



BOOK REVIEWS



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Beware the Bishop!

Steve Goldberg

Bxh7+, by David Rudel, 2010 Thinkers' Press, Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 186pp. \$14.99 (ChessCafe Price: \$12.59)

Author David Rudel writes that while working on his previous book [The Moment of Zuke](#), he had an eye-opening experience. "I wasn't surprised by the number of times Bxh7+ occurred in high-level games – it is not for nothing that the Greek Gift is well known. Rather, it was the play afterward that I had not expected...It isn't that somehow strong players lose their ability to analyze once the Trojan horse was munching on h7-grass. Rather, the material, drawn almost exclusively from expert level or higher games, suggested the players were using their raw (generally good) analysis skills without having spent much focused training on the sacrifice. There are a bundle of tips and tricks that are useful to know (on both sides of the board), and it seems that kit bag is not widely assimilated among chess players."

After a brief introduction, Rudel divides the book into five "modules," in which he examines a particular aspect of the Bxh7 sacrifice. The table of contents makes this more clear:

- **Part I**
 - Module 1: Early Colle Blundersaults
 - Module 2: French Advance Blundersaults
 - Module 3: The Double-Bishop Sac
- **Part II**
 - Module 4: Bxh7+ with a Knight on e5
 - Module 5: The Classic Bishop Sacrifice

Each module consists of several pages of instruction which help the reader to identify when the position is ripe for this move, and when it is not. Specific "tips and tricks" are provided in each case, and each module concludes with a series of exercises. For each position presented, the reader has to decide if Black is safe, or if White can proceed with the Bxh7+ move, and why or why not. Rudel provides clear and concise solutions for each problem he poses.

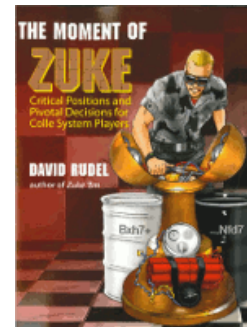
In total, 116 such exercises are included in the book. The ambitious reader who has worked through each problem may well be seeing Bxh7+ in his or her dreams.

Let's take a quick look at a small bit of instruction from Module 2 – "French Blundersaults." Rudel presents a generic position from the French Defense:



Rudel writes, "It's not hard to see why this opening theoretically allows for

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[The Moment of Zuke](#)
by David Rudel



[Zuke Em](#)
by David Rudel



[The Colle System](#)
by Nigel Davies

frequent bishop sacrifices – White's pawn on e5 prevents Black from placing a knight on f6 to defend h7... In particular, if all the following are true, you can be reasonably sure castling is a very bad idea for Black:

- White can play Bxh7+ and safely play Ng5+ without being captured.
- White has pawns at d4 and e5.
- White's dark-squared bishop can legally move to h6.

Neither Black's queen nor bishop could get to the b1-h7 diagonal if given one free move."

He continues, "If the above are true, then under anything approximating classical opening moves... the sacrifice should always bring White an advantage. Most of the time this happens early in the game, and the plan for White is straight forward. This module investigates those cases."

The next several pages go on to examine various such permutations, followed by twelve related exercises, including the following:



The last moves were 7.Nf3 Nge7 8.Bd3 0-0 and the reader must decide if Black is safe or not, and why or why not.

In his answer, Rudel provides the game score that led to this position, as well as the following responses:

Is Black Safe? **No**

Commentary: All the requirements are met to allow a quick French Advance Blundersault. Since White has not castled, the reliable way to obtain an advantage involves ramming the h-pawn into Black's face.

Analysis, Variations, and Notes:

9.Bxh7+ Kxh7 10.Ng5+ Kg6

10...Kg8 11.Qh5 Re8 12.Qh7+ Kf8 13.Qh8+ Ng8 14.Nh7+ Ke7 15.Bg5+ Nf6 16.Qxg7 Kd7 17.Nxf6+ Kc7.

11.h4 Qa5

11...Qe8 12.h5+ Kh6 13.Qg4 threatening Nxe6+ with Qxg7# to follow. 13...Rg8 14.Nge4+ Kh7 15.h6 threatening hxg7+ and Nf6+;

12.h5+ Kh6 13.Qd3 threatening Qh7+. **13...Nf5 14.g4** White will get back his material plus interest.

A similar pattern follows for all of the other exercises in the book, with each exercise posing a slightly different set of circumstances so that the reader begins to assimilate the basic elements within each module.

Rudel rightly asks the question, "But is it worth spending a bunch of energy on a sacrifice that you might only face or use in one game out of a hundred?" He answers, "That's a fair question. Of course, if you play the Colle, French, or some other opening given to frequent bishop sacs, it's obvious that special study of Bxh7+ is valuable... Even if the number of times the actual sacrifice

hits the board is small, the number of times it is an option is significantly larger. Considering the frequency one has to consider the sacrifice (on both offense and defense) and the value in terms of peace-of-mind and confidence in practical play, devoting some time to the sacrifice is a legitimate way of increasing one's overall chess preparation."

And that's where this book comes in. Requiring a relatively moderate amount of time and effort that is not overly taxing, the author claims that "you can see pretty much every important trick, trap, and idea there is to know about the Greek Gift."

At the very least, the reader will likely enjoy exploring so many facets of this fun sacrifice. But be careful to heed Rudel's warnings – if not used under the proper conditions, you might end up sacrificing your king rather than just the bishop!

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by David Rudel

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