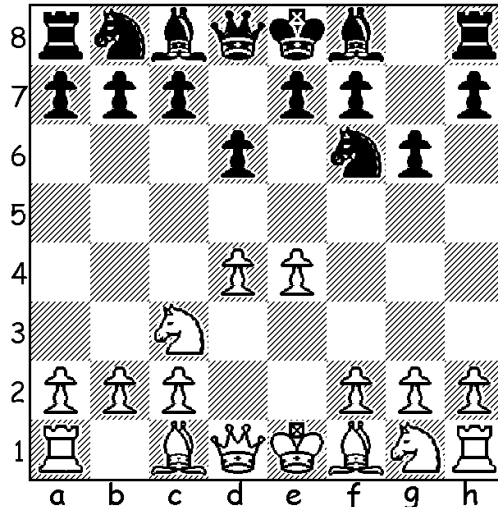


Diagram 334
Pirc Defense

The position in diagram 334 is called the “Pirc Defense” named after the Slovenian grandmaster Vasja Pirc who popularized this defense. In some circles it is also called the, “Modern Defense” and even “The Rat.” Don’t ask me how it got that last name!

Against the Pirc Defense a dangerous attack by White is called the, “Austrian Attack.”

4.f2-f4 Bf8-g7 5.Ng1-f3 O-O 6.e4-e5 Nf6-d7

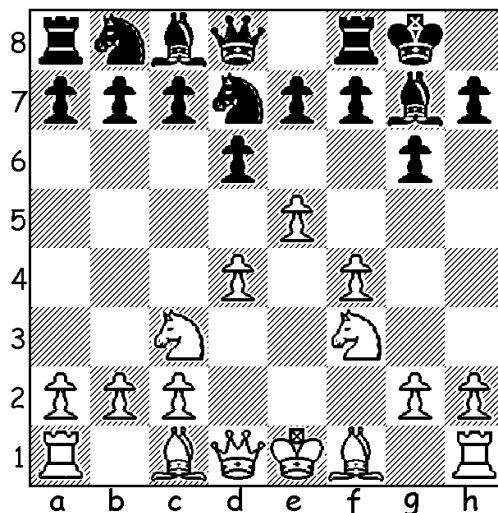


Diagram 335
Pirc Defense/Austrian Attack

For the moment, Black’s King appears safe. A situation that makes Black happy. White decides to rock the ramparts with a direct Kingside attack. Now that the f6-Knight has been pushed away, White decides to charge up the h-file.

7.h2-h4 c7-c5

While White attacks on the Kingside Black tries to counter attack in the center.

8.h4-h5 c5xd4 9.Qd1xd4

Another dangerous line that needs close study as well is: 9.h5xg6 d4xc3!? 10.g6xf7+ Rf8xf7 11.Bf1-c4, with a wild and complicated attacking game. The more restrained text is considered White's best move.

9...d6xe5 10.Qd4-f2

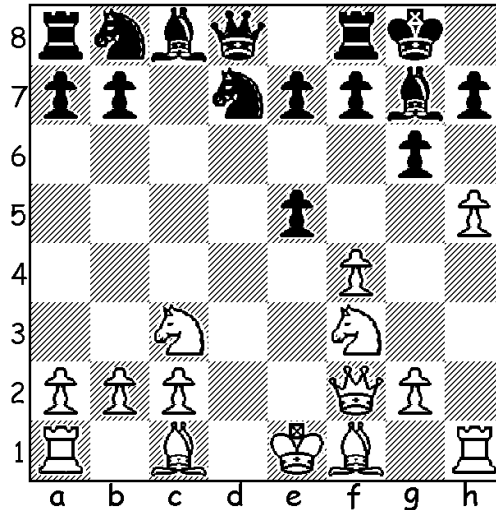


Diagram 336
Pirc Defense/Austrian Attack
Black to Play

A temporary retreat. White wants to get his Queen over to the h-file to attack Black's King.

10...e5xf4 11.h5xg6 h7xg6 12.Qf2-h4

White threatens Checkmate. Black has to defend the h7-square.

12...Nd7-f6 13.Bc1xf4

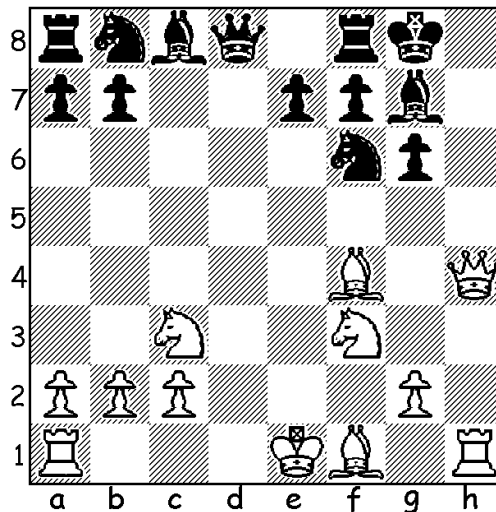


Diagram 337
Pirc Defense/Austrian Attack
Black to Play

As we see in diagram 337, White has sacrificed a pawn but has created dangerous threats to Black's King. Neither player can make a single mistake.

My advice is to practice the tabiya positions I've shown you. When you are White play a fortress variation. When you are Black don't try the fortress set up until you have gained experience. Stay with the classical Defenses. Remember to write down your moves on a score-sheet and to keep these records of your games.

I promise you that much later you will enjoy replaying these practice games and you will wonder to yourself, "Did I really play this bad?" Remember champions are not born they are created by practice and training.

Chapter Sixteen:

Tournament Chess Etiquette

This chapter is different from the rest of the Curriculum and might be considered out of place as it doesn't deal with "learning chess moves" rather it is about a different part of the Chess world: Official organized chess competitions. In short this chapter is about the world of Chess *tournaments*.

When we play skittles Chess games which are Chess for fun games, we might speak with our opponent directly asking why he or she made a particular move. We might also warn our opponent of an impending threat that we are trying to make. Laugh with abandon or cringe after making a howler. Besides talking to our opponents we might drink or even eat while we are playing. We might make a move realize another one was better and ask our opponent for a "take back." All of this is entirely acceptable behavior. We are playing for fun.

At Chess tournaments however the situation is dramatically different. We are not allowed to take back a move; talk to our opponent; or seek advice during play. Indeed a rule of tournament Chess is "touch move." If we touch a piece and it can make a *legal* move the rules require that we move the piece or pawn that we touched *first*. So we have to be sure about the move we want to play before touching a pawn or piece. If after a move is made a pawn or piece is not properly centralized on a square, we must say "adjust" in advance of putting it properly on a square. We would make an adjustment only when it is our turn to move not while our opponent is on move. If we play in a tournament abroad it is most common to say, "j'adoube," which is French for "adjust" before touch a pawn or piece. Many experienced American tournament players prefer to say, "j'adoube" as well. It is my preference as well. My French language skills need a lot of practice!

In competitive tournament Chess we are required to keep an accurate score-sheet. Our score-sheet is not only a record of the game played but is also evidence of a three-fold repetition of moves; proof that a time control was reached either successfully or unsuccessfully; as well as proof of a "fifty move rule" that no progress was achieved in such a span of moves. At the end of the game, regardless of the result, both players are required to sign each other's score-sheet and to inform the arbiter of the result.

We are not allowed to talk to our opponent or to anyone else during play. We most certainly cannot receive advice during the game. That would not only be against the spirit of fair sport it is also against the rules. Getting advice during play or talking with others might draw a rebuke from the arbiter and such flouting of this rule might mean a time penalty or punishment by the forfeit of the game. In a word the atmosphere at Chess tournaments is "serious."

For first time tournament players competitive tournament Chess can seem intimidating. There is much to learn including the pairings of the competition; the time controls as Chess clocks are used for the competitions; which board number we will play on; as well as the types of boards, sets and clocks to use. There are standard tournament regulation types of sets, boards and clocks with which we must acquaint ourselves before the competition.

This chapter is to give advice about competitive Chess as well as how to behave during tournaments. The single most important advice I can give is to *be kind*. Of course when you enter a Chess tournament you want to compete well and to win. You will have a lot to learn and if you are kind to others they will in turn help you giving good advice along the way. As you become an experienced tournament player you in turn should do your best to help those who are new to Chess tournaments. A kind attitude will not only gain you many new friends it will make you a better competitor as well.

Paul Keres

When I was a young man of fifteen years old Vancouver British Columbia hosted a tournament that featured the legendary chess grandmaster Paul Keres from Estonia. The local chess community was abuzz with his participation and I took a break from my schoolwork to visit the event driving back and forth from Seattle with a group of friends.

I was mesmerized by the play of Paul Keres and watched him with an eagle eye during one of the rounds. He sat at the board in an elegant gentlemanly fashion, playing his moves carefully placing his pawns and pieces directly on the square, pressing the button on his clock in an unhurried fashion followed by precisely writing down his move. His manner and bearing were regal. He never disturbed his opponent in any way. I determined that while I couldn't imitate the same moves that he played I would endeavor to emulate *his* behavior at the board and would at all times respect my opponent. I'm proud to say that after decades of competitive tournament Chess I've followed his example well.

Remember although tournament Chess is a competition that we want to win we can also win in another way by showing respect for our opponent. Respecting others is proof that you also respect yourself.

Bent Larsen

A few years later this time at a tournament in Lone Pine, California I was a competitor playing against Jan Timman a grandmaster from Holland. Alongside our game another one was being played. Across the table to my right side was yet another Chess legend, the "Great Dane," Bent Larsen from Denmark playing against an International Master Jonathan Speelman from England.

In the years ahead Bent would become a personal hero of mine. In that game, Bent was the clear favorite and everyone expected him to win. While Bent did in fact win the competition, he lost that particular game. I watched it all unfold before my eyes. Upon resigning Bent said, "Thank you," shook his opponent's hand and signed both score-sheets. While I was shocked to see a legend falling in an upset, his demeanor throughout what was undoubtedly a painful loss was simply amazing. What control! Thereafter I determined that whatever happened in my games, win, lose or draw, I too would imitate Bent and thank my opponent after the game. Again, I'm proud to say I have followed *his* example well.

Showing respect for your opponent is a vital part of competitive Chess. Sometimes our opponents will misbehave but that is their problem, not yours. At the board and at all times we must behave properly!

At a Chess tournament *never* raise your voice. *Anything* you have to say can be said softly. When we shout it is proof that we have lost our emotional control. Chess tournaments have a policy of “quiet” and “silence” so that other players are not disturbed. If you have a complaint or a question, speak with an arbiter in a quiet soft tone of voice. An arbiter will appreciate a respectful question much more than an angry one.

Offering Draws

Draws are part of the game of Chess. Sports fans are accustomed to seeing teams and individuals win or lose oftentimes there is a tiebreaker to force a victory. In Chess there is a tie. A well played game between two equally matched opponents will oftentimes end in a draw. This fact however should not be needlessly encouraged through a “draw offer.” In tournament Chess when a balanced or equal position is reached, a player has the right to offer a draw. Such an offer can be declined or accepted. It is a polite custom to say, “I would like to continue,” when declining a draw. This way the opponent knows that the draw offer was heard and refused.

I am firmly of the opinion that players should decline draw offers and certainly not make them. Play the game out to its natural conclusion! Exhaust the possibilities as best you can. You will learn far more about Chess by playing to the very end than you will by making an early and premature peace agreement.

Losing Games

If you do decide to play competitive tournament Chess please do gird yourself to losing games. There is no shame in losing to a better more experienced player. They will have studied and trained as well! Sometimes a loss can be very painful. Trust me, I most certainly do know! But that is part and parcel of competitive Chess. Sometimes our opponent will play better; sometimes we will play badly and blunder. It happens. Get over it! It is often said that, “You learn more from your losses than your wins.” I know this to be true. As a player who has lost hundreds indeed thousands of games, I’m forced to admit that I’ve learned a great deal. When we compete we all take the risk of defeat as well as the thrill to victory it is after all the allure of competition. The more we study and practice the better we become.

Post-Mortem

After a game is finished it is common practice to leave the tournament room and go to a special analysis room where you and your opponent can go over the game together and reflect on the moves made. This courtesy is a practice I strongly encourage. You may learn a lot and perhaps your opponent will as well. You may discover that much to your own surprise, that your opponent had completely different ideas and judgments about certain positions. Sharing such viewpoints will help you to expand your own views.

If your ambition is to become a tournament player I would strongly recommend that you split your time. Half of your “Chess time” should consist of study (theory) and the other half practice which means playing both skittles games and tournament games. For skittles games I recommend playing with a Chess clock. The most popular form of skittles is “five minute Chess” with both players having but five minutes each to complete all your moves for the whole game else you “lose on time.” You will learn to think quickly and play fast.

In terms of study material, there are a lot of Chess book titles. Rather than mention the many individual titles of books that I’ve studied I’d rather point you in the direction of my favorite *authors*. Such a list would include works by: Mikhail Tal, my favorite writer, Paul Keres, Bent Larsen, Garry Kasparov, Robert James Fischer (“My Sixty Memorable Games,”) David Bronstein,

Alexander Alekhine (“My Best Games” two volume series), Dr. John Nunn, Jeremy Silman and Edward Winter to mention those I’ve enjoyed the most.

Today, Chess study really does mean having a computer and using the many computer programs available. In terms of databases, ChessBase, a Hamburg Germany based company provides the standard used around the world. There are many fantastic Chess “engines” a software opponent you can play against night and day which can help you analyze positions testing your ideas. There are numerous training programs as well. I’d recommend that you visit the Amazon website and read the customer reviews about the products that you might be interested.

My favorite Chess websites for up to date news include the following:

www.chessbase.com
www.chesscafe.com
www.chessvibes.com
www.theweekinchess.com
www.chesshistory.com

My favorite online playing sites are:

www.internetchessclub.com
www.playchess.com