

GM Miloje Ratković - IM Milovan Ratković

DRILL YOUR CHESS STRATEGY!

**500 hand-picked training exercises
with detailed solutions**



INFORMANT
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CLASSIFICATION

★ - Easy

○ White to move

★★ - Medium

● Black to move

★★★ - Hard

★★★★ - Very hard

SIGNS

± white stands slightly better

⇔ with counter-play

∓ black stands slightly better

⊙ zugzwang

± white has the upper hand

mate

∓ black has the upper hand

! a very good move

+− white has a decisive advantage

!! an excellent move

−+ black has a decisive advantage

? bad move

= equality

?? a blunder

∞ unclear

!?! interesting move

∞ with compensation for the material

?! a dubious move

○ lead in development

△ with the idea

→ with attack

□ only move

↑ with initiative

△ better is

≤ worse is

⊕ time

PREFACE

Hello dear chess friends!

We don't know about you, but we have always wondered if there is any chess workbook or encyclopedia where we can study positional play. There are many books about chess strategy out there, but it is not easy to study them. You have to spend hours analyzing master games in order to find one or two instructive moments only. Most strategic books offer you analyzed games from the first to the last move. Very often, you have to read a few pages in order to analyze a single game. We live in a fast time. Most of us don't have enough time to study like this. So, what to do then? Positional play and strategy are essential.

Why not just to have a simple puzzle book where you are supposed to find best move in each position? Every single position is picked carefully and this method will help you develop different strategic concepts and patterns. There are no chapters or indicative names or comments to help you find solution more easily. Just positions. "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication" – Leonardo da Vinci.

This is something new on the market. We are working on this project for years and we are very happy to finally share our material with you. We are working as chess coaches and we noticed huge improvement in chess understanding of our students after working on these positions.

All these positions are new! What does that mean? We didn't recycle old, famous games that everyone knows. We didn't use material and positions from other books and courses. All positions are unique. Also, the 99% of the positions are from modern games played in the last couple of years.

This book will teach you how to be flexible and practical chess player. No matter what type of position or pawn structure you have on the board, you must be able to find the best move and the best plan. The more concepts and patterns you know, the stronger player you become.

These exercises are perfect for intermediate, club players who want to improve and get to 2100 or 2200 fide, but it is also very helpful for players who are CM or FM, but would like to become IM or GM. This book provides variety of positional motifs and ideas and no matter what level you are, this will improve your chess significantly.

All positions are divided according to their difficulty on:

- * Easy positions. We are asking for basic positional understanding.
- ** Medium positions. You are supposed to find a bit deeper and longer plan.
- *** Hard positions. You have to apply more advanced principles, calculate well and find a subtle and more difficult idea.
- **** Very hard positions. It is more complicated. You should calculate more, find more advanced ideas and you have to take a lot of circumstances into account in order to find the right move.

Now, it is all relative. Every chess player is special. Sometimes, for example, you can find a position with 2 stars more difficult than a position with 3 stars. That is normal. You are simply familiar with some ideas and some types of positions more than with the others. The scoring system in the book is based on our experience and it is made as objective as possible

While doing these tasks you should pay attention to the following:

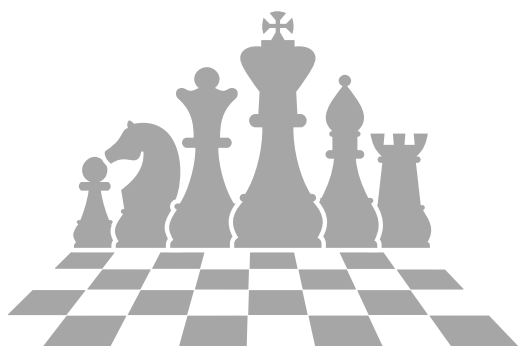
- Who is better
- What is the worst placed piece in your position
- King safety (both yours and your opponent's)
- What is your opponent's next move and what is your opponent's plan
- Where are the weaknesses (both yours and your opponent's)
- Consequences of exchanges in the position

How to study this book? You should simply try to solve puzzles one by one. That's all. After you find the move and decide what would you do in a certain position, you should go to the back pages and compare your solution with the solution in the book. We made sure that the solutions and the moves we put are precise and easy to understand. Also, we put a lot of diagrams to help you visualize better. Our personal advice is to put every position on the board and try to solve it in the old-fashioned way. But, it is totally fine to solve the positions directly from the book if you are not at home or you simply don't have chess board with you. The way we created everything allows you to do it in the both ways.

So, let's study chess strategy in the more dynamic and fun way!

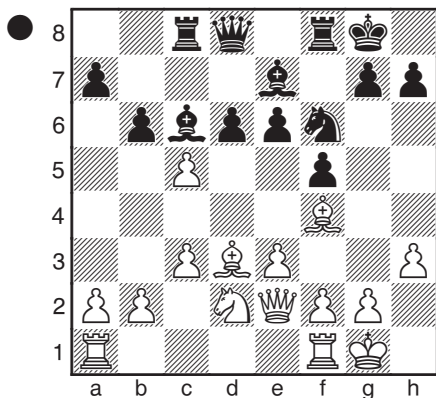
GM Miloje Ratković
IM Milovan Ratković

EXERCISES



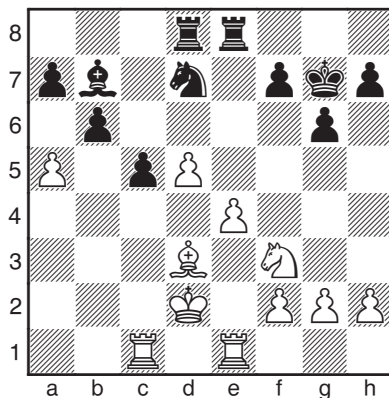
25. C. Reilein 2250 -
F. Kuenzner 2285
Germany 2002

★



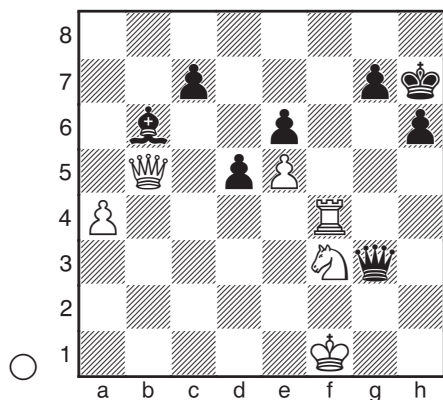
27. Ding Liren 2805 -
Wei Yi 2736
Abidjan GCT rapid 2019

★★★



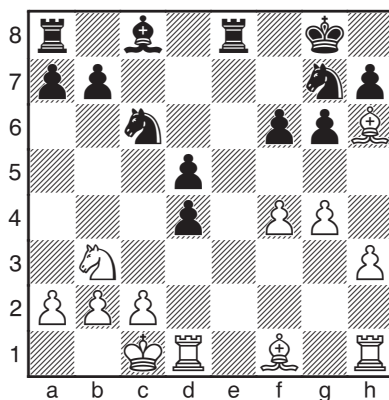
26. Z. Tsydypov 2546 -
M. Vlasenko 2424
Russia 2019

★★

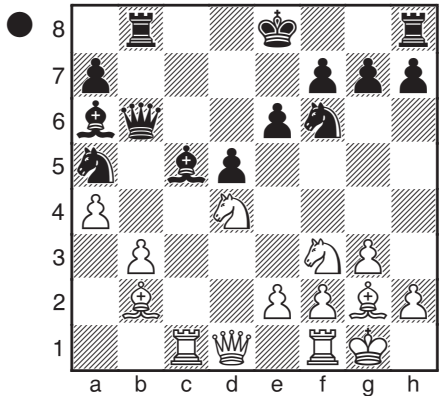


28. G. Vidit 2727 -
N. Grandelius 2672
Wijk aan Zee 2022

★★★★

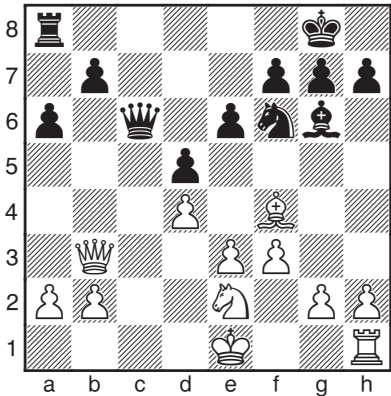


341. Practical position



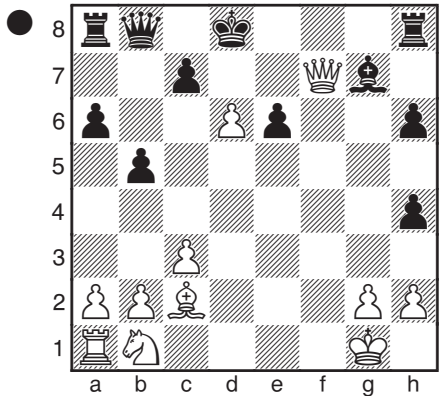
343. Xiu Deshun 2510 - Kong Xiangrui 2401

China 2024



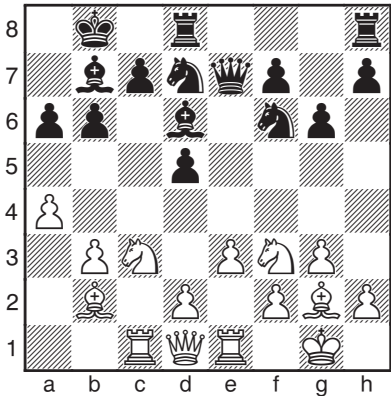
342. V. Ivic 2561 - M. Nikitenko 2521

Serbia 2023

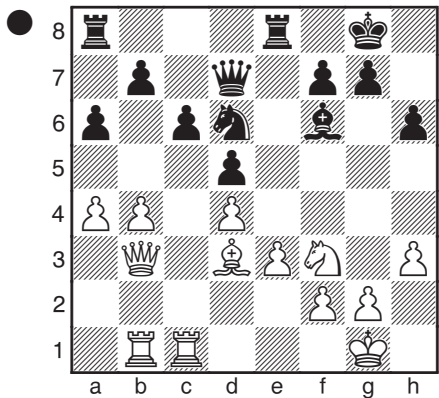


344. Zhao Yuanhe 2477 - Wang Chen 2485

China 2024

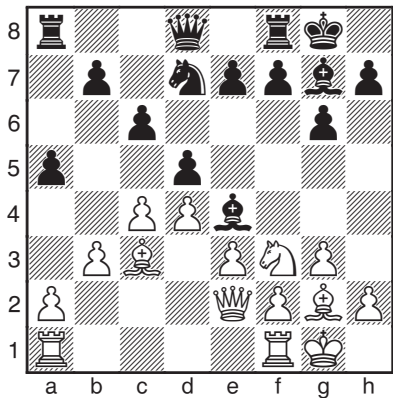


389. Practical position

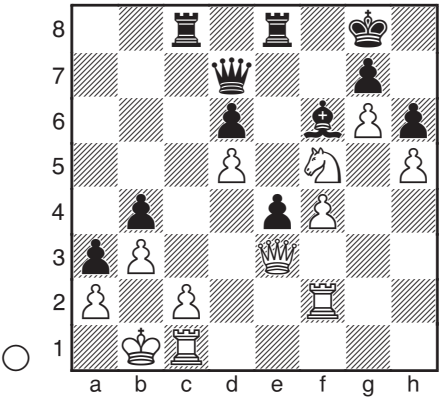


391. D. Gukesh 2725 -
A. Giri 2749

Wijk aan Zee blitz 2024

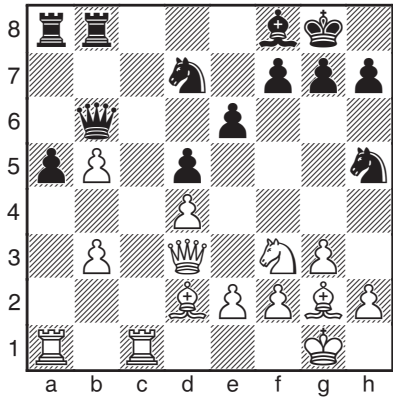


390. Practical position

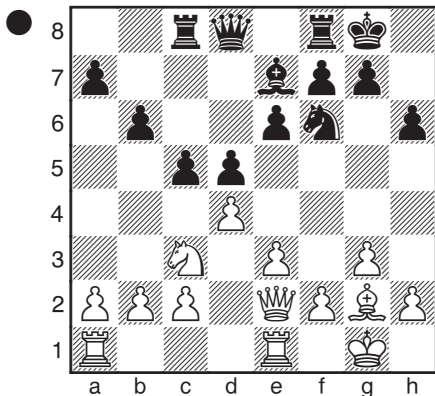


392. M. Chigaev 2576 -
V. Tilicheev 2402

Grand Prix Bucharest rapid 2024

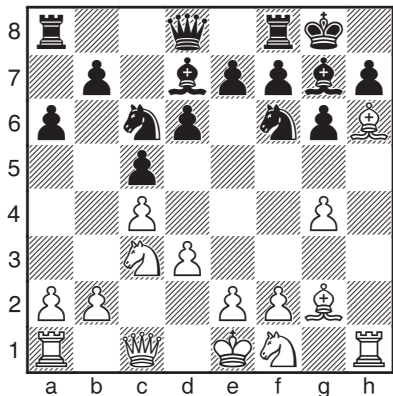


393. Practical position

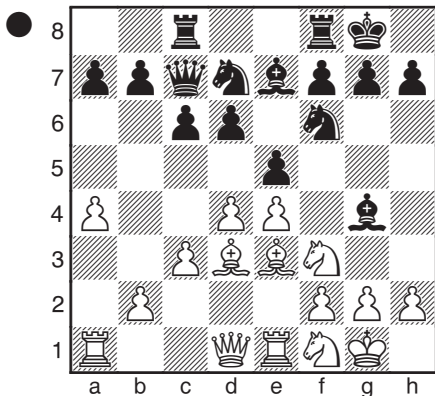


395. Ding Liren 2780 - Wei Yi 2740

China Chess King rapid 2024

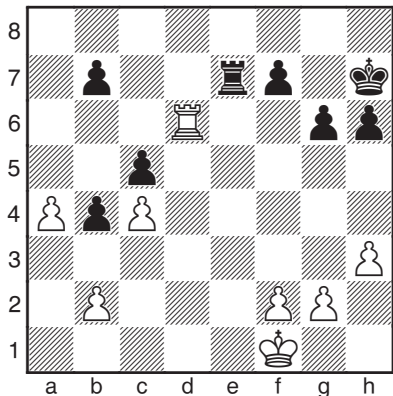


394. Practical position

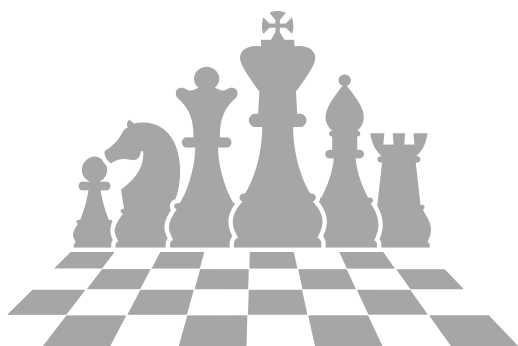


396. P. Michalik 2576 - T. Beerdsen 2496

Germany 2023



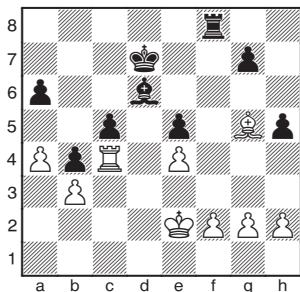
SOLUTIONS



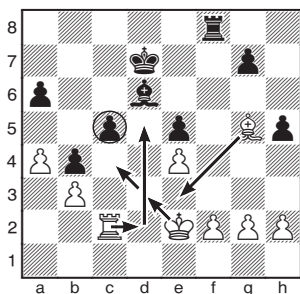


8. D. Gordievsky 2585-
P. Toropov 2327

★★★★

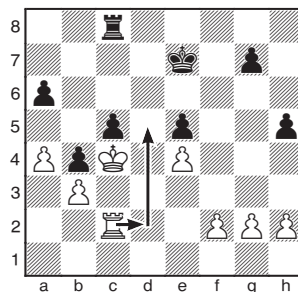


1. **Rc2!**



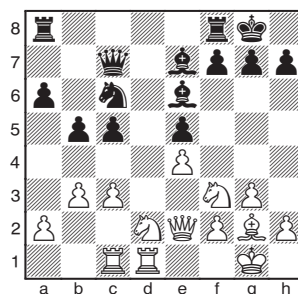
The only good move! White wants to march with the king to c4, place his bishop on e3 and the rook on d5. After that, the c5-pawn falls and Black's position collapses. Other moves are not good enough. If White tries to do the same thing in a different move order, it won't work. Let's say White plays 1. **Ke3?** Then, Black's reply would be **Qc6** followed by **Ke7** and **Rd8** with equal position. Our bishop must control the d8-square. That's why we first go for the rook and king maneuver.

1... **Rc8** 2. **Qd3** **Ke7** 3. **Qxe7** **Qxe7**
4. **Qc4+-**

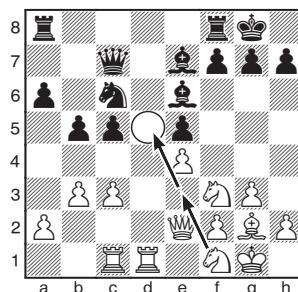


9. Practical position

★



1. **Nf1!±**

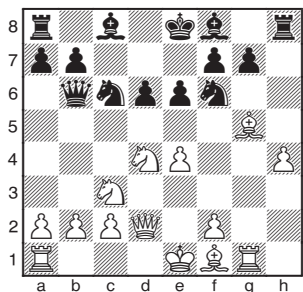


Our knight belongs on d5!



**23. Y. Kryvoruchko 2697-
K. Kulaots 2573**

★★★



A highly instructive example. The d4-knight is hanging. If White takes on c6, he doesn't achieve anything. Black takes with the b-pawn, connects the b-pawn with the central pawn mass and opens the b-file. If White plays 0-0-0, Black exchanges everything on d4 and goes into equal endgame.

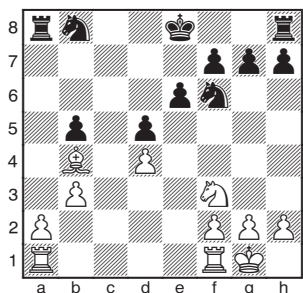
So, the only good move is **1.♘b3!** Now, White simply castles long and plays a standard Sicilian type of a position with an obvious advantage.

1...a6 2.0-0-0 ♖d7 3.♙e2 ♔c7 4.h5±

~*~

**24. A. Hambleton 2436 -
J. Terry 2213**

★★★★



White is clearly better. But, how to proceed?

If White plays the logical **1.♖fc1?**, there is a simple **♘a6** reply and Black consolidates. Therefore, we need to play dynamically.

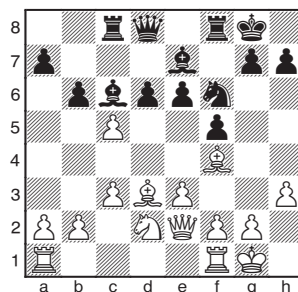
1.a4! bxa4 2.♖fc1! Now, if **2...♘a6**, **3.♖xa4** and White wins.

2...♘bd7 3.♖xa4 ♖b8 4.♙d6+- White's position is winning. Black's king is stuck in the center.

~*~

**25. C. Reilein 2250 -
F. Kuenzner 2285**

★



1...bxc5! Capture towards the center! Now, Black's center is simply delightful.

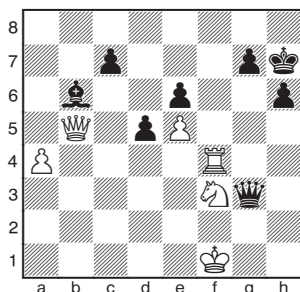
2.♖ad1 ♔h8 3.♘c4 ♙d5 4.♙b1 ♔c7 5.f3 e5! In the game, Black played **5...♔c6** and got into some complications after **6.e4**.

6.♙h2 ♙e6±

~*~

26. Z. Tsydypov 2546 -
M. Vlasenko 2424
Russia 2019

★★



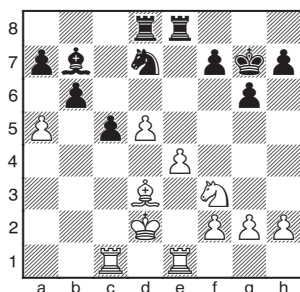
Black is threatening mate on f2 and capturing the rook on f4.

1. ♔d3+! ♕g8 2. ♔d2!+-

~*~

27. Ding Liren 2805 -
Wei Yi 2736

★★★

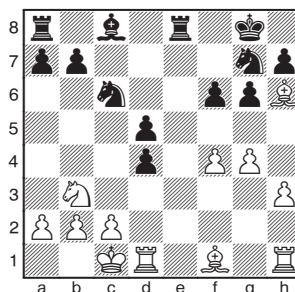


1...f5! After this, White's center collapses and White's king gets in danger.

2. exf5 ♕xd5 3. fxg6 hxg6 4. ♖xe8 ♜xe8 5. axb6 axb6 ♞ Black has a better and more comfortable position. Wei Yi later played well and won the game with the help of his strong connected passers on the queenside.

28. G. Vidit 2727 -
N. Grandelius 2672

★★★★



Not an easy position for Black. White wants to play ♖xd4 as well as ♕g2 with a better position.

1...♕f5!! Brilliant idea! Grandelius played 1...♘e6?! and after 2. ♕g2 got into serious problems and lost the game eventually.

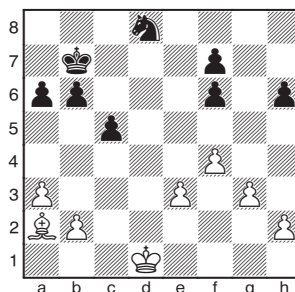
2. ♕xg7 ♕e4! This intermezzo is the whole point

3. ♖g1 ♕xg7 4. ♘xd4 ♖ac8=

~*~

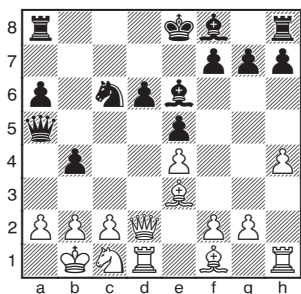
29. Practical position

★



**188. C. Gokerkan 2489 –
A. Predke 2685**

★★★★



Critical moment. It is essential to find the right plan.

1.g3! White's idea is f4 and after exf4 White wants to recapture with the pawn!

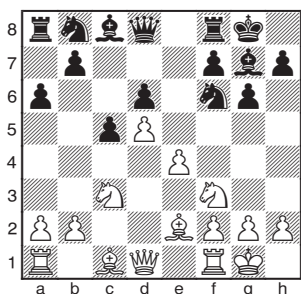
1.f4!? exf4 2.♘xf4 ♘e7 3.♘xd6 ♖d8 4.♙f4 0–0± White is better, but Black's position is not that terrible.

1...♘e7 2.f4 f6 3.f5! ♘f7 4.g4±
White is much better.

~*~

189. Practical position

★



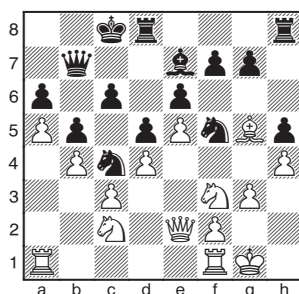
Black wants to expand on the queen-side with b5. We must prevent that!

1.a4! ♖e8 2.♘d2! ♘bd7 3.♙c2 b6 4.♘c4±

~*~

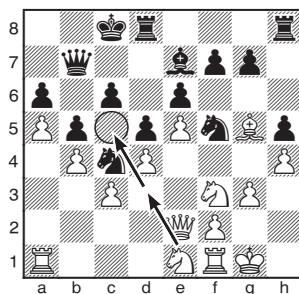
**190. B. Adhiban 2598 –
M. Kushagra 2426**

★★



The knight on c2 is doing nothing. It would be best on c5!

1.♘ce1!±



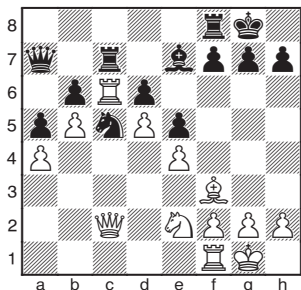
a7–g1 diagonal.

1...♙d8! 2.♖a1 ♔d4 3.♖a2 ♙b6
4.♙f1 ♙c5 5.b3 e4±

~*~

340. Practical position

★★★★



We should just bring the knight to c4 and Black is strategically lost.

1.♞c3! Black has two approaches. He can either wait and see what happens, or try to play actively and go for the f5 idea.

1...♔b7

1...g6 2.♞d1 f5 3.♞e3 fxe4 4. ♙xe4 ♖f4 5.f3 ♙g5 6.♞c4 ♞xe4 7.fxe4 ♖xf1+ 8.♔xf1 ♖f7+ 9.♔g1 ♖f8 10.♔e2± And Black loses material.

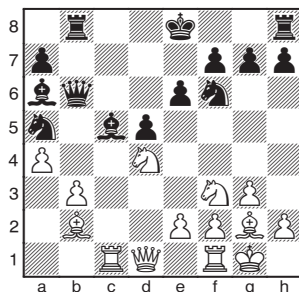
2.♞d1 ♔a7 3.♞e3 ♖b7 4.♞c4 ♔b8 Now, let's play according to the Principle of 2 weaknesses! We should squeeze Black on the kingside.

5.g3! ♔d8 6.♙g2 ♖b8 7.f4±

~*~

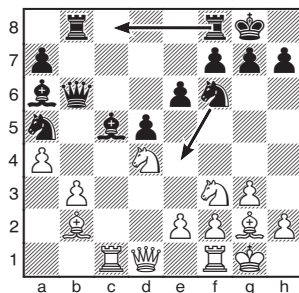
341. Practical position

★



Black's position is good. There is only one thing left to be done.

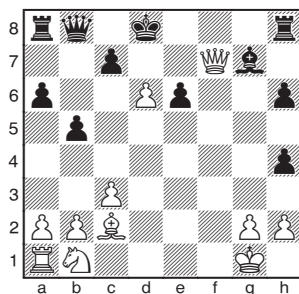
1...0-0±



~*~

342. V. Ivic 2561 – M. Nikitenko 2521

★★



Black is up in material. But, White has

some concrete threats on the 7th-rank.

1...♔a7+!

1...♖f8? 2.♔e7+ ♔c8 3.d7+ ♔b7
4.♘d2±

2.♔h1 cxd6 The 7th-rank is secured.

3.♔xe6

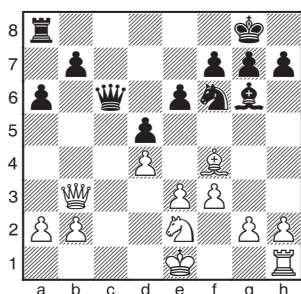
The game continued with 3.♔f4
♔e7+-

3...♔e7+-



343. Xiu Deshun 2510 - Kong Xiangrui 2401

★★★



White has to do something with his king. There are three options at his disposal: ♔f2, ♔d2 and 0-0.

1.♔d2! The best one. After trading off the rooks and queens, White's king will be very active. It can go to the queenside quickly.

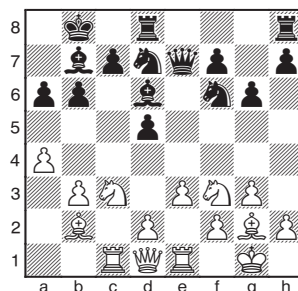
1...♖c8 2.♖c1 ♔d7 3.♖xc8+ ♔xc8 4.♔c3 ♔xc3+ 5.♔xc3 ♘d7 6.♘c1 f6 7.♙c7 ♔f7 8.♘b3 b6 9.a4± And later on White won

thanks to the the great position of his king.



344. Zhao Yuanhe 2477 - Wang Chen 2485

★★★★



There is a great, aggressive idea which would bring White a clearly superior position.

1.a5!

1.♔e2?! White played this move and gave Black good chances. 1...♖c8 2. ♖c2 ♖hd8 3.a5 b5 4.♘xb5 axb5 5.a6?! ♙xa6 6.♖c6? ♔b7 7.♖a1 ♖a8± And Black won later on.

1...b5

1...bxa5 2.♘a4 ♙b4 3.♘d4± Black's castle on the queenside is seriously damaged.

2.♘xb5! This knight sacrifice is the point.

2...axb5 3.♘d4! ♙e5

3...b4?! 4.a6 ♙a8 5.a7+ ♔c8 6. ♔e2+-

4.a6 ♙xd4