

GM Ivan Ivanišević

Innovative Approaches to Improving Middlegame Play



Author

GM Ivan Ivanišević

Cover design

Miloš Majstorović

Translator

B. A. FM Vuk Žegarac

Typesetting

Katarina Tadić

Editor-in-chief

GM Branko Tadić

© Copyright 2024 Chess Fortress

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means: electronic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 978-86-82410-13-3

Printed by:

"Intranet centar"

Bulevar Peke Dapčevića 32,

11000 Beograd

Tiraž: 500

Izdavač

CHESS FORTRESS

11060 Beograd, Vojvode Micka Krstića 9, Srbija

e-mail: info@chessfortress.com

website: www.chessfortress.com

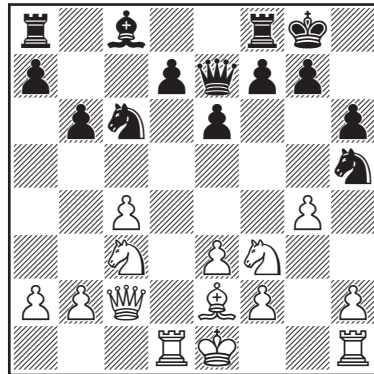
TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY TO SYMBOLS	4
PREFACE	5
CHAPTER ONE - <i>The AlphaZero Pawn</i>	7
CHAPTER TWO - <i>Central Passed Pawn</i>	59
CHAPTER THREE - <i>Zugzwang</i>	89
CHAPTER FOUR - <i>Middlegame Queen Sarcifice</i>	117
CHAPTER FIVE - <i>(Un)expected Kingside Attack</i>	155
CHAPTER SIX - <i>The King's Indian Attack</i>	187

CHAPTER FIVE

(Un)expected Kingside Attack

The inspiration for this topic came from a game I played against Turkish grandmaster Sanal. I remember that the position of the black pawn on h6 was enough to prompt me to launch an attack on my opponent's castled position. This detail, although seemingly insignificant at first glance, turned out to be crucial in breaking through the opponent's defense. Over time, I began to notice games with this theme, where similar tactical motives recur, often from seemingly quiet positions.



For this chapter, I have selected what I believe to be the most instructive examples of unexpected attacks on the opponent's king. I would like to emphasize that all the games shown originate from positional openings such as the Queen's Gambit, the Spanish Game, and the Nimzo-Indian Defense, which often offer stable positions but conceal significant tactical opportunities for those who are ready to recognize and exploit them at the right moment.

These examples illustrate how a deep understanding of the position can be transformed into a powerful attack, often surprising even the most experienced opponents.

**W. So (2770) –
Hi. Nakamura (2736)**
Internet Rapid 2020

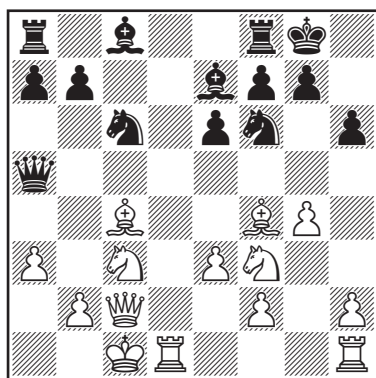
**1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗f3 d5 4. ♗c3
♙e7 5. ♙g5 h6 6. ♙f4!?**

Instead of the conventional retreat of the bishop to h4 or exchanging on f6, White opts for the line with ♙f4 where Black has one extra tempo - a pawn on h6. The idea is to use the position of Black's pawn on h6 to launch an attack on the kingside once Black decides to go for a short castling.

**6... 0-0 7. e3 c5 8. dxc5 ♙xc5 9. a3
♞c6 10. ♚c2 ♚a5 11. 0-0-0 ♙e7 12.
g4**

So begins the kingside attack. This idea is well-known and has been applied many times in the Queen's Gambit Declined after 5. ♙f4, but in those cases, Black's pawn is on h7.

12... dxc4 13. ♙xc4

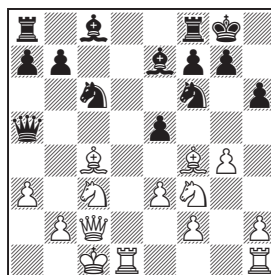


The board features a theoretical position from the 5. ♙f4 variation, but the difference is made by the position of

Black's h-pawn. This is exactly what prevented Nakamura from continuing along familiar lines and led him to choose a far more passive way of playing.

13... ♖d8?!

More consistent is 13... e5 just like in the theoretical position that arises in the 5. ♙f4 variation.



A) It's possible that Black was concerned about the bishop sacrifice. 14. ♙xh6!? but after the counter-sacrifice 14... ♙xa3!∞ a position with chances for both sides would arise. By capturing the piece, Black would find themselves under a strong attack 14... gxh6? 15. ♚g6+ ♚h8 16. ♚xh6+ ♞h7 17. h4+-

B) 14. g5 exf4 15. gxf6 ♙xf6 16. ♞d5∞

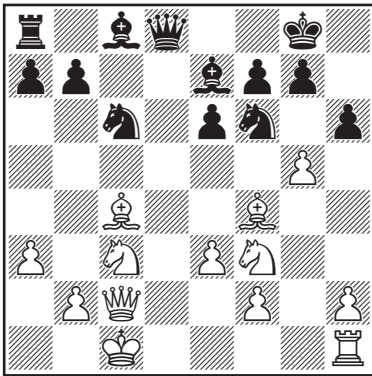
14. ♖xd8+ ♚xd8?

An unnecessary retreat of the queen, which was well-positioned.

Better is 14... ♞xd8 15. ♖g1! (White wouldn't benefit from shifting the game to the center. 15. ♖d1 ♞xg4 16. ♞b5 e5! Black would manage to activate his pieces by returning the material. 17. ♞xe5 ♞xe5 18. ♙xe4 ♙e6 19. ♙d3 ♖c8 20. ♙c3 ♚b6 21.

♞d4 ♜f6 ∞ And now **15. g5** is not dangerous. Unlike in the game position, the black queen remains active, the knight participates in the defense of the kingside, and quicker counterplay along the c-file is achieved. 15... $\text{hxg5! 16. ♞xg5 ♜d7}$ ∞ 15... $\text{♜d7 16. g5 hxg5 17. ♞xg5 ♞b6 18. ♞e5 ♞c8 19. f3}$ ↑ White retains the initiative, even though Black has developed all his pieces, because of the open g-file and centralized pieces, which makes it easier for White to play.

15. g5!



15... ♞h5

By exchanging pawns, White's attack would only be accelerated. 15... $\text{hxg5 16. ♞xg5 ♜d7 17. ♞g1 ♞f8 18. ♞ce4}$ +—

16. ♞d1 ♜d7

16... $\text{♞a5 17. g6! ♞xf4 18. gx7+ ♜xf7 19. exf4}$ ↑ There is no visible way for Black to solve the problem of the light-squared bishop on c8.

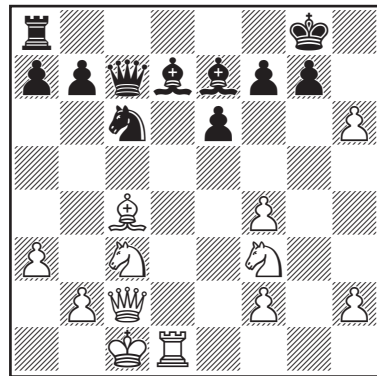
17. gxh6 ♞xf4

In the case of 17... g6 White would get

the chance to gain a material advantage with a simple tactical blow. 18. $\text{♜xe6! ♜xe6 (18... fxe6 19. ♞xg6+-)}$ 19. $\text{♞xd8+ ♞xd8 20. ♜g5+-}$

18. exf4 ♞c7

And again, no good is 18... g6 because of 19. $\text{♜xe6! ♜xe6 (19... fxe6 20. ♞xg6+ ♜f8 21. ♞g7+ ♜e8 22. h7+-)}$ 20. $\text{♞xd8+ ♞xd8 21. ♞e2+-}$

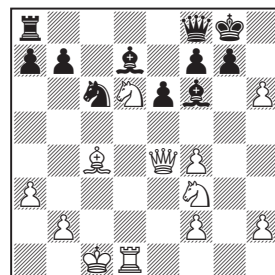


19. ♞e4!

By centralizing the queen, White defends the f-pawn. Black is passive and cannot organize defense against White's multiple threats.

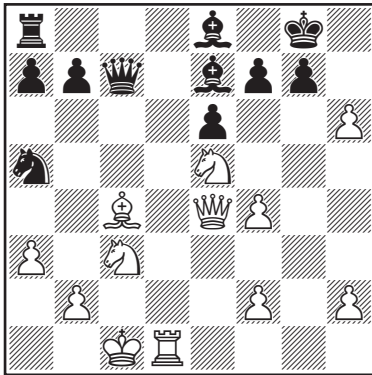
19... ♞a5

19... ♜f6 20. ♞b5 ♞d8 (Losing by force is 20... ♞c8 because of 21. ♞d6 ♞f8)



22. ♖xf7! ♜xf7 23. ♜xd7+-) 21. ♘e5
 White develops the initiative by applying pressure on the d-file. 21... ♘xe5
 (21... ♙xe5 22. fxe5+-) 22. fxe5
 ♙g5+ 23. ♚b1 ♜e7 (23... ♙xh6 24.
 ♜xb7+-) 24. hxg7 ♙c6 25. ♜g4+-

20. ♘e5 ♙e8



21. ♜d7!

A deflection! With an attractive rook sacrifice, So converts his advantage.

21... ♜c5

Black cannot take the rook with 21... ♙xd7 because of 22. h7+ ♚h8 23. ♘xf7#

21... ♜xd7 makes no sense either. 22. ♘xd7 ♙xd7 23. ♜e5+- White captures Black's knight with a double attack.

22. b4 ♜xf2 23. ♜xe7 ♜g1+ 24. ♘d1
 1 : 0

The conclusion is that So surprised Nakamura with the opening choice! By using a non-standard move order, they transitioned into one of the main lines of the Queen's Gambit, but the difference was made by the 'provoked' Black h-pawn. The course of the game clearly indicates that Nakamura was surprised, which unsettled him and led him to deviate from the principled 13... e5 to 13... ♜d8?! Kudos to Wesley So for his flawless play, who took full advantage of his opponent's passive play in the best possible way.