



COLUMNISTS

Middlegame Motifs

Nigel Davies



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Attacking a Second Weakness

A classic strategy in both warfare and chess is to tie the enemy down to a particular weak spot and then use his lack of mobility to launch a second attack elsewhere. Sun Tzu sums it up in his famous book, *The Art of War*: "Appear where they cannot go, head for where they least expect you." In chess terms this scenario usually arises when one of the players has done everything in his power to attack a certain weakness only to have his opponent defend it with equal force. What one must then do is find a way to attack him on a different part of the board in the expectation that his pieces will be unable to cope with the new threat.

Here are a couple of classic examples. In the first of these Vidmar gets tied down to stopping Alekhine's passed b-pawn, whilst in the second it is Donaldson's own b-pawn that gets him in knots.

Alekhine, Alexander – Vidmar, Milan Sr

Hastings (2), 1936

Queen's Gambit Declined [D65]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 Be7 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Rc1 c6 8.Qc2 a6 9.cxd5 Nxd5 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.Bc4 Nxc3 12.Qxc3 c5 13.dxc5 Qxc5 14.Bb3 b6 15.Qd2 Qh5 16.Bd1 Nc5 17.b4 Ne4 18.Qd4 Bb7 19.0-0 b5 20.Ne5 Qh6 21.Nc6 Bxc6 22.Rxc6

Black is under tremendous pressure here because of White's superior development and the badly placed queen on h6. Eventually it's the weak a6 pawn that falls.

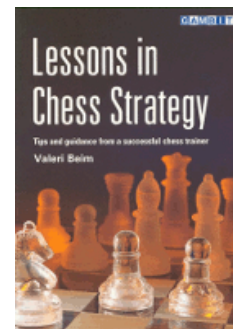
22...Nf6 23.Bf3 Rad8 24.Rd6 Rxd6 25.Qxd6 Qh4 26.a3 Qc4 27.Qxa6 Nd5 28.a4 Nc7 29.Qc6 Qxc6 30.Bxc6 bxa4 31.Ra1 Rb8 32.Rxa4 Kf8



White has won a pawn but it's not easy to convert this into an actual point because Black is able to blockade the b-pawn. Here's what Alekhine himself had to say: "White's winning plan is easy to explain, but rather difficult to carry out. White exploits the fact that the black pieces are occupied on the queenside to create, by the gradual advance of his pawns and their exchange, vulnerable points in Black's position in the centre and on the kingside. Only after this preparatory work can the decisive offensive be begun." Black's first "weakness" is the pawn deficit on the queenside and the second will be created on the kingside.

33.g4! Ke7 34.b5

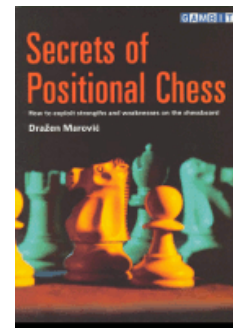
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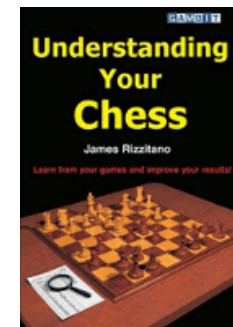
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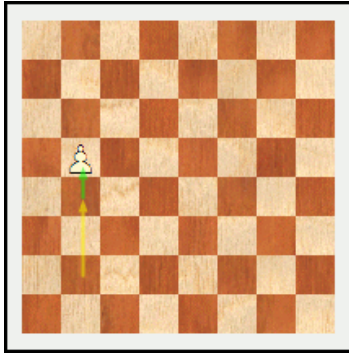
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34...e5 35.f4 f6

Black should have tried 35...exf4 when 36.Rd4 allows Black to save himself with 36...Nxb5 37.Rb4 fxe3 38.Bxb5 Kd6 39.Rb1 Rb6 which is drawish. White would have had to play 36.exf4, which gives him winning chances but without it being as easy as the game.

36.fxe5 fxe5 37.Ra2 Rb6

White's last move prevented 37...Kd6 because of 38.Rd2+ followed by 39.Rd7.

38.Rb2 h6 39.Kf2 Ke6 40.Kf3 Nd5 41.h4!

It's better to stay out of the rook endgame for the time being.

41...Ne7 42.Be4 Nd5 43.Rb3 Kd6 44.g5

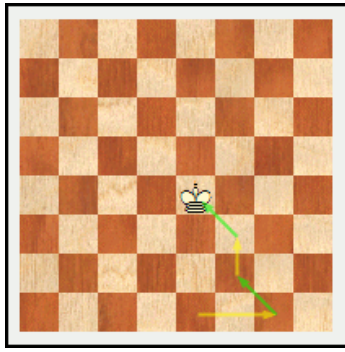
Black now has a second weakness, the pawn on g7.

44...hxg5 45.hxg5 Ke6 46.Bd3 Kd6 47.Ra3 Nc7 48.Ra7 Rb8

48...Nxb5 49.Rxg7 would be hopeless for Black.

49.Ke4





49...g6

Stopping 50.Kf5.

50.Ra3 Rb6 51.Bc4 Rb8

Or if 51...Kc5 there follows 52.Ra7 Kxc4 (Or 52...Nxb5 53.Bxb5 Kxb5 54.Re7) 53.Rxc7+ Kxb5 54.Kxe5 and Black is losing the rook endgame.

52.Rd3+ Kc5 53.Rd7 Ne8 54.Bf7 Nd6+ 55.Kxe5 Rb6 56.e4 Nxb5

Finally getting rid of the b-pawn but at the cost of his entire kingside.

57.Rd5+ Kb4 58.Rd8 Na7 59.Rd6 Nc6+ 60.Kf6 Kc5 61.Rd5+ Kb4 62.e5 Kc4 63.Rd1+ Kc5 64.Rc1+ Kd4 65.e6 Ke3 66.Bxg6 Nd4 67.Bf7 Ne2 68.Re1 Kf2 69.Rxe2+ 1-0

Donaldson, John (2430) – Taimanov, Mark (2425)

Owens Corning Wrexham (2), 15.10.1997

Bogo-Inidan Defence [E11]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Bb4+ 4.Bd2 a5 5.g3 d5 6.Qc2 Nc6 7.a3 Be7 8.Bg2 0-0 9.0-0 Bd7 10.Rd1 a4

In retrospect this can be seen as quite an ominous move. Later in the game Taimanov will use the a-file and weakness of the b2-pawn very effectively.

11.cxd5 exd5 12.Nc3 Na5 13.Bg5 Nb3 14.Rab1 Ra5!



Defending the d5 pawn whilst simultaneously activating the rook.

15.Ne5 Be8 16.e3 h6 17.Bxf6 Bxf6 18.Nd3 Bc6 19.Nb4 Qd7 20.Nca2 Be7 21.Nc1?!

Not the best. White mistakenly believes that the doubled b-pawn will not be a problem but Taimanov will demonstrate otherwise. 21.h4 intending 22.Bf3 and 23.Kg2 would have been better.

21...Nxc1 22.Rdxc1?

He should have tried 22.Nxc6 after which 22...Qxc6 23.Qxc1 (23.Qxc6 Ne2+ 24.Kf1 Nxg3+ 25.hxg3 bxc6 is also fine for Black) 23...Qxc1 24.Rdxc1 c6

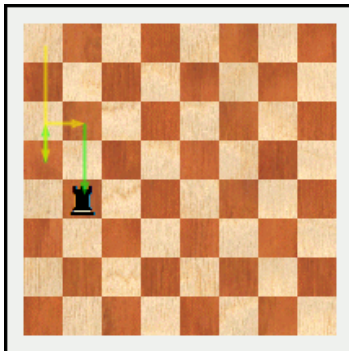
is dead equal.

22...Bxb4 23.axb4 Ra6 24.Qc5 Rb6!



Black's eventual winning plan starts to take shape. The Black rook will pressurise White's doubled and isolated b-pawns with its colleague joining in later.

25.Bf1?! Bb5! 26.Qxc7 Qxc7 27.Rxc7 Bxf1 28.Kxf1 Rxb4



Black has all the chances in this endgame. White's main problem is that his rooks are tied down as if this were to fall Black would get two connected passed pawns on the queenside. And as the game goes Black gets to create weaknesses on White's poorly defended kingside.

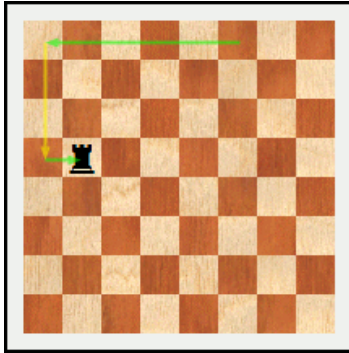
29.Ra1 Ra8! 30.Ra2 Ra5!

Taking the same route as his colleague on b4.

31.Ke2

If 31.Rc5, there would follow 31...Rxc5 32.dxc5 Kf8 and Black's king would be en route for c6 to attack the c5-pawn.

31...Rab5



It was probably better to put the king on f3 and just wait. In the game Black's king gets in amongst White's kingside pawns.

And here 36.h3 looks better so as to meet 36...g5 with 37.g4+ and keep Black's king out.

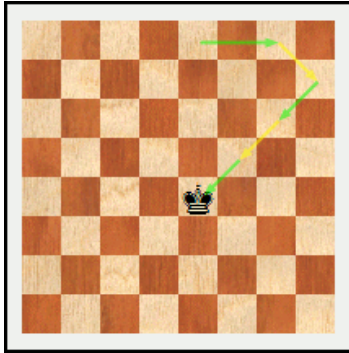
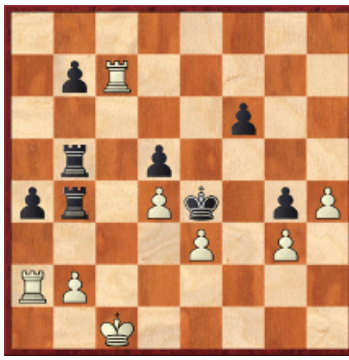
31...Rab5



39.fxg4+ hxg4 40.h4

So White gets his own passes pawns and the game becomes quite sharp. To his credit Taimanov proves to be more than a match for his younger opponent.

40...Ke4!



41.Re7+ Kf3 42.h5 Rb6 43.Ra3

Or 43.h6 f5 44.h7 Rh6 etc.

43...Kxg3 44.e4+ Kf4 45.exd5 Rc4+ 46.Kb1 Rxd4?!

The only mistake in an otherwise excellent game. Black should play 46...f5 , advancing his pawns whilst stopping the h-pawn in its tracks.

47.h6 f5 48.Re6 Rb5 49.Rh3?

Clever but not the best. 49.h7 would have made it difficult for Black.

49...Rd2

Not 49...gxh3 50.h7 etc.

50.h7 Rxb2+ 51.Kc1?

51.Ka1 was mandatory.

51...Rdc2+ 52.Kd1 Rh2!

Threatening 53...Rb1 mate.

53.Rxh2 Rxh2 54.Re7 g3 55.Rg7 g2 0-1

After 56.Rxg2 Rxh7, Black wins easily thanks to his a- and b-pawns.

Exercises (solutions next month)



White to play. He has successfully tied Black down to the weakness on d6 and also made progress on the kingside, but how does he put the ball in the net?



Black to play. Black has tied White down to the g-pawn but still needs to break through. How does he do it?

Solutions to last month's exercises

Joerg, Harald (2189) – Shekhter, Dmitriy (2104)

Landesliga Sued 0405 Bayern (7.3), 13.02.2005



White to play. How should he break through here?

19.Nge6! is a spectacular way to close the game out. After **19...Bxf4 20.Rxf4 Qd6** White finished off neatly with **21.Rxf7! Rxf7** [21...Qxg3 22.Rxf8+ wins a rook for starters.] **22.Qxg6+ Kh8 23.Qxf7 Qe5 24.Rf1 1-0**

Shabanov, Yuri (2431) – Rudnik, Heinz (2157)

EU-chT Seniors 6th Dresden (1.2), 22.02.2004



White to play. Black has just prevented mate on h7 by going 12...h6. How should White reply?

13.fxg6! Bd4+

And not 13...hxg5 because of 14.Qh7#.

14.Kh1 fxg6 15.Nf3

Now Black's kingside is falling apart.

15...h5 16.Bh6 Rf6 17.Bg5 Bxc3 18.bxc3 Rf7 19.Qg3 Qf8 20.Qc7

Winning the c6 pawn with more to follow.

20...b4 21.c4 Nf6 22.Ne5 Ne8 23.Rxf7 Qxf7 24.Qxc6 1-0

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