

Chess Master

Secrets

vol.1

(Updated Version)



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Introduction

Chess masters account for about less than five percent of chess players world wide. The masses are left to guess and wonder what chess masters know and do that others don't. We are going to teach you what it is you need to know to be a part of that elite group that is so set apart from the rest of the chess world. We, furthermore, are going to reveal to you all the secrets of being a chess master and defeating master level players.

What you are reading is the first volume of a series entitled:

Chess Master Secrets provided by *Chessolutions.com*. Our staff, in collaboration with a qualified network of national chess masters, has developed these volumes for use as a supplement to your weekly tutorials online. It is our goal to provide you, from A to Z, with the most comprehensive chess course that money can buy.

There is no substitute for hard work and regular study, though. The student of chess should always be willing to do their fair share of studying to accelerate their growth as a chess player. We give you all the tools you will need (both online and with the manuals you will receive) but it is the responsibility of the student to put these tools to work.

We encourage the advanced student to compete in tournaments and regular match play. (Remember that much more is gained from playing players of equal or better strength). One of the most important aspects of learning is

putting new information into practice. Tournament play is not only good for the student who wishes to improve their competitive chess, it is also an effective learning tool for the student who studies even for the simple joy of the game.

This volume focuses on some basic chess master secrets which, at first, may not seem like secrets at all but whose complete and thorough understanding is essential for reaching the upper echelon of the chess world. Understanding fundamentals simplifies the task of improving chess performance.

You will discover that many of the themes presented in these volumes are the very themes that are consistently misunderstood by the majority of the chess world (even though the average chess player can quote and make reference to them as if they know completely what they're talking about).

Masters don't necessarily play complicated chess they play good chess. You will be surprised to see that we will stress the importance of understanding certain themes that most chess players may consider basic. ***It is the mastering of these basics that forms the template of a master player.*** We will concentrate first on the simpler notions and gradually progress to the more complicated themes thereby giving the student a solid foundation for building a successful chess career.

Four Tips

We have divided this first volume into four main areas of chess performance that the budding master should begin with.

The first focuses on selecting reliable and aggressive opening systems to play. Masters, typically, are well prepared when entering a tournament or match game. We give you the basics of selecting an opening to suit the playing styles of both laid-back more aggressive players.

The second stresses the need for studying each phase of the game equally. Masters consistently play well because they have strengthened every facet of their game not just certain phases. This is critical in understanding what separates masters from average and even expert level chess players. We examine the games of three different world champions and their excellence in a particular phase of a chess game. For studying the opening we recommend the games and playing style of the legendary and mysterious Bobby Fischer. For the middle game we recommend the great demon of uncompromising chess Gary Kasparov. And for studying the endgame we most certainly recommend a thorough study of the games of Jose Raul Capablanca. This section gives you a taste of what you will be able to do as a master chess player.

The third focuses on knowing the most basic endgame positions. It is surprising how many players, even up to the expert level, don't even know the most rudimentary

endgame positions. This series starts your endgame studies at the very beginning so nothing is ever left out.

The fourth main subject is a brief introductory discussion of the art of attack in chess. You will begin to see why it is so important to be well versed in the many attacking schemes (which you will be learning) that can be employed during the course of a chess game. You, furthermore, will learn that it is near impossible to win consistently without being able to riddle your opponent's position with good sound attacks. This series will guide you through all these various attacking schemes.

1. Play Reliable and Aggressive Opening Systems

A charming thing to observe is that people tend to play chess the way they live their lives. It's quite interesting to notice that a player with an aggressive temperament tends to play systems that lead to early complications. Others with more tame dispositions tend to select opening systems that compliment their laid-back personality. In addition, they tend to play moves that are less confrontational and without much risk. These features lead to different playing styles varying from player to player. But sound aggressive chess can and should be played by everyone.

It is important to decide early in chess development what opening systems are most compatible with one's personality. Doing this one will be able to always navigate games toward familiar waters. This is a big advantage in tournament play where emotions are very high.

It is also important to play systems that have some spice. In modern master chess players with aggressive temperaments who don't shy away from complications tend to do better in higher level competition. The static chess of players like Capablanca and Lasker probably has seen its best days. Today most high-level players are just too well-versed in the basics of good and solid positional play. Playing systems that allow for calm development and

uninterrupted planning usually leads to draws stale continuations. No one plays chess to draw. The absolute desire to win is what gives us that drive to always want to find the best moves. However, the best advice for the more timid player is to find systems that are not too risky but have some "life" in them. Aggressive players should play aggressive systems but with a bit of refinement and observance of good chess strategy.

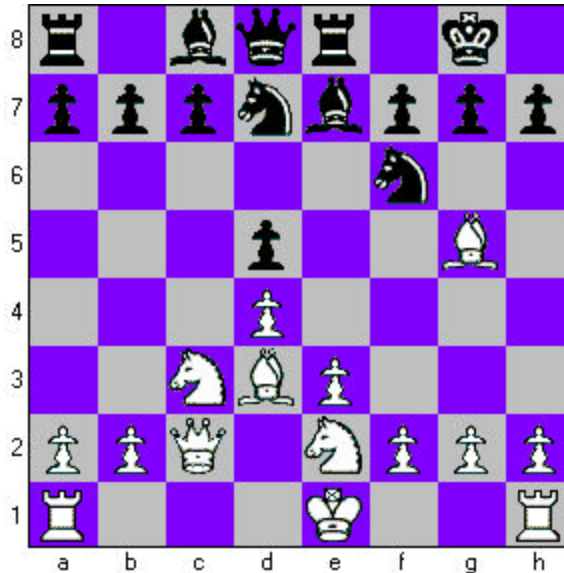
Queen's Gambit Declined: Exchange Variation

Here is an example of a well known quiet system played with a bit of an aggressive twist. It is a variation of the Queen's Gambit Exchange where white, instead of playing for the usual slow minority attack on the queenside, plays for a decisive attack on the black King.

Botvinnik Mikhail - Keres Paul

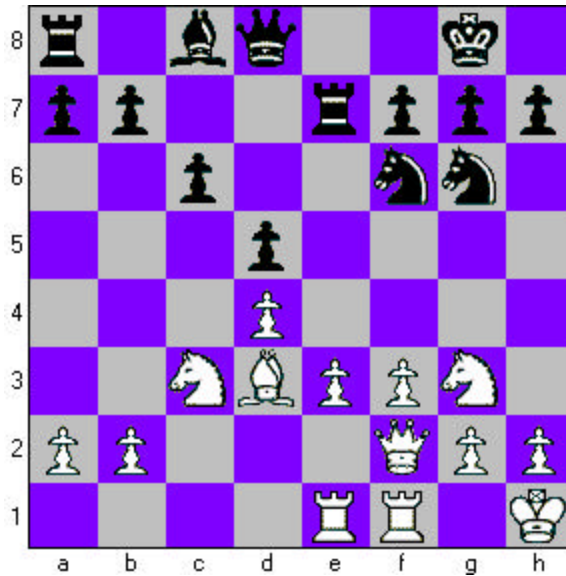
Moscow 1952

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 e6 3.♞c3 d5 4.cd ed 5.♞g5 ♞e7 6.e3 O-O 7.♞d3 ♟bd7 8.♟c2
♞e8 9.♞ge2 ♟f8



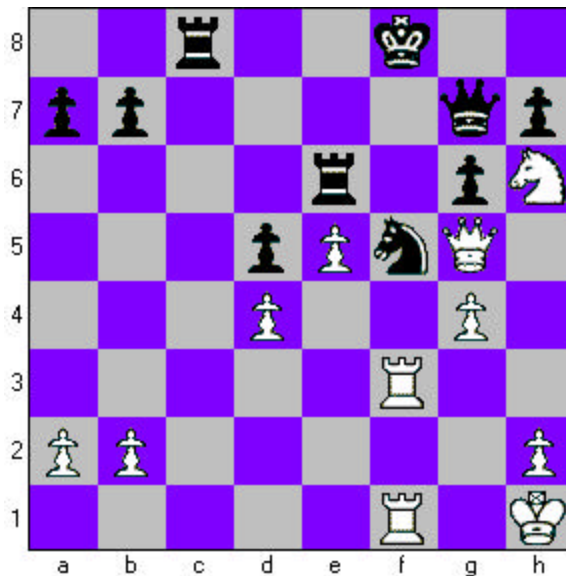
White plays this well known system in a more dynamic fashion. He will not be content with his usual *slight* opening advantage where black has numerous routes to full equality. He develops his King's knight at e2 in order to allow for the later advance of his f-pawn. This will enable him to create a dangerous pawn center and launch a terrible attack against the black king.

10.O-O c6 11.♞ab1 ♞d6 12.♟h1 ♟g6 13.f3 ♞e7 14.♞be1 ♟d7 15.♞e7
♞e7 16.♟g3 ♟f6 17.♟f2 ♞e6



White has begun his methodical march toward the kingside. He will play e4 at the right moment and launch a decisive attack.

18. ♖f5 ♝f5 19. ♝f5 ♞b6 20. e4 d5 21. fe | d8 22. e5 ♝d5 23. ♖e4 ♖f8 24. ♖d6 ♞c7 25. ♝e4 ♝e6 26. ♞h4 g6 27. ♝d5 cd 28. | c1 ♞d7 29. | c3 | f8 30. ♖f5! | fe8 31. ♖h6 ♜f8 32. ♞f6 ♝g7 33. | cf3 | c8 34. ♖f7 | e6 35. ♞g5 ♖f5 36. ♖h6 ♞g7 37. g4 [1:0]



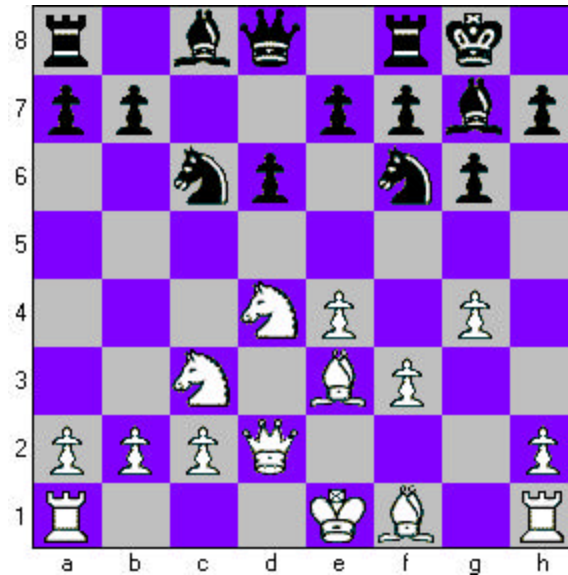
An excellent display by the former world champion. He showed how this deceptively tame opening can be spiced up to provide more winning chances for the first player.

Sicilian Dragon

Here is a game for the aggressive minded player. Any player with a flare for tactics and a love for complicated positions should consider playing the Sicilian Dragon. The Dragon allows the aggressive player much room for creativity and inventiveness.

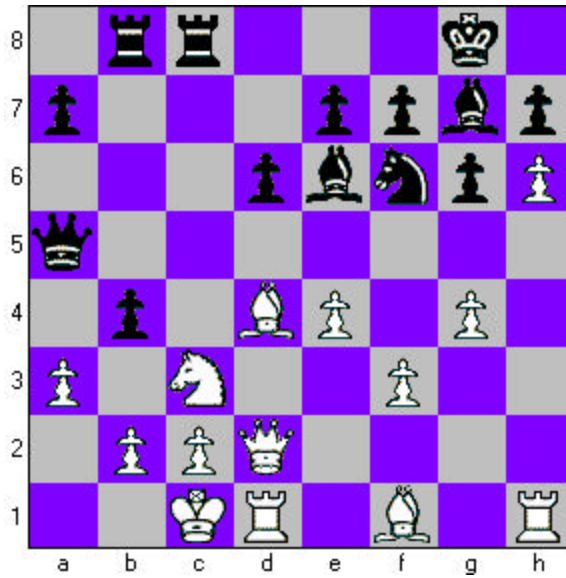
Plaskett - Watson

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 d6 3.d4 cd 4.♖d4 ♖f6 5.♖c3 g6 6.♞e3 ♞g7 7.f3 O-O 8.♟d2
♞c6 9.g4



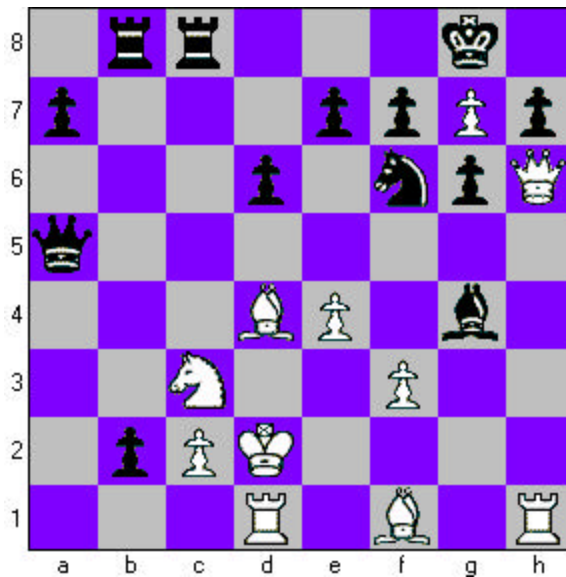
The stuff that dreams are made of. White has chosen the Yugoslav Attack which is the most aggressive system against the Dragon.

♞e6 10.O-O-O ♖d4 11.♞d4 ♟a5 12.a3 ; fc8 13.h4 ; ab8 14.h5 b5 15.h6
(hxg6 is more natural in positions like these. White evidently underestimated black's strong reply.) b4!!



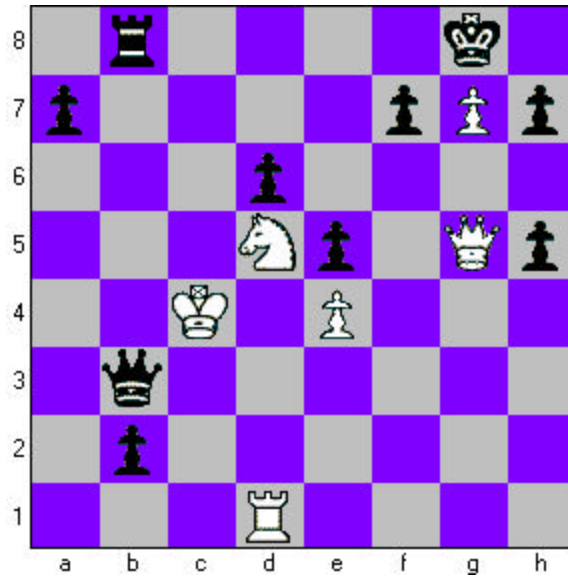
Well played by black! Only the strong survive!

16. hg ba 17. £ h6 ab 18. ♔ d2 ♞ g4!!



A bolt of lightning out of no where! If White now takes time to play 19. fxg4 then black will have time to seal off the kingside with 19...e5!

19. ♖f6 ♗h5 20. ♗d4 e5 21. ♜h5 g4 22. ♜g5 ♜b4 23. ♗d3 ♜d4 24. ♝d5 ♜f2
 25. ♗e2 ♜c2 26. ♜c2 ♜e2 27. ♜c3 ♜f3 28. ♜c4 ♜b3mate



Any Questions?

[0:1]

2. Study Each Phase of the Game Equally

There are essentially three phases of a chess game. The opening, middle game and the endgame. Each phase has unique characteristics that must be observed when playing. The advanced player should already be familiar with some of the fundamentals of good play in these phases.

Although all world champions were masters of every phase of the game it is worthwhile to study some of them and their particular strength in a given stage of the game.

Openings

For examining the opening we will select former World Champion Bobby Fischer who knew better than anyone how to create positions of dynamic imbalance. This is one of the keys to winning on the higher levels. Fischer didn't vary too much in his selection of opening systems but those that he played he played well. Likewise, the advanced player should subscribe to a few good opening systems that allow his or her strengths to be accentuated.

Hill - Fischer

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 d6 3.d4 cd 4.♗d4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.♞e2 e5 7.♗b3 ♞e7 8.O-O
O-O 9.♞e3 ♞e6 10.f3 ♗bd7 11.♞d2 ♗b6 12.♞fd1 ♞c7 13.♞e1 d5!



And, as simple as that, Fischer has outplayed his opponent achieving a better central pawn formation and stealing the initiative right out from under white. White, having failed to fix black's weak pawn on d6, will have to endure great pressure in the center and along the c-file now that the position has opened in black's favor.

14.ed ♗fd5 15.♗d5 ♗d5 16.♞f2 ♞c2



Having never made it out of the opening White is down a pawn and his position is objectively lost. This is a fine example of what can happen to a player who is content with lazy and uninspired opening play. The opening must be played with the same vigor that is required to play the middle game. In fact, we should always assume that there will be no middle game success without a good sound method in the opening. If you lose in the opening against a strong player prepare for a long uphill battle throughout the game. Fischer won in short order:

17. ♠d2 | a8 18. | a1 ♠d2 19. | d2 ♣g5 20. | c8 | c8 21. | d1 | c2
[0:1]

Tips for opening success:

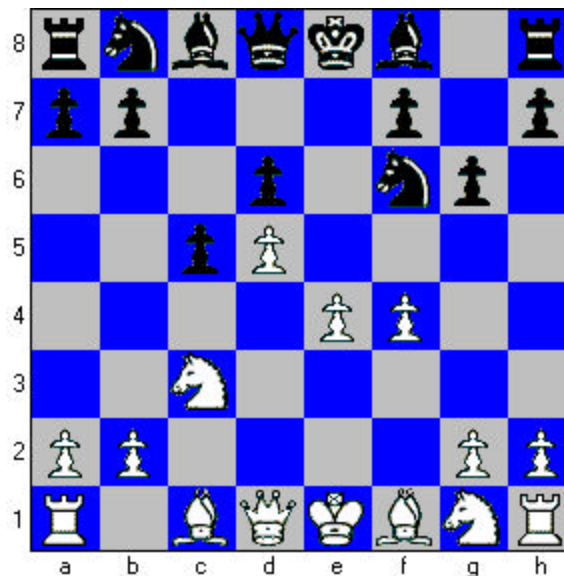
- **Obtain a playable position** through good and thorough home preparation. Don't wait until the game to decide what type of opening you are going to play. Know well in advanced where you will be going in the opening and what type of position you will be aiming for in the middle game. If you are a player who plays comfortably with the dynamic isolani then aim for positions of that sort. Furthermore, decide at home how you are going to approach the struggle. Books and computers are very helpful for this type of chess training. Research and make a notebook of all systems as white and black that fit your playing style. Study the theory of the systems and analyze critical and hypothetical positions. This way you will avoid surprises and always have an advantage over less prepared opponents.
- **Don't play stale and boring opening systems** . It is exceedingly difficult to win against the stronger players with chess that is outdated and lackluster. With the explosion of new theory and the invention of computers and advanced training methods it is very unlikely that a quality player will be confounded by old attacking schemes and slight advantages. To gain the initiative you need your opponent to make a strategic, positional or other type of error. Play systems that give him an opportunity to do just that.
- **Be loyal to theory** . Why reinvent the wheel when you don't really have to? Unless your new idea is a unique and profound one, play the opening according to the logic that is already prescribed. You will have plenty of chances for original creativity in the coming middle game.

The Middle Game

For examining the middle game we will select former World Champion Garry Kasparov whose chess creativity is unsurpassed. Kasparov consistently shows the world how to fight the battle of give and take. Furthermore, we learn from him that there are very few absolutes in chess. His ability to seize the initiative and wreck his opponents' position is a joy to watch and a lesson to be learned.

Kasparov- Nunn

1.d4 ♝f6 2.c4 e6 3.♝c3 c5 4.d5 ed 5.cd d6 6.e4 g6 7.f4



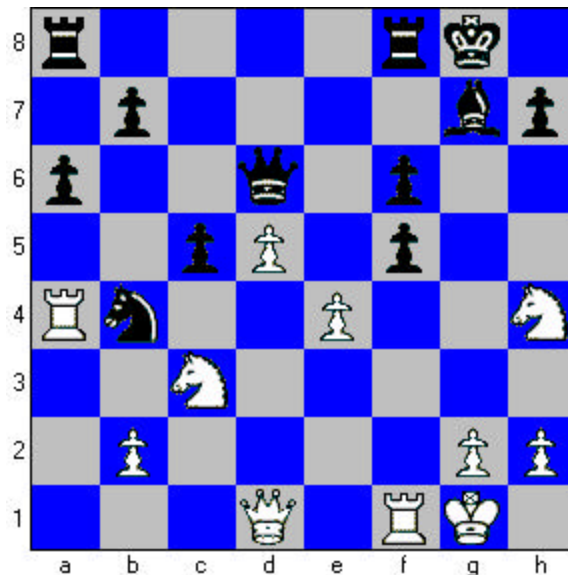
Kasparov chooses a very aggressive system of the Benoni. If allowed simple and easy development Black will be able to set up a comfortable position with excellent chances for counter play.

7....♞g7 8.♞b5 ♝fd7 9.a4 ♝a6 10.♝f3 ♝b4 11.O-O a6 12.♞d7 ♞d7 13.f5!



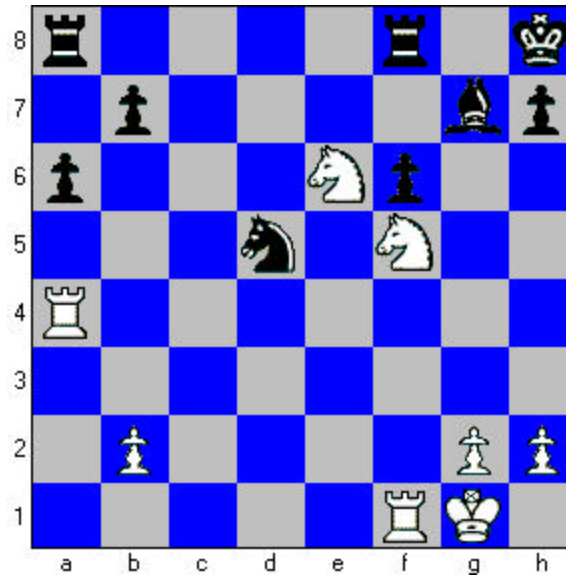
Black's pieces are not so well posted, whereas white's pieces can initiate battle at a moment's notice. Black's only trump is the knight on b4 which occupies a useless position at the moment.

13...O-O 14. ♞g5 f6 15. ♞f4 gf 16. ♞d6 ♞a4 17. ♜ a4 ♞d6 18. ♝h4!



A brilliant conception! Kasparov sacrifices material for active play against black's kingside. The idea of sacrificing in the middle game for the initiative is a key part of Kasparov's middle game strategy.

18...fe 19.♖f5 ♜d7 20.♗e4 ♝h8 21.♗c5 ♜d5 22.♜d5 ♗d5 23.♗e6



[1:0]

A smashing win by the former World Champion.

Tips for playing a “smashing” middle game:

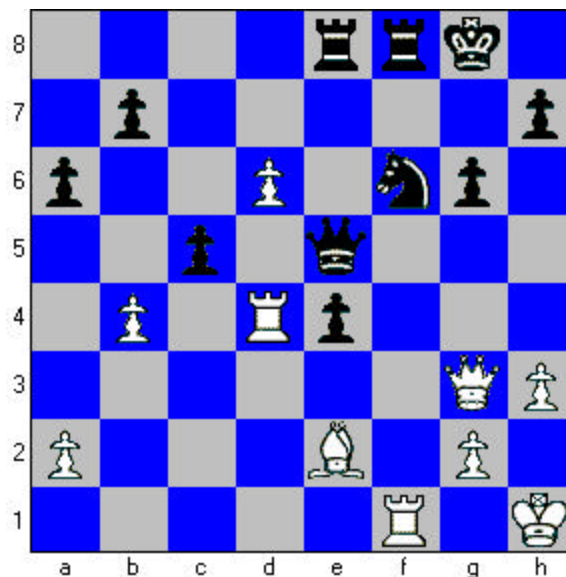
- **Play aggressively** . Don't be afraid to play complicated positions as this is the most fundamental way of defeating a strong player. Stale uninspired chess rarely produces victory against a quality player. Why play chess if you don't play to win?!
- **Create an imbalance** in the position when playing for a win. This can be done with pawn exchanges leaving one side with a queenside majority and the other with a kingside majority. Imbalances can also be created with the use of dynamic sacrifices of material or position. *(Remember that the winner is the player who checkmates his opponent not the one who has acquired the most points by way of capturing pieces.)* Other imbalances would be represented by exchanges of knights for bishops and vice versa. The nature of the position (open, closed, etc.) is bound to favour one side over the other. Be open-minded to the possibilities but also be prudent. Don't force something that is not there lest you fall victim to your own aggressive intentions.
- **Study the games** of the great world champions like Kasparov, Botvinnik, Capablanca, Karpov and Fischer. The depth of their strategic understanding is immeasurable. Furthermore, their games remain an invaluable resource for any student of chess.

Endings

One of the greatest players of the endgame phase was the former World Champion Jose Raul Capablanca. His amazing technique, especially in positions with only small advantages, is well worth studying. The ending is probably the phase of the game that is the least studied by players of all strengths. The master, however, recognizes the importance of understanding all phases equally.

Capablanca - Beynon

Position after move 30.



Capablanca is temporarily down a pawn. He will regain it soon and retain a positional advantage due to his strong passed pawn. He shows us how to turn this slight advantage in the ending into a win.

31. ♖e5 | e5 32. bc ♗d7

(If black plays 32... | c5 then 33. | f6 | f6 34.d7 wins a piece.)

33. ♗a6! ba 34. | f8 ♕f8

(This is better than 34... ♗f8 35.c6 | c5 36.d7 ♗e6 37. | e4 ♗d8 38. | e8+ ♕f7 39. | xd8 | xc6 40. | f8+ and white wins.)

35.c6 ♕e8 36.c7 | c5 37. | e4 ♕f8 38. | e7 ♗f6 39.d7 ♗d7 40. | d7 [1:0]

Beautiful and methodical.

Tips for winning in endings:

- **Study the games** of the great endgame masters like Capablanca, Fischer and Benko. Force yourself to sit down and learn the fundamentals of good endgame strategy.
- **Study endings at the beginning** of your study sessions. Endings probably require the most amount of concentration of the three phases, so study them when you have the most amount of energy.
- **Work with your computer** chess program on endgame problems and solutions. Work on specific themes. (*One week, perhaps, work exclusively on kings and pawns. The next on kings, minor pieces and pawns, etc.*)
- **Purchase a copy** of Reben Fine's *Basic Chess Endings* and study it religiously. Start out with simpler themes first and then proceed to more complicated endings. Study endings if you study nothing else.
- **Capablanca said** *"in order to improve your game, you must study the endgame before anything else; for whereas the endings can be studied and mastered by themselves, the middle game and the opening must be studied in relation to the endgame."*
- **Very often the difference** between a master and everybody else is the master's ability to play a decent endgame. You'll be surprised how much further you'll go with a good foundation in sound endgame principals.

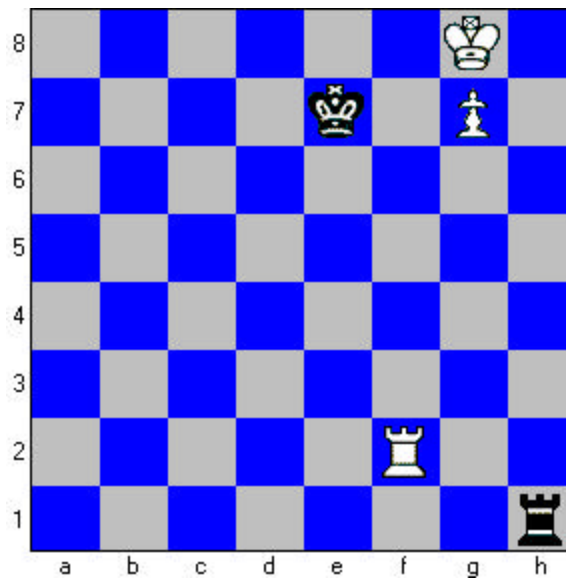
3. Know All the Basic Endings

As alluded to before, all masters have a command of the fundamentals of endgame play. It is illogical to think that you can reach such levels of play without mastering all phases of the game. When studying endgame strategy you should start at the very beginning. Strive to build a solid foundation by learning the simple positions first and the more complex ones after.

It's amazing how many intermediate to advanced players think that studying these easy endings is a waste of time. Most people think that they have a command of them when they actually may not. It is so important to understand even the most subtle points of these endings in order to play them effectively.

Lucena Position

The Lucena position is the position that the stronger side would like to achieve and the weaker side must try to prevent.



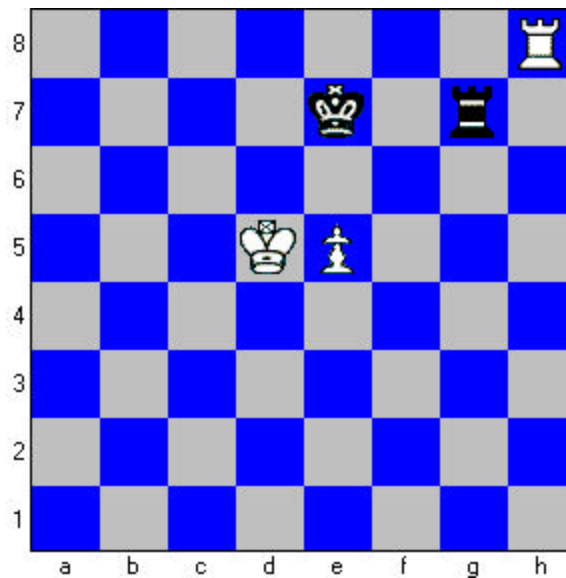
The winning method is as follows:

1.Re2+ Kd7 2.Re4 Kd6 3.Kf7 Rf1+ 4.Kg6 Rg1 5.Kf6 Rf1+ 6.Kg5 Rg1+ 7.Rg4!

Black can no longer prevent the advance of the white pawn.

Philidor Position

The Philidor Position is the saving grace for the player who is down a pawn in a rook pawn ending. If the weaker side can achieve this position he can draw.



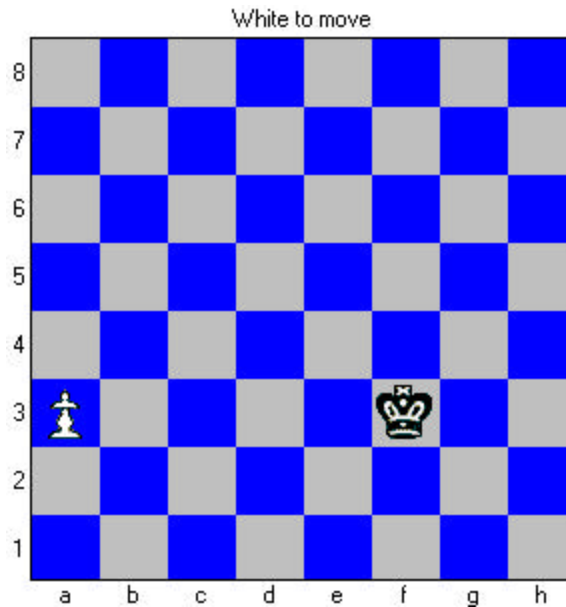
Black secures a draw as follow:

1...Rg6 2.Rh7+ Ke8 3.e6 Rg1

The black rook has "checking distance" which will enable him to prevent the advance of the white forces. We discuss more about rook pawn endings in our weekly tutorials.

Rule of Square

The most basic endgame is a king and pawn versus a king. The goal of every "passed pawn" is to reach the eighth rank, whereupon it promotes to a queen or any other piece the player may desire. Since there are no other pieces assisting the lonely king it is essential for him to stop the pawn himself, lest it promote itself to a queen and ultimately checkmate him.

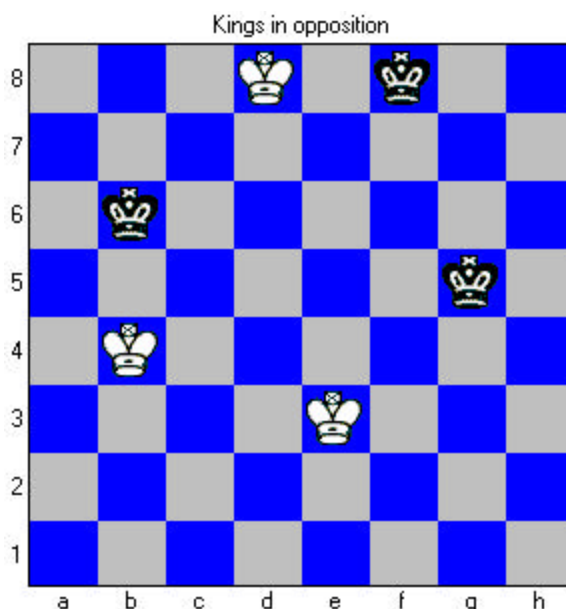


Here we can determine whether black can stop the pawn from queening by using the **Rule of Square**. We can draw a mental square inside the board based on the number of moves required for the pawn to queen.

Here it would take the white pawn five moves to reach a8. We, therefore, count five squares in all directions leading from a8 to form our "square". The "square" is formed by the squares a3, a8, f8 and f3. The black king is inside the "square". He may therefore overtake the pawn and prevent it from reaching the queening square. If the black king were sitting on g2 he would be outside the square and, thus, be unable to prevent the promotion of the white pawn.

The Opposition

The Opposition is another key part of simple endings that all masters know. This is an extremely important element of king and pawn endings. The opposition refers to two kings facing each other with only one square between them in any given direction. The king who does not have the move has the opposition.



Whichever king is compelled to move has lost the opposition. This principle is very important. Very often the player with the move will lose the game because he has lost the opposition and cannot prevent the opposing king from penetrating his position.

We study more about the opposition and the theory of **related squares** in our weekly tutorials.

4. You Must be Able to Attack!

Why Attack?

When one has an advantage one must attack or risk losing the advantage altogether. One must be uncompromising and bold in pursuit of victory lest one should fall short every time.

There are several ways to attack an opponents position. In general, one may attack the kingside or the queenside. Attacks on the kingside tend to be more decisive as mate ends the game.

True attack should never be equated with unsoundness and undisciplined chess. A sound attack is justified when the attacker has a positional advantage in the center and/or the area of the board where his attack is being launched. When the attack is unsound a vicious counter attack or correct counter blow in the center will general diffuse it with decisive effect.

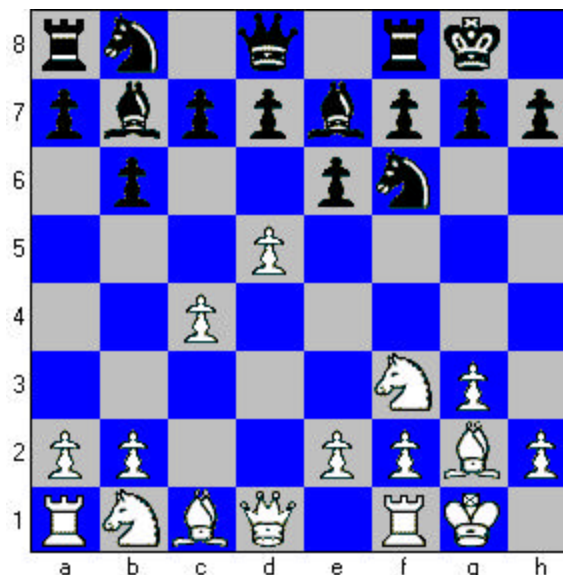
Be Brutal and Sacrifice!

Masters know how to play sacrificial style chess. It should be noted that, although it is not always necessary to play this way (like Mikhail Tal), it is very good to know when and how it should be done. Spare nothing! Chess is not strictly a material game. Your opponent can only realize material advantage if he can survive until the endgame. (*"Before the endgame the Gods have placed the middle game."*)

Kasparov - Marjanovic

1.d4 ♝f6 2.c4 e6 3.♞f3 b6 4.g3 ♞b7 5.♞g2 ♞e7 6.O-O O-O 7.d5!?

An interesting pawn sacrifice based on the theme of the unprotected bishop on b7. Normal development by way of 7. ♞c3 is safer but offers less winning opportunities.



7...ed 8.♞h4 c6 9.cd ♞d5 10.♞f5 ♞c7

An improvement. After the tempting 10... ♞c5? black gets a difficult position:

11.e4 ♞e7 12.♞g7! ♣g7 13.b4!

11. ♞c3 d5 12.e4 ♞f6

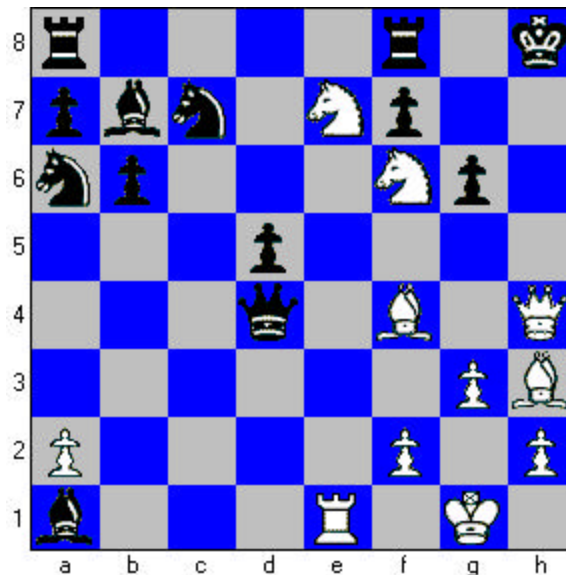
White still has good play after 12...de 13. ♞e4

13. e4 c5 14. ♞f4 ♝ba6 15. ♞e1 ♞d7? [♝c5] 16. ♞h3 ♜h8 17. ♝e4 ♞b2
 18. ♝g5!

Having amassed so many attackers near black's king Kasparov has no intention of concerning himself with the meaningless threats to his rook. Kasparov plays brutally and sacrifices! In order to defeat strong players it is often necessary to engage in spirited and uncompromising hand to hand combat.



18... ♞c6 19. ♝e7 ♞f6 20. ♝h7! ♞d4 21. ♞h5 g6 22. ♞h4 ♞a1 23. ♝f6+



Black resigns in view of 23... ♜g7 24. ♞h6+ ♜f6 25. ♞g5 mate. A vicious and unrelenting attack by Kasparov! [1:0]

You Must Attack to Win!

Chess, most certainly, is not for the fearful. You must not be afraid of your own shadow. In order to realize a positional advantage and secure victory you must be prepared to fight. Wait-and-see chess will get you no where with the stronger players. No hesitation is allowed. Every moment you wait is another moments' chance for your opponent to stabilize his position and seize the initiative. When you determine that you have a positional advantage decide exactly where your advantage is. Plan your attack based on the unique features of the given position.

If you have significant spatial advantage on the queenside then it is there that you are likely to succeed. If your opponent has allowed you to amass significant force near his king then chances are your attack will be most successful there.

Kamsky, Gata - Short, Nigel

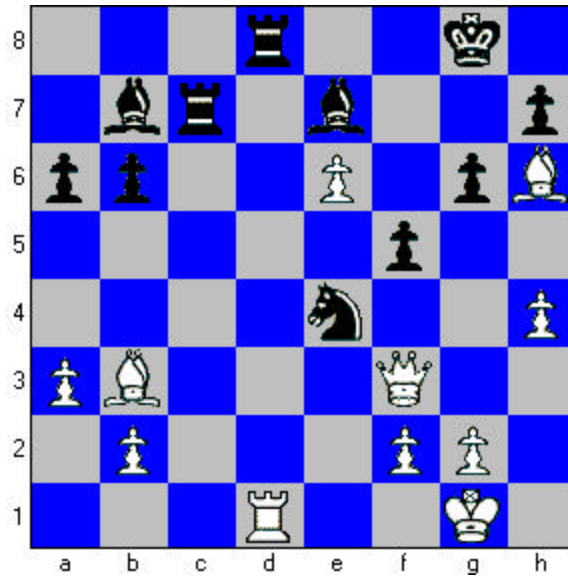
1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♙c3 ♞b4 4.e3 c5 5.♞d3 ♙c6 6.♙ge2 cd 7.ed d5 8.cd
 ♙d5 9.O-O ♞d6 10.♙e4 ♞e7 11.a3 O-O 12.♞c2 ♚e8 13.♙d3 g6 14.♞h6 b6
 15.♚ad1 ♞b7 16.♚fe1 ♚c8 17.♞b3!



[17.♙2c3 ♙a5 18.♙g3 ♙c4 19.♞a4 ♞c6 20.♞b3 ♙c3 21.bc? (21.♙c3
 ♞d6!?) 21....♞e4! 22.♚e4 ♙d6 23.♚g4 ♙f5μ]17....a6 18.♙2g3 ♙b8
 19.♙f3 ♚c7 20.♙h5!



20...♖d7 21.h4± ♖7f6? 22.♖hf6 ♖f6 23.d5! ♖e4 [23...♖d5 24.♗d5 ♗d5
 25.♙d5! ed 26.♖f6 ♗f6 27.♙e8 ♔e8 28.♔f6 ♙c1 29.♕h2!•]24.de f5
 25.♙d8 ♙d8 26.♙d1



There is no time for hesitation. White wins.

[1:0]

Conclusion

This first volume represents some of the most basic elements of strategy that you will be learning during your membership with Chessolutions.com. We will periodically notify you of the availability of other volumes that you will be able to download from our website.

The material in the other volumes is progressively more difficult. It is so important however, to see to it that the student has a good command of all the fundamentals of good chess performance. To cross the ocean we must first build a ship. It would be illogical to plan to build the ship at the end of the journey. For how will we get there without it? This volume has helped you build the ship. And now the journey begins.

Good luck!