



COLUMNISTS

Middlegame Motifs

Nigel Davies

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Pin Power

As Fred Reinfeld once put it, "The pin is mightier than the sword." And whilst pins are usually associated with lethal short term tactics, they can also dominate certain middlegame positions. This month we shall be examining such scenarios to see just how mighty the humble pin can be; not only can it disable the piece that is being pinned, it can also tie down the piece it's being pinned against.

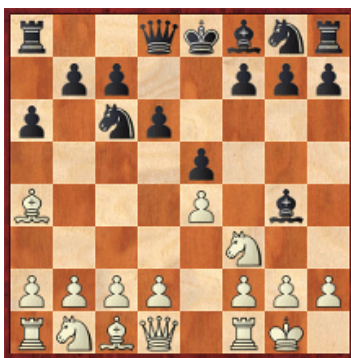
The first of this month's games is a classic example of pin power. As early as move five, White's knight on f3 gets pinned, tying it down and the queen on d1 which needs to defend it. As the game progresses, a variety of other pins make their presence felt along the h-file, d-file, and a7-g1 diagonal. The game even ends with a pin along White's third rank, tying down the bishop on e3 and hitting the a3-pawn.

Jansa, Vlastimil – Nun, Jiri

CSSR, 1969

Ruy Lopez Defence [C72]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 d6 5.0-0 Bg4



[FEN "r2qkbnr/1pp2ppp/p1np4/4p3/B3P1b1/5N2/PPPP1PPP/RNBQ1RK1 w kq - 0 6"]

Pinning the knight on f3 like this is quite awkward for White to deal with. White tries to drive it away with his next move, but the stubborn bishop refuses to budge.

6.h3 h5!?

The point behind Black's last move. White can try to take this bishop, but in doing so will open the h-file.

7.c4

The main line runs 7.d4 b5 8.Bb3 Nxd4 9.hxg4 hxg4 10.Ng5 Nh6 and represents the greatest challenge to Black's idea.

7...Qf6 8.Qb3

Breaking the pin and attacking b7, though Black has a few more tricks up his sleeve.

8...0-0-0!?

After 8...Bxf3, White can play 9.Qxb7; for example, 9...Qg6 10.Bxc6+ Ke7 11.g3 Qg4! 12.d4! (And not 12.hxg4 hxg4 because White would be mated on

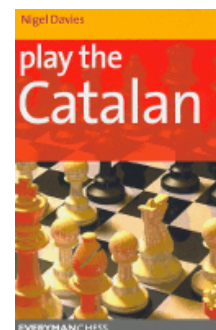
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Tricks & Traps Vol. 1
by Nigel Davies



Tricks & Traps Vol. 2
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Play the Catalan
by Nigel Davies

h1) 12...Kf6 (Or 12...Qxh3 13.Bg5+! Nf6 14.Qxc7+ Ke6 15.d5+ Nxd5 16.cxd5# mate) 13.Nd2 , and Black's attack gets stopped in its tracks.

9.Bxc6 bxc6 10.hxg4?

Even now this turns out to be too risky. White should have settled for 10.Nh2 when his kingside will be relatively secure.

10...hxg4 11.Nh2 Qh4!

What's amazing about this move is that Black is aiming for the exchange of queens despite being a piece down. What he's looking for are some attacking/pinning themes down the h-file and on the a7-g1 diagonal. Meanwhile note that the h2-knight is pinned against h1, if it moves there would be an immediate mate.

12.Qg3 Qxg3 13.fxg3 d5! 14.Nxg4

14.d4 was another possibility, but then 14...dxe4 15.Nxg4 exd4 would leave Black with obvious compensation because of his passed central pawn duo.

14...Nf6!



[FEN"2kr1b1r/2p2pp1/p1p2n2/3pp3/2P1P1N1/6P1/PP1P2P1/RNB2RK1 w -- 0 15"]

15.Rxf6?

After this rather panicky looking move, White is in trouble. He should have played 15.Ne3, after which 15...d4 16.Nf5 d3 seems best with a messy position in which Black has definite compensation for the piece. On the other hand, 15.Nxf6? would have been very bad because of 15...Bc5+ 16.Rf2 gxf6 threatens the spectacular 17...Rh1+ 18.Kxh1 Bxf2 followed by 19...Rh8 mate.

15...gxf6 16.b4 dxe4

16...Bxb4 17.Ba3 would eliminate Black's dangerous bishop.

17.c5 f5! 18.Nxe5?

Walking into a new pin on the h8-a1 diagonal. 18.Nf2 would have been better though it still looks good for Black after 18...a5 19.a3 axb4 20.axb4 Rd4 threatening the b-pawn.

18...e3!

Using another pin, this time along the d-file. White's d-pawn is rooted to the spot because it doesn't allow Black's rook in to d1.

19.Bb2 Bg7!



[FEN"2kr3r/2p2pb1/p1p5/2P1Np2/1P6/4p1P1/PB1P2P1/RN4K1 w - - 0 20"]

Yet another pin, this time along the h8-a1 diagonal.

20.Na3

20.Nd3 loses on the spot after 20...exd2 21.Nxd2 Bxb2 22.Nxb2 Rxd2 etc.

20...Rxd2 21.Bc3 Re8! 22.Bxd2 Bxe5 23.Bxe3

After 23.Rd1, Black can play 23...e2 24.Re1 Bd4+ 25.Kh2 Rh8+ followed by mate.

23...Bxa1

Emerging from the tactics with an extra exchange.

24.Nc2 Bc3 25.Kf2 Re4 26.a3 Be5 27.Kf3 Rc4 28.Ne1 Rc3 0-1

A final pin on the bishop on e3 whilst simultaneously threatening the pawn on a3. White's position is hopeless.

This next game is one of my own efforts played on a correspondence chess server. Black's decisive mistake may well have been 17...Qc8, walking into a pin on the h3-c8 diagonal. Once this happened both his queen and e6-pawn were rooted to the spot whilst White was able to intensify the pressure.

Davies, Nigel (2355) – Wilczek, Tadeusz (2497)

Correspondence Chessfriend.com (1), 01.12.2004

Open Catalan [E04]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2 Bb4+ 5.Nd2 Nc6 6.Ngf3 dxc4 7.0-0 c3

Holding on to the pawn, though White is going to get a fair measure of positional compensation.



[FEN"r1bqk2r/ppp2ppp/2n1pn2/8/1b1P4/2p2NP1/PP1NPPBP/R1BQ1RK1 w kq - 0 8"]

8.Nc4 0-0 9.Qd3 cxb2 10.Bxb2 Be7 11.e4

Simply taking space in the centre after which Black finds it difficult to gain footholds for his pieces.

11...b6 12.a3

Again following a policy of restricting Black's counterplay. In this case it prevents ...Nc6-b4 followed by ...c7-c5.

12...Bb7 13.Rfe1 a5

This artificial looking attempt to unravel Black's queenside works out badly. Given that Black's aim is to play ...c7-c5, I think there was a case for the apparently retrograde 13...Nb8. Black can try to play ...c7-c5 on his next move.

14.Rad1 a4 15.d5 Na5

After 15...exd5? 16.exd5 Na5, White can play 17.Ng5, threatening 18.Bxf6, and if 17...g6, then 18.d6! Bxd6 19.Bxb7 Nxb7 20.Qc3 creates deadly pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal.

16.Ne3 Nb3?!



[FEN"r2q1rk1/1bp1bPPP/1p2pN2/3P4/p3P3/Pn1QNNP1/1B3BPB/3RR1K1 w - - 0 17"]

16...Bc5 might have been a better move, though White could then get his pawn back with 17.Qc2 Qe7 (17...exd5 18.exd5 Nb3 is decisively met by 19.Ng5!) 18.Qxa4, at the same time keeping the better position.

17.Qc2 Qc8

Escaping the influence of White's rook on d1, but walking into a deadly pin on the h3-c8 diagonal. Black should have played 17...exd5 when the simplest line is 18.exd5, with very strong pressure against Black's kingside (19.Ng5 is a threat).

18.Bh3!

Setting up a pin which eventually decides the game. The pawn on e6 gets rooted to the spot, as does Black's queen which is needed to defend it.

18...Nc5 19.Ng5

Not only intensifying the pressure against e6, White now has threats against h7 as well.

19...Ne8

On 19...h6, there is 20.dxe6! fxe6 (20...hgx5 21.exf7+ wins Black's queen) 21.Nxe6 Nxe6 22.Nd5, threatening both 23.Nxc7 and 23.Nf4.

20.dxe6 fxe6 21.Nxe6! Nxe6 22.Qc4

Setting up a second pin, this time on the e6-knight against Black's king.

22...Kf7 23.Nd5!



[FEN"r1q1nr2/1bp1bkpp/1p2n3/3N4/p1Q1P3/P5PB/1B3P1P/3RR1K1 b - - 0 23"]

Threatening 24.Nf4.

23...b5

After 23...Ba6, White should maintain the pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal with 24.Qa2.

24.Qxb5

Starting to cash in via a crop of pawns rather than attempting an immediate win. 24.Qa2 Ra6 would reinforce the pinned knight.

24...Ba6

And not 24...c6 because of 25.Bxe6+ Kxe6 26.Nf4+ etc.

25.Qa5 Be2

Black had several alternatives here, but none of them would have saved him in the long run:

a) 25...Bb7 is met by 26.Qc3 Bf6 27.e5 Bg5 28.f4!; for example, 28...Bd8 29.Bxe6+ Qxe6 30.f5 Qc8 31.Ne7! Bxe7 32.Qc4+ followed by mate.

b) After 25...c5, White has 26.Nb6 Qc7 27.Rd7 Bc4 and now 28.Qxa8 Qxb6 29.Rb7! Qd6 30.Qxa4 is overwhelming.

c) 25...Rb8 is met by 26.Nxe7 Kxe7 27.Bd4 when White will pick up the a-pawn (the third pawn for the piece) whilst maintaining a tremendous position.

d) 25...Bg5 26.Qc3 gives White many threats, not least of which is 27.Qe5.

26.Bxe6+

This leads to a gain of material.

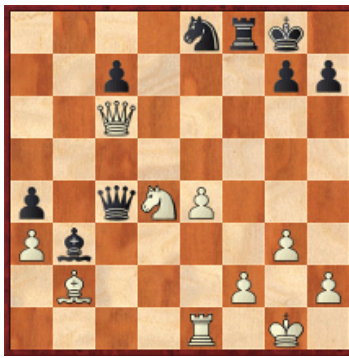
26...Qxe6

And not 26...Kxe6 because of 27.Nf4+ Kf7 (27...Rxf4 28.Qd5# mate) 28.Qd5 + with mate next move.

27.Qxa8 Bxd1 28.Nxe7 Bb3 29.Nc6

Threatening 30.Nd8+.

29...Kg8 30.Nd4 Qc4 31.Qc6



[FEN"4nrk1/2p3pp/2Q5/8/p1qNP3/
Pb4P1/1B3P1P/4R1K1 b - - 0 31"]

The exchange of queens will reduce Black's counterplay, which is why I chose it instead of other promising lines.

31...Nd6 32.e5 Qxc6 33.Nxc6 Nc4 34.Bc1 Ra8 35.f4 Na5

Hoping for salvation via an opposite colour bishop endgame. But even this is not enough.

36.Nxa5 Rxa5 37.f5 Rd5 38.Kf2 Rd1 39.g4 h5 40.h3

Keeping the pawns together on light squares.

40...Rxe1 41.Kxe1 Kf7

The attempt to undermine White's pawns with 41...hxg4 42.hxg4 g6 falls short after 43.e6 gxf5 44.gxf5 Bc2 45.f6 Bf5 46.f7+ Kg7 47.Bh6+ followed by the promotion of the f-pawn.

42.Bg5 Ke8

Or if 42...g6, there is 43.e6+ Ke8 44.gxh5 gxh5 45.Kd2 Bd5 46.Ke3 supporting the pawns. The line 42...hxg4 43.hxg4 g6 44.e6+ Ke8 45.Kd2 is very similar.

43.e6 Bd5 44.Kf2

With the king coming to g3, the pawns will be protected by White's king. After this Black will be unable to blockade them.

44...c5 45.Kg3 hxg4 46.hxg4 Kf8 47.Be3 c4 48.Bc5+ Kg8 49.Bb4 g6 50.Kf4 gxf5 51.gxf5 Kh7 52.Ke5 Bc6 53.f6 1-0

Exercises (solutions next month)



[FEN"1rbq1r1k/1ppn1p1P/p2p1n1R/3Pp1B1/
2P1P2Q/2N5/PP3PP1/2KR4 w - - 0 22"]

White to play successfully exploited the pin on Black's f6-knight. What was his next move?



[FEN"r2qnrk1/p4ppp/bnp4/2p1pP2/2PPP3/
P1PB4/4N1PP/R1BQ1RK1 w - - 0 13"]

White to play used a pinning concept to set in motion a deadly attack. What did he do?

Solutions to last month's exercises

Foerster, Andreas – Bartelborth, Thomas
Bundesliga 8384 Germany, 1984



[FEN"8/p1R2ppk/1p5p/3Rn1rP/1P1pr1q1/
6P1/P2QPPK1/6N1 b - - 0 32"]

Black to play set in motion a winning attack. What was the key move?

32...Re3! This is the key move, setting up deadly sacrificial threats against g3.
33.Qe1 33.Qc2+ d3 34.exd3 Rxf3+ leads to mate; whilst 33.Nf3 Rxf3 34.
exf3 Qxf3+ wins the rook on d5. **33...Nd3 0-1** After 33...Nd3 34.Qf1 Rxf3+
35.fxg3 Qxf3+ 36.Kh1 Qh4+ 37.Nh3 Nf2+ 38.Qxf2 Qxh3+ 39.Qh2 Qf1+,
White is getting mated.

Bronstein, David (2445) – Piket, Jeroen (2495)
Rotterdam KO (3), 1990



[FEN"3rr1k1/pp3ppp/8/q3n3/3p1Nb1/
P5PP/1P2PPB1/2RQR1K1 b - - 0 20"]

Black to play uncorked a ruinous blow to his great adversary, what was it?

20...d3! Ignoring the attack on the bishop and threatening to push the pawn on
to d2, winning one of White's rooks. **21.Rc3** White could have avoided an
immediate loss of material via 21.b4 Qa6 22.Ra1 d2 23.Rf1, but after 23...Bf5

Black's d-pawn would be a bone in White's throat. **21...dxe2 22.Qxd8 Qxd8 23.hxg4 Nxg4** White has inadequate compensation for the queen though the game still needs winning. Piket makes an efficient job of the technical phase. **24.Bf3 h5 25.Rc2 g6 26.Rcxe2 Rxe2 27.Rxe2 b6 28.Kg2 Qd4 29.Nd5 Ne5 30.Nf6+ Kg7 31.Re4 Qxb2 32.Nd5 Nxf3 33.Kxf3 Qxa3+ 34.Re3 Qd6 35.Nf4 a5 0-1**

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