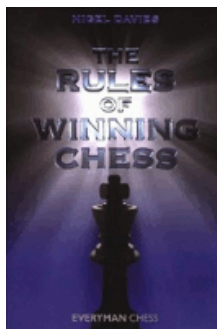




## COLUMNISTS

### Middlegame Motifs

Nigel Davies



#### CHESSTHEATRE

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## The Bad Stonewall Bishop

A bad bishop is one that is shut in by its own pawns. For this reason it is usually advisable to put pawns on the opposite color to your remaining bishop if you only have one of them left. There are also situations in which your pawns are on the same color as your remaining bishop, but the bishop is outside the pawn chain. In this case the pawns do not limit the bishops range of movement as much, so it may not be a liability. One of the pawn structures most commonly used to illustrate the problems with a bad bishop is the Stonewall formation. In this pawn structure, Black puts pawns on d5, e6 and f5, limiting the scope of his light-squared bishop on c8.

In a future column I will take a look at how this bishop can be activated to good effect. But now let's take a look at why this bishop acquired such a poor reputation. The first game is a classic demonstration of how White should play, posting his knights on d3 and f3 and then aiming for a breakthrough on the queenside. The second game shows an attempt by Black to bring the bad bishop out to b7, and it later emerges via a6. But meanwhile some other strategic issues emerge.

**Geller, Efim – Szabó, László**  
Budapest (12), 1952  
Slav Defense [A92]

1.d4 e6 2.Nf3 f5 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Be7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d5 7.Nbd2 c6 8.Ne5 Nbd7 9.Nd3 Qe8 10.Qc2 g5

After 10...Bd6, White could adopt another strategy typical of Stonewall formations, the exchange of Black's dark-squared bishop with 11.Nf3, followed by 12.Bf4.

### 11.Nf3

Placing both knights within reach of e5 is a highly effective plan for White. With the center under close observation it is very difficult for Black to mobilize his forces for a kingside attack.

### 11...Ne4

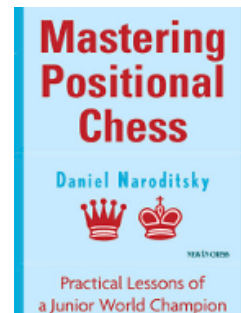


[FEN "r1b1qrk1/pp1nb2p/2p1p3/3p1pp1/2PPn3/3N1NP1/PPQ1PPBP/1RB2RK1 b - - 0 12"]

### 12.Rb1!

Another important and thematic move. It is not enough to have e5 under control, White needs to penetrate his opponent's position in some way. The simplest and most logical way to achieve this is via a queenside pawn advance.

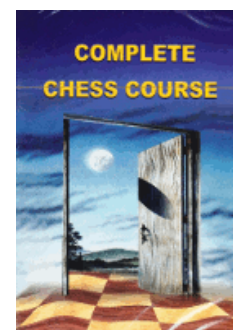
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## 12...Bf6 13.b4 b5

Preventing b4-b5 but contracting a new weakness on c6 and has issues in finding a way to evacuate his knight from e4. With his next move White takes d6 away from it and intends to play f2-f3 as soon as possible.

## 14.c5 a5 15.a3 axb4 16.axb4 g4

Setting about making g5 available for his knight on e4, but now White's f2-f3 will lever open files on the kingside.

## 17.Nfe5 Nxe5 18.dxe5 Bd8 19.Bh6 Rf7 20.f3 Bg5



[FEN "r1b1q1k1/5r1p/2p1p2B/1pPpPpb1/1P2n1p1/3N1PP1/2Q1P1BP/1R3RK1 w - - 0 21"]

The only way to rescue his knight. After 20...gxf3 21.exf3 Ng5 22.h4, it would not have a square.

## 21.Bxg5 Nxg5 22.fxg4 Rfa7

And not 22...fxg4, because of 23.Nf2 when 23...h5? 24.Qg6+ wins on the spot

## 23.gxf5 exf5 24.Qd2 Nf7 25.Qf4 Ra2

Should Black target the e5-pawn with 25...Re7, there would follow 26.Ra1 when after 26...Rxa1 27.Rxa1 Nxe5 28.Nxe5 Rxe5 29.Bf3, Black would be defenseless against White's invasion along the a-file.

## 26.Qe3 Qe7



[FEN "r1b3k1/4qn1p/2p5/1pPpPp2/1P6/3NQP1/r3P1BP/1R3RK1 w - - 0 27"]

## 27.Bh3 Ng5

27...Qg5 would have been more tenacious, but Black is still in a poor position after 28.Nf4 R2a3 29.Qd4; for example, 29...Nd8 30.e4! fxe4 (30...dxe4 31.Qd6 threatening 32.e6 is too strong) 31.Bxc8 Rxc8 32.Nxd5 cxd5 (32...Rxc3+ is met by 33.Kh1) 33.Qxd5+ with a winning attack.

## 28.Bxf5 d4 29.Qxd4 Rxe2 30.Bxc8 Raa2 31.Nb2 Rxe5 32.Rbd1 Re2 33.Rd2 Rxd2 34.Qxd2 Ne4 35.Qf4 Rxb2 36.Be6+ 1-0

**O'Kelly de Galway, Alberic – Donner, Jan Hein**

Amsterdam (8), 1950

Dutch Defense [A81]

**1.d4 e6 2.Nf3 f5 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Be7 5.0–0 0–0 6.b3 d5 7.Bb2 Qe8 8.Ne5  
Nbd7 9.Nd3 Bd6 10.c4 c6 11.Nd2 b6**



[FEN "r1b1qrk1/p2n2pp/1ppbpn2/3p1p2/2PP4/  
1P1N2P1/PB1NPPBP/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 12"]

An excellent plan, intending to develop the bishop on b7. But these days we tend not to mix it with the old fashioned idea of bashing White on the kingside with ...Qe6, ...Qh5 and some general thuggery.

**12.Rc1 Ne4 13.Nf3**

The same positioning of the knights as in the Geller game.

**13...Bb7 14.Nfe5 Rc8**

Black should have played 14...Nxe5 after which 15.dxe5 (15.Nxe5 Bxe5 16.dxe5 dxc4 17.Rxc4 c5 is also OK for Black) 15...Be7 16.Nf4 Bc5 with a playable position for Black.

**15.f3 Nef6 16.c5!**

Creating a breach in Black's pawn structure.

**16...bxc5 17.Nxc5 Nxc5 18.dxc5 Bc7 19.Qd4 Ba6**



[FEN "2r1qrk1/p1b3pp/b1p1pn2/2PpNp2/  
3Q4/1P3PP1/PB2P1BP/2R2RK1 w - - 0 20"]

A good example of the 'bad' bishop operating outside his pawn structure, in which case it becomes rather good. The problem for Black here is that White's strong grip on the d4- and e5-squares gives him the better of it anyway.

**20.Rfe1 Bb5 21.a4**

Starting the advance of his pawn majority on the a- to c-files.

**21...Ba6 22.Bc3 Rb8 23.Rb1 Rb7 24.b4 Bxe5 25.Qxe5 Qe7 26.Qe3 Nd7?**



[FEN "5rk1/pr1nq1pp/b1p1p3/2Pp1p2/PP6/2B1QPP1/4P1BP/1R2R1K1 w - - 0 27"]

Black wants to play ...e6-e5, but he's missing an important tactical theme. 26... Bc4 would have been better.

**27.f4?**

Missing an immediate win of a piece via 27.b5! cxb5 28.c6.

**27...Bc4 28.Bd4 a6 29.Rec1 Rfb8 30.Rxc4!**

White finally cracks the Stonewall structure with this nice exchange sacrifice.

**30...dxc4 31.Qc3 e5**

After 31...Nf6, there would follow 32.Bxf6 Qxf6 33.Qxc4 threatening both the c6- and a6-pawns.

**32.fxe5 Qe6 33.e4 a5?!**



[FEN "1r4k1/1r1n2pp/2p1q3/p1P1Pp2/PPpBP3/2Q3P1/6BP/1R4K1 w - - 0 34"]

33...fxe4 34.Bf1 was also good for White, but Black would be better off than in the game.

**34.b5! cxb5 35.exf5 Qxf5 36.Rf1 Qe6 37.Bxb7 Rxb7 38.Qf3 Rb8 39.c6 b4 40.cxd7 Qxd7 41.Bc5 h6 42.Bd6 1-0**

**Exercises (solutions next month)**



[FEN "rn2qrk1/1bb3pp/2p1p3/p1P2p2/PPpBP3/2Q3P1/6BP/1R4K1 w - - 0 34"]

White to play. This is not a combination, just a good positional move. How does White get the right set of bishops left on the board?



[FEN "r5rk/2RN1Rp1/b3p2p/3p1p1P/p2P1K2/Pp2PPP1/1P6/8 w - - 0 36"]

Although this position did not have arise directly from a Stonewall formation it shows the same strategic features. How did White to play crown his excellent positional play?

### Solutions to last month's exercises

**Unzicker, Wolfgang – Fischer, Robert**

Varna ol (Men) fin-A (7), 1962



[FEN "2r3k1/q4pp1/3p3p/1p1QpPb1/4P3/1NP3PP/rP6/R3RK2 b - - 0 26"]

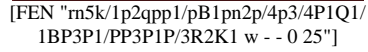
Although White appears to have a classic 'good knight vs. bad bishop' advantage, the knight is a long way from its ideal square on d5 and Black's pieces have become very active. How did Black to play win the game?

**26...Rxc3!** This brilliant shot exploits the weakness of White's king. Unzicker resigned here, but let's look at what could have happened had he continued:

**27.Rxa2** Or **27.bxc3 Qf2#**. **27...Rf3+ 28.Ke2 Rf2+ 29.Kd3 Qxa2 30.Ra1 Qxb2** is winning for Black as besides his material advantage White's king is hopelessly exposed.

**Smyslov, Vassily – Reshevsky, Samuel**

World Championship Den Haag/Moscow (11), 11.04.1948



**25.Bxe6!** Far from obvious because White is giving up his bishop-pair. The point comes on the next move. **25...fxe6** **26.Qh4!** This is very unpleasant for Black who needs his queen on the board to defend d6. Once they are exchanged the pawn falls. **26...Qd7** **26...Qxh4** **27.gxh4** also leaves the d-pawn defenseless. **27.Qd8+ Qxd8** **28.Bxd8 Nd7** **29.Be7** and Black could no longer defend the d6-pawn and eventually lost the game.

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