



Colin Crouch

Attacking Technique

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Colin Crouch

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Symbols

+	Check
++	Double Check
#	Mate
!	Good move
!!	Excellent move
?	Bad move
??	Serious blunder
!?	Interesting move
?!	Dubious move
1-0	White wins
0-1	Black wins
1/2-1/2	Draw
Ch	Championship
Echt	European team championship
Wch	World championship
Wcht	World team championship
OL	Olympiad
Z	Zonal
IZ	Interzonal
Ct	Candidates event
corr	Correspondence game
(n)	<i>n</i> th match game
(D)	Diagram follows

Introduction

This book examines the question of how to win games where you get a big advantage, with particular emphasis on the opening and middlegame. Look back at your score-sheets, and look at the percentages you score when you have reached a position that you feel ought to be winning. Did you score over 90% in those games? If not, your winning technique can certainly be improved!

The title of this book is *Attacking Technique*, but the emphasis is on the technique, not the attacking. We may define technique as the art of bringing the game to its logical conclusion (a win or a safe draw) by the means of clear and direct moves. Thus if you have a good position, and aim to convert it into a win, you must find clear objectives and follow them through. Your opponent, if he or she is a good player, will fight hard to complicate the position, but if your position is already strong enough then, assuming accurate play, you will prevail. Sometimes the correct plan is to play quietly and avoid complications. At other times it is more appropriate to rise to the challenge and hack one's way right through

the jungle of complications. If one enters the complications with a superior position and does not actually get outplayed in them, then one ought to emerge safely with a better position. There is no hard-and-fast rule as to which way to handle your opponent's attempts to complicate, and we shall see examples of both methods in this book. However, the general principle would be that the more your advantage depends on static weaknesses in your opponent's position, the more you should keep things simple, while the more that your advantage depends on superior piece mobility and tactical co-ordination in a sharp position, the more likely it is that sharp methods are needed to bring the full point home. It might be argued with some justice that deliberately entering sharp tactical complications when you are better hardly scores highly on *clarity*, but if the position is genuinely sharp and better for you, then sharp play fulfils the needs of the position and is thus the *logical* as well as the direct approach.

The games in this book are not carefully selected classics from the super-grandmasters, but ordinary

8 Introduction

grandmaster and master games mostly taken from international tournaments held in Britain during 1993 and 1994.

Apart from the examples in Chapter 1, the complete games all come from the 1994 Lloyds Bank Masters, as a tribute to what was for many years the top international open in Britain. The 1994 event was alas the final one of a distinguished series initiated and organised by Stewart Reuben; even the most generous of sponsorship packages eventually comes to an end. Fortunately the final event finished in dazzling and newsworthy fashion as the teenage Russian star

Alexander Morozevich won with a breathtaking $9\frac{1}{2}/10$. Several of his games are given here; some of them have their faults, but when he was able to get into a good attacking position, young Morozevich was lethal. It will be very interesting to see how his play develops over the years.

While some tournaments disappear, others appear; this process is vital for the continued health of competitive chess. The twenty positions in the quiz section are all taken from the Isle of Man Opens in 1993 and 1994 sponsored by the local firm Monarch Assurance, and organised by Dennis Hemsley.

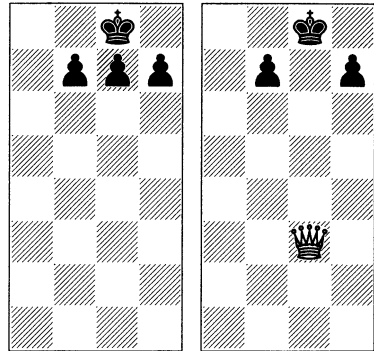
1 Basics of the Kingside Attack: The Three-Piece Rule

In later chapters, we shall investigate the process by which a positional advantage is converted into an attack, and ultimately into a win, using sophisticated examples from recent play. If you are better you **must** attack, otherwise your advantage will disappear. Yet the attack does not necessarily have to be against the king; if for example your opponent's king is well defended, but there are pawn weaknesses to attack elsewhere, it makes sense to go for the pawns.

So how should we know when a kingside attack is likely to be fruitful?

The first point to remember is that the king is an excellent short-range defender. The king is the only piece, other than the queen, which is able to cover all eight adjacent squares, or all five adjacent squares if it is on the back rank. When Black has castled kingside, the king provides sturdy protection for the pawns on f7, g7 and h7, assuming of course that these pawns are still there. The pawns themselves fulfil the complementary role of providing cover for the king. If for

example the g7-pawn were missing, then White might well have something like ♔g3+, exposing the king to a possibly dangerous attack.



Safe king

Exposed king

The king is an excellent short-range defender, but as it can only move one square at a time it is a poor long-range defender. Once the pawns in front of the king have disappeared, the king is easily attacked from afar.

The second basic point to remember about the kingside attack is that mate decides the game. If you checkmate your opponent's king, it does not matter whether

10 Basics of the Kingside Attack: The Three-Piece Rule

you are a pawn, a piece or even a whole queen down; you have won the game! Attacks on the king are thus played for much higher stakes than queenside attacks. It is comparatively rare to sacrifice a piece to create a queenside passed pawn, but almost routine to sacrifice a piece to open up your opponent's king. Even so, it is pointless to sacrifice heavily to expose the king if you then don't have enough material to give checkmate. *To conduct a successful kingside attack, you must be prepared to sacrifice, while being careful to ensure that you have enough material in reserve to force checkmate. In general, a successful kingside attack will need at least three pieces participating; one to be sacrificed and two to give checkmate.*

Consider now a simple example. Like the other games in this chapter, it comes from about a hundred years ago; readers might well be interested, when reading later chapters, to consider the extent to which standards of attacking and defensive play have improved in the intervening century.

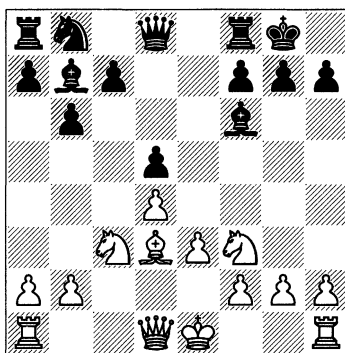
Marshall – Burn Paris 1900

1	d4	d5
2	c4	e6
3	♘f3	♘f6
4	♙g5	♙e7

5	e3	0-0
6	♘f3	b6

Nowadays 6...h6 is generally preferred; it makes it more difficult for White to arrange a snap attack against h7.

7	♙d3	♙b7
8	cxd5	exd5
9	♙xf6	♙xf6 (D)



W

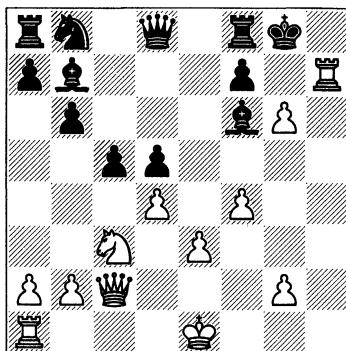
10 h4!?

Marshall had the reputation of being a terrifying master of attack, while Burn was regarded as a dour and effective defensive player, a master of the slow grind. In this particular game, the master of attack gets the master of defence into a panic.

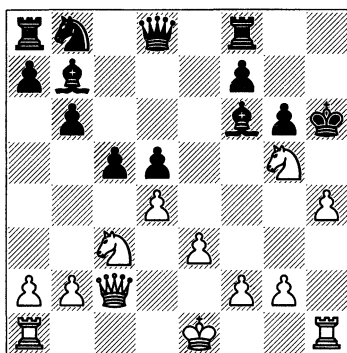
10 ... g6?!

Black is quite naturally anxious about sacrifices on h7, and aware that 10...h6 will merely encourage White to start a pawn storm with g4, etc. However, the text-move weakens his kingside fortress.

Modern theory suggests that Black can just about cope with the threat on h7, as White does not quite have sufficient fire-power in reserve to back up the sacrifice. Thus the *Encyclopedia of Chess Openings* cites Teschner-Spassky, Riga 1959: 10...c5! 11 ♖xh7+?! (11 ♖c2 is perfectly playable) 11...♙xh7 12 ♜g5+ ♙h6 13 ♖c2 g6 (D).



W



W

Already the soundness of White's play may be questioned; he has only two pieces in the attack! To bring his king's rook into the attack, he has to sacrifice the knight, but that still leaves only two attacking pieces. True, the white kingside pawns soon become far enough advanced to be regarded as the equivalent of the third piece, but in compensation Black will have time to surround his king with defensive pieces. Play now continued 14 h5 ♙xg5 15 f4+ ♙h6 16 hxg6+ ♙g7 17 ♜h7+ ♙g8 (D).

The natural continuation now would be 18 exf7+ ♜xf7 19 ♖g6+ ♙g7, with an attacking formation closely reminiscent of that in the Marshall-Burn encounter. However, there is one enormous difference: Marshall, as we shall soon see, had a knight in reserve with which to play the decisive ♜g5 (three attacking pieces!), whereas Teschner has nothing. Teschner tried instead 18 0-0-0, but Black's king was adequately covered after 18...♙g7 19 ♜dh1 ♖f6, and he still of course had two extra pieces.

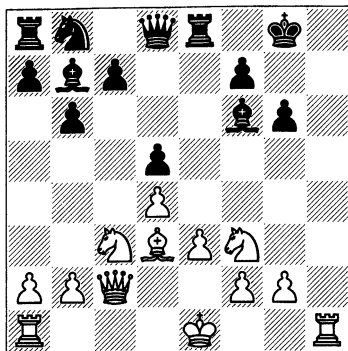
Now let us return to Marshall-Burn, and 10...g6.

11 h5!

A standard attacking plan. If you can break up your opponent's pawn cover by exchanging pawns, it is obviously rather more economical than doing so by means of sacrificing pieces.

11 ... ♜e8
12 hxg6 ♙xg6

13 ♖c2 (D)



B

13 ... ♗g7?

The decisive mistake. Burn forgets that one of the essentials of defence is to have the king supporting the defensive pawn cover. 13...♗g7! was essential, although White's advantage in development still gives him the better game.

14 ♗xg6!

Three pieces in the attack; one of them sacrifices itself to get the king into the open.

14 ... fxg6

15 ♖xg6

Now there are only two pieces in the attack, and this will be insufficient to mate Black. It only takes a single move though to introduce the third piece, the knight on f3, and this makes all the difference.

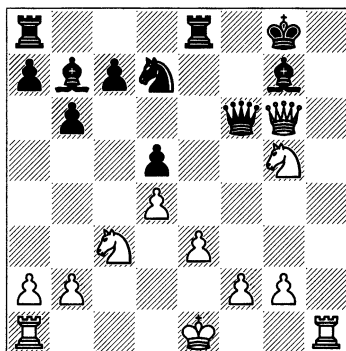
15 ... ♗d7

White is helped by the fact that the queen may not be challenged: 15...♖f6? 16 ♖xe8+, etc.

16 ♗g5

Three pieces in the attack again...

16 ... ♖f6 (D)



W

17 ♖h8+! 1-0

...and again one of them is sacrificed to bring the king out into the open. Black resigned in view of 17...♗xh8 18 ♖h7#.

It *always* requires at least two pieces to checkmate the king. Even the most powerful piece on the board, the queen, requires help. In those cases where one piece can give mate unassisted by friends (most notably the 'back-rank mate'), it requires that the flight squares of the king be blocked off by its own pawns or pieces. But how is such a checkmate to be arranged? Not, unless the defender makes a gross blunder, by one piece acting alone, but rather through the concerted activity of several pieces leading to the possibility of a mating combination.

It usually takes at least three pieces hovering around the opposing king for a full frontal attack to have a chance of succeeding, but this presence of pieces does not come about spontaneously; it has to be worked for, with pieces moving into position.

If you have no pieces attacking the king, then it is obviously much too early to be thinking about mate. Get developed and centralise your pieces; these are your priorities for the time being. If your pieces are well-developed, they will have influence on both sides of the board, and maybe the possibility of a kingside attack will gradually emerge.

If you have one piece attacking the king, then remember that it can do nothing by itself. If you can see straightforward methods to bring pieces two and three into the attack, then a direct attack on the king may well be something to be considered. However, remember that it might well be more effective to direct your attention elsewhere on the board. In particular, it is usually inadvisable to allow your pieces to lose touch with the centre of the board.

If you have two pieces attacking the king, then by all means consider ways of introducing a third piece to the attack. However, remember that it is not obligatory to attack the king; you may well have more promising possibilities elsewhere.

If you have three pieces attacking the king, then you may well be in business! Three pieces, including your own king, may well be enough to set up a mating attack, particularly if the king is sparsely defended by pieces, or if the pawn cover is broken. A piece sacrifice to expose the king might well be considered, particularly if a reserve piece may quickly be brought into the attack.

If you have four pieces attacking the king, then start looking for the winning combination! Unless your opponent's pieces are particularly well placed for defence, there will usually be something in the air.

Our next game shows one of the top players from a hundred years ago making the cardinal mistake of trying a sacrificial attack with only two pieces left with which to attack after the sacrifice.

Maroczy – Charousek
Budapest 1896

1	b3	d5
2	f4	e6
3	♙b2	♘f6
4	♘f3	♙e7
5	e3	c5
6	♘c3	a6
7	♘e2	♘c6
8	♘g3	

White follows the opening strategy devised by the English master Bird. In a slow positional struggle,

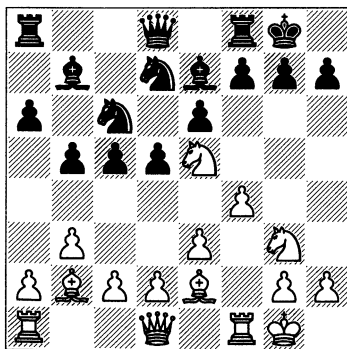
his control of the central squares will be useful, while the two white knights will be well placed to menace the black king after kingside castling.

8 ... 0-0
 9 ♖e2 b5
 10 0-0

Maroczy later noted that 10 a4! would have been strong. The reply that damages Black's queenside the least (10...b4) allows White to transfer his bishop to d3 without fear of either ...♟b4 or ...c4.

10 ... ♗b7
 11 ♟e5 ♟d7? (D)

A serious defensive slip; Black needs this knight for defence. 11...♟e8, giving extra cover to g7 and preparing ...f5 or ...f6, is much tighter.

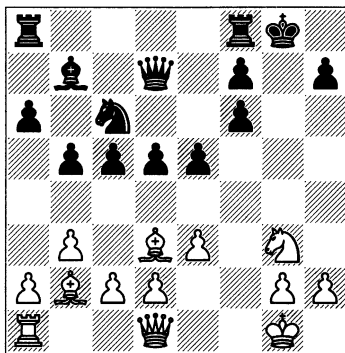


W

12 ♟h5?!

Missing a clear opportunity. 12 ♟xd7! ♜xd7 13 f5 is strong. If Black were now to have two moves

to spare, he could consolidate with ...f6 and ...e5. However, in answer to 13...e5, White has the exchange sacrifice 14 f6! ♗xf6 15 ♜xf6 gxf6 16 ♗d3!. White would then have three pieces pointed directly at Black's exposed king, a ratio of power offering good prospects of success, despite the exchange and pawn sacrifice. Black can then try (D):



B

a) 16...♟e7 17 ♜h5 f5 (17...♟g6 18 ♜h6 ♟h8 19 ♟h5 ♜g8 20 ♟xf6 wins the queen; 17...e4 18 ♗xf6 soon mates) 18 ♟xf5 ♟g6 (18...f6 19 ♜g4+ ♟g6 20 ♟h6+ wins the queen) 19 ♗xe5! f6 (or 19...♟xe5 20 ♜g5+ ♟g6 21 ♜f6). Now 20 ♜g5?! ♜e6! would be misplaced aestheticism, so Black has survived the first wave of the attack. However, after the continuation 20 ♗d6 (threatening ♟e7+) 20...♜fe8 21 ♗xc5 material is approximately level again, and White's excellently

placed minor pieces give him a substantial positional edge. It is doubtful if Black will be able to survive the second wave of the attack.

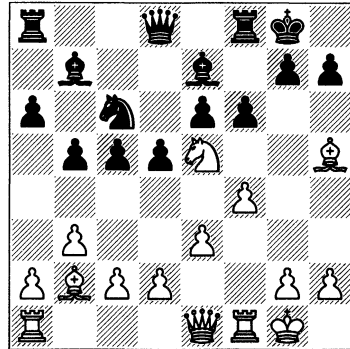
b) 16...♖fb8 17 ♖h5 ♘f8 (or 17...♟e7 18 ♖h6!) 18 ♖f1 ♘e7 19 ♖xf6! ♘xf6 20 ♖h4+ ♘g7 21 ♖xh7+ ♘f6 (if 21...♘f8, 22 ♟f5 forces Black to give up his queen) 22 ♖h4+ ♘g7 23 ♟f5+ ♖xf5 24 ♙xf5. Once more Black has survived the first wave of the attack against the king, but again White has recovered his material and has a substantial positional advantage. His pieces all work well together, and the outside passed h-pawn will be a real nuisance for Black to deal with.

As you play through these variations, note how careful White is always to keep at least three pieces in the attack.

In reply to 13 f5, Black could also try 13...f6, but 14 fxe6 ♖xe6 15 ♙g4 ♖f7 16 ♟f5 gives White a comfortable positional edge, even though it might as yet still be a little early to think about a direct kingside attack.

12 ... ♟f6
 13 ♖e1 ♟xh5
 14 ♙xh5 f6 (D)
 15 ♟g6?

White tries to attack with only two pieces, and justly gets punished. Naturally after the acceptance of the sacrifice Black must



W

take care not to be mated on h7, but this is easily enough avoided.

White should have settled for approximate equality by means of 15 ♟xc6.

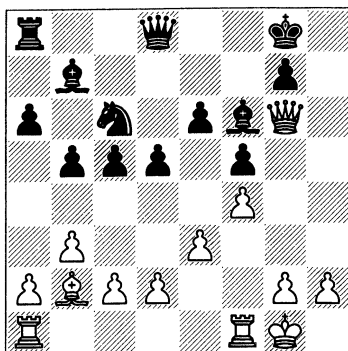
15 ... hxg6
 16 ♙xg6 f5
 17 ♖e2 ♖f6!
 18 ♖h5

Equally after 18 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 the black king is safe, as he can escape via e7. Black would then have a slight material advantage, and control of the centre and queenside.

18 ... ♖xg6
 19 ♖xg6 ♙f6 (D)

That's it! White's thinly based attack has fizzled out, and Black now takes control. He mops up easily enough.

20 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 21 ♖xf6 gxf6 22 c4 dxc4 23 bxc4 ♖d8 24 ♖fd1 b4 25 d3 ♘f7 26 g3 e5 27 ♖d2 a5 28 h3 a4 29 ♖f1 ♘e6 30 fxe5 ♟xe5 31 ♖df2 ♖xd3 32 ♖xf5 ♟f3+ 33 ♖5xf3 ♙xf3 34 ♖xf3 ♖d2 0-1



W

The three-piece rule applies whether the defending king is still in the centre, or hiding in his castle in the corner. We are usually informed that it is dangerous to leave our king in the centre as it then becomes vulnerable to attack, but this still only applies if the attacker has enough pieces to get close to the king. If the king is in the centre, it is usually well protected by pieces, but is likely to suffer from relatively poor pawn cover, since it is a strategic necessity to create some sort of pawn centre (even if only a 'small centre') in the opening, and this involves moving pawns away from the king. When a player castles, his king is generally regarded as being more secure than in the centre, and this is mainly because of the extra pawn cover on the flanks. However, it must be remembered that if the king is in the corner, it is often difficult to bring pieces from the other side of the

board to defend it, and this can help the attacker considerably.

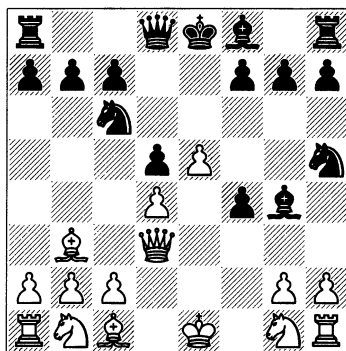
Two more examples, one with the king in the centre, and one with the king in the corner.

Charousek – Chigorin
Budapest 1896

- | | | |
|---|-----|------|
| 1 | e4 | e5 |
| 2 | f4 | exf4 |
| 3 | ♘c4 | ♘c6 |

Charousek and Chigorin eventually tied for first place in this tournament, and in the play-off match (eventually won by Chigorin), the Russian was to prefer 3...d5 4 ♙xd5 ♚h4+ 5 ♚f1 g5.

- | | | |
|---|-----|---------|
| 4 | d4 | ♘f6 |
| 5 | e5 | d5 |
| 6 | ♙b3 | ♙g4 |
| 7 | ♚d3 | ♘h5 (D) |



W

In such positions White is better, by reason of his central control, if he can regain the pawn painlessly.

Black is therefore trying hard to hold on to the pawn on f4, but his pieces thereby become tortuously placed.

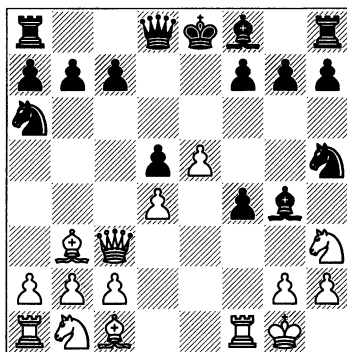
8 ♖h3 ♘b4?!

An irrelevant prod. 8...♗h4+ 9 ♖f2 ♙e6 would have been more to the point, holding f4 while continuing to protect the centre. Then 10 g3 fxg3 11 hxg3 ♗xg3 12 ♞xh5 ♗g1+ 13 ♗f1 (not 13 ♙e2? ♙g4+) 13...♗xf1+ 14 ♙xf1 ♖xd4 gives rise to unclear play; Black has three sound pawns for the piece.

9 ♗c3 ♖a6

A shallow threat, easily met by a developing move.

10 0-0 (D)



B

10 ... ♙e2?

Black soon finds himself subject to a decisive sacrificial attack after yet another shallow move. True, White is much better if Black humbly drops the pawn with 10...c6 11 ♖xf4, and Black's position is also

bad after the continuation 10...g5 11 ♙a4+ c6 (11...♙d7 12 ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 13 ♗f3) 12 ♙xc6+ bxc6 13 ♗xc6+ ♙d7 14 ♗xa6.

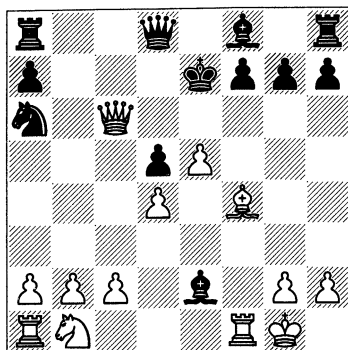
The only correct move is 10...f3!, and if White then attempts to attack with 11 ♙a4+?! c6 12 ♙xc6+ bxc6 13 ♗xc6+ ♙d7 14 ♗xa6 fxg2, it is White, not Black, who is suffering from king exposure! White can try to vary at move 12, but even 12 ♞xf3 ♙xf3 13 ♙xc6+ bxc6 14 ♗xc6+ ♙e7 does not promise much. Alternatively, after 12 e6 ♙xe6 13 ♙xc6+ bxc6 14 ♗xc6+ ♙d7 15 ♗xa6 fxg2 16 ♞e1+ ♙e7 17 ♙g5 f6! Black starts to take over.

Maybe 10...f3! is best met by the quiet 11 ♖g5!, when White will regain his pawn with a slight lead in development and the opportunity to try to demonstrate that the black knights stuck on opposite rims of the board are ineffective.

11 ♙a4+ c6
 12 ♙xc6+ bxc6
 13 ♗xc6+ ♙e7
 14 ♖xf4?

A serious technical error which lets Black right back into the game. As Charousek himself pointed out, 14 ♖c3 would have been quickly decisive. *It is better to bring an undeveloped piece into the attack, rather than an already developed piece; the gain in attacking power is much greater.*

14 ... ♖xf4
 15 ♙xf4 (D)



B

15 ... h6?

Black's king is seriously exposed in the centre after White's piece sacrifice, and White has the requisite three pieces in the attack. But how does White proceed after 15... xf1! , calmly removing one of these pieces, given that the check on g5 is not immediately decisive? Charousek gives the line 16 g5+ f6 17 exf6+ f7 , and now the quiet 18 d2 , preparing to bring a third piece into the attack again. If then 18... c8 19 fxg7! , White should win easily enough; alternatively 18... e2 19 fxg7 g7 20 xd8 hxd8 (20... xd4+ 21 h1 hxd8 22 e1 ac8 23 wh6 , etc.) 21 f1+! xf1 22 xf1 and the a6-knight is trapped. 18... c8! is a better defence, but even so the continuation 19 fxg7! wg5 20 wd7+ e7 21 gxh8 d+ g7 22 xf1 favours White.

It is of course absolutely correct for White to bring the third piece

into the attack, and Charousek's line is the best way of doing this. There is a tempting alternative in 16 c3 , when 17 xd5+ , winning the queen, is threatened. If 16... f6 then 17 xd5+ f7 18 e6+ g8 19 $\text{xf1!?$ gives White a handful of strong pawns and an enduring attack in return for the rook. However, Black can play 16... c4! 17 g5+ f6 18 exf6+ f7 19 fxg7 xg7 20 xd8 hxd8 with an unclear position, which might indeed favour Black. This line shows Black returning all the sacrificed material in order to reach a position in which White's initiative has disappeared, and the three active minor piece balance the queen.

Knowledge of the three-piece rule would have helped Chigorin find the right defensive track. *If you are defending, and your opponent has sacrificed material, then if you can bring your him down to two attacking pieces, do so.*

16 c3

Better late than never.

16 ... c4 17 e6!

Decisive, and all the more pleasing in that the obvious 17 g3 does not get very far after 17... c8! 18 h4+ g5 19 wf6+ d7 20 xh8 xf1 , etc.

The purpose of the pawn sacrifice with 17 e6! is to open up lines, and thus help the white rooks get at the black king. 17... f5 in reply is

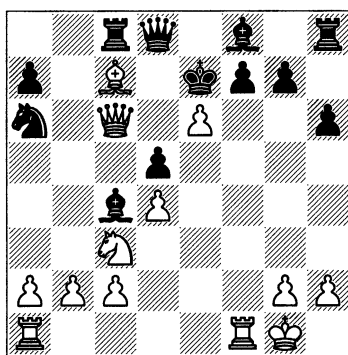
ineffective, because White has 18 ♖b7+ ♔xe6 19 ♜ae1+ ♔f6 20 ♖c6+ ♔f7 21 ♖e6#. The continuation which gives the longest resistance is 17...fxe6 18 ♜ae1 ♖c8 19 ♙d6+ ♔d8 20 ♖xc8+ ♜xc8 21 ♜xf8+ (Sergeant). Black can then give White difficult technical problems to solve after 21...♔d7 22 ♜xh8 ♜xh8 23 ♙e5 ♔b4!, but the counter-intuitive 23 ♙a3! (threatening to trap the bishop with b3) should secure victory, despite opposite-coloured bishops. 23...♔c7 24 b3 ♙a6 25 ♔a4 followed by ♔c5 is the plan.

17 ... ♜c8?

This solves nothing.

18 ♙c7! (D)

Three pieces and a pawn; sufficient for a conclusive attack! In view of the threat of ♜xf7#, Black must lose the queen.



B

18 ... fxe6
19 ♙xd8+ ♜xd8

20 ♖b7+ ♙d7
21 ♜f7+ ♔xf7
22 ♖xd7+ ♙e7
23 ♜e1 ♜e8
24 b3 ♔f8
25 bxc4 1-0

And finally, before we move on to some more modern examples, a game where White had the luxury of being able to attack the king with *four* pieces.

Schlechter – Janowski

Cologne 1898

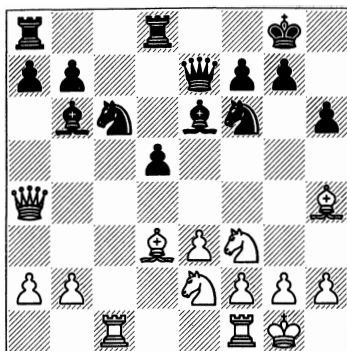
1 d4 d5
2 c4 e6
3 ♔c3 ♔f6
4 ♔f3 c5
5 cxd5 exd5
6 ♙g5 ♙e6
7 dxc5 ♙xc5
8 e3 0-0
9 ♙d3 ♔c6
10 0-0 ♖e7?!

Warren Goldman, in his recently published biography of Schlechter, correctly notes that Black should have broken the pin with 10...♙e7.

11 ♖a4 h6?!

Often this move is useful in the Queen's Gambit, but here its main effect is to weaken Black's kingside pawn structure. If White attacks g7, it will be difficult, now that the h-pawn has moved, to defend with ...g6. Goldman suggests 11...♔b4!?. chesstouring.com

- 12 ♖h4 ♜fd8
 13 ♜ac1 ♘b6
 14 ♘e2 (D)



B

White's last move is primarily directed at the battle for the centre, and in particular preventing Black from playing the freeing move ...d4. It also has a secondary purpose: White, with the better position in the centre, can use the central files as an avenue to transfer pieces from the queenside, where Black is solid, to the kingside, where Black has weaknesses. It soon becomes noticeable that neither of Black's minor pieces on the queenside can do much to assist the king; for the bishop especially the route back is obscure.

- 14 ... ♘d7
 15 ♜f4

Setting Black a little dare; can 15...g5 be played? White has sufficient pieces in the attack to feel comfortable about sacrificing, and

at the very least he can draw with 16 ♖xg5 hxg5 17 ♜xg5+ ♔f8 18 ♜h6+ ♔g8 19 ♜g5+. A further look reveals the line 16 ♘xg5 ♘h5 17 ♜f3 ♘g7 (17...♘e5? 18 ♖h7+) 18 ♖h7+ ♔f8 19 ♘f4 (threatening ♘g6+) 19...♘e5 20 ♘ge6+ and the black queen vanishes with check.

- 15 ... ♜ac8?!

The wrong rook, but Janowski was never a player who enjoyed defensive chores. 15...♜dc8 is more accurate in that it releases the d8-square for the bishop, allowing a key minor piece to join in the defence of the kingside. White could of course try 16 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 17 ♜xf6 gxf6, doing some damage before Black can bolster f6. In the position that results however, the black pawn structure may be ugly, but he has a useful bishop pair and the danger of White launching a mating attack is remote.

- 16 ♘ed4?!

An imperfection in White's attacking technique; he allows unnecessary simplification. 16 ♘g3! allows the knight an unimpeded route to the kingside. If Black then plays 16...♖c7, 17 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 18 ♜xf6 gxf6 19 ♘h5 wins a pawn, since 19...♖e5? drops even more material to 20 ♘xe5 fxe5 21 ♘f6+ followed by ♘xd7 and ♖f5. The alternative 16...♜b4!? is certainly imaginative, but Black has inadequate compensation for the pawn after 17 ♖xf6 ♜xf4 18 exf4 gxf6

19 ♖h5 ♘d4 20 ♖xf6+ ♔g7 21 ♖h5+ ♗f8 22 ♖e5!.

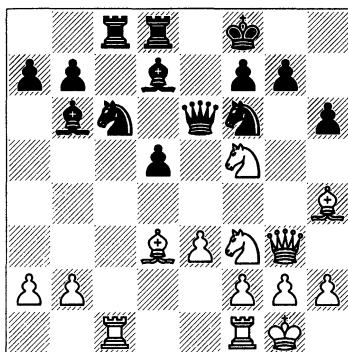
16 ... ♗f8?

Aimless passivity. Goldman's move 16...♖xd4 restricts White to a slight edge.

17 ♖f5 ♖e6?!

17...♗xf5 was essential.

18 ♖g3 (D)



B

A clear-cut example of a kingside attack with pieces against an under-defended fortress. White has three pieces (♖g3; ♖f5; ♗h4) in direct attacking positions, and two more pieces (♗d3; ♖f3) closely supporting the attack, the bishop supporting the advanced knight, and the rear knight preparing to sacrifice itself should Black ever play ...g5. Black meanwhile is very weak on the dark squares, with g7 being under particular pressure, h6 also vulnerable, and the pin on the h4-d8 diagonal annoying. Now 18...♖h5 would allow 19 ♖d6+

♖xd6 20 ♖xd6 winning the exchange, so Black instead pushes a kingside pawn, and hopes forlornly that he can beat off White's sacrificial attack.

18 ... g5

19 ♖xg5

Such obvious sacrifices need no exclamation marks.

19 ... hxg5

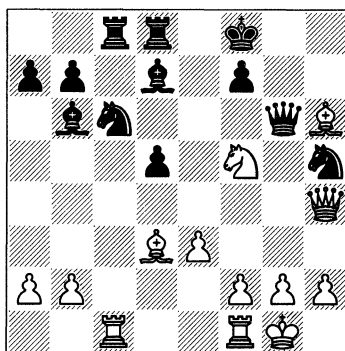
20 ♗xg5

Still attacking h6 and g7; the threat is now 21 ♗h6+ followed by 22 ♖g7+.

20 ... ♖h5

21 ♖h4 ♖g6

22 ♗h6+ (D)

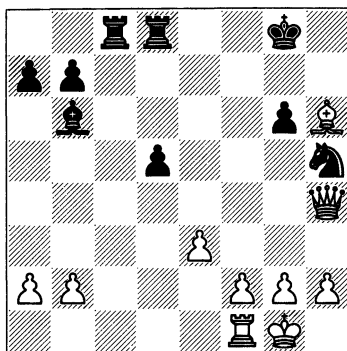


B

White has sacrificed a piece, but still has four pieces in the attack! This is quite enough to force the win of the black queen. White's rook on c1 is also part of the attack, in that it is about to sacrifice itself for Black's knight so that White can enter with queen or knight on

e7. However, this rook is not essential to White's attack, since White would still be winning (22...♔g8 23 ♖e7+; 22...♗e8 23 ♖g7+) even if the rook were back at a1. Four pieces are enough; five are simply overwhelming!

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 22 ... | ♔g8 |
| 23 ♖xc6 | ♗xf5 |
| 24 ♖xg6+ | ♗xg6 |
| 25 ♗xg6 | fxg6 (D) |



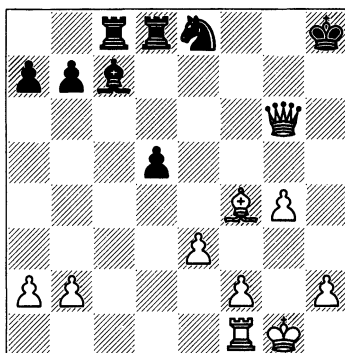
B

26 g4

White now has a decisive material advantage, and decides that the simplest way to force surrender is to carry on with the attack. True, one usually needs three pieces to attack, but queen plus a single minor piece can well be enough if the opposing king is devoid of pawn cover, and if there is no defensive queen in sight.

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 26 ... | ♗g7 |
| 27 ♖f6 | ♗e8 |
| 28 ♖xg6+ | ♗h8 |

29 ♗f4 ♗c7 (D)



W

30 ♖h6+ 1-0

Dissecting nineteenth century games can be interesting, not least in that it shows us how much standards have improved in the last hundred years. For textbook purposes, the four games we have just looked at are ideal precisely because of the many imperfections in the play! As in a fruitful coaching session, the interest lies not so much in the praise of the moves played, but rather in the close analysis of why evidently plausible but inferior moves were played, and in the indication of the difference between play that is merely plausible and play that is truly thematic.

Master and grandmaster play from the 1990s is much more sophisticated, much more truly thematic, than its 1890s counterpart. The modern player will not just lie

down in front of an attack in the way that Burn, Chigorin and Janowski did. The modern player can't just wait for a mistake and then roll through with a straightforward kingside attack; good attacking positions have to be worked for, and when they arrive they have to be exploited to their utmost. The modern player appreciates, to a much greater extent than the player of a

hundred years ago, that to attack properly, anywhere on the board, you need to have enough pieces in the attack. This needs no special emphasis; it is part of the modern master's elementary background knowledge. But what more sophisticated concepts does the modern attacking player need? This is the question that we try to answer in the chapters that follow.

2 Technical Chess and Fighting Chess

One of the most fundamental distinctions to be made is between technical chess and fighting chess, between positions where one player has already made a mistake, allowing the position to be decided by technical means, and positions where everything is still to be played for and in which the better player, the one who plays more forcefully and avoids mistakes, will prevail.

The story of a technical finish to a game of chess might be summarised as follows:

- 1) White focuses on a weak square on the queenside;
- 2) Black's pieces are forced to cover the weak square;
- 3) As a result, Black's king is insufficiently defended;
- 4) White attacks the king, forcing Black's pieces to change direction;
- 5) This leaves Black's queenside weak again;
- 6) White piles on to the queenside weaknesses and forces Black to drop a pawn;
- 7) White simplifies to an endgame a pawn up;

8) White creates a passed pawn with his extra pawn;

9) White gradually advances the passed pawn;

10) White wins.

This is a logical progression which could easily fit a real game, but other histories are possible. Maybe in another game the progression from (4) might continue:

5) Black's king looks safe, but the pawn structure in front of the king may be destroyed by a piece sacrifice;

6) The king is forced into the open;

7) Black has to sacrifice a lot of material to avoid immediate mate;

8) White wins.

Whether White ultimately wins by a king-hunt or by endgame play, we are still dealing with technical chess, with *attacking technique*. In either case, White is looking for weaknesses, trying to exploit them with vigorous play, and trying to force an attack home. It is *technical* chess because White, starting with an advantage, aims to further that advantage by simple and logical means against an opponent

who, however hard he or she may try, cannot make much impact on the course of the game. Yet from the starting point of the technical phase, White is already better; he or she has achieved an advantage through *fighting* chess. In fighting chess, neither player has a dominant advantage, and all sorts of little battles are going on all over the board, but especially in the centre, with each player trying hard to establish some sort of advantage somewhere, while avoiding disadvantage elsewhere. The 'correct' result of a fighting battle is a draw, but in practice it happens, even at top grandmaster level, that one player makes a slip big enough to incur a definite disadvantage. At this moment the technical play begins.

It is difficult to draw up a set of positional rules for fighting chess, precisely because of the multiplicity of skirmishes. Certainly it is desirable to keep pieces active, to aim for control of the centre, and to avoid structural weaknesses, but with both players fighting hard there is a lot of give and take. 'If I advance this pawn to gain space for my pieces, will the slight weakening of the adjoining file be significant or irrelevant?'; 'Is it worth giving up my bishop pair to double his pawns?'; 'Should I snatch that pawn?'. The complexities of such basic questions make it unusually

difficult to write a textbook of the middlegame.

To write on middlegame *technique* is simpler and more manageable, and allows one to concentrate on questions of logical planning without having to get involved in all the cut and thrust of the struggle in an unclear position. Middlegame technique is *attacking* technique. When you are better, you *must* attack; Steinitz taught us all this a century ago. This should not be taken to mean that you must attack the opponent's king, but if it is vulnerable enough, then by all means attack it. The real point is that you must attack *something*; the king, a weak pawn, a weak square, a piece in trouble, anything so long as you are making use of your advantage to create trouble for your opponent. If you are ahead in material, the simplest way is often to keep offering exchanges in order to aim for a winning endgame. By offering exchanges that your opponent can't accept, you are actually attacking your opponent's pieces, aiming to force them into less desirable positions. Alternatively, if you have a big kingside attack, your opponent will often be all too willing to exchange into an endgame, even if it finally turns out to be lost.

If you have an advantage, your aim is to win the position. Don't think that because your advantage

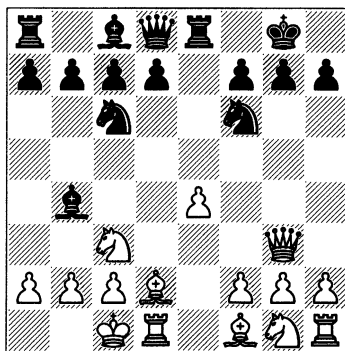
is on the kingside you necessarily have to win by a kingside attack, or that because you are a pawn up, you necessarily have to hurry into an endgame. Take things step by step, aiming always to increase your advantage, but without prejudice as to which part of the board. However, when you see that your opponent's defences have finally been weakened enough for you to make a decisive breakthrough, then attack the critical weakness with all possible vigour. It is best to concentrate on one really big weakness, if there is one, rather than to try to poke at little weaknesses.

To appreciate fully the nuances of technical chess, one has to appreciate that the technical phase is preceded by the fighting phase. Our first illustrative game is the one that first gave Morozevich the lead at the Lloyds Bank tournament. Playing White against an English grandmaster, he did not enter into any heavy theoretical battle, but instead played an off-beat opening which theory regards with disdain. One of the main principles of fighting chess is that you can win only if your opponent makes a mistake, and therefore the first objective is to cajole your opponent into error. In pursuit of this aim, all chessic means are fair; confuse him, out-book him, attack him, provoke him, bore him, or

whatever. When however your opponent has made that critical mistake, you must forget about your arsenal of devious fighting methods, and must instead concentrate on letting attacking technique decide.

Morozevich – Hebden
London, Lloyds Bank 1994
Centre Game

1 e4	e5
2 d4	exd4
3 ♖xd4	♟c6
4 ♖e3	♟f6
5 ♟c3	♞b4
6 ♞d2	0-0
7 0-0-0	♞e8
8 ♖g3 (D)	



B

The general feeling about this opening is that White has lost too much time with his queen to have any real chance of an advantage. Indeed theory suggests that Black

could well be significantly better after 8...♞xe4!, e.g. 9 ♖g5 ♙xc3 10 ♜xc3 h6, or 9 ♙d3 ♜g4 10 ♜h3 d6!. Morozevich may well have had a significant improvement ready, or he may have been bluffing; it would stray from the point of the book to try too hard to find out. What is important is that Black has been caught off-guard by White's unusual opening, and makes a quiet move which gives White a definite advantage to play with.

8 ... d6?!

9 f3

White secures his centre, and thereby establishes an advantage in space.

9 ... ♘e5

10 h4

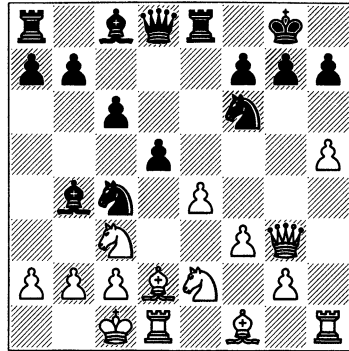
Black's most important weakness is around his king, so White tries a kingside pawn prod. Often it is not enough to attack with pieces alone; it then becomes necessary to use a pawn advance to unsettle the opposing pawn structure and create some weak squares. Such weak squares are then liable to positional exploitation.

10 ... c6

11 h5 d5?!

This must be regarded with suspicion. Black plays slowly, then fast; the change of tempo is inappropriate. Bringing another piece into play with 11...♙e6 would have been sensible.

12 ♘ge2 ♘c4 (D)



W

A critical position. White is attacking on the kingside, certainly, but Black has a counter-attack against the white king which will not necessarily be easy to deal with. White has the obvious choice between the moves 13 h6 and 13 ♙h6, but this choice has to be made with care.

13 h6!

13 ♙h6 is met not by 13...g6? 14 ♙g5!, which improves on the game continuation for White, but rather by 13...♘g4!, and if 14 fxg4, then 14...gxh6 when the possibility of ...♜g5+ leaves Black firmly in control on the dark squares.

Never underestimate your opponent's defensive resources; *the more pieces that are flying around, the greater the chances for a resourceful counter-sacrifice.*

13 ... g6

14 ♙g5

White is attacking the whole kingside, not just the king. This pin

is extremely nasty. Black can create counterplay, but Morozevich is able to deal with it.

14 ... ♖b6

15 ♘a4!

And not 15 ♙xf6?? ♙d6.

15 ... ♗a5

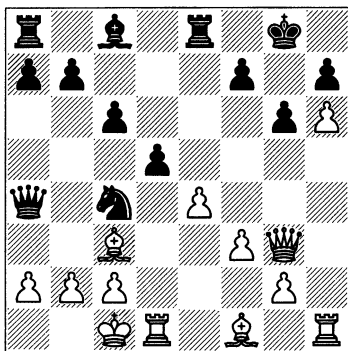
16 ♙xf6 ♗xa4

17 ♘c3!

So that if the queen moves, then 18 ♙xc4 and White is rid of Black's most dangerous minor piece. Morozevich must have foreseen this when he allowed the knight to land on c4 in the first place.

17 ... ♙xc3

18 ♙xc3 (D)



B

With some insightful play the young Russian has taken the game from the fighting stage to the technical stage. At first sight Black's game may not appear irretrievably poor; both kings are weak and both players have a queen and minor piece in the attack. Two factors

work heavily in White's favour though. Firstly, Black's knight on c4 is easily exchanged, while the white bishop on c3 cannot be challenged; and secondly, Black's g7-square is irreparably weak.

18 ... ♘e3

If 18... ♗xa2, then 19 ♙xc4 ♗xc4 20 ♖g5 followed by ♖f6 and a quick mate. If in this line 19... dxc4, White must avoid the 'tactical' 20 ♗e5?? ♗a1+! 21 ♘d2 ♗xd1+ followed by ... ♗xe5, and should play instead 20 ♖g5.

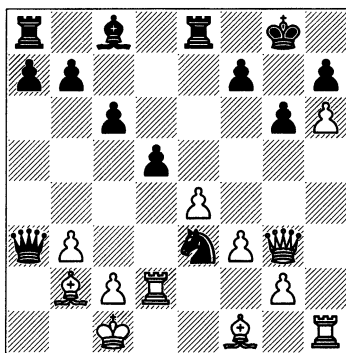
Flashy play is poor technique.

19 b3 ♗xa2

Surprisingly, the loss of this pawn does not matter. White has enough pieces to cover his king; Black hasn't!

20 ♗d2 ♗a3+

21 ♙b2 (D)



B

21 ... ♗e7?

The final mistake. 21... ♘f1 22 ♗xf1 ♗e7 has more fight to it,

since if 23 exd5 cxd5 24 ♖xd5 ♙e6 25 ♗e5? then Black gains the advantage by means of 25...f6!. 25 ♖e1! is better, with the tactical possibility 25...♖ad8? 26 ♗e5 f6 27 ♗xe6+! ♗xe6 28 ♖xe6 winning a piece. 25...f6 resists, but it is a miserable defensive task for Black.

22 ♙e2!

Now the knight is also in danger.

22 ... dxe4

23 fxe4 ♗xe4

24 ♗g5

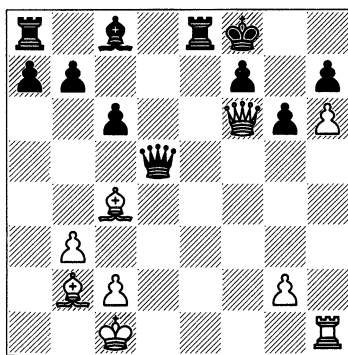
Always thematic. If 24...♗xg2, then 25 ♗f6 ♗xh1+ 26 ♖d1 and White wins.

24 ... ♘d5

25 ♖xd5 ♗xd5

26 ♗f6 ♙f8

27 ♙c4 (D)



B

1-0

In view of 27...♗f5 28 ♙a3+ c5 29 ♙xc5+ ♗xc5 30 ♗xf7#.

So how does this game illustrate our theme? At first sight it looks a

pretty complicated game with both players attacking hard, yet in the end White wins quickly and extremely convincingly. It looked like a hard fighting game until about move 24, but the finish was sudden. Without a massive blunder at a late stage, we must conclude that White had been much better for rather longer than at first appears.

Our suggestion is that, in grandmaster terms at least, the game had been 'technical' since around move 12 or 13. With 13 h6! White was able to inflict massive damage on the dark squares around Black's king, and this proved to be the decisive weakness. White's basic plan was to attack this weakness with vigour, and totally uncompromisingly. He allowed Black to start a few skirmishes on the queenside, but these were little more than a distraction given that Black was attacking a 'normal' castled king's position, rather than an already weakened position. Everything appeared complicated, but White operated on the general principle that if you enter complications with a positional advantage, you should emerge from complications with a positional advantage. Quiet play would have allowed Black into the game.

Earlier, Morozevich won with another kingside attack, when his opponent neglected to play a crucial anticipatory defensive move.

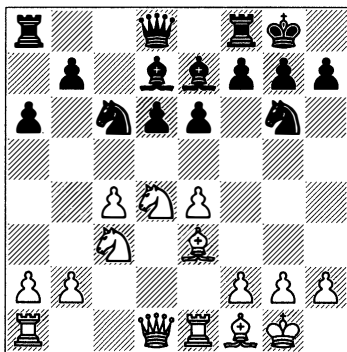
This created an opportunity which was quickly hammered home.

Morozevich – Arakhamia

London, Lloyds Bank 1994

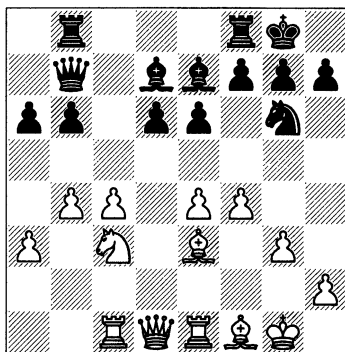
Sicilian, Rossolimo

- | | |
|--------|---------|
| 1 e4 | c5 |
| 2 ♖f3 | ♗c6 |
| 3 ♙b5 | e6 |
| 4 0-0 | ♗ge7 |
| 5 ♖e1 | a6 |
| 6 ♙f1 | ♗g6 |
| 7 d4 | cxd4 |
| 8 ♗xd4 | ♙e7 |
| 9 ♙e3 | 0-0 |
| 10 c4 | d6 |
| 11 ♗c3 | ♙d7 (D) |



W

- | | |
|-----------|------|
| 12 ♗b3 | ♗a5 |
| 13 ♗xa5 | ♙xa5 |
| 14 a3 | ♙c7 |
| 15 ♖c1 | b6 |
| 16 b4 | ♖ab8 |
| 17 f4 | ♙b7 |
| 18 g3 (D) | |



B

White has a space advantage, but it is nothing special. With his last move, White signals the possibility of redeploying his bishop to g2, but again this is nothing terrifying, as such a move would weaken the pawn on c4. There is, however, another possibility, of which Black remains oblivious.

18 ... b5?

A mechanical move, underestimating the perils on the kingside. 18...♖fc8! is much better, again pressurising the c-pawn, but also leaving the knight a valuable retreat square on f8. White could still continue with the attack, but its success is still not guaranteed if Black defends carefully. Play might for example continue 19 h4 h6 (it is inadvisable to allow a white pawn to land on h6) 20 h5 ♗f8 21 g4 ♗h7 22 ♙d2 ♗f6!, and by giving herself room to manoeuvre Black has secured significant counter-play against the white pawns. The

g5 push by White still needs preparation, and at some stage Black may well be able to anticipate this with ...♔f8 (f8 comes into use again!), meeting g5 with ...♘g8.

19 h4!

Black has only slightly mistimed her counterplay, but already falls into deep trouble. It is now a matter of technique, *attacking* technique, for White.

19 ... ♖fc8

A move too late, but after 19...h6 20 h5 the knight is forced to the dreadful square h8 whence it may never emerge unless Black is prepared to make a weakening move with the f-pawn.

20 h5 ♘f8

21 h6

Since White is not worried about Black's ...bxc4, there is no need to give Black an open line by inserting 21 cxb5?! axb5.

21 ... bxc4?

Now it is simple. 21...g6, erecting a few hedgehog spines, is tougher. The obvious 22 ♖d4?! is met by 22...e5! 23 fxe5 ♘e6, when Black is fully in the game. Neither does 22 c5?! dxc5 23 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 24 bxc5 work because of 24...♗a7! when White's dark-squared weaknesses turn out to be as important as Black's.

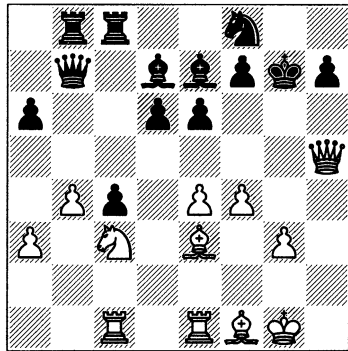
The correct way to treat the position would be quietly and positionally. After 22 cxb5 axb5 23 ♖d4! White has no immediate mating

attack, but he has good central control and the better minor pieces, while Black's weakness on g7 will not run away.

Just because you start to build your positional advantage with a kingside attack, it doesn't mean that you always have to carry on with a kingside attack. Sometimes it is better to fix a weakness and then concentrate your play elsewhere.

22 hxg7 ♔xg7

23 ♗h5 (D)



B

The black king is now seriously exposed, and White can readily bring his dark-squared bishop and a rook into the attack.

23 ... ♖e8

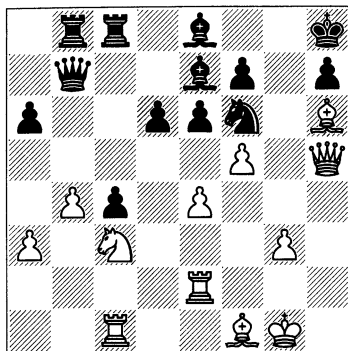
23...♖f6 24 e5 solves nothing, but 23...f6 would resist for longer.

24 f5!

Pawn prods are often an integral part of a kingside attack. 25 f6+ is now a genuine threat, while another

diagonal is opened for the bishop on e3.

24 ... ♘d7
 25 ♖e2 ♘f6
 26 ♙h6+ ♔h8 (D)



B

27 ♖g5 1-0

Frighteningly quick once the attack had started rolling.

So, two deadly Morozevich king-side attacks focusing on g7. In the Hebden game, a sharp opening was more one-sided than it looked. In the Arakhamia game, an apparently slight defensive slip had enormous consequences. Vigorous exploitation of your opponent's mistakes is the key to winning tournaments!

Our third Morozevich example shows White playing the early mid-game in what might be termed 'technical style'. White achieves no big advantage early on, but still keeps a nagging pressure, the important 'advantage of the move'.

Even holding only a slight advantage, it is still possible to play technically, quietly regrouping pieces, threatening to attack a weak point every so often, never letting the opponent attack, and gradually building up an initiative. Having only a slight edge, attacking an opponent too early and over-vigorously will let him or her back into the game. It is better at such an early stage to concentrate on developing the co-ordination of your pieces and attacking, hard, only when there is a genuine target to aim at.

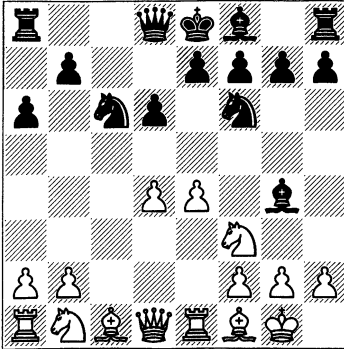
Morozevich – Petrusson

London, Lloyds Bank 1994

Sicilian, Rossolimo

1 e4 c5
 2 ♘f3 ♘c6
 3 ♙b5 d6
 4 0-0 ♙d7
 5 ♖e1 ♘f6
 6 c3 a6
 7 ♙f1 ♙g4!/?
 8 d4 cxd4
 9 cxd4 (D)
 9 ... d5?!/

After this, the initiative stays with White. It seems inconsistent that, having sacrificed a tempo to play ...♙g4, Black does not inflict doubled pawns on White with 9...♙xf3 10 gxf3. True, 10...e5 11 d5 gives White attacking chances, but the strange-looking 10...g5!/? could be considered, with the idea



B

of taking control of the dark squares (e.g., by ...♖h5, ...h6, ...♗g7, and if d5 then ...♘e5). If White were to try opening the position with 11 f4?! gx f4 12 ♖xf4, then 12...♗b6, attacking dark squares on the queenside, is awkward to meet.

10 e5 ♘g8

Black envisages a French Defence type of position, but with the bad bishop outside the pawn chain. However, this plan is too slow.

11 ♗e3 e6

12 a3

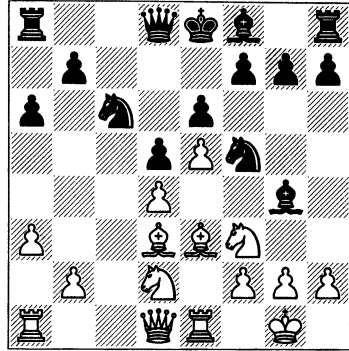
Black's defences are sufficiently solid for him to be able to withstand a direct attack with ease. What he cannot cope with is slow strangulation. White's modest pawn move prevents the counterattack with ...♗b4, and ensures that the black bishop on f8 and knight on g8 will get in each other's way when they try to develop.

12 ... ♘ge7

13 ♘bd2 ♘f5

So the knight gets out of the way of one bishop, only to obstruct the retreat of the other.

14 ♗d3 (D)



B

Good timing, now that Black can no longer oppose the light-squared bishops with ...♗f5.

14 ... ♗e7

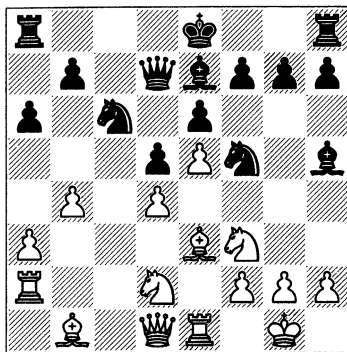
15 ♗b1 ♗d7

16 b4 ♗h5

Here, or on one of the previous two moves, Black could have tried ...♘xe3; fx e3 ♗f5. The attempt to swap light-squared bishops is positionally well motivated, as White's most dangerous attacking piece disappears. The drawback is that when the blocked pawn structures with doubled pawns arise after 18 ♗xf5 ex f5, Black's remaining bishop will become a less effective minor piece than a white knight. In the game, Black therefore tries to offer the bishop exchange on g6 rather than on f5, but this costs

more time. Given that the position is blocked, mere loss of time is not vital; what is necessary is to ensure that the opponent has as little as possible to attack.

17 ♖a2 (D)



B

17 ... 0-0?!

It might seem a little harsh to criticise castling on move 17 as being premature, but such is the case here. It is handy for the defender in a blocked position to be able to keep the king unmoved in the centre, as it makes it very difficult for the attacker to know where to attack; in one move the black king could appear at either c8 or g8! If for example White were to try to amass everything for a queenside attack, Black could simply wait, get on with his game, and dance away with his king to g8 (by castling) when things got tough on the queenside. On the other hand, if White went all-out for kingside

play, Black always has queenside castling in reserve.

So long as Black keeps his options open for his king, and so long as White has no overwhelming positional advantage on any part of the board, what we have is *fighting chess*. All White can play for is small positional gains, maybe a little gain of space on the queenside, maybe some favourable redeployment of pieces in the centre, and hope that he can ultimately accumulate a few advantages. Black, meanwhile, can concentrate on keeping his defences secure, on improving the co-ordination of his still slightly cramped pieces, and on blunting the force of White's initiative so that in any endgame which arises, White's pawns might prove to be overextended and therefore weak.

Once the black king reaches the far part of the kingside however, White knows exactly where to attack. To make things worse for Black, White's advanced pawn on e5 acts as a superb spearhead from the attack. White now has a clear and strong plan: to gain space on the kingside, with the help of a general pawn advance, in the full knowledge that when some space has been gained the ultimate reward will be a formidable attack against a cornered king. We thus quickly move from fighting chess to a display of *attacking technique*.
www.chess.com

How could Black have avoided this unfavourable transition? The strictly logical plan is 17...♙g6, *without* castling. Black's kingside would still be reasonably secure, allowing him to postpone a decision on whether to capture on e3. The question of where to place the king can be left undecided for even longer. Another, more adventurous, method is 17...g5!?, aiming to take advantage of the congested state of White's minor pieces in the centre. Either way, it's a fight! For White, I suspect that 17 h3! would have been more flexible than 17 ♖a2; then White keeps in reserve both ♙a2 (against ...♙g6) and g4 (against ...g5).

18 h3 ♖h8

Perhaps 18...♙g6! is again more to the point, the intention being to exchange light-squared bishops on b1 rather than on g6, and thus avoid doubled pawns in front of the king. Black seems to underestimate the dangers caused by the dislocation of his defensive pawns.

19 ♖f1 ♖ac8?!

The same comment applies.

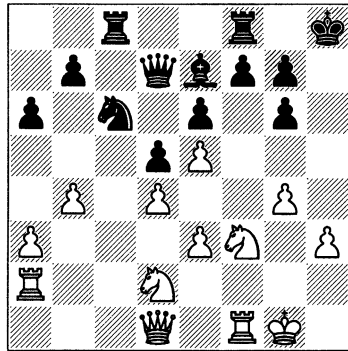
20 g4! ♗xe3

21 fxe3 ♙g6

22 ♙xg6 hxg6? (D)

This dreadful recapture compounds Black's previous errors. 22...fxg6 had to be tried. Obviously this would lead to a deterioration in Black's pawn structure for when an endgame is approached

(the e6-pawn becomes particularly weak), but this is nevertheless preferable to leaving the king fatally exposed.



W

Black's problem is not so much that he has two g-pawns, but rather that he has no h-pawn. White can now aim for an attack along the h-file.

23 ♗b3! ♗a7

24 ♗c5

The skilful attacker knows the value of working on both flanks. If Black should try exchanging with 24...♙xc5, then he will have big problems dealing with the mating plan of ♖e1-h4+ and ♗g5.

24 ... ♖c6

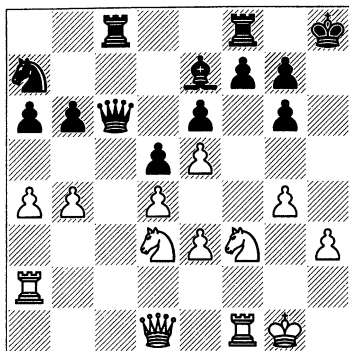
25 a4

Again White ignores the kingside, and calmly spends a move stopping ...♗b5. Black's weakness along the h-file will not go away, and so in the interim White makes what gains he can elsewhere.

25 ... b6

26 ♖d3 (D)

Not 26 ♖xa6?? ♚c4, spearing a piece.



B

26 ... ♚g8

27 h4

White's knight manoeuvre on the queenside (♖d2-b3-c5-d3) has brought the knight closer to the kingside (♖f4 is now possible), and so White again switches his attack. The quick succession of a4 and h4 is appealing, and gives a clear indication that White's kingside attack is part of a broad positional strategy rather than just crash-bang-wallop.

27 ... ♚d7

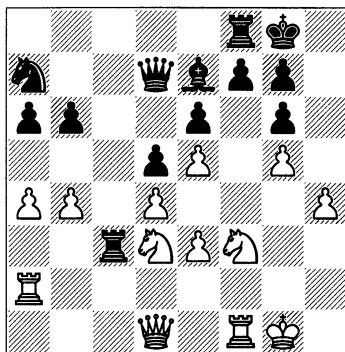
28 g5

Fixing Black's g-pawns, so that h5 cannot be met by ...g5.

28 ... ♜c3 (D)

29 h5!

White's impressive manoeuvring sets up the final breakthrough.



W

29 ... gxf6

30 ♖f4 ♜xe3

30...g6 would have been a futile gesture after 31 ♖xh5 gxf6 32 ♖h4 followed, in some order, by ♚h5, ♜g2/h2, etc.

Sacrificing a piece to destroy an opposing king's pawn cover is standard technique, and is generally a low-risk strategy if the defender has difficulty in bringing across pieces to cover the king.

31 ♖xh5 ♚c6 (D)

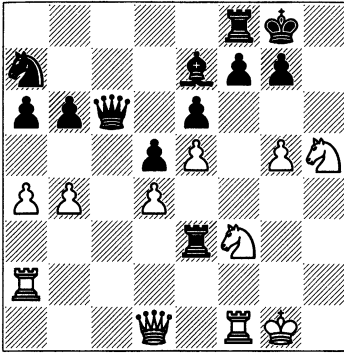
32 ♖f6+

A second knight sacrifice to illustrate our theme. Black cannot permit the g-file to be opened; 32...gxf6 33 gxf6 ♜xb4 gives White any number of winning lines, the most straightforward of which is the continuation 34 ♜g2+ ♚h8 35 ♖g5.

32 ... ♜xf6

33 gxf6 g6

So Black has avoided the opening of the g-file, but the f6-pawn is

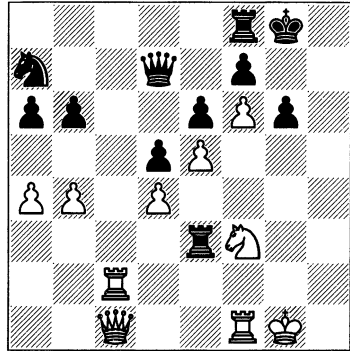


W

stuck in his throat. He becomes the third of Morozevich's opponents to be choked on g7!

34 ♖c2 ♔d7

35 ♔c1 (D)



B

1-0

♔h6 follows.

3 Sacrifices and Combinations

It is always pleasant to play combinations, and when you reach a good position you will get plenty of opportunities. Remember, however, that your main objective is to win the game, and so when you reach a position that you feel confident can be won by normal means (even if it will take another thirty moves or more), you should play a sacrificial combination only when you feel absolutely certain of its outcome. This doesn't mean that you must have calculated everything to its end, as often a sacrifice will lead to a position where you can be reasonably sure that the exposure of your opponent's king is fully worth whatever you have sacrificed. However, what you must avoid is playing a speculative sacrifice and trusting to good fortune when there is a simple and logical alternative way of playing with confidence for the win.

Clearly, the balance shifts when you reach a position in which you are better but not winning, and in which with a sacrifice you can pose your opponent extremely difficult practical problems which might prove both objectively and subjectively insoluble. *If you genuinely*

think that a sacrificial move is best, you must play it, even if you cannot fully calculate its consequences. The player who is afraid of sacrificing is afraid of chess.

A distinction should be drawn between sacrifices and combinations.

A *combination* is a tactical sequence of moves, generally understood as involving a sacrifice, which is supposed to lead to a very precise objective. Either a combination is sound, or it is unsound. If it is unsound, it is because the defender has a tactical resource that refutes the combination, or because the sacrificial attack quite simply runs out of steam.

A *sacrifice* is the surrender of material for non-material gains, such as the acceleration of the attack. The real question to evaluate when sacrificing material is not so much whether the sacrifice is 'sound' or 'unsound', but rather whether the compensation gained is worth the sacrificed material. For example, you might want to sacrifice a knight to expose your opponent's king; the question you have to ask is whether you are getting half a knight's-worth of attack,

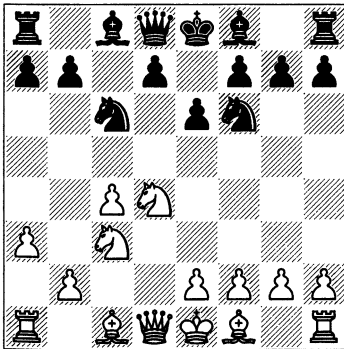
a full knight's-worth of attack, or more than a knight's-worth of attack.

Good attacking technique requires a good feel for the attacking positional sacrifice. The fine judgement that is required is often difficult to acquire, and the learning player will no doubt often get things wrong before getting it right. It is time to consider some practical examples.

Speelman – K.Arke

London, Lloyds Bank 1994

- | | | |
|---|------|------|
| 1 | ♘f3 | ♘f6 |
| 2 | c4 | c5 |
| 3 | ♘c3 | ♘c6 |
| 4 | d4 | cxd4 |
| 5 | ♘xd4 | e6 |
| 6 | a3!? | (D) |



B

Otherwise ...♙b4 might be annoying.

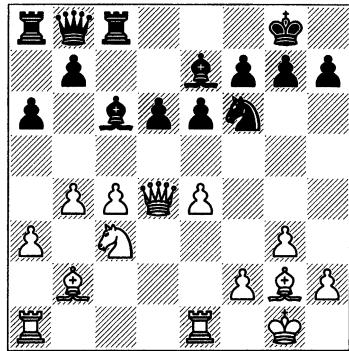
- | | | |
|---|-----|------|
| 6 | ... | ♘xd4 |
|---|-----|------|

6...d5!?

- | | | |
|----|------|-------|
| 7 | ♙xd4 | d6 |
| 8 | g3 | ♙d7 |
| 9 | ♙g2 | ♙c6 |
| 10 | e4 | ♙e7 |
| 11 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| 12 | b4 | ♙b8?! |

Too passive. 12...♘g4!?, with the idea of regrouping with ...♙f6 and ...♘e5, makes more sense. White's queenside pawns may prove over-extended if he is not careful.

- | | | |
|----|------|----------|
| 13 | ♙b2 | ♙c8 |
| 14 | ♙fe1 | a6?! (D) |



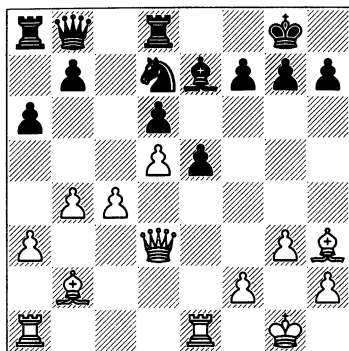
W

15 ♘d5!

A standard sacrificial idea in this type of position. Often in the Sicilian this piece sacrifice is 'unclear but promising', with White hoping (after ...exd5; exd5) for an attack against the uncastled king as compensation for his sacrificed piece. Here, though, there is no real sacrifice, as White regains the piece immediately after 15...exd5 16 exd5.

Black's position is already very dubious; he could have side-stepped the knight blow with 14...♙f8.

- 15 ... ♙xd5
 16 exd5 e5
 17 ♖d3 ♘d7
 18 ♙h3 ♙d8 (D)



W

19 f4

Vigorously assaulting Black's centre.

19 ... b5

So that Black can meet 20 ♙xd7 by 20...♖a7+! followed by ...♖xd7, when Black stays in the game. However, White has something sharper in mind.

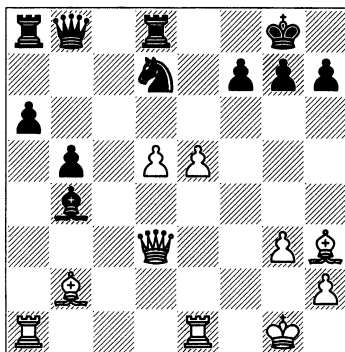
20 c5! dxc5

21 fxe5

A pawn centre like this, backed up by the powerful bishop pair, is worth the investment of a remote queenside pawn, especially given that Black's pieces are passive and his kingside open to attack. A positional pawn sacrifice such as this

can be played without any qualms whatsoever.

- 21 ... cxb4
 22 axb4 ♙xb4 (D)



W

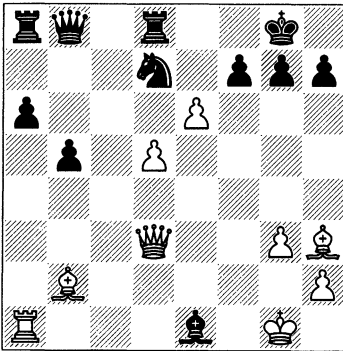
23 e6!

However, this is a much more difficult position to judge. When writing the first draft of this book, I was sceptical of this sacrifice, believing that the acceleration of the attack did not quite justify the sacrifice of the exchange. I felt that the quieter 23 ♖e2 would have been stronger, when there can be little doubt that White has excellent compensation for the pawn. Black gains an extra tempo for defence, but White can still build up his attack systematically, aiming to focus his attack on f7 (♖f1, e6, etc.). Black would undoubtedly have enormous difficulties in defending, and White, having sacrificed only a pawn, is taking no real risks. My opinion of Speelman's move has

improved on re-examining the position, but even so, 23 ♖e2 is the move I would recommend here to the ordinary player. You would need a grandmasterly self-confidence in your attacking play to be able to carry off a move like 23 e6.

23 ... ♙c5+?

Black's only chance is to snatch material and hope for the best, viz. 23...♙xe1! (D):



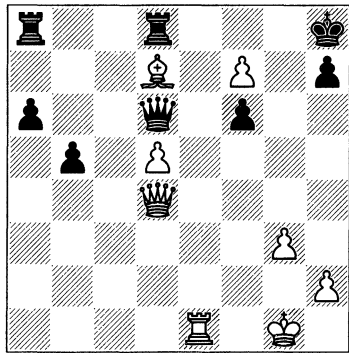
W

a) 24 exd7 ♙b4 25 ♖d4 (alternatively, 25 ♙xg7?! ♖b6+ 26 ♙d4 ♙c5) 25...♙f8 and Black is secure.

b) 24 ♖xe1 fxe6 (24...♗f6 25 ♙xf6 gxf6 26 e7 should win) 25 ♙xe6+ (25 dxe6!?) 25...♗h8 26 ♖c3 ♖a7+! (a key *zwischenzug*) 27 ♗h1 ♗f6 and if 28 ♖xf6? then 28...gxf6 29 ♙xf6+ there is no mate since Black has 29...♖g7.

c) 24 exf7+! is critical. Since 24...♗xf7? 25 ♖xh7 gives White a winning attack, Black's only reply is 24...♗h8. After 25 ♖xe1, White's

attack is highly dangerous, with ♖e6-h6 being one of the main threats. My original assumption was that 25...♗f6 kept Black in the game, but then 26 ♙xf6 gxf6 27 ♖d4! is strong, one tactical point being 27...♗g7 28 ♖e6 ♖a7 29 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 30 ♖e8! winning a rook. If instead 27...♖d6, then White has a beautiful win by 28 ♙d7!! (D).



B

The threat is simply 29 ♖e8+, (29 ♙e8 is also deadly) and after 28...♖xd7 (there is nothing better) 29 ♖e8+ ♗g7 30 ♖g4+ ♗h6 (or 30...♗xf7 31 ♖g8#) 31 ♖h3+ ♗g7 (31...♗g6 32 ♖g8+ mates) 32 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 33 f8♖+ and White emerges a rook up.

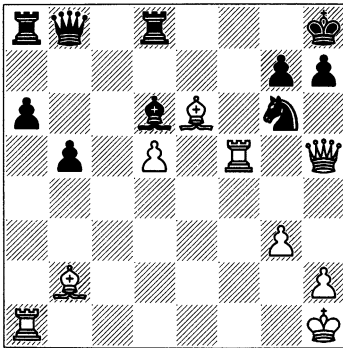
So your annotator, trying very hard to be stern and classically minded, relents. 23 e6! is strong, and I would not wish to deny anyone, amateur or grandmaster, the type of finish given in line 'c'. It is still worth reminding the reader not

to be overgenerous with material when attacking. A pawn deficit can easily be ignored, but bigger sacrifices need very careful assessment. Speelman's assessment was subtle and correct.

- | | | |
|----|-------|------|
| 24 | ♔h1 | fxe6 |
| 25 | ♙xe6+ | ♖h8 |
| 26 | ♗f1 | ♘e5 |
| 27 | ♚e2 | ♙d6 |

This blockade might explain why Black wanted to retain the bishop, but the blockade doesn't last very long.

- | | | |
|----|---------|-----|
| 28 | ♗f5 | ♘g6 |
| 29 | ♚h5 (D) | |



B

And before White could play the brilliancy with ♚xh7+ (♙xg7+ is also threatened), **Black resigned.**

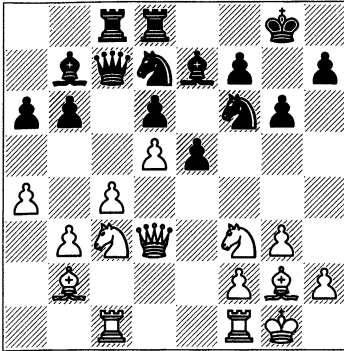
Sometimes the course of the attack is not so smooth. The following game has obvious similarities with the last, but here the attacker goes wrong. White, a tactically

astute grandmaster, faces a position which might reasonably be assumed to be advantageous, and rejects playing quietly to maintain a very slight edge, choosing instead to stir up tactics on the king-side. Unfortunately the attack is not quite there, and after careful defence by Black, White fails utterly. It happens to us all of course, and a fine matter of judgement is involved.

Mestel – Åkesson
London, Lloyds Bank 1994

- | | | |
|----|------|--------|
| 1 | c4 | e6 |
| 2 | ♘f3 | ♘f6 |
| 3 | g3 | b6 |
| 4 | ♙g2 | ♙b7 |
| 5 | 0-0 | ♙e7 |
| 6 | b3 | 0-0 |
| 7 | ♙b2 | c5 |
| 8 | e3 | a6 |
| 9 | ♚e2 | ♚c7 |
| 10 | ♘c3 | ♗d8 |
| 11 | ♗ac1 | d6 |
| 12 | d4 | ♘bd7 |
| 13 | ♚d3 | cxd4 |
| 14 | exd4 | ♗ac8 |
| 15 | d5 | e5 |
| 16 | a4 | g6 (D) |
| 17 | ♘g5 | |

White has the same basic central pawn structure (♙c4, d5 v ♙d6, e5) as in the Speelman-Arkell game, and tries the same basic plan of f4 and launching an attack against f7. Even some of the minor details are



W

the same; White has a fianchettoed bishop on b2 which eagerly awaits the opening of the long diagonal, and plays his other bishop to h3 with the aim of putting pressure on the knight on d7 which props up the e5-pawn. Yet in one game the attack succeeds, and in the other it fails, the main reason being that Åkesson has a much tighter defensive structure than Arkell had. Mestel's kingside attack is tempting, but there is no guarantee that it should succeed. We are still in the realm of fighting chess.

17 Qd2 , giving extra cover to the b-pawn and not leaving the knight open to attack, might well have been preferable.

17 ... Qh5
18 h4?!

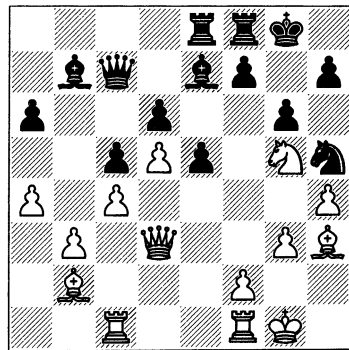
Again there is the suspicion that White is overcommitting himself on the kingside. If he wants to play f4, he doesn't really want to play h4 as well. 18 Qge4? f5 is fine for

Black, but 18 Qh3!? is worth considering, as 18...f5 19 f4 e4 20 Wc2 leaves Black a little loose on the kingside.

18 ... Qf8
19 Qh3 Qce8

A commendably calm defence. Black sees that the main danger is on the kingside, and so he quietly shifts his rooks across to await the opening of lines there. The panicky 19...h6?? loses quickly to 20 Qe6 fxe6 21 Wxg6+ Qg7 22 Qxe6+ ; if the defender has already moved a pawn in front of the king, it is usually extremely dangerous to try to push an attacking piece further away from the king with another pawn move.

20 Qce4 Qc5
21 Qxc5 bxc5 (D)



W

It would be very natural to conclude that White is better here; he has more space, his pieces are pointed towards the black king,

and he can lever open the position with a timely f4, after which his bishop on b2 becomes an extremely effective piece. Yet despite these obvious points, one must not forget that Black has an extra pawn in the centre, which would allow him to consider plans such as ...♙c8 followed by ...f5, or ...♙xg5.

If this position were to be set as an exercise, with the reader being asked how White could create a strong kingside attack, the answer would come back pretty quickly...

22 f4?!

While this sets up a violent attack, it turns out that White quickly loses the game once his attack is repulsed. He is steering through the complications aiming at maximum advantage, and disregards various ways of keeping the position approximately equal. It turns out that he overestimates his chances.

22 ... exf4!!

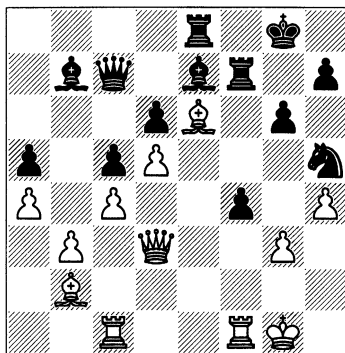
An outstanding and paradoxical defensive move which works because it damages the white kingside. Few could be happy about leaving the a1-h8 diagonal wide open, but White cannot exploit it. For example, 23 g4 ♘g3! 24 ♖xf4 ♙xg5 wins material, while 23 gx f4 ♙c8 gives Black active play.

23 ♘e6

White finds a combination, but it turns out to be unsound.

23 ... fxe6

24 ♙xe6+ ♖f7 (D)



W

Now White would like to play 25 g4 ♘f6 26 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 27 ♖xf4 when the terrible pin on the knight will decide the game. Unfortunately Black is well prepared to meet 25 g4 with the counter-attack 25...♙f6!, which turns the game around, e.g. 26 ♙xf6 ♖xe6! (a vital resource; after 26...♘xf6 27 ♖xf4 White still has the monster pin) 27 dxe6 ♖xf6 28 gxh5 gxh5. In the resulting position, White is the exchange for a pawn ahead, but *Black* has a massive and probably decisive kingside attack. After various sacrifices and counter-sacrifices, Black is the one who finally takes advantage of the open lines on the kingside, and also the long light-squared diagonal. With a bit of cultivation, the passed f-pawn may also become a great asset for Black.

A lot to see from move 22? Maybe!

White, dissatisfied with all this, tries a different method.

25 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7

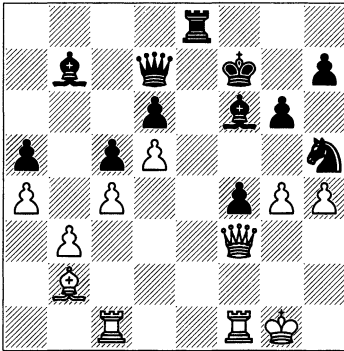
26 g4

Now if 26...♟f6? 27 ♖xf4 White has the position he wants. However...

26 ... ♗d7!

The counterattack starts. After 27 gxh5? ♗g4+, possibly followed by ...♖xh4, all Black's pieces will be rushing towards the naked king.

27 ♖f3 ♖f6! (D)



W

Once the defender's pieces are more active than the attacker's, it is clear that the attack has failed.

28 ♖xf6?!

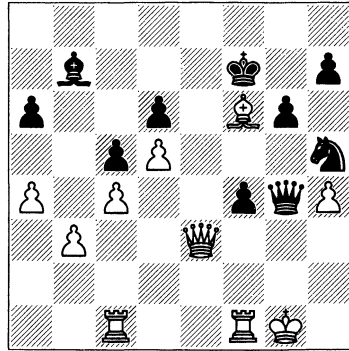
Blunder? Time trouble? White is still worse after 28 gxh5 ♖xb2 29 hxg6+ (or 29 ♖xf4+), but can play on.

28 ... ♖e3

29 ♖xe3

29 ♗d1 ♖g3+ 30 ♔h2 ♖xg4 31 ♖g5 h6 32 ♖xh6 ♖xh4+ is one of several winning lines for Black.

29 ... ♖xg4+ (D)



W

0-1

If this were a textbook on defensive play, the above game would be an excellent example to use. Black played calmly when he had to, and counter-attacked vigorously when he had to, not being afraid to sacrifice material to take over the initiative. Just when White played what might have appeared to be his winning combination, it turned out that Åkesson, his pieces well placed for defence, was ready with strings of tactics with which to refute the combination.

In a book on attacking technique, it is as well to remember that in chess attack and defence can be very finely balanced. In a position where you are level or have only a slight edge, to attempt to launch an uncompromising attack involves an element of risk. The sort of questions you must ask are:

- Am I ignoring too much the defence of my own weak spots?

- Am I creating further weak spots by pushing my pieces and pawns forward?
- Does my attack have real chances of succeeding?

To be able to attack *in safety*, you must be able to answer these questions with No, No, Yes. If you can do so, you probably have much the better position already. If not, you must concentrate on coming out on top in all the minor positional skirmishes associated with a tense position, before trying to weigh in with the big assault. Sometimes, however, sharp play is needed to establish your advantage in the first place; if your opponent makes a weak move you must try to punish it, and this cannot always be done by quiet moves. Our next example is an attractive case in point.

In all the hurly-burly of a big international open there can be little time to award any brilliancy prizes. At the 1994 Lloyds Bank Masters, there were some 1,400 games; how is one to pick out a single game from all these? Even if only half the players sent in a single game, there would still be 140 games for a judge to examine – a formidable task.

Yet one game stands out as particularly attractive, Chernin's win in the first round against Rossiter. Chernin made a purely positional sacrifice of queen for two minor

pieces, but so big was the advantage he achieved that Rossiter had nothing better to do than drop a rook. It was superbly imaginative, and fully justified, play by the Hungarian-based Russian, but this is a book on attacking technique rather than on brilliancy, and so while admiring the fireworks we must still concentrate on the nuts and bolts. Also we must note with sadness that a minor inaccuracy was made in time trouble, so the brilliancy is slightly flawed. Would any judge have had time to see this?

Chernin – Rossiter

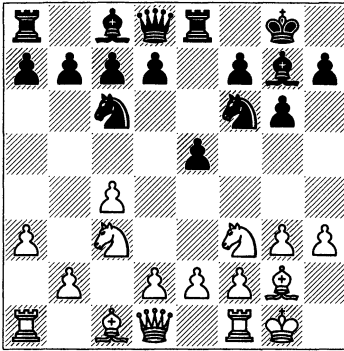
London, Lloyds Bank 1994

English Opening

1	c4	e5
2	♘c3	♙f6
3	♙f3	♘c6
4	a3	g6
5	g3	♗g7
6	♗g2	0-0
7	0-0	♖e8
8	h3 (D)	
8	...	d6?!

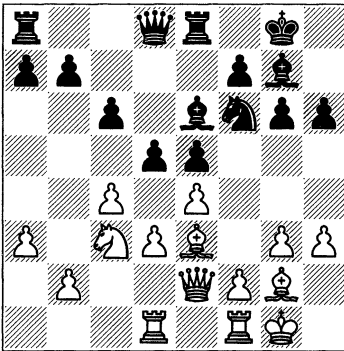
A slightly passive move which allows White to maintain his initiative. White's opening play has perhaps been a little too slow (4 a3; 8 h3), and this would justify an attempt to open the position up with 8...d5.

9	e4	♘d4
10	d3	♙xf3+
11	♗xf3	h6



B

- | | | |
|----|------|--------|
| 12 | ♔e2 | c6 |
| 13 | ♙e3 | ♙e6 |
| 14 | ♖ad1 | d5 (D) |



W

Black has not chosen the most propitious time to open the centre, since White, with all his pieces developed, can open the centre still further.

15 exd5

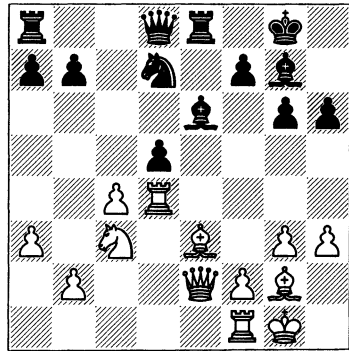
Generally the capture to be preferred in such positions, as it gives scope for the fianchettoed bishop.

- | | |
|--------|------|
| 15 ... | cxd5 |
| 16 d4 | exd4 |

Excusably missing some deep tactical points. 16...e4, with a more closed centre, looks better, and if 17 cxd5, 17...♘xd5! (17...♙xd5?! 18 ♖b5 favours White) 18 ♘xe4?! ♙xh3! and Black stands well.

17 c5 provides better chances. White closes the centre, and play switches to the flanks. White has better prospects on the queenside than Black has on the kingside. It helps White greatly that, in contrast to various French-type positions, the e3-square is not occupied by a pawn.

- | | | |
|----|------|---------|
| 17 | ♗xd4 | ♘d7 (D) |
|----|------|---------|



W

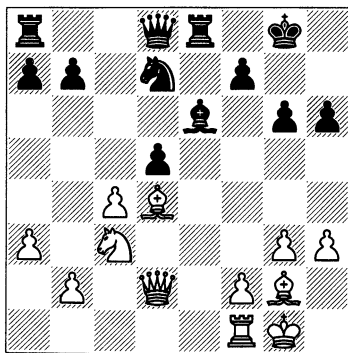
This position looks like it ought to give White something, especially given his pressure on d5. Finding something concrete is not easy though; 18 ♖d1 d4! 19 ♙xd4 ♙xh3 is reasonable enough, but nothing special. White has to be a

little more imaginative to exploit his edge to the full.

18 ♖d2!

The number one principle of sacrificial play is that the player making the sacrifice is attempting to make positional gains that outweigh the cost of the material sacrifice. A sacrificial combination may be adjudged as sound, unsound or indeterminate, but a positional sacrifice is assessed according to whether the compensation for the material is sufficient or not.

If Black snatches the exchange with 18...♙xd4 19 ♙xd4 (D), what has White got?



B

1) The most obvious point is that White has eliminated a key defensive piece, the bishop on g7, and has himself established control of the key long diagonal. This could easily be transformed into a mating attack if White should be allowed to play ♖xh6.

2) Black has two very weak pawns on h6 and d5, and both pawns are under immediate attack and cannot be protected simultaneously. White will probably soon gain a pawn, halving the extent of his material sacrifice, while still maintaining his initiative.

3) Taken piece for piece, White is more active. His bishop pair has to be watched. Black's bishop is in danger of getting trapped after cxd5 ♙f5; g4.

When everything is taken into account, White has ample compensation for the exchange, for example 19...dxc4 20 ♖xh6 ♘f6 21 ♗d1 when ♘e4 becomes a big threat; if 21...♙f5 then 22 ♘d5. Black therefore declines White's offer.

18 ... ♘c5

The threat of ...♘b3 makes it appear that Black's game just about hangs together. White has to be prepared to sacrifice again, and more heavily, to dispel this illusion.

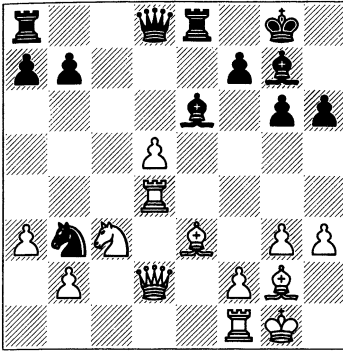
19 cxd5 ♘b3 (D)

20 dxe6!!

After the routine 20 ♖d1 ♘xd4 21 ♙xd4 White certainly has sufficient compensation for the sacrificed material, but without being able to claim a significant advantage. The text is more startling, yet more convincing.

20 ... ♘xd2

The obvious move, but there are also three possible captures of the rook:



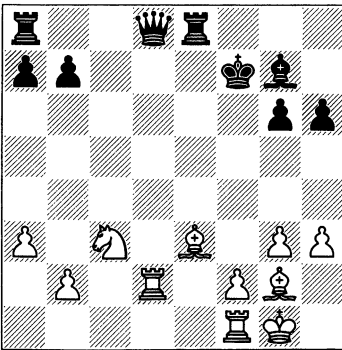
B

a) 20...♙xd4 21 exf7+ ♔xf7 22 ♖d1! should win.

b) 20...♘d4 21 exf7+ ♔xf7 22 ♖d1 leaves Black with nothing better than to allow the knight to fall; if 22...♘f5 then 23 ♖c2 ♘xe3 24 ♖b3+.

c) 20...♗xd4 21 exf7+ ♔xf7 22 ♖c2! and then 22...♗d4 is met by 23 ♙d5+ while 22...♗xe3 23 fxe3+ is check.

21 exf7+ ♔xf7
22 ♗xd2! (D)



B

The critical position. White has bishop, knight and pawn for the queen, a substantial enough sacrifice. Black's queen and king are both feeling the air, and White's minor pieces are beautifully coordinated, but one still has to blink several times before convincing oneself that White is better, and maybe even winning.

In any sacrificial situation, a *critical question to ask is what material the defender can afford to sacrifice back in order to blunt the initiative*. If for example Black could get away with sacrificing the exchange, material would be about level. However, the vital point is that if Black sacrifices queen for rook he would be substantially behind in material (♖ v ♙+♘+♙). This means that White has the clear attacking plan of using his rooks to harass the queen, thus gaining time to take advantage of the exposed position of the black king.

White's attack works out surprisingly smoothly. While the sacrifice itself took considerable imagination, once the sacrificial stage has passed we have reached the stage where the remainder is technique.

22 ... ♖a5

If 22...♗f6 White can force the win of the exchange with 23 ♙d5+ (23...♔f8 24 ♙c5+; 23...♔e7? 24 ♙c5+). Of course, after 23...♗e6 White does not have to take the pinned rook immediately, but can

instead add to the pressure first with a view to further material gain, for example 23...♖e6 24 ♘e4 followed by ♘c5.

23 ♗d5+ ♖e6

Or 23...♗f8 24 b4 ♖xa3 (alternatively 24...♗xc3 25 bxa5 wins for White) 25 ♗c5+ ♖e7 26 ♘b5 ♖a4 27 ♘c7 and White is starting to crash through, e.g. 27...♖c8 28 ♘e6+ ♗e8 29 ♘xg7+ ♖xg7 30 ♖e1+ ♗d8 31 ♗c6+. White also wins in the event of 23...♗e7 24 b4 ♖xa3 25 ♗c5+ ♗f6 26 ♗d4+ ♗e7 27 ♗xg7.

24 b4 ♖a6

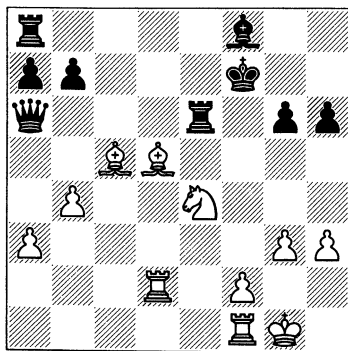
24...♖xa3 25 ♘b5 ♖xb4 26 ♘c7 ♖e8 27 ♘xe8 wins.

25 ♘e4 ♗f8

Naturally Black must cover the c5-square.

26 ♗c5 (D)

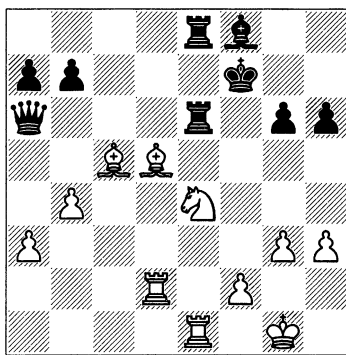
26 ♖c1?! ♗e8 keeps Black in the game, so White continues the battle for the c5-square. ♗xf8 followed by ♘c5 is a big threat.



B

26 ... ♗e7!?

This looks like a blunder, but actually resists surprisingly well. The main alternative is 26...♖e8, when the obvious 27 ♗xf8? ♗xf8 28 ♘c5 leads to nothing after 28...♖d6! 29 ♘xe6+ ♖xe6. White has one difficult move to find: 27 ♖e1! (D) which self-pins the knight but also puts the heat on the e6-rook. Black's two main defences allow White to scrape into a winning endgame:



B

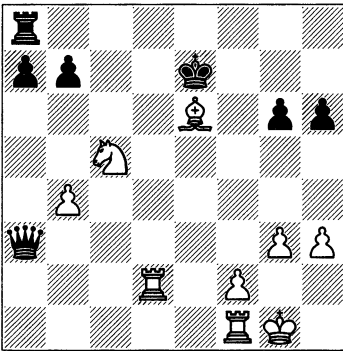
a) 27...♗g7 28 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 (or 28...♖xe6 29 ♖d7+ ♗g8 30 ♖d8 wins for White) 29 ♗d4+ and White wins his queen back with a knight check next move, for instance 29...♗g8 30 ♘f6+ ♖xf6 31 ♗xf6 ♖e1+ 32 ♗g2. This leaves White a pawn ahead in the endgame, which with proper technique should be an uncomplicated if lengthy win.

b) 27...g5! creates space for ...♗g6, and dares White to do his

worst. All the pieces disappear after 28 ♖d6+! ♙xd6 29 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 30 ♙xe6+ ♜xe6 31 ♜xd6+ ♜xd6 32 ♙xd6 ♜xd6, and White is a pawn up in a king and pawn ending, which he wins with, for example, 33 f4.

It is therefore a win, but not an easy win. And if one's opponent's defence is strong, then it often requires imagination as well as plodding accuracy to convert a winning position.

27 ♙xe7 ♜xe7
 28 ♖c5 ♜xa3
 29 ♙xe6 (D)



B

It is quite likely that Black had deliberately aimed for this position at move 26, since he is not too far behind in material and will have a dangerous pair of passed pawns if he can find time for ...♜xb4. Black has unshackled his pieces, but White is still too well coordinated to allow the defence to succeed.

For example if Black tries an immediate 29...♜xb4, White has 30 ♜d7+ ♜f6 31 ♜f7+ ♜e5 (31...♜g5 32 f4+ ♜h5 33 ♜f5+! gxf5 34 ♙f7# would give the spectators more pleasure) 32 ♖d3+ ♜xe6 33 ♖xb4 ♜xf7 34 ♜b1. The resulting endgame is not difficult to win; Black's queenside pawns need never become dangerous, while White has his extra knight and a useful extra pawn on the kingside.

29 ... ♜d8

Black hopes very much for simplification. If he can exchange rooks and also win the b-pawn, he should be able to draw.

30 ♜e2?!

Chess is not an easy game, and a narrowly winning position can be difficult to convert, particularly if, as I would suspect in this instance, there is a fearsome time scramble going on. One line of argument supporting the move played is that because White's advantage is in his piece co-ordination and his attack, he should keep pieces on the board, rather than head towards an endgame-like position with a rook exchange. The counter-argument, which is more persuasive in this particular case, is that the text move, which contrary to appearances threatens nothing, wastes a tempo.

30 ♜xd8! ♜xd8 31 ♜d1+ is a mating attack, despite the reduced material. There might follow:

a) 31...♖c7 32 ♜d7+ ♕b6 (not 32...♕c6? 33 ♙d5+ ♕b7 34 ♜xb7#) 33 ♙d5! ♜xb4 34 ♜xb7+ ♕xc5 35 ♜xb4 ♕xb4 and White is winning easily.

b) 31...♕e8 32 ♜d7 leaves Black defenceless against ♙f7+ followed by ♜e6+ (or mate).

c) 31...♕e7 32 ♜d7+ ♕f6 33 ♜f7+ ♕e5 34 ♙f4+ ♕d4 35 ♜d7+ ♕e3 36 ♜d3+ winning the queen.

All this would be straightforward but attractive attacking technique – if one had time on the clock!

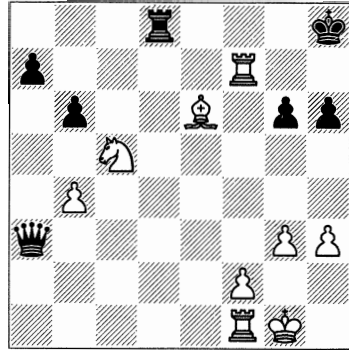
30 ... ♕f6?!

An instance of the threat being stronger than the execution. Black could have fought on by the fearless 30...♜xb4!, although after 31 ♜xb7 White should still win.

31 ♜e4

Now White is fully coordinated again.

31 ... b6
32 ♜f4+ ♕g7
33 ♜f7+ ♕h8 (D)



W

34 ♜d7 1-0
 ♜f6 follows. Despite the double error on move 30, a fine game.

4 Piece Mobility: Breaking the Symmetry

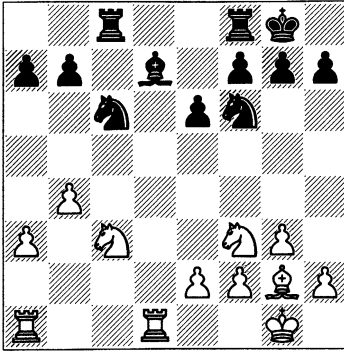
The final game of the previous chapter showed White sacrificing his queen for a decisive advantage in piece mobility. Black had no real weaknesses as such; instead the main point was that White's pieces were incredibly active and could drive Black's less agile pieces all over the place. It is interesting to note that after White had sacrificed his queen, he played only one pawn move (24 b4) and the sole reason of that was to prod the black queen. Furthermore, during this critical stage of the game, all of White's pawns were in his own half; there was absolutely no reliance placed on the standard method of fixing a critical weakness by advancing a pawn, as we saw in the Morozevich games earlier; instead, everything was done by piece play.

Sheer piece mobility can win games, even if the defender apparently has no real weaknesses. This is shown with greatest clarity by examining positions containing symmetrical pawn structures. In such positions the defender has no more weaknesses than the attacker; rather the problem is that

the defender's pieces cannot cooperate and often seem anaesthetised. It is remarkable how quickly the defence can collapse in such positions. If you are attacking, just get your pieces as active as possible. Do not worry about your opponent's apparent solidity; if your pieces are active enough, weaknesses will soon be forced.

Mestel – Kinsman *London, Lloyds Bank 1994* Semi-Tarrasch Defence

1	c4	♘f6
2	g3	d5
3	cxd5	♗xd5
4	♙g2	e6
5	♗f3	♙e7
6	d4	0-0
7	0-0	c5
8	a3	♗c6
9	dxcc5	♙xc5
10	b4	♙e7
11	♙b2	♙f6
12	♖b3	♙d7
13	♗d1	♙xb2
14	♖xb2	♖f6
15	♖xf6	♗xf6
16	♗c3 (D)	



B

The position might look slightly dull and symmetrical, drawish even, but White has a distinct edge. His main pluses are firstly that he has already set his queenside play in motion (probably Black should have tried the restraining ...a5 at some stage), and secondly that his fianchettoed bishop is beautifully placed, whereas Black's bishop is passive and a target to attack.

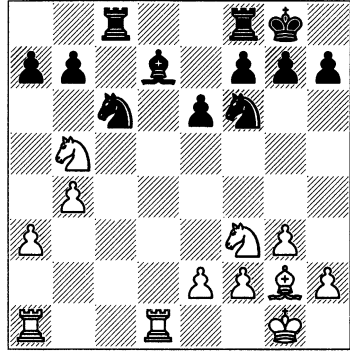
It is important for the practical player to have an eye for such advantages, and important to appreciate that uncomplicatedly vigorous and purposeful play can convert an apparently slight advantage, purely based on piece mobility, into a speedy win. Here Black never gets into the game.

16 ... ♖ac8?

This is soon shown as a waste of time. 16...♗fd8!? would be better.

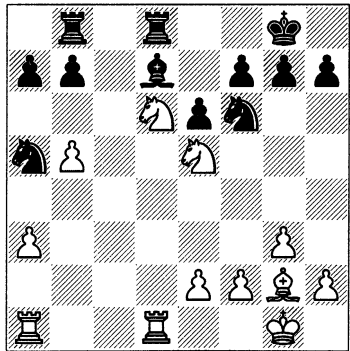
17 ♖b5! (D)

Note that White plays the ♖b5-d6 manoeuvre *before* playing b5.



B

- 17 ... ♗fd8
- 18 ♖d6 ♗b8
- 19 b5 ♖a5
- 20 ♖e5 (D)



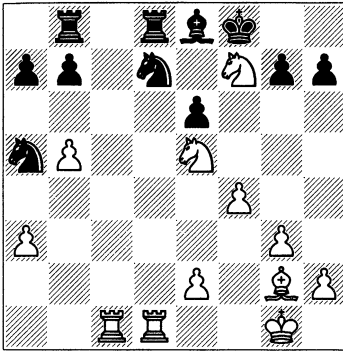
B

White has made giant strides since the previous diagram. Should we say that Black has problems because of his weaknesses on b7 and f7? Not really. The point is that if a player's pieces are active enough, even the 'normal' squares of his opponent become weaknesses.

20 ... ♔e8
 21 ♖ac1 ♕f8
 22 f4

Consolidating his grip on the dark squares. Not, however, 22 ♖c7? in view of 22...♗d5.

22 ... ♗d7
 23 ♗dxf7 (D)



B

1-0

Black must lose material.

Our next example features another game with an almost symmetrical pawn structure in which the player with the more active pieces overruns his opponent with a kingside attack, despite there being relatively few pieces on the board.

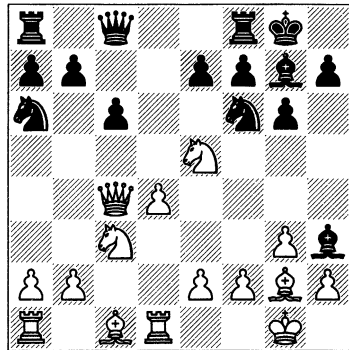
Lodhi – I. Gurevich

London, Lloyds Bank 1994

Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 ♗f6
 2 ♗f3 g6

3 c4 ♗g7
 4 ♗c3 d5
 5 g3 dxc4
 6 ♖a4+ c6
 7 ♖xc4 0-0
 8 ♗g2 ♗a6
 9 0-0 ♗f5
 10 ♗e5 ♖c8
 11 ♖d1 ♗h3 (D)



W

This position is hardly a model of symmetry; indeed there is considerable tension. White has a secure pawn centre and more active pieces, but Black is slightly ahead in development, and needs to take advantage of that lead in development.

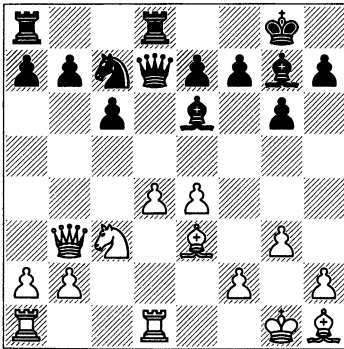
His last move indicates a standard plan against the king's fianchetto; the move g3 (or ...g6) leaves some weak squares in front of the king, and these may in certain circumstances be open to attack, particularly if the defending bishop can be exchanged.

Here Black's excursion with the bishop is a means of keeping the balance; only later, when the central pawn structure has been clarified, does Black start a genuine attack against the king.

12 ♖h1

A slight concession which need not concern White too much at the moment; he is still better in the centre.

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 12 ... | ♗c7 |
| 13 e4 | ♘d7 |
| 14 ♘xd7 | ♙xd7 |
| 15 ♖e3 | ♚fd8 |
| 16 ♗b3 | ♖e6 (D) |



W

17 d5?!

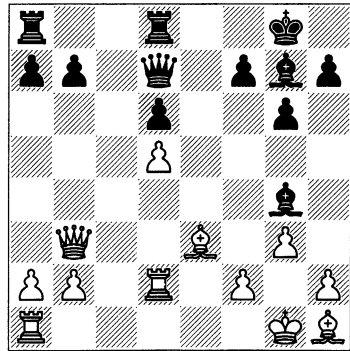
17 ♗xb7?? ♚db8 is a beginner's trap, but this is a more sophisticated error, which I suspect a master is more likely to make than a club player. Most players would, quite correctly, be wary of the isolated pawn that White is allowing himself, but Lodhi is presumably

reasoning that the position drifts into indeterminacy after 17 ♗c2 (although maybe White is very slightly better), whereas after the text he has a genuine space advantage, and perhaps the chance to develop an initiative.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 17 ... | ♗c2 |
| 18 exd5 | ♖g4 |
| 19 ♚d2 | ♗e8 |
| 20 ♗e4 | ♗d6! |

A promising square for the knight. White feels obliged to exchange.

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 21 ♗xd6 | exd6 (D) |
|---------|----------|



W

Now we have a nearly symmetrical pawn structure, with the main imbalance being that White's d-pawn is further advanced than Black's. One might naïvely assume that this means that the position favours White, who has more space. In fact, the reverse is true:

1) White's pawn on d5 blocks his king's bishop, whereas Black's

king's bishop has a free run of the long diagonal.

2) Black has secure pawn anchorage for his pieces on e5 and c5, whereas White's d5-pawn provides no such anchorage (unless perhaps Black can be induced to play ...b6 and allow White to penetrate on c6).

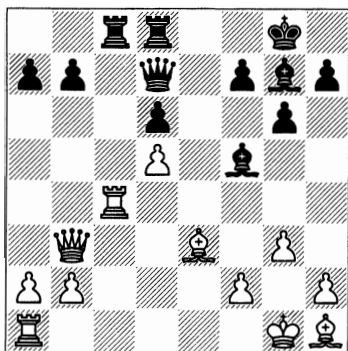
3) White's pawn is more easily attacked than Black's.

22 ♖c2

A symmetrical pawn structure means open files rather than semi-open ones. First of all, before anything happens on the kingside, we have the battle of the c-file.

22 ... ♗f5

23 ♖c4 ♖ac8 (D)



W

24 ♖ac1 ♖xc4

25 ♖xc4 ♖c8

26 ♖xc8+

26 ♗xa7? ♖xc4 27 ♗xc4 b5 wins the bishop.

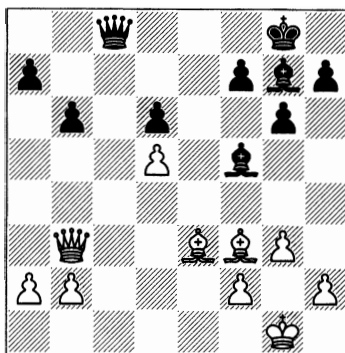
26 ... ♗xc8

27 ♗f3

27 ♗xa7? ♗c1+ 28 ♗g2 ♗e4+ 29 f3 ♗d2+ is also no fun for White.

27 ... b6 (D)

With rooks off the board and Black having control of the c-file, this now counts as a 'harmless weakening'.



W

28 h4

This, however, is a more consequential weakening. It is an unpleasant move to make, but White is terribly passive, and at least he now has a bolt-hole for his king on h2. The position is quiet, but in different ways for each player; the black pieces creep stealthily forward, whereas White's pieces are asleep. White has absolutely nothing to compensate for Black's control of the open c-file and the long dark-squared diagonal.

28 ... ♗e5

The outpost.

29 ♗h2

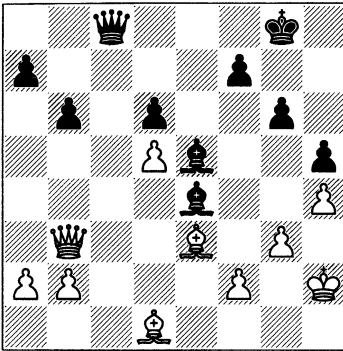
Not so much a safety precaution, more a sign that White can do nothing constructive with his pieces.

29 ... h5

30 ♖d1?!

When White finally moves one of his pieces, it leaves an important square unprotected.

30 ... ♗e4! (D)



W

The encirclement goes on. Black's main threat is not so much ... ♗f5, but rather ... ♗b7 picking up the d-pawn. Either way, the bishop cannot be allowed to remain on e4.

31 f3

This, although necessary, is a major weakening of the kingside pawn structure. *If your advantage is one of superior piece mobility, then the normal procedure is to try to create threats to force your opponent to weaken his or her pawn structure. Once you have forced this weakness, you can then set about exploiting it.*

31 ... ♗f5

Given that he has just forced a significant concession on the kingside, Black is not in the least upset at this 'loss of tempo'.

32 ♔g2 ♗a6

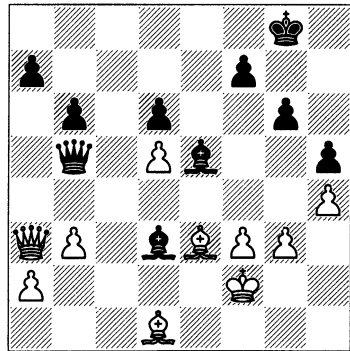
A useful change of direction. Black's queen, despite being situated on the flank, attacks both the queenside and the kingside, and indeed ties three white pieces (the queen on b3, the d1-bishop, and the white king) to passive defence.

33 ♔f2 ♗d3

Now ... ♗c4 is a threat.

34 ♗a3 ♗b5

35 b3 (D)



B

Black could now aim to conserve his advantages with 35...a5, but 36 f4 followed by ♗f3 keeps the struggle going. He aims instead for a direct attack; if you are checkmating your opponent, why bother about an a-pawn?

35 ... ♗xd5! chesstooling.com

36 ♔xa7 ♕b5

37 ♔xb6 ♕d3

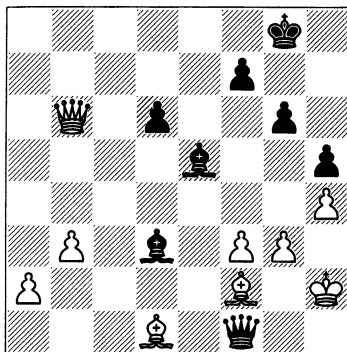
With a decisive kingside attack.

38 ♖g2 ♗f1+

39 ♖h2 ♕d3

40 ♔f2 (D)

There was nothing better.



B

40 ... ♖xd1

41 ♗e3 ♕e2

42 ♖g2 ♖h7

0-1

These examples with symmetrical and near-symmetrical pawn structures show very clearly that you do not necessarily need pre-existing structural weaknesses in your opponent's position in order to attack. If you have the more active pieces and use them properly, these pieces will be able to create weaknesses by themselves!

A word of warning needs to be added though. If you insist on attacking a non-weakness in a *level*

position, your efforts will generally be in vain. Your opponent will either be able to beat off the attack or, more infuriatingly still, will be able to ignore your attack and leave your pieces misplaced. In level positions you should concentrate on fighting chess rather than on attacking chess (I hope I have already made the distinction clear). What you must try to do in a level position is to engage on an intense struggle with your opponent, battling to increase your piece mobility, maybe trying to gain a bit of space, maybe trying to avoid getting hemmed in, and taking advantage of every little concession or weakness that is offered, while aiming to give as little as possible away yourself.

The main exception to the rule that you should avoid trying to launch an attack in a level position is if the position is level but asymmetrical. In such positions, both players have parts of the board where they are evidently strong, but also parts of the board where they are weak. In such positions you *must* attack where you are stronger; after all, your opponent will be very grateful if you don't! As a general rule, the proper ratio is about three attacking moves to one defensive move, but maybe that is a subject for another book.

In positions which are not heavily unbalanced, it is unreasonable

to attack unless you are more active, but when you have become more active it would be folly not to

attack, and, as we have seen, such attacks can be surprisingly effective.

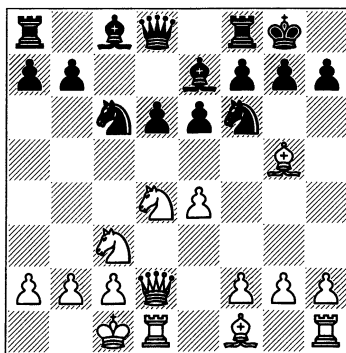
5 Piece Mobility: The Centre and the Flank

The centre is the most important part of the board. If you control the centre, and your pieces are well anchored there, you are well placed to attack on either flank, and well placed to defend on either flank. Conversely, if your opponent has full control of the centre, you will find it difficult to attack, and difficult to defend against your opponent's attacks.

Despite the importance of the centre, games are decided comparatively rarely by a central *attack*. What happens more often is that players battle for *control* of the centre, and once they have accomplished such control, they try to create and look for *weaknesses* to attack. Such weaknesses are usually on the flank, in a corner. Therefore the battle for central control and the flank attack are linked. If you see that your opponent has a weakness on one side of the board, don't just charge in regardless. Your attack against the castled king will be much stronger if you are secure in the centre than if your opponent is in control of vital central squares.

Ferguson – D. Gurevich
London, Lloyds Bank 1994
Sicilian, Richter-Rauzer

1	e4	c5
2	♘f3	d6
3	d4	cxd4
4	♘xd4	♗f6
5	♗c3	♗c6
6	♙g5	e6
7	♚d2	♙e7
8	0-0-0	0-0 (D)



W

A thematic Sicilian Defence position, and of course one thoroughly familiar to theory. White has castled queenside, which allows him to throw pawns forward

on the kingside, without having to worry about any weakening of the king's defences. In addition, the queen's rook is brought to a central file without loss of time. On the negative side, Black has good chances of a queenside counterattack aiming directly at the white king.

Both players are attacking on the flanks – White on the kingside, and Black on the queenside. But what is happening in the centre? Here the central position is tense and complicated. White has more space, without having complete control. Black has an extra pawn in the centre, which makes it difficult to break through. The battle for central control is only just starting.

9 ♖b3 ♗b6
10 f3

Anchoring the e-pawn and preparing a later g4. Another plan is f4, but this would be preferred on move 9 rather than on move 10.

10 ... ♖d8
11 ♔b1 ♗c7?!

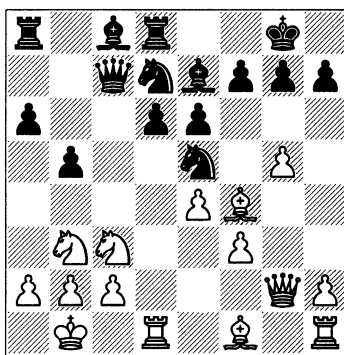
I leave detailed discussion of move-order to the theoreticians. If you think that moving the queen twice in such short succession is a little fishy, then I would find it hard to disagree. 11...a6!? would be preferable.

12 ♔f4 a6
13 g4 ♗e5

The e5-square is very often strategically vital for Black's defence

in the Sicilian. If Black can establish a knight on this square, without it being driven away by pawns, then he or she can withstand a lot of kingside pressure. Black is not in the least worried by 14 ♕xe5? dxe5; the extra control gained on the central dark squares easily outweighs any slight weakness of the doubled pawns.

14 g5 ♗fd7
15 ♗g2 b5 (D)

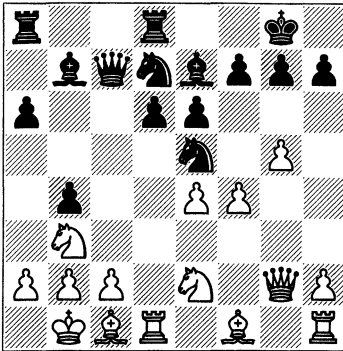


W

16 ♔c1!

The bishop is nicely placed here, giving extra protection to the weak b2-square, and getting out of the way of the b-pawn. Note also that earlier White was careful not to move his king's bishop; this left his second rank free so that he could play ♗d2-g2 without loss of time.

16 ... b4
17 ♗e2 ♔b7
18 f4?! (D)
18 ... ♗c4?



B

Such a natural move, but also a mistake. Black is making attacking gestures on the queenside (maybe he will have time for ...a5 and ...a4) without paying enough attention to the battle for the centre. 18...♖g6!, in spite of its provocative appearance (isn't he encouraging the h4-h5 thrust?), is positionally more soundly based, putting pressure on both the e-pawn and the f-pawn. ...♗h4 is an immediate threat, and if 19 h4 then 19...♖ac8 shows that Black's attack is more effective without the knight blocking the c-file. White has to be careful, because in the event of, for example, 20 ♗g3 e5 21 f5 (21 ♗f5 ♖f8 is fine for Black) 21...♗f4 22 ♖xf4 exf4 23 ♗h5 f3! Black wins the race to attack.

In this variation, 19 ♗g3 would be more sensible, since 19...e5 is met by 20 f5 ♗f4 21 ♖xf4 exf4 22 ♗h5, but the simple 19...♖ac8 gives Black good play. Should White

ever try f5, then Black will be in full control of the e5-square.

The position after 18...♗g6! is surprisingly good for Black. The alert reader will have recognised similarities to the Morozevich-Arkhamia game, and will have seen that Black's queenside play is much more dangerous than in that game. But if with 18...♗c4? Black can be accused of neglecting the centre, then so can White, whose f4 was mistimed. 18 h4! ♖ac8 19 ♗g3 would have been better, saving f4 for later.

19 ♗g3 d5

If 19...e5, then 20 f5 keeps the attack.

20 ♖d3

a5

21 f5

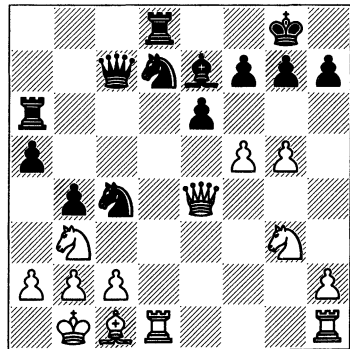
dx4

22 ♖xe4

♗xe4

23 ♗xe4

♖a6 (D)

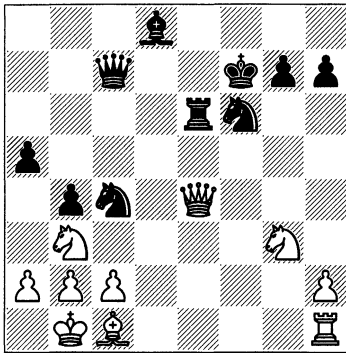


W

The board has opened up in the last few moves, with Black having to release the central tension in

order not to be overrun on the kingside. White's attack is still not over; he can bring pawns into contact on the kingside, and thereby force the black king into the open.

- 24 g6 ♖f6
 25 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8
 26 gxf7+ ♚xf7
 27 fxe6+ ♖xe6 (D)



W

28 ♖a8!!

One of the most paradoxical centralising moves you are likely to see! The queen in the corner influences events both on the kingside (the back rank is breezy) and on the queenside (Black's ...a4 is prevented) while still covering vital squares on d5 and e4. This is exactly the all-over effect that one would desire from a fully centralised piece, and yet White's queen is in the corner, where it is less exposed to attack than on any central square.

White's one real advantage in this position is that Black's king is

exposed; move the black king to g8 and the rook to e8, and Black's position would become comfortable. The essential question is whether White can mobilise his pieces before Black can consolidate.

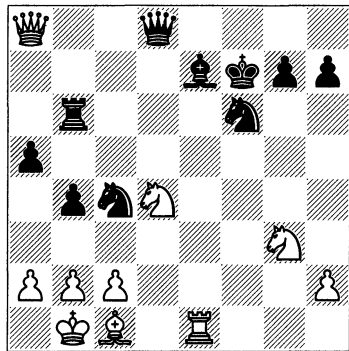
28 ... ♔e7

If 28...♔e8, White could continue the attack with 29 ♖f1, while 29...♚g8 30 ♖h5! ♖xh5 31 ♗d5+ ♚h8 32 ♗xh5 gives White substantial kingside pressure. In this line the white queen makes good use of the centre to switch from flank to flank.

29 ♖d4

Despite the lack of pawn anchorage, the critical central squares all seem to be falling to White.

29 ... ♖b6
 30 ♖e1 ♗d8 (D)



W

31 ♗f3!

A more conventional form of centralisation. The possibility of ♗b3 adds to Black's difficulties,

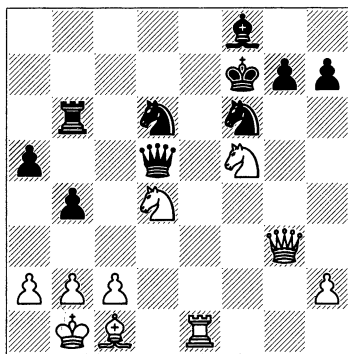
while 31...♖xd4 would run into 32 ♜xe7+ ♔f8 33 ♖a8+ ♔xe7 34 ♜f5+. White's queen manoeuvring is a pleasure to watch.

31 ... ♖d5
32 ♜gf5

Another piece joins the attack with gain of tempo, as 32...♖xf3? allows 33 ♜xe7+. White is making fullest possible use of the tactical problems Black faces through the exposure of his king.

32 ... ♔f8
33 ♖g3 ♜d6? (D)

Missing the threat. 33...♜b7 had to be tried, although 34 ♜e6 continues to give White a massive attack (34...g6 35 ♖h4, etc.).



W

34 ♜e7+! ♔g7
35 ♜xg7+ ♔h8
36 ♜e7 ♖c4
36...♖xd4 37 ♜g8+ ♜xg8 38 ♖xg8#.
37 b3 ♜de4
38 ♖g2 ♜c3+

39 ♔a1 ♔xg7
40 bxc4 ♜fe4
41 ♜df5 1-0

In the last game, the centre was semi-open, with the prospect of quickly becoming fully open, and the question of who had central control overrode the question of who had the faster flank attack. In our next example, the centre is semi-closed. Again both players concentrate on flank attacks, but the complexion of the game quickly changes when Black sacrifices the exchange to gain central control.

Chernin – Hebden

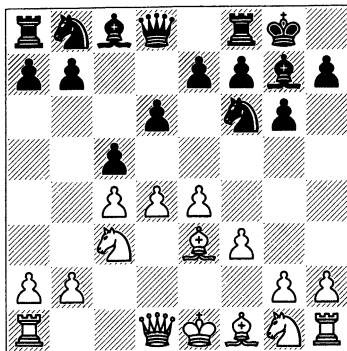
London, Lloyds Bank 1994

King's Indian, Sämisch

1 d4 ♜f6
2 c4 g6
3 ♜c3 ♔g7
4 e4 d6
5 f3 0-0
6 ♔e3 c5 (D)

This is not a misprint! Experience shows that after the continuation 7 dxc5 dxc5 8 ♖xd8 ♜xd8 9 ♔xc5 ♜c6 Black's superior development and dark-square control provide give good compensation for the gambited pawn.

7 ♜ge2 ♜c6
8 d5 ♜e5
9 ♜g3 a6
10 a4 e6
11 ♔e2 exd5



W

12 **cxd5** **♗d7**

Such positions are guaranteed to infuriate White, who will always want to trap the knight on e5!

13 **h3**

It's probably not worth it though. 13 0-0!? is sensible.

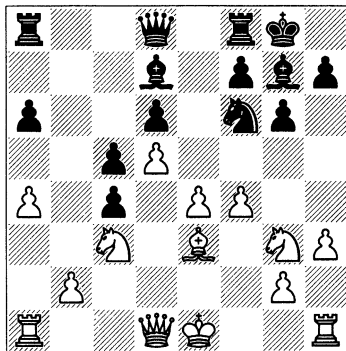
[Editor's note: The immediate 13 f4 is suspect, since rather than the obvious 13...♗eg4 (which is unclear), Black has the brilliant novelty 13...♗fg4!!, as played in the game Levitt-Beaumont, British League (4NCL) 1996, when Black has the advantage, perhaps even a decisive one.]

13 ... **b5**

14 **f4** **♗c4**

15 **♗xc4** **bxc4 (D)**

In Benoni-type positions where White has played an early f4, the assessment of the position depends a lot on whether White can ever profitably play e5. Here it is not so; 15 e5? dxe5 16 fxe5 ♖b8! is good for Black. White must therefore



W

stay put in the centre; his only realistic plan is to cover his weaknesses on b2 and e4, and then build up his attack with f5.

16 **0-0** **♖b8**

17 **♗f2** **♗b3**

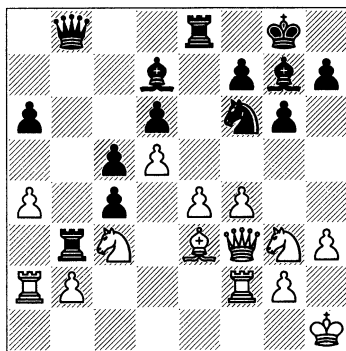
18 **♖f3** **♖b8**

Covering both b2 and e5.

19 **♗a2** **♗e8**

20 **♗h1 (D)**

A move of consolidation that he doesn't really have time for.



B

Black is attacking on the queenside, and White on the kingside. The fact that Black is not chasing the white king does not mean that Black is not attacking; an attack against a positional weakness is definitely a form of attack. Indeed, the fact that White's king is on the kingside actually makes it more difficult for White to defend the sore spots on the b-file.

How, though, is Black to make progress? The answer is paradoxical: first he coaxes White into an attacking pawn thrust that leaves an important central square unguarded, and then he makes a positional exchange sacrifice.

20 ... h5!?

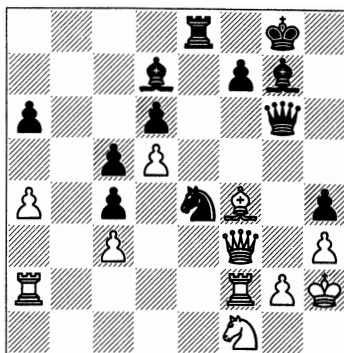
With ideas of rolling back the kingside with ...h4. White should now probably try 21 ♖c2, but of course he is still worse.

21 f5?

Losing his grip on e5, a factor which Black immediately exploits.

21 ...	♖xc3!
22 bxc3	♗b1+
23 ♔h2	h4
24 ♘f1	♗xe4
25 fxg6	♗xg6
26 ♙f4	♘e4 (D)

Black's material sacrifice has been slight – rook for bishop and pawn – and he now controls the centre and can in principle attack either on the kingside or the queenside. Since White has got the kingside well covered but has little



W

protecting the queenside, it is not surprising that the decision comes on the queenside.

27 ♖fc2 ♙f5

28 ♖e2

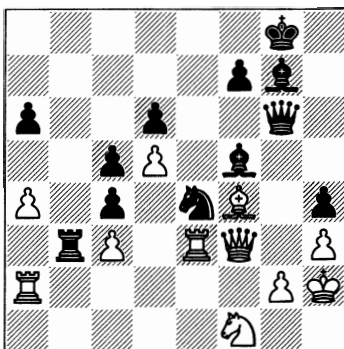
A 'waste of time' that is necessary in order to prevent ...♘xc3.

28 ... ♖b8

Once again Black makes use of the b-file.

29 ♖e3 ♖b3 (D)

Déjà vu?



W

30 ♖ae2 ♗xc3
 31 ♖e8+ ♕h7
 32 ♖2e3 ♖b2

Now that Black has wrapped up the queenside, he can turn his attention again to the kingside.

33 ♖e1 ♙d4
 34 ♗d2 ♗xa4
 35 ♖1e7 c3

36 ♖f8

Desperation. He is completely encircled, and looks for the only point on the board where he may possibly attack, even though it is all ultimately futile.

36 ... cxd2
 37 ♖exf7+ ♙g7
 0-1

6 The Initiative

The initiative is to fighting chess as the attack is to technical chess. Thus, when you are clearly better you may *attack* your opponent's weaknesses, with excellent prospects for success. When you do not have this significant advantage, and are maybe only slightly better, you can still try to press your opponent hard, to try to force him or her into some form of mistake which may be transformed into a permanent advantage for you. If you have the initiative, you are the one forcing the pace in all the little tactical and positional battles that come under the heading of fighting chess. If you have the initiative, you must try to gain the upper hand in all these battles. *The main objective of initiative play is not so much to force the win (your opponent must make a mistake for this to be possible) but rather to prevent your opponent from equalising.*

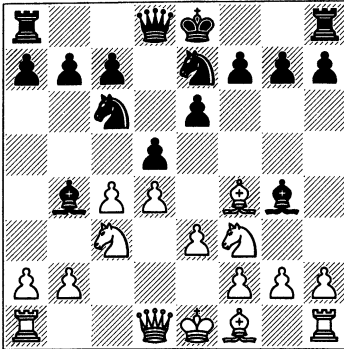
Initiative play is an essential aspect of grandmaster and master play. Our illustrative game comes from Alexander Morozevich's outstanding winning run at the Lloyds Bank Masters. His opponent's development is a little slow, with one of the bishops being mildly hemmed

in, but it does not look too serious. Morozevich, however, keeps the initiative so superbly, even though the play is often complicated and tactical, that the ailing bishop never gets back into play, even when we are well into the endgame. As you play through the game, note how even when the queens are off, Morozevich gains time by harassing the enemy king. Any mating threats are incidental; what is important is that by using the initiative to create a series of threats, one player has time to co-ordinate his pieces, while the other can undertake nothing but passive defence.

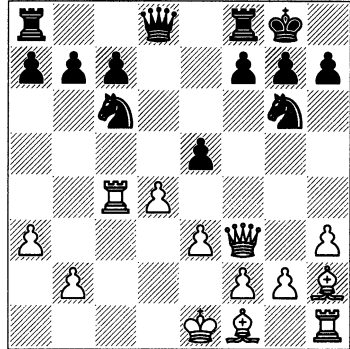
Åkesson – Morozevich
London, Lloyds Bank 1994
Queen's Gambit, Chigorin

1	♘f3	♘c6
2	d4	d5
3	♙f4	♙g4
4	e3	e6
5	c4	♙b4+
6	♘c3	♘ge7 (D)

All very much based on the great nineteenth-century pioneer of Russian chess, Mikhail Chigorin. Black's development (e.g. the knight on c6) looks almost naïve,



W



W

and he has paid minimal attention to building a pawn centre, but at least his pieces are out quickly. White can try to gain time by attacking the bishops, but the spirit of the Chigorin method is to be prepared to exchange bishop for knight if this is necessary to maintain the flow of development. See for example Black's 9th and 12th moves.

- | | | |
|----|-------------|---------------|
| 7 | h3 | ♘h5 |
| 8 | ♖c1 | 0-0 |
| 9 | a3 | ♘xc3+ |
| 10 | ♗xc3 | dx4 |
| 11 | ♗xc4 | ♘g6 |
| 12 | ♙h2 | ♘xf3! |
| 13 | ♗xf3 | e5 (D) |

Already we can suggest that Black is slightly better. Somewhere along the line (maybe 11 ♗xc4) White has misassessed the pace of the position, and now finds that his bishop pair is of no great use to him, while Black is better developed and has already been able to

make a valuable pawn break in the centre.

Black has the initiative, but only for as long as White is behind in development. Black must therefore try to keep White tied down by threats.

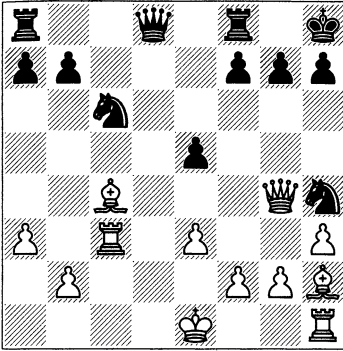
- | | | |
|----|------------|------------|
| 14 | d5 | ♙a5 |
| 15 | ♗c3 | c6 |
| 16 | dx6 | |

Of course not 16 b4?? cxd5 17 bxa5 ♗xa5 18 ♔d2 d4, when Black wins.

- | | | |
|----|------------|--------------|
| 16 | ... | ♘xc6 |
| 17 | ♙c4 | ♘h4?! |

Such pin-prick threats can be an important part of the process, so long as one is moving pieces to genuinely more aggressive positions. Even so, I strongly suspect that the immediate 17...♙h8!, preparing ...f5 while keeping the knight closer to the centre, would have been preferable; see the next note.

- | | | |
|----|------------|----------------|
| 18 | ♗g4 | ♙h8 (D) |
|----|------------|----------------|



W

19 ♖d3?

This does not gain time because it forces the black queen to develop, allowing the black rooks to be connected. However, 19 0-0? f5 is not very effective either; Black has a powerful kingside attack building up. The correct solution must surely be 19 e4!. This concedes a minor weakness on d4, but in compensation gives White an outpost for his bishop on d5. A more important gain for White is that Black's kingside initiative is stopped dead. If Black should ever be forced to backtrack with ...♗g6, White is probably better.

Morozevich at age 17 did not quite have perfect positional touch, but such things can improve very quickly.

19 ... ♔e7!

Black fights hard for the initiative; the 'safe' 19...♔f6 renounces the possibility of an early ...f5.

20 ♖d7

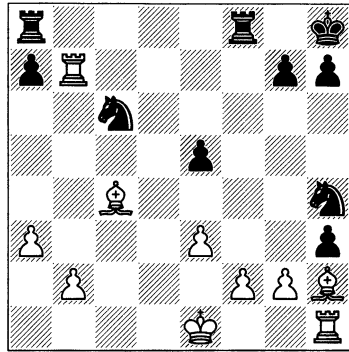
At first sight it appears as though White is the one setting the pace, but the tactical flurry over the next few moves shows otherwise.

20 ... f5!

Black cannot afford to slow down.

21 ♖xe7 fxe4

22 ♖xb7 g3 (D)



W

23 ♗d5!

White too must fight for the initiative. In the event of 23 gxh3?! ♗f3+ 24 ♔e2 ♖ad8 Black's rooks and knights are perfectly coordinated, while no two of White's pieces are working together properly. Play might continue 25 ♖f7 ♖xf7 26 ♗xf7 e4! 27 ♗g3 ♖d2+ 28 ♔f1 ♗ce5, leaving White under severe pressure.

23 ... hxg2

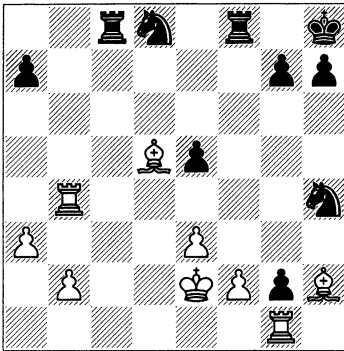
24 ♖g1 ♖ac8

25 ♔e2

The pawn cannot yet be taken: 25 ♗xg2? ♗d8 26 ♖b4 ♖c1+ 27

♙e2 ♖xg1 28 ♙xg1 ♜xg2 29 ♖g4 ♜f4+ 30 exf4 exf4, followed maybe by ...♜e6, ...g5, ...h5, etc., when Black has a safe extra pawn and the more active pieces for the endgame.

25 ... ♜d8
26 ♖b4 (D)



B

Again White seems to have recovered well, and if Black's play should in any way become neutralised, then White's bishop pair will dominate the board. If for example Black plays the passive 26...♜g6?, then 27 ♖c4! ♖xc4 28 ♙xc4 eliminates all Black's counterplay, and after 28...♜h4 29 ♙g3 ♜f3 30 ♖xg2 e4 31 ♙d5 White is set to win.

Passive play would be poor play here. *When pieces are flying all over the board, you must make sure that your pieces are flying as quickly as your opponent's.*

26 ... ♖c2+!

27 ♙d3 ♖c5!

This is a much better way of dealing with the position; no passive retreat, but rather a series of counter-threats to keep the initiative. Black is pestering the white king purely in order to gain time. With his 26th move he pulls the opposing king on to the d-file, firstly so that the ...♖xd5 threatened with the following move would be check, and secondly so that any later ...♖d8 (after, e.g., 28 ♙xg2 ♜xg2 29 ♖xg2 ♜c6 30 ♖ moves ♖d8+) would also be check.

28 ♖xh4 ♖xd5+
29 ♙e2 ♜f7
30 ♖xg2 ♖c8

Black seeks other ways of pestering the white king to gain time. The question remains whether there is anywhere on the board where the white king would be truly safe.

31 ♖b4

White too insists on remaining active, but Black's head-start in development is still obvious, even through to the endgame.

31 ... h6

It may seem strange to allow White an entry square on g6, but other points need to be considered:

1) Black needs to cut out any back-rank mating possibilities, as otherwise his rook on c8 could never become fully active;

2) He does not want to move his g-pawn, since if White then gets a

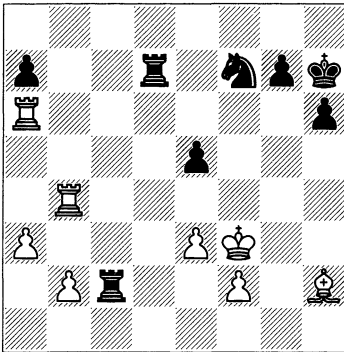
rook to the seventh, Black's king would be more vulnerable than before;

3) Playing ...h6 allows the knight a square on g5, which in some circumstances might be useful.

32 ♖g6 ♔h7

Black's king is now much more secure.

33 ♖a6 ♖c2+
34 ♕f3 ♖d7 (D)



W

The position has started to stabilise, and for the first time we can speak of 'static', or rather semi-static, features. White has no real pawn weakness of consequence, and indeed Black has the two weakest pawns on the board, on a7 and e5. Despite this, Black remains clearly better, because his advantage in piece activity has taken on a permanent aspect. White's bishop on h2 has no active play (apart from mild pressure on the black e-pawn), and is destined to remain

useless through the rest of the game. The white rooks are active, but all they can attack is the a-pawn. Meanwhile Black's rooks are nicely placed; he has one rook on the seventh rank, while the other can attack either along the rank or the file, White's king being exposed to the crossfire. The knight may also join in the attack, while in the longer term a gradual advance of the kingside pawns will cause trouble for White.

Morozevich, by keeping hold of the initiative when the position was wild, now has the prize of the initiative (can we say attack?) in a quiet technical position. It is interesting to note that since White is no worse in terms of pawn structure, what Black is making use of his superior piece activity. Black is the one who controls the centre, after all.

35 ♗g3 h5

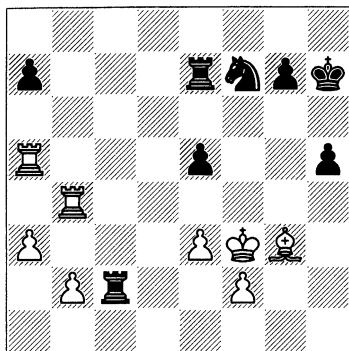
Black at some stage would like to play ...h4 to stop the bishop protecting the f-pawn, the main weakness in White's position.

36 ♖a5

White is regrouping his rooks for a queenside assault. The centralising 36 ♕e4 is too slow, e.g. 36...g5 37 f4 h4! 38 fxf5 hxg3 39 g6+ ♕g7 40 gxf7 ♖xf7 (simpler than 40...g2 41 ♖g6+) and Black's passed pawn runs through. A line such as this demonstrates that it is difficult for White to defend both

centre and kingside simultaneously.

36 ... ♖e7 (D)



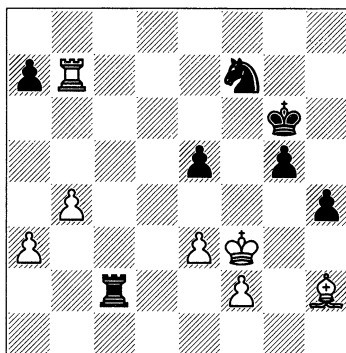
W

37 ♖ab5 g5
 38 ♖b7 ♖xb7
 39 ♖xb7 ♔g6
 40 b4

White has been terrified into an exchange of rooks, but this merely accentuates the fact that he is playing on in effect a piece down. His last hope is that he can pick up a pawn on the queenside and create two rolling passed pawns before Black can win on the kingside. Since the pawn on a7 is indeed extremely weak, Black has no alternative but to play attacking chess.

40 ... h4
 41 ♔h2 (D)
 41 ... e4!
 42 ♔g2

After 42 ♔xe4 ♖xf2 Black's two passed pawns on the kingside will win long before White has achieved



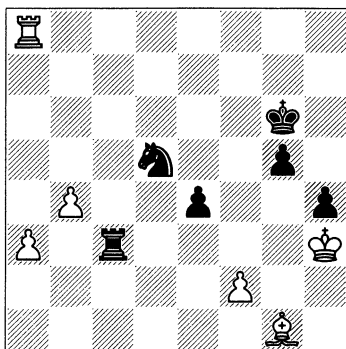
B

anything on the queenside. After the text-move, however, Black wins, believe it or not, by a direct attack against the king.

42 ... ♘h6!
 43 ♖xa7 ♘g4
 44 ♔g1

A humiliating retreat for the bishop.

44 ... ♖xe3+
 45 ♔h3 ♖d5
 46 ♖a8 ♖c3+ (D)



W

47 ♖g2

It is a real mating attack: 47 ♖g4?
 ♜f6#, or 47 ♖h2 ♜f4 48 ♜g8+?
 (48 ♖h1 transposes to the game)
 48...♜f7 49 ♜xg5 ♜h3#.

47 ... ♜f4+

48 ♖h1 ♜c1

49 ♖h2 ♜e2

The end. 50 ♜g8+ ♖h5 51 ♜h8+
 ♖g4 does not help White.

50 f4 ♜xg1

51 fxg5 ♜f3+

0-1

An impressive piece of initiative play, but when did the initiative become an attack? In the early stages (from about move 20 to 35) Black was working very hard to keep his pieces active and to create lots of threats, but these threats were not yet coordinated. Black was trying to get his pieces working together properly, rather than attacking any particular weakness, and he also had to take full account of the point that White too was aiming for piece activity. Black won the battle

for the initiative, essentially since he was already objectively better (White had already gone wrong) and because he continued to play actively to keep his advantage. It was only when Black had come out on top in the *battle for the initiative* that he could actually set about attacking weaknesses; he had to subdue White's counterplay in order to give himself the breathing space with which to co-ordinate his pieces for a full-scale assault on White's weaknesses. Whereas objectively Black was probably always better from move 20 onwards, *subjectively* it must have felt very different. Early on, Black must have been fighting really hard, knowing that he had a real battle on his hands; it was fighting chess in a good position. Only around move 30-35 could Black start to sit back and ask himself exactly how he was going to set about destroying the white defences; it was at this stage that one could start to talk about *attacking technique*.

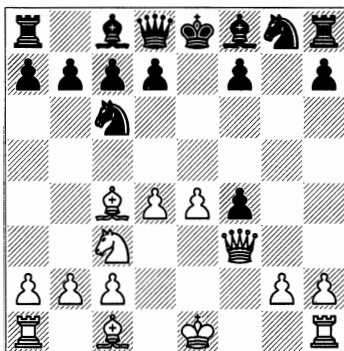
7 The Attack Goes Wrong

We learn from our mistakes, but it is less painful to learn from other people's mistakes. In this chapter we present a couple of games where the attack should have triumphed, but in fact failed through a failure of technique. In the first, Mortazavi plays a fiery and speculative gambit against a strong grandmaster, and gets a wonderful attacking position. But once you start attacking, you must ensure that you keep a grip on the position, particularly if you have sacrificed material.

Mortazavi – Miles
London, Lloyds Bank 1994
 Vienna Gambit

- | | | |
|---|----------|------|
| 1 | e4 | ♘c6 |
| 2 | ♘c3 | e5 |
| 3 | f4 | exf4 |
| 4 | ♘f3 | g5 |
| 5 | d4 | g4 |
| 6 | ♙c4 | gxf3 |
| 7 | ♚xf3 (D) | |
| 7 | ... | d5 |

This is not a book on opening theory, therefore no deep analysis of 7...♘xd4, except to note that White plays 8 ♙xf7+ ♘xf7 9 ♚h5+ with a possible draw (but



B

can either side improve?) after 9...♘g7 10 ♚g4+ ♘f7 11 ♚h5+.

Black's 7...d5, freeing his c8-bishop, is a typical counter-sacrifice in this type of position.

- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 8 | ♘xd5 | ♙xd4 |
| 9 | ♚xf4 | ♙d6?! |

Again, this is not a book of heavy analysis, but Black's move looks wrong. 9...♘e6 is possible, while the cheeky 9...♘xc2+ might be best of all, one point being that if the white king moves to the d-file, the knight will be pinned. Thus 10 ♘d1 is answered with 10...♘xa1 giving Black a lot of extra material to run with.

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 10 | ♚f2 | ♙c6 |
|----|-----|-----|

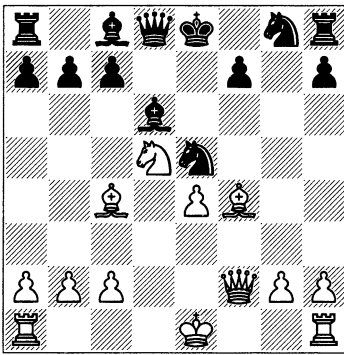
Black is losing control in the centre, but after 10...♘e6 11 ♙e3!

White can create pressure on the f- and d-files, and even think about playing ♖d4, while it is hard to see how Black is going to develop.

11 ♖f4!

White has no need to be frightened of the exchange of bishops, as Black's dark squares would then become terribly weak.

11 ... ♘e5 (D)



W

12 0-0!

So far, so good. This is the correct plan; White has no need to waste time by moving his bishop, and instead completes his development, rushing another piece into the attack.

12 ... ♗xc4

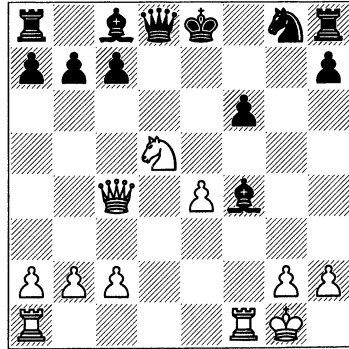
12... ♗e6 looks more principled, but in fact White keeps a dangerous attack with 13 ♗b5+! c6 14 ♖g3!. White's last two moves would then have reduced the tension on his own pieces, while adding to the threats against Black. In particular,

White is no longer in any danger on the a7-g1 diagonal, while if Black captures the white bishop he is doing so with a random pawn move and not the more threatening ... ♗xc4.

13 ♖d4 f6

14 ♖xc4 ♗xf4? (D)

Poor timing. 14...c6! is much better. After 15 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 (but not 15... ♖xf6? 16 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 17 ♖f7+ ♗d8 18 ♖ad1) 16 e5 ♖b6+! 17 ♗h1 ♖b4 18 ♖d3 White will end up with two pawns for the piece, and will have perfectly reasonable compensation for the sacrifice, given Black's laggardly development.



W

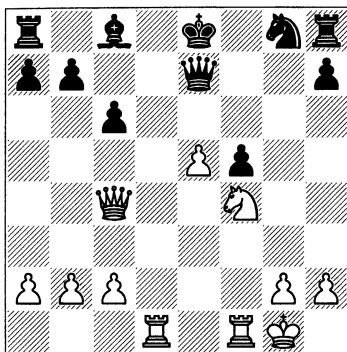
15 ♗xf4 c6

A necessary precaution, since 15... ♖e7? is met by 16 ♗d5, but now Black is very seriously behind in development and should probably lose.

16 e5! chesstouring.com

Spot on. An attack needs open lines. If now 16...fxe5, 17 ♖g6.

16 ... f5
17 ♖ad1 ♗e7 (D)



W

The position has clarified. White has sacrificed a piece but has completed his development, while Black is still undeveloped with his king pinned down. What we have reached is a very technical position. White's positional compensation for the piece is so strongly evident that there is no need to seek any tactical justification for the sacrifice. White can play it as a matter of technique.

The correct move is 18 ♖d6!, followed by ♖fd1, completing the centralisation process. The principle of centralisation is highly important in chess strategy, especially so when the opposing king is stuck in the centre! Note also that White is using his control of the d-file to establish an outpost which restricts

further Black's piece activity; ...♘h6 is thus ruled out.

After 18 ♖d6! the rest of the game would be a matter of simple attacking technique; no brilliancies, no combinations even, but just a few straightforward blows, e.g.:

a) 18...♗xe5 (on principle White should not be scared of this, as it opens another file in front of the king) 19 ♖fd1 ♖e7 20 ♖d8 ♘h6 21 ♖xh8 ♗xh8 22 ♗e2+ ♖f6 (22...♖f7 23 ♗h5+ ♖g7 24 ♗g5+) 23 ♖d6+ ♖g5 (23...♖g7 24 ♗e5+) 24 ♘h3+ ♘h4 25 ♖xh6#.

b) 18...♗d7 19 ♖fd1 0-0-0 20 ♗d4 (the most brutal) and Black's position will topple in a couple of moves.

Nothing flashy, just normal forcing play. Instead there followed:

18 ♗c3??

Wholly anti-positional; as we have seen, there is no need to protect the e-pawn. Meanwhile, by not activating his own pieces, he allows Black to activate his. White has surrendered his chance to control Black's development squares on h6 and e6, and is guilty of culpable neglect of the centre.

18 ... ♘h6!

Everything has changed in an instant. Black is now ready to castle and escape with his extra piece.

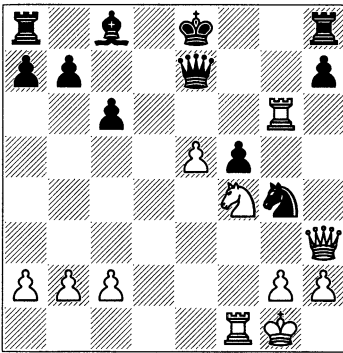
19 ♗h3

A totally decentralising move; even so, the only way to keep the attack alive. chesstouring.com

19 ... ♔g5
 20 ♖d6

The rook settles on the correct square, but two moves too late. In those two moves, the white queen has moved to a much worse square while Black has caught up on his development.

20 ... ♘g4
 21 ♖g6 ♕e7 (D)



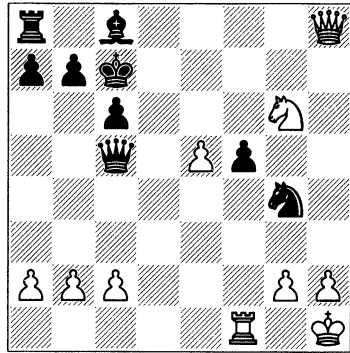
W

You only need to compare this diagram with the last to see how White's position has regressed. A few moves ago he had plenty to attack along the d-file, and along the a2-g8 diagonal, but now what on Earth can he do with the g- and h-files? Indeed the one big threat in the position is Black's ...♕c5+.

22 ♕h5 hxg6
 23 ♕xh8+ ♔d7
 24 ♘xg6 ♕c5+
 25 ♔h1 ♔c7 (D)

Now that the black king is safe, the rest is easy. Black spends a bit

of time consolidating, then takes over the attack.



W

26 h3 ♘e3
 27 ♖e1 ♕xc2
 28 ♖g1 ♕e4
 29 ♕f6 b5
 30 ♕d6+ ♔b6
 31 ♕d8+ ♔a6
 32 ♕c7 ♗b7
 33 ♘e7 ♖h8
 34 ♔h2 ♕f4+
 35 ♔h1 ♕e4
 36 ♔h2 ♘g4+
 37 ♔h1 ♖xh3#

0-1

We have seen how a single anti-positional move can ruin even the most powerful of attacks. Our next and final example again shows how much can be missed in grandmaster chess, particularly when tournament pressure is running high. It was not just the *initiative* that swung back and forth in this game, it was also the *advantage*.

After an unimaginative piece of play by Black, White had excellent kingside attacking prospects in the early middlegame, but then missed a subtle manoeuvre. Then Black in turn, suddenly finding himself in possession of the attack, stopped off for an unnecessary pawn capture on the queenside, and handed the advantage back to White. This time White finally converted his edge.

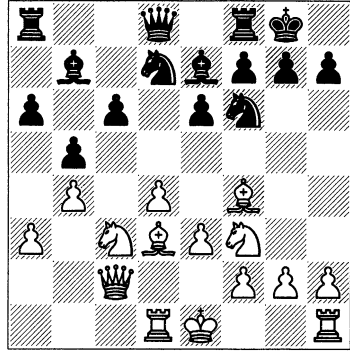
Psakhis – King
London, Lloyds Bank 1994
 Queen's Gambit Declined

- | | | |
|---|-----|------|
| 1 | d4 | ♘f6 |
| 2 | c4 | e6 |
| 3 | ♘f3 | d5 |
| 4 | ♘c3 | ♙e7 |
| 5 | ♙f4 | 0-0 |
| 6 | e3 | ♘bd7 |

Generally reckoned as slightly passive; 6...c5 is usually preferred.

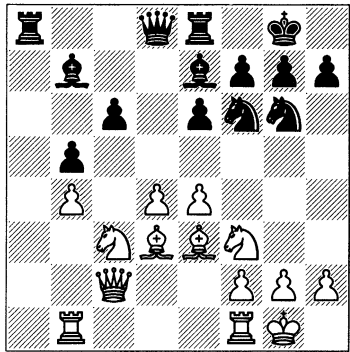
- | | | |
|----|----------|------|
| 7 | ♙c2 | c6 |
| 8 | ♙d1 | a6 |
| 9 | a3 | dxc4 |
| 10 | ♙xc4 | b5 |
| 11 | ♙d3 | ♙b7 |
| 12 | b4!? (D) | |

White wants to stop Black freeing himself with ...c5, and is prepared to allow some weakening of his queenside pawn structure to achieve this. The prevention of ...c5 gives White time to build up his pawn centre with e4, with a possible kingside attack in prospect.



B

- | | | |
|----|----------|------|
| 12 | ... | a5 |
| 13 | ♙b1 | ♙e8 |
| 14 | e4 | ♘f8 |
| 15 | 0-0 | ♘g6 |
| 16 | ♙e3 | axb4 |
| 17 | axb4 (D) | |



B

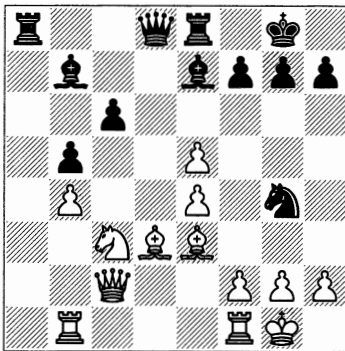
White has achieved his pawn centre, and if allowed will advance with e5, meeting ...♘d5 by ♘xd5. After this, any recapture will be in White's favour. Thus, ...cxd5 would leave the b-pawn weak, ♙xd5

would leave Black with problems on the c-file (after ♖e4), and ...exd5 would allow White the chance of a pawn roller on the kingside (f4, f5, etc.).

17 ... e5

Black therefore has to hurry the normal freeing move. Ideally he would have preferred it not to have involved even a temporary pawn sacrifice, but he cannot spend any more time in preparation. If instead 17...♘g4 then 18 e5! ♘xe3 19 fxe3 and it has become no easier for Black to free his position.

18 ♘xe5 ♘xe5
19 dxe5 ♘g4 (D)



W

20 e6?!

A desperado sacrifice. The e-pawn has to go, but in relinquishing the pawn, White makes sure that he damages Black's kingside. Even so, the simple 20 ♖f4 is better, with a slight advantage to White after, for example, 20...♖f8

21 ♖e2 ♘xe5 22 ♖e3 followed by a timely f4.

20 ... fxe6?

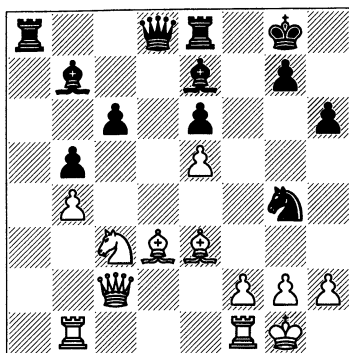
This plays into White's hands; Black's kingside becomes terribly weak. 20...♘xe3 was to be considered, as after 21 exf7+ ♖xf7 22 fxe3+ ♖f6! Black has good play for his pieces, and White's extra pawn, a doubled isolated pawn on an open file, does not count for much. White can however play with more subtlety: 21 fxe3! fxe6 22 e5 with positions similar to the game. 21...♖f6?? 22 e5! wins a piece for White.

How then is Black to improve? The important thing is to defend actively. Thus 20...♗d6! 21 exf7+ ♖xf7 when all Black's pieces are active, and he is already counterattacking with vigour. The paradox is that a black pawn on e6 actually gets in the way, reducing the scope of the king's rook and the queen in particular. To this may be added the fact that actually capturing the pawn costs a tempo which could better be employed for other purposes.

21 e5!

Now the attack is back with White, who has with one move opened an important diagonal (b1-h7) as well as an important transit square for his attacking forces (e4), while shutting off Black's knight retreat on f6.

21 ... chesstoh6(D)com



W

22 ♖f4?

This routine move promptly hands the attack over to Black; the bishop is exposed here, and Black can gain time by using it as a target.

White forgets one of the basic rules of attacking technique. *When attacking, you must identify the primary weakness of your opponent's position, and aim to find a plan which takes maximum advantage of this weakness.* Here the most serious weakness in Black's position is along the b1-h7 diagonal, a string of weak squares leading to the king. We can try for White such moves as 22 ♖h7+ or 22 ♖g6, but they do not lead White very far. *What White really needs is to get the queen in front of the bishop;* that way he has a potential mating attack.

Once this point has been recognised, the obscure sacrifice 22 ♖e2!! suddenly becomes the obvious move. White is playing the

'valve manoeuvre'; ♖e2 (opening the valve), ♖e4 or ♖g6 (the queen passes through) and ♖d3 (closing the valve). After that, ♖h7+ is a big threat. Another attacking plan for White is revealed after 22... ♗xe3 23 fxe3 ♖b6 (23... ♗f8 24 ♖g6) 24 ♗f3! when White can aim for ♗g3 and an attack on g7.

Black can of course take the pawn with 22... ♗xe5, but after 23 ♖e4 the black position wins no prizes for beauty. If 23... ♖c7 (stopping ♗xb5), White's most promising approach is 24 f4 ♗f7 25 ♖d3 c5 26 ♖h7+ ♗f8 27 f5 and White's attack breaks through, the crowd-pleaser being 27... e5 28 f6! ♖xf6 29 ♖xc5+ ♖e7 30 ♖h8#.

[*Note by John Nunn:* after 22 ♖e2 ♗xe5 23 ♖e4 ♖f6! 24 ♗xb5 (24 ♖xb5 ♗f7! costs White a piece because of the threats of 25... ♖xc3 and 25... ♗d6) 24... ♖e7 25 ♗c3 c5 Black is, if anything, slightly better.]

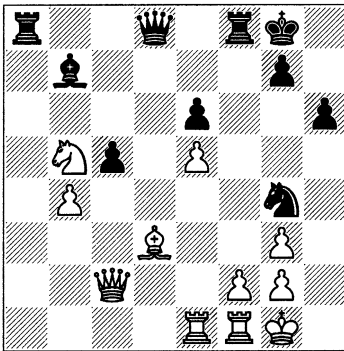
None of this is particularly deep tactically; it is *positional chess*, attacking technique. Here though it is technically quite difficult, as a strong grandmaster fails to find the most promising line. In a sharp position, imagination is a vital component of technique. Imagination is required to work out what the most dangerous plan is, and then to follow it through without being deterred by such pedestrian considerations as 'he is threatening my

e-pawn, so I must defend it'. The pawn sacrifice has always to be considered in such circumstances, and it is a matter of both positional and tactical judgement (here mainly positional) in deciding whether the pawn sacrifice is good or not.

- 22 ... ♖f8
 23 ♖g3 ♖h4!
 24 ♖be1 ♖xg3

Forcing White to accept the same undesirable kingside pawn structure that we saw earlier in Morozevich-Petursson.

- 25 hxg3 c5!
 26 ♘xb5 (D)



B

- 26 ... cxb4?

The game has turned round totally in the last few moves, and now Black has a standard attacking position. As soon as the black queen gets to h5, White is mated! I find it a mystery why Black did not play 26...♖g5 here; it is surely the technically correct move. Once

that Black has set in motion the big attack against the white king, there is no need to waste a move on the queenside merely to restore the material balance. *When checkmate is at stake, the flow of the attack is worth more than a stray pawn.*

After 26...♖g5, 27 f3 ♘e3 wins Black the exchange, while 27 ♖h7+ ♘h8 28 ♖g6 cxb4 is also favourable for Black, now that White has abandoned the queenside.

Black's position seems almost jinxed after 27 ♖e2, as all his most plausible attacking attempts get refuted in startling fashion. For example, 27...♘xf2? allows 28 ♖xf2 ♖e3 29 ♖xc5!, winning for White; the 'brilliancy' with 29...♖xf2 30 ♖xe3 ♖xg2+ 31 ♘f1 ♖f8+ fails after 32 ♖f4!. On the other knight sacrifice, 27...♘e3? 28 fxe3 ♖xe3+ 29 ♘h2 ♖f2, which appears to force a win, White has the astonishing resource 30 ♖d3!! when two pins suddenly become two discovered attacks, with an X-ray defence of g2 as well.

All very aesthetic and frustrating, but Black's position is totally acceptable, indeed better, after 27...cxb4. What is the difference between this and taking the pawn a move earlier? Essentially it is that Black has inserted an active attacking move, while White has had to play a passive defensive move, withdrawing one of his pieces from his own attack. As a consequence,

the initiative would lie with Black, not White.

27 ♖c4!

Already the difference is clear; Black has no time for 27...♞g5 because of 28 ♖xe6+.

27 ... ♞b6

The need to protect the e-pawn has taken the queen to the wrong side of the board, but 27...♖d5 allows 28 ♖xd5 exd5 29 ♞g6!.

28 ♖d6

And now White takes control of the centre.

28 ... ♖d5

29 ♖xd5 exd5

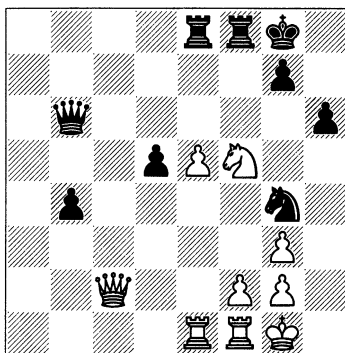
30 ♖f5!

Central control is a wonderful thing; if you have it, you can do such unlikely things as to transfer an apparently useless knight on b5 to an excellent attacking post on a square like f5. With threats like e6 and ♖e7+ it is clear that White is now the one attacking on the king-side.

30 ... ♞ae8 (D)

31 ♞d3!

The centre, always the centre! As well as the obvious threat to the d-pawn, this move reserves the option of ♖d4, for example 31...♞e6 32 ♖d4 gives White a clear advantage. There is also some tactical cut and thrust; after 31...♞xe5 32 ♞xe5 ♖xe5 33 ♞xd5+ ♖f7 34 ♖e7+, White wins material in the event of 34...♖h8 35 ♞f5. However, Black can improve with 34...♖h7!, and



W

while White is definitely better, he has no immediate clear win.

The attempt at a tactical refutation of 31...♞xe5 with 32 ♖e7+ does not quite succeed: 32...♞e7 33 ♞xe7 ♞xf2 34 ♞xd5+ ♖h7! 35 ♞e4+ ♞f5+! 36 ♖h1 ♖f2+ 37 ♞xf2 ♞xf2 38 ♞f7 (38 g4?! ♞f1+ 39 ♖h2 ♞f4+ leaves Black better) 38...♖g6 39 ♞xf5 ♞xf5 40 ♞xb4 with a draw.

[*Note by John Nunn:* I do not see how Black can be worse after the straightforward 31...♖h8; both f2 and e5 are vulnerable, and Black has an outside passed pawn.]

31 ... ♖xe5??

This is simply a blunder.

32 ♞xd5+

With a decisive gain of material. If now 32...♖f7 33 ♖e7+, White has ♞e6 in reserve.

32 ... ♞e6

33 ♞xe5 ♞xd5

34 ♞xd5 ♞b8

35 ♞b1 ♞b3

36 ♖d4 b2
37 ♜b5 1-0

The tournament situation was very tense at this stage (both players had 6/8) and this may help explain some of the mistakes, which at grandmaster level may very certainly be regarded as lapses in attacking technique. The criticism to

be made of both players' play is that they did not push their respective advantages hard enough when they had the chance. If this fault may be detected in the play of grandmasters, how much more frequent is it in the games of ordinary players?

If you have the attack, you must use it or lose it!

8 Quizzes

We finish this book with twenty positions taken from the Isle of Man tournaments of 1993 and 1994. Again the stress is on the sort of technique that wins ordinary games in ordinary tournaments; you are not being asked to find ultra-dazzling brilliancies. Instead, the idea is to give you, the reader, some sort of feel for how to convert an advantageous position into a win.

For each position, we give you three candidate moves, and we ask you to think about the position, and decide which move you would play. In many of the positions, there are candidate moves almost as good as the best move, but in others any straying from the correct path will suddenly give you a bad position. Maybe you will want to play a move that is not listed. Sometimes such a move will be better than some of the moves listed, but even so you are asked to choose solely from the moves listed. Maybe for example the correct idea is to play a rook to c1 rather than to push a kingside pawn. The exercise is more interesting if we give as alternatives ♖ac1, f5 or g5, rather than ♖ac1, ♗fc1 or f5.

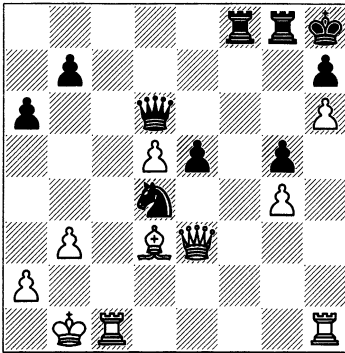
Marks are given out of ten. You can gain some idea of your level of

attacking technique by averaging your score over twenty exercises. I have not divided the ranking system into 'master', 'expert', etc.; rather, your final score is intended to approximate to your percentage score if you had these twenty positions against competent opponents roughly your own strength. Thus a score of 7/10 for a move means that you have missed a winning opportunity but still stand better, while 5/10 means that you have allowed it to slip to equality. 2/10 would mean that you have played something disastrous, and suddenly stand much worse. In a lot of these exercises you are bound to score at least 50% whatever you play. Remember, though, that this means half a point lost, not half a point gained.

Finally, if you should think that the author's own games are over-represented in this final section, there is a very good reason for this. I remember only too well the games in which I missed a win, or in which my opponents had me on the ropes but could not land the final blow; it is much more difficult to identify similar mistakes while whizzing through the scores of other players' games.

1

B.Lalić – Pein
Isle of Man 1994

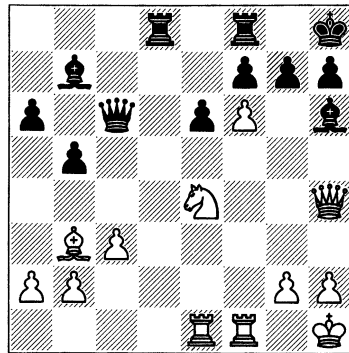


White to play:

- (a) 30 ♖e4
- (b) 30 ♜h5
- (c) 30 ♜hf1

3

Danielczyk – Lyons
Isle of Man 1994

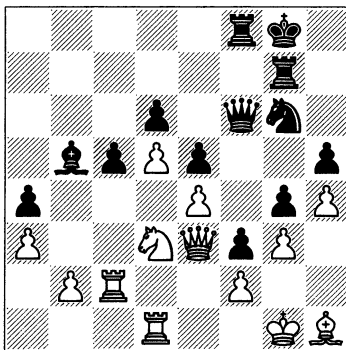


White to play:

- (a) 21 fxg7+
- (b) 21 ♙c2
- (c) 21 ♜f3

2

Maggs – Koshy
Isle of Man 1993

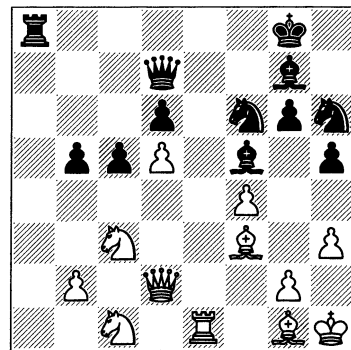


Black to play:

- (a) 31...♘f4
- (b) 31...♘xh4
- (c) 31...♙h7

4

Ballon – Howell
Isle of Man 1994

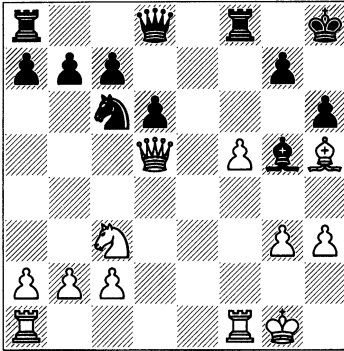


Black to play:

- (a) 24...♜e8
- (b) 24...♙xh3
- (c) 24...b4

5

G.Flear – Wolstencroft
Isle of Man 1994

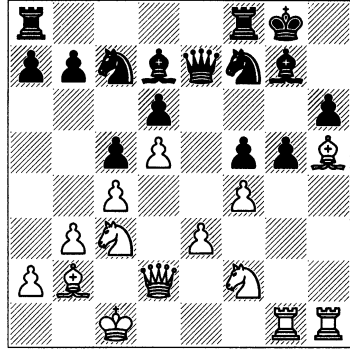


Black to play:

- (a) 16... ♖e3+
- (b) 16... ♘e5
- (c) 16... ♖f6

7

McNab – Welling
Isle of Man 1993

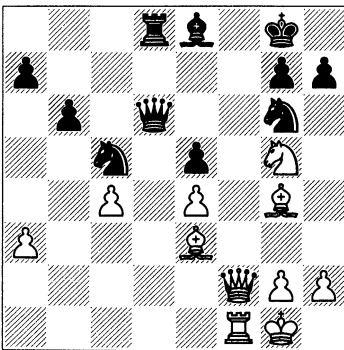


White to play:

- (a) 23 e4
- (b) 23 ♘cd1
- (c) 23 ♖xf7+

6

Crouch – S.Lalic
Isle of Man 1994

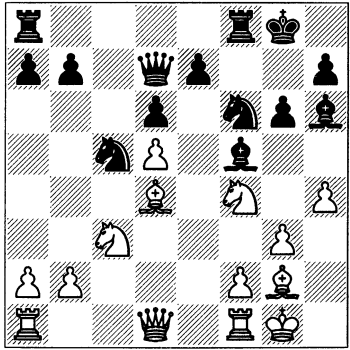


White to play:

- (a) 25 ♘f7
- (b) 25 ♖f5
- (c) 25 ♖xc5

8

Sher – Bech Hansen
Isle of Man 1994

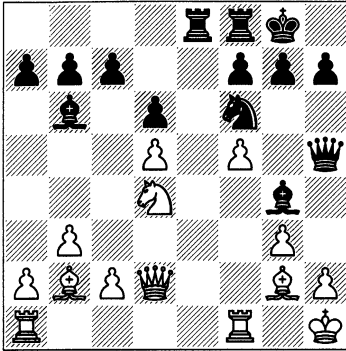


White to play:

- (a) 16 b4
- (b) 16 ♖f3
- (c) 17 ♖xc5 chesstouring.com

9

S.Lalić – B.Kristensen
Isle of Man 1994

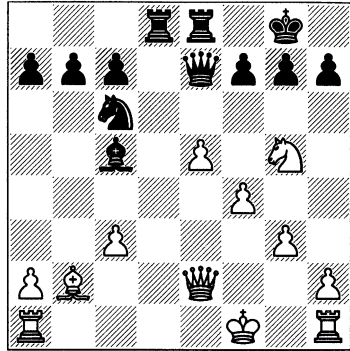


Black to play:

- (a) 20...♘e4
- (b) 20...♗e2
- (c) 20...♖e5

11

K.Arkeil – Kumaran
Isle of Man 1993

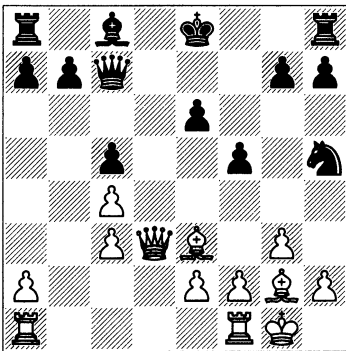


Black to play:

- (a) 19...♕d7
- (b) 19...♗b6
- (c) 19...♘xe5

10

Ward – Fenn
Isle of Man 1994

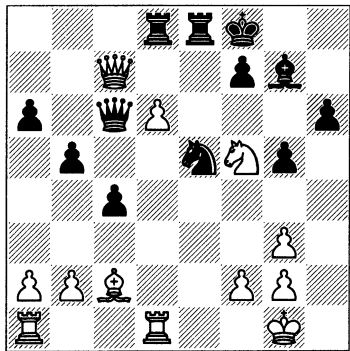


White to play:

- (a) 15 ♖ab1
- (b) 15 ♖fd1
- (c) 15 ♗f3

12

Rossiter – Crouch
Isle of Man 1993

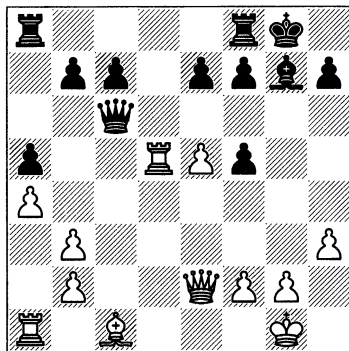


White to play:

- (a) 33 f4
- (b) 33 ♕e7+
- (c) 33 ♖e1

13

Nunn – Howell
Isle of Man 1994

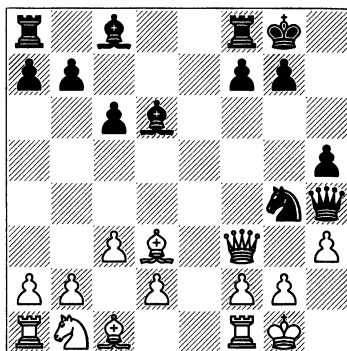


White to play:

- (a) 19 ♔d3
- (b) 19 ♖b5
- (c) 19 ♖d3

15

Nicholson – Mol
Isle of Man 1994

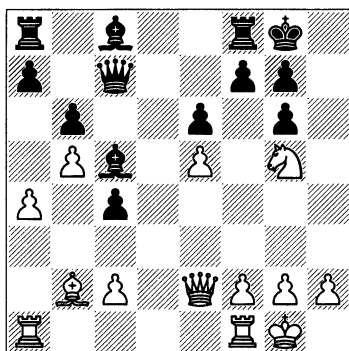


Black to play:

- (a) 15...bxc6
- (b) 15...♗e8
- (c) 15...♘h2

14

Crouch – Quillan
Isle of Man 1994

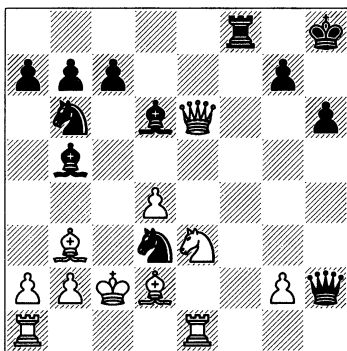


White to play:

- (a) 17 ♔e4
- (b) 17 ♔g4
- (c) 17 ♙a3

16

Howell – Crouch
Isle of Man 1993

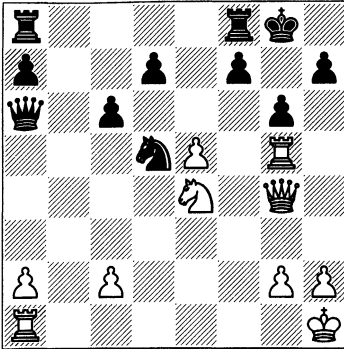


Black to play:

- (a) 25...♗xe1+
- (b) 25...♗f4
- (c) 25...♙d7 chesstouring.com

17

Emms – Gayson
Isle of Man 1994

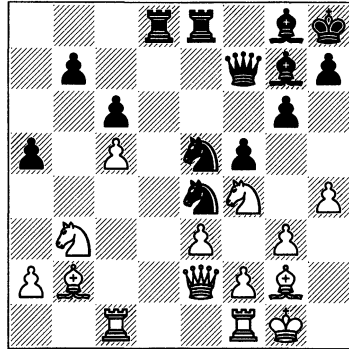


White to play:

- (a) 20 ♘f6+
- (b) 20 c4
- (c) 20 ♖h5

19

E.Sakhatova – Wolstencroft
Isle of Man 1994

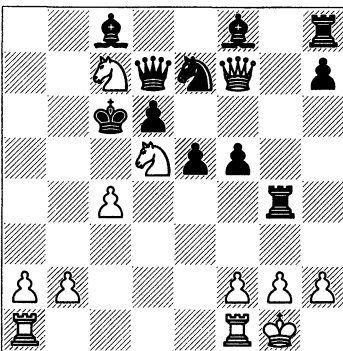


White to play:

- (a) 23 ♙xe5
- (b) 23 ♖c2
- (c) 23 ♘d4

18

Ellison – Koshy
Isle of Man 1993

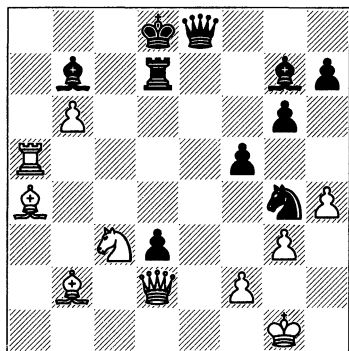


White to play:

- (a) 18 ♘b5
- (b) 18 ♘a8
- (c) 18 ♖fc1

20

Conquest – Crouch
Isle of Man 1994



White to play.

Something a little different. In a time scramble, the game went 28 ♖a7 ♙xc3 29 ♙xc3 ♖e4 30 ♖g5+

♙c8 31 ♘d7+ ♙xd7 32 ♖xb7+ ♗xb7 33 ♗d2 ♗xb6 34 ♗xd3+ ♗d6 35 ♗c4 ♗e6 36 ♗b5+ ♗c6 ½-½. Can White improve on this?

Solutions to Quizzes

1. B.Lalić-Pein

It is perhaps a little surprising that White has anything at all; it is amazing that Black lasted only two more moves! There is a tempting target on h7, but the immediate **30 ♗e4 ♗f7** 31 ♖hf1 ♗e7 leaves nothing clear. White cannot decisively strengthen his attack without allowing Black time for ...♗b5, for example 32 ♗f2 ♗b5 33 ♙a1 (33 ♖cf1?? ♗c3+) 33...♗b6.

30 ♖hf1!! cuts across this defensive plan; if, for example, 30...♗f4, then 31 ♖xf4 gxf4 32 ♗e4 ♗e7 33 d6 when Black is no longer able to cover both e5 and h7. 30...♗xh6 31 ♖h1 is also fruitless for Black, and 30...♖xf1 31 ♖xf1 leaves Black no defence in the long run, the most aesthetic variation being 31...♗e7 32 ♗f7 ♗xf7 33 ♗xe5+ ♗g7 34 ♗xd4. Black tried **30...b5**, perhaps fondly thinking he could weasel out by playing a later ...♗xd5 without allowing ♙c4, but after **31 ♗e4!** he was compelled to resign. A surprising paralysis.

30 ♖h5? is basically irrelevant; aggressive defence with 30...♗f4 leaves Black well placed.

Scores:

- (a) 30 ♗e4 – 5 points
- (b) 30 ♖h5 – 3 points
- (c) 30 ♖hf1 – 10 points

2. Maggs-Koshy

So many of the sacrifices that get played during the course of an attack are not 'brilliances', merely routine technique. And so it proves here. **31...♗xh4** 32 gxf4 ♗xh4 is nothing special in terms of imaginative genius, but is rather the natural continuation of the attack. All that Black has to make sure of is that White cannot escape with the extra piece before the black breakthrough is complete. It turns out that White, passive, has nothing against ...g3, e.g. 33 ♗e1 g3! 34 ♗xf3 gxf2#, or 33 ♖cd2 g3 34 ♗xf3 (34 gxf3 ♖xg3+ 35 ♗g2 f2+) 34...gxf2+ 35 ♙f1 ♖g1+ 36 ♙e2 ♖e1+ 37 ♖xe1 fxe1 ♗#. In the game, White declined the knight sacrifice with **32 ♙f1 ♗g6** **33 ♙e1 h4**, but Black had simply won a pawn and broken through on the kingside.

31...♗f4 is effective if White takes the knight, but if White moves his knight away, for example 32 ♗e1, then neither 32...♗e2+ nor 32...♗h3+ does anything to destroy the kingside. The proper target is h4.

Black can of course mess around with **31...♙h7**, or any other reasonable waiting move, but why bother?

Black ultimately has no better plan than to play ...♗xh4, and the proper amount of preparation is exactly that which allows the sacrifice to be most effective; no more, no less.

Scores:

- (a) 31...♗f4 – 7 points
- (b) 31...♗xh4 – 10 points
- (c) 31...♖h7 – 7 points

3. Danielczyk-Lyons

White has paralysed Black on the kingside, and can thus manoeuvre a bit before hitting with a final attack. There is therefore no hurry for 21 fxg7+ ♗xg7 22 ♖xf7; Black gains immediate counterplay with ...♗d2. 21 ♗c2? ♗d2 22 ♗b1 ♖xb2 is even worse; Black is prepared to hit back with ...♖xb1.

The correct plan is to block the long diagonal with 21 ♖f3!, thereby unpinning the knight and threatening 22 fxg7+ ♗xg7 23 ♗g5. After that, Black could not hold back White's attack: 21...♖c7 22 ♗c3 ♖e5 23 fxg7+ ♖xg7 (23...♗xg7 24 ♗g5) 24 ♖g3 ♖e5 25 ♖xh6 ♗xe4 26 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 (one last try: 27 ♗xe4?? walks into 27...♗d1#) 27 ♖f6+ 1-0.

Scores:

- (a) 21 fxg7+ – 6 points
- (b) 21 ♗c2 – 4 points
- (c) 21 ♖f3 – 10 points

4. Ballon-Howell

A thematic Benoni-type position in which Black has succeeded

in breaking White's centre with a timely ...f5. White is slightly better in the centre, but Black is attacking hard on both flanks.

The pawn on h3 screams out to be taken; 24...♗xh3! and if 25 gxh3? Black wins two vital pawns with 25...♖xh3+. White had prepared instead 25 ♗xb5, which maintains material equality. Even so, the absence of the h-pawn is severely felt by White, who has lost his grip on the g4-square, and finds himself exposed on the h-file as well. Black promptly took advantage of these two weaknesses with 25...♗g4 26 ♗xg4 hxg4! 27 ♖d3 ♗f5 28 ♗e2 g3 29 ♗bc3 ♗h8 30 ♗xg3 ♖h7+ 31 ♗h2 ♗g4 0-1. Very thematic.

Can Black try the refinement of playing 24...b4!?, avoiding even White's ♗xb5 idea? There is apparently a nasty tactical trap that White can set, namely 25 ♗e4 ♗xh3 26 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 27 f5!?, but Black has the counter-resource 27...♖xf5! 28 ♖xh6 ♗g5, winning the queen (29 ♗e4 ♗g2+). White could try instead 26 ♗xd6, but Black is much better after 26...♗g4, for example 27 ♗xg4 hxg4 28 ♖e6 ♖a6. The win would, however, be much more long-winded than in the game, and this in practical terms means more chances for Black to go wrong.

24...♖e8 is steady and sound, challenging White's pawn centre

and aiming for an endgame advantage. Unlike the capture on h3 it does no real damage to White's position.

Scores:

- (a) 24...♖e8 – 6 points
- (b) 24...♙xh3 – 10 points
- (c) 24...b4 – 8 points

5. G.Flear-Wolstencroft

White's kingside pawn structure is loose, but if he could get his bishop back to g2 his position would be defensible. Black can forestall this plan with either 16...♗e5 or 16...♞f6, but White then has the alternative of developing and centralising with 17 ♖ae1, when the white pieces are active enough to prevent Black from developing too formidable an attack.

Given this context, 16...♙e3+! is no random check. After 17 ♖h2 ♞g5! the bishop cannot retreat to f3 because the f-pawn falls. 18 ♙e2 ♖ae8 allows Black full control of the e-file, which leaves only 18 ♙f7, a precarious square. Black was able to gain time to set up a decisive attack by hitting the queen that protects the bishop. The game finished 18...♗b4 19 ♞xb7 ♗xc2 20 ♖ab1 ♙d4 21 ♗e4 ♞e3 22 ♙d5 ♞e2+ 23 ♖h1 ♖ab8 24 ♞c6 ♖b6 25 ♞a4 ♗e3 26 ♖g1 ♞f3+ 27 ♖h2 c5 28 ♙c6 ♖c8 29 ♙d7 ♞cb8 0-1.

It is tough defending a kingside position when you are weak on both light squares and dark squares.

Scores:

- (a) 16...♙e3+ – 10 points
- (b) 16...♗e5 – 6 points
- (c) 16...♞f6 – 5 points

6. Crouch-S.Lalić

One should play the attack in an unprejudiced fashion. Even if you have a kingside attack, it is not always necessary to play for mate. Here White, seeing nothing clear in any direct attack against the king, prefers to cash in his substantial positional advantage in an endgame. Thus, 25 ♙xc5! ♞xc5 26 ♙e6+ ♖h8 27 ♞xc5 bxc5 28 ♙d5. Now it is clear that Black's problem is not the weakness of her king, but rather her weaknesses on the f-file and the light squares. The game finished 28...♖b8 29 ♗e6 ♖b2 30 ♗xc5 ♗f4 31 ♗d3 ♖xg2+ 32 ♖h1 ♖c2 33 ♗xf4 exf4 34 ♖xf4 ♖c1+ 35 ♖g2 ♖c2+ 36 ♖g1 1-0.

25 ♙f5 keeps some pressure, but can hardly be regarded as convincing. 25 ♗f7 ♙xf7 26 ♞xf7+ ♖h8 reduces the pressure.

Scores:

- (a) 25 ♗f7 – 5 points
- (b) 25 ♙f5 – 7 points
- (c) 25 ♙xc5 – 10 points

7. McNab-Welling

At the moment White's position has obvious potential, but he is attacking on a very narrow front, and there is nothing special to be gained by 23 ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 24 fxg5 hxg5

25 ♖h5 g4, while 23 ♖cd1 ♗e8!, with the idea of ...♗f6 or ...♗g7, successfully shores up Black's defences.

The proper way is to widen the attacking front with 23 e4!. White now has extra pressure on f5 and g5. The main threat is 24 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 25 fxg5 which now, unlike on the previous move, regains the pawn and opens the g-file. Probably Black should play 23...♗e8 and hope to cling on when White opens the g-file. Instead, Black's position collapsed after 23...gxf4?! 24 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 25 ♖b5+ ♗h7 26 ♖xc7 ♖ac8 27 ♗e6 ♗xe6 28 dxe6 ♗xe6 29 exf5 1-0 (29...♗xf5 30 ♗g4).

Bring pawns into contact is one of the most basic techniques of bringing the attack to the boil.

Scores:

- (a) 23 e4 – 10 points
- (b) 23 ♖cd1 – 4 points
- (c) 23 ♗xf7+ – 5 points

8. Sher-Bech Hansen

A Dutch Defence that has not gone well for Black, who is left with severe weaknesses on the e-file and along the dark-squared long diagonal. White could achieve a slight but steady positional advantage with 16 ♗xc5 ♗xf4 (or 16...dxc5 17 ♗e6) 17 ♗d4, but sees that with more active play he can drive Black's pieces into a terrible tangle.

Play continued 16 b4! ♗ce4 17 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 (17...♗e4 18 ♗e6) 18 ♗e6! ♖fc8 and now White spiked another minor piece with 19 g4! ♗xe6 20 dxe6 ♗xe6 21 g5 ♗f8 22 ♖e1 d5 23 f3 1-0. Black could have tried 16...♗xf4, but after 17 bxc5 ♗h6 18 c6 he is in big trouble on the queenside.

16 ♗f3 is playable and tense, but does nothing to generate an attack, and nothing to fix any permanent weaknesses in the black position. 16...♗ce4 keeps the balance.

Scores:

- (a) 16 b4 – 10 points
- (b) 16 ♗f3 – 5 points
- (c) 16 ♗xc5 – 6 points

9. S.Lalić-B.Kristensen

Black definitely has attacking chances as White's overextended pawns have left her with various weaknesses, particularly d5, e4, f5 and g4. White, however, is quite well developed, and has pieces that are active enough to meet any immediate attacking attempt. Therefore 20...♗e4?! is crude, and White should have no problems after 21 ♗f4, and if 21...g5, then 22 ♗e3. 20...♗e2?!, vacating g4 for the knight is more subtle, but White's king dance is subtler still after 21 ♖fe1 ♗g4 22 h3 ♗f2+ 23 ♗h2 ♗g4+ 24 ♗g1!. Black's attack again fails to make contact after 22...♗a6 23 c4.

Black preferred instead to finish his development with 20...♖e5, with the plan of doubling rooks on the e-file, which would put White under severe pressure. To avoid this problem, White tried 21 ♖ae1 ♖fe8 22 ♖xe5, but after 22...dxe5 Black had a monster passed pawn which was able to expand into the vacuum created by White's earlier advances. Black won after 23 ♣f3 e4 24 ♣e5 e3 25 ♖c3 e2 26 ♖e1 ♠f2 27 ♣d7 (a nice try, but Black is in control of the tactics) 27...♗xe1 28 ♣xf6+ gxf6 29 ♖xe1 (29 ♖xf6 ♠c3!) 29...♖xf5 30 h4 ♠f3 31 ♣h2 ♠xg2 32 ♣xg2 ♖e3 33 ♠c1 ♖f3+ 0-1.

White's main weakness was in the centre, not on the kingside. Black won by a central attack, not a kingside attack.

Scores:

- (a) 20...♣e4 – 3 points
- (b) 20...♠e2 – 3 points
- (c) 20...♖e5 – 10 points

10. Ward-Fenn

White, having recovered from a poor opening, now has an advantage in mobility, and must try to make it tell. 15 ♠f3?! ♣f6 16 ♠f4 e5 17 ♖e3 ♣d7 is a false trail, so White must first complete his development, preferably in such a way as to prevent Black doing the same.

White wants to get his rooks into play, and b1 and d1 are the obvious

squares. The point about 15 ♠f3! is that it prevents Black castling, as after 15...0-0 16 ♖d6 White wins the c-pawn while maintaining his other positional advantages. 15 ♠ab1?! 0-0 16 ♠fd1 ♖b8! provides Black with an important breathing space, because 17 ♖d6 ♖xd6 18 ♠xd6 b6 holds the queenside together, since 19 ♠xc5 is answered by 19...♠a6.

The game went 15 ♠f3! ♣e7 (15...♖b8 16 ♠xc5) 16 ♠ab1 (better timing!) 16...♖b8 17 ♠f3 ♣f6 18 ♠f4 e5 19 ♖e3 ♣d7 20 ♠xd7+ ♠xd7 21 ♠xe5 ♖c8 22 ♠xb8+ 1-0.

Scores:

- (a) 15 ♠ab1 – 6 points
- (b) 15 ♠fd1 – 10 points
- (c) 15 ♠f3 – 5 points

11. K.Arkeel-Kumaran

Black has successfully lured forward White's kingside pawns, and must now look for ways of getting behind the pawns before White can consolidate with ♣f3, ♠g2, etc. Naturally Black must avoid the impatient 19...f6?? 20 ♖c4+, but quiet play with 19...♠b6 allows White to get on with his defensive plan. There is no guarantee that White would have wanted to gain a tempo on the bishop anyway, and ...♖c5 is no threat.

19...♖d7 is natural and strong, but White can perhaps string a defence together with 20 ♖e1. Instead,

Kumaran found a more brutal way with **19...♗xe5!**. This had to be calculated accurately, but transforms the position into a clear win. There followed **20 ♖xe5 ♗d2! 21 ♖xe7** (21 ♗e4 ♖d7! 22 ♖xc5 ♖d3+ 23 ♗g1 ♖xe4) **21...♗xe7** and White had nothing better than to return the extra piece with **22 ♖a3**. Black had no trouble winning after **22...♖xa3 23 ♗f3 ♗b2 24 ♗d1 ♗ee2 25 ♗d8+ ♖f8 26 ♗e1 ♗xa2 27 ♗d3 g6 28 ♗c1 ♖f2+ 29 ♗e1 ♗ac2 30 ♗d3 ♖fe2+ 31 ♗d1 ♗ed2+ 32 ♗e1 ♗g7 33 ♗d7 ♖d6 0-1**.

Scores:

- (a) 19...♖d7 – 8 points
- (b) 19...♖b6 – 5 points
- (c) 19...♗xe5 – 10 points

12. Rossiter-Crouch

An object lesson to show that unnecessary combinations should not be made. My opponent, who was in time-trouble, chose **33 ♖e7+?! ♗g8 34 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 35 ♗e7+ ♗f8 36 ♗xc6 ♗xc6**. White has won the exchange certainly, but Black has active minor pieces and an imposing queenside pawn majority, while White's b- and d-pawns are both weak. Despite White's material advantage, Black had the better of the draw after **37 ♗ab1 ♗d4 38 ♖e4 ♗xd6 39 g4 ♗e6 40 ♗e1 a5 41 a4 b4 42 ♖d5 ♗xe1+ 43 ♗xe1 c3 44 bxc3 bxc3 45 ♗f1 ♗c2 46 ♗e4 ♗a3 47 ♖c6**

f5 48 ♗e8+ ♗f7 49 ♗c8 c2 50 ♖d5+ ♗e7 51 ♗e1 ♗d7 52 ♗c6 fxf4 53 ♗d2 ♖b2 54 ♗xc2 ♗xc2 55 ♗xc2 ♖d4 56 f3 ♗d6 57 ♖f7 gxf3 58 gxf3 ♗e5 59 ♗d3 ♖b6 60 ♗e2 ♗f4 61 ♖h5 ♗g3 62 ♗f1 ♗h4 63 ♖f7 h5 1/2-1/2.

The black position is difficult enough after **33 f4**, but maybe there are chances to hold after **33...♗d7 34 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 35 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 36 ♖f5 ♗dd8**.

The real crusher is the quiet little **33 ♗e1!**, with the extra pressure on the e-file making the passed pawn a winner. ♗xe5 is threatened, while **33...♖xc7 34 dxc7** is a win for White, for example **34...♗c8 35 ♗d6 ♗xc7 36 ♗xe8 ♗xe8 37 f4**, or **34...♗d2 35 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 36 ♗xe5**.

If your opponent's position is about to crack, don't simplify; just keep going with the hammer and chisel!

Scores:

- (a) 33 f4 – 8 points
- (b) 33 ♖e7+ – 4 points
- (c) 33 ♗e1 – 10 points

13. Nunn-Howell

19 ♗b5 is solid without being particularly enterprising. At least the e-pawn remains covered. **19 ♗d3** is on the slow side, and also lets slip White's not too firm grip on e5.

19 ♖d3! is a much more robust move. To avoid remaining a passive victim, Black had to play

19...e6 20 ♖d7 ♗xe5, but now White was able to switch to a direct kingside attack by 21 ♗h6!. Black immediately went wrong with the greedy 21...♗xb2?, when White's attack broke through: 22 ♖b1 ♗g7 23 ♖g3 ♖c3 24 ♖xc3 ♗xc3 25 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 26 ♖xc7 ♗b4 27 ♖xb7 ♖d8 28 g3 ♗g7 29 ♖c1 1-0.

Black would have had no greater success trying to preserve the exchange; after 21...♖fe8 22 ♖d2 (better than 22 ♖c1 ♖e4 23 ♖d1, when 23...♖h4! displaces the annoying bishop) 22...f4 23 ♖d1 ♗d6 24 ♖e2 f3 25 ♖e3 f6 26 ♖g7+ ♗h8 27 ♖d7 White has a decisive attack.

However, the correct defence was the surprising 21...♗d6!. It looks suicidal to move the bishop off the long diagonal, but the threat to the d7 rook forces White to act at once, and it turns out that without the a1 rook he can give perpetual check, but no more. According to analysis by John Nunn, White may try:

1) 22 ♖d4 f6 23 ♖g7+ ♗h8 24 ♖h4 (24 ♖e1 ♖e8 followed by ...♖f7 defends) 24...♖e4 25 ♖h5 (25 f4 ♗xf4) 25...f4! 26 ♖g4 ♖g8 27 ♖f7 ♖xg4 28 ♖xf6+ ♗g8 29 hxg4 ♖g6 and by returning the material Black has fended off the attack. White is now slightly worse.

2) 22 ♖d2 f4 (22...♗h8? 23 ♖g5 ♗e5 24 ♖ad1 ♖fe8 25 ♖d8 ♖c2 26 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 27 ♖d8! ♖c6 28 ♖d7 and wins) 23 ♖e2 ♗h8 and there is no continuation of the attack.

3) 22 ♖e3 f4 23 ♗xf4 ♖xd7 24 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 25 ♖g5+ ♗h8 26 ♖f6+ ♗g8 27 ♖g5+ is perpetual check.

4) 22 f4! (White's best chance) 22...♗h8 23 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 (after 23...♖xd7 24 ♖d4+ f6 25 ♖xf6+ ♗g8 26 ♗xd6 cxd6 27 ♖e1 ♖e8 28 ♖e3 White has a large advantage) 24 ♖c3+ ♖xc3 25 bxc3 ♗xf4 gives White an edge thanks to his active rook on d7.

Thus, even with best defence, 19 ♖d3 retains an edge, and Black has to play accurately to achieve this much.

Scores:

- (a) 19 ♖d3 – 10 points
- (b) 19 ♖b5 – 6 points
- (c) 19 ♖d3 – 5 points

14. Crouch-Quillan

Authorial fallibility should be admitted! Here I grossly overestimated the gains I would make after 17 ♖g4 ♗e7 18 ♗a3 ♗xg5! 19 ♗xf8? (19 ♖xg5 still gives attacking chances) 19...♖xe5! 20 ♖fe1 ♖f5 21 ♖xf5 gxf5 22 ♗b4 ♗b7. Black now had adequate compensation for the exchange, with a pawn, a solid position and active pieces. Although White won after complicated endgame play (23 a5 ♗f6 24 c3 ♖b8 25 axb6 axb6 26 ♗d6 ♖d8 27 ♗e5 ♗xe5 28 ♖xe5 ♖d2 29 h4 ♖c2 30 ♖ee1 ♖xc3 31 ♖ec1 ♖xc1+ 32 ♖xc1 ♗d5 33 ♗f1 ♗f8 34 f3 ♗e7 35 ♗e2 ♗d6 36 g4!

♙c5 37 h5 fxg4 38 fxg4 f6 39 g5!
fxg5 40 ♖g1 ♙xb5 41 ♖xg5 ♙b4
42 ♖xg7 ♙e4 43 h6 b5 44 ♙d2
♙b3 45 h7 ♙xh7 46 ♖xh7 b4 47
♖h4 c3+ 48 ♙c1 ♙a3 49 ♙c2 1-0),
he was not in control at all stages.

White's knight on g5 is the pride and joy of his position, and should not be exchanged so readily. **17 ♙a3!** secures the position of the horse by forcing the exchange of dark-squared bishops. The only way that the knight could then be dislodged is by ...f6, but then the exchange of pawns on f6 gives White a major positional advantage, e.g. 17...♙xa3 18 ♖xa3 ♖e7 19 ♖g3 f6 20 exf6 and if 20...gxf6 21 ♖e4.

17 ♖e4 is again answered by 17...♙e7, and after 18 ♖xa8 ♙b7 19 ♖xa7 ♖a8 20 ♖xa8+ ♙xa8 the white rooks are inferior to the black queen, which is backed up by the more active minor pieces.

The two white pieces which are working best together are the queen and the knight, and this co-operation should not be frittered away too lightly.

15. Nicholson-Mol

Black has gambited, and has obvious attacking chances. His immediate decision is whether to recapture the pawn on c6, or whether to try to speed things up with an attacking move. Ideally Black would want to avoid holding things up for the sake of a queenside pawn, but

cxb7 is potentially dangerous. If for example **15...♗h2**, then 16 ♖e4 ♖xe4 17 ♙xe4 ♗xf1 18 cxb7 ♙xb7 19 ♙xb7 ♖ab8 20 ♙d5 ♗h2 21 g3 with advantage to White. A more sophisticated version of the theme is **15...♖e8** (aiming to prevent ♖e1) 16 ♙c4 ♗e5 17 ♙xf7+! ♗xf7 (or 17...♙f8 18 ♖xh5) 18 cxb7 ♖xb7 19 ♖xb7 and White has broken the main force of the attack.

It seems therefore that Black was sensible in preferring the quiet move **15...bxc6**. If now 16 ♖e1, then 16...♙h2+ 17 ♙f1 (17 ♙h1 ♗xf2+ 18 ♙xh2 ♗g4+) 17...♗xf2! 18 ♖xf2 ♙g3 with a winning attack, for example 19 ♖e2 ♙xh3 20 ♖e4 (20 gxh3 ♖ae8! 21 ♙e4 f5 22 ♖c4+ ♙h8 leaves White helpless, despite his massive material advantage) 20...♖f6+ 21 ♙g1 ♖f2+ 22 ♙h1 ♙f5! 23 ♖xf5 ♖xe1+ 24 ♖f1 (if 24 ♙f1, simply 24...♖xc1) 24...♖ae8 25 ♗a3 ♖e7! 26 ♖f5 ♖h4+ 27 ♖h3 ♖e1+. These variations are worth close examination. Of course it would be asking too much to expect Black to see all this in advance, but the player with the good feel for the attack ought to be able to find his or her way through all this over the board.

In the game White folded with much less resistance after **16 ♖e4?! g6! 17 ♖xc6** (White has no decent alternatives) **17...♙h2+ 18 ♙h1 ♖b8 19 ♖f3 ♙b7 20 ♙e4 ♙xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♗xf2+ 0-1**

Scores:

(a) 15...bxc6 – 10 points

(b) 15...♞e8 – 4 points

(c) 15...♘h2 – 4 points

16. Howell-Crouch

Black has sacrificed the exchange for a pawn to drive the white king into the open. He now faces a critical choice: to regain his material, or to play on for an attack.

25...♘xe1+ 26 ♞xe1 regains the exchange and indeed leaves Black a pawn up, but White's king is safe and his pieces could become dangerously active. It is easy to envisage a situation in which White plays his king to b1 and then takes control of the b1-h7 diagonal, with problems for Black, who would rather have this diagonal for himself.

Black's sacrifice in material is relatively small, and it is too early for him to be panicked into regaining the material; it is after all easier to play a position the exchange down with active pieces than a position a pawn up with indifferent piece co-ordination. If the material sacrifice is small, it is usually better to think about keeping the flow of the attack, rather than about restoring the material balance. Black's priority should be to attack the king along the b1-h7 diagonal. Play continued 25...♙d7! 26 ♖e4 (26 ♖g6 might be more accurate, but 26...♘xe1+ 27 ♞xe1 ♖g3 would

be a better-timed simplification) 26...♘f2! 27 ♖xb7 ♖h5! and with his queen out of play, White was unable to withstand the black assault. 28...♖g6+ is threatened, so White tried 28 ♙b1 ♖b5 29 ♙c2 ♘d3 30 ♘d1, allowing the queen offer 30...♘c4! 31 ♖xb5 ♘xd2#.

25...♘f4 26 ♖g4 does not have the same sting; the black queen is out of the attack.

Scores:

(a) 25...♘xe1+ – 5 points

(b) 25...♘f4 – 4 points

(c) 25...♙d7 – 10 points

17. Emms-Gayson

This is a position with several tempting attacking possibilities. Indeed White, a pawn down, is obliged to press for a kingside attack, because he will be worse if he simply tries to restore material parity with 20 ♖xd7? (20...♞ad8!?!; 20...♖e2!?!).

Black's main weaknesses are on the dark squares around his king, and White found an attractive combination involving a queen sacrifice. He played the surprising 20 c4! f5 (the only move; 20...♘e3? 21 ♘f6+; 20...♖xc4?? 21 ♘f6+) 21 exf6 (21 ♞xg6+? ♙h8!) 21...♖xc4 22 ♞xg6+ ♙h8 23 ♞g7!. Now White threatens ♞xh7+ followed by ♖g7#, and if 23...♞g8 then 24 ♞xh7+ ♙xh7 25 ♖h5#, while if 23...♘xf6 there follows 24 ♘xf6! ♖xg4 25 ♞xh7#. Therefore Black

sacrificed his own queen instead, but did not have enough material compensation to enable him to save the endgame. White wrapped up with **23... ♖xe4 24 ♗xe4 ♜xf6 25 ♜xh7+ ♜xh7 26 ♖d4+ ♜f6 27 ♜f1 ♔g7 28 g4** (a luxury! This not only pushes a passed pawn, but also aids White's kingside attack) **28... ♔g6 29 ♖d3+ ♔g7 30 ♖f5 ♜d5 31 ♖xd7+ ♔h8 32 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 33 ♖xc6 ♜f4 34 h4 ♔g7 35 ♔h2 ♜g6 36 ♔g3 ♜e5 37 ♖c7+ ♜f7 38 ♖xa7 ♔g6 39 ♖b6+ ♔h7 40 g5 ♔g7 41 h5 ♜d8 42 ♖f6+ ♔h8 43 h6 1-0.**

Other moves allow Black a good defence. **20 ♜f6+** is logical and direct, but after **20... ♜xf6 21 exf6 c5** White will not find it easy to set up his mating net, for instance **22 ♖f4 ♜ab8 23 ♜f5 ♔h8**, with unclear play. **20 ♖h5 ♔h8** is a dead end; if **21 ♖h6** then **21... ♖e2**.

Scores:

- (a) **20 ♜f6+** – 5 points
- (b) **20 c4** – 10 points
- (c) **20 ♖h5** – 3 points

18. Ellison-Koshy

It is always an impressive achievement for a county player to beat an IM in twenty moves, and it gives great encouragement to the ordinary player – even though such a prospect scares the living daylight out of the average IM! Play continued **18 ♜f1 ♜g6** (18... ♜xd5 19 cxd5+ keeps White in control,

showing the positional point of the rook move) **19 ♜e6! ♜h4? 20 ♖f6 ♜hg8** (20... ♖xe6 21 ♖d8! finishes nicely; 22 ♖c7# is threatened, and if 21... ♖d7 22 ♖b6# or 21... ♖f7 22 ♖xc8+) **21 ♜d8+ 1-0** (21... ♔c5 22 b4+ ♔d4 23 ♜b6+). Even so, this attractive finish is not wholly convincing in that Black can escape into an unclear endgame with **19... ♖xf7! 20 ♜d8+ ♔d7 21 ♜xf7 ♜d4 22 ♜xh8 ♜xh8 23 ♜b6+** (it is advisable to remove the bishop pair) **23... ♔d8 24 ♜xc8 ♔xc8**. Summing up the position that has been reached, White is nominally ahead in material (♜+♔+♔ v ♜+♜) and has a big queenside pawn majority, but Black's minor pieces are well placed either to blockade or to counter-attack. There is no reason to believe that White is better.

The problem White faces is that having sacrificed a piece for two pawns to expose Black's king, he must now find a way to disentangle his knights to give him time to regroup his pieces and prepare perhaps to push his pawns into the attack. The move I liked at first was **18 ♜a8!?**, when **18... ♜xd5??** allows **19 ♖xd5#**. Even here **18... ♔b7 19 ♜ab6 ♖d8 20 ♜xc8 ♜g7!** is less than totally clear, though White can still probably claim some sort of edge after the continuation **21 ♖f6 ♔xc8** (21... ♖xc8? 22 ♜xe7 leaves no safe recapture) **22 ♜xe7+ ♖xe7 23 ♖xf5+ ♖d7 24 ♖d3**.

18 ♖b5 is another attempt, on which Black is in great danger if he tries 18...♞xc4 19 ♞ac1 ♜xb5 20 ♞xc4. Black's pieces are actively placed for defence however after 18...♗xd5 19 ♞xd5+ ♜b6 and if 20 a4? then Black replies 20...♗b7 21 a5+ ♜a6.

It seems therefore that the position is quite simply unclear, with both 18 ♞fc1!? and 18 ♗a8!? maintaining some sort of attacking momentum without being objectively advantageous. Black must defend alertly in either case.

Scores:

- (a) 18 ♖b5 – 3 points
- (b) 18 ♗a8 – 10 points
- (c) 18 ♞fc1 – 10 points

19. E.Sakhatova-Wolstencroft

There is nothing particularly clear in the cautious 23 ♞c2 or in 23 ♗d4 ♞xa2 24 ♞a1 ♞c4. And of course White must avoid the blunder 23 ♗xa5?? ♞d2.

To win games, you have to take advantage of the defects in your opponent's position, even if it means creating lesser defects in your own position. Black's a-pawn should not be allowed to survive, and Sakhatova played a surprising double sacrifice of the 'minor exchange' (bishop for knight) in order to remove the pawn safely. Play continued 23 ♗xe5! ♞xe5 (to keep an eye on c5; taking with the bishop does not help, because the

potential weakness on the a1-h8 diagonal will discourage any exchange on f4) 24 ♗xe4! fxe4 25 ♗xa5 ♞e7?! (25...♞xa2!? is clearly favourable for White) 26 ♗b3 ♞a8 (not 26...♗xb3 27 axb3 ♞xc5?? 28 ♞xc5 ♞xc5 29 ♗e6) 27 ♞fd1 ♗xb3 28 axb3 ♞xc5 29 ♞xc5 ♞xc5 and now, while Black has regained his pawn, White has activated her pieces and is well placed to attack Black's weakened kingside. Note how White's beautifully placed knight on f4 has been more effective than either black bishop; the knight will play a noble role in the final onslaught. White created a light-squared bind and won after 30 h5 g5 31 ♗e6 ♞e7 32 ♞g4 ♗f6 33 ♞f5 b6 34 h6 ♜h8 35 ♞xe4! ♞e8 36 ♞xc6 ♞xe6 37 ♞d6 ♞e5 38 ♞xf6 ♞a1+ 39 ♜g2 ♞d8 40 ♞e6+ ♜h8 41 ♞e7 1-0.

An exercise which tests not so much your ability to force an attack through, but rather your ability to seize the opportunity to set up an attack in the first place. What we have seen is quite a typical sequence. One player sees a chance to snatch a pawn, but at the cost of some piece mobility; the opponent is obliged to try to regain the pawn, but at the cost of an even greater sacrifice in piece mobility, and the creation of a complex of weak squares. This tilt in the balance of power allows the player with the initiative to start a direct attack

Scores:

(a) 23 ♠xe5 – 10 points

(b) 23 ♜c2 – 5 points

(c) 23 ♘d4 – 6 points

20. Conquest-Crouch

After the game, Stuart Conquest noted the amazing possibility **28 ♜a7 ♠xc3 29 ♜xb7!! ♠xd2 30 ♜b8+ ♘e7 31 ♜xe8+ ♘xe8 32 b7!** queening a pawn. I suspect that he had half-seen this during the time scramble, but opted for something safer. The combination is so startling that I could not resist bending the format of the quiz to include it. Black could also try in this line 29...♜xb7 30 ♜xd3+ ♜d7, but 31

♜xc3 should be enough to win for White.

Scores:

You are happy with the game continuation: 5 points

29 ♜xb7!! – 10 points. Full credit for tactical awareness.

28 ♠xd7 – 4 points. Black is happy enough to sacrifice the exchange, given the power of his bishop pair.

29 ♜xc3?? – 1 point. 29...d2 wins.

Others: I can't include every legal move! Take 5 points for any attempt to grind out a technical endgame, and 3 points for any tactical attempt not already listed.

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