

Dean Ippolito

Tricks, Traps, and Tips in the Chess Opening

Practical Lessons for Ambitious Improvers

New In Chess 2022

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Foreword

Introduction to the series

After many years of coaches, students, and parents asking when my next instructive manual would come out, I finally made time to organize all of the material that I've accumulated over the past 30 years of teaching in a structured manner. When I began this project, my intention was to use the most instructive material and pack it into one book for coaches, students, and parents. After several years of carefully selecting games and puzzles for the undertaking, I realized that it was not possible to condense everything into one book. Therefore, I decided to separate it by parts of the game. The first book will focus on tricks and themes in the opening. Most of those have to do with the weak points f2 and f7 and deal with attacks aimed at the uncastled king.

The second book will showcase attacking ideas in the middlegame. These ideas include attacking the castled king and will include many themes on the subject. The book will also include a basic introduction to more advanced themes such as noticing the opponent's ideas, outpost squares, etc. Additionally, typical middlegame tricks such as the Greek Gift will be covered in their own chapters. Most of these are aimed at the weak spots after castling – the primary targets of h2 and h7 and the secondary targets such as g2 and g7.

The third book will cover important themes, tricks, and typical checkmate patterns in the endgame. Most of the checkmate themes in the endgame have to do with the back rank, or herding the enemy king to the side. Additionally, other endgame themes such as stalemate ideas will be covered.

Introduction to the book

This book is the culmination of decades of working with scholastic players, as well as being a top scholastic junior myself. It includes detailed games, stories to help the student remember, and a history of the ideas. There are a total of 60 games, each its own lesson. All of the sections will conclude with training positions as a review for the student. There are over 200 training positions in this book alone, along with many other extra questions asked during each lesson.

All of the games have been shown and tested in classes, some with over 100 groups. There were many games which could be included in two or more chapters, but I tried to make everything as consistent as possible. Many of the explanations are taken from students' questions, so there is very little that the reader will need to wonder about.

This book is intended for anyone interested in improving quickly by getting right to the most important patterns and positions which are likely to come up in the opening. It is a blueprint highlighting all of the most important openings, traps, tactics, and themes for players to move from the early stages of chess development into the stage of being able to compete at club level events, or even state and national levels for scholastic players. It is designed to ensure that the reader knows the fundamentals and is aimed to create a foundation for which a student can grow and grasp more advanced ideas.

Though this book is intended for players who are taking their first steps into tournament play, there may be terms the reader is unfamiliar with, and there is a glossary in the back. Newer players are encouraged to make use of the glossary until they are familiar with all of the terms.

What separates this book's format is that everything is designed to build on previous ideas while showing new games and ideas. The games are structured based on how I teach my students privately and in classes, in a progressive way so each new game/idea introduces a new technique with residual ideas and techniques reinforced. The idea is to slowly broaden one's base of knowledge by keeping to similar themes. It's designed to have the same effect as when one throws a stone into a lake. No old concept will be ignored and it will be reiterated until there is a full understanding of the idea, pattern or technique. The games can be taught or learned in order, or they can be shown as stand-alone games. For that reason, the concepts will be bolded each time they occur.

Before going any further, I'd like to tell two quick stories explaining what this book is trying to avoid. Many years ago, a coach and friend of mine wanted to teach one of his students the Benko Gambit. For that particular student, it was necessary to learn how to play for the initiative, and it was the perfect recommendation. The father of that student was insistent that the gambit was bad, based upon what his computer engine said. Not only is the Benko Gambit a respectable opening, but more importantly, the point was to expand the base of the student's comfort zone to make him more well-rounded. The student never wound up playing the gambit in tournaments, and didn't make it very far.

When I was beginning to coach full time, there was a scholastic player who had been shown a dubious way of playing against the Fried Liver

Attack in an attempt to trick other students who had been shown how to play it. It worked well for a while, and the student made it to around 1200 rather quickly. Soon after, though, his progress slowed to a stop, and, frustrated, he never made it much further. He was put into a fast lane of gaining rating points but became a sort of one-trick pony who eventually hit the traffic of more advanced players and failed at making continued progress.

I began playing in scholastic tournaments in the US at age six and have made almost every mistake imaginable. It's this personal experience of knowing what works and what is important long term that I have tried to impart into my lessons of working with over 30,000 students. There will be plateaus for every player at some point, but the key is to do the work that is necessary to achieve the student's potential long term, not to look for short cuts that lead to temporary gain.

Players, parents and coaches should find many suitable games for their children and students and they are encouraged to incorporate these games and review exercises into their lessons. Most students will fall into the same traps many times before the idea finally sticks, and there are many ideas with multiple games highlighting certain typical traps within the main trap itself. This helps build pattern recognition while not boring the student with the exact same material.

As mentioned previously, each chapter can be used as a stand-alone chapter, and for this reason there will be some exercises which will be used in more than one chapter. When mastering any new idea, repetition is the key to success, and hopefully students will recognize certain positions when they have seen them more than once. The games in each chapter will generally get more advanced, as we see the same ideas, but must recognize them in more advanced positions. This is not only beneficial for the student, but also for the coach who may want to show themes that get more advanced with each game, as the student will hopefully be getting more accustomed to the ideas.

There is an exercise section at the end of each chapter which reinforces the ideas. Coaches can use these as homework for their students. There is homework for multiple levels of students. While games can be taught to all levels of students, exercises can be given based on the level that each student or class falls into. The first exercises of a chapter are generally the easiest, from there the level gradually increases. If the reader understands and solves most of the puzzles at the end of each chapter, then he or she should be confident that the necessary understanding to use such themes and traps is present. The exercise solving section of each chapter will include typical patterns from famous games, my own games, and many

from the games of my students. Therefore, you can rest assured that these are extremely practical patterns that will come up often. I do want to mention that I included many practical examples from famous classic games to broaden the student's knowledge of chess culture and history. Students are much more likely to remember positions that occur from a famous chess player's game.

Overall, there are 60 number of instructive games, 218 number of puzzles to solve at the end of each chapter, and dozens of questions which are asked during each lesson for the reader to try to answer. I want it to be something that is a guide for many generations to come and not tied to any changing theory. Although the analyses were carefully checked with Stockfish 14, I consider the educational value of the material more important than whether it is perfect engine play. For that reason, there may be some suggestions with which computer engines may slightly disagree. What I hope to impart are the types of positions that will lead to students having a broad base of knowledge. I hope that you will find the information in the book useful.

Special thanks to my good friend and author International Master David Vigorito for helping me organize the material.

Best of luck in your chess adventures!

Dean Ippolito
Charlotte (NC), USA
April 2022

CHAPTER 3

Attack on the uncastled king

Introduction

One of the most common mistakes amongst amateurs and younger players is to wait too long to castle. While there are times when an attack must be carried out at the expense of the safety of one's own king, it is important not to overdo it and instead to make one's own king's safety a priority. It is somewhat rare to see a master wait longer than 10 to 12 moves to castle. If the opponent does wait too long to castle, it's important to know when and how to carry out an effective attack as punishment for the lack of care shown to the king.

To put it another way, think of the beginning of the game as a race. Whoever develops faster will be able to attack first. By leaving the king in the center, most attacks are going to fall flat.

Let's first see another instructive game by the best player of the mid-1800's – Paul Morphy. Morphy was a true prodigy who famously learned the rules as a child simply by watching games between his father and uncle. Morphy became so much better than everyone else in the world that he quit chess at age 22 to begin a law career. Here, Morphy forces Black to move the f-pawn early, and then targets the king with devastating effects. This game could also be included in the section on early f-pawn moves.

Game 13 Italian Game

Paul Morphy
Sr Dominguez

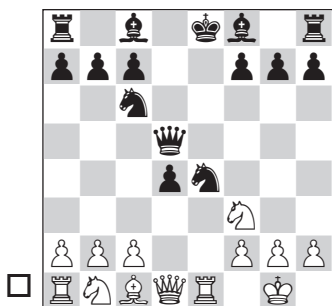
Havana blindfold simultaneous 1864

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♘f6 4.d4

Paul Morphy played 4.♘g5 many times, more on that in Chapter 9.

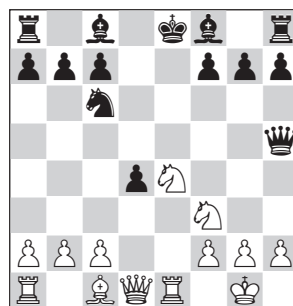
4...exd4 5.0-0 ♙c5

5...♗xe4 is possible, but Black has to be prepared for 6.♖e1. An instructive variation that has been played thousands of times then continues 6...d5 7.♙xd5! ♚xd5 when White can take advantage of two pins.



Question: How can White take advantage of the pins?

Answer: After 8.♗c3 the knight on e4 is stuck in an **absolute pin**, and the pawn on d4 cannot capture the white knight since it's stuck in a **relative pin**. Therefore, Black's queen has to move. After 8...♚h5 9.♗xe4 White is threatening many winning **discovered checks**.



Question: What is White's threat to force checkmate in two moves?

Answer: 10.♗f6+ (**double check**) 10...♚d8 11.♖e8#. In order to prevent this checkmate pattern, Black should close the e-file with 10...♙e6. Then White will prevent Black from castling long with 11.♙g5.

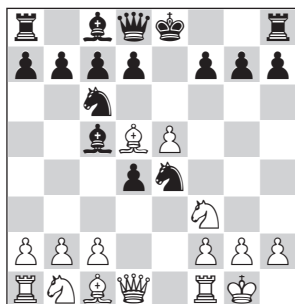
6.e5 ♗e4?

This is a very common mistake. 6...d5 is the typical move when the knight is on f6 and there is a bishop on c4. Play can continue with 7.exf6 dxc4 and now 8.fxg7 ♖g8 isn't dangerous for Black since he can always castle queenside. 8.♖e1+ ♙e6 is also fine for Black. This variation

is known as the Max Lange Attack, named after the German master Max Lange. It is known to be very complicated.

7.♙d5

7.♖e1 and 7.♚e2 are also very strong.



7...f5

This is the only way to defend but now Black does not have the option of castling.

8.exf6

Even a simple **developing** move like 8.♘bd2 is good for White. After 8...♗xd2 9.♙xd2, White is winning. What is Black supposed to do with his king?

8...♗xf6 9.♙g5

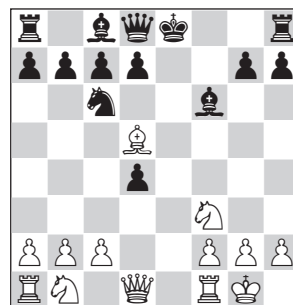
White sets up a **relative pin**, though 9.♖e1+ is also very strong.

9...♙e7

One way of dealing with a **pin** is the block, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6. After 9...♙e7, Black threatens 10...♗xd5 as the knight is no longer pinned.

10.♙xf6 ♙xf6

If 10...gxf6?, then 11.♗g5! uses **line clearance** to get the queen to h5 and then to f7 to deliver checkmate.



11.♖e1+

White is attacking on the open **file**.

11...♗e7?

If 11...♙e7, then White will play 12.♗g5 which threatens 13.♗f7 and 13.♚h5+.

Though it's not pretty, Black had to play 11...♙f8, when it's doubtful that his uncastled king will survive much longer.

12.♗e5

White is planning 13.♗f7 or 13.♚h5+.

12...♙xe5

12...♗xd5 allows the **discovered check** 13.♗c6+, winning the queen, but even 13.♚h5+ is winning here.

13.♚h5+

We see this typical check by the queen often.

13...g6

The alternatives are even worse:

13...♙f8 14.♚f7# or 13...♗g6

14.♖xe5+ with an easily winning attack.

14.♚xe5

White attacks the rook.

14...♖f8 15.♗d2

Paul Morphy gets his knight into the attack.

15...c6

15...d6 was a better try to defend, though after 16.♔g7 it's totally winning. Now White threatens checkmate. In fact, there is no way to avoid checkmate!

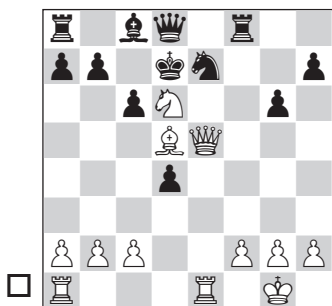
16. ♖e4

This wins very easily but 16.♘c4! was even more accurate. There would then be no way to avoid mate.

16...d6

16...cxd5 allows smothered checkmate with 17.♘d6#. Black could instead move the queen, but after 17.♘d6+ ♔d8 18.♔xe7+ the game will still be over. Now we see why 16.♘c4! was even a little more accurate than 16.♖e4. If 16.♘c4!, Black couldn't move the queen away due to 17.♔xe7#. On e4 the knight interferes with the rook's defense of the queen. All of this doesn't matter because the position is so easily winning anyway.

17. ♘xd6+ ♔d7



Question: Find mate in 3.

18. ♕e6+ ♔c7 19. ♘xc8+

A **discovered check**. 19.♘c4+ also leads to mate on the next move.

Surprisingly, the **double checks** 19.♘b5+ and 19.♘e8+ aren't as good for White.

19... ♔d6

This is the only move to stop check.

20. ♔xd6# 1-0

The following game was played in one of my classes. White uses a direct attack on the opponent's uncastled king.

Game 14 Italian Game

Seema Parmar 1227

Chen Shen 1058

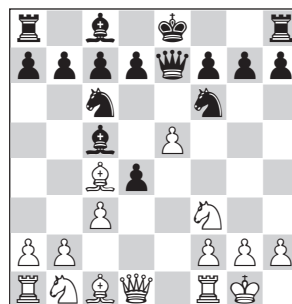
New Jersey 2020

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♕c4 ♕c5 4.c3 ♘f6 5.d4 exd4 6.e5 ♔e7?

6...d5! is the only good move. There is a rule about such positions: if Black can play ...d7-d5 to attack a white bishop on c4 after White plays e4-e5 to attack a black knight, he should.

6...♖e4? 7.♕d5 is the same idea as in the previous game, and Black would again be in trouble.

7.0-0!



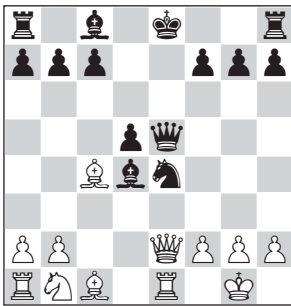
The best way to defend a piece is to not defend it at all. Sometimes you

can turn an attacked piece into a **poisoned piece** rather than defending it. We speak of a poisoned piece if its capture leads to bigger problems for the capturing side.

7...♖g4

7...♖xe5 is out of the question since after 8.♖xe5, the recapture 8...♗xe5 runs into 9.♙e1 with an **absolute pin**. While 9...♖e4 saves the queen, the pinned knight will soon be lost. An instructive variation using many little tactics could follow:

10.♗e2 d5 11.cxd4 ♙xd4



analysis diagram

12.♙xd5! (**removing the guard** of the knight) 12...♗xd5 (after 12...♙xf2+ White replies with 13.♗xf2! and if 13...♖xf2 then 14.♙xe5+ wins a lot of material) 13.♗xe4+ ♗e6! (13...♗xe4 14.♙xe4+ is another winning **double attack**) and now 14.♖f1! defends the rook and threatens 15.♗xd4 at the same time.

8.cxd4 ♙b6

Unfortunately for Black, there is no 8...♙b4+ which would gain a tempo on the white king and give him enough time to castle.

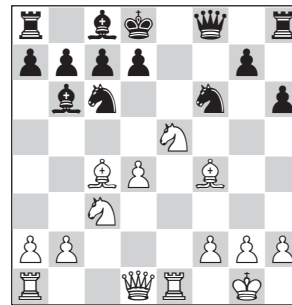
9.♙g5 ♗f8

The queen didn't want to venture out too far with a move like 9...♗b4, but now castling will take even longer.

10.♖c3 h6 11.♙f4 f6

The knight on g4 was in danger of being trapped with 12.h3, but 11...f6 let's White open up the e-file for a direct attack on the black king.

12.exf6 ♖xf6 13.♙e1+ ♖d8 14.♖e5



A **double attack** on g6 and f7, practically forcing Black's reply.

14...♖xe5 15.dxe5 ♖h7

That poor knight can't get a break from being kicked around.

16.♙g3 ♗c5 17.♗g4

This both defends the bishop on c4 and attacks Black's pawn on g7.

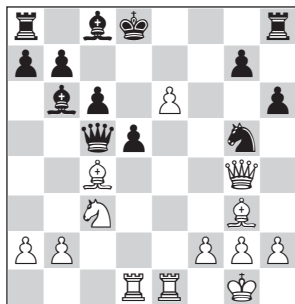
17...♖g5 18.♙ad1

There are other good moves here, but bringing the last piece into the attack is never a bad idea.

18...c6 19.e6 d5

Of course, the pawn on e6 cannot be captured with 19...♖xe6 in light of 20.♙xe6 and the pawn on d7 is stuck in an **absolute pin**.

Now White can sacrifice on d5 to win in many ways.



20. ♖xd5! ♜e7

20...cxd5 21. ♖xd5+ will win the queen with a **double attack**.

21. ♖b3

This threatens the **double attack**

22. ♖d6+.

21... ♖a5 22. ♖d6+ ♜e8 23. ♖h5+

♜d8 24.e7+ ♜d7 25.e8 ♖+ ♖xe8

26. ♖xe8# 1-0

In the next game, a young Magnus Carlsen, already **Grandmaster**, makes quick work of his strong opponent, a **FIDE Master**, by preventing him from castling.

Game 15 Ruy Lopez

Magnus Carlsen 2552

Oystein Dannevig 2372

Molde ch-NOR 2004 (1)

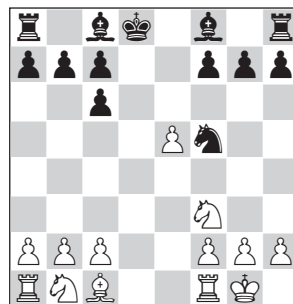
1.e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♘c6 3. ♖b5 ♘f6

This is the Berlin Wall Variation of the Ruy Lopez, which became popular after **Vladimir Kramnik** used it to dethrone **Garry Kasparov** in the 2000 World Championship Match.

4.d3

White refrains from the main move 4.0-0 which allows the famous

endgame that Kramnik used in the World Championship Match after 4... ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6. ♖xc6 dxc6 (of course, taking away from the center to open the diagonal for the bishop) 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8. ♖xd8+ ♜xd8.



analysis diagram

Black has **doubled pawns**, but does have the bishop pair. Not being able to castle isn't a big deal here as there are no queens on the board. This has been played in thousands of **master** games since the 2000 match.

4...d6

This move is a little passive; 4... ♖c5 is more active since the pawn on e5 is not in danger. If 5. ♖xc6 dxc6 (taking away from the center to open the bishop) 6. ♘xe5?? loses to the **double attack** 6... ♖d4, threatening both to take the knight and to give mate.

5.0-0 g6

This move is more dangerous for Black than 5... ♖e7 which would get ready to castle immediately.

6.d4

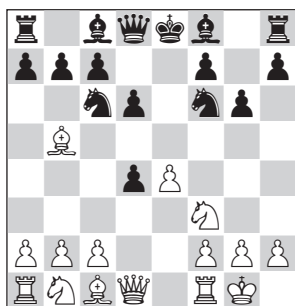
Even though White has already moved the d-pawn, he moves it again to open the center.

Carlsen later played the slower 6.c3 against both former World Champions Vishy Anand and Vladimir Kramnik. His choice in this game, 6.d4, is more direct and aggressive.

6...exd4?!

Accuracy is really important when neglecting king **development**.

6...♙d7 is necessary, as played in many high level games.



7.e5!

Carlsen immediately opens the position. We will see him play the same thematic break in a future game.

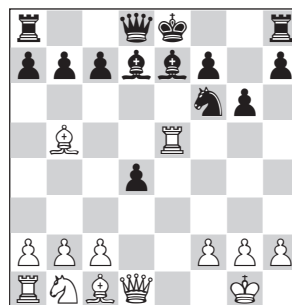
7...dxe5 8.♘xe5 ♙d7?!

An active defense with the move 8...♙d5 was better. After 9.♘xc6 ♙xb5 10.♘d4, Black will be down a pawn. However, this was a better choice than in the game.

9.♖e1?

Carlsen threatens a **discovered check** and at the same time **develops** a piece. Still, it was better to insert 9.♙xc6 first before playing ♖e1. After 9.♙xc6 ♙xc6 10.♖e1 ♙e7 11.♙h6, Black's king will be stuck in the center.

9...♘xe5 10.♖xe5+ ♙e7



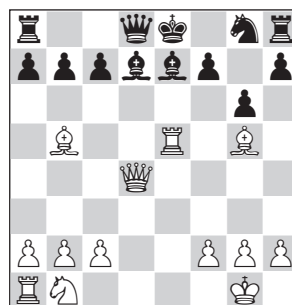
11.♙g5!

A good way to deal with your opponent's threats is by making bigger threats of your own. Here the threat of 12.♙xf6 is more dangerous than Black's threat of 11...♙xb5.

11...♘g8

This was practically forced as 11...0-0 runs into 12.♖xe7 and after 12...♙xe7 13.♙xd7 ♙xd7 14.♙xf6 White wins material.

12.♙xd4



12...f6!

Black avoids the trick of 12...♙xb5? 13.♖xe7+ (with a **discovered attack**) 13...♘xe7 14.♙xh8+.

13.♘c3

Carlsen gets a bit carried away playing for the **initiative** directed at Black's uncastled king.

13. ♖xd7+ was objectively best. After 13... ♗xd7 14. ♜d5 the position is equal, though Black will need to find some accurate moves until the king gets to safety.



13...c5?

Black was under a lot of pressure and blunders with this **intermediate move**.

13...fxg5?? wouldn't help either as White could then play 14. ♞ae1. 13...fxe5?? is no better since 14. ♗xe5 attacks the rook on h8.

However, Black did have the move 13... ♖xb5, after which White can play 14. ♜x7+ (if 14. ♜d5, then 14... ♖c6! is an important queen sacrifice that more than saves Black; after 15. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 followed by 16...fxg5 Black has an edge) and now 14... ♗xe7! is Black's saving resource. In that case, after 15. ♗c5+ ♗d6 16. ♗xb5 the capture 16...fxg5? isn't good due to 17. ♜d1 followed by 18. ♘d5+ when Black's king is too exposed. However, 16... ♗c6 would give Black an edge. This all shows that it's hard to be under pressure with an uncastled king. Black had a defense, but it was all very difficult to find.

14. ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 15. ♗xd7+ ♖xd7 Black has sought salvation in the **endgame**, but the king is a target even here.

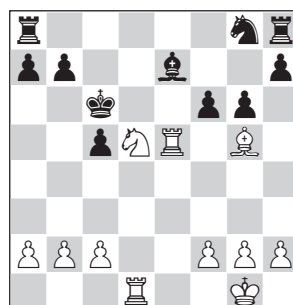
16. ♜d1+ ♖c7

16... ♗e8 would walk back into the **absolute pin** on the e-file. After 17. ♖xf6! ♘xf6 18. ♜de1 ♘g8 19. ♘d5 the pressure on the pinned piece will win the bishop and give White an easily winning **endgame**.

17. ♘d5+

Carlsen does not let up!

17... ♖c6



18. ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 19. ♞e6+ ♖b5

20. ♖xf6 ♞hd8 21. ♜x8 ♜xd8

22. ♞e1!

One final nice move preventing **back rank mate** while keeping two pieces on the pinned knight. Black resigned since he can't save the knight.

1-0

Next, we will see an example from one of my games against an experienced **master**. My opponent makes some slightly wasteful moves at the beginning, and quickly finds his uncastled king in danger.

Game 16 Caro-Kann Defense

Boris Reichstein

2088

Dean Ippolito

2407

Maryland 2014 (1)

1.e4 c6

This is the Caro-Kann Defense. Black plans on putting a pawn in the center on move two instead of move one.

2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4

Entering the Panov-Botvinnik Variation of the Caro-Kann. Bobby Fischer used this often.

**4...♞f6 5.♟c3 ♞c6 6.♙e3**

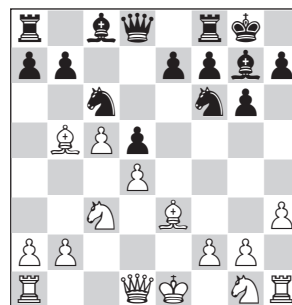
6.♞f3 is best, **developing** the knight before the bishop.

6...g6

My plan was to aim the king's bishop at White's d4-pawn.

7.c5 ♙g7 8.♙b5 0-0 9.h3

Even though the position hasn't opened up yet, White should probably play 9.♞f3. The idea of 9.h3 is to stop Black's bishop or knight from coming to g4, but it is a little slow. 9.h3 isn't a bad idea after he's castled, but king safety has to be a priority here when the other side already has better **development**.

**9...e5!**

This blows up the center for the first time and opens the **file** that the white king is on.

10.♙xc6?!

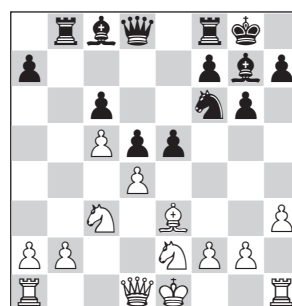
This will open up another line of attack for Black, the b-file. 10.♞ge2 immediately was better.

10...bxc6 11.♞ge2

If 11.dxe5?, 11...♞d7 12.f4 ♖h4+ would be winning.

11...♝b8!

This attacks b2 and makes sure White doesn't have time to castle. It didn't take Black long to use the opened b-file to attack.

**12.b3**

Though White is already in trouble, this opens the a1-h8 diagonal for Black's well-placed bishop. The files and diagonals are all opening too

quickly for an uncastled king to remain safe.

12...♙a6 13.dxe5

White still needed to castle, though after 13.0-0 ♖e4 followed by 14...f5, Black would have had a huge edge in the center.

13...♗d7

13...♗h5 might have been an even stronger way to open the bishop's diagonal.

14.f4

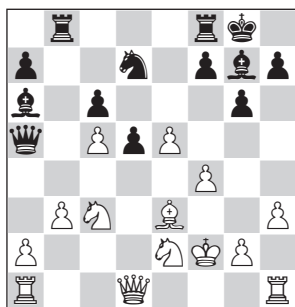
14.0-0 ♖xe5 and the black bishops are slicing up the board. The position would already be winning, so White decided to at least try to hold onto the e5-pawn.

14...♙a5

The queen pins the knight to the king.

15.♙f2?

This walks into a lot of tactics – it might just be lost already. Although 15.0-0 was better, White didn't want the rook on f1 to be stuck in a **relative pin**. After 15.0-0 ♖xc5, Black again has a big edge.



15...♗xc5 16.♙d2

It would have been better to play 16.♙xc5 ♙xc5+ 17.♙d4. He does this next move, but that loses an

extra turn that could have been spent on defense.

16...f6

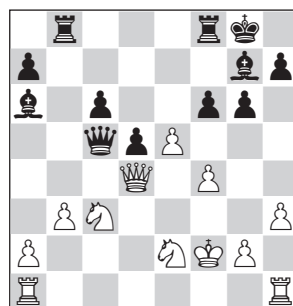
This blows up the center for a second time and opens the file that the king is on. 16...♗d3+ would just help White's king escape to h2.

17.♙xc5

White is lost, but relatively best was 17.e6, trying to keep the f-file closed.

17...♙xc5+ 18.♙d4

White wants to trade queens.



18...♙e7

18...♙xd4+ 19.♗xd4 fxe5 20.♗xc6 isn't as simple since Black's best attacker is removed from the board.

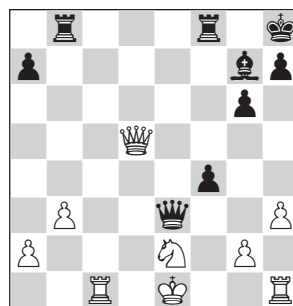
19.♙a4 ♗xe2 20.♗xe2 fxe5

21.♙xc6 exf4 22.♙xd5+ ♖h8

23.♙ac1

White doesn't have any defense.

23...♙e3+ 24.♙e1



24...f3!

24...♖be8 24.♔d2 gives White more hope of defending.

25.gxf3 ♖be8

This threatens checkmate and

26...♔xc1+.

26.♔d2 ♔xf3

White resigned since 27.♖g1 ♔f2+ 28.♔d1 ♖d8, winning the queen, or 28...♖xe2 followed by taking the rook would both leave him down too much material.

0-1

The following is a great attacking game where a **master** uses a dangerous **gambit** to unleash a deadly attack on Black's uncastled king. There are many instructive tactical themes in this game.

Game 17 Sicilian Defense

Leroy Dubeck

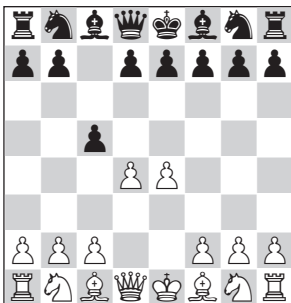
Raymond Weinstein

New Jersey 1958

1.e4 c5

Black plays the Sicilian Defense, breaking the symmetry on move one.

2.d4



This is the Smith-Morra Gambit.

White wants to sacrifice a pawn to begin attacking immediately.

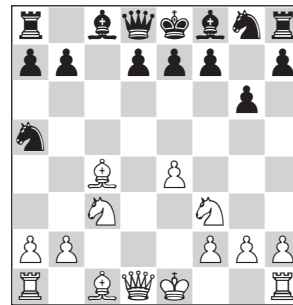
2...cxd4

Black accepts the **gambit**.

3.c3 dxc3 4.♗xc3 ♗c6 5.♗f3 g6

6.♕c4 ♗a5?

Black had to keep **developing** with 6...♕g7. It is dangerous to move the same piece twice in the **opening**, especially against a **gambit!**



7.♔d4!

White immediately grabs the important a1-h8 diagonal before Black can place a bishop on it.

7...f6

7...♗f6 would run into the typical move 8.e5.

8.0-0 ♗h6?

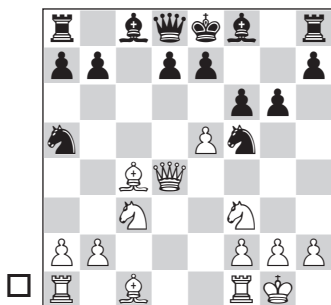
Where else can the knight go?

It was better to play 8...d6 first though, in order to prevent what happened in the game.

9.e5

This is a common move in such positions. White is trying to blast open the center now that White's king is safe.

9...♗f5



Question: Can you find a good intermediate move for White?

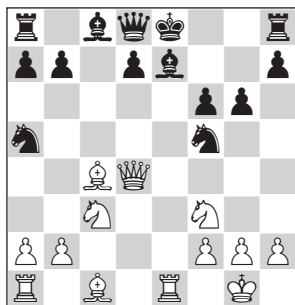
10.exf6!

This is the most direct way to take advantage of Black's king in the center.

10...exf6

10...♞xd4 would allow the embarrassing mate with a pawn after 11.f7#.

11.♖e1+ ♕e7

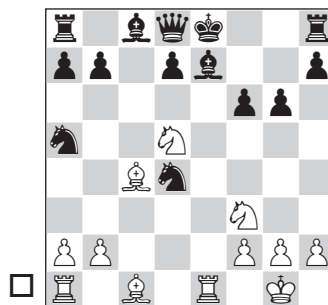


12.♘d5!

White makes another **intermediate move**, again allowing the queen to be taken.

12...♖f8

Question: How would White win after 12...♞xd4 ?



analysis diagram

Answer: 13.♞xf6+ ♖f8 14.♕h6#. Does this pattern look familiar from Chapter 2?

13.♞xe7!

White really wants to sacrifice his queen!

Question: What happens now after 13...♞xd4 ?

Answer: 14.♕h6+ ♖g8 15.♞xf6# and it's again mate in 2.

13...♞xe7

And still the queen cannot be taken, since after 13...♞xd4 White can mate in a way we are familiar with by now: 14.♕h6+ ♖g8 15.♞xf6#.

14.♕h6+ ♖e8

14...♞xh6 would allow White to safely take Black's queen now that his own is not in jeopardy, while 14...♖f7 would allow the **discovered checks** 15.♞xf6+ or 15.♞xe7+, just taking the queen with the knight.

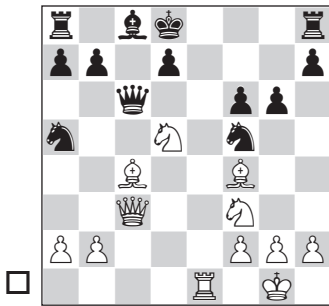
15.♞c3

White finally needs to move the queen.

15... ♔d6

Black has to move his queen too.

16. ♖e1+ ♔d8 17. ♘f4 ♕c6



Now there is a nice finishing touch in this attacking miniature.

Conclusion

Many players will neglect castling. This is possible in some situations, but we want to be on the lookout for active moves that can expose an enemy king that remains uncastled for too long. Additionally, we want to ensure that we don't keep our king in the center for too long in the opening if there is a risk of the center exploding.

The following exercises consist of different themes. In some exercises, you will be asked how to take advantage of a king that hasn't castled. In others, the question will be whether or not the opponent's slowness in castling justifies an aggressive follow up.

Question: How can White force mate in 2?

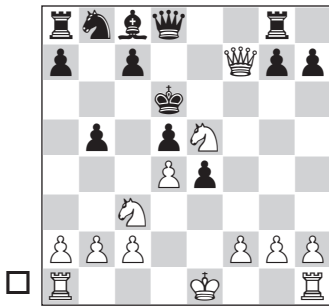
18. ♕xf6+!

Black resigned since this move **deflects** Black's queen. After 18... ♕xf6, 19. ♘c7 is checkmate. The final position may remind some of you of The Immortal Game – Anderssen-Kiezieritsky, London 1851. That game itself will be examined in Volume 2.

1-0

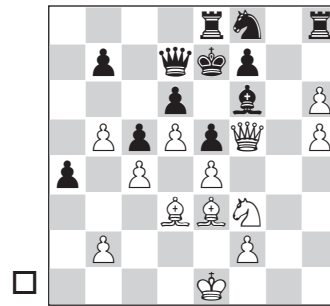
Take advantage of a king that didn't castle by forcing checkmate:

Exercise 49



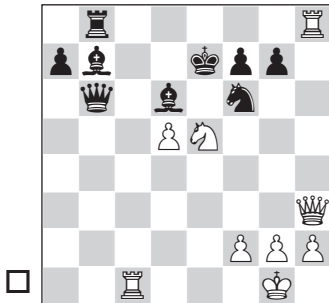
Checkmate in 1 move

Exercise 50



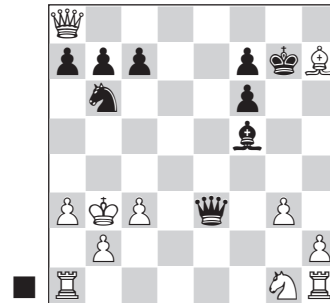
Checkmate in 2 moves

Exercise 51



Checkmate in 2 moves

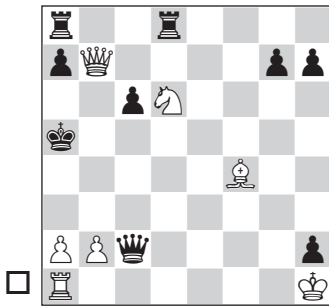
Exercise 52



Checkmate in 3 moves

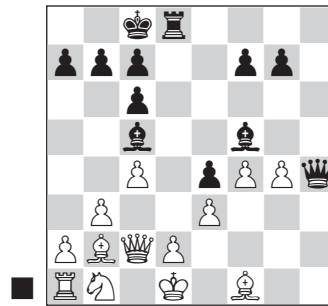
Take advantage of a king that didn't castle by forcing checkmate:

Exercise 53



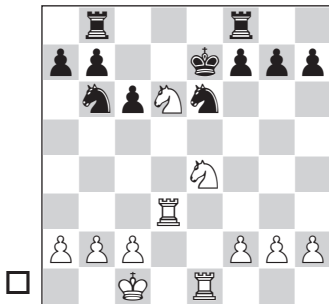
Checkmate in 3 moves

Exercise 54



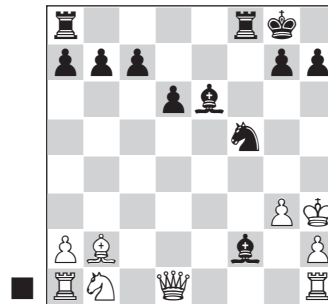
Checkmate in 3 moves

Exercise 55



Checkmate in 4 moves

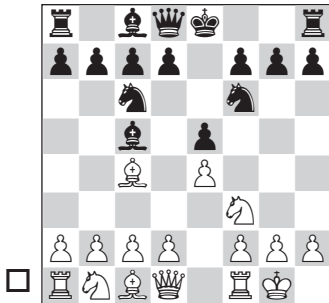
Exercise 56



Checkmate in 4 moves

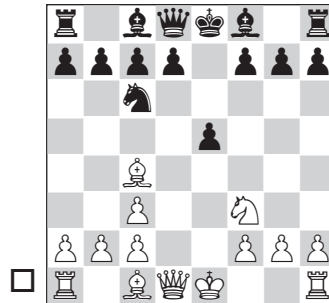
In each of the following positions, state whether the given move for the given side is good or bad (i.e. is it too soon to attack?, is it possible to get to the uncastled king?):

Exercise 57



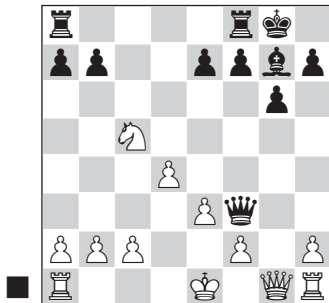
Should White play 1.♘g5 ?

Exercise 58



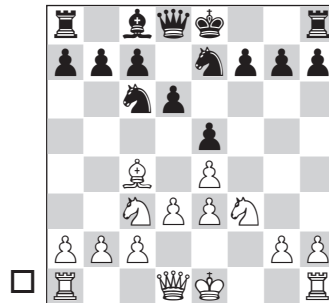
Should White play 1.♘g5 ?

Exercise 59



Should Black play 1...e5 ?

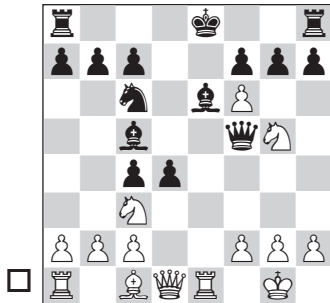
Exercise 60



Should White play 1.♘g5 ?

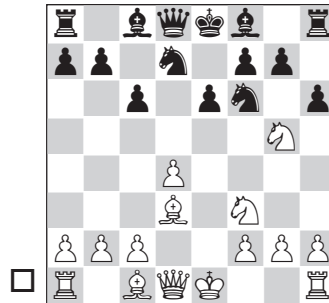
In each of the following famous games or positions, state whether the given move for the given side is good or bad (i.e., is it too soon to attack or is it possible to get to the uncastled king?):

Exercise 61



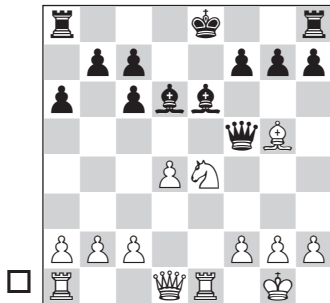
Should White play 1.g4 ?

Exercise 62



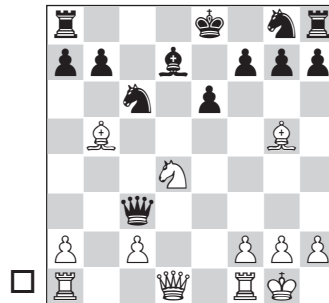
Should White play 1.♘xe6 ?

Exercise 63



Should White play 1.g4 ?

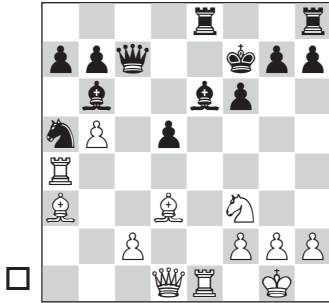
Exercise 64



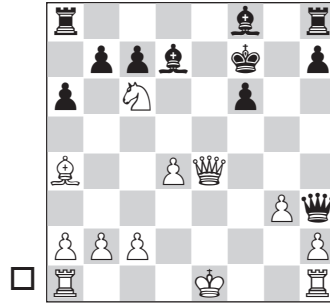
Should White play 1.♘f5 ?

In each of the following games involving world champions, how did the given side finish the game by targeting the opponent's uncastled king? It does not need to force checkmate.

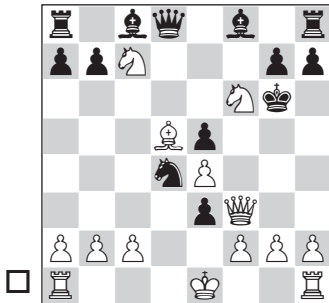
Exercise 65



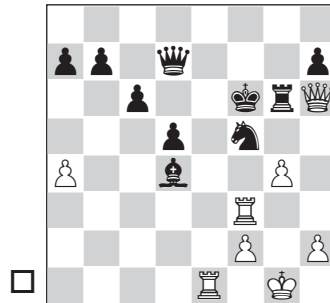
Exercise 66



Exercise 67



Exercise 68



CHAPTER 8

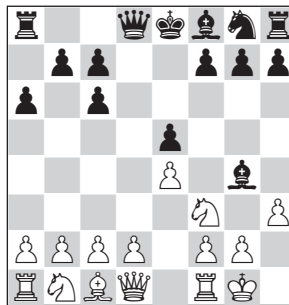
The Fishing Pole

Introduction

The Fishing Pole is one of the most dangerous traps right out of the opening, though it can even be used late into the middlegame. Most of the time, it happens in the Ruy Lopez. However, it has been used both by White and by Black in nearly every opening.

I refer to the Fishing Pole in my classes whenever one side sacrifices a minor piece (bishop or knight) in order to open up the opponent's file next to a castled king (normally the h-file). One side puts out a piece as bait and 'fishes' for a weakness around the enemy king to go after in an attack. The clever name can be traced to National Master Jack Young.

I also like this idea as a way to try to turn an opponent's strength into a weakness, and one's own weakness into a strength. What I mean by that is that the side using the idea waits for the opponent to castle. That 'strength' (the opponent's king safety) can be turned into his demise. Our own 'weakness' (not having castled) can be turned into our biggest advantage by using our rook's ability to attack on the open file next to the enemy king. That would not have been possible if the rook had moved during castling. Let's first see what it looks like:



Here is one of the most common positions in the Exchange Variation of the Ruy Lopez. Black has just played **5...Bg4** and White has tried to deal with the **relative pin** by kicking the bishop with the good move **6.h3**. In the above position, the best move is **6...h5!**. Black has used the bishop to fish for a weakness in White's position. If White takes the bait (the bishop) then the h-file will open up and White will be in big trouble. This position will be analyzed in more depth below.

Many games have ended quickly due to the **Fishing Pole**. Even early computers, playing at **grandmaster** strength otherwise, would often fall into it. Let's first look at the example from the introduction.

Game 42 Ruy Lopez

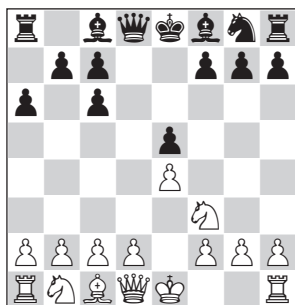
Aleksey Gusev 2329

Lenar Murzin 2257

Tula 2000 (7)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙xc6 dxc6

Normally, when two different pawns can capture a piece, it is best to take away from the center only when it opens up the diagonal for the bishop. We have seen this many times in other games.



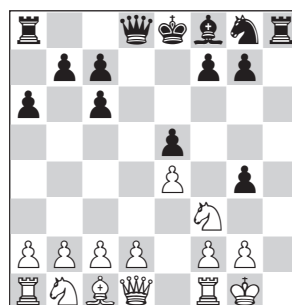
5.0-0 ♙g4 6.h3 h5!

Rather than move the bishop, Black doubles down and simply defends it with the h-pawn.

7.hxg4??

This is a blunder. White will now be helpless on the h-file. White should have played 7.d3 which renews the threat of capturing the bishop with 8.hxg4 since after 8...hxg4, White will now have the blocking move

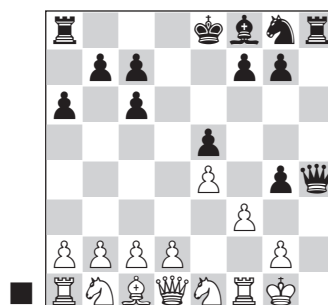
9.♘g5. So, after 7.d3 the move 7...♙f6! will again make the capture on g4 bad. White will have to play 9.♘bd2, 10.♙e1 and 11.♘f1 before hxg4 is finally threatened. The reason is that after hxg4 ...hxg4 White will be able to play ♘f3-h2 and on ...♙d8-h4, White can defend the h2-knight with the other knight after ♘d2-f1. When White finally threatens hxg4, Black will capture on f3 and ruin White's pawn structure. This is one of the main lines in **master** games. **7...hxg4**



This position has occurred many times and even the early chess computers would often lose like this, as mentioned before.

8.d4

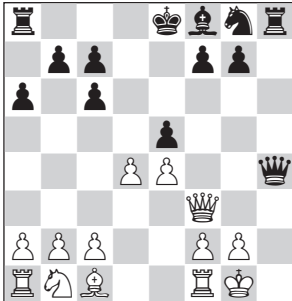
If 8.♘e1 ♙h4 9.f3...



Question: ... how does Black win?

Answer: After 9...g3, keeping the king trapped in the box, 10...♖h1# is unstoppable.

8...gxf3 9.♖xf3 ♖h4



10.g3

10.♖h3 ♖xh3 11.gxh3 exd4 leaves Black up material and positionally winning.

10...♖h2# 0-1

Before we get to more advanced positions using the **Fishing Pole**, here is an amusing game which I have seen occur about half a dozen times in class. This game is important for knowing what to avoid, instead of an example of good use of the **Fishing Pole** trap.

Game 43 Italian Game

Student A

Student B

DOCA Classes

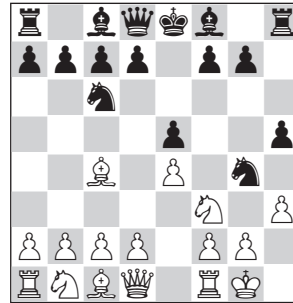
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♘f6

Black has obviously become so enamored by the idea of the **Fishing Pole** that he has decided to allow 4.♘g5.

4.0-0 ♘g4?

This is not a good move, but it I have seen it work in my classes and even in a tournament or two.

5.h3 h5?

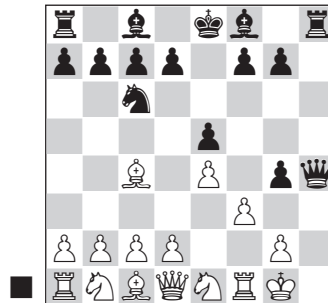


Black really wants to make this trap work...maybe he just saw this idea in class for the first time...

6.hxg4??

If White does anything but take the knight, his position is winning.

6...hxg4 7.♘e1 ♖h4 8.f3



White's king will run away to f2 next if Black plays 8...♖h1+.

Question: How can Black prevent this?

8...g3!

The king is stuck in the box. This is even stronger than 8...♙c5+. Now there's no way to avoid 9...♖h1#.

9.d4

I saw one game where a student played 9. ♖xf7+ with the idea of stalling an extra move or so.

9... ♚h1# 0-1

Obviously, this game has some flaws. As mentioned in the beginning, it is important to know what to avoid when the opponent is obsessed with the **Fishing Pole**.

Here is a **blitz game** between two very strong **Grandmasters**. Even though it's just a **blitz game**, it shows that White has to be very careful about taking the bishop on g4, even later than in our previous game.

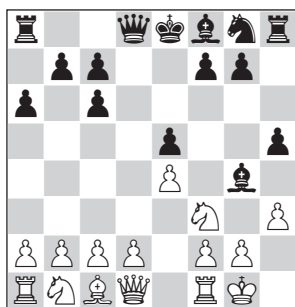
Game 44 Ruy Lopez

Giovanni Vescovi 2648

Murtas Kazhgaleyev 2596

ACP Blitz 2004 (3)

1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♖b5 a6 4. ♗xc6 dxc6 5.0-0 ♗g4 6.h3 h5!



7.d3

Obviously, this is much better than 7.hxg4?? as in the previous game. Now, White is threatening 8.hxg4 since after 8...hxg4, 9. ♘g5 will stop

the black queen from moving to h4. Since it will defend the knight on g5, the bishop on c1 is the key defender.

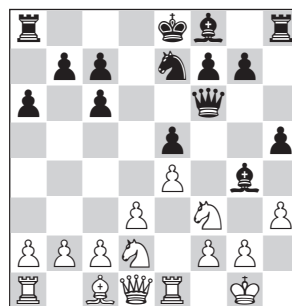
7... ♚f6

Black finds a different path to the h-file for the queen in the event that White captures the bishop on g4.

8. ♘bd2

8.hxg4?? hxg4 9. ♘g5 ♚h6 (the reason the queen wanted to be on f6) 10. ♘h3 (with a **discovered attack** on the queen) 10... ♚h5 and White's king is in big trouble.

8... ♘e7 9. ♖e1



White really wants to force the bishop on g4 to do something. White may move the queen's knight to f1 to defend, now that the rook has moved to e1.

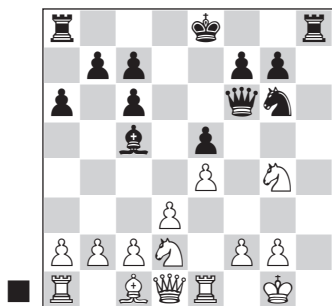
9... ♘g6 10.hxg4??

It's still too soon to take the bishop! 10.d4 is supposed to be White's best move. If 10. ♘f1, then 10... ♗xf3 11. ♚xf3 ♚xf3 12.gxf3 ♘h4 and Black is already better.

10...hxg4 11. ♘h2 ♗c5!

Black is threatening to take the f-pawn as well as playing 12...g3.

12. ♘xg4



Question: White was losing anyway, but this allows forced mate in 4. Can you find it?

12... ♖h4 **13.** ♔f1 ♚h1+

13... ♘f4 is also mate in 3, but it's always safer to force checkmate with a series of checks, giving the opponent less possible moves.

14. ♔e2 ♘f4+ **15.** ♔f3 ♚xg2#

15... ♖h3 is also checkmate since the pawn on g2 is stuck in an **absolute pin**.

0-1

Let's look at a great example of the **Fishing Pole** from the fourth World Champion, Alexander Alekhine.

Game 45 Ruy Lopez

Alexander Alekhine

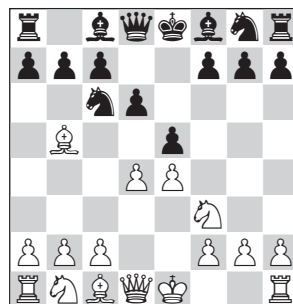
Heinz van Mindeno

Amsterdam 1933

1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 **3.** ♙b5 d6 **4.d4**

White aggressively expands in the center, skipping the usual preparatory 4.c3. We can compare this to Philidor's Defense after 1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 d6 3.d4. Since Black

has been passive, White can be aggressive.



4...exd4 5. ♚xd4

Of course, 5. ♘xd4 is more normal, attacking the pinned piece. Black would reply 5... ♙d7. Why would the World Champion move the queen out early? The only good reason is that he wanted to castle **queenside**. This was a **simultaneous game** so Alekhine wanted to try to win as quickly as possible.

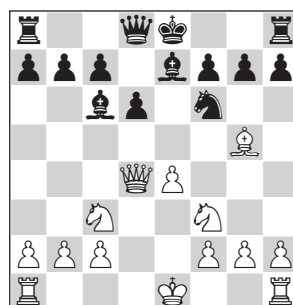
5...♙d7

Black breaks the **pin** on the c6-knight.

6. ♙xc6

White doesn't want to lose time by moving the queen again.

6...♙xc6 7. ♘c3 ♘f6 **8.** ♙g5 ♙e7



White enjoys a space advantage while Black's pieces are passively

placed. The c6-bishop in particular is too far from the light squares on the **kingside**, in particular the a2-g8 diagonal.

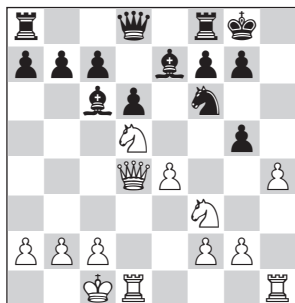
9.0-0-0 0-0 10.h4

Since the kings are castled on opposite sides, White starts the typical **pawn storm**.

10...h6 11.♘d5!?

This is another version of the **Fishing Pole**. White offers a piece in exchange for an open h-file on which he can quickly double his rooks. This move is a mistake, but it is very tricky. Again, White was playing a **simultaneous game** and wanted to win as quickly as possible.

11...hxg5



Black takes the bait.

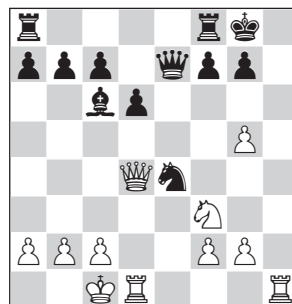
12.♗xe7+

12.hxg5 was stronger, but then 12...♗xd5 13.exd5 ♔xg5+ and Black is better.

12...♖xe7 13.hxg5 ♗xe4?

13...♗h7! would have begun an instructive consolidating maneuver. The black knight then goes to g6 via f8 and defends the critical h8-square, the square on which the

entire white attack is riding. After 13...♗h7 14.♖h4 ♖fe8 15.g6 (15.♖dh1 ♔xe4!) 15...♗f8! 16.gxf7 ♖xf7, 17.♖dh1 is answered by 17...♗g6. Black would be winning after this, but it doesn't take away from the creativity of Alekhine's idea.



14.♖h5

This is a dual-purpose move. White threatens to double rooks and simultaneously defends g5. As logical as this move is, as we will see, it did give Black a chance to defend. Instead, playing 14.♖h2 or 14.♖h3 was better. If Black takes the pawn with 14...♗xg5 then 15.♖h8+!! ♗xh8 16.♖h4 is strong.

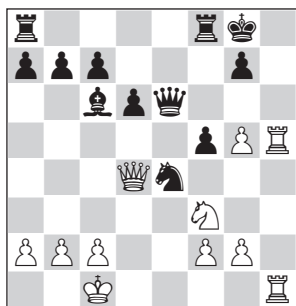
14...♖e6

Black wanted to defend against g5-g6. However, 14...f5 15.g6 ♖f6 16.♖dh1 ♖xg6 17.♗e5 ♖xh5! saves Black. This defense wouldn't be possible if the rook were on h2 or h3.

15.♖dh1 f5

Question: What happens on 15...f6 ?

Answer: 16.g6, keeping the king trapped.

**16. ♖e5!**

This is an amazing **deflection!**

After this White's threats are overwhelming. The mating net will be completed by playing the typical pawn advance g5-g6 and there will be no defense. The black queen is **overloaded**, having to defend g6 and the a2-g8 diagonal.

16. ♖c4 wouldn't work because Black can at least capture on c4 and then deflect the rook after 17.g6 ♖f1+.

16...dxe5

If 16... ♖xe5, White plays 17.g6 followed by 18. ♖h8, an unstoppable checkmate.

17.g6

17. ♖c4 ♖xc4 18.g6 ♖f1+ still doesn't work for White. 17. ♖xe5, trying to **deflect** the queen from defending against g5-g6, doesn't work either as 17... ♖xe5 18.g6 ♖f4+ and then 19... ♖h6 wins for Black.

17... ♖xg6 18. ♖c4+ 1-0

Black resigned since mate can't be stopped. After the check is blocked on f7 then ♖h5-h8 will be mate. If the black pawn were back on d6 then he could block with ...d6-d5. This was the ingenious point behind the move 16. ♖e5!

It's time for an amazing example of the **Fishing Pole** from one of our students. Incidentally, Daniel won in exactly the same way against many players who actually knew the **Fishing Pole** idea. The way he deployed it, it doesn't actually work, but it's hard to figure out the reason why.

Game 46 Italian Game

Daniel Shen 771

Aanish Vallabheneni 764

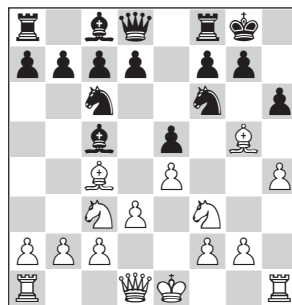
New Jersey 2014 (2)

1.e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♖c4 ♖c5 4.d3 ♖f6 5. ♖c3

White has transposed into a Four Knights Defense.

5...0-0

It's possible to just play 5...d6, but 5...0-0 can't be bad!

6. ♖g5 h6 7.h4??

Here we see a clever, albeit not entirely correct example of the **Fishing Pole!**

White has waited for Black to castle in order to turn Black's strength into a weakness. I had my doubts that this should work here because the white queen's diagonal

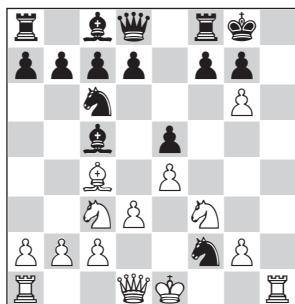
to h5 is blocked by the knight on f3.

7...hxg5

Black accepts the gift. 7...♙e7 is the safe move, but it looks like Black now wins.

8.hxg5 ♘g4 9.g6 ♘xf2??

It seems like Black is winning even more material but, as we will see, Black's eagerness will be penalized. Instead, 9...d5 or 9...♙xf2+ wins for Black, but it doesn't take away from White's idea.



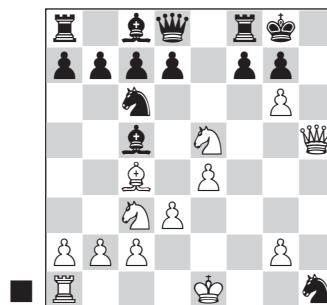
10.♘xe5!

This shocker is the winning move. Black played 9...♘xf2?? in order to make a **double attack**. Not only did White ignore the two attacked pieces, but he puts yet another one in danger!

10...♘xd1

Black goes for the queen but now a checkmate in 5 is forced. Before we get there, we will consider the alternative captures. Taking the rook doesn't work either, as after 10...♘xh1 11.gxf7+ White is winning.

Surprisingly, 11.♙h5 lets Black off with a **deflection** and then a **double attack**.

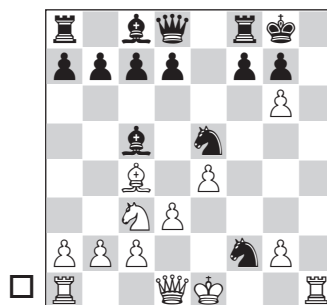


analysis diagram

Question: Can you find how?

Answer: 11...♙h4+ 12.♙xh4 ♙f2+ and the game continues.

If 10...♘xe5...



analysis diagram

Question: ... find mate in 3.

Answer: 11.♖h8+ (a **decoy**) followed by ♙h5-h7#. 11.♙h5 is slower.

