

Srđan Čarnić

PRACTICAL CHESS TUTOR **From Basics to Mastery 1**

Essential Skills for Ambitious Improvers



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INTRODUCTION

Dear readers, the book in your hands is primarily intended for all who are entering the magical world of chess, beginners, children and their parents and of course – adult ambitious improvers. This chess textbook will enable readers to strengthen their knowledge of the chess basics and fundamentals and will help trainers and chess teachers in working with their students.

Chess has existed for thousands of years, its first roots being in the area of today's India and afterwards Iran, from where it spread throughout Europe and America. Nowadays, chess is played all over the world. The beauty of our beloved game is such that it can be played by everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, and is the very special kind of universal language for millions of people.

Chess has great benefits for all generations. For the older players, it represents companionship, satisfaction, strengthening of cognitive skills, and for the youngest, in addition to the above mentioned, it helps in building concentration, attention, intuition, planning, analysis, logics, work habits.

A Few Words about the Book

The book is divided into 5 chapters.

The first chapter is devoted to all the basic rules of chess. In this chapter we will explain how the pieces move, the value of pieces, terms such as check, checkmate, stalemate, pawn promotion, etc. Of course, if the reader is familiar with the basic rules of chess he can skip most of the introductory themes.

The second part of the book is devoted to executing checkmate with various pieces, which is extremely important to know and understand well. There are also one move checkmates with defensive tools against checkmates explained in detail, and also simple combinations for achieve a material advantage. When I started working as a chess trainer, I often skipped teaching the students checkmates in a move. As a result, my

students played endings and openings very well, and were even able to see some more complex combinations, but were often overlooking mates in one move! In addition, they were not able to see simple defences against opponent's threats. The chapter also contains basic exercises for solving checkmates in one move.

The third part of the book is devoted to all the basic chess endgames. Here you will also find various theoretical draws and stalemate positions, examples of perpetual check. I advise you to learn the endgames well because they form the basis for the middlegame plans. In addition, you will improve your technique and learn the value of small material gains.

The fourth part of the book deals with tactical motifs and themes and contains a great number of instructive exercises. Tactics are extremely important because we achieve goals such as checkmate or material advantage by executing powerful tactical motifs. My legendary coach Grandmaster Bora Ivkov insisted on knowing tactical themes by heart since such knowledge allows us to find the patterns and combinations much faster and easier in practical games.

The fifth part of the book is all about the opening phase of the game. We will tackle opening principles, most common traps and mistakes in openings and show how to avoid grave mistakes and blunders. Quite often parents and inexperienced coaches suggest learning openings by heart, playing for tricks and traps, encouraged by some initial successes their children and students achieve in tournaments. However, that approach can cause long-term negative consequences for the development of a chess player. Traps are quickly learned by all opponents, while precious time is lost for learning more important positions and themes. Also, modern computer engines are often used before the student has grasped fundamental knowledge. On the very first move alone, there are 400 possibilities for both sides – so you can imagine how rich and diverse the game of chess can be. Of course, most of those first moves are bad, but still the number of realistic possibilities in the first ten moves is huge. So, the real "work" on opening theory and forming one's own opening repertory should come only later on when the player has a truly solid command of opening rules and principles.

How to study this book?

The book should be read carefully and thoroughly, alone or with friends, parents or with a chess coach. Upon the reread all diagrams should be examined closely, all the key positions stored in memory and exercises solved without moving the pieces (ideally by setting up the chessboard and writing down solutions in the notebook for future reference). Of course, an experienced trainer will add his own exercises and examples during the class. Students working alone can really achieve a lot if they remain prudent and diligent while working with this book and the series as a whole.

Finally, a Piece of Advice for Parents

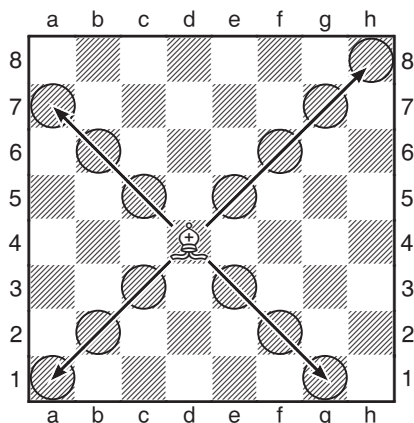
The best approach to the child who is interested in chess is with full support without major criticism, pressure or personal ambitions imposed on them. Criticism should be avoided especially after a defeat. In the beginning, chess is supposed to be fun, but that does not mean that you should leave the child to fend for himself. In the beginning, computer engines should not be used, because even grandmasters and world champions make mistakes, as you will see in this book.

Chess will bring great benefits to your child. If you are choosing a chess coach, check the possible selection with multiple sources in your local community, city, chess federation. If you are looking for a coach online, choose reliable chess sites and FIDE recommendations. The pedagogical qualities of the trainer are also important in addition to the professional ones. Also choose competitions wisely, because tournaments that are too strong can discourage further work on chess, while tournaments with weak opponents can create a wrong image of player's chess prowess. When a good level of knowledge and overall playing skills is achieved, then I advise entering stronger tournaments.

I hope you will find the material both entertaining and instructive enough, and that you will gladly continue the journey we are just about to embark on together. This is the first book in the series that should diligently lead you to true chess mastery.

Srđan Čarnić
Belgrade, January 2024

THE BISHOP



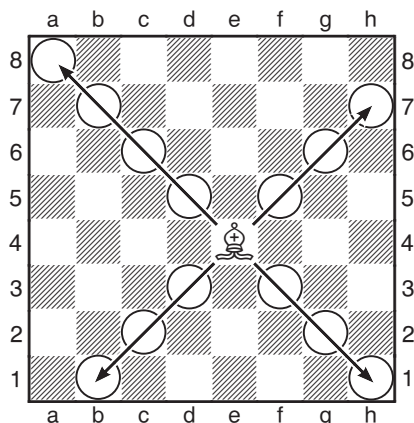
The bishop is a long-range piece, but it can only move diagonally. Also, the bishop is the only piece that can never change the colour of the square (complex of squares) it moves on during the entire game, and it cannot jump over other pieces either (friendly or enemy).

The bishop is worth 3 pawns, and is roughly equal in power to the knight (even though it is generally accepted that bishops are more valuable than knights, especially when operating in pair).

In the diagram we see the white bishop on the dark square d4 from where it attacks 13 dark squares diagonally.

1. ♖d4–h8

1. ♖d4–a7; 1. ♖d4–g1 (see diagram for other possibilities)



In the diagram position we see the white light-squared bishop that can move only on light squares.

1. ♗e4–h7

1. ♗e4–a8; 1. ♗e4–h1 (see diagram for other possibilities)

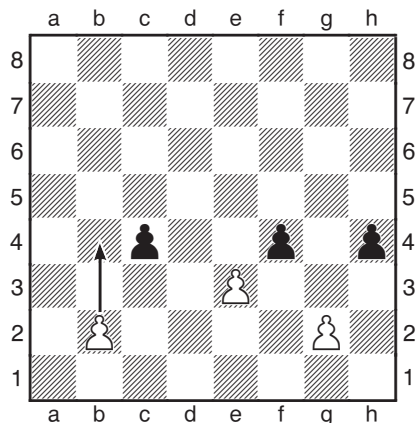


EN PASSANT RULE

Finally, we will explain the *en passant* rule as the most difficult move to understand, especially for beginners.

En passant can be played only if one side moves its pawn two squares forward (from pawn's initial position) and finds itself next to - on the same rank as the opponent's pawn (which is on the same rank, but on the adjacent file). Then the pawn can take the opponent's pawn diagonally but only on the following move, as an immediate reply. So, the *en passant* capture is possible, but not obligatory.

The following example explains the *en passant* rule very well.



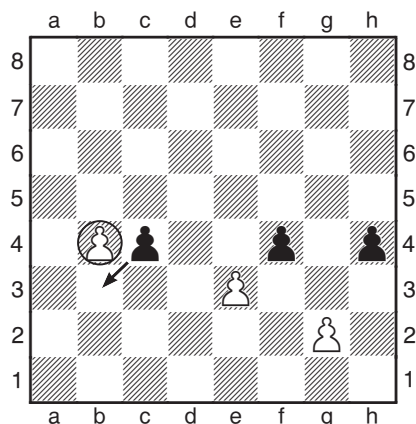
If the white pawn moves two squares forward to b4, the black c4-pawn may or may not take it diagonally as if the pawn had stopped on b3.

If the pawn from the g2 square goes

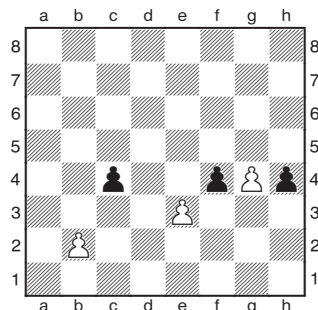
two squares forward, to the g4 square, then it may or may not be taken by the h4 or f4 pawns as if the white pawn had come to the g3 square.

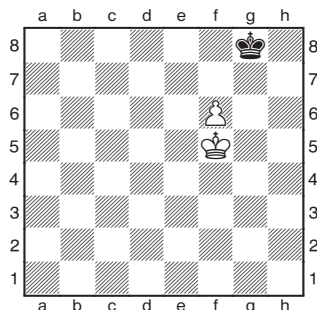
If the capture does not happen immediately on the very following move, it is not possible to execute it later. If the white pawn advances from e3 to e4 then *en passant* rule does not apply because the white pawn did not go two squares forward but only one.

1.b2–b4



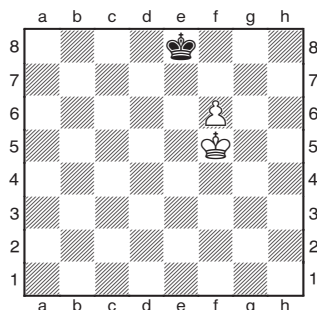
1.g2–g4





This move loses. 11. ♔g6 ♕f8 12. f7 ♕e7 13. ♔g7;

10... ♕e8??



This is also a losing king retreat. 11. ♕e6 ♕f8 12. f7 ♔g7 13. ♕e7

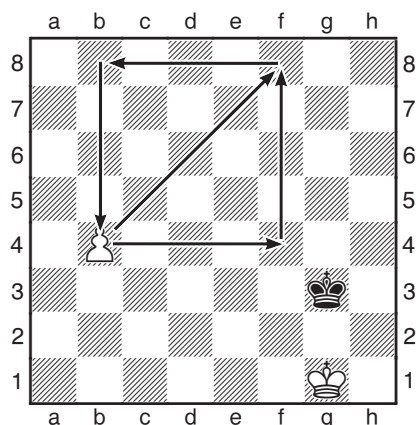
11. ♔g6

11. ♕e6 ♕e8 Black holds the opposition – draw.

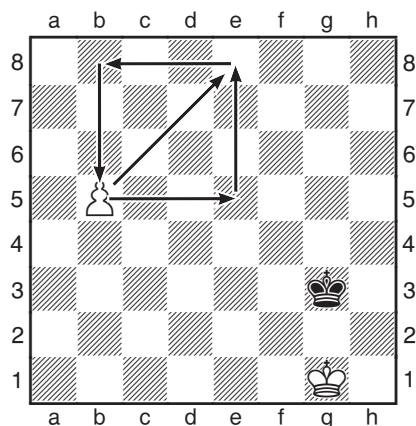
11... ♔g8 Black takes the opposition and secures a draw.

Position 3

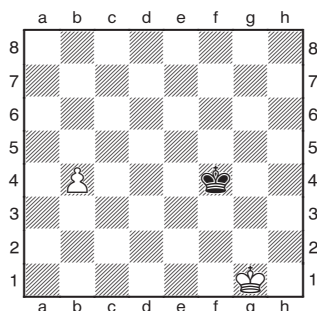
Now we shall learn the *rule of the square*. The rule of the square is an important visualization tool that players use to quickly assess if a pawn can promote before the enemy king catches it. The pawn can promote if the opposing king cannot step into the square on its next move.



1.b5



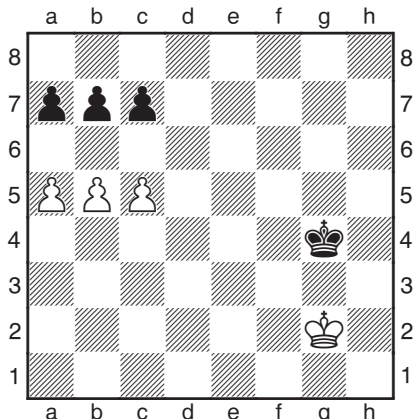
If it is Black to move his king enters the square and is able to capture the white pawn before it reaches the queening square. 1... ♔f4



2.b5

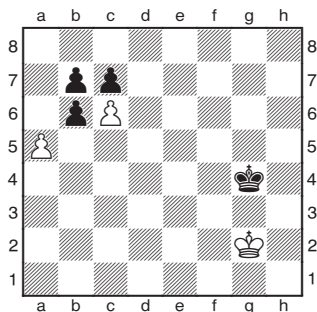
Position 8

The following position explores the theme of a *pawn breakthrough*, an extremely important element of pawn endgames (alongside opposition and passed pawns).



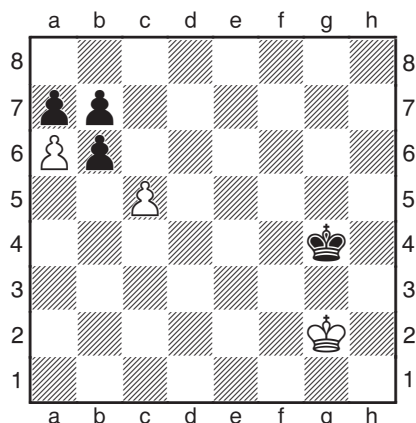
1.b6!! cxb6

1...axb6 2.c6!



White sacrifices his pawns in order to allow the a-pawn to promote. **2... bxc6 3.a6**

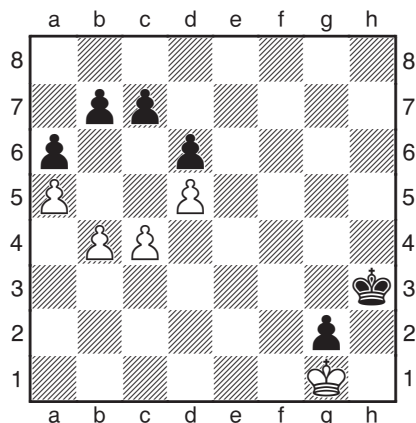
2.a6!



Here White sacrifices the a-pawn so the c-pawn could run to promotion.

2...bxa6 3.c6

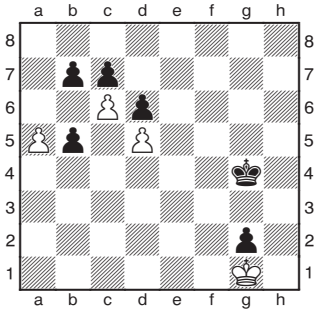
Position 9



In this, slightly more complicated position Black is up a pawn, but still cannot stop White's pawns to achieve a decisive breakthrough.

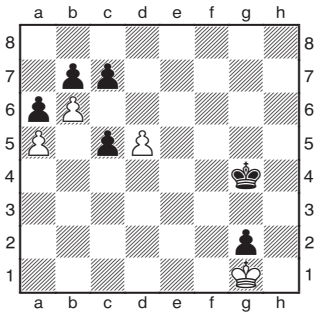
1.b5! ♔g4 2.c5! ♔f5

2...axb5 3.c6



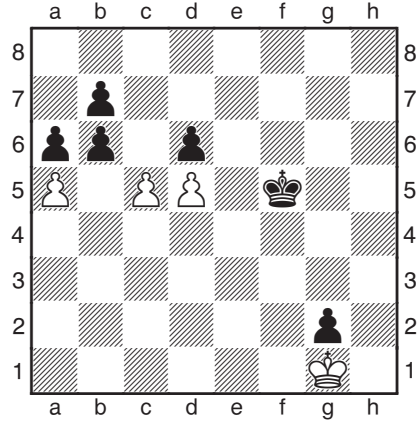
3...bxc6 4.a6+-;

2...dxc5 3.b6



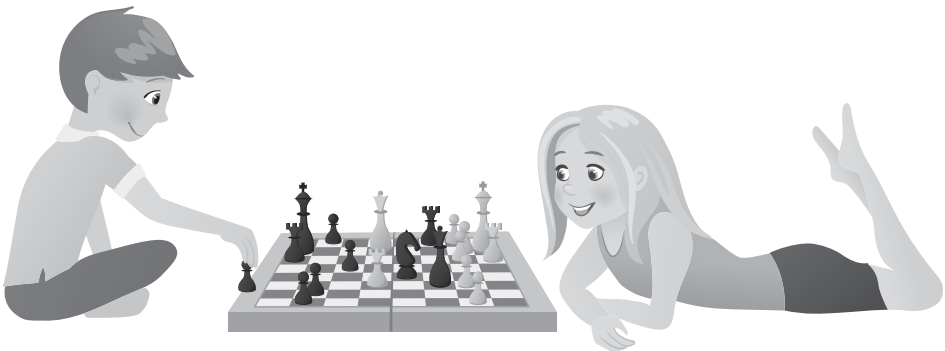
3...cxb6 4.d6+-

3.b6 cxb6

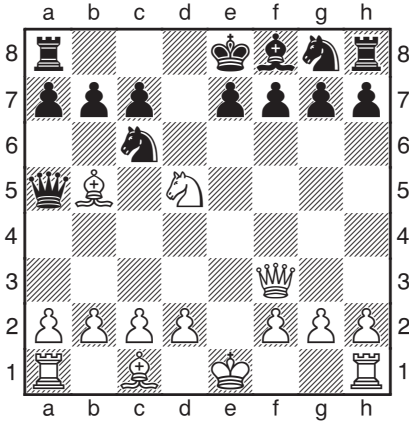


3...dxc5 4.bxc7

4.c6 bxc6 5.axb6+- The white pawn runs to promotion and queens.



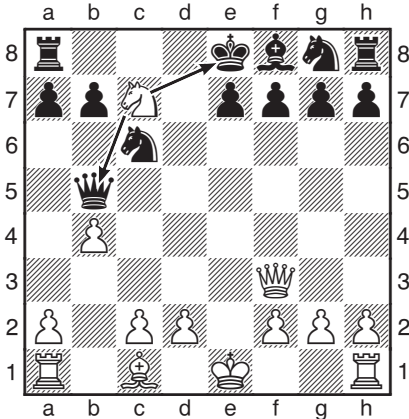
Position 5



1.b4! The black queen is trapped and must capture the bishop with yet another powerful double attack coming right away.

Please note how important is the proper development of the pieces, as White's army clearly dominates the whole battlefield.

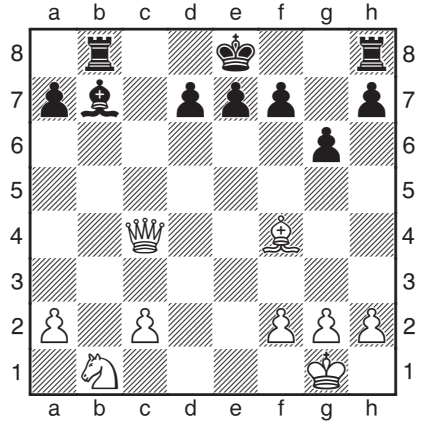
1...♙xb5 2.♘xc7+



Knight fork wins the black queen. An exquisite double attack.

2...♚d7 3.♘xb5

Position 6



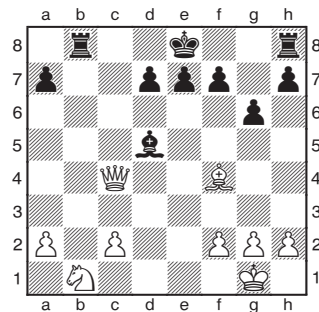
Black to play

1...♚a6!+-

Double attack! Two white pieces are being directly threatened with a capture.

Further analysis proves Black is winning.

An example of an unsuccessful double attack, or a case of a bad move with two good ideas is **1...♚d5?**



2.♙f1+-

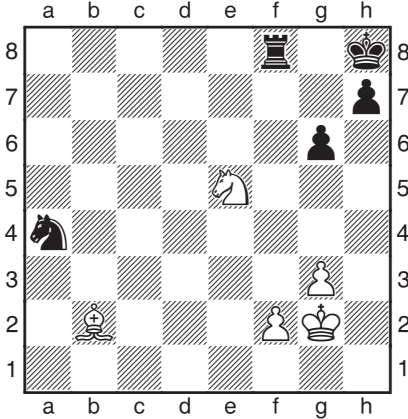
2.♙xa6

2.♚xb8 ♚xc4+-

2...♖xb1+-+

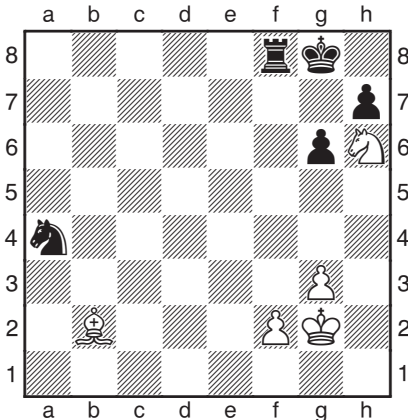
DISCOVERED CHECK

Position 1



White executes a checkmate by means of a discovered double check. Please remember the final position well!

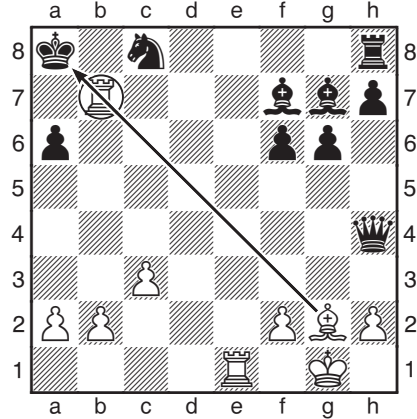
1. ♘f7+ ♔g8 2. ♘h6#



Position 2

Now we will explore the so called *windmill* combination of discovered

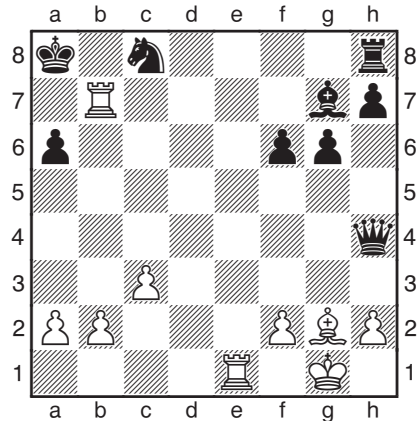
checks. The black army is going to be pulverized in the process.



1. ♖xf7+

1. ♖b4+ ♔a7 2. ♖xh4±

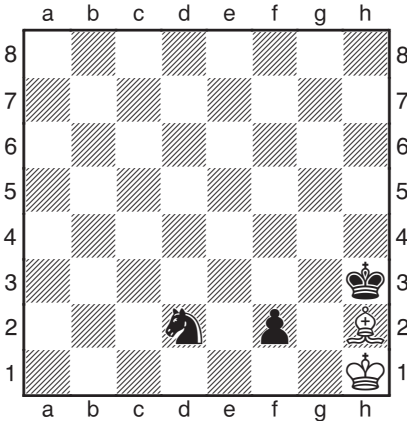
1... ♕b8 2. ♖b7+ ♔a8



3. ♖xg7+ ♔b8 4. ♖b7+ ♔a8

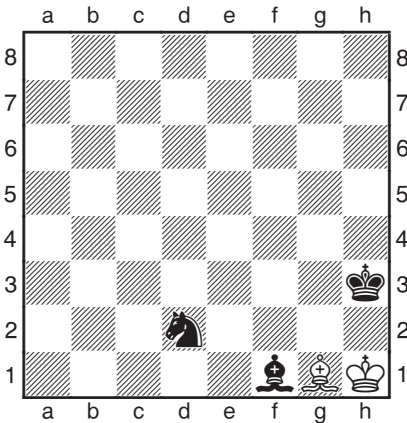
PAWN PROMOTION

Position 1



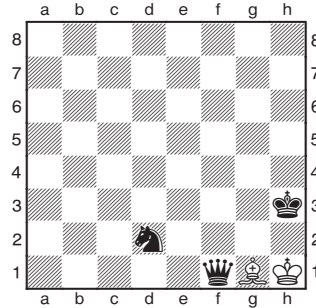
1. ♔g1! White's last defensive resource.

1...f1 ♕!!

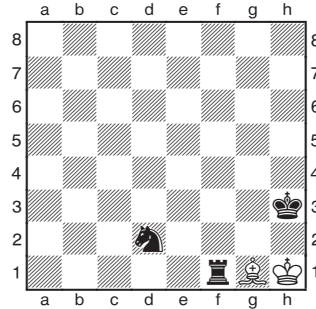


Promoting the pawn into a new queen or rook leads to a draw.

a) **1...f1 ♖** Stalemate;



b) **1...f1 ♜** Stalemate.



2. ♕e3 ♘f3

White is not able to prevent the checkmate on the next move. In actual fact, without the bishop White would save himself thanks to the stalemate rule.

3. ♕f4 ♕g2#

BLOCKADE

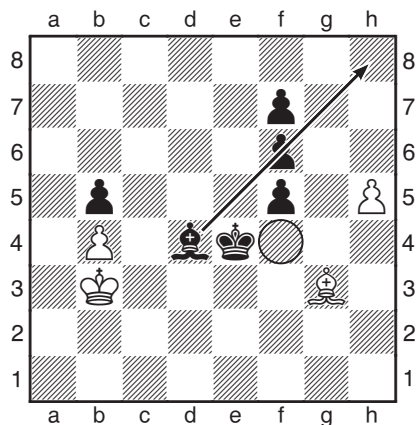
Blockade is defined as an act or means of sealing off a place to prevent goods or people from entering or leaving.

In chess we change it to get blockade defined as an act of sealing off a square to prevent pieces or pawns from entering. The way this sealing off is accomplished on the chessboard is by physically occupying the square in question with a piece or pawn that cannot be captured. Thus to blockade a pawn (usually involving passed pawns which need to be stopped from advancing towards promotion) we place a unit on the square directly in front, preventing the pawn from moving forward.

When tactics are involved, a major target is often the opponent's king, whose mobility needs to be decisively reduced in an attempt to force a checkmate, and is usually preceded with one or more decoy piece sacrifice(s). Another major target is the opponent's queen, which may be trapped after blocking all escape squares. At times, a tactical blockade is executed by forcefully sacrificing all the remaining active pieces, with the sole purpose of achieving a draw via stalemate, effectively blocking in ones own king. In other instances, a

strategic blockade may result after a sacrifice or a combination, leading to an impenetrable fortress and a draw. A blockade may also involve blocking the opponent's pieces from being able to assist in defending their king, after which a direct assault on the now undefended or poorly defended king would lead to a decisive material gain or checkmate. Another form of blockade is to make sure enemy pieces are stuck behind pawn chains, thus physically preventing them from entering perhaps large sections of the board at all.

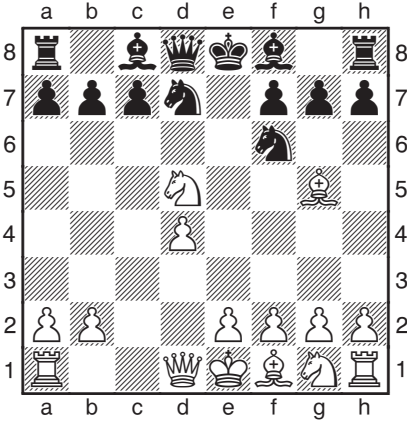
Position 1



1. ♙f4!! A really interesting example of blockade in the endgame occurred in the following position. White sacri-

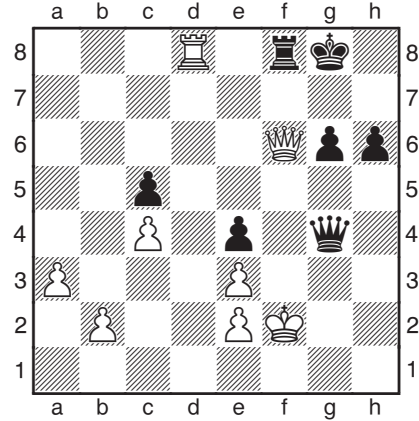
EXERCISES

Exercise 1



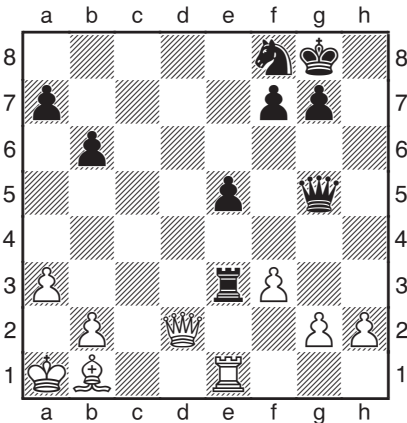
Black to play and win material.

Exercise 3



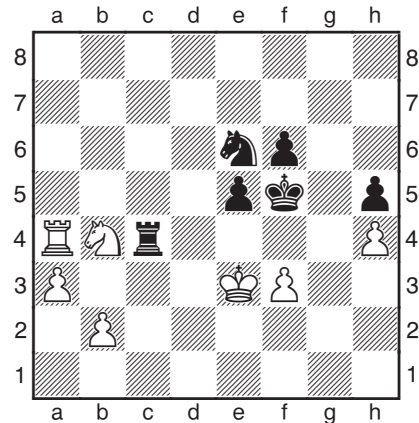
Black to play and win.

Exercise 2



Black to play and win.

Exercise 4



White to play and win.

Example 3

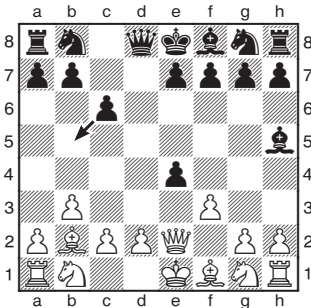
1.b3 d5 2.♘b2 ♘g4

Also good for Black is 2...♘f5

3.f3?! A bad move. White is weakening his king while the f1-knight cannot be developed on its natural place.

3...♘h5 4.g4?!

♞ 4.e4 dxe4 5.♚e2 c6

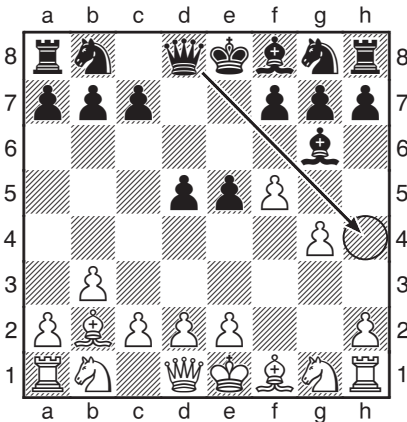


6.♚xe4 ♘g6 and Black stands clearly better.

4...♘g6 5.f4?

5.h4 h5

5...e5! 6.f5??



Again, White is not paying attention to opponent's threats and weaknes

his king even further.

6...♚h4#

Example 4

In the following examples we encounter familiar mistakes: neglecting the safety of our king, lagging in development, allowing the opponent to gain central control.

1.d4 f5 We call this opening the Dutch Defence.

2.♘g5!? h6

♞ 2...g6

3.♘h4 g5? 4.♘g3 f4? Black managed to trap the white bishop, but he is seriously undeveloped. On top of that, he exposed his king to attack!

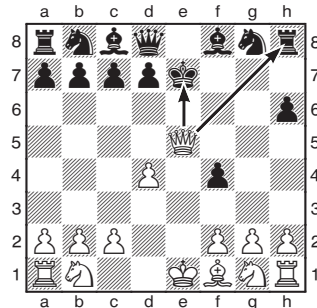
5.e3 White is threatening checkmate.

5...h5

5...♘f6 6.exf4;

5...e5 6.exf4 exf4 7.♚h5+ ♔e7

8.♘xf4 gxf4 9.♚e5+



White obtains a huge material advantage, while the black king is under fire;

5...fxg3 6.♚h5#

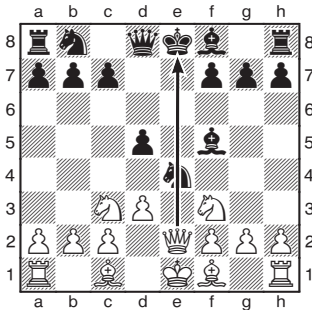
teaching others - mistakes can help in learning process! We are more likely to remember a terrible mistake than an excellent move we made!

Here correct way for Black is 5...♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♔e7 7.♔e3 0-0 (7...♘c6 8.♖d2 ♔e6 9.0-0-0 ♖d7 and Black is ready to castle on the queenside (long castle.) 8.♖d2 White has only a slight edge in this positon with the opposite side castling.

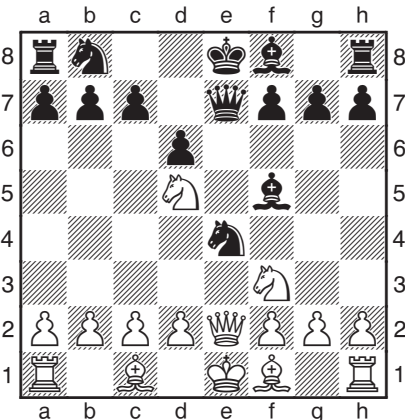
6.♖e2 Vishy Anand resigned right away because he cannot save his piece.

6...♖e7

6...d5 7.d3



7.♘d5



7...♖d8

7...♖e6?? 8.♘xc7+

8.d3 c6 9.dxe4 cxd5 10.exf5+ and White wins a piece in all the possible variations.

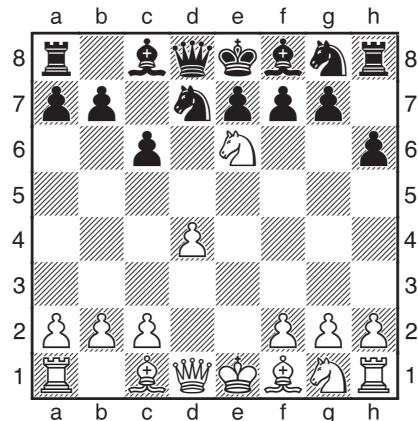
Example 9

In the next elite level game we will explore an extremely insstructive blunder in the Caro-Kann Defence. White wins very quickly due to Black's grave mistake in already inferior position.

1.e4 c6 The Caro-Kann Defence, known for its solidity (named after the English player Horatio Caro and the Austrian player Marcus Kann who developed it way back in 1886).

2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘g5 The great champion Garry Kasparov used to play this variation.

5...h6? 6.♘e6!



6...♖a5+

6...fxe6??

Example 6

The Pirc Defence

The popular Pirc Defence contains interesting traps too.

1.e4 d6 The Pirc Defence.

2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 g6 4.♘f3 The main alternatives for White are:

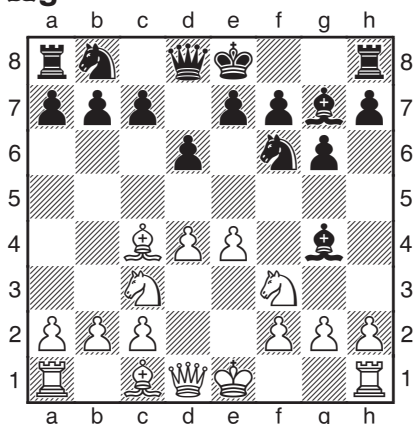
4.f4;

4.♙e3

4...♙g7 5.♙c4!? White sets up an interesting trap.

5.♙e2 is the main continuation.

5...♙g4?

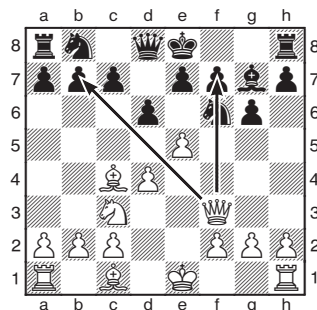


The bishop move looks natural enough, as Black is developing a piece. However, he neglects White's resources and threats. Instead, Black should have castled here, taking care of his king's safety.

5...0-0 6.0-0 ♘xe4 7.♗xe4 d5 8.♙d3 dxe4 9.♙xe4 ♘d7 Black has a really fine position.

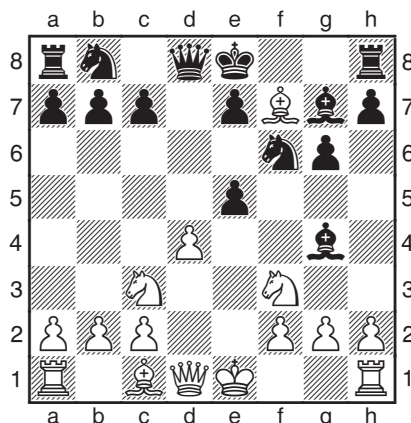
6.e5! dxe5

6...♙xf3 7.♙xf3

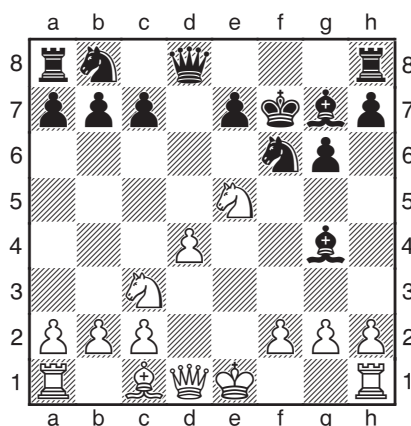


7...dxe5 8.dxe5 ♙d4 (8...♘fd7 9.♙xf7#) 9.exf6 ♙xc4 10.fxg7 and White is winning.

7.♙xf7+!



7...♙xf7 8.♘xe5+



Double attack – knight fork!