



BOOK REVIEWS



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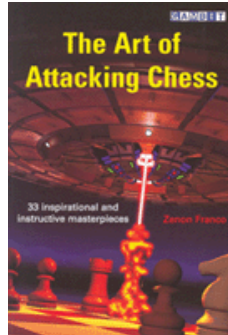
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A Worthwhile Collection

Steve Goldberg

The Art of Attacking Chess, by Zenon Franco, 2008 Gambit Publications Ltd., Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 255pp., \$31.95

Gambit Publications has produced a number of annotated game collections, along a variety of themes. A few come quickly to mind: [50 Essential Chess Lessons](#), [50 Ways to Win at Chess](#), [Grandmaster Chess Move by Move](#), [Grandmaster Secrets: Winning Quickly at Chess](#), [How to Crush Your Chess Opponents](#). What these all have in common, besides inviting covers and excellent production, are highly instructive annotations. Game notes are heavily weighted toward explanations and tactical and strategic concerns, as opposed to just dense variations.



The Art of Attacking Chess is another Gambit book along this same model. The author is Zenon Franco, a grandmaster and chess trainer from Paraguay. Thirty-three complete games are carefully analyzed, in addition to a number of “supplemental” games or game segments. The Table of Contents indicates how the games are organized:

- 1 The King in the Centre
- 2 Opposite-Side Castling
- 3 Attacking the Castled King (Same-Side Castling)
- 4 Exploiting Temporary Advantages
- 5 Horwitz Bishops
- 6 Miscellaneous Themes

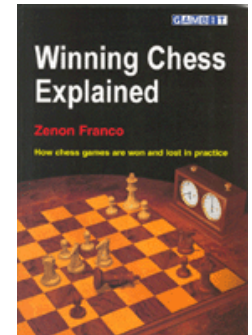
In his Introduction, the author gives his readers a hint at what they can expect from the book:

There are certain set-ups which clearly force you to attack; a familiar one is where the kings are castled on opposite wings, when victory often goes to the side who wins the attacking race. Another obvious example is when one side has the bishop-pair aimed along open diagonals at the enemy’s castled position, or similarly an open file facing the enemy’s castled position ... In this book we shall not only see games with brilliant conclusions but also examine the different stages in the creation of these finishes.

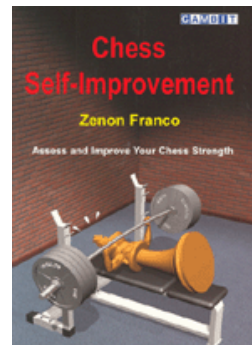
In addition to the heavily annotated games, each chapter concludes with a number of exercises in which the reader is presented with a position and asked how to proceed. These exercises are drawn from actual tournament games, and the author provides nearly as much explanation in the exercise solutions as in the main text. A full fifty-four pages are devoted to the solutions.

Franco’s game annotations are extensive enough that it is impractical to include all of his notes for an entire game, but I’ll present a couple snippets to demonstrate what readers will find in the book.

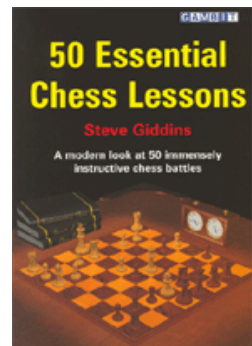
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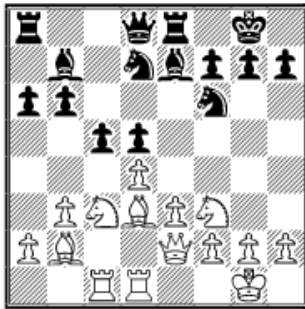


[Chess Self-Improvement](#)
by Zenon Franco



[50 Essential Chess Lessons](#)
by Steve Giddins

In Game 24, Gulko-Ehlvest, Horgen 1995, White has just played **13.Rfd1** to reach the following position:



This natural move is an error, which might seem surprising, since how can it be bad to centralize a rook, and at the same time create pressure against the black queen?

The weakness of this move does not lie so much in the move itself, which viewed in isolation is a good one, but in the fact that it takes no account of what Black can play. This highlights the usefulness of 'prophylactic thinking,' as discussed by Dvoretsky in his books. It is important to keep asking yourself "what can my opponent do, or what does he want to do?"

If the opponent's planned move cannot be prevented, or is not harmful to us, we should continue with our own plans relatively independently. But if the opponent intends to play something unpleasant, it is essential to react accordingly, if possible with a move that advances our own plans and at the same time removes the venom from the opponent's idea.

White is planning Ne5, when exchanging knights on e5 would be inadvisable for Black on account of the pressure from the d1-rook. How can Black reduce White's prospects?

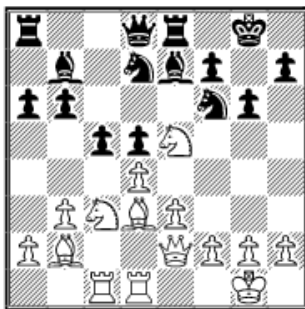
13...g6!

Black could prevent Ne5 with 13...Bd6, but the seemingly modest text-move is more ambitious: Black prepares a reply to 14.Ne5, while the future of the d3-bishop will be very poor after this excellent move; its activity is now restricted on both diagonals, by the g6- and a6-pawns.

Neutralizing the d3-bishop is much more important than the weakness created on the long dark diagonal, because White does not have enough pieces to exploit this, and because opening the diagonal with dxc5 would leave Black with strong hanging pawns. The strength of these pawns in similar positions where White (in this case) is not in a position to attack them can be seen by comparing the position with that in Game 22.

As well as simply restricting the d3-bishop, ...g6 has other virtues, as we shall see. Looking back, it is now clear that the right move was 13.Bf5! instead of 13.Rfd1?!, so that the bishop could remain active on the h3-c8 diagonal.

14.Ne5



This was the idea of White's previous move. Now White wants to play 15.f4, fortifying the strong e5-knight.

14...cxd4!

It is always difficult to know the right moment to resolve the central tension. Here Black has a concrete idea to combat White's plan to entrench the e5-knight.

15.exd4 Nh5!

This is the other part of Black's defensive concept. White has weakened the f4-square and now, unexpectedly, we see another virtue of 13...g6!:

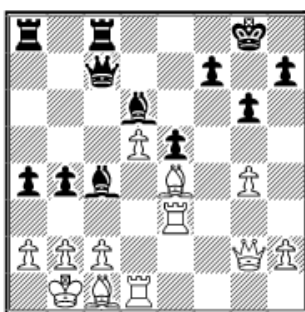
control of the h5-square. The late Spanish GM David Garcia Ilundain used to emphasize that good moves have additional and unexpected virtues.

The game continues, with three more pages of notes, until White resigns after Black's thirty-first move. A nice feature is that after each of the thirty-three primary games, Franco includes brief notes summarizing the lessons to be gained from that particular encounter, similar to Steve Giddins' [50 Essential Chess Lessons](#).

As an aside, it may be helpful to briefly define the term "Horwitz Bishops," since the above game segment comes from this chapter. The author explains:

Aron Nimzowitsch defined 'Horwitz Bishops' as "two bishops raking two adjacent diagonals and thus together bombarding the enemy's castled position" and he gave as an example white bishops placed at b2 and d3.

Let's also take a look at one of the seventy-three exercises. It is Black to move in this position from Honfi-Tal, Sukhumi 1972:

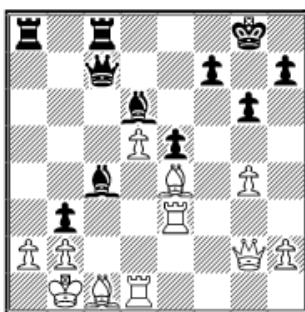


Black has made great progress with his attack and now opens lines in the typical manner.

25...b3!? 26.cxb3

If 26.Rc3 bxa2+ 27.Ka1 Qa5 Black's attack is extremely dangerous in Tal's opinion; Black has in his favor the b-file, the latent threat of ...a3, and the possible tour ...Bc5-d4.

26...axb3



27.axb3?

White should keep the a-file closed with 27.a3! Then 27...Bxd5!? must be met by 28.Rc3 (28.Bxd5?? Qc2+), when Black is only a little better due to the more exposed white king.

27...Be2!

A beautiful sacrifice clearing the c-file, which also pulls the white queen onto an unprotected square.

28.Qxe2

If 28.Rc3 Bxd1 29.Rxc7 Rxc7 the two rooks are much stronger than the queen, because of the exposed position of the king; the threats are ...Bxb3 and also the attack with Rca7.

28...Qa5 29.Rc3 Qa2+ 30.Kc2 Rxc3+ 31.Kxc3 Bb4+

This sacrifice is the key to the whole combination.

32.Kxb4

Of course if 32.Kd3 then 32...Qxb3#.

32...Qa5+ 33.Kc4 Qa6+ 0-1

Some of the games included in *The Art of Attacking Chess* will have been

previously seen by readers, other games probably not. But any well-annotated collection is worthwhile. When I compared a couple games that I had encountered in other books, it was apparent that each author had some unique contributions to make.

Working through Franco's notes in this collection presents an excellent opportunity for the reader to grasp a bit of the thought process of a grandmaster. His discussions of piece placement, proper exchanges, awareness of the opponent's intentions, and developing and executing correct plans provide essential lessons for any chess player. For intermediate and advanced players especially, *The Art of Attacking Chess* will be a welcome addition to one's chess library.

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by Zenon Franco

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