



Chess Master vs. Amateur

Quote of the Month: *You learn more when your mistakes are identified and punished.*

It's time for some Novice Nook games! This month features a fun match played between myself and an amateur who challenged me to some games at our Main Line Chess Club. He wanted Black in each game, and no clock, to provide himself with the maximum test. We played five instructive games at a relatively quickly pace, so the overall caliber of play might be spottier than in a serious tournament.

COLUMNISTS

Novice Nook

Dan Heisman

In each game I will identify the major "guideline violations" made by my opponent. At the very least, the games should give those who like to play ...a6 and ...h6, at every opportunity, reasons to hesitate before doing so!

Heisman,D – Amateur

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 e6?

Guideline violations: 1. Don't allow your knight to be pushed out of the center by pawn moves. 2. Trade flank pawns for center ones. Standard is 3...cxd4.

4.d5 exd5

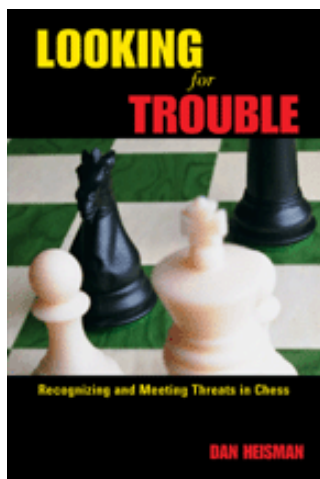
Guideline violations: Don't open lines for the better developed player. Here White will make better use of the open file, while Black wastes time moving his knight again.

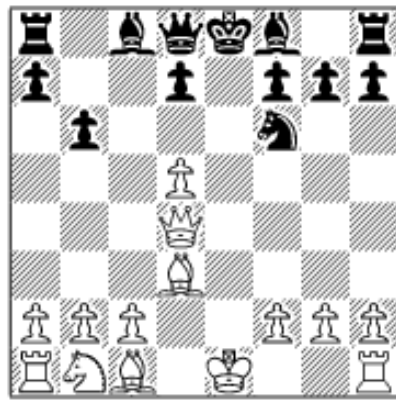
5.exd5 Nd4?

Guideline violations: Don't give up material unnecessarily. This is a Counting mistake and Black loses a pawn. At the master level this position is already won for White! Black was better off moving his knight wherever it was safe.

6.Nxd4 cxd4 7.Qxd4 Nf6 8.Bd3 b6??

Guideline violations: 1. Make sure your pieces have escape squares. 2. Castle as quickly as possible, especially if your opponent has a lead in development. 3. Don't waste time with unnecessary pawn moves. Don't play "Hope Chess" where you wait until after your opponent makes a threat and only then realize you can't meet it.





White to move

9.d6! White threatens a check on the e-file and Black needs to move his queen so that he can respond with 10...Kd8, but 9...b6 blocked the escape. Therefore, White alertly wins a piece with 9.d6!

9...Bxd6 Black gives up the piece immediately, but now he is fatally weak on the dark squares. Against a strong opponent you can resign in good conscience in such positions! If you win once in a thousand games because he has a heart attack, it wasn't worth it!

10.Qxd6 Bb7 Black can avert a big disaster by trading queens with 10...Qe7+, but since you don't want to trade when you are losing, he is between a rock and a hard place.

11.0-0 Bd5 12.Re1+ Be6 13.b3 White prepares the final onslaught on the dark squares.

13...Rc8 14.Bb5 Stopping 14...Rc6. With this much of a lead there is no need to protect the pawn on c2.

14...Rxc2 This was the last chance to play 14...Qe7, but it did not matter that much.

15.Ba3 Qc7 Black gets mated; also hopeless was 15...Ng8 16.Qf8#; 15...Nd5 16.Qxd5; 15...Rc5 16.Nc3+- and if 16...Rxc3? 17.Rxe6+ fxe6 18.Qxe6+ Qe7 19.Qxe7#; and 15...h6 Or any other random move, 16.Rxe6+ fxe6 17.Qxe6+ Qe7 18.Qxe7#

16.Qe7# 1-0

Heisman,D – Amateur

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 g6 Black attempts to improve by developing his kingside faster. This opening is called the Hyper-Accelerated Dragon. **3.d4 cxd4 4.Qxd4** This is better than 4.Nxd4 because it forces Black to decide how to safeguard his rook.

4...f6 More common is 4...Nf6.

5.Bc4 Bg7 6.0-0± Nh6 Black intends ...Nf7 and ...O-O – I think! Note that

this move does NOT violate the guideline “Develop your pieces toward the center” because f6 is unavailable to the knight and after 4...f6 the light squares are weak, and ...Nh6-f7 will allow Black to castle. Yes, Nh6-f7 costs an extra tempo, but it’s the best solution Black has, and not castling could be disastrous.

7.Nc3 Nc6 8.Qd5 White forces Black to push yet another pawn and weaken his kingside further. If your opponent puts a lot of pawns on the third rank, this is usually ineffective, especially on the kingside.

8...e6 9.Qd3 Nf7 10.Bf4 h6?

Guideline violations: 1. Don’t make too many pawn moves in the opening. 2. Don’t push too many pawns to the 3rd rank because it weakens the other third rank squares (here g6). 3. Castle early if possible. 4. Don’t play ...a6 or ...h6 too early as it wastes time, and this often leads to problems the move was meant to prevent! Now Black is theoretically lost. But there is still the matter of winning the game for White.

11.Nb5 e5 12.Be3 In this quick game I miss the “removal of the guard” tactic on g6: 12.Bxf7+ Kxf7 13.Qd5+ Ke7 14.Nh4+-

12...d6



White to Move

13.Nh4! White puts his finger on Black’s problem.

13...g5 Black’s kingside looks like Swiss cheese: full of holes!

14.Qd5 Buddy Fritz points out that better is 14.Bxf7+ Kxf7 15.Qd5+ Be6 16.Nxd6+ Ke7 17.Nhf5+ Kd7 18.Qb5+-

14...Qd7 15.Nf5 Easier is the trick 15.Qxf7+ Qxf7 16.Nxd6+ Ke7 17.Nxf7+-

15...0-0 Finally – but too late to save the game.

16.Nbxd6 Nb4 17.Qd2 Nxc2?? Black miscalculates in a lost position. He tries an “overworked piece” combination but forgets the queen can safely capture since the knight on d6 is guarded by the other one posted on f5.

18.Qxc2 1–0*Heisman,D – Amateur*

1.e4 g6 Black tries to improve by fianchettoing even earlier! This opening is not a Sicilian, but rather a “Modern” or “King’s Fianchetto.”

2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 b6(?)

Guideline violations: Develop knights before bishops. Double fianchettoes, especially for Black, are usually questionable. It is better to develop a plan to attack the center with ...d6, or ...c6, or ...c5.

4.Bc4 Bb7 5.Nf3 e6?

Guideline violations: Don’t unnecessarily weaken the kingside dark squares. Better was 5...d6 or maybe even the center fork trick 5...Nxe4.

6.Bg5 f6

Guideline violations: Don’t make unnecessary pawn moves. Better was 6...Nge7.

7.Bf4 h6?

Guideline violations: Here we go again! 1. Don’t make unnecessary pawn moves. 2. Don’t unnecessarily weaken squares. Better is 7...d5 8.exd5 exd5 9.Bd3 Ne7 10.Nb5 Na6; or 7...Nh6 8.0–0 0–0

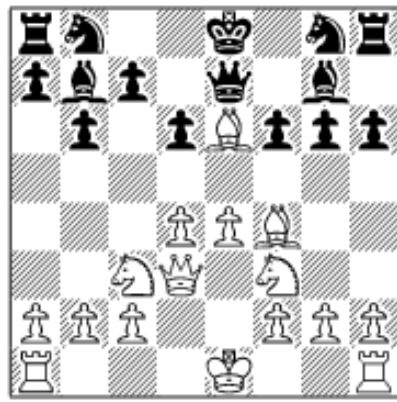
8.Qd3 Eyeing the weak g6-square again. Also good was 8.Nb5.

8...d6??

Guideline violations: 1. Don’t remove a defender and lose material. 2. Don’t put all your pawns on the third rank and weaken the third rank squares. This is getting to look like the weak Hippopotamus Defense, where all eight black pawns go to the third rank! Of course, Black is already theoretically lost. If 8...a6 9.Nd2 Ne7 10.Qg3+-

9.Bxe6 Qe7

The black knights continue to sleep.



White to Move

10.Nd5! A little tactical trick pattern. If 10...Qxe6?? 11.Nxc7+ wins the queen and if 10...Bxd5 11.exd5 holds the strong bishop on e6.

10...Qd8 11.e5 Line clearance.

11...dxe5 12.Qxg6+ 1-0

Heisman,D – Amateur

1.e4 c5 Back to the Sicilian!

2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nxd4?

Guideline violations: 1. Don't develop your opponent's pieces. 2. Move every piece once in the opening, before you move any piece twice, unless there is a tactic. Better is 4...e6, or 4...Nf6, or even 4...a6.

5.Qxd4 e6 6.Nc3 h6?

Guideline Violations: Black again follows the pattern of wasting time with ...a6 and ...h6. Rather than preventing invasions, the waste of time encourages them! For example, in such positions it is usually (but not always!) better to allow Bg5 than to waste time preventing it with ...h6! The general rule is:

If your opponent has another good square to develop a piece that can make a pin, then preventing him from implementing that pin by making an otherwise useless pawn move is usually just a waste of tempo.

For example, in this position White is happy with 7.Bf4, so why waste time preventing 7.Bg5?

7.Bf4 a6 8.0-0-0 Once again, White has a massive lead in development and an easy attack because of Black's consistent waste of tempos.

8...Ne7 9.Bc4 Fritz likes 9.Qa4±

9...Nc6 10.Qe3 e5?

Guideline violations: 1. Don't move pieces (or pawns!) twice in the opening unless there is a tactic. 2. Don't weaken your squares (here ...d5) unnecessarily.

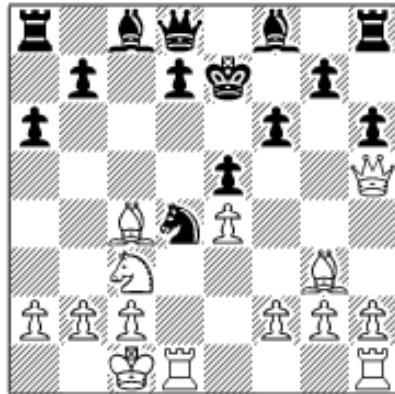
11.Bg3 f6?

Guideline violations: 1. Don't unnecessarily push the f-pawn before you castle, especially if the queens are still on the board. 2. Don't weaken the squares around your king. 3. Don't push too many pawns unnecessarily in the opening.

12.Qe2 Nd4?

Guideline violations: 1. Move every piece once in the opening, before you move any piece twice, unless there is a tactic. 2. Don't allow checks that will prevent you from castling and send your king on an unhappy journey, especially with queens on the board. The better 12...h5 prevents the queen check, but creates further weaknesses. But Black is already lost.

13.Qh5+ Ke7



White to Move

14.Rxd4 Another pseudo-sacrifice to open up the h2-b8 diagonal for the bishop and to cover d6.

14...exd4 15.Qf7# 1-0

Heisman,D – Amateur

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nxd4?

Guideline violations: 1. Don't develop your opponent's pieces. 2. Move every piece once in the opening, before you move any piece twice, unless there is a tactic. Better is 4...e6, or 4...Nf6, or even 4...a6. Plus this is the same mistake as in Game 4! Learn to recognize your mistakes and not repeat them.

5.Qxd4 e6 6.Nc3 b6(?) Black is already in trouble!

7.Bf4 a6?

Guideline violations: Don't make too many unnecessary pawn moves in the opening. For example, Black could try stopping 8.Nb5 with 7...Bb7 8.Nb5 Rc8 9.Nxa7 Rxc2, although White is already much better in every line.

8.0-0-0 Fritz says 8.Na4+-

8...Bb7 9.Bc4 Fritz likes 9.Na4 b5 10.Nb6 Ra7 11.Bb8+-

9...h6? I'll let you fill in the "Guidelines violated" here!

10.Rhe1 Ne7

White has a massive lead in development and all his pieces are ready to strike, but the center is relatively closed. How should he proceed?

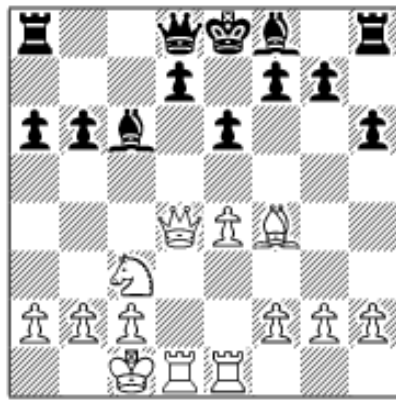


White to Move

11.Bd5! A stock sacrifice based on my knowledge of similar positions.

11...Nc6 The following is some quick Fritz analysis. In all the lines White is much better or winning: 11...exd5 12.exd5 d6 13.Ne4 and now: **A)** 13...Kd7 **A1)** 14.Nxd6 **A1a)** 14...Nf5 15.Nxf5 Qf6 16.Be5 Qg6 17.Bxg7 Bxg7 (17...Bc5 18.Qa4+ b5 19.Qa5 Qxf5 20.d6+-) 18.Nxg7+- **A1b)** 14...Ng6 15.Nxb7 Qf6 16.Be5 Nxe5 17.Rxe5 Bd6 18.Qg4+ Kc7 19.Rf5+- **A1c)** 14...Qc7 15.Qa4+ b5 16.Nxb5+- ; **B)** 13...f5 14.Nxd6+ Kd7 15.Nxb7+-; **C)** 13...Nf5 14.Nf6#; Or if 11...Bc6 Relatively best, but now the black knight is denied c6, hitting the queen. 12.Na4! with a big attack.

12.Bxc6 Bxc6



White to Move

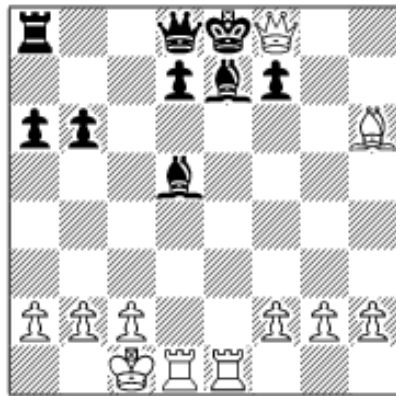
13.Nd5! This is fun! I wonder if there is another piece I can sacrifice on d5...

13...exd5(?) Black can't resist the 2nd sacrifice. He probably figures that it is better to be up a piece (well, temporarily) in a lost position than be even. If 13...Rc8 to guard against Nc7+ then 14.Nxb6 is annoying.

14.exd5+ Be7 15.Qxg7 Better than the mundane 15.dxc6, which also wins easily.

15...Rf8 16.Bxh6 Bxd5 There is no defense. If 16...d6, then 17.dxc6 covers the d7 flight square and should lead to a quick mate.

17.Qxf8# A common mating pattern. White's perfect-looking development and center control win quickly once more. **1-0**



The final position

Let's summarize the most important lessons from these games. Although all the games are completely different, there were some very strong similarities:

1. Black consistently neglected his development and made too many unnecessary pawn moves. More than two or three pawn moves in the opening can be great, but they must have a purpose. If

most of your pawn moves are only one space instead of two, that is likely a sign of danger unless you are an experienced "Hedgehog" player (note: the Hedgehog is an opening pattern possible from several different openings).

2. Because of Black's pawn moves, White was able to build a massive lead in development.

3. White took almost complete control of the center.

4. Usually White castled before Black, who sometimes did not (or was not able to) castle at all.

5. Once White had a big enough lead in development (sometimes having every piece in play compared to only a few for his opponent), then he attacked; identifying the weaknesses in his opponent's position and trying to use more pieces to attack the weak squares than were defending them. The result was that White would "win" the square, either winning material if there was a fixed weakness on the square, or gaining access to that square for further inroads and operations. Wilhelm Steinitz wrote, "When you have the advantage, you must attack or it will disappear." The World Champion was referring to such advantages as found here – being ahead in time and development. If one has a large material advantage, then the player with the superior position does *not* have to attack – he can just trade off his opponent's pieces and win simply by attrition.

6. White won every game quickly by following good opening guidelines such as rapidly developing his army – the longest game was only 18 moves! Note that none of the games were won on "book traps." White's superior opening knowledge was NOT the difference; instead, it was his superior application of general opening guidelines in unfamiliar positions and much better familiarity with basic tactical patterns.

One other thing I want *Novice Nook* readers to learn from these games is that the reason to face better players is because *the same mistakes you make when you win against weak players are recognized and punished by stronger players*. And if you want to get better that is good for you! If your mistakes are punished, you are much more likely to recognize them and not repeat them. So ironically, if you were to choose between two players with the same rating as to which will be the superior player in the future, the one who has the LOWER winning percentage is your better bet!

Of course, you don't have to play opponents rated 1000 points higher as in this month's games; even opponents rated 150-200 points higher should suffice (and is likely much more fun!). Plus, you should get about 25% of the points from players rated 200 points above you and the experience against this level of competition affords you ample opportunity to play well and get a deserved upset victory when you do.

Dan welcomes readers' questions; he is a full-time instructor on the ICC as Phillytutor.



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